Bath & North East Somerset Council

Improving People's Lives

Strategic Evidence Base for Bath & North East Somerset: Executive Summary

March 2024

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Foreword

The Strategic Evidence Base is a summary of information and evidence about Bath and North East Somerset to help inform local decision making:

[Strategic Evidence Base Main Document]

This document provides a summary of the key messages from the Strategic Evidence Base.

Our population continues to grow

- In 2022 the population of B&NES was estimated to be **195,618**, a 10% increase since 2012.
    - This growth is driven by **inward migration**, mainly students from across England and Wales, rather than natural change.
- The shape of the population is largely driven by the **high number of university students** attending the two campus-based universities in the area.
- Since 2012, the gap between births and deaths in B&NES has been narrowing, even showing some signs of a **natural decrease** in several years.
- **International net migration** is at its highest level since at least 2012.

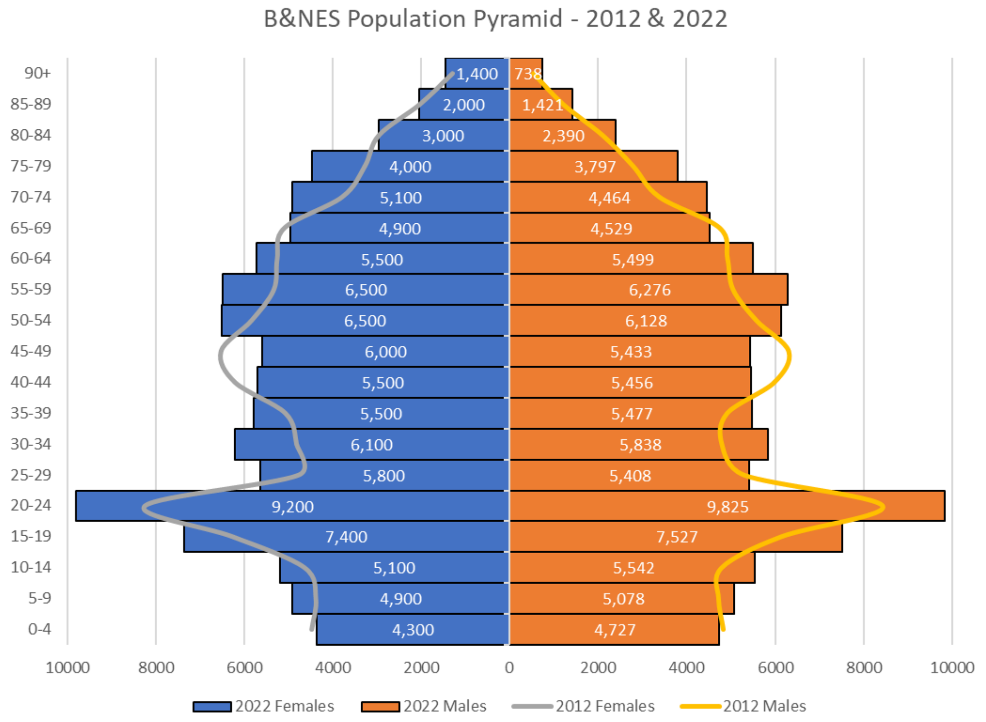

Figure 1 B&NES Population Pyramid – 2012 & 2022. Source: [ONS Mid-year population estimates (2022)]

Our overall outcomes are good

- **Life expectancy is higher** than the national average: 84.8 years (Female), 80.3 years (Male).
- 84% of residents are **satisfied with B&NES as a place to live** (2022), compared to 75% nationally.
- **Unemployment levels in B&NES are low** (2.6% compared to 3.6% England, Q4 2022).
- 52% of the population are educated to **degree level** or higher compared to 43% for England.
- Pupils generally **attain higher grades** compared to regional and national figures in all stages of education.
- 2021 data shows that most **mortality rates in B&NES** (including premature and preventable) are statistically significantly lower than the rate for England.

Despite overall low levels, we still see pockets of relative deprivation

- B&NES is ranked **269 out of 317** Local Authorities in England for overall deprivation, making it one of the **least deprived** in the country.
    - However, **two** small areas are within the **most deprived** 10% nationally:

