

Consultation Responses- Draft Somerset Housing Strategy 2019- 2023

<p>Q1. Does this draft framework demonstrate a clear understanding of national & local housing issues?</p>
<p>Overall, it is well-constructed, evidenced, informed by various high level strategies and realistic. We endorse the direction of travel of the various ambitions and welcome further engagement post approval of the Framework as tackling the housing crisis needs a coordinated approach from everyone. Moving into implementation, the County Council looks forward to working with everyone to ensure that we achieve our shared ambitions. (Paula Hewitt, Lead Director for Economic and Community Infrastructure & Director of Commissioning)</p>
<p><i>Response: Noted</i></p>
<p>It is a clear, transparent, simple and an accountable document. It is also interesting and well communicated and effectively represents the difficulties, challenges and assets which Somerset has in regard to housing and its central importance to communities and wellbeing of residents. (Angela Gascoigne, SHAL Housing)</p>
<p><i>Response: Noted</i></p>
<p>AMEND and insert in Introduction: Recognise that Government has consulted on a draft National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018) and updated planning practice guidance. This introduces a standard methodology for calculating objectively assessed housing need for local planning authorities and a housing delivery test (National Park Authorities are exempt from this test). (ENPA)</p>
<p><i>Response: Agree – amend introductory text</i></p>
<p>Q2. Do you agree with the VISION for housing with Somerset?</p>
<p>There is a need to ensure we achieve the right balance of housing, employment and infrastructure in rural areas such as West Somerset and not merely utilise all grants available. There are no meaningful statements regarding where the money is coming from to fund this utopian vision for the future. (Geoffrey Williams- Resident)</p>
<p><i>Response: The purpose of the Vision is to provide a statement of the future to which all key partners can agree and aspire. The Vision is supported by a range of priorities and ambitions that describe how we shall seek to improve housing delivery, housing conditions and housing support services for the residents of Somerset. Delivery will be coordinated within a Multi-agency Delivery Plan that we shall publish before the end of 2018. However, it is agreed that more could be said about the relationship between housing, the economy and infrastructure. Amend the draft SHS</i></p>
<p>More focus on Veterans from HM Forces. (Andy Kendall- MP, SSDC)</p>
<p><i>Response: Agree to amend the SHS to acknowledge the housing related concerns of this group</i></p>
<p>There is a risk of equating local issues with national issues. There must be a recognition of the negative impact of Hinkley Point C, especially once it is built, on locals.(Jeff Curtis- Shepton Mallet United Charities- Chair)</p>
<p><i>Response: Noted, but we have already covered this within the 'Introduction', 'Key Challenges', 'Housing and Economy' and 'Housing and Society'.</i></p>
<p>Lack of joined up thinking, strategic and a holistic approach. We must view housing as part of developing whole communities. (Michael Phillips- Resident)</p>
<p><i>Response: Thank you for your comment. Your concerns regarding a whole community approach are noted and (for example) addressed in Theme 3, Priority 3. Ambition 1. Ideas will be explored further as we develop the Multi Agency Delivery Plan and any associated partner Action Plans</i></p>

SWP is concerned at the lack of recognition of environmental issues within the draft. There is a lack of any reference to ensuring that homes and communities are designed with waste in mind (SWP's developer guidance). Adequate provision of storage for refuse and recycling within the property must be provided, as well as sufficient space outside for waste collection and access for collection vehicles, and the use and provision of Recycling Sites within the County. SWP is keen to be involved early in the discussion about opportunities to trial innovative approaches, for example in any further garden town developments. (Mickey Green- SWP)

*Response: It is acknowledged that the draft SHS contains little guidance on environmental issues, and this needs to be rectified. However, there is a balance to be struck between high level strategic guidance (e.g. SHS) and matters of policy detail that are more appropriate for other documents e.g. the LDF and associated guidance. We will give this matter further consideration. **Agree to amend the draft SHS to refer to and provide strategic guidance based on the Environmental and Health impact methodologies and legislation and to encourage local promotion and adoption***

The Framework demonstrates a clear understanding of national and local housing issues and aligns itself to the HotSW LEP Strategic Economic Plan, emerging Productivity Strategy, the Government's Industrial Strategy and the National Infrastructure Assessment. We welcome the ambition to maximise HPC legacy, work with One Public Estate, and to make use of available funding streams such as the Housing Infrastructure Fund. Seen in the context of new development and the improvement of existing housing stock, the benefits of low carbon economy such as improved energy efficiency are perhaps something that could usefully be explored going forward to provide sustainable and inclusive growth. (Chris Garcia- HotSW LEP)

*Response: **Agree to amend the draft SHS to provide strategic guidance on environmental issues (to reference its relationship with the growth agenda)***

The leadership requirement is too vague and the vision should emphasise the rural community. (Brian Longstaff, Beercombe Parish Council)

Response: Thank you for your comment. The leadership ambition is set out and there is reference to rural housing issues. The importance of local communities (rural or urban) are noted throughout the document. The detailed interpretation of the Vision is contained within the Priorities and Ambitions where there is more to say about rurality and rural housing issues. These matters are considered important

There are not outcomes/ targets to support the vision. (Eric Newcombe- Pitminster Parish Council)

Response: Thank you for your comment. We wanted to secure support to a proposed Vision, Priorities and Ambitions, before developing actions with proposed outcomes and targets. We shall soon be preparing a Multi-Agency Delivery Plan that will identify specific activity together with outcomes and targets

The emphasis on holistic health and wellbeing is pivotal. Now we need to ensure that there is action behind the words and people remain central. (Jane Knowles, Somerset Activity & Sport Partnership)

Response: Noted and will be addressed in both Multi Agency Delivery Plan and any Partner Action Plans

The sub-section on Economy only refers to the house-building economy; there is no reference to the general economy and prosperity. (Chris Barker, West Coker Parish Council)

*Response: Noted and agree that we could say a little more about the County-wide aspirations for growth and prosperity. **Amend the draft SHS***

Missing is the grave sustainability need for communal, cooperative and council housing with accompanying restrictions on unsustainable private housing, private renting and right to buy. (Alan Debenham, Green Party)

Response: Noted. The draft Framework operates within a current housing system that is determined by relevant laws, regulations and guidance. We acknowledge the issues that you refer to, and we are seeking to address some of these concerns through strategic systems leadership

- (1) Ambitions should be more detailed and robust.
 (2) How would effectiveness of Framework be measured? (WS Scrutiny)

Response: Noted. We shall soon be preparing a Multi-Agency Delivery Plan that will identify specific activity together with outcomes and targets

Robust but has too many priorities. (Registered Social Landlord Forum- Housing Directors)

Response: Noted and (to some extent) we agree. The challenge is to consider which of the priorities require strategic systems leadership in order to deliver results. These will be the focus of the Multi Agency Delivery Plan and any partner Action Plans. Alongside this we shall be reconsidering the Terms of Reference and governance arrangements around strategic housing, with a view to bringing in more interested partners with the appropriate authority, skills, drive and desire for change

Housing market is generally fluid at the moment with things continually changing. A challenge for the Framework is flexibility. How will this be incorporated? (TD/WS Community Planning Group)

Response: Noted. There will be systematic monitoring / annual review of the Multi Agency Action Plan and any partner Action Plans

Concerns around Hinkley Point C impact, especially in reference to hate crime. (VCS Forum)

*Response: Noted: We understand that these matters are being given consideration by those working on the mitigation measures associated with the HPC development. We note that there has been a recent appointment of a Community Safety Officer (funded through the HPC Community Mitigation Fund). **Amend the draft EIA to reference this matter, and to identify how and where these concerns are being addressed***

Q3. Do you agree with the context, priorities & ambitions for housing & ECONOMY?

It seems to be a utopian ideal of society and needs proof of funding to ensure employment and infrastructure are adequate. Reduction on allowances for landlords and rogue landlords enforcement (which seems invisible) will only lead to a shortfall of rented property. Are you also considering forcing resident homeowners to downsize? (Geoffrey Williams- Resident)

Response: We wanted to secure support to a proposed Vision, Priorities and Ambitions, before developing specific proposals. We shall soon be preparing a Multi-Agency Delivery Plan/partner Action Plans that will identify specific activity which would include elements of employment and infrastructure. Reduction on allowances for landlords will be compensated by Theme 2, Priority 2. There will not be any forced movement of homeowners / occupiers – rather, we wish to be able to offer an ‘appropriate’ property solution for those whose existing properties may be affecting their health and wellbeing. Those over-occupying properties are (of course) encouraged to downsize.

