South Somerset

Authority Monitoring Report

September 2016

1. Introduction

1.1. Overview

1.1.1. This report represents South Somerset District Council's (hereon "the Council") first "Authority Monitoring Report" (AMR).

1.1.2. Creating the new style monitoring report also coincides with the first monitoring year of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028)[1].

1.1.3. The AMR represents an opportunity to provide an update on important information across a series of issues. The AMR covers the following topics:

- **Part One**: What has been achieved in the last 12 months?;
- **Part Two**: South Somerset in context;
- **Part Three**: How are we dealing with the key issues in South Somerset?

1.2. Methodology

1.2.1. The Council intends that the AMR is a useful and accessible document that can be easily read and understood by the public and stakeholders.

1.2.2. Wherever possible the AMR will provide data for up to and including the 31st March 2016. This date represents the end of the financial year, upon which many statistics are reviewed and updated. Where data is provided to a different date, this will be specified.

1.2.3. The AMR includes both primary and secondary source data. The primary data relates to information held by the Council itself, linked to work that has been carried out as part of the Council's own evidence gathering and monitoring.

1.2.4. Secondary source data, which makes up the vast majority of the data within the AMR, is accessed from a range of accepted and verified sources, including Government departments (e.g. Department for Communities and Local Government), other local authorities (e.g. Somerset County Council), official data collection agencies (e.g. Office of National Statistics), and third-party sources (e.g. data observatories, Oxford Economics).

1.2.5. To ensure transparency, each source will be identified. Some data may be anonymised to ensure that commercial sensitivity is protected.

[1] The South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028) was adopted on 5th March 2015.

Part One: What Has Been Achieved In The Last Year?

Introduction

The first part of the AMR focussed on progress made over the last 12 months. It is helpful that this first AMR period corresponds with the first year of the implementation of the adopted local plan. It allows for initial reflection on the success (or otherwise) of the policies set out in the local plan, and provides a platform to inform future revisions to the local plan.

In addition, the team continues to progress a number of other projects and workstreams, as part of its wider role in developing the Council's overall policy position on key matters. This includes on issues such as: Neighbourhood Planning, Community Infrastructure Levy, Affordable Housing, Infrastructure, Retailing, etc. The team is working closely with internal departments, for example: Development Management, Economic Development, Community Health and Leisure, and Strategic Housing to bring a consistency of approach across the Council on important matters.

The following sections of the report discuss the topics set out below in more detail:

- Progress on the Local Plan and the prospect of the Early Review of the Local Plan
- Progress on Neighbourhood Plans being prepared in South Somerset;
- The Council's ongoing Duty to Co-operate work; and
- An update on strategically important planning applications and appeal decisions.

2. Implementing the South Somerset Local Plan

2.1. Progress since Adoption

2.1.1. The Council adopted the South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028) in March 2015. Successfully adopting a local plan is a major achievement for the Council. To put the result in to context, information taken from the Planning Inspectorate (as at March 2015) shows that only 25% local authorities have managed to adopt a fully compliant local plan[2].

2.1.2. Having a local plan in place provides a formal policy framework through which to make decisions on planning applications that arise in the district. The local plan ensures that the Council can make positive decisions on sustainable development within the district.

2.1.3. Table 2.1 sets out the number of times that the policies in the new local plan have been used since it was adopted.

Table 2.1: Use of South Somerset Local Plan Policies in 2015 / 2016

POLICY	POLICY	NUMBER OF TIMES USED BETWEEN 01/04/15 and 31/03/16
Sustainable Development	SD1	664
Settlement Strategy	SS1	482
Development in Rural Settlements	SS2	65
Delivering New Employment Land	SS3	13
District-wide Housing Provision	SS4	8
Delivering New Housing Growth	SS5	30
Infrastructure Delivery	SS6	8
Phasing of Previously Developed Land	SS7	7
Urban Framework and Greenfield Housing for Yeovil	YV1	7
Ansford / Castle Cary Direction of Growth	LMT1	4
Strategic Employment Sites	EP1	4
Office Development	EP2	2
Safeguarding Employment Land	EP3	17
Expansion of Existing Businesses in the Countryside	EP4	35
Farm Diversification	EP5	5
Henstridge Airfield	EP6	2
New Build Live / Work Units	EP7	2
New and Enhanced Tourist Facilities	EP8	32
Retail Hierarchy	EP9	9

[2] Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners – Signal failure? A Review of Local Plans and Housing Requirements (March 2015). http://nlpplanning.com/uploads/ffiles/2015/03/219520.pdf

POLICY	POLICY	NUMBER OF TIMES USED BETWEEN 01/04/15 and 31/03/16
Convenience and Comparison Goods Shopping in Yeovil	EP11	11
Protection of Retail Frontages	EP13	3
Protection and Provision of Local Shops, Community Facilities and Services	EP15	16
Use of PDL for Housing	HG2	2
Provision of Affordable Housing	HG3	6
Provision of Affordable Housing (Sites of 1-5 Dwellings)	HG4	12
Achieving a Mix of Market Housing	HG5	9
Care Homes and Specialist Accommodation	HG6	8
Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	HG7	8
Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside	HG8	9
Housing for Agricultural and Related Workers	HG9	9
Removal of Agricultural and Other Occupancy Conditions	HG10	2
Low Carbon Travel	TA1	4
Sustainable Travel at Chard and Yeovil	TA3	9
Travel Plans	TA4	14
Transport Impact of New Development	TA5	752
Parking Standards	TA6	532
Provision of Open Space, Outdoor Playing Space, Sports, Cultural and community Facilities in new Development	HW1	5
Addressing Climate Change in South Somerset	EQ1	49
General Development	EQ2	1596
Historic Environment	EQ3	833
Biodiversity	EQ4	138
Green Infrastructure	EQ5	31
Pollution Control	EQ7	107
Equine Development	EQ8	19

Source: SSDC Database

2.1.4. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the most consistently used policies are those linked to the overall settlement strategy defined within the plan (Policy SD1 and Policy SS1. This is closely followed by general policies linked to the impacts on the transport network (Policy TA5 and Policy TA6), and whether the proposed development constitutes good quality design and does not generate unacceptable impacts on the natural or built environment (Policy EQ2, Policy EQ3, and Policy EQ4).

2.1.5. The use and application of policies relating to affordable housing is somewhat surprising. However, this can be explained as the effect of the change in Government policy on this issue (see Section 11 for further information).

2.2. Working Towards the Early Review of Local Plan

2.2.1. The Planning Inspector who examined the local plan stated in his report to the Council that an early review of the local plan should be carried out, to assess the situation regarding housing and employment provision in Wincanton[3].

2.2.2. In order to bring about the early review, the Council has embarked on a challenge programme of work to update its existing evidence and provide a robust basis from which to propose new or amended policies. Any policies that are prepared would need to follow the formal procedures and any new or significantly amended policies would need to be examined by the Planning Inspectorate before they could be brought into effect.

2.2.3. The Council has set out a work plan through to March 2018 to have any new or amended policies adopted within the early review of the local plan. The details behind this work plan can be found within the Council's updated Local Development Scheme (2015 – 2018)[4].

2.3. Providing Support on Neighbourhood Plans

2.3.1. The Council continues to support those parish and town councils (or neighbourhood forums) who wish to progress a Neighbourhood Plan. At present, the six groups who are progressing Neighbourhood Plans are at the very early stages of the process. The groups are mainly involved in data collection and formulating policies.

2.3.2. The Council continues to discharge its statutory functions and has provided SA / SEA screening and scoping advice for three of the six emerging NPs. However, the Council has only been able to provide limited advice given the formative stages and lack of defined policies in the NPs. As and when the NPs are more detailed, the Council is likely to have to screen the NPs again.

Table 2.2: Status and Progress of South Somerset Neighbourhood Plans

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN	DATE DESIGNATED	SEA SCOPING COMPLETE YES/NO
Queen Camel	March 2013	Yes
East Coker	September 2013	Yes
Wincanton	March 2014	Yes
South Petherton	April 2015	No
Castle Cary and Ansford	June 2015	No
Martock	April 2016	No

Source: SSDC Database

[3] Planning Inspectorate – Report on the Examination into the South Somerset Local Plan 2006 – 2028 (January 2015). Paragraph 100.
[4] South Somerset Local Development Scheme (2015 – 2018). http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/early-review-of-local-plan-(2006-2028/local-development-scheme-(lds)/

2.4. Establishing a Community Infrastructure Levy

2.4.1. The Council remains committed to putting in place a Community Infrastructure Levy. In May 2016, the Council submitted its draft Charging Schedule to an independent examiner, who will now consider all of the Council's evidence that justifies the creation of a levy charge.

2.4.2. The proposed levy charges are: £40 per square metre for all new residential development (except in the Yeovil and Chard Urban Extensions); and £100 per square metre on all large-format retail outside of the defined town centres.

2.4.3. The Examination Hearing in to the draft Charging Schedule took place in Summer 2016, and the Council expects to adopt the levy in Autumn 2016. A date when the levy will be charged on all eligible development has yet to be determined. Further details on the Council's progress with the levy can be found on the Council's website: http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/community-infrastructure-levy/.

2.5. Meeting our Duty to Co-operate

2.5.1. The requirement on the Council to co-operate with statutory and non-statutory partners is an ongoing one. This work ensures that strategically significant issues that could affect a number of different locations are discussed and resolved. The Council is mindful of its direct relationships with local authorities, as well as its functional relationships with a range of authorities.

2.5.2. On important matters such as housing, transport, economic development, and retail the Council has regular dialogue with these other authorities to ensure that critical issues are proactively addressed, and preferably in a co-ordinated manner. For example, the Council has recently jointly procured a Strategic Housing Market Assessment, which has defined the functional housing and economic market areas across Somerset, understanding the complementarities and the spatial specificity required to properly plan for the future.

2.5.3. The Council recently completed an update to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, during which there was in-depth dialogue with agencies responsible for health, education, transport, utilities, flood prevention, ecology, environment, and waste and minerals.

2.5.4. As the Council progresses the early review of the local plan, it will maintain this level of discussion with partners to ensure that its responsibilities linked to the Duty to Co-operate are discharged.

2.6. Creating a Self-build and Custom-build Register

2.6.1. Under the terms of the recently enacted Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, and reinforced by the Housing and Planning Act 2016, the Council is required to hold a register of those interested in building their own home on their own parcel of land and/or accessing a serviced plot of land to commission a custom-build project. The Council has since 2015 held a register of persons who have declared an interest.

2.6.2. As at May 2016, the Council's database holds a list of 23 interest parties who have applied to be on the register. This equates to 23 plots of land which are being sought, across 16 different locations in the district. The locations where plots have been requested range from the largest settlements (e.g. Yeovil and Chard) through to the smallest settlements (e.g. Babcary and Fivehead).

2.6.3. Those wishing to put themselves forward to be on the register should do so by completing the Council's online form, which can be found on the Council's website: http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/self-build--custom-build/

2.6.4. The information collated from the register is being used as part of the final Strategic Housing Market Assessment so as to understand the scale of demand in South Somerset and the overall effect on housing need in the district.

2.7. Working on Planning Applications and Appeals

2.7.1. Over the last 12 months, the Council has been considering and managing a number of strategically important planning applications, these are set out in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Major Planning Applications and Decision Reached

SITE NAME	PROPOSAL	DECISION
Mudford Sustainable Urban Extension, Yeovil	765 dwellings and associated employment, community, and leisure uses, and accompanying infrastructure	Pending
Keyford Sustainable Urban Extension, Yeovil	800 dwellings and associated employment, community, and leisure uses, and accompanying infrastructure	Pending
Crewkerne Key Site, Crewkerne	110 dwellings, 4 ha of employment land, community and leisure uses, and accompanying infrastructure	Approved
Persimmon, Chard	350 dwellings and associated employment, community, and leisure uses, and accompanying infrastructure	Pending
Land Between Forton and Tatworth Road, Chard	200 dwellings and associated employment, community, and leisure uses, and accompanying infrastructure	Pending
Lavers Oak, Martock	91 dwellings with Public Open Space, Vehicular Access	Refused
Shudrick Lane, Ilminster	220 dwellings with Public Open Space, Vehicular Access	Refused
Bunford Park, Yeovil	25ha of employment land in Yeovil	Approved
Dancing Lane, Wincanton	55 dwellings	Refused – Allowed on Appeal
Torbay Road, Ansford and Castle Cary	165 dwellings, 2 ha of employment and associated access and highways infrastructure14/02020/OUT & 15/02347/OUT	Approved
Land West of Station Road, Ansford and Castle Cary	75 dwellings and associated access and highways infrastructure 14/02906/OUT	Approved
Land at Station Road,	75 dwellings and associated access and	Refused – Subject

Ansford and Castle Cary	highways infrastructure 15/00519/OUT	to an Appeal
Land at Station Road, Ansford and Castle Cary	75 dwellings and associated access and highways infrastructure 15/02415/OUT	Pending – Subject to an Appeal
Wayside Farm, Ansford and Castle Cary	125 dwellings and associated access and highways infrastructure	Refused – Subject to an Appeal
Land Off Cartway Lane, Somerton	59 dwellings and associated access	Pending
Land Off Cuckoo Hill, Bruton	68 dwellings with Public Open Space	Pending
Bunford Hollow, Yeovil	80 dwellings and associated access and highways infrastructure	Approved
Land off Oaklands Avenue, Chard	78 dwellings and associated access and highways infrastructure	Pending
The Trial Ground, Somerton	80 dwellings and associated access and highways infrastructure	Approved
Land South Of Coat Road, Martock	95 dwellings and associated landscaping	Approved
Land East of Crimchard, Chard	110 dwellings and associated access and highways infrastructure	Refused
Land South of Langport Road, Langport Road, Somerton	150dwellings and associated access and highways infrastructure	Approved
Land North of Dragonfly Chase, Ilchester	150dwellings and associated access and highways infrastructure, Open space	Approved
Land North of Thorne Lane, Yeovil	298 dwellings and associated access and highways infrastructure, open space	Pending
Haynes Publishing, High Street, Sparkford	47 dwellings commercial and highways infrastructure	Pending
Land OS 5775 North of Kelways, Wearne Lane, Langport	71 Dwellings and associated access and open space	Refused – Subject to an Appeal
Yeovil Town Football Club LTD, Boundary Road, Houndstone	Mixed-use development (comprising A1, A3, C1, C3, D1 and D2	Pending Decision
Land at Ringwell Hill, Bower Hinton	49 Dwellings and associated access and open space	Refused – Subject to an Appeal

Source: SSDC Planning and Monitoring Databases

Part Two: South Somerset in Context

Introduction

Previous monitoring reports have failed to understand South Somerset's role and function in the context of neighbouring local authorities, the County, the South-West or the UK.

