

# SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL



# SOMERSET Libraries

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT

October 2018

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document sets out an assessment of the need for a library service in Somerset, considering both the entire county and different areas within it. Recommendations for the re-design of the library service are based in part on the analysis of needs set out in this report. The report and analysis presented fulfils the County Council's statutory obligation to undertake an assessment of the needs which the library service should meet in determining how it provides a comprehensive and efficient public library service.
- 1.2. The needs analysis is a key aspect of the delivery of the library service re-design strategy set in November 2017. It enables the County Council to focus limited resources on delivering support where it is needed the most. The process also ensures that the network of library buildings and the library services we provide will have the greatest impact across the range of outcomes set by our strategy.
- 1.3. The needs assessment is a fundamental part of the best practice approach to library service re-design set out in the national libraries taskforce toolkit *Libraries shaping the future* (see section 13 below for further details). The approach and methodology that has been used enables the County Council to meet a number of the guiding 'design principles' set out in the toolkit. Important decisions about the future of the library service will be shaped by local needs, focused on public benefit and informed by evidence.
- 1.4. Somerset is a rural county with a rising population and significant variations in deprivation. Many communities lack good transport links and there are significant inequalities in health, social mobility and educational attainment across the population. Many people within our urban neighbourhoods are vulnerable to social isolation. Long term health conditions, particularly dementia and diabetes, are likely to be an increasing challenge in the future. The population of older people is increasing rapidly. Library service provision needs to take account of the rurality of the county and the paucity of transport links, but also be focussed on targeting services to more deprived communities to be most effective. Somerset Libraries offer much valued support to people seeking employment, looking to start a business, coping with a long-term health condition and to those suffering from loneliness. They also play a crucial role in developing confidence and improving well-being for young people and adults of all ages. By targeting our library services effectively and continuing to deliver a richer level of engagement with service users, Somerset Libraries has a significant role to play in improving the lives of Somerset residents, and the resilience and strength of Somerset communities.
- 1.5. The document includes some extracts from an online mapping tool, developed specifically for the library service re-design programme. For those people that find the map extracts in this document difficult to read, it should be noted that all the maps are also available to view online at: <https://catchments2018.azurewebsites.net/>

## 2. Approach and Methodology

- 2.1. The analysis presented here is based on a combination of 'soft' information on local needs and 'hard' statistical data. The 'soft' information has been gathered through a series of conversations, engagement exercises and formal consultation with users of the library service, Somerset residents, library service staff and community and stakeholder groups. The selection of statistical data and the methodology used has been developed over time and has been informed by feedback gathered through the consultation exercise.
- 2.2. This section summarises the methodology used to underpin the statistical elements of the needs assessment. A more detailed explanation of the technical approaches, methodologies and datasets used are available in the background paper *Data Analysis – Methodology and Data Sources* (see section 13 below for further details).
- 2.3. Feedback on the methodology was gathered through the consultation exercise. In some areas we have revised the methodology and datasets used following consideration of the feedback (for further details, see the background paper *Consultation Feedback Analysis: methodology and data* – referenced in section 13 below). The majority of the methodology and statistical data used in this final version of the needs assessment reflects the data and approach used in the development of consultation proposals.
- 2.4. The need for library services in different areas of the county has been analysed by:
- Mapping various statistical measures of need, using standard statistical geographies (Output Areas and Lower-layer Super Output Areas).
  - Using library catchments and sub-catchment data to analyse differences in relative need.
- 2.5. We have used detailed mapping of library usage to divide Somerset into 9 separate geographical areas. The areas represent geographies where in general, library users appear to travel within, rather than away from, the area. These areas were used during the public consultation. Following consideration of feedback and updating usage data, the view of the project team is that they remain the most appropriate way to assess library service needs across the county.
- 2.6. The selection of 'hard' statistical data used in the needs assessment has been developed to address statutory considerations as well as the outcomes framework set for the library service. Our needs assessment also considers:
- Different levels of population in different parts of Somerset.
  - Estimates of population growth and future housing development.
  - Relative levels of current usage – based on the underlying logic that libraries that are well used are likely to address needs more effectively.
- 2.7. Throughout the report, unless referenced specifically, data sources are taken from the sources set out in the background paper *Data Analysis – Methodology and Data Sources* (see section 13 below for further details), or from the Somerset Intelligence partnership website at [www.somersetintelligence.org.uk](http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk).

2.8. Maps are derived from the interactive library catchment mapping tool developed specifically for the Somerset library re-design programme, which can be viewed at <https://catchments2018.azurewebsites.net/>

2.9. We have used the current population figures, available for different geographical subdivisions:

- Population figures for areas and library catchment areas are based on mid-2016 population estimates published at output area level.
- Population figures for towns and villages are based on the 2011 census data for 'built-up area' geographies and are therefore likely to be slightly lower than the actual current built-up area populations. These population figures are shown in *italics* in the report, so they can be distinguished from the more recent estimates used elsewhere.
- Population and housing growth estimates for different communities are highly uncertain and should be taken as indicative only. Where estimated population growth is expressed as a percentage growth for built-up areas, the percentage compares projected growth with 2011 census population data. The background paper *Housing and Population Growth – Methodology and Data Sources* (see section 13 below for further details) explains this point further.

### **3. The need for a Library Service in Somerset**

3.1. This section sets out a summary of the high level, overarching need for library services in Somerset. An analysis of overarching needs was set out in the background document *Vision, Strategic Direction and Outcomes Framework* (see section 13 below for further details), and the analysis presented here supplements the earlier assessment with information and insights gained through the consultation exercise.

#### *Somerset's Population and Geography*

3.2. As at June 2015, an estimated 545,390 people lived in Somerset. Around 13.5% of the population regularly borrow items through the library service, and on average each person in Somerset visits a library in Somerset three times per year. Somerset's population is projected to continue rising by at least 3,000 a year for the next two decades or so, reaching 600,000 by 2030.

3.3. Housing growth and associated population growth was raised by many respondents during the public consultation exercise. Communities across Somerset are expanding; but conversely many communities are losing services – banks, post offices, public sector services and retail businesses have closed over recent years.

*“Within the next few years we can expect at least another 1300 homes to be built ... more people looking for more services.”*

3.4. Somerset's population is older than the national average and is becoming older. The number of people aged 75 or over is projected to double by 2039. The under-16 population is projected to increase by 9% by 2039, with the majority of this increase in the next ten years. However, the 'working age' population is projected to witness a 2% decline over the next twenty-five years.

3.5. Somerset has four Further Education (FE) colleges but no large Higher Education (HE) campus, and there is a net flow of 18-24 year olds out of the county. Most Somerset residents are 'White British', i.e. White: English, Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish. At the time of the 2011 Census there were 28,414 Somerset residents whose ethnicity was not White British, equating to 5.4% of the county's overall population.

3.6. Somerset is a rural county, and the 8<sup>th</sup> most rural of all English counties which creates problems with accessing services. In Somerset 48% of the population live in a rural area. This rurality is reflected by the relatively high number of libraries (35, including one mobile library) maintained across the county. Away from the main transport corridors transport links can be poor. 88% of Somerset's roads are categorised as 'rural' compared with 64% in Great Britain. Communities in rural West Somerset are particularly isolated; in parts of Exmoor households can be on average around 40 minutes by public transport from their nearest food store, and 50 minutes from a GP. As may be expected, car ownership is high in rural Somerset with around half of households having at least two vehicles. However, around one in nine households in rural Somerset have access to only one car/van or no vehicles at all. Feedback from the consultation exercise emphasised that where public transport routes exist, travel



times are often lengthy and inconvenient, and the cost of public transport is very high for those who are ineligible for the concessionary travel scheme. Families can be particularly affected by the high cost of public transport.

3.7. Generally, Somerset is better than the national average in terms of overall levels of deprivation, however levels of deprivation are variable across the county. The number of 'highly deprived' neighbourhoods in Somerset (categorised as being within the 20% most deprived in England according to the 'Index of Multiple Deprivation') increased to 25 in 2015, up from 14 in 2010. Around 38,000 Somerset residents now live in a neighbourhood identified as one of the 20% most deprived in England, with the highest levels of deprivation found within the county's larger urban areas. Deprivation also exists in many parts of rural Somerset, but this tends to be masked in statistical geographies.

3.8. What does this mean for the Library Service?

- Populations of older people and younger children – key user groups for Library Services - are expected to rise. Housing and associated population growth, combined with a perceived reduction in the availability of local services, is a concern for many Somerset residents and community leaders.
- The design of Library Service provision needs to take account of the rurality of the county and the paucity and high cost of public transport links in some areas.
- Deprivation is variable across the county and there are a significant number of residents living in deprived neighbourhoods, even though the County as a whole is less deprived than the national average. Deprivation in some rural areas exists but is not always apparent from statistical datasets.

### Somerset's Economy and Employment

3.9. In 2014, the Somerset economy was worth £9.56 billion, an increase of 3.2% since 2013. The credit crunch caused Somerset's economic output (measured by GVA – Gross Value Added) to contract by 4.6% between 2007 and 2010. However, the 2016 *State of the Somerset Economy* report highlights that since 2012 the Somerset economy has been growing at a faster rate than the Local Economic Partnership (LEP) area and the UK. Somerset's economic productivity is consistently behind the UK level, with a difference of 18.4% in GVA per full-time equivalent job (as at 2014).

3.10. The majority of Somerset's GVA (£6.7bn in 2014) is generated by service-based industries, but production and manufacturing play a greater role in the county than at a national level. Somerset's economy is predominantly made up of small businesses - 76.3% of the County's businesses have fewer than 5 employees and a further 13% have 5-9 employees. Somerset has higher levels of self-employment than the UK (17.5% compared to 14.7%). In 2013, there were 2,355 'business births' in Somerset, a rate of 11.2%. This is lower than the birth rates of 14.1% for the UK and 11.5% for the LEP area.

3.11. Average earnings in Somerset are consistently lower than the UK level. Although gross disposable household income is higher than the UK average, housing affordability in Somerset is worse than at national level. In 2013, the lower quartile house price was equivalent to 7.5 times the lower quartile wage, compared to 6.5 times nationally. Affordability ratios escalated significantly after 2001 and have not returned to these lower levels since, despite the economic downturn.

3.12. In December 2014, 13,500 people in Somerset were unemployed; equating to a rate of 5.2%, which is slightly below the average national rate of unemployment. During the consultation period staff and community groups emphasised how important public computer access in libraries was for unemployed people in receipt of universal credit. Construction and operation of the Hinkley Point C nuclear reactor will bring new jobs.

*“Everyone nowadays needs access to online resources, and for many of our residents, [the] Library is the only option ... benefits claimants must register and communicate regularly online ... unemployed people must provide proof of extensive online job search.”*

3.13. What does this mean for the Library Service?

- Libraries can help small businesses and self-employed entrepreneurs to start up and grow, providing a range of quality business information and signposting services. Small businesses and self-employed people are more prevalent in Somerset than the national average.
- Somerset has a relatively small but significant number of unemployed people; through providing digital access and a range of business resources, Somerset Libraries have a role to play in supporting people into work or self-employment. The public computer / internet access provided in libraries is becoming increasingly important for many unemployed people with the roll-out of universal credit.

#### Health and Wellbeing in Somerset

3.14. Health in Somerset is better than, or not significantly different from, the England average in respect of most of the 2017 Health Profile indicators published by Public Health England. However, Somerset is worse than the national average for child obesity, smoking in pregnancy and alcohol-related hospital admissions amongst under-18s. The number of people being diagnosed with diabetes is increasing rapidly. Life expectancy for both men and women is higher than the England average but inequalities exist: life expectancy is 6.3 years lower for men and 4.3 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Somerset than in the least deprived areas. Somerset has a higher prevalence of dementia than the national average, and the ageing population is likely to increase the health burden of dementia.



3.15. Results from the Measuring National Well-being programme suggest that personal well-being in Somerset is better than the national average, but not significantly so. In line with overall national trends, rural areas tend to have higher levels of subjective well-being than urban areas. In comparison to Somerset's statistical neighbours (i.e. areas with similar population demographics), people in Somerset report higher levels of happiness. Research has shown how loneliness can affect both mental and physical wellbeing and helping to reduce levels of social isolation is a key role for Public Library Services. Analysis of the 2011 census shows that 33,500 people in Somerset aged 65 or older live on their own (1 in 7 households), and there are more than 27,000 one-person households in which the resident has a long-term health problem or disability. The results of a 2015 analysis of social isolation risk factors suggested that the Somerset neighbourhoods most vulnerable to social isolation are largely urban, with 'hotspots' in parts of Bridgwater, Highbridge, Taunton, Chard, Yeovil, Martock, Wellington and Minehead. Social isolation was raised as a significant concern by many individual respondents, staff and organisations in the public consultation exercise.

*"There are many customers in the village that feel isolated & alone. The bus service is unreliable & will only continue to get worse. This makes people feel very cut off from society, when they can spend a few hours in the library, in a calm atmosphere doing the jigsaw, looking at magazines or talking to other people, it makes them feel valued & part of the community again. Some of these customers have mental health issues & need more support."*

3.16. What does this mean for the Library Service?

- There are inequalities in health and neighbourhoods that are vulnerable to social isolation, and the design of Library Services needs to take account of a varying level of need around the County. Social isolation was identified by a large number of consultation respondents as a key problem that the library service is actively and effectively addressing.
- Somerset's Library Service could have a significant role both in preventing and supporting those affected by conditions like dementia and diabetes, which are likely to be an increasing challenge for Somerset in the future. Research shows that library usage can play an important role in people's quality of life and wellbeing <sup>1</sup>.
- Regular readers report fewer feelings of stress and depression with self-esteem and greater self-acceptance <sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Debbie Hicks et al, *Museums, Libraries & Archives*, (2010), Public library activity in the areas of health and wellbeing, final report;

<sup>2</sup> Centre for Research into Reading, Literature and Society (CRILS) at the University of Liverpool (2014), 'A study of the benefits to adults of regular reading for pleasure'; Report from Quick Reads in partnership with Dr Josie Billington.

Children and Young People in Somerset

3.17. Children and young people's educational attainment has improved but the proportion of Somerset pupils going into Higher Education is consistently below the national average. Vulnerable groups, particularly those with special educational needs and disabilities, those eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after and care leavers continue to experience relatively poor outcomes. Those in more deprived areas experience much lower attainment. About 14,300 Somerset children live in low-income households. Whilst not all will be 'vulnerable', poverty is a strong indicator of poor wellbeing and lack of opportunity. In the main, these households are tightly clustered in specific localities of Taunton, Bridgwater and Yeovil. West Somerset is the worst performing area for social mobility in the whole of England, ranking lowest against adulthood social mobility indicators and against Early Years indicators. Feedback from the consultation exercise has provided new insights into the value of library spaces for young people studying.

*"I need the Library to do homework and as a safe place to go. Where else can a teenage girl on her own go?"*

3.18. The Somerset Children and Young People's Survey found 29% of primary age children reported high self-esteem, compared to 38% nationally. The rate of young person hospital admissions due to substance misuse and the rate of hospital admissions because of self-harm are both higher in Somerset than nationally.

3.19. The public consultation exercise has highlighted further aspects of overarching needs relating to children and young people. Across Somerset we received many letters from school children. We also carried out a series of focus groups and surveys with primary schools in certain communities. The feedback is summarised below:

- Children value being able to walk to the library.
- Children enjoy reading books (including through the Summer Reading Challenge).
- There are a significant number of home-schooled children using libraries to support their education (with parental support, accompanied by tutors, or through informal groups).
- Children and young people use libraries as a place to study.
- Visiting the library on the way home from primary school, or through an organised primary school visit, is an important activity for many children across Somerset.

*"My children are both bookworms and regularly use the library to get books out on their way home from school."*

*"If the library shuts down it would affect my family as they are home-schooled and use the library quite often and use it for books and their topics."*

*"It would affect me and my brother because my older brother uses the library for a lunch revision and I want that opportunity too ... it is quiet and has good resources."*

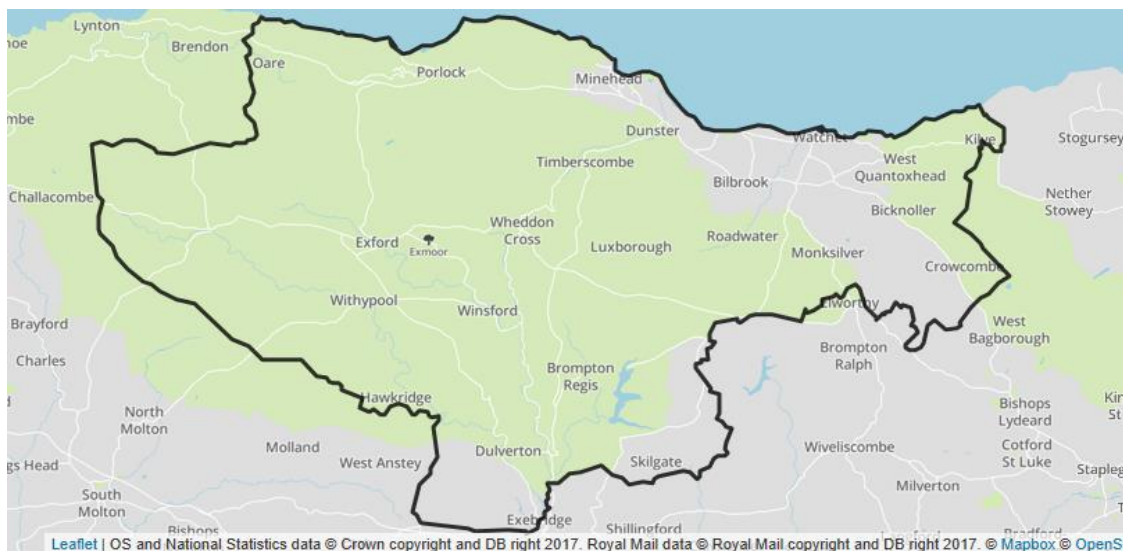
3.20. Feedback from the staff consultation highlighted the value of libraries in providing free positive activities for children.

3.21. What does this mean for the Library Service?

- Library Services can play an important role in inspiring and engaging children who feel less confident in a school setting; by targeting services towards vulnerable groups the service could improve educational outcomes and social mobility.
- Libraries play a key role in supporting 'school readiness'. Research provides compelling evidence that library usage is an important factor in literacy skill levels and general educational attainment.
- There is some evidence that Children and Young People in Somerset are likely to be more affected by problems with mental health and wellbeing than is the case nationally. Library Services can improve young people's confidence and wellbeing.
- Libraries play an important role in educating children - as a venue for home-schooling activities, as a safe space to study and to support the development of reading.

