

# South Somerset District Council

## Settlement Profile: Langport & Huish Episcopi

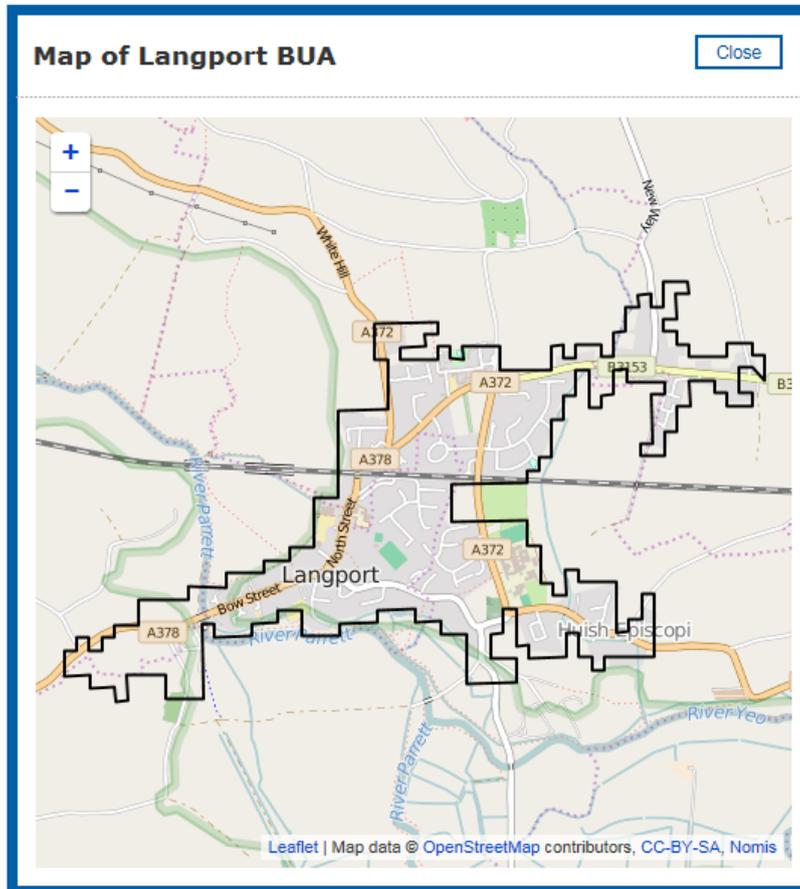


October 2017

## 1. INTRODUCTION

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

**Figure 1.1: Map of Langport & Huish Episcopi BUA**



Source: Partnership Intelligence Unit, Somerset County Council

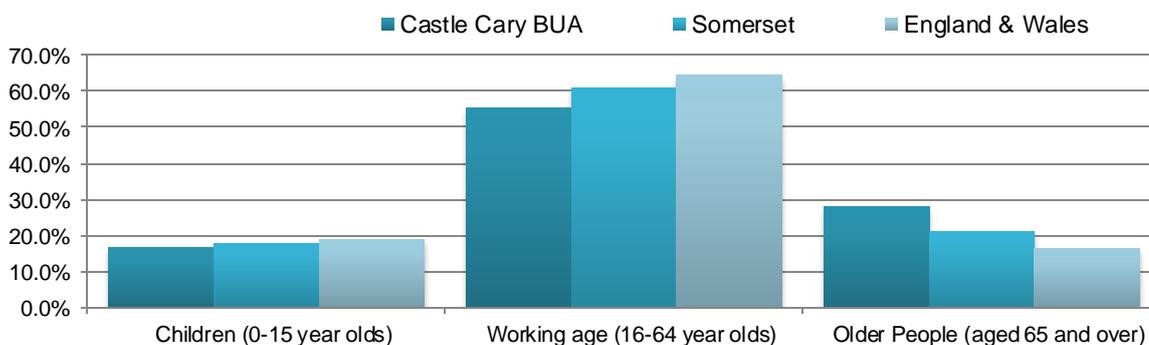
- 1.2. As Figure 1.1 shows, NOMIS includes both Langport and Huish Episcopi in its Langport BUA. They are also considered jointly in the Local Plan as a Local Market Town.
- 1.3. Langport & Huish Episcopi is in the north of the district, positioned on the banks of the River Parrett and on the edge of the Somerset Levels and Moors. The settlement is a tourist destination due to its rich historic character and its position on the river banks and by the Parrett trail, offering walking, cycling and horse riding opportunities.

