

Sufficiency Update

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Somerset
Council

Introduction

The Council has a statutory duty to make sure there are enough childcare places to enable parents to take up or remain in work and training; to have free early years education for all eligible young children in their area; and undertake an assessment of the sufficiency of childcare places in its area at least every 3 years, with an annual update, and publish the assessments in the prescribed manner.

Childcare Act 2006

The Council also has a duty to make sure there are enough school places for children and young people who live in the county and to make sure these places are of good quality with enough space to promote parental choice and diversity and to undertake an assessment of the sufficiency of school places in its area with annual updates.

Education Act 1996

Projection Modelling

When modelling pupil projection figures there are a number of factors which we are able to consider:

- Birth rate data
- School roll data
- Migration data
- Housing 'with a reasonable degree of certainty'

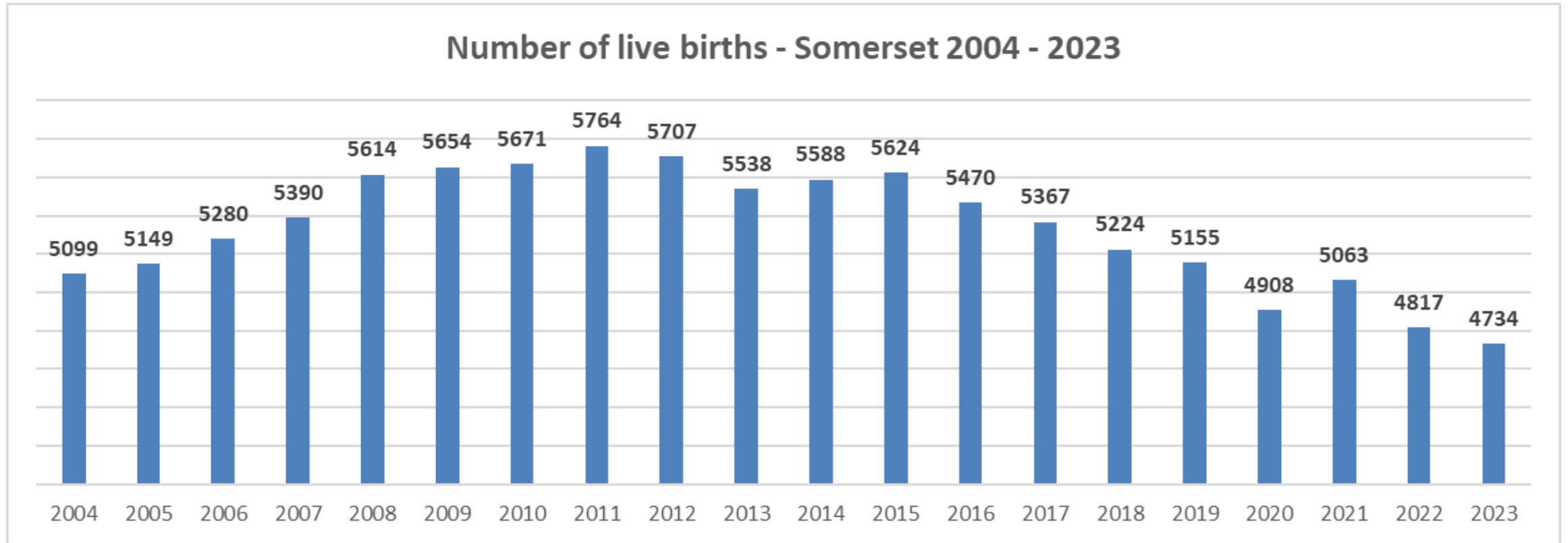
Specialist Projections are more complex in that

they have to map mainstream projections to specialist catchments and incorporate assumed demand (2.23% in 2024) for specialist places and data relating to primary needs.

That data then needs to be mapped against state-maintained capacity in each specialist catchment, noting that each provision is registered to meet a specific need type (or types) and age-range.