## 4. Area 1: Western Somerset

4.1. The map below shows the Western Somerset area boundary. The area includes most of West Somerset District, including Exmoor, the coast and hinterland from Porlock to Kilve, and the rural areas to the north of the Brendon Hills and north-west of the Quantock Hills.



### Population, Growth and Demography

4.2. The Western Somerset area is sparsely populated (total pop. 32,014, the second lowest of the 9 areas considered), with Minehead (pop. 11,291), Williton (pop. 2,644) and Watchet (pop. 3,581) being the main built up areas. The population profile of the area is set out in the table below; the area has a high proportion of elderly people and correspondingly low proportions of children, young and working age people compared to Somerset as a whole.

Age range	Population	% of population in age range
<b>All ages</b>	32,014	100%
<b>Under 5</b>	1,311	4%
<b>5-11</b>	1,908	6%
<b>12-17</b>	1,707	5%
<b>18-64</b>	16,509	52%
<b>65+</b>	10,579	33%

4.3. Much of the area is rural and the western part of the area is very sparsely populated; nearly 60% of the population live within 2 miles of either Minehead, Watchet or Williton centres. Porlock (pop. 1,213) and Dulverton (pop. 1,052) are the only built-up areas away from Minehead, Watchet and Williton with populations over 1000 and are classified as rural towns in a sparse setting under the ONS rural-urban classification (2011). Only four further built-up areas (Dunster and Carhampton situated close to Minehead, and Washford and Stogumber situated close to Watchet / Williton) had populations over 400 at the time of the 2011 census. Rural populations



## APPENDIX 2: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

are predominantly located in the north-east of the area, between Minehead and Williton and to the south and east of Williton / Watchet.

- 4.4. Watchet, Williton and Minehead are designated tier 1 settlements in the current local plan and are estimated to see around 1,500 houses built across the three settlements in the next 10 years; this is likely to mean that the populations of these communities will grow by 15% or more by 2028. Housing development in other (lower tier) settlements is likely to be much lower. Population and housing growth is projected to be lower in Western Somerset overall than in other parts of Somerset, and concerns about housing and population growth were not raised as frequently by consultation respondents as they were in other areas. However, a significant number of respondents using Watchet library, as well as Watchet Town Council and staff in the library service, did note that the town's population was likely to grow significantly because of housing development.

### Deprivation and Social Need

- 4.5. Levels of deprivation are relatively high in this area compared to the rest of Somerset, particularly in Watchet and Williton, and the area is known for having very low levels of social mobility. The 'heatmaps' below show concentrations of deprivation, but it is important to note that consultation feedback identified further 'hidden' deprivation in the sparsely populated areas of Exmoor which is not always evident when data is aggregated to Lower-layer Super Output Area level.

Fig. 4.5a: Income deprivation



Fig. 4.5b: Employment deprivation

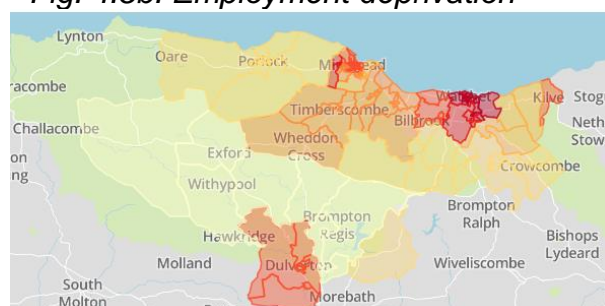


Fig. 4.5c: Health deprivation

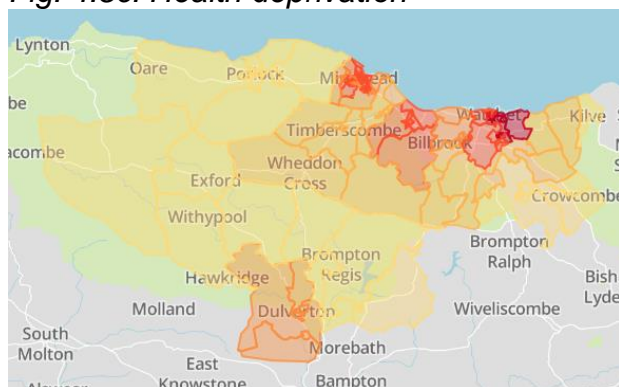
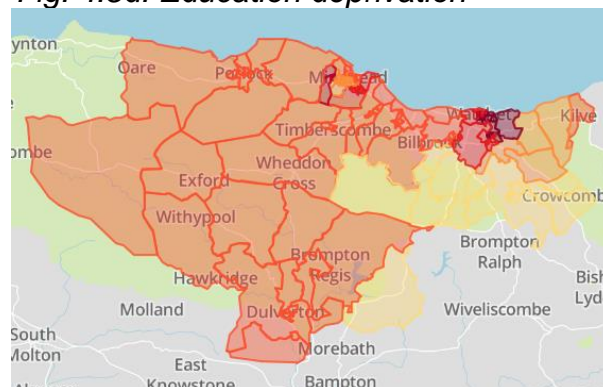


Fig. 4.5d: Education deprivation



Key to map shading:

Low Medium High

(Note that green shading represents Exmoor National Park and Quantock AONB)

4.6. Employment and income levels are lower than elsewhere in Somerset, with pockets of employment deprivation (in the 20% most deprived nationally) in the Watchet and Williton library catchments. Consultation responses highlighted the relatively low levels of employment and income in Watchet and Dulverton. Comments showed the importance of the library as an information hub following the closure of a major employer in the area.

*“I think any reduction in services in an area of high social deprivation will have adverse effects on people that need the services the most. If services must be reduced, then community partnership must be the preferred option.”*

4.7. Educational attainment is lower in Western Somerset than elsewhere and post-16 education is a significant challenge for the area. Only 63% of 5 year olds reach the expected level of school readiness compared to 72% for Somerset as a whole. Health deprivation is also more significant than elsewhere in Somerset, the area has a high proportion of people over 65, and for all current library catchments the proportion of (self-identified) disabled people is higher than for Somerset as a whole. The Minehead area has considerably higher rates of Adult Social Care interventions than the average for Somerset.

4.8. There has been considerable investment in improving broadband infrastructure in the area. Evidence shows that people living in the more deprived communities of Minehead, Watchet, Williton, Exmoor and Dulverton are more likely to be digitally excluded than the rest of Somerset. Consultation responses highlighted that some users of Dulverton library rely on the public computers because of poor broadband infrastructure in the catchment. Social isolation is variable across the area, with people living in the coastal towns statistically more likely to be socially isolated than those in the more rural areas. Consultation feedback highlighted the role of Dulverton and Porlock libraries in providing important opportunities for social interaction in these geographically remote communities.

Fig. 4.8a: Social isolation

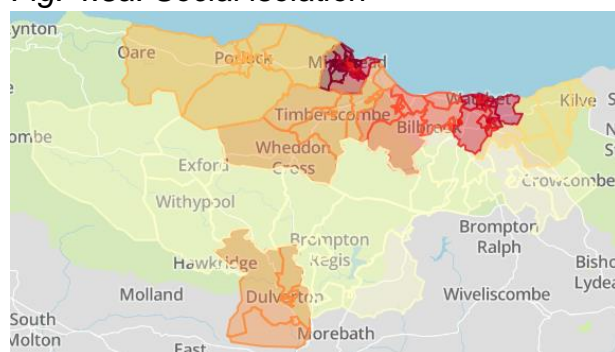
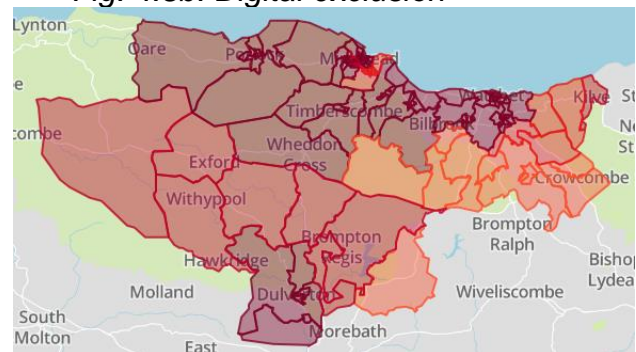


Fig. 4.8b: Digital exclusion



Key to map shading:

Low Medium High

(Note that green shading represents Exmoor National Park and Quantock AONB)



*“Remote locations like Porlock need all the community spirit support they can get to maintain a “heart” to the village. The library is an important part of that. Even for people who seldom use the service, knowing that it is there supporting the community generates a positive feeling.”*

### Current Library Usage

- 4.9. There are currently five libraries in the area and levels of library usage vary significantly. Usage of Minehead library is high across all categories, both in absolute terms and relative to the catchment population. Although usage of Dulverton and Porlock libraries is relatively low in absolute terms, considering the very small catchment and built-up area populations these are generally well-used libraries, particularly Dulverton library which has the highest rates of usage in the area across all categories (a point made strongly in the consultation by a large number of respondents, as well as community representatives and staff).
- 4.10. Usage of Williton and Watchet libraries is lower relative to the populations in these library catchments, particularly Watchet library, which has the lowest number of active borrowers, the lowest usage (in terms of annual hours of use) of the People’s Network, the lowest annual footfall, and the lowest participation in events when these measures are expressed per head of catchment population. Williton library has a larger catchment population and so in absolute terms it has relatively high levels of usage – the second highest in the area.

*Table 4.10: Selected library usage measures (2017/18 financial year)*

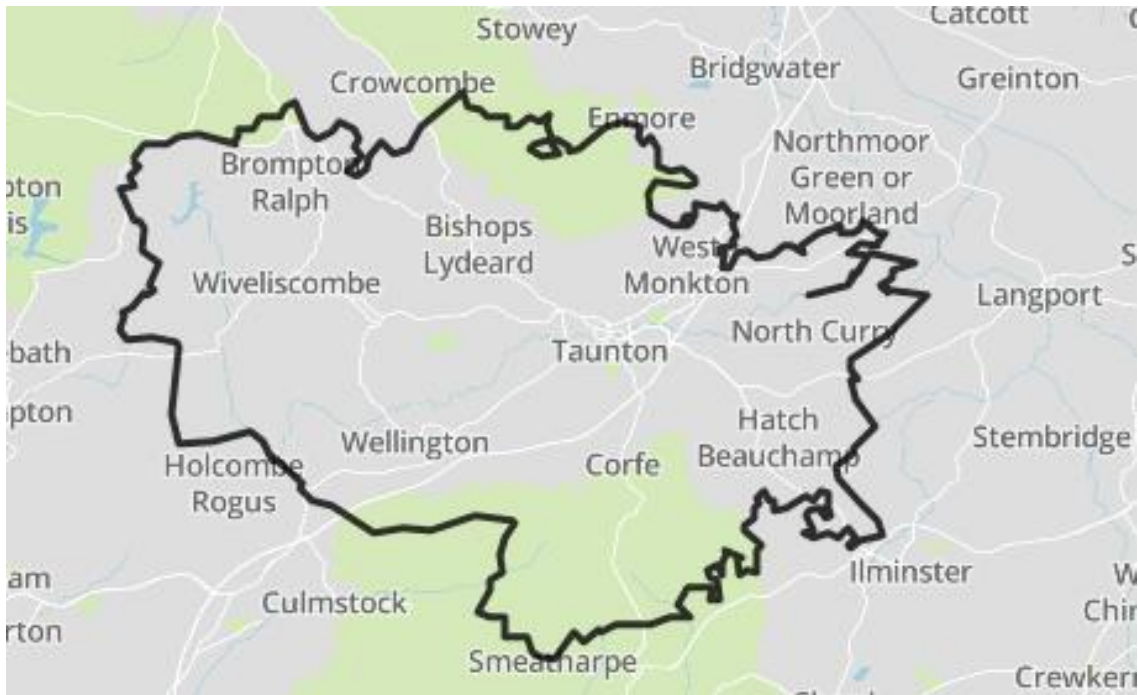
Library	Active borrowers in the year	People's Network User hours	Event participation in the year	Footfall in the year	Current opening hours per week	Footfall per hour of opening	Total library catchment population
Dulverton	538	575	858	21,225	19	21	3,670
Minehead	2,696	3,654	3,602	64,833	38	33	26,180
Porlock	258	179	410	5,909	18	6	2,214
Watchet	496	468	388	8,212	18	9	6,445
Williton	1,220	1,178	914	31,407	28	22	12,902

## **Summary of key points: Western Somerset**

- Populations are low relative to other areas of Somerset, and populations are heavily concentrated in and around the Minehead and Watchet / Williton areas, which is also where future population growth is likely to be most significant.
- A high and growing proportion of elderly people in all library catchments, with high levels of adult social care intervention around Minehead, and high levels of health deprivation and self-identified disability in the main population centres and the areas around Porlock and Dulverton.
- High levels of income and employment deprivation, particularly in the Watchet / Williton area and to a lesser extent in Minehead, but also good evidence from the public consultation of more dispersed but (in relative terms) significant deprivation in the Dulverton library catchment. Unemployment and related deprivation in Watchet was noted in consultation responses by staff, community representatives and individual respondents.
- Social mobility, school readiness and educational attainment are generally lower than in other parts of Somerset; social mobility and post-16 education are particular challenges which are receiving national attention and support.
- Statistical risks of social isolation are highest in the more deprived towns of Williton, Watchet and Minehead. Digital exclusion risks are more widespread across the district and are high in all library catchments.
- Minehead library has the highest usage by some margin; Dulverton and Porlock are well-used considering the small size of these communities. Williton library has a much higher level of usage than nearby Watchet library, which has the lowest level of usage per head of catchment population.

## 5. Area 2: Taunton, Wellington and Surrounding Area

5.1. The map below shows the boundary of this area. Area 2 includes much of the Taunton Deane District Council area, from the Devon border across to the Quantock Hills to the north-west of Taunton (including the Somerset portion of the Blackdown Hills area), and the western part of the Somerset Levels extending to Stoke St Gregory in the east and towards Ilminster in the south-east.



### Population, Growth and Demography

5.2. This area has the highest population of the 9 areas (total pop. 115,545), largely because of the major towns of Taunton (pop. 64,621, the main built up area) and Wellington (pop. 13,822). The population profile of the area is set out in the table below; the age distribution is broadly in line with Somerset as a whole.

Age range	Population	% of population in age range
<b>All ages</b>	115,545	100%
<b>Under 5</b>	6,613	6%
<b>5-11</b>	9,128	8%
<b>12-17</b>	7,815	7%
<b>18-64</b>	66,373	57%
<b>65+</b>	25,616	22%

5.3. The rural parts of the area around Taunton are relatively densely populated; the built-up areas of Cotford St Luke (pop. 2,309), Bishop's Lydeard (pop. 2,040), Creech St. Michael (pop. 1,769) and Ruishton (pop. 1,473) are significant settlements within 6 miles of Taunton centre; the villages of Kingston St. Mary, Stoke St. Mary, Blagdon Hill and Bradford on Tone and the Norton Manor military camp all lie within a similar distance and account for a further combined (2011 census) population of 2,750. The rural surrounds of Wellington are less densely populated, with the larger villages of

Langford Budville (pop. 535) and Chelston (pop. 442) being the only settlements of any significant size near to Wellington. Other sizable communities in the area include Wiveliscombe (pop. 2,178) and nearby Milverton (pop. 1,112) to the west and Stoke St. Gregory/Meare Green (pop. 626) and North Curry (pop. 926) to the east. The rural areas in the Quantock and Brendon Hills to the north, towards the Devon border in the south and west, and in the eastern parts of the Somerset levels are more sparsely populated.

- 5.4. Taunton and Wellington are the designated tier 1 settlements in the current local plan for the area. Taunton is designated for significant housing growth (estimated at between 10,000 and 13,000 dwellings over the next 10 years, which would increase the population of Taunton very significantly – by as much as 50% of the 2011 census population). Housing growth forecast for Wellington is also significant (estimated at between 1,000 and 2,000 dwellings by 2020, which would lead to a population growth, compared to 2011 levels, of between 18% and 35%). The extent of housing development in other (lower tier) settlements is likely to be lower; but population growth in Wiveliscombe and Bishops Lydeard because of housing growth over the next 10 years is also likely to be significant (estimated in the region of 30% and 20% of 2011 census levels respectively). Concerns about housing and population growth were raised most frequently by consultation respondents who used Wellington library, as well as by stakeholder groups and staff responding in respect of Priorswood and Wellington libraries, and by a smaller number of respondents who used Bishops Lydeard library.

Deprivation and Social Need

- 5.5. Levels of deprivation vary significantly within the area, which contains the most deprived ward in Somerset as well as some of the least deprived. Many of the rural areas are relatively wealthy, as are some parts of the major towns. Deprivation is concentrated in the urban areas of Taunton and Wellington; Taunton has 3 neighbourhoods in the 10% most deprived nationally; Wellington has 1 neighbourhood in the 20% most deprived nationally. Statistically Bishops Lydeard and Wiveliscombe library catchments have much lower levels of deprivation, but evidence gathered by the review suggests that income and employment deprivation exist in Wiveliscombe and Bishops Lydeard in smaller pockets. Some consultation respondents using or representing Wiveliscombe library noted that usage of the public internet access was high, and that these facilities were vital for local unemployed people.

*“We have various contacts who are unemployed, and who have limited internet access, so the library is a vital part of them seeking work. Many people are only able to pay and access their various on-line accounts via the library computer.”*

Wiveliscombe Evangelical Congregational Church

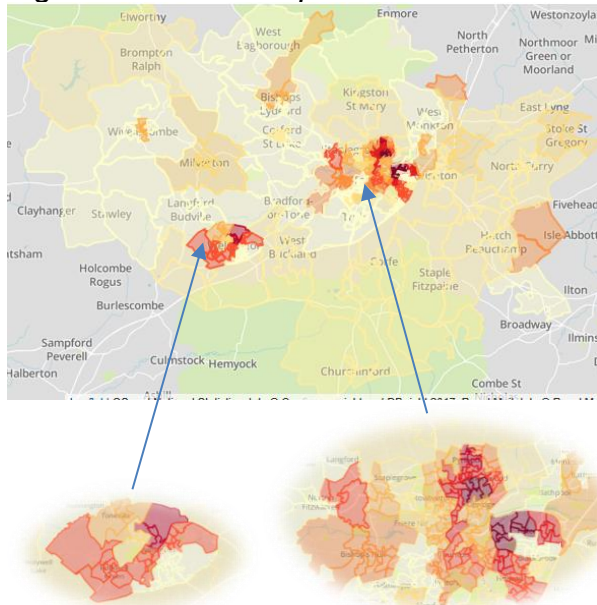
- 5.6. Notwithstanding these important points, there is no doubt that the majority of households in this area experiencing income, employment, health and education deprivation and social isolation risks are concentrated in the localities of Lyngford and Priorswood to the north of Taunton, in Halcon to the east of Taunton, as well as to a lesser extent in neighbourhoods in the north and south-west of Wellington. The



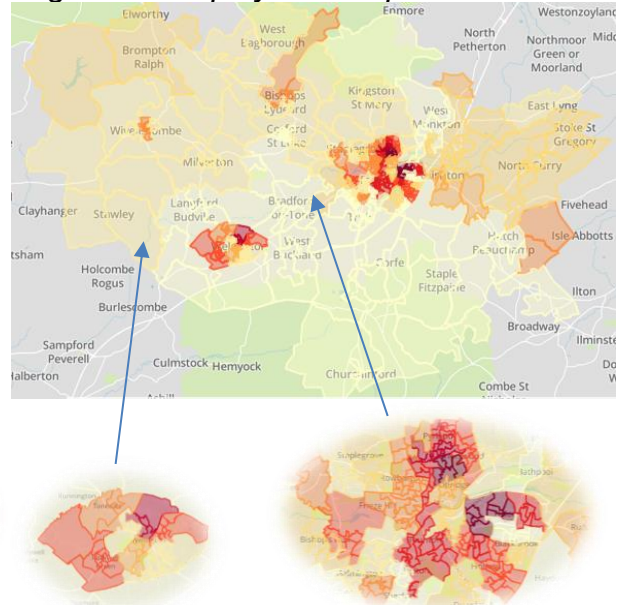
## APPENDIX 2: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

percentage of under 5s reaching the expected level school readiness is much lower than the Somerset average in some of these urban neighbourhoods. The rate of Adult Social Care interventions is high, and in the Halcon ward in Taunton especially, income deprivation affecting children is significant.

