

Homefinder Somerset Quarterly Monitoring Report October 2020

Introduction

This report provides the latest key information from Homefinder Somerset.

Households registered with Homefinder Somerset

The number of households registered with Homefinder Somerset increased by 74 (1%) to 10,559 between 1 July and 6 October 2020.

The proportion of households in Gold Band varies from 6% in Mendip and Sedgemoor to 10% in South Somerset. It can be seen that the proportion of households in the Silver Band is very similar in 3 of the 4 local authorities (35-37%), whilst Mendip has a higher proportion (47%). The proportion of households in Bronze Band ranges from 46% in Mendip to 59% in Sedgemoor.

Table 1: Number of households registered with Homefinder Somerset by local authority and Band as at 6 October 2020

	Emergency		Gold		Silver		Bronze		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Mendip	1	0%	108	6%	784	47%	770	46%	1,663	16%
Sedgemoor	4	0%	158	6%	919	35%	1,535	59%	2,616	25%
Somerset West & Taunton	3	0%	287	7%	1,557	36%	2,436	57%	4,283	41%
South Somerset	2	0%	199	10%	729	37%	1,067	53%	1,997	19%
Total	10	0%	752	7%	3,989	38%	5,808	55%	10,559	100%

Note: The percentages refer to the proportion of households who are in that Band (e.g. 7% of all households are in Gold Band). The percentage given for the total refers to the proportion of all households registered with a particular local authority (e.g. 25% of households are registered with Sedgemoor DC).

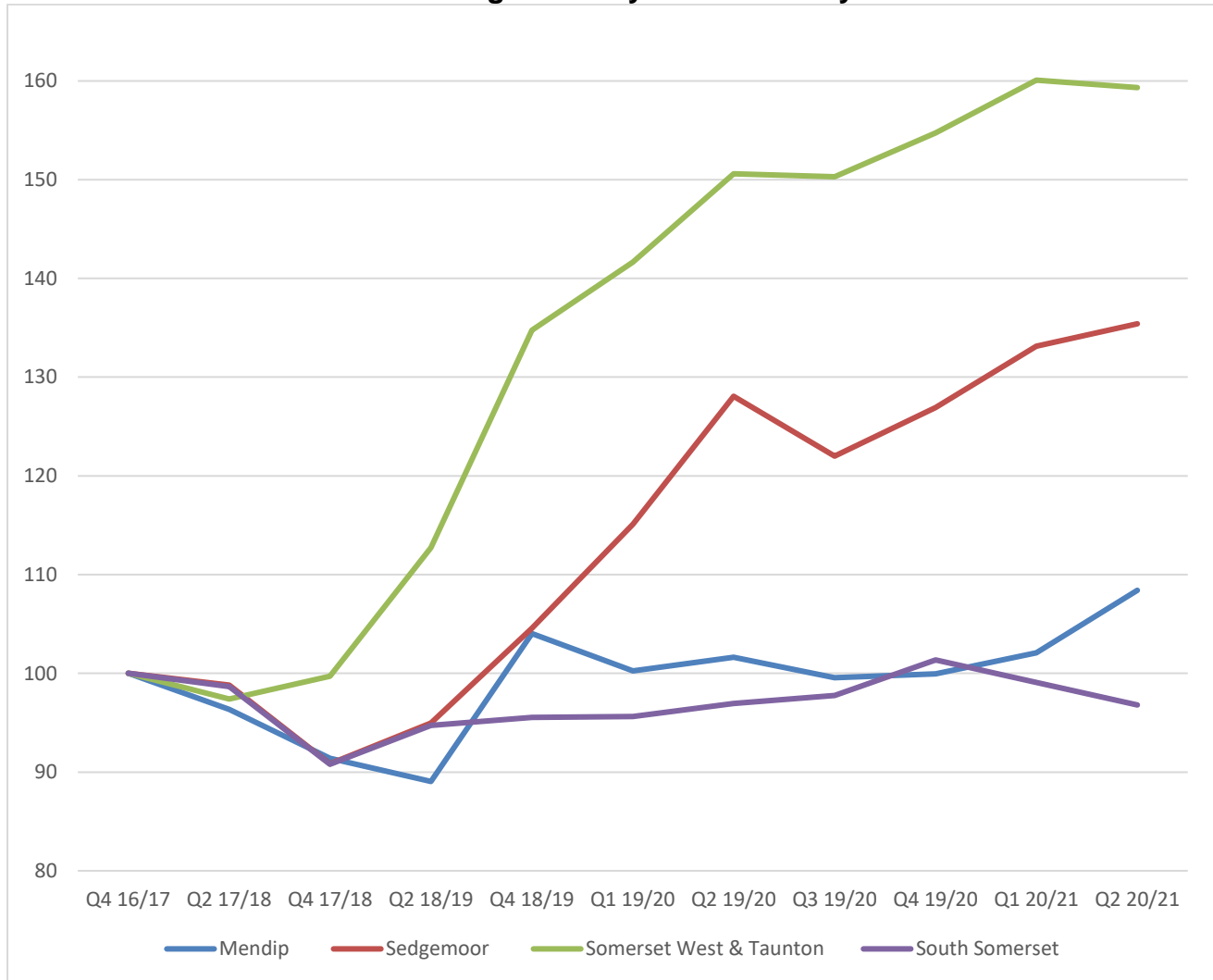
It can be seen from Table 2 and Chart 1 that the number of households registered with Homefinder Somerset has increased by 29% since Q4 2016/17. However, as previously reported this increase is largely due to the growth in the register in Somerset West & Taunton, which has increased by 59% during this time. This increase was due to the local authority being unable to undertake the renewals process due to transformation and merger of the 2 local authorities, but is expected to reduce significantly by the next quarterly report as a result of the work being undertaken to review the register.

