

SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

- 1.1 'South Somerset Together', your Local Strategic Partnership, is closely involved in developing a Community Strategy aimed at drawing more investment and activities into the District, and creating a better environment for current and future generations.
- 1.2 It is important that the Strategy accurately reflects the true needs and aspirations of local people, which is why the Partnership is now seeking your views.
- 1.3 We would like you to consider the following consultation document. It contains information gathered from literally hundreds of sources, and focuses on main trends, and the most important issues and concerns facing South Somerset communities in the short and longer term.
- 1.4 The document proposes a Vision and set of goals, which will need collective action in order to sustain and improve the long-term prospects of the area.
- 1.5 Based on the consultation feedback over the coming months, the finished Strategy will provide a focus for the energy and resources of partners, businesses and communities working across the District.
- 1.6 Our purpose is to develop a very clear and well-evidenced agenda for South Somerset. This in turn will act as a guide and focus for future investment in the area.
- 1.7 It will also help us to negotiate an improved Somerset Local Area Agreement (LAA) with Government, which better reflects the particular needs of South Somerset. Similarly it will enable us to make a stronger input into regional and national plans.
- 1.8 Through the process of developing this Strategy, we aim to make much clearer the important links between the grassroots local community partnerships, South Somerset Together, its sub-groups such as the Yeovil Vision, the Market Town Investment Group, other statutory partnerships operating at District and Countywide level. By making roles and responsibilities clear, we hope we shall be able to motivate existing and potential new partners to be involved and work together for the future of South Somerset.
- 1.9 In Appendix 1 is a table of definitions and glossary of terms, which have been used in this document, designed to aid understanding and help everyone to make a consistent input as we develop the Strategy.

WHAT IS GREATER SUSTAINABILITY AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

1.10 There is now a broad consensus that in seeking economic goals and securing rising standards of living, we need also to conserve and enhance our environment and seek fairness and equity for all - now and for the future. The UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy, March 2005, identifies 5 national sustainable development principles:

- Living within environmental limits
- Ensuring strong, healthy & just society
- Achieving a sustainable economy
- Promoting good governance
- Using sound science responsibly

1.11 To achieve these principles a genuinely Sustainable Community Strategy needs to have given some priority to:

- Creating more sustainable communities
- Natural resource protection & environmental enhancement
- Climate change & energy
- Sustainable consumption & production

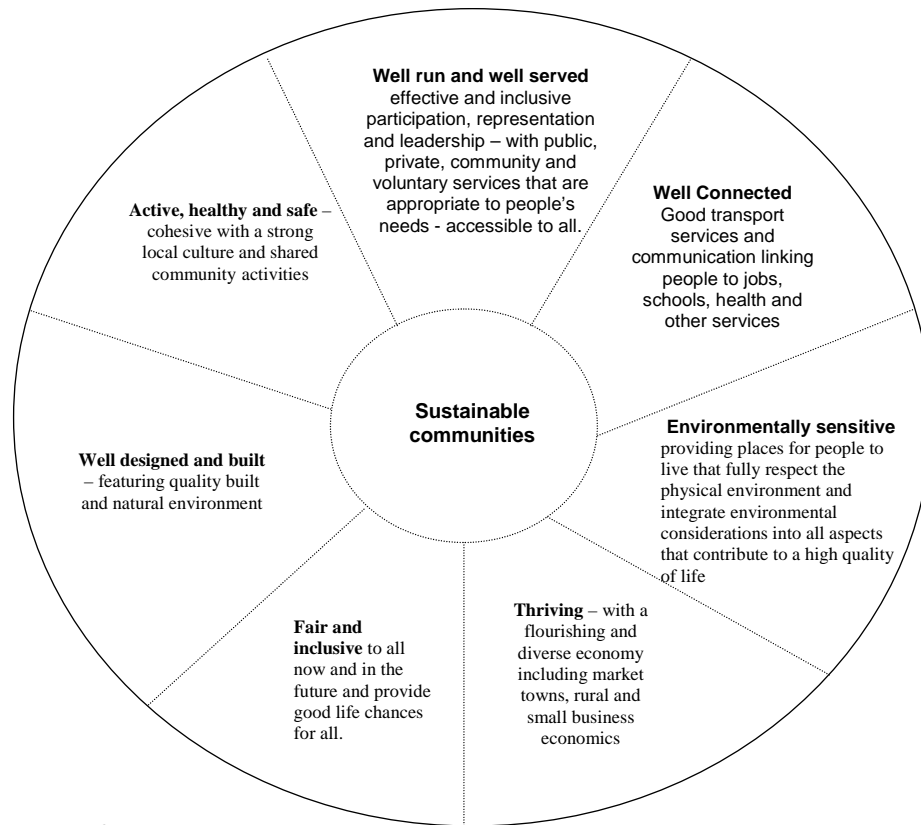
1.12 These themes have been reflected in regional documents and for good reason. The South West's eco footprint shows that if the region's consumption patterns were replicated worldwide, we would need 2 extra planets to sustain us! This suggests that we need to make a shift towards lower consumption lifestyles, which are more resource efficient. To this end, the Regional Spatial Strategy contains sustainability principles and the Regional Economic Strategy contains a statement of intent

“South West England will demonstrate that economic growth can be secured within environmental limits to bring prosperity to the region”.

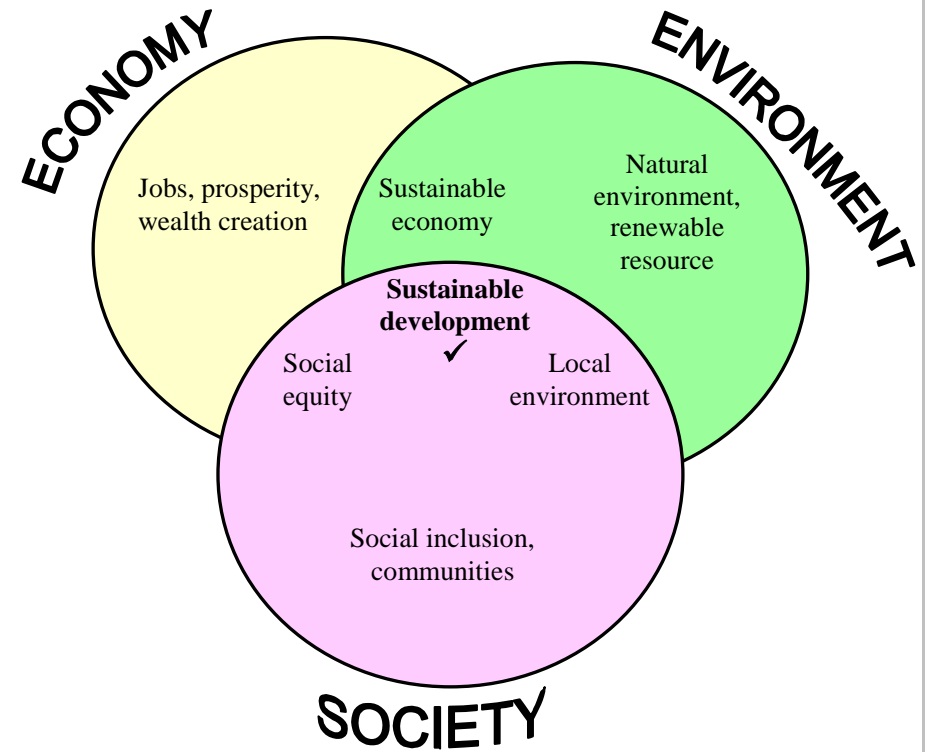
1.13 What does all this mean in practical terms for the particular circumstances of South Somerset, Yeovil and its largely market town and rural economy? This Community Strategy has an important role to play in delivering more sustainable communities at the South Somerset level. To do this, we will need to both develop strong local leadership, a shared plan and the right skills and knowledge throughout partner organisations in order to work together to achieve shared goals. In researching our particular needs and circumstances we have been adapting definitions developed in the Egan Review (*The Egan Review of Skills – A consultation paper October 2003*) about what makes up a sustainable community.

Key components :

“Sustainable communities are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all.”²



Source:² *The Egan Review of Skills – A consultation paper October 2003*

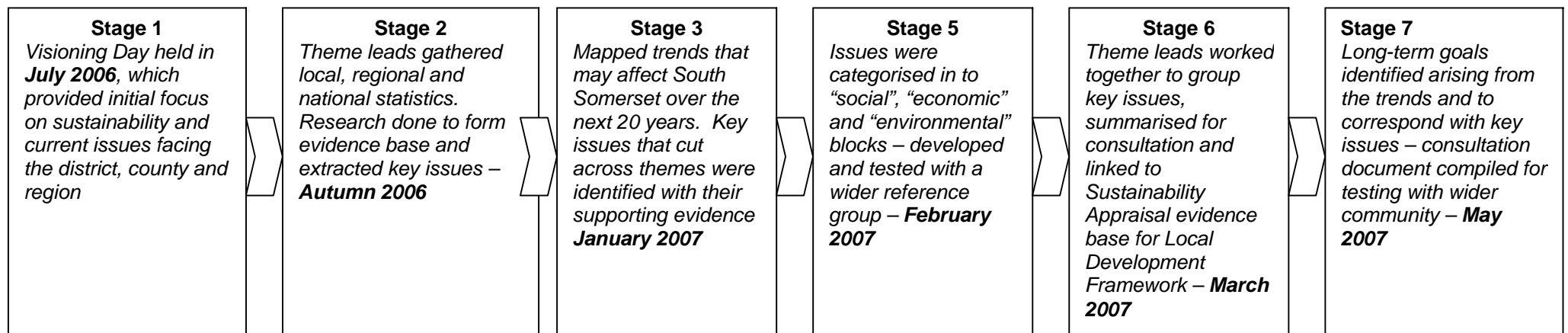


“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”¹

¹ *World Commission on Environment and Development 1987 Brundtland Report*

PREPARATION OF THE TRENDS, GOALS & KEY ISSUES DOCUMENT & WHY YOUR VIEWS ARE IMPORTANT

1.14 The Partnership has been scanning documents and compiled a huge evidence base of local, regional and national data sources. This has enabled us to sift through and try to pinpoint the issues and long-term challenges facing South Somerset. As well as trawling through the main national and regional statistics, such as the Census, the project team has put great emphasis on auditing the evidence that has arisen from many local sources. Parish and Community Plans, prepared by dozens of communities across South Somerset have been a particularly important source of the issues faced by our communities. Combining this information under themes, has given us a more tailored understanding of the particular needs of this area. By grouping issues and considering trends we have been able to suggest some long-term goals, which we shall need to work towards.



