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# WEDMORE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

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”

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...and the residents of Wedmore.



# INTRODUCTION

## National and Local Policy

**1.7** Although the 2018 version of the NPPF was published in July 2018 and generally supersedes the 2012 document, paragraph 214 confirms that where a Neighbourhood Plan is submitted prior to the 24th January 2019, the policies in the 2012 Framework will apply. Whilst the 2012 NPPF is therefore the operative document for the assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan, it has been prepared to be consistent with both Frameworks.

**1.8** The 2012 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in paragraphs 183-185 provides for communities to develop a plan for their neighbourhood which sets out the policies which will determine the decisions on future planning applications. The Neighbourhood Plan (NP) provides the tool to ensure that the right types of development are provided for the community, in accordance with the needs and priorities of the wider local area.

**1.9** The NPPF requires the NP to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Sedgemoor Development Plan. The NP is required to reflect its policies and to plan positively to support them. A new Sedgemoor Local Plan was adopted in February 2019, and the NP has been prepared in accordance with its policies.

**1.10** Having been produced in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Development Plan, the NP is in addition able to shape and direct sustainable development in Wedmore Parish. Its policies take precedence over the non-strategic policies of the Sedgemoor Local Plan, where there is any conflict.



**1.11** Discussions have taken place with SDC to determine whether the NP will require either a Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environment Assessment (SA / SEA) or a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA). Sedgemoor Council has also sought the views of statutory consultees. As a consequence, Sedgemoor Council has formally confirmed in October 2018 that a SA / SEA or HRA is not required. Sedgemoor Council has also undertaken a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) of the Plan.

## How to read this document

**1.12** Each section of the plan covers a different topic. Under each heading there is the justification for the policies which provides the necessary understanding of the policy and what it is seeking to achieve. The policies themselves are presented in the coloured boxes. It is these policies against which planning applications will be assessed. It is advisable that, in order to understand the full context for any individual policy, it is read in conjunction with the supporting text.

**1.13** At the end of some of the policy topic chapters there is a list of 'non land use policy aspirations'. These relate to non-land use matters which have been suggested by the community but are not appropriate to include in a Neighbourhood Plan (as policies) which is focussed on the use of land. However, they do signal actions which could be taken forward by the Parish Council or others, or initiatives which could be funded by Community Infrastructure Levy monies or developer contributions.

**1.14** A Glossary of planning terms can be found in **Appendix 1**.



# SOCIO ECONOMIC PROFILE OF WEDMORE

## Overview

**2.1** The Parish of Wedmore is located in the heart of rural Somerset, situated at the foot of the Mendip hills and on the edge of the Somerset Levels. The area is also known as the Isle of Wedmore, as it was an island at one time, surrounded by marshland. The name Wedmore is thought to come from the old English form of 'waep' mor, meaning hunting moor. Wedmore village is the centre of the community, but the parish is very much larger, consisting of a number of villages and hamlets, all with their own unique rural characteristics. The Parish consists of two main villages: Wedmore and Blackford. Outside of the settlement boundaries of Wedmore and Blackford is considered to be 'Countryside', which includes Theale, plus a number of smaller hamlets. The remainder of the Parish is open countryside, primarily in agricultural use. The quality of the landscape is very high, varying from the 'uplands' of the Isle of Wedmore to the levels or 'moors' with their particular characteristic of 'rhynes', reeds and willows. Wedmore village has its own Conservation Area and the NP area contains a large number of Listed Buildings which are an indication of the historic and architectural quality of the area.

**2.2** The main street in the village, The Borough, has been evident in some shape or form since Saxon times. The formation of shops, houses, church and pubs has changed very little in the last hundred years, giving it a very traditional appearance and providing a focus for Wedmore inhabitants and visitors.

**2.3** Wedmore's proximity to the city of Wells and natural beauty spots like Cheddar and the AONB makes it a desirable place to live and to visit. Residents particularly value the ancient St Mary's Church in the centre of the village and also the views and skylines in and around the village.

**2.4** The parish has a population of 3,318 according to the 2011 census. Wedmore's population has grown over the years. For example, West End was at one time a separate community, but is now incorporated in Wedmore. The most significant recent increase in housing and population came with the development of Saxon Way in the 1980s. Those who were once 'newcomers' have contributed to the lively and varied community life, together with well established local families.

**2.5** In line with national trends, the population profile shows an aging demographic with both a median and mean age which is older than the equivalent figures for England / Wales and Somerset. However, the number of under 18 year olds has remained broadly constant. Expanded school catchments have been reflected in the need for a new first school (4-9 year olds) at the turn of the century and additional accommodation added since then.

**2.6** Wedmore still has a number of working farms in and around the village. There are dairy herds, arable fields and many orchards producing apples for cider. Mixing with traditional agriculture, there are small businesses providing a varied range of goods and services, for example, printing and complementary therapies. Whilst an increasing number of people work from home, with many of them self-employed, people who work outside Wedmore benefit from the easy access to motorway links and to Bristol. Bristol Airport is also an accessible source of jobs. The nearest railway station is Burnham and Highbridge which is on the Bristol to Taunton main line.

**2.7** As well as the attraction of the peace and quiet of the rural environment, many families move to Wedmore to access the schools and nurseries for children up to 13 years old. Many residents perceive that the medical capacity has not reflected the increasing needs of the population. This increase in need is at both ends of the age spectrum, under 18s and over 60s.

**2.8** People choose to live in and around Wedmore because of its vibrant community spirit and friendly village life. There are many clubs and societies, catering for Sport, Hobbies and Cultural interests as well as Cubs, Brownies and the Young Farmers Association. Annual community events take place around the Parish, such as Harvest Home celebrations in Wedmore and Blackford, Theale Flower Show, the Street Fair, the Wedmore Arts Festival, the Turnip Prize and the Wedmore Real Ale Festival. The Green Group promote sustainable living and the village is twinned with St Medard de Guizieres in southern France.

**2.9** Inhabitants of Wedmore appreciate the facilities and services their community has to offer and that this attracts people into the village centre. However, one disadvantage of this popularity is the increase in traffic and congestion in the centre of the village despite the availability of car parking spaces in the Worthington Close car park. Access to public transport is limited and consequently there is a very high reliance on car usage, with nearly two thirds of households owning two or more cars.

**2.10** People come from miles around to visit the shops, particularly the specialist ladies and menswear shops. The three public houses in the village offer different styles for different tastes and are a focus for visitors and locals alike.

**2.11** The popularity of Wedmore as a place to live and the limited increase in the number of dwellings has contributed to house prices which are higher than average for this part of Somerset. This has an impact on younger people wanting to remain in the Parish and older people wanting to 'downsize' within their existing community. These were concerns that were highlighted in the NP residents' survey ([www.wedmore.online](http://www.wedmore.online)).



## WEDMORE STATISTICAL PROFILE

**2.12 Appendix 2** contains more facts and figures about the plan area. These are largely based on Census information for 1991, 2001 and 2011. These show that the area has the following broad characteristics which have influenced the Vision, objectives and policies of the Neighbourhood Plan :

- Population growth took place over the whole 20-year period but has slowed since 2001
- Since 1991, the percentage of under 18's has remained constant whilst the proportion of over 65 year olds has increased. The 18 - 44 age group has seen a noticeable decrease as a proportion of the population over the same period
- Wedmore residents are well educated with a high level of self-employment and a low level of unemployment
- A relatively large and growing proportion work from home
- Perceived good health is also at a very high level
- House prices are well above local and national averages and there is a high level of owner occupation of larger houses
- The number of dwellings increased 19 percent between 1991-2011 mirroring the population growth during the same period but as with the population, growth of new dwellings slowed between 2001-2011.

# CONSULTATION: What You Have Told Us

**3.1** Following the designation of the Neighbourhood Plan area in September 2016, an initial consultation event took place in October 2016. The purpose of this consultation was to check whether there was broad community support for the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan.

**3.2** The event took place on the 7th October 2016 in the Village Hall. It explained what a Neighbourhood Plan is, what it can achieve and the procedural steps involved in its preparation. Attendees were asked to leave comments (on the day or by post / email) and to 'vote' whether a Neighbourhood Plan should be prepared. 75% of those who voted wanted to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan for Wedmore.

**3.3** This level of community support and the range of comments led to the decision to prepare a community questionnaire which was sent to every household in the Parish. This was distributed in March 2017 with comments requested by 12th April 2017. A total of 506 Questionnaires were returned by post or online. This represented 33 % of the households consulted and is considered to be a representative sample.

**3.4** The full analysis of the Questionnaire, prepared by Hope-Stone Research, can be seen on [www.wedmore.online](http://www.wedmore.online). The main points raised were :

- residents choose to live in the area because it offers a peaceful rural environment with a strong sense of community coupled with good amenities and facilities
- further development raised concerns about traffic, impact on the environment and whether infrastructure can cope
- there was a general recognition that development is necessary, particularly to provide homes for the younger and older members of the community. The need for affordable housing for local people was emphasised.

**3.5** At the same time as the Questionnaire was distributed, a 'Call for Sites' also took place. This asked landowners and developers with land in the Parish whether they would like to put their land forward for consideration as an allocation. A total of 25 sites were put forward which varied in capacity from 1 house to 200 homes.

**3.6** In order to explain the results of the Questionnaire and the range of sites that had been put forward, a second consultation event was held in the Village Hall on the 24th June 2017. This was attended by around 135 people who were encouraged to comment on the issues raised by the Questionnaire and the sites. Comments could be left on the day (forms or 'post its'), by post or email.