## 2. POPULATION

2.1 Figure 2.1 shows the age profile of Langport & Huish Episcopi'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 Langport & Huish Episcopi's Age Profile Compared to Somerset, and England & Wales**

	Langport BUA	Somerset	England & Wales
		%	%
<b>Total usually resident population</b>	<b>3,063</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Children (0-15 year olds)	477	15.6	17.8
Working age (16-64 year olds)	1,837	60.0	61.1
Older People (aged 65 and over)	749	24.5	21.1



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

2.2 Figure 2.1 shows that Langport & Huish Episcopi has a resident population of 3,063 people, with proportionately fewer children and people of 'Working age', and more 'Older People' than Somerset, and England & Wales.

2.3 Langport & Huish Episcopi has an elderly population which is likely to result in pressure on services for the elderly.

## 3. HOUSING

3.1 Policy SS5 sets Langport & Huish Episcopi a target of delivering 374 new dwellings by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2028; the same as the other Local Market Towns, and a direction of growth identified to the north of the settlement (Policy LMT 2). Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, it has delivered 297 dwellings and had 152 commitments<sup>1</sup>.

3.2 Following further consideration, part of the residential Direction of Growth has been deemed unsustainable following a planning application<sup>2</sup> for residential development

<sup>1</sup> South Somerset District Council Monitoring Database

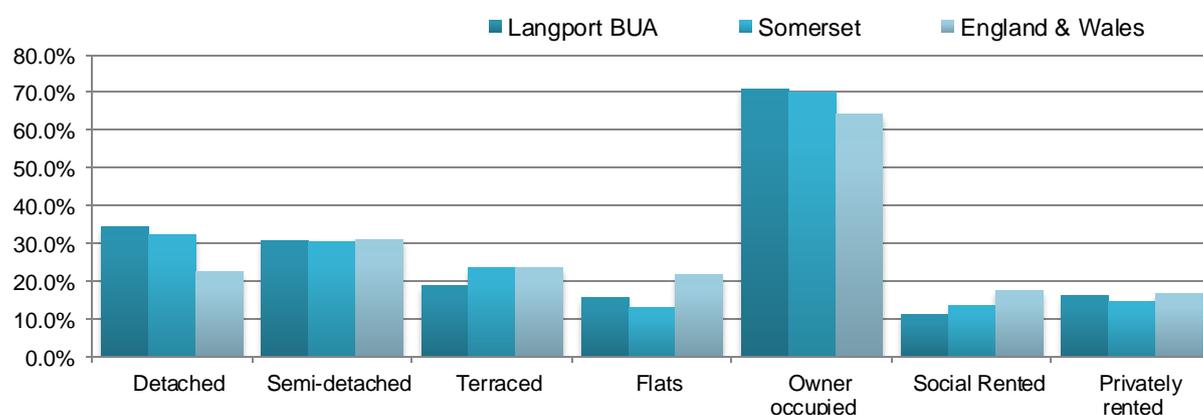
<sup>2</sup> Application ref. 14/05234/OUT

that was refused and upheld on appeal<sup>3</sup>. The development of the site poses significant concerns over its impact on the historic environment and regarding coalescence with the settlement of Wearne, to the north.

3.3 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 Langport & Huish Episcopi, Somerset, and England & Wales.