1.15 This is only the start of the process! We now need to hear from you. We will be holding further discussions and feeding in the views and perspectives of partners, parishes, businesses and community groups across the District, in order to refine the main concerns, test the Vision statement and agree on our goals. Appendix 3 sets out our overall approach to consultation at this stage. Only then can we start to work on getting the best solutions. Any specific actions that we identify will need to strike that essential balance between social, economic and environmental concerns if our Strategy is to be sustainable.

HOW DOES ALL THIS LINK INTO THE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT AND LAND USE ALLOCATIONS ACROSS THE DISTRICT?

- 1.16 Land, buildings and how we manage, develop and use them are of vital importance. These resources are regulated through the planning system and offer us major opportunities to better meet and balance the full range of community and other needs. A new national system called the Local Development Framework (LDF) is being put in place at the South Somerset level. Our aim is to make sure that the long-term goals for both the Community Strategy and the Core strategy of the LDF are the same so that land use development and other actions are properly linked up and work together. This means that the system of plans within the new LDF, allocating land for development and establishing policy for development control should be directed by the wider community's aspirations. The Sustainable Community Strategy, vision and goals should be the key determinant of the objectives and priorities of planning policy and will be mirrored in the Core Strategy of the LDF. The Core Strategy is the first and central Local Development Document required in the LDF. It will establish the settlement hierarchy for growth and key strategic policies for controlling development. So for example where making progress towards a goal in the Sustainable Community Strategy needs new planning policies to help to achieve it, then the Core Strategy will be the key strategic planning mechanism through which this is done. Equally some goals will not require any land use changes in order to make progress towards them.
- 1.17 Preparation of the Core Strategy for South Somerset is about to commence over the next 18 months with a statutory process of consideration of issues and options moving towards a preferred option for development for public examination. The publication of this consultation for the Sustainable Community Strategy allows Community's aspirations to be at the commencement and heart of the development of the Core Strategy.
- 1.18 A statutory requirement for any Local Development Document is the production of a Sustainability Appraisal to ensure that the Core strategy objectives and nature is developed with direct reference to national, regional and local sustainability considerations. It is a requirement of a Sustainability Appraisal that a Sustainability Framework is established against which objectives and actions can be judged to determine their credibility in terms of wider sustainability objectives and aspirations. A draft Framework has been produced by consultants employed by South Somerset District Council as part of the preparation for the Core Strategy. Alongside this, the consultants are also considering this document to examine its fit with the draft Sustainability Framework and ensure that this consultation will inform its final form. The revised Framework will in due course be used for developing the Core Strategy and other Local Development Documents.

SECTION TWO – A TIME OF RAPID & LASTING CHANGE

2. INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

2.1 This section explores the major social, economic & environmental changes & trends that will affect South Somerset over the next 20 years and considers some of the pressures that are making them occur. By understanding these trends we are in a better position to either make the most of them or seek to plan for and mitigate their effects. To be most effective such planning needs to be done across public, voluntary, community & business sectors.

2.2 The scene is set by a brief description of the area and some of its defining characteristics.

South Somerset forms much of the eastern side of the County of Somerset running south of the Mendip hills. It comprises nearly a third of the County with a population of over 156,000 and covers an area of 370 square miles. Taking both population and area together, South Somerset is the largest District in England. It consists of a mixture of both sparsely inhabited rural areas and a network of market towns. A third of the population lives in the thriving and growing principal town of Yeovil, which acts as a sub regional centre for much of the district and areas of West Dorset. The town grew around the railway and has been a major hub for the aerospace industry and other related engineering, as well as traditional manufacturing. In recent years the development of the Yeovil Vision has started to address the outdated image of the town and build on its natural strengths and assets.

2.3 Significantly over 40% of the population live in small towns, villages and hamlets of fewer than 2,500 people. Population density is only 1.6 people per hectare, compared to the England and Wales average of 3.4. There are a further 9 market towns serving the dispersed population, with larger centres including Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster, Somerton & Wincanton. This pattern of settlements presents a real challenge in providing equity of service across such a diverse area. Parished throughout, there are 121 parishes served by 102 parish and town councils. The district has a fascinating environmental, industrial and cultural heritage with an enviable and varied landscape, valued by residents and a great draw to visitors. It is situated en route between London and the southwest holiday counties of Devon and Cornwall. Major railway lines and trunk roads such as the A303 cross it. There is a Naval airbase at Yeovilton, to the north west of Yeovil.

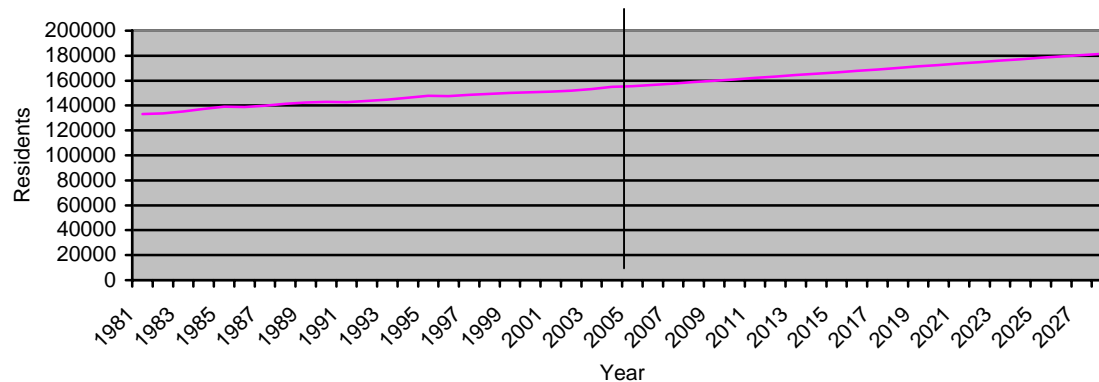
- 2.4 The landscape is mainly undulating, agricultural land with some very fertile belts that have traditionally been famed for top quality food production such as apples and dairy produce. Topography and agricultural practices have helped to secure special status for outstanding landscapes such as the flat lands of the Levels and Moors to the north and west of the district, the rolling Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to the south west and a small part of the Cranborne Chase and West Wilts AONB to the north east. Just west of Yeovil is the heritage site of Ham Hill Country Park.
- 2.5 Many village settlements are built from local stone and the area has a high concentration of listed buildings and conservation areas as well as grand country homes and estates, some now owned by the National Trust. There is a strong link between the quality and productiveness of the area and the success of the local economy, through commerce, recreation, tourism and providing an environment where people want to work and live.
- 2.6 The population of the area is growing steadily, due to its many attractions, as a place to live and work. Yeovil is the main focus for this growth. Local labour shortages and the quality of life available stimulate in-migration of both workers and the elderly throughout the district. South Somerset now has a growing population of economic migrants, especially from Portugal, Poland and other Eastern European countries. Despite a low unemployment rate, wages and educational qualifications are lower than the national average. The Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2004, shows that several wards in Yeovil and Chard – the most urban parts of the District – are in the most deprived 20% in UK, 12% of the population of South Somerset lives in the most deprived 25% Super Output Areas in England, also 11% of children under 16 live in low-income households. As a whole the District is in the 50% most income deprived Districts in England. The house price: income ratio across the whole district is 7.72 compared to 6.25 for England and Wales, although in certain more rural areas it reaches 14:1.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Trend: Population growth

- 2.7 Population growth in South Somerset has been almost twice the national average over the past 10 years (6% between 1994-2004 in South Somerset compared to 3.9% nationally).
- 2.8 Population projections predict that by 2028 the population of South Somerset will reach 181,400. This is an increase of 25,300 residents from the current population estimate of 156,100 (Mid 2005 estimate – ONS).

Population estimates for South Somerset
 (robust estimates up to mid 2004, mid 2005 onwards on trend-based projections only)



The chart above demonstrates that the rate of growth from 2005 onwards will be even greater than over previous years (a steeper slope).

2.9 Drivers

- Population growth used to be primarily due to natural growth i.e. increases in birth rates and decreases in death rates, but since the mid-1990s, migration both internal and external have been a key driver of population growth.
- A particular factor is the increase in migrant workers and their families. The South West Observatory, (2005). Migrant Workers Bulletin states that this is driven by economic forces such as demand for labour and low local unemployment levels. Migration pressures are predicted to intensify in the medium to long-term as the EU expands. Recent growth is particularly evident in rural areas and small towns. This may put additional pressures on the need for affordable housing and rented accommodation and all this is relevant to South Somerset
- 90% of this growth will be in the over 60s age group – indeed it is predicted that there will be net losses in younger age groups.
- Life expectancy is increasing and South Somerset has one of the highest in the country.

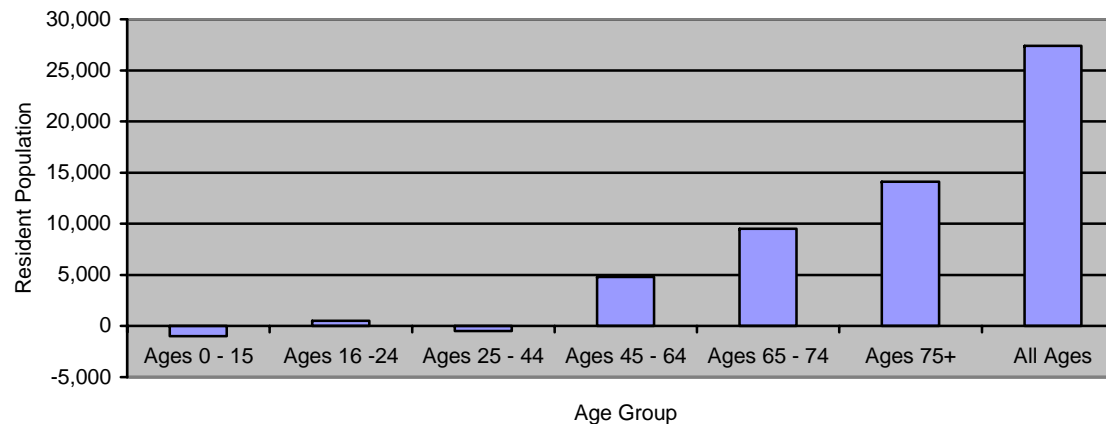
2.10 So what?

