

South Somerset District Council

Settlement Profile: Iminster

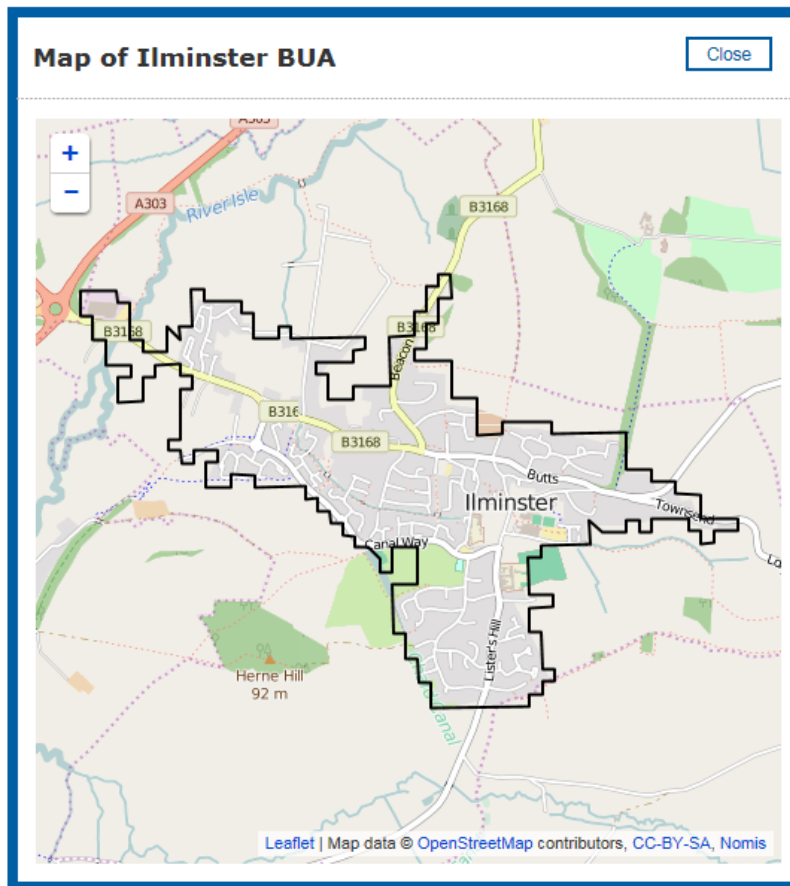


October 2017

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Settlement Profile has been produced using 2011 Census data for the 'Built-up Area' (BUA) of Ilminster (Figure 1.1), unless otherwise stated.

Figure 1.1: Map of Crewkerne BUA



Source: Partnership Intelligence Unit, Somerset County Council

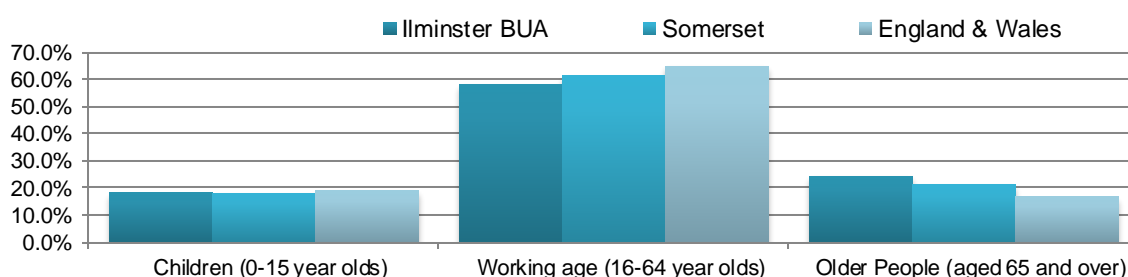
- 1.2. Ilminster is located at the intersection of the A303 and A358, 12 miles to the east of Taunton and 15 miles to the west of Yeovil. Due to this highways accessibility, both of these settlements are easily accessible, and Ilminster has functional relationship with both.
- 1.3. Highways England plan to dual the A358 from the A303 at Southfields roundabout. These works will significantly enhance road connectivity to the motorway network for Ilminster and is likely to bring about opportunities for growth.
- 1.4. Ilminster Town Council applied for the parish of Ilminster to be designated as a Neighbourhood Area for the purposes of the preparation of the Ilminster Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Area was designated on 1st June 2017 but at the time of writing there has been no pre-submission consultation under Regulation 14 of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