**3.7** A total of 114 responses were made. The majority of comments related to the sites rather than the questionnaire responses. Whilst most sites received expressions of both support and objection, the more favoured sites were Cross Farm, Westholme Farm and the site east of the Primary School.

**3.8** Following the June event, it was felt that there had been sufficient feedback from the community to allow a start to be made on drafting a 'Vision', objectives for each topic area, broad policy themes and 'front runner' sites for allocation. Since one of the strongest community aspirations was the delivery of affordable housing, it was decided to discount any of the submitted sites of ten or fewer homes. This was because Government guidance states that sites of this size do not have to provide any affordable housing. This reduced the number of sites for assessment from 25 to 10.

**3.9** The assessment of sites and preparation of the draft Vision (etc.) took place during the summer of 2017. In order to ensure that the assessment was as objective as possible, an Assessment Matrix was developed which was closely related to the one used by Sedgemoor Council in the preparation of its Local Plan. Since some of the Sedgemoor criteria were not relevant to Wedmore (eg. impact on the AONB), these were dropped or modified to make them more relevant to Wedmore. The final Assessment

Matrix contained 13 criteria and each of the large sites was scored on a 'traffic light' system of 'red', 'amber' or 'green'. The matrix and each site assessment can be seen in the 'Site Assessments' document prepared in November 2017 ([www.wedmore.online](http://www.wedmore.online)).

**3.10** On the 24th November 2017, an event was held at the Village Hall and this was repeated in the Parish Room on the 28th and 30th November plus the 2nd December. This asked for views on

- the draft Vision and topic objectives
- broad policy directions
- four initial 'front runner' sites, one of which was a composite site made up of two landowners sites. The composite site related to Holdenhurst and adjoining land. This was created in response to public opposition to earlier proposals on just the Holdenhurst site that were rejected on appeal on two occasions.

**3.11** Again, comments could be made at the events, by post, email or online. Around 200 people attended the events and altogether there were 1,021 individual responses. Of those who expressed a view, the level of favourable support was as follows

TOPICS	
Vision	87.2%
Transport	78.7%
Housing	85.1%
Employment	89.4%
Community	87.2%
Design	89.4%

SITES	
East of First School	77.6%
Westholme Farm	73.4%
Holdenhurst / Wells Almshouses Trust	61.7%
Axe Valley Vets, Blackford	64.8%

**3.12** Since Cross Farm has planning permission, the community was not asked if the site should be allocated. Instead, people were asked how they would like to see the site developed. 81 suggestions were received and these were forwarded to the prospective developer.

**3.13** This high level of support for the 'direction of travel' of the Plan allowed the Group to proceed with confidence to the stage of preparation of a 'Working Draft' which contained the full text, policies, allocations and plans. This was on consultation from the 11th May to 1st June 2018. There were 3 public exhibitions in the Parish Rooms on the 11th, 12th and 15th May attended by 53 people.

**3.14** A total of 23 responses were received. The main comments were :

- objections to the allocation East of Wedmore First School
- objections to the Westholme Farm allocation. Some queried whether sufficient regard had been given to the impact on Listed Buildings and the Conservation Area whilst others raised flooding and traffic issues
- an objection to the omission of the Holdenhurst site as an allocation there should be traffic calming in Combe Batch
- scepticism that affordable housing would go to local people and suggestions that 'social rent' is sought
- a request for clearer definition of planning terms
- support and objections to a 20 mph zone
- the settlement boundary and Conservation Area should be shown in the Proposals Map.

**3.15** A summary of these representations and the responses can be seen on [www.wedmore.online](http://www.wedmore.online). The 'Working Draft' text was reviewed in the context of these comments and the result was the 'Regulation 14' version of the plan.

**3.16** The Regulation 14 NP was placed on consultation from the 14th July to the 8th September 2018. Sedgemoor Council advertised the consultation on its website, notified all organisations on its Local Plan database and undertook consultation with statutory consultees. A summary of the Regulation 14 plan was distributed to each household in the Parish. Four events were advertised in the summary document and via posters and banners in the village. These were :

- 7th July** Attendance at the Wedmore Street Fair
- 14th July** Exhibition at the Masonic Hall
- 17th July** Exhibition at the Masonic Hall
- 19th July** Exhibition at the Parish Room

**3.17** Comments were received from six statutory consultees (Sport England, National Grid, Wessex Water, the Axe / Brue Local Drainage Board, Historic England and Somerset County Council) as well as Sedgemoor Council. Thirty three members of the public / developers also responded. A summary of the representations and the NP Group responses can be seen on [www.wedmore.online](http://www.wedmore.online) and in the Consultation Statement. Many of the concerns related to matters which are outside the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan. Relevant comments included

- support for the creation of CLT
- opposition to the proposed open space / play area to the rear of Worthington Close
- objection to allocations and support for allocations
- proposals for a one way road system
- are all the requirements in the allocations policies fully justified by NPPF criteria
- calls for more car parking and more traffic calming measures
- seeking an increase in the capacity of the Westholme Farm site and clarifying policy criteria
- clarifying text / plans and additions to the Glossary
- seeking the re-inclusion of the Holdenhurst site following the grant of planning permission.

**3.18** Separately from its Regulation 14 response, Historic England (HE) wrote to Sedgemoor Council on the 22nd June 2108 in response to the SA / SEA screening request. Historic England expressed concerns whether the proposed allocations had been properly assessed from a heritage perspective. HE suggested that a more robust Heritage Assessment evidence base was required. In view of this a Heritage Assessment was commissioned from Kim Sankey of Angel Architecture Ltd. A copy of the Assessment can be seen on [www.wedmore.online](http://www.wedmore.online).

**3.19** The Heritage Assessment (September 2018) was reviewed by HE which confirmed that it considered the Heritage evidence base to now be satisfactory.

**3.20** All of these representations were carefully considered and the plan was amended, as appropriate. The 'submission' (Reg 15) version of the Wedmore Neighbourhood Plan was formally submitted to Sedgemoor Council in November 2018 who placed the Plan on consultation up to the 21st December 2018.

**3.21** Sedgemoor Council then forwarded the submission plan, the background evidence base and representations to the independent Examiner. The Examiner recommended that with certain modifications the plan could proceed to its Referendum.



# VISION FOR WEDMORE

4.1 As explained in Chapter 3, the Questionnaire and consultation events sought views from the community about what they valued about living in the Parish of Wedmore, what they disliked and how they would like to see the area evolve over the next 15 years.

4.2 There were clear themes in the responses and these led us to the following draft Vision

## VISION

"Wedmore Parish will retain its strong sense of a community in a historic and rural setting. This will be supported by a modest growth in new housing, particularly targeted at the younger, less affluent and older members of the parish. The excellent range of shops, services, facilities and jobs will be retained and enhanced, ensuring Wedmore village remains a destination of choice. In order to minimise further traffic congestion and promote road safety, new housing allocations in Wedmore village will be focussed where residents can walk to a range of facilities along safe and level routes. These allocations will be located where there is the least impact on valued open spaces, views and the historic environment of Wedmore village."

4.3 This Vision was consulted on at the November 2017 event and 87 % indicated their support. The Vision is now included in this final plan.

4.4 The purpose of the Vision is not only to set out what sort of place Wedmore Parish should be in 2032, but also provide the starting point for the preparation of policy objectives for the individual topic chapters (Chapters 5 to 9).



# HOUSING

## Objective

"To meet the housing needs required in the emerging Sedgemoor Local Plan through allocations and policies which deliver well located sites with a range of house sizes. The priority will be to deliver smaller, less expensive properties for sale, affordable housing to rent and housing for older residents".

**5.1** Wedmore Village is identified in Policy S2 of the Sedgemoor Local Plan as a Tier 2 settlement to accommodate a minimum of 116 new houses by 2032. Through the process of consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan housing was identified as the main issue of concern to the community. Whilst residents enjoy the historic and rural environment of the Parish, they also referred to the lack of smaller, more affordable homes for younger and older people to buy or rent. Without more housing of this type, young people may be forced to live elsewhere and some older residents would be unable to move into homes within the Parish suitable for their needs.

**5.2** This community feedback is also supported by the Census data in Chapter 2 (Profile) which demonstrates that, statistically, Wedmore Parish is characterised by large, expensive owner occupied houses with relatively few smaller, cheaper homes to buy or rent (privately or through a Housing Association). In view of this, the Housing policies seek to focus on the issues of housing size and tenure. Other policies deal with the allocation of new housing and their

## POLICY WED1 – LOCATION OF HOUSING

"In accordance with Policy T2a of the Sedgemoor Local Plan (2019), Wedmore Village is the most sustainable (Tier 2) settlement in the Parish and this is where most new homes and development will be focussed. Blackford, as a Tier 4 settlement, is the next most sustainable location for development within the Parish. New homes will be encouraged within the settlement boundaries of these Villages and on the Neighbourhood Plan allocations where they satisfy other development plan policies and are appropriate to the scale, design and character of the settlement.

New housing proposals that come forward to meet any remaining unmet local affordable housing need or other local infrastructure priorities at Wedmore and Blackford will need to satisfy policies T2b and T4 of the Sedgemoor Local Plan respectively.

Elsewhere in the Parish, outside of the identified settlement boundaries, proposals for new housing will be appropriately controlled and will need to satisfy the policies as set out in the 'Countryside' section of the Local Plan, as well as any District wide policies that are relevant to the proposal."

**5.3** This policy seeks to focus new housing in the most sustainable locations within the Neighbourhood Plan area. Where sites are promoted which are outside the Village settlement boundary and not at the allocated sites, they will have to satisfy the criteria in Local Plan Policies T2b and T4. This includes justifying the local need for the proposal, demonstrating community support and the provision of 40% on-site affordable housing.

