



**PORTISHEAD
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

**PART TWO
DRAFT PLANNING POLICIES
AND COMMUNITY ACTIONS**

PART 2 PLANNING POLICIES AND COMMUNITY ACTIONS

INTRODUCTION TO THIS SECTION

2.0 The planning policies and community actions on the following pages will be used to help determine planning applications within the Portishead Neighbourhood Area. Each policy relates back to at least one objective, which in turn links to the overall vision.

2.1 Government guidance sets out that that a policy in a Neighbourhood Plan should be: 'clear and unambiguous... it should be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence. It should be distinct to reflect and respond to the unique characteristics and planning context of the specific neighbourhood area for which it has been prepared' ([National Planning Practice Guidance 2020](#)⁵).

2.2 The Neighbourhood Plan contains a total of 41 policies. These are organised around the three themes of the Town Council's strategy to 'Create a Modern Sustainable Town for the Future': Environment, Wellbeing and Prosperity.

2.3 The Neighbourhood Plan also contains a fourth planning policy section that includes area based policies for Portishead Town Centre.

UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

2.4 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute towards the achievement of 'sustainable development', which is defined by the United Nations as 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'⁶.

2.5 As a member of the United Nations, the UK has agreed to pursue the [17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development](#)⁷ in the period to 2030. These goals address environmental protections, social progress and economic wellbeing. These are priorities which are mirrored by Portishead Town Council's three themes of Environment, Wellbeing and Prosperity that support its strategy to 'Create a Modern Sustainable Town of the Future'.

2.6 The Portishead Neighbourhood Plan is drafted to link into the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. In doing so, we can contribute towards delivering and translating the high level goals of sustainable development into real local level action in Portishead.

2.7 The Sustainable Development Goals are threaded throughout the Neighbourhood Plan. At the beginning of

each theme we set out which of the goals are contributed towards by the planning policies and community actions within the following pages.

2.8 An overview of the goals can be seen below and clicking the goals will take you to an in depth description on the UN website:



STRUCTURE OF PART 2

INTRODUCTION TO THIS SECTION

We have colour coded this section to make it easier to navigate.

ENVIRONMENT

Page *Natural Environment*

- 28 Policy PEN1: Landscape Setting and Views
- 33 Policy PEN2: Portishead's Green and Blue Infrastructure
- 38 Policy PEN3: Flood Risk and Natural Flood Management
- 40 Policy PEN4: Biodiversity
- 45 Policy PEN5: Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland
- 49 Policy PEN6: Designation of Local Green Spaces
- 53 Policy PEN7: Other Green Spaces

Built Environment

- 56 Policy PEB1: Locally Distinctive, High Quality Design
- 59 Policy PEB2: Small and Infill Development
- 62 Policy PEB3: Local Heritage
- 66 Policy PEB4: Sustainable Design, Construction and Retrofitting

Renewable Energy

- 68 Policy PER1: Supporting Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Schemes in Portishead

WELLBEING

Page *Community Facilities and Infrastructure*

- 74 Policy PWC1: Protection of Existing Community Facilities and Infrastructure
- 78 Policy PWC2: New Community Facilities and Infrastructure

Housing

- 80 Policy PWH1: Protection of Portishead's Existing Housing Stock
- 82 Policy PWH2: Retaining Existing Valued Smaller and Accessible Housing Stock
- 85 Policy PWH3: New Housing to Meet Local Needs in Portishead
- 87 Policy PWH4: Housing Available to Local People in Housing Need
- 88 Policy PWH5: First Homes Discount in Portishead
- 90 Policy PWH6: Homes for Elderly, Disabled and Vulnerable People
- 92 Policy PWH7: Adaptable New Homes
- 94 Policy PWH8: Alterations to make Existing Homes Accessible
- 95 Policy PWH9: Community Led Development Projects
- 97 Policy PWH10: Self Build and Custom Build Housing
- 98 Policy PWH11: Sub-divisions and Conversions of Larger Residential Property

PROSPERITY

Page *Economy*

- 102 Policy PPE1: Protecting Portishead's Valued Employment Space
- 105 Policy PPE2: Supporting Business Investment, Start-ups and Low Carbon Business Enterprise
- 106 Policy PPE3: Supporting Low Carbon Local Businesses
- 108 Policy PPE4: Digital Connectivity and Telecommunications
- 110 Policy PPE5: Homeworking and Live-Work Units

Transport

- 112 Policy PPT1: Inclusive Active Travel
- 115 Policy PPT2: Encouraging Active Travel for Leisure and Recreation
- 118 Policy PPT3: Supporting the Shift to Ultra Low Emission Vehicles
- 120 Policy PPT4: Highways Impacts and Securing
- 122 Policy PPT5: Highway Safety
- 125 Policy PPT6: Development Proposals and Travel Planning

AREA BASED POLICIES AND COMMUNITY ACTIONS

Page *Priorities for Wyndham Way Study Area*

- 130 Community Action: Wyndham Way Study Area

Priorities for Portishead Town Centre

- 132 Policy PTC1: Protection of Portishead Town Centre Character and Vitality
- 134 Policy PTC2: Business Use of Upper Floors
- 136 Policy PTC3: Town Centre Housing
- 138 Policy PTC4: Keeping the Town Centre Accessible to Everybody
- 139 Policy PTC5: Shopfronts and Signage

ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

The following section of the neighbourhood plan contains policies related to the environment:

Natural Environment

- Policy PEN1: Landscape Setting and Views
- Policy PEN2: Portishead's Green and Blue Infrastructure
- Policy PEN3: Flood Risk and Natural Flood Management
- Policy PEN4: Biodiversity
- Policy PEN5: Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland
- Policy PEN6: Designation of Local Green Spaces
- Policy PEN7: Other Green Spaces

Built Environment

- Policy PEB1: Locally Distinctive, High Quality Design
- Policy PEB2: Small and Infill Development
- Policy PEB3: Local Heritage
- Policy PEB4: Sustainable Design, Construction and Retrofitting

Renewable Energy

- Policy PER1: Supporting Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Schemes in Portishead

UN SDGs

The policies in this section contribute to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:



ENVIRONMENT: INTRODUCTION

PORTISHEAD'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

3.0 Portishead has a rich blue and green environmental heritage. Located on the southern shore of the Severn Estuary at the mouth of the River Avon, the town has a line of cliffs, beaches and salt marsh along its northern and eastern fringes, opening into the watercourses known as rhynes which drain the low-lying Somerset Levels to the south. The whole of Portishead's coastline has various statutory protections due to its significant biodiversity and scientific value. There are also expanses of ancient and protected hillside woodland at East Wood and Weston Big Wood.

3.1 Since 2001, Portishead has undergone population growth of approximately 60%, with a significant expansion in the number of residential dwellings and a large increase in the size of the built area of the town. Whilst the availability of land for development has greatly reduced, the demand for housing in Portishead has remained strong and therefore the remaining areas of open space in and around the town are important to protect.

3.2 Portishead's location on the northernmost edge of the Somerset Levels, between the Gordano Valley and Rodmoor, means that there is continuing

pressure to encroach further onto the floodplain and into the rural fringes of the town which are part of the green-belt.

3.3 At present, Weston Big Wood dominates the slopes of the valley to the south and south west of Portishead, with the built area of the town lying behind the ridge of the hill. Around Weston Big Wood there are natural buffer areas of fields which consist of unimproved and improved grassland, hedgerows, shelterbelts (which act as windbreaks) and trees. These serve as vital wildlife links with the surrounding Gordano Valley. Even small amounts of development around the fringes of this woodland will significantly impact on the biodiversity of the area as well as the visual appearance of the wood from the valley.

3.4 The inter-relationships and inter-connections between the woodland, rhynes, grassland and agricultural land are what sustain the Woods, the Valley, its beauty, flora and fauna.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

3.5 The character of Portishead has been shaped over the years by a series of factors including landscape, the town's coastal location, its industry and the routes into and within the town. There is a wide variety of architectural styles and built characteristics across the town that contribute to a rich and diverse character

3.6 Portishead was a small village prior to the late Victorian era and the subsequent growth related to the dock. A number of buildings are currently designated through the listing system, including the nationally important former National Nautical School (now Fedden Village).

3.7 The Neighbourhood Plan identifies a number of buildings and heritage assets which are of value to the local area that are not currently listed. It also identifies features of the town which have a specific character related to the town's industrial past, including the rows of dock workers' housing adjacent to the High Street. In a post-industrial town with a relatively young population, many of whom have moved to the town from outside of the area in the last twenty years, the preservation and interpretation of aspects of the town's past, whilst looking forward to new uses, is essential.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

3.8 Work undertaken by the Centre for Sustainable Energy to support the Neighbourhood Plan concluded that immediate opportunities for developing renewable energy sources within the town are limited. Geography and urbanisation preclude wind and large-scale solar energy solutions. Other potential technologies such as tidal and micro-tidal solutions would potentially be viable within the area and may be a future solution but are not currently mature enough for full consideration, however we want to

encourage the use of new technologies as they become available. The recent start-up of a powerful tidal-powered turbine generating electricity in Orkney and the investment of billions of pounds in a tidal lagoon project with underwater turbines in Swansea Bay suggests that the capability to harness tidal power will soon become commercially viable. The introduction of some form of micro-tidal power generation in Portishead could play a crucial role in achieving our ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030.

3.9 Renewable Energy Community Interest Companies such as Low Carbon Gordano (Solar) and Channel Green Energy (Wind) are active in the town and in the wider area and we are keen to encourage these companies to develop further local renewable solutions.



PLANNING POLICIES: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

LANDSCAPE SETTING AND VIEWS

Context

3.10 The character and quality of landscape is key to maintaining a strong sense of place which is an important objective in the National Planning Policy Framework. Portishead has a distinct and varied landscape setting⁸ which is cherished by residents and visitors.

3.11 The Portishead Community Character Statement (2022) has been prepared as part of the evidence base to the Neighbourhood Plan. The Community Character Statement has been prepared by a working group of local people with the support of expert Plan consultants. It describes and analyses important and locally distinctive features of the town as a whole and in the landscape setting.

3.12 As set out in the Community Character Statement, the landscape setting to the town plays a vital role in the distinct and separate identity of Portishead. There are four distinct areas to the landscape setting, from the higher ground of Portishead Down, with its extensive and valued views and the ancient woods of Weston Big Wood. The ridge of Portishead Down then dips and rises again further to the east at East Wood. To the west is Portishead

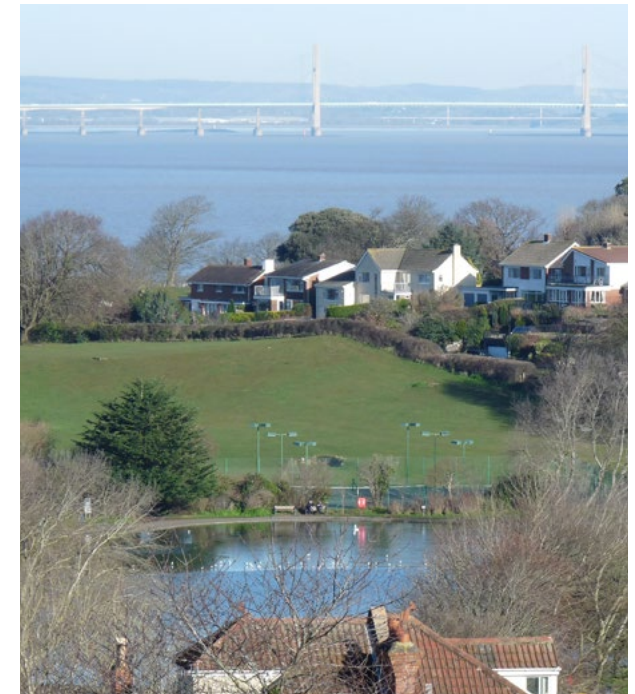
Bay, culturally and historically important to the town and its sense of place, again with wide expansive views. To the east of the town is the open flat landscape of the Gordano Valley.

3.13 These distinct areas that contribute to the distinct and highly valued setting of the town have been assessed and categorised into different character areas, both at a national level and by North Somerset Council. [The North Somerset Council 'Landscape Character Assessment' \(2018\)](#)⁸ supplementary Planning Guidance has identified different character types and areas in North Somerset. It is used to inform and guide planning decisions. The areas can be seen on Figure 2.

3.14 The last remaining open spaces, particularly the area around Weston Big Wood and farmland and floodplain outside the settlement boundary, are valued as settings to the town and for their role as local green spaces. They also deliver multiple ecosystem services and benefits (as set out in the Portishead Green and Blue Infrastructure Evidence Base Report 2022) and consequently should never be built on. Any future development needs to be carefully managed to protect and safeguard Portishead's assets, which

from the coastline to the ancient woodland, are unique assets that provide much value to the wellbeing of residents, the quality of the environment and the distinct character and visual amenity of Portishead.

3.15 As part of the character assessment work, the working group also identified key local views that should be protected. These are shown in detail in the Portishead Local Key Views Report (2021) also prepared as part of the evidence base to support this Plan.



Relevant Objective

O1 To protect Portishead's locally valued views, landscape setting and valued relationship with the Gordano Valley, and maintain the separation of Portishead from other villages and towns.

Local Policy Context

CS5	Landscape and the historic environment
CS6	North Somerset's green belt
DM10	Landscape
DM12	Development within the green belt

POLICY PEN1 – LANDSCAPE SETTING AND VIEWS

Any development should seek to conserve and enhance the landscape setting of Portishead and its landscape character, views and features, including those identified on Figure 2.

Development proposals will be expected to:

- i. integrate natural features such as groups of trees and the local rhyme system that contribute to both the landscape character and setting of the development; and
- ii. demonstrate that the whole scheme, including hard landscape and planting proposals, draws on local landscape characteristics and features through reference to relevant existing landscape and historic landscape assessments, the Portishead Community Character Statement, as well as any additional site specific assessments; and
- iii. respond sensitively to the transition between settlement edge and surrounding countryside and green belt, respecting the tranquillity of the landscape, and avoid any adverse impact on irreplaceable habitats such as Weston Big Wood and East Wood.