**Figure 3.1: Langport & Huish Episcopi's Accommodation and Household Profiles Compared to Somerset, and England & Wales**

	Langport BUA		Somerset	England & Wales
		%	%	%
<b>Total number of dwellings</b>	<b>1,422</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Detached	490	34.5%	32.3%	22.6%
Semi-detached	435	30.6%	30.4%	31.1%
Terraced	267	18.8%	23.7%	23.6%
Flats	221	15.5%	13.0%	21.6%
<b>Tenure</b>				
<b>Total number of households</b>	<b>1,333</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Owner occupied	946	71.0%	70.2%	64.3%
Social Rented	150	11.3%	13.5%	17.6%
Privately rented	215	16.1%	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

3.4 Figure 3.1 shows that Langport & Huish Episcopi has a higher proportion of detached and semi-detached properties to Somerset and England & Wales, and has few terraced properties also. The settlement has a greater proportion of flats than the Somerset average but less than England & Wales. Overall, the settlement lack provision of housing at the affordable end of the market.

<sup>3</sup> Appeal ref. APP/R3325/W/15/3136302

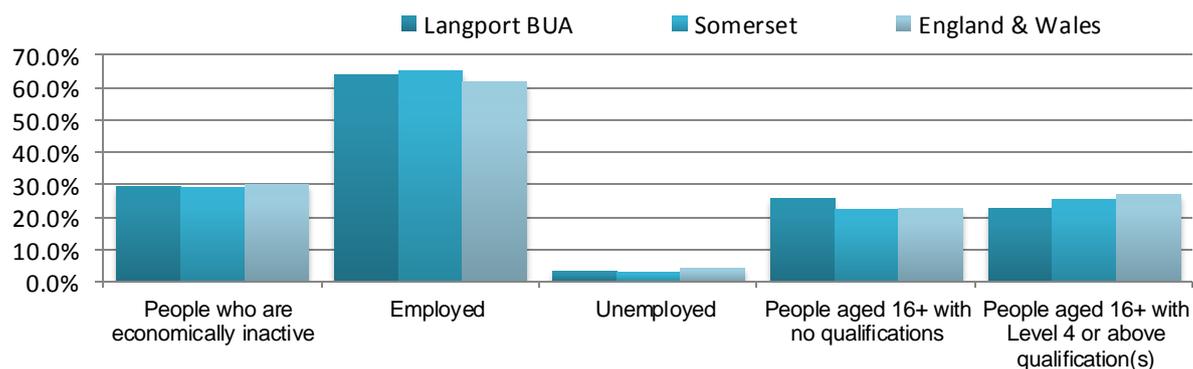
- 3.5 Langport & Huish Episcopi's tenure is dominated by owner-occupied properties, even more so than Somerset and England & Wales. The proportion of private rented accommodation is below the English & Welsh levels but above the average proportion in Somerset. The proportion of social housing is lower than the Somerset average and the English & Welsh average.
- 3.6 The settlement would benefit from a more mixed housing supply, particularly at the cheaper end of the market and more social housing.

## 4. ECONOMY

- 4.1 As Figure 4.1 shows, the proportion of economically inactive people and unemployed people in Langport & Huish Episcopi is below the English & Welsh average but above the Somerset average. The proportion of people employed is above the English & Welsh averages but below the Somerset average. The settlement should then be considered to be in a moderate economic position despite lower than average qualification levels compared to the County, and the English & Welsh average.

**Figure 4.1: Langport & Huish Episcopi's Economic Activity Compared to Somerset, and England & Wales**

	Langport BUA	Somerset	England & Wales
		%	%
<b>Total number of people aged 16 to 74</b>	<b>2,168</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
People who are economically inactive	641	29.6	30.3
Employed	1,387	64.0	61.9
Unemployed	72	3.3	4.4
People aged 16+ with no qualifications	667	25.8	22.4
People aged 16+ with Level 4 or above qualification(s)	590	22.8	27.2



