

‘Improving our communities together’

**North Somerset
Sustainable Community Strategy
2008 – 2026**

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Welcome to the North Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy. This strategy provides a vision for the future and a plan that will lead to better opportunities and quality of life for all. The North Somerset Partnership (NSP) has developed this work with the active involvement of local people.

The NSP brings together a range of partners who include key public organisations, private businesses and voluntary and community groups. We have been working together in our present structure since 2004. Through our partnership efforts we have already shown that we can achieve more by working together. Some of our key achievements so far are described in this document. However, there is much more to be done to meet the needs of our diverse communities.

North Somerset is generally prosperous but some communities experience significant problems relating to health, unemployment, poor environmental conditions and crime. We are committed to reducing inequalities and disadvantage through partnership action.

North Somerset is the gateway to the West Country and is a popular area in which to live. Over the next 20 years we expect to see significant housing development and a substantial growth in our population. Our challenge will be to ensure that we manage this change and take a sustainable approach that benefits existing communities and future generations.

We will continue to work with our colleagues across the West of England sub-region and in the region as a whole, to deal with significant issues that we cannot tackle alone. We will continue to influence regional economic development and support sustainable transport links across the area.

Global considerations are having an increasingly significant impact on quality of life in North Somerset. It is not possible to predict how climate change will affect us, but we must plan for the likely damaging effects and encourage the life style changes that will limit this impact.

This strategy sets out our shared understanding of our main challenges over the next eighteen years. It provides the framework for us to work together and with regional and government agencies and our communities, in common purpose.

Thank you to everyone who helped to create this strategy by sharing your views and aspirations for the future. We look forward to our ongoing work with you.

Nigel Ashton

Chairman, North Somerset Partnership



About our Sustainable Community Strategy

The purpose of this strategy is to improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of our area and to contribute to sustainable development throughout the UK¹.

The North Somerset Partnership has developed this strategy, vision and priorities, by bringing together our strong evidence base of local views and statistical data. It is our long-term plan to improve quality of life and opportunities locally by joining up services and tackling complex issues in a coherent, integrated and sustainable way.



The North Somerset vision:

'Sustainable, inclusive, safe, healthy, prosperous communities thriving in a quality environment.'

Our shared priorities

To help achieve our vision, we have developed six shared priorities. They are:

- **Tackling disadvantage and promoting equality of opportunity.**
- **Developing strong inclusive communities.**
- **Ensuring safer communities.**
- **Improving health and wellbeing.**
- **Developing a prosperous economy and enterprising community.**
- **Living within environmental limits.**

Each of these shared priorities has a section in this strategy, except tackling disadvantage and promoting equality of opportunity, which threads throughout all the priorities. In this way, our commitment to an 'improved quality of life for all' is put into practice through all North Somerset Partnership work programmes.

To develop these priorities we considered:

- national, regional and local trends
- data and views from across our partnership
- partner organisations' consultations and key issues identified in local parish plans
- the views of people who joined in our consultation activities and events (see Appendix C).

To help us ensure this strategy will leave North Somerset as a better place for future generations we have tested our work against national and regional sustainable development principles.

These are represented in the diagram below. Using this information, we have produced a sustainability appraisal that has helped us to shape this strategy. The implementation of this work will also take account of these principles. Full details of our sustainability appraisal can be found at www.northsomersetpartnership.org.uk

This Sustainable Community Strategy focuses on priorities for the area.

Taken from *Securing the Future – The National Strategy for Sustainable Development* (March 2005)

It sets out:

- our long-term vision
- key issues and trends that we need to consider
- our progress to date
- our shared priorities and improvements we want to see
- specific strategies and plans that will support our progress
- examples of how our work can be supported locally
- how the strategy will be delivered.



It aims to:

- build on our experience of developing and implementing our first Community Strategy from 2004
- inform other plans at a sub-regional and regional level where possible, so North Somerset priorities are recognised and prioritised accordingly
- provide the framework for more detailed plans and strategies of NSP delivery partnerships and those of individual partners
- influence and encourage investment decisions by the public, private, community and voluntary sectors
- inform people about the challenges, opportunities and priorities in North Somerset and encourage local involvement in driving forward sustainable development.

Our partnership commitments

Throughout this strategy we show how local organisations will work together to address important issues that can be best achieved in partnership. Through our partnership efforts we are committed to:

Sustainable development

By implementing this strategy, the NSP will contribute to the achievement of sustainability, both locally and more widely, working with local people to identify and take action on local goals and priorities. These will link to regional, national and even global aims where this is necessary.

Community engagement

Working together we want to harness the local skills, knowledge, experience and enthusiasm within our communities. We will encourage involvement in partnership consultations, forums, events, local projects and decision making, and will continue to work with local people and community representatives to support this.

Customer focus

Our customers (including residents, businesses and visitors to North Somerset) are our focus. We will work together to ensure we provide value for money and improve access to services and facilities when delivering our programmes.

Tackling inequalities and disadvantage

Overall, the quality of life across the area is good, but there are some very significant pockets of deprivation reflected by inequalities in health, limited access to affordable and decent housing, and to services, employment and training opportunities. The NSP will tackle these issues as a priority.

Promoting community cohesion, equality and diversity

We want to encourage a sense of belonging for all and ensure that diversity is appreciated and valued, with positive relationships developed between generations and with people from different cultural backgrounds.

We will not discriminate against people, treat them unfairly, or create artificial barriers that prevent them participating in our work. We recognise this includes taking action to ensure that all people can benefit from our work and services, and employment opportunities, even if they have not done so historically, or if the work is not particularly aimed at them, or if they have care responsibilities.

The work of the partnership will embrace the spirit and implementation of equalities legislation² to ensure that we deliver fair and equitable work programmes that are accessible to all.



Implementing the strategy

The NSP Board will oversee the work described in this strategy, and has ultimate responsibility for it, through monitoring and evaluating progress. To support the Board, the NSP includes delivery partnerships and sub-groups to prioritise, plan and deliver activity over the short and medium-term.

This Sustainable Community Strategy will inform a range of long-term specific policies and strategies, and medium-term delivery plans that detail work to be undertaken to implement it. They include:

- The Local Development Framework - this area's 20-year planning policy framework, which will help to identify and encourage the development of the physical infrastructure required to achieve our economic, social and environmental objectives and deliver sustainable spatial development.
- The Local Area Agreement (LAA) - a three-year agreement between central government and the local area. The LAA, led by the NSP, aims to improve the quality of life for local people by strengthening local services. The agreement contains targets to achieve key aspects of the Sustainable Community Strategy and deliver improvements for the area. Areas of focus include children and young people's issues, economic development and the environment, people's health and wellbeing and the creation of safe and strong communities.
- NSP Delivery Partnerships and sub-groups will develop detailed action plans, which will help us achieve our shared objectives in the short, medium and long-term.
- Partners will include relevant parts of this strategy in their own business plans to help make this strategy a reality.



For an illustration of the North Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy Delivery Framework, see Appendix A.

Resources for delivery

The NSP has limited resources of its own to implement this strategy and its delivery plans. Our work is heavily dependent on the support of all partners and particularly the constrained resources of public sector agencies. To make progress, all NSP partners will need to work together to maximise the benefit of the resources we have. All partners will need to consider:

- how to best use existing resources to support our shared priorities
- how we can best manage any reductions and challenges to our resources
- how we can attract further and new external investment into the area, through our partnership efforts
- how we can add value by sharing resources where appropriate.

On some strategic issues, such as planning, transport and managing future housing growth, the NSP partners have recognised that we can achieve more by working together with neighbouring areas. The West of England Partnership (which covers the four areas of Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire) provides a clear governance structure for sub-regional working. By working together and pooling resources and expertise, partners are in a stronger position to obtain greater commitment and investment from government, helping us deliver the major infrastructural improvements the area needs.

We have already been successful in getting additional resources through our Joint Local Transport Plan, and through the New Growth Points Initiative. We plan to build upon this success through the preparation of a Multi Area Agreement for 2008-11.

Individuals can also make a huge contribution to the delivery of this strategy. Each shared priority includes a number of suggested actions that **you** can take to help North Somerset be a place where people want to work and live, now and in the future.

Managing risk

The NSP will review external influences regularly to determine how any changes in available resources, government programmes and regional and sub-regional governance and structures affect our work. We will maximise opportunities to help deliver our work programme and minimise risk where possible.

How will we know if we are making a difference?

We have a range of indicators to help us monitor progress.

Our performance measures will include:

- North Somerset Indicators (that measure quality of life across the area) will be developed and reviewed annually as part of the implementation plan for this document. These indicators will bring together information on a broad range of social, environmental and economic issues from national and local indicator sets.
- Local Area Agreement Performance Indicators, which are measured and reported quarterly.
- Quarterly monitoring of delivery partnership and sub-group action plans against the aims laid out within this strategy.
- Partners own performance indicators used to monitor specific areas of work as appropriate.

In addition to these specific monitoring processes, the government assesses and monitors the work of individual public sector organisations in our partnership. Part of these assessments will identify how well we work in partnership locally and how we are implementing our Sustainable Community Strategy through our joint efforts.

How the Sustainable Community Strategy will evolve

This strategy will evolve as all parts of our partnership continue to influence and inform its direction. It will be monitored regularly so it reflects significant changes to the social, economic and environmental circumstances of North Somerset.

Any development of this strategy will take into account future consultations, new data and changing circumstances. From April 2008 there is a new duty for local health services and local authorities to work together to identify the key health and wellbeing needs of local communities by undertaking a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. The information from this piece of work will be used as part of the development of this strategy.

How the NSP will evolve

In order to be effective, the NSP must review its internal processes, functions and structures over time. In any review, the partnership will take account of any significant changes in government policy and priorities, regional and sub-regional governance, and changes to the structures and resources of its own partners.

Throughout any changes, the NSP will continue to include partners from across the public, business, community and voluntary sectors to maximise the contributions needed to support sustainable development, including changes that meet the expressed interests and needs of local people.

About North Somerset

Our communities

North Somerset is a diverse area, with coastal, urban and market towns and rural villages. 30% of our population live in rural areas with the remaining population living in the coastal towns of Weston-super-Mare (40%), Clevedon, Portishead and the market town of Nailsea (30%)³.

Our population was 201,400 in 2006⁴ with a higher than average number of older people (23% as opposed to 18% nationally)⁵. 22% of our population is under the age of 19⁶.

The area has a relatively small black and minority ethnic population compared to the national average⁷ but our cultural diversity is growing with an estimated 58 first languages spoken in our schools⁸.

North Somerset is generally prosperous with some of the wealthiest communities in the country. However, some people living here experience economic, social or environmental disadvantage or social isolation. Overall, North Somerset has the eleventh biggest 'inequalities gap' in the country⁹ (the gap between our wealthiest and poorest communities). Some areas within Weston-super-Mare are in the top 10% most deprived areas in England¹⁰.

Many rural and urban communities work together to identify local needs and work with organisations to respond to concerns. Across North Somerset 21 community-led parish plans are either complete or under way. The Neighbourhood Management programme brings together local residents from four estates in Weston-super-Mare to tackle issues across the area. North Somerset also has over 30 Local Action Teams and 1200 Neighbourhood Watch groups¹¹ working together on community safety issues. Evidence suggests that a strong community does not tolerate crime or anti-social behaviour and demands high quality public services.

Voluntary and community organisations also provide an important platform for local people to contribute to and have a say in community activities and developments. The voluntary sector contributes to the local economy as employers, providers of services and through volunteering¹².



Communities enjoy a broad range of arts, leisure, formal and informal recreation activities. Facilities include libraries, leisure and sports centres, health clubs, specific interest and town and district museums, cinemas, parks and open spaces. A range of community theatre, music groups and art festivals also offer a variety of learning and cultural opportunities across the area.

North Somerset has a wealth of cultural attractions, including the Tynesfield Estate and Clevedon Court, two National Trust properties of distinction and a range of medieval churches. Clevedon Pier has been restored, following a long community fund-raising campaign, and is the only intact Grade I listed pier in the country. Weston-super-Mare has two significant conference and entertainment venues in the Winter Gardens and the Playhouse Theatre.