Development proposals that are likely to affect any of the local key views shown on Figure 3, and described in the Portishead Local Key Views Report, should assess the effect of the proposals on the view(s) and demonstrate how any adverse effects have been addressed.

The North Somerset Council 'Landscape Character Assessment' (2018) supplementary Planning Guidance has identified different character types and areas in North Somerset. Shown on the map and table below:



Landscape Character Area	Strategy	Character	Condition
E4 Portishead Ridges and Combes	Conserve and Enhance	Moderate	Declining
A2 Clapton Moor	Conserve/ Enhance and Strengthen	Moderate	Good
L4 Clevedon and Portishead Bays	Conserve	Strong	Good

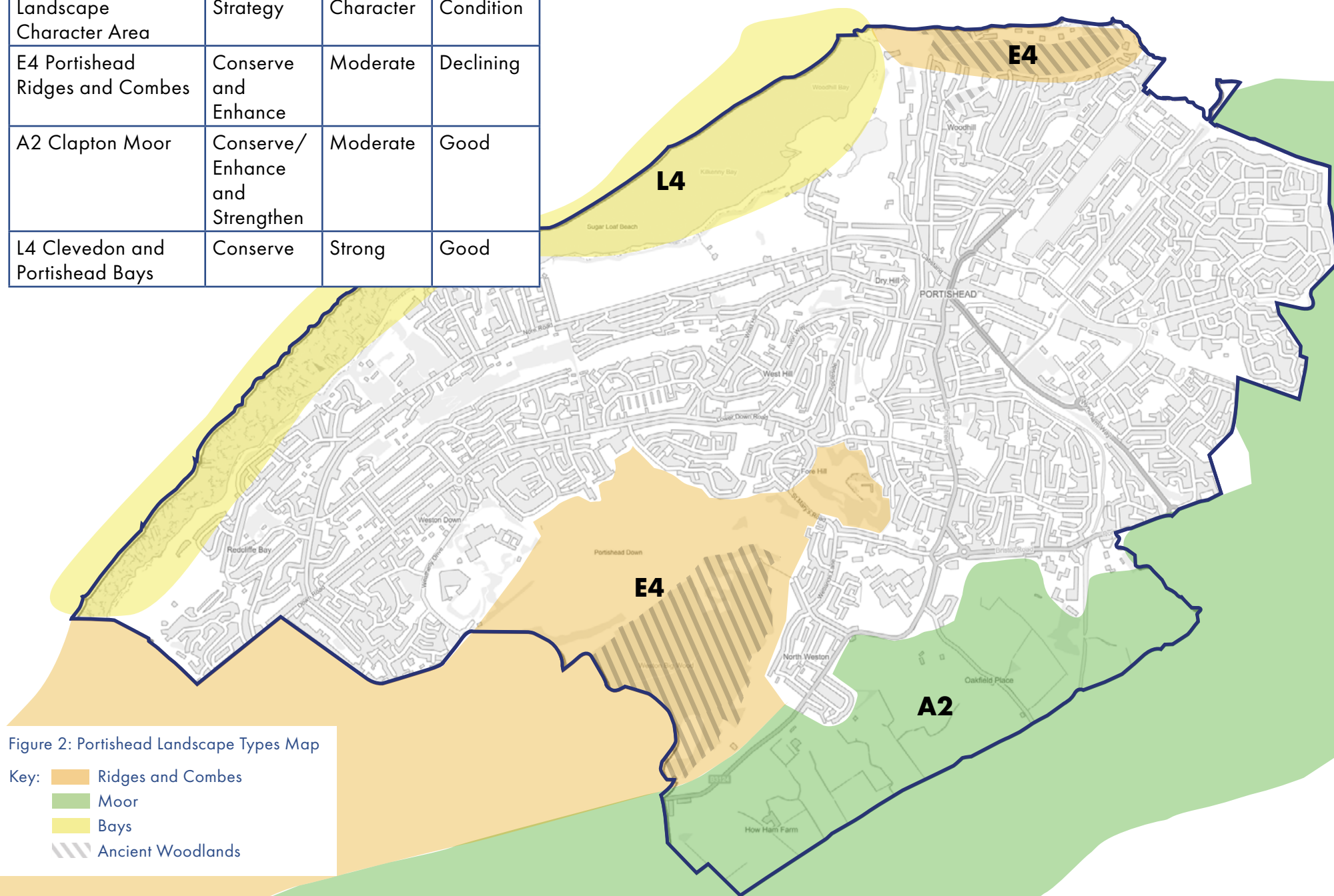
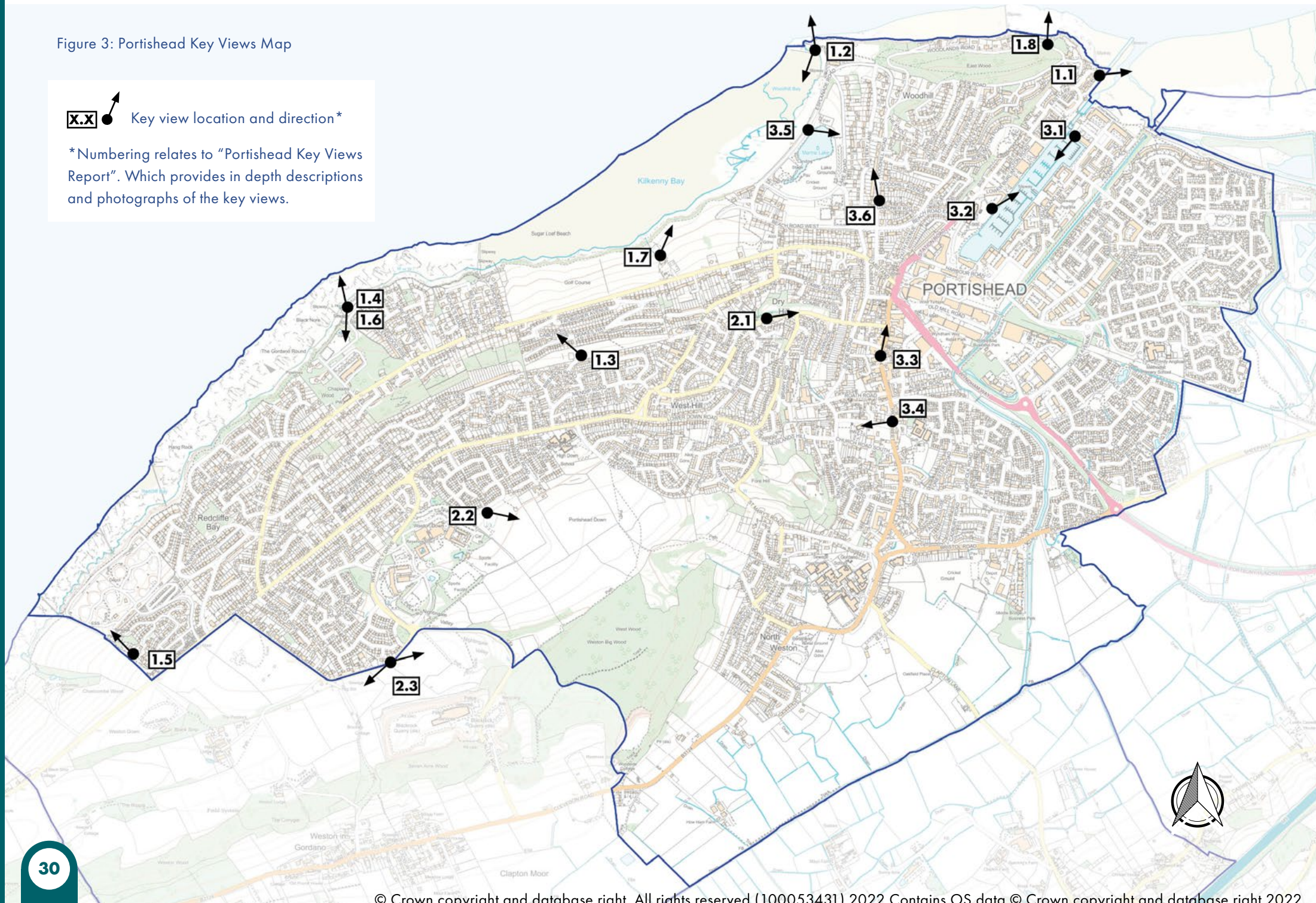


Figure 2: Portishead Landscape Types Map
 Key: Ridges and Combes
 Moor
 Bays
 Ancient Woodlands

Figure 3: Portishead Key Views Map

X.X ● ↗ Key view location and direction *

*Numbering relates to "Portishead Key Views Report". Which provides in depth descriptions and photographs of the key views.



GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

Context

3.16 Green and blue infrastructure encompasses the network of multifunctional green and blue spaces, and other natural features such as trees, verges and lakes, that give us a wide range of benefits for nature, climate and community wellbeing.

3.17 Green and blue infrastructure (GBI) in Portishead provides a huge range of 'ecosystem services'. From flood management at Portbury Ditch, to recreation opportunities at the Lake Grounds, through to supporting the local pollinator network in the Portishead in Bloom planters on the High Street; the green and blue infrastructure network in Portishead is multi-functional as well as integral to the quality of place of the town.

3.18 Portishead's green and blue assets are part of a network of green and blue infrastructure that is locally, regionally, nationally and internationally important. Figure 4 illustrates diagrammatically the key strategic green and blue infrastructure in the Neighbourhood Area to be protected and enhanced. The Severn Estuary has a number of designations recognising its local and international importance:

- The Severn Estuary Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Severn Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Severn Estuary Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention (Ramsar Site)
- Severn Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

3.19 More detail on Portishead's green and blue infrastructure, can be found in the Portishead Green and Blue Infrastructure Evidence Base Report (2022). Below an aerial shot looking north towards Severn Estuary with Weston Big Wood in the foreground.



WHAT ARE 'ECOSYSTEM SERVICES'?

Ecosystem services are the multiple benefits that the natural environment provides. Ecosystem services make human life possible and include - to name just a few - the production of food and water, flood regulation, space for recreation, air quality regulation and maintenance of biodiversity. A key aim of draft policy PEN2 is to support and diversify the range of ecosystem services provided by Portishead's green and blue infrastructure network.

3.20 North Somerset Council's [Green Infrastructure Strategy \(2020\)](#)⁹ provides a framework for protecting and enhancing the green and blue infrastructure network across the District. Using objectives from the Strategy, the Portishead GBI Evidence Report includes an assessment of how key GBI areas currently perform at various ecosystem services, as well as specific recommendations about how this performance could be improved. Proposals that affect Portishead's GBI network are expected to refer to the Portishead GBI Evidence Report and demonstrate how they protect and enhance the quantity and quality of the network, referring to the specific findings of the Report and priorities identified in Policy PEN2. Information included in the GBI Evidence Report, together with site specific analysis required for site proposals, will inform the content of the Climate Change Adaptation Statement which is required to be submitted by North Somerset Council's emerging Local Plan Policy DP5.

3.21 The [North Somerset Green Infrastructure Strategy](#)⁹ highlights the importance of the need to develop several linked policies that cover the full range of functions that green and blue infrastructure

covers. Policy PEN2 is therefore linked to other NDP policies on biodiversity, trees and woodland and open spaces. The protection and enhancement of Portishead's green and blue infrastructure network is threaded throughout further policies in the NDP, reflecting the GBI network's integral role in placemaking, wellbeing and mitigating the effects of the climate emergency.



Relevant Objective

O2 To protect and enhance the multi-functional blue-green (water and green) spaces of our town and the links between them, recognising the importance of these areas for health and wellbeing.

Local Policy Context

- CS1 Addressing climate change and carbon reduction
- CS4 Nature conservation
- CS9 Green infrastructure
- DM19 Green infrastructure

POLICY PEN2 - PORTISHEAD'S GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

The integrity, multi-functionality, quality and connectivity of the strategic Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) network will be protected, enhanced and managed. Development that will result in the creation of new green and/or blue infrastructure (GBI) and/or contribute to the protection, management, enhancement and connectivity of Portishead's existing GBI network, as illustrated diagrammatically on Figure 4, and detailed in the Portishead GBI Evidence Base Report, will be supported.

Proposals for developments must, where relevant to the proposed development:

- i. identify the existing GBI within and around the development site; and
- ii. demonstrate how GBI has been incorporated into the proposal, with particular reference to the Objectives and Recommendations included in the Portishead GBI Evidence Base Report; and
- iii. assess and address how the proposal will benefit a range of ecosystem services that the GBI network provides; and
- iv. assess and address how the proposal will benefit connectivity of GBI through the site and beyond; and
- v. demonstrate that GBI in the proposal has been designed to promote and enhance local diversity and distinctiveness, referring particularly to the Portishead GBI Evidence Base Report and the Key Positive Design Characteristics identified in the Portishead Community Character Statement.

RELATED COMMUNITY ACTIONS

Joined up working for a joined up strategic GBI network

The Portishead Neighbourhood Area is part of key strategic Green and Blue infrastructure corridors that sweep beyond the Neighbourhood Area and across North Somerset. It is key that Green and Blue Infrastructure assets in Portishead are managed appropriately and in collaboration with neighbouring parishes to ensure benefits to the strategic network. Portishead Town Council already works collaboratively with its neighbouring parishes and is committed to continuing this in relation to green and blue infrastructure where needed.

Greening the Grey

Identify opportunities for 'greening the grey' within the built area e.g. green roofs, walls and planting in built up areas where the opportunities to provide new open space is limited. Development around the Marina has been identified as an area where this could be particularly beneficial. Portishead Town Council owns a number of bus shelters around the town and a toilet block – these have been identified as potential green roofs.