Without these comparisons it is difficult to understand what makes South Somerset unique and what specific opportunities and constraints exist within the district.

This part of the AMR looks at South Somerset's status when compared against others. Where relevant and appropriate, comparison is also made against the district authorities in Somerset, namely: Mendip, Sedgemoor, Taunton Deane, and West Somerset; as well as Somerset, the South-West and the UK.

Five main topics are considered and analysed in order to set out a wider contextual understanding of South Somerset's relative position. This data and analysis should help challenge underlying assumptions about the character and make-up of the district.

Those topics are set out as follows:

- Population and Demographics;
- Housing and Households;
- Economy and Jobs;
- Retail; and
- Transport.

3. Population and Demographics

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES:

- South Somerset's population of 164,982 (2015) is the largest of the five local authorities in Somerset.
- Population growth has been consistent, with South Somerset showing the largest overall increase in population across the County since 2001.
- The main cause of population growth in South Somerset is internal migration from elsewhere in the UK.
- Yeovil continues to be the largest town in South Somerset. However, the largest population growth between 2001 and 2011 took place in Ilminster.
- South Somerset has a number of settlements of similar size - reflecting their historic market town status. This dispersed pattern of people and development has strengths and weaknesses. Questions about how best to support these locations whilst not overburdening them and marrying up infrastructure provision are critical to deciding on the long term future of the district.
- South Somerset is an ageing district, with sharp growth in those aged over 60. This is twinned with recent data showing significant losses in those aged 15 to 29. If this trend is to continue over the long term, the district may face major challenges in providing a sufficiently large and competitive labour force.

3.1. Population Trends

3.1.1. The Census in 2011 shows that South Somerset has the largest resident population in Somerset. Since 2001, South Somerset's population has grown at a relatively consistent rate. The level of growth has fluctuated at around one thousand additional persons each and every year. Between 2001 and 2011, South Somerset's overall population grew by 10,274 persons (the highest level of growth in Somerset). The rate of change in population was third, behind Taunton Deane and Sedgemoor, albeit the population in those locations is starting from a much lower base.

3.1.2. Table 3.1 sets out the resident population in each local authority in Somerset, as well as a figure for the South West region; and compares the level of change between 2001 and 2011.

Table 3.1: Population Change in South Somerset (2001 – 2011)

Area	Population (2001)	Population (2011)	Change (2001 – 2011)	Percentage Change (%) (2001 – 2011)
Mendip	103,869	109,279	5,410	5.21
Sedgemoor	105,881	114,588	8,707	8.22
South Somerset	150,969	161,243	10,274	6.81
Taunton Deane	102,299	110,187	7,888	7.71
West Somerset	35,075	34,675	-400	-1.14
Somerset	498,093	529,972	31,879	6.40
South West	4,928,434	5,288,935	360,501	7.31

Source: Neighbourhood Statistics – All Usual Residents – Census 2001 and 2011

3.1.3. As well as looking at Census data, it is possible to set out more recent information on population. Mid-year population estimates are officially released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), taking account of long term international migration patterns, along with combination of registration, survey and administrative data are used to estimate the different components of population change.

3.1.4. The latest Mid-Year Population Estimate data release is from 2015. Table 3.2 shows the population estimate for each of the Somerset local authority areas and the South West; as well as the scale of growth since the Mid-Year Population Estimate in 2001.

Table 3.2: Population Change in South Somerset (2001 – 2015)

Area	Population (2001)	Population (2015)	Change (2001 – 2015)	Percentage Change (%) (2001 – 2015)
Mendip	103,964	111,724	7,760	7.46
Sedgemoor	106,030	120,260	14,230	13.42
South Somerset	151,059	164,982	13,923	9.22
Taunton Deane	102,585	114,021	11,436	11.15
West Somerset	35,069	34,403	-666	-1.90
Somerset	498,707	545,390	46,683	9.36
South West	4,943,364	5,471,180	527,816	10.68
England	49,449,746	54,786,327	5,336,581	10.79

Source: ONS – Mid-year Population Estimate (Mid-2015 release)

3.1.5. Whilst the exact figures for 2001 differ slightly to those recorded in the Census, due to them stemming from a different dataset, the overall trend in growth is very similar.

3.1.6. South Somerset's population remains the largest in the County and the level of growth in the district remains at approximately one thousand persons per annum. Interestingly, by 2015, the data shows that South Somerset's overall level of population growth has dipped below that experienced in Sedgemoor. South Somerset's rate of change remains third, behind both Taunton Deane and Sedgemoor.

3.2. Components of Population Change

3.2.1. It is clear that South Somerset's population is growing and has continued to grow over the last 10 to 15 years. To understand what is driving this change, it is possible to analyse the components of population change, and the breakdown of the effects of births, deaths, migration and other influences. Table 3.3 shows this breakdown in detail.

3.2.2. The analysis indicates that the main driver of the population growth in South Somerset is internal migration, i.e. those choosing to relocate to the district from elsewhere in the UK. Levels of international migration have, at times, matched the amount of internal migration (see period 2004 – 2006) but it does not have a dominant influence on population growth in the district. Indeed recent figures (since 2011) show international migration representing just 5% – 10% of the total population growth per annum.

3.2.3. Interestingly, early in the previous decade (2001 to 2006) deaths were exceeding births. However, the subsequent period 2007 to 2014 shows that the birth rate has increased to the extent that it is outweighing the number of deaths in the district. But, as at 2014/2015 the number of deaths is again exceeding births and so has resulted in a negative natural change. It will be interesting to watch this fluctuating pattern and see whether the current negative net change caused by more deaths than births maintains in to the long term.

Table 3.3: Components of Population Change in South Somerset (2001 to 2015)

Year	Natural change	Net internal migration	Net international migration	Other changes	Other (UPC)	Total change
2001/2	-236	1,027	201	135	-21	**1,106**
2002/3	-172	1,134	360	11	-35	**1,298**
2003/4	-130	1,222	455	-28	-15	**1,504**
2004/5	-83	873	774	-2	-44	**1,518**
2005/6	-114	500	521	57	-29	**935**
2006/7	-25	923	619	47	-28	**1,536**
2007/8	158	842	207	13	-5	**1,215**
2008/9	43	429	15	23	-3	**507**
2009/10	56	-1	164	-55	29	**193**
2010/11	152	725	348	-27	44	**1,242**
2011/12	111	697	50	41	0	**899**
2012/13	44	828	64	-5	0	**931**
2013/14	91	456	125	-46	0	**626**
2014/15	-126	380	48	111	0	**413**
Total	**-231**	**10,035**	**3,951**	**275**	**-107**	**13,923**

Source: ONS

3.2.4. Table 3.4 below explores the reasons for the population change between 2013/14 and 2014/15 in more detail. It highlights a number of effects occurring in South Somerset:

- The net loss of internal migrants is greatest in the age group 15-19, highlighting the effect of students leaving the district to go to further and higher education elsewhere in the UK. There are also net losses across the age range 20 - 29;
- The net gain of internal migrants is greatest in the age group 65-69, highlighting the attractiveness of the district to retirees. There are also significant net gains across the age range 50-64.
- South Somerset has a reasonably gain of “other” forms of population, with these mainly stemming from members of the armed forces. This figure also includes prisoners, but this does not have a significant bearing on the figures in South Somerset.

Table 3.4: Detailed Breakdown of Components of Population Change between 2013/14 and 2014/15

Age	Estimated Population 2014	Births (a)	Deaths (b)	Internal Migration Inflow (c)	Internal Migration Outflow (d)	Internal Migration Net (e)	International Migration Inflow (f)	International Migration Outflow (g)	International Migration Net (h)	Other (i)	Total Change (a – b) + e + h + i	Estimated Population 2015	% of Estimated Population 2015
0-4	9,048	1,645	8	524	473	51	45	16	29	12	1,729	8914	5.40%
5-9	9,159	0	0	411	335	76	37	17	20	5	101	9333	5.66%
10-14	8,800	0	1	356	307	49	48	11	37	1	86	8775	5.32%
15-19	9,328	0	1	351	803	-452	54	23	31	2	-420	9228	5.59%
20-24	8,221	0	3	924	982	-58	79	135	-56	18	-99	7813	4.74%
25-29	9,011	0	2	799	831	-32	101	139	-38	38	-34	9166	5.56%
30-34	8,109	0	6	597	547	50	66	98	-32	6	18	8205	4.97%
35-39	8,208	0	9	481	350	131	49	66	-17	10	115	8138	4.93%
40-44	10,343	0	7	464	386	78	43	45	-2	20	89	10062	6.10%
45-49	11,702	0	23	413	363	50	38	33	5	11	43	11589	7.02%
50-54	11,757	0	41	476	340	136	41	22	19	-5	109	11962	7.25%
55-59	10,682	0	37	412	294	118	26	14	12	-7	86	10917	6.62%
60-64	11,216	0	75	378	254	124	24	12	12	0	61	11023	6.68%
65-69	12,009	0	117	408	260	148	15	9	6	0	37	12251	7.43%
70-74	9,025	0	161	208	195	13	16	6	10	0	-138	9410	5.70%
75-79	7,002	0	181	122	132	-10	6	2	4	0	-187	7167	4.34%
80-84	5,385	0	284	110	161	-51	2	0	2	0	-333	5332	3.23%
85-89	3,439	0	312	80	107	-27	6	0	6	0	-333	3525	2.14%
90+	2,125	0	503	59	73	-14	0	0	0	0	-517	2172	1.32%
Grand Total	**164,569**	**1,645**	**1,771**	**7,573**	**7,193**	**380**	**696**	**648**	**48**	**111**	**413**	**164,982**	**100.00%**

Source: ONS

3.3. Population in South Somerset's Main Settlements

3.3.1. It is long held that South Somerset is a rural area – and in terms of land form and overall size this is largely true. However, it is noteworthy that the district has 15 settlements, each with a population of approximately 2,000 or more residents.

3.3.2. The data presented in Table 3.5 below sets out the population for the settlements themselves, taking account of the built development footprint, rather than presenting data on a 'parish' or 'ward' administrative boundary basis.

Table 3.5: Population of Settlements in South Somerset (2001 to 2011)

Settlement	2001	2011	Change	% Change
Yeovil	40,282	45,339	5,057	12.55
Chard	11,631	13,074	1,443	12.41
Crewkerne	6,728	7,000	272	4.04
Ilminster	4,285	5,808	1,523	35.54
Wincanton	4,803	5,435	632	13.16
Martock	4,309	4,522	213	4.94
Somerton	4,133	4,339	206	4.98
Castle Cary	3,056	3,232	176	5.76
South Petherton	3,177	3,367	190	5.98
Langport	2,977	3,063	86	2.89
Bruton	2,611	2,593	-18	-0.69
Milborne Port	2,644	2,802	158	5.98
Ilchester and Yeovilton	2,570	3,824	1,254	48.79
Tatworth	2,211	2,259	48	2.17
Stoke sub Hamdon	1,965	1,968	3	0.15

Source: Neighbourhood Statistics – Census

3.3.3. The data shows there are a number of settlements across the district with a broadly similar population. There are strengths and weaknesses to this pattern of development and population.

3.3.4. It can be conferred that this scale provides a sufficient level of activity to support a range of services and facilities in these locations, allowing them to be sustainable settlements that serve community needs. However, given the range of similar sized settlements in does also pose the question – how best to focus development in order to achieve a sustainable pattern of growth, whilst simultaneously protecting the natural environment? This is one of South Somerset's greatest dilemmas looking to the future. Finding a satisfactory solution will be at the heart of the choices in future local plan-making.

3.3.5. Table 3.5 also shows the level of growth and change in the main settlements between 2001 and 2011. The analysis reveals that population growth in Yeovil and Chard has been consistent over the last decade. Interestingly, the level of growth in Ilminster has outstripped everywhere bar Yeovil, underpinning its status as one of the strongest towns in terms of market attractiveness.

3.3.6. The rate of population change in Ilchester and Yeovilton is significant during this period, but can be explained by the changing nature of the military-linked population at RNAS Yeovilton, and the relocation of service personnel from overseas. It is unlikely that this level of growth will be replicated in the future.

3.3.7. Perhaps most interesting of all is that for nine of the settlements, annual growth has been very small – in the tens of persons. Some of these settlements have only experience a 5% increase in population between the two Census periods. Somewhat surprisingly, the data also shows a reduction in population in Bruton over the ten-year period.

3.3.8. At a more general level, the table shows that South Somerset has a series of locations which are of a similar scale *and* in close proximity to one another (e.g. Langport & Somerton; Bruton & Castle Cary; Martock & South Petherton). As noted above, there are strengths and weaknesses to this dispersed pattern of development and population across the district.

3.3.9. Strengths include that each settlement is of a size to provide opportunities to live and work; whilst balancing impacts on environmental capacity. But, weaknesses can stem from each place competing against on another for scarce investment and infrastructure funding.

3.3.10. Because these places are the same size, there is the perception that they should be treated equally. That the level of investment, infrastructure and service provision must be identical in order for the locations to survive and prosper. The reality is that these locations are different, by virtue of history and geography. Therefore, the idea that each should be treated equally in terms of provision is unlikely to be successfully justified. Nor is it likely to be a successful strategy for growth looking to the future.

3.3.11. The Council's complementary work examining the role and function of these settlements will be crucial in shaping the strategy for future growth. A thorough understanding of the "functional" way that these settlements (or clusters of settlements) operate will be vital to ensuring that South Somerset maximises its opportunities and does not run the risk of perpetuating the status quo, which may be to the detriment of individual settlements and the district as a whole.

3.3.12. Analysing the functional role of these places requires an appreciation of the way that people access and utilise other supporting services and infrastructure (employment, education, healthcare, social services, leisure, etc). The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2015/2016) provides a frame of reference on each of these issues, and will be instrumental in future plan-making.

3.3.13. The question of how best to focus development in certain locations in order to achieve a sustainable pattern of development in the future remains one of the most challenging questions facing South Somerset. In looking to the future there may need to be a more deliberate strategy where certain locations are identified to receive additional growth which would see them overtake the population of other settlements, and indeed those in close proximity.

