



# Authority Monitoring Report



2023



## **Foreword**

The North Somerset Council Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) is published each year. This AMR monitors the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

The primary purpose of the AMR is to report on the performance of the planning policies and the progress of emerging policy documents and North Somerset Council remains committed to preparing and publishing a monitoring report in this format each year.

Further copies of this document and those from previous years are available on our website at [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/planningpolicy](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/planningpolicy)

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## **Introduction**

The production of an Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) is a statutory requirement.

The purpose of this report is to:

- Show how North Somerset's emerging development plan documents are progressing;
- Show how well the policies in the adopted development plan documents are performing; and
- Where policies are not being implemented, explain why and set out what steps are being taken to ensure that the policy is implemented, or whether the policy should be amended or replaced.

Annual monitoring will also form the basis for review of any development plan documents that are adopted.

## Local Development Plan

The development plan for North Somerset currently comprises the following adopted documents and associated policies maps:

- North Somerset Core Strategy (2017)
- Sites and Policies Plan Part 1: Development Management Policies (2016)
- Sites and Policies Plan Part 2: Site Allocations Plan (2018)
- West of England Joint Waste Core Strategy (2011)
- Backwell Neighbourhood Development Plan (2015)
- Long Ashton Neighbourhood Development Plan (2015)
- Claverham Neighbourhood Development Plan (2018)
- Yatton Neighbourhood Development Plan (2019)
- Congresbury Neighbourhood Development Plan (2019)
- Abbots Leigh, Ham Green, Pill and Easton-in-Gordano Neighbourhood Plan (2021)
- Portishead Neighbourhood Plan (2023)

### Core Strategy

Following an examination conducted by an independent Inspector, the North Somerset Core Strategy was found sound and was formally adopted in April 2012. The adoption of the Core Strategy was subsequently challenged. The High Court Judgment found that Policy CS13: Scale of new housing was unlawful by reason of the Core Strategy Inspector's failure to give 'adequate or intelligible reasons for his conclusions on the housing requirement figure.

As a result Policy CS13, along with other policies that could require consequential changes if the housing requirement increased, were remitted back to the Planning Inspectorate for re-examination. The re-examination took place in two stages. Policy CS13 was re-adopted in 18 September 2015.

The second stage of the re-examination assessed whether any consequential changes were needed to the other remitted policies as a result of the increase to the housing requirement.

The Core Strategy remitted policies were adopted by the council on 10 January 2017. Further details are available at [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/corestrategy](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/corestrategy).

### Sites and Policies Plan Part 1: Development Management Policies

This development plan document contains the detailed development management planning policies to deliver the adopted Core Strategy. It covers a range of development issues including development in the Green Belt, major transport schemes, conservation areas, extensions to dwellings, development in the countryside, retailing, accommodation for older people, minerals planning and design.

The plan was adopted by full council on 19 July 2016. For further details please visit [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sitesandpolicies](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sitesandpolicies).

### *Sites and Policies Plan Part 2: Site Allocations Plan*

The Site Allocations Plan allocates housing and employment sites to deliver the Core Strategy requirements and defines the settlement boundaries for towns and villages identified in the Core Strategy in order to direct development to the most sustainable locations within North Somerset. The plan also contains allocations and policies that will protect the environment and provide additional facilities for leisure and social and community uses.

The plan was adopted on 10 April 2018. Further details are available at [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sitesandpolicies](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sitesandpolicies).

### *West of England Joint Waste Core Strategy*

The four unitary authorities in the West of England area worked together to produce this joint development plan document which was adopted in March 2011. The plan period runs until 2026. The strategy sets out the policies for the provision of waste management infrastructure across the sub region.

The document is available at <http://www.westofengland.org/waste-planning/adopted-joint-waste-core-strategy>.

### *Neighbourhood Development Plans*

Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) have now been made for seven areas within North Somerset;

- Abbots Leigh, Ham Green, Pill and Easton-in-Gordano
- Backwell
- Claverham
- Congresbury
- Long Ashton
- Portishead
- Yatton

As they are adopted, these form part of the local development plan.

Plans are being prepared for a number of other neighbourhood areas within the district.

The adopted plans and further information on those that are being prepared can be viewed at [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplans](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplans).

## Emerging plans

The Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the programme for the preparation of the Council's suite of planning policy documents. It sets out details of which documents are being produced, in what order, and when. The LDS is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it reflects the anticipated programme accurately. The last published version is dated August 2023 and can be viewed on our website at [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/localplan).

### Local Plan 2039

A new Local Plan is being prepared by the Council.

The Local Plan will allocate sufficient housing and employment and identify any associated necessary infrastructure. The Local Plan will also reassess, and update where appropriate, policies and designations for the protection of the natural and built environment and allocations for other land uses.

It will also contain a full suite of development management policies relating to the use of land and buildings on topics such as retail, employment, residential uses, design, flooding and drainage, waste and minerals, community facilities, transport and other infrastructure.

We published an initial pre-commencement document in March 2020 setting out the proposed scope, methodology and programme for the new Local Plan and consulted upon it from 10 March – 22 April 2020.

Following consideration of the responses to the pre-commencement document we moved on to the Challenges for the Future consultation. We published a document in July 2020 which set out what we thought were the challenges facing North Somerset over the next 15 years, and we consulted on a number of questions relating to these challenges between 22 July and 2 September 2020, seeking feedback on the issues that the Local Plan will need to address.

We received over 3,000 comments to the Challenges consultation from a wide range of people and organisations, including residents, businesses, house builders, service providers, local interest groups and town and parish council. These responses helped us shape the next part of the process – Choices for the Future.

In November 2020 we published the Choices for the Future document and opened a consultation on various approaches for where new housing and employment should be delivered over the next 15 years. We consulted upon this document between 2 November to 14 December 2020. The responses to these choices guided us towards a new spatial strategy which was endorsed by the Council's Executive committee in April 2021.

A draft Preferred Options Local Plan was agreed by the Executive committee in February 2022. The was published for consultation which closed on 29 April 2022. We received over 4,000 comments from over 700 respondents.

Work then progressed towards a Publication Version of the plan, however on 6 December 2022 there was an announcement of the Government's intention to make further changes to the planning system, which could include a revised method for calculating local housing requirements and protecting constrained areas such as Green Belts. North Somerset Council made the decision to await clarity on these critical issues before finalising a revised version of the Local Plan.

A Regulation 19 Publication Version of the plan was consulted upon from November 2023 – January 2024.

A revised Local Development Scheme will be published in due course, setting out a detailed revised timetable.

Full details are available at [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/localplan2039](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/localplan2039)

### Emerging Neighbourhood Development Plans

In addition to the made plans there are other Neighbourhood groups at various stages of plan production and other parishes within North Somerset have also expressed an interest in developing a Neighbourhood Plan. Full details are kept up to date at [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning).

### **Supplementary Planning Documents**

Whilst not formally part of the development plan, Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) can provide more detail on certain aspects of the development plan and clarify the interpretation of a policy or approach. Once adopted, SPDs are material considerations in the planning process.

Current adopted SPDs:

- Accessible Housing Needs (2018)
- Affordable Housing (2013)
- Biodiversity (2024)
- Biodiversity and Trees (2005)
- Creating Sustainable Buildings and Places (2021)
- Development Contributions (2016)
- Dolphin Square (2008)
- Employment Led Delivery in Weston-super-Mare (2014)
- Landscape Character Assessment (2018)
- North Somerset and Mendip Bats Special Area of Conservation (2018)
- Parking Standards (2021)
- Residential Design Guide part 1 (2013)
- Residential Design Guide part 2 (2014)



- Shopfront Design Guide (2019)
- Solar Photovoltaic Arrays (2013)
- Travel Plans (2023)
- Weston Villages (2012)
- Weston-super-Mare Town Centre Regeneration (2017)
- Wind turbines (2014)

All adopted and emerging supplementary planning documents are available to download from [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/spds](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/spds).

### **Community Infrastructure Levy**

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge which developers have to pay per square metre of development towards the cost of infrastructure to support development. The charge which is payable varies according to the size, type and location of the development. Our CIL charging schedule took effect on 18 January 2018. We are required to produce a separate monitoring report on CIL income and expenditure, along with details of any monies secured or spent in relation to S106 legal agreements. This is called an Infrastructure Funding Statement.

Full details of our CIL, including the Infrastructure Funding Statement and previous monitoring reports, are available at [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/CIL](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/CIL).

## **Authority Monitoring Report Topic areas**

The Authority Monitoring Report is presented on a topic basis, for ease of reference. The topics have been set out to mirror the themes in the Core Strategy, which are:

- Living within environmental limits
- Delivering strong and inclusive communities
- Delivering a prosperous economy
- Ensuring safe and healthy communities.

Since the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the withdrawal of Government guidance on monitoring it is now a matter for local authorities to decide what to include in their monitoring reports while ensuring that they are prepared in accordance with relevant legislation.

## Setting the scene in North Somerset

### Location map



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North Somerset covers an area of 39,080 hectares (151 square miles) and (according to the 2021 Census) has a population of 216,727 people. The district contains an international airport, a deep-sea west coast port, part of the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a large area of Green Belt stretching south-west from the edge of Bristol, as well as areas of low-lying levels and moors. The main settlements include the strategically significant town of Weston-super-Mare and the three smaller towns of Portishead, Clevedon and Nailsea. The M5 runs from north to south through the district and the mainline railway from Bristol to the South-West also crosses North Somerset stopping at five stations along its route.

## Demographic structure

### Population size

- The population of North Somerset is 216,728 as recorded by the 2021 Census, an increase of 1,154 on the 2020 mid-year population estimate.
- The age breakdown for North Somerset is:
  - Aged 0-15 years – 17.6%
  - Aged 16-64 years – 58.5%
  - Aged 65 years and over – 23.9%
- Currently the proportion of people in North Somerset aged 65 and over is 23.9%, compared to 22.4% in the South West and 18.5% in England and Wales.

Source: 2021 Census ONS

### Ethnicity

	White	Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	Other ethnic group
North Somerset	95.7%	1.7%	1.5%	0.5%	0.6%
South West	93.1%	2.0%	2.8%	1.2%	0.9%
England and Wales	81.7%	2.9%	9.3%	4.0%	2.1%

Source: 2021 Census, ONS

### Dwellings, household types and tenure

At the 2021 Census there were 94,648 households in North Somerset. The household composition is:

- 30.7% one-person household
- 64.5% single family household
- 4.8% other household type

Source: 2021 Census

## **Socio-cultural issues**

### **Crime rates and perception of safety**

- Over the past year 13,717 crimes were recorded in North Somerset. This was a 0.55% increase on the previous year.

Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime, March 2023

### **Unemployment rates**

- The unemployment rate of people aged 16-64 in North Somerset is 3.3% for the period of April 2022 to March 2023. This is an increase on the previous year's figure of 2.4%. The unemployment rate across the South West 2.8%.

Source: Annual Population Survey April 2022 to March 2023

### **Deprivation**

- Within the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019 the local authority district with a rank of 1 is the most deprived, and the area ranked 317 is the least deprived. North Somerset is ranked at 221.
- North Somerset has 5 LSOAs within the most deprived 5% in England, all within South and Central wards of Weston-super-Mare.
- There are 12 LSOAs within the least deprived 5% in England, these are spread across the district.

