

Public Document Pack

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Date: Tuesday, 29 November 2022

Dear Sir or Madam

The Executive – Wednesday, 7 December 2022, 6.00 pm – New Council Chamber - Town Hall

A meeting of the Executive will take place as indicated above.

Please Note that any member of the press and public may listen in to proceedings at this meeting via the weblink below –

<https://youtu.be/cHwTSo14w4g>

The agenda is set out overleaf.

Yours faithfully

Assistant Director Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer

To: Members of the Executive

Councillors:

Steve Bridger (Chairman), Mike Bell (Vice-Chairman), Mark Canniford, Ashley Cartman, Catherine Gibbons, Steve Hogg, Bridget Petty and Mike Solomon.

All other Members of the Council (for information)

This document and associated papers can be made available in a different format on request.

Agenda

1. **Addresses by Members of the Public (ESO 6)**

The Executive, at the discretion of the Chairperson, will hear up to four people, each of whom must be a resident or a business ratepayer or an elector, who wish to address it in accordance with the Executive Standing Orders, on matters that affect the area or its residents and over which the Executive has powers and duties. The Chairperson will select the order of the matters to be heard. Each person will be limited to a period of three minutes and this part of the meeting must not exceed fifteen minutes.

Requests to speak must be submitted in writing to the Monitoring Officer, or the officer mentioned at the top of this agenda letter, by noon on the day before the meeting and the request must detail the subject matter of the address.

2. **Apologies for absence**

3. **Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37)**

A Member must declare any disclosable pecuniary interest where it relates to any matter being considered at the meeting. A declaration of a disclosable pecuniary interest should indicate the interest and the agenda item to which it relates. A Member is not permitted to participate in this agenda item by law and should immediately leave the meeting before the start of any debate.

If the Member leaves the meeting in respect of a declaration, he or she should ensure that the Chairperson is aware of this before he or she leaves to enable their exit from the meeting to be recorded in the minutes in accordance with Standing Order 37.

4. **Minutes 19 October 2022 (Pages 7 - 12)**

19 October 2022, to approve as a correct record

5. **Non-Executive Councillors' Addresses**

Non-Executive Councillors wishing to address the Executive are required to notify the contact officer mentioned at the top of this summons letter by noon on the day before the meeting. A total of fifteen minutes will be allocated to hear all addresses.

6. **Matters referred to the Executive and not dealt with elsewhere on this agenda**

None.

7. **West of England Sub-Region: items not dealt with elsewhere on this agenda**

8. **Forward Plan dated 2 December 2022**

(to follow)

- 9. Schools Capital Upgrades - remaining roofing programme (Pages 13 - 30)**
Report of Councillor Cartman (attached)
- 10. Approval of Two Towns Placemaking Strategies and Connecting Portishead Development Framework (Pages 31 - 146)**
Report of Councillor Canniford (attached)
- 11. Month 6 Budget Monitor, Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Revenue Budget 2023/24 (Pages 147 - 170)**
Report of Councillor Cartman (attached)
- 12. Rights of Way Improvement Plan (Pages 171 - 324)**
Report of Councillor Solomon (attached)
- 13. Future Governance Model - The Music Service (Pages 325 - 336)**
Report of Councillor Gibbons (attached)
- 14. Ofsted Focused Visit Letter (Pages 337 - 340)**
Report of Councillor Gibbons (attached)
- 15. Weston Business Quarter - delivery/disposal options and mechanisms (includes EXEMPT appendix) (Pages 341 - 352)**
Report of Councillor Cartman (attached)
- 16. Oral reports of Executive Councillors**
Executive Councillors might report orally on matters in progress. Such reports will be for information only and no material decisions can be made arising from them.
- 17. Urgent business permitted by the Local Government Act 1972 (if any)**
For a matter to be considered as an urgent item, the following question must be addressed: "What harm to the public interest would flow from leaving it until the next meeting?" If harm can be demonstrated, then it is open to the Chairperson to rule that it be considered as urgent. Otherwise the matter cannot be considered urgent within the statutory provisions.

Exempt Items

Should the Executive wish to consider a matter as an Exempt Item, the following resolution should be passed -

“(1) That the press, public, and officers not required by the Members, the Chief Executive or the Director, to remain during the exempt session, be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the ground that its consideration will involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Section 100I of the Local Government Act 1972.”

Also, if appropriate, the following resolution should be passed –

“(2) That members of the Council who are not members of the Executive be invited to remain.”

Mobile phones and other mobile devices

All persons attending the meeting are requested to ensure that these devices are switched to silent mode. The chairman may approve an exception to this request in special circumstances.

Filming and recording of meetings

The proceedings of this meeting may be recorded for broadcasting purposes.

Anyone wishing to film part or all of the proceedings may do so unless the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting or there is good reason not to do so, as directed by the Chairman. Any filming must be done as unobtrusively as possible from a single fixed position without the use of any additional lighting, focusing only on those actively participating in the meeting and having regard to the wishes of any members of the public present who may not wish to be filmed. As a matter of courtesy, anyone wishing to film proceedings is asked to advise the Chairman or the Assistant Director Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer's representative before the start of the meeting so that all those present may be made aware that it is happening.

Members of the public may also use Facebook and Twitter or other forms of social media to report on proceedings at this meeting.

Emergency Evacuation Procedure

On hearing the alarm – (a continuous two tone siren)

Leave the room by the nearest exit door. Ensure that windows are closed.

Last person out to close the door.

Do not stop to collect personal belongings.

Do not use the lifts.

Follow the green and white exit signs and make your way to the assembly point.

Do not re-enter the building until authorised to do so by the Fire Authority.

Go to Assembly Point C – Outside the offices formerly occupied by Stephen & Co

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Minutes

of the Meeting of

The Executive

Wednesday, 19 October 2022

New Council Chamber - Town Hall

Meeting Commenced: 2.32 pm

Meeting Concluded: 3.33 pm

Councillors:

Steve Bridger (Chairman)
Mike Bell (Vice-Chairman)

Mark Canniford
Catherine Gibbons
Steve Hogg
Bridget Petty
Mike Solomon

Apologies: Councillor: Ashley Cartman.

Also in attendance: Councillors Hugh Gregor and Lisa Pilgrim.

Officers in attendance: Jo Walker (Chief Executive), Amy Webb (Director of Corporate Services), Sheila Smith (Director of Children's Services), Matt Lenny (Director of Public Health), Hayley Verrico (Interim Director, Adults' Support and Safeguarding), Nicholas Brain (Assistant Director Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer), Emma Diakou (Head of Business Insight, Policy and Partnerships), Richard Kent (Head of Planning, Place Directorate) and Michael Reep (Planning Policy Manager, Place Directorate).

Partaking via Microsoft Teams:

Councillors: Nigel Ashton, Mike Bird, John Cato, Peter Crew, Don Davies, Karin Haverson, Sandra Hearne, John Ley-Morgan, Stuart McQuillan, Robert Payne, Terry Porter, James Tonkin.

Officers: Gemma Dando (Assistant Director - Neighbourhood and Transport, Place Directorate), Mel Watts (Finance Manager, Corporate Services Directorate) and Hazel Brinton (Committee Services Manager, Corporate Services Directorate)

EXE Chairperson's Welcome

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The Chairperson welcomed everyone to this face-to-face meeting of the Executive in the New Council Chamber.

Some councillors and officers would be joining the meeting remotely via Microsoft Teams but whilst able to partake they would not be "in attendance formally".

The meeting was being streamed live on the internet and a recorded version would be available to view within 48 hours on the North Somerset Council website.

EXE 32 Addresses by Members of the Public (ESO 6)

None received.

EXE 33 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37)

None declared.

EXE 34 Minutes

Resolved: that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

EXE 35 Non-Executive Councillors' Addresses

None received.

EXE 36 Matters referred to the Executive and not dealt with elsewhere on this agenda

None.

EXE 37 West of England Sub-Region: items not dealt with elsewhere on this agenda

None.

EXE 38 Forward Plan dated 3 October 2022 (attached)

Resolved: that the Forward Plan be noted.

EXE 39 Local Plan 2038 - Update following further consideration by informal Place Policy and Scrutiny Panel meeting on 7 October 2022

The Chairperson advised that a written reference note following the informal Place Policy and Scrutiny Panel set up to receive wider and deeper input from members had been circulated to all members and further legal advice had been obtained.

The comments from the informal Place Policy and Scrutiny Panel were noted together with the ongoing work by officers on the constrained nature of North Somerset. A future report would come to the Executive to give clarification on the nuances around the Green Belt and its protection and other sensitive sites. The Chairperson hoped that the council would receive greater clarity from central government on possible changes to local planning policy and to which the council would respond. He noted that the council wished to submit a robust, responsive plan that responded to community views and that all members could support.

EXE 40 Month 5 Budget Monitor

The Director of Corporate Services presented the report. She highlighted that the

net expenditure for the council for 2022/23 was expected to be £185m for the year which would be an overspend of £4.391m and an underlying increase in service pressures of £400k since the last report.

Mitigations in the budget of £856k had been identified to offset some of the overspend. The pressures were coming from a number of areas such as the rise in energy costs and cost of living pressures including wage increases. Officers were looking at energy saving measures and pay increases were subject to ongoing national negotiations.

The Director of Corporate Services further noted that after identified mitigations, the overspend had been reduced to £231k but this meant using reserves and contingency which reduced the council's flexibility in addressing any future, emerging risks. Work was ongoing to reduce the deficit to zero by year end. Additionally, she noted minor changes to capital projects and two additions to the capital programme.

In discussing the report, members queried the level of outturn forecast variance on the Children's Services Directorate Schools Budget and the use of reserves to cover the forecasted overspend and balance the current year budget. The impact of the deficit and use of reserves on the following year's budget and reserves was queried. The Director of Corporate Services noted that the use of reserves was for one off costs and not ongoing revenue costs.

Resolved: that the Executive

- i. Noted the projected revenue and capital budget forecasts as detailed within the report and also the issues and assumptions that underpin the forecasts,
- ii. Approved the in-year amendments to the revenue and capital budgets as detailed in Appendices 1 and 4 to the report and
- iii. Noted the financial risks being assessed by the council, which may have an impact on future monitoring reports

Reasons for the decision:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

EXE 41 Update on the Cost of Living Working Group

The Head of Business Insight, Policy and Partnerships presented the report which gave an overview of the work of the Cost of Living Working Group. She brought members' attention to a number of updates including the development of a cost-of-living action plan by the working group which now comprised of around 60 members across North Somerset including groups from the community and voluntary sectors. The action plan touched on a number of areas as detailed in the report and would be shared with the council's Citizen Panel for feedback.

The officer presenting noted her report detailed a number of ongoing projects including the Public Living Rooms Project which had received 23 applications from 29 different groups for grant funding. She added that libraries were being considered for warm spaces as was the production of a map.

The report also detailed a Communications Plan and an Oversight Panel which had been set up as the Cost of Living Working Group had grown so rapidly that the panel was required to expedite decision making. The panel was chaired by Councillor Bell and would meet every two weeks for the foreseeable future.

The Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing commented that the council had pulled together the Working Group task force in response to the cost-of-living crisis and thanked officers and teams from across all directorates who were finding time in addition to their day jobs to support the initiative. He added that it demonstrated that even in challenging times, there was a willingness amongst communities to support each other and how important local councils were in drawing upon their expertise and networks in times of crisis. He noted that the message for the community was that there was help out there and thanked officers and voluntary groups for getting involved.

In discussing the report, members noted that there were concerns over the level of detail and complexity of the “Worrying about Money” leaflet which whilst useful was nonetheless too complex for some residents to understand. They also expressed concerns around whether the support was reaching all those that were in need over and above the usual demographic targeted for support. It was noted that the council was supporting a wider range of households that usually targeted although the financial mechanisms for support were constrained by legislation.

During the debate, it was highlighted that there were a number of ways information on sustainable energy and tips on energy efficiency was being communicated including via the local Eat Festivals and social media.

Resolved: that the Executive noted the report.

EXE 42 Living Well with COVID

The Director of Public Health and Regulatory Services summarised the main points of his report. He noted that the country was now in a different phase of the pandemic but commended the council and community over the past three years for the response in mitigating the risk of COVID. He explained the requirement to produce a North Somerset COVID-19 Local Outbreak Management Plan had been proactively replaced by the council’s North Somerset Living Well with COVID-19 strategy.

He explained that roles and responsibilities for the various agencies would be different from April 2023 when the national funding from Department of Health and Social Care which had been provided to support the local response would cease.

The Director of Public Health and Regulatory Services outlined the four areas of the North Somerset Living Well with COVID-19 strategy:

- Prevention where the council was working alongside settings in managing

- localised outbreaks
- Protection via the vaccination programme which targeted the most vulnerable residents and monitoring the uptake of vaccinations
- Treatment – clinically led but with a more effective range of interventions and
- Response where the Public and Regulatory Service was still running a team alongside colleagues from Adult Social Care and Children’s Services although this would cease from in April 2023.

North Somerset residents were encouraged to take up vaccinations when offered.

In discussing the report, members asked questions around the severity of reactions to vaccinations and their ongoing effectiveness; the availability of support and advice for those with long covid and the flexibility the council could exercise in adding to the national guidelines regarding health issues and whether that could be tailored to local requirements.

The Director of Public Health and Regulatory Services highlighted to members that the National Covid Inquiry had opened and that the first matter being considered was around response and turning scientific insight into guidance. Members asked about communications to keep Covid on the radar and it was explained that the relative risk now was much lower than at the start of the pandemic. The importance of public health services and health protection together with the necessary funding of them was considered as was the potential conflict of messaging regarding staying at home if vulnerable due to Covid with the message of communities coming together in shared warm spaces during the Cost of Living crisis. The ongoing requirement for volunteers to help with the vaccination programme was noted.

Resolved: that the Executive noted the report.

EXE 43 Draft Calendar of Executive Meetings 2023/24

The Executive considered the report of the Assistant Director Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer.

Resolved: that the draft calendar of Executive meetings for the 2023/24 Municipal Year be approved.

Reasons for the decision:

As set out in the report.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

As set out in the report.

EXE 44 Oral reports of Executive Councillors

None.

EXE Urgent business permitted by the Local Government Act 1972 (if any)

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None.

Chairman

North Somerset Council

Report to the Executive

Date of Meeting: 7 December 2022

Subject of Report: Approval of joint Commissioning and Procurement Plan to progress with Schools capital upgrades – remaining roofing programme

Town or Parish: Kewstoke

**Officer/Member Presenting: Cllr Cartman – Executive Member for Corporate Services
Alex Hearn, Assistant Director for Placemaking & Growth**

Key Decision: Yes

Reason: The expenditure is in excess of £500,000

Recommendations

- It is recommended that this joint commissioning and procurement plan for the procurement of roofing and other construction works at Kewstoke Primary School be approved.
- Approve allocation of up to the value of £1.75m from the Schools Capital Maintenance programme (approved at Council 15th February 22) for Kewstoke Primary School to support essential repairs and improvements.

1. Summary of Report

It is requested that the Executive supports the route of an open tender to deliver specified capital maintenance works at Kewstoke Primary School and approves the inclusion of the project at Kewstoke Primary School as part of the council's capital programme for 2022/23 and 2023/24 to support essential repairs and improvements up to the value of £1.75m.

2. Policy

This project falls within the school's capital maintenance programme which was approved at the February 2022 Full Council. (See [Committee Report NSC \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#) Appendix 2, table 2.1).

Kewstoke Primary School is classed as a maintained school and as such the council is the employer of staff and the buildings are a corporate resource. Significant condition concerns have been raised and this project looks to rectify these. Many schools are, in line with Government expectations, converting to academy status. The council has an agreed policy not to fund capital schemes at maintained schools who have an Academy Order in place stating their intention to convert to become an academy. Kewstoke Primary School does not have an Academy Order in place at this time.

Councils are responsible for the maintenance of their schools. Multi—Academy Trusts take over that responsibility when a school converts to become an academy. The council has a duty to ensure that schools that are within its control are safe, but it is also acknowledged that due to funding shortfalls, there is a significant challenge in relation to the backlog maintenance of the council's school building stock. Even when a school is considering an academy conversion, the DfE expects LAs to treat schools considering academy conversion fairly, including by investing in high-priority condition issues and honouring any commitments of capital funding that they have made. On academy conversion, at a minimum, schools should be in a safe condition with no health and safety or regulatory compliance issues.

3. Details

Introduction

The school currently contributes to the provision of school places in the council's area and is forecast to be needed for the foreseeable future.

An elemental condition survey has been undertaken which makes comment on the condition of the main elements of the building. This has been developed into a five-year maintenance plan which highlights maintenance work anticipated within a specific five-year plan.

The preparation of a five-year plan should be undertaken in a regular routine to enable it to be updated and forecast future requirements throughout the operational life of the building. The calculation for the estimated costs of the current plan has been undertaken using rates from published BCIS information with reference made to the BCIS Building Maintenance Price Book, 2020 Edition. Market prices may vary from the figures used when local constraints, labour availability and material costs are taken into consideration. These costs are a guide for use during planning only and have not been market tested.

The survey found that the roof to the main building is approaching the end of its service and requires invasive inspection to assess the condition of the battens and felt. An allowance for replacement of the roof has been made. In addition to the maintenance issues identified within the report, there are a number of suitability issues which require immediate attention. In particular, the toilets and welfare arrangements are original external structures and there is insufficient space within the school for staff needs.

The scope of the project has been provisionally agreed and is to include a new roof on the original school building, an extension to the front facing aspect of the school to form a relocated staff area and the provision of new welfare facilities for both staff and pupils.

Any professional services required will be procured in line with Contract Standing Orders.

Contract Structure

The contract will have a total term of 24 weeks, with no extensions. Given the nature of the project works that are included an extension is not deemed necessary. The total value of the project is £1.75m, which includes professional and other associated fees, however this construction element has a budget of approximately £1.4m.

The work is due to commence in June/July 2023, in line with the school summer holidays, to mitigate risks of bad weather or working on a live site. The terms and conditions to be used will be the JCT Intermediate Form of Building Contract.

Market / Suppliers

The current market for works contractors is somewhat challenging and competitive for buyers, with contractors having limited resources to bid for and deliver new contracts and prioritising the most lucrative ones. There is an open tender route, as well as frameworks options the council could use, both of which demonstrate a clear pool of suppliers working in the South West who may be interested in our contract.

This contract may not be attractive to larger suppliers, due to its comparatively low value, however there is a market of suppliers bidding for work within our spend threshold which suggests there is an appetite for this value of project.

Route to market

We recommend carrying out an open tender because this gives maximum opportunity of competition across the market, allows local suppliers access to the opportunity and gives us the greatest freedom to design the evaluation methodology (weightings).

Outline timeline

An outline timetable of key milestones is detailed below:

Approval of Joint Commissioning & Procurement Plan	December 2022
Market testing	December 2022-January 2023
Completion of Tender Documents	January 2023
Open Tender bids issued	February 2023
Tender Evaluation	March/April 2023
Award of Contract	May 2023
Contract Commences	June/July 2023
Project Completion	September - November 2023

Social Value

In accordance with the Council's Social Value Policy, 10% of the overall weighting will be for bidders to propose their tangible social value commitments.

During the tender process, bidders will be asked to enter their social value commitments on the Social Value Portal. Social Value Portal utilises the National Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMs) to calculate social value contributions, which enables NSC to gain a

greater understanding of the value of bidders' commitments and to evaluate social value tender responses quantitatively as well as qualitatively.

For the Kewstoke School works commission, the project team are proposing to use Social Value Portal to undertake both the evaluation of the social value responses and ongoing contract management of the social value commitments provided by the appointed supplier. This service will cost 0.20% of the contract value, equating to £2,800, and will be paid by the winning bidder direct to the Social Value Portal.

Evaluation

The evaluation methodology for the Open Tender will ensure pre-qualification checks are carried out on all pertinent elements, such as Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity etc. The quality questions will test the bidders' approaches to meeting the quality criteria

Weightings will be as follows:

Price	65%
Quality	25%
Social Value	10%

These weightings were chosen due to the clear need, echoed throughout consultation, to drive good value for money through this project. The inclusion of technical quality questions and minimum quality scores allow us to maintain a high minimum quality standard whilst prioritising price.

Price and quality assessment will be scored as follows:

Price: Price will have a weighted score of 65% and will be based on the submission of a pricing schedule. Price will be calculated using a fixed price lump sum model, which asks suppliers to price the project and provide a breakdown of these costs, including labour, materials, overheads, preliminaries, trade staff and site supervision costs, with an allowance for inflationary increases, as is required within this market at the moment. The lowest total price will receive the maximum score of 100% and the prices of all other tenders will be expressed as a percentage of the maximum score

Quality: Quality will be assessed against the project outputs, behaviours and project management including assessment on the following topics:

1. Project delivery approach and management
2. Lead Officer and Key Staff CVs
3. Programme of key milestones to deliver the project
4. Risks and Mitigations
5. Environmental Impact and Mitigations

There will be subcriteria to test bidders' ability to meet some of the Lessons Learned issues we have encountered on other council projects (see below).

Quality will have a weighted score of 25% and will be evaluated in accordance with the following scoring guidelines:

Score	Classification	Award Criteria
5	Excellent	A response that inspires confidence; specification is fully met and is robustly and clearly demonstrated and evidenced. Full evidence as to how the contract will be fulfilled either by demonstrating past experience or through a clear process of implementation.
4	Good	A response supported by good evidence/examples of the Bidders' relevant ability and/or gives the council a good level of confidence in the Bidders' ability. All requirements are met and evidence is provided to support the answers demonstrating sufficiency, compliance and either actual experience or a process of implementation.
3	Satisfactory	A response that is acceptable and meets the minimum requirement but remains limited and could have been expanded upon.
2	Weak	A response only partially satisfying the requirement with deficiencies apparent. Not supported by sufficient breadth or sufficient quality of evidence/examples and provides the council a limited level of confidence in the Bidders' ability to deliver the specification.
1	Inadequate	A response that has material omissions not supported by sufficient breadth and sufficient quality of evidence/examples. Overall the response provides the council with a very low level of confidence in the Bidders' ability to deliver the specification.
0	Unsatisfactory	No response or response does not provide any relevant information and does not answer the question.

We will apply a minimum score for all quality questions to disincentivise poor quality, cheap bids.

The evaluation panel will be as follows:

- Head of Strategic Planning and Governance (or nominated person)
- Senior Project Manager
- Senior Building Surveyor.

It will be moderated by a member of the Strategic Procurement Team.

Lesson Learned

There are lessons to be learned from previous projects which centre around strong contract management, and we have considered ways to mitigate potential risks, these are as follows:

- The Terms and Conditions need to be comprehensive and include all the key elements expected on a project of this type. This includes ensuring that the contractor is not only considered to be responsible for any site damage, but also that it technically can be found to be legally liable for the damage caused by its negligence. A failure to ensure this can result in complex and costly repairs impacting on Council budgets. For Kewstoke Primary School, the terms and conditions must be sufficiently robust to ensure that the contractor is responsible for securing the whole site and will be liable for costs incurred in failing in their duty to do so. Insurance limits must also be set appropriately. The team is liaising with the Insurance & Risk Manager to ensure all risks are mitigated as far as is possible.
- Agreeing a clear logistics plan with all stakeholders prior to commencement will be essential. This is to ensure that all stakeholders understand the scope and delivery plans for the project and that risk assessments and mitigations can be put in place as required.
- It is best to undertake invasive works during the summer months when pupils and staff are not on site, and this must be prioritised. Starting on site as soon as the school holidays commence must be recorded as a key milestone within the programme.
- A communication plan must be produced and have buy-in from all stakeholders. It is suggested that a weekly progress update is communicated to the Head teacher and nominated stakeholders, as required, alongside regular Board meetings to manage progress and oversee any changes from the delivery plans. In the case of a business continuity event happening, the business continuity plan should be referred to alongside the communication plan.
- NSC Health and Safety are engaged on the selection of suppliers and the tender evaluation model.

4. Consultation

All necessary stakeholders of the school have been consulted about the scope of works to upgrade site. If approved, wider consultations will be undertaken with staff, pupils, neighbours and community stakeholders as part of the planning application determinations as required.

The chair of the Partnerships, Corporate Organisation and Overview Management Policy and Scrutiny Panel (PCOM) has been initially briefed about the scheme.

The PCOM Working Group met on 6 September 2022. Members of the Children and Young People's Services Policy and Scrutiny Panel were also invited to attend. There was a follow up session on 17 October 2022 to brief councillors of the ongoing strategy and rationale for the project. The Panel's questions were concentrated around school place provision.

Those present understood the pressures on school buildings but also highlighted the pressures on the council's capital and revenue resources, especially as a significant element of the costs of these works would be met from capital borrowing. The Working Group, when balancing the significant economic pressures on the council against the benefits of ensuring local schools places remain available, also noted that the council would have a statutory obligation to provide free Home to School Transport to those who may not be able to attend a school within the statutory distance from their home. The council's commitment to supporting village communities was discussed, as was the Government's intention for all schools to move away from council control. Members were supportive of ensuring that the residents of North Somerset have access to good local schools, but mindful of the significant costs to enable this to happen.

Consultation was carried out with professional services already in place with experience of this market, this assured us that there is a sufficient pool of suppliers delivering similar contracts in the market, further checks were carried out internally to ensure such suppliers look appropriate for our requirements.

5. Financial Implications

Schools and those responsible for school buildings are eligible for either a School Condition Allocation (SCA) or Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) grant.

North Somerset is, as of 1 April 2022, responsible for nine maintained schools across ten buildings. To assist with the maintenance of these sites it has been allocated, based on a formula, £355,250 of SCA in 2022/23. This is a reduced amount from the 2021/22 allocation of £376,356. As each school converts to academy status, the SCA allocation is reduced the following financial year.

The current allocation includes a funding protection element as a transitional protection. The DfE intends to further reduce the level of protection offered by 25% points per annum until 2025-26, when no protection will remain. The exact methodology for calculating SCA in future years is yet to be confirmed.

Details of the conditions of grant can be found at [Condition funding methodology 2022 to 2023 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/107122/condition_funding_methodology_2022_to_2023.pdf)

The backlog of maintenance needs across the school estate is estimated to be in the region of £6.1m over 5 years. This selection of Kewstoke Primary School has been influenced by the outcomes of the surveys when all the school buildings were compared and has been arrived at from an informed position. Once the repairs and improvements are made, these should make the site suitable for learning for a considerable time to come.

Costs

The estimated construction value of this scheme is £1.4m, with a total project budget of £1.75m (to include professional and all other associated fees).

Funding

At its meeting on 2 February 2022, Council approved borrowing for this school site for its roof and other necessary upgrades as part of a £3.445m allocation to cover the maintenance needs of school sites – see [Committee Report NSC \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#) Appendix 2, table 2.1. Please note £1.5m has already been slipped to 23/24 for this allocation.

As indicated above, Kewstoke Primary School is one of nine schools across ten sites for which the repairs and maintenance of the buildings falls to the Council. Assessed against the remaining 5 sites, Kewstoke Primary School is deemed to have the greatest need for urgent works that, if not undertaken, could put part of the site's use in risk of closure.

Maintained schools are part of the Council's capital estate and funding has been secured as above. Agreement to undertake this work could be made to facilitate a future academy transfer. Our Corporate Plan speaks of 'Partnerships which enhance skills, learning and employment opportunities' and 'Collaborating with Partners to deliver the best outcomes'. Making a decision to progress with the enhancements at Kewstoke Primary School supports the village of Kewstoke and potentially prepares the school for a future transfer to become an academy if that is the school's wish. Once a transfer takes place the academy trust would become responsible for future maintenance needs, thereby releasing the Council from any future liabilities.

The DfE provides School Condition Allocations to assist with the cost of maintaining Council-owned schools. Other than Council funding, there are no further grants available. Basic Need and developer contributions should be used to create new places and not to replicate existing provision.

6. Legal Powers and Implications

The contract value is below the Public Contract Regulations 2015 Works threshold, however, the procurement will follow best practice and be in line the Council's Contract Standing Orders.

The JCT Intermediate Form of Building Contract will be used incorporating clauses to protect the council (see Lessons Learned above).

The procurement process will be compliant with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 by ensuring it seeks additional social value during the tender process.

7. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

The design will be developed with reference to the Council's policies on climate change and with consideration of the environmental implications.

Upgrading the roof and supporting accommodation changes will enable this old building to benefit from greater insulation and better building efficiency.

The works on the school building will result in year on year savings in the amount of energy used achieved through the use of modern building materials and the introduction of higher levels of insulation that meets current standards. In addition, buildings of single skin construction will be replaced by modern insulated cavity wall construction and areas of the school that are currently being heated without regulation will have control measures introduced which will greatly reduce their cost in use. Specific figures around carbon impact of the works are not available at this time, as carbon surveys have not been undertaken on the school site to provide a baseline.

A Climate Emergency Risk Assessment has been produced to identify any environmental risks or opportunities. The outcome of this was that both the specification and quality section will be adjusted to reflect the requirement for minimal environmental impact through this project. Suppliers will be asked how they will mitigate negative and enable positive environmental impacts throughout the project and the specification will address the disposal of waste and the potential for rainwater harvesting facilities.

8. Risk Management

The surveys of this site show that the roof of the main school building needs repair. A failure to maintain this structure could lead to significant leaks and the necessary closure of this building. There are also health and safety risks if the building is not maintained.

Prior to the commencement of the works, a detailed risk register will be drafted, and any corrective measures will be managed through risk assessments and safe methods of working.

In the case of a business continuity event happening the business continuity plan should be referred to, alongside the communication plan for the project.

The appointed supplier will develop and maintain the project risk register. Initial risks and mitigations are provided below.

Insufficient interest from contractors.	Soft market testing will be carried out with suppliers prior to procurement in order to gauge their appetite for bidding and stimulate interest in the opportunity.
An unmanageable number of bids are received due to it being an open tender.	External Professional advise has been sought and indications are that the market at that time of year is unlikely to return an overwhelming response. Coupled with the location and orientation of the site, the works will appeal to a limited market
Bid costs are higher than anticipated.	Specialist consultant advice was used to estimate the correct budget for the funding application. There will a requirement to move to contract without delay to ensure some certainty with the price. In the event of a tender being received which exceeds the budget, a validation exercise will be undertaken, with a view to engineering the scheme to within budget

9. Equality Implications

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? Yes

The EIA did not highlight any risks to particular groups and overall has a positive impact.

10. Corporate Implications

The provision of the building improvements demonstrated in this report will support the Council's corporate plan objectives to improve Prosperity and Opportunity, Health and Well-being and Quality Place.

11. Options Considered

A variety of framework options were considered, including the Crown Commercial Services Construction Works and Associated Services. Many of the frameworks were deemed to not hold a suitable number of recognised local suppliers. Whilst the CCS framework initially looked promising from a supplier perspective, the restrictions around tender weightings did not allow for price to be weighted as highly as it needed to be, therefore this option is not the preference and an open tender proposed instead.

The Council submitted a Priority School Buildings bid to the DfE in March 2022, seeking funding to support the replacement of the demountable buildings on this site. This bid is in progress. The DfE visited the school site in August 2022 as part of their assessment process. The outcome and delivery programme for successful bids is unknown and cannot be relied upon for success. The Council is bidding for support alongside significant numbers of other schools and Local Authorities across England

The Council could decide not to undertake the scheme and risk the closure of parts or all of the school site. The Council could also decide to postpone any improvements to the school, allowing a new academy trust to take over these responsibilities on conversion. Many of the schools who have had their sites upgraded by the Council recently have converted to academy status soon after their upgrade. The DfE have recently stated that Council's must 'treat schools considering conversion fairly, including by investing in high-priority condition issues and honouring any commitments of capital funding that they have made. On conversion, at a minimum, schools should be in a safe condition with no health and safety or regulatory compliance issues. In some cases, both in North Somerset and nationally, the condition of a school's buildings has been a barrier to a school being accepted into a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). Currently the works required at Kewstoke Primary School could make it less attractive to a MAT if left undelivered.

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Appendices:

Background Papers:

Equality Impact Assessment (Stage 1) Kewstoke

Feb 22 Council paper for the Schools Capital Maintenance addition (link within report)

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SUSTAINABILITY QUESTIONS

Key

Likelihood	Impact
1 - rare,	1 - insignificant/minor
2 - unlikely	2 - moderate
3 - possible	3 - significant
4 - likely	4 - very significant
5 - almost certain	5 - major

Sustainability Pillar	Risk/Opportunity Title	Question	Answer (Y/N/Not sure)	Comments - why is this a risk/opportunity for this contract? Please use the If / Then / Impact headings	Lifecycle stage to mitigate Select as many as appropriate from: Pre-qualification, Specification, Tender Evaluation & Contract Management.	Mitigation/s	Guidance	Links
Environmental	Materials	Will this contract create a requirement for significant amounts of natural materials? This could include any natural material that is part of a finite resource, provides environmental benefits to being retained in situ and/or creates an environmental risk through removing. This could also include timber, biomass, stone, sand, minerals etc. Consider sustainable sourcing		e.g. if (x) happens then (y) will not work impact (z) is damaged	There will be a quality question included which will cover how the supplier will mitigate the environmental risks of the whole process, including procurement and transport of new materials to ensure they are sustainable. Question will also target supply chain and future performance.	This is a whole roof replacement. The roof covering will include natural materials, such as timber, sand and small stone. There is the potential requirement for composite tiles, including concrete, for the roof, which accounts for the sand and small stones. It may be that there is a planning condition to use clay tiles to remain in keeping with buildings original materials, even though they are heavier and less desirable to the project team, however this will be dependant on decisions around planning outside of the project team's control. An environmental impact assessment will be carried out on old resources/materials removed	Timber may be used in a variety of ways such as; timber used for construction (e.g. groynes/bridges/buildings), sheds, decking and flooring, furniture, fishing pegs, stop logs, fencing, habitat creation, boats etc. The UK Government Timber Procurement Policy and EA specific requirements must be followed and the mandatory wording, questions, clauses included within contracts. Recycled timber should be used ahead of virgin timber. All purchases of virgin tropical hardwood require business case approval. For advice on EA contracts that include timber please contact the EA Sustainable Business Team for advice. Audits on this are regularly for EA are carried out and compliance is reported to Executive Directors.	Government EA Timber
Environmental	Materials	Will this contract create a requirement for materials with significant embedded carbon such as steel, iron and concrete.		e.g. if (x) happens then (y) will not work impact (z) is damaged	Quality question above would require suppliers to discuss how to obtain concrete as sustainably as possible (if applicable).	As above, there could be a requirement for concrete composite tile or clay, as yet unknown, there will be very little requirement for iron and steel however. A detailed design will be required before NSC can select the		
Environmental	Materials	Will this contract create a requirement for peat?		e.g. if (x) happens then (y) will not work impact (z) is damaged	N/A	No		
Environmental	Maintenance Requirements	Will this contract require large amounts of spare parts or consumable items, especially those that require regular replacement and cannot be recycled? This may include contracts that require on-going maintenance.		e.g. if (x) happens then (y) will not work impact (z) is damaged	N/A	Little to no risk, there is a possible requirement for a hand dryer in bathrooms however this decision is depend on bathroom design, school budget and input from the school around preference. Consideration can be taken at the time as to most sustainable choice but suppliers will not be able to	Maintenance can extend the life span of a product and ensure it is operating at its maximum efficiency. However, it can also involve the use of a large number of consumable goods or parts that require disposal and can involve a lot of travelling. Whole life costing of the maintenance activity can be used as part of the evaluation to ensure the most efficient and sustainable maintenance proposal is delivered. Legal disposal of parts/consumables must be ensured. Refillable, repairable and reusable consumables and remote diagnostics and repair (e.g. the use of satellite, drones) may provide a more sustainable options. Maintenance regimes should be planned and optimised and low carbon travel options utilised.	
Environmental	Carbon Efficiency	Does this contract rely on significant levels of energy, electricity, gas, fuel (petrol / diesel /bio-diesel/ biomass *) etc to operate? This could be anything for which there is a constant energy/fuel consumption requirement or a requirement for regular transport or freight. This could include boiler replacement, heating and ventilation, catering, white goods, construction, refurbishment projects, ICT, transport and fleet, pumps, generators, boilers.		e.g. if (x) happens then (y) will not work impact (z) is damaged	As above, the quality question will be broad enough so supplier will have opportunity to demonstrate ways to transport more efficiently, distance of supply chain, future performance etc.	Minimal energy requirements, mainly around transporting materials and people to staff over 18-24 weeks however no significant requirement for equipment onsite. There will be an improvement in energy performance for the school as a		
Environmental	Water Efficiency	Will large volumes of water be used in production of this product or delivery of this service? E.g. Is the production process water intensive? Will large volumes of water be used during the in-use lifecycle stage?		e.g. if (x) happens then (y) will not work impact (z) is damaged	The specification will include the potential requirement for installing rain water harvesting equipment during the project however the outcome will need to be discussed in collaboration with the supplier to understand what is possible around capacity of container	There is no significant use of water within process. No requirement for water usage around dust management as no significant dust expected. New roof could provide opportunity for storm/rain water harvesting facilities to be installed.	Water is a finite resource. A lot of products and services can have a large embodied water impact that is 'hidden' as it does not directly affect our own consumption. Examples include; the production of steel, clothing, chemicals and microchips for IT/technological equipment. Over 99% of water impacts lie in our supply chain. The use of water becomes more of an issue if it is occurring in areas of known or predicted water shortages. Water pollution in the supply chain from the production of goods and services can also be an issue and directly links to our role in improving water quality in England.	
Environmental	Biodiversity, Animal Welfare and Habitat protection	Does this contract create an environmental risk to biodiversity and animals? This could include the use of pesticides, disturbing/destroying habitats and protected areas, risk of introduction of invasive species, pollution of rivers and streams with chemicals / oils / hazardous substances			N/A	No risk, work on the school site and replacement of the roof and some interior work should not affect any habitats		

Environmental	Waste (Inc. Packaging & Consumables)	Does the service/activity/product generate large quantities of waste, during manufacture, use or disposal (including packaging)? E.g. construction, catering, electrical goods, repairs and maintenance, furniture		e.g. if (x) happens then (y) will not work impact (z) is damaged	The Specification will state that waste must be removed by a registered contractor and they will need to provide need waste transfer notices. It will also stipulate that waste must be separated out by whoever removes it from site. The quality question allows the supplier to offer any innovative solutions to make this more sustainable, such as reusing materials on other contracts. As a matter of course, surveys will be carried out which will identify any asbestos risk and the duties under health and safety at work regulations will be followed at all times with regards identification, removal and	Materials of old roof will need to be disposed of, as well as packaging for new materials.		
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Specification
Supplier selection
Evaluation
Contract
Management

North Somerset Council

Initial Equality Impact Assessment



Please add content where << XXX>> is indicated.
Please make Yes or No bold as appropriate.

1. The Proposal

Directorate: Place
Service area: Property Assets and Projects
Lead Officer: Jonothan Hughes
Links to a budget reduction proposal: No
Date of assessment: 16th August 2022

Description of the proposal:

What is changing?

Kewstoke School:

New roof on original school building

An extension to the front facing aspect of the school to form a staff area

The provision of new welfare facilities for both staff and pupils

Summary of changes:

Please describe how the policy or service will change as a result of the proposal.

The school will be fit for purpose and provide a safer working environment for building users and visitors.

2. Customer equality impact summary

Will the proposal have a disproportionate impact on any of these groups?

Insert X into one box per row, for impact level and type.

H = High, M = Medium, L = Low, N = None

+ = Positive, = = Neutral, - = Negative

Impact Level	Impact type						
	H	M	L	N	+	=	-
Disabled people			X			X	
People from different ethnic groups			X			X	
Men or women (including those who are pregnant or on maternity leave)			X		X		
Lesbian, gay or bisexual people			X			X	
People on a low income			X			X	
People in particular age groups			X			X	
People in particular faith groups			X			X	
People who are married or in a civil partnership			X			X	
Transgender people			X			X	
Other specific impacts, for example: carers, parents, impact on health and wellbeing, Armed Forces Community etc. Please specify:			X			X	

3. Explanation of customer impact

Please describe the reasons for the impact level in the table above.

The provision of new welfare facilities for both staff and pupils is being improved.

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North Somerset Council

Report to the Executive

Date of meeting: 7 December 2022

Subject of report: Placemaking Strategies: Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead

Town or Parish: Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead

Officer/member presenting: Cllr Canniford, Executive Member for Placemaking and Economy

Key Decision: Yes

Reason: Impacts on more than two wards.

Recommendation

To endorse the Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead placemaking strategies as the partnership visions for regeneration, placemaking and economic development for the respective towns.

1. Summary of report

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of engagement with stakeholders and communities in Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead to develop placemaking strategies for key areas of those towns. It requests that the Executive endorse the strategies that have emerged as a result of that work.

2. Policy

- 2.1 The work and engagement on placemaking strategies supports delivery of the Corporate Plan priorities to create “*a thriving and sustainable place*”; “*a council that empowers and cares about people*”; and “*an open and enabling organisation*”.
- 2.2 The vision, priorities and actions identified within the strategies will be fed into other relevant council strategies and policies, including where appropriate the development of the Local Plan.

3. Details

Clevedon and Nailsea

- 3.1 During 2021 and 2022, North Somerset Council, with the support of Design West Community Interest Company, worked with local communities, business interests and town councils to develop placemaking strategies for Clevedon and Nailsea, with

a focus on the town centres. This offered an opportunity for local people to shape visions for the future of their towns, which have not benefited from placemaking programmes in the past.

- 3.2 The initiative for developing the strategies was called the ‘Two Towns’ programme, as the projects were prepared concurrently, using similar methodologies, and making use of the same professional team with exemplary approaches to engagement and consultation.
- 3.3 The Design West team included specialist urban designers, architects, transport, landscape and development professionals. This team led the project, facilitated workshops and other engagement activities, and drafted proposals and reports.
- 3.4 Over 2,400 people engaged in the work, which included:
- A dedicated [website](#) providing public information about the project and acting as a repository of information during the preparation and engagement phases. The website included an online survey.
 - In-person questionnaires, including actors dressed as historical figures attending public events to canvas views and encourage participation.
 - A series of workshops and walking tours with key stakeholders including town councils, local businesses and community organisations.
- 3.5 Work started with building an understanding of local issues and priorities, before developing more specific proposals for testing through consultation. This included sketch proposals for key sites such as Queens Square in Clevedon; a cultural/community hub associated with Clevedon Library and the Curzon cinema; and the Crown Glass and high street areas in Nailsea. The proposals are included in the strategies.
- 3.6 The strategies explore how to adapt and reinvigorate the heart of the towns to meet the needs of communities for new homes and leisure, culture, and commerce through short and long-term changes. Action plans for placemaking activity will empower communities to generate local investment, support health and wellbeing and action responses to the climate emergency. The preparation of the strategies provides a strong basis for conversations to continue through partnership working as and when particular projects are taken forward.
- 3.7 The strategies include prioritised action plans with the highest priority actions set out below:

Clevedon

Project	Aims
Queen Square: public realm improvement	Animate and improve, contributing to the sense of place and increasing cultural / economic activity.
Active Travel campaign	Encourage modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport.
Clock Tower, Triangle and Old Church Road improvement	Improve the place of the street and enhance the environment for visitors and businesses.

Town Centre bus and cycle hub	Encourage cyclists to choose the town centre as a destination. To encourage and support active travel and public transport.
Meanwhile Strategy	To support evening (18hr) activity in the town centre.
Castlewood	To bring underused spaces into more frequent use. To use vacant property.

- 3.8 In considering opportunities to provide additional homes for local and younger people, facilitated workshops were held exploring options for the development of council-owned land at Churchill Avenue and at Castlewood. These sites were also identified within the recent Development Sites consultation exercise, the results of which were reported to Council on the 8th November 2022.
- 3.9 In relation to Churchill Avenue, the Council meeting on 8th November agreed that further engagement was required to explore options including possible Town Council purchase of land. The site is referenced in the Placemaking Strategy, but is not deemed to be a high priority. Its inclusion in no way prejudices other decisions of the Council, nor commits it for delivery. If it is in due course brought forward for development, this will require additional engagement, design, planning, consultation and formal decisions of the council, both in its landowner and planning roles.

Nailsea

Project	Aims
Nailsea Library	Maintain the role and presence of the library in the town centre.
Crown Glass site development brief and guidance	Develop a shared vision and strategy to guide short and long-term improvement.
Establish a Business Improvement District (BID)	Set out and lead a series of joined-up activities to make an inviting town centre.
Meanwhile Strategy	Support evening activity, and designer makers/independent businesses to bring empty shops and public spaces into use.
Town Centre bus and cycle hub	Encourage cyclists to choose the town centre as a destination, support active travel and public transport.
Cultural and heritage strategy	Build capacity – modelled on the Culture Weston Framework.
Village Green and High Street – public realm improvement	Make the high street a greener and more attractive destination.

- 3.10 In considering opportunities to provide additional homes for local and younger people, the Nailsea workshops included exploring potential for free surface car-

parking to be repurposed for new homes. This included as an example the free long-stay car park at Clevedon Road, which was used as a case study design exercise.

- 3.12 This was a challenging discussion for some stakeholders, who felt that the loss of free town centre parking might be damaging for local businesses. The Placemaking Strategy includes an action about looking at the town's Parking Strategy with a view to "*using land more efficiently and supporting a balanced approach to transport*", however this is not scored as a high priority action.
- 3.13 The possibility of developing car parks was also considered within the recent Development Sites consultation exercise, the results of which were reported to Council on the 8th November 2022. No specific sites were identified to be pursued, but it was agreed that future work could be undertaken with highways colleagues to identify any sites that might potentially be suitable, where they are underutilised or it could accommodate development above parking.
- 3.14 The discussions and actions in the Nailsea Placemaking Strategy about parking in no way prejudices other decisions of the Council, nor commits any of the parking areas in the town for development. If sites are in due course brought forward, this will require additional engagement, design, planning, consultation and formal decisions of the council, both in its landowner and planning roles.
- 3.15 The Clevedon and Nailsea Placemaking Strategies are very much intended to be partnership documents. Outcomes are only achievable through partnership working and collaborations with residents, town councils, the voluntary sector and social enterprise, business networks and investors. Officers from across the council will work together and with those partners to assist delivery of actions where needed.
- 3.16 Regular stakeholder meetings will continue, so that all interested parties can continue to be involved. Project groups will be established to work on the priority projects and these will also use the stakeholder group for consultation and feedback.
- 3.17 The progress of any of the individual projects identified in the documents will be dependent on further work to determine feasibility and securing all appropriate consents and funding. Mention in these documents does not imply formal council commitments to any specific project unless and until the normal governance and project development/approval processes are completed.
- 3.18 The draft strategies are attached as appendices A and B. Further information can be found at <https://twotowns.place>.

Portishead

- 3.19 In addition to the work in Clevedon and Nailsea, the council has worked with Portishead Town Council and business and land interests to prepare a Wyndham Way Development Framework. This addresses an area of Portishead between the marina and the high street. It is different from the Clevedon and Nailsea work because it is concerned specifically with the future of a large brownfield area, the evolution of which needs to be coordinated through the planning process.
- 3.20 The project was initiated due to planning challenges in relation to a previous, and now withdrawn, outline planning application for Old Mill Road, a trading estate set off Wyndham Way.

- 3.21 In 2020, North Somerset Council began a process of engagement and exploration with Portishead Town Council and the asset managers Abrdn (formerly known as Aberdeen Standard Investment), who were acting on behalf of landowners the Phoenix Fund. A tripartite memorandum of understanding was agreed, and a steering group formed that also included local business representatives, including from within the Old Mill Road trading estate. The steering group has met monthly since July 2020, albeit with some periods of not meeting during procurement periods.
- 3.22 Part-funded by North Somerset Council and the Phoenix Fund, a professional team led by Allies and Morrison Architects has led and facilitated a process resulting in a development framework. This seeks to establish important principles in relation to economy, homes, movement, infrastructure, the climate emergency and delivery. It is intended to help guide future development proposals that may come forward from landowners and developers.
- 3.23 The Wyndham Way Development Framework is strategic in nature but seeks to bring together and build upon opportunities to:
- Introduce good planning urban design principles for 20 hectares of previously developed land within Portishead town centre.
 - Make connections across the site, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists who are currently poorly served.
 - Make the most of emerging improvements to public transport, including though MetroWest Phase 1b, the reopening of the Portishead to Bristol rail line and improved bus services.
 - Ensure there is a supply of good quality workspace to increase the local employment capacity and meet the needs of existing and new ways of working.
 - Provide new homes across multiple tenures including genuinely affordable housing.
- 3.24 The project has its own dedicated website at www.wyndhamway.co.uk. This has been available for engagement throughout the project and has hosted a public consultation exercise between September and November 2022, publicised by four local press articles. During this period, 4,636 visits were made to the website, including 994 new visitors who had not visited the site before. 49 responses to the online survey were made, making 275 comments. 23 residents and stakeholders attended the consultation event organised by Allies and Morrison at Portishead Library on 13 October and four responses were made by email to the project consultation email address.
- 3.25 The area of land within the development framework has been subject to development pressure in recent years and this is likely to continue and increase with the delivery of the MetroWest Portishead rail line. While the principle of development can generally be supported under the current Local Plan, the development framework provides an opportunity to coordinate change and ensure proposals that come forward respect the key principles set out above.
- 3.26 The draft document is attached at appendix C. In the future, it can be converted to a supplementary planning document to the Local Plan and is expected to form part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan at examination in public. This will require further public consultation and a formal council decision.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 Extensive and exemplary public engagement and consultation has been undertaken for all three studies, as detailed in section 3 above. This approach has sought to ensure a representative sample of respondents and to provide opportunities for people to make representations over time and through a variety of means.
- 4.2 The respective town councils, local stakeholders, business and community networks have contributed very actively and positively, often having to consider very challenging issues.
- 4.3 The exercises have provided the basis for continued partnership working to develop initiatives within action plans and ensure ongoing opportunities for local people to participate in discussions that shape the future of their towns.
- 4.4 The strategies will be considered at the Place Policy & Scrutiny Panel on 23rd November 2023. Verbal feedback will be provided to the Executive meeting if required.

5. Financial implications

- 5.1 Funding for the studies has been provided by revenue reserves from within Placemaking and Growth, allocations from the Community Renewal Fund and in the case of Portishead, contributions from The Phoenix Fund. The respective town councils were invited to contribute.
- 5.2 The endorsement of the strategies does not in itself bring any financial implications.
- 5.3 Future actions and projects identified within the strategies may have financial implications for the council and other partners. Each project will develop its own project and resourcing plans suitable for the nature of the project, which will be subject to standard council governance and decision-making requirements.

6. Legal powers and implications

- 6.1 The endorsement of the strategies in itself does not bring any legal implications.
- 6.2 The outcomes and individual actions from the strategies may have legal implications. These will be assessed and dealt with on a project-by-project basis.
- 6.3 Clevedon and Nailsea documents have not been prepared to be planning policy instruments, however they may be used to help inform the council's emerging Local Plan and any associated supplementary planning guidance.
- 6.4 The Wyndham Way Development Framework has been prepared so that it can become a supplementary planning document to the Local Plan. This would require further governance and decision-making by the council through its role as Local Planning Authority.
- 6.5 Not all projects are within the council's gift to deliver or are on land or property that the council will own. There will need to be effective partnership working between the council, property owners and funders to support delivery.

- 6.6 There may be occasions when the council may need to use its powers to compulsory purchase sites to enable delivery, where there is a credible proposition and the council's costs can be underwritten. These would be addressed if and when such requirements arose as part of the project governance and management.

7. Climate Change and environmental implications

- 7.1 North Somerset's commitment to the declaration of the climate change emergency and its sustainable development goals are core principles underpinning the strategy documents. As projects come forward, the specific details and requirements for each project will be developed to maximise sustainability and minimise emissions.

8. Risk management

- 8.1 The endorsement of the strategies in themselves does not present any significant risks. Each of the action plan projects will develop their own risk management approaches.

9. Equality implications

- 9.1 Care was taken to ensure that a wide range of stakeholders, individuals and other interests were involved in the process of developing the strategies. The public consultation took an innovative approach to ensure that communities were fairly represented.
- 9.1 As projects come forward, equality implications of each scheme will be considered as an integral part of the project plans.

10. Corporate implications

- 10.1 The preparation of the documents has involved a wide range of services from across the council.
- 10.2 The visions and priorities within the documents will be shared with relevant services to feed into their own strategies and actions. Relevant examples include leisure, public transport, open space and school place planning.
- 10.3 Delivery of projects will require support from across the council, however these actions will be delivered in partnership and some will not need to involve North Somerset Council. Project officers will engage with regulatory services such as planning, highways and licensing where appropriate.

11. Options considered

- 11.1 Not to prepare or endorse the strategies for Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead, or to significantly amend their content: this is not recommended as the strategies have been developed through extensive stakeholder engagement including town councils. To reject the conclusions would be damaging to relationships with the key stakeholders and partners involved.

Authors:

Rachel Lewis, Heritage and Design Manager
Alex Hearn, Assistant Director Placemaking and Growth

Appendices:

- Appendix A: Clevedon Placemaking Strategy.
- Appendix B: Nailsea Placemaking Strategy.
- Appendix C: Wyndham Way Development Framework.

Background papers:

N/a

PROPOSED

WELCOME TO THE CLEVEDON PLACEMAKING STRATEGY



IN ASSOCIATION WITH



TWC
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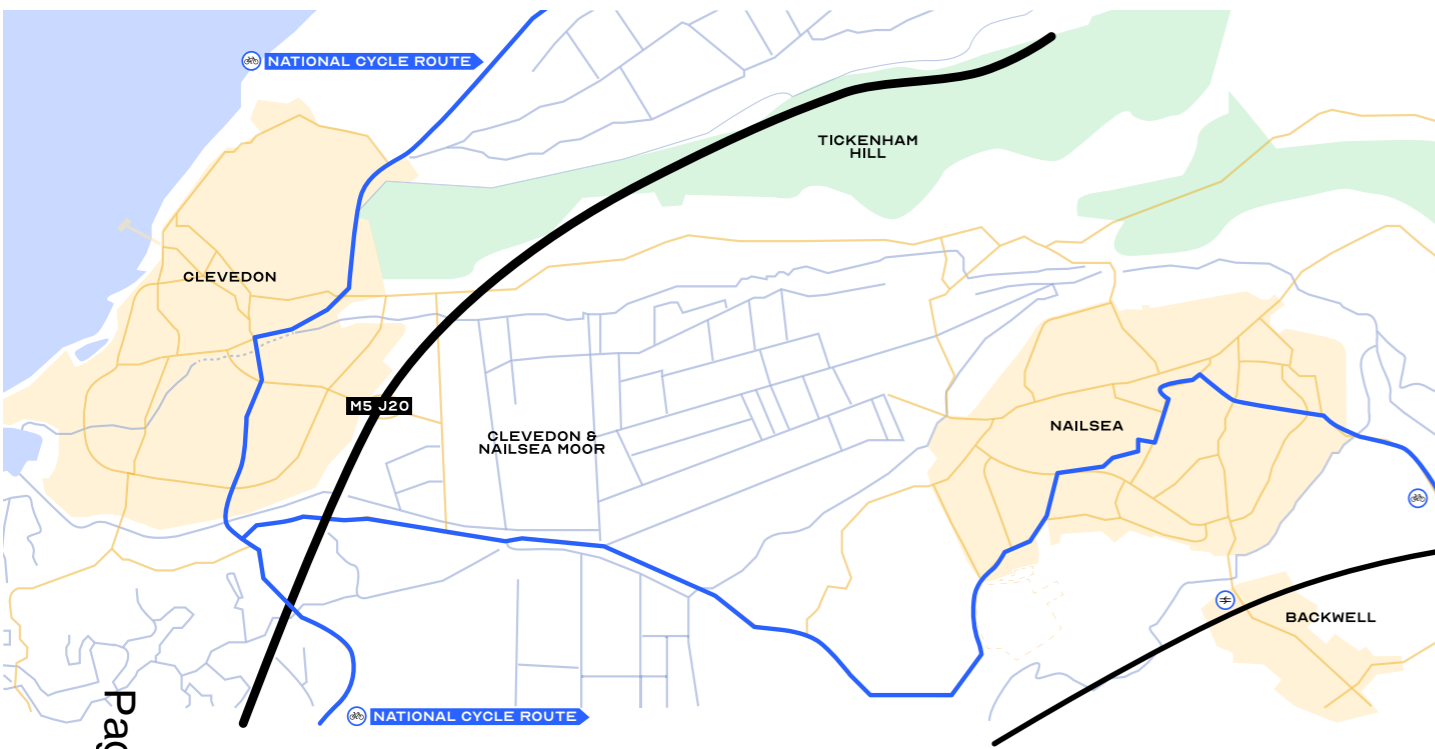
The Town Council and North Somerset Council are working together with local stakeholders to take a placemaking approach to improving the town centre, creating new economic and cultural opportunities and supporting active travel, whilst building on what is special and distinctive about the town.

The proposed Placemaking Strategy was developed in parallel with North Somerset's emerging Local Plan for 2023-38 and focuses on the role of the town centre and seafront and their connections to the town as a whole.

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CLEVEDON IN CONTEXT



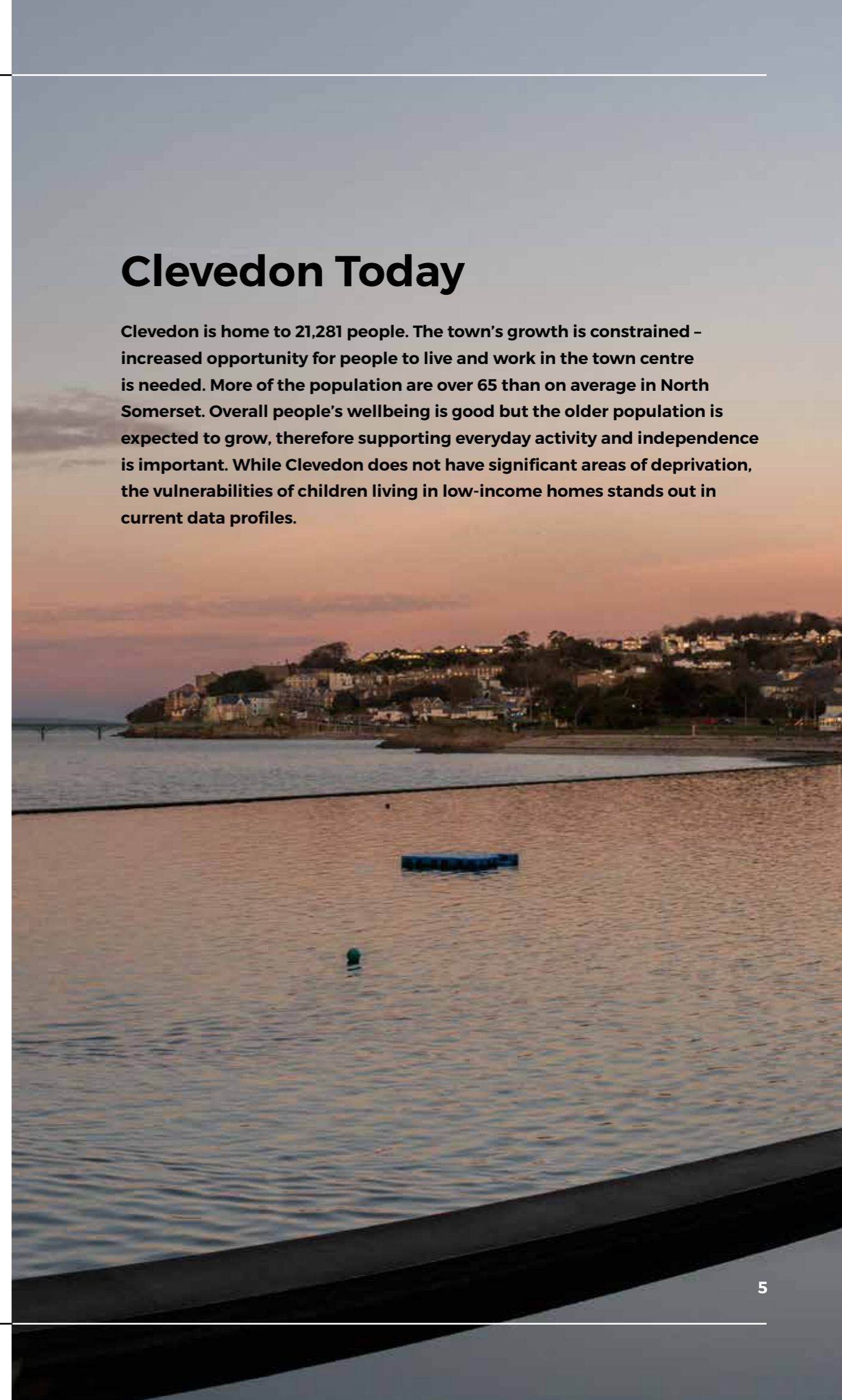
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Clevedon is a coastal town set on and around seven hills overlooking the Bristol Channel. The town grew as a Victorian resort – Clevedon Pier and many fine Victorian buildings are included in its conservation area. The town has expanded gradually over the years with areas of late modern housing infilled around the historic centre. Clevedon Bay is popular for sailing, rowing, paddle boarding and swimming.

The promenade is a popular stopping point for cyclists. Clevedon's inland historic town centre includes the Curzon Cinema and Queen's Square, Clevedon Pier, the Curzon Cinema and Clevedon Marine Lake are key local landmarks that have been restored and are now run by the community. The town is accessible from the M5 and by rail at Yatton and via long-range cycle routes from Bristol and Yatton.

Clevedon Today

Clevedon is home to 21,281 people. The town's growth is constrained – increased opportunity for people to live and work in the town centre is needed. More of the population are over 65 than on average in North Somerset. Overall people's wellbeing is good but the older population is expected to grow, therefore supporting everyday activity and independence is important. While Clevedon does not have significant areas of deprivation, the vulnerabilities of children living in low-income homes stands out in current data profiles.



Co-designing Places

The proposed Placemaking Strategy for Clevedon aims to celebrate and develop the identity of the town, setting expectations for future development, planning and funding bids. The strategy also identifies opportunities for meanwhile projects that can be led by communities as a catalyst for change. The Strategy has been developed to link to local and national policy and promote well-designed, beautiful, healthy and sustainable places.

The Strategy was co-designed with a community steering group during 2021 and 2022. A series of workshops set out priorities for the town and explored the potential of some key sites. The Steering Group included representatives

from Clevedon Town Council and those from business, cultural and civil society in the town, bringing a diverse set of perspectives to the co-design process.

Progress was shared via the Two Towns project website (including updates on a sister project in Nailsea) where the public could also engage in the project and contribute ideas and responses.

Stakeholder workshops explored a wide range of themes related to the WECA Quality Places Charter. These included connectivity (public space and active travel), landscape, biodiversity and health, cultural, economic, social development and zero carbon.

Vision and Priorities

Placemaking activity in Clevedon will build on the town's Victorian heritage and identity as a place to enjoy the sea. It should enhance and connect the town's three historic destinations: Clevedon Pier; Clevedon Marine Lake; and the Curzon Cinema, creating an inclusive cultural heartbeat in the town centre, powered by its unique community groups.

Placemaking activity will empower communities to generate local investment, support health and wellbeing and take action to tackle climate change.

The workshops and public engagement identified five placemaking priorities for Clevedon.

Placemaking Priorities



DISTINCT

Promote locally responsive architecture, adding to 19thC and seaside identity. Reconnect the town centre and enhance public spaces to create new destinations and improve the setting historic streets and buildings.



ENTICING

Generate places and homes to suit young people and young families to maintain diverse communities. Make places attractive to visitors throughout the year, improving recreational opportunities for residents.



ANIMATED

Create new opportunities for enterprise. Create new spaces for co-working, culture and seafront amenities. Improve the presence and attractiveness of key destinations so they are easy for visitors and residents to find.



BLUE & GREEN

Enhance existing gardens and planting. Develop opportunities for communities to take ownership of and participate in rewilding. Support the development of community gardens, creating opportunities for improved wellbeing. Make the presence of the river in the town centre more visible.



ACTIVE

Make it easier to get around on foot and by bike, highlighting key destinations and improving wayfinding. Make the town centre more pedestrian-friendly and healthier, in keeping with the 'fresh air' associations of the town.

Clevedon Strategies

Under each placemaking priority there are seven actions that underpin Clevedon's Strategies.



DISTINCT

Promote locally responsive architecture, adding to 19thC and seaside identity. Reconnect the town centre and enhance streets and public spaces to create new destinations. Make streets feel safer with more evening activities. Value the town's strong network of community groups.

- 1 Bring different organisations together to work collaboratively to supercharge the town's creative and cultural and social potential.
- 2 Restore the library and extend as a cultural and community hub creating greener outdoor spaces/gardens.
- 3 Develop a safer feeling 18-hour town centre - with more active frontages onto streets and public space with 'eyes on the street'.
- 4 Set design standards for high quality denser housing and mixed-use development in the town centre.
- 5 Encourage high quality, locally responsive design and using Design Review.
- 6 Develop a Parking Strategy to reduce the impact of cars on places and encourage other modes of transport.
- 7 Use resources smartly - make low and zero carbon approaches a new normal - as outlined in North Somerset's Climate Emergency Strategic Plan.



ENTICING

Generate places and homes to suit young people and families to maintain diverse communities. Make places attractive to visitors and residents throughout the year, improving recreational opportunities. Put the Library and Curzon Cinema at heart of Clevedon's community. Make space for children, teenagers, families and older people and better link communities.

- 1 Recognise the opportunity to develop the cultural dimension of the town to draw visitors and provide new recreational experiences for residents.
- 2 Create a community and cultural hub centred on the Library to bring people together and meet the strategic aims of the North Somerset Libraries Strategy.
- 3 Enhance the presence of Princes Hall and intensify the use of the building and landscape for cultural activities.
- 4 Attract visitors into the town all year round to boost the local economy.
- 5 Identify opportunities for more diverse housing to be developed promoting exemplary projects for example at Churchill Avenue.
- 6 Consider different models of development such as co-housing and reusing existing
- 7 Improve access to amenity within 15-minutes, considering sport and social destinations as well as cultural, work and retail destinations.



ANIMATED

Create new opportunities for enterprise in Clevedon. Restore and enhance Queen's Square as a pivotal public space. Create new spaces for co-working, culture and seafront amenities. Improve the presence and attractiveness of key destinations so that they are easy for visitors and residents to find.

- 1 Develop a partnership to lead a meanwhile strategy for temporary cultural and food-related events and experiences.
- 2 Identify opportunities for pop-up pitches and new concessions around Queen's Square working with landowners to build community participation and ownership.
- 3 Consider the role of festivals, markets, and events and how these opportunities are supported.
- 4 Explore the potential for improved retail and recreational amenities at Clevedon Marine Lake and Salthouse Fields.
- 5 Identify new low-cost workshop and co-working spaces and establish a partnership to manage and develop these.
- 6 Link physical and digital activities to connect cultural and business organisations.
- 7 Develop a parallel cultural strategy to the Culture Weston Framework.





BLUE & GREEN

Enhance existing gardens and planting. Develop opportunities for communities to participate in rewilding. Support the development of new community gardens, creating opportunities for improved wellbeing. Highlight the links from Clevedon's rivers to the sea, making their presence more visible.

- 1 Improve the quality of the environment in the town centre with increased pedestrian priority, planting, seating and lighting.
- 2 Create new gardens/green spaces in the town centre such as at the Library and Queen's Square.
- 3 Define incremental and achievable improvements to public space to begin right away – creating spaces that encourage use.
- 4 Increase the use of existing gardens such as Sunhill Park and Marshall's Field.
- 5 Enhance the river corridors – making rivers more accessible and giving them more presence in the town centre.
- 6 Create new play destinations to bring young people into outdoor spaces.
- 7 Link small changes to the big value connections established in North Somerset's Landscape and Rewilding Strategy.
- 8 Set up a biodiversity partnership of existing community groups to develop interpretation, ownership and maintenance of rewilded spaces and gardens.



ACTIVE

Make it easier to get around on foot and by bike, encouraging active travel. Improve wayfinding and link the three distinct areas of the town. Make the Town Centre healthier in keeping with Clevedon's 'fresh air' associations. Improve the quality of the public realm so that businesses can thrive.

- 1 Shape the public realm to create a sense of arrival in the town, reducing the severance caused by the Great Western Road.
- 2 Increase the impact of the Curzon Cinema, linking to a remodelled Library and connecting these valued places to Queen's Square improving Old Church Road.
- 3 Reduce the environmental impact of traffic and parking through the town centre link and improving public spaces and streets.
- 4 Improve wayfinding with themes, lighting and signage improving access to footpaths and cycleways. Create new – and celebrate existing – landmarks.
- 5 Build on North Somerset's Active Travel Strategy making cycling attractive to all, creating safer well-connected routes.
- 6 Locate a mobility hub in the town centre, including bike maintenance, stores, racks and e-bike hire.
- 7 Partner with communities and schools to encourage the take up of more walking and cycling.



CONNECTING CLEVEDON

Clevedon Pier, the beach and Marine Lake are well linked to the thriving shops at Hill Road and Alexandra Road, whilst the historic town centre requires regeneration.

This neighbourhood diagram shows how the pier, lake and town centre form a central triangle of destinations. It also highlights the walking and cycling routes which North Somerset Council plans to improve, including wayfinding to key connections and establishing links to the National Cycle Network.

PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES

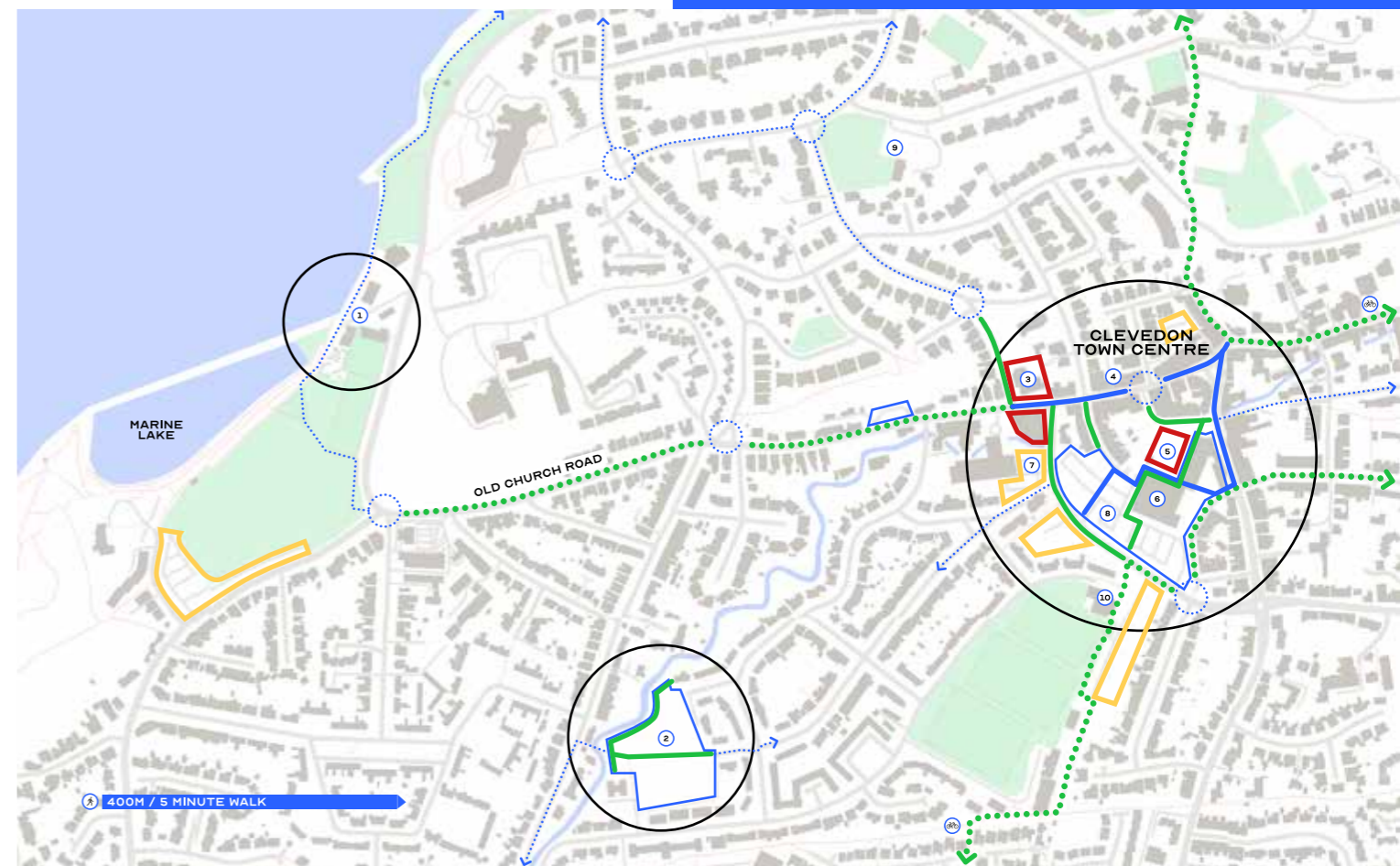
- Walking and Cycling Improvements
- ... Wayfinding Two Rivers (Land Yeo)
- ... Wayfinding Seafront
- ... Wayfinding Curzon to Pier
- Linking to National Cycle Network
- ▶ Proposed bespoke signs/highlights
- 📍 Proposed additional Town Maps
- 📍 Existing Discover Clevedon Town Maps

TOWN CENTRE PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES

This map locates streets, public spaces and sites identified by stakeholders for improvement over time. The project opportunities relate to the vision and priorities proposed. They aim to enhance the town centre, generating distinctive, enticing and animated destinations, owned and curated by communities, whilst contributing to blue & green and active travel infrastructure.

PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES

1. Improved retail and recreational amenities at Salhouse Fields
2. New homes at Churchill Avenue
3. Improved connections between Library and Curzon Cinema
4. Old Church Road and Clock Tower/Triangle improvement
5. Queen's Square animation and improvement
6. B&M store redevelopment, plus new homes
7. Calming Great Western Road
8. Town centre cycle hub
9. Princes Hall improvement
10. The Barn, Youth and Community Centre improvement and 'play on the way'



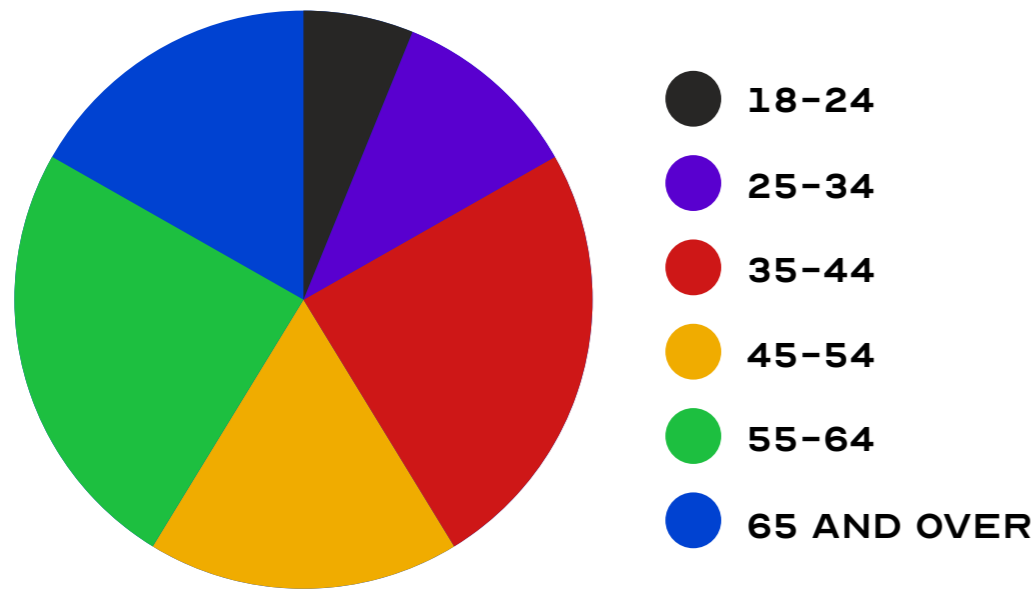
KEY

- Improved pedestrian and cycle links between Curzon, Library and The Triangle
- Improved blue & green links to Queens Square and Great Western Rd
- Improved active travel connections
- Opportunities to improve and animate public spaces
- Strategic sites
- Opportunities to improve and diversify use of car park sites to be informed by parking survey
- ⋯ Wayfinding opportunities

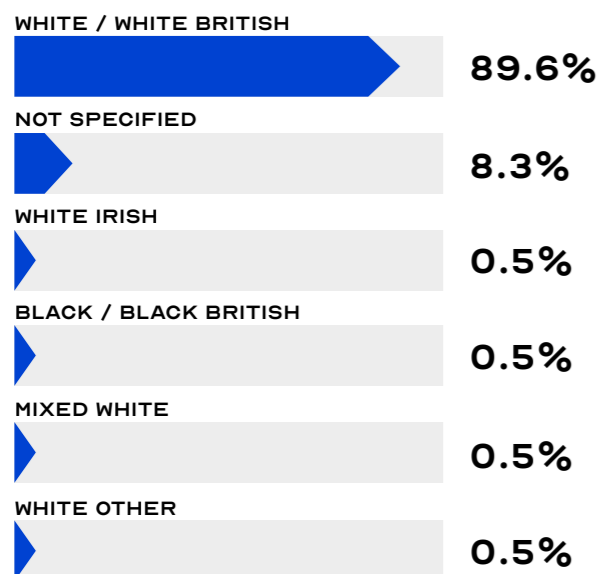
Public Survey Data Summary

A public survey (195 respondents) explored how Clevedon town centre could be adapted and invigorated to meet the community's short- and long-term needs.

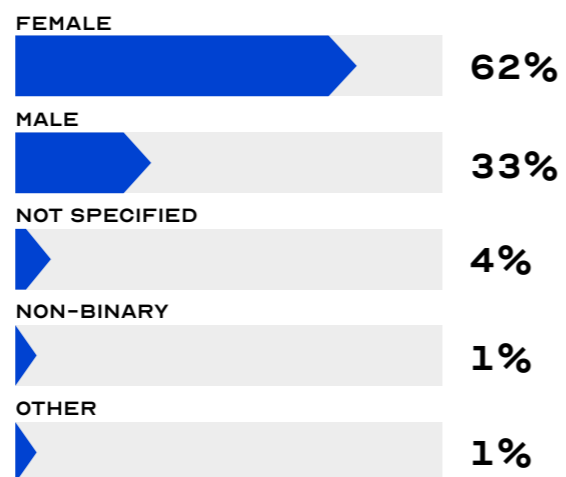
AGE GROUP



ETHNICITY



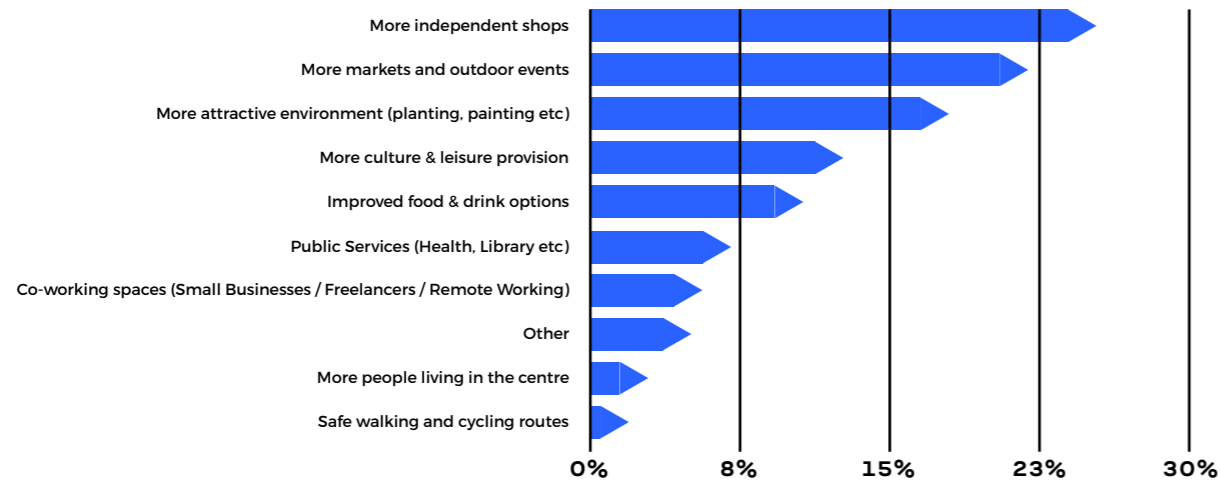
GENDER



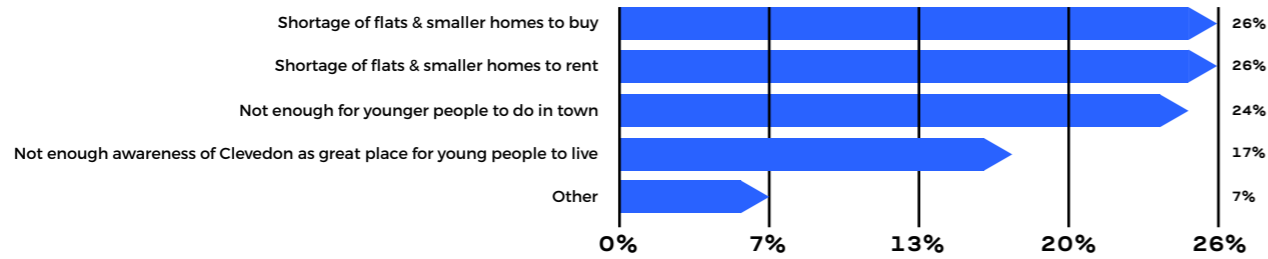
What do you love about Clevedon?