U n d e r 1 6	Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)	12.50%	45	47	49	51	53	55	56	57	57	57	57
	Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD)	3.00%	11	11	12	12	13	13	13	14	14	14	14
	Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)	8.40%	30	31	33	34	36	37	38	38	38	38	38
	Physical Disability (PD)	4.10%	15	15	16	17	17	18	18	19	19	19	19
	Total	28.00%	100	104	110	115	119	122	125	128	128	128	127
	With Post-16	15.00%	115	120	126	132	137	141	144	147	147	147	146
	Polden Bower places		232	232	232	232	232	232	232	232	232	232	232
	Sufficiency calculation (learning difficulties)		117	112	106	100	95	91	88	85	85	85	86
	Autism Demand												
	Autism Demand	33.00%	118	123	130	135	141	144	147	151	150	151	150
	Westover Green ASC Base		14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
	Polden ASC Base		24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24
Total local capacity		38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	
Sufficiency calculation (ASC)		-80	-85	-92	-97	-103	-106	-109	-113	-112	-113	-112	
F o r t e c h n i c a l	Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)	17.80%	63	66	70	73	76	78	79	81	81	81	81
	Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)	16.60%	59	62	65	68	71	73	74	76	76	76	75
	Total	34.40%	123	128	135	141	147	150	154	157	157	157	156
	Local capacity		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Sufficiency calculation (SEMH/SLCN)		-123	-128	-135	-141	-147	-150	-154	-157	-157	-157	-156
s t r u c t u r e	Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)	1.80%	6	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
	Hearing Impairment (HI)	0.70%	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	Visual Impairment (VI)	0.50%	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Total	3%	11	11	12	12	13	13	13	14	14	14	14

Birth Rate



Need

The SEND Code of Practice describes 4 broad areas of need:

- Communication & Interaction
- Cognition & Learning
- Social, Emotional & Mental Health
- Sensory and / or Physical

Our projection modelling goes further, in that it includes data relating to primary need, of which there are many more:

Autism Spectrum Condition	Physical Disability
Social, Emotional & Mental Health	Speech, Language & Communication Needs
Severe Learning Difficulty	Specific Learning Difficulties
Moderate Learning Difficulty	Hearing Impairment
Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty	Visual Impairment

Local First Approach

When planning places, significant regard is given to statutory walking distances:

Under 8 = 2 miles
8 & over = 3 miles

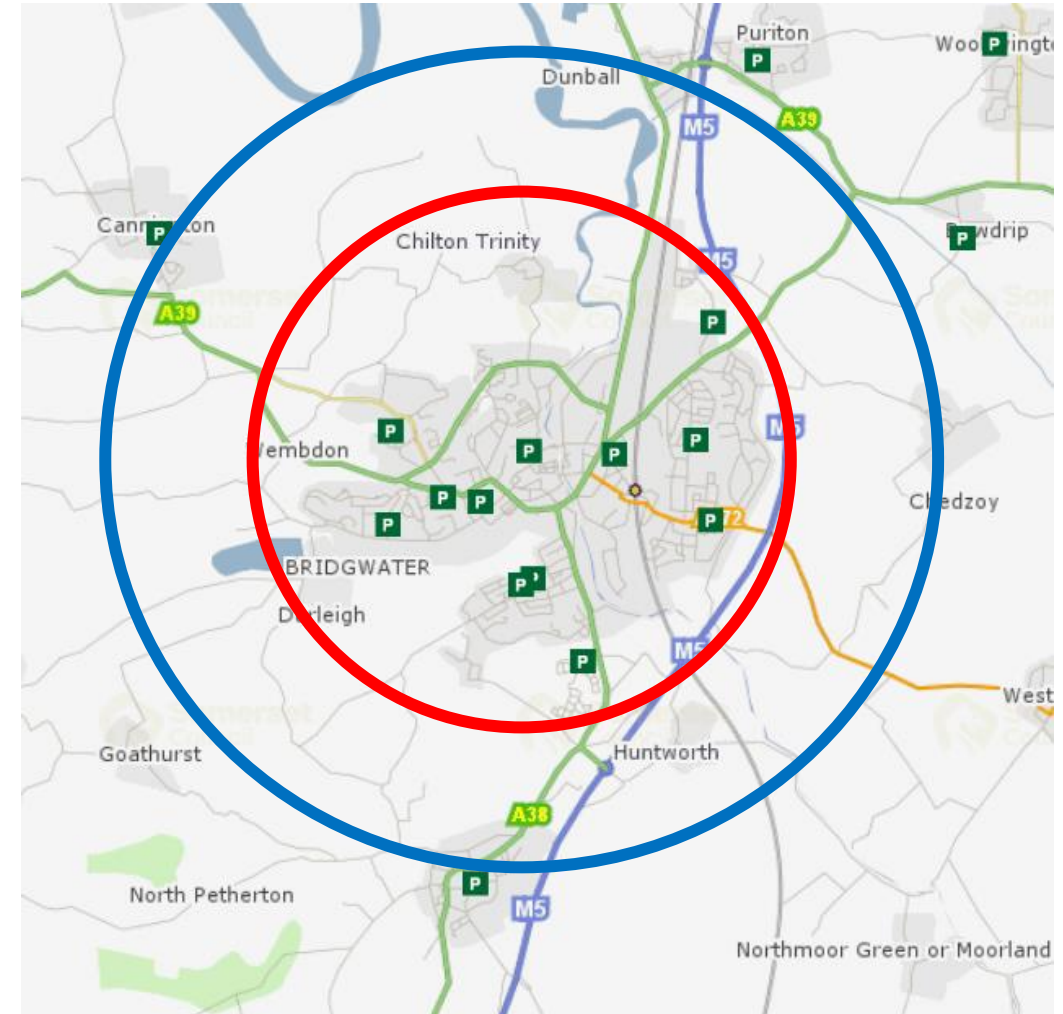
If sufficient school places are not available within these distances, the council incurs significant additional transport costs:

Taxi £25k - £40k per annum

Minibus: £30k - £50k per annum

Coach: £55k - £75k per annum

To date, our specialist provision has been delivered in our main population centres (Taunton, Yeovil & Bridgwater) as well as key locations in the Mendip area.



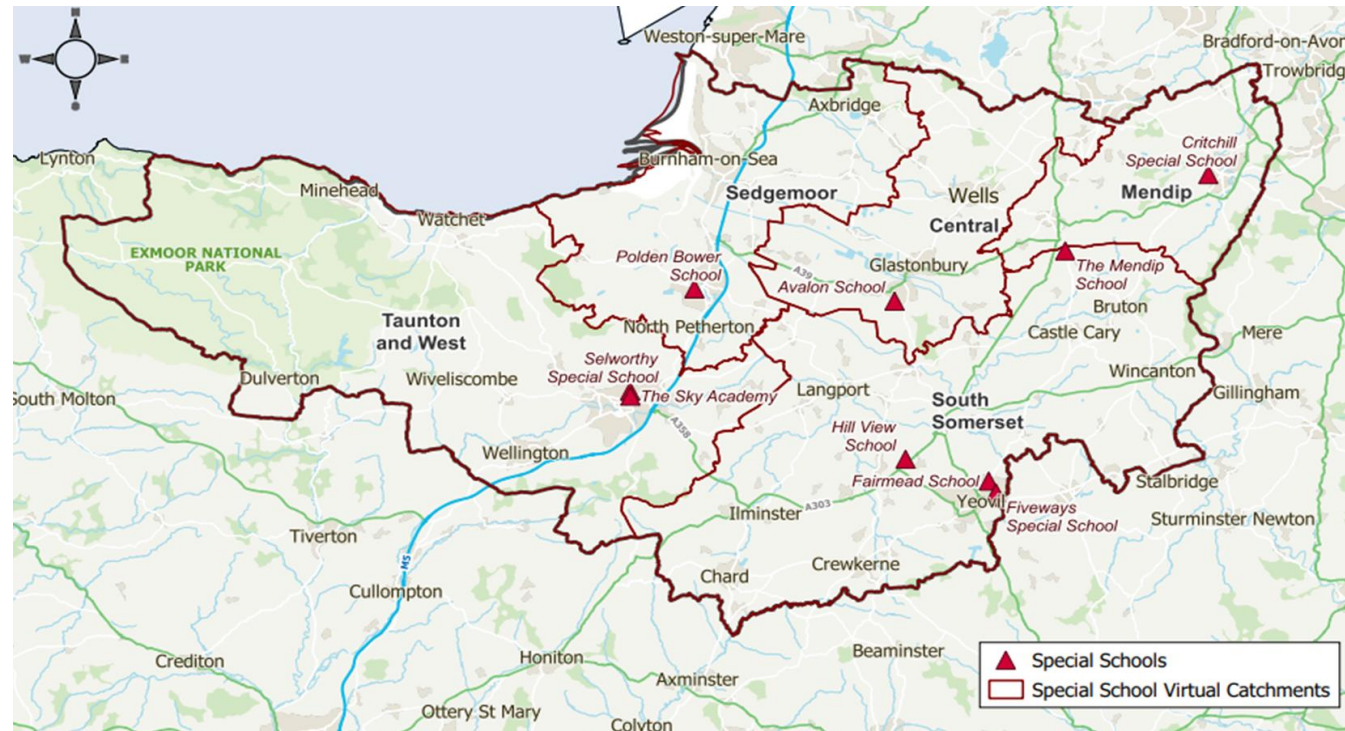
Local First Approach (Specialist)