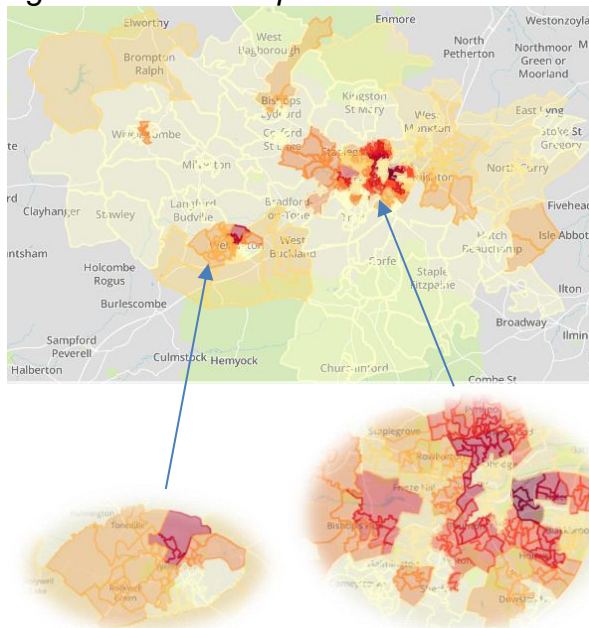
**Fig. 5.5a: Income deprivation**



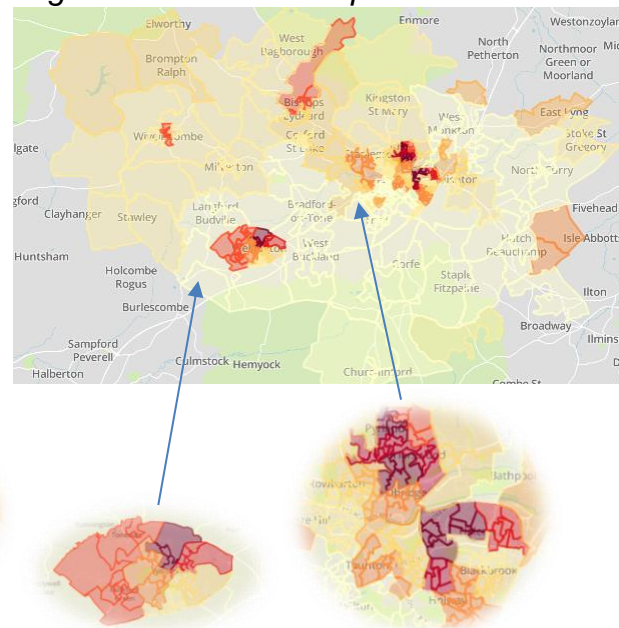
**Fig. 5.5b: Employment deprivation**



**Fig. 5.5c: Health deprivation**



**Fig. 5.5d: Education deprivation**



**Key to map shading:**

Low Medium High

*(Note that green shading represents Exmoor National Park and the Quantock and Blackdown AONB areas)*

5.7. A significant number of consultation respondents using Wellington library noted that the library played a significant role in reducing social isolation and supporting vulnerable people. Stakeholders noted that use of the food bank and Citizen's Advice

Bureau in Wellington was increasing and provided first-hand evidence of the value of the library to people on lower incomes.

*"[Wellington Library] is valuable in terms of getting my child to learn to socialise with other children and starting to look at books. And I've made some friends too. But the main bonus is that it is free. I couldn't afford what it would cost in a commercial play group."*

Single parent on benefits interviewed at Baby Boogie  
(interviewed by Friends of Wellington Library)

*"I can't afford the Gazette, and even the Welly Weekly is a luxury some weeks, so it is good to be able to come in and keep in touch with what's going on."*

5.8. Respondents using Priorswood library also highlighted the low income and employment levels in the local area as being key factors in the need for local library services, including access to the internet for unemployed people. Well-evidenced consultation responses were received from community organisations and representatives for the Priorswood area of Taunton, highlighting the significant levels of need. Responses explained how the library service supports universal credit claimants, the significant number of people with dementia, mental health and learning disabilities in the area, and pupils from nearby Selworthy special school.

*"Lyngford Park Surgery, which is centrally located for both Lyngford and Pyrland/Rowbarton has:*

- *The 3<sup>rd</sup> highest prevalence of patients with mental health diagnoses*
- *The 2<sup>nd</sup> highest prevalence of patients with dementia*
- *The 5<sup>th</sup> highest prevalence of patients with learning disabilities.*

Response from Trustees of North Taunton Partnership

*"For us, being able to access Priorswood library has huge benefits. It supports our Lower School in the early teaching of phonics and reading. It also allows them to access the community and put into practice the skills such as stranger danger ... For our Sixth Form, the library provides opportunities for work experience, helping to develop the skills for future employment."*

Selworthy Special School

5.9. As noted in paragraph 5.6, statistical social isolation risk is highest in the most deprived neighbourhoods of Taunton and Wellington, although loneliness and social isolation were also noted as important local needs being met effectively by Wiveliscombe library. Nearly all rural parts of the area have very low social isolation risks. Digital exclusion is more widely spread across the area, with the highest risks being concentrated in the deprived neighbourhoods in the north of Taunton. There



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are also significant levels of risk in other deprived parts of Taunton and Wellington, rural areas around Bishops Lydeard, to the east of Taunton and in the sparsely populated districts to the north of Wiveliscombe.

Fig. 5.7a: Social isolation

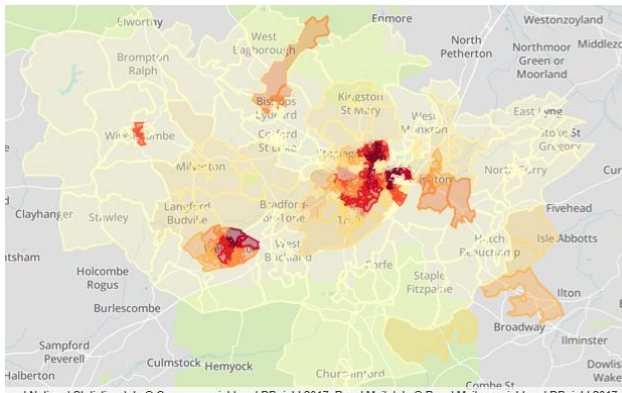
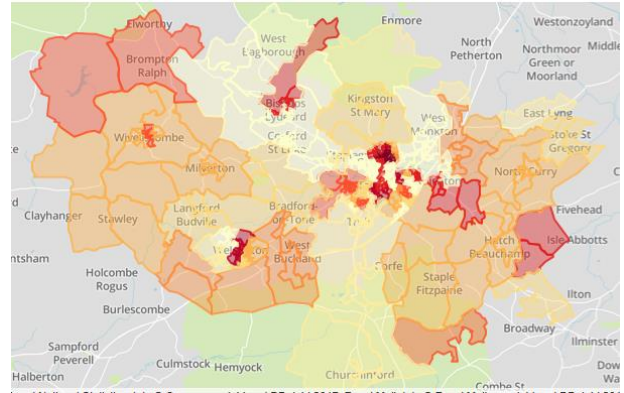


Fig. 5.7b: Digital exclusion



### Key to map shading:

Low Medium High

(Note that green shading represents Exmoor National Park and the Quantock and Blackdown AONB areas)

### Current Library Usage

5.10. There are currently five libraries in the area and levels of library usage vary significantly. Usage of Taunton library is very high across all categories; Taunton is one of the busiest libraries in the whole south west region, and its catchment extends across the whole of area 2 and beyond into a number of surrounding areas. Because of Taunton Library's very large catchment, usage rates (per head of catchment population) are lower than usage rates for Wellington and Wiveliscombe, which are both well-used libraries for the size of the catchment populations. Rates of computer use, expressed by hours of usage, are relatively low in Wiveliscombe library per head of catchment population, as are rates of event participation in Wellington library.

5.11. Consultation respondents using Wiveliscombe library, including several local stakeholder groups, noted that Wiveliscombe was very well used by the local population; the consultation exercise highlighted the use of Wiveliscombe as a key community 'hub' venue providing valuable opportunities for social interaction. This aspect of usage is not evident from the event statistics, and so is particularly notable.

5.12. Priorswood library has the highest level of usage of the three sub-urban libraries in Somerset <sup>1</sup> across all categories of usage. Usage of the People's Network and event participation are particularly high for a library of this size (rates of usage within the catchment are considered to be skewed in this densely populated, urban area and so are difficult to compare). Usage of Bishops Lydeard library is very low across all categories.

<sup>1</sup> Sunningdale library in Yeovil and Highbridge library in the Highbridge/Burnham-on-Sea conurbation are the other two sub-urban libraries compared here.

Table 5.8: Selected library usage measures (2017/18 financial year)

Library	Active borrowers in the year	People's Network User hours	Event participation in the year	Footfall in the year	Current opening hours per week	Footfall per hour of opening	Total library catchment population
Bishops Lydeard	238	44	200	3,267	11	6	4,643
Priorswood	889	1,153	2,192	14,734	29	10	21,704
Taunton	14,125	30,039	10,141	280,211	48	113	174,866
Wellington	2,851	2,445	1,231	67,019	37	35	27,173
Wiveliscombe	696	419	436	24,880	18	27	5,806

### **Summary of key points: Taunton, Wellington and surrounding area:**

- Populations are very high relative to other areas of Somerset and are concentrated in and around the Taunton and Wellington areas, which are projected to have the most significant level of population growth. Relatively fewer people live in the catchments and built-up areas surrounding Wiveliscombe and Bishops Lydeard library, although populations in these settlements are also likely to increase over the next 10 years.
- Very high levels of deprivation across multiple indices exist in the Halcon and Priorswood areas of Taunton, as well as to a lesser extent in one neighbourhood in the north of Wellington, and people living in these areas are also more likely to experience loneliness. The public consultation exercise highlighted some evidence of need related to income and employment deprivation in Wiveliscombe. Consultation responses relating to Priorswood and Wellington libraries contained strong evidence that these libraries meet high levels of local need across a range of criteria, including a range of significant health and well-being needs in Priorswood.
- The rural parts of the catchment, including Bishops Lydeard, have lower levels of need and include some of the wealthiest communities in Somerset, with many areas least likely to experience social isolation. Digital exclusion risks are more widespread, but again digital exclusion is most likely to be experienced by those living in the more deprived urban areas, with further pockets of risk in some of the more sparsely populated rural districts.
- Usage is very variable, with Taunton library having the highest levels of use in Somerset, and Bishops Lydeard amongst the lowest. Usage of Wiveliscombe, Wellington and Priorswood libraries is high; Wiveliscombe in particular is well-used for borrowing, considering the size of the catchment population, and Priorswood is very well-used for events and activities, and for public computer access.

## 6. Area 3: Bridgwater, Burnham-on-Sea and Surrounding Area

6.1. The map below shows the boundary of this area. Area 3 includes much of the Sedgemoor District Council area, from the North Somerset border down the M5 corridor to the Quantock Hills and the boundary with Area 2. It also includes the eastern part of the West Somerset District Council area. The area is focused along the A38/M5 corridor but extends beyond to the west of the River Parrett, and eastwards covering the western part of the Polden Hills and parts of the Somerset levels.



### Population, Growth and Demography

6.2. This area has the second highest population of the 9 areas (total pop. 102,300), largely because of the major towns of Bridgwater (pop. 41,276, the main built up area) and Burnham-on-Sea/Highbridge (pop. 23,325). The population profile of the area is set out in the table below; the age distribution is broadly in line with Somerset as a whole.

Age range	Population	% of population in age range
<b>All ages</b>	102,300	100%
<b>Under 5</b>	6,088	6%
<b>5-11</b>	8,031	8%
<b>12-17</b>	6,902	7%
<b>18-64</b>	58,750	57%
<b>65+</b>	22,529	22%

6.3. The majority of the population is located in the main towns and villages along the A38/M5 corridor and the coast. The 'rural fringe' area around Bridgwater is relatively

densely populated; the built-up areas of North Petherton (*pop. 3,142*)<sup>2</sup>, Woolavington (*pop. 2,115*), Cannington (*pop. 2,002*), Puriton (*pop. 1,968*) and Westonzoyland (*pop. 1,686*) are significant settlements within 5 miles of Bridgwater centre; the villages of Cossington, Pawlett and Chedzoy all lie within a similar distance and account for a further combined (2011 census) population of 1,860. The built-up area of Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge extends northwards along the coast and includes Berrow and Brean. A number of other larger villages - Huntspill and West Huntspill (*pop. 1,133 & 782 respectively*), Brent Knoll (*pop. 1,271*) and Lympsham (*pop. 681*) all lie within a relatively short distance of Burnham-on-Sea. Other sizable communities lying further afield in the area include Nether Stowey (*pop. 1,373*), Stogursey (*pop. 838*) and Comwich (*pop. 693*) to the west, and Mark (*pop. 741*), East Brent (*pop. 628*), Chilton Polden (*pop. 698*) and Middlezoy (*pop. 725*) on the boundary of the area to the east. The rural areas in the Quantock Hills and along the coastal strip to the west of the River Parrett estuary are more sparsely populated, as are the lower lying parts of the Somerset levels.

6.4. Bridgwater is the designated principle settlement in the current local plan for the area, the built-up area of Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge is (jointly) designated as a town and of similar importance to Bridgwater in the area's settlement hierarchy. North Petherton is the only other built-up area designated as a 'tier 1' settlement with identified scope for further growth. All these communities are designated for significant housing growth, estimated at:

- Between 2,500 and 3,300 dwellings over the next 10 years for Bridgwater - an increase over the 2011 census population of up to 20%. Over and above this, the large temporary workforce associated with the Hinkley Point C construction project will largely be based at a campus site in Bridgwater.
- Between 600 and 800 dwellings over the next 10 years for Burnham-on-Sea and between 400 and 1,400 dwellings for Highbridge<sup>3</sup>; a combined population increase of up to 20% over the 2011 census population for this built-up area, with much of the growth likely to occur at the southern end of the built-up area around Highbridge.
- Between 50 and 300 dwellings for North Petherton (the North Petherton area has already seen very significant housing growth since 2011 with new estates on the southern fringe of Bridgwater).

6.5. The extent of housing development in other (lower tier) settlements is likely to be lower; smaller scale development is planned for Nether Stowey and other 'tier 2' settlements (Woolavington, Puriton and Cannington) in the area. Concerns about housing and population growth were raised most frequently by consultation respondents who used or represented Highbridge library and estimates of growth have been revised to reflect insights obtained in the consultation exercise for this area. Stakeholder groups responding in respect of North Petherton and Nether Stowey libraries also expressed some concern over the impact of housing and population growth in these communities.

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<sup>2</sup> The North Petherton area has seen significant development since 2011. The total population living within 2 miles of North Petherton Library is estimated at 7,065, using mid-2016 statistical estimates; a proportion of this population lives in the southern part of the nearby built-up area of Bridgwater.

<sup>3</sup> Our consideration of housing and population growth was extended to include a more in-depth look at planned developments within Highbridge library's catchment area, to address concerns expressed in the consultation. This investigation identified a potential population growth of up to 2,840 to the year 2028.



Deprivation and Social Need

6.6. Levels of deprivation vary significantly within the area. Some of the rural areas are relatively wealthy (particularly those to the immediate west of Bridgwater and in the north-eastern part of the area) as are some parts of the major towns. Deprivation is concentrated in the urban areas of Bridgwater and Highbridge; Bridgwater has 2 neighbourhoods in the 10% most deprived nationally and a number of other neighbourhoods in the 20% most deprived. Highbridge has 1 neighbourhood in the 10% most deprived nationally, and a further neighbourhood in the 20% most deprived. Deprivation is variable in other parts of Bridgwater and Burnham-on-Sea; both urban areas have a mixture of wealthier and less wealthy neighbourhoods.