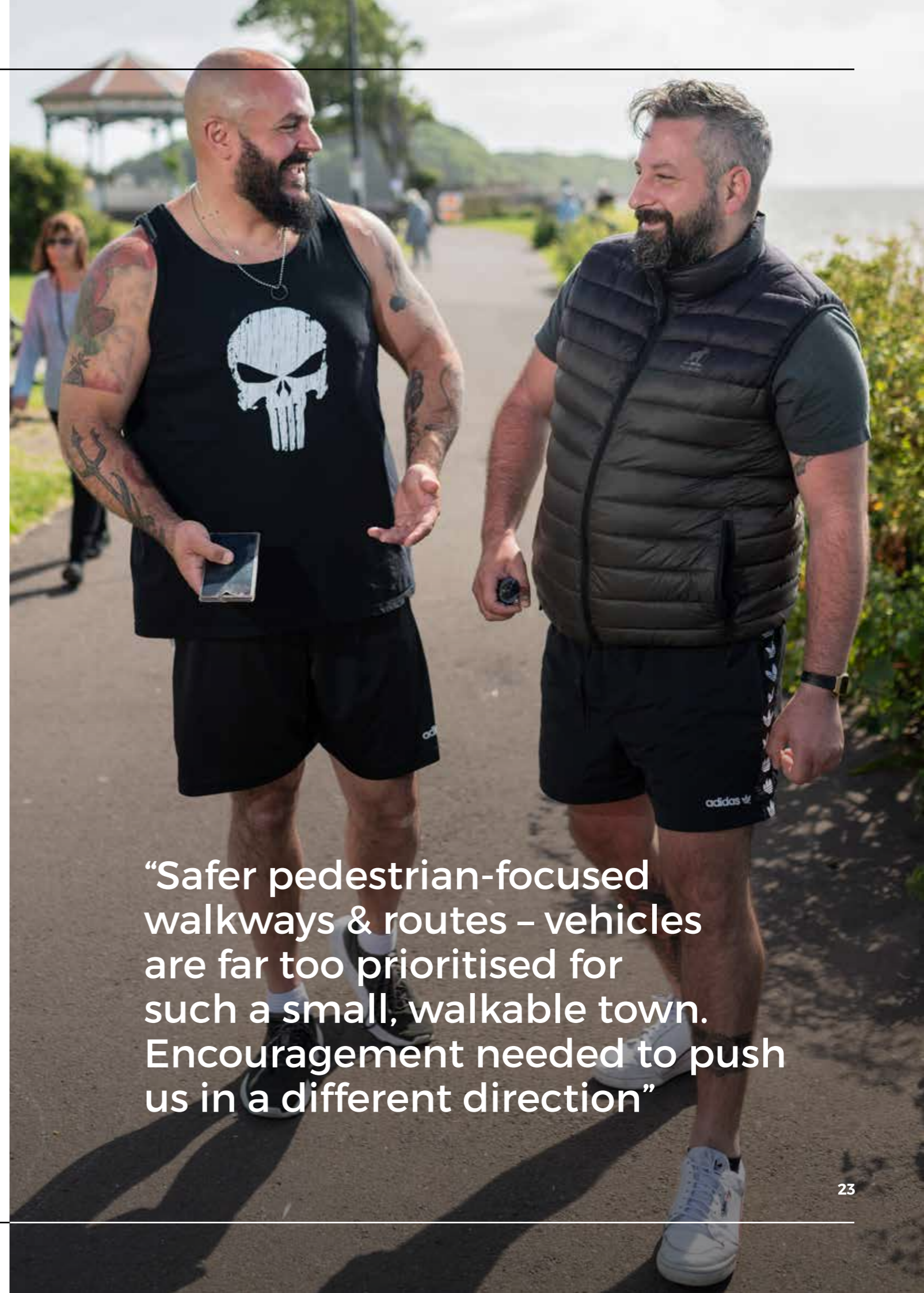
How do we help the centre of Clevedon thrive?



What are the biggest challenges in attracting younger people to live in Clevedon?



How can Clevedon promote healthy people and nature?

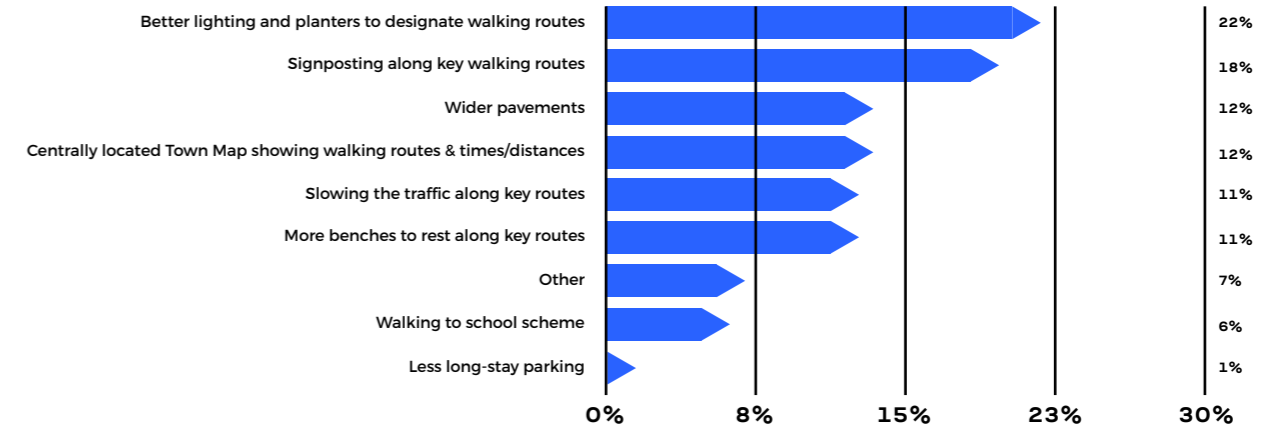


“Safer pedestrian-focused walkways & routes – vehicles are far too prioritised for such a small, walkable town. Encouragement needed to push us in a different direction”



“Having dedicated cycle lanes which actually link up the whole town not just sporadic sections would mean less confident cyclists could get out more”

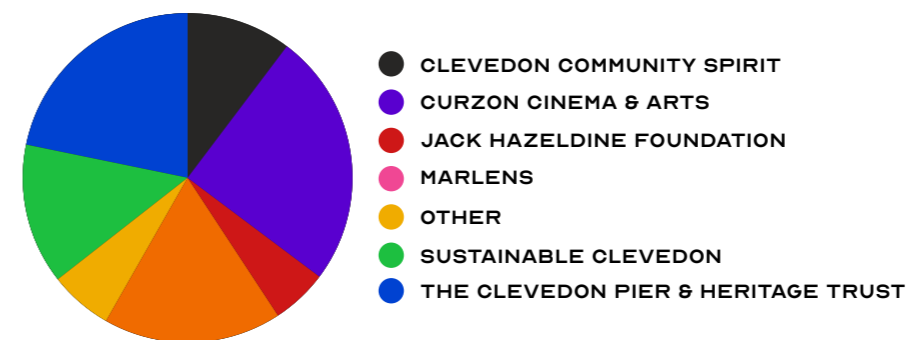
What would make you walk more?



What would make you cycle more?



Which community groups can make Clevedon a better place?

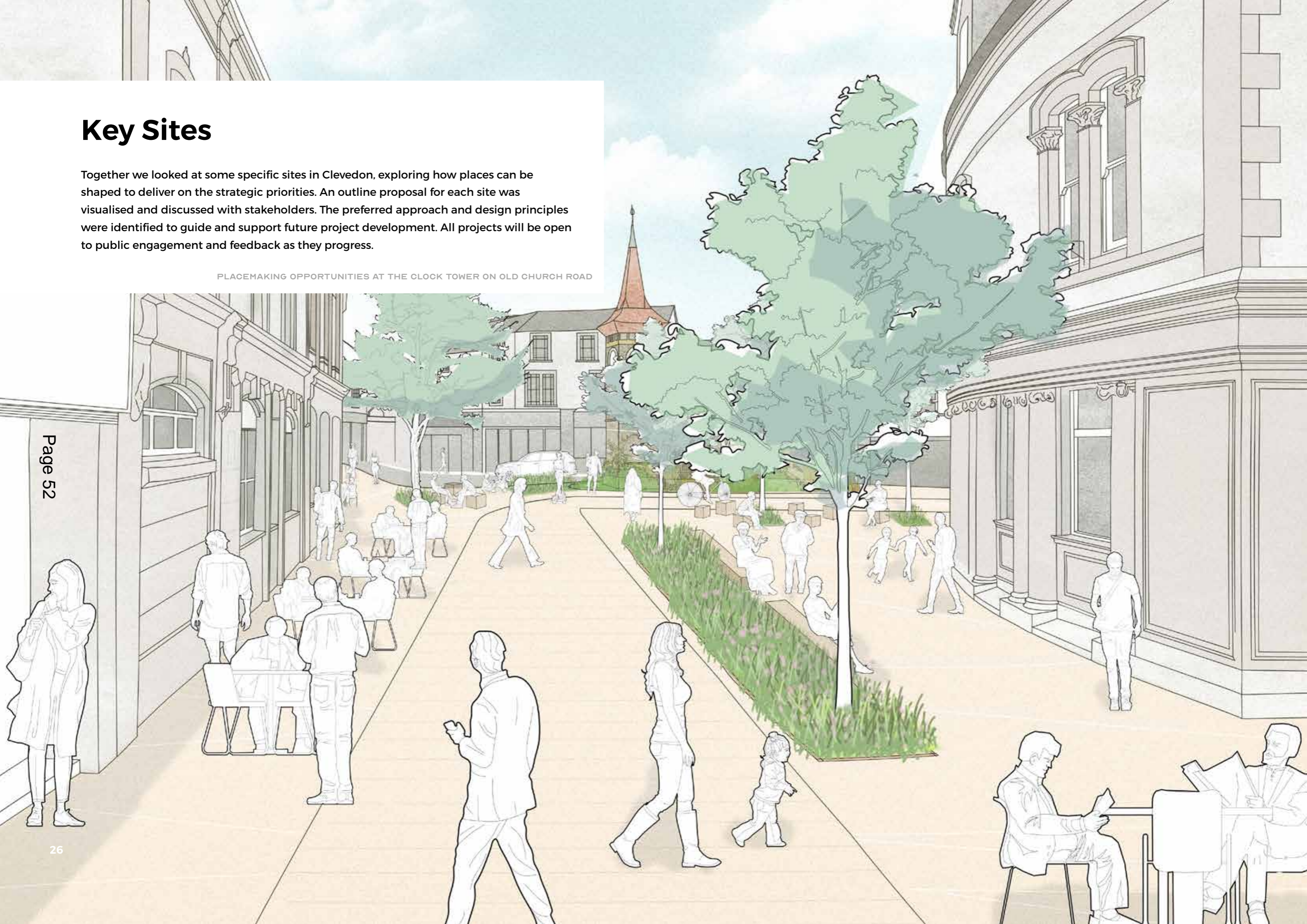


Other groups mentioned
 Clevedon Aid, Clevedon BID, Clevedon Civic Society, Clevedon Community Bandstand, Clevedon Literary Festival CIC, Clevedon Men's Shed, Clevedon Pride, Clevedon Skate Project, Strawberry Line to Clevedon connection group, Guides and Scouts, Knitting group at Baptist Church, The Barn Groups, St John's Church, Theatre Orchard, Culture Weston, Transition Clevedon, Clevedon Gardeners' Club

Key Sites

Together we looked at some specific sites in Clevedon, exploring how places can be shaped to deliver on the strategic priorities. An outline proposal for each site was visualised and discussed with stakeholders. The preferred approach and design principles were identified to guide and support future project development. All projects will be open to public engagement and feedback as they progress.

PLACEMAKING OPPORTUNITIES AT THE CLOCK TOWER ON OLD CHURCH ROAD



Queen's Square

Queen's Square is at the heart of Clevedon's historic town centre. The weekly Charter Market held every Thursday was established in 1346. The square is surrounded by small cafés and retail units and by Clevedon Baptist Church. In December 2021 planning permission was granted to redevelop the B&M store to the south of the square and add new residential units. An associated investment is to be made to improve Queen's Square. Stakeholders would like to see improvements made to the space early on, and a clear long-term strategy.

The square is a pivotal public space in the town but it needs improvement and better animation. It sees limited use in the evening and feels unsafe at times. Events held there do not have the draw of those on the seafront or Hill Road. Improvements should provide a space that gives local residents a sense of pride and ownership and sustains intensified outdoor activities throughout the year.

VIEW OF QUEEN'S SQUARE



Making an attractive destination

Stakeholders would like to see:

- High-impact visual changes to improve draw and dwell time, including generous-sized street furniture and elements for play or playfulness suitable for children and all ages.
- More social and meeting spaces and more greenery and planting.
- Improved infrastructure for seasonal events, markets and performances, harmonising competing uses.
- Improved lighting and reduction of visual barriers to design out anti-social behaviour.
- Opportunities for tenants to spill out into the public realm (e.g. street cafés).
- An enhanced toilet building – making a more positive contribution to the route through with easy access to services.
- Responding to heritage – drawing on the site's river and railway heritage.
- A wider public realm strategy to include Station Road, the Station Road /Kenn Road junction and the Clock Tower junction to Old Church Road

- Include a green transport hub including electric cycle charging and the Strawberry Line cycle amenity

Wider public engagement defined a vision; Queen's Square can transform into a multifunctional meeting point for the community. A place to relax, spend time in nature, host activities, visit the market and support local businesses. The area can be playful and safe for all ages.

APPROACH

Changes to Queen's Square and subsequent management should be led by a group of key stakeholders, to include: owners/ leaseholders; the Baptist Church; Clevedon BID; Theatre Shop; Wessex Investors; the Market; and cultural/performance organisers. As well as making physical improvements, the aim should be to select appropriate tenants and fund a cultural/ animation programme for the Square.

QUEEN'S SQUARE AND THE CLOCK TOWER PROPOSED PLAN



DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- AN URBAN PLAZA AT STATION ROAD WITH ROOM FOR OUTDOOR DINING
- AN EXTENDED NATURAL PLAY AREA AROUND THE LARGE TREE
- A FLEXIBLE MARKET, MEANWHILE AND EVENT SPACE
- A DEFINED MOVEMENT CORRIDOR AND ENHANCED WC BUILDING

Clevedon Library and Curzon Cinema

The Curzon Cinema is one of the oldest cinemas in the country and has been in continuous operation since 1912. Like Clevedon Pier and Clevedon Marine Lake, the cinema is owned and managed by the community. It is opposite Clevedon's Edwardian Library at the western edge of the Old Town. The library is soon to be refurbished internally. The area is currently very car dominated with poor quality public realm. The Curzon is a Grade II listed building, and the Library is in the Conservation Area.

VIEW OF CURZON CINEMA AND CLEVEDON LIBRARY FROM OLD CHURCH ROAD



Clevedon's cultural and community Hub

The proposals explore opportunities to create an enhanced cultural hub for the town, centred on this pair of distinctive historic buildings. There is opportunity to extend the library and reconfigure parts of the Curzon Cinema, making sensitive contemporary additions to intensify the use of the buildings. From the outline proposals highlighted here, a Design Brief for an extension to the Library will be developed with a dedicated stakeholder group. This will aim to make the building more legible and flexible in its use and remove previous poor quality adaptation. Public realm improvements to the library site should improve accessibility, functionality and appearance (and greenness) of its external spaces. There is also opportunity to animate the east facing façade of the Curzon using lighting and sympathetic signage.

An associated Phased Strategy for Public Realm Improvement will be developed.

There is opportunity to link the Curzon and Library by improving the public realm and creating wider crossings or a shared surface with pedestrian priority. A strategy will be developed to bring together current proposals by North Somerset Highways and Active Travel, linking to proposals for The Clock Tower, Triangle, Old Church Road and routes to the seafront. Proposals will include early wins and a prioritised set of improvements that can be implemented over time.

APPROACH

A group established to help steer public realm improvements could support here, linking to Queen's Square and any meanwhile projects. The development of the Library as a community hub will bring together Clevedon's cultural and community organisations.

LIBRARY AND CURZON PROPOSED SITE PLAN



DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- EASIER ENTRANCES TO THE CURZON AND LIBRARY
- GREENER COMMUNITY GARDEN IN FRONT OF LIBRARY
- FLEXIBLE NEW LIBRARY EXTENSION
- INCREASED PAVEMENT WIDTH WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR SEATING AND PLANTING
- CALMER MORE PEOPLE CENTRED PUBLIC SPACES

Castlewood

North Somerset Council made a formal decision in May 2022 to stop using the Castlewood site as offices – due to hybrid working practices, the high level of annual costs associated with retaining it and its very poor energy efficiency. A stakeholder workshop was held to explore possible approaches to the site. The site is at the eastern edge of Clevedon about 1km from the town centre fronting north onto Tickenham Road with a southern edge bounded by the river. It is seen when approaching from Nailsea and is part of a gateway to Clevedon.

VIEW OF APARTMENTS FROM RIVER



Shaping a new gateway to Clevedon

The overall aim is to sustainably intensify the use of the site, predominantly for housing. The questions explored in the workshop were:

1. Reuse of existing building or new build accommodation – how can we meet zero carbon ambitions?
2. A landscape led development – how can we ensure the site is not dominated by cars?
3. Access to the Land Yeo – should/could this be made fully accessible to the public?
4. Provision of commercial space on the site – how much and what type?
5. Who is this new housing for?

The workshop explored two options one retaining and adapting the exiting building another replacing it. Retaining the building was possible but would place limitations on the layout and types of housing that could be proposed. Stakeholders wished to see the whole life carbon value of replacing the building evaluated.

The river front aspect and views of the Land Yeo should be used more, and the screen

of Cypress trees potentially replaced with more permeable and biodiverse habitat. A landscape strategy should deliver shared public gardens and play spaces and better active travel links. The site shouldn't be overly car dominated. It is an opportunity for a neighbourhood mobility hub with accessible bus services and a possible car club.

Housing was generally considered to be a good use of the site. It would be good to see much needed smaller low-cost housing included. Routes for young people into housing are needed. The site is also attractive to families as it is close to schools. Stakeholders would like to see some commercial and social spaces included in the mix.

APPROACH

For North Somerset Council making the most of previously developed and brownfield land, the 4 hectare (10 acre) site has the potential to deliver an exemplar low carbon residential-led mixed use development that can provide good quality and energy efficient homes including genuinely affordable housing to meet local needs.

PROPOSED PLAN – REUSE EXISTING



PROPOSED PLAN – REPLACE EXISTING



Churchill Avenue

Churchill Avenue is a green field site designated for housing in North Somerset's Local Plan (2006-26). This allows for 44 homes, improved play and public open spaces, and space for river access (surface water drainage features, with access, is via Wordsworth Road). The site is a WWII Pennyfield and has a strong desire line crossing it. More diverse housing is an identified wish of stakeholders.

VIEW OF HOMES FROM SHARED LANDSCAPE



A new housing exemplar

Some design principles for the site have been defined with stakeholders. Proposals for the site should be landscape-led, enhance biodiversity and bring people into contact with nature. The layout should offer local amenity with access to the river and small-scale opportunities for play. It should contribute to east west walking and cycling routes and the Land Yeo Friends Two River Walk. Bridge and footpath links to Strode Road should be improved. The public realm proposals should work with the site's history. The impact of parking and hard surfaces should be well contained.

There should be a focus on family homes offering a mixed tenure scheme for open market and public rent, and no senior living as well-provided elsewhere.

APPROACH

The project should be led by North Somerset in partnership with adjacent landowners where opportunities may exist to improve nearby sites. The proposal should be an exemplar for housing design in the district and should be of high-quality, distinctive and zero carbon.

A flood risk assessment, sequential and exception test will need to accompany any planning application.



DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- LOCATE SHARED LANDSCAPE ALONG DESIRE LINE, IMPROVING WALKING LINKS
- ENHANCE BIODIVERSITY OF RIVER'S EDGE AND MAKE MORE ACCESSIBLE
- SET BLOCKS BACK RESPECTING NEIGHBOURING BUILDINGS
- INCLUDE POCKET PARK

Clevedon Stakeholders Priorities for Project Actions and Timings

PROJECT	AIMS
Queens Square - Public Realm Improvement	Animate and improve contributing to the sense of place and increasing cultural/economic activity.
Active Travel Campaign	Encourage modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport.
Clock Tower, Triangle and Old Church Road improvement	Improve the place of the street and enhance the environment for visitors and businesses.
Town centre bus and cycle hub	Encourage cyclists to choose the town centre as a destination. To encourage and support active travel and public transport.
Meanwhile Strategy	To support evening (18hr) activity in the town centre.
Castlewood	To bring underused spaces into more frequent use. To use vacant property.
Great Western Road Calming	Create a sense of arrival, improve the identity and accessibility - increasing biodiversity.
Housing Design guidance	Qualities and standards of amenity for high quality town centre housing on design (ref Urban Living SPD, Bristol).
Biodiversity Partnership	Enhance the use of river corridors and existing gardens and allotments. Link to rewilding strategy.
Co-Housing Strategy or Exemplar	Identify site to develop exemplar Community Led Housing
Signing National Cycling Routes	Promote recreational opportunities and active travel
Low cost and co working spaces	Identify opportunities to add to available co-working space.
Salthouse Fields	Improve the quality of retail, recreational amenities and WCs.
Parking Strategy	Use land more efficiently and sustain the viability and vitality of the town centre. To support a balanced approach to transport.
Cultural Strategy	Build partnerships and enhance cultural activities in Clevedon.
The Barn, Youth and Community Centre	Improve access and links to the park. Increase flexibility of use. Add associated play space. To improve amenities for children and young people close to the town centre.
Homes at Churchill Avenue	Provide new zero carbon homes with high quality landscape led design. Improve public access to the river and biodiversity.
Cultural & Community Hub at Library	Increase the role and presence of the library in the town centre. To improve associated external spaces and public realm.
Princes Hall improvement	Intensify use of Princes Hall and improve access and signage
Three Wayfinding Routes	Promote and enhance place qualities and bespoke signage to key landmarks.

LEAD	KEY STAKEHOLDERS	PRIORITY	TIMING
North Somerset Council (NSC)	Project Steering Group, Clevedon Business Improvement District (BID)/Wessex/ Markets/Cultural partners	25	A
Clevedon Town Council (CTC)	Schools and business	23	A
NSC	Public Realm SG (Hosted by BID)	23	A
NSC	Public Realm SG (Hosted by BID)/ Wessex Investors	22	A
Placemaking Steering Group	Cultural Partners/NSC	20	A
NSC		12	A
NSC	Placemaking Steering Group/Wessex Investors	22	B
NSC		21	B
CTC	Existing groups working with countryside recreation and wildlife	21	B
CLH SG		18	B
NSC	BID	17	B
CTC	CTC/NSC/BID	16	B
NSC/CTC	Marlens	16	B
NSC		25	C
Cultural & Community Partners	Curzon/Clevedon Literary Festival/ Theatre Shop/BID	20	C
NSC	The Barn, Clevedon Children's Centre	20	C
NSC	Residents/ Alliance Homes/ The Environment Agency	18	C
NSC Libraries	Clevedon Town Council (CTC) & Community Partners	17	C
NSC Libraries	CTC & Cultural and Community Partners	17	C
Clevedon BID	NSC	15	C

Clevedon Conversations

Throughout the process 2400 people shared their views on their town's future.



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THANK YOU

Paul Anslow
Cllr Barry Cherokoff
Cllr Caroline Cherry
Pearl Cross
Phil Curme
Jane De Bude
Marilyn Edwards
Cllr Angela Everitt
Ruth Gofton
George Grace
Cllr Eric Holdsworth
Jonathan Hurford
Hilary Jenkins Spangler
Sarah Mac Cuaig
Petra Mansour
Hilary Neal
Maureen Ni Fiann
Andrew Pegg
Keith Pimm
Carol Price
Gavin Price
Cllr Geoff Richardson
Laila Rizvi
Suzannah Shaw
Nicola Short
Pete Templeton
David Turner
John Tranter
Tom Vaughan
Eleanor Wade
Cllr Judith West
Cllr Richard Westwood
Isabel White
Rod White
Nicki Winstone
Cllr Hannah Young

Clevedon Chamber of Trade
Clevedon Town Council
North Somerset Council
The Jack Hazeldine Foundation
Clevedon Pier
Clevedon Aid
Clevedon Community Resilience
Clevedon Town Council
Sustainable Clevedon
Clevedon Bid
Clevedon Town Council
Clevedon Civic Society
Marlens Marine Lake
Discover Clevedon
Clevedon Skatepark
Curzon Cinema
Clevedon Live Music
Wessex Investors
Clevedon Baptist Church
Clevedon Literary Festival
Marlens Marine Lake
North Somerset Council
Clevedon YMCA
Curzon Cinema
St John the Evangelist Church School
Sustainable Clevedon
Curzon Cinema
Clevedon Civic Society
Clevedon BID
The Barn (Youth and Community Centre)
Clevedon Town Council
Clevedon Town and North Somerset Council
Clevedon Literary Festival
The Theatre Shop
Jack Hazeldine Foundation
Clevedon Town Council

The Students of Weston College
The People of Clevedon

NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL

Richard Blows
Jenny Ford
Alex Hearn
Luke Johnson
Rachel Lewis
Frankie Mann
Luke Turner
Nicola Webb
Emma Wellard
Olivia Stephens

Policy and Partnerships Lead
Director, Placemaking
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Graduate Trainee
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Sustainable Transport
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Head of Libraries and Community
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George Mathews
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Paul Blakemore
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Sarah Jones-Morris
Helen Newman
Jon Tricker
Matt McFeat
Ben Stephenson
Mike Cowdy
Úna Breathnach-Hifearnáin
Kate Cowdy

Studio Hive
AHMM Architects
AHMM Architects
AHMM Architects
Studio Maya
Studio Maya
Photographer
UWE Bristol
Landsmith Associates
Helen Newman Architects
Phil Jones Associates
Phil Jones Associates
BAS Consultancy
McGregor Coxall
McGregor Coxall
McGregor Coxall



ALLFORD
HALL
MONAGHAN
MORRIS

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PROPOSED

WELCOME TO THE NAILSEA PLACEMAKING STRATEGY



IN ASSOCIATION WITH



**TWO
TOWNS**



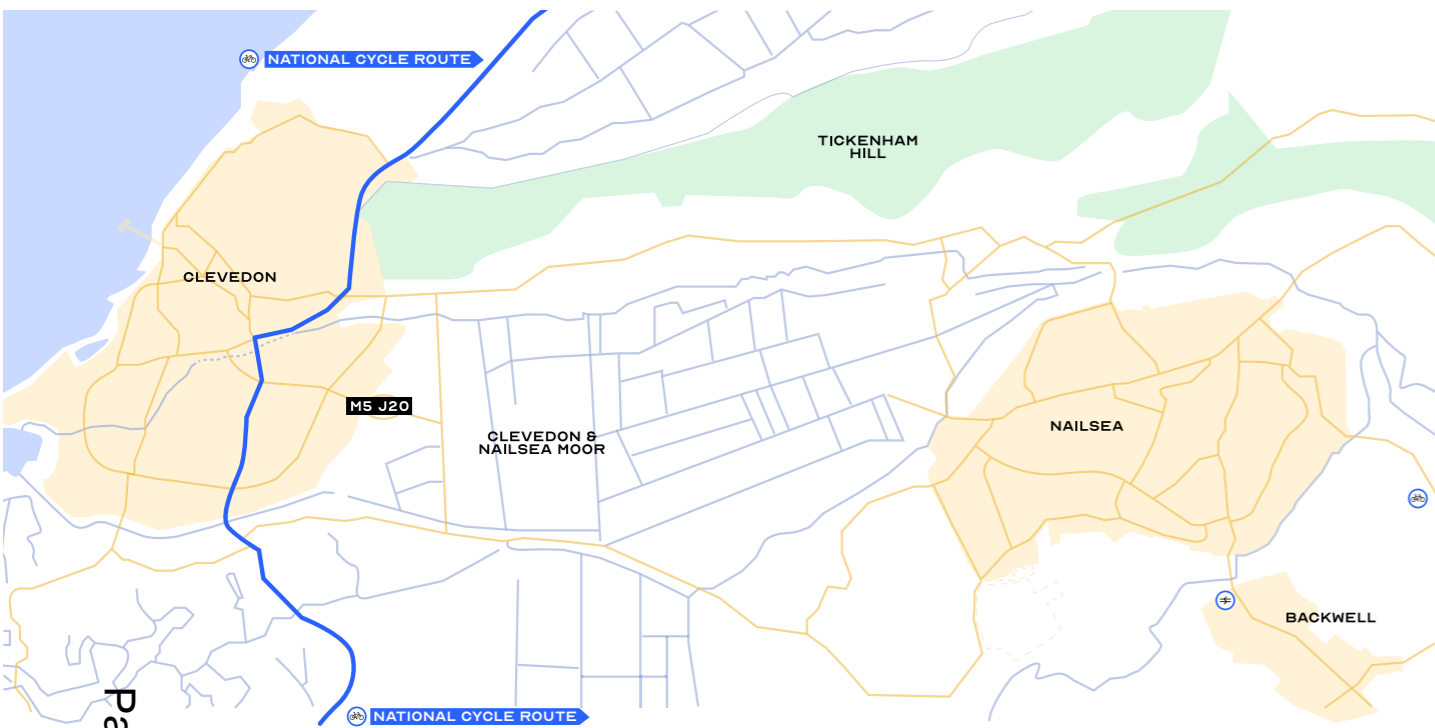
The Town Council and North Somerset Council are working together with local stakeholders to take a placemaking approach to improving the town centre, creating new economic and cultural opportunities and supporting active travel, whilst building on what is special and distinctive about the town.

The proposed Placemaking Strategy was developed in parallel with North Somerset's emerging Local Plan for 2023-38 and focuses on the role of the town centre and its connections to the town.

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NAILSEA IN CONTEXT



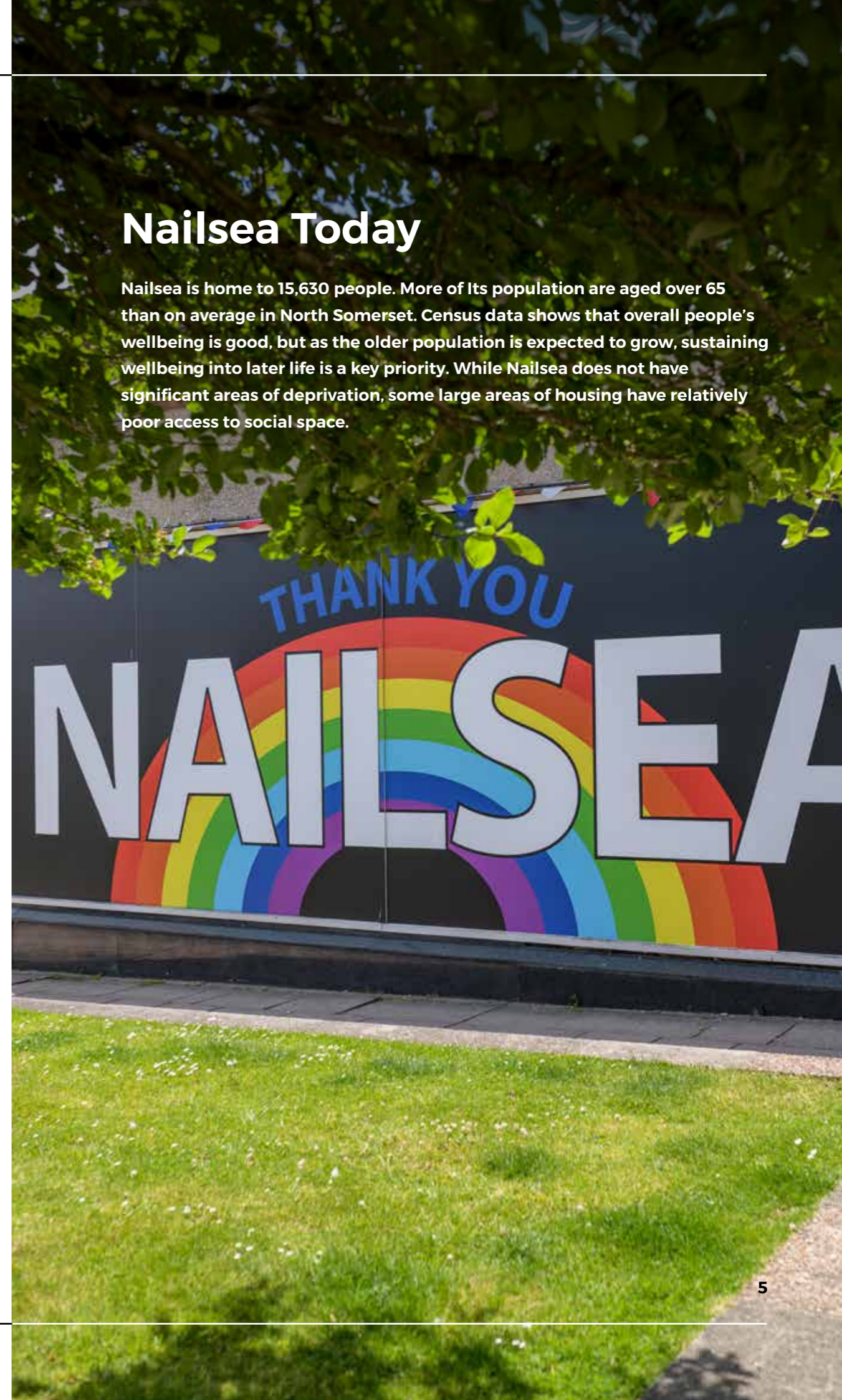
Nailsea began as an agricultural village, famed for coal mining and glassmaking from the 18th century. Fragments of this history and Nailsea's medieval past can be found across the town. The town centre is comprised of the late 20th century galleried Crown Glass Shopping Centre, leading into the fine grained historic High Street. Residents enjoy the greenness of the town with woods and significant trees being key to Nailsea's character.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the oval form of the town was filled out with suburban neighbourhoods. Nailsea is set to grow over the next 15 years with new homes at Youngwood Lane to the west. North Somerset is also piloting the delivery of low carbon council housing nearby.

The town is accessible from the M5, by rail between Nailsea and Backwell Station, and via long-range cycle routes between Bristol and Yatton.

Nailsea Today

Nailsea is home to 15,630 people. More of its population are aged over 65 than on average in North Somerset. Census data shows that overall people's wellbeing is good, but as the older population is expected to grow, sustaining wellbeing into later life is a key priority. While Nailsea does not have significant areas of deprivation, some large areas of housing have relatively poor access to social space.



Co-designing Places

The proposed Placemaking Strategy for Nailsea aims to celebrate and develop the identity of the town, setting expectations for future development, planning and funding bids. The strategy also identifies opportunities for meanwhile projects that can be led by communities as a catalyst for change. The Strategy has been developed to link to local and national policy and promote well-designed, beautiful, healthy and sustainable places.

The Strategy was co-designed with a community steering group during 2021 and 2022. A series of workshops set out priorities for the towns and explored the potential of some key sites. The Steering Group included representatives from Nailsea Town Council and those from business, cultural and civil society in the towns, bringing a diverse set of perspectives to the co-design process.

Vision and Priorities

Placemaking activity in Nailsea will contribute to the town's green and contemporary identity, renewing the town centre as a destination. By bringing in new activity and creating new opportunities, it should celebrate the town's history as a place of ingenuity and entrepreneurial spirit, and connecting more strongly to its residential neighbourhoods.

Placemaking activity will empower communities to generate local investment, support health and wellbeing and take action to tackle climate change.

The workshops and public engagement identified five placemaking priorities for Nailsea.

Placemaking Priorities



DISTINCT

Make Nailsea's town centre more attractive to spend time in. Extend the greenness of the town and link the fine-grained high street to Somerset Square. Renew the town centre, adding some high-quality outward looking buildings, that are inventive and contribute to safer streets.



ENTICING

Generate places and homes to encourage young people and young families to relocate to Nailsea and to maintain diverse communities. Make public space and destinations attractive to young people and families, improving recreational opportunities for all.



ANIMATED

Bring new homes into the town centre to increase activity. Sustain a wide-range of leisure and retail destinations. Make new space for co-working, culture and makers, supporting people working from home in the town. Generate new daytime and evening destinations and activity to animate the town centre.



BLUE & GREEN

Build on Nailsea's green and verdant character. Bring new planting to grey areas, adding trees and natural features to improve the High Street and Village Green. Generate opportunities for community participation in green spaces.



ACTIVE

Build on North Somerset's Active Travel Strategy to make it easier for all to get around on foot and by bike and via public transport. Connect the railway station with the town, improve wayfinding, and develop the identity of recreational green corridors.

Nailsea Strategies

Under each placemaking priority there are seven actions that underpin Nailsea's Strategies.



DISTINCT

Make Nailsea's town centre more attractive to spend time in. Extend the greenness of the town and link the fine-grained high street to Somerset Square. Renew the town centre, adding some high-quality outward looking buildings, that are inventive and contribute to safer streets.

- 1 New, well-designed and innovative buildings strengthen Nailsea's character bringing creativity and inventiveness.
- 2 The civic quality of Somerset Square and the Library are responded to and enhanced through retrofitting and repurposing.
- 3 A phased approach to regenerating the town centre improves the townscape, generating mixed-use and outward-facing, active frontages.
- 4 The poor legibility and greyness of parts of the town centre are improved and to make places more attractive.
- 5 The High Street's distinctive fine-grained character is restored with more interest along the way, give the street a beginning and an end.
- 6 Pedestrian routes link outwards from the town centre, breaking the road collar. Over-capacity roads are slowed and narrowed and streets have reprioritised space for pedestrian and cyclists.
- 7 Energy efficiency and renewable generation is showcased in new buildings.



ENTICING

Generate places and homes to encourage young people and young families to relocate to Nailsea and to maintain diverse communities. Make public space and destinations attractive to young people and families, improving recreational opportunities for all.

- 1 The identity of the town centre is developed, according to a long-term vision that is shared with key landowners.
- 2 Land use is diversified and intensified to generate more affordable and/or diverse kinds of workspace and housing.
- 3 Cultural, recreational and evening destinations are developed at the west end of the town centre.
- 4 New proposals celebrate the town's built and industrial heritage and its green character.
- 5 Concentrated activity around Somerset Square offers unique leisure, retail, recreational and play experiences.
- 6 The identities of Nailsea's neighbourhoods are reinforced to support '15-minute' neighbourhoods, identifying opportunities to enhance existing centres.
- 7 A parking strategy informs how parking spaces can be improved and used more efficiently.



ANIMATED

Bring new homes into the town centre to increase activity. Sustain a wide-range of leisure and retail destinations. Make new space for co-working, culture and makers, supporting people working from home in the town. Generate new daytime and evening destinations and activity to animate the town centre.

- 1 At the heart of the town centre, Nailsea Library is maintained as a key destination.
- 2 Other destinations are created, such as a business hub to network, support and encourage start-ups, or an indoor venue for small-scale pop-up shops.
- 3 A Meanwhile Strategy, including leases coordinated by the Town Council, activates empty shop units i.e. with designer/makers and micro manufacturing.
- 4 Somerset Square and the High Street are animated in different ways, including increasing the scale of weekly markets.
- 5 Existing community and cultural organisations and amenities establish a baseline for developing a new cultural strategy.
- 6 Scotch Horn is improved, increasing the links between the building and its outside spaces. Improve the frontages to the town, the park and important cycle links.
- 7 Community resilience and its expression is valued in different spaces in the town, such as No 26 and 65. Learning from this stewardship can be extended to other services.





BLUE & GREEN

Build on Nailsea's green and verdant character. Bring new planting to grey areas, adding trees and natural features to improve the High Street and Village Green. Generate opportunities for community participation in green spaces.

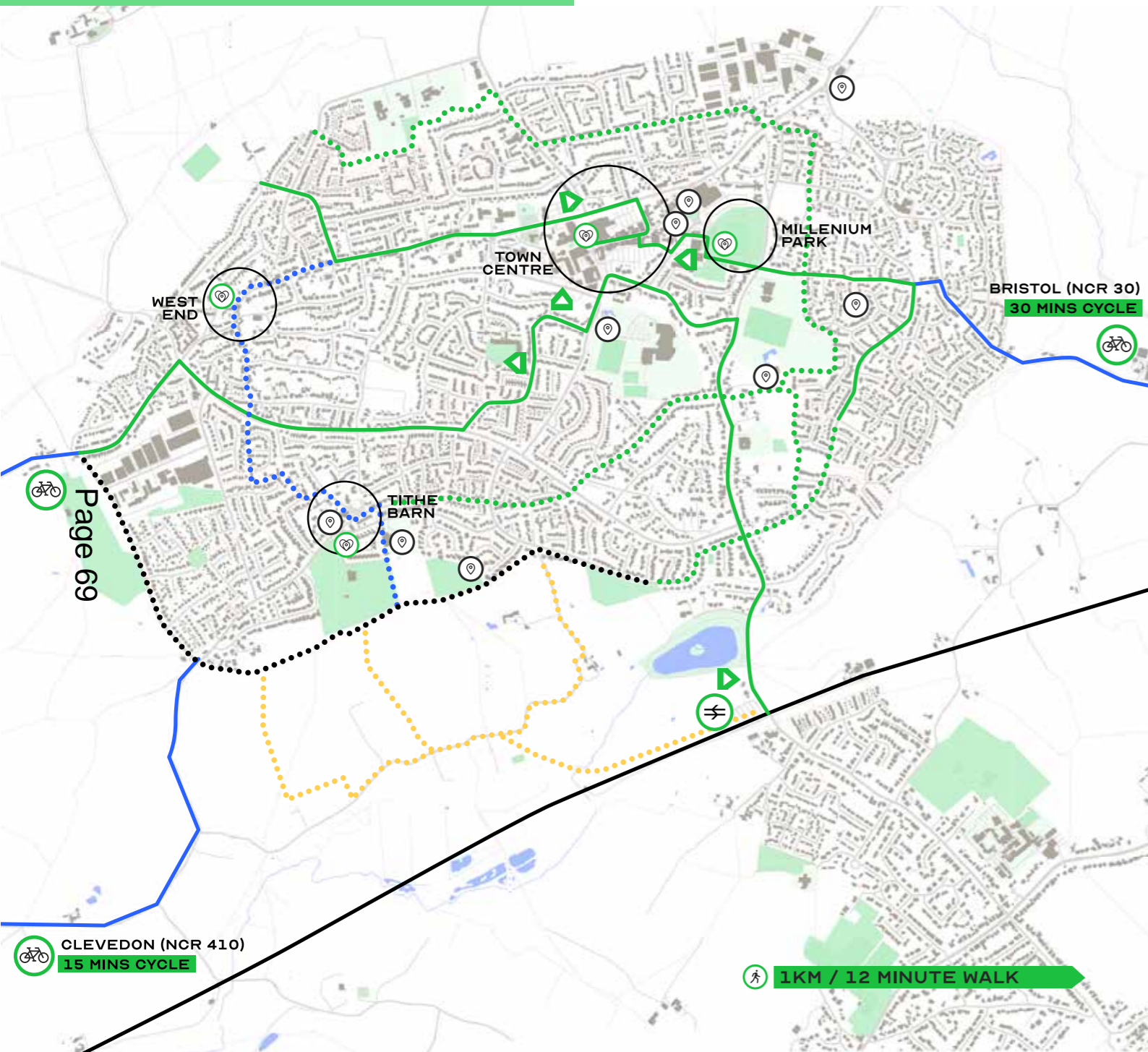
- 1 The ease of walking and cycling is improved to deliver high quality streets and spaces and better serve older people and children.
- 2 The High Street is better linked to Millennium Park across Brockway and the east end of the High Street is greened.
- 3 The town centre is better linked to residential neighbourhoods.
- 4 A strategic vision for green infrastructure across and around the town is used improve legibility.
- 5 Existing green corridors are extended through public spaces, e.g. Improving the connections between the north/south rewilding corridor and Somerset Square.
- 6 Rewilding is developed for people and nature with interpretation about rewilding linked to wayfinding in places.
- 7 The role of community groups to own and manage green spaces is developed, to create interesting and engaging recreational routes (e.g. establishing a resource for Town Rangers).



ACTIVE

Build on North Somerset's Active Travel Strategy to make it easier for all to get around on foot and by bike and via public transport. Connect the railway station with the town, improve wayfinding, and develop the identity of recreational green corridors.

- 1 More frequent and convenient public transport links to the station make the town a more attractive destination and commercial centre.
- 2 Improve wayfinding: signage, lighting, planting and help with legibility, inclusion and safety.
- 3 From Scotch Horn, Festival Way is extended into the town and linked to the west.
- 4 Create quiet cycle lanes to the west towards Clevedon.
- 5 Calm parts of the town centre ring roads to make better connections to residential area nearby.
- 6 Link walking and cycling routes to green routes, identifying opportunities for active recreation and wellbeing.
- 7 Create an attractive, easy to use time and distance map of walking routes, prioritising key routes across the 'Nailsea Town Paths', prioritising safe routes to school and identifying other key destinations. Opportunity for co-design.



CONNECTING NAILSEA

Nailsea Town Centre, the West End and Tithe Barn are the three historic neighbourhood centres of Nailsea. Linking these places highlights important social and cultural destinations for the town. Improved wayfinding helps promote how much of Nailsea is within walking and cycling distance.

This neighbourhood diagram shows how the town centre is linked to surrounding neighbourhoods. It also highlights the walking and cycling routes that North Somerset Council plans to improve, including links to the National Cycle Network.

PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES

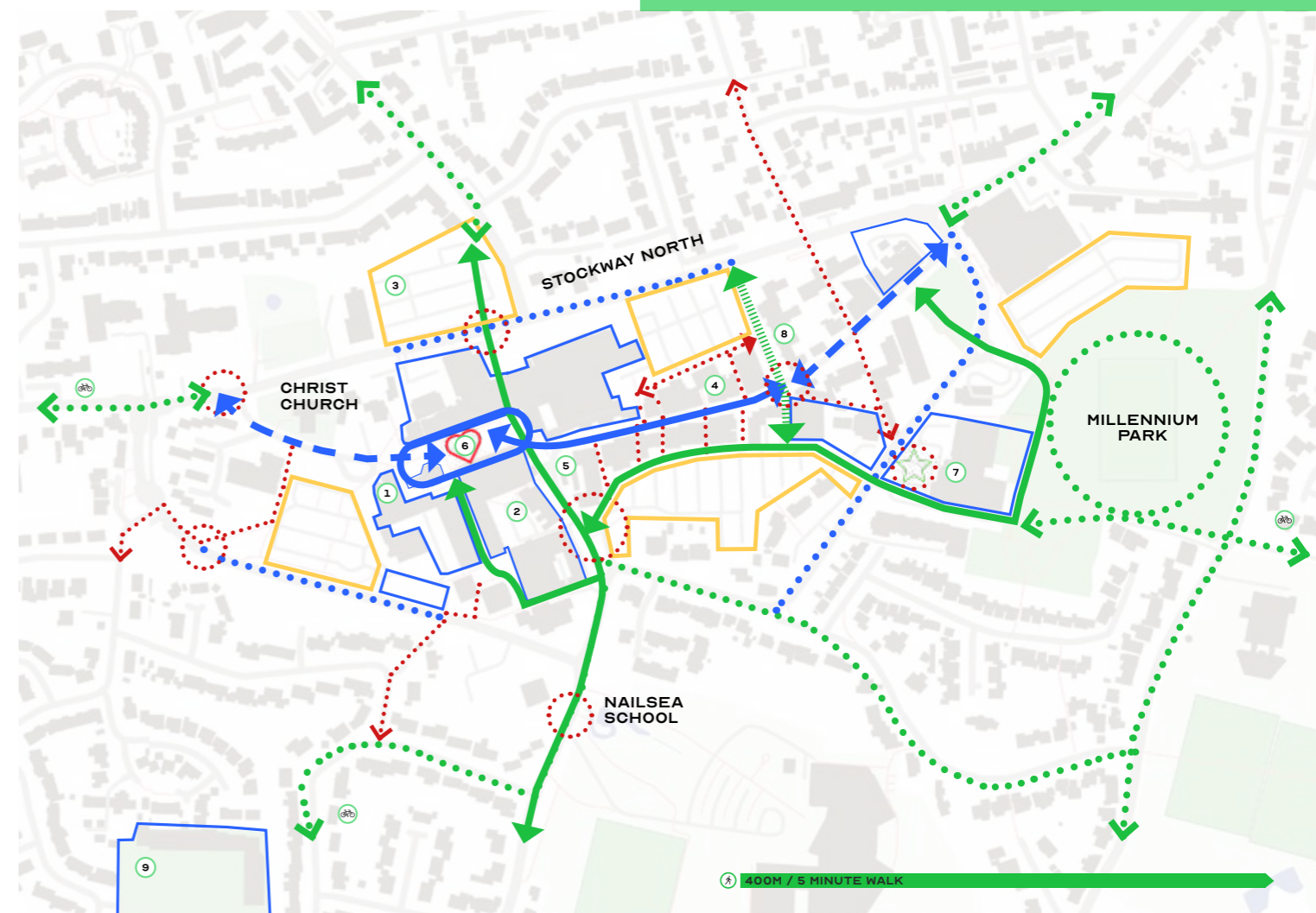
- Walking and Cycling Improvements
- Linking to National Cycling Routes
- ... Wayfinding Nailsea Edge (part shown)
- ... Wayfinding West End to Tithe Barn
- ... Linking schools and selected recreational routes
- ... Linking Youngwood Lane
- Nailsea & Backwell Station
- Existing Heritage Trail Markers
- Proposed Town Maps
- Proposed bespoke signs/highlights

TOWN CENTRE PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES

This map locates streets, public spaces and sites identified by stakeholders for improvement over time. The project opportunities relate to the vision and priorities proposed. They aim to enhance the town centre, generating distinctive, enticing and animated destinations, owned and curated by communities, whilst contributing to blue & green and active travel infrastructure.

PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES

1. Library and former college building regeneration
2. Phased regeneration of Crown Glass
3. Car park study
4. High Street improvement and greening
5. Village green improvement
6. Somerset Square animation
7. Scotch Horn improvement and cycle hub
8. Opportunity to integrate rewilding and wayfinding
9. Opportunity to build community around existing amenity



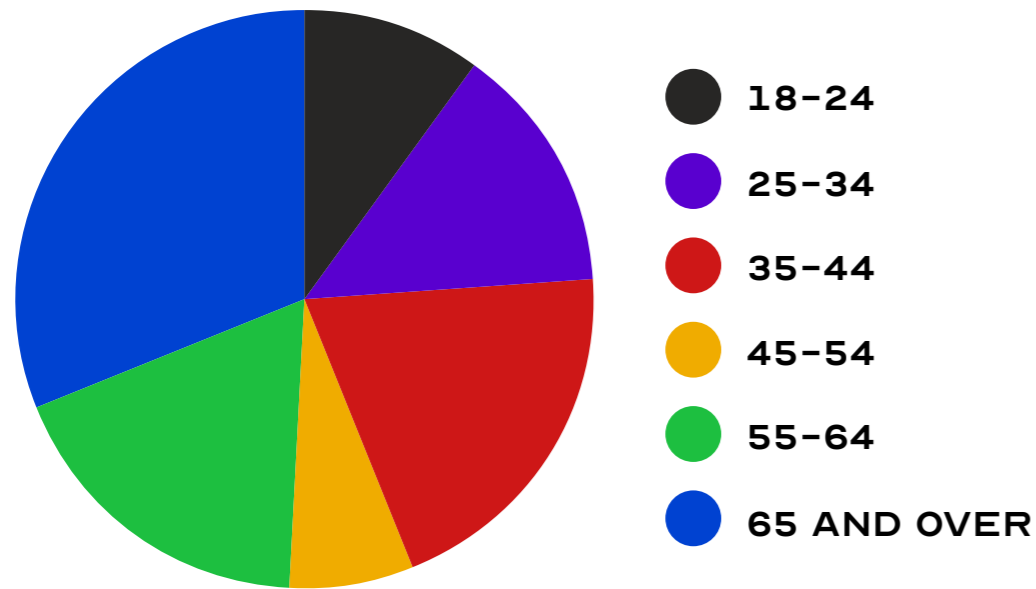
KEY

- Improved links between High Street and Somerset Square
- Improved green connections north to south and to Millennium Park
- ⋯ Improved active travel connections
- Opportunities to improve and diversify use of car park sites informed by parking survey
- Other sites where use could be intensified
- ⋯ Opportunities to create outward facing frontages and loosen road collar
- ⋯ Wayfinding opportunities

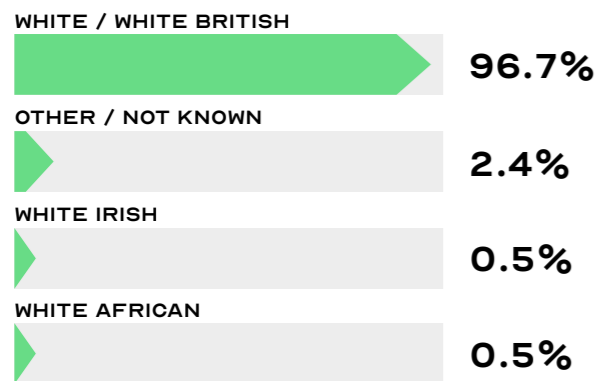
Public Survey Data Summary

A public survey explored how Nailsea town centre could be adapted and invigorated to meet the community's short- and long-term needs.

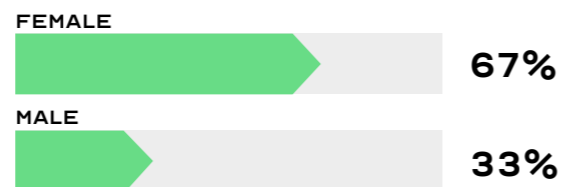
AGE GROUP



ETHNICITY



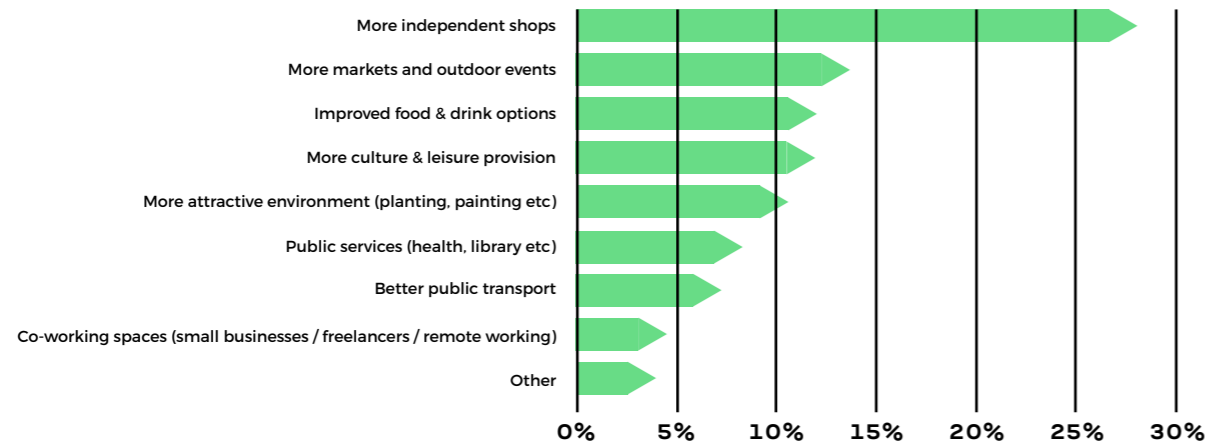
GENDER



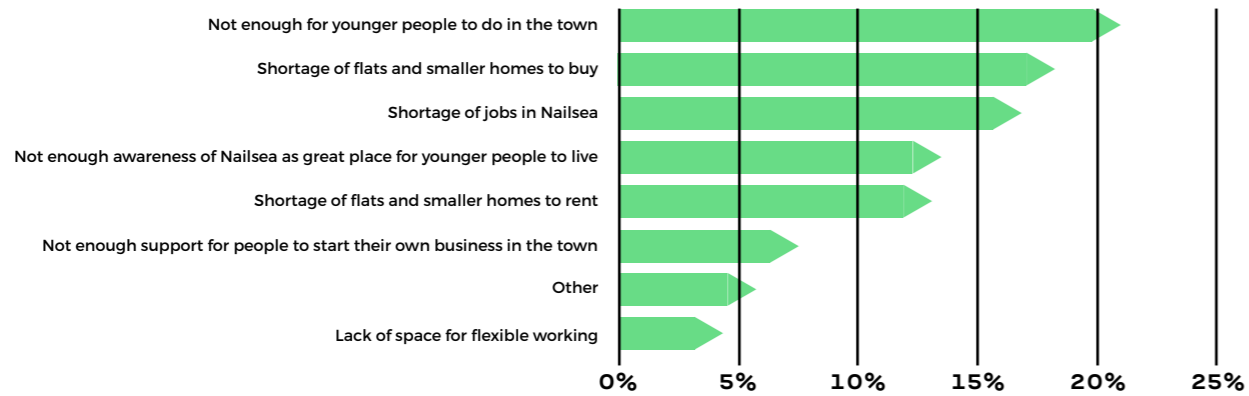
What do you love about Nailsea?



How do we help the centre of Nailsea thrive?



What are the biggest challenges in attracting younger people to live in Nailsea?



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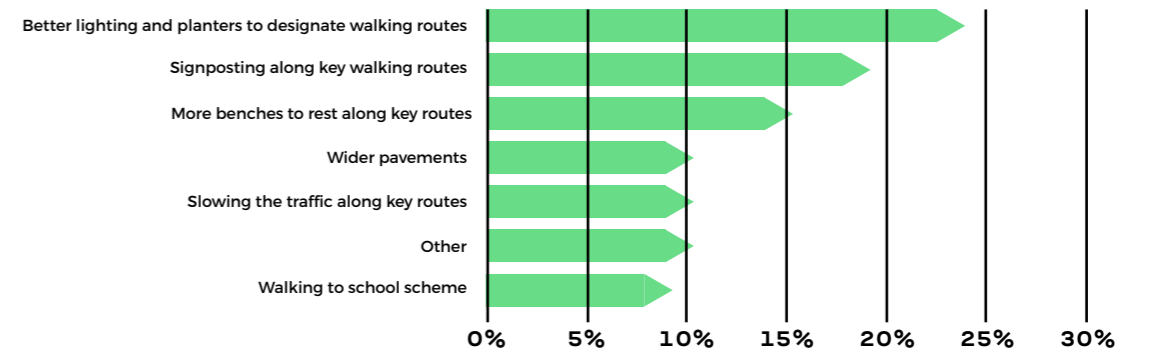
“Good inclusion and facilities for our youth and young adult population – they are our future and we want them to stay in Nailsea.”



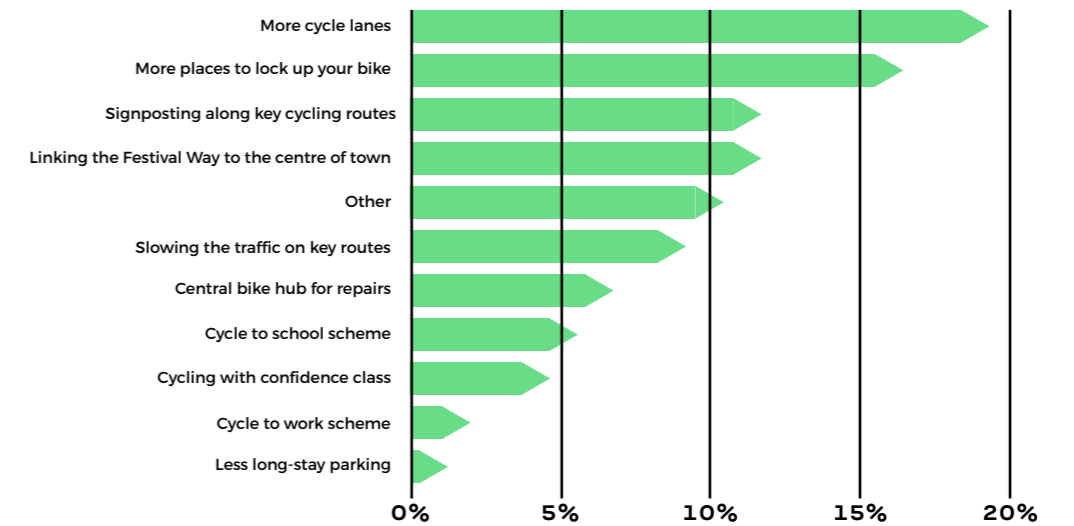


“The cut-through paths between streets are brilliant and should be developed further. The pedestrianised centre is great and should be used more. The views and accessible countryside should stay.”

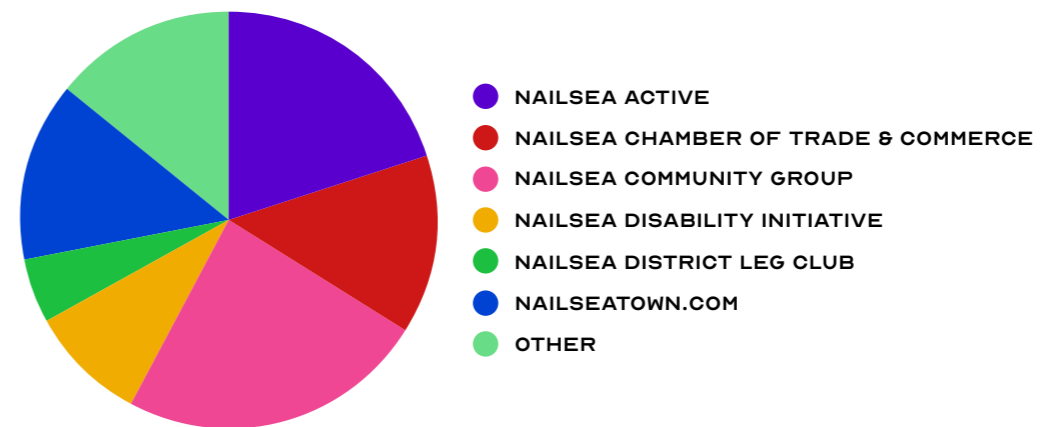
What would make you walk more?



What would make you cycle more?



Which community groups can make Nailsea a better place?



Other groups mentioned
 Nailsea Community Trust Limited, Nailsea History Group, Nailsea & District Horticultural Society, Nailsea in Bloom, Nailsea Shedders, Nailsea Women's Institute, Nailsea and District Local History Society



Key Sites

Together we looked at some specific sites in Nailsea, exploring how places can be shaped to deliver on the strategic priorities. An outline proposal for each site was visualised and discussed with stakeholders. The preferred approach and design principles were identified to guide and support future project development. All projects will be open to public engagement and feedback as they progress.

VIEW OF HIGH STREET LOOKING TOWARDS THE VILLAGE GREEN



Crown Glass and High Street regeneration

The Crown Glass Shopping Centre is at the heart of Nailsea. Over the next decade the Crown Glass buildings will need to be regenerated to meet needs of a growing population and to make a more sustainable and attractive destination. The retail centre was purpose built in the 1970s and includes some upper floor residential and office use. At its centre, a large piazza Somerset Square links east to west via Nailsea's High Street and to the south via Colliers Walk.

The generous arcade and public space of Somerset Square is unusual and elegant, and the area has some popular destinations, including a mix of national and independent retailers. But overall, Crown Glass lacks pull as a destination, especially in the evenings. The High Street needs to be a stronger thread running through the town. To regenerate Crown Glass, the challenge is to create a more vital and enduring place by reusing land and structures more efficiently.

VIEW OF TOWN CENTRE LIVING IN COLLIERS WALK



Setting out a shared vision

With Stakeholders, we explored the need to develop a clearer identity for Nailsea as a shopping destination, bringing an economic and architectural vision together. We identified ways that the use of this important area of the town centre can be concentrated and intensified.

- Introduce new buildings that contribute to Nailsea's character, making the town centre more legible and bringing creativity and inventiveness.
- Concentrate existing activity and diversify the town's retail and leisure offer, including meanwhile and market uses.
- Create quality outside spaces as destinations and amenities for residents and visitors, to include more inviting, well-defined, intimate spaces with better lighting, green space and play spaces.

- Enhance the fine-grained high street making it greener and a more clearly defined connection to Somerset Square.
- Make the town centre more outward looking, with a stronger sense of arrival and more active frontages.
- Break the road collar, establishing safer pedestrian and cycle connections to residential neighbourhoods.
- Activate Somerset Square, support and extend the evening economy, enable economic diversity.
- Make space for niche shopping, flexible spaces, smaller shop units for local start-ups and businesses and incubator spaces, with room for growth.
- Bring new homes into the town centre to diversify and sustain activity.

The extent of retail space is possibly greater than the town needs. There may be an opportunity to shift some areas towards live-work and town centre living.

VIEW OF HIGH STREET LOOKING EAST



COLLIERS WALK

This example illustrated for Colliers Walk shows a street populated with designer maker workshops and informal recreation and play spaces. More town centre living in this location could contribute footfall overall as important link between square to south and Somerset Square.

Following on from these priorities, a shared vision should be established between key stakeholders that can guide short-term revitalisation and longer-term restoration and redevelopment.

Nailsea Library and former college building

Nailsea Library is a popular destination in the town centre and is North Somerset's second busiest library. Its character as a landmark in Somerset Square is valued by people in Nailsea and sustaining a viable long-term library site is important to North Somerset Council. Currently the octagonal library building is in a poor condition, has inadequate physical accessibility internally and weak public realm interfaces. The site is next to the unoccupied former Western College building and between them is unattractive un-surveyed public realm. The redevelopment of both sites together presents an opportunity for a catalyst for regeneration, intensifying activity in Somerset Square.

VIEW OF LIBRARY SITE FROM SOMERSET SQUARE



Three options for reshaping the library and former college site

Stakeholders considered three options, each increasing residential uses at the site and exploring different options for repurposing or replacing the library building.

- 01 - Partial demolition
- 02 - Redevelop all
- 03 - Redevelop all

Option 01 - Partial demolition

The existing building is valued by stakeholders because it is 'iconic', 'quirky' and 'brutalist'. Retaining the building is challenging as major refurbishment is needed to make the building more accessible and energy efficient. If retained the building could also be improved by having a more inviting entrance and better views out and in. It could offer better overlooked outside spaces and give access to a greener community garden. There could be associated uses such as an outdoor craft market. If the library was to move, the library octagon could be repurposed as a café/restaurant.

Option 02 - Redevelop all

3 to 4 storey at current library site or **Option 03 - Redevelop all**

Single storey at current library site

Any new building at the site should also be iconic, retaining some of the existing qualities and contributing to Somerset Square in urban design terms. The design should be distinctive, visibly green and sustainable, softening the concrete with pockets of wildlife and green roofs.

Option 3 is preferred. Stakeholders were concerned Option 2 would overshadow Somerset Square. Ground floor use should be part of a strategy for across Crown Glass. These options could include a café, a food hall and/or flexible space for community use. Some of the first floor could be mixed use, including workspace and small workshops (for example like the Engine Shed in Bristol). The residential use should be high quality, supporting healthy living, with generous balconies to animate the façade.

In each option there is the opportunity to reconnect the library site with Somerset Square and improve the quality of arrival from the west.



OPTION 01
PARTIAL DEMOLITION



OPTION 02
REDEVELOP ALL



OPTION 03
REDEVELOP ALL

Car parking survey and strategy

Nailsea town centre is surrounded by car parks at Clevedon Road, Station Road, Waitrose, Crown Glass, Scotch Horn and Tesco. Some spaces could potentially be better used to improve public space, landscape amenity or to provide housing (as illustrated here). Stakeholders asked that changes to parking should be informed by a survey of actual parking use in the town. The six main town centre car parks were surveyed. It found that in some there was more parking than needed and that people were making frequent trips from nearby in the town. They also found that most long stay parking users had travelled alone and around 1/3 of those from nearby.

To better sustain people's health and wellbeing and address the climate emergency, other equally convenient ways of getting around need to be supported. North Somerset Council have set out plans to improve active travel and public transport that are integrated in this strategy. A two-step approach to encouraging changes in patterns of movement is proposed.

VIEW CLEVEDON ROAD TOWARDS CROWN GLASS



Diversifying modes of transport

STEP ONE

Small/medium scale impactful changes to support behaviour change.

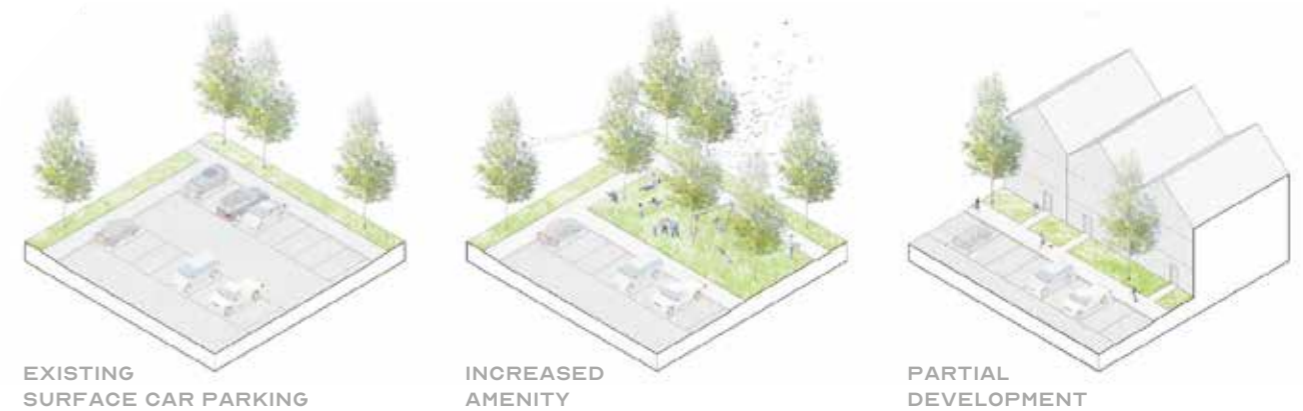
- **Improve active travel infrastructure**
 - Develop mobility hubs
 - Improve cycle parking and storage
 - Improve cycling and walking routes
- **Shift priority to pedestrian and cycle movement**
 - Improve key public space thresholds and linkages
 - Move on street parking to car parks
 - Slow and reduce vehicle movement
- **Improve place qualities and efficiency of car parks**
 - Improve connections between car parks and town centre

- Integrate electric vehicle charging
- Improve signage
- Work with landowners and others on behaviour change

STEP TWO

Identify priority areas for reducing car parking or making car parking use more efficient

- Establish design approach to improving car park efficiency/reorganisation
- Explore benefit of introducing charging to improve efficiency of use
- Explore scope to use additional parking space site by site to meet other Placemaking Strategy priorities



CLEVEDON ROAD

The view of Clevedon Road illustrates the potential reuse of a car park site, where the land use is shifted towards residential use, bringing new homes close to the town centre. This explores how placing buildings can reframe and improve streets and public spaces. Stakeholders felt that in the long-term, more housing of the right sort is

desirable. Especially as it is important to diversify housing available in the town with affordable housing to suit young people starting out in life. They also appreciated how this site could make a more positive contribution to the town centre, improving public realm and connecting the Clevedon Road area to the town.

Nailsea Stakeholders Priorities for Project Actions and Timings

PROJECT	AIMS
Nailsea Library	Maintain the role and presence of the library in the town centre.
Crown Glass Site Development Brief and Guidance	Develop a shared vision and strategy to guide short- and long-term improvement.
Establish a Business Improvement District (BID)	Set out and lead a series of joined up activities to make an inviting town centre.
Meanwhile Strategy	Support evening activity, and designer makers/independent businesses bring empty shops and public spaces into use.
Town centre bus and cycle hub	Encourage cyclists to choose the town centre as a destination, support active travel and public transport.
Cultural and Heritage Strategy	Build capacity - modelled on the Culture Weston Framework.
Village Green and High Street - Public Realm Improvement	Make The High Street a greener and more attractive destination.
Work Hub	Provide shared workspaces for commuters working from home and provide start up opportunities - host events.
Biodiversity Partnership	Enhance the use of landscape corridors and existing gardens and allotments. Link to NSC rewilding strategy.
Improved Station Links	More frequent and convenient public transport links to the station.
Active Travel Campaign	Reduce inefficient use of long-term parking by employers, encourage modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport.
Town Map & Wayfinding Routes	Promote and enhance place qualities and bespoke signage to key landmarks. Improve recreational routes.
Housing Design guidance	Influence high quality town centre housing (as Urban Living SP/ Bristol) guidance on design qualities and standards of amenity.
Parking Strategy	Use land more efficiently and support a balanced approach to transport. Pilot with Station Road Car Park
Link Cycle route to Clevedon	Create quiet cycle lanes to the west towards Clevedon.
Town Centre Homes	Identify opportunities to provide new homes with high quality landscape led design. Including new and renovated social housing.
Brockway Calming	Link the town centre to Millennium Park improving place identity.
Scotch Horn Leisure Centre	If improving, take the opportunity to create a better street and Parkside presence and foreground cycle connections.
Signing National Cycling Routes	Promote recreational opportunities and active travel.
Nailsea Neighbourhoods	Reinforce the identity of Nailsea's existing neighbourhoods around key cultural, leisure and social spaces.

LEAD	KEY STAKEHOLDERS	PRIORITY	TIMING
North Somerset Council (NSC) Libraries	Nailsea Town Council (NCT)	18	A
NSC	Praxis, Developments Bristol, Waitrose	15	A
NTC	NSC, Local Businesses	15	A
NTC / Nailsea BID	Nailsea BID, Nailsea Community Group Cultural Partners	15	A
NTC / NSC	Placemaking Steering Group	12	A
Cultural & Community Partners	NTC/Nailsea BID	12	A
NTC / NSC	Placemaking Steering Group	11	A
NTC / Nailsea BID	Nailsea BID, Nailsea Community Group	14	B
NTC	Existing groups working with countryside recreation and wildlife	14	B
NTC / NSC	Placemaking Steering Group	13	B
NTC	Wessex Water, Pelican and schools and business	11	B
NTC / NSC	Nailsea Active, Nailsea Leg Club	10	B
NSC		10	B
NSC	NTC	9	B
NTC/NSC		14	C
NSC	NTC	13	C
NSC	Placemaking Steering Group	12	C
NSC	NTC/Nailsea Active	12	C
NTC / NSC	Placemaking Steering Group	9	C
NTC	Mizzymead Leisure Centre, Nailsea Tithe Barn - no 25/No 65	9	C

Nailsea Conversations

Throughout the process 2400 people shared their views on their town's future.



THANK YOU

Amy Badman
Cllr Mike Bird
Cllr Jeremy Blatchford
Carole Brooke
Jo Duffy
David Francis
Matt Hanley
James Hewitt
Cllr Claire Hunt
Sean Kelly
Cllr Ben Kushner
Blanche Longley
Cllr Rod Lees
Cllr Emily Miller
Ian Morrell
Cllr David Packham
Sandy Riley
Jules Richardson
Chris Smith
Cllr James Steel
Glen Schmidt
Cllr James Tonkin

Pelican
North Somerset Council
Nailsea Town Council
The Leg Club
Nailsea Town Clerk
Nailsea Memory Club
One 2 One
Praxis
Nailsea Town Council
Nailsea Disability Initiative
Nailsea Town Council
Praxis
Nailsea Town Council
Nailsea Town Council
Nailsea Town Council
Nailsea Town Council
Nailsea Tithe Barn
Nailsea Community Group
Waitrose
Nailsea Town Council
Nailsea Active
North Somerset Council

The Students of Weston College
The People of Nailsea

NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL

Richard Blows
Jenny Ford
Alex Hearn
Luke Johnson
Rachel Lewis
Frankie Mann
Luke Turner
Nicola Webb
Emma Wellard
Olivia Stephens
Karlie Philips

Policy and Partnerships Lead
Director, Placemaking
Assistant Director, Placemaking
Graduate Trainee
Heritage and Design Manager
Sustainable Transport
Sustainable Transport
Climate Emergency Project Manager
Head of Libraries and Community
Support Officer
Leisure Manager

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Pippa Box
Jane Faram
Pippa Goldfinger
Dr Anna Rutherford
Juliet Simpson
Daniel Widdowson

DESIGN TEAM

James Howard
Cormac Farrelly
Jason Ramlugon
George Mathews
Chris Cummins
Nat Inker
Paul Blakemore
Professor Bill Gething
Sarah Jones-Morris
Helen Newman
Jon Tricker
Matt McFeat
Ben Stephenson
David Finch
Martyn Lonsdale
Yuli Cadney Toh
Sarah Toy

Studio Hive
AHMM Architects
AHMM Architects
AHMM Architects
Studio Maya
Studio Maya
Photographer
UWE Bristol
Landsmith Associates
Helen Newman Architects
Phil Jones Associates
Phil Jones Associates
BAS Consultancy
Churchman Thornhill Finch
Lavigne Lonsdale
Architect/Urban Designer
Sarah Toy Consulting



ALLFORD
HALL
MONAGHAN
MORRIS

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A Framework for Central Portishead

Wyndham Way Opportunity Area
Framework - draft for endorsement

November 2022



Portishead
Town
Council



CONTENTS

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Vision and Principles
- 3 Consultation
- 4 A Spatial Framework
- 5 Phasing and delivery

Allies and Morrison
Urban Practitioners

**AVISON
YOUNG**

PJA

 **Distinctive**



INTRODUCTION

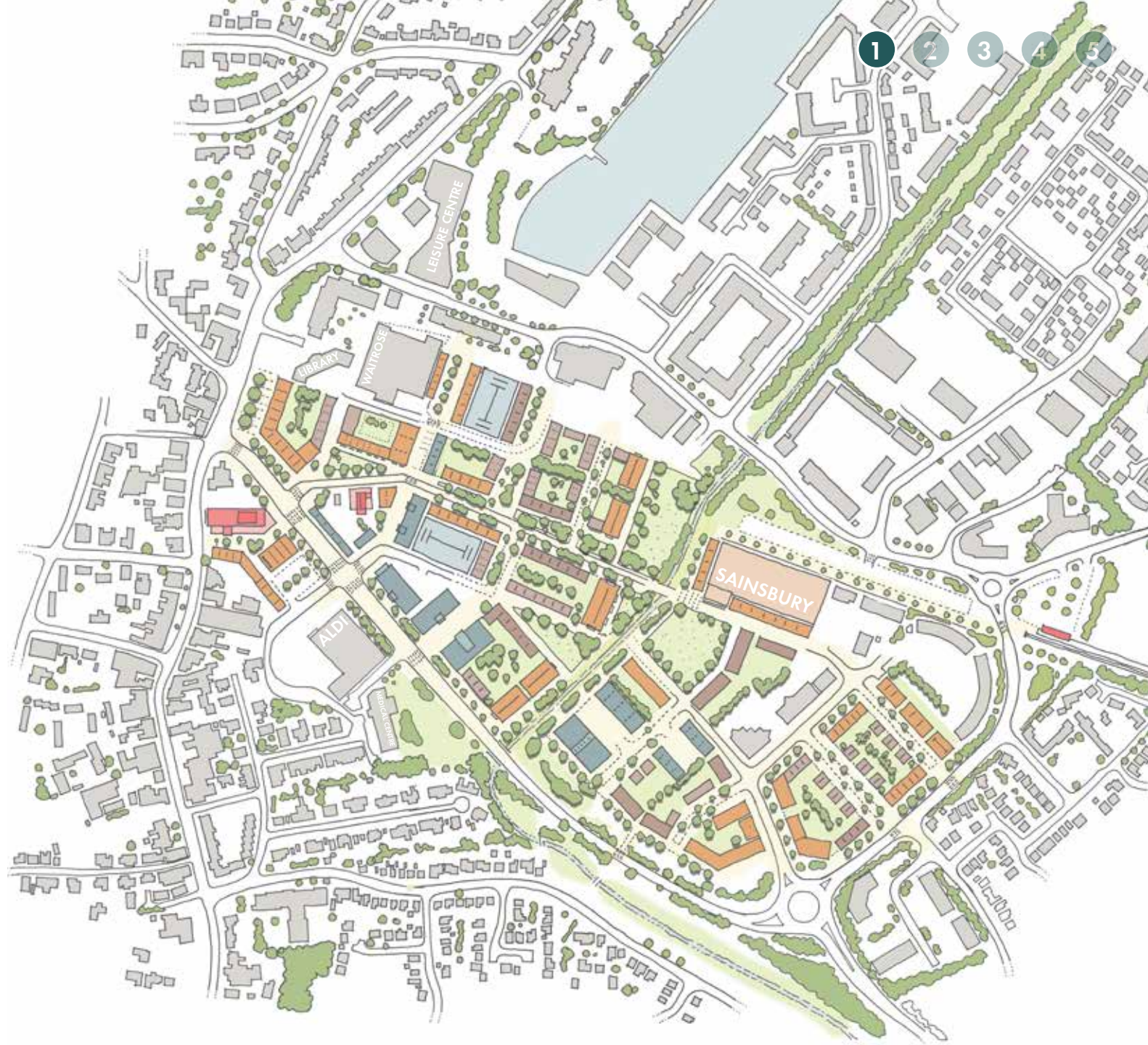
Introduction

This development framework has been prepared to help guide potential future development of the central area of Portishead, between the High Street, the Marina and the planned new railway station. It has been led by North Somerset Council working with Portishead Town Council and key land owners and with extensive local consultation.

The project started with the 2021 publication of the Vision and Scoping Study which set out the key principles for the area and identified how change could benefit Portishead as a whole. The town has grown substantially over recent decades, and this is an important opportunity to make better connections between the new and old areas.

This is also an important chance to help make Portishead more sustainable through supporting the local economy, helping to reduce car-dependency and creating a greener place.

Change is expected to be gradual - there are many different land owners in the area, so this is a framework for change rather than a big planning application. This approach helps to set a clear direction of travel and coordinate designs so that they add up to deliver the vision we want to see.



INTRODUCTION

Fragmented land ownership

The land ownership in the area is a really important factor for how the area could change over time. This plan shows the many different parcels of land, and illustrates just how many different land owners have an interest.

A framework for an area like this is different to a planning application. It can't dictate a single design, or require that things are developed at a specific time. Even public projects like changes to roads are subject to funding being available. Any change will be gradual, piecemeal and could take many different forms.

This approach creates a framework for change. It sets out how the different area can be developed in coordinated ways which contribute to a wider picture. This includes planning the network of streets and spaces and considering different uses. It has to take account of existing uses which may not change for a long time, as well as be flexible enough to allow land owners to develop a range of different options.

What it can do is show what good change should look like, and provide clear rules for the things which are fundamental.



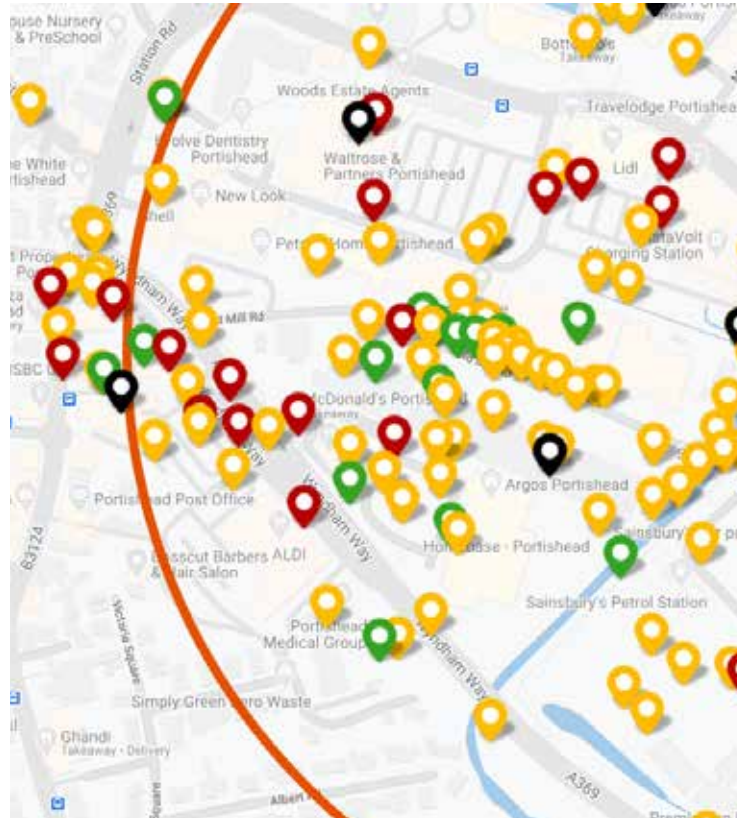
INTRODUCTION

A collaborative process

The framework has been developed through a series of stages of public consultation and engagement, starting with the original engagement in 2020 as part of the Vision and Scoping study and through two rounds of engagement on the emerging ideas and then the draft Framework document.

