

# Sustainability Appraisal

## Scoping Report

Consultation Version  
March 2020





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## Non-Technical Summary

### Sustainability and the Sustainability Appraisal Process

- i. The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process is a process that aims to ensure that all significant plans and programmes which relate to land use issues are compatible with the aims of sustainable development. These include the documents that will form the local planning policy framework for North Somerset.
- ii. 'Sustainable development' has been defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. There are economic, social and environmental dimensions to this. Sustainable development is not development that balances or trades off these three aspects but development that enables the economy, society and the environment to be sustained together.
- iii. The origins of the SA process lie with the European Union's Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive, which aims to ensure that all significant land use plans, programmes and policies take into consideration environmental issues and impacts. The UK's SA process has widened this scope to also include consideration of economic and social issues when assessing specific plans, programmes and policies relating to land use.
- iv. Guidance contained in Planning Practice Guidance is that the sustainability appraisal should only focus on what is needed to assess the likely significant effects of the Local Plan. It should focus on the environmental, economic and social impacts that are likely to be significant. It does not need to be done in any more detail, or using more resources, than is considered to be appropriate for the content and level of detail in the Local Plan. This advice will be followed in the production of the SA for the North Somerset Local Plan.

### The Local Plan

- v. The new North Somerset Local Plan is a formal development plan document. The plan area will be the administrative area of North Somerset (see [Map 1](#)). The main purpose of the Local Plan is to review and roll-forward policies and allocations in the existing development plan documents. It will review and eventually replace the Core Strategy 2006-2026 (adopted 2017) and the Sites and Policies Plan, Parts 1 and 2 (adopted 2016 and 2018). It will set the planning policies on which decisions will be made within the plan period, 2023-2038. The plan will reflect the overall amount of new residential and employment development determined and where it should be located, through site

allocations, as well as set out the infrastructure required to support that growth e.g. schools, transport, community facilities and green spaces. New sites for non-strategic development in the district will also be allocated. The Local Plan will also set out the suite of planning policies that will be used to deliver sustainable development in North Somerset.

- vi. This Scoping Report sets out a Framework for how the SA will be carried out for the new Local Plan. A Challenges and Choices document is being produced to consider the options which can be considered to deliver the housing requirement for the district. These options will undergo a high-level sustainability appraisal using the sustainability appraisal objectives identified within this scoping report. Following consultation on these spatial options, a preferred approach will be selected which will be put forward into the draft Local Plan.
- vii. The Local Plan will contain a range of policy types, including area-based, development management and site allocations policies. It is unlikely that the same methodology for assessing the development management policies will be suitable to assess site allocations within the plan. For this reason, different appraisal methods will be selected to effectively appraise the different policy types within the Local Plan.
- viii. The first stage of the scoping process has been to identify and review relevant plans, programmes and policies that influence the Plan. This includes looking at documents at national and regional/sub-regional and local level. They have been identified and reviewed to ensure the North Somerset Local Plan complies with the aims and objectives of complementary plans, programmes and policies.
- ix. To assess what options would be most sustainable for the future development of North Somerset, it has been necessary to identify those key environmental and other sustainability issues that currently exist in the District. This process has included looking at a range of information and indicators on economic, social and environmental conditions to illustrate the issues relevant to the authority.
- x. This Report then sets out the SA Framework. This will be used to assess, against relevant sustainability criteria, the different options and alternatives being considered when progressing the North Somerset Local Plan. The SA process should identify any likely significant adverse effects and measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset them. The sustainability appraisal must consider all reasonable alternatives and assess them in the same level of detail as the option the plan-maker proposes to take forward in the Local Plan (the preferred approach).

- xi. The SA Framework consists of a set of sustainability objectives against which the Plan's emerging policy options will be tested.
- xii. The Scoping Report is published for consultation in accordance with the SEA Directive and Regulations. Consultation on an interim scoping report took place alongside the consultation on a Local Plan Issues and Options document in 2018. This revised scoping report will accompany the new Local Plan Challenges and Choices document which is due to be consulted on in May 2020. The consultation is to primarily seek the view of the three statutory consultees, namely the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England. This report defines the scope of the SA and the proposed level of detail that will be included. In considering the Draft Scoping Report, consultees are invited to answer the following specific questions:
1. *Have all relevant plans and programmes been referenced?*
  2. *Is any significant environmental, social or economic data missing or misrepresented?*
  3. *Are there any additional sustainability issues within North Somerset that need to be considered in the development of the New Local Plan document?*
  4. *Do you agree with the proposed Sustainability Appraisal Framework?*
  5. *Is the proposed methodology for the next stages of the Sustainability Appraisal correct?*
- xiii. Comments received via the consultation process may be used to inform further iterations of the scoping report and inform the next stage within the SA process.
- xiv. Following on from this scoping stage, the full Sustainability Appraisal is undertaken. An interim high-level SA Report will be published alongside the Challenges and Choices document in May 2020, a draft SA main report will be published alongside a consultation version of the Local Plan and a Final SA Report will then be published alongside the Publication version of the Local Plan. Feedback from consultation on both the Scoping Report and the Challenges and Choices document, together with any other additional findings and updates will be incorporated into an ongoing and iterative SA process.

If you have any queries on this report or any other aspect of the SA process, please contact:

- E-mail: [planning.policy@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@n-somerset.gov.uk)
- Post: Post Point 15, Town Hall, Walliscote Grove Road, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1UJ

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 North Somerset Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan which will be one of the principal Development Plan Documents (DPD) for the administrative area of North Somerset for the period 2023 to 2038. This document will review and, once adopted, replace the following existing local plans:
- Core Strategy 2006 - 2026
  - Development Management Policies - Sites and Policies Plan Part 1
  - Site Allocations Plan - Sites and Policies Plan Part 2
- 1.2 This Scoping Report provides the framework for the sustainability appraisal of the North Somerset Local Plan. This Scoping Report draws on the information collated for the Scoping Reports produced previously for the above Local Plan documents. The information contained within these reports has been reviewed and updated where necessary.
- 1.3 Part of the purpose of the new Local Plan will be to allocate sites for strategic development, as well as to allocate new sites for non-strategic development in the local authority area. The Local Plan will also set out the suite of planning policies that will be used to deliver sustainable development in North Somerset.

### Sustainable Development

- 1.5 National legislation and the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) require that local plans are prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. Through their plans, local planning authorities should seek opportunities to achieve each of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development with net gains across all three. Significant adverse impacts on any of these dimensions should be avoided and, wherever possible, alternative options which reduce or eliminate such impacts should be pursued.
- 1.6 The term 'sustainable development' originates from the Brundtland Commission Report of the World Commission of Environment and Development in 1987, which defined sustainable development as:
- “Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.*
- 1.7 The Government has developed a strategy for mainstreaming sustainable development that sets out the more robust effort in a number of areas:

- National and international sustainability
- Transparency and public accountability
- Operations and procurement requirements
- Protecting the natural environment
- Fairness and improved wellbeing

1.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's view of what sustainable development in England means in practice for the planning system. It identifies three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform several mutually dependent roles which work simultaneously with one another:

a) **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) **an environmental objective** – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment**

1.9 Under the European Directive 2001/42/EC (known as the SEA Directive) local authorities are required to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of major land use planning documents.

1.10 The purpose of SEA is to consider issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, and material assets, cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage, and landscape (as well as the interrelationship between these)



and to determine how the council's policies could influence each, identifying any likely significant effects on the environment.

- 1.11 By considering these issues in detail, SEA seeks to ensure that environmental considerations are fully integrated in the preparation and adoption of plans, programmes and policies which are likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

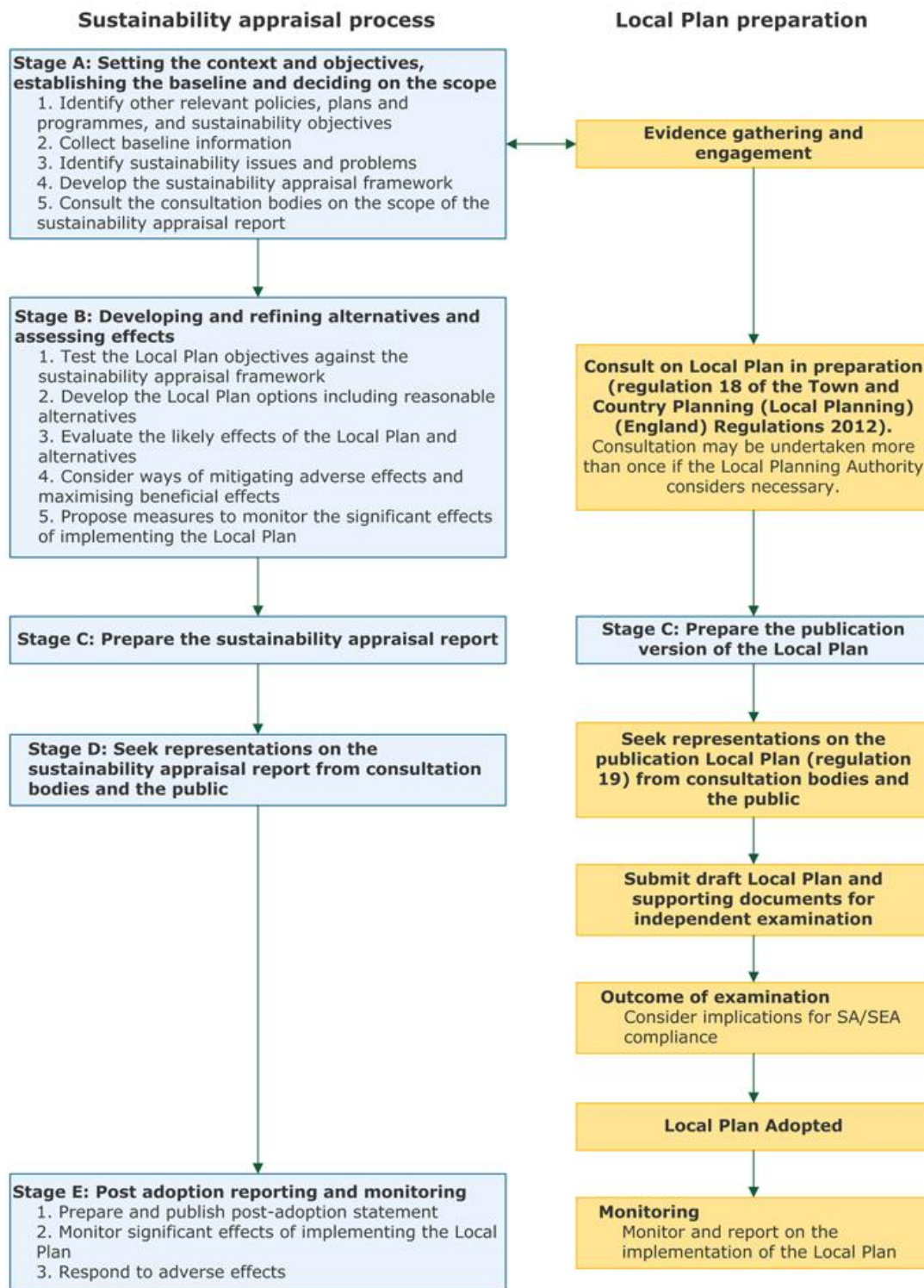
### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- 1.12 Whilst SEA focuses on environmental issues, Sustainability Appraisal (SA) widens the approach to also include economic and social issues. The purpose of SA is to ensure that the principles of sustainable development are taken fully into account when preparing local planning documents.
- 1.13 The SA process has been designed so that, by carrying out one appraisal process, local authorities can also satisfy the requirements of the SEA Directive. Therefore, it should be taken that where the Scoping Report refers to the SA process it also incorporates the requirements of the SEA Directive.
- 1.14 The SA will also put in place a framework to monitor such policies once in operation, to ensure that they are working in a way that accords with sustainability objectives. This will help in reviewing policies later and revising or replacing them if necessary.
- 1.15 A final Sustainability Appraisal Report will accompany the Publication version of the Local Plan. This will identify and report on the likely significant effects (both negative and positive) of the plan and of reasonable alternatives and propose measures to reduce or enhance those effects.

### **SA Methodology and SEA Requirements**

- 1.16 The SA process is typically conducted in five stages of preparation (see [Diagram 1](#) overleaf), the first being the Scoping stage (stage A); and the second and third (stages B and C) being the actual appraisal stage. This is followed by seeking comments on the SA report (stage D) and finally post adoption reporting and monitoring (stage E).

Diagram 1: Stages of the SA process



Source: National Planning Practice Guidance

## Scoping Report

1.18 The Scoping Report is the first step in undertaking a SA. The Scoping Report undertakes the following tasks:

- Task A1: Identifying other relevant policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives.
- Task A2: Collecting baseline information.
- Task A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems.
- Task A4: Developing the sustainability appraisal framework.
- Task A5: Consulting on the scope of the sustainability appraisal.

1.19 This scoping stage (Stage A) identifies the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the SA report. It should set out the context, objectives and approach of the assessment; and identify relevant environmental, economic and social issues and objectives.

1.20 The process of SA requires an examination of the state of North Somerset as it is today and the identification of key issues that could affect its future sustainability. Using this information, sustainability objectives are then developed, against which the draft proposals, including the Issues and Options of the North Somerset Local Plan will be assessed. This will inform any judgements on what options best achieve the sustainability objectives.

## Consultation

1.21 In accordance with the relevant regulations, comments on this Scoping Report are invited from the following statutory environmental consultation bodies:

- Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Natural England

1.22 In considering the Scoping Report, consultees are asked to address the following questions:

- 1. Have all relevant plans and programmes been referenced?*
- 2. Is any significant environmental, social or economic data missing or misrepresented?*
- 3. Are there any additional sustainability issues within North Somerset that need to be considered in the development of the New Local Plan document?*
- 4. Do you agree with the proposed Sustainability Appraisal Framework?*
- 5. Is the proposed methodology for the next stages of the Sustainability Appraisal correct?*

1.23 A six-week consultation period on the draft scoping report will take place from 9 March to 20 April 2020.

## 2. Task A1 – The requirements of other plans, programmes and policies

- 2.1 It is a SEA requirement that the planning authority take account of the relationship between the Local Plan and other relevant key policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives. There are numerous international and national policy documents that can have an indirect influence on the Local Plan, however, for the purposes of this scoping report it is considered that international policy is translated into more immediately relevant strategic national and local documents. For this reason, very high-level plans, policies and programmes are not presented in this report.
- 2.2 A review of relevant plans, policies and programmes is carried out to identify key influences on the plan, to identify relevant sustainability objectives and to ensure that the aims and objectives of the Local Plan are consistent with their strategies, objectives and policies. It is important to identify where there may be potential conflicts, and where the North Somerset Local Plan can contribute to the aims of these other plans/programmes. This review is based on the review undertaken for the SA produced for the North Somerset Sites and Policies Plan and has been updated to consider any new policies, plans and programmes, these are set out in [Appendix 1](#).
- 2.3 Through the process of this review, relevant issues have been identified which will need to be addressed in the North Somerset Local Plan and its Sustainability Appraisal. These issues are outlined below, broadly falling into the three pillars of sustainability (social, economic or environmental) but there is overlap with each of these issues with impacts on other aspects of sustainability.

### Economic:

1. *Safeguarding and increasing jobs and productivity;*
2. *Delivering a strong, competitive efficient economy with 'clean, green' growth;*
3. *Better and more sustainable access to services, facilities and amenities (including digital connections) for all;*
4. *Protection of town centres, in their role of providing jobs and economic prosperity;*

### Social:

5. *Meeting communities' needs for well-designed/ energy efficient housing, including affordable housing;*
6. *Improve health and wellbeing; particularly given an ageing population and health inequalities;*

7. *Ensure diverse, socially cohesive connected communities are maintained or created;*
8. *Provision and protection of green open spaces, and green infrastructure;*

Environmental:

9. *Very high levels of greenhouse gas saving (primarily carbon dioxide) to help mitigate climate change;*
10. *Effective adaptation to the impacts of climate change*
11. *Address flooding and flood risk including issues with coastal change and protect water quality and supply;*
12. *Reduce the need to travel by car;*
13. *Improve air quality and reduce all kinds of pollution (including water, noise and light);*
14. *Manage pressure on the countryside/ greenfield sites, and protect best and most versatile agricultural land;*
15. *Protect, conserve and enhance (net gain)of internationally, nationally and locally recognised biodiversity and landscape characters (including the Mendip Hills AONB);*
16. *Protection of historical / cultural assets that could be threatened by development and land allocations and by neglect through being unoccupied /underused*

2.4 These issues, along with those identified in analysis of the baseline information in section 3, have been used to develop the objectives of the Sustainability Appraisal and will therefore go on to help shape the North Somerset Local Plan.