Challenges for North Somerset

By supporting the development of our communities we want to ensure that local people continue to have the drive, confidence and commitment to make a difference in their neighbourhood. In doing so we will need to consider the following future challenges:

- We anticipate an overall rise in the North Somerset population to 246,100 by 2026¹³.
- We expect further growth in the number of older people with an increase of 19% in those over 75 by 2015, and people over retirement age making up 30% of our population by 2025¹⁴.
- The number of young people under the age of 19 is expected to increase¹⁵.
- It can often be hard to identify and evidence local needs and issues due to the remoteness and dispersed nature of some communities in North Somerset.
- New communities may be developed in North Somerset in response to the Draft South West Regional Spatial Strategy urban extension proposals. This currently outlines the potential for up to 26,000 new homes to be built in North Somerset by 2026.
- Any new development will need to be designed with the appropriate infrastructure that balances homes with jobs, services, transport links and facilities.
- Services and facilities will need to reflect the changing needs of our existing and new communities and the growing cultural diversity of the area.
- As our population grows, more demand will be made on services provided by the voluntary and community sector. Expansion of the infrastructure to support further development in this sector will be necessary if we are to maximise the valuable contribution it makes across communities in North Somerset.
- Evidence suggests that further support is required to assist with the development of the culture, leisure and recreation sector. Key issues that have been identified include a lack of gallery space, concert hall and performing arts space in North Somerset¹⁶.
- To tackle significant disadvantage, agencies will need to continue working with local people to seek solutions that can have a lasting impact on people's lives and benefit communities as a whole.

Safe communities

Nationally crime has fallen by a third in the last decade¹⁷ and the South West has the second lowest crime rate of the nine English regions¹⁸. North Somerset is generally a safe place to live.

During the 12 months ended October 2007, North Somerset recorded 78.186 crimes per 1,000 population¹⁹, third highest out of Avon and Somerset's six Police districts.

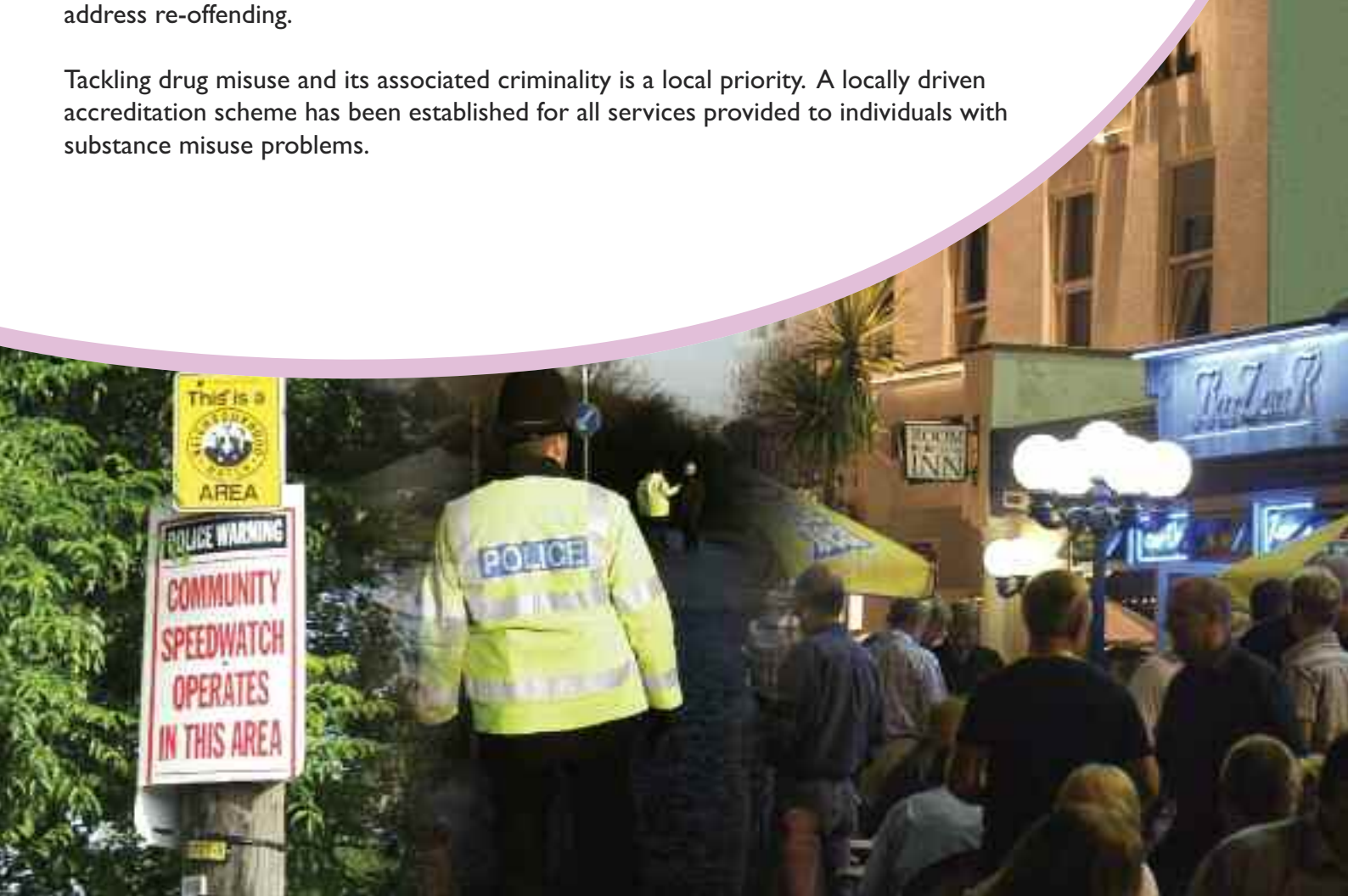
In some parts of North Somerset there are disproportionate levels of crime. In Weston-super-Mare, a vibrant night-time economy means many people enjoy a night out in the town centre; sometimes this leads to violence or criminal damage. About three-quarters of assaults and two-thirds of damage offences in North Somerset occur in Weston-super-Mare with South and Central Wards recording nearly 45% of all assaults recorded in North Somerset (June 06-June 07)²⁰.

The North Somerset Crime and Drugs Reduction Partnership have allocated resources to tackle this, and to address alcohol-related violent crime, underage drinking and anti-social behaviour. Operation Jigsaw, which provides additional policing at peak times, led to a 14.5% reduction in assaults on Friday and Saturday nights during July and August 2007²¹.

Young people in North Somerset are far more likely to become victims of crime than any other category of the population. They are also more likely to be victims than offenders. Active citizenship and personal safety will be further encouraged through working with schools and youth services.

About 33% of assaults recorded in North Somerset in 2006-07 were associated with domestic incidents, compared with 30% in 2005-06²². A comprehensive partnership response has been put in place to address this issue, providing support and advocacy services to victims and measures to address re-offending.

Tackling drug misuse and its associated criminality is a local priority. A locally driven accreditation scheme has been established for all services provided to individuals with substance misuse problems.



Public safety is also an important issue. The number of people killed or seriously injured on roads in North Somerset has reduced in recent years from 106 people killed or seriously injured during 2001-04 (average) to 58 people during 2006-07 (average)²³.

In 2006-07, North Somerset had the lowest number of accidental dwelling fires (43) in the West of England²⁴. In the same period the number of deliberate arson fires was 342, the second lowest in the West of England districts²⁵. The number of hoax calls received in North Somerset was 58²⁶. In 2007-08 Avon Fire and Rescue Service undertook over 860 Home Fire Safety Visits offering advice to North Somerset residents²⁷.

In working together to tackle crime and help people feel safe, we recognise the importance of listening to and working with local communities to address issues. Communities have told us they are concerned about increasing levels of environmental crime, such as fly-tipping and we are working in partnership to address these issues.

Challenges for North Somerset

It is widely recognised that crime has a significant impact on communities, and feeling safe is an important factor in achieving a good quality of life and sense of wellbeing. Challenges for North Somerset include:

- Continue to reduce all crime and increase reporting of crime.
- Developing a safe night-time economy in our urban areas where violence, criminal damage and anti-social behaviour are not tolerated.
- Developing a culture where domestic violence of any sort is unacceptable and any offenders are reported.
- Reducing incidents of domestic violence and re-victimisation rates by addressing perpetrators' behaviour and providing more support to those who have survived domestic abuse.
- Working with children and young people to reduce the risks of them becoming victims of crime.
- Working with communities to find local solutions to local problems – further developing area-based working and neighbourhood policing particularly in disadvantaged areas, which tend to experience higher levels of some types of crime.
- To increase public safety on the roads and at home.
- Tackling increasing levels of environmental crime - from dog fouling and graffiti to fly-tipping, as this type of disregard for the places in which we live often leads to other criminal activity.

Healthy communities

People in North Somerset are generally healthy with a life expectancy better than the national average²⁸. Premature deaths from heart disease and stroke are reducing. However, there are still around 600 early deaths per year from these conditions together with liver disease, cancer and accidents²⁹.

There is a widening gap in life expectancy between people living in our most deprived areas and the most affluent. The gap between the most deprived fifth of our areas and the least deprived fifth is now 7.8 years for a baby boy and 5.9 years for a baby girl³⁰. One electoral ward in Weston-super-Mare has the lowest life expectancy of any ward in the South West³¹.

Healthy life expectancy is increasing at a lower rate than overall life expectancy. This means that elderly people now live longer with health problems. 59% of North Somerset Housing residents have indicated that someone within their household has a long-standing illness or disability³². North Somerset appears to have a relatively high number of people with mental/behavioural disorders and currently a relatively low number of people engaged with mental health services³³.

Currently, around 1,400 people aged over 18 are supported in permanent residential/nursing home placements with a further 230 in short-term or respite placements. Domiciliary care, day care, items of occupational therapy equipment or other services are supporting a further 3,100 people at home.

Infant mortality rates in the area have been consistently higher than the South West averages though lower than the national average³⁴. Our child population is generally healthy but, as in the rest of England, childhood obesity is increasing. In North Somerset we are working to encourage healthy eating and encourage physical activity. Currently 75% of all 5-7 year olds in 88% of primary schools have access to fresh fruit and vegetables on a daily basis³⁵. A co-ordinated approach is taken by a range of partners to promote the health and wellbeing of children and young people. Further work will be required to ensure that children with disabilities and emotional health needs are supported along with their families and carers.

Sexual health services across the area have improved and are considered to be very successful. Our teenage pregnancy rates are now decreasing³⁶.



Lifestyle factors such as smoking and alcohol consumption have a significant impact on people's health. In 2005-06 the PCT Stop Smoking Service helped 1,293 people to stop smoking³⁷. It is anticipated that the new smoking legislation will also have a significant impact on helping people to quit.

A snapshot of Accident and Emergency attendances on one Friday night at Weston General Hospital revealed that just over half presenting between 9pm and 3am were alcohol related³⁸, indicating that issues around alcohol misuse need to be addressed.

Challenges for North Somerset

Many factors influence people's physical and emotional health and wellbeing: the use of drugs and alcohol, living and working conditions, income, housing conditions, the local environment, access to health care education, leisure and cultural activities, what we eat and how much physical activity we take.

Challenges to improve the health and wellbeing of people in North Somerset include:

- An increase in the numbers of frail and vulnerable older people with health problems as our older population grows.
- Further local services for people with mental health problems need to be developed to meet the mismatch between incidence and services and to meet the expected rise in dementia and depression as the population ages.
- We are committed to improving the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people and increase support for parents – improving the chances for all young people to do well at school and contribute positively and actively to society.
- We want to improve our services for children with disabilities and those who are particularly vulnerable.
- We will work together to encourage healthy, active lifestyles that improve health and wellbeing and reduce illness.
- We will aim to work with people to reduce the harm caused by smoking, drugs and alcohol misuse.
- Continued efforts will be needed to reduce the health inequalities experienced in the area.

Housing

In North Somerset most people are owner-occupiers, this accounts for 79.4% of housing stock. However, there is a growing gap between wages and the cost of purchasing a home. The average house price in North Somerset is now almost nine times the average income of those working in the district.

Those renting from a private landlord or living rent-free account for 11.3%, and those renting from Registered Social Landlords account for an additional 9.3%³⁹. Private rented housing costs are 16% higher than the national average at around £575 per month for a two-bedroom house⁴⁰.

A recent 'Private Housing Stock Condition Survey' determined that around 30,000 private dwellings are classed as non-decent (as determined by the Government's Decent Homes Standard data). However, plans are in place to ensure that properties occupied by vulnerable people are improved.

Central Weston has a higher than average concentration of houses in multiple occupation, which means that many families live in poorer quality homes, and sometimes overcrowded conditions sharing basic amenities.