3.4. Age Profile

3.4.1. Whilst population growth is the main component of change in the district, the age-profile of South Somerset's existing population also has a significant influence on how the district functions. Table 3.6 compares the changing age profile of each of the local authorities in Somerset.

Table 3.6: Change in Age Structure (2001-2014)

Area	Under 15	15-29	30-44	45-59	60-74	75 & over	Total
Mendip	-6.6%	10.1%	-19.3%	13.2%	41.8%	22.3%	**6.6%**
Sedgemoor	2.5%	23.3%	-12.8%	16.4%	36.5%	20.9%	**12.3%**
South Somerset	-2.0%	13.1%	-14.6%	10.5%	38.5%	22.9%	**8.9%**
Taunton Deane	3.1%	10.7%	-8.7%	14.5%	31.1%	20.8%	**10.0%**
West Somerset	-16.3%	1.0%	-28.7%	-4.9%	22.8%	11.1%	**-2.1%**
Somerset	-1.8%	13.3%	-14.8%	12.0%	35.8%	20.8%	**8.6%**
South West	1.2%	16.7%	-8.4%	12.7%	30.1%	16.1%	**9.7%**
England	4.2%	12.9%	-4.0%	16.0%	24.1%	17.5%	**9.8%**

Source: ONS

3.4.2. Since 2001, South Somerset has seen a decline in both the 'Under 15' and '30-44' age groups, albeit the loss of those under 15 is modest. From the point of view of developing and maintaining a labour force within the area this could, in the long term, present some structural challenges about the availability of future employees.

3.4.3. To some extent this is counter-balanced by growth in the '15-29', '45-59' and 60-74' age groups, but of course, the older age category includes those individuals who will have passed the state retirement age and will therefore not be economically active. Data on the state of the economy (see Chapter 4) shows that there are no immediate issues linked to this loss of key segments of the workforce; however, it is something that requires on-going review to ensure there is not a long term problem generated.

3.4.4. It is interesting to compare the longer term trend in the 15-29 age group, against the year-on-year change set out in Table 3.4 above. Table 3.6 shows that over the last decade, there has been steady growth in that age group; whereas the latest yearly statistics indicate a significant loss of people. It will be interesting to see whether this more recent trend, which accords with a colloquial understanding of what happens to people in this age group, continues or not.

3.4.5. Interestingly, South Somerset is not alone in facing this issue. Each of the Somerset local authorities has experienced the same shift in its age-profile. Again, in looking at the long term future of Somerset, to ensure that it continues to be economically competitive, there may need to be a joined-up policy response to ensure that younger age cohorts are retained within the county.

3.4.6. For example, addressing the lack of a comprehensive approach to Further and Higher Education within the county, through a more consensual set of policies to delivery educational infrastructure, may be required to ensure the statistical trends do not continue to the detriment of the area.

4. Housing and Households

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES:

- Between 2001 and 2011 South Somerset has delivered more dwelling than any other local authority in the county (7,263 dwellings).
- Most of the main settlements saw an approximate 10% increase in the number of dwellings over the period 2001 to 2011.
- The number of empty homes in the district remains consistent and relatively static, although recent good work has reduced the overall number since 2012 / 2013.
- South Somerset has seen a steady rise in the number of households in the district between 2001 and 2011.
- Latest projections for future household numbers show that South Somerset will need to provide for the second highest mount in Somerset, after Sedgemoor.
- The affordability of an average house in South Somerset is around 7.5 times the average income.
- Affordable housing need in South Somerset remains high. With approximately 25% of all need in the county arising from the district.

4.1. Dwellings

4.1.1. As the population of South Somerset increases, it is natural to expect the number of dwellings in South Somerset to also increase. Between 2001 and 2011, South Somerset delivered more new dwellings than any other local authority in Somerset. Indeed the rate of increase in South Somerset was higher than both the South-West and England average; and second only to Sedgemoor in Somerset.

4.1.2. Table 4.1 shows that between the period 2001 and 2011, South Somerset delivered over 7,200 new dwellings, at an annual average of 726.

Table 4.1: Number of Dwellings per Local Authority (2001 – 2011)

Local Authority	2001	2011	Change	% Change
Mendip	44,069	48,675	4,606	10.45
Sedgemoor	45,773	50,879	5,106	11.16
South Somerset	66,112	73,375	7,263	10.99
Taunton Deane	45,157	49,220	4,063	9.00
West Somerset	16,820	17,571	751	4.46
South West	2,180,746	2,401,289	220,543	10.11
England	21,206,804	22,976,066	1,769,262	8.34

Source: Neighbourhood Statistics – Census – All Dwellings

4.1.3. Whilst the Census data shows a track record of delivery between 2001 and 2011, the Council is also required to track the delivery of dwellings over the lifetime of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028).

4.1.4. The Council carries out annual monitoring based upon the financial year period (1st April to 31st March). Between 2006 and 2016, the Council's monitoring shows that 6,252 new dwellings have been delivered in South Somerset. Further details on the Council's track record of housing delivery and the implications for the Council's five-year housing land supply position can be found in Section 10 and on the Council's website[5].

Table 4.2: Number of Dwellings per Settlement in South Somerset (2001 – 2011)

Settlement	2001	2011	Change	% Change	Annualised Average Change (2001 to 2011)
Yeovil	19,469	21,691	2,222	11.41	222
Chard	5,769*	6,962	1,193	20.68	119
Crewkerne	3,084	3,427	343	11.12	34
Ilminster	1,588*	1,994	406	25.57	41
Wincanton	2,122	2,478	356	16.78	36
Somerton	1,909	2,065	156	8.17	16
Castle Cary	1,458	1,578	120	8.23	12
Langport	1,308	1,422	114	8.72	11
Bruton	1,073	1,141	68	6.34	7
Ilchester	789*	960	171	21.67	17
Martock	1,883	2,083	200	10.62	20
Milborne Port	1,170	1,325	155	13.25	16
South Petherton	1,213	1,339	126	10.39	13
Stoke Sub Hamdon	756	787	31	4.10	3

Source: Neighbourhood Statistics – Census – All Dwellings

* Data for four output areas in Chard, two in Ilminster and two in Ilchester are not available from the 2001 Census, but are available in the 2011 Census. Therefore 'change' and 'percentage' change in these settlements is likely to be over-estimated, albeit not to the extent that it has a significant bearing on the overall conclusion.

4.1.5. Table 4.2 above shows that each of the main settlements across South Somerset saw a moderate level of growth in dwellings over the period 2001 to 2011. It is not surprising to see Yeovil and Chard experience the largest growth in number of dwellings given they are most strategically important settlements in the district. However, as per the data on population growth, it is interesting to see Ilminster recording the greatest rate of change in percentage terms, and the highest annual increase after Yeovil and Chard.

[5]

4.2. Vacant Properties

4.2.1. During the preparation of the local plan it was advocated that the overall housing requirement in South Somerset could be significantly reduced due to the changing nature of the number of vacant properties in the district.

4.2.2. Table 4.3 documents the number of vacant properties in South Somerset and the other local authorities in the county. Table 4.4 then sets out which of those vacant properties can be classified as long term vacant, and therefore not likely to come back in to habitable use.

4.2.3. The data shows that South Somerset has the largest overall stock of vacant homes within Somerset. Again, as per other datasets, this is not surprising given overall size and scale of the district and the total volume of properties.

4.2.4. When the overall quantum of vacant homes is compared with the number of long term vacant properties, it is clear that overall ratio has remained more or less constant since 2006. Some variation has occurred, particularly in 2013, but there is insufficient evidence to suggest there is a wholesale shift in the relationship between the overall number of vacant dwellings and the level of long term vacancies.

4.2.5. As such, the evidence does not suggest that the level of new housing delivery in South Somerset can be reduced significantly due to the prospect of resolving the overall number of vacant dwellings. Whilst the objective to reduce the number of vacant properties should remain, to help raise the quality of the residential stock, and address negative quality of place issues, there is nothing to suggest that it is a solution or realistic alternative to new housing provision.

Table 4.3: Vacant Properties

Local Authority	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Mendip	1,469	1,348	1,354	1,503	1,403	1,444	1403	1402	1461
Sedgemoor	1,873	1,460	1,575	1,671	1,566	1,468	1643	1886	1815
South Somerset	2,373	2,289	2,410	2,603	2,554	2,649	2588	2286	2108
Taunton Deane	1,281	1,319	1,431	1,583	1,665	1,602	1596	1644	1703
West Somerset	565	544	570	617	649	560	545	544	495

Source: DCLG – Live Table 615

Table 4.4: Long Term Vacant Properties

Local Authority	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Mendip	468	434	486	530	473	445	485	470	439
Sedgemoor	814	399	473	528	488	415	470	390	277
South Somerset	905	922	1,138	1,124	1,029	1,103	1,016	470	636
Taunton Deane	445	395	345	443	540	495	429	428	473
West Somerset	287	290	295	303	324	239	209	211	224

Source: DCLG – Live Table 615

4.3. Households

4.3.1. The Census records all residents living in households at the time of the survey. Table 4.5 sets out the overall number of households in South Somerset in both 2001 and 2011. A household is defined as one person living alone, or a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address who share cooking facilities and share a living room, sitting room or dining area.

Table 4.5: Number of Households in South Somerset (2001 to 2011)

Households	2001	2011	Change	% Change
South Somerset	63,769	69,501	5,732	8.99

Source: Neighbourhood Statistics - Households (Census 2001 and 2011)

4.3.2. The table can be read in conjunction with data set out in Section 4.1 and Section 4.2, to highlight that population growth, change in the number of households and the overall number of dwellings delivered in the district does not balance, and are not equal.

4.3.3. This is not surprising. The numbers of households does not directly translate into the number of dwellings required or built. Other factors, such as the propensity to form a household and average household size affect the overall number of dwellings that are ultimately needed or built.

4.3.4. That being said, the household projections produced by Government are a robust starting point from which to understand the change in number of households in an area, and the likely impact this will have on the need to plan for a future number of dwellings.

4.3.5. The most up-to-date household projections are the 2014-based CLG sub-national household projections (SNHP) published in July 2016. Those projections are underpinned by 2014-based ONS sub-national population projections (SNPP) published in May 2016.

4.3.6. The data from the SNHP shows that the average household size in South Somerset in 2014 was 2.25 persons per household. As household size continues to reduce, it is likely that household formation rates will increase, which in turn will raise the overall number of households that will be created in the future.

4.3.7. Notwithstanding the points raised in Section 4.3.2, the fact that household size is reducing and more households are being formed, is likely to mean that more dwellings will be required in South Somerset to accommodate this growth.

4.3.8. Table 4.6 below sets out levels of household growth expected by the CLG household projections in the 2014 – 2039 period. Across the whole County, the CLG household projections show household growth of about 50,000 – this is a 21% increase; slightly below equivalent figures for England (23%).

4.3.9. In absolute terms, South Somerset's projected growth is expected to be the second highest in the county after Sedgemoor. Although proportionately growth is projected to be highest in Sedgemoor (27%), and Taunton Deane (24%), with South Somerset somewhat lower at 18%.

Table 4.6: Household Change 2014 to 2039 (2014-based CLG household projections)

Area	Households 2014	Households 2039	Change in households	% change
Mendip	47,453	57,144	9,691	20.42
Sedgemoor	50,921	64,624	13,703	26.91
South Somerset	71,585	84,824	13,239	18.49
Taunton Deane	48,743	60,246	11,503	23.60
West Somerset	15,651	17,405	1,754	11.21
Somerset	234,353	284,532	50,179	21.41
England	22,746,487	28,003,598	5,257,111	23.11

Source: CLG – 2014-based household projections

4.3.10. The full implications of these household figures, and the subsequent requirement for the number of new homes required in South Somerset is not yet fully determined. The Council has commissioned a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) which will explore these issues more thoroughly and present a conclusion on both household formation and the overall number of dwellings likely to be required in the future. This report is expected to be finalised in late September / early October and will be a crucial piece of evidence when looking at the proposed Early Review of the Local Plan.

4.4. Housing Affordability

4.4.1. Whilst the Government has tasked local authorities to boost significantly the supply of housing, there remains a major issue stemming from whether housing is affordable to those individuals in need.

4.4.2. Table 4.7 and Table 4.8 set out datasets highlighting the relative affordability of housing within South Somerset. Hopefully, the figures help outline some of the complex issues involved in housing provision, and the challenge facing local authorities in solving the problem of whether there is sufficient housing.

4.4.3. The Council suggests that the data shows, in the short term at least, that problems centred on housing affordability and access to the right type of housing in the right locations, is unlikely to be solved solely through increasing the volume of new dwellings delivered.

4.4.4. Arguably, the fact that housing is unaffordable to many is a symptom of fifty years or more of under-investment and under-delivery. Therefore, it is plausible to expect that a long term problem requires a long term solution. It is advocated that a more sophisticated, joined-up programme of investment and targeted action is required to ultimately resolve the complex issues.

4.4.5. Table 4.7 and Table 4.8 show the ratio of average house price to average incomes in South Somerset and how that has evolved since 2001. The tables also provide a comparison between South Somerset and the other local authorities in the county, and England as a whole.

4.4.6. The tables compare house prices and earnings at the lower quartile and median ranges. The lower quartile and median property price/income is determined by ranking all property prices/incomes in ascending order. The lowest 25 per cent of prices are below the lower quartile; the highest 75 per cent are above the lower quartile. The lowest 50 per cent of prices are below the median; the highest 50 per cent are above the median.

4.4.7. The ratios in both tables track the boom and bust cycle of the economy over the last decade, with ratios becoming their most extreme in 2008, and dropping back considerably afterwards. However, over the last three years of the data (2013 – 2015) the ratios are beginning to rise sharply and are now approaching the levels seen when the housing market was at its peak in 2008.

4.4.8. In Table 4.7 South Somerset's ratio is the lowest in the county; whereas in Table 4.8 South Somerset's ratio is the second lowest after Sedgemoor. South Somerset's ratios are perhaps not quite as high as say Taunton Deane or Mendip because of the sheer range in values of properties across the district. It is without doubt that in certain locations within South Somerset, the ratio will be much greater, and affordability pressures much higher.

4.4.9. Even though the ratios for South Somerset are some of the lowest in Somerset, it is still above the national level in both tables.

4.4.10. Furthermore, in general terms having a ratio of over seven to one cannot be deemed 'affordable' or indeed represent a long term sustainable housing market.