This engagement was undertaken primarily online through COVID with the aid of the project website, but also supplemented with drop-in consultations in Portishead Library and a stakeholder site walkabout and workshop in 2022 once conditions allowed.

The inputs received through all of these engagements have informed the understanding of the area and then helped to shape the draft framework. Section three of this report provides more detail of the engagement process and findings.

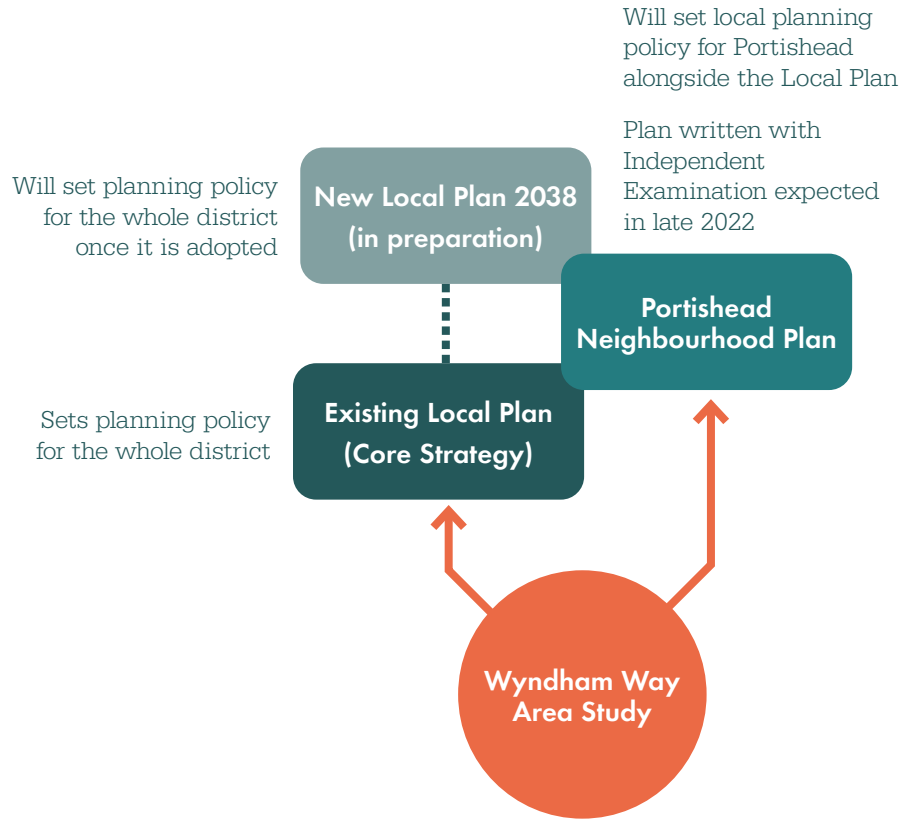


Understanding the area

This framework is based on extensive research across many different topics. The team has studied the history of the area and how the town has grown responding to the landscape and the historic industry. The team has looked at the environmental and ecological constraints, including wildlife and water. This has informed ideas for how the area can work better for the environment and help reduce the risk of flooding through good design.

The baseline work also looks at the social and economic context, identifying the issues and opportunities for new and existing uses. This work has also taken place in the context of the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan and could help to inform future planning policy development.

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- Victorian
- 1930s
- 1970s
- 1980s
- 2020s



INTRODUCTION

Origins and growth

Before making recommendations about the future of Portishead, it is important to understand the existing town and the factors that have shaped it. By listening to local people and looking through historic maps, aerial photographs and records, it is possible to tell how the town has grown and to start to understand its story.

This approach reveals important things which any future plans can help to protect and build upon, such as the historic role of the High Street as well as the more recent significance of the Marina as a place where people live work and play rather than a place of industry.

It also helps to understand the former industrial life of the core of the study area, subdivided by numerous railway lines, factories and yards.

This has left a legacy of disconnected places. This has become particularly important as Portishead has grown to the east within the new development at Port Marine. Here, a new neighbourhood has been created but doesn't yet have a good safe network of streets connecting it back to the town centre.



Victorian

Looking back at maps from the Victorian Period shows the historic High Street and the streets immediately around it as clearly established. The maps also show industrial activity at the wharf and newer housing being developed on West Hill.

1930s

The inter-war period saw the growth of industrial activity around the wharf and residential consolidation around Woodhill, to the north of the High Street. Redcliffe Bay was also being developed as a new neighbourhood to the west.

1970s

The post-war period shows substantial infill along the ridge of West Hill and Woodhill as well as urban expansion to the south, creating the North Weston area and Gordano School.

1980s

The later years of the Twentieth Century shows development in and around the town centre, including Brampton Way to the south as well as steeper sites off Avon Way.

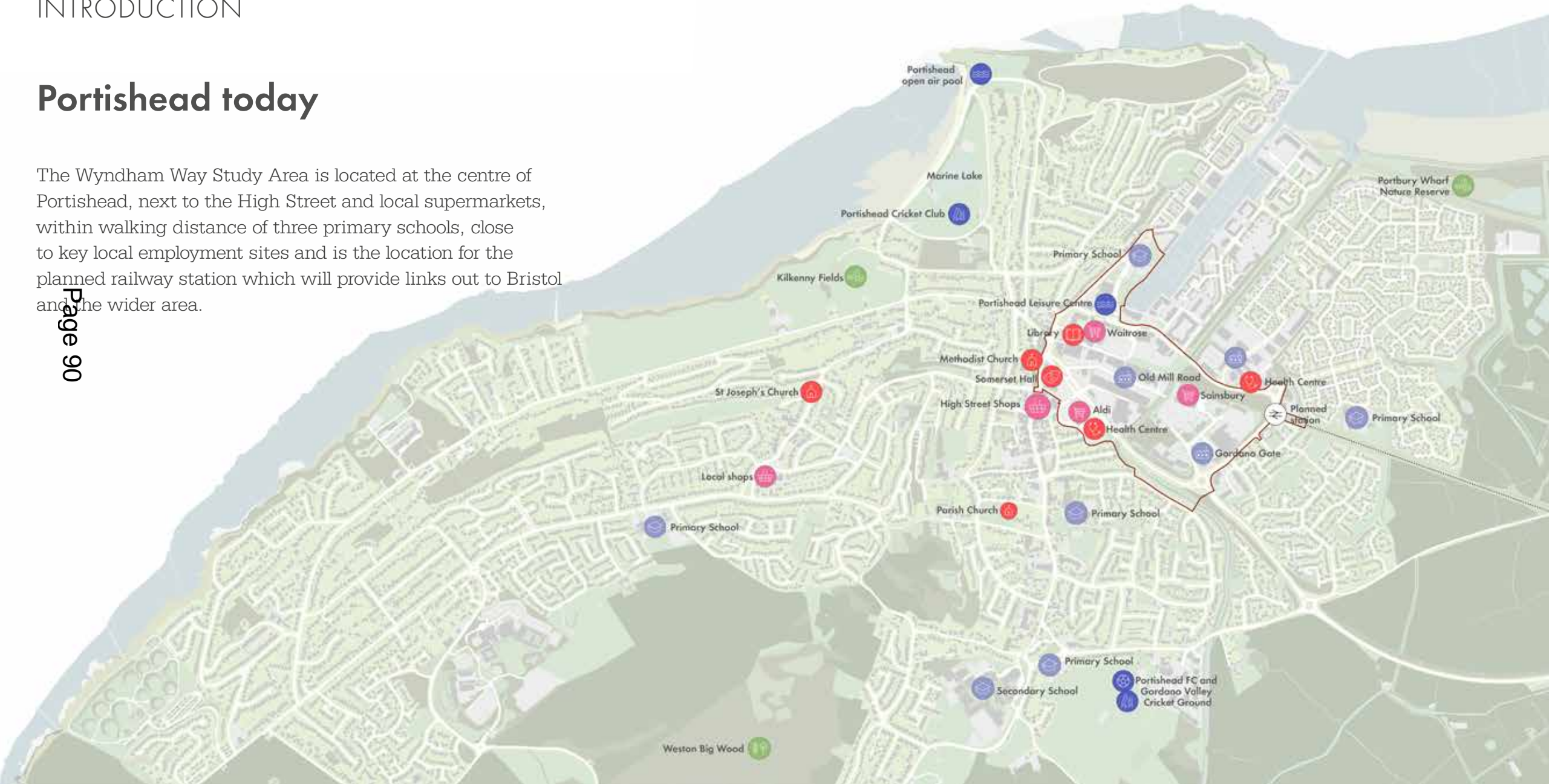
2020

Development up to the present day has included the significant eastward expansion of Portishead in the form of the Port Marine area as well as the transformation of the Wharf itself to create today's modern marina.

INTRODUCTION

Portishead today

The Wyndham Way Study Area is located at the centre of Portishead, next to the High Street and local supermarkets, within walking distance of three primary schools, close to key local employment sites and is the location for the planned railway station which will provide links out to Bristol and the wider area.



INTRODUCTION

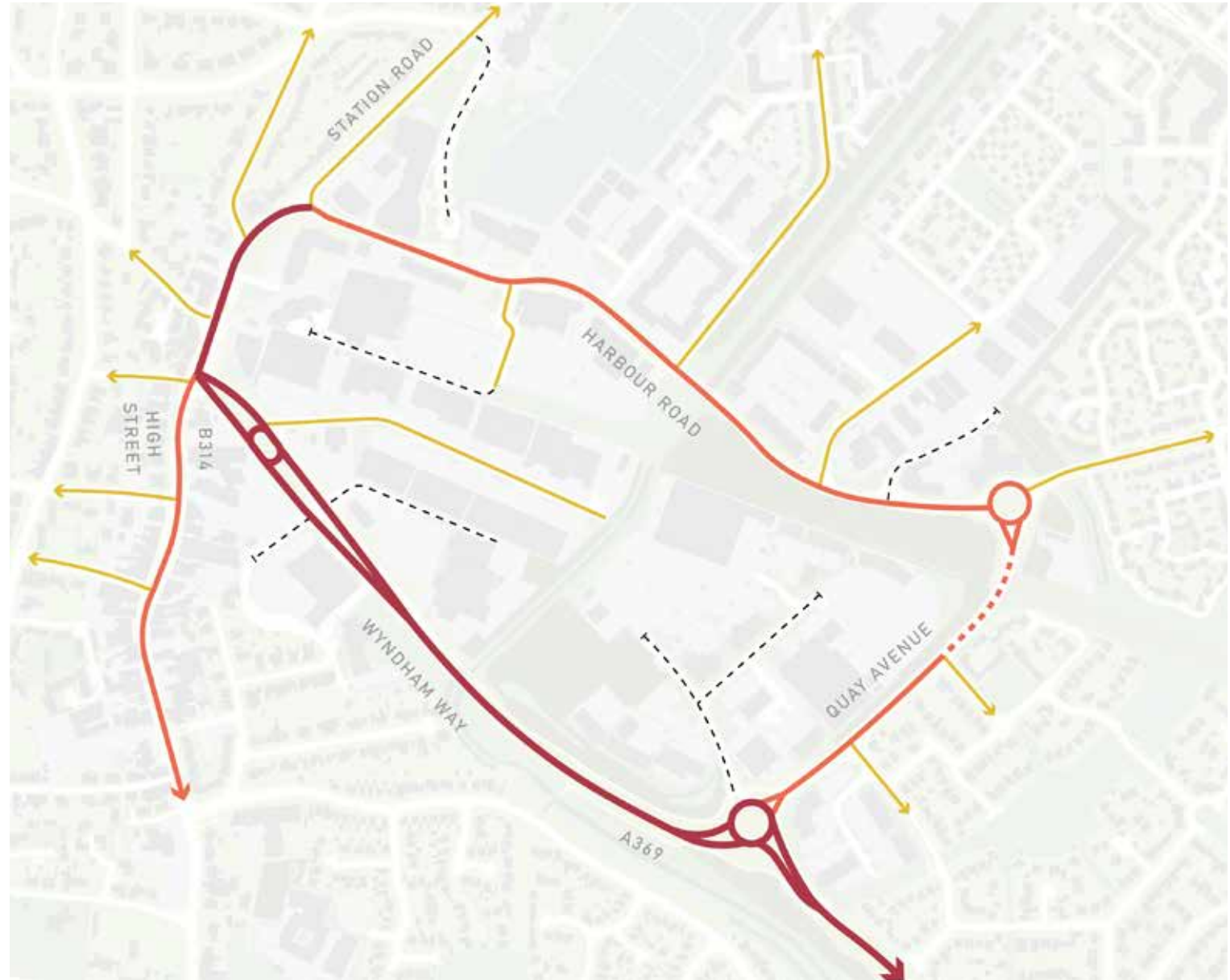
Movement

Road Network - Portishead Town Centre is served by a road network with a mix of road types, the most significant being Wyndham Way (A369) which links the town with Bristol and the M5, via The Portbury Hundred. The town has an attractive and busy local High Street. Quay Avenue and Harbour Road act as a town centre ring road and provide access to local neighbourhoods and the harbour area.

Pedestrian Movement - this is critical to the future success of Portishead town centre and the whole central area is identified as a Core Walking Zone by NSC, meaning walking improvement projects should be planned and prioritised. A walking audit has revealed the following issues.

Generally, the town centre roads have footways, but these are narrow in places.

- Within the study area there are many barriers to movement between land uses and this particularly affects the relationship between the Town Car park and Harbour area.



Existing road hierarchy

INTRODUCTION

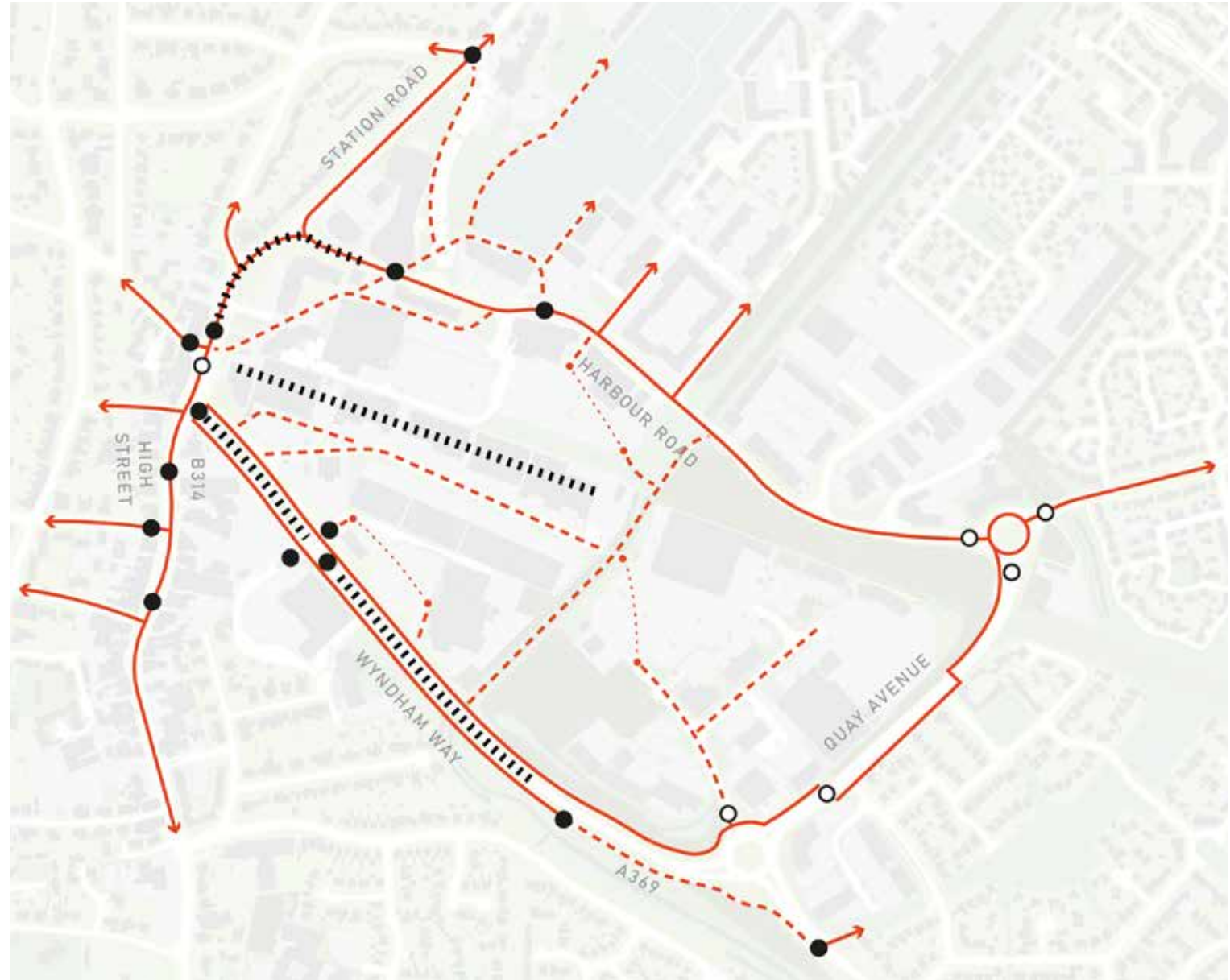
- Wyndham Way acts a barrier to north-south movement and is a hostile street to walk along or cross.
- The Cabstand junction can be confusing for pedestrians but is located on an important route from the High Street to the Harbour.

Concerns about pedestrian movement form a large proportion of responses from the recent community engagement.

Cycling Movement - there are some dedicated cycle facilities within the town however the Council, through its ongoing plans, wants to make further improvements and will be seeking central government funding.

Road Safety – there have been several recent accidents on Wyndham Way and the High Street, some involving pedestrians.

Local Buses – buses serve the town operating on the High Street, Quay Avenue, Harbour Road and Station Road with several frequent services to nearby places, including Bristol, Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon and Nailsea.



Existing pedestrian movement



INTRODUCTION

Rail Station Proposal – the Council, in partnership with WECA, is at an advanced stage in the planning of the new MetroWest rail line which will connect Bristol with Portishead town centre. The station will be located near the Harbour Road / Quay Ave roundabout. The new rail line is the subject of a Development Consent Order (DCO) - a form of planning permission - and will include a small transport interchange, taxi waiting and on-street bus stopping, together with a long-stay car park and new walking and cycling routes linking to the town centre.

Car Parking – there are many car parks and parking spaces within the town centre area. However only a small proportion of these are managed Council owned public car parks. Most parking spaces are free and associated with retail or employment land uses.

In summary the Scoping Study has highlighted the following issues and opportunities.

- the WWSA is a major barrier to local movement;
- the routes that exist around the WWSA are mainly designed for cars and other motor vehicles;
- pedestrian and cycle movement has emerged as an afterthought, probably encouraging more local journeys to be made by car; and,
- there is a real opportunity for the WWSA to better connect to existing neighbourhoods around it, and to encourage walking and cycling within the area, including to and from the new station when it opens.

Movement and Access Recommendations

The Development Framework for Portishead town centre will be informed by transport and movement considerations, drawing on best practice and recognising the needs of all residents / town centre users, whilst embracing new technology. As part of the next stage of work consideration should be given to developing new transport and movement initiatives aimed at improving movement within and around the area and creating new environments that encourage walking and cycling.





INTRODUCTION

Such new interventions could include the following.

20-Minute Town

A 20-minute town is a place where neighbourhoods can access a range of town centre functions within a 20-minute walk from their home. Portishead is suited to this approach as the town centre is fairly central and a new station is planned. This would include improved walking and cycling connections to the surrounding neighbourhoods.

Embrace the Big Street

Like the High Street, Wyndham Way would benefit from new development frontage. The current highway engineering creates a hostile feel and would benefit from a 'street like' environment better suited to a town centre location, whilst providing for improved footpaths and cycleways.

Go Dutch with Junctions

Many of the junctions on Wyndham Way do not fulfil the latest guidelines on walking and cycling. There are several ways of improving local junctions, including a Dutch style roundabout which is one way of achieving better walking and cycling, whilst still retaining reasonable road capacity.

Slow Streets for Walking and Cycling

To improve movement through the WWSA, a series of new connections aimed at walking and slow cycling would improve permeability and connection of the town centre and help people navigate through the area. These would need to cater for several key routes including; station to High Street and High Street to harbour.

Optimise the High Street and Cabstand Junction

Parts of the High Street and Cabstand junction would benefit from public realm improvement to help manage traffic speed, improve walkability and better cater for buses and HGV servicing needs.





INTRODUCTION

Ecology and Biodiversity

The study area is located within a predominantly urban environment, but there are a number of important ecological sites in the surrounding area, including areas of ancient woodland located to the north and south-west of the study area.

The Severn Estuary is protected by a number of ecological designations to reflect the importance of the habitats and species and has been identified as having national and international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering and migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds.

The mudflats and sandflats, saltmarsh, shingle and rocky shore habitats support the protected bird species. Future development within the Study Area would not directly impact these designated sites, and due consideration would be given to them as plans emerge.

Improving the natural environment within Portishead is a key aspect of the overall vision, which includes aspirations for biodiversity net gain, and wider environmental net





INTRODUCTION

gain. This could be achieved by increasing the amount of green spaces and thinking carefully about how rainwater is managed, including features such as green roofs.

Noise

Page 96
There are a number of noise sources within and surrounding the study area, particularly the main road network (A369, Quays Avenue, Harbour Road, Station Road).

Air Quality

The site is not located within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) but improving the area for walking and cycling, and thinking carefully about the type of development will aspire to improve local air quality.

Climate Change Resilience

Any future plans will need to consider the resilience of new development in the study area and explore how development in this location can make Portishead more resilient.

Sustainable Construction

Sustainable design initiatives will need to be incorporated into any future design. For example, any construction materials can be selected following the Building Research Establishment (BRE) 'Green Guide to Specification' to reduce the environmental impacts of these materials, and the carbon emissions associated with construction would need to be key drivers in the design process.

Heritage

The site contains one Grade II listed building – the Old Mill Public House (formerley the White Lion) and Former Sea Wall. Other surrounding sensitive buildings include a number of Grade II and II* listed buildings, with the Grade I listed Parish Church of St Peter approximately 300m south-west of the site.



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Water

The main flood risk is associated with tidal flooding from the coast to the north and northeast. However, there are tidal flood defences which are managed by the Environment Agency (EA) and which appropriately protect Portishead from tidal flooding.

The site and surrounding area is located within Flood Zone 3 - land assessed as having 1 in 200 or greater annual probability of flooding from the sea in any year - but this designation does not take account of the coastal flood defences and therefore the actual (tidal) flood risk may be considered to be lower than that typically associated with Flood Zone 3. The Portbury Ditch flows past the Portishead Business Park, flowing from the Clevedon hills before discharging into the Severn Estuary at Portishead Docks. The Portishead Ditch does not contribute to the Flood Zone 3 designation.

There have been incidents of surface water flooding and ponding in areas of Portishead, as well as some instances of flooding from the Portbury Ditch affecting land when

an intense storm occurs at the same time as high tide conditions. This is different from the coastal flood risk which is managed by flood defences.

As development plans emerge, a full and detailed Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) would be undertaken, in line with relevant planning requirements. This would determine the risks of flooding at the site from sources including rivers, the sea, sewers and groundwater. The vulnerability of different development uses would be a key consideration in this process, as well as appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) will form an important part of the development proposals. It is recognised that surface water arising from a developed site should, as far as is practicable, be managed to mimic the surface water flows arising from the site prior to the proposed development while reducing flood risks to the site itself and elsewhere. Proposed drainage measures would also take climate change into account and would have benefits for both drainage and biodiversity.



INTRODUCTION

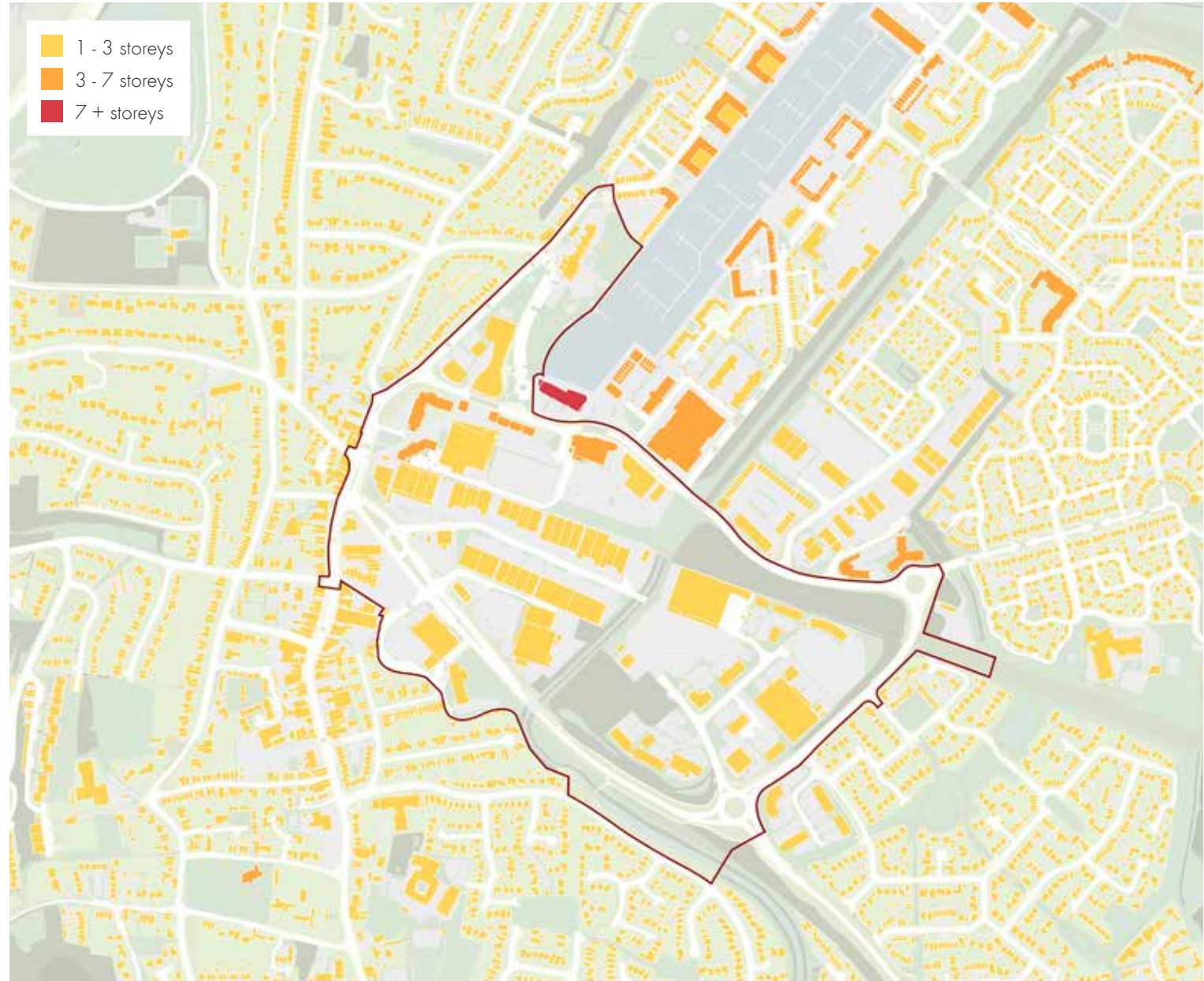
Existing building heights

Building heights in Portishead can be categorised broadly into three distinct types.

The historic town which extends north west and south from the High Street, rising up the hillsides is predominantly low rise, with most of the buildings being two or three stories and some single storey bungalow developments in residential areas.

The modern suburban development to the east is also generally modest in scale, with most homes being two and three stories.

The development around the Marina provides a stronger scale, including buildings of five to seven stories fronting onto the water and key locations and a nine storey building providing the end of the long view at the south western terminus of the water and acting as a significant landmark for the town.



“Develop a place for Portishead, of Portishead, capturing the town’s unique character and embracing the opportunities for living and working in a better way.”

2 VISION AND PRINCIPLES

VISION AND PRINCIPLES

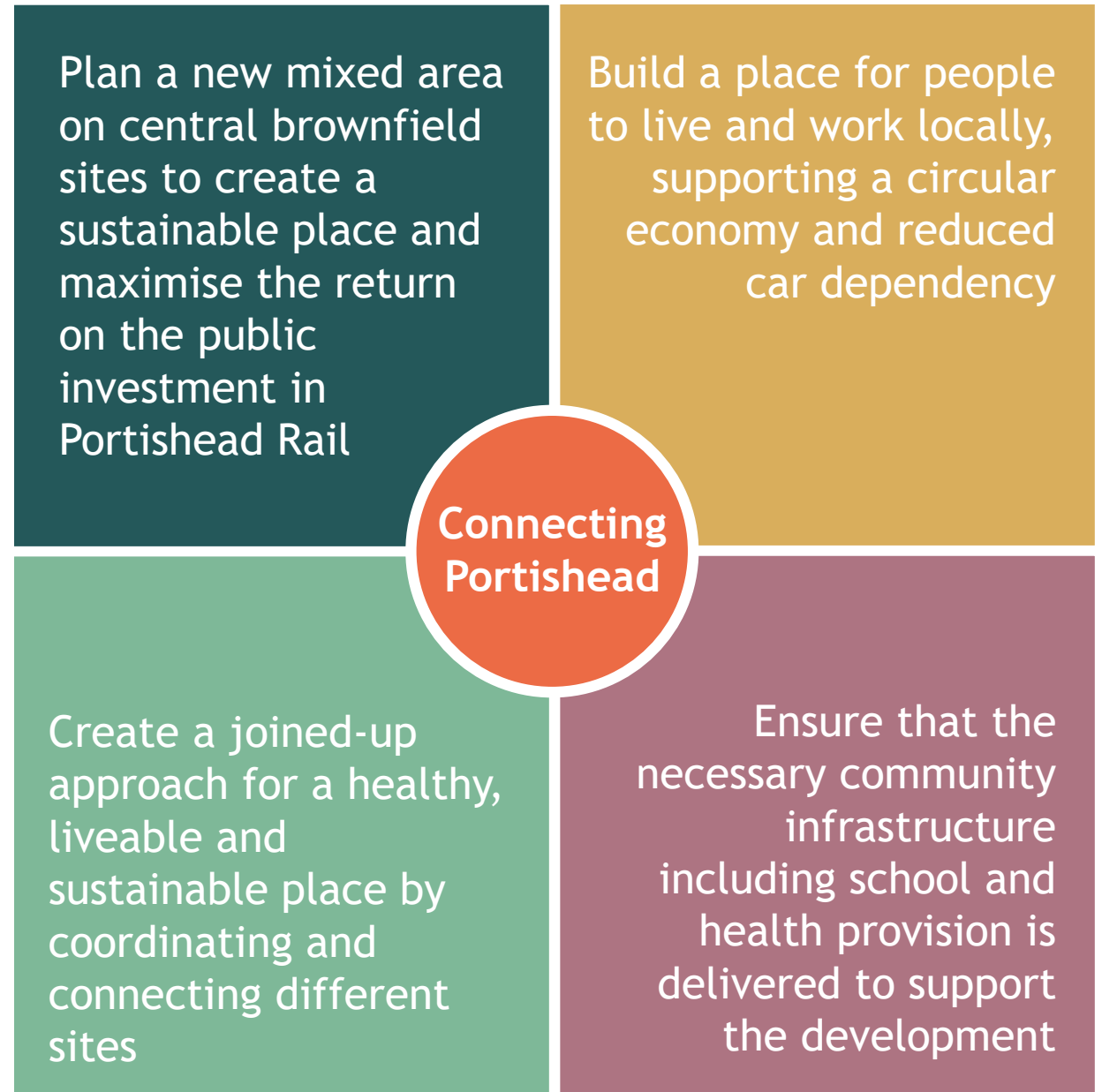
Principles and strategy

The Vision, Principles and Strategy have been developed by the project team in collaboration with the Project Steering Group and respond to the particular issues and opportunities which the research and engagement have identified are important for the Wyndham Way area.

This approach has also drawn on the North Somerset Local Plan Challenges and Choices consultation as well as the emerging Portishead Neighbourhood Plan and its key themes.

This Scoping Study and the framework that will follow from it are being developed through a significant period of change. North Somerset has recently declared both Climate and Nature Emergencies and has championed bold proposals through its emerging planning policy. The Neighbourhood Plan will also set out a strong green agenda for change. The direction of travel is clearly set towards more sustainable growth on central previously developed 'brownfield' sites with better opportunity for sustainable travel and reduced reliance on the car.

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VISION AND PRINCIPLES

Over 40% of carbon emissions in North Somerset come from transport and this is not currently forecast to fall in future years. Real gains have however been made in emissions from homes and commercial buildings, though there is so much more to achieve.

This work is being undertaken through the COVID-19 pandemic which has significantly challenged the ways in which people live, work, travel and shop. This has accelerated the trend towards local working rather than commuting into larger cities, and as a consequence, many smaller towns have seen a resurgence in local shops due to the increased numbers of people working from home.

This combination of the opportunity to remake a significant central part of Portishead to address some of the key challenges and opportunities of the moment is truly significant. The approach set out here is intended to provide a guide for the development of the future framework, mapping a positive way forward for the benefit of the whole town and the wider area.



VISION AND PRINCIPLES



Digital connectivity and infrastructure have become as important as transport infrastructure for business, and the COVID pandemic has accelerated the emerging trends for remote working to the point where a large number of people are home working. Towns like Portishead are well-placed to benefit from this trend for smaller digitally enabled businesses, workplace hubs and home working.



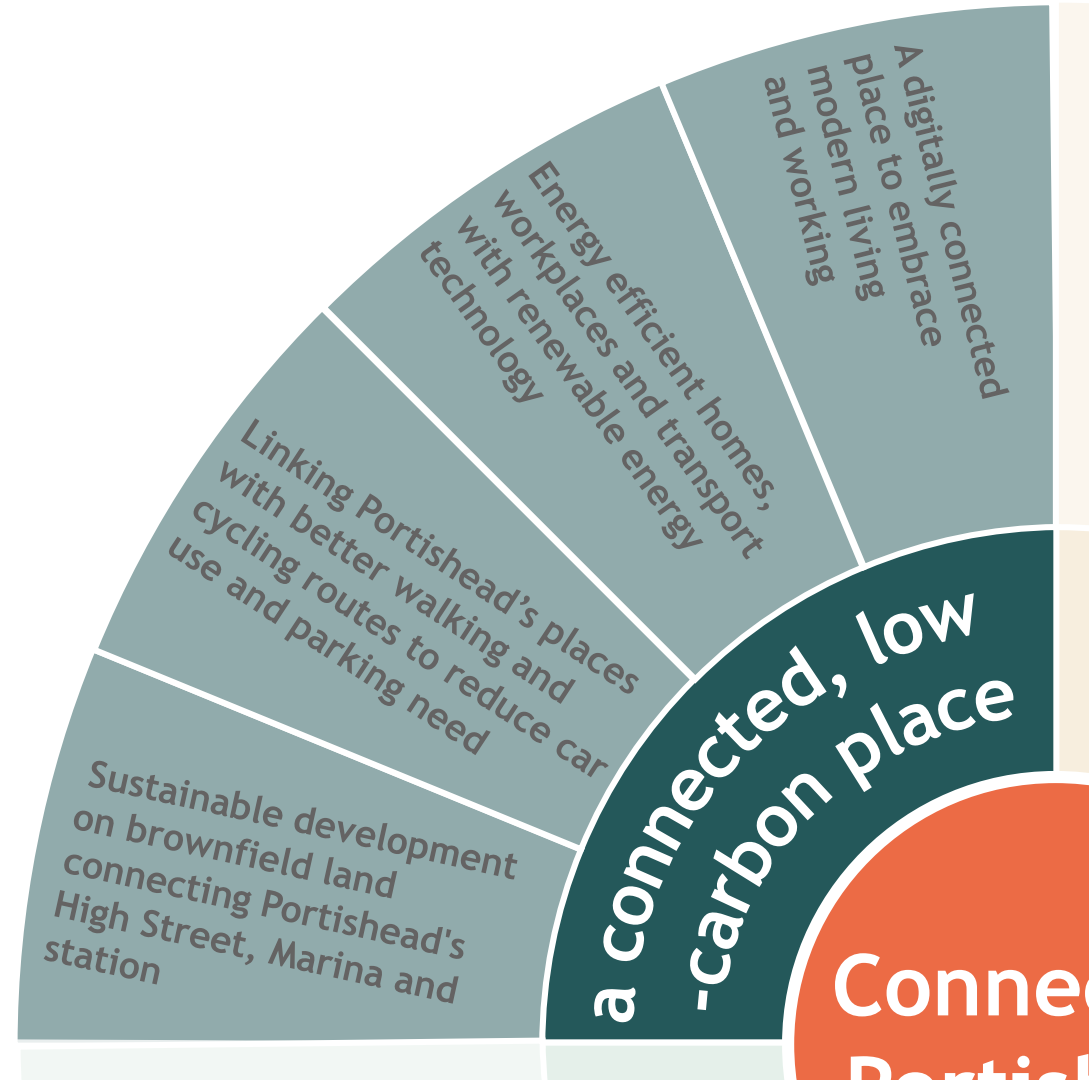
National regulations set minimum standards for the insulation and energy efficiency of homes, gradually increasing to the point where new homes will be able to operate at zero carbon. The scale of new development and the potential mix of uses also means that both renewable energy generation and smart energy network technology could be applied.



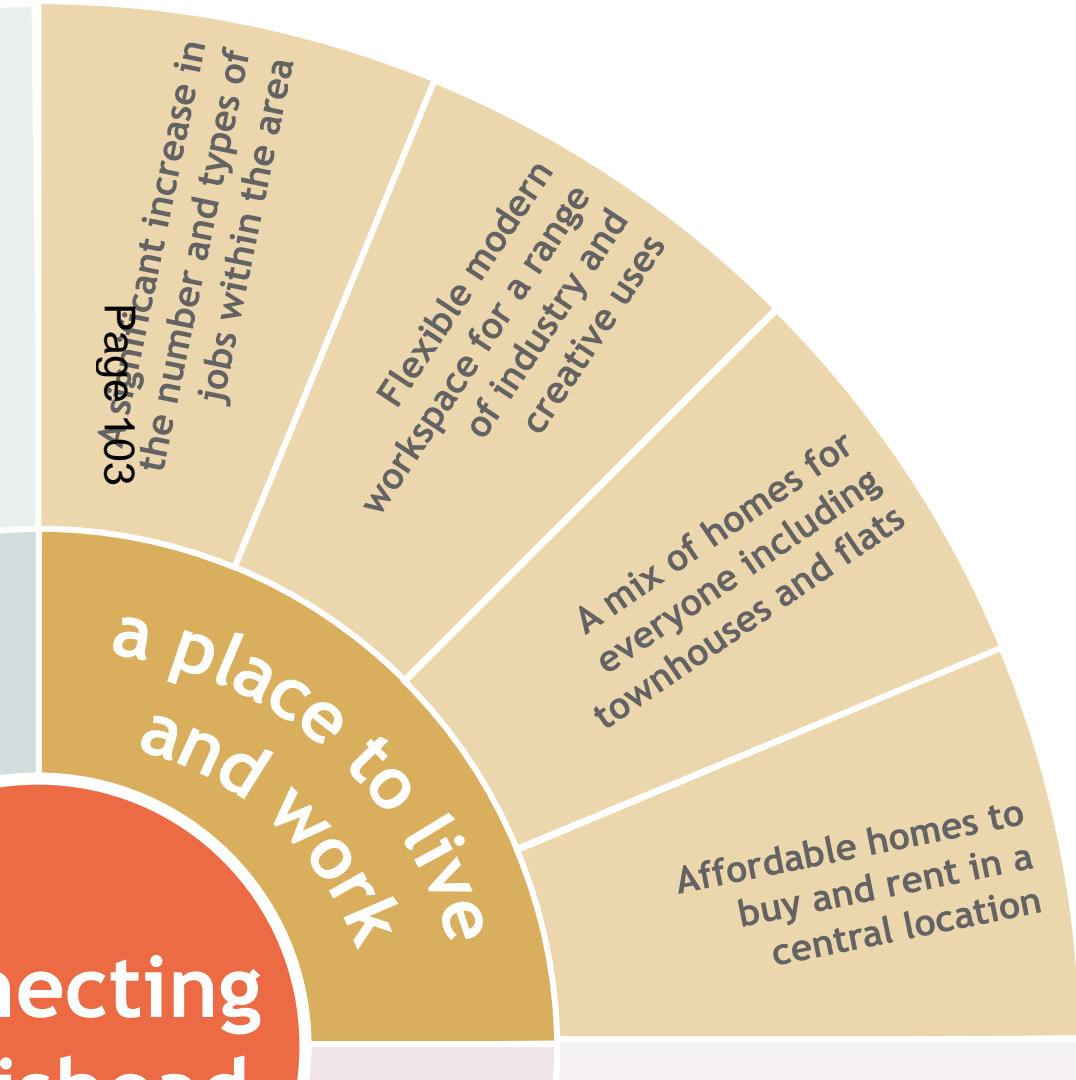
Recent development around Portishead, including the Marina and Port Marine have walkable streets within them, but lack good connections to the town centre. Development of this central area is a good opportunity to create clear and safe street links for walking and cycling which can help to reduce the need for short car trips within the town. This could help to reduce car dependency and make walking and cycling safe for younger people, helping to build healthy lifestyles and reduce traffic congestion.



Brownfield development is the most sustainable option for new development. It reduces the need to further expand the town, saving green-field sites from development. It also places new development in a central location where people can easily walk and cycle to local facilities as well as use the new station. This boosts the viability of the existing High Street, and also makes the development a good location for complementary shops, employment space and leisure facilities



VISION AND PRINCIPLES



The existing industrial and retail uses which provide the bulk of the employment within the study area at the moment tend to provide a relatively low number of jobs. They are in single storey buildings, with large areas of parking and yard space and include uses such as warehousing.

As new development is delivered, it can include new business space and support a wider range of activities to support employment for local people.



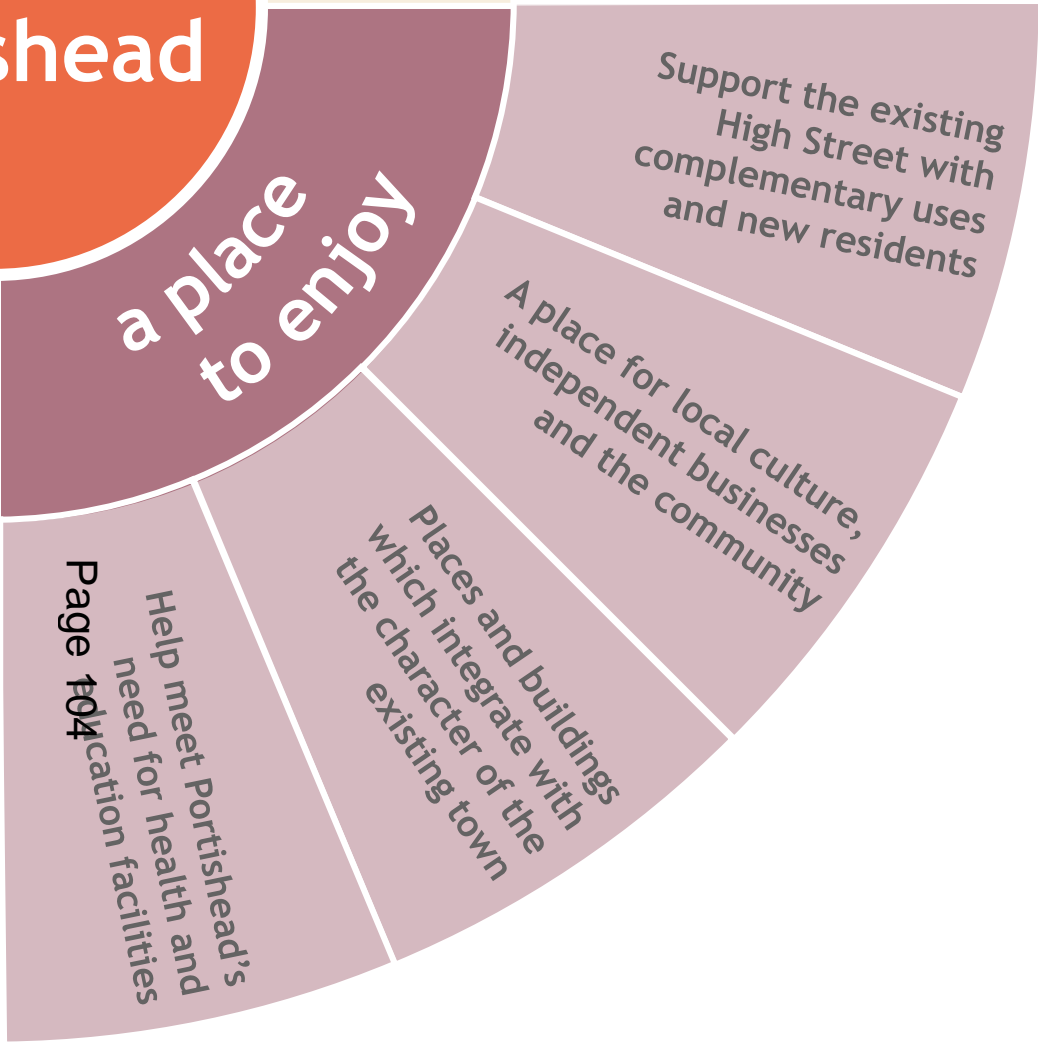
Delivering new workspace as part of a larger development also means that it can be designed to accommodate a wider range of uses and can adapt well to a wide range of workspace needs including workshop, studio and office uses alongside more traditional light industrial uses. Key to this flexibility will be creating modular units which can allow businesses to expand, providing good service access and dealing with infrastructure such as services and ventilation.



As part of contributing to a balanced local community, any development of this size should seek to address the identified need to deliver new housing within Portishead. This should include a range of types, densities tenures of new homes (including affordable housing) from flats through to larger family homes, together with associated amenity spaces.



North Somerset Council requires affordable homes to be delivered in any new residential development, subject to viability considerations, and these requirements will apply to schemes put forward in the Wyndham Way area.



The existing High Street is the retail heart of Portishead, and is complemented by the Marina, with its selection of shops and restaurants. The aim of new development should be to complement it by adding further uses which will benefit Portishead as a growing town. More people living within a short walk of the High Street will boost businesses by increasing the number of customers on their doorsteps.



The Wyndham Way area provides a key growth opportunity right in the heart of Portishead in a district that has long been the focus of the town's industry. A central location like this is an ideal place to locate space for small businesses, flexible workspace and creative spaces that can help to expand opportunities in Portishead. It also offers the potential to expand Portishead's cultural and community provision, with the potential for new cinema and venue space that could either complement or replace the existing Somerset Hall.



Portishead has a characterful historic centre and an attractive Marina area, including attractive buildings, but also great streets and spaces. The local landscape, with hills to the west, means that the roofscape of the central area of Portishead is really visible. The aim for new development should be to create a place with a distinctive character which reflects this existing context and feels like it belongs in Portishead. The development should include streets and spaces which create clear links to help integrate and connect, as well as provide distinctive and characterful design.



Portishead has grown substantially over the last few decades. North Somerset Council and Portishead Town Council have been working to assess what facilities the larger community needs, including the demand for essential services such as school places, healthcare and things like local leisure provision. As well as providing new jobs and homes, any development will need to address the associated infrastructure requirements related to the development providing funding and/or provide new or improved local facilities.

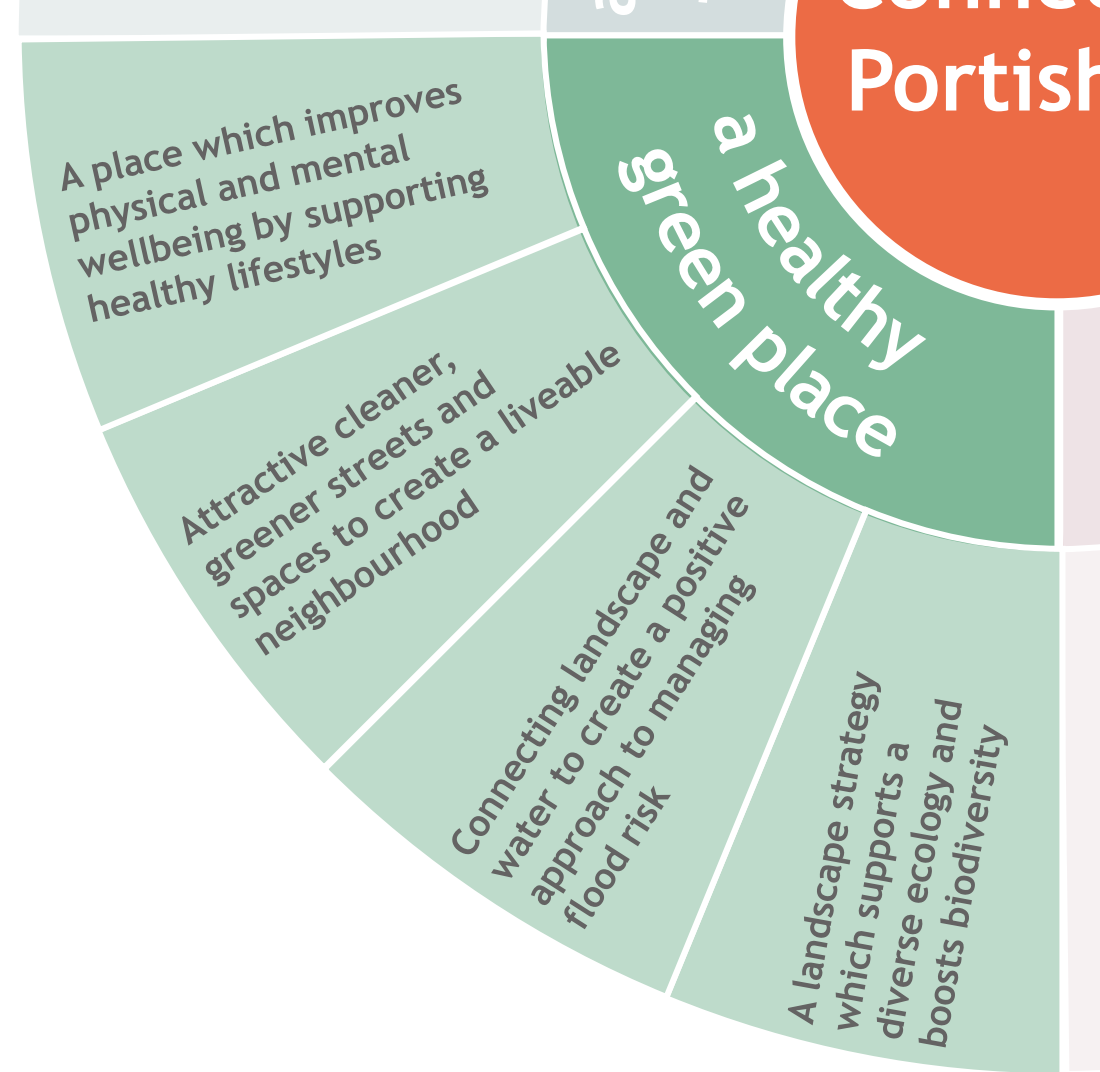


New development in Portishead should provide buildings and spaces which support healthy, happy lifestyles. This includes providing good outdoor space in the form of private gardens and terraces, as well as creating public spaces for play and relaxation. Enabling walking, cycling and reducing local car trips is a well-established way to promote healthy lifestyles. The creation of safe and clear links between different parts of Portishead will help to make walking and cycling easier and replace short car trips for some existing residents as well as new residents.

For the central area of Portishead to be an attractive location for people to want to live, work and spend time the streets and spaces need to provide an attractive environment. This could range from central pedestrian spaces which enable cafes or restaurants to provide outdoor seating, to safe streets which enable children to walk and cycle safely to school, to green spaces which provide pockets of space to play in, relax in, or look on to. Green spaces which are interlinked, and which connect into the green corridor of the watercourse will also feel larger and more generous.

The Wyndham Way area is susceptible to flood risk but does benefit from tidal flood protection. The large areas of roof and hard standing in the area contribute to the management and design of the existing watercourse to balance drainage, storage capacity and biodiversity. This should also be complemented by good provision of permeable surfaces within any development, including rain gardens, green or brown roofs and tree planting which can all help to slow down the flow of rainwater and at the same time create a more attractive place.

As well as declaring a climate emergency, North Somerset Council has also declared a nature emergency, drawing attention to the urgent need to improve biodiversity in the district. The existing study area has elements of strong ecological value in its watercourse and some significant trees, but has large areas of hard roof and paved surface. As plans are developed for the area, extending fingers of green space into new development which connect with the green corridor of the watercourse will help to connect and support a much richer and more diverse ecology.



After dark, Wyndham Way becomes a sort of no man's land and doesn't feel too safe

There is no sense of arrival and no great impression of the High Street

The leisure centre is too small, in the wrong place and poor quality

The intersection at the petrol station, Wyndham Way, High Street and Cabstand is a very awkward pinch point. The intersection NEEDS to be eased, it is very difficult to get through, very busy and way too much traffic

More green space!

The rhine greenway could become central green area

Old Mill Road feels like a wasted space. Could this be made into a link between Waitrose and Homebase?

We enjoy coming to Portishead to walk along the greenway, marina and pier.

The area needs to be more attractive with nicer public spaces

The site has a poor structural environment. It disrupts public space and footpaths and is a health hazard

The Old Mill Road businesses are essential and provide important high skilled and professional jobs

Can we improve the building frontages in the Wyndham Way area?

Could we include an arts or culture club?

Harbour Road is aggressive for pedestrians, a better route across the car park would help

3 CONSULTATION

CONSULTATION

Listening to local people

The approach to the framework has been developed through ongoing consultation with local residents, councillors and landowners. It began with a listening exercise in the Vision and Scoping Study and has continued through consultation in spring 2022 and into consultation on the draft document in September and October 2022. We have received hundreds of comments and ideas through our library drop-in, stakeholder site visit workshop and through the website:

Desire for better public transport: people would like to see better bus services and a well-connected railway station.

Improved accessibility: The lack of good walking and cycling routes through the area tends to promote car use. Many enjoy walking but suggested that the area needs new and better connections.

Importance of the rhine greenway: Many people use the rhine greenway as an enjoyable space to walk, cycle and run. People see its environmental importance and would like it to be protected and enhanced.

Improving the attractiveness of the area: People are keen to see more attractive streets including planting and seating.

Parking: There are different opinions around parking provision - some people would like to see parking in Portishead sustained and some people think there is too much. The existing design and location of car parking makes the area hard to navigate and less attractive to walk through.

Traffic: Many commented on the amount of traffic in Portishead and the dominance of cars. The Cabstand junction is a particular pressure point for the area.

Protect current economic uses: People want to see new businesses settle and thrive whilst protecting the current industry within the Wyndham Way Area. There is a desire for smaller independent shops and businesses.

Sustainability: Development must aim for carbon neutrality - energy efficient and enhance and protect local wildlife.

Schools: There is concern that rapid growth in new housing would place pressure on school places.

Leisure: Some people would like to see the leisure centre improved or replaced with a new facility.



Feedback and ideas from the consultation have helped to develop the vision and principles into the draft framework

Redevelop Old Mill Road and create an attractive connection between the station and the High Street. Encourage independent businesses to set up in Portishead to attract visitors to Portishead.

The Old Mill Road businesses are essential and provide important high skilled and professional jobs

Encourage independent businesses to set up in Portishead to attract visitors to Portishead.

There is no sense of arrival and no great impression of the High Street

This is a good opportunity to create an attractive and distinctive gateway between the new station and the High Street

Could we include an arts or culture club?

A wider range of businesses would encourage people to start business and find work in Portishead

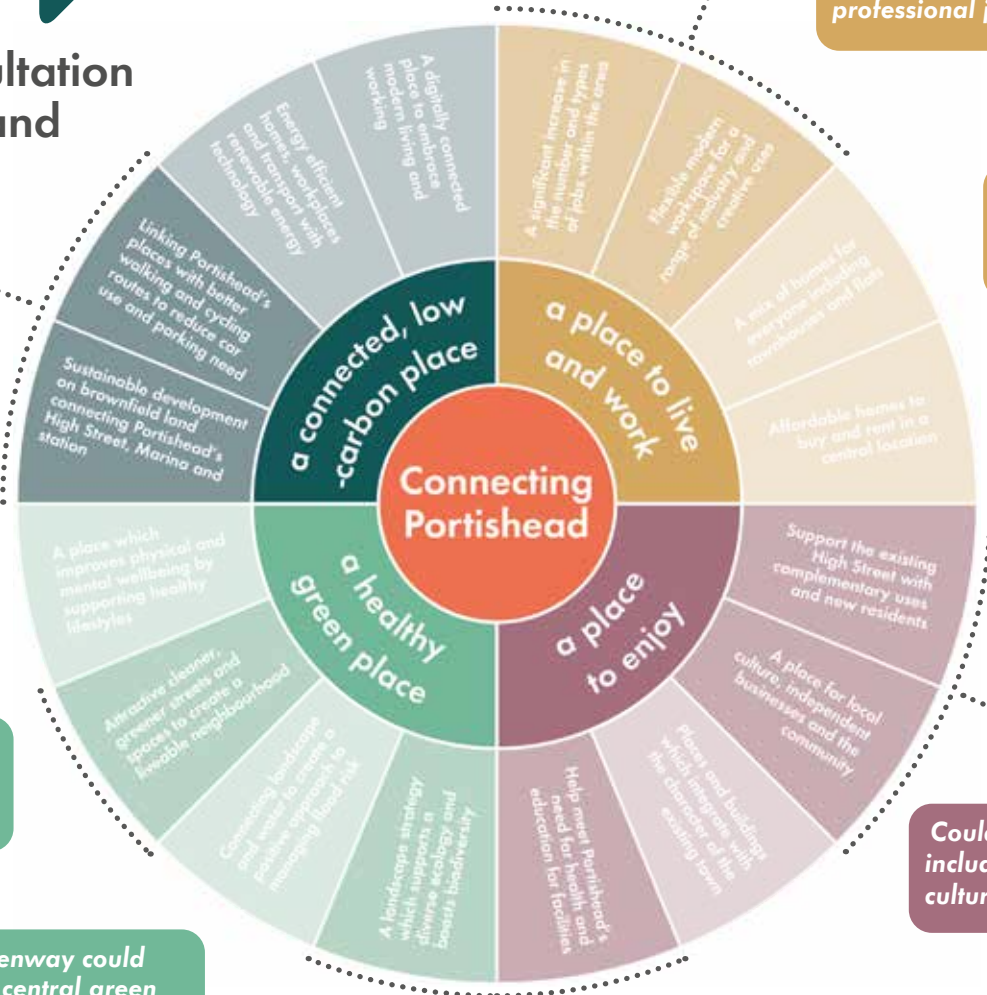
More green space and space for wildlife

The greenway could become central green area

The area needs to be more attractive with nicer public spaces

When you approach Portishead from Wyndham Way, you notice straight away the lack of trees. So we definitely more evergreens needed here

A cycle way from the High Street down Old Mill Road, past the station and then parallel to the railway to Pill.



Framework consultation

The second round of consultation was held between 23 September and 4 November 2022 and included a blend of online, offline and media engagement as well as a drop-in session at Portishead Library. The project website received over 5,000 visits during the consultation period and hundreds of comments have been received.

Online survey

Forty-nine people responded to the online survey. Overall, the survey found that most respondents expressed support for the masterplan’s aims whilst raising questions and sometimes expressing concerns about parking, community infrastructure and public transport.

The main themes emerging from the feedback were:

Community infrastructure, including medical facilities, community centre, schools and nurseries were regularly highlighted as an important part of the development mix. Some comments highlighted concerns about this keeping pace with any future development.

Concerns and comments about public transport provision, most notably the bus network serving the town. There were also several comments about the rail link, with several respondents wanting to see this align with any development activity.

Parking provision, including concerns about quantity, location and the number of spaces proposed.

Support for green and open space, and comments about how this integrates with and connects the wider town.

Support for employment provision, including space for existing businesses on Wyndham Way. This is set against comments stating that there was too much empty space in the area already.

Comments about a new housing provision, and associated infrastructure provision.

Please make the street network wide enough for both walking and cycling, with plenty of benches, parks and gardens.

Green space must be a top priority in a family-focused town and with current ecological concerns - preferably designed to maximise soaking away waste water and natural drainage.

Solutions for optimising future land use at Portishead, a high order settlement, requires approaching from a strategic level considering all available constraints and opportunities.



Interactive map as part of the WSSA public consultation

At the moment, school children walk through the area from the east to get to their schools on the other side of town. But it isn't a very safe route for them and this must be improved!

Could you give more detail to some of the terms? Community space can mean different things to different people.

Please provide separate cycle lanes!

After dark, you don't really want to walk through the area so it would be great to get some lighting and activity there, you'd feel a lot safer.

We could do with a shuttle bus serving the station.

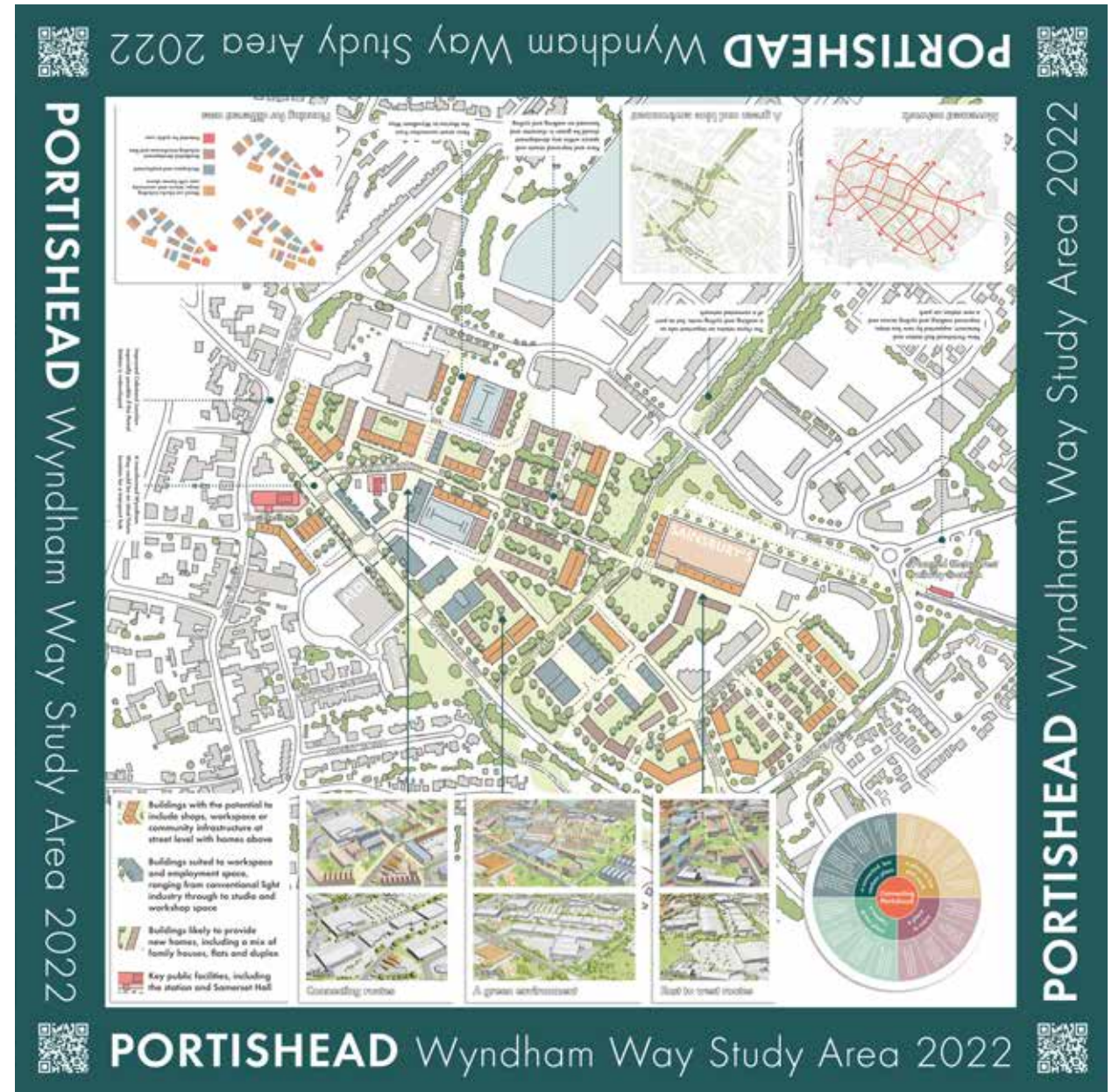
Could the historic building at the end of Old Mill Road be a museum? It could show the history of the port!

Could you make the colours on the masterplan slightly more vibrant so people are able to distinguish between the uses?

At the moment, to get to the high street, I have to walk all the way down Harbour Road. It would be great if there was a more direct route!

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Responses from the in-person engagement event



CONSULTATION

In-person event

Twenty-three people attended the consultation event at Portishead Library on 13 October 2022. Particular themes raised included:

- Supportive of masterplan in general.
- Doubts about whether the rail service will happen.
- Concerns about infrastructure, particularly in relation to the phasing of housing delivery.
- Support for the proposed connections to and from the station.
- Support for change at Old Mill Road, but not at the expense of existing jobs or businesses.
- Support for creating space for local artisan businesses and artists.
- Concerns about local buses, and the knock-on impact this has on car congestion.

- Useful advice on how to improve graphic communication of plans and drawings. Included improvements to colour schemes and the creation of helpful diagrams to aid in an understanding of the masterplan framework.
- Attendees wanted more detail added to terms such as mixed-use, community space and green space.
- Support for creating active spaces to improve safety of the area, particularly after dark.
- Concerns about the impact on the high street, and the loss of the high street as a local centre.

This consultation is the latest phase of engagement on Wyndham Way to have taken place since 2020. Although it's not surprising that engagement levels have dropped compared to the earlier phase in 2020, there is continued interest in the project. The feedback has helped to shape a masterplan for Wyndham Way and a framework for the area's continued evolution.



CONSULTATION

Responding to engagement

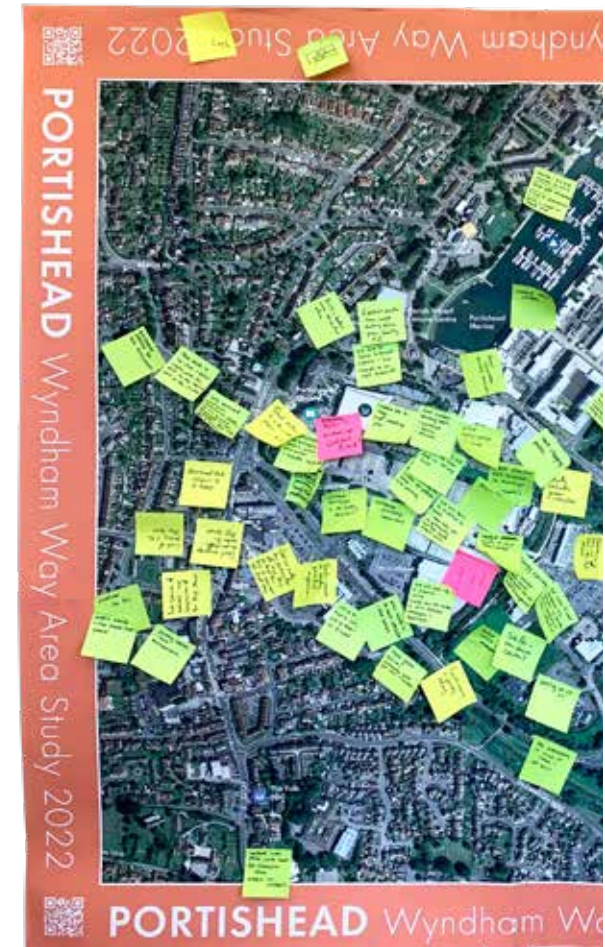
A number of changes have been made to the final draft of the document to respond to the feedback that was received over the course of the project. This includes the following elements:

- Page 112**

The section on employment and workspace has been expanded to respond to concerns about the types of space and risk of loss of jobs. This confirms that there is a clear expectation that the area will see an increase in the range and number of jobs in the future.
- The report now includes more information about new homes, including the possibilities for different types of housing and estimates of the different numbers of new homes which could be delivered in different scenarios and timescales. The gradual delivery of new homes over the fifteen year period of the framework also supports the approach taken to the delivery of community infrastructure.
- The lack of definitive plans with detailed design was noted as a key concern. It is not the role of the framework to respond to this, but more illustrations

and information have been included to help explain the principle of flexibility and the range of options which could come forward. This approach also responds to comments suggesting that a wider range of building scales should be included to demonstrate the ability of the framework to accommodate different density models and massing.

A wider range of comments received relate to the details around elements such as design for accessibility which are elements that are framed by the wider planning policy and regulatory context and which people will have the opportunity to engage with as and when individual applications are proposed.





4 A SPATIAL FRAMEWORK

SPACIAL FRAMEWORK

The framework

The framework has been designed to explore and address the key outcomes of the engagement and research process. It sets out a joined-up approach for the gradual transformation of the area in the context of a series of important discussions which cover not only the Wyndham Way area, but affect the wider town.

In developing the approach, a series of components have been identified which set out how the principles identified in the Vision can be translated into a practical framework for future development. These have been tested through consultation on the draft document and updated to reflect public and stakeholder feedback.

Page 14

Creating a framework for development



A connected district

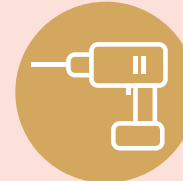


A green and blue environment



A flexible framework

Design for different uses



Workspace and employment



New homes



Parking

Delivering infrastructure



Planning for Portishead rail



School place provision



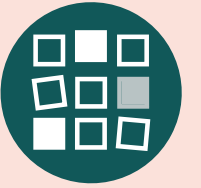
Public buildings



A connected district



A green and blue environment



A flexible framework

A framework for development

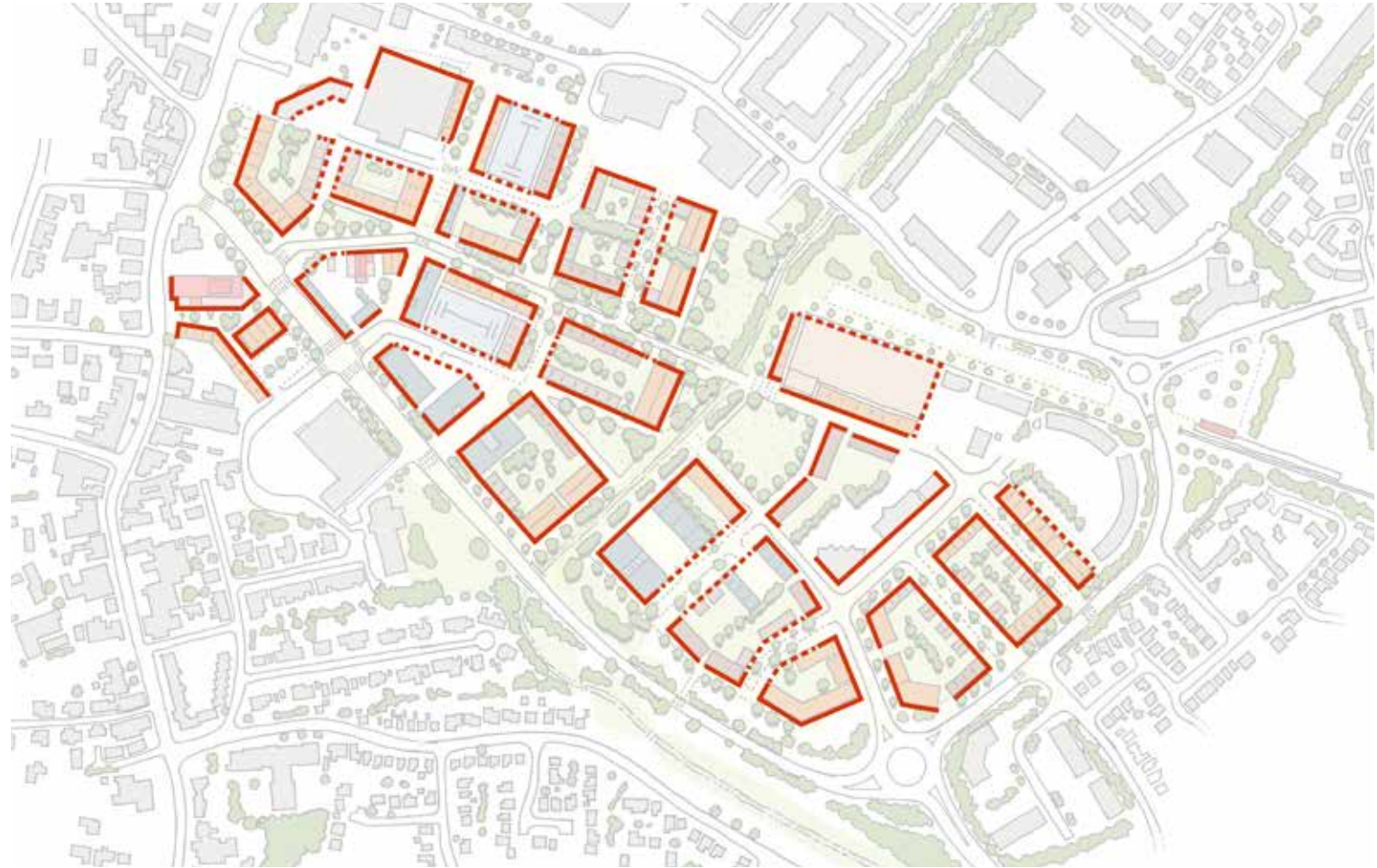
SPACIAL FRAMEWORK

Creating a flexible framework

Urban blocks are the key components of our historic towns and cities. They help to create places which deliver safer streets by overlooking with front doors, windows and shop fronts. They are flexible in being able to accommodate a wide range of uses and enable change over time that supports a resilient economy. They also define clear fronts and backs creating areas for gardens, yards and servicing away from the front faces onto public streets.

The flexibility which a good block structure creates is really important to the Wyndham Way area. Change will happen over a relatively long period of time and through many different projects. Whilst the illustrative framework help to show ways in which the area could change, the framework of blocks defines the essential rules for development that give landowners and developers the opportunity to be creative but still work in a coordinated way.

The block structure which has been developed for the Wyndham Way area takes account of land ownerships and existing buildings to give the most flexibility whilst still unlocking change.



Urban block structure







SPACIAL FRAMEWORK

Planning for different uses

The ability to deliver a range of different uses within the area is a key part of the framework approach and it is important to appreciate that the illustrative scheme shown in this document is just one way in which the area could develop.

The framework which we have proposed not only allows for variations in the design of individual buildings but also allows for variations in uses. A flexible approach will help the wider town adapt to changing demands for workspace, leisure, community facilities, homes and more, helping to support a more resilient economy for the town.

-  Mixed use blocks including shops, leisure and community uses with homes above
-  Workspace and employment
-  Residential development including townhouses and flats
-  Potential for public uses



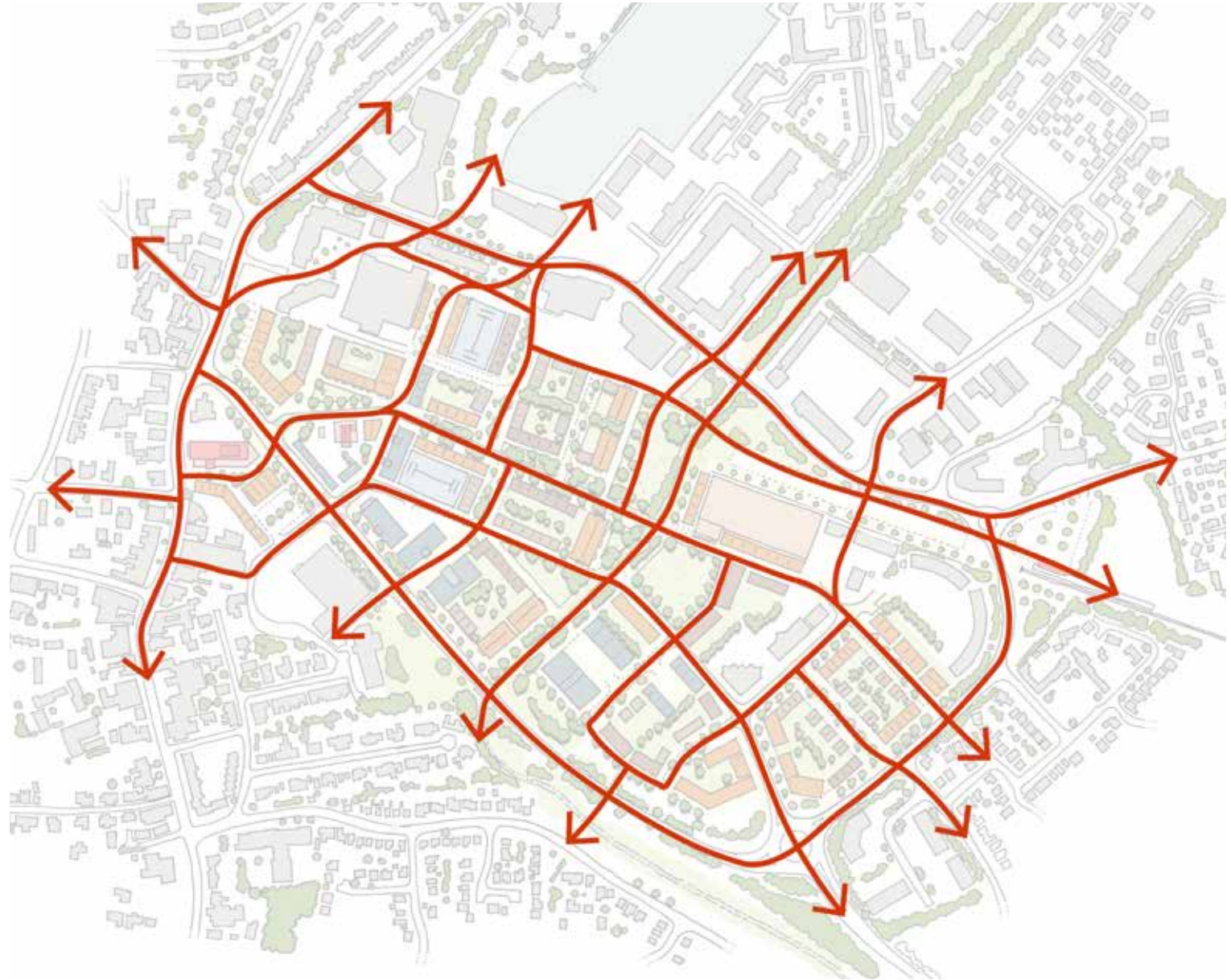
SPACIAL FRAMEWORK

A connected district

Delivering a connecting network of streets and routes for walking and cycling has been one of the consistent ambitions of this project. It tackles one of the big issues that has arisen as Portishead has grown over the last few decades, but without the connecting routes that could make short journeys really easy to do on foot or by bicycle.

The fragmented ownership in the area makes a comprehensive street pattern hard to deliver as a single project. However, the fact that different land owners need to coordinate their developments to deliver joined-up streets is one of the challenges which makes this framework important. Without it, there is a risk that piecemeal development will never produce a connected place.

A clear and attractive street network will help to make walking and cycling easier for some trips. Whilst it won't replace every car journey it can replace some of them, giving healthy choices to more people. It will also make the town better for children and teenagers who don't drive by creating a safe environment which gives them more independence.



Movement network

A green and blue environment

Green streets and spaces are a vital aspect of creating a place which is liveable, supports biodiversity and helps to address the impacts of climate change. Whilst the rhine creates an attractive green corridor through the heart of the area, a large proportion of space is hard surfaces, either roofs, roads or car parks.

Given the fragmented ownership of the area, it is unlikely that a single large park could be created. However, a series of smaller spaces which connect into the rhine corridor will create usable spaces and will help to extend the benefits of green space to a large proportion of the site.

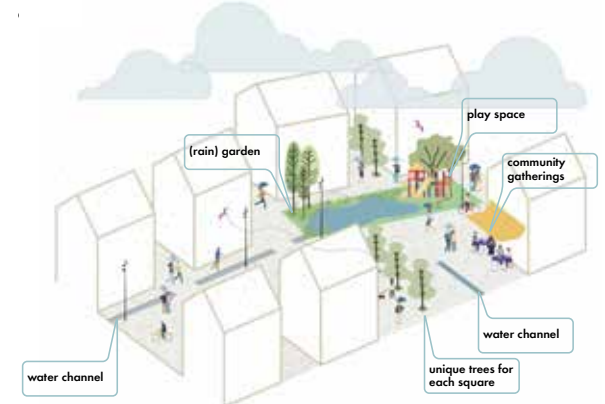
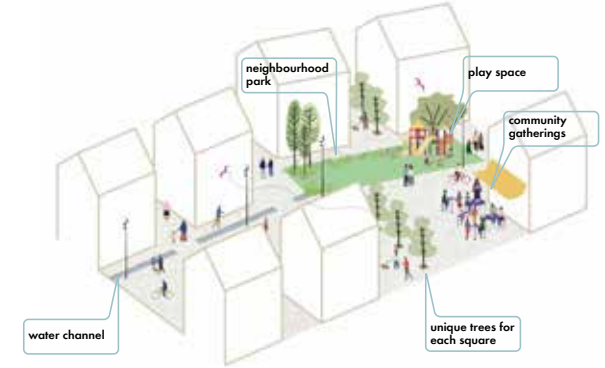
New and improved streets are also expected to be much greener. Trees are important to provide shade and help maintain cooler temperatures. Greenery at ground level can include elements of seating and features for play, but should also include rain-gardens for sustainable urban drainage to help manage water run-off and reduce flood risk downstream.

Finally, gardens and green roofs also have a big part to play in making the area as green as possible and provide space for residents to relax.