We have a growing number of people seeking social housing in the area. Availability of housing association property is limited, and properties to the North of the district are at a premium. More than 50% of those waiting for appropriate accommodation are single people applying for one bedroom homes⁴¹.

To respond to the needs of our growing ageing population we must support people to stay in their own homes, through appropriate adaptations and home improvements.

We are committed to increasing opportunities for people to have warm, safe decent housing with support, where appropriate. This includes assisting our vulnerable young and older residents and people with learning difficulties, short-term or ongoing mental health issues or people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.



Challenges for North Somerset

- In 2006 the average house price was £201,963 compared to the national average of £199,184. Between 1998 and 2006 house prices rose by 154% whereas nationally the increase was 136%⁴². We must look at ways to narrow the gap between wages and housing costs, and provide affordable housing to tackle the growing demand across the area.
- In June 2007 there were 5,093 applicants on the Housing Needs Register⁴³; the trend is upward, and we expect this to continue. We will need to tackle the problems associated with demand outstripping supply for affordable homes to rent.
- We will need to continue to work together to prevent homelessness and to reduce the number of people living in temporary housing.
- We will continue to ensure North Somerset housing stock meets the Decent Homes Standard as required by the Government.
- As our ageing and younger population continues to grow we will need to increase opportunities for people to have warm, safe, decent housing with support, where appropriate.
- Older people and other vulnerable groups will need support to stay in their own homes, through appropriate adaptations, improvements and support services.
- We will need to plan and work together to ensure that older people have access to a range of housing options and housing related services appropriate for their needs.
- We want to reduce fuel poverty by improving the energy efficiency of our existing housing stock while ensuring new buildings are as resource efficient as possible.
- The growth in higher education delivery by Weston College is placing further demands on housing stock which requires solutions.

Economy

North Somerset is part of the West of England sub-region (with Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset, South Gloucestershire). It is a relatively prosperous area with low unemployment, locally it is 2%, nationally it is 5.1%⁴⁴.

The District has national and international transport links and these resources contribute to the economy of the West of England and the South West region overall.

Bristol International Airport has grown rapidly in recent years. Local and regional demand for air travel is forecast to grow in the future and national policy supports growth to between 10 and 12 million passengers per annum⁴⁵. This growth will bring considerable economic benefit to the South West region, but plans for future growth will need to address concerns about impacts on the environment, deliver improved public transport services and include greater use of low-carbon technologies. Bristol International Airport published a Master Plan in 2006 setting out how the Airport might develop to meet this growth. Royal Portbury Dock has also grown rapidly and any further commercial development would need to be within existing boundaries.

There are significant opportunities for economic development across our sub-region with associated transport pressures. Currently it is estimated that 36% of residents out-commute for work each day⁴⁶, causing significant congestion and pollution in some areas. Additionally, over the next 20 years major development sites will become available requiring more investment in the transport infrastructure.

The Regional Economic Strategy sets out those sectors where further development should be encouraged. These include:

- tourism
- food and drink industries
- creative industries.

It also focuses on improved skills and innovation, with strong support for development of a 'knowledge-driven' economy with high skill levels in the workforce in order to retain employment.

North Somerset has more highly skilled and highly qualified residents than the South West and national averages⁴⁷. However, we lack a broad range of high-level employment opportunities to match the skills of our workforce.



Unlike many areas across the country the number of young people in North Somerset is likely to grow. Young people in North Somerset achieve above average results in GCSEs⁴⁸ (though there is an achievement gap between those in Weston-super-Mare and the other parts of the district). Many young people leave the local area for higher education or employment opportunities. However, Weston College achieved the highest success rates in the West of England for learners over the last two years and is leading in a range of new initiatives including work-based learning and higher education.

Some neighbourhoods, particularly in Weston-super-Mare, have more residents with low level or no qualifications than regional and national averages⁴⁹. Low paid employment and unemployment within these communities impacts on the wider economy as people are unable spend locally to support local business.

The area also has a significant social economy sector. This includes all not-for-profit organisations in North Somerset. This diverse sector ranges from local neighbourhood organisations through to national housing associations. The overall income and expenditure levels of this sector in North Somerset may be as high as around £400million⁵⁰.

Challenges for North Somerset

- Globally, employment patterns are changing; businesses are moving their production and services to cheaper, developing economies abroad.
- Future technological advances may change employment and travel for work patterns considerably over the coming decades.
- Economic growth will increasingly depend on enterprise and innovation and the ability to develop attract and retain a skilled workforce. It will also require greater efficiency and moves to a low-carbon, low-waste economy to help tackle climate change. These changes offer significant business opportunities in the environmental technology sector.
- In North Somerset major development sites will become available over the next 20 years (especially in Weston-super-Mare), requiring more investment in transport infrastructure and services to maximise local opportunities for employment.
- Pressure for expansion of key strategic transport links will need to be balanced with environmental impact considerations.
- There is a need to improve achievement levels in schools as well as offering learning and basic training opportunities to communities and businesses across the district, particularly in our disadvantaged areas.
- The development of major employment opportunities on sites in our four main urban areas will be essential to reduce out-commuting, traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.
- With a growing population of young people, we have a significant future workforce that we will need to encourage to stay in the area. Initiatives like Weston College's recent development of Higher Education facilities will hopefully encourage more of our young people to remain in the area for higher education and new employment prospects.
- We need to balance the need to create employment opportunities with the need to maintain and protect the quality of our environment.
- Learning is key to securing a sustainable future for the region. We need to learn the skills, techniques and processes necessary to develop a new more sustainable way of living.

Environment

A high quality environment is vital for our quality of life. North Somerset benefits from a diverse and attractive landscape that changes from the Severn estuary in the west through the flat landscape of the North Somerset Levels and Moors to dramatic hills such as the Tickenham Ridge, Dundry Plateau and the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

North Somerset has an enviable natural environment. These diverse rural and urban areas include a number of historic landscapes and a wealth of Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas. The natural environment supports a high level of biodiversity and includes international and nationally recognised wildlife sites. Many species that are in decline nationally can be found in North Somerset, including otters, dormice, bats, hares and great crested newts⁵¹.

The majority of North Somerset residents enjoy a high quality of life. However, it is becoming increasingly apparent that some aspects of our lifestyles are unsustainable. Recent research into North Somerset's 'Eco-Footprint' shows that we are using more than three times our fair share of the world's natural resources⁵².

There is now overwhelming evidence that greenhouse-gas emissions from human activity are changing the global climate, which is likely to have a significant effect on the local and global environment and to directly affect our quality of life in the future.

The district benefits from excellent rail and road connections to the rest of the UK, but traffic congestion is a problem in some areas. Car ownership in the district is above the national average and many people travel outside of the district to work. Walking and cycling rates are amongst the lowest in the South West⁵³.

Bristol International Airport has grown rapidly in recent years and passenger numbers are forecast to grow further in line with government policy. Plans for future growth will need to address impacts on the environment, deliver improved public transport services and include greater use of low-carbon technologies.



Challenges for North Somerset

Learning to live within environmental limits will be a significant challenge for the district over the next 20 years.

- We need to find new ways of doing things that help to conserve natural resources and reduce the amount of waste and pollution we produce.
- We will need to respond to the twin challenges of climate change and peak oil (the likelihood that global oil production is approaching its peak and that fuel will become increasingly expensive)⁵⁴. It is not possible to predict with certainty how these issues will affect North Somerset, but we must try to limit the amount of fossil fuels we use and greenhouse gases we produce, whilst planning for the effects of a changing climate. Some of the changes are likely to be positive, and will bring new opportunities to the area, such as new business opportunities in a growing environmental technology sector.
- We will need to encourage sustainable transport options and ensure that any improvements to our transport infrastructure consider any negative impact on the natural environment.
- It is important to ensure that the natural environment of North Somerset continues to support the high level of biodiversity in the area.
- We will need to ensure that future developments minimise damage to the natural environment and limit harmful emissions.
- We will also need to find ways of making our existing housing stock more resource efficient
- Research shows that there is a direct link between the quality of life in communities and the quality of their local environment⁵⁵. For example, those living in the most deprived areas usually experience more air pollution, have less access to quality green space and adequate housing and experience a higher expectation of crime⁵⁶.
- Tackling environmental inequalities and ensuring that all people have access to a good quality environment is critical to the development of a more sustainable future.

More detailed information about North Somerset can be found on the North Somerset Partnership website: www.northsomersetpartnership.org.uk

and from the Topic Papers supporting the development of the Local Development Framework, on the North Somerset Council website at: www.n-somerset.gov.uk/CStopicpapers.

Our shared priorities

Tackling disadvantage and promoting equality of opportunity
(this is a key shared priority running through all those listed)

- Developing strong inclusive communities
- Ensuring safer communities
- Improving health and wellbeing
- Developing a prosperous economy and enterprising community
- Living within environmental limits

Developing strong and inclusive communities

Why this is a priority

- North Somerset is generally prosperous with higher than average earnings and some of the wealthiest communities in the country. However, some areas of Central and South Wards in Weston-super-Mare are in the top 10% most deprived areas in England. This results in North Somerset having the eleventh biggest 'inequalities gap' in the country.
- It is currently estimated that a further 26,000 new homes could be built across North Somerset by 2026 (Draft Regional Spatial Strategy 2006-26), of which at least 30% should be affordable housing. These new developments will need to be designed in a sustainable way to incorporate appropriate infrastructure, balance homes with jobs, services, transport links and facilities.
- There is a growing community and voluntary sector across North Somerset that includes 760 registered charities and hundreds of unregistered voluntary and community groups⁵⁷. These charities and local groups are increasingly providing important services for children, young people and adults across a spectrum of health and social care, culture, environment, learning and many other interests. Demand will continue to grow for these services.
- North Somerset is a diverse area in terms of population, geography, age, faith and culture. Rural communities cover a third of North Somerset and have issues and needs that are often hard to identify and evidence due to remoteness and dispersed nature of some locations. North Somerset has higher than the national average population of older people living in the area (23% as opposed to 18% nationally) with a projected increase of 19% of people over 75 by 2015⁵⁸. These issues, along with an increasing population and projected increase in the proportion of young people, will place further demands on services.



What our communities told us

We received over 5,500 qualitative comments from local people through a range of methods to describe the complex issues that have helped shape this work. For this shared priority people felt the following issues were important:

‘Fostering community spirit through increased sense of belonging, identity and pride of place’ by

- encouraging and supporting children, young people and adults to be involved within the community and influence local democracy
- fostering integration between new developments and existing neighbourhoods and people of different backgrounds and ages
- ensuring that new housing developments have appropriate and accessible community facilities and services.

‘Support the development of our voluntary and community sector’ by

- improving and supporting community facilities, services, activities and groups
- encouraging the development of volunteering opportunities
- promoting volunteering opportunities to support vulnerable adults and young people and tackle social isolation.

‘Improve and maintain the range of activities for all ages including young people, families and adults’ by

- improving access to young people’s services and facilities within urban and rural communities
- improving the range of cultural, leisure, public play areas and community activities
- encouraging a range of community learning opportunities to improve wellbeing.

In a survey asking about priorities for the area 63.2% of young people and 33.6% of adults thought that developing a wide range of arts, entertainment and recreational and cultural opportunities was a very important priority for local people and visitors to the area.

‘Tackle social isolation and help to create and maintain social networks’

Older people were keen to ensure that social networks within communities were strengthened to enable people to share interests and concerns. Greater effort was required to ensure that information about services and facilities was available to older people who felt isolated. Improved access to affordable transport options would help to alleviate some of the social isolation and loneliness experienced.

Examples of North Somerset Partnership achievements so far

- North Somerset Compact agreement between voluntary, community and public sector organisations established.
- Development of the Fair Share Trust capacity-building programme for voluntary and community sector in areas of need.
- Secured resources and worked with local people to develop a Neighbourhood Management programme in South Ward, Weston-super-Mare.
- Secured resources to develop capacity building programme in Central Ward, Weston-super-Mare.
- Implementing the Rural Social Community Programme to support parishes to develop their parish planning activity and supporting work between parish councils and young people.
- Many young people from across the district have taken part in the Millennium Volunteer Programme and 200 young people have been involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.



What we will do to achieve our shared priority



Aim:

Enable the development of successful neighbourhoods across North Somerset.

“ What’s missing is the feeling of community. Some villages in North Somerset do really well at having a community identity. They organise events, know each other and there is often a community hub, for example, pub and church. This does not happen in my community ”

Weston resident.

“ More local facilities will be needed when houses are built ”

Yatton resident.