When planning specialist places, we aim to meet need within a child's 'Specialist Catchment'.

These are clusters of mainstream school catchment areas, built around Somerset's state-maintained special schools. These will be realigned in 2025 to match the new Locality Areas.

By planning in this way, and placing children with a disciplined 'Local First' approach, we can educate children close to home and realise a number of benefits:

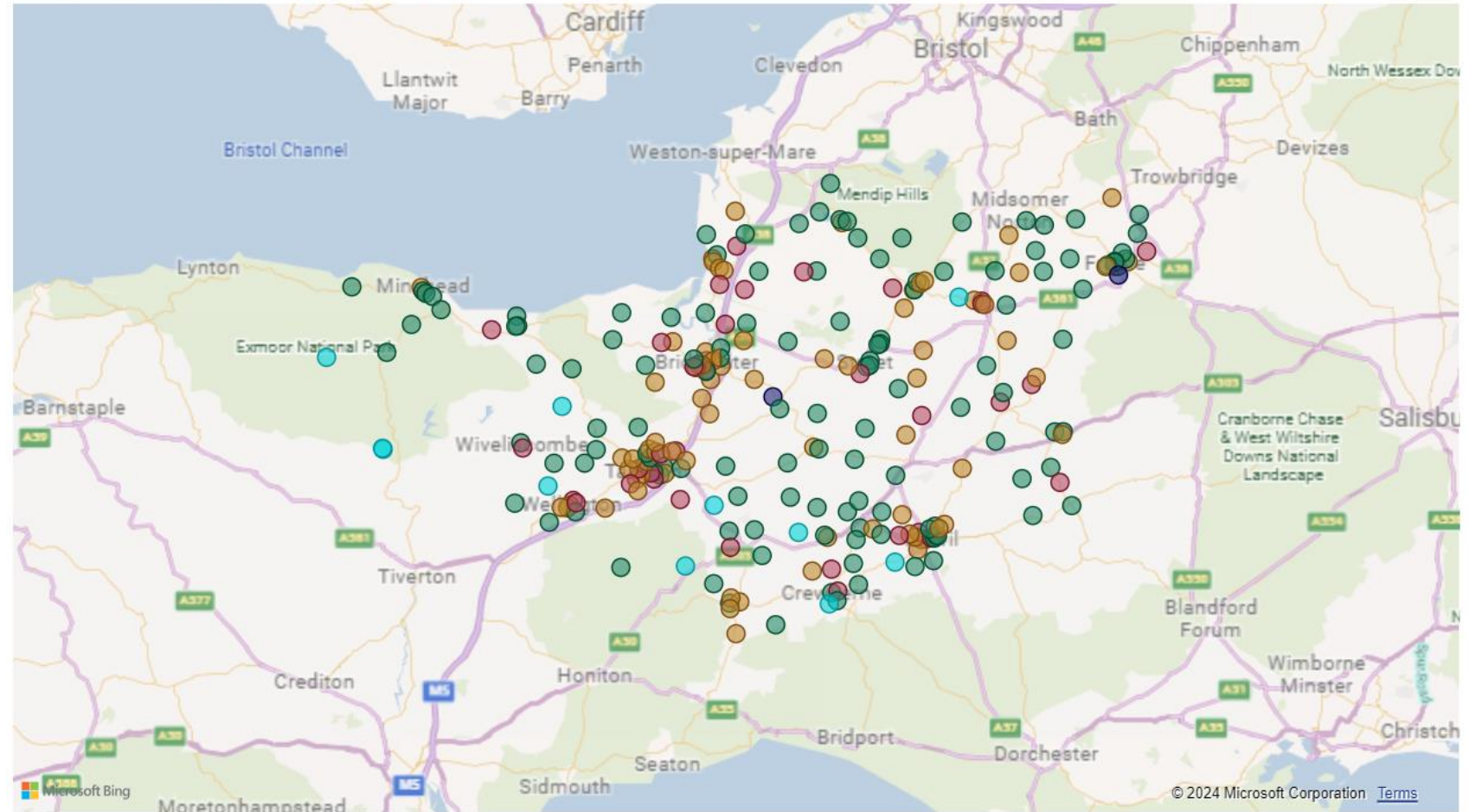
- Improve parental engagement
- Reduce travel distances and time
- Allow transport networks to be configured using economies of scale, increasing efficiency and reducing cost



