

Consultation Draft October 2016

Weston-super-Mare Town Centre Regeneration DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)



Living, Learning, Lifestyles



FOREWORD

"Weston-super-Mare town centre is undergoing an exciting period of change and renewal, and attracting significant new investment, as the council's ambitious regeneration plans begin to take hold. Confidence in the town is gathering real momentum, with numerous pivotal sites now having been unlocked for development which together will transform the town centre.

We recognise that Weston presents particular challenges to developers. We are addressing these, changing the investment landscape and presenting Weston as an attractive and immediate prospect in which to invest. This SPD makes clear our new expectations which support, encourage and incentivise investment in good quality development.

To ensure that development meets our vision for the future of the town centre, as well as the needs and aspirations of our existing communities, clear guidance on planning is needed. The SPD will help deliver the regeneration programme set out in the **Prospectus for Change** which is characterised by ambition and economic growth and will see Weston repositioned as a thriving place to live, learn and spend leisure time with a vibrant cultural offer.

It also sets out a series of inter-related strategies which look at how these ambitions will be realised including through quality housing provision, travel and movement and an improved public realm. It details how we can most effectively value the distinct character and historic fabric which parts of the town benefit from.

The SPD provides a framework for co-ordinated and focussed investment that will raise the quality of the built environment and create new homes and jobs in the heart of the town centre. To deliver these changes the council is committed to working with public and private sector partners to ensure high standards of design are achieved which raise quality, maximise investment and help the town to realise its full potential."

Cllr Nigel Ashton, Leader of the Council
Mike Jackson, Chief Executive



Nigel Ashton
Leader
North Somerset Council



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Chief Executive
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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In March 2015 North Somerset Council published the Prospectus for Change. This document sets out ambitious plans for the town centre to create a lively university town where people want to live, learn and spend their leisure time. The vision aims to deliver a stronger, vibrant and prosperous town centre better equipped to deal with current and future challenges. The themes of living, learning and lifestyle form the focus of town centre regeneration, with the aim of attracting more people to live in and visit the town centre, increasing footfall and vitality. The ambition set out in the document gained wide spread support.

1.2 Policy

The principle of regenerating and revitalising the town centre is established in Core Strategy Policy CS29: Weston-super-Mare Town Centre which identifies the town centre as a focus for development. The adopted Sites and Policies Plan: Part 1 sets out the policies for development management issues including detailed retail policies to support a town centre first approach for shopping, a more focussed primary shopping area and introduces greater flexibility regarding uses in the primary shopping frontages. The Site Allocations Plan Consultation Draft (March 2016) sets out the town centre regeneration area and proposes that a supplementary planning document (SPD) will establish a masterplan and delivery strategy in order to support its implementation. A report to the Executive in April 2016 set out the overarching principles and priorities for the SPD.

1.3 What is a supplementary planning document (SPD)?

Supplementary planning documents are:

'Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design.

Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.' (National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Annex 2).

The Weston Town Centre Regeneration SPD;

- Sets out a Masterplan to guide future planning of the town centre.
- Identifies the key development sites and infrastructure projects which the council are proposing.
- Helps to remove barriers and positively encourage investment.

The SPD sets out the principles and overall plan for this area. It is to be used as guidance and can be material to the determination of planning applications. It will guide development but cannot foresee all potential opportunities. Indeed, in many instances flexibility to respond to innovative solutions and changing circumstances will be required.

The document is structured as follows:

Section 1 sets out the how the themes of living, learning and lifestyles will be the focus for regeneration.

Section 2 contains the masterplan, identifies the main development sites, the movement strategy, areas of open space and greening, heritage and design principles and character areas.

Section 3 details how the main proposals will be delivered.

1.4 Plan area

The area within which the SPD will apply is the town centre regeneration area as set out in the Site Allocations Plan Consultation Draft March 2016. Figure 1 illustrates the area. Whilst the guidance set out in this SPD applies within the designated area, regeneration and restoration is not limited to this. The renaissance of the Tropicana and potential restoration of Birnbeck Pier will contribute to the overall regeneration aims. Links with the area beyond the town centre by promoting access to the wider landscape are required as well as measures aimed at encouraging residents living in the suburbs and further away to use the town centre.





1.5 How the guidance has been formulated

The guidance has been informed by the responses received to the Prospectus for Change, work commissioned from LDA Design, advice from Historic England's Urban Panel and other specialists.

1.6 Consultation and adoption

Consultation will take place on this draft for 6 weeks, closing on 12 December 2016.

The response to consultation will be assessed, a consultation statement will be prepared and amendments proposed to the SPD as appropriate. It is anticipated that the SPD will be adopted by the council in the New Year 2017.

Visit www.n-somerset.gov.uk/wtccconsultation to comment online.

Alternatively you can send your comments to:

Planning Policy and Research
PP15, North Somerset Council
Walliscote Grove Rd
Weston-super-Mare
BS23 1UJ

or

email: planning.policy@n-somerset.gov.uk



OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

- To significantly increase the number of people living, working and making use of the services and cultural offer in the town centre.
- To improve the quality of the offer and positively change perceptions about how and when people use the town centre.
- Kick-start regeneration by making direct interventions and taking a supporting and enabling approach to delivery of growth in the town centre.

PRIORITIES

- 1 The provision of at least 1000 new homes, aimed mostly at home owners, to rebalance the tenure structure in the centre.
- 2 The regeneration of underused brownfield sites in a priority zone stretching from the railway station to the seafront, mainly for residential use, with significant public realm improvements including a tree lined boulevard along Station Road, Walliscote Grove Road and Carlton Street.
- 3 To prioritise quality design solutions which respect, respond to and utilise the heritage of the town and which achieve high quality contemporary housing and public space specifications.
- 4 Define character areas throughout the regeneration area which set clear design guidance for future development.
- 5 Support and encourage owners of existing groups of prominent or heritage buildings in poor repair to carry out coordinated improvements, such as those carried out at The Centre in July 2016.

- 6 Managing traffic to create a core area that provides priority to pedestrians and cyclists, shared space schemes, quiet ways, with safe, attractive, and convenient parking for residents and visitors and delivering a cycle-friendly town.
- 7 Delivering a greener and more sustainable town centre, with a coordinated high quality public realm that enhances the town's character, provides relaxation areas and pedestrian corridors linking key destinations, integrating planting, trees and SuDS.
- 8 Improving the links between the seafront and the town centre, in particular the improvement of Regent Street as one of the prime pedestrian routes.
- 9 The reconfiguration of Alexandra Parade as a transport interchange and high quality public space, reducing through-traffic and providing a central hub point for information and access into the town centre and train station.
- 10 The improvement of Town Square as a key leisure and event space.
- 11 Focussing the retail offer into the prime shopping area and prioritising improvements to the High Street whilst supporting innovation/specialist outlets.
- 12 Expanding primary school provision including a safeguarded school site or premises.
- 13 Delivering a smarter town by integrating digital uplift and infrastructure provision.

Table 1 Overarching principles and priorities agreed at April Executive 2016



SECTION 1

LIVING LEARNING AND LIFESTYLES

BACKGROUND

The themes of living, learning and lifestyles were identified in the Prospectus for Change as the main focus for bringing about the regeneration of the town centre. Each of these are considered in turn, setting out the main opportunities, issues and requirements for new development.

LIVING

2.1 Encouraging more people to live in the town centre

Encouraging more people to live in the town centre is fundamental to the vision for the town centre. This will need to be of significant quantity if it is to have an impact on shops and services and bring about the change in vitality the centre needs. This SPD sets out three new major mixed use development sites where the council and its partners are proposing new homes;



Station Gateway – this could be up to 500-600 new homes

Dolphin Square – in the region of 220 homes

Walliscote Place – approximately 70 new homes

Additional redevelopment opportunities, conversions and smaller sites are also anticipated to come forward as momentum builds. The SPD aims to **incentivise developers and investors to bring forward high quality residential schemes** by demonstrating what can be achieved, carrying out infrastructure improvements and proposing that, for a limited period, developments under 250 residential units throughout most of the central area will not be subject to financial contributions towards cumulative infrastructure provision (Section 106/CIL contributions) or affordable housing provision. Full details on infrastructure delivery are set out in Section 3.

Figure 2 sets out the sites which include residential development which have been allocated in the consultation draft of the Site Allocations Plan (March 2016). **As part of this consultation we would be interested to hear from owners or developers of other potential sites within the defined SPD area.**

2.2 Mixed and balanced community

The ambition for the town centre aims to improve the quality of housing available in order to attract a more mixed and balanced community. Central Weston currently has a high proportion of privately rented accommodation and much lower owner occupation than elsewhere in the district or other central areas such as Portishead. Much of the private rented sector is poor quality. The majority of the housing proposed on the large sites above will be aimed at people wishing to buy market housing and for younger people wanting starter homes thereby helping to achieve a more mixed and balanced community in the centre. These people will be attracted by the new housing choices and lifestyle.

Buy to rent will be discouraged on sites being developed in partnership with the council.

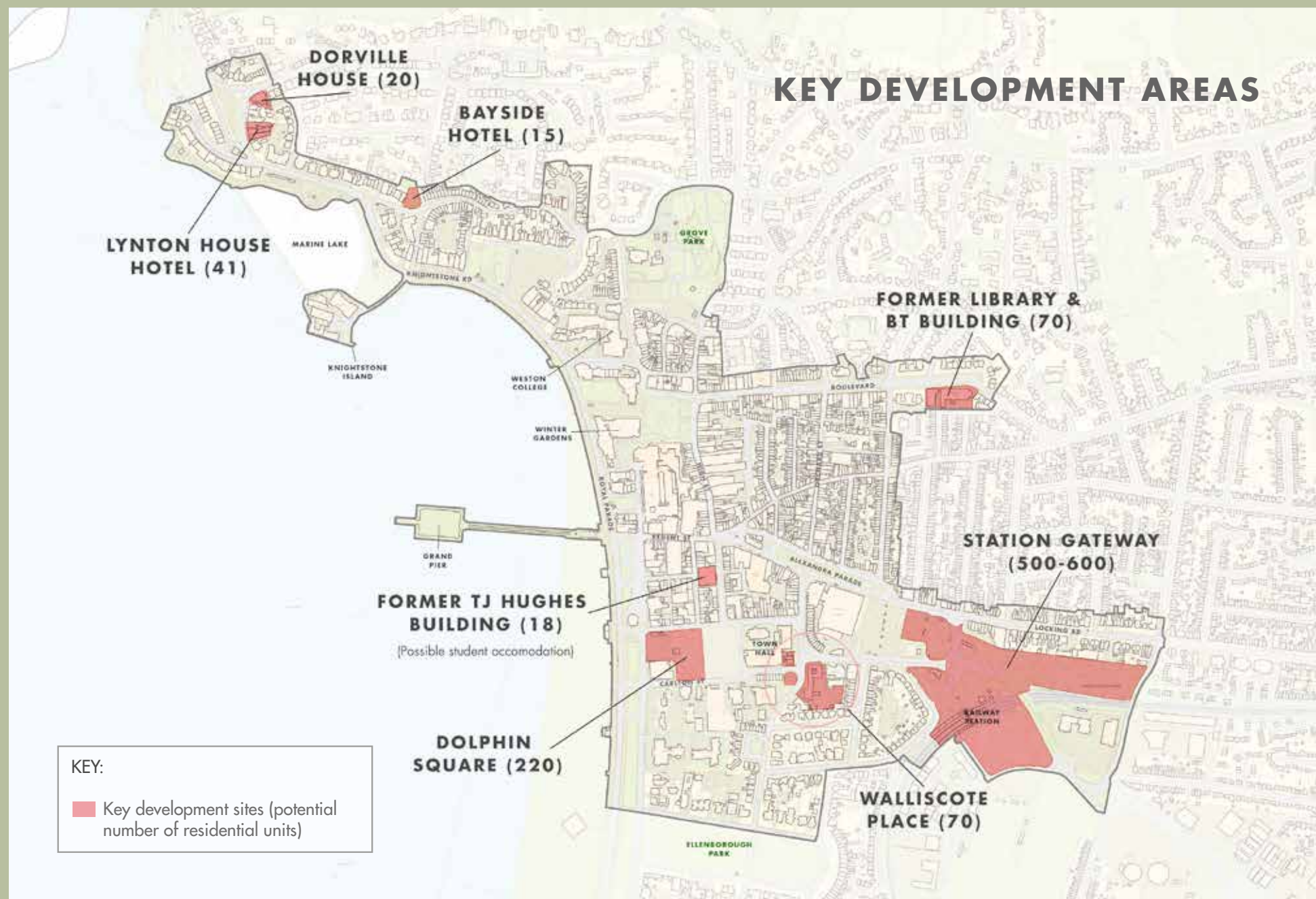


Figure 2

2.3 Ensuring a quality place to live

The proposals set out in this SPD seek to improve housing choice and to lift the quality of design. **All residential development will be expected to at least meet and if not exceed minimum design standards** set out in the Core Strategy (2012) and Development Management Plan (2016) and the Residential design guides.

The design of the building and its context are important aspects of design. The SPD therefore sets out to help developers and individuals proposing development to understand the important characteristics of the area in which it is located by establishing Character Areas and setting out principles to be followed in each. Details are set out in Section 2.

2.4 Residential Parking

Parking adds value to property and is often a requirement of those looking to buy a home, however, particularly in some residential conversions, it will not be practicable to provide the target levels set out in the Parking Standards SPD. The Parking Standards SPD recognises that in sustainable locations such as the town centre other types of travel will be used but that residents will often still own a car. Sites within the SPD area are accessible by other means of transport and developers will not be required to demonstrate this. In determining the level of car parking provision within Weston SPD area, in addition to the Parking Standards SPD, the following guidance is given;

- **New build schemes** will be required to provide a minimum of one space per dwelling unit in line with the



current North Somerset Parking Standards. Schemes of 10 or more units will also need to meet the following requirements;

Superfast charging points

10% of the total parking spaces should include superfast charging points with a minimum of 1 space. In order to future proof car parking areas ducting should be included to support the provision of charging points for 40% of spaces in the longer term.

Charging points should be highly visible but not disrupt the aesthetic value of the location and would need to be located where one charging point can serve the maximum number of spaces.

Car clubs

Establishment of a car club scheme and car parking facilities to accommodate this. On site 5% of spaces should accommodate a car club car with a minimum of 1 space and this should be located adjacent to the electric charging point as the council's aspiration is for electric vehicle car clubs.