Extending Portishead's central greenway

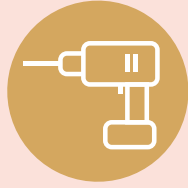
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Green streets and spaces serve many functions

SPACIAL FRAMEWORK





Workspace and
employment



New homes



Parking

Designing for different uses

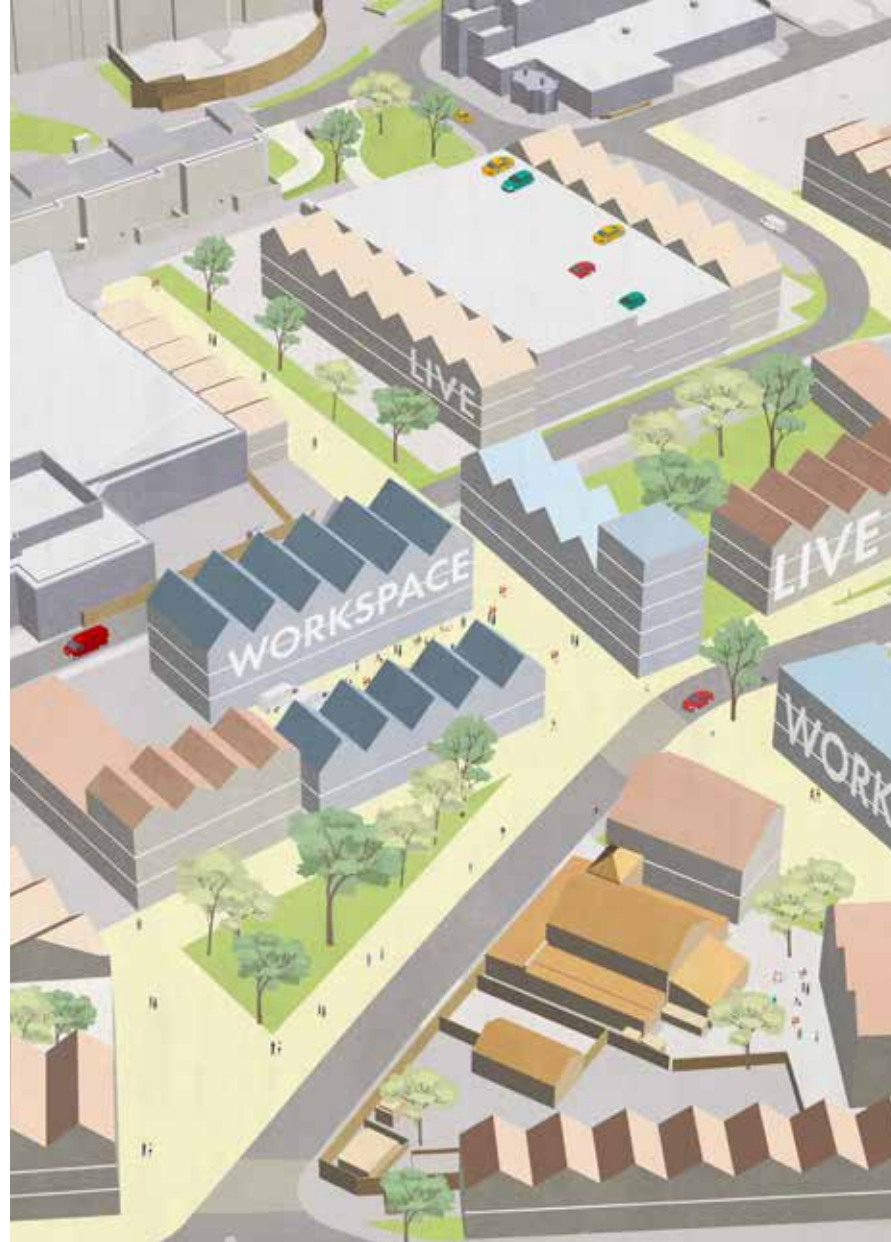
SPACIAL FRAMEWORK

Workspace and employment

The existing employment in the Wyndham Way area has been an important part of the public debate around the framework. Employment and workspace in and around the town centre has a significant role to play in making the town more economically sustainable, with local jobs supporting the high street and giving people more opportunities to work locally.

Over the last few years the national trend has seen demand for employment and commercial space has remained high, making it attractive for land owners. In the short term, this makes the development of existing sites like Old Mill Road less likely as the space is in demand. Change is likely to be gradual and more likely to be about creative mixed use.

Workspace can be designed to be much better integrated into the wider town, helping to create good streets and be a positive part of Portishead. Lots of historic factory and mill buildings in our towns and cities do this very well and show how workspace could be better integrated into the town.



Crate is an example of innovative workspace for small businesses within an existing industrial estate. It includes a cafe and has become a centre for events and markets

SPACIAL FRAMEWORK

New types of workspace

In recent years employment sites have tended to be low density and low rise. This contrasts with more historic developments like Victorian factories and warehouses which tended to be multi-storey. Stacked workspace for creative 'maker-spaces' is returning as a form of development, as is work space as a ground floor use with housing above. Both options mean that more activity can be accommodated within a site, using land more efficiently and helping to support the town centre.

For any workspace as part of mixed use development, providing yard space which can accommodate vans and deliveries is an important factor, as are goods lifts to upper floors. Work space units also typically need much bigger floor-to-ceiling heights than other uses.

When considering a mixed use scheme, it is important that work space is designed so that factors such as noise, air quality and servicing do not affect nearby homes and create conflict. Careful design of service yards and bin stores as well as the orientation of entrances can play a big part in making mixed use areas successful.



Uplands is an example of the modern stacked industrial space being planned. It includes service yards and goods lifts as well as creating good street frontage.



Modern work space can be much more flexible and attractive.



SPACIAL FRAMEWORK

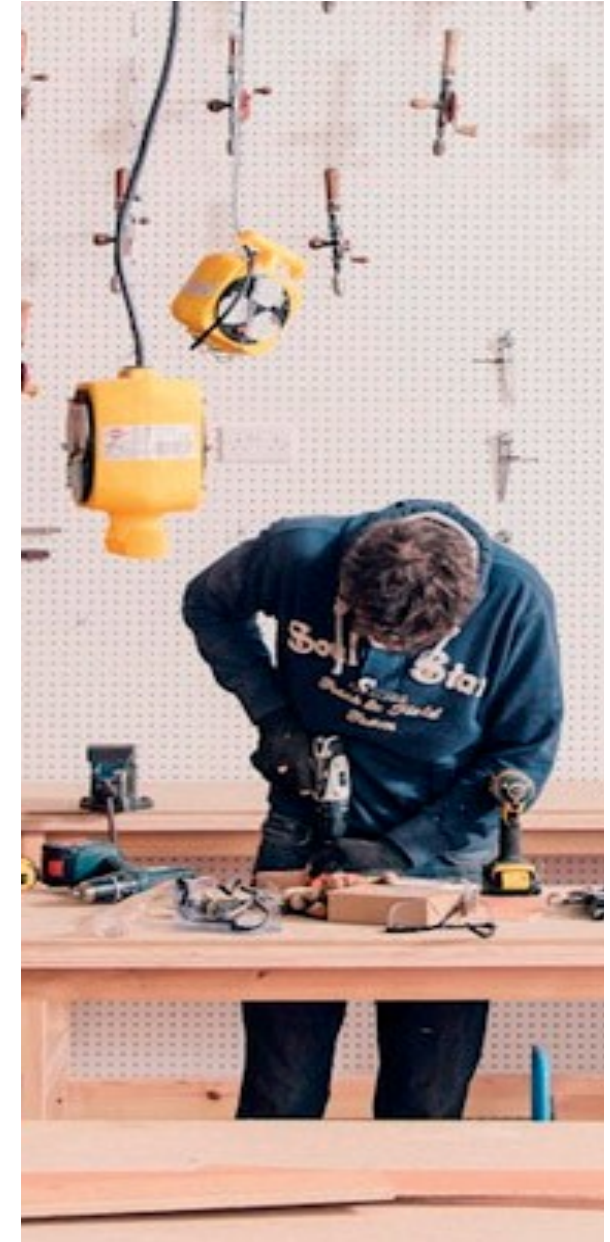
New types of workspace

The discussions about the amount of workspace available in Portishead and the local jobs which this delivers have been a key part of the consultation process supporting this study. Whilst it is not possible in a framework like this to make clear predictions about the future number of jobs the council's expectation is that employment in the area will increase and that there will be a broadening range of opportunities available. There are a number of factors which will inform future schemes and decisions.

- The original Vision and Principles established in 2020 includes a clear expectation that the area will continue to provide employment for Portishead. This continues to form part of the framework and the Council remains committed to the planning designations including the employment allocation on the Gordano Gate site which would introduce new employment land.
- Industrial sites such as Old Mill Road often include a significant number of trade retail units and leisure such as gyms. These are also important sources of employment and can be integrated into mixed use areas.

- A planning policy document can't make a commitment to retain an existing company on its present site. These are commercial matters that are for individual businesses and their landlords to determine.
- Different uses have different job densities - this will benefit Portishead as sites are developed for more modern workspace. We are likely to see more space for creative uses, increasing the number of jobs on the site and widening the range of opportunities.

Based on the illustrative options that have been drawn up for this framework it is estimated that the area could provide up to 600 jobs, depending on the level of change and the sites that come forward for development.



SPACIAL FRAMEWORK

Town centre living

Town centre living has a significant role to play in any future development in central Portishead. It contributes to town centre vitality; it provides a sustainable location for living within walking and cycling distance of shops, services and transport; and it reduces the need for greenfield development by using central brownfield sites.

Residential development in a central location can include a range of terraced family houses mixed with flats. Duplex units for family housing in mid-rise blocks can help to maintain a mix of housing types which responds to Portishead’s housing need as set out in the Local Plan, and maintain an active street frontage.

The examples shown here are from a variety of locations in the south of England and so respond to different contexts. Development in Portishead would be expected to reflect the character of the local area in terms of building materials and forms.



Right: Examples of high quality town centre family houses and apartments at a range of densities

A range of housing types



Page 126

Suburban housing predominates in large areas of Portishead. However, the relatively low density means that it is relatively land-hungry and leads to car dependency due to the scale of development. This approach is expected to have minimal application in new central development in Portishead.

Density - 30 dwellings per hectare

Parking - on plot



Terraced town houses ranging from two to four stories can accommodate everything from relatively small homes to large family dwellings. A typical Victorian street of terraced homes would usually be regarded as working well with on-street parking providing one space per house, but there might be potential for a rear courtyard or off-site parking

Density - up to 60 dwellings per hectare

Parking - on street or in shared parking



Mews homes with the option for integral parking and roof terraces can be used on smaller or constricted sites, often within the middle of a larger scale block. Mews streets with a shared surface are suitable for areas with local traffic only and low speed design.

Density - up to 60 dwellings per hectare

Parking - integrated

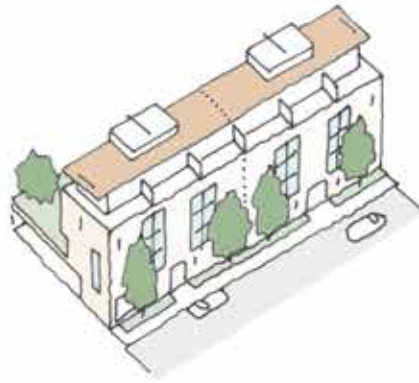
A range of housing types

Page 127



Stacked maisonettes can create an attractive street frontage at four storey and have the advantage of providing each home with a front door directly onto the street. The lower unit would usually be expected to have a garden at ground level, whilst the upper unit might be small and step back to allow space for a roof terrace.

Density - 100 dwellings per hectare
Parking - on street or shared parking



Apartment buildings can contribute to a mix of unit types as part of a larger development. They can make a positive contribution to the streetscape by including front doors onto the street for ground floor flats. Whilst parking in basements is unlikely to be viable in a location like Portishead, the option of parking below a podium courtyard amenity space may be suitable.

Density - up to 200 dwellings per hectare
Parking - on street or in shared parking



Mixed blocks containing a range of apartment buildings, stacked maisonettes and town houses provides an attractive way to achieve good densities with flexibility and the opportunity to include other uses at street level. Parking can be provided within a podium deck or externally as part of a shared provision.

Density - typically 120 dwellings per hectare
Parking - on street, podium or shared parking

SPACIAL FRAMEWORK

Scale and massing

The predominant scale of the study area at the moment is two-storey industrial buildings, with large shallow roofs which become the dominant feature in views from the surrounding hills. This is in contrast to the mainly two and three storey old parts of Portishead and the taller development around the waterside of the Marina.

The framework for the area creates the context for a range of options in terms of scale and massing. The provision of stacked parking or undercroft parking is likely to be required to allow for denser options to be delivered whilst still meeting commercial expectations.

The possible range in densities which different scale and massing options could deliver is reflected in the housing capacity study which forms the final section of this report.



Above: Different options for scale and massing of development with the existing buildings also included for comparison

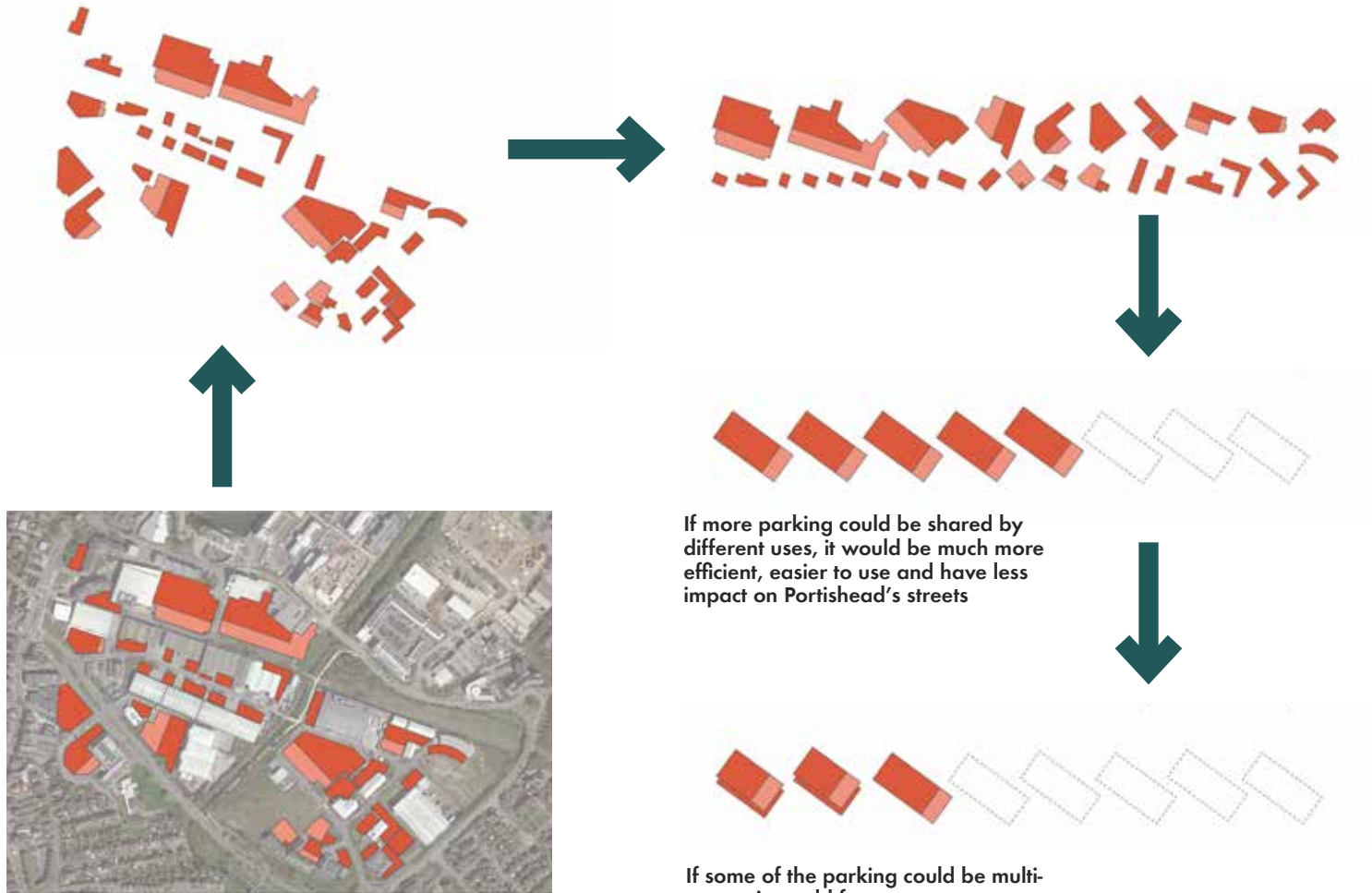
SPACIAL FRAMEWORK

Parking

Surface car parking currently dominates this part of Portishead. Whilst some car parks like the town centre car park adjacent to the High Street are in demand and well used, most of the car parks are bigger than they need to be. This is largely because they each serve different uses and are split across different ownerships.

As the area changes over time, a different approach to parking could help to meet Portishead's parking needs but also reduce the impact it has on the streets. Greater use of shared parking and multi-storey parking would mean that less space needs to be given over to cars and more can be used for buildings and spaces.

Provision of different parking to suit different needs will also help. Parking near the High Street which is best for short-stay errand parking should be complemented with longer stay parking suitable for people who work in the area, but might not need to park quite so close.



A map of central Portishead highlighting the areas of parking for public use, shopping and businesses

If more parking could be shared by different uses, it would be much more efficient, easier to use and have less impact on Portishead's streets

If some of the parking could be multi-storey, it would free up even more space for productive uses, including workspace and homes in a sustainable location

SPACIAL FRAMEWORK

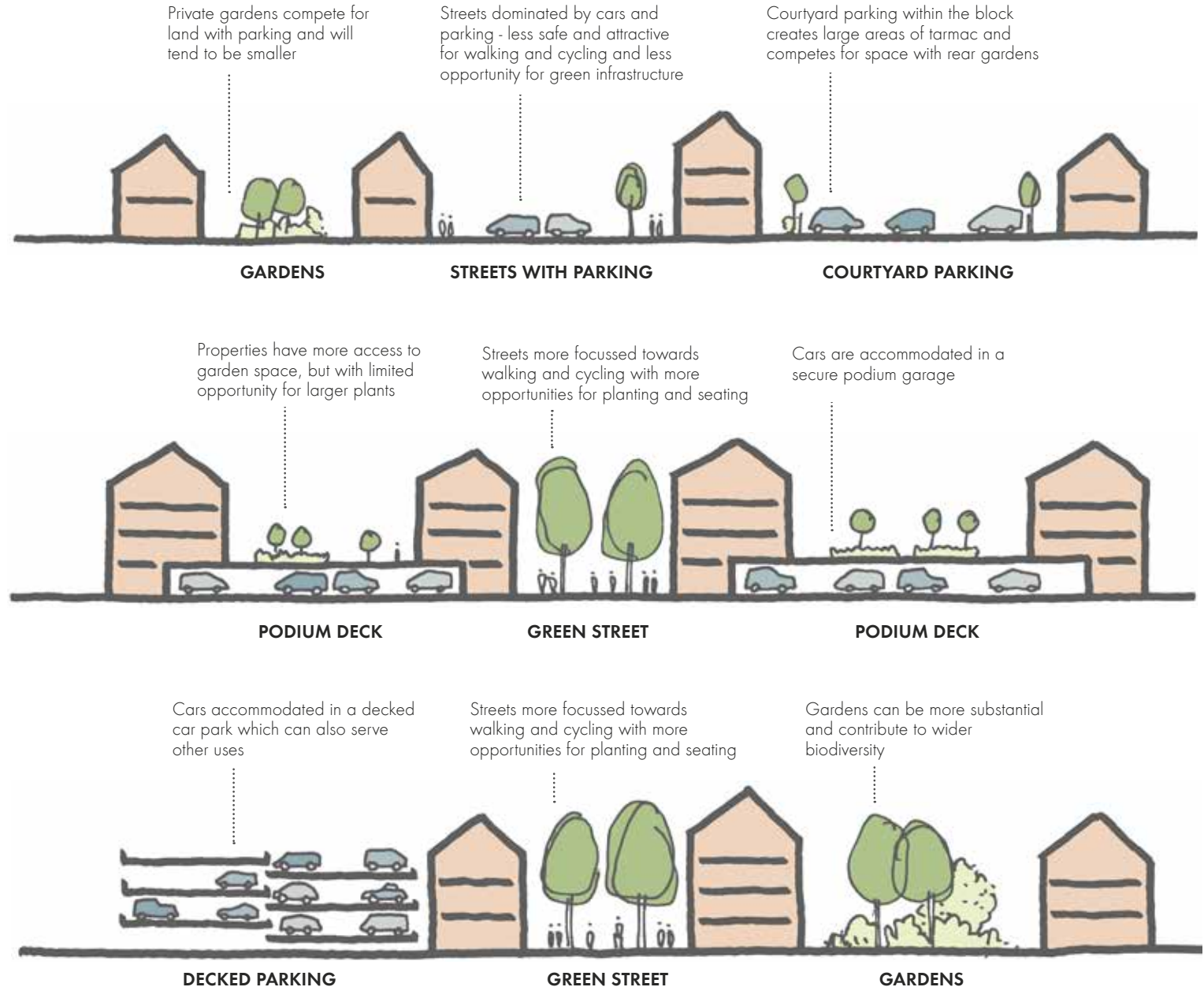
Residential parking

Any new homes in the area will need some parking, although the central location and delivery of the station will help to reduce the overall requirement. There are different ways to deliver this, each with their strengths and weaknesses.

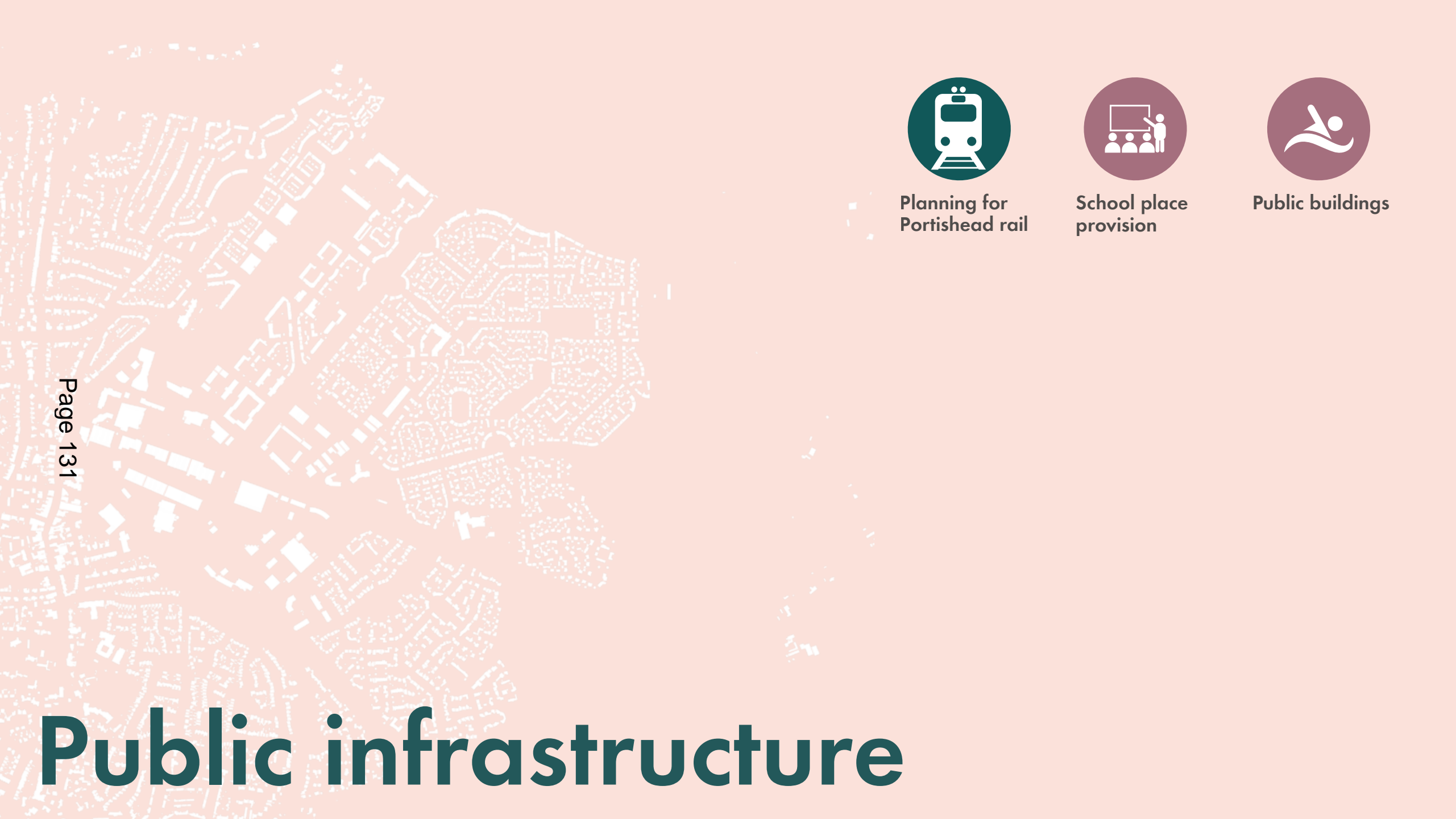
Surface parking, either on street or in courtyards is space-hungry and has a big impact on the public spaces. It limits the amount of development that can be delivered, but has the advantage of being cheap to build.

Parking in a podium or a multi-storey car park is more expensive to build, but can be used to create better streets and more garden space for residents. They allow for streets to be focussed around walking and cycling as well as allowing deliveries and servicing, and can support schemes like car sharing which reduce the need for car ownership.

The spacial framework is flexible and can accommodate a range of options. However, options which reduce the need for surface parking will work best with the other objectives in the framework to create a sustainable place.



Page 30



Planning for
Portishead rail



School place
provision



Public buildings

Public infrastructure

SPACIAL FRAMEWORK

School place provision

Even if change in a neighbourhood is gradual over a medium term, it is essential that planning for the requirement of infrastructure is considered at an early stage by stakeholders.

Regarding education, there is currently some capacity in Ponshead's primary schools, although there could be a deficit in secondary provision by 2026 without intervention. Ponshead as a town has grown significantly in the last twenty years and a school age bulge passing through the academic years.

If the framework proposals were delivered in a single or two or three large schemes, it would likely trigger the need to deliver a new primary school as it could create a new demographic bulge which the existing schools may not be able to meet.

However, as the area is in many different land ownerships, change is expected to be gradual over time. Schemes that would be delivered within the individual ownerships would not on their own be large enough to trigger a school nor create a site large enough to accommodate one.

Given this context, it is expected that a gradual evolution of change over the medium to long term will create a need for school places which is itself gradual and each development will be expected to make a contribution to funding new school places through Development Contributions.

The local planning authority and education authority will continue to keep this under review and may choose to identify land for a new school. Proposals that derive demand for a new school can be expected to be asked to provide this capacity.

In all cases, land owners and prospective planning applicants are strongly encouraged to engage with the local planning authority and local education at an early stage.



SPACIAL FRAMEWORK

Leisure centre options

Although local people have told us they would like a better leisure centre, Portishead’s existing facility is one of the better and newer ones in the district. This means that it isn’t likely to be replaced in the short or medium term. However, as the Framework sets out a gradual process for change, it is possible to anticipate that a new leisure centre could be developed in the longer term. There are a number of factors to consider which can help to plan for this:

- Having the leisure centre in a central location helps to support the High Street and means that it is as accessible as possible
- To ensure continuous operation, it would be good to deliver a new leisure centre on a different site before closing or redeveloping the old site
- A new centre could allow for a more extensive leisure offer, including a training pool, and could include basketball courts and five-a-side pitches - possibly on the roof
- There could be opportunities to integrate and re-provide other public uses



The Britannia leisure centre in Hackney is a good example of a modern facility in an urban area, including rooftop pitches and courts.

SPACIAL FRAMEWORK

Planning for Portishead rail

The delivery of Portishead Rail creates a new context for the centre of the town and a genuine alternative for travel to Bristol. The plans for the station including changes to the road network to create space for the station and forecourt, and a new car park on land to the north of Sainsbury's.

The framework will help to deliver good walking and cycling routes to the station which will help some people to travel without a car. It also shows how new sustainable development in the area around the station will help to capitalise on the investment of public money.

The station will help people commuting to Bristol, but will also make it easier for people who want to get to Portishead. This will support local businesses and should make Portishead a more attractive location for investment.

Along with the delivery of the railway, page 55 of the framework also highlights wider potential transport improvements, including the opportunity for a mobility hub on Wyndham Way.

Existing station area

showing the current road layout and building.



Proposed plans for the station

showing how the existing Phoenix Way roundabout will be moved to create the station site. It will be connected with improved pedestrian routes, new bus stops and a new station car park.

New east-west ped/cycle route Station car park Remodelled junction and bus stops New station and forecourt





SPACIAL FRAMEWORK

Somerset Hall options

Somerset Hall and the Precinct are important parts of the town centre, but also rather turn their backs on Wyndham Way and create a poor first impression of Portishead for many people.

The framework sets out how the Precinct could be redeveloped around a remodelled Somerset Hall, creating an opportunity for supporting the growing range of businesses in the area, alongside space for community events. Remodelling the existing building reduces cost and complexity, but is also a more sustainable approach.

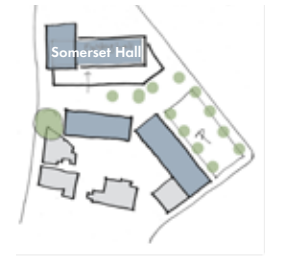
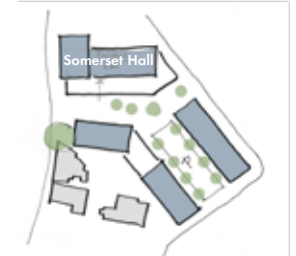
Any development would need to be carefully phased and to work with the existing businesses, ideally to re-provide new accommodation which minimises the disruption to continuity of trade.

Some parking should be retained to support short stay parking for shopping and errands but could be designed like a market square so that it can be turned over for big public events on special days. Active street frontage onto Wyndham Way will make it a better point of arrival into the town and could be a future location for bus stops.



Top: Historic images of the Precinct
Below: The Precinct today

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- 2
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- 5



Different sketch options for the development of the Precinct and Somerset Hall with new public space



SPACIAL FRAMEWORK

An illustrative plan

This illustration shows how the area could look if it was all developed in line with the principles set out in this framework. It has the potential to be a connected and sustainable district with a mix of homes, jobs, green space and community infrastructure.

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Buildings with the potential to include shops, workspace or community infrastructure at street level with homes above



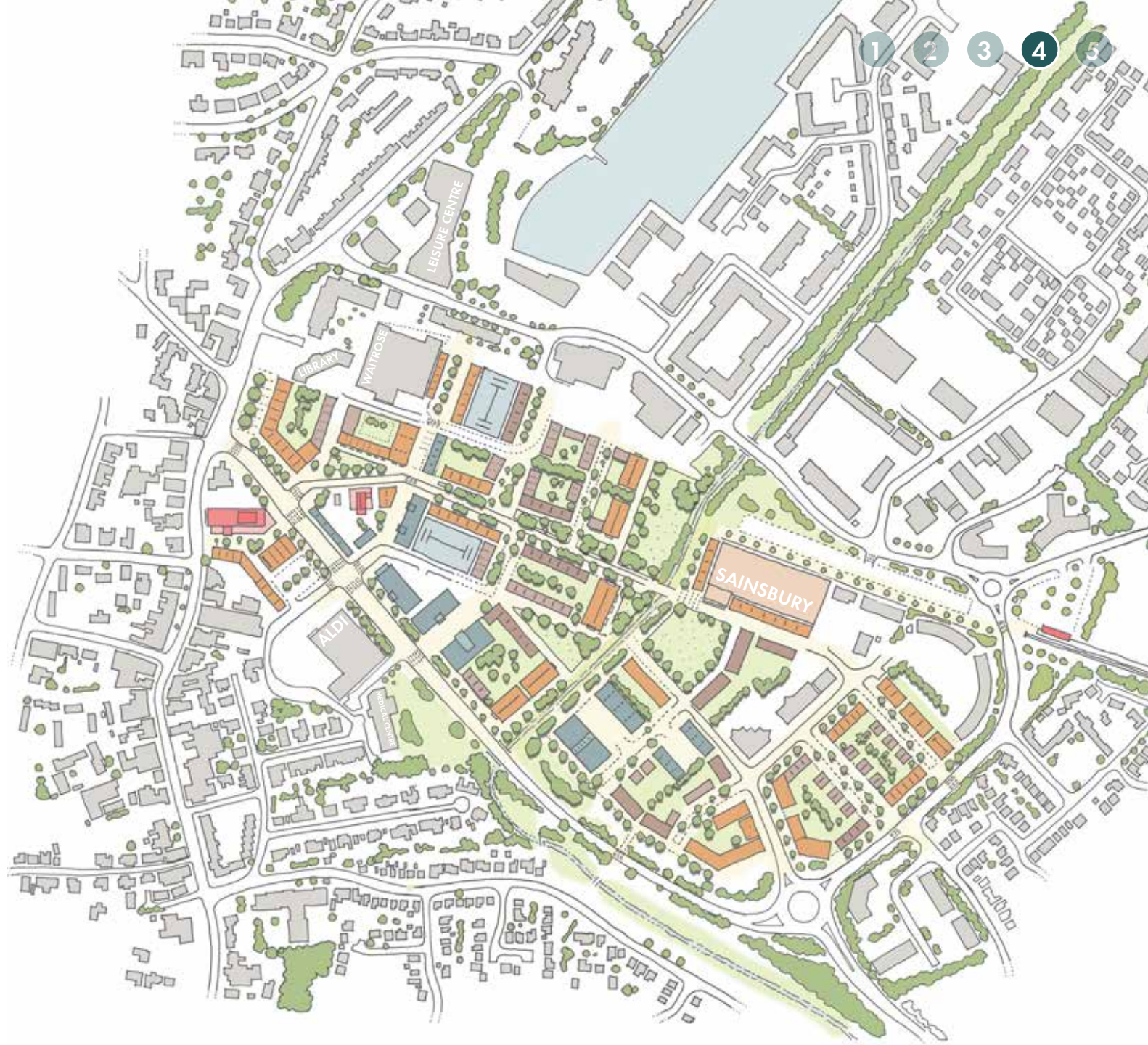
Buildings suited to workspace and employment space, ranging from conventional light industry through to studio and workshop space



Buildings likely to provide new homes, including a mix of family houses, flats and duplex



Key public facilities, including the station and Somerset Hall





A vision for transport improvements

New street connection from the Marina to Wyndham Way

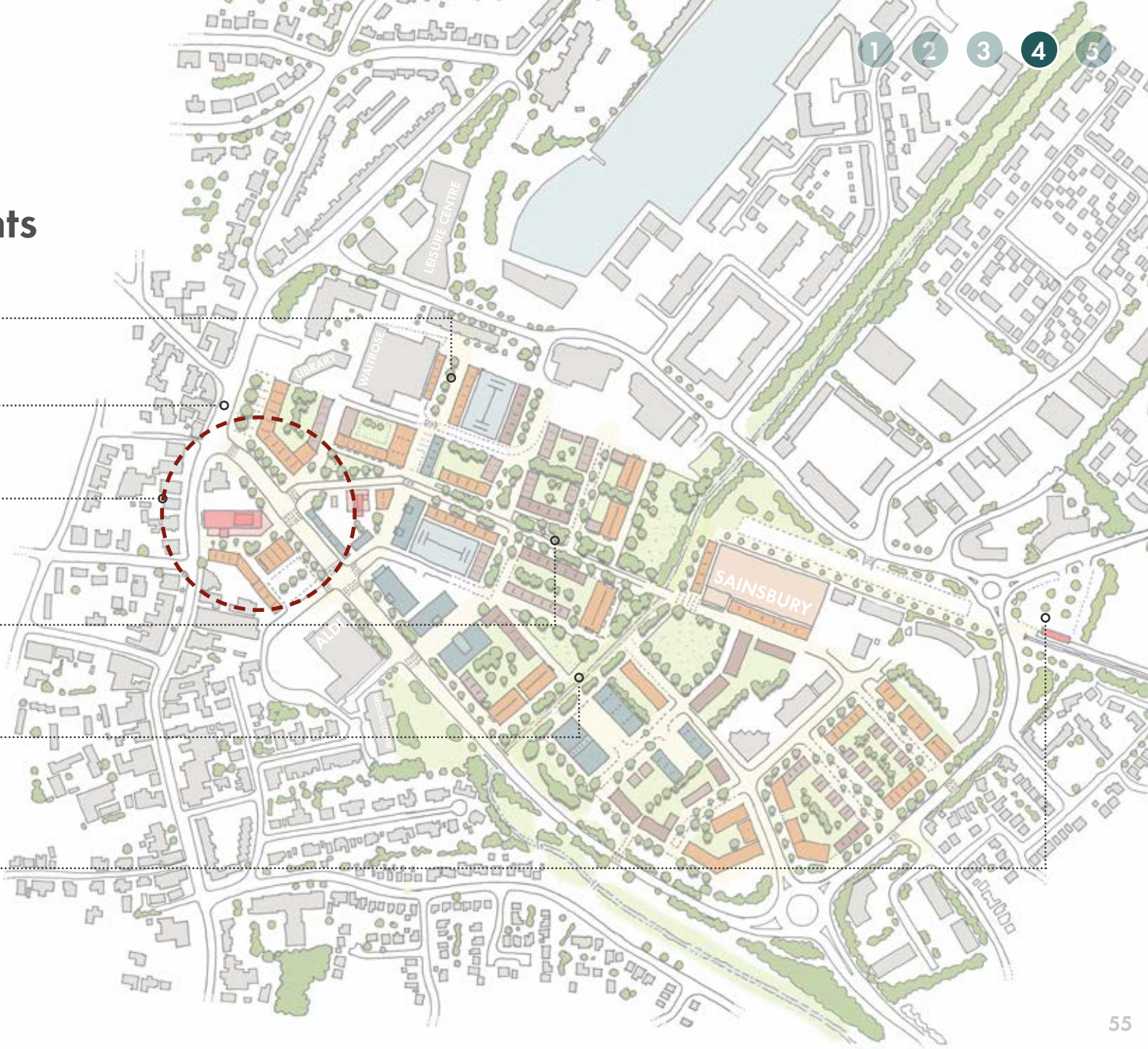
Improved Cabstand Junction especially possible if the Petrol Station is redeveloped

As Wyndham Way is transformed it could support the northern part of the High Street as an important focus for bus connections

New and improved streets and spaces within any development should be green in character and focussed on walking and cycling.

The rhyne retains an important role as a walking and cycling route, but as part of a connected network

New Portishead Rail station and forecourt, supported by new bus stops, improved walking and cycling access and a new station car park



SPACIAL FRAMEWORK

Connecting routes

This image shows the new connecting route from the High Street to Portishead Marina, through the Old Mill Road area. New buildings would include a mix of uses with workspace and commercial premises at street level and new homes above. As with the flexible approach to buildings and uses, there is also potential for scale and massing to vary as detailed building designs are developed. This could include taller buildings reflecting the context of the marina and subject to high quality design.



Existing





SPACIAL FRAMEWORK

A green environment

The proposals show how the greenway can be enhanced and extended to create a green corridor with soft edges connecting into new development. Homes and businesses overlooking the corridor help to create safer routes for pedestrians and cyclists.

Page 139



Existing





SPACIAL FRAMEWORK

East to west routes

This image shows the improved links along Old Mill Road between the station and the town centre. It also illustrates how developing new parking for Sainsbury's above the store could release land for homes and open space overlooking the greenway.

Page 140



Existing





5 PHASING AND DELIVERY

PHASING AND DELIVERY

Gradual and flexible change

This framework for central Portishead is designed to be flexible, allowing for changes in the economic and development context over a long period of time. There are lots of different land ownerships and it is hard to predict or dictate how change will happen. Some sites will come forward for development before others while some may remain in commercial use for the long term. The following section explores how change could happen, but there are many other ways in which development could be delivered.

This framework approach is important as it helps to form part of the evidence base for the Local Plan and supports decisions about the need for community infrastructure such as school places. This process includes understanding how quickly sites might be redeveloped, bearing in mind their current use - some are completely vacant, and others have long-standing businesses and tenants.

The plans capture a few key principles which will help to coordinate and unlock change:

Enable independent delivery: The more that individual land owners can plan and deliver development by themselves, the easier it will be to deliver. However, the local planning authority will want to ensure that proposals do not blight neighbouring sites and that local infrastructure delivery (for example open space) is equitable and practical.

Enable quick wins, not expedient solutions: Setting out a clear framework will be helpful in unlocking early projects, as people can see that they form part of a wider strategy. However, it is also important to make sure that the projects delivered contribute to the wider vision for a connected place, rather than just being expedient.

Minimises changes to infrastructure: Leaving roads, sub-stations and buried services in place as much as possible keeps costs down and makes change easier for individual land owners. However even gradual change and growth will require contributions to and investment in local infrastructure along the way.



Understanding growth



Short term - 0 to 5 years

Change in the short term is likely to be limited to available sites like Gordano Gate (as an industrial site) and some residential or mixed use development elsewhere in the study area, though no planning applications for development of any of the sites have been received.

Opportunities for the Precinct and delivering different types of workspace on Old Mill Road could help to strengthen links from the High Street to the Marina. The delivery of the railway station and improved bus infrastructure could also materialise in the first five years.



Medium term - 5 to 10 years

In the medium term, we could see redevelopment of the Sainsbury's site and parts of the Old Mill Road area to deliver a mix of uses including new homes, commercial and community space new green space, along with development at other sites.



Long term - 10 to 15 years

In the longer term we might expect that sites like the retail park and petrol station at the Cabstand junction are redeveloped for a mix of homes, commercial and community space, along with the Homebase site and other parcels of land down towards Quays Avenue.

PHASING AND DELIVERY

Housing delivery

A key consideration of the planning policy context for Portishead is future housing delivery. The following scenarios have therefore been measured and calculated to illustrate the possible housing delivery within the framework area over the coming fifteen years. Each scenarios also makes allowance for the other uses within the framework, including workspace, shops and community needs.

The three different models also include an assumption that there will be variations in density across the area, and the descriptions all still allow for a range of family housing and would still be expected to include some element of density in the more central area.

As previously noted, the context for development coming forward, particularly around the transformation of some existing sites, means that these are indicative estimates which are likely to change. Different economic trends and changes to national planning policy requirements could influence very different outcomes, and it is also worth noting that some sites included within these figures may not be developed at all during the framework period.



Low density model
overall density 40 dph



Medium density model
overall density 55 dph



Mixed density model
overall density 70 dph

Short term opportunities

0 - 5 years

Medium term opportunities

5 - 10 years

Long term opportunities

10 - 15 years

Total potential number of homes over 15 years

120	250	350
270	330	410
160	170	190

550

750

950

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North Somerset Council

Report to the Executive

Date of Meeting: 8 December 2022

Subject of Report: Financial report covering Month 6 Budget Monitoring 2022/23 & Medium Term Financial Plan Update 2023-2027

Town or Parish: All

Officer/Member Presenting: Ash Cartman, Executive Member for Corporate Services

Key Decision: Yes

Reason: Financial implications within the report are in excess of £500,000 and impact on all wards and communities within North Somerset

Recommendations

1. The Executive is asked to note:
 - a) the updated revenue and capital budget forecasts as detailed within para 3.1 of the report in respect of the monitoring the budgets for 2022/23 financial year and the proposed strategy to balance the budget by the end of the year,
 - b) the updated range of revenue budget assumptions and risks within the Medium Term Financial Plan for the period 2023-2027 as detailed within paras 3.3 and 3.4 of the report,
 - c) the draft savings strategies and proposals that have been included within the Medium Term Financial Plan as described within para 3.5 and listed in Appendix 1,
 - d) the updated budget gap of **£4.111m** for 2023/24 financial year as detailed in para 3.2, together with outstanding areas of work which are to be completed before the Executive can present a balanced budget for the 2023/24 financial year
2. The Executive is asked to approve:
 - e) the in-year amendments to the budgets within the current capital programme following the re-assessment and re-phasing of the current capital programme as detailed listed in Appendix 2,
 - f) the release of the Executive's latest draft budget for 2023/24 for consultation and engagement with the public and other stakeholders, incorporating growth and savings items as described throughout the report, whilst recognising that further changes will still need to be made to finalise and balance the budget for next year.

1. Summary of Report

This report provides a further update with regards to the assumptions that underpin the council's financial monitoring for the current financial year, as well as those included within the medium term financial plan (MTFP), covering the 4-year period to 2026/27.

Previous reports on each of these areas were considered by the Executive at the meetings in September and October 2022. At that time the council had an **in-year** budget pressure of **£4.4m** and a budget gap of over £41m for the 4-year period to 2026/27, with a **short-fall of £17m** for the **2023/24** financial year.

The council has a well-established and embedded process to continually review and assess its financial performance and work to alleviate pressures by developing and implementing a range of strategies to close budget gaps.

Progress has been made since the last reports were published and the latest modelling shows that the council's financial position across all years has slightly improved. The projected overspend for the current financial year has **reduced to £4m** and the budget gap across the medium term has reduced to £27m, with a short-fall of **£4.1m for 2023/24**, compared to the previous position of £17m, now that identified savings of £10.53m have been incorporated.

The council would usually aim to publish a draft balanced budget at this point in the year so that residents, businesses and other stakeholders across North Somerset can review and assess the major components of the council's budget plans for the year ahead and provide commentary and feedback where appropriate.

However, there remain several key areas of uncertainty about some areas of Government policy and funding arrangements for local government, which may have a material impact on council's medium term financial plan. These are expected to be clarified in the financial settlement, which is expected in late December. The council is acutely aware of the importance of financial assumptions so that it can ensure that funds are not only allocated to the priorities identified within the Corporate Plan, but that the challenging decisions that may be required to close any budget gaps are based on sound evidence.

Therefore, whilst a range of spending and funding assumptions have been included within the financial modelling presented within this report, some of these assumptions could change over the next few weeks, potentially as a result of the national economic situation, as well as the Governments response in managing those financial challenges.

There is a legal requirement to prepare and approve a robust revenue budget for the 2023/24 financial year, along with relevant council tax bandings and rates. Ultimately the MTFP will work towards delivering these outcomes and will culminate in a financial update being presented to Council in January and then a further report on the draft balanced budget presented to the Executive in February 2023.

2. Policy

The council has a net revenue budget of £185m for 2022/23, which is supported by a rolling MTFP process. It also has a capital investment programme for the period 2022-2027 which totals c.£340m, which is based on the needs and ambitions described within the Capital Strategy.

The council's MTFP supports the on-going provision of services for the people of North Somerset, within the context of the priorities for the area, as set out within the approved Corporate Plan. It identifies the likely costs and pressures that the council will face and compares these against the anticipated income and resource allocations over the period. The MTFP integrates a range of financial strategies and highlights the key risks inherent within our budget planning processes.

3. Details

3.1. Update on the 2022/23 revenue budget monitoring position

The council follows a traditional incremental approach to its annual budgeting cycle whereby the approved revenue base budget is used as a starting point to build from and variations are considered and incorporated where they are material in nature, aligned to delivery of statutory responsibilities or Corporate Plan priorities. A similar approach is adopted in respect of creating funding forecasts.

Therefore, when preparing budgets for future years it is important to firstly review the baseline position for the current financial year and to understand and quantify the extent to which any existing risks and pressures will be ongoing and which may impact on the council's budget in the future. Should ongoing pressures be identified as part of this review, they must be addressed as part of the council's work to prepare a sustainable budget going forwards.

The table below shows an updated forecast of the council's revenue budget position for the current financial year, using the information gathered from budget managers at the end September 2022.

Revenue Budget Monitoring Summary 2022/23

	Month 6 Forecast (end of September 2022)					Month 5 Forecast (August)			Change + / - £000
	Original Net Revenue Budget £000	Revised Revenue Budget £000	Projected Out-turn Position £000	Projected Out-turn Variance £000	%	Revised Revenue Budget £000	Projected Out-turn Position £000	Projected Out-turn Variance £000	
Service Expenditure Budgets									
Adult Social Services	75,158	75,050	75,488	438	0.58%	75,171	75,585	414	24
Children's Services	26,989	27,097	28,484	1,386	5.12%	26,977	28,450	1,473	(87)
Corporate Services	27,553	27,461	27,896	434	1.58%	27,461	28,055	594	(159)
Place	29,989	30,080	31,335	1,255	4.17%	30,080	31,428	1,348	(93)
Public Health & Reg Services	1,374	1,374	1,317	(57)	-4.17%	1,374	1,360	(14)	(43)
Incremental impact of pay offer	0	0	1,603	1,603		0	1,603	1,603	0
Impact of energy procurement	0	0	812	812		0	812	812	0
	161,063	161,063	166,934	5,871	3.65%	161,063	167,293	6,230	(359)
Other Revenue Budgets									
Capital Financing & Interest	11,207	11,207	9,312	(1,895)	-17%	11,207	9,312	(1,895)	0
Other Non Service Budgets	13,205	13,205	13,260	55	0.42%	13,205	13,260	55	0
	24,412	24,412	22,573	(1,839)	-7.53%	24,412	22,573	(1,839)	0
Total Net Revenue Budget	185,475	185,475	189,507	4,032	2.17%	185,475	189,866	4,391	(359)
General Fund Financing Budgets	(185,475)	(185,475)	(185,475)	0	0.00%	(185,475)	(185,475)	0	0
NET REVENUE BUDGET TOTAL	(0)	0	4,032	4,032	2.17%	(0)	4,391	4,391	(359)

The table is displayed in the council's standard financial monitoring template and depicts the reported position for each of the 'directorates' in turn, as well as showing an aggregated picture of all council services.

Key messages and headlines that can be taken from the table are;

- The council's approved net revenue budget for the year totals **£185.475m** (white and blue shaded columns)
- Managers estimate that the council will spend **£189.507m** on delivering services by the end of the year (yellow shaded column)
- This is **£4.032m** more than the council has available to spend or had planned to spend when the budget was approved back in February 2022.

As a comparator has been included, it is possible to see that the council's underlying financial position has marginally improved compared to the previous report presented to the Executive at the meeting in October, as the projected overspend has reduced by £0.359m from £4.391m.

A review of the information supporting these forecasts indicate that the reduction is largely because of the mitigations and interventions that are being put into place by directors as they collectively strive to reduce the overspend. There have been a range of individual changes implemented within each service area but can be grouped into the following themes;

- Review and reduce staffing costs, e.g. holding posts vacant for longer or until the end of the financial year,
- Review and reduce areas of discretionary spending or defer delivery where possible,
- Implementation of processes to manage rising demand for services, e.g. introduce review and assurance panels to validate requests for services,
- Improve the collection of outstanding debts to increase income due to the council

It is anticipated that these courses of action will minimise the potential use of the financial risk reserve at the end of the financial year in order to balance the budget. The council recognises that reserves are a short-term solution and should only be used to fund specific one-off impacts or until a longer-term funding strategy has been put into place.

Integration of 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years

The information presented above is a high-level financial summary based on the council's more detailed budget analysis and forecasts. The detail that supports these values was previously reported to the Executive at the meeting in October and remains unchanged and so provides an opportunity to understand and assess those pressures which are likely to be one-off in nature or continue.

A review of these variances show that there are several material budget pressures being experienced in the current year, which are likely to continue into future years, a summary of these items is provided below.

- | | |
|--|---------|
| • Inflation on contracts, including fuel (various areas) | £1.864m |
| • Inflation on energy contracts | £0.812m |
| • Inflation on pay budgets | £1.603m |
| • Children's services placement costs | £1.132m |
| • Home to school transport costs | £1.276m |

It should be noted that additional provision has been added into the financial modelling for next year to provide a more sustainable and realistic baseline for these service costs going forwards. Values and forecasts will continue to be reviewed and updated in the coming

months to ensure that the latest levels are included within the final budget considered by Council in February 2023.

3.2. Latest budget projections for 2023-2027

In addition to updating the financial position for the current financial year the council has also updated its financial modelling for the medium term. The table below shows that the budget gap has reduced to £28m across the 4-years, with **£4.1m** of this in 2023/24.

MTFP FINANCIAL SUMMARY	MTFP - DECEMBER 2022				
	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000
- Resources - Grants, Council Tax & Business Rates	179,090	191,845	194,618	199,380	206,330
- Current Budget - base spending position	171,317	179,090	191,845	194,618	199,380
- Budget pressures, increased spending and investment plans	16,396	28,949	13,552	13,982	14,221
- Remove Covid & other one-off impacts	-4,466	-1,553	0	0	0
- Savings proposals and increased income	-4,157	-10,530	-1,938	-572	-690
- Revised Spending Base	179,090	195,956	203,459	208,029	212,911
- Budget Gap	0	-4,111	-8,841	-8,649	-6,581
			-28,182		
Core Assumptions for Council Tax Increase:	2.99%	2.99%	2.99%	2.99%	2.99%
- North Somerset Council Services	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%
- Adult Social Care Precept	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%

Revised forecasts have been included within the report for each of the following elements;

- Paragraph 3.3 - budget pressures (i.e. how much money the council may need to pay to deliver services),
- Paragraph 3.4 - resources (i.e. how much money the council expects that it will receive into the budget so that it can pay for the services), and also
- Paragraph 3.5 savings proposals, this is how much money the council expects to save after implementing a series of proposals designed to either reduce costs or increase income, all of which are needed to close the budget gap.

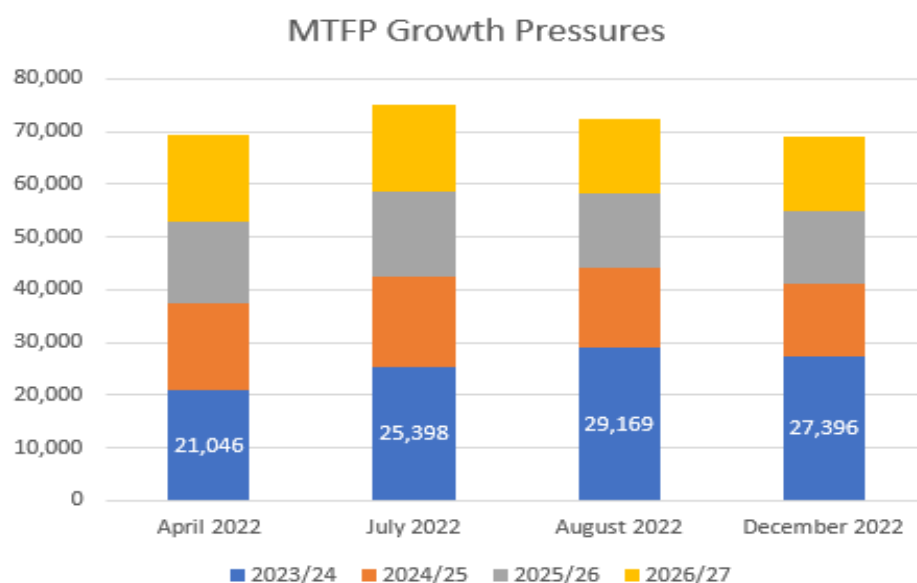
3.3. Building a sustainable and robust revenue budget for the future

As noted in para 3.1 above, the results of budget monitoring forecasts in respect of the current financial year have been reviewed to ensure that the budget for next year does not feature any legacy issues and is set at robust levels wherever possible.

Information has **also** been gathered from a variety of sources to ensure that any other new spending plans or growth allocations that have been included within the MTFP are essential to the ongoing delivery of services. And in addition, all items of growth that have been included will need to be supported by evidenced based calculations using a series of transparent cost drivers so that they can be validated and assessed.

Forecasts show that income is not keeping up with our costs and this means that some difficult decisions have been made to restrict new spending proposals from being included within the budget plans unless they support an essential service. Indeed, **any opportunities to invest in anything other than core statutory services has been extremely limited.**

The chart below shows the latest levels of additional spending that have been included across the 4 years of the MTFP, and the latest levels of growth included at this time currently total **£27.396m** for next year.



A table has also been included to provide further clarity on the main areas of additional spending that have been reflected within the MTFP. Narrative descriptions on each of the core assumptions supporting these values have been included within previous reports.

MTFP Growth Pressures

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Inflation - pay	4,528	2,671	2,751	2,841
Inflation - energy	4,198	-972	395	435
Inflation - major contracts	2,598	1,027	1,049	1,072
Adult social care - existing services	8,960	6,233	6,032	6,055
Adult social care - new responsibilities	1,686	0	0	0
Childrens services	1,380	488	550	550
Waste Service	3,052	0	0	0
Home to Schools Transport	1,416	350	350	1,100
Other growth items	-422	3,755	2,855	2,168
TOTALS	27,396	13,552	13,982	14,221

3.4. Update on resource assumptions

The council pays for its services each year through three main sources of income, these being council tax, business rates and government grants. The table below shows how much money the council currently expects to receive from each of these sources within the latest modelling, along with the main assumptions that underpin these forecasts.

MTFP Resources		2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Revenue Support Grant		2,250	2,250	2,250	2,250
New Homes Bonus Grant		819	819	0	0
Lower Tier Services Grant		224	224	0	0
Services Grant		1,096	1,096	0	0
Social Care Support Grant	Assumed up by £2.3m	10,395	12,695	14,995	17,295
ASC Market Sustainability Grant	To fund Reform costs	2,310	2,310	2,310	2,310
Council Tax Income - baseline		124,848	129,475	134,075	138,725
Council Tax Income - increase	Assumed 1.99%	2,485	2,577	2,577	2,577
Council Tax Income - ASC Precept	Assumed 1%	1,248	1,294	1,294	1,294
Business Rate Grants		12,543	9,041	9,041	9,041
Business Rate Income		32,105	32,838	32,838	32,838
Use of Risk Reserve	To fund Energy costs	1,522	0	0	0
TOTALS		191,845	194,618	199,380	206,330

Previous reports have provided additional commentary to support the council's assumptions on its resource base as there is more uncertainty within this area of the financial modelling because a lot of the components are influenced by Government policy as well as the health of the nations' finances. Once decided, these factors will influence how much money the government has available to be able to allocate to each of its spending departments or how much money the council will be able to raise through council tax or business rates. It is therefore hoped that the Chancellors announcements within the Autumn Statement will provide further clarity so that the council can finalise its assumptions for both 2023/24 and into the medium term. At the time of writing the council is aware that some of the following assumptions will need to be updated in a later report and para 3.7 provides an indication of areas that might change.

Areas of uncertainty or potential change are listed below;

- i. **Council tax capping limits** – this being the percentage increase that the council could increase council tax by without the need to hold a referendum. An increase of 1% would bring the council approximately £1.25m of additional income. The MTFP currently assumes that the cap is set at 2% to fund general council spending, with a further 1% specifically for an increase in the adult social care precept, making a total increase of 3% or an increase of c.£3.75m for next year.

However, the MTFP also assumes an increase in the current social care support grant of £2.3m, which if converted into a council tax percentage increase, means that the MTFP reflects an increase of c.5% for next year. Paragraph 3.7 refers to the additional funding for Adult Social Care, announced in the Autumn Statement, but it is not yet clear the extent to which this funding will come with conditions, which might require it to be spent on new activities, projects and programmes.

- ii. **Social care support grant** – the council currently receives £8m from the social care support grant which is used to fund pressures within the council's social care services.

As noted above the MTFP currently assumes that the government will provide additional funds at a national level and the council will receive an increase of £2.3m of the current social care support grant in each of the next two years taking the estimated level of grant to be £10.395m and £12.695m.

Over recent years the government has chosen to fund the rising cost of social care through a combination of national and local resources by providing additional funding

through increasing the specific grant **and** also allowing councils to levy an adult social care precept through the council tax system. This combined approach means that the government can ensure that funding increases are applied fairly and consistently for councils across the country, because allocating funding using the council tax base mechanism alone would mean that some councils would be able to generate much higher levels of income compared to others.

The assumptions within the current modelling are based on the premise that the council has received an increase in collective funding for social care of between £3.5m-£4m in each of the last 4 years through both Grant and Precept, although the proportions between Grant and Precept have differed in each year which makes forecasting difficult. The council's modelling assumes that overall level of funding increases of this scale will continue, although it has not been possible to confirm whether the additional money will come through as a Grant or as a Precept on local taxpayers.

It is therefore important to understand both the council tax flexibilities and the current social care grant funding elements together, because whilst there would be a financial risk to the council's forecasts if grant levels did not increase as expected, this risk could be mitigated if the government increased the cap on the council tax and / or the adult social care precept.

- iii. **Social care reforms** – includes two elements, the care cap (i.e. how much a person will pay towards the cost of their care) and sustaining the market through providing a fair price for care. The council needs to understand implementation timescales and the funding envelope being allocated for these new policy decisions although the MTFP currently assumes a break-even position, in that the financial impact for the council will match the funding allocated by the government. Given that policy changes require specific outcomes to be delivered the principle of ring-fencing would apply for any areas of new grants. Again, as noted in paragraph 3.7, the care cap element of the reforms has been delayed for at least 2 years and the consequences of this need to be further understood and reported at a later date.
- iv. **Business rate income and associated grants** – each year the government applies inflation on business rate income at a national level through the 'multiplier', although this value has not been confirmed and so may change from the rates included within the MTFP.

In addition to this, there have been instances in recent years where the government has changed several national policies for business rates and either not passed on the inflationary increase to businesses themselves or have introduced reliefs to help small businesses or those operating within certain sectors, for example retail, hospitality and leisure. In these situations the government has compensated councils who would have been entitled to receive their share of the income by way of a specific grant, meaning that should similar changes be introduced over the next few weeks, whilst the individual components of the council's modelling might change, the net impact should be neutral.

- v. **New Homes Bonus** - The government has not confirmed whether there will be a further round of New Homes Bonus Payments in 2023/24. In 2020 the government launched a consultation on its future, which recommended a series of reforms, but the government has not yet responded to the consultation. The council continues to plan on the current basis that the money will continue.

- vi. There are a number of **other grants** currently included within the council's resource forecasts which have not yet been confirmed and so may change in the future. The council will seek to clarify the arrangements and values associated with the Services grant as there remain questions about how much the council will receive for 2023/24 and beyond. This is largely because the government previously advised that funding would be withdrawn following the reversal of the National Insurance Levy increase and it is likely that this will be done through the Services grant.

3.5. Financial strategies and savings plans

Budget reports over recent years have shown that the council has faced many difficult decisions in identifying savings proposals as it has been necessary to balance its books following an increase in spending in areas of need. When preparing the draft budget for next year a similar approach will again be required, although given economic backdrop of continued high levels of inflation, the savings values included within the latest modelling are actually much higher than in recent years.

The Executive have continued their stance in that they would like to continue to protect front line services from direct cuts in service provision where possible, and also any areas that support vulnerable people within our communities although they do recognise that hard choices will need to be made across all areas of the budget.

Senior officers within the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) have spent many months looking at ways in which costs can be reduced, more income generated or services delivered differently as they recognise that as time goes by it becomes ever more challenging to deliver further savings from efficiencies.

The work undertaken by CLT included allocating savings targets to each of the directorates to ensure that all services and all areas of the council could help to contribute to the financial challenge in a fair and consistent way. The targets were initially calculated and shared using a variety of measures which took into account the individual nature of the relevant directorate and their spending powers and also their ability to consider and deliver change or unlock savings plans. However, as the council's financial modelling continued to be updated and the budget gap grew, it was necessary to change this approach and ask all service areas to identify savings which equated to 10% of their net budget, however challenging that may be.

All options and ideas have been shared with the Executive who provided a collective response on whether savings should be taken forward and included within the draft budget for next year or not. This iterative process also helped to refine and shape the details of some proposals as well as confirm delivery timescales and ensure there is a clear understanding of consultation and communication requirements, which are likely to be different for each item.

Appendix 1 provides a detailed schedule showing all of the draft budget proposals that have been approved in principle by the Executive and are currently included within the draft medium-term financial plan, **with £10.5m** of these being scheduled for delivery in 2023/24. Whilst it can be seen that the listing does include some difficult choices, the council is aware that it **still** has a budget shortfall of **£4.1m** for next year, which means that further savings or changes to assumptions within the MTFP will be required in order to balance the budget.

Each of the draft budget proposals will be supported by an Equalities Impact Assessment which will enable the council to understand the nature of the saving and also the impact of any budget change and to mitigate any potential inequalities that may arise.

The background and approach taken by each director when formulating proposals for their areas was shared within the All-Member Budget Scrutiny Session held on 17 November 2022.

3.6. Next steps, including closing the budget gap and timetable

As described above, the council has updated its financial modelling to reflect the latest known information in respect of its resource forecasts as well as its spending pressures. The corporate leadership team has taken care to assess and challenge all of the anticipated cost and demand increases which have been proposed to date to ensure that the budget is prepared in a robust and sustainable way, but without increasing the budget gap to unachievable levels, as this would mean that the council would be required to identify greater reductions in other areas of the budget.

Every effort will be made over the coming weeks to review further options, choices and alternatives so that a balanced budget can be set for the year ahead although there may be more difficult choices to consider. Areas currently being considered to close the budget gap include;

- Review the capital financing costs included within current forecasts to see if they can be reduced by re-phasing or reducing capital spending. Further information is included within para 3.8,
- Review growth calculations currently included for provider inflation,
- Review and assess the impacts of the triennial review on the council's pension costs,
- Review the detailed calculations supporting the council tax base for next year once information has been gathered, this would include data to show delivery of new homes, current position for reliefs and discounts and cash collection rates,
- Lobby for increased resources from the government in respect of new burdens for new responsibilities as well as new funding for specific pressures, notably adult social care,
- Increase the amount of savings proposals from current levels
- Explore collaboration opportunities with our partners to seek efficiencies and resilience
- Explore the potential for shared roles and services - although unlikely to have an impact on the 2023/24 budget.

As noted above, one of the main areas of continued uncertainty is waiting for information from the government. Although the Autumn Statement provides some guidance, the provisional local government finance settlement will give the detailed funding envelope for the council and is due to be published on 21 December 2022. Although the council is likely to receive the details required for next year, it is hoped that these announcements will also contain some high level information to inform a second year, which would allow the council to have more confidence in being able to prepare a robust financial plan that focuses on more than a single year at a time. This would support more strategic decisions to be made about the future of services.

The formal and informal milestones associated with the MTFP process are as follows;

- Report to Executive, December 2022 – updated financial summary incorporating draft savings proposals;

- Scrutiny – initial All Member session 17 November (prior to release of the formal report) and further session to be arranged in January (after further budget work has been completed to close the gap)
- Autumn Statement, 17 November 2022 – release of information by the Chancellor
- Taxbase, December 2022 – Executive Member decision on the forward plan
- Initial Equality Impact Assessments, December 2022 – initial EIA for all savings included within the December report, to be published on the council’s website
- Provisional local governance finance settlement, 21 December 2022
- Other engagement – December and January, including equalities forum, discussions with town and parish councils and other key stakeholders
- Report to Council, January 2023 – to provide an update on the financial modelling, including changes required to deliver a balanced budget
- Report to Executive, February 2023 – recommended balanced revenue and capital budgets for 2023/24 to Council; including detailed Equality Impact Assessments and the consideration of any alternative budgets
- Report to Council, February 2023 – approval of the 2023/24 revenue and capital budgets along with council tax levels and bandings

3.7. Key messages included within the Autumn Statement

The Chancellor of the Exchequer released his Autumn Statement on 17 November which aimed to “restore stability to the economy, protect high quality public services and build long-term prosperity for the United Kingdom.”

The speech and supporting documentation contained many changes which are likely to affect all residents and businesses over the next few years, as well as those organisations who deliver public services.

Some of the main headlines are listed below, and although not all will have a direct impact on the council’s finances they are important to be aware of;

- The state pension, benefits and tax credits will increase by 10.1% from April 2023
- Employment taxation – freeze in income tax levels; higher rate earners threshold reduced; national living wage to be increased from £9.50 to £10.42 from April 2023
- Energy taxation – energy firms will see the windfall tax increase from 25% to 35%
- Energy bills and support – majority of households will pay more in energy from April as government support is reduced; although increased financial support for pensioner households (£300), those on means tested benefits (£900) and those on disability benefits (£150); no detail on impact for businesses or the public sector
- Electric vehicles will be required to pay vehicle excise duty from April 2025
- There will be no cuts to capital spending plans within major projects to continue
- Council tax flexibility – capping limit for unitary councils increased to 3%; adult social care precept increased to 2%
- Small business rate reliefs to be extended; multiplier to be frozen

- Public sector spending - levels across local government to be protected; spending across other departments will be lower and limited to 1% above inflation
- Social care reforms – implementation of the care cap to be delayed for two years; additional funding to be given to the care sector and local government to provide care for an extra 200,000 people and also support and improve hospital discharges

Given the complexities surrounding the government proposals it will take time to review the detail included within the report and assess how this will affect the council and also whether any of the core assumptions within the current financial modelling need to be updated. Additional details will also be included within the provisional local government finance settlement on 21 December and so an update on the MTFP will be presented to Council at the meeting in January, ahead of the budget report to be considered by the Executive in February 2023.

3.8. Capital Strategy

The Capital Strategy outlines the council's approach to capital investment over the short, medium and longer term and gives a high-level overview of how capital expenditure contributes to the provision of local services within the area.

It matches the council's priorities and planned service requirements with funding projections and asset management considerations. One of the main themes within the capital strategy is that capital investment plans must be affordable, prudent and sustainable, which means that the MTFP and the annual revenue budget must contain the ongoing financial impacts of any borrowing decisions associated with the capital programme.

The forecasts linked to the capital monitoring process show that the council is facing significant inflationary impacts for some of the projects within the current programme and so further work will be undertaken to quantify the potential scale of these risks.

This means that decisions must be taken to prioritise and manage the inflationary impacts within the current programme, before the council is able to make any decisions about its ambitions to deliver new capital investment projects within the short-term. A detailed assessment of the current programme has been carried out which has looked to either re-phase or remove areas of non-essential spending in order to generate a financial saving within the revenue budget forecasts.

It is proposed that the council's capital strategy for 2023/24 will recommend that new capital spending will be focused across the following;

- those projects which have ring-fenced external funding, such as maintenance of the highways network, bus service improvement plan, spending on maintaining schools and providing additional places, enabling residents to stay in their homes by providing disabled facilities grants and providing funding for more affordable housing.
- projects that actively support the council's essential operational service delivery, such as investment in ICT provision and further investment in the maintenance of our roads, buildings, leisure facilities, or library assets to ensure that they are fit for purpose. Projects that deliver a positive financial outcome from a business case would also be considered.

The council will identify additional resources to support new capital spending, although this will be at lower levels than in the current year. Further details will be included within the Capital Strategy report considered by the Executive at the meeting in February 2023.

3.9. Dedicated Schools Budget

The Council, through the Strategic Schools Forum (SSF), is responsible for overseeing the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and distributing funding to schools and early years providers. The total 2022/23 DSG is c. £191m but is paid by the government to the Council minus deductions (“recoupment”) for academies and further education. The 2022/23 DSG is as follows:

Block	Total DSG (£m)	Deductions (£m)	DSG payable to NSC (£m)	Notes / Examples of Services
Schools	145.657	137.333	8.324	Formula driven funding for individual schools, including academies
Central Services	1.670	0	1.670	Funding, admissions, inclusion and historic borrowing costs
High Needs	32.248	3.453	28.795	Special schools, Top-Up Funding, Alternative Provision
Early Years	11.640	0	11.640	Formula driven funding for individual providers
TOTAL	191.215	140.786	50.429	

Each year, the SSF consults with schools and interested stakeholders, and then takes decisions on the formula for distributing resources to providers (including academies), along with associated funding arrangements.

The schools’ block of the DSG is expected to increase by around of £2.8m (or 1.85%) in 2023/24, particularly to allow the implementation of the Government’s promised minimum funding per pupil of £4,405 for primary schools and £5,715 for secondary schools. Funding in the High Needs Block is expected to rise by around £1.8m (5.7%).

The initial budget planning process has identified that, despite an increase in funding in the High Needs Block of the DSG from central government, it is unlikely that there will be sufficient funding to meet existing demands, particularly in relation to out of authority placements and top-up funding, given the high level of increases in the number of children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

As a result, it is not anticipated that the DSG deficit (projected to be c.£18m by the end of 2022/23) will reduce in the short term. However, the Council has a DSG Management Plan in place and, during the course of the next few months, will be taking part in the DfE’s Safety Valve Programme, with an agreement hoped to be reached by 31 March 2023.

The Safety Valve Programme requires local authorities to develop substantial plans for reform to their high needs systems and associating spending, with support and challenge from the department, to rapidly place them on a sustainable footing (i.e. an in-year balanced budget within a “reasonable” period of time). Local authorities will be held account for their reforms and deficit reduction targets via regular reporting to the department. The department will help the local authorities with additional funding over time to contribute to “paying off” their historic DSG deficits, contingent on delivery of the reforms.

As part of the Safety Valve Programme, the Council is being actively encouraged to consider a movement of resources from the School Block to the High Needs Block of up to 1% (movements of 0.5% have been agreed in the last 3 years), in order to close the gap

between the expected total peak deficit and the amount that the DfE is prepared to contribute; the Council may also need to look at its own general or earmarked reserves, subject to agreement by the Local Government Minister.

The timetable for the setting of the Schools' Budget covered by the DSG is as follows:

Key Dates	Details
28 November 2022 to 23 December 2022	Consultation period
Late December 2022	EFA confirms DSG allocations for 2023-24 (prior to recoupment of funding for academies)
December/January 2022/2023	Formula funding for schools updated to reflect on October 2022 data set and 2023-24 DSG
13 January 2023	Deadline for submission of Safety Valve Proposal to DfE
19 January 2023	SSF Meeting
20 January 2023	Deadline for submission of final 2023/24 APT to ESFA
8 February and 21 February 2023	Executive and Council approval of schools budget
By 28 February 2023	Delegated budget shares for mainstream maintained schools 2023/4 to be confirmed
8 March 2023	SSF Meeting
By 31 March 2023	Early years and high needs allocations issued

4. Consultation

The government, through its legislative framework, clearly expects that local authorities will be able to demonstrate that they have in place mechanisms to ensure that 'representatives of local people' are being appropriately informed, consulted or involved in services, policies or decisions that affect or interest them.

There are many aspects of service delivery which impact on our residents, customers and other stakeholders and members of the public, and so we recognise that it is our responsibility to ensure that any changes we make to them through the budget, need to be considered and consulted upon. Failure to do so adequately could result in aspects of the budget being subject to legal challenge.

The council is fully committed to ensuring that residents, business and other stakeholders from across the district such as town and parish councils, are included within its MTFP planning, through scrutiny, consultation and engagement plans.

All Members were invited to attend the first scrutiny session on 17 November so that they could have the opportunity to understand the major components of the councils' financial arrangements and considerations and ask questions or challenge any of the key assumptions used within the modelling. It is anticipated that further sessions will be arranged once savings plans have been finalised and progress has been made to balance the budget for next year.

Once the draft budget has been approved for consultation then officers will arrange for members of its citizens panel to be consulted about the plans for the year ahead and they have the opportunity to share their views. It is expected that a broad range of questions relating to current service provision as well as potential changes highlighted within the budget papers will be asked with feedback included within the next report.

5. Financial Implications

Financial implications are contained throughout the report.

6. Legal Powers and Implications

The Local Government Act 1972 lays down the fundamental principle by providing that every local authority shall make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs including balancing their budgets each year from within their own resource allocations, although further details and requirements are contained within related legislation.

The **setting of the council's budget** for the forthcoming year, and the ongoing **arrangements for monitoring** all aspects of this to ensure that the councils spending is within the approved limits, is an integral part of the financial administration process.

Further requirements are contained within the Local Government Act 1988, Section 114 (3) which provide for instances whereby the chief finance officer of an authority makes a judgement that the expenditure of the authority in a financial year is likely to exceed the resources available.

7. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

Both aspects covered within this report, that is in terms of monitoring of the budget for the current year and setting budgets for future years, will be impacted by the increasing costs of energy, which does provide an opportunity to highlight climate and environmental issues.

The council's financial forecasts show that it will need to spend more on its energy costs than ever before which is a challenge given the scale of other financial pressures.

The council is therefore considering ways in which it can reduce these costs through the development of longer-term investment proposals. Whilst there are no specific climate related investment plans detailed at this time, climate and environmental related implications will be at the forefront of our thinking when considering underlying service policies, priorities and strategies associated with the revenue budget, as well as through formulating investment plans and determining options to make reductions in our energy usage and associated costs to ensure a more sustainable future and the continued commitment to Net Zero by 2030.

8. Risk Management

In setting the revenue and capital budgets, the council must consider the known key financial risks that may affect its plans and these will either be explicitly provided for within the base budget or be offset and held against the unallocated contingency budget or the council's general fund working balance.

The council recognises that known risks, together with the unconfirmed, but anticipated timeframes surrounding future funding settlements, does attract a high degree of risk in terms of making specific decisions around its financial planning, particularly at such a critical point in the process.

Officers will continue to test the impact of varying key assumptions in the medium term financial strategy to assess the sensitivity of the ranges of indicative budget figures. This

informs decisions about the level of working balances needed to provide assurance as to the robustness of the budget estimates.

An MTFP risk register is regularly updated which reflects the most significant areas of the council's financial planning, although at this time some of the most significant risks are shown below;

- Uncertainty about some elements of funding likely to be received from central government in future years,
- Continued longer-term uncertainty about future reforms of local government finance and the impact this may have on the council's resources,
- Continued uncertainty about the long-term funding solution for adult social care, as well as the potential impacts that may arise in this area following the delayed Social Care Reforms, especially any potential short-falls in funding in relation to the "Fair Cost of Care", the Care Cap, and changes to the means test when they are eventually implemented,
- Ongoing uncertainty across a range of economic factors and inflationary rates that are likely to drive up cost in key areas such as pay, energy and third-party contracts, as well as impact on the sustainability of providers and partners, e.g. notably those who provide social care services and bus, transport and leisure related services,
- Potential increases in demand in areas which are difficult to control, including adult and children's social care and home to school transport (especially for children with special educational needs and disability SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)),
- Ability to facilitate economic and housing growth to increase income and generate wider economic benefits,
- Ability required to deliver change through transformation and innovation and capture the financial benefits,
- Impact of the inflationary costs associated with major capital projects,
- Impact on council employees.

In addition, there are specific concerns across the sector relating to the possible end of the statutory override period in relation to the Dedicated Schools Grant deficit. This is currently set for the end of March 2023, although the Government is currently consulting with all councils about the potential impacts should that go ahead. Alongside this, the council has started its "Safety Valve" negotiation with the Government as to how, in the medium term, the high needs block of the DSG (Dedicated Schools Grant) can be brought into in-year balance and how, consequently, the Government may contribute to reducing the historic deficit which will then inform the level of resources that the council may need to identify from its own reserves to close the gap.

9. Equality Implications

In considering its vision, ambitions and financial planning the council is mindful of its Public Sector Equalities Duties to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination
- advance equality of opportunity; and
- Encourage good relations between groups.

As per previous years, the council will undertake thorough Equality Impact Assessments, (EIA), for all budget savings plans which will be incorporated within the relevant budget papers throughout the MTFP process.

It is anticipated that an initial summary EIA will be completed and published on the council's website in December 2022 in respect of all the savings plans that are included within this report, which will provide an outline of the plans should they be approved and integrated into the budget in subsequent years.

Should further savings proposals be required to balance the budget and included within the MTFP in later reports, they will also follow the same core requirement of having an EIA published on the council's website.

10. Corporate Implications

The Corporate Plan and MTFP, along with the supporting financial monitoring processes and performance management framework are vital tools to help align effort across the organisation and ensure that core services are all are focused on delivery to agreed community and organisational priorities.

With continuing financial pressures and rising demands for services, it is essential that the councils' limited resources continue to be prioritised and allocated in line with the identified priorities. The Corporate Plan continues to be reviewed in the light of emerging risks and pressures and steps are being taken to assess timeframes and monitor key outcomes although it should be noted that the proposed changes included within the MTFP may impact on colleagues and capacity levels and deliverability.

11. Options Considered

The council is legally required to set a balanced budget and to implement a robust financial framework to ensure that spending is aligned to available resources and work to date has focused on achieving that objective. Some of the core assumptions that unpin this aim are subjective or based on information held at a specific point in time could therefore be updated or alternative options could be considered for inclusion within future modelling, particularly to enable the budget to be balanced for next year.

