



Local Community Network

Yearly Report 2023/2024

Shepton



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Local Community Networks (LCNs)

Purpose

“To be the focus for community development, engagement and partnership working at local level; improving the outcomes for residents through establishing strong connections between Somerset Council, our communities and partners.”

Map

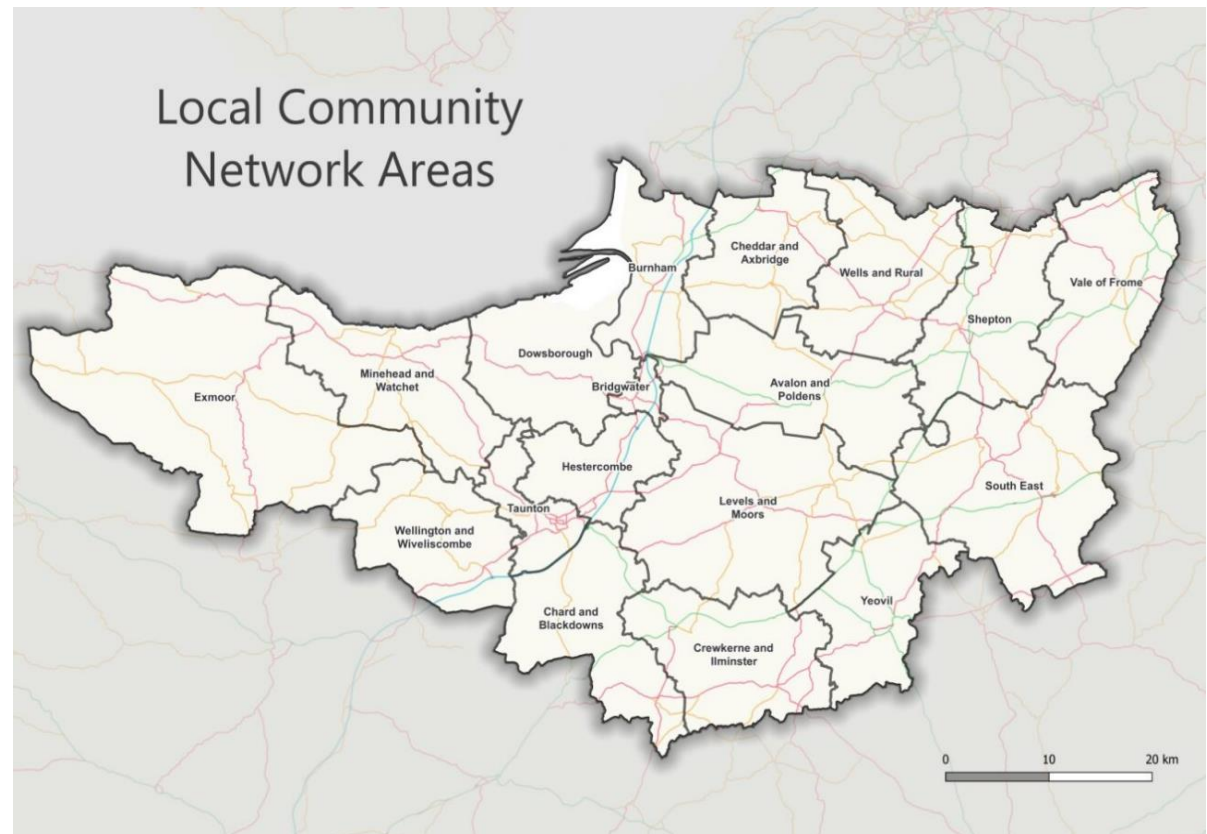
There are 18 LCNs in total.

They cover every city, town, and parish within the local authority area.

Full details of each LCN, including their demographics, characteristics, agendas, and meeting dates, can be found online.

