



# A Community Strategy for Mendip

**Draft for Consultation  
April 2004**



*By 2021 Mendip will be a thriving,  
just and sustainable place to  
live in, work in and visit*

# Community Strategy for Mendip

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Produced by the Mendip Strategic Partnership	

## Foreword – from the Chair of the Mendip Strategic Partnership



*This draft community strategy has been prepared to help make a real difference for the people of Mendip. Organisations that can improve the quality of life for local people have come together, as a Partnership, to better co-ordinate our actions so we can be more effective. The Partnership's starting point was to meet with local people to find out their needs and priorities on a broad range of issues that affect their lives.*

*We have used this information to help us prepare the draft strategy, together with the actions that the organisations which make up the Partnership will need to take, so that we can achieve the aims within the strategy. We now invite the communities of Mendip to support the Partnership and help us to achieve these aims".*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ron Ballantine". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ron Ballantine  
Chair of the Mendip Strategic Partnership

## Introduction

This is Mendip's first community strategy and is presented as a draft to be used for discussion amongst organisations, agencies, individuals and anyone with an interest in the Mendip district.

The consultation period for this draft runs until 25<sup>th</sup> June 2004, after which the document will be revised, taking into account feedback received. The community strategy will then be published and circulated during Autumn 2004.

The strategy has been produced by organisations and individuals represented on the Mendip Strategic Partnership (MSP). The MSP is a partnership of representatives from the public, voluntary and private sectors, committed to working together to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of communities in the district.

This strategy sets out what we believe to be the important issues for people living in, working in and visiting Mendip. These issues have been identified in a number of ways, for example by:

- asking people in Mendip to tell us what matters most to them, now and in the future;
- examining information about the district, such as demographic trends and health & social needs data and environmental information;

and

- talking to those agencies who work with communities on a day to day basis.

Taking into account the resources that are available, we are developing action plans for each of the issues. Some of these actions are to be achieved in the near future and some are longer term.

Whilst this community strategy looks ahead to how we would like the district to be by 2021, we recognise that we can't achieve it all at once and that priorities can change over time. The action plans will therefore be monitored and reviewed every year, with progress being reported to the communities of Mendip. The community strategy itself will be reviewed periodically, in the light of progress made on the action plans and an assessment of the extent to which the strategy is influencing the work of partner organisations.

## **Community Planning and Local Strategic Partnerships**

The Government requires local authorities to produce a community strategy or plan which sets out the key issues and challenges for an area and how they will be tackled. Local authorities are not expected to do this on their own. There are many public, private and voluntary agencies, organisations and individuals that affect the quality of life of local people. Local authorities are expected to work in partnership with these bodies and people to develop, publish and implement a long term plan for the area.

These partnerships are generally known as Local Strategic Partnerships or LSPs. LSPs aim to co-ordinate the work of voluntary, public and private organisations that operate in an area and add value through working together to address issues more effectively than any one organisation could on its own.

Mendip's LSP is called the Mendip Strategic Partnership, or MSP. The MSP has two elements:

- the MSP Board, which meets regularly to develop and progress the community strategy and is made up of representatives from public, private and voluntary agencies
- The wider MSP – which comprises any group or individual with an interest in the economic, environmental and social well being of the district.

The MSP Board is made up of representatives from the following sectors, agencies and organisations:

- Police
- Primary Care Trust
- Faith Communities
- Environment Forum
- Voluntary Sector
- Registered Social Landlords
- Education
- Young People
- Local Councils
- Businesses

More information about the MSP, its current membership and its work can be accessed at the MSP website: [www.mendipstrategicpartnership.org.uk](http://www.mendipstrategicpartnership.org.uk)

The aim of the MSP is:

***'To work together to help create healthy, just, vibrant and sustainable communities in Mendip'***

## Community Strategy for Mendip

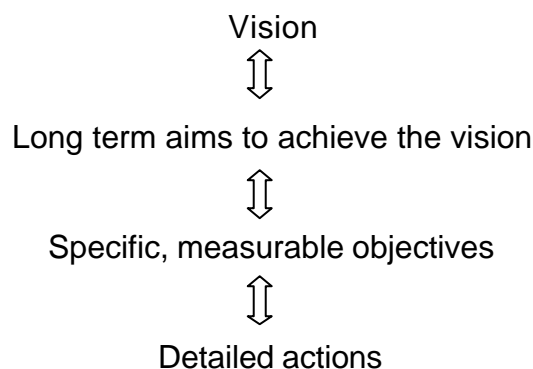
### **Its Shared Aims and Objectives are:**

- To share resources to be more effective in what we do
- To seek a long term vision with a rolling plan of short term actions
- To share networks, information, and contacts with each other
- To share good ideas and learn from our neighbours
- To support our voluntary sector partners to participate fully
- To actively engage our business community
- To foster sustainable development
- To use our influence and discretion to meet the local needs and priorities of our communities
- To uncover and set priorities and the overall agenda for community planning
- To seek continuity in the process of bids for funding

## The Community Strategy

The purpose of this community strategy is to set out how we intend to promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of Mendip, by highlighting the key issues that affect the quality of life of people in the district and setting out clear aims for how they will be addressed.

The strategy comprises a long term vision for the district and long term aims to achieve the vision. This strategy will be supported by a detailed action plan that sets out objectives to achieve the longer term aims and actions to achieve the objectives.



To turn the vision into reality, all partners will need to show continuous commitment to bringing together their own priorities and aims and pooling resources. The MSP believes that working together like this is the best way to achieve positive outcomes, particularly where needs cut across traditional agency boundaries.

The success of the strategy will also depend upon ongoing community involvement in the community planning process, to ensure that the aims and objectives of the MSP truly reflect the priorities for people living in, working in and visiting Mendip. The supporting action plans will show how the MSP intends to ensure community engagement in development and delivery of the Strategy.

### **The Mendip Context**

Mendip district is situated in the north-eastern part of the county of Somerset, not far from the cities of Bristol and Bath. It covers an area of some 285 square miles from the limestone summits of the Mendip Hills to the broad expanse of the Somerset Levels. Mendip contains some of the region's best known tourist attractions, such as Wells Cathedral, Wookey Hole Caves and Glastonbury Abbey.

The environment of Mendip is prized by those who live here, work here and visit the district. The diversity of landscapes and of plants and animals that thrive here has, in turn, shaped the industrial and agricultural development of the area over thousands of years. The building styles and cultural activities across the district reflect quite local conditions. Each of Mendip's five urban settlements; Frome, Glastonbury, Shepton Mallet, Street and the cathedral City of Wells, has its own distinctive character and range of facilities. The geography and history of Mendip strongly influence the issues that affect its communities today.

As well as having a high quality environment, Mendip is home to over 100,000 people and to a wide variety of businesses and organisations. The challenge for Mendip is to preserve the precarious balance between the needs of current and future generations, enjoying our environment now while preserving it for future generations to enjoy. This is a global as well as a local challenge.

### **Population and Demographic Change**

The population of Mendip was 103,869 as recorded in the Census 2001. The gender split is fairly even with 50,725 males and 53,144 females. At the time of the Census there were just under 9,000 residents aged 75 or over, a figure which is increasing over time, and 21,358 aged below 16. While the area is mainly rural in character, most people (61%) live in the district's market towns. The largest town, Frome, has a population of 24,500. Street has 11,000 residents and Wells 10,400, whilst Glastonbury and Shepton Mallet are a little smaller at 8,700 and 9,000 respectively (rounded to nearest 100).

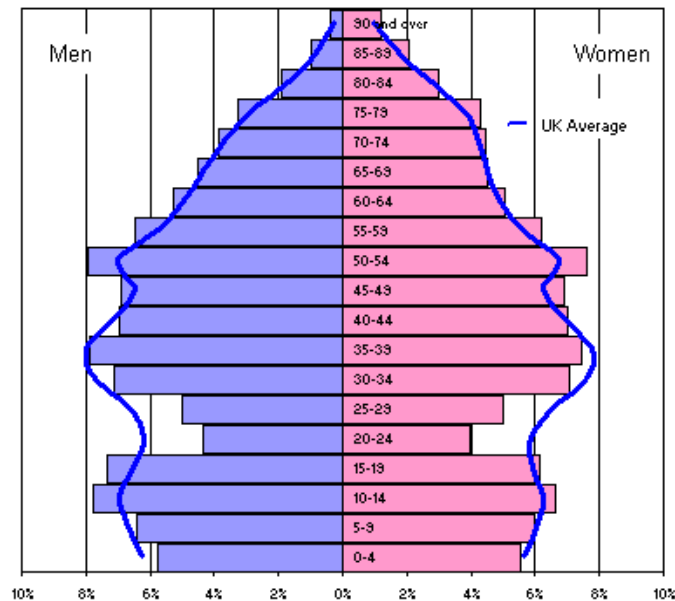
The population structure is not very different from the national picture, except for a lesser proportion of 20 – 35 year olds, as the graph overleaf shows. The absence of a university in Somerset, and movement of school-leavers of the area for higher education or career progression, may account for some of this.