Table 4.7: Ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile earnings in Somerset

Local Authority	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013*	2014*	2015*
Mendip	5.29	6.68	6.93	8.50	8.46	8.63	10.12	9.69	8.53	8.08	8.96	9.22	8.41	8.84	8.91
Sedgemoor	4.23	4.88	6.05	7.75	7.71	7.97	8.56	8.22	7.11	7.37	7.56	7.41	7.19	7.94	7.89
South Somerset	5.12	5.51	6.67	7.82	8.13	8.27	8.49	8.39	7.44	8.02	7.23	7.41	7.17	7.52	7.63
Taunton Deane	5.68	6.56	7.51	8.53	8.99	8.23	9.41	9.39	7.58	7.67	8.10	8.30	7.86	8.46	8.08
West Somerset	.	6.10	7.51	11.26	.	8.62	10.97	10.90	9.82	8.92	10.36	9.25	9.50	10.12	10.19
England	4.08	4.45	5.23	6.28	6.82	7.15	7.25	6.97	6.28	6.69	6.57	6.58	6.66	6.95	7.02

Source: DCLG – Live Table 576

Table 4.8: Ratio of median house prices to median earnings in Somerset

Local Authority	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013*	2014*	2015*
Mendip	5.18	6.40	7.28	8.34	7.94	7.71	8.43	8.69	8.09	7.66	7.59	8.72	8.02	8.72	9.06
Sedgemoor	4.71	5.62	6.50	8.08	7.89	7.12	8.16	8.40	7.08	8.02	7.52	7.36	7.48	7.36	7.59
South Somerset	4.76	5.23	6.45	7.38	7.60	7.47	7.98	8.04	7.27	7.73	7.07	6.99	7.19	7.39	7.79
Taunton Deane	4.82	5.76	6.99	7.60	7.98	7.59	8.13	8.06	6.94	7.53	7.53	7.67	7.46	7.73	7.87
West Somerset	.	.	.	.	.	7.68	.	.	.	6.27	.	.	.	.	.
England	4.47	5.07	5.83	6.58	6.81	6.97	7.23	6.93	6.27	7.01	6.69	6.86	6.92	7.25	7.49

Source: DCLG – Live Table 577

House Price data is sourced from ONS House Price Statistics for Small Areas (HPSSA) statistical release. Earnings data is sourced from The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). House price data covers the 12 months up to September 2015. Earnings relate to the respondents place of residence rather than place of work. This means that affordability in commuter areas reflects the earning power of commuters.

* New versions of the DCLG tables have been created using a different source of House Price data - the ONS House Price Statistics for Small Areas datasets. This leads to slight differences in the distribution of affordability ratios from 2013 onwards.

4.4.11. The ratios set out in Table 4.7 and Table 4.8 can be brought in to sharper focus when compared with the average sales values achieved for a range of properties across a range of settlements in the district. Sales values are taken from properties sold over the period September 2014 to March 2015.

4.4.12. The data shows some significant variations in average values realised across the district. Prices in Crewkerne are the lowest across the larger settlements in the district, and it is clear that the larger settlements realise lower values on average. This reflects the range and type of properties in these locations with the lower prices helping to moderate the average values. Elsewhere, in the smaller settlements across the district, values are significantly higher, with Milborne Port showing the highest average sales values.

4.4.13. Simply put, whilst South Somerset has one formal "Housing Market Area" spanning the whole of the administrative area of the district, it is clear that there are significant differences and sub-markets, which generate different housing affordability pressures.

Table 4.9: Sales Values (2014 – 2015)

Area	Average values per dwelling sold between September 2014 & March 2015	Average values £s per sq. m	Average values £s per sq. ft.
Yeovil	£190,667	£2,243	£208
Chard	£193,595	£2,278	£212
Crewkerne	£168,531	£1,983	£184
Ilminster	£243,578	£2,865	£266
Wincanton	£196,334	£2,310	£215
Martock	£216,681	£2,549	£237
Somerton	£258,144	£3,036	£282
Castle Cary	£193,595	£2,278	£212
Langport	£270,589	£3,182	£296
Bruton	£252,032	£2,965	£275
Milborne Port	£298,873	£3,515	£327
Templecombe	£273,904	£3,222	£299
SSDC Average	**£229,710**	**£2,702**	**£251**

Source: SSDC – Community Infrastructure Levy Viability Evidence (2015)

4.5. Households on Housing Register

4.5.1. In any discussion about households and affordable housing it is important to no just focus on purchase/rental price, but to also understand need and demand. Table 4.10 sets out the current number of households on the Homefinder Register, with their relative 'need' documented by the appropriate banding.

4.5.2. Table 4.11 can be read in conjunction with the assessment of need, and shows where within Somerset those on the register are seeking to live.

Table 4.10: Households on Somerset Homefinder Register by banding (January 2016)

Local Authority	Emergency	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Unknown	TOTAL
Mendip	1	147	589	569	0	1,306
Sedgemoor	1	192	583	1,585	2	2,363
South Somerset	3	271	708	1,092	1	2,075
Taunton Deane	3	330	571	1,616	0	2,520
West Somerset	0	80	168	369	0	617
TOTAL	8	1,020	2,619	5,231	3	8,881
% of total	0.1%	11.5%	29.5%	58.9%	0.0%	100.0%

Source: Somerset Homefinder Housing Register

Table 4.11: Number of Households on Somerset Homefinder Register (January 2016)

	Mendip	Sedgemoor	South Somerset	Taunton Deane	West Somerset	Outside Somerset	Unknown	TOTAL	% of total
Mendip	1,233	1	2	0	0	65	5	**1,306**	**14.7%**
Sedgemoor	5	2,198	7	2	1	140	10	**2,363**	**26.6%**
South Somerset	4	1	1,966	2	2	99	1	**2,075**	**23.4%**
Taunton Deane	1	8	4	2,381	2	120	4	**2,520**	**28.4%**
West Somerset	0	0	3	2	586	24	2	**617**	**6.9%**
TOTAL	1,243	2,208	1,982	2,387	591	448	22	**8,881**	**100.0%**
% of total	**14.0%**	**24.9%**	**22.3%**	**26.9%**	**6.7%**	**5.0%**	**0.2%**	**100.0%**	

Source: Somerset Homefinder Housing Register

4.5.3. Taken together Tables 4.10 and Table 4.11 give a useful guide to South Somerset's current affordable housing need. It is of interest to note that the vast majority of those in need who are currently within South Somerset wish to remain in South Somerset, rather than be housed elsewhere in the county.

4.5.4. The context provided by this data is vital in future discussions on policy-making for addressing projected newly-arising need. However, it is too simplistic to just look at current need to understand future need, with other factors such as the rate of newly forming households, and existing households falling into need ultimately affecting the overall quantum.

4.5.5. The council has commissioned a "Strategic Housing Market Assessment" (SHMA) via Justin Gardner Consulting and further details on future affordable housing requirements will be defined in that work. The final SHMA report is expected in late September / early October 2016.

5. South Somerset's Economy

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES:

- South Somerset's Function Economic Area extends along the A303 corridor.
- Total number of jobs in South Somerset (which includes self-employed, government-supported trainees and HM Forces) was 82,000 in 2015.
- The 'Public administration, education and health sector' is the largest employer in South Somerset. Although the 'manufacturing' sector is a significant employer.
- In 2015, Manufacturing generated £785 million to the South Somerset economy. This sector's economic value has grown by over 25% since 2001.
- The number of enterprises in South Somerset has grown since2010, but only steadily. The agriculture sector has the largest number of enterprises. Manufacturing, whilst the most valuable sector to the economy only has the third highest number of enterprises.
- In 2015, 98% of all businesses employed fewer than 50 employees. This Shows South Somerset's reliance on Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs).
- Economic activity rates are at their highest recorded levels. In 2015, 85,600 people were economically active, which represents 84% of the population.
- Gross weekly wages for both males and females are lower than the national and regional average.
- The number of claimants in South Somerset is at the lowest level since 2001.

5.1. Overview

5.1.1. A strong and prosperous economy is one where: a major proportion of the local population is economically active, unemployment is low, workers and business are raising their productivity, employees are more highly skilled, and the overall number of jobs and businesses is increasing in the area.

5.1.2. In understanding the link between a strong economy and other issues, say housing delivery, it is important to recognise that it is a highly complex relationship. Changes and effects in one do have a bearing on the other, but the ratio is not an absolute one, and a number of other factors and assumptions affect the overall association. In summary, it is too simplistic to expect the provision of jobs in an area to equal the amount of new homes in an area (or vice versa). Assumptions about commuting, double jobbing (the proportion of people with more than one job), and future economic activity rates, also have an influence on whether an area's economy is deemed to be performing well and 'growing'.

5.1.3. So, whilst job growth and the changes in the economy should be used in the overall consideration of housing delivery and the future state of the district, caution is required to ensure that the too much emphasis is placed on the direct linked between one aspect and the other.

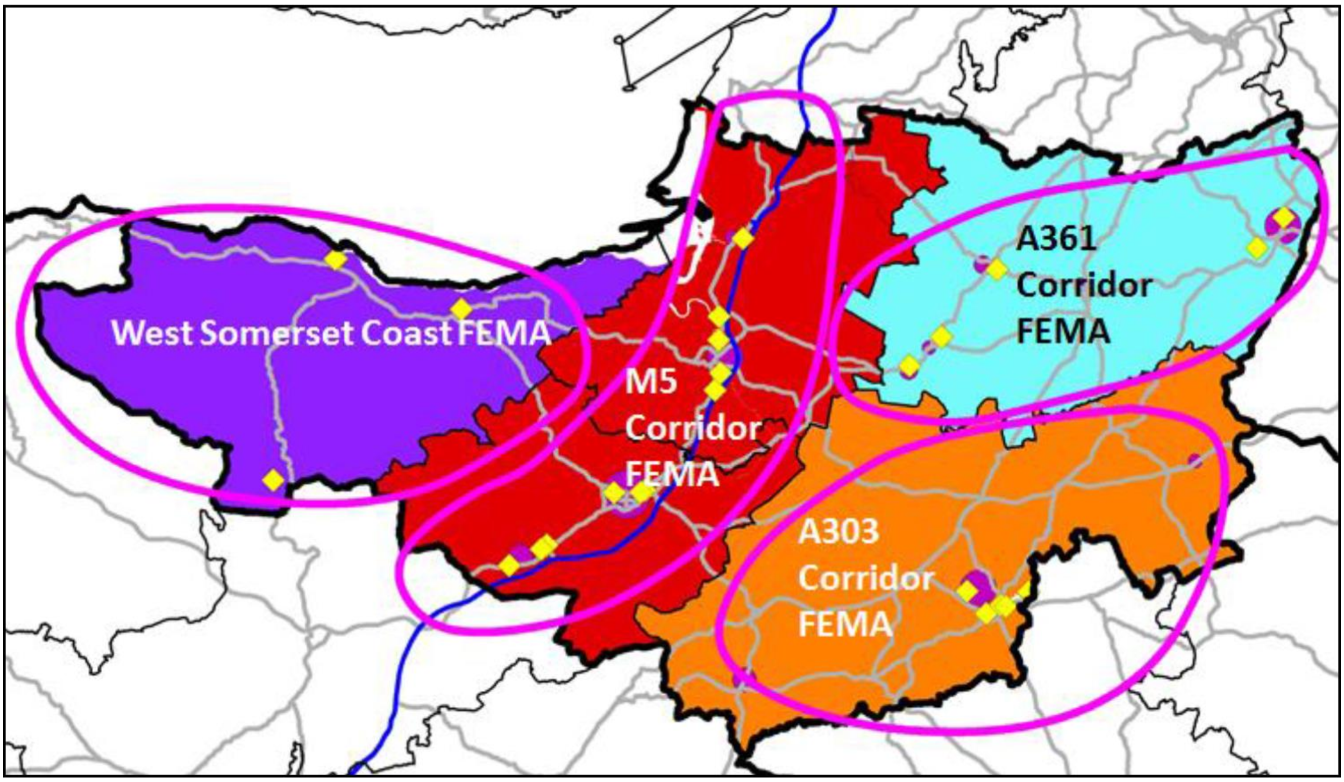
5.2. Functional Economic Area of South Somerset

5.2.1. To help understand all of the above, it is important to be mindful of the context within which the local economy operates. The economy of South Somerset does not operate in isolation. Influences at the national, regional, and local level affect how the economy functions, and there are inter-dependencies stemming from the make-up of the labour market; housing market; supply chains in industry and commerce; service markets for consumers; administrative areas; and transport networks.

5.2.2. As such, it is increasingly important to consider South Somerset's *"Functional Economic Market Area"* (FEMA). The latest work carried out on behalf of the Council, by Opinion Research Services (ORS), has clarified South Somerset's FEMA, and this is shown in Figure 5.1 below.

5.2.3. The work shows that South Somerset sits within the A303 Corridor FEMA, which is heavily influenced by the A303 as a strategic transport corridor connecting Somerset with the wider South West. The A303 Corridor, with Yeovil at the heart of it, provides a strong 'east-west' axis through the district, facilitating business connectivity as well as easy access to markets, labour, goods and materials. Future programmed improvements to the A303 (and the A358) therefore present an opportunity to enhance and strengthen the economy of South Somerset.

Figure 5.1: Functional Economic Market Area



Source: Housing Market Areas and Functional Economic Market Areas in Somerset (2015)

5.3. Economic Sectors in South Somerset

5.3.1. The economy in South Somerset has traditionally been dominated by agriculture and manufacturing. The district’s long established link with the aerospace industry has provided a locational advantage that is unsurpassed in the rest of Somerset.

5.3.2. Table 5.1 sets out in more detail the number of people employed in South Somerset, by sector, since 2009. The data stems from the ONS’ Business Register and Employment Survey and is an account of employee jobs, but it excludes self-employed, government-supported trainees and HM Forces, and also excludes farm-based agriculture. Table 5.1 can be read in conjunction with table 5.6 but they do no show the same information.

5.3.3. Increasingly, the number of employee jobs created and maintained in the service sector has overtaken the levels seen in manufacturing. The majority of the service sector in South Somerset is built upon those roles within public administration, healthcare and education; but there are significant service sector jobs in: wholesale and retail, accommodation and food services, and financial and business services.

5.3.4. A move away from any perceived (or real) over-reliance on manufacturing is, on the one hand, a positive. Over-specialisation can result in an area’s economy becoming vulnerable to a downturn in that sector. However, it is also necessary to appreciate that service sector jobs are, on the whole, less valuable to the economy, and are often less productive. This is set out in more detail in Table 5.2.

