

# Housing Needs Assessment

## Somersford Parish Council, Cheshire

April 2016  
Final Report

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## Glossary of terms used in text

DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
HNA	Housing Needs Assessment
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PPG	Planning Practice Guidance
SHLAA	Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
SHMAU	Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update

## Executive Summary

1. The 2011 Localism Act introduced neighbourhood planning, allowing parish councils and other groups across England to develop and adopt legally binding development plans for their neighbourhood area.
2. As more and more parishes and forums seek to address housing growth, including tenure and type of new housing, it has become evident that developing policies need to be underpinned by robust, objectively assessed housing data.
3. In the words of the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), establishing future need for housing is not an exact science, and no single approach will provide a definitive answer. The process involves making balanced judgments, as well as gathering numbers and facts. At a neighbourhood planning level, one important consideration is determining the extent to which the neighbourhood diverges from the local authority average, reflecting the fact that a single town or neighbourhood almost never constitutes a housing market on its own and must therefore be assessed in its wider context.
4. The guidance quoted above on housing needs assessment is primarily aimed at local planning authorities preparing Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMAs), which are used to determine housing need at a local authority level. However, it helpfully states that those preparing neighbourhood plans can use the guidance to identify specific local needs that may be relevant to a neighbourhood, but that any assessment at such a local level should be proportionate.
5. Our brief was to advise on data at this more local level to help Somerford Parish Council understand, among other matters, the type, tenure and quantity of housing needed to inform neighbourhood plan policies.
6. This objective and independent housing needs advice note follows the PPG approach where relevant. This ensures our findings are appropriately evidenced. The PPG advises that assessment of development needs should be thorough but proportionate and does not require planners to consider purely hypothetical future scenarios, only future scenarios that could be reasonably expected to occur.
7. Housing Needs Assessment at neighbourhood plan level can be focused either on quantity of housing needed, type of housing need, or both. In most cases, there is a need to focus on quantity where the housing projection for the settlement being assessed is unclear, for example where the local authority has not set a specific target for the settlement, or where there is no local plan in place.
8. In the case of Somerford, this is indeed the case. As such, this report focuses both on quantity and type of housing needed. In order to understand both topics, we have gathered a wide range of local evidence and summarised it into policy recommendations designed to inform decisions on housing quantity and characteristics.
9. The planning period of neighbourhood plans, where possible, should always be aligned with the relevant local plan. In the case of Somerford, this would mean aligning with the Cheshire East emerging Local Plan period, which extends from 2015 to 2030.
10. The PPG states that:

*'no single source of information on needs will be comprehensive in identifying the appropriate assessment area; careful consideration should be given to the appropriateness of each source of information and how they relate to one another. For example, for housing, where there are*

*issues of affordability or low demand, house price or rental level analyses will be particularly important in identifying the assessment area. Where there are relatively high or volatile rates of household movement, migration data will be particularly important. Plan makers will need to consider the usefulness of each source of information and approach for their purposes’.*

11. It continues: *‘Plan makers should avoid expending significant resources on primary research (information that is collected through surveys, focus groups or interviews etc. and analysed to produce a new set of findings) as this will in many cases be a disproportionate way of establishing an evidence base. They should instead look to rely predominantly on secondary data (e.g. Census, national surveys) to inform their assessment which are identified within the guidance’.*
12. Compared with the 2001 Census, the 2011 Census gathered data in a number of new categories and across a range of geographies that are highly relevant to planning at the neighbourhood level and helpful if a PPG-based approach is being used.
13. Like much of the data forming the housing policy evidence base, the Census information is quantitative. However, at a local level, qualitative and anecdotal data, if used judiciously, also has an important role to play, to a perhaps greater extent than at local authority level. We have gathered data from as wide a range of sources as practicable in order to ensure robustness of conclusions and recommendations arising from the analysis of that data. Our conversation with a local estate agent (Stuart Rushton) helped ensure our conclusions were informed by a qualitative, local perspective.
14. Our approach is to provide advice on the housing required based on need and/or demand rather than supply. This is in line with the PPG, which states that *‘the assessment of development needs should be an objective assessment of need based on facts and unbiased evidence. Plan makers should not apply constraints to the overall assessment of need, such as limitations imposed by the supply of land for new development, historic under performance, viability, infrastructure or environmental constraints.’*
15. For this reason, we advise that the conclusions of this report should be assessed against supply-side considerations (including, for example, factors such as transport infrastructure, landscape constraints, flood risk and so on) as a separate and follow-on study<sup>1</sup>.
16. Our assessment of a wide range of data sources identified four separate projections of dwelling numbers for Somerford between 2015 and 2030<sup>2</sup> based on:
  - A figure derived from Cheshire East’s emerging Local Plan, disaggregated to Somerford (which gives a total of 17 dwellings, or roughly 1 per year);
  - The Government’s 2012-based household projections, extrapolated to Somerford, translated from households to dwellings, and rebased to actual 2014 population (which gives 18 dwellings, or 1-2 per year);
  - A projection forward of dwelling completion rates 2001-2011 (which gives 21 dwellings, or 1-2 per year) and
  - A projection forward of dwelling completion rates 2011-2015<sup>3</sup> (which gives 30 dwellings, or 2 per year).

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<sup>1</sup> Such an approach, clearly separating housing need assessment (demand-side) from dwelling capacity assessment (supply side), was recently endorsed by the Government for calculating housing need at local authority level in the ministerial statement and press release ‘Councils must protect our precious green belt land’ (DCLG, 4 October 2014, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/councils-must-protect-our-precious-green-belt-land>)

<sup>2</sup> As explained in more detail within the main body of the report, all calculations of dwellings within Somerford parish (and hence future need) exclude the caravans within the parish boundary that were counted in the 2011 Census but not within the 2001 Census.

17. A further assessment applied to the four projections set out above indicates that the local market factors acting to increase or decrease demand for new housing are effectively in balance.
18. Additionally, it is notable Somerford's future dwelling projections comprise a very narrow range, with a maximum of 30 and minimum of 17. This is certainly not the case for all places, but in the case of Somerford it is helpful to see that the Local Plan-derived target (which is the only one of the figures carrying statutory weight, in the sense that the Neighbourhood Plan must demonstrate conformity with it at its examination) is relatively close to the other projections derived.
19. Based on this fact, and taking into account that factors acting to constrain demand and factors acting to increase demand appear to cancel one another out at Somerford, we recommend that the most appropriate estimate of dwelling need at Somerford over the period 2015 to 2030 is 17 dwellings, as per the Local Plan-derived calculation. However, note that this should be thought of as a minimum figure, in line both with best practice in planning and the fact that the other three projections are all higher than seventeen dwellings.
20. Note that any dwellings completed or with outstanding permission in the plan area since the start of 2016 would count towards this dwelling total, meaning the outstanding number of dwellings decreases accordingly.
21. The table below, which replicates Table 19 of our conclusions, summarises the data we have gathered with a potential impact on the characteristics of the housing needed in the neighbourhood. Factors are in alphabetical but no other order.

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3 With those dwellings completed within Somerford parish, but meeting Congleton's rather than Somerford's need, excluded from the total.

**Table 19: Summary of local factors specific to Somerford with a potential impact on neighbourhood plan housing characteristics**

Factor	Source(s) (see Chapter 3)	Possible impact on housing needed	Conclusion
<b>Dwelling type</b>	SHMAU, Census, Stuart Rushton	Across the wider market, houses rather than flats remain the most popular dwelling types for most parts of the market. Detached and semi-detached properties are in most demand. Bungalows are in particular demand among the older population. Families expressed a preference for detached and semi-detached homes. In Somerford itself, detached and semi-detached homes predominate, with very low levels of terraces or flats.	<p>The vast majority of new homes to be provided, including the smaller as well as the larger units, should be detached or semi-detached. A proportion of the new homes should be bungalows.</p> <p>There is little demand for terraced housing or flats within Somerford and in any case the provision of more detached and semi-detached houses is much more in line with the local context.</p>
<b>Family-sized housing</b>	SHMAU, Congleton HNA, Census, Stuart Rushton	The Census and SHMAU both show a much higher than average proportion of the population self-employed and/or working from home. As such, these people value homes with one or more extra rooms/bedrooms to use as an office, and this ensures demand for larger homes remains strong. The SHMAU notes that three or more bed homes are most popular with families, and that many of these want four or more. Additionally, the new employment growth at Congleton will act to increase the proportion of families moving into the wider area, which the Census shows is already increasing, along with house size.	<p>Alongside smaller homes for retired, older and single person households, a proportion of larger homes are still likely required to meet the needs of families moving into the area and those who work from home.</p> <p>These homes should be at least three bedrooms in size, with the majority providing four bedrooms or more. Given their size and the local development context, it is likely that these homes would be detached or semi-detached rather than terraced.</p>

Factor	Source(s) (see Chapter 3)	Possible impact on housing needed	Conclusion
<b>Housing for older people</b>	SHMAU, Congleton HNA, Cheshire East Local Plan, Census, Stuart Rushton	The SHMAU notes that the choice of housing for older people, and the opportunities for downsizing, need to increase. As a result, there will be future demand for bungalows and smaller detached homes across Congleton Rural as older people stay in their own homes for longer. This will also increase the housing mix, which is a key aim of the Local Plan. Stuart Rushton notes that although the demographic profile is older than average, the oldest element of the population are moving away to more accessible locations nearby. Smaller homes will also meet the need of the increasing numbers of single person households.	<p>The geographical location of Somerford suggests that specialist housing for the oldest part of the population should be provided elsewhere, in more accessible locations, within walking distance of services and facilities.</p> <p>However, there still appears to be a case for providing a proportion of smaller homes locally for the recently retired and/or over-55s to downsize into, specifically for independent living. These could include smaller detached homes and bungalows.</p>
<b>Tenure of housing</b>	Cheshire East, Census, SHMAU, Stuart Rushton	Cheshire East data supports the SHMAU in showing a very low level of affordable housing need, though social housing has been increasing in the parish recently. Owner-occupation has been growing recently and will continue to be the majority tenure in future.	<p>Despite the low level of affordable housing need, we recommend the Parish Council work closely with Cheshire East to ensure local affordable need is met, particularly in light of recent increase in social housing within the parish.</p> <p>Otherwise, it can be assumed that most new homes provided will be for owner-occupation.</p> <p>The minority of homes in the affordable tenure would be, on the basis of the current waiting list, smaller units (mainly 1-2 bedrooms)</p>

# 1 Introduction

## **Housing Needs Assessment in Neighbourhood Planning**

22. The 2011 Localism Act introduced neighbourhood planning, allowing parish councils and other groups across England to develop and adopt legally binding development plans for their neighbourhood area.
23. As more and more parishes and forums seek to address housing growth, including tenure and type of new housing, it has become evident that developing policies need to be underpinned by robust, objectively assessed housing data.
24. In the words of the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), establishing future need for housing is not an exact science, and no single approach will provide a definitive answer. The process involves making balanced judgments, as well as gathering numbers and facts. At a neighbourhood planning level, one important consideration is determining the extent to which the neighbourhood diverges from the local authority average, reflecting the fact that a single town or neighbourhood almost never constitutes a housing market on its own and must therefore be assessed in its wider context.
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26. Our brief was to advise on data at this more local level to help Somerford Parish Council understand, among other matters, the type, tenure and quantity of housing needed to inform neighbourhood plan policies.