The national population increase between the 1991 and 2001 Census was 1.8% while the South West region generally saw a greater increase of 4.5%. Mendip's increase however was 6.7%, more in line with Somerset's increase of 6.3%. In Mendip, this was almost equally due to natural change in the local population (the excess of births over deaths) and to net migration (the difference between the number of people moving in and the number moving out). Migration to the

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area shows that it is a popular choice to come to live, particularly by people from the south-east, reflecting its high quality environment and its robust economy

### *Analysis of Mendip population against UK population*



*Mendip population analysis as bars; UK population as plotline*  
Source : Census 2001

The overwhelming majority of Mendip's population classifies themselves as of White British background. The representation of those from ethnic minority cultures and backgrounds is 1.2% of the total population, with very small numbers of individuals from Asian, Black African, Black Caribbean, and Chinese background. This is not dissimilar to the South West as a whole, outside the major towns of Bath, Bristol, Gloucester, and Plymouth.

Of the 43,000 households in Mendip 12141 (28%) are comprised of one person. Those households containing 2 or 3 people make up 52% of the total. Those containing 4 or more make up the remaining 20%.

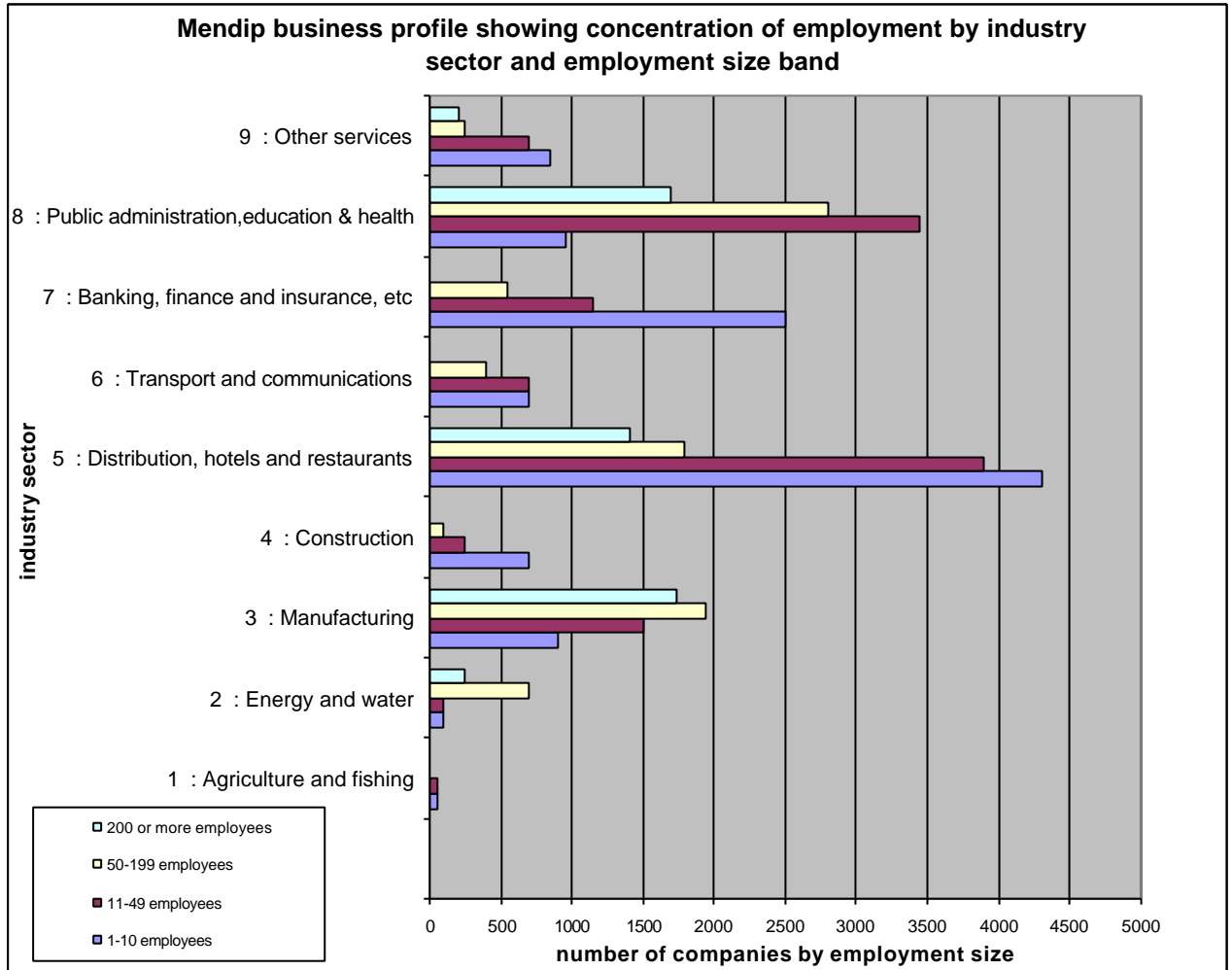
## **Economy**

The economy of Mendip is made up predominantly of small and micro companies. Approximately 85% of companies in Mendip employ less than 10 employees, accounting for 29% of all jobs in the district, while companies that employ 11-49 people account for a further 32% of all jobs. It is clear, therefore, that small businesses are the core of the local economy. Such companies are more likely to have been established and developed within the area, and as such are less likely to move outside the district because of premises or labour market constraints.

The sectors that provide the greatest number of jobs are retailing (non-motor), and hotels and restaurants - accounting for 10,500 employees - and public administration, education, health and social work – accounting for 9,000

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employees. There are few public service jobs in the smallest companies (1-10 employees) whereas 36% of jobs in retailing and tourism are in this category.



(Source: Somerset County Council)

The traditional manufacturing businesses in the local economy have seen significant losses in recent years as manufacturing is moved overseas or demand for products has ceased – e.g. sheepskins. There is evidence of the emergence of specialist high tech and ICT sector businesses, such as data management, electronics, and internet applications. These are either spin-offs from large company restructuring (e.g. local companies M5 DATA and SEA) or relocation to the district. The area has successful food production companies that have developed a premium product with national reputations and sales outlets.

Tourism makes a significant contribution to Mendip’s economy. There are some renowned country house hotels, and a broad range of quality inspected accommodation in guesthouses, bed and breakfasts, and small hotels. The Bath and West Showground draws visitors year-round for events ranging from antiques and craft fairs, agricultural and country shows, and trade events. In addition, the district is unique in being the venue for Europe’s largest outdoor music festival, Glastonbury Festival. The Festival more than doubles the population of the district for almost a week of the year and it plays a considerable part in supporting the local economy.

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### Social indicators

There are pockets of deprivation and social needs within the district, notably in Frome and Glastonbury. Glastonbury St Benedict's ward is within the top 20% of deprived wards in England, as measured on the Government's Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). Frome Keyford, Glastonbury St Edmund's, and Shepton East wards are ranked just outside the top 25% deprived wards on the IMD. These areas have a broad range of social needs, including low household income levels, health concerns, high levels of benefit drawdown, schools exclusions, and family breakdown (such as Youth Offending Team referrals, social services at risk and care orders).

Deprivation indicator	<b>Mendip wards in most deprived 10% in Somerset (rank in brackets : 153 wards Somerset)</b>	<b>Further Mendip wards in most deprived 25% in Somerset (rank in brackets)</b>
Overall IMD score	Glastonbury St Benedict's (7)	Glastonbury St Edmund's (18) Frome Keyford (24) Frome Welshmill (26) Glastonbury St Mary's (32) Shepton Mallet (34)
Low Household income	Glastonbury St Benedict's (2) Glastonbury St Edmund's (6) Frome Keyford (13)	Frome Welshmill (16) Glastonbury St John's (27) Shepton Mallet (29)
Unemployment	Glastonbury St Benedict's (3) Glastonbury St Edmund's (8) Glastonbury St Mary's (9)	Frome Keyford (23) Glastonbury St John's (25) Frome Welshmill (29) Shepton Mallet (31)
Health Deprivation and Disability	Glastonbury St Benedict's (5) Glastonbury St Mary's (14)	Wells St Cuthbert's (18) Frome Welshmill (26) Glastonbury St Edmund's (32) Frome Badcox (38)
Low Educational achievement	no Mendip wards in the worst 10% Somerset	Shepton Mallet (33)
Poor Housing	Frome Keyford (4) Beckington and Rode (6) Frome Welshmill (9)	Shepton Mallet (20) Ebbor (21)
Geographical access	Vale (7)	Avalon (18) Postlebury (21) Nordinton (22) Nedge (32)
Child Poverty	Glastonbury St Edmund's (6) Glastonbury St Benedict's (7) Frome Keyford (14)	Frome Welshmill (24) Glastonbury St John's (35) Sheppey (38)

Glastonbury has the highest seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in Somerset, at 5%. This is twice the Somerset and national average. Glastonbury

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also has one of the highest benefit dependency rates. There are a number of factors within the working age population which contribute to this, including lack of job-relevant skills, access to appropriate transport and childcare, and conscious choices of some people to find ad-hoc or casual employment deemed to be based around ethical values.

On a Somerset comparison, Glastonbury St Benedict's, St Edmund's, and Frome Keyford feature among the 10% most deprived wards in the County. The relatively high percentage of elderly residents in Street and Wells, and in parts of Frome (the wards of Welshmill and Badcox) mean these areas in particular have high health and social care needs, such as attendance and disability care and incidence of chronic illness.

As with most areas that are predominantly rural in character, the analysis of need in rural wards is less clearly defined – with pockets of deprivation being masked by relative affluence within village communities. That said, the Health and Social Needs Analysis Group study of social deprivation across Somerset, and the IMD 2000 rankings, show that relative to Mendip and Somerset as a whole the villages of Meare, Coleford, Chilcompton, and Priddy have high levels of child poverty, child health needs, and have low household income levels.