### 3. Task A2 – Baseline information and assessment

#### Introduction

- 3.1 Sustainability appraisal requires the collection and review of baseline information to provide the basis for predicting and monitoring effects and to aid the identification of sustainability issues and possible methods of dealing with them. Baseline information has been updated during each stage of the SA process to ensure that they reflect the current situation in North Somerset and continue to provide an accurate basis for assessing the likely effects of the Local Plan.
- 3.2 The data used to describe North Somerset's economic, social and environmental state has largely been drawn from the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) and represents a wide range of indicators and data sources. The AMR for this and previous years are available on our website at: [North Somerset Authority monitoring report](#)

#### An introduction to North Somerset

#### Map 1. Administrative area of North Somerset:



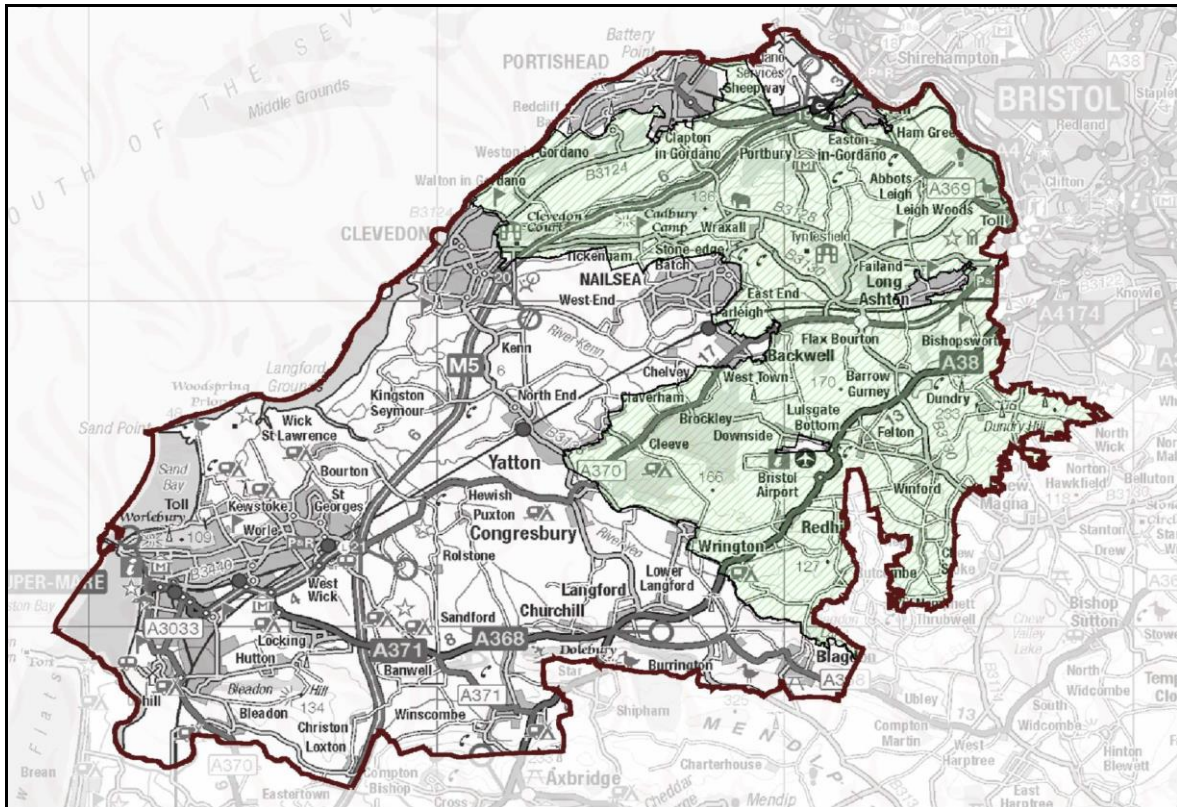
- 3.3 North Somerset covers an area of around 39,080 hectares (151 square miles) and has a population of 213,919 people. The District contains an international airport, a deep-sea west coast port, part of the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (shown on [Map 3](#)), a large area of Green Belt stretching south-west (shown on [Map 2](#)) from the edge of



Bristol, as well as areas of low-lying levels and moors. The main settlements include the strategically significant town of Weston-super-Mare and the three smaller towns of Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead. The M5 runs from north to south through the District and the mainline railway from Bristol to the South West also crosses North Somerset, where there are five stations.

*2018 Mid-Year Population Estimate, Office for National Statistics*

Map 2. Green Belt:



3.4 North Somerset is an area that has undergone rapid expansion over recent decades, arising principally from its strategic road and rail communications and location adjoining the City of Bristol. It is a generally prosperous area, with low unemployment, good scores on health indicators and lower than average crime rates. However, there is concentrated deprivation in parts of Weston-super-Mare. The Authority has one of the greatest range of measured inequalities. It contains significantly important environmental assets. Growth has brought increasingly acute transportation pressures, with high rates of car ownership and usage, and of road traffic growth, as well as pressure on community and social infrastructure and increased house prices. Further growth is difficult to accommodate given the area's infrastructure capacity which has not kept pace with past growth, its relative lack of previously developed (brownfield) sites and the environmental designations that apply to much of the rural area.



## Economic baseline

### Prosperity

- 3.5 North Somerset is part of the West of England growth area. In 2012 an Enterprise Area was identified at Junction 21 in Weston-super-Mare. This is part of a select group of five strategically important employment locations across the West of England that complement the Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone in Bristol. Each Enterprise Area will have defined incentives for business. These will be aimed at maintaining the importance of North Somerset for new business investment and growth. The North Somerset Enterprise Area (known as Junction 21) will focus on the development of food and drink innovation. The Area will include a Food Enterprise Zone, which will include a food and drink innovation centre and business units to promote start-ups in the sector.
- 3.6 The adopted Core Strategy focuses on supporting a successful economy and seeks to provide an additional 10,100 jobs by 2026, by allocating around 114 hectares of land for employment-related 'B' class uses. This will help address the issue of out-commuting and will increase self-containment, particularly in Weston-super-Mare.

### Labour Market

3.7 Some key statistics:

- There were an estimated 102,000 jobs in North Somerset in 2018.

*Source: Jobs density NOMIS, 2018*

Table 1: Percentage of residents in employment by occupation

	<b>North Somerset</b>	<b>England &amp; Wales</b>
1: managers, directors and senior officials	14.1	11.5
2: professional occupations	19.8	21.3
3: associate prof & tech occupations	14.4	14.9
4: administrative and secretarial occupations	10.8	9.8
5: skilled trades occupations	10.3	10.0
6: caring, leisure and other service occupations	7.8	8.9
7: sales and customer service occupations	6.6	7.1
8: process, plant and machine operatives	7.5	6.2
9: elementary occupations	8.7	10.1

*Source: Annual Population Survey October 2018 – September 2019, ONS*

- The local employment rate remains considerably above the national rate. The local unemployment rate remains below the national figure but is higher than the regional rate.

Table 2: Employment and unemployment rates

	<b>North Somerset</b>	<b>South West</b>	<b>England and Wales</b>
Employment rate – aged 16-64 %	80.1	79.2	75.8
Unemployment rate – aged 16-64 %	3.7	3.4	4.0

- 80.1% of North Somerset residents are economically active. This is higher than both the South West (79.2%) and England and Wales percentages (75.8%).
- 72.1% of the economically active population of North Somerset aged 16-64 work full time and 27.9% work part time. In England and Wales, 75.4% work full time and 24.5% work part time.

*Source: Annual Population Survey October 2018-September 2019, ONS*

### Income

- In 2019 the average gross annual pay for full time employees working in North Somerset was £26,445, an increase on the previous year of £525. Currently average earnings for employees across England and Wales are higher, at £30,500 per annum.
- The average full-time gross pay for the residents of North Somerset in 2019 was £30,751, an increase of £505 since last year. This is similar to the average figure for England and Wales which was £30,504.

*Source: ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2019*

Table 3: Enterprise births and deaths

<b>Region</b>	<b>Enterprise Births</b>	<b>Enterprise Deaths</b>	<b>Active Enterprises</b>
England and Wales	354,090	308,845	2,692,005
South West	24,100	22,050	232,445
North Somerset	1,005	925	9,260

*Source: Business Demography 2018, Office for National Statistics*

### Town Centres and Retailing

3.8 The traditional town centres are Clevedon, Nailsea, Portishead and Weston-super-Mare (which is classed in the Core Strategy as a sub-regional centre). Retail monitoring is reported for the whole of each town centre and reported for just the units in the Primary Retail Frontage (PRF).

Table 4: Retail vacancy rates: town centres - 2018

	<b>Weston-super-Mare</b>	<b>Portishead</b>	<b>Clevedon</b>	<b>Nailsea</b>
Total units	622	136	153	170
Vacant units	90	7	14	26
<b>% of vacant units</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>15%</b>
Total PRF units	156	76	63	46
Vacant PRF units	18	5	6	8
<b>% of vacant PRF units</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>17%</b>
% of total units in A1 use	42%	53%	45%	49%
% of total PRF units in A1 use	63%	59%	65%	74%

3.9 In defined retail areas, policy indicators and targets state that the proportion of primary retail frontage (PRF) units in a non-retail use should not exceed 20% and vacant units should not exceed 10%. Of all the towns, only Nailsea currently does not exceed the target for PRF in non-retail use. This can be attributed to the continuing economic downturn, and it is positive to retain active frontages, rather than vacant PRF units.

#### District and Local Centres

3.10 North Somerset has 4 district centres, 18 local centres and various out-of-town centre retail areas. There are also significant retail facilities at the fringe of North Somerset at Cribbs Causeway and at Bristol City Centre and Taunton. The vacancy rates at the following district and local centres are as follows.

Table 5: Retail vacancy rates – District and local centres: 2018

Backwell	2%	Pill	13%
Banwell	14%	Queensway (W-s-M)	7%
Clevedon Hill Road	9%	Winscombe	2%
Congresbury	5%	Worle High Street	2%
Locking Castle (W-s-M)	0%	Wrington	11%
Long Ashton	14%	Yatton	4%

3.11 A1 (retail) uses in the local and district centres can be significantly lower than in the primary retail areas of the four towns (Clevedon, Nailsea, Portishead and Weston), for example Banwell has an A1 use of 21%. This may be explained by the smaller size of the centres and the fact that they must serve a community as well as a retail function.

#### Other Retailing

3.12 There are retail parks at Weston-super-Mare and smaller groups of large retail units or freestanding superstores at Clevedon and Portishead.

## Social baseline

### Demographic Structure

#### 3.13 Some key statistics:

##### Population Size

- The population of North Somerset is 213,919 (48.7% male, 51.3% female). This is an increase of 9,134 since the 2011 Census.

*Source: 2018 Mid-Year Population Estimates, ONS*

Table 6: Population growth 1991-2011

	North Somerset	England and Wales
<b>1991</b>	177,472	49.9 million
<b>2001</b>	188,564 (6.2% increase on 1991)	52 million (4.2% increase on 1991)
<b>2011</b>	202,566 (7.4% increase on 2001)	56.1 million (7.9% increase on 2001)

- The elderly are a larger proportion of the population than regionally and nationally (23.8% compared to 22% for south west and 18.3% for England and Wales) and the working age population is correspondingly smaller. This also reflected in the higher median age.

Table 7: Population comparisons by age group

Age	North Somerset		South West		England and Wales	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
Total	211,700	100.0	5,516,973	100.0	58,381,217	100.0
Aged 0 - 15	38,300	18.1	968,072	17.5	11,086,179	19
Aged 16 - 64	123,700	58.4	3,358,047	60.9	36,777,560	63
Aged 65 and over	49,700	23.5	1,190,854	21.6	10,517,478	18
Median age (2011 Census)	44		42		39	

*Source: 2018 Mid-Year Population Estimates, ONS*

### Deprivation

3.14 North Somerset is ranked 221 out of 317 local authorities for overall deprivation, 1 being the most deprived and 317 being the least deprived. At neighbourhood level, North Somerset contains 135 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), 8 of which are within the most deprived 10% of areas nationally and 25 of which are within the least deprived

10% of areas nationally. All eight areas within the most deprived 10% are within Weston-super-Mare. Our lowest ranking area falls within the most deprived 1% of areas nationally, and our four highest ranking areas are within the least deprived 1%, highlighting the range of inequality within the district.

*Source: Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019*

## Housing

### 3.15 Some key statistics:

#### Dwellings, Household Types and Tenure:

- At the 2011 Census there were 88,227 occupied households in North Somerset. This means that on average there were 2.3 people living in each household.
- 30.7% of households are single-person households; compared to a national figure is 30.2%.
- 8.8% of households are lone-parent households; nationally the figure is 10.6%.
- 50% of households are comprised of couples; nationally the figure is 45.3%.
- 36.8% of the population of North Somerset own their property outright and 36.1% own their property with a mortgage or a loan. This means that 72.9% of North Somerset residents are owner-occupiers compared to a figure of 63.5% nationally.
- 25.4% of the North Somerset population rent their properties.

*Source: 2011 Census*

3.16 The North Somerset Site Allocations Plan identifies sites to deliver a total of 22,285 dwellings to meet the Core Strategy Policy CS13 housing requirement of a minimum of 20,985 dwellings. As at April 2019, 10,439 of these units had already been built.

3.17 During the 2018/19 monitoring year 74% of housing completions recorded took place on previously developed sites. Whilst a significant proportion of the current commitments are also on previously developed land and it is the Council's intentions to maximise the use of brownfield sites it is expected that this proportion will reduce during the plan period of the new Local Plan due to increasing pressure on greenfield sites and the declining amount of brownfield land available at sustainable locations.

3.18 In 2015, the council, working jointly with the other authorities in the West of England, prepared a Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Bristol Housing Market Area for the period 2016-2036. Since then, the Government has introduced a standard methodology for calculating

local housing need. This currently indicates the need for around 1,369 homes per year in North Somerset.

## Health

### 3.19 Some key statistics:

- 81.1% of people consider themselves to be in good or very good health (close to the national average of 81.2%), and a further 13.7% describe their general health as fair. This accounts for 94.8% of the total population, higher than the 91.4% that described their health as fair or better in 2001.
- 4.1% of residents consider themselves to be in bad health, and a further 1.2% think they are in very bad health. Current proportions are similar to national averages.
- 38,740 people (19.2%) in North Somerset describe themselves as having a limiting long-term illness of some form. This is an increase from the 18.5% in 2001. The national average has decreased, from 18.5% in 2001 to 17.9% in 2011.
- The average female life expectancy in North Somerset is 83.6 years and the average male life expectancy is 79.9 years. This is very closely aligned to the England and Wales average life expectancies.

*Source: North Somerset Health Profile 2018, Department of Health*

3.20 The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) aims to identify the current and future needs for health and social care services for all people in North Somerset. It contains a range of information which is useful in ensuring that development plan policies are effectively contributing to overall health and well-being across North Somerset. Some of the findings in the JSNA include that large inequalities exist between the most and least deprived areas in North Somerset. The current JSNA is available to view: [North Somerset Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#)

## Crime Rates and Perception of Safety

3.21 There were 15,452 crimes reported in 2018/9 in North Somerset. This is an increase of 934 recorded crimes within North Somerset from the 2017/8 record.

*Source: ONS*

3.22 55% of North Somerset resident adults feel very safe or fairly safe when outside in their local area after dark. 86% of adults feel very safe or fairly safe when outside in their local area during the day. These figures are lower than the last time the measure was recorded in 2014.

*Source: North Somerset Residents Survey, October 2016*

## Tourism

3.23 Tourism, whether day visitors or staying visitors, forms a significant part of the North Somerset economy.

Some key statistics:

- There were 8 million visitors to North Somerset in 2018.
- There were 7.5 million-day visitors to North Somerset in 2018.
- There were 528,000 staying visitor trips to North Somerset spending a total of 1,813,000 nights in 2018.
- Visitor expenditure in 2018 was £373,722,000.
- The number of people employed full time directly and indirectly by tourism in North Somerset is estimated as 5,226 full time equivalents.