## **Local Study Context**

27. Somerford is a small village in Cheshire with a parish population of 430 (2011 Census). It is immediately north-west of the larger market town of Congleton, and its local authority is Cheshire East. It is around three miles east of Junction 17 of the M6 motorway, providing fast road links to the North West and the West Midlands.
28. Somerford benefits from easy access to both Holmes Chapel and Congleton railway stations. Holmes Chapel provides access to both Crewe (and thus in future, the HS2 rail link) and Manchester, while Congleton also provides connections to Manchester, but also Stoke-on-Trent and Stockport. The nearest major airport is Manchester.
29. The Neighbourhood Plan area is the same as Somerford Parish. This greatly simplifies the gathering of statistics, as all are available at parish level.
30. For planning purposes, Somerford is covered by the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan, but this has had a long and troubled development, meaning the final Local Plan is yet to be adopted. As such, there is no specific housing target for the village, and a prime objective of this report is to help determine one.
31. Somerford is also part of the Cheshire East Housing Market Area, and as such, the Cheshire East Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (SHMAU) is relevant to this housing needs analysis and will be interrogated as appropriate.

## 2 Approach

### PPG-Based Assessment

33. This objective and independent housing needs advice note follows the PPG approach where relevant. This ensures our findings are appropriately evidenced. The PPG advises that assessment of development needs should be thorough but proportionate and does not require planners to consider purely hypothetical future scenarios, only future scenarios that could be reasonably expected to occur.

### Summary of Methodology

34. Housing Needs Assessment at neighbourhood plan level can be focused either on quantity of housing needed, type of housing need, or both. In most cases, there is a need to focus on quantity where the housing target for the settlement being assessed is unclear, for example where the local authority has not set a specific target for the settlement, or where there is no local plan in place.
35. In the case of Somerford, this is indeed the case. As such, this report focuses both on quantity and type of housing needed. In order to understand both topics, we have gathered a wide range of local evidence and summarised it into policy recommendations designed to inform decisions on housing quantity and characteristics.
36. The planning period of neighbourhood plans, where possible, should always be aligned with the relevant local plan. In the case of Somerford, this would mean aligning with the Cheshire East emerging Local Plan period, which extends from 2015 to 2030.

### Gathering and Using a Range of Data

37. The PPG states that:

*'no single source of information on needs will be comprehensive in identifying the appropriate assessment area; careful consideration should be given to the appropriateness of each source of information and how they relate to one another. For example, for housing, where there are issues of affordability or low demand, house price or rental level analyses will be particularly important in identifying the assessment area. Where there are relatively high or volatile rates of household movement, migration data will be particularly important. Plan makers will need to consider the usefulness of each source of information and approach for their purposes'*

38. It continues: *'Plan makers should avoid expending significant resources on primary research (information that is collected through surveys, focus groups or interviews etc. and analysed to produce a new set of findings) as this will in many cases be a disproportionate way of establishing an evidence base. They should instead look to rely predominantly on secondary data (e.g. Census, national surveys) to inform their assessment which are identified within the guidance'*.
39. Compared with the 2001 Census, the 2011 Census gathered data in a number of new categories and across a range of geographies that are highly relevant to planning at the neighbourhood level and helpful if a PPG-based approach is being used.
40. Like much of the data forming the housing policy evidence base, the Census information is quantitative. However, at a local level, qualitative and anecdotal data, if used judiciously, also has an important role to play, to a perhaps greater extent than at local authority level. We have gathered data from as wide a range of sources as practicable in order to ensure robustness of conclusions and recommendations arising from the analysis of that data. Our conversation with

a local estate agent (Stuart Rushton) helped ensure our conclusions were informed by a qualitative, local perspective.

### **Focus On Demand Rather Than Supply**

41. Our approach is to provide advice on the housing required based on need and/or demand rather than supply. This is in line with the PPG, which states that *'the assessment of development needs should be an objective assessment of need based on facts and unbiased evidence. Plan makers should not apply constraints to the overall assessment of need, such as limitations imposed by the supply of land for new development, historic under performance, viability, infrastructure or environmental constraints.'*
42. For this reason, we advise that the conclusions of this report should be assessed against supply-side considerations (including, for example, factors such as transport infrastructure, landscape constraints, flood risk and so on) as a separate and follow-on study<sup>4</sup>.

### **Study Objectives**

43. The objectives of this report can be summarised as:
- Collation of a range of data with relevance to housing need in Somerford relative to Cheshire East and the wider South Cheshire area as a whole;
  - Analysis of that data to determine patterns of housing need and demand;
  - Setting out recommendations based on our data analysis that can be used to inform the Neighbourhood Plan's housing policies.
44. The remainder of this report is structured around the objectives set out above:
- Chapter 3 sets out the data gathered from all sources; and
  - Chapter 4 sets out our conclusions and recommendations based on our data analysis that can be used to inform the Neighbourhood Plan's housing policies.

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<sup>4</sup> Such an approach, clearly separating housing need assessment (demand-side) from dwelling capacity assessment (supply side) , was recently endorsed by the Government for calculating housing need at local authority level in the ministerial statement and press release 'Councils must protect our precious green belt land' (DCLG, 4 October 2014, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/councils-must-protect-our-precious-green-belt-land>)

### 3 Relevant Data

#### Local Planning Context

*Cheshire East Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (SHMAU) (arc4, September 2013)*

45. The PPG states that neighbourhood planners can refer to existing needs assessments prepared by the local planning authority as a starting point. As Somerford is located within the Cheshire Housing Market Area, we therefore turned to the Cheshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (2013, henceforth SHMAU)<sup>5</sup> which covers the housing market area and informs housing policies at a local authority level, including affordable housing policy<sup>6</sup>.
46. For the purposes of finer-grained analysis across such a large authority, the SHMAU divides Cheshire East into a number of spatial areas. Somerford parish is located within the SHMAU's Congleton Rural area.<sup>7</sup>
47. Map 3.1 of the SHMAU is replicated as Figure 1 below and shows that, in common with other rural villages across Cheshire East, Somerford lies within an area of high average house prices.

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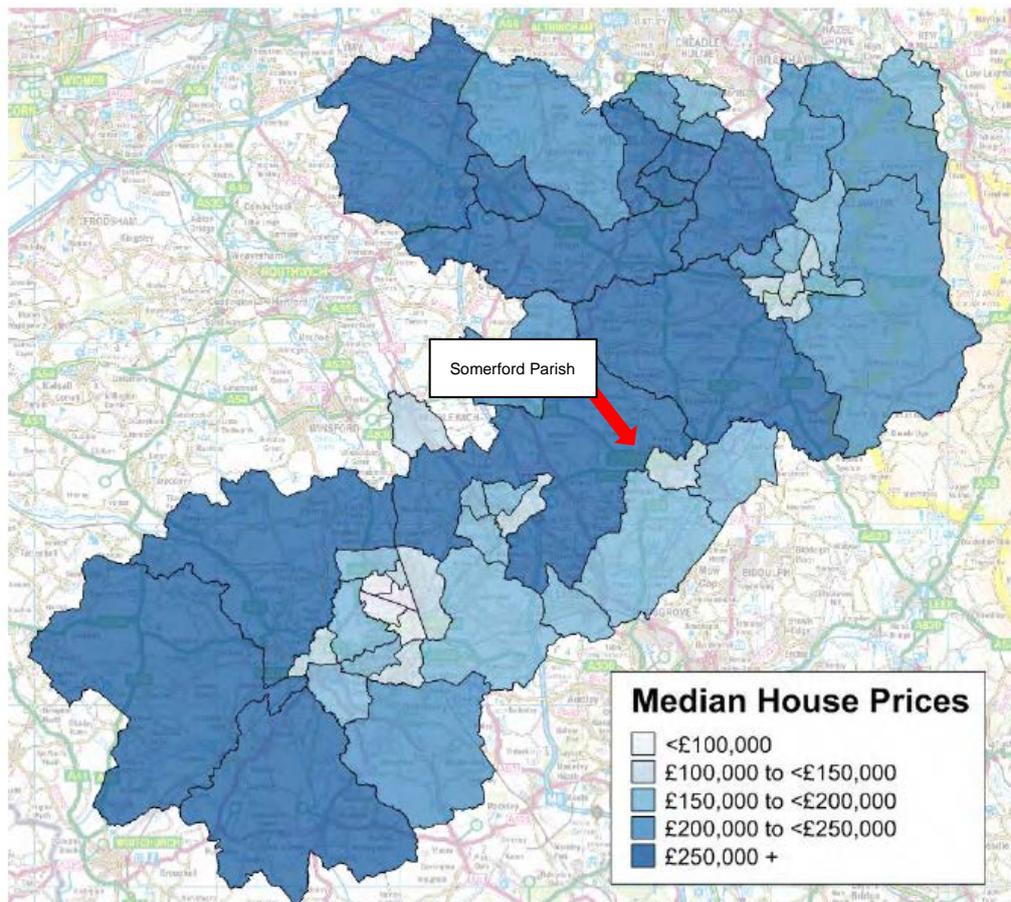
<sup>5</sup> Available online at

[http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial\\_planning/research\\_and\\_evidence/strategic\\_housing\\_market\\_assmt.aspx](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial_planning/research_and_evidence/strategic_housing_market_assmt.aspx)

<sup>6</sup> Here and throughout this report, we have defined affordable housing according **only** to the standard definition found in Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), namely: 'Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.' We have avoided the definition of affordable housing in its colloquial sense of 'relatively cheaper market housing'.

<sup>7</sup> SHMAU Appendix A defines Congleton Rural as the parishes of Appendix A: Congleton Rural is comprised of the six parishes of Hulme Walfield, Moreton cum Alcumlow, Newbold Astbury, Smallwood, Somerford Booths and Somerford.

**Figure 1: Median House Prices in Cheshire East, 2012/3**



Source: Cheshire East SHMAU (arc4, 2013)

48. Table 3.2 of the SHMAU shows that of the households moving into the Congleton Rural area between 2008 and 2013, 55.3% were from other parts of Cheshire East and 44.7% from outside. This contrasts with an overall average for Cheshire East of 68.5% of house moves being within the local authority and only 31.5% of people moving into Cheshire East from elsewhere.
49. In particular, Congleton Rural's proportion of people moving in from elsewhere in the UK (i.e. from somewhere that is not Cheshire, Greater Manchester, other parts of the North West, the West Midlands or the East Midlands) is the highest of any spatial area, at 29.1% (compared with a Cheshire East average of 10.3%).
50. The SHMAU states (paragraph 3.53) that local stakeholders in the housing market (estate agents, housing associations, housebuilders, local authority housing specialists and so on) identified a lack of choice in terms of housing solutions as a key issue for the Borough's ageing population. Other issues identified in respect of the older population included:
- The need to encourage downsizing;
  - The need for a range of accommodation options to be made available, from gradual support through to full care;
  - The cost of providing accommodation, and lack of grant funding to do so, were identified as problematic;
  - The lack of a detailed understanding of the wishes and aspirations of this age group, geographically profiled, was seen to be a key problem;

- There is a lack of awareness amongst the client group of their housing and support options;
- There is an over-supply currently of residential care and nursing homes; and
- There is a shortage of suitable sites.