More detailed analysis of the character and profile of the area in relation to each topic in the strategy is contained in the individual chapter.

### **Environment**

The environment of Mendip is generally high quality and valued by those who live and work here, and those who visit the district. The district has a wealth of natural and man made heritage, with a diversity of wildlife, buildings and archaeology. The landscape has been shaped by millennia of human activity. The countryside remains a managed landscape, shaped by agriculture and many other forms of activity. However, the environment of the district is vulnerable to a wide range of pressures, both local and global. The district includes 47 sites of special scientific interest and around 400 County Wildlife Sites. There are around 10 sites of international importance for wildlife (Natura 2000).

There are two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, designated for their national landscape value - the Mendip Hills AONB and West Wiltshire Downs and Cranbourne Chase AONB. The landscape of the district outside these designated areas is also of acknowledged value. The Somerset Levels and Moors are a nationally important wetland landscape. A Landscape Assessment of the District has been prepared to describe its varied characteristics and as a basis for planning policies designed to conserve its character.

The water environment is generally of high quality, with Environment Agency River Quality Objectives generally being met. There are however, several hot spots for river pollution associated with industrial and built development.

There are several major aquifers in the district, most notable in the Mendip Hills. In some cases these are used for drinking water supply. Water quality is

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generally good but there are some concerns over uncontrolled and diffuse pollution to groundwater.

The district's built heritage is one of its most important assets. There are nearly 3000 listed buildings in the area, as well as 27 Conservation Areas designated for their special architectural or historical interest. Mendip has a rich archaeological heritage, with 240 nationally designated archaeological sites and a large number of more locally important records.

Air quality is generally good, with a small number of local hot spots suffering higher levels of pollution. Mendip's environment is subject to a wide variety of pressures and links can be made to all the themes in this community strategy.

Economic activity, housing, leisure and transport all put pressure on the district's environmental resources. The quality of the environment has an impact on local communities and people's ability to learn, stay well and to feel safe. The ways in which local people use energy and resources, and the mechanisms for buying and producing food, also impact on the environment. The vitality of the local community is built out of all aspects of local activity but is underpinned by the quality of the environment.

The high quality of Mendip's environment – both natural and man-made – is also the basis of Mendip's tourism industry and an important factor for many local businesses remaining here. Whilst economic activity is dependant upon the environment, and places pressures on it, it is the means for generating wealth to re-invest in the environment for future generations.

The environment is not just important locally, but many of the pressures identified will have a wider, global impact. Transport and energy resource use in particular are linked to global climate change. Climate change will in turn add to local pressures with increases in flooding and threats to regional biodiversity. There are also concerns about heat stress, summer water availability and associated health risks.

## **A Vision for Mendip**

One of the first challenges for the MSP in developing a community strategy has been to create a long term vision for the district that represents a broad consensus of how the district will be in the future, based on analysis of local issues.

This vision has been influenced by community consultation and the visions and priorities of agencies represented on the MSP. It will in turn influence how these agencies deliver their services to the communities of Mendip.

***By 2021 Mendip will be a thriving, just and sustainable place to live in, work in and visit***

### **Defining the elements of the Vision:**

Each element of the Vision reflects all of the themes in this strategy to some degree. Below is a description of what the MSP means by each of the key elements of the vision.

#### **Thriving**

Mendip will be a place where people can flourish. Good health and positive prospects for the future are the bedrock on which the district as a whole will thrive.

Good protection and management of our environmental assets are key to this health and vitality and we need to become increasingly good at working in harmony with the environment to protect the needs of future generations.

The vitality of local businesses will determine the range of work opportunities and wage levels available locally. Businesses' ability to respond to local and global pressures will determine the quality of local services and the resources we have available to invest in meeting social and environmental needs.

Thriving local businesses require skilled workforces and so the ability of local education providers to work with the business community to anticipate skill requirements is essential.

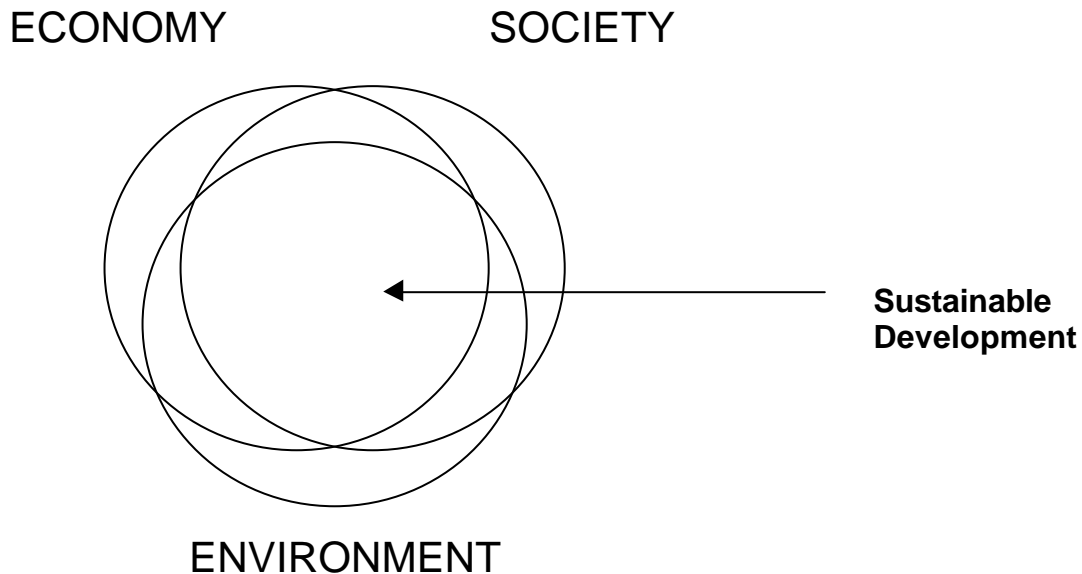
#### **Sustainable**

Sustainable development means not just providing for our needs now, but making sure we do not damage the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The quality of our natural environment, locally and internationally, is the foundation on which our health, our communities and our economy are built.

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Sustainable development cannot be achieved by just focusing on environmental issues. It is also not enough to just identify sustainable development as embracing social, economic and environmental issues without clearly identifying how these issues will be joined up. Sustainable development can only be achieved by **integrating** social, economic and environmental issues throughout all aspects of the Partnership's work – an inclusive, 'one circle' approach that involves learning to carry out existing activities in new ways.

**Fig 1. Three circles definition of 'sustainable development'**



### **Just**

The long term vision for Mendip is that it will be a just place where people from all backgrounds are treated fairly, have equal life opportunities and can live together harmoniously in what is known as 'cohesive communities'.

Partners represented on the MSP will work together to design services that address inequalities, for example in health outcomes. Public services have a duty to promote behaviour that reduces inequality.

In a just district, people have the right to expect to feel safe in their communities, diversity is valued and the views of all individuals and groups are respected.

### Key Themes

The actions and long term aims which we believe will achieve the vision for Mendip have been grouped under a number of themed headings which reflect the issues that affect quality of life. The MSP developed these headings when designing the Great Cake of Life consultation programme. Whilst the MSP recognises that all of the themes link with and impact on each other to a great or lesser extent, it has gathered them into three broad groups as follows:

The group first is about our **basic requirements**:

- **Environment** – natural and built environment, including street cleanliness
- **A place to live** – accommodation, providing shelter and warmth
- **Energy and Waste** – reducing use of energy and materials, promoting recycling and the use of renewable resources, reducing pollution
- **Food** – the positive impact on our health and economy that can be provided by access to good quality, healthy food, from known sources, for which the producer receives a fair price, produced locally where possible.

The second group is about our **daily activities**:

- **A job to do** – the local economy, availability and access to jobs, job satisfaction, training, wage levels
- **Ways to learn** – lifelong learning opportunities, including access and barriers
- **Things to do** – opportunities for leisure activities and to contribute to society
- **Getting around** – public transport, traffic and parking and also access to services, e.g. shops, health services, broadband

The third group is about feeling safe and staying well within **cohesive communities**:

- **Feeling safe** – community safety, road safety, anti-social behaviour and environmental safety
- **Staying well** – factors influencing the ability to stay well, including environmental impacts, health information and access to health services
- **Sense of community** – feeling a part of a community of place or interest

# Environment

## Background

The Mendip district contains some of England's most attractive environments. It includes nationally recognised landscapes, is important for water resources, is nationally important for many plant and animal habitats and has a wealth of history. The diversity of landscapes results in varied agricultural and building practices within a relatively small geographical area. The Mendip environment is a key reason why people choose to live and work in the district and are attracted as visitors.

There are tensions between the benefits of preserving the natural and built assets handed on to us by previous generations and needs and demands of current generations. Quarrying, modern farming practices, demands for energy and materials, new housing to meet changing household patterns, and the impact of roads and traffic are damaging our local environment. These localised pressures reflect global processes, including climate change which is predicted to bring increases in stormy weather, flooding and greater variations in temperature to the Mendip area. The transition from a fossil fuel energy economy to more local based renewable energy technologies will present challenges to the District over the next 20 years.

At a neighbourhood level there continue to be concerns that anti-social behaviour by a minority of people (and their pets) makes our public spaces less attractive and safe to use and more expensive to look after. Litter, dog fouling, graffiti and abandoned cars all make areas appear uncared for and divert resources from providing facilities and opportunities for people of all ages in our communities to enjoy.

