

Somerset West
and Taunton

Wellington Place Plan

Adopted 28th March 2023

Allies and Morrison Avison Young LUC



Contents

1. Introduction	7
2. Issues and opportunities	29
3. Vision, priorities & spatial strategies	65
4. Growth scenarios	107
5. Next steps	133

Thank you for the
involvement of both officers
and Members at Somerset
West and Taunton Council
and Wellington Town Council

Executive summary



Regional context (chapter 1)



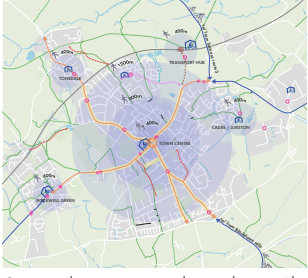
Engagement summary (cpt 1)



Landscape character (cpt 2)



Six thematic priorities (cpt 3 and 4)



Spatial strategy plans (cpt 4)



Growth scenarios (cpt 5)

#	Action	Objective	By when	Place	Impact	Cost	Benefit
13	Supporting biodiversity						
14	Review the potential of the former Dolphin Pub for community uses						
15	Deliver the Public Realm Improvement Plan, including the landscape design for new public space in front of the former M2 building						
16	Establish Digital digital connectivity for existing and new homes and workplaces (see CNCR) by supporting operators and following statutory guidance "Infrastructure for electronic communications: Approved Document E"						
17	Build awareness of support for businesses, available through the Council and the LEP						
18	Work in partnership with the LEP to support the growth of green economy industries and identify particular opportunities for Wellington						
19	Identify local renewable energy projects to support a Somerset-wide Renewable Energy Strategy, including the early identification of opportunities for new neighbourhoods with ground source heat-pumps, hydro-electric, power and community heating networks (see CNCR)						
20	Densify affordable homes in the town centre: new homes on small sites, and vacant retail premises converted						

Action Plan (Appendix)

Purpose of the Place Plan

Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT) has produced a Place Plan for Wellington comprising a Vision and a Spatial Framework. The Place Plan has been adopted as a material consideration in determining planning applications and considering conservation and regeneration activities in Wellington. The Place Plan is an Evidence Base document which will also shape the new Somerset-wide Local Plan alongside the wider studies and strategies in the existing and emerging evidence base.

Structure of the document

The Place Plan is structured as follows:

- Introduction: Setting the scene for the project including engagement activities.
- Issues and opportunities: Outlining Wellington's rich context including historical analysis, socio-economic character, connectivity and landscape.
- Vision, priorities and spatial strategies: Identification of a vision for Wellington and six key thematic priorities. In addition, this chapter presents a spatial strategy and defines key

projects, guidelines and principles.

- Growth scenarios: Definition and initial qualitative evaluation of a number of potential geographic growth scenarios across Wellington.
- Next steps: Overview of ongoing activities to progress the thinking in the Place Plan, and develop the new Somerset-wide Local Plan.
- Action Plan (Appendix): SWT has prepared an Action Plan which distils the key project priorities.

Responding to context

As part of the Place Plan, we developed a Baseline Report and Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report to help us define an understanding of the key issues and opportunities for Wellington. Key topics include connectivity, landscape and identity, resilience of the town centre and community life, heritage and the environment and sustainability.

Vision and key themes

The Vision: "Wellington will be a successful, welcoming town, clearly rooted in its landscape

setting of the Blackdown Hills, and the proud industrial and commercial heritage at Tonedale Mill and Tone Works"

It is supplemented by six thematic priorities:

1. An accessible place
2. A town rooted in its setting
3. Celebrating our industrial and commercial heritage
4. A high bar for sustainability
5. A welcoming town and centre
6. A resilient town

Spatial strategies

Each of the six thematic priorities has been developed into a spatial strategy. The strategies define spatial priorities, potential projects and guidance in relation to the existing town, and its future growth.

The spatial strategies represent a direction of travel and an initial collation of opportunities. They will need to be progressed and developed via the new Somerset-wide Local Plan, and in partnership with local regeneration and

community partners, landowners and developers.

Growth scenarios

Based on an initial understanding of opportunities and constraints, we have defined a range of potential growth scenarios. These identify a potential range of broad locations and set out some of the key considerations which will help to shape future conversations and dialogue around place-making. Further assessments and evidence base studies will feed into the new Somerset-wide Local Plan, including a comprehensive site allocations process.

Delivery and Action Plan

The indicative Action Plan contains a list of potential actions to realise the vision and objectives set out in the Wellington Place Plan. The Action Plan is a working document, kept under periodic review, along with time-scales for delivery. The Action Plan will progress in alignment with the emerging new Somerset-wide Local Plan.

1 Introduction



Introduction

Wellington is a town with a rich history, impressive landscape setting and strong retail, leisure and employment offer. The town has a market town function for the Somerset West and Taunton District alongside its extensive offer of independent shops and restaurants.

Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT) commissioned Allies and Morrison, Avison Young and Land Use Consultants to prepare this Wellington Place Plan, to support decisions around the development, regeneration and conservation of Wellington. The Place Plan will also feed into the evidence base for the new Somerset-wide Local Plan.

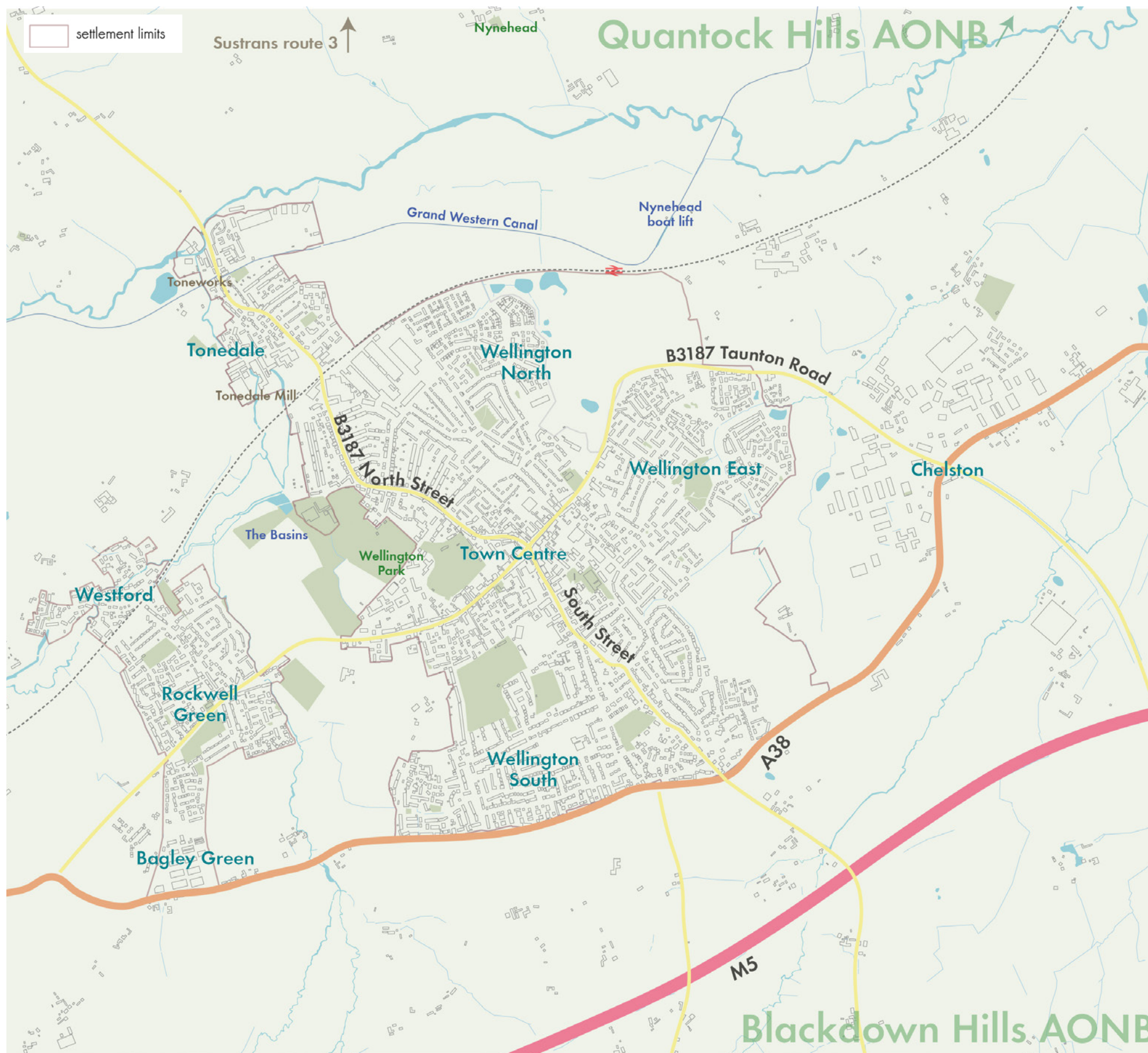
The Wellington Place Plan covers the Parish of Wellington and areas contiguous to the settlement boundaries identified in the Taunton Deane Local Plan (2011-2028). The Plan also acknowledges the role of the town in serving a wider rural hinterland.

The Wellington Place Plan consultation ran from 23rd January to 20 February 2023 and followed a visioning exercise with the community in October 2022. The consultation followed the methods set out in SWT's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

The Wellington Place Plan is not a Supplementary Planning Document, but the process and consultation has been in accordance with the requirements for an SPD in order to ensure a thorough and robust process and ensure the agreement of the Plan as policy and a material planning consideration in accordance with best practice. Consultation has been carried out in line with the requirements for the adoption of a Supplementary Planning Document set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

Following the consideration of representations received during the consultation in 2023, amendments were made for this final publication. Somerset West and Taunton Council adopted the Wellington Place Plan on 28 March 2023, as a material planning consideration for the preparation of masterplans, pre-application advice, assessing planning applications and any other development management purposes within the area of the Plan.

The Place Plan draws together a review of the evidence base, Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, outcomes from the first stage of engagement and the synthesis of a clear vision, themes, spatial plans, principles and projects.



Strategic context

The settlement of Wellington provides an important function in the District as a market town and acts as focus for a rural hinterland which extends into Devon. The town has a significant employment, retail and leisure offering and is the district's secondary centre, after Taunton. The town occupies an attractive setting at the foot of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The city of Exeter is only 28 miles away, a key destination for employment and tertiary education.

The character of Wellington is central to its identity as well as to the quality of life that it offers to residents and the experience that it offers to visitors. It is also important to the economic prosperity of the town, which is home to businesses of all sizes, and the offer to potential investors. The Place Plan seeks to improve the attractiveness and accessibility of the town centre, alongside diversification of its offer.

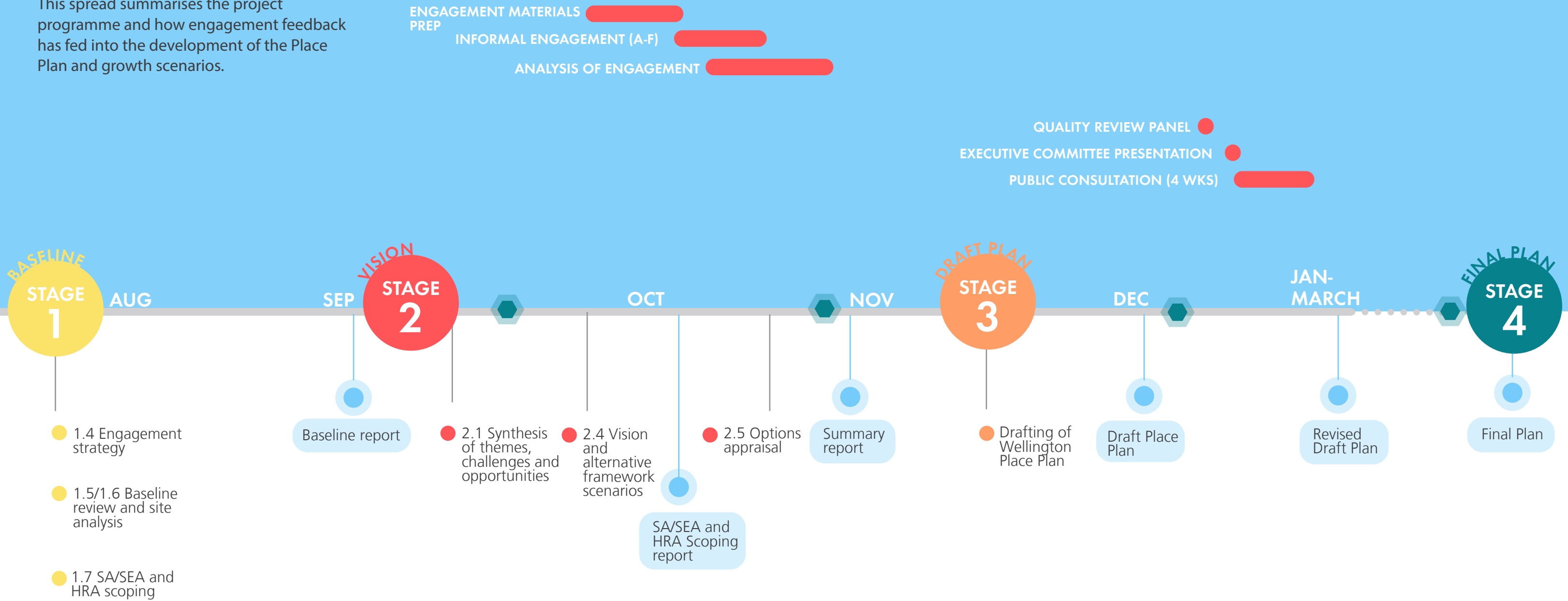
A key challenge relates to transport management, in the context of a growing town, and the environmental impact of traffic and increasing demands on infrastructure. The anticipated delivery of a new Wellington Railway Station by May 2025 and improvements to local walking and cycling infrastructure should help ease this pressure. The principles and priorities set out in the Place Plan will be progressed as set out in the accompanying Action Plan.

The Place Plan also seeks to address Heritage-at-Risk in the town and to secure new uses and long-term management of these heritage assets in a way which complements Wellington's built heritage and landscape assets.



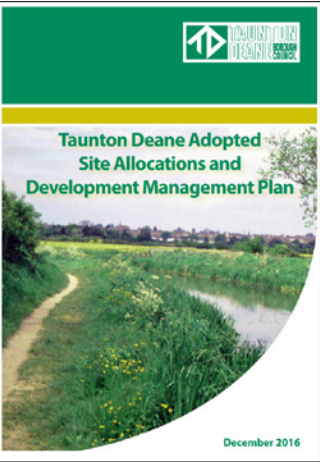
Project programme

This spread summarises the project programme and how engagement feedback has fed into the development of the Place Plan and growth scenarios.



Policy context

This policy context section provided a robust background to the Wellington Place Plan. The documents included within this section were thoroughly reviewed and considered for policy steering on the Wellington Place Plan.



Taunton Deane Adopted Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (2016)

A Plan that sets out policies and strategic objectives in line with the Core Strategy (themes including water management, employment, retail, design quality etc), as well as descriptions and justifications regarding their alignment with national policy.

The Plan sets out development management policies examining factors such as economic, design and infrastructure. The Plan also sets out spatial, strategic site allocations for mixed-use / residential development for the wider area. Policy WEL1 relates specifically to Wellington: Tonedale Mill.

SWT declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and Ecological Emergency in 2020. In response to this, SWT prepared a **Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience (CNCR) Action Plan**. The CNCR Action Plan identifies a proposed one-year action plan together with route maps for longer term action, and the role that SWT will need to play in delivery. Over 300 potential climate actions are identified to progress over the next ten years as part of SWT's corporate priority of working towards a carbon neutral district and Council by 2030.



Taunton Deane Green Infrastructure Strategy (2009)

A strategy that identifies opportunities for green infrastructure and identifies funding and implementation approaches to support greening throughout the borough. Much of the strategic allocations for the borough are going to be delivered by urban extensions, making the provision and retention of green infrastructure extremely important.

Themes include: open space, access, green links, landscape, ecology, biodiversity, cultural heritage, flooding, and socio-economic issues.

The plan identifies priorities for Wellington:

- Good provision and access to formal parks and gardens, however, a deficiency in access to local open space including town centre, Rockwell Green and Tonedale;
- Lack of safe routes for cycling between Wellington and Taunton.

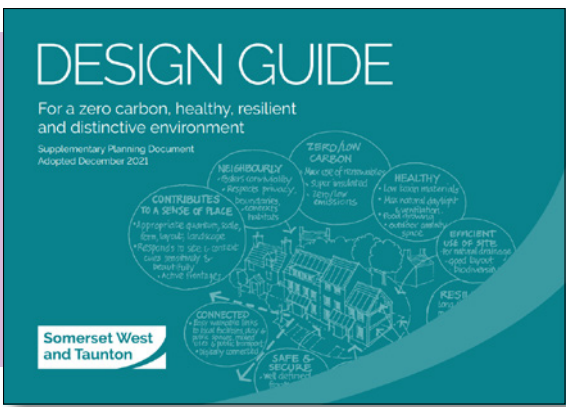
In addition, SWT are preparing a **Local Nature Recovery Strategy** as well as the **Somerset Tree Strategy** which is due to be adopted by the council in March 2023.



Somerset West and Taunton Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Action Plan (2020)

The **Playing Pitch Strategy 2016-2028** acknowledges the need for additional pitches in Wellington, and to improve drainage and the quality and capacity of its pitches. The Strategy sets out several options to accommodate demand to 2028, giving key considerations. Additionally, the Strategy highlights sharing issues between clubs, with the cricket ground being shared with the football club. There are linked issues to the provision of football and rugby grass pitches, as well as AGP provision for hockey and for football training in the town. Solutions for these issues will be explored as the Playing Pitch Strategy is developed.

The **Somerset West and Taunton Design Guide** provides design guidance in line with the National Design Guide, following this thematic structure: contributes to a sense of place, neighbourly, zero/low carbon, healthy, efficient use of site, resilient, adaptable, spacious, safe and secure, connected. The Design Guide informs design codes and design briefs, recommending a specific design process to follow for a successful



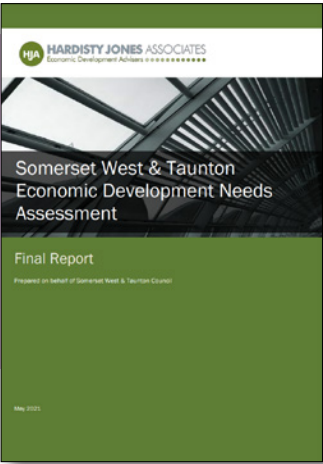
Somerset West and Taunton Design Guide (2021)

application and project. The guide provides detail on specific aspects of design and architectural features including spatially specific guidance for character areas.

Wellington lies within character area 6: Vale of Taunton Deane. Issues identified in Wellington regarding design:

- Retention and conversion of historic industrial buildings;
- Containing suburban growth and respecting the green setting;
- Erosion of field patterns, meadows, parkland and other green features;
- Flood-sensitive design.

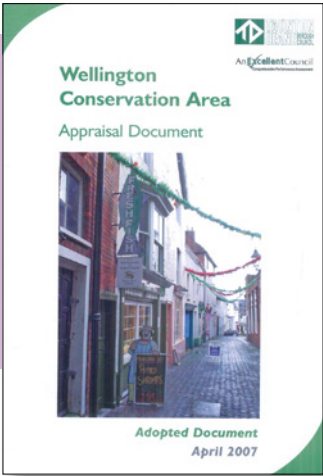
The Design Guide provides a reinterpretation of the town centre's high street, suggesting urban greening, breaking up large blocks and building along organic building lines. The guide picks up on local design and architectural details.



Somerset West and Taunton Economic Development Needs Assessment (2021)

A study drawing together evidence to inform an assessment of potential employment land needs across the Somerset West and Taunton local authority area. Findings:

- The area is home to 88,000 working age people and accommodates for 82,000 jobs;
- Unemployment rates are low and have been declining;
- Employment is well catered for by linkages to neighbouring districts, for example by the M5;
- Major employment growth forecast for: Health, Professional Services, Administrative Services, Education, Arts & Recreation, Accommodation & Food and Construction;
- Future employment sites requirements will be driven by the economic net growth and the need to provide suitable premises for the existing economy.



Wellington Conservation Area Appraisal (2007)

An appraisal defining the area of special historic interest in Wellington town centre, providing a description and evaluation of the historic features' contributions to the environment. Findings:

- The Conservation Area covers the town's main commercial streets and medieval street pattern which is dominated by specialist and independent retailers;
- Wellington has a large proportion of relatively plain but well-built and varied eighteenth-early nineteenth century buildings;
- The Conservation Area contains many listed buildings and is now considered Heritage-at-Risk;
- Factors affecting the Conservation Area:
 - Household alterations
 - Vacancy rates
 - Traffic and parking.



Taunton Green Space Strategy (2014)

A strategy prepared to cover 2010-2015, with key policy drivers relating to the NPPF, Taunton Deane Core Strategy, Play Policy and Play Strategy. This strategy supports the Taunton Deane Adopted Site Allocations and Development Management Plan and provides information based upon plans for future development.

Wellington:

- 72 green spaces in the town and wider area, totalling 64.89 Ha of open space;
- A large proportion of the 64.89Ha comes from outdoor sports facilities (39.2%);
- The provision of green space in the future for Wellington as the population is set to increase to nearly 20,000 people due to strategic developments. Strategic allocations include 52 Ha of land for green spaces associated with this development.



Employment, Retail and Leisure Study (2018)

A study assessing the need for additional land and floor space for employment land, retail and leisure spaces. The Somerset West and Taunton districts were found not to require any additional floorspace for these economic uses due to the low population growth predicted over the plan period.

Wellington:

- Wellington has a strong convenience offer with Waitrose, the Co-operative, Asda and the new Lidl.
- Small independent retailers offering high quality goods to cater to a mid-luxury market.
- Vacancy rates in the centre are higher than the national average.
- The centre is performing well, however, there is room for improvement in enhancing the public realm in the centre and its peripheral streets.

Emerging planning context



Local Plan 2040 Issues and Opportunities Document (2020)

This document was consulted upon for SWT's Local Plan 2040, but has since been put on hold as the Local Government Review for Somerset has taken place (see Section 1 Introduction).

This document sets out: draft objectives; projected issues for the area; and opportunities to address these and meet the objectives.

Findings:

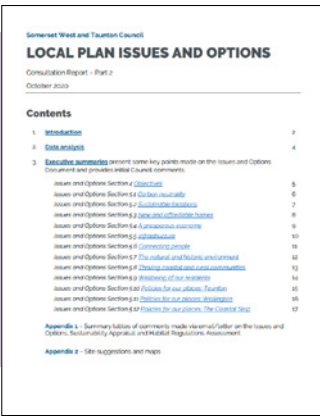
- There is a need to retain the integrity of the retail core providing opportunities for competition and consumer choice.
- Ancillary facilities need to be supported.
- The town centre environment has much room for improvement. There are several public realm projects and preservation projects of historic buildings that would add to these improvements.
- The reopening of the Railway station would encourage public transport use and aid regeneration initiatives of Tonedale Mill and Tone Works.