2. POPULATION

- 2.1 Figure 2.1 shows the age profile of Ilminster’s resident population, assessing the number and percentage of residents in each of the following groups: children; working age; and older people. It then compares the percentages against those for Somerset, and England & Wales.

Figure 2.1 Ilminster Age Profile Compared to Somerset, and England & Wales

	Ilminster BUA		Somerset	England & Wales
		%	%	%
Total usually resident population	5,808	100.0	100.0	100.0
Children (0-15 year olds)	1,044	18.0	17.8	18.9
Working age (16-64 year olds)	3,365	57.9	61.1	64.7
Older People (aged 65 and over)	1,399	24.1	21.1	16.4



Source: Partnership Intelligence Unit, Somerset County Council, using 2011 Census statistics from ONS

- 2.2 Figure 2.1 shows that Ilminster has a resident population of 5,808 people, with proportionately fewer residents of ‘Working age’, and more ‘Older People’ than Somerset, and England & Wales. It has a similar proportion of children to Somerset - both of which are below the averages for England & Wales.
- 2.3 Ilminster has an elderly population which is likely to result in pressure on services for the elderly.

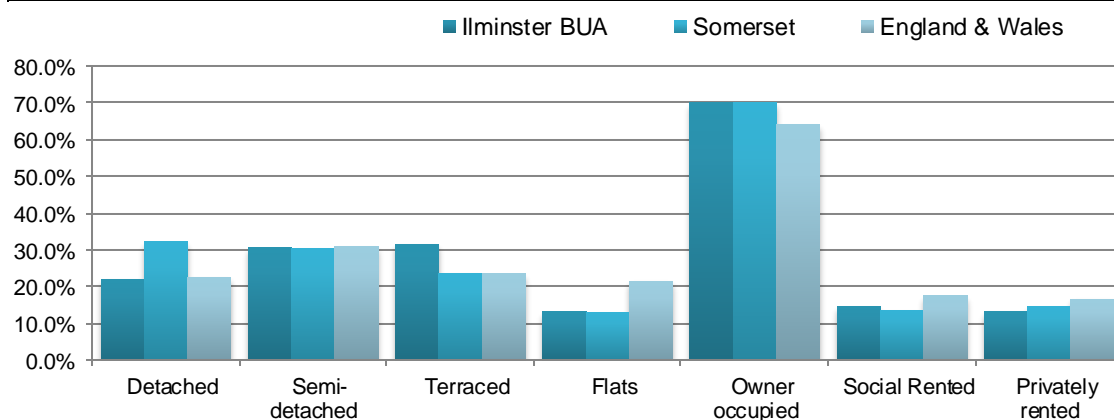
3. HOUSING

- 3.1 Policy SS5 sets Ilminster a target of delivering 496 new dwellings by 31st March 2028, a much lower figure than the other Primary Market Towns. Between 1st April 2006 and 31st March 2017, it has delivered 264 dwellings and had 120 commitments¹. It needs permission for another 112 dwellings but on the basis of its suggesting that it is on-track to reach its targets.
- 3.2 Figure 3.1 shows the number and percentage of dwellings by dwelling type and households by tenure. It also presents a comparison of dwelling types and tenure profiles for Ilminster, Somerset, and England & Wales.