- **Conversions of existing buildings** where it can be demonstrated that it not practical to meet the minimum requirement of 1 space per unit applicants will be required to maximise on-site parking provision and provide alternatives to private car ownership and parking on site including enhanced provision for car clubs and requirements for access to electric charging points; doubling the requirements above.

In addition, we require developers to investigate off-site provision including leasing arrangements in private car parks and engagement with public transport providers as this is an area where on-street parking is particularly constrained and although modal alternatives are available they will need to be encouraged. We require developers to promote the car-free or sustainable travel nature of sites that are approved with reduced parking.





Figure 3

2.5 Improving existing residential areas

Some existing residential areas within the SPD boundary are in need of improvements. Often these are areas where there are high concentrations of poor quality rental properties.

Part of the Weston regeneration SPD is included in an area of restricted subdivision where further subdivision of housing is not permitted. Policy DM39 (Areas of Restricted Subdivision) also aims to ensure that outside these areas the conversion of properties to self-contained properties and Houses in Multiple occupation (HMO's) meet strict criteria. Details are available in the Development Management Policies Plan (July 2016).

An additional licensing scheme has been introduced in part of Weston central ward which has a high concentration of poor quality rented multi occupied housing. This will help improve standards and help address some of the issues caused in this area. This scheme will last until the end of 2018. Full details are available at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/hmo-licences.

Figure 3 shows the location of both of these areas.

Where the community is motivated to get together to carry out improvements to their properties and neighbourhoods the council will endeavour to support and encourage this. Further improvements similar to those recently carried out at The Centre are being considered, and **suggestions from interested groups are welcomed.**

2.6 Living requirements

In order to improve the quality of residential provision within the town centre regeneration area all development will be expected to comply with the following:

- **Place making** – all developments should contribute to place-making, creating places with a strong sense of identity and local distinctiveness, which are well designed and function efficiently in line with Policy DM32. People should want to live in these areas and patterns of development should help build local community identity and cohesion.
- **Mixed and balanced communities** – Weston Central ward currently has a high proportion of people living in poor quality rented accommodation and a much lower proportion of owner occupiers than elsewhere in the district. The aim is to improve the quality of the homes available, increase the proportion of owner occupation and encourage the use of housing products which will enable people especially first time buyers to access the housing market. The council will work with partners such as the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to deliver starter homes.
- **Healthy housing** – The need to ensure healthier lifestyles is becoming an increasingly important factor in the design of new development. Ensuring safe cycle and pedestrian routes, easy storage of bikes, and other large sports and leisure equipment, access to outside space, fresh air and sports and recreation activities should be ingrained in the place-making process from the outset.
- **High quality housing** – The design and planning of all development proposals should demonstrate design quality which meets the needs and aspirations of 21st Century living, meet and preferably exceed minimum quality standards and be responsive to its context. Housing design should adhere to the design principles for the character area in which it is located as well as the overall masterplan.



- **Spacious accessible and adaptable housing** – where practical and viable all new build housing should as a minimum meet the nationally described space standards and comply with Policy DM42.
- **Sustainable housing** – Energy efficiency, insulation, water and waste management will be required to meet set standards. Sustainable travel options will feature in the new designs. Electric charging points, car clubs and bicycle storage will all be expected as part of the design of major development schemes.
- **Intelligent housing** – where appropriate new technologies should be incorporated into the design of dwellings, this will connect the key electrical appliances and services allowing them to be remotely controlled, monitored or accessed.
- **Affordable housing** – To rebalance the housing mix in the town centre and deliver a range of high quality housing, development will focus on alternative modes of affordable housing such as starter homes. For most sites for a limited period there will be no requirement to deliver affordable homes as traditionally defined and set out in Core Strategy Policy CS16. Refer to Section 3 for details. Initiatives by Housing Associations and other delivery partners to provide affordable homes will continue to be sought and supported.
- **Aspirational housing** – the Council will seek aspirational houses and flats¹ in the regeneration of Weston, in line with Policy DM34, to help create an attractive image and establish a high quality status for the town. Although these will only make up a limited amount of the new stock it will help to change the image of Weston, help establish a new quality standard, and ensure that the current gap in the availability of dwellings in the upper tax bands is rebalanced.
- **Student housing** – As Weston grows as a university town so too will the demand for student housing. Purpose built quality accommodation which meets the needs of modern day student expectations and which will attract students to Weston will be required. Providers should work with Weston College to ensure both the amount and quality of accommodation is met.
- **Smaller housing schemes** – Making better use of vacant space above shops and other premises within the town centre would not only provide an important source of housing but also ensures the centre is not deserted in the evenings and provides additional surveillance. Where high quality schemes are brought forward these will be supported. The Council is supportive of vacant ground floor units outside the Primary Shopping Area in residential style streets converting to residential use, particularly where this helps to consolidate the shopping area. Indeed greater flexibility to change uses to residential has been part of the governments' changes to permitted development rights. See link² for more details.

¹ The definition of aspirational houses and flat is found in the Development Management Policies Sites and Policies Plan 2016

² https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common_projects/9/change_of_use/2

LEARNING

3.1 University centre

Weston College was granted University Centre status at the end of 2015 bringing Weston-super-Mare a step closer to becoming a university town. This means that the college is able to expand its higher education provision to run courses on a much greater scale and at a higher level. The new Law and Professional Services Academy will operate from the remodelled Winter Gardens and former Arosfa Hotel, bringing significant numbers of new students into the town centre. The aim is to follow this with further expansion in the future.

The granting of University Centre status is regarded as a major achievement and will enable education at all levels with higher education acting as a catalyst for regeneration. Securing a prestigious base for the university in the heart of the town will make a significant difference to both the town and the surrounding communities, increasing activity, footfall as well as addressing a current local skills gap.

Weston College currently provides education to 30,000 learners with over 860 students enrolled on degree level courses. The Academy is expected to bring an additional 35 teaching and support roles, 250 students and other auxiliary roles such as catering and cleaning. This growing student population will bring vitality and activity to the centre and will have a positive effect on its urban character.



3.2 School places

Additional housing in the town centre of the scale being proposed will require expanded primary school provision including a safeguarded school site. It is proposed that the new school site should be located within or close to the Station Gateway area, the exact location would be decided through the detailed master planning of this area. Additional early years provision will also be required. Demand for secondary places will be assessed as part of the overall requirement throughout Weston for secondary school provision.

3.3 Learning requirements;

- **University** – The council will work with Weston College to ensure further phases of university expansion take place in the town centre regeneration area. Community use of the facilities should be made available where practicable to ensure local benefit.
- **Student accommodation** – This should be provided in purpose-built quality accommodation in association with the college to ensure quality standards.
- **Primary school provision** – The increase in people living in the town centre will inevitably lead to a need for more school places. Modelling indicates that increased provision will be required. Possible expansion of an existing school and site for a new primary school in the vicinity of Station Gateway is required. Work to establish the precise location is ongoing.





LIFESTYLES

4.1 A great place to live

Weston town centre already has the basic assets which make it a great place to live;

- It has an outdoor lifestyle focussed on the beach and rural hinterland; and.
- An underrated quality in its architectural, heritage and cultural assets.
- It is comparatively more affordable than Bristol or Bath.
- Great accessibility (less than 30 minutes to Bristol by train with over 40 trains per day, 3 miles to the M5, 30 minutes to the airport by car).

4.2 Delivering employment

The need to ensure that employment provision is provided alongside housing is a fundamental principle governing planning policy throughout Weston-super-Mare.³ Delivering this in the town centre is more complex as the need to increase the number of people living in the town centre, viability issues, and site scale and location makes the suitability of on-site provision less appropriate. Nonetheless employment provision in the centre is and will continue to come forward. The Dolphin Square development, the University and the development of a creative hub all provide employment

³ Core Strategy CS20, CS30. Employment led delivery at Weston-super-Mare SPD (2014)



opportunities unrelated to housing developments. As housing develops and the regeneration initiative gathers momentum employment in service and related jobs will also increase. In order to encourage the regeneration of the town centre to take place there will be **no direct requirement for developments within the defined town centre regeneration area to provide or contribute towards employment provision**. However, employment opportunities will be carefully monitored to ensure adequate employment is being provided overall, in line with housing numbers.

The proposed approach to support economic growth within the town centre involves actively encouraging the move of Weston towards a knowledge, information and 'creative' economy, capitalising on its proximity to Bristol and potential spill-over demand, as well as building on existing enterprises in the town.

The Council will therefore;

- **Support the establishment of a creative hub building** for small creative business start-ups.
- **Support flexible workspace provision** in the town centre encouraging the provision of flexible managed workspaces.
- **Digital and creative sectors** – Support the set-up and development of digital and creative sector businesses.
- **University** – Support the University Centre in the town centre and innovation spin-offs.
- **Carry out public realm improvements** to support economic enterprise and investment.

4.3 Lifestyle provision

With its university centre status and growing town centre offer, Weston has potential to attract a wider demographic profile. Further changes are, however, required to promote and develop an attractive lifestyle offer which appeals to both existing and potential residents. This will include a wider range of bars and restaurants and higher quality evening economy; attractive pedestrian friendly public spaces; cultural facilities and events; modern recreational facilities, and a good range of retail outlets.

Large events, leisure activities and extreme sports are already part of the Weston scene and will continued to be supported. The highly successful 2015 Dismaland experience attracted an international audience and has stimulated efforts to ensure the Tropicana is reinvented as an arts and events venue.

4.4 Lifestyle requirements;

- **Shopping** – Policies contained in the Development Management Policies Sites and Policies Plan Part 1 aim to focus the shopping area in a more concentrated area acknowledging that the retail area in Weston is widely dispersed and that less retail floor space is likely to be required in future. Within the primary shopping area a greater range of uses are supported allowing food and drink and evening economy uses. Improvements to the High Street and better links to adjacent areas and the seafront are proposed. Regent Street and Spider Lane are proposed as the primary pedestrian links between the High Street and the seafront. Proposals to link the Sovereign Centre with the seafront and create a more prominent entrance from the seafront would be supported. Outside the primary shopping area there are areas which contain clusters of independent retailers, (Orchard/Meadows, Grove Village, the Boulevard, St James Street). These areas often have high turnover and vacant units. Public realm improvements to the 'laneways' to provide a



higher quality pedestrian environment will help support the independent businesses in some of these areas. Elsewhere the conversion of vacant shop units in residential style streets back to housing will be supported. Shopfront design and signage guidance will be published to encourage a more coherent shopping area and reflect the character of buildings. This will include advice on converting shops to residential units.

- **Culture and leisure** – Encourage the cultural and leisure offer. Cultural and leisure activities have been central to Weston's past and will continue to play a crucial role in supporting the local economy and providing activities for visitors and residents. New residential development will increase demand for a variety of leisure activities, whether sports, arts, cultural or restaurants and evening entertainment, the majority of which should be met within the town centre. The focus is on improving the range and quality of attractions so that Weston **meets the needs of its residents** as well as being an all year round destination for visitors. Opportunities to improve visitor accommodation and facilities to appeal to a wider demographic will need to be harnessed and supported. Promoting a better understanding of the town's cultural heritage will aid the appreciation of the town's assets and buildings and encourage positive management and use.
- **Evening and night-time uses** – Proposals should seek to improve the functioning of the town in the evenings through, for example good design, extended opening times, imaginative use of lighting and the siting of uses which will improve the safety, image and attractiveness of the town

- **Community facilities** – more residents will increase demand for a variety of community services such as doctors, dentists, children's centres etc. Proposals for new or to extend existing facilities will be supported in principle.
- **Smart town** – Deliver a smarter town by integrating digital uplift and infrastructure provision. The vision is to deliver digital benefits in the following areas and all developments should ensure they are enabling and cooperating in this ambition. Examples of what this may look like will vary considerably by development and is evolving rapidly. The following is an indication of some of the types of provision which should be considered;
 - Smarter parking management – pre-allocated/bookable spaces, variable charging, incentives.
 - Increased legibility of streets e.g. navigation apps.
 - Low carbon decentralised energy networks.
 - Smarter metering.
 - Remote control of domestic energy systems.
 - Integrating local generation using smart grids.
 - Agile trading systems to encourage informal trading, pop ups, start up SMEs.
 - Digital democracy.
 - Waste management e.g. smart bins.





SECTION 2

THE MASTERPLAN

The masterplan makes up the essential part of the SPD. This establishes a clear structure within which regeneration projects and other development will take place. It

- identifies the key opportunity sites and priorities for development.
- sets out the movement proposals.
- establishes the open space networks and greening strategy, and
- establishes the Character Areas and guidance on the design principles.

THE MASTERPLAN

KEY:

- Key development sites
- Key Town Centre routes
- P Railway/Long stay car park
- Bus interchange
- Main boulevards
- Key public spaces (1-6)
- Promenade
- Pedestrian priority areas
- Shared/upgraded pedestrian routes

Key public spaces

1. Town Square
2. Princess Royal Square
3. Big Lamp Corner
4. Church Square
5. Walliscote Place
6. Station Square

Character areas

- A. The Bay
- B. Grove Village
- C. The Boulevard
- D. High Street Area
- E. Orchard Meadows
- F. Lower High Street
- G. Alexandra Parade
- H. Walliscote Place
- I. Station Gateway
- Residential areas



Figure 4. The Masterplan

KEY SITES AND THE FOCUS FOR REGENERATION

A number of key sites have been identified as offering a particular opportunity to unlock development. These include the regeneration of underused brownfield sites in a priority area stretching from beyond the railway station to the seafront (See Figure 5). This is an extensive area including land around the railway station and Locking Road car park (Station Gateway), Walliscote Place and Dolphin Square. This area contains key brownfield sites which have been allocated for development. The area provides an opportunity to deliver significant housing, improve the quality of the area and make a significant difference to the first impressions of the town and link to the heart of the centre. Public realm improvements will include a tree-lined boulevard between the Station and the seafront along Station Road, Walliscote Grove Road and Carlton Street which improves pedestrian and cycle links to the seafront and aims to incorporate a sustainable drainage system.



Figure 5

5.1 Station Gateway

A detailed masterplan for this area will be progressed in partnership with owners, developers and the rail industry to deliver a mainly residential mixed use development.

5.2 Walliscote Place

The re-development and reuse of the Police Station site, former Magistrates' Court, Roselawn Terrace, Walliscote Grove Road East Car Park, and their immediate surroundings, will act as a catalyst development to set a new quality benchmark for the town. Public realm improvements will enhance the setting of the new buildings, listed buildings and local heritage assets and establishing the area as a key gateway to the town.