Improvements we want to see include:

- New communities developed with appropriate facilities and infrastructure to support and encourage a sense of place.
- A range of affordable homes with options to rent and buy to promote mixed communities and enable people to remain in, or return to their home town or village if they want to.
- Good access to key services and facilities through effective land use and transport planning.
- Development of a wide range of cultural, arts and leisure events and facilities within our urban and rural neighbourhoods, aimed at residents and visitors.
- Promoting the distinctiveness of North Somerset in design, local employment, local markets, produce, events and cultural experiences.

Aim:

Support the development of the voluntary and community sectors.

“ There are many voluntary and statutory groups working in Weston but there is a need to improve links with local people and making sure there is funding for long-term services, giving continuity ”

Weston resident.

Improvements we want to see include:

- Full implementation and updating of the North Somerset Compact.
- Further development of the infrastructure for the voluntary and community sector.
- Improved access to voluntary and community services.
- Supporting and encouraging skills development in the voluntary and community sector.
- Supporting and encouraging the involvement of the voluntary and community sector across the NSP and its associated bodies.

Aim:

Ensure all people are able to make a positive contribution to their communities.

“ **Value OUR youth, include them in every layer of decision making and service provision – encourage them, not disparage them** ”

Portishead resident.

Improvements we want to see include:

- Increased participation in volunteering opportunities and promotion of volunteering opportunities for young people.
- Helping people to participate in their communities, with opportunities to influence decision making and shape services and facilities where possible including:
 - greater involvement of children and young people
 - ensuring older people’s voices are heard
 - encouraging black and minority ethnic and under represented groups to have a say in key services and facilities through appropriate accessible information and support
 - supporting the development of parish/town community planning activity and the implementation of local action plans
 - increased learning opportunities that support the development of more sustainable communities.

Aim:

Meet the learning, social and cultural needs of North Somerset communities.

Improvements we want to see include:

- Access to a range of social support and community activities for children, young people, families and older people.
- Further development of community learning opportunities for adults.
- Timely delivery of appropriate infrastructure and facilities to meet the range of social and cultural needs within new developments.
- Learning opportunities to promote the cultural diversity of the area.
- Social development of children and young people through a range of play and youth activities and facilities to meet local needs.
- Further development of cultural facilities.



Developing strong and inclusive communities – tackling disadvantage and promoting equality of opportunity



Aim:

Deliver community regeneration and increase capacity in areas of need.

“ Organisations and local people should get together and work together in mutual response. Things only change if people work together instead of complaining ”

Weston resident.

Improvements we want to see include:

- Further development of the Neighbourhood Management Programme for communities in South Ward, Weston-super Mare.
- Taking lessons learned from Neighbourhood Management Programme and applying them in other disadvantaged areas and communities to support regeneration and good service provision.
- Supporting the development of a co-ordinated programme of action to address inequalities in Central Ward, Weston-super-Mare.

Aim:

Encourage community cohesion within our urban and rural neighbourhoods.

“ It would be good to have more local festivals, celebrating life in North Somerset ”

Backwell resident

“ We need to openly celebrate diversity ”

Nailsea resident.

Improvements we want to see include:

- Positive relationships developed between people from different backgrounds or of different life stages in workplaces, schools and neighbourhoods where people’s diversity is appreciated and valued.
- Work with young people to provide positive activities for them to engage with.
- Celebration of diversity and communities’ achievements.
- Community information and advice in appropriate formats to reflect the diversity of our communities. For example; information is translated into large print, audio, Braille or mother tongue languages.

Aim:

Address social isolation within our urban and rural communities.

Improvements we want to see include:

- Better understanding about the actual and perceived barriers to accessing services and facilities to identify how to address them.
- Support for vulnerable people of all ages, and those with specific needs, to play a full and active part within the community.
- Initiatives to tackle social isolation.

Strategies and plans that will support our progress

National

- Together We Can Agenda 2005
- Leitch Review of Skills 2006
- Learning & Skills Strategy 2003
- Sub-National Economic & Regeneration Review 2007
- Independence and Opportunity – Supporting People National Strategy 2007

Regional/Sub-regional

- Draft Regional Spatial Strategy 2006-2026
- Regional Economic Strategy 2006-12
- Tourism in Somerset 2006-2010

Local

- Local Area Agreement 2007-2010
- Local Development Framework 2006-2026
- North Somerset Economic Development & Regeneration Strategy 2006-2016
- Single Plan for Children & Young People 2006-2009
- Draft Older People's Strategy
- Neighbourhood Management Programme 2006-2010
- Blue Skies Tourism Strategy 2001 (update 2005)
- Tourism in Somerset (2006-2010)
- North Somerset Compact 2005
- Equality Schemes including Race 2007-2010, Disability 2007, Gender 2007
- Learning and Skills Development Plan 2006-2009
- Supporting People Five year Strategy 2005-2010

How you can support our work programme

- Find out if your town or village is preparing a Parish Plan and get involved. Contact your local Parish Clerk, Community Action on 01275 393 837, or the Parish Planning Officer at North Somerset Council on 01275 884 327.
- Why not join your local tenants or residents association and have your say?
- Does your group need help or support? Voluntary Action North Somerset has a range of support services on offer, contact them on 01934 410 190.
- Become part of the Citizens Panel. For more information contact the Consultation Officer at North Somerset Council 01275 888 762.
- Become a local Councillor and raise the issues that matter to your community. For more information view the www.nalc.gov.uk website.
- Have you thought about volunteering? Voluntary Action North Somerset has details of many opportunities across North Somerset, visit their website www.vansweb.org.uk.
- Support local events in your area. Tourist Information Centres may have details: Weston: 01934 641 741 or Clevedon: 01275 343 630. Visit the tourism website www.visitsomerset.co.uk



Ensuring safer communities

Why this is a priority

- A number of partner organisations have a statutory duty to address community safety issues. It is recognised that crime can be prevented by agencies including the police, council and health services working together, with local people.
- Local people say community safety is a high priority.
- Our most disadvantaged neighbourhoods experience disproportionately higher levels of some types of crime.
- Some crimes are under-reported, for example, domestic violence has often been an invisible crime. We need to further increase the number of people who report what is happening to them and reduce the number of repeat incidents.
- Weston-super-Mare houses around 11% of all the national drug rehabilitation beds⁵⁹ and communities have told us they are concerned about drug misuse and associated criminal activity.
- In North Somerset there is a strong network of 1,200 neighbourhood watch groups and local action teams working to tackle local safety issues.



What our communities told us

Most North Somerset residents see community safety and living without fear of crime as high priorities and an important factor in 'what makes North Somerset a good place to live'. From a broad perspective, people told us that 'A sense of belonging and feeling comfortable and safe was very important to maintaining and improving quality of life in the area'. When discussed in more detail 73.9% of people over 24 years old felt that reducing crime was very important and a key priority for the area. Young people under 24 years old considered reducing crime to be the second most important priority, second only to increasing transport choice and accessibility.

Major issues that local people want us to work together to address are:

- Preventing and reducing crime such as thefts, criminal damage and violent crime.
- Tackling drug and alcohol related problems.
- Reducing anti-social behaviour through prevention and enforcement approaches.
- Encouraging people's involvement and participation in promoting community safety within communities.
- Developing an understanding of the impact the fear of crime can have on local people and businesses.
- Reducing the level of litter and fly-tipping in the area, particularly in disadvantaged areas.

Examples of North Somerset Partnership achievements so far

- Establishment of an on-line resource directory signposting the availability of activities for young people.
- An accreditation scheme for drug and alcohol services has been developed. Housing and property standards have been circulated to providers and agreed for use.
- Implementation of Operation Jigsaw (additional policing at peak times) has led to a 14.5% reduction in assaults occurring in Central Ward on Friday and Saturday nights (July/August 2007).
- A structured inspection and enforcement programme of the ten most problematic venues across the district has seen a year-on-year reduction of 8.1% in assaults and 20.5% reduction in criminal damage across the district.
- Training sessions have been held for Local Action Teams. These have explored how Local Action Teams can work with their communities and partner organisations to help tackle anti-social behaviour and a range of other issues.
- Attracted almost £200,000 additional resources from the Home Office to tackle crime related to the night-time economy and to develop solutions with local communities.
- Achieving Secure by Design accreditation on new affordable housing developments.

What we will do to achieve our shared priority

<p>Aim: Reduce and prevent violent crime and support victims.</p>	<p>Improvements we want to see include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased reporting of domestic violence and reduced repeat victimisation. ● Better support to children and young people who are victims of violent crime or who experience violent crime as a consequence of their family circumstances. ● Continuing initiatives to address violent behaviour as a result of alcohol misuse. ● Continued work with businesses to ensure good management of licensed premises.
<p>Aim: Reduce and prevent criminal activity including anti-social behaviour, criminal damage and theft.</p> <p>“ Anti-social behaviour needs to be tackled in a different way, by integrating communities – old & young – so the fear is reduced and impersonal nature of our communities addressed. If people know each other they are less likely to affect them in a negative way ” Long Ashton resident.</p>	<p>Improvements we want to see include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Further development of initiatives to tackle criminal damage in geographical hot spots. ● Working with local communities to respond to local concerns and give young people options to participate in positive community activity. ● Rapid response to environmental crime, for example, fly-tipping, graffiti etc. ● Crime designed out using ‘secured by design’ standards.
<p>Aim: Reduce alcohol and drug misuse and drug related crime.</p> <p>“ Too many bars around and people getting drunk. It is not very nice ” Weston young person.</p>	<p>Improvements we want to see include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Raised awareness about safe drinking with young people and adults. ● Better support services for young people who experience the effects of alcohol and drug misuse as a consequence of their family environment. ● Further development of drug awareness activities and harm reduction work. ● More people receiving structured drug treatment. ● Targeted work with offenders to tackle drug-related crime.

Aim:

Reduce public safety risks.

Improvements we want to see include:

- Promotion of household fire prevention and detection initiatives.
- Continued reduction in the number of serious road casualties in children, young people and adults from road collisions.
- Safe cycling and walking encouraged through integrated planning.
- Improved highways and pedestrian access.





Ensuring safer communities – tackling disadvantage and promoting equality of opportunity

<p>Aim: Improve community safety and reduce the disproportionate levels of crime within our most disadvantaged neighbourhoods.</p> <p>“ Reduce anti-social behaviour in my area ” <i>Weston resident.</i></p>	<p>Improvements we want to see include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sustain the Neighbourhood Management Programme within South Ward, Weston-super Mare. ● Service providers are responsive to neighbourhood needs and improve service delivery. ● Services and initiatives that promote community safety and reduces crime in Central Ward in Weston-super Mare.
<p>Aim: Promote respect and tackle discrimination.</p>	<p>Improvements we want to see include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Awareness of equalities issues in communities and organisations raised. ● Full involvement of representative groups in developing work programmes. ● Respect for cultural diversity within our communities celebrated and fostered. ● Initiatives that challenge bullying in schools and workplaces. ● Raised awareness of reporting procedures for hate crime. ● People kept informed of action to tackle discrimination.

Aim:

Increase public reassurance and community participation including supporting vulnerable people.

“ I want to feel safe at home ”
Worle resident.

Improvements we want to see include:

- Continue and increase neighbourhood working by service providers.
- Increased awareness of the work that is taking place to reduce crime and encourage local involvement.
- Further development of the Local Action Team Network and Neighbourhood Watch Schemes.
- Support for addressing community issues raised within parish plans.
- Continued targeted distribution of crime prevention messages.
- Work with young people to encourage them to stay safe.
- Services to support families, children and young people who have experienced trauma, for example, domestic violence.
- Planning for new communities with well-designed housing, employment, community spaces, facilities and services that enhance community safety.



child-Safe™

reducing crimes against children...