¹ South Somerset District Council Monitoring Database

Figure 3.1: Ilminster's Accommodation and Household Profiles Compared to Somerset, and England & Wales

	Ilminster BUA		Somerset	England & Wales
		%	%	%
Total number of dwellings	2,716	100.0	100.0	100.0
Detached	601	22.1	32.3	22.6
Semi-detached	833	30.7	30.4	31.1
Terraced	860	31.7	23.7	23.6
Flats	360	13.3	13.0	21.6
Tenure		%	%	%
Total number of households	2,609	100.0	100.0	100.0
Owner occupied	1,830	70.1	70.2	64.3
Social Rented	383	14.7	13.5	17.6
Privately rented	349	13.4	14.7	16.7
Average household size (persons per household)	2.2			



Source: Partnership Intelligence Unit, Somerset County Council, using 2011 Census statistics from ONS

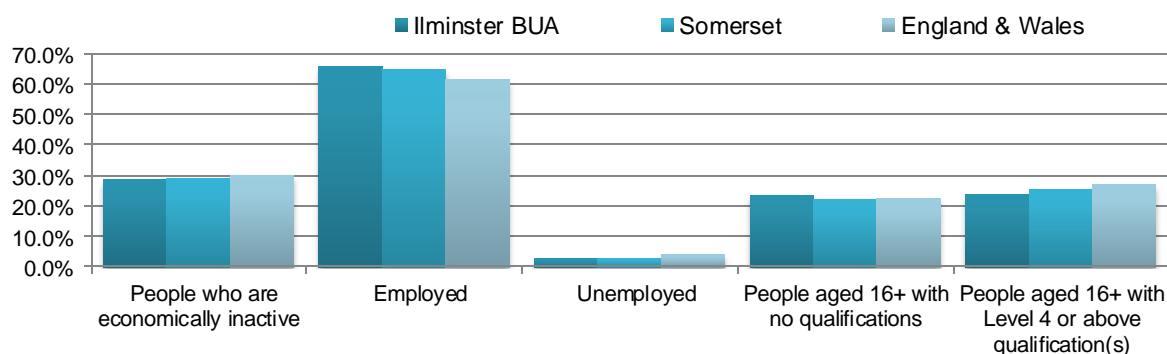
- 3.3 Figure 3.1 shows that Ilminster has a significantly greater proportion of terraced properties than Somerset, and England & Wales, and a similar level of detached properties to England & Wales. The settlement has a good range and balance of property types, including a good supply of terraced properties which give the town more affordability, and help to even out the limited number of flats.
- 3.4 Ilminster's proportion of private rented accommodation is lower than the county and national averages. Its proportion of social housing is greater than the Somerset average but both are below the English & Welsh average. Overall, the settlement would benefit from a greater proportion of privately and socially rented dwellings.

4. ECONOMY

- 4.1 As Figure 4.1 shows, the proportion of economically inactive people and unemployed people in Ilminster is below the average for Somerset. The proportion of Ilminster's residents employed is above the Somerset, and English & Welsh averages. Despite lower than average qualification levels, the settlement should be considered to be in an economically strong position.

Figure 4.1: Ilminster's Economic Activity Compared to Somerset, and England & Wales

	Ilminster BUA		Somerset	England & Wales
		%	%	%
Total number of people aged 16 to 74	4,023	100.0	100.0	100.0
People who are economically inactive	1,158	28.8	29.2	30.3
Employed	2,656	66.0	65.2	61.9%
Unemployed	117	2.9	3.0	4.4
People aged 16+ with no qualifications	1,127	23.7	22.4	22.7
People aged 16+ with Level 4 or above qualification(s)	1,139	23.9	25.6	27.2



Source: Partnership Intelligence Unit, Somerset County Council, using 2011 Census statistics from ONS

- 4.2 The main employment area is to the west of the settlement, accessed off Station Road, allowing ease of access to the A303.
- 4.3 The SSDC Monitoring Data base shows that Ilminster has delivered the second largest amount of land (4.03 ha net) for economic development of all the named Local Plan settlements and a good amount of floorspace (15,647 metres squared). However, it has failed to deliver on its economic development land strategic allocations.
- 4.4 The majority of land delivered in Ilminster is in the B-uses, which is mostly attributable to the Highways Agency maintenance depot at Southfields Roundabout. Nearly half of all the floorspace delivered in Ilminster has been in the traditional B uses (45%) but there has also been a significant quantity of A, C, D, and Sui Generis uses floorspace delivered, reflecting the service role of the town.