Source: Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019

## **LIVING WITHIN ENVIRONMENTAL LIMITS**

### **Climate Change**

#### **Climate Emergency**

North Somerset Council is committed to reducing carbon emissions and tackling climate change. The Core Strategy outlines principles that will guide development to be more sustainable.

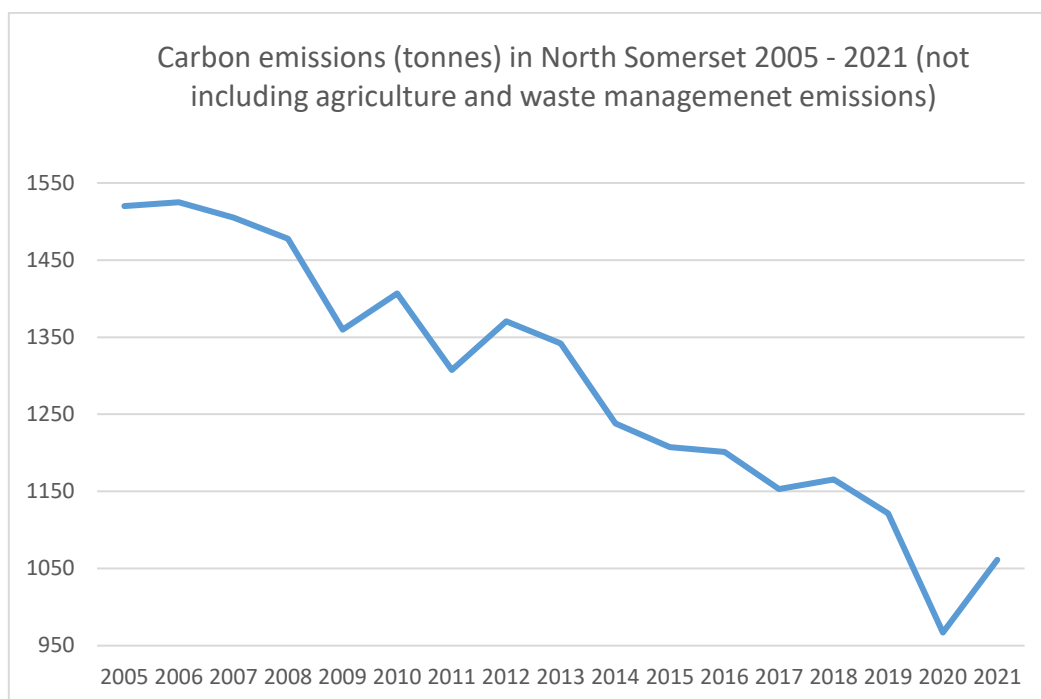
In February 2019 the council declared a Climate Emergency. A target to be carbon neutral by 2030 has been set for both the organisation and the authority area. Other ambitions include encouraging greener choices in local infrastructure, building and planning and an increase in green and wild spaces to encourage greater biodiversity and absorb carbon emissions. A Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan has been produced to assist in achieving these targets. A refreshed action plan was adopted in November 2022 following the successful completion of several projects outlined in the original plan. The report is available on our website at <https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/climatechange>.

#### **Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

The Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy provide data at local authority level estimating industrial, public sector, commercial, domestic, transport, LULUCF, agricultural and waste management greenhouse gas emissions in kilotons. Figures are available from 2005 to 2021 and show there has been a significant reduction in North Somerset.

Year	Industry Total	Commercial Total	Public Sector Total	Domestic Total	Transport Total	LULUCF Net Emissions	Agriculture Total	Waste Management Total	Grand Total	Per Capita Emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	Emissions per km <sup>2</sup> (kt CO <sub>2</sub> e)
<b>2005</b>	228.5	177.7	47.6	486.8	578.4	1.1	134.7	44.4	1,699.1	8.7	4.3
<b>2006</b>	227.5	191.0	47.6	491.1	567.9	-0.1	131.8	42.9	1,699.7	8.6	4.4
<b>2007</b>	217.0	183.1	44.8	472.8	588.1	-1.0	133.2	71.6	1,709.7	8.6	4.4
<b>2008</b>	204.6	179.9	42.9	472.2	580.2	-2.3	132.9	84.5	1,695.0	8.4	4.3
<b>2009</b>	187.5	151.8	36.3	430.4	557.0	-3.3	129.6	82.6	1,572.0	7.8	4.0
<b>2010</b>	205.8	160.7	38.8	459.4	545.5	-3.6	128.6	62.2	1,597.4	7.9	4.1
<b>2011</b>	186.5	151.3	36.6	403.0	534.5	-4.5	124.3	41.4	1,473.0	7.3	3.8
<b>2012</b>	198.7	162.7	38.6	437.1	538.2	-4.5	126.7	40.8	1,538.2	7.5	3.9
<b>2013</b>	200.4	150.1	36.5	425.0	535.7	-5.8	122.3	40.5	1,504.5	7.3	3.9
<b>2014</b>	183.3	129.0	31.7	358.3	541.9	-5.8	122.2	36.6	1,397.2	6.7	3.6
<b>2015</b>	179.3	113.9	27.3	347.0	547.0	-6.9	123.2	35.9	1,366.6	6.5	3.5
<b>2016</b>	174.2	100.3	24.4	332.8	575.5	-6.1	118.4	29.9	1,349.4	6.3	3.5

Year	Industry Total	Commercial Total	Public Sector Total	Domestic Total	Transport Total	LULUCF Net Emissions	Agriculture Total	Waste Management Total	Grand Total	Per Capita Emissions (tCO <sub>2e</sub> )	Emissions per km <sup>2</sup> (kt CO <sub>2e</sub> )
<b>2017</b>	169.2	85.6	26.0	310.6	568.5	-7.0	121.3	39.0	1,313.3	6.1	3.4
<b>2018</b>	201.1	58.0	31.3	303.1	578.7	-6.9	118.8	39.8	1,324.0	6.2	3.4
<b>2019</b>	183.8	48.4	28.2	294.4	574.1	-7.3	116.3	43.6	1,281.5	5.9	3.3
<b>2020</b>	179.4	41.2	26.3	287.3	440.9	-8.0	111.4	44.1	1,122.6	5.2	2.9
<b>2021</b>	197.8	47.0	28.2	292.0	504.8	-8.2	110.6	40.0	1,212.2	5.6	3.1



The most significant reduction in carbon emissions has come from the commercial sector with a reduction of 73.5% since 2005.

## Sustainable design and construction

### Renewable energy

Large renewable energy and microgeneration schemes are supported by the council. Renewable electricity produced in North Somerset, as at the end of 2022, is detailed in the table below.

	Number of sites	Capacity (MW)	Generation (MWh)
Photovoltaic	9,562	82.416	74,966
Onshore Wind	7	0.045	9
Hydro	2	0.023	X
Anaerobic Digestion	2	1.099	X
Landfill Gas	1	1.561	X
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,574</b>	<b>85.144</b>	<b>75,057*</b>

Source: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero 2022

*X – there was some generation but it has been suppressed to prevent the output of individual plants being revealed.*

*\* total does not include hydro, anaerobic digestion and landfill gas generation.*

### Carbon Reduction

Throughout the North Somerset district carbon emissions have been reduced to 5.6 tonnes per capita in 2021 with the transport sector being one of the major sources of carbon dioxide emissions. The council has taken the decision to implement the following changes to reduce carbon emissions:

- **Rewilding and green programme** - allowing our green spaces to grow wild and planting more trees
- **Transport** - improve paths and roads to encourage more walking and cycling, switch to green energy sources for buses and public transport
- **Reduce, reuse, recycle** - improve our waste management strategies and services to send less to landfill
- **Planning and building** - update policies to guide sustainable development, and provide incentives for homeowners to make green improvements

The council have also taken the following action to reduce the risks associated with a changing climate:

- **Flood risk management schemes:** tackling the increase in flood risk from extreme weather events and a changing climate.
- **Biodiversity and green infrastructure planning policy:** reducing the threats posed to biodiversity by climate change. GI leads to cooling, carbon storage and provides shading, increasingly required through increased temperatures.
- **Community resilience** – providing support for communities to cope in extreme weather events.



## **Supplementary Planning Documents**

The Creating Sustainable Buildings and Places SPD was adopted in April 2021. This document joins the Wind Turbines SPD and the Solar Photovoltaic Array SPD in providing additional guidance for sustainable development, the SPDs can be viewed at [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/spds](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/spds)

### **Environmental protection**

#### **Flood Risk**

Policy CS3 of the adopted North Somerset Core Strategy relates to Environmental Impacts and Flood Risk Assessment. Since July 2016 it has been supplemented by adopted Policy DM1 on Flooding and Drainage in the adopted Sites and Policies Plan: Part 1. One monitoring indicator identified is to review the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) at regular intervals. The SFRA was produced as a series of studies between 2008 and 2010. An update to the SFRA Level 1 was published in June 2020 and is available on our website: [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sfra](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sfra).

As a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), North Somerset has prepared a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) which outlines how we intend to manage local flood risk within our area. Local flood risk means flooding from surface runoff, groundwater and ordinary watercourses.

The LFRMS identifies objectives for managing local flood risk, proposes measures to achieve these objectives and sets an action plan giving approximate timescales for implementing these actions. The LFRMS can be viewed at <https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-02/local%20flood%20risk%20management%20strategy.pdf>.

### **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)**

#### **Screening opinions**

The council has a specific role within the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 to provide screening opinions on development proposals. This is to determine whether a proposed development falls within the remit of the Regulations, by whether it is likely to have any significant effects on the environment. Screening should take place at an early stage in the decision of a development but can occur after a planning application has been made.

The EIA Regulations list the types of development that may be subject to EIA within 2 separate Schedules. All projects listed in Schedule One will be subject to EIA and an Environmental Statement will be required with a planning application. The council is required to determine whether a proposal listed in Schedule Two of the Regulations should be subject to EIA. An assessment is undertaken to determine whether these projects are likely or unlikely to have significant effects on the environment. Where significant effects are judged to be likely, a positive screening opinion is provided and when significant effects are judged to be unlikely- a negative screening opinion is provided.

**Scoping opinions**

If it is determined that a proposal is subject to EIA and an Environmental Statement (ES) is required, the developer can apply to the council in writing for a Scoping Opinion. This is guidance on the issues that will need to be addressed within the submitted ES.

**Environmental policies**

The adopted Core Strategy policy CS5: Landscape and the historic environment seeks to protect and enhance North Somerset's landscape and townscape as well as the Mendip Hills AONB. The adopted Sites and Policies Plan Part 1: Development Management Policies DM11 seeks to protect the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). These policies provide guidance on development proposals within these areas.

