

Community profiles - Context

The 'Connecting Communities' programme is an initiative designed to help public service providers listen to, and meet the needs of, the diverse people and communities who live in the area. The approach has been built around five key principles: 'listen, prioritise, join-up, work with you and share ideas'.

This initiative has come at the right time. Getting the input of local people in order to design the right services is seen as increasingly important. And as there is now much less public funding available, local people and neighbourhoods are being asked to help run services too. Each area will be supported by a local 'Forum' that will work together to improve local engagement between the public services and the local communities and encouraging local people to talk to each other, share their skills and ideas.

The Forums currently cover the parished areas of North East Somerset, bringing together neighbourhoods, villages and towns to reflect local issues and develop a more joined-up approach to addressing these concerns.

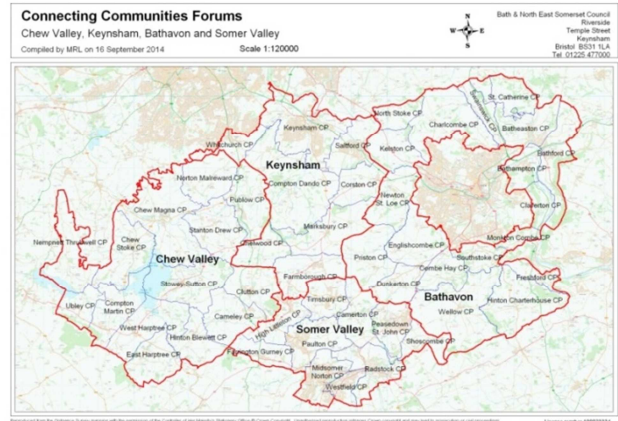
Three Forums have been established so far. These are:-

Chew Valley Area Forum, covers the parishes of, Cameley, Chew Magna, Chew Stoke, Clutton, Compton Martin, East Harptree, Hinton Blewett, Nempnett Thrubwell, Norton Malreward, Publow with Pensford, Stanton Drew, Stowey Sutton, Ubley, West Harptree.

Keynsham Area Forum covers the parishes of Chelwood, Compton Dando, Corston, Farmborough, Marksbury, Keynsham, Saltford and Whitchurch.

Somer Valley Area Forum, covers the parishes of Farrington Gurney, High Littleton, Midsomer Norton, Paulton, Peasedown St John, Radstock, Timsbury and Westfield.

These profiles have been designed to gain a better understanding of the issues and opportunities affecting the local community and set out the shared priorities agreed by partners across the area.



The Chew Valley - At a glance

The Chew Valley lies to the west of Bath and North East Somerset, and has strong links to Bristol. It is a large rural area and identified as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. One of its key features is the Chew Valley Lake, an important site for wildlife which has been dedicated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Protection Area.

The Chew Valley Area is covered by 5 electoral wards and 14 parishes. Its population is 9,974. Key villages include Chew Magna, Chew Stoke and Pensford, these are “washed over” by the Green Belt and are junctions to several main transport routes providing access to Bristol in particular.

Poor public transport provision means that the population is very reliant on private transport. The need for community transport has continued to increase particularly for health related appointments and social activities.

Unemployment in the area is lower than the national average. The Chew Valley has a higher percentage of self-employed people, along with a high proportion of people in senior managerial or professional roles. 19% of the workforce either work mainly from home or at home, and for those people that travel to work, the majority travel distances of between 10km and 20km.

There is one secondary school, Chew Valley, which has 1200 pupils including 200 in the Sixth Form. Many of the students travel from bordering areas such as Bristol. The school site also accommodates the leisure centre and a children's centre. There are eight primary schools in the area: seven are run by the local authority and one, Chew Stoke, is an Academy.

Chew Valley is particularly prone to flooding and 48 properties across Chew Magna and Chew Stoke flooded in September and November 2012 – leading to one fatality.

Housing growth in the Chew Valley over the next 20 years will be limited and any new development will be focussed on villages outside the Green Belt that have a wide range of local facilities and public transport. The Core Strategy allows provision for the larger villages outside the Green Belt to identify development sites to accommodate around 50 dwellings, with small villages outside the Green Belt with a more limited range of services/facilities identifying sites to accommodate around 10 to 15 dwellings within the plan period. For those villages within and “washed over” by the Green Belt, new housing provision is limited to small-scale infill development or limited affordable housing to meet local community needs.

