



Somerset Housing Strategy 2019 - 2023



Somerset Health and Wellbeing



Sedgemoor
IN SOMERSET



MENDIP
DISTRICT COUNCIL



EXMOOR
NATIONAL PARK

Priorities and Ambitions for Homes and Housing in Somerset



SSDC planting, courtesy of SSDC and Stonewater



Housing in Taunton



Cottages in West Somerset

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National Citizens Service (NCS) Summer 2017 Project, Lyngford Park Children's Play Area, courtesy of TDBC



Blackthorn Gardens, 'Pocket Park', courtesy of TDBC

Foreword

Homes are a basic necessity. We all need one. Local authorities have a broad role to play in supporting and regulating the housing sector, and in facilitating the delivery of new homes. All agencies, including the NHS and Social Care are impacted by housing – its availability, quality and suitability. These factors play out in people and communities – poor housing leads to significant health inequalities. The economy relies on a sufficient supply of housing in order to attract and retain a skilled workforce.

Tackling our housing crisis is not something that one service or organisation can achieve alone. Local authorities, Registered Providers, developers, the NHS, social care and the voluntary and community sectors – all have important roles to play. However, budgets are under pressure, with demand for our services on the increase. Providing leadership and direction is now critical. It is also more important than ever to have effective partnerships built on trust and mutual respect.

We aim to make our services simple to access and provide support that really works. At the same time, we have to be realistic about the challenges that we face and prioritise the limited resources that we have. We recognise that all communities have people assets: individuals or groups who understand their communities and have the talent to help build cohesion, support and social activity. We wish to work with more communities to help release that talent.

The Somerset Housing Strategy will help us to galvanise the necessary leadership skills; to develop strong, inclusive and effective partnerships; and make sure that we are supporting each other to achieve the housing ambitions for Somerset.



Ric Pallister OBE

South Somerset District Council, Chair of SSHP



Terry Beale

Taunton Deane Borough Council



Andrew Gilling

Sedgemoor District Council



Keith Turner

West Somerset Council



Nigel Woollcombe-Adams

Mendip District Council

Developing the strategic housing priorities for Somerset (2017 - 2018)

The Somerset Housing Strategy (SHS) is prepared by the Somerset Strategic Housing Partnership (SSHP), comprising representation from the five Somerset local housing authorities, Housing Associations, Exmoor National Park and the County Council (which includes Adult Social Care, Public Health and Strategic Planning).

The process of developing this Strategy began in 2017. We produced a 'Housing Benchmarking Report' that established key data and facts relating to the local housing market. We used this and other evidence to produce district based and county wide Housing Market Profiles. These were published in July 2017, which coincided with a 'stakeholder conference' where 100+ people representing the local housing market met to discuss key topics of concern, and to suggest possible priorities and ideas.

During the Autumn of 2017 we continued the conversation and met with a range of partners to discuss the latest data and intelligence, to consider latest Government policy, and to shape the ideas that were generated by the stakeholder conference. Gradually a vision and a refined set of priorities and ambitions began to emerge.

February 2018 saw the publication of the draft SHS which coincided with a three month period of public consultation. The draft SHS was scrutinised by housing forums, within council chambers, by parish councils and by a range of interested partnership bodies. Overwhelmingly the content received favourable support, as well as ideas as to how we may further shape and refine the draft priorities and objectives. These have all been considered resulting in many amendments to the content of this final document. Importantly, we also received many suggestions as to how we may take forward some of the priorities and objectives and many partners wish to be further involved in the delivery of the SHS.

We are excited by these prospects. Of course, not everyone was wholly supportive, and some had real concerns about our ability to deliver change. We understand these concerns and frustrations. Only time will tell whether we are able to truly make a positive difference to homes and housing in Somerset. By working together and with strong leadership, we are confident that we can.

All the documents referred to above, including a summary of the consultation comments together with our response, can be found on the district council and county council web sites.

Introduction

The Somerset Housing Strategy sets out the strategic direction for housing activity in the County, dealing with housing need, supply and our approach to quality and management of existing and new housing stock. It enables us to have clear multi-agency priorities and objectives on how to tackle the major housing issues that affect the people of Somerset. There are a range of partners involved to help solve these issues, including residents, local voluntary and community sector, housing associations, district councils, the county council (including public health, adult social care), developers, planning agents, private landlords and their agents, and government and their associated partners. The Strategy is supported by a multi-agency delivery plan that sets out how the priorities and objectives are to be achieved. Progress is monitored by the Somerset Strategic Housing Partnership. Each individual partner may also decide to have their own action plan.

The previous Somerset Housing Strategy (Somerset Housing Strategy) was published in 2013. Much has changed since then. The government has since recognised housing as a top national priority (aiming for the national delivery of 300,000 new homes per annum) and has recently introduced a flurry of legislation and policy (with more to follow) together with a range of associated funding streams:

- **Welfare Reform & Work Act (2016)** – universal credit; capping of benefits; 1% rent reduction on social housing; freeze on Local Housing Allowance; spare room subsidy etc
- **Housing and Planning Act (2016)** – empowered the Government to introduce Right to Buy for Housing Association tenants; phasing out of life-time tenancies; promoting the delivery of Starter Homes etc
- **Housing White Paper (2017)** – various measures to empower local authorities to deliver more homes through the town and country planning system; including the Housing Infrastructure Fund
- **National Planning Policy Framework (2018)** – introduces a number of important policy changes including a housing delivery test for Local Authorities (commencing November 2018) and a standardised method of calculating housing need (from January 2019)
- **Homelessness Reduction Act (2017)** – contains a big focus on prevention of homelessness, relief from homelessness and recovery/support. There is also more of a focus on single people and 18-25 year olds. Local authorities have 'new burdens' funding and access to flexible homeless support grant
- **Social Housing Green Paper (2018)** – contains proposals to improve: standards within the social housing sector; health and safety; tenant voice; protection from rogue landlords; improved complaints procedures; and new models of 'right to buy' designed to ease access to home ownership
- **Rough Sleeping Strategy (2018)** – contains a vision to halve rough sleeping by 2022, and ending it by 2027. It has three main themes of 'prevention', 'intervention' and 'recovery'. The strategy will be updated on an annual basis and the Government is also developing a wider homelessness strategy