How will this be achieved? How will the strategy inform hard to reach areas, especially those in crisis seeking to access services and accommodation? (Yvonne Butcher- Sanctuary Housing-Scheme Service Manager)

Response: This is a leadership challenge – we need all the various ‘systems’ and ‘partners’ to be working together to resolve this other complex issues. Complex issues require solutions that are able to adapt quickly to a rapidly changing landscape. We are working on this through the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Strategic Housing Partnership and associated commissioning arrangements. Further detail will be provided in the Multi Agency Delivery Plan.

Most of the housing being built is not affordable to those most in need. The Housing Infrastructure Fund is only suitable to national needs and we need real jobs rather than academic prowess as a rural County Needs. (Jeff Curtis- Shepton Mallet United Charities- Chair)

Response: The way to improve affordability is to provide more housing, and to ensure that new housing is reflective of and appropriate to local need. This Housing Framework provides a vision to enable that to happen. Further details will be provided in the Multi-Agency Delivery Plan. The Somerset Growth Plan and the Local Enterprise Partnership are seeking to improve the range of jobs, upskill the local workforce and improve productivity. We will work in partnership to ensure that

<p><i>all relevant systems (housing, planning, economic development, health and wellbeing etc) are aligned to achieve these strategic ambitions</i></p>
<p>The ambitions are listed in a disordered, divided, disparate and dysfunctional way with no patterned, holistic, strategic 'linking' of ideas, needs and targets. Priorities and aims are unclear. (Michael Phillips- Resident)</p>
<p><i>Response: Thank you for your feedback. We have secured wide partnership support for the content of the draft SHS. Outcomes are targets will be identified in the Multi Agency Delivery Plan</i></p>
<p>Priority 2 must remain a sincere ambition. (Brian Longstaff, Beercombe Parish Council)</p>
<p><i>Response: Noted and will be addressed in both Multi Agency Delivery Plan and partner Action Plans</i></p>
<p>Ambition within each Priority need to be prioritised and more positive outcomes/ results need to be articulated. (Eric Newcombe- Pitminster Parish Council)</p>
<p><i>Response: Noted and will be addressed in both Multi Agency Delivery Plan and District Action Plans</i></p>
<p>(1) Members supported the building and acquisition of existing homes by SDC/HIS as a means of having more control over accommodation required and allocation of housing applications. (2) Would CIL compromise delivery of the type of homes required? How will the current lack of one bed properties be addressed, and is it accurate as it conflicts between the private sector and the Council's aspirations? (3) Is there a need for more sheltered housing? JSNA and Demographic information? (4) Members were interested in knowing more about whether modular builds were a viable option. (5) Committee members noted and supported the action to address the current shortage of construction skills through Education, Training and Employment schemes. Raise with LEP? (SDC Community Scrutiny Committee)</p>
<p><i>Response: Questions will be addressed within the District Action Plan for Sedgemoor. A target for modular build has been added.</i></p>
<p>There is little substance on how the economy will expand to employ the expected population. (Merriott Parish Council)</p>
<p><i>Response: Noted and we shall provide some further explanatory text. Amend the draft SHS</i></p>
<p>Supporting communities with Universal Credit is pivotal as people will be seeking unfavourable finance to cope with the change in benefit payment cycles created. (Ross Kuklinski, Home Group Operations Manager)</p>
<p><i>Response: Agree: As partners we work on this through the remit of the Financial Inclusion Strategy and associated partner / individual activity. There is much good practice that needs to be shared and developed. This is a matter that requires further consideration, possibly as a specific piece of work within the Multi Agency Delivery Plan</i></p>
<p>The Framework needs to adopt a proactive approach rather than a reactive one. (Emma Curtis, Milborne Port Parish Council)</p>
<p><i>Response: Actually, you need to do both. React to circumstances that are making life difficult for people, and be proactive in how you identify solutions and develop a vision for the future. We believe that the draft SHS strikes this balance</i></p>
<p>Short term disadvantages of Hinkley Point C must be addressed. (Liz Payne, CPRE Somerset)</p>
<p><i>Response: The draft SHS acknowledges the impact of HPC – ref 'Introduction', 'Key Challenges', 'Housing and Economy' and 'Housing and Society'. Mitigation strategies have also been produced by Sedgemoor, West Somerset and Taunton Deane.</i></p>

- (1) Seek to de-risk business for housing associations with regards to loan covenants, pension funding and headcount to enable the ability to build new homes.
- (2) Seek to work with SMEs across a wide range of services. Also consider developing methodology with partners on evidencing social impact accordingly. (Angela Gascoigne, SHAL Housing)

Response:

(1) We agree that this would be desirable in the interests of delivering more homes, but question the extent to which local government has the resources to be able to do this as this seems to be outside our remit

(2) Achieving positive social impact through investment / purchasing decisions is a matter of keen interest to a number of partners, and could / should be the focus of a detailed piece of work that could inform the sector. Consider including as a work-stream within the Multi Agency Delivery Plan

Welcome the support of Modern Methods of Construction and modular off site construction, particularly when aligned with increased thermal efficiency. It also links with improving construction skills for young people, essential in the light of reduced immigration and an ageing workforce. In this regard a University focused on construction skills is to be welcomed. (Angela Gascoigne, SHAL Housing)

Response: This is matter for multi-agency debate, particularly within the sphere of the Somerset Growth Board. We shall work to encourage cross-sector discussions between housing, economic development and town planners. Linking opportunities to local communities is essential

It would be particularly useful for housing associations and local authorities to work together on the introduction of the Voluntary Right to Buy, following the two year pilot starting in the Midland this summer, to ensure that there are no unintended consequences with regards to rural rented homes. (Angela Gascoigne, SHAL Housing)

Response: We note that the latest pilot includes the idea of a one-for-one replacement and will monitor the potential of this to protect the number of rural rented properties and contribute to the debate in support of our rural housing where possible. This will also be covered through a refreshed Somerset Tenancy Strategy

Ensure that the shared ambition of the Somerset Growth Plan; economic prosperity will be inclusive, to the benefit of all groups within the community is delivered. Accordingly, the Key Facts, Aspirations and the Housing & Economy sections should be revised to reflect this shared ambition of economic growth between now and 2030. (Paula Hewitt, Lead Director for Economic and Community Infrastructure & Director for Commissioning)

*Response: Agree: **Amend the SHS***

The support that could be offered beyond the provision of housing, is a real chance to make a difference to some of our most vulnerable adults and children. (Jane Knowles, Somerset Activity & Sport Partnership)

Response: Noted, supported and the Multi Agency Delivery Plan will address this

Particular reference to relevant mix of accommodation is good. Partnerships and collaboration will be key to the success of this Framework, especially in rural communities. Embracing local expertise will also create better outcomes for everyone. (Claire Tough, Homes in Sedgemoor)

Response: Noted and agree – the Multi Agency Delivery Plan will identify/suggest opportunities for further partnership activity

Lack of reference to encouragement of a thriving economy. This must be the top priority. (Chris Barker, West Coker Parish Council)

*Response: Agree that we need to insert some text regarding the relationship of housing and the economy. **Amend the SHS***

There's no mention of energy efficient new build homes in this document, which is key in building support for new homes. It would be useful if the Framework explained how the Councils would seek to encourage this. More use could be made of s106 Rural Exception Sites, which are a key tool to deliver rural homes and release development land. Solutions to keep young people in the County need consideration e.g. enabling agile working through superfast broadband in new homes and building close to railway stations and other transport hubs. (Mandella Edwards, Hastoe Housing Association)

*Response: Agree to all of the above. **Amend the SHS (Economy – Priority 2 and Health - Priority 1 & 2).** Element of this may also be picked up within specific activity that will be included in the Multi Agency Delivery Plan*

AMEND Ambition: Each local authority will prioritise the delivery of new housing (~~open market and affordable~~) to meet the needs of their area and provide community leadership at the highest level to make this happen. (ENPA)

*Response: Agree – **amend the SHS***

AMEND Ambition: Maintain up to date local plan coverage within each district area and Exmoor National Park and ensure a five-year housing land supply to meet housing targets. (ENPA)

*Response: Agree. **Amend the SHS***

AMEND Ambition: ~~Maximise land value of rural exceptions sites.~~ Incentivise/ promote land release for rural exception sites. Ensuring that provision remains affordable in perpetuity for future generations or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. (ENPA)