Key Facts

- There are 9,974 residents, 22% are under 18, 2% full time students, 22% over 65 and 9% are over 75. 2.1% increase in population since 2001.
- Chew Valley South Ward falls within the least deprived 10% nationally.
- 29% economically inactive, of which 18% are retired, higher than the national average.
- 38% of people have a degree or above – higher than national average (27%).
- 18% of people have no qualifications – lower than national average (23%).
- 1 in 4 children are aged between 5 and 6 years.
- 3 in 10 children aged 10 and 11 are overweight or obese.
- 5.8% of lives “limited a lot” by a disability.
- 120 employment & support allowance claimants.
- Child poverty (5%) is low compared to the UK (27%).
- Chew Valley South Ward has one of the highest rate of under 18 emergency admissions for injuries.
- The Chew Valley car scheme is run by 47 volunteers for medical appointments only. In the last year 170 passenger journeys were made averaging between 2 miles to longer distances eg RUH in Bath.
- There have been approximately 8 floods in the area since 1960. In July 1968, double the normal rainfall fell in just 18 hours, flooding 88 properties in Chew Magna – some up to 2m deep.

The Village Agents scheme provides support for local residents to help and support mainly older people and their families throughout a significant life change. This is often triggered by a change in circumstance such as a family member returning from hospital or a loss of a relative. The Village Agents work through the issues in order to help them maintain a healthy and independent lifestyle.

A number of the larger villages have retained their local pub and convenience stores with some provision for post office services, and a supply of library books is part of the 'Hub in the Pub' in Chew Stoke. All villages have a church room, village or community facility, which vary in size and are used by a range of clubs and groups on a regular basis. The mobile library service also operates once a week in the area. Chew Magna acts as a local service hub to the surrounding villages, although more recently the GP surgery in Chew Magna relocated to a nearby village Chew Stoke. Other GP surgeries are located in West Harptree and Temple Cloud.

There are high levels of volunteering, much of which is informal volunteering helping neighbours and caring for relatives. There are many residents who are involved in community activities, such as lunch clubs, local flood wardens, the hub in a pub, and the community car scheme. However with an ageing population the available 'volunteer pool' is likely to reduce and the need for health-related services and adequate transport provision will increase further.

Future Challenges

Many rural communities have experienced significant social change over the last couple of decades and the Chew Valley has experienced the greatest proportion of population ageing across the authority area – the latest census shows an increase of 42% of people aged 75+ (Chew Valley South Ward).

Whilst many of the villages have some services for the local community to access, these are widely spread. Coupled with the lack of public transport in the rural area, accessing doctors' surgeries, schools, shops and post offices requires most people to travel by private transport, either by car or taxi. The increased costs of accessing services together with the increased costs of housing has led to rural living becoming less and less affordable, and for some completely unaffordable. This is particularly a problem for older people, families with young children and young people.

Chew Valley Priorities

The Forum has identified a number of priorities that are of particular concern to the area which are set out below under eight common themes. The Forum recognises that work is already underway in some areas to address these issues, such as Neighbourhood planning, Placemaking, Flood Forum etc. However there are three areas where the biggest impact is being felt by the community, these are:-

Health & Wellbeing

- improve access to services by offering more accessible ways to deliver services recognising the challenges of rural life and reducing inequality, isolation and loneliness.

Transport provision

- increase the health and wellbeing of those more isolated by considering alternative methods to public transport.
- improve connections to the main public transport routes for commuters.
- provide safer routes for cycling and walking.

Economic Development & Enterprise

- support rural businesses to thrive.
- improve the access to broadband for rural businesses.

The Forum will regularly review its eight themes in order to respond to new challenges and changing circumstances. Their other priorities include:-

Children & Young people -

- improve the provision of services and facilities for young people.

Developments and Infrastructure-

- ensure the impact of development maintains the identity of villages and provides sufficient improvements to infrastructure such as schools, roads, traffic and health.
- Improve the availability of affordable housing for local people.