Some of these changes have presented opportunities. The Homelessness Reduction Act will enable the delivery of more effective prevention services to support those at risk of homelessness. But funding remains a concern. The Housing and Planning Act provides additional powers to deal with rogue landlords. The Social Housing Green Paper presents a very welcome focus on the importance of Social Housing within local communities. Other initiatives such as 'Help to Buy' enables first time buyers to access a deposit for a mortgage.

Somerset Housing Strategy

However, many of these changes present real challenges. House prices have risen steadily faster than earnings during the past five years. Building activity from the Housing Association sector has slowed down due to concern around a number of issues such as reduced rental income, the impact of welfare reform and the availability of support services. Meanwhile, homelessness and rough sleeping remain major concerns.

The local scene is also complicated by a number of factors including the rural nature of the county, and the impact of Hinkley Point C. Rurality makes it difficult and expensive to deliver services. It also makes Somerset a desirable location for internal in-migration, fuelling local property price increases and contributing to the ageing demographic among many of our rural communities.

Lack of affordable housing contributes to the challenges of retaining younger people, and their skills, within Somerset. This impacts on all sectors, including public services. Meanwhile, the sheer volume of workers at Hinkley Point C (5,600 on-site at peak construction) presents real challenges to the housing sector – private sector rents are steadily rising, as is the number of unlicensed Houses in Multiple Occupation. The site is also a major draw for local construction talent. How will this play out for local growth aspirations? To help mitigate these impacts EDF have provided £7.5m of funding towards additional housing capacity across West Somerset, Sedgemoor, Taunton Deane and North Somerset. Meanwhile, the recent designation of Taunton as a Garden Town presents a real opportunity to deliver a step-change in how we plan for a more inclusive / healthy housing environment.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that the Somerset Housing Strategy is an important tool that can help realise national housing policy. The Government have set a target of delivering 300,000 homes a year across England! But what are the implications of this for Somerset? Ultimately we are striving for sustainable growth, where a growing local economy is balanced by housing growth that is delivering homes that are affordable, healthy, suitable and stable.

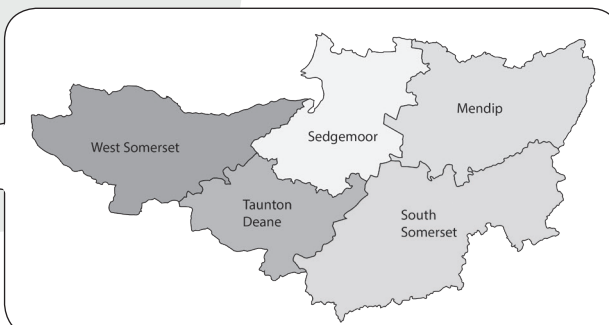
To do this we need to consider demographic changes (which inform both the number and type of housing that are required) alongside realistic economic growth assumptions, that contain ambitions to grow the economy (within certain sectors) and increase productivity. We need to ensure that economic growth is inclusive and improves social mobility. Much of this is explained within the Somerset Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the Somerset Growth Plan. The economy and housing supply are fundamentally linked, and neither is considered in isolation.

Leadership

All major political parties agree that housing is a top national priority. That presents an opportunity for local authorities and their partners to deliver strong leadership, leadership that brings together communities, housing, town and country planning and health and social care. We are striving for a combined commitment to improve this complex system for the benefit of our residents. We are already positioning ourselves to ensure improved partnership arrangements around these inter-related agendas. Leadership features strongly in this Strategy. We hope that the delivery of the Strategy will be a catalyst for creative thinking, innovation and an approach that designs solutions alongside the residents and communities that we are seeking to help.

About Somerset

Somerset is one of the most rural counties in England with a population density of **1.5 people per hectare** (4.1 hectare England average)



8,230 live applications as at 31 March 2017 (Homefinder Somerset)

24.2% of the population are aged 65 and over in 2017 (ONS 2017 mid-year estimate) and set to rise to **25.3%** in 2020 and then to **31.5%** in 2035 (ONS population projections)

99.5% increase in the private rented stock from 2001 to 2011 (Census)

Lambrook & Halcon in Taunton and **Sydenham Central** in Bridgwater are the top 3 most deprived areas in Somerset (Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015)

48% of Somerset live in rural areas (Census 2011)

The proportion of Somerset households in fuel poverty has decreased from **12.4%** in 2014 to **10.2%** in 2016, though localities such as West Somerset are still at 11.6% (Fuel poverty sub-regional statistics 2016)

236,500 households projected in 2015 (ONS)

10% of children in income deprived families are concentrated in 0.07% of the County area (Somerset County Council)

555,195 population (ONS mid 2017 population estimates) and projected to rise **1.5%** by 2020 to **563,000** (ONS population projections)

2,600 new dementia cases in 2015 and it is projected to rise to **4,800** new cases in 2035 (Somerset Dementia Needs Assessment)

Autumn estimates of rough sleeping has fallen - **50** in 2014, **56** in 2015 and **48** in 2016. The highest numbers of rough sleepers were in Mendip and Taunton Deane for 2015/16.

