

**North Somerset Council
Local Development Framework**

**Sites and Policies
Development Plan Document**

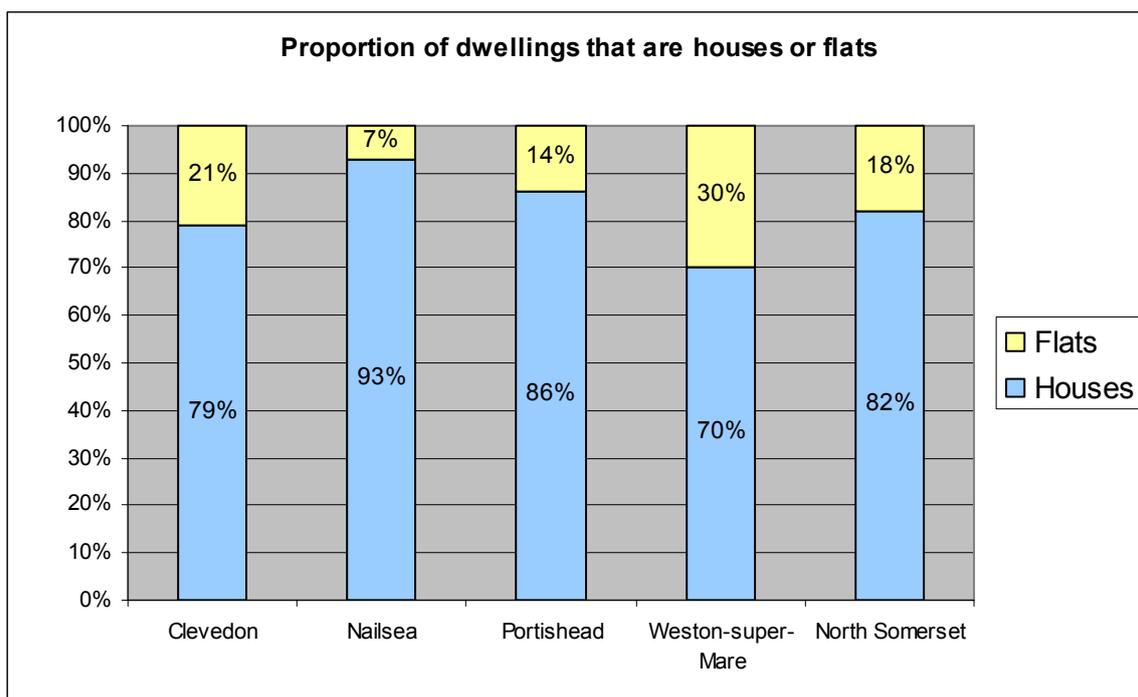
**Evidence Paper
Subdivision of family housing**

There is a general concern that parts of North Somerset, particularly within Weston-super-Mare have become saturated with small dwellings, mainly flats, and that a concentration of this kind of dwelling can lead to both environmental issues (such as parking problems and waste storage) and social and deprivation issues.

The following information was collected to investigate the proportion of types and sizes of dwellings across North Somerset to evidence any emerging policies on mixed and balanced communities.