## **Nature conservation**

### **Key assets**

North Somerset has:

- **2** National Nature Reserves (NNR)
- **13** Local Nature Reserves (LNR)
- **204** Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)
- **56** Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)
- **1** Ramsar
- **4** Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)
- **1** Special Protection Area (SPA)
- **75** Local Geological Sites (LGS)
- **1,069** Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)
- **1** Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Source: North Somerset Council and Natural England

### **Local sites**

Local sites include Local Wildlife Sites and Local Geological Sites. The 204 Local Wildlife Sites in North Somerset cover an area of 8509.39 hectares. The condition of Local Sites is largely unknown as the majority are privately owned. Local Sites are non-statutory sites so there is no obligation on owners to protect or report on the features for which the site was designated; or for them to allow their landholdings to be surveyed (unless the designation happens to overlap with that of a SSSI). Therefore, designated Local Wildlife Sites may include habitats that have been damaged or destroyed through inappropriate management or neglect.

### **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)**

SSSI condition is assessed by Natural England. 65% of North Somerset SSSIs are in favourable condition. This falls below the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan sets a new target to restore 75% of SSSIs by area to favourable condition by 2042. It is important to note that a large proportion of our SSSI sites have not been fully monitored by Natural England for many years however and a large percentage are expected to have declined in condition, reducing those in favourable condition to an even lower level. Natural England have identified many long term threats to our SSSI sites including nutrient enrichment in water, sea level rise, coastal squeeze, poor water quality and recreational disturbance. We hope that our Green Infrastructure Strategy will help to reduce this trend.

	Hectares
Favourable	2,295.24
Unfavourable Recovering	574.35
Unfavourable No Change	574.98
Unfavourable Declining	79.74
Assessed area	3,524.31

Source: Natural England

## **Development Management**

The natural environment policies in the Core Strategy seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity through:

- meeting Biodiversity Action Plan targets,
- implementation of new Green Infrastructure,
- safeguarding and enhancing through new development,
- protecting designated sites and important habitats, and
- promoting native tree planting.

Ecological consultation responses provided to Development Management ensure that the above aims are implemented within submitted ecological reports and landscaping plans. Policies CS4 and DM8 support the negotiation of reasonable avoidance and mitigation of harm to site biodiversity (prioritising protected sites and species; and Section 41 habitats and species) and the pursuit of opportunities to enhance site biodiversity.

Within the ecological assessment, it is considered essential to secure locally appropriate ecological landscaping and management of retained open spaces (subject to other required designated use constraints, e.g. play areas), particularly for major application sites; and to negotiate sufficient habitat on the boundaries of sites (proportionate to size of site) to retain sufficient wildlife corridor network.

A sufficient boundary buffer habitat is essential for bats and other wildlife that needs to migrate and interbreed with other populations for genetic exchange. A significant proportion of native planting is required within landscaping plans to increase the likelihood of provision of essential specific larval food plants for insects; and other ornamental planting required to have some recognised wildlife benefit (nectar, seeds, berries). External lighting conditions are also secured to avoid harm to light sensitive species of bats and other nocturnal wildlife.

## **Green Infrastructure Strategy**

The councils new Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy was adopted in September 2021. The strategy sets out the GI network within the district and provides a framework to maximise the environmental, economic and social benefits as well as the management, improvement and connectivity of GI assets. The strategy will also be used to inform the new Local Plan.

## **Projects**

### Rewilding in North Somerset

In February 2020 an ambitious rewilding programme commenced. Suitable sites for rewilding were picked throughout the district including parks, verges and other open spaces. Initially 5,000 trees were planted and areas of previously cut amenity grass were allowed to grow longer. The last of the tree planting was completed in winter 2021/22 and the final tall grass areas were introduced in summer 2022.

These actions have created new habitats for wildlife to flourish supporting our biodiversity action plan aims. Other benefits include helping to reduce our carbon footprint and providing more green infrastructure. A project delivered by Avon Wildlife Trust with the help of funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund has assessed the rewilding project as a success. A total of 30,000 trees were planted and approximately 400,000 square metres of tall grass has been created.

The council was awarded funding from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund in March 2023. This will enable 31,000 more trees to be planted by December 2025.

### Ash Dieback Action Plan

Ash dieback is a disease which will lead to the decline and death of most Ash trees. The disease was confirmed to be in North Somerset in 2019 but it is likely it has been in the local areas for longer. There are approximately 200,000 Ash trees in the district and around 80,000 of those are the responsibility of the council. The Action Plan, published in July 2022, sets out ways to manage the disease and associated risks in conjunction with the costs and resources needed. Our Green Infrastructure Strategy enables the council to prepare for the impact on the landscape and will help us develop resilience for the future. Progress has been made on the tree felling work throughout the district to remove Ash trees which have been identified as rapidly declining and pose a safety risk.

### Landscape and the historic environment

It is the council's aim for the historic environment to be maintained and protected. Any development affecting conservation areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens and archaeological sites should be appropriate and seek to enhance and reflect the character of the protected area.

### **Heritage assets**

North Somerset has:

- **32** Conservation Areas
- **1,077** Listed Buildings
- **68** Scheduled Monuments
- **8** Registered parks and gardens
- **59** Unregistered parks and gardens
- **43** Local Heritage List assets

Source: Historic England 2024 / North Somerset Council

### **Historic England's 'Heritage at Risk' Register**

Eight sites within the district are on the Heritage at Risk Register 2023. Four of these sites are Listed Buildings and four are Scheduled Monuments.

The four Listed Buildings at risk are:

- Ashton Court, Long Ashton (Grade I listed)
- St Mary's Church, Portbury (Grade I listed – place of worship)

- Birnbeck Pier, Weston-super-Mare (Grade II\* listed)
- St George's Church, Pill and Easton-in-Gordano (Grade II\* listed – place of worship)

The four Scheduled Monuments at risk are:

- Elms Colliery, Nailsea (the buildings are also Grade II listed)
- Worlebury Camp: a large multivallate hillfort on Worlebury Hill, Weston-super-Mare
- Long barrow 350m south-west of Cornerpool Farm, Wrington
- Slight univallate hillfort 150 metres east of Cleeve Court, Cleeve

### **Conservation Areas**

There are currently no Conservation Areas on the Heritage at Risk Register. Banwell Conservation Area's Appraisal and Management Plan was adopted in September 2021. Work has commenced on the three Backwell Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans and will continue in 2024.

### **Development Management, Enforcement and Planning Appeals**

The Principal Conservation & Heritage Officer and Principal Archaeologist review and provide comments on planning applications and enforcement cases. Large applications which have required input over the past year include: Land at Rectory Farm, Land north of the A368, Land West of Kenn Road, Battleaxes Inn, Uphill Grange, Land South of Nailsea and 17-21 High Street W-s-M.

Several major applications including the Banwell Bypass continue to require input from heritage officers.

There was one large public inquiry in which required the input of NSC heritage officers:

#### Warren Lane, Long Ashton

An application for 35 houses was refused by the Council on green belt and Archaeological grounds. The applicant appealed the decision, and this was subject to a 6-day Public Inquiry. The appeal was dismissed on the grounds that the harm to the Scheduled Monument and its setting would not be outweighed by the public benefit of new houses in this location and the impact on openness in the green belt.

### **High Street Heritage Action Zones (HAZ) 2019-2024**

**Engagement:** The High Street Heritage Action Zone delivered a strong programme of engagement work in the past 12 months including: Heritage Open Days Festival, Know Your Place online digital mapping resource, Volunteer recruitment training and management, and has developed two new exhibitions about the HSHAZ and culture Weston on both Weston Museum and The Sovereign to support the legacy of this work as the HSHAZ draw to an end in March 2024.

**Conservation:** Shopfront enhancement work carried out 4-8 Walliscote Road and completion of works to the balcony of the Kendell's building. Work now

looking to support the conservation and restore of the shop front in the Odeon (Plaza) building.

### **North Somerset Local Heritage List**

The Local Heritage List criteria and management procedures have been successfully adopted by the Council and has resulted in the successful adoption of 43 assets nominated for local listing.

The Council is now working on the fourth nomination round of local assets with expectation to take these to the panel for discussion of official adoption in the summer/autumn of 2024.

The heritage officers have held several training workshops to aid local residents in better understanding the nomination criteria and also how to nominate assets themselves. It is proposed to create a short information/instructional video to add to the Council's website/YouTube channel for residents.

### **Historic Environment Record**

The North Somerset Historic Environment Record (NSHER) is published on the council's website at <http://map.n-somerset.gov.uk/her.html>.

Layers available to view on the HER interactive map are:

- Conservation Areas
- Scheduled Monuments
- Registered Historic Parks and Gardens
- Unregistered Parks and Gardens
- Monuments (non-designated heritage assets)
- Historic Landscape Characterisation
- Events (e.g. excavation & survey reports)
- Listed Buildings

Over the last year work has progressed on enhancing the HER database, including the ongoing NRHE to HER data accession project, currently at 65% completion, which will result in almost 2500 records being updated or completely new information being added.

Accession of digitised grey literature archives also progressed throughout 2023, rising from under 30% to over 50%.

The current 5-year rolling audit cycle began with an audit completed in March 2022. Work guided by a resultant Action Plan is ongoing with a midpoint assessment due in the second half of 2024.

### **Know Your Place**

The Sharing Heritage/Know Your Place North Somerset project has continued to be extremely successful, with volunteers having added over 2600 records onto the website's Community Layer showcasing the rich history and heritage across North Somerset. The platform is also used to receive nominations and display additions to the Local Heritage List

Social media accounts set up to disseminate information in a digital format now have 4500 followers and group members, and a combined average across social media platforms of around 90,000 views per month.

Heritage officers continue to collaborate with Weston Town Council, Weston Museum and NSC Libraries team on projects relating to our shared heritage aims.

## **Green Belt**

### **Size of the Green Belt**

The size of the Green Belt within North Somerset is 154.9 square kilometres, which covers 40% of the district. There has been no change to the Green Belt during the monitoring period.



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## **Waste**

### **New waste management facilities**

No planning applications for new waste management facilities were approved in North Somerset during the monitoring period 2022/23.

### **Joint Waste Core Strategy**

North Somerset, Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire have an adopted West of England Joint Waste Core Strategy (JWCS).

In accordance with the waste hierarchy, the JWCS focuses on waste prevention, re-use, recycling and recovery of value from waste, with the



ultimate aim to divert waste away from landfill. The West of England authorities are committed to meeting the sub-region's needs and the timely provision of sufficient waste infrastructure.

