



# **Local Community Network**

## Yearly Report 2023/2024

**Wellington and Wiveliscombe**



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# Local Community Networks (LCNs)

## Purpose

“To be the focus for community development, engagement and partnership working at local level; improving the outcomes for residents through establishing strong connections between Somerset Council, our communities and partners.”

## Map

There are 18 LCNs in total.

They cover every city, town, and parish within the local authority area.

Full details of each LCN, including their demographics, characteristics, agendas, and meeting dates, can be found online.

Please visit the following webpage:

[www.somerset.gov.uk/local-community-networks/](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/local-community-networks/)

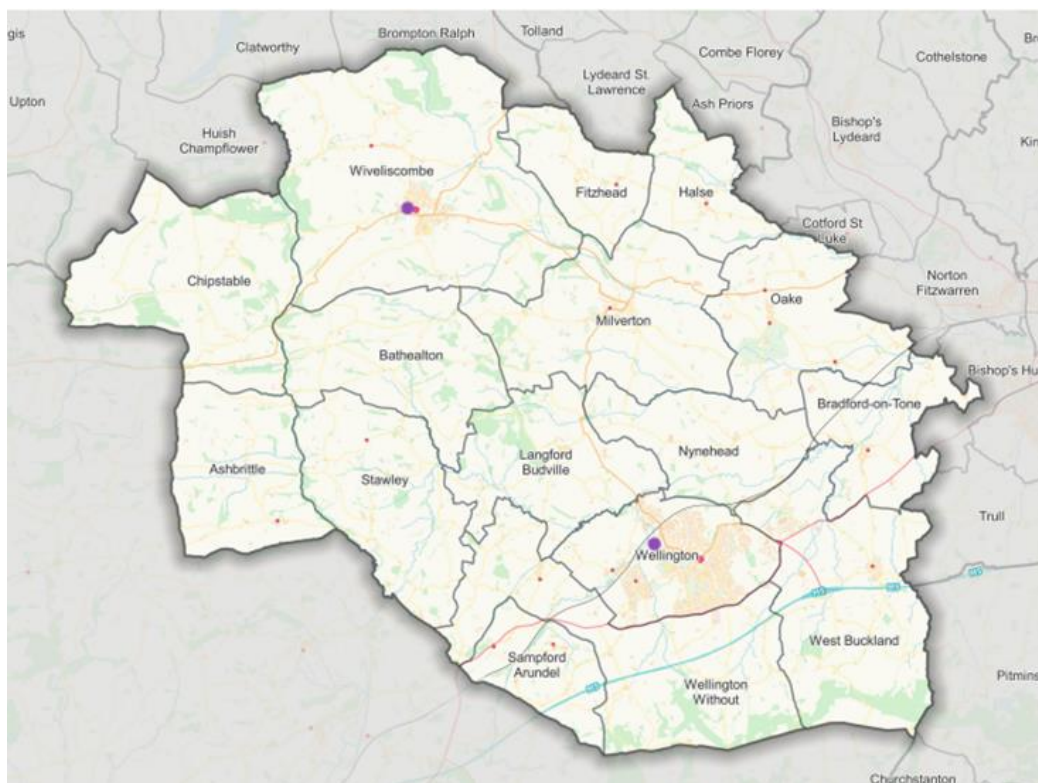


# Wellington and Wiveliscombe LCN

The Wellington and Wiveliscombe LCN area lies a few miles west of Taunton. It features 16 parishes and includes the three Somerset Council electoral divisions of Blackdown and Neroche, Upper Tone, and Wellington.

The LCN covers around 66 square miles of Somerset, has a population of just over 27,000 and some 12,000 households. The landscape includes rolling hills and wooded lanes, picturesque villages and hamlets, and historical landmarks.

An economically and culturally vibrant area, Wellington and Wiveliscombe are the largest and most populated towns, with a range of smaller communities in the parishes of Ashbrittle, Bathealton, Bradford-on-Tone, Chipstable, Fitzhead, Halse, Langford Budville, Milverton, Nynehead, Oake, Sampford Arundel, Stawley, Wellington Without, and West Buckland.



Transport connectivity is good especially across the south of the area, with the M5 close and A38 cutting through Wellington.

The northern area bordering Exmoor feels significantly more rural with the road network reflecting this and travel times being longer.

Wellington particularly has seen significant development in recent years with large numbers of houses being built along with new commercial sites providing space for industrial and retail expansion.

The area is served by 14 state-funded schools, with primary provision spread across the area and secondary education focussed in Wiveliscombe and Wellington, which also has a successful private school.