Strategies and plans that will support our progress

National

- Cutting Crime: A new partnership 2008-2011
- National Drugs Strategy 2008
- Respect Agenda 2006
- Safe, sensible, social: The National Alcohol Strategy 2007

Local

- Safer Communities Strategy 2005-2008
- Local Area Agreement 2007-2010
- Domestic Abuse Strategy 2007
- Alcohol Strategy (Draft 2008)
- Annual Adult Treatment Plan 2008
- Private Sector Housing Strategy 2005-2009
- Single Plan for Children & Young People 2006-2009
- Annual Young People's Substance Misuse Plan 2008
- Local Development Framework 2006-2026
- Learning and Skills Development Plan 2006-2009

How you can support our work programme

- Report crime, anti-social behaviour and suspicious incidents to Avon and Somerset Police www.avonandsomerset.police.uk or Tel: 0845 456 7000.
- Anti-social behaviour can also be reported on the North Somerset Council website at www.n-somerset.gov.uk 'I want to report...'
- Join or set up a local Neighbourhood Watch group. For more information contact the Avon and Somerset Police. Tel: 0845 456 7000.
- Join your Local Action Team. For more information contact Avon and Somerset Police on 0845 456 7000 or North Somerset Council on 01275 888 394.
- Make sure your home is secure. For advice contact your local Crime Reduction Officer on 0845 456 7000.
- Call anonymously to provide information about crime: Crimestoppers 0800 555 111.
- To find out more about becoming a Special Constable or volunteer visit www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/recruitment or write to the Human Resources Manager at Weston-super-Mare Police Station, Walliscote Road, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1UU.
- To find out about volunteer work with young people 'at risk of offending' contact junction 21, a mentoring project managed by North Somerset Youth Offending Team. Tel: 01275 888 360 or email steve.coggins@n-somerset.gov.uk

Improving health and wellbeing

Why this is a priority

- Good health is not equally distributed across North Somerset and there is a widening gap in life expectancy between people living in our most deprived areas and the most affluent. The gap between the most deprived fifth of our area and the least deprived fifth is now 7.8 years for a baby boy and 5.9 years for a baby girl. One ward in Weston has the lowest life expectancy of any ward in the South West.
- Promoting and supporting healthy and active lifestyles can make a significant difference to preventing ill health and promoting wellbeing – joint efforts to support people to stop smoking, address drug and alcohol misuse, have healthy diets and take regular exercise will help to improve the health of people across North Somerset.
- With an ageing population healthy life expectancy is increasing at a lower rate than overall life expectancy. Elderly people now live longer with health problems and we can expect an increase in chronic conditions such as heart failure, respiratory disease, diabetes and stroke. Mental health conditions such as dementia and depression are expected to rise as the population ages.
- Infant mortality rates in North Somerset have been consistently higher than the South West average but are lower than the national average⁶⁰.
 - Good quality housing contributes significantly to public health. In Central Weston-super-Mare a higher than average concentration of houses in multiple occupation means that many families live in poorer quality, sometimes overcrowded accommodation with basic shared amenities.
 - The average house price in North Somerset is now almost nine times the average annual income of those working in the district.
 - Private rented housing costs are 16% higher than the national average at around £575 per month for a two-bedroom house.



- A recent 'Private Housing Stock Condition Survey' determined that around 30,000 private dwellings are classed as non-decent (as determined by the Government's Decent Homes Standard).
- In June 2007 there were 5093 applicants on the Housing Needs Register; this is an upward trend that is anticipated to grow further.

What our communities told us

People viewed improving health and wellbeing in a variety of ways, encouraging us to tackle this area of work from a broad perspective.

When asked about the key priorities for the NSP, 63.8% of people considered improving health and wellbeing to be very important. There was strong support for improving health by:

- Promoting healthy and active lifestyles, including sensible drinking and healthy eating to prevent ill health.
- Increasing recreational opportunities for all, including young people, older people, those with mental health problems and disabled people.
- Improved road safety and reduced traffic fumes.

There was also a desire for:

- Improved primary care facilities and out-of-hours GP services.
- Improved transport to health facilities and better parking at hospitals.
- Better access to mental health and counselling services.

Reducing poverty and social isolation were seen as key to tackling disadvantage.

45.9% of all people and 52.6% of young people (up to 24 years) also considered having an appropriate range of housing to meet local needs as very important. People were concerned about:

- Access to affordable accommodation to rent or buy.
- Improving conditions of houses of multiple occupation.
- Homes and support designed to enable independent living for all age groups.
- Availability of affordable and supportive housing options, especially for older people.
- Ensuring new developments have appropriate infrastructure as well as a range of housing and employment opportunities to support the new communities.
- Encouraging the development of eco-friendly built housing as well as fuel-efficient homes.

Examples of North Somerset Partnership achievements so far

- Tackling Health Inequalities Action Plan developed and being implemented.
- Go 4 Life – Healthy and Active Lifestyles Strategy launched in July 2007.
- 50% of North Somerset schools achieved Healthy Schools Status by 2006.
- 27.8% reduction in teenage pregnancies since 1998 – 10th highest reduction in UK.
- 100% of secondary schools take part in the drug peer educators project, with approximately one hundred young people being provided with multi-agency training each year.
- Lottery bids submitted to improve access to learning and social activities for older people. Also for improved access to employment and learning opportunities for people with learning disabilities.
- Positive development of joint-working between health and social care such as integrated services for learning disability and mental health and locality services for children.
- 30% reduction in homelessness through mediation, advice and other preventative actions.
- Secured over £8m funding for affordable homes in 2006/7/8 from the Government's National Affordable Housing Programme.
- 428 homes occupied by vulnerable people improved to the Decent Homes Standard and approximately 3000 people enabled to live independently through partnership housing support services.
- Delivered 204 housing adaptations to help older or disabled people remain independent.
- Energy efficiency of social housing has been improved, reducing fuel poverty in low income households.



What we will do to achieve our shared priority

<p>Aim: Reduce the number of early deaths from heart disease, cancer, stroke, chronic liver disease and preventable accidents.</p>	<p>Improvements we want to see include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Awareness raised about the significance of early detection of health problems particularly with people over 50 years old. ● Full involvement in the 'Go 4 Life' Campaign to encourage physical activity and healthy eating. ● Lifestyle changes made to improve health such as reducing alcohol misuse and smoking. ● Road safety for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists improved. ● Better access to quality green spaces to encourage people to become more active and to take regular exercise.
<p>Aim: Improve mental health promotion and treatment services for people with mental health problems.</p>	<p>Improvements we want to see include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Good mental health and reduction in the negative impact of social isolation across the District. ● Anti-bullying policies in schools and colleges developed and fully implemented. ● Parents and carers supported. ● Primary Mental Health Service with improved access for children, young people and adults experiencing emotional or mental health problems developed. ● Increased integrated and joint working between relevant agencies.
<p>Aim: Full access to appropriate high quality health and community services and facilities.</p>	<p>Improvements we want to see include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Better access to health and community services within our rural and urban communities. ● Appropriate services and facilities developed to respond to the needs of people within future developments, with a particular emphasis on built environments that promote healthy lifestyles. ● Full response to fluctuations in pressures on services at particular times, for example during seasonal population increases. ● Well promoted sustainable and accessible transport options.

Aim:

Encourage children and young people to lead healthier lives.

“ Encourage young people to walk to school improving health ”

Weston resident.

Improvements we want to see include:

- Reduction in childhood obesity by increasing activity levels and promoting healthy eating.
- Provision of good quality play opportunities.
- More advice and support about alcohol and drug misuse and smoking.
- Reduced teenage conceptions by providing appropriate accessible sexual health advice.
- Better access to local services in communities and schools.



Aim:

Meet the health and social needs of older people.

“ More social activities/lunch clubs for elderly people that can be accessed without the need for referral. Befriending and shopping services would solve many problems that presently escalate to higher needs ”

Weston resident.

Improvements we want to see include:

- Accessible services that promote independent living.
- Further development of urban and rural social networks and activities to reduce social isolation and improve mental health.
- Appropriate support for carers of older people.

Aim:

Ensure older people and vulnerable groups have access to a range of housing and housing related services.

Improvements we want to see include:

- Quality information and advice about housing options provided.
- Provision of services and support to deliver decent, affordable, accessible, warm and safe homes leading to improved independence.
- Increased housing choice and options.
- A range of housing alternatives to residential care for older people unable to remain in their own homes.



Improving health and wellbeing – tackling disadvantage and promoting equality of opportunity

Aim:

Increase life expectancy in areas where health outcomes are the poorest.

“ Improving health & wellbeing can be done not only through medical services but through reducing poverty and better education ”

Congresbury resident.

Improvements we want to see include:

- Targeted resources so that those with most need receive most help and care.
- Innovative ways of delivering services to counter the entrenched inequalities in health experienced by those living in areas of disadvantage.
- Continued improvement of early years support in disadvantaged areas.
- Positive life style choices made through supportive programmes.

Aim:

Develop preventative, appropriate, accessible services for people who are at higher risk of poor health.

Improvements we want to see include:

- Service development reflects and responds to the specific health needs of:
 - children, young people and adults who experience mental and emotional health difficulties
 - people with drug and alcohol related health problems
 - children, young people and adults with learning disabilities
 - children, young people and adults with physical and/or sensory impairments
 - children, young people and adults from black and minority ethnic communities.
- Carers health improved, and greater awareness of health issues affecting carers.

<p>Aim: Improve the life chances of vulnerable children, including looked after children and young people.</p>	<p>Improvements we want to see include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improved continuity of care for looked after children in safe and secure environments. ● Provision of necessary support to help vulnerable children/young people achieve in school. ● Supporting families, mothers and children to ensure the best possible start in life is integrated fully within plans to develop children’s centres. ● Activities and opportunities for vulnerable children/young people outside of school. ● Access to housing and support services for young people leaving care.
<p>Aim: Better access to quality homes.</p>	<p>Improvements we want to see include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● More vulnerable people, including young people leaving care, living in decent homes across all tenures. ● Better housing options for families. ● Reduced numbers of people in fuel poverty. ● Appropriate and timely housing adaptations to meet people’s access needs. ● Work with private landlords to improve housing standards. ● Accreditation schemes for services that provide supported housing for people in drug rehabilitation.
<p>Aim: Increase supply and access to affordable housing.</p> <p>“ There needs to be more affordable and low cost housing so that future generations can afford a property ” Nailsea resident.</p>	<p>Improvements we want to see include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maximised investment to improve supply. ● Innovation and delivery of affordable homes without the need for public subsidy. ● Work with housing associations, private sector developers, businesses and land owners for more opportunities for affordable housing. ● New housing developments to provide more affordable housing in development plans. ● Re-use empty properties and maximise investment to improve supply and increase rural house building.

<p>Aim: Prevent and tackle homelessness.</p>	<p>Improvements we want to see include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop prevention work with people at risk of becoming homeless. ● Increase the number of people moving on into settled accommodation from temporary provision. ● Improved access to information and advice.
<p>Aim: Adequate housing and appropriate health care is available for our Black, Minority Ethnic, Gypsy and Traveller communities.</p>	<p>Improvements we want to see include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consult with service users appropriately. ● Identify perceived or real barriers that may stop people from accessing services and facilities. ● Take language and cultural issues into account when delivering services. ● Raise awareness of housing, care and support services available, through improved and appropriate communication.

Strategies and plans that will support our progress

National

- Our health, our care, our say 2006
- Every Child Matters 2003
- Choosing Health 2004
- A prospectus for arts and health 2007

Regional/Sub-regional

- Draft Regional Spatial Strategy 2006
- Regional Housing Strategy 2006 – 2015
- Learning & Skills Council South West Region Statement of Priorities 2007/08
- West of England Community Learning Strategy 2007/08
- West of England Skills for Life Strategy 2007/08
- Joint Local Transport Plan 2006

Local

- Local Area Agreement 2007-2010
- Single Plan for Children & Young People 2006-2009
- Supporting People Five-Year Strategy 2005-2010
- Tackling Health Inequalities Action Plan 2006
- Go 4 Life – Healthy & Active Lifestyles Strategy 2007
- Draft Older People's Strategy
- Older People's Housing Strategy 2007-2010
- Homelessness Strategy 2003-2006
- Local Development Framework 2006-2026
- North Somerset Housing Strategy 2004-2009
- Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2005/06 – 2008/09
- Community Learning Plan 2007/08



How you can support our work programme

- Take some regular exercise. Your local leisure centre will have activities for all ages. Why not find out what's on offer? Remember young people with a leisure key can get discounts on some activities.
- To find out the benefits of giving up smoking. Contact 'Support to Stop' on 01275 546 744.
- Eat healthily - find out about healthy food for you and your family. Contact Taste of North Somerset on 01275 546 742 or view www.eatwell.gov.uk
- Are you caring for someone? Do you need advice, support or practical help? Visit www.nscrossroads.org.uk for further information.
- Take a look at your local library – see what facilities and information they now offer.
- Support or get involved in local events.
- 50+? Why not contact the local U3A (University of the 3rd Age) Bristol/Woodspring Tel: 01275 791 576 or Weston-super-Mare Tel: 01934 622 255.
- Tenant, landlord or home owner? For housing advice contact the North Somerset Council Housing Advice Team, Tel: 01934 634 790.