Fig. 6.6a: Income deprivation

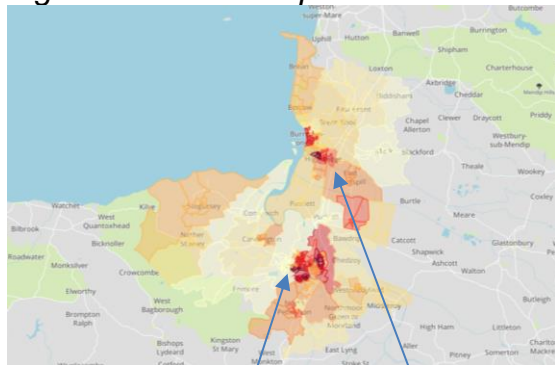


Fig. 6.6b: Employment deprivation

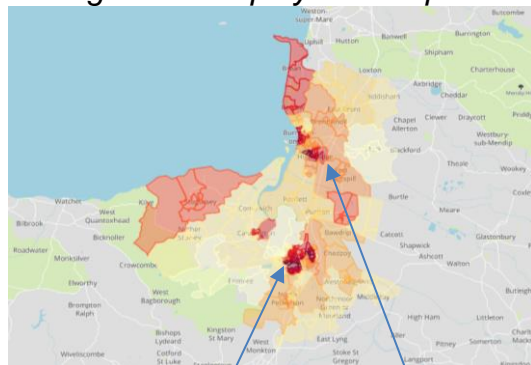


Fig. 6.6c: Health deprivation

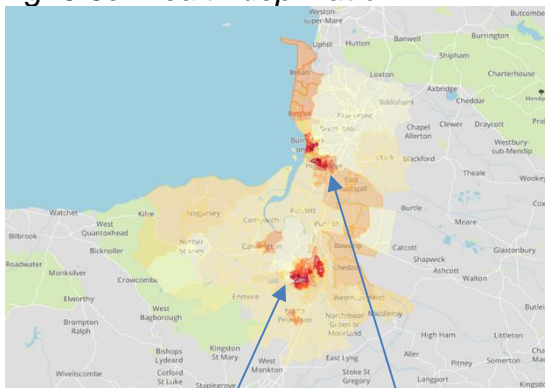
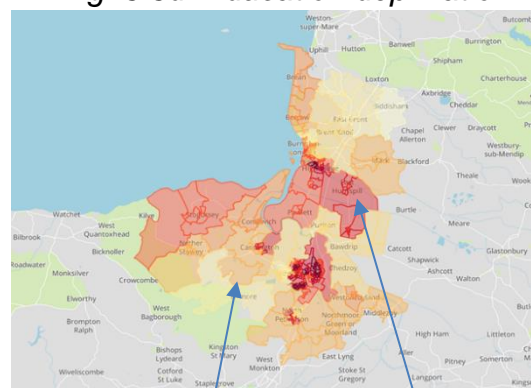


Fig. 6.6d: Education deprivation



Key to map shading:

Low Medium High

(Note that green shading represents Exmoor National Park, and the Quantock and Mendip Hills AONB areas)

6.7. Statistically North Petherton and Nether Stowey library catchments have much lower levels of deprivation. However, evidence gathered by the review suggests that the rural area to the north of Nether Stowey, and parts of North Petherton experience more income and employment deprivation than the average for Somerset. Some consultation respondents using or representing North Petherton library noted that a number of residents on lower incomes (including migrant workers, unemployed people and students) were dependent on public internet access at the library and had difficulty affording transport.

6.8. Notwithstanding these important points, there is no doubt that most households in this area experiencing income, employment, health and education deprivation and social isolation risks are concentrated in the localities of Sydenham and Westover in Bridgwater and in Highbridge. Health deprivation is also pronounced in parts of Burnham-on-Sea, which has a high population of elderly disabled people and very high rates of Adult Social Care intervention. Other parts of Bridgwater and the rural area around Stogursey experience lower levels of deprivation but are more deprived than the Somerset average for most indicators. The percentage of under 5s reaching the expected level school readiness is lower than the Somerset average in the more deprived neighbourhoods of Bridgwater, and income deprivation affecting children is significant in these areas and in Highbridge. Consultation feedback was relatively low in Bridgwater, Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge, reflecting the fact that no changes were proposed for the libraries in Bridgwater and Burnham, and that usage of Highbridge library is very low. However, many of the respondents expressing concern about the proposals for Highbridge library noted deprivation in the area as a significant factor in their opposition to proposals.

*“There are limited employment opportunities in Highbridge ... the town lost its major employers many years ago, and while these have to some extent been replaced by the businesses on the Isleport and Walrow industrial estates, there have recently been major closures on these sites ... even the Post Office has closed in this consultation period.”*

Fig. 6.9a: Social isolation

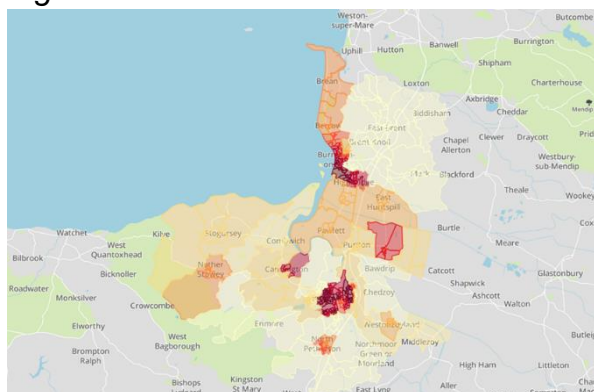
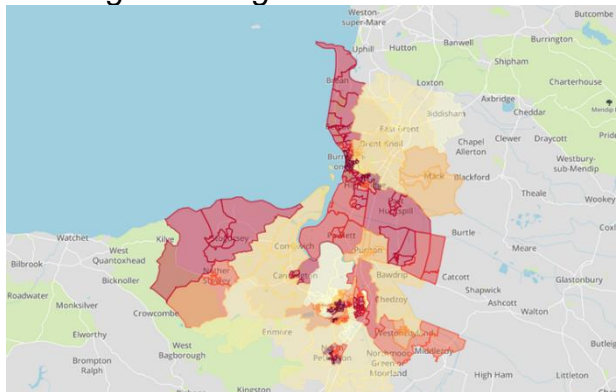


Fig. 6.9b: Digital exclusion



Key to map shading:

Low Medium High

(Note that green shading represents Exmoor National Park, and the Quantock and Mendip Hills AONB areas)



6.9. As noted in paragraph 6.8, statistical social isolation risk is highest in the most deprived neighbourhoods of Bridgwater and Highbridge, with a further significant pocket of social isolation risk around Cannington. Feedback from residents and stakeholder groups in Nether Stowey highlighted the role this library plays in preventing social isolation.

*“The area has a higher than average proportion of elderly people, many living alone ... the library serves a vital social role. For many, a chat with the librarian and other users may be one of the few interactions they have in a week. The number of and range of activities and events provided at Nether Stowey library ... is very extensive. Many of these activities are of particular relevance to the more vulnerable groups in the community.”*

Nether Stowey Parish Council

6.10. Figure 6.9 shows that nearly all rural parts of the area have lower than average social isolation risks, apart from the area around Woolavington which has a moderate risk. Consultation respondents in North Petherton noted that broadband connectivity was poor in some parts of the catchment, and digital exclusion risks are notably high in North Petherton as well as in the deprived parts of Bridgwater and Highbridge, Burnham-on-Sea and the rural areas around Stogursey, East Huntspill and Berrow.

#### Current Library Usage

6.11. There are currently five libraries in the area and levels of library usage vary significantly. Usage of Bridgwater library is high across all categories; Bridgwater serves a large and populous catchment extending across the southern part of Area 3 and beyond. Burnham-on-Sea library is also well-used; both libraries are notable for the extent of People’s Network usage, which, across both of the major libraries, is nearly 30 times that of the other 3 libraries in Area 3 combined. Other rates of usage (active borrowers and event participation per head of catchment population) for these two larger libraries are in line with the average for Somerset libraries.

Table 6.11: Selected library usage measures (2017/18 financial year)

Library	Active borrowers in the year	People's Network User hours	Event participation in the year	Footfall in the year	Current opening hours per week	Footfall per hour of opening	Total library catchment population
Bridgwater	5,820	15,141	5,600	110,664	41	52	75,845
Burnham	3,046	6,169	2,708	57,333	34	32	37,261
Highbridge	262	305	132	3,502	10	7	6,964
Nether Stowey	391	232	2,180	7,862	20	8	4,780
North Petherton	471	214	125	7,379	21	7	8,168

6.12. Although levels of usage for Nether Stowey library are much lower than other libraries for some measures, Nether Stowey is a small community with a small urban catchment, and the library is very well used relative to the size of the catchment

population. Consultation respondents using Nether Stowey library highlighted this point, and especially the very high participation in events, which is the highest of any library in Somerset per head of the catchment population; a tribute to the very active Friends group supporting this library.

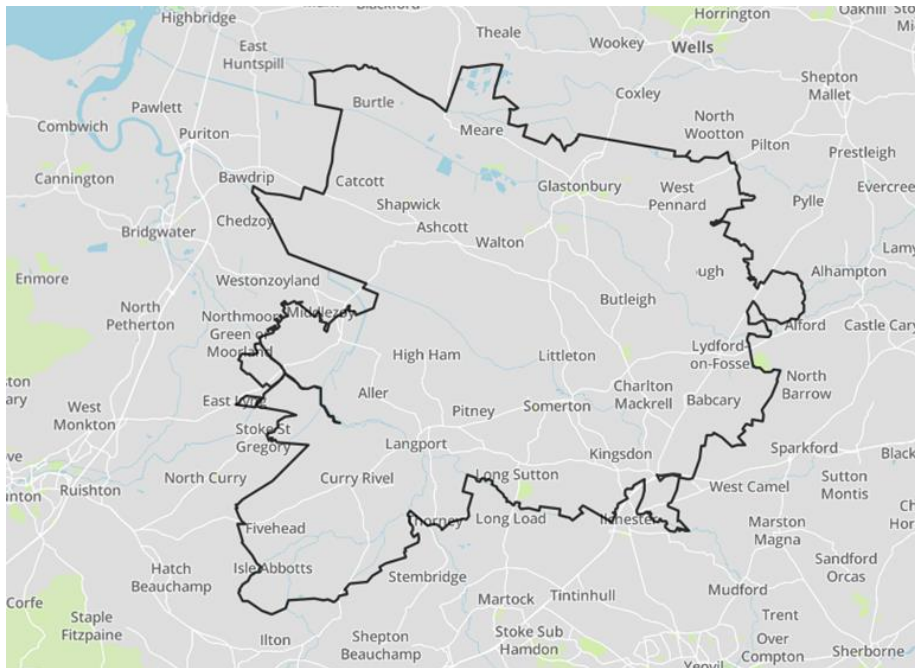
6.13. North Petherton library also has lower levels of usage but a much higher catchment population than Nether Stowey; rates of usage per catchment population are low. Highbridge library has the lowest number of active borrowers and, as with North Petherton, rates usage per head of catchment population are low.

**Summary of key points: Bridgwater, Burnham and surrounding area:**

- Populations are high relative to other areas of Somerset and are concentrated in and around the Bridgwater and Burnham/Highbridge areas (including North Petherton), which are projected to have the most significant level of population growth. Relatively fewer people live in the catchment and built-up area surrounding Nether Stowey library.
- Very high levels of deprivation across multiple indices exist in Highbridge and the Sydenham and Westover/Hamp parts of Bridgwater, and to a lesser extent in other parts of Bridgwater and Burnham-on-Sea, and people living in these areas are also likely to experience loneliness and digital exclusion. The public consultation exercise highlighted some evidence of need related to income deprivation and social isolation in North Petherton. Consultation responses relating to Highbridge emphasised the extent of deprivation in this community.
- Burnham-on-Sea has a large population of elderly and disabled people, with high risks of digital exclusion.
- Highbridge and the more deprived parts of Bridgwater have high levels of income deprivation affecting children, and early years attainment levels are lower than average in many parts of Bridgwater.
- The rural parts of the catchment, including Nether Stowey, generally have lower levels of need with the exception of the area around Stogursey, which has higher levels of employment and health deprivation, and a higher digital exclusion risk, than other parts of Somerset. There is a notable pocket of social isolation risk around Cannington.
- Library usage is very variable. Bridgwater and Burnham-on-Sea libraries account for the vast majority of library usage in the area. Nether Stowey library is well-used for the size of the catchment. Highbridge and North Petherton libraries have lower levels of usage across all categories, with usage rates low relative to the size of library catchments.

## 7. Area 4: Central Somerset

7.1. The map below shows the boundary of this area. Area 4 includes parts of Sedgemoor, South Somerset and Mendip District Council areas and covers the majority of the Somerset levels.



### Population, Growth and Demography

7.2. This area has the fifth highest population of the 9 areas (total pop. 51,300), with the population mainly concentrated in the major towns of Glastonbury (*pop.* 8,471) and Street (*pop.* 12,911), and to a lesser extent Langport (*pop.* 3,063) and Somerton (*pop.* 4,339). The population profile of the area is set out in the table below; the age distribution is broadly in line with Somerset as a whole.

Age range	Population	% of population in age range
<b>All ages</b>	51,906	100%
<b>Under 5</b>	2,438	5%
<b>5-11</b>	3,823	7%
<b>12-17</b>	4,068	8%
<b>18-64</b>	28,686	55%
<b>65+</b>	12,891	25%

7.3. Nearly 60% of the population of the area live within 2 miles of the centre of one of these major towns, with the remaining 40% distributed across a large number of villages. Rural populations are concentrated on the higher ground. The villages of Chilton Polden, Edington, Catcott, Shapwick and Ashcott in the western part of the Polden Hills had a combined population of 3,013 at the time of the 2011 census; to the south west of the area a similar cluster of villages around Curry Rivel had a combined population of 2,832 in 2011. Other sizable communities include Charlton Adam/Charlton Mackrell (*pop.* 1,073) and Keinton Mandeville (*pop.* 1,068) to the east of Somerton, Oxenpill (*pop.* 828) and West Pennard (*pop.* 670) to the north and east



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of Glastonbury, Butleigh (pop. 712) to the south of Street and Othery (pop. 642) in the west of the area.

7.4. Glastonbury, Street, Somerton and Langport are all classified as principal (tier 1) settlements in the relevant planning authority settlement hierarchy. There are no other tier 1 settlements in the area. All these communities are designated for significant housing growth, estimated at:

- Between 400 and 1,300 dwellings over the next 10 years for Street, and between 500 and 800 dwellings over the next 10 years for Glastonbury - an increase over the 2011 census populations of around 20% for both communities.
- Between 400 and 500 dwellings for Somerton, a population increase of up to 25% over the 2011 census population for this built up area. Somerton has a relatively significant level of housing development growth underway.
- Between 300 and 400 dwellings for Langport/Huish Episcopi, a population increase of up to 28% over the 2011 census population for this built up area.

Concerns over housing and population growth featured heavily in consultation responses expressing opposition to the potential closure of Somerton library, far less so in response from the other main communities.

### Deprivation and Social Need

7.5. Levels of deprivation vary within the area, as shown in the maps below.

Fig. 7.5a: Income deprivation

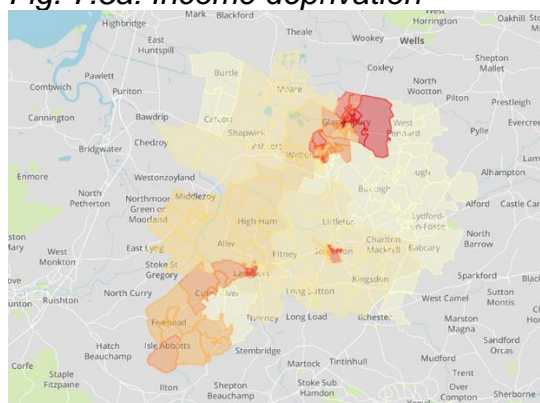


Fig. 7.5b: Employment deprivation

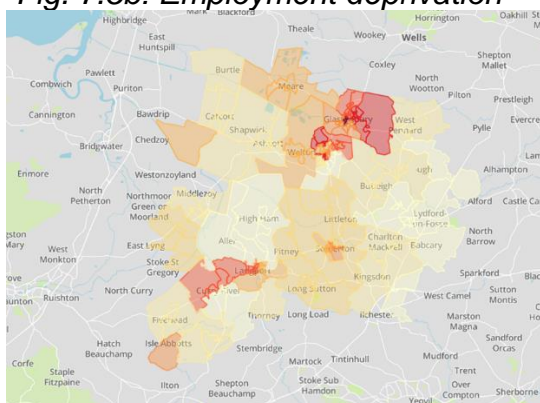


Fig. 7.5c: Health deprivation

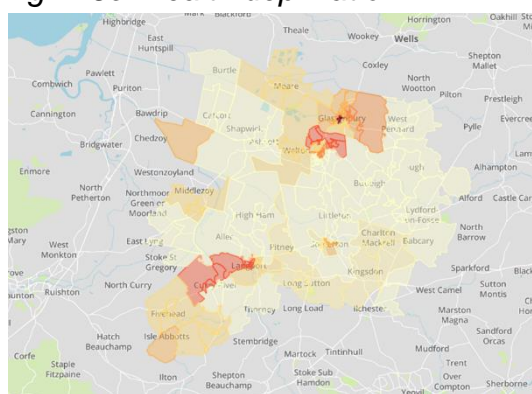
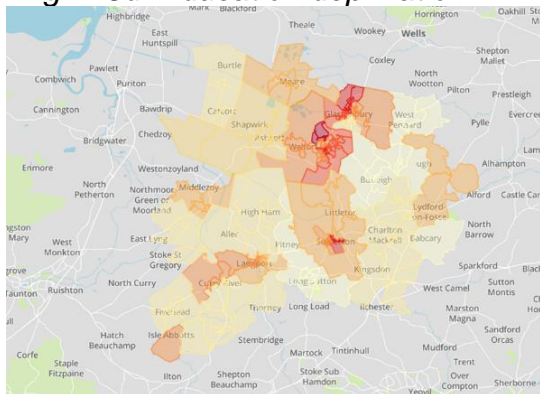


Fig. 7.5d: Education deprivation



Key to map shading:

Low Medium High

7.6. The only area with significant deprivation over multiple indices is one neighbourhood in Glastonbury, which is within the 10% most deprived nationally. There are no other areas in the top 20% most deprived; the rural area to the west of Langport and the northern part of Street are in the 30% most deprived nationally, and further neighbourhoods in Glastonbury have multiple deprivation indices in the top 40% nationally. Glastonbury, and to a lesser extent Street and Langport, have some evidence of income and employment deprivation; Somerton, Glastonbury and Street have areas of higher education deprivation, and Glastonbury has a pronounced pocket of Health deprivation. Many rural parts of the area are less deprived than the national and Somerset average on most indices, particularly the Somerset levels to the north of Langport and east of Street, and the villages to the north and east of Somerton.

7.7. There was less evidence of need emerging in the consultation responses from Central Somerset than in some other areas. Although the response levels were very large for Street and Somerton, deprivation did not emerge as a significant theme running through consultation responses from these communities compared to (for example) responses from Martock and Cheddar. However, the response from young people in Street was notable - both for the involvement of local primary schools in the drop-in event and the response from the local youth council.

7.8. The main exception to this general rule were responses from users of Somerton library noting the use of the library by older people for social purposes, helping to address social isolation and loneliness. This feedback echoes statistical evidence of social isolation in the eastern part of Somerton, and in the north of Street; both of these areas also have high rates of Adult Social Care intervention. As with many areas, digital exclusion risks are more widespread, with significant pockets of digital exclusion risk in each of the main towns, as well as rural areas with higher risk of digital exclusion to the north and east of Glastonbury and to the west of Langport.