Visit: [www.somerset.gov.uk/local-community-networks/lcn-areas/wellington-wiveliscombe/](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/local-community-networks/lcn-areas/wellington-wiveliscombe/)

# Chair and Vice Chair



## Chair: Wellington and Wiveliscombe LCN

Cllr Ross Henley

Ross is Somerset Councillor for the Blackdown and Neroche electoral division.

## Vice Chair: Wellington and Wiveliscombe LCN

Cllr Gwil Wren

Gwil is Somerset Councillor for the Upper Tone electoral division.



# Chair's Introduction

“Last year I was delighted to become involved and to accept the honour of becoming the first ever Chair of the Wellington and Wiveliscombe Local Community Network (LCN).

LCNs are a totally new initiative for us in Somerset and are a great place and opportunity for Somerset councillors, parish and town councillors and local community organisations to work together on joint projects and to share good practice across the area.

Our LCN contains a very varied landscape. It includes the largest town of Wellington, a smaller town called Wiveliscombe, plus a large group of rural and village communities across a wide geography.

We are very lucky to have so many already established community group initiatives right across our area which have provided so many inspiring stories of fantastic success. From the community of Halse which took over the local ale house and turned it into a community pub, to the great work of Wivey Link and the working parties which Wellington Town Council has set up on many issues. This includes the exciting plans to run services previously managed by Somerset Council.

I've been especially pleased to see the LCN set up two new working groups - one on highways issues and the other on transport links. Both are relevant and important to all the communities in our LCN area.

Thank you to all members of the working groups for giving time to get these up and running, and thanks also to the many Somerset Council staff who have worked so hard at (and between) our meetings. It's you that make the LCN happen, and function so well.

I am looking forward to Year Two of our interesting and positive LCN. We've so much positive work to build on.”

**Cllr Ross Henley**  
Chair, Wellington and Wiveliscombe LCN



# Priorities and Ambitions

## Data

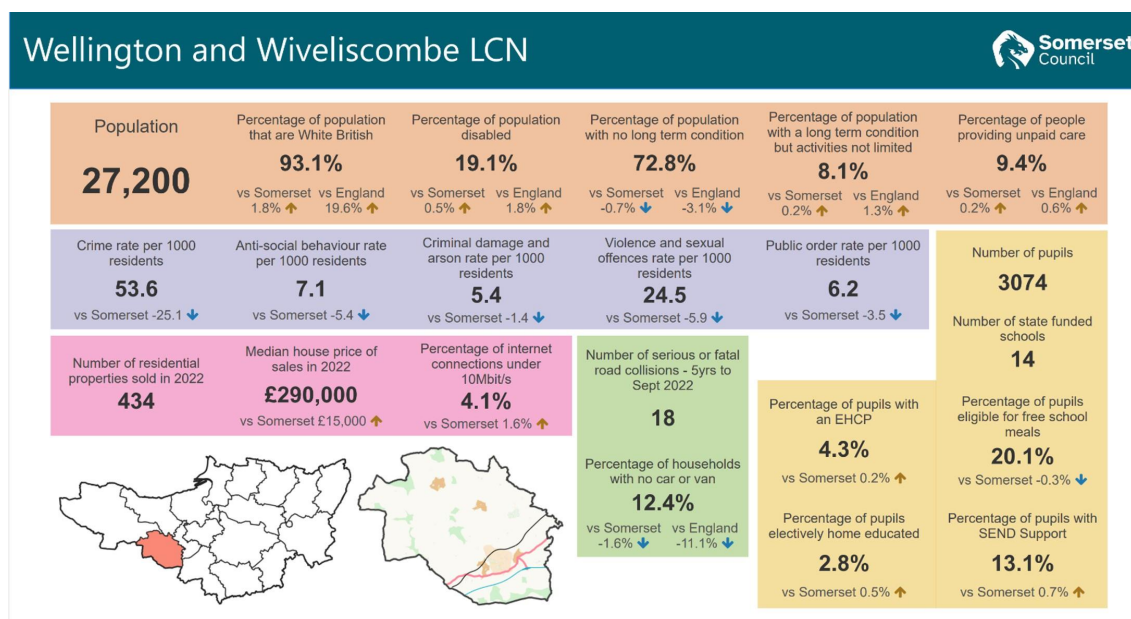
At the initial Wellington and Wiveliscombe LCN meeting, attendees were shown a data set (see below). It provided useful statistical information aimed at generating initial thoughts and discussions. specific knowledge of the area.