20,000 new homes by 2020. Exceeded growth plan of **2,857** by **54** in 2014 (Somerset Growth Plan)

£220,000 median price paid **£167,000** lower quartile price paid (House Price Statistics for Small Areas December 2017)

Average household size is projected to fall from **2.26** in 2014 to **2.13** in 2039, slightly below the national average of **2.35** in 2014 (ONS population projection)

Shortfall of **£145.86** between B&B charge and Housing Benefit paid per week

Almost **8,000** homes in Somerset are without central heating (Census 2011)

Median gross annual pay for full time workers in Somerset was **£26,532** (+ - 5.4%) in 2017 (ASHE)

Key Challenges

Somerset Housing Strategy

Hinkley causing an increased demand for all forms of accommodation within commutable distance of Hinkley Point C

High proportion of population aged over 65 - challenge of providing suitable housing of the right type and quality in the right locations due to mismatch of properties

24,391 households in Somerset are in fuel poverty - there is a clear link between poor energy efficiency, fuel poverty and poor health

People are living longer but more of our lives are spent in ill health or disability

Social isolation of people in poorer communities due to comparatively small and dispersed market towns / urban areas

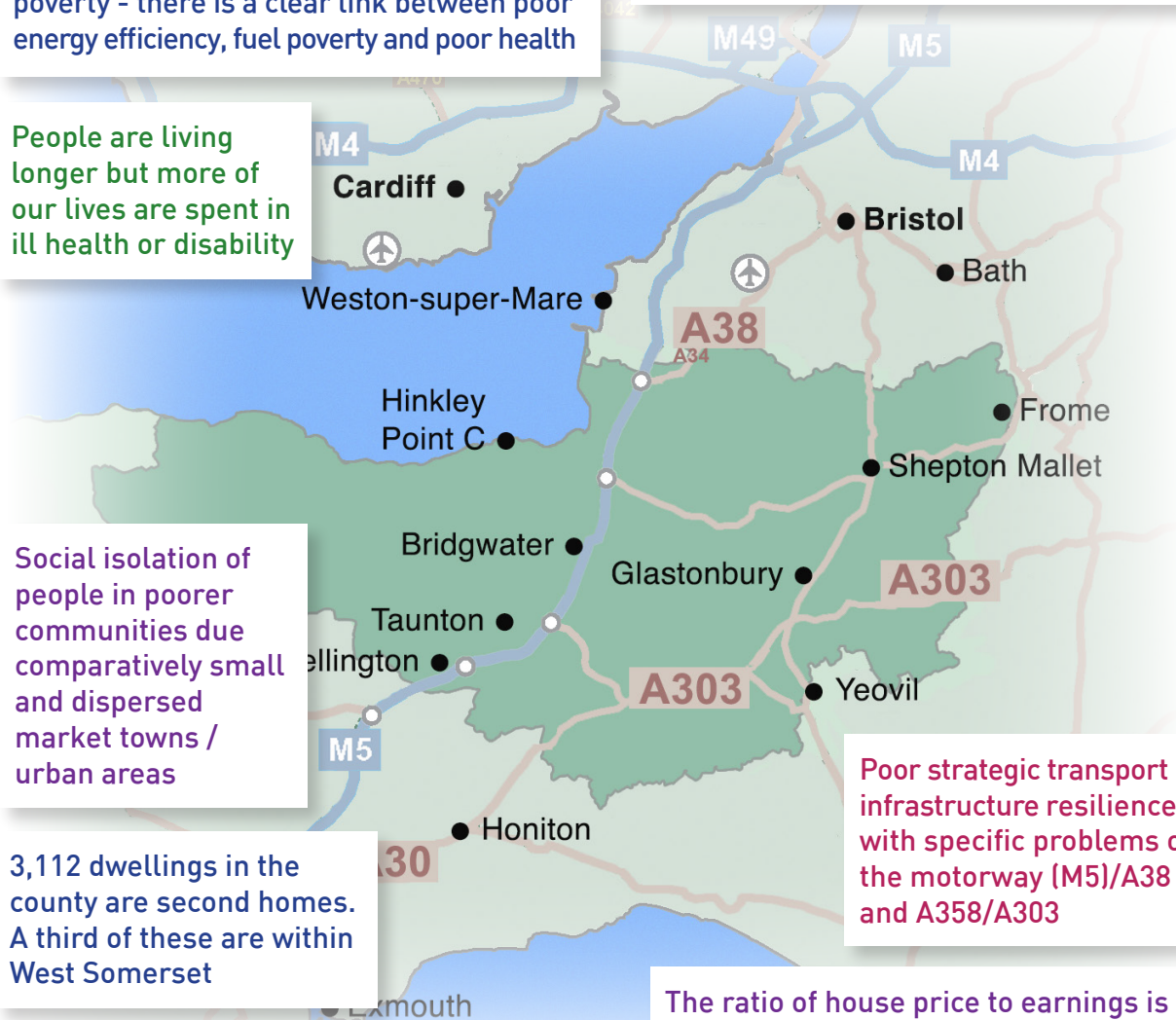
3,112 dwellings in the county are second homes. A third of these are within West Somerset

Housing supply remains an issue, especially for one-bedroom properties due to increase of single-person households, especially older persons and the single under 35s on the shared accommodation rate

The upward trend in single-person households, coupled with private sector rents at record high levels, will potentially increase the number of households who apply for local authority assistance with their housing

The life expectancy gap between residents in the most and least deprived areas in Sedgemoor is significant at 8.1 years for men and 3.6 years for women (Sedgemoor Health Profile 2017, Public Health England)

In migration of 40+ year olds seeking lifestyle change, using capital asset of homes in higher house price areas to outbid / out compete local people and out migration of younger people for education and work



Poor strategic transport infrastructure resilience with specific problems on the motorway (M5)/A38 and A358/A303

The ratio of house price to earnings is greater than the national average in all the Somerset housing authorities

Low pay economy in comparison to other regions, causing a growing affordability gap with significant consequences for both young people and families

All the net need for new housing in the next 20 years will be for the households over 65 necessitating the need for more flexible models of supported housing which enable independent living

Somerset Housing Strategy

The Somerset Housing Strategy has regard to the relationship of the local housing market with both the local economy and prevailing health inequalities. The Somerset Growth Plan and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy provide important context.