Please visit the following webpage:

www.somerset.gov.uk/local-community-networks/



Shepton LCN

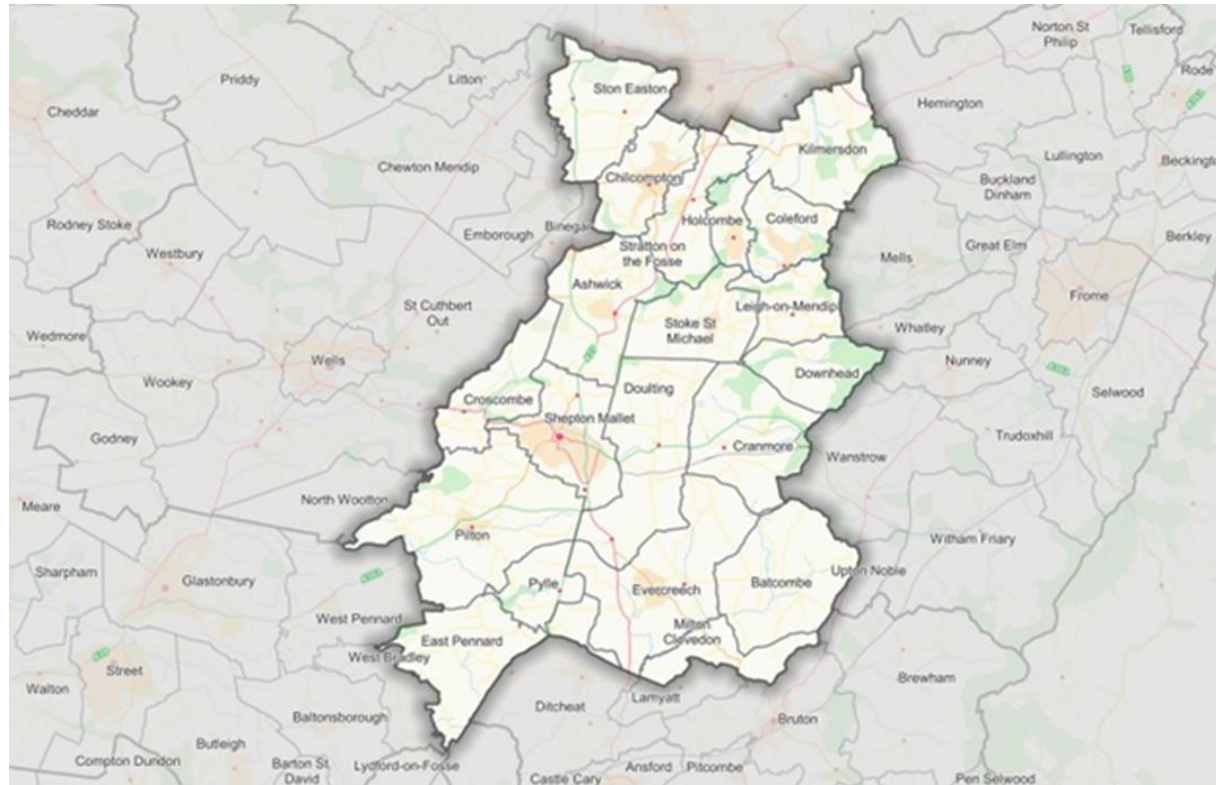
Shepton LCN has a population of close-to 28,000 people.

There are four Electoral Divisions within the Shepton LCN area. They are Mendip Central and East, Mendip Hills, Mendip South and Shepton Mallet.

It features 20 rural parishes, including the market town of Shepton Mallet.

Nestled at the gateway to the Mendip Hills, this LCN encompasses an area of outstanding natural beauty.

And every year the nearby Pilton parish plays host to the iconic, global music and performing arts event, Glastonbury Festival.



Shepton LCN Area

Chair and Vice Chair



Chair: Shepton LCN

Cllr Philip Ham

Philip has more than 20 years' experience as a local councillor at parish, district and county council level.

He currently serves on Somerset Council representing the Mendip Central & East Division.

Vice Chair: Shepton LCN

Cllr Claire Sully

Claire's motto is "I am determined to improve lives through my professional, political and community work."

She is a member of Somerset Council and represents the Mendip South Division.