Table 2: Number of households registered with Homefinder Somerset by local authority

	Q4 16/17	Q2 17/18	Q4 17/18	Q2 18/19	Q4 18/19	Q1 19/20	Q2 19/20	Q3 19/20	Q4 19/20	Q1 20/21	Q2 20/21
Mendip	1,534	1,478	1,402	1,366	1,596	1,538	1,559	1,527	1,533	1,566	1,663
Sedgemoor	1,932	1,909	1,755	1,835	2,020	2,224	2,474	2,357	2,452	2,572	2,616
Somerset West & Taunton	2,688	2,618	2,680	3,030	3,622	3,808	4,048	4,040	4,159	4,303	4,283
South Somerset	2,063	2,035	1,873	1,954	1,971	1,973	2,000	2,017	2,091	2,044	1,997
Total	8,217	8,040	7,710	8,185	9,209	9,543	10,081	9,941	10,235	10,485	10,559

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Chart 1: Number of households registered by local authority. Q4 2016/17 as the base



Just over half of all households (51%) registered with Homefinder Somerset need a 1 bed home, whilst just under a third (31%) need a 2 bed home.

Table 3: Size of home needed. Households registered as at 6 October 2020

	1 Bed		2 Beds		3 Beds		4+ Beds		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Mendip	826	50%	540	32%	236	14%	61	4%	1,663
Sedgemoor	1,272	49%	835	32%	392	15%	117	4%	2,616
Somerset West & Taunton	2,292	54%	1,234	29%	573	13%	184	4%	4,283
South Somerset	975	49%	613	31%	311	16%	98	5%	1,997
Total	5,365	51%	3,222	31%	1,512	14%	460	4%	10,559

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Bidding Analysis

Between 1 July and 30 September a total of 33,972 bids were placed by 4,513 households on homes across Somerset. This is a return to normal levels, and a 60% increase on the previous quarter, which saw a much smaller number of bids due to the impact of the Coronavirus and the huge reduction in the number of homes advertised during April and May. The number of bids made in the last quarter was virtually identical to the corresponding quarter last year.

98% of bids made during the quarter were placed via the website.