51. The same stakeholders identified a number of possible solutions, including:

- Developing lifetime homes;
- Allowing more homes to be built;
- Provision of retirement accommodation for those aged 55 and over;
- Provision of assistance with downsizing;
- Use of neighbourhood planning tools to deliver solutions;
- Promotion, awareness raising and education about the issues and options;
- Development of non-tenure specific support services;
- Open market housing schemes with an older persons' element restricted to prevent it reverting to general needs accommodation;
- Developing solutions in consultation with older people;
- Adopting a proactive approach to developing sheltered housing schemes; and
- Provision of more funding and discounted land.

52. In addition to the general stakeholder inputs, estate agents specifically were invited to share their views on the current housing market (as of 2013). Agents described it as stagnant; prices have fallen and a downward pressure on values remains strong. Sellers reportedly remain reluctant to lower sales prices and this further contributes to stagnation within the market.

53. There are, however, differences across Cheshire East. Rural areas (such as Somerford) continue to remain strong in terms of values and demand for homes in these areas is high.

54. Estate agents also report that the type of property being sold also makes a difference. Rural housing remains relatively scarce so values in this location are protected. Additionally, demand from older people for alternative housing solutions is strong.

55. Table 4.4 of the SHMAU (adapted as Table 1 below) shows the full breakdown of property types across Congleton Rural compared with the Cheshire East averages.

**Table 1: Property types in Congleton Rural**

Property type	Proportion of all properties, Congleton Rural (%)	Proportion of all properties, Cheshire East (%)
<b>1-2 bed bungalow</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>7.0</b>
<b>3+ bed bungalow</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>1 bed flat</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>4.4</b>
<b>2 bed flat</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>4.7</b>
<b>3+ bed flat</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.3</b>
<b>1-2 bed terraced house</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>9.1</b>
<b>3 bed terraced house</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>8.3</b>
<b>4+ bed terraced house</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.8</b>
<b>1-2 bed semi-detached house</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>5.3</b>
<b>3 bed semi-detached house</b>	<b>17.1</b>	<b>17.4</b>
<b>4+ bed semi-detached house</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>4.1</b>
<b>1-3 bed detached house</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>11.1</b>
<b>4+ bed detached house</b>	<b>27.6</b>	<b>21.6</b>

*Source: Cheshire East SHMAU (arc4, 2013)*

56. Table 1 shows that there is likely to be demand in future for more bungalows and more small detached houses in Congleton Rural, including Somerford, taking into account the rural context, existing levels of supply, and likely patterns of demand based on the older population.
57. This point is addressed by the SHMAU when it notes that over the period 2011 to 2030, the number of residents aged 60 and over is expected to increase from 85,500 to 124,000 (or by 45.0%). The number aged 75 and over is expected to increase by 74.6% (from 33,800 in 2011 to 59,000 by 2030).
58. Table 4.6 of the SHMAU shows where people living in Congleton Rural work. An unusually high proportion (26.2%) work from home, with Congleton and Alsager, and to a lesser extent, Middlewich and Sandbach, also popular destinations. Of these settlements, Middlewich is the furthest from the area, at 8 miles. This is still relatively close, and suggests that Congleton Rural is not significantly in demand among long-distance commuters. However, note that this conclusion, based on a 2009 household survey, appears to be contradicted in the case of Somerford by more recent, comprehensive and locally-specific data from Census 2011- see paragraph 131 below.

59. Turning to the issue of affordable housing, Table 4.9 of the SHMAU shows that Congleton Rural's total number of households in affordable housing need is 6.0% (compared with a Cheshire East average of 6.4%). This translates into an annual affordable housing need for this spatial area of 11 homes, broken down by type in SHMAU Table 4.14, which is replicated as Table 2 below. Tables C2 and C4 of the SHMAU further confirm that the current level of affordable housing across Congleton Rural is very low (14 dwellings across six parishes, or an average of only 2-3 affordable dwellings per parish).<sup>8</sup>

**Figure 2: Annual affordable housing need by Cheshire East spatial area, 2013/4 to 2017/8**

Sub-area	Designation and no. beds						
	General Needs				Older Person		Total
	1	2	3	4+	1	2+	
Acton	6	-18	-3	0	1	0	-14
Adlington Prestbury and Bollington	1	11	0	1	2	0	15
Alsager	-6	38	15	2	5	0	54
Alsager Rural	14	0	8	6	14	-7	35
Audlem	4	-6	16	4	0	3	22
Bunbury	18	-1	0	1	0	0	18
Congleton	27	-49	10	46	37	-12	58
Congleton Rural	1	1	4	2	0	2	11
Crewe	50	-51	149	37	12	20	217
Disley	6	-21	27	1	1	-1	13
Handforth and Wilmslow	-10	-35	49	5	13	3	25
Haslington and Englesea	1	11	19	10	1	1	44
Holmes Chapel	2	-6	12	1	4	-3	10
Holmes Chapel Rural	0	10	7	-5	2	4	17
Knutsford	8	34	-62	49	10	-1	38
Knutsford Rural	16	1	1	5	7	0	30
Macclesfield	-112	103	116	-1	80	-6	180
Macclesfield Rural - National Park	9	2	8	0	0	0	19
Macclesfield Rural	9	6	23	11	2	8	59
Middlewich	26	22	8	0	4	4	65
Minshull	1	2	2	0	2	0	8
Mobberley Chelford and Alderley Edge	16	17	11	13	9	22	87
Nantwich	40	-27	15	35	16	-1	78
Peckforton	5	4	3	0	1	0	13
Poynton	24	45	19	4	-8	35	118
Sandbach	18	33	18	9	11	5	94
Sandbach Rural	13	2	-8	3	2	0	12
Wrenbury	0	15	-9	12	2	0	20
Wybunbury and Shavington	8	20	7	12	1	7	54

Source: Cheshire East SHMAU (arc4, 2013)

<sup>8</sup> Somerford Parish Council advise that their own housing survey work indicated a need for one affordable dwelling in the parish, thus giving a broadly consistent result between the two surveys of affordable need being in low single figures.

60. In terms of housing type preference among households who reported they are planning to move, the SHMAU notes that houses rather than flats remain the most popular choice of most (except for older singles and couples), particularly detached and semi-detached properties, with three bedroom houses most popular overall. Note that singles under 60 would, on average, consider a much wider range of dwelling types and sizes.
61. There is a strong preference for bungalows amongst older person households (mentioned by 49.5% of older singles and 72.9% of older couples) along with 72.9% of lone parents with adult children and 66.5% of other lone parents. This is summarised in the SHMAU's Table 4.12, which is replicated as Figure 3 below.

**Figure 3: Market preferences by household type, Cheshire East**

Property size/type	Household Type and % who would consider												Total
	Single Adult (under 60)	Single Adult (60 or over)	Couple only (both under 60)	Couple only (one or both 60 or over)	Couple (under 60) with 1 or 2 child(ren)	Couple (under 60) with 3 or more children	Couple (under 60) with adult child(ren)	Lone Parent (under 60) with 1 or 2 child(ren)	Lone Parent (under 60) with 3 or more children	Lone Parent (under 60) with adult child(ren)	Other Older	Other type of household	
House	72.5	69.8	89.5	55.6	88.9	87.2	69.6	78.9	100.0	91.3	58.6	62.5	79.3
Detached	55.2	36.1	59.8	39.0	73.8	74.5	43.7	42.0	100.0	18.5	25.8	62.5	56.6
Semi-detached	58.1	33.1	67.5	25.3	49.1	43.6	38.0	65.1	0.0	85.0	47.3	41.2	52.5
Small Terr	30.8	12.7	19.4	9.2	5.1	1.2	10.4	25.6	0.0	65.8	0.0	0.0	16.2
Large Terr	40.0	2.9	37.5	6.5	23.2	42.6	10.4	21.1	0.0	65.8	6.2	3.8	27.2
2 Bed House	52.6	39.9	41.5	24.3	5.7	0.0	23.6	45.6	0.0	79.3	8.3	44.1	31.2
3 Bed House	59.2	34.3	62.6	37.6	53.4	34.3	19.8	40.6	0.0	82.5	45.3	44.2	51.4
4 Bed House	20.2	7.1	19.9	11.2	54.0	69.7	8.3	17.5	100.0	8.8	11.2	3.0	27.8
5 Bed House	11.7	0.0	7.1	0.6	17.8	41.2	2.2	10.0	0.0	5.7	0.0	7.9	10.8
Flat	24.1	12.9	2.4	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	37.4	6.3
1 Bed Flat	22.4	12.9	2.4	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.5
2 Bed Flat	34.1	37.6	6.3	17.8	1.1	0.0	10.4	20.4	0.0	79.3	0.0	37.4	15.4
3 Bed Flat	18.1	10.3	5.7	14.5	0.4	3.5	0.0	6.6	0.0	79.3	0.0	37.4	9.3
Bungalow	35.5	49.5	15.1	72.9	11.8	40.1	34.0	66.5	0.0	72.7	51.5	47.1	33.5
Detached	32.9	39.9	12.4	54.5	11.4	29.9	31.3	33.9	0.0	72.7	51.5	47.1	26.9
Semi-detached	29.4	28.8	7.8	31.2	3.5	26.5	14.9	61.9	0.0	72.7	21.6	0.0	20.5
Terraced	14.6	8.2	2.9	4.1	1.6	25.5	10.4	26.0	0.0	72.7	0.0	0.0	9.0
1 Bed Bungalow	10.9	4.5	4.5	5.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.3
2 Bed Bungalow	31.5	29.2	10.9	39.7	2.5	0.0	26.8	52.8	0.0	72.7	10.7	41.2	21.1
3 Bed Bungalow	29.5	28.4	11.4	39.6	8.6	25.0	8.1	19.7	0.0	72.7	47.0	44.2	21.4
4 Bed Bungalow	12.4	2.3	3.9	11.8	6.8	39.2	0.0	13.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Cheshire East SHMAU (arc4, 2013)

62. The table shows that among families (an important component of demand in Congleton Rural), couples with children had a strong preference for houses, particularly detached, semi-detached and larger terraces; preferences for bungalows were also noted amongst larger families; and couples with children were most likely to consider properties with three or more bedrooms.
63. Couples with non-dependent (adult) children were most likely to consider houses (detached and semi-detached) and bungalows, with the strongest preferences for dwellings with two and three bedrooms.
64. The SHMAU cross-referenced its data on market aspirations (as presented in Figure 3 above) with market expectations (i.e. the homes that people realistically think they will get, as opposed to the ones they ideally want). This cross-referencing process suggests that a much higher proportion would like to move to a detached house than expect to. In contrast, higher proportions expect to move to a semi-detached house than would prefer to.
65. In terms of property size, the majority of respondents expect to move to a property with two, three or four or more bedrooms. A higher proportion of households would like a property with four or more bedrooms.