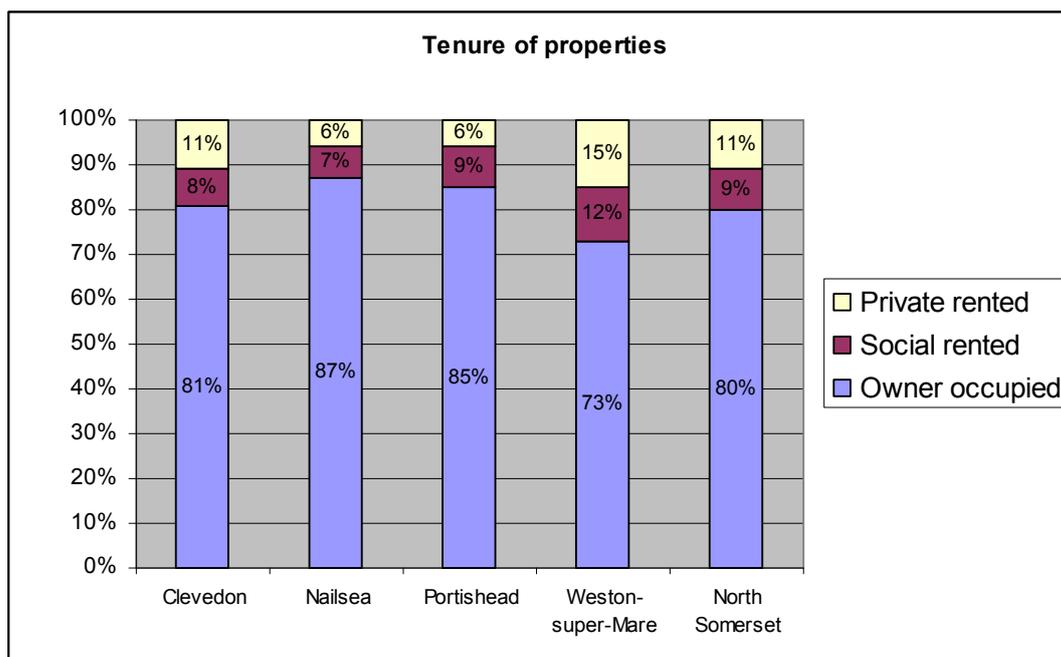
Houses and flats

Across the district as a whole at the time of the 2001 Census, 82% of dwellings were houses and 18% were flats. This percentage differs greatly across the four towns across the district as shown below.



Tenure

Similarly, the tenure of properties within the towns across the district varies greatly.

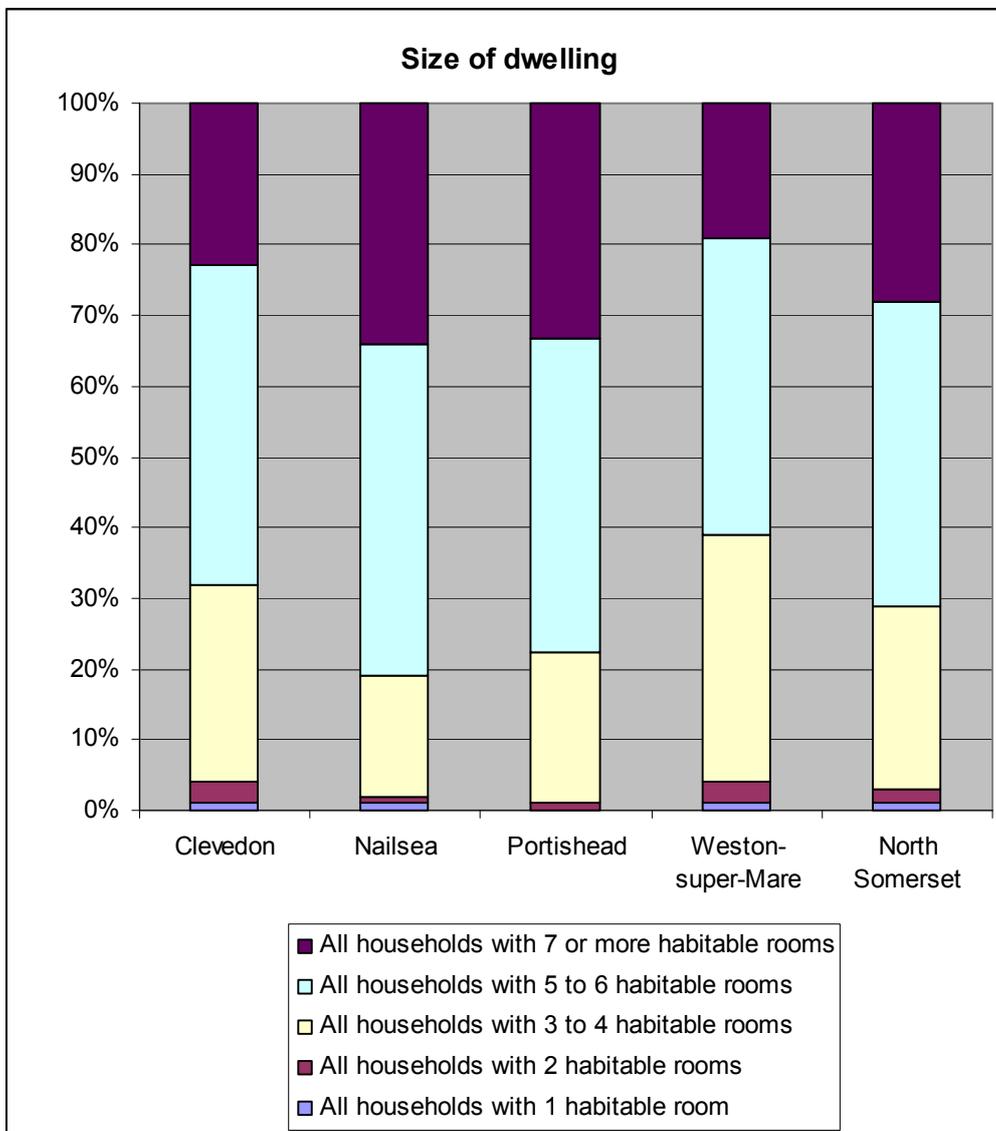


Size of dwellings

The last Census in 2001 did not ask residents about how many bedrooms were in their houses. The only information that we can use as a proxy to measure the size of dwellings is the number of habitable rooms that there were. Bathrooms, toilets, hallways, landings and rooms that can only be used for storage do not count as habitable rooms. For this exercise the following assumptions have been made:

- 1 habitable room = 1 bedroom dwelling
- 2 habitable rooms = 1 bedroom dwelling
- 3 or 4 habitable rooms = 1 or 2 bedroom dwelling
- 5 or 6 habitable rooms = 2 or 3 bedroom dwelling
- 7 or more habitable rooms = 4 or more bedroom dwelling

The following chart shows the size of dwellings within the towns in the district and across North Somerset as a whole.