Delivering the JWCS relies upon a robust monitoring system. This is set out in section 7 of the JWCS. The tables below show monitoring results for the JWCS for North Somerset, against key indicators, for 2022/23. A copy of the adopted JWCS document is available to view at [www.westofengland.org](http://www.westofengland.org)

## Recycling/Composting

Unitary Authority	Capacity of applications approved during 2022/23 (tonnes)	Capacity lost during 2022/23 (tonnes)	Capacity operational at 31/03/2023 (tonnes)	Capacity permitted but not operational at 31/03/2023 (tonnes)
North Somerset	0	0	268,200	0

## Recovery

Zone & indicative requirement for residual waste treatment capacity as set out in the JWCS	Capacity of applications approved during 2022/23 (tonnes)	Capacity lost during 2022/23 (tonnes)	Capacity operational at 31/03/2023 (tonnes)	Capacity permitted but not operational at 31/03/2023 (tonnes)	Electricity and/or heat output from operational recovery facility (MW)
A~390,000tpa	0	0	5,000	0	0
E~100,000tpa	0	0	15,000	0	1.1
Total for North Somerset	0	0	20,000	0	1.1

## Hazardous/Non-Hazardous Landfill

Not applicable

## Inert Landfill

Unitary Authority	Site Name	Capacity of applications approved during 2022/23 (tonnes)	Landfill capacity which became unavailable during 2022/23 (tonnes)	Landfill operational at 31/03/2023 (tonnes)	Landfill permitted but not started at 31/03/2023 (tonnes)
North Somerset	Durnford Quarry	0	0	Approx 382,500 tonnes per annum for 20 years (2012-2032)	0

Unitary Authority	Site Name	Capacity of applications approved during 2022/23 (tonnes)	Landfill capacity which became unavailable during 2022/23 (tonnes)	Landfill operational at 31/03/2023 (tonnes)	Landfill permitted but not started at 31/03/2023 (tonnes)
North Somerset	Lulsgate Quarry, Felton	0	0	A quantity of restoration material (apparently unspecified) to form a community recreation space to be completed before 31 Jan 2028	0

## Commentary

There has been little change from the 2021/22 situation regarding extant planning permissions for waste facilities in North Somerset, taking account of all the above waste categories: recycling and composting, recovery, hazardous/non-hazardous landfill and inert landfill. The only change is that, regarding inert landfill, permission (ref 21/P/2605/FUL) was granted on 31 Jan 2023 extending the time for restoration of Lulsgate Quarry.

## Minerals

Production of primary land won aggregates and secondary and recycled aggregates.

We are unable to publish details of the amount of primary land won aggregates in North Somerset for 2022, the latest year for which figures have been obtained, due to confidentiality issues. Data on production of crushed rock across the West of England sub region in recent years is available in the published annual reports of the South West Aggregates Working Party.

## **Landbank of crushed rock**

The adopted Core Strategy Policy CS8 relates to minerals and states that the council will seek to maintain a landbank for crushed rock of at least 10 years. Currently the calculated landbank is in excess of 10 years. This indicator will be monitored and reported annually.

## Transport and movement

### Travel to work

The working population of North Somerset use the following types of transport to travel to work:

Method of travel to workplace	North Somerset (%)	England and Wales (%)
Driving a car or van	50.6	45.1
Passenger in a car or van	3.7	3.9
Underground, metro, light rail, tram	0.0	1.8
Train	0.8	1.9
Bus, minibus or coach	1.7	4.2
Taxi	0.4	0.7
Motorcycle, scooter or moped	0.5	0.5
Bicycle	1.9	2.0
On foot	7.0	7.6
Other method of travel to work	0.8	1.0
Work mainly at or from home	32.6	31.2

Source: 2021 Census Travel to work statistics

### Car or van availability

Number of cars or vans	North Somerset (%)	England and Wales (%)
No cars or vans in household	15.0	23.3
1 car or van in household	41.1	41.3
2 cars or vans in household	32.1	26.2
3 or more cars or vans in household	11.9	9.2

Source: 2021 Census

### Traffic

In 2022 motor vehicle traffic in North Somerset was **1,572** million miles, an increase from **1,458** million miles in 2021.

Source: Department for Transport Road Traffic Statistics

In 2022 there were 37 reported killed and seriously injured casualties on North Somerset roads. This is an increase on the 2021 figure of 34.

Source: Department for Transport Reported Road Casualties Great Britain: 2022 Annual Report

## **Joint Local Transport Plan**

The West of England Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP4), adopted in March 2020 by the West of England authorities, including the West of England Combined Authority (WECA), its three constituent authorities (Bath & North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council) and North Somerset Council. JLTP4 sets out the vision for transport up to 2036. It shows how we aim to achieve a well-connected sustainable transport network that works for residents across the region; a network that offers greater, realistic travel choices and makes walking, cycling and public transport the natural way to travel.

Work has just begun on updating JLTP4 which will become JLTP5. The work is being led by the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) and supported by consultants and the early work (up to Summer 2024) will focus on updating the major transport schemes that are contained within JLTP4 (a light touch review of the policies). Public consultation is planned for Autumn 2024, aiming for adoption of the updated plan (JLTP5) around March 2025.

## **Local Walking & Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)**

The West of England LCWIP identified issues and set out relatively quick win improvements for walking/wheeling and cycling for the largest towns in North Somerset (Weston-super-Mare, Portishead, Clevedon and Nailsea, with Yatton included too). Since the adoption of the LCWIP it guides transport planning and scheme prioritisation through our new Integrated Transport Scheme Pipeline – which is our new 7-stage process to record, policy-check, prioritise, test feasibility, undertake engagement, design, deliver and monitor transport infrastructure schemes on our network.

## **Active Travel Strategy (ATS)**

The Active Travel Strategy was adopted in July 2021 and has set the context for a Place and Movement Framework, which classifies every road, street and lane within North Somerset with both a 'Place' and 'Movement' function. This has resulted in nine different classifications and a draft Design Toolkit is underway to help set out what the aspiration is for each classification. The Place and Movement Framework provided the policy context for a set of seven action plans to help turn the policies and commitments in the Active Travel Strategy into more defined/detailed actions. These are the Active Travel Action Plans (ATAPs) – covering 20mph, Active Travel Network, First and Last Mile, Liveable Neighbourhoods, Rural Lanes, Safer Active Routes to School and Transport Behaviour Change. We are using the seven ATAPs to bring forward initiatives and transport improvement schemes to help make walking/wheeling and cycling the natural choice for a cleaner, healthier and more active North Somerset and achieve a 300% increase in walking/wheeling and cycling trips by 2030, as is the target of the Active Travel Strategy.

## **Active Travel Fund**

Funding from the Department for Transport's Active Travel Fund supports cycling and walking schemes. Tranche one of the scheme supported temporary projects to help combat the coronavirus pandemic. Further rounds of funding support the creation of longer-term projects.

Work on phase one and two of the scheme has now been completed and we have received further funding; £310,000 for phase three and £417,640 for phase four. Work is currently underway on phase three and phase four projects with various schemes already completed. These include timed restrictions to vehicles outside some schools during drop off and pick up times, safety improvements at pedestrian crossings and the installation of a zebra crossing at Milton Road in Weston-super-Mare. Further work will be undertaken including installing new links, improving safety for cyclists and safety improvements at key crossings on Festival Way between Nailsea and Flax Bourton.

## **Rail**

The council aims to increase transport connectivity, promote accessibility for all and reduce carbon emissions from transport by maximising and developing the transport network. The West of England Joint Local Transport Plan 4 (JLTP4) sets out to improve rail services including train frequencies, rolling stock, passenger waiting and information enhancements and greater interchange facilities for all stations including pedestrian, cycling, bus and electric vehicle access improvements to railway stations. It should be noted that improvements to the platforms and the railway itself are more difficult for local authorities as they play more of a lobbyist role to regional and national rail operators who own and operate the platforms, trains and tracks.

The West of England Combined Authority (WECA) are working on a package of accessibility improvements to railway stations across the West of England sub-region using the Department for Transport's Access for All funding. For North Somerset this includes Nailsea & Backwell station, with the planned works including new benches, wayfinding signage and maintenance on current Sheffield cycle hoops. This work is being supported with some match-funding from the council's annual Integrated Transport Block funding and the work is due to be complete before the end of March 2024.

No other major improvements have been undertaken during the monitoring period, although progress is being made on the Metrowest Phase 1 scheme to reopen the Portishead to Bristol passenger line.

With regards to development around railway stations, policies in the North Somerset Core Strategy and the Sites and Policies Plan Part 1 set out that only acceptable railway related development on safeguarded land will be supported.

## Rail Station Usage

The need to provide improved transport connectivity whilst ensuring carbon-efficient choices can be indirectly monitored through the number of passengers using the rail service in North Somerset.

Estimates of station usage is detailed in the table below. Data published by the Office of Rail and Road estimates the entries, exits and interchanges at each station based on ticket sales. For the 2022/23 financial year, all stations saw a significant increase in patronage from 2021/22 levels, a further indication of recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

<b>Station Name</b>	<b>2022/23 Entries &amp; Exits</b>	<b>2021/22 Entries &amp; Exits</b>	<b>Change between 2021/22 to 2022/23 (%)</b>
Nailsea & Backwell	414,450	298,332	39%
Weston Milton	94,086	66,964	40%
Weston-super-Mare	939,804	777,910	21%
Worle	319,340	232,340	37%
Yatton	452,506	332,736	36%

Estimates of Station Usage 2022/23, Office of Road and Rail

With more passengers using the train for journeys this will help the council towards its target of carbon neutrality by 2030 and a green, active and inclusive economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

## Parking

The council adopted Civil Parking Enforcement powers (CPE) in April 2017. This includes taking responsibility for on-street parking enforcement from the police who were previously responsible. CPE enables improved enforcement of parking regulations which leads to better parking in areas where there are restrictions, as well as improved turnover of parking spaces – supporting town centres and shopping streets by making it easier for visitors and shoppers to park. Further details are available at [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/parking](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/parking).

A new parking scheme was adopted in February 2022 in Leigh Woods. The scheme helps residents, commuters and other vehicle users share the available parking fairly. Parking in the area is separated into resident and visitor bays, with pay and display visitor charges between the hours of 9am and 9pm and new parking permits available for residents. The scheme also included the first roadside electric vehicle charging point in North Somerset which has now been implemented.

## Walking, cycling and Rights of Way network

The council aims to increase transport choice and promote accessibility by maximising and developing the transport network and reducing congestion. This can also have other benefits such as improving the health and wellbeing of the population. We are working towards expanding and improving strategic cycle routes, pedestrian links and multiuser routes.

The England Coast Path follows the North Somerset Coast and is known locally as the North Somerset Tidal Trail. The trail is divided into six sections and out of the six sections improvement works have been completed on five of them. Three sections were officially opened by Natural England in June 2022 between the River Axe and Sand Bay and the section between Clevedon and the River Avon was opened in June 2023. Section 6 between Weston-super-Mare and Clevedon is currently awaiting determination by the Secretary of State.

As well as the England Coast Path project the Public Rights of Way Team continues on dealing with a number of Public Path and Definitive Map Modification Orders. The maintenance team arranged the installation of 94 gates, 25 bridges 35 steps and 12 surface improvements, together with a large number of other issues including vegetation clearance and obstructions. These works were part of the general maintenance and improvement of the rights of way network. Some of the gates were installed on behalf of NSC by the Woodspring Ramblers.

## **Cycling**

The council is fully committed to improving its active travel routes. Following on from the adoption of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and the Active Travel Strategy, it has now also adopted its suite of Active Travel Strategy Action Plans (ATAPS), which are:

- 20mph
- Active Travel Network
- First & Last Mile
- Liveable Neighbourhoods
- Rural Lanes
- Safer Active Routes to School
- Transport Behaviour Change

Over the 2022/23 financial year, the following infrastructure was delivered or actions taken to develop our active travel network:

- Delivered 20mph zones in:
  - Wrington Village
  - Uphill Village
  - Nailsea Town Centre
  - Clevedon The Beach / Hill Road area
  - Baker Street W-s-M
  - Pill and Easton-in-Gordano Village
- Identified the route improvements necessary for a comprehensive Active Travel Network.
- The Weston to Clevedon Cycle Route (Pier to Pier Way) continued to be progressed and is due to open Spring 2024. Funding and permissions were secured for a short but essential link (Duck Lane to the Strawberry Line Extension) enabling a quiet and safe link connecting the Pier to Pier Way to Yatton, due to be opened Spring 2024. A package of Yatton Active Travel Enhancements were progressed and are now at the delivery stage. We have been actively

progressing the Strawberry Line Extension (Clevedon to Yatton) feasibility work with National Highways and a crucial link under the M5 has been designed and checked.