## POLICY WED2 – HOUSING MIX

"Subject to Policy WED3, housing developments should provide a range of housing sizes, types and tenures within the site. The mix should have regard to the latest housing mix set out in the prevailing Sedgemoor Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) or relevant local housing needs assessments, but particular support will be given to developments which deliver smaller one, two and three bedroom houses suitable for young people, young families and older people."



**5.4** This policy reflects both the contents of the 2016 Sedgemoor SHMA ([www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/SHMA](http://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/SHMA)) and the responses from the community that whilst new housing developments should provide a range of housing, the particular need in Wedmore is for smaller homes suitable for single people, young families and older people. It is also supported by evidence from the 2011 Census which shows that Wedmore has an unusually high proportion of large owner occupied homes which achieve prices that are not affordable to many Wedmore residents. The 2018 Wedmore Housing Needs Assessment ([www.wedmore.online](http://www.wedmore.online)) undertaken by Sedgemoor District Council shows a particular need for one bed rented homes and two bed shared ownership homes.

## POLICY WED3 – AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

"Affordable housing will be provided in accordance with the Local Plan.

Any sites that come forward under Local Plan Policy T2b should have appropriate regard to the Wedmore Neighbourhood Plan's 'Site Assessments' evidence base (November 2017), ensuring the constraints and planning considerations raised in relation to available sites are adequately addressed.

The tenure split will reflect the 2018 Wedmore Housing Needs Assessment, or subsequent updated evidence.

An off-site contribution for sites of 11 dwellings or more will only be supported in exceptional circumstances if it can be demonstrated that it will be invested in a specific affordable housing project elsewhere in Wedmore Parish."

**5.5** This policy supports Policies D6 and T2b of the Sedgemoor Local Plan (2019). The percentage of on-site affordable housing<sup>1</sup> will be between 15% and 40% depending on the category of site. Affordable houses will be dwellings provided by Sedgemoor District Council, a Registered Provider (formerly a Housing Association) or a Community Land Trust. An off-site contribution is not generally supported since the funding can often be diverted to projects elsewhere in Sedgemoor, which provides no benefit to Wedmore residents. For this reason, Policy WED3 regards an off-site contribution as only being applicable in exceptional cases. In such cases, it is for the Applicant to demonstrate a suitable site or project as the recipient of the off-site contribution.

**5.6** Any site coming forward under Local Plan Policy T2b will be the subject of a 'local lettings' policy.

## Non Land Use Policy Aspirations

**5.7** The establishment of a Wedmore Community Land Trust to retain affordable housing for those with a Wedmore connection will be supported. This is likely to be progressed by Wedmore Parish Council.



<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 for definition of 'Affordable Housing'

# DESIGN AND ENVIRONMENT

## Objective

"To maintain the high quality of the natural and built environments of Wedmore Parish, and to protect its well preserved heritage".

**6.1** Wedmore was one of the first conservation areas to be designated in the County in 1971. The current conservation area designated by Sedgemoor District Council in 1991 includes the central medieval street pattern of The Borough, Grants Lane, Church Street and Glanville Road extending along Pilcorn Street, Combe Batch and West End. The Conservation Area is approximately half of the total area of the settlement boundary and includes 124 listed buildings, monuments and heritage assets. There are also a range of Listed Buildings and buildings of interest in Blackford, Theale and the remainder of the NP area.

**6.2** Its fine stone houses, high walls and attractive lanes impart a real distinction to the Village that make it only one of four villages in the district to be granted the title of 'outstanding heritage settlement'.

**6.3** Respondents to the Questionnaire and public consultation events made it clear that they strongly value Wedmore's architectural heritage and the key views of the surrounding countryside namely Lascot Hill, the Mendip Hills and the Levels which are important to its setting.

**6.4** Other comments noted that the surrounding rural landscape and open spaces contribute such an important green backdrop to the village and its historic environment that it should be protected. The Local Plan policies already provide protection to those open spaces which are particularly important to the character of Wedmore and its setting. Residents also considered that the Neighbourhood Plan should influence the design of new buildings by encouraging the use of traditional materials and local architectural characteristics.

**6.5** Sustainability, the use of renewable energy sources and energy conservation should be encouraged, although the scope for the NP to require higher energy targets than set nationally through the Building Regulations is limited.

## POLICY WED4 – NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

"Development will be supported where it can protect and enhance the natural environment of the Plan area. This includes the special character and biodiversity of the levels / moors and its rhynes, the network of historic lanes and their associated trees and hedgerows.

**Sustainable Drainage Systems should be used in all new development, where relevant, to control the rate of surface water runoff to assist in the management of water in the Somerset levels."**

**6.6** The NP area contains a diverse and valued range of landscape and habitats. These include

- the characteristic flat landscape of the Somerset levels with its network of rhynes flanked by willow trees, this area is particularly sensitive to surface water run off volumes. The landscape character of the rhynes should be respected and development should allow adequate adjacent space as an ecological and maintenance buffer
- the 'upland' areas of the Isle of Wedmore with its more diverse range of trees, fields, orchards and copses.

**6.7** Development proposals should seek to respect this landscape character and enhance it, where possible, by new planting appropriate to the local context. This will assist in retaining and enhancing the biodiversity of the NP area.

## POLICY WED5 – DESIGN

"Development that is of high quality design and is sympathetic to the traditional built character of the villages within the Parish will be supported where it takes into account the recommendations of the Wedmore Village Design Statement.

Development should also

1. Respect the historic value and architectural integrity of heritage assets so that new buildings maintain a harmonious appearance in scale, mass and bulk
2. Respect the visual and physical inter-relationship with surrounding heritage assets by maintaining spatial character, sight lines and avoiding dominating forms that detract from their significance or setting
3. Have regard to the open nature of the surrounding land, all amenity space should be located within the core of the development with natural, non suburban materials which emulate the agrarian character of the village."

**6.8** The Village has an abundance of building types and styles providing a source of inspiration for creative designers. Any new development is expected to be of the highest quality and sympathetic to the traditional built character of the Village and that of the Parish.

**6.9** In 2005 the Village produced a 'Village Design Statement' that was adopted by Sedgemoor District Council in 2013 as supplementary planning guidance [www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/vds](http://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/vds). This remains relevant and should continue to guide planning decisions. Whilst it was prepared in the context of just Wedmore Village, the built characteristics of the rest of the Parish are very similar. For this reason, it will also be applied Parish wide.

**6.10** The statement identifies key architectural features and materials which are important in creating a sense of place and which contribute to the character of the Village and its local distinctiveness. It helps developers to understand the views of local residents and should be used to inform the design process.

**6.11** It is not the role of the Neighbourhood Plan to dictate the architectural style of new development but the plan will support well designed buildings which are in keeping with the local vernacular and can be integrated into the traditional style of the Village.

## POLICY WED6 – WEDMORE CONSERVATION AREA

"Development proposals for new build or alterations to buildings in the Wedmore Conservation Area will be supported if :

1. Local traditional materials and architectural detailing is used in the design and execution of the works
2. New buildings and site layouts respect the historical settlement form and traditional road patterns of Wedmore
3. Extensions and alterations to existing buildings will respect the character of the original building in scale, form, colour and materials
4. The design of private and public space will actively contribute to the well being of all residents and the built environment
5. Where appropriate to the context, contemporary design shall be of high quality, relating to the local vernacular by use of local traditional materials and architectural detailing."

**6.12** The results of the Questionnaire ([www.wedmore.online](http://www.wedmore.online)) demonstrate that the residents of Wedmore are proud of their village, its history and its attractive rural setting. The protection of the Conservation Area is one of the prime concerns of residents.

**6.13** The designation of a conservation area in 1971 and sustained investment by property owners has protected its historic fabric so that it continues to be a popular place to live and destination to visit.

**6.14** Sedgemoor District Council's Conservation Guide (<https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/article/1253/Conservation-areas-of-Sedgemoor>) provides a brief history and description of its character and buildings.

**6.15** Church Street and the area in the vicinity of St Mary's Church is, in architectural terms, the highlight of the Village. The open aspect of the elevated churchyard allows full appreciation of the wealth of listed buildings along the gently curved Church Street. From this vantage point the varied roofscape of the mostly 18th and early 19th century stone buildings can be appreciated including distant views of the Mendip Hills.

**6.16** Buildings vary in their height, size, form and architectural styles to create a distinctive character. Wedmore stone was used extensively throughout the village for buildings and high stone boundary walls that contribute to the sense of enclosure.

**6.17** The Village Design Statement mentioned in Policy WED5 gives more detailed guidance on the architectural detailing of the local vernacular and materials which are commonly used.

**6.18** To inform the preparation of the NP a Heritage Assessment was commissioned from Angel Architecture. This can be seen at [www.wedmore.online](http://www.wedmore.online). The purpose of the Assessment was to assess the significance of any effects of the proposed NP on the heritage assets of the area. The Assessment concluded that the impact of development on the setting of heritage assets is likely to be negligible. However, the Assessment suggested strengthening of the wording of Policy WED5 to ensure that the detailed design of new buildings, boundary treatment and landscaping protects the aesthetic value of the setting of the Heritage Assets and the NP area as a whole.