All proposals contained within the draft budget have been considered in detail by individual Executive Members and approved by the Executive collectively.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 Savings plans included within draft budget
Appendix 2 Changes to the current capital programme

Background Papers:

Exec Report – February 2022, Medium Term Financial Plan and Revenue Budget update
Exec Report – September 2022, Medium Term Financial Plan and Revenue Budget update
Exec Report - September 2022, Revenue Budget Monitoring 2022/23 Month 5
Council Report – February 2022, Council Tax Setting 2022/23

MTFP Savings Proposals included within the draft budget

APPENDIX 1

Directorate	Ref	Description	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total Proposals
ASS	ASS01	Better Care Fund - Inflation on adult protection element - contribution to increased costs	300	0	0	300
ASS	ASS02	Extra Care Housing - reduced unit costs of care element following re-tender	25	0	0	25
ASS	ASS03	Reducing the number / size of new care packages through reablement, Technology Enabled Care (TEC) and other early intervention services	400	0	0	400
ASS	ASS04	Meeting the needs of people through strengths-based assessment and governance approach that ensures equity and consistency	200	0	0	200
ASS	ASS05	Reviews of existing care packages to ensure that all appropriate Continuing Health Care (CHC) or joint funding is received	500	0	0	500
ASS	ASS06	Reviews of existing care packages to ensure still appropriate, strengths-based assessment and use of TEC	500	0	0	500
ASS	ASS07	Review the services received within Mental Health / Learning Disabilities considering TEC, Shared lives and Housing with support to maximise independence.	325	0	0	325
ASS	ASS08	Identify new Supported Living schemes as a more cost effective and independence maximising alternative to residential placements	100	0	0	100
ASS	ASS09	Equipment demonstration delivery moved to alternative venues, end use of MOTEX demonstration centre	60	0	0	60
ASS	ASS10	Review of arrangements for shared office accommodation with Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership	75	0	0	75
ASS	ASS11	Review staffing arrangements in the Learning Disabilities and mental Health Teams	120	0	0	120
ASS	ASS12	Increase vacancy management target in adult social care by 1%	125	0	0	125
ASS	ASS13	Increased client contributions to reflect increases in benefits and pensions	940	0	0	940
ASS	ASS14	Review Voluntary and Community Sector Grants and Commissioned Services	200	0	0	200
ASS	ASS15	Review of staffing and deletion of non-statutory Bristol Autism Services seconded Social Worker role	59	0	0	59
ASS	ASS16	Freeze TEC Coordinator post until external funding becomes available	49	0	0	49
ASS	ASS17	Review of funding arrangements for staff in the Housing Team	163	0	0	163
ASS	ASS18	Annual uplift to fees and charges to cover inflationary cost of services - Adults	255	256	256	767

MTFP Savings Proposals included within the draft budget

APPENDIX 1

Directorate	Ref	Description	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total Proposals
CH	CH01	Efficiency savings or reductions in budgets in line with projected or historic spend or demand	85	0	0	85
CH	CH02	Relocate Family Support and Safeguarding team to alternative office accommodation	20	0	0	20
CH	CH03	Deletion of vacant posts in Education Funding, Fostering Training, Strategy and Policy and Training Teams	121	0	0	121
CH	CH04	Review of Family Time Service to ensure service supports children with the highest needs	60	0	0	60
CH	CH05	Increase in Vacancy Management target	38	0	0	38
CH	CH06	Review of costs for children with complex care needs	50	0	0	50
CH	CH07	Review of staffing in Family Support & Safeguarding Teams	76	0	0	76
CH	CH08	Review of arrangements for Family Group Conferencing	56	0	0	56
CH	CH09	Remove final tranche of discretionary funding for under two's child care	80	0	0	80
CH	CH10	Review funding arrangements for staffing costs in Youth Justice Service	29	0	0	29
CH	CH11	Rationalisation / reprioritisation of Children's Centre and Early Help provision	300	0	0	300
CH	CH12	Annual uplift to fees and charges to cover inflationary cost of services - Children	13	14	14	41

MTFP Savings Proposals included within the draft budget

APPENDIX 1

Directorate	Ref	Description	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total Proposals
CSD	CSD1	Reduce senior management within the directorate, along with external resources previously used to support transformation	159	0	0	159
CSD	CSD2	Review the scope and scale of support provided to the council through external contractual arrangements in respect of Internal Audit and Archiving, i.e. the storing of historic artefacts.	10	10	8	28
CSD	CSD3	Review the scope and scale of the Business Intelligence team, the Policy & Partnerships team and the delivery of consultation and research activity	80	20	0	100
CSD	CSD4	Reduction in grants from the corporate services directorate to external organisations, will be considered as part of a wider review.	10	0	0	10
CSD	CSD5	Review and reduce resources required to deliver Procurement services, reflecting reduced demand as a result of lower overall external spend.	54	0	0	54
CSD	CSD6	Review of the Comms team and release capacity from vacant post	35	0	0	35
CSD	CSD7	Reduce number of editions of North Somerset Life from 3 to 2 per year. Also look to increase income opportunities	39	0	0	39
CSD	CSD8	Realign occupational health budget and annual leave buy back budgets to current levels	13	0	0	13
CSD	CSD9	Review the resources required to deliver a range of internal support services including the senior leadership support team, legal, democratic and scrutiny services as well as electoral and registration services and look to reduce costs and / or increase income.	21	95	60	176
CSD	CSD10	Review and reduce the resources required to deliver a range of internal support services such as ICT support and project management and external contract costs for bought in services. Seek further income from trading opportunities and project management activity.	120	0	0	120
CSD	CSD11	Reduce printing costs and equipment leases, reduce physical document storage costs	10	10	0	20
CSD	CSD13	Increase income from Carelink users - aligned to inflation	10	0	0	10
CSD	CSD14	Implement a range of changes and cuts to the Support Services Contract through reductions to the scope and scale of services and capacity available to the council. Areas of change include; Facilities, Digital Support, Cash Collection, Revenues and Benefits, Accounts Payable, Carelink and ICT.	133	235	0	368
CSD	CSD15	Increase council tax income by introducing a new policy to levy a second homes premium	0	150	0	150
CSD	CSD16	Realign council tax support scheme to current levels of demand	100	0	0	100
CSD	CSD17	Undertake a review of the Finance Service to evaluate core areas of responsibility, reduce the scope and scale of services currently provided and efficiencies.	58	65	14	137
CSD	CSD19	Align income budget from tenants to current levels at Castlewood and reduce premises related costs within office accommodation sites by 10% e.g. paper supplies, maintenance etc	235	0	0	235

MTFP Savings Proposals included within the draft budget

APPENDIX 1

Directorate	Ref	Description	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total Proposals
CSD	CSD20	Reduce budgets associated with the Sovereign Centre including the removal of resources set-aside to fund the capital financing costs of potential future investment and contract management costs.	290	0	0	290
CSD	CSD21	Increase income from external investment activity largely as a result of higher interest rates	695	0	0	695
CSD	CSD22	Reduction in debt costs and charges (Avon Loan Debt & Revolving Infrastructure Fund)	20	15	0	35
CSD	CSD23	Reduction in former employee pension costs	10	10	0	20
CSD	CSD24	Annual uplift to fees and charges to cover inflationary cost of services - Corporate	36	37	37	110

MTFP Savings Proposals included within the draft budget

APPENDIX 1

Directorate	Ref	Description	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total Proposals
PH&RS	PH1	Indicative proposal relating to the Housing elements of Regulatory Services - based on 22/23 month 6 forecast - some opportunity to increase income, although will need to be phased in over period of time; to be validated & supported by evidence	45	0	0	45
PH&RS	PH2	Indicative proposal relating to the Consumer Protection element of Regulatory Services - based on 22/23 month 6 forecast - some opportunity to increase income, although will need to be phased in over period of time; staffing budgets to be reviewed and compared to capacity levels as still being impacted by pandemic activity; to be validated & supported by evidence	60	0	0	60
PH&RS	PH3	Indicative proposal relating to Environmental Protection element of Regulatory Services - based on 22/23 month 6 forecast - some opportunity to increase income, although will need to be phased in over period of time; staffing budgets to be reviewed and compared to capacity levels as still being impacted by pandemic activity; to be validated & supported by evidence	25	0	0	25
PH&RS	PH4	Annual uplift to fees and charges to cover inflationary cost of services - PH&RS	10	11	11	32
PH&RS	PH5	Remodel team structure and limit recruitment against restructure plans agreed earlier in 2022. New reporting lines and allocation of functions to share increased workload. Will deliver savings to also support further realignment in 22/23.	118	0	0	118
PH&RS	PH6	Reduce allocation of budget to GP delivery of health checks and target provision in areas of higher deprivation or high risk workplace settings.	30	0	0	30
PH&RS	PH7	Seek economies of scale in delivery of settings programmes and reduce funding to support some interventions e.g. mental health training.	20	0	0	20
PH&RS	PH8	Need to top-slice PH savings to fund ring-fenced pressures, includes staffing budgets and contract increases	-168	0	0	-168

MTFP Savings Proposals included within the draft budget

APPENDIX 1

Directorate	Ref	Description	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total Proposals
PD	PD1	Increase recycling materials income target	900	0	0	900
PD	PD2	Close Backwell recycling centre	300	0	0	300
PD	PD3	Garden Waste inflationary increase	150	0	0	150
PD	PD4	Garden waste optimisation of rounds (Garden Waste collected on a different day to other collections)	50	100	0	150
PD	PD5	Find efficiency savings within the Waste Contract - This could include campaigns to improve the sorting of recycling by residents	150	150	0	300
PD	PD6	Refresh and embed a policy to minimise replacement/additional bins/containers	50	50	0	100
PD	PD7	Campaigns to increase recycling and reduce disposal costs	50	0	0	50
PD	PD8	Increase public convenience charges to 30p	30	0	0	30
PD	PD9	Income from public surveillance cameras & private CCTV monitoring	10	0	0	10
PD	PD10	Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) revenue for Anti-Social-Behaviour & CCTV used to issue FPNs for Highways and Public Protection Order and review funding models for Community Response	50	85	0	135
PD	PD11	Realign income budgets for leisure centres to current usage levels	15	0	0	15
PD	PD12	Make permanent the existing closure of Churchill Sports Centre	117	0	0	117
PD	PD13	Seafront staff review	40	0	0	40
PD	PD14	Review the commercial model for the following buildings: Somerset Hall Playhouse Theatre Tropicana The Bay Cafe	248	0	0	248
PD	PD15	Realign the budget for Curatorial Service	5	0	0	5
PD	PD17	Establishment of a single, council-wide transport function and improved commissioning	50	0	0	50
PD	PD18	Revisit safe walking routes to school	100	0	0	100
PD	PD20	Moving traffic violations - Adopt new powers available to Highways Authorities to improve safety and reduce congestion by enforcing traffic contraventions	100	100	0	200
PD	PD21	Bus lane enforcement	50	50	0	100
PD	PD22	Realign budget for structure repairs to reflect actual spending	25	0	0	25
PD	PD23	Reduce external spend and increase internal spend on the Capital Programme	200	0	0	200
PD	PD24	Realign budget for affordable housing income	28	0	0	28

MTFP Savings Proposals included within the draft budget

APPENDIX 1

Directorate	Ref	Description	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total Proposals
PD	PD25	Deletion of vacant officer post within Development Team	37	0	0	37
PD	PD26	Estimated increase in national planning application fees	16	0	0	16
PD	PD27	Delete vacant Access Officer post	19	0	0	19
PD	PD28	Economy team additional income	16	0	0	16
PD	PD30	Expand commercial waste service	0	50	0	50
PD	PD32	Review residents parking zones	0	50	50	100
PD	PD33	Biodiversity Net Gain	0	25	0	25
PD	PD34	Progress the libraries strategy by investigating alternative funding opportunities, models and partnerships	0	135	0	135
PD	PD35	Review Placemaking & Growth services	0	93	0	93
PD	PD36	Annual uplift to fees and charges to cover inflationary cost of services - Place	124	122	122	368

ANALYSIS OF CHANGES TO THE 2022/23 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

APPENDIX 2

	2022/23 Capital Programme Budget £000	2023/24 Capital Prog Budget £000	2024/25 Capital Prog Budget £000	2026/27 Capital Prog Budget £000	Total Capital Prog Budget £000
ORIGINAL APPROVED CAPITAL EXPENDITURE BUDGETS	94,798	99,181	17,978	0	211,957
Adj P10 - P12	2,273	0	0	0	2,273
Budget as per P12 Out-turn	97,071	99,181	17,978	0	214,230
Planned Additions to the capital Programme - Exec, Feb 2022	38,722	0	0	0	38,722
Slippage of approved budgets from 2021/22	48,582	0	0	0	48,582
TOTAL ORIGINAL CAPITAL BUDGETS	184,374	99,181	17,978	0	301,533
AMENDMENTS TO THE PROGRAMME IN-YEAR;					
Months 1-5 - Previously approved	(14,939)	13,969	35,349	5,000	39,378
Month 6					
Additions - Kia E-Niro - (DP233)	36	0	0	0	36
Additions - Golden Valley Primary School - (CY56)	224	0	0	0	224
Additions - BSIP (DP247)	200	0	0	0	200
Virement - Funding for Carlton Centre works - KCY310 (CS27)	0	0	0	0	0
Virement - Reallocation of City Deal and LTP schemes - DP*	0	0	0	0	0
Rephase - Low Emission Vehicle Provision	(45)	45	0	0	0
Rephase - Purchase of Land to support biodiversity net gain	(300)	300	0	0	0
Rephase - Digital documentation of Decisions taken	(50)	50	0	0	0
Rephase - GIS / Mapping system projects	(105)	105	0	0	0
Rephase - Ravenswood replacement de-mountable building	(150)	150	0	0	0
Rephase - Portishead Lakegrounds	(150)	150	0	0	0
Rephase - Development Strategy	(1,000)	1,000	0	0	0
Rephase - Waste Depot	(500)	500	0	0	0
Rephase - Tropicana & Magistrates	(400)	0	400	0	0
Rephase - ICT - Security Tools	(50)	50	0	0	0
Rephase - ICT - Windows 11 upgrade project	(50)	50	0	0	0
Rephase - ICT - Customer Services	(50)	50	0	0	0
Rephase - ICT - ContrOCC	(150)	150	0	0	0
Rephase - Accommodation	(1,851)	1,718	133	0	0
Rephase - Banwell Monitor of party Wall	(500)	0	500	0	0
Rephase - J21 northbound Slip	(527)	527	0	0	0
Rephase - Highways Maintenance Schemes	(1,098)	1,098	0	0	0
Rephase - Waste & Recycling - vehicles and electric top-up	(1,250)	1,250	0	0	0
Rephase - A38 MRN	(567)	(581)	1,148	0	0
Rephase - SBL Part 1 Claims	(620)	285	336	0	(0)
Rephase - Leisure Asset Management (HM Air Handling & Roof)	(700)	700	0	0	0
Rephase - Asset Management Plans	(806)	806	0	0	0
Rephase - Parks & Streetscene - Vehicles & Equipment	6	(6)	0	0	0
Savings - Parks & Streetscene - Vehicles & Equipment	0	(812)	0	0	(812)
Savings - Parking Review	0	(250)	0	0	(250)
Savings - Placemaking District Wide	(125)	0	0	0	(125)
REVISED 2022/23 CAPITAL PROGRAMME	158,855	120,485	55,844	5,000	340,184

North Somerset Council

Report to the Executive

Date of Meeting: 7 December 2022

Subject of Report: North Somerset Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2022-32

Town or Parish: All

Officer/Member Presenting: Cllr Mike Solomon - Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Services

Key Decision: Yes

Reason:

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan provides a vision for the Rights of Way network over the next 10 years, together with objectives and an action plan to deliver improvements that will benefit all communities in North Somerset.

Recommendations

That the Council adopts the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) 2022-23 appended to this report.

1. Summary of Report

- 1.1 The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 placed a legal obligation on all Local Authorities to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) to outline their aims for managing and improving local public rights of way (PRoW) in their area and to review, amend or rewrite this plan at least every 10 years.
- 1.2 Our first RoWIP (2007-2017) was updated in 2010 and was due for review in 2020. This is therefore our second RoWIP, the production of which has been delayed due to the Covid restrictions and workload pressures.
- 1.3. The Plan sets out how North Somerset Council (NSC) will manage the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) provision for the benefit of the physical and mental wellbeing of walkers, equestrians, cyclists and those with visual or mobility difficulties, together with delivering sustainable travel options and opportunities to engage with the natural environment.
- 1.4. As part of the development of the new RoWIP we proposed a set of 5 objectives and 14 areas of activity under which numerous actions were created to comprise the ROWIP action plan.

- 1.5 From 8th August 2022 we consulted on the draft RoWIP and invited responses to a number of questions, including requesting feedback on the following:
- PRow user requirements
 - RoWIP objectives
 - RoWIP action plan
- 1.6 Consultation responses were evaluated and have informed the RoWIP update.
- 1.7 It is recommended that the Council adopts the North Somerset Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2022-32 as appended to this report.

2. Policy

- 2.1 The RoWIP 2022-32 is a key strategic document that interacts with a wide range of policies in North Somerset and across the West of England. It sets out how we will act to deliver key aims to:
1. Increase our PRow Network through establishing effective connections
 2. Seek opportunities for improved strategic routes
 3. Improve routes to make them more accessible and enjoyable for all
 4. Encourage visitors to our region
 5. Support opportunities for the PRow Network to help address the Climate Emergency through enabling sustainable travel
 6. Support opportunities for the PRow Network to help address the Ecological Emergency through native planting, enhancing connectivity and engendering a better understanding of our natural environment
 7. Contribute to sustainable development, improved health outcomes and enhanced quality of life for our communities

3. Details

- 3.1 The North Somerset Rights of Way Improvement Plan is attached as Appendix A.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 A range of consultation exercises were carried out. (Table 1).

Consultation exercise	Details	Date
Briefing	Executive member briefing	19 th July 2022
Briefing	All member Informal Scrutiny	4 th August 2022
Econsult	Open invitation to respond to the consultation	22 nd August until 7 th October 2022
E life	Emailed to 43,000 individuals	September edition
Town and Parishes	Meetings with all Town and Parishes were offered at 2 evening events	20 th and 27 th September
Local Access Forum	A dedicated session was offered to provide a feedback opportunity for LAF members	22 nd September
Press and social media	A press release was published and numerous social media posts were carried out	August/September/October
Posters	QR code on posters located in key locations on the PRow network pointed people towards eConsult	August/September/October

Table 1 Consultation exercises for the promotion of the 2022-32 Rights of Way Improvement Plan

- 4.2 As this consultation exercise demonstrates the Council made considerable effort to raise awareness of the draft 2022-32 RoWIP.
- 4.3 The development of the RoWIP has taken place with input from the Place scrutiny panel.
- 4.4 The eConsult consultation resulted in 174 responses, 146 from individuals and 28 from organisations. Of the organisational responses, 19 of these were from town and parish councils with the remainder being from those representing user interests such as equestrian and ramblers groups together with organisations such as The Monarch's Way Association and also the Local Access Forum. Respondents were asked to consider a range of questions whose purpose was to explain how and why people used rights of way and what barriers they felt they faced to using them together with gaining opinions on the RoWIP itself and whether our list of user requirements was accurate, whether we have chosen an appropriate set of objectives and to raise actions that may have been missed out of the action plan. A summary of the responses can be found in Appendix B.

Following the consultation process we undertook analysis of the feedback we had received to update the draft RoWIP. Not all respondees replied to each question. Many of the responses received have been used to inform the final version.

4.5 PRow User Requirements

As part of the draft 2022-32 RoWIP we sought views on continued relevance of the list of user requirements which had been identified for the 2007 RoWIP. Of the 170 people who responded to the question about the requirements of PRow users, 124

people (55%) felt we had correctly identified the requirements each type of user has, 25 did not agree and 21 were unsure.

Table 2 provides a summary of the original RoWIP list of user requirements together with details of the additional requirements proposed by the consultees which are listed in the final column. Not all categories received any suggestions other than 'better provision.' Many suggestions had already been captured by the existing list of requirements or identified shortfalls. All user types would benefit from guidance on path user behaviour to better enable multi-user paths to be enjoyed by all.

User Type	Proposed RoWIP 2022-32 User Requirements			Post-consultation additions
	Requirements	Current Provision	Shortfall	
Mobility, visually and other impaired users	Routes suitable for use. Good information about routes. Suitable facilities	Limited routes identified for specific use.	Limited percentage of network available. Insufficient targeted information provided.	Parking, consideration of gate widths, path widths/inclines
Casual Walker	Safe, clean and interesting environment for people and children. Good information (for example website, leaflets and on the ground waymarking)	860km of public right of way plus 500ha of area-wide access and permissive access over private land	Need to continue reducing obstructions, ensure adequate signage and improve surfacing where possible to increase 'ease of use'.	Connection with public transport, safer crossings over highways, greater variety of routes, greater levels of signage
Walkers with Dogs	Means of passing through stiles. Facilities for dog mess and drinking. Areas in which dogs can run free legally and without affecting livestock.	860km of public right of way plus 500ha of area-wide access and permissive access over private land	Need for greater education amongst dog owners about responsible behaviour and risks to livestock. Need for routes with suitable facilities.	Requirements are what existing resources allow
Ramblers	Variety of routes. Good access furniture. Continued mechanism for dealing with complaints and definitive map problems	860km of public right of way plus 500ha of area-wide access and permissive access over private land. Backlog of Legal Orders for processing. Procedure for handling complaints moved online.	Need to increase 'ease of use'. More publicity/promotion. Backlog of Legal Orders has been reduced, however work still to be done	Requirements are what existing resources allow
Cyclists	Variety of route options with good	280km of public rights of way and	Small percentage of local rights of	Better segregation

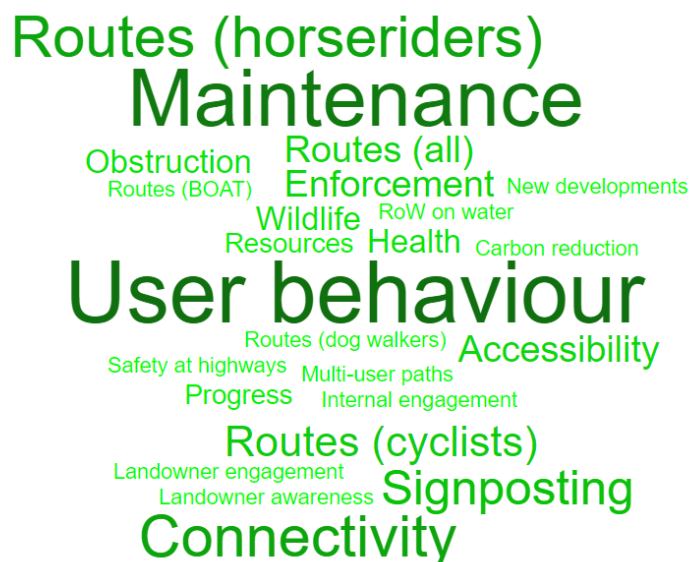
	connectivity, including routes free of difficulty (for example avoiding dangerous road crossing and steep hills). Improved publicity and promotion	cycle tracks plus permissive routes. Fragmented network. Information on some routes published.	way available for cyclist and very little permissive. Poor connectivity. Need to improve information online and through publications	
Utilitarian users (walkers and cyclists)	Safe, off-road network that links residential areas and key destinations (for example schools, places of work and shops). Good all-weather surfaces.	Existing network of highways, including public rights of way, footways and cycle tracks plus permissive paths.	Connectivity of links between trip generators.	Fully gated routes to villages, safer connections at roads
Horse riders	Routes that are free of obstructions, well signposted, waymarked, free from vegetation, suitable surfaces, safe to use and form circular routes at least five miles long.	123km of public rights of way and 1.5km permissive route. Fragmented network, minimal publication of routes. Roadside verges could offer possibilities.	Only small percentage of local rights of way available for horse riders, very little permissive use available. Poor connectivity, few circular routes, limited information.	Path widening, vegetation control, disabled users
Carriage Drivers	Adequate parking. Good length of route.	38km of public rights of way.	Small length of route publicly available. Poor connection.	Requirements are what existing resources allow
Off Road Motorists	Unsurfaced routes that are free from obstruction and have character. Challenging natural gradient and surface. Reasonable length and interesting topography. Routes that would not be damaged by light vehicle use.	0.7km of public right of way	There is negligible provision for off-road driving on local rights of way in North Somerset. These routes require greater investment due to degradation by vehicles.	Requirements are what existing resources allow

Table 2 Identified requirements for each type of PRoW user

4.6 Objectives

The consultation set out our draft objectives and invited comments on whether they are the right set of objectives to improve the North Somerset rights of way network.

The responses received, including those supporting the objectives where responses were often still provided, covered the following themes (larger text equates to a greater number of responses on that theme):



We received 170 responses on the objectives with 124 people (73%) agreeing that they were appropriate choices. Of those that did not agree (25) or who were not sure (23), in many cases the suggestions for improvements to the objectives were already encapsulated directly in the existing wording or within the spirit of the objective. For example, there were calls for “more routes for horse-riders” however this is already covered under objective 5: *Increase routes other than footpaths*. Equally there were suggestions such as “accessible furniture is very important but many pieces currently in situ are unnecessary and unlawful. These should be removed.” Objective 3 covers this particular point as making routes more accessible can only be achieved by ensuring furniture such as stiles and gates are replaced with versions that accommodate more users.

Multiple suggestions highlighted that the objectives required more detail to enable people to recognise their concerns are being reflected in our proposals. As such we have amended the objectives to provide this (alterations to the draft objectives are highlighted in bold).

1. Provide a **timely** and effective maintenance and **enforcement** policy for the PRow network
2. Improve connectivity on the PRow network
3. Improve accessibility for all users
4. Improve awareness of the PRow network (**e.g. promotion/signage**) and its benefits (**e.g. for health and access to nature**), understanding of the responsibilities of PRow users (**e.g. behaviour towards other users and the natural environment**) and **landowners** and the knowledge and confidence relevant to each type of user
5. Increase routes other than footpaths to address the inequality of PRow provision across North Somerset **and identify opportunities for segregated use where possible**

4.7 Action Plan

We suggested a range of 32 actions to improve user experience. This received a much more mixed and slightly lower response (144 people) with only one third

agreeing with our proposals. The third of respondents who did not agree with our actions either wanted some removed or others added. 44 of the respondees did not necessarily agree but provided no feedback on what actions were needed.

The responses received, including those supporting the content of the action plan, covered the following themes (larger text equates to a greater number of responses on that theme):



Many correctly highlighted that our objectives relating to connectivity and an increase in routes other than footpaths are not specifically listed in the proposed actions so these have been added into section 10 of the action plan. For example, section 10 of the action plan consists of actions to improve the network and 3 suggestions drawn from the consultation responses will be added to the existing list. One of these is to identify routes which can be upgraded to accommodate a greater variety of users, including segregation and provision of additional facilities for those with impairments.

Respondents made a wide range of different comments and suggestions. Many related to problems on or requests for specific routes and so are not reported within the revised RoWIP however they will be investigated separately.

Other broader concerns related to the relative lack of bridleways and non-road or segregated cycle routes; poor and infrequent maintenance; a lack of sufficient signposting; risks to nature from both increased activity on PRow and increased surfacing of paths; a lack of multi-user routes; safety where RoW meet the highway; engaging with landowners to achieve improved access and concerns over the progress possible within Council budgetary constraints.

To cover the concerns raised under this element of consultation we have proposed some new actions and also amended others.

New actions

New Action Plan Reference	Activity
2.f)	Report on progress with maintenance
8.c)	Make greater use of on-site signage, including QR codes to inform the public about rights of way and seek engagement
9.c)	Report on progress with asset management
10.d)	Identify locations for improved connectivity, including severed routes
10.e)	Identify locations for safety improvements at junctions with highways
10.f)	Identify routes which can be upgraded to accommodate a greater variety of users, including segregation and provision of additional facilities for those with impairments
10.g)	Identify, map and promote routes which are specifically suitable for those with mobility impairments, aiming for a minimum of at least one per parish

Amended or clarified actions

Action Plan Reference	Activity
1.a)	Increase awareness of how to report problems
6.b)	Significantly reduce the backlog of Definitive Map Modification Order Applications and maintain outstanding applications below 10 (amended deadline from 2027 to 2024)
11.b)	Deliver action plan objectives from the GI Strategy including identifying areas where PROW/nature conflicts may arise, or could be enhanced

Some areas where consultee responses will not be able to be accommodated within the RoWIP document, but which in some cases are still a requirement for NSC to address include:

Suggestion from consultation	Is this something the council can take forward?	Proposed action
Provision of pavements where these are missing along highways	The council does not provide pavements on all highways and there is not sufficient budget to provide and maintain additional pavements unless critical.	Highlight reporting mechanisms for any critical safety issues related to missing pavements
Creation of more on-road cycle routes	Where feasible as part of Active Travel Policy and action plan	Information to be shared within the upcoming Active Travel action plan consultation
Segregation of walkers from livestock where RoW pass over fields	There is no requirement nor budget for the council to implement this suggestion	No further action

Clearance of over-hanging vegetation from pavements	Where feasible	Highlight reporting mechanisms for overhanging vegetation
Creation of rights of way on water bodies	There is no requirement nor budget for the council to implement this suggestion	No further action
Provision of dog waste bins and access to water on RoW	This is not possible on NSC land due to budget constraints and other landowners are not obliged to provide these facilities	No further action
Provision of public conveniences on RoW	This is not possible due to budget constraints	No further action

Other useful suggestions received through the consultation which will be explored through the proposed actions include:

- interactive options to encourage better engagement and people finding out more about the landscape etc. around certain places
- make access to the LAF meetings more accessible to stakeholders
- Online reporting should be extended to easily allow public suggestions on improvements and connectivity as well as maintenance and access issues.
- There will be numerous PRoWs which cross over Parish boundaries. There should be joined up consultation with both Parish/Town Councils, wherever possible.
- Use Parish & Town Councils - all have their own websites and most have a Parish Magazine. Publish regular news about works & improvements to the network - this should increase the amount of people seeing the information

As part of the consultation process we also engaged with the Disabled Ramblers who have been instrumental in ensuring that the key accessibility barriers associated with the different types of impaired users have been acknowledged and that the processes we employ for maintenance and new projects adequately take these users' requirements into consideration.

5. Financial Implications

Costs

- 5.1** There are no direct financial consequences or commitments flowing from this decision to approve the Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2022-32, but the delivery of the action plan will depend upon funding being available.
- 5.2** An additional £150,000 of revenue funding was made available in 2020 for rights of way improvements in recognition of the historical lack of funding. We worked with

the town and parish councils to identify the top 10 priorities in each area and with this funding we have installed:

- 12 Bristol gates
- 105 pedestrian gates
- 76 kissing gates
- 23 bridges
- 9 surface works
- 3 horse gates

The remainder of the identified improvements will be made as part of RoWIP 2022-32.

Funding

- 5.2 Ongoing funding will be required for the maintenance of the rights of way network. Many improvement schemes will be achievable through developer contributions or via match-funding from town and parish councils.
- 5.3 Where resources (including additional staff) are required this will be dealt with via the processes of the MTFP and/or the Councils Capital Strategy.

6. Legal Powers and Implications

- 6.1. None. The RoWIP is a guidance document and would not itself create commitments or statutory requirements on the Council, legal, financial or otherwise.

7. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- 7.1 The strategic aims of RoWIP 2022-32 include:
- Support opportunities for the PRoW Network to help address the Climate Emergency through enabling sustainable travel
 - Support opportunities for the PRoW Network to help address the Ecological Emergency through native planting, enhancing connectivity and engendering a better understanding of our natural environment

These demonstrate the commitment to addressing the climate and nature emergency which are intrinsic to the RoWIP's purpose.

8. Risk Management

- 8.1 As mentioned earlier, the RoWIP is mandated via legislation and we are already not adhering to this by having a Plan that is not current.

In addition to meeting the legislative needs the consultation has enabled us to engage with PRoW users and determine their requirements for using the network and also their views on the priorities for improving public rights of way in North Somerset.

9. Equality Implications

Have you undertaken an Equalities Impact Assessment? Yes.

- 9.1 The RoWIP directly addresses inequalities around access to rights of way as it focusses on improvements to access for all users but specifically those with mobility or other impairments. It also seeks to increase the number of routes so this will ensure the proximity of our communities to their nearest RoW will improve.

10. Corporate Implications

- 10.1 The RoWIP aligns with the Council's nature and climate emergencies through the provision of routes to enable sustainable and active travel together with opportunities for people to engage with and develop an appreciation for the natural environment.

11. Options Considered

- 11.1 None

Author:

Esther Coffin-Smith, Natural Environment Manager

Appendices:

Appendix A – Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2022-32

Appendix B – RoWIP 2022-32 consultation - summary of responses

Background Papers:

The 2007 RoWIP.

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The background of the page is a photograph of a landscape. In the foreground, there is a green field with a wooden fence. In the middle ground, there is a cemetery with several tombstones. In the background, there is a large, multi-story stone church tower with Gothic-style windows and a spire. The sky is blue and clear. On the left side of the page, there is a vertical purple decorative element with a stylized leaf or flame shape.

North Somerset Council **Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007 – 2017** (revised November 2010)

Improving Public Access
and Local Rights of Way
in North Somerset Page 183

Forward

I am pleased to be able to introduce this revised Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Whilst the current plan runs until 2017 we have made some minor amendments in order to link and integrate the plan with the next phase of the Local Transport Plan.

The Plan heralds a new approach to managing our local rights of way network - we will be aiming to better provide what people want rather than only focusing on satisfying our statutory duties.

North Somerset Council's countryside access work has long recognised the breadth of benefits that the service can bring. It is a high priority for government (locally, regionally and nationally) as a means of supporting:

- our health, well-being and quality of life
- sustainable transport and reduction of congestion
- re-engagement with our countryside
- the local economy.

I see great benefit in the council aligning the Local Transport Plan with the Plan we outline here for walking, cycling, horse-riding, carriage driving and



'off-road' driving, whether for recreation or for commuting. Co-ordination of our efforts with those of other government agencies, with regard to agricultural policy, rural diversification, development and so on, will allow us to ensure greater 'joined up' thinking to the benefit of all. Understanding of the scope of the council's work, and satisfaction with it, should be boosted as the public gets directly involved in planning and monitoring progress as we implement the Plan.

The North Somerset Local Access Forum, and officers from inside, and outside, the council have contributed to the development of this Plan. We consulted the public over the winter and received some detailed responses which we have addressed as far as we can in this final version. However, a word of warning. The success of this plan will rely heavily on the continuing help from volunteers, landowners and outside funding sources. For many projects and existing maintenance works, the council can only act as an enabler - we simply do not have the financial resources or staffing available to do more.

Meanwhile, we expect to publish regular updates on our progress towards implementation and to give you opportunities to let us know how you think we're doing. Enjoy our countryside.

Councillor Elfan Ap Rees



Executive summary

1. Introduction

We (North Somerset Council) are pleased to publish our Rights of Way Improvement Plan (the Plan). We have produced the Plan in line with guidance produced by government and in compliance with our legal duties. We believe that the actions proposed in the Plan:

- fit in with our strategy at local level and with national government policy
- will improve people's quality of life
- should help to boost the local economy.

The North Somerset countryside has much to offer its residents and our visitors, and local rights of way provide one of the best ways of exploring and enjoying it. For many, the network also provides a convenient, safe, healthy and enjoyable means of getting to work or school.

The aims of the Plan are to:

- set out the actions needed to improve the local rights of way network to meet identified needs of users
- integrate rights of way with other transport planning, including the Joint Local Transport Plan 3 (JLTP3)
- help guide forward planning and development to safeguard and improve the network
- ensure that improvements needed to achieve good access are included in other strategies and funding bids
- secure wider involvement.

We have already consulted widely within North Somerset and published a draft Plan. This final revised Plan reflects comments and ideas we have received in response to the consultation. The Plan only covers North Somerset, although we will move towards integration with the Joint Local Transport Plan 3 (JLTP3) in the future.

2. Users and their needs

In order to identify the needs of different local rights of way users, we have listened to what people have told us locally and have reviewed research results undertaken across the country (which is reasonably consistent in terms of people's needs). The Plan lists the needs of:

- walkers (casual walkers, walkers with dogs, ramblers, and those walking to work, to school or to access services)
- cyclists (recreational and utilitarian), including cycling to work
- equestrians (horse riders and carriage drivers)
- drivers of motor vehicles on unsealed roads
- people with a wide range of impairments including mobility, visual and hearing.

We also recognise that some people do not currently make use of the network but may be attracted to use it in future. They too have their needs.

The key points from this section are that:

- there are many different needs to try to satisfy
- 'walkers' are a composite of different types, each with its own needs and preferences and it will be difficult to meet all these at all points of the network. However, all walkers have a basic requirement that routes are easily traceable, useable and welcoming
- cyclists, horse riders and drivers of horse-drawn carriages are keen to have continuity of safe routes with minimum need to use busy main roads
- motor vehicle drivers are looking for interesting and challenging off-road¹ routes that can be used without adverse effects (for example, appropriately surfaced, not obstructed, without conflict)
- mobility and visually impaired users have very diverse needs but much can be achieved by improving the information made available to them
- Local residents and visitors may be unaware of the access opportunities available and therefore represent a large potential source of extra usage
- landowners and farmers are key stakeholders in delivering a functional network and are keen to see network users made more aware of countryside matters.

¹ The term 'road' is generally defined in statutes as including all classes of highway. This means that care is needed when using expressions such as 'driving off-road'. Technically this should be interpreted as driving other than on a highway or any other road to which the public has access. For the purposes of the Plan, the term 'off-road' is used in the generally understood way of meaning 'not on a sealed (tarmacked or concrete) highway', rather than the legal one of 'not on a public route'.

3. Current provision

The local rights of way network of North Somerset extends to 826km, the majority (704km) being footpaths that can only be used by people on foot or by people dependent on mobility vehicles. The balance comprises bridleways (85km), restricted byways (37km) and byways (<1 km). A small proportion of the network has been designed for use by people with limited mobility. However, the network is not evenly distributed with some areas having a dense network whilst others are only lightly covered.

We work continuously to maintain and improve the condition of the network – namely the continuous review of the legal record (the Definitive Map and Statement), its maintenance and its promotion. Although we achieve a standard comparable with other authorities for ‘ease of use’ (as measured by the Best Value Performance Indicator 178), there is always room for improvement.

Public access is not restricted solely to local rights of way. Some landowners are happy to allow the public to use linear routes across their land, ranging from simply tolerating it to entering into legally-binding agreements with the government or the local authority. Further, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW ACT 2000) gave the public a right of access, on foot for informal recreation, to areas mapped as ‘access land’. There are about 500ha of access land in North Somerset, supplemented by permissive access to some other areas.

Key points made in this section are that:

- despite the district’s relatively small size, it has an array of opportunities for the public to gain access to the countryside
- the opportunities for walkers are reasonably well distributed around the area, meaning that most people will have ready access to the countryside
- the network available for use by cyclists, horse riders and drivers of horse-drawn carriages is small and fragmented, meaning that continuity can, at present, only be achieved by use of lanes and roads, some of which are not well-suited for this use, or with permission of landowners
- there is little scope for accommodating off-road motor vehicle drivers on the area’s current network of local rights of way
- there is limited provision of routes that can be used by the public with mobility and other impairments relative to the number of people who are limited by such conditions

- despite its limitations, the local rights of way network can serve as an important part of the transport network and its improvement will be an important element in encouraging more participation in walking and cycling
- our research has identified a number of areas where we can make improvements.

4. Improving public access and local rights of way to meet identified needs

Bringing the two assessments together reveals where we need to focus our efforts. In summary, we believe the key shortfalls are:

Casual walkers

- Need to reduce obstructions, improve signage and surfacing and thereby contribute to increasing the ‘ease of use’ result.
- More publicity/promotion/way marking.

Walkers with dogs

- Need for greater education amongst dog owners about what constitutes responsible behaviour and the risks to livestock (see appendix E for questions about legal aspects).
- Need for dog friendly routes/areas.
- Need for routes with suitable facilities.

Ramblers

- Need to increase ‘ease of use’ result.
- More publicity/promotion.

Cyclists

- Only small percentage of local rights of way available for cyclists, and very little permissive.
- Poor connectivity.
- Inadequate information.

Multi-user routes (walkers and cyclists)

- Does the network have sufficient links between trip generators – homes, schools, shops and places of work?

Horse riders

- Only small percentage of local rights of way are available for horse riders, and very little permissive.
- Poor connectivity, meaning few circular routes.
- Inadequate information.

Carriage drivers

- Small length of route publicly available.
- Poorly connected.

Off-road motorists

- In effect, there is no provision for off-road driving on local rights of way in North Somerset.

Mobility, visually and other impaired users

- Limited percentage of network available.
- Insufficient targeted information provided.

Non-users

- Insufficient targeted information provided.
- In order for these shortfalls to be overcome, we will need to make changes to our procedures as well as undertaking specific actions on the ground.

These changes are considered under the four different themes:

- Vision and culture (VC) – having the right approach.
- Working practices and processes (WPP) – having the right tools.

- Services and facilities (SF) – doing the right things.
- Communication and education (CE) – publishing the right information.

The Statement of Actions (contained in section four) sets out proposed actions, who is leading on the action, the targets for delivery and the resources required.

5. Implementation

We will continue to strive to meet our duties with respect to local rights of way and exercise our powers as we think best. We recognise that the standard to which the existing network is managed and maintained could be improved and additions made.

The Local Access Forum (LAF) will advise us on matters relating to public access and recreation, and we will have regard to this advice. However, we have not been given additional resources to implement the actions within our Plan. But, the Plan is now incorporated within the JLTP3 and certain actions will be included in the annual delivery programme.

We intend to publish updates on the Plan's progress periodically within the LAF's annual report.



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1 Introduction

North Somerset is blessed with attractive countryside, a coastline packed with interest and delightful towns and villages. Many people want to travel within North Somerset, for example, to go to work or go to school, to visit the shops and to enjoy themselves. Most destinations are accessible to people on foot, bicycle and (in some cases) even on horseback, thanks to the network of local rights of way. We at North Somerset Council are responsible for securing this network of routes for your use.

The Plan has been based upon feedback from the public gained during the consultation exercise. We have formulated actions from this feedback and they are set out in section four. The plan is the first time that such a strategic overview has been undertaken on access issues.

In updating the Plan, we have been guided by:

- the requirements of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000¹
- the statutory guidance produced by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs²
- the advice available on the Public Rights of Way Good Practice Guide website³.



The Plan covers the period up to 2017, with regular updates, and defines our vision for improving access and local rights of way over the next seven years in North Somerset - a vision to be achieved through a variety of policies and activities. This includes a Statement of Actions outlining what North Somerset Council and others propose to do to secure improvements to the development, promotion and management of the local rights of way.

Our long-term goals are:

- to increase the use and enjoyment of local rights of way by local people
- to encourage visitors to the area to use and enjoy our local rights of way network in order to promote economic benefits
- to provide opportunities for sustainable travel to local services and facilities
- to contribute to the sustainable development and quality of life of North Somerset's communities now and in the future.

The Plan focuses on public rights of way and includes cycletracks, most of which are within rural areas, but not exclusively so. Our responsibilities extend to rights of way throughout the area and so too does this Plan.

1.1 Why have we prepared this Plan?

1.1.1 Because it fits in with our strategy at local and national level

We are required by the Government to prepare and publish a plan for improving local rights of way in our area.

The Plan must look at:

- the extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public
- the opportunities provided by local rights of way (footpaths, cycletracks, bridleways, restricted byways and byways) for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of our area
- the accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and others with impairments or mobility problems.

1 www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2000/20000037.htm (section 60 and 61)

2 www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/cl/rowip/rowip.pdf

3 www.iprow.co.uk/wiki/index.php/main_page

In addition, new legislation, current and emerging strategies and policies from government at all levels influence what we do. So, a key element of the Plan is its support for the themes, aims and objectives of a wide range of existing plans and strategies.

The key components of this strategic planning framework are:

- Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
- Sport England Regional Plan 2004 and 'sport playing its part series'
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Joint Local Transport Plan
- Forest of Avon Community Forest Plan 2002
- Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2009-2014
- North Somerset Council Access Strategy for Disabled People 2005
- North Somerset Public Rights of Way Milestones Statement 1999
- North Somerset Replacement Local Plan March 2007 – Core Strategy – 2011 - onwards
- Cross compliance regulations under the Single Payment Scheme (of the Common Agricultural Policy)
- Association of Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities.

A more complete list of influential documents that form the policy framework is given in Appendix A.

Of particular relevance is Policy T/7 from the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan, 2007. This is reproduced in full in the box below together with paragraph 9.70, which is also highly relevant.



Policy T/7: Protection, development and improvement of the rights of way network and other forms of public access

Development that would reduce, sever or adversely affect the use, amenity or safety of public rights of way and other forms of public access, or prejudice the planned development of the network will only be permitted if acceptable provision is made to mitigate those effects, or divert or replace the right of way or other form of access, before the development commences.

Paragraph 9.70 states:

The council will pursue a programme for the protection, extension, improvement and maintenance of opportunities for access by sustainable modes, including public footpaths, bridleways, byways and cycle routes, together with associated services and facilities.

Key priorities within this programme are to provide and promote:

- urban fringe multi-user rides and trail routes around all towns and villages together with green corridors and gateway sites connecting urban areas with the countryside and wider access network beyond
- strategic multi-user routes connecting all towns, villages and appropriate tourist attractions and open space
- a continuous coastal footpath, broadly following the River Avon and the coast of North Somerset, diverting inland where necessary to avoid undue conflict with biodiversity interests or for reasons of safety and security
- public access to support the objectives of the Forest of Avon
- a series of Safe Routes to School schemes and other links to local services and facilities.

Source: North Somerset Replacement Local Plan 2007

1.1.2 Because it will improve people's quality of life

We recognise the substantial value that good access and local rights of way provide for developing sustainable, safe, strong and healthy communities.

We believe that the Plan will help improve the quality of life for people in North Somerset in several ways.

Sustainable travel

- Encouraging the number of people walking and cycling and decreasing car dependency and use, especially for regular local journeys, for example, commuting to work or school.
- Improving road safety for vulnerable users and enabling better accessibility for all people such as to key community facilities.

Recreation, sport and leisure

- Enhancing the quantity and quality of provision to appeal to all members of local communities, including different forms of transport such as walking, cycling and mountain-biking, horse riding and carriage driving.
- Different forms and levels of activity such as to experience and enjoy the local environment, to observe and interpret wildlife, engage in either gentle or more physically demanding activity.

Health and well-being

- Enabling everyone to have the opportunity for physical exercise, near to their home and free of charge, to help them reduce the risk of health conditions including coronary heart disease, diabetes, stroke, obesity and osteoporosis.
- Good access for all empowers people to lead independent lives, feel a part of their local community and be able to actively participate in it.
- Interacting socially with other people and making a valuable contribution to mental health and well being.

Economic development and tourism

- Promoting sites and routes to all visitors and so support tourism and new business opportunities, including farm diversification, for existing and potential markets such as countryside access generally, mountainbiking and cycling, horse riding and equestrian activities and watching wildlife.

Community life, education and culture

- Ensuring everyone has equal opportunities to access local services and facilities to the same quality of access experience, and to feel socially

included in community life generally.

- Providing opportunities for people to access nearby communities without the need to own a car, and so ensure social cohesion and inclusion.
- Good access provides opportunities for all people to develop a greater understanding of their local environment, and learn about its geography, history, wildlife, and land management.
- Our local network of public paths is a local environmental and cultural heritage resource able to provide opportunities for school and college pupils to enhance their curriculum learning.

1.1.3 Because it should help boost the local economy

Residents of North Somerset are a key audience for the Plan but the ability to access the countryside along local rights of way are of wider interest to visitors. North Somerset is a gateway to the south west peninsula. It lies close to the Greater Bristol conurbation, has good road and rail links and Bristol International Airport is close by. North Somerset's coast, countryside and its more developed areas provide immense potential for recreation and healthy activity for all and to significantly enhance tourism and the local economy.

A national survey found that just under three quarters of all adults in Great Britain have made a visit to the countryside, and just over half have visited the seaside/coast within the year prior to the survey interview⁴. Around 527 million walking trips are made annually to the English countryside, which is estimated to generate between £1.5 billion and £2.8 billion for local economies, and further supporting between 180,500 and 245,500 full-time jobs⁵.

The South West Coast National Trail has been judged the greatest asset to tourism in the region. Research suggests that the total economic value derived from the Coast Path is at least £143m per annum. In Somerset, it is estimated that local households and visiting friends and relatives using the Coast Path account for some £34m in spending each year⁶.

Similar figures are not available for North Somerset alone, however, this example illustrates the potential economic benefits of long distance promoted routes. It is estimated that equestrian and horse riding

⁴ GB Day visit survey (CA) 2002/03

⁵ The economic and social value of Walking in England (Ramblers' Association 2003)

⁶ The economic value of the South West Coast Path 2003

activities alone generate in excess of £11-12m each year to the North Somerset economy.

1.2 What has the North Somerset area got to offer?

North Somerset is a diverse mix of coast and countryside with towns and villages spread evenly, and lies adjacent to the Greater Bristol conurbation to its north east. North Somerset's land area of approximately 375sq km is bordered by Bristol City and Bath and North East Somerset Councils, and the county of Somerset. Approximately 42km of coastline along the Severn Estuary forms the district's north western boundary.

The district contains a number of key attractions including the traditional coastal towns of Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon and Portishead. The National Trust's Tyntesfield Estate and the coastline and areas of open space including the levels and moors. Mendip Hills AONB and publicly accessible land such as Ashton Court Estate and Leigh Woods. It has excellent beaches at Weston-super-Mare, Sand Bay and Clevedon. The state and extent of countryside access opportunities are discussed further in Section three.

1.3 Who does the network of local rights of way serve?

Approximately 190,000 people live in North Somerset, of whom around 70% live within the main urban areas of Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead. The area's resident population increases each year through visitors. This amounted to around a further 5.3m people during 2004 (up from 3.6m in 1998), of whom around 4.8m were day visitors. Such a substantial increase not only represents a significant potential market for leisure-related tourism, but also represents higher potential usage of local rights of way.

North Somerset is generally prosperous, but some communities have greater needs and problems relating to accessibility and equality of opportunity, unemployment and low income, long-term ill-health, poor environmental conditions and facilities, crime and personal safety. Parts of Weston-super-Mare in particular are amongst the most deprived in the country, with 17,447 North Somerset residents living in the 20% most deprived areas nationally. Around 18% of households have no car and almost 35,000 residents (19%) suffer from limiting long term illness. North Somerset continues to see an increase in the numbers of school age children. However, the



proportion of children walking to school has declined nationally from around 61% in the early 1990s to around 50% in 2004 (the same figure for North Somerset's primary school children), with the school run accounting for 21% of car trips at 8.50am on weekdays during school terms.

There are around 25% more elderly people than the national average living in North Somerset. Currently, around 19% of residents are over sixty five years of age compared with a national average of 16%.

The population of North Somerset has more than doubled over the last fifty years. The area has faced considerable development pressure in recent decades, which is likely to continue. It is estimated that the resident population will rise by about 15% by 2018 to around 216,700 (compared to the 2001 Census of around 191,000). In line with all other council services, we will need to ensure that the local rights of way network will, by 2017, be able to meet the demands placed upon it by the expanded population and our visitors.

1.4 What the Plan will do?

This Plan focuses upon local rights of way and public access in the district, how we intend to provide and promote them, and processes we will follow for achieving improvements. It outlines what we think are the actions needed for improvements identified during the assessment stage.

The document also details what actions we and other key partners propose to take for securing these improvements. It will also form a component of the Greater Bristol Joint Local Transport Plan 2011-2025. Integrating the two plans will ensure that the contribution that good access and local rights of way make towards achieving better local transport is fully recognised and incorporated into wider transport planning and supported through appropriate funding.

The Plan will influence decision-making at strategic and practical day-to-day management levels.

It will be used to further:

- inform and guide forward planning and development control and to assist the determination of individual planning proposals (including seeking developer contributions and protecting land that may be needed for future network development)
- ensure that improvements necessary to achieve good access to the countryside are fully supported through wider transport planning and decision making including through walking and cycling strategies with the LTP, and to assist securing appropriate funding for activities
- encourage greater joined-up working, wider community involvement and enhanced partnership working.

The Plan will thus provide a framework for guiding implementation of our policies and activities, and to ensure on-going improvements that better match the availability of resources with the demands of residents and visitors.

1.5 Who have we consulted?

An outline of the process of completing the Plan is given in Appendix B. A key step in this process is consultation (key stage one). We have already consulted widely during the course of preparing this Plan.

We have consulted our colleagues within the council:

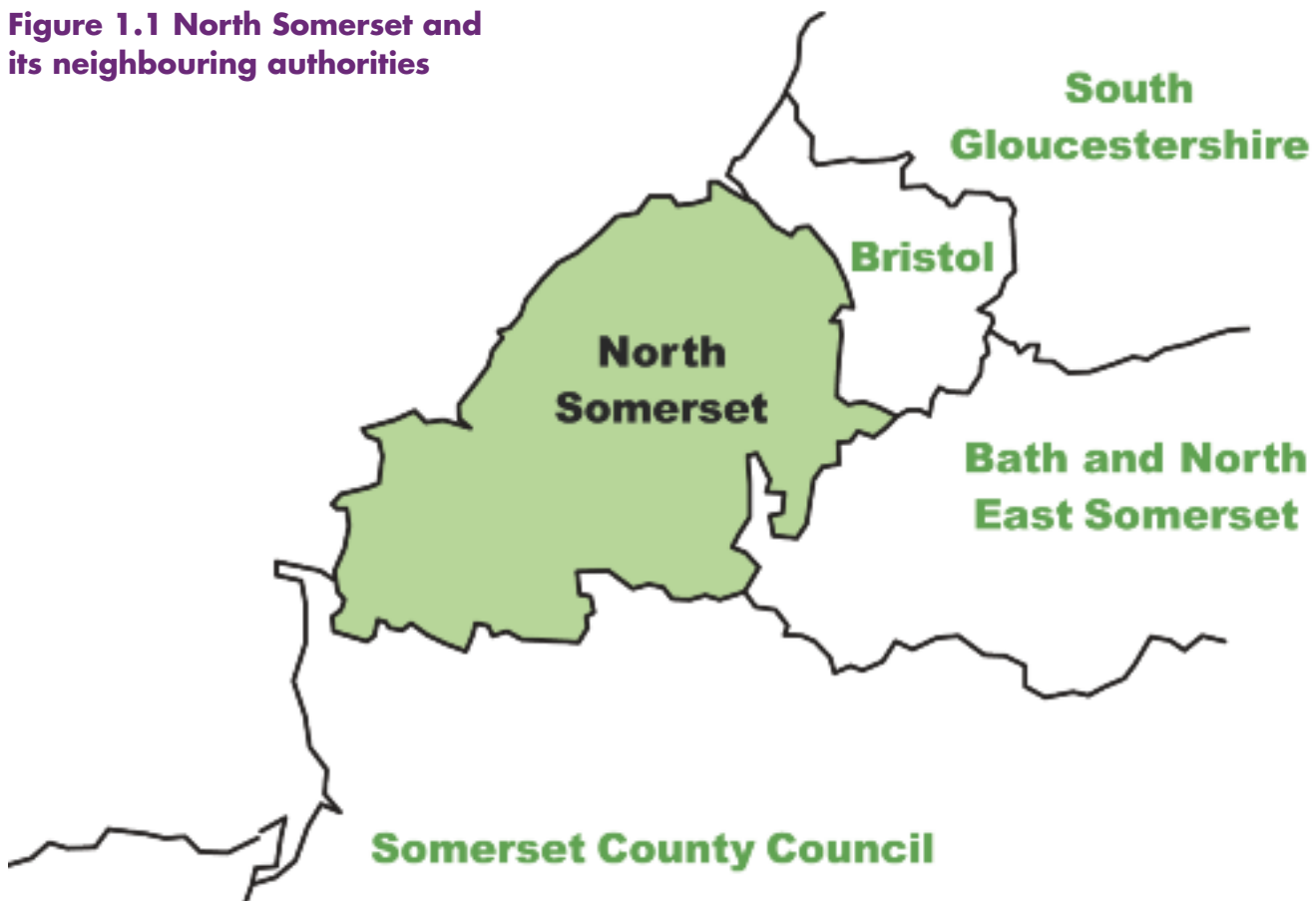
- Access Officer.
- Adult Social Services and Housing.
- Environmental Education Centre (Goblin Combe).
- Education Assets.
- Highways Management.
- Planning and Transport.
- Tourism, Economic Development and Regeneration.

We have also consulted a number of external bodies:

- Avon Wildlife Trust.
- Bath and North East Somerset Council.
- Bristol City Council.
- Bristol Horse Driving Club.
- British Horse Society.
- British Trust for Conservation Volunteers.
- Cyclists Touring Club.
- Disabled Information and Access Line (DIAL⁷).
- Disabled Ramblers Association.
- Forest of Avon Community Forest Team.
- Forestry Commission.
- Local Access Forum (via the RoWIP sub-group).
- Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Team.
- NHS North Somerset (formerly Primary Care Trust).
- National Trust.
- North Somerset Council Rights of Way Sub-Committee.
- Old Somerset Horse Driving Club.
- Ramblers' Association.
- Somerset County Council.
- South Gloucestershire Council.
- Sport England.
- Sustrans.
- Town and Parish Councils within the district.
- Trail Riders Fellowship.
- Woodspring Bridleways Association.

⁷ a glossary of abbreviations and acronyms is given in Appendix C

Figure 1.1 North Somerset and its neighbouring authorities



1.6 Why have we prepared the Plan for North Somerset only?

We have worked with our colleagues in adjacent unitary authorities (Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City Council) and Somerset County Council during this Plan's development. This has helped us formulate similar policies and approaches to assessing and planning improvements to our respective local rights of way. It has enabled us to identify shared needs and common issues across the sub-region. Our work will ensure that our respective Plans follow the same principles, and with due regard to the shared needs and common issues.

Separate Plans are being prepared by Somerset County Council and the remaining West of England Authorities (South Gloucestershire, Bristol City and Bath and North East Somerset). However, we aim to continue to collaborate so that the Plans dovetail.

The development of two plans for the Greater Bristol Area also reflects the existence of two Local Access Forums – one for North Somerset and one for the remaining three West of England unitary authorities. It is intended to periodically update the Plan if needed.

1.7 Key points to carry forward

What we want you to take forward from this section is that:

- the local rights of way network is important for functional reasons (like commuting to school and places of work) as well as for recreation
- improving the local rights of way network has the potential to improve the quality of life in North Somerset
- the area has a varied countryside that should be attractive to residents and visitors alike
- we have followed best practice in preparing the Plan, consistent with what we need it to do.

The rest of the Plan follows a logical, step-by-step process, to identify what we, the council, has to do and what we think our priorities should be.

2 Users and their needs

2.1 Introduction

In this section, we review the types of activities normally associated with local rights of way and identify the needs and preferences of the different types of people who participate in these activities.

North Somerset is a relatively small community and we are in regular contact with local groups and individuals with an active interest in countryside access. We have consulted these stakeholders directly during the preparation of the Plan.

However, much work has been done by other authorities and government agencies. We have drawn on research done in many different parts of the country. The consistency of the findings suggests that it is reasonable to conclude that the needs of residents and visitors to North Somerset will be similar to elsewhere.

2.2 Walkers

Walking is the most popular form of activity associated with the countryside. It is a means of transport in its own right and usually accounts for at least part of journeys made by other means, for example walking to and from the bus, train or car. Walking has health and recreational benefits as well as functional uses and yet many of us do not walk enough to gain these benefits.

Walkers are possibly the most diverse group of users as they include everybody from the very young to the very old and those with a wide range of disabilities.

Those who walk also fall into two distinct groups: Those that walk for practical reasons (for example, getting to work, school or the shops). Those that walk for pleasure, recreation or health.

The latter may also be split down further into groups such as walkers with dogs, casual walkers and ramblers. Nevertheless, even though walkers walk for different reasons, their needs are often comparable.

Research carried out by other authorities whilst preparing for their Rights of Way Improvement Plan has taken an in-depth look at the needs of walkers. This research recognises that there are many categories of walker, each with different needs and preferences, and so some segmentation into sub-groups is desirable. A split of recreational walkers into three sub-groups is probably sufficient to consider the range of needs. Many of the findings are relevant to walkers using our network of local rights of way, although it will not be possible to meet all their needs all the time. The findings from a study by ADAS for Bedfordshire⁸ are typical and are summarised below.

Needs of casual walkers

- Natural looking paths – not smooth, artificial surfaces.
- Variety of surfaces and terrain (but not too muddy).
- Maps and information about routes (so you can choose a route suitable for your ability).
- Paths clear of obstruction.
- Way marking – reassurance you are on the right track.
- Safety
- Some areas with activities for children.
- Benches.
- Safe car parking.
- Wildlife interest/attractive environment.
- No litter, fly tipping.
- No children on bikes.



⁷ a glossary of abbreviations and acronyms is given in Appendix C

Needs of ramblers

- Variety – differing grades, surfaces, scenery.
- Natural surface and environment.
- Not too muddy.
- Adequate signage and way marks.
- Ideally no busy road crossings or at least a safe crossing point.
- Paths not obstructed.
- Furniture and bridges in good repair with gaps or kissing gates instead of stiles.
- Adequate public transport for linear routes.
- Safe and sufficient parking.
- Effective response to complaints.
- Access to Definitive Map as required.

Needs of walkers with dogs

- Sufficient dog bins that are emptied regularly.
- Room for the dog to run off the lead.
- Safe for the dog to run off the lead (for example, no vehicles, other walkers or livestock).
- Controlled undergrowth.
- No stiles or dog gates (as dog gates are only suitable for small dogs).
- Clear and sufficient signage.
- Clear routes across fields.
- Lighting in winter on local routes near to the road.
- Attractive environment (and opportunities for the dog to drink).

Dogs have the potential to cause significant adverse effects on livestock and wildlife if not handled responsibly by their owners. Consequently, there are laws in place to protect against these effects. The laws are complex (and are discussed in outline in Appendix E in the form of Q&A). However, there are two simple guidelines for dog owners to follow to make sure they do not fall foul of the law:

- Clean up after your dog wherever you are (go equipped with plastic bags and dispose of the bags responsibly).
- Keep your dog on a lead unless you are certain that you are allowed to take it off the lead, there are no livestock nearby and your dog is unlikely to disturb wildlife.

In addition, many people use the local rights of way network for functional purposes like going to school and work. In its national study, Entec⁹ found that:

- a third of households had at least one member who walked or cycled on at least part of their journey to work
- around one sixth of households had children who walked or cycled to school
- three-quarters of households had at least one member who regularly walked or cycled at least part of their journey to local shops and amenities.

However, these utilitarian journeys make use mainly of roads, footways and cycletracks rather than public rights of way. Nevertheless, if local rights of way were able to meet the needs of these walkers (and cyclists), there is a large 'market potential'. Utilitarian users are likely to need:

- good route surfaces
- routes that are safe to use (not sharing with traffic, safe road crossings, possibly lighting along some sections)
- good linkages with key destinations (schools, retail outlets, major employment areas).

These findings were broadly echoed in the consultations undertaken during the preparation of our Plan. In particular:

Safety

Walkers, cyclists and horse riders are the most vulnerable users of roads used by vehicular traffic, especially the very young and the elderly for whom busy roads are a particular hazard.

Information

Although there is some published information promoting routes, it was generally felt that more paths and bridleways needed to be publicised/promoted locally as leisure walks. Also, improved signposting and way marking routes was felt important to give walkers confidence that they were on the right track.

Physical improvements

Concerns were raised about vegetation blocking paths at ground level and also of wet and muddy paths in winter making it difficult to walk. Path furniture was also cited as a problem and some found certain stiles too difficult to use. Blocked and ploughed out paths were also concerns.

⁹ reviewed by Hickey in 2003 (www.iprow.co.uk/docs/uploads/reviseuse.demand.pdf)

2.3 Cyclists

Although cycling only accounts for around 2% of all journeys, cycle sales have been buoyant for a number of years and the use of local and national cycle routes continues to rise. There is great potential to encourage people to cycle more often by making the public rights of way network more accessible by bicycle.

Many people use bicycles to get to and from work or school, or for other utilitarian journeys like going to the shops or to access other services. In fact, these uses may account for the majority of journeys made on bicycles (see above). There are also many people who use cycles for recreational reasons. According to research for the Rights of Way Law Review, off-road cyclists can be placed in several categories, each with its own needs:

- Family groups, who need the security of knowing that they are unlikely to get lost or meet major difficulties (for example, steep hills, busy roads) and need only be around five miles in length.
- Casual or occasional cyclists, who have similar needs to family groups.
- More adventurous riders, who are usually more map literate and so will probably venture onto the local rights of way network and tend to be more accepting of the variable conditions they will find.
- Serious enthusiasts, whose key need, according to the CTC, is a route of up to five hours' duration, over terrain suited to their interest.

Cyclists need off-road routes with safe crossing points where a route crosses a busy road. Where a route utilises roads, cyclists are most concerned about the speed of motorists and their attitude, particularly toward children and novice cyclists. It is important that off road routes are:

- free from obstruction and other obstacles like gates and livestock
- not overgrown with vegetation such as brambles and nettles
- well signposted
- surfaced so as to be generally level and free from pot holes. They should also be well drained, preferably with a compacted stone surface (tarmac is preferred where the route may be used by long distance road cyclists or commuters)
- wide enough to share with other users such as walkers and horse riders



- accessible to all cycles including, for example, those with child trailers or tandems.

2.4 Horse riders and carriage driving

A survey undertaken by the British Equestrian Trades Association¹⁰ reveals that 'the number of horses in Britain, including those kept by private owners and in professional establishments, has reached 1.35 million. They are owned or cared for by 720,000 people, or 1.2% of the UK population.'

The study shows that around 2.1 million people ride at least once a month, with a further 2.2 million having done so during the last year, making a total of 4.3 million participants. The previous estimate was that 2.4 million people had ridden during the last 12 months. Leisure riding remains the most important single type of riding, up by 5% since the last survey (1999).

Sheffield Hallam University analysed information about horse riding in the UK when assisting Hampshire to develop its Plan¹¹.

¹⁰ www.beta-uk.org/

¹¹ www.iprow.co.uk/docs/uploads/forest.of.eversley.draft.plan.pdf

Research by rural resources for Shropshire County Council¹² revealed that horse riders, like walkers and cyclists, need off road routes and safe crossing points where a route crosses a busy road.

Those interviewed said how important it is that these off road routes are:

- free from obstruction and other obstacles (mentioning difficult gates, electric fencing, dogs, bulls, cows and other horses)
- not overgrown with vegetation such as brambles and nettles (or have overhanging branches and low trees)
- well signposted and way marked.

Horse riders need surfaces to be generally level and preferably free from pot holes. They should also be well drained to prevent poaching, preferably with a natural surface (not tarmac or concrete).

Riders who use roads are most concerned about the speed of motorists and their attitude to riders. Slippery road surfaces and narrow verges are also of concern, although many riders prefer to ride on the carriageway rather than the verge, as verges are often uneven and hide litter which can spook horses into traffic. Also by riding on the road, vehicles are often forced to slow down in order to pass. Routes of at least five miles long are the most useful, preferably providing rides of around two to three hours in duration.



There are a number of liverys, as well as equine related businesses in the area and there are eight horse riding schools listed in the Yellow Pages for North Somerset. Like walkers and cyclists, horse riders are vulnerable when using trafficked roads. Indeed, they could be considered more vulnerable than other users due to the sometimes unpredictable nature of their mounts. Young and inexperienced riders are at particular risk. The bridleway network is limited and is fragmented with many routes being severed by main roads.



Another equestrian activity that is practiced on public rights of way is the driving of horse-drawn carriages. The number of people who take part in carriage driving is relatively small but is growing, according to the British Driving Society. Evidence of their needs is limited but Sheffield Hallam and Rural Resources both considered their needs in the course of their respective studies. In short, the needs of carriage drivers are similar to those of horse riders, plus:

- adequate parking for manoeuvring carriages and horses
- an area close to a car park to tack up horse and harness horse to carriage
- long distance routes with gates wide enough to allow the carriage to pass through
- absence of blocking vegetation.

Many authorities develop specific strategies to guide developments for equestrians.

¹² www.iprow.co.uk/docs/uploads/salop.horse.and.cycle.study.pdf

2.5 Drivers of motor vehicles

Recreational off road driving/motorcycling is generally carried out within a rural environment, where drivers can experience the challenge of more difficult terrain than offered by surfaced roads. The national rights of way use and demand survey by Entec in 2001¹³ suggests that 4% of households undertake off road driving of some description, but it is recognised that some of this use may be on private land, or other open land, and paths and tracks that are not recorded as rights of way.

The public has a right to drive motor vehicles on byways open to all traffic (BOATs). A detailed study of use of BOATs by motor vehicle drivers, undertaken by Faber Maunsell, showed that the large majority of BOATs are well-maintained and are not problematic. However, where problems do exist, these can be contentious. North Somerset only has one BOAT at present, although off-road use of this does give rise to complaints.

There is some illegal use, which could suggest an unmet latent demand for off-road routes (although it may mean that some people don't want to 'play by the rules'). This illegal access on footpaths and bridleways causes significant concern amongst landowners and legitimate users but is difficult to control. Standard access controls designed to prevent unlawful use also tend to cause problems for legitimate users, especially horse riders on bridleways, and users with mobility problems on all routes.

Like other users, off road drivers need a connected network of routes that are free from obstruction. Research carried out by Faber Maunsell¹⁴ on behalf of Nottinghamshire County Council suggests that recreational drivers are happy to share routes with other users. However, some recreational drivers prefer challenging terrain, which may conflict with the needs and preferences of other rights of way users who require a different surface and regard motor vehicles as disturbing their quiet enjoyment of the countryside.

Another study by Faber Maunsell¹⁵ (this one for Defra) asked a range of organisations that represent off-road motor vehicle drivers what they sought from routes. Each group made a similar response but they embraced the following points:

- Unsurfaced routes that are 'different' from ordinary roads (LARA).

- Routes that are free from obstructions and conflict with other users (All Wheel Drive Club).
- Good surface, free from obstructing vegetation, preferably with some character and history (Trail Riders Fellowship).
- Challenging natural gradient and surface (Association of Classic Trials Clubs).
- Reasonable length and interesting topography (Association of Rover Clubs).
- Routes that are not damaged by light vehicle use (Green Lane Association).

2.6 Impaired users

As a local authority, we have a number of obligations towards people with mobility difficulties and sight problems:

- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires us to ensure that the needs of these groups are taken into account in our Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
- The Disability Discrimination Acts (DDA) of 1995 and 2005 (replaced by the Equality Act 2010) mean we have to ensure we make reasonable provision for the disabled when providing services and carrying out our functions. The Disability Rights Commission holds that public rights of way are a service under the terms of the Act and this view seems to be echoed by Natural England (see Box 2.1 below). However, there is some uncertainty over how the law applies in relation to public rights of way (as distinct from the associated facilities and furniture) and the question has not yet been tested in the courts.

Box 2.1 Does DDA 1995 (as replaced by the Equality Act 2010) apply to Public Rights of Way?

'The DDA 1995 affects all those responsible for providing access to the countryside as 'service providers'...it covers the whole range of countryside services including guided walks, events, visitor centres, information, interpretation, signage, paths and trails and so on. The Act also covers everyone involved in providing a service to the public, including volunteers.'

Source: By All Reasonable Means (page nine) (Countryside Agency 2005)

¹³ reviewed by Hickey in 2003 (www.iprow.co.uk/docs/uploads/reviseduse.demand.pdf)

¹⁴ www.iprow.co.uk/docs/uploads/nottinghamshire.vehicle.users.final.report.pdf

¹⁵ www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/cl/mpv/pdf/researchrep-veh.pdf

We are reminded by the Diversity Review¹⁶ of our responsibilities towards meeting the needs of 'hard-to-reach' groups, such as all those people with disabilities - not just with mobility and/or visual impairments. We have embodied the requirements in our draft Policy NSC19 (Access to the Countryside), which is reproduced in Appendix D.

It is important to remember that mobility can be restricted by stiffened joints, pushing a pram or short term health conditions, and restrictions are not limited

to disabled people. So, people with mobility and visual impairments have needs and aspirations as diverse as any but are more likely to be excluded unintentionally. We need to be sensitive to these aspirations at a local level. For example, cycling and horse riding can increase access for people with limited mobility. Care is needed to ensure that easy to use gates remain stockproof. Research for the City of York¹⁷ identified the key needs of people with mobility difficulties (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: needs of people with disabilities

Wheelchair users need:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Signs at eye level. ● Gates which are easy to open and close. ● Catches which are easy to reach and operate. ● Minimum crossfall on paths or even cambers. ● Space on car parks to transfer from their car to their chair. ● Spaces to sit next to companions at seats and accessible picnic tables. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accessible toilets. ● Space to pass other path users. ● Views unrestricted by handrails or walls. ● Space to turn corners. ● Hand rails at appropriate heights. ● Minimum gradients on all paths. ● Surfaces which are firm, level and non-slip. ● Level space next to ramps or gates.
People with walking difficulties or dexterity/balance problems need:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Level, even surfaces on paths. ● Easy to negotiate stiles and gates. ● Steps with handrails and even treads and risers. ● Gates that are not heavy and catches that are easy to operate. ● Seats that are easy to rise from. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Passing places on paths. ● Minimum gaps in the path surface. ● Resting places at regular intervals. ● Minimum gradients along and across paths. ● Horseriders need places to mount and dismount, plus easy catches on bridlegates.
Visually impaired people need:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Space to pass other path users. ● Warning of hazards at head height. ● Clear edges to paths. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Even path surfaces. ● Even and clearly marked steps. ● Easy to use catches on gates.

Source: Hosker et al (2003) www.iprow.co.uk/docs/uploads/York.ROWIP.accessibility.pilot.report.RH.pdf

Disabled ramblers can sometimes be provided with portable toilets for organised walks, which greatly expands the network available for their use, although this is not without logistical and financial challenges. Disability issues are not just confined to users who walk. Horse riding, cycling and motor vehicles can greatly increase accessibility for mobility impaired users, although this can sometimes be overlooked. In addition, the levels of challenge and capability can vary greatly as much within people with mobility and visual impairments as any other group of users.



¹⁶ <http://naturalengland.twoten.com/naturalenglandshop/docs/CRN94.pdf> and <http://naturalengland.twoten.com/naturalenglandshop/docs/CRN95.pdf>

¹⁷ See: <http://www.iprow.co.uk/docs/uploads/York.ROWIP.accessibility.pilot.report.RH.pdf>

A recurring theme amongst people with mobility and sight problems is the need for information that will enable them to judge the challenges of a route against their own capabilities. These groups need particularly good information about accessibility such as locations of gates, gradients, surfaces and supporting facilities such as toilets. Disabled horse riders need other facilities such as hitching rails, places to mount and dismount, catches that can be operated without dismounting, and bridleways wide enough to allow unconfident riders to pass safely, and perhaps to allow one horse to be led from another - these are also welcomed by the majority of disabled users. Increasing accessibility can be as much about increasing awareness, confidence and links with transportation, as physical improvements to path surfaces and furniture.

2.7 Attracting new users

Not everyone makes use of the local rights of way network. It is important to understand why this is and whether there are barriers that can be overcome. Entec's national survey¹⁸ showed that within 44% of households, no one undertook any activity in the countryside. The main reasons given among non-users for this lack of use were:

- Not enough information (58%)
- Routes badly signposted (51%)
- Routes in a poor state (58%)
- I feel unsafe (44%)
- Not enough routes (45%)
- Health problems (16%)
- Old age (13%)
- Not interested (12%)

¹⁸ reviewed by Hickey 2003

(www.iprow.co.uk/docs/uploads/reviseuse.demand.pdf)

As can be seen, the reasons people do not use local rights of way are very varied. Some people are just not interested and never will be. Others may be interested but do not have enough free time. The lack of information and a related lack of confidence seem to be the main factors in discouraging wider use of the network.

It is reasonable to suppose that there are those who could become users given the right information on what opportunities are available, whether this means more signposts on the ground or leaflets in tourist offices, at libraries or on websites. For their interest to be maintained, routes they are encouraged to use

should be well-way marked and easy to follow (even in urban areas), so that new users gain confidence.

Children merit particular attention and education about the countryside and ways of gaining access to it will not only be beneficial but could stimulate interest. There are opportunities to work with the Children's Services Department to add appropriate material to curricula and with citizenship learning.

Another section of society that does not make good use of the public rights of way network is the ethnic minorities. Natural England and the Black Environmental Network found that the main barriers to use are (not in any priority order):

● **Lack of cultural habit**

Stories of racial abuse circulate and entrench the fears that keep people from ethnic communities at home.

● **Lack of knowledge**

There may be no pool of knowledge about where to go and what to do when out in the countryside. Fear of trespassing is a barrier, too. They are also not sure how local people will react to them.

● **Cost of visiting the countryside**

The costs of transport, food, accommodation, visiting tourist sights and activities may be too high for many people, especially as many like to visit with family and friends.

● **Transport**

Many people from the ethnic minorities live in urban areas and may be less likely to have a car. Using public transport to travel to the countryside may be just too big a step to take, given that it is travel into the unknown, and there will be stress in travelling long distances to seemingly remote places.

● **Different patterns of use (of the countryside)**

The ethnic minority groups often prefer to spend their leisure time with relatives and friends. Research shows that family picnics and barbeques were popular and there was a preference for managed sites which offer facilities and structured activities.

● Lack of culturally appropriate provisions

For some groups, the countryside does not cater for their basic cultural or religious needs such as appropriate food and praying facilities. BEN found that there may be a difficulty where women-only groups are expected to have male drivers or organisers.

● Dogs

There is a reluctance amongst some Muslims to put themselves in situations where they may encounter dogs. The countryside, and particularly organised events in the countryside, may be viewed as such a situation and so would be avoided. We need to be mindful of these particular barriers in our work and do what we can to remove them.

2.8 Landowners

Although not normally seen as 'users' of the network, many public rights of way cross fields or follow tracks used by farmers and property owners. Increasingly, they see the demand for access as an opportunity – whether to build permissive access into an agri-environment scheme application or as a potential diversification opportunity.

Landowners also have certain responsibilities towards the network and so are critical to delivery of a good network. Yet, landowners in general, and farmers in particular, are subject to lots of other pressures, including falling incomes, new regulations and changes to their ways of working resulting from these pressures. Network users do not always appreciate why farmers manage the land in the way they do, and there is a need to improve their understanding as this will often improve their enjoyment. Feedback from our research shows that farmers and landowners want network users to:



- be more fully aware of why they manage their land in the way they do
- be aware of where they can and cannot go when crossing land, through clear signing, way marking and education
- be aware of the risks posed by dogs to their livestock caused by irresponsible dog owners, both through stock worrying and spread of disease
- appreciate landowners' contributions to delivery of a good access network and a beautiful and biologically diverse countryside.

As key stakeholders, landowners want to be consulted over changes to the network that will affect them. We need to make sure that we take the opportunity to raise awareness in relevant material that we produce.

2.9 Key points to carry forward

What we want you to take forward from this section is that:

- there are many different needs to try to satisfy
- walkers are a composite of different types, each with its own needs and preferences and it will be difficult to meet all these at all points of the network
- cyclists, horse riders and drivers of horse drawn carriages are keen to have continuity of safe routes with minimum necessity for use of busy main roads
- motor vehicle drivers are looking for interesting and challenging off-road routes that can be used without adverse effects (for example, appropriately surfaced, not obstructed, without conflict)
- mobility and visually impaired users have very diverse needs but much can be achieved by improving the information made available to them
- a significant proportion of the residents and visitors make little or no use of the access opportunities available, and so represent a huge potential source of extra usage
- landowners and farmers are key players in delivering a functional network and are keen to see network users made more aware of countryside matters.

Having looked at the needs and preferences of the different types of user, the next section looks at what is currently available within North Somerset.

3 Current provision for access to the countryside

3.1 Introduction

In this section, we review the extent, type and quality of provision for access on local rights of way and other forms of public access within North Somerset.

3.2 The local rights of way network

3.2.1 Length available

The public rights of way network is recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement, which is a legal document maintained by the council.

There are approximately 826km of recorded public rights of way in North Somerset:

- 704km definitive footpath
- 85km definitive bridleway
- 37km definitive restricted byway¹⁹
- 0.7km definitive byway open to all traffic (BOAT).

This means that only just under 15% of the network is available to horse riders and cyclists and a tiny proportion to drivers of motor vehicles²⁰. The distribution of public rights of way across North Somerset recorded on the Definitive Map is shown in Figure 3.1. However, the recording of a route on the Definitive Map does not guarantee that the route is easy to use by those entitled to use it, and we discuss the quality of our local rights of way below.

We also have powers to introduce a Traffic Regulation Order on public rights of way to prohibit its use by any class of user, where we feel that this is necessary and meets the relevant legal tests. However, we only use this power when all else has failed, and there are no such orders in operation at present in North Somerset.



There are 157km of on-road and off-road (adopted highway) cycle routes. The flagship Strawberry Line Heritage Trail provides 11km of off-road route within North Somerset and links to Axbridge and Cheddar. The Strawberry Line Heritage Trail can be accessed directly from the mainline station at Yatton. Its status is a permissive footpath and cycleway route (although consideration could be given to making all or at least part of it available for horse riding as well).

The network of cycle routes in North Somerset sits within a much wider regional and national network of routes, mainly developed by Sustrans. Figure 3.2 shows open and proposed routes for North Somerset. The availability of this wider network enhances the value of local routes which link to it. However, more needs to be done to secure the network for the future by establishing and recording rights where appropriate.

3.2.2 Coverage and connectivity

A listing of the length of route available by type masks the fact that the network is fragmented in many parts, and severed by roads, often busy ones. Further, the density of the network varies, with some areas relatively well served by routes and others with very few or none. Although gaps in the footpath network are relatively few, this is not the case for bridleways. An analysis of bridleway coverage undertaken in

¹⁹ note: prior to the coming into force of S47 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, these routes were known as Roads Used as Public Paths (RUPPs). The public has a right to use restricted byways for walking, cycling, horse riding and driving of non-motorised vehicles.

²⁰ for the purposes of the Road Traffic Act 1988, use of a powered mobility vehicle on a public right of way is not a criminal offence (by virtue of S20 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970).

2000²¹ found the results 'very startling and profound'. The main gaps observed are:

- In the North of the Council's area, around the areas South of Portishead and Easton-In- Gordano.
- The area between Nailsea and Failand.
- The area around Long Ashton.
- The area between Blagdon, Wrington and Felton.
- The area East of Cleeve and Congresbury, North East of Yatton and North of Churchill.
- The area between Banwell and Weston-super-Mare.
- The area North of Weston-super-Mare.

- The area South East of Weston-super-Mare to Winscombe.
- The area between Portishead and Nailsea.

However, the report acknowledges that there may be linkages and routes regularly used by horse riders and cyclists that are not shown on the Definitive Map as public rights of way. Lengths of restricted byways and byways open to all traffic, particularly the latter, are of limited length and very fragmented.