Developing a prosperous economy and enterprising community

Why this is a priority

- North Somerset is a relatively prosperous area with a well-qualified workforce and lower than average unemployment at 2%, nationally it is 5.1%.
- Since 2000, the number of VAT registered businesses in North Somerset has increased by 9.5% to 6,140 with the number of financial services, real estate, renting and business services increasing⁶¹.
- With a growing population of young people, we have a significant potential future workforce.
- Young people in North Somerset achieve above average results in GCSEs (though there is an achievement gap between those in Weston-super-Mare and the other parts of the district).
- There is a lack of appropriate high-level employment opportunities locally. Approximately 36% of residents out-commute for work each day causing significant congestion and pollution in some parts of the district.
- Some neighbourhoods, particularly in Weston-super-Mare, have more residents with low level or no qualifications than regional and national averages.
- There are a variety of social enterprises serving the population of North Somerset with overall income and expenditure levels that may be as much as around £400million.
- Employment opportunities will increase, particularly in Clevedon, Portishead and Weston-super-Mare over the next 10 years with new development; we need to ensure that local people can access these opportunities.



What our communities told us

Local people have told us their concerns and ideas to develop a prosperous economy and enterprising community. Key issues that our communities wanted us to address were to:

- Create a strong identity and encourage, support and market local products, for example, local food and drink, and tourism.
- Encourage employment-led regeneration especially in Weston-super-Mare.
- Improve and promote the retail offer in towns and villages.
- Support and encourage small business development.
- Maintain key services and the economic vitality of both rural and urban areas.
- Improve quality and access to employment and training opportunities including high quality schools.
- Improve access to training and employment through availability of childcare facilities and provision of facilities to meet the needs of disabled people.
- Improve access to retail services and facilities for disabled people.
- Look at opportunities to support community transport schemes (for example, more vehicles, off peak services for young people etc.)
- Develop accessible, affordable and efficient transport, including support for young people.
- Develop community and voluntary organisations to increase local investment as social enterprise.

Examples of North Somerset Partnership achievements so far

- The Greater Bristol Bus Network Major Transport Scheme bid (decision awaited from DFT at time of writing).
- 395 new businesses set up since 2004.
- Social enterprise and the wider voluntary sector has been mapped to show it brings investment of hundreds of millions of pounds into the area, and a new Social Enterprise Directory that helps local social enterprise access support has been published.
- New Government funds to tackle disadvantage in South Ward (Weston-super-Mare), and further new funds to focus on improving skills and access to jobs in Central Ward (Weston-super-Mare).
- To date the 'Ready for Work Programme' has helped 335 people back into work or training since 2004.
- Agreement of a common prospectus across secondary schools and other providers to widen learning opportunities for young people.
- Development of post-16 learning opportunities through the provision of degree courses on a new college learning centre in Weston-super-Mare and sixth-form teaching on school sites.
- A new system to help businesses looking to relocate or expand into new premises is now available online through Invest West for the West of England.

What we will do to achieve our shared priority

<p>Aim: Grow and develop business and enterprise.</p>	<p>Improvements we want to see include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Business investment and increased supply of land and appropriately sized premises/business units and better industrial estates with improved security and environmental enhancement.● Local purchasing of products and services and local supply chains in all organisations and local communities.● Support the rural farming economy to adapt and flourish in a changing market.● More new business and social enterprise start-ups and development and retention of existing small and medium-sized businesses by encouraging enterprise and innovation.● Encourage sustainable tourism in towns and rural areas, including maximising the impact and range of quality local attractions with improved visitor experience increasing visitor spend.● Advantage taken of opportunities from new technologies, especially in the environmental technology sector.
<p>Aim: Development of the infrastructure needed to support sustainable economic growth.</p> <p>“ Have a brave INTEGRATED (i.e. joined-up) scheme which links every part of the town and outlying areas ” Portishead resident.</p>	<p>Improvements we want to see include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Integrated sustainable improvements in the transport infrastructure between North Somerset’s urban and rural communities and its links to the South West.● Land allocations and development for new communities that bring opportunities for sustainable economic development.● More affordable housing options and balanced development to meet peoples needs in existing and new communities.● New facilities and quality learning opportunities across all phases of education including further and higher education, with appropriate residential facilities for students.● Programmes that combine increased transport investment with measures to manage travel demand to support sustainable growth.

Aim:

Develop the knowledge economy to support efficiency, competitiveness and innovation.

Improvements**we want to see include:**

- Investment and development in the creative and knowledge based services and production.
- Cluster and link knowledge based businesses.
- Provision of land and well equipped property attractive to current and future business needs.

Aim:

Develop learning and skills within communities and business sectors.

“ Small business given more help with funding to train young people in different trades ”

Banwell resident.

Improvements we want to see include:

- Improve skills in the workforce and staff development in existing employers and key growth sectors.
- Creating a high quality adaptable skills base.
- Better access to vocational training opportunities from age 14 and to higher education.
- Raised standards of learning achievement for young people and adults.
- Ensure that young people are encouraged to achieve their full potential through support initiatives.
- Enterprise in schools and further education establishments promoted, with strong links to employers.
- Access to free information and advice about all forms of learning and those educational opportunities to be available to individuals at all ages.
- Learning and skills programmes to respond to sustainable development challenges.



Aim:

Regenerate main town centres as locations for retail, civic and cultural activity with employment and housing.

“ Shopping area upgraded to look more welcoming - plants, trees etc, building more fitting to village ”

Pill resident.

Improvements we want to see include:

- New employment and business development opportunities provided to improve the balance between homes and jobs.
- Town centre economy strengthened through development of the night time economy and an expansion of retail activity and leisure opportunities.
- Key sites within the towns regenerated.
- Town centre management arrangements between public and private sectors in all main towns.

Aim:

Climate Change issues addressed with businesses and environmental agencies.

“ I believe that companies should be made to recycle ”

Clevedon resident.

Improvements we want to see include:

- Initiatives to reduce the carbon footprint of businesses and help tackle and adapt to climate change undertaken.
- Reduced energy and other resource usage, better travel planning, and better waste management and effective environmental management systems.
- Investment in flood defences as the area adapts to the impact of climate change.
- Uptake and/or development of new technologies to help combat climate change (new business opportunities).
- Continue to promote and encourage tourism businesses to sign up for the Green Tourism Business Scheme.



Developing a prosperous economy and enterprising community – tackling disadvantage and promoting equality of opportunity



<p>Aim: Eradicate economic exclusion.</p>	<p>Improvements we want to see include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Raise the standard of educational achievement of those not achieving at the same level as their peers. ● Increase the number of young people staying in Education, Employment or Training. ● Support neighbourhood regeneration programmes that bring together public agencies, local businesses and local people to seek solutions that respond to local needs. ● Better access to affordable community banking/finance initiatives. ● Business start-up programmes to encourage new business in less prosperous areas of the district.
<p>Aim: Full access to learning, training and employment.</p> <p>“ I have problems finding affordable childcare ” Banwell resident.</p> <p>“ Reduce/subsidise fares, more frequent services going to key places e.g. colleges, library, and shopping centres ” North Somerset resident.</p>	<p>Improvements we want to see include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social enterprise to encourage a range of pathways to work in disadvantaged areas. ● Encourage employers to improve access to employment opportunities for people from the local area, particularly in areas of disadvantage. ● Accessible quality childcare and transport in rural and less prosperous urban areas. ● Looked after children and young people supported in their education and employment needs. ● Basic skills development for all adults who need it. ● Better skills and realised potential among long-term unemployed people.

Strategies and plans that will support our progress

National

- Framework for Excellence 2007
- Tomorrow's Tourism Today 2004
- Leitch Skills Review 2006
- Sub-National Economic Development & Regeneration Review 2007
- Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change 2006

Regional/Sub-regional

- Regional Economic Strategy for South West England 2006-2015
- South West England Strategy for Enterprise
- West of England Skills for Life Strategy 2007-08
- West of England Community Learning Strategy 2007-08
- West of England Vision 2026
- Towards 2015
- Tourism in Somerset 2006-2010

Local

- Local Area Agreement 2007-2010
- Local Development Framework 2006-2026
- North Somerset Economic Development & Regeneration Strategy 2006-2016
- Single Plan for Children & Young People 2006-2009
- Learning Service provider plans including North Somerset 14-19 Strategy 2004-2007
- Blue Skies Tourism Strategy 2001
- Weston Area Action Plan 2007
- Affordable Housing Plan 2006-2009

How you can support our work programme

- Support the local economy by buying local products and shopping locally, for example in local centres and Farmers Markets.
- For business advice, information, training and networking opportunities contact North Somerset Enterprise Agency on 01934 418 118.
- Enrol on a leisure or educational course at Weston College. Tel: 01934 411 411.
- Join the Weston and Area Credit Union. Tel: 01934 429 573.
- Gain experience by volunteering with a local group - Contact Voluntary Action North Somerset on 01934 410 910.
- Use public transport, cycle, or walk to reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

Living within environmental limits

Why this is a priority

- Climate change is likely to have an increasingly significant impact on the quality of life in North Somerset. With increasing extremes in weather, the risk of flooding is likely to increase for both inland and coastal communities
- Main land-use issues will include minimising the impact on the natural environment, by ensuring any development is low carbon and contributes to the character and integrity of existing communities and landscapes.
- We will need to develop more sustainable transport patterns. Car ownership in North Somerset is currently above the national average, whilst walking and cycling rates are amongst the lowest in the South West.
- Significant future transport issues include the potential plans for a South Bristol Ring Road, the potential expansion of key strategic links and the need to tackle congestion hotspots such as Junctions 19 and 21 of the M5.
- Local people want high standards of street management and maintenance; this includes less litter and better maintenance of historic buildings.



What our communities told us

Local people were keen to ensure that environmental concerns were tackled. Key overarching issues included protecting the natural environment and addressing actions that have a negative impact on the environment. Adapting to and restricting the impact of climate change was considered to be very important when planning for the future. A range of suggestions were given about how we could work together to address these issues. These included:

- Improving and maintaining clean public spaces.
- Access to the countryside and coast.
- Improved recycling services, both domestic and business.
- Encourage alternative/renewable energy sources.
- Protecting and maintaining open spaces.
- Encourage eco-building practices.
- Protecting our natural landscape and encouraging biodiversity.
- Managing and enhancing the built environment.
- Encouraging community involvement and promoting awareness of environmental issues.
- Promoting good farming practices and preserving traditions.
- Improving transport infrastructure and sustainable travel options.

Examples of North Somerset Partnership achievements so far

- 'Change I Thing' campaign successfully launched in July 2006 to encourage people to reduce their personal 'eco-footprint'.
- The successful development of the Eco Schools programme with 40% of local schools registered as taking part.
- 42% of our schools now have a travel plan.
- Implementing the Biodiversity Action Plan for North Somerset.
- Completion of eco-homes excellent units at Ashlands, Portishead – Knightstone HA and Persimmon Homes.
- Improvements have been made to green areas on social housing estates in our urban areas.



What we will do to achieve our shared priority

<p>Aim: Tackle climate change by reducing emissions of greenhouse gases.</p> <p>“ Not enough done to encourage renewable energy ” Banwell resident.</p>	<p>Improvements we want to see include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Planning policies to ensure new developments are low carbon. ● Raised awareness about the causes of climate change and local people, organisations, schools, businesses and institutions reducing their ‘carbon foot print’. ● Improve the energy efficiency of North Somerset’s existing building stock across all tenures. ● Development and use of renewable energy sources, especially through the development of community or domestic scale ‘micro generation’ schemes, encouraged where appropriate.
<p>Aim: Assist service providers, businesses, and communities to adapt to the effects of unavoidable climate change and to increasing energy costs.</p> <p>“ Everyone to be more aware of the environmental and social implications of their activities and taking steps to minimise unwanted effects ” Backwell resident.</p>	<p>Improvements we want to see include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Likely effects of climate change are taken into account in all policies and services and in the design of all new developments. ● Support the local economy to take full advantage of new technologies and other business opportunities, and by helping businesses to adapt to rising energy costs and effects of changing climate. ● Limit the more damaging effects of climate change.
<p>Aim: Conserve resources and reduce waste.</p> <p>“ We need wider environmental measures to reduce consumption and refuse ” Long Ashton resident.</p>	<p>Improvements we want to see include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Planning policies to promote water conservation measures developed/used. ● Environmentally responsible behaviour amongst local people, organisations, schools, businesses and major institutions (for example by promoting environmental management systems and sustainable procurement practices). ● Recycling services and markets for recycled materials encouraged. ● Reduction in the amounts of waste produced across all sectors, with all new developments maximising on-site recycling of materials.