*Source: The Economic Impact of North Somerset's Visitor Economy 2018*

3.24 Key tourist attractions include the various beaches (including Weston, Uphill and Sand Bay) with associated events, the Grand Pier, the Mendip Hills AONB, Puxton Park, Noah's Ark Zoo Farm, Clevedon Pier, and Tyntesfield. The main events that bring people into the District are Weston Air Days, the Beach Race and the Carnival. The Bristol Balloon Fiesta held at the Ashton Court estate in North Somerset also brings many visitors to the north of the District.

## Leisure, Open Space and Recreation

3.25 Across the District there is a wide range of both formal and informal open space, sport and recreation facilities. There are 12 sports and leisure centres in North Somerset, including public leisure centres in Nailsea, Backwell, Portishead, Clevedon, Weston-super-Mare and Churchill. Several schools also open their facilities at out of school times for community use, namely Gordano, Clevedon, Worle and Hans Price. The council also maintain sports pitches which are hired out to clubs. Many private health clubs exist around the District.

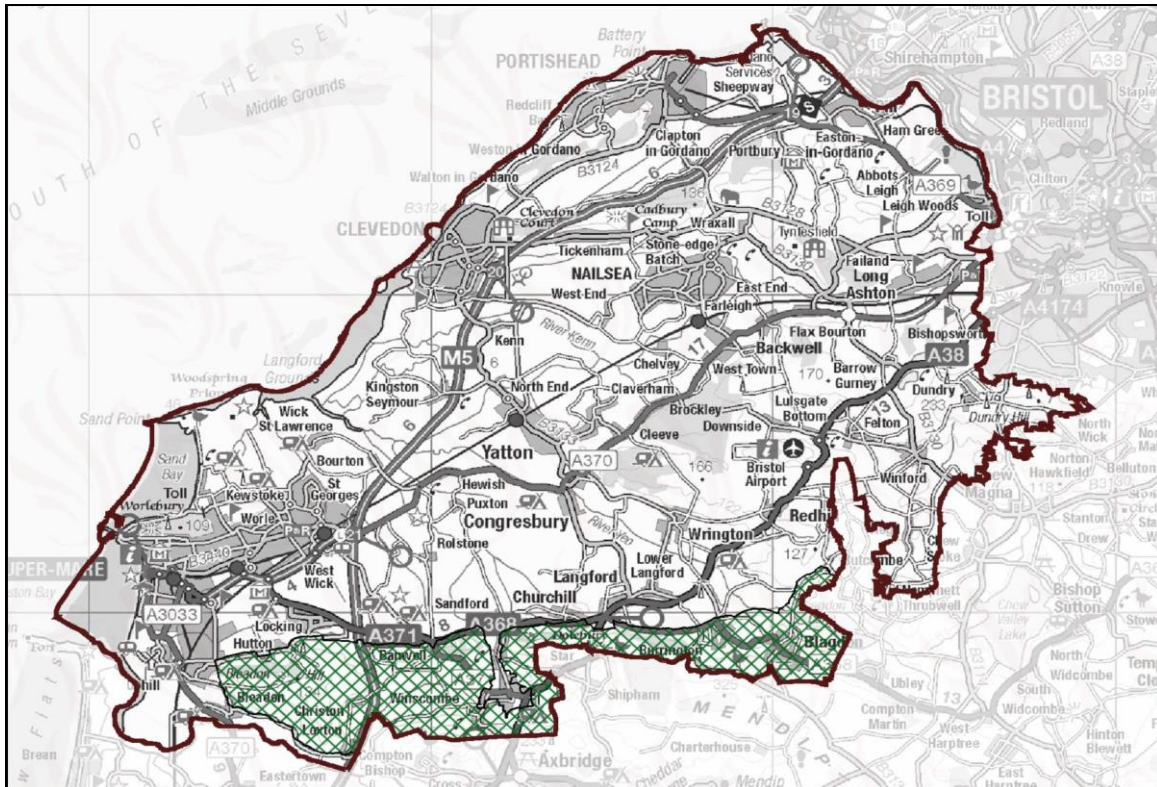
3.26 There are theatres at Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon and Backwell and cinemas at Weston-super-Mare and Clevedon. There are also many well-used community halls such as Somerset Hall in Portishead. The council operates 12 libraries and a mobile library service.

3.27 The local rights of way network of North Somerset extend to 826km, the majority (704km) being footpaths. As the highways authority, North Somerset Council is responsible for maintaining public footpaths, public bridleways, restricted byways and a byway open to all traffic (BOAT). Despite the District's relatively small size, it has an array of opportunities for the public to gain access to the countryside. The opportunities for

walkers are reasonably well distributed around the area, meaning that most people will have ready access to the countryside. There are large areas of public access land at Ashton Court and Leigh Woods in the north of the District.

3.28 The northern parts of the Mendip Hills AONB (shown in Map 3. below) are within North Somerset and are popular for walkers and mountain biking.

Map 3. Mendip Hills AONB:





## Environmental baseline

### Climate Change and Renewable Energy

#### UKCP18 climate projections

- 3.29 The met office released its most up to date UK climate projections (UKCP18) in 2018. These provide an assessment of how the climate of the UK may change over the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The headline finding is that there is a greater chance of warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers. All areas of the UK are projected to experience warming, with warming greater in the summer than the winter. Future temperature rise depends on the amount of greenhouse gases the world emits. The lowest scenario is compatible with aims to limit global warming since pre-industrial levels to below 2°C. The highest scenario will likely require significant further adaptation. Sea-level rise will occur for all emission scenarios.
- 3.30 Carbon dioxide is the principle Greenhouse Gas. North Somerset Council declared a Climate Emergency in early 2019. A Climate Emergency Strategy and Action plan was published in late 2019. These set out the key principles which outline how the council will address the causes and consequences of climate change and includes an aim for North Somerset to become a carbon neutral council and a carbon neutral area by 2030. This is detailed on the [Climate Emergency page](#) on the council website.
- 3.31 The climate emergency declaration and aim for carbon neutrality increase the urgency and need for new development to be net zero carbon.
- 3.32 The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) provide annual statistics detailing greenhouse gas emissions at national and local authority level ([Table 8](#)). The data is provided as a sub-set, which details those emissions considered to be under the influence of local authorities, this removes motorway and aviation emission statistics. There is a roughly even split between industrial and commercial, domestic and transport-based emissions within this subset data. This data shows that the trend is a reduction in emissions over between 2005 – 2017. However, there is a very significant way to go to meet the local aspiration detailed under the climate emergency for carbon neutrality by 2030.

Table 8: Carbon Emissions

Year	Industry and Commercial	Domestic	Transport	Grand Total	Population ('000s, mid-year estimate)	Per Capita Emissions (t)
2005	454.6	471.0	305.2	1,230.7	194.7	6.3
2006	467.9	475.3	307.7	1,251.0	197.0	6.3
2007	447.9	458.8	314.8	1,221.5	199.5	6.1
2008	434.2	458.9	308.2	1,201.3	200.9	6.0
2009	377.6	416.9	300.2	1,094.8	201.7	5.4
2010	404.2	444.5	292.0	1,140.7	203.0	5.6
2011	372.0	388.8	286.4	1,047.2	203.1	5.2
2012	399.0	422.5	280.1	1,101.6	204.5	5.4
2013	381.6	411.8	278.9	1,072.3	206.2	5.2
2014	277.8	343.2	284.7	905.8	208.2	4.4
2015	323.3	334.7	289.6	947.6	209.9	4.5
2016	302.7	320.7	297.1	920.5	211.7	4.3
2017	288.8	299.3	298.3	886.4	212.8	4.2

3.33 BEIS provides data for the total amount of energy from renewable technologies in North Somerset. Renewable electricity produced in North Somerset, as at the end of 2018, is detailed in the table below.

Table 9: Renewable Energy generation in North Somerset (2018)

	Number of sites	Capacity (MW)	Generation (MWh)
Photovoltaic	6,777	80.0	79,233
Onshore Wind	5	0.034	71
Hydro	2	0.023	68
Anaerobic Digestion	2	1.099	6,065
Landfill Gas	2	2.349	5,858
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,788</b>	<b>83.496</b>	<b>91,295</b>

*Source: Department of Business, Energy and Industry*

## Transport and Accessibility

### Congestion

3.34 In 2018 estimated traffic flows for all motor vehicles in North Somerset were 1,549 million kilometres. Traffic on North Somerset roads has increased by 30% between 2000 and 2018.

*Source: Department for Transport National Road Traffic Statistics*

3.35 Congestion continues to be an issue in North Somerset particularly around the motorway junctions and on key routes in urban areas. Many key corridors also go through more rural village communities, creating pinch points on the route which suffer from congestion particularly during peak hours. With significant housing and population growth, tackling congestion and supporting an employment-led approach will become a major challenge for the council.

3.36 North Somerset is an area where a high proportion of the working population commute out of the area to work. Data on travel to work patterns from the 2011 Census show that over 23,000 people travel to work in Bristol and areas of South Gloucestershire, approximately 24% of the working population. Mode of travel is predominantly car/van with 74% choosing this mode to commute.

3.37 The working population of North Somerset use the following transport to travel to work, shown in comparisons to the national breakdown:

	North Somerset	UK
Car or van (driver)	68.5%	(57.5%)
Walking	9.5%	(10.7%)
Working from home	6.6%	(5.4%)
Public transport	5.5%	(16.4%)
Car or van (passenger)	5.2%	(5.1%)
Cycling	2.8%	(2.9%)
Motorcycle, etc	1.0%	(0.8%)
Taxi	0.4%	(0.5%)
Other	0.5%	(0.6%)

Over 37% of the working age population travel over 10km to work.

*Source: 2011 Census Travel to work statistics*

### Car ownership

3.38 North Somerset has a large rural area and a higher than average car ownership and usage. The total number of cars/vans owned in North Somerset at the time of the 2011 Census was 121,381. The 2011 Census identified that 17.2% of households had no car or van compared with 26% in England and Wales and 41.3% had two or more cars/vans compared with 32.2% in England and Wales.

*Source: 2011 Census*

### Bus travel

3.39 A MetroBus network has been developed over the last five years, which provides a smarter way of travelling. The first services started operating in 2018 with a service now running between Long Ashton park and ride and Bristol City Centre. More routes are planned, including a Cribbs Causeway metrobus extension, due to open in 2021. Information is available on the [Metrobus](#) website.

3.40 This investment, together with further investment in other schemes and improvements, has in recent years contributed to increases in bus passenger numbers. There are over 6 million bus passenger journeys in North Somerset each year.

### Cycling

3.41 Cycling trips have continued to grow with continued investment in new routes, including the Brean Down Way which is now open, and the Weston to Clevedon Cycle route which is due to begin construction in 2020. There are also improved cycling facilities as well as ongoing promotion of cycling in the area.

### Rail travel

3.42 The number of rail journeys made from the five stations in North Somerset continue to increase, with estimates showing 2,516,022 journeys made in 2017/18, 30,680 more than the previous year.

*Source: Estimates of station usage 2017-18, Office of Road and Rail*

### Air travel

3.43 Bristol Airport is the largest airport serving the South West. During 2017, air transport movements increased by 3.3% to 76,212. Terminal air passengers increased by 8%, to a total of 8,232,628. An estimated 12.5% of air passengers used public transport for their journey to or from the airport. The number of people working at the airport in summer 2016 was 3,459 (full-time equivalent), up from 3,070 in 2016. The number of companies operating in the airport is 54 an increase of 2 from 2016.

3.44 Planning permission was granted in 2011 for a comprehensive expansion of the airport. A new hotel has opened as well as a new reception, expanded car park, and a new multi-storey car park opposite the terminal.

3.45 Bristol Airport submitted a planning application in 2018 to increase the current annual cap of 10 million passengers per annum, to up to 12 million passengers per annum (mppa) by the mid-2020s. The planning application was rejected by planning committee in early 2020. It is recognised that planned expansion has the potential to impact a range of environmental (and socio-economic) receptors.

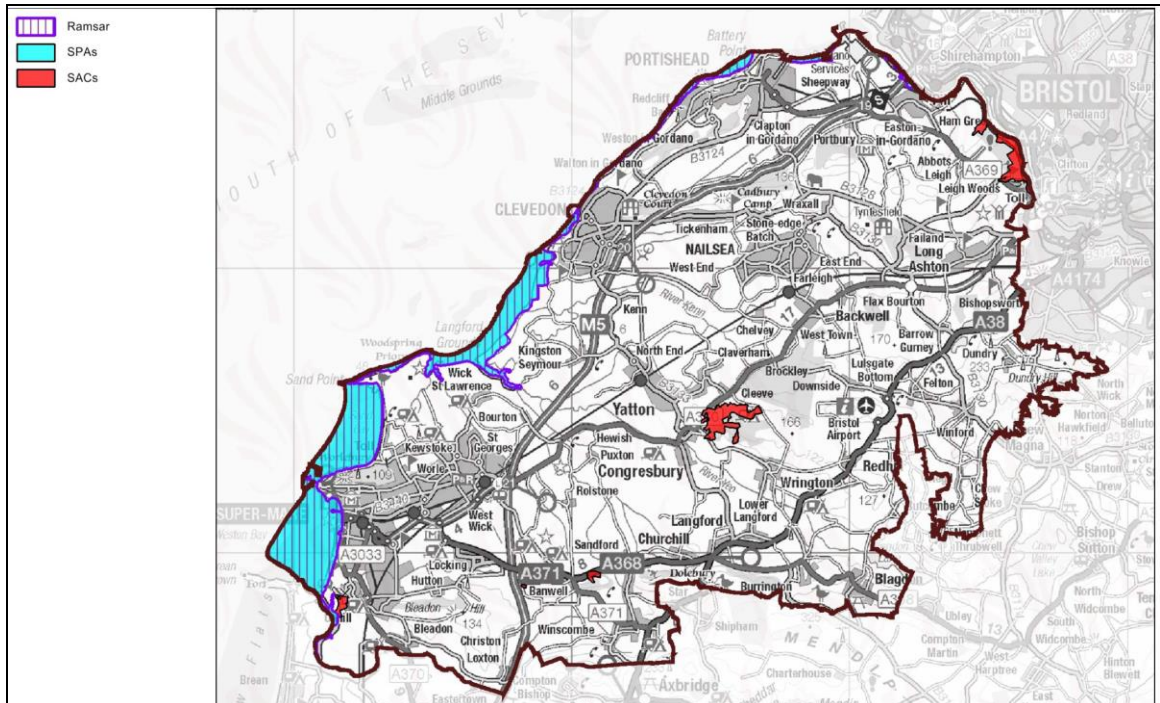
### Natural Environment

#### Biodiversity

3.46 North Somerset has a range of locations identified for their environmental sensitivity. It has four areas with statutory designations of international/European importance. These include the coastline, which comprises part of the Severn Estuary European Site, with its multiple international/European designations of Ramsar (as a wetland of international importance); Special Protection Area (SPA), for the internationally important assemblages of overwintering waders and waterfowl, and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (under the European Habitats Directive), for its habitats and qualifying interest bird species. The other SACs are: The North Somerset and Mendip Bats, Mendip Limestone Grasslands and Avon Gorge Woodlands SACs. The qualifying interest species of the North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC comprise greater and lesser horseshoe bats, which are dependent on foraging and navigation habitats outside of the designated SSSI/SAC roosting areas. Therefore, any Habitats Regulations Assessment of likely significant effects would relate to how these species may be negatively impacted

by loss of habitats within key foraging distances (5km) of the North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC.

Map 4. Ramsar sites, SPAs and SACs in North Somerset:



3.47 Key habitats within the District include the coastline, inland wetlands (rivers, ponds, the extensive rhynes of the floodplain grazing marsh of the Levels and Moors (wet ditch drainage networks which may comprise SSSIs in certain locations)); grazed pastures (notably cattle grazed as an important habitat for greater horseshoe bats); tall hedgerows, tree lines, and semi-natural deciduous woodlands. North Somerset is a stronghold for many rare species of European importance, including species of bats, otter, hazel dormouse and great crested newt. It also supports many other legally protected species which have suffered severe declines, such as water vole, which has been successfully reintroduced into the area at Portbury; and Schedule 1 birds under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), such as kingfisher and peregrine falcon. Other such notable species of Principal Importance in England include the brown hare and common toad.