The Somerset Growth Plan provides a vision for a productive and innovative business community and economy, with a labour force that has the necessary skills, and a system that will deliver the required infrastructure. Importantly, it seeks that economic prosperity will be inclusive, to the benefit of all groups within the community. The Somerset Housing Strategy reflects the same objectives.

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy (Improving Lives) seeks to address health inequalities that exist between people, between communities, and within the economy. It seeks fairer life chances for all, improved health and wellbeing, more people living independently for longer, and safe, vibrant and well-balanced communities. The Somerset Housing Strategy also seeks to deliver these same outcomes.

The Somerset Growth Plan, Health and Wellbeing Strategy and this Housing Strategy should be read together to give a clearer picture of the interrelated strategic priorities and objectives for the county of Somerset. From these strategies flow a range of other plans and activities.

The diagram on page 11 shows the links between the Somerset Housing Strategy and the range of other important local strategies and plans.



Bridgwater Together 2017
Community Council for Somerset

Equalities

The Somerset Housing Strategy has been supported and informed by an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA). The EIA seeks to ensure that under-represented / vulnerable groups are considered within the development of strategy, policy and procedures. The process of developing an EIA (to directly inform the SHS) is ongoing. We are committed to preparing a SHS Delivery Plan. This will contain a range of activities, each of which will be supported and informed by their respective EIAs.

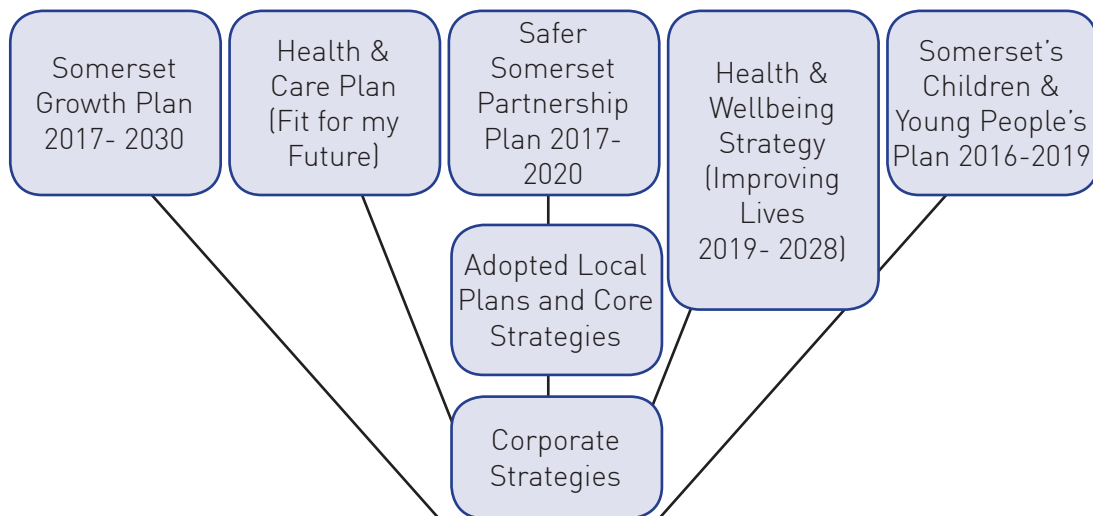


Children, courtesy of Yarlington HA

Somerset Housing Strategy

High Level Strategies

These are the high level strategies and plans that the Somerset Housing Strategy must conform with - i.e. they sit above the Strategy