## Community Views

*'Beautiful countryside immediately outside; quiet, safe, peaceful'*

*'Always clear up after dogs – too much litter on streets, people needed to bin it'*

*'River is very dirty with lots of things in it'*

*'Need to concentrate on the Architecture to ensure new buildings don't look out of place'*

(Quotations from Great Cake of Life Consultation Summer 2003)

# Community Strategy for Mendip

## Key Facts

- Nearly 43 per cent of the district is recognised as being environmentally sensitive and in 2000 was the 25th most important English district in terms of numbers of historic buildings
- The Mendip district has:
  - 47 Sites of Special Scientific Interest
  - 10 internationally important sites (including SACs, SPAs and RAMSAR designated sites)
  - 5,690 ha of County Wildlife Sites
  - 3127 sites of archaeological importance
  - 242 Scheduled Ancient Monuments
  - 27 Conservation Areas
  - 2,926 listed buildings, of which 90 are Grade 1 and 201 are 2\*
  - 5 public libraries and at least 3 museums Frome museum, Glastonbury rural life museum, Wells & Mendip museum
  - 840 miles of public rights of way including 748 miles of footpath and 57 of bridleway
  - 48 kilometres of National Cycle Network (NCR) cycle route and 5 kilometres of non NCR cycle route
  - More than 20 Field and Heritage Centres
- Mendip District Council produced a "Mendip Environment" report in 1994, adopted a Biodiversity Action Plan in 1995 and launched a "Sustainable Development Guide" in March 2004. The District Local Plan was adopted in December 2002 and Action Plans for both the Mendip Hills AONB and the Cranbourne Chase AONB were adopted in 2004.

For references see <http://www.mendipenvironmentforum.org.uk/msp/facts.htm>

## Long Term Aims

1. To maintain and enhance the character and quality of our towns and villages
2. To achieve a good widespread understanding of key environmental issues in Mendip
3. To maintain and enhance biodiversity
4. To maintain and enhance landscape character and diversity
5. To identify and implement appropriate measures to respond to ongoing climate change pressures
6. To develop the local capacity to achieve these aims through support for organisations, networks, communities and businesses that promote related work and in turn promote individual action

**Environment**

*By 2021 Mendip will be a thriving, just and sustainable place to live in, work in and visit*

# A Place to Live

## Background

The theme 'a place to live' is about ensuring that everyone has access to a healthy, safe and comfortable place to live. This is important to everyone. The provision of good quality, affordable housing cuts across a range of social and economic issues that determine the quality of life, health and well being of everyone who lives in Mendip, whether they own their homes or rent from a private or social landlord.

All Mendip's communities are within commuting distance of a major urban area (Bath, Bristol, Taunton). Increasing numbers of people who work in these urban areas have been encouraged to live in Mendip because of its comparatively cheaper house prices, the high environmental quality and good quality schools. This, together with changes in the demographic make up of the local population and migration into the district generally, places extra demand on the district's housing stock, contributing to house price rises in the district.

A place to live is about more than 'bricks and mortar'. There is a need to ensure that in developing, providing and maintaining homes across all tenures that there is an emphasis placed on social inclusion and sustainable communities. There are many vulnerable people who need support to enable them to continue to live within their home.

Housing is also one of the most significant activities for climate change impacts, therefore action on energy and water efficiency in buildings is an important issue.

## Community Views

*"Houses too expensive. Wages do not reflect prices"*

*"High cost housing which encourages dormitory population"*

*"Lack of social housing or housing to rent in general"*

*"Not enough affordable housing to enable young people /people on low incomes to get onto property ladder"*

*"Need to leave more space/area for children and activities among new housing"*

*"No development in green areas, develop from within"*

*"More support for homeless"*

(Quotations from Great Cake of Life Consultation Summer 2003)

## Community Strategy for Mendip

### Key Facts

- The number of households in Mendip is expected to grow by 23% between 1991 and 2011 over the next 10 years. There is a trend for smaller households. (Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review April 2000)
- The County Structure Plan provides for about 8,950 homes to be built over the same 20 yr. period. 59% of the way through that period, 59% of those homes have been built
- Mendip's population is generally younger compared to the rest of Somerset, particularly in the under 20's age group
- 81% of households own their own homes, 6% rent from a private landlord, 12% from social housing landlords and 1% in Low Cost Home Ownership. (Housing Needs Assessment Nov 2001)
- 40% of the housing requirement in Mendip is for 'affordable homes', with another 12% for private rented homes. (Housing Needs Assessment November 2001)
- In 2002/03 there were 2233 applicants registered on the common housing register. (Common Housing Register)
- During 2002/03, 153 homeless presentations were received (Common Housing Register)
- In April 2003, an estimated 6% of homes in Mendip were unfit for human habitation. A further 18% of the private housing stock was in a state of disrepair. (Better Homes Better Lives MDC Housing Strategy 2002 – 2005/06)

### Long term aims

1. To ensure the provision of suitable and affordable housing for all
2. To meet the housing requirements of the area in ways that help build sustainable communities and respect local distinctiveness, including meeting the needs of rural communities
3. To minimise levels of homelessness, with an emphasis on preventing it occurring in the first place
4. To ensure that homes across all tenures are well maintained and energy efficient
5. To ensure that the residents of Mendip have access to advice, care and support to enable them to live independently and safely

**A Place  
to Live**

*By 2021 Mendip will be a thriving, just and sustainable place to live in, work in  
and visit*

# Energy & Waste

## Background

Buildings consume around half the energy used in Britain and half of those buildings are in the domestic sector. Good insulation and heating systems in homes can reduce energy costs and fuel poverty, increase comfort and improve health. Much of the remaining energy use is in transport – a demand that is increasing each year. Transport energy use can be tackled by reducing the need to travel and increasing the fuel efficiency of the vehicles we use. Businesses and organisations should also review energy use in order to lower their costs and their environmental impacts.

We meet most of our current energy demands using fossil fuels, yet fossil fuels create global climate change, acid rain and local air pollution. In Mendip we have plentiful access to renewable energy resources from the sun, water, wind, and biomass. Harnessing renewable energy resources, at an appropriate scale and location, would offer economic and employment benefits as well as reducing environmental impact. The development of biofuels from locally grown crops would also reduce local energy pollution, and the health impacts, from cars & lorries.

Historically, Mendip has relied heavily upon landfill for the disposal of its waste from its households and businesses, which is viewed as a missed opportunity because it prevents the further extraction of useful materials and energy. As part of the Somerset Waste Partnership, Mendip District Council has begun an ambitious programme of service improvements, which are bringing about a real difference in the volumes of material minimised, recycled, composted and re-used locally. Services include the introduction of a major kerbside recycling scheme for paper, cans and glass, and there are plans to expand the collections through the introduction of dedicated collections for organic wastes from households across Mendip. The support and understanding of waste producers is vital as we work towards goal of minimising the waste we produce

## Community Views

*“Just built an energy efficient house that will use no fossil fuels. More information could be available”*

*“This country has a very long coastline. All that energy pounding them night and day”.*

*“The proposals on alternative energy projects in the area are very helpful and need to be encouraged. We should support the proposed wind turbine on Mendips”*

*“More education on waste disposal please”*

*“Recycling bin excellent but can we tackle plastic and cardboard as well?”*

(Quotations from Great Cake of Life Consultation Summer 2003)

## Community Strategy for Mendip

### **Biomass and Biofuels**

Biomass is a form of renewable energy which has considerable potential in Somerset. If transport distances are short and cultivation does not use large amounts of chemicals then the negative environmental impact of energy crops can be very much lower than that of using fossil fuels such as petrol or diesel.

Energy crops offer opportunities to local farmers and landowners – particularly if they work together co-operatively to offer energy service contracts to provide heat and power, rather than simply selling the raw materials as a commodity.

Biofuels, principally biodiesel and bioethanol, are produced from a variety of agricultural and forestry crops and residues, using proven, reliable technologies. The fuel can be blended with diesel or petrol and sold through existing retail outlets, or may be used pure in modified engines. Establishment of biofuel processing plant could produce significant benefits for the rural economy of Somerset, in addition to a reduction in emission of gases responsible for climate change.

### **Key Facts**

- Fuel poverty is an issue for 19% of Mendip households
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change suggests that by 2020 we should have reduced carbon dioxide emissions by 40% of 1990 levels and eventually by 60%
- UK goals contained in the Sustainable Energy Bill:
  - to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 60% of 1990 levels by 2050 with a target of a 20% emissions cut by 2010
  - 25% of energy to be generated from renewable resources by 2020
- The South West has a target to achieve 10% of electricity use generated from renewable sources by 2010
- In 2002/03 the Somerset Waste Partnership dealt with 288,000 tonnes of household waste of which 20.3% was recycled
- The Somerset Waste Partnership has a statutory household waste recycling target of 28% for 2003/04 and 40% by 2005/06

(Source: MDC Corporate Policy & Research Team)

### **Long term aims:**

1. To achieve high levels of awareness of the need for effective use of energy and resources and with everyone feeling confident to take action to minimise energy and resource use and maximise the use of renewable resources and re use and recycling of materials
2. To ensure that new housing and commercial developments have energy efficient designs and are constructed wherever possible from reused, recycled or sustainably produced materials
3. To ensure that systems and strategies are in place to reduce transport energy demand and impact through influencing peoples' travel choices, including making walking and cycling easier, safer and more attractive
4. To ensure that systems and strategies are in place to reduce energy demand as much as possible and carefully match the type of supply to needs and wider environmental impacts
5. To ensure that businesses are aware and able to take advantage of opportunities in the developing energy efficiency, waste reduction and recycling, sustainable production and renewable energy markets

**Energy &  
Waste**

*By 2021 Mendip will be a thriving, just and sustainable place to live in, work in and visit*

# Food

## Background

Food is an important issue for everyone. The quality of the food we eat affects our health and well-being. Food related businesses contribute to the local economy and the way in which food is produced and transported affects the quality of the local environment. Food is also a focus for social activities – through day-to-day meals, through drawing visitors to the area to sample the distinctiveness of local food and in passing on skills from one generation to another.