Deprivation

In the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007 North Somerset had the 11th largest range of inequality out of all local authorities. This means that we have areas that are very prosperous, within the top 25% nationally, and areas that are very deprived, within the bottom 2% nationally. The most deprived areas are contained within Weston-super-Mare as shown below.



Correlation between deprivation and small, rented accommodation units

All of the evidence above suggests that Weston-super-Mare is the only area of the district that is currently suffering severe deprivation issues and that has a higher than average proportion of small, rented accommodation units. Furthermore, only parts of the town are affected, namely Weston-super-Mare Central ward, Weston-super-Mare South ward and Weston-super-Mare West ward. Whilst it is not possible to directly correlate deprivation with the types of dwellings in these areas a link has been established and therefore the rest of the evidence presented in this paper will relate to these three areas of the town.



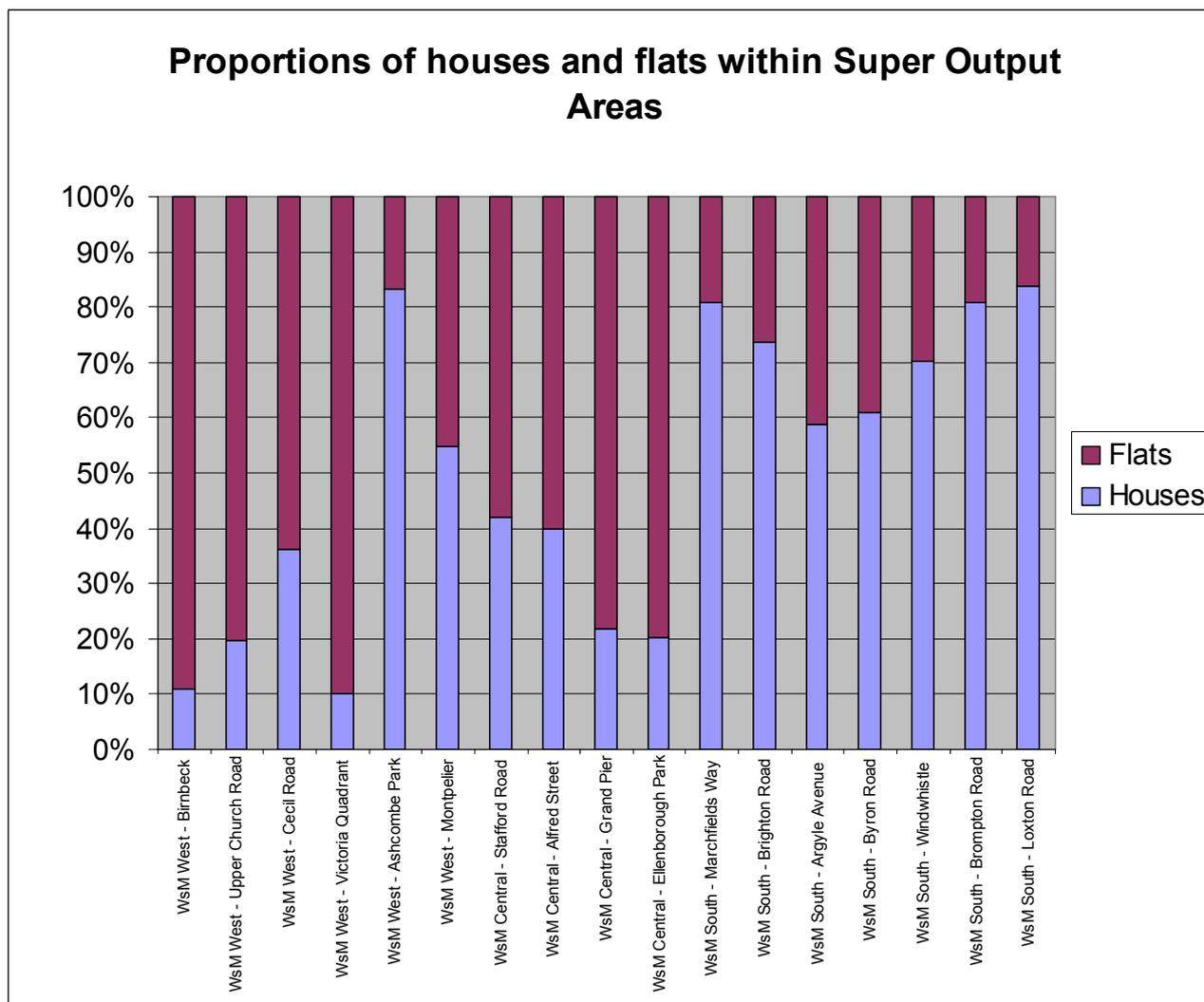
Further analysis of Weston-super-Mare Central, South and West wards

Within wards are a smaller geography, known as Super Output Areas (SOAs). SOAs each contain a population of around 1,500 people and can be used to look at differences within wards.