- This has already and will continue to put increased demand for housing and increased demand for public sector services such as health and care – particularly important considering that much of this growth is in the older age groups.
- Growth due to migration of older people means that newcomers are unlikely to participate fully in the local labour market.
- According to the Regional Spatial Strategy, the majority of housing development in the future will be in Yeovil, as it is defined as a Strategically Significant Town for the South West.

Trend: Ageing population

- 2.11 The population is ageing in three ways – the average age is rising, the number of old people and the proportion of old people are also increasing.
- 2.12 It is projected that **90%** of population growth in the South West between 2004 and 2028 will be in the 60 years and over age group.
- 2.13 We are living longer, having fewer children and life expectancy is increasing.

**Population growth by age group in South Somerset between 2004 and 2029
(mid 2004-based estimates)**



2.14 The above chart demonstrates the population projections by age group until 2029 (ONS). It is predicted that the greatest increase will be seen in the elderly population whereas there will be little increase in other age groups. There is a predicted decrease of 1,000 residents aged 0-15 years and a predicted decrease of 500 residents aged 25-44 years. Therefore total population growth over the next 20 years or so can almost completely be attributed to the elderly population.

2.15 Drivers

- Post-war ‘baby boomers’ are approaching retirement age
- In-migration of older people is the main driver – most people are coming to South Somerset for quality of life and retirement – not to work
- Life expectancy in South Somerset is amongst the highest in the country

2.16 So what?

- The number of people likely to need care services, such as nursing home care, is predicted to double over the next quarter of a century
- Ageing will impact on housing as there will be greater demand for supported housing, adapted houses and single-person properties
- Ageing will shape provision of leisure and cultural services and product demand

- It is predicted that the new generations of older people will be more active and more likely to participate in lifelong learning
- There will certainly be implications for the economy in terms of the number of working-age people needed to support retired citizens and the number of people choosing to stay in employment for longer

Trend: Increased demand for housing

2.17 New projections from The Office of National Statistics predicts a much higher level of household growth over the next 20 years (to 2026) than the figures used to inform the South West Regional Spatial Strategy. These projections (Household Projections by Somerset District – DCLG 2006) suggest that by 2026 **South Somerset will need to accommodate 19,000 more households** (40% more than predicted in the Regional Spatial Strategy). 69% of all additional households will be one person households with 90% of these going to people over the age of 35 and 33% going to those aged over 65.

2.18 Nationally, in 1961, half of all homes were inhabited by couples with children - this is now less than 40%. 21% of children live with a lone parent, compared to just 7% in 1972 and 40% of children are now born outside of marriage.
Source: Projections of the UK labour Force, 2006-2020. Office of National Statistics.

2.19 Drivers

- Net inward migration (mainly of older people)
- Young families are being priced out of the local housing market – therefore the type of housing required is changing to reflect demographic changes
- Cohabiting couple households are also on the increase – on average these households are more likely than married households to split into single-person households. The average household size is predicted to be 2 persons per household by 2026 in the South West region

(Source: Somerset County Council and the Somerset Local Planning Authorities: Implications of additional household growth through ONS household projections – Baker Associates).

2.20 So what?

- There will be a large demand for housing – but not family housing as in previous years, the demand will be for one and two person housing
- There may also be a demand for adapted housing to allow older people to remain in their own homes for longer
- As most new residents will be elderly there is the issue of making sure that new housing allows access to services such as health care and social activities
- Apart from the developments allocated to Yeovil, other towns in South Somerset have been identified as having potential for future housing development – Ilminster, Wincanton and Chard
- Rural housing is not always considered sustainable due to travelling distances to reach key services

Trend: Decline in numbers of young people

2.21 Fewer children are being born than are needed to sustain the population. For a population to be sustainable, a fertility rate of 2.1 births per female is required. Currently, the rate in South Somerset is 1.81

2.22 Drivers

- Declining fertility rates
- Lack of affordable housing for families – net loss of people age 25-44 from South Somerset predicted between 2004-2029 (ONS)

2.23 So what?

- There will be declining pupil numbers, particularly in rural schools
- There will be fewer young people entering the labour market – this could lead to stagnation of the skills present in the local workforce and a lack of new graduates/skilled people entering the work force
- Service provision may change to reflect more the needs of older residents

Trend: Decline in working age population

2.24 It is predicted that there will be a net loss of working age people over the next 20 years

2.25 Drivers

- Lack of affordable housing
- Lack of professional/graduate career opportunities
- Lack of Higher Education provision
- Low wage economy

2.26 So what?

- This could seriously impact on the skills levels of our workforce, the workforce itself will be aged and low-skilled
- This may impact on inward investment as there is not the skills pool to attract new businesses in the area
- Business start-ups may decline leading to declining industries and rural/market town economies

2.27 Other Predicted Changes to the Workforce:

- The working age population will be older - the state pension age for women will rise from 60 to 65 years old by 2020.

Source: Projections of the UK Labour Force, 2006-2020.

- There will be increasing demand from employers for ICT skills and generic skills such as management skills, communication and customer-handling skills. Computer literacy will be essential for most forms of employment
- The majority of new jobs created over the next 10 years are expected to be at managerial or professional level
- Many businesses could be transformed by changes in technology and communications
- There is already a trend for businesses to outsource parts of their work – particularly sending low-skilled manual work overseas

Source: Forethought: Britain in 2020 – The Labour Party.

ENVIRONMENT

Trend: Increasing Road and Air Traffic

- 2.28 The Department for Transport forecasts suggest that road traffic will increase by at least 23% in England between 2000 and 2010. Traffic in the South West is rising faster than the national average.
- 2.29 Britons are forecast to be more mobile than ever by 2020, increasing the demand for transport, especially air travel.

Source: Projections of the UK labour Force, 2006-2020. Office of National Statistics.

2.30 Drivers

- Increase in commuting
- Poor public transport
- Increase in the number of cars per household
- People are now more mobile than ever before in terms of both work and leisure activities

2.31 So what?

- Detrimental effect on environment (CO2 emissions and other pollutants)
- Risk of decrease in road safety for car-users, cyclists and pedestrians
- Over-reliance on cars and safety concerns may mean that people will be walking less
- Congestion in our towns and villages
- Increased traffic flows may put additional pressures on smaller roads and increase the need for resurfacing work
- Increased demand for car parking
- Could encourage more commuters to work from home

- 2.32 The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister expects passenger numbers from Bristol Airport to almost double by 2015 from 2006 figures.

2.33 Drivers

- Provision of flights to America and other new destinations
- Greater availability of cheap flights to expanding range of destinations

2.34 So what?

- Increased air travel is bad for the environment
- May increase traffic on our roads

Trend: Climate change

2.35 Current climate models predict that global temperatures will rise by between 1.4 and 5.8°C by the end of the century.

2.36 Drivers

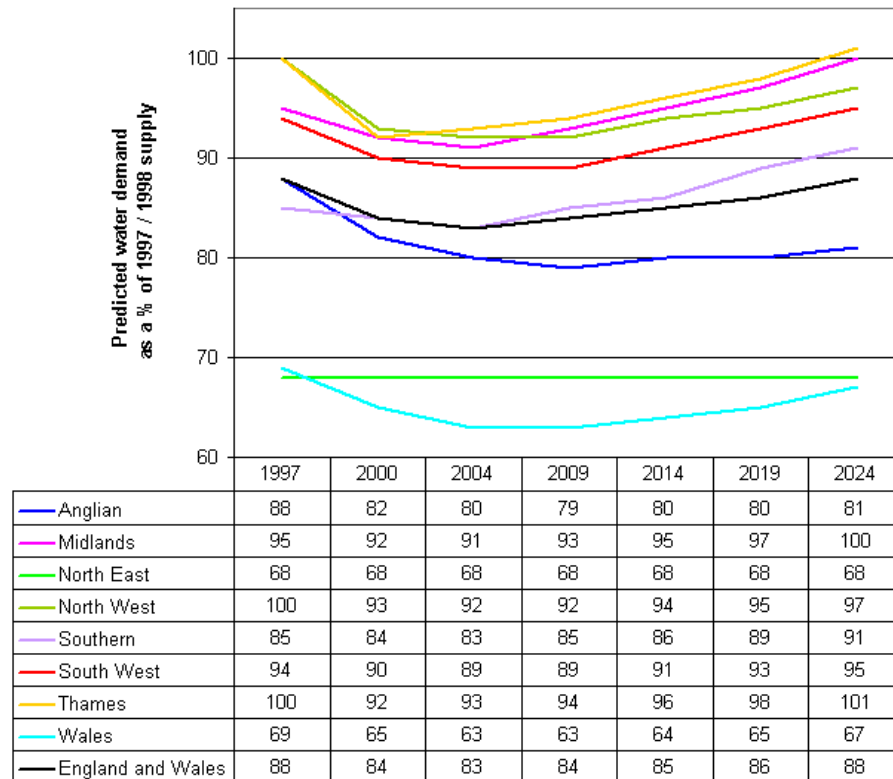
- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported in 2001 that there is new, stronger evidence that most of the warming over the last 50 years is attributable to human activities. These are activities that involve the emission of 'greenhouse gases', such as carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide. More recent reports such as Climate Change 2007 : The Physical Science Basis report (Intergovernmental panel on Climate Change) reinforce this message.

2.37 So what?

- Mean sea levels are predicted to rise by between 9 and 88 centimetres, causing flooding of low-lying areas.
- Other effects could include increases in rainfall and the frequency of extreme weather events. Winters may become wetter and summers may get drier.
- This will affect wildlife, landscape and farming and settlements in low-lying areas. There may also be additional pressures on water use and reservoirs.
- Hotter summers could be a real danger to vulnerable residents such as the elderly.

Trend: Increasing Usage of Energy and Water

2.38 Research into forecasting the region's expected electricity demand in 2020 predicts an increase in energy use – this is mainly due to an increase in housing and population but also to the rise in high-energy products such as flat screen televisions.



Predicted water demand – Source: Environment Agency 2004

2.39 The demand for water in the South West is predicted to increase considerable by 2024 – a greater increase than is predicted for England and Wales as a whole.