3.48 In terms of key assets in the natural environment, North Somerset has:

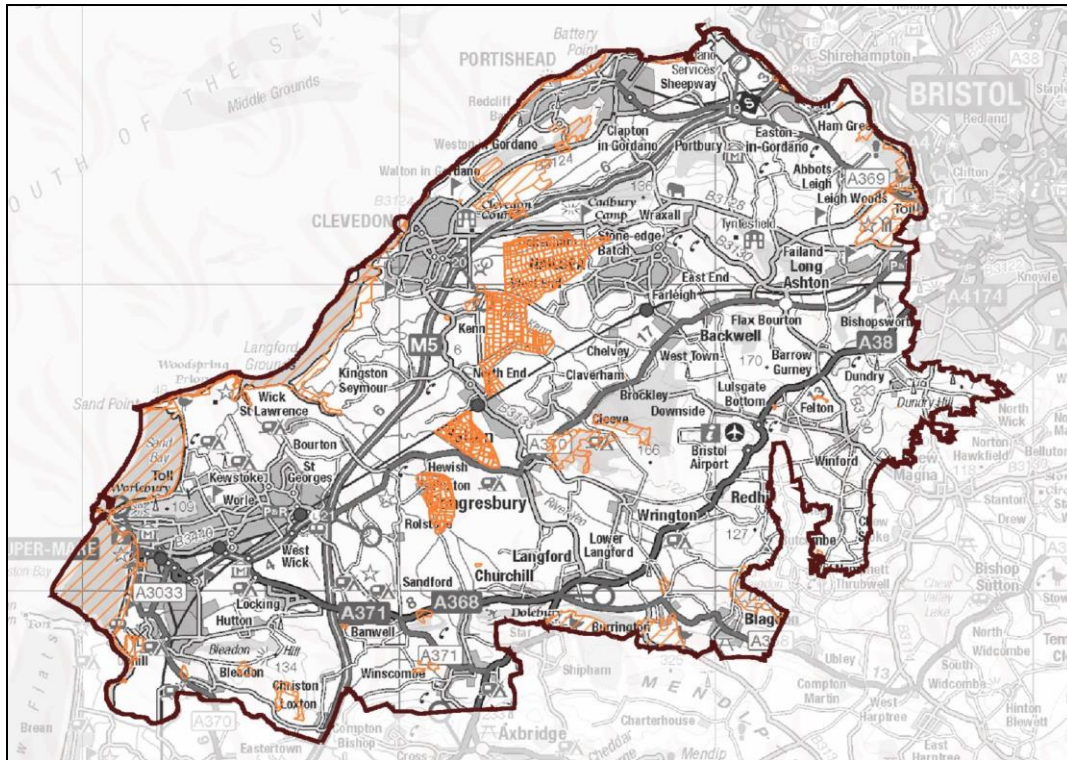
- **2** National Nature Reserves (NNR)
- **13** Local Nature Reserves (LNR) covering 291.424ha
- **204** Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) covering 8509.39ha (although their condition is largely unknown as the majority are privately owned)
- **56** Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) covering approximately 3,483 ha of area, as assessed by Natural England (2013)



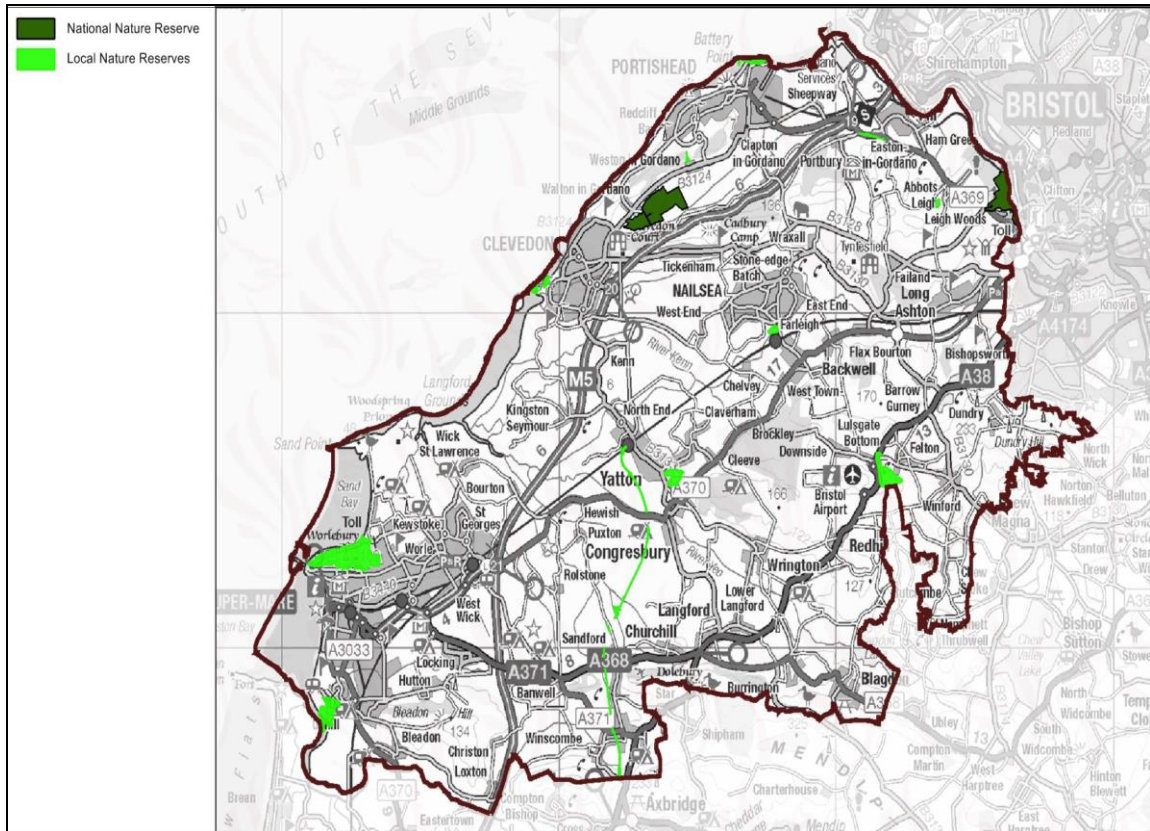
- **1** Wildlife Site of International Importance (Ramsar)
- **4** Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)
- **1** Special Protection Area (SPA)
- **75** Local Geological Sites (LGS)
- **1,024** Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)
- **1** Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Source: North Somerset Council and Natural England

Map 5. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in North Somerset:



Map 6. National and local nature reserves in North Somerset:



3.49 The population of North Somerset is 213,919 (2018 figure), which gives a ratio of 1 hectare of Local Nature Reserve (LNR) per 734 residents. This is well within Natural England's access to natural green space target of 1 hectare of LNR per 1,000.

3.50 SSSI condition is assessed by Natural England. 77.2% of North Somerset SSSIs are in favourable condition. This greatly exceeds the national target of 50% of SSSIs in favourable condition by 2020 set within 'Biodiversity 2020'.

Table 10: SSSI Condition

	2013 hectares
Favourable	2,691.11
Unfavourable Recovering	441.19
Unfavourable No Change	278.46
Unfavourable Declining	64.80
Assessed area	3,483.70

Source: Natural England

### Landscape

3.51 North Somerset has a highly varied landscape. The North Somerset Landscape Character Assessment was updated in 2018. The main purpose is to document the current status of the North Somerset Landscape. This review reflects new development, incorporates



consequential changes to descriptions and boundaries and updates previous photos and maps. [Landscape Character Assessment update 2018](#)

- 3.52 The assessment provides a broad indication of the landscapes of the District which range from the carboniferous limestone uplands of the Mendips to the level, wet pasturelands of the levels and moors. The significance of the landscape of the Mendip Hills is acknowledged by their designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) ([Map 3](#)) for which a Management Plan has been produced.
- 3.53 The North Somerset Landscape Character Assessment states that the District is characterised by a diversity of landscapes and these variations and differences are represented by 11 landscape types, e.g. Moors, and River Flood Plain. These have a distinct character with similar physical and cultural attributes, including geology, landform, land cover and historical evolution. The landscape types are further sub-divided into component landscape character areas; e.g. Clapton Moor and Lox Yeo River Flood Plain. The assessment identifies the characteristics of the landscape character areas and the forces for change affecting them. The condition of these character areas is assessed and 12 of the 25 are identified as 'declining' in condition.

#### Open spaces

- 3.54 There are over 40 parks, public open spaces and nature reserves in the authority. There are 6 areas which are managed to Green Flag Award standard.
- Uphill Hill Local Nature Reserve, Uphill
  - Watchhouse Hill Public Nature Reserve, Pill
  - Abbots Pool in Leigh Woods
  - Trendlewood Community Park, Nailsea
  - Portishead Lake Grounds
  - Prince Consort Gardens, Weston-super-Mare

#### Soil

- 3.55 Most agricultural land in North Somerset is Grade 3, with areas of Grade 1 and 2 along some of the river valleys and notably around Nailsea, Pill and Churchill. However, the age and precision of this data is variable. There are large areas of woodland in the centre of the District and along the Avon Valley as well as along major ridges. There is relatively little rural land in other non-agricultural uses, though two areas are used for reservoirs. Details can be found here:

[Defra agricultural land classification map](#)

3.56 The re-use of previously developed land has contributed to major housing and employment growth at Weston-super-Mare (Weston Airfield and RAF Locking) and Portishead (Port Marine and Ashlands) but these opportunities are now approaching exhaustion. As a consequence, there is increasing pressure on greenfield sites for development.

### Historic Environment

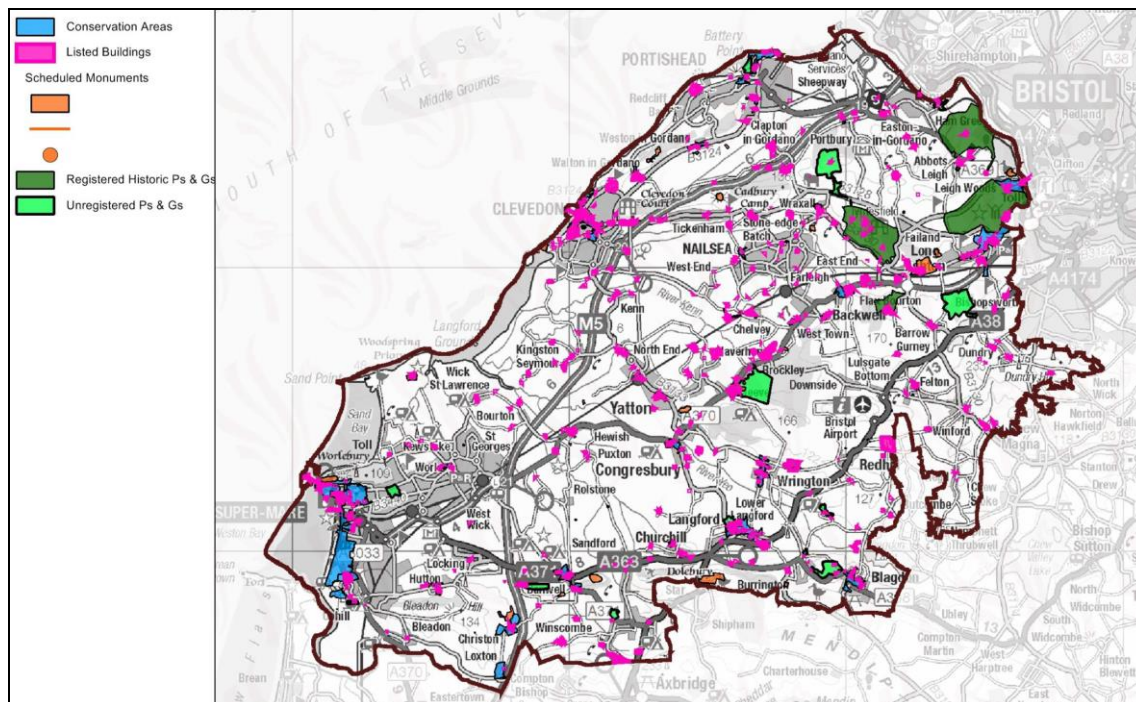
3.57 The built heritage and historic landscapes of North Somerset are an important element in providing a sense of place and civic pride for residents and visitors. This diverse heritage ranges from palaeoenvironmental deposits to prehistoric hillforts, Roman, Saxon and medieval settlement and the industrial archaeology of Nailsea.

3.58 In terms of key assets in the historic environment, North Somerset has:

- **36** Conservation Areas
- **1,100** Listed Buildings
- **68** Scheduled Monuments
- **8** Registered parks and gardens
- **58** Unregistered parks and gardens.

*Source: English Heritage / North Somerset Council*

Map 7. Conservation areas, Listed buildings, Scheduled monuments, Registered and Unregistered Parks and Gardens



3.59 These numbers give a snapshot of the much larger numbers of regionally and locally important sites, monuments and structures that pepper the landscape of the District.

3.60 Six sites within the District are on the English Heritage 'At Risk Register' 2019. Three are sites are Conservation Areas, three are Listed Buildings and two sites are Scheduled Monuments.

The three Listed Buildings at risk are:

- Ashton Court, Long Ashton (Grade I listed)
- St Mary's Church, Portbury (Grade I listed – place of worship)
- Birnbeck Pier, Weston-super-Mare (Grade II\* listed)

The three Scheduled Monuments at risk are:

- Elms Colliery, Nailsea (the buildings are also Grade II listed)
- Worlebury Camp: a large multivallate hillfort on Worlebury Hill, Weston-super-Mare
- Long barrow 350m south west of Cornerpool Farm, Wrington

There are currently no Conservation Areas on the Heritage at Risk Register. There were previously four out of 36 Conservation Areas on the 'At Risk Register'. This is therefore a significant improvement since the previous reporting period.

### Air Quality

3.61 The council has a duty to monitor and manage air quality within the District. The main pollutant of concern locally is nitrogen dioxide, which originates primarily from road traffic emissions. Data from non-automatic monitoring sites operating around the District indicates that nitrogen dioxide remains well below the national annual mean objective. There are currently no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) within North Somerset.

### Water Quality

3.62 North Somerset lies within the Severn Estuary River Basin district and within this the Bristol Avon and North Somerset streams catchment. This is characterised by long lowland sections interconnected in places by Rhynes and ditches. This complex artificial drainage system is managed by the Internal Drainage Boards. The catchment supports a diverse range of wildlife and plant species and recreation is increasingly important, particularly where the rivers are readily accessible to the main population centres.

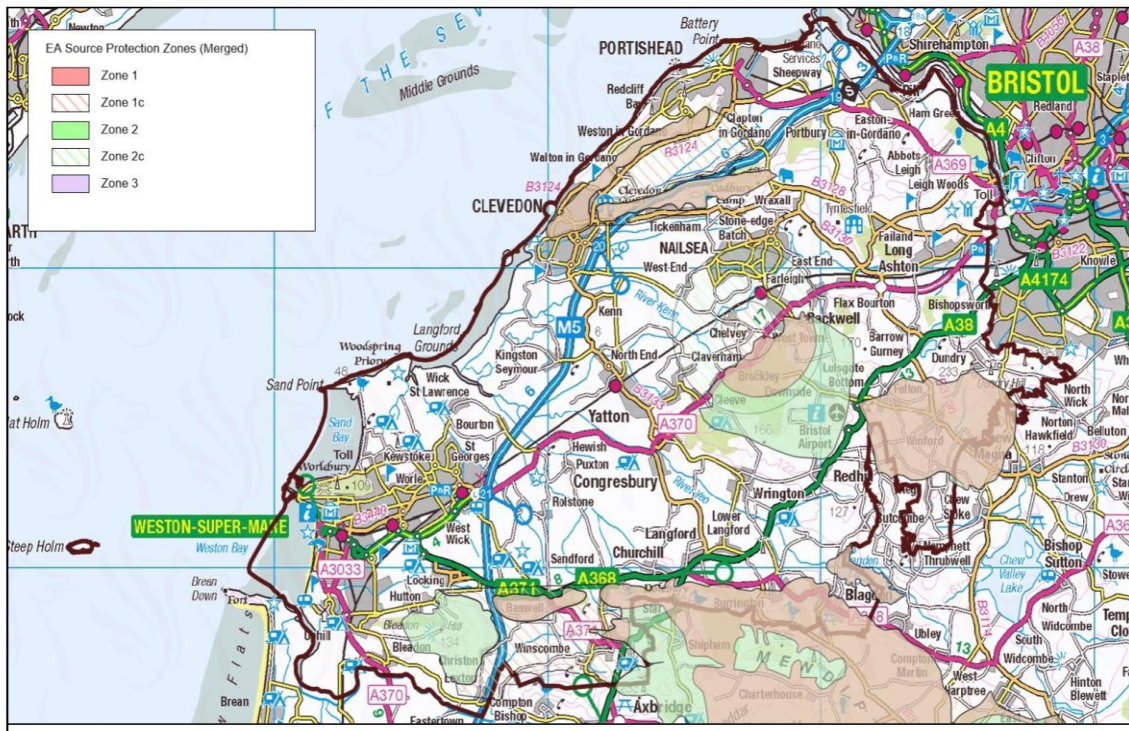
3.63 The Severn Estuary River Basins Management Plan sets out the objectives for improving water quality within the catchment area. The priority river basins management issues to tackle in the catchment are identified as:

- Excessive nutrient pollution and sediment leaching
- Degraded ecological habitats
- Flooding and flow issues

3.64 The North Somerset Levels and Moors Catchment Project funded by Wessex Water will carry out an integrated restoration project. Avon Wildlife Trust is working with partners and landowners to improve wetland systems, improve biodiversity and address water quality/quantity issues.