5.3 Dolphin Square and Environs

Work commenced in 2016 on a £18m scheme to provide a cinema, restaurants, indoor climbing and soft play facilities on part of the former Dolphin Square site. Once completed this will have a major impact on leisure and choice of restaurants in the heart of the town centre. Uncertainty around the delivery of the retail-led final phase of the Dolphin Square development has raised the possibility of alternative approaches and uses. A housing-led development would contribute to quality town centre housing provision within the conservation area and achieve a step change in line with the Prospectus for Change.

5.4 Town Square and the Italian Gardens

This is a key public space and destination at the northern end of the High Street that is currently not fulfilling its potential, and its enhancement as a leisure and event space is proposed. Improvements will create better links to the seafront and to the wider town centre helping to animate the High Street. Improved frontages on to the square will be encouraged.

MOVEMENT

6.1 Introduction

The aspiration for the town centre is for a high quality, sustainable development with a transport system that fully embraces this, reducing traffic movement and dominance and improving the public realm. Supporting the needs of a changing demographic by providing real opportunities for all modes of travel and driving Weston into the future. The aim is to provide a clear movement network for all users and modes with a simplified transport infrastructure and improvement to legibility. Key pedestrian links will be strengthened including between the seafront, town centre and key gateways and cycle infrastructure will be provided to link to key destinations and support the shift towards a culture for increased cycling. A high quality bus interchange will provide a central hub for access and information.

6.2 Vehicular traffic and parking

Key town centre routes have been identified which represent the main strategic movement corridors and play a critical role in defining the structure of the town centre and link to the wider network. Local access routes tend to have a reduced strategic traffic function linking to the key town centre routes and to each other. Reference is also made to 'laneways' in the character areas which have the potential to offer a unique, finer grain and more intimate environment and high quality pedestrian friendly environment.



Main changes proposed;

- Changes to the road configuration at Alexandra Parade to provide a bus interchange reducing other vehicular traffic circulating around the parade. Alfred Street would become the key vehicle route to link with the Boulevard.
- Pedestrians would be given priority in Regent St from Princess Royal Square to Big Lamp Corner encouraging visitors using the seafront into the town.
- Traffic speeds will be reduced in the town centre to help reduce vehicle dominance and enhance the quality of the public realm. A 20mph zone will be introduced in the central area to support this.
- Transform the arrival experience and connectivity from Hildesheim Bridge and the railway station.
- Establish Walliscote Place as a key town centre arrival location and enhancing Oxford Street as a setting for the Dolphin Square redevelopment.

Further information relating to the requirements regarding changes to the highway can be found in the council's Highways Development Design Guide and Manual for Streets.

A parking study is currently being commissioned which will provide evidence regarding demand for town centre parking and how this will be supplied and managed.



Figure 6 shows the key vehicular, cycling, pedestrian routes and bus routes.

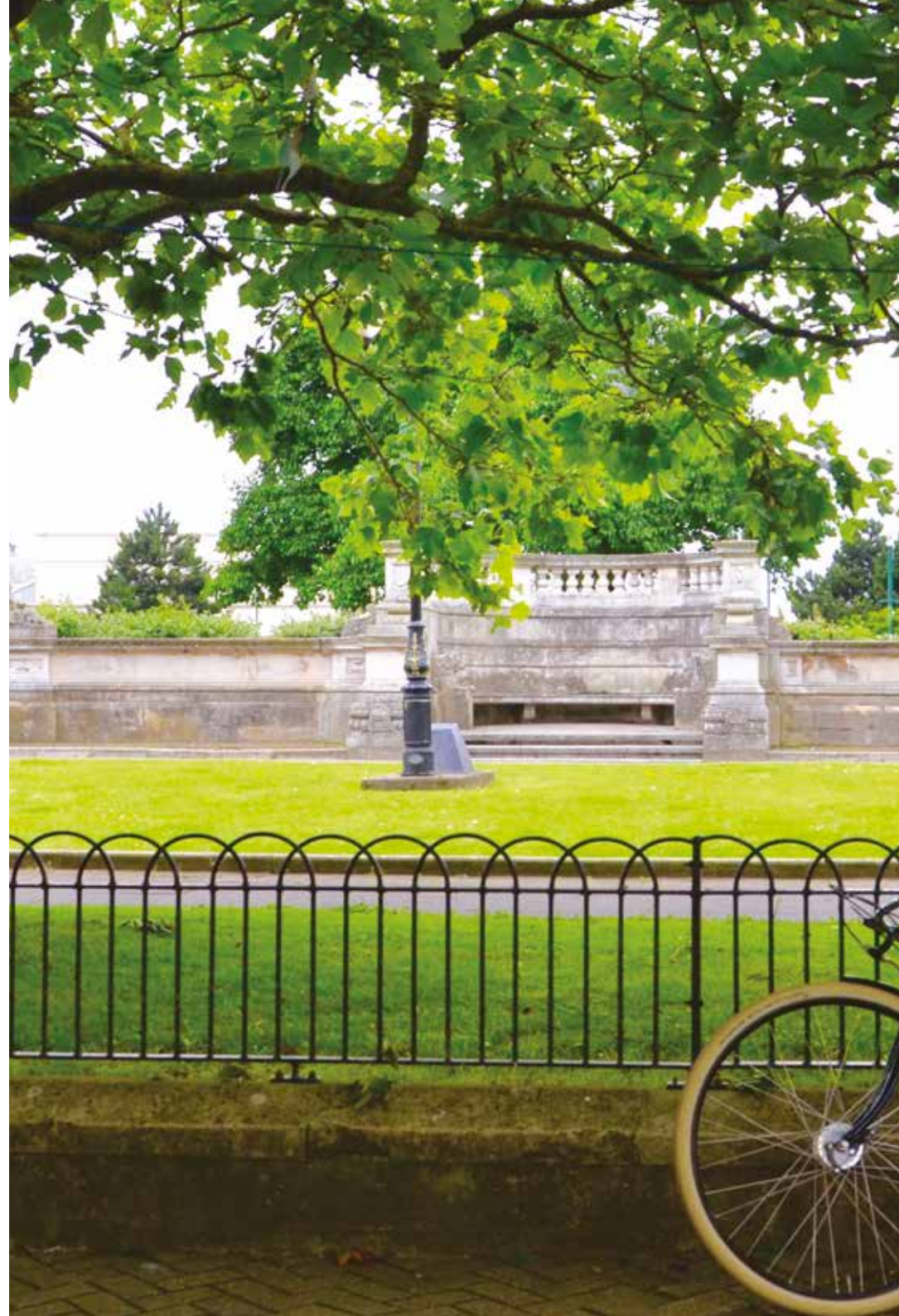
6.3 Walking

An improved and coordinated public realm throughout the town centre will be delivered, focused on key links such as Station Road, Walliscote Place, Regent Street/Big Lamp Corner and Alexandra Parade. The proposed pedestrian priority/shared space in Regent Street, dedicated crossing points and links to meet pedestrian desire lines will encourage natural pedestrian wayfinding between the station, the town centre, the seafront and other key attractions and developments.

Changes and reductions of general traffic (for example on Alexandra Parade and Walliscote Road North – except buses and access) and will support a more pedestrian friendly centre.

The main changes proposed are;

- Pedestrians would be given priority in Regent St from Princess Royal Square to Big Lamp Corner.
- New pedestrian links will be provided across Dolphin Square and between the railway station and Alexandra Parade.
- Improved pedestrian links at Spider Lane and between the University buildings near Town Square.
- Strengthened delivery of laneways at Orchard Meadows to provide a more intimate environment and animated, high quality, pedestrian friendly environments and potential shared space corridors.
- Public realm improvements on Regent Street and Oxford Street and from Hildesheim Bridge along the proposed Station Boulevard to the seafront.





6.4 Cycling

Cycling will be promoted throughout the town. Figure 6 identifies the proposed key routes as well as the coastal route and how existing routes are linked with the town centre. Cycling provision within the town will be improved. Existing cycle links end prior to the town centre which does not encourage people within a short cycle ride to use bicycles to access the town. Consideration will be given to whether a self-service cycle hire scheme could be applicable for residents use.

The build-up of student numbers also needs to be taken into account when considering better cycle provision as does the need to encourage cyclists using the seafront for leisure to come into the town.

Physical improvements, improved signage, more cycle parking and better promotion are needed. **Improvements to cycling provision, including dedicated provision as part of major development proposals and public realm improvements will be required in development proposals.**

6.5 Bus Transport

The proposed bus network is detailed in Figure 6. This shows the routes buses will be able to use in the town centre. The network will be enhanced with the provision of a high quality interchange at Alexandra Parade. Full details of this have yet to be drawn up however the aim is to bring together bus stops in a central location with improved information, and high quality public realm. The gyratory road system will be altered and vehicular traffic will be reduced.



The Council's aspiration is for continuous improvement in the services and infrastructure for public transport in North Somerset, building on our previous delivery which has included the Greater Bristol Bus Network and LSTF funded schemes. Our Vision for 2036 includes Metrobus (bus rapid transit) provision for Weston-super-Mare.

The quality and design of bus stop infrastructure should be considered as part of the overall planning for new development. Bus stop facilities would need to be provided to the MetroBus standard and be delivered in conjunction with the development and not at a later stage.

Public transport information points should be provided incorporating the latest digital technology. These information points can have a wider use in terms of wayfinding and information sharing with advertising supporting the ongoing maintenance cost of the displays.

6.6 Rail

The railway station is central to the town centre and will play an important role in achieving a shift to more sustainable modes of transport. Improvements to the station will be pursued. Current parking capacity would need to be maintained and future demand forecast. Proposals will be brought forward in the Station Gateway Masterplan.

The Council's vision is for significant improvements to the station, service frequencies and service capacity within Weston super Mare and throughout North Somerset with a key aspiration for hourly services from Weston to London, increased frequencies for local services at key stops, better station facilities, access for all and extended platform lengths at some stations. We will continue to work in partnership with the Department for Transport, other West of England authorities and the LEP to develop the network and build on the current MetroWest investment and will input to franchising discussions. We will continue to work in partnership with Network Rail and rail franchisees to align delivery, secure bid funding and leverage ongoing improvements.

6.7 Parking

A parking study is currently being commissioned which will provide evidence regarding demand for town centre parking and how this can be managed.

Parking standards and provision for development would need to be in keeping with the quality and style of the development and be in line with the current North Somerset Parking Standards with the following additions to reflect the changing nature of the town centre:

- Electric charging points

With technology advancing in terms of electric vehicles every opportunity should be taken to expand the network of electric vehicle charging points in public and private parking areas. 10% of the total parking spaces should include superfast charging points with a minimum of 1 space. In order to future proof car parking areas ducting should be included to support the provision of charging points for 40% of spaces in the longer term.

Charging points should be highly visible but not disrupt the aesthetic value of the location and would need to be located where one charging point can serve the maximum number of spaces.

Car clubs

Establishment of a car club scheme and car parking facilities to accommodate this. On site 5% of spaces should accommodate a car club car with a minimum of 1 space and this should be located adjacent to the electric charging point as the Council's aspiration is for electric vehicle car clubs

Modal Shift Targets

	MODE 2011 TTW MODE SHARE*	END PHASE 3 (2026) TRAVEL TO WORK TARGET MODE SHARE
Train	2.1%	4.2%
Bus, minibus, coach	4.8%	6%
Taxi	0.8%	0.8%
Bicycle	3.9%	5.1%
On foot	15%	19.5%
Motorcycle, scooter, moped	1.1%	1.1%
Driver (car or van)	65.2%	55.4%
Passenger (car or van)	6.8%	7.6%
Other	0.3%	0.3%

* Includes travel to work to and from Weston-super-Mare

6.8 Coaches

Those development proposals likely to generate coach traffic such as sport venues should provide appropriate off street facilities for the stopping, setting down and picking up of passengers, together with adequate space for the manoeuvring to allow vehicles to leave the site in forward gear. The onus will be on the developer to demonstrate that an appropriate level of provision is made to satisfy likely levels of usage. Layouts requiring coaches to reverse in or out of a site would not be acceptable.

6.9 Travel Plans

Travel plans should be provided in line with the Travel Plan SPD. It is an aspiration of the council to develop an area wide travel plan for Weston Town Centre to support the overarching modal shift targets and new developments would need to work with the council to support this. The table on page 33 sets out these targets.

6.10 Flood Risk and Drainage

Parts of Weston Town Centre lie within the floodplain, a site specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) which considers all sources of flooding and potential contamination risks will need to be undertaken in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for all development sites that are within or partially within Flood Zones 3 or 2. It is recommended that early pre-application discussions with the Environment Agency are undertaken to establish the format and detail of the FRA and to identify potential issues and costs associated with flooding.

Parts of Weston town centre are at a high risk from surface water flooding and the existing surface water drainage system is at or near capacity. A reduction in surface water runoff for the 1 in 1 year and the 1 in 100 year rainfall event, with an allowance for climate change is required on all development sites as far as reasonably practicable, with a reduction of at least 30% required on all major sites.

Sustainable drainage should be integrated with greening wherever possible, to provide enhanced amenity value and water quality benefits.

Reference should be made to the West of England Guide Sustainable Drainage Developer Guide, the North Somerset Sustainable Drainage Design Guidance (Section 2 of West of England Guide) and North Somerset Councils emerging policy on SuDS adoption and maintenance. Further information on SuDS viability for the key sites is available from the Council's Flood Risk team.



OPEN SPACE AND GREENING

7.1 Green spaces and trees

A key characteristic of the town centre is the network of sheltered green spaces set back from the exposed seafront and the lawns overlooking Marine Parade and the beach. Grove Park, at the northern end of the town centre, and Ellenborough Park at the southern end forming 'green brackets' to the town centre. These parks are the largest and most public of a series of smaller green spaces enclosed by villas, terraces or crescents that give parts of the town a leafy garden ambience. The Victorian residential areas surrounding the town centre are often characterised by attractive tree-lined streets whereas the central area has little greenery. Understanding the historical character and value of these spaces and avenues have and will continue to inform development and underpins the public realm strategy. Strategic tree planting along key routes will support the main street hierarchy and help finding your way about. Species selection will be determined by location, existing planting, specific constraints and requirements.

7.2 Three Boulevards

A key component of the plan for the town centre is the reinforcement of the strategic east-west routes into the town. The three boulevards, Alexandra Parade/Locking Road, The Boulevard and proposed Station Boulevard will give structure to the town. These will be tree lined, emphasising the avenue approach to the town, clearly delineating the route to the sea, and provide an attractive and welcoming environment. Existing trees will be protected and any damaged or diseased trees will be replaced. New planting where appropriate will be encouraged and the planting of Station Boulevard will form a key component of the proposals for the main approach into Weston.

