

North Somerset Council

Report to the Place Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Date of meeting: 23rd November 2022

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

Town or Parish: Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead

Officer presenting: Alex Hearn, Assistant Director, Placemaking & Growth

Recommendation: to note and discuss the draft Nailsea, Clevedon and Portishead Placemaking Strategies as appended, in advance of their consideration and recommended endorsement by the Executive in December.

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 Panel discuss the strategies that have emerged as a result of that work, in advance of their consideration by the Executive in December.

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 – The Two Towns project

- 3.1 During 2021 and 2022, North Somerset Council, with the support of Design West CIC has 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 has proved to be an opportunity to shape visions for these towns, which have not historically benefited from placemaking programmes.
- 3.2 The project 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. However the distinctive identities of Clevedon and Nailsea were fully recognised throughout the work, and separate Placemaking

Strategies are proposed for each town. Future engagement and project delivery will be through separate programmes of activity for Nailsea and for Clevedon, and not through the 'Two Towns' initiative.

- 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 Engagement activity reached more than 2,400 people and included:
- A dedicated [Two Towns](#) website providing public information about the project and acting as a repository of information during the preparation and engagement phases. The website also hosted an online survey.
 - In-person questionnaires, including actors dressed as historical figures attending public events to canvas views and encourage participation.
 - A series of stakeholder workshops and walking tours with Town Councils, local businesses, community organisations and others.
- 3.5 Work commenced 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; a cultural / community hub associated with the Library and Curzon cinema in Clevedon; and the Crown Glass and high Street areas in Nailsea. These proposals are included in the strategies.
- 3.6 The strategies explore how to adapt and reinvigorate the two town centres 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.
- 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.

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.

- 3.8 The strategies are very much intended to be partnership documents. Outcomes will only be realisable through partnership working and collaborations with town councils, residents, the voluntary sector and social enterprise, business networks and investors. Officers will work across the council and with those partners to assist delivery of actions where needed.
- 3.9 The draft strategies are attached as Appendices A and B. Further information can be found at <https://twotowns.place/>

Portishead: Wyndham Way Development Framework

- 3.10 In addition to the Two Towns work, the council has worked with Portishead Town Council and business and land interests to prepare a draft Wyndham Way Development Framework. This addresses an area of Portishead between the marina and the high street. It is slightly different from the Clevedon and Nailsea work, because it is concerned with the future of a large brownfield area, the evolution of which needs to be coordinated through the planning process.
- 3.11 The project was initiated as a result of planning challenges in relation to a previous and now withdrawn outline planning application for Old Mill Road, a trading estate set off Wyndham Way.
- 3.12 In 2020, North Somerset Council commenced 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 estate. The Steering Group meetings has met monthly since July 2020, albeit with some periods of not meeting during procurement periods.
- 3.13 Part-funded by the Phoenix Fund and North Somerset Council, a professional team led by Allies and Morrison Architects has led and facilitated a process that has resulted in a draft Development Framework. This seeks to establish important

principles in relation to the 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.

- 3.14 The draft 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 development 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 Portishead Rail 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 through high quality placemaking, genuinely including affordable housing.
- 3.15 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 since late September 2022.
- 3.16 The land within the draft Development Framework area has been subject to development pressure in recent years and this is likely to continue and increase with the delivery of Portishead Rail. While under the current Local Plan, the principle of development can generally be supported, the draft Development Framework provides an opportunity to coordinate change and ensure that proposals that come forward respect the key principles set out above.
- 3.17 The draft document is attached at Appendix C. It can be converted to a Supplementary Planning Document to the current or emerging Local Plan and is expected to form part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan at Examination in Public.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 Extensive and exemplary public engagement 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.
- 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.

5. Financial implications

- 5.1 Funding for the studies has been provided by identified 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 also 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 proposed endorsement of the strategies by the Executive in December does not bring any significant 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 Nailsea and Clevedon 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 current or emerging 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 content of the strategies in itself does not create any significant risks. Each of the Action Plan projects will develop their own risk management approaches as they come forward.

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.

9.2 As projects come forward the equalities 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 – for example leisure, public transport, open space and school place planning.

10.3 Delivery of projects / actions will require support from across the council, however these actions will be delivered in partnership and some will not need to involve NSC. 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 Nailsea, Clevedon 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 those partners.

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Appendices:

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

Background papers:

N/a