#### **POLICY WED7 – SUSTAINABILITY. PROVISION OF WELL-DESIGNED ENERGY EFFICIENT BUILDINGS AND PLACES.**

**“The design and standard of any new non-residential development should aim to meet a high level of sustainable design and construction and be optimised for energy efficiency, targeting zero carbon emissions. This includes :**

- 1. Siting and orientation to optimise passive solar gain**
- 2. The use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials**
- 3. Installation of energy efficient measures such as loft and wall insulation and double glazing**
- 4. Developments should aim to meet the Buildings Research Establishment BREEAM building standard ‘Very Good’ or equivalent standard, unless it can be demonstrated that this is not viable**
- 5. Any new development to be encouraged to incorporate on-site energy generation from renewable sources such as solar panels or heat pumps where appropriate**
- 6. The retrofit of heritage properties / assets is encouraged to reduce energy demand and to generate renewable energy where appropriate, providing it safeguards historic characteristics**
- 7. Alterations to existing buildings should be designed with energy reduction in mind.”**

**6.19** Sustainability is one of the core principles underpinning national and district planning policy. ‘Sustainability’ was defined by the United Nations as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

**6.20** The Neighbourhood Plan can play its part in moving the community towards zero carbon emissions by encouraging all new non-residential buildings to achieve greater energy efficiency through building design, improved energy conservation and the use of renewable energy sources. A Neighbourhood Plan cannot refer to any additional local technical standards or requirements relating to the construction, internal layout or performance of new dwellings. Therefore, Policy WED7 only applies to non-residential development. Policy WED7 sets out in a series of measures which clearly signpost the aspirations of the Wedmore community to achieve a low energy, low carbon future.

#### **POLICY WED8 – ELECTRIC AND LOW EMISSION VEHICLES**

**“New dwellings should be designed where practical to incorporate facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra low emission vehicles.”**

**6.21** The Community Questionnaire indicated strong support for the encouragement of the use of electric and other ultra low emission vehicles. Policy WED8 seeks to ensure that residents of new housing have the availability of charging facilities for these types of vehicle.

#### **Non Land Use Policy Aspirations**

**6.22** To gradually shift Wedmore to a position where it can become a zero carbon community.



# TRANSPORT

## Objective

"To manage and control the impact of traffic through the location of future developments as well as by the appropriate use of speed restrictions, traffic calming, footpaths and additional car parking with improved lighting and security."

**7.1** The process of consultation showed that the speed of traffic and congestion are major concerns of residents (see Questionnaire consultation report on [www.wedmore.online](http://www.wedmore.online)). This is exacerbated by the absence of footpaths along some key routes and reduced widths elsewhere. Whilst a Neighbourhood Plan cannot limit traffic passing through Wedmore, it can propose measures which both reduce the speed of traffic and improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists.

**7.2** Additional traffic resulting from new housing can be minimised if the new allocations are in locations where people have the opportunity to walk or cycle rather than use the car. Since most local trips are either to the Village Centre or the First School / Recreation Ground, these are the preferred areas for new housing set out in more detail in Chapter 10 'Housing Allocations'.

### POLICY WED9 –TRANSPORT STRATEGY

"Development proposals will be supported where they provide, or contribute to, the accessibility and safety improvements in the Wedmore Transport Strategy in accordance with the statutory tests as set out in the Community Infrastructure Levy regulations 2010."

## Justification for the Policy

**7.3** The Wedmore Transport Strategy (WED9) cross refers to a package of measures set out below designed to reduce the speed of traffic and improve safety for both pedestrians and cyclists. There are eleven proposals in the strategy. Each of these transport measures is given a number and the location of that measure is shown on the Wedmore and Blackford Proposals Maps using the same number.



## Wedmore Transport Strategy Proposals

- 1) A 20mph speed limit in the areas marked on the Proposals Map will mitigate community concerns about excessive vehicle speeds and danger to pedestrians and cyclists
- 2) The existing traffic calming scheme on Blackford Road by the Wedmore First School is poorly designed and should be extended west of the Kelsons Lane / Blackford Road junction. Since allocations WED15 and WED16 will be creating new accesses onto the Blackford Road, it is a requirement that these allocations fund both the new access points and the revised traffic calming scheme
- 3) There is no pedestrian crossing on Blackford Road outside Hugh Sexey's Middle School and limited "drop off" facilities. The development of the WED17 site will be expected to provide land and a financial contribution to the crossing and new footpaths. Development proposals which can also improve the drop off facilities will be encouraged
- 4) The junction of Kelsons Lane with Blackford Road has very poor visibility east towards the village. The development of the WED15 site should include proposals to improve visibility
- 5) The junction of Pilcorn Street with West End has very poor visibility east towards the village. The development of the WED16 site should include proposals to improve visibility by realigning the highway
- 6) Pilcorn Street is the main route between Wedmore First

School, the recreation ground and the centre of the village and has only intermittent footpaths. Housing Allocations WED15 and WED16 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding should contribute to additional sections of footpath and carriageway narrowing, where necessary, to create a continuous footpath along the northern side of the whole length of Pilcorn Street

- 7) Parking restriction will be sought at pinch points and blind corners such as outside the Old Post Office in Church Street
- 8) At present, the most direct route for children wishing to walk or cycle between Wedmore First School and Hugh Sexey's Middle School in Blackford is along Blackford Road. This is a busy road which has no footpaths and is unlit. In order to encourage more children to walk or cycle to school, an off road cycle and footpath route is proposed between the two schools. This ambition will be secured by private negotiations between the Parish Council and relevant landowners
- 9) The creation of a new footpath link between the Worthington Road car ark and The Borough would encourage users of the Village Hall to use the car park rather than parking on street
- 10) The Combe Batch area of Wedmore currently has no continuous footpath to the Borough. The development of the Cross Farm site will deliver a footpath / cycleway through the site linking Combe Batch Rise with both the Lerburne and the Borough Mall car park.
- 11) If the childrens play area is not provided on land north of Worthington Close (WED 13(3)), this land could be used as an extension to the car park.

## 7.4 Non Land Use Policy Aspirations

- 1) Support and promote community transport initiatives and work with Somerset County Council on the development of their Passenger Transport Strategy.
- 2) Improved availability of visitor parking will promote access to the many small shops and businesses. Parking in The Borough is often monopolised by shop staff. In order to enable shoppers to park for short periods, the Parish Council will promote a Traffic Regulation Order to restrict parking in The Borough to three hour periods between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm with parking permit exemptions for residents only.
- 3) Continue to advocate an HGV ban in Wedmore Village.

# ECONOMY

## Objective

**“To maintain the position of Wedmore village as a lively retail centre and tourist destination.”**

### POLICY WED10 – SUPPORTING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

“Retail (A1) and non retail uses (A2 to A5) will be supported within the defined boundary of Wedmore District Centre. Changes of use from retail (A1), and non retail uses (A2 to A5) will be resisted unless over riding justification can be demonstrated.”

#### Protecting Wedmore’s Retail Heart

**8.1** Wedmore has expanded its economy over the years becoming a destination of choice for both residents and visitors. It provides a diverse range of small, independent retail stores mainly located around the Borough and Church Street. The Village Store, which supplies newspapers, food and household items, is the largest shop. The Pharmacy provides a vital service to the community as does the sub Post Office whose retention in its current location has wide public support, particularly in view of the closure of the last Bank branches. The many fashion retail outlets attract customers from a wide area. Visitors are also welcomed by a number of pubs, cafes, restaurants and a range of accommodation providers.

**8.2** Retail space has increased in recent years with the development of the Borough Mall and Borough Mews, providing further small units for independent retailers. In April 2018 a survey of retail and other service providers revealed that 49 premises were open for business with a further two vacant units. A monthly market in the Borough Mews is a recent innovation, attracting stall holders from outside the Village.

**8.3** Changes to the Village centre should therefore be carefully considered to ensure that it remains an attractive destination to visit as well as a sustainable place to live and work for current and future residents. Traffic management measures as set out in Chapter 7 will therefore need to be sensitively applied.

**8.4** This policy seeks to maintain the character of Wedmore Village Centre and its diverse range of independent stores. The ‘Village Centre’ boundary is defined by the Sedgemoor Local Plan (2018) and is shown on the NP Proposals Map. The ‘Glossary’ (Appendix 1) contains the ‘Use Classes’.

### POLICY WED11 – SMALL SCALE EMPLOYMENT SPACE

“Development proposals which provide small scale (less than 150 m2) Class B1 employment space, particularly on flexible terms to support small businesses, will be supported where the proposal is the following:

- conversion of an existing building or buildings subject to the impact of this provision on the highway network and parking
- within, or close to, the settlement boundary of Wedmore, new small scale B1 class buildings will also be supported, subject to the provision of adequate access, parking and servicing facilities.”

**8.5** Wedmore has historically served as a centre for the agricultural community in its surrounding area. This role has diminished in recent times as land holdings were consolidated into a few much larger farms. Employment in agriculture has reduced significantly but at 6% is still above the average for Somerset (see Appendix 2).

**8.6** The area is now a popular tourist destination and the Village has developed a strong retail and hospitality offer providing employment both in the village but also in managing bed and breakfast accommodation, holiday cottages and farm stays.



**8.7** The consultation process shows an increase in full and part time working from home and converted farm buildings in the wider Parish including some light industrial premises. Approximately 25% of working-age residents work within the Parish. Improving broadband and mobile phone reception may well encourage this trend and thus help to maintain the viability of local shops and services which already have to compete with on-line shopping.

### POLICY WED12 – COMMUNICATIONS

“Ducting capable of accepting fibre cables should be installed in all new residential, retail and commercial premises to enable a superfast broadband connection.”

**8.8** Further work on the communications network is required to meet the needs of local businesses. The consultation indicates a need for more small business premises (under 150 m2) as home-based and start-up business seek space to expand. The creation of a modest-sized business centre with attractive rental terms and basic facilities such as a meeting room would be strongly supported.



## COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING

### Objective

"To maintain and expand the range of community services and facilities in Wedmore to meet the needs of all sections of the community."