Objective 1	To ensure all new development works towards the District's "carbon neutrality by 2030" target
Objective 2	To enhance the role of Taunton town centre in the sub-region and to strengthen the function, vitality and self-containment of all our towns
Objective 3	To provide a sufficient and varied supply of high quality and affordable homes to meet the needs of all sections of our communities
Objective 4	To create a prosperous, resilient and entrepreneurial economy ensuring competitiveness across the wider sub-region and attracting the most talented workers to the District
Objective 5	To ensure that new development is supported by essential infrastructure in a timely manner
Objective 6	To achieve a major change in travel behaviour towards walking, cycling and public transport and to reduce the need to travel
Objective 7	To protect and enhance the environmental, historic, economic and wellbeing value of the District's distinctive landscapes biodiversity and local character.
Objective 8	To boost tourism, economic development, agricultural transformation and deliver more affordable homes in our rural and coastal communities
Objective 9	To improve wellbeing, inclusivity and a reduction in inequalities enabling independence and facilitating social interaction

- There are several risks to the heritage assets including changes to doors and windows, vehicle dominance in the centre, infill development.

Policy approaches to support the issues include the following themes:

- Maximising retail frontages.
- Support retail, employment and service uses in strategic land allocations.
- Protection of Tonedale Mill and Tone Works is needed.
- Historic character needs to be retained.



Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation Reports 1 & 2 (2020)

The consultation reports set out findings in response to the Issues and Options Consultation, as part of the SWT's Local Plan 2040 review. The first report sets out the general results of these consultations, and the second report assesses these results in much more detail to inform the next stage of drafting for the Local Plan.

Findings:

- The public and stakeholders felt that the Local Plan had appropriate and encouraging objectives.
- The carbon neutrality target should be as soon as possible, suggestions for 2025 instead of 2030. Climate change should be a priority for developer contributions.
- There should be a mix of specifically allocated sites and broad areas for specific renewable energy development.
- The settlement tiers presented seem correct.

- Housing distribution should continue in its current pattern or increase in Wellington / Taunton and reduce in Minehead / other rural centres.
- Affordable homes should be in line with national recommendations of 702 per annum.
- Specific sites should be allocated for allocated for gypsy, traveller and show people communities.
- There should be a defined percentage of accessible and adaptable homes.
- There should be realistic growth ambitions in terms of providing employment.
- Development in rural areas should be managed by effective settlement boundaries.
- Housing in Taunton town centre should be car free and more energy-efficient.

Emerging Local Plan next steps

The new Somerset West and Taunton Council came into being on Monday 1 April 2019 and combined the former West Somerset Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council into a brand new District council.

Subsequently, in July 2021, the Secretary of State approved a proposal for a new single unitary council to be formed in Somerset, to replace Somerset’s current five councils. The new Somerset Council will come into being on 1 April 2023.

The formation of a unitary council in Somerset will have a significant impact on the way all public services (including planning and the Local Plan) are delivered for years to come. The Local Plan (or its equivalent if changed by central government), will need to be embedded into any new structures and cover the geographical area of the new local authority.

The Wellington Place Plan is an evidence base document which will shape the new Local Plan alongside the wider studies and strategies in the existing and emerging evidence base. The Place Plan is not currently part of the Development Plan. References to potential guidance, projects, priorities and growth scenarios will require further development through the plan-making process. This includes a range of robust evidence base documents and considerations relating to delivery and viability.

The scoping report

LUC have prepared a report that includes a focused assessment of baseline, that will cover the following aspects:

- Climate change
- Population, health and well-being
- Equalities
- Deprivation
- Economy
- Transport
- Water resources including quality and phosphates, supply and flooding
- Landscape
- Soils
- Biodiversity
- Historic environment

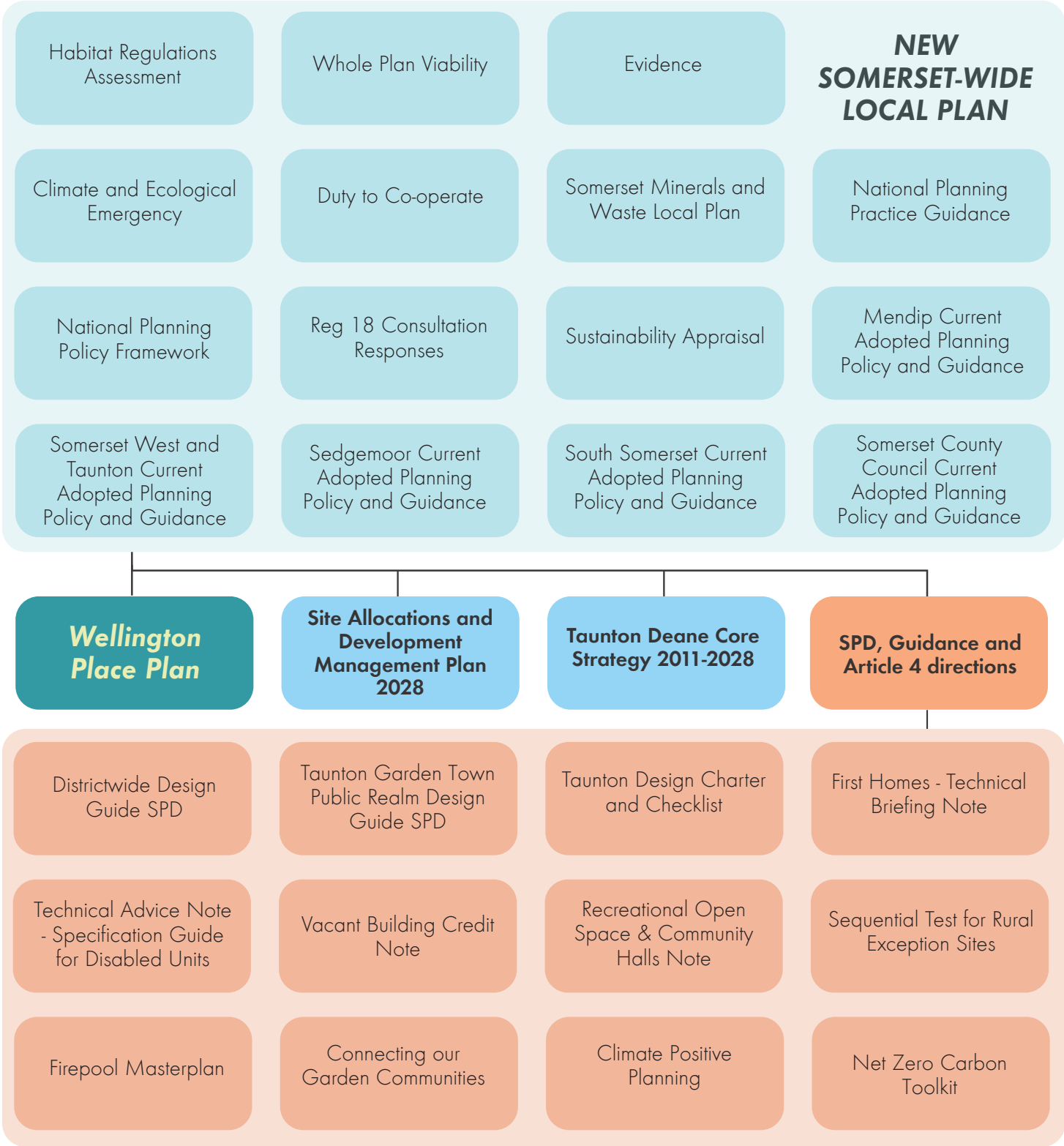


Diagram to show where the Wellington Place Plan sits within the context of the new Somerset-wide Local Plan.

Sites context

This section provides information on:

- Sites that have been allocated for development in the current adopted Taunton Deane Borough Council Core Strategy (2011-2028) (red on the map)
- Sites that have been either identified or allocated as green space (green on the map)

Sites promoted in the call for sites, as part of the Issues and Options Local Plan consultation and through the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA), have informed options for potential growth areas in the Place Plan.

The sites information will inform options for potential growth areas in the Place Plan.

Subject to the planning policy process, it is anticipated that existing employment sites and designations would be protected for economic uses, finding opportunities for growth and other employment benefits.

Green Space - Acquired Sites

Land at the basins

Type: Greenfield

Proposals: Expansion to existing allotments; Country Park and Conservation Area; community garden and community sports

Fox's Field (3.44 ha)

Type: Greenfield

Proposals: The land was acquired by SWT in 2019 with the aim to create a forest garden to enhance biodiversity and provide a local community orchard. The site is leased to Wellington Town Council who are working with Wellington Transition Town on the project.

Core Strategy Site Allocations

SS3

Longforth Farm, Wellington (60.4 ha)

Type: Part allocated, Greenfield and Brownfield

Status: Longforth Farm complete, other parts of site have no current planning apps. Bloor Homes area has 503dw completed, areas occupied by Relyon and Swallowfield currently retain existing commercial uses.

Description and Promoted uses: 900 dwellings; 35-40 dph; centre; community, leisure and educational uses; 11 Ha of employment land

SS4

Cades / Jurston, Wellington (33.5 ha)

Type: Allocated, Greenfield

Status: Cades is built out, Jurston under construction with just over half the site granted Reserve Matters permission.

Description and Promoted uses: 900 dwellings; 35-40 dph; community; leisure and educational uses; 30 Ha of green wedge

SS5

Strategic employment site, Chelston (8.67 ha)

Type: Allocated, Greenfield

Status: Not yet progressed

Description and Promoted uses: Employment land use class B1 b & c; B2; B8

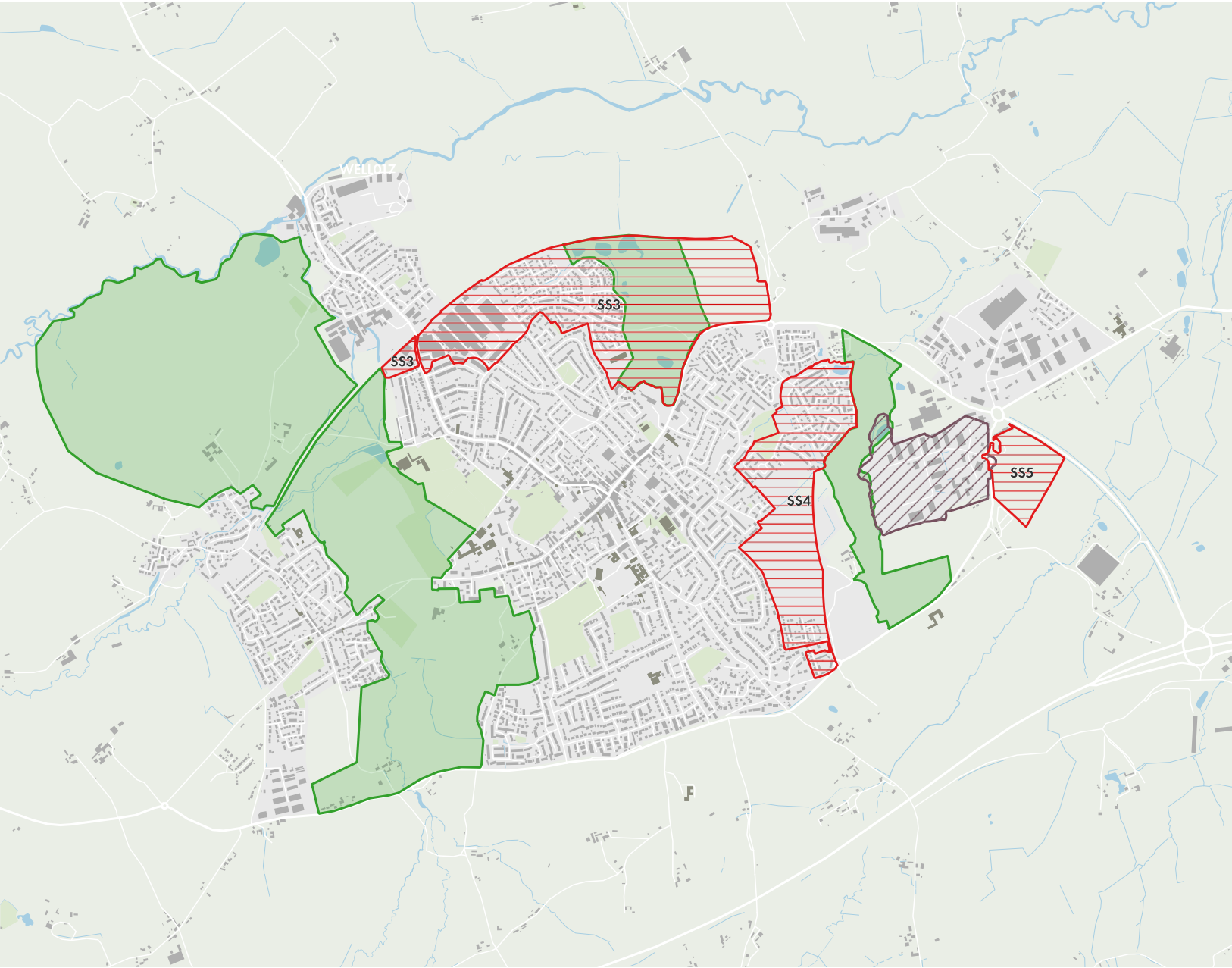
WEL1

Tonedale Mill (5.7 ha)

Type: Allocated, Brownfield

Status: Some commercial and leisure elements completed. Recently urgent repairs have been undertaken on the other parts of historic structure. Homes England and Historic England have signed a MoU to focus on Tonedale as a priority site; SWT working with owner to bring forward the site.

Description and Promoted uses: 220 dwellings; mix-used; 1.5Ha of employment land (class B)



LEGEND

Allocated sites

Other sites

Wellington green space

Engagement overview

The Place Plan has been informed by a diverse programme of engagement which closed with drop-in events as a part of a formal consultation. Activities took place alongside our review of the evidence base, feeding into our understanding of opportunities, constraints and key priorities. This has shaped a clear set of thematic principles, projects and plans which respond to the main outcomes from a wide range of conversations with different stakeholders and members of the community. Key findings from the engagement activity are set out on pages 57 to 62.

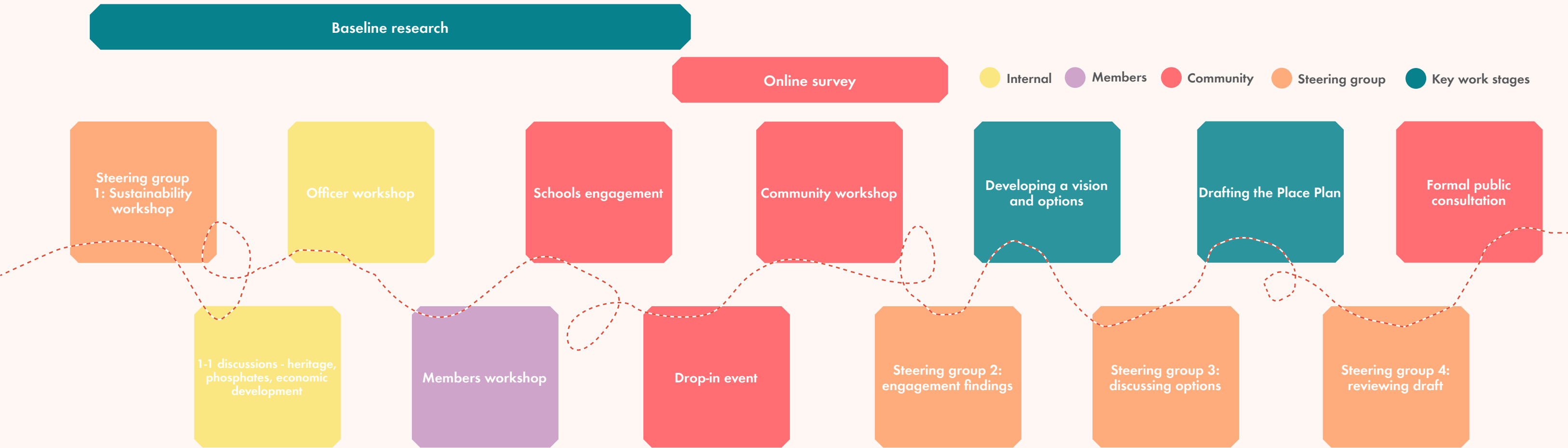


September 2022

October 2022

December 2022

January 2023



Headline stats

W

Stage 2
consultation ran
between 10 and 23
October 2022

L

Stage 3
consultation ran
between 23 Jan
and 20 Feb 2023

Online
exhibition &
forum

Y

122
survey
responses



**E-mailed
comments**

1
community
workshop
18
attendees

Drop-in session at
Quaker Meeting
House

Members
& officer
sessions

108
schools
responses

Thank you
to everyone who
got involved.

2 Issues and opportunities



Wellington's past

Wellington developed along the linear Fore Street, nestled in the beautiful Tone Valley.

The town has expanded as an industrial settlement with a medieval core which remains largely unaltered.

Key industries that have shaped the town and influenced expansion:

- Brick making (seen today in the distinctive orange colour of the Victorian and Edwardian terraces).
- Wool trade and cloth-making where the Fox Brothers was a key business.
- Relyon mattresses, which is still a major local employer.
- Veterinary products, toiletries and cosmetics - Walter Gregory opened his first chemists in Fore Street in 1882, and in 1950s Gregory's became a pioneer of the aerosol industry. The company became known as Swallowfield in 1986 and is still a major employer in the town.

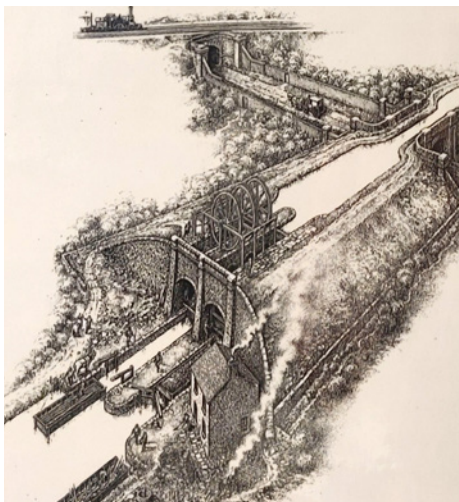
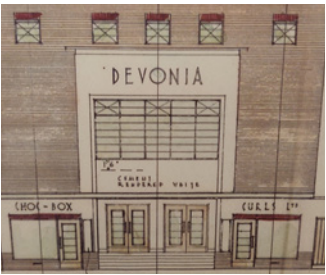
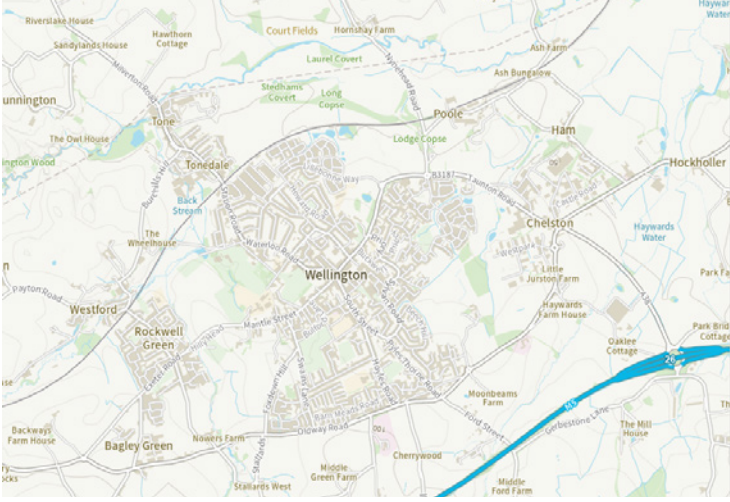
1890



1960



2022



Historic photos of Wellington and surrounds ©Wellington Museum

South Street, 1907

Architects drawing of Wellesley cinema

Wellington view, 1852

Town centre, c1910

the brick building beside the Town Hall was the Post Office between 1885 and 1911

North Street, c1900s

before cars, North Street was a significant part of Wellington's shopping area

Waterloo Road

West along Fore St, 1938

Group of canal structures near Wellington, 1840s

the canal lift was a pioneering invention designed by James Green

Rockwell Green, c1910 looking north past The Weavers Arms

Inside woollen factory, 1910

Historic photos captions

Wellington's past

Early & medieval

- Evidence of Bronze Age settlement and farming.
- Medieval settlement at Longforth Farm included complex of buildings and large medieval 'manor' house dating between 1200 and 1400 at Longforth Farm.
- Land named Weolington and Walintone.
- Medieval town newly laid out to encourage trade arranged along Bristol to Exeter road with moderately successful local market and fairs.
- Small scale cloth industry.

Georgian and Victorian

- Increasing prosperity, a "fine, thriving town" described by Collinson (1791).
- Industrial activity included iron foundries, wool and clothing manufacturing.
- Growth of Westford Mills and Tone Works textile mills provide local employment.
- Introduction of turnpikes, extension of Grand Western Canal and railway leads to expansion of town northwards.
- Wellington Monument built.

20th century

- Leisure offer grows with opening of Wellington Park and three cinemas: the Town Hall cinema in 1909 (renamed Rex Cinema), Castle Cinema in 1912 (renamed Tivoli) and Wellesley Cinema (1937) which still remains today.
- Train links and the opening of the M5 connects the town to Taunton, Exeter, Bristol, and the Midlands. This leads to significant expansion.
- Wellington functions as a dormitory settlement of Taunton.
- Fox Bros & Co nearly closes down but manages to stay afloat.
- Several horticultural nurseries in area.

21st century

- The resident population of Wellington grew from 12,845 in 2001 to 16,669 in 2021.
- Unique retail offer and a legacy of commercial and industrial innovation.
- Tone Works site currently at risk and underused but provides great opportunity.
- A railway station again at Wellington will bring further benefits to town with further development planned.

1086

Recorded in Domesday Book with the name Walintone, belonging to Bishop Giso of Wells.

1215

Town gains town status by Royal Charter.

1731

Fire causes major damage in the town.

1819

Only visit to the town by the first Duke of Wellington.

1830s

Wellington Hall built as market hall.
Tonedale Mill opens.
Wellington Union Workhouse opens on North Street (1837).

1843

Wellington Station opens.

1854

Wellington Monument erected in honour of Arthur Wellesley.

1866

William Thomas & Co Ltd install the biggest Hoffman brick kiln in Britain burning continuously for over 100 years (except for 6 weeks in 1921).

1903

Wellington Park opens on land given by Fox Bros.



Beech Grove entrance to park, 1910
@Wellington Museum

1930s

Widening of Longforth Rd / High Street junction (1931).
Traffic lights first appear in town (1935).

1964

Wellington Railway station closes.
Creation of new Wellington Town Crest.

1978

Heavy snow closes roads into the town for two days.



The Town Crest shows a wool sack (representing the woollen industry), bulls head (veterinary products and Swallowfield), milk churn (milk factory in Champford Lane), mattress (Relyon mattresses), and a Chrysanthemum representing the horticultural nurseries formerly in the area ©Wellington Museum

2021

Decontamination works begin on Tone Works



Medieval floor tiles discovered at Longforth Farm

Highlights

History

Wellington has a rich history which is evident in the built environment. There are many listed buildings in the town centre as well as the Grade I listed Church of St John the Baptist, included within the town centre Conservation Area (on the 'At Risk Register'). These assets in particular bring heritage tourism to Wellington. The town centre is compact and has a medieval street pattern as well as visual, architectural details that pay homage to Wellington's history including the red bricks which are commonplace in the town. These elements and other non-listed heritage assets must be protected and maintained. On the outskirts of town, Tone Works and Tonedale Mill are nationally significant assets (on the 'At Risk Register'). Wellington Monument stands proudly in the surrounding landscape. Wellington School was founded in 1837 and remains in historic buildings including the Grade II listed chapel. The school has a potential role in keeping young people and students in the town and supporting local industry.