7.3 Avenues

Opportunities for greening in the town centre are limited and one of more obvious solutions lies in the planting of more street trees where this is both practical and will enhance the street scene and historical context. Species will be dependent on locational constraints. **Where major developments are being proposed opportunities to create tree lined avenues should be evaluated and where appropriate included as part of the proposals.**

Guidance on landscaping and trees in the highway can be found in North Somerset's Highways Development Design Guide.

7.4 Additional landscaping

Elsewhere the establishment of 'pocket parks' can aid the greening of the town. The design of these would be required to be informed by an understanding of the historic context, complement the character area in which it is located and ensure that the public realm is uncluttered, robust and safe.

A programme to enhance existing residential and urban areas with additional planting, where feasible, will be established.

7.5 Urban open spaces

Open spaces provide environmental, social and economic benefits and are therefore critical in terms of their contribution to town character, finding your way around, establishing a sense of arrival, encouraging activities and just allowing time to dwell and enjoy the outdoors and the space. Weston town centre has three main urban public spaces, Town Square, Big Lamp Corner and Princess Royal Square. A further square in front of the Emmanuel Church is being created alongside the Dolphin Square development. These will be supplemented with enhanced spaces at Walliscote Place and at the Railway Station.



Figure 7 sets out the main public spaces and how these are linked to a clear and connected public realm strategy.



HERITAGE, DESIGN AND CHARACTER AREAS

8.1 Background

Weston-super-Mare is an attractive seaside town with a distinctive heritage and topography defined by two hills. The prominent ridge of Worlebury to the north, with 300 acres of Weston Woods, creates a strong sylvan backdrop whereas the south is bounded by Mendip's grassier Bleadon Hill, Uphill and Brean Down.

One of the most defining features of Weston is its west facing sandy bay which affords distant views of the Welsh coast and sea punctuated by the two islands of Steep Holm and Flat Holm. The seafront has been a busy tourist destination since the 19th century and remains popular with visitors today.

Much of Weston's distinctive structural quality dates back to Victorian times with some notable Edwardian and inter-war and post-war additions. Much of the town's recognisable quality is modest in scale with few examples of ostentatious exuberance so often associated with resort towns. Open spaces contrast with the seafront, offering generous green east-west approaches along Alexandra Parade and the Boulevard and there are several intimate and characterful sets of lanes in Grove Village and Orchard Meadows.

8.2 Heritage Assets

Five Conservation Areas cover parts of the regeneration area (Figure 8) although a number of them are at risk. There are numerous listed buildings along with buildings and structures identified as of local townscape and heritage interest. The buildings of local townscape and historic interest shown on Figure 8 are derived from the Heritage & Urban Design Strategy 2000. The list is not exclusive, other buildings and features in the town centre area may also be regarded as a heritage asset.

A better understanding of the significance of the town centre's heritage and character should be used to inform proposed development. Guidance in this SPD should be used as the starting point for this. Major proposals will be required to carry out a full and detailed analysis.

The most notable buildings include:

Pre-Victorian – Dr Fox's Bath House, Glebe House, Royal Hotel, Thatched Cottage

Victorian terraces – Claremont Crescent, Greenfield Place, Magdala Buildings, Manilla Crescent, Royal Crescent, Royal Terrace, Oriel Terrace, South Terrace, Somerset Buildings, Upper Church Road

Victorian churches – All Saints', Emmanuel, St John the Baptist, Wadham Street Baptist (now Blakehay Theatre)

Victorian public & commercial buildings – Grand Atlantic Hotel, Old Library, Railway Station, Stuckey's Bank (former) & Imperial Hotel, Town Hall, Walliscote School, Weston College School of Science & Art

Victorian streets – many streets retain their 19th century flavour (even without wholesale Listing or Conservation Area status), some more strikingly so than others. In particular the Boulevard, including Mercury office and adjacent buildings, St Kew's Masonic Lodge (now Constitutional Club) and upper storeys above the shops and offices, stands at the grander conceptual stage with streets such as Hopkins Street, Palmer Street,



HERITAGE ASSETS



exemplifying well-ordered 19th century working class streets. Many of these buildings were designed by the distinguished 19th century local architect Hans Fowler Price, whose prodigious output has given Weston more than 800 buildings of architectural merit.

Victorian seafront – The promenade wall, esplanade and beach lawns form a harmonious curve along the entire length of Weston's seafront and recent flood defence works have much enhanced the entirety of this superb structure.

Modern – Edwardian flamboyance produced the original Grand Pier (twice rebuilt following fire damage), swimming baths and theatre at Knightstone (now residential). The town also features a number of interesting Art Deco, interwar and post-war buildings, including: Boulevard United Reformed Church, Centre Buildings, College Knightstone Campus in softened Brutalism, Costa Coffee High Street, (former) Magistrates' Court, Museum, Odeon Cinema (with the country's only fully-working theatre pipe organ in the building for which it was originally intended), Queen Alexandra Memorial Hospital (now residential), Silica, Station Road Depository, Victoria Methodist Church with impressive Pennant & Ham stone tower, War Memorial, and Winter Gardens Pavilion.

8.3 High Quality Design

Ensuring high quality design is central to the new proposals for the town centre. New development will be expected to positively respond to and enhance existing characteristics and heritage, communicating Weston's unique and special qualities and its ambition for the future as a contemporary and creative place to live work and visit. The regeneration approach will recognise the importance of heritage and character to the quality of the town centre environment, with 21st century architecture contributing to and complementing the quality of the town's architectural heritage. Sensitive reuse and development of heritage buildings which respect the historic fabric of the building and meet modern needs will be supported.



8.4 Tall buildings

Design will also need to take on board the higher densities required to deliver the critical mass needed to change perceptions of Weston and to deliver the quantity of housing needed. This may involve buildings which are taller than the surrounding built form. When tall buildings¹ are proposed a rigorous process of analysis and justification will be needed to accompany a full planning application (outline applications will not be accepted). In the right place tall buildings can make a positive contribution to urban life, but ill-considered proposals can have a disproportionate impact of the character, appearance and enjoyment of places, and dominate key heritage buildings.

Historic England has produced an advice note on Tall Buildings (Dec 2015) which sets out a useful checklist for applicants preparing an application and how proposals will be assessed.

Tall buildings should not be positioned where they;

- Obstruct views from key public vantage points, or obstruct views of key buildings especially the church spires or towers.
- Are out of keeping with the scale and continuity of the seafront properties.
- Have a detrimental impact on the historic environment.
- Have an adverse impact on the living conditions of nearby residents or overshadow residential properties.
- Create adverse climatic conditions.

All tall buildings will be required to meet the following;

- Provide landmark buildings which aid the legibility of the town.

- Demonstrate exceptional design quality.
- Contribute to an interesting and elegant skyline.
- At Station Gateway, establish a new character area or
- Help to reduce the perception of height of Hildesheim Bridge.

The character areas provide further information on locations where tall buildings would be particularly sensitive. It is the intention to produce a tall building strategy to establish where taller buildings would be more acceptable.

8.5 Improvements

The need to maintain and improve many of the existing buildings is also recognised and will be encouraged. Where a coordinated approach is required owners and interested parties will be encouraged to get together to make positive improvements.

Legislation in 2013 created heritage partnership agreements and local listed building consent orders which allow a group of people living in a terrace of similar buildings to all be classed under the same consent for doing the same works, the use of these arrangements will be encouraged where they would be appropriate.

A programme of improvements to the public realm will be carried out helping to provide the setting for quality buildings and spaces in the town and provide the impetus for further improvements and investments.

It is also proposed that the council will issue further guidance on a range of projects. See section 9.6

¹ Tall buildings are those that are substantially taller than their neighbours and/or which significantly change the skyline

DESIGN REQUIREMENTS TO BE APPLIED THROUGHOUT THE REGENERATION AREA

In addition to the specific requirements set out in the character areas all development proposals will be required to comply with the following requirements as appropriate;

- Ensure importance of views to and across the bay, to the wooded backdrop on the hillside and existing and proposed landmarks are maintained.
- Maintain and strengthen the elegance, legibility, heritage, proportion and scale of the town's character.
- Improve physical and visual links between the seafront and shopping area.
- Development should respond to and express the distinct qualities, and urban form of the character area within which it is located.
- Establish a distinct new 21st Century character area at Station Gateway.
- Use of high quality materials based on site analysis, an understanding of the historic context and character area, which have a long life, are robust and can withstand a coastal environment.
- Where proposals exceed the height or massing of buildings in that or adjacent character areas this will need to be supported by a clear design rationale ensuring that harm will not be caused to heritage assets and make a positive contribution to the surrounding urban form and skyline.
- Deliver a greener town centre by tree and other planting along key routes and spaces, integrated with Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to reduce surface water flood risk.
- The strong east-west routes linking the town with the seafront should be clearly recognised as the primary structuring elements forming three boulevards, the Boulevard, Alexandra Parade and an enhanced Station Road Boulevard. The primary north south elements of The Promenade and High Street also form both important destinations and movement corridors and should also form the key structuring elements of the town.
- Ensure a co-ordinated and consistent approach where there are adjoining development sites.
- Infill development must respect the vertical and horizontal rhythms and scale of adjacent development, frontages and building lines.
- Development should take account of environmental conditions and minimise wind effects especially near the seafront using the built form to create areas of shelter from the prevailing winds.
- Ensure comprehensive analysis of each site, including where it can be seen from, key views of short, medium and long distance, immediate context, and cultural importance.
- Within the existing built form opportunities to reinstate missing or neglected architectural details or boundary features such as walls, railings, gates, or distinctive paving materials which form an important element of the character of a block or group of buildings will be encouraged.
- Ensure physically inclusive design that meets the needs of all sections of the community in line with Policy DM33.



8.6 Late amendment to plans

Past experience in achieving high quality developments have sometimes been undermined by last minute amendments to schemes on the grounds that the detailing causes viability issues. Amendments which reduce the design quality will not be looked on favourably, applicants are therefore advised to ensure that schemes, as proposed can be delivered.

8.7 The Character Areas

A series of character areas have been identified, in order to aid understanding, guide development proposals, ensure the components of the masterplan are included in detailed proposals and improve design quality.

These identify the key characteristic of the area informed by location, land uses, historical context, and particular issues or opportunities.

A future character statement sets out the ambition for the future of the area.

A set of principles is established which development is required to conform with. The extent to which individual proposals are expected to meet all principles will be dependent on the type and scale of development proposed.

CHARACTER AREAS

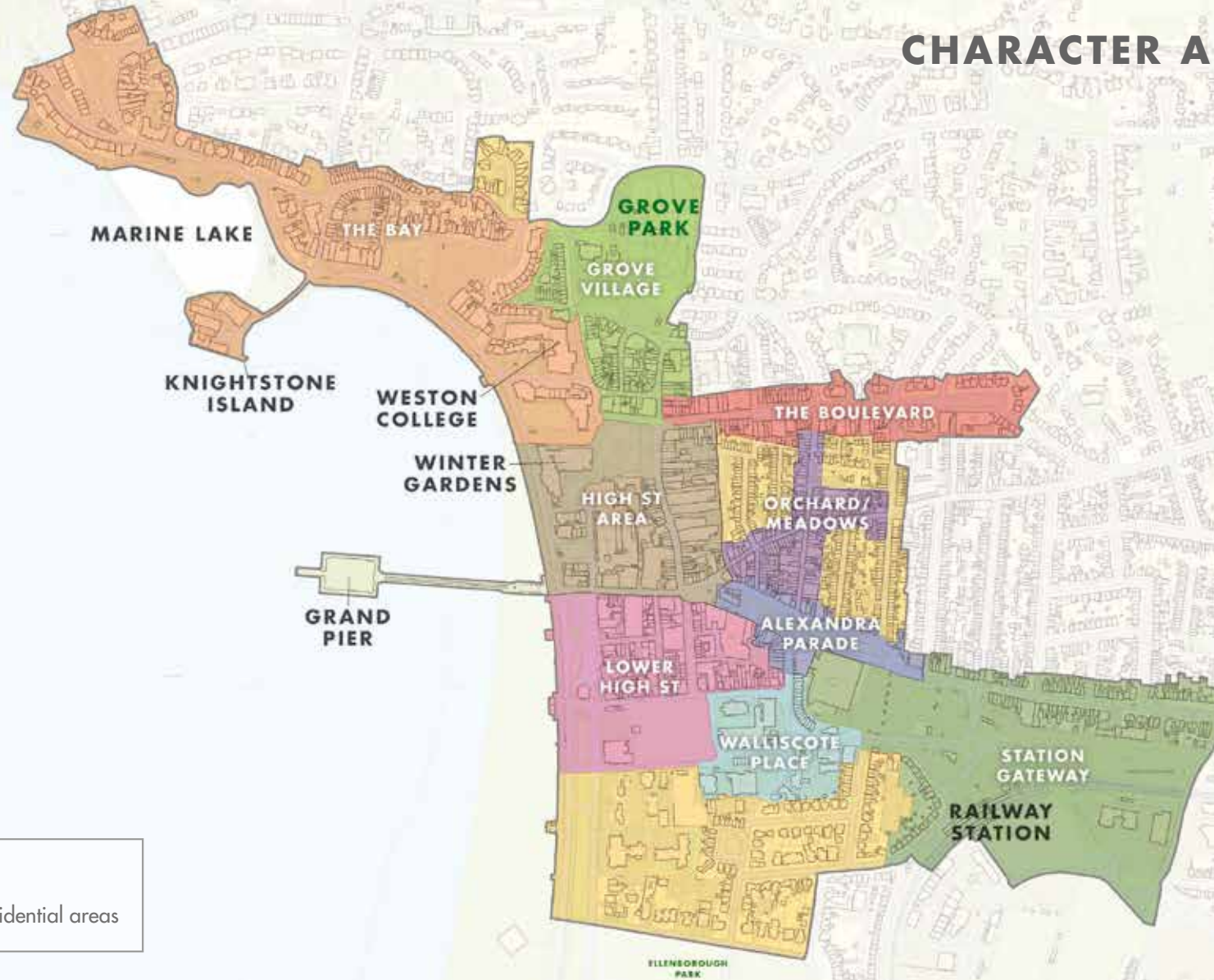
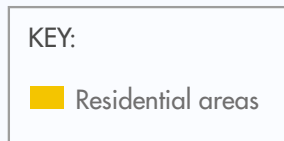
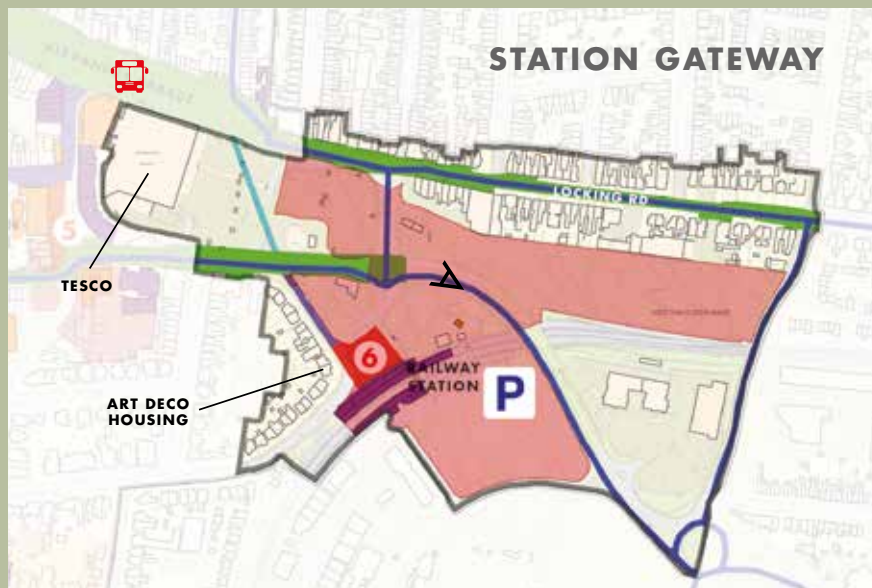