2.40 Drivers

- Above average increases in housing in the South West
- Population growth
- Growth in number of businesses and their energy demands
- Domestic growth in energy hungry appliances such as flat screen TVs

2.41 So what?

- The proportion of family spending on housing, fuel and power has increased from 9 to 10% since 2002 (ONS 2007).
- Increasing demand for power and water, coupled with the government 's support for sustainable energy, could mean that we may need to look at ways of producing renewable energy in South Somerset and look at ways to save energy, such as finding ways to make our buildings more energy efficient and use of water resources more efficient.
- There is much debate nationally about the effects of global demands for fuel, such as oil. Whilst supplies will not run out, some forecasters predict that there will be shortages, this will in turn force up prices of energy itself and also commodities such as food. This uncertainty suggests that local economies will be well served by expanding their ability to use renewable energy sources and contain energy demand

HEALTH AND CARE

Trend: Long-term care for older people

Source: Demand for long-term care for older people in England to 2031 – ONS.

- 2.42 Demographic pressures on long-term care raise questions of affordability. The numbers of very elderly people (aged 85+) are growing even faster than the over 65s. Numbers of very elderly people are predicted to grow by 88% between 1996 levels and 2031. To meet demand, residential places need to increase by 65% from 1996 levels and number of homecare hours would need to increase by 48%.
- 2.43 Long-term expenditure would need to rise by 148%. The proportion of public money to be spent on long-term care is predicted to fall slightly and private expenditure is expected to increase. Care and social care costs are predicted to rise by 1% every year with health care rising by 1.5% annually. The number of *dependent* older people is expected to increase by

62% by 2031 (compared to 1996 levels). The proportion of older people living with relatives is also set to decline so there will be an increased number of older people living alone.

2.44 Drivers

- Healthy life expectancy is not increasing as fast as general life expectancy so more people will be living with ill-health
- Post-war baby boom
- Changes in family structures so that older people are less likely to be cared for by relatives

2.45 So what?

- This will have a significant impact on funding priorities for all relevant public sector agencies.
- There may also be an impact on the local workforce in terms of jobs generated in the care sector and the subsequent skills needs. There will be pressure on existing service provision and residential bed space.
- There will be a need to help older people to stay active and healthy for longer.
- Socially, there will be an increase in social isolation i.e. the numbers of old people living alone.

Trend: Declining Physical Activity levels

Source: Active People Survey, Sport England 2006; Active Places Data 2006; 2020 VISION: CULTURAL AND CREATIVE FUTURES FOR THE SOUTH WEST

Obesity rates have tripled over the past 20 years and the trend is for them to increase

Nationally, on average, only 21% of the adult population are participating in regularly in sport and active recreation (at least 3 x per week). Regionally, the figure is higher at 21.9%. South Somerset's participation rate however is lower than both the national and regional average (20.3%)

Further analysis of the data has shown that South Somerset's activity levels are lower than expected. South Somerset should have activity levels of 21.76%, so at 20.29%, there is a 1.47% difference. Of the 23 districts within the South West that had lower than expected activity levels, South Somerset's was the 8th highest difference

Only 25.76% of the population of South Somerset are within 20 minutes travel time (urban areas -walk, rural - by car) of a range of 3 different sports facility types of which one has achieved a quality assured standard

Estimated investment needed to maintain existing leisure facilities is around £500 million. (Regional Plan for Sport, Sport England, 2004-8). Opportunities are presented by the 2012 Olympic Games

2.46 Drivers

- Lack of time and inclination to exercise
- Increased use of the car and a lack of infrastructure such as pavements, paths etc. which supports the safe use of *active transport* such as cycling, walking etc.
- Poor diets
- Poor work-life balance (could be alleviated by home-working for some)
- Work and commuting patterns are making inroads into time traditionally allocated for sporting activities

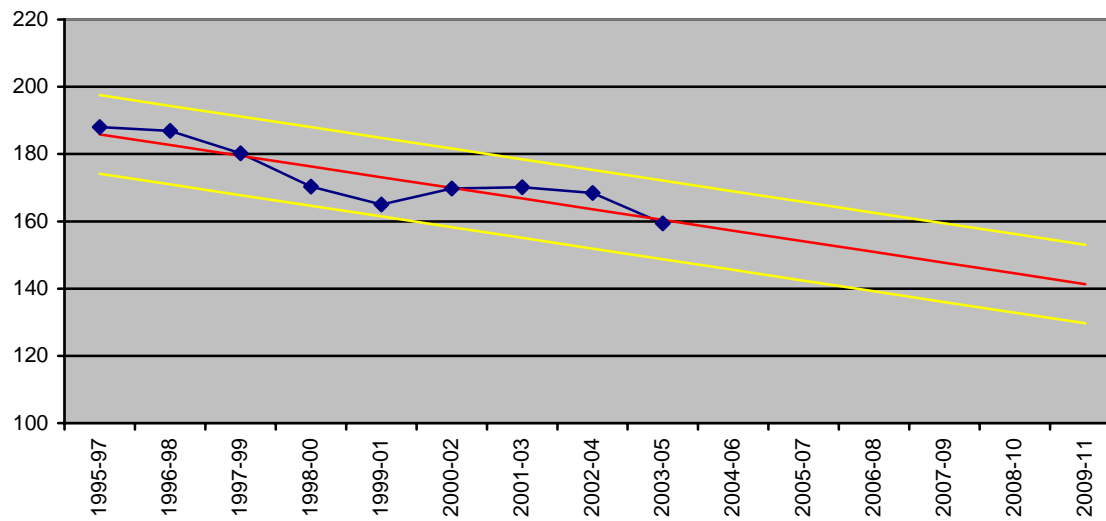
2.47 So what?

- The World Health Organisation has reported that physical inactivity is one of the 10 leading causes of death in developed countries and is responsible for 23% cardiovascular disease in men and 22% in women. People who are physically active are 50% less likely to develop other major chronic diseases such as a stroke, diabetes and cancers
- Physical inactivity is a recognised risk factor for Type 2 diabetes, obesity, stroke, muscular-skeletal disorders and mental illness. It is important for the prevention of ill health that individuals are physically active at the recommended 5x 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity per week (see Chief Medical Officer's Report – At least 5 a week (2004))
- Increasing people's activity levels will directly help to prevent the demands that ageing and obesity related illnesses/conditions places on local health services
- Increasing levels of obesity will have a significant impact on the health services and on general quality of life

Trend: Cancers and Circulatory Diseases

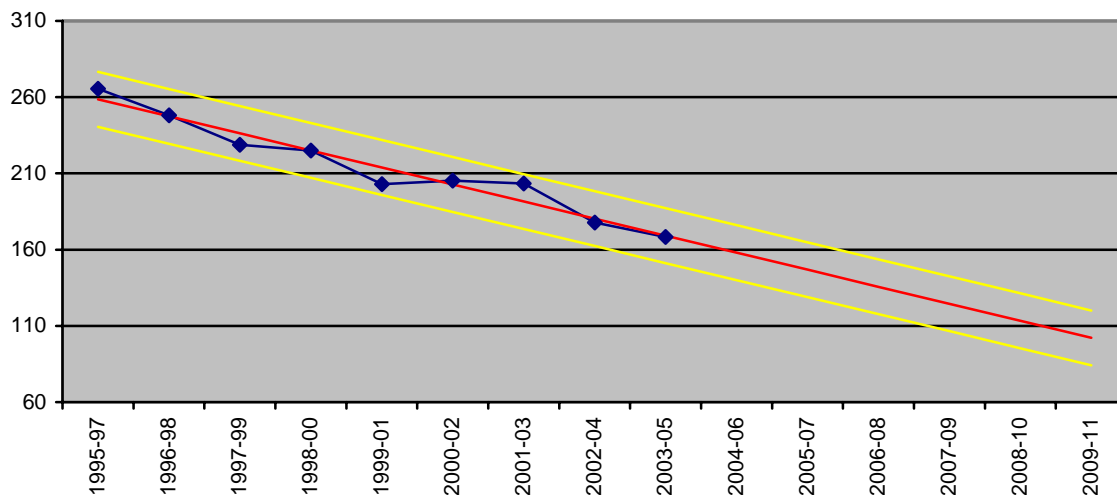
2.48 Generally, NHS projections to 2011 indicate that deaths from cancer and circulatory diseases are falling in South Somerset:

Death rates from all cancers in South Somerset - projections to 2010
(rate per 100,00 population)



Source: Somerset NHS

Death rates from circulatory diseases in South Somerset - projections to 2010
(rates are per 100,00 population)



Source: Somerset NHS

- 2.49 However, other projections indicate that obesity and other risk factors associated with cancers and circulatory diseases are increasing. Therefore the number of people developing these illnesses overall is not decreasing (each condition shows a slightly different pattern) it is just that less people are dying early from these illnesses. Therefore it is likely that, in the future, South Somerset will have a higher proportion of residents living with lifestyle-related health problems than ever before.
- 2.50 Cancers that have shown decreases in incidence rates in recent years in South Somerset are lung cancer, stomach cancer and bladder cancer.

2.51 Cancers that have shown increases in incidence rates in recent years in South Somerset are prostate cancer and skin cancer.

Issue: Increasing Diabetes

Area	2001 Estimate		SCENARIO 1 Population change + static obesity trend		SCENARIO 2 Population change + increasing obesity		SCENARIO 3 Population change + reversing obesity trend	
	Number	Prevalence	Number	Prevalence	Number	Prevalence	Number	Prevalence
England								
064 England	2,146,627	4.37%	2,377,809	4.63%	2,595,324	5.05%	2,176,770	4.24%
Government Office Regions (boundaries at 1st April 1996)								
K South West	215,274	4.37%	243,009	4.65%	265,198	5.07%	222,489	4.26%
Local Authority Districts (boundaries at 1st April 1998)								
40UB Mendip	4,143	3.99%	4,846	4.37%	5,287	4.77%	4,439	4.01%
40UC Sedgemoor	4,698	4.44%	5,534	4.80%	6,042	5.24%	5,064	4.40%
40UD South Somerset	6,360	4.21%	7,416	4.61%	8,091	5.03%	6,791	4.22%
40UE Taunton Deane	4,502	4.40%	5,302	4.65%	5,784	5.08%	4,856	4.26%
40UF West Somerset	2,127	6.06%	2,393	6.56%	2,616	7.17%	2,187	5.99%

Source: Somerset NHS using Yorkshire and Humberside public health observatory model.

2.52 Changes in diabetes rates are hard to predict due to many different lifestyle factors, whilst it seems that childhood obesity is on the increase, people are much better educated about the issues than ever before and many people are actively improving their diet and lifestyles.