Fig. 7.8a: Social isolation

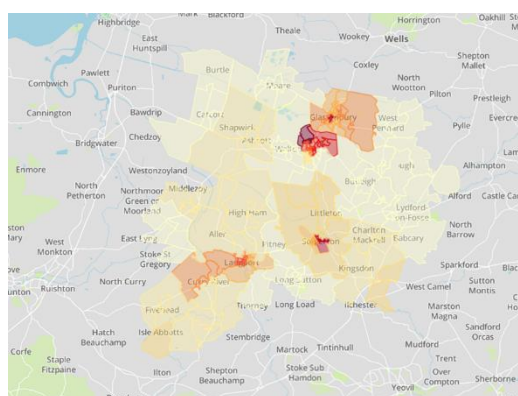
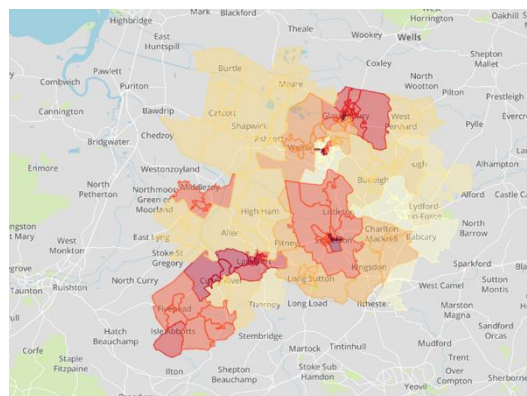


Fig. 7.8b: Digital exclusion



Key to map shading:

Low Medium High

Current Library Usage

7.9. Table 7.9 overleaf shows that all 4 libraries in the area are fairly well-used.

Table 7.9: Selected library usage measures (2017/18 financial year)

Library	Active borrowers in the year	People's Network User hours	Event participation in the year	Footfall in the year	Current opening hours per week	Footfall per hour of opening	Total library catchment population
Glastonbury	2,131	10,624	2,291	96,674	46	40	31,239
Langport	1,644	1,346	3,187	35,069	32	21	21,450
Somerton	1,245	1,044	2,639	38,203	29	26	19,012
Street	2,495	6,013	1,639	58,804	34	33	41,614

7.10. Glastonbury library has very high usage of public computer access - the highest per head of catchment population of all Somerset libraries by some distance. All three libraries have fairly high levels of event participation, Langport and Somerton have high rates of event participation relative to the size of catchment populations. Street has the highest number of active borrowers and is a busy library, with high footfall. The catchment population for Street is influenced by the draw of Clarks' village, meaning that many users from further afield use Street library in combination with other libraries in the area. Rates of usage per head of catchment population in Street could therefore be misleading; footfall in Glastonbury library is influenced by the fact that this library is a hub for other services; although the majority of footfall relates to library usage. Consultation responses in both Street and Somerton emphasised how well-used and busy these libraries were.

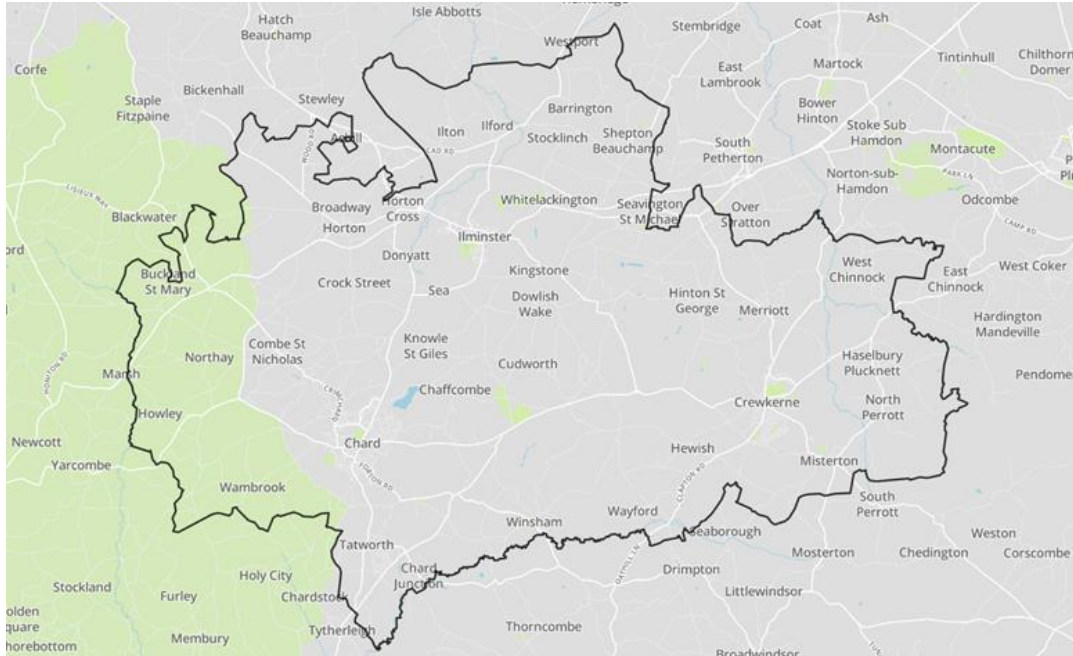


**Summary of key points: Central Somerset:**

- Populations are concentrated in the Street / Glastonbury area and to a lesser extent in the towns of Somerton and Langport; rural population density is higher in the areas of higher ground to the south-west of Langport, the Polden Hills near Street and to the south of Street and east of Somerton. All of the major towns are experiencing housing and population growth, particularly Somerton where this was noted as a concern in the consultation.
- The area is generally less deprived than some other parts of Somerset, with Glastonbury having the only pocket of significant deprivation (especially income, employment and health deprivation) across multiple indices.
- Somerton and Street have areas with a high risk of social isolation, with high rates of Adult Social Care interventions in two small pockets. Significant pockets of digital exclusion risk exist in each of the main towns, as well to the north and east of Glastonbury and to the west of Langport. Education deprivation is highest in Street, Glastonbury and Somerton.
- Generally, there was less evidence of need emerging in the consultation than for other areas in Somerset. The rural parts of the catchment, generally have lower levels of need with the exception of the area to the west of Langport.
- Library usage is fairly high for all four libraries in the area. Glastonbury library has the highest level of usage overall, with very high levels of public computer access usage relative to the population of the catchment. Street has the highest number of active borrowers and is a busy, well-used library. Event participation is high across all four libraries; with Langport and Somerton particularly well-used for events, relative to the smaller populations in these communities.

## 8. Area 5: Chard, Ilminster, Crewkerne and Surrounding Area

8.1. The map below shows the boundary of this area. Area 5 includes the western part of South Somerset District, from the Devon border and the Blackdown Hills in the west to the rural catchment of Crewkerne in the east and encompassing the rural catchment of Ilminster to the north, which extends up to the Somerset levels north of Ilton.



### Population, Growth and Demography

8.2. This area has the fourth lowest population of the 9 areas (total pop. 43,853), with the population mainly concentrated in the towns of Chard (*pop. 13,074*), Crewkerne (*pop. 7,826*), and Ilminster (*pop. 5,808*). The population profile of the area is set out in the table below; the age distribution largely in line with Somerset as a whole, although there is a higher proportion of people aged over 65, with a correspondingly lower proportion of people aged 18-64.

Age range	Population	% of population in age range
<b>All ages</b>	43,853	100%
<b>Under 5</b>	2,261	5%
<b>5-11</b>	3,308	8%
<b>12-17</b>	2,732	6%
<b>18-64</b>	23,715	54%
<b>65+</b>	11,837	27%

8.3. Nearly 70% of the population of the area live within 2 miles of the centre of one of these 3 major towns. Other sizable communities include Broadway/Horton near Ilminster (*pop. 1,391*), Tatworth (*pop. 2,259*) and Combe St. Nicholas (*pop. 1,029*) near Chard, and Merriott (*pop. 1,979*) to the north of Crewkerne. A number of other villages (Ilton, Barrington and Shepton Beauchamp to the north of Ilminster, Winsham on the Dorset border between Chard and Crewkerne, and Hinton St. George,

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Haselbury Plucknett and West Chinnock in the rural catchment of Crewkerne) had populations over 400 at the time of the 2011 census.

8.4. The three major settlements are all designated 'tier 1' settlements in the planning authority settlement hierarchy, and are therefore all likely to see significant housing and population growth for the foreseeable future, estimated at:

- Between 600 and 1,200 dwellings over the next 10 years for Chard, an increase over the 2011 census populations of around 20%.
- Between 500 and 1000 dwellings for Crewkerne, a population increase of up to 27% over the 2011 census population for this built-up area.
- Between 300 and 500 dwellings for Ilminster, a population increase of up to 19% over the 2011 census population for this built-up area.

Concerns over housing and population growth featured heavily in consultation responses expressing opposition to the potential closure of Ilminster library. Ilminster is experiencing significant housing development at the current time, with potential expansion of school provision in the town.

### Deprivation and Social Need

8.5. Levels of deprivation vary significantly within the area. Chard has the only significant pocket of deprivation across multiple indices, with one neighbourhood to the east of the town centre in the 20% most deprived nationally.

Fig. 8.5a: Income deprivation

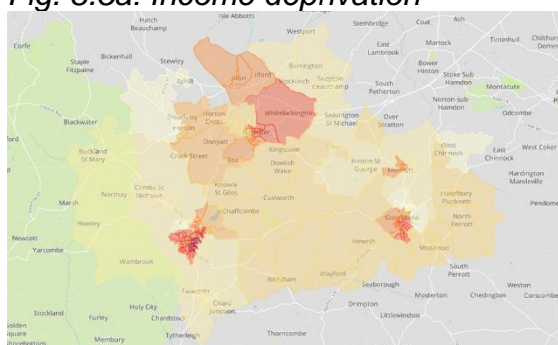


Fig. 8.5b: Employment deprivation

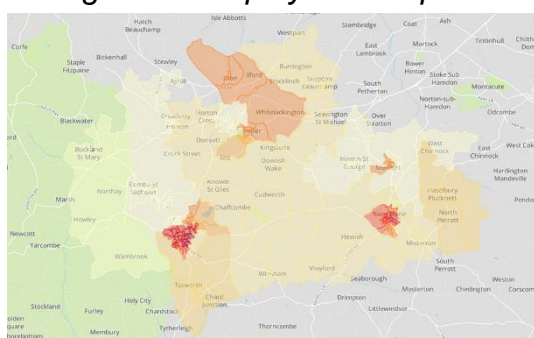


Fig. 8.5c: Health deprivation

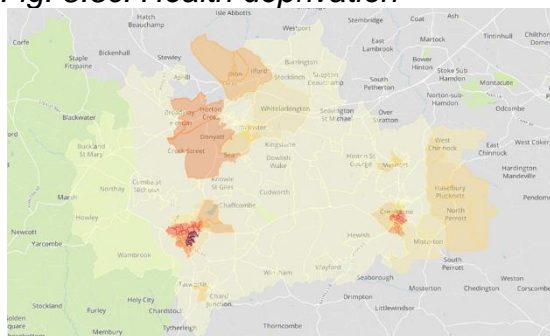
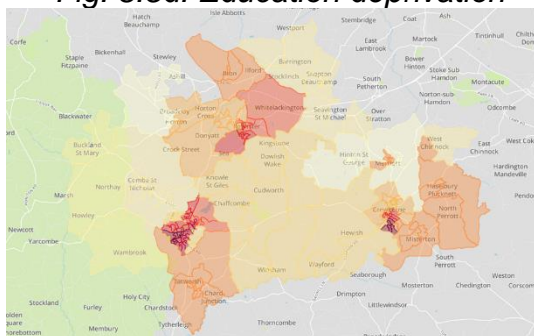


Fig. 8.5d: Education deprivation



Key to map shading:

Low Medium High

(Note that green shading represents the Blackdown AONB area)

8.6. Income and employment deprivation is concentrated in Chard, with a less pronounced pocket of employment deprivation in Crewkerne, and some evidence of income deprivation in both Crewkerne and Ilminster. Income deprivation affecting children is most pronounced in Chard (with some areas of the town in the 30% most deprived nationally on this index). Health deprivation is also pronounced in Chard, which has one neighbourhood in the top 10% most deprived for health deprivation nationally. Chard and Crewkerne each have one neighbourhood in the top 10% most deprived nationally for education deprivation.

8.7. The needs of older people and young children were highlighted by many respondents in Crewkerne, where there was a significant level of public engagement with the consultation and a large number of responses. Social isolation risks are highest in Chard, which has a large area in the top 10% of social isolation risk nationally (this area also has some of the highest levels of digital exclusion and Adult Social Care intervention in Somerset). However, Crewkerne has one area of relatively high social isolation (in the top 20% nationally), which also has a very high rate of adult social care intervention and a high digital exclusion risk (in the top 10% nationally). Crewkerne has a high proportion of elderly people, and relatively higher levels of disability. Other needs relating to social isolation were highlighted by staff.

*"I have been living alone for the last 17 years and have borrowed over 600 books mostly novels from the library. I expect a lot of elderly people rely on books to help them combat being alone. I can drive short distances, but my walking is very limited so parking in Waitrose car park gets me close to the library."*

*Crewkerne library user*

*"A safe and warm place for the big issue sellers to retreat to - most know us by name now ... we have customers who come in daily, sometimes we are the only contact they have."*

*Staff consultation response, Crewkerne*

8.8. The needs of young children and families were also highlighted in consultation responses by users of Ilminster library. Evidence from the community engagement exercise and staff consultation indicates that there is a strong need for these well-used activities that Ilminster library provides for children.

*"I think it is really important to allow the popular and long-standing children's provision to be maintained. The nearby Children's Centre has been closed, and there are few free activities in the town. Literacy and reading is a top priority."*

*Staff consultation response, Ilminster*

8.9. Fig. 8.9 overleaf shows that digital exclusion risk is relatively high across much of this area, with particularly high levels of digital exclusion risk in the rural areas to the south of Chard, around Ilminster, and in the north of the area around Ilton.



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Fig. 8.9a: Social isolation

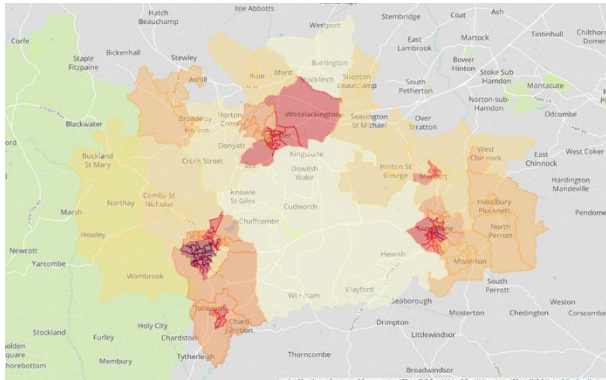
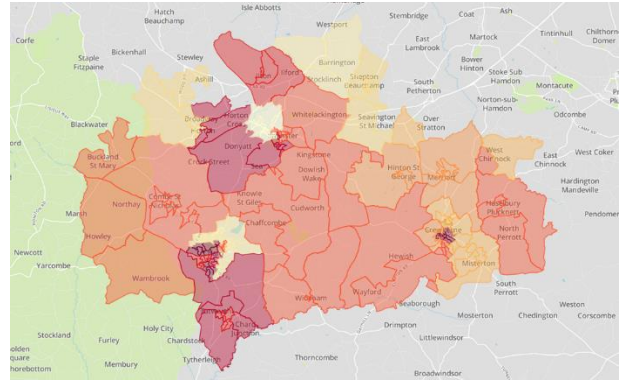


Fig. 8.9b: Digital exclusion



Key to map shading:

Low Medium High

(Note that green shading represents the Blackdown AONB area)

### Current Library Usage

8.10. Library usage is highest in Chard and Crewkerne libraries, both of which are busy, well-used libraries across most measures. Usage of Ilminster library is lower, however, Ilminster library is well-used for events and borrowing for the size of the catchment population. Usage of public internet access at Ilminster library is relatively low per head of catchment population.

Table 8.10: Selected library usage measures (2017/18 financial year)

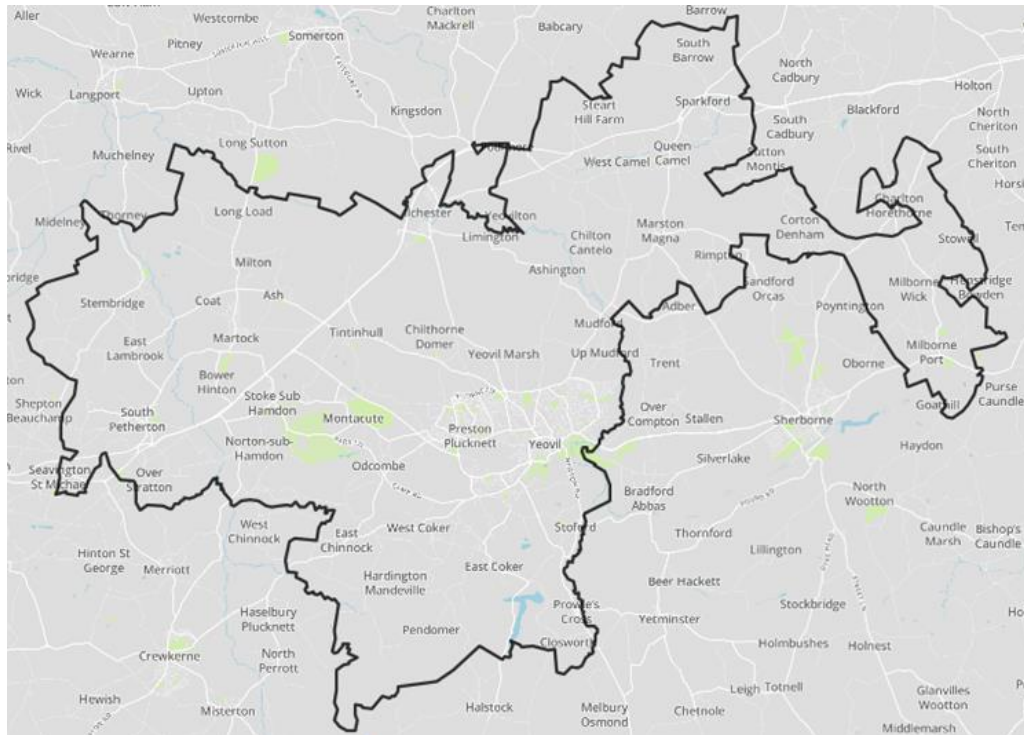
Library	Active borrowers in the year	People's Network User hours	Event participation in the year	Footfall in the year	Current opening hours per week	Footfall per hour of opening	Total library catchment population
Chard	2,556	3,916	2,305	65,245	32	40	27,289
Crewkerne	2,139	2,585	2,761	51,887	29	34	22,187
Ilminster	1,142	967	1,347	24,096	22	22	13,082

**Summary of key points: Chard, Crewkerne and Ilminster area:**

- Populations are concentrated in the main towns, all of which are experiencing housing and population growth. In Ilminster housing growth was noted as a concern in the consultation. There are some larger villages with significant populations close to Chard and Crewkerne; elsewhere the rural population is more dispersed, and the area is more sparsely populated along the Devon and Dorset borders.
- Chard has significant levels of deprivation in some neighbourhoods across all measures and has the only nationally significant levels of deprivation in the area. However, there is some evidence of income deprivation in both Crewkerne and Ilminster.
- Crewkerne has a high population of older people, with one area of high risk of social isolation and high rates of Adult Social Care interventions. Significant pockets of digital exclusion risk exist in each of the main towns, as well to the south of Chard and in the rural catchment of Ilminster. The needs of older people and other social isolation factors were highlighted in consultation responses relating to Crewkerne.
- The needs of children and families were highlighted by a number of respondents in relation to Ilminster library.
- Library usage is fairly high for Chard and Crewkerne libraries. Usage of Ilminster is lower, but Ilminster library is reasonably well-used for events and borrowing, relative to the smaller catchment population.