- Developed a prioritisation scheme for our Capital Programme. This is being used for all Highway and Active Travel requests, including the many received during the ATAPS consultation, to ensure only the highest priority and most effective schemes go forward.
- Improvements are considered alongside our new Place and Movement Framework. This is street classification system that provides a defined, transparent and consistent framework that helps set out the purpose of the North Somerset transport network for both movement and place. It sets out the types of improvements needed to help us rebalance the importance of, and design for **place**, and ensure that active travel **movement needs** are better catered for.
- Highway Design Codes are being developed for consistency in our approach across the District, and to ensure opportunities for improvements are not missed.
- Road space audits have been carried out for most urban Primary and Urban Distributor roads. As we select and prioritise active travel improvement schemes, including maintenance schemes, the audits will help us quickly determine what opportunities are possible.
- First and Last Mile schemes are being worked up as part of North Somerset's ambitious Bus Service Improvement Plans, to be delivered by September 2025.
- One Liveable Neighbourhood scheme has been consulted upon, and will be delivered in 2024.
- One Rural lanes safety improvement scheme has been consulted upon with local stakeholders and will be delivered in 2024.
- We have continued to develop proposals for School Streets, and we will be delivering nine School Streets, at six schools in 2023-24.
- Delivering Transport Behaviour Change is an integral element of highway improvements, however, funding is limited, and has been limited to supporting walking to school.

We have continued to offer free Bikeability training, using DfT Bikeability grant-funding with some match-funding provided by North Somerset Council. The following places were delivered in 2022/23.

	Number delivered	Course contents
Bikeability Balance (children in Reception)	0	Learning to ride – funding not requested
Bikeability Level 1 (children in Year 4)	944	Cycle control - off road
Bikeability Level 1/2 (children in Year 5/6)	1,379	On road cycle training
Bikeability Level 3 (Years 7-9)	145	On road cycle training including a journey
Bikeability Fix	0	Cycle maintenance - no funding available



## **School Travel Plans**

On a termly basis we produce a schools newsletter containing guidance and information about national and regional campaigns related to active and sustainable travel to school and road safety initiatives.

We encourage the use of Modeshift STARS to create school travel plans and support planning applications. Modeshift STARS is a national awards scheme that recognises schools that have shown excellence in supporting walking, wheeling, cycling and other forms of sustainable travel. The application process provides an online template with survey and reporting functions that will generate a national standard school travel plan. Schools progress their plan through levels good to outstanding and nominate a travel champion responsible for delivering initiatives in school. We support schools in submitting their plan for national accreditation and awards.

## **Workplace and Residential Travel plans**

Travel Plans are a planning requirement for all new large or expanding developments as well as some smaller ones where there is expected to be a significant transport impact. Our new fully revised and adopted Travel Plans Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out the detail of what is expected from a developer to mitigate the transport impacts of the development and encourage more sustainable travel. Comments are provided by the Sustainable Travel and Road Safety team for all Travel Plans submitted as part of a planning application. This engagement ensures a strong commitment to sustainable and active travel within new developments, with the aim of facilitating movements around neighbourhoods, as well as further afield, whilst reducing traffic generated by developments.

The new SPD includes the option of a paid for Travel Plan service for developers as an alternative to developing their own Travel Plan (for appropriate, mainly residential developments), as well as a taking a more rigorous approach in general.

Over 2022/23 the council continued to promote, help and support organisations and businesses with a planning requirement for a Travel Plan and also those who are voluntarily developing a Travel Plan, under the brand Travelwest ([www.travelwest.info/businesses](http://www.travelwest.info/businesses)). This included the promotion of sustainable travel initiatives and awareness campaigns. This service has been very limited since early Spring 2022 due to the lack of resources.

## **Transport improvement schemes**

The Council aims to improve transport connectivity and reduce carbon emissions from transport by pursuing a programme of Integrated Transport improvements. This will help enable low-carbon and more active transport choices wherever possible, helping to promote accessibility, inclusivity and local economic growth by developing the transport network for all travel modes.

Work has progressed on the following major transport schemes:

- MetroWest Phase 1: Portishead to Bristol Railway Line – the reopening of the disused Portishead branch line to Bristol, with new stations at Portishead and Pill, and upgrading the frequency of trains on the Severn Beach to Westbury Line, is being led by North Somerset Council jointly with the West of England Combined Authority. The project will deliver benefits for residents and businesses of all five local authorities in the West of England.

This major transport enhancement forms part of the MetroWest programme of investment in the local rail network over the coming years. The wide ranging benefits of the project include supporting economic growth, improving transport resilience, increasing accessibility to the rail network, and improving quality of life. The project's Development Consent Order examination commenced in October 2020 and lasted six months. A decision was made in November 2022 to grant planning consent including permission to start the compulsory purchase of the required land.

Since consent was granted work has been undertaken on the detailed design. Noise surveys, ground investigations and soil sampling projects have also progressed. Ecology enabling works are underway which includes reptile translocation, tree planting to provide new bat corridors and the installation of new bird and bat boxes.

- Banwell Bypass – in October 2019 the Council secured funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government through the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) to build a bypass to the north of the village of Banwell. A long-standing aspiration for both the Council and the residents of Banwell, the bypass will provide numerous benefits, including providing improvements to air quality and the public realm in the centre of the village, supporting future housing delivery; and improving local and regional connectivity for longer trips. The bypass will also allow the reallocation of road space in the centre of the village to more sustainable modes of transport wherever possible, improving accessibility and quality of life for Banwell residents.

In August 2020 the grant funding agreement was signed that has enabled extensive advanced survey works to be undertaken including ecology, watercourses, ground investigation, topographical and archaeological investigation. Public consultations have been undertaken in July 2021 and March 2022 focussing on the route of the bypass, any local issue which should be considered and the scheme design. The planning application was submitted in July 2022 with a permission granted in March 2023. Detailed design work is now underway to progress the scheme delivery.

- Weston Town Centre Transport Enhancements Scheme – the town centre public realm and sustainable transport improvements

scheme includes the creation of a centralised bus interchange at the east end of Regent Street, wider pavements, road layout improvements and the resurfacing of some roads. Works have been completed and the bus hub opened in February 2022.

- North/South Link Road, Locking Parklands – The North South Link Road at Locking Parklands will provide a link from the A371 at Locking to the A370 West Wick roundabout as a key part of the access strategy for the Weston Villages and developments alongside the link road. Construction work on the southern part of the road commenced in November 2018 and was completed in Spring 2021 providing access to the Flowerdown estate and the Parklands Educate Together Primary School. The northern part of the road will be built by developers and is expected to be completed in the near future.
- Tutshill Sluice – the delivery of the Pier to Pier cycle route between Weston and Clevedon is part of the North Somerset Coastal Towns Cycle Route and has been a long-held council ambition. The route will also be used by pedestrians and horse riders. Funding was secured and work is underway on the scheme which includes a new bridge over the Congresbury Yeo, developing 1.4km of shared use path, junction improvements and route signing. The route is due to fully open in spring 2024 and will offer benefits to the local community including encouraging leisure cycling and providing a safe route for commuters as well as generating tourism.
- Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) – by working towards an improved bus service throughout North Somerset and the wider West of England area there are opportunities to not only provide customers with a convenient, coordinated and affordable network but we can also decarbonise public transport and increase air quality as well as improving the health and wellbeing of our communities.

Progress has been made on a number of key areas including various bus priority schemes to improve journey times, this includes bus lanes being installed on the A370 at Brockley Combe and on the A369 at Beggar Bush Lane, the prioritisation of buses is also given due to the installation of smart traffic lights.

We have also been able to increase the frequency of some routes around the district and to Bristol as well as reducing some fares to make bus travel more attractive and economical. An on-demand bus service trail has also been launched. The WESTlink service allows a greater number of residents access to the public transport network by enabling them a transport link between their homes and public transport routes. This is especially useful for people who live in rural areas which are not served by a bus route.

A scheme to attract new bus users has been launched, free travel is offered to residents in the West of England during their birthday

month. Free bus travel has also been offered to young residents leaving the care system.

## **Air Travel**

Bristol Airport is the largest airport serving the South West, providing an important facility for both leisure and business needs as well as providing employment opportunities in the local area.

The Bristol Airport Annual Monitoring Report 2022 provides information on the activity at the airport over the year. Some key highlights are:

- Post Covid-19 passenger numbers have recovered by 90% with 7.9 million passengers using the airport in 2022 compared to 8.9 million passengers in 2019.
- Air traffic movements doubled between 2022 and 2021 due to travel restrictions being lifted in March 2022.
- The A3 Weston Flyer bus services was reinstated following its suspension through the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Alicante, Dublin and Amsterdam with the top three destinations from Bristol Airport.

## **DELIVERING STRONG AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES**

### **High quality design**

#### **Housing quality and design**

The council is committed to supporting high quality design in new housing development. The Core Strategy identifies the importance of this in policy CS12: Achieving high quality design and place making. The policy suggests that in designing new developments of 10 or more dwellings, applicants should demonstrate how they meet the Building for Life criteria.

Policy DM32: High quality design and place making of the adopted Sites and Policies Plan Part 1 sets out criteria against which planning applications will be determined. The Weston Villages SPD sets out further specific detailed guidance for this major mixed-use development area.

Two Residential Design Guide SPDs have been adopted. Section 1 covers protecting the living conditions of neighbours (adopted January 2013) and Section 2 details appearance and character of house extensions and alterations (adopted April 2014). These documents are available to download from our website at [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/SPDs](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/SPDs). Other guidance has been produced to aid high quality design including a Development Management Advice Note on recycling and waste (September 2013) and a Highways Development Design Guide (October 2020).

#### **Sustainable Buildings and Places**

Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy relates to delivering sustainable design and construction. The policy states that when considering proposals for development the council will require energy efficient designs and the use of on-site renewable energy.

The policy also refers to the Code for Sustainable Homes and the Lifetime Homes scheme. The Government released a Written Ministerial Statement in March 2014 stating that the Code for Sustainable Homes and the Lifetime Homes schemes would be wound down and replaced with a simplified system incorporated into Building Regulations. The policy also references BREEAM standards which ensures buildings are of sustainable design and construction.

The Creating Sustainable Buildings and Places in North Somerset Supplementary Planning Document was first adopted in March 2015. The document was produced to support policy CS1: Addressing climate change and carbon reduction and CS2: Delivering sustainable design and construction of the Core Strategy. The document also updated policy CS2 following the change in national policy. Following a review, an updated Creating Sustainable Buildings and Places in North Somerset SPD was adopted in 2021.