Chair's Introduction

We are an LCN of 20 parishes including the market town of Shepton Mallet. At our first meeting I was delighted to be elected as Chair with Claire Sully as the Vice Chair. The particular boundary of this LCN means we have four Electoral Divisions (and so eight Somerset Councillors) within the LCN.

We've been pleased with the growing representation of parishes attending the LCN, with almost all parishes represented at some point or another. The LCN has become a healthy forum for open discussion and debate where everyone is welcome.

It has felt like growing an oak tree from seed; during this first year we had to obtain the acorn, sow it, wait for germination and then wait for the green shoots. This tree will need watering and care, and in time, nutrition (money) to grow and flourish.

We have covered subjects like highways, flooding, health and wellbeing and young persons. We've set up terms of reference for the LCN and established two working groups – Highways Working Group, Chaired by Cllr Martin Lovell, and a Flood Working Group, Chaired by Cllr Barry Clarke.

Whilst the police have been able to attend one of our meetings online, for various reasons (including shift patterns) they have not been able to join us in person to provide an overview of policing issues in the area. We look forward to welcoming them in the coming year.

We are pleased with the general attendance and enthusiasm of stakeholders and local businesses and hope to see this grow. Going forward we will be planning the agendas for the coming year and hope that this, alongside the development of the working group action plans, will build momentum and interest in the LCN.

I found the workshop for Chairs and Vice Chairs a very helpful and enlightening session, especially when discussing with peers the priorities, ideas and best practice being enacted across all the LCN groups in Somerset.

Lastly, I would personally thank all the Officers that have made this last year possible.