## 9. Area 6: Yeovil and Surrounding Area

9.1. The map below shows the boundary of this area. Area 6 includes the southern / central part of South Somerset district, focussed on the main town of Yeovil, from South Petherton in the west of the area, Ilchester and Sparkford to the north, and Milborne Port to the east. The Dorset border forms the southern boundary of the area, and the community of Sherborne (in Dorset, outside Area 6) has close links to Milborne Port and Yeovil.



### Population, Growth and Demography

9.2. This area has the third highest population of the 9 areas (total pop. 79,853), largely because of the significant population of Yeovil (*pop.* 45,784). The population profile of the area is set out in the table below; the age distribution largely in line with Somerset as a whole.

Age range	Population	% of population in age range
<b>All ages</b>	79,229	100%
<b>Under 5</b>	4,660	6%
<b>5-11</b>	6,313	8%
<b>12-17</b>	5,149	7%
<b>18-64</b>	46,089	58%
<b>65+</b>	17,018	21%

9.3. Apart from Yeovil, the settlements of Martock (*pop.* 4,522), South Petherton (*pop.* 3,064), Milborne Port (*pop.* 2,802), Stoke Sub-Hamdon (*pop.* 2,415) and Ilchester (*pop.* 2,153) are the only other settlements with populations over 2,000 (at the time of the 2011 census). The naval airbase at Yeovilton also has a relatively significant armed forces population. The rural parts of the area around Yeovil are relatively

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densely populated; the villages of Tintinhull, Chilthorne Domer, Montacute, East Chinnock, North, East and West Coker, Barwick and Odcombe all lie within a short distance of Yeovil and account for a further combined (2011 census) population of 6,272. Further away from Yeovil, the rural surrounds of Martock, South Petherton and Milborne Port are less densely populated. The villages of Kingsbury Episcopi (*pop. 641*) and Ash (*pop. 626*) are the largest settlements in the Martock / South Petherton area. Marston Magna (*pop. 523*), West Camel, Queen Camel and Sparkford (*combined pop. 1,493*), Charlton Horethorne (*pop. 591*) and Hardington Mandeville (*pop. 585*) are further away from the main centres of population but cannot be considered remote by Somerset standards.

9.4. Yeovil is the only principle / tier 1 settlement in the area under the South Somerset District Council settlement classification for planning purposes and is designated for significant growth. Housing growth estimates for Yeovil range between 2,600 and 7,400 dwellings over the next 10 years - at the upper end of this scale this could lead to a significant (35%) population increase over 2011 census levels. Ilchester, South Petherton, Martock, Stoke Sub-Hamdon and Milborne Port are all designated as tier 2 settlements and so are likely to see some housing growth, estimated as:

- Around 300 dwellings for Martock - which would represent a population growth estimated at 13% over 2011 census levels.
- Between 70 and 230 dwellings for South Petherton - a population growth estimated at 16% over 2011 census levels.
- Between 100 and 280 dwellings for Milborne Port - a population growth estimated at 21% over 2011 census levels.

Concerns about housing growth did not feature as significantly in consultation responses from these communities, compared to elsewhere in Somerset.

### Deprivation and Social Need

9.5. Levels of deprivation vary significantly within the area, which contains some of the highest and lowest levels of deprivation in Somerset.

Fig. 9.5a: Income deprivation

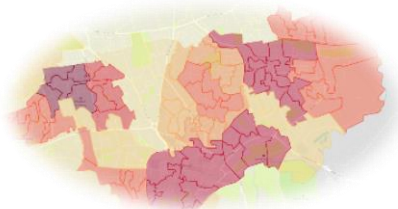
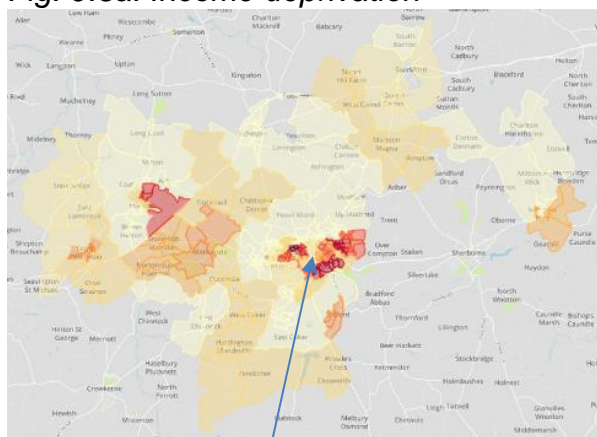


Fig. 9.5b: Employment deprivation

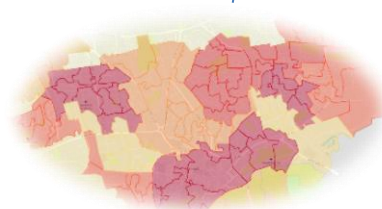
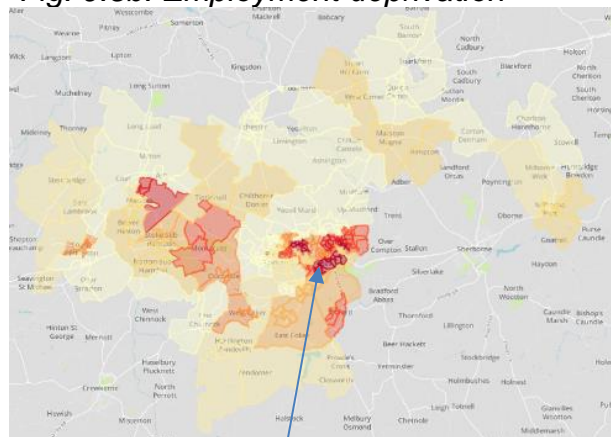




Fig. 9.5c: Health deprivation

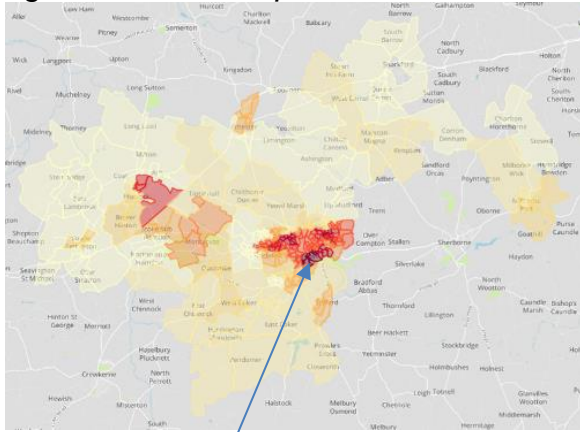
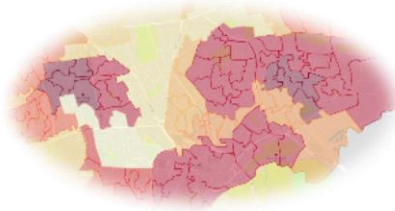
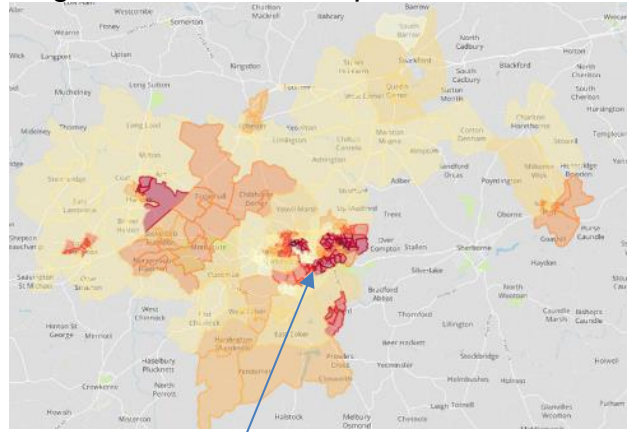


Fig. 9.5d: Education deprivation



Key to map shading:

Low Medium High

9.6. The neighbourhood of Westfield in Yeovil has the highest levels of deprivation, in the top 10% nationally for multiple deprivation, income deprivation and income deprivation affecting children, and education deprivation, and in the top 20% nationally for employment and health deprivation. Other neighbourhoods in Yeovil, including the centre of the town, the Sunningdale/Monmouth road area and Wyndham Park, also have pronounced deprivation in the top 20% nationally on most indices. Consultation response levels were very low in Yeovil, but discussions with local partners during the community engagement exercise highlighted the level of deprivation in these areas.

Fig. 9.6a: Social isolation

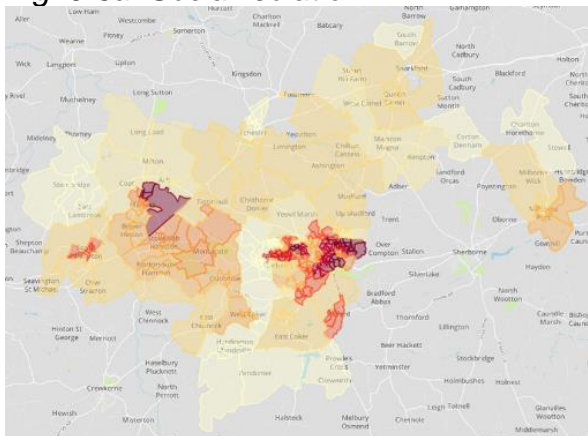
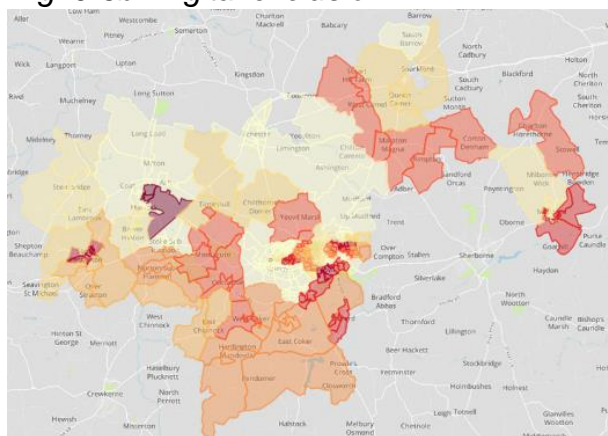


Fig. 9.6b: Digital exclusion



Key to map shading:

Low Medium High

9.7. Martock is the only other community with significant levels of deprivation; in the top 10% nationally for digital exclusion and social isolation risk, with high levels of Adult Social Care intervention, as well as more moderate income, employment, education and health deprivation. Martock Parish Council provided a great deal of evidence of need in this community, noting that the library provided an essential facility for public internet access for digitally excluded job seekers in the community.

*“Martock has relatively high levels of deprivation including unemployment and low income ... for many of our residents Martock Library is the only option available to them ... to meet the stringent requirements for Universal Credit.”*

*Martock Parish Council*

9.8. Milborne Port, Ilchester, Stoke Sub-Hamdon and South Petherton have much lower levels of deprivation on most indices. South Petherton has high rates of Adult Social Care intervention and some evidence of social isolation, digital exclusion risks, and higher levels of disability - perhaps associated with the relatively older population in this community. However, income, employment, and health deprivation indices are all around the average for Somerset. Milborne Port, Stoke Sub-Hamdon and Ilchester all exhibit lower than average deprivation on all statistical measures, other than a small pocket of moderate digital exclusion risk to the south of Milborne Port. There are no notable pockets of rural deprivation in the area.

#### Current Library Usage

9.9. Table 9.9 below shows that usage is very variable across the 5 libraries in this area:

*Table 9.9: Selected library usage measures (2017/18 financial year)*

Library	Active borrowers in the year	People's Network User hours	Event participation in the year	Footfall in the year	Current opening hours per week	Footfall per hour of opening	Total library catchment population
Martock	1,205	1,365	981	39,871	33	24	16,603
Milborne Port	329	564	357	6,163	15	8	3,400
South Petherton	457	331	-	7,292	17	8	5,432
Sunningdale	147	101	-	3,302	14	5	5,805
Yeovil	7,541	15,819	4,011	160,550	48	65	109,038

9.10. Yeovil library is a large, town centre library serving a large catchment which spreads beyond the boundaries of Area 6 (and includes some parts of neighbouring Dorset). Usage is much more significant than the other libraries in Area 6 across all measures. Martock library has the second highest levels of usage across all measures, with a particularly significant level of public internet access usage. Milborne Port is also well-used for public internet access but has lower levels of event participation and a low number of active borrowers, reflecting the small population in the catchment. South Petherton library has generally low levels of usage relative to the size of this community, although borrowing is relatively high. Sunningdale library

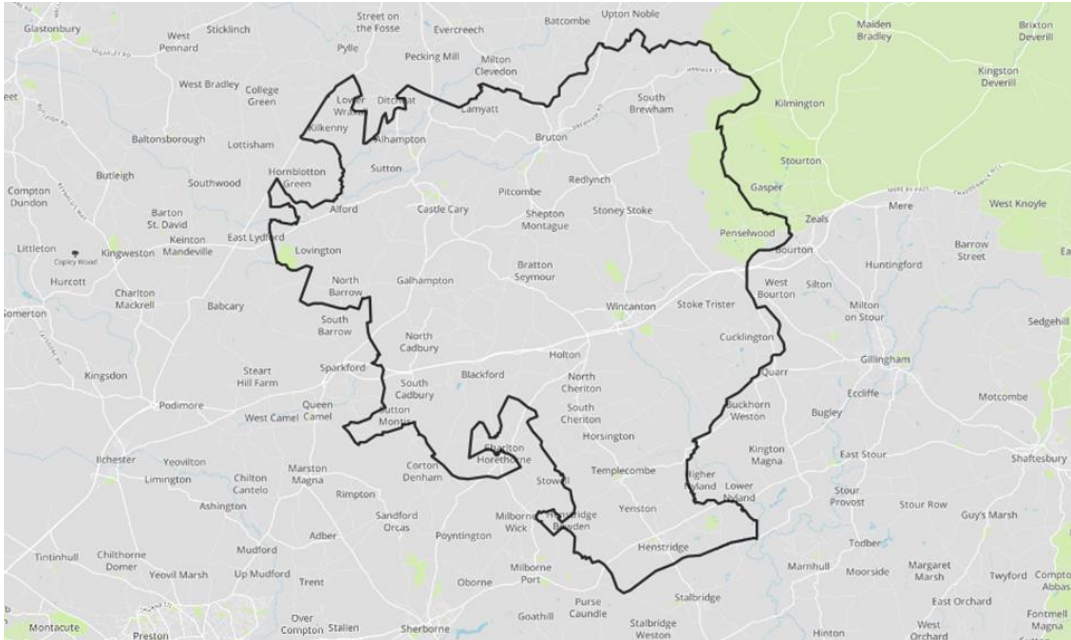
has the lowest levels of use of all of Somerset's libraries, with very low numbers of borrowers and, along with Highbridge library, the lowest rates of footfall per head of catchment population.

**Summary of key points: Yeovil and surrounding area:**

- The population is largely concentrated in the principle town of Yeovil and its surrounding rural fringe, and Yeovil is experiencing significant housing and population growth. Martock, South Petherton, Stoke-sub-Hamdon, Ilchester and Milborne Port have much smaller populations with lower levels of forecast growth.
- Need is concentrated in Yeovil, which has a number of areas with significant levels of deprivation and one neighbourhood with very significant levels of deprivation across all measures. Martock has very high risks of digital exclusion and social isolation, and evidence of deprivation across a number of other indices. Feedback in the consultation and usage measures indicates that public internet access meets a significant need in Martock.
- Many of the rural areas and the other larger settlements have much lower levels of deprivation; many parts of the area are relatively wealthy. However, there is a significant pocket of social isolation risk in South Petherton, and some evidence of higher rates of disability and digital exclusion risks.
- Library usage is very high for Yeovil, reflecting its status as the county's second largest town. Usage of Martock is significant, particularly for public computer access.
- Usage of South Petherton, Milborne Port and Sunningdale libraries is low, although Milborne Port is well-used considering the small population in the catchment. Sunningdale library usage is the lowest of all Somerset libraries.

## 10. Area 7: South East Somerset

- 10.1. The map below shows the boundary of this area. Area 7 includes the eastern part of South Somerset district, extending from the Wiltshire / Dorset border across to the rural catchment of Castle Cary in the north west, but excluding Milborne Port and its rural catchment in the south west (because this area of Somerset looks towards Yeovil for services).



### Population, Growth and Demography

- 10.2. This area has the smallest population of the 9 areas considered and is centred on the rural hub of Wincanton (*pop.* 5,435). It is given separate consideration in the needs assessment because of the distance of this part of Somerset from other centres of population. The population profile of the area is set out in the table below; the age distribution is broadly in line with Somerset as a whole, with a slightly higher proportion of older people offsetting a slightly lower working age population.

Age range	Population	% of population in age range
<b>All ages</b>	22360	100%
<b>Under 5</b>	1111	5%
<b>5-11</b>	1861	8%
<b>12-17</b>	1814	8%
<b>18-64</b>	12116	54%
<b>65+</b>	5458	25%

- 10.3. Castle Cary/Ansford (*pop.* 3,232) and Bruton (*pop.* 2,984) in the north of the area, and Templecombe (*pop.* 1,560) and Henstridge (*pop.* 1,530) to the south are the other settlements of significance in the area. Apart from North Cadbury (*pop.* 638) the other rural settlements are small, and the rural districts are sparsely populated.



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10.4. Castle Cary/Ansford and Wincanton are designated as tier 1 settlements by the planning authority and are likely to see the largest level of population growth, which could be very significant for these relatively small towns:

- Castle Cary is estimated to see housing growth of between 350 and 500 dwellings over the next 10 years - we estimate that this could lead to a population growth of up to 30% compared to 2011 census levels.
- Wincanton is estimated to see housing growth of between 500 and 700 dwellings over the next 10 years - leading to an estimated population growth of up to 29% over 2011 census levels.
- Estimated housing growth for Bruton is lower, reflecting its second-tier status in the settlement hierarchy for planning (estimates for housing growth over the next 10 years range between 70 and 200 dwellings; an estimated population increase of up to 15% over 2011 levels).