Town centre and community pride

Wellington's town centre is well-loved, with high quality elements such as independent shops and eateries, Waitrose and Wellington School. In the future it will play a major role in attracting life and encouraging new business enterprises. The current adopted Core Strategy sets out the role of Wellington as a secondary focus for growth within the Borough, recognising the town's size, offer of services and facilities, and role as a

market town serving a wider rural hinterland. There is a large amount of civic pride within Wellington, with active groups like Wellington Transition Town and Wellington Town Council who are taking a lead on local regeneration projects, such as reuse of the Kings Arms Pub with plans to reopen for community use. The community is well-served by a large community infrastructure network including schools, faith buildings, outdoor play spaces, leisure facilities and arts / heritage uses.

Landscape setting

The town's landscape setting is an important part of its identity and historic evolution. The town is set just north of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which is popular amongst local people and those in the wider area for walking and to enjoy views out to the Quantock Hills and over Wellington. There are several viewpoints in the town too, such as the green wedge between Rockwell Green and Wellington.

The River Tone runs just north of the town centre, and is surrounded by wooded land. The town once had a strong agricultural function, and Wellington's limited urban sprawl is still today surrounded by green space, some of which is farmland. This landscape setting is a huge highlight for Wellington in terms of identity, access to green space and attracting visitors.

rich history



loved town centre



green landscape



visual details



Challenges

Retail trends

Wellington faces the challenges of shifting retail trends, as do many other towns and cities in the UK. The movement of retail online and to out-of-town locations brings challenges around the vitality of town centres in terms of investment, employment, and footfall. Wellington's town centre is filled with independent shops, eateries, and cafés in addition to Waitrose, Asda, the Co-operative and the new Lidl. The diversification of the town centre's offer to encourage competition and comparison, coupled with public realm improvements should see Wellington thrive.

Traffic management

Wellington's town centre sits at the meeting point of High Street, North Street, South Street and Fore Street which are all responsible for directing traffic in and out of central Wellington. However, this makes the presence of vehicular traffic and heavy lorries in the centre extremely prominent causing congestion. On a larger scale, Wellington is not well connected to the surrounding areas by public transport or cycling – for example, to Taunton. These issues contribute to vehicular dependence which has implications on sustainability and environmental factors. SWT has plans to improve cycleways and pedestrian routes as well as to reopen the railway station. There are also longer-term aspirations set out in the current adopted Core Strategy to provide a link road through Longforth to the B3187. However, this is dependent on Relyon, Swallowfield and Pritex relocating. An investigation into the feasibility of other options

is therefore considered to have merit. A link road has the potential to reduce town centre traffic and address access issues.

Heritage-at-Risk

The town's Conservation Area is on Historic England's Heritage-at-Risk register. Notable features that need protecting are Tonedale Mill and Tone Works. SWT is hoping to regenerate and secure long-term management solutions for the two sites. It is a concern that flooding could be an issue for heritage assets. Heritage issues should be at the forefront of considerations in the Wellington Place Plan.

Landscape setting

There are concerns that future development will erode green spaces and the wider landscape setting. This landscape setting and green and blue infrastructure networks are key contributors to Wellington's identity as a rural town. Loss of agricultural land associated with strategic development or phosphate mitigation measures could threaten food security. SWT is seeking to ensure that strategic allocations for development are balanced with green wedges and access to green space is maintained.

Housing

Wellington has a local need for more affordable and private rented homes. A greater variety in housing types and tenures is needed to meet housing needs and cater for the town's population.

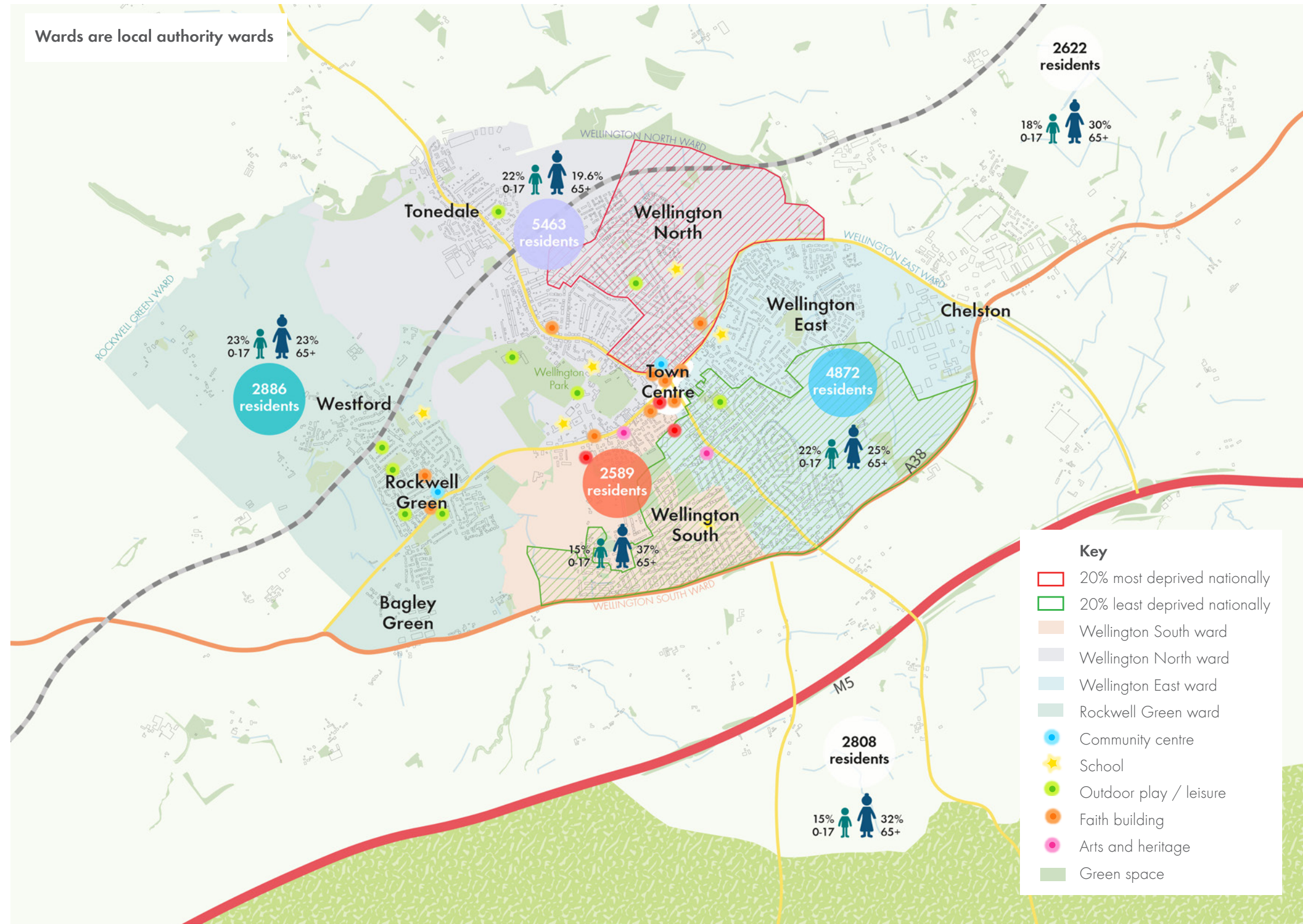


Social analysis

Introducing Wellington's residents

Wellington has a diverse population, but there are some common characteristics:

- Wellington has an ageing population. This is particularly striking in Wellington South ward, where nearly 1 in 5 residents are 75 or over, and 37% of residents are 65+ (ONS 2019 Mid-year estimates). Only 15% of Wellington South's residents are 0-17 year olds. Elsewhere in Wellington, 0-17 year olds make up 22% of the population, higher than the District average (19.2%).
- Most people are white British, although there is a small population of Polish and Portuguese residents, as well as those from a non-European background. In Wellington East, 2.3% speak a non-European language (2011 Census). The most ethnically diverse ward is Wellington North where 5.2% of residents are from a BAME background.
- There is a mix of religious and non-religious - those who identify as Christian make up between 59 and 64% across all wards. Between 1 and 2% of residents across wards belong to a non-Christian religion. The rest of residents identify as having no religion (2011 Census). This is similar to the Somerset and District figures.
- Social mobility is low in Taunton Deane and is in the bottom 20-40% within the South West region (Social Mobility Index, 2018)



- Broadband speed for households is faster in Wellington than its rural hinterland. For example, 0.3% of properties in Wellington North have less than super fast broadband, compared to 34% for Milverton & District ward and 36% for Monument ward (Ofcom Connected Nations Report, 2020).

A key difference is that the northern parts of town, and Rockwell Green, are far more deprived than the south. Incomes are lower, educational performance is lower and crime is higher:

- Deprivation - parts of Wellington North (on either side of Lillebonne Way) are within the 20% most deprived LSOAs nationally (IMD, 2019). The picture is strikingly different in Wellington South, much of which is in the 20% least deprived. Longforth Farm would diversify the housing offer and community in the Wellington North ward. Income, employment, health and education deprivation are especially high, as is income deprivation affecting older people. Rockwell Green and Wellington East also have higher levels of deprivation (within 30% and 40% most deprived nationally across most indicators).
- Residents in the north and eastern parts of town, as well as Rockwell Green, are at high risk of feeling lonely (Somerset Social Isolation map, 2015) - according to the Somerset Social Isolation Index, 15 common factors, including age, financial stress, car ownership and health status, can influence

social isolation and loneliness. The Index identifies LSOAs that are particularly lonely, and these tend to be in urban, deprived areas, specifically the north and eastern parts of Wellington. The effect of loneliness and isolation can be as harmful to health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

- Social housing - over 4% of residents are waiting for social housing in Wellington North and Wellington East. This figure is lower at 3% for residents in Wellington South (Homefinder Housing Register, March 2017). The figure is much higher at 7% for Rockwell Green residents.
- Education - 84% of pupils in Wellington South achieved the expected standard in KS2 Reading, Writing and Maths in 2019, compared to 49% of pupils in Wellington North ward and 43% of Rockwell Green pupils (Somerset County Council, 2019). For Wellington East, 55% of pupils achieved the expected standard. In 2011, the ward with the highest % of those aged 16+ with no qualification was Wellington North, with 26% of residents without a qualification. This is higher than the 22% average for the District and County.
- Special educational needs - there are fewer students with Special Educational Needs in Wellington South (113 per 1000) compared to Rockwell Green (201 per 1000), Wellington North (166 per 1000) and Wellington East (152 per 1000). The District and County average is 146 pupils per 1000.



84%
of students
in Wellington
South



43%
of students
in Rockwell
Green

49%
of students
in Wellington
North

**achieved the
expected standard
in KS2 in 2019**

**249 per 1000
students pupils**

**eligible for free
school meals in
Rockwell Green,
compared to
66 per 1000 in
Wellington South**



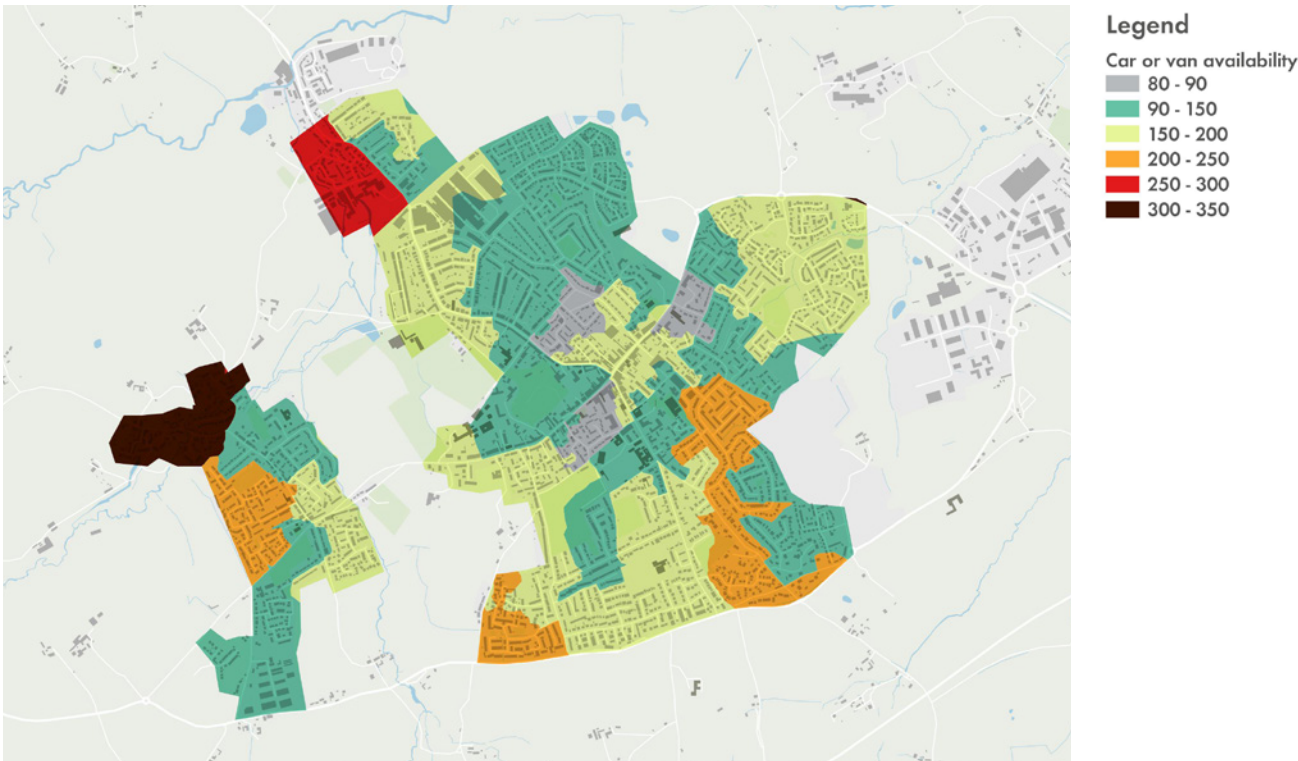
- Free School Meals - the number of pupils eligible for Free School Meals is higher than the District average in Wellington North (177 per 1000), Wellington East (166 per 1000) and Rockwell Green (249 per 1000). In Wellington South, numbers are far lower, at 66 per 1000 students. In the rural hinterland figures remain low too.
- Car ownership - 21% of householders in Wellington North do not own a car or van, compared to 18% in Wellington South and Wellington East, and 14% in Rockwell Green (2011 Census).
- Mortality - mortality is highest in Wellington North Ward, higher than the Somerset and District average mortality rates. Monument ward, which covers Wellington's rural hinterland to the south, also has surprisingly high mortality figures (NHS Digital: Civil Registrations Data & ONS Mid-year pop estimates 2015-2019).
- Crime - Wellington East had the highest number of violence and sexual offences in April 2019 - 3161 per 100,000 people. Wellington North closely followed. Wellington South has much lower reported violence and sexual offences (1352 per 100,000 people in April, 2019). Antisocial behaviour and criminal damage rates are highest in Wellington North, more than double that of Wellington South. Crime figures are higher

in Wellington North than the Somerset and District averages.

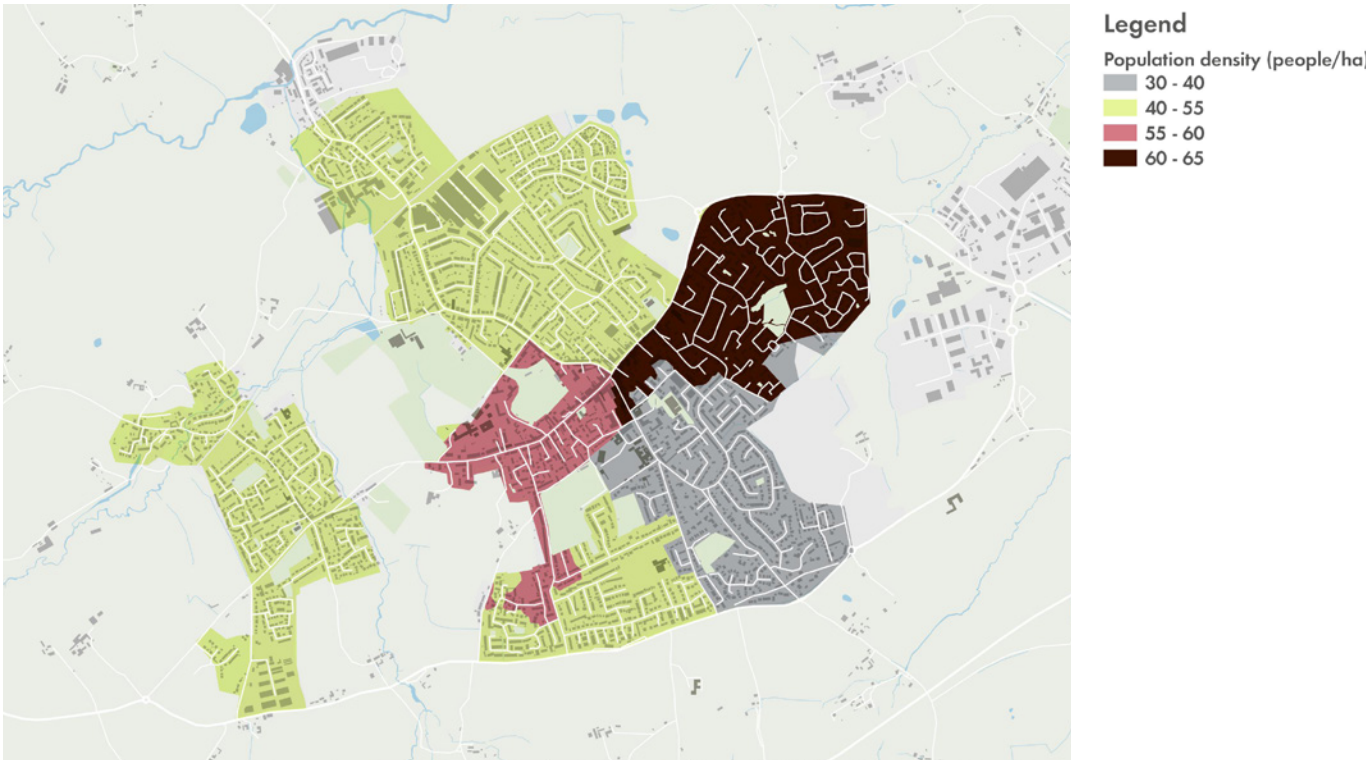
- Population density - the number of people per hectare living in parts of Wellington East (in the northern half of the ward) is considerably higher than elsewhere in Wellington.
- Health - at the district level, 81.6% of residents in Taunton Deane (in which Wellington was located prior to the formation of Somerset West and Taunton District) described themselves as having 'very good health' or 'good health'. This is slightly higher

than the national average for England and Wales of 81.2%. The figure for the three Wellington wards is slightly lower, at 79.9%. Like the majority of Somerset, Wellington has an ageing population which is likely to lead to more cases of residents suffering from age-related conditions such as dementia.

- Wellington has a lack of junior sports pitches and limited outdoor facilities for young people. The Skate Park is in need of improvements overall and to improve its safety. Roller sports, in general, are poorly provided for in Wellington.



Car and van availability



Population density



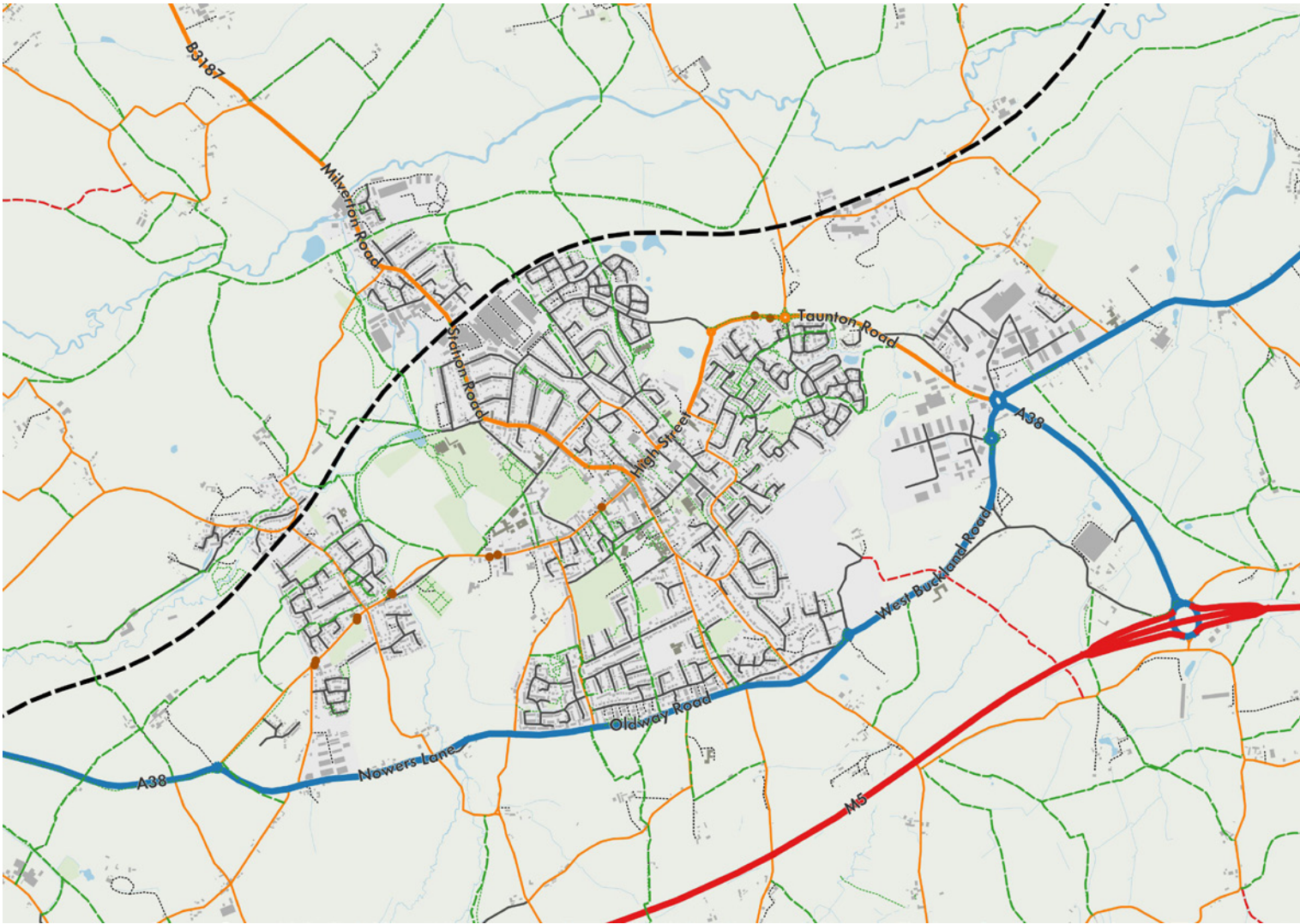
Connectivity

Wellington is well-connected both regionally and nationally by the Strategic Road Network, namely the M5, which links to Exeter, Bristol, Birmingham and beyond. The A38, part of the Major Road Network, runs south of the town, linking to the M5.

The town centre is well-connected in all directions by B roads, however, experiences major congestion problems due to the confluence of four key roads being at the very centre of Wellington. The town's relatively historic street pattern has a finer grain which complicates these issues and places strain on infrastructure, accessibility to the centre and produces sustainability issues.