Environmental, Sustainability and Climate Change -

- maintain awareness of the threat of Fracking in the local community.
- reduce the impact of flooding by working in partnership with agencies and the community to identify prevention measures and maintenance.

Stronger Communities -

- ensure community facilities are accessible and affordable to the whole community.

Safer Communities-

- provide a safe community by reducing anti-social behaviour.

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Keynsham area - At a glance

The Keynsham area lies in the north of Bath and North East Somerset, and has strong links to both Bristol and Bath. The largest of the areas, Keynsham, is a market town, which serves a number of the nearby villages. One of its key features is that the physical geography is influenced by the two rivers, Avon and Chew, which converge to the north of the town. Historically the rivers were used as a transport corridor: now the A4 from Bath to Bristol provides the principal traffic route for the area.

The Keynsham area is defined by seven electoral wards; one town; and seven parishes. Saltford and Whitchurch are local centres,

Public transport provision for most of the Keynsham area is good with rail, bus, road and cycle networks connecting the main cities and further afield. However the service available to the outlying villages is limited which means that some of the population is reliant on private transport. Keynsham Dial a Ride has seen an increase in its membership over the last five years particularly for health-related appointments. The service also runs a number of social events for its members.

Unemployment in the area is below the national average. The majority of people are employed, working mainly in managerial, professional, administrative and secretarial roles. 19% of the population is retired: this is higher than the national average. The main mode of transport to work is by car or van, travelling distances of between 5km and 10km to work.

There are two secondary schools and nine primary schools that serve the area. Broadlands Secondary and Wellsway Secondary are now Academies. Wellsway Secondary school specialises in Sports and Science and accommodates a leisure centre that is available for wider community use.

Key Facts

- There are 24,763 residents, 20% are under 18, 2% full time students, 23% over 65. 0.4% increase in population since 2001.
- There are some relatively high levels of deprivation in the Keynsham area with, Keynsham North and South and Publow and Whitchurch Wards in the most deprived 50% nationally. Farmborough and Keynsham east both fall within the least deprived 30%.
- Keynsham Dial-a-Ride has approximately 1,200 members. Over 50 groups now use the service.
- 32% economically inactive, of which 19% are retired, higher than the national average.
- 29% of people have a degree level or above and 20% of people have no qualifications.
- 1 in 3 children are aged between 5 and 6 years.
- 1 in 4 children aged 10 and 11 are overweight or obese.
- 8.5% of lives "limited a lot" by a disability.
- 455 employment & support allowance claimants.
- Child poverty (14%) is low compared to the UK (27%).

Over the next 15 years the area will see a significant growth in its population with Keynsham receiving the largest increase of 30%. Around 2,150 homes will be built in Keynsham and a further 200 homes in Whitchurch. The Core Strategy allows provision for the larger villages outside the Green Belt to identify development sites to accommodate around 50 dwelling, with small villages outside the Green Belt with a more limited range of services/facilities identifying sites to accommodate around 10 to 15 dwellings within the plan period. For those villages within and 'washed over' by the Green Belt new housing provision is limited to small scale infill development or limited affordable housing to meet local community needs.

Access to facilities and services in the Keynsham area is good. There are two leisure facilities, one run by Wellsway School and the other by the local authority. There are many community assets including church halls, village halls and community facilities across the area that vary in size and offer a range of activities and events for local people. Keynsham town centre has a newly designed One Stop Shop which includes a new library and access to a range of public sector partners, including the Council, Police and Curo. In addition there is a library in Saltford and the mobile library service visits some of the smaller villages on a weekly basis. There is a Health centre in Keynsham and four other GP surgeries

in Keynsham and Saltford. The smaller villages, Compton Dando, Marksbury, Farmborough and Corston are served by their neighbouring town or village less than 2 miles away. Keynsham area is served by the B&NES Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) who are responsible for commissioning a range of local healthcare services for the area, with the exception of Whitchurch which comes under the responsibility of the Bristol CCG.