66. The SHMAU states that future development should focus on delivering to address identified requirements and help to address the mismatches between aspirations and expectations to the extent that this is reasonable and practical.
67. Perhaps the most significant component of demand for housing in Congleton Rural is the older population. The SHMAU notes that its research shows the vast majority of older people want to stay in their own homes with help and support when needed and the vast majority are owner occupiers.
68. There is also a degree of interest in new forms of older persons' accommodation, for instance older persons' apartments and properties in a retirement/care village. Providing a wider range of older persons' accommodation has the potential to free-up larger family accommodation (although price could still remain a barrier to entry).
69. Generally, the SHMAU concludes that the range of housing options available to older people needs to be diversified, for instance through the development of open market housing marketed at older people, the development of Extra Care accommodation and co-housing.

*Congleton Housing Needs Assessment (Urban Vision, July 2015)*

70. In July 2015, Somerford's neighbouring town of Congleton commissioned its own Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) from Urban Vision. It is summarised briefly here as its conclusions, covering as it does a similar local housing market, are considered relevant for Somerford. Like this report, it was developed in the absence of an adopted Local Plan for Cheshire East.
71. The HNA states that much of the growth planned within the Congleton area falls within Congleton's neighbouring parishes, including 285 dwellings within Somerford parish (comprising both completions and outstanding permissions) between 2010 and 2015.<sup>9</sup> The growth comprises a total of 4,150 homes and 24 hectares of new employment land, to address Congleton's relative shortage of jobs.
72. It highlights that despite the local ageing population, more people are choosing to remain in their family homes, and are not choosing to downsize. This is also evidenced by slow sales at a recent McCarthy and Stone development of housing for older people in the town, and explains strong house builder interest in the town.
73. The report points to Congleton's function as a commuter settlement, with much commuting from the town to the rest of Cheshire East, as well as to Manchester, Liverpool and North Staffordshire.
74. Congleton HNA's key conclusions are as follows:
- More family housing is required
  - More affordable housing is required
  - Downsizing should be encouraged

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<sup>9</sup> This assessment is not directly comparable with our own assessment of recent dwelling growth within the boundaries of Somerford parish (see paragraph 71 above), for three main reasons: firstly, a different time window of assessment was used, secondly we have counted only completions rather than both completions and outstanding permissions, as the latter may never be built, and thirdly as we have disaggregated recent dwelling growth at Somerford into that aimed at meeting Congleton's need and that aimed at meeting Somerford's own need, which was not a relevant consideration for the Congleton HNA.

- A 'modern urban housing offer' should be developed to help retain young people
- Encourage new housing investment models (as a means to grow the private rental market and social housing offer)

*Note on Census 2011 data for Somerford*

75. In the Census 2011, Somerford Parish contained 249 dwellings. However, this figure has been questioned by the Parish Council as, in their view, it seems too large (in the 2001 Census, the parish had 125 dwellings).
76. As such, the Parish Council contacted the Office for National Statistics (ONS), who responded by stating that the major change between the two Census years was in caravans or other mobile structures - there were none in 2001, but there were 102 in 2011.
77. ONS therefore concluded that the figures suggest a caravan park or similar entity has developed in the area in the years between censuses, and this has been confirmed by the Parish Council. As the caravans are considered to be temporary dwellings, the Parish Council has indicated they should be excluded from the 249 dwellings enumerated in the parish within Census 2011. This leaves a total of 147 (permanent) dwellings in the parish in Census 2011, and as such, this will be the figure used for the remainder of this analysis.

*Local Plan Strategy Proposed Changes (Consultation Draft) (Cheshire East Borough Council, March 2016)*

78. The most recent iteration of Cheshire East's emerging Local Plan was released in March 2016, and incorporates proposed changes from the previous version. It covers the planning period 2015 to 2030. Specific policies and provisions of the emerging Plan having relevance for housing to be provided at Somerford include Policy PG 6: Spatial Distribution of Development.
79. As well as allocating 24 hectares of new employment land at Congleton, Policy PG 6 distributes development among four categories of settlement: Principal Towns, Key Service Centres, Local Service Centres and Other Settlements and Rural Areas. It can be inferred that Somerford is part of the Other Settlements and Rural Areas category, which will be the location of 2,950 new homes of the total of 36,000.
80. However, within this category, new homes at Alderley Park (proposed for a new settlement) can be subtracted from the figure of 2,950. This is Site CS29 in the Cheshire East Core Strategy, which is assumed to have a total capacity of '200-300 homes'. If we assume a midpoint of 250, this can be removed from the Other Settlements and Rural Areas target of 2,950 to leave a target of 2,700.
81. To calculate Somerford's share of the 2,700, we need first to understand the total number of existing dwellings in the 'Other Settlements and Rural Areas' category. This can be calculated by subtracting from the Cheshire East dwellings total (Census 2011) those dwellings in all other areas (also derived from Census 2011 definitions)<sup>10</sup>, with what remains being the total number of dwellings in the Other Settlements and Rural Areas.
82. The total number of dwellings in Cheshire East in the 2011 Census was 166,236. Of these the following dwellings are outside the Other Settlements and Rural Areas:
- Principal Towns and Key Service Centres:

<sup>10</sup> The definition used was a combination of either Middle Super Output Areas, Built-Up Areas, Built-Up Area Sub-divisions, or parish level data, depending on the most appropriate geographic boundary to use for each named settlement.

- Crewe 33,216
- Macclesfield 29,670
- Alsager 6,142
- Congleton 11,832
- Handforth (this is, for statistical purposes, included within the Wilmslow total)<sup>11</sup>
- Knutsford 6,131
- Middlewich 5,920
- Nantwich 8,261
- Poynton 6,610
- Sandbach 8,119
- Wilmslow 16,700

This gives a Principal Towns and Key Service Centre dwellings total of 132,601.

- Local Service Centres:

- Alderley Edge (this is, for statistical purposes, included within the Wilmslow total)
- Audlem 780
- Bollington (this is, for statistical purposes, included within the Macclesfield total)
- Bunbury 512
- Chelford 513
- Disley 1,980
- Goostrey 913
- Haslington 2,013
- Holmes Chapel 2,512
- Mobberley 909
- Prestbury (this is, for statistical purposes, already included within the Macclesfield total)
- Shavington (this is, for statistical purposes, already included within the Crewe total)
- Wrenbury 293

This gives a Local Service Centre dwellings total of 10,425.

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<sup>11</sup> As per Built Up Area Sub-Division definitions as defined by the Office for National Statistics- see Usual Resident Population totals by Built-Up Area Sub-Divisions at [www.nomisweb.co.uk](http://www.nomisweb.co.uk). Both Wilmslow and Handforth are themselves considered sub-divisions of the Greater Manchester built-up area.

83. Adding together the Key Service Centre and Local Service Centre dwellings total gives us  $(132,601+10,425=)$  143,026. Subtracting these dwellings from the Cheshire East total therefore gives us a remainder of  $(166,236 - 143,026=)$  23,210 dwellings, including those in Somerford, that are within the Local Plan category 'Other Settlements and Rural Areas'.

84. At the 2011 Census, Somerford Parish had 147 (permanent) dwellings- in other words, 0.633% of the Other Settlements and Rural Areas total dwellings. This means that its 'fair share' of the 2,700 homes proposed for this category would be 0.633% of 2,700, which equates to 17 dwellings. This can be taken as the Cheshire East Local Plan-derived housing target for Somerford parish, which can of course, if the group wishes, be counted within the extensive developments within the parish boundary that comprise urban extensions to Congleton.

85. Other Local Plan policies with particular relevance to this Housing Needs Assessment include:

- Policy SC 4: Residential Mix, which states that new residential development should maintain, provide or contribute to a mix of housing tenures, types and sizes to help support the creation of mixed, balanced and inclusive communities. This could include Key Worker Housing and people wishing to build or commission their own home.
  - It also states: to meet the needs arising from the increasing longevity of the Borough's older residents, the Council will require developers to demonstrate how their proposal will be capable of meeting, and adapting to, the long term needs of this specific group of people. This would include the provision of a variety of dwelling types and other measures to support Health and Wellbeing and independent living through new developments that recognise the needs of older people, those with dementia and other vulnerable people, as well as including developing dementia-friendly communities.
  - Finally, it states that development proposals for accommodation designed specifically for the elderly and people who require specialist accommodation will be supported where there is a proven need; they are located within settlements; accessible by public transport; and within a reasonable walking distance of community facilities such as shops, medical services and public open space.
- Policy SC 5: Affordable Homes, which states that in residential developments affordable housing will be provided as follows:
  - In developments of 15 or more dwellings (or 0.4 hectares) in the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres at least 30% of all units are to be affordable;
  - In developments of three or more dwellings (or 0.2 hectares) in Local Service Centres and all other locations at least 30% of all units are to be affordable;
  - In future, where Cheshire East Council evidence, such as housing needs studies or housing market assessments, indicate a change in the Borough's housing need the above thresholds and percentage requirements may be varied.

86. The Local Plan also specifies how and where Congleton will grow. The Back Lane and Radnor Park growth area, allocated for 750 homes, is partly within the parish, as illustrated in Local Plan Figure 15.26.

#### *DCLG Household Projections*

87. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) periodically publishes household projections. The NPPG recommends that these household projections should form the starting point for the assessment of housing need, albeit that this advice is likely aimed

more at local authorities than neighbourhood planners, particularly neighbourhood planners able to derive a dwellings target from the Local Plan, as is the case at Somerford.

88. Nevertheless, an exercise extrapolating the household projections to Somerford may still be helpful in determining number of houses to plan for within the neighbourhood plan.
89. The most recent (2012-based) household projections were published in February 2015<sup>12</sup>, and extend to 2037. Although population projections are only available at a local authority level, a calculation of the share for Somerford is nevertheless possible for the household projections based on the neighbourhood's household numbers in 2011 (the Core Strategy base date).
90. At the 2011 Census, Cheshire East had 159,441 households and Somerford had 140 households<sup>13</sup>, or 0.088% of the Cheshire East total.
91. In the 2012-based household projections, the projection for 2030 is for 179,573 households in Cheshire East. Assuming it continues to form 0.088% of the District total (i.e. rightly, for the purposes of this calculation, disregarding the impact of the new housing within the parish forming an urban extension to Congleton), Somerford's new total number of households would be 158 and therefore 18 new households would have formed in Somerford over the Plan period.
92. Number of households does not, however, equate precisely to number of dwellings, with the latter usually slightly higher. In Somerford in the 2011 Census, there were 140 households but 147 dwellings. This gives a ratio of 0.952 households per dwelling. In the case of Somerford, then, a projection of 18 new households translates into a need for 19 dwellings (rounded to the nearest whole number).
93. However, the 2012-based household projections may need to be 'rebased' for accuracy now that the mid-2014 population estimates are available. The mid-2014 population estimates give the actual number of people in Cheshire East at that point, meaning the difference between the actual and the projected number of dwellings can to be taken into account in future projections.
94. The 2012-based projections were based on the 2012-based Sub-National Population Projections, which estimated that by 2014 there would be 374,700 people in Cheshire East. The mid-2014 estimates show that there were actually 374,179 people, which is lower than the projections by only 0.14%. As such, in the case of Somerford, the rebased household projections-derived dwelling figure remains 19 dwellings.
95. This projection is an entirely unconstrained, theoretical figure comprising a relative proportion of the overall projected increase, and thus, does not take into account political, economic, demographic or any other drivers that might have influenced, or may in future influence, the Core Strategy distribution across the Borough and hence the difference between this figure and the Core Strategy-derived figure.