### Introduction

**9.1** The theme of Community and Wellbeing includes the aspects of health, leisure and recreation.

**9.2** The various consultations on the Neighbourhood Plan have confirmed how the community values the wide range of clubs, societies and facilities in the Parish and wants them protected. However, there is also a concern about the current health infrastructure and whether this can cope with the proposed increase in population.

#### Policy WED13 – PLAY, SPORTS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

**1.1.** "Locally valued community facilities listed in Appendix 3 will be protected from loss. Proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of locally valued community facilities will only be supported where:

- i. there is no reasonable prospect of viable continued use of the existing building or facility and a need is demonstrated for the proposed change; and,
- ii. there is no adverse impact on the natural and built environment of the adjoining area.
- iii. an exception is the redevelopment of the Axe Valley Veterinary Centre on Redmans Hill, Blackford, subject to the requirements of Policy WED17.

**2.** Development proposals for new, replacement, extended and/or improved community facilities and open space will be supported where:

- i. the proposal would not have significant adverse impact on the amenity of nearby residents;

- ii. the proposal would not have significant adverse impacts on the surrounding local environment (with regard to biodiversity, wildlife habitat and landscape character);
- iii. the proposal would not have unacceptable impacts on the local road network (with regard to additional traffic volume / congestion, demand for parking, and pollution levels);
- iv. it is easily accessible to residents.

**3.** Land to the north and east of Worthington Close is currently proposed to be the location of a childrens play area funded by the Cross Farm development. If this play area is constructed elsewhere, an extension to the Worthington Road car park, is supported."

**9.3** Wedmore is well endowed with community and recreational facilities and these need to be protected from loss. Appendix 3 contains a list of facilities which would benefit from protection under Policy WED13. However, the consultation highlighted a need for more facilities for teenagers. This is currently proposed to be advanced through the allocation of open space incorporating a play area on Parish Council owned land north and east of Worthington Close. Funding for this forms part of the Cross Farm S106 agreement. However, negotiations between the developer and the Parish Council may result in the play area being provided adjacent to Cross Farm. If this occurs, the land north and east of the Worthington Close car park could be utilised as an extension to the car park (see paragraph 7.3(11)). As such, the land would provide a community use.

**9.4** Proposers of development are encouraged to engage with the local community and Parish Council at the earliest opportunity to help ensure that any proposals take into account this plan's aims and objectives, the needs of users and the views of the local community.

#### POLICY WED14 – HEALTH AND MEDICAL CARE

"Development proposals will be supported which provide :-

- specialist and adaptable housing, to enable older people and the disabled to remain in their own homes for as long as possible
- a care home (nursing and personal care).

The provision of a new healthcare facility is supported, should this be promoted by an approved Healthcare provider."

**9.5** Wedmore has a GP surgery in the village, as part of the Axbridge and Wedmore Medical Practice and most residents of Wedmore are registered with this practice. Recruitment difficulties nationwide and a reduction in the number of appointments offered in Wedmore (down to 3.5 days per week) have led many residents to express concern that services will be oversubscribed when new housing is built. Feedback from the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire ([www.wedmore.online](http://www.wedmore.online)) and from consultation events in the community indicates that there is a strong desire for a new purpose-built surgery in the Village. However, since the start of the NP process improvements have been made to the access and service at the Axbridge and Wedmore medical practice. There has been an increase in salaried GPs who have joined the three partners. New ways of working have been introduced, including online consultations. Details can be found on the practice website [www.axbridgewedmoremedicalpractice.nhs.uk](http://www.axbridgewedmoremedicalpractice.nhs.uk). A Primary Care Paramedic has also been recruited to the team.

**9.6** Demographic evidence shows that Wedmore has a higher than average number of people over 65 years old, when compared with neighbouring Cheddar and Somerset as a whole. In the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire, about 25% of people thought that Wedmore needed more sheltered housing, retirement housing (both low cost rented and private) and a care home.

**9.7** Both local and national policies advocate that more people are cared for and supported in their own homes, including people with significant health and social care needs. This will require homes which are of a suitable size and design to enable this care to be delivered safely and to a high standard.

**9.8** There will still be a significant number who will require considerable and sustained support in old age. The provision of a care home in Wedmore could be an asset to the community.

**9.9** Given the demographic of residents and feedback from parishioners, representatives from Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and from the GP partnership were consulted to find out more about local plans and policies.

**9.10** In summary the outcomes from this consultation are as follows:-

- 1)** Axbridge and Wedmore Practice estimate that 30% of all consultations can be appropriately conducted by a person other than a GP
- 2)** At the present time there is no prospect of a new surgery in Wedmore, as financial support is not available locally or nationally. However, as this was a major concern for Wedmore residents, any plans to enhance the current GP surgery or build a new practice would be supported, should this become feasible in the future
- 3)** One significant local and national policy is summed up in this theme, taken from the CCG's guidance :- 'Encourage communities and individuals to take more control of their own Health and Wellbeing' (CCG 2014-2019).

**9.11** In view of these findings it has been concluded that this Neighbourhood Plan will not include a policy to allocate a specific site for a new surgery to be built in Wedmore. However, should a proposal be promoted by an approved healthcare provider on a suitable site, this would be strongly supported.

**9.12 Non Land Use Policy Aspirations :** Since it is unlikely that Wedmore will achieve a new purpose built surgery in the short term, the Neighbourhood Plan advocates the following non land use policy actions designed to allow the community to take more control over its own health and wellbeing

- 1)** Encourage regular health checks and immunisation
- 2)** To work closely with the GP practice to identify actions the community can implement themselves
- 3)** Support healthy lifestyles and the provision of facilities to achieve this
- 4)** Enable access for all to the range of community and recreational facilities in the NP area
- 5)** Encourage the availability of an NHS dentist in the village.

Somerset Sustainability and Transformation Group (2016) 'Somerset Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) 2016-2020/21.' <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/stp/> Last accessed 13 September 2018

NHS Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group Strategy (2014) 'Clinical Leadership to Improve Health 2014- 2019.' <https://tinyurl.com/y8cloju5> Last accessed 13 September 2018

# HOUSING ALLOCATIONS

**10.1** Policy S2 of the Sedgemoor Local Plan (2019) sets a minimum number of homes which should be built in Wedmore Village between 2011 and 2032. The focus is on the Village rather than the whole Parish because the Village (a 'Tier 2 settlement') is the focus for shops, services, jobs and facilities. As such, new homes in the Village gives people the opportunity to walk and cycle to more of their destinations rather than use the car.

**10.2** The Neighbourhood Plan needs to demonstrate how at least 116 new homes will be built in Wedmore Village between 2011 and 2032. This does not mean that the plan has to allocate land for at least 116 homes since some have already been built between 2011 and 2018 and others have permission but are yet to be built. The position as at October 2018 and as follows.

## HOUSING NUMBERS

Built 2011 - 2018	13
Planning Permission but not started	68
Allocations Required	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>



**10.3** Whilst most permissions since 2011 have been individual plots, small groups (such as in Quab Lane) and barn conversions, the notable exceptions are Cross Farm and Holdenhurst. Cross Farm was granted outline planning permission for 55 homes in 2015 and is under construction. In August 2018, 11 homes were granted permission at Holdenhurst. The occupancy of these will be restricted to those over 55. In addition to the 66 dwellings arising from these two large developments, there are two unimplemented planning permission within the Village. When these are added to the homes completed since 2011, the total of completions and commitments rises to 81. This leaves a minimum of 35 homes to be allocated in Wedmore Village.

**10.4** Two sites are proposed to be allocated for housing in the Village on land at Westholme Farm (Policy WED15) and on land east of the First School (Policy WED16). These will deliver 46 homes. Together with post 2011 completions and unbuilt permissions, this means that the Village should be able to complete 127 homes by 2032. This is modestly in excess of the 116 minimum.

**10.5** In addition to the two sites at Wedmore Village, the November 2017 consultation also proposed the allocation of the Axe Valley Veterinary Surgery site in Blackford for 12 homes (WED17). Since Blackford is a Local Plan 'Tier4' settlement, these homes do not count towards the minimum figure of 116 dwellings.

**10.6** It is proposed to marginally exceed the minimum of 116 dwellings in Wedmore Village by 2032. This will be made up as follows :

REFERENCE SITE	SITE	
WED15	Westholme Farm	11 homes
WED16	East of Wedmore First School	35 homes
	Built 2011 - 18	13 homes
	Unbuilt planning permissions	68 homes
<b>Total for Wedmore Village (2011-32)</b>		<b>127 homes</b>

In addition, Policy WED17 allocates 12 homes at the site of Axe Valley Vets in Blackford.

**10.7** This total is likely to represent an under estimate since further 'windfall' sites will continue to come forward within the Village settlement boundary during the remainder of the Local Plan period to 2032. However, it is expected that the annual number of windfall house completions will reduce, as most of the obvious candidates have already been developed.

### POLICY WED15 WESTHOLME FARM

"Land at Westholme Farm is allocated for approximately 11 - 16 homes. The development should comply with the following principles

- a) 30% on-site affordable housing, distributed across the site
- b) the design of the affordable housing shall be indistinguishable from the market housing
- c) the development shall provide a mix of housing, but with an emphasis on smaller and less expensive homes to rent or buy
- d) the layout and design will pay special regard to the setting of adjoining Listed Buildings and to preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area (Policies WED5 and WED6)
- e) access for vehicles will be taken from a single point of access on to Blackford Road
- f) the development, along with site WED16, will fund the design and implementation of a new traffic calming scheme on Blackford Road / Pilcorn Street and provide safe pedestrian / cycle crossing facilities to Wedmore First School and contribute to the creation of a footpath along the northern side of Pilcorn Street
- g) the western part of the site will be retained as an open space
- h) the provision of a high standard of on-site and on plot landscaping
- i) the provision of a SuDS measures along with a mechanism to ensure their long term management
- j) the development should create a high quality built frontage on to Blackford Road."



