

North Somerset Council

Report to the Executive

Date of meeting: 7 December 2022

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

Town or Parish: Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead

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

Key Decision: Yes

Reason: Impacts on more than two wards.

Recommendation

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

1. Summary of report

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

2. Policy

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

3. Details

Clevedon and Nailsea

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

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

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

Clevedon

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

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

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

Nailsea

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

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

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

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

Portishead

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

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

4. Consultation

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

5. Financial implications

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

6. Legal powers and implications

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

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

7. Climate Change and environmental implications

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

8. Risk management

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

9. Equality implications

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

10. Corporate implications

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

11. Options considered

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

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Appendices:

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

Background papers:

N/a