Those present at the LCN were asked to consider what this data meant to them in relation to their specific knowledge of the area.

They were asked to consider what they felt was important to their community, residents, and local businesses.

The answers from the data set discussions were grouped into themes.

**You'll find a larger image of the data set at Appendix B of this report.**



# Priorities and Ambitions

## July (inaugural) Meeting

The LCN held its first meeting in July 2023 to introduce a new way of working, establish how stakeholders could participate, elect a Chair and Vice Chair, and explore local priorities. Some 30 people attended in person with a further five participating online.

Alongside a discussion about priorities, participants were asked to suggest local organisations which should be represented at future LCN meetings alongside public sector bodies and health organisations. Suggestions included local churches, schools and early years groups, housing providers and organisations which support volunteers to improve the area.

Key priorities were identified at the meeting, and these are featured in the graphic below. A range of secondary priorities were also noted for future consideration.





# Priorities and Ambitions

## October Meeting

The second meeting took place in October, with 27 people in the room and three attending online. The meeting was introduced to a standard data set (see Page 7) which had been prepared for each LCN area to support initial discussions.

LCN members were keen to explore more detailed information around specific topics as working groups developed and new priorities were identified. During discussions it was noted that support for children and families was not in the initial priority list, and should be included for further discussion.

The meeting also featured a presentation from Somerset Highways. It was agreed that a Highways Working Group would be developed to progress the discussion.

## December Meeting

This attracted 25 in-person attendees and three online. The primary focus was Somerset Council's financial position and LCN member's potential responses.

Cllr Theo Butt Philip, Lead Member for Transformation and Human Resources, talked through the financial position and its implications – including for asset and service devolution to local councils - and took comments and questions from LCN members during a frank discussion.

It was agreed that local council members of the LCN would each discuss their options with a view to exploring any collective or collaborative responses at the next meeting.

LCN members agreed to include further exploration of the Highways Steward Scheme in discussion about their response to Somerset Council's financial position.

# Priorities and Ambitions

## February Meeting

The February 2024 meeting saw 16 in-person attendees and five online participants. We discussed the potential for asset and service devolution to local councils, and agreed that while there was interest across the LCN area, it was for individual councils to explore with Somerset Council.

Following a thorough exploration of the Highways Steward Scheme it was agreed that critical mass to develop this across the LCN had not been reached and individual councils would discuss the potential with their neighbours and progress as appropriate.

It was noted that Highways Working Group and a Transport Working Group were being developed and would report to the next meeting. LCN members were thanked for offering to join these new working groups.

## April Meeting

For the April meeting 16 people gathered in-person, with five more online, to take feedback from the two, newly established working groups (see below), to explore wider priorities and to learn about the Tonedale Mill and Toneworks development project.

LCN members were interested in the Tonedale Mill and Toneworks project and could see a range of very welcome community benefits across the area. Everyone was keen to engage with the project, watch it develop and said they looked forward to future updates.

# Working Groups

## Highways

Chaired by Rod Burton of Milverton PC, the Highways Working Group met for the first time in March with a second gathering in late June.

At the initial meeting, Somerset Council's Highways team updated attendees on scheduled works and planned projects in the coming year and the working group discussed how engagement might support improved responses from the Highways team and local stakeholders.

LCN members were keen to understand how programmes of work are developed and planned, and to contribute local knowledge to ensure minimum disruption to residents. Contact details were shared, and it was agreed to meet quarterly to maintain momentum.

## Transport

Chaired by Somerset Councillor Dave Mansell, the Transport Working Group met for the first time in April to discuss and agree its work programme.

With representatives from local councils and interested stakeholders across the LCN area, its remit was to look at public and community transport, and make recommendations to the LCN and other bodies on how improvements might be delivered.

First steps included collating information from bus user groups, community transport providers and local residents, and the aim is to meet Somerset Council transport planners and bus operators during the summer of 2024.

## Venues

The LCN (and its two working groups) met at various venues across the year. The LCN team is grateful to the teams at these venues for their support and hospitality, and to the local councils which enabled their use.

- Wiveliscombe Rugby Club
- Wellington Rugby Club
- Wellington Town Council
- Wiveliscombe Community Office
- Wiveliscombe Community Centre
- Langford Budville Jubilee Hall

# Reflections

Through the work of the LCN and its members, we are starting to better understand the work public sector agencies and many voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) organisations undertake across the area.

Alongside this, there is a growing recognition of the efficiencies, improvements and opportunities which can come from better partnership working across topics, themes and geographies, and all stakeholders are committed to maximising the benefit for local services, organisations and residents.