## **Scale of new housing**

### **Housing provision**

Policy CS13 of the Core Strategy sets out the scale of new housing proposed for the district over the plan period and CS14 sets out how this is proposed to be delivered in line with the spatial strategy of the plan.

The Core Strategy housing requirement is 20,985 dwellings for the period 2006-2026, equivalent to 1,049 dwellings per annum.

### **Housing completions**

During the 2022/23 monitoring year 976 net dwelling completions were recorded. During the plan period so far (2006 – 2023) a total of 14,266 homes have been delivered.

### **Five year housing land supply**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against their housing requirements.

The council's most recently tested position that was examined through a series of planning appeals in 2022 is that we can currently demonstrate 3.5 years supply. This will remain the Council's position until the next residential land survey is undertaken in April 2024.

## **Mixed and balanced communities**

### **Local Housing Needs Assessment**

Along with the other councils in the West of England, North Somerset jointly commissioned Opinion Research Services (ORS) to produce a Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) to look at the different types of need that exist within the total amount of housing required over the next plan period.

The new Local Plan will take account of this evidence. The LHNA and a summary paper can be viewed at [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/localplan2039](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/localplan2039)

### **Houses in Multiple Occupation**

Core Strategy Policy CS15 relates to ensuring mixed and balanced communities across the district. One of the indicators is to monitor the change in the number of licensed Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) as ongoing monitoring will assess the effectiveness of the policy approach.

HMOs must be licenced if they are rented to five or more people and tenants share toilet, bathroom or kitchen facilities.

Details of licenced HMOs can be viewed on our website at <https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/housing/help-landlords-letting-out-homes/houses-multiple-occupation-hmo-licensing>.

## **Self-build opportunities**

The self-build market is growing and the council recognises the importance of allowing opportunities for this sector. We are committed to supporting self-build development for local people wishing to access market or affordable housing. The National Custom and Self Build Association website and the Self Build Portal website bring together a range of information and support for those wanting to get involved in a self build project. Our adopted development management policies plan offers general support for custom and self build projects and our new Local Plan policies will consider how best we can ensure the delivery of self and custom build housing in future.

The council has a self build register where people can register their interest in plots which may become available. This also enables the council to assess the level of demand within the area. As at October 2022 there were 544 records on the register in total.

Legislation requires us to try and ensure that there are enough plots available to meet demand within the area. To do this, we must look at the amount of people registered within the area each year and three years later must have permissioned enough plots to satisfy that level of demand. The register is in effect a proxy for the level demand – we cannot guarantee that those people on the register will be offered a plot. Back in October 2019 we had 196 records on our register. Therefore by October 2022 we ought to have consented 196 plots to meet that level of demand. As at October 2022 we have consented 147 housing plots that have successfully been granted CIL exemption relief on the basis that they meet the self build criteria and a further 6 plots on a large scheme in Backwell – a total of 153 plots.

As and when opportunities may become available within the area these will be promoted to those on the register.

Further information on self build and custom build housing is available on our website at [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/selfbuild](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/selfbuild).

## **Affordable housing**

### **Affordable Housing Targets**

Policy CS16 of the Core Strategy states that affordable housing completions should be monitored on an annual basis, including the type and tenure of the housing delivered. Overall delivery will be assessed in 5 year tranches, and the policy approach reviewed as appropriate.

The adopted target is for 150 affordable homes to be provided per annum.

During the period 2022/23, 404 new affordable housing units were delivered, a significant increase on last year and the most we have provided in a year. This figure includes both 277 build new affordable housing units and 127 flats that were built last year as market housing and then purchased this year for affordable housing provision by Alliance Homes.

Plan period total delivery now stands at 2,694 units over 17 years, an average of 158 dwellings per annum.

#### **Annual affordable housing delivery over Core Strategy plan period to date**

2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
126	192	266	149	110	42	211	166	154	126	138	155	96	75	91	193	404



## DELIVERING A PROSPEROUS ECONOMY

### Supporting a successful economy

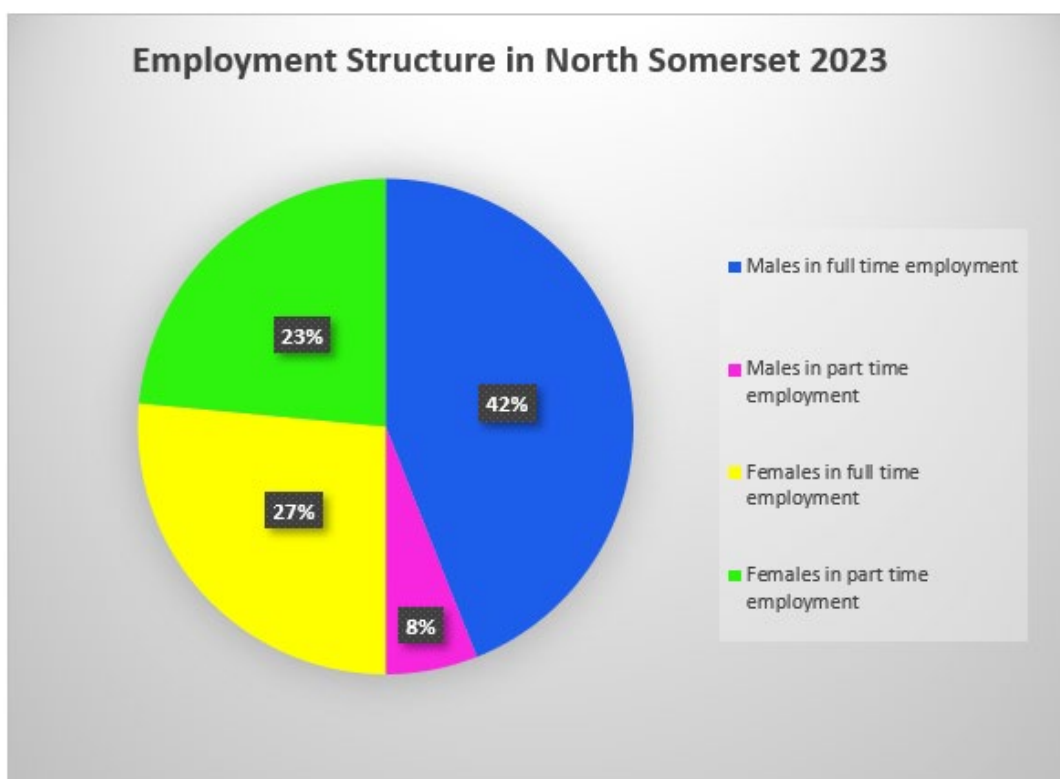
#### Economic activity

**86%** of North Somerset residents aged 16 to 64 are economically active, this is an increase of 2.81% on the previous year. This compares to 80.7% in the Southwest and 78.5% in England and Wales.

Source: Annual Population Survey April 2022 - March 2023

#### Employment structure

- **67.1%** of 16-64 year olds in North Somerset work full time and **31.6%** work part time. In England and Wales, 76.2% work full time and 23.5% work part time.
- **83.4%** of the economically active males work full time and **15.1%** work part time. In England and Wales, 88.3% of the economically active males work full time and 11.5% work part time.
- **53.2%** of the economically active females work full time and **45.6%** work part time. Nationally, 63.1% of the economically active females work full time and 36.7% work part time.



Source: Annual Population Survey April 2022 - March 2023

## Income

- In 2022 the average gross annual pay for full time employees **working** in North Somerset was **£31,963**, an increase on the previous year. Current average earnings for employees across the South West are £33,450 per annum.
- The average full time gross pay for the **residents** of North Somerset in 2023 was **£35,998**. This is higher than the average figure for England and Wales which was £34,999.

Source: ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2023

## Productivity

Region	Enterprise Births	Enterprise Deaths	Active Enterprises
England and Wales	312,670	320,560	2,685,600
South West	24,510	24,710	237,100
North Somerset	1,095	1,065	9,560

Business Demography 2022, Office for National Statistics

## Employment floorspace

Employment floorspace gains and losses are monitored through the Planning system.

### Total amount of additional employment floorspace – by type

	E(g)(i) Office (formerly B1a)	E(g)(ii) Research and Development (formerly B1b)	E(g)(iii) Light Industry (formerly B1c)	B2 General Industry	B8 Storage and Warehouse	Mixed B and/or E use	Total
Large site gains (sqm)	738	0	2,242	0	0	2,559	<b>5,539</b>
Large site losses (sqm)	0	0	0	1,092	548	0	<b>1,640</b>
Small site gains (sqm)	110	0	0	0	491	0	<b>601</b>
Small site losses (sqm)	643	0	0	0	0	156	<b>799</b>
<b>Net gain (sqm)</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,242</b>	<b>-1,092</b>	<b>-57</b>	2,403	<b>3,701</b>

Large sites are those that are allocated for employment use in the Sites and Policies Plan or windfall sites with a floorspace of 500 square metres or more. Small sites are monitored separately, and cover all of the employment sites that do not meet the threshold of a large site.

During the 2022/23 monitoring period five large employment sites were developed resulting in a net gain of 3,701 sqm of employment floorspace. Two of these sites were subject to change of use applications so some floorspace changed use.

## Total amount of large site employment floorspace gain on previously developed land – by type

	E(g)(i) Office (formerly B1a)	E(g)(ii) Research and Development (formerly B1b)	E(g)(iii) Light Industry (formerly B1c)	B2 General Industry	B8 Storage and Warehouse	Mixed B and/or E use	<b>Total</b>
Gross sqm completed	738	0	2,242	0	0	2,559	<b>5,539</b>
Gross sqm completed on PDL	738	0	2,242	0	0	2,559	<b>5,539</b>
% completed on PDL	100%	~	100%	~	~	100%	<b>100%</b>

## Employment land

The adopted Core Strategy focuses on supporting a successful economy and seeks to provide an additional 10,100 jobs by 2026 by allocating around 114 hectares of land for B class uses. This will help address the issue of out-commuting and will increase self-containment, particularly in Weston-super-Mare. The adopted Sites and Policies Plan Part 2 allocates new employment sites to be developed.

## Supporting the local economy

Employment led development within North Somerset is key in ensuring that there is a balance between new homes and local job opportunities. The North Somerset Economic Plan 2020 – 2025 sets out aims and objectives to enhance the local economy, paying particular attention to the issues which have arisen in the economy post Coronavirus pandemic. The economic plan aims to support green and low carbon businesses while providing digital access and inclusive growth for the residents in the district.

We are working closely with key landowners, developers and agents to make sure that there is a focus on creating a range of new jobs as part of the developments coming forward within the Junction 21 Enterprise Area. We offer services to assist with the delivery of business proposals which have significant economic benefits including planning performance agreements to assist with project management and resources.

In 2018 we adopted the Food Enterprise Zone Local Development Order (LDO) for a period of five years. This covers 7.5 hectares of land within Weston Business Quarter in the Enterprise Area. The LDO granted outline planning permission for new units of B1, B2 or B8 use class for use by food businesses. Work on Zone 1 has been completed and the centre is known as FoodWorksSW and includes 12 food grade business units to lease, four product development areas, workshop space and meeting rooms.

## Transport and infrastructure

Progress has been made on a number of highway and transport schemes this year, as detailed within the Transport and Movement section of the Environment chapter.