3.65 Groundwater supplies around a third of drinking water and it is therefore crucial that supplies are maintained and to ensure that water is safe to drink. The Environment Agency has defined Source Protection Zones (SPZs) for groundwater sources, such as wells, boreholes and springs used for public drinking water supply. These zones show the risk of contamination from any activity that might cause pollution in the area. These are used to set up pollution reduction measures in areas of high risk and to monitor the activities of potential polluters nearby. Zones are defined by how groundwater behaves in that area, what constructions there are to get the water out into the public water supply and the process for doing this. The zones for North Somerset are shown in the map below, with Zone 1 (inner zone) areas defined as a 50-day travel time from a point below the water table to the source and Zone 2 (outer zone) defined as a 400-day travel time from a point below the water table to the source.

Map 8: Groundwater Source Protection Zones



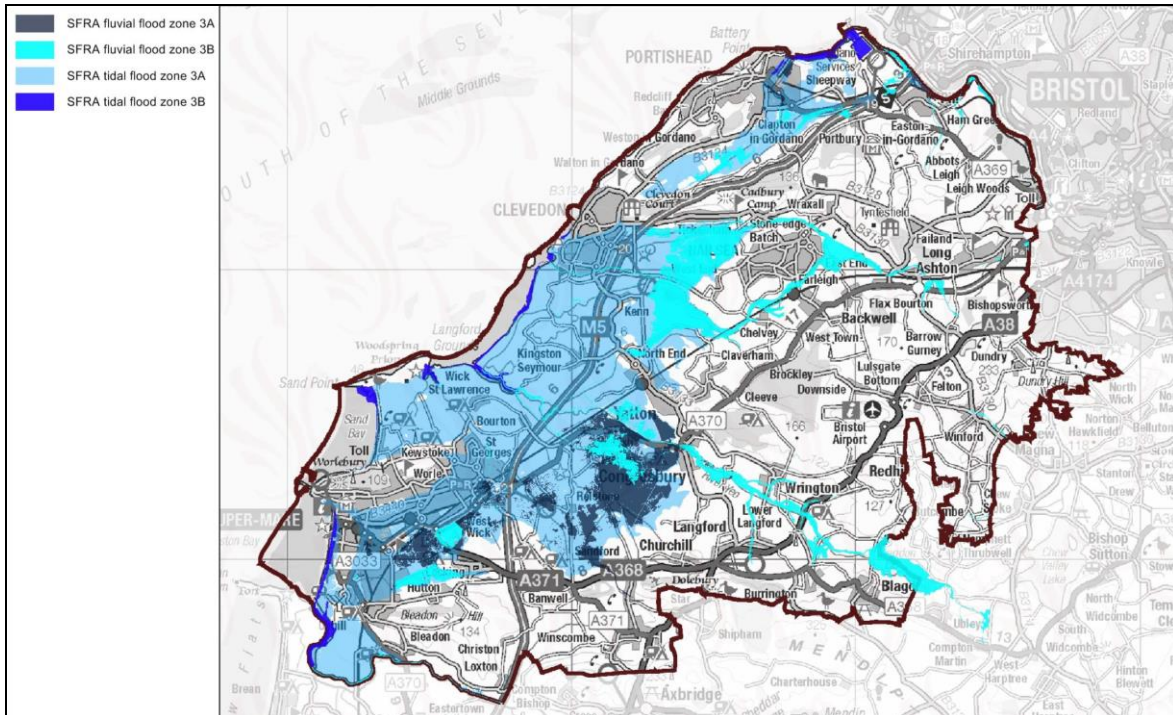
## Flood Risk

3.66 Much of North Somerset is low-lying and in Flood Zones 2 and 3, including extensive areas of fluvial floodplain (Zone 3b). See map below. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment was published in parts between 2008 and 2010 and its mapping has been partially updated since. The sources of flood risk of greatest relevance to plan-making are fluvial, tidal, surface water, groundwater, and from reservoirs. North Somerset has examples of each. Climate change will raise the risk from most of these sources and the prediction of its effects will be a particular focus of the SFRA review. Updated SFRA level 1 and level 2, taking climate change into account will be available in 2020.

3.67 As a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), North Somerset Council has prepared a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) which outlines how local flood risk is intended to be managed. Local flood risk means flooding from surface runoff, groundwater and ordinary watercourses.

Map 9. Fluvial and Tidal Flood Zones 3a and 3b





### Green infrastructure

3.68 Green infrastructure is the integrated network of multi-functional spaces within and linking urban and rural environments with significant environmental, social and economic benefits. If properly planned and integrated into development, it can enhance the townscape and visual amenity, promote a sense of place and community identity, and improve the health and sense of well-being of people. Parks, sports fields and play space are clearly beneficial to health. Networks of green spaces and corridors such as disused railway lines provide opportunities for recreation, walking and cycling and benefit wildlife by conserving and enhancing habitats, and providing buffers from development to important wildlife sites and watercourses. In urban areas such provision can also have a welcome cooling effect in summer, through providing shade and promoting evaporation.

3.69 Green infrastructure is important in rural and urban areas, and on the urban-rural fringe, particularly where it supports a vibrant rural economy and enhances facilities available to villages for recreation, walking and cycling. Attenuation ponds and other sustainable drainage systems, together with larger water bodies, are also valuable aspects of green infrastructure, often having great ecological and landscape value, recreational and educational benefit. Some large water bodies may be of operational value, for example the Barrow tanks are important for the water supply.

3.70 The West of England authorities are preparing a joint Green Infrastructure strategy to coordinate the approach to strategic issues and identify best practice across the sub-region.

### Rewilding

3.71 Rewilding seeks to change the way open spaces are managed to benefit both biodiversity and local communities. North Somerset plans to rewild parks, open spaces and verges across the district. This will primarily include planting more trees and allowing some areas of grass to grow taller. Retention of trees and tree planting, together with other green space, can help to combat climate change and flooding, by absorbing CO<sub>2</sub> and moisture and reducing excessive run off. Locations have been identified with an interactive map showing amenity grass areas, to be rewilded. A [rewilding](#) web page contains for more information.

#### **4. Task A3 – Key sustainability issues and the North Somerset Local Plan.**

- 4.1 Through analysis of the baseline data set out in the previous chapter, several key sustainability issues affecting North Somerset have been identified.
- 4.2 Where possible, the following table (11) sets out the role of the North Somerset Local Plan in tackling the identified issues. Also considered, as required by the SEA Directive, is the likely evolution of each issue without the implementation of this Plan. Such scenarios will be considered in more detail in later SA stages, when predictions are made about the effects of individual policies.



Table 11: Current and likely future Sustainability Issues in North Somerset and the role of the North Somerset Local Plan.

<b>Key Issue</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Scale of challenge</b>	<b>Likely evolution of the issue without the plan</b>	<b>Potential role of the North Somerset Local Plan</b>
<b><i>Inequality</i></b>	<b><i>Better and more sustainable access to jobs, services, facilities and amenities for all</i></b>	There is a specific need to address inequality, where access to local jobs and services, is worse for some (principally in the older urban parts of the District) than for most residents of the district	<b>Moderate/Major</b> Continuation of current trend, although other strategies and initiatives may well impact on this trend.	New employment land provision, housing and associated community facilities could help reduce deprivation within the most disadvantaged parts of the District. The plan will also sit alongside the complementary education, health, economic development plans, programmes and policies.
<b><i>Economic prosperity</i></b>	<b><i>Safeguarding and increasing jobs and productivity</i></b> <i>Meeting the future needs of businesses for additional land and premises.</i>	Planning has an important role to play to maintain a ready supply of sites and premises to meet local requirements for business expansion and inward investment. This will be important to enable the council to take the pro-active steps towards restoring a closer balance between employment and housing in a manner that would not conflict with the longer-term objectives.	<b>Major</b> The achievement of the right balance between the distribution of housing and employment across all settlements in North Somerset during the plan period.	Allocation of employment sites alongside new housing sites.  This policy requirement is demonstrated through the identification of the J21 Enterprise Area.  This would contribute to resolving the issue of out-commuting within the District.

<b>Key Issue</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Scale of challenge</b>	<b>Likely evolution of the issue without the plan</b>	<b>Potential role of the North Somerset Local Plan</b>
<b>Town centre decline</b>	<b>Protection of Town centres/ retail centres.</b> Their role as economic drivers and centres of job provision should be protected. District and local centres provide accessible facilities for their communities.	Town centres face pressures both from the rise of online retailing and provision of out-of-town shopping centres.	<b>Moderate</b> Town Centre vitality is influenced by factors outside of the role of planning policy restrictions.	The Local Plan presents the opportunity to provide updated policy to protect and bolster the evolving role of town centres in the District in providing jobs and contributing to a strong local economy.
<b>Ageing population</b>	<b>Improve health and well-being across the District</b>	These are issues arising from the fact that the elderly is a larger proportion of the population than regionally and nationally and the working age population is correspondingly smaller.  There are also disparities between life expectancy ages across the District.	<b>Moderate</b> Continuation of current trend, although other strategies and initiatives may well impact on this trend.	The Local Plan can ensure that the location of new development promotes improved health and well-being through: infrastructure that will lead to increased physical activity, access to good quality open space, considering the needs of the elderly, improved air quality and access to services and facilities.
<b>Meeting housing need</b>	<i>Meeting local communities</i> <b>needs for housing,</b>	Significant housing growth required over the plan period.	<b>Major</b> Speculative development which	Planning has an important role to play in delivering the right quantum of housing in the right places. Policy

Key Issue	Objective	Scale of challenge	Likely evolution of the issue without the plan	Potential role of the North Somerset Local Plan
	<i>including affordable housing</i>		is not where most needed within the District. Affordable housing not provided where a policy is not in place to enforce this.	requiring an appropriate level of affordable housing will be required. Spatial policies set out within the Local Plan to direct development to the most appropriate locations.
<b>Oversubscribed health and community facilities</b>	<b>Need for new health and community facilities</b> <i>other than to meet future housing growth</i>	Improved access to health and community services for the existing population is required.	<b>Moderate</b> Continuation of current trend of over-subscribed services, although other strategies and initiatives may well impact on this trend.	To ensure that appropriate facilities are created through new development and does not add to existing problems in provision. Local Plan could allocate or safeguard sites for new facilities to be provided through other funding streams that address the needs of the existing communities.
<b>Climate emergency</b>	<b>High levels of greenhouse gas saving</b> <i>needed to help mitigate climate change</i> Likely to affect biodiversity and have socio-economic impacts.	The scale of proposed development could generate significant additional GHG emissions, making it harder to reach emissions reduction targets	<b>Major</b> Unsustainable increase in greenhouse gas/ carbon emissions associated with new development.	Need to ensure that new development minimises its contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. Policies requiring low/zero carbon development or development that produces more renewable energy than it uses through opportunities including heat networks and other measures to support the delivery of environmentally sustainable

<b>Key Issue</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Scale of challenge</b>	<b>Likely evolution of the issue without the plan</b>	<b>Potential role of the North Somerset Local Plan</b>
				development will be considered.
<b>Car-based travel</b>	<b>Reduce the need to travel by car.</b> Out-commuting impacting on congestion/air quality and emissions at motorway junctions and on key routes in urban / rural areas creating pinch points particularly in peak hours.	A high proportion of people out-commute for employment to Bristol and surrounding areas largely by car. Large parts of the District are rural in nature where public transport, walking and cycling links are usually sparser.  Acceptable distances/frequency for public transport should be enforced	<b>Moderate/Major</b> Additional growth will lead to increased congestion/deterioration in air quality.	The Plan allocations will focus on jobs and growth which would facilitate working closer to home and reduce the need for out-commuting.  The Plan can promote development sites which allow for walking, cycling and use of public transport and will require the early implementation of infrastructure. Park and ride sites and cycle routes will need to be allocated.  The Plan can consider the possibility of additional development in key villages to help them become more sustainable and reduce the need for travel by car.
<b>Flood risk</b>	<b>Address flooding and flood risk</b> <i>including issues with coastal change and increased risk due to climate change</i>	There is a conflict between flood risk, employment/housing growth required for the District.	<b>Moderate/Major</b> Continuation of the current trend, although the extent to which new development is at risk has been	Flood risk taken into consideration when allocating employment and housing sites. The protected green space can mitigate flood risk from nearby development where integrated with sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). The Plan

<b>Key Issue</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Scale of challenge</b>	<b>Likely evolution of the issue without the plan</b>	<b>Potential role of the North Somerset Local Plan</b>
			reduced by national planning policy elevating the issue of flood risk.	can mitigate the impact of development on the qualifying features of the international designations in the Severn Estuary and elsewhere.
<b>Pollution</b>	<b>Improve air quality and reduce all kinds of pollution</b>	Planning has an important role to play in ensuring that new development does not lead to lessening of environmental quality and to ensure that development is not introduced into areas of existing poor environmental quality unless it improves them.	<b>Major</b> Continuation of current trend, although other strategies and initiatives may well impact on this trend.	The Plan can seek to not allocate development sites in areas where any facet of environmental quality is poor. The Plan can require mitigation measures for developments for certain types of problem, e.g. noise/ light. This is likely to include that associated with Bristol Airport.
<b>Biodiversity and landscape character area protection</b>	<b>Protect, conserve and enhance internationally, nationally and locally recognised biodiversity, landscape character area</b> <i>(including Mendip Hill AONB)</i>	There are significant areas of both statutory and non-statutory nature conservation sites across the District. There is scope for the improvement of some of these areas.  Some landscape character areas are under threat of decline.	<b>Major</b> Continuation of current trend, although other strategies and initiatives (for example, local Biodiversity Action Plan) will also have a critical influence on future patterns.	The Plan should ensure that biodiversity and landscape assets are protected and enhanced in new development.  The scope of influence of the Plan is restricted to managing development requiring planning permission. Changes to both landscapes and natural habitats arising from changing agricultural

<b>Key Issue</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Scale of challenge</b>	<b>Likely evolution of the issue without the plan</b>	<b>Potential role of the North Somerset Local Plan</b>
				or management practices cannot be addressed through the Plan.
<b>Heritage protection</b>	<b>Protection of historical / cultural assets</b> that could be threatened by development and land allocations and by neglect through being unoccupied /underused.	The District has many listed buildings, archaeological sites and conservation areas.	<b>Major</b> Continuation or an increase in historic areas, monuments and buildings on the at-risk register.	Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Scheduled Ancient Monuments and their immediate surroundings can all be protected when determining site allocations. The Plan can also highlight the importance of regenerating threatened assets and identify potential new uses for them.
<b>Pressure on greenfield sites/protection of open space</b>	<b>Pressure on the countryside/ greenfield, open space and recreation sites</b> from planned development	Policy needs to enforce the prioritisation and use of vacant previously developed/ brownfield sites.  Protection of open space for recreation and provision of new facilities within new development.	<b>Major</b> Major brownfield opportunities in the District are now reaching exhaustion.  Green open space designation is under threat from the scale of development required in the district over the plan period.	The Plan will need to identify development sites that reuse vacant previously developed land. However, there will be other factors to take into consideration in deciding a site's suitability for redevelopment; the existence of previously developed land is not a reason alone to allow development. With no major new brownfield opportunities anticipated, there will be increased pressure on greenfield land but also an increased expectation that urban re-development will

Key Issue	Objective	Scale of challenge	Likely evolution of the issue without the plan	Potential role of the North Somerset Local Plan
				<p>contribute at higher densities than in recent decades.</p> <p>Policies to protect existing open space designations and or improve existing facilities where required</p>



## 5. Task A4 – The Sustainability Appraisal Framework: objectives and indicators

### Introduction

5.1 The SA framework provides a way in which sustainability effects can be described, analysed and compared. The process of undertaking a SA involves the identification of sustainability objectives which are used to measure and monitor the success of the plan.