GBI Network Assets and Priorities Diagram

Key:

 Neighbourhood Boundary

Statutory Designations:

 RAMSAR/Special Protection Areas/ Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

 Green Belt

 Local Nature Reserves

 Local Wildlife Sites

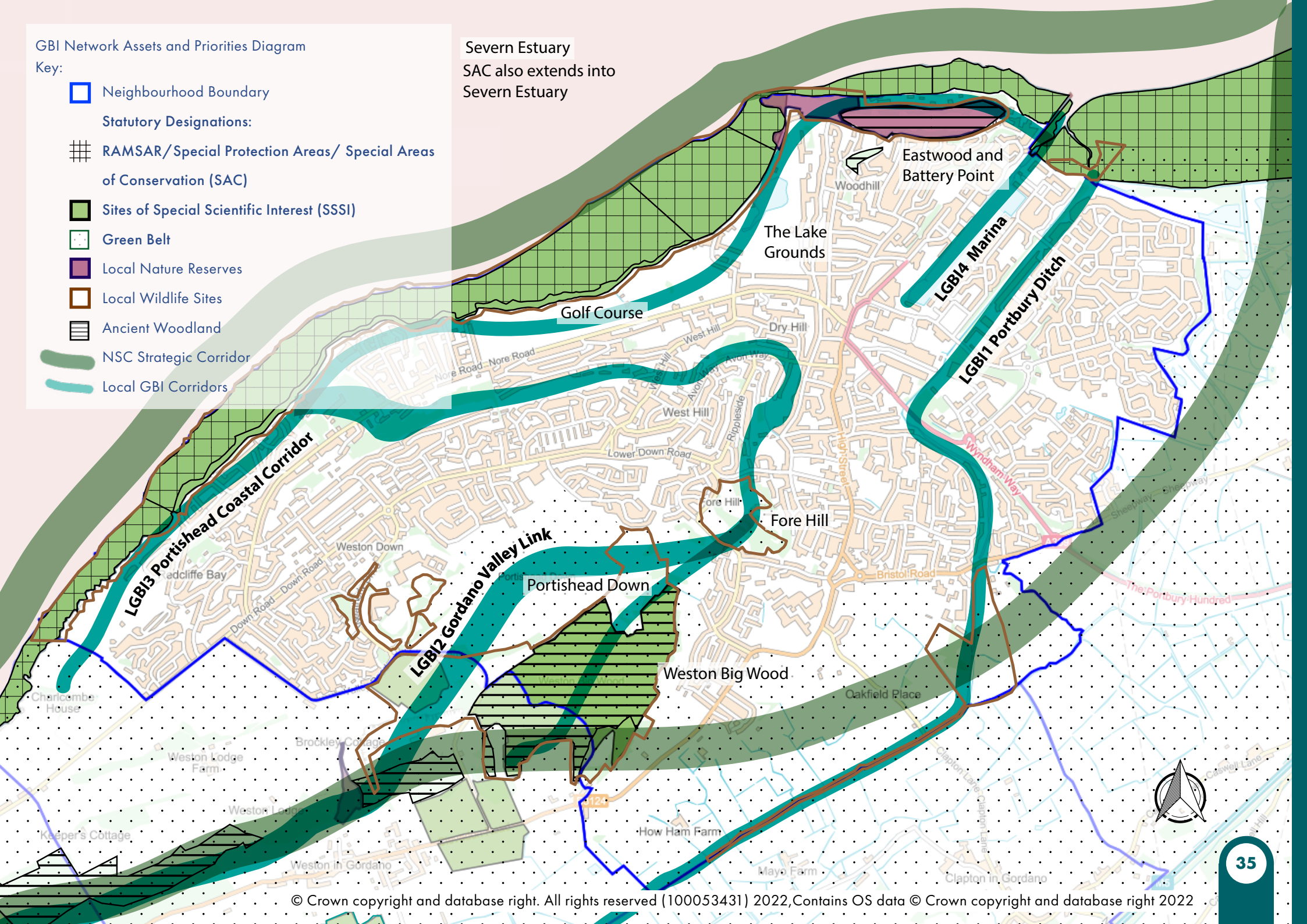
 Ancient Woodland

 NSC Strategic Corridor

 Local GBI Corridors

Severn Estuary

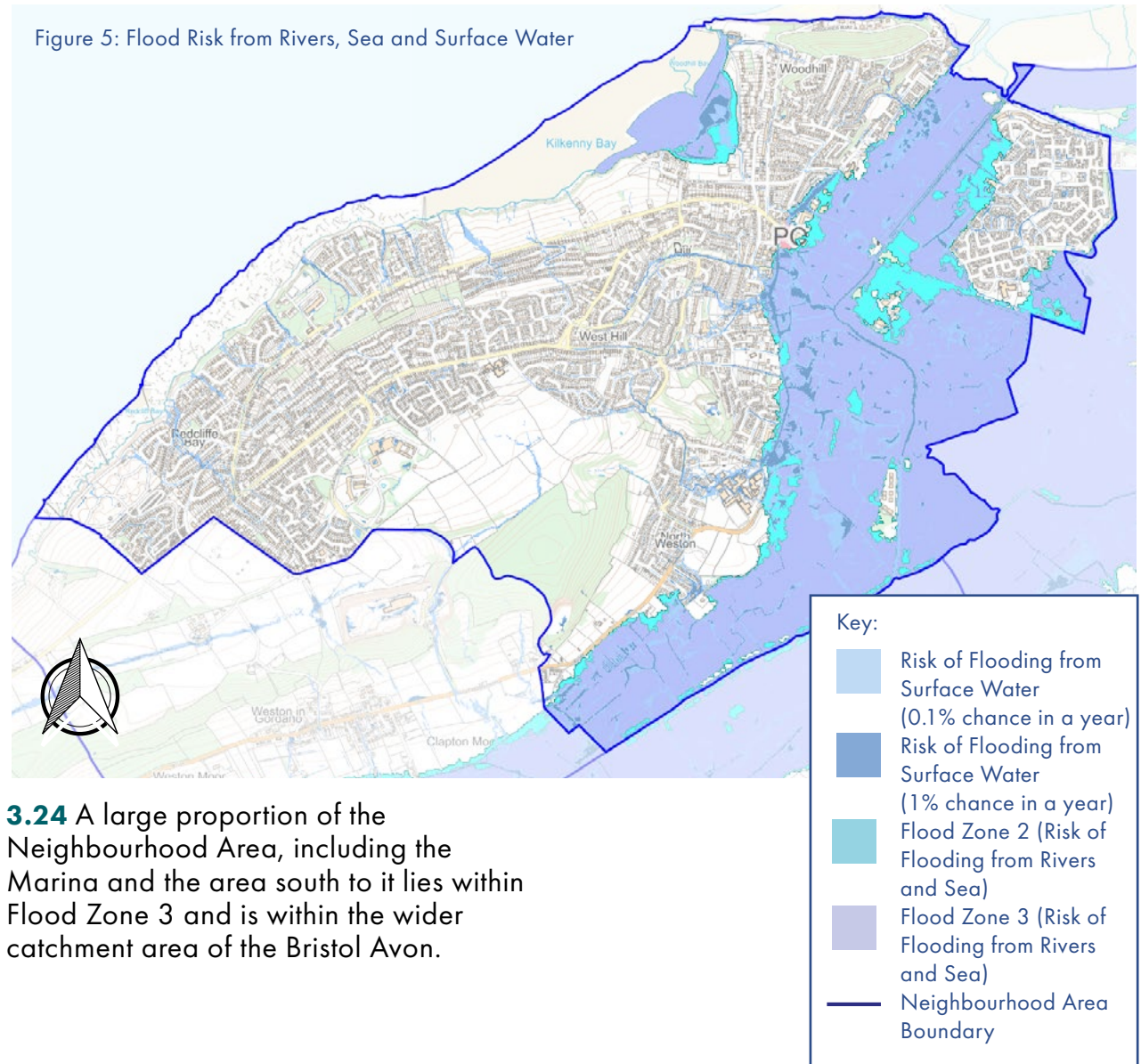
SAC also extends into
Severn Estuary



FLOOD RISK AND NATURAL FLOOD MANAGEMENT

3.22 During the preparation of this Plan, the wider community highlighted strong concerns over flood risk, including concerns over rising sea levels, risk of flooding from the local rhynes, particularly around Lipgate Place, Bristol Road and Clevedon Road and the risk of surface water flooding in more recent development around the Marina. *The North Somerset Strategic Flood Risk Assessment*¹⁰ identifies Portishead as susceptible to groundwater flooding, with more than a quarter of the town considered at risk.

3.23 One of the major impacts of a changing climate is a further increased risk of flooding. The UK Met Office predicts that in a business-as-usual scenario, Britain could experience a decrease in summer rainfall by up to 47%, and up to 35% more rain in winter by 2070¹¹. This flood risk is exacerbated by the presence of the tidal Portbury Ditch within the Neighbourhood Area. The regular combination of high tides and high rainfall means that rainwater draining off the surrounding hills effectively has nowhere to go for the period of time around the high tide, particularly during spring tides.



3.24 A large proportion of the Neighbourhood Area, including the Marina and the area south to it lies within Flood Zone 3 and is within the wider catchment area of the Bristol Avon.

3.25 Bristol Avon Rivers Trust (BART) is a local charity which delivers education, land and river management advice and practical river restoration work throughout the Bristol Avon catchment. One particular area of focus for the charity is Natural Flood Management (NFM), the 'soft engineering' of water on a landscape scale, in order to contribute towards "slowing the flow". NFM projects are designed to complement existing flood projects that are being delivered by other organisations already working in the area. Natural Flood Management involves working with nature to try and 'slow the flow' of water through a landscape. There are a variety of techniques and land-based interventions that can be used, including; subsoiling, cross drains, earth bunds, leaky ponds, cover crops, hedge planting, tree planting and grass buffers.

3.26 In terms of new development, and the important task of 'managing rainfall' in Portishead, drainage should be designed to match natural routes, infiltration rates and discharge rates as far as possible. Therefore the aim must be for water to be discharged as high up the drainage hierarchy¹² as possible:

1. into the ground (infiltration);
2. to a surface water body;
3. to a surface water sewer, highway drain, or another drainage system;
4. to a combined sewer.

3.27 The National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance together with the North Somerset Local Plan highlight the importance of development taking place in areas at least risk of flooding where possible, as well as the need to manage the flow of surface rainwater. North Somerset Council Development Advice Note 'Development

and Flood Risk Issues'¹³ provides further guidance for those applying for planning permission in the Neighbourhood Area. Draft policy PEN3 adds local detail to the North Somerset Council policies.

Photos below show flooding arounds Lippgate Place.



Relevant Objective:

O7 To deliver sustainable development which prioritises brownfield land, responds positively to the climate crisis, reduces our carbon footprint and energy demand, and mitigates the local impacts of climate change.

Local Policy Context

CS3 Environmental impacts and flood risk management

DM1 Flooding and drainage

POLICY PEN3 - FLOOD RISK AND NATURAL FLOOD MANAGEMENT

Natural flood management works to conserve and enhance the ecological flood storage value of the water environment, including watercourse corridors, such as the rhyne system and catchments will be supported.

Major development should include provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs), where appropriate, as part of the Natural Flood Management approach and the wider Green and Blue Infrastructure network of Portishead, paying particular attention to the Green and Blue Infrastructure Assets and Priorities shown on Figure 4 and the Objectives and Recommendations included in the Portishead GBI Evidence Base Report.

Where development proposals are in areas with known surface water flooding issues, they should include appropriate mitigation and construction methods.

Development in the neighbourhood area should also demonstrate adherence to the National Design Guide (2019), which includes guidance on integrated water management that enhances the character of a place and makes it more resilient to impacts of climate change.

BIODIVERSITY

Context

3.28 The Neighbourhood Area is host to a range of wildlife sites and features. From the internationally important Severn Estuary RAMSAR site (also a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest and Special Area of Conservation) through to nationally important sites of ancient woodland, such as Weston Big Wood, as well as local nature reserves at Fore Hill and East Wood and Battery Point, Portishead's wildlife sites and features support a rich overall wildlife network which contributes towards the wellbeing of wildlife and residents alike. However, we are also aware that human activity impacts on our local biodiversity such as with light pollution, and greater pressure on our ancient woodland, as demonstrated in the Portishead GBI Evidence Base Report (2022).

3.29 A record of habitats and biodiversity information has been obtained from Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre and from local group Wild Portishead, who are using online tool iNaturalist to map and record wildlife in Portishead. This information is also included in the GBI Evidence Base Report.

3.30 Emerging North Somerset Local Plan Policy DP32 (Nature Conservation) outlines the emerging approach to nature and biodiversity conservation in the District. The GBI Evidence Base Report sets out detailed information on the existing biodiversity assets and nature conservation in Portishead. Proposals should pay particular attention to the objectives and recommendations set out in the Portishead GBI Evidence Base Report to help ensure that biodiversity improvement benefits local ecosystems and improves the range of ecosystem services that the GBI network provides.

3.31 Policy PEN4 is consistent with paragraph 174(d) of the NPPF, which requires a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain in new schemes. The emerging North Somerset Local Plan looks to deliver this at the North Somerset level through emerging policy DP33 (Biodiversity Net Gain). The biodiversity net gain approach follows on from the Government's aim to 'leave the environment in a better state than we found it' in its 25 Year Environment Plan.

3.32 Policy PEN4 states that proposals that are within or outside a Site of Special

Scientific Interest will not normally be permitted. For instance, this would apply to proposals which could affect the sensitive bird species and other habitats and species of the Severn Estuary. All designated SSSIs in the Portishead Neighbourhood Area are shown on Figure 4.

3.33 Paragraph 179(b) of the NPPF states that 'plans should promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity'.



Relevant Objective

O4 To protect and enhance the biodiversity of our area, recognising the important sites in Portishead that act as carbon sinks and sustain species under threat, including our small locally valued green spaces, nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and internationally designated RAMSAR site and associated Salt Marshes.