The Connecting Devon and Somerset project, which is the largest publicly funded rural broadband programme, encompasses the six areas of Devon, Torbay, Plymouth, Somerset, North Somerset and Bath and North East Somerset. The project aims to deliver superfast broadband to 95% of premises in rural areas. Phase One of the roll-out of broadband infrastructure is complete in North Somerset and a substantial number of cabinets and exchanges have been upgraded as part of the programme in rural areas. Work on the project continues.

## Retail

### Retail Centres

North Somerset is served by four towns, four district centres, 18 local centres and various out of centre retail areas. There are also significant retail offerings in close proximity to North Somerset at Cribbs Causeway, Bristol City Centre and Taunton. Retail areas throughout the district are monitored annually to record any changes in occupancy and vacancy rates.

<b>Towns</b>	<b>Weston-super-Mare</b>	<b>Portishead</b>	<b>Clevedon</b>	<b>Nailsea</b>
Total units	631	134	152	165
Vacant units	128	8	13	26
<b>% of vacant units</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>16%</b>
Total PRF units	158	75	61	46
Vacant PRF units	29	7	6	9
<b>% of vacant PRF units</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>20%</b>
% of total units in Ea use	32%	47%	39%	38%
% of total PRF units in Ea use	53%	52%	59%	63%

April 2023

### *PRF – Primary Retail Frontage*

In defined town centres, policy indicators and targets state that the proportion of primary retail frontage (PRF) units in a non-retail use should not exceed 30% and vacant units should not exceed 10%. At present, Portishead and Clevedon PRF do not exceed 10% vacant units. No town centre PRF has an Ea use of 70%, this means that no town has a non-retail use of 30% and are therefore not within the target. Town centres were negatively impacted by the national lockdowns during the Covid-19 pandemic and recovery has been slow.

## Weston Town Centre

An ambitious programme of placemaking and regeneration for Weston-super-Mare is well underway. This focuses on developing quality living, learning and lifestyle opportunities in the town centre. Economic growth will be underpinned by attracting more people to live in the town centre and creating a residential environment that will help to inject new life into the centre, boosting the demand for shops and services.

Projects completed include an improved public realm and transport scheme to enhance Station Road, Walliscote Road and Alexandra Parade, building improvements including a refresh of one of the prominent Art Deco buildings and shopfront enhancements to some retail units.

The council is working towards the re-development of vacant sites at Locking Road, Sunnyside Road, Dolphin Square and Walliscote Place. It is estimated around 500 new homes could be provided alongside commercial and community buildings.

## Tourism

### Tourism Activity

- The total value of tourism in North Somerset in 2022 was £332,995,000, this includes both day and staying visiting as well as other tourism related spend.
- The total number of actual jobs created by tourism is 5,433 (both full and part time) with the full-time equivalent jobs being 3,716.
- The total jobs created accounts for 5% of employment in the area.
- 6,391,000 day visits to North Somerset was estimated in 2022.
- It is estimated that the average spend for day visitors was £37.27.

Source: Economic Development, North Somerset Council 2022

### Tourist Accommodation

Core Strategy Policy CS22 has a clear intention to monitor the number of tourist accommodation bed spaces in Weston-super-Mare, and across the rest of the district. The following table shows the number of tourist bed spaces, pitches, berths and units in North Somerset.

<b>Accommodation supply</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Measure</b>
Hotels	3,950	bedspaces
Guesthouses	461	bedspaces
Inns	145	bedspaces
B&B	332	bedspaces
Farms	19	bedspaces
Self-catering	410	units
Touring caravans/tents	697	pitches
Static vans	296	pitches
Holiday centres	543	units
Group accommodation	86	bedspaces

<b>Accommodation supply</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Measure</b>
Campus	0	bedspaces
Second homes	374	units
Marinas	250	berths

Source: SWRTB, RYA and North Somerset Council 2022, Census 2021

## **Bristol Airport**

### **Expansion**

Long term plans for the airport have been developed with the first masterplan being published in 2006 guiding expansion up until 2030 to increase the airport capacity to 12 million passengers per annum. Further work has been undertaken and in 2018 consultation documents were published. Details of this can be viewed at <https://www.bristolairport.co.uk/corporate/about-us/our-future/>.

An outline planning application was submitted to the council in December 2018 for the development of the airport to expand the capacity to 12 million terminal passengers a year. The proposal included terminal extensions, an expansion of the parking provision and improvements to the local road network to improve transport links and traffic. In March 2020 councillors voted to refuse the application and Bristol Airport Limited subsequently lodged an appeal. A public inquiry was held between July and October 2021 and in February 2022 a panel of three inspectors allowed the appeal and granted planning permission.

### **Employment**

During 2022 the total number of staff employed at the airport was 3,401 by 50 companies. 307 individuals were directly employed by the airport in 2022 compared to 259 in 2021.

## **Royal Portbury Dock**

Within the Core Strategy, Policy CS24 provides that the role of Royal Portbury Dock will be maintained and enhanced, and that land will continue to be safeguarded for port uses within the Sites and Policies Plan. Any significant development which is permitted will be reported on in future AMRs.

## **ENSURING SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES**

### **Children, young people and education**

#### **Education**

Assessments including all primary tests, GCSEs and A levels were disrupted in 2020 and 2021 due to Covid-19 restrictions. The cancellation of these tests was instructed by the Department of Education. Ofqual developed a process to award GCSE and A level students grades which fairly reflected their performance and ability and summer exams resumed in 2022.

#### **Key Stage 2**

To raise standards in primary education the Government implemented a new set of tests for key stage 2 children in 2016. The tests assess maths, reading and spelling, grammar and punctuation with writing being assessed separately by teacher evaluation. The new method of assessment replaces the previous 'level' system with pupils either reaching the expected standard or being below the expected standard. No assessments were undertaken in 2020 and 2021.

	<b>North Somerset</b>	<b><u>South West</u></b>	<b>England</b>
<b><u>% achieving Key Stage 2 Reading Expected Standard</u></b>			
<b>2023</b>	74%	73%	73%
<b>2022</b>	77%	74%	75%
<b>2019</b>	75%	74%	74%
<b>2018</b>	77%	75%	76%
<b>2017</b>	71%	73%	72%
<b><u>% achieving Key Stage 2 Writing Expected Standard</u></b>			
<b>2023</b>	70%	70%	72%
<b>2022</b>	69%	69%	70%
<b>2019</b>	80%	78%	79%
<b>2018</b>	80%	78%	79%
<b>2017</b>	76%	76%	77%
<b><u>% achieving Key Stage 2 Maths Expected Standard</u></b>			
<b>2023</b>	73%	70%	73%
<b>2022</b>	74%	70%	72%
<b>2019</b>	79%	77%	79%
<b>2018</b>	74%	74%	76%
<b>2017</b>	73%	73%	75%
<b><u>% achieving Key Stage 2 Reading, Writing and Maths Expected Standard</u></b>			
<b>2023</b>	60%	57%	60%
<b>2022</b>	59%	57%	59%
<b>2019</b>	65%	64%	65%
<b>2018</b>	64%	63%	65%
<b>2017</b>	59%	60%	62%

Source: Department for Education – National curriculum assessments: key stage 2

## GCSE results

The GCSE summer exams resumed in 2022 after two years of cancellation due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The percentage of pupils in North Somerset achieving level 9 – 5 (equivalent to a strong C or above) in English and Maths in 2023 was 44.6%. Throughout England 45.3% students achieved this.

Source: Department for Education

## A Levels (Level 3 qualifications)

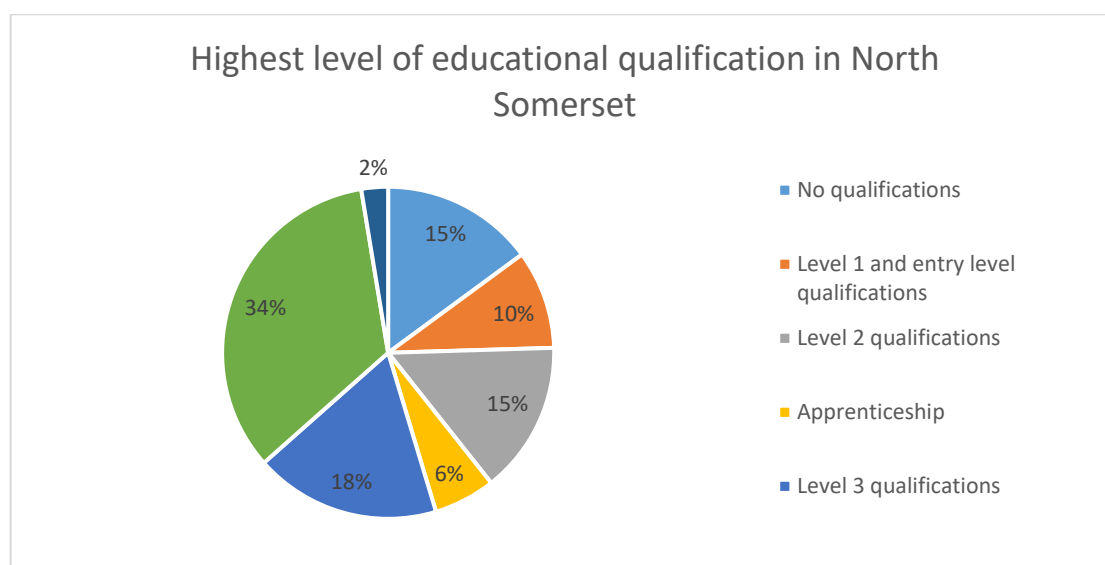
Results in North Somerset show the average point score per entry in 2023 was 32, the equivalent of a C+. This is a decrease on the 2022 figure of 35.8 (B-). North Somerset is slightly below the national average with the average point score per entry for England being 34.2, the equivalent of a C+.

Source: Department for Education

## Educational Qualifications

The population aged 16years and over have the following qualifications:

Highest level of qualification	North Somerset (%)	South West (%)	England and Wales (%)
No qualifications	14.9	15.7	18.2
Level 1 and entry level qualifications	9.6	9.8	9.6
Level 2 qualifications	14.8	14.3	13.4
Apprenticeship	6.0	6.0	5.3
Level 3 qualifications	18.1	18.5	16.9
Level 4 qualifications or above	33.9	33.1	33.8
Other qualifications	2.6	2.6	2.8



Source: Census 2021 Qualifications



## **Schools**

North Somerset has:

- 65 primary schools
- 11 secondary schools
- 4 special schools
- 3 independent schools
- 1 pupil referral unit and tuition

A new school was opened in September 2022 for young people with social, emotional and mental health needs. Lime Hills Academy has a temporary base in Nailsea providing 22 secondary school places. A planning application has been submitted for a new permanent base which will be located in a purpose-built school in Langford providing 65 places for children aged between five and 16.

The North Somerset Enterprise and Technical College on Weston Airfield opened in 2014 and is part of the Inspirational Futures Trust. From September 2020 the college started to operate as a secondary school as well as offering post 16 course. The school is now known as the Winterstoke Hundred Academy. Planning permission was granted in September 2021 to expand the school on a site at Locking Parklands. The newly built second campus is the first carbon neutral school in the area and was opened to students in January 2024. The site can accommodate 900 school places, which supports the increase in demand from the residential development at Weston Villages.