2.53 Rates of chronic illness and mental illness are predicted to increase by 2020.

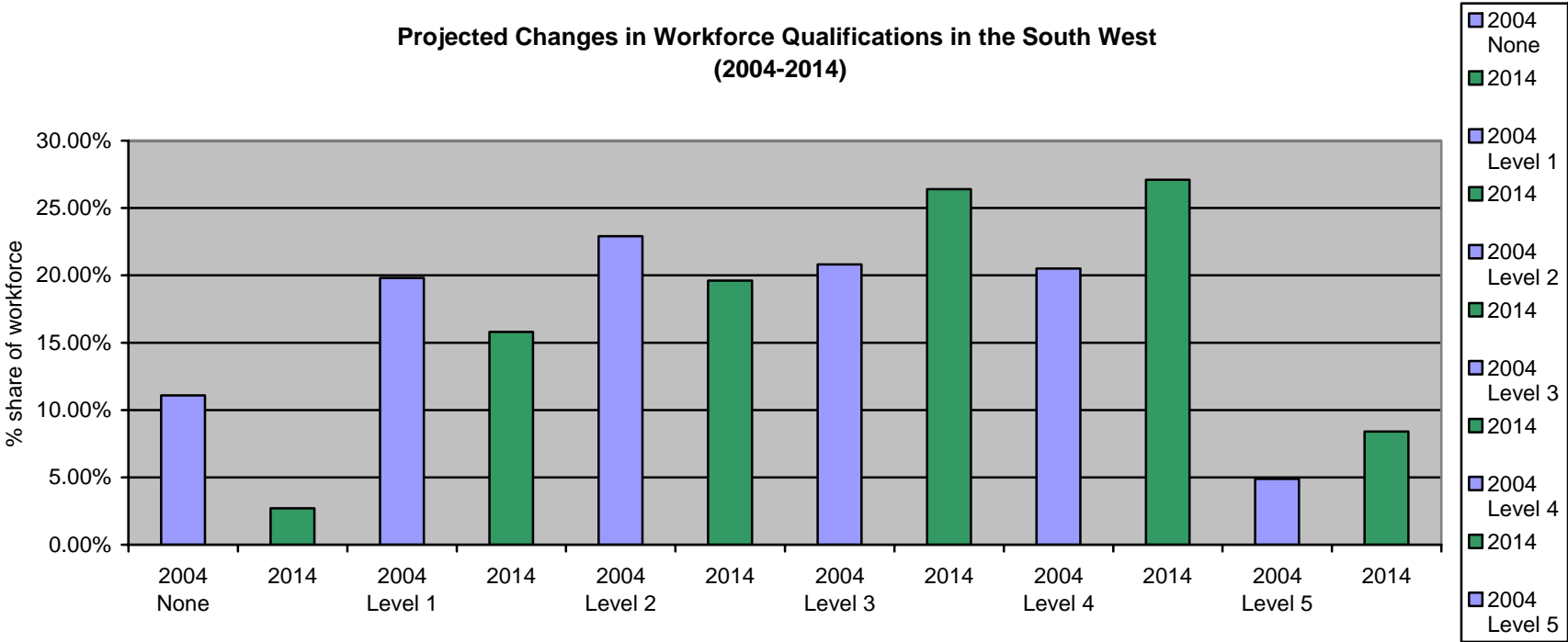
Source: Projections of the UK labour Force, 2006-2020. Office of National Statistics.

ECONOMY

Trend: Changing skills profile

Source: Working Futures 2004-2014 – Institute for Employment Research

2.54 Nationally, the overall qualification profile is set to improve dramatically between 2004-2014. More people will be qualified to higher levels (levels refer to NVQ Levels). The numbers with little or no qualifications will fall. This trend will be seen across almost all sectors.



2.55 The chart above shows that in 2004 (blue), people qualified to Level 2 made up the largest proportion of the workforce, in 2014 (green) it is estimated that the majority of the workforce will be qualified to Level 3 or 4

2.56 There will be an increase in people with professional/managerial occupations and a decrease in people in elementary/manual occupations.

2.57 Drivers

- Patterns are the consequence of both supply and demand influences – there is a greater supply of people with formal qualifications due to government policies to increase participation in Higher Education. Demand has increased with many more jobs requiring qualifications than ever before and with the returns of gaining such qualifications still remaining high.

2.58 So what?

- There may be an increasing demand for training and education at higher levels, if this demand is not met locally, South Somerset could lose even more young people as they travel to gain qualifications.
- South Somerset generally has a low skills economy – sectors such as manufacturing may find that the local workforce becomes over-qualified for their needs thus increasing the likelihood of relocation abroad or of recruiting migrant labour.
- More positively, if skilled people can be trained in the area, the skills level of the local workforce may attract inward investment and encourage the development of a knowledge-based economy. Average wage levels may also be positively affected (unless this becomes a push factor for skilled people to move elsewhere)

Trend: Employment changes by sector

2.59 In the South West, between 2005-2011, it is projected that there will be around 370,00 new jobs in the region, many of which will be part-time. Most of this growth is projected to be in public and private service industries and in construction. Falling employment levels are predicted in production sectors, such as manufacturing.

2.60 However, South Somerset does seem to be bucking this trend somewhat as several manufacturing and engineering firms have expanded significantly in recent years.

2.61 Locally, there is also considerable interest from service sector businesses, such as gyms and crèches, to move into premises on industrial estates rather than town centre premises. However, to accommodate this, sites suitable for new industrial businesses would be lost.

Source: South Somerset District Council Economic Development Unit

2.62 Drivers:

- Positive reputation of the area particularly in and around Yeovil in the aerospace and advanced engineering sectors
- Cost of town centre business premises for service sector businesses
- Town centre car parking pressures for service sector businesses
- Expanding industrial businesses are providing an easy market for service industries to locate amongst them

2.63 So what?

- Manufacturing firms locally are having difficulties with recruitment and are turning to migrant labour to fill jobs. The jobs created by expansion in manufacturing are likely to be low-skill jobs, which will not match the future skills profile of South Somerset residents. However, if service sectors are allowed to move into the area, this could generate higher-level job opportunities.
- Growth in engineering focused on the Yeovil area, is a positive trend for South Somerset.
- New businesses may no longer look to locate in town centres - this would have multiple effects on town centre and rural economies.

Trend: Retail Expenditure Growth

2.64 **Yeovil** is the dominant shopping centre in the District. It is in reasonably good health, but a lack of opportunities for new retailers to enter the town. The centre lacks character and is in need of improvement. Theoretically it could support a new foodstore by 2021, but given the reasonable prospect of two new foodstores in Crewkerne and Ilminster in the next 5 years, trade diversion will impact on demand. Retail offer is already good so there is no need for a new superstore. There is a need for additional comparison goods retail development in Yeovil. There is projected expenditure capacity to support around 13,000sq.m.net floor space, rising to 34,000sq.m.net by 2016 and 57,000sq.m.net by 2021. Development should seek to provide a mix of shops including large-scale and multi-level units, within a high-quality shopping environment.

- 2.65 Chard** is the second largest centre in the District for the number of shop units and retail turnover. The town centre is visually attractive, but the vacancy rate which has increased significantly since 1994 (up 30% to 13%, national average 10%) probably due to the number of independents and their turnover rates. The town centre has a choice of supermarkets and the out-of-centre Tesco is performing well. Surplus convenience goods expenditure suggests there will be capacity for around 600sq.m.net floor space by 2016 and 900sq.m.net floor space by 2021. The town centre has a reasonably varied comparison goods shopping offer, comprising mostly independents. Surplus comparison goods expenditure suggests there will be capacity for 1,496sq.m.net floor space by 2010, 3,914sq.m.net floor space by 2016 and 6,617sq.m.net floor space by 2021.
- 2.66 Ilminster** despite being one of the smaller principal towns it has a good balance of retail services and facilities and the town centre is reasonably vital and viable. Residents would benefit from having access to a new foodstore; this would meet the deficiencies in the town, improving the retail offer and retain greater levels of expenditure within the catchment area. The recent planning consent at Shudrick Lane will satisfy this need. As in Wincanton the town centre convenience stores may wish to place emphasis on quality to differentiate the large supermarket chains in the future. Surplus comparison goods expenditure suggests there will be capacity for 549sq.m.net of floor space by 2010, 1,436sq.m.net of floor space by 2016 and 2,427sq.m.net of floor space by 2021
- 2.67 Crewkerne** has a busy town centre anchored by two supermarkets and a small but diverse comparison sector. It has a broad range of other uses and is popular at night with local residents. Residents would benefit from having access to a new foodstore; this would meet the qualitative deficiencies in the town, improving the retail offer and retain greater levels of expenditure within the catchment area. A 2,000sq.m.gross foodstore operated by a retailer not currently represented in the area (this includes Yeovil) is achievable and would broaden choice for residents. Surplus comparison goods expenditure suggests there will be capacity for 440sq.m.net of floor space by 2010, 1,151sq.m.net of floor space by 2016 and 1,946sq.m.net of floor space by 2021.
- 2.68 Wincanton** town centre displays reasonably high levels of vitality and viability despite several factors, which could have undermined its status (out-of-centre Morrisons and competition from Gillingham). Overall the retail composition has experienced little change between 1998-2005, there has been a moderate reduction in the number of retail units so Wincanton must build on its strengths and set itself apart from other centres to maintain its position in the retail hierarchy.

There is no identified need for significant levels of additional retail floor space in Wincanton, but surplus comparison goods expenditure suggests there will be capacity for 332sq.m.net of floor space by 2010, 827sq.m.net of floor space by 2016 and 1,383sq.m.net of floor space by 2021.

Note: Given that the four smaller principal centres have been reducing in size over recent years and the apparent lack of retailer demand for floor space, a cautious approach should be taken to the figures.

2.69 District Centres: Somerton, Castle Cary & Langport Somerton and Langport are important in terms of serving needs of local residents as they are the furthest away from Yeovil. Castle Cary is a vital and viable centre offering a diverse mix of goods and services.

2.70 Local Centres: Bruton, South Petherton, Martock & Milborne Port

Development plan policies should be formulated to encourage appropriate facilities to locate within the local centres to help prevent the loss of existing retail units.

Source South Somerset Retail Capacity Study January 2006

2.71 Drivers:

- Growing expenditure due to population growth, disposable income etc enables commercial growth to be viable to a greater or lesser extent depending on the town in question for comparison retailing.
- High personal mobility mean many consumers can make choices on where to shop based on the attractiveness of the retail offer and other personal factors such as time available, multi purpose trips, parking etc.
- The profile of existing stores and proposed stores, depending on the town in question, account for convenience retailing expenditure growth.