#### *Dwelling growth 2001-2011*

96. As previously noted, dwelling growth for Somerford between 2001 and 2011 can be determined once the 102 caravans included in the 2011 Census figures are removed from the total. With Census 2001 showing 126 dwellings and Census 2011 140 dwellings excluding caravans, this equates to a ten-year growth rate of 14 dwellings, or 1-2 dwellings per year.

<sup>12</sup> See 2012-based DCLG Household Projections live tables at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-household-projections>

<sup>13</sup> The 140 households comprises the total number of households enumerated at Somerford (173) minus those households which were caravans (33), therefore 140 households.

97. If this rate of completion was projected forward for the period 2015-2030, a dwelling requirement of  $(15 \times 1.4=)$  21 dwellings would be the result.

#### *Dwelling growth since 2011*

98. Cheshire East have helpfully provided the number of dwellings completed in Somerford Parish since the 2011 Census, and even more helpfully, broken down that number into those sites that are the result of small-scale (i.e. 'local' growth) and those that are part of the expansion of Congleton into the parish.
99. Cheshire East advises that since 2011, 71 dwellings have been completed in the parish, but that 63 of these were at the Loachbrook Farm site forming an urban extension to Congleton. As such, eight dwellings have been completed that represent the 'natural' growth of Somerford. This equates to a rate of two dwellings per year. If this rate of completion was projected forward for the period 2015-2030, a dwelling projection of  $(15 \times 2=)$  30 dwellings would be the result.

#### *Local housing waiting list (Cheshire East, March 2016)*

100. We contacted Cheshire East for their assessment of the number of households currently on the waiting list that expressed a preference for Somerford. This provides a useful indication of whether the emerging Local Plan target of 30% affordable homes is sufficient to meet present affordable need, and whether the SHMAU-derived estimate of 2-3 affordable dwellings annually for Somerford is correct.
101. Cheshire East advises that currently there are five households on the waiting list for Somerford. These households require 2 x 1 bed, 2 x 2 bed and 1 x 3 bed units.
102. Although the waiting list is only a snapshot in time, it does seem apparent that, with only five households in need of affordable housing at present, the emerging Local Plan policy of 30% affordable housing provision should be adequate to meet affordable need in Somerford over the remainder of the plan period, even allowing for a reasonable level of increase in affordable need in future. As such, on the basis of this evidence, there does not appear to be a requirement for the Somerford Neighbourhood Plan to set its own affordable housing target, although it may reference Cheshire East's list and mention the need to work closely with the District Council to ensure the needs of those on the housing waiting list continue to be met.
103. Note that even after the Neighbourhood Plan is adopted, Cheshire East's affordable housing policy will continue to apply within Somerford, and as such it will still be the Council that controls the housing waiting list and negotiate affordable housing commitments with developers as part of the development management process.

### **Characteristics of Population**

104. Through analysis of Census 2001 and 2011 data, we have investigated how the population of Somerford neighbourhood plan area differs from that of the Cheshire East and England averages.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Please note that for demographic statistics, those households occupying caravans cannot be stripped out of the data. However, as the majority of the caravans in the parish in Census 2011 were unoccupied (76 out of 102, or 75%) the 26 households in caravans, most of them likely 1 or 2 person households, are unlikely to have a significant impact on the statistics (given the total population of 430 persons). However, to allow for any distorting effect, we have inserted appropriate caveats at relevant points in our statistical analysis to allow for the effects of the caravans- this is particularly the case for statistics on dwellings (e.g. room sizes) rather than residents, as the unoccupied caravans are included within the dwellings category, thus making the distorting effect potentially greater without adjustment.

105. Table 2 gives the population and number of households in Somerford, Cheshire East and England, as recorded in the 2011 census. In 2011, Somerford had a population of 430, and an average household size of 3.0 persons. This is larger than both the local and national averages.

**Table 2: Population and household size in Somerford, 2011<sup>15</sup>**

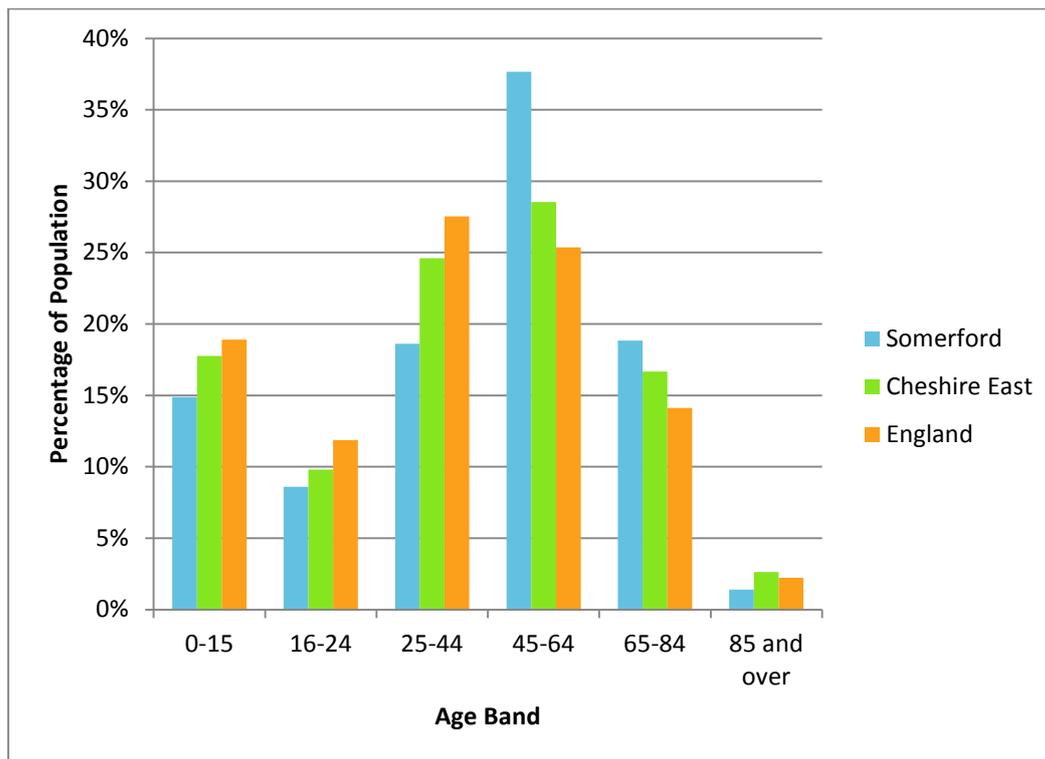
	Somerford	Cheshire East	England
Population	430	370,127	53,012,456
Households	140	159,441	22,063,368
Household size	3.0	2.3	2.4
Dwellings	147	166,236	22,976,066

*Source: ONS, Census 2011. AECOM calculations*

106. As illustrated in Figure 4 below, the largest age group in Somerford is ages 45-64, at 38%. This is much higher than the figures for Cheshire East (29%) and England (25.4%). The proportion of all age groups younger than 44 is lower than both the Cheshire East and England averages. The proportion of people aged 65-84 is higher in Somerford (19%) than in Cheshire East (17%) or England (14.1%). The proportion of people aged 85 and over is, by contrast, lower in Somerford (1%) than the local (3%) and national (2%) averages.
107. Table 3 shows the rate of change of the population by age band. It shows that the proportion of people in the 45-84 age groups have undergone a considerable increase in Somerford between 2001 and 2011, but with no growth in the 85 and over age group (in great contrast to the local and national trends). The decline in the 0-15 age group is also in stark contrast to the trend in Cheshire East and England, though there has been an above-average increase in the 16-24 age group.

<sup>15</sup> ONS, Census 2011, Population Density (QS102EW); Household Size, 2011 (QS406EW).

**Figure 4: Age structure in Somerford<sup>16</sup>**



Source: ONS, Census 2011. AECOM calculations

**Table 3: Rate of change in the age structure of Somerford population, 2001-2011<sup>17</sup>**

Age group	Somerford	Cheshire East	England
0-15	-11%	-4%	1.2%
16-24	22%	13%	17.2%
25-44	-13%	-8%	1.4%
45-64	29%	11%	15.2%
65-84	58%	15%	9.1%
85 and over	0%	26%	23.7%

Source: ONS, Census 2001 and 2011. AECOM calculations

108. Table 4 shows that Somerford is home to fewer people born outside the UK than either Cheshire East or England, and that correspondingly, the Born in the UK category is above the local authority and England averages.

<sup>16</sup> ONS, Census 2011, Age Structure (KS102EW)

<sup>17</sup> ONS, Census 2011, Age Structure (KS102EW); ONS, Census 2001, Age Structure (KS02)

**Table 4: Country of birth and length of residence**

Place of birth	Population breakdown		Somerford	Cheshire East	England
Born in the UK	Total		96.3%	94.5%	86.2%
Born outside the UK	Total		3.7%	5.5%	13.8%
	EU		2.3%	2.8%	3.7%
	Other		1.4%	2.7%	9.4%
	Length of residence	Less than 2 years	0.2%	0.6%	1.8%
		2-5 years	0.0%	1.0%	2.2%
5-10 years		1.2%	1.1%	2.9%	
10 years or more		2.3%	2.7%	7.0%	

Source: ONS, Census 2011. AECOM calculations

109. Of the 3.7% of Somerford residents who were born overseas, the majority have lived in the UK for ten years or more, indicating no recent influx of international migrants.

### Household Type

110. Table 5 shows clearly that in recent years there has been a net increase in Somerford only of households with four rooms and more<sup>18</sup>, in contrast to relatively strong growth in smaller households across Cheshire East and England. There has been an unusually high increase in four-roomed houses and also very strong growth, well above local and national averages, in houses with 5-7 rooms. By contrast, there has been lower than average growth in the largest households (8 rooms or more).<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> 'Number of rooms' as defined for Census purposes is not the same as 'number of bedrooms'. The Census definition of 'number of rooms' is as follows: 'Number of rooms does not include bathrooms, toilets, halls or landings, or rooms that can only be used for storage. All other rooms, for example, kitchens, living rooms, bedrooms, utility rooms, studies and conservatories are counted. If two rooms have been converted into one they are counted as one room. Rooms shared between a number of households, for example a shared kitchen, are not counted'.

<sup>19</sup> Note that the significant increase in four-room units may well be explained by the fact that the caravans/mobile homes are counted as having four rooms. However, this does not change the key inference from this table that house sizes are getting larger.