4.5 Figure 4.2 shows the employment within the settlement, specific to 18 industry groups.

Figure 4.2: Employment Provision in Ilminster, 2015

Sector	Ilminster		South Somerset
	No of Jobs	%	%
1 : Agriculture, forestry & fishing (A)	10	0.4	n/a
2 : Mining, quarrying & utilities (B,D and E)	0	0.0	0.9
3 : Manufacturing (C)	500	20.2	20.3
4 : Construction (F)	175	7.1	5.5
5 : Motor trades (Part G)	100	4.0	(All G) 18.8
6 : Wholesale (Part G)	150	6.1	
7 : Retail (Part G)	400	16.2	
8 : Transport & storage (inc postal) (H)	20	0.8	3.5
9 : Accommodation & food services (I)	175	7.1	6.2
10 : Information & communication (J)	75	3.0	2
11 : Financial & insurance (K)	25	1.0	0.9
12 : Property (L)	15	0.6	1.4
13 : Professional, scientific & technical (M)	225	9.1	7
14 : Business administration & support services (N)	75	3.0	5.5
15 : Public administration & defence (O)	50	2.0	2.3
16 : Education (P)	100	4.0	7.8
17 : Health (Q)	300	12.1	14.1
18 : Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services (R,S,T and U)	50	2.0	3.9
Total	2,500		

Source: Business Register and Employment Survey, NOMIS, 2015

The BRES data does not include farmagriculture (SIC subclass 01000).data at settlement level; it is only available at region and country level. This is Open Access data that has been rounded to make it publishable; as such, the figures do not tally to an exact 100%.

4.6 Of the sectors, the primary employer within the settlement is Manufacturing (20.2%); the second and third largest employers are Retail (16.2%).and Health (12.1%).

4.7 The settlement provides around 2,500 jobs, meaning that for every resident aged 16 to 74, the settlement provides approximately 60% of a job. In fact, the settlement provides a similar number of jobs as there are people employed in the settlement.

Town Centre

4.8 The Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study² identifies that the town centre is healthy, with limited vacancies.

² Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study (2017)

- 4.2 Ilminster has a good selection of retail and service uses and its key roles include:
Convenience shopping – The convenience offer is comprised of a Tesco superstore with parking that benefits the rest of the centre; a McColls; and other independent shops.
Comparison shopping – The Comparison offer is good, comprised predominantly from independent units, but for a Boots and Peacocks.
Services – With two banks, four estate agents, three accountants, two solicitors, five hairdressers, and a post office, the service offer is good for the size of the settlement.
Entertainment – The night time economy is limited with only a brassier and wine bar, two public houses, and two Indian restaurants.
Other uses – A range of offices, a dentist, veterinary surgery, and dry cleaners, all contribute to the town centre offer, increasing footfall and vitality.
- 5.1 Nevertheless, Ilminster only retains a moderate amount of its convenience goods, comparison goods, and food and beverage expenditure because of ease of access to Taunton and Yeovil.
- 5.2 Limited growth in town centre floorspace is projected, which could be met by small in-fill developments, and shop extensions. It also states that the town centre is vulnerable to large scale retail and recommends that the 750 sq. m gross threshold for retail in Policy EP12 (Floorspace Threshold for Impact Assessments) should remain.

Figure 4.3: Projected Retail Floorspace Capacity in Ilminster

Type	By 2024	By 2029	By 2034
Convenience	-	-	-
Comparison	112	265	421
Food and Beverage	20	61	101
Total	132	326	522

Source: South Somerset Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study, 2017

- 5.3 The limited projected growth in town centre floorspace could be met by small in-fill developments, shop extensions, and additional retail opportunities identified in the Study.