Local Policy Context:

CS4 Nature conservation
DM8 Nature conservation
CS9 Green infrastructure

POLICY PEN4 - BIODIVERSITY

Development proposals will be expected to deliver a minimum of 10% net gain in biodiversity, including the enhancement and creation of ecological networks within and, where relevant, connecting with those beyond the Plan Area (see Figure 4). Proposals that exceed the minimum requirement of 10% biodiversity net gain will be particularly supported.

Protection, connection and enhancement of statutory and non-statutory nature conservation sites (as shown on Figure 4) is a priority for the Neighbourhood Area and development proposals must demonstrate sensitive responses to these sites where necessary, such as accommodating a buffer zone to protect sensitive habitats, or demonstrating that opportunities to reduce indirect impacts, such as light pollution, have been taken. Specific attention for priority habitats, as identified on Figure 6, and protected species should also be demonstrated.

Development that will adversely affect the integrity of sites of international importance for wildlife, including Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites, will not be permitted.

Any proposals that could affect sites of international importance for wildlife, including Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Ramsar Sites must carry out screening for Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

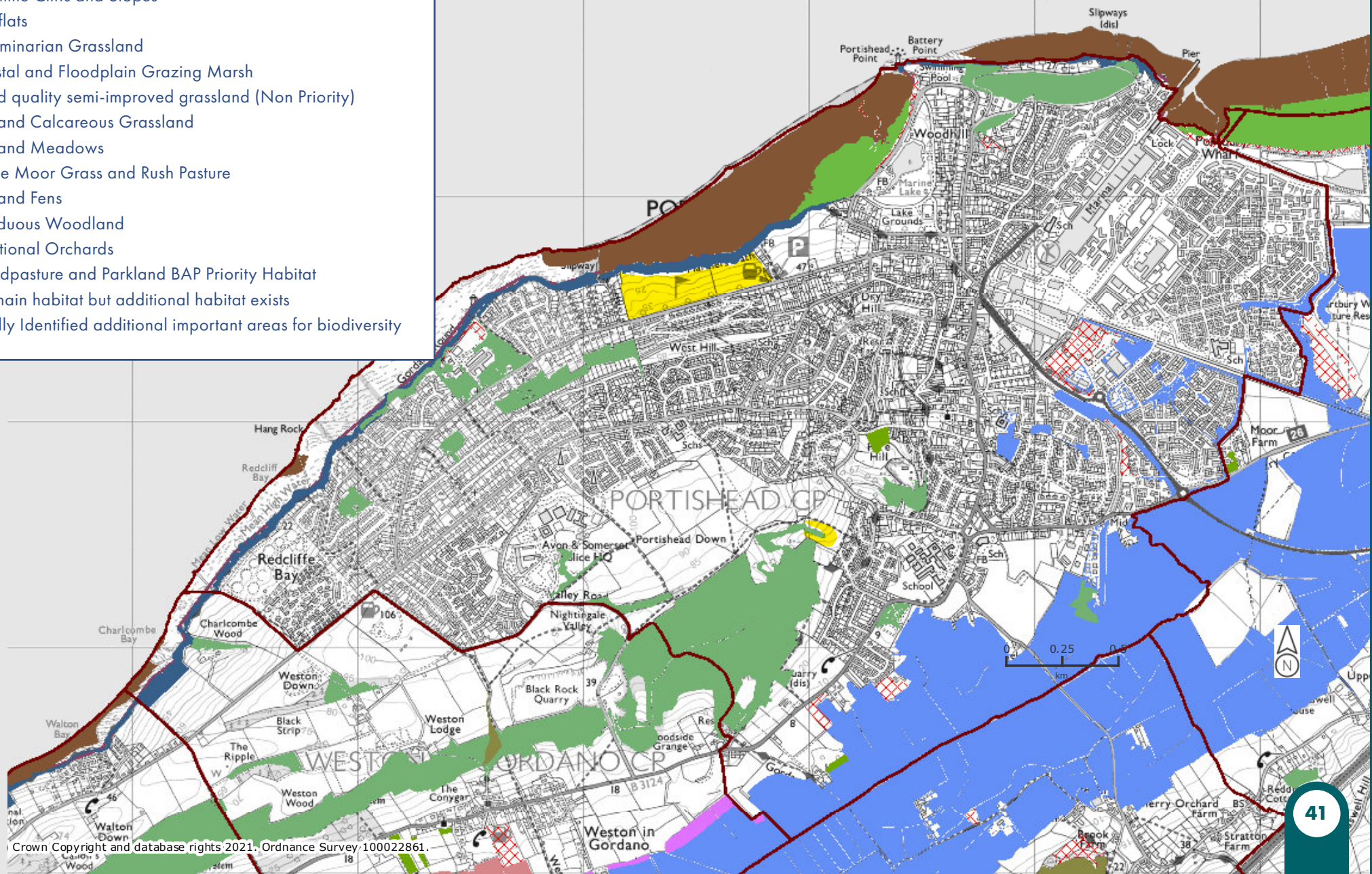
Development which is likely to have an adverse effect on an Site of Special Scientific Interest (either individually or in combination with other developments), will not normally be permitted.

Development which could harm, directly or indirectly, species which are legally protected, or species and habitats that have been identified as Species or Habitats of Principal Importance in England (also known as Section 41 or 'Priority' species and habitats) will not be permitted unless the harm can be avoided or mitigated by appropriate measures.

Figure 6: Priority Habitats

Key:

- Parishes (GB)
- Coastal Saltmarsh (England)
- Maritime Cliffs and Slopes
- Mudflats
- Calaminarian Grassland
- Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh
- Good quality semi-improved grassland (Non Priority)
- Lowland Calcareous Grassland
- Lowland Meadows
- Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pasture
- Lowland Fens
- Deciduous Woodland
- Traditional Orchards
- Woodpasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat
- No main habitat but additional habitat exists
- Locally Identified additional important areas for biodiversity



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RELATED COMMUNITY ACTIONS

- *Expand rewilding management regimes in order to increase biodiversity.* Portishead Town Council support appropriately designed rewilding projects within the Town, understanding 'rewilding' as the 'large-scale restoration of ecosystems to the point where nature is allowed to take care of itself'¹⁷. In Portishead, it is important that potential rewilding projects are well communicated with the nearby community and informed by community engagement to inform the type of project (including species etc.) that is suitable in each particular location. Recent NSC-led projects for tree planting in Portishead have had mixed results as a number of the saplings did not survive, either through lack of watering/care and/or accidental damage or vandalism due to trees being planted in the wrong locations. Better collaboration with knowledgeable local partners would help to ensure that appropriate projects are brought forward. There may be an opportunity for appropriate rewilding projects on the Portishead Town Council-owned land at the football fields on Bristol Road. This would need to be carefully managed to ensure that the recreation function of this important green space was protected and enhanced where possible.
- *Reduce pesticide usage and/or go pesticide free in some areas.* Portishead Town Council supports this and has already banned the use of Glyphosate herbicide by Portishead Town Council in Portishead.
- *Encourage and support wildlife friendly gardening.* Wild Portishead promotes this through campaigns such as the Metre Meadow¹⁸ which encourages people to leave a 1 m² unmown area of their garden and keep a note of how it develops; the species it attracts etc. Portishead in Bloom is another relevant local partner that already does a lot of good work to promote biodiversity.

PROMOTING PORTISHEAD'S BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

The recently passed legislation in the Environment Act requires developments to increase biodiversity value on site by at least 10%. This is a positive step towards nature recovery, but it relates only to sites that are being developed.

North Somerset Council recently declared an ecological emergency, recognising that the survival of our society and economy relies on the health of the natural environment and ecosystems.¹⁴ We need to do all that we can to increase biodiversity in Portishead, not just in areas where development is taking place.

There is opportunity for us to improve the wildlife value of our public realm and spaces; improving, rewilding and restoring natural habitats, increasing the range of ecosystem services they provide to improve health and wellbeing of residents as well as of ecological networks. These local community assets are within our management and have potential to secure biodiversity gains well in excess of 10%.

Portishead Town Council will work with local organisations and community groups to identify the best opportunities. This should be informed by Nature Recovery Network and Opportunities mapping from the West of England Nature Partnership and North Somerset Council's rewilding map. These projects identify particular areas for biodiversity improvements, as well as the type of habitat most appropriate.

TREES, HEDGEROWS AND WOODLAND

Context

3.34 Portishead has a distinctive treescape, with large areas of woodland visible from within the built environment as well as locally valued significant trees located within and around the town. The number and diversity of street trees is an important feature of the town (many of which are protected with Tree Protection Orders) and the Neighbourhood Area is also home to large areas of Ancient Woodland - nearly 45 hectares in total.

3.35 Ancient Woodlands are our richest land-based habitat for wildlife. According to the Woodland Trust they are home to more threatened species than any other habitat. Ancient Woodland covers a significant proportion of the land in the town area at around 4.7%, which is significantly higher than the national average of 2.5%¹⁹ - much of this Ancient Woodland is within Weston Big Wood outside the settlement in the green belt, but also includes East Wood and Wood Hill within the town.

3.36 Weston Big Wood is also home to the rare Round-leaved Whitebeam. The Round-leaved Whitebeam is only found within the Neighbourhood Area, within the

Avon Gorge and over the Severn Estuary in the Forest of Dean. The Round-leaved Whitebeam is classed as 'vulnerable' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.²⁰

3.37 The Standing Advice from Natural England and the Forestry Commission²¹ relating to buffers for ancient woodlands, is that the proposal should have a buffer zone of at least 15 metres from the boundary of the woodland to avoid root damage (known as the root protection area). In their 'Planners' Manual for Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees' (2019) the Woodland Trust state in relation to providing adequate buffers, "Although there is no 'one size fits all' with buffer design, each one should be designed to fulfil the specific requirements of its location and the type of proposed development. In order to protect Weston Big Wood as an irreplaceable habitats in Portishead, the biggest possible buffers should separate ancient woodland and any development that comes forward. As a precautionary principle, a 50-150 metre buffer should be maintained between a development and the ancient woodland, including through the construction phase, unless the applicant can demonstrate very clearly how a smaller buffer would suffice. Weston Big Wood is designated as a Site of Special

Scientific Interest (SSSI). SSSI impact risk zones around the wood are used as a tool to make an assessment of any development proposals - the first risk zone around the wood extends to 50meters (and there is currently no development within this zone) and the second to 150m.

3.38 Overall tree canopy coverage in Portishead in 2020 is estimated to be an average of 20% which has been mapped to date using the i-tree canopy tool²². The Woodland Trust recommend an increase in UK woodland cover from its current 13% of land area to 19% by 2050 to tackle this country's biodiversity and climate crises.²³ The Urban Forestry and Woodland Advisory Committee Network²⁴ advise that 'a minimum standard for tree canopy cover is set for a local area, with evidence showing that 20% is a good aspiration'. It is therefore considered necessary and achievable, for any development proposals in Portishead to continue to deliver 20% tree canopy coverage.

3.39 Trees in Portishead have a range of functions, be it contributing towards biodiversity and amenity value, providing shade and helping with other adaptations to the effects of climate change. There

are a significant number of trees with Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) reflecting the importance of trees and woodland in and around this town, which are highly valued by the local community. Existing Tree Protection Orders can be viewed on North Somerset Council’s online planning map.²⁵

3.40 Inspired by work on the NDP, a group of local people started the Significant Trees of Portishead project which aims to record, map and collect key data on the trees in the Neighbourhood Area, with a view to protect valuable trees and sustainably increase the overall tree cover in Portishead. The aim of the project was to work with ecologists, arboriculturalists and local people to ensure the appropriate species and size of tree are planted in the right places to maximise their chance of survival and ensure that the overall GBI network is protected and enhanced through tree planting. The project used *iNaturalist*²⁶ – an online mapping tool – to map and record data. Detail and analysis of the treescape in Portishead is included in the Portishead GBI Evidence Base Report (2022), with key features shown on Figure 7.

3.41 As stated in North Somerset Council’s adopted policy framework, retaining trees and hedgerows can influence both the design and layout of any development, and

arrangements for their protection should be made during the construction phase. Designs should also take account of the long term setting for important trees and how they will relate to the use of the area in the future. It is important to note here that a Neighbourhood Plan in itself cannot protect a tree from being felled, unless it is protected by a Tree Preservation Order or is within a Conservation Area.

3.42 Hedgerows, like trees, can make an important contribution to the character and can also be important historically as indications of land use and previous ownership. They also contribute significantly to biodiversity and amenity value of the natural and, in places, built environment. Trees will also help with adaptation to the effects of climate change.

3.43 Where tree loss is unavoidable, a Tree Replacement Standard can be used to inform the number of replacement trees for the loss in canopy cover.

3.44 Whilst a particular site or design approach to trees will inform the number and approach to tree planting, the standard below is an established methodology to underpin discussions on the replacement of these key assets.

3.45 The Neighbourhood Area is located within the Forest of Avon, which is part of a national programme of Community Forests across England, delivering more trees and woodlands. In 2021, the Forest of Avon published its *Tree and Woodland Strategy for the West of England*²⁷, which the NDP Community Actions aim to contribute towards. Looking ahead, the aim is to ensure that the city’s tree cover is, at the very least, protected and maintained in keeping with SDG 15 – Life on Land.

Trunk Diameter of Tree lost to development (cm measured at 1.5 metres above ground level)	Number of Replacement Trees
Less than 15	0 - 1
15 - 19.9	1
20 - 29.9	2
30 - 39.9	3
40 - 49.9	4
50 - 59.9	5
60 - 69.9	6
70 - 79.9	7
80 +	8

Table 1: Tree Replacement Standard (based on the Bristol Tree Replacement Standard (known as BTRS – see page 21 of Bristol City Council’s Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document)

Relevant Objective

O3 To protect, maintain and expand Portishead's distinctive treescape and woodland areas such as Weston Big Wood.