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**10.8** Land at Westholme Farm scored well in the Site Assessment (see [www.wedmore.online](http://www.wedmore.online)) due to its proximity to the Wedmore First School and the range of facilities at the Recreation Ground. The site is within walking and cycling distance of the Village Centre, and other Neighbourhood Plan policies seek to improve the pedestrian and cycle route along Pilcorn Street. Contributions to these improvements will be sought from the development of WED14.

**10.9** This site scored less well in terms of access to public transport and its potential impact on the historic environment. This latter concern related to the effect on adjacent Listed Buildings and the Conservation Area. However, the Heritage Assessment concluded that this could be mitigated through the careful design of the layout, the choice of materials and landscaping as well as a reduction in the number of dwellings.

## POLICY WED16 EAST OF WEDMORE FIRST SCHOOL

"Land to the east of Wedmore First School is allocated for approximately 35 homes. The development should comply with the following principles

- a) 30% on-site affordable housing, distributed across the site
- b) the design of the affordable housing shall be indistinguishable from the market housing
- c) the development shall provide a mix of housing, but with an emphasis on smaller and less expensive homes to rent or buy
- d) access for vehicles shall be taken from a single point of access on to Blackford Road
- e) e) the development, along with site WED15, will fund the design and implementation of a new traffic calming scheme on Blackford Road / Pilcorn Street, provide safe pedestrian / cycle crossing facilities to Wedmore First School and contribute to the creation of a footpath along the northern side of Pilcorn Street
- f) the provision of a childrens play area
- g) the provision of a high standard of on-site and on plot landscaping
- h) the layout will give particular regard to respecting neighbouring buildings in mass, scale and the use of locally distinctive materials as well as the orientation of plots to create an active building frontage to Pilcorn Street
- i) the provision of SuDS features along with a mechanism to ensure their long term management."

## EAST OF WEDMORE FIRST SCHOOL



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**10.11** Whilst not physically adjoining any Listed Buildings or the Conservation Area, the site should be considered in a comprehensive manner along with the Westholme Farm site in terms of plot orientation, layout and the use of locally distinctive materials.

**10.12** The land to the East of Wedmore First School scored well in the Site Assessment (see [www.wedmore.online](http://www.wedmore.online)) due to its proximity to the Wedmore First School and the range of facilities at the Recreation Ground. The site is within cycling and walking distance of the Village Centre, other Neighbourhood Plan policies seek to improve the pedestrian and cycle route along Pilcorn Street. Contributions to these improvements will be required from the development of WED15.

## POLICY WED17 AXE VALLEY VETS

"The Axe Valley Vets site in Blackford is allocated for approximately 12 homes. The development should comply with the following principles

- a) the provision of 30% on-site affordable housing, distributed across the site
- b) the design of the affordable housing will be indistinguishable from the market housing
- c) the development shall provide a mix of housing, but with an emphasis on smaller and less expensive homes to rent or buy
- d) the provision of a high standard of on-site and on plot landscaping
- e) access for vehicles will be from a single point of access on to Redmans Hill
- f) the development will provide land and a contribution towards a new pedestrian crossing of Blackford Road opposite Hugh Sexey's Middle School, along with footpaths on the southern side of Blackford Road and the western side of Redmans Lane
- g) the provision of SuDS features along with a mechanism to ensure their long term management
- h) the new Veterinary Surgery will be available for use prior to the development of the site for housing."

**10.13** The Axe Valley Vets site is in Blackford. Since Blackford is classified as a Tier 4 settlement in the Sedgemoor Local Plan, its development will not count towards the minimum of 116 homes to be built in Wedmore by 2032. However, this is a previously developed site (occupied by the Vets practice) and its location within the settlement limits of Blackford means that its redevelopment for housing is likely to be acceptable in principle. This is in accordance with the new Sedgemoor Local Plan.

**10.14** The site is proposed for a development of approximately 12 homes. However, development is dependent on the Veterinary Practice identifying and constructing a new site elsewhere in Wedmore Parish prior to the start of the housing development.

## AXE VALLEY VETS, BLACKFORD



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For Maps WED14, WED15 and WED16

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# APPENDIX 1 GLOSSARY

## GLOSSARY OF PLANNING TERMS

### TERM

#### Affordable Housing

### DEFINITION

**Affordable housing:** housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

a) **Affordable housing for rent:** meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

b) **Starter homes:** is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.

### TERM

#### Affordable Housing

### DEFINITION

c) **Discounted market sales housing:** is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

d) **Other affordable routes to home ownership:** is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

## TERM

### Allocation site

A piece of land that has had a particular use earmarked to it via the Neighbourhood Plan or Local plan. This might be for housing employment or another purpose such as amenity use.

### Basic conditions

Criteria that a Neighbourhood Plan must meet before it can come into force. These are:

- They must be appropriate having regard to national policy,
- They must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development,
- They must be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the local area,
- They must be compatible with human rights requirements,
- They must be compatible with EU obligations. Land that has been previously developed on (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings and residential gardens).

### Brownfield site

### Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Allows local authorities to raise funds from developers undertaking new building projects in their areas. Money can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure such as transport schemes, schools and leisure centres.

### Conservation Area

An area designated under Section 69 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as being of 'special architectural or historical interest' the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance

### Consultation Statement

A document which needs to be submitted to Sedgemoor District Council detailing the people and organisations consulted with about the proposed Neighbourhood Plan and how this was undertaken. It also includes a summary of the main issues and concerns raised throughout the consultation process and how these were considered and addressed in the proposed Neighbourhood Plan.

### Designated Neighbourhood (Plan) Area

This is the area that the plan will focus on. For town or parish councils, the designated area is usually the administration boundary.

### Examination

Sedgemoor District Council will send the completed Neighbourhood Plan to an independent examiner who will check whether the proposed plan meets the basic conditions and other requirements set out by law. The examiner will then send a report back to Sedgemoor District Council to publish

## TERM

### Floodplain

A floodplain is the area that would naturally be affected by flooding if a river rises above its bank, or high tides and stormy seas cause flooding in coastal areas

### Flood Zone

An area identified by the Environment Agency as being at risk of flooding. The Flood Zone refers to the probability of river and sea flooding, ignoring the presence of defences.

### Greenfield Site

Land where there has been no previous development.

### Lifetime Homes

Ordinary homes carefully designed to incorporate 16 Design Criteria that can be universally applied to new homes at minimal cost. Each criterion adds to comfort and convenience and supports changing needs of individuals and families at different stages of life, from raising children through to coping with reduced mobility or illness in later life.

### Local Plan

The name for a document (or collection of documents) prepared by your local planning authority for the use and development of land and for changes to the transport system. The adopted Local Plan forms part of the Statutory Development Plans for the area.

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Sets out national planning policy and how these are expected to be applied. Provides a planning policy National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) framework for Local Plans and Neighbourhood Development Plans.

### Neighbourhood (Development) Plan

A planning document created by a parish or town council or a neighbourhood forum, which sets out a vision for the neighbourhood area, and contains policies for the development and use of land in the area. Neighbourhood plans must be subjected to an independent examination to confirm that they meet legal requirements, and then to a local referendum. If approved by a majority vote of the local community, the neighbourhood plan will then form part of the statutory development plan

### Policy

A concise statement of the principles that a particular kind of development proposal should satisfy in order to obtain planning permission.

### Referendum

A vote in which the people in a defined area are asked to give their opinion about or decide an important political or social question. Neighbourhood Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders are made by a referendum of the eligible voters within a neighbourhood area.

## TERM

## DEFINITION

### Section 106

Planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, secured by a local planning authority through negotiations with a developer to mitigate the impacts of permitting a development proposal. They cover things like highway improvements or open space provision.

### Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

This organisation has overall responsibility for commissioning of primary (eg GP services), secondary (eg hospital services) and community (eg district nursing) services for residents of Somerset. The CCG also works very closely with the local authority to deliver social care, eg care in the home and in care homes.

### Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

A way of ensuring the environmental implications of decisions are taken into account before the decisions are made. The need for environmental assessment of plans and programmes is set out in the EU Directive 2001/42/EC – known as the SEA Directive.

### Sustainable Development

Resolution 24/187 of the United Nations General Assembly defined sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

### Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Currently the main planning legislation for England and Wales is consolidated in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990: this is regarded as the 'principal act.'

### Use Classes

The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 puts uses of land and buildings into various categories known as 'Use Classes'. It is generally the case that you will need planning permission to change from one use class to another, although there are exceptions where the legislation does allow some changes between uses.

### A1 to A5 Use Classes

Refers to retail, food and drink and professional services premises

### B1, B2, and B8 Use Classes

Refers to business use (offices, industrial and warehousing)

### C1 to C3 Use Classes

Refers to hotels and residential use including institutional

### D1 and D2 Use Classes

Refers to non-residential institutions, assembly and leisure

# APPENDIX 2 STATISTICAL PROFILE

## The Parish in numbers<sup>2</sup>

- 1 This Appendix outlines characteristics of the population, housing and economic activity based on the 2011 census with comparisons with the 1991 and 2001 censuses where possible. Comparisons are also made with neighbouring areas, Somerset county and England and Wales<sup>3</sup>.
- 2 **Population size and gender** : The Parish of Wedmore comprises 4,165 hectares of land with a population density of 0.8 persons per hectare (Somerset average 1.5, England & Wales average 3.7).
- 3 The 2011 census recorded 3,318 people living in the Parish. As per the national average, there are slightly more females than males. The total population has grown steadily and significantly since the 2,784 recorded in the 1991 census, a 19 percent increase over the twenty-year period. Noticeably, the rate of increase was considerably higher between 1991 and 2001 than between 2001 and 2011.