Housing growth was noted as a concern by a number of respondents who used Castle Cary library.

### Deprivation and Social Need

10.5. Levels of deprivation are relatively low across the area, which has the lowest levels of deprivation of all 9 areas considered.

Fig. 10.5a: Income deprivation

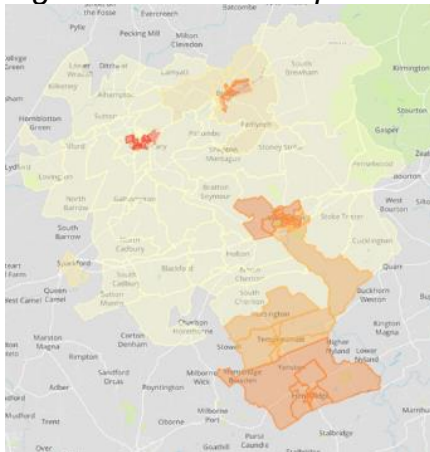


Fig. 10.5b: Employment deprivation

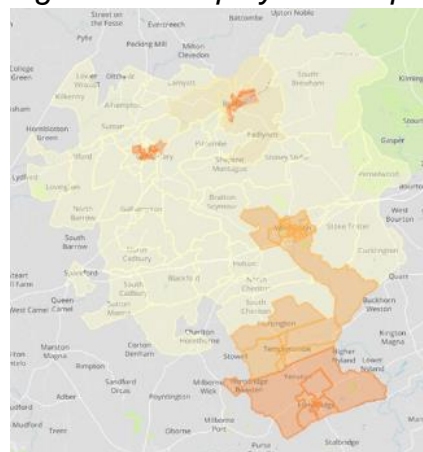
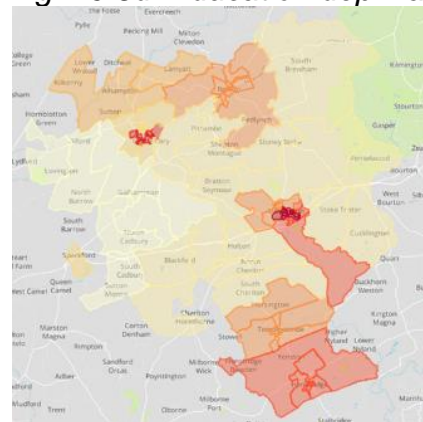


Fig. 10.5c: Health deprivation



Fig. 10.5d: Education deprivation



Key to map shading:

Low Medium High

(Note that green shading represents the West Wiltshire Downs AONB area)

10.6. Only 3 neighbourhoods in Wincanton, Henstridge and Castle Cary are more deprived than the Somerset average. Employment and income levels are higher than elsewhere in Somerset in the area, however income is relatively low in Castle Cary. Many of the rural parts of the area have high levels of income and employment. Educational attainment and school readiness levels are lowest in Wincanton (which has a neighbourhood in the 20% most deprived nationally for education deprivation); educational attainment in Castle Cary is also relatively low. Concerns relating to deprivation did not feature significantly in consultation responses in this area, although concerns about those on lower incomes were mentioned in general terms by some respondents who used Castle Cary library, and evidence from the earlier community engagement exercise noted the significant number of children at the local primary school who qualified for free school meals.

10.7. Social isolation and digital exclusion risks are more pronounced in the towns of Castle Cary and Wincanton, which both have high rates of Adult Social Care intervention in some neighbourhoods. There is a very significant pocket (in the top 10% nationally) of digital exclusion risk in Castle Cary town and digital exclusion risks are also high in the area around Henstridge, and to a lesser extent in Wincanton town. Bruton has some of the lowest levels of deprivation of all towns in Somerset.

Fig. 10.7a: Social isolation

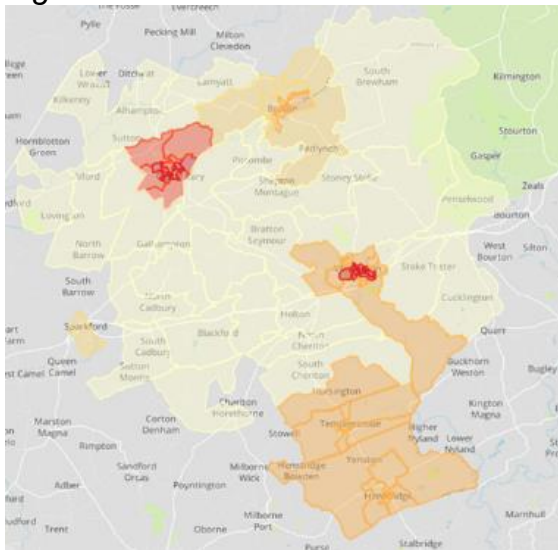
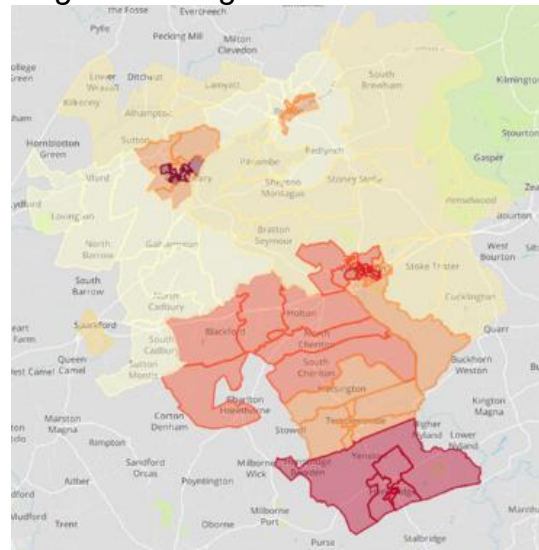


Fig. 10.7b: Digital exclusion



Key to map shading:

Low Medium High

(Note that green shading represents the West Wiltshire Downs AONB area)

Current Library Usage

10.8. Table 10.8 overleaf shows that usage of the three libraries in this area.

Table 10.8: Selected library usage measures (2017/18 financial year)

Library	Active borrowers in the year	People's Network User hours	Event participation in the year	Footfall in the year	Current opening hours per week	Footfall per hour of opening	Total library catchment population
Bruton	336	134	279	5,190	12	8	5,066
Castle Cary	567	219	366	9,226	20	9	8,783
Wincanton	1,610	1,156	2,520	29,813	29	20	17,769

10.9. Wincanton library has the highest level of usage across all measures, nearly 4 times the volume of event participation and over 3 times the level of public computer access usage than the other two libraries combined. It should be noted, however, that Castle Cary library is very small, and this constrains the type and range of events that can be delivered, as well as the range of stock that can be offered; there is no doubt that this impacts on usage levels for Castle Cary. Usage per head of catchment population is in line with the expected rate of usage for Wincanton library, but is lower for Castle Cary and Bruton libraries. Usage of Bruton library is particularly low.

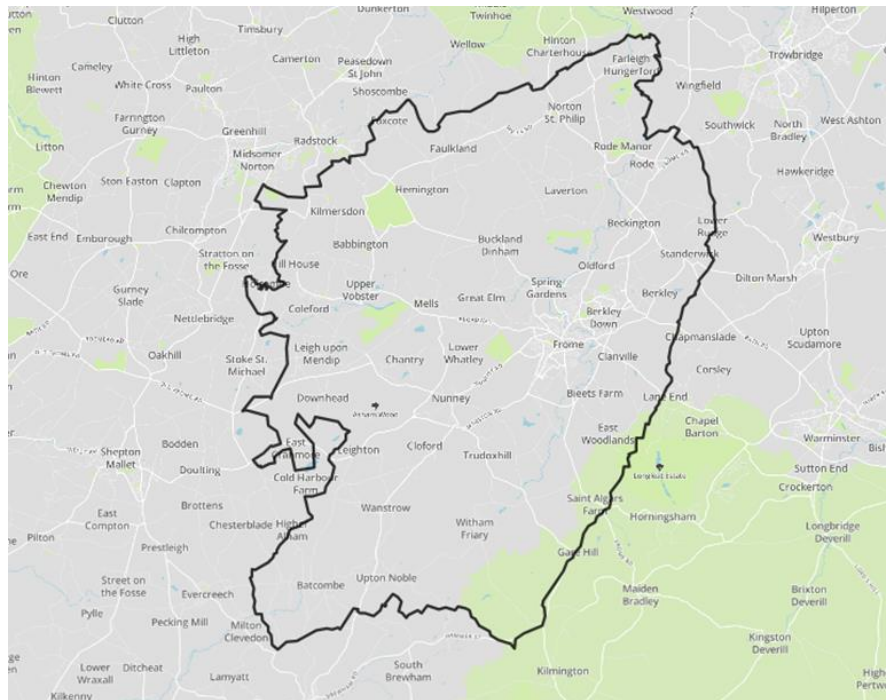
### **Summary of key points: South East Somerset**

- The population of the area is low relative to other areas, mainly concentrated in the towns of Wincanton, Castle Cary and Bruton with a further area of population to the south, near the Dorset border. Rural parts of the area are relatively sparsely populated.
- Levels of deprivation are relatively low and there is no significant income or employment deprivation. The main areas of need relate to risks of social isolation and digital exclusion, both of which are relatively high in Castle Cary town, and to a lesser extent in Wincanton and (for digital exclusion) around Henstridge in the far south east of Somerset. There is some evidence of lower educational attainment (including lower early years attainment) in Wincanton.
- Bruton is one of the least deprived towns in Somerset. Generally, little evidence of need in the area was obtained through the consultation exercise, although some evidence of deprivation related to low income was highlighted by community representatives and respondents representing Castle Cary.
- Wincanton Library has by far the largest share of library usage of the three libraries in the area, across all measures. Usage of Castle Cary library is low, particularly for public computer access and events - though this can be attributed in part to the very small size of the library building. Usage of Bruton library is at the lower end of the range for all Somerset libraries.



## 11. Area 8: Frome and Surrounding Area

11.1. The map below shows the boundary of this area. Area 8 comprises of the north-eastern part of Mendip District Council, occupying the far north east of the county bordering Wiltshire and Bath and North East Somerset.



### Population, Growth and Demography

11.2. Area 8 has the third lowest population of the 9 areas (total pop. 40,733), with the population concentrated in the principle town of Frome (pop. 26,203). The population profile of the area is set out in the table below; the age distribution is largely in line with Somerset as a whole, with a slightly younger population profile compared to the Somerset average.

Age range	Population	% of population in age range
<b>All ages</b>	40,733	100%
<b>Under 5</b>	2,384	6%
<b>5-11</b>	3,520	9%
<b>12-17</b>	2,805	7%
<b>18-64</b>	23,744	58%
<b>65+</b>	8,280	20%

11.3. The rural area surrounding Frome has the most significant rural population, with the villages of Nunney, Mells, Buckland Dinham, Rode and Beckington all lying within a 5-mile radius of Frome town centre having a combined (2011 census) population of 3,737. The communities of Coleford and Holcombe in the north-west of the district is the only other significant settlement of note, with a combined (2011 census) population of 3,098. Other rural parts of the district are more sparsely populated, with



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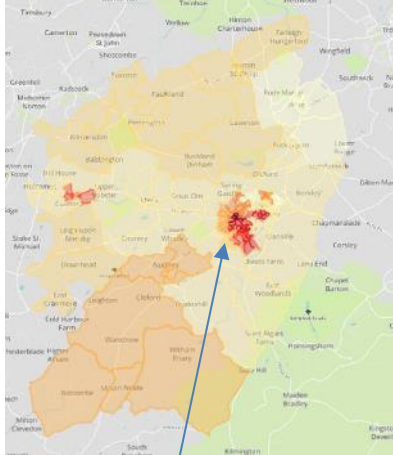
the settlements of Batcombe (*pop.* 439) in the south and Norton St. Philip (*pop.* 556) in the north being the only other villages with (2011 census) populations over 400.

11.4. Frome is the only tier 1 settlement in the area in the extant Mendip district settlement hierarchy and is anticipated to see a significant level of housing growth - estimated at between 1000 and 2300 dwellings over the next 10 years. This could increase the population by as much as 20% over 2011 census levels.

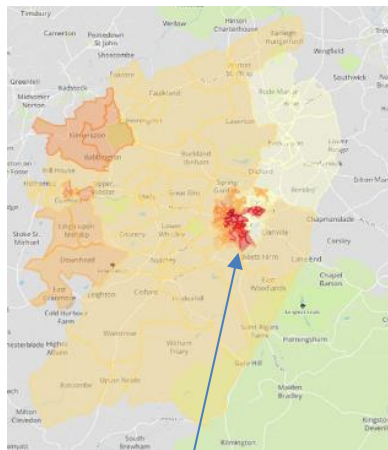
### Deprivation and Social Need

11.5. Levels of deprivation vary significantly within the area, as illustrated in fig. 11.5:

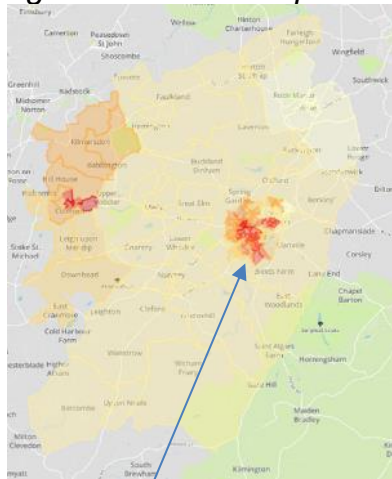
**Fig. 11.5a: Income deprivation**



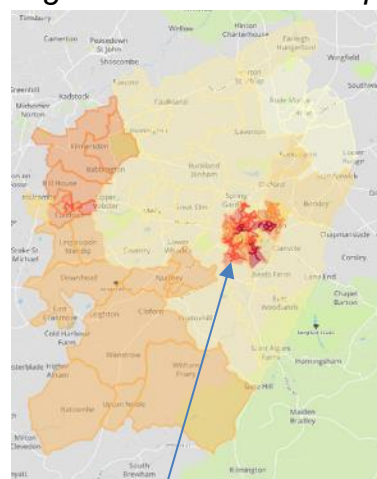
**Fig. 11.5b: Employment deprivation**



**Fig. 11.5c: Health deprivation**



**Fig. 11.5d: Education deprivation**



Key to map shading (green shading represents the Wiltshire Downs AONB area).

Low Medium High

11.6. The only significant pocket of multiple deprivation is the Trinity area of Frome, which is within the 20% most deprived areas nationally. Income deprivation in this area is particularly pronounced. Other parts of central, eastern and southern Frome also have more significant levels of deprivation, with a number of neighbourhoods with levels of deprivation in the top 30% nationally on a number of indices. Educational deprivation is particularly high in Frome, with 3 neighbourhoods in the 20% most deprived nationally on this index. Early years attainment in some of these neighbourhoods is lower than the Somerset average, and income deprivation affecting children is in the top 20% nationally in two areas. Social isolation and digital exclusion risks are also highest in the more deprived parts of Frome.

11.7. Other parts of Frome and area 8 are much less deprived, and the area contains some of the least deprived parts of Somerset (particularly around Rode in the far north east). The only other settlement in area 8 which has some evidence of deprivation is Coleford, which has some risk of social isolation and digital exclusion, and where income and health deprivation is below the average for Somerset.

Fig. 11.7a: Social isolation

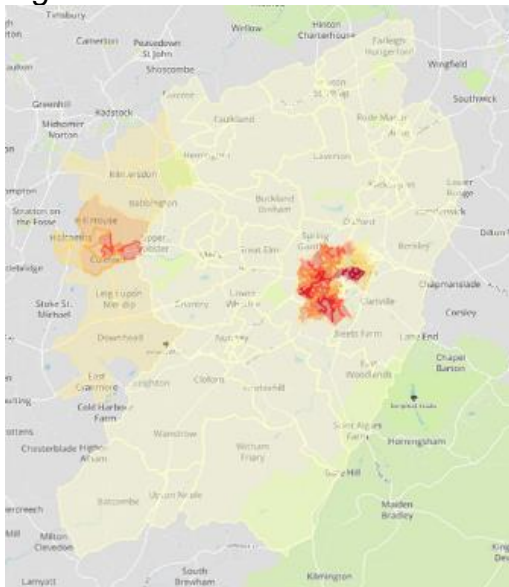
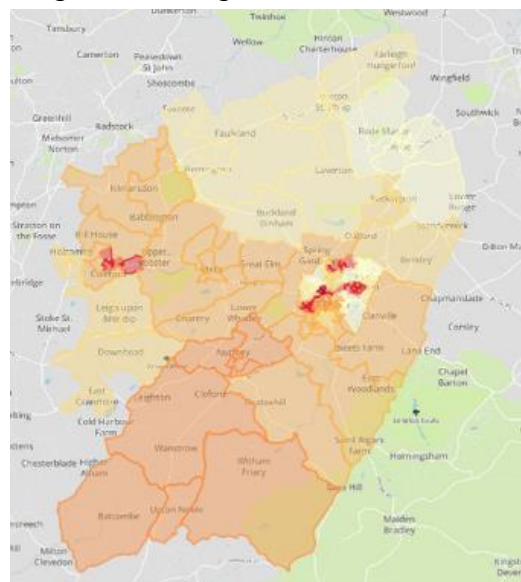


Fig. 11.7b: Digital exclusion



Key to map shading (green shading represents the Wiltshire Downs AONB area):

Low Medium High

Current Library Usage

11.8. The level of cross-boundary movement is notable in this part of Somerset. Commuting and access to services between area 8 and the towns of Radstock/Midsomer Norton, Bath, Trowbridge, Westbury and Warminster was noted as being more significant than access from this part of Somerset to other Mendip towns. This is likely to have an impact on library service usage, particularly around the northern boundary of the area, which is very close to Radstock.

11.9. Frome is the only library in the area, and usage levels are shown in table 11.9 overleaf. Frome library is very well used across all measures, with very high rates of usage per head of catchment population across all measures - higher than the libraries in the larger communities of Yeovil and Bridgwater for events, and comparable to these libraries for active borrowers.