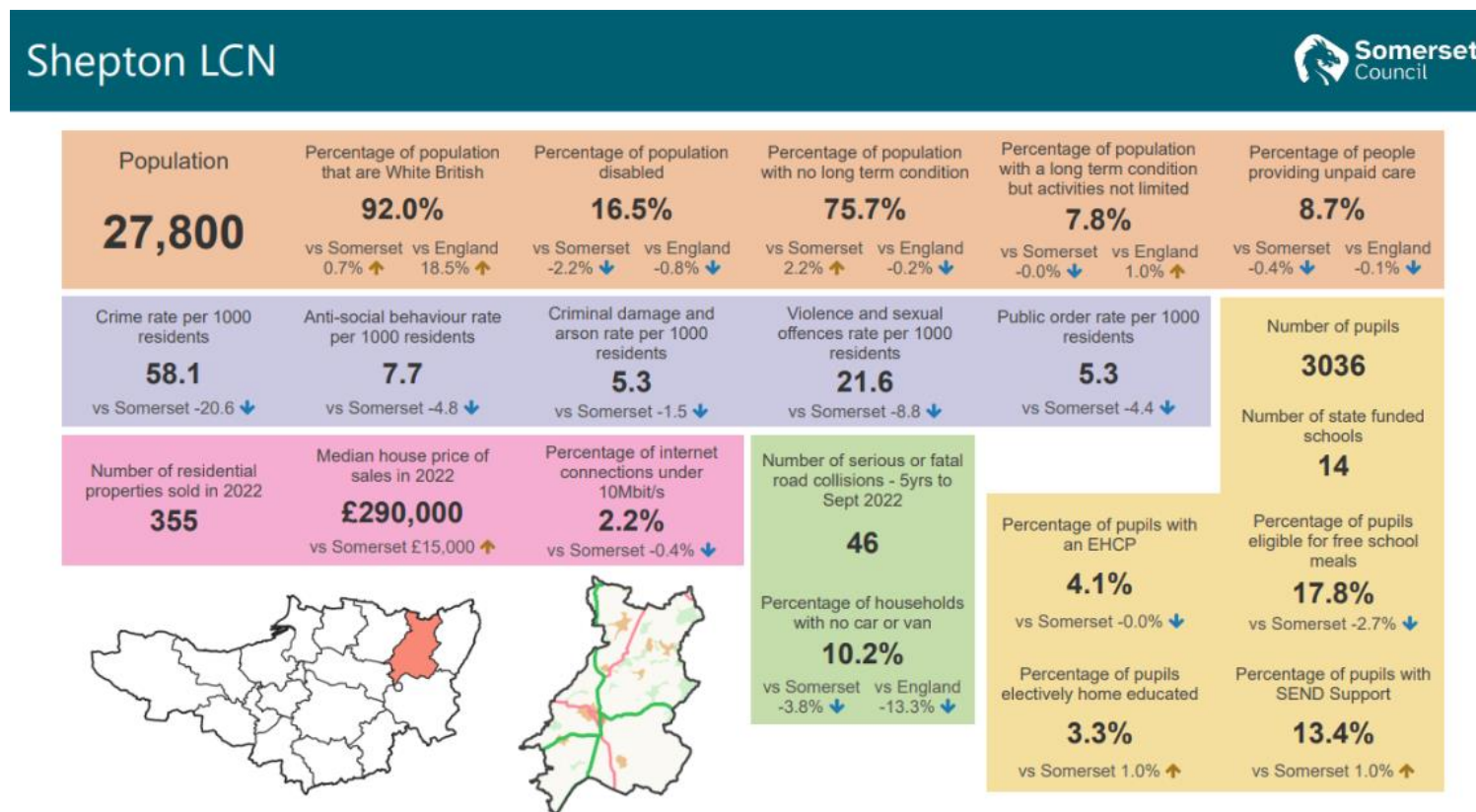
Cllr Philip Ham
Chair, Shepton LCN

Priorities and Ambitions

Data

Our Performance Management team at Somerset Council produced a useful data pack for the Shepton LCN area, providing critical information on population, residential properties, policing, and the number of pupils in education (including educational needs).

This is an example of what data can be produced (see image below and at Appendix B). Going forward, it will be used to support areas of work discussed at future meetings.