<p>Aim: Maintain and improve environmental quality in urban areas.</p> <p>“ Instead of building more just improve on the buildings we have already ” Young person, Sandford.</p>	<p>Improvements we want to see include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enhanced local environmental quality in both new and existing developments. For example, by ensuring that biodiversity, green infrastructure and sustainable travel schemes are a requirement of all regeneration and development plans. ● Promotion of policies and practices that adhere to the principles of ‘place shaping’ which deliver well designed neighbourhoods that are sustainable, function well and enhance local distinctiveness. ● Reduced environmental crime such as fly-tipping. ● National standards for sustainable construction exceeded.
<p>Aim: Sustain and enhance North Somerset’s natural environment.</p> <p>“ Maintaining an attractive environment by keeping existing green spaces, and not developing important green spaces with building – either commercial or private ” Clevedon resident.</p>	<p>Improvements we want to see include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Planning policies used to protect and enhance the unique ecology of North Somerset. ● Existing habitats are adequately protected and opportunities to create new habitats in both urban and rural areas are taken to support biodiversity. ● Sustainable patterns of land use and management (for example by designing new developments in a sensitive way and adopting land management practices that protect biodiversity).
<p>Aim: Encourage more sustainable patterns of travel and tackle road congestion.</p> <p>“ What about environmental issues, including transport and ensuring there are efficient bus services so people are encouraged to leave their cars at home and more cycling networks? ” Long Ashton resident.</p>	<p>Improvements we want to see include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduce the need to travel through a range of options including use of innovative approaches and joined up development planning processes. ● Realistic alternatives to travel by car by improving public transport networks and encouraging walking and cycling. ● Work with businesses and other organisations to promote sustainable transport options that respond to work/school travel patterns (for example by adopting Green Travel Plans). ● Work with sub-regional and regional partners to encourage improvements across all transport networks.

Living within environmental limits – tackling disadvantage and promoting equality of opportunity



<p>Aim: Develop understanding and action on environmental inequalities in North Somerset.</p>	<p>Improvements we want to see include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Capacity and skills of communities experiencing exclusion, pollution and environmental crime developed so their voices are heard. ● Understanding of how poor environments contribute to poor health through joint work between health and environment organisations. ● Reduced number of people living in fuel poverty; better energy efficiency of our existing housing stock across all tenures.
<p>Aim: Ensure access to open spaces and a quality environment for all.</p>	<p>Improvements we want to see include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Better access to informal recreation activity in the countryside and open spaces, including disabled people's access. ● Better green infrastructure (including allotments) in urban and rural areas to encourage healthy and active lifestyles and enhance biodiversity.

Strategies and plans that will support our progress

National

- Securing the Future: UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy 2005
- Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (Dec 2006)
- Sustainable Communities Strategy: Building for the Future 2007
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

Regional/Sub-regional

- South West Biodiversity Action Plan 1997
- Avon Biodiversity Action Plan 2004
- South West Regional Sustainable Development Framework 2001
- Draft Regional Spatial Strategy 2006
- Our Environment: Our Future Regional Strategy for the South West's Environment 2004-2014
- Joint Local Transport Plan 2006/07 – 2010/11

Local

- Local Area Agreement 2007-2010
- Local Development Framework 2006-2026
- Action for Nature – North Somerset Biodiversity Action Plan 2005
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2005
- Waste Development Framework 2005-2008
- Mendip Hills AONB Plan
- Forest of Avon Plan
- North Somerset Landscape Character Assessment

How you can support our work programme

- Find out more about recycling opportunities in North Somerset. Tel: 01275 888 802.
- Don't forget the fortnightly green box collection will collect paper, glass, steel and aluminium cans, aluminium foil, textiles and shoes.
- Buy a composter. Tel: 01275 888 509.
- Encourage wildlife into your garden. Contact the North Somerset Wildlife Wardens on 01761 462 276.
- Reduce the amount of energy you use in your home. For advice, contact 01934 634 807.
- Report pollution and fly-tipping. Tel: 0800 807 060.
- Want to use your car less? Find out about car sharing, visit www.2carshare.com



Delivering our Sustainable Community Strategy

This Sustainable Community Strategy is the partnership's planning framework for improving quality of life and opportunities across the area. It brings together our shared priorities and key aims for the area, with illustrative examples of improvements we will consider and prioritise through the development of our delivery plans and following action. It will:

- Influence development of new strategies and plans for North Somerset.
- Reduce duplication of effort by bringing together key actions that contribute to our wellbeing.
- 'Add value' to existing and future work where appropriate.
- Inform other plans at a sub-regional and regional level to enable North Somerset priorities to be recognised and prioritised accordingly.

Through the implementation of our strategy, we will demonstrate how our strategic aims translate into practical action to make a real and lasting difference to people living in, working in and visiting our area.

The success of the North Somerset Partnership in improving the quality of life of local people will be monitored against a number of national indicators. This will also help us to compare our achievements with those of other areas of the country. Delivery Partnerships will develop their action plans to deliver the aims within this document. Where the aims within this strategy are not covered by national indicators, local indicators will be developed to measure quality of life across the area. These will be developed as part of this strategy's implementation plan.

Key issues identified in the Sustainable Community Strategy will be included in the Local Area Agreement (LAA) which is a key delivery mechanism of the Sustainable Community Strategy, based around the shared priorities. Clear governance structures exist for the development of the LAA with the NSP Board maintaining overall responsibility. A sub-group of the NSP Board provides day-to-day direction and decision making to ensure the LAA contributes to the long-term strategic vision set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

The strategy will be revised and updated as information becomes available and will reflect any new priorities identified through local research and surveys including those identified by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to be undertaken by the local authority and the Primary Care Trust.

The North Somerset Partnership (NSP)

Delivery Structure

NSP Board

The Board membership includes a range of public, private, community and voluntary organisations. It will oversee the work described in this strategy and has ultimate responsibility for it, through reviewing and evaluating progress. The partnership will receive quarterly updates on actions and will consider successes and any short falls in progress to determine how these can be addressed together.

NSP Delivery Partnerships and Forums

The Board works with thematic delivery partnerships/forums with membership also drawn from across sectors. This gives a broad range of views to inform and influence the direction of our work and oversee its delivery.

Each delivery partnership works to prioritise, plan and deliver key work that supports their specific theme. The delivery partnerships work together to achieve synergy between work areas when delivering cross-cutting shared objectives. Where the aims and improvements agreed by the NSP are not already part of an existing delivery plan, these will be reviewed and prioritised by the relevant delivery partnership and new actions will be determined and agreed. Delivery partnership progress is monitored quarterly.

NSP Stakeholders and North Somerset Communities

The NSP holds a stakeholder event every year to discuss progress and consider future work. This event is open to all organisations and community representatives with an interest in NSP work, and provides a wider opportunity to link complementary work programmes and influence the direction of this strategy.

Communities across the area contribute to our work programme in a range of ways, through community led activities such as parish/town planning or their contributions to public and voluntary and community services, projects and initiatives. Local people have helped to shape this work programme and will continue to do so through consultation and engagement during its implementation.

NSP in the future

In order to be effective, the NSP must review its internal processes, functions and structures at regular intervals. When reviewing the partnership, we will take account of significant changes in government policy and priorities, regional and sub-regional governance and changes to the structures and resources of our own partners. The diagram in Appendix A describes the NSP delivery structure.

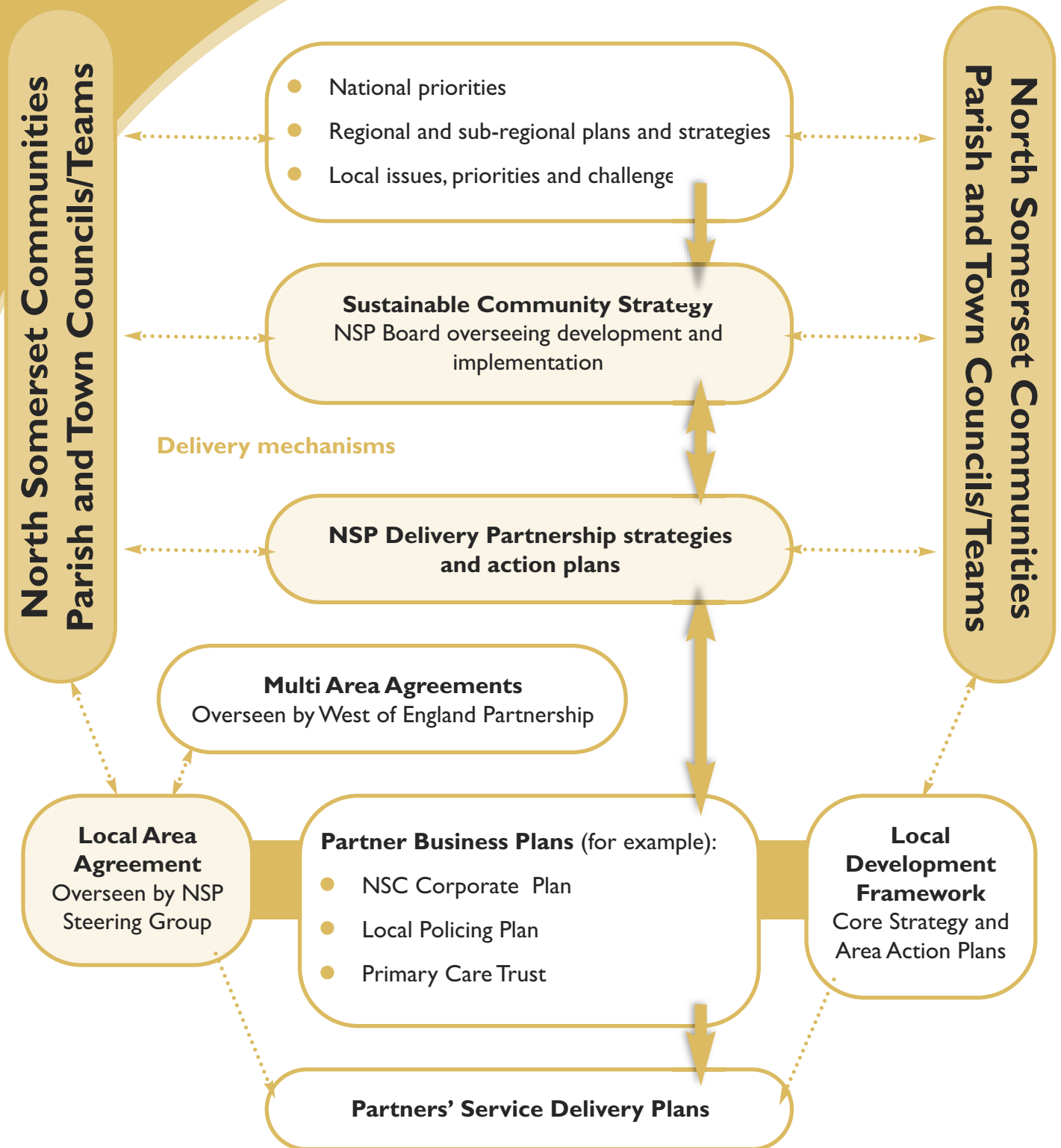
How we will keep people informed of our progress

The NSP will produce an annual report to update on progress, which will be circulated widely through our stakeholder bulletin network and beyond. This will set out our achievements and future targets. Key information on current work programmes will be regularly updated on our website www.northsomersetpartnership.org.uk. Additionally, there will be an opportunity to discuss progress and input into the work programme through attendance at the annual NSP Stakeholder Event.