The district of Mendip has been famous for its cider and cheese production for centuries. Recent developments in organic farming, the re-establishment of vineyards and the popularity of Farmers Markets have kept Mendip in the public eye as a centre for producing food and drink of the finest quality.

Another local delicacy dating back to Roman times is the Mendip Wallfish. Identified with the Priddy area, and mentioned in a survey of historic food cultures promoted by the EU, Mendip Wallfish are snails.

## Somerset Food Links

Buying locally produced food keeps money in the local economy – each pound spent generates at least £2.50 in additional local trading.

Somerset Food Links (SFL) was set up in 1999 to support a ‘thriving, equitable and sustainable local trade and land products’. SFL works with local producers to help them to develop their access to local markets. This has included producing local food directories to improve awareness of the range of local food available, supporting the setting up of Somerset Farmers Markets Limited (who run Farmers Markets each week in Wells, once a fortnight in Frome and monthly in Glastonbury) and supporting the development of Somerset Local Food Direct (who provide a home delivery service for local food).

SFL has also provided grants and support for community food initiatives including community gardens and local food co-ops. This led to the setting up of the Somerset Community Food Initiative which provides a range of information and training in food growing for community groups.

Somerset Food Links are currently working with students and staff of the Blue School in Wells who are keen to source far more of the school meals from local producers

## Community Views

*‘Parents & children should be educated about the benefits of healthy eating and encouraged to give up junk food’*

*“Would be great if there was fresh local food available in the village. But this is probably too much of a luxury”*

*“I want more local organic food – it is good for me and the environment – No GM”*

*“Support your local small farmers and small shops I say! Use the Farmers Market etc.”*

*“More opportunities for young people to learn basic, easy cooking & enjoy it”.*

(Quotations from Great Cake of Life Consultation Summer 2003)

## Community Strategy for Mendip

### Key Facts

- Mendip's three Farmers Markets generate £410,000 turnover for the local food producers who attend them. Glastonbury was the third Farmers Market to start in the South West region in August 1998
- Mendip is host to the first direct delivery scheme for Farmers Markets Producers in the country.
- Mendip has 38 local food producers listed on the Celebrating Somerset website and included in the Somerset Food Links Directory.
- Mendip pioneered the Grow It! Cook It! Eat It! project to introduce practical food education into schools. The model is now used in many areas of the UK
- Eating at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day could reduce overall deaths from heart disease, stroke and certain cancers by between 20% and 40%. In 2002 56% of Mendip residents consumed the recommended five pieces of fruit and vegetables – lower than the rest of Somerset but higher than the UK average of 27%
- Transporting food now makes up 25% of road traffic when use of cars to visit supermarkets is included
- The quality and variety of local food is important in attracting tourists to the area – the Mendip tourism industry is worth around £77m and supports some 6,000 jobs. There are 600 tourism businesses in Mendip, of which around 400 are accommodation providers

(Source: Somerset Food Links and Mendip PCT)

### Long term aims

1. To encourage, support and promote activities to achieve:
  - an increase in local production for local needs
  - much greater use of locally produced food in schools and hospitals
  - a reduction of pollution and waste as a result of reduced transport and packaging
  - preservation of distinctive landscape character and local biodiversity as a result of sensitive land management
  - improved health and well-being as a result of increased consumption of fruit and vegetables
  - improved sense of community as a result of the enjoyment and learning that results from community food activities
  - economic benefits resulting from tourism and from increases in local purchasing for local needs.
2. To support organisations and networks that promote just and sustainable food economies
3. To promote the benefits of Fair Trade for products where the Somerset climate is unsuitable for growing for local needs, for example tea, coffee, chocolate and exotic fruits

**Food**

*By 2021 Mendip will be a thriving, just and sustainable place to live in, work in and visit*

# A Job to Do

## Background

Mendip is characterised by a predominance of small to medium sized enterprises (many employing less than 10 people). Growth in the local economy has mostly been generated from within the district. Mendip has seen a progressive decline in employment in traditional manufacturing activity, including engineering, chemicals, leather and shoe manufacture, due in part to globalisation. Technological advances and upskilling of workforces have also contributed to loss of employment in manufacturing.

Although the number of major employers is declining, those that remain continue to dominate their local economies, for example, Butler and Tanner in Frome and Thales in Wells.

Employment in the service sector, both public and private, has grown, with employment in the private education sector strongly represented. The tourism sector performs strongly, particularly for short breaks and in the more affluent third age market. The low wage economy is however a serious issue in certain industries, including important sectors like food and drink production.

There is considerable potential in Somerset for developing businesses and training opportunities in the following sectors: sustainable construction, sustainable food and farming, reuse and recycling of materials and renewable forms of energy, particularly wind, biomass and biofuels and small scale hydropower.

Many people feel that Mendip is becoming increasingly more associated with dormitory status – as an outlier of Bristol, Bath and even London. Meanwhile there are increasing signs of people trading from home/ unorthodox locations, something that has been made possible by use of e-commerce.

A complacent attitude towards training and staff development exists in certain industries and employers and there are skill shortages in some industries.

## Community Views

*“Work is good if you are in the Service sector – industry in town is not good”*

*“Wages not up with times of living cost”*

*“There are quite a number of people who do craft work locally – it would be good to look into setting up a centre, maybe, where craft and workers could work and show/ sell their goods”*

*“Would like more accessible information on local jobs “*

*“Too few employers employ disabled people. They need to comply with the Disabilities Discrimination Act 1995”*

*(Quotations from Great Cake of Life Consultation Summer 2003)*

# Community Strategy for Mendip

## Key Facts

- It is anticipated that there will be 35,000 UK jobs in renewable energy by 2020. (Source: DTI 2004)
- Mendip's economy is predominantly a service economy with:
  - 24% of employment in Health and Social Care, public services and admin
  - 22% in retail, distribution and repair
  - Hotel and Catering rose from 5.9% in 1998 to 9% in 2001
  - Manufacturing accounts for 19% of employment
  - Agriculture has declined from 3.1% in 1998 to 2.1% in 2001
- 29.7% of employees within Mendip are in micro companies, i.e. employing 1-10 employees
- 32.4% of employees within Mendip are in small companies i.e. employing 11-49 employees
- 23.3% are in medium size companies and 14.5% are in larger companies employing 50-199 and 200 plus employees respectively. (Source: NOMIS)
- Tourism is a vital part of the district's economy. Visitors spend an estimated £96.2 million a year in Mendip and there are 5667 jobs in Mendip related to Tourism spending (Source: Economic Impact of Tourism in Mendip 2003)
- There are around 600 tourism businesses in Mendip of which 400 are accommodation providers (Source: Somerset County Council 2003)
- 90% of males in work in Mendip are full time, compared with 51% of females
- In Mendip, women are most likely to work in wholesale, retail, trade, health and social work, whereas men are most likely to work in manufacturing, wholesales and retail
- In 2003, Glastonbury had the highest unemployment rate in Mendip at 5% (Source: Somerset County Council)
- In 2002, only 24% of employers surveyed had a written equal opportunities policy and 71% did not have a disability policy (Source: Somerset LSC Employer Survey 2002)

## Long term aims

1. To ensure that Mendip continues to be a 'working district', providing diverse job opportunities for local people particularly in 'knowledge economies' and lifestyle industries associated with Somerset
2. To ensure agencies support local entrepreneurial talent to assist it to thrive, offsetting jobs lost in traditional manufacturing
3. To support the retention of key local employers as keystones of the local economy
4. To address the underlying problems from reliance on a number of low wage, but important local business sectors, through upskilling and technological advance
5. To increase the number of job opportunities through not for profit enterprises and community endeavour, as a means of getting disadvantaged people more economically active
6. To exploit the opportunities for live/ work employment, based upon home working
7. To explore ways in which employment opportunities for young people can be provided to retain local talent and skills in the area
8. To encourage and promote local procurement and stronger local supply chains
9. To encourage all employers to fulfil their employment rights responsibilities

**A Job to Do**

*By 2021 Mendip will be a thriving, just and sustainable place to live in, work in and visit*

# Ways to Learn

## Background

In the knowledge-based economy of the future, higher standards of attainment for young people and adults are prerequisites of international competitiveness. The standard of living of the whole Mendip community will rest upon being able to develop and increase our knowledge and skills. The fight against under-achievement is central to the combating of social exclusion. Ensuring continuing access to learning offers individuals the opportunity to maintain and build on their successes, to learn from and contribute to their communities and to be able to compete effectively in the job market.

However, the social and economic context in Mendip presents a number of challenges.