Local roads in Wellington often take the form of cul-de-sacs which do not lend themselves well to positive internal connectivity, again placing strain on the B roads (Exeter Rd, Taunton Rd, North St, South St).

Public transport is limited with the only bus stops connecting east and west Wellington, leaving no north to south routes. There are plans for the opening of a Wellington railway station north of the town centre which will provide sustainable connectivity and transport options and encourage walkability in the town.



Connectivity



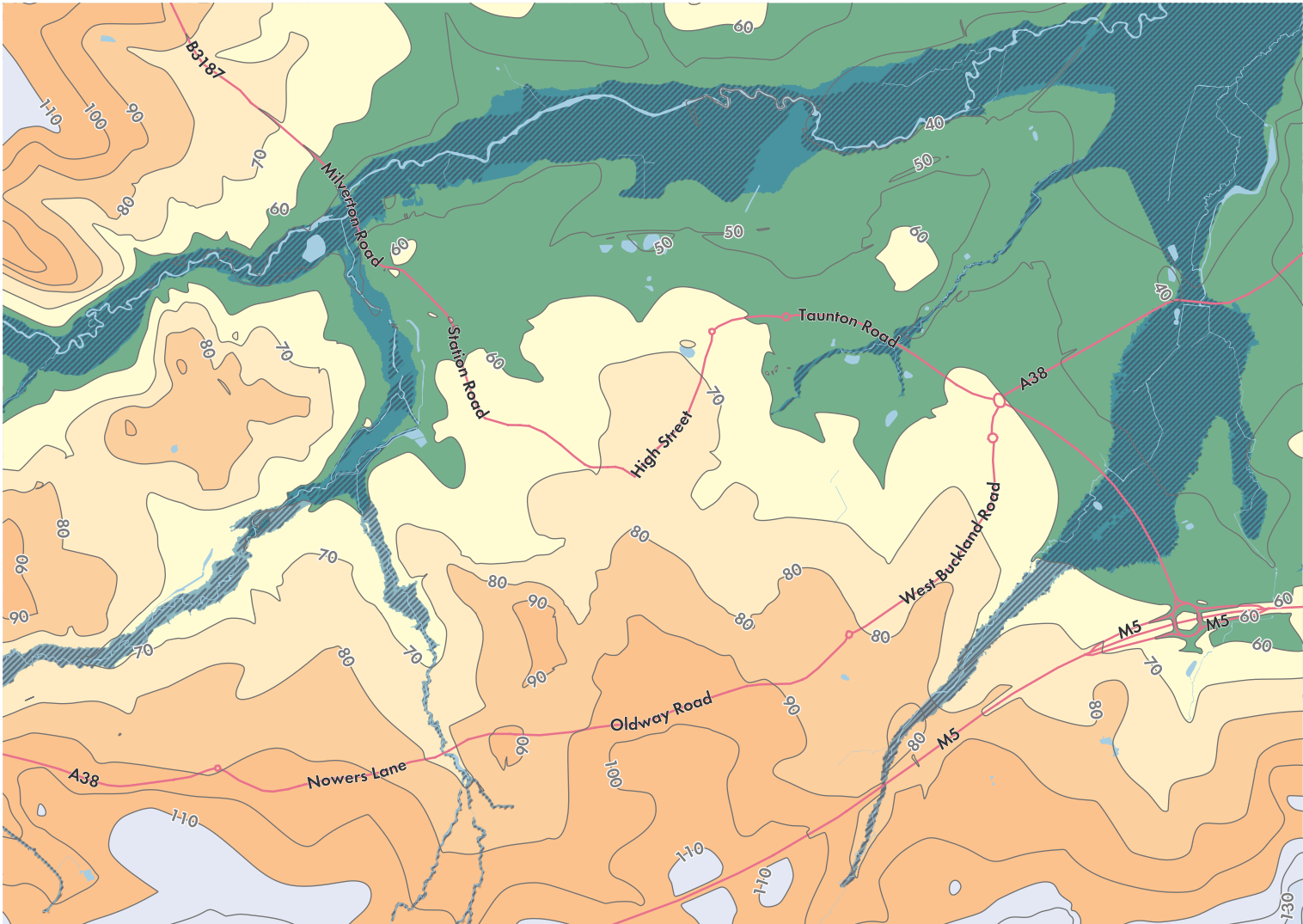
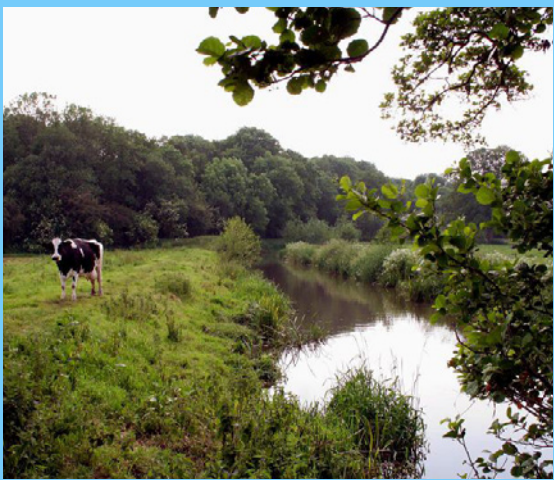
- Bus stop
- Rail track
- Public rights of way
 - Footpath
 - Restricted Byway
 - unofficial paths
- Roads
 - Motorway
 - A Road
 - B Road
 - Minor Road
 - Local Road
 - Restricted Local Access Road

Flooding

Wellington lies within the valley of the River Tone, meaning that part of the town and its surrounds are susceptible to flooding from the river and its tributaries. This area is characterised by Low Vale Farmland that produce clay and peat moors. Flood zone 2 areas surround the town, following the south-westerly path of the River Tone. The river is surrounded by flat green land which acts as effective flood plains, and are zone 3 flood zones.

Future stages of the plan-making process will need to consider flood risk and the approach to phosphate mitigation, drawing on more detailed evidence base studies and strategies. The Place Plan makes a number of references to areas where assessments will be required, but these are not exhaustive, and do not prejudice or replace the need for future studies including SFRA as part of the development of future planning policy guidance and site allocations. Future studies will need to consider:

- Appropriate locations for development in response to flood risk assessments.
- Blue green infrastructure including the multi-functional benefits of green infrastructure for flood alleviation, SUDS and health benefits.
- An examination of catchment-based improvement works to alleviate flood risk and the need for preparation of flood risk plans.
- The strategic interface between flood risk management and phosphates mitigation.



Flooding and topography

Legend

Flood and topography

- Contours all
- Surface water
- nat_floodzone3_v2

Flood zones

- Flood Zone 2

Topography (metres)

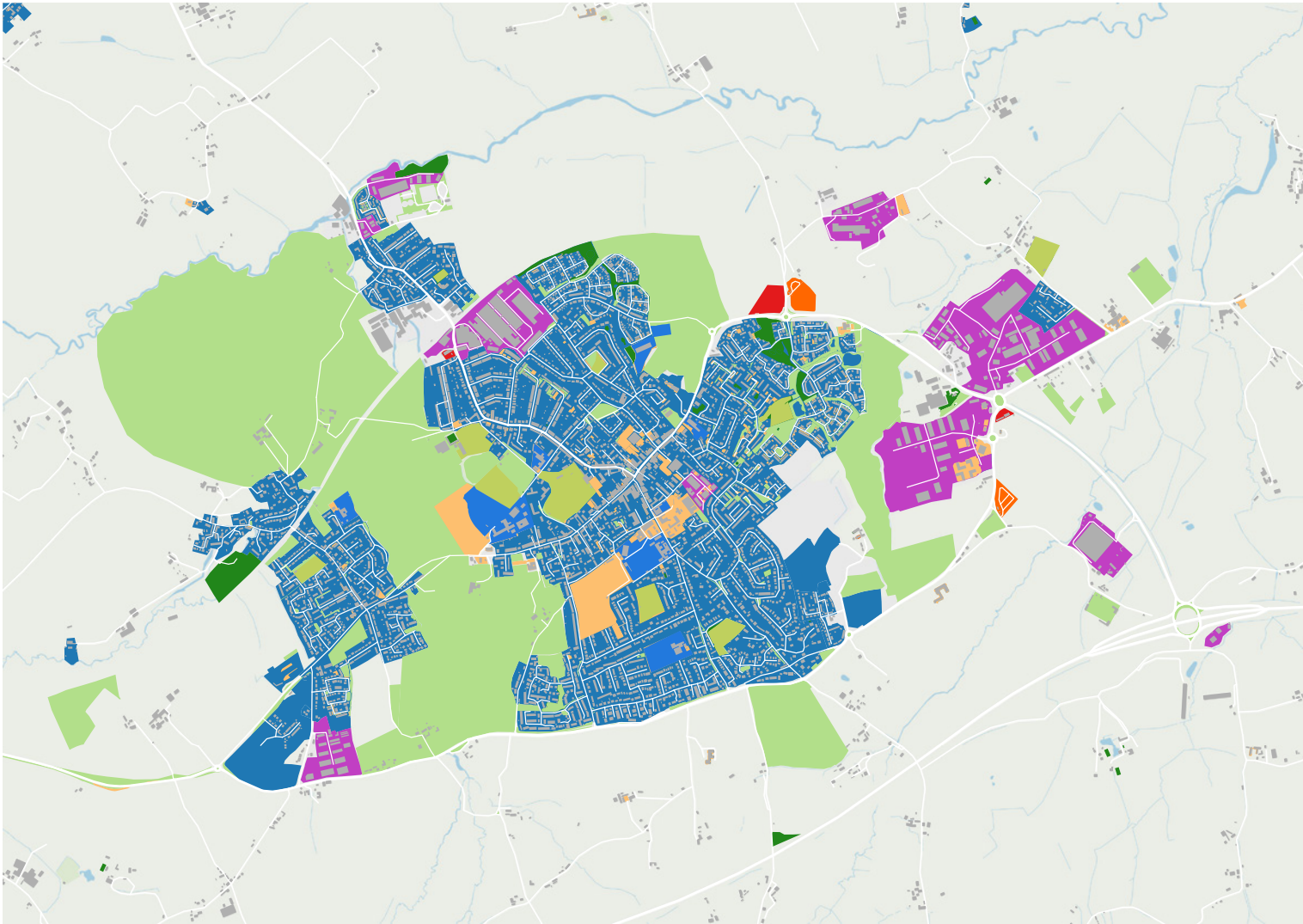
- 40 - 50
- 50 - 60
- 60 - 70
- 70 - 80

Land uses

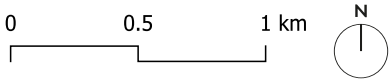
Wellington is heavily dominated by residential use which stretches right up to the town centre and is surrounded by green space and farmland.

The town centre is characterised by retail and commercial use with local amenities spreading out into and dotted throughout the residential sprawl. These uses in and around the town centre are important for the long-term vitality and economy of Wellington, relevant in the context of shifting retail and working patterns.

Wellington has industrial and employment land clustered around main roads and along the railway line which serve both jobs and services to the local and wider community.



Land use



- Legend**
- Land use
- Residential
 - Retail/commercial
 - Tourism
 - Industrial / employment
 - Under construction
 - Amenity
 - Leisure
 - Green space,Open space
 - Play fields
 - Education

Wellington's heritage today

- Wellington's rich history is seen today in the prevalence of heritage assets in the centre and on its edges.
- The town has over 90 listed buildings and a Conservation Area in the town centre.
- The historic core is a medieval pattern of burgage plots either side of the main road with later redevelopment.
- Georgian and Regency houses are located on the edge of town and there are early Victorian villas on South Street.
- Small Victorian town houses and modest terraces along Mantle Street and North Street.
- 20th century housing at Wellesely Park.
- One Grade I listed building, St John the Baptist Church, built in 1510 and a handsome Gothic building.
- Grade II* Registered Park and Garden north of town at Nynehead.



Heritage and natural designations

Heritage-at-Risk

There are substantial heritage assets identified as 'at risk' on Historic England's Heritage-at-Risk register. These are:

- Tone Works (Grade II*)
- Tonedale Mill (Grade II*)
- Wellington Conservation Area

Tone Works and Tonedale Mill have high heritage significance:

- Former Fox Brothers' woollen mills founded in 1790.
- At the height of its success, employed over 5000 local people.
- Largest and most comprehensive representative textile manufacturing in the south-west.
- Range of surviving structures and old machinery, the last of their kind.
- Rare example of a textile factory where all processes are carried on by the same firm on the same premises.

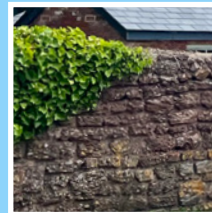
The main challenges regarding Tone Works and Tonedale Mill are:

- Vacant, derelict buildings.
- Fragmented land ownership, and landowner carrying out unauthorised, inappropriate works to Tonedale House (2017).
- Significant funding and long term repairs required to carry out urgent works.

SWT submitted an application to the first round of the Levelling up Fund (LUF) but was unsuccessful. A further submission has been made to the LUF Round 2, to remove the mills from the Risk Register. The aim is to "return them to their original status (as industrial hearts of the community), breathing new life into the town by stabilising and securing these assets with the aim of transforming them into an exciting mix of cultural, community and commercial uses, alongside a unique and desirable residential community."

Boundary treatments

Historic boundary treatments contribute significantly to the heritage and cohesive character of Wellington. Old stone walls, brick walls and wrought iron railings are at risk of decay, neglect, insensitive alterations or even demolition to make way for off-street car-parking.



Walls bring a cohesive, historic character to Wellington



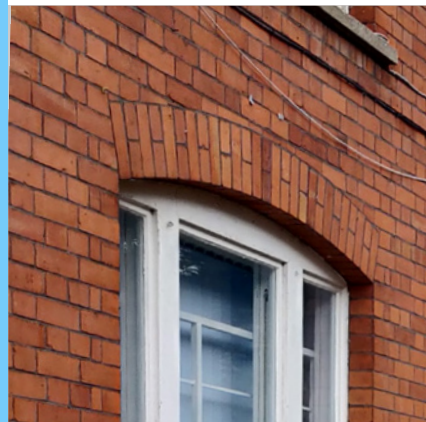
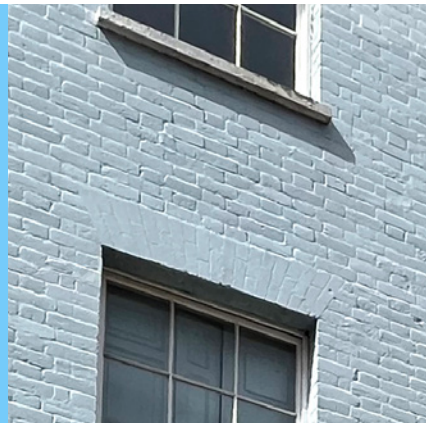
Alterations and demolition of walls can erode character incrementally



Town centre character

We have identified a number of key themes which define the particular character of Wellington town centre. This has been derived from the Wellington Conservation Area Appraisal (2007) and our own visual analysis.

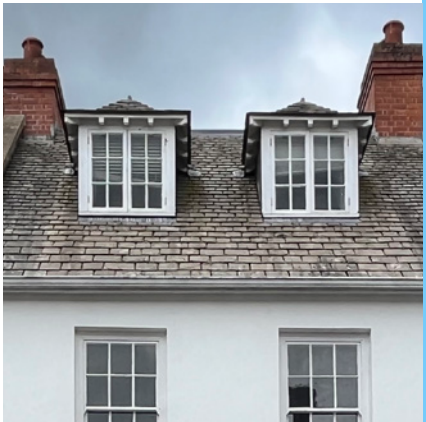
Colour



Materials



Details



'Of Wellington':

Simple and functional

Brick-built

High quality building composition along High Street

Footways, lanes & courtyards

Intact traditional shop fronts

Cast iron street name plates and railings

High stone & brick walls

Engagement headlines

This section summarises the key findings from community engagement

GETTING AROUND

An accessible place, linking existing and new neighbourhoods with the town centre, prioritising active travel and buses. Making safe and easy connections to the railway station, community facilities, employment areas, surrounding landscape and settlements including Taunton.

Wellington has plenty of well-loved footpaths that people use to get to the town centre and out to nearby countryside. People want to see these improved, joined up and well-signposted. Consideration should be given to new and safe walking connections through green spaces between neighbourhoods, employment areas, the station and the town centre.

Lots of people already cycle in Wellington. People want to see a cycle network which is safe and easy to use, for young and old, linking the town with nearby towns and villages, the new station, and improving access into the countryside.



Whilst the day bus service to Taunton is really good, people want to see an evening service as an alternative to driving. An improved bus network in and around town is welcomed - frequent, reliable and cheaper services linking new and existing residential areas with the new station, the town centre and nearby villages. Providing a link road to take congestion out of the town centre will be complicated and challenging. In the short-term, measures should focus on reducing the number of short-range car journeys through the town, including school journeys, to create a safer, more pleasant experience in town for those on foot.



LANDSCAPE & IDENTITY

A town respectful of its rural setting, rooted in a productive landscape of growing, craft and industry.

Access to and provision of green and open space is very important to Wellington's community with many people identifying it as their favourite thing about the town. Community groups and projects such as Transition Town and Wellington in Bloom are key initiatives that residents are invested in to continue to celebrate and enhance the town's landscape. Prioritising green and open space will be an important way of ensuring that community needs are met.

People enjoy the benefits of Wellington's size - it is small and compact enough for fostering community, and big enough to provide a range of services and activities for local people. Maintaining both positive aspects in the context of growth will be key to Wellington's future. Residents have identified the River Tone to the north and the A38 to the south as appropriate edges for any development in order to maintain this size.

Many residents identify with the historic agricultural identity that contributes to the town's culture. Enhancing this identity through supporting local businesses and a wide range of community events will keep this spirit alive.



Similarly, residents feel that the views to and from the town centre are important, including from Chelston towards the Blackdown Hills and Monument which provide a unique setting for the town.

Considering the local vernacular, architecture, scale, and massing of the wider settlement and surrounding villages is important in maintaining local distinctiveness and connections between Wellington and its satellite villages. People would like there to be a cohesive identity between the town and villages while maintaining green spaces as buffers between the settlements.

New developments are very enclosed and new homes sometimes face infrastructure. Development should face onto green space and relate well to create safer, attractive walking / cycling routes through green spaces into Wellington, the station and other amenities.



TOWN CENTRE RESILIENCE & COMMUNITY LIFE

A welcoming and cared-for centre for all at the heart of Wellington, which meets local needs and draws people in with its charming buildings, social spaces and varied activities and uses. A town which young and old continue to be proud of and where community life grows.

Wellington's town centre is well loved, described as vibrant and home to key assets for the community. It is an attractive town centre with many appreciated independent shops. The traffic and congestion through the town centre was identified as a key issue and undermines the many positive aspects of the High Street and Fore Street. Residents would like to see more pedestrian friendly streets with traffic reduced, with social spaces and places outside to spend time. Some locals would like to see pedestrianisation of certain streets in the town centre.

Community spirit and pride is strong within Wellington and many people feel proud of their town. It is important to continue this civic pride with events and local projects that will harness this. Transition Town, the Film Festival, the regular markets and Wellington in Bloom are good examples of this.

Though Villa Verde, The Iron Duke and The Pump House are well loved and visited venues, residents and the Town Centre Health Check deem that the town would strongly benefit from a stronger



night-time economy.

Residents explored issues of vacancy rates and higher rates of turnover and how this affects the feel of the town centre and its level of resilience. Engagement feedback shows that it is important to reuse vacant buildings to bring more life into the town centre, at all times of the day. Residents explored whether these vacant buildings could be used for affordable town centre homes, given the current cost of living crisis. Other ideas included using upper storeys to help diversify the employment base in Wellington and bring small businesses into town.

Residents are concerned that local services and social infrastructure such as Post Offices, GP surgeries and local roads are already suffering and currently above capacity, and therefore new development will only place further pressure on social and transport infrastructure. Access to and provision of services and good connections in the context of future growth will be important to address within the Wellington Place Plan.

The provision of facilities specifically for young people was identified as a key priority, as well as more flexible community space to cater for all of Wellington's residents. Opportunities for adult education in town would also be welcome.

HERITAGE & HISTORIC SETTING

A town proud of its outstanding heritage and Fox Brothers legacy, re-imagining its old buildings and landscapes for the 21st century.

The historic environment is important to residents in Wellington, particularly the opportunity that the regeneration of Tonedale Mill and Tone Works has for a distinct local offer. Residents explored different uses that these buildings could house for example, crafts, workspace, homes, community uses and eateries. Most people see the value of Tonedale Mill and Tone Works providing a mix of uses which meet local needs and also bring in visitors.

Residents feel that Wellington's heritage assets and historic buildings are in poor condition, and advocate for the general cleaning up and preservation of these to ensure that Wellington's historic character remains. Ideas to reuse historic buildings and improve shopfronts will help take care of Wellington's heritage.

The industrial farming landscape is an important part of Wellington's identity and has resulted in distinctly local historic farmstead architecture which should be celebrated, maintained, and reflected in proposals for new development. Similarly, the protection of the town's historic landscapes and waterways needs to be central



to the Wellington Place Plan.

The role of the Fox Family is important to the town's history including their influence on the Mill, rugby club, basins and homes built at the time. Promoting this heritage through way-finding, heritage trails and other initiatives will help to celebrate the unique history of the town.



Inspiration from elsewhere..



Exeter



Frome



Wiveliscombe



Frome

Places people mentioned through the engagement highlighting positive aspects to draw on



Wiveliscombe



Hay-on-Wye



Exmouth

3 Vision, priorities and spatial strategies



OUR VISION FOR WELLINGTON



Wellington will be a successful, welcoming town, clearly rooted in its landscape setting of the Blackdown Hills, and the proud industrial and commercial heritage at Tonedale Mill and Tone Works.

The town centre will form the beating heart of Wellington, a focus for local people and visitors who enjoy its vibrant uses, charming and restored historic buildings, and social spaces.

Wellington will be easily accessible, with walking, cycling and buses creating safe and easy connections between the town centre, community facilities, neighbourhoods, the new railway station and beyond to Taunton.




Wellington will be resilient, embracing an ambitious approach to sustainability in all its forms, and being responsive to changing economic context through a wide range of employment and training opportunities.



New, sustainable neighbourhoods and employment areas will be integrated with the existing settlement, complementing Wellington's character, and having a well-rounded sense of identity and community.

The town will benefit from generous swathes of green open space connecting to the surrounding countryside, and well managed waterways. These will provide rich and diverse habitats, community open space, sports and recreation facilities and productive landscapes.



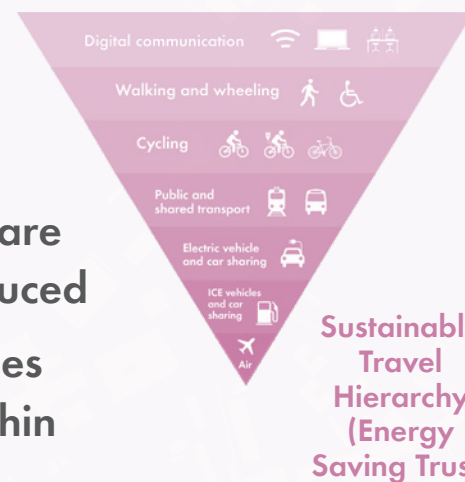


AN ACCESSIBLE PLACE

linking existing and new neighbourhoods with the town centre, prioritising active travel and buses within a sustainable travel hierarchy. Making safe and easy connections to the railway station, community facilities, employment areas, surrounding landscape and settlements including Taunton.