**Table 1. Population change 1991-2011**

	Number	% increase from previous census
1991	2,784	-
2001	3,145	13%
2011	3,318	6%

- 4 **Age Distribution** : Those aged 65+ comprise 22 percent of Wedmore's population. In the 1991 census, this figure was slightly lower at 19 percent. 22 percent are under 18, unchanged since 1991.
- 5 While the proportion of retired (65+) has increased, the proportion of younger people (18-44) has declined considerably from 31 percent of the population in 1991 down to the current 20 percent.

**Table 2. Age distribution change 1991-2011**

	Under 18	% Over 65 %
1991	22.0	19.1%
2001	22.7	19.2%
2011	22.4	22.1%

<sup>2</sup> All percentages in the text have been rounded to the nearest whole number and so may differ from those shown in the charts and tables. Where the text refers to the national average, this is in reference to England and Wales only.

<sup>3</sup> Referred to as 'national' in the text as figures for the whole of the UK are not available.

6. **Mean and median age** : Wedmore has a slightly higher than average (mean) age compared with Somerset and England and Wales overall, with a mean age of 44.1. Both mean and median age have risen since 2001; mean age has risen from 42.6 to the current 44.1, the median age from 45 to the current 48.

**Table 3. Age comparison 2011**

	Mean age	Median age
Wedmore	44.1	48
Cheddar	44.0	46
Somerset	42.7	44
England and Wales	39.3	39

7. **Ethnicity** : Wedmore residents almost entirely self-identify as white (98 percent) although there is a small but broad mix of non-white residents including those of Asian, African-Caribbean, Arab or mixed heritage. Wedmore's ethnic profile is similar to that of Somerset as a whole but significantly less diverse than England and Wales overall.

8. **Health** : Wedmore residents under retirement age (65) are more likely than those in Cheddar, Somerset and England and Wales overall to self-identify as being in good or very good health, with 86 percent stating this as their health status.

**Table 4. Perceived health comparison 2011**

	Good or very good health % of adults 18-65
Wedmore	85.6
Cheddar	82.3
Somerset	80.9
England and Wales	81.2

9. **Housing** : Housing costs in Wedmore are considerably higher than the Somerset average and the national average in general. Prices are also higher than the adjoining neighbourhoods of Cheddar, Mark and Wells.<sup>4</sup> The average property value is currently (Feb 2018) estimated to be £568,000. (see **Table over page**)

**Table 5. House price comparison February 2018**

Comparable values	Average property value
Wedmore	£568,000
Cheddar	£346,000
Wells	£328,000
Mark	£400,000
Somerset	£274,000
England	£330,000

10. Prices have steadily increased over the past 10 years, and are now around 30 percent higher than values recorded in 2001. Prices have increased by an average of 5 percent over the past 12 months (February 2017- February 2018).
11. The value increase in the ...  
 - Past 12 months : 5%  
 - Past 5 years : 40%  
 - Past 10 years : 31%
12. Dwelling type : There are 1,387 dwellings in the Parish of Wedmore, 58 of which were unoccupied at the time of the 2011 census. Almost all dwellings are unshared and are predominantly houses or bungalows (91 percent) rather than flats, maisonettes or other dwelling types (e.g. bedsits).
13. There was a 19 percent increase in the number of dwellings between 1991 and 2011, the same level of growth as the population during the same period. However as with the population growth, the increase in number of dwellings slowed after 2001.

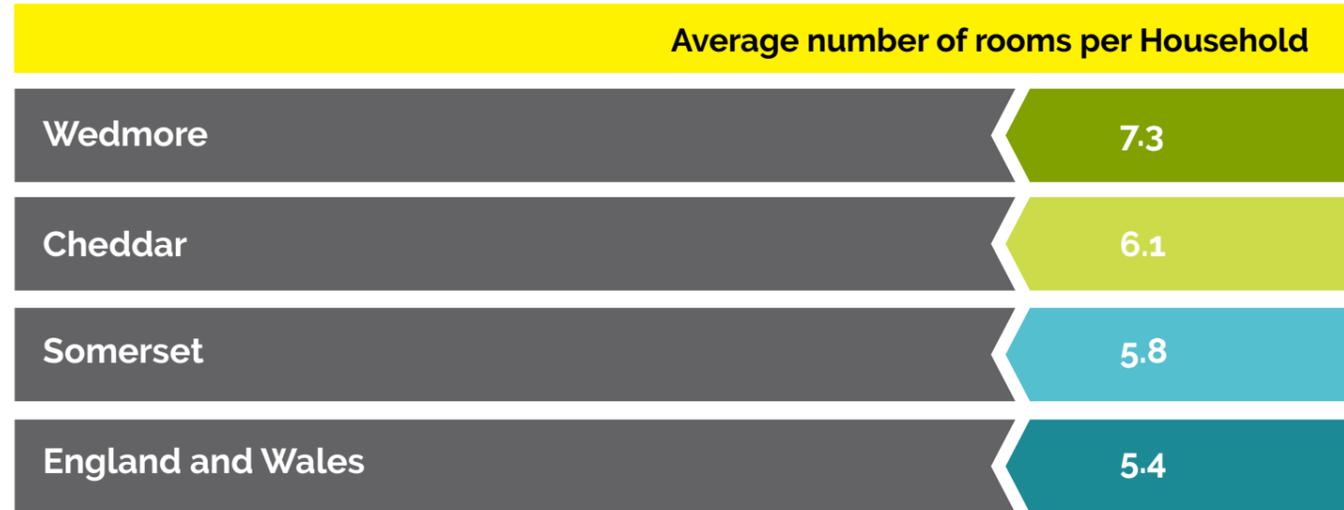
**Table 6. Number of dwellings change 1991-2011**

	Number	% increase from previous census
1991	1,160	-
2001	1,288	11%
2011	1,387	8%

**14. Tenure :** 85 percent of households are owner occupied with just 8 percent rented from a social or local authority housing provider. This is comparable with 2001 when 86 percent of homes were owned. The proportion of owner occupied housing is significantly higher than neighbouring Cheddar (77 percent) and above both the Somerset and national averages.

**15. Occupancy :** Wedmore has a high number of rooms per household (7.3) again, above neighbouring, county and national averages. The average household size in Wedmore is 2.5.

**Table 7. Occupancy comparison 2011**



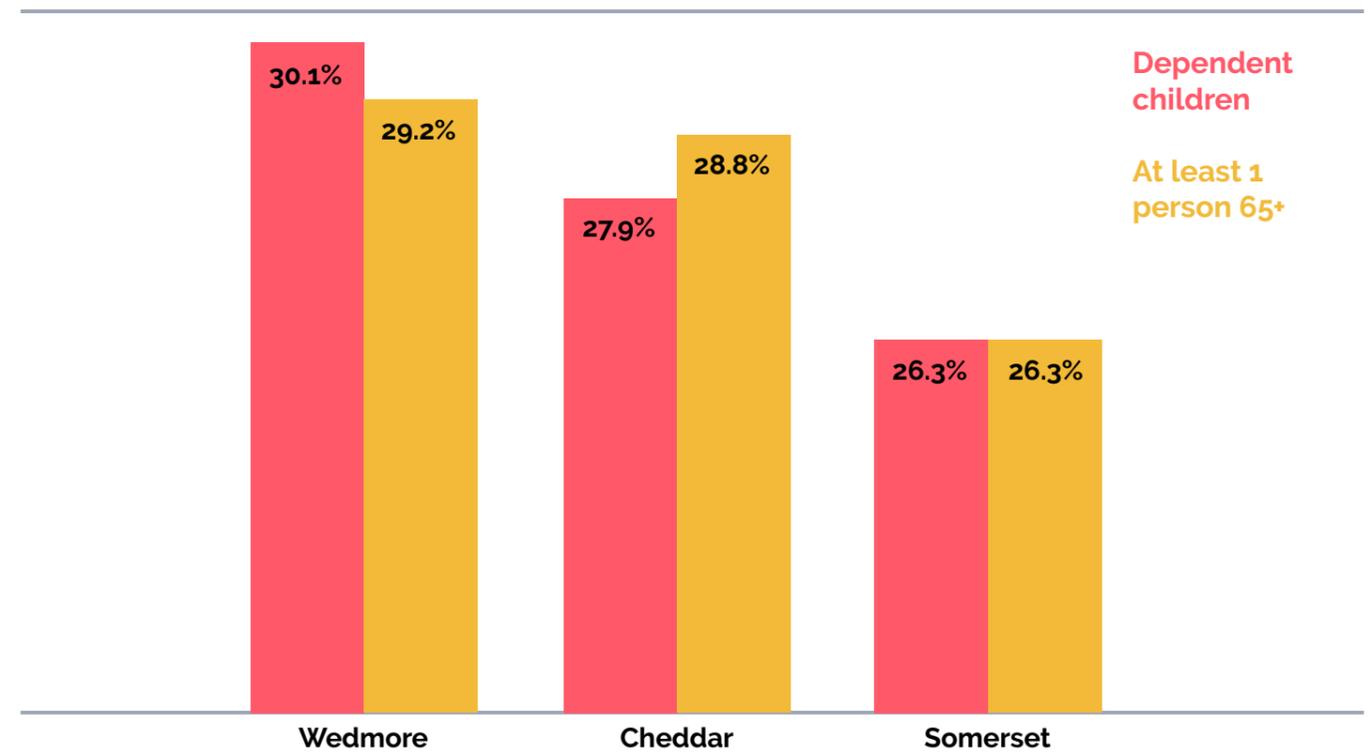
**16. Vehicles :** Vehicle ownership per household is high with only 6 percent of homes not having access to a car or van (it was 8 percent in 2001). 63 percent of households have two vehicles or more.