5.3.5. As such, continuing to strengthening the higher value manufacturing sector, and in particular, nurturing the aerospace supply chain within South Somerset should remain a key objective of the Council and the business community to ensure a high value and resilient economy emerges for the long term.

Table 5.1: Employee Jobs by Industry Sector in South Somerset (2009 – 2014)

Sector	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Primary Services (A-B: agriculture and mining)	100	100	200	200	200	100
Energy and Water (D-E)	400	400	700	500	500	500
Manufacturing (C)	13,800	13,300	14,400	12,800	13,500	13,200
Construction (F)	3,800	3,100	3,200	3,100	3,200	3,300
Wholesale and retail, including motor trades (G)	12,900	11,500	11,000	10,800	11,000	11,300
Transport storage (H)	2,500	2,500	2,200	1,800	1,900	2,000
Accommodation and food services(I)	3,700	3,900	3,700	4,000	4,000	4,100
Information and communication (J)	1,600	1,600	1,700	1,400	1,400	1,700
Financial and other business services(K-N)	9,700	9,900	9,900	7,700	8,200	9,100
Public admin, education and health (O-Q)	16,200	16,200	16,400	16,400	17,400	17,000
Other Services (R-S)	2,900	2,700	2,200	2,500	2,500	2,500
TOTAL	**67,600**	**65,200**	**65,600**	**61,100**	**63,700**	**64,600**

Source: NOMIS / ONS (Figures are rounded to nearest hundred and may not add up to totals)

5.4. Productivity

5.4.1. Productivity is considered the single most important determination of average living standards[6]. It is defined as the effectiveness of productive effort, as measured in terms of the rate of output per unit of input.

5.4.2. Table 5.2 highlights a general trend of economic growth in South Somerset (as measured by Gross Value Added (GVA)) since 2001, albeit a slight fall can be seen between 2006 and 2009 associated with the recession.

5.4.3. Manufacturing has consistently been the most productive sector in South Somerset, and remains hugely important to short and long term future of the economy. Elsewhere, the combined sectors of public administration, education, and health (O-Q); and financial and other business services (K-N) represent significant sectors of the economy, with each providing for approximately 20% of the GVA generated in South Somerset.

[6] Fixing the Foundations: creating a more prosperous nation, HM Treasury, 2015.

Table 5.2: Gross Value Added by Industry Sector in South Somerset (2001 to 2015)

GVA (£m, 2011 prices)	2001	2006	2009	2015	% change 2001 to 2015	% in 2015
A : Agriculture, forestry and fishing	42.03	61.92	59.63	56.19	**33.69**	**1.79**
B : Mining and quarrying	1.24	7.83	3.90	6.17	**397.58**	**0.20**
C : Manufacturing	489.97	616.62	637.10	784.78	**60.17**	**25.04**
D : Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	16.04	14.63	17.68	10.29	**-35.85**	**0.33**
E : Water supply; sewage, waste management and remediation activities	13.19	50.35	24.09	17.59	**33.36**	**0.56**
F : Construction	122.32	219.84	196.23	213.05	**74.17**	**6.80**
G : Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	330.22	406.99	356.29	358.07	**8.43**	**11.42**
H : Transportation and storage	78.62	79.02	98.81	86.28	**9.74**	**2.75**
I : Accommodation and food service activities	67.18	58.77	65.21	80.13	**19.28**	**2.56**
J : Information and communication	71.64	92.83	90.73	88.95	**24.16**	**2.84**
K : Financial and insurance activities	46.28	52.14	62.48	49.45	**6.85**	**1.58**
L : Real estate activities	334.56	326.02	297.29	328.61	**-1.78**	**10.48**
M : Professional, scientific and technical activities	68.74	106.65	103.87	139.24	**102.56**	**4.44**
N : Administrative and support service activities	33.17	85.27	130.79	132.24	**298.67**	**4.22**
O : Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	258.65	262.98	248.68	223.85	**-13.45**	**7.14**
P : Education	161.45	203.48	162.31	184.12	**14.04**	**5.87**
Q : Human health and social work activities	142.06	165.17	204.47	258.61	**82.04**	**8.25**
R : Arts, entertainment and recreation	24.48	29.24	38.80	31.36	**28.10**	**1.00**
S : Other service activities	89.89	93.96	73.06	85.58	**-4.79**	**2.73**
TOTAL	**2,391.72**	**2,933.72**	**2,871.41**	**3,134.57**	**31.06**	**100.00**

Source: Oxford Economics (from Heart of the South West LEP)

5.5. Business and Enterprise

5.5.1. South Somerset has the largest overall number of enterprises in the county, as shown in Table 5.3. Recessionary impacts were experienced between 2010 and 2013, with a fall in business numbers; however since then there has been steady growth. The overall rate of growth in this period has however been relatively low, with South Somerset's figures being the second lowest in the county, and lower than the South West trend.

Table 5.3: Total Enterprises (2010 – 2015)

Year	Mendip	Sedgemoor	South Somerset	Taunton Deane	West Somerset	South West	Great Britain
2010	5,090	4,360	6,685	4,230	1,730	197,935	2,031,845
2011	4,995	4,340	6,530	4,190	1,700	196,605	2,012,900
2012	5,090	4,425	6,515	4,180	1,655	200,500	2,081,700
2013	5,075	4,460	6,485	4,200	1,650	201,150	2,100,890
2014	5,210	4,535	6,680	4,265	1,685	207,470	2,197,000
2015	5,540	4,730	7,070	4,520	1,750	220,825	2,382,370
Change	**450**	**370**	**385**	**290**	**20**	**22,890**	**350,525**
% Change	**8.84**	**8.49**	**5.76**	**6.86**	**1.16**	**11.56**	**17.25**

Source: NOMIS / Inter Departmental Business Register / ONS

Table 5.4: Total Enterprises by Sector (2015)

Sector	Mendip	Sedgemoor	South Somerset	Taunton Deane	West Somerset
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	770	675	1,160	645	515
Production	425	350	515	245	75
Construction	755	640	905	560	145
Motor trades	180	185	275	185	50
Wholesale	190	180	260	185	45
Retail	395	325	485	330	150
Transport & Storage (inc. postal)	175	170	165	105	35
Accommodation & food services	330	345	390	240	155
Information & communication	325	185	360	210	45
Finance & insurance	65	80	95	95	15
Property	175	145	200	170	35
Professional, scientific & technical	780	625	975	645	170
Business administration & support services	370	320	460	300	110
Public administration & defence	35	35	50	25	15
Education	90	80	110	70	20
Health	155	135	250	225	45
Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services	325	260	415	285	125
Total	**5,540**	**4,735**	**7,070**	**4,520**	**1,750**

Source: NOMIS / Inter Departmental Business Register / ONS

5.5.2. It is interesting to note that, whilst employee jobs and productivity in the agricultural sector is relatively low, the actual number of businesses/enterprises engaged in that sector is the highest in the district. In contrast, there are significantly fewer “production” (or manufacturing) businesses. However, given the manufacturing sector’s role in providing employment and productivity, it only serves to further highlight the importance of these businesses to South Somerset.

5.5.3. The vast majority - 90% - of businesses in South Somerset are micro enterprises employing up to 9 people, a proportion that has remained broadly similar since 2010. Given this, planning policies and decisions should continue to support the development of these sized businesses in the future as being vital to the local economy.

5.5.4. At the other end of the scale, there are only 15 (or 0.2%) large enterprises that employ more than 250 people in the district, a 25% fall since 2010. In considering the future growth of businesses, it is important to be realistic about the potential to attract numerous large enterprises to the district.

Table 5.5: Size of Enterprises in South Somerset (2010 – 2015)

Date	Micro (0 to 9) enterprises		Small (10 to 49) enterprises		Medium (50 to 249) enterprises		Large (250+) enterprises		TOTAL	
2010	6,020	90.1	565	8.4	85	1.3	20	0.3	**6,690**	**100**
2011	5,880	90.1	540	8.3	90	1.4	15	0.2	**6,525**	**100**
2012	5,840	89.7	560	8.6	100	1.5	15	0.2	**6,515**	**100**
2013	5,790	89.3	585	9	95	1.5	15	0.2	**6,485**	**100**
2014	5,960	89.2	605	9.1	100	1.5	15	0.2	**6,680**	**100**
2015	6,345	89.7	610	8.6	105	1.5	15	0.2	**7,075**	**100**
Change	**325**		**45**		**20**		**-5**		**385**	**100**
% Change	**5.40**		**7.96**		**23.53**		**-25.00**		**5.75**	**100**

Source: NOMIS / Inter Departmental Business Register / ONS

5.6. Employment and Jobs

5.6.1. The total number of jobs is a workplace-based measure and comprises employee jobs, self-employed, government-supported trainees and HM Forces. This is why the figures set out in Table 5.6 differ to those set out in Table 5.1 above.

5.6.2. The number of residents aged 16-64 figures used to calculate jobs densities are based on the relevant mid-year population estimates.

Table 5.6: Total Jobs and Job Density (2001 – 2014)

Year	South Somerset	South Somerset (density)	South West (density)	Great Britain (density)
2001	77,000	0.83	0.82	0.8
2002	76,000	0.82	0.83	0.8
2003	78,000	0.83	0.83	0.8
2004	80,000	0.84	0.83	0.8
2005	81,000	0.85	0.82	0.8
2006	81,000	0.84	0.82	0.79
2007	84,000	0.85	0.82	0.79
2008	82,000	0.83	0.81	0.79
2009	80,000	0.81	0.82	0.77
2010	81,000	0.82	0.82	0.77
2011	85,000	0.87	0.82	0.78
2012	80,000	0.82	0.81	0.78
2013	83,000	0.85	0.83	0.79
2014	82,000	0.84	0.86	0.82
Change (2001 – 2014)	5,000			
Change (2006 – 2014)	1,000			

Source: NOMIS / ONS

5.6.3. Table 5.6 indicates that the total number of jobs fell in the years following the recession, but have now recovered slightly. It should be noted that some fluctuations are also related to the accuracy of the ONS data rather than structural changes in the economy.

5.6.4. Latest data on the employment density in South Somerset are very similar to the regional and national average.

5.7. Economic Activity & Unemployment

5.7.1. As well as looking at the total number of jobs in South Somerset, it is important to establish the overall level of economic activity. A healthy economy is where the workforce is active, where there is a relatively high ratio between those whose are capable of working and those who work. The table below shows a trend of rising levels of economic activity in South Somerset, with the number of people in employment increasing by 8,100 over the Local Plan period so far. Linking this housing growth, shows a broad balance of employment levels and housing growth over the last 9-10 years.

Table 5.7: Total Jobs and Job Density (2001 – 2014)

	Economically active		In Employment		Employees		Self-employed		Unemployed	
Date	South Somerset	(%)	South Somerset	(%)	South Somerset	(%)	South Somerset	(%)	South Somerset	(%)
2004	77,700	79.9	75,200	77.2	64,400	67	10,000	9.4	2,100	2.7
2005	75,800	76.2	72,200	72.4	58,800	60.2	12,300	11.2	2,400	3.2
2006	78,300	78.7	74,500	74.8	60,300	61.2	13,600	13	2,700	3.5
2007	81,000	81.1	78,300	78.3	64,200	64.4	13,000	12.8	2,600	3.3
2008	84,100	84.2	82,300	82.3	70,800	71.4	10,600	10.2	2,700	3.1
2009	84,300	80.4	79,200	75.8	69,400	67.6	9,800	8.2	4,100	4.9
2010	86,100	83.2	79,900	76.8	67,300	65.9	11,500	10.3	4,000	4.7
2011	78,900	77.9	75,800	74.8	61,800	61.9	12,500	12.1	3,800	4.7
2012	77,100	76.9	73,700	73.3	61,300	61.5	12,400	11.9	3,900	5.1
2013	82,200	81.3	80,000	79	64,000	64.4	14,800	13.5	3,600	4.3
2014	82,800	80.5	78,800	76.7	65,000	65.1	11,200	10	3,500	4.3
2015	85,600	83.7	82,600	80.6	64,400	64.7	17,500	15.1	2,800	3.3
2004 – 2015	**7,900**	**3.80**	**7,400**	**3.40**	**0**	**-2.30**	**7,500**	**5.70**	**700**	**0.60**
2006 – 2015	**7,300**	**5.00**	**8,100**	**5.80**	**4,100**	**3.50**	**3,900**	**2.10**	**100**	**-0.20**

Source: ONS annual population survey

Note: numbers are for those aged 16 and over, % is for those of aged 16-64

5.8. Economic Forecasts

5.8.1. An attempt at forecasting the economic future of a district or area is fraught with difficulty. There are a number of variables that can be subject to change, and the fortunes of industries and employers are hard to predict. Furthermore, the influence of other external factors, such as Government policy changes, and the relationship with the EU, mean that predictions made in 2016 can quickly become inaccurate.

5.8.2. That being said, there are a number of forecasts available to local authorities. Table 5.8 through to Table 5.10 set out the forecasts provided by Oxford Economics, which are currently being used by the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership to supports plans for growth.