Discussions throughout 2024/25 will progress work on the issues identified in the LCN's first year and explore how further benefits can be gained.

To date the LCN has been a valuable platform for:

- Understanding Somerset Council's financial position. Giving town and parish councils, and local voluntary organisations, the opportunity to explore how they can support each other in the future.
- Improving understanding and working relationships with Somerset Council Highways Team. Highways officers are now more visible and recognised as helpful and keen to work with local stakeholders as much as possible.
- Bringing together groups with an interest in public and community transport to explore and agree what improvements the area would like to see and to plan how these improvements might be delivered.
- Raising the profile of local projects and organisations by providing a platform for publicity and engagement.

## Contacts

Email: [wellingtonandwiveliscombelcn@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:wellingtonandwiveliscombelcn@somerset.gov.uk) Website: [www.somerset.gov.uk/local-community-networks/](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/local-community-networks/)

Wellington and Wiveliscombe LCN: [www.somerset.gov.uk/local-community-networks/lcn-areas/wellington-wiveliscombe/](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/local-community-networks/lcn-areas/wellington-wiveliscombe/)

# Appendices

## Appendix A – Core Membership

### Parishes

Ashbrittle  
Bathealton  
Bradford-on-Tone  
Chipstable  
Fitzhead  
Halse  
Langford Budville  
Milverton  
Nynehead  
Oake  
Sampford Arundel  
Stawley  
Wellington  
Wellington Without  
West Buckland  
Wiveliscombe

### Electoral Divisions

Blackdown and Neroche  
Upper Tone  
Wellington

### Organisations

Avon and Somerset Police  
NHS  
Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue  
Education  
Spark Somerset  
Society Local Council Clerks (SLCC)  
Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC)  
Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP)  
Community Council for Somerset (Village Agents)  
Citizens Advice Somerset  
Department of Work and Pensions  
Somerset Rivers Authority  
Somerset Local Nature Partnership  
Chamber of Commerce  
Somerset Youth Work Alliance  
Wiveliscombe Area Partnership