Table 4: Number of bids and bidders 1 April 2019 – 30 September 2020

	No. of bids	No. of bidders
2019		
April	9,100	2,733
May	13,600	3,055
June	10,392	2,903
July	11,585	2,796
August	11,540	2,932
September	10,823	2,775
October	12,819	3,093
November	11,276	2,945
December	10,215	2,788
2020		
January	11,668	2,987
February	13,567	2,970
March	9,884	2,686
April	4,468	1,546
May	5,073	1,881
June	11,713	2,684
July	11,776	2,939
August	10,253	2,752
September	11,943	3,084
Average	10,650	2,753

Table 5 below shows the proportion of households by local authority and Band who are considered to be inactive (e.g. they have not bid or logged onto the Homefinder Somerset website during the last 6 months, and are not on autobid). This analysis excludes those households who have only registered in the last month and may not have had the opportunity to bid or login to the website.

It can be seen that nearly a third of households registered with Homefinder Somerset can be considered as inactive. The proportion of inactive households varies by Band and local authority. As expected the proportion of inactive households increases as priority reduces. The proportion of inactive households in Gold Band ranges from 6% in Mendip and South Somerset to 38% in Somerset West & Taunton. The higher proportion of inactive households in Somerset West & Taunton is likely to reduce significantly by the next quarterly report as a result of the work that is being undertaken to review the register.

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Table 5: Percentage of households who have not bid or logged onto the Homefinder Somerset website during the last 6 months, and are not on autobid as at 6 October 2020 (excluding those households who have registered in the last month)

	Emergency	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Mendip	n/a	6%	12%	22%	16%
Sedgemoor	0%	17%	28%	35%	32%
Somerset West & Taunton	0%	38%	40%	48%	45%
South Somerset	n/a	6%	9%	19%	14%
Total	0%	21%	26%	36%	31%

Table 6 reveals that an average of 67 bids were placed for the 509 homes advertised between 1 July and 30 September 2020. The number of homes advertised increased by 71% from the previous quarter as advertising returned to more normal levels.

The average number of bids varied considerably between local authority areas and property type/size. The average number of bids for houses (109) was much higher than for flats (37), and in Sedgemoor there were an average of 171 bids for 2 bed houses compared to only 23 bids for 2 bed flats.

The average number of bids for homes advertised during the quarter ranged from 48 bids in South Somerset (165 homes advertised) to 87 in Somerset West & Taunton (132 homes advertised).

Table 6: Number of homes and average number of bids by type, size and local authority (1 July – 30 September 2020)

	Mendip		Sedgemoor		Somerset West & Taunton		South Somerset		Total	
	No. of homes	Average no. of bids	No. of homes	Average no. of bids	No. of homes	Average no. of bids	No. of homes	Average no. of bids	No. of homes	Average no. of bids
Bungalow	18	85	10	71	29	91	43	41	100	67
1 Bedroom	10	117	9	67	22	102	25	34	66	74
2 Bedroom	8	46	1	102	7	55	18	51	34	52
Flat	33	49	74	27	53	59	68	26	228	37
1 Bedroom	26	53	42	31	27	79	40	31	135	45
2 Bedroom	7	33	32	23	26	39	28	18	93	26
House	23	91	43	144	44	118	53	82	163	109
1 Bedroom					8	107			8	107
2 Bedroom	13	109	25	171	18	137	26	105	82	133
3 Bedroom	9	71	16	115	18	103	25	62	68	87
4 Bedroom	1	39	2	56			1	52	4	51
5 Bedroom							1	8	1	8
Maisonette	1	8	4	22	1	32			6	21
2 Bedroom			3	24	1	32			4	26
3 Bedroom	1	8	1	16					2	12
Studio flat	2	60	4	69	5	100	1	68	12	80
Total	77	70	135	69	132	87	165	48	509	67

Note: This data excludes homes set up for direct match

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126 homes (25%) advertised during the last quarter received over 100 bids. The highest number of bids received was 345, for a 2 bed Rentplus house in Puriton.

Rejection Reasons

During the last quarter landlords set a total of 476 bids to match or offer rejected. Whilst this is a greater number than the previous quarter, which was affected by the Coronavirus lockdown, it is significantly down on the same quarter last year, when 885 bids from 592 households were match or offer rejected.