**Table 8. Vehicle ownership comparison 2011**



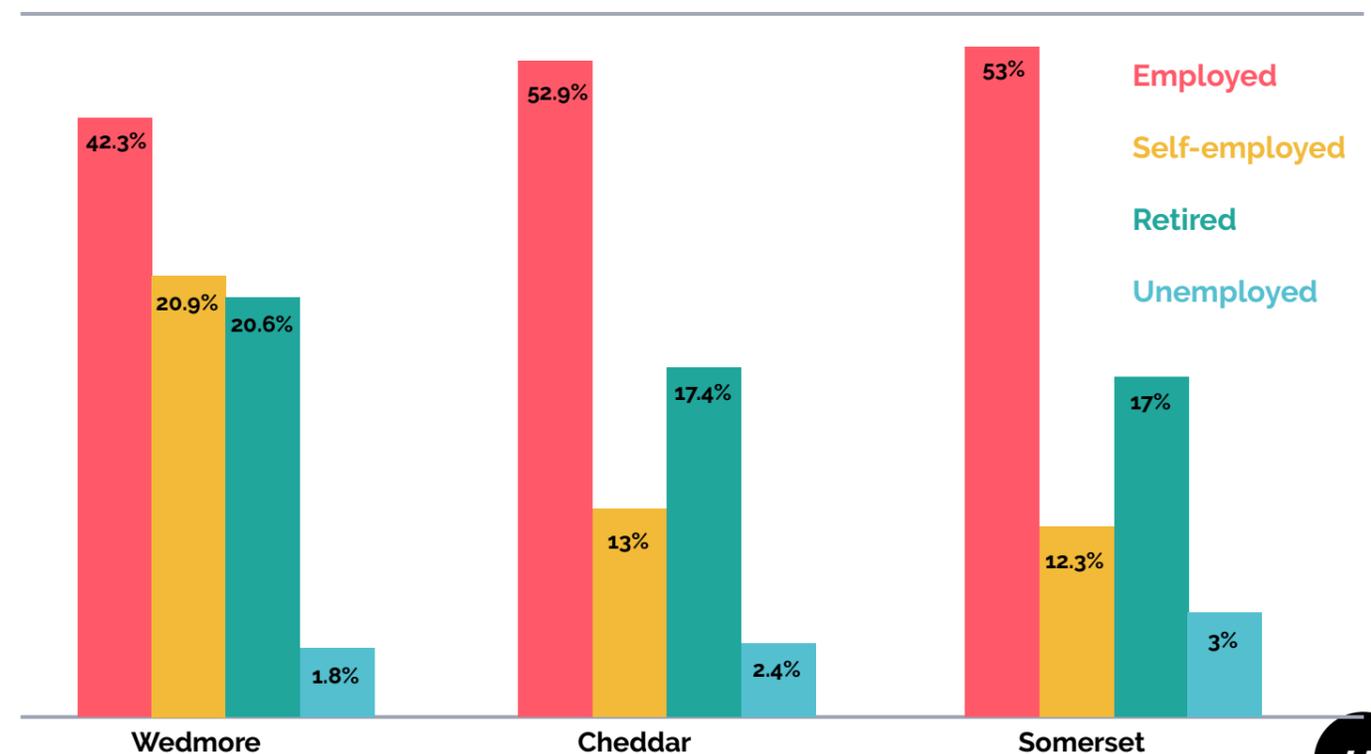
**17. Household composition :** Compared with neighbouring Cheddar and Somerset generally, Wedmore has a higher proportion of households with occupants 65 or over (29 percent). It also has a higher proportion of households with dependent children (30 percent). (see Chart over page)

**Chart 1. Household composition comparison 2011**



**18. Employment and economic activity :** Wedmore has a high proportion of economically active adults in work and unemployment is low at 1.8 percent. Those identified as employees (63 percent) is almost unchanged since 2001 when it was recorded at 62 percent. However, the proportion of self-employed has increased; from 17 percent in 2001 to current 21 percent in 2011.

**Chart 2. Employment and economic activity comparison 2011**

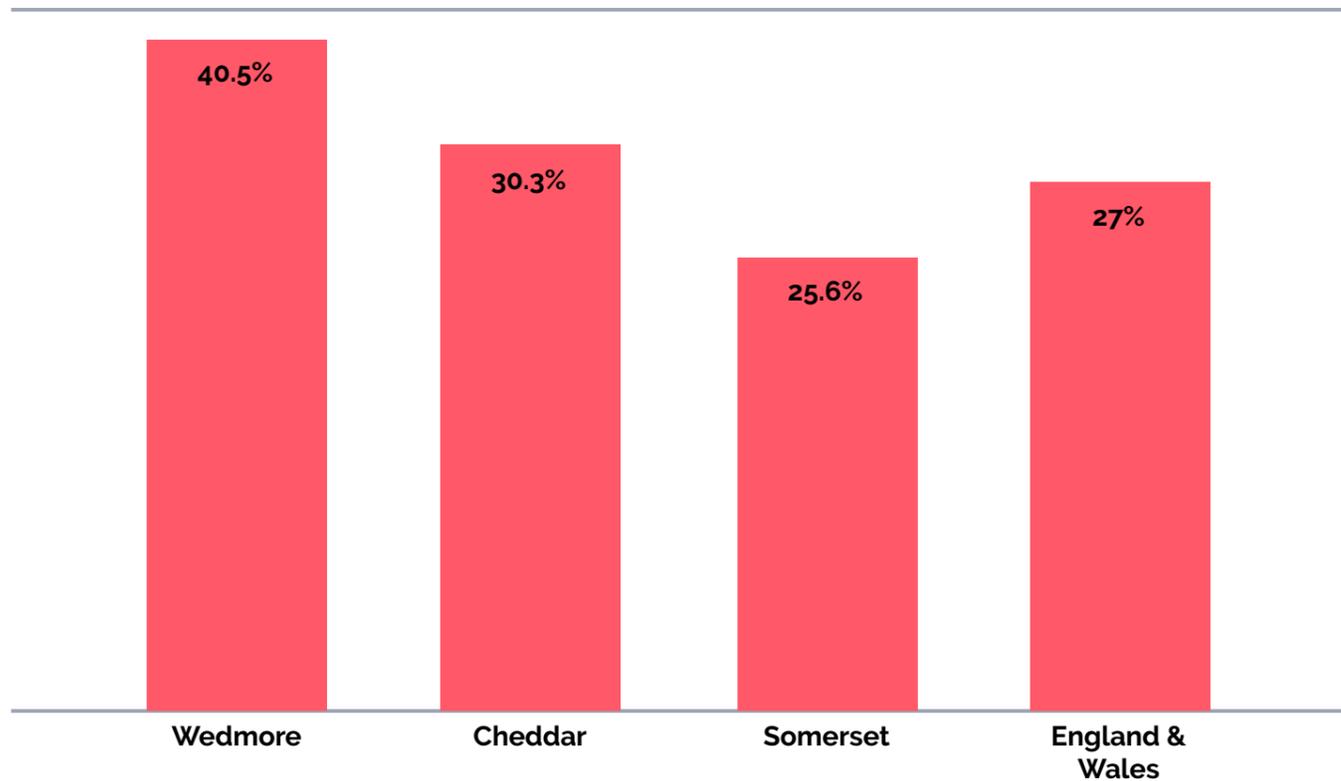


## APPENDIX 3 PLAY, SPORTS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

**19. Method of travel to work :** Of those employed 63 percent drive to work, but with just over a quarter (26 percent) saying they work mainly from home. This is a noticeable increase on the 20 percent recorded in 2001 and 15 percent in 1991.

**20. Qualifications :** Wedmore residents are well qualified with 41 percent registering qualifications at Level 4 or above (the highest category in the census). This is considerably higher than the Somerset average of 26 percent or the national average of 27 percent.

**Chart 3. Education comparison 2011**



**21. Occupation by industry :** Wedmore is a rural area and while only 6 percent of those economically active work in agriculture, this is significantly higher than the Somerset average of 3 percent and neighbouring parish Cheddar (2 percent). The national average is less than 1 percent. However, the most commonly cited occupational categories are wholesale and retail trades, professional, scientific and technical activities, education and human health and social work activities, all with significantly higher numbers than those working in agriculture.

**The facilities protected under Policy WED13 are :**

- The Recreation Ground Complex in Blackford Road including
- Tennis Club
- Bowls Club
- Childrens Play Area
- The Village Hall in The Borough
- The Masonic Hall in Church Street
- Theale Village Hall in Wells Road
- The George Inn, Church Street
- The Swan, The Borough
- The New Inn, Combe Batch
- The Panborough Inn, Wells Road
- The Sexey's Arms, Blackford Road
- The Trotter, Clewer
- Somermead Scout / Guide Hut off Combe Batch
- St Mary's Church on Church Street
- The Methodist Church on Sand Road
- Theale Church on Wells Road
- Blackford Church (Blackford Road)
- Theale Play Area (Theale)
- Blackford Play Area (Blackford)
- Wedmore Surgery in St Medard Way
- Wedmore Dental Practice in The Borough
- Axe Valley Veterinary Centre on Redmans Hill
- Bagley Baptist Church, Cold Nose Lane, Bagley