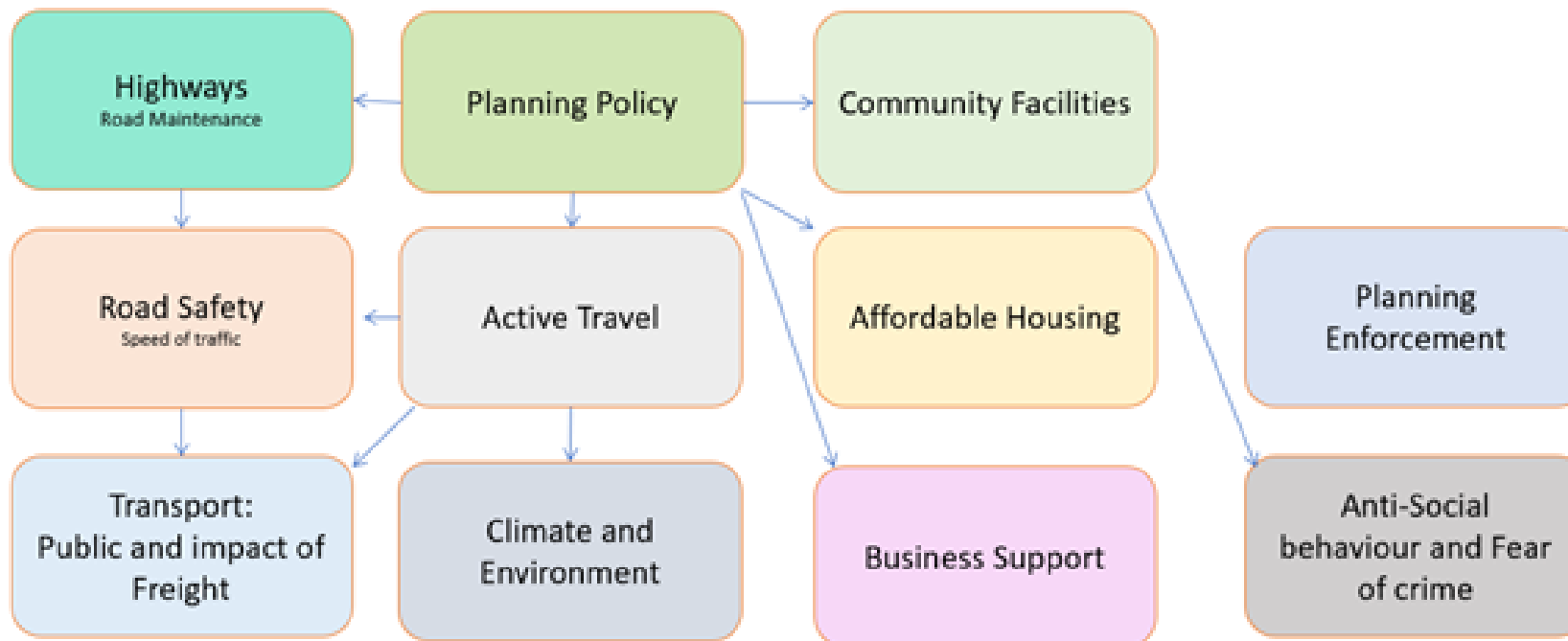


Larger image can be found at Appendix B

Priorities and Ambitions

At the beginning of this year the Shepton LCN discussed in small groups what they felt was important for their towns and parishes. These discussions led to the priorities and ambitions the Shepton LCN wanted to focus on.

The table below identifies these areas and gave the LCN themes for discussion throughout the year.



LCN Meeting Highlights

Early Development

The initial meetings of the LCN have been focused on providing space for representatives to meet, get to know each other and begin to identify local priorities. The process has taken time and has involved bringing people with different networks and existing relationships together within the newly defined LCN area. This has started to draw out shared aims, objectives and challenges in themes. This LCN is developing well, with many parishes being represented at each meeting to discuss what is relevant to their parish. It has been a good space to share information from Somerset Council.

In addition to this, we have had extreme weather this year. Flooding has been a major concern for many. The LCN has been a platform for colleagues of the Council to share information and support our communities during the devastation this has caused. It has given us a space to communicate the immediate effects and plan for future events.

Financial Emergency

The Financial Emergency declared by Somerset Council in November, clearly impacted the nature of conversations which have had to take place within the context of identifying efficiencies and devolving services.

The LCN has proved to be a very effective vehicle for information sharing and for facilitating early consideration of the impact of budget cuts on service delivery and potential mitigation. This is an ongoing, complex, two-way process with details of service reductions and future service standards emerging over time. The LCN has provided a space for representatives, in particular from town and parish councils, to share the approach that is taken to setting precepts, for example.

Making Connections

We have used a number of venues across Shepton LCN area, including halls in Ashwick & Oakhill, Croscombe and the Shape Mendip site at Shepton Mallet. We've provided a hybrid option for those unable to attend in person. Going forward we hope the IT connections will be more stable, and halls with good broadband will be the preferred option. We will continue to ensure meetings are held across the LCN area in order to enable and encourage attendance by all.

Technical and governance support for the LCN meetings has been provided by Somerset Council's Democratic Services and IT colleagues. We are grateful for their assistance during this, our inaugural LCN year.

Working Groups

Shepton LCN has two working groups covering highways and traffic, and flooding. These working groups are in their infancy and will grow in the course of time.

Highways Working Group

The Highways Working Group has met twice, with the first meeting being in-person with the Highways team. This was well attended (13 people) and was supported by two Highways Officers.

A great discussion was had. The Highways team answered many questions and provided useful information. There was learning about the Highways Steward scheme and how it can work across the LCN. Cllr Martin Lovell leads this group which is open to all to attend.

A second meeting has taken place via MS Teams (virtual) to discuss the priorities the group wish to take forward, and a future in-person session will be arranged once a dedicated Link Officer is in post.

Flood Working Group

The Flood Working Group has recently held its first meeting. Paul Elliston from Somerset Rivers Authority was in attendance, alongside Cllr Barry Clark who is leading this group. Notes have been shared with the members, parish clerks and attendees.

The immediate priority for the group is to communicate the aims and objectives to the wider LCN, to recruit volunteers to key areas and to encourage more participation.

Future meetings for the Flood Working Group will be to provide support with emergency plans and emergency plan writing. Paul will be running workshops to support this area of work with the aim to give parishes the tools they need to support their communities going forward.