Mapping Latent Capacity

Map Showing Somerset Schools By Occupancy

Occupancy Group ● 0-25% ● 25-50% ● 50-90% ● 90-99% ● 100%+



We're developing a Dashboard which allows us to understand which mainstream schools have physical capacity to host a SEN Unit.

This will allow us to approach schools / Trusts in a targeted way, when we have a need to deliver additional specialist places in specific geographical locations.

Gaps and Opportunities (Specialist)

Demand for some specialist places significantly exceeds their availability in Somerset.

The key areas of unmet need (our sufficiency gap) are ASC and SEMH.

Central Somerset (Glastonbury, Street & Wells)

- New 64-place SEMH school planned for Wells in 2027 (circa £10m investment)
- Need to identify latent physical capacity in a mainstream primary school to host small ASC or SEMH provision

Mendip (Frome, Shepton Mallet)

- Exploring the expansion of The Mendip School through a formal feasibility (circa £1.5m)
- Working with Trusts in Frome to identify mainstream primary schools to host small SEMH provisions

Gaps and Opportunities (Specialist)

Sedgemoor (Bridgwater, Burnham & Highbridge, Cheddar)

- Exploring the expansion of Polden Bower through a formal feasibility (circa £2m)
- Early discussions to create a small SEMH provision in a mainstream primary school
- Early discussions to create a small ASC provision in a mainstream primary school
- Would welcome opportunity to explore provision in Cheddar

South Somerset (Ansford, Chard, Crewkerne & Ilminster, Huish Episcopi, Stoke-Sub-Hamdon, Wincanton, Yeovil)

- Hill View School has now opened (circa £15m investment)
- Early discussions to create a small SEMH or ASC provision in a mainstream primary school in Crewkerne
- Early discussions to create additional capacity at Fiveways School

Taunton & West (Taunton, Wellington, West Somerset, Wiveliscombe)

- Exploring the expansion of Selworthy School as part of DfE rebuild (circa £1.5m)
- Exploring the creation of a small ASC provision in a mainstream primary school through a formal feasibility (circa £150,000)
- Working with stakeholders in West Somerset to explore specialist provision as part of area reorganisation
- The Cove at Court Fields is operating in its new building (£500,000 investment)