*Response: Agree: **Amend the SHS***

AMEND Ambition: Improve the percentage of affordable homes in rural developments tied to local plan allocations. ~~Increase the choice of supported accommodation.~~ Increase the number of supported housing units to ensure the needs of some of the most vulnerable in society are more effectively met. (Tony Murray, Magna)

*Response: Agree. **Amend the SHS***

REVISE Ambition: 'There will be an increase in rates of self-build and custom build' and 'We shall work to see the introduction of off-site/ modular construction' as they clash and neither are the best answers. (Tony Murray, Magna)

*Response: Agree to reconsider the draft wording. **Consider amend the draft SHS***

AMEND Ambition: Each local authority will prioritise the delivery of new housing (~~open market and affordable~~) and provide community leadership at the highest level to make this happen. (Keith House, LGA Housing Panel)

*Response: Agree. **Amend the draft SHS***

Reliance on private housing is bad in terms of resources per person as it is unsustainable as we grow only 15% of our fruit and 55% of vegetables. (Alan Debenham, Green Party)

Response: We are seeking to maximise the number of affordable homes across all tenures as per Theme 1, Priority 1

- (1) Eco building was encouraged and seek to utilise green methods and renewable energy in construction.
- (2) The Framework should be changed to focus on the new economy. (TDBC Community Scrutiny)

*Response: Agree that the Framework need to say more about environmental matters. **Amend the SHS***

Q4. Are there any issues that might pose a threat/ barrier to delivery of the priorities & ambitions?

Lack of funding, employment, poor road network, few buses/ public transport, rurality in West Somerset, poor infrastructure, bureaucracy. (Geoffrey Williams- Resident)

Response: Noted and these issues are recognised by a range of partners working in various functions

Identify as a priority area those homeless and under 35 and deal with issues such as funding for staffing for rough sleepers and increasing the supported housing stock, especially those with substance misuse issues. Also seek to revise the non-priority bonds set up by TDBC which requires a payment from homeless individuals in order to secure it. (Yvonne Butcher- Sanctuary Housing- Scheme Service Manager)

Response: There is a rapidly changing landscape in relation to young people with complex needs. The Housing Reduction Act has released some funding for support services and more is being made available from Govt (specifically for rough sleepers) to which we can bid and hopefully secure funding. The County Council's commissioning arrangements (in relation to people with complex needs) is also changing and will hopefully deliver a more responsive service that is focussed with individuals at the centre of decision making. We are committed to reviewing the Youth Housing Strategy that will pick up and recognise / address some of these concerns

Change at Central Government and the threat of boom and bust. (Jeff Curtis- Shepton Mallet United Charities- Chair)

Response: Noted that the national picture presents difficult challenges at a local level

The lack of effective infrastructure provision and adequate community facilities means other social factor aims and targets are completely unattainable no matter how many houses are built. (Michael Phillips- Resident)

*Response: Noted. The draft SHS seeks to help address these concerns e.g. Health (Priority 1). It is noted that these concerns can only largely be addressed through a robust LDF. The draft SHS could say a little more on this theme. **Amend the draft SHS***

The continued capping of local authorities and its inability to borrow funding for houses will render this strategy unachievable. (Kingsdon Parish Council)

Response: These are significant challenges but Councils do have access to money (if they wish – subject to borrowing limits) to stimulate house building. We need to be more proactive in this area. We hope that individual partners (district) Action Plans may help to identify specific opportunities to stimulate housing growth

The lack of Parish Councils involvement in this process as they are at the front line of any strategic decisions. (Brian Longstaff, Beercombe Parish Council)

Response: Noted and it is acknowledged that as public services / housing providers we need to work more proactively with communities. This is stated within the draft SHS

Achievement of these ambitions are reliant on the private sector accepting this strategic direction. Accordingly, one ambition might be to work with the private sector to develop the right incentives. (Eric Newcombe- Pitminster Parish Council)

Response: Noted. The Private sector is a key player in helping to resolve a national housing crisis. It is acknowledged that proactive partnerships with the private sector could help to deliver better outcomes. This will be considered as we develop a Multi Agency Delivery Plan

Challenge and change the current rural planning supposition that any new housing on rural green field sites will be refused. This condemns many villages to a gradual decline, skewing the housing stock as the population age and infrastructure for the vulnerable is reduced. (Stoke St Gregory Parish Council)

Response: Noted. This needs to be considered by individual district councils as they review their LDF (and is possibly a matter to be considered in individual district Action Plans)

- (1) Challenge between planners and developers who wish to maximise their income from any building developments.
- (2) More homes that meet Lifetime standards or minimum space standards to meet the growing older population.
- (3) Need for low cost homes to keep younger working age people in Somerset which will be needed in part to support the ageing population. (Carolyn Arscott, Public Health Manager, Ageing Well & Learning Disability, Somerset County Council)

Response:

- (1) *See Economy – Priorities 1 and 2, and Health – Priority 1. It is noted that the draft SHS could say a little bit more about this difficult challenge. **Amend the draft SHS***
- (2) *See Health - Priority 1.*
- (3) *We are committed to a review of the Youth Housing Strategy (Society – Priority 3)*

The only training requirement highlighted is for construction workers, yet there is critical shortage of trained personnel across the board. (Merriott Parish Council)

Response: This is matter for multi-agency debate, particularly within the sphere of the Somerset Growth Board/Local Enterprise Partnership. We shall work to encourage cross-sector discussions, links and activities between housing, economic development and town planners. Linking opportunities to local communities is essential

The current rate of reduction in funding is creating unsustainable environment for providers to comfortably deliver services to prevent and reduce homelessness. (Ross Kuklinski, Home Group Operations Manager)

Response: Acknowledged. There is a rapidly changing landscape in relation to homelessness. The Housing Reduction Act has released some funding for Housing Options services and more is being available from Govt (specifically for rough sleepers) to which we can bid and hopefully secure funding. The County Council's commissioning arrangements (in relation to people with complex needs) is also changing and will hopefully deliver a more responsive service that is focussed on an individual circumstances with solutions that are designed with individuals at the centre of decision making. Locally, there is also further good practice being developed through partnership arrangements. E.g. Positive Lives. The draft SHS contains a number of priorities that will help address these concerns (e.g. see Housing and Society)

Planning policy and restrictions, infrastructure, labour market, funding for both capital and revenue projects. (Caroline Hughes, Head of Development- Liverty Limited)

Response: Noted and these issues are recognised by a range of partners working in various functions. Strategic leadership will help to address some of these concerns but, unfortunately, we have very limited resources and progress may at times appear slow and challenging

Promotion of training as top priority as skills across the construction industry are in very short supply. (Carolyn Nichols, Henstridge Parish Council)

Response: This is a matter for multi-agency leadership, particularly within the sphere of the Somerset Growth Board/Local Enterprise Partnership. We shall work to encourage cross-sector discussions between housing, economic development and town planners. Linking opportunities to local communities is essential and we will strive to include it in the Multi Agency Delivery Plan

Improvement of connectivity within rural settlements and the wider area, where the retail sector is no longer strong with little transport. (Emma Curtis, Milborne Port Parish Council)

Response: Noted. This issue is recognised by a range of partners working in various functions and strategic leadership will be needed which we will strive to include in the Multi Agency Delivery Plan.

- (1) How will Hinkley Point C be turned into long term benefit?
- (2) How can the Framework influence the districts in maintaining the emphasis on 5 year housing land supply?
- (3) Concerns that the draft National Planning Policy Framework no longer contains “social rented housing” with the focus on starter homes and discounted market housing.
- (4) How to stop developers using viability as a means to minimise the level of affordable housing provided despite local plan policy and requirements?
- (5) How will the establishment of a university be achieved? (Liz Payne, CPRE Somerset)

Response:

- (1) *The Framework can help mitigate the impacts of HPC on the housing market. It can help foster benefits via increased housing provision and improved skills across the construction sector*
- (2) *This is a national requirement and is a function of the LDF – Strategic Housing will monitor and challenge progress*
- (3) *The Framework has no influence over national policy*
- (4) *Robust needs assessments and community voice – see Economy (Priority 1) and Society (Priority 3)*
- (5) *Through systems leadership – Growth, LEP, Health and Wellbeing and Strategic Housing all working together*

There is a need to work with Government on changing the law which sees agricultural land rise exponentially for development. (Fran Hicks, Taunton Deane CAB)

Response: Local Council Leaders and members of parishes to raise the rural issue at a national level. There are also law reforms needed to deliver councils cheaper land. A coalition of 15 think-tanks and campaign groups, including the National Housing Federation have suggested that land should be sold to councils for housing at discounted prices, seeking the revision/ clarification of the Land Compensation Act 1961. Such a move, they add, would also mean “less opposition to new development and much better infrastructure”. In a letter to Housing Secretary James Brokenshire, the group suggests reform could see a £9bn cost reduction per 100,000 homes built. Will Tanner, director of think-tank Onward- which organised the letter, said: “Clarifying the law is essential if we are to fix Britain’s housing crisis.”