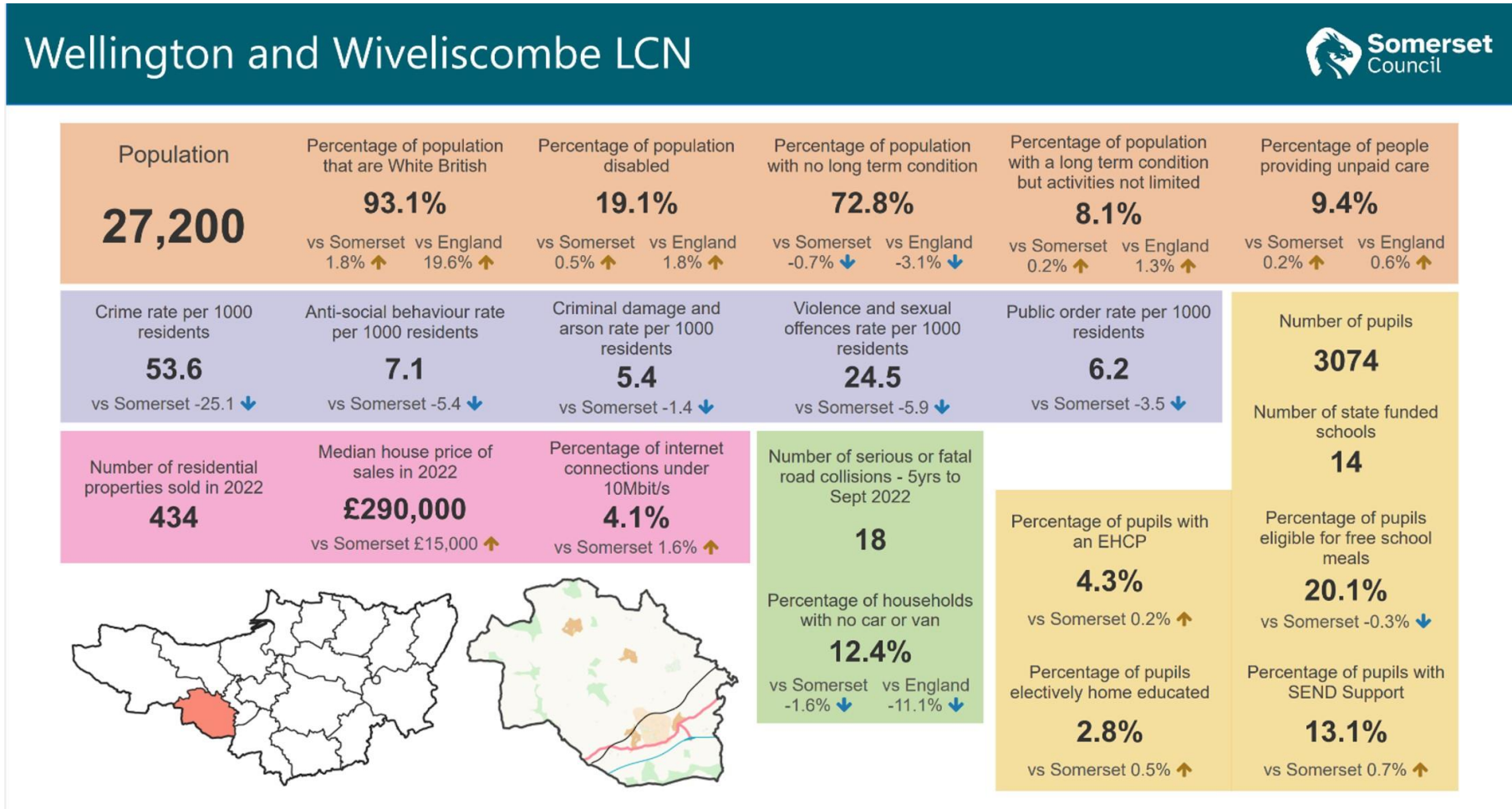
## Appendix A - continued

### Other Partners and Stakeholders

Best Before Store, Wellington  
Wellington Churches Together  
Christians Against Poverty  
Food Banks and pantries  
Growing Minds  
LiveWest Housing  
Schools  
Early years and pre-schools  
Reminiscence Learning Dementia Support  
Wellington Street Pastors  
Transition Town Wellington  
Wellington Mill CIC  
Wiveliscombe Civic Historical Society  
Wivey Cares  
Wivey Kitchen  
Wivey Grows  
Wivey Pool  
Wivey Welcomes Refugees  
Blackdowns National Landscape (previously AONB)  
Wellington Community Association  
Wivey Bus User Group  
Wivey Link



## Appendix B – Data



## Appendix C – Meeting Dates and Agenda Items

### 6 July 2023 at Wiveliscombe Community Centre

#### Agenda:

1. To elect the Chair of the Local Community Network
2. To appoint the Vice Chair of the Local Community Network
3. To receive apologies for absence
4. Declarations of interest
5. Public question time
6. To determine the priorities and areas of focus for the next 12 months
  - What are LCNs and how will we work together?
  - Discussion – what is important to residents and businesses in our area?
7. To agree the frequency of meetings
8. The schedule meetings for the next 12 months

### 12 October 2023 at Wellington Rugby Club

#### Agenda:

1. Apologies for absence
2. Declarations of interest
3. Notes from the previous meeting
4. Public question time
5. Highlights of themes discussed at the last meeting
6. An introduction to data
7. Presentation from Somerset Highways
8. Discussion:
  - What are the more detailed issues?
  - How do we know?
  - What can we do about it?
9. Dates of future meetings

## **12 December 2023 at Wellington Ruby Club**

Agenda:

1. Apologies for absence
2. Declarations of interest
3. Notes from the previous meeting
4. Update on Somerset Council's financial position
5. Update on actions from the previous meeting
6. Public question time
7. Discussion – themes identified at July meeting
8. Provisional formation of working groups
9. Dates of future meetings

## **6 February 2024 at Wellington Rugby Club**

Agenda:

1. Apologies for absence
2. Declarations of interest
3. Notes from the previous meeting
4. Update on actions from the previous meeting
5. Public question time
6. Identify changes to our LCN priorities
7. Highways Steward Scheme presentation
8. Discussion – asset and service devolution
9. Formation of working groups
10. Dates of future meetings

## 22 April 2024 at Wiveliscombe Rugby Club

### Agenda:

1. Apologies for absence
2. Declarations of interest
3. To approve the notes of the previous meeting
4. Actions from the last meeting
5. Public question time
6. Feedback and discussion from the Highways working group
7. Feedback and discussion from the Transport working group
8. Presentation and discussion on local project of interest – Tonedale Mill and Toneworks
9. Next steps and future agenda items
10. Dates of future meetings

To browse all Wellington and Wiveliscombe LCN minutes visit:

[democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=896](https://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=896)