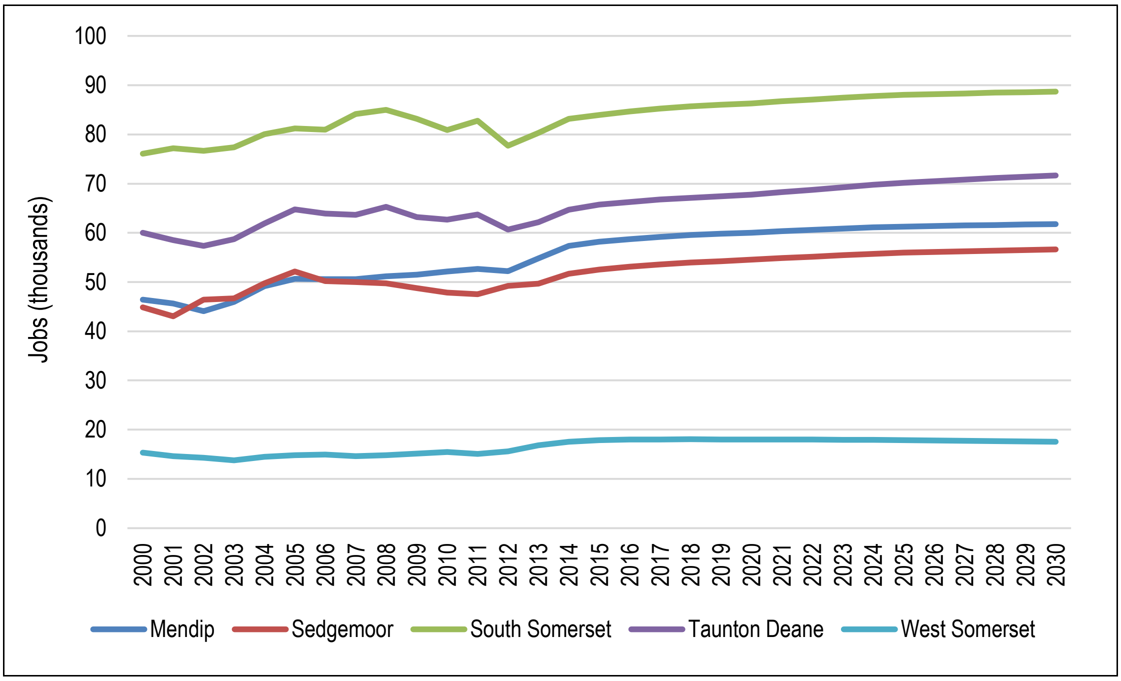
Table 5.8: Past and forecast job growth – Somerset

	Past growth		Forecast growth	
	2000-2014	Per annum	2014-2030	Per annum
Mendip	10,920	780	4,410	276
Sedgemoor	6,810	486	4,930	308
South Somerset	7,070	505	5,550	347
Taunton Deane	4,670	334	7,000	438
West Somerset	2,210	158	20	1
Somerset	31,680	2,263	21,910	1,369

Source: Oxford Economics (from Heart of the South West LEP)

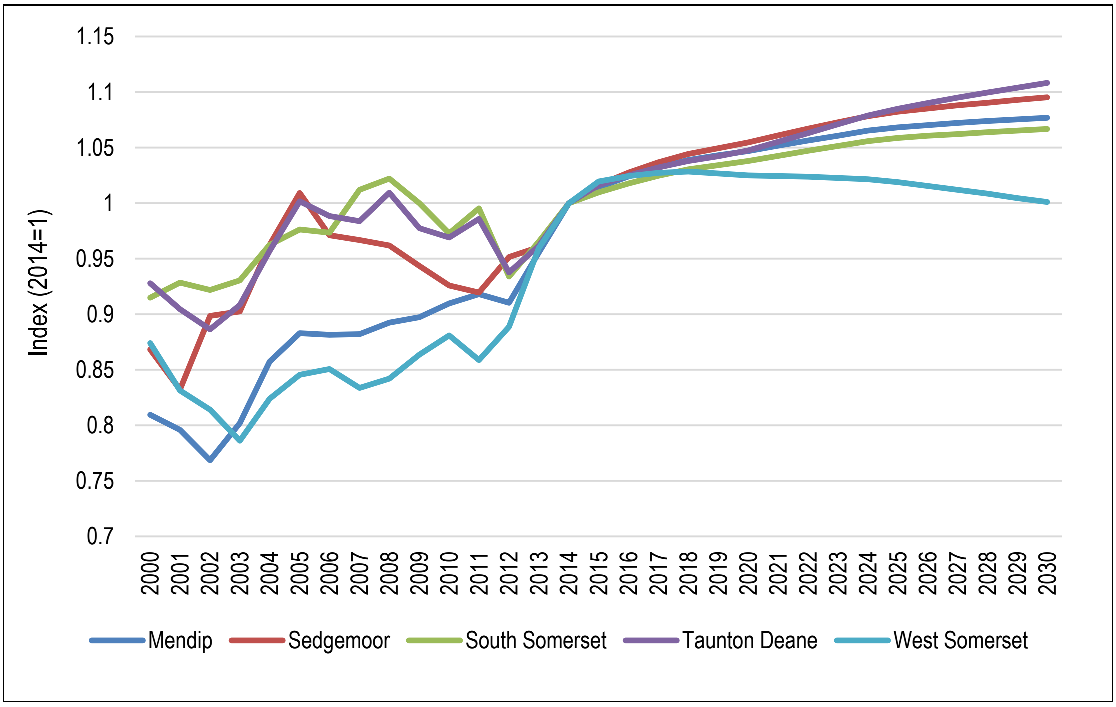
5.8.3. The figures below show past and forecast job growth (the first chart showing the total number of jobs in each area and the second showing the same information indexed to 2014). The key finding to note from these charts is the variation in the past trend figures; in some areas a year-on-year change of in excess of 5,000 jobs can be seen. In reality, such a change is unlikely and will be driven more by the quality of data available than any real changes that may have occurred.

Figure 5.1: Total employment (jobs) – Somerset



Source: Oxford Economics (from Heart of the South West LEP)

Figure 5.2: Total employment (jobs) – Indexed (2014=1) – Somerset



Source: Oxford Economics (from Heart of the South West LEP)

5.8.4. Whilst the figures above provide an indication of what has happened in the past (and what might happen in the future) it needs to be remembered that such forecasts are highly uncertain. Indeed, even estimates of past trends can vary from source to source. This can be seen through an analysis of ONS job data (shown in the table below) which covers a period from 2000 to 2013. Across the whole of the County the ONS data suggests a similar level of job growth (of about 2,000 per annum); however, some of the local authority estimates are quite different. These differences are likely to be due to the methodologies employed in different sources along with the fact that underlying data (often drawn from the Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) is a sample survey which is subject to quite large margins of error at a smaller area level.

Table 5.9: Estimated job growth (2000-13) - ONS

Local Authority	2000-13	Per annum
Mendip	6,000	462
Sedgemoor	5,000	385
South Somerset	9,000	692
Taunton Deane	2,000	154
West Somerset	4,000	308
Somerset	26,000	2,000

Source: ONS

5.8.5. To work out the change in the resident workforce required to match the forecast number of jobs, the commuting ratio is multiplied by the amount of double jobbing (to give an adjustment factor) and in turn multiply this by the number of jobs – this is shown in the table below. Overall, the table shows that to meet the forecast growth in jobs (of 1,370 per annum) a slightly lower level of resident workforce growth would be needed (of about 1,341 people each year). If past trends in job growth are to be repeated the analysis suggests an increase in the resident workforce of about 2,131 people per annum (it should be noted that in looking at past growth data has been combined from the OE analysis and the analysis of ONS job data). These figures give a total change in the resident workforce of 30,833 based on forecast growth and 49,010 based on past trends (over the 2014-37 period).

Table 5.10: Forecast job growth/past trends in job growth and change in resident workforce

Local Authority	OE estimate of future growth			Past trend analysis (combined sources)		
	Additional jobs (pa)	Change in resident workforce (pa)	Change in resident workforce (2014-37)	Additional jobs (pa)	Change in resident workforce (pa)	Change in resident workforce (2014-37)
Mendip	276	287	6,601	621	646	14,853
Sedgemoor	308	343	7,898	436	486	11,167
South Somerset	347	333	7,665	599	575	13,221
Taunton Deane	438	376	8,647	244	209	4,817
West Somerset	1	1	21	233	215	4,952
Somerset	1,370	1,341	30,833	2,132	2,131	49,010

Source: OE, NOMIS and 2011 Census

5.9. Employment by Occupation

5.9.1. Data presented so far indicates that the economy in South Somerset is performing relatively well, and appears to be recovering from the impacts of the recession. However, it is also true that a strong performing economy and successful local area will have a higher proportion of higher professional occupations and a more highly skilled workforce.

5.9.2. Table 5.8 sets out the number of people employed by occupation / skill type across South Somerset. It then compares those figures against the percentages seen across the South West and Great Britain. The data shows that South Somerset has a lower percentage of higher professional occupations (major group 1 to 3) than the South West and Great Britain.

5.9.3. Similarly, South Somerset has a much higher proportion of lower skilled occupations (major group 6 to 7; and major group 8 to 9) than the South West and GB.

5.9.4. Looking ahead, it will be a challenge for South Somerset to not only increase the number of people employed in the district, but to raise the standard of occupations within the district. Attracting, developing and maintaining higher skilled and higher professional occupations to the area will ensure that South Somerset's economy is more competitive and resilient in the longer term.

Table 5.11: The level of skills in South Somerset (2001 to 2015)

	South Somerset (numbers)	South Somerset (%)	South West (%)	Great Britain (%)
Soc 2010 major group 1-3	32,300	39.3	44.8	44.4
1 Managers, directors and senior officials	6,700	8.1	11.2	10.4
2 Professional occupations	14,600	17.7	19.2	19.8
3 Associate professional & technical	11,000	13.3	14.2	14.1
Soc 2010 major group 4-5	19,400	23.6	22.2	21.4
4 Administrative & secretarial	7,800	9.5	10.0	10.7
5 Skilled trades occupations	11,600	14.0	12.0	10.6
Soc 2010 major group 6-7	15,800	19.3	17.1	16.9
6 Caring, leisure and Other Service occupations	10,700	13.0	9.7	9.2
7 Sales and customer service occs	5,100	6.2	7.4	7.7
Soc 2010 major group 8-9	14,700	17.9	16.0	17.2
8 Process plant & machine operatives	4,800	5.8	5.3	6.3
9 Elementary occupations	9,900	12.0	10.7	10.8

Source: ONS

5.10. Qualifications

5.10.1. In looking to raise the profile of jobs and occupations in South Somerset it will be important to attract and retain more highly skilled and qualified individuals.

5.10.2. Table 5.12 outlines the qualifications held by the resident population aged 16-64 in South Somerset in 2015.

Table 5.12: Qualification Levels in South Somerset (January 2015 to December 2015)

Individual levels	South Somerset	South Somerset (%)	South West (%)	Great Britain (%)
NVQ4 and above	34,400	36.0	37.3	37.1
NVQ3 and above	63,300	66.2	60.4	57.4
NVQ2 and above	78,800	82.5	77.6	73.6
NVQ1 and above	87,600	91.6	89.7	84.9
Other qualifications	3,300	3.5	4.8	6.5
No qualifications	4,700	4.9	5.5	8.6

Source: ONS annual population survey

5.10.3. The data highlights that South Somerset has a lower percentage of people with no qualifications than either the South West average or the Great Britain average. But it is also true, that South Somerset has a lower percentage of people with the highest level qualification, NVQ4 (degree-level equivalent), than either the South West or Great Britain.

5.10.4. The Council will need to work closely with all education institutions, but especially further and higher education departments to ensure that those achieving the highest qualifications are not only taught here, but choose to stay here and live and work in South Somerset.

5.11. Pay / Wages

5.11.1. To complement an understanding of the type of occupations within the overall employment profile in South Somerset it is useful to look at the changing nature of wages earned in the district.

5.11.2. Table 5.13 shows the wage structure in the local area in terms of full-time weekly pay. The figures are the median earnings in pounds for employees living in the area. It highlights that across both male and female workers, the average weekly pay is considerably below the South West and Great Britain average.

5.11.3. The challenging circumstances prompted from South Somerset having a low paid workforce are manifest. Issues such as relative rousing affordability, the strength of the economy, and the trends in retail and spend, can in various ways be linked back to the amount of wages earned. Raising the overall wage levels in South Somerset is a key challenge. Generating higher value jobs, which require a more highly skilled workforce, is a route to achieving this. Twinning this approach with delivering a higher quality residential offer so that those highly skilled workers remain in South Somerset is a critical joined-up policy response for future plan-making.

Table 5.13: Average Weekly Pay in South Somerset Earnings by residence (2015)

	South Somerset (pounds)	South West (pounds)	Great Britain (pounds)
Gross weekly pay			
Full-time workers	456.4	498.8	529.6
Male full-time workers	502.9	539.6	570.4
Female full-time workers	404.7	440.1	471.6

Source: ONS annual survey of hours and earnings - resident analysis

5.12. Claimants

5.12.1. Analysing data looking back to 2001 shows that the number of claimants in South Somerset has been consistently lower than the regional and national.

5.12.2. Even so, South Somerset was not immune to the impact of the recession, and in 2008 the number of claimants doubled. So much so, that 2009's figures represent the highest recorded number of claimants in the last 15 years.

5.12.3. Between 2009 and 2013 the number of claimants remained high, and significantly higher than historic records. However, since 2013 the figures have reduced dramatically and are now below figures recorded back in 2001. In proportional terms, South Somerset's number of claimants now represents less than 1% and is significantly below the South West and Great Britain average.

Table 5.14: Claimant count in South Somerset (2001 to 2015)

Date	South Somerset	South Somerset (%)	South West (%)	Great Britain (%)
Aug-01	1,000	1.1	1.6	2.5
Aug-02	950	1	1.6	2.4
Aug-03	890	1	1.4	2.3
Aug-04	810	0.9	1.2	2
Aug-05	990	1	1.3	2.2
Aug-06	1,040	1.1	1.4	2.3
Aug-07	790	0.8	1.2	2
Aug-08	850	0.9	1.4	2.2
Aug-09	1,820	1.9	2.7	3.8
Aug-10	1,570	1.6	2.3	3.4
Aug-11	1,740	1.8	2.5	3.7
Aug-12	1,660	1.7	2.5	3.7
Aug-13	1,370	1.4	2.1	3.2
Aug-14	790	0.8	1.3	2.2
Aug-15	610	0.6	1	1.6
2001 - 2015	**-390**			
2006 - 2015	**-430**			

Source: ONS

6. Retail

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES:

- The future of the high street remains uncertain. With challenging conditions for both local and national retailers.
- Yeovil remains most important retail centre within the district. But the town centre faces competition from out-of-town retail estates and adjacent retail estates including in West Dorset.
- Vacancy rates in Yeovil town centre of Yeovil have increased since 2006 and recessionary impacts have been felt within the town centre and Primary Shopping Area.
- Future plans for the regeneration of Yeovil Town Centre are integral to the Council's "Investing in Infrastructure" programme. Further investment in the town centre needs to be co-ordinated to ensure the town remains its vitality.

6.1. Overview

6.1.1. Yeovil is the largest centre in South Somerset, followed by the market towns and rural centres which are spread across the district. Each centre has their own distinct role and function, providing a range of services and facilities for their surrounding area. The area varies according to the size of the centre, for example given the range and choice of facilities, Yeovil may act as a destination for shopping or entertainment across the entire district, whereas Martock, with its reduced facilities, may only be a local shopping destination. Naturally the bigger the centre, the more services and facilities on offer.