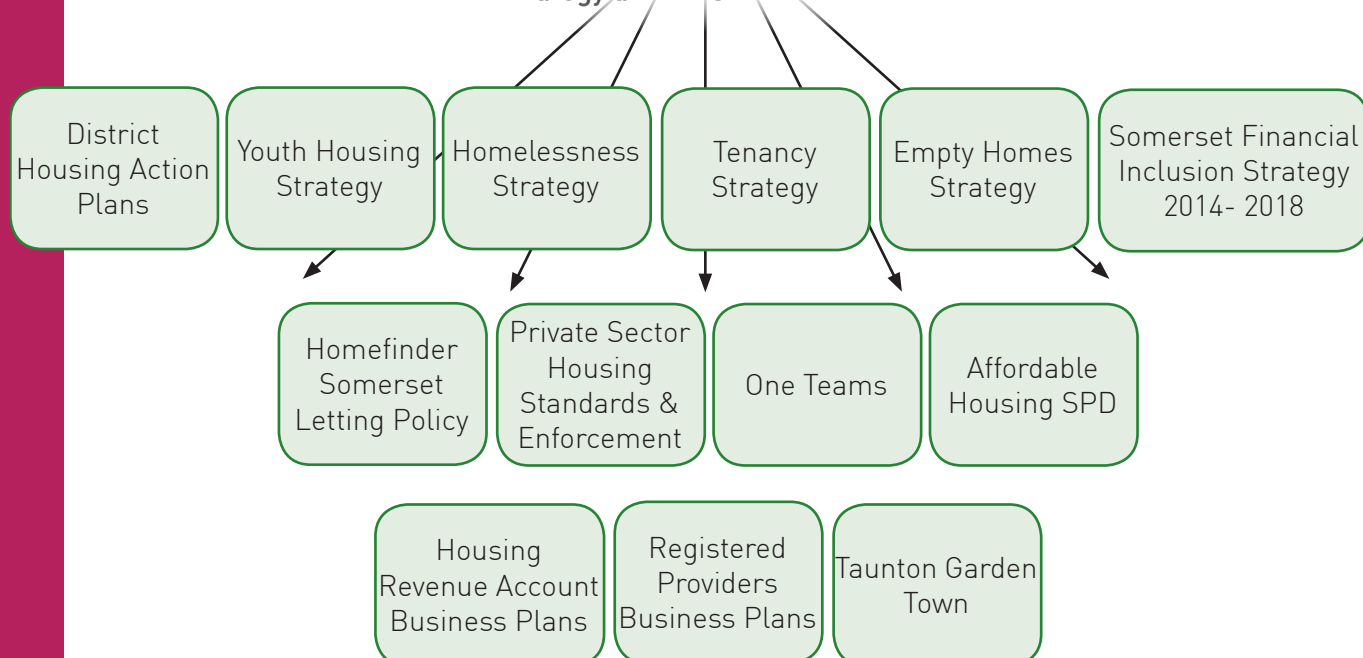
Evidence Base

This is the evidence base that underpin the Strategy



Strategies and Policies that sit beneath

These are the strategies and policies that sit beneath the Strategy and must conform to it



Our vision for Housing within Somerset

This Strategy establishes our vision for housing in Somerset. It sets out three major themes and under each one, the priorities and objectives that we want to achieve. Cutting across these themes is the drive for strong and effective strategic leadership across systems

Strong and effective strategic **Leadership**:

To deliver **leadership** across an integrated system that embraces communities, housing, health & wellbeing, social care and town & country planning

A local **Economy** that provides opportunity for all:

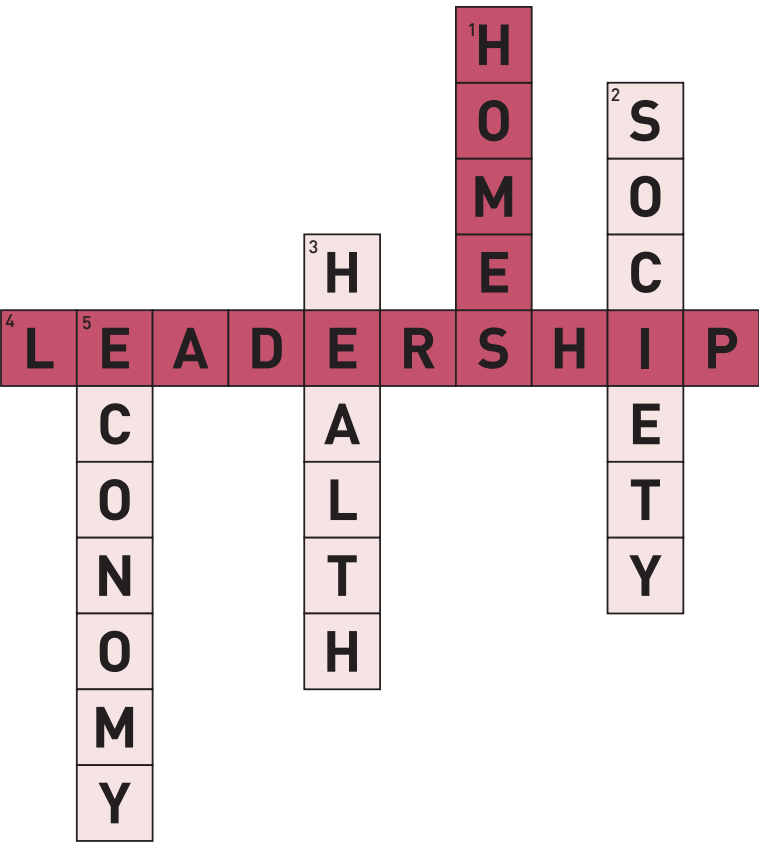
Increase housing supply across all tenures and maximise the proportion of affordable homes including within rural communities, to be constructed by a skilled local labour force

Homes in Somerset are good for your **Health**:

A healthy living environment with secure and decent homes that fosters independent living within strong communities

A **Society** that supports the vulnerable:

Coordinated support to individuals and communities to reduce the impact of Welfare Reform, to prevent homelessness, and to facilitate a balanced housing stock that meets the needs of all local people



Down

1. A 'basic need' – we need lots more of them (but more than just bricks and mortar)
2. A body of individuals living together as a community
3. The state of being free from illness or injury / a person's physical or mental condition
5. The production and consumption of goods and services and the supply of money – but interventions needed so that all can benefit

Across

4. Critical for addressing complex problems and for coordinating the delivery of 1, 2, 3 and 5 (Down) (10)

Housing and Economy

Vision: A local Economy that provides opportunity for all

Context

- There are **not enough homes (all tenures)**
- A **growing affordability gap** with significant consequences for both young people and families
- A **growing private rented sector** that is getting more difficult to afford
- Increasing numbers of workers at **Hinkley Point C** are placing pressure on the private rented sector, fuelling rent increases (1 and 2 bed properties)
- There is **net out-migration of young people**
- **Net in migration of 40+** seeking lifestyle change, using capital asset of homes in higher house price areas to **outbid/out compete local people**
- Lack of opportunities for **social mobility** is a major issue across West Somerset
- **There is delay in construction** at key sites due to market financial changes
- There is a **skills shortage** within the construction sector
- **Poor transport infrastructure resilience** with specific problems on the motorway (M5) / A38 and strategic (A358/A303) network, and insufficient bus/rail link/A road links within much of the county

Priority 1: Maximise the number of affordable homes (all tenures)

Objective: Each Local Authority will prioritise the delivery of new affordable housing (all tenures) and provide community leadership at the highest level to make this happen

Objective: Make use of all available funding streams from Central Government such as the Housing Infrastructure Fund and other short term funding such as private rented sector access fund

Objective: Each Local Housing Authority to have current information about housing need across its locality