Local Policy Context

CS4 Nature conservation
CS9 Green Infrastructure
DM8 Nature Conservation
DM9 Trees and Woodlands
Biodiversity and Trees SPD



POLICY PEN5 – TREES, HEDGEROWS AND WOODLAND

Ancient and Veteran Trees

Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate no loss, or deterioration of the irreplaceable habitats of Ancient Woodland (as shown on Figure 7). Development proposals directly or indirectly affecting Ancient Woodland and ancient trees or veteran trees identified in the Neighbourhood Plan Area will be resisted. A 50 - 150metre buffer should be maintained between any development and the Ancient Woodland of the SSSI Weston Big Wood, including during the construction phase, in order to avoid adverse impacts on this irreplaceable habitat, unless the applicant can demonstrate very clearly how a smaller buffer would be acceptable.

Any ancient or veteran trees must be retained within a development site, including a root protection area and appropriate buffer zone, which should be whichever is greater of, either an area which is a radius of 15 times the diameter of the tree with no cap or (b) 5 metres beyond the crown.

Other Existing Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

Existing trees and hedgerows on development sites should be considered throughout the design process to be retained and incorporated as placemaking features in new development.

Development proposals affecting other existing trees or hedgerows should ensure that there is no damage, or loss of value, to those which demonstrate good arboricultural, biodiversity value nor to the Locally Identified Significant Trees identified on Figure 7 (and as part of the ongoing Significant Trees of Portishead project). Protection before and after development should be in accordance with British Standard BS5837.

Where there is an unavoidable loss of trees on site, the number and type of replacement trees should be informed by the quality and size of the lost trees.

cont.

POLICY PEN5 – TREES, HEDGEROWS AND WOODLAND CONTINUED

New Trees

New tree planting, in development proposals and throughout the built and natural environments of the Plan area, will be supported to maintain and increase the overall tree canopy cover of the Neighbourhood Area, and to provide gateway and landmark trees that contribute to local distinctiveness. This should be informed by relevant ecology and arboricultural assessment and should have regard to the advice set out in the Portishead GBI Evidence Base Report - with a preference for native, large-canopied and orchard species.

Tree Canopy Cover

Proposals should clearly set out what the future tree canopy coverage of a site will be with a target of 20% of the site area on sites outside of the town centre and greater than 0.5 ha in size. This will principally be achieved through retention and planting of trees, but where it can be demonstrated that this is impractical, the use of other green infrastructure (e.g. green roofs) can be used to deliver equivalent benefit. On residential development sites, some of this tree canopy cover will be expected to be met through new trees on streets as well as within gardens.

SIGNIFICANT TREES OF PORTISHEAD PROJECT

During the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, members of the Environment Working Group took part in a project to log significant trees in Portishead to catalogue key information such as their species, size, health, function and location. Part of the project's aim was to identify trees with potential for tree preservation orders (TPOs) and / or for listing on the Woodland Trust's Ancient Tree Inventory²⁸, which would grant them further protection.

Figure 7 shows those that have been identified as part of the project, although there will be many more within the Neighbourhood Area.

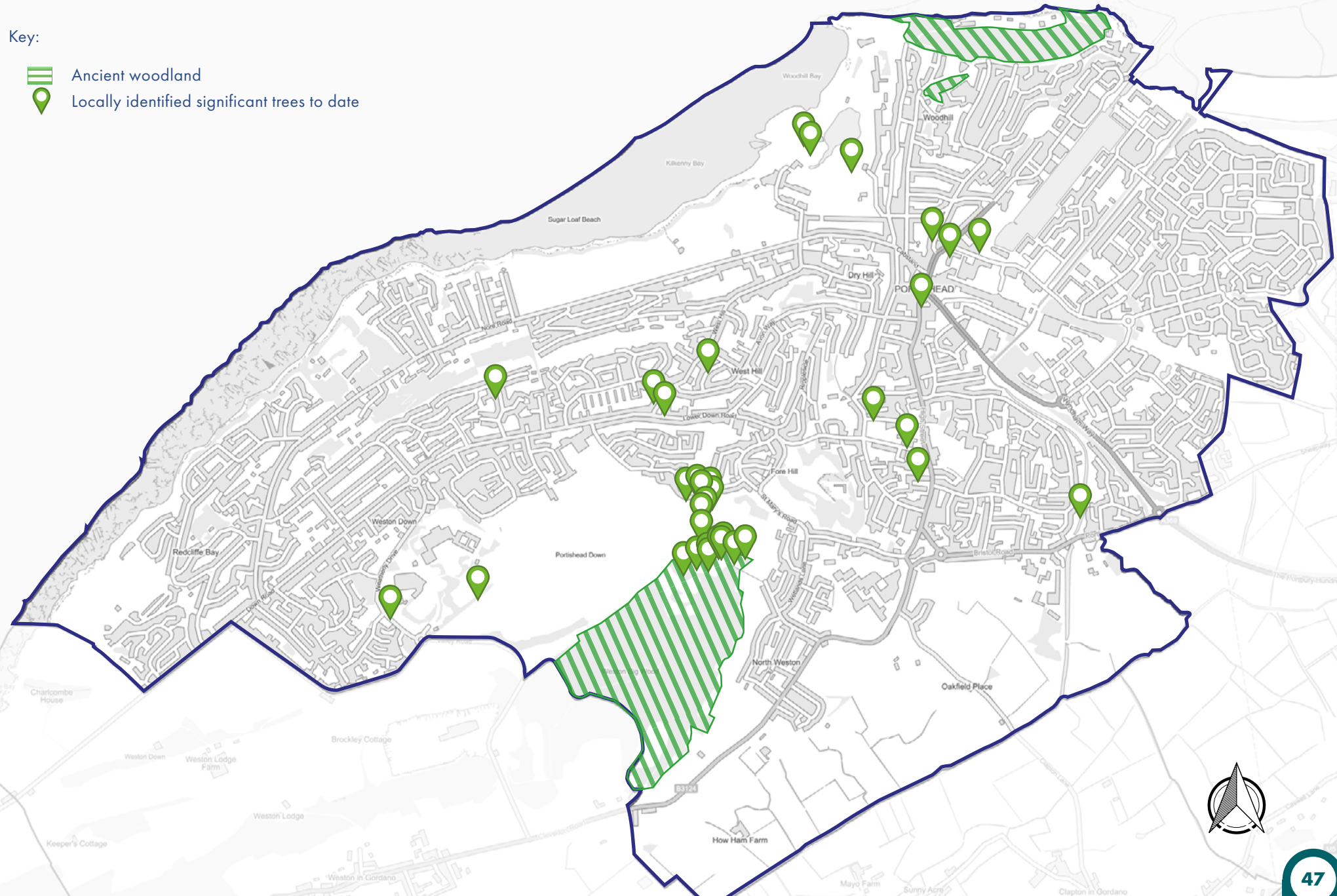
Nominations and suggestions for significant trees were made directly from the community via online engagement and other methods.

The project builds evidence around what makes a tree valuable and successful in particular places in Portishead, locations for potential tree planting; useful to inform rewilding projects within the Neighbourhood Area to help ensure that the 'right trees are planted in the right places' (NPPF paragraph 131).

Figure 7: Ancient Woodland, Locally Identified Significant Trees

Key:

-  Ancient woodland
-  Locally identified significant trees to date



DESIGNATION OF LOCAL GREEN SPACES

Context

3.46 The Neighbourhood Plan proposes the designation of Local Green Spaces. The designation, introduced by the NPPF, provides special protection against development for green areas of importance to communities. The designation can be used:

- where the green space is in reasonably proximity to the community it serves
- where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife.
- where the green area is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

Local Green Spaces do not have to be publicly accessible, and do not need to be in public ownership.

3.47 North Somerset Council's Sites and Policies Plan Part 2 document designates Local Green Spaces in Portishead. These designations are carried forward into the emerging Local Plan (specifically

emerging policy LP14 Local Green Space). The Neighbourhood Plan identifies further spaces for designation that are particularly special to Portishead's local community.

3.48 A full explanation of the methodology, evidence and justification to support the designation of the nominated Local Green Spaces is set out in the Portishead Local Green Space Evidence Base Report (2022).

3.49 Local policy for managing development on a Local Green Space should be consistent with policy for Green Belt. This means 'inappropriate development of the space would not be allowed except for in very special circumstances'. (NPPF 2021, para 147)². It is possible that limited development affecting a Local Green Space could be acceptable, for example new / replacement facilities relating to the functions normally associated with the space (e.g. changing rooms for recreation spaces). Development and uses unrelated to those functions, such as residential development, would not normally be acceptable and would need to meet the exception test requiring 'very special circumstances'

3.50 Only those spaces which meet the Local Green Space criteria above are included in the draft designations in Policy PEN6. The Portishead Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has also identified a wider network of undesignated green spaces which spans the whole town and encompasses the spaces which do not fit the Local Green Space criteria and so cannot be included as Local Green Space. NDP Policy PEN7 (Other Green Space) includes more information on this network of spaces.

North Somerset Council Sites and Policies Plan para 4.38-9 <https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-03/site%20allocations%20plan.pdf>

Relevant Objective

○9 To protect and improve health, wellbeing, leisure and recreation opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities by protecting and expanding community facilities and spaces for community activities to ensure that Portishead is a welcoming, safe and accessible place for everyone.

○10 To ensure all residents have easy access to local green, blue and open spaces, and to promote environments and transport networks that offer all individuals and communities the greatest potential to lead active and healthy lifestyles.

Local Policy Context

SA5 Local Green Space

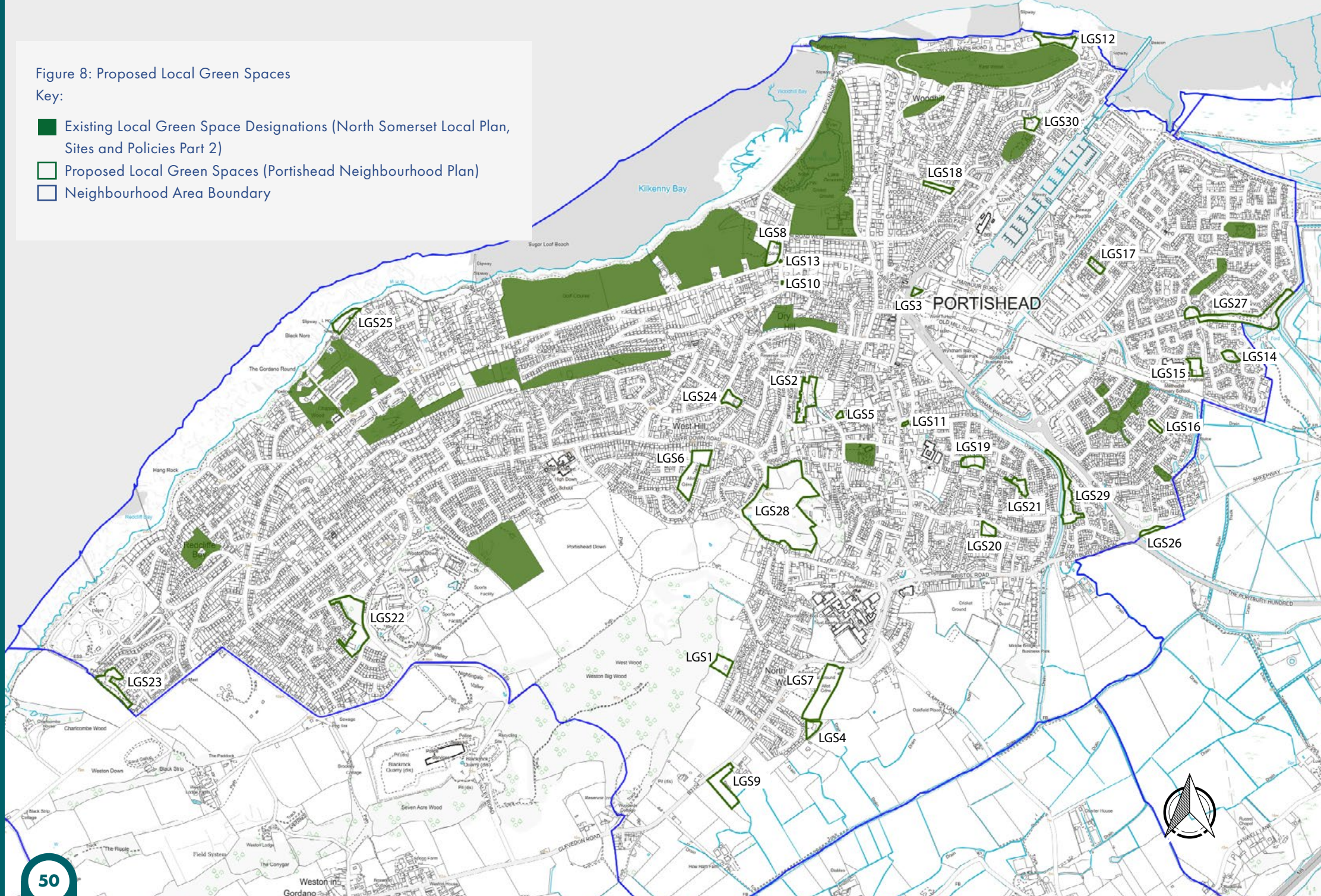
SA6 Undesignated Green Space

POLICY PEN6 – DESIGNATION OF LOCAL GREEN SPACES

In accordance with NPPF paragraphs 101-103, planning permission will not be granted except in very special circumstances for development which adversely affects a designated Local Green Space as shown on Figure 8 and detailed in the Local Green Space Evidence Base Report, particularly regarding the characteristics underpinning its designation, such as beauty, historic importance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of wildlife.

Figure 8: Proposed Local Green Spaces
Key:

- Existing Local Green Space Designations (North Somerset Local Plan, Sites and Policies Part 2)
- Proposed Local Green Spaces (Portishead Neighbourhood Plan)
- Neighbourhood Area Boundary



OTHER GREEN SPACES

Context

3.51 Green spaces within and around the built environment are a key component of Portishead's GBI network. Increasing development pressure on the town has highlighted the importance of nearby and accessible open spaces in Portishead for the local community; a sentiment that has only increased throughout the pandemic.