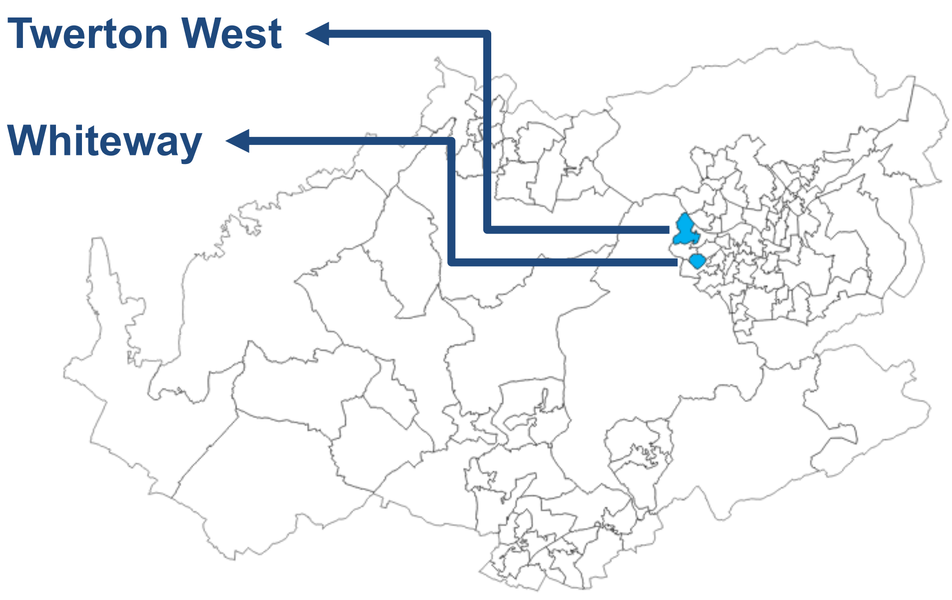

Figure 2 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019. Source: [IMD Dashboard]

Inequalities affect a wide range of local life outcomes

- Geographical inequalities in life expectancy in B&NES mean the difference between wards with the highest and lowest life expectancy is **10 years for females** and **7 years for males**.
- Gaps in education attainment are present for the **Free School Meal (FSM)** cohort and **Special Educational Needs & Disability** (SEND) cohort at all stages and between **boys** and **girls**.
    - Key Stage 2 (KS2) attainment in the FSM cohort is the **worst** in the country and Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFS) attainment in the FSM cohort is the **3rd worst** in the country (2022/23).
- **Smoking** is the greatest risk factor for mortality in B&NES (2019), and is the leading preventable cause of illness and premature death in England.
- **1 in 5** (21%) workers in routine & manual occupations smoke in B&NES (2020), compared to 1 in 10 (10%) of adults in B&NES who smoke (2021).
- **Mortality rates** are substantially higher than the England rate in some of the most deprived areas in B&NES (including premature deaths; cancer mortality, cardiovascular disease mortality & avoidable deaths).

Demand for services remains high

- In Jan 2023, there were **1,967** children and young people with an **Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)**. This has shown a **13% increase** per year on average from 2015 to 2023, higher than national and regional growth trends.
- There were **5,992** households on the waiting list for **social housing** (March 2023), a 9% increase compared to the previous year.

Cost of living challenges continue

- Estimates suggest **4,000** people in B&NES (including **1,500** children) will fall into absolute poverty in 2022/23.
- 12% of households in B&NES are estimated to be in **Fuel Poverty**.

We expect further demographic growth

- We have an **ageing population**: the working age population (15-64) is projected to increase by **7%** by 2028, whereas the 65+ population is projected to increase by **15%** over the same period.
- We are starting to plan for **14,800** more homes by 2042.

Economic growth and productivity have been relatively low

- Growth in the **number of businesses** has not kept pace with England and West of England (21% vs 34%/31% respectively from 2010 to 2022).
- **Economic growth** in B&NES has not kept pace with England and West of England (11% vs 50%/55% respectively from 1998 to 2021).

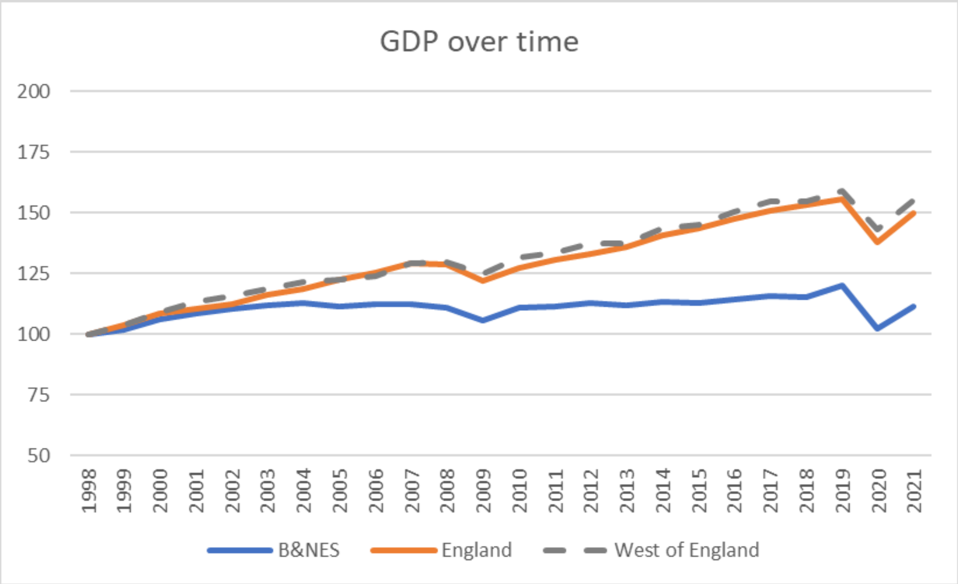

Figure 3 GDP over time (CVM Index, 1998=100). Sources: ONS Regional GDP (April 2023): LAs / ITL regions / Enterprise regions