Objective: Each Local Authority will seek to deliver the necessary infrastructure and community facilities in a timely and phased manner to accelerate housing delivery

Priority 2: Provide more affordable homes to support rural economies and communities

Objective: Support the rural economy and the creation of sustainable rural communities by meeting demonstrably identified needs for affordable housing

Objective: Improve the percentage of affordable homes in rural developments tied to local plan allocations. Increase the number of supported housing units to ensure the need of some of the most vulnerable in society are more effectively met

Objective: Incentivise / promote land release for rural exception sites. Ensuring that provision remains affordable in perpetuity for future generations or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision

Objective: Increase the number of Community Land Trusts across Somerset, particularly within rural communities

Priority 3: Increase the supply of homes

Objective: Maintain up to date local plan coverage within each district area and Exmoor National Park and ensure a five-year housing land supply to meet housing targets

Objective: Maximise Hinkley Point C legacy and long term benefits

Objective: Work with One Public Estate and identify opportunities to reuse released land and buildings to meet housing needs

Priority 4: Upskill the local labour force

Objective: Align our activities with the Somerset Growth Plan and promote the establishment of a University, apprenticeships and a skills based academy for the construction sector

Objective: There will be an increase in rates of self-build and custom build

Objective: We will introduce off-site / modular construction

Priority 5: Creating sustainable homes and places in Somerset

Objective: The consideration of new housing developments will place sustainability at the heart of decision making

Objective: More homes will be provided that are healthy and affordable to run, integrating low carbon design and resilience to the predicted impacts of climate change



Top left: Rural scheme at Meare, courtesy of MDC

Top right: Opening of Creechbarrow Road Play Area, Group courtesy of TDBC

Left: Community Land Trust, Norton Sub Hamdon, South Somerset, courtesy of Yarlington Housing

Housing and Health

Vision: Homes in Somerset are good for your Health:

Context

- Growing **health inequalities** due to geography, age and financial capability
- An **ageing population** with specific housing requirements
- 75% of the elderly **own their homes**, but **12%** of older people aged 60+ **live in poverty**
- 10% of **children in income deprived families** are **concentrated in 0.07%** of the county area
- There are **14,300 children** and **20,000 older people in low income households** in Somerset
- **33,500** people in Somerset **aged 65 or older live on their own** (1 in 7 households)
- **27,000 one-person households** in which the resident has a **long-term health problem or disability**
- **30,000+ homes with Category 1 hazards** (and the **highest** proportion in the **Private Rented Sector**)
- **1 in 3** households do **not have gas central heating** (1 in 2 in **West Somerset**)
- **Average of 10.2% of households** living in **fuel poverty** (11.1% England average and rising to almost **18%** in our most deprived localities)
- There are **major financial costs to health, social care and housing services** due to trips and falls, excess cold, damp, dementia, domestic violence, homelessness and delayed hospital discharges
- There is a need for more flexible models of supported housing which **enable independent living**

Priority 1: Maximise positive health impacts through housing development and the lived environment

Objective: Develop and promote the use of Health Impact Assessments and ensure appropriate standards of design within housing development and the lived environment, so that new developments provide the opportunity for healthy living

Objective: Foster partnerships with developers around the delivery of lifetime homes / space standards to ensure well designed homes that are built for changing life circumstances and adaptability

Objective: Taunton Garden Town development will be an exemplar project that will deliver positive health impacts through creative design. Lessons will be learned to inform other major developments throughout the county

Priority 2: Improve the existing housing stock

Objective: Work with private rented sector landlords to improve the conditions of the homes which they let

Objective: There is a coordinated approach to combat poor quality or unsuitable homes of any tenure, specifically addressing fire risk, cold homes, disrepair, and accessibility. Members of the public know how to access support to combat poor housing conditions

Priority 3: Match lifelong independent living with appropriate property solutions

Objective: For those seeking an affordable home to rent, identify any further improvements to improve the matching of need (relating to physical/mental/learning disability) with available property through Homefinder Somerset

Objective: To ensure that all households in Somerset have access to coordinated information and advice and related services to enable them to live independently in a home which meets their needs

Objective: To ensure that individuals with particular, additional and / or complex support needs have the necessary support to live independently longer in a home that meets their needs. Consideration will include the potential of new technologies

Objective: To increase the range of housing providers that are willing to house individuals with additional and / or complex support needs

Priority 4: Collaborate with local residents to build healthy and strong communities

Objective: To identify the talent and skills of people within local communities. To work with the people 'assets' to design solutions to complex problems such as homelessness, addictive behaviours and poor mental health. To enable healthy, strong and self-supporting communities that are partnered by effective service delivery



Top left: New housing in South Somerset

Bottom left: Mother and child

Above: Priorswood Resource Centre in Taunton

Housing and Society

Vision: A Society that supports the vulnerable

Context

- Significant levels of **homelessness** and **rough sleeping**
- Ongoing **welfare reform** and **Universal Credit** roll-out
- Particular concerns for the **under 35s** who often struggle to access housing due to challenging benefit regime and high cost of open market housing
- **Lack of supply of 1 bedroom properties** for which there is significant demand
- Some communities in rural areas (principally in West Somerset) have further pressures due to **high levels of second home ownership**
- There are very **high levels of long term empty homes** in West Somerset
- **Mismatch** between the provision of larger properties, increasingly smaller households and **changing demographics** (particularly within Exmoor National Park where there is a predominance of larger, detached homes)
- There is an **increased demand for all forms of accommodation** within commutable distance of **Hinkley Point C**
- There is **hidden housing need** particularly within **rural communities**
- There is **no strategic transit site for gypsies and travellers** and a general under-provision of all pitches across the county
- Further **risers in mortgage rates** could increase the number of repossessions
- There are significant numbers of **armed service / ex service personnel** and their families who are seeking accommodation via Homefinder