3.2.3 Condition of the network

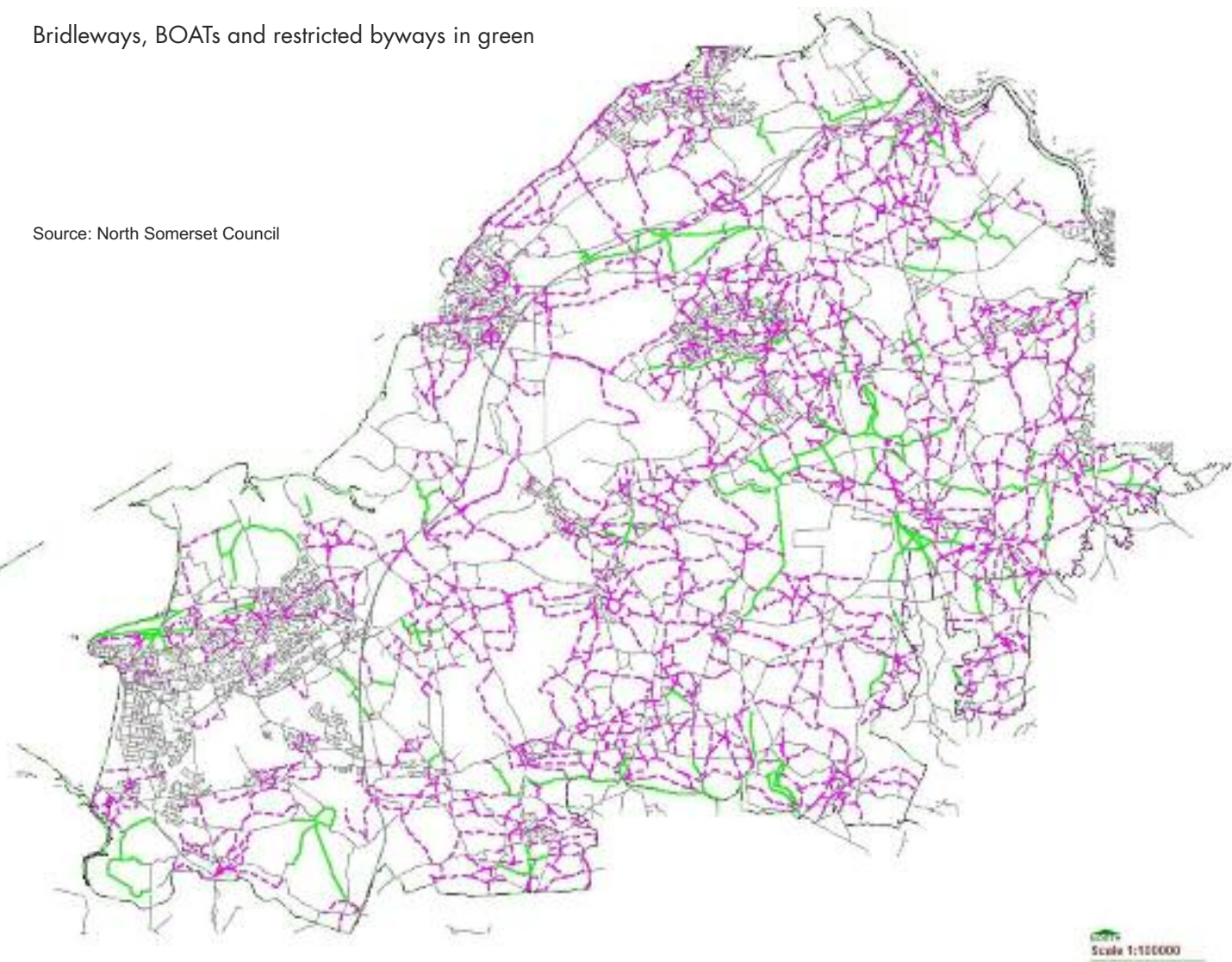
Figure 3.1 Distribution of public rights of way in North Somerset

Road centre lines in grey

Public footpaths in purple

Bridleways, BOATs and restricted byways in green

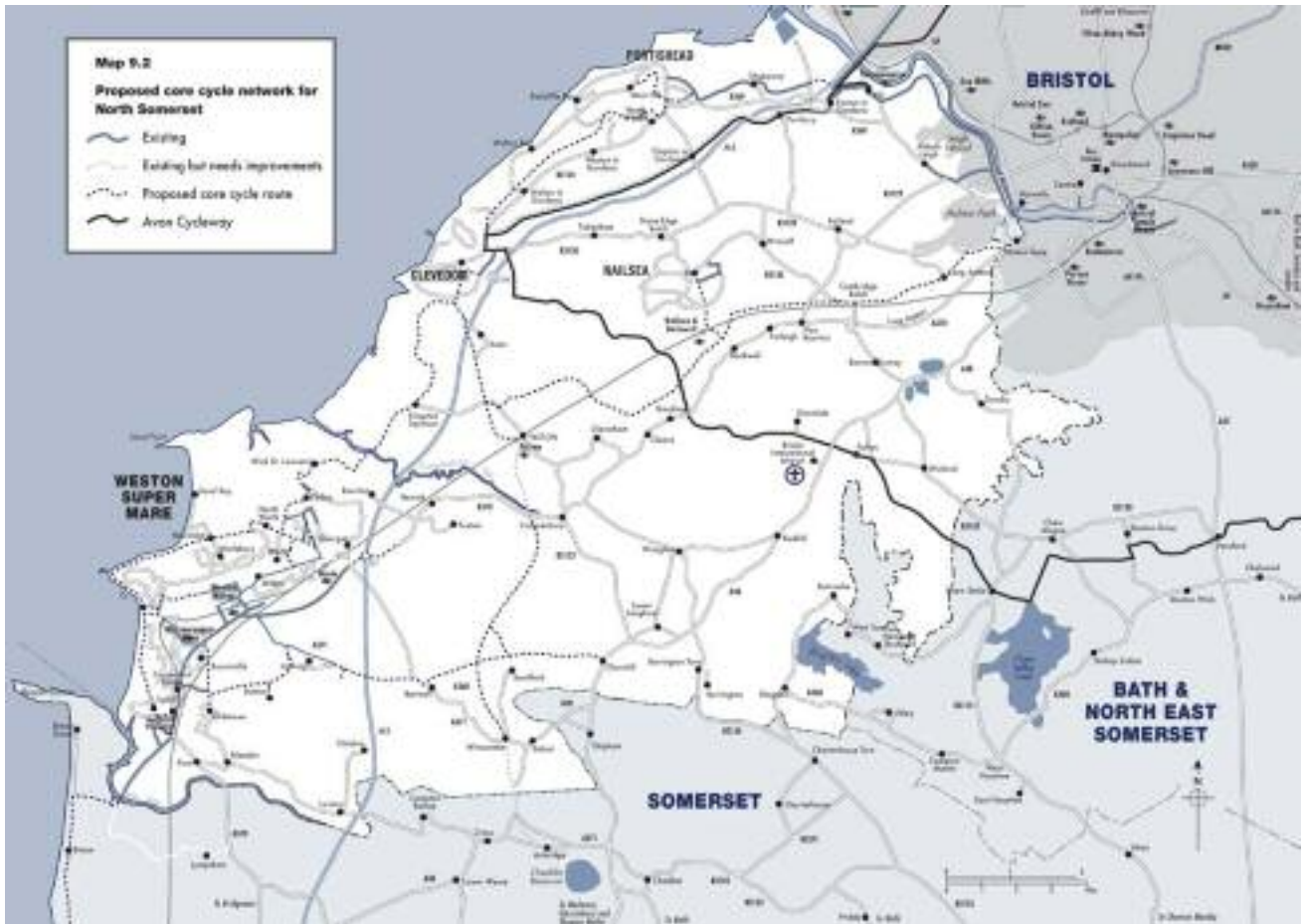
Source: North Somerset Council



21 Collins, A 2000. Improving the public bridleways network within North Somerset, NSC

Figure 3.2: Open and proposed NCN routes in the North Somerset Area

Source: North Somerset Council Replacement Local Plan 2007



To be of most value, local rights of way need to be:

- legally defined
- properly maintained
- well publicised.

As a highway authority, our performance is judged against these criteria. So, how are we doing?

Legally defined – our legal obligations

All public rights of way are required by law to be recorded on a Definitive Map and we are required to keep it under continuous review. This means ensuring that the legal records are kept up to date and reflect the situation on the ground. North Somerset's Definitive Map has not been updated since it was first produced and has a 'relevant date' of 1956. However what is known as the 'working copy' is updated to reflect changes in recorded legal status achieved by dedications, Modification or Public Path orders. The network is not static and evolves for a variety of reasons, such as when new roads are constructed or

buildings developed. But, for the network to be changed, certain tests have to be satisfied to protect everyone's interests. Every time a public right of way is created, permanently closed or diverted, we have to follow a procedure set out in law. The orders we make to bring about these changes to the network are often referred to as Public Path Orders (PPOs).

We also have a duty to correct the Definitive Map if it is shown to be wrong in any way. For example, if an unrecorded path is discovered, it must be added to the Definitive Map. Another common error is for a recorded route to have been recorded with the wrong status (for example, a footpath may, in reality, be a bridleway). The process does not actually create or extinguish any public rights, it only ensures that the legally-definitive record accurately reflects the correct situation.

Anyone can apply for a change to the Definitive Map if they believe it to be wrong. Where we find that an



error has occurred (for example, an unrecorded route is discovered), we must correct the map but the process is lengthy and complex, involving much historical research and gathering of evidence to support the claims. The outcome is often contentious and in many instances leads to a Public Inquiry or Hearing.

In July 2006, there were 78 outstanding applications made by the public to alter the Definitive Map, either to add routes that are not yet recorded, or to change the status of recorded routes because it is believed that their status may have been recorded incorrectly. The claims are for:

- Byway Open to All Traffic (49)
- Either Byway Open to All Traffic or Bridleway (4)
- Bridleway (12)
- Footpath (13)

Of the 49 applications for Byways, 27 were received after the cut-off date introduced by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (20 January 2005). These may no longer be assessed as byway claims, but the claims will continue to be investigated and may be found to carry restricted byway or bridleway rights. Any more byway claims we receive will be progressed in the same way.

Making these Orders is estimated to cost between £5,000 and £9,000 each. We expect there will be objections to the majority of the applications so far received, which (if not withdrawn) will result in a Public Inquiry or Hearing. However, the officer time

available is limited and progress is expected to be slow. With current resources, we expect to deal with an average of 3-4 Definitive Map Modification Orders and an average of 6-8 Public Path Orders each year.

Properly maintained – our legal obligations

We have a duty to ensure that all public rights of way are properly maintained. Our maintenance standards are described in our Streets and Open Spaces Service Standards document²². Implicit within these standards are that routes should be appropriately signed and way marked, and be properly 'policed'. But, the exact level and nature of maintenance is not specified.

One exception is the specific requirement to ensure that all rights of way are properly signposted where they abut against tarmaced roads.

An assessment was carried out twice each year (November and May) along a randomly selected 5% of the network, using a nationally-approved survey method. This gave a 'snap shot' of the condition of the network, although research²³ suggests that it is better considered as an indicator of our compliance with our statutory duties over public rights of way.

Currently, 72.1% of the footpaths, bridleways and byways in North Somerset meet the required standard as measured by this method, compared to 71% for England as a whole. Our current target is 80.0%, so this is an area where we need to make improvements.

Town and parish councils are key players because they have good local knowledge, powers to undertake maintenance of footpaths and bridleways in their areas and are able to raise funds through a precept on the rates, should they so wish. Each parish/town has one of our officers linked with it, and the NS LAF operates a 'buddy' system, in which each parish is buddied with a LAF member. We are keen to work more closely with the councils and the LAF to ensure our efforts are co-ordinated for maximum beneficial effect.

Landowners and farmers also have responsibilities. The law sets out their responsibilities with regard to

22 See: http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/E7D47449-FB90-4616-AB78-7D6A856AE00F/0/Strategy_Streets_and_open_spaces_Service_Standards_2006.pdf

23 For more discussion on monitoring of public rights of way and BVPI 178 in particular, see: http://www.countryside.gov.uk/Images/DGdoc_tcm2-28078.pdf

ploughing and cropping²⁴, and we have a duty and powers to ensure they are complied with.

In 2005, the suite of agricultural subsidy schemes was replaced by a new scheme (the Single Payment), and claimants have to comply with rights of way legislation (as well as many other things) in order to be eligible for the subsidy. Failure to comply could result in financial penalties being applied. In addition, the latest agri-environment scheme (the Environmental Stewardship Scheme) places similar obligations on participants in respect of keeping rights of way in good order, with penalties if this is not done.

Landowners are responsible for the maintenance of stiles, gates and hedges that cross or run alongside public rights of way. Our maintenance team works with landowners to ensure that these structures are safe and convenient to use as far as is reasonable. We are legally required to contribute at least 25% of the cost of these structures if asked by the landowner and so we sometimes offer to replace stiles and gates free of charge, especially as this ensures they are constructed and maintained to a satisfactory standard. Even so, we still carry the bulk of the maintenance responsibility and, with the limited budget available, it is not always possible to maintain all paths to the standard we would like and which the public expect.

Representatives of users tell us that common problems encountered on public rights of way in North Somerset are:

- poor way marking and signing
- gates and stiles that are badly maintained (some of which may exist without the correct lawful authority)
- un-official diversions
- recorded routes that cannot be traced on the ground
- obstructions.

Some respondents to the draft Plan have suggested that a formal inspection programme and enforcement procedure needs to be developed to ensure that these problems are identified and dealt with. An enforcement procedure has now been put in place, even so, ensuring that these problems are tackled more effectively will require concerted effort by all stakeholders.

Well publicised

²⁴ Rights of Way Act 1990



We do not have a statutory obligation to promote local rights of way but we think it is important that people know about them and the opportunities they provide. We currently produce a range of publications that promote routes in North Somerset. For example, Weston-super-Mare's Tourist Information Centre carried stocks of over 40 walking and cycling leaflets.

Examples include:

- Avon Cycleway Map
- Avon Timberland Trail
- Guided Walks in and around the Forest of Avon
- North Somerset Cycle Map
- Cycling in Somerset
- Mendip Hills AONB Bus Walks
- The Strawberry Line – for Walkers and Cyclists
- Family Explorer
- Walking, Riding and Cycling Routes in Somerset
- Town Trail (four options)

A number of the routes are promoted as access trails including the Strawberry Line Heritage Trail, River Avon Trail, Avon Timberland Trail, Two Rivers Way and Mendip Way.

We publicise other aspects of highway use on our website, covering issues like:

- travel to school
- public transport
- cycling.

3.3 Permissive routes and areas

Landowners can, if they



wish, give permission for public access along paths and tracks which cross their land. These are called permissive routes (sometimes referred to as 'concessionary routes'). On permissive routes, it is generally the landowner who is responsible for maintenance and safety of users unless agreed otherwise.

Farmers can seek to provide access through an agreement with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) under an incentive scheme. There are currently six such linear routes in North Somerset listed on the Defra Country Walks website²⁵ (four footpaths and two bridleways, totaling 9.1km, of which 1.5km is bridleway - there are area-wide agreements too, see below).

More permissive routes are expected to become available under the Higher Level Scheme, although

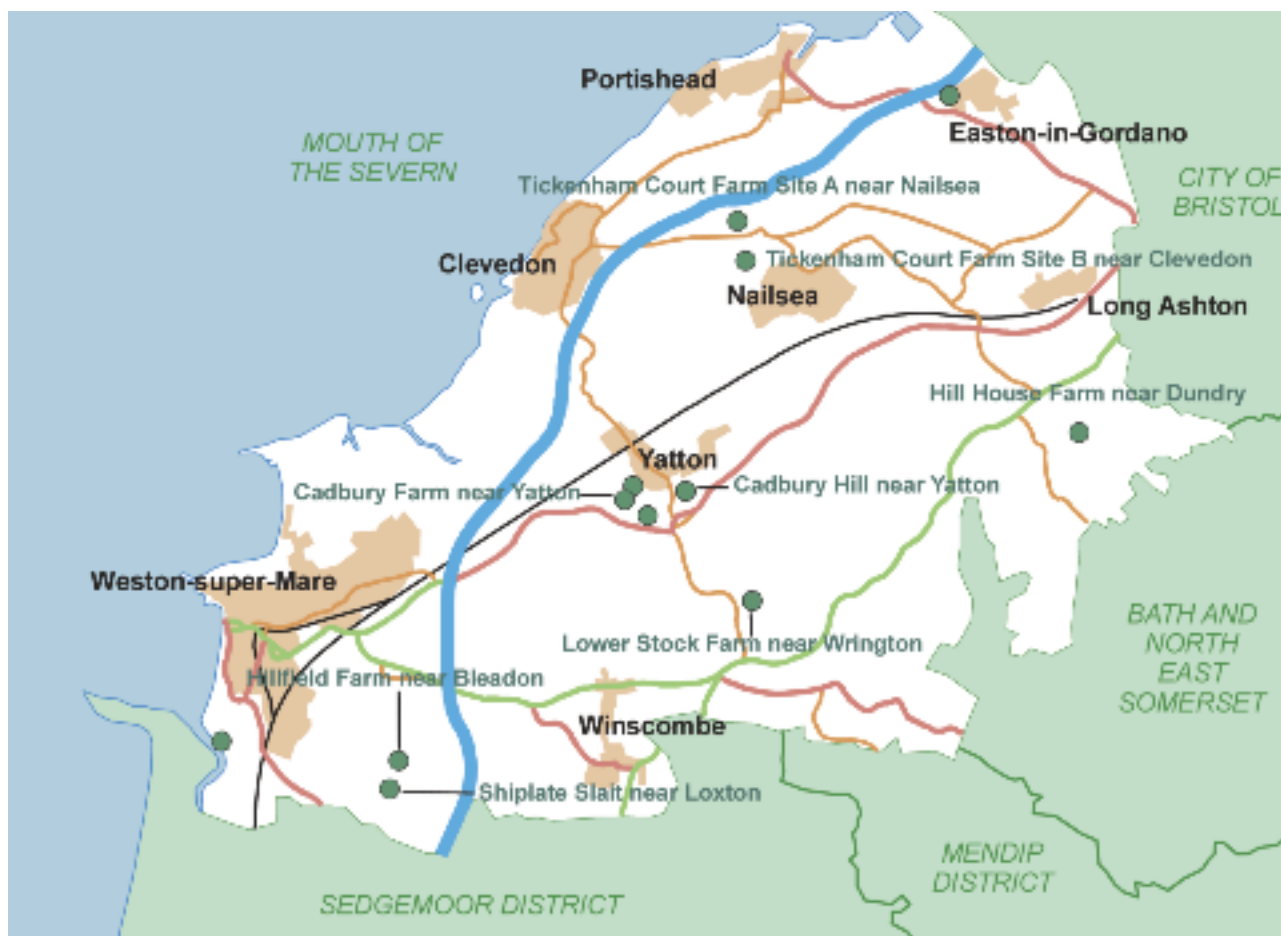
scheme funding is limited. Agreements generally last for ten years and, while the agreement lasts, the access created can be used just like their rights of way equivalent.

Farmers can also provide area-wide permissive access under an agreement with Defra. In North Somerset, there are four such agreements listed on the Defra Country Walks website, totalling at least 35ha (including the important site of Cadbury Hill).

Permissive access routes and areas recorded on the Defra Country Walks website are shown in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3: Defra Country Walks

Source: map based on Defra Country Walks website: <http://countrywalks.defra.gov.uk>
 © Crown copyright. North Somerset Council 100023397 2007



²⁵ <http://countrywalks.defra.gov.uk/>

Figure 3.4: Areas of Access Land

Source: North Somerset Council © Crown copyright. North Somerset Council 100023397 2007



3.4 Areas of countryside with public access

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 (Part I) created a right of public access on foot for informal recreation to areas of 'mountain, moor, heath, down and registered common land.' Users can be accompanied by dogs, subject to a variety of restrictions. This land (referred to as Access Land) is recorded on maps of Access Land prepared by the then Countryside Agency (<http://www.openaccess.gov.uk/>).

The CROW Act also provides a means by which landowners can dedicate land for public access, and the Forestry Commission has used this mechanism over virtually all its owned estates in England and Wales. Figure 3.4 shows the location of Access Land in North Somerset.

Public access is available to other areas of land by permission or tolerance of the landowner, such as:

- some of the land that we own, public parks and open spaces (such as Ashcombe Park, Poet's Walk)
- some of the National Trust's land (such as at Middle Hope)
- some other areas (for example, Weston Woods).

Access Land and some other types of land to which the public has area-wide access is shown on Ordnance Survey maps (Explorer series 1:25,000 scale) as a pale yellow wash within an orangey-brown border, and lime green wash where the Access Land is woodland (such as forests dedicated by the Forestry Commission). Some types of land accessible to the public (for example, the National Trust land) are shown on Ordnance Survey maps (Landranger series, 1:50,000 scale) denoted by a thick purple line.

3.5 Access for all routes

These are routes that are easy to use and which are free of obstructions such as stiles, steps and narrow bridges so that they can be used by virtually anyone, even those with mobility impairments.

In North Somerset, there are three promoted routes:

- The Strawberry Line.
- Uphill Local Nature Reserve.
- Weston Woods.

3.6 Road and rail

Quiet rural and urban roads form an important part of the access network, forming important links in the off-road network, particularly for cyclists, horse riders and carriage drivers. Roadside verges, where these are part of the highway and can be used safely, are particularly valuable for horse riders. However, in many cases, horse riders are reluctant to use such verges as experience has taught them that vehicle drivers tend to wrongly assume that there is then no need for them to slow down whilst passing. Verges can also be heavily vegetated and this masks uneven surfaces and litter.

North Somerset is relatively well served by rail connections with stations at Nailsea and Backwell, Yatton, Worle, Weston Milton, and Weston-super-Mare. This provides access to the rural area from Weston-super-Mare and can help users from Bristol visiting North Somerset.

3.7 Key points to carry forward

What we want you to take forward from this section is that:

- despite the district's relatively small size, it has an array of opportunities for the public to enjoy on foot, cycle or horse-back
- the opportunities for walkers are reasonably well distributed around the area, meaning that most people have ready access to the countryside and within urban areas
- the network available for use by cyclists, horse riders and drivers of horse-drawn carriages is small and fragmented, meaning that continuity on many routes can, at present, only be achieved by use of lanes and roads
- there is little scope for accommodating off-road motor vehicle drivers with the area's current network of local rights of way
- there is poor provision of routes that can be used by people with mobility impairments relative to the number of people who are limited by such conditions
- despite its limitations, the local rights of way network can serve as an important part of the transport network and its improvement will be an important element in encouraging more participation in walking and cycling
- our research has identified a number of areas of our work and our access network where we can make improvements.

The potential for improvements is discussed in the next section.

4 Improving public access and local rights of way to meet identified needs

4.1 Introduction

The process of assessing what people want from a countryside access network and the extent to which our network can currently meet these requirements helps reveal current shortcomings. We have summarised the picture that this analysis has revealed in **Table 4.1** below.

We also realise, from the research done so far, that there is a lot we don't know about the needs and preferences of local rights of way users - both current and potential. So, we believe there is a need for us to do more investigation into this as part of the Plan.

Table 4.1: Matching Requirements and Provision

User type	Requirements	Current provision	Shortfall
Casual walkers	Safe, clean and interesting environment for people and children. Good information - leaflets and on the ground (for example, waymarking).	826km of public right of way plus 9.1km of permissive 500ha of area wide access and 35ha permissive (plus NT). Information on some routes BVPI = 72.1%	Need to reduce obstructions, poor signage and surfacing and thereby contribute to increasing the 'ease of use' result. More publicity/promotion/waymarking.
Walkers with dogs	Facilities for dog mess and drinking. Areas in which dog can run free legally and without affecting livestock (see Appendix E for questions and answers about legal aspects of dogs in the countryside). Means of passing through stiles.	826km of public right of way plus 9.1km of permissive 500ha of area-wide access and 35ha permissive (plus NT). Information on some routes.	Need for greater education amongst dog owners about what constitutes responsible behaviour and the risks to livestock. Need for dog friendly routes/areas. Need for routes with suitable facilities.
Ramblers	Varied routes. Good access furniture (for example, gates and waymarks). Mechanisms for dealing with complaints and definitive map problems.	826km of public right of way plus 9.1km of permissive 500ha of area-wide access and 35ha permissive (plus NT). Information on some routes BVPI = 72.1% Backlog of Legal Orders for processing. Procedure for handling complaints is informal.	Need to increase 'ease of use' result. More publicity/promotion. Backlog of Legal Orders increasing. Need formal procedure for handling complaints.
Cyclists	Variety of route options with good connectivity, including routes free of difficulties (for example, dangerous road crossings and steep hills). Information to avoid getting lost.	280km of public right of way and cycletracks plus 11.5km permissive route. Fragmented network. Information on some routes published.	Only small percentage of local rights of way available for cyclists, and very little permissive. Poor connectivity. Inadequate information.

User type	Requirements	Current provision	Shortfall
Utilitarian users (walkers and cyclists)	Safe, off-road network that links residential areas and key destinations (for example, schools, places of work and shops). Good all-weather surfaces.	Existing network of highways, including public rights of way, footways and cycletracks plus permissive paths.	Does the network have sufficient links between trip generators – homes, schools, shops and places of work?
Horse riders	Routes that are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● free of obstructions (for example, vegetation, gates able to be opened from horseback) ● well signposted and way marked ● have suitable surfaces ● safe to use ● at least five miles long and circular 	123km of public right of way and 1.5km permissive route. Fragmented network. Information on some routes published. Roadside verges offer more possibilities.	Only small percentage of local rights of way available for horse riders, and very little permissive. Poor connectivity, meaning few circular routes. Inadequate information.
Carriage drivers	Adequate parking. Good length of route.	38 km of public right of way. Private arrangements.	Small length of route publicly available. Poorly connected.
Off-road motorists	Unsurfaced routes that are free from obstruction and have character. Challenging natural gradient and surface. Reasonable length and interesting topography. Routes that are not damaged. by light vehicle use.	0.7 km of public right of way.	In effect, there is no provision for off-road driving on local rights of way in North Somerset.
Mobility, visually and other impaired users	Routes suitable for use. Good information about routes. Suitable facilities.	Three routes.	Limited percentage of network available. Insufficient targeted information provided.
Non-users	Support and information to overcome barriers.	Material to promote activity using the health agenda.	Insufficient targeted information provided.

In order to plan our proposals to overcome these shortcomings, we believe it will also be necessary to develop our internal policies and practices to give greater priority to providing what people want. We recognise that this may seem somewhat remote from doing work on the ground, but we think that getting our working procedures right is an important pre-requisite to getting the network right.

We have developed four linked themes, each possessing a number of guiding policy objectives and activities for delivering improvements in practice. Each of these is discussed in turn below.



4.2 Key themes

4.2.1 Vision and culture (VC) – having the right approach

We need to:

- develop the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, including policies and service standards in order to provide a clearer statement of what we intend to do:
- develop a more forward looking, creative approach to developing, managing and promoting local rights of way by seeking to focus our work on meeting identified needs
- ensure local rights of way are given appropriate recognition in development control, economic regeneration, tourism development, transport planning and decision making in line with the hierarchy of highway users
- increase the number of people using local rights of way and the quality of their experience and widen the range of users to the whole of society, and thereby promote health and social benefits in the community
- promote alternatives to car travel, thus encouraging people to adopt more sustainable modes of transport
- develop a local vision for achieving good access in North Somerset.

4.2.2 Working practices and processes (WPP) – having the right tools

We need to:

- develop procedures for encouraging the development of new access opportunities using a criteria led approach, with priority to be given to routes that would:
 - be of value to those with disabilities and mobility impairment
 - create routes for horse riders and cyclists
 - provide links that allow circular routes to be created
 - re-align routes so that the resulting route is more convenient and/or safer to use
 - link urban areas to the countryside, especially in areas where provision is currently poor.
- create better partnerships, greater joined-up working with key stakeholders and wider community involvement
- work more closely with landowners and Defra to develop more permissive access to meet specialist demand

- seek, consider and act as appropriate on guidance from the Local Access Forum
- improve the management of legal processes, including handling Orders and keeping the Definitive Map under review
- respond more effectively and efficiently to user needs
- develop, apply and uphold an inspection programme and enforcement policy
- seek to secure higher levels of funding/resources for maintenance and development activities, including external funding
- make sure we have the information we need to judge our efficiency and effectiveness, and to identify how we can improve our working practices
- continue to report on applications to change the network to the PROW sub committee.

4.2.3 Services and facilities (SF) – doing the right things

We need to:

- improve the network condition by keeping it free of obstructions and with surfaces appropriate to usage and, in some situations, facilities such as street lighting, benches, other access furniture
- improve connectivity between existing routes within the overall network and to local communities (including, for example, schools, shops, places of work)
- provide better signage and way-marking
- remove unnecessary barriers to access, applying a policy of least restrictive option
- provide a range of routes to meet the variety of needs of the community and its visitors
- encourage development of new routes, either permanent or permissive, where these generate sufficient benefits to users (for example, by linking network fragments, by allowing better use by commuters to school or work).

4.2.4 Communication and education (CE) – publishing the right information

We need to:

- make the Definitive Map more readily available to those who want to see it
- provide better promotion of key routes through a variety of forms of communication
- provide better access to information about countryside access, including the local rights of way network, to as wide a range of potential users as possible

- in developing promotional material, make sure that information is included to educate the users about the area they will be passing through and how it is managed
- promote greater recognition of the value of good access.

They are a mix of on the ground improvements and internal operations but contribute to achieving the objectives we have set ourselves. A key to the abbreviations used in the tables is given in Appendix C.

Vision and culture (VC) – having the right approach

4.3 Putting policy into practice

So what does all this mean in practice? It means that the actions we propose to take in future will be more focused on meeting the identified needs of users and potential future users.

Our aim is to change positively the way we think about local rights of way and public access in North Somerset to secure widespread recognition and greater support for delivering the benefits of good public access. Activities in this category will help us develop the right approach to delivering as good a network as we can. To achieve our aim we will undertake the following:

The actions we propose to take are contained in the following four tables (tables 4.2 to 4.5 inclusive).

Table 4.2: Vision and Culture - Statement of Actions

Key to commitment category

- A - we can do it
- B - we think we can do it
- C - we would like to do it but currently have insufficient resources



Ref	Activity, project or scheme	Lead (in bold)/ Partners	Target and delivery period	Resources	Co. Ca.
VC1	Consolidate data from VC11 with data from other sources to better understand patterns of visitor behaviour	NSC and input from others doing surveys	Ongoing with regular reviews	NSC	A
VC2	Integrate our RoWIP with the JLTP3 and ensure compatibility with other relevant plans	NSC LTP, NS LAF, neighbouring authorities	Integration with the third Joint Local Transport Plan (2011-2025) by 2012. Compatibility at the next RoWIP review with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Sustainable Community Strategy ● Access Strategy ● Local Development Framework ● Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan ● North Somerset's Green Infrastructure Plan 	Existing	A
VC3	Develop strategy for promoting sustainable transport	NSC LTP , NS LAF	Link in with other county-wide regional and national programmes for economic/ tourism developments	NSC/LTP	NSC /LTP

Ref	Activity, project or scheme	Lead (in bold)/ Partners	Target and delivery period	Resources	Co. Ca.
VC4	Compile a strategic map of the area which highlights centres of population, existing 'hubs' (for example Burrington Coombe), attractions to better understand where management pressures will be greatest	NSC , NS LAF, Natural England, NSC	Done, keep updated	NSC, Forest of Avon, MHAONB	A
VC5	Capture needs and preferences and ongoing requests from under represented users	NSC ASS&H , disabled groups, Education Authority, leaders/representatives of ethnic communities	Ongoing	Existing	B
VC6	Develop strategy for promoting health benefits of PROW and countryside access	NHS North Somerset (formerly NSPCT) , NS LAF, Natural England, NSC, Go4Life	Link in with other county-wide regional and national programmes for economic/tourism developments	NSC/NHS North Somerset	B
VC7	Research to better understand the needs of our customers, through use of questions through the Citizens' Panel and by our Town and Parish Councils. Revision needed to ensure generic information on needs and preferences are relevant to North Somerset	NSC , NSC Corporate Services, NS LAF	Questions posed early 2012. results analysed by late 2012, inputs to RoWIP review early 2012 to 2013	NASC	B

Working practices and processes (WPP) – having the right tools

We need to develop the way we work in order to achieve our goal of providing good, well-used access.

We will do this by encouraging participation in decision making and enabling the wider community to support us in achieving our collective potential. This will give us the tools we need to do the job in the best way we can. To achieve our aims we will undertake the following:

Table 4.3 Working practices and processes - statement of actions

Ref	Activity, project or scheme	Lead (in bold)/ Partners	Target and delivery period	Resources	Co. Ca.
WPP1	Maintain records and respond to ad hoc legal matters including those associated with HA80 S31 deposits	NSC PROW	Ongoing	Existing	A
WPP2	Produce action plans to identify key priorities for management and development	NSC PROW , NS LAF	Annually	Existing	A
WPP3	Produce an annual maintenance programme (and LROW matters incorporated into wider highway asset plan)	NSC PROW and Highways Maintenance, NS LAF	Annually	Existing	A
WPP4	Keep the maintenance programme under review and incorporate routes to be improved and promoted, within the scope of resource availability	NSC PROW , NS LAF	Annually	External improvement funding to be identified	A C
WPP5	Ensure that we work with farmers and landowners to develop better access, such as through negotiation of Public Path Creation Agreements and permissive access where we believe this is justified by the public benefits	NSC , farmers, landowners	Ongoing	Existing, volunteers	A
WPP6	Work with local public transport providers to improve service to access users where feasible	NSC , local public transport providers, user groups	Ongoing	Existing	A
WPP7	Maintain working links with officers in neighbouring authorities	NSC , neighbouring authorities, NS LAF, neighbouring LAFs	Ongoing	NSC	A

Ref	Activity, project or scheme	Lead (in bold)/ Partners	Target and delivery period	Resources	Co. Ca.
WPP8	<p>Review NSC material that promotes local rights of way and countryside access to ensure information is included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● about land management practices (for example, for agriculture, forestry and nature conservation), including recommended behaviour when passing through fields containing cattle and bulls ● that will encourage support to the local economy, as appropriate ● that makes it as appealing as possible to as wide a proportion of the population as possible ● about public transport ● that enables mobility impaired and disabled users to judge the suitability of a route for their use 	<p>NSC, NS LAF, NT Landowners, Avon Wildlife Trust, County Archaeologist, Town and Parish Councils, Economic regeneration, User groups, community leaders, Transport providers, disabled users</p>	Ongoing	Existing	A
WPP9	<p>Ensure that new development contributes wherever possible and appropriate towards delivering the RoWIP's aims including improving upon deficiencies in the quality and quantity of services and facilities through appropriate planning obligations and conditions</p>	<p>Developers, NSC Development Planning and Control</p>	Ongoing	Existing, plus assistance from NSC Development Planning and Control	A
WPP 10	<p>Seek to ensure increased levels of funding are made available from the JLTP2 grant towards RoWIP aims that address core shared transport priorities</p>	<p>NSC, funding providers, JLTP3</p>	Ongoing	LTP	A
WPP 11	<p>Have procedures in place that ensure that, when developing access opportunities, we fully comply with our responsibilities towards the protection and enhancement of nature conservation</p>	<p>NSC PROW</p>	Ongoing	Existing	A
WPP 12	<p>Work with our colleagues in Development Planning and Control to develop procedures that ensure PROW/access issues are properly considered, including Section 106 agreements</p>	<p>NSC Development Planning and Control, developers, FoA, MHAONB, NS LAF</p>	Procedures developed by early 2008	Existing, plus contributions from Development Planning and Control	A

Ref	Activity, project or scheme	Lead (in bold)/ Partners	Target and delivery period	Resources	Co. Ca.
WPP 13	Develop policies to improve development, management and promotion of countryside access and use of local rights of way	LSP , NSC PROW, user groups, NS LAF	Review service standards for PROW management activities and customer service	All key players with input from wider community	A
WPP 14	Follow design guides on specific matters (for example, gaps/gates/stiles, signage, interpretation), keeping within national standards and legal requirements including, S69 CROW 2000 and British Standard 2006. Ensure our specifications for access furniture complies with latest standards, but retains local distinctiveness	NSC PROW Disabled groups, NS LAF, NSPCT FoA, MHAONB	Ongoing	Existing and secure additional external funding (for example, Local ALSF)	B
WPP 15	Work with colleagues in highways to improve the usability of roadside verges where these are part of the highway and can safely provide a significantly valuable contribution to the network.	NSC Highways , NSC PT&T, BHS, NSC PROW	Ongoing	Highways	B
WPP 16	Seek better levels of revenue funding for both development and management service areas, to include budget to fund the RoWIP's implementation	NSC , funding providers, JLTP3	Ongoing	External funding providers	B
WPP 17	Assisting the Mendip Cross Trails Trust to develop a strategic recreation network	MHAONB Service	Ongoing	MHAONB, Mendip Cross Trails Trust	B
WPP 18	Work with private sector to develop secure car parking where such provision is needed to develop use of the network and in areas not adequately served by public transport	Private landowners , NSC, user groups, FoA, MHAONB	As required by network developments	Private sector	B
WPP 19	Update GIS data and information including digitising schedules of recognised projects and network schemes subject to existing internal resources	NSC PROW/NSC IT	Ongoing	Existing	C

Ref	Activity, project or scheme	Lead (in bold)/ Partners	Target and delivery period	Resources	Co. Ca.
WPP 20	Develop procedures for handling complaints from members of the public and consider if/how we can develop the system to provide feedback to complainants (which will require a software review)	NSC SOS , NS LAF	Using NSC EXOR information and reporting system or similar database	Additional resources required for data entry and software development	A
WPP 21	Build on the existing network of local community volunteers to report problems and assist with maintenance tasks	NSC PROW , user groups, Town and Parish Councils, NS LAF, FoA, MHAONB	Ongoing	NSC, Town and Parish Councils, local community volunteers, and user groups, NSLAF	C
WPP 22	Work with town/parish councils to ensure that urban PROWs are properly recorded on the Definitive Map	NSC PROW , Town and Parish Councils	By 2026	NSC	C
WPP 23	Provide ongoing support and training for the volunteer network	NSC , volunteers, Town and Parish Councils, FoA, MHAONB	Ongoing	The extent of support depends on the resources identified (for example, existing resources cover a limited amount of training)	B
WPP 24	Work with Town and Parish Councils to improve way marking and signing of PROW that provide links to wider network and provide information on improvements	NSC PROW , Town and Parish Councils	Ongoing	Additional external funding to be identified	C

Services and facilities (SF) – doing the right things

Our aim is to provide a high-quality and accessible local rights of way network.

The actions proposed in this theme are intended to produce visible improvements to the network. We think these are the right things to be doing.

To achieve our aims we will undertake the following:

Table 4.4 Services and facilities - statement of actions

Ref	Activity, project or scheme	Lead (in bold)/ Partners	Target and delivery period	Resources	Co. Ca.
SF1	Complete the remaining sections of the Festival Way between Long Ashton and Bristol	NSC Planning Transport Policy and Design , NS LAF	2015	JLPT3	A
SF2	Develop a multi-user cross moor link west of Nailsea from the west end of North Drove	NSC Planning Transport Policy and Design , NSC Rights of Way Team, NS LAF	2015	JLPT3	B
SF3	Pro-actively negotiate with landowners (incrementally across the district) the removal of unnecessary or inappropriate access barriers and furniture (applying the principle of least restrictive option), and to install signage to promote good behaviour and safe access on multi-user routes where necessary	NSC , landowners	Ongoing	NSC PROW and Highways Maintenance with further input from NSC SPG and TP&P via new development links, other key player input and local community support	A
SF4	Process outstanding and new applications for Definitive Map Modification Orders	NSC PROW , Applicants, NS PROW sub-committee	Four or more 'Schedule 14' Definitive Map Modification Orders determined each year, depending on complexity	Existing	A
SF5	Process outstanding and new Public Path Orders applications as necessary	NSC PROW , NS PROW sub-committee, NSC	Six to eight Public Path Orders determined each year, depending on complexity	Existing	A

Ref	Activity, project or scheme	Lead (in bold)/ Partners	Target and delivery period	Resources	Co. Ca.
SF6	Create access by foot and cycle to Tyntesfield from Bristol via Failand and via Flax Bourton	Sustrans , NSC Sustainable Travel team, National Trust, NS LAF	Mostly completed apart from a section north of the Flax Bourton greenway	Sustrans, Local ALSF	B
SF7	Improve access within and around Weston-super-Mare including connections east of M5	NSC Highways	Ongoing	Existing – using development control process where appropriate	B
SF8	Monitoring use of public rights of way in MHAONB through visitor counters	MHAONB Service	Ongoing	MHAONB	B
SF9	Resolve enforcement cases, including the removal of unlawful structures where existing resources allow	NSC PROW , user groups, NS LAF	Ongoing	Existing	B
SF10	Develop the Tidal Trail coast path including a route between Clevedon and Weston-super-Mare	Natural England, Environment Agency, landowners, user groups, NS LAF, JLTP3	Awaiting issue of Natural England regulations	Secure additional external resources, JLTP3, Natural England	B
SF11	Improve Two Rivers Way Trail including promotion and a link alongside the River Yeo between the flood bank and the Strawberry Line Heritage Trail (a claimed route)	NSC PROW	2008	External resources to be secured - S106 contributions	B
SF12	Build Congresbury Yeo bridge on Strawberry Line	NSC Highway Structures, CVRWS, YACWAG, TP&P	2015	Secure external additional resources - JLTP, Sustrans, Lottery Fund	B
SF13	Develop circular routes from the Strawberry Line (for example Puxton, Congresbury and Yatton)	NSC PROW CVRWS, YACWAG, FoA and MHAONB	2012	S106 and Access Dedication Scheme	B
SF14	Improve access around Tyntesfield Estate particularly between Wraxall and Backwell railway station and linking the B3130 and B3128	NSC PROW , National Trust, Sustrans, NS LAF	2015	JLTP3, other grant resources, Section 106 contributions, Sustrans	B

Ref	Activity, project or scheme	Lead (in bold)/ Partners	Target and delivery period	Resources	Co. Ca.
SF15	Carry out a feasibility study and develop an extension to the Strawberry Line between Yatton and Clevedon	NSC TP&P , CVRWS, YACWAG, NS LAF	2013	S106 plus additional resources to be secured, JLTP3	B
SF16	Develop access links through Lyncombe Wood	Goblin Combe Environment Centre	2013	External resources to be identified	B
SF17	Construct safe crossing of the Portbury Hundred	NSC Development Control	S106	NSC, Developer contribution	B
SF18	Open the Axe sluice at Brean to travellers on cycle and on foot and extend access to the highway at Brean	Sustrans , NSC, Environment Agency, SCC, Somerset LAF, NS LAF	2010 onwards	External resources to be identified, EA/Somerset County Council	B
SF19	Identify and develop areas around towns where dogs can safely and legally be allowed to run freely and promote use of such areas by walkers with dogs	NSC , dog owners/Kennel Club, landowners	Ongoing	External funding to be secured	C
SF20	Develop a bridleway along Charlton Drive and through the Tyntesfield Estate, Wraxall	NSC , PROW, National Trust, landowners, NS LAF	Ongoing	External resources to be secured, JLTP3	C
SF21	Improve access in and around Ashton Court Estate including links to surrounding areas including the River Avon Trail and Bristol city, and the 'park and ride' site to the south	BCC , NSC, Sustrans, NS LAF, Parish Council, Ashton Vale Estate	Ongoing	External resources to be secured, JLTP3, HLF	C

Ref	Activity, project or scheme	Lead (in bold)/ Partners	Target and delivery period	Resources	Co. Ca.
SF22	<p>Improve access within the Gordano Valley including development of a circular trail within the valley and develop a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● route alongside Portbury Ditch connecting with ongoing development at Portishead ● route between Portishead and Clapton-in-Gordano, and explore connections to surrounding areas ● bridleway link between Weston-in-Gordano and Clevedon Lane. 	Joint project developing route at Clapton Moor consisting of AWT with support from YANSEC and landowners	Ongoing	Requires additional external funding to develop projects further	C
SF23	Improve access in and around Kewstoke and Sand Bay with a route from the village hall to the beach	NSC , Local community, Parish Council	Ongoing	Resources to be secured	C
SF24	Develop and promote a circular bridleway route around Goblin Combe, Brockley Combe and Chelvey	NSC , Goblin Combe Environment Centre	Ongoing	NS local ALSF	C
SF25	Develop access links in Abbots Leigh Parish	Abbots Leigh Parish Council , NSC/NSC PROW	Ongoing	Resources to be identified	C
SF26	Improve access in and around Bleadon including a horse rider friendly crossing of the A370 and a bridleway link to Brean	NSC , BHS, Sustrans, landowners, SCC, Somerset LAF	Ongoing	External resources to be identified	C
SF27	Carry out feasibility study for development of a multi-user trail on the former Wrington Vale Light Railway joining the Strawberry Line at Congresbury	NSC/TP&P , YACWAG	Ongoing	External resources to be secured	C
SF28	Process in batches correction of anomalies on the Definitive Map, correction of abuses of planning conditions/ requirements and Legal Event Orders	NSC PROW , Town and Parish Councils, user groups, developers	Funding dependent	External additional resources required	C

Ref	Activity, project or scheme	Lead (in bold)/ Partners	Target and delivery period	Resources	Co. Ca.
SF29	Improve on 85% signage of routes from carriageways, and effective waymarking on all PROW following asset survey	NSC PROW	Ongoing	External resources to be identified	C
SF30	Develop safer paths from Nailsea to Wraxall School and on to Tyntesfield	Wraxall School, National Trust, NSC	2010 onwards	External resources to be secured	C
SF31	Evaluate, prioritise, develop and promote a set of highly accessible trails focused on meeting the needs of disabled people, and mobility impaired and visually impaired persons. Further develop guided or led access activities to use them	NSC , North Somerset Access Group and disabled groups, Sport Development team	Ongoing	External resources to be secured	C
SF32	Record on the Definitive Map those PROW that are shown on the List of Streets but not on the Definitive Map	NSC PROW	2026	Resources needed to correct digital record and make orders	C

Communication and education (CE) – publishing the right information

Our aim is to improve the quality of information about our services and facilities. We will do this by providing information about LROW and localities to support local and wider community needs, encouraging and enabling less confident and more

vulnerable users to enjoy access to LROW and the district, and enabling people to access appropriate information relevant to their needs.

The actions set out under this theme are intended to make sure we publish the right information. To achieve our aims we will undertake the following:

Table 4.5: Communications and education - statement of actions

Ref	Activity, project or scheme	Lead (in bold)/ Partners	Target and delivery period	Resources	Co. Ca.
CE1	Promote road safety training through practical support to key groups and vulnerable users including school children	NSC PP&T, NSC Sustainable Travel Team, NSC Road Safety Team, local walking groups	Child pedestrian and cycle training underway	Existing	A
CE2	Publish and make available an annual NS LAF report, as required by law	NS LAF, NSC PROW	Annually	Existing	A
CE3	Educate dog owners to ensure they are more aware of their legal responsibilities towards their dogs. Promote responsible dog ownership amongst walkers with dogs who use the network through a variety of means (see Appendix E)	NS LAF NFU, CLA, Kennel Club, Natural England, local communities, LAF	Ongoing	NS LAF	A
CE4	Produce, publish and support Travel Plans with employers and others managing sites of high and consistent travel (for example, schools both voluntary and through planning process)	NSC PP&T, NSC Sustainable Travel, NSC Road Safety Team	15 Plans completed by 2010, average of nine Plans per year ongoing, 100% of schools have travel plans	Existing	A
CE5	Assist, where we can, through the provision of relevant material, qualified individuals and user groups who want to develop and conduct guided walks in the area	Walk leaders, NSC PROW, Ramblers' Association, NS WHI	As required, and responses within one calendar month	Ramblers' Association and other walking groups	A
CE6	Maintain and make available register for Public Path Order Applications & Section 31 (6) deposits	NSC PROW, NSC IT and Web Team	Dependent on legislation	Existing	A

Ref	Activity, project or scheme	Lead (in bold)/ Partners	Target and delivery period	Resources	Co. Ca.
CE7	Produce an adopted NSC planning advice note for 'access development', and progress to adoption	NSC Planning Policy Team	Ongoing	NSC – existing	B
CE8	Undertake guided or led walks and rides in a variety of locations and environments, at different times of year and to meet the needs of all people enabling them to enjoy equal access to the district	All key players with NSC to establish partnerships and lead role to develop project with input from local community, Ramblers' Association and other community groups	Ongoing – walks published in North Somerset Life	All key players	B
CE9	Publicising and promoting routes through publications	MHAONB Service/NSC	Ongoing	MHAONB	B
CE10	Make available the updated Definitive Map (dependent on Action SF5 and SF6) and PROW information (currently available on OS Mapping and Source Map) via a public website	NSC PROW , NSC IT and Web Team	To be determined	Additional resources required for project development	C
CE11	Develop a North Somerset website to form a focal point of public access to a whole range of information on promoted routes and localities, where to go for different users, LROW management issues, and links to other sites and useful information to help plan journeys and enjoy the district	All key players with NSC to help establish partnerships and identify lead roles to develop projects with input from local communities	Ongoing	NSC	C
CE12	Consult disabled groups over their information needs and how these can best be provided, and then develop information that can be used by the mobility and visually impaired about use of LROWs in the area	NSC Corporate Services Unit, disabled ramblers, other disabled groups	Ongoing	NSC and disabled groups	C
CE13	Identify potential and existing community leaders able to champion good access and LROW, and provide support and training as appropriate	NSC PROW, elected members, local councils, NS LAF	Dependent on resources	All key players input from the wider community, NSC Existing	C

5 Implementation

5.1 Taking the Plan forward

Many individuals and organisations have helped to shape the development of this Plan and are committed to its values, aims and objectives. These include local Town and Parish Councils, adjacent local authorities, Government organisations and agencies, non-Government organisations, the North Somerset Local Access Forum and numerous local community interest groups.

The process of preparing this Plan has been led by North Somerset Council in its capacity as the Local Highway Authority²⁶. However, whilst we are required to prepare the Plan, there is no legal requirement nor extra funding to implement it. There is a risk that the Plan will not be fully implemented and so that its value is limited. The enthusiasm and collective effort of many key players and decision-makers will be fundamental to getting it implemented and so to its success. They will play a critical role in delivering the actions listed, as shown in the section above.

We expect that:

- elected councillors and senior managers of key delivery organisations will seek to ensure sufficient support and resources are made available for its implementation
- Government departments and agencies will support its aims through relevant processes, technical support and grant funding
- non-Government organisations will collaborate as partners to promote joined-up working and contribute resources to delivering improvements
- local Town and Parish Councils, local community interest groups and volunteers will play an active part in assisting the development and improved management of local services and facilities
- professional practitioners will be dynamic, confident, resourceful, mutually supportive and customer-focused in guiding the Plan's implementation and continued development. Will seek to develop the skills and knowledge of others in the wider community so that they can effectively contribute towards

- achieving its aims and will ensure that every opportunity to secure improved services and facilities and implement the Plan's aims are taken through better joined-up working
- land managers will ensure that the public needs and rights are not compromised in pursuit of their needs
- developers will contribute to the Plan's aims and objectives and so ensure the sustainable development and enhanced quality of life for North Somerset's communities
- the public will take an active interest in and pride in their local rights of way and will contribute to its protection and improvement and will promote appropriate behaviour in using LROW
- funding bodies will support activities that contribute towards achieving good access and local rights of way in North Somerset.

In addition the following key players will particularly help to deliver improvements in practice:

- North Somerset Council
- Town and Parish Councils
- North Somerset Local Access Forum
- NHS North Somerset (formerly North Somerset Primary Care Trust)
- Forest of Avon Community Forest
- Sustrans
- Forestry Commission
- Mendip Hills AONB Service

At a more strategic level, we look forward to working with Natural England and Defra in implementing the Plan.

5.2 Monitoring

We recognise that many of the actions proposed in our Statement of Actions are aspirations that we cannot firmly commit to unless and until we are sure we have the resources to carry them out. Availability of resources and opportunities to complete actions change from year to year and so we propose to monitor and report on each year's activity in the form of an Annual Report. This should include reporting on what has been done in response to complaints. This will be submitted to the LAF for their comment and publicised.

²⁶ Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, Section 60(1)

Appendix A

Documents consulted

National and international

- Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
- Planning Policy Guidance including Housing (PPG3), Transport (PPG13), Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (PPG17), Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (PPS7), and Planning and Access for Disabled
- People: A Good Practice Guide
- Transport Act 2000
- The countryside in and around towns strategy (Countryside Agency) 2005

Regional

- Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2005
- Joint Replacement Structure Plan (JRSP) 2000
- Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10) 2001
- Sport England Regional Plan 2004-2008 and 'Sport playing its part' series
- State of the Countryside in the South West (Countryside Agency) 2004
- South West Regional Woodland and Forestry Framework 2005
- West of England Partnership Vision for 2026

Local

- North Somerset Community Strategy 2004-2008
- Emerging Greater Bristol Local Transport Plan 2006-2011
- Forest of Avon Community Forest Plan 2002
- Learning in North Somerset: A vision and strategy (NSC) 2003-2006
- Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan 2004-2009
- North Somerset Council Access Strategy for Disabled People 2005
- North Somerset Blue Skies Tourism Strategy 2000
- North Somerset Community Safety Strategy 2002-2005
- North Somerset Compact

- North Somerset Council Corporate Plan 2005-2008
- North Somerset Council Development and Environment Business Plan 2004-2007
- North Somerset Countryside Strategy 1995
- North Somerset Local Plan 2000
- North Somerset Local Transport Plan 2000-2005
- North Somerset Primary Care Trust Annual Report 2004-2005
- North Somerset Primary Care Trust Health Improvement and Modernisation Plan 2002-2005
- North Somerset Replacement Local Plan 2nd Deposit 2004
- North Somerset Safer Communities Audit 2004
- North Somerset Safer Communities Strategy 2005-2008
- Strategy for the Severn Estuary 2001

Additional information

- A countryside for health and well being: the physical and mental health benefits of green exercise (CRN) 2005
- Promoting physical activity: international and UK experiences (DH) 2004
- UK Government's Choosing Health: Choosing Physical Activity (DH) 2005
- Disability Rights Commission in 2003. Code of Practice - Rights of Access Services to the public, public authority functions and premises (www.drc-gb.org/library/publications/services_and_transport/code_of_practice_rights_of_ac.aspx)
- ONS Omnibus Survey 2001: Disability and the Disability Discrimination Act (DWP, IHRS)
- Walking and cycling: an action plan (DfT) 2004
- At least five a week: evidence on the impact of physical activity and its relationship to health (DH) 2004
- A Physically active life through everyday transport (WHO, ROE) 2002
- The economic and social value of walking in England (Ramblers' Association) 2003
- Health impacts of countryside access routes in the North East (Countryside Agency) 2004

Appendix B Outline process for preparing

Lead authority	North Somerset Council Highway Authority
Key statutory directive	Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 S60(1)
Key stages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assessment of relevant strategies, policies and plans, existing services and facilities, and consultation with wider community to elicit key issues and needs for improvements to LROW ● Evaluation of assessment data, information and consultation comments ● Preparation and preliminary circulation of draft RoWIP to key players to elicit and incorporate shared objectives into the RoWIP's action statement ● Publication of Provisional RoWIP and consultation with wider community ● Evaluation of consultation comments and redrafting of RoWIP where appropriate ● Adoption and publication of RoWIP by North Somerset Council

Appendix C Abbreviations and acronyms

ALSF	Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund
AWT	Avon Wildlife Trust
BANES	Bath and North East Somerset Council
BEN	Black Environmental Network
BHS	British Horse Society
BCC	Bristol City Council
BOAT	Byway Open to All Traffic
BVPI	Best Value Performance Indicator
CE	Communications and education
CLA	Country Land and Business Association
CRN	Countryside Recreation Network
CROW	Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
CTC	Cyclists Touring Club
CVRWS	Cheddar Valley Railway Walk Society
DDA	Disability Discrimination Acts (1995 and 2005)
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DfT	Department for Transport
DH	Department for Health
DIAL	Disabled Information Access Line
DWP, IHRS	Department for Work and Pensions, In House Report Series
EA	Environment Agency
FoA	Forest of Avon (Community Forest)

Good access	This refers to the range of measures that can contribute towards ensuring good accessibility and availability of LROW services and facilities, and the achievement of their effective and efficient provision, promotion and management
GOSW	Government Office South West
HA80	Highways Act 1980
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
HLS	Higher Level Scheme (of Environmental Stewardship)
JLAF	Joint Local Access Forum (for the adjoining unitary authority areas of BCC, BANES, and SGC)
JRSP	Joint Replacement Structure Plan
LARA	Land Access Recreation Association (of Motoring Organisations)
LEMO	Legal Event Modification Order
LROW	Local rights of way are defined in section 60(5) of CROW Act 2000 as including footpaths, cycletracks, bridleways and restricted byways within the authority's area and the ways within the authority's area which are shown in a Definitive Map and Statement as byways open to all traffic
LRSA	Least Restrictive Standard Access
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
LTP/JLTP2	Local Transport Plan and joint second LTP for Greater Bristol area
MCCT	Mendip Cross Trails Trust
MHAONB	Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
NFU	National Farmers Union

NHS NS	NHS North Somerset
NSC	North Somerset Council
NSC ASS&H	North Somerset Council Adult Social Services and Housing
NSC IT	North Somerset Council Information Technology
NSC PROW	North Somerset Council Public Rights of Way
NSC SOS	North Somerset Council Streets and Open Spaces
NSC SPG	North Somerset Council Strategic Planning Group
NSLAF	North Somerset Local Access Forum
NSPCT	North Somerset Primary Care Trust
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PPG/PPS	Planning Policy Guidance to be superseded by Planning Policy Statements
PPO	Public Path Order
PROW	Public Rights of Way - public footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic
RoWIP	Rights of Way Improvement Plan
RPG/RSS	Regional Planning Guidance to be superseded by the Regional Spatial Strategy
S106	Section of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 that enables the council to require developers to contribute towards the cost of associated infrastructure development as a condition of planning consent
SCC	Somerset County Council
SF	Services and facilities
SGC	South Gloucestershire Council
SPG/SPD	Supplementary Planning Guidance to be superseded by Supplementary Planning Documents

SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
Sustrans	National charity that is developing a national cycling network
SWERDA	South West England Regional Development Agency
TIC	Tourist Information Centre
TP&P	Transport Policy and Planning (within NSC)
UA	Unitary authority
User groups	Collective term for community groups representing different LROW users from national to local levels of representation and especially those with interests in walking and rambling, cycling and mountain biking, horse riding and equestrian pursuits, motorised recreation including trail bike riding and four-wheel drive vehicles, and people with particular needs relating to accessibility such as disability, mobility or visual impairment
VC	Vision and culture
WHI	Walk the Way to Health Initiative
WHO, ROE	World Health Organisation, Regional Office for Europe
WPP	Working practices and processes
YACWAG	Yatton and Congresbury Wildlife Action Group
YANSEC	Yanley and North Somerset Environmental Company

Appendix D Draft policy NSC19 - access to the countryside

North Somerset Access Strategy

Key principles

- 1 The design of any equipment or the layout of any right of way or open space must always be directed towards the highest standard of inclusivity. Known as the Least Restrictive Standard of Access (LRSA), it should be applied to any rural or urban leisure area.
- 2 Sites for landscape improvements must be audited to assess their accessibility for disabled people prior to any work being undertaken to identify exactly any design requirements.

Design criteria

- 1 The LRSA is defined as seeking to achieve on a site by site basis the highest standard for a piece of work that is possible whether it is for a stock control gate or a substantial visitor centre and attractions.
- 2 In applying the LRSA reference should be made to the guidance produced by the Countryside Agency entitled 'By All Reasonable Means: Inclusive Access To The Outdoors For Disabled People' and the standards it refers to in Appendix One produced by the Fieldfare Trust entitled 'BT Countryside for All Accessibility Standards'. To obtain these guidance notes visit www.countryside.gov.uk/Publications/articles/Publication_tcm2-27720.asp
- 3 Opportunities to remove barriers to any user, but particularly disabled people, and to widen accessibility should always be taken as a part of any new works or maintenance work. Attention must always equally be paid to:
 - a. how information is provided
 - i. to plan visits
 - ii. for wayfinding on routes or within a site
 - iii. for interpretation of the site or area
 - b. How disabled visitor arrive at the site
 - i. Car parking areas where parking provision is made
 - ii. Bus drop-off and parking areas
 - c. The management of the route or site both in terms of staff training and service provision for

disabled people as well as physical maintenance of route surfaces etc.

- 4 Focal points such as large car parks or interpretation centres must always provide toilets, seating and access to on-site facilities (for example, shops, catering outlets or interpretation centres).
- 5 Some wider key detailed issues include:
 - a. car parking standards are met in full with bays marked out, enforced, and in appropriate locations
 - b. regular provision of accessible seating along routes
 - c. ensuring gates and barriers, etc., restricting access whether for stock control or to prevent motorcycle access, are accessible to disabled people.

Other issues

- 1 The general auditing of all routes and sites should be undertaken irrespective of whether any work is proposed to ensure:
 - a. services are meeting the needs of disabled people and standards of service required by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Amendment Act 2005 are maintained
 - b. management plans are accurate, inclusive and up to date. Works should be evaluated following their completion and routes and sites monitored to maintain standards of accessibility for disabled people.
- 2 The preparation of a management plan may on some sites seem heavy handed but it should be borne in mind that the management of the needs of disabled people and the adopting of a more inclusive approach may generate complex issues if it's a site where these matters have not previously been considered. Such a document can often be a simple list noting tasks, responsibilities and recording the action taken against them.

Further information

The Countryside Agency's document 'By All Reasonable Means: Inclusive Access To The Outdoors For Disabled People' contains a range of additional supporting information on the issues raised in this note.

Appendix E Laws relating to dogs in the countryside

The contents of this Appendix are for guidance only and do not constitute a definitive statement or interpretation of the law. Anyone seeking to rely on the relevant legislation should seek independent legal advice.

Can a dog be guilty of trespass?

No – but the dog's owner can.

Are dogs allowed on a public right of way?

Dogs are regarded as a 'usual accompaniment' to anyone using a public right of way. Dogs and their owners are, however, required to stay on the line of the route and not to stray from it.

Do landowners have to make stiles 'dog friendly'?

In short, no. Although many stiles are the responsibility of the landowner, they are under no obligation to provide dog flaps or other means of making it easier to get dogs through the hedge, fence or wall. Damaging a fence to allow a dog to pass through it could constitute criminal damage.

Do dogs have to be kept on a lead on a public right of way?

(See also the question about bylaws, below)
The Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953 S1(2)(c) makes it an offence for a dog to 'be at large (that is to say not on a lead or otherwise under close control) in a field or enclosure in which there are sheep' but 'under close control' is not defined. It is possible for the local highway authority to make an order under Section 27 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 requiring dogs to be kept on leads on specific public rights of way, although these require approval of the police and are rarely used. NOTE: irrespective of the legal obligation, a dog owner has a moral obligation to guard against their dog doing harm so, if in doubt, keep it on a lead.

Can dog walkers be stopped from using a public right of way?

One leading expert suggests that a Traffic Regulation Order can be sought to prohibit use of a right of way by anyone accompanied by a dog.

Can a farmer legally shoot a dog?

Section 9 of the Animals Act 1971 provides that the owner of livestock, the landowner or anyone acting on their behalf is entitled to shoot any dog if they believe it is the only reasonable way of stopping it worrying livestock. Such action must be reported to the local police within 48 hours.

What about dogs on CROW access land?

(these restrictions do not apply to public rights of way or land referred to as 'Section 15 land', which may be subject to other forms of restrictions).

There are several provisions in the CROW Act:

- A dog must be on a lead of not more than 2m at any time when in the vicinity of livestock and between 1 March and 31 July each year.
- 'The owner of any land may, so far as appears to him to be necessary in connection with lambing, by taking such steps as may be prescribed, provide that during a specified period the right conferred by section 2(1) is exercisable only by persons who do not take dogs into any field or enclosure on the land in which there are sheep.' (S23(2). Section 23(3) limits the size of the field or enclosure referred to above as 15ha. Section 23(4)(b) limits the period to a single period within any calendar year of no more than six weeks. The restriction 'does not prevent a blind person from taking with him a trained guide dog, or a deaf person from taking with him a trained hearing dog.'

Landowners or tenants can apply to the relevant authority for additional restrictions, which could include further limits to people with dogs. These would be specific to the local circumstances (under s24 and s25). Some Government bodies (such as Natural England) can seek restrictions on dogs for reasons such as nature conservation (under s26, for example). Commercial dog walkers/carers may be trespassing if they go onto access land with their dogs, as Schedule 2 of CROW states that the rights granted under CROW Part I do not extend to anyone coming onto the land who 'engages in any activity which is organised or undertaken (whether by him or another) for any commercial purpose'.

What about dogs elsewhere?

Local byelaws may impose restrictions over land owned or managed by bodies with byelaw making powers, such as local authorities, National Trust and MoD. Byelaws are usually posted on signs at key entry points. Byelaws can be made to regulate behaviour associated with dogs in four ways:

- Keeping dogs on leads.
- Keeping dogs on leads where disturbance is likely.
- Banning dogs (although these cannot be used on rights of way).
- Requirement to prevent dog fouling.

What about farm dogs that appear to be threatening?

Farm dogs must also be kept under control. Allowing farm dogs loose to behave aggressively in a farm yard through which a public right of way runs, is not desirable – especially if the dog (or dogs) have a record of aggressive behaviour, as this could constitute an obstruction of the highway under s137 of the Highways Act 1980. It may also put the public at risk and so could constitute a common law nuisance.

Is failing to clear up dog mess an offence and is it acceptable to pick up mess in a plastic bag and throw away the bag?

Does it need to be an offence? Common sense suggests that the dog's owner is responsible. However, the legal position is less clear:

- It is an offence under Section 87 (of the Environmental Protection Act 1990) to throw or drop or otherwise deposit, in a public open place, anything that could cause, or contribute to or tend to lead to the defacement of that place by litter.
- Any member of the public dropping litter on CROW access land loses his/her access rights on that land (and any other land in the same ownership) for 72 hours and becomes a trespasser.
- The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 (and regulations and orders made under its provisions) will empower unitary authorities to issue dog control orders relating to one of the following:
 - Fouling of land by dogs and removal of dog faeces.
 - The keeping of dogs on leads.
 - The exclusion of dogs from land.
 - The number of dogs which a person may take onto land.

- It is never acceptable, having picked up the mess in a plastic bag, to then throw the bag onto the ground or hang it from a tree.

Are dogs required to have a collar and ID disc?

Control of Dogs Order 1992: requires that every dog, whilst on a highway (note that public rights of way are highways) or in a public place (note that CROW Access land may be regarded as a public place), must be wearing a collar with the name and address of its owner on the collar itself or on a plate, disc or some other device attached to it. There are exceptions to the general rule for working or assistance dogs. Anyone failing to comply is guilty of an offence under the Animal Health Act 1981.

Who is responsible for clearing up dog mess?

Natural justice suggests that the dog's owner is responsible for clearing up the mess created by their dog. However, once someone has failed to meet this obligation, who is then responsible?

The Litter (Animal Droppings) Order 1991 made under Section 86 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a duty on local authorities to keep the following areas clear of dog faeces:

- Any public walk or pleasure ground.
- Any land ... laid out ... or used for the purpose of recreation.
- Any part of the seashore which is frequently used by large numbers of people and managed by the person having direct control of it as a tourist resort or recreational facility.
- Any land forming part of a public highway (public rights of way are highways) which is open to the air, which the public are permitted to use on foot only and which provides access to retail premises.
- a picnic site provided by a local authority under Section 10(2) of the Countryside Act 1968.

The requirement does not apply to woodland, heath or land used for the grazing of animals. In any case, the dog's owner should pick up their dog's mess.

Is it an offence to allow a dog to chase or disturb wildlife?

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Section 28 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) is relevant here. Where land has been notified by Natural England as a SSSI under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, trespass may constitute a criminal offence under Section 28P if a person, without reasonable excuse, intentionally or recklessly destroys or damages any of the flora or fauna or geological or physiographical features by reason of which the land is of special interest, or intentionally or recklessly disturbs fauna and the person knew what he had destroyed, damaged or disturbed was within an SSSI. It is possible that if a person was the keeper of a dog that was being encouraged to destroy or damage such features, the person could be held liable. Thus, to succeed, the prosecution would have to show it was reasonable for the person to have known the site was an SSSI, either through signage or because they had been told by, for example, a land manager, warden or ranger. This suggestion is speculative, as the legislation is relatively new.

Can dogs be controlled for health and safety reasons?

There may be grounds, either under Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations, or under Occupiers' Liability Acts, for a landowner to seek to introduce measures to reduce significant risks. However, these requirements are site specific and may impact more on the land manager than the dog owner. Powers exist for Defra to bring in restrictions to help control the spread of certain animal diseases, although rarely used, and these might affect dogs.

Do the public's dogs affect a farmer's assured status?

This depends on the details of the protocols of the scheme to which the farmer seeks to comply. For example, the National Dairy Farm Assurance Scheme requires that 'dogs and cats (where practical) must be wormed regularly' (www.ndfas.org.uk/standards/herd_v2.asp). It is open to interpretation as to whether it is practical for a farmer to require visitors' dogs to be wormed regularly. Participation in farm assured schemes is voluntary, although breach of scheme rules can have significant effects on the saleability of the farmer's produce.

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For more information call 01934 427 467 or email streetsandopenspaces@n-somerset.gov.uk



Improving Public Access
and Local Rights of Way
in North Somerset



North Somerset Council
Rights of Way
Improvement Plan
2nd Edition
2022-2032

This plan explains how the Council will aim to provide a better experience for all users of the Public Rights of Way network in North Somerset.

[North Somerset Council Public Rights of Way Team](#)

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1. Foreword

Thank you for taking the time to review the second edition of our Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP 2022) for North Somerset Council. I would like to reassure you that we have thoroughly reviewed all the consultation responses which have provided valuable insights to our thinking and many have been incorporated into this final.

This Plan sets out the Council's Vision and Objectives for the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network and outlines the actions we believe we will need to focus on during the next ten years.

Ensuring visitors and local people alike can enjoy the beauty and tranquility of large parts of the North Somerset countryside is important and the rights of way network is a valuable resource for this. It contributes to people being able to lead a healthy lifestyle whether enjoying the fresh air, appreciating wildlife and the landscape, improving fitness and well-being, exploring on foot, on mobility scooter, by bike or by horse, or simply to walk the dog.

In North Somerset it is recognised that in addition to enabling people to enjoy the countryside, the rights of way network should also provide sustainable options for travelling to school or work and for accessing local services such as shops, health facilities or to reach public transport. The network should provide a safe, traffic-free, carbon-free alternative to increasingly busy roads and lanes. These paths contribute to the district being a special place in which to live, work and visit, and the positive impact they have on the rural economy cannot be overlooked. All these are acknowledged within this Plan.

Finally, we need to ensure we target resources to manage the PRoW network even more efficiently, focussing where action is most needed over the next ten years. We recognise there is real concern about the connectivity of the network and the safety of crossing or using roads to link paths. We will seek to maximise opportunities to improve the network through Council Policies, Local Plans and Parish Neighbourhood Plans.



Councillor Solomon
Executive Member for
Neighbourhoods and
Community Services

2. Overview

What are Public Rights of Way?

A public right of way is a path that everyone has the legal right to use on foot and mobility scooter and sometimes using other modes of transport (e.g. horses, horse-drawn carriages, bicycles).

535 miles /
860
kilometres of
Rights of
Way

Gates - 3000
Signposts - 1881
Stiles - 815
Culverts - 407
Bridges <5m - 241
Bridges >5m - 81

1155 Footpaths, covering 432 miles/695 km
110 Bridleways covering 75 miles/121 km
56 Restricted Byways, covering 27 miles/44 km
1 Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT) covering 0.5 miles/0.75 km

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 placed a legal obligation on all Local Authorities to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) to outline their aims for managing and improving local public rights of way (PRoW) in their area and to review, amend or rewrite this plan at least every 10 years.

Our first RoWIP (2007-2017) was updated in 2010 and was due for review in 2020. This is therefore our second RoWIP, the production of which has been delayed due to the Covid restrictions and workload pressures.

Through this Plan North Somerset Council (NSC) will manage the PRoW provision for the benefit of the physical and mental wellbeing of walkers, equestrians, cyclists and those with visual or mobility difficulties.

The main aims of this document are to:

- summarise the extent to which local public rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public
- summarise the opportunities provided by local public rights of way
- summarise the accessibility of local public rights of way
- detail the proposed action we will take for the management of local public rights of way and for securing an improved network

This Plan has been completed following a wide-ranging consultation exercise with users. The final version will be made available on the Council's website.

Our Vision

A connected, accessible and well-maintained network of local public rights of way that meets current and future needs of users, encourages them to engage with the natural environment, promotes health through use for exercise and leisure, helps reduce carbon emissions through use for sustainable travel, promotes the use of multi-user routes to ensure the best value for both the public and use of public money, providing a safe and enjoyable environment for all.

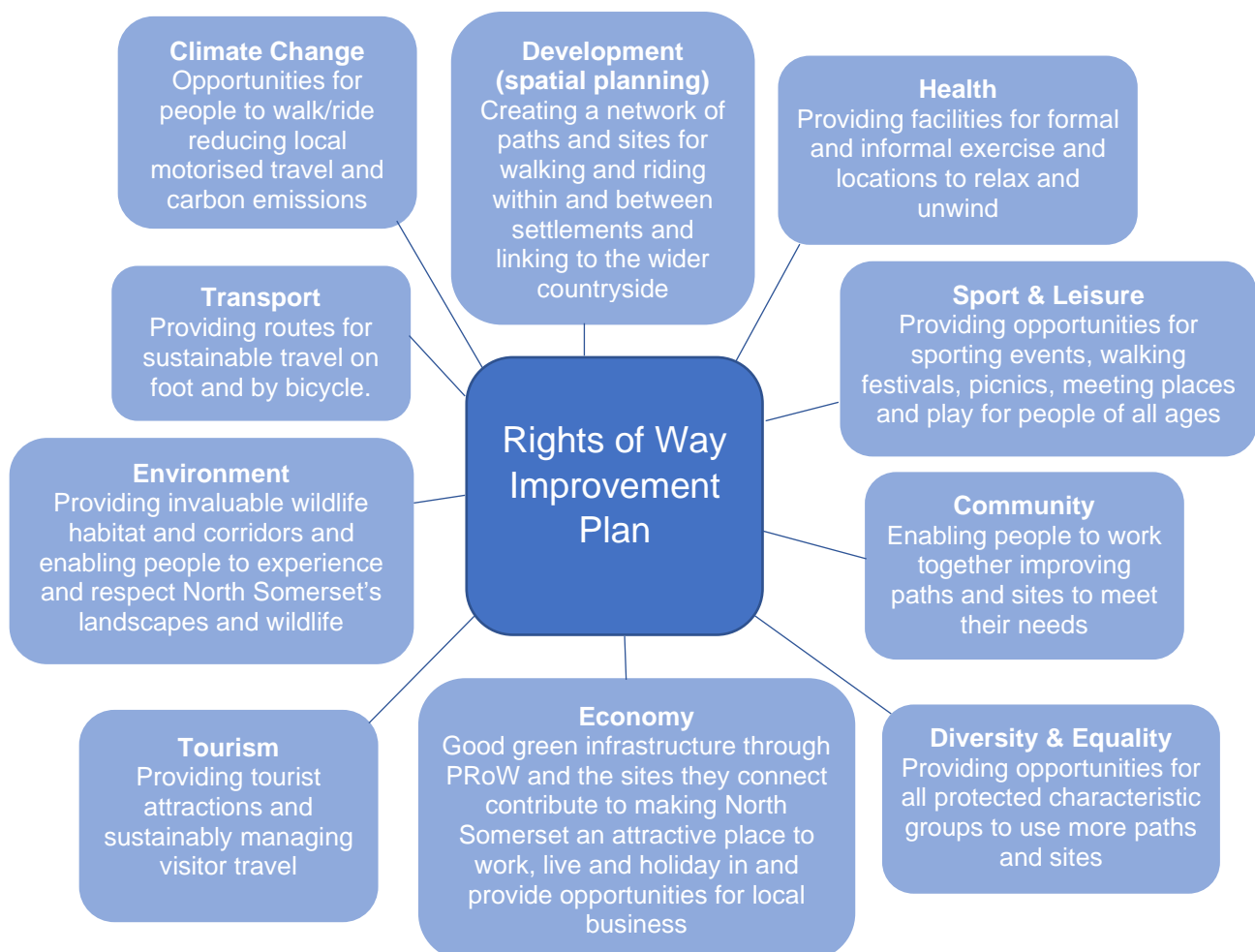
3. Background

Public Rights of Way (PRoW) are a valuable resource for North Somerset residents and visitors alike, allowing access to the beauty and tranquillity of large parts of our countryside. The PRoW network provides a safe alternative to increasingly busy roads and lanes. They enable people to enjoy the outdoors and appreciate wildlife and the landscape whether on foot, on mobility scooter, by bike or by horse. They form part of everyday life for many, providing access to shops, workplaces, educational and health services as well as being a vital link to public transport.

North Somerset has a PRoW network of around 860 kilometres/535 miles, consisting of Footpaths, Bridleways, Restricted Byways and one Byway Open to all Traffic (see Table 1 for definitions). These are illustrated on our [Definitive Map](#) which North Somerset Council maintains as an accurate record through continual review and makes available to the public.

North Somerset also has other sites and routes which provide access opportunities such as permissive paths, green lanes, cycle tracks, parks and common land and the forthcoming Natural England National Trail, the England Coast Path.

Strategic Context for the North Somerset RoWIP



4. Overview of North Somerset

North Somerset is a mix of coastline and countryside with towns and villages spread evenly. The north easterly region of the district lies adjacent to the Greater Bristol conurbation. North Somerset's land area of approximately 375sq km is bordered by Bristol City and Bath and North-East Somerset Councils, and the county of Somerset. Approximately 42km of coastline along the Severn Estuary forms the district's north-western boundary.



Figure 1 The area of North Somerset

Approximately 215,052 people live in North Somerset, of which around 70% live within the main urban areas of Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead. The area's resident population increases each year through visitors. Such a substantial increase not only represents a significant potential market for leisure-related tourism, but also represents higher potential usage of local rights of way.

North Somerset is generally prosperous, but some communities have greater needs and problems relating to unemployment, low income, environmental conditions and accessibility. Levels of deprivation within North Somerset are generally low, however, parts of Weston-super-Mare are amongst the most deprived in the country, have no access to private cars and suffer from limiting long term illness.

The landscape of North Somerset is highly varied, with open moors and river flood plains contrasting with ridges, gorges and rolling farmland. The natural environment in our region contributes substantially to the identity, sense of place and quality of life in

the district, as well as its economy and attractiveness as a place in which to live and invest.

The predominantly rural setting throughout North Somerset coupled with its varying geology and topography has resulted in a landscape of great nature conservation value which is reflected in the number of international, national and locally designated sites throughout the area. This includes: 4 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) including the Severn Estuary European Marine Site (which is a SAC, Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site); 56 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); 2 National Nature Reserves (NNR); 13 Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The geographical location of North Somerset makes it an attractive tourist destination. Its combination of coastal setting, beautiful countryside, accessibility via the M5 and Bristol Airport, and close proximity to Bristol, the City of Bath (a World Heritage Site), Cheddar Gorge, Wells and the rest of Somerset make it a versatile location which could appeal to a wide tourist market.

The district is made up of a number of key attractions; coastal towns such as Weston super Mare, Clevedon and Portishead; Tyntesfield, the National Trust's Estate; Ashton Court Estate and Leigh Woods and the section of the England Coastal Path which passes through our District (Aust to Brean) where works have commenced and which is hoped to be completed by the end of 2023. Our element of this is to be known as the North Somerset Tidal Trail.



Figure 2 Collage of North Somerset Landscapes

5. Overview of the North Somerset PRow Network

Key Statistics

The PRow network in North Somerset is 860 km in length consisting of Footpaths, Bridleways, Restricted Byways and one Byway Open to All Traffic (BOATs), as seen in Table 1.

Type of PRow	For use by	Symbol	Km	Miles	%of total
Footpath	Walkers, mobility aid users		695	432	80.8
Bridleway	Walkers, mobility aid users horse riders and cyclists		121	75	14
Restricted Byway	Walkers, mobility aid users horse riders, cyclists and horse drawn carriages		44	27	5
BOAT	Walkers, mobility aid users horse riders, cyclists, horse drawn carriages and motor vehicles		0.8	0.5	0.2

Table 1: Length of PRow by type (Jan 2022)

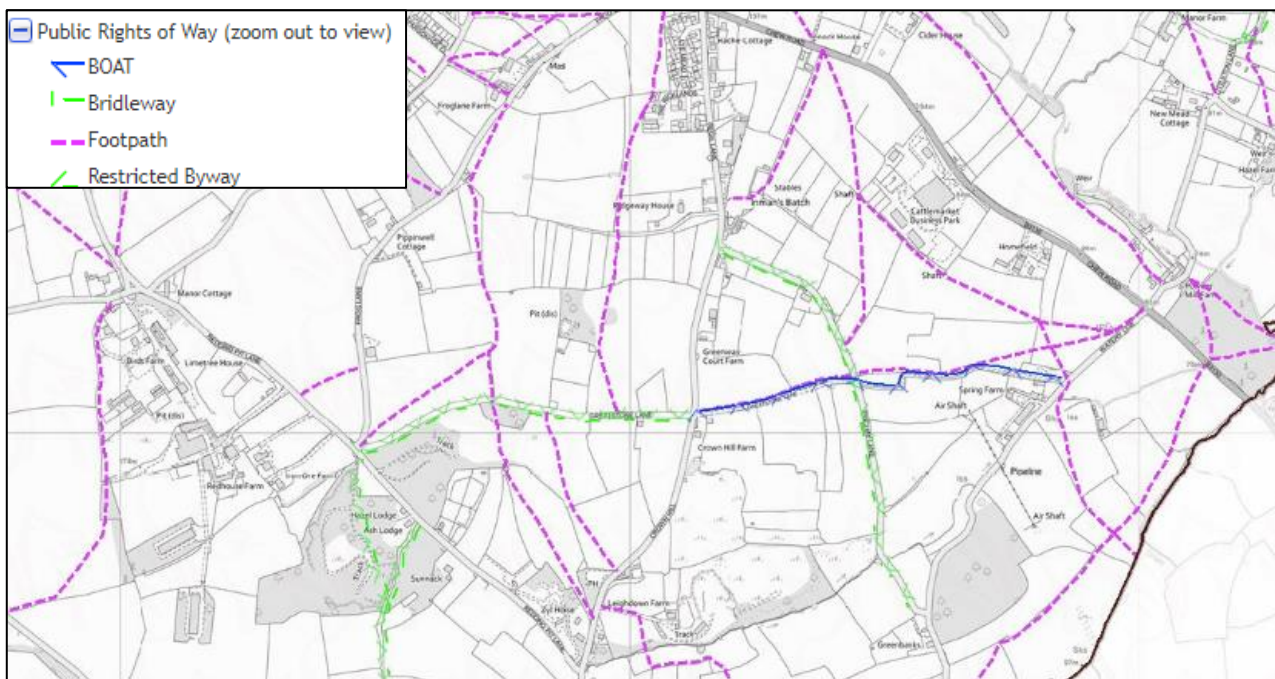


Figure 3 Example of PRow in North Somerset

Trends in Use

Usage of our public rights of way has increased since the start of the Covid pandemic. One indication of this greater usage is through higher numbers of issues reported to the PRow team (see Figure 4) which increased 17% in the two years following the start of the pandemic.

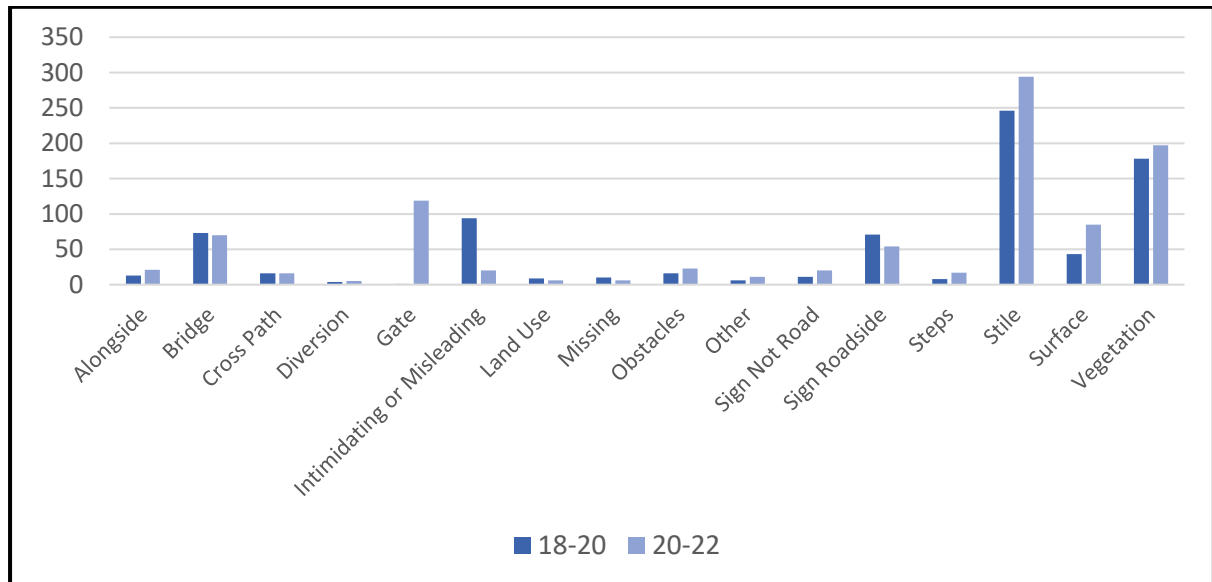


Figure 4 Number of PRow issues reported pre and post Covid 19

Whilst most of the length of the Strawberry Line is not a public right of way, counter data from the Winscombe section where multiple rights of way intersect also demonstrates an increase during the first year of the pandemic (see Figure 5).