Figure 8 Map of Character areas



KEY:

Key development sites

Key Town Centre routes

P Railway/Long stay car park

Bus interchange

Boulevards/Historic Parks/Garden

Key public spaces (1-6)

Promenade

Pedestrian priority areas

Shared/upgraded pedestrian routes



View

Conservation areas

Listed buildings

Buildings of Historic Interest

Key public spaces

1. Town Square

2. Princess Royal Square

3. Big Lamp Corner

4. Church Square

5. Walliscote Place

6. Station Square

STATION GATEWAY

KEY EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

- 1 Key area forming the main approach into the town from the east comprising Locking Road and Locking Road car park, the railway station and surrounding area, Sunnyside Road and part of Tesco car park. Dominated by highways and railway infrastructure including Hildesheim Bridge;
- 2 Mostly of poor quality and disjointed urban form with a number of development and surface car park sites. The art deco houses on Station Approach are the key characteristic of the area in front of the station;
- 3 The railway station feels peripheral to the town centre due to its surroundings of surface car parks, major road infrastructure, poorly designed post-war commercial brick buildings and under-used land;
- 4 No visually obvious proximity or connection to town centre and seafront;
- 5 Area has a key link and arrival function and is in need of upgrading to make it more attractive and to change perceptions of the town centre; and
- 6 Provides a major redevelopment opportunity with the potential to introduce a new 21st century character to the area and repair the urban form.

FUTURE CHARACTER STATEMENT

New modern distinctive and coherent 21st Century character area that resonates the elegance, style and warmth of Weston's finest Art Deco, Victorian and coastal heritage and utilises this as inspiration for the best of contemporary architecture. The area will have an urban quality with buildings enclosing the public realm to herald a sense of arrival to the town centre and celebrate the distinct green backdrop to the town by establishing a new leafy green urban quarter. The mainly residential area will bring a significant uplift in well-designed urban living in a mix of sizes and types including a significant proportion of starter homes.

The area will be unified with the town and seafront by a strong public realm centred on the boulevard treatment of Station Road, Walliscote Grove Road and Carlton Street and a sequence of well-enclosed, overlooked and attractive green streets and spaces, influenced by Weston's best Victorian tree-lined streets and sheltered coastal gardens. The new development will be designed to mark a sense of arrival to the centre, incorporate Hildesheim Bridge, add selected marker buildings to help orientation and place-making, and send a positive message about the regeneration of the town centre.





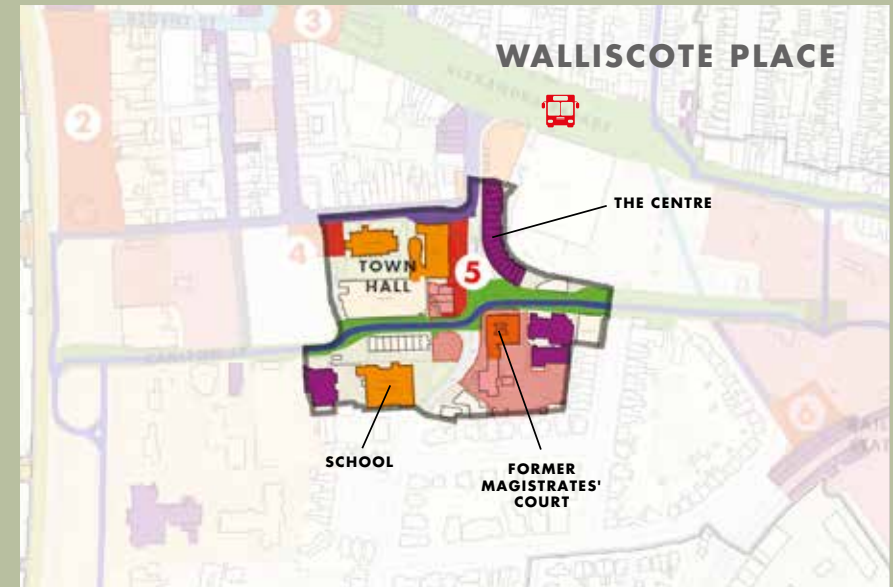
DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

- Deliver a high quality, contemporary residential area (up to 600 units) with supporting land uses including commercial, car parking and a primary school either within or adjacent to the character area.
- The built form should assist in creating an entrance/gateway, provide legibility, enclose the public realm where appropriate, and ensure a consistent and coherent approach.
- Significantly improve the railway station and the forecourt as a key arrival space and plaza.
- Re-provide at least the current (120) car parking spaces and take into account future demand in a more efficient form, reducing the amount of surface car parking.
- Ensure that the establishment of a tree lined boulevard for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles between Hildesheim Bridge and the seafront along Station Road, Walliscote Grove Road and Carlton Street is prioritised. This will include a coordinated public realm, generous tree-lined pavements, dedicated cycle lanes, safe crossing points and buildings fronting the street.
- Provide a pedestrian public access bridge across the railway station.
- Establish a strong pedestrian link from the station entrance to Station Road, enhanced through appropriate use of materials and tree planting. Ensure a clear crossing point linked to a new direct route through Tesco's car park to Alexandra Parade and the proposed bus interchange.
- Minimise the perceived level change between Hildesheim Bridge and surrounding area with careful design.
- The design approach, character, materials and style of the built form will be set out in a detailed Masterplan to ensure a coordinated approach to new development and the public realm.
- Use sensitively designed lighting to enhance key buildings and strengthen legibility of the area and Station Boulevard at night.
- Development will need to sensitively integrate the Grade II listed signal box and art deco buildings.
- Within this broader character area there is a smaller sub area at Locking Road where development proposals will need to respond to the existing built form and context.

WALLISCOTE PLACE

EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

- 1 Area within the heart of the town centre including the Town Hall and offices, the former Magistrates' Court, Police Station, the Centre buildings, and Walliscote School.
- 2 Area includes a mix of uses including the civic function, churches, library, school, offices, retail and residential.
- 3 The listed Magistrates' Court has been vacant since a new court building was opened on the edge of town and the police will vacate their current site as soon as the purpose-built site on Weston Gateway Business Park is complete.
- 4 The area includes a cluster of high quality Grade II listed heritage buildings around Walliscote Road and Town Hall, including Town Hall itself, the Magistrates' Court, Emmanuel Church, Walliscote School, the Odeon Cinema on Alexandra Parade and 18 Walliscote Road. Other building of local interest include the curving 1930's moderne Centre buildings fronting the Town Hall and the Free Gothic building on Station Rd occupied by Nightingales.
- 5 Mix of styles of architecture ranging from the exuberant Dutch Baroque at Walliscote School, the Art Deco and Modernist 1930's buildings through to the 1980's Town Hall extension.
- 6 The redevelopment of the Police Station site and vacant Magistrates' Court and other nearby sites offer opportunities to introduce new uses, kick start the ambitions for Weston and herald a change in perceptions.



KEY:

Key development sites

Key Town Centre routes

P Railway/Long stay car park

Bus interchange

Boulevards/Historic Parks/Garden

Key public spaces (1-6)

Promenade

Pedestrian priority areas

Shared/upgraded pedestrian routes

View

Conservation areas

Listed buildings

Buildings of Historic Interest

Key public spaces

1. Town Square

2. Princess Royal Square

3. Big Lamp Corner

4. Church Square

5. Walliscote Place

6. Station Square



FUTURE CHARACTER STATEMENT

Walliscote Place will become a new arrival space and destination in Weston-super-Mare. The uplift in urban quality and new development will mark a fundamental change for Weston-super-Mare signalling the new ambition of the town and demonstrating to potential developers and businesses, through the commercial success of the scheme, that Weston-super-Mare is an optimum place in which to invest. High quality new urban apartments will attract a new residential population to the town and add vitality. Quality design and a new iconic statement building will enrich Weston's built form. Heritage assets will be carefully considered and complemented by design-led new development. The newly painted Art Deco Centre will become a noticeable statement building and public realm enhancements will create a space which people can enjoy and will mark the arrival at the town centre. The boulevard treatment of Station Rd will continue into this area complemented by further greening.

DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

- To reinforce the role of the area as the threshold to both the town centre and the seafront.
- Ensure that development is informed by a thorough understanding and analysis of the context and the important heritage assets in the vicinity, which will include the importance of views and the character area's key characteristics. Development should respond to and complement these assets.
- Deliver an iconic building of exceptional design quality.
- Enhance the setting of listed buildings and appropriate conversion and re-use of the listed Magistrates' Court.
- Replace Roselawn buildings and develop on Walliscote Grove Road East Car Park to form a strong sense of arrival into the Town Centre.
- Contribute to improved access and connectivity between Station Approach and the town centre along the A370 corridor for cars, pedestrians, cyclist and public transport users.
- Ensure that street trees and greening are an integral element of the design.
- Ensure a coherent and consistent approach to public realm for whole area at the outset, in order to avoid piecemeal approach to landscape design etc.
- Use of consistent architecture across the new development sites in this area; and
- Use of high quality materials and detailing sympathetic to surrounding historic buildings to set a clear quality standard for subsequent developments in the town centre.



KEY:

Key development sites

Key Town Centre routes

P Railway/Long stay car park

Bus interchange

Boulevards/Historic Parks/Garden

Key public spaces (1-6)

Promenade

Pedestrian priority areas

Shared/upgraded pedestrian routes



View

Conservation areas

Listed buildings

Buildings of Historic Interest

Key public spaces

1. Town Square

2. Princess Royal Square

3. Big Lamp Corner

4. Church Square

5. Walliscote Place

6. Station Square

LOWER HIGH STREET

KEY EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

- 1 Mixed-use area includes the former Dolphin Square site, the area around St James Street as well as the southern section of the High Street and block including the NCP car park.
- 2 Whilst the area does contain a few fine buildings it also has significant areas of poor quality which offer redevelopment and regeneration opportunities.
- 3 Part of the former Dolphin Square area is undergoing a major redevelopment to include a cinema, gym, and food and drink outlets. This will significantly change the character of the area in terms of foot-fall and uses. Architecturally it will bring modern, bold and large scale buildings.
- 4 The area from the seafront to St James Street is historically part of the mid-19th century expansion of Weston village, with the original north-south orientated grid of streets remaining intact. The original character of small scale commercial and residential terraces is significantly eroded by larger scale post-war redevelopment of consistently poor quality. Remnants of the older terrace buildings remain, concentrated in St James Street, including public houses and a few isolated cottages. There is a mix of town centre land uses including independent retail and food and drink outlets, especially along St James Street. Significant night-time economy uses with bars and clubs are found towards Regent Street. Some of the market

traders from the former Dolphin Square have established in the area. Low quality residential accommodation is interspersed throughout with numerous empty buildings. The area will be liable to change once the Dolphin Square redevelopment is completed and new footfall patterns are established. Businesses will adapt to the new circumstances and customers. Building lines are generally closed and continuous with heights of ranging from 2-4 storeys. Though local colour and interest arises especially along St James Street, the area generally is in need of improvement, with potential for sympathetic re-development of individual plots and a need for comprehensive public realm improvements.

- 5 Regent Street links the St James area with the High street area and also the seafront with the town centre. This street is mainly a mix of bars and amusement arcades and a part of the night-time 'bright light' economy spilling from the Pier and promenade into the town centre.
- 6 The southern section of High Street and the block to its east comprise mainly retail uses and a large scale concrete 60/70's multi-storey car park. High Street south has been a significant retail area but the closure of TJ Hughes has left a conspicuous vacant post war building which fronts both St James Street and High Street. Coffee and charity shops dominate. Access to the NCP car park requires vehicles to use the most southern section of the street. The area does include the fine Victorian stone curving Magdala Buildings terrace opposite the Odeon and listed building at 18-20 Walliscote Road. This entire block to the east of High Street south is dominated by ground floor retail uses, with frequent vacancies and use changes.

FUTURE CHARACTER STATEMENT

This area will see both redevelopment and refurbishment. The Dolphin Square cinema and leisure redevelopment will provide a new focus for both daytime and evening activity and provide impetus for the revival of the area. The final phase of the Dolphin Square redevelopment will be a high quality, mainly residential, development that forms a key part of this character area. The design will need to enhance the conservation area and surrounding public realm and terminate key views. It will manage the transition between the tall leisure building under construction, the hotel on the seafront and the existing 2-3 storey built form. It will bring a new vitality to the area as well as create greater demand for services. The establishment of a Station Boulevard will connect the area with the wider redevelopments happening at Walliscote Place and Station Approach.

The area from the seafront to St James Street will be recognised as a mixed use town centre quarter, providing a key link between the High Street retail area to the north and the Dolphin Square development. A vibrant mix of creative uses, small businesses, restaurants and cafes will be encouraged, alongside contemporary residential conversions, re-development and student housing. The general grain of the built form will be retained, with the opportunity for incremental appropriate re-development of lower quality buildings within the existing street pattern.