Capitalise on new tenants at significant and teachable moments to facilitate rather than enforce to make a difference. (Jane Knowles, Somerset Activity & Sport Partnership)

Response: Noted and agree. This will be considered in both the Multi Agency Delivery Plan and partners Action Plans

Investment is needed in involving and integrating rural communities that are feeling overrun and segregated from their incoming neighbours in new homes. Seek to address issues in regards to infrastructure that can exacerbate issues around feeling connected, e.g. community hubs. (Claire Tough, Homes in Sedgemoor)

Response: Noted. This is a matter that should be picked up in the development of Health Impact Assessments (Health – Priority 1). Town and country planners, local communities and the VCS have roles to play here, alongside housing providers

Attracting good skilled jobs requires an attractive environment in our towns, requiring redevelopment of dead shopping areas to create affordable residential and employment zones. (Chris Barker, West Coker Parish Council)

Response: Noted. This is a matter for the Somerset Growth Plan, Economic Development Strategies and the LDF. Strategic Housing will engage with and seek to influence these high level plans

Many of the barriers already identified- inadequate housing supply, affordability, out-migration of young people. (Mandella Edwards, Hastoe Housing Association)

Response: Noted

I think a key potential barrier is going to be the availability of government capital grant (mainly via Homes England). (Tony Murray, Magna)

Response: Noted. And we await to hear details of further funding opportunities and the content of a proposed Social Housing Green Paper (expected Autumn 2018)

It is extensive unsustainability in terms of resource depletion, pollution, killing biodiversity, and creating climate destruction and social violence. (Alan Debenham, Green Party)

*Response: The answer is to build sustainable homes and sustainable communities. The draft SHS needs to say more on this theme. **Amend the draft SHS***

Concerns over the increased costs of construction due to Brexit. (TDBC Community Scrutiny)

Response: We need to nurture and develop a local construction sector (Economy – Priority 4)

- (1) The lack of control SSHP had over private developers.
- (2) The difficulty of low cost home ownership in the area. (WS Scrutiny)

Response:

- (1) *Response: Noted. The Private sector is a key player in helping to resolve a national housing crisis. It is acknowledged that proactive partnerships with the private sector could help to deliver better outcomes. This will be considered as we develop a Multi Agency Delivery Plan*
- (2) *The draft SHS acknowledges the affordability problem and seeks to address this through a variety of priorities and ambitions. Further detail will be considered as we prepare the Multi Agency Delivery Plan and any supporting District Action Plans*

Q5. Do you agree with the context, priorities & ambitions for housing & HEALTH?

Inclusion of Veterans with priority. (Andy Kendall- MP, SSDC)

*Response: **Agree to amend the SHS to acknowledge the housing related concerns of this group***

Who will you work with in the private sector to facilitate downsizing? (Jeff Curtis- Shepton Mallet United Charities- Chair)

Response: The Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership (SWPSHP) (and equivalents in Mendip and South Somerset) have a role to play here. There is also a mutual exchange scheme through Homefinder and Home Moves Plus in West Somerset, Sedgemoor and Taunton Deane to seek help with downsizing in social homes

Nothing can work effectively without adequate and efficient infrastructure provision. The claims of the document are contradictory. (Michael Phillips- Resident)

Response: See our previous comments in relation to infrastructure

The health context is a given factor because it occupies a considerable piece of this Framework and suggests it is a problem- historic or ongoing. (Brian Longstaff, Beercombe Parish Council)

Response: Yes, an historic and ongoing concern

The improvement of housing stock would benefit from the introduction of 'minimum housing standards'. (Eric Newcombe- Pitminster Parish Council)

Response: We already have minimum housing standards – these are enforced by the Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership (SWPSHP) (and equivalents in Mendip and South Somerset). As ever, resourcing is an issue. However, impact can be made by targeting areas that are known to be concentrations of poor housing standards. This will be considered in both the Multi-Agency Delivery Plan and any partner Action Plans

Priority to ensure that there is a range of housing options available for older people beyond Extra Care such as bungalows. This will assist in downsizing. (Caroline Hughes, Head of Development- Livery Limited)

Response: Noted and agree. We believe that more work should be done to explore this issue (housing for the elderly) and it should be a work-stream within a Multi Agency Delivery Plan

- (1) The need to rigorously address rogue landlords.
- (2) Private landlords may require support or persuasion to bring a property back into use and support for the landlord to help with difficult tenancies.
- (3) Levels of fuel poverty would need to be closely monitored and addressed. (SDC Community Scrutiny Committee)

Response:

- (1) *These are enforced by the Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership (SWPSHP) and the equivalents in Mendip and South Somerset. As ever, resourcing is an issue. However, impact can be made by targeting areas that are known to be concentrations of poor housing standards. This will be considered in both the Multi Agency Delivery Plan and any partner Action Plans*
- (2) *There are individual schemes for empty homes such as with Somerset Care & Repair providing grant and loan schemes operating across the County. Enforcement action is a possibility as well under SWPSHP and the equivalents in Mendip and South Somerset*
- (3) *SWPSHP and the equivalents in Mendip and South Somerset work with the Centre for Sustainable Energy on utilising national funding schemes for the fuel poor. The new service, Somerset Independence Plus will also offer help with funding and advice*

The use of health impact assessments for new developments is key. (Ross Kuklinski, Home Group Operations Manager)

Response: Noted and agree

Support the recognition of an ageing population and the need for appropriate accommodation and support. (Liz Payne, CPRE Somerset)

Response: Noted

Consider promoting electric vehicles and its impact on those on low incomes and inaccessibility to transport, within a rural context. (Angela Gascoigne, SHAL Housing)

Response: Housing standards within Local Plans should include electric charging points for electric vehicles on all new builds. We will also seek to raise at the appropriate Forums

Digitalisation of service provision is key and homes must be connected and regarded as essential. Seek to work in partnership across Somerset to understand the extent of this problem and make provision for it to enable access for all, irrespective of income. (Angela Gascoigne, SHAL Housing)

Response: Agree – this issue will be explored as we develop ideas for a Multi Agency Delivery Plan. And we welcome RP input / leadership on elements of the Plan

There is a crucial need for decent gardens for families or communal gardens and allotments for apartments. (Fran Hicks, Taunton Deane CAB)

Response: Agree – we shall consider this as we develop draft proposals for Health Impact Assessments within a Multi Agency Delivery Plan

Consideration of low carbon/ sustainable transport links, encouragement of healthy ways to travel to/from new developments and recognition of local opportunities (eg. the rights of way network) to stay active such as through cycling and walking. (Technical Officers Comments, Somerset County Council)

Response: Agree – we shall consider this as we develop draft proposals for Health Impact Assessments within a Multi Agency Delivery Plan and if suitable, to link with the appropriate Forums