Reflections

This LCN is starting to better understand the work that other local, agencies and voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) organisations undertake and the efficiencies that might come from better partnership working.

These conversations will of course progress going forward as we further explore topics of interest and priorities for this LCN and its residents.

The Shepton LCN has been a platform for:

- Understanding Somerset Council's financial position, giving town and parish councils the opportunity to see how they can support each other and protect the much-valued non-statutory services for communities, going forward.
- Improving working relationships with Somerset Council Highways Officers. Officers are engaged and visible to the LCN group, which is proving beneficial for all.
- The opportunity for Avon and Somerset Police to deliver their collective messages to a wider audience in one setting. A better use of time and resources all-round.

Contacts

Email: sheptonlcn@government.gov.uk Website: www.somerset.gov.uk/local-community-networks/

Shepton LCN: www.somerset.gov.uk/local-community-networks/lcn-areas/shepton/

Appendices

Appendix A – Membership

Parishes

Ashwick
Batcombe
Chilcompton
Coleford
Cranmore
Croscombe
Doulting
Downhead
East Pennard
Evercreech
Holcombe
Kilmersdon
Leigh-on-Mendip
Milton Clevedon
Pilton
Pylle
Shepton Mallet
Stoke St Michael
Ston Easton
Stratton on the Fosse

Electoral Divisions

Mendip Central and East
Mendip Hills
Mendip South
Shepton Mallet

Core Organisations

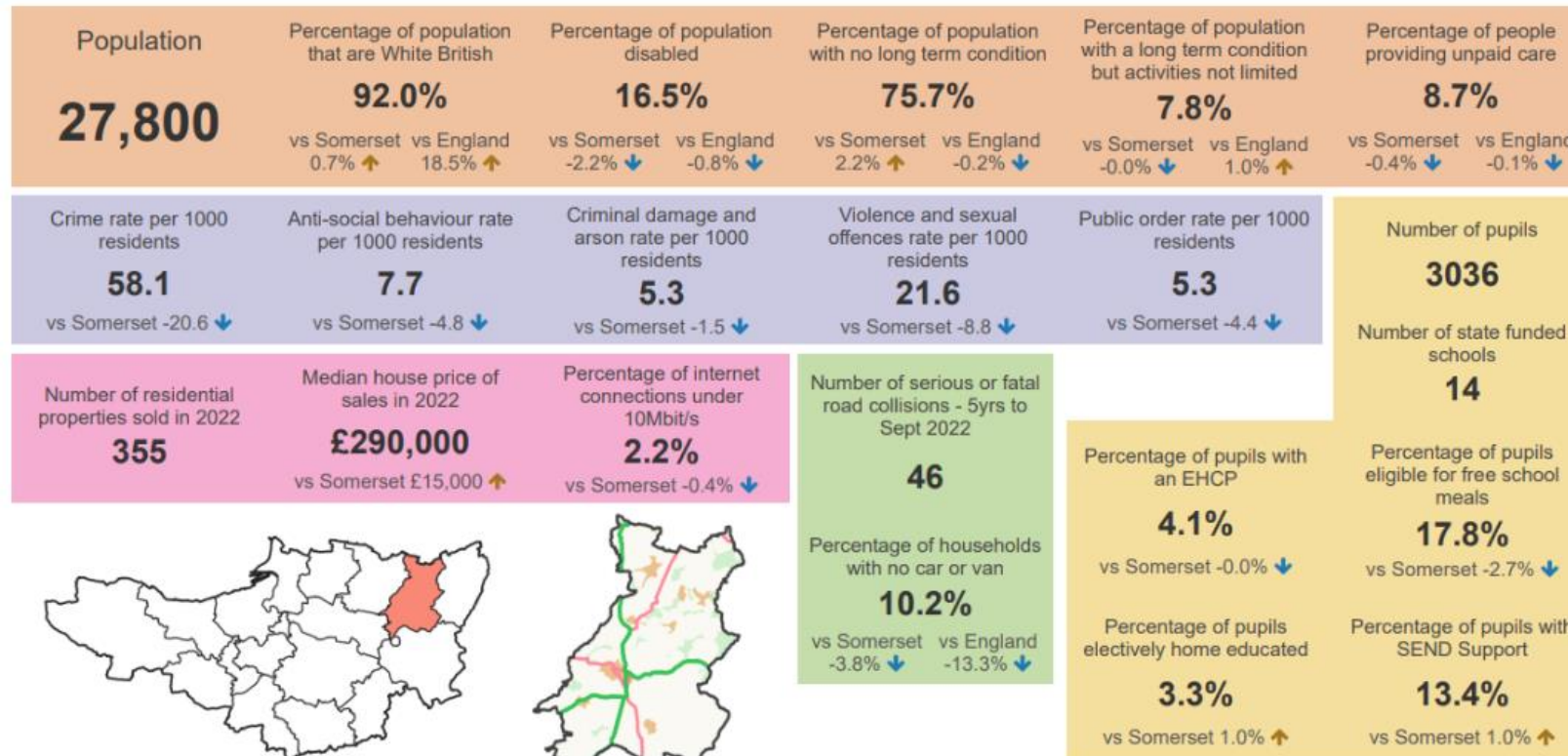
Avon and Somerset Police
NHS
Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue
Education Partners
Spark Somerset
Society Local Council Clerks (SLCC)
Somerset Association Local Councils (SALC)
Somerset Activity Sports Partnership (SASP)
Community Council for Somerset
Somerset Youth Alliance
Citizens Advice
Department of Work and Pensions
Somerset Rivers Authority
Somerset Local Nature Partnership
Business Chamber