365 households were match or offer rejected (as some households were match or offer rejected for more than 1 property) by landlords for 209 homes (as more than one household was match or offer rejected on some homes).

Table 7 shows that the most common reason why applicants were rejected was 'Applicant no longer wants to be considered', which accounted for 12% of cases. The other most common reasons why applicants were rejected were: 'Applicant did not respond' (9%), 'Applicant states area is unsuitable' (8%), 'Applicant states property is unsuitable' (8%) and 'Applicant considered unsuitable due to arrears/debts' (7%). Together these reasons accounted 43% of all rejections during the quarter.

The most common reasons that applicants rejected an offer (e.g. those starting with Landlord_ in the table below) were as follows: the applicant's circumstances had changed, the applicant stating that the property wasn't suitable for them, or the applicant stating that the location wasn't suitable. Each of these reasons accounted for 5% of all rejection reasons.

Given the relatively low number of rejections this quarter the variations between landlords can be affected by a very small number of cases, and as such no analysis of these variations is presented.

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Table 7: Match or Offer Rejection reasons used by landlords (1 July – 30 September 2020)

	Aster		HiS		LiveWest		Magna		Stonewater		Somerset West & Taunton		Yarlington		Other ¹		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	% of total
Applicant no longer wants to be considered	11	13%	4	11%	5	6%	4	12%	2	4%	1	9%	27	20%	3	10%	57	12%
Applicant did not respond	2	2%	7	19%	3	4%	5	15%	3	5%	1	9%	13	9%	7	23%	41	9%
Applicant states property not suitable	2	2%	2	6%	6	7%	3	9%	7	13%	1	9%	9	7%	9	30%	39	8%
Applicant states area is unsuitable	3	3%	5	14%	4	5%	5	15%	10	18%	1	9%	8	6%	1	3%	37	8%
Applicant considered unsuitable due to arrears/debts	5	6%	4	11%	4	5%			7	13%			12	9%	1	3%	33	7%
Landlord_Change of circumstances identified	3	3%	3	8%	4	5%	3	9%	6	11%			5	4%			24	5%
Landlord_Property not suitable for applicant	5	6%			11	13%	3	9%	1	2%			2	1%	2	7%	24	5%
Landlord_Location deemed unsuitable	4	5%	3	8%	1	1%	3	9%	3	5%			9	7%			23	5%
Landlord_No children under 16					21	25%							2	1%			23	5%
Applicant considered unsuitable due to ASB/Convictions	6	7%			1	1%					3	27%	11	8%			21	4%
Landlord_Offer withdrawn by landlord	4	5%	2	6%	3	4%							3	2%			12	3%
Applicant did not complete verification			3	8%	1	1%							5	4%	2	7%	11	2%
Landlord_Adapted housing required	4	5%			2	2%			3	5%			1	1%			10	2%
Landlord_Applicant is on autobid	8	9%											2	1%			10	2%
Landlord_Requires ground floor	1	1%			6	7%			3	5%							10	2%
Applicant doesn't want to move			2	6%			1	3%			2	18%	3	2%			8	2%
Landlord_Does not require supported housing	7	8%											1	1%			8	2%

¹ Other includes Hanover, Sanctuary, Selwood Housing and SHAL

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Table 7 (continued): Match or Offer Rejection reasons used by landlords (1 July – 30 September 2020).