<p>(1) Support the use of Health Impact Assessment with housing development and Stage 1 HIA screening considers impacts on health and welfare. As such, the HIA process should encourage consideration of the effects of noise and other health hazards and this is a requirement of NPPF guidance on Health and Wellbeing (Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 53-002-20140306) and is a feature of the HUDU Planning for Health Rapid Health Impact Assessment Tool.</p> <p>(2) To link to the Public Health Outcomes Framework 2017 (PHOF) as the Framework could have direct impact on several of the performance indicators applied to Local Authorities and indirectly affect other indicators.</p> <p>(3) AMEND Ambition: Promote the use of Health Impact Assessment and ensure appropriate standards of design within housing development and the lived environment, so that new development provide the opportunity for healthy living. (Mike Highfield, Somerset County Council Acoustics Specialist)</p> <p><i>Response:</i></p> <p>(1) Agree – we shall consider this as we develop draft proposals for Health Impact Assessments within a Multi Agency Delivery Plan</p> <p>(2) As (1)</p> <p>(3) Agree to amending the SHS along the lines suggested</p>
<p>Partnership working via housing officers could be really beneficial to closing the health inequality gaps. (Jane Knowles, Somerset Activity & Sport Partnership)</p> <p><i>Response: Agree. There is huge potential here. We are keen to have a dialogue about this</i></p>
<p>More investment needed around combating fuel poverty and its health implications. (Claire Tough, Homes in Sedgemoor)</p> <p><i>Response: Public Health is currently undertaking a Fuel Poverty Audit. We shall also work with Centre for Sustainable Energy to utilise national funding schemes</i></p>
<p>How can Somerset work to ensure new homes are highly energy efficient due to rurality? (Mandella Edwards, Hastoe Housing Association)</p> <p><i>Response: As there is limited funding, we will through the Centre for Sustainable Energy work with the Indices of Multiple Deprivation and hospital admission data to rank where the numbers of poor energy efficient homes are highest, incomes are lowest, incidences of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease are highest and combined heart disease rates are highest. These will be targeted with any future schemes under ECO Flex</i></p>
<p>(1) Elaborate on Health Impact Assessment.</p> <p>(2) AMEND Vision 2, Priority 4 to have less jargon. (Tony Murray, Magna)</p> <p><i>Response:</i></p> <p>(1) Amend the SHS to elaborate on HIA</p> <p>(2) Amend the SHS to explain 'asset-based' approaches</p>
<p>Remember the 3R's (reduce, reuse and recycle, SHARE) when population is escalating exponentially. (Alan Debenham, Green Party)</p> <p><i>Response: Noted. Amend the draft SHS to say more about environmental considerations</i></p>
<p>Stronger links needed between strategic priorities, investment partners and funding partners to enable building suitable properties for adaptations. (SSHG Project Team)</p> <p><i>Response: The SHS/SSHG can set the strategic direction, but operational delivery rests elsewhere. Agree that closer partnership working is essential, based on agreed priorities</i></p>
<p>Explore Dementia Friendly Housing currently operating with Homes in Sedgemoor. (SSHG Project Team)</p> <p><i>Response: Agree – this is an example of good practice. We need to consider this (and other examples) as we develop relevant work-streams within the Multi Agency Action Plan and any partner Action Plans</i></p>

- (1) Theme 2, Priority 3- Does this section refer to all housing sectors or only the social housing sector as Ambition 1 implies so and links to Homefinder Somerset?
- (2) Ambition 1- Matching of physical disability needs through Homefinder Somerset is well developed but more can be done.
- (3) Ambition 1- Inclusion of mental and learning disability would make it too wide? It is less of matching to properties than access to information, advice and support services that is key.
- (4) Perhaps to break Ambition 1 into 2 parts? (Homefinder Monitoring Board)

Response:

- (1) *Priority 3 relates to all sectors, but Ambition 1 is specific to Homefinder Somerset. **Amend the SHS to provide clarity***
- (2) *Noted and further improvements can be considered as we develop relevant workstreams within the Multi Agency Delivery Plan. **Amend the SHS to rephrase the wording so as to not imply that HFS is not performing well with the matching of need to housing type***
- (3) *Noted and this is referred to within Ambition 3. Further dialogue required – **possible amendments to the SHS** may be required to clarify ambitions*
- (4) *Noted and this is referred to within Ambition 3. Further dialogue required – **possible amendments to the SHS** may be required to clarify ambitions*

Focus on delivery lifetime homes in West Somerset (with subsequent changes to Local Plan policies to enable this to happen). (WS Health & Wellbeing Task & Finish Group)

Response: We note that the ageing demographic is particularly acute in West Somerset and we are also aware of local ambitions for policies that can deliver lifetime / accessible homes. However, there is actually a pan-wide Somerset need for such properties, and a county-wide approach would be beneficial. Such matters must be debated within appropriate forum such as SSPC and considered as we develop relevant workstreams within the Multi Agency Delivery Plan

Q6. Are there any issues that might pose a threat/ barrier to delivery of the priorities & ambitions?

Lack of funding, employment, remoteness of West Somerset, poor road network, few buses/ public transport, poor infrastructure, bureaucracy, poor local government. (Geoffrey Williams- Resident)

Response: Please see our response to your comment on Q4

As mentioned in Q4. (Yvonne Butcher- Sanctuary Housing- Scheme Service Manager)

Response: Please see our response to your comment on Q4

Hinkley Point, Taunton Garden City, University ambitions. Need to support the aspirations of local people rather than get carried away with constant growth and the rush to concrete the countryside by big developers. (Jeff Curtis- Shepton Mallet United Charities- Chair)

Response: We generally see the aspirations of the Garden Town, University status etc as a means to help the aspirations of the residents of Somerset. These initiatives create opportunities. We are in no rush to concrete the countryside, but the inevitable fact is that people aspire to affordable housing, and the way to achieve that is to meet housing needs, and that requires more housing and development on greenfields, as there are not enough brownfield sites to accommodate the demand for new housing

Parking and transport links are making housing development worse. Growing social isolation, alienation, lack of healthcare provision caused by reduced community facilities and inadequate public transport. (Michael Phillips- Resident)

Response: Please see our previous responses to your comments

As per Q4. (Kingsdon Parish Council)

Response: Please see our response to your comment on Q4

There must be a clear trail from this Framework through Strategic to Objectives and then to clear Plans & Targets. (Brian Longstaff, Beercombe Parish Council)

Response: Agree and this will be established within the Multi Agency Delivery Plan and and partner Action Plans

- (1) The reliance on the private sector involvement.
- (2) Financial support for the implementation of the SHS.
- (3) Conformation of subservient strategies.
- (4) Leadership's ability to draw together all the relevant policy and strategic plans. (Eric Newcombe- Pitminster Parish Council)

Response:

- (1) *Noted. We need to develop strong and effective partnerships with the private sector in order to improve housing standards and for the delivery of new homes. And we need to be prepared to take enforcement action where necessary, and to maintain a robust line on key elements of policy*
- (2) *Noted. We need to be proactive and access more funding for Somerset*
- (3) *Noted – very important for the delivery of our stated priorities and ambitions*
- (4) *Agree – leadership is a central theme of the SHS
The above matters will be considered as we develop the Multi Agency Delivery Plan and any partner Action Plans*

- (1) Need for a balanced range of ages in rural communities so that the most vulnerable at both ends of the age range may be supported by those of other ages.
- (2) Involving the local communities in determining the degree of new housing is likely to lead to better balanced and healthier rural communities.
- (3) Planning decision need to respond more to local needs than to inflexible central policy. (Stoke St Gregory Parish Council)

Response:

- (1) *Agree*
- (2) *Yes, housing needs surveys / community plans / neighbourhood plans are essential to understanding local needs within communities and to overcome issues of NIMBYism in order to release land for appropriate housing to meet local need*
- (3) *As (2) but we cannot avoid the need to also comply with national policy
The above matters will be considered as we develop the Multi Agency Delivery Plan and any partner Action Plans*

See Q4. Older people should not have to move when they have a crisis as moving is detrimental to the health and wellbeing of the person, costs the NHS and Social Care and is unsustainable. (Carolyn Arscott, Public Health Manager, Ageing Well & Learning Disability, Somerset County Council)

Response: Noted. As a priority older people should be helped to retain their independence. We intend to give this issue (housing for the elderly) a specific work priority within the Multi Agency Delivery Plan

Lack of investment in training to meet the shortfall of trained personnel as mentioned at Q4, particularly in education, nursing and GPs. (Merriott Parish Council)

Response: Please see our reply to your comment on Q4. In addition, yes, we acknowledge that there are training requirements across the sector, including those within a range of care services

As per response for Q4. (Caroline Hughes, Head of Development- Livery Limited)

Response: Please see our reply to your comment on Q4. In addition, yes, we acknowledge that there are training requirements across the sector, including those within a range of care services

A 'Help to Move' scheme to inform, incentivise and encourage people to downsize, Village Agents and the Symphony organisation. (Carolyn Nichols, Henstridge Parish Council)

Response: Noted: Such schemes do exist, provided by some housing providers within the social housing sector. But this needs to be widened to include other tenures. We intend to give this issue (housing for the elderly) a specific work priority within the Multi Agency Delivery Plan

Lack of health service supply and public transport. (Emma Curtis, Milborne Port Parish Council)

Response: Noted – please refer to similar infrastructure comments / replies elsewhere

The need for more control over private sector landlords. (Liz Payne, CPRE Somerset)

Response: Noted, and more legislation is being provided by Government aiming to assist councils in this area. Resourcing is always an issue, but impact can be made by targeting geographic concentrations of poor housing standards rogue landlords etc. Please refer to Health: Priority 2, Ambition 2

- (1) Homefinder to provide customer experience similar to commercial services.
- (2) Homefinder to transparently deliver granular data to inform strategic housing decisions.
- (3) Homefinder to be a vehicle for communication, marketing, community resource and reducing misconceptions about social housing occupants. (Angela Gascoigne, SHAL Housing)

Response: We agree that Homefinder could be improved along the lines suggested to make it a better experience for customers, to improve strategic decision making and to improve communications. We shall discuss this with the HFS coordinator, and seek to influence changes through the development of project work that will be included within the Multi Agency Delivery Plan

Increase the use of local development companies as allegiance to the area increases the level of care and commitment, employs local people and keeps money in the local economy. Seek to put community needs before profit. (Fran Hicks, Taunton Deane CAB)

Response: Agree that we need to give such proposals serious consideration with the development of the Multi Agency Delivery Plan and any partner Action Plans.