2.72 So what?

- Market growth opportunities should be exploited for a wide range of commercial and economic reasons and to provide jobs, enhanced service and retailing and as an aid to town centre vitality and regeneration.
- If development is not forthcoming in Yeovil, it is likely that trade will be lost to bigger towns and cities.
- Market limitations on towns need to be recognised and worked with

CRIME

Trend: Crime

- 2.73 It is very difficult to model and predict future crime levels. It is generally accepted that burglary and theft increases as consumer spending increases due to increased opportunity to steal high value good from properties and individuals. Theft and burglary rates are also associated with the number of young males in a particular area.
- 2.74 An increasing elderly population could impact on opportunities for certain crimes and possibly on the fear of crime (depending on local initiatives for neighbourhood policing).
- 2.75 Whilst anti-social behaviour, violent crime, identity fraud and drug related crime are documented as key issues in the media, it is difficult to predict levels of these crimes for the future, as changes are influenced by a complex combination of social factors and changes in policing policies and procedures. Criminal damage is the most common crime in South Somerset.

2.76 Drivers

- Increases in the number of people purchasing technological and high value goods
- Increases in the number of elderly people living alone
- The media has a huge influence on perceptions of crime levels and fear of crime
- There are many other drivers such as social factors, uses of technology, drug availability, unemployment, etc.

2.77 So what?

Low levels of crime and disorder have been cited by South Somerset residents as being a key consideration when deciding what makes an area a good place to live, (BMG Quality of Life survey 2005).

Have we accurately pinpointed the main trends?

Please give us your comments about anything that's missing or understated or overstated.

For any comments that you make, please give us supporting evidence so that we can check this and add it to our evidence base

SECTION THREE – AIMING FOR LASTING IMPROVEMENT, GOALS & KEY ISSUES

3.1 Below we set out the key & specific issues that affect us now. Based on the trend section of this document, and these issues, we have put forward some long-term goals, which describe conditions in the future - 2026 and beyond - where issues faced today have been successfully addressed. Many of the goals and issues are “cross cutting”, that is they have major social, economic and environmental dimensions to them. Together they enable us to create a Vision for a more sustainable South Somerset . You will notice that a wide range of specific issues have also been flagged up under key issues. These expand on and explore some particular aspects of the data and may have been derived from one piece of research or many, many layers of evidence. At this stage we are not looking at or exploring all the many examples of excellent work that is going on to address these issues or make the most of the Area’s natural assets. This will come later in the draft Strategy document. The sources of evidence to support the issues are so extensive that they are referenced separately in the bibliography in Appendix 2.

3.2 THE VISION STATEMENT

A thriving South Somerset which makes the most of its natural assets, heritage, enterprise and community spirit in order to conserve natural resources, plan and build a better quality of life for everyone, now and in the future.

THE COMMUNITY

3.3 GOAL ONE: Safe communities with strong social networks with everyone showing respect for each other

3.4 KEY ISSUES

- I. Fear of crime – especially after dark and in certain geographical areas in towns – reduces quality of life
- II. Victims of crime including ASB and harassment – across age groups – experience reduces quality of life
- III. Lack of respect and understanding between groups in communities (e.g. young/old/travellers)
- IV. Drug and alcohol supply and consumption appears to be a significant factor in crime

3.5 Specific issues:

- Lack of understanding and integration between older people and young people - leads to prejudice on both sides

- Need to improve leisure and cultural activities for young people, especially in rural areas - can impact on anti-social behaviour, health and aspirations (especially lack of activities for girls), lack of youth clubs with attractive activities and a lack of trained volunteers to run them
- Antisocial behaviour is a big problem in South Somerset - affecting fear of crime, perceptions of young people, appearance of an area. It is increasing
- Need for people to feel safe using leisure and cultural facilities and open spaces - CCTV, lighting, speed restrictions, signage
- Criminal damage is the most common crime in South Somerset - particularly in Area South
- Theft, assault and hate crime are also issues in South Somerset with hotspots spread across the four areas (Area West - thefts from private gardens and vehicles mostly in Crewkerne, targeting older people, high level of alcohol-related assault, Area East - thefts from vehicles in Wincanton, Templecombe and Castle Cary, Area South - hate crime against those working in takeaways)
- Fraud and forgery is the fastest growing crime in South Somerset - victims are often the elderly or vulnerable
- Lack of accessible support services for young people - especially with regard to help with drug issues, sexual health and pregnancy, mental health, offending and other advice - need to consider awareness, opening times, access channels, stigma
- Many people face discrimination in South Somerset - particularly Black and ethnic minority groups, gays/lesbians and gypsy and traveller communities
- Many homeless people are unable to work due to addiction and mental illness
- Problems with speeding vehicles in towns and villages - not just cars but lorries and buses too - many accident black-spots

3.6 GOAL TWO: Strong, vibrant voluntary sector, high levels of volunteering and active citizens

3.7 KEY ISSUES

1. Shortage of volunteer capacity (including skills etc) across age/location and activity types
2. Lack of resources to sustain a wide range of community activities and facilities and voluntary sector services

3.8 Specific issues:

- Volunteering monopolised by older affluent people (especially women) in rural areas - need to increase diversity of volunteers - particularly young people and minority groups
- Shortage of volunteers - difficulty finding and retaining them. Need to improve quality of volunteer training
- Need for volunteers to be valued, supported and sustainably funded, VCS needs to be better coordinated so that all organisations have a voice and the support they need
- Lack of understanding and integration between older people and young people - leads to prejudice on both sides
- Lots of socially isolated older people, carers and disabled people in rural areas - many communities would like to develop “good neighbour” schemes
- There are many people with caring responsibilities in South Somerset (many unpaid), this is set to increase greatly over next 20 years due to ageing population and increasing poor physical and mental health (i.e. dementia). There is a currently a lack of support for carers
- Need to improve leisure and cultural activities for young people, especially in rural areas - can impact on anti-social behaviour, health and aspirations (esp. lack of activities for girls), lack of youth clubs with attractive activities and a lack of trained volunteers to run them
- Variable access to leisure and cultural opportunities - transport is a particular issue especially for children getting to and from weekend and after-school activities, need better use and promotion of existing community facilities, more affordable holiday activities, equal access to all, especially for all age groups, children with disabilities and those on low incomes
- Lack of affordable pre-school and nursery provision in villages and towns
- Young people do not have many opportunities to have their say on activities in their area and how the Council’s money is spent on leisure and cultural activities

HEALTH & WELL BEING

3.9 GOAL THREE: Everyone is able to choose healthy lifestyles and access support to improve their health

3.10 KEY ISSUES

- I. Wide range of health inequalities especially concentrated in key geographical areas, such as Yeovil & Chard, and groups
- II. Increase in “lifestyle related” illnesses and diseases such as obesity and heart disease
- III. Low levels of walking and cycling and high dependency on car use

- IV. Growing demand for diverse range of care services that meet the needs of an increasingly older population, their families and their carers
- V. Low participation levels in physical and cultural activities. 53.3% of adults have not taken part in any moderate intensity sport or active recreation of at least 30 minutes within the last 4 weeks (the national figure is 50.6%, regional – 49.2%). This means that South Somerset currently has higher than average levels of sedentary residents

3.11 Specific issues:

- Importance of reducing health inequalities e.g. life expectancy differs by almost 6 years between the most and least deprived wards in the district. Life expectancy is lowest in Yeovil, Chard, Neroche and Wincanton. Life expectancy in the lowest fifth of wards is 77.5 years, whereas in the highest fifth it is 83.4 years (South West Public Health Observatory)
- Many and rising numbers of people have caring responsibilities in South Somerset (many unpaid) coupled with a lack of support for carers
- Many residents would like to access education classes, leisure and cultural opportunities etc locally i.e. in village halls
- Community, leisure and cultural facilities should not be provided in isolation
- Lack of adequate mental health services - particularly preventative services in rural areas, for males and for the homeless
- Need to improve leisure and cultural activities for young people, especially in rural areas - can impact on anti-social behaviour, health and aspirations (especially lack of activities for girls) lack of youth clubs with attractive activities and a lack of trained volunteers to run them
- People can feel unsafe using leisure facilities and open spaces
- Variable access to leisure and cultural opportunities - transport is a particular issue especially for children getting to and from weekend and after-school activities, need better use and promotion of local community facilities, more affordable holiday activities, equal access to all, especially for all age groups, children with disabilities and those on low incomes
- High levels of investment needed to maintain existing leisure and cultural facilities. Need to find innovative solutions to ensure greater accessibility and added value
- Untapped potential for increasing investment in leisure and cultural facilities, including play areas and open spaces, through increased developer contributions
- Leisure and cultural activities need to encourage and be able to adapt to the needs of older people

- Lack of accessible support services for young people - especially with regard to help with drug issues, sexual health and pregnancy, mental health, offending and other advice due to lack of awareness, opening times, access channels, stigma
- Young people do not have many opportunities to have their say on activities in their area and how the Council's money is spent on leisure and cultural activities
- Obesity and lifestyle related illnesses are increasing, including obesity in children. People in South Somerset are not taking enough physical exercise, drinking too much alcohol, smoking. This is particularly the case in deprived areas of Yeovil and Chard
- Hypertension (high blood pressure) and teenage birth rates are significantly higher than the county average
- Sexually transmitted infection rates and other sexual health problems (non-transmitted) are increasing (South West data only)
- Older people in rural areas are isolated from key services such as healthcare and leisure opportunities - need to increase outreach facilities, make better use of community buildings and improve public transport
- Many homeless people are unable to work due to addiction and mental illness and lack outreach support
- Huge expansion needed in the care sector to meet the demands of the growing ageing population - requires significant long-term expenditure on care services, residential bed space and investment in workforce skills
- There is low participation in walking and cycling due to lack of safe cycle/walking routes, lack of time. People rely on short journeys by private car
- Increase in migrant workers may pose particular challenges to ensure equitable access to health services
- Not enough use made of the countryside for leisure and health opportunities (inc. mental health).
- Residents would like to see increased access to rights of way for health, i.e. increase walking and cycling and tourism benefits

WELL RUN AND SERVED

3.12 GOAL FOUR: Services and facilities- including education, health, advice and information, leisure and cultural - have been designed around the needs of the community enabling everyone to have fair and equitable access.