Principles /objectives

- A town where existing residents can easily walk or cycle to their destination rather than relying on the car; where short car journeys are minimised and town centre congestion is reduced
- A town in which all residents can rely on buses throughout the day and evening and are within a 5 minute walk of a bus stop
- A well-used railway station that is easily accessible by walking routes, cycling links and infrastructure and on bus routes
- New neighbourhoods with active travel as a feasible and attractive alternative to car journeys
- Industry and workspace in accessible locations that do not create congestion
- A town that is accessible to all levels of mobility including provision for mobility scooters and wheelchairs





A TOWN ROOTED IN ITS SETTING

respectful of its productive landscapes of growing, craft and industry

Principles/objectives

- A town which maintains its identity as a discrete market town in a rural setting
- A town with visual and physical links to its surrounding landscapes, particularly the Blackdown Hills
- A town connected to its surrounding productive landscapes and craft heritage
- A town serving a network of satellite villages, each also discrete in their rural setting
- The town and villages' craft and industry evident through the building types and vernacular
- A town which invests in its historic waterways to realise their character, and environmental and recreational benefits
- A town with irreplaceable habitats such as Ancient Woodland



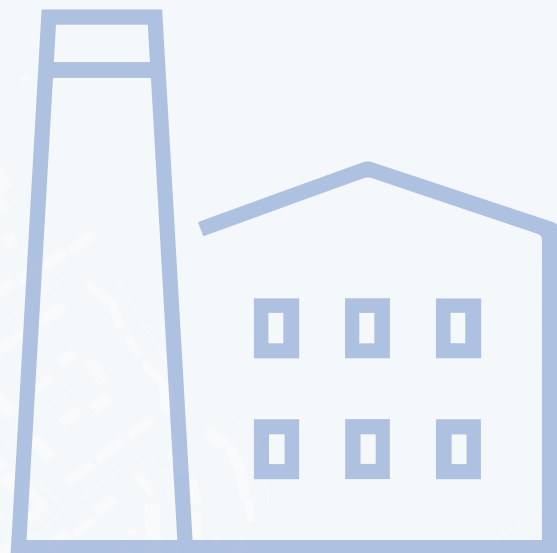


CELEBRATING OUR INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL HERITAGE

A town proud of its outstanding heritage and Fox Brothers legacy, re-imagining its old buildings and landscapes for the 21st century

Principles/objectives

- A town which conserves and adaptively reuses its industrial built heritage
- A town which values, maintains and enhances its town centre heritage
- A town which celebrates, draws on and creatively re-imagines its craft heritage
- A town which protects and enhances its historic landscapes





A HIGH BAR FOR SUSTAINABILITY

A carbon neutral town which draws on its rich natural resources and local passion for a resilient future

Principles/objectives

- A town which protects and enhances its natural environment, ecological diversity and habitat continuity
- A town which prioritises sustainable travel and provides feasible alternatives to private car journeys
- A town which champions zero carbon sustainable buildings where the carbon is measured across the lifetime of the buildings
- A town which uses water efficiently and effectively minimises nutrient pollution in its water network
- A town which effectively mitigates and adapts to climate change through tree planting and flood risk management
- A town which encourages and facilitates local food production
- A town with sustainable and community based energy generation



Photo: Andreas Hofmeyr



A WELCOMING TOWN AND CENTRE

for all at the heart of Wellington, which meets local needs and draws people in with its charming buildings, social spaces and varied activities and uses

Principles/objectives

- A town centre which meets the practical amenity needs of its residents
- A charming town with independent shops and businesses that attracts visitors
- A sociable town with a range of events and activities for all residents, and venues and spaces to support these
- A town which meets the needs of all ages (including young people) and encourages intergenerational sociability
- A town with an active network of community groups and businesses and appropriate venues for these
- A town that is lively at different times of the day and evening
- A town with strong links to sports and arts in its leisure and recreation provision
- A town with business premises adaptable for modern business needs



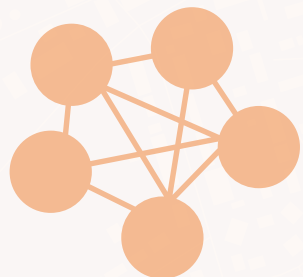


A RESILIENT TOWN

that can respond to economic and social shifts and provide good training and employment opportunities for residents and the local workforce

Principles/objectives

- A town that understands its role in a wider economic ecosystem and responds to this
- A town that works with its major employers to understand their needs
- A town with a strong business voice
- A town that encourages emerging industries and supports green businesses
- A town which creates the right environment for innovation
- A town which supports its local community in accessing skills training and jobs and retains its young people
- A town that celebrates its current industries and the employment that is provided
- A town that addresses local housing needs in terms of affordability, tenures, sizes and accessibility



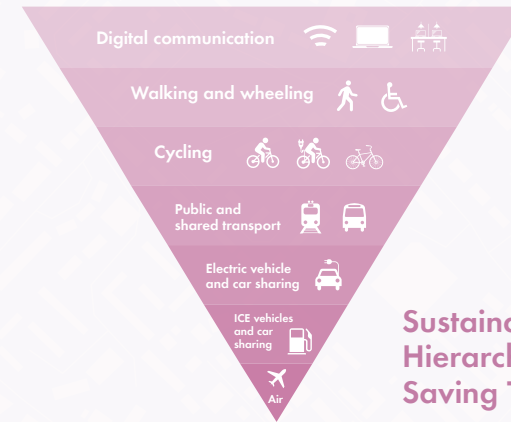


AN ACCESSIBLE PLACE

linking existing and new neighbourhoods with the town centre, prioritising active travel and buses within a sustainable travel hierarchy. Making safe and easy connections to the railway station, community facilities, employment areas, surrounding landscape and settlements including Taunton.

Town related spatial priorities, projects and guidance

1. Re-establish a railway station for Wellington as a transport hub, with strategic connections to Taunton and Bristol Airport, integrated sustainable transport modes and a mix of uses co-located with the station
2. Investment in the public realm, pavement widening and direct crossings to improve key walking routes in the town centre and to schools as well as considering those who travel on roller skates, skateboards and scooters
3. Investment in historic footpaths to clear these and prevent them falling into disrepair and out of use, and to provide better signage and wayfinding. The same applies to woodland connections being improved. Links to the town centre, employment locations and out to the Blackdown Hills to be improved
4. Establishing an integrated cycling network with direct routes, segregated paths where possible, clear signage with distances, infrastructure such as cycle parking and maintenance points. Ensure that these feel safe and are overlooked
5. Cycle hubs at key locations such as the town centre, large employers, schools and the proposed railway station with secure and weather protected parking, maintenance tools, e-bike charging points, bike hire such as Brompton lockers
6. Good cycle connections and signage to Sustrans route 3 (at Nynehead) to Taunton (a leisure route of 10 miles), directly between Wellington and Taunton and to/from surrounding villages
7. Review potential for a Park and Ride scheme with parking close to the M5/A38 junction and links to the town centre and railway station



Sustainable Travel Hierarchy (Energy Saving Trust)

8. Review opportunities and establish on-street EV charging points via lamp posts and other options in existing neighbourhoods, at petrol stations and at key employers
9. Explore improvements to bus service coverage, either through amendments to the existing routes or through an on-demand app based minibus system, with a particular focus on connections to/from Taunton and evening bus services.
10. Review all options for removing articulated lorries from the town centre, including a new link road to the north of the town centre or use of existing alternative roads such as Lillebonne Way, to decrease congestion and improve air quality
11. Utilise a “vision and validate” approach to transport assessment and travel planning – moving away from traditional “predict and provide” which results in ever increasing road capacity building.
12. Wellington Movement and Traffic Study to consider the overall approach to strategic



SEGREGATED SCHOOL CYCLE LANES
Segregated cycle lanes with greening and tree planting on routes to primary and secondary schools in north Cambridge.



PAVEMENT WIDENING
Resurfacing, planting and bike storage to improve walking and cycling facilities in north London.

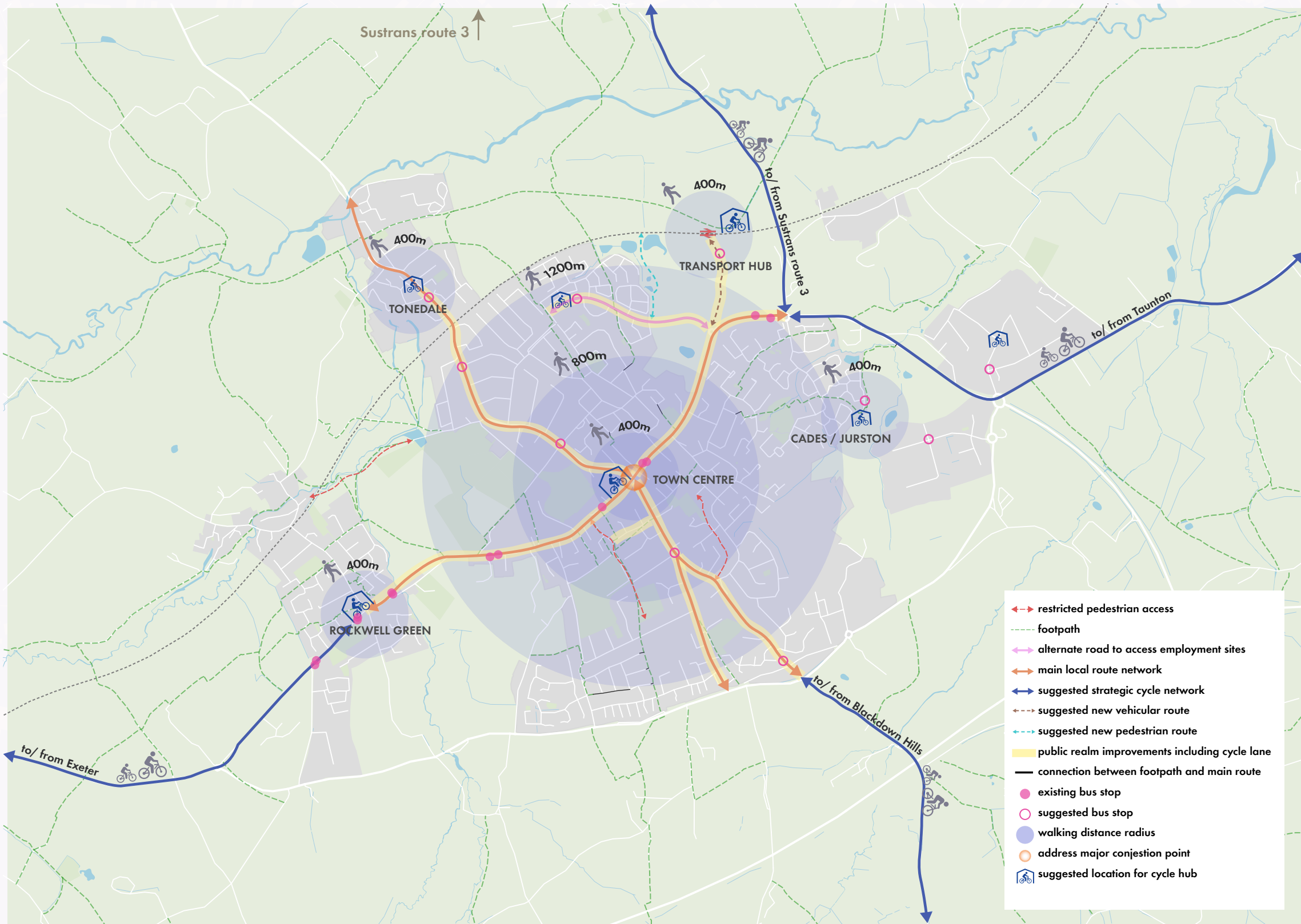


CYCLE HUBS
A series of cycle hubs in Waltham Forest with secure, weather-proof cycle parking with cycle maintenance tools. Can also include cycle hire and e-bike charge points.

movement issues and opportunities as set out in the Place Plan. This should include consideration of potential cumulative traffic impacts of the growth scenarios and how this will be addressed through a “vision and validate” approach

Growth related spatial priorities, projects and guidance

- 13. Direct pedestrian and cycle links to local amenities, the town centre, large employers and the station to be priorities during the strategic masterplanning stage of new neighbourhoods. These links must be well lit
- 14. Cycle provision to be integrated into new home design, with convenient, safe parking and e-bike charging
- 15. Off-road and on-road EV charging points to be provided in new neighbourhoods and considered at the masterplanning stage
- 16. New developments close to the town centre and the proposed railway station to be designed as car-free or with reduced parking levels
- 17. Bus routes to be amended to serve new neighbourhoods from the point residents move in so that good habits can be formed, with review of the potential for a Bus Rapid Transit system
- 18. Developments must consider different housing tenures and types and mobility levels of residents



Spatial strategy plan: An accessible place



WELLINGTON RAILWAY STATION

The proposal and funding to re-establish a railway station in Wellington is a once in a generation opportunity to transform the town's connections; improve accessibility for residents and visitors; and attract businesses to the town. It is critical to realise the full positive potential of the station by setting out a sustainable, strategic approach.

Station related spatial priorities, projects and guidance

1. Establish the station as a transport hub which integrates different modes of public transport and active travel, including local bus routes and connections to Taunton; and coach links to Bristol airport. Ensure this has real time information for passengers
2. Establish a cycle hub at the station, with secure and weather protected parking and maintenance tools. Explore potential for establishing a cycle hire point at the station, such as Brompton lockers.
3. Plan cycle routes to and from the railway station early in the masterplanning process for sites near the station. Coordinate across masterplan areas and beyond site boundaries, to ensure a continuous, high quality cycle network between the station and the town centre, large employers and neighbourhoods
4. Carefully consider the level and cost of private parking at the station, and assess this against the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy and the Council's 'vision and validate' approach to planning across transport modes. Avoid the station area simply becoming a large car park
5. Explore design options for creating a public space which the new station can front, which is vibrant and has natural surveillance. This should include a drop off 'kiss and ride' area and a taxi waiting. Consider the roles of these amenities in tandem, so that drop-off elements do not compromise the quality of the public space
6. Continue work to develop a clear vision, identity and role for the station area beyond the pure transportation benefits based on Wellington's community and economic needs. Incorporate this into masterplanning work

7. Capitalise on the opportunity to locate active uses, such as employment space, shops and/or community uses and homes close to the station, to make best use of the sustainable transport connections. Give particular focus to affordable and small work space
8. Carefully explore the potential for a road link over the rail line, to connect the areas to the south and north of the station. This is considered a critical piece of infrastructure for any development to come forward to the north of the rail line.
9. Explore the opportunity for contemporary architecture immediately around the station area that has regard for the commonality of station buildings across the country



NEW STATION DESIGNS
Network Rail and the Royal Institute of British Architects' (RIBA) competition identified designs for new, low impact stations. The winning scheme was by 7N Architects (image by 7N Architects).



COMMUNITY ROLE OF STATION BUILDINGS
A sustainable community, training and arts facility was incorporated into the railway station improvement programme at Burnham-on-Crouch



STATION BIKE HIRE
Brompton has bike hire lockers in 68 town stations across the country to support active travel





A TOWN ROOTED IN ITS SETTING

respectful of its productive and cultural landscapes of growing, craft and industry

Town related spatial priorities, projects and guidance

1. Review food production businesses and outlets - support farm shops within the town centre and at local farms and prevent these from being undermined by out-of-centre alternatives
2. Explore opportunities to expand the market offer in Wellington, working with local food and craft producers*
3. Identify spaces in the town centre and other strategic locations to support local food and craft based businesses - matching vacant units to micro-businesses and working with landlords

*Waste sites and facilities in Poole must be safeguarded when considering spaces for food, arts and crafts around Tonedale

4. Improve walking routes and wayfinding for accessible connections from the town centre to PROWs and surrounding villages and hiking trails
5. Retain and enhance Wellington's green corridors that connect neighbourhoods to the surrounding landscape
6. Explore the heritage, environmental, ecological, energy generation and amenity potential of the River Tone, its tributaries and infrastructure
- 7.

8. Growth related spatial principles and projects
9. Maintain the rural character of the A38 by ensuring that development doesn't span this and that a landscape buffer and planted bund is provided for any development to the north
10. Maintain the discrete setting of satellite villages surrounding Wellington, and avoid coalescence between these and Wellington
11. Take a landscape-led approach to neighbourhoods, shaped by the retention of historic hedgerows, mature trees, enclosed field boundaries, orchards and waterways and an appreciation of the cultural landscapes that these represent, drawing on landscape character assessments.
12. Use the vernacular of historic farm buildings and settlement forms for the design of new neighbourhood structures and buildings, including local materials such as clay, stone and timber



FOX'S FIELD
Wellington Mills CIC and Transition Town Wellington are restoring the fields as a wild flower meadow and forest garden, with pathways laid with material donated by local businesses. A food growing area will be established

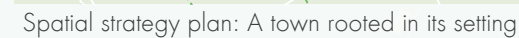
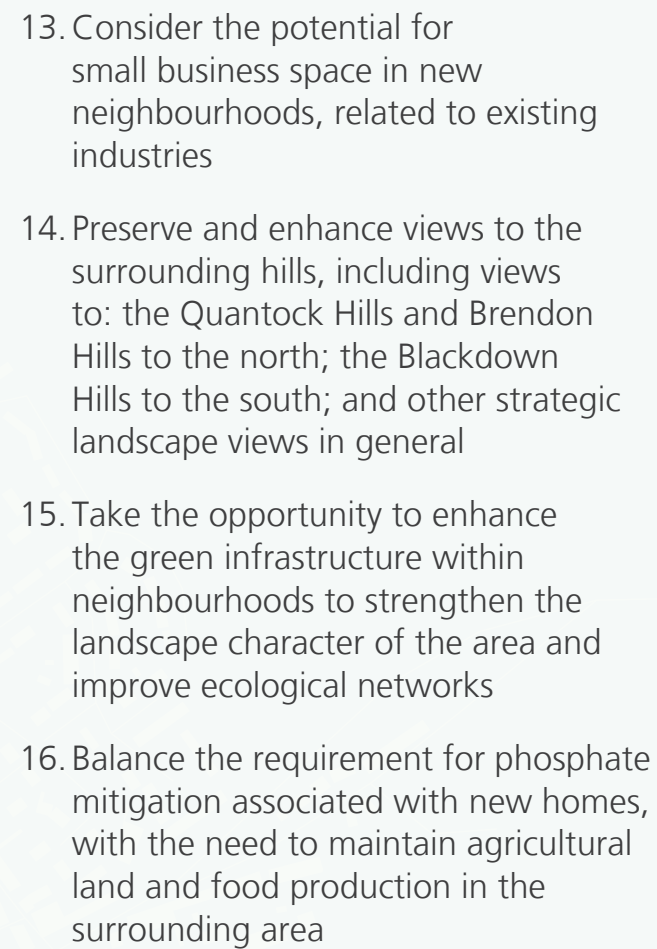


RIGHTS OF WAY
Nailsworth, Stroud walking and cycling track along old Midland rail route. Resurfaced recently using material mostly made from old tyres



WELLY'S FARM SHOPS
Wellington has a number of high quality farm shops, some of which are related to the surrounding landscapes and production





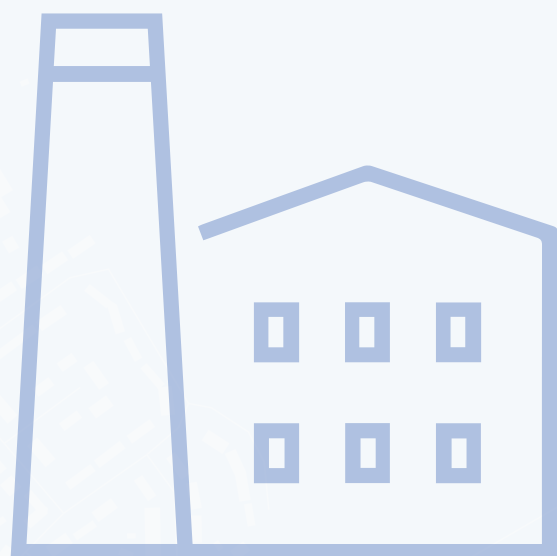


CELEBRATING OUR INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL HERITAGE

A town proud of its outstanding heritage and Fox Brothers legacy, re-imagining its old buildings and landscapes for the 21st century

Town related spatial priorities, projects and guidance

1. Continue to actively work with Historic England and seek funding for securing, conserving and renovating Tonedale Mills and Tone Works
2. Review opportunities for creative adaptive reuse of structures, with input from heritage professionals and local communities
3. Raise the profile of continuing craft businesses within the Mills and Tone Works and promote Wellington's identity as a centre for craft
4. Actively work with statutory bodies, landowners and partners to preserve and adapt empty town centre buildings within the Conservation Area
5. Review opportunities for maintenance, facade and shop front improvements to historic buildings within the town centre Conservation Area, including funding streams
6. Diversifying the town's economic base and supporting new industries by providing suitable space in the right locations at Tonedale and Chelston and understanding the employment and educational networks
7. Providing training opportunities in existing and new industries for local residents, including craft skills related to industrial heritage conservation
8. Understanding the balance of appropriate commercial uses that could be brought in to successfully use and support the space



KAMPUS, MANCHESTER
Two refurbished Grade II Listed warehouses, with new homes alongside and a pavilion structure linking these



ADA BELFIELD CENTRE, BELPER
Former Thornton's factory in Derbyshire, re-purposed as a residential care home and public library

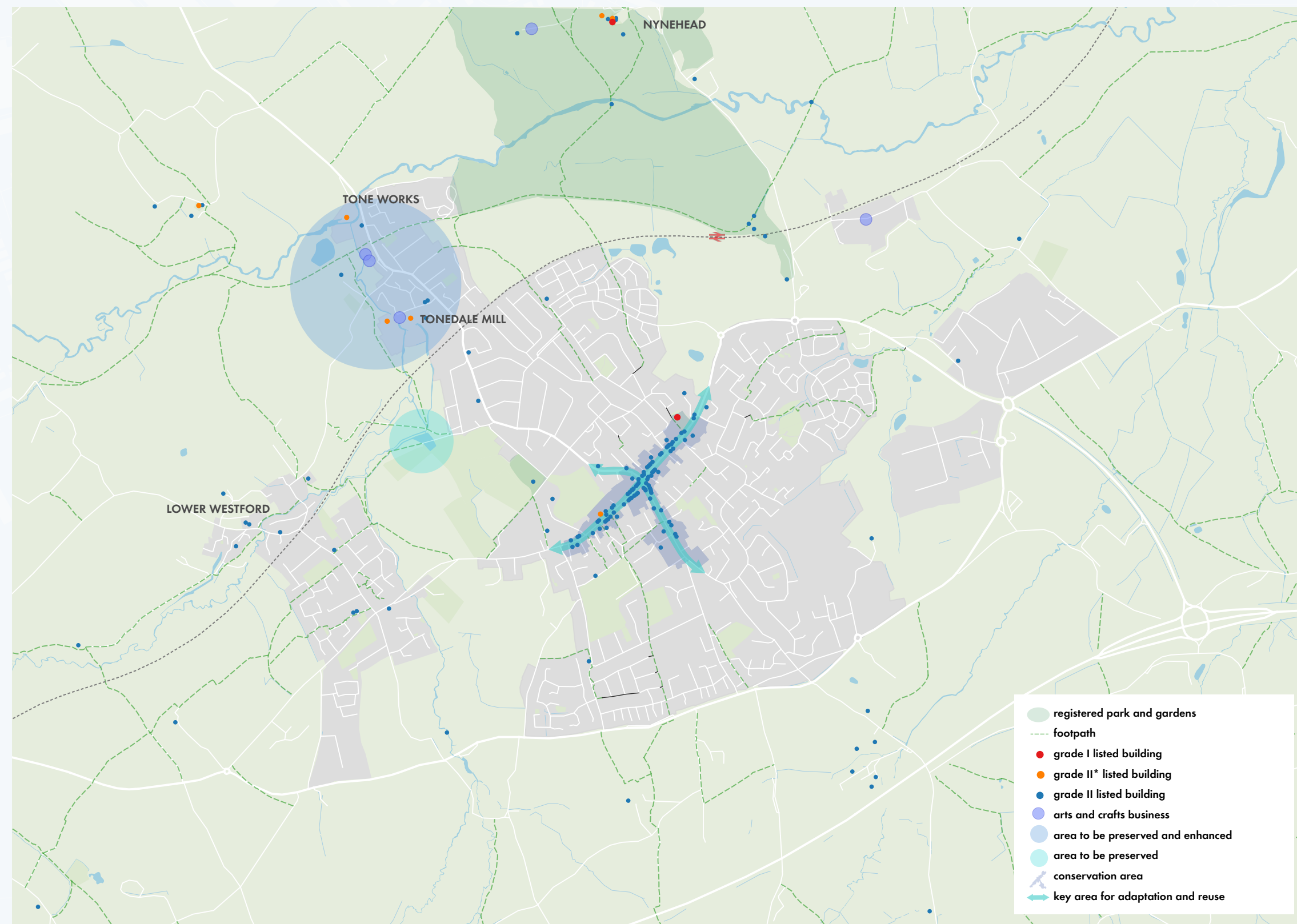


SHOP FRONT IMPROVEMENTS. DARWEN
A Townscape Heritage Initiative working with local landowners and retailers to refurbish historic buildings and improve shop fronts