Train housing staff to understand and embrace the wider benefits to health and wellbeing across the age ranges. (Jane Knowles, Somerset Activity & Sport Partnership)

Response: Agree – there are examples of good practice across the region (e.g. Plymouth) and this needs further consideration within individual partner Action Plans

Budgets and investment. We must ensure these priorities are further developed and the budgets allowed for them are maximised including other funding streams. (Claire Tough, Homes in Sedgemoor)

Response: Agree. This will be considered as we develop the Multi Agency Delivery Plan and any partner Action Plans

Most of the Ambitions are imprecise, immeasurable and the means to achieve them are not given. (Chris Barker, West Coker Parish Council)

Response: Thank you for your comments. More work is required to translate the Vision into specific actions – this will be done as we develop proposals within the Multi Agency Delivery Plan

Drastic reduction of non-statutory support grant available from Somerset County Council to provide advice services to assist people to live independently or to meet the complex support needs of people that need to be housed independently of all ages. (Tony Murray, Magna)

Response: The pressure on public budgets is a cause for real concern. However, commissioning arrangements are moving to a place where they are more holistic, person centred and prevention focussed. This will bring benefits including more opportunities for joint working with the voluntary sector e.g. village, community and care agents, who are able to provide excellent support services to vulnerable people. However, your concerns are noted and such issues will be explored as we develop specific work streams within the Multi Agency Delivery Plan

The need to change the unsustainable lifestyle we're used to. (Alan Debenham, Green Party)

Response: Noted – see our responses in relation to your previous similar comments

Q7. Do you agree with the context, priorities & ambitions for housing & SOCIETY?

Veterans should be given some consideration. (Andy Kendall- MP, SSDC)

Response: Agree to amend the SHS to acknowledge the housing related concerns of this group

Priority for homeless individuals, especially those under 35 as above. (Yvonne Butcher- Sanctuary Housing- Scheme Service Manager)

Response: we are committed to a review of both the Homelessness Strategy and the Youth Housing Strategy

Linking vulnerable people to supported housing, especially those needing a high level of support is good. Links also to be made to the Government's consultation on the 'Future of funding for Supported Housing' which will need a Needs Assessment. (Karen Deverell- Mendip YMCA)

Response: Noted although things have moved on (at a National level re funding for supported housing) since these comments were made

Should be based on need and be small scale. (Jeff Curtis- Shepton Mallet United Charities- Chair)

Response: Noted

Providing homes should be an outcome with the solution in better holistic development in all parts of the County. 1. Infrastructure 2. Community Facilities 3. Housing (Michael Phillips- Resident)

Response: Thank you for your comments. An acute shortage of housing requires the delivery of more housing. Infrastructure considerations / community facilities are an essential part of that debate, both at a strategic level and a local level

Not top of my list of priorities e.g. Only 48 rough sleepers in the whole of Somerset. (Brian Longstaff, Beercombe Parish Council)

Response: Noted. 48 rough sleepers are 48 extremely vulnerable people whose needs would escalate if left unresolved which would undoubtedly impact many other spheres such as health and crime.

- (1) Priority 3, Ambition 1- The Framework is to target plans and direct the developments of local plans accordingly.
- (2) Direct action and a more positive approach needed to tackle empty homes. (Eric Newcombe- Pitminster Parish Council)

Response:

- (1) *The aim of the Framework is to provide strategic guidance to the development of Local Plans across Somerset. We (as Strategic Housing) need to become more involved with the development of the LDF. But, we won't be able to 'direct' (and nor do we want to). A collaborative / partnership approach is preferable*
- (2) *Agree and we are exploring ways of how we may do this (within the context of having very limited resources)*

The number of HMO applications (and those under the number to require an application and therefore not regulated) was a cause for concern. (SDC Community Scrutiny Committee)

Response: There are government changes to licensing requirements and this will see many more properties brought under the licensing regime. All HMOs are regulated, although it is sometimes difficult to identify them. We shall raise this matter with each District private sector team and seek that it be monitored/ This will be addressed in the Multi Agency Delivery Plan?

Housing and Society can only benefit from increased investment in the economy. (Merriott Parish Council)

Response: Prevailing economic conditions are undoubtedly affecting society. This places greater pressure on vulnerable people struggling with rents, access to the jobs market and the impact of reduction of welfare etc

Addressing welfare reform impact is essential and we are aware of measures in place regarding the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. (Ross Kuklinski, Home Group Operations Manager)

Response: Noted, and further work will commence to refresh the Homelessness Strategy to take stock of the implementation of the HRA

<p>(1) It is vital that the numbers of homeless and rough sleepers are reduced.</p> <p>(2) Support the revision of the GTAA as the Mendip figure of a shortage of 90 pitches by 2021. (Liz Payne, CPRE Somerset)</p> <p><i>Response: Noted and this will be addressed in the Multi Agency Delivery Plan/ Somerset Homelessness Strategy?</i></p>
<p>(1) Extend the Housing Association Sector scorecard to include a measure to show how associations are tackling homelessness.</p> <p>(2) Seek to maintain lifetime tenancies and explore how to support Housing First initiatives in the South West and specialist support within a Psychologically Informed Environment. (Angela Gascoigne, SHAL Housing)</p> <p><i>Response: Noted and we would welcome a conversation concerning the feasibility of such proposals. Could these ideas be considered as part of the review of the Homelessness Strategy? These ideas are also explored in the Government's Social Housing Green Paper which we will utilise accordingly</i></p>
<p>Need to address poverty and problem debt for families with young children that are linked to affordability of housing.</p> <p>(1) Establish a multi-agency task force focussed on families to understand the impact of poverty, including in work poverty, and how this can be addressed by partnership working.</p> <p>(2) To lobby Central Government to ensure that this issue is tackled nationally as well as locally.</p> <p>(3) Revival of the Youth Housing Strategy to ensure that Adverse Childhood Experiences do not feed into the creation of homelessness going forward. (Angela Gascoigne, SHAL Housing)</p> <p><i>Response:</i></p> <p>(1) <i>This is an interesting idea and we'd like to have further conversations regarding the feasibility of such a proposal. It is being taken forward through the Health & Wellbeing Board. Could this be linked to the Financial Inclusion Strategy?</i></p> <p>(2) <i>To be considered as part of (1).</i></p> <p>(3) <i>Agree. We are committed to a review of the Youth Housing Strategy</i></p>
<p>Address the stigma associated with social housing occupants and its communities and to tie in with work undertaken by the Together Teams and Halcon One to ensure that. (Angela Gascoigne, SHAL Housing)</p> <p><i>Response: Probably not a matter for the SHS to lead on, but certainly a valid issue. Our support for this work will be reflected in District Action Plans to recognise the local nature of delivery. This is also addressed through the Government's Social Housing Green Paper</i></p>
<p>To include Children Social Care in the Delivery Plan to ensure sustainment and support of service for children, young people and their families in the present and to prevent future homelessness. (Angela Gascoigne, SHAL Housing)</p> <p><i>Response: Agree and this will occur as we review the Youth Housing Strategy</i></p>
<p>Ensure the needs of those leaving care are addressed. (Paula Hewitt, Lead Director for Economic and Community Infrastructure & Director of Commissioning)</p> <p><i>Response: Noted and this will be considered as we review the Youth Housing Strategy. Amend the SHS to include further wording around issues affecting children / young people</i></p>
<p>Asset based community development works well for the long term and this could be a good chance for housing to work with community providers. (Jane Knowles, Somerset Activity & Sport Partnership)</p> <p><i>Response: Noted and agree</i></p>
<p>AMEND Ambition 3: Explain Social Impact Bond. (Claire Tough, Homes in Sedgemoor)</p> <p><i>Response: Agree to amend the SHS to provide further explanation</i></p>
<p>Homelessness Strategy is much needed. (Claire Tough, Homes in Sedgemoor)</p> <p><i>Response: Agree and we will work closely with the refresh of the Somerset Homelessness Strategy</i></p>