3.13 KEY ISSUES

- I. Certain groups disadvantaged by difficulty accessing services including jobs, learning, health services (e.g. disabled, rural, mental health)

- II. Elected representatives do not reflect the wider community: they are older with less women and ethnic minorities. There are also low numbers standing for elected office with many parishes uncontested
- III. Gaps in specialist advice and information/services (e.g. mental health)
- IV. Variable access to affordable, appropriate, safe and local leisure and cultural opportunities
- V. Increasing demand for caring within families and support services
- VI. Lack of specialist housing and accommodation to meet the needs of an increasingly elderly and diverse population

3.14 Specific issues:

- Lots of socially isolated older people, carers and disabled people in rural areas - many communities would like to develop “good neighbour” schemes
- Many and rising numbers of people have caring responsibilities in South Somerset (many unpaid) coupled with a lack of support for carers
- Locally over 50% of people say they do not feel well/very well informed about how to get involved in decision making and there is low attendance at Council meetings
- Many residents would like to access education classes, leisure opportunities etc locally i.e. in village halls. Community, leisure and cultural facilities should not be provided in isolation
- Lack of adequate mental health services - particularly preventative services in rural areas for males and for the homeless
- Disabled residents still face barriers to accessing services and accessing the labour market - lack of choice in accessing information and services, lack of reliable public transport to reach employment, lack of support in finding and retaining employment
- Variable access to leisure and cultural opportunities - transport is a particular issue especially for children getting to and from weekend and after-school activities, need better use and promotion of existing community facilities, more affordable holiday activities, equal access to all, especially for all age groups, children with disabilities and those on low incomes
- High levels of investment needed to maintain existing leisure and cultural facilities. Need to find innovative solutions to ensure greater accessibility and added value
- Under tapped potential for investment in leisure and cultural activities, including play areas and open spaces, through increased developer contributions
- Leisure and cultural activities need to encourage and adapt to meet the needs of older people.
- Lack of affordable pre-school and nursery provision in villages and towns

- Reduction in outdoor play opportunities for parents and children to play together and for young people in both rural and urban areas
- Lack of accessible support services for young people - especially with regard to help with drug issues, sexual health and pregnancy, mental health, offending and other advice due to lack of awareness, opening times, access channels, and stigma
- Many residents face social exclusion through lack of ICT skills or lack of access to technology - need for more ICT training particularly in rural areas and for older people, need for more community ICT access points i.e. cyber cafes (used mostly by migrant workers and the homeless) some villages are still not broadband enabled
- Older people in rural areas are isolated from key services such as healthcare and leisure and cultural opportunities - need to increase outreach facilities, make better use of community buildings and improve public transport
- Increase in migrant workers may pose particular challenges to ensure equitable access to health services
- Lack of outreach services to reach the homeless on the streets
- Lack of provision for the needs of gypsy and traveller communities - lack of site and lack of support from councillors and local community
- Increased demand for one and two bedroom houses in both rural and urban areas that will allow older people to stay in their own homes for as long as possible
- Lack of outreach education (not just ICT) in community facilities - over next 20 years more people are predicted to take part in lifelong learning than ever before
- Lack of access to computers and the Internet for children to do their homework (proven to hinder attainment as IT is now an integral part of the curriculum for all subjects and a required workplace skill)
- Lack of affordable housing for people of working age - large affordability gap between wages and house prices with the average house price being around 10 times the average wage
- Expansion needed in the care sector to meet the demands of the growing ageing population - requires significant long-term expenditure on care services, residential bed space and investment in workforce skills
- Need for general service provision to adapt to the needs of the older population - assisted refuse collection, provision for sight and hearing impairment, help with forms and accessing services, changing leisure and learning opportunities for the next more mobile cohort etc.
- Demand on homeless shelters and hostels in South Somerset plus a big problem when trying to house the homeless, is their dogs

- Migrant workers and BME communities face barriers accessing employment and services and need help and support on employment and accommodation issues and support to integrate into local communities

ACCESSIBILITY AND COMMUNICATIONS

3.15 GOAL FIVE: Across the District people of all ages and backgrounds have access to Information and communications technology (ICT) and transport options

3.16 KEY ISSUES

- I. There is high dependency on car travel and public and community transport is patchy, leading to those without their own transport isolated, with problems accessing the services and facilities they need
- II. Those without computers, or the skills to use them, are increasingly being isolated from a range of services and social links

3.17 Specific issues:

- Disabled residents still face barriers to accessing services and accessing the labour market - lack of choice in accessing information and services, lack of reliable public transport to reach employment, lack of support in finding and retaining employment
- Variable access to leisure and cultural opportunities - transport is a particular issue especially for children getting to and from weekend and after-school activities, need better use and promotion of existing community facilities, more affordable holiday activities, equal access to all, especially for all age groups, children with disabilities and those on low incomes
- Many residents face social exclusion through lack of ICT skills or lack of access to technology - need for more ICT training particularly in rural areas and for older people, need for more community ICT access points i.e. cyber cafes (used most by migrant workers and homeless) some villages are still not broadband enabled
- Older people in rural areas are isolated from key services such as healthcare and leisure and cultural opportunities - need to increase outreach facilities, make better use of community buildings and improve public transport
- South Somerset public transport is not meeting the needs of residents
- Net loss of young people from the district due to lack of job and education opportunities, public transport to further education is still a significant issue within the district

- Lack of shopping opportunities (including markets) in villages and market towns - threatened by car use
- Lack of access to computers and the Internet for children to do their homework (proven to hinder attainment as IT is now an integral part of the curriculum for all subjects and a required workplace skill)
- Many small businesses not benefiting from technology - need to make the most of opportunities such as the Internet and home-working
- There is low participation in walking and cycling due to lack of safe cycle/walking routes, lack of time. People rely on short journeys by private car
- There will be a large increase in traffic congestion on South Somerset roads over the next 20 years leading to pressure on roads and existing transport infrastructure

BUSINESSES

3.18 GOAL SIX: A competitive, high performing economy that is diverse and adaptable

3.19 KEY ISSUES

- I. Overall business base dominated by low wage industries
- II. Many businesses have been slow to adapt to changes in market forces, lowering productivity
- III. Low start up rates and lack of support for new businesses
- IV. Lack of public/ private sector partnerships hampers development of high performance economy.
- V. Lack of businesses emerging, to meet the growing demand in key sectors e.g. the needs of older people

3.20 Specific issues:

- South Somerset is over-reliant on declining manufacturing sector and large engineering companies
- Many small businesses are not investing enough in training and upskilling their workforce
- Net loss of young people from the district due to lack of job and education opportunities, public transport to further education is still a significant issue within the district
- South Somerset has a low-wage, low-skill economy particularly in rural areas - not attracting investment or skilled workers into the area

- Agriculture is changing due to climate change and economic changes - requires diversification, promotion of farmers markets, climate change is affecting seasonality of crops and woodland and farmland populations
- Need for general service provision to adapt to the needs of the older population - assisted refuse collection, provision for sight and hearing impairment, help with forms and accessing services, changing leisure and learning opportunities for the next more mobile cohort etc.
- Service, construction, environmental technologies and retail sectors are set to expand greatly over next 20 years.
- South Somerset is over-reliant on non-renewable energy sources - need to increase use of sustainable energy sources
- Lack of business networks and business support - especially in rural areas

3.21 GOAL SEVEN: Infrastructure is in place for businesses to thrive

3.22 KEY ISSUES

- I. Traffic congestion deters inward investment and business competitiveness
- II. Low take up of new technologies and use of renewable energy sources for business advantage
- III. Insufficient understanding of planning and regulatory frameworks by business
- IV. Transport connections into Yeovil by road and rail are poor

3.23 Specific Issues

- Many small businesses not benefiting from technology - need to make the most of opportunities such as the Internet and home-working
- There will be a large increase in traffic congestion on South Somerset roads over the next 20 years leading to pressure on roads and existing transport infrastructure
- Shortage of accommodation for business start-ups and new technology industries
- Lack of inward investment and new businesses coming to the area

JOBS

3.24 GOAL EIGHT: An educated and skilled workforce with less economic disadvantage and a good match with the needs of the business sector

3.25 KEY ISSUES

- I. Outward migration of skilled young people and generally a declining employment base
- II. Skill shortages in some sectors fuelled by insufficiently attractive job opportunities, high living costs e.g. house prices and mismatch between training provided and demand
- III. Labour shortages have led to recruitment of migrant workforce in some business sectors

3.26 Specific issues:

- High illiteracy rate amongst gypsy and travellers and no local opportunities for them to learn traditional skills - hinders self-employment
- Lack of outreach education (not just ICT) in community facilities - over next 20 years more people are predicted to take part in lifelong learning than ever before
- Lack of access to computers and the Internet for children to do their homework (proven to hinder attainment as IT is now an integral part of the curriculum for all subjects and a required workplace skill)
- Lack of affordable housing for people of working age - large affordability gap between wages and house prices with the average house price being around 10 times the average wage
- Expansion needed in the care sector to meet the demands of the growing ageing population - requires significant long-term expenditure on care services, residential bed space and investment in workforce skills
- Lack of advice and guidance for young people to pursue vocational education and acquire the skills that local businesses require
- Many small businesses are not investing enough in training and upskilling their workforce
- Net loss of young people from the district due to lack of job and education opportunities, lack of public transport to further education is still a significant issue.
- South Somerset has a low-wage, low-skill economy particularly in rural areas - not attracting investment or skilled workers into the area
- Established labour force needs to update its skills

DISTINCTIVENESS

3.27 GOAL NINE: Thriving Yeovil, market town and rural economy / environment able to attract and retain visitors, consumers and high quality, sustainable businesses

3.28 KEY ISSUES

- I. Yeovil and market town environments still have aspects which deter customers and visitors
- II. Potential of rural, artistic, cultural and heritage assets of the area are underdeveloped
- III. Poor transport connections and traffic congestion, especially in Yeovil, deter economic vitality
- IV. Economic and environmental factors mean that increasing numbers of farm businesses are showing negative incomes
- V. Need to respond positively to retain expected retail expenditure growth to avoid customers going elsewhere
- VI. Yeovil has had a poor image in the sub region and needs to raise its profile regionally

3.29 Specific issues

- Need to respond to retail growth demand in Yeovil
- Support needed to encourage retailers to take up the realistic growth potential in the market towns
- Lack of links between tourism and other parts of the private and public sector
- Need to develop and promote history, heritage, arts and cultural attractions and events to residents and visitors – a significant part of the tourism economy.
- Lack of multipurpose cultural venues in towns
- Lack of recognition of the role of arts, culture and access to the countryside in making places distinctive
- Somerset's cultural and creative communities fail to enjoy an equitable share of national and regional funding
- Low profile of arts and culture in Somerset
- Trends point towards a change of focus for tourism from long breaks to short/day trips - need to provide attractions for young and old
- Need to promote local food and distinctiveness of market towns - help local producers, attracts visitors, attracts inward investment
- Lack of affordable holiday accommodation
- Agriculture is changing due to climate change and economic changes - requires diversification, promotion of farmers markets, climate change is affecting seasonality of crops and woodland and farmland wildlife populations.