Growth related spatial priorities, projects and guidance

9. Preserve and enhance the setting of Tonedale Mill and Tone Works and ensure that any future development does not compromise this
10. Take cues from Wellington's town centre Georgian heritage and workers cottages for new development, particularly within the existing settlement
11. Take cues from the mill vernacular and architectural detail of Tonedale Mill, Tone Works and other historic industrial buildings
12. Preserve the historic landscape of the Basins, avoid development unduly reducing this green corridor
13. Preserve and respond to historic boundary treatments such as stone, brick walls and wrought iron railings
14. Consider potential for energy generation on River Tone as part of wider opportunities for waterways



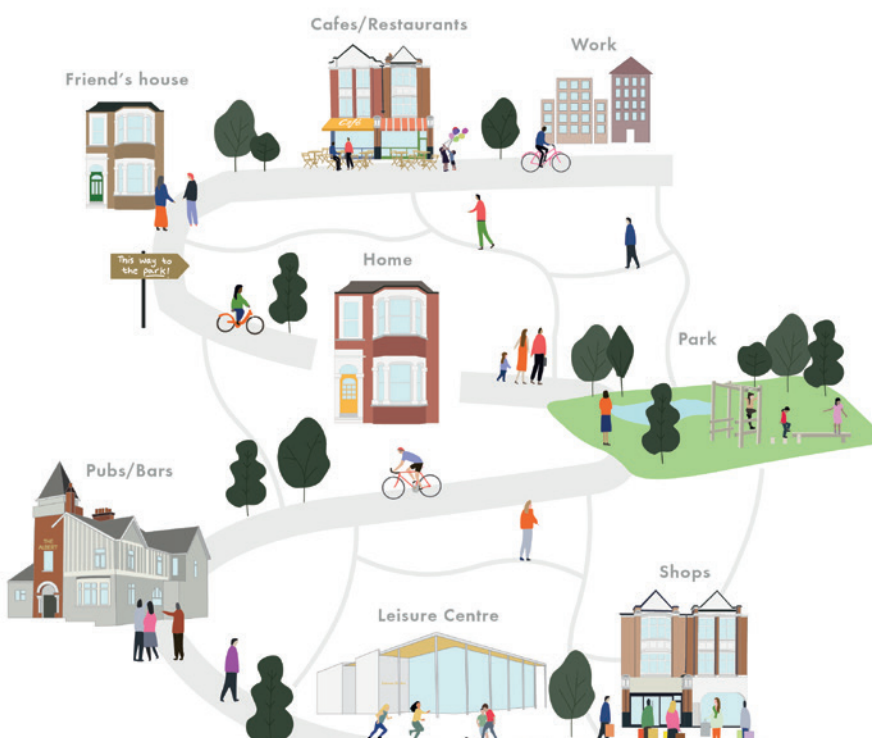
Spatial strategy plan: Celebrating our industrial and commercial heritage



A HIGH BAR FOR SUSTAINABILITY

A town which draws on its rich natural resources and local passion for a resilient future

Town related spatial priorities, projects and guidance



15 minute neighbourhood principles should inform projects in the town and design for any new neighbourhoods

1. Investment in and management of the Basins, Fox's Fields and Wellington's other green corridors to support ecological diversity and habitat continuity
2. A project to explore the environmental, ecological and energy generation potential of the River Tone and its tributaries (taking into account heritage and amenity considerations)
3. Protect existing allotments and identify sites for expansion of these and/or sites for new allotments and/or orchard trees
4. A retrofit first approach to sites with historic buildings, to preserve embodied carbon, particularly the substantial historic structures at Tonedale, which have huge levels of embodied carbon
5. Review opportunities for tree planting within the town (taking account of underground utilities) to help provide shade and drainage and improve air quality

6. Sustainable and active travel proposals based around the 15-minute neighbourhood concept (see theme 1)
7. A targeted approach to improving air quality in the town centre including promoting active and green travel options, and landscape measures

Growth related spatial priorities, projects and guidance

8. Any new development proposals must include an effective phosphate mitigation strategy and a flood management plan. These must be implemented as part of the scheme, to avoid permanent or temporary increases in phosphate loads to the site
9. New developments should consider appropriate opportunities to at least meet their own energy requirements as part of a zero-carbon target including through exploration of site-wide and communal solutions for both heat and power. Proposals should also help build awareness and capacity for community energy projects and provide a more direct and proactive role in enabling sustainable solutions (see Climate Neutrality and Climate Resilience Action Plan)



NEW FOREST WETLANDS
Cross agency and community working to restore stream network, flood plains and mires. The improved water storage reduces flood peaks and helps manage drought periods



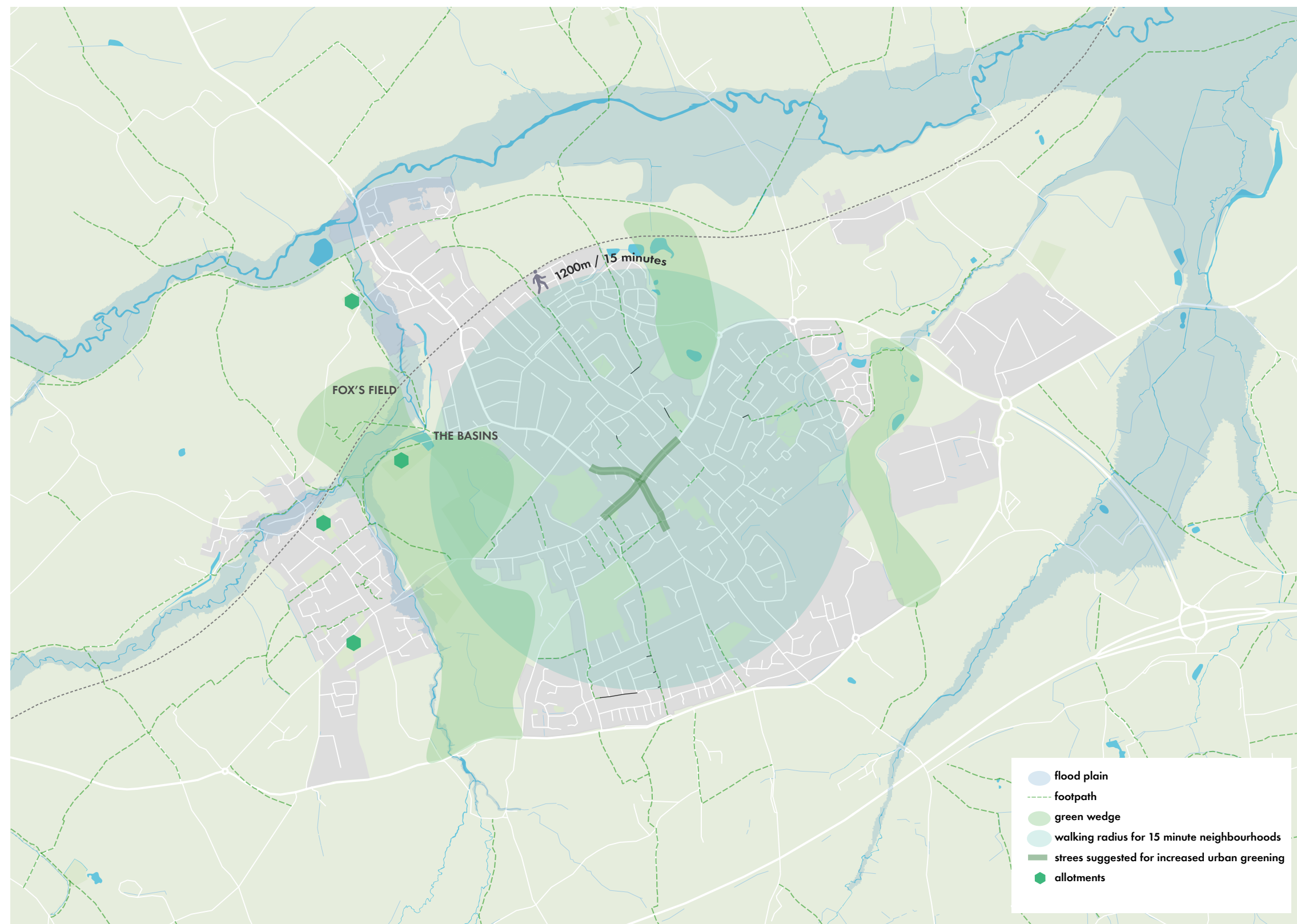
ALLOTMENTS
Cornwall Mind charity took on allotment plots in Falmouth to provide health and well-being benefits to members, as well as sustainability benefits



STREET TREES
Trees for Streets is a forum for local communities to crowd fund street tree planting, as part of the Trees for Cities charity.



10. New neighbourhood masterplans should include proposals for protecting and enhancing natural habitats, delivering at least 10% biodiversity net gain, aligning with the Ecological Vision and Action Plan and emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Somerset
11. New neighbourhoods must include food growing space such as allotments and productive tree planting
12. New neighbourhoods should be tree-lined for shade and drainage and have effective and attractive SuDS. The creation of managed wetlands should be explored at the masterplan stage
13. New homes should be designed to minimise energy requirements, through: building aspect; efficient form factor; and a fabric first approach
14. New developments will be supported by adequate consideration of and proposals for: water supply; foul drainage and sewage treatment facilities; and surface water drainage, including rain and grey water harvesting
15. New developments should consider use of traditional and local materials such as clay, cob and stone
16. Consider the installation of Tree Pits as a Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) feature to reduce surface water run off in urban areas



Spatial strategy plan: A high bar for sustainability



A WELCOMING TOWN AND CENTRE

for all at the heart of Wellington, which meets local needs and draws people in with its charming buildings, social spaces and varied activities and uses



Town related spatial priorities, projects and guidance

1. Continue to work with Historic England and engage with land owners, to invest in listed buildings and others within the Conservation Area (currently on HE's Heritage-at-Risk list) to ensure these assets are protected and enhanced. This will include the review of the Wellington Conservation Area Appraisal
2. Review vacancy levels (at ground and upper floors) within the town centre and work with the Town Council and business forums to match these to employment needs or establish them as homes
3. Explore the potential and associated funding opportunities to undertake a shopfront improvement scheme within the town centre conservation area
4. Continue to support and expand the regular market, to include the attraction of street food stalls and a seating area
5. Explore the potential of establishing a small town square in front of the former post office building on Fore Street. Undertake design work to support this
6. Review potential to improve key junctions and widen pavements in the town centre so they are more pedestrian friendly (see accessibility theme), particularly on school routes, such as the junction of North Street and Fore Street
7. Review and engage with evening economy businesses to support these and attract new businesses to the centre. Focus evening uses in clusters within the centre and invest in the public realm at these points
8. Establish community uses on the ground floor of the refurbished former Kings Arms pub and promote this
9. Review the potential for investing in and refurbishing the former Dolphin Pub as a community asset. This could include space for a Wellington youth club and potentially residential units above
10. Establish partnership working to promote the town's events programme, cultural assets and other activities and establish Wellington as a cultural centre
11. Develop a lighting strategy for the town centre that will improve the sense of safety and support events and activities
12. Develop small sites within the town centre to provide new, affordable homes. This could include retrofitting vacant historic properties. The 42 affordable homes delivered at Cornhill is a positive example
13. Retain key views out to the Blackdown Hills from the centre



FROME MARKET
The popular twice weekly market brings together local farmers, food producers and crafts people. A weekly antiques market sits alongside the food market



WIVELISCOMBE POOL
The Wivey community pool has charitable status and hosts many local exercise groups



STREET DECORATION
Festival decoration in Libourne, France, to decorate the street and complement events and activities

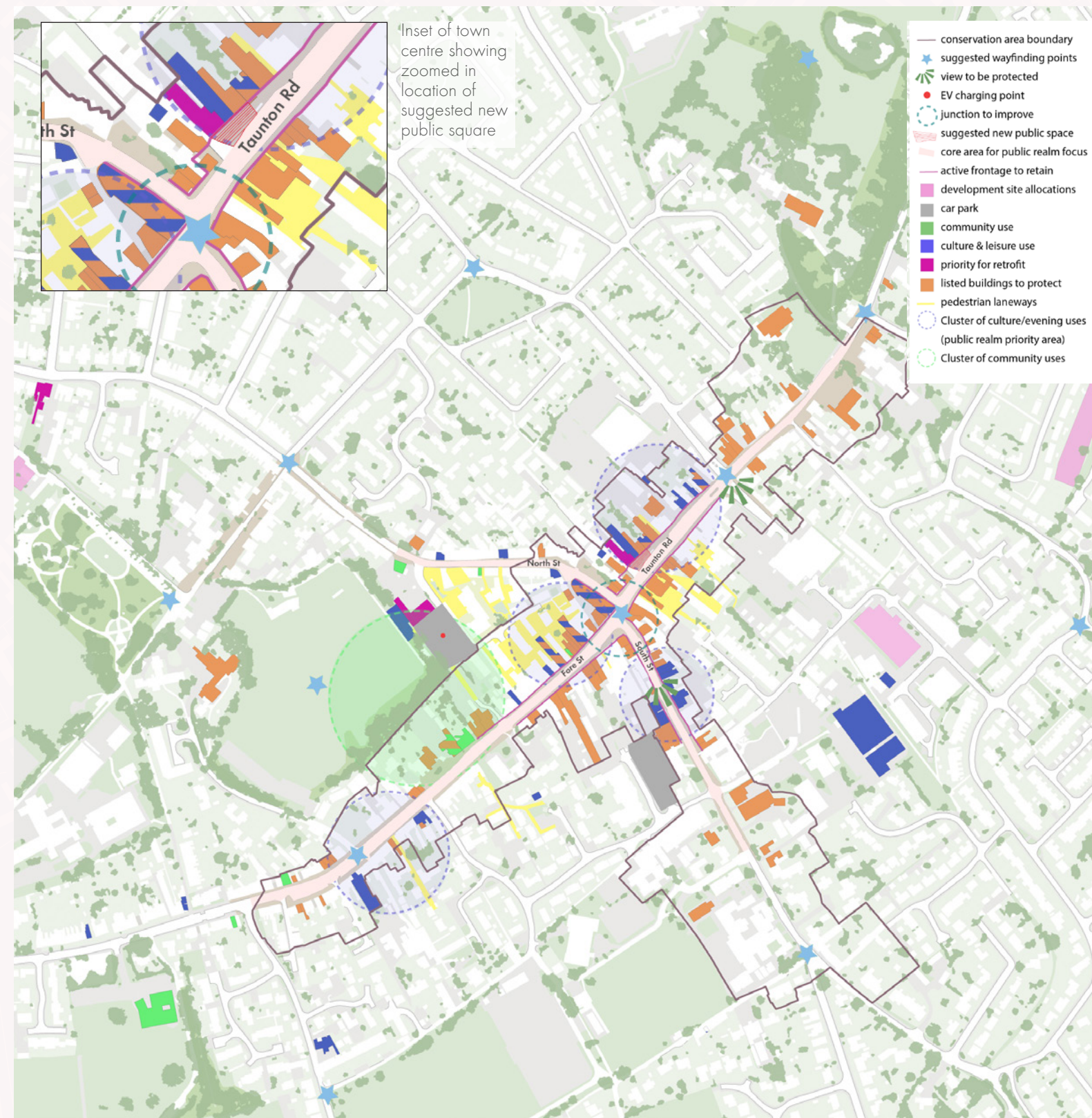


SHOP FRONT IMPROVEMENTS
A successful heritage economic regeneration scheme in Forest Gate, east London

14. Explore the potential for provision of recreational sporting facilities e.g. skate parks and other spaces for young people
15. Improve wayfinding and walking routes to community assets near the town centre (see accessibility theme)
16. Establish cycle infrastructure, such as parking and maintenance, within the town centre (see accessibility theme)
17. Review all options for tree planting and public realm enhancement within the town centre, taking account of constraints such as underground utilities, to provide greening, shade and drainage within the centre (see sustainability theme)
18. Establish a Town Centre Delivery Plan to bring forward the priorities identified within this theme, as a priority for Wellington's future success

Growth related spatial priorities, projects and guidance

19. Ensure that residents of new neighbourhoods have good access to community uses, such as GPs, dentists, nurseries and local shops. This could be linking with existing services and facilities or establishing dedicated new spaces
20. Do not establish a critical mass of uses that may compete with and undermine the town centre
21. Review opportunities for new town centre homes, to increase footfall at different times of the day and support existing shops and services
22. Locate active uses on the threshold of new and existing neighbourhoods to encourage integration between new and existing residents



Spatial strategy plan: A welcoming town and centre

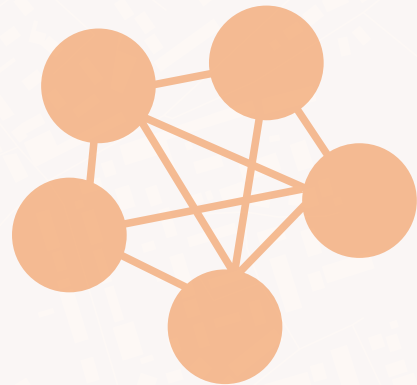


A RESILIENT TOWN

that can respond to economic and social shifts and provide good training and employment opportunities for residents and the local workforce

Town related spatial priorities, projects and guidance

1. Partnership working with major employers Relyon, Swallowfield and Pritex to understand their needs regarding employment space, accessibility and skills
2. Mapping of existing businesses, industries and supply chains to understand relationships and support fruitful connections between these
3. Forging links between local higher education institutions and employers, to help meet skills gaps and encourage graduates and school leavers to stay local and create a well-educated, well-trained, motivated workforce
4. Review opportunities for small business and co-working space in the town centre, to bring empty units or upper floors back into use, improve the town centre's resilience and provide space for micro-businesses
5. Establish Gigabit digital connectivity for existing and new homes and workspaces
6. Encourage business to operate using principles from the circular economy
7. Ensure that the town remains attractive to potential new investment and open to changing business models and technologies



Growth related spatial priorities, projects and guidance

8. Regeneration at Tonedale Mill and Tone Works as a major employment opportunity, informed by an employment strategy, with targeted businesses by size and industry, with supply chain and collaboration links explored. Mixed-use and co-working space as part of the mix
9. Specific training in heritage conservation and craft skills for local school leavers, to contribute to Tone Works and Tonedale Mill regeneration and establish local expertise in 'at risk' craft industries



HERITAGE CRAFT SKILLS TRAINING
Historic England partners with the Princes Foundation, Canal and Rivers Trust and SPAB to provide training for building conservation and craft skills



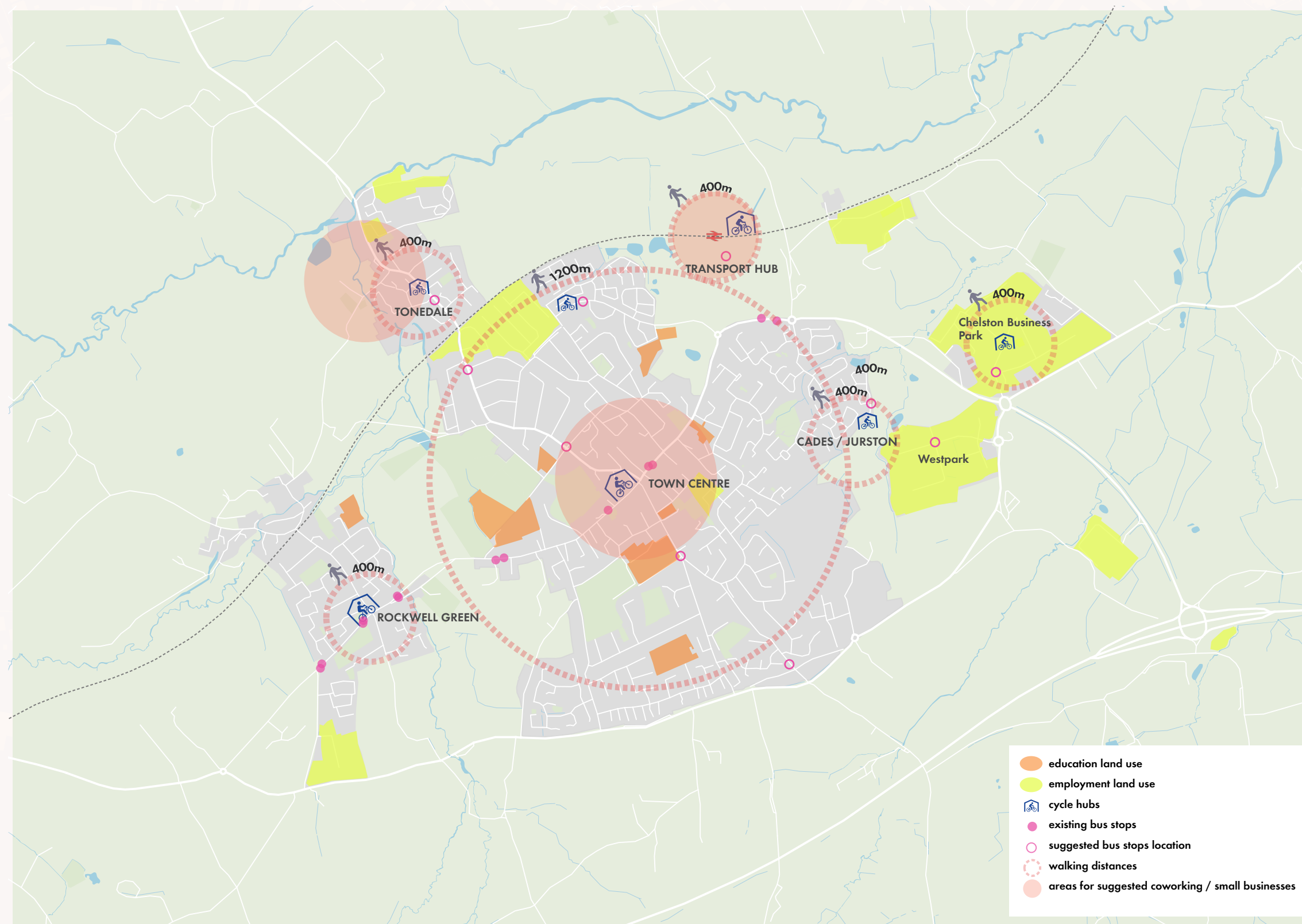
CO-WORKING SPACE
The Nook in Cullompton provides co-working space for micro businesses, with shared facilities and cafe to support collaboration



POP-UP SPACE IN VACANT SHOPS
The Mill in Walthamstow took two adjacent vacant retail units and turned them into a pop-up gallery and community space. The group actively invite community suggestions for how to use the space, with rotating activities



10. New, accessible workspaces at Chelston and Westpark business parks, with associated sustainable transport strategies and uses strategies to ensure these areas do not undermine the town centre's health. Other sites for employment growth will be considered as the Place Plan is taken forwards
11. Partnership working across the sub-region to support the growth of green economy industries through identified sites and business collaboration
12. Establishing work space and mixed-uses close to the new railway station, with careful consideration of the type of vehicle flows that different workspaces may generate. Opportunity for co-working space accessible by train
13. Provision of recreational space for young people for leisure activities and socialising
14. Development at Chelston, Westpark and Tonedale should use a Traffic Study to ensure that traffic around the A38 is not exacerbated
15. The 'agent of change' principle should be embraced with a view to protecting existing industrial activities in the event that new development comes forward in proximity



Spatial strategy plan: A resilient town

4 Growth scenarios



Growth scenarios

The Place Plan explores a number of potential growth scenarios across the Wellington area. These are organised geographically across the five key zones identified on the adjacent plan:

- Central;
- North and Tonedale area;
- Rockwell Green;
- East / Chelston; and
- South.