**Table 5: Rates of change in number of rooms per household in Somerford, 2001-2011<sup>20</sup>**

Number of Rooms	Somerford	Cheshire East	England
1 Room	0.0%	-20.4%	-5.2%
2 Rooms	0.0%	1.4%	24.2%
3 Rooms	0.0%	26.1%	20.4%
4 Rooms	466.7%	3.8%	3.5%
5 Rooms	40.0%	-2.8%	-1.8%
6 Rooms	45.8%	3.3%	2.1%
7 Rooms	41.2%	13.2%	17.9%
8 Rooms or more	3.1%	27.1%	29.8%

Source: ONS, Census 2001 and 2011. AECOM calculations

111. The PPG states that factors such as overcrowding, concealed and shared households, homelessness and the numbers of people in temporary accommodation demonstrate un-met need for housing. Increases in the number of such households may be a signal to consider increasing planned housing numbers.
112. Table 6 emphasises that, on the contrary, Somerford is becoming significantly more under-crowded, which is strongly indicative of an ageing population. In other words, larger units that once housed a family are gradually losing residents (from children moving away, and then parents becoming widowed or moving into care), resulting in decreasing number of persons per room. By contrast, Cheshire East and England as a whole are seeing increasing levels of overcrowding.

<sup>20</sup> ONS, Census 2011, Number of Rooms (QS407EW); ONS, Census 2001, Number of Rooms (UV57)

**Table 6: Trends in number of persons per room in Somerford, 2001-2011<sup>21</sup>**

Persons per room	Somerford	Cheshire East	England
Up to 0.5 persons per room	35.8%	11.4%	7.9%
Over 0.5 and up to 1.0 persons per room	52.6%	-1.8%	7.0%
Over 1.0 and up to 1.5 persons per room	0.0%	-6.7%	27.3%
Over 1.5 persons per room	0.0%	2.4%	2.5%

Source: ONS, Census 2001 and 2011. AECOM calculations

### Household Tenure

113. The PPG states that housing needs studies should investigate household tenure in the current stock and in recent supply, and assess whether continuation of these trends would meet future needs. Plan makers should therefore examine current and future trends in tenure.

**Table 7: Tenure (households) in Somerford, 2011<sup>22</sup>**

Tenure	Somerford	Cheshire East	England
Owned; total	89.8%	78.2%	63.3%
Shared ownership	0.0%	0.3%	0.8%
Social rented; total	2.4%	12.6%	17.7%
Private rented; total	5.5%	6.2%	16.8%

Source: ONS, Census 2011. AECOM calculations

114. Table 7 shows that the level of owner occupation in Somerford is higher than the Cheshire East average and significantly higher than the England average. The proportion of socially rented housing (rented from the Council or a Registered Social Landlord) is much lower than local and national averages. There is also a far lower proportion of privately rented units in Somerford compared to the Cheshire East and England averages.
115. Table 8 shows how tenure has changed in Somerford between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses. Home ownership in the area has increased significantly, to a much greater extent than the modest growth in Cheshire East and the contraction at national level. Note also how shared ownership (an indication of a lack of affordable housing) increased significantly across Cheshire East but not in Somerford. However, there has been a much larger increase in social

<sup>21</sup> ONS, Census 2011, Persons Per Room - Households (QS409EW); ONS, Census 2001, Persons per Room - Households (UV58)

<sup>22</sup> ONS, Census 2011, Tenure - Households (QS405EW)

rentals in Somerford (far higher than local and national averages), as well as in private rentals (though at a lower rate than the Cheshire East and England averages).

**Table 8: Rate of tenure change in Somerford, 2001-2011**

Tenure	Somerford	Cheshire East	England
Owned; total	32.5%	3.2%	-0.6%
Shared ownership	0.0%	77.4%	30.0%
Social rented; total	66.7%	-2.1%	-0.9%
Private rented; total	42.9%	119.8%	82.4%

Source: ONS, Census 2001 and 2011, AECOM calculations.

116. We can analyse the rental sector using data from the home.co.uk website. This provides, for each postcode area and city, data on average price of rented property (adjusted for local range of housing type to enable like-for-like comparison), and data on average time that a rental property has been on the market. It can be assumed that the higher average rental price and shorter the average time on the market, the higher local demand for rental property, and by implication, the higher the local demand for owner-occupied stock as many prospective home-owners will rent if they cannot yet afford to buy.

**Table 9: Rental sector statistics in Somerford versus Worcestershire average**

	Somerford and Congleton (CW12)	East/South East Cheshire(CW)	Somerford difference
Average time on market (days)	72 days	64 days	11%

Source: home.co.uk

117. The average price of rented property in Somerford and Congleton (£845 pcm) is 10.7% higher than the average across the CW postcode area (£755 pcm). Therefore, with properties in Somerford/Congleton renting over a slightly, but not significantly, longer time period than across south-east Cheshire as a whole, but with rents slightly higher than the local average, there does not appear to be a significant difference in rental demand between the immediate Somerford area and its wider local context.
118. Demand is, however, relatively stronger for home sales. House price data from Rightmove<sup>23</sup> shows that as of March 2016, the average house price in Somerford was £271,891. This is significantly higher than the overall Cheshire average of £220,026, and supports the conclusions of the SHMAU interrogated previously.

### Local Household Composition

119. Table 10 shows that the proportion of single person households in Somerford is significantly lower than the Cheshire East and England averages. By contrast, the proportion of households with a single family occupancy is much higher than both the Cheshire East and England averages.

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices.html>

**Table 10: Household composition (by household) in Somerford, 2011<sup>24</sup>**

		Somerford	Cheshire East	England
One person household	Total	14.5%	29.7%	30.2%
	Aged 65 and over	6.4%	13.4%	12.4%
	Other	8.1%	16.3%	17.9%
One family only <sup>25</sup>	Total	83.8%	65.9%	61.8%
	All aged 65 and over	15.6%	10.2%	8.1%
	With no children	32.4%	19.7%	17.6%
	With dependent children	24.9%	26.4%	26.5%
	All children non-dependent	11.0%	9.7%	9.6%
Other household types	Total	1.7%	4.4%	8.0%

Source: ONS, Census 2011. AECOM calculations

120. The proportion of single person households aged 65 and over in Somerford is lower than both the Cheshire East and England averages, which is perhaps surprising given the age profile of the village. However, at the same time, the proportion of single family households aged 65 and over is much higher than the local and national averages.
121. The plan area is home to a much higher than average proportion of families with no children. The proportion of households with dependent children is slightly, but not significantly lower than local and national averages. The proportion of households where all children are non-dependent is slightly higher than the local and national average. The proportion of other household types is very low.
122. Table 11 shows how household composition changed in the 10 years between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses. Overall, there was a large increase in single person households in the plan area, which was much greater than the local and national average increases. This increase affected both households over and under the age of 65.
123. There were also larger than average increases in one family households, and in particular families over the age of 65 and those (under 65) with no children. There were smaller, but still above average, increases in family households with dependent and non-dependent children.

<sup>24</sup> ONS, Census 2011, Household Composition - Households (QS113EW)

<sup>25</sup> This includes: married couples, cohabiting couples, same-sex civil partnership couples and lone parents.

**Table 11: Rates of change in household composition in Somerford, 2001-2011<sup>26</sup>**

Household type		Percentage change, 2001-2011		
		Somerford	Cheshire East	England
One person household	Total	56.3%	15.7%	8.4%
	Aged 65 and over	37.5%	1.4%	-7.3%
	Other	75.0%	30.9%	22.7%
One family only	Total	39.4%	4.9%	5.4%
	All aged 65 and over	92.9%	6.7%	-2.0%
	With no children	69.7%	5.1%	7.1%
	With dependent children	7.5%	2.9%	5.0%
	All children non-dependent	11.8%	8.2%	10.6%
Other household types	Total	-50.0%	16.0%	28.9%

Source: ONS, Census 2001 and 2011. AECOM calculations.

124. As noted previously, Somerford's household size is in line with the local and national averages. However, Table 12 shows that the plan area experienced a significant increase in its population and number of households over the period 2001-2011 but that at the same time there was a decrease in household size. The decrease in household size at the same time as a large increase in population is indicative of a growing number of under-occupied dwellings, as might be expected from a population that is older than average.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> ONS, Census 2011, Household Composition - Households (QS113EW); ONS, Census 2001, Household Composition - Households (UV65)

<sup>27</sup> Even though part of the increase in numbers of households and population could be explained by the caravans in the 2011 Census, the overall trend for increasing under-occupation appears to remain the case.

**Table 12: Change in household numbers and size in Somerford, 2001-2011**

Key indicator	Percentage change, 2001-2011		
	Somerford	Cheshire East	England
Population	24.6%	5.2%	7.90%
Households	37.3%	8.4%	7.90%
Household size	-9.2%	-2.9%	0%

Source: ONS, Census 2001 and 2011. AECOM calculations.

125. Table 13 shows that the proportion of dwellings in Somerford that are detached in line with the local average, and that both are higher than the England average<sup>28</sup>. In turn, the proportion of semi-detached dwellings is lower than local and national averages, while the proportion of terraced dwellings is far lower than average. The proportion of flats is significantly less than both the local and national averages.

**Table 13: Accommodation type (households), 2011**

Dwelling type		Somerford	Cheshire East	England
Whole house or bungalow	Detached	34.5%	35.1%	22.4%
	Semi-detached	19.7%	32.2%	31.2%
	Terraced	4.0%	21.4%	24.5%
Flat, maisonette or apartment	Purpose-built block of flats or tenement	0.0%	8.8%	16.4%
	Parts of a converted or shared house	0.4%	1.3%	3.8%
	In commercial building	0.4%	0.8%	1.0%

Source: ONS, Census 2001 and 2011. AECOM calculations

126. A 'concealed family' means any group of people who want to form a new household but are unable to do so, typically for economic reasons such as high house prices or a lack of suitable property. Table 14 shows that there is only one concealed family in the plan area; one would normally expect a correlation between lower numbers of people per household and lower numbers of concealed families, and this is indeed the case. The proportion of concealed families is lower than the Cheshire East and England rates.

<sup>28</sup> This table excludes caravans and other mobile and/or temporary structures.

**Table 14: Concealed families in Somerford, 2011<sup>29</sup>**

Concealed families	Somerford	Cheshire East	England
All families: total	149	110,567	14,885,145
Concealed families: total	1	1,176	275,954
Concealed families as % of total	0.7%	1.1%	1.90%

Source: ONS, Census 2001 and 2011. AECOM calculations

127. Official statistics do not clarify the overlap, if any, between the Somerford/Cheshire East housing waiting list and the stated number of concealed families locally.

### **Economic Activity**

128. Table 15 shows that Somerford's proportion of economically active and inactive residents is largely in line with both the Cheshire East and England averages. Somerford has, however, a far higher proportion of economically active residents that are self-employed compared to Cheshire East and England. Full-time employee levels in Somerford are significantly lower than the Cheshire East level, but higher than the England level, while its unemployment level is lower than both the national and local averages.
129. Levels of retired people are higher than the local and national averages but student households are below average. Relatively fewer households are looking after home or family, or are long-term sick/disabled (despite the relatively older population) than the local and national averages.