	Aster		HiS		LiveWest		Magna		Stonewater		Somerset West & Taunton		Yarlington		Other		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	% of total
Landlord_Doesn't meet agreed local lettings Plan	2	2%			1	1%			2	4%	1	9%	2	1%			8	2%
Landlord_Property is adapted & applicant has no requirement for adaptations	5	6%			3	4%											8	2%
Applicant state unable to afford rent in advance					3	4%							4	3%			7	1%
Landlord_Pets – No/type incompatible with property					2	2%	4	12%					1	1%			7	1%
Landlord_Sensitive let applicant unsuitable	5	6%							1	2%	1	9%					7	1%
Applicant states bedrooms too small			1	3%	1	1%	1	3%	2	4%			1	1%			6	1%
Landlord_Fails to meet housing needs	4	5%											2	1%			6	1%
Landlord_Ground floor not required	4	5%							1	2%							5	1%
Landlord_Health Reasons prevent applicant from moving.					1	1%			1	2%			2	1%			4	1%
Applicant failed to attend viewing/letting									1	2%			1	1%	1	3%	3	1%
Applicant feels property isn't affordable													3	2%			3	1%
Landlord_Doesn't meet band criteria							1	3%	1	2%			1	1%			3	1%
Landlord_No housing need	1	1%											2	1%			3	1%
Other reasons (used once or twice in total by all landlords)	2	2%	0	0%	2	2%	1	3%	1	2%	0	0%	5	4%	4	13%	15	3%
Total	88	100%	36	100%	85	100%	34	100%	55	100%	11	100%	137	100%	30	100%	476	100%

Note: Percentages for each landlord refer to % of total rejections for that landlord (e.g. 11% of households rejected by Homes in Sedgemoor were rejected using the reason 'Applicant no longer wants to be considered')

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Homes Let

554 homes across Somerset were set to let² in the last quarter. This was a significant increase (66%) from the previous quarter, which was affected by the Coronavirus lockdown.

Tables 9 and 10 set out the profile of the homes let in the last quarter by size, local authority and landlord. 42% of homes let in the last quarter were 1 bed or studio homes and 40% were 2 bed homes. South Somerset again accounted for the highest number of homes let (199).

Table 9: Homes let between 1 July and 30 September 2020 by property local authority

	Studio	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	Total	%
Mendip	1	24	22	12	3		62	11%
Sedgemoor	3	49	57	29			138	25%
Somerset West & Taunton	4	59	64	26	1	1	155	28%
South Somerset	1	88	77	29	3	1	199	36%
Total	9	220	220	96	7	2	554	100%
% of total	2%	40%	40%	17%	1%	0%	100%	

Yarlington (26%), Somerset West & Taunton (17%), and Homes in Sedgemoor (18%) together accounted for 58% of homes let in the last quarter.

Table 10: Homes let between 1 July and 30 September 2020 by landlord

	Studio	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	Total	%
Acorn		1					1	0%
Aster	1	16	10	11	3	1	42	8%
Bridgeman Letting Ltd			2	1			3	1%
Falcon Rural			2				2	0%
Guinness		3		1			4	1%
Hanover		2					2	0%
Hastoe HA			3				3	1%
Homes in Sedgemoor	3	40	17	18			78	14%
LiveWest		14	16	5			35	6%
Magna Housing		18	18	3			39	7%
Sanctuary HA	1	5	7	1			14	3%
Selwood Housing		2	1				3	1%
SHAL		5	21	8			34	6%
Somerset West & Taunton	4	34	36	21		1	96	17%
Southwestern HS			1				1	0%
Stonewater		15	29	6	2		52	9%
Yarlington		65	57	21	2		145	26%
Total	9	220	220	96	7	2	554	100%

Tables 11 and 12 show that 41% of homes were let to households in the Gold band. The proportion of homes let to households in the Gold Band varied from 31% of homes in Mendip to 47% of homes in South Somerset. 45% of homes were let in the last quarter were let to households in the Silver band. This ranged from 38% of homes in South Somerset to 56% in Mendip.

² These homes were set to Offer Accepted. This figure includes homes let by direct match.

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Table 11: Homes let between 1 July and 30 September 2020 by property local authority and Band

	Emergency		Gold		Silver		Bronze		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Mendip	1	2%	19	31%	35	56%	7	11%	62
Sedgemoor	1	1%	53	38%	71	51%	13	9%	138
Somerset West & Taunton	3	2%	63	41%	67	43%	22	14%	155
South Somerset	7	4%	94	47%	76	38%	22	11%	199
Total	12	2%	229	41%	249	45%	64	12%	554

The proportion of homes let to applicants in Gold Band amongst the 5 landlords who let the most homes in the last quarter also varied by landlord (Table 12), from 40% for Aster and Homes in Sedgemoor to 46% for Somerset West & Taunton and Yarlington.