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

- 4.2 The main employment areas in Langport & Huish Episcopi are:
- Westover Trading Estate
  - Tanyard Lane
- 4.3 The SSDC Monitoring Data base shows that Langport & Huish Episcopi has delivered 0.12 hectares of land (gross) and 4,525 sq. metres of floorspace (gross). Losses have reduced these gross figures to 0.04 hectares of land (net) and 1,325 sq. m floorspace (net) since 2006/7. This is significantly less than the Local Plan target for the settlement of 4.01 hectares. Moreover, due to the historic sensitivity of the area, the suitability of the employment Direction of Growth has also been questioned.
- 4.4 The Great Bow Yard offices, community space, and a café development and the erection of additional classrooms at Huish Academy have produced the most new additional floorspace in the town. However, the total net floorspace increase has been modest as a lot of the development in the settlement has been changes of use.
- 4.5 The tourism trade in the Langport & Huish Episcopi has shaped its economic growth. The main drivers of economic development have been the service and leisure sectors.
- 4.6 Figure 4.2 shows the employment provision for Langport & Huish Episcopi in terms of the number of jobs and the percentage in 18 industry groups, compared to the percentage distribution in South Somerset.

**Figure 4.2: Employment Provision in Langport & Huish Episcopi, 2015**

Sector	Langport & Huish Episcopi		South Somerset
	No. of Jobs	%	%
1: Agriculture, forestry & fishing (A)	0	0.0	n/a
2: Mining, quarrying & utilities (B,D and E)	0	0.0	0.9
3: Manufacturing (C)	300	24.8	20.3
4: Construction (F)	30	2.5	5.5
5: Motor trades (Part G)	35	2.9	(All G) 18.8
6: Wholesale (Part G)	10	0.8	
7: Retail (Part G)	175	14.5	
8: Transport & storage (inc postal) (H)	35	2.9	3.5
9: Accommodation & food services (I)	40	3.3	6.2
10: Information & communication (J)	10	0.8	2
11: Financial & insurance (K)	10	0.8	0.9
12: Property (L)	10	0.8	1.4
13: Professional, scientific & technical (M)	75	6.2	7
14: Business administration & support services (N)	35	2.9	5.5
15: Public administration & defence (O)	0	0.0	2.3
16: Education (P)	250	20.7	7.8
17: Health (Q)	200	16.5	14.1
18: Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services (R,S,T and U)	30	2.5	3.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,250</b>		

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%.

- 4.7 Of the industries, the primary employer within the settlement is manufacturing (24.8%), the second and third largest employers are Education (20.7%), and Health (16.5%).
- 4.8 The settlement provides around 1,250 jobs, meaning that for every resident aged 16 to 74, the settlement provides close to 60% (approx. 58%) of a job.

### Town Centre

- 4.9 The town centre performs an important retail and tourism role.
- 4.10 The Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study<sup>4</sup> identifies a good comparison and convenience offer in the centre, though the service uses could be more varied, and the food and drink offer could be improved. Nevertheless, the overall offer is good and the vacancy rate is (3.9%) significantly below the national average, suggesting that the town centre is in a healthy position.

<sup>4</sup> Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study (2017)

- 4.11 On the edge of the centre is a Tesco supermarket which caters for the settlement and a wider hinterland.
- 4.12 The Study's projected retail floorspace capacity for Langport and Huish Episcopi is shown in Figure 7.36.

**Figure 4.3: Projected Retail Floorspace Capacity in Langport and Huish Episcopi**

Type	Additional Floorspace (Square Metres) (Gross)		
	By 2024	By 2029	By 2034
Convenience	778	827	874
Comparison	25	60	95
Food and Beverage	16	47	77
<b>Total</b>	<b>819</b>	<b>934</b>	<b>1,046</b>

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

- 4.13 There is future capacity for retail growth but it is not substantial.