Priority 1: Support communities with the impact of welfare reform

Objective: Work as partners to share best practice and consolidate / improve awareness of benefit changes and what it means for families and individuals to help prevent incidence of debt and rent arrears

Objective: Develop suitable housing options for the under 35s

Objective: Housing and support services working with under 35s to have a focus on assisting people into work, and utilise initiatives such as Social Impact Bond to enable providers and landlords to build links with employment, education and training initiatives

Objective: Promote sources of advice and training that are available to private sector landlords, existing private tenants, and residents considering renting, to include 'accreditation'/'tenant ready' schemes

Priority 2: Reduce Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

Objective: Prepare and implement a new statutory county-wide Homelessness Strategy, to include the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and to foresee changing economic circumstances including rising interest rates that could increase repossessions

Priority 3: Create and sustain thriving communities

Objective: As Local Plans are reviewed, they are to include appropriate policy responses that address the demands of changing demographics including specialist needs

Somerset Housing Strategy

Objective: Communities are supported to develop community led plans (Neighbourhood Plans/Parish Plans) to help identify community housing needs, sites for future housing and promote inclusive high quality design

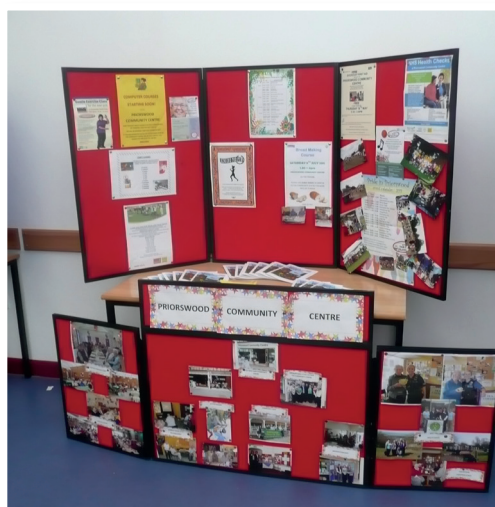
Objective: Revise and update the existing Somerset Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment and increase the amount of available Gypsy and Traveller pitches across the County, exploring opportunities to use public sector land to make residential and transit site provision

Objective: To refresh the Youth Housing Strategy and consider the impact on children and young adults (including those leaving care) of poor housing standards, overcrowding, affordability, and insecurity of tenure. To deliver safe housing solutions that protect vulnerable children and young adults

Objective: Commissioners and providers of housing and support services are to deliver social value and seek a social return on investment. This will enhance the value of the Somerset £pound and so expand the range and quality of service delivery for the benefit and opportunity of local residents and the voluntary / community sector

Objective: Seek to create a downward trend in the number of Long Term Empty homes across all districts

Objective: To work in partnership with housing providers and the charity / voluntary sector to improve housing options / support services for those serving and ex serving members of the armed forces and their families who find that they are in housing need



Top left: Ground Cutting, Northwick Road, Mark, courtesy of South-Western Housing Society and SDC

Top right: Working with local communities, Priorswood Community Centre, courtesy of TDBC

Bottom: Floral display of Mr & Mrs Beer, Woolavington, courtesy of Homes in Sedgemoor

Governance

The Somerset Housing Strategy is the responsibility of the Somerset Strategic Housing Partnership (SSHP), comprising member and officer representation from each of the Somerset districts and the County Council. Public Health, the Clinical Commissioning Group, Homes England, and a local Registered Provider are also represented. The Exmoor National Park authority also provided valuable support to the preparation of the SHS.

SSHP sits within the governance arrangements of the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board.

Delivery

A SHS multi-agency 'Delivery Plan' will be prepared. This will detail a range of prioritised actions / projects, together with information on expected outcomes, lead agency, key partners, timescales, resources, and deliverables.

The Delivery Plan will be reviewed and updated annually.

Each SSHP partner is encouraged to develop their own SHS Action Plans (or to embed activity within other appropriate plans e.g. corporate plans). Partner Action Plans will be the responsibility of the partner organisation (including delivery/governance).

Performance

Performance against the Delivery Plan will be monitored by SSHP.

Review of the Somerset Housing Strategy will occur in 2023.

Glossary

Affordable Housing: Affordable housing includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing (including Low Cost Home Ownership options), provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market

- Affordable rented housing: Rented housing let by Registered Providers to eligible households at Intermediate Housing
- Intermediate housing: Housing at prices and rents above those of social rent but below market price or rents. A rent of no more than 80 per cent of the local market rent
- Social rented housing: Rented housing owned and managed by Local Authorities and Registered Providers for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime

Category 1 Hazard: Housing Standards - A category 1 hazard is a hazard that poses a serious threat to the health or safety of people living in or visiting a home. Examples can include a leaking roof, mould on the walls / ceilings, excess cold, exposed wiring or overloaded electrical sockets, a dangerous or broken boiler etc. There is a scoring system to assess whether any hazard is 'Category 1'. Councils must take action to remove or reduce Category 1 hazards

Community Land Trust: Community Land Trusts are a form of community-led housing, set up and run by ordinary people to develop and manage homes as well as other assets. CLTs act as long-term stewards of housing, ensuring that it remains genuinely affordable, based on what people actually earn in their area, not just for now but for every future occupier (National Community Land Trust Network)

Custom build: Custom build homes are where an individual or a group works with a developer to help deliver a home. The developer may help to find a plot, manage the construction and arrange the finance for the new home. This is more of a hands-off approach compared to self-build but the home will be tailored to match the individuals/groups requirements

Empty Home (long term): A home that has been unoccupied for more than six months

Fuel poverty: Fuel poverty in England is measured using the Low Income High Costs (LIHC) indicator. Under the LIHC indicator, a household is considered to be fuel poor if