- Decline of shopping opportunities (including markets) in villages and market towns - as car use has increased
- Threat of loss of business premises to residential use in market towns and villages
- A need to improve the appearance of market towns to increase tourism, local pride and inward investment
- Residents see litter, dog fouling and street cleaning as a key issues for South Somerset - it is a major factor affecting how satisfied people are with the area that they live
- There will be a large increase in traffic congestion on South Somerset roads over the next 20 years leading to pressure on roads and existing transport infrastructure

NB: A more detailed Economic Development Strategy has been prepared, using the same evidence base and is out for consultation through South Somerset District Council. This considers in greater detail specific economic development needs and solutions.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

3.30 GOAL TEN: High quality homes, buildings and public spaces where people can live and work in an environmentally friendly way

3.31 KEY ISSUE

1. Legacy of historic buildings and conservation areas are being damaged through some poor design and build
2. Locations of homes and jobs necessitate commuting, and a dependency on car travel
3. Lack of suitable planning policies to accelerate and encourage the construction of low energy, environmentally friendly buildings

3.32 Specific issues

- Many small businesses not benefiting from technology – not yet making the most of opportunities such as the Internet and home-working
- Decline of shopping opportunities (including markets) in villages and market towns as car use has increased

3.33 GOAL ELEVEN: A balanced housing market with a range of affordable housing flexible enough to meet the changing needs of the population

3.34 KEY ISSUES

1. Large and growing housing affordability gap, especially in rural areas, fuelled by shortage of supply and high demand

3.35 Specific issues:

- Lack of provision for the needs of gypsy and traveller communities - lack of site and lack of support from councillors and local community
- Population growth means a high demand for housing in South Somerset
- Increased demand for one and two bedroom house in both rural and urban areas. Shortages can result in the elderly having to go into care or under occupying unsuitable homes
- Lack of affordable housing for people of working age - large affordability gap between wages and house prices with the average house price being around 10 times the average wage
- Unmet demand for homeless shelters and hostels in South Somerset
- Migrant workers, black & minority ethnic communities face barriers accessing services and need help and support on accommodation issues and to integrate into local communities
- General lack of affordable housing to accommodate predicted future demand (The annual shortfall in affordable housing supply that is represented by registered need is around 750 per annum, predominantly, though not exclusively, for social rented housing)
- Increases in migrant workers are impacting on the demand for affordable housing in the district
- Housing stock unsuited to those with disabilities

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

3.36 GOAL TWELVE: Effective use and stewardship of natural resources and biodiversity

3.37 KEY ISSUES

- I. Climate change is leading to increasing seasonal pressures of flooding, drought and storm damage causing wide-ranging problems for households and businesses
- II. Damage to the landscape, loss of wildlife habitats and species (biodiversity) through development and other land use or management changes

3.38 Specific issues:

- Greater risk of winter flooding and summer droughts due to increasing winter rainfall and warmer summers - also greater risk of trees falling and storm damage - particularly for rail network. Will impact on farming and habitats
- Need to protect wildlife and habitats both for conservation reasons and tourism reasons - Somerset has the lowest proportion of Sites of Special Scientific Interest in favourable condition in the South West Region at only 66%
- South Somerset is over-reliant on non-renewable energy sources - need to increase use of sustainable energy sources
- South Somerset has an unsustainable ecological footprint

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY / POLLUTION

3.39 GOAL THIRTEEN: High levels of environmental awareness, pride in and satisfaction with the local environment

3.40 KEY ISSUES

- I. Environmental degradation – e.g. speeding traffic, fly tipping, vandalism and litter - is adversely affecting quality of life and an increasing problem in many areas
- II. High volume of traffic is causing air pollution in towns, in particular at peak travel times, and is adversely affecting health and well being. This may worsen as traffic increases

3.41 Specific issues:

- There is poor air quality in towns especially Yeovil
- There will be a large increase in traffic congestion on South Somerset roads over the next 20 years leading to pressure on roads and existing transport infrastructure

- Residents see litter, dog fouling and street cleaning as a key issues for South Somerset - it is a major factor affecting how satisfied people are with the area that they live
- Antisocial behaviour is a big problem in South Somerset - affecting fear of crime, perceptions of young people, appearance of an area. It is increasing
- Criminal damage is the most common crime in South Somerset - particularly in the Yeovil area.
- Problems with speeding vehicles in towns and villages - not just cars but lorries and buses too - also need to improve the management of accident black-spots
- Rising incidents of fly tipping

WASTE AND ENERGY CONSUMPTION

3.42 GOAL FOURTEEN: Move towards a zero carbon economy by 2050

3.43 KEY ISSUES

- I. Increases by over 2% per annum in total domestic and commercial waste in South Somerset
- II. Increasing traffic levels consuming fuel and causing air pollution
- III. Low availability of environmentally friendly fuels for transport
- IV. High and rising costs of transporting goods, heating homes and buildings, especially where they are poorly insulated
- V. Rising demand for energy resulting in increased levels of CO2 and other greenhouse gases
- VI. South Somerset has the highest levels of CO2 emissions in Somerset
- VII. Limited recycling opportunities in South Somerset

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

1. Do you agree with the Vision Statement? If not, how would you amend the Statement?
2. Have we identified the right long-term goals? If you suggest amendments or new ones, can you explain your thinking for this
3. Have we identified the most important issues? Your comments about anything missed or under/over stated, please include back-up evidence
4. Please give us your views on any opportunities or options to address these issues that you would like to see considered at the draft strategy stage

SECTION FOUR – PRODUCING THE STRATEGY

- 4.1 Please submit any views or comments that you have got on this document by 31st July 2007 **on the questionnaire provided**. You may answer any questions that you feel are relevant.
- 4.2 We shall be analysing the feedback and comments over the summer, in order to inform the first draft of the Sustainable Community Strategy for South Somerset. Partners will be considering this feedback in September 2007. Following on from this a Community Strategy with a Delivery Plan will be developed which will be designed to marry up with and influence the Local Area Agreement, which is due to start to be redrafted in the autumn 2007. The Delivery Plan will identify strategic priorities for South Somerset Together and actions to address these. It will clarify who is responsible for what actions and with what resources and the timescales needed. It will also cross reference to specific plans, strategies and programmes, which contain more detailed plans to address specific issues.
- 4.3 The Sustainable Community Strategy will be issued as a draft document, for further comment, before South Somerset Together and its individual partner agencies adopt it later in the year.

HOW YOU CAN HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF SOUTH SOMERSET

- 4.4 South Somerset Together Partnership is continually seeking the views and involvement of local people in shaping the way that services are delivered and to improve quality of life for our residents. You can find out about consultations through local newspapers, the South Somerset Together website on www.southsomersettogether.org.uk and websites of the individual organisations making up the Partnership.
- 4.5 You can continue to make your input to community planning through:
- Attending your local South Somerset District Council Area Committee meeting as an individual or on behalf of an organisation
 - Letting us know your views on the consultation document or other South Somerset Together activities through the South Somerset Together website
 - Becoming involved in activities that contribute to the implementation of the Community Strategy. There are a whole host of ways in which you can volunteer to get involved in tackling local issues or giving feedback to public bodies about their services
 - Becoming involved in the voluntary sector network, coordinated by South Somerset Voluntary & Community Action.
 - Contact us: Telephone the LSP Coordinator on 01963 435004

This consultation document is available in large print and alternative formats on request.

APPENDIX 1

Glossary of Terms and Definitions:

Descriptor	Meaning
Baseline position	Where we are now, or at a recently measured point, in relation to a specific issue
Evidence	Data or set of data (may be primary or secondary, but must have source details) from which an issue/ key issue has been deduced or verified
Goals (sometimes called aims)	Describes the condition or state we want to be in (at a future date – say 20 years time)
Key Issue	A significant or complex problem, need, challenge (or opportunity) facing the district. It may be made up of a collection of more specific issues/problems.
Local Area Agreement	Document drawn up by Somerset County Council, endorsed by Partner Agencies and agreed with the Government, sets out targets & priorities for improving quality of life across the country
Objectives	Measurable milestones, there may be several, which together contribute towards achieving goals
Options/Actions	These are specific interventions that are designed to address issues and so take us towards achieving a particular objective and hence goal
Parish & Community Plans	Researched and written directly by the community identifying local needs & priorities. Includes action plans for responding to needs
Sustainability Appraisal Framework	A set of sustainable goals/ objectives, derived from local, regional and national indicators and issues which, together, can be used holistically to provide a method for describing, comparing and analysing the sustainability impact of any proposed interventions/actions. This is usually applied to physical proposals and enables them to be designed in such a way as to mitigate against adverse effects.

APPENDIX 2

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APPENDIX 3

Consultation on the Sustainable Community Strategy

Our aim is to provide a wide range opportunities for involvement & participation as we develop this Strategy. This approach mirrors the one adopted through the Statement of Community Involvement being used for the Local Development Framework.

At this stage of the process, our consultation method will be as follows:

WHO WILL BE INVOLVED	METHODS OF INVOLVEMENT
<p>Specific consultees as set out in the Statement of Community Involvement ie: South West Regional Assembly, Somerset County Council, South Somerset Parish Councils, Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council, Dorset County Council, North Dorset District Council, West Dorset District Council, Wiltshire County Council, Salisbury District Council, Devon County Council, East Devon District Council, all adjoining parishes that fall outside South Somerset District Council's administrative boundaries, the Environment Agency, Highways Agency, Historic Building & Monuments Commission for England, Natural England, Strategic Rail Authority, South West Regional Development Agency, British Telecom & Mobile Operators Association, Ministry of Defence, Dorset & Somerset Strategic Health Authority, Utility Providers, Key Public Delivery stakeholders, relevant SSDC Officers, District Councillors, members of the public, other local groups/developers/employers as appropriate</p>	<p>Meetings Emails Letter with copy of document Telephone Workshop SSDC and SST websites Local Media Parish/Town Council newsletters Leaflet/questionnaire Public Exhibitions/Events</p>

In addition to the above, the document will be tested against the draft Sustainability Appraisal, as described earlier in this document