5. INFRASTRUCTURE

- 5.4 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan³ (IDP) explains that the dualling of the A303 and the A358 from the A303 at Southfields roundabout, along with proposed improvements to junction 25 of the M5, will significantly enhance road connectivity to the motorway network. This will give Ilminster a strategic offer to businesses and commuters, affecting the growth potential of the town.
- 5.5 The IDP also highlights that highway works and flood risk alleviation are required to deliver the economic development scheme proposed at Station Road, with a Surface Water Feasibility Study to take place in 2019/20. Because of the infrastructure works required as a prerequisite to economic development, the feasibility of the allocation has been brought under question.

³ Infrastructure Delivery Plan (Update 2015/16) Part One – Spatial Summary (January 2016)

- 5.6 Somerset County Council is assessing the need for a new school in the Direction of Growth. Should the outline application⁴ for 400 dwellings at Canal Way be approved, it looks likely that an application for an associated school would follow soon after.
- 5.7 New housing does generate the need for additional infrastructure although the timing may not be fundamental to delivering the development. The infrastructure providers are being consulted as part of the Local Plan Review and any additional infrastructure required to meet future growth in Ilminster will be identified.

6. TRAVEL

- 6.1 How the residents of a settlement travel is an indication of its sustainability.
- 6.2 The settlement's public transport provision is shown in Figure 6.1 below.

Figure 6.1: Public Transport Provision

Buses		
Operator	Principal Destinations	Frequency (approx.)
Buses of Somerset	30: Taunton – Chard - Axminster – Axminster Railway Station	90 mins
Berry's Coaches	London Superfast 2	2xdaily
Nippy Bus	N10: Martock, Taunton Links with N6 DRT from Villages around the Martock / Ilminster Area and N9 to Yeovil	4xdaily
Somerset County Council	9: Merriott – Crewkerne	2 x daily weekday mornings ⁵

- 6.3 The town benefits from an express coach service to London, as well as bus services to Chard and Taunton. There is however no direct bus route to Yeovil. Crewkerne Station and Axminster Station are approximately 8.5 miles and 12.5 miles away respectively.
- 6.4 Overall, Ilminster is underserved by public transport and would benefit from improved bus services.

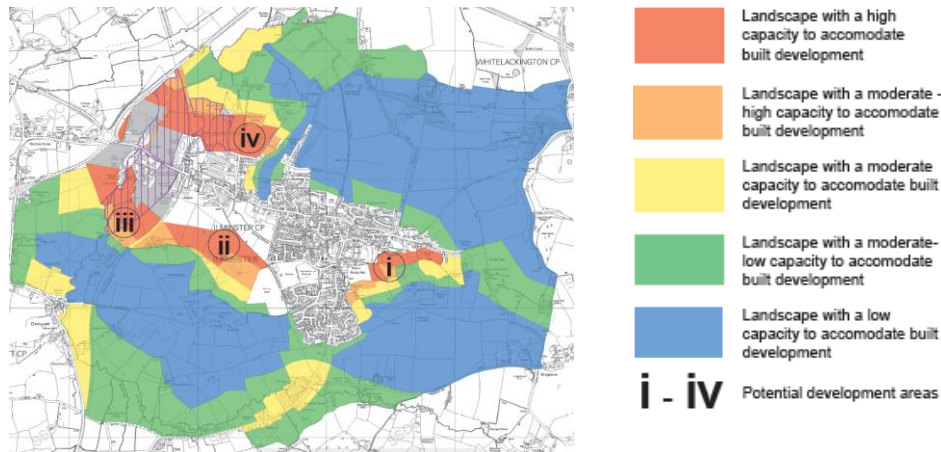
⁴ 16/05500/OUT

⁵ Timings mean that Service 9 work better for communities travelling into Ilminster rather than vice versa

7. ENVIRONMENT

7.1 The Peripheral Landscape Study⁶ shows that, from a landscape standpoint, there is land with potential to accommodate growth, predominantly to the west (Figure 7.1).