We have re-examined the indicators that were used above for the towns at this small geographical area to allow us to pinpoint where problems within the wards may be.

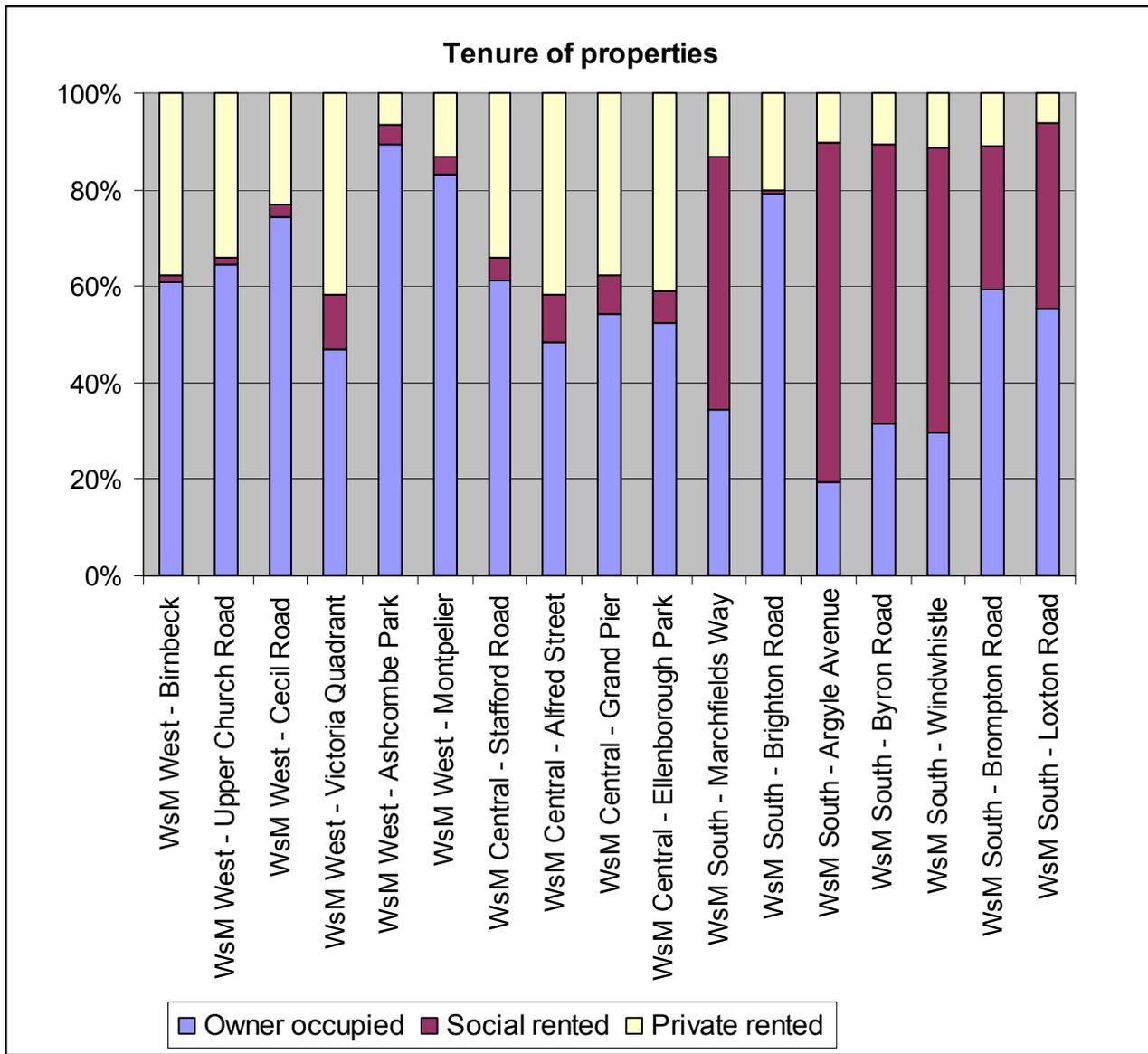
Houses and flats

The following graph shows the differences in types of housing within these wards. At the time of the 2001 Census it can clearly be seen that both West and Central wards are largely made up of flats, whereas South ward has a higher proportion of houses.