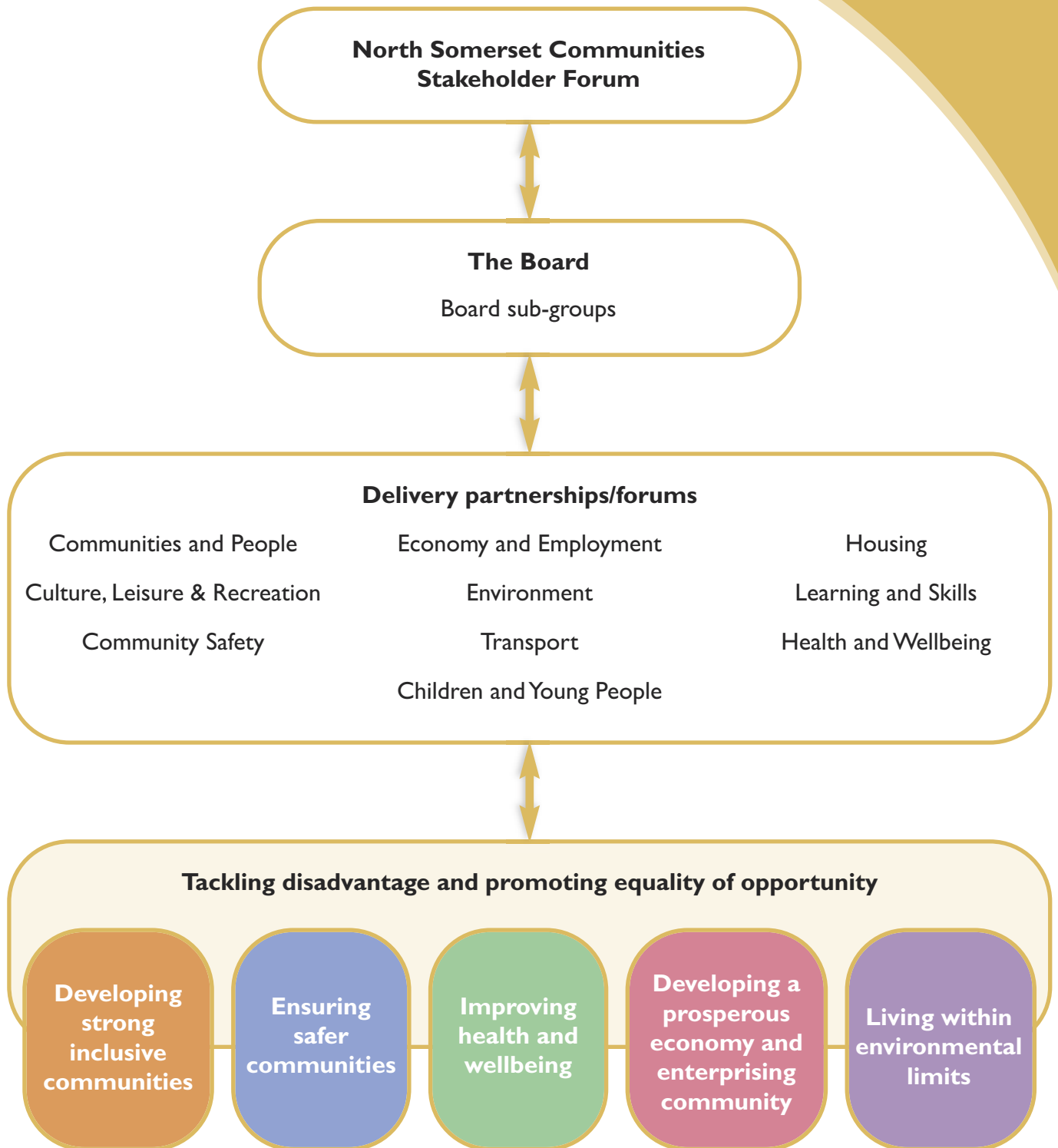
Keeping our work up to date

This strategy will evolve as all parts of our partnership continue to influence and inform its direction. To ensure that it reflects any significant future changes in local circumstances, the strategy will be reviewed and elements refreshed as appropriate every three years.

Appendix A The North Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy Delivery Structure



Appendix B The North Somerset Partnership Structure



Appendix C Sustainable Community Strategy consultation overview

To inform and help shape this strategy, a wide-ranging public consultation and engagement programme was carried out from May 2006 to November 2006.

The programme was developed following a review of a range of consultations that had been carried out by North Somerset Council and its partners over the previous 18 months. The review, which used information sought from service users, communities (parish plans) and the general public, identified gaps in information from certain geographical areas. A specific need to consult with young people about their aspirations for the future of North Somerset was also identified.

Involvement in the Consultation and Engagement Programme

More than 1,100 people got involved in the consultation programme, providing information to the NSP on community issues across North Somerset. Of those involved, 356 were young people.

Over 5,500 comments were collected from across the district. Feedback from participants demonstrated that many of the people who took part were residents who would not traditionally come forward to engage in more formal consultation exercises.

Methods used for engaging people

The consultation programme used a range of methods, with an emphasis on making the process fun and relatively quick and easy for people to put their views across. All activities were planned to enable all members of the community to engage across the 18 locations where activities took place. A range of methods and targeted advertising was undertaken to ensure an inclusive approach.

During the consultation people were asked what they liked, did not like or would like to change about where they lived. The following methods were used:

- Diary room film project with young people
- Audio interviews with young people
- Schools art competition – The winners of this competition were three boys from Larch Centre Pupil Referral Unit
- Community snapshot photos and comments of key issues. Many of the photos taken have been used to illustrate this strategy
- Flagging up key issues on large scale maps
- Plant your ideas – thematic pots
- Questionnaires at events and online



- Interactive displays for young people's input during Local Democracy Week and the general public in local libraries and information points
- Sustainability Wheel identifying key local sustainability issues
- Stakeholder event – interactive activities considering views and gaps.

Initial analysis of quantitative and qualitative data collected

The majority of data collated is of a qualitative nature and has been analysed on a thematic basis.

Not all participants provided information on equalities issues such as sharing personal information about disabilities or ethnicity.

How the information gathered was used

The primary focus of the consultation programme was to encourage people to influence and help shape the new Sustainable Community Strategy and to promote an understanding about the work of the North Somerset Partnership. The information collected has been used to complement existing base line data and service area consultations that have been undertaken over the last 18 months by North Somerset Council and its partners. The outcomes of this work have fed into NSP work programmes by:

- Helping to shape the Sustainable Community Strategy
- Assisting Delivery Partnerships to develop action plans to support the implementation of the Sustainable Community Strategy
- Providing evidence to support the development of the LAA and the associated action plans
- Supporting other initiatives such as the North Somerset Play Strategy Big Lottery Bid, North Somerset Older People's Strategy, Parish Planning, Nailsea School funding application, and development of the 'Gateway Project' in Pill, Yatton, Locking Castle and Nailsea.

Sharing the information with stakeholders

At the NSP Annual Event in November 2006 stakeholders were invited to comment on the outcomes of the consultation process. They considered the priority status of issues and added further information and identified gaps where appropriate.

Feeding back to communities

Key messages from the programme have been fed back to members of the public using existing resources such as the NSC and NSP web site, NSP Stakeholder Bulletin and North Somerset Life. The diary room film has been shown at a range of Council and partner meetings. Copies have been requested by a range of voluntary organisations working with young people across the area as a training resource or to inform work being undertaken. It is also available for youth clubs to use if they wish.

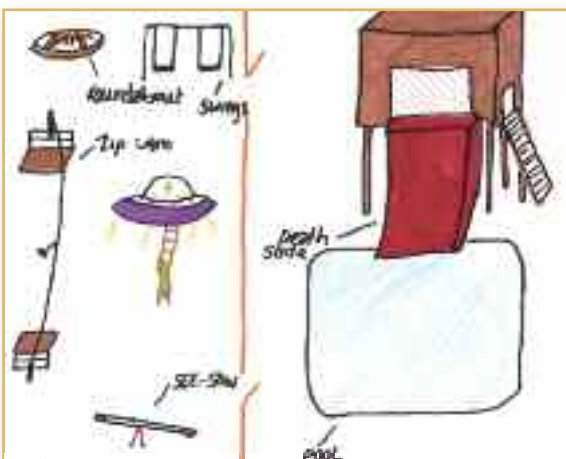
For more detailed information please contact:

northsomersetpartnership@n-somerset.gov.uk

The North Somerset Partnership asked children to draw or paint a picture on the theme of:

Aliens have landed near your home. They will grant you one wish. It must help people in your home town or village now and in the future. What would you wish for?

“ The aliens have landed and everyone thinks it’s cool they added to our play park and put in a pool. ”



Connor Baker (11yrs), Weston-super-Mare

“ Look through a smashed window, see the Bournville from old to new with lots of things for people to do. ”



Chris Thompson (12yrs), Weston-super-Mare

“ I wish for allotments for all the Pill community. Free organic fruit and vegetables for everyone for healthy eating. ”



Jonathan Boy (13yrs), Pill

Glossary

Affordable housing	Housing that is available to those whose housing needs are not met through the normal operation of the housing market by reason of cost. It may include housing for rent or sale, and its construction may or may not be publicly subsidised.
Biodiversity	Biodiversity is the variety of species, habitats and ecological systems that make up the living earth.
Climate change	‘A change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods’. (UNFCCC)
CO₂	Carbon dioxide – a greenhouse gas.
Compact	An agreement between voluntary and community sector and local public agencies to improve their relationship for mutual advantage.
Creative industries	Industries that have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation. These include the visual arts, design, performing arts and music.
Decent Homes Standard	A minimum standard for social housing by 2010 based on the state of repair, how modern the facilities and services are and level of energy efficiency.
Eco-building practices	Techniques to design and construct healthy and environmentally friendly buildings, using sustainable building methods and materials.
Eco-footprint	A tool to measure our ecological performance. It tracks how much individuals, organisations, cities, regions and nations or humanity as a whole consumes and compares this amount to the resources nature can provide (for example, land, water, energy, resources).
Environmental limits	Natural resource systems can provide a range of benefits to people, including a clean, regular water supply, production of food and fibre and protection of communities from hazards. External pressures, for example, pollution or over-use, may impact on these resource systems and reduce the level or quality of benefit they provide. Eventually the reduction in benefit may no longer be acceptable or tolerable – it has reached the ‘environmental limit’.

GOSW	Government Office of the South West.
Indices of deprivation	Measure levels of deprivation based on income, employment, health and disability, education, skills and training deprivation, barriers to housing and services, the living environment and crime.
Knowledge based industries	Include electrical and optical equipment, printing, publishing, media, chemicals and energy and aerospace industries.
Knowledge based services	These include telecommunications, information technology, research and development, finance, business, recreational and cultural services. People who work in these industries usually possess professional, managerial, scientific and technical skills and expertise.
Local Action Team	A group of local residents, police, business owners and council officers working together to achieve a reduction in crime/anti-social behaviour within their particular area.
Local Area Agreement (LAA)	A three-year agreement between central government and a local area (represented by the local authority and other partners through the local strategic partnership). It is designed to help local partner organisations deliver particular priorities as set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy.
Local Development Framework/Core Strategy	This is a set of planning policy documents to guide development within an area. The Core Strategy is a key component of delivering the Sustainable Community Strategy by setting out its spatial aspects and providing a long-term spatial vision.
Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)	An overarching cross-sector partnership with representatives from public, private, voluntary and community organisations. The purpose of an LSP is to develop and implement a Sustainable Community Strategy to improve quality of life for residents in the area.
Microgeneration	Production of heat and/or electricity on a small-scale from a low carbon source e.g. solar panels, wind turbines.
Performance Indicators	Measures by which we can monitor our progress.
Performance management framework	The system by which we set out what we want to deliver and then review whether we are doing so.
Private sector	Individual companies, Chambers of Commerce, industrial associations and other organisations representing business interests.

PSAI	Public Service Agreement – an agreement between North Somerset Council and central government to deliver an improvement in services.
Public sector	Local authorities, regional authorities, central government, the police, health authorities and other statutory authorities.
Regeneration	Developing communities in areas of disadvantage and interest by providing additional support to increase opportunities for all.
Regional Spatial Strategy	A strategy to provide guidance on how the region will develop over the next 15-20 years. Other regional and local plans, strategies and programmes are prepared in conformity with it.
Social enterprises	A business trading for a social purpose. Any surpluses are reinvested into the community or into service developments.
Spatial planning	Brings together plans for housing, planning, environmental protection, economic development, agriculture, transport and waste for an area.
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest.
Sustainable Development	Development that meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
SWRDA	South West Regional Development Agency.
Voluntary and community sector	Made up of local informal groups of people from communities of place or interest and working together to achieve a common aim, or more formal organisations managed by a management committee made up of volunteers possibly employing professional staff, with other resources.
West of England sub-region	The area that used to be known as Avon, comprising of the Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City Council, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire local authority areas.
Weston Area Development Framework	A 20-year planning framework to provide a sustainable balance of housing and good quality employment for residents with the aim of reducing the need to travel.

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