<sup>29</sup> NOMIS, LC1110EW - Concealed family status by family type by dependent children by age of Family Reference Person (FRP)

**Table 15: Economic activity in Somerford, 2011<sup>30</sup>**

Economic category		Somerford	Cheshire East	England
Economically active	Total	69.5%	70.6%	69.9%
	Employee: Full-time	26.9%	39.4%	13.7%
	Employee: Part-time	15.4%	14.4%	38.6%
	Self-employed	22.2%	10.7%	9.8%
	Unemployed	3.0%	3.2%	4.4%
	Full-time student	2.1%	2.8%	3.4%
Economically inactive	Total	30.5%	29.4%	30.1%
	Retired	21.3%	17.1%	13.7%
	Student	3.3%	4.2%	5.8%
	Looking after home or family	3.0%	3.5%	4.4%
	Long-term sick or disabled	2.1%	3.1%	4.1%
	Other	0.9%	1.5%	2.2%

Source: ONS, Census 2001 and 2011. AECOM calculations

**Table 16: Rates of long-term health problems or disability in Somerford, 2011<sup>31</sup>**

Extent of activity limitation	Somerford	Cheshire East	England
Day-to-day activities limited a lot	4.2%	7.9%	8.3%
Day-to-day activities limited a little	9.3%	9.6%	9.3%
Day-to-day activities not limited	86.5%	82.5%	82.4%

Source: ONS, Census 2001 and 2011. AECOM calculations

130. The PPG advises taking account in housing need assessment of the number of people with long-term limiting illness. Table 15 shows that the proportion of working-age residents of Somerford who are long-term sick or disabled is lower than the Cheshire East and England averages, and Table 16 shows the proportion whose day-to-day activities are not limited is much higher than the Cheshire East and England averages.
131. Table 17 shows that Somerford residents travel further to work than both the Cheshire East and England averages with 39.55% of residents travelling more than 10km to work, compared with

<sup>30</sup> ONS, Census 2011, Economic Activity (QS601EW)

<sup>31</sup> ONS, Census 2011, Long-Term Health Problem or Disability (QS303EW)

an average for this distance band of 33.82% of Cheshire East residents and 29% of England residents. This indicates Somerford is popular with long-distance commuters and that places to which they commute are likely to include Warrington, Manchester, Stockport and Stoke.

132. Note also the very high proportion of people working mainly at home, more than double the Cheshire East average and almost treble the England average.

**Table 17: Distance travelled to work, 2011<sup>32</sup>**

Location of work	Somerford	Cheshire East	England
Less than 10km	25.78%	46.39%	52.30%
10km to less than 30km	30.22%	24.66%	21%
30km and over	9.33%	9.16%	8%
Work mainly at or from home	28.89%	12.88%	10.30%
Other	5.78%	6.91%	8.50%

Source: ONS, Census 2011, AECOM calculations

#### Information from local estate agent

133. The Parish Council provided AECOM with the contact details of a local estate agent, Stuart Rushton. Stuart Rushton has a strong knowledge of the local housing market that can be used to test and supplement our conclusions based on Census and local authority level data. The following information was sourced from James Higgin of Stuart Rushton in March 2016.
134. Stuart Rushton confirmed that the relatively stable, lower transaction housing market formerly the defining characteristic of the parish was changing as new estates linked to Congleton are developed within its boundaries. The age profile of the occupants of these newer houses is significantly younger than in the pre-existing village of Somerford.
135. By contrast, the village itself is characterised by larger homes set in larger gardens. As such, the village tends to be most popular among an older, wealthier demographic. Prices for larger, detached properties can reach in significant excess of £500,000.<sup>33</sup>
136. The most active sector of the market looking to buy in Somerford appears to be families, with less interest from older incomers. By contrast, often, the family-sized housing is being sold by older people looking to downsize, who then move out of the parish so that they can be within walking distance of services and facilities rather than having to access them by car. In general, when older people move out of Somerford, it is less to Congleton and more to other nearby towns with perhaps more of a glamorous image, including Knutsford, Holmes Chapel and Alderley Edge.
137. Interviewing a local estate agent with strong local knowledge of the existing market helps verify or validate evidence gathered from other sources, including the Census. In the case of Somerford, the information provided by Stuart Rushton has been very useful in broadly confirming the picture already being built up by Census and other data, and it will inform our conclusions alongside these other data sources.

<sup>32</sup> NOMIS, QS702EW - Distance travelled to work

<sup>33</sup> The Parish Council point to recent transactions in the village around the £1m mark.

## 4 Conclusions

### Overview

138. This housing needs assessment has interrogated a wide range of data sources, which, taken together, can inform key trends and messages relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan's housing policies.
139. In this first section of our conclusions we make recommendations on the overall quantum of housing growth required.
140. In the second section, we assess, based on the data uncovered, indications of the components and characteristics of future housing based on the data analysed.
141. In line with recommended best practice, our preferred methodology is to present the projections our analysis has produced as a starting point, and then highlight the factors<sup>34</sup> that the Parish Council might wish to take into consideration as they determine the final housing policy text, bearing in mind the requirement to be in general conformity with the strategic housing policies of Cheshire East.

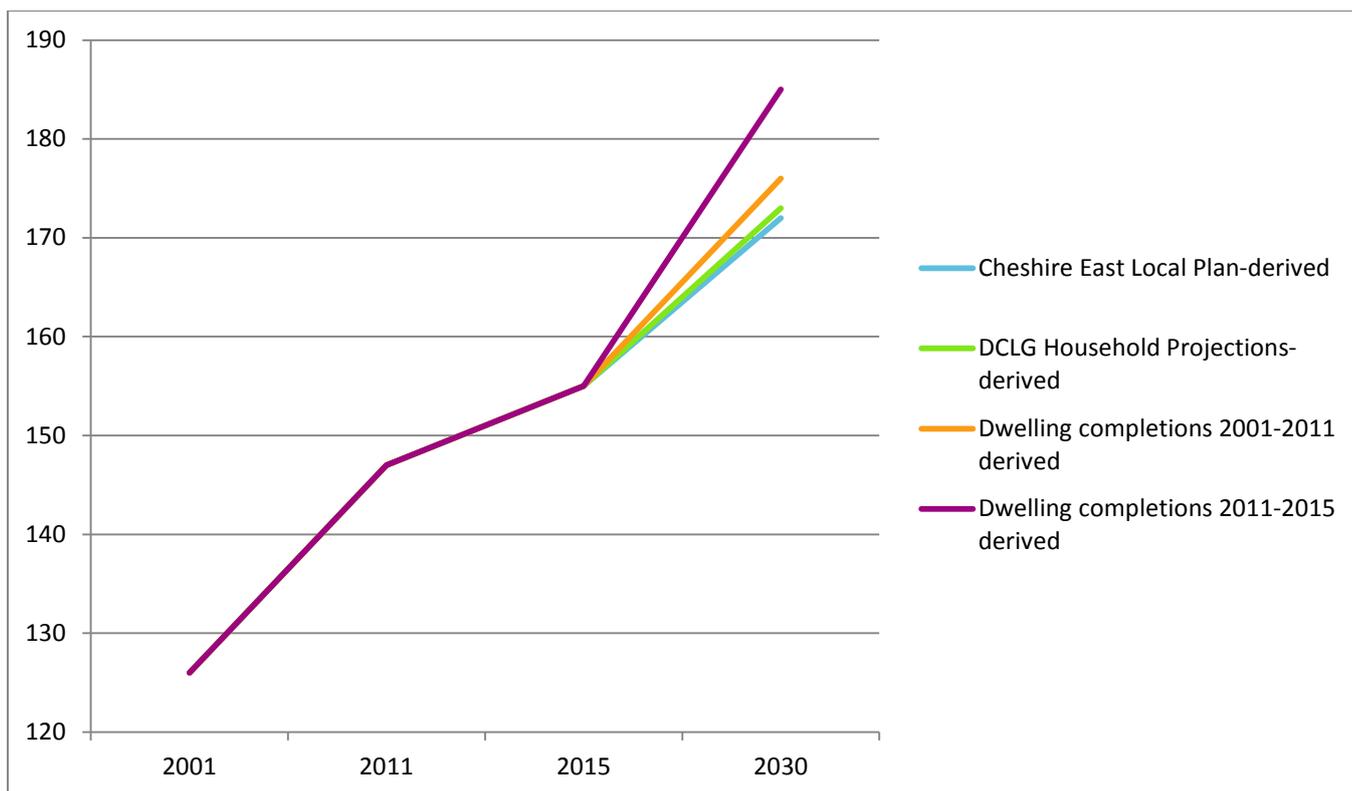
### Quantity of Housing Needed

142. To recap, we have identified four separate projections of dwelling numbers for Somerford between 2015 and 2030 based on:
- A figure derived from Cheshire East's emerging Local Plan, disaggregated to Somerford, and with caravans excluded (which gives a total of 17 dwellings, or just over 1 per year);
  - The Government's 2012-based household projections, extrapolated to Somerford, translated from households to dwellings, with caravans excluded and rebased to actual 2014 population (which gives 18 dwellings, or just over 1 per year);
  - A projection forward of dwelling completion rates 2001-2011, with caravans excluded (which gives 21 dwellings, or 1-2 dwellings per year); and
  - A projection forward of dwelling completion rates 2011-2015<sup>35</sup> (which gives 30 dwellings, or 2 per year).
143. These dwelling number projections are illustrated in Figure 5 below.

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<sup>34</sup> These factors are also referred to as 'indicators' in the PPG.

<sup>35</sup> With those dwellings completed within Somerford parish, but meeting Congleton's rather than Somerford's need, excluded from the total.



**Figure 5: Comparison of dwelling number projections**

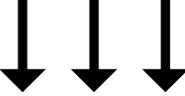
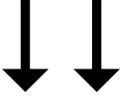
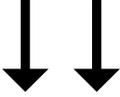
Source: *Emerging Cheshire East Local Plan (2016)*, *DCLG 2012-Based Household Projections (rebased to 2014)*, *Census 2011*, information from *Cheshire East District Council*, *AECOM calculations*

144. We have summarised the findings of the data gathered in Chapter 3 above in Table 18 below. The source for each factor with particular relevance to the neighbourhood is shown, together with AECOM assessment of whether that factor is more likely to increase (↑), decrease (↓) or have no impact on (↔) the neighbourhood plan area's future housing need. Following PPG guidance, the factors relate both to housing price and housing quantity.
145. We have applied our professional judgement on the scales of increase and decrease associated with each factor on a scale from one to three, where one arrow indicates 'some impact', two arrows 'stronger impact' and three arrows indicates an even stronger impact. Factors are in alphabetical but no other order.
146. Note that factors have the potential to contradict one another, due to data being gathered at different times and across differing geographies. The Parish Council is invited to use its judgement in resolving any conflicts, but we would advise that the more local and more recent data should generally have priority over data gathered at a larger spatial scale or older data.
147. However, our general approach reflects PPG advice to adjust the housing quantity suggested by household projections to reflect appropriate market signals, as well as other market indicators of the balance between the demand for and supply of dwellings, such as house prices and past build-out rate.
148. The PPG also advises that market signals are affected by a number of factors, and plan makers should not attempt to estimate the precise impact of an increase in housing supply. Rather they should increase planned supply by an amount that, on reasonable assumptions and consistent with principles of sustainable development, could be expected to improve affordability, and monitor the response of the market over the plan period.