3.52 North Somerset policy SA6 recognises the value of open green spaces which are not designated as Local Green Spaces in making worthwhile contributions to the townscape, character, setting and visual attractiveness of a place. The policies require development proposals that affect undesignated open spaces to not have a detrimental impact on green infrastructure by adversely affecting spaces that make this worthwhile contribution. In Portishead, our undesignated open spaces have a range of functions and provide a range of ecosystem services, for example providing space for recreation and play, providing an important community value, local food production, contributing towards the townscape and distinctive character of an area, and providing space for biodiversity to thrive through rewilding projects.

3.53 The Portishead GBI Evidence Base Report (2022) includes an audit of open spaces in Portishead, which includes identification of spaces and their function and value, as well as opportunities for improvement where appropriate. The open space audit and Policy PEN7 adds local detail to North Somerset policy by identifying the open spaces in Portishead and their valued functions and contributions. The open spaces are identified on Figure 9.

3.54 Some of the undesignated green spaces in Portishead are identified as Community Open Spaces. These green spaces are where limited development is supported, so long as it is in keeping with the existing use and community value of the site. For example, a school may wish to build a sports pavilion on its playing field, or a medical centre may need to build additional healthcare facilities on its land.

3.55 Throughout the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, Slade Road open area has been highlighted as an important open green space for the local community. In planning terms, two distinct areas make



up this space. The first is the western, wooded area, which this Neighbourhood Plan proposes to designate as a Local Green Space (see policy PEN6 above), to be protected from development in line with Green Belt policy.

3.56 The second area is the eastern, more open area, which local people value for its recreation and biodiversity. The space is used informally for bmx and other activities, and there is an informal footpath that crosses the area.

3.57 This eastern area is allocated for residential development in North Somerset's Local Plan Policy SA1. This is an allocation that is brought forward into emerging Local Plan material from North Somerset. The Neighbourhood Plan cannot be used to block development, so it is not appropriate for the Neighbourhood Plan to identify this space in PEN7. However, it is important that the recreational and biodiversity value of this space is noted.

3.58 The Other Green Spaces map and policy should be read in conjunction with draft Neighbourhood Plan Policy PEN6.



Relevant Objectives:

O2 To protect and enhance the multi-functional blue-green (water and green) spaces of our town and the links between them, recognising the importance of these areas for health and wellbeing.

O10 To ensure all residents have easy access to local green, blue and open spaces, and to promote environments and transport networks that offer all individuals and communities the greatest potential to lead active and healthy lifestyles.

Local Policy Context

CS9 Green infrastructure
SA5 Local Green Space
SA6 Undesignated Green Space

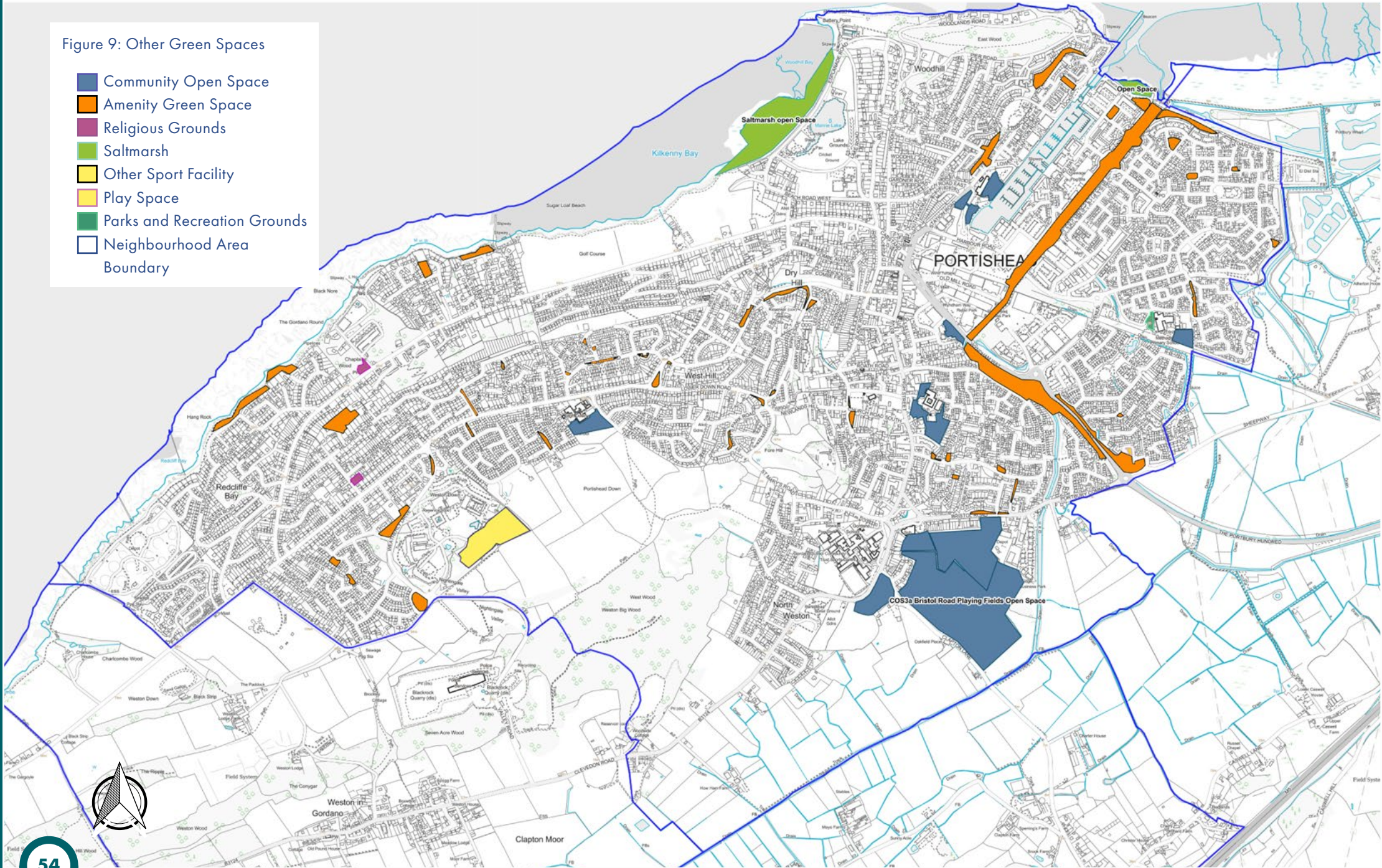
POLICY PEN7 - OTHER GREEN SPACES

Development proposals affecting green spaces, not designated as Local Green Spaces, as identified on Figure 9, will only be acceptable provided they:

- do not have a detrimental impact on green infrastructure by adversely affecting spaces which provide an important community and/or biodiversity value, and/or make a worthwhile contribution to amenity and/or the townscape, character, setting, visual attractiveness of the settlement, and
- demonstrate from an assessment of open space provision, using the quantity and access standards for open space as set out by North Somerset Council²⁹, that there is a surplus in the catchment area of open space beyond that required to meet both current and forecast need, and full consideration has been given to all functions that the open space performs, or
- demonstrate that a replacement open space (or enhancement of the remainder of the existing site) provides a net benefit to the community in terms of the quantity, quality and accessibility of the open space including by walking and cycling.
- Any proposed development on school playing fields must be for education purposes or where the Department for Education is satisfied that the land is no longer required for school use and its loss would not result in a shortfall in recreational open space/playing pitches for the local community.

Figure 9: Other Green Spaces

- Community Open Space
- Amenity Green Space
- Religious Grounds
- Saltmarsh
- Other Sport Facility
- Play Space
- Parks and Recreation Grounds
- Neighbourhood Area Boundary



PLANNING POLICIES: BUILT ENVIRONMENT

LOCALLY DISTINCTIVE, HIGH QUALITY DESIGN

Context

3.59 In 2019 the Government published a 'National Design Guide'³⁰ which highlights the importance of understanding and responding to local character. In early 2021 a National Model Design Code³¹ was introduced as part of the government's planning practice guidance. It expands the National Design Guide and reflects the government's priorities and provides a common overarching framework for design.

3.60 The 2021 update of the NPPF also underscores the importance of high quality design: "the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve."³²

3.61 The NPPF sets out that "Neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development".³³

3.62 An in-depth survey and analysis of the locally distinctive character and design of the built and natural environment is summarised in the Portishead Community

Character Statement (2022), which forms a key part of the evidence base for our Neighbourhood Plan. It has been produced by the Steering Group with guidance from Plan consultants. The core of this document is a description and analysis of important and locally distinctive features of the town as a whole and the distinctive areas within it.

3.63 The Portishead Community Character Statement complements and informs our Neighbourhood Plan. It reflects local aspirations and sets out how the identified special qualities and locally distinctive characteristics should be reflected in development proposals. The combination of Portishead's distinctive landscape setting that ranges from coastal to ridges with areas of ancient woodland, to pastoral farmland in the Gordano Valley, and its diverse settlement pattern, as well as a rich variety of building forms and architectural styles contribute to a rich and diverse character.

3.64 The Community Character Statement should be used at the earliest possible stages of design and as part of early pre-application community engagement.

3.65 Policy PEB1 includes requirements for 'major' development proposals. 'Major' development is generally defined as development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or where the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more.

3.66 Policy PEB1 encourages developments to take note of the twelve design quality considerations in *Building for a Healthy Life*³⁴ which cover the themes of 'integrated neighbourhoods', 'distinctive places' and 'streets for all'. If developments achieve nine out of twelve 'green' indicators within these themes, they can secure a Building for a Healthy Life commendation.

Relevant Objective

O5 To ensure that development protects and reinforces Portishead's character and distinctiveness, and encourages the highest standards of building, public space and landscape design and sustainability.

Local Policy Context

CS12 Achieving High Quality Design and Placemaking
DM32 Quality Design

POLICY PEB1 - LOCALLY DISTINCTIVE, HIGH QUALITY DESIGN

High quality development proposals which protect, conserve and enhance the built and natural environment of Portishead and deliver locally distinct places and high quality design where people can live well will be supported.

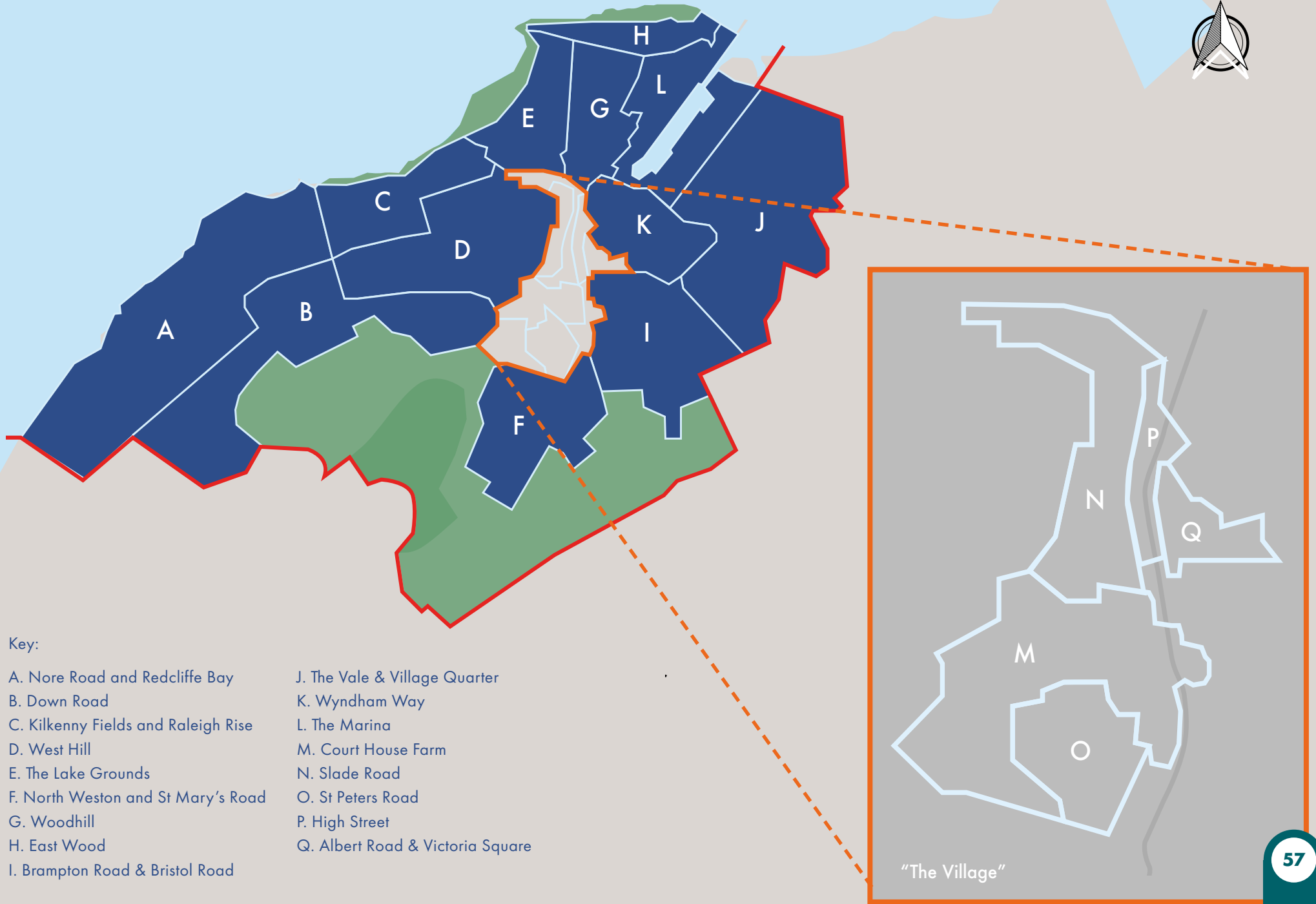
All new development must be based on thorough site and context appraisal, and must draw upon positive and distinctive features of Portishead's built and natural character and heritage.