Tenure

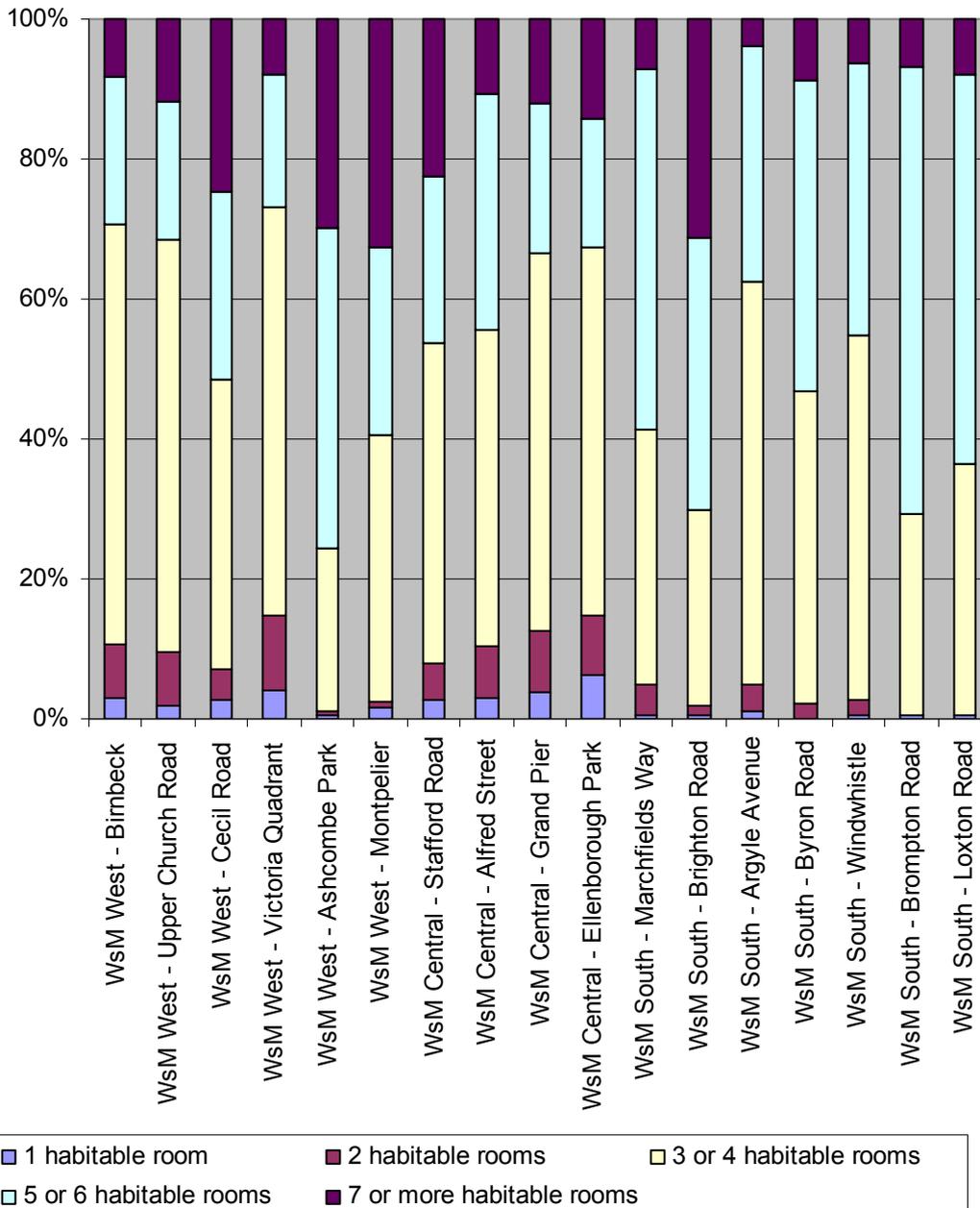
As shown in the graph below, Weston-super-Mare West and Central wards generally display high proportions of private rented dwellings. Conversely, most of Weston-super-Mare South ward consists of mainly social rented accommodation.



Size of dwellings

With the exception of 3 super output areas, all of the areas analysed have a relatively high proportion of smaller dwellings.