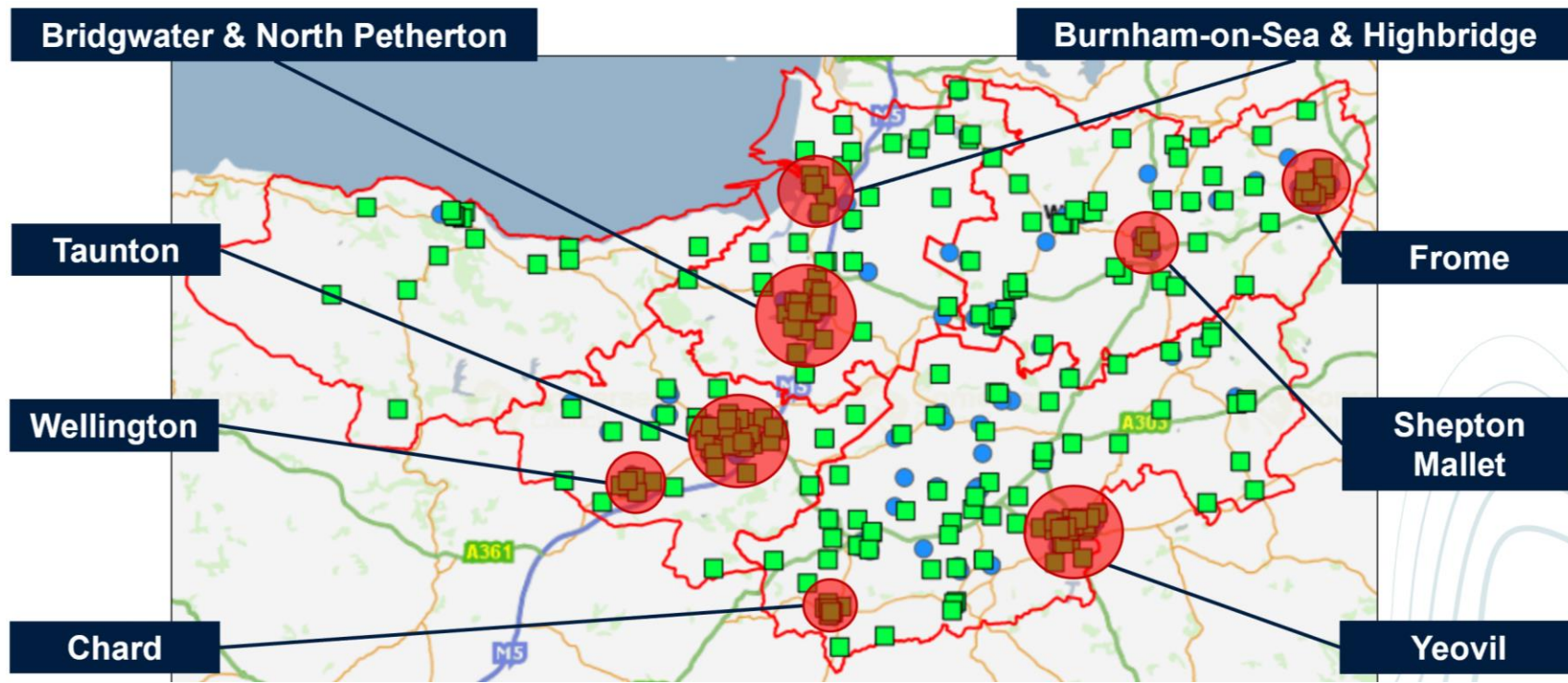
Highlights (Early Years)

The introduction of Extended Entitlement is creating sufficiency pressures in main population centres.

DfE provided a £900k grant to deliver additional capacity for Extended Entitlement & Wraparound projects.

Applications being sought (and funding awarded) from providers in hotspots.

Don't expect to see developer contributions for at least a couple of years.



Highlights (Mainstream)

Taunton

- Acute place issues in some year groups as the bulge moves through the system but additional capacity at Monkton Wood and Bishop Fox's not yet fully utilised
- Large NCY 6 cohort expected to fill all secondary PANs in September 2025

Wellington

- Addressing some space deficiencies using S106 ahead of a big NCY 7 entry group in September 2025

Shepton Mallet

- Expansion at St Paul's is underway

Bridgwater

- Expect to commission expansion of Puriton and new Bridgwater South primary school in the next few months to meet needs of new developments

Yeovil

- Exploring expansion of Primrose Lane to meet needs of developments in the Mudford area

Questions