Additional Partners

The Trustee Playing Fields Pilton
Connect Somerset
Scotts Group Ltd
Healthwatch
Somerset Foundation Trust
WellBe Link (adult mental health)
First Aid for Mental Health
Instructors Mendip Country Practice
Make the Sunshine

Appendix B – Data

Shepton LCN

Appendix C – Meeting Dates and Agendas

Browse Shepton LCN meeting minutes and agendas here: <https://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=903>

Monday 31 July 2023

Mendip Shape Council Chamber

1. To elect the chair of the LCN
2. To appoint the Vice-Chair of the LCN
3. To receive any apologies for absence
4. Declarations of Interest
5. Public Questions (not covered on the agenda)
6. To determine the priorities and areas of focus for the LCN for the next 12 months
 - a. What are LCNs and how will we work together
 - b. Discussion – What is important to residents and businesses in our area? (An opportunity to raise any local issues or concerns for LCN to consider)
7. To agree the frequency of meetings
8. The schedule of meetings for the next 12 months

Wednesday 18 October 2023

Ashwick & Oakhill Village Hall

1. Apologies
2. Declaration of interest
3. Approval of minutes of the last meeting
4. Public Question Time (anything not covered on the agenda)
5. Highlights of themes discussed at the last meeting
6. An introduction to data
7. Discussion:
8. Dates for the next meetings

Thursday 11 January 2024

Mendip Shape Council Chamber

1. Apologies
2. Declaration of interest
3. Approval of minutes of the last meeting
4. Update on Somerset Council's current financial position - Q&A
5. Public Question Time (anything not covered on the agenda)
6. Discussion re Highways and Transport Issues
7. Item Suggestions, for Future meetings
 - a. Shepton Mallet Leisure Centre?
 - b. Working groups going forward – HGV issues? Rural/Public Transport?
8. Dates for the next meetings

Monday 11 March 2024

Mendip Shape Council Chamber

1. Apologies
2. Declaration of interest
3. Approval of minutes of the last meeting
4. Police update with Q & A
5. Public Question Time (anything not covered on the agenda)
6. Working groups update
 - a. Highways and Traffic
 - b. Flooding
7. Health and Wellbeing presentation
8. Forward planning for future meetings
9. Dates for the next meetings

Monday 29 April 2024

Croscombe Village Hall

1. Apologies
2. Declaration of interest
3. Approval of minutes of the last meeting
4. Public Question Time (anything not covered on the agenda)
5. Working groups update
6. Young People presentation
7. Forward planning for future meetings
8. Dates for the next meetings