149. As such, Table 18 should be used as a basis for qualitative judgement rather than quantitative calculation. It is designed to form the starting point for steering group decisions on housing policy rather than to provide definitive answers. Again, this reflects the PPG approach- it states that when considering future need for different types of housing, planners have the option to consider whether they plan to attract an age profile that differs from the present situation. They should look at the household types, tenure and size in the current stock and in recent supply, and assess whether continuation of these trends would meet future needs.
150. The PPG also states that appropriate comparisons of indicators (i.e. factors) should be made and that trends uncovered may necessitate adjustment to planned housing numbers compared to ones based solely on household projections. Where upward adjustment is considered necessary, it should be at a reasonable level and not negatively affect strategic conformity with the emerging Local Plan.
151. To help inform the steering group discussions that will be necessary to determine a neighbourhood plan housing target, we have provided our own professional judgement of need level, based on the projections presented in Figure 5 and the market factors presented in Table 18, and taking into account our own knowledge and experience of housing need at neighbourhood plan level.

**Table 18: Summary of factors specific to Somerford with a potential impact on neighbourhood plan housing quantity**

Factor	Source(s) (detailed in Chapter 3)	Possible impact on future housing need	Rationale for judgement
<b>Age structure of population</b>	SHMAU, Census, Stuart Rushton	↑ ↑	SHMAU notes a current lack of housing choice for older people, with a range of accommodation options required, as well as a need to encourage downsizing. Census 2011 shows older population, and trends toward this increasing. The SHMAU also notes future projections of large-scale increase in population aged over 60. However, Stuart Rushton indicates the oldest people are moving out of the parish in order to be closer to services and facilities. As such, we have given this factor two rather than three up arrows.
<b>Economic performance and potential</b>	SHMAU, Census, Congleton HNA	↑	Somerford itself seemingly attractive to commuters (Census) despite SHMAU conclusion that rural areas generally are not. Low unemployment currently, and significant new employment space (24 hectares) at nearby Congleton also has the potential to drive demand in future. However, only one up arrow given as significant housing growth at Congleton to meet the demand from employees as well.
<b>House prices relative to surroundings</b>	SHMAU, Rightmove, Stuart Rushton, Somerford Parish Council	↑ ↑ ↑	SHMAU notes high average house prices and constantly high demand for housing, driven by incomers. Rural areas of Cheshire East, including Somerford, continue to remain strong in terms of values and demand for homes in these areas is high. These conclusions are supported by house price data from Rightmove and Stuart Rushton- and information from the Parish Council suggests even these could be underestimates. As such, we have given this an assessment of three up arrows.
<b>International and UK in-migration rate</b>	SHMAU, Census	↑	Relatively high in-migration rate from rest of UK, but rate of international in-migration very low. Our assessment is of one up arrow on the assumption that the former slightly outweighs the latter in terms of impact on dwellings needed.

Factor	Source(s) (detailed in Chapter 3)	Possible impact on future housing need	Rationale for judgement
<b>Level of new supply in local housing market</b>	Congleton HNA, dwellings completion data from Cheshire East, Census, Cheshire East SHLAA, Stuart Rushton		Recent levels of supply (2001-2015) very high, mainly as urban extensions to Congleton within the parish boundary, and Congleton HNA/Cheshire East SHLAA shows many more are planned. These have the effect of meeting a significant level of existing demand (for Congleton rather than Somerford), but nevertheless also significantly constraining demand within Somerford itself). The scale of the Congleton-linked growth compared with the small size of Somerford suggests that three down arrows is an appropriate assessment.
<b>Local housing waiting list/need for affordable housing</b>	SHMAU, Cheshire East housing waiting list, Cheshire East Local Plan, Census		Few households on local affordable housing waiting list, suggesting demand for affordable housing is much lower in Somerford than the Cheshire East average, although the Census does show it is growing. However, evidence from SHMAU is that pressure for affordable homes remains low, and the Census shows a lower than average rate of shared occupation. Even a future increase in need should be met by existing target of 30% affordable housing. Two rather than three down arrows to take account of the recent growth in social housing locally.
<b>Overcrowding, including concealed families</b>	Census		Household size is around average for Cheshire East and England, but under-crowding rather than over-crowding is increasing as a result of the ageing population. There is only one concealed family in the parish. As such, we have given this factor two down arrows (under-crowding increasing, but household size not lower than average).
<b>Rental market relative to wider area</b>	Census, home.co.uk		Low but increasing levels of private rentals. Rents are around average compared with the wider area. As such, we do not consider rental prices to have either an upward or downward effect on the number of dwellings needed.

152. Table 18 contains in total seven up arrows and seven down arrows, indicating that the local market factors acting to increase or decrease demand for new housing are effectively in balance.

153. Additionally, it is notable from Figure 5 that Somerford's future dwelling projections comprise a very narrow range, with a maximum of 30 and minimum of 17. This is certainly not the case for all places, but in the case of Somerford it is helpful to see that the Local Plan-derived target (which is the only one of the figures carrying statutory weight, in the sense that the Neighbourhood Plan must demonstrate conformity with it at its examination) is relatively close to the other projections derived.
154. Based on this fact, and taking into account Table 18, which shows that the factors acting to increase demand and factors acting to constrain demand appear to cancel one another out at Somerford, we recommend that the most appropriate estimate of dwelling need at Somerford over the period 2015 to 2030 is 17 dwellings, as per the Local Plan-derived calculation; however, note that this should be thought of as a minimum figure, in line both with best practice in planning and the fact that the other three projections are all higher than seventeen dwellings.
155. Note that any dwellings completed or with outstanding permission in the plan area since the start of 2016 would count towards this dwelling total, meaning the outstanding number of dwellings decreases accordingly.

### **Characteristics of housing needed**

156. Table 19 summarises the data we have gathered with a potential impact on the characteristics of the housing needed in the neighbourhood. Factors are in alphabetical but no other order.

**Table 19: Summary of local factors specific to Somerford with a potential impact on neighbourhood plan housing characteristics**

Factor	Source(s) (see Chapter 3)	Possible impact on housing needed	Conclusion
<b>Dwelling type</b>	SHMAU, Census, Stuart Rushton	Across the wider market, houses rather than flats remain the most popular dwelling types for most parts of the market. Detached and semi-detached properties are in most demand. Bungalows are in particular demand among the older population. Families expressed a preference for detached and semi-detached homes. In Somerford itself, detached and semi-detached homes predominate, with very low levels of terraces or flats.	<p>The vast majority of new homes to be provided, including the smaller as well as the larger units, should be detached or semi-detached. A proportion of the new homes should be bungalows.</p> <p>There is little demand for terraced housing or flats within Somerford and in any case the provision of more detached and semi-detached houses is much more in line with the local context.</p>
<b>Family-sized housing</b>	SHMAU, Congleton HNA, Census, Stuart Rushton	The Census and SHMAU both show a much higher than average proportion of the population self-employed and/or working from home. As such, these people value homes with one or more extra rooms/bedrooms to use as an office, and this ensures demand for larger homes remains strong. The SHMAU notes that three or more bed homes are most popular with families, and that many of these want four or more. Additionally, the new employment growth at Congleton will act to increase the proportion of families moving into the wider area, which the Census shows is already increasing, along with house size.	<p>Alongside smaller homes for retired, older and single person households, a proportion of larger homes are still likely required to meet the needs of families moving into the area and those who work from home.</p> <p>These homes should be at least three bedrooms in size, with the majority providing four bedrooms or more. Given their size and the local development context, it is likely that these homes would be detached or semi-detached rather than terraced.</p>

Factor	Source(s) (see Chapter 3)	Possible impact on housing needed	Conclusion
<b>Housing for older people</b>	SHMAU, Congleton HNA, Cheshire East Local Plan, Census, Stuart Rushton	The SHMAU notes that the choice of housing for older people, and the opportunities for downsizing, need to increase. As a result, there will be future demand for bungalows and smaller detached homes across Congleton Rural as older people stay in their own homes for longer. This will also increase the housing mix, which is a key aim of the Local Plan. Stuart Rushton notes that although the demographic profile is older than average, the oldest element of the population are moving away to more accessible locations nearby. Smaller homes will also meet the need of the increasing numbers of single person households.	<p>The geographical location of Somerford suggests that specialist housing for the oldest part of the population should be provided elsewhere, in more accessible locations, within walking distance of services and facilities.</p> <p>However, there still appears to be a case for providing a proportion of smaller homes for the recently retired and/or over-55s to downsize into more locally, specifically for independent living. These could include smaller detached homes and bungalows.</p>
<b>Tenure of housing</b>	Cheshire East, Census, SHMAU, Stuart Rushton	Cheshire East data supports the SHMAU in showing a very low level of affordable housing need, though social housing has been increasing in the parish recently. Owner-occupation has been growing recently and will continue to be the majority tenure in future.	<p>Despite the low level of affordable housing need, we recommend the Parish Council work closely with Cheshire East to ensure local affordable need is met, particularly in light of recent increase in social housing within the parish.</p> <p>Otherwise, it can be assumed that most new homes provided will be for owner-occupation.</p> <p>The minority of homes in the affordable tenure would be, on the basis of the current waiting list, smaller units (mainly 1-2 bedrooms)</p>

## Recommendations for next steps

157. This neighbourhood plan housing needs advice has aimed to provide Somerford Parish Council with evidence on housing trends from a range of sources. We recommend that the Parish Council should, as a next step, discuss the contents and conclusions with Cheshire East District Council with a view to agreeing and formulating draft housing policies, taking the following into account during the process:

- the contents of this report, including but not limited to Tables 18 and 19;

- Neighbourhood Planning Basic Condition E, which is the need for the neighbourhood plan to be in general conformity with the emerging development plan (here, the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan);
  - the types (detached, semi-detached, terraced etc.) and sizes (1 bedroom, 2 bedroom etc.) of recent and existing dwelling completions and commitments (i.e. post 2015) and cross-referencing the findings of this assessment with Table 19, as what has already been provided will have an impact on the types and sizes of the remaining homes to be provided over the rest of the plan period;
  - the views of the District Council;
  - the views of local residents;
  - the views of other relevant local stakeholders, including housing developers; and
  - the numerous supply-side considerations, including local environmental constraints, the location and characteristics of suitable land, and any capacity work carried out by the Council, including but not limited to the SHLAA.
158. As noted previously, recent changes to the planning system, as well as forthcoming changes to the National Planning Policy Framework as well as the implementation of the Housing and Planning Bill, will continue to affect housing policies at a local authority and, by extension, a neighbourhood level.
159. This advice note has been provided in good faith by AECOM consultants on the basis of housing data current at the time of writing (alongside other relevant and available information).
160. Bearing this in mind, we recommend that the steering group should monitor carefully strategies and documents with an impact on housing policy produced by the District Council or any other relevant body and review the neighbourhood plan accordingly to ensure that general conformity is maintained.
161. Most obviously, this includes monitoring the status of the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan.
162. At the same time, monitoring ongoing demographic or other trends in the factors summarised in Tables 18 and 19 would be particularly valuable.

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