6.1.2. Town centres across the country have been in decline. Cheaper out of town centre locations and internet shopping have competed against traditional High Streets resulting in increased vacancy rates and 'dead' areas in need of regeneration.

6.1.3. South Somerset is no different and a key objective of the local plan through policies EP11 (Location of Main Town Centre Uses), EP12 (Floorspace Threshold for Impact Assessments) and EP13 (Protection of Retail Frontages) is to improve the vitality and viability of the district's town centres by making them the preferred locations for retailing and town centre uses.

6.1.4. Given that Yeovil has been the focus of pressure to develop retail uses outside of the town centre, this AMR will focus on retailing in Yeovil. Subsequent versions of the AMR will look more widely at retailing across the district.

6.2. Yeovil Town Centre

6.2.1. Yeovil Town Centre is the largest and most successful town centre in South Somerset in terms of physical size and trading ability.

6.2.2. There are two purpose built shopping centres in the town centre, the Quedam Centre and Glovers Walk. The Quedam Centre is by far the larger of the two, covering a significant proportion of the northern area of the town centre. It is occupied by national multiple retailers and also has direct access to a multi-storey car park. Glovers Walk, built in the 1960s, is located next to the Quedam Centre and incorporates the bus station. In recent years, despite its fairly central location, Glovers Walk has suffered from high vacancy rates and underperformance which have affected its physical environment.

6.2.3. The centre also benefits from a Tesco Extra store on its western side and Yeo Leisure Park on the south-eastern side. The leisure park features a cinema, bowling alley, health and fitness club and food and drink uses. Both locations provide for linked trips to other parts of the centre due to their close proximity to the primary shopping area.

6.2.4. The focus for retail provision in Yeovil Town Centre is within the High Street and Quedam Shopping Centre and these accommodate the majority of national multiple non-food operators, anchored by stores such as Marks and Spencer's, Boots, British Home Stores and Primark. There is an independent department store called Denners with two premises in the centre. Smaller independent stores are concentrated along the secondary shopping streets. The Primary Shopping Area and parts of the secondary areas are pedestrianised, which provide an accessible pedestrian environment.

6.2.5. In addition to the town centre, there are a number of retail locations outside of Yeovil town centre where national multiple retailers more normally associated with town centre locations trade. Namely:

- The Peel Centre (Babylon Hill);
- Houndstone Retail Park;
- Lynx Trading Estate; and
- Lysander Road and pockets along Lyde Road.

6.2.6. Yeovil Town Centre is a successful town centre[7]. It has however experienced increased vacancies in recent years. The Council's Annual Retail Monitoring data, presented in Table 6.1 and 6.2 illustrates vacancy rates within the Town Centre and Primary Shopping Frontage (as defined in the Local Plan) since 2006.

[7] South Somerset Retail Study Update, July 2010

Table 6.1: Total Premises and Vacancies in Yeovil Town Centre (2006 to 2015)

Year	Total Premises within Town Centre	Vacancies	%
2006	487	46	9.44
2007	468	48	10.25
2008	468	49	10.47
2009	471	61	12.95
2010	472	56	11.86
2011	480	56	11.66
2012	480	71	14.79
2013	480	72	15.00
2014	483	75	15.52
2015	494	70	14.17
2006-2015	+7	+24	+4.73

Source: SSDC

Table 6.2: Total Premises and Vacancies in Yeovil's Primary Shopping Frontage (2006 to 2015)

Year	Total Premises within Yeovil's Primary Shopping Frontage	Vacancies	%
2006	125	8	6.4
2007	126	8	6.34
2008	127	9	7.08
2009	128	17	13.28
2010	130	17	13.07
2011	128	12	12.5
2012	128	23	17.96
2013	136	24	17.64
2014	128	24	18.75
2015	131	19	14.50
2006-2015	+6	+11	+8.1

Source: SSDC

6.2.7. The data demonstrates that vacancy rates have increased over time. Whilst the last survey undertaken in September 2015 shows a slight improvement, the overall vacancy rate across the Town Centre of 14.17%, remains significantly above the national average of 12.5% recorded by Retail Gazette in March 2016. This is likely to be part in due to the UK economic climate and changing shopping habits and part in due to the age, attractiveness, availability and cost of property stock.

6.2.8. The Quedam Shopping Centre is a key contributor to the overall health and attractiveness of Yeovil town centre. The current owners, Benson Elliot, have had two applications approved to improve the existing offer with the town centre by extending, amalgamating and reconfiguring existing units. The South Somerset Retail Study Update (2010) concluded that the proposals for the extension of the Quedam Centre, if implemented would considerably improve the town centre offer by providing a range of modern retail units.

6.2.9. In addition to the Quedam Shopping Centre extension, there are other town centre sites that present major opportunities for investment and regeneration within Yeovil;

these include the Cattle Market and Stars Lane and Box Factory sites. Whilst the Council seeks to focus development within the town centre and to these sites, through the Local Plan and policy EP11 in particular, the development industry is keen to develop on out of town sites where generally development costs are lower and land is available.

6.2.10. This is demonstrated by the fact that in recent years there have been a number of significant proposals for both food and non-food shopping in out of town locations. Difficulties with the deliverability and/or availability of town centre sites at the present time is making it difficult to resist out of town retail proposals indefinitely and the time has come to address these issues if policy EP11 is to remain effective and future investment in Yeovil is to be within the town centre.

7. Transport and Travel

7.1. Commuting

7.1.1. The table below shows summary data about commuting to and from each local authority from the 2011 Census. Overall the data shows that Somerset sees a small level of net out-commuting for work with the number of people resident in the County who are working being about 3% higher than the total number who work in the area. This number is shown as the commuting ratio in the final row of the table and is calculated as the number of people living in an area (and working) divided by the number of people working in the area (regardless of where they live). For individual local authorities, only Taunton Deane sees net in-commuting with net out-commuting being particularly high in Sedgemoor.

Table 7.1: Commuting patterns in Somerset by local authority (2011)

Local Authority	Mendip	Sedgemoor	South Somerset	Taunton Deane	West Somerset	Somerset
Live and work in LA	24,531	25,804	46,159	33,771	6,952	-
Home workers	8,764	7,339	10,805	6,815	3,998	-
No fixed workplace	4,926	4,685	6,246	4,009	1,390	-
Out-commute	11,464	9,214	15,228	15,737	2,785	-
In-commute	16,051	17,128	16,214	10,024	3,217	-
Total working in LA	49,685	47,042	78,438	60,332	15,125	250,622
Total living in LA (and working)	54,272	54,956	79,424	54,619	15,557	258,828
Commuting ratio	**1.09**	**1.17**	**1.01**	**0.91**	**1.03**	**1.03**

Source: 2011 Census

Part Three: How Are We Tackling The Major Issues Facing South Somerset?

Introduction

Whilst the context provided in Chapter 3 to Chapter 7 is useful and provides an overall frame of reference to how South Somerset looks and feels – it is important to emphasise the key strategic issues which dominate local opinion. Many of these stem from the dominant policies set out in the South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028).

For the majority, the following issues are the most important, and are directly linked back to the South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028):

- Housing delivery in rural areas;
- Delivery of employment and economic growth;
- Overall housing delivery and progress against targets; and
- Delivery of affordable housing; and
- Providing for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

Each of these issues is discussed in turn below.

8. Delivery In Rural Settlements (Policy SS2)

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES:

- Delivery in the Rural Settlements in South Somerset remains strong.
- Delivery is ahead of the annualised target for this point of time in the South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028).
- Larger existing Rural Settlements appear to be the focus for most new development.
- But there are also significant commitments in other, much smaller, locations.
- Will be important to monitor this situation careful – whilst the Rural Settlements represent vital component of the district's new housing supply, without some control on numbers there could be a risk of over-development.
- A better understanding of infrastructure requirements and locations for growth is required in the future to inform better choices for where to focus development so that its benefits are maximised and impacts minimised.

8.1. Overview

8.1.1. The spatial strategy in the local plan focuses new development at Yeovil, followed by the identified Market Towns and Rural Centres. In addition, it also identifies a certain amount of growth in what are described as "Rural Settlements". These Rural Settlements are the smallest locations within the district and are villages and hamlets spread across South Somerset.

8.1.2. In the Rural Settlements, Policy SS2 seeks to strictly control and limit development, subject to providing employment opportunities, creating or enhancing community facilities, and/or meeting identified housing need. Policy SS2 also sets out that development should be commensurate with the scale and character of the settlement, be consistent with community-led plans, and generally have the support of the local community following robust engagement and consultation.

8.1.3. Policy SS2 was used a total of 91 planning application decisions in the last year, comprising 66 times when refusing permission and 25 when allowing permission.

8.1.4. So far, there has been very little employment provision delivered through Policy SS2. Similarly, there has been a lack of delivery of community facilities and services at Rural Settlements in the last year, although some evidence indicates potential delivery since Policy SS2 has been adopted through the granting of planning permissions. For example, permission has recently been granted for a dwelling and a village shop in Babcary.

8.1.5. In terms of meeting identified housing need, 1,301 dwellings have been delivered in the Rural Settlements over the first 10 years of the local plan period (2006 – 2016).

8.1.6. This is some 282 dwellings higher than what would be 'expected' at this stage of the plan period. As at 2016, this figure also equates to 21% of the total housing delivered in the district so far, which is higher than the proportion envisaged to be delivered via the Rural Settlements, which is set out in Policy SS5 as only 14%.

8.1.7. Delivery has been highest in Misterton, Henstridge, and Curry Rivel. This is interesting because these locations are already of a certain size (greater than 70 dwellings) and so it can be seen that the larger Rural Settlements with a stronger existing critical mass of dwellings and a greater provision of services and facilities are attracting the highest concentration of new development.

8.1.8. Given the fact that the local plan was only adopted in March 2015, it is important to note that the majority of housing delivery was prior to Policy SS2 being formally adopted. Nonetheless, the latest monitoring indicates that 145 dwellings were built in Rural Settlements in 2015/16, which is far greater than the annualised requirement of 102 dwellings, and is therefore not fully consistent with the local plan spatial strategy. Of the 145 new dwellings, 13 were affordable dwellings – 7 in Queen Camel, and 6 in Horton.

8.1.9. Although there were no individual Rural Settlements that delivered 10 or more dwellings last year, the Council is aware that some Rural Settlements have a relatively high level of existing commitments. This is set out in further detail in the Council's Five-year Housing Land Supply Paper (July 2016)[8].

8.1.10. For example, in the monitoring year, planning permission was granted for a total of 50 dwellings in Keinton Mandeville, 30 dwellings in Curry Rivel, and 45 dwellings in Merriott (through the permitted redevelopment of Tail Mill). The Council will need to be mindful of allowing additional new development in these settlements. A greater appreciation of the infrastructure requirements and potential impacts on facilities, services; as well as the natural environment are required to ensure that over-development does not occur and that development to remains commensurate with the scale and character of settlement.

8.1.11. Policy SS2 was referenced in approximately a dozen appeal decisions at Rural Settlements over the monitoring year. Some of the key issues highlighted by Inspectors were:

- Early in the monitoring period, with a newly adopted Local Plan and a five-year housing land supply, full weight was given to Policy SS2;[9]
- When there was a lack of a five-year housing land supply, Inspectors attributed less weight (in some cases "limited" weight) to Policy SS2 and applied the NPPFs 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.[10]
- Whilst some members of the local community may oppose development, this does not mean that there has been a failure by the applicant to undertake robust engagement and consultation with the local community – established planning law (and Policy SS2 itself) does not require public support before permission can be granted.[11]

[8] SSDC Five-Year Housing Land Supply Paper (July 2016): http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/early-review-of-local-plan-(2006-2028/project-management--monitoring/

[9] Land off Long Furlong Lane, East Coker APP/R3325/A/14/2224839; land off Boozer Pit, Merriott APP/R3325/A/14/2218660.

[10] Rear of The Burrows, High Street, Sparkford APP/R3325/W/15/3100543; land north of Stanchester Way, Curry Rivel APP/R3325/W/3018532

[11] Land at Tanyard, Broadway APP/R3325/W/15/3063768.

- Whilst ‘localism’ is an important Government objective, the NPPF also seeks to boost significantly the supply of housing.[12]

8.1.12. Overall, it is clear that Rural Settlements remain vital to South Somerset, and remain an important part of achieving housing delivery in the district. That being said, more housing has been delivered in the first 10 years of the Local Plan period and in the last year than the settlement strategy envisages. This may require the Council to be more restrictive when considering future housing proposals in the Rural Settlements.

8.1.13. However, given the current lack of a five-year housing land supply, it may be deemed that the benefits of housing delivery outweigh any conflict with the overall spatial strategy set out for Rural Settlements in Policy SS2 and Policy SS5.

[12] Ibid.

9. Delivering Employment Land and Economic Growth (Policy SS3)

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES:

- South Somerset's employment monitoring database not currently fit for purpose.
- Data is not sufficiently robust to provide an acceptable analysis at time of writing.
- Review of employment land is taking place as part of wider Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment.
- Council proposes to table a separate Employment Monitoring Report by December 2016.
- All future AMRs will incorporate monitoring of employment land and premises.

9.1.1. At time of writing, the Council is unable to provide an in-depth analysis of the delivery against the policy targets set out in Policy SS3.

9.1.2. The Council's monitoring database is currently being overhauled in order to ensure that the data outputs from it are robust. Proposal is to produce a separate Employment Monitoring Report by end of December 2016. This will set out statistics and data on employment land and premises in South Somerset over the local plan period. This data will be included in all future AMRs produced by the Council.

10. Delivering New Housing (Policy SS5)

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES:

- South Somerset's housing database has been overhauled to ensure monitoring data is robust.
- Completions recorded from 2006 to 2016 show a total of 6,252 new homes built across the district.
- This figure is behind target. At this point in the local plan, the Council should have achieved 7,250 new homes.
- Progress in meeting the target figure for new homes in individual settlements is mixed.
- Although development in each settlement is not judged on an annual basis, because development sites are planned to come forward throughout the lifetime of the plan, it is a useful indicator of progress to compare delivery against an annualised average.
- The annualised breakdown shows that eight out of the 14 settlements where a target figure is specified are behind schedule in delivering the number of homes that ought to have been achieved by 2016.

10.1.1. Housing delivery in South Somerset has been mixed. Under the previous local plan (dated 1991 to 2006) the Council achieved the entirety of its housing requirement of 13,700 new dwellings.