- To maximise the opportunities available in the community for people to acquire new skills, knowledge and confidence;
- To combat social exclusion through the promotion of social justice and equality of opportunity;
- To maximise the strength of community and voluntary organisations and promote active citizenship;
- To make best use of partnership arrangements in responding to the learning needs of communities;
- To maximize the use of technology to widen access to learning from home or community centre

## Community Views

*"Good schools"*

*"Library is brilliant"*

*"Good College & Library"*

*"Lack of LEA Nursery provision"*

*"Adult Ed programme is very good"*

*"More access to training and work opportunities for the over 50s. Too much ageism"*

(Quotations from Great Cake of Life Consultation Summer 2003)

## Community Strategy for Mendip

### Key Facts

- 19% of people in working age in Mendip have a degree or higher level qualification; this compares favourably with the other districts in Somerset, but is below areas such as Bath and Bristol with around 26% and 25% respectively and the national average of 29%
- 27% of working age population in Mendip has no qualification, which is similar to Somerset as a whole, with South Somerset, Taunton Deane and West Somerset having 27%, 26% and 30% respectively while Sedgemoor have about 40%
- the total number of full time students and school children aged over 16 make up 4% of the population of Mendip, compared to 5.1% for England and Wales (Source: Census 2001)
- The main difficulty employers experience with recruitment is a shortage of appropriately skilled staff
- Public admin and Education and Health employers are more likely than many private employers to have a training budget (Source: The Somerset LSC Employers Survey 2002)
- Lack of motivation and low self esteem are recognised barriers to learning, as are transport, poverty and rurality (Source: Somerset LSC annual Plan 2003/4)
- In Mendip in 2001, 23.1% and 22.6% respectively were below the standard set by basic skills agency for literacy and numeracy. Although this is slightly better than the national picture, it still impacts on individual's ability to access employment and quality of life
- Almost a quarter of 11 year olds in Somerset are not reaching their expected skill level in English and maths (Source: Somerset's Statement of Learning and Skills Needs February 2002)

### Long term aims

1. Plan for and ensure that the effectiveness and flexibility of the Mendip workforce is able to respond to the future skills needs of local employers and the economy
2. Create a culture in Mendip where participating in learning is seen as an essential, desirable and natural part of life for people of all ages and backgrounds
3. Provide broad access to high quality learning opportunities, through a coherent system of provision that meets the needs of the whole Mendip community
4. Promote voluntary work as a vehicle for learning and improving skills to help people become economically active

**Ways to  
Learn**

*By 2021 Mendip will be a thriving, just and sustainable place to live in, work in  
and visit*

# Things to Do

## Background

The theme 'Things to Do' relates to opportunities for people to do things they enjoy during their leisure time. This has important benefits for our wellbeing and quality of life; leading balanced lifestyles, enjoying new experiences and broadening our horizons. The theme is also about the contribution recreational and cultural activities can make to many aspects of community life including health, the local economy, environment, community safety and quality of life generally.

Young people and adults alike have highlighted the need for more things for young people to do. Participation in sport, active recreation, leisure and cultural pursuits is at an all time high and it is reasonable to assume that demand for new leisure facilities will continue to increase, which should bring consequent health benefits.

### **INTERGENERATIONAL DIGITAL ARTS PROJECT September 2003 – March 2005**

*An 18 month arts residency is underway in targeted wards in Glastonbury as part of the SRB programme. Partners include MDC Arts, Take Art! (Somerset's Rural Arts Agency), SRB partnership, the County Youth Service, Sure Start, local Schools, the Robert Barton Trust and the Crime Reduction Partnership. Participants range from pre school, family and youth groups to elderly people.*

*12 groups of varying size will work with Digital Artist Richard Tomlinson during the 18 months. The expected number of participants will total in the region of 200 plus audience numbers.*

*The aims are diverse but relate to;*

- *targeting vulnerable groups and individuals some of whom may be at risk of offending. e.g. a group of young people who have been excluded from main stream education*
- *increasing the skills base of participants and opening doors to further education and training opportunities*
- *using the shared experience of the residency to bring a diverse range of groups together increasing understanding, respect and tolerance within a fragmented community.*

*The partners are working towards*

- *a thorough and detailed evaluation project and a published report*
- *a strategy for continuance.*

## Community Views

*"We need an arts centre like Frome"*

*"More facilities at affordable prices for children and teenagers"*

*"The park is great when it's sunny. To play footie or just hang out"*

*"Cinema and Theatre facilities are excellent"*

*"More activities for young people to encourage desirable behaviour and use of time"*

*(Quotations from Great Cake of Life Consultation Summer 2003)*

## Community Strategy for Mendip

### Key Facts

- The Mendip District hosts the largest Performing Arts Festival of its kind – The Glastonbury Festival of Performing Arts
- There are 5 theatres in Mendip: Amulet - Shepton Mallet, Little Theatre – Wells, Memorial Theatre – Frome, Merlin Theatre – Frome, Strode Theatre - Street
- There is one Visual Arts Centre in Mendip - Black Swan Arts, Frome
- Other Key Arts Organisations providing a valuable service to Mendip are:
  - Take Art! providing a professional Rural Touring Scheme, long term residencies, a pre-school project and dance development
  - Somerset Film and Video Ltd providing community film and video production
  - Somerset Artweek Ltd running one of the largest biennial Open Studios events in the country
  - Actiontrack Performance Company providing participatory Arts work for young people and those at risk
- The Mendip district is home to two centres of excellence for Music:
  - Wells Cathedral Specialist Music School
  - Jackdaws Educational Trust, Nr. Frome
- There are eight leisure centres and/or swimming pools open to the public in Mendip: Wells Leisure Centre, Strode Swimming Pool – Street, Shepton Mallet Outdoor Swimming Pool, Frome Leisure Centre, Wells Sports Development Centre, Shepton Mallet Leisure Centre, Glastonbury Leisure Centre, Greenbank Outdoor Pool - Street
- Mendip has 50+ children’s play areas, 44 adult football, 16 junior football, 10 rugby, 29 cricket and 5 grass hockey pitches available for community use
- Mendip District Council has 13 leased leisure facilities ranging from football clubs, rugby clubs, cricket pavilions, through to scout huts, Rifle Clubs and Bowls Clubs
- There are 35 identifiable tourist attractions in Mendip that make significant contributions to the economy. These include Frome Museum, the East Somerset Railway, Glastonbury Abbey, Somerset Rural Life Museum, Royal Bath and West Showground, Wookey Hole Caves and Wells Cathedral

### Long term aims

1. To promote an innovative and vibrant arts economy and infrastructure in Mendip
2. To reduce rural disadvantage by increasing opportunities and access to arts provision and sport and leisure initiatives to develop and maintain vibrant rural communities
3. To reduce anti-social behaviour and fear of crime through leisure and cultural activity
4. To promote Mendip as a vibrant and culturally diverse tourist destination with a thriving cultural business sector by working with arts organisations and small businesses
5. To ensure that art contributes to quality design in the planning process and street scene
6. To bring local, regional and national sporting events to the Mendip district (all cultural events, Frome Festival etc)
7. To encourage participation in outdoor pursuits in ways that do not compromise the natural environment
8. To encourage volunteering as a rewarding activity

### Things to Do

*By 2021 Mendip will be a thriving, just and sustainable place to live in, work in and visit*

# Getting Around

## Background

There are many factors affecting the ability to access goods, services and information in Mendip such as availability of public transport, provision of electronic services, roads, traffic and parking availability.

Mendip is characterised by busy market towns (with unique and historic built environments with narrow streets and listed buildings) and picturesque villages that often hide the difficulties experienced by local communities in accessing essential facilities.

Mendip has an extensive rights of way network and its attractive countryside encourages tourism, which is beneficial for local economy, however limited public transport services, and limited integration between forms of transport, mean a heavy reliance on the private car for getting around.

The theme of Getting Around is also about being able to access information and services electronically. Somerset currently has the lowest access to broadband in the South West region, which together with an under-developed road and rail infrastructure potentially inhibits business and economic investment.

## Community Views

*"Transport - better buses, more cycle routes"*

*"As a wheelchair user I find it could be improved by having more dropped kerbs"*

*"Balanced variety of shops, so local people who don't have own cars, don't have to travel to Yeovil, Bristol, Taunton on bus"*

*"Buses okay, but getting to/from villages and some towns requires almost military planning and great patience"*

*"Availability of broadband would help working from home and business generally"*

*"The internet has had a very positive effect on home office working but lack of public transport inhibits low cost, environmentally friendly commuting"*

(Quotations from Great Cake of Life Consultation Summer 2003)

## Community Strategy for Mendip

### Key Facts

- 81% of households in Somerset have access to a car.
- The average number of cars per household in Mendip was 1.24 in 1999.
- There are 65 bus routes serving the Mendip area.
- Somerset County Council in partnership with First produce 40,000 bus timetables for the Mendip area each year
- There are 840 miles of Public Right of Way in Mendip
- 67.6% of Mendip residents travel to work by private car while 2.3% use public transport (Source: Census 2001)
  
- In 2002, the incidence of companies in Mendip accepting orders electronically is 28% compared to the County figure of 19%
- 45% of employers in Mendip had their own website by 2002. (Source: LSC Employers Survey 2002)

### Long Term Aims

1. To promote accessibility to everyday facilities for all, especially those without a car
2. To protect and enhance the built and natural environment
3. To improve safety for all who travel
4. To contribute to an efficient economy and to support sustainable economic growth in appropriate locations
5. To exploit technology to reduce the need to travel to access services and information
6. To promote the integration of all forms of public transport (cycling, walking and land-use planning), leading to a better, more efficient transport system
7. To maintain the efficiency and effectiveness of the road network and manage the traffic on it
8. To encourage and promote leisure and tourism opportunities within the county in a more sustainable manner
9. To increase awareness of the wider impacts of travel behaviour
10. To promote alternative means of transport by business as well as local communities

**Getting  
Around**

*By 2021 Mendip will be a thriving, just and sustainable place to live in, work in and visit*

# Feeling Safe

## Background

Crime and Disorder levels in Mendip are relatively low compared with many other parts of the County but are none the less important to the people living in, working in and visiting the area. To improve the feeling of safety, Mendip Strategic Partnership, in liaison with Mendip & South Somerset Community Safety Partnership, aims to work with the communities of Mendip toward reducing crime and disorder and to work closely with the Police to identify and arrest people who commit crime. Related topics, including improving people's perceptions of crime risk and their fear of crime, developing a greater understanding of the reasons why crimes are committed and the effect that crime has on people's quality of life, will be tackled by raising the awareness of the true situation and by better promotion of the multi agency projects and initiatives undertaken and successes achieved.