The stated Priority 3 should be the first priority. Thriving Communities make it possible to solve other problems. However, thriving communities require good employment opportunities, and this is not mentioned. (Chris Barker, West Coker Parish Council)

Response: The ordering of the priorities is not an issue. They are all of equal weight and all are interrelated. Agree that thriving communities require good employment opportunities. This is referred to in Society: Priority 1. However, there is a limit as to how much we can say on this issue, as this crosses in to the realm of economic development. The interrelationship of the various strategies is shown on page 16 of the draft SHS

- (1) Although welfare reform is still a priority, it is now less urgent as the Local Housing Allowance cap based on the shared housing rate for young people under 35 on HB or UC has now been dropped by the Government.
- (2) To relate Priority 3 with the challenge of the rising over 65 population by seeking to have a range of retirement living options for sale and rent in the right locations or adapting available properties.
- (3) AMEND Priority 3, Ambition 5 as the meaning is unclear in the context of funding and providing housing and support services. (Tony Murray, Magna)

Response

- (1) *Noted as the Local Housing Allowance rate as a whole needs review as it is not keeping up with rent rises. Lobbying is happening at a national level now*
- (2) *Agree and this is also considered within Health: Priority 1 and Health: Priority 3 and will feature as a workstream within the Multi-Agency Delivery Plan*
- (3) *Noted and agree. **Amend the SHS** to provide further explanation*

See all above. (Alan Debenham, Green Party)

Response: See our previous replies

Youth Housing Strategy needed. (SSHG Project Team)

Response: Noted and will be progressed as a priority piece of work

Elderly Persons Strategy needed. (SSHG Project Team)

Response: Noted and will be considered as we develop a Multi Agency Delivery Plan

- (1) Tackling poverty and inequality in the Somerset area was important.
- (2) Further work in investment for addressing homelessness in the town centre was requested. (TDBC Community Scrutiny)

Response:

- (1) *Noted and we shall develop further thinking on how to tackle this as we begin the development of the Multi Agency Delivery Plan and any supporting partner Action Plans*
- (2) *Noted and since these comments were made we have developed a Rough Sleepers One Team for Taunton Town Centre. However, this must work alongside the Social Exclusion Panel, to ensure a district wide approach to rough sleeping. These are matters for further consideration within the context of Positives Lives and the review of the Homelessness Strategy*

- (1) Hidden homelessness in rural communities needs to be identified through surveys.
- (2) Assessment of risk of offending behaviour when accommodating care leavers as support services do not consider this as part of service delivery.
- (3) What are the solutions for elderly sex offender housing?
- (4) The probation service is now employing housing support officers. (Safer Somerset Partnership)

Response:

- (1) *Could we simply say here that we recognise these as legitimate needs but they are about how service is delivered and therefore may form a part of delivery plans but are not appropriate for inclusion in the SHS? Noted and will be included in the Multi Agency Delivery Plan, in the delivery of the Somerset Homelessness Strategy*
- (2) *Noted and will be raised with Children & Young Person's Services and P2i*
- (3) *Noted and will be discussed with the National Probation Services*
- (4) *Thank you. We shall endeavour to make the links*

<p>Q8. Are there any issues that might pose a threat/ barrier to delivery of the priorities & ambitions?</p>
<p>Lack of funding, employment, remoteness of West Somerset, poor road network, few buses/ public transport, poor infrastructure, bureaucracy, poor local government. (Geoffrey Williams- Resident)</p> <p><i>Response: Please see our response to your comment on Q4</i></p>
<p>As mentioned in Q4. (Yvonne Butcher- Sanctuary Housing- Scheme Service Manager)</p> <p><i>Response: Please see our response to your comment on Q4</i></p>
<p>I think it's been decided. (Jeff Curtis- Shepton Mallet United Charities- Chair)</p> <p><i>Response: The Framework was prepared in consultation with partners and supported by a firm evidence base. To ensure that the Framework remains relevant, constant dialogue is needed with partners and will continue to be an ambition</i></p>
<p>The people who compiled this report and oversee its realisation. Housing and infrastructure development in Somerset is already poorly delivered. (Michael Phillips- Resident)</p> <p><i>Response: Noted</i></p>
<p>As per Q4. (Kingsdon Parish Council)</p> <p><i>Response: Please see our response to your comment on Q4</i></p>
<p>Involve and engage the Parish Councils to ensure growth for small rural villages. (Brian Longstaff, Beercombe Parish Council)</p> <p><i>Response: Agree – this is an aspiration of Society: Priority 3</i></p>
<p>See answer to Q7. (Eric Newcombe- Pitminster Parish Council)</p> <p><i>Response: Please see our response to your comment on Q4</i></p>
<p>See Q6 and Neighbourhood Plan preparation is too onerous and expensive for small parishes. (Stoke St Gregory Parish Council)</p> <p><i>Response: Noted. Although a targeted approach to housing needs surveys, neighbourhood planning etc. is required, which will help coordinate the resourcing of such activities from across the public/VCS sector</i></p>
<p>Achieving the right balance of low cost housing for the working age population to ensure the right balance of population. (Carolyn Arscott, Public Health Manager, Ageing Well & Learning Disability, Somerset County Council)</p> <p><i>Response: Thank you for your comment. Demographic information will inform planning accordingly</i></p>
<p>As previously stated at Q7. (Merriott Parish Council)</p> <p><i>Response: Please see our response to your comment on Q7</i></p>
<p>As previously stated at Q4. (Caroline Hughes, Head of Development- Liverty Limited)</p> <p><i>Response: Please see our response to your comment on Q4</i></p>
<p>Local opposition and lack of government funding. (Emma Curtis, Milborne Port Parish Council)</p> <p><i>Response: Noted – we need an evidenced based / targeted (prioritised) approach to help manage such challenges</i></p>
<p>Although Gypsy & Traveller sites may be identified, the issue of suitable sites acceptable by the settled communities remains. Further, most site application are still refused by Planning. (Liz Payne, CPRE Somerset)</p> <p><i>Response: Agreed. This is a significant leadership challenge. We hope that the review of the GTAA will help galvanise support for an implementable solution to the need for more transit and permanent sites throughout the county</i></p>

Lack of funds, willingness to be innovative, to take risks and the effort to involve the communities. (Fran Hicks, Taunton Deane CAB)

Response: Agree that these are historic / current problems that have frustrated progress. The delivery of the SHS / improved systems leadership needs to change this.

As in Q6 above. (Claire Tough, Homes in Sedgemoor)

Response: See our response to your comment on Q6

Please see Q7 above. (Chris Barker, West Coker Parish Council)

Response: See our response to your comment on Q7

Welfare reform and the rollout of Universal Credit. (Mandella Edwards, Hastoe Housing Association)

Response: Noted, hence the reason why this is a specific priority within the draft SHS

See my answer to Q7. (Tony Murray, Magna)

Response: See our reply to your comment at Q7

Lack of resources (food especially), pollution and dramatic climate change. (Alan Debenham, Green Party)

Response: Noted

Q9. Do you have any suggestions/ ideas to help us deliver any of the priorities/ ambitions?

There needs to be more joined up thinking between the economy, infrastructure and housing in West Somerset to ensure it provides the right stimulus and local benefit.(Geoffrey Williams- Resident)

Response: Noted. West Somerset presents particular challenges, against a context of a rapidly ageing demographic and severe public spending restraint. The West Somerset Opportunity Area is focussed project to help facilitate greater social mobility across the locality. Additional partnership work, driven by strong systems leadership, is necessary to tackle some of the difficult issues across the locality. The Multi Agency Delivery Plan will help to identify new initiatives and opportunities

- (1) Additional funding for homeless outreach workers.
- (2) Offer a Bond scheme that does not come at a cost to non-priority applicants.
- (3) Identifying a service to support hard to reach areas. (Yvonne Butcher- Sanctuary Housing-Scheme Service Manager)

Response:

- (1) *To be considered against the context of the review of the Homelessness Strategy, and additional Govt funding to support the HRA together with the recently announced rough sleepers funding. We have to maximise the opportunities presented by national funding streams as historically, Somerset has under-performed*
- (2) *To be raised with Homelessness Teams*
- (3) *To be raised with each District's Rough Sleeper One Teams*

You will consult and pretend that constituents matter. (Jeff Curtis- Shepton Mallet United Charities-Chair)

Response: Thank you for your feedback. We consult because we understand that we can make better products (strategies/action plans etc) by having a better understanding of different points of views / identifying issues that we may not have foreseen.