Size of dwelling



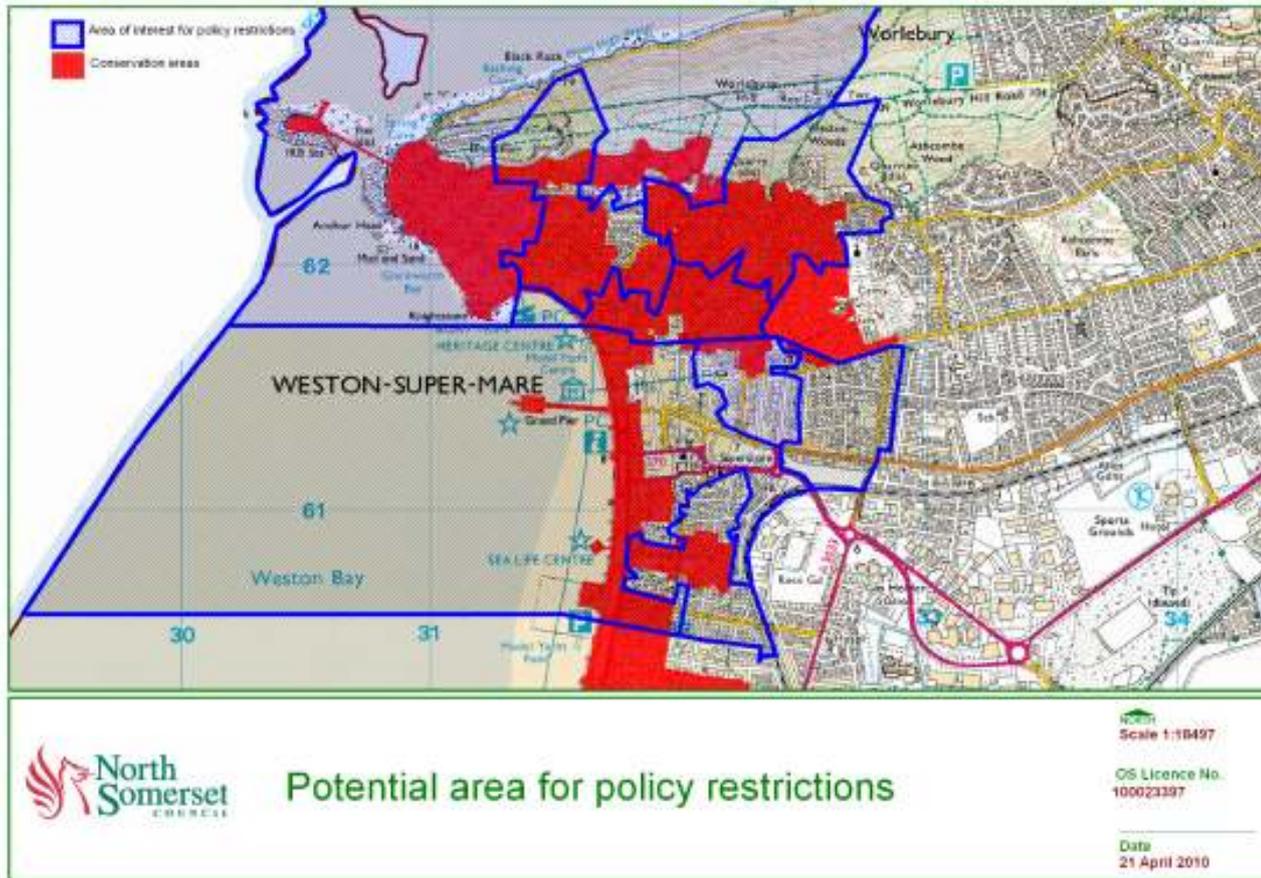
Summary of analysis

Whilst it is not possible to directly correlate deprivation issues with types of accommodation in an area we have established eight super output areas in Weston-super-Mare that have significant deprivation issues and that have larger than average proportions of small, rented flats. These super output areas are

- Birnbeck
- Upper Church Road
- Cecil Road
- Victoria Quadrant
- Stafford Road
- Alfred Street
- Grand Pier

- Ellenborough Park.

These areas are shown on the map below.



Based upon the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office (c) Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution in civil proceedings. (North Somerset Council, 2010, 100023397)

Policy options

Option 1 – Resist all development of small flats within this whole area

One option would be to resist any developments containing one bedroom flats within these areas. This would seek to stop any proliferation of small units getting worse. It should, however be noted that this geographical area includes the town centre, where in some instances small flats above shops are the only feasible option. Also within this area are some sites where small flats or apartments would be an acceptable form of regeneration, such as Birnbeck Pier, The Royal Pier Hotel, Victoria Square, NCP Car Park, Dolphin Square, Locking Road Car Park, The Dorville Hotel and other hotels or listed buildings along the sea front.

For these reasons this option is not considered feasible.

Option 2 – Resist development of small flats within this area, excepting sites within the conservation areas.

Some of the sites named above are within a conservation area. Having this as an exception to a restrictive policy would therefore potentially allow developments of small units on these sites. The problem with this approach would be that not all of the sites are within conservation areas, and that there are lots of family houses within the conservation areas that we would not want to be exception sites.

For these reasons this option is not considered feasible.