These areas have been defined following: a review of the evidence base; the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA); representations received through the Local Plan Issues and Options consultation; and the Place Plan engagement activities. Each area includes the following:

- Overview of constraints and opportunities;
- Summary of potential scenarios including an overview of considerations relating to: access; placemaking; land uses; environment; and a spatial plan illustrating the area.

The purpose of this section is to provide a more holistic understanding of how growth might be accommodated in different parts of Wellington, with an emphasis on how these potential growth locations might integrate with the existing settlement from a placemaking perspective. The new Somerset-wide Local Plan will consider potential site

allocations in more detail.

Area prioritisation

Three tiers are identified in terms of suitability from a broad placemaking perspective:

- Tier 1 is more suitable
- Tier 2 is suitable, subject to further detailed studies
- Tier 3 is less suitable

The area prioritisation takes into account further work/studies that will need to be done in order to mitigate impacts; or infrastructure that may be needed to accommodate growth in certain areas.

Specific consideration might need to be given, for example, to:

- Additional school capacity (development will need to be sustainably located for future residents to access schools)
- Cumulative affects on traffic and movements, for which a 'vision and validate' approach should be used to address this
- Flood risk areas in zones 2 and 3, which will be dedicated to blue-green infrastructure and not within the built development.

Subject to the planning policy process, it is anticipated that existing employment sites and designations would be protected for economic uses, finding opportunities for growth and other employment benefits.



Central

The existing Wellington settlement area can provide opportunities both for retrofitting existing buildings and for the redevelopment of brownfield sites.

These opportunities are considered priorities to protect greenfield sites surrounding the town and the Council will take a 'brownfield sites first' approach to development. However, available sites are likely to be small and constrained and so may need to be supplemented by development in the strategic areas surrounding the town.

Two sites have been allocated within the Local Plan, and vacant and underused buildings exist within the town that can also contribute to Wellington's housing, employment and community infrastructure needs. These are likely to come forward as individual sites, rather than to be considered as one strategic growth scenario, as is done for the areas surrounding the settlement.

Constraints and challenges

- Careful design is consideration is needed to respond to the existing (likely historic context), particularly in relation to listed buildings and/or the town centre conservation area
- Careful consideration is needed to avoid placing undue traffic pressure on existing streets within the town.
- Parking provision may be limited in the town centre area

Opportunities

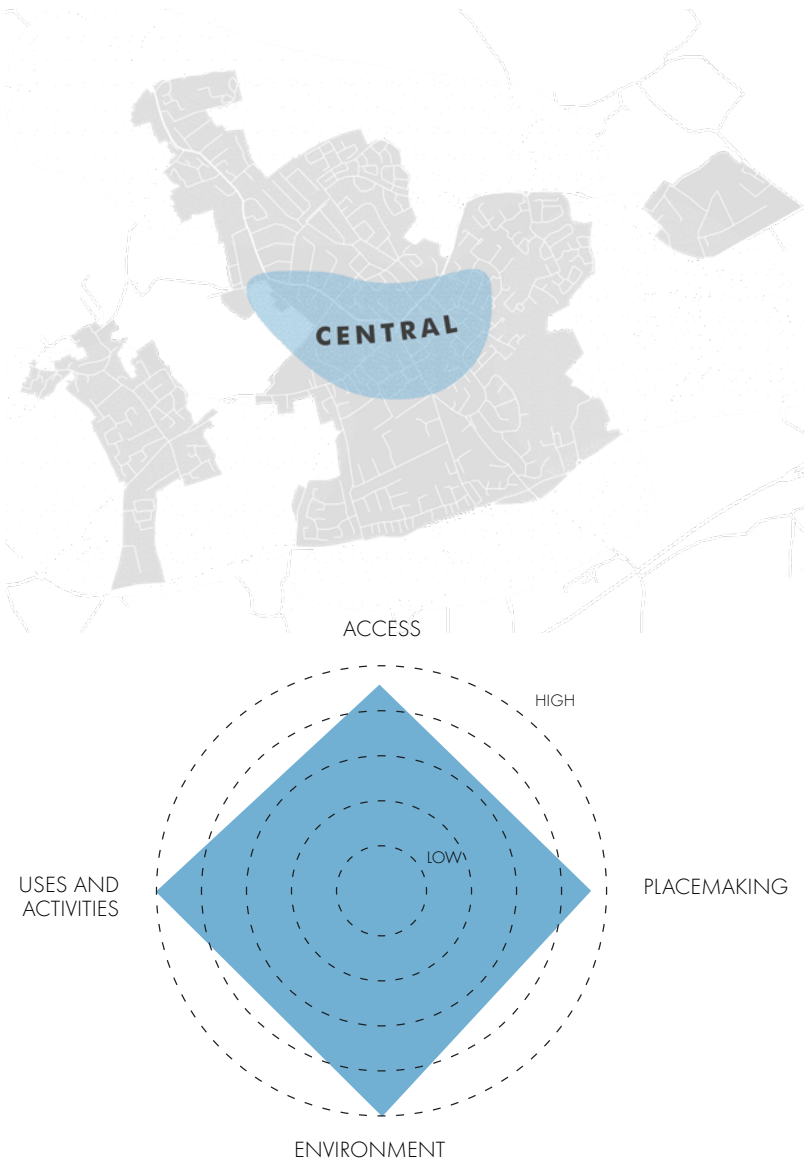
- Development would make good use of the existing street network and will not need significant new road infrastructure
- Development will support active travel and sustainable lifestyles, with shops and services in easy reach
- Existing shops and businesses will be supported by new residents living close by
- Vacant buildings can be retrofitted or refurbished, enhancing the townscape and retaining the embodied carbon within these buildings
- Vacant, underused land can be brought back into use, improving the townscape and

potentially mending the urban structure

- Greening can be incorporated into designs, to address the lack of greenery in the town centre and immediate surrounds. Surrounding greenfield sites can be retained in this approach

Prioritisation

The central area of Wellington presents a significant number of opportunities, with limited constraints and challenges. It is therefore considered 'more suitable' for development and a Tier 1 area.



North and Tonedale area

The northern area presents a good opportunity to develop in a sustainable way. The proposed railway station lies within this area, with the ambition of establishing a local centre surrounding it.

Homes in this area will be close to the station and Lidl at the eastern end; and Tonedale Mill, Tone Works and commercial uses at the western end.

The area is well connected to the PROW network, with walking and cycling links to the centre and out to the villages. It is also close to Sustrans cycle route 3, a leisure route, with connection to Taunton.

The area is bound either by the existing settlement or by clear natural boundaries of waterways and the perimeter to Nynehead.

The area is on low ground so will not be sensitive in terms of strategic views. However, proximity to Nynehead presents sensitivities. The nearby River Tone flood plain presents a valuable opportunity for a phosphate mitigation strategy. The River Tone will be the northern boundary to any development that happens in this area, to protect the landscape setting and avoid coalescence with the villages that lie north of Wellington. Design will also have to provide a sufficient buffer from the West Deane Way walking route.

Constraints and challenges

- Listed Nynehead Court historic park and garden sensitivity - significant screening would be required
- Keeping enough focus on the town centre - walking and cycling links need to be good
- Areas to the north of Tonedale are far from the town centre, proposed railway station and existing bus routes
- Areas to the north of Tonedale are not well connected to the existing settlement boundary - many promoted sites are bound by agricultural land
- Groundwater flood risk due to proximity of flood zones
- Landscape sensitivities and agricultural land classifications

Opportunities

- Opening of the railway station and proximity of this
- Tonedale Mill and Tone Works buildings as catalysts for growth, with roles within a local centre
- Close to main employers within the town (walking/cycling distance)
- Proximity of flood zone could support phosphate mitigation strategy

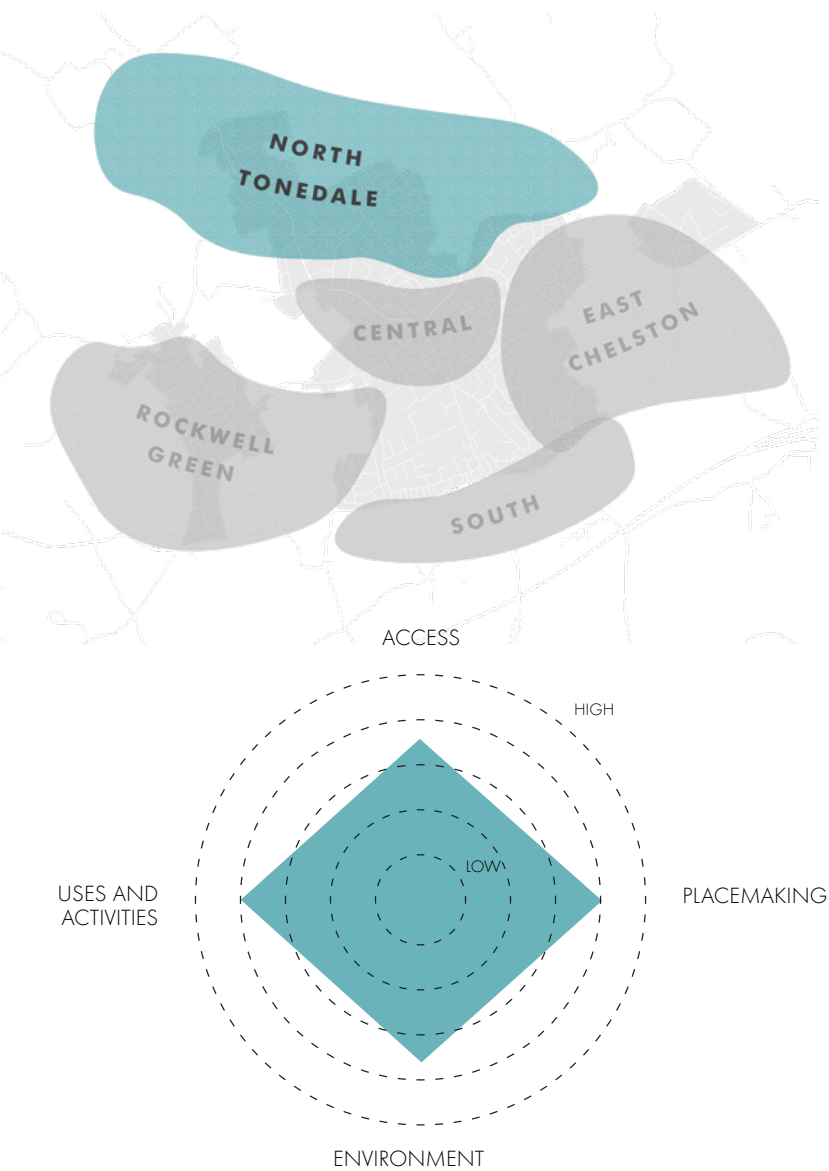
- Historic waterway/hedgerow and boundary of Nynehead can provide a clear settlement perimeter

Prioritisation

Station-led intensification to the south of the railway line presents a number of opportunities including: supporting the economic health of the town; and meeting sustainability criteria. It is considered a Tier 1 area.

Heritage-led regeneration around the Tonedale Mill and Tone Works area presents a number of townscape, heritage and environmental opportunities. It will require investment in the existing built fabric and sensitive additions. The technical constraints related to the heritage and waterways mean that these are considered Tier 2 areas.

The wedge to the north of the rail line has the potential to make best use of the proposed station, but environmental and access challenges exist. This area is, therefore, identified as Tier 2.



Station-led intensification

The area around the proposed railway station location presents a great opportunity for the town. To realise the potential of this major infrastructure investment, a sustainable transport hub should be established, with modal interchange, work spaces, homes and community uses.

The area can benefit from good active travel links to/from the town centre and establish a new local centre that supports the 15-minute neighbourhood principles and meets people's everyday needs.

SWT aspirations for a northern relief road remain, and this will be fundamental to facilitating development to the north of the railway line. In addition, a north-south link over the railway line close to the station would better connect this area and provide a more integrated neighbourhood.

USES AND ACTIVITIES

- + Potential for genuine, mixed-use cluster by railway station
- + Possible use of Tonedale area as local centre for western homes
- ? Residential neighbourhood focused north west of railway line
- ? Commercial uses focused south of rail lane (without new bridge)
- ? Impacts to Nynehead

*The Waste Water Plant is safeguarded by Policy DM5 in the Waste Core Strategy. No development should be in close proximity to the Plant.

+ Positive element
- Negative element
? Design consideration

ACCESS

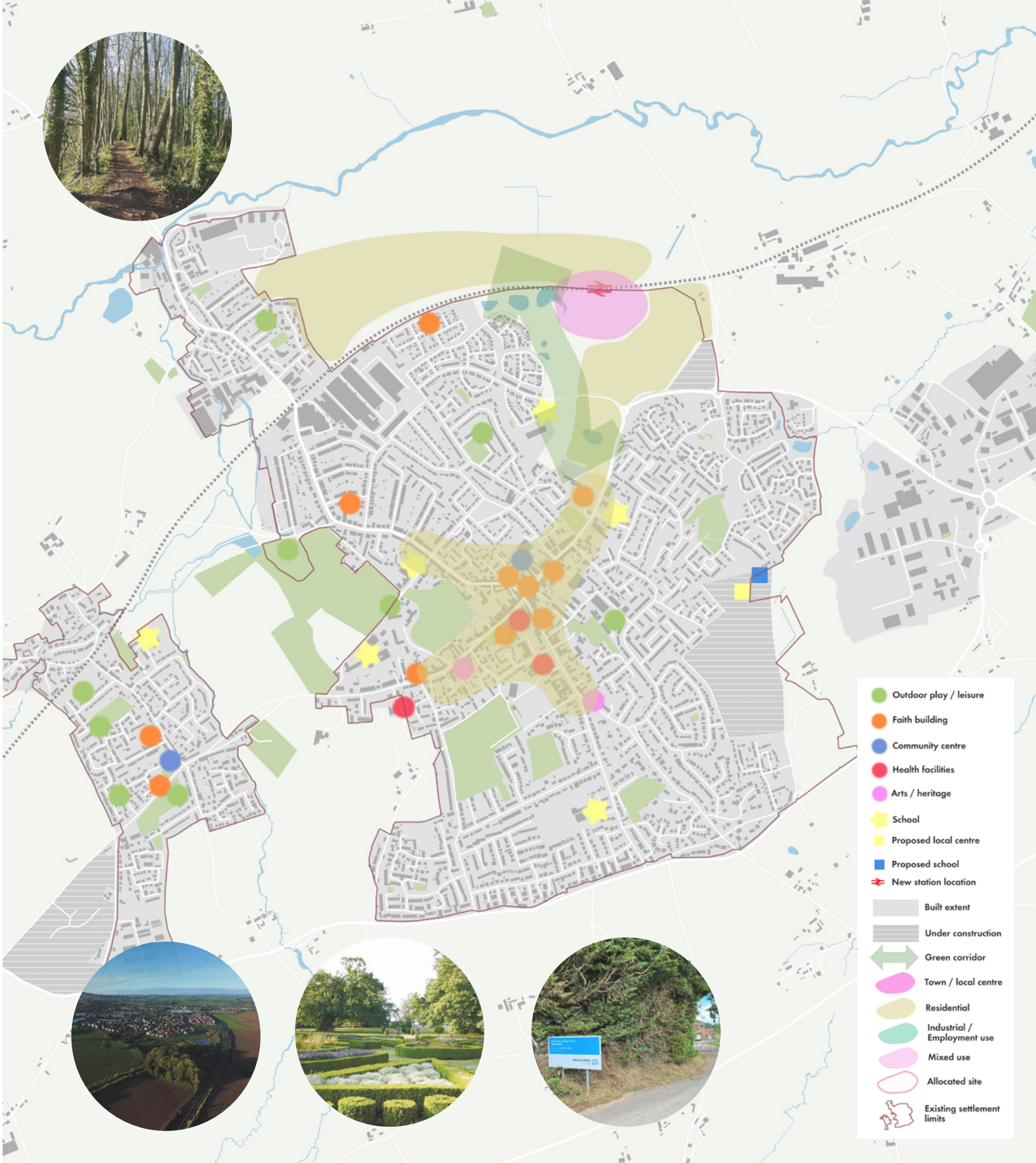
- + Railway station access
- + Close to the town centre
- + Good PROW links
- + Good links to strategic cycle network
- + Bus stops to the south
- ? Commercial access
- Residential access from west
- New rail crossing needed

PLACEMAKING

- + Low level land, so low visibility
- + Potential higher density at station area
- + Clear potential settlement boundary
- ? Edge conditions important - existing neighbourhoods, railway line and hedgerows
- ? Design cues from workers cottages and farmsteads?
- Possible severance from town due to rail line

ENVIRONMENT

- + Potential phosphate mitigation strategy and creation of managed wetlands
- Sensitivity close to Grade II Listed Gardens at Nynehead
- Proximity to / odour issues from the Waste Water Plant*
- Green corridor retained, but narrower than current policy position



Heritage-led regeneration

The Tonedale area presents a valuable opportunity to invest in the substantial heritage assets at Tonedale Mill and Tone Works and provide heritage-led growth and regeneration.

Potential exists to create a cluster of integrated micro-businesses. This could be done through retrofitting and creatively re-using the substantial historic structures. A focus on creative industries, craft and local food production would strengthen Tonedale as a local centre, without undermining the town centre.

The waterways in this area present an opportunity to holistically review the heritage, environment, amenity and energy generation potential of the River Tone and its tributaries. This includes the potential for a phosphate mitigation strategy. New homes and buildings could take design cues from the mills and workers cottages of the area.

The River Tone will form the boundary for development in Tonedale to avoid harming the landscape setting and villages north of Wellington.

USES AND ACTIVITIES

- ? Potential to strengthen Tonedale as a local centre
- + Scope for co-working and small business space
- Northern sites far from town centre

ACCESS

- + Good PROW links
- + Good links to strategic cycle network
- ? Bus stops close but more regular service required
- Strategic access through town centre

PLACEMAKING

- + Low land, low visibility
- + Potential for higher density close to mills
- Ambiguous settlement boundary for some sites
- ? Edge conditions important - fields, waterways
- ? Design cues from workers cottages and mills
- ? Poorly enclosed sites

ENVIRONMENT

- + Potential phosphate mitigation strategy
- + Opportunity for a holistic Waterways project
- + Fox's Field as a community asset
- + Direct connection into the Basins
- + Historic waterways and hedgerows

- + Positive element
- Negative element
- ? Design consideration



Rockwell Green

The south western edge of Wellington's existing settlement is very close to the town centre, with good access to shops and services on foot or by bike. Similarly, the area south of Rockwell Green is close to the village's shops and services. Both, therefore, present a sustainable option for growth and there could be different scales of intervention in this area.

However, the Basins and large green wedge is an important ecological and amenity space, with strategic views southward to the Blackdown Hills. This wedge should be retained with a minimum width (to be explored at the next stage).

Development here would have great access to green space and could help frame the space to make it feel safe and sociable - an issue raised for the town's existing green spaces.

- Waterways running through the area may constrain development but could present a valuable opportunity for a phosphate mitigation solution. Flood risk management, climate change and phosphate mitigation will need to be considered in further detail as part of the plan-making process, with reference to wider planning policy documents as appropriate.

Constraints and challenges

- Coalescence between Rockwell Green and Wellington
- Landscape sensitivity: Undermining of the Green Wedge, including land at the Basins purchased to provide access to open space, re-wilding and growing space
- Could interfere with strategic views from green corridor to southern rural areas on higher land
- Land to the south west could cause coalescence with smaller villages beyond (though WELL005 already under construction)
- Edge condition to development to rural land will be a key consideration
- Groundwater flood risk due to proximity of flood zones
- Some promoted sites not well integrated with the existing settlement - bound by agricultural land
- No clear perimeter for some sites
- Agricultural land classification
- Swains Lane and Wellington Basins Local Nature Reserve
- Rising topography

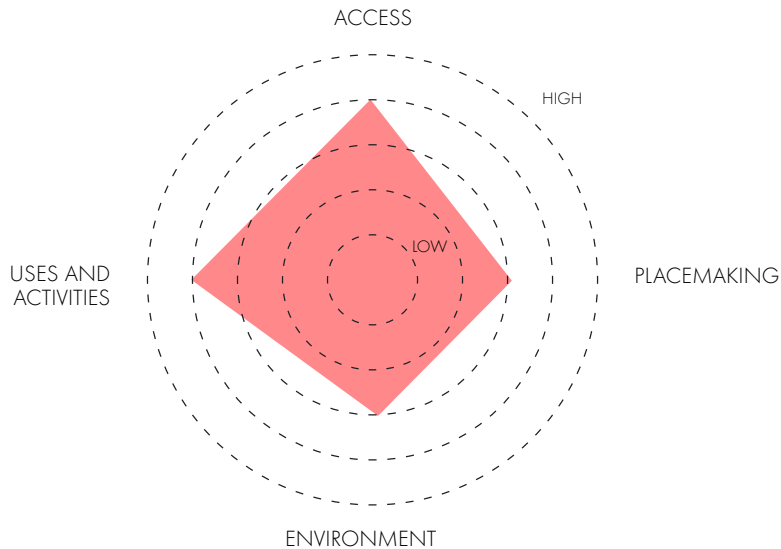
Opportunities

- Close proximity to Rockwell local centre could help support local businesses
- If a parameter is set that requires the green wedge to provide a minimum of 200m distancing between built development, sites either side could provide attractive framing of green space
- Potential to enhance existing walking/cycling routes to the town centre
- Proximity to flood plain could provide an opportunity for phosphate mitigation
- Historic waterway/hedgerow and boundary of Nynhead can provide a clear settlement perimeter

Prioritisation

The landscape-led neighbourhoods sitting between Wellington and Rockwell Green present opportunities for new homes in a high quality environment with decent access to shops and services, although any impacts on the green wedge will need to be very carefully considered. These areas are identified as Tier 2.