## 5. INFRASTRUCTURE

- 5.1 The IDP<sup>5</sup> states that the growth proposed for Langport and Huish Episcopi is unlikely to result in abnormal or fundamental infrastructure constraints relating to transport, telecommunications, emergency services, health care, waste and recycling, or other utilities. The education and health care service providers are preparing capacity studies which may highlight issues in due course.
- 5.2 Being located on the of the River Parrett means fluvial flooding is a significant risk. Planning permission has been granted on the Westover Trading Estate for a scheme which includes raising parts of the estate road by up to 0.8m. Additional flood risk infrastructure is required to better manage flood risk. The Environment Agency has already considered an embankment scheme which may provide a comprehensive solution for the future.
- 5.3 Wessex Water has completed a capacity scheme at Langport Sewage Treatment Works, but further work may be required.
- 5.4 New housing will generate a need for additional open space and outdoor play space, sports, community and cultural facilities, although the timing of this is not fundamental to delivering development.
- 5.5 There is local political pressure for the Langport railway station to be opened. However, no viability study that would meet Network Rail's criteria has been undertaken and it is not a corporate priority.

<sup>5</sup> South Somerset Infrastructure Delivery Plan Update 2015/16 Part One – Spatial Summary  
[https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/814403/idp\\_2015\\_16\\_part\\_1\\_issue.pdf](https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/814403/idp_2015_16_part_1_issue.pdf)

## 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**

<b>Buses</b>		
<b>Operator</b>	<b>Principal Destinations</b>	<b>Frequency (approx.)</b>
Hatch Green Coaches	16: Langport – Bridgwater via Aller. (Only 2x daily to Huish Episcopi)	2 hourly
Buses of Somerset	54: Taunton – Yeovil (serving Fivehead, Curry Rivel, Langport, Somerton, and Ilchester)	Hourly
Isle Valley Transport	Service into Langport from Low Ham, East & West Lambrook, Kingsbury Episcopi & Muchelney.	Thursdays only
	Service into Langport from High Ham, Low Ham, Long Sutton, Huish Episcopi and Aller	Mondays & Wednesdays only
	Service into Langport from Isle Brewers, Fivehead, & Drayton	Tuesdays & Fridays only

6.3 The nearest station, Yeovil Pen Mill Station, is located 14.1 miles away. However, it is likely that Taunton Station (14.2 miles away) or Castle Cary Station (14.5 miles away) would be more used as the former offers a high speed service to London and the latter good connections north and south in addition to east and west. However the existing car park at Castle Cary is at capacity and the expansion of this has been identified in the IDP.

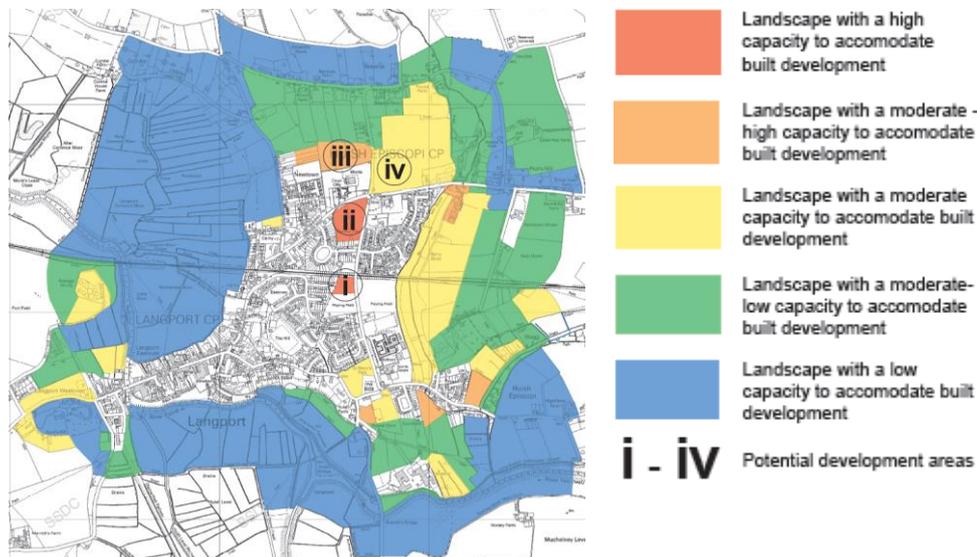
6.4 For a Local Market Town, the Langport is comparatively well served by bus services. However Huish Episcopi is poorly served

6.5 Although it would arguably benefit from closer proximity to a train station, it remains to be seen that a station at Langport would make business sense or gain support from the rail infrastructure provider or train operator.