Figure 7.1: Ilminster Landscape Capacity



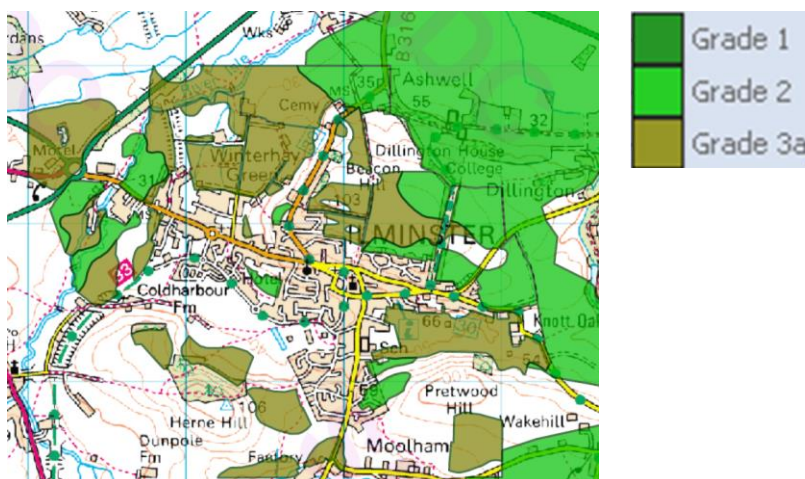
Source: Peripheral Landscape Study (2008)

7.2 Whilst landscape potential is important, other factors and constraints are also necessary to understanding the growth potential of the settlement.

7.3 Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land (Grades 1, 2 & 3a)⁷, is a key environmental constraint, according to the NPPF⁸. Loss of BMV will have to be considered as part of the planning balance for future growth. There are parcels of land mostly to the east and to the north of the settlement.

7.4 As Figure 7.2 shows, there are large swathes of BMV land located in 360 degrees around the settlement.

Figure 7.2: BMV Land around Ilminster



Source: WebMap, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Data

⁶ Peripheral Landscape Assessment, March 2008: <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/evidence-base/district-wide-documents/peripheral-landscape-studies/>

⁷ Defined in the NPPF, (DCLG) 2012 – Annex 2

⁸ DCLG, 2012

7.5 Another environmental constraint for Ilminster's growth is flood risk, shown below in Figure 7.3.

Figure 7.3: Ilminster Flood Map (Flood Zones 2 and 3)



Source: Environment Agency data on WebMap

7.6 Flood Zone 2 and 3 land to the north-west of the settlement is located in an area with otherwise very strong development potential, as identified by the Peripheral Landscape Study. As the IDP highlights, flood alleviation works are required to bring this site into a viable use.

7.7 There are also a number of archaeological sites, and two that intersect the town: the Chard canal; and the Taunton to Chard railway. A large county geological site⁹ covers most of the town. The boundary of the site is a large indicative area where parts of the old town walls can be found. As the exact locations of the walls are not mapped, it is not clear where the wall remains lie and how much of a constraint they pose to development; each case will have to be considered as it arises. Overall, the archaeological and geological sites are unlikely to significantly constrain the growth of the town.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 Ilminster's ability to accommodate growth is good if it is accompanied by the planned highway improvement and introduction of the appropriate infrastructure to mitigate flood risk to the west of the town.

Key Issues

8.2 The key issues that will need to be taken into account in planning the future of Ilminster include:

- The flooding infrastructure required to bring land to the west of the settlement, on Station Road, into employment use
- The dualling of the A303 and the A358, and improvements to junction 25 of the M5

⁹ The old town walls are now the best place for clean exposures of the Middle Lias Moolstone – a ferruginous sand oolite limestone where the shelly fossils bivalves, brachiopods, ammonites and belemnites have been preserved within the rock