The western villages are in a far more sensitive landscape context and have far more limited access to shops and services. As such, they are considered Tier 3, less suitable for development.



Landscape-led neighbourhoods

The green corridor between Wellington and Rockwell Green represents an important gap between the two settlements, supporting their discrete nature, which should be maintained. However, scope may exist to provide new homes either side of this green corridor, with very good access to either the town centre or Rockwell Green's local shops and services. This could include a small mixed-use area, closest to the town centre.

These homes should be positioned and arranged to have regard to their settlement edge locations and more rural context, and treat the open space “break” between Wellington and Rockwell Green as a public park, with high quality recreational facilities and good connections with the surrounding pedestrian and cycle networks. These recreational facilities should include the provision of spaces for young people. Homes and streets would need to front onto the public park so as to optimise the surveillance of the area and provide a sense of safety for people using the space. Investment in the Basins could include expanded allotments and managed wetlands. A minimum width for the green corridor would need to be established, such as 200m.

Mixed use development will require a carefully considered design to ensure an appropriate approach when considering residential and industrial uses. The 'agent of change' principle will protect existing industry if new development comes forward.

- USES AND ACTIVITIES
- + Well served by town centre and Rockwell Green centre
 - + Potential for mixed-use development
 - ? Relationship between industry and homes

+ Positive element
- Negative element
? Design consideration

ACCESS

- + Good road access
- + Close to town centre - opportunity to improve walking and cycling links
- + Good PROW links
- + Bus stops nearby, to the north
- + Strategic access via A38

PLACEMAKING

- ? Undulating fields - some sites visible to the surrounding area
- ? Careful consideration of edge condition - can be positive but could also have negative impact
- ? Recent development suburban - careful consideration of vernacular
- ? Relationship with industry
- Danger of coalescence

ENVIRONMENT

- + Potential phosphate mitigation solution
- + Investment in the Basins
- ? How to balance ecology and amenity roles of green space
- + Direct connections into the Basins
- Proximity to flood zone



Western villages

The northern area here may present the opportunity for sensitive expansion of the village vernacular, taking cues from the historic buildings such as Georgian cottages and the old school house. However, the sensitive nature of the village context here and strategic views due to topography mean that the number of homes that could be achieved would be low and would need to be very carefully designed. This might suit a small, local developer or provide self-build opportunities.

The portion of land to the south of the railway line is on higher ground and may make unacceptable incursions on strategic views to the west, although the development immediately south of this may change the sensitivity of the context.

The gap between the site and the existing settlement also presents challenges in terms of integrating neighbourhoods and providing good access to services by walking and cycling. This is considered a more challenging site in terms of placemaking and sustainability.

USES AND ACTIVITIES

- ? Not too far from Rockwell Green shops, but walking and cycling routes need to be improved
- Far from the town centre and services
- Sensitivities may mean number of homes achievable is quite low for some sites

+ Positive element
- Negative element
? Design consideration

ACCESS

- + Good road access via A38 and through Rockwell Green
- + Bus stops nearby, to the south (for southern parcel)
- Bus stops far (for northern parcel)
- Far from town centre for walking (and possibly cycling)

PLACEMAKING

- On higher ground, so visible from surrounding areas
- Potential issue with coalescence with hamlets to west
- Gap between southern site and existing settlement
- ? Edge condition issues - existing neighbourhoods, fields, railway line
- ? Design cues from Georgian cottages and old school house

ENVIRONMENT

- + Flood zone 3 for part of sites, which would need to be avoided



South

The southern sites are located to the south of the A38 Oldway Road. Whilst they are located reasonably close to Swains Lane and to the Cades/Jurston neighbourhoods, recently under construction, the nature of the green corridor and the A38 mean the sites are rather isolated.

There are a number of significant constraints and challenges related to the sites. The elevated land and the strategic location between the town and the Blackdown Hills means that the sites will be highly visible and compromise important and valued landscape views. The busy A38, which serves as part of the Major Road Network, creates a strong boundary which prevents development to the south from integrating with Wellington in a sustainable way. For these reasons, the area is considered to be less suitable for development. No specific growth scenarios have been suggested at this stage.

Constraints and challenges

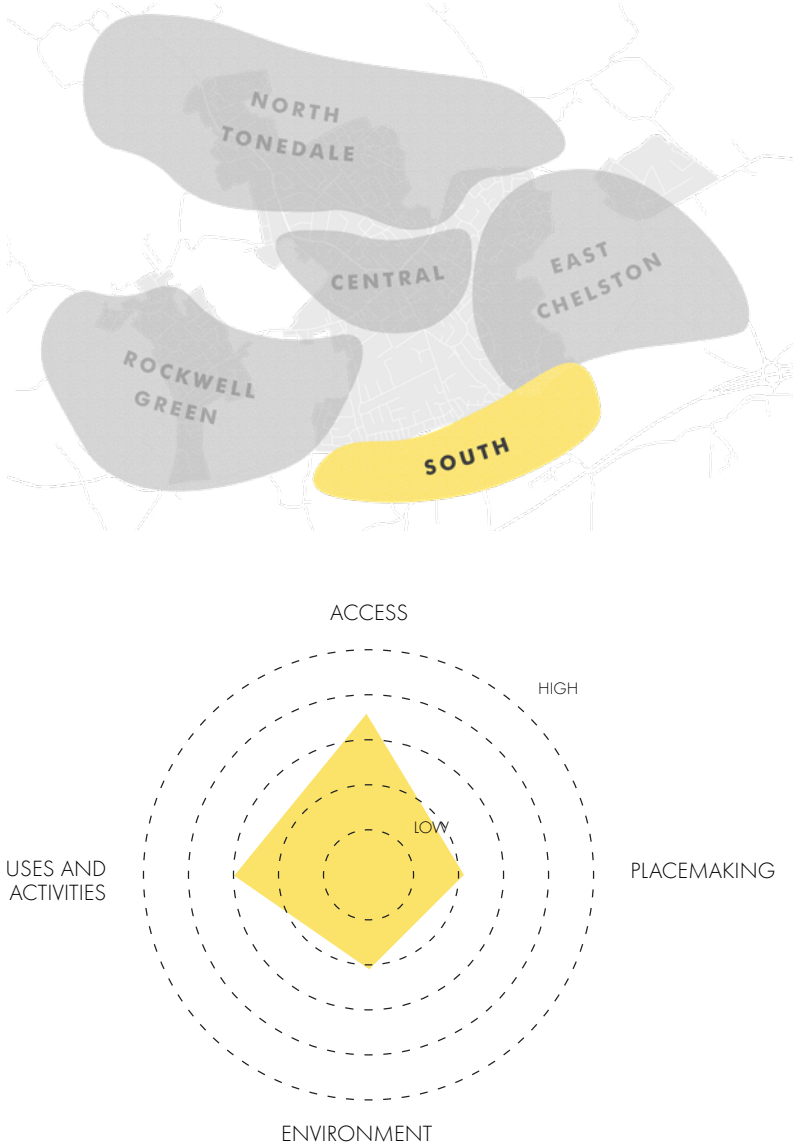
- Topography mapping shows that land is more elevated here and homes will, therefore, be more visible from surrounding areas
- The A38 provides a strong settlement boundary. Development to the south of this would be severed from the fabric of Wellington.
- The A38 is a key route with a rural character that supports Wellington's identity as a market town in a rural setting
- Any development to the north of the A38 should be heavily screened with tree planted buffer and bund
- Any development to the south of the A38 would likely compromise the rural character and unique identity of Wellington
- Location is far from the proposed railway station
- The southern part of the town is not well served by buses
- Not close to a local centre

Opportunities

- Historic PROWs could provide good walking links into the town centre
- Good direct walking links along existing road network

Prioritisation

The southern area presents a number of townscape and environmental challenges that will not easily be overcome and will not be close to local shops and services. It is therefore considered a Tier 3 area that is less suitable for development.



East / Chelston

The eastern area presents an opportunity to intensify and diversify employment uses and spaces for the town. The location means that industrial traffic will not flow through the town centre.

The area to the east of the green wedge could provide an element of residential development, given close proximity to: the Cades/Jurston local centre and new school location; the green wedge; and amenity space.

Historic plans show a village at the northern point of the area and the site is reasonably close to the proposed railway station.

Careful planning and design would be required to manage the relationship between any residential neighbourhoods and surrounding commercial/industrial uses.

The Chelston roundabout has existing issues with traffic flow and so a Traffic Study would be required to consider the impacts of further development.

Constraints and challenges

- Sites situated in Low Vale LCA
- Largely outside of flood zones with the exception of Foxmoor Business Park
- Greenfield sites have established field boundaries and hedgerow coverage
- Absence of heritage designations
- Existing employment sites and designations
- Existing green wedge proposal

- Groundwater flood risk due to proximity of flood zones
- Landscape sensitivities
- Development to be consistent with rural character south of the A38

Opportunities

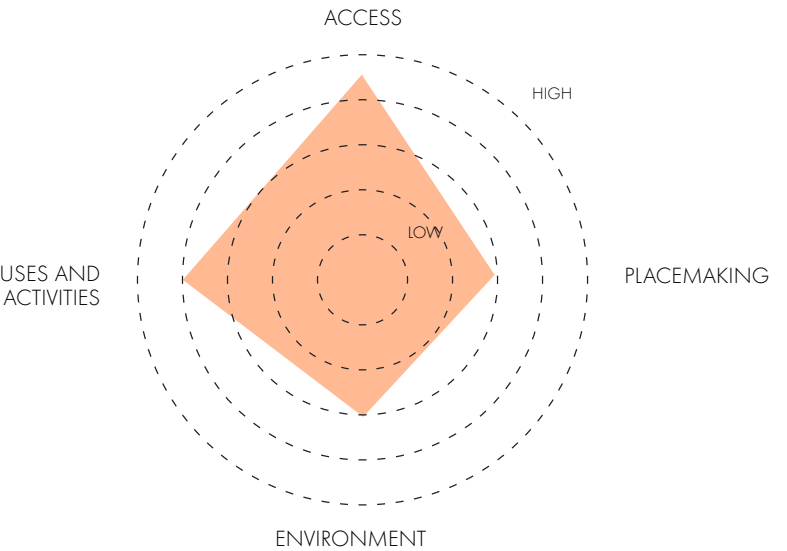
- Strengthen employment focus with Chelston benefiting from a satellite character with existing brownfield sites and roads forming a relatively coherent development extent
- Highly accessible via A38 and M5, avoiding industrial traffic traversing central Wellington
- Potential to introduce greater mix of uses
- Opportunity to strengthen destination for visitors to south west but not at expense of town centre

Relationship between sites

- Sites form two logical clusters: north of West Buckland Road, which has a more brownfield character focused around Westpark Business Park; and south of West Buckland Road / west of A38, which is more Greenfield.
- Existing development is largely employment based. Any deviation from this could undermine the current integrity of the Chelston area as a satellite to Wellington.

Prioritisation

Mixed-use and industrial intensification in the East/Chelston area could contribute positively to Wellington's economic base. The location, at the edge of the town, means that industrial traffic would not contribute to existing issues that the town centre currently faces in this regard. However, careful thought will need to be given to how this area can complement rather than compete with the town centre. Environmental and placemaking challenges also exist in terms of creating high quality residential neighbourhoods and the relationship between uses. This area is, therefore, considered Tier 2.



Mixed-use intensification

There is an opportunity to pursue an intensification of uses in the area close to Taunton Road and south of Westpark. This could include a mix of commercial space and homes.

This scenario would entail the intensification and diversification of Westpark for light industry and mixed commercial uses.

New homes could form part of this mix. Good access to the green corridor, local centre and new school at Cades/Jurston would need to be ensured, to align with the vision and objectives set out in the Place Plan. Any new homes must be a mix of types and tenures to cater for various needs, such as accessibility.

+ Positive element
- Negative element
? Design consideration

ACCESS

- + Good road access via A38 and Taunton Road - avoids town centre
- + Good direct walking/cycling to town centre
- + Bus route close by, potential for new stop
- ? Balance of commercial and residential access

PLACEMAKING

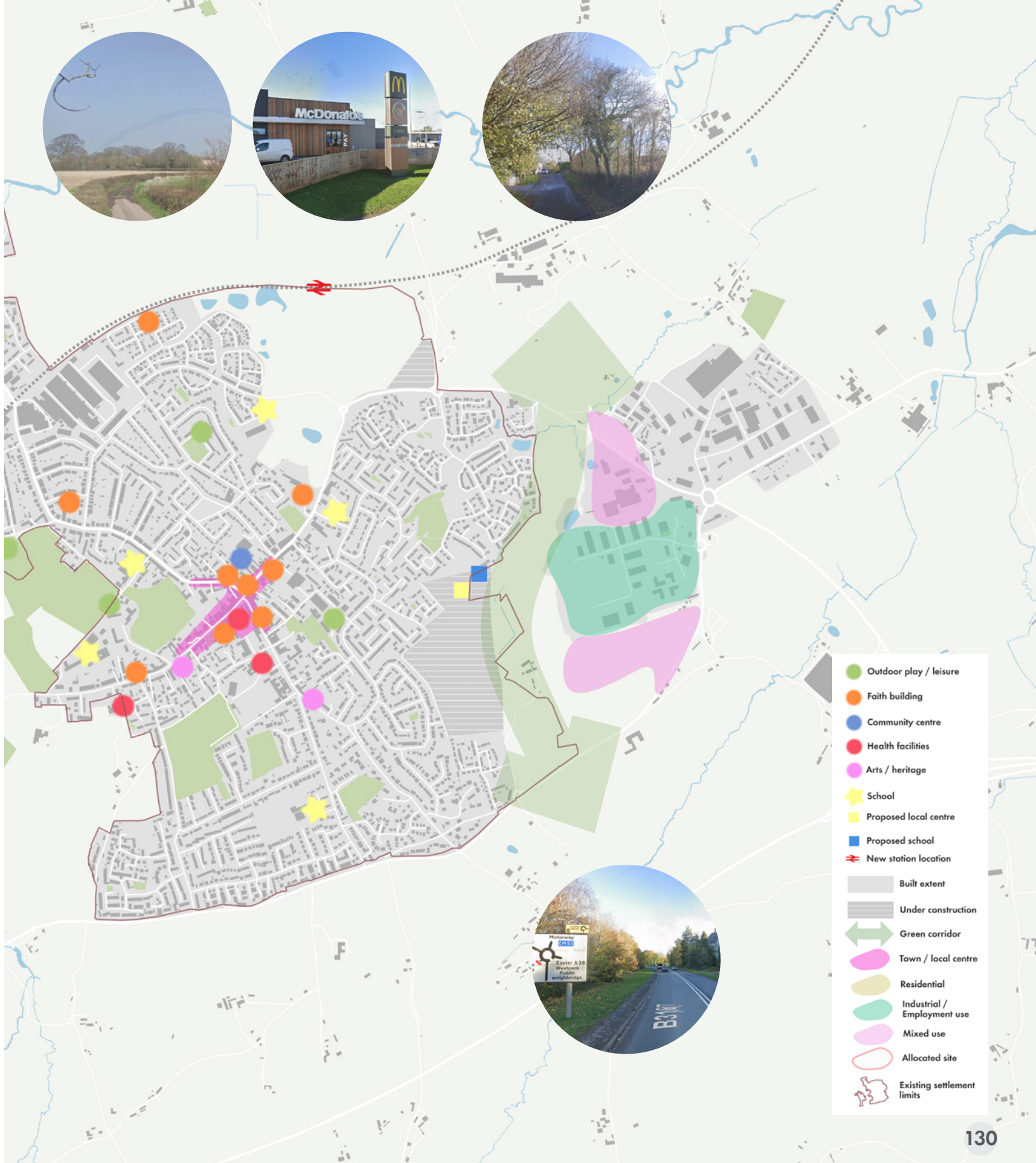
- Substantial buffer and screening needed from A38 to maintain rural lane character. Limited existing trees, so planting needed
- ? Need to consider relationship between residential and light industry
- ? Residential edge condition to green access could be very positive, but needs careful consideration

USES AND ACTIVITIES

- + Homes nearby could help support diversification of industry
- + Agglomeration amongst existing industry, without negative impact on town centre
- Far from the town centre

ENVIRONMENT

- ? Open views south to Blackdown Hills to be retained
- Archaeologically sensitive site at the northern end
- Some flood risk due to flood zone two relatively close by



Industrial intensification

Areas close to M5 junction 26 could be intensified for industrial activity as illustrated on the adjacent plan.

This approach has potential strategic benefits, as the location close to the motorway might limit the volume of additional commercial traffic entering the town centre.

Part of the area is already allocated for industrial / employment use. This additional complementary area could support critical mass, potentially as a later phase of growth.

It is important to highlight that any commercial uses in this location should not compete with the role of the town centre. It is considered that any residential development here would be too isolated and car focused.

- + Positive element
- Negative element
- ? Design consideration

ACCESS

- + Good road access from M5
- + Bus route close by, potential for new stop
- ? Impact on Chelston roundabout would need to be assessed

PLACEMAKING

- ? Relationship with Taunton Road to be carefully considered, as arrival point to Wellington
- ? Also consider homes to the south, adjacent to the A38, frontage should be towards green space and not onto the road

ENVIRONMENT

- Part of site in flood zone 3 - to be avoided

USES AND ACTIVITIES

- + Agglomeration amongst existing industry without negative impact on town centre
- ? Uses must not compete with town centre commercial activity



5 Next steps



NEXT STEPS

Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT) has prepared the Wellington Place Plan as a material planning consideration for the preparation of masterplans, pre-application advice, assessing planning applications and any other development management purposes within the area of the Plan.

New Somerset-wide Local Plan

1 April 2023 marks the beginning of a new unitary council for Somerset, replacing the previous two-tier system of county and district councils.

Given these time-scales and the numerous stages in Local, Mineral and Waste Plan preparation, the existing councils (including Somerset West and Taunton Council) will therefore no longer be progressing new plans through the statutory process based on their individual geographies. Existing county and district councils are working closely to scope the content and time-scales for new Development Plan(s) to be prepared in the future as part of the single unitary council. This includes ongoing work to progress and align key evidence base documents. Relevant documents, including an updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) for the new Somerset Council will be published in due course as the councils work through the transitional arrangements.

This means that although Somerset West and Taunton Council is no longer pursuing the Local Plan Review 2040, consulted upon in 2020, the information gathered through the Wellington Place Plan consultation and evidence base will inform the Development Plan(s) for the new Somerset Council. The Wellington Place Plan will also inform the evidence base for new policies and allocations in the Development Plan(s) for the new Somerset Council.

Delivery focus

At a town-wide scale the delivery programme for the Place Plan will be coordinated and led by SWT. SWT's role will be to establish and lead the governance structure, undertake direct activities and infrastructure projects, and coordinate activities undertaken by the private sector and third sector.

Action plan

SWT has prepared an Action Plan which will establish a delivery focus on the priorities and principles in the Place Plan. The Action Plan is set out in the Appendix to this main document.

The Action Plan contains a list of potential actions to realise the vision and objectives set out in the Wellington Place Plan. The time-scales for delivery will be kept under review and align with the new Somerset-wide Local Plan, once adopted.



Accessibility: Designing the public realm (including streets and spaces) and buildings in a way which is inclusive for all people, including those with physical, sensory or cognitive impairments.

Blue Infrastructure: Blue infrastructure usually relates to urban water infrastructure, including ponds, lakes, streams rivers and storm water provision.

Buffer: A buffer is a landscape feature used to protect a sensitive area from the impacts of development .

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): The Community Infrastructure Levy (the ‘levy’) is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area. It is an important tool for local authorities to use to help them deliver the infrastructure needed to support development in their area.

Convenience Retail: Retail stores selling everyday essential items, such as food and newspapers.

Development: Development is defined under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as

“the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or other land”.

Efficient form factor: The design of a building that is compact and minimises the number of external walls and therefore the amount of heat loss. For example, terraced homes have a more efficient form factor than detached houses.

Evidence base: An evidence base is the evidence that any development plan document, especially a core strategy, is based on. It is made up of the views of stakeholders and background facts about the area.

Fabric-first approach: A sustainable construction strategy that uses energy efficient building materials that minimise heating requirements and local materials with short supply chains.

Greenfield: Land which is yet to be developed.

Green business: An enterprise that has minimal negative impact or positive effect on the environment, community, society or economy.

Green corridor: A strip of land which enables wildlife to bridge habitats in an urban environment which might otherwise be separated by roads or development.

Green Infrastructure: ‘Green infrastructure’ is a term used to describe the network of natural spaces and corridors in a given area. Green infrastructure assets include open spaces such as parks and gardens, allotments, woodlands, fields, hedges, lakes, ponds, playing fields, coastal habitats, as well as footpaths, cycleways or rivers.

Green wedge: An open area around, and between, parts of settlements which maintains a distinction between countryside and built-up areas. They help to prevent coalescence of adjacent settlements and also have potential to provide areas for active travel, recreation and other functions.

Infrastructure: A collective term for services such as roads, electricity, sewerage, water, children’s services, health facilities and recycling and refuse facilities.

Listed Building: Buildings and structures which have been identified by the Secretary of State for National Heritage as being of special architectural or historic interest and which are subject to the law to ensure their protection and maintenance.

Material consideration: A material consideration is a matter that should be taken into account in deciding a planning application or on an appeal against a planning decision.

Meanwhile Use: Meanwhile use of a space refers to the short-term use of temporarily empty buildings or public realm, often during a redevelopment.

Section 106 Legal Agreements (S106): These are legal agreements between Local Authorities and developers; these are linked to planning permissions and can also be known as planning obligations. Section 106 agreements are drafted when it is considered that a development will have significant impacts on the local area that cannot be moderated by means of conditions attached to a planning decision..

Sustainable Drainage Systems: Sustainable drainage systems or ‘SuDs’ are drainage solutions that provide an alternative to the direct channelling of surface water through networks of pipes and sewers to nearby watercourses. By mimicking natural drainage regimes, SuDS aim to reduce surface water flooding, improve water quality and enhance the amenity and biodiversity value of the environment.

Third sector: The 'third sector' is a term that covers a range of different organisations with different structures and purposes, belonging neither to the public sector nor to the private sector. This could include the voluntary sector, non-governmental organisations, or non-profit organisations

Vernacular: The architectural equivalent of local dialect, so that a building reflects the design of historic local structures and uses local materials.

Workspace: A flexible workspace, or 'workspace' is an umbrella term to define a work place solution that is rented on a flexible lease term. It can take multiple forms, including co-working, serviced offices, makerspace, Incubators / Accelerators etc.

15-minute neighbourhoods: The 15-minute neighbourhood is a concept of local living, illustrated in the graphic on page 95. The concept is to promote sustainable and self-sufficient places, where access to 'daily services' such as schools, doctors, public open space, local transport, shops, employment are within a 15 minute walk or short cycle. The 15-minute neighbourhood serves as a principle

for development and urban life that makes life more liveable for residents, by improving air quality and making neighbourhoods safer, quieter, more diverse, inclusive and economically vibrant.