## 7. ENVIRONMENT

- 7.1 The Peripheral Landscape Study<sup>6</sup> shows that the north and east of the settlement has the most potential for settlement growth from a landscape standpoint.

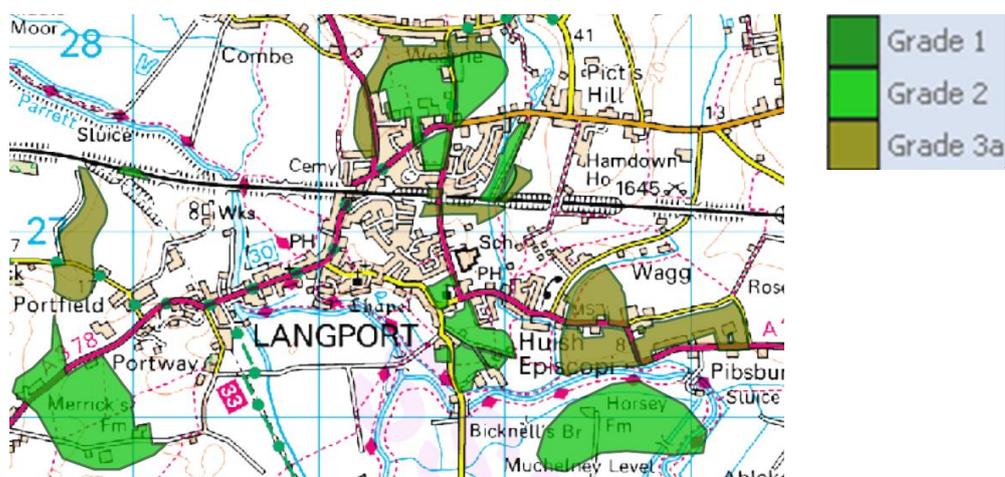
**Figure 7.1: Langport & Huish Episcopi Landscape Capacity**



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)<sup>7</sup>, is a key environmental constraint, according to the NPPF<sup>8</sup>. 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.

**Figure 7.2: BMV Land around Langport & Huish Episcopi**



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

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

<sup>7</sup> Defined in the NPPF, (DCLG) 2012 – Annex 2

<sup>8</sup> DCLG, 2012

- 7.4 Another environmental constraint for Langport & Huish Episcopi's growth is flood risk, shown below in Figure 7.3.

**Figure 7.3: Langport & Huish Episcopi Flood Map (Flood Zones 2 and 3)**



Source: Environment Agency data on WebMap

- 7.5 As Figure 7.3 shows, Flood Zones 2 and 3 run through the settlement, with vast swathes of Flood Zone 2 and 3 land to its south and west.
- 7.6 The wetlands to the west and south of the settlement mean that there is a large nature reserve to the south and a smaller nature reserve to the west of the settlement. There is also an RSPB consultation area, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, a Special Protection Area, and a Ramsar Conservation site in this wetland area.
- 7.7 There are numerous archaeological sites and a Historic Battlefield. These sites will need to be conserved appropriately.

## 8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Langport & Huish Episcopi's ability to accommodate future growth is considered to be fairly strong. The town centre is in a healthy position, providing services to the settlement and its hinterland, and bus services are relatively good. However, the town is constrained by flood risk, limiting directions of growth and placing a strong reliance on land to the north and east, and the ability of the settlement to provide sufficient employment is also questionable.

### Key Issues

- 8.2 Looking towards the future it is considered that the key issues for Langport & Huish Episcopi are:
- Flood risk, which places a strong reliance on land to the north and the east of the settlement being available and deliverable for settlement growth.
  - Employment land has not been produced.
  - Part of the residential Direction of Growth and the employment Direction of Growth may not be suitable.