### Development of the Framework

5.2 The starting point for this SA framework is the Core Strategy Scoping Report. This has been reviewed and updated to ensure relevance to the scope of the Local Plan incorporating elements of the most recent Scoping Report for the Sites and Policies Plan. [Table 12](#) sets out the proposed SA framework objectives. These are used to assist in making judgements about the likely effects of options and policies on the headline SA objectives.

5.3 [Table 13](#) sets out each objective with a set of 'decision-making criteria', these are what the SA will look to identify in terms of positive and negative effects of the plan. Alongside these are a small number of indicators, which will allow the District's performance on that issue to be gauged, now and in the future. These indicators will be used to scrutinise and evaluate potential options for the North Somerset Local Plan. Using a consistent approach as a starting point to score the effects of Local Plan content will allow for transparent appraisal.

5.4 The SA Framework will be used in the SA procedure to assess the relative performance of each option and objective of the plan using significant positive (++) , positive (+) , significant negative (--), negative (-) and where necessary neutral symbols (0). Unknown impacts will also be identified (?). Possible mitigation measures will be proposed accordingly. Detail of the SA methodology will be set out in detail in the SA main report.

## **Internal compatibility of the Sustainability Objectives**

- 5.5 The internal compatibility of the SA objectives is then tested for conflict. There may be tensions between objectives that cannot be resolved: the compatibility assessment should clarify these so that subsequent decisions are well based, and mitigation can be considered.
- 5.6 The diagram ([Table 14](#)) shows that uncertain compatibility exists between a number of the objectives. The ultimate effect of the objectives on one another is dependent on the way that they are implemented in North Somerset.
- 5.7 It is considered that the uncertainties identified do not necessitate the SA objectives to be re-written. Some areas of potential conflict will always remain. The conflict between the provision of a buoyant and diverse economy and conserving biodiversity will always be difficult to reconcile, but both are key elements of ensuring sustainable development. Potential negative impacts can, however, be avoided through the correct implementation.

Table 12: Sustainability Appraisal Framework Objectives

	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Economic</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>Environmental</b>
1.1	Ensure a range of job opportunities are easily accessible without having to use a car	X		X
1.2	Locate development where there is a demand for new employment, particularly where there is a known sector demand	X		
1.3	Provides opportunities to improve economic wellbeing and reduce inequalities	X	X	
1.4	Promote the optimal use of land which supports regeneration, maximise re-use of previously developed (brownfield) land and protects the rural economy	X		X
1.5	Promote development which is unlikely to create excessive infrastructure requirements	X		
2.1	Boost delivery and meet the housing need identified within the plan period		X	
2.2	Deliver affordable or specialist housing where it is most needed		X	
2.3	Achieve reasonable access to a wide range of community, educational, town centre and healthcare facilities	X	X	
2.4	Enhancing community cohesion and community facilities provision including cultural facilities		X	
2.5	Achieve healthy living opportunities - access to Open Spaces, Public Rights of Way, walking and cycling opportunities, Outdoor leisure activities		X	
3.1	Support decentralised renewable energy generation	X		X
3.2	Minimise vulnerability to tidal & fluvial flooding, without increasing flood risk elsewhere. Also minimise surface water flood risk and harm to water quality and availability	X	X	X
3.3	Reduce the need to travel by car		X	X
3.4	Minimise impact on and where appropriate enhance treasured landscape/ townscape such as the Mendip Hills AONB		X	X
3.5	Minimise impact and where appropriate enhance treasured heritage assets and Conservation Areas		X	X
3.6	Protect and where possible enhance Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Green Infrastructure particularly with respect to protected habitats and species		X	X

**Table 13: The Sustainability Appraisal Framework**

SA Objective	Decision-making criteria (SA will look for...)		Suggested scoring criteria/ Indicator(s)	Relevant SEA topic
	Positive effect (+/++)	Negative effect (-/-)		
1.1 Ensure a range of <b>job opportunities are easily accessible</b> without having to use a car	Development near Weston-super-Mare, Bristol, Clevedon, Nailsea or Portishead town centres and major employment areas, offering a wide range of jobs and near train stations or on a range of frequent bus routes to employment areas	Development which is distant from a range of employment opportunities and dependent on the car to access a range of employment options	<p><b>[++]</b> within 5km of Weston and Bristol centres and North Fringe</p> <p><b>[+]</b> <i>good accessibility (defined in Appendix 2)</i> to sustainable travel options to the above (or within 5km to Clevedon, Nailsea or Portishead and major employers (more than 250 employees)</p> <p><b>[0]</b> <i>limited accessibility</i> to job opportunities (<u>Appendix 2</u>) and /or in the vicinity of only 1 major employer</p> <p><b>[-]</b> <i>poor accessibility (Appendix 2)</i> to major employers with local service jobs in vicinity</p> <p><b>[--]</b> no or very limited job opportunities in the vicinity</p>	Population, Human Health, Climate
1.2 Locate development where there is a <b>demand for new employment</b> , particularly where there is a known sector demand	Development where there is demand for employment space. Development that contributes towards the needs identified by the North Somerset Employment Land Review	Development where there is little demand. Development that does not contribute towards the needs identified by the North Somerset Employment Land Review	<p>*(see detail in <u>Appendix 2</u>)</p> <p><b>[++]</b> for areas of high demand</p> <p><b>[+]</b> for some demand</p> <p><b>[?]</b> untested location</p> <p><b>[--]</b> difficult to attract employment</p> <p>Score can be enhanced to a higher level if the employment is for a known priority sector</p>	Material assets
1.3 Provides opportunities	Development that provides access to	Development that does not provide	<b>[++]</b> mixed use developments in locations with good access to jobs, training and education	Population, human health

SA Objective	Decision-making criteria (SA will look for...)		Suggested scoring criteria/ Indicator(s)	Relevant SEA topic
	Positive effect (+/++)	Negative effect (-/- -)		
to improve <b>economic wellbeing and reduce inequalities</b>	good quality jobs, education and training opportunities for all	good access to jobs, education and training	(see <a href="#">Appendix 2</a> for accessibility criteria), <b>[+]</b> developments with good access to some of the above <b>[-]</b> limited access to jobs, training and educational opportunities ( <a href="#">appendix 2</a> ) <b>[--]</b> development in a location with poor access ( <a href="#">appendix 2</a> ) to jobs, training and education  Where locations adjoin areas of concentrated disadvantage (identified via IMD), mitigation should refer to difficulty of making any credible linkage.	
<b>1.4</b> Promote the <b>optimal use of land</b> which supports regeneration, maximise re-use of previously developed (brownfield) land and protects the rural economy	Development on previously developed land/ brownfield sites.  Development where optimal use can be made of land by building at higher density.  Protect Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Agricultural Land for agricultural use through development	Development on open space/ greenfield/ sites.  Development on high Agricultural Land Value (ALV) classification (grade 1 – 3a)  Loss of local food growing land of demonstrable value.	<b>[++]</b> development can include brownfield sites, non-agricultural land (ALV classification 3b – 5 or low probability of BMV) <b>[+]</b> some greenfield site, but its location is such that it could be developed at very high density. Most of site is ALV Grades 3b to 5 <b>[-]</b> greater than 50% ALV Grades 1 to 3a, some brownfield possible <b>[--]</b> greenfield sites, greater than 50% site is ALV Grades 1 to 3a <b>[-/+]</b> greenfield sites with mix of probabilities of BMV agricultural land <b>[+/?]</b> mix of brownfield and greenfield with a mix of probabilities of BMV agricultural land quality	Soil, Flora & Fauna, Biodiversity

SA Objective	Decision-making criteria (SA will look for...)		Suggested scoring criteria/ Indicator(s)	Relevant SEA topic
	Positive effect (+/++)	Negative effect (-/-)		
	on land of low BMV classification (Grade 3b - 5)			
<b>1.5</b> Development which is unlikely to create excessive <b>infrastructure requirements</b>	High land value areas.  Areas where funding for major infrastructure projects is secured e.g. Infrastructure providing wider benefits/ unlocking economic growth	Areas of low viability.  Areas in need of major infrastructure works  e.g. railway crossings, major flood mitigation required, major transport infrastructure required	<b>[++]</b> high value areas (Community Infrastructure Level (CIL) Zone C) with no major infrastructure requirements (bypasses, etc) <b>[+]</b> Medium land value areas (CIL Zone B) development in locations with reasonable existing infrastructure, therefore likely to need limited infrastructure requirements <b>[--]</b> Low Value Land areas (CIL Zone A) development in locations which will require essential major infrastructure requirements/ areas of low viability unable to secure affordable housing or CIL requirements	Material assets
<b>2.1 Boost housing delivery</b> and meet the housing need identified within the plan period	Development that is can meet specific needs and/or more general housing needs in the short-term	Development that is likely to require a longer lead in time for development.	(see <a href="#">Appendix 2</a> for facilities assumed to be provided with different scales of development) <b>[++]</b> where very large-scale development is likely and/or will contribute to meeting housing need within first 5 years of local plan <b>[+]</b> where medium scale development is likely and/or longer-term development with longer lead in times <b>[-]</b> smaller development which restricts larger scale and/or on-site restrictions could severely limit the development potential	Population
<b>2.2 Deliver affordable or</b>	Development that contributes to	Development that does not contribute	<b>[++]</b> developments located in areas of greatest affordable housing need	Population, human health

SA Objective	Decision-making criteria (SA will look for...)		Suggested scoring criteria/ Indicator(s)	Relevant SEA topic
	Positive effect (+/++)	Negative effect (-/- -)		
<b>specialist housing</b> where it is most needed	meeting the needs identified at the areas most in need	to meeting affordable needs where most needed.	<p><b>[+]</b> developments in areas of some affordable housing but in area of great need</p> <p><b>[-]</b> where only limited affordable housing proposed</p> <p><b>[- -]</b> where no affordable housing proposed</p>	
<b>2.3</b> Achieve reasonable <b>access to a wide range of facilities</b> (community, educational, town centre and healthcare facilities)	Development within a reasonable distance of a wide range of facilities. Multi-purpose community facilities, primary and secondary schools, higher education establishments supermarkets, and doctor's surgery.	Development beyond a reasonable distance and with no public transport to community facilities.	<p>See accessibility scoring at <a href="#">Appendix 2</a>:</p> <p><b>[++]</b> majority facilities and services within reasonable walking and cycling distance and a good public transport connections, (a range of useful bus routes)</p> <p><b>[+]</b> some facilities and services within reasonable walking and cycling distance and some public transport connections</p> <p><b>[0]</b> access would require short car journeys</p> <p><b>[-]</b> most facilities beyond reasonable walking and cycling distance), limited public transport connections</p> <p><b>[- -]</b> no or very limited facilities/services</p>	Population, Human health, Climate



SA Objective	Decision-making criteria (SA will look for...)		Suggested scoring criteria/ Indicator(s)	Relevant SEA topic
	Positive effect (+/++)	Negative effect (-/- -)		
<b>2.4 Enhancing community cohesion</b> and community facilities provision including cultural facilities	<p>Development which adds to the retail and leisure services and facilities within a town centre.</p> <p>Development which would create a demonstrable increase in footfall and potential use of a centre.</p> <p>Good access to cultural services e.g. museums, libraries, theatres</p>	<p>Development which has the potential to remove retail and leisure services and facilities from a town centre.</p> <p>Physical barriers to integration</p>	<p>See <a href="#">Appendix 2</a> for assumed facilities/services expected to be delivered at different scales of development</p> <p><b>[++]</b> development which brings significant benefits to the local community), well integrated with the community. Or of a scale which will help support a struggling town centre.</p> <p><b>[+]</b> development is of a scale which justifies a new village or neighbourhood. Which builds own identity in time.</p> <p><b>[0]</b> no effect</p> <p><b>[-]</b> new development outside and greater than 5km from town/village centre</p> <p><b>[--]</b> development which is not well integrated or is physically separated from the adjoining settlement</p>	Population, human health, cultural heritage

SA Objective	Decision-making criteria (SA will look for...)		Suggested scoring criteria/ Indicator(s)	Relevant SEA topic
	Positive effect (+/++)	Negative effect (-/- -)		
<b>2.5. Improve health and wellbeing /healthy living opportunities -</b> access to Open Spaces, Public Rights of Way, walking and cycling opportunities, Outdoor leisure activities	<p>Development in a location providing access to suitable (quantity and quality) of public open space.</p> <p>Development on or adjacent to primary walking network/ PRow routes.</p> <p>Development at coastal locations</p>	<p>Development in a location lacking access to suitable (quantity and quality) of public open space.</p> <p>Development on public open space which reduces quantity, quality and accessibility.</p> <p>Development outside PRow network.</p>	<p>See accessibility criteria at <a href="#">Appendix 2</a>:</p> <p><b>[++]</b> good accessibility to a wide range and choice of open spaces, public rights of way, walking and cycling opportunities and outdoor leisure activities – or scale of potential development would deliver significant new green infrastructure and connectivity.</p> <p><b>[+]</b> reasonable accessibility to the above</p> <p><b>[+/-]</b> access to open space, public rights of way and walking and cycling opportunities in immediate vicinity however limited access to a range of wider opportunities</p> <p><b>[-]</b> limited access to the above</p> <p><b>[- -]</b> poor access to the above</p>	Human health, Population, landscape
<b>3.1 Supports decentralised renewable energy generation</b>	<p>Development which integrates renewable energy, where there is an identified potential renewable energy source nearby.</p> <p>Development with the potential to provide new heat network (high density) or has the potential to links into existing heat networks</p>	<p>Development which is likely to use non-renewable forms of energy generation and has little potential to connect into or provide a new heat network (dispersed settlement scenarios)</p>	<p><b>[++]</b> significant extent of area identified as having potential for wind or solar energy development</p> <p><b>[+]</b> parts of surrounding area identified as having potential, or the development potential is of a significant enough scale to possibly deliver heat networks</p> <p><b>[0]</b> no areas with potential for wind and solar schemes within reasonable proximity</p>	Climate, material assets

SA Objective	Decision-making criteria (SA will look for...)		Suggested scoring criteria/ Indicator(s)	Relevant SEA topic
	Positive effect (+/++)	Negative effect (-/- -)		
<b>3.2 Minimise vulnerability to tidal &amp; fluvial flooding,</b> without increasing flood risk elsewhere. Also minimise <b>surface water flood risk</b> and harm to water quality and availability.	<p>Development in flood zone 1/2. Development proposed in areas of lowest flood risk</p> <p>Development which mitigates existing flood risk from tidal or fluvial sources.</p>	<p>Development in flood risk zone 3a/b. Highly vulnerable development in flood risk zone 3a</p> <p>Any other development in areas of flood risk</p> <p>Flood defences and mitigation measures that would have negative effects on flooding elsewhere.</p>	<p><b>[++]</b> &gt; 60% Flood Zone 1</p> <p><b>[+]</b> &gt; 60% Flood Zone 2</p> <p><b>[+/-]</b> significant area in Flood Zone 1 and significant in flood zones 3a and b, which may allow development in areas at sequentially lower risk</p> <p><b>[-]</b> &gt; 60% Flood zone 3a, which will require flood risk mitigation measures</p> <p><b>[--]</b> &gt; 60% Flood Zone 3b which will require flood mitigation measures (significant negative impact could be reintroduced via climate change)</p>	Water, Climate, Human health, material assets
<b>3.3 Reduce the need to travel by car</b>	<p>Development allows for walking and cycling for accessibility</p> <p>Development within reasonable distance of rail station.</p> <p>Development within reasonable distance of bus stops which offer a range of route options</p>	<p>Development does not promote walking or cycling for accessibility</p> <p>Development outside reasonable distance of rail station.</p> <p>Development outside reasonable distance to bus stops or with poor route provision.</p>	<p>Reasonable accessibility by all transport modes (see <a href="#">Appendix 2</a>):</p> <p><b>[++]</b> very good accessibility especially by walking/cycling</p> <p><b>[+]</b> good accessibility including by train/bus</p> <p><b>[+/-]</b> limited accessibility by some modes</p> <p><b>[--]</b> poor accessibility by any transport mode except car</p>	Climate, human health, air.