- They have required fuel costs that are above the average (the national median level), and
- Were they to spend that amount they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line

Garden Town (Taunton): Taunton was designated a Garden Town in 2017 (the only one in the South West). The Taunton Garden Town proposals encompass the elements that are essential to maintaining a thriving and sustainable community, such as: the delivery of new homes, major town centre regeneration schemes, new open spaces for communities and wildlife, flood protection, locations for business and more efficient and sustainable ways of getting around. The Government has committed to work with the local district council to access funding to deliver essential infrastructure in line with or ahead of housing and the wider growth of Taunton

GTAA (Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment): Councils across Somerset jointly commissioned this study from De Montfort University (2011) to assess the need for residential and transit pitches for the travelling community in the county, as required by national policy. It is now in need of updating

Health Inequality: Health inequalities can be defined as differences in health status or in the distribution of health determinants between different population groups. For example, differences in mobility between elderly people and younger populations or differences in mortality rates between people from different social classes (World Health Organisation)

Health Impact Assessment: A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a process that ensures that the effect of development on both health and health inequalities are considered and responded to during the planning / development process. It is usually informed by locally adopted guidance. Countywide guidance is desirable to ensure consistency of application of HIA

Hidden Homelessness / Housing Need: People who are not entitled to help with housing, or who don't even approach their councils for help, will stay in hostels, squats or B&Bs, in overcrowded accommodation or 'concealed' housing, such as the floors or sofas of friends and family. This is hidden homelessness, as it is not counted in official statistics. Similarly, people who cannot afford their own home and who live with their family, is an example of 'hidden' housing need, as it is very difficult to quantify

Homefinder Somerset: Choice Based Lettings for Somerset. A partnership of Local Authorities and Housing Associations working together to make the process of finding a home to rent both simple and transparent for applicants
<https://www.homefindersomerset.co.uk/>

Lifetime home/s: Homes that meet 16 design criteria that are intended to make homes more accessible and adaptable for lifetime use at minimal cost
<http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/>

Low income household: Commonly a household whose income is 60% or less of the average (median) British household income for that year

Local Housing Allowance (LHA): This is the way of working out Housing Benefit (HB) for people who rent from a private landlord

Local Plans: Planning Policy documents which contain a spatial strategy together with a range of local planning policies that aim to guide and control new development within a defined locality (e.g. within a district council boundary, or a National Park)

Modular construction: "Modular" is a construction method of building homes (and other buildings) that involves constructing sections away from the building site, then delivering them to the intended site. Installation of the prefabricated sections is completed on site

One Public Estate: One Public Estate (OPE) is a national initiative managed by central Government to enable public sector organisations to 'rationalise their asset and estates management'. In other words, Local Authorities were able to bid for project funding to facilitate the sharing of buildings and services with other public sector organisations
<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/schemes-and-initiatives/customer-hubs-and-one-public-estate/>

Self-build: Projects where someone directly organises the design and construction of their own home. This covers a wide range of projects from a traditional DIY self-build home to projects where the self-builder employs someone to build their home for them. Community-led projects can also be defined as self-build

SHMA – Somerset Strategic Housing Market Assessment: The Government's National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) requires each Local Authority to undertake a SHMA as part of the evidence base required to inform district Local Plans. A SHMA seeks to assess the long term need and affordability of housing in the area, and is based on demographic and economic trends. The latest SHMA for Somerset was published in October 2016

Social Impact Bond: Social Impact Bonds (SIBs) are a commissioning tool that can enable organisations to deliver outcomes contracts and make funding for services conditional on achieving results. Social Investors pay for the project at the start, and then receive payments based on the results achieved by the project. There now exist many SIBs across the UK, supporting tens of thousands of beneficiaries in areas like youth unemployment, education / training, mental health and homelessness

Social Value: Social Value is the quantification of the relative importance that people place on the changes they experience in their lives. Often these changes cannot be given a financial value (or it is very hard to do so). Examples of social value include an individual whose confidence may be increased through interaction with a community group. Or whose health and wellbeing is improved through living next to (or having convenient access to) a park. An organisation can influence social value through its procurement and service delivery practices (see Social Return on Investment)

Social Return on Investment (SROI): SROI is a framework for measuring and accounting for a much broader concept of value i.e. beyond the monetary value of an investment / purchase. It seeks to reduce inequality and environmental degradation and improve wellbeing. SROI measures change in ways that are relevant to the people or organisations that experience or contribute to it. It does this by incorporating social, environmental and economic costs and benefits in to decision making around service delivery, and assigning each of these a monetary value. This enables a ratio of benefits to costs to be calculated. For example, a ratio of 3:1 indicates that an investment of £1 delivers £3 of social value. An example may be the outsourcing of some service delivery to community groups, who due to greater local knowledge of people and their circumstances, could deliver greater impact (for the same financial investment) and so enhance social value <http://www.socialvalueuk.org/resources/sroi-guide/>

Sustainability: In the context of new housing developments, this is to include flood mitigation and flood resilient building design, green infrastructure, sustainable travel, minimisation of waste and pollution, protection and enhancement of biodiversity, and notable measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change; providing homes and spaces that are healthy for occupiers and users

Universal Credit: A monthly benefit payment for people who are on low income or are out of work. It's being rolled out in stages across the UK and is replacing other benefits (as part of the government's Welfare Reform agenda). How much a person receives depends on their circumstances, including income and how many children they have

We are committed to having open dialogue on matters relating to strategic housing. We shall ensure that the following information is available on the district council and county council web sites:

- Somerset Housing Strategy (SHS)
- SHS Delivery Plan
- SHS Performance Scorecards
- Monthly newsletters

Each website contains relevant contact information.

We shall work towards delivering a single countywide resource for the above.

If you wish to write to us, please address any correspondence to 'Housing Strategy' at your local district council.