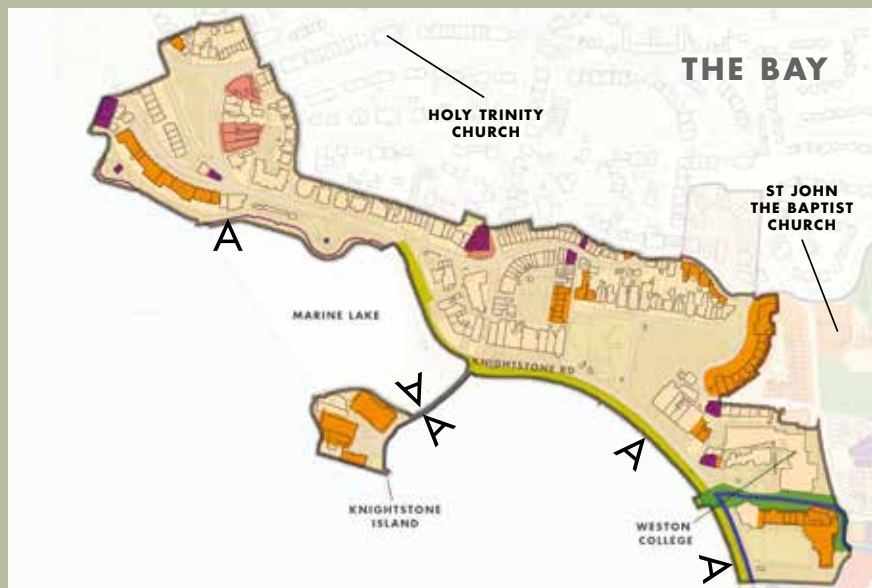
An improved coordinated public realm will unify the area's character and act as a backdrop to the activities taking place within it. Whilst it is anticipated that the area will remain a night-time destination, the control of associated noise and antisocial behaviour will be enforced to create a safe and attractive



environment for a growing number of town centre residents and visitors. The pedestrianisation of Regent Street will encourage greater footfall from the seafront. Surface improvements will provide a clear and obvious route to and from the seafront and pier. High Street south's retailing offer will be rejuvenated by the Dolphin Square development drawing people along this route. The upper storeys of properties will see residential uses add to the vibrancy of the area. In the longer term opportunities to redevelop some of the poor quality buildings in the block with the NCP car park will be explored.

DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

- Development of the Dolphin Square phase 4 site will need to establish a high quality place to live which can link the diverse adjacent developments creating a transition between the finer grain and lower urban form of St James Street and the larger mass of earlier development phases. It should make much of its seafront and conservation area location, establish Carlton Street as part of a new continuous and tree-lined east-west avenue linking the station to the seafront and deliver an informal north-south pedestrian route through the development, connecting Carlton Street and Oxford Street. The development should contribute to the quality of the surrounding public realm and overall greening of the town. Any development will need to make appropriate provision for associated car parking on site.
- Development and regeneration within the existing built form should contribute to the quarter's diverse character. Incremental, high quality re-development and refurbishments for independent business and meanwhile uses (temporary use of empty properties), mixed with existing and new independent retail, food and drink outlets, residential and student accommodation uses will be welcomed.
- All land uses, including those supporting the night-time economy should ensure a safe and attractive environment can be maintained at all times, controlling noise and anti-social behaviour.
- Creative re-use and sensitive contemporary re-development of existing buildings within the existing urban form will be encouraged.
- Retain vehicular access for access and servicing, including access to NCP car park off High Street.
- Improve public realm to create a coherent identity, strengthen physical and visual connections between the primary shopping area, the seafront, Dolphin Square and Walliscote Place.
- Where re-development of existing plots is appropriate, new development should respect the generally continuous building lines with occasional well-designed setbacks to increase spill-out/sitting out space.
- Development should respond to the environmental conditions/microclimate of the site, particularly close to the sea where sites are most exposed to the prevailing south-westerly winds, and where provision of shelter will be required.
- Care should be taken to enhance the strong building line and frontage typical of the existing seafront development.



KEY:

Key development sites

Key Town Centre routes

P Railway/Long stay car park

Bus interchange

Boulevards/Historic Parks/Garden

Key public spaces (1-6)

Promenade

Pedestrian priority areas

Shared/upgraded pedestrian routes

View

Conservation areas

Listed buildings

Buildings of Historic Interest

Key public spaces

1. Town Square

2. Princess Royal Square

3. Big Lamp Corner

4. Church Square

5. Walliscote Place

6. Station Square

THE BAY

EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

- 1 Area at the northern end of the Bay overlooking Marine Lake, Knightstone Island and the piers. Land rises steeply towards the wooded backdrop of Worlebury Hill.
- 2 Characterised by seafront hotels, bars, holiday accommodation, conversions to nursing homes, apartments and HMOs.
- 3 Located in the Birnbeck and Melrose Conservation Areas. Numerous listed buildings including the Royal Crescent, Royal Hotel and Claremont Crescent. Grade II* listed Birnbeck Pier and Holy Trinity Church provide individual points of architectural interest in the wider bay context. Buildings are predominantly three to four storey painted render or stone Victorian and Edwardian villas and terraces some with generous set-backs from the road, interspersed by areas of private open space and car parking.
- 4 Royal Parade and Knightstone Road separate the built edge from the newly renovated wide pedestrian promenade and the beach.
- 5 Extensive views from and to this area across the bay, to Knightstone Island, and Marine Lake. Holy Trinity Church spire and St John the Baptist Church tower punctuate the wooded backdrop behind the frontage buildings.



- 6 Much of the mid-19th residential character derives from sub-Regency, Italianate and Tudor fashion so typical of that era. Terraces and crescents to the fore with individual larger villas further uphill lend solidity. Boundary walls, gate pillars, an impressive variety of barge boarding and occasional remnants of terra cotta additions from the former Weston Royal Potteries add to a sense of architectural self-confidence. Timber sash windows were the norm, though many have been replaced using inappropriate materials or design detail. A mix of individual and shared private gardens have often given way to car parking, causing a loss of traditional boundary walls.

FUTURE CHARACTER STATEMENT

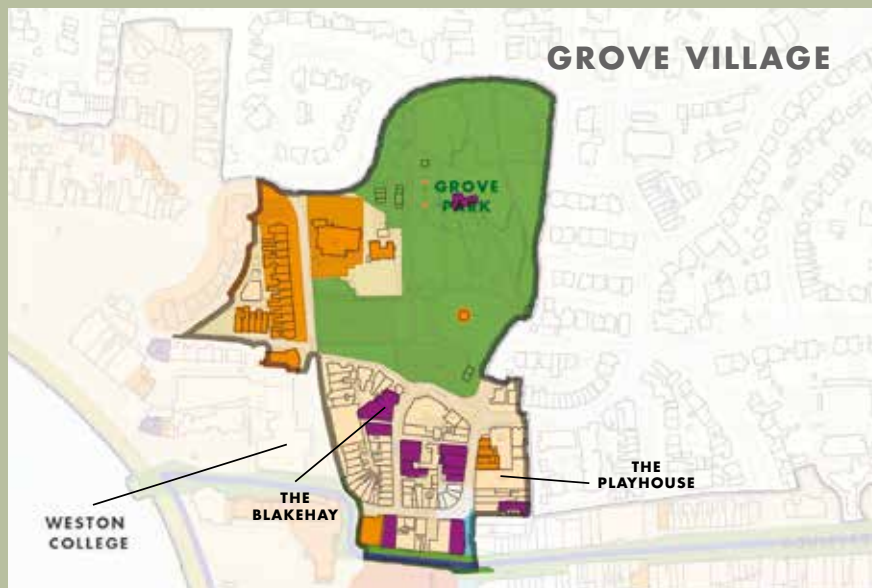
The prominence of the Bay area fronting the seafront will continue as the significant and defining character of Weston as a seaside town. The focus will be to create a mix of hotel and tourist accommodation including more boutique style hotels. Bars and restaurants will continue to feature strongly in the area. The conversion of some of the poorer quality hotels and buildings to quality residential use is to be welcomed where there is no realistic prospect of the hotel being refurbished. Conversions to poor quality residential accommodation and HMO's will be resisted. Some student accommodation in purpose built or converted premises will add to the vibrancy of the area and sites close to the existing college may be acceptable for additional college uses.

Views form an important component of the town and seascape in the area. Glimpses of the sea from inland are

to be maintained, properties should be orientated to make the most of sea views. The curving sweep of three to four storey buildings along the frontage, the wooded backdrop and the prominent church spire and tower form a cohesive vista which will be maintained.

DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

- Uses including leisure, cultural and tourist facilities, entertainment, and accommodation, also well designed residential uses, including purpose built student accommodation and college uses.
- Bars, cafes and restaurant uses which spill onto the pavement along the seafront will be encouraged.
- The conversion of poor quality existing and former hotels and care homes to well designed, quality residential uses will be welcomed where there is no realistic prospect of the existing facility being refurbished and used in the plan period.
- The conversion of sub-divided villas and houses back to single residences will be welcomed but further sub-divisions to poor quality housing and HMOs will be resisted.
- New development including extensions to existing properties should harmonise with the existing scale of development in this part of town and with the overall building materials which are mainly stone and painted render.
- Buildings significantly taller than the existing built form which disrupt the curving sweep of the bay would not normally be acceptable. Buildings should not compete with or obstruct the views of the Listed church spire and tower.
- Buildings should be orientated to make the most of sea views, ensuring seaward facing facades along the promenade.
- Conversions of Victorian and Edwardian properties will need to ensure the integrity of the buildings are not compromised, that detailing is maintained and that any extensions conform with or complement the period architecture.
- The curving sweep of mainly three to four storey buildings along the seafront should be maintained.
- Views from across the bay should continue to see both this curving built form, the wooded backdrop and the church spire and tower.
- Any public realm improvements would be required to be sympathetic to the historical character of the area and enhance both the conservation area and any listed building. Materials and street furniture should emphasise the distinctly Victorian character of this area.
- The importance of the pedestrian and cycling network along the coast and links with the wider town centre should be recognised and enhanced in any physical improvements made to the public realm.
- Any open spaces should take into account the impact of the wind and orientate seating areas to make the most of views but which are also sheltered.



KEY:

Key development sites

Key Town Centre routes

Railway/Long stay car park

Bus interchange

Boulevards/Historic Parks/Garden

Key public spaces (1-6)

Promenade

Pedestrian priority areas

Shared/upgraded pedestrian routes



View

Conservation areas

Listed buildings

Buildings of Historic Interest

Key public spaces

1. Town Square

2. Princess Royal Square

3. Big Lamp Corner

4. Church Square

5. Walliscote Place

6. Station Square

GROVE VILLAGE

KEY EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

- 1 Area to the north of the primary shopping area including Grove Park.
- 2 Grove Park is a registered historic park and garden and valued green space in the town centre containing some listed features. St John's Church, Glebe House, Grove House, War Memorial, Victorian band stand and nearby Oriel Terrace add quality to the parkland setting. The character area is included within a conservation area.
- 3 Distinct and vibrant character with a well-established night-time and cultural economy, with venues including the Playhouse Theatre, Heritage Café and Blakehay Theatre, some small scale specialist retail units.
- 4 Fine grain urban form structured by an informal grid of lanes enclosed by typically three storey buildings. Many interesting buildings including listed examples of Hans Price's work and buildings dating from Weston's early growth from a small village. A rich mix of architecture, including beautifully detailed and proportioned Italianate and Flemish architecture, Victorian and post-war buildings in varying condition, many in need of repair. Boundaries defined by strong closed building lines which abut the streets.
- 5 Narrow pavements and on-street parking restrict pedestrian movement and limit the opportunity for businesses to spill out and animate the public realm.

- 6 Strong links between the built up area and Grove Park, with attractive views to the wooded backdrop of Worlebury Hill and the Upper Stone Town. Limestone rubble, limestone ashlar and red brick are prevalent building materials which create a warm and textured character.

FUTURE CHARACTER STATEMENT

Grove Village will increasingly be recognised as the cultural, creative and university quarter of Weston-super-Mare – a destination at the northern end of the High Street with a strong focus on culture, leisure and the evening economy. The area is identified as having potential to become a 'seedbed' for the creative industries which are being increasingly priced out of Bristol, and for local talent to capitalise on Weston's regeneration. Grove Village will play an important role in drawing footfall northwards across the town centre and will become a year-round daytime and evening destination for local residents and visitors.

The growing student population attending Weston College and its new Law and Professional Services Academy at the Winter Gardens will strengthen this role, introducing a new energy and vitality to the area whilst also contributing towards the establishment of a mixed and balanced town centre community.

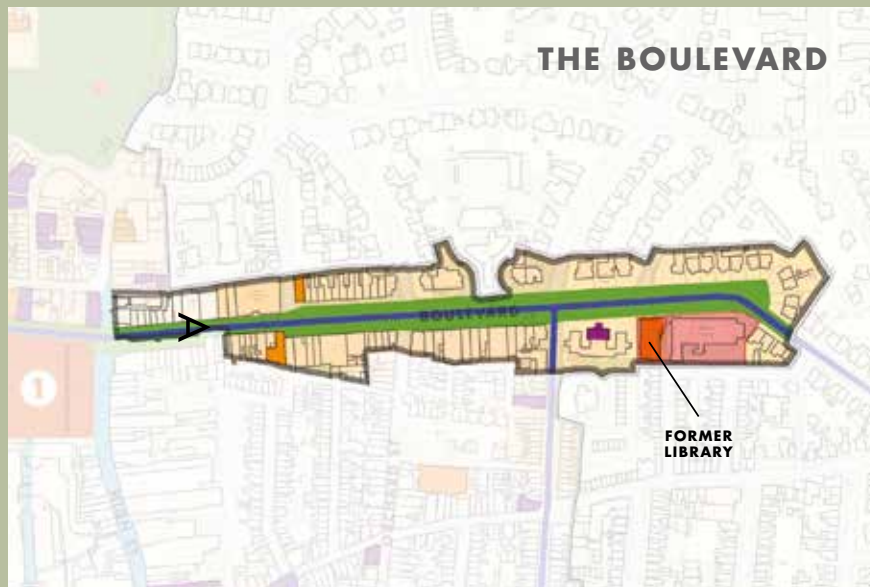
Public realm improvements will allow the intimate streets to provide valuable spill out space for a mix of cafes, restaurants and bars. The quality of the street scenes will be enhanced by sympathetic improvements to buildings and their frontages, including shop frontage and signage.





DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

- Respect and where possible strengthen the area's role as Weston's 'cultural quarter' by sympathetic improvements to the built form and providing complementary uses to the existing mix, focused around arts, culture, entertainment, education and the night-time economy including food and drink.
- Respect existing development scale (typically 2-4 storeys) and the fine grain of development found in this area reflecting the rich variety in plot widths, architectural style and materials through appropriate shop front and signage design, sensitive restoration and complementary contemporary design.
- Provide clear, direct and safe pedestrian links to surrounding character areas, particularly the Seafront and High Street, and between Weston College and the Winter Gardens, including the provision of improved pavement space, shared treatment, coordinated public realm, incorporating clear and safe crossing points, all in keeping with the heritage and character of the area.
- Improve legibility and natural wayfinding through a coordinated approach to public realm design and street furniture selection which reflects its character.
- Retain and frame views of Worlebury Hill and Grove Park to the north.
- Buildings which front the Town Square should enclose that space. Frontages, scale, and prominence should provide a coherent backdrop for the square.



KEY:

Key development sites

Key Town Centre routes

Railway/Long stay car park

Bus interchange

Boulevards/Historic Parks/Garden

Key public spaces (1-6)

Promenade

Pedestrian priority areas

Shared/upgraded pedestrian routes



View

Conservation areas

Listed buildings

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Key public spaces

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THE BOULEVARD

KEY EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

- 1 Built by a Francophile Lord of the Manor with views terminating at Christ Church spire in the east and the Royal Hotel in the west. Primary east-west approach route leading to Town Square.
- 2 Boulevard to the east: straight and generously proportioned tree-lined street (predominantly cherry) with consistent section including on street parking and generous pavements. Waterloo Street to the west: Buildings step in locally with narrower pavements and inconsistent tree planting.
- 3 Separates Upper Stone Town (Victorian residential area) to the north and Orchard Meadows area to the south. Land use mostly residential above independent retail, restaurants and businesses. Falls within the Boulevard/Montpelier Conservation Area. The town's largest concentration of Hans Fowler Price's 19th c. buildings.
- 4 Enclosed by predominantly 2-3 storey terraced buildings of varying style typical of the local Victorian character, with uniform offsets and close building lines. Some fine buildings including the Grade II listed Central library and Mercury building.
- 5 Predominant building material local limestone, with some red brick (former Central library).
- 6 Occasional attractive views towards Worlebury Hill and Upper Stone Town to the north.



FUTURE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Boulevard and Waterloo Street will maintain their role as one of the key east-west approach routes into the town centre.

Retailing on The Boulevard and Waterloo Street is anticipated to remain as a secondary and specialist area with a mix of smaller independent and niche retail outlets, restaurants, cafes, professional services and small businesses.

The grandeur of the street will be enhanced through sympathetic and coordinated treatment to shopfronts and signage and a clean, uncluttered and coordinated public realm treatment. Trees are an important part of the street's character and will be retained, managed and replaced if necessary.

DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

- Reinforce the strong east-west connectivity towards the town centre through appropriate transport and public realm design and establishing safe and clearly legible north-south crossing points.
- Reinforce the green character of the street by maintaining, planting and, where necessary, replacing single species avenue trees.
- The use of SuDS to curtail surface water run-off and green the street as appropriate.
- Encourage use of pavement cafe space;
- Ensure shopfronts and signage are of high quality design, are sympathetic to the character of the area and subservient to the buildings.
- New development to respect the massing form and scale of the surrounding built form; buildings to front the street and maintain the existing uniform and continuous building line.
- When development proposals are considered owners should be encouraged to upgrade the boundary treatment of properties.

ALEXANDRA PARADE

KEY EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

- 1 The site of the original railway, Alexandra Parade was laid out as an open space following the construction of a new railway station in 1866, and after failed attempts to sell the site as development plots.
- 2 This primary east-west approach route links Locking Road with Big Lamp Corner. Characterised by an elongated circular one way street system (Regent Street and Alexandra Parade) around an area of mature trees and raised lawns. Dominated by circulating traffic with a number of bus stops on-street.
- 3 Public realm in need of updating, cluttered with pedestrian barriers and traffic lights.
- 4 Built form typically 3-4 storeys on Regent Street and 2-3 storeys on Alexandra Parade, with continuous closed building line.
- 5 Variety of architectural styles including several interesting buildings in varying states of disrepair, including Cecil Howitt's Grade II listed Art Deco Odeon Cinema.
- 6 Building elevations dominated by uncoordinated shop front signs and advertising boards.



KEY:

Key development sites

Key Town Centre routes

P Railway/Long stay car park

Bus interchange

Boulevards/Historic Parks/Garden

Key public spaces (1-6)

Promenade

Pedestrian priority areas

Shared/upgraded pedestrian routes

View

Conservation areas

Listed buildings

Buildings of Historic Interest

Key public spaces

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2. Princess Royal Square

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4. Church Square

5. Walliscote Place

6. Station Square



FUTURE CHARACTER STATEMENT

Alexandra Parade will become a key arrival space into the town centre and will accommodate a bus interchange and key cycle links. Vehicular traffic around the space will be reduced, with traffic from the east directed onto Alfred Street northwards and from Walliscote Road North onto Oxford Street and Carlton Street, freeing up space on the Parade for the bus interchange and a high quality pedestrian space. The direct visual and physical link between Walliscote Road and Orchard Street will be strengthened. Improved access to green space and reduced through traffic will make a more attractive environment for pedestrians, with cafe and sitting out space encouraged.

The frontages of key buildings will be restored and signage and visual clutter reduced. Visual and physical links to Big Lamp Corner, Walliscote Place and Orchard Street will be improved through a coordinated approach to public realm design.

DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

- Reinforce the strong east-west connectivity towards the town centre through appropriate transport and public realm design.
- Accommodate the town centre bus interchange with a focus to the east of Orchard Street.
- Improve pedestrian, cycle and visual north-south connectivity.
- Reinforce the green character of the space and create better accessibility to it. Retaining and planting avenue trees and creating a high quality coordinated public realm design that includes SuDS and creates a high quality and complementary sequence of spaces with the new space at Walliscote Place and Big Lamp Corner.
- Create a high quality and flexible public space at the western end that relates to Big Lamp Corner and High Street ensuring a quality link between the two character areas and which establishes a sense of entry to the High Street area; and
- Reinforce and strengthen the urban form along routes in keeping with the existing scale and massing.

HIGH STREET AREA

KEY EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

- 1 The retail heart of Weston is centred on High Street, the main pedestrianised link between Grove Village and High Street South. It includes Town Square and Big Lamp Corner, two of the key public spaces in the Town Centre, and extends to the seafront including Victoria Square and the Winter Gardens.
- 2 There are a considerable number of buildings of interest in a variety of architectural styles and of varying quality. A rich variety of building materials in warm tones typical of Weston, including brick, painted brick, render, tiles and limestone ashlar including some rare lead detailing. Characterised by a closed continuous building line with a variety of plot sizes and a typical building height of 2-3 storeys. The Sovereign Centre occupies a large urban block west of the High Street behind existing buildings, with internal access to Town Square and is one of the largest plots in the town centre.
- 3 Town Square is a fragmented space with limited permeability and animation.
- 4 There is a lack of cohesion in the public realm in terms of design and materials. Pedestrianised High Street is looking tired. Uncontrolled shopfront design and signage reduce the coherence of the streetscape and adversely affect architectural and streetscape character. Few evening economy uses, little residential use and lack of activity in the evenings contribute to an unattractive area in the evening.



KEY:

Key development sites

Key Town Centre routes

P Railway/Long stay car park

Bus interchange

Boulevards/Historic Parks/Garden

Key public spaces (1-6)

Promenade

Pedestrian priority areas

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- 5 Poor visibility and connection between the Seafront and High Street Areas.
- 6 Views north to Worlebury Hill and Upper Stone Town along High Street are a key feature.

FUTURE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The High Street Area will be strengthened as the primary shopping area and an attractive town centre destination, focussing on the pedestrianised High Street and two key public spaces at either end. At one end, Town Square will have considerable impact as an improved space with increased leisure, food and drink offer at the Sovereign Centre. It will provide the setting for the new college facility at the Winter Gardens and improved setting to the Royal Hotel. The link via Spider Lane will be enhanced to create an enticing throughway from seafront to High Street. The role of Big Lamp Corner as an important public space at the heart of a consolidated, enlivened town centre and at one end of the pedestrianised Regent Street linking the town centre to the seafront and the Pier will also be strengthened. An improved frontage to the Sovereign Centre from the promenade at Victoria Square will be supported. The High Street will be upgraded with improved surfacing and street furniture. The potential to construct a canopy will be investigated. The qualities of some of the existing built form will be strengthened, with opportunities to gradually upgrade some of the lower quality post war buildings and a more sympathetic treatment to shop fronts.

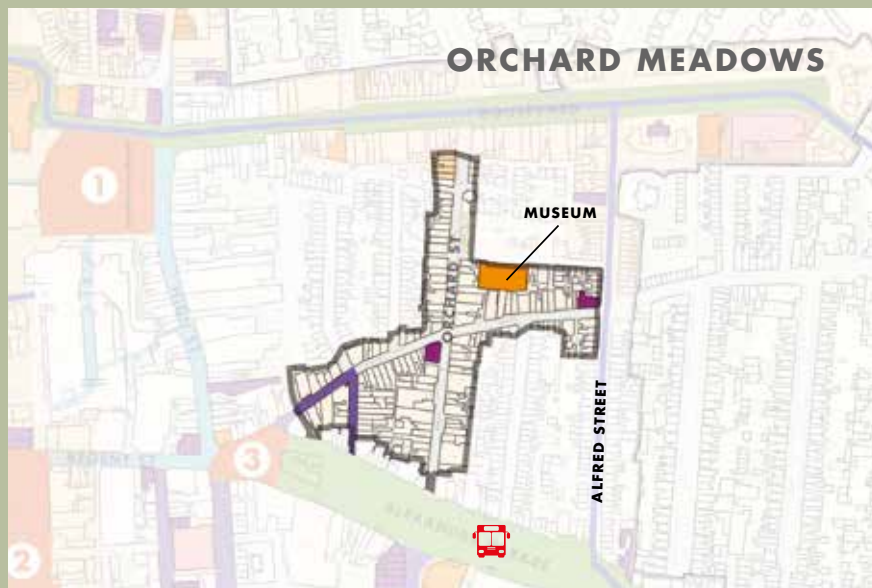


DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

- Strengthen the area as the main town centre retail and leisure destination and supporting focused, food and beverage outlets facing Town Square.
- Create improved direct links to Orchard/ Meadows, High Street South, Grove Village and the seafront.
- Contribute to an improved and coordinated high quality public realm.
- New development to respect existing scale (typically 2-4 storeys) and reflect rich variety in plot widths, architectural style and materials through appropriate shop front and signage design, sensitive restoration and complementary contemporary development.
- Make a positive contribution to the vitality, viability and diversity of the town by encouraging a greater mix of uses including retail, food and drink, leisure, residential and education to encourage a continuous daytime and evening economy, whilst respecting the need to prioritise retail development on the primary shopping frontages.
- Improvements to Town Square should ensure its use as a flexible event space with active uses encouraged and greater connectivity to the seafront, High Street and Grove Village.
- Improve the setting and views of the Royal Hotel including transformation of the linkage to the Seafront along Spider Lane and the creation of an animated and active western edge to Town Square.
- Sovereign Centre improvements should ensure the complex relates better to the surrounding buildings and spaces and create a prominent and well-designed seafront frontage.



- Proposals for the development or enhancement of Victoria Square should ensure significant linkages from the seafront to the Sovereign centre.
- Proposals which provide residential use above shops will be welcomed; and
- Shopfront design (including the use of security shutters) should reflect the historic quality of the building. A coordinated approach throughout the primary shopping area and the need to balance security with a welcoming night-time environment is required.



KEY:

■ Key development sites

— Key Town Centre routes

P Railway/Long stay car park

🚌 Bus interchange

■ Boulevards/Historic Parks/Garden

■ Key public spaces (1-6)

■ Promenade

■ Pedestrian priority areas

■ Shared/upgraded pedestrian routes



View

■ Conservation areas

■ Listed buildings

■ Buildings of Historic Interest

Key public spaces

1. Town Square

2. Princess Royal Square

3. Big Lamp Corner

4. Church Square

5. Walliscote Place

6. Station Square

ORCHARD MEADOWS

KEY EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

- 1 Historically forming the 'working class' quarter of Weston-super-Mare, characterised by a dense, fine grained urban form comprising tight lanes lined by a mix of narrow 2 and 3 storey buildings. North-south lanes link Alexandra Parade and the Boulevard.
- 2 Mixed use area including residential, independent retail and business (with a wider range of uses and activity on Meadow and Orchard Streets and primarily residential use further east).
- 3 An eclectic mix of building materials including brick, painted brick, render, tiles and limestone ashlar. Area has a number of Victorian shop fronts, some have been restored but others insensitively changed or neglected. Boundaries are defined by continuous building lines which tightly abut the streets and have a strong influence over their character.
- 4 A concentration of poor quality dwellings and HMOs, which, coupled with vacancy and associated disrepair of commercial premises, are eroding the area's character. Building facades and streets have too many signs and visual clutter which competes with character defining details. Narrow pavements and on-street parking issues inhibit pedestrian movement and restrict the opportunity for businesses to spill out and animate the public realm.
- 5 Limited connectivity to High Street and Boulevard.

- 6 Weston Museum is located in Burlington Street just off Orchard Street and forms an important cultural building in this part of town.

FUTURE CHARACTER STATEMENT

Orchard Meadows will be recognised as Weston's 'lanes' quarter, providing a lively mix of independent shops, food and drink outlets, cafes and independent businesses focused on Orchard and Meadow Streets. The change in demand for retail space has resulted in a more mixed area recently with an increase in shops converting to residential properties. Nonetheless Orchard Meadows will continue to be a clearly defined neighbourhood with a strong identity. Where conversions to residential use happen the aim should be to ensure better design standards which will help regenerate the area and add to the vibrancy of the community.

Located between two primary east-west routes – Alexandra Parade to the south and the Boulevard to the north – Orchard Meadows plays an important role in improving the connectivity and legibility of the town centre. Pedestrian and cycle access will be prioritised, made safer and more attractive and public realm improvements at Big Lamp Corner and Alexandra Parade will bind Orchard Meadows to surrounding character areas and the High Street, improve legibility and uplift the quality of the streetscape. Reducing the number of poor quality HMOs and vacant commercial premises, combined with the repair of the urban fabric and improved public realm will attract a wider mix of people and contribute towards a diverse and balanced town centre community with a sense of ownership over their neighbourhood.





DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

- Retain and strengthen the urban form and lanes character. Uses including independent food, drink, retail and small-scale commercial promises will be supported in principle.
- Whilst some change of use from shops to residential is expected efforts to concentrate the shopping/commercial activity towards the western section of Meadow Street and the southern part of Orchard Street will be supported.
- Support and encourage the appropriate conversions, repair and enhancement of existing buildings of heritage value.
- Unify the character and quality of the area and improve legibility and natural wayfinding through coordinated public realm treatment and coordinated and sympathetic shop front design.
- Reflect and bring out rich variety in plot widths, architectural style and materials.
- Draw people into the area by improving public realm and visibility from Big Lamp Corner and Alexandra Parade as key gateway spaces into the area.
- Improve physical and visual connectivity between the lanes and High Street and the Boulevard.
- Incorporate north-south cycle link on Orchard Street subject to detailed design and feasibility.
- Control the number of HMOs and improve quality of existing buildings;
- New development to respect existing closed and generally continuous building line; and
- Improve the frontage street setting of Weston Museum, currently dominated by single storey private garages.



SECTION 3

INVESTING IN REGENERATION

9 DELIVERING REGENERATION

Weston-super-Mare town centre has suffered from a lack of investment, leading to tired fabric in much of the public and private realm. This has had a consequential impact of limiting the attractiveness of the town and the demographic mix. It is recognised however, that there is now the opportunity to revive the town's fortunes through a range of measures to add life and economic vitality to the town.

9.1 Kick starting the process and taking the initiative

To overcome the self-perpetuating cycle of poor quality and low value development, North Somerset Council, in partnership with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and Historic England, is intervening in the housing market to create a step change in the housing offer at key strategic locations sending a powerful message that Weston-super-Mare town centre is an attractive place to live, work and invest. North Somerset Council is also prepared to take an active role, investing where necessary to implement its vision and deliver improvements.

9.2 Compulsory Purchase Orders

In order to facilitate development, re-development, improvements and ensure the proper planning of Weston-super-Mare Town Centre the council is prepared to use Compulsory Purchases Orders (CPOs) to acquire land if necessary.

9.3 Involving the private sector

Whilst the council is intervening on some key sites the majority of the regeneration initiatives are expected to come forward from the private sector. The council welcomes early discussions on proposals.

9.4 Significant town centre investments already completed or under way

Although the town generally has suffered from a lack of investment there are notable examples of recent investment;

- The Grand Pier was rebuilt following the 2008 fire.
- Major improvements to sea defences, seafront roads and enhancements to the promenade with new lighting, seating and public art have taken place winning many prestigious awards in 2011.
- A 112 bed Premier Inn hotel and Brewers Fayre restaurant opened in December 2012. Trading in the hotel and restaurant has been excellent.
- McLaren Life developed the new 380 space multi storey town centre car park in Carlton Street. This was completed and opened in August 2012.
- The construction of the third phase of the Dolphin Square project is under way. This includes a 1,600 seat Cineworld cinema, leisure facilities and restaurants. This is expected to open in the summer of 2017 bringing a new variety to the town centre and expanding leisure opportunities in the evening and year-round.





- In 2015 Weston College was granted University Centre status and funding to create a Law and Professional Services Academy and University Centre in Weston-super-Mare. This will be housed within the Winter Gardens and former Arosfa Hotel, bringing significant numbers of new students to the town. The iconic ballroom at the Winter Gardens will be restored to its former glory, protecting and enhancing this prominent facility for community use.
- Weston town centre is one of 20 locations outside London designated as a Housing Zone, meaning it is a priority area for funding. Recent acquisitions include the site of the final phase of Dolphin Square together with the site of the former Sands night club and the Oxford Corner cafe. This will now allow comprehensive redevelopment of a large area right in the town centre, complementing McLaren Life's restaurant and leisure development at Dolphin Square. The HCA has also acquired both the vacant land at Sunnyside Road and Locking Road Car Park for another scheme which will provide a further development opportunity, complementing the council's plans for an improved entrance to the town centre.
- The council has purchased the police station and former Magistrates' Court which it aims to develop as contemporary apartments, setting a new quality and value benchmark for the town.
- Banksy's 'Dismaland' helped to highlight the economic benefits of a thriving creative sector and the council is looking at developing a creative hub to support and inspire creative entrepreneurship in the town. Plans to develop the tropicana as an arts and performance venue are also under way. As well as providing a catalyst for economic growth, these will help to make Weston town centre an attractive place to live for a more diverse range of people, including young professionals.
- Refurbishment of The Centre (opposite the Town Hall) – repairing the art-deco building's façade, a fresh coat of paint and the installation of planters and seating outside the front of the building have dramatically improved the whole site, making it much more attractive for shoppers,

visitors and residents. With the help of the council the owners of all 17 units have worked together to organise and invest in the much-needed improvements. Working collectively has not only meant the work can be done more cost effectively but has also enabled the owners to select one consistent colour scheme (in a striking art-deco Miami-style) for the repainting of the whole façade. The repainting and building repairs were funded by the owners of the building.

- In 2015 the main shopping precinct in Weston, the Sovereign Centre was sold to new owners bringing with it more investment and possible expansion.

This significant investment and the opportunities presented by numerous key sites now being simultaneously unlocked for development by key partner organisations working together, offers an unprecedented opportunity to drive regeneration forward on a large scale. High quality housing is at its heart together with a major leisure development at Dolphin Square and flagship Law and Professional Services Academy at the Winter Gardens.

9.5 Proposed works

Further works are also being proposed these include:

- A bid to the Starter Homes land fund.
- Town Square public realm enhancements.
- Station boulevard improvements.
- Walliscote Place enhancements.
- Alexandra Parade enhancements and transport hub.
- Further refurbishment projects similar to the painting of The Centre.

The town centre has been designated by government as one of just 20 Housing Zones across the country. This programme offers support and incentives to local authorities and local developers working together to build homes on brownfield sites.

9.6 Delivering High Quality Design

Ensuring high quality design is at the heart of the regeneration programme for the town centre. A design review panel will be established and applicants for large or sensitive sites will be required to engage with the panel at an early stage in the design process. The panel's recommendations will be material to the planning decision.

The council is also seeking the designation of a Heritage Action Zone in Weston-super-Mare town centre from Historic England to secure help and funding aimed at ensuring that the regeneration and renewal of Weston's heritage drives forward sustainable economic development and community life.

9.7 Further guidance and projects

This SPD sets out the overall masterplan and principles for development.

Detailed guidance on specific types of development, schemes and design briefs will be needed to provide more detailed and specific advice and encourage and support better design.

The list of further projects includes;

- Conservation Area appraisals.
- Update of the buildings of local townscape and historical interest.
- Shop front design and repair guidance.
- Changing shops to residential use.
- Town Square improvements.
- Station Boulevard enhancements.
- Laneways and independent retailing.
- Tall building strategy.
- Greening/planting programme.



9.8 Infrastructure Delivery

A key benefit of focusing development in Weston town centre is that many of the services and facilities needed for residents, visitors and businesses are already in place and easily accessible. Maintaining successful and sustainable growth will require further investment in infrastructure, but this is anticipated to be less significant than would be the case on a greenfield or out-of-town site.

In the town centre growth will take place across a number of dispersed sites, most of which are not in themselves expected to create a substantial infrastructure pressure. However, cumulative effects will need to be addressed. It is likely that much of the infrastructure will require public sector investment. The council is working with partners (including the HCA and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)) to find suitable funding.

Infrastructure requirements are likely to include:

- Improvements to transport and the public realm.
- Additional school places, particularly at pre-school and primary level.
- Provision of utilities and broadband.
- Measures to support the employment-led approach in Weston, such as delivery of the Creative Hub.
- Investment in community, leisure and health facilities to ensure their ongoing sustainability.
- Low-cost and/or affordable housing including starter homes.

9.9 How will the infrastructure be funded and delivered?

Guidance on the principles of infrastructure delivery in North Somerset can be found in our Core Strategy Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Due to low development viability and the small-scale nature of individual sites, it is likely that delivery of much of the infrastructure will require public



sector investment. North Somerset Council is working with partners including the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to find suitable funding. This will include value-capture mechanisms on public-sector-led sites, bids for funding to bring forward strategic transport schemes as opportunities arise and working with partners and other agencies to align delivery and leverage improvements. The Council will also use its own funding (e.g. LTP allocations) to deliver highways and transport improvements.

9.10 Will developers have to contribute to infrastructure costs?

North Somerset Council wishes to take a supporting and enabling approach to delivery of growth in Weston Town Centre and will not seek financial contributions towards infrastructure which is needed as a result of cumulative growth from developments located in the proposed nil rate CIL charging area. This approach will be reviewed in the future should viability improve.

There are typically two main ways in which developers deliver and fund infrastructure and affordable housing. These are:

- The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): this is a financial contribution charged to developments on a per sqm basis. It is particularly suitable for funding infrastructure required from lots of smaller developments.
- Section 106 planning obligations and Section 38/278 highways agreements: these are negotiated legal agreements through which a developer commits to



Figure 10

funding or directly delivering infrastructure that is needed to mitigate the impacts of their development proposal. It is useful for addressing site specific problems, particularly on larger sites.

It is anticipated that North Somerset Council will introduce a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in 2017. CIL rates must be set at a level that is affordable for the majority of development. Based on viability appraisal work carried out for the CIL North Somerset Council is proposing a nil rate for residential, educational, community and B-class commercial development. If adopted this **would mean most developments in the town centre area would not pay any CIL charges.**

Further information regarding CIL can be found on our webpage www.n-somerset.gov.uk/cil.

Figure 10 shows the proposed areas in the town centre where different charging rates are likely to apply. The majority of the regeneration area is within the nil CIL area (area A on the map).

Section 106 contributions towards infrastructure may be required from some of the larger town centre sites, where they create a specific problem that needs to be addressed. This might for example be for some minor changes to a road junction needed to ensure safe access to a new development. **It is envisaged that most such requirements will be small-scale, as wider infrastructure will be delivered using public sector funding and the CIL.**

Sites of greater than 100 dwellings may also need to contribute to education provision.

Where sites are brought forward by the public sector, North Somerset Council will seek to incorporate value-capture mechanisms to ensure that any benefit from uplift in property values is reinvested in ongoing regeneration and infrastructure.

9.11 Will developers have to contribute towards affordable housing?

Through the Core Strategy (CS16), supported by the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document, the council seeks to negotiate affordable housing on all sites of 11 units or more (updated following National Planning Policy Guidance amendments).

Research for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and from recent development proposals demonstrates that that development viability in the town centre is generally low and that affordable housing provision is likely to be undeliverable on most sites.

To enable acceleration of site delivery, the Council will accept this CIL research as adequate evidence of a lack of viability for sites in the nil-CIL zone (Area A, Figure 10) and will not require any on site affordable housing, contributions or further viability evidence relating to affordable housing from those sites¹. This will apply to all sites that commence work before 31 March 2020, after which our guidance will be reviewed.

The North Somerset Development Contributions SPD states that any contributions towards affordable housing or other S106 requirements that are reduced as a result of viability should be subject to measures to boost the contributions through public sector grant and market recovery mechanism, except where exceptional circumstances apply. It has been agreed that the town centre regeneration area represents exceptional circumstances, in that it has lower viability than the rest of North Somerset and there is a need to de-risk investment to incentivise developers. Market recovery mechanisms will not therefore

¹ This position is subject to confirmation of the CIL evidence base through forthcoming consultation and examination, expected to be completed early 2017.

apply to developments that commence before 31 March 2020, at which point this decision will be reviewed.

The Council will continue work with Registered Providers and other delivery partners to identify development opportunities to provide Affordable Housing within the town centre regeneration area including utilising public subsidy to deliver affordable homes where possible.

The exemptions from affordable housing set out above will not apply to sites of more than 250 dwellings. Sites located outside of this nil-CIL zone will be subject to the affordable housing requirement as detailed within the existing Affordable Housing SPD (2013).

Refer to www.n-somerset.gov.uk/affordablehousing for more information about how the Council applies its affordable housing policy.

9.12 Employment-led requirements

Most residential sites in the regeneration area will not be expected to make direct provision for employment-led requirements.

CS20 of the North Somerset Core Strategy states that:

"Throughout Weston-super-Mare proposals should provide for 1.5 jobs per home over the plan period both at Weston Villages and elsewhere on sites of 10 or more dwellings. The type of employment should be acceptable in planning terms and not detrimental to the overall employment strategy in the town."

Outside of the Weston Villages and allocated sites, if on-site provision is not suitable, financial contributions will be sought towards economic development through the use of planning obligations. These contributions will be agreed through Section 106 and the Community Infrastructure Levy and will be focussed on local initiatives and to support the delivery of employment elsewhere in the town."

An SPD on 'Employment-led delivery at Weston-super-Mare' was adopted in November 2014. For areas of Weston outside of the Junction 21



Employment delivery requirements as set out in the Employment-led delivery at Weston-super-Mare SPD

Scale of proposal	Preferred delivery mechanism (in order of preference)
0 – 9 dwellings	No requirement.
10 – 49 dwellings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Financial contributions. 2. Off-site provision within the Junction 21 Enterprise Area. 3. On-site provision or off-site provision within the remainder of Weston-super-Mare.
50+ dwellings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On-site provision. 2. Off-site elsewhere within J21 EA. 3. Off-site within remainder of Weston. 4. Financial contribution (£106).

Enterprise Area this provided guidance on requirements as set out in the table opposite:

It is not practical or suitable for most town centre regeneration area developments to provide on-site employment alongside housing. Any 'under-provision' in this area will be compensated for through commercial developments coming forward in their own right, including 300 jobs at Dolphin Square and around 45 jobs at the Creative Hub.

For sites of more than 50 dwellings, developers should consider whether it is appropriate for any on-site employment to be provided, but this will not be bound by strict job targets.

Financial contributions towards jobs would be through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which is expected to be set at zero for most of the town centre regeneration area.

The Council may require developers to take other measures to support employment and skills growth, including local supply chain targets, apprenticeships and joint marketing activities.

APPENDIX 1

REFERENCES:

- North Somerset Core Strategy www.n-somerset.gov.uk/corestrategy
- Sites and Policies Plan Part 1 Development management policies 2016 and Part 2 draft site Allocations
www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sitesandpolicies
- Site Allocations Plan Consultation Draft March 2016
www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sitesandpolicies
- Residential Design Guide SPD – Protecting the living conditions of neighbours
www.n-somerset.gov.uk/spds
- Residential Design Guide SPD – Appearance and character of house extensions and alterations
www.n-somerset.gov.uk/spds
- Highways Development Design Guide
www.n-somerset.gov.uk/spds
- Parking Standards SPD
www.n-somerset.gov.uk/spds



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Braille or audio formats on request.

Help is also available for people who
require council information in languages
other than English.