SA Objective	Decision-making criteria (SA will look for...)		Suggested scoring criteria/ Indicator(s)	Relevant SEA topic
	Positive effect (+/++)	Negative effect (-/- -)		
	Development with access to multiple bus routes.	Development outside cycling network.		
<b>3.4 Minimise impact</b> on and where appropriate <b>enhance treasured landscape/ townscape</b> , such as the Mendip Hills AONB and Conservation Areas.	<p>Developments which enhance the visual attractiveness of the area, creating quality placed and contributing to townscape, landscape, and /or character of the settlement.</p> <p>Sites unlikely to cause any significant adverse impact on either the general landscape or townscape</p>	<p>Developments which detract from visual attractiveness of the area.</p> <p>Development likely to leads to loss, change or harm to townscape or landscape or character of a settlement.</p>	<p><b>[++]</b> site contains majority low landscape sensitivity</p> <p><b>[+]</b> site contains majority low to medium landscape sensitivity</p> <p><b>[0]</b> site contains majority medium landscape sensitivity</p> <p><b>[-]</b> site contains majority medium to high landscape sensitivity.</p> <p><b>[--]</b> site contains majority High landscape sensitivity / AONB/ within a registered landscape (i.e. scheduled monument, open space landscape)</p>	Landscape
<b>3.5 Minimise impact</b> and where appropriate <b>enhance treasured heritage assets and Conservation</b>	<p>Development that is likely to safeguard, protect, and where appropriate enhance, the significance of any affected heritage asset, historic townscape or</p>	<p>Development that leads to loss, change or harm to affected heritage assets, historic</p> <p>Development in locations which would harm the</p>	<p>Heritage advice likely to be needed on the following:</p> <p><b>[++]</b> enhances heritage assets</p> <p><b>[+]</b> minor positive effect is likely overall on the heritage asset</p> <p><b>[0]</b> site has no known heritage assets within boundary– and would not affect heritage setting.</p> <p><b>[-]</b> minor negative effect likely overall on the</p>	Cultural heritage

SA Objective	Decision-making criteria (SA will look for...)		Suggested scoring criteria/ Indicator(s)	Relevant SEA topic
	Positive effect (+/++)	Negative effect (-/- -)		
<b>Areas</b>	landscape.	character and setting of a heritage asset	heritage asset [--] detrimental impacts on heritage asset [?] likely effect on the heritage asset is uncertain	
<b>3.6 Protect and where possible enhance Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Green Infrastructure</b> particularly with respect to protected habitats and species.	<p>Development that integrates/ preserves or enhances existing local sites/ habitats or features.</p> <p>Development that maintains/ enhances the connectivity and integrity of Wildlife Networks.</p> <p>Development which enhances existing Green Infrastructure corridors and linked assets.</p> <p>Development that takes opportunities to provide new/ strengthen existing</p>	<p>Development on or adjacent to national and local sites (including Wildlife Corridors) that creates potential for harm.</p> <p>Development that would fragment the connectivity and Integrity of Wildlife Networks.</p> <p>Development that severs existing GI corridor.</p> <p>Development that leads to loss of individual GI assets on existing corridors in the Strategic Network.</p>	<p>[?] for most sites – SNCI, etc. impact could be positive, neutral or negative and will not be known until design work is progressed. Phase 1 assessments may be needed</p> <p>[++] net gain/enhancement of bio/ geo diversity and GI networks can be demonstrated</p> <p>[+] protection of existing bio/geo diversity and GI networks can be demonstrated</p> <p>[0] if no known biodiversity constraints</p> <p>[-] Mitigation of avoidable harm e.g. reducing the area considered for development</p> <p>[--] where impact on European sites seems likely</p>	Biodiversity, Fauna & Flora

SA Objective	Decision-making criteria (SA will look for...)		Suggested scoring criteria/ Indicator(s)	Relevant SEA topic
	Positive effect (+/++)	Negative effect (-/- -)		
	Green Infrastructure corridors.			

Table 14: **Compatibility of SA Objectives**

<b>1.1</b>																	
<b>1.2</b>	?																
<b>1.3</b>	?	✓															
<b>1.4</b>	?	?	?														
<b>1.5</b>	?	-	-	✓													
<b>2.1</b>	?	-	?	x	-												
<b>2.2</b>	?	-	✓	-	-	✓											
<b>2.3</b>	✓	?	✓	✓	?	?	-										
<b>2.4</b>	✓	?	?	?	-	?	?	✓									
<b>2.5</b>	?	-	?	✓	?	?	-	✓	✓								
<b>3.1</b>	-	-	?	?	?	?	-	-	-	?							
<b>3.2</b>	-	-	-	?	?	x	-	?	-	?	?						
<b>3.3</b>	✓	✓	✓	?	?	?	-	✓	✓	✓	?	-					
<b>3.4</b>	-	?	-	?	✓	?	-	?	-	✓	?	✓	?				
<b>3.5</b>	?	-	-	✓	✓	?	-	?	-	✓	?	✓	?	✓			
<b>3.6</b>	?	-	-	✓	✓	?	-	-	-	?	?	?	-	-	-		
	<b>1.1</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.6</b>	

**Key for Diagram:**

- Effect uncertain ?
- Positive effect: ✓
- No/negligible effect: -
- Negative effect: x

## 6. Other Assessments Linked to the SA Process

### Equality Impact Assessments

- 6.1 Ensuring equality of opportunity for all members of the community is at the heart of sustainable development. North Somerset Council works with all parts of every community and is committed to ensuring that its policies and plans provide equality of opportunity for all. The council has an adopted Equality and Diversity Policy to maintain this commitment.
- 6.2 To ensure that the plans, policies and strategies produced by the council accord with the Equality and Diversity Policy, a brief but concise Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken for the North Somerset Local Plan in conjunction with the SA process.
- 6.3 These assessments will be carried out at the draft plan stage, when the sustainability appraisal is conducted. The assessment will review the potential impact of the preferred options only.

### Appropriate Assessment of the Local Plan under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Habitats Regulations)

- 6.4 In recognition of its internationally important natural features and wildlife, the Severn Estuary is protected by a range of national and international nature conservation legislation. As well as being notified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000, it is also designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) under EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds ('the Birds Directive'); and is a Ramsar site under the Ramsar Convention on the Conservation of Wetlands of Importance. It is also a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under European Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora ('the Habitats Directive 1992'), currently implemented in England and Wales by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Habitats Regulations).
- 6.5 In addition to the Severn Estuary, North Somerset also has three other SACs – Avon Gorge Woodlands, Mendip Limestone Grasslands, and North Somerset and Mendip Bats.
- 6.6 Regulation 105 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) requires that:

*'Assessment of implications for European sites and European offshore marine sites:*

*(1) Where a land use plan—*



(a) *is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and*

(b) *is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site, the plan-making authority for that plan must, before the plan is given effect, make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of that site's conservation objectives.'*

- 6.7 An appropriate assessment addresses the likely impact on those features of interest (e.g. waders or wildfowl) for which the site has been designated and has to be carried out regardless of whether those effects are direct or indirect, temporary or permanent, alone or in combination, negative or beneficial. The 'competent authority' can ask for sufficient information as is reasonable to enable that assessment to be carried out. Under European and national law, this has to be carried out before any planning permission can be granted.
- 6.8 The same legislative protection and constraints applies to habitat (e.g. coastal floodplain grassland) used by the European protected species, even if the land in question lies outside the SPA/Ramsar site.
- 6.9 The Habitats Directive applies the precautionary principle to protected areas; plans and projects can only be permitted having ascertained that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the site(s) in question. However, plans and projects may be permitted if there are no alternatives to them and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest as to why they should go ahead. In such cases, compensatory provision will be necessary to ensure the overall integrity of the site network.
- 6.10 To ascertain whether or not site integrity will be affected, a scoping assessment should be undertaken of the plan or project in question. The policies in the North Somerset Local Plan that may impact upon any Natura 2000 sites in the District must therefore be subject to this scoping process, which will be carried out in conjunction with the SA.
- 6.11 Any policy relating to, or impacting in any way upon, the conservation objectives of the designated sites will be tested in strict accordance with the provisions of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

## **Health Impact Assessment**

- 6.12 The impact of development on human health and wellbeing is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises that supporting the health, social and cultural wellbeing of communities is part of the social role of planning in delivering sustainable development.

- 6.13 Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) give valuable information not only about potential effects of proposed development on health, but also how to manage them. They provide the opportunity to change the design of a proposed development to protect and improve health. Health Impact Assessments are currently required in policy CS26: Supporting Healthy Living and the provision of healthcare facilities on all 'large scale developments in the district'.
- 6.14 It is proposed to have a specific policy on HIAs in the Local Plan which provides more detail on exactly when HIAs will be required and what will be expected as part of the HIA process. A more detailed policy will give better clarity to applicants at the start of the planning application process in terms of what would be required as part of the application and will result in health impacts being considered at the start of the process.

## **7. Next Stages and Methodology for the SA**

### **What happens next?**

7.1 This Scoping Report is the first stage of the SA process (Stage A). The stages that follow are:

- Developing and refining options (Stage B)
- Prepare the sustainability appraisal report (Stage C)
- Consulting on the Plan and the SA Report (Stage D)
- Monitoring the implementation of the Plan (Stage E)

### **Developing and refining options (Stage B)**

7.2 Under the SEA Directive, the council is required to assess the plans effects in comparison with “*reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme*”. The council will develop various policy options capable of meeting the objectives of the Local Plan. Each reasonable policy option will be tested against the SA Framework to determine its performance in sustainability terms.

7.3 The SA will be carried out on the basis of assessing the difference made by having, as opposed to not having, the policies in their proposed form, bearing in mind how the baseline would be likely to evolve in the absence of the plan. This can be assessed against the various SA objectives and any opportunities to improve the options to meet those objectives can be identified. This process will identify whether the effects are positive, negative or uncertain.

### **Appraising the effects of the plan (Stage C)**

7.4 The next stage of the SA process is to assess each option, in order to determine whether it is likely to have a significant effect on the environment and sustainable development. The purpose of this stage is to predict and evaluate the effects of policies so that, where adverse effects are predicted, consideration will be given to what mitigation measures may be required. This stage will lead to the production of the main SA Report.

7.5 Each option will be assessed and, where necessary, recommendations made for refining these included in the process. At this stage, if there are limitations in the data that is available, it is expected that the predictions regarding the impacts of policy options may be broad-based and qualitative rather than detailed and quantitative. Where possible, the potential effects will be quantified, but, where this is not possible, a subjective judgment will need to be made.

- 7.6 Completion of this process will make it possible to decide if any of the options are likely to have any adverse impacts. Where adverse impacts are predicted, information will be presented on the measures proposed to prevent, reduce or offset these adverse effects. Where an adverse effect cannot be mitigated, the council will consider deleting or modifying the policy. Even if a policy does not have any adverse impacts, the council will where possible seek to enhance its positive and beneficial effects.
- 7.7 Where policies are proposed for alteration in light of the SA process, these will be highlighted in the main SA report. The SA process will also provide a commentary on any sustainability issues that arise during the refinement of the option. Conclusions on the overall sustainability effects of the policy will also be provided as part of the main SA report.
- 7.8 Table 15 below sets out SEA regulation requirements for how significant effects on the environment should be determined. These criteria used throughout Stages B and C of the SA process but will also be applied to the determination of significant effects on economic and social circumstances, as well as the environment, so that the likely significant effects on broader sustainability may be determined.

Table 15: SEA Regulations criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment (Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations 2004)

1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to -
  - (a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;
  - (b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;
  - (c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;
  - (d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and
  - (e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).
  
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to -
  - (a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;
  - (b) the cumulative nature of the effects;
  - (c) the transboundary nature of the effects;
  - (d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);
  - (e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
  - (f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to -
    - (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;
    - (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or
    - (iii) intensive land-use; and
  - (g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

### **Consulting on the plan and sustainability appraisal (Stage D)**

7.9 A SA Draft Main Report will be available for consultation at the same time as public participation on the Consultation draft version of the North Somerset Local Plan. If changes are made in light of the public participation stage, the SA Main Report may need to be amended as necessary to reflect any changes, if the changes result in likely significant effects.

7.10 The revised SA Main Report will be submitted to the Secretary of State alongside the submission of the North Somerset Local Plan, which will be subject to independent examination by a Planning Inspector. The independent examination will consider whether the SA process has been incorporated into the production of the submitted Plan and whether the requirements of the SEA Directive have been met.

### **Monitoring the implementation of the plan (Stage E)**

7.11 It is a requirement of the SEA Directive that the significant environmental effects of the implementation of Plans must be monitored to identify any unforeseen adverse effects and to enable appropriate remedial action to be taken. SA monitoring will allow the Council to answer the following questions:

- Were the assessment's predictions of sustainability effects accurate?
- Is the plan contributing to the achievement of desired SA objectives and targets?
- Are mitigation measures performing as well as expected?
- Are there any adverse effects? Are these within acceptable limits, or is remedial action desirable?

7.12 SA monitoring will be undertaken annually following adoption in line with the requirement to produce an Annual Monitoring Report. Further information on monitoring will be set out in the SA Main Report.

## Appendix 1 – Review of Plans, Programmes and Policies

The below lists a range of plans, programmes and policies and reviews the relationship with the North Somerset Local Plan and the Sustainability Appraisal. There are a range of national strategies, plans, programmes and policies, these are the high-level policy and strategy documents. A number of sub-national strategies exist and are listed alongside the relevant local strategies, plans, programmes and policies.