Table 11.9: Selected library usage measures (2017/18 financial year)

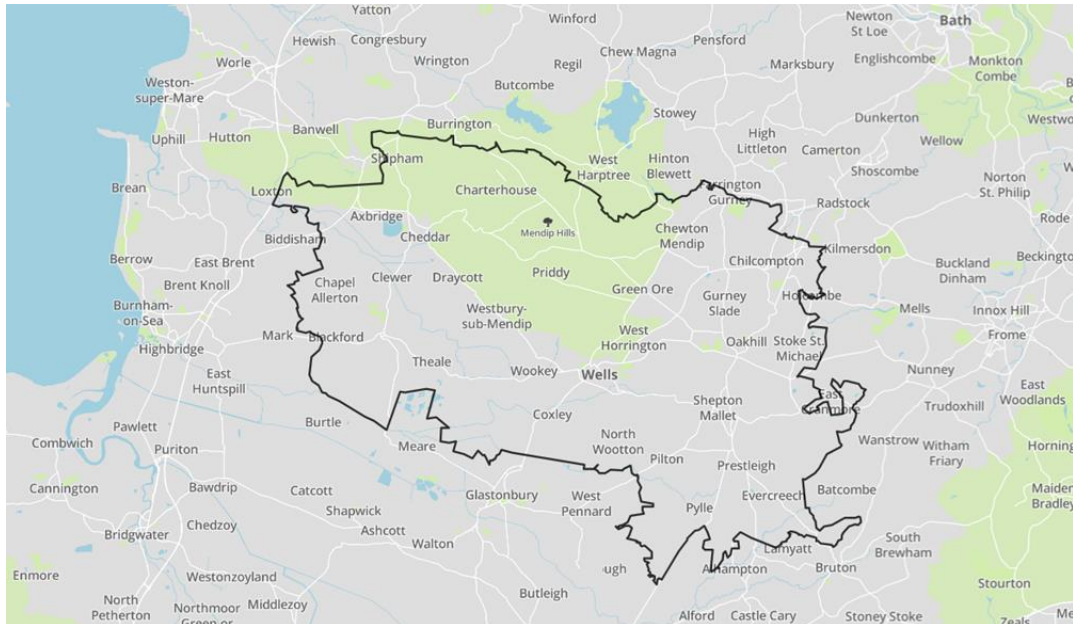
Library	Active borrowers in the year	People's Network User hours	Event participation in the year	Footfall in the year	Current opening hours per week	Footfall per hour of opening	Total library catchment population
Frome	6,984	10,228	8,075	162,447	44	71	46,823

**Summary of key points: Frome and surrounding area**

- The town of Frome has the highest levels of need by all measures:
  - A large and growing population.
  - High levels of deprivation in some parts of the town, particularly the Trinity area (across multiple indices), and the area in the south of Frome, which has low educational attainment and high levels of income deprivation affecting children.
  - Very high levels of library usage.
- Need is much lower in other parts of area 8, with the exception of the settlement of Coleford, which has a significant population and some evidence of income related deprivation and digital exclusion risk.

## 12. Area 9: Wells, Shepton and Mendip Hills Area

12.1. The map below shows the boundary of this area. Area 9 includes the north-western and central parts of Mendip District, and the north-eastern part of Sedgemoor District. The Mendip Hills cover the northern half of the area.



### Population, Growth and Demography

12.2. Area 9 has the fourth highest population of the nine areas considered, with Wells (*pop. 11,343*), Shepton Mallet (*pop. 10,369*) and Cheddar (*pop. 5,199*) being the main settlements. The population profile of the area is set out in the table below; the age distribution is broadly in line with Somerset as a whole.

Age range	Population	% of population in age range
<b>All ages</b>	57,450	100%
<b>Under 5</b>	2,755	5%
<b>5-11</b>	4,372	8%
<b>12-17</b>	4,306	7%
<b>18-64</b>	32,293	56%
<b>65+</b>	13,724	24%

12.3. The area has a significant rural population outside of the main towns (an estimated 53% of the population live within 2 miles of the centre of one of the 3 main settlements), giving area 9 one of the highest rural populations of the 9 areas analysed. In the north of the area, between Shepton Mallet and Radstock/Midsomer Norton, the village of Chilcompton is a significant settlement, when combined with the nearby villages Stratton-on-the-Fosse, Oakhill and Binegar there is a cluster of villages with a combined population of 4,400 at the time of the 2011 census. To the south-east of Shepton Mallet, Evercreech and nearby Stoney Stratton had a combined population of 2,156 in 2011; the settlements of Pilton (*pop. 646*) and Croscombe (*pop. 603*) are also near to Shepton. The communities of Wookey Hole, Westbury-sub-Mendip, Draycott and Rodney Stoke to the north and north-west of



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Wells have a combined (2011 census) population of 2,451; Henton, Wookey, Theale, Wedmore and Blackford (*combined pop. 3,833*) also generally look to Wells for services. The communities of Rooksbridge, Cocklake, Weare, Cross, Axebridge and Shipham, with a combined (2011 census) population of 4,614, are nearer to Cheddar and look to that town, as well as communities in North Somerset, for services.

12.4. Wells and Shepton Mallet are both designated as principal market towns in the settlement hierarchy of Mendip District Council, and Cheddar is designated as a tier 1 settlement in Sedgemoor’s planning policy framework. This means that these three communities are all designated for significant housing growth:

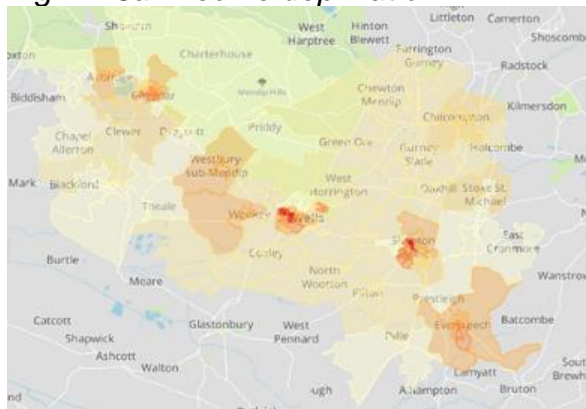
- Wells is estimated to see between 1100 and 1500 new dwellings built over the next 10 years.
- Shepton Mallet could have up to 1300 new dwellings built in the coming decade.
- Housing growth for Cheddar is estimated between 500 and 600 dwellings over the next 10 years.

These estimates would lead to an estimated population growth of about 25-30% over 2011 census levels for each of the 3 towns. Housing growth was noted as a concern during the consultation in some stakeholder responses relating to Cheddar library.

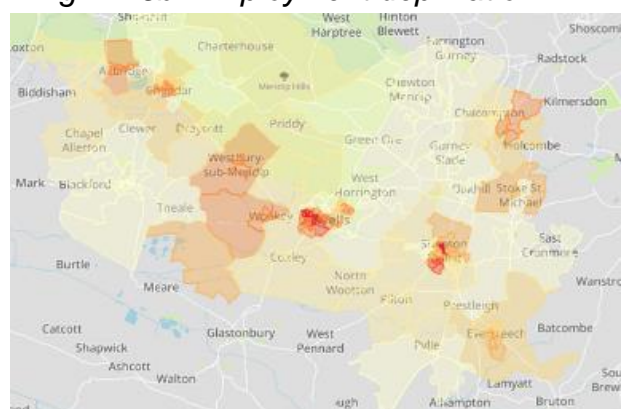
### Deprivation and Social Need

12.5. Levels of deprivation are shown in fig. 12.5 below.

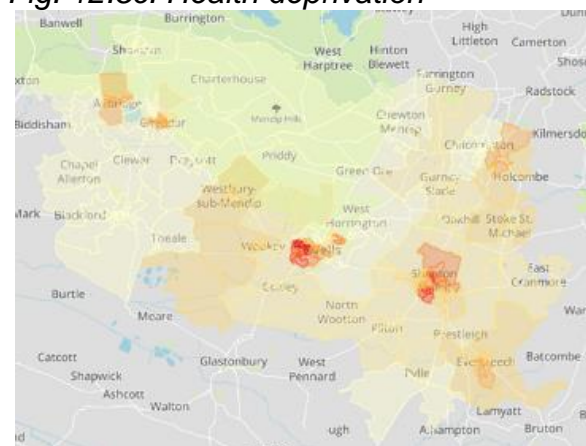
**Fig. 12.5a: Income deprivation**



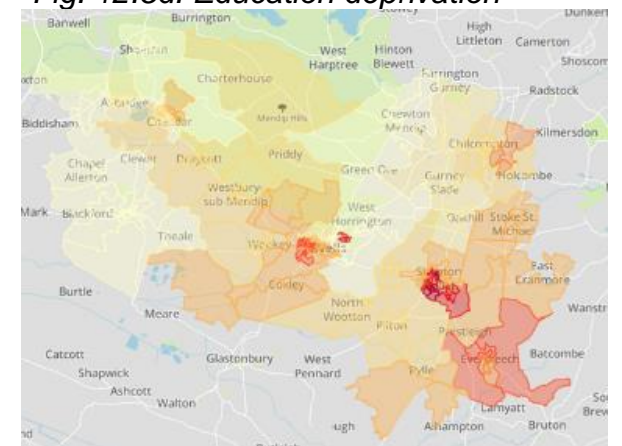
**Fig. 12.5b: Employment deprivation**



**Fig. 12.5c: Health deprivation**



**Fig. 12.5d: Education deprivation**



**Key to map shading (note that green shading represents the Mendip AONB area):**

Low Medium High

12.6. Deprivation is lower than in other areas of Somerset and is concentrated in the towns of Wells and Shepton Mallet. Wells has one neighbourhood with relatively high levels of deprivation (in the 30% most deprived for income, employment and health deprivation, and social isolation risk). This neighbourhood also has a significant risk of digital exclusion and very high rates of Adult Social Care intervention. The central area of Shepton Mallet also has levels of deprivation in the top 30% nationally for most indicators. However, neither of these pockets are as significantly deprived as some neighbourhoods in Glastonbury and Frome. The public consultation feedback for the communities of Shepton Mallet and Wells did not identify any significant evidence of deprivation not already apparent from the statistical review.

12.7. Deprivation in other parts of the area is low, and overall the area has lower levels of deprivation than other parts of Somerset. Parts of Wells and Shepton and the rural areas around Cheddar and Wedmore are amongst the least deprived nationally. Digital exclusion and social isolation risks are more prevalent than other types of need, with parts of Wells, Shepton Mallet, Cheddar and the rural areas around Evercreech having particularly pronounced levels of digital exclusion risk (especially in the southern part of Shepton Mallet, which has a level of digital exclusion risk in the top 10% nationally). Wells and Shepton Mallet have high (top 20% nationally) risks of social isolation in some neighbourhoods, with a less pronounced pocket of social isolation deprivation in Cheddar.

Fig. 12.7a: Social isolation

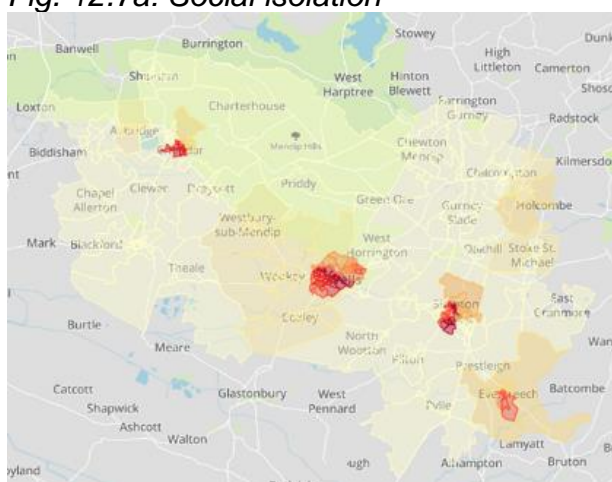
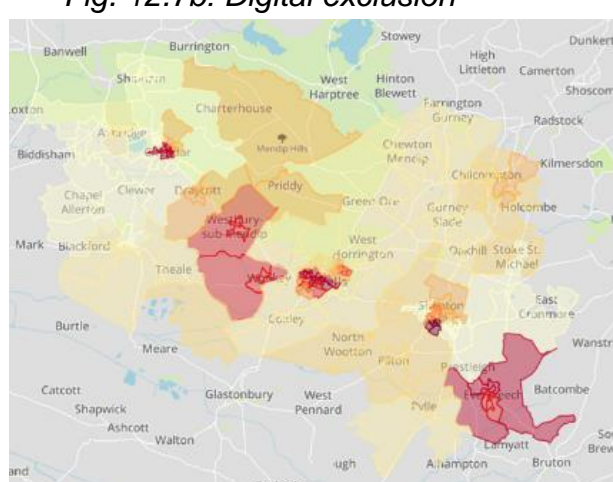


Fig. 12.7b: Digital exclusion



Key to map shading (green shading represents the Mendip AONB area):

Low Medium High

12.8. Consultation responses from the community of Cheddar gave compelling evidence of need in that community which is not obvious from the statistical analysis shown in the catchment maps. Although average levels of income in Cheddar library catchment are relatively high, there is evidence that this masks a significant number of lower-income households in Cheddar town. Cheddar, and nearby Shipham and Axebridge, have relatively high populations of elderly people, and in Cheddar many live alone. There is evidence of a large number of carers in Cheddar.

*“Support for the lonely and isolated ... is the top Cheddar issue from the feedback from our Village Agent,”*

*Nov. 2017 Report on Wellbeing in Cheddar and Surrounding Area*

Current Library Usage

12.9. There are three libraries in the area, and usage is set out in table 12.9:

Table 12.9: Selected library usage measures (2017/18 financial year)

Library	Active borrowers in the year	People's Network User hours	Event participation in the year	Footfall in the year	Current opening hours per week	Footfall per hour of opening	Total library catchment population
Cheddar	1,312	688	1,927	31,643	24	25	15,406
Shepton Mallet	1,752	1,256	1,066	41,838	26	31	23,075
Wells	3,889	7,891	2,147	110,350	42	51	68,518

12.10. Usage of all three libraries is significant, although participation in events is relatively low in Shepton Mallet, and public computer access usage is lower in Cheddar. Wells has by far the most significant usage, particularly for borrowing and public computer use; it is one of the county's busiest libraries, reflecting in part a strong retail draw in the settlement of Wells, which is reflected in the large catchment. Usage of Cheddar library for events and borrowing is high per head of catchment population. The level of consultation response from users of Cheddar library was very high, and many users highlighted the value of the library as a social hub for the town, with a range popular and well-attended events. Usage of Shepton Mallet is lower than would be expected for a town of this size (see Table 12.10 below), and the level of response to the consultation was also lower (in terms of the number of survey responses received) than in other communities where changes were proposed.

Table 12.10: Usage rates - Shepton Mallet library compared to other libraries in similar-sized communities.

Library	Estimated population within walking distance	Usage rates per head of population within walking distance				Current opening hours per week
		Active borrowers per head	People's Network User hours per head	Event participants per head	Footfall per head	
Crewkerne	9,138	0.23	0.28	0.30	5.68	29
Shepton Mallet	10,971	0.16	0.11	0.10	3.81	26
Minehead	11,812	0.23	0.31	0.30	5.49	38
Chard	14,328	0.18	0.27	0.16	4.55	32
Wellington	15,511	0.18	0.16	0.08	4.32	37

## **Summary of key points: Wells, Shepton and Mendip Hills area**

- The towns of Wells and Shepton Mallet have the most significant populations, with a smaller population in Cheddar. However, there are also significant clusters of population in the rural area around Cheddar (including Axebridge), at the eastern end of the Mendip Hills around Chilcompton, and to the north-west and west of Wells.
- All of the three towns are designated principal settlements and are likely to experience significant housing and population growth over the next decade - possibly as much as 30%.
- Deprivation is lower than other areas of Somerset and is concentrated in the towns of Wells and Shepton Mallet. Evidence gathered in the consultation exercise suggests that there are some households with lower incomes in Cheddar town; though this income deprivation is not apparent in the statistical analysis. There is also evidence of a significant number of carers in Cheddar.
- Digital inclusion and social isolation risks are generally more significant needs than income, employment and health deprivation. Both Wells and Shepton Mallet have pockets of high social isolation, and evidence gathered through the consultation exercise suggests that there are also significant social isolation needs in Cheddar. There are pockets of significant digital exclusion risk in the major towns (especially the southern part of Shepton Mallet), and around the village of Evercreech.
- Usage of all three libraries is significant, with Wells library being the busiest (reflecting the strong retail draw of Wells which is a factor in this library's dominant catchment). Cheddar is well-used for events and borrowing, and clearly highly valued by the community as a library and social hub.
- Usage of Shepton Mallet is lower across all measures than would be expected for a town of this size, and the number of consultation responses was also relatively low.



### 13. **Background papers, useful links and links to supporting evidence**

A wide range of background and supporting documents are referred to in the paper, all can be found online, and links are set out here:

13.1. The library service re-design programme is embedded in a clear strategic framework, set through a formal County Council decision in November 2017.

- [Library Service Vision, Strategic Direction and Outcomes Framework decision](#)
- [Vision, Strategic Direction and Outcomes Framework paper](#)
- [Report to Scrutiny Policies & Place Committee 3 Oct 2017](#)

13.2. A large range of statistical data has been used to support the assessment, and various technical and methodological approaches have been employed in the analysis. Summaries of the statistical data, and details of the technical approaches employed are set out in a range of documents and datasets that have been developed and produced by the library service re-design project team:

[Library Catchment Mapping Tool](https://catchments2018.azurewebsites.net/) <https://catchments2018.azurewebsites.net/>

The following may be found in the Evidence & Data section of this site:

<http://somersetlibraries.co.uk/redesign/>

- Needs Assessment Data spreadsheet
- Methodology and Data Sources
- Housing and Population Growth – Methodology and Data Sources

13.3. The analysis has also drawn upon data sources and strategic assessments developed by Somerset County Council and the Somerset Intelligence partnership:

- Somerset Intelligence website – see [www.somersetintelligence.org.uk](http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk).
- State of the Somerset Economy Report – available from [www.somerset.gov.uk](http://www.somerset.gov.uk).
- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment – available from [www.somersetintelligence.org.uk](http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk).
- Somerset Children's and Young People's Plan – available from [www.somerset.gov.uk](http://www.somerset.gov.uk).

13.4. A public consultation exercise was carried out from 29<sup>th</sup> January 2018 to 13<sup>th</sup> June 2018, and feedback from this consultation has been used extensively in developing this assessment.

- The following may be found in the Consultation section of this site:  
<http://somersetlibraries.co.uk/redesign/>
  - Consultation and staff feedback
  - Consultation Feedback Analysis: methodology and data
- Decision to carry out Library Redesign Consultation  
<http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=632>

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- Extension of Library Redesign Consultation decision  
<http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=682>

13.5. Finally, there are government publications that have informed and guided the approach taken and datasets used:

- Libraries shaping the future: good practice toolkit – see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/libraries-shaping-the-future-good-practice-toolkit>
- Longer-term, evidence-based sustainable planning toolkit – see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/longer-term-evidence-based-sustainable-planning-toolkit>
- Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016 to 2021 – see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/libraries-deliver-ambition-for-public-libraries-in-england-2016-to-2021>