An audit of crime and disorder plus the views of residents are collected by the Community Safety Partnership. This information forms the basis of the Partnership's three year Crime Reduction Strategy. The 2005/8 Strategy will be available from April 2005. Community views gathered from The Great Cake of Life consultation events are also being considered in the audit.

Many of the agencies represented on the Mendip Strategic Partnership are already involved in the work of the Community Safety Partnership.

## About the Mendip Community Safety Partnership

The Community Safety Partnership is establishing themed multi agency groups to address the priorities and strategies. Groups established to date include:

- Mendip House Burglary Initiatives Group which links into the Somerset Burglary Strategy
- Anti Social Behaviour Group – which will link into the Somerset East Anti Social Behaviour Strategy
- Mendip Domestic Abuse Form – which links into the County Domestic Abuse Forum and will link into the Somerset D A Strategy
- Substance Misuse Group – which links into the National Drugs Strategy and the Somerset DAT Strategy

## Community Views

*"No safe route to walk up the hill to school"*

*"Traffic speeding through the village and inadequate pavements"*

*"Not enough police on duty in the evening to make elderly of Wells feel safe"*

*"Neighbourhood watch has helped enormously to develop solidarity and sense of community in our area"*

(Quotations from Great Cake of Life Consultation Summer 2003)

## Community Strategy for Mendip

### Key Facts

- Almost a third of households in Mendip are members of Neighbourhood Watch schemes
- Almost a quarter of all violent crime in Mendip is Domestic Abuse
- All five secondary schools in Mendip now have an active Youth Watch (Source: Crime Reduction Partnership )
- An average of 120 people a week are injured on roads in the Avon and Somerset area
- Excessive or inappropriate speed is a major factor in around a third of all collisions (Source: Safety Camera Partnership Annual Review 2002/03)

### Long term aims

1. To achieve continual reduction in crime in the following priority areas:
  - House Burglary
  - Violent Crime / Domestic Abuse
  - Drugs & Alcohol abuse
  - Vehicle Crime
  - Road Safety
  - Anti Social Behaviour
2. To ensure access to advice and information to help people to stay safe and develop a realistic understanding of crime risks
3. To engage communities in helping to tackle the underlying causes of crime
4. To work in partnership throughout Somerset to reduce crime, recognising that it is not constrained by geographical boundaries
5. To improve safety on roads in Mendip

**Feeling  
Safe**

*By 2021 Mendip will be a thriving, just and sustainable place to live in, work in and visit*

# Staying Well

## Background

Health is influenced by a wide range of factors, some of which are beyond the control of individuals, such as ageing and genetics. However many wider issues influence health, such as poverty, unemployment and social exclusion and the link between poor health and poverty is well recognised. Reducing this inequality in health between the richest and poorest is key to improving overall health of the communities of Mendip.

People in Mendip generally enjoy better health than nationally, although there are specific groups within Mendip who experience poorer health. Death rates from cancer and coronary heart disease are decreasing, although they are still the commonest causes of death. Smoking cessation and tackling obesity are priorities. Of particular concern in Mendip are mental and sexual ill health and the falling uptake of childhood immunisations.

Good care through pregnancy, breast feeding, immunisation, healthy weaning and being nurtured in a loving environment give the best start to a child. Health in early life strongly influences health in adulthood. To ensure healthy communities it is important for all children to have a good start in life.

## Community Views

*“Too many children being driven to school by car”*

*“Fantastic local hospital; staff and facilities have been well used by my family and couldn’t have been better elsewhere”*

*“Hospital transport problems”*

*“Need well women’s sessions at a Health Centre e.g. once a month a nurse and female GP info/advice etc re women’s health issues”*

*“Our health services are excellent – although all are overstretched”*

*“Not enough guidelines and healthy alternatives hence a very obese nation!”*

(Quotations from Great Cake of Life Consultation Summer 2003)

## Community Strategy for Mendip

### Key Facts

- Mendip has a slightly younger population than the rest of Somerset
- Life expectancy in Mendip for females is 80 years and males 77 years, which is higher than the national average
- Most deaths in Mendip are due to cancer and coronary heart disease, yet respiratory diseases cause considerable ill health and some deaths
- In 2002 45% of people in Mendip considered themselves overweight or obese. Weight is a health inequality issue as obesity is unevenly distributed across social classes and people of different ethnic origin
- The biggest lifestyle risk factors for coronary heart disease are smoking, lack of exercise, being overweight or obese and an unhealthy diet
- Diabetes can lead to premature death, affects 3% of the Mendip population and is on the increase
- 75% of newly diagnosed diabetics are obese or overweight
- Deaths from skin cancer in Mendip are higher than expected although actual numbers are small
- 20% of people suffer from anxiety and depression in Mendip compared to 17% across Somerset

(Source: Mendip Primary Care Trust)

### Long term aims

To improve the overall health of the people of Mendip and reduce the health gap between those who experience the worst health and those who experience the best health by:-

1. Reducing the number of people smoking and being exposed to passive smoke, particularly those from manual groups and pregnant women
2. Encouraging physical activity for all people, particularly the number of people overweight or obese
3. Encouraging healthy eating affordability and education
4. Supporting people suffering from mental health issues, particularly those who are isolated
5. Improving sexual health and access to sexual health services and reducing teenage pregnancies
6. Facilitating access to better information on benefit entitlement and encouraging uptake of benefits
7. Reducing the physical, psychological and social damage to individuals and communities cause by excessive consumption of alcohol
8. Reducing the physical, psychological and social damage to individuals and communities caused by abuse of drugs

**Staying  
Well**

*By 2021 Mendip will be a thriving, just and sustainable place to live in, work in and visit*

# Sense of Community

## Background

The term 'sense of community' is not always easy to define. One definition is a shared view of how effectively people are working together to live well in a locality. There are also communities of interest – people who are brought together by their interest in a particular subject, but who may not live near each other.

Mendip is made up of unique and distinctive towns and villages and this is reflected in the diversity of its communities. The rurality of much of the district has both positive and negative effects on the quality of life of local people and their sense of community. Many villages have developed a strong sense of community but equally, issues of deprivation and problems with access in some areas can inhibit peoples' ability to feel part of a community.

Community spirit in Mendip is often developed or strengthened through people coming together to tackle challenges around issues such as transport, safety and access to opportunities and facilities generally. Changes in the local economy – specifically farming and quarrying but generally across the business sector - have significant impacts on local communities.

## Community Views

*"Electric mix of people – brings a vibrant economy and cultural diversity"*

*"Important to me that people are encouraged to think of themselves as part of a much wider community world – not just for themselves"*

*"More community events to bring all ages together e.g. tea dances, fetes, family discos, cul-de-sac get togethers to get to know your neighbours"*

*"Voluntary support to help people get out and about more"*

*"Difficult to obtain money to finance maintenance & improvements or amenities – particularly village hall in small community"*

*"Listen to people's comments. When we get beyond working age we do not necessarily become senile, but often still have much to offer"*

(Quotations from Great Cake of Life Consultation Summer 2003)

# Community Strategy for Mendip

## Key Facts

- The Glastonbury St Benedict's ward is within the top 20% deprived wards in England
- The wards of Frome Keyford, Glastonbury St Edmund's, and Shepton East are ranked just outside the top 25% derived wards on the national Index of Multiple Deprivation
- 9.6% of Mendip residents provide voluntary unpaid care to a family member, neighbour, friend or other person (Source: Census 2001)
- The ethnic minority population of Somerset rose from 0.49% in 1991 to 1.2% in 2001 (Source: Somerset Race Equality Council)
- The trend for voting in Mendip is downwards, with 69% voting in Parliamentary Elections in 2001 compared to 82% in 1992, and 35% voting in District Council Elections in 2003 compared to 52% in 1991 (Source: MDC Elections Service)

## Long Term Aims

1. To develop and maintain a strong sense of community and community cohesion throughout Mendip
2. To combat social exclusion by promoting social justice and equality of opportunity
3. To celebrate local distinctiveness and diversity within the community
4. To support the development of community and voluntary organisations
5. To encourage and promote volunteering
6. To improve access to information, advice, services, goods and activities to reduce social isolation
7. To help all members of society to feel safe within their own environment
8. To encourage a strong community leadership role by public agencies to support community capacity building
9. To encourage democracy and ensure that the views of all of Mendip's communities can be heard, including those of young people and the elderly
10. To improve approaches to accessing funding, to make it more effective through partnership working

**Sense of  
Community**

*By 2021 Mendip will be a thriving, just and sustainable place to live in, work in  
and visit*

### **Local Community Planning Initiatives in Mendip**

Whilst the MSP is taking a strategic view of community planning district-wide, there are a number of locally generated community planning initiatives in Mendip, which the MSP is keen to develop links with and support.