Infrastructure first, community facilities second and housing provision third. (Michael Phillips- Resident)

Response: Your point about the importance of community facilities and infrastructure is well made and noted.

<p>Lobby Central Government and local Somerset MPs to abolish capping of local authorities and allow borrowing of funds to buy land and build houses. (Kingsdon Parish Council)</p> <p><i>Response: We are able to lobby Central Govt through having a local district council leader as a representative on the LGA housing panel. The housing challenge across Somerset is consistently fed in to this forum.</i></p>
<p>Only when plans and targets are finalised. (Brian Longstaff, Beercombe Parish Council)</p> <p><i>Response: We aim to publish a draft Multi Agency Delivery Plan towards the end of the year</i></p>
<p>(1) Develop an online forum for a selected group of policy/ strategic planners. (2) Continually target Parish Councils/ Town Councils with questions and deadlines so as to gauge the range and diversity of SHS issues. (Eric Newcombe- Pitminster Parish Council)</p> <p><i>Response: These are interesting suggestions. We shall seek to improve communications regarding strategic housing matters. Amend the draft SHS to include discussion regarding this topic</i></p>
<p>Prioritise local perceptions of need over the blind application of policy, especially in rural areas. (Stoke St Gregory Parish Council)</p> <p><i>Response: Noted. We acknowledge the importance of community voice at Society: Priority 3</i></p>
<p>Brownfield site developments should be prioritised before any further greenfield sites. (Merriott Parish Council)</p> <p><i>Response: Agree in principle. An issue for individual LDF that each contains such a policy (sequential test)</i></p>
<p>All partnership agencies to be involved/ included in the Delivery Plan via delegation with firm deadlines to ensure delivery. (Ross Kuklinski, Home Group Operations Manager)</p> <p><i>Response: The Delivery Plan will need to cover a wide range of housing related topics, and as such will require broad partnership support across the County. It is also critical that a range of partners from across the sector take responsibility for leading key work programmes / partnership arrangements. This is a significant challenge and is a matter that will be debated within the Somerset Strategic Housing Partnership. Further dialogue will be necessary and you will be notified for further input in due course</i></p>
<p>Liverty are involved in a number of housing management, development, elderly persons and supported housing projects and partnerships in Somerset and will actively engage to support the Framework. (Caroline Hughes, Head of Development- Liverty Limited)</p> <p><i>Response: Many thanks for your offer of support which is greatly appreciated. We shall be in touch</i></p>
<p>Make use of vacant properties as priority for local people. (Emma Curtis, Milborne Port Parish Council)</p> <p><i>Response: We support the conversion of empty homes to occupancy via grant funding schemes. Where such public money is used, we currently require that priority letting should be to those who are in housing need within the local area</i></p>
<p>(1) Work with rural groups producing Neighbourhood Plans to identify sites for affordable housing for rent. (2) CPRE are also looking at rural affordable housing issues. (Liz Payne, CPRE Somerset)</p> <p><i>Response: Noted. There is useful guidance on such topics http://ruralhousingalliance.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/ParishCouncilGuideFullReport.pdf</i></p> <p><i>We acknowledge the importance of community voice on such matters as Neighbourhood plans. Ref Society: Priority 3</i></p>
<p>Taunton Deane CAB through a Listening Campaign have identified housing and homelessness as one of the main concerns and welcome working with the Council accordingly. (Fran Hicks, Taunton Deane CAB)</p> <p><i>Response: We welcome your continued willingness to work in partnership to resolve some of these difficult challenges</i></p>

Training housing officers to look at community health and wellbeing as per Plymouth initiative. Pilot for older people or families could become Somerset best practice. (Jane Knowles, Somerset Activity & Sport Partnership)

Response: Noted and agree that this would be an excellent initiative. To be considered further as we prepare the Multi Agency Delivery Plan

Homes in Sedgemoor is keen to work with all partners to support the delivery of this Framework especially in Universal Credit and Fuel Poverty through best practice. (Claire Tough, Homes in Sedgemoor)

Response: Many thanks for your offer of support which is greatly appreciated. We shall be in touch

- (1) Protect key employers and industries such as Leonardo, Pittards and local agriculture.
- (2) Identify and target industries and employers with good future prospects (sustainable energy, high tech recycling, EVs, medical research).
- (3) Develop Town Plans which replace redundant shops with residential and employment buildings. (Chris Barker, West Coker Parish Council)

Response:

- (1) Thank you but this is not an issue for the draft SHS. However, this will be raised with LEP accordingly
- (2) Thank you but this is not an issue for the draft SHS. However, this will be raised with LEP accordingly
- (3) Noted – an issue for individual LDF and community plans to consider

More dialogue about specific ideas, projects later in the process. (Tony Murray, Magna)

Response: Noted and this will occur. We shall be in contact

See answer to Q2 above and the comments above. (Alan Debenham, Green Party)

Response: Noted – see our various response above

- (1) Multi-agency Delivery Plan is supported to help deliver the priorities of the Framework.
- (2) The Delivery Plan to be considered at a future meeting/ workshop session for the Committee's comments.
- (3) Consider the Action Plan to address homelessness in the town centre in partnership with TAH/ ARC. (TDBC Community Scrutiny)

Response:

- (1) Your support is noted and welcome
- (2) Agree
- (3) Agree, although significant progress has been made on this issue through the establishment of the Taunton Town Centre Rough Sleepers One Team

Members wish to be involved in the development of multi-agency Delivery Plan. (WS Scrutiny)

Response: Noted and we shall ensure that Members are fully involved with the development of the Delivery Plan

Although the board strongly supported the aspirations of the Framework, it was felt that there needed to be more interaction between housing and clinical professionals so that each side could understand and see what happens on the other side. Suggestion that a 'challenge' event might take place where each side could identify issues as they saw them and then have a two way dialogue on how to address the issues. (Somerset Health & Wellbeing Board)

Response: This suggestion is supported. Public Health has agreed to implement this as an action with support of MDC and the CCG. Such dialogue will be essential to the development of the Delivery Plan

Q10. Do you have any comments on the content of the EIA?

The rhetoric is meaningless without concrete objectives in supporting vulnerable minorities. Housing provision is an outcome, rather than a catalyst, for progress in this field. (Michael Phillips-Resident)

Response: Thank you for raising this issue. We will address this in the Multi Agency Delivery Plan

Little to contradict and the challenge is to engage, apply and deliver. (Chris Barker, West Coker Parish Council)

Response: Noted and agree

Promoting privatisation politically due to diminished funds will have tragic consequences. (Alan Debenham, Green Party)

Response: We have little control over the macro economic circumstances

- (1) Need to consult the Transition Town movement and its similar bodies.
- (2) How would vulnerable people that fall into multiple characteristics be managed? (TDBC Community Scrutiny)

Response:

- (1) *Noted and this has been undertaken and no responses received*
- (2) *Thank you for raising this point. We will ensure that data / insight / intelligence from all Protected Characteristics is considered and noted / acted upon*

Q11. Do you have any further comments?

This is not strategic document but a wish list of diverse and disparate aims, ambitions and requirements that have no reasonable attainment pathways. (Michael Phillips- Resident)

Response: Thank you for your comments- we will bear this in mind at the next stage

There needs to be a structured co-ordination of consultations/ assessments/ surveys/ strategies presented to Parish Councils. (Merriott Parish Council)

Response: Ideally, yes. Certainly feasible where districts have Parish Liaison Officers who historically may have undertaken such a role. But not all have, due to funding pressures. In the context of the Housing Framework, we shall ensure that Parishes are notified of further developments.

Towns and villages should grow organically (not large scale) and more work should be done to involve Parishes in the designing and planning to enable control over their built environment. The need is recognised but should not be delivered purely for profit. The right houses in the right place built by local builders would be our mantra. (Carolyn Nichols, Henstridge Parish Council)

Response: Noted and we generally agree with these observations. The Framework contains priorities and ambitions that may help to achieve such outcomes for our rural areas

This questionnaire is poorly written and not fit for purpose. (Emma Curtis, Milborne Port Parish Council)

Response: Thank you for your comment. We are sorry that you found the questionnaire poorly written

The Framework has many worthy Ambitions, but does not set out the Means to realise them. (Chris Barker, West Coker Parish Council)

Response: Agree and this will be addressed through the preparation of the Multi Agency Delivery Plan

See all above and consider the recommended changes. (Alan Debenham, Green Party)

Response: Noted and amendments will be made concerning environmental impact