10.1.2. Under the newly adopted local plan (2006 to 2028), the plan covers a timeframe where the country experienced the largest, most significant economic recession ever seen. It is without doubt that this has had an effect on the delivery figures over the period 2006 to 2016.

10.1.3. Nevertheless, the current position is that the Council is behind its target in terms of the new number of new dwellings that should have been built during the plan period. The Council's most recent 'Five-year Housing Land Supply' paper sets out the latest figures on number of completions delivered and expected future commitments linked to planning permissions granted[13]. This section should be read in conjunction with the five-year housing land supply paper.

10.1.4. Table 10.1 and Table 10.2 re-iterate the current position as at 2016, with data fixed to the 31st March 2016, as this represents the end of the financial year period and is the date when the Council's monitoring database is analysed.

10.1.5. Table 10.1 confirms that Council is behind target on where it would expect to be by the 31st March 2016. There is a shortfall of 998 dwellings in terms of where the Council should be based on an annualised average figure through to 2016.

[13] South Somerset District Council – Five-year Housing Land Supply Paper (July 2016)

Table 10.1: Delivery of Dwellings against South Somerset Local Plan (2006 -2016)

Settlement	Local Plan Target to 2028	Annualised Target	Total Completions to 2016	Annualised Delivery
Yeovil	7,441	338	2,076	208
Chard	1,852	84	639	64
Crewkerne	961	44	349	35
Ilminster	496	23	263	26
Wincanton	703	32	594	59
Somerton	374	17	69	7
Langport	374	17	288	29
Castle Cary	374	17	68	7
Ilchester	141	6	1	0
South Petherton	229	10	219	22
Martock	230	10	76	8
Bruton	203	9	102	10
Milborne Port	279	13	200	20
Stoke Sub Hamdon	51	2	7	1
Rural Settlements	2,242	102	1,301	130
TOTAL	**15,950**	**725**	**6,252**	**625**

Source: SSDC Monitoring Database

10.1.6. There are some dangers with looking at the data at fixed points in time, and by drawing analysis on a per annum basis. The reality in terms of when developments come forward and are built out is linked to a whole range of issues, including access to finance, market capacity, sales rates, landownership agreements, infrastructure investment and delivery etc.

10.1.7. Some locations have historically been under-provided for in previous local plans. Therefore the market is ready to accommodate a number of sites, in a shorter time period, and therefore delivery has taken place in the early part of the local plan-period.

10.1.8. In other locations, the sites scheduled to be built out and the overall market conditions in that settlement are more challenging. As such, the profile of construction on those sites is slower, the time taken to build out is longer, and the quantum per annum is less. There should be no penalty for delivering development later in the local-plan period as long as a Council can continue to maintain a demonstrable five-year housing land supply.

10.1.9. That being said, there are some conclusions that can be drawn, in particular from analysing Table 10.2. It is clear that certain locations are performing better than others and have built out more homes than might have been expected based upon their annualised averages.

Table 10.2: Comparison of Dwelling Delivery Rate against South Somerset Local Plan (2006 -2028)

Settlement	Local Plan Target to 2028	Annualised Target For 2016	Total Completions to 2016	Difference Against Annualised Target for 2016	Difference Against Target to 2028	Percentage Against Annualised Target to 2016	Percentage Against Target to 2028
Yeovil	7,441	3,382	2,076	**-1,306**	-5,365	61.38	27.90
Chard	1,852	842	639	**-203**	-1,213	75.89	34.50
Crewkerne	961	437	349	**-88**	-612	79.86	36.32
Ilminster	496	225	263	**38**	-233	116.89	53.02
Wincanton	703	320	594	**274**	-109	185.63	84.50
Somerton	374	170	69	**-101**	-305	40.59	18.45
Langport	374	170	288	**118**	-86	169.41	77.01
Castle Cary	374	170	68	**-102**	-306	40.00	18.18
Ilchester	141	64	1	**-63**	-140	1.56	0.71
South Petherton	229	104	219	**115**	-10	210.58	95.63
Martock	230	105	76	**-29**	-154	72.38	33.04
Bruton	203	92	102	**10**	-101	110.87	50.25
Milborne Port	279	127	200	**73**	-79	157.48	71.68
Stoke Sub Hamdon	51	23	7	**-16**	-44	30.43	13.73
Rural Settlements	2,242	1,019	1,301	**282**	-941	127.67	58.03
TOTAL	**15,950**	**7,250**	**6,252**	**-998**	**-9,698**	**86.23**	**39.20**

Source: SSDC Monitoring Database

10.1.10. For example, the rate of housing delivery in the Rural Settlements over the first 10 years of the local plan period is greater than expected. The same is also true of delivery in Wincanton, Langport, South Petherton, Milborne Port, Ilminster and Bruton. Delivery in Yeovil and Chard is considerably less than the annualised average through to 2016.

10.1.11. No settlement has exceeded the total housing requirement based upon completions alone. This is not surprising given there are a further 12 years of the local plan period still to run.

10.1.12. However, in looking at the percentage rate of delivery against the total housing requirement figure through to 2028, it can be seen that places such as South Petherton, Wincanton, and Langport have already achieved over 75% of their local plan target. In addition, Milborne Port, Rural Settlements, Ilminster, and Bruton have already achieved over 50% of their local plan target. Given that the local plan is less than hallway through its life, this indicates that certain locations have accommodated and delivered development at a significant pace.

10.1.13. In order to gain a full picture of what is happening in a settlement it is also necessary to consider "planned commitments" in conjunction with the completion figures. The number of planned commitments is subject to change due to whether or not sites are given planning permission. The latest publicised data on planned commitments is contained in the Council's most recent 'Five-year Housing Land Supply' paper .

11. Realising Affordable Housing (Policy HG3 and Policy HG4)

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES:

- The Council's objectives set out in Policy HG3 and HG4 have been rendered out of date by a major change in Government policy on deliver affordable housing.
- The Government's new policy is that no affordable housing obligation should be placed on development schemes of 10 dwellings or less.
- Policy HG3 and Policy HG4 will be replaced through the Council's Early Review of the Local Plan.
- The 35% requirement for affordable housing on all sites which are above the Government's threshold remains.
- The affordable housing programme managed by the Strategic Housing team monitors delivery of all affordable tenure forms delivered over each financial year.
- Total delivery of affordable housing in South Somerset since 2006/2007 is 2,281 gross; and 1,553 net.

11.1.1. In monitoring delivery of affordable housing the Council is mindful that the policy approach set out in the South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028) has been dramatically affected by a major change in Government policy.

11.1.2. The Government's policy is that local authorities should not seek affordable housing obligations from developments which are 10 dwellings or less. Therefore, the Council can only ask for affordable housing to be provided on a scheme which is 11 dwellings or more.

11.1.3. This renders the Council's affordable housing thresholds set out in Policy HG3 and Policy HG4 out of date. As such, the Council will seek to resolve this in preparing the Early Review of the Local Plan.

11.1.4. The evidence to inform the Council's revised affordable housing policy will be set out in the forthcoming Strategic Housing Market Assessment, which will be finalised in late September / Early October 2016.

11.1.5. That being said, the Strategic Housing team's monitoring of total affordable housing delivery allows the Council to track completions over time. This information is set out in Table 11.1.

Table 11.1: Total Affordable Housing Provision

Year	Net	Replacements	Gross
2006/07	n/a	n/a	227
2007/08	n/a	n/a	157
2008/09	172	48	220
2009/10	123	18	141
2010/11	357	97	454
2011/12	272	78	350
2012/13	90	44	134
2013/14	102	59	161
2014/15	181	0	181
2015/16	128	0	128
2016/17	59	0	59
2017/18	69	0	69
TOTAL	**1553**	**344**	**2281**

Source: SSDC Strategic Housing Monitoring Database

11.1.6. Projected Affordable Housing Delivery via Strategic Housing Paper to District Executive – September 2016 indicates that 59 in 2016/2017 and 69 in 2017/2018 will be achieved.

11.1.7. Always the case though that many sites produce none (below threshold) and others less than 35% (viability) so planning obligations alone is bound to be less than 35% overall – mathematically impossible to do otherwise.

11.1.8. On the other hand a few 100% (or thereabouts) sites controlled by housing associations, such as those which have been the backbone of our programme in the past, will compensate in the other direction. In fact I think raw data shows in excess of 35% of all dwellings being affordable in previous years.

12. Delivery Against Policy HG7 (Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople)

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES:

- South Somerset record of delivery on Gypsy and Traveller sites is very good.
- 35 residential pitches have been delivered since 2006.
- Future provision is still required across all types of pitches.
- Sites for transit and travelling showpeople ore urgently required to meet local plan objectives.

12.1.1. The Council has been monitoring the net gain of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople since 2006-2007. Table 12.1 below shows the net gain per year.

Table 12.1: Delivery of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople (2006 -2016)

Settlement	Residential Pitches	Transit	Travelling Showpeople
2006 – 2007	/	/	/
2007 – 2008	1	/	/
2008 – 2009	6	/	/
2009 – 2010	1	/	/
2010 – 2011	6	/	/
2011 – 2012	3	/	/
2012 – 2013	3	/	/
2013 – 2014	2	/	/
2014 – 2015	1	/	/
2015 – 2016	12	/	/
TOTAL	**35**	**/**	**/**

Source: SSDC Monitoring Database

12.1.2. The data shows that the Council has consistently managed to deliver residential (i.e. where people can permanently stay), but has been less able to facilitate transit sites and sites specifically for travelling showpeople.

12.1.3. The local plan target has identified 23 pitches, and so in simple terms the Council is currently exceeding this target having realised 35 residential pitches since 2006. However, looking ahead, the Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment shows that over the period 2016 to 2020 the Council will need to deliver a further eight residential pitches, and therefore will still be required to take a proactive stance to continuing to meet needs.

13. Conclusion and Next Steps

13.1.1. Progress in the last 12 months, since the adoption of the local plan, has confirmed a series of on-going issues, and revealed a number of new challenges.

13.1.2. South Somerset remains one of the most important districts in Somerset, housing the greatest number of residents and businesses than any other local authority area. This puts South Somerset in a unique and advantageous position, to build upon its strengths and to use this critical mass to help overcome some of its challenges.

13.1.3. Population growth has been steady and is being driven by those locating from elsewhere in the UK. The number of new households formed in South Somerset has also increased, with the average size of a household continuing to reduce. Demand from new residents and households, as well as those generated by an increasingly older existing population, means South Somerset faces significant pressure in terms of future housing provision. This is compounded by housing affordability getting progressively more acute as the difference between average house prices and average wages becoming increasingly marked.

13.1.4. Business growth has also been stable and appears to have recovered from the most difficult issues associated with the recession. South Somerset has a strong economic identify, and benefits from a large agricultural sector, a strong service sector, and a highly productive manufacturing sector.

13.1.5. The business profile continues to be dominated by Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and ensuring they received the correct support in terms of land, property, intelligence and business support is of paramount importance to ensure that South Somerset is economically competitive in the face of competition from others.

13.1.6. Those living in South Somerset have seen their ability to access employment increase, with economic activity rates at their highest recorded levels, and claimant rates at their lowest recorded levels. However, average wages are lower than the national and regional average; and the district has fewer highly skilled workers than the regional and national average.

13.1.7. Taken together, questions need to be asked of policy makers and those within the business community, as to how to best to generate a higher value-added economy, supporting a more highly skilled and highly labour force in South Somerset and ensure its long term competitiveness.

13.1.8. Housing delivery in the Rural Settlements in South Somerset remains strong and is ahead of target and is greater than envisaged at this point in time in the South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028). In looking at the future, careful consideration is required over the long term role and function of the Rural Settlements, given their attractiveness for future residential schemes, but their vulnerability to the impacts of over-development

13.1.9. Overall housing completions recorded from 2006 to 2016 show that the Council is behind target, and has a shortfall of 998 dwellings. Analysing this data in more detail shows that performance across the settlements in the district is mixed

13.1.10. Although development in each settlement is not judged on an annual basis, because development sites are planned to come forward throughout the lifetime of the plan, it is a useful indicator of progress to compare delivery against an annualised average.

13.1.11. The annualised breakdown shows that eight out of the 14 settlements where a target figure is specified are behind schedule in delivering the number of homes that ought to have been achieved by 2016. Delivery in the two largest towns in South Somerset – Yeovil and Chard – is below target and the potential distortion between the planned housing distribution set out in the South Somerset Local Plan (2006 - 2028), versus what is emerging so far, is a critical issue that will be discussed as part of the Early Review of the Local Plan.

13.1.12. The Council's policy objectives for affordable housing have been rendered out of date by a major change in Government policy on deliver affordable housing. The Government's requirement that no affordable housing obligation should be placed on development schemes of 10 dwellings or less will require a new policy to be written, which will be included in the Early Review of the Local Plan.

13.1.13. The Council's monitoring database to track employment land, building and floorspace delivery is not fit for purpose. There is a direct action on the Spatial Policy team to provide an update on employment provision in a separate paper by December 2016. This data and information will be incorporated in to all future AMRs.

13.1.14. From looking at South Somerset's progress, particularly since 2001 and 2006, it is clear that the district is moving forward. There are real successes in the number of businesses grown, the number of people employed in the area, and the reduction in those seeking out-of-work benefit claimants. However, there are some clear challenges in terms of housing delivery and keeping pace with the needs identified by Government and as defined in the South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028).

13.1.15. When comparing the performance of South Somerset with other locations, especially adjacent local authorities, it is clear that some of them are experiencing stronger growth than South Somerset. This may pose challenges in terms of ensuring South Somerset remains competitive and caters to the needs and demands of its residents and businesses. Proactive policy responses will be needed, in order to set a clear direction for how and where the district wishes to grow, regenerate, compete, and become more prosperous.

13.1.16. The analysis in this AMR indicates that the policies in the local plan are being successful to a point, but that continued appraisal is required to ensure that the balance between delivering growth and realising investment is twinned with a better understanding of how to focus growth to the right sites, in the right locations to truly advance as an area where people wish to live and work.

13.1.17. The data in this AMR will feed in to the first stages of the Early Review of the Local Plan, which is scheduled to take place later in 2016. The discussions as part of the Early Review of the Local Plan will provide the opportunity to test the findings of this AMR, and challenge the existing policy framework where it is deemed to be not achieving what is necessary to ensure that South Somerset becomes stronger, more resilient, and more successful.