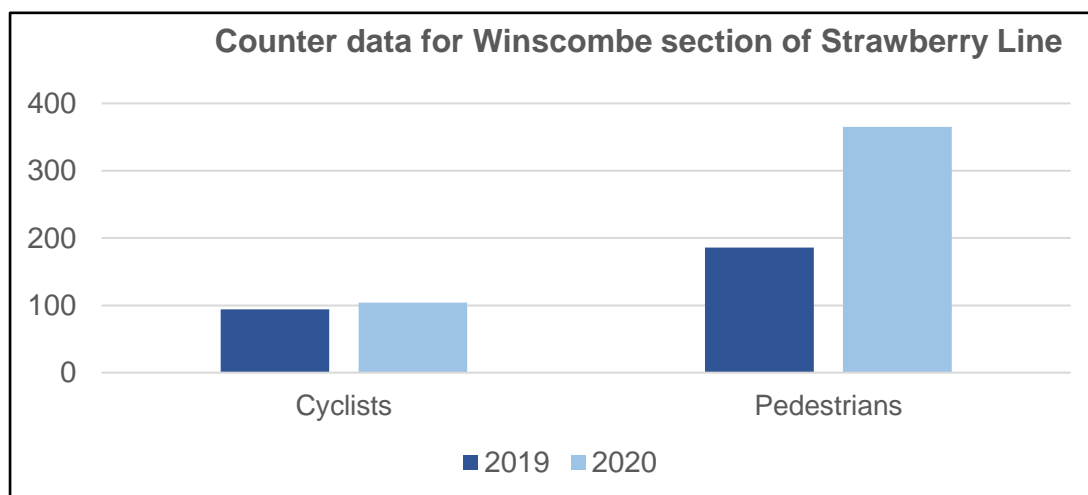


Figure 5: Increase in average daily cyclist and pedestrian counts pre and post-Covid outbreak

Data from visitor counters in the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty have shown an increase of up to 54% in visitor numbers for paths on Bleadon Hill and 31% on Crook Peak between 2019 and 2021.

Rights of Way Users

A wide variety of users enjoy our rights of way, including but not exclusive to:

Walkers – the use ranges from residents using routes for dog walking and family outings to regular, dedicated users such as ‘ramblers’ and tourists exploring new areas. Their use can be both recreational and for commuting. Walkers comprise the largest percentage of PRow users.

Horse riders – these use local rides (bridleways, restricted byways, byways open to all traffic and quiet roads) for daily recreation and horse exercising. Some riders will box their horses to areas further afield. The majority of these bridleways have no access or facilities for horse transport.

Cyclists – these range from family rides along even level routes to all-terrain use incorporating the road network for connectivity. Cycling along the network is also used for commuting.



Figure 6 Collage of some PRow Users

Carriage drivers – whilst such use is limited, this can involve the whole family giving access to the countryside for users who are unable to use it by other means.

Motorised vehicle users – in North Somerset there is only one Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT) making motor vehicle opportunities for lawful off-road recreational driving by motorbikes and 4 x 4 vehicles very limited. This type of route requires greater maintenance investment per length of route to maintain in a safe condition because of the heavier levels of use. An increase in provision has been requested by some BOAT users.

Users with access needs – this can include disabled people, such as those who are blind or partially sighted, those with a mobility impairment*¹ and those with other

¹ RoWIP guidance defines “mobility impairment” in its broadest sense. For example people with either temporary or permanent mobility impairment can include older people, younger people, pregnant women, people experiencing ill health, carers of people with visibility and mobility impairment, people who use pushchairs to carry young children and people who use wheelchairs or Electrically Propelled Vehicles (EPVs).

sensory impairments or conditions that may limit access or confidence to enjoy the PRow network. These users can enjoy exploring the PRow network in a wide variety of ways including via many specific modes of transport, however the availability of facilities such as parking, toilets, benches and route information are often of greater importance to ensure an enjoyable experience.

Mapping of the PRow Network

The PRow network in North Somerset is recorded on the Definitive Map which is regarded as the legal record of public rights of way. That historic data has been transposed into an electronic format and all the changes made to our network have been incorporated within this and it is known as the Working Copy of the Definitive Map. It can be located on the North Somerset website under [Definitive Map](#) (see Figure 7).

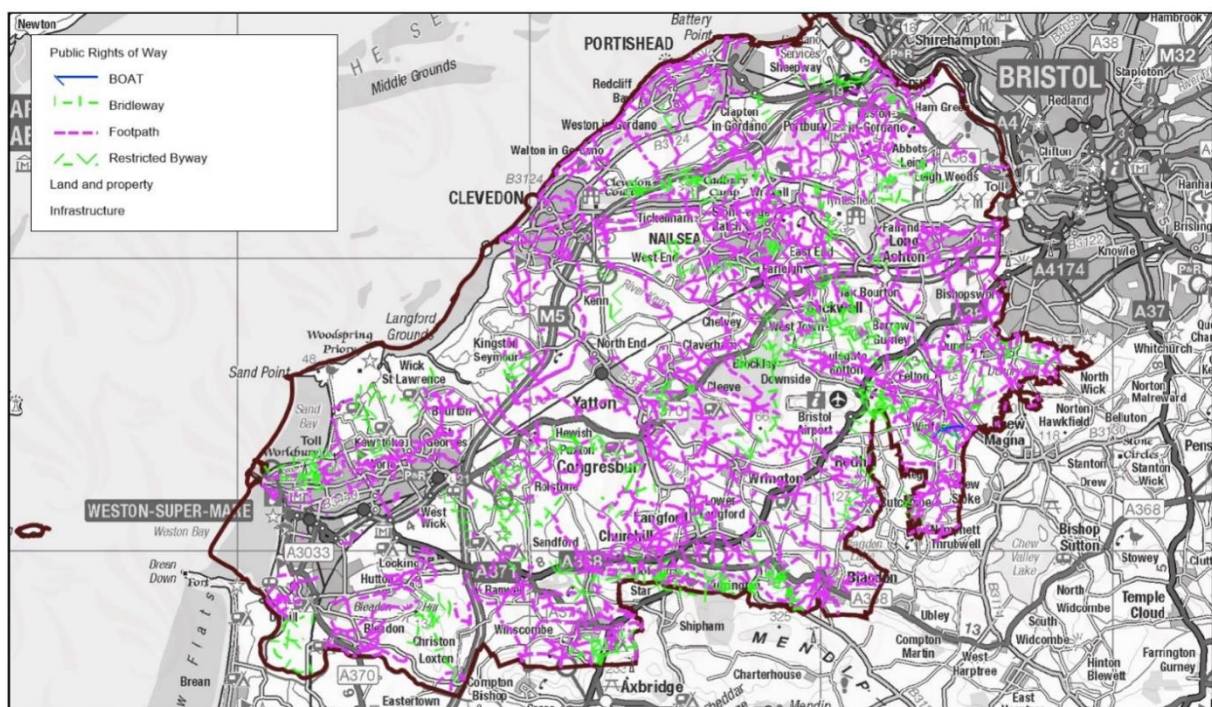


Figure 7: Public Rights of Way Network, May 2022

Alternative Types of Access

In addition to Public Rights of Way there are many other ways residents and visitors can enjoy the countryside and coast of North Somerset that connect to and complement the network.

Other access includes:

- Open Access land such as Felton Common, Common Hill in Walton-in-Gordano and Black Down
- The developing England Coast Path - The footpaths which follow our

coastline will soon become part of the England Coastal Path (North Somerset Tidal Trail). This will further encourage residents and visitors to enjoy the countryside and coast of North Somerset.

- Promoted trails such as the Gordano Round, Backwell and Nailsea Round, the Forest of Avon Trail, West Mendip Way, the Monarch’s Way, the Butcombe Trail, the Limestone Link and the Strawberry Line.

Current Identified Issues with our PRoW

Accessibility of Routes

Our routes have a wide variety of users and consideration is required to ensure the network meets the accessibility needs of our ageing population, people with limited mobility and those with disabilities. This will include identification of routes where barriers are creating access issues, working with landowners to install furniture to improve this and creating more circular routes suitable for those with limited mobility.

Order	Barrier type	Who is excluded by it?
1	Large Gap (greater than 1,100mm)	-
2	Chicane (greater than 1200mm - and less than 1.6m length)	Large mobility scooters and adapted cycles and some wheelchairs, scooters, pushchairs dependant on the extent of the offset of the barriers
3	Two-way gate	Can impede those with difficulty with dexterity and reach
4	One-way gate	Non-self-closing can impede those with difficulty with dexterity and reach Self-closing can impede some users of mobility scooters
4a	Kissing gate with RADAR by-pass	Requires more effort than most gates and can impede those with difficulty with dexterity and reach and those with large pushchairs
5	Kissing gate, latched	Generally more difficult to use than latchless ones. Impedes use by some mobility vehicle users and pushchairs
6	Smaller kissing gate (box type)	All wheelchairs, scooters and pushchairs
7	Smaller kissing gate (triangle type)	The above plus some child-carrying back packs
8	Squeeze stile (narrow gap in dry stone wall)	All wheelchairs, scooters and pushchairs, plus some others with limited mobility, larger people, some pregnant people, the less agile and many dogs.
9	Ordinary stile modified to make it more accessible for example three steps instead of two	A large proportion of wheelchairs, scooters and pushchairs, plus some others with limited mobility, larger people, some pregnant people, the less agile and many dogs.
10	Ordinary stile or stone step stile	As above
11	Ladder stile	As above

Figure 8 A hierarchy of barriers can be referred to, with the least restrictive option at the top.

We also need to encourage more people in North Somerset to make short journeys by walking or cycling to improve health outcomes and reduce carbon emissions. We therefore need to identify the routes linking the places people live with the services they need and maintain these to a high standard to enable people to continue using them.

Fragmented Nature of Routes

Local fragmentation and severance of PRow routes by roads is a problem for our users. A lack of continuous routes makes it difficult for cyclists and horse riders in particular to complete a meaningful journey without riding on roads, making them more vulnerable, or resorting to using footpaths.

When the M5 motorway was built around 1976 its construction led to the severance of many footpaths and bridleways, which are still dead-end paths today. Similarly, the development of the busy A38 has affected many rights of way which intersect it. Current investment in the A38 has to date not had any regard for the crossing of affected rights of way. Situations such as these across the whole of the district, make it difficult at times to find safe continuous routes.

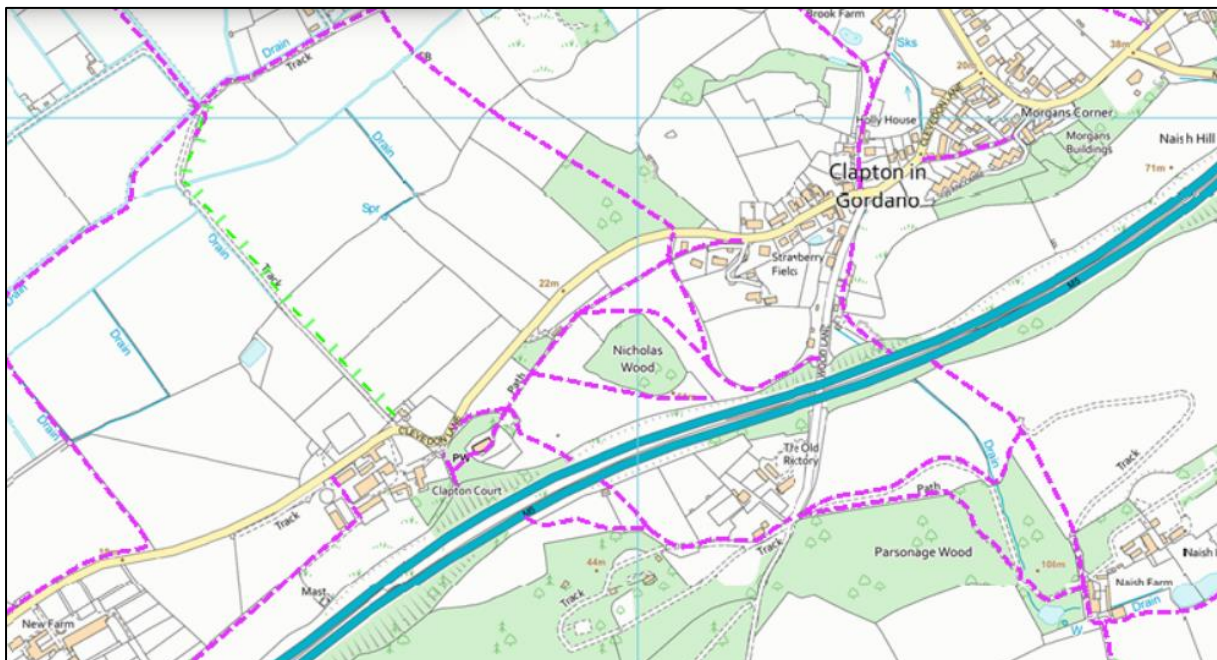


Figure 9: An example of severance of routes due to the M5 motorway

Multi-User Routes

To further promote healthy lifestyles, improve local access and rights of way, and to comply with the Equality Act 2010, North Somerset Council must ensure that wherever possible, any new routes are classed as multi-user paths. This will mean that sufficient provision is made for vulnerable user groups and the best value is achieved for both the public and our resource allocation.

The North Somerset Local Access Forum (LAF) defines multi-user routes as follows:

“A multi-user public right of way is one which permits the following groups of vulnerable non-motorised users to use it: walkers, cyclists, horse riders and carriage drivers; the exception to non-motorised users is for the use of electric wheelchairs and mobility vehicles to ensure that those with more limited mobility are also included.”

Public Involvement in Creating New Access

The Council acknowledges the existing PRoW network does not always provide the opportunities users seek but has limited capacity to deliver new routes. This is for several reasons, namely due to funding constraints but also requires the agreement of the landowner. If agreement is not forthcoming but the Council considers that there is a necessity to create a route, this can be investigated but will allow the landowner to claim compensation from the Council.

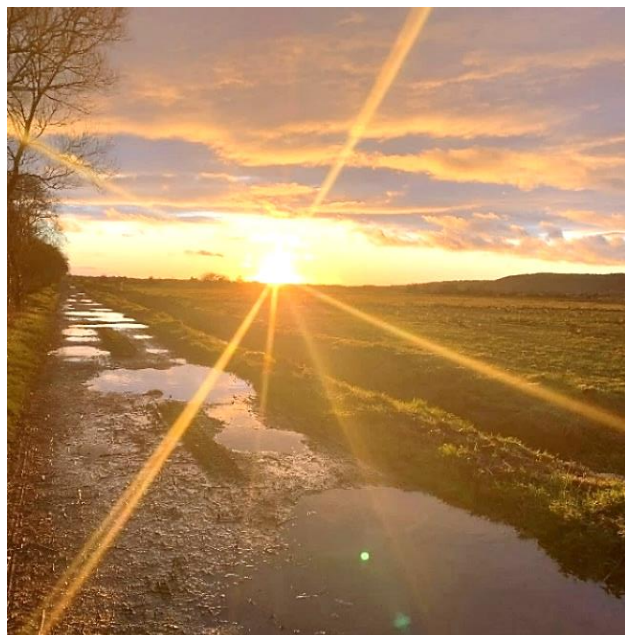
Community and user groups can get involved, for example through developing neighbourhood plans which will influence and identify improvements on routes in the vicinity of planning development areas. For further details of whether your area has one, or is developing or reviewing one, contact [North Somerset planning authority](#) or [parish council](#).

Communities can also be proactive in creating new access, whether permissive path or a PRoW. What will be required is feasibility on the ground; gaining support from residents and local councils/councillors, Local Access Forums (LAFs); and landowner permission.

Risks from Climate Change

Improved PRoW can play an important role in helping to address climate change. The UK Government is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions across the economy by at least 80% on 1990 levels by 2050. Changes to transport and how we travel will need to take place if we are to make a significant contribution to this target.

The Department for Transport is encouraging local authorities to help mitigate climate change by developing more sustainable transport systems, facilitating behaviour change and reducing the need to travel. In our region vehicles comprise 40% of our carbon emissions which amounts to 625,000t tonnes CO₂e annually.



Improving PRow and creating a safe and attractive environment will enable people to walk, ride and cycle for journeys and/or to use public transport and will reduce carbon emissions.

North Somerset is experiencing hotter, drier summers and warmer, wetter winters. It is predicted that there will be more frequent extreme weather events and rising sea levels - 80cm higher by 2080. These climatic trends will have an impact on people's use and enjoyment of PRow and public green space as well as to our current working practices to maintain and improve them.

As part of our action plan we are proposing that we monitor the impacts of climate change on our network, identify areas that are most vulnerable and develop plans to mitigate or adapt to the new weather patterns.

Predicted Climate Change	Implications for RoWIP/Site management in North Somerset
Warmer dryer summers	Increased visitor numbers. Increase in walking, riding and cycling. Increased pressure on paths/sites and communities. Dry and dusty paths prone to erosion. Possibly increase in conflict between different user activities. Increased pressure on promoted routes especially coast paths.
Warmer wetter winters	Wet and muddy paths prone to erosion. Difficult to use routes safely.
Storms	Increased coastal erosion and potential impact on network of paths in the coastal corridor. Obstructions – fallen trees.
Flooding	Washout of paths – gullies.
Vegetation	Lengthening growing season requiring more frequent vegetation clearance.

Table 2 Climate change implications for management North Somerset's PRow and countryside sites

6. Legal Obligations and Rights of Way

There are a number of obligations on the Council and landowners in relation to public rights of way and continuing to fulfil these requirements is one of the areas covered by our 2022 action plan.

Land Ownership

The land occupied by a PRow is very rarely owned by the Council. As the Highway Authority North Somerset Council has the following obligations:

- keep the surface of PRow which are maintained at public expense in a fit state for public use (see Figure 10)
- make sure obstructions are removed

- maintain some bridges over natural watercourses, including farm ditches
- provide at least a 25% contribution to landowners' costs for replacing and maintaining structures for the control of animals, e.g. gates or stiles, on completion of the work to a satisfactory standard
- make sure there are no notices that prevent or discourage the use of a public right of way
- add signs where a public right of way leaves metalled roads
- make sure the public's rights to use a public right of way are protected
- make sure landowners carry out their duties, and take action if they don't

The landowner is responsible for keeping a PRow free from obstruction which includes side and over-hanging vegetation and crops and the maintenance of structures such as gates and stiles.

Therefore, responsibility of a PRow is shared between the landowner and the Council. The management and maintenance of the 860 km of PRow in North Somerset is administered by the Public Rights of Way Team through working with landowners, use of volunteers including the Woodspring Ramblers Association and via accredited contractors. The Council will aim to work with landowners to resolve PRow issues. Failure on the part of either the Council or the landowner to fulfil their duties may result in legal action.

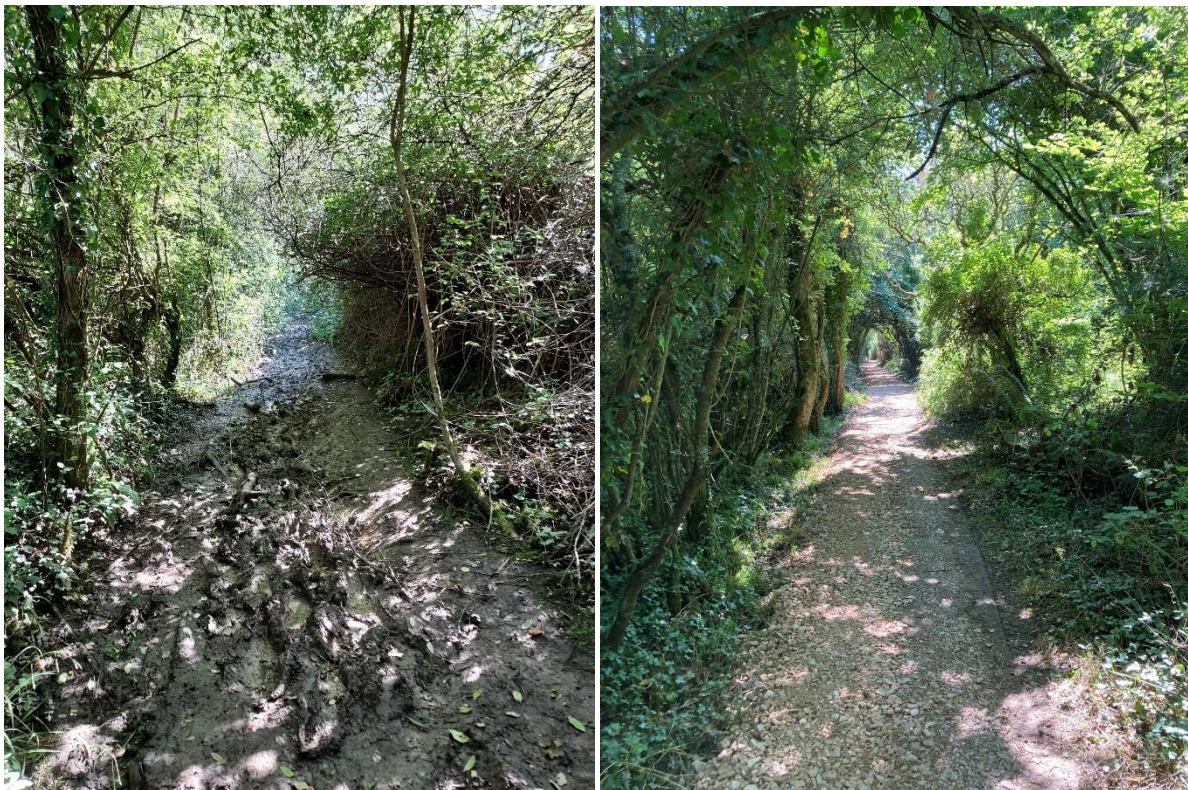


Figure 10 Example of a surfacing improvement on Monarch's Way

Definitive Map and Statement

The official record relating to PRow is called the Definitive Map and Statement and the original documents are available for inspection at the Council's offices by appointment or a digital working copy is available on our [website](#). The Council have a statutory duty to ensure that the Definitive Map for the area is kept under review and that as soon as is possible all required changes will be made. This map, which commenced with the Definitive Map of 1956 has continued to evolve recording all changes which are made through Modification Orders (Figure 11) and Public Path Order (

Figure 12) processes.

Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMOs) amend the map and statement to ensure that it is a correct record of the public's rights.

DMMOs are about whether rights already exist, not about whether they should be created or taken away.

There are 4 types of modifications which can be made to the Definitive Map made using DMMOs:

- Adding a public right of way to the Definitive Map
- Altering the status of a public right of way already recorded e.g. footpath to bridleway to record additional rights
- Altering the status of a public right of way already recorded e.g. bridleway to footpath to remove recorded rights
- To remove a recorded right of way where evidence shows this has been incorrectly recorded

Figure 11 Definitive Map Modification Order definition

Public Path Orders (PPOs) make changes to the Definitive Map and Statement.

There are 3 types of PPOs

- Public Path Creation Orders which create new public rights of way or upgrade existing public rights of way
- Public Path Extinguishment Orders extinguish existing public rights of way
- Public Path Diversion Orders alter the alignment of an existing public right of way

Figure 12 Public Path Order definition

Inspection and Maintenance

Due to the capacity of the PRow Team, inspection and maintenance of the 860km of rights of way network is predominantly reactive. However, bi-annual schedules of maintenance works are issued to our contractor relating to footpaths which are routes to schools and also prioritise more popularly used routes such as the Gordano Round, Monarch's Way and Coast Path. Issues which are reported to the Council by the public are assessed ensuring that health and safety issues are addressed first. The Council will contact landowners regarding matters that they are responsible for according to priority and resources available.

Working with Volunteers

Over the last 10 years the Council's Access Officer has developed a strong working arrangement with Woodspring Ramblers Association who initially undertook minor improvement works. They have now been trained to undertake a variety of valuable projects including installation of furniture, replacing bridges and vegetation clearance. Going forward further work should be undertaken to encourage other volunteer groups throughout the district such as Friends of the Land Yeo and parish council volunteer groups to work with the Council on projects important to them.



Reporting and Recording Issues on the Network

The public can report PRow issues online and by telephone. These are investigated and prioritised depending on their impact on users and health and safety criteria. When an issue is identified it is recorded on our Countryside Access Management System (CAMS). This IT system was introduced in 2008 to record structures on our network and enable issues to be logged thereby improving the efficiency and reporting capabilities as well as enabling more efficient maintenance plans to be formed.

Improving Accessibility

The Council aims to establish a public rights of way network which embraces least restrictive access, preferring gaps over gates (where stock proofing is not required) and gates over stiles. For several years, the Council has been working with landowners by providing gates for them to replace existing stiles, thereby improving accessibility.

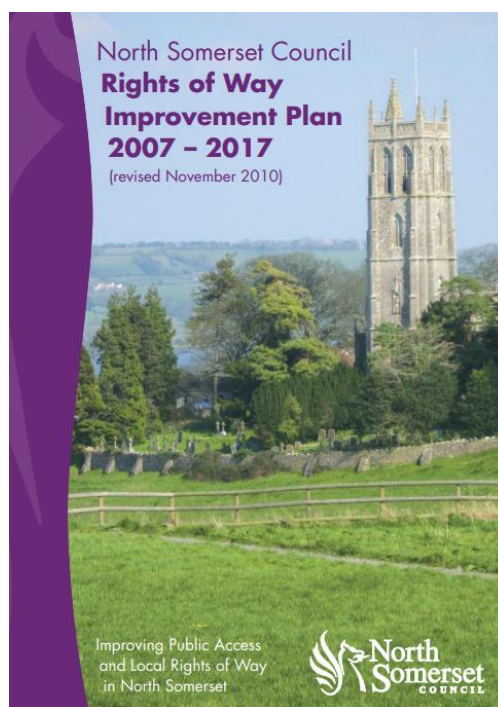
We have replaced 1021 stiles with gates since 2010. There remain 797 stiles which could be replaced with the landowner's permission.



7. The Importance of a RoWIP

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007 – 2017 (revised to 2020) was first published in response to the requirements laid down in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The RoWIP analysed the Public Rights of Way network (PRoW) and how it met the needs of local people, visitors and user groups. Its aim was to provide a plan of action for North Somerset Council to improve the network, to consider health and wellbeing, the local economy and to protect the environment.

During its preparation there was considerable consultation with users, visitors and landowners and the RoWIP aimed to address the opportunities and issues raised. The results of that consultation helped to define the content of the first Plan and may still be relevant to this revised RoWIP 2022.



However, the public sector has seen significant change since the last Plan was produced in 2010. Climate and Ecological Emergency declarations focusing on carbon reduction and nature recovery, coupled with economic growth aspirations to significantly increase housing and population means that there are increasing pressures on PRoW networks.

In addition the recent Covid-19 pandemic has defined nationally the growing need for outdoor recreation for health and wellbeing. There is an even greater requirement to have a clear, evidence-based, prioritised plan to target limited resources whilst giving the greatest public benefit. A new approach is necessary, delivering across multiple policy areas and integrating activity across local authority services and partner organisations.

RoWIP 2022 aims to identify how North Somerset Council will manage the Rights of Way Network for the benefit of all users and abilities. It also outlines ways in which improvements, such as provision of new routes and major works could be achieved over and above routine maintenance and examines the impacts of climate change on the network. The content of the original RoWIP 2007 – 2017 may still be relevant so should be considered as a relevant reference document to this Plan.

Effective targeting of resources together with reflecting the way PRoW improvements are identified and prioritised are key to this Plan. The Plan should not therefore be read in isolation as it will influence, and be influenced by, other plans and strategies such as:

North Somerset Council Corporate Plan 2020 - 2024
 North Somerset Council Green Infrastructure Strategy 2021
 North Somerset Draft Local Plan 2038
 North Somerset Climate Emergency
 Joint Local Transport Plan 4 2020
 Active Travel Strategy
 National Planning Policy Framework
 North Somerset Economic Plan 2017 - 2036
 Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021 - 24
 North Somerset Core Strategy 2017
 Parish Council Neighborhood Plans

Figure 13 List of plans and strategies that influence and are influenced by the RoWIP

Raising the strategic profile of the PRow network through this Plan will help increase awareness amongst policy makers and influence neighbourhood plans. Securing developers' contributions, those from Parish Councils and internal council funding will generate critical resources and investment for PRow improvements to address issues such as accessibility.

Progress since RoWIP1

In preparation for RoWIP 2022 the Council consulted with our town and parish councils and received 191 nominations in relation to improvements to PRow in their areas (see Appendix A). These consisted of suggestions including: reinstating/diverting/creating PRowS or permissive paths, installing gates, repairing stiles/gates/bridges, improving signage, resurfacing works, vegetation clearance, obstruction removal and connection of one or more PRowS.

Access to some time-limited, one-off funding allocated by North Somerset Council and using Section 106 funds has enabled progress with these nominations and through these works we are already achieving a key aim of the Council to replace stiles with gates, as seen in Figure 14 below. Using this funding we have so far installed/completed:

- 12 Bristol Gates
- 105 Pedestrian Gates
- 76 Kissing Gates
- 23 Bridges



- 9 Surface Works
- 3 Horse Gates

Since 2010 we have undertaken the following:

- 1021 stiles have been replaced with gates
- 322 bridges have been repaired/replaced
- 303 finger posts with signs have been installed
- 1050 vegetation issues have been resolved
- 316 fallen trees have been cleared



Figure 14 Before and after shots of stile replacements with kissing gates

Whilst there has been a delay with producing RoWIP 2022, work on the Public Rights of Way network between 2020 and 2022 has continued, with regular maintenance, seasonal works, legal work and responses to various issues by the public, groups and organisations, increasingly so during and following the pandemic. As an example, between 1 January 2020 and 1 January 2022 the PRow team logged 975 issues which had been reported or observed and despite the hinderance of Covid-19, 634 of those have since been completed.

We have made progress with the establishment of the England Coastal Path and the first completed stretch from Aust to Brean Down was officially opened in June 2022. We have also continued to work to address PRow-related issues and opportunities within new developments, commenting on average on 50 planning applications annually.

The PRow team have also worked with internal departments on a variety of issues including Planning (e.g. South Bristol Link Road to avoid route severance or creating diversions of PRow), Green Infrastructure Strategy (e.g. ensuring PRow enhancement and provision was included), Active Travel (e.g. Strawberry Line extension and coast-to-coast route) and continued to develop the Digital



Management System (CAMS) to better understand our network by recording assets including furniture, waymarking and surfacing.

8. Consultation on this RoWIP

This document was presented for public consultation between August and October 2022. Following consultation amendments have been made. A summary of the consultation responses can be found in Appendix B.

Anticipated Outcomes of the Consultation

There are a number of areas of this document where we sought public comments. The first of these related to PRoW user requirements and whether these have changed since our consultation on this subject for RoWIP1.

The following list of user requirements were identified during consultation for RoWIP1 and we sought views on whether these still exist and what new ones needed inclusion. Following consultation additional requirements were identified and these have been listed in the final column of the table below.

User Type	Requirements	Current Provision	Shortfall	Proposed additions
Mobility, visually and other impaired users	Routes suitable for use. Good information about routes. Suitable facilities (e.g. parking)	Limited routes identified for specific use.	Limited percentage of network available. Insufficient targeted information provided.	Parking, consideration of gate widths, path widths/inclines
Casual Walker	Safe, clean and interesting environment for people and children. Good information (for example website, leaflets and on the ground waymarking)	860km of public right of way plus 500ha of area-wide access and permissive access over private land	Need to continue reducing obstructions, ensure adequate signage and improve surfacing where possible to increase 'ease of use'.	Connection with public transport, safer crossings over highways, greater variety of routes
Walkers with Dogs	Means of passing through stiles. Facilities for dog mess and drinking. Areas in which dogs can run free legally and without affecting livestock.	860km of public right of way plus 500ha of area-wide access and permissive access over private land	Need for greater education amongst dog owners about responsible behaviour and risks to livestock. Need for routes with suitable facilities.	Requirements deemed sufficient

Ramblers	Variety of routes. Good access furniture. Continued mechanism for dealing with complaints and definitive map problems	860km of public right of way plus 500ha of area-wide access and permissive access over private land. Backlog of Legal Orders for processing. Procedure for handling complaints moved online.	Need to increase 'ease of use'. More publicity/promotion. Backlog of Legal Orders has been reduced, however work still to be done	Requirements deemed sufficient
Cyclists	Variety of route options with good connectivity, including routes free of difficulty (for example avoiding dangerous road crossing and steep hills). Improved publicity and promotion	280km of public rights of way and cycle tracks plus permissive routes. Fragmented network. Information on some routes published.	Small percentage of local rights of way available for cyclist and very little permissive. Poor connectivity. Need to improve information online and through publications	Better segregation
Utilitarian users (walkers and cyclists)	Safe, off-road network that links residential areas and key destinations (for example schools, places of work and shops). Good all-weather surfaces.	Existing network of highways, including public rights of way, footways and cycle tracks plus permissive paths.	Connectivity of links between trip generators.	Fully gated routes to villages, safer connections at roads
Horse riders	Routes that are free of obstructions, well signposted, waymarked, free from vegetation, suitable surfaces, safe to use and form circular routes at least five miles long.	123km of public rights of way and 1.5km permissive route. Fragmented network, minimal publication of routes. Roadside verges could	Only small percentage of local rights of way available for horse riders, very little permissive use available. Poor connectivity, few circular routes, limited information.	Path widening, vegetation control, disabled users

		offer possibilities.		
Carriage Drivers	Adequate parking. Good length of route.	38km of public rights of way.	Small length of route publicly available. Poor connection.	Requirements deemed sufficient
Off Road Motorists	Unsurfaced routes that are free from obstruction and have character. Challenging natural gradient and surface. Reasonable length and interesting topography. Routes that would not be damaged by light vehicle use.	0.7km of public right of way	There is negligible provision for off-road driving on local rights of way in North Somerset. These routes require greater investment due to degradation by vehicles.	Requirements deemed sufficient

Figure 15: PRow user requirements as identified in RoWIP1 together with 2022 consultation additions

In addition to establishing the current position on user requirements, we also sought to confirm whether our objectives, statement of action and corresponding action plan are fit for purpose or whether amendments were required. The objectives and action plan were both updated to reflect consultation feedback.

9. RoWIP 2022 Objectives

Key Themes

Within our Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007 – 2020 four ‘Key Themes’ were identified:

1. Vision and culture
2. Working practices and processes
3. Services and facilities
4. Communication and education

We consider that these are still relevant and they have been reproduced within this document. Within the action plan we have broadly translated these four themes into the activity required to deliver improvements.

Theme 1 - Vision and Culture – having the right approach

To achieve our objectives we need to maintain our culture of continuous improvement. We have developed this RoWIP 2022 to:

- Develop policies to provide a clearer statement of what we intend to do.
- Develop a more forward looking, creative approach to developing, managing and promoting local PRow by focusing our work on meeting identified needs.
- Ensure local PRow are given appropriate recognition when determining Planning Applications, economic regeneration, tourism development, Strategic Transport and decision making in line with the hierarchy of highway users.
- Increase the number of people using local rights of way by improving the quality of their experience and promoting health and social benefits in the community.
- Promote alternatives to car travel, encouraging adoption of more sustainable modes of transport to help reduce carbon emissions.

Theme 2 - Working practices and processes – having the right tools

We have developed this RoWIP 2022 to:

- Develop procedures for encouraging the development of new access opportunities using a criterion led approach, with priority to be given to routes that would:
 - Be of value to those with disabilities and mobility impairment.
 - Create routes for horse riders and cyclists.
 - Provide links that allow circular routes to be created.
 - Re-align routes so that the resulting route is more convenient and/or safer to use.
 - Link urban areas to the countryside, especially in areas where provision is currently poor.

- Create better partnerships, greater joined-up working with key stakeholders and wider community involvement.
- Work more closely with landowners and Defra to develop more permissive access to meet specialist demand.
- Maintain appropriate engagement with the Local Access Forum.
- Improve the execution of legal processes, including handling Orders and keeping the Definitive Map under review.
- Respond more effectively and efficiently to user needs as resources allow.
- Develop, apply and uphold an inspection programme as resources allow.
- Develop, apply and uphold an enforcement policy as resources allow.
- Seek to secure higher levels of funding/resources for maintenance and development activities, including external funding.
- Make sure we have the information we need to judge our efficiency and effectiveness, for example clear data on the numbers of improvements made, miles of footpaths opened, obstructions removed etc.
- Continue to report on applications to change the network to the Council's PRow Sub-committee.

Theme 3 - Services and Facilities – doing the right things

We have developed this RoWIP 2022 to:

- Establish a system of prioritisation of limited funding and staff resources to enable the following:
 - Improve the network condition by keeping it free of obstructions and with surfaces appropriate to usage and, in some situations, facilities such as street lighting, benches, other access furniture.
 - Improve connectivity between existing routes within the overall network and to local communities (including, for example, schools, shops, places of work).
 - Provide better signage and way-marking.
 - Remove unnecessary barriers to access, applying a policy of least restrictive option.
 - Provide a range of routes to meet the variety of needs of the community and its visitors.
 - Encourage development of new routes, either permanent or permissive, where these generate sufficient benefits to users (for example, by linking network fragments, by allowing better use by commuters to school or work).

Theme 4 - Communication and education – publishing the right information

We have developed this RoWIP 2022 to:

- Establish a system of prioritisation of limited staff resources to enable the following:
 - Make the Definitive Map more readily available to those who want to see it.

- Provide better promotion of key routes through a variety of forms of communication.
- Provide better signposting to information about countryside access, including the local rights of way network, to as wide a range of potential users as possible
- In developing promotional material, make sure that information is included to educate the users about the area they will be passing through and how it is managed.
- Promote greater recognition of the value of good access.

Since 2010 we have developed records relating to the maintenance of the network. This has shown us that ease of use of our network has improved, however further improvement is required.

Strategic Aims

The RoWIP1 themes have been translated into 7 key strategic aims:

Ref Strategic Aim

1	Increase our PRow Network through establishing effective connections
2	Seek opportunities for improved strategic routes
3	Improve routes to make them more accessible and enjoyable for all
4	Encourage visitors to our region
5	Support opportunities for the PRow Network to help address the Climate Emergency through enabling sustainable travel
6	Support opportunities for the PRow Network to help address the Ecological Emergency through native planting, enhancing connectivity and engendering a better understanding of our natural environment
7	Contribute to sustainable development, improved health outcomes and enhanced quality of life for our communities

Objectives

These aims are supported by 5 specific objectives, our Statement of Action which equally support the key themes:

Ref Key Objectives

1	Provide a timely and effective maintenance and enforcement policy for the PRow network
2	Improve connectivity on the PRow network
3	Improve accessibility for all users
4	Improve awareness of the PRow network (e.g., promotion/signage) and its benefits (e.g., for health), understanding of the responsibilities of PRow users (e.g. behaviour) and landowners and the knowledge and confidence relevant to each type of user
5	Increase routes other than footpaths to address the inequality of PRow provision across North Somerset

These objectives will be achieved through the following main areas of activity and these are presented in more detail, together with our proposed actions, under the same 14 headings in Action Plan:

Ref Action Plan Activity

1	Reactive maintenance on the PRow network
2	Undertake proactive maintenance of the PRow network
3	Increase Landowner Engagement
4	Maintain the Definitive Map and Statement
5	Process Public Path Order applications
6	Process Definitive Map Modification Order applications
7	Update and maintain S31(6) and S53 registers online
8	Enable promotion of PRow network via a wide variety of means
9	Maintain asset management records on PRow network
10	Investigate and enable improvement to the network
11	Undertake engagement with the planning process
12	Keep under review consultation and legislative changes
13	Create initiatives, campaigns and communication to engage users
14	Maintain and improve partnership and stakeholder relationships

10. Our Action Plan

The Action Plan sets out the activities that North Somerset Council, along with its partners, need to focus on over the next ten years to secure better management and improvement of the PRow network in North Somerset. The foremost priority is to meet the statutory duties of the Council.

Improvement Schemes

The Council alone cannot deliver an improved access network that will meet the needs of all. The Council will, within available resources and where appropriate, work with partners to seek to gain improvements. Improvements could include major surfacing and bridge replacements and creation of new routes.

Some larger scale PRow improvement works will need resources to be identified. These could be funded through the Council's Joint Local Transport Plan 4 (JLTP4). Suitable schemes would need to be identified during inspections, via reports from the public or through the Walking and Cycling Strategy.

Access improvements can also be achieved via the planning system. The Council reviews all planning applications affecting PRow and comments as appropriate. It also works closely with planning authorities, developers and user groups to seek gains for communities to mitigate local development.

Schemes will need to be developed to a stage that demonstrates whether or not they are viable. Often referred to as a feasibility study, it may at this stage be demonstrated that an idea cannot be delivered as it is simply not possible to build it 'on the ground' or gain the necessary permissions. However, when a feasibility study can evidence that a scheme could be achieved, the next stage is for it to be fed through the correct channels to be prioritised for funding and delivery.

Drove roads are a common characteristic which could offer excellent opportunities for walkers including disabled users, horse riders and cyclists and may extend to carriage drivers. However, these routes would need large investment due to the waterlogged surface conditions which currently are problematic.

A starting point for any new scheme will be to consider who could benefit from a new route, such as walkers, cyclists, horse riders and the disabled, and be as inclusive as possible. Often the aim will be to achieve at least bridleway status, as this is the legal right of way which encompasses all vulnerable user groups. The eventual outcome invariably is a balance of the needs of all stakeholders, including users and landowners/managers. It may be that because of topography, landowner permission or other robust and defensible reasons, a lesser status may have to be delivered.

Partners – Initials Used

LAF – Local Access Forum	NE – Natural England
HE – Highways England	NT – National Trust
FA – Forest of Avon	NFU – National Farmers Union
FC – Forestry Commission	NR – Network Rail
PC – Parish Council	DF - Defra
CLA – Country Landowners and Business Association	SLMC – Strawberry Line Management Committee
GR – Gordano Round Group	NR – Nailsea Round
JLTP – Joint Local Transport Plan	BR – Backwell Round

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Activity	Timescale	Key Partners	Funding Stream
1. Reactive maintenance on the PRow network			
Reactive work will include vegetation clearance, repair or replacement of structures, replacement or installation of signage and surface repairs			
a) Manage reports from the public: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> respond in accordance with published timescales and priorities investigate reports, such as health and safety/total obstruction, arrange works with contractors or landowners as required increase awareness of how to report problems 	On-going	NSC PRow Team NSC Contractors Landowners	NSC revenue Landowners
2. Proactive maintenance of the PRow network			
a) Develop an inspection and maintenance programme in partnership with Parish Council and volunteer groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> liaison with PCs plan and undertake inspections log and prioritise work carry out agreed maintenance work 	Commence discussion within year 2022/2023	NSC PRow Team PCs NSC Contractor NSC Volunteers	NSC revenue

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> landowner engagement on priority issues 			
<p>b) Deliver an annual summer surface vegetation clearance programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> review paths included in annual clearance schedule including routes to schools allocated clearance schedule carry out clearance 	Routes to school prior to Autumn term and Summer term annually	NSC PRoW Team NSC Contractor NSC Volunteers	NSC revenue
<p>c) Deliver small scale improvements, including those suggested by Town and Parish Councils (see appendix), such as bridges, boardwalks, steps and vegetation clearance, prioritised to reflect health and safety needs.</p>	Ongoing	NSC PRoW Team NSC Volunteers NSC Contractors	NSC revenue Section 106/Community Infrastructure Levy income
<p>d) Climate change is leading to increased flooding and periods of drier weather resulting in surfacing issues for the network. Monitor these so that a management mechanism can be devised for the network as a whole.</p>	Ongoing	NSC PRoW Team	NSC revenue
<p>e) Investigate purchase of CAMS Mobile to improve productivity, information availability and flexibility.</p>	2022	NSC PRoW Team	NSC revenue/Section 106 funding
<p>f) Report on progress with maintenance</p>	Ongoing	NSC PRoW Team	NSC revenue
3. Landowner engagement			
<p>a) Engage with landowners to inform and encourage them to undertake their PRoW responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide advice about land management affecting rights of way on their land initially through direct contact notifying them of issues and expected outcomes where necessary through legal enforcement if work is not carried out within an acceptable timeframe and to the required standard 	Ongoing - this will be on a case-by-case basis dependent on issues being raised	NSC PRoW Team NSC Legal Services Landowners	NSC revenue Landowners
<p>b) Work with landowners to deliver a gate for stile replacement programme to secure improved accessibility</p>	Ongoing	NSC PRoW Team Landowners PCs	NSC revenue Section 106/Community Infrastructure

			Levy income Landowners
c) Seek through upgrade of existing literature a proactive approach towards securing landowner cooperation in keeping PRoWs open and available, i.e. during ploughing and cropping	Revised by 2024	NSC PRoW Team DF CLA NFU PCs	NSC revenue
4. Definitive Map and Statement			
a) As required by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Highways Act 1980, Town and Country Planning Act 1991, including the forthcoming Deregulation Act: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To keep under review the accuracy of the Working Copy of the Definitive Map 	Ongoing	NSC PRoW Team NSC Planning	NSC revenue
5. Process Public Path Order applications			
a) To process PPO Applications which will divert and extinguish PRoW, seeking enhancements and improvements which are of benefit to the public where possible	Within 6 months of receipt	NSC PRoW Team NSC Planning	Self-funding
b) Significantly reduce the backlog of definitive PPO applications	By 2024	NSC PRoW Team	NSC revenue
6. Process Definitive Map Modification Order applications			
a) Collate and process new Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) applications within a reasonable timescale	Initial consultation to be undertaken within 12 months of receipt	NSC PRoW Team	NSC revenue
b) Significantly reduce the backlog of Definitive Map Modification Order Applications and maintain outstanding applications below 10.	By 2025	NSC PRoW Team	NSC revenue

7. Update and maintain S31(6) and S53 registers online			
a) Establish and maintain the S31(6) register online	Ongoing		NSC revenue
b) Establish an accessible Section 53 register on the council website detailing active DMMOs	Summer 2022	NSC PRoW Team	NSC revenue
8. Promotion of PRoW			
a) Ensure that the NSC website is developed to provide up to date information on the PRoW network, landowners' responsibilities and assistive literature explaining how NSC will work with landowners and partners	2022/2023	NSC PRoW Team	NSC revenue
b) Assist partners in promoting and advertising promoted routes, such as the Gordano Round, Nailsea and Backwell Round, Forest of Avon Trail and Strawberry Line	2023/2024	NSC PRoW Team FA SLMC NR BR GR	NSC revenue Funding from partners
c) Make greater use of on-site signage, including QR codes to inform the public about rights of way and seek engagement	2023/24	NSC PRoW Team	NSC revenue
9. Asset management on PRoW network			
a) Continue to replace, record, and update infrastructure data on the PRoW network (signs, bridges, steps, gates, stiles, etc.), including location, type and condition. CAMS data will record completion of replacement.	Ongoing	NSC PRoW Team	NSC revenue Section 106/Community Infrastructure Levy income
b) Investigate increased usage of counters to capture data to better understand user numbers	2023/24		
c) Report on progress with asset management	Ongoing		
10. Improvements to the network			
a) To identify routes which could be considered suitable for upgrading with less restrictive structures and develop a program of projects	2022/2024	NSC PRoW Team PCs User Groups	NSC revenue Landowners
b) Following consultation with Parish Councils to identify suitable routes requiring surface improvements which have most benefit to the public (i.e. safe routes to school, establishment of circular routes for less able users)	2022/2024	NSC PRoW Team PCs NSC Planning NSC Highways LAF Landowners	NSC revenue Section 106/Community Infrastructure Levy income Landowners

		Community and User Groups Grant Bodies	
c) Establish a list of priority major works to existing PRow (typically surfacing over 100m and large bridges), including schemes which will need funding through capital investment.	Ongoing subject to capital availability	NSC PRow Team JLTP	NSC capital
d) Identify locations for improved connectivity, including severed routes	2026	NSC PRow Team PCs User Groups	NSC revenue Section 106/Community Infrastructure Levy income Landowners
e) Identify locations for safety improvements at junctions with highways	2028	NSC PRow Team PCs User Groups NSC Highways	NSC capital
f) Identify routes which can be upgraded to accommodate a greater variety of users, including segregation and provision of additional facilities for those with impairments	2027	NSC PRow Team PCs User Groups	NSC capital Section 106/Community Infrastructure Levy income Landowners
g) Identify, map and promote routes which are specifically suitable for those with mobility impairments, aiming for a minimum of at least one per parish.	2027	NSC PRow Team PCs User Groups	NSC revenue Section 106/Community Infrastructure Levy income Landowners
11. Engagement with the Planning Process			
a) To seek, through planning applications, enhancement and improvement opportunities through S106 funding, Community Infrastructure Levy or developer build to the affected or neighboring PRow network according to their status, having regard for potential upgrade.	Ongoing	NSC PRow Team NSC Planning NSC Highways PC LAF	NSC revenue Section 106/Community Infrastructure Levy income

		Developers User Groups Public	
b) To deliver action plan objectives from Green Infrastructure Strategy including identifying areas where PROW/nature conflicts may arise.	2023	NSC PROW Team NE Landowners	NSC revenue Section 106/Community Infrastructure Levy income
c) To ensure that a Supplementary Planning Document giving guidance for development which affects PROW is included in local planning documents	2023	NSC PROW Team	NSC revenue
12. Consultation and legislative changes			
a) England Coastal Path development with NE. Continue to engage with consultation process ensuring future roles and responsibilities are clearly understood in regard to maintenance, legal processes and on-going liabilities. Ensure ongoing management and maintenance is embedded in PROW working practice.	2024	NSC PROW Team NE Landowners	NSC revenue Natural England capital/revenue Landowners
b) Engage with other consultations over the lifetime of this Plan that have an impact of PROW (Deregulation Bill, Green Infrastructure Strategy, JLTP, Corporate Plan to ensure any changes are for the benefit of North Somerset residents and visitors.	Ongoing	NSC PROW Team NSC Legal Services Central Government LAF Landowners	NSC revenue
13. Initiatives and campaigns			
a) To review and engage with initiatives and campaigns that seek to inform and positively influence users of the PROW network (Parish Council walking groups, Ramblers, Countryside Code, Green Infrastructure Strategy, North Somerset Life, Facebook, Ordnance Survey)	Ongoing	NSC PROW Team LAF User Groups	NSC revenue
b) Establish dialogue with organisations and departments which	Ongoing	NSC PROW Team	NSC revenue

actively encourage activities leading to a healthy lifestyle and who could promote use of the PRoW network.		Public Health organisations NSC Sport and Active Lifestyles Team	
14. Partnership and Stakeholder relationships			
a) Ensure continuity of LAF, providing support to the Chair in line with government guidance to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated NSC Forum Officer • Appointment of members • Annual election of Chair and Vice Chair • Agreed cycle of meetings • Agenda, minutes, annual report available on NSC website 	Ongoing	NSC PRoW Team NSC Legal and Democratic services LAF	NSC revenue
b) Create a landowner forum to facilitate good relationships	Q1 2023	NSC PRoW Team Landowners	NSC revenue

11. Implementation and Progress Monitoring

Delivering the Plan

The draft Plan was published for public consultation and the comments received have helped to shape the development of this final version of the Plan, its objectives and our proposed actions. We sought comments from local town and parish councils, government organisations and agencies, local and national user groups, the North Somerset Local Access Forum, local community interest groups and the residents of North Somerset, amongst others.

The process of preparing this Plan has been led by North Somerset Council in its capacity as the local highway authority. Whilst we are required to prepare the Plan, there is no legal requirement nor extra funding to implement it. However, there are a number of income streams which we can access. These are section 106 development funding, Community Infrastructure Levy, capital funding from North Somerset Council and external grant bodies. These funding streams will help us to achieve significant improvements and derive benefit for our residents and visitors.

The existence of this RoWIP will provide evidence to grant bodies that we are committed to developing and improving the PRoW network in North Somerset. The continued enthusiasm and collective effort of many key players and decision-makers is therefore fundamental to its implementation and by association, its success. They will continue to play a critical role in delivering the actions. Without the support of these stakeholders and the injection of additional funding, minimal improvements will be able to be delivered each year.

Monitoring

We recognise that many of the actions proposed in our Statement of Actions are aspirations that will be dependent on the availability of sufficient resources. We will monitor and report on each year's activity in the form of an annual report. This will include reporting on what projects have been achieved. This will be submitted to the LAF for their comment and placed on the Council website. We will also provide regular updates on improvement schemes via social media channels to update residents and visitors on our progress and encourage greater usage of our PRoW network.

12. Appendices

Appendix A. Town and Parish Council route improvement nominations

Parish	PROW Ref / Unrecorded	Description of Route	Proposed change	Status
Abbots Leigh	LA1/11?	Reinstatement of the PROW from the end of Church Road in Abbots Leigh village (grid ref 547743) through to Oak Lodge in Leigh Woods (grid ref 551744).	Additional route	Not currently achievable*
Abbots Leigh	Unrecorded	Creation of a permissive path from grid ref 546734 on path LA 1/1 to Leigh Woods at grid ref 548741.	Additional route	Not currently achievable*
Abbots Leigh	Unrecorded	Reinstatement of a historic path from the A369 at grid ref 546734 to Upper Farm at grid ref 544726	Additional route	Not currently achievable*
Abbots Leigh	Unrecorded	Reinstatement of a historic path from near the Church in Abbots Leigh (at grid ref 544740) to opposite Freeways (at grid ref 541744) on the road from the A369 to Leigh Court.	Additional route	Not currently achievable*
Abbots Leigh	LA1/11	LA 1/1 near the Beggar Bush Lane traffic lights (grid ref 553732)	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Abbots Leigh	LA1/6	3 stiles on the LA1/6 footpath between the A369 end of Blackmoor Road at grid ref 534744 and its exit onto the road to St Katherine's School (at grid ref 531749)	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Abbots Leigh	LA1/4/50	Wooden stile at entrance to Abbots Pool wood	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*

Abbots Leigh	LA1/1/20	Wooden stile on path at Stoke Leigh Lodge	Access Improvement	In progress
Backwell	LA2/32/20	Between Westfield Rd and Westleigh school. Stone pavement to clear up muddy surface. Route between the Westfield estate and the primary school	Surface Improvement	In progress
Backwell	ST 489 691 ST 489 692	Replace stiles with gates. Footpath cuts across fields next to Leisure centre.	Improve Access	In progress
Backwell	Across all paths in the Backwell parish	Continue to replace all stiles with gates. All existing routes not already converted.	Improve Access	In progress
Backwell	ST 490 695	Upgrading existing path - Footpath that goes under railway bridge joining Backwell Common with the fields adjoining fields near Leisure Centre	Surface Improvement	In progress
Backwell	ST 489 693 (suggests LA2/24/30)	Replace stiles with gates Route to Pitt Lane NW of village	Access Improvement	In progress
Backwell	ST 487 696 (suggests LA2/29/10)	Replace stiles with gates Footpath en route to Dibden's farm	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Backwell	LA2/7b	Footpath / Bridlepath descending from Jubilee Stone to Churchtown. Signposts or gate for cyclists	Additional direction signs	Scheduled or Complete
Backwell	Link between LA2/49 and LA4/14	Replace or relay footpath Path just outside the parish border linking Brockley & Backwell)	Additional route	Not currently achievable*
Backwell	ST 471 687 to point W (suggest LA2/33)	Signposts required on existing Grove Farm estate	Additional direction signs	Scheduled or Complete

Backwell	ST 474 680 to point NW (suggest LA4/13)	Signposts required on existing Grove Farm estate	Additional direction signs	Scheduled or Complete
Backwell	LA2/13/10	A gate that could do with replacing sooner rather than later is the one by Sores Court	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Backwell	LA2/13/10	The one at the Dark Lane end of the path that runs across the fields behind Oakley Close needs a new gate.	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Backwell	LA2/26/30	Small path across one field to driveway to house	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Backwell	LA2/29/10	Footbridge with worn away area when stepping off	Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Banwell	Unrecorded	Create a cycle way	Additional route	Not currently achievable*
Banwell	Unrecorded	Havage Drove running from 411620 Nye Road to 405618 Boxbush Lane.	Additional route	Not currently achievable*
Banwell	PROW AX3/3?	Stonebridge Farm to Whitecross Lane	Additional Route	Still to be addressed
Banwell	AX3/51/10	Stile at end not fit for purpose	Access Improvement	In progress
Barrow Gurney	New Link to Monarchs Way	An important arterial route linking Barrow Gurney to Long Ashton.	Additional route	Still to be addressed
Barrow Gurney	Part of Cycleway 344	Important link to the A38, A2 public transport to Bristol and Bristol Airport.	Major vegetation clearance	Scheduled or Complete
Barrow Gurney	LA3/9/10, LA3/9/20, LA3/12/10 and LA9/15/10	An important arterial route linking Barrow Gurney village and the Barrow Court area to Flax Bourton.	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*

Barrow Gurney	LA3/2, LA3/2, LA3/3, LA3/6, LA3/6, LA3/20, LA3/10, LA3/10, LA3/10, LA3/10 and LA3/10	A high interest circular route	Access improvement and additional signage	Not currently achievable*
Barrow Gurney	LA3/14, LA3/25, LA7/32, LA3/13, LA7/32, LA7/29, LA12/6, LA3/27, LA3/1 and LA3/2.	Another circular route that commences by the village green	Surface Improvement and new PROW to be created through Oatley Park.	Not currently achievable*
Barrow Gurney	LA3/10, LA3/17, LA3/23, LA19/84, and LA3/14	Another circular option that commences by the village green.	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Barrow Gurney	LA3/11/10	An arterial route linking Naish Lane residents to Barrow Gurney village centre.	Access Improvement and additional signage	Not currently achievable*
Barrow Gurney	Unrecorded	This route would provide a more topographically level and direct route to access A370 based public transport. This new route is the most requested by parishioners and would be Priority 1 if there were to be a viable proposal.	Additional route	In progress
Barrow Gurney	LA3/16/10	This PROW commences with a badly broken unsafe wooden stile.	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Barrow Gurney	LA3/1/10	This PROW does not exist as featured on the Definitive Map.	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Barrow Gurney	LA3/25/10	The route on the definitive map no longer exists.	PROW reinstatement	In progress

Blagdon	AX5/23/30	Street End Lane - south into the woods	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Blagdon	AX5/21/20	Stile	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Blagdon	AX5/23/30	Stile	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Blagdon	AX5/30/10	Garston Lane leading to the waterworks	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Blagdon	AX5/5 and 5/6	Score Lane Housing estate to Mendip Hills	Access Improvement	In progress
Blagdon	AX5/13 and 5/15	link to Burrington Combe for the village via Luvers Lane	Access Improvement	In progress
Blagdon	AX5/1	Link former council houses at Dipland Grove to the main village	Access Improvement	In progress
Blagdon	AX5/24/20	Busy path out of Rickford	Access Improvement	In progress
Bleadon	AX6/01/10	Commences on to the Walborough Reserve from the uphill end of Bleadon at the Toll Road	Access and Surface Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Bleadon	AX6/10	Goes in parallel to Purn Way through the allotments and up to Celtic Way	Access, Signage and Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Bleadon	AX6/12	Purn Way Westdown Cottage	Access, Signage and Surface Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Bleadon	AX6/18	Mearcombe Lane to Shiplate Slait	Access Improvement	In progress
Bleadon	AX6/21	Hellenge Gate nr Spindlewood House Shiplate Rd	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*

Bleadon	Goes left via Purn Hill SSI and right on to Purn Lane	Commences on Purn Way and links to Purn Lane across the edge of the SSI - on a pathway which does not go on to the actual hill	Upgrade to Bridleway	In progress
Brockley	LA4/6/10; LA4/6/20; LA4/6/30		Access Improvement	In progress
Brockley	LA4/16/10	Bowling Green in Brockley Woods to A370	Additional Signage	Scheduled or Complete
Brockley	LA4/4/20	A370 to junction with LA4/4/10	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Brockley	LA4/5/10	Brockley Court Farm to Brockley Elm	Access and Signage Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Brockley	LA2/49	Along Brockley Combe Road to Potshole triangle	Additional route	Not currently achievable*
Burrington	AX10/30/10	Rickford Lane/Burrington Lane (east) - restricted byway	Access and Signage Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Burrington	AX10/30/20	Rickford Lane/Burrington Lane (middle) - footpath	Access and Signage Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Burrington	AX10/30/40	Rickford Lane/Burrington Lane (west) - restricted byway	Access and Signage Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Burrington	AX10/101/10	Rickford (The Batch) to Bourne Lane	Access and Signage Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Burrington	AX10/108/10	Copthorne Lane (bridleway)	Surface Improvement	In progress

Burrington	AX10/104/10	Bourne Lane to Emley Lane	Access and Surface Improvement	In progress
Burrington	AX10/109/10	Langford Lane (near Bath Road) to A38 (Havyatt Green and to former rail track near bus stops near Yew Tree Close	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Burrington	AX14/13/10	Bath Road (A368) Peartree Ind Est to A38 (footpath)	Access Improvement	In progress
Burrington	AX/10/118/10	Langford Green Farm to Langford Court Lodge (footpath)	Additional direction signs	Scheduled or Complete
Burrington	AX10/37/10	Link Lane to Langford Green Farm (footpath)	Access and Signage Improvement	In progress
Burrington	AX10/113/10	Langford Lane past Langford Court to A38 and Lower Langford (footpath) links with AX10/120/20 (below)	Additional direction signs	In progress
Burrington	AX10/120/20	Bath Road (A368) near Brook towards Langford Court (footpath) linking with AX10/113/10	Additional direction signs	In progress
Burrington	AX5/24/10	route out of Rickford to Boune Lane	Access Improvement	In progress
Burrington	AX10/35/10	Small path from A368 to A3134	Access Improvement	In progress
Churchill	AX14/34, AX14/36	Route commences off Ladymead Lane and ends in Church Lane, Churchill	Surface Improvement	In progress
Churchill	AX14/21/10	Connects the A368 (Greenhill Road) east of Sandford to Churchill Green west of the Academy.	Surface Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Churchill	AX/14/66 and AX/14/67	Connects Greenwell Lane to Bakers Lane	Access and Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete

Churchill	AX14/67/20	Connects Bakers Lane to Stock Lane	Access and Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Churchill	AX14/44/60	Connects the Mushroom farm to Churchill Primary School, Pudding Pie Lane	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Churchill	AX14/53; AX14/67, AX14/68, AX14/69 and AX14/66	Connects Stoke Lane to Blackmoor	Access, Signage and Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Churchill	AX29/45/20 AX29/45/30 AX29/45/40 AX29/46/30	Route connecting the A368 (Greenhill Road) in Sandford to Churchill Green, but substantially further west of the Academy.	Access and Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Churchill	AX 14/24/20 to AX14/26/40	Route commences at Churchill Green to join footpath AX14/26/40 around boundary of Churchill Academy.	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Churchill	AX 14/26/40	Connects with AX14/24/20 and AX 14/ 25/10 and follows the 3 G sports pitches	Signage Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Churchill	AX14/26/25 links with AX/14/25/10	Connects with AX 14/ 26/45 and follows the hedgerow boundary of the Leisure centre fields up to corner of these fields and junction with AX 14/28/15, AX14/28/10 and AX14/25/20.	Surface Improvement	In progress
Churchill	AX14/28/10 connects with AX14/27/10	Follows the hedgerow and connects up with AX14/27/10.	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Churchill	AX14/27/10	Crosses through various fields and joins Honey Hall Lane.	Access and Signage Improvement	Scheduled or Complete

Churchill	AX14/30/10 links with AX16/30/20	Links two villages	Access and Signage Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Churchill	AX16/30/20	Walk along Honey Hall Lane in an East to West direction until you reach start of AX 16/17/10	Access and Signage Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Churchill	AX 16/17/10	From Honey Hall Lane, continues through various fields, to join AX14/25/20, AX14/25/10, AX14/28/10 and AX14/28/15.	Access and Signage Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Churchill	AX14/25/20		Access and Signage Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Churchill	AX14/42/30	Ladymead Lane going westwards along north side of shared utility site (Western Power/ BT)	Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Churchill	AX14/16/30 AX14/16/40	Route through Wyndhurst Farm from Lower Langford across the A38 to arable land and then to the Bath Road	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Clapton in Gordano	unrecorded	New path - route commences at the junction of Clapton Lane and B3124 and ends at the junction between Clapton Lane and Moor Lane	Additional route	Not currently achievable*
Clapton in Gordano	LA5/26a/10	Busy walking route next to M5 on hilly grass fields	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Clapton in Gordano		Failand Lane to A369	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Cleeve	LA 6/4	Rear of Italian Restaurant (A370) and crosses Cleeve Court fields to Plunder Street	Signage and Surface Improvements	Scheduled or Complete
Cleeve	LA 6/2	Between properties No 44 & No 46 Main Road (A370) climbing to KINGS WOOD	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete

Cleeve	LA 6/9	No 50 & No 48 Bishops Road, heads east to Brockley crossing Meetinghouse Lane & Littlewood Lane	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Cleeve	LA 6/11	Commences at the main gate to Holy Trinity Church (A370), heading north it links to Route 6/9	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Cleeve	LA 6/17	Upgrading existing path route alongside Goblin Combe Camp, Cleeve Hill Road	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Cleeve	LA6/14, LA6/12 & LA6/13/25	Littlewood Lane to Main Road	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Cleeve	LA6/10/30	Path along hedge line	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Clevedon	Suggest LA22/28	The Ripple from Edward Rd/ Edward Rd south to School	Surface Improvement	In progress
Clevedon	LA22/37	The Zig Zag Dial Hill Rd to Hill Road	Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Clevedon		The Coastal Path Marine Terrace towards Portishead	Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Clevedon	LA22/6/50		Access and Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Clevedon	LA22/41/10	Donkey Path Victoria Rd to Elton Rd	Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Clevedon	LA22/30, LA22/6, LA22/7 and LA22/8	Strawberry Hill Chestnut Grove to Walton Road	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Clevedon		Old Park Rd to Lime Kiln Lane	Surface Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Clevedon	LA22/55/10	Alexandra Gardens Alexandra Rd to Hill Road	Surface Improvement	Not currently achievable*

Clevedon		Footpath Gardens Rd to Hill Rd	Surface Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Clevedon		Footpath Kings Road to Old Park Road	Surface Improvement	In progress
Clevedon	LA22/2710 & LA22/26/10	Footpath from Gold Club to coastal path	Access and Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Clevedon	LA22/19/70, LA22/19/80	Footpath through estate running along river bank	Surface Improvement	In progress
Clevedon	LA22/51/10	Footpath linking Clevedon to Kingston Seymour	Access improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Clevedon	LA22/15/20	Route from Nailsea Wall to Clevedon	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Congresbury	Ax16/2/10 & Ax16/27/10	Millennium green to Wier	Surface Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Congresbury	AX16/27/20	New housing development to river Yeo	Surface Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Congresbury	AX16/56/10	Access to Strawberry Line	Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Congresbury	Ax16/7/20 at ST4365 62144	Footpath from village to Golf club	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Congresbury	AX16/17/10 at ST 43341 61241	Path from Village to Churchill School	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Congresbury	AX16/17/10 at ST 43254 61103	Path from Village to Churchill School	Access improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Congresbury	AX16/25/10	A370 to Smallway	Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Congresbury	AX16/37/20	Drove rd from sports ground to tarmac path AX17/37/10	Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Congresbury	AX16/37/20	Drove rd from sports ground to tarmac path AX17/37/10	Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete

Congresbury	AX16/10/10 to AX14/59/10	Currently busy section of B3133	Additional Route	Not currently achievable*
Congresbury	AX16/23/10 ST 434636 - 432636	From Church field to Strawberry line	Surface Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Dundry	Unrecorded	A new footpath from Dundry Village Hall, Crabtree Lane to Church Road.	Additional route	Not currently achievable*
Dundry	LA7/33/10 and LA7/33/20	Route commences on Highridge Road and proceeds south east down a short track to Dundry Lane	Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Flax Bourton	LA9/3/20	Re-route away from Festival Way Cycle Path along North Side of railway between LA9/5/20 and LA9/1/30.	Additional Route	Not currently achievable*
Flax Bourton	unrecorded	Festival Way mixed use cycleway from Farleigh Green LA12/2/10 to Station Road LA9/6/10.	Surface Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Flax Bourton	unrecorded	Festival Way mixed use cycleway from LA9/1/30 Railway Bridge to LA9/6/10 Station Road	Surface improvement	Not currently achievable*
Flax Bourton	unrecorded. disappeared from record.	Jcn LA9/3/10 and LA9/2/10 to Restricted Byway LA9/5/10 to reinstate diagonal field path shown on 1980's O/S maps.	Additional Route	Not currently achievable*
Flax Bourton	unrecorded	LA9/6/10 or LA9/22/10 to Jubilee Inn	Additional Route	Not currently achievable*
Flax Bourton	LA9/8/10	Re-route from Jcn LA9/9/10 to Field Entrance at bend in Station Road	Additional Route	Not currently achievable*
Flax Bourton	LA9/5/10	Restricted Byway from A370 to LA9/3/20	Surface Improvement	Still to be addressed
Flax Bourton	unrecorded	North end of LA9/6/10 to School west side of Station Road inside hedge.	Surface Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Flax Bourton	unrecorded. Previously permitted path.	LA9/13/10 to LA9/14/10	Additional Route	Not currently achievable*

Flax Bourton	LA12/2/10	Old Weston Road to B3130	Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Hutton	AX18/7/30	Lodwell Farm to The Bury	Surface Improvement	Still to be addressed
Hutton	AX18/8/10	Track from gate adjacent to the reservoir	Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Hutton	AX18/4/10	Canada Coombe, via gate through field of sheep to stile	Access and Surface Improvement	In progress
Hutton	AX18/9/10	Main Road to Elmhurst Playground	Surface Improvement	In progress
Hutton	AX18/2/10	Ascending footpath alongside the quarry at Upper Church Lane	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Hutton	AX18/9/10	Hutton Hill - Oakland Drive to Des Phippen Park	Access and Surface Improvement	Still to be addressed
Hutton	AX18/2/10	Start of footpath at Upper Church Lane	Access and Signage Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Hutton	AX18/10/10	Start of route at Banwell Road	Signage Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Kewstoke	N//A	Extending the existing footpath will provide a safe route for locals in particular Children	Additional route	Not currently achievable*
Kewstoke	AX19/2	Kewstoke Road to W.S.M boundary on Worlebury Hill	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Kewstoke	AX19/5	Bottom of Monks Hill to Worlebury Park	Signage Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Kewstoke	AX19/6	Norton Lane to Kewstoke Road	Signage Improvement	In progress
Kewstoke	AX19/7	Bridleway at entrance to Woodspring priory - Elmsley Lane to County road	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*

Kewstoke	AX19/8	Beach Road to Elmsley Lane	Access Improvement	In progress
Kewstoke	AX19/10	Bridleway Myrtle Farm Lane to Collum Lane	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Kewstoke	N/A	Crookes lane from Kewstoke Village Hall to Chip shop	Additional Route	Not currently achievable*
Kewstoke	N//A	Proposed Footpath from Village School to Anson Road	Additional Route	Not currently achievable*
Kingston Seymour	LA 11/7/10	North from Back Lane, past Riverside Farm and into Kenn Parish by two different routes	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Kingston Seymour	LA 11/11/10	East from Bullocks Lane to end at private fields. Was dissected when the M5 was built	Access and Signage Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Kingston Seymour	LA 11/5/10	North from Ham Lane to Middle Lane	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Kingston Seymour	LA 11/10/10	North from Ham Lane to Middle Lane	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Kingston Seymour	LA 11/9/10	North from Ham Lane to Middle Lane	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Kingston Seymour	LA 11/4/30	South from Ham Lane as far as the motorway	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Kingston Seymour	LA 11/3/30	South from Yew Tree Farm to a crossing over the M5	Signage Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Kingston Seymour	LA 11/13/20	South west from Yew Tree Farm to link with LA 11/12/10 and LA 11/13/30	Signage Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Kingston Seymour	LA 11/12/10	South from Ham Lane at Moorside Farm to junction with LA 11/13/20 and LA 11/13/30	Signage Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Kingston Seymour	LA 11/13/30	South from junction described in LA 11/12/10	Signage Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Kingston Seymour	LA 11/1/10	Continuation of LA 11/13/30 towards motorway at Phipps Bridge	Signage Improvement	Scheduled or Complete

Kingston Seymour	LA 11/2/10 & LA 21/31/30	From the south side of the motorway heading north east	Access and Signage Improvement	Still to be addressed
Kingston Seymour	LA 11/3/10	South east from the motorway bridge to link with LA 21/31/30, LA 11/6/10 and another that goes into Yatton Parish.	Signage Improvement	In progress
Kingston Seymour	LA 11/4/10	North east from motorway crossing to link up with LA 11/4/40	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Kingston Seymour	LA 11/6/10	North east from junction with LA 11/3/10	Signage Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Kingston Seymour	LA21/31/10	Continuation of LA 11/6/10	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Kingston Seymour	LA 11/4/40	South from Lampley Road motorway bridge alongside M5	Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Long Ashton		Developing a strategic route Festival Way from B3128 to B3130	Surface Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Long Ashton	LA12/12/60	Upgrade existing path Old PROW from Parsonage Farm footbridge to B3128 near Park and Ride	Surface Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Long Ashton		Widen existing PROW network. From car park at NE corner go Ashton Hill Woods to the entrance to the Tyntesfield Estate	Additional Route	Not currently achievable*
Long Ashton		Widen existing PROW network. From PROW on north side B3130 by Kingcott Mill estate to PROW on footbridge over the railway 200m to the east on the B3130	Additional Route	Not currently achievable*
Long Ashton	LA12/5/95	Add a new path. Track crossing Yanley Quarry landfill site between Community Forest Path and PROW from Yanley Farm to Hanging Hill Wood	Additional Route	Not currently achievable*

Long Ashton		Provide safe crossings to Ashton Court. Community Forest Path at Church Lodge entrance to Ashton Court	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Long Ashton	LA12/28/10	Keeds Lane	Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Long Ashton	LA12/6/20	Muddy pathway along section of Monarchs Way	Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Long Ashton	LA12/32a/10	Path fallen away	Surface Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Long Ashton	LA12/25/10	junction with B3128	Signage Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Nailsea	LA13/49/10	Drove roads between LA13/49/10 and Manmoor Lane as Bridleways and create a new field edge Bridleway	Additional Route	Not currently achievable*
Nailsea	LA2/35/20 & LA13/29/10	Upgrade route to Nailsea and Backwell Station from Youngwood. Footpath between Nailsea and Backwell Station and Youngwood Lane	Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Nailsea	All Rights of Way within residential areas	Signposting to Town Centre All Rights of Way in residential areas	Signage Improvement	In progress
Nailsea	LA13/23, LA13/23, LA13/23	PROW which run alongside the public highway to utilise paths towards the town centre	Access and Signage Improvement	In progress
Nailsea	PROW crossing a road	Dropped Kerbs on All Rights of Way crossing roads	Surface Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Nailsea	LA16/17/20 & LA16/18/30	Creation of new PROW linking two existing PROW	Additional Route	Not currently achievable*
Nailsea	LA13/1/90	Improvements and repairs to Nailsea Round	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Nailsea	LA13/1/20	Improvements and repairs to Nailsea Round	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete

Nailsea	LA13/1/20	Improvements and repairs to Nailsea Round	Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Nailsea	LA13/1/20	Improvements and repairs to Nailsea Round	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Nailsea	LA13/1/90	Improvements and repairs to Nailsea Round	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Nailsea	LA13/50/10	Improvements and repairs to Nailsea Round	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Nailsea	LA13/7/10	Improvements and repairs to Nailsea Round	Surface Improvement	Still to be addressed
Nailsea	LA13/7/10	Improvements and repairs to Nailsea Round	Access and Surface Improvement	Still to be addressed
Nailsea	LA13/2/20	Improvements and repairs to Nailsea Round	Access Improvement	Still to be addressed
Nailsea	LA13/7/10 & LA13/7/20	Wooden gate on a bank overlooking wooden bridge structures that are too short for the flooded area and starting to decay	Access Improvement	In progress
Nailsea	LA13/26/30	Short path with stiles on either end	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Nailsea	LA13/27/40	two stiles at location could be changed to gates	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Pill & Easton in Gordano	LA8/8/20	Footpath through services but no connectivity with neighbouring routes	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Pill & Easton in Gordano	LA8/30/10	Upgraded Between the top of cross lanes towards the Rudgeleigh Inn	Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Pill & Easton in Gordano	Unrecorded	Path around the edge of the field to link with other PROWs	Additional Route	Not currently achievable*
Pill & Easton in Gordano	unrecorded	Rear access new cycle path (dual use) from Sturmey Way in St.Katherine's park.	Additional Route	Not currently achievable*

Pill & Easton in Gordano	unrecorded	New Path Pathway runs along the side of the field next to The White House	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Pill & Easton in Gordano	unrecorded	Track from Brandon house to Happerton lane	Surface Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Pill & Easton in Gordano	LA8/22/10 and LA8/26/20	Upgrading	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Pill & Easton in Gordano	LA8/54/10	Upgrading restricted byway from A369 to combe lane, through Hails wood by walking up the stream.	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Pill & Easton in Gordano	LA8/68/10	Footway across the Northbound side of the Avonmouth bridge to form a circular walk across the saltmarsh and back round to the village	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Pill & Easton in Gordano	LA1/6/60	Upgrade From the A369 to Cabots way	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Pill & Easton in Gordano	LA8/12/40	Path alongside allotments	Surface Improvement	Still to be addressed
Pill & Easton in Gordano	LA8/29/10	Path at Upper Happerton Farm	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Pill & Easton in Gordano	LA8/39/10	Footpath down to Happerton Lane	Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Portbury		Cross route across land with numerous stiles and overgrown vegetation	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Portishead	LA23/15/10	Field from Highdown school/ entering Portishead Downs via a stile and then joining with LA14/6/40.	Additional Route	Not currently achievable*
Portishead	LA23/4/20	Gordano Round from Sugar loaf beach to end of Kilkenny fields.	Surface Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Portishead	LA23/4/10	Gordano Round from East Wood to Portbury Wharf and Nature reserve	Additional Route	Not currently achievable*
Portishead	Various - recorded	Gordano Round - in its entirety	Signage Improvement	Not currently achievable*

Portishead	LA23/4/15	Gordano Round Coastal Path - maintenance due to erosion into sea	Surface Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Portishead	LA23/15/10	Gordano Round Coastal Path - maintenance - wooden bridges	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Portishead	LA18/4/30 to LA18/4/10	Blackberry Lane off Valley road to Weston-in-Gordano	Surface and Signage Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Portishead	Unrecorded	Improve access from North Weston to Weston Big Wood by confirming a ROW between Clevedon Road and WBW behind Hollis Avenue.	Additional Route	Not currently achievable*
Portishead	LA14/4/10, LA14/8/20, LA14/143/10, LA14/6/40	Avon Wildlife and Weston Big Wood and PROW paths	Signage Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Portishead	LA14/11/20	Between Hillcrest Road and Nore Road - Kingsway	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Portishead	LA23/2/10	East Wood, issues with obstacles, structural surface	Surface Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Portishead	LA15/15/20	This network of paths is regularly impassable at certain times of the year. We propose that the height of the path is raised and has a camber so that the flood water will run off the path.	Surface Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Portishead	LA15/15/20	Nature reserve paths don't have full continuity despite the fact that the nature reserve out to the marina and back is a well established walking loop.	Additional route and access improvement	Not currently achievable*
Portishead	LA23/231/20	Step section of path, public request for handrail and surface very uneven	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Puxton	AX24/1/10	Maintain existing path. Commences on A370 at 402644 going south to meet footpath going along the river from Waterman's Bow.	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*

Puxton	AX24/25/10	Maintain existing path. Right of Way on May's Lane, between Maysgreen Lane and Puxton Lane	Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Puxton	AX16/46/20	Maintain existing path. Foot path off Puxton Road at Willow Farm	Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Puxton	AX16/52/30	Maintain existing path. footpath gate at The Elms 401648	Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Puxton	AX28/25/20	Improve signage. Bridge across Oldbridge River 391646	Signage Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Puxton	N/A	Upgrade a permitted path. Connects footpaths at Phipp's bridge SW to Oldbridge river	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Puxton	AX24/15/10	Path from Crossmans farm to Mayfield Lane	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Tickenham	Joins LA 16/3	Proposed footpath at the old Tickenham Garden Centre from Old Lane to public bridleway LA 16/3	Additional Route	Not currently achievable*
Tickenham	Joins footpaths LA 16/17, LA 16/18, LA 16/19 and LA 16/21	Proposed footpath taking obvious route along the south bank of the Land Yeo	Additional Route	Not currently achievable*
Tickenham	Joins LA 16/24 and LA 16/3	Proposed footpath old Tickenham Garden Centre to Washing Pound Lane	Additional Route	Not currently achievable*
Tickenham	LA 16/6	Footpath between Cadbury Camp Lane West and Barrow Court Farm	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Tickenham	LA19/20/10	Two wooden stile and one stone stile that cuts across a busy ben d in the road, over grass fields for sheep	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Weston in Gordano	LA18/4/10	Route from Big Wood to Walton in Gordano	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete

Winford	LA19/2/10	Prospect House, Old Hill	Access and Signage Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Winford	LA7/3/10	From Littleton Court to Littleton Lane	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Winford	LA19/68/10	Chapel Lane to Kentshare Farm	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Winford	LA19/49/10 to LA19/49/30	Long Cross to Winford village and Primary School	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Winford	LA19/45/20 & LA19/10/10	From close Winford village - Frog Lane to Old Hill	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Winford	LA19/40/05	Ricklands to Greatstone Lane	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Winford	LA19/38/30&50	Opposite Leighdown farm to Frog Lane Farm	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Winford	LA19/5/10	Birds Farm	Access and Surface Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Winford	LA19/57/60 to 57/40	From A38 - Lulsgate Quarry - Stanshalls Lane	Access and Surface Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Winford	LA19/23/10	Strode	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Winford	LA19/32/10	Strode	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Winscombe & Sandford	27	Maxmills Lane to Barton Rd	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Winscombe & Sandford	41	Hill Road, Methodist Church, across disused railway, and right angled turn to Station Road	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Winscombe & Sandford	45	Along Greenhill Lane to end of Sandmead Grove	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete

Winscombe & Sandford	46	Greenhill Road and onwards to Old Drove	Access Improvement	In progress
Winscombe & Sandford	AX29/35/20	From Barton Road to a narrow lane and onto Church Road, nearly opposite The Lynch	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Winscombe & Sandford	AX29/9/20, AX29/8/40	From A38 adjacent to Netherdale Caravan Park past Hale Drove	Access and Signage Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Winscombe & Sandford	31	Route commences from A38 proceeds north easterly to Oakridge & Sidcot School	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Winscombe & Sandford	38	Parson's Rd to Barton Rd	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Winscombe & Sandford	23	From Winscombe Hill along Barton Drove to join 39	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Winscombe & Sandford	10	Across A38 from Fullers Lane to Junction with 8	Access Improvement	In progress
Winscombe & Sandford	AX29/35/20	Broken wooden gate and muddy gateway	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Winscombe & Sandford	AX29/1	Well Close to Brae Rise	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Winscombe & Sandford	AX29/11	Link running from Yadley Lane to Eastwell Lane	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Winscombe & Sandford	Ax29/67	Sandford Wood to Uplands	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Winscombe & Sandford	AX/66a	Sandford Wood	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Winscombe & Sandford	AX3/51	Lox Yeo River, path running alongside of river lost that used to be a footpath before WW2	Additional route	Not currently achievable*
Winscombe & Sandford	AX29/30	Footpath from bridle way	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Wraxall and Failand	LA 20/36 and The Grove, Wraxall	Cross field route to join path at OS 714494 and LA 20/36 at o.s.719489	Additional Route, Access	Scheduled or Complete

			and Surface Improvement	
Wraxall and Failand	LA 20/60 and LA 20.72	Roadside path between entry to Tyntesfield at junction Horserace Lane/Clevedon Road and Jctn Flax Bourton Rd/ Oxhouse Lane	Surface Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Wrington	Unrecorded	New Bridleway from Wrington to Strawberry Line.	Additional Route	Not currently achievable*
Wrington	AX30/1/10-40 and AX30/2/10-30	Upgrade gates and remove stiles to circular path from Ladywell to West Hay Rd. Starts and ends on Broad St - full details in Wrington Accessible Proposal 2	Access Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Wrington	AX30/53/10	Replace inaccessible gates with pedestrian gates. part of popular circular walk around Wrington popular in particular with elderly.	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Wrington	Unrecorded	Inclusion of new path near Stoney Croft House. Connect paths AX30/4/10 with AX14/58/10 along the line of the disused railway.	Additional Route	Not currently achievable*
Wrington	AX30/32/40	Replace old stiles with pedestrian gates. Part of very popular round walk on Old Hill from Wrington	Access improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Wrington	AX30/32/2 & 30 and AX30/35/20	Replace old stiles with pedestrian gates. Popular route from Wrington to Redhill along top of Old Hill	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Wrington	AX30/42, AX30/38, AX30/31, AX30/54	Upgrade gates on popular route to Old Hill / Meeting House Farm. Starts and Ends on Broad St - full details in Wrington Accessible Proposal 1	Access improvement	Not currently achievable*
Wrington	AX30/31/10	Very popular footpath from Old Hill to Meeting House Farm.	Surface Improvement	Not currently achievable*

Wrington	AX30/48/10	Replace difficult stile with pedestrian gate. Footpath that enables a circular walk around Goblin Combe	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Wrington	AX30/14/10	Upgrade path in Lye Cross. Part of a circular walk from Wrington that avoids walking down busy A38.	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Wrington	AX30/71/10	Path from Wrington Hill to Bridleway	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Wrington	AX30/62/20	Path from Burrington to Wrington arriving at A38	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Wrington	AX30/70/20	Three stiles on footpath from A38 to Winters Lane	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Yatton	LA/21/44/20	Proceeds up on to Cadbury Hill from Kissing gate (the Claverham vista)	Surface Improvement	Not currently achievable*
Yatton	AX16/36/10	runs from the Woodhill entrance NE across to Blind Lane entrance to Henley Wood Cottage	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Yatton	LA21/11	From Scout hut on High St Claverham linking to Jasmine Lane	Access and Surface Improvement	Still to be assessed
Yatton	LA21/31 and LA21/40	Runs from North End Road nearly opposite Ham Lane both sides of the Little River	Access and Surface Improvement	Scheduled or Complete
Yatton	Junction of LA21/22 and LA6/7	Runs from Warners Close in Cleeve to the extension at the end of Chapel Lane in Claverham	Access Improvement	Scheduled or Complete

* The "Not currently achievable" status has been given to a number of improvement suggestions. This is for a variety of reasons but includes: lack of landowner consent, the proposal is not on a PRoW, on inspection the suggested improvement was not required (e.g., gate in satisfactory condition, surfacing not degraded), archaeological/heritage constraints, improvement is not possible due to grazing requirements, a legal application will be required. Where feasible (e.g., where landowner consent could not be obtained) these will be revisited.