Option 3 – Resist the conversion of family housing to flats within this area, or within smaller areas defined within this larger boundary

A policy that sought to resist the conversion of family housing to flats would allow the specific sites named above to be developed as flats or apartments, whilst stopping any more family housing being lost. Also, to seek to redress the balance it may be helpful to incorporate into the policy a level of support for converting flats back to family housing where possible. Defining smaller areas would allow the policy to focus on streets or neighbourhoods where the proportion of flats is the greatest.

Option 4 – Resist the conversion of family housing to flats within the whole of Weston-super-Mare

The evidence shown in this paper splits Weston-super-Mare into super output areas and focuses on those with the highest levels of deprivation. As a town, Weston does have proportionately more small, rented flats than the rest of the district and therefore we could consider applying option 3 to the whole of Weston, rather than just the area identified above.

Further analysis of specific areas within Weston-super-Mare

Three main areas have been identified determined by a range of factors including;

1. The proportion of subdivided properties.
2. Demographic/social issues
3. Parking and bin storage problems
4. The nature and size of the original properties
5. Historical and local characteristics of the street
6. Future risk of flooding

These areas are:

- Moorland Road area
- Clifton Road area
- George Street area

Moorland Road area

This is an area which developed in the late 1800s early 1900s as Weston-super-Mare expanded behind the seafront to the south of Clarence Park. It includes most of Moorland Road, Walliscote Road South, and parts of Quantock Road, Lyndhurst Road and Charlton Avenue. It is characterised by short terrace houses with occasional pairs of semi detached properties. Most are stone with bay windows and gabled roofs although there are occasional brick or rendered properties on some plots. Most of the original properties had small rear gardens, whilst some of those with larger gardens have seen some backland development between the main rows of terraces. Front gardens are small, typically just over 3m from pavement to the front of the house. Many have retained their stone walls and gates and although some have been surfaced for car parking there is generally insufficient depth to cater for a car parked straight on. Consequently on street parking is high with insufficient space at peak periods of the day and overnight. Limited waste and recycling storage areas result in bins and boxes left in the street.

Whilst the street scene contains substantial numbers of parked cars, mature street trees soften the visual impact and in general most houses appear externally to be in a reasonable state of repair.

Within the proposed boundary, there are 266 property units, of which 16 are in commercial use. Of the 250 residential units, 55% are still a single residential dwelling, and 45% have been converted to flats. The total number of flats arising from the conversions within the boundary is 299, equating to an average of 2.67 flats per original dwelling. Compared to the original 250 residential units, there

are now a total of 456 units of accommodation, which includes flats over shops. The density of the housing in the area would have originally been 31 dwellings per hectare, and is currently 57 dwellings per hectare.

The Moorland Road proposed zone for restriction is within the Weston-super-Mare Clarence and Uphill ward. This zone only makes up a small part of the ward, and is not typical of the ward as a whole.

In terms of deprivation, the area that the proposed boundary covers broadly matches with three super output areas. This geography was introduced in 2004 to primarily monitor deprivation, so that pockets within larger wards were not hidden. One of the super output areas within the proposed Moorland Road boundary is in the bottom 14% of areas nationally, and is the 11th most deprived super output area out of the 124 in North Somerset.

Clifton Road area

This is an area between Ellenborough Park and Clarence Park developed mainly in the late Victorian and Edwardian era and comprising of most properties in Clevedon Road, Clifton Road, Severn Road, Langport Road, Whitecross Road, Dickenson Road, Raleigh Court, Pitman Road, Albert Road, and parts of Walliscote Road and Exeter Road. Most of the properties are in residential use although the area includes some retail units. This is a larger area than the Moorland Road area characterised by a grid pattern of streets between the seafront and the railway line. Most properties are two storey stone built domestic buildings arranged in terraces and pairs of semi-detached properties. Most of the original houses had very small rear gardens and although there are occasional blocks of garages most properties do not have any private parking space. Streets are overcrowded with cars and there are generally less street trees than in Moorland Road. Many of the buildings have interesting facades and architectural details but front gardens tend to be very small and in many cases only large enough to accommodate wheelie bins.

Within the proposed boundary, there are 556 property units, of which 52 are in commercial use. Of the 504 residential units, 46% are still a single residential dwelling, and 54% have been converted to flats. The total number of flats arising from the conversions within the boundary is 848, equating to an average of 3.12 flats per original dwelling. Compared to the original 504 residential units, there are now a total of 1,101 units of accommodation, which includes flats over shops. The density of the housing in the area would have originally been 27 dwellings per hectare, and is currently 59 dwellings per hectare.

This proposed zone straddles the ward boundary of Weston-super-Mare Central and Weston-super-Mare Clarence and Uphill. Clarence and Uphill ward covers a large geographical area with a varied mix of house types, tenures and socio-demographic characteristics. Central ward is a more deprived area, with typically smaller units of accommodation and a higher proportion of flats. It should, however, be noted that this ward as a whole does cover the town centre as well as large residential areas, and therefore all of the characteristics of what you would expect from a town centre, such as flats above shops, are mirrored in the statistics for this ward.