#### **Shepton 21 / Market & Coastal Towns Initiative (MCTi) status for Shepton Mallet and its surrounding rural hinterland\*.**

Shepton 21 is made up of Shepton Mallet's education, business, community and political leaders and was formed in December 2002.

In summer 2003 it was successful in gaining around £85,000 from the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) and Mendip District Council with the town being earmarked as part of the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative (MCTi). Some of that money has to be used for the consultation exercise which will lead to the development of a community plan.

Following the consultation exercise, Shepton 21 will create a comprehensive report of people's opinions before considering the main themes and agreeing on a long term vision for the town.

The MCTi process is about the community working together to develop their own strategic plan of how their town could/ should be regenerated in the longer term rather than simply a means of compiling a hit list of projects 'to do'. SWRDA also reinforced that the point of developing this community led longer term vision is to get the community to work together and have more ownership and say in the development of their town with partners such as Councils, agencies etc.

However, when the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) has been developed to a stage where there are specific targets, there will be opportunities to go to 'a brokering table' with SWRDA and other potential match funding partners relevant to the proposal(s). This is to make the partners aware of what is wanted and as a means of seeking immediate or future funding. The proposals need not be for physical projects but can also be for revenue projects such as, for example, employing professional assistance to help develop the CSP and/or its targets, or for running events or workshops, developing websites etc. There may be an intermingling of the two components by way of a 'reality check'.

The SWRDA also stressed that the MCTi funding process is not via a one-off grant or 100% funding by SWRDA over a fixed period for the community to go and spend on projects, like the SRB funding process. But that SWRDA will provide 'match funding' at its discretion at a 'brokering table' and with partners to further or implement the goals, projects or plan.

## Community Strategy for Mendip

Previous MCTi schemes elsewhere have covered issues such as community development, employment, community safety, health, business opportunities, transport and road safety, tourism and development needs.

### Stage 1

At the time of writing, Shepton 21 are at the first stage of the MCTi process where they have to make the community within the MCTi boundary aware of the process, invite them to participate in creating the 'vision' and start to collect their thoughts, wishes and ideas.

To enable this, Shepton 21 will be holding an 'MCTi Community Event' in The Amulet, Shepton Mallet

### Stage 2

Following the Event, Shepton 21, will use the information gathered to begin to put together their Community Strategic Plan (CSP) which will structure the vision and out of which projects will be identified.

### Stage 3

There will be ongoing consultation by Shepton 21 with the community to continue to build the CSP. This is likely to be via theme specific working sub-groups of Shepton 21 liaising with the community and may include further Events or Workshops.

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\*The rural 'hinterland' within the MCTi boundary includes the parishes of: Croscombe, Pilton, Pylle, Doultling, Stoke St. Michael, Cranmore, Downhead, Leigh on Mendip, Ashwick, Binegar, Evercreech, Milton Clevedon, Ditchat and East Pennard.

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## **Glastonbury SRB**

In August 2000 the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) made an award of £713,250 to Glastonbury under the Single Regeneration Budget, for a five-year economic and social regeneration programme in the four wards, in particular St Benedict's and St Edmunds. These 2 wards have the highest deprivation statistics in Mendip, and are among the most disadvantaged wards in Somerset. SRB grant will help secure other funds, with the total programme being worth £4 million in new project activity in Glastonbury.

The principle aim of the programme is to build a strong community with a sense of cohesion offering opportunities and support to individuals while developing prosperity within the town. The programme has five strategic objectives these are:

## Community Strategy for Mendip

- Improving the employment prospects, education and skills of local people
- Addressing social exclusion and improving opportunities for the disadvantaged
- Supporting and promoting growth in local economies and businesses
- Promoting sustainable regeneration, improving and protecting the environment
- Reducing crime and drug abuse and improving community safety

These five key strategic objectives are broken down into thematic areas in order to create projects with the support of SRB funds in partnership with other agencies and organisations. These themes are:

- **Access to work**

Supporting skills provision to meet local needs and extending the range of work opportunities open to local people

- **Community Development and Capacity Building**

Capacity building and development to provide support for organisations and projects working to help people in need, to support the development of young people, and to help build the skills within the community to develop and support new initiatives

- **Economic Growth**

Support for economic growth through measures to encourage the creation and development of small businesses and community enterprises and support

- **Sustainable Regeneration**

Encouraging sustainable regeneration through measures to encourage businesses to adopt more environmentally friendly practices in line with local agenda 21

- **Community Safety, tackling crime, drug and alcohol misuse**

Addressing drug and alcohol misuse and community safety through projects on youth prevention and education and awareness, tackling anti-social attitudes, support rehabilitation projects and encouraging more positive policing to address key problem areas.

A Partnership Board of 16 with representatives from the Voluntary and Community sectors, private sector and public agencies is responsible to steer programme implementation, strategic direction and project funding allocations.

Projects supported by SRB grant will contribute to programme outcomes such as reducing unemployment, raising income levels, developing a community infrastructure and supporting community groups, and encouraging more new businesses.

## Community Strategy for Mendip

### **Street Community Appraisal Partnership (SCAP)**

SCAP is a partnership made up of representatives from a wide range of community organisations that together are seeking to make a positive difference to quality of life for the people of Street. This representation includes the voluntary, business and faith communities and the local college, youth service, Street Parish Council and Mendip District Council.

SCAP was set up in 2001 and its first task was to try and find out what the priorities were for people living, working and studying in Street. A consultant was engaged to carry out a comprehensive audit of consultation undertaken by the various public agencies in Mendip. The audit revealed that although a fair amount of consultation and research had been carried out across the district, not enough detail was available at a local level and that there were significant gaps in information about what was important to young people in Street. The Parish Council was also keen to find out if there was demand for further community meeting facilities in Street.

SCAP therefore set about undertaking or commissioning research in a number of areas and, since the audit, has begun to consult to find out about:

- demand for additional community facilities in Street
- young people's perceptions of living, studying, working and spending their leisure time in Street.

SCAP is also planning to consult with people with disabilities to understand more about and raise awareness of the challenges some people may face in going about their daily lives in Street.

From the outset, SCAP has been keen to link its work with the wider Community Strategy for Mendip and the MSP.

## **Consultation on the Draft Community Strategy**

This is a first draft of the first community strategy for Mendip. Although we have based our vision and aims on the needs and views of people in Mendip, we want and expect the strategy to continue to develop and be shaped by communities, organisations and individuals with an interest in Mendip.

We therefore welcome your comments on any aspect of this draft community strategy and would particularly appreciate your views on:

- To what extent the long term vision which we have developed for the district is clear and is right for Mendip
- To what extent you feel that the aims in the community strategy are the right ones to achieve the vision
- If there are any aims you feel are missing from the draft strategy
- How easy the document is to read and understand

And any other suggestions for how the strategy can be improved.

Please give us your views in one of the following ways:

- Via the MSP Website [www.mendipstrategicpartnership.org.uk](http://www.mendipstrategicpartnership.org.uk)

or to

- Sara Skirton, Community Planning and Consultation Officer at Mendip District Council, Cannards Grave Road, Shepton Mallet, Somerset BA4 5BT

On - 01749 341340

E- mail – [skirtons@mendip.gov.uk](mailto:skirtons@mendip.gov.uk)

***By 25<sup>th</sup> June 2004 please***

**All views received will be considered in the production of the final version of the first community strategy for Mendip and its supporting action plans.**

## **Related Plans, Reports and Strategies**

Avon and Somerset Police Authority Strategy Plan 2003/04- 04/05

*'Better Homes Better Lives'* MDC Housing Strategy 2002-2005/06

Great Cake of Life Programme of Community Engagement 2003 – Reports available from [www.mendipstrategicpartnership.org.uk](http://www.mendipstrategicpartnership.org.uk)

Mendip Biodiversity Action Plan 1995

Mendip Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy 2002/05

Mendip District Council Business Plans 2004/05

Mendip District Local Plan – Mendip District Council December 2002

Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan 2004/09

Mendip Primary Care Trust Health Improvement and Modernisation Plan 2002/05

Mendip Primary Care Trust Local Delivery Plan 2004/05

Somerset County Youth Service Mendip Area Plan 2003/004 - 06

Somerset Learning and Skills Council Annual Plan 2003/04 – *“Championing the Power of Learning”*

Somerset Local Transport Plan – Somerset County Council July 2000 (with subsequent annual Monitoring Reports)

Somerset's Statement of Learning and Skills Needs February 2002 (Learning and Skills Council)

## Glossary of Terms

SACs	-	Special Areas of Conservation – classified under EC directive on Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna
SPAs	-	Special Protection Areas, classified under EC directive on conservation of wild birds
Ramsar	-	Listed under Convention of Wetlands of International Importance
Deprivation	-	When individuals or communities are unable to access or benefit from the life chances and opportunities that others take for granted.
Diversity	-	The range and variety of backgrounds, skills, attitudes, beliefs and experiences to be found in a population
Micro companies	-	Companies with less than 10 employees
Biodiversity	-	The variety of living things in all habitats
Broadband	-	Internet connection that allows speedy downloading of and access to information