The community is very active with high levels of volunteering. It is estimated that there are over 300 community and voluntary groups across the area providing a range of opportunities including, historical societies, gardening clubs, allotments, litter picking, environment groups, lunch clubs, community resources and support and advice groups. There are many community events organised throughout the year including music festivals, village fetes, Christmas events and much more. The Keynsham and Saltford Churches together has strong links within the community and take an active role in local events.

Future Challenges

Nearly a quarter of residents in the area are over 65 years and by 2029 the population in Keynsham will have increased by 30%. There are pockets of deprivation particularly in Keynsham North and South Wards and Publow and Whitchurch compared to the rest of the area. The growth in the population coupled with an increased aging population places and pockets of deprivation places future pressures on public services.

The challenge will be to ensure the area retains its identity, becomes well-connected, and continue to offer good access to services. Keynsham Town centre will need to improve both socially and economically and the local neighbouring villages will need to continue to play an important role in meeting the day to day needs of their community.

Keynsham Area Priorities

The Forum has identified a number of priorities that are of particular concern to the area which are set out below under eight common themes. These are:-

Health & Wellbeing

- Ensure services are accessible and affordable particularly for those more vulnerable and isolated people in the community

Transport provision

- Improve the provision of public transport for access to work
- Ensure provision for health related and reducing isolation and loneliness

Children & Young people

- Improve the provision of facilities and services for young people

Developments and Infrastructure

- ensure the impact of development maintains the identity of the town and villages and provide sufficient improvements to infrastructure such as schools, roads, traffic and health

Economic Development & Enterprise

- Create more job opportunities and support those people seeking employment

Environmental, Sustainability and Climate Change

- Improve the Air quality

Stronger Communities

- Ensure community assets are maintained and retained for future community use

Safer Communities

- Create a safe community by reducing the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour

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The Somer Valley - At a glance

The Somer Valley lies in the south of Bath and North East Somerset and has close links with Mendip. The area has strong historical characteristics from a Medieval Market town to the transformation during the industrial revolution. The strength in community and historical identity remains strong. The industrial landscape has been returned to beautiful countryside, and the former Somerset and Dorset Railway route provides a well-used cycling route for access to Bath and Frome.

The Somer Valley Area is defined by 8 electoral wards and is made up of 2 towns and 6 parishes. Its population is approximately 40,555.

Access by car and public transport to Bath and Bristol is reasonable but high levels of out-commuting, coupled with limited opportunities for large scale transport intervention has created high levels of congestion during peak times.

Those people living without private transport in the more rural areas of the Somer Valley may be affected by poor public transport routes. Community Transport is available for those unable to access conventional public transport and is offered by a number of providers including, Midsomer Norton Dial a Ride, Midsomer Norton Community Service Vehicle Trust and Midsomer Norton Community Minibus.

The Somer Valley is at the centre of the Somerset Coalfields and employed up to 4,000 people in the early 19th Century. Although the last pit closed in 1973, in 2013 the Somer Valley contained only 8% of all businesses in Bath and North East Somerset and 16% of manufacturing businesses. Manufacturing industries include printing, binding and packaging and provide important local employment opportunities. There are opportunities to increase the economic competitiveness to attract small and medium scale local businesses and highly skilled entrepreneurs.

Unemployment in the area in August 2014 was 0.8% (217 people) - 5.2% lower than the national average (6%). The majority of people are employed, working mainly in professional occupations; administrative and secretarial roles and skilled trades, although some wards do have significant employment in 'elementary occupations'. The main mode of transport to work is by car or van, travelling distances of between 10km and 20km to work.

There are three secondary schools, all of which are now Academies: Writhlington, Somervale and Norton Hill. Writhlington School also accommodates a Community Sports Centre offering a range of facilities including a gym, sports hall and outdoor football, cricket and tennis pitches. There are eleven primary schools in the area, one of which, Trinity (Radstock), is an Academy.