Table 12: Homes let between 1 July and 30 September 2020 by landlord and Band

	Emergency		Gold		Silver		Bronze		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Acorn					1	100%			1
Aster			17	40%	22	52%	3	7%	42
Bridgeman Letting Ltd							3	100%	3
Falcon Rural					1	50%	1	50%	2
Guinness			1	25%	3	75%			4
Hanover					2	100%			2
Hastoe HA			1	33%	1	33%	1	33%	3
Homes in Sedgemoor	1	1%	31	40%	37	47%	9	12%	78
LiveWest			12	34%	18	51%	5	14%	35
Magna Housing	1	3%	15	38%	23	59%			39
Sanctuary HA			7	50%	7	50%			14
Selwood Housing	1	33%			2	67%			3
SHAL			13	38%	18	53%	3	9%	34
Somerset West & Taunton	2	2%	44	46%	34	35%	16	17%	96
Southwestern HS					1	100%			1
Stonewater	1	2%	22	42%	24	46%	5	10%	52
Yarlington	6	4%	66	46%	55	38%	18	12%	145
Total	12	2%	229	41%	249	45%	64	12%	554

123 homes were let to homeless applicants in Gold Band or Silver Under Relief in the last quarter, representing 22% of all homes let. This is below the proportion seen in the last quarter (28%) but above the proportion seen in 2019/20, when 15% of homes were let to homeless households in Gold Band and Silver Under Relief. The proportion of homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band or Silver Under Relief ranged from 30% in Somerset West & Taunton to 5% in Mendip – see Table 13.

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Table 13: Homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band or Silver Under Relief between 1 July and 30 September 2020 by property local authority

	No. of homes let	No. of homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band or Silver Under Relief	% of all homes let
Mendip	62	3	5%
Sedgemoor	138	28	20%
Somerset West & Taunton	155	33	21%
South Somerset	199	59	30%
Total	554	123	22%

Amongst the 7 largest landlords in the last quarter the proportion of homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band or Silver Under Relief varied from 38% of homes let by Magna to 5% of homes let by Aster – see Table 14.

Table 14: Homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band or Silver Under Relief between 1 July and 30 September 2020 by landlord

	No. of homes let	No. of homes let to homeless applicants in Gold Band or Silver Under Relief	% of all homes let
Acorn	1	0	0%
Aster	42	2	5%
Bridgeman Letting Ltd	3	0	0%
Falcon Rural	2	0	0%
Guinness	4	1	25%
Hanover	2	0	0%
Hastoe HA	3	1	33%
Homes in Sedgemoor	78	15	19%
LiveWest	35	4	11%
Magna Housing	39	15	38%
Sanctuary HA	14	6	43%
Selwood Housing	3	0	0%
SHAL	34	7	21%
Somerset West & Taunton	96	18	19%
Southwestern HS	1	0	0%
Stonewater	52	18	35%
Yarlington	145	36	25%
Total	554	123	22%

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Nearly 30,700 homes have been let through Homefinder Somerset since 2009. The total number of lets per year by size is shown in Table 15.

Table 15: Number of properties let

	Studio	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	6 Bed	Total
2009	41	927	1,063	477	42	2	0	2,552
2010	41	926	1,078	576	52	4	1	2,678
2011	48	933	1,381	635	56	6	0	3,059
2012	46	944	1,358	717	55	3	1	3,124
2013	50	969	1,264	588	49	8	0	2,928
2014	54	935	1,148	547	48	4	0	2,736
2015	40	1,031	1,294	605	36	4	2	3,012
2016	43	832	1,065	446	31	3	0	2,420
2017	37	847	953	365	27	2	0	2,231
2018	35	866	791	333	34	1	0	2,060
2019	32	905	913	376	38	2	1	2,267
2020 to 30 September	23	610	659	298	21	3	0	1,614
Total	490	10,725	12,967	5,963	489	42	5	30,681

For more information please contact Rupert Warren (r.warren@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)