Appendix B. Summary of Consultation Responses

Q1

Are you answering this consultation as an individual or organisation?

This is a must-answer question because the questions later are slightly different for organisations and individuals

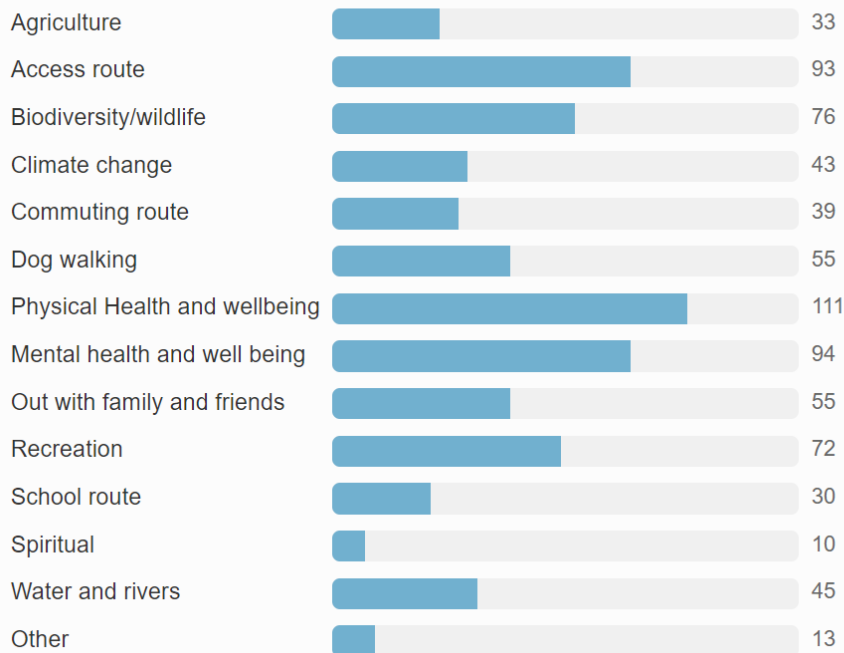


Below is a list of organisations who responded.

Abbots Leigh Parish Council
Axbridge Bridleways Association
Backwell Parish Council
Barrow Gurney Parish Council
Churchill Parish Council*
Clapton in Gordano Parish Council
Cleeve Parish Council
Clevedon Ramblers*
Disabled Ramblers
Dundry Parish Council
Flax Bourton Parish Council
Hutton Parish Council
Kewstoke Parish Council
Kingston Seymour Parish Council
Locking Parish Council
Long Ashton Parish Council
Nailsea Town Council
North Somerset Local Access Forum
Portishead Town Council
Ramblers
The British Horse Society
The Monarch's Way Association
Tickenham Parish Council
Tickenham Parish Council
Winford Parish Council
Woodspring Ramblers
Wraxall & Failand Parish Council
Wroughton Parish Council*
Yatton Ramblers

Q2.1

Which elements of North Somerset Public Rights of Way network (PRoW) network do you consider most important?



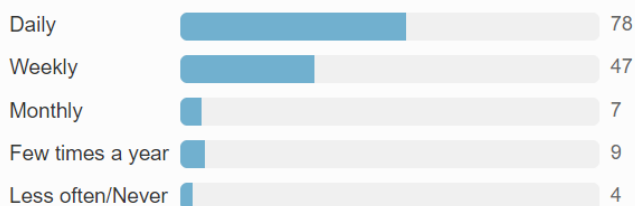
'Other' important elements responses included:

- Better access on all routes by upgrading them to allow access for horse riders and cyclists.
- We need old bridleways open to keep horses off the roads
- Horse riding
- Bridleways
- Reduce the speed limit on Brockley Lane to 20mph
- Horse-riding
- Safety
- Cycling, really important to be able to cycle from Yatton to Clevedon and from pier to pier.
- Bridges
- Easy contact to NSC
- The danger to users on foot because of mixed walking/cycling routes

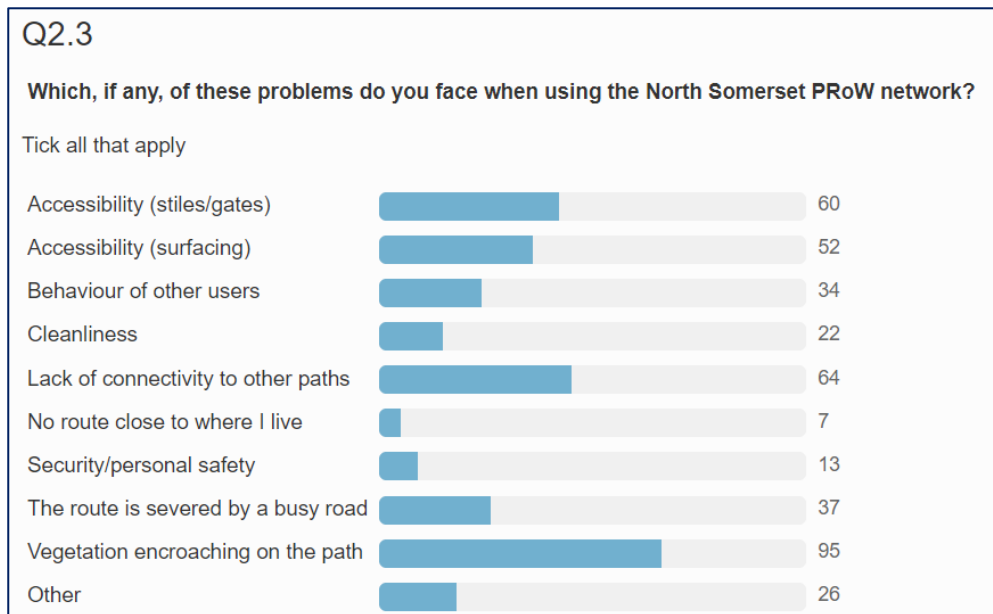
Q2.2a

How often do you use the North Somerset Public Rights of Way network?

Tick one



Individual responses to question 2.3

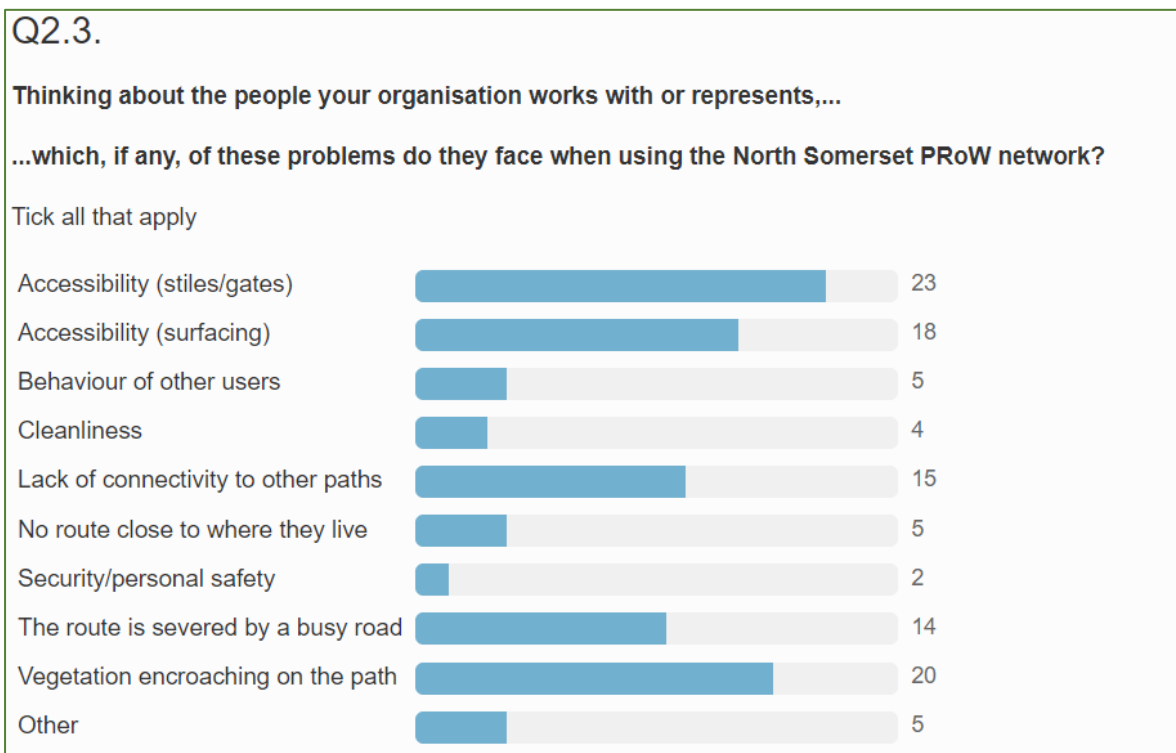


'Other' problems included:

- Parking & access for people with limited mobility (not blue badge)
- Unable to gain legal access on horse and bicycle on paths which could easily accommodate such use
- Damage and water logging due to horses and cyclist
- Locked gates with private property signs on routes that according to the definitive map are open to the public
- Need for Bridge repair on Clevedon Coast path
- As a horse rider I am excluded from most routes such as the strawberry line. Many bridleways are dangerous or impassable due to obstructions and overgrowth. Routes do not join up, forcing me onto road
- People with a dog, or more often, multiple dogs, often not on leads.
- Lack of adequate draining on the unsurfaced pathways around Nailsea
- Dogs, in particular mess and urine. A bags of dog mess being left lying on the ground and hung in vegetation
- Most bridle ways have to be reached by riding on busy roads
- We need to make Brockley Lane that connected the PRow network, less dangerous for walkers, cyclists, horse riders, by reducing the speed limit on this lane to 20mph should improve things.
- Not enough off road bridle paths
- Often signage unclear, mud & vegetation (stinging nettles, brambles, homeowners' perimeter hedging) so deep it's difficult to get through, especially at gates, styles. Fences & pathway collapses. Dog poo.
- Fencing off paths which run along field edges inevitably means that in 10-20 years a hedge develops naturally along the fence line. This means that the path loses its view and becomes an "alleyway"
- Dog Fouling
- dogs - barking, jumping, urinating/fouling
- Lack of signage

- Signage
- Lack of Byway Open to All Traffic due to consequences of CROW and NERC
- Use of PRow by cyclists on footpaths and motor cyclists on bridleways
- Cyclists using footpaths.
- Risk to life
- Footpaths that cross Backwell Bow are dangerous to cross, due to visibility, traffic, fast bikes...
- Cows blocking path
- PRow paths are not always accessible. I refer to land owned by NS Council and maintained by them.

Organisational responses to question 2.3



'Other' problems provided by organisational consultees included:

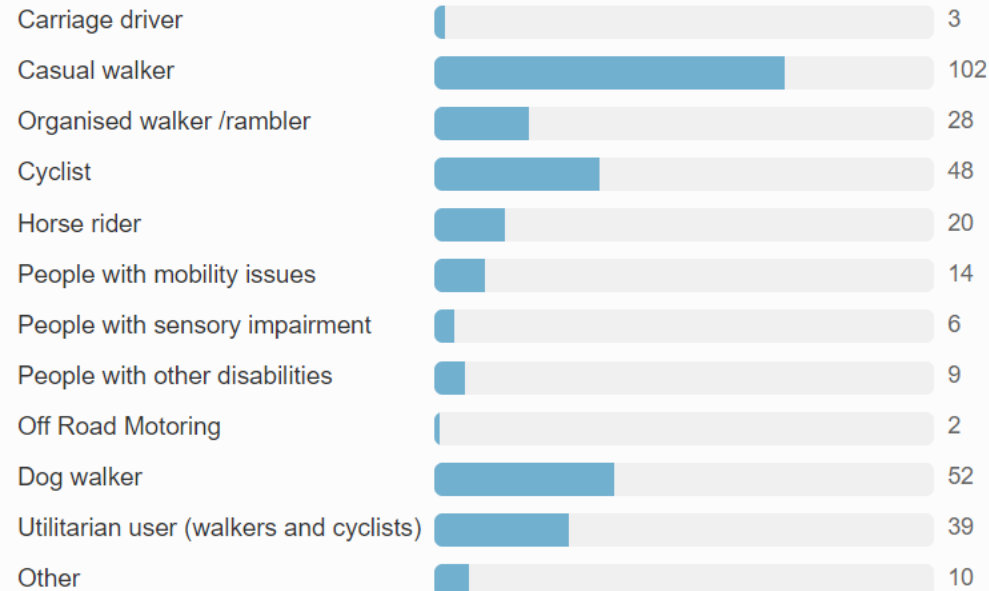
Response
1. accessibility for non ambulant users and 2. lack of progress with Definitive Map Modification Orders
Landowners can experience difficulties with those using the PRow, who either are not aware of, or do not understand the Countryside Code, particularly when there is livestock grazing.
friction between conflicting uses
Cleeve's stiles have been changed but other adjoining Parishes not changed.
A severe lack of Waymarking posts in certain parts of the route

Individual responses to question 2.4

Q2.4

Which of the following best describes your use of or interest in the North Somerset PRow network?

Tick all that apply



'Other' responses included:

- Brockley Lane, - many Lorries, Cars driving far too fast down it, they have no concerns for walkers, cyclists & horse riders
- Runner/jogger
- Plant recording/botany
- Farming
- Writing about routes to encourage use by others
- I use the paths on the Portbury Wharf Nature Reserve for wildlife monitoring and producing self-guided trails
- health and wellbeing, exercise

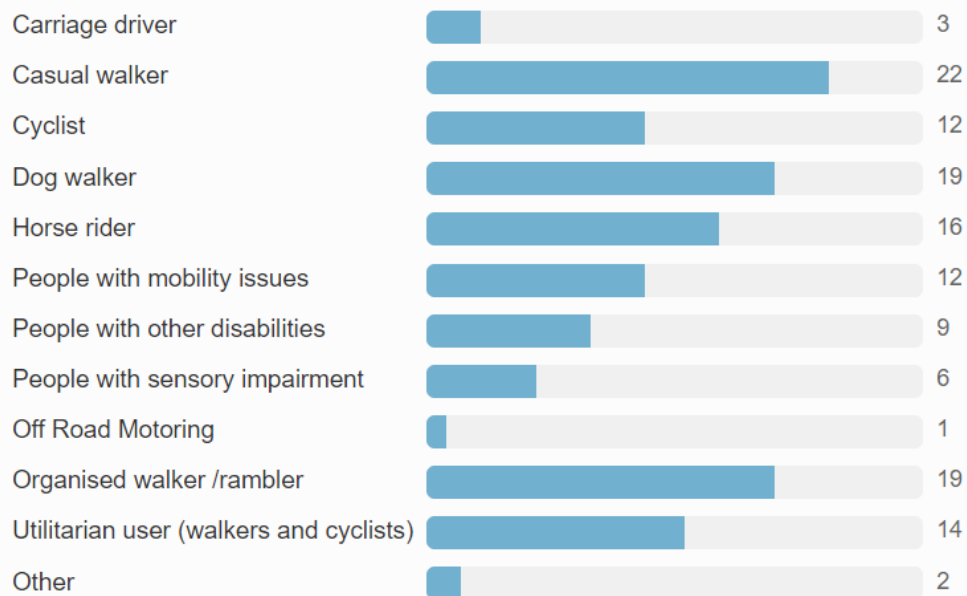
Organisational responses to question 2.4

Q2.4.

Thinking about the people your organisation works with or represents...

...which of the following best describes their interest in the North Somerset PRoW network?

Tick all that apply



'Other' responses included:

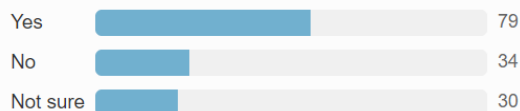
- Landowners and farmers.
- The Spinney PROW AX20/3/30 has been highlighted as a safe pedestrian route to schools - this is not the case, its in a very poor condition, uneven, slippery surface, overgrown vegetation.

Individual responses to question 3.1

Q3.1

On page 22 and page 23 of the [Improvement Plan](#), we set out what we think the different types of PRoW users need from the network.

Please take a look at that section of the document and tell us if what we think covers everything you need as a user?

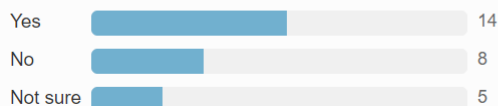


Organisational responses to question 3.1

Q3.1.

On page 22 and page 23 of the [Improvement Plan](#), we set out what we think the different types of PRow users need from the network

Please take a look at that section of the document and tell us if this covers the needs of the people your organisation works with or represents?



Responses to Question 3.2 have been summarised into the following updated list of user requirements:

User Type	Proposed ROWIP 2022 User Requirements			Post-consultation additions
	Requirements	Current Provision	Shortfall	
Mobility, visually and other impaired users	Routes suitable for use. Good information about routes. Suitable facilities	Limited routes identified for specific use.	Limited percentage of network available. Insufficient targeted information provided.	Parking, consideration of gate widths, path widths/inclines
Casual Walker	Safe, clean and interesting environment for people and children. Good information (for example website, leaflets and on the ground waymarking)	860km of public right of way plus 500ha of area-wide access and permissive access over private land	Need to continue reducing obstructions, ensure adequate signage and improve surfacing where possible to increase 'ease of use'.	Connection with public transport, safer crossings over highways, greater variety of routes, greater levels of signage
Walkers with Dogs	Means of passing through stiles. Facilities for dog mess and drinking. Areas in which dogs can run free legally and without affecting livestock.	860km of public right of way plus 500ha of area-wide access and permissive access over private land	Need for greater education amongst dog owners about responsible behaviour and risks to livestock. Need for routes with suitable facilities.	Requirements are what existing resources allow
Ramblers	Variety of routes. Good access furniture. Continued mechanism for dealing with complaints and definitive map problems	860km of public right of way plus 500ha of area-wide access and permissive access over private land. Backlog of	Need to increase 'ease of use'. More publicity/promotion. Backlog of Legal Orders has been reduced, however work still to be done	Requirements are what existing resources allow

		Legal Orders for processing. Procedure for handling complaints moved online.		
Cyclists	Variety of route options with good connectivity, including routes free of difficulty (for example avoiding dangerous road crossing and steep hills). Improved publicity and promotion	280km of public rights of way and cycle tracks plus permissive routes. Fragmented network. Information on some routes published.	Small percentage of local rights of way available for cyclist and very little permissive. Poor connectivity. Need to improve information online and through publications	Better segregation
Utilitarian users (walkers and cyclists)	Safe, off-road network that links residential areas and key destinations (for example schools, places of work and shops). Good all-weather surfaces.	Existing network of highways, including public rights of way, footways and cycle tracks plus permissive paths.	Connectivity of links between trip generators.	Fully gated routes to villages, safer connections at roads
Horse riders	Routes that are free of obstructions, well signposted, waymarked, free from vegetation, suitable surfaces, safe to use and form circular routes at least five miles long.	123km of public rights of way and 1.5km permissive route. Fragmented network, minimal publication of routes. Roadside verges could offer possibilities.	Only small percentage of local rights of way available for horse riders, very little permissive use available. Poor connectivity, few circular routes, limited information.	Path widening, vegetation control, disabled users
Carriage Drivers	Adequate parking. Good length of route.	38km of public rights of way.	Small length of route publicly available. Poor connection.	Requirements are what existing resources allow
Off Road Motorists	Unsurfaced routes that are free from obstruction and have character. Challenging natural gradient	0.7km of public right of way	There is negligible provision for off-road driving on local rights of way in North Somerset. These routes require greater	Requirements are what existing resources allow

	and surface. Reasonable length and interesting topography. Routes that would not be damaged by light vehicle use.		investment due to degradation by vehicles.	
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Question 3.3

This question asked:

We want to make sure that you are not disadvantaged by the PRow draft Improvement Plan. This could be because of:

- age
- sex
- disability
- ethnicity
- other 'protected characteristic' (as defined in the [Equality Act 2010](#)).
- aspects of identity which are not protected characteristics, such as location, wealth and anything else you think relevant.

Please let us know if there is anything you think we should include in the proposals, to ensure that you are not disadvantaged because of any aspect of your identity.

This question was answered 52 times (albeit some answers were not related to the question or were acknowledging no disadvantage). The responses fell into the below categories:

age	sex	disability	ethnicity	other protected characteristic	other aspect of identify
2	3	14	0	1	7

Question 4.1 posed the following question:

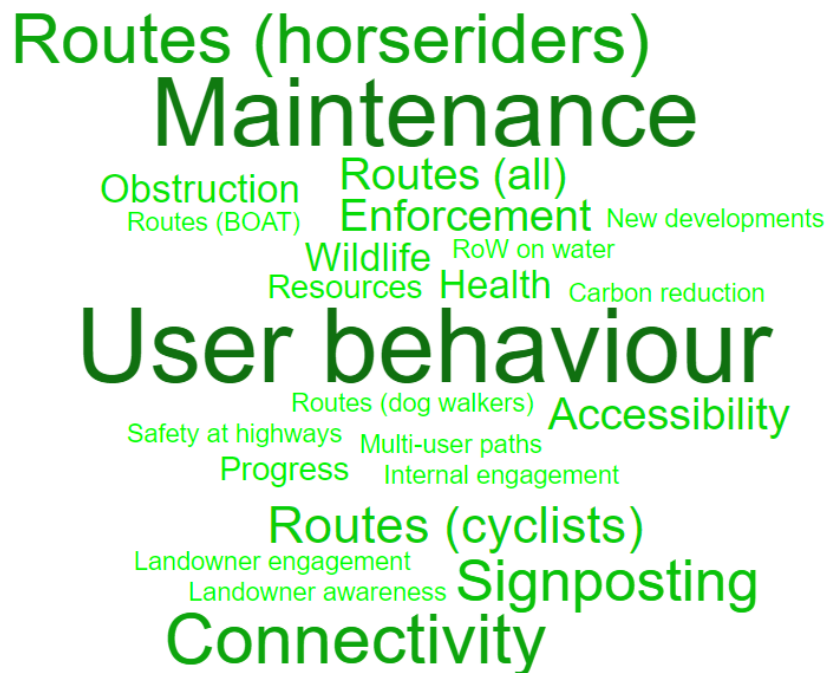
The five objectives of the improvement plan are:

- Provide an effective maintenance policy for the PRow network
- Improve connectivity on the PRow network
- Improve accessibility for all users
- Improve awareness of the PRow network and its benefits, understanding of the responsibilities of PRow users and the knowledge and confidence relevant to each type of user
- Increase routes other than footpaths to address the inequality of PRow provision across North Somerset

Do you think these are a the right set of objectives for improving the North Somerset PRoW network?



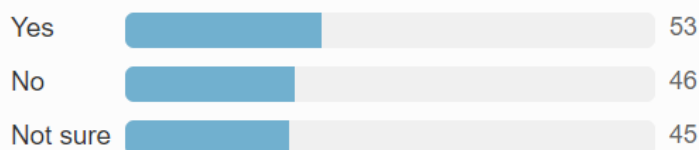
Themes raised in the responses to whether these are the right set of objectives (larger text denotes a larger number of responses) included:



Question 5.1 asked the following question:

The table on pages 29-34 of the [Improvement Plan](#), lists the 14 actions we intend to take, including detail about those actions. Please take a look at that table and tell us:

Are we missing any that would improve your ability to use the network and enjoyment of it?



Themes raised in the responses to what is missing (larger text denotes a larger number of responses) included:



Summary of North Somerset Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2022-32 Consultation Responses

Q1

Are you answering this consultation as an individual or organisation?

This is a must-answer question because the questions later are slightly different for organisations and individuals

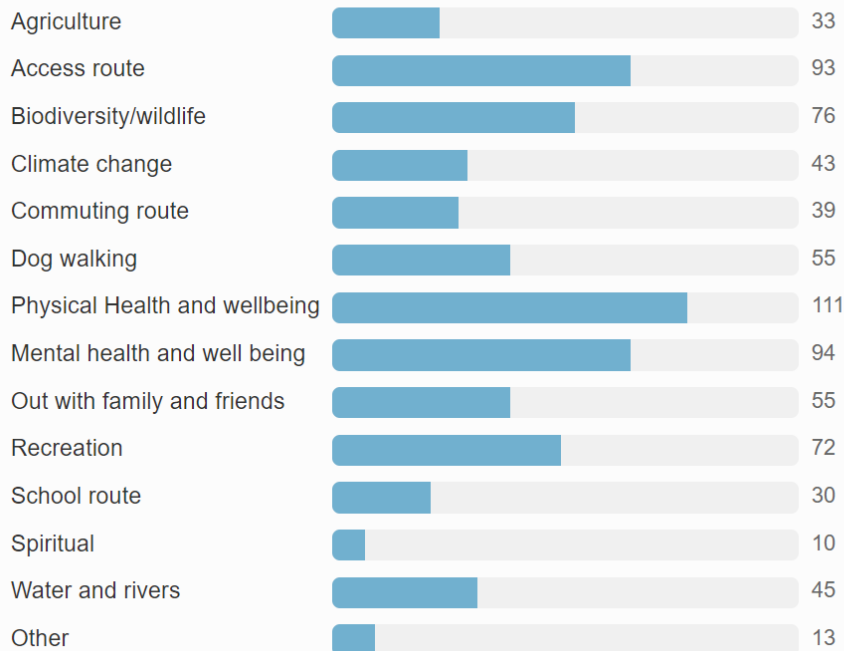


Below is a list of organisations who responded.

Abbots Leigh Parish Council
Axbridge Bridleways Association
Backwell Parish Council
Barrow Gurney Parish Council
Churchill Parish Council*
Clapton in Gordano Parish Council
Cleeve Parish Council
Clevedon Ramblers*
Disabled Ramblers
Dundry Parish Council
Flax Bourton Parish Council
Hutton Parish Council
Kewstoke Parish Council
Kingston Seymour Parish Council
Locking Parish Council
Long Ashton Parish Council
Nailsea Town Council
North Somerset Local Access Forum
Portishead Town Council
Ramblers
The British Horse Society
The Monarch's Way Association
Tickenham Parish Council
Tickenham Parish Council
Winford Parish Council
Woodspring Ramblers
Wraxall & Failand Parish Council
Wrington Parish Council*
Yatton Ramblers

Q2.1

Which elements of North Somerset Public Rights of Way network (PRoW) network do you consider most important?



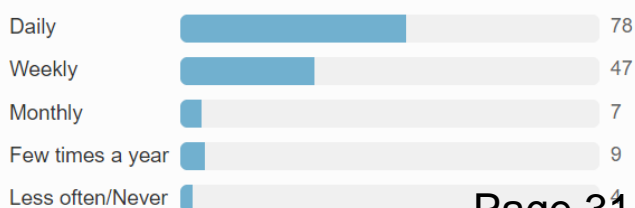
'Other' important elements responses included:

- Better access on all routes by upgrading them to allow access for horse riders and cyclists.
- We need old bridleways open to keep horses off the roads
- Horse riding
- Bridleways
- Reduce the speed limit on Brockley Lane to 20mph
- Horse-riding
- Safety
- Cycling, really important to be able to cycle from Yatton to Clevedon and from pier to pier.
- Bridges
- Easy contact to NSC
- The danger to users on foot because of mixed walking/cycling routes

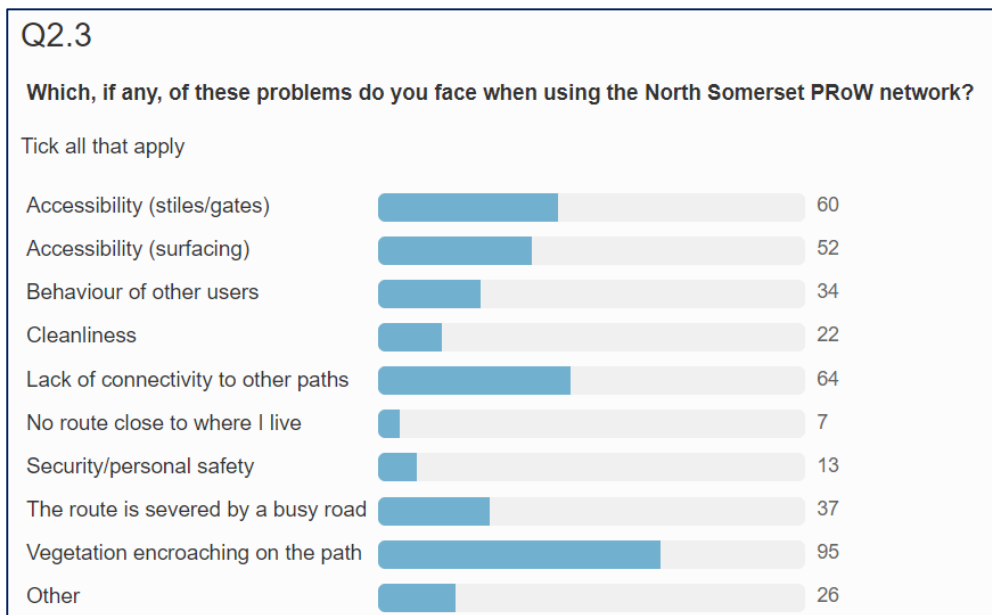
Q2.2a

How often do you use the North Somerset Public Rights of Way network?

Tick one



Individual responses to question 2.3

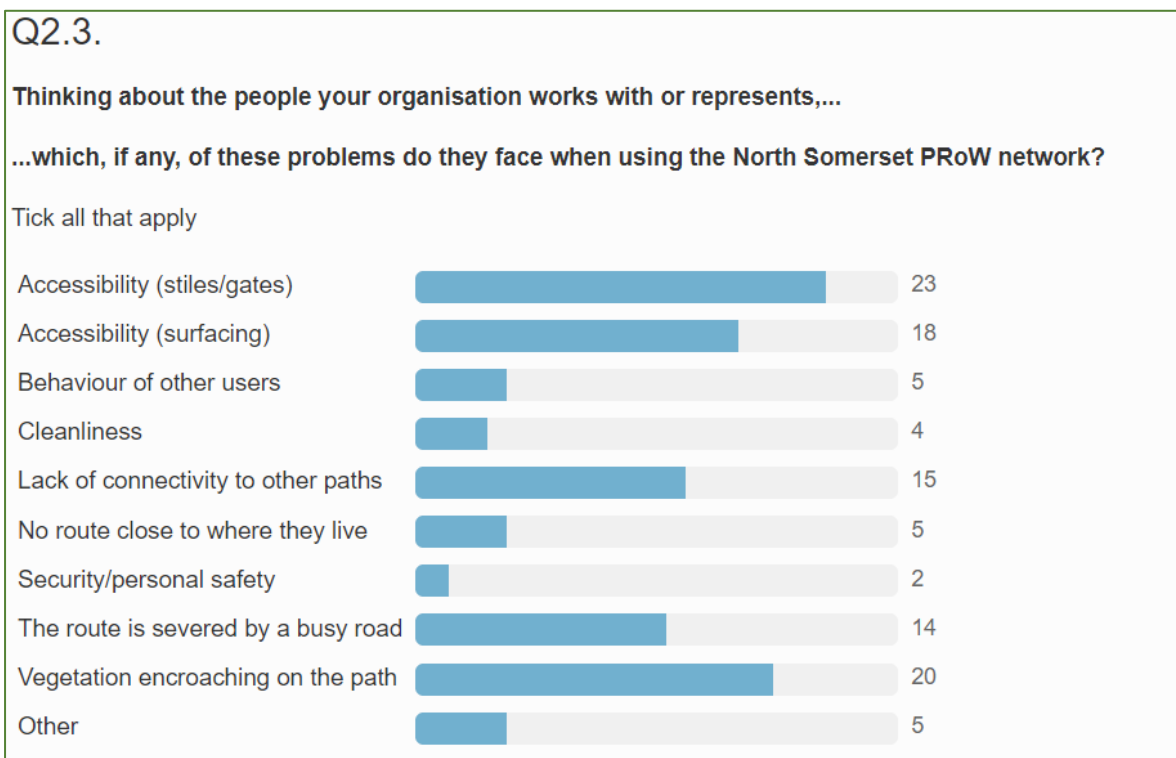


'Other' problems included:

- Parking & access for people with limited mobility (not blue badge)
- Unable to gain legal access on horse and bicycle on paths which could easily accommodate such use
- Damage and water logging due to horses and cyclist
- Locked gates with private property signs on routes that according to the definitive map are open to the public
- Need for Bridge repair on Clevedon Coast path
- As a horse rider I am excluded from most routes such as the strawberry line. Many bridleways are dangerous or impassable due to obstructions and overgrowth. Routes do not join up, forcing me onto road
- People with a dog, or more often, multiple dogs, often not on leads.
- Lack of adequate draining on the unsurfaced pathways around Nailsea
- Dogs, in particular mess and urine. A bags of dog mess being left lying on the ground and hung in vegetation
- Most bridle ways have to be reached by riding on busy roads
- We need to make Brockley Lane that connected the PRow network, less dangerous for walkers, cyclists, horse riders, by reducing the speed limit on this lane to 20mph should improve things.
- Not enough off road bridle paths
- Often signage unclear, mud & vegetation (stinging nettles, brambles, homeowners' perimeter hedging) so deep it's difficult to get through, especially at gates, styles. Fences & pathway collapses. Dog poo.
- Fencing off paths which run along field edges inevitably means that in 10-20 years a hedge develops naturally along the fence line. This means that the path loses its view and becomes an "alleyway"
- Dog Fouling

- dogs - barking, jumping, urinating/fouling
- Lack of signage
- Signage
- Lack of Byway Open to All Traffic due to consequences of CROW and NERC
- Use of PRow by cyclists on footpaths and motor cyclists on bridleways
- Cyclists using footpaths.
- Risk to life
- Footpaths that cross Backwell Bow are dangerous to cross, due to visibility, traffic, fast bikes...
- Cows blocking path
- PRow paths are not always accessible. I refer to land owned by NS Council and maintained by them.

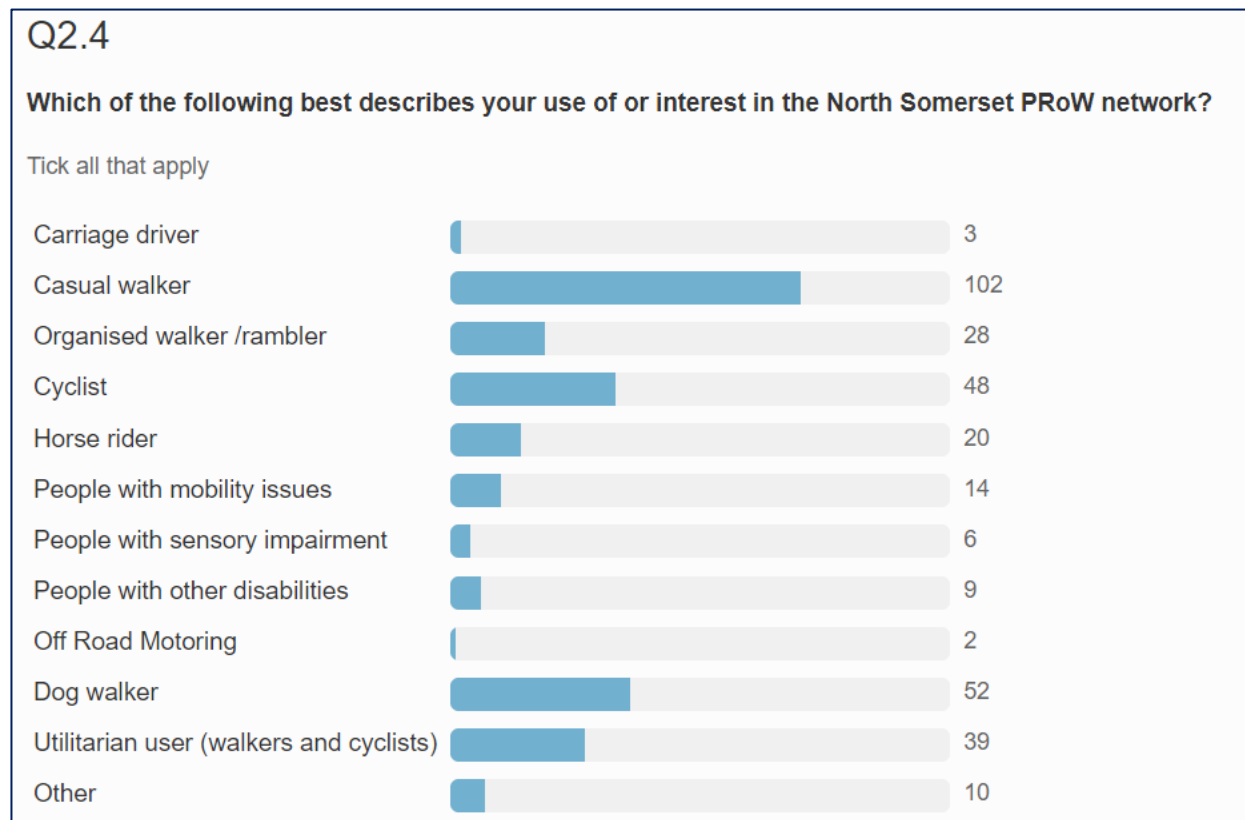
Organisational responses to question 2.3



'Other' problems provided by organisational consultees included:

Response
1. accessibility for non ambulant users and 2. lack of progress with Definitive Map Modification Orders
Landowners can experience difficulties with those using the PRow, who either are not aware of, or do not understand the Countryside Code, particularly when there is livestock grazing.
friction between conflicting uses
Cleeve's stiles have been changed but other adjoining Parishes not changed.
A severe lack of Waymarking posts in certain parts of the route

Individual responses to question 2.4



'Other' responses included:

- Brockley Lane, - many Lorries, Cars driving far too fast down it, they have no concerns for walkers, cyclists & horse riders
- Runner/jogger
- Plant recording/botany
- Farming
- Writing about routes to encourage use by others
- I use the paths on the Portbury Wharf Nature Reserve for wildlife monitoring and producing self-guided trails
- health and wellbeing, exercise

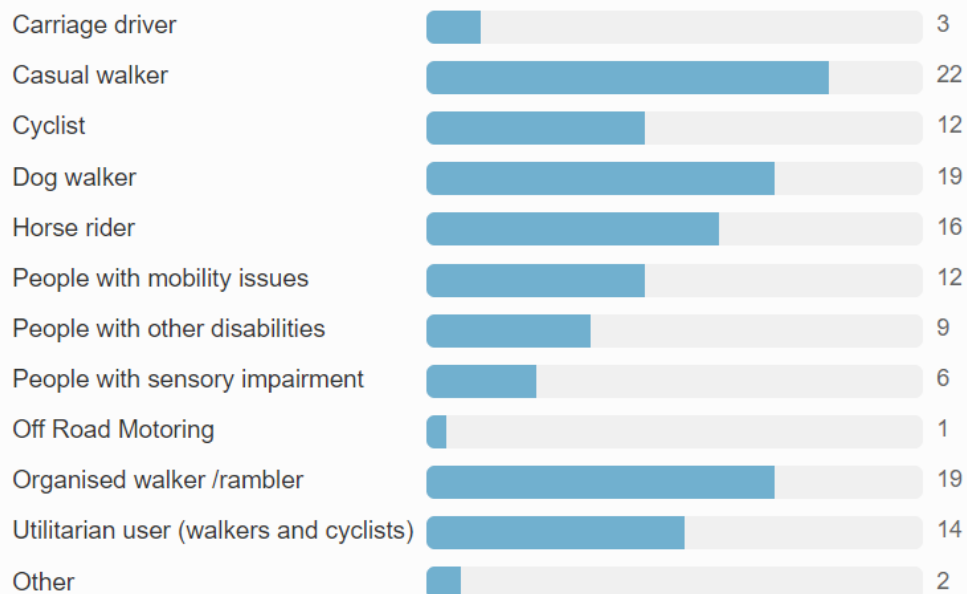
Organisational responses to question 2.4

Q2.4.

Thinking about the people your organisation works with or represents...

...which of the following best describes their interest in the North Somerset PRoW network?

Tick all that apply



'Other' responses included:

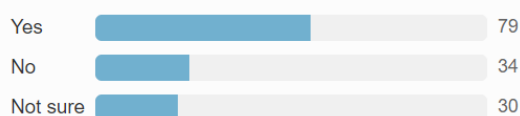
- Landowners and farmers.
- The Spinney PROW AX20/3/30 has been highlighted as a safe pedestrian route to schools - this is not the case, its in a very poor condition, uneven, slippery surface, overgrown vegetation.

Individual responses to question 3.1

Q3.1

On page 22 and page 23 of the [Improvement Plan](#), we set out what we think the different types of PRoW users need from the network.

Please take a look at that section of the document and tell us if what we think covers everything you need as a user?

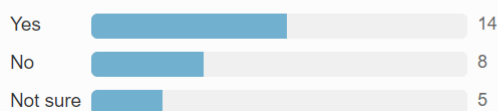


Organisational responses to question 3.1

Q3.1.

On page 22 and page 23 of the [Improvement Plan](#), we set out what we think the different types of PRoW users need from the network

Please take a look at that section of the document and tell us if this covers the needs of the people your organisation works with or represents?



Responses to Question 3.2 have been summarised into the following updated list of user requirements:

User Type	Proposed ROWIP 2022 User Requirements			Post-consultation additions
	Requirements	Current Provision	Shortfall	
Mobility, visually and other impaired users	Routes suitable for use. Good information about routes. Suitable facilities	Limited routes identified for specific use.	Limited percentage of network available. Insufficient targeted information provided.	Parking, consideration of gate widths, path widths/inclines
Casual Walker	Safe, clean and interesting environment for people and children. Good information (for example website, leaflets and on the ground waymarking)	860km of public right of way plus 500ha of area-wide access and permissive access over private land	Need to continue reducing obstructions, ensure adequate signage and improve surfacing where possible to increase 'ease of use'.	Connection with public transport, safer crossings over highways, greater variety of routes, greater levels of signage
Walkers with Dogs	Means of passing through stiles. Facilities for dog mess and drinking. Areas in which dogs can run free legally and without affecting livestock.	860km of public right of way plus 500ha of area-wide access and permissive access over private land	Need for greater education amongst dog owners about responsible behaviour and risks to livestock. Need for routes with suitable facilities.	Requirements are what existing resources allow
Ramblers	Variety of routes. Good access furniture. Continued mechanism for dealing with complaints and	860km of public right of way plus 500ha of area-wide access and permissive access over	Need to increase 'ease of use'. More publicity/promotion. Backlog of Legal Orders has been reduced, however	Requirements are what existing resources allow

	definitive map problems	private land. Backlog of Legal Orders for processing. Procedure for handling complaints moved online.	work still to be done	
Cyclists	Variety of route options with good connectivity, including routes free of difficulty (for example avoiding dangerous road crossing and steep hills). Improved publicity and promotion	280km of public rights of way and cycle tracks plus permissive routes. Fragmented network. Information on some routes published.	Small percentage of local rights of way available for cyclist and very little permissive. Poor connectivity. Need to improve information online and through publications	Better segregation
Utilitarian users (walkers and cyclists)	Safe, off-road network that links residential areas and key destinations (for example schools, places of work and shops). Good all-weather surfaces.	Existing network of highways, including public rights of way, footways and cycle tracks plus permissive paths.	Connectivity of links between trip generators.	Fully gated routes to villages, safer connections at roads
Horse riders	Routes that are free of obstructions, well signposted, waymarked, free from vegetation, suitable surfaces, safe to use and form circular routes at least five miles long.	123km of public rights of way and 1.5km permissive route. Fragmented network, minimal publication of routes. Roadside verges could offer possibilities.	Only small percentage of local rights of way available for horse riders, very little permissive use available. Poor connectivity, few circular routes, limited information.	Path widening, vegetation control, disabled users
Carriage Drivers	Adequate parking. Good length of route.	38km of public rights of way.	Small length of route publicly available. Poor connection.	Requirements are what existing resources allow
Off Road Motorists	Unsurfaced routes that are free from obstruction and have character.	0.7km of public right of way	There is negligible provision for off-road driving on local rights of way in North Somerset.	Requirements are what existing resources allow

	Challenging natural gradient and surface. Reasonable length and interesting topography. Routes that would not be damaged by light vehicle use.		These routes require greater investment due to degradation by vehicles.	
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Question 3.3

This question asked:

We want to make sure that you are not disadvantaged by the PRoW draft Improvement Plan. This could be because of:

- age
- sex
- disability
- ethnicity
- other 'protected characteristic' (as defined in the [Equality Act 2010](#)).
- aspects of identity which are not protected characteristics, such as location, wealth and anything else you think relevant.

Please let us know if there is anything you think we should include in the proposals, to ensure that you are not disadvantaged because of any aspect of your identity.

This question was answered 52 times (albeit some answers were not related to the question or were acknowledging no disadvantage). The responses fell into the below categories:

age	sex	disability	ethnicity	other protected characteristic	other aspect of identify
2	3	14	0	1	7

Question 4.1 posed the following question:

The five objectives of the improvement plan are:

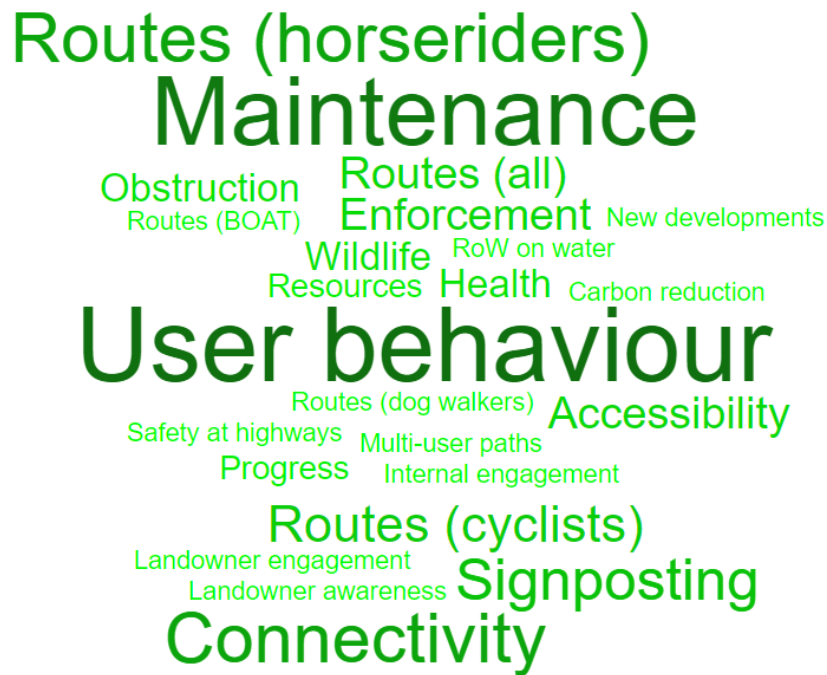
- Provide an effective maintenance policy for the PRoW network
- Improve connectivity on the PRoW network
- Improve accessibility for all users

- Improve awareness of the PRow network and its benefits, understanding of the responsibilities of PRow users and the knowledge and confidence relevant to each type of user
- Increase routes other than footpaths to address the inequality of PRow provision across North Somerset

Do you think these are a the right set of objectives for improving the North Somerset PRow network?



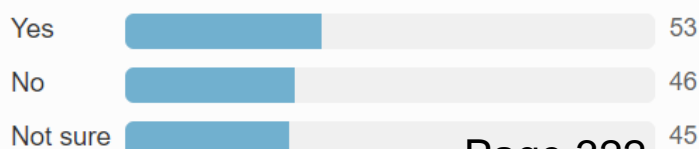
Themes raised in the responses to whether these are the right set of objectives (larger text denotes a larger number of responses) included:



Question 5.1 asked the following question:

The table on pages 29-34 of the [Improvement Plan](#), lists the 14 actions we intend to take, including detail about those actions. Please take a look at that table and tell us:

Are we missing any that would improve your ability to use the network and enjoyment of it?



Themes raised in the responses to what is missing (larger text denotes a larger number of responses) included:



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North Somerset Council

Report to the Executive

Date of Meeting: 7th December 2022

Subject of Report: Future Governance of the Music Service

Town or Parish: All

Officer/Member Presenting: Executive Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning

Key Decision: No

Reason:

The proposals are being considered by the Executive.

Recommendations

- i. To approve, in principle, the proposal that the Music Service merges with Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) and South Gloucestershire Council's Music Services, into one single service.
- ii. To approve, in principle, the single service being established as an independent organisation outside the 3 Councils, enabling the Service to be eligible to retain government funding, protect staff and develop a broader, more universal youth music education offer on behalf of the 3 Councils.
- iii. As we are yet to receive final actuarial details and proposals for any pension admission agreements for the proposed independent organisation, to delegate authority to the Executive Member for Corporate Services and the Director of Corporate Services (s151) officer to make the final decision on potential transfer and the terms thereof once transfer negotiations have progressed and proposed terms can be reported

1. Summary of Report

- 1.1. The future of Music Education, as required by the Department for Education (DfE) will change radically in 2023. This paper proposes actions which seek to protect the existing music offer for young people and build a vibrant and robust music education future for young people in North Somerset.
- 1.2. Over the last 2 years, North Somerset and South Glos, and latterly B&NES Music Services have been working in partnership to deliver a more robust, more universal offer for young people in our region. We now need to transform our governance model so that we can release this potential to deliver for the future.

- 1.3. In July 2022, the DfE released its refreshed vision for the governance and delivery of music education in England. This new vision is significantly different to the current model. The governance and funding of music services (through their role as Lead Organisation of Music Education Hubs) is required to radically transform.
- 1.4. Over the last 18 months, the 3 Music Services have engaged a consultant to look at how the Services can work better together. Their review recommendations align with the DfE's new vision for the future governance of music education
- 1.5. This report lays out the background to these recommendations and the transformation required by the DfE in the next 3 months. It proposes a new model which seeks to protect the future of the music service as a new separate organisation, sitting outside the LA, with senior LA officer representation at a strategic level.
- 1.6. It is felt this is the only viable option to retain the government funding on which the service relies.
- 1.7. This will enable us to retain existing services and build a robust model which will attract future funding, enabling the Music Service to deliver a bigger, better, more universal offer for young people in North Somerset.

2. Policy

- 2.1. The National Plan for Music Education (2011) is the Government's plan for music education in England.
- 2.2. A refreshed Plan was released in July 2022.
- 2.3. The Government devolves the management and monitoring of Music Education Hubs to Arts Council England. The Council, as fund holder for North Somerset's Music Hub, is bound by a contractual 'relationship framework' with ACE over the delivery of the Plan and the use of public funds.

3. Details

Background and Context

- 3.1. The Music Service is a non-statutory service, providing music education to students, families, and schools. The Service is funded by a Department for Education (DfE) grant to deliver its role as Lead Organisation of the local Music Education Hub (see 3.c). This grant totals c. 35% of income, with the balance of income from traded services (schools and families). The Service has a staff of 2 managers and 39 teaching staff. The 2 business support officers are provided through the Support Services Contract with Agilisys.
- 3.2. The Service delivers the National Plan for Music Education (2011) – the government's vision for music education in England.
- 3.3. The DfE's model for music education is to fund Music Education Hubs to deliver the National Plan for Music Education (NPME). Hubs are informal partnerships

of local music and education organisations operating as a network of providers. They are broadly aligned to LA areas. Hubs have a Lead Organisation, which receives the DfE grant, and is held to account by Arts Council England (ACE) for the delivery of the NPME. Locally, B&NES, North Somerset and South Glos Council Music Services are all Lead Organisations of the local Hub.

- 3.4. Since 2020, North Somerset and South Glos music services have been working in partnership, with a shared management team and increasingly homogenised strategy, development and operations, alongside greater sharing of resources. In March 2021, B&NES Music Service joined this alliance.
- 3.5. The result of this partnership working is that a broader, more universal offer is being achieved because of the efficiencies gained by working together. Through partnership, the services are beginning to realise their potential to deliver a bigger and better offer for all young people from the most vulnerable to those who are gifted and talented. Through greater partnership, the 3 Music Services have the potential to achieve an even wider offer and this proposal seeks to enable this potential to be realised.
- 3.6. A consultant has been working with the 3 Music Services over the last 18 months to evaluate how the music services can improve their collaboration, ensuring that they are robust and viable for the future, making sure current services are protected and the growth potential can be realised. The report includes a recommendation that the 3 services should join together, with options for this joint service to operate a) within one of the Councils and b) as an independent organisation, delivering on behalf of the 3 Councils.
- 3.7. Since this report, the music education landscape has changed radically. There is now an urgency to transform if we are to remain viable in the near future.
- 3.8. In July 2022 the DfE launched the refreshed National Plan for Music Education (2022). Alongside this, it announced that all Services in England would need to re-bid to retain the government funding which delivers the plan.
- 3.9. The bidding process will be different to the past in that:
 - 3.9.1. the grant application process will be open and highly competitive. ACE are proactively encouraging and enabling a wide range of education and arts organisations to bid against us. This is the first time in the 50+ year history of Music Services that there has been a competitive process.
 - 3.9.2. It is very unlikely that small LA music services will be eligible to apply. DfE/ACE are expecting mergers/partnerships and that organisations will apply for a larger grant representing a wider geographic area. If North Somerset were to apply alone, it is very likely to be unsuccessful and we expect DfE/ACE would force us to join with a partner prescribed by ACE.
- 3.10. The future delivery model and therefore fund-holding organisation will also be very different to the present model. DfE/ACE expect to see:

- 3.10.1. the grant being allocated to non-LA strategic organisations, largely volunteer led, whose role is to decide strategy. This strategic body will then commission other organisations to deliver services.
- 3.10.2. they do not wish to see funding being used to support the employment of a teaching workforce
- 3.11. This means that most English Music Services will need to prepare a radical transformation of their business model by Spring 2023 if they are to have a strong bid for future funding.

Preparing for the future in North Somerset

- 3.12. In recent months, the Music Hubs for B&NES, North Somerset and South Glos have merged into the West of England Music Alliance, representing the 3 LA areas. The 3 Music Services remain as joint Lead Organisations.
- 3.13. The three Music Services now work closely together; as one management team, aligned strategy and operational processes, collaborate on all projects, and share staff, music resources, projects and training.
- 3.14. The Music Service leader, supported by senior officers in the three LAs and an external consultant, have been preparing for the new DfE/ACE vision for the last 18 months. The consultant, funded by Arts Council England, engaged with key stakeholders in- and outside the Councils, including senior Council officers and service users, to review aspirations for music in the region and propose options for the future governance of the music services.
- 3.15. The 2 options presented were proposals to merge the 3 Services, with models operating within and outside the LA.
- 3.16. One option was to create a single LA shared service. However, none of the 3 LAs in the partnership are in a position to host the shared service The host LA would be expanding the Service headcount from c. 50 to c. 150, and taking on the associated employment, redundancy and pension risks. As we do not have a guarantee of funding beyond April 2023, the risk to any one of the Councils is too high.
- 3.17. The new vision from DfE/ACE also means an LA shared service is unlikely to be sufficient transformation on which to create a strong bid for future funding.
- 3.18. The second option proposed was the merged services sitting outside the LAs, as an independent organisation. On the basis of the need for the radical transformation described above, this option becomes the only route we believe is viable to ensure a future youth music provision in North Somerset which can take forward existing services, deliver an aspirational growth plan and ensure a Service which is influenced by, and dedicated to, North Somerset's needs and aspirations.

The Proposal

- 3.19. To implement the option outlined in para 3.18:
- 3.20. For North Somerset Music Service to merge with B&NES and South Glos Music Services and spin out of the Local Authority into an independent company; a company limited by guarantee, registered as a charity, with a trading arm.
- 3.21. The charity will operate as the strategic Hub and will apply for the DfE funding to deliver the new National Plan for Music.
- 3.22. The trading arm will offer a teaching service, which can be commissioned by the Hub to take forward delivery of existing services.
- 3.23. The traded (teaching) arm will be a self-sufficient commercial enterprise, operating viably as a stand-alone business without funding.
- 3.24. Staff will TUPE to the new organisation.
- 3.25. We believe this is the only viable proposal, and will:
 - 3.25.1. Retain a music education provision and funding for North Somerset, with influence from Council Officers at a strategic level
 - 3.25.2. Enable existing services to continue with no- to minimal disruption for existing users (students, families and schools).
 - 3.25.3. Enable the expansion of a universal offer for children and young people
 - 3.25.4. Create an organisation which meets the aspirations of DfE/ACE, presenting a strong case to retain future funding without which the Service cannot continue
 - 3.25.5. Remove the risk to the Council of the closure of the Music Service and related redundancies
 - 3.25.6. Protect the future employment of approx 150 music teaching staff
 - 3.25.7. Enable the Music Service to attract new funding, establish a regional footprint and be a significant influencer in music for young people in the region

Delivering the proposal

- 3.26. In September 2022, North Somerset Council, on behalf of the 3 LAs, commissioned consultants to deliver the spin-out project as follows:

Oct - Nov22:	Consultants create business case and financial model
Oct - Dec 22:	Agreement is sought from the 3 LAs
Dec 22 - March 23:	Consultants complete the implementation of the new organisation
Jan - Feb 23:	The new organisation bids for future funding on behalf of the 3 LAs
March - April 23:	Funding awards are announced
April - Aug 23:	If successful, the new organisation becomes operational and transfer process completes*
Sept 23:	The new organisation takes on the work of the 3 LA music services with DfE funding. A new Board of Trustees, which includes LA representation, oversees the work of the new organisation.

- 3.27. *If unsuccessful in securing funding the implementation process will stop. A viable alternative operating model for the Music Service will be sought. If no viable alternative is available, the Service will need to close.

Governance

- 3.28. The new organisation will be totally independent of the councils i.e. it will not be a local authority trading company with council ownership or membership but it is intended to have advisory groups representing stakeholders such as the 3 LAs, schools, young people and delivery organisations.
- 3.29. A representative from each of these advisory groups will sit on the Charity's Board, ensuring the LAs are represented at a strategic level. To protect the Council, this will be an advisory, non-voting role so as to ensure clarity about the removal of Council control over the new organisation.

HR, Pensions and Staff transfer

- 3.30. Staff will transfer to the new organisation, with the principles of TUPE applying to protect employee's terms and conditions.
- 3.31. The majority of staff are members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS). 6 staff, equating to 1.6FTE, are in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), with only 0.038FTE of this being in the 55-60 age range.
- 3.32. The new organisation will apply to LGPS for closed admitted body status and parallel arrangements with TPS to protect existing employees' pensions. Terms will be negotiated between the Pension schemes, LAs and the new organisation ahead of the implementation phase and before any final decision by the Executive Member under any delegations granted in line with recommendation iii of this report.
- 3.33. Employees recruited to the new organisation post-transfer will be offered an alternative pension solution.

4. Consultation

- 4.1. The consultation project sought views on the aspirations of music education from the North Somerset Director or Children's Services and the Executive Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning. Similar consultation was conducted in B&NES and South Glos.
- 4.2. These proposals were approved to proceed to the Executive by the Children's Services Policy Scrutiny Committee in October 2022.
- 4.3. The proposals are at a similar stage in both B&NES and South Gloucestershire.
- 4.4. Staff have been briefed and there is approval of proposals which seek to protect their future. Consultation will take place, as required by HR policy, at the appropriate time

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. The current North Somerset Service is budgeted to be a cost neutral service, with an annual turnover of c. £920k. In 2021/22 the service made a surplus of £161k and, as a result began the 2022/23 financial year with balances of £171k.
- 5.2. The proposal seeks to remove financial risk from the Council by creating a model which will be successful in attracting continued funding. The TUPE of staff is expected to result in no redundancy costs for NSC staff
- 5.3. The risk of not proceeding with the proposal is that the Service will not be viable for future funding which will likely lead to the closure of the service with 43 redundancies and possible pension liability costs.
- 5.4. North Somerset's contribution to the transformation project is £15,000 which can be met from the Music Service reserves described above.
- 5.5. The Service's existing reserves, described above, would transfer with the new organisation. Ringfencing of reserves for use on Arts Council England agreed activity is a condition of funding. These reserves will also contribute to ensuring the ongoing viability of the new organisation.
- 5.6. The Service's stock of musical instruments, which resources teaching programmes, would transfer with the new organisation. This stock will contribute to ensuring the ongoing viability of the new organisation.

6. Legal Powers and Implications

- 6.1. The music service is a non-statutory service and is not funded by the Council
- 6.2. The move to an independent company is being made with full legal guidance from the 3 LAs and the project consultant's legal advisor.

7. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- 7.1. A more cohesive governance structure will enable more efficient deployment of peripatetic teaching staff, reducing carbon footprint and congestion
- 7.2. A shared operating model will eliminate duplication of resources and facilities which will reduce energy use and waste.

8. Risk Management

Company Limited by Guarantee as Charity with a Trading Arm			
Risk	Impact	Probability	Mitigation
Loss of financial viability – need to stand on own two feet (no local authority money to fall back on)	Very High	Medium	Professional financial management and effective marketing to drive new business development through partnerships.
Disruption to services through disengaged workforce	High	Low	High level of communication and engagement of all employees, customers, partners and other stakeholders to ensure benefits understood.
Interruption to services during transition to the new entity	Medium	Low	Detailed transition and implementation planning.
Transition and implementation project overruns	Medium	Low	Detailed planning, regular progress reviews.
DfE grant timetable is not yet known.	Medium	Medium	Detailed planning, regular progress reviews, regular consultations with ACE.
Pension and other employment liabilities too high for new entity	High	Medium	Professional pensions advisor commissioned by the new entity to support negotiation with pension funds and local authorities.
Increased competition	Medium	High	In the commercial world, the existence of competition is a motivator for innovation in all aspects of products and services. Encouraging a creative culture – one where new ideas are welcomed and every idea is evaluated for implementation – will keep WEMA relevant and competitive.
Loss of grant from ACE	Very High	Medium	ACE have been engaged throughout this process to provide insight and guidance into how WEMA can maintain status and continue to receive the grant and will be consulted throughout the re-tender process.

Lack of diversity and commercial experience in leadership and management team slows down or prevents change	Medium	High	Leadership development planned as part of implementation. An independent organisation will need new skills at Board level but will have the capacity to reallocate existing resource to other roles.
Recession will put pressure on household income and school budgets	Medium	High	Independent entity will have an enhanced ability to make individual and ensemble experiences enjoyable enough that children choose not to drop them when given the choice; need to find ways of engaging with schools – maybe through school strategy development – to develop music service of choice relationships.
Increasing cost of transport – school coaches and teachers’ personal transport	Medium	High	Organising the teaching staff geographically based on where they live rather than the LA they work for will help allocate lessons with reduced mileage in mind; offering a highly-localised service will reduce reliance on coach transport for schools.
Existing grant contracts not novated	High	Medium	ACE are being consulted on their conditions for grant contract novation. Planning will take these into account to inform timing of creation and transition to the new entity; SLAs with the local authorities for the grant money to be transferred to the new entity are a fall-back option if the novation process cannot be completed by 31 st March 2023.

9. Equality Implications

- 9.1. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and identifies no negative impact on users or staff.
- 9.2. The proposal seeks to:
 - 9.2.1. Ensure all staff would TUPE to the new organisation, retaining their existing terms of employment
 - 9.2.2. Ensure the retention of existing services for all users in the future
 - 9.2.3. Create an enhanced offer, particularly focussing on vulnerable people and those in challenging circumstances

10. Corporate Implications

- 10.1. HR, finance and legal support will be required to support the process
- 10.2. The possible reduction in the required level of support staff in the Support Services Contract with Agilisys has already been communicated to the appropriate officer.
- 10.3. Implementation will result in reduced headcount in the LA.

11. Options Considered

- 11.1. Apply for the new round of DfE funding as a single LA Music Service
 - 11.1.1. Very unlikely to be eligible, and if eligible, very unlikely to be successful. Does not benefit from the existing partnership work which improves the universal music offer in North Somerset. Service will most likely need to close.
 - 11.1.2. Redundancy and possible pension costs are likely to be in excess of £150k
- 11.2. Proceed with a merged Tri-LA music service, but remain within the LA
 - 11.2.1. Does not meet DfE/ACE vision so weakens our bid to retain funding
 - 11.2.2. Increased risk that a competitor's bid would be successful
 - 11.2.3. Redundancy costs (as a single Service, or merged) plus likelihood of early-retirement pension costs are high
 - 11.2.4. None of the 3 LAs are willing to host the shared service as too high risk. Therefore not a viable option

Author:

Simon Lock
Head of North Somerset and South Glos Music Services
Strategic Consultant: B&NES Music Service

Appendices:

Background Papers:

1. The National Plan for Music Education (Department for Education, 2011)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/180973/DFE-00086-2011.pdf
2. The Power of Music to Change Lives: A National Plan for Music Education (Department for Education, 2022)
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1086619/The Power of Music to Change Lives.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1086619/The_Power_of_Music_to_Change_Lives.pdf)
3. Arts Council England Music Hub Investment Programme (2022)
<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/our-open-funds/music-hub-investment-programme>
4. Consultation into the future governance of the Music Services for B&NES, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (Lock, Thareja, 2022)
www.wema.org.uk/download/wema_report1.pdf
5. Business case prepared by The Head of Service and project consultants High Growth Knowledge Company Ltd
www.wema.org.uk/download/business_case1.pdf
6. Arts Council England – Music Education Hubs Terms and Conditions 2022-2023
<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/20187/download?attachment>
7. Equalities Impact Assessment
www.wema.org.uk/download/MusicServiceMergerEIA.pdf

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North Somerset Council

Report to the Executive

Date of Meeting: December 7th 2022

Subject of Report: Ofsted Focused Visit letter

Town or Parish: All

**Officer/Member Presenting: Executive Member, Children's Services,
Lifelong Learning and Skills**

Key Decision: No

Reason: Information item on Ofsted visit

Recommendations

That Members note the contents of the letter.

That Members note the progress to date and the work still needed.

1. Summary of Report

In September 2022 Ofsted undertook a Focused Visit (FV) wherein Inspectors looked at the local authority's arrangements for the 'front door', which is the point at which the local authority, alongside other agencies, considers and responds to referrals about children who may be in need or at risk of harm.

2. Policy

All local authority Children's Services are inspected by Ofsted and as part of the programme they undertake Focused Visits in between their full inspections, the frequency of which depends on their judgement of how well a local authority is serving its children and families. Rather than a graded judgement a FV results in a letter which may contain areas for priority action and increasingly the Department for Education (DfE) are issuing Improvement Notices where this is the case.

3. Details

Since the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) in March 2020 when Ofsted judged us as 'Requires Improvement to be Good' we have had two FVs and two Annual Engagement Meetings with Ofsted. In addition, the DfE agreed with us that we should have an Improvement Adviser. While they were satisfied that we were making progress and he finished his work in December 2021 he was clear that there was still some distance to go and identified several areas in addition to our social work practice where the Council needed to make progress. His estimate was that it would take a further two years post December 2021 to embed it.

In December 2021 Ofsted undertook a FV which looked at the local authority's arrangements for children in need, including those who are subject of a child protection plan. They identified four areas where we need to improve practice:

- The analysis and management of risk to children.
- Management oversight of safeguarding practice, including supervision of staff.
- The quality and timely implementation of plans for children.
- The quality assurance arrangements of social work practice

All these areas were already in the Children's Services Improvement Plan, but progress had been hampered by a focus on the realignment of the directorate and changes in key management posts.

In the most recent FV the Inspectors identified:

- The understanding of, and response to, children at risk of exploitation.
- The quality and depth of social work practice when children are in complex or chronic need.
- The quality assurance of decision-making in the front door.

Again, all of these are areas that had been identified internally and frustratingly the item relating to the quality assurance of decision-making at the front door had been diarised for in depth work earlier in the year but this had not been able to be progressed alongside other pieces of work.

Key messages from the Inspectors:

- We know ourselves well and provided them with an accurate picture of where we are and what we need to do
- They didn't see any areas of concern that we hadn't already identified in our plans
- Our Early Help Assessments are thorough with good use of research
- They could see that there is an increase in the pace of change across the whole service and this needs to continue
- Our work on the Front Door has taken too long and we need to accelerate the work on the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
- They saw some really creative work in Family Wellbeing and Family Support and Safeguarding which was achieving positive outcomes for children
- They saw good management oversight at the beginning and end of assessments
- We need to be much more professionally curious and triangulate the information we receive by ensuring we consistently talk to family and friends, involved professionals and children and young people (where appropriate) to inform our decision making
- There are early signs of our Quality Assurance work becoming embedded but there needs to be more focused quality assurance done by teams within teams and informed by our performance information. This work needs to focus on day-to-day decision making and impact on children.
- We need to develop our multi-agency response to Child Exploitation and children missing including having a shared understanding of who these children are
- We need to seek more feedback from our children and families and involve them in service improvement

Our Annual Engagement Meeting with Ofsted will take place in January/February 2023 which provides opportunities for the local authority to evidence progress made since the FV and for Ofsted to challenge and triangulate information.

4. Consultation

This report provides information on a Focused Visit by Ofsted and so no consultation is required.

5. Financial Implications

Ofsted reference the lack of a specialist resource where young people are in complex and chronic conditions, particularly when at risk of exploitation. Given our Improvement Journey and the close external scrutiny we are under, officers concluded that this needed to be actioned.

Costs

The cost of a Senior Practitioner, including on costs is c £51k.

Funding

Ofsted identified the the lack of a specialist resource for children living in complex and chronic conditions as hampering the work we need to undertake at pace with children and young people at risk of criminal and sexual exploitation. Mindful of the current budgetary pressures the directorate senior leadership team have moved a combination of base and grant funding from other areas to create a fixed term, specialist role. This will become a budget pressure when the short-term funding expires because we know that the numbers of young people drawn into exploitation are increasing.

6. Legal Powers and Implications

Local authorities are required to ensure there is a timely, thorough response to children who might be in need of help or protection.

7. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

The FV examined the work of the 'front door' which comprises a great deal of communication via phones and Teams meetings: this increased during Covid and has been maintained so that there has been a decrease in the need for car travel. The team is located in the Town Hall although other teams whose work was scrutinised are based in the localities they serve.

8. Risk Management

There is a specific risk on the Strategic Risk Register: 'Risk that we do not deliver sustainable change in Children's Services at the right pace of the improvement journey.' This is kept under review at Corporate Leadership Team, Quartet meetings, Directorate Leadership Team, Service Leadership Team and Children's Quality Assurance and Performance Monitoring Board. There are several inter-dependencies including recruitment and retention of the workforce, budget pressures and effective partnership working.

9. Equality Implications

N/A.

10. Corporate Implications

None.

11. Options Considered

None.

Author: Sheila Smith, Director for Children's Services.

Appendices:



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Background Papers:

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North Somerset Council

Report to the Executive

Date of meeting: 7th December 2022

Subject of report: Delivery and disposal options for land owned by North Somerset Council at the Weston Business Quarter

Town or Parish: Weston-super-Mare

Member presenting: Cllr. Ash Cartman, Executive Member for Corporate Services

Key Decision: Yes

Reason: financial threshold above £500k

Recommendations

- To note the change in circumstances and proposed change of approach to the development of North Somerset Council owned land at the Weston Business Quarter.
- To delegate authority, for a maximum period of 18 months from the date of this meeting, to the Executive Member for Corporate Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Placemaking & Economy and the Section 151 Officer, to finalise and approve the disposal of council-owned land at the Weston Business Quarter in line with the parameters set out in Appendix A.

1. Summary of report

- 1.1 This report sets out the actions that have taken place following the Executive decision of 23rd June 2021 (decision EXE 30) in respect of the Weston Business Quarter (WBQ). It summarises the conclusions of that work and recommends progressing a disposal to a potential investor.

2. Policy

- 2.1 This proposal supports the Corporate Plan objective of creating a Thriving and Sustainable Place, in particular the priority of creating “an attractive and vibrant place for business investment and sustainable growth”.
- 2.3 The proposals supports commitments in the North Somerset Economic Strategy relating to low-carbon inward investment, strategic employment sites, and the Junction 21 Enterprise Area (now renamed as the Weston Enterprise Area).
- 2.3 The site is allocated for commercial development in the adopted Local Plan, with the exception of Plot 6 which is allocated for a potential Park & Ride site.

3. Details

Background

- 3.1 Actions detailed in this report were pursued in line with the following previous decisions:
- Executive report, 23rd June 2021: Business Case and Commissioning Plan for development of Weston Business Quarter, including retrospective approval of funding bid.
 - Director decisions DP21, 25th June 2021 and DP437, 2nd March 2022: appointment of Jones Lang Lasalle for the provision of commercial advice; additional advice on disposal negotiations.
 - Director decision DP241, 14th Oct 2021: appointment of Atkins for the delivery of design, survey and cost estimates for the development of a Full Business Case.
 - In addition, Atkins were commissioned to seek an alternative site for park & ride provision (Director Decision DP437, 2nd March 2022), in recognition of the importance of the WBQ site as a strategic employment location.
- 3.2 In July 2021, the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership approved the council's Outline Business Case for £11.1m Revolving Infrastructure Funding (RIF). Subject to the further approval of a Full Business Case (FBC), the money would be available to deliver infrastructure and servicing of plots at the Weston Business Quarter (WBQ). Importantly, the funding would be forward funding rather than grant, and its repayment must be underwritten by NSC.
- 3.3 Further to the decisions and approvals detailed above, work on the delivery of infrastructure and servicing of plots has been completed to RIBA stage 2. This included the preparation of more detailed cost estimates and the provision of soft market testing and viability advice from JLL.
- 3.4 Detail on the findings of Atkins and JLL is provided in exempt Appendix A to this report. It provides commercial information that would be of assistance to any third party seeking to acquire the whole or part of WBQ, therefore it is essential that the information is kept confidential.
- 3.5 In summary, key findings are that the costs have increased to a level beyond the £11.1m RIF funding that is available, and that a traditional development appraisal based on servicing and selling plots / buildings does not provide confidence in being able to generate a sufficient return on this investment to be able to repay the funding to the LEP. This suggests that there is currently too much risk on the council to progress any further with the development of the Full Business Case.
- 3.6 A report from Atkins on the Park & Ride designation has been received and shared with Highway Services and Planning officers. The proposed removal of this designation has been included in the Draft Preferred Options consultation paper for the Local Plan 2023 to 2038.

Major enquiry for purchase of land at Weston Business Quarter (WBQ)

- 3.7 The Council's Economy Team has received a positive inquiry for the acquisition of part of the council's land at the WBQ. The potential purchaser has indicated that they wish to acquire the whole of WBQ, excluding plot 6 (partly as a response to NSC's

desire to retain plot 6 for other potential priorities of its own, as set out in paragraph 3.13).

- 3.8 The potential purchaser is a substantial manufacturing company based within the south-west of England and wishing to expand its presence in the region. The company's brand is recognised internationally for its high-end market products. It is anticipated that company will in its first phase bring 80 new jobs to Weston, with further plans to expand the business in the future.
- 3.9 This type of investor works from a different financial model than a traditional development proposal. This is because their business case is based on the long-term future of their business, rather than on the development and sale of land. They are therefore likely to be able to make the site viable, within those terms.
- 3.10 In view of this significant investment enquiry, and the difficulties for the council in pursuing the development of the site itself, it is recommended that negotiations with the potential investor continue and that authority be delegated to the Executive Member for Corporate Services to finalise a disposal of the site to this or any other future potential purchaser. Information on the value of the site, negotiating approach and proposed Heads of Terms are provided in Appendix A.
- 3.11 The delegation of authority is suggested to be limited to a maximum of 18 months. If a disposal is not reached within that time period, a further report will be required prior to further action.
- 3.12 In the event that the current discussions are unsuccessful, it is proposed that additional marketing of the site would take place with a view to securing a disposal to another party within the same parameters.
- 3.13 The retention of plot 6 by the council would ensure that the land is available for any future expansion / phase 2 of the Foodworks innovation centre already located adjacent to this land (or for any other use identified as a priority for the council). A key aspect of the negotiation with the potential investor will be to ensure that necessary access and wayleave rights are maintained for this plot.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 The allocation of the Weston Business Quarter for employment purposes and the principle of seeking investment have been consulted upon via various council generated reports and plans, including the North Somerset Economic Strategy and Sites and Allocations Plan.
- 4.2 The discussions on the potential of this site are commercially sensitive and confidential, however the Executive Member has been kept advised of progress. Reference to the potential direction of travel has been made in development programme briefings to Place and PCOM panels.
- 4.3 Through its soft marketing exercise, JLL has canvassed potential developers and interested occupants of the Business Quarter.

5. Financial implications

- 5.1 Financial implications are detailed and discussed in Appendix A.

6. Legal powers and implications

- 6.1 The Local Government Act 1972 gives the council power to dispose of land held by it in any manner it wishes provided the council achieves the best consideration that can possibly be obtained.
- 6.2 This proposal is for a commercial disposal of the land rather than a procurement exercise for its development. A commercial disposal is recommended as the most efficient and effective way to enable the current investment interest to come forward; however limits the conditions that the council can place on the disposal.

7. Climate change and environmental implications

- 7.1 The expected purchaser of the site has a good track record in relation to sustainability and has expressed their ambition of a zero carbon development, including on-site renewables. However the nature of a commercial disposal is that the council is unable to specify this requirement and will have to rely on the planning system to assess and ensure the sustainability of proposals as they come forward.

8. Risk management

- 8.1 Not being able to reach agreement on the disposal of the site: in the event that the current discussions fall through, consideration will be given to marketing the site to other potential owner-occupiers, however there remains a risk that in the current economic climate the council may not be able to dispose of the site. The council would have to take a view on these risks and its short- and medium-term response.
- 8.2 By moving to an option of disposal, the council would lose the opportunity of RIF funding from the LEP: whilst the council is now unlikely to pursue this route, officers will discuss with LEP colleagues whether the funding can be kept on hold until such time as a deal is concluded.
- 8.3 The price achieved is insufficient to cover costs incurred to date and/or to generate any return to invest in future priorities: the council is being supported by specialist consultants and will seek to avoid this eventuality. The final decision on disposal will require Executive Member approval in conjunction with the Section 151 Officer.
- 8.4 The sale of the site does not result in development, as the purchaser's proposals stall or are abandoned / an alternative development comes forward which is less acceptable: the suggested Heads of Terms include a buy-back provision after four years, however any commercial disposal holds these risks.

9. Equality implications

- 9.1 The proposed sale of part of the Business Quarter has very limited direct or indirect equality or diversity implications.
- 9.2 The South Ward area in Weston is close to the site and is within the 5% most deprived areas nationally. The successful sale to the interested party could bring added employment to Weston through the construction work and through the long-term creation of employment opportunities.

9.3 The planning application by the interested party will need to comply with the requirements of the Local Plan and other planning policies, which have been subject to EIA assessments.

10. Corporate implications

10.1 Work on this project is led by the Economy, Development and Major Projects Teams, with support from finance and legal colleagues.

11. Options considered

11.1 As detailed above and in Appendix A, various options have been considered for this site, however the recommended disposal is considered to be best option available.

Authors:

Jenny Ford, Head of Placemaking & Development
Jane Harrison, Head of Economy
Geoff Brakspear, Development Projects and Asset Manager
Jonathan D'Este-Hoare, Major Projects & Technical Services

Appendices:

Appendix A (EXEMPT): development appraisals and negotiating position

Background papers:

Executive report, 23rd June 2021: Business Case and Commissioning Plan for development of Weston Business Quarter, including retrospective approval of funding bid.

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
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