Any proposals for major development must demonstrate how the proposed development layout, density, access proposals and building design approach complement and extend the positive characteristics of the immediate area, wider settlement and landscape of Portishead.

In addition to having regard to the National Design Guidance and North Somerset Council design policy, development proposals must demonstrate how they have been informed by the Portishead Community Character Assessment, and therefore how they have responded positively to the history and characteristics of the area in which the site is located.

Major development scheme proposals with a residential component should be shaped using the Building for a Healthy Life design assessment tool or similar, and have regard to National Design Guidance and Secured by Design standards. Major residential development schemes that demonstrate that they achieve nine out of twelve 'green' indicators, securing Building for a Healthy Life Commendation, will be supported.

Figure 10: Character Areas



Key:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| A. Nore Road and Redcliffe Bay | J. The Vale & Village Quarter |
| B. Down Road | K. Wyndham Way |
| C. Kilkenny Fields and Raleigh Rise | L. The Marina |
| D. West Hill | M. Court House Farm |
| E. The Lake Grounds | N. Slade Road |
| F. North Weston and St Mary's Road | O. St Peters Road |
| G. Woodhill | P. High Street |
| H. East Wood | Q. Albert Road & Victoria Square |
| I. Brampton Road & Bristol Road | |

SMALL AND INFILL DEVELOPMENT

Context

3.67 Adopted North Somerset policy SA2 identifies Portishead's settlement boundary, within which residential development is acceptable in principle (subject to the other detailed policies of the Local Plan). The built area of Portishead has a tightly drawn settlement boundary, outside of which is either the Severn Estuary or current Green Belt land – see Figure 11.

3.68 During the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan and its associated Community Character Statement, the community highlighted concerns over levels of development pressure on land within the Settlement Boundary and the impact of this being instances of residential development 'squeezed into' inappropriate locations which do not reflect the character of nearby existing development, for example, there has been strong and successful resistance to any change to the status quo on the large section of open grassland at Portishead Golf Course.

3.69 Local Plan policies SA2 (Settlement Boundaries) and DM37 (Residential development within existing residential areas) set criteria for acceptable

residential development within existing residential areas. NDP Policy PEB2 below sets out Portishead-specific criteria for how this should be delivered within the Neighbourhood Area. It also broadens the scope of this topic to include criteria for infill development to provide other land uses such as employment opportunities or new facilities.

3.70 Infill development is defined as the filling of a relatively small gap between existing buildings³⁵.

3.71 A priority objective of the Core Strategy is to maximise brownfield opportunities in Portishead. Brownfield land is defined as land that has been 'previously developed'; this definition excludes agricultural or forestry buildings and gardens.

3.72 Local planning authorities, including North Somerset Council, are required to publish a brownfield land register for their area which sets out previously developed land that a local planning authority considers suitable for residential development. Whether a brownfield is

considered 'suitable' will be decided by North Somerset Planning officers taking into account considerations such as biodiversity, highways and identified local needs.

3.73 During the preparation of the Plan, local people highlighted the key concern that infrastructure in Portishead must be improved in order to support any new residential development. Any proposals for infill residential development in Portishead should ensure that they do not negatively impact on local infrastructure provision, particularly health and education services.



Relevant Objectives:

O7 To deliver sustainable development which prioritises brownfield land, responds positively to the climate crisis, reduces our carbon footprint and energy demand, and mitigates the local impacts of climate change.

O5 To ensure that development protects and reinforces Portishead's character and distinctiveness, and encourages the highest standards of building, public space and landscape design and sustainability.

Local Policy Context

SA2 Settlement boundaries
CS14 Distribution of new housing
CS31 Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead
DM37 Residential development in existing residential areas
Residential Design Guide SPD

POLICY PEB2 - SMALL AND INFILL DEVELOPMENT

Proposals for new or improved local employment opportunities, small housing developments for up to and including 9 units, and / or new services and facilities that contribute to the continued and sustainable growth of Portishead will be supported in principle provided that development is located within the Settlement Boundary and accords with the limits of development provisions set out in the North Somerset Local Plan (policies SA2 and DM37).

Small and infill development within the Settlement Boundary that ensures the regeneration of previously developed land, or conversion and/or refurbishment of existing premises will be supported in principle, subject to compliance with other policies in the development plan.

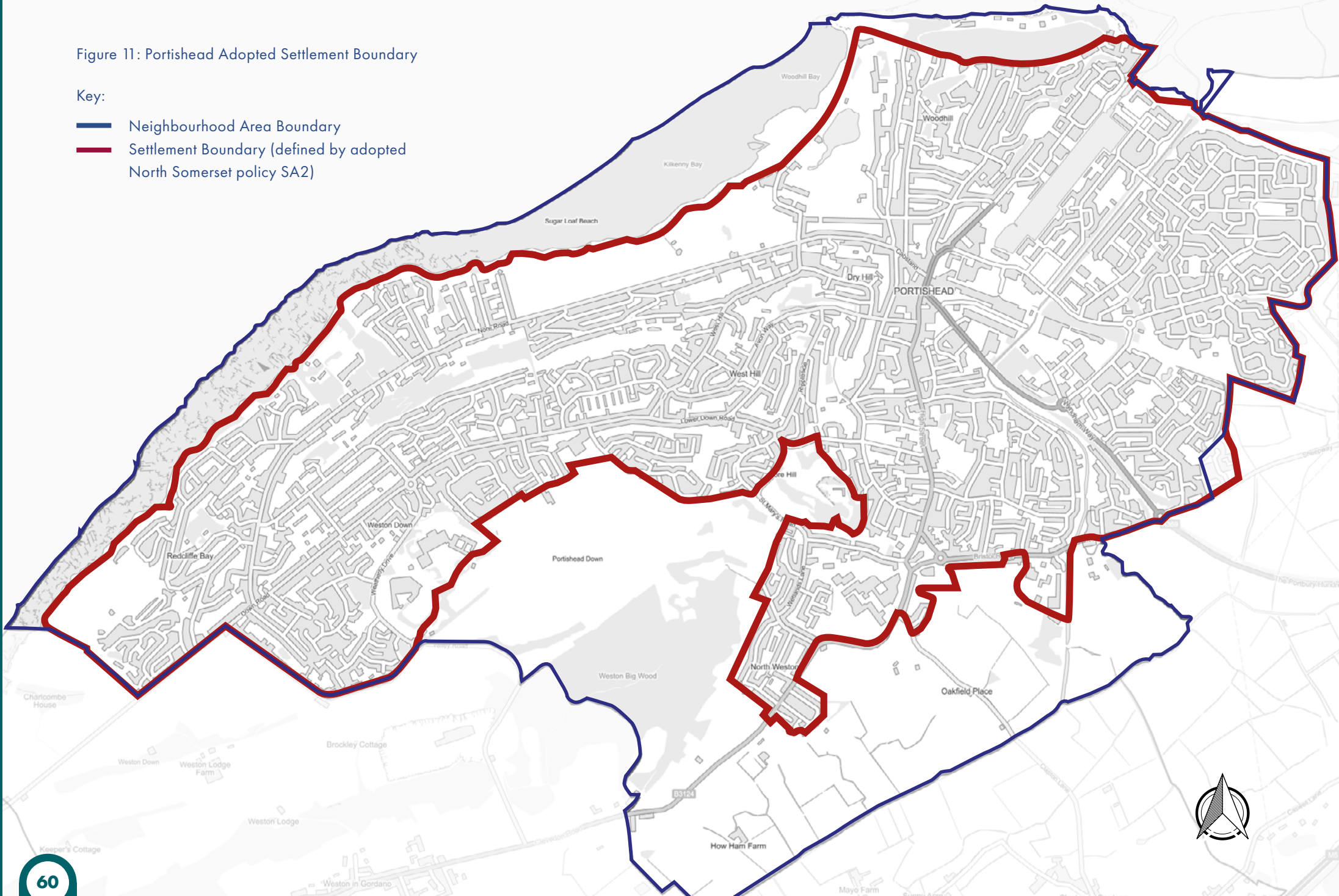
Any small and infill development should:

- Not adversely affect the character of the area, paying particular attention to the rhythms of existing plot sizes and the volumes of houses, as identified in the Portishead Community Character Statement; and
- Deliver an improvement in biodiversity within and, where appropriate, beyond the site, with particular reference to policy PEN4 in this Neighbourhood Plan, where an improvement of over 10% in net gain in biodiversity will be particularly supported.

Figure 11: Portishead Adopted Settlement Boundary

Key:

- Neighbourhood Area Boundary
- Settlement Boundary (defined by adopted North Somerset policy SA2)



LOCAL HERITAGE

Context

3.74 Portishead is rich in local heritage and has an active local history group – The Gordano Civic Society. There are 39 listed buildings in the town, as well as one scheduled ancient monument, and four Conservation Areas, as shown on Figure 12.

3.75 A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural character and historic interest which is protected by law against certain changes. Unlike listed buildings, which are designated by Historic England, Conservation Areas are appointed and managed by the Local Authority - in this case North Somerset District Council. [The Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990 \(Part II section 72\)](#)⁶⁰ requires planning authorities to pay special attention to the 'preserving or enhancing the character or appearance' of a Conservation Area.

3.76 National policy states that, in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. This should be a thorough assessment of impact proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset which can range from the Conservation Area itself to specific

buildings or structures. Heritage statements are a method of ensuring that this work is undertaken as part of any development procedures.

3.77 There are also many more buildings, and structures in Portishead that play a role in collective heritage and identity of the town even though they do not meet the listing criteria for nationally significant heritage assets for Grade I or II listing (such as the grade II listed Fedden Village/ National Nautical School), are valued as part of the local heritage story. Their heritage value places them in the category of 'buildings of local interest', otherwise called 'non-designated heritage assets'. Through research and consultation, a number of such locally valued non-designated heritage assets have been identified. Some of these are also recorded on the North Somerset Historic Environment Record. These are shown on Figure 12 and detailed information is set out in the Portishead Locally Valued Non-designated Heritage Assets Report (2022) which is part of the evidence base to the Neighbourhood Plan.

3.78 By identifying buildings and structures of local interest, the local community has the chance to recognise buildings or other heritage assets that are of importance to

the sense of place and local heritage and that these need to be regarded with care in planning decisions. This will benefit both owners and developers regarding better understanding of opportunities and constraints of the local area.

3.79 North Somerset Council are working in collaboration with Historic England to launch a Local Heritage List for North Somerset. The Local Heritage List for the district has a nomination and assessment process. Buildings and structures of local interest identified in this Neighbourhood Plan may be nominated for consideration for the North Somerset List and are considered to be strong candidates having been identified locally using Historic England guidance and have also been through a rigorous public consultation process.

"There are a number of processes through which non-designated heritage assets may be identified, including the local and neighbourhood plan-making processes and conservation area appraisals and reviews. Irrespective of how they are identified, it is important that the decisions to identify them as non-designated heritage assets are based on sound evidence."

Paragraph 40 Historic Environment PPG⁶²

Relevant Objective:

O6 To ensure that new development is sympathetic to our local heritage, including its maritime and industrial history.

Local Policy Context

- CS5 Landscape and the Historic Environment
- DM3 Conservation Areas
- DM4 Listed Buildings
- DM5 Historic Parks and Gardens
- DM6 Archaeology
- DM7 Non-designated Heritage

POLICY PEB3: LOCAL HERITAGE

A. Designated Heritage Assets

Development will be expected to preserve and where appropriate enhance the character, appearance, special interest and setting of:

- the four Conservation Areas in Portishead, existing open green space, including private gardens, should be protected from unsympathetic development where this would have an adverse impact on the historic character of a Conservation Area; and
- Listed buildings and structures across the town.

B. Non-designated Heritage Assets

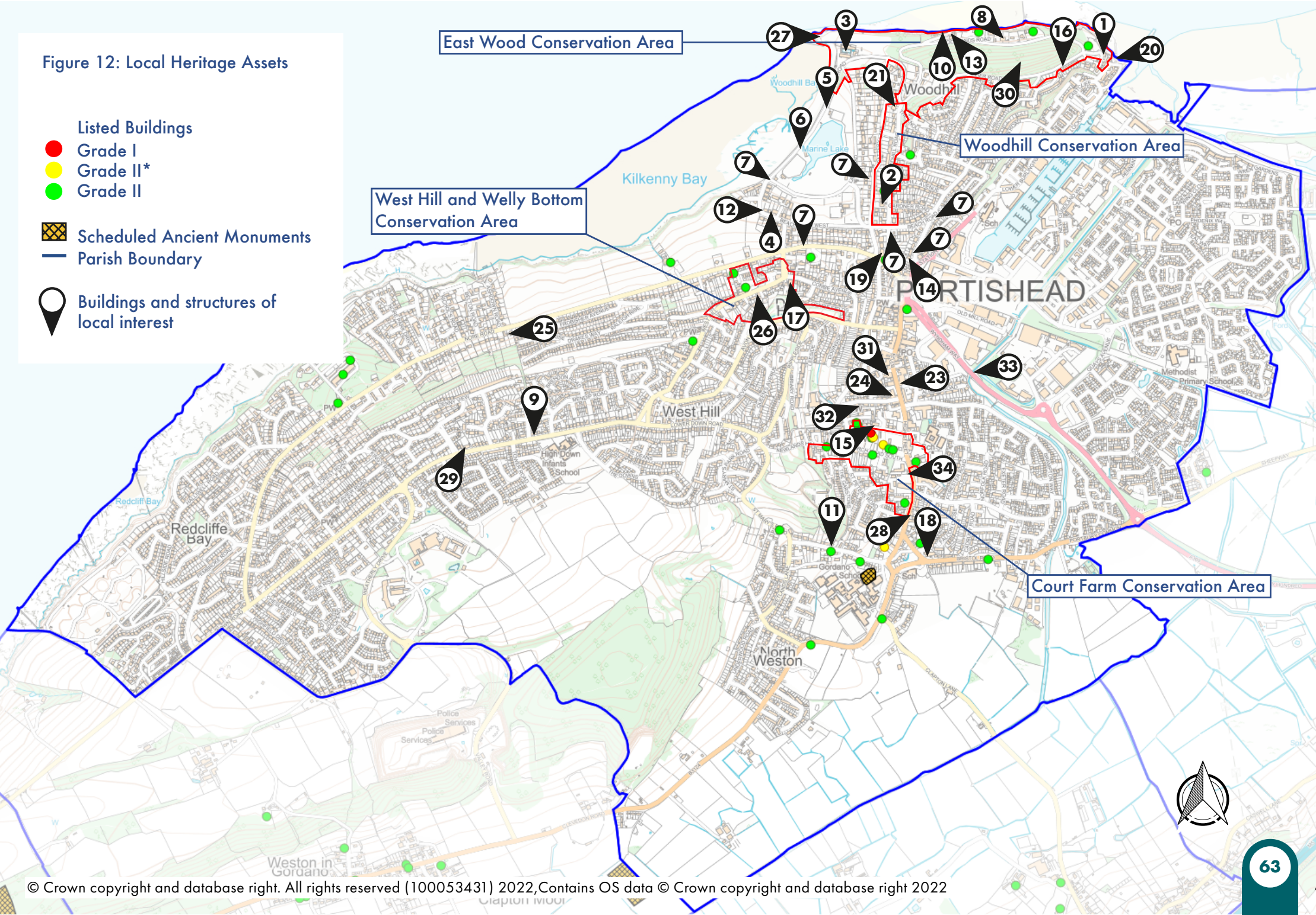
Development proposals that affect non-designated Heritage Assets (including buildings or structures of local interest as shown on Figure 12) will be required to take into account the character, context and setting, including important views towards and from the building or structure. Development proposals must demonstrate that appropriate consideration has been given to:

- i. the significance of the heritage asset;
- ii. its most distinctive and important features;
- iii. the elements of its setting and immediate surrounds that contribute to its significance; and,
- iv. the contribution the asset and its setting makes to the character of the local area (whether in a Conservation Area or not).

A heritage impact assessment should accompany planning applications in Portishead which have the potential to impact upon heritage assets (designated and non-designated) and/or its setting.

Figure 12: Local Heritage Assets

- Listed Buildings
 - Grade I
 - Grade II*
 - Grade II
- ▣ Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Parish Boundary
- 📍 Buildings and structures of local interest



BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES OF LOCAL INTEREST

1. Historic Building (House): The Dock Master's House
2. Historic Building (House): The Abbey' Woodhill Road
3. Swimming Pool: Portishead Open Air Pool
4. Historic Building (House): Mariners Cottage
5. Street Furniture: Street Lamps*
6. Street Furniture: Street Benches*
7. Street Furniture: Ventilation Columns*
8. Historic Buildings (House): Woodlands and Holmleigh
9. Historic Building (House): The Upper Lodge
10. Historic Building (Salt Water Bathhouse): The Saltings
11. Historic Building (House): The Cot
12. Historic Building (House): Myrtle Cottage
13. Historic Building (House): Anchorage
14. Historic Building: "The old police station" **
15. Historic Building (House): Church Cottage
16. Street Furniture: Fencing and Gates: Power Station original Fencing
17. Historic Building (House): Avon View House & Annex
18. Historic Building (Public House): The Albion **
19. Historic Building (Church): United Reform Church **
20. Historic Pier and Building: Lifeboat station, Slipway and Pier **
21. Historic Building (House): 71-73 Woodhill Road
22. Historic Building (Church): Methodist Church **
23. Historic Building (Public House): The Plough **
24. Historic Building (Public House): The Poacher **
25. Historic Building (House): Nore Lodge
26. Historic Building (Converted Church/Dwelling): Moose Hall **
27. Historic Lighthouse: Battery Point Lighthouse
28. Historic Building (House): Clarence House
29. Historic Building (House): Down House
30. Iron Age Hill Fort: East Wood **
31. Historic Building: Former Portishead Post Office
32. Historic Building: Roath Road Chapel **
33. Historic Bridge: Weston, Clevedon and Portishead Light Railway bridge
34. Historic Building (Lodge House): Clarence House Lodge

Note: planning policy only has an impact where planning consent is needed. There will be little control over street furniture which is covered instead by the Highways Act unless it is actually fully listed (Grade I, Grade II or Grade II listed).

** Non-designated heritage assets also recorded on the North Somerset Historic Environment Record.

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND RETROFITTING

3.80 The emissions from the UK's buildings account for 26% of the UK's total emissions. 18% of this total is from our homes (32% in Portishead) (Centre for Sustainable Energy, 2021)³⁶. This is not only bad for the planet, it is bad for the occupants; new homes need to be designed and built to use significantly less energy (which also means they would cost a lot less to run) (Net Carbon Toolkit, 2021)³⁷.

3.81 The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019³⁸ commits the UK government by law to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 'net zero' by 2050, and constitutes a legally binding commitment to end the UK's contribution to climate change. 'Net zero' refers to the balance between the amount of greenhouse gas produced and the amount removed from the atmosphere.

3.82 North Somerset Council's Climate Emergency Strategic Action Plan³⁹ sets out the Council's aim to become a carbon neutral area by 2030 and is updated every year. Every redevelopment project or new build in Portishead provides an opportunity to make a difference and a contribution towards meeting North Somerset's climate change targets for 2030 and beyond.

3.83 Achieving an energy efficient built environment is a key theme in North Somerset Council's Climate Emergency Strategic Action Plan, including the aim for all new homes and commercial space to be carbon neutral or carbon neutral plus. Addressing climate change and carbon reduction (Policy CS1), and delivering sustainable design and construction (Policy CS2) are leading policies within North Somerset Council's adopted Local Plan. Policy PEB4 is part of Portishead Town Council's local response to the climate emergency.

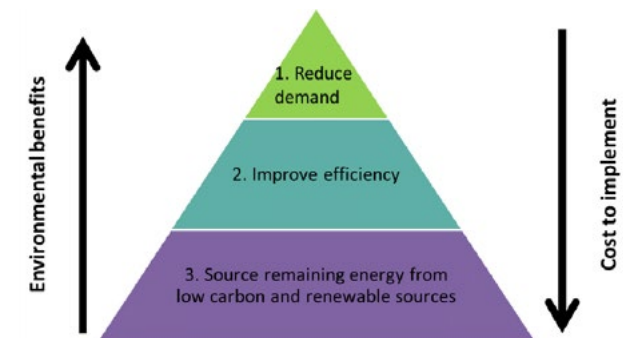
3.84 Responding to the climate emergency is also a priority in North Somerset Council's emerging Local Plan (see footnote links). Evidence underpinning emerging Local Plan Policy DP6 (Net Zero Construction) is particularly relevant to NDP policy PEB4; this evidence illustrates the need for the measures set out in policy PEB4, as well as their deliverability and viability.

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-03/net%20zero%20new%20build%20policy%20evidence%20December%202021.pdf>

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-02/Operational%20Carbon%20non-domestic%20Jul21.pdf>

3.85 The Net Zero Carbon Framework (2021) is a key reference for NDP policy PEB4. The Framework has been created to make Net Zero carbon new build and retrofit more accessible. The Framework is for use by building professionals (developers, contractors, architects and engineers) and is also relevant to self-builders, planning officers and other housing professionals. The UK Green Building Council also provides a framework definition to help guide the implementation of net zero building.

3.86 The energy use of existing buildings in Portishead represents a large proportion of our total carbon emissions. The sensitive retrofitting of these buildings is supported. The [LETI Climate Emergency Retrofit Guide](#)⁴⁰ provides some further key guidance on how we can retrofit our homes to make them fit for the future and support our net zero targets.



The Energy Hierarchy

Relevant Objective

O5 To ensure that development protects and reinforces Portishead's character and distinctiveness, and encourages the highest standards of building, public space and landscape design and sustainability.

Existing Local Policy Context

- CS1 Addressing climate change and carbon reduction
- CS2 Delivering sustainable design and construction

RELATED COMMUNITY ACTIONS

- The Town Council should encourage and stimulate improvement of the energy efficiency of the existing housing stock

POLICY PEB4: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND RETROFITTING

Development should be designed to reduce carbon emissions and energy demand in response to Climate Change, and must follow the principles of the energy hierarchy. High standards of sustainable design and construction will be supported, and it should achieve measures such as:

- a. sustainable construction techniques, with measures to minimise energy use and maximise renewable energy production. Both new build and refurbishment of existing homes should seek to meet energy use targets as set out in the [Net Zero Carbon Toolkit \(2021\)](#)⁴¹;
- b. opportunities to maximise green infrastructure to sequester carbon and provide other benefits such as shade;
- c. good connections to existing services and facilities, and/or a mix of uses in the proposed development that minimises the need to travel by car;
- d. addressing the potential for overheating, all new development should include a recognised overheating risk assessment ([Home Quality Mark \(HQM\)](#)⁴² or equivalent);
- e. conservation of water resources through incorporation of water efficiency and water reuse measures minimising vulnerability to flooding.
- f. use of sustainably sourced materials during construction (HQM or equivalent); and
- g. minimising waste and maximising recycling waste generated during construction.

The retrofit of existing and heritage properties/assets is encouraged to reduce energy demand and to generate renewable energy where appropriate, providing it safeguards historic and/or positive distinctive characteristics (as identified in the Portishead Community Design Statement) and development is done with engagement and permissions of relevant organisations.

For major applications, applicants are encouraged to use appropriate sustainability assessment tools such as the [Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method \(BREEAM\)](#)⁴³, [Home Quality Mark for residential Development and/or CEEQUAL](#)⁴⁴ (or equivalents) for infrastructure development.

PLANNING POLICIES: RENEWABLE ENERGY

SUPPORTING RENEWABLE AND LOW CARBON ENERGY SCHEMES IN PORTISHEAD

Context

3.87 Strategic policies in the emerging North Somerset Local Plan (particularly policies SP1 Sustainable Development and SP2 Climate Change) require, where appropriate, development proposals to demonstrate how they address the climate emergency and contribute towards the aim of a carbon neutral North Somerset by 2030. One of the key methods to do this is maximising, supporting and encouraging decentralised renewable energy generation in new development.

3.88 Government advice requires that 'the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate. It should help to shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions... including (supporting) ...renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure' (NPPF paragraph 152⁴⁵).

3.89 Emerging North Somerset Policy DP7 supports development for renewable energy generation in principle, and identifies particular 'areas of search' within Portishead where this might be appropriate.

3.90 During the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Centre for Sustainable Energy produced the Portishead Renewable Energy Study (2021), exploring the potential for renewable energy generation in Portishead. The Study concluded that currently, opportunities for developing large-scale renewable energy projects in the Neighbourhood Area, such as solar or wind, are limited, largely due to Green Belt constraints.

3.91 However, Portishead's location on the Severn Estuary presents an opportunity to harness its huge tidal range. The recent start-up of a powerful tidal-powered turbine generating electricity in Orkney⁴⁶ and the investment of billions of pounds in a tidal lagoon project with underwater turbines in Swansea Bay⁴⁷ suggests that the capability to harness tidal power will soon become commercially viable. The introduction of some form of tidal power generation in Portishead could play a crucial role in achieving our ambition to becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

3.92 Tidal and micro-tidal solutions would potentially be viable within the Neighbourhood Area and may be a future solution. These ideas and technologies are not currently developed sufficiently for full consideration, however NDP policy PED5 supports innovative thinking around this approach and encourages projects harnessing this potential.

3.93 The exploration and delivery of alternative renewable energy generation, such as solar and wind, is supported by the Town Council and NDP policy PER1. There are active local renewable energy Community Interest Companies in Portishead, such as Low Carbon Gordano (solar) and Channel Green Energy (wind). These groups are active in the town and the wider area and explore the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy developments that are led by and/or meet the needs of the local Portishead community. These developments are particularly supported by NDP policy PER1.

Related Objective

O7 To deliver sustainable development which prioritises brownfield land, responds positively to the climate crisis, reduces our carbon footprint and energy demand, and mitigates the local impacts of climate change.

Local Policy Context

- CS1 Addressing climate change and carbon reduction
 - CS2 Delivering sustainable design and construction,
 - CS3 Environmental Impacts and Flood Risk Management
- Solar photovoltaic array SPD

RELATED COMMUNITY ACTIONS:

- In principle, the Town Council supports the installation of solar photovoltaic panels on residential properties - and is exploring opportunities for undertaking a project to map areas of opportunity.

POLICY PER1 - SUPPORTING RENEWABLE AND LOW CARBON ENERGY SCHEMES IN PORTISHEAD

Decentralised renewable and low carbon energy schemes will be supported and encouraged, and will be approved where their impact is, or can be made, acceptable.

Particular support will be given to local renewable and low carbon energy generation developments that:

- are led by local renewable energy groups, and/or meet the needs of the local community;
- provide energy storage opportunities
- provide solar canopies over surface car parks
- harness the tidal energy stemming from the tidal range of the Severn Estuary
- harness Portishead marina for the use of water source heat pumps.

In determining applications for local renewable and low carbon energy generation developments, the following issues will be considered:

- i. the contribution of the proposals, in light of North Somerset Council's aim for a carbon neutral North Somerset by 2030, to cutting greenhouse gas emissions and decarbonising our energy system; and
- ii. the impact of the scheme, together with any cumulative issues, on landscape character, visual amenity, water quality and flood risk, heritage significance, local character and distinctiveness (as identified in the Portishead Community Character Statement), recreation, biodiversity and, where appropriate, agricultural land use, aviation and telecommunications; and
- iii. the impact on users and residents of the local area, including where relevant, shadow flicker, glint and glare, air quality, vibration and noise.

Any proposals that could affect the sensitive bird species and other habitats and species of the River Severn Estuary must carry out screening for Habitats Regulation Assessment.