- **Productivity** is lower than England and the West of England with the gap widening over the past decade and growth stagnating in B&NES in recent years.
- Following an upwards trend since 2010, the **employment rate** in B&NES has recently fallen and is now below the national rate for the first time in over a decade (Q4 2022).
- Although resident **wages** are now higher than national, workplace wages are still lower suggesting those working for employers based outside B&NES receive higher wages on average.

Housing pressures are worsening

- The **cost of housing is high** (x10 house price to wage ratio compared to x8 nationally, 2022).
- There has been a decrease in the number of households who own their house with a **mortgage** and an increase in the number who **rent** from the private sector (Census 2021).

- We have a high number of **vacant dwellings** (2,288 in 2023), of which more than **1 in 3** (39%) are **long-term** vacant dwellings.
- We have seen an increase in the number of households in **temporary accommodation**, although this remains below the national rate (2023).

Our emissions are reducing

- Greenhouse gas emissions **decreased** by 39% (from 2005 to 2021).
- Emissions from a broad range of economic sectors have reduced: Domestic (**39% decrease**), Transport (**22% decrease**), Commercial, Industry, and the Public Sector but they **are not decreasing fast enough to reach net zero by 2030.**

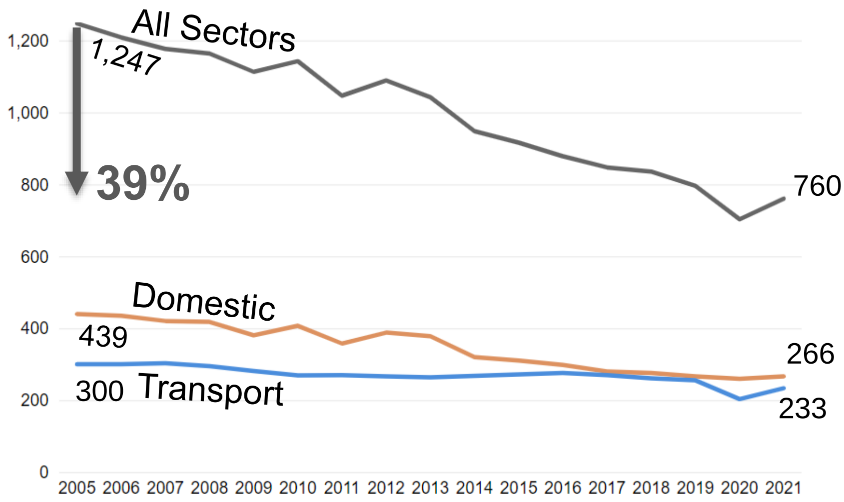

Figure 4 B&NES District Greenhouse Gas Emissions (kt CO2e). Source: [UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics]

We have signs of worsening wellbeing and higher prevalence of mental ill-health

- We have higher anxiety levels than England.

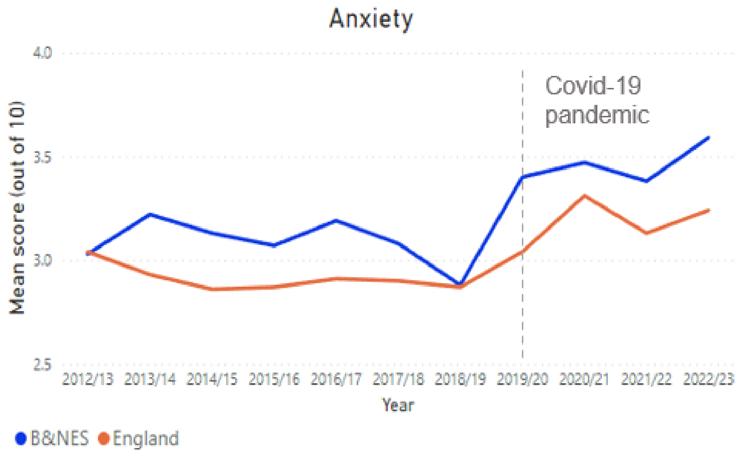

Figure 5 Anxiety levels. Source: [ONS Personal Wellbeing in the UK]()

- Rates of **hospitalisation** (2020/21) are increasing and comparatively high for:
    - Under 18 mental health
    - Under 18 alcohol conditions
    - Eating disorders
    - Self-harm

particularly for **young women and girls**.