During the last 20 years employment growth in the Somer Valley has significantly been outweighed by large scale housing developments. It is important that such development does not continue to worsen the balance between homes and jobs and therefore the focus over the next 20 years will be creating more employment opportunities. The area has the capacity to create more than 2,000 jobs. However it has been predicted that no more than 900 jobs will come forward during this period unless a strong partnership between public and private sectors is developed. There are a significant number of housing commitments already underway in the Somer Valley: future housing will be restrained and

Key Facts – Somer Valley

- There are 40,055 residents, 22% are under 18, 2% full time students, 18% over 65. 5.2% increase in population since 1991
- Levels of deprivation vary greatly across the Somer Valley, from Radstock in the most deprived 40% nationally to High Littleton in the least 20% deprived.
- 32% economically inactive, of which 15% are retired.
- 22% of people have a degree or above – lower than national average (27%).
- 23% of people have no qualifications.
- 3 in 10 children are aged between 5 and 6 years.
- 1 in 4 children aged 10 and 11 are overweight or obese (B&NES).
- 83% of residents in good or very good health
- 7.3% of lives "limited a lot" by a disability.
- 815 employment & support allowance claimants.
- Child poverty (14%) is low compared to the UK (27%).

additional housing likely to be restricted to in-fill, windfall and brownfield sites. Greenfield development above existing employment and housing commitments will be limited.

Access to facilities and services in the Somer Valley is good. There are two leisure facilities, one run by Writhlington School and the other by the local authority. There are many community assets across the area that vary in size and offer a range of activities and events for local people. In addition there are three public libraries, one of which, Paulton Hub has recently been developed and is run in partnership between the Council and volunteers. The Hub offers a range of services including a coffee bar, WiFi and a meeting room to hire. The Hub also provides the opportunity for a range of other organisations to deliver their services in an accessible, central village location. The mobile library service also operates once a week in villages where there is no permanent library facility.

There are seven GP surgeries (Paulton; Peasedown St John; Radstock; Midsomer Norton (2); Timsbury and Westfield). The Paulton surgery has recently re-located and expanded its services – particularly around preventative medicine. There is increasing pressure on some of the other surgeries – particularly in Peasedown, Radstock and Midsomer Norton – due to increased housing development and an ageing population.

The community is very active with high levels of volunteering and community organisations providing a range of opportunities including, historical societies, gardening clubs, allotments, litter picking, environment groups, lunch clubs, community resources and support and advice groups. There are many community events organised throughout the year including village fetes, Christmas events and much more.

Future Challenges

Bath and North East Somerset is ranked 247 out of the 326 English local authorities (where 1 is the most deprived), which makes it one of the least deprived 30% of local authorities in the country. However, there are pockets of deprivation and, in the Somer Valley: the Midsomer Norton Redfield and North Wards are the areas which have seen the greatest relative increase in deprivation, worsening by 4,200 and 3,900 places respectively. However, these areas still remain within the least deprived 40%.

Other challenges include a vulnerable local economy dependent on a narrow range of industries and few large employers. There is a number of large, vacant, underused or ageing factory sites and perceived difficulty in attracting economic investment in the area. Also, high levels of out-commuting due to lack of local employment opportunities, traffic congestion and limited opportunities for large scale transport intervention.

Strengths

The area has an outstanding natural environment within and surrounding the individual communities and its mining heritage provides a basis for recreation and tourism. The critical mass of a combined Somer Valley area offers greater potential than individual towns and villages. It has active local communities and existing community networks as well as a local hospital and good schools. In addition, housing is of a relatively lower cost compared to elsewhere in the district.

Somer Valley Priorities

The Forum has identified a number of priorities that are of particular concern to the area which are set out below under seven common themes. The Forum will regularly review its themes in order to respond to new challenges and changing circumstances. The priorities include:-

Children & Young People

- improve the provision of services and facilities for young people.

Developments and Infrastructure

- ensure the impact of development maintains the identity of villages and provides sufficient improvements to transport infrastructure

Economic Development & Enterprise

- Create more job opportunities to prevent out-community

Health & Wellbeing

- Reduce social isolation
- Quality retirement accommodation
- Community Services (eg doctors' etc)
- Poverty: deprivation
- Health: childhood obesity, cancers, diabetes, poor child dental health, mental health

Safer Communities

- reduce anti-social behaviour.

Stronger Communities

- reduce isolation especially in villages

Transport

- increase the health and wellbeing of those more isolated
- help reduce the impact of congestion