## **Weston College**

The College offers hundreds of courses to school leavers and adults at various levels including A levels, Diplomas, BTEC, City and Guilds, apprenticeships and degrees (offered in partnership with Bath Spa University and the University of the West of England). Weston College also has the contract to deliver the education services in prisons located in the south west providing learning opportunities to thousands of offenders.

There are four main campuses at present; Loxton Campus, the town centre Knightstone Campus, South West Skills Campus and the modern university building at the Winter Gardens in the town centre and a number of satellite centres.

## **School places**

Core Strategy Policy CS25 has an indicator in place to monitor the number of extra school places and those funded through development. The table shows the number of school places throughout the district and the additional spaces created. Spaces funded through Section 106 contributions are located at Chestnut Park in Yatton and Parklands Educate Together in Weston-super-Mare providing new educational facilities to families moving to the new developments.

	Number of school places Sep 2022	Number of school places Sep 2023	Difference in places	s106 funded places	Location of funded places	Notes
Primary	18,042	17,786	-256	60	Parklands Educate Together (30) Chestnut Park (30)	<p>For September 2023, 30 additional places were created at Parklands Educate Together Primary. Chestnut Park Primary added 30 Reception places.</p> <p>To help with the management of school places and the decline in places needed in some areas (due to a fall in birth rate), the following schools have reduced their PAN and/or capped the number of pupils which has had the net effect of reducing the total number of Primary School Places: High Down Infant (-51), Mead Vale (-38), St Martin's (-86), St Nicholas Chantry (-30), Windwhistle (-26), Yatton Infant (-60).</p> <p>High Down Junior School has removed a breach class (-30).</p> <p>The following schools have made a small increase to the classes that were capped last year: All Saints (+4), Locking (+1)</p>
Secondary	12,940	13,120	180	0		<p>A further 150 places were added at Winterstoke Hundred following the South West Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) re-brokerage.</p> <p>Worle Community School has reduced the cap to the number of pupils in some years adding 30 places to number of secondary places</p>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30,982</b>	<b>30,906</b>	<b>-76</b>	<b>60</b>		

## Children's Centres

Children's centres provide services for families with children under five. They host drop-in advice clinics, parenting workshops, parent and toddler groups and even speech and language services. Many also host regular activities for children under five. There are currently 14 centres throughout North Somerset:

- Ashcombe Children's Centre
- Banwell, Winscombe and Sandford Children's Centre (satellite unit)
- The Carlton Centre
- Castle Batch Children's Centre
- Clevedon Children's Centre
- Locking Castle and Locking Children's Centre
- Nailsea and Backwell Children's Centre
- Oldmixon Family Centre
- Pill Library and Children's Centre (satellite unit)
- Portishead Children's Centre
- South Weston Children's Centre @ The For All Living Centre
- Worle Library and Children's Centre
- Yatton Library and Children's Centre
- Yeo Valley and Rural Outreach Children's Centre

## Health

### Life expectancy

The average female life expectancy in North Somerset is 83.9 years and the average male life expectancy is 80.7 years. In England the average life expectancies are currently 82.8 years for females and 78.7 years for males.

Source: Local Authority Health Profiles - North Somerset 2021, Public Health England

### Disability

40,533 people in North Somerset describe themselves as being disabled as defined under the Equality Act, 18.7% of the population. The national average across England and Wales is 17.5%.

Source: 2021 Census

### General health

As of 2021 81.4% of people consider themselves to be in good or very good health, and a further 13.3% describe their general health as fair. This accounts for 94.7% of the total population, slightly lower than the 91.8% that described their health as fair or better ten years ago. 4.1% of our residents consider themselves to be in bad health, and a further 1.2% think they are in very bad health. Our current proportions are similar to the national averages.

Source: 2021 Census

## **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment**

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for Health and Social Care aims to identify the current and future needs for health and social care services for all people in North Somerset. It contains a wealth of information and is a useful tool in ensuring that development plan policies are effectively contributing to overall health and well-being across North Somerset. The JSNA is available to view on our website at [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/council-democracy/statistics-data/joint-strategic-needs-assessment-jsna-health-social-care](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/council-democracy/statistics-data/joint-strategic-needs-assessment-jsna-health-social-care).

## **Sport, recreation and community facilities**

### **Sport and recreation**

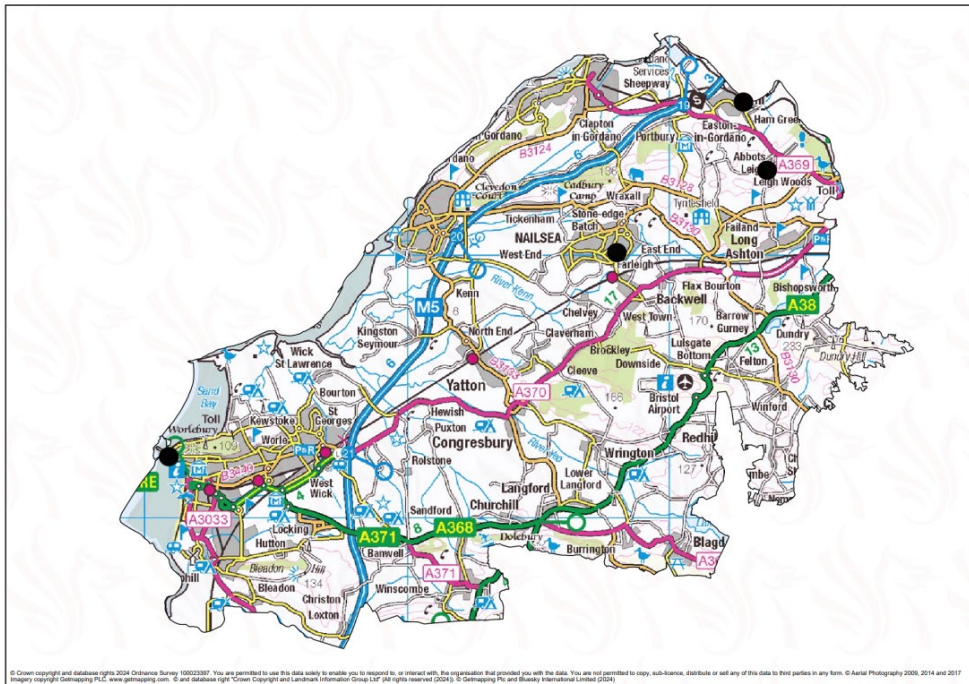
Policy CS27 of the Core Strategy aims to ensure that for all residents of North Somerset there is safe and convenient access to sport, recreation and community facilities. Policies DM68 (Protection of sporting, cultural and community facilities) and DM69 (Location of sporting, cultural and community facilities) of the Sites and Policies Plan Part 1 Development Management Policies seek to protect and enhance facilities.

The council also has a Sport and Leisure Facilities Strategy which details the councils aims to provide high quality facilities and identifies the future demand of facilities due to a growing population. The document can be viewed on the councils website: <https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-03/Sport%20and%20Leisure%20Facilities%20Strategy%202020-36.pdf>. The council also promotes healthy lifestyles and encourages local people to become more physically active through the bespoke Better Health North Somerset website <https://www.betterhealthns.co.uk/>.

### **Open spaces**

There are over 40 parks, public open spaces and nature reserves in the authority and we are responsible for approximately two million square metres or green infrastructure. There are currently four areas of open space in North Somerset that were managed to Green Flag Award standard. The sites are shown on the map below and are:

- Watchhouse Hill Public Open Space in Pill
- Abbots Pool in Leigh Woods
- Trendlewood Community Park, Nailsea
- Prince Consort Gardens, Weston-super-Mare



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Further information on the Green Flag Award criteria can be found at <http://www.greenflagaward.org.uk/>. The local nature reserve at Uphill Hill has been withdrawn from the scheme due to the site not meeting the judging criteria of having an active volunteer group working with the council.

### Community facilities

Our sport and leisure centres offer a range of facilities. There are seven leisure centres in North Somerset:

- Backwell Leisure Centre
- The Campus
- Hutton Moor Leisure Centre
- Parish Wharf Leisure Centre
- Portishead Open Air Pool
- Scotch Horn Leisure Centre
- Strode Leisure Centre

The council also maintain sports pitches and facilities which are hired out.

A decision to permanently close Churchill Sports Centre was made in January 2023. The centre had been closed since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic and since then no funding has been available to reinstate the service. Churchill Academy operate the sports pitches and sports hall and these are still available for community use.

Throughout the district there are a large range of community meeting places. An interactive map is available on the councils website detailing these venues: <https://map.n-somerset.gov.uk/map/Aurora.svc/run?embedded=true&noCache=0.05748824>

[817550324&script=%5CAurora%5CCommunityMeetingPlaces.AuroraScript%24#](#).

There are currently 12 libraries and a mobile library service which serve the district. Further details of the libraries are available on our website at [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/). In October 2022 the council signed a lease on a premises at Colliers Walk in Nailsea to move the library out of its current building in order to secure it's long term future for the community. The relocated Nailsea library opened in July 2023 providing a modern and accessible facility.

## **Duty to co-operate**

The requirement for local planning authorities (LPAs) to work under the Duty to Cooperate (DTC) on strategic planning issues is set out in section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as inserted by section 110 of the Localism Act (2011). This requires authorities to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis in relation to a number of activities including the preparation of development plan documents, other local development documents and marine plans. Local planning authorities must publish details of what action they have taken in relation to the duty to co-operate through their Authority's Monitoring Reports (AMRs).

## **Statement of Common Ground**

As part of the supporting documentation published alongside the emerging Local Plan the council has published a Duty to Co-operate Statement of Common Ground. This document captures the actions taken to address strategic cross-boundary matters through the duty to co-operate. Our most recently published statement of compliance can be viewed at [Duty to Co-operate Statement of Compliance \(n-somerset.gov.uk\)](https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/duty-to-co-operate-statement-of-compliance)

## **Minerals Planning**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires minerals planning authorities (MPAs), such as the West of England authorities, to plan for a steady and adequate supply of aggregates by participating in the operation of an Aggregate Working Party (AWP) and taking its advice into account when preparing their Local Aggregates Assessment. The South West AWP meets quarterly and membership includes representatives from central Government, mineral planning authorities, the Mineral Products Association, the British Aggregates Association, and such other representatives as appropriate.

## **Local Aggregates Assessment (LAA)**

A Local Aggregate Assessment is an annual assessment of the demand for and supply of aggregates in a mineral planning authority's area. Within the West of England, Local Aggregates Assessments are prepared jointly by the four unitary authorities (UAs) within the West of England sub-region (Bristol City, Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire). The LAA forms an important part of the evidence base that will be used to inform preparation of the UAs' individual Local Plans.

## **Joint Planning Data Group**

The West of England authorities take a joined-up approach to land-use research and monitoring across the sub-region and there is a well-established joint working arrangement through the Joint Planning Data Group. The group meets quarterly to ensure consistency, best practice, share expertise and reduce duplication of effort across the sub-region.