In terms of deprivation, the area that the proposed boundary covers falls within four super output area boundaries. This geography was introduced in 2004 to specifically monitor deprivation, so that pockets within larger wards were not hidden. Two of the super output areas within the proposed Clifton Road boundary are in the bottom 5% of areas nationally, and are the 5th and 6th most deprived super output areas out of the 124 in North Somerset.

George Street Area

This is an area immediately to the east of the town centre and north of Locking Road. It consists of most properties in Alma Street, Alfred Street, Jubilee Road, George Street, Swiss Road, Wooler Road, Glebe Road, Stafford Road, Gordon Road, Milburn Road, Trevelyan Road, Stanley Grove and Lyons Court as well as parts of Baker Street, Clarendon Road and the southern part of Ashcombe Road. Most of the properties are residential two storey Victorian stone built properties. Plot sizes generally increase the further to the east as the tight terraces which sit directly on the street in Alma Road change into mostly semi detached properties on Swiss Road and Ashcombe Road. Few of the properties have any private parking space and many lack storage for waste and recycling collections. There are few street trees and some of the properties would benefit from a degree of maintenance.

Within the proposed boundary, there are 736 property units, of which 57 are in commercial use. Of the 679 residential units, 54% are still a single residential dwelling, and 46% have been converted to flats. The total number of flats arising from the conversions within the boundary is 902, equating to an average of 2.86 flats per original dwelling. Compared to the original 679 residential units, there are now a total of 1299 units of accommodation, which includes flats over shops. The density of the housing in the area would have originally been 35.2 dwellings per hectare, and is currently 67.34 dwellings per hectare.

This proposed zone falls within the Weston-super-Mare Central ward. Central ward is a deprived area, with typically smaller units of accommodation and a higher proportion of flats. It should, however, be noted that this ward as a whole does cover the town centre as well as large residential areas, and therefore all of the characteristics of what you would expect from a town centre, such as flats above shops, are mirrored in the statistics for this ward.

In terms of deprivation, the area that the proposed boundary covers largely matches up with two super output area boundaries. This geography was introduced in 2004 to specifically monitor deprivation, so that pockets within larger wards were not hidden. One of these super output areas is in the bottom 3% of areas nationally, and is the 4th most deprived super output area out of the 124 in North Somerset. The other is within the bottom 10% nationally and is the 9th most deprived area in North Somerset, out of 124.

Proposed policy approach

A policy entitled 'Areas of Restricted Subdivision' was then drafted on the basis of the evidence presented above, and boundaries defined.

Internal consultation

In December 2010 an e-mail inviting comments on the basis of the draft policy and proposed indicative boundaries was sent to the Ward Councillors whose areas were involved, and other internal officers, by way of informal consultation. This summary highlights the issues raised and subsequent revisions made, concerning the boundaries of the proposed areas.

Comments received included

- Support for general approach
- Moorland Road area could be extended to include Southend Road
- Clifton Road area could be extended to include whole of Albert Road, Whitecross Road, Pitman Road and Dickenson Road
- George Street area could be extended to the east, as far as Ashcombe Road.

Subsequent revisions considered and made

Moorland Road area

Extending the proposed boundary to incorporate Southend Road was considered, however, the boundary remains unchanged. The road is a metre wider than Moorland Road, and therefore parking does not appear to be an issue. Also, the frontages of the properties are in some cases large enough to accommodate a car, also meaning that there appear to be plenty of passing places. Brief analysis of the house types shows that only around 18% of the properties on this road contain flats, compared to around 45% in the boundary as defined initially.

Clifton Road area

Suggestions were made that the original proposed boundary could be extended to incorporate the whole of Albert Road, Whitecross Road, Pitman Road and Dickenson Road. Revisions have been made to the proposed boundary on the basis of a site visit. The boundary has been extended to the north and now includes additional properties on Albert Road, Whitecross Road, Pitman Road and most of Dickenson Road, with the exception of some bungalows at the top of the road, which are characteristically different from the rest of the proposed zone. The proportion of flats within the added area is similar to that of the rest of the zone, and the narrow streets, parking issues and lack of bin storage space are also of a similar nature.

George Street area

It was suggested that the boundary could be extended to the east towards, and incorporating, Ashcombe Road. The proportions of houses and flats within the proposed additions were calculated as a desk top exercise, and a site visit made. The proposed boundary has been amended on the basis of both the high proportion of flats, and the characteristics of the area. The boundary does extend to incorporate the southern half of Ashcombe Road, and also Beaufort Road, Gordon Road, Milburn Road, Trevalyan Road, Stafford Road, Stanley Road and Stanley Grove. This area is similar to the zone already proposed and contains a high proportion of flats.



For further information please contact

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