Title of Policy, plan and programme	Objectives	Relationship with Local Plan and Sustainability Appraisal
<b>INTERNATIONAL</b>		
International documents are not specifically reviewed as part of this SA scoping report, as it is considered that the objectives of these are translated into national policy, principally through the NPPF.		
<b>NATIONAL</b>		
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)	<p>This is an updated version to the original NPPF of 2012. It sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. It provides a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities. The NPPF constitutes guidance for local planning authorities and decision-takers both in drawing up plans and as a material consideration in determining applications. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.</p> <p><b>Key objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering a sufficient supply of homes</li> <li>• Building a strong, competitive economy</li> <li>• Ensuring the vitality of town centres</li> <li>• Promoting healthy and safe communities</li> </ul>	<p>Sets the current national level of planning policy that the Plan must conform to.</p> <p>Local Plan policies should comply with the principles of sustainable development.</p> <p>Sustainability appraisal should be an integral part of the plan preparation process and</p>

Title of Policy, plan and programme	Objectives	Relationship with Local Plan and Sustainability Appraisal
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting sustainable transport</li> <li>• Supporting high quality communications</li> <li>• Making effective use of land</li> <li>• Achieving well-designed places</li> <li>• Protecting green belt land</li> <li>• Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change</li> <li>• Conserving and enhancing the natural environment</li> <li>• Conserving and enhancing the historic environment</li> <li>• Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals</li> </ul>	<p>should consider all the likely significant effects on the environment, economic and social factors.</p>
<p>National Planning Policy Guidance: <b>Air Quality</b> (2014, updated 2019)</p>	<p>In order to deliver the objectives of this guidance, when preparing development plans and considering planning applications, local authorities should;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider what development is being proposed and where it is situated;</li> <li>• Encourage sustainable transport;</li> <li>• Take into account air quality management areas;</li> <li>• Take account of potential cumulative impact of a number of smaller developments on air quality as well as the effect of more substantial developments;</li> <li>• Consider the impact of point source pollution; and</li> <li>• Consider ways in which new development would be appropriate in locations where air quality is likely to be a concern and not give rise to unacceptable risks from pollution</li> </ul> <p><b>Targets:</b> Refers to 2008 Ambient Air Quality Directive sets legally binding limits for concentrations in outdoor air of major air pollutants that impact public health.</p>	<p>Consider policies to achieve these objectives</p>
<p>National Planning Policy Guidance: <b>Climate Change</b> (2014, updated 2019)</p>	<p><b>Objectives:</b> Addressing climate change is one of core land use planning principles which should underpin both plan making and decision taking. Responding to climate change is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the delivery of appropriately sited 'green' energy;</li> <li>• Reduce greenhouse gases through effective spatial planning.</li> </ul> <p>In order to deliver the objectives of this guidance, when preparing development plans and</p>	<p>Local Plan policies will need to achieve these objectives</p>



Title of Policy, plan and programme	Objectives	Relationship with Local Plan and Sustainability Appraisal
	<p>considering planning applications, local authorities should;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the need to travel through provision of sustainable transport;</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for renewable and low energy technologies;</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for decentralised energy and heating;</li> <li>• Promote low carbon design approaches to reduce energy consumption in buildings;</li> <li>• Consider future climate risks such as flooding and availability of water;</li> <li>• Engage with appropriate partners; and</li> <li>• Advise developers on how to reduce energy consumption through materials and design.</li> </ul> <p>Planning can also help increase resilience to climate change impact through the location, mix and design of development.</p> <p>There are no specific targets relating to this document.</p>	
<p>National Planning Policy Guidance: <b>Historic environment</b> (2014, updated 2019)</p>	<p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To protect and enhance heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance;</li> <li>• Ensure heritage assets remain used and valued; and</li> <li>• Where a heritage asset is justifiably lost or partially lost steps are taken to interpret its contribution to the understanding of our past.</li> </ul> <p>In order to deliver the objectives of this guidance, when preparing development plans and considering planning applications, local authorities should;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify specific opportunities within the area for the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets;</li> <li>• Consider the relationship and impact of other policies on the delivery of a strategy for conservation; and</li> <li>• Hold clear and up to date information on designated and non-designated heritage assets.</li> </ul> <p>There are no specific targets relating to this document.</p>	<p>Consider policies to achieve these objectives</p>
<p>National Planning Policy Guidance: <b>Town centres and retail</b> (2014, updated 2019)</p>	<p>Local planning authorities should plan positively to support town centres and take a leading role in promoting a positive vision for these areas. Consider structural changes in the economy, in particular changing shopping and leisure patterns and the impact these are likely to have of town centres:</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b></p>	<p>Consider policies in the Local Plan to achieve these objectives</p>

Title of Policy, plan and programme	Objectives	Relationship with Local Plan and Sustainability Appraisal
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase economic activity within town centres</li> <li>• Provide additional employment opportunities</li> <li>• Allow town centres to diversify and offer services beyond retail</li> <li>• Provide opportunities to accommodate a range of suitable development to support town centre vitality and viability</li> <li>• Identify how existing land can be used more effectively</li> <li>• Identify policies to address environmental issues facing town centres, including opportunities to conserve and enhance the historic environment</li> </ul>	
<p>National Planning Policy Guidance: <b>Natural Environment</b> – includes agricultural land, soil and brownfield land of environmental value. Green infrastructure, Biodiversity, Geodiversity and ecosystems and landscape (2014, updated 2019)</p>	<p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use agricultural land classification system to make informed choices about future use of land</li> <li>• Consider the biodiversity or geodiversity of brownfield land and its environmental sensitivity</li> <li>• Identify the location of existing and proposed green infrastructure networks and provide policies for their protection or enhancement</li> <li>• Deliver a strategic approach to biodiversity and geodiversity protection as an integral part of policy</li> <li>• Consider the potential impact of development on protected and priority species, and scope to avoid or mitigate any impacts</li> <li>• develop policies which set out approach to biodiversity net gain and how these will be delivered</li> <li>• policies to identify landscape of special characteristics and set out criteria for assessment</li> </ul>	<p>These objectives should be considered within Local Plan policy</p>
<p>National Planning Policy Guidance: <b>Flood Risk and coastal change</b> (2014, updated 2019)</p>	<p><b>Objective:</b> The NPPG section on Flood Risk contains strict guidance on how local authorities should act on flood risk assessments in the preparation of its local plan and the decision making process. It states that the tests as set out in the NPPF should be followed and where the tests are not met, new development on flood risk sites should not be allowed. To deliver the objectives of this guidance, when preparing development plans and considering planning applications, local authorities should;</p>	<p>Local Plan policies should reflect these objectives</p>

Title of Policy, plan and programme	Objectives	Relationship with Local Plan and Sustainability Appraisal
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake a flood risk assessment of the area which will inform the local plan;</li> <li>• For sites over 1-hectare developers should undertake a site-specific flood risk assessment;</li> <li>• Apply a sequential test approach to site selection and decision taking;</li> <li>• Where development is in areas at risk of flooding, it should be appropriately flood resilient, resistant and safe for the development's lifetime; and</li> <li>• Seek flood risk management opportunities to reduce the causes and effects of flooding</li> </ul>	
DCLG Housing White Paper - <i>Laying the Foundations: Fixing our broken housing market</i> (2017)	<p>The proposals in the white paper set out how the government intends to boost housing supply, create a more efficient housing market whose outcomes more closely reflect the needs and aspirations of all households and which supports the wider economic prosperity.</p> <p><b>Key objectives/steps:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning for the right homes in the right places</li> <li>• Building homes faster</li> <li>• Diversify the housing market</li> <li>• Helping people now</li> </ul>	The local plan should reflect these aspirations in policy
<b>River Basin Management Plan</b> for the Severn Basin district (2015)	<p>Provide a framework for protecting and enhancing the benefits provided by the water environment.</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To prevent deterioration of the status of surface waters and groundwater</li> <li>• To achieve objectives and standards for protected areas</li> <li>• To aim to achieve good status for all water bodies, for heavily modified water bodies and artificial water bodies, good ecological potential and good surface water chemical status</li> <li>• To reverse any significant and sustained upward trends in pollutant concentrations in groundwater</li> <li>• The cessation of discharges, emissions and losses of priority hazardous substances into surface waters</li> <li>• Progressively reduce the pollution of groundwater and prevent or limit the entry of pollutants</li> </ul>	Consider policies to achieve these objectives
A Green Future: Our <b>25 Year Plan to</b>	Sets out goals for improving the environment over the next 25 years. <b>Objectives:</b>	Consider policies to achieve these

Title of Policy, plan and programme	Objectives	Relationship with Local Plan and Sustainability Appraisal
<p><b>Improve the Environment</b> (2018)</p>	<p>Deliver cleaner air and water in our cities and rural landscapes, protect threatened species and provide richer wildlife habitats. It calls for an approach to agriculture, forestry, land use and fishing that puts the environment first.</p> <p>2 key areas of relevance to the Local Plan:</p> <p>1) Using and managing land sustainably:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embed an 'environmental net gain' principle for development, including housing and infrastructure.</li> </ul> <p>2) Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help people improve their health and wellbeing by using green spaces including through mental health services</li> <li>• Encourage children to be close to nature, in and out of school, with particular focus on disadvantaged areas.</li> <li>• 'Green' our towns and cities by creating green infrastructure and planting one million urban trees.</li> </ul>	<p>environmental objectives locally</p>
<p><b>UK Clean Growth Strategy</b> - leading the way to a low carbon future (2017)</p>	<p>Achieving clean growth - growing our national income while cutting greenhouse gas emissions</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To meet our domestic commitments at the lowest possible net cost to UK taxpayers, consumers and businesses.</li> <li>2. To maximise the social and economic benefits for the UK from this transition.</li> <li>3. In order to meet the objectives, the strategy sets 3 goals:</li> <li>4. To nurture low carbon technologies, processes and systems that are as cheap as possible.</li> <li>5. Secure the most industrial and economic advantage from the global transition to a low carbon economy.</li> <li>6. Low carbon technologies that are cheaper and to offer more value than high carbon ones, so that other countries, particularly developing countries, follow our example</li> </ol> <p><b>5 key areas for action:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improving Business and Industry Efficiency and Supporting Clean Growth</li> <li>2. Improving Our Homes</li> </ol>	<p>Consider policies to meet these objectives locally</p>

Title of Policy, plan and programme	Objectives	Relationship with Local Plan and Sustainability Appraisal
	3. Accelerating the Shift to Low Carbon Transport 4. Delivering Clean, Smart, Flexible Power 5. Enhancing the Benefits and Value of Our Natural Resources	
<b>2. Sub-national</b>		
West of England <b>Joint Local Transport Plan 4</b> 2020 – 2036 (2020)	<b>Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take action against climate change and address poor air quality</li> <li>• Support sustainable and inclusive economic growth</li> <li>• Enable equality and improve accessibility</li> <li>• Contribute to better health, wellbeing, safety and security</li> <li>• Create better places</li> </ul> <b>Targets:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air quality - ensure levels of NO<sub>2</sub> across the WoE monitoring sites are below the annual mean air quality objective of 40µ/m<sup>3</sup></li> <li>• CO<sub>2</sub> levels - Transport in the West of England to be carbon neutral by 2030</li> <li>• Electric Vehicle Uptake - 5000 registrations per year from 2020 in the West of England</li> <li>• Road congestion – to active green (0 – 5% decrease) or amber (0 – 5 % increase) in average AM peak journey time on A roads managed by local authorities across each monitoring period)</li> <li>• Modal share – use of JTS forecast modal share to 2036</li> <li>• Bus satisfaction – transport focus annual survey</li> </ul>	Consider policies to achieve transport-related objectives
Local <b>Industrial Strategy</b> (2019)	<b>Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in infrastructure that reduced energy demand, lowers carbon emissions and is resilient to the impacts of climate change</li> <li>• Strengthening innovation and driving productivity</li> <li>• Supporting all residents to contribute to and benefit from economic success</li> <li>• Providing businesses with the space, networks and skills they need to boost productivity, grow and thrive</li> </ul>	Consider policies to address these objectives

Title of Policy, plan and programme	Objectives	Relationship with Local Plan and Sustainability Appraisal
West of England <b>Duty to Cooperate</b> schedule (2013)	<p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To identify the strategic planning issues affecting more than one unitary authority area in the West of England;</li> <li>• To define the processes for taking these issues forward; and</li> <li>• To document the outcomes delivered.</li> </ul> <p>To deliver the objectives of this guidance the schedule demonstrates a table showing a key theme, issues and anticipated delivery outcome/benefits, the Local Authorities which are affected, any actions required and a proposed action date and by whom.</p> <p>There are no specific targets relating to this guidance.</p>	Ensures that cross boundary issues are consulted on at a strategic level
West of England Strategic <b>Housing Market Assessment</b> SHMA (wider Bristol - 2018)	The SHMA identifies the Objectively Assessed Need (for market and affordable housing) for the 4 local authorities within the West of England (Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and S Gloucestershire). This is determined to be 87,000 dwellings for the period 2016-36. This number takes into account the need to meet household and population projection, taking account of migration and demographic change, address the needs for all types of housing, including affordable and the needs of different groups in the community, and caters for housing demand and the scale of housing supply necessary to meet this demand.	Consider policies to help deliver non-strategic housing growth in the district where there is community support
West of England <b>Strategic Economic Plan</b> 2015 – 2030 (2014)	<p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create the right conditions for business to thrive. Give confidence and certainty to our investors to attract and retain investment to stimulate and incentivise growth.</li> <li>• Ensure a resilient economy, which operate within the environmental limits. That is low carbon and resource efficient economy, increases natural capital and is proofed against future environmental, economic and social shocks.</li> <li>• Create places where people want to live and work, through delivery of cultural infrastructure, including broadband, transport and housing to unlock suitable locations for economic growth.</li> <li>• Shape the local workforce to provide people with skills that businesses need to succeed and that will provide them with job opportunities.</li> <li>• Ensure all our communities share in the prosperity, health and well-being and reduce the inequality gap.</li> </ul>	Consider policies to achieve these Economic objectives

Title of Policy, plan and programme	Objectives	Relationship with Local Plan and Sustainability Appraisal
	<p><b>Targets:</b> The West of England LEP aims to exceed the Oxford Economics baseline growth figure of 65,000 jobs and 2.6% GVA growth up to 2030.</p>	
<p>West of England <b>Green Infrastructure framework</b> (2011)</p>	<p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain a functional and connected strategic Green Infrastructure network and maximise opportunities for enhancing the network</li> <li>• Ensure multi-functional benefits are recognised and considered in the planning process</li> <li>• Ensure new development, wherever possible supports the maintenance and enhancement of strategic GI network</li> <li>• Ensure early, continuous and effective engagement between all authorities</li> <li>• Monitor and keep up-to-date shared evidence on GI across WoE</li> <li>• Secure investment necessary to unlock major development opportunities</li> <li>• Ensure businesses and communities are more aware of environmental challenges and opportunities for GI</li> </ul>	<p>Policies within Local Plan should contribute to achieving GI objectives</p>
<p><b>3. Local</b></p>		
<p>North Somerset <b>Core Strategy</b> (2006 - 2026)</p>	<p><b>Priorities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackling disadvantage and promoting equality of opportunity;</li> <li>• Developing strong inclusive communities</li> <li>• Ensuring safer communities</li> <li>• Improving health and wellbeing</li> <li>• Developing a prosperous economy and enterprising community</li> <li>• Living within environmental limits</li> </ul> <p><b>Summarised Priority objectives:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Deliver sustainable housing development to meet housing needs, through the provision of a minimum of 20,985 new homes by 2026</li> <li>2. Ensure that major development proposals are delivered in tandem with the necessary improvements in physical and social infrastructure</li> <li>3. Prioritise employment growth to support self-containment</li> </ol>	<p>Ensure that commitments identified in the Core Strategy are carried through.</p>

Title of Policy, plan and programme	Objectives	Relationship with Local Plan and Sustainability Appraisal
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Make provision for the needs of an ageing population</li> <li>5. Focus strategic development at Weston-super-Mare as part of an employment-led strategy</li> <li>6. Improve the vibrancy, prosperity, distinctiveness, quality and range of local services</li> <li>7. Continue to support the existing Green Belt</li> <li>8. Continue to redress substantial inequalities between most deprived and prosperous areas</li> <li>9. Improve accessibility through delivery of major transport schemes</li> <li>10. Ensure that sufficient parking is provided in new developments</li> </ol>	
<p>North Somerset Sites and Policies Plan: <b>Development Management and Site Allocations Plan</b> (2016 &amp; 2017)</p>	<p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responding to Climate Change and High-Quality Design</li> <li>• Managing Future Development</li> <li>• Tackling Congestion and Improving Accessibility</li> <li>• Managing the Environment and Heritage</li> <li>• Maintaining Economic Prosperity</li> <li>• Providing Housing and Community Infrastructure</li> </ul>	<p>Ensure that commitments identified in the Sites and policies plan are carried through into the Local Plan 2038.</p>
<p>North Somerset <b>Sustainable Community Strategy</b> (2008 – 2026)</p>	<p>Provides a vision for the district: to be a distinctive place with vibrant, sustainable communities where everyone fulfils their potential. A place that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintains and enhances its outstanding built and natural environment;</li> <li>• has a dynamic, low carbon economy;</li> <li>• achieves connectivity;</li> <li>• has world class arts and culture.</li> </ul> <p>Has vibrant sustainable communities, that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are lively and inclusive;</li> <li>• places where people feel safe, take responsibility and contribute;</li> <li>• are carbon neutral;</li> <li>• where the disadvantaged are supported;</li> <li>• where the vulnerable are protected.</li> </ul> <p>Here people feel proud to live Communities where everyone fulfils their potential by having an equal opportunity to:</p>	<p>The Plan needs to consider the relevant objectives and sustainability needs of communities and how this will be delivered both strategically and on the ground. Resulting sustainability objectives will apply to multiple topics reflected in the SA Framework.</p>



Title of Policy, plan and programme	Objectives	Relationship with Local Plan and Sustainability Appraisal
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn and develop skills;</li> <li>• Enjoy a healthy, low carbon lifestyle;</li> <li>• Influence the future of their area;</li> <li>• Contribute to the economy and society</li> </ul>	
<b>Affordable housing</b> SPD (2013)	<p><b>Objectives:</b> To advise applicants on how the council applies its affordable housing policies. It sets out the council's definition of affordable housing and preferred methods of ensuring delivery.</p> <p>On-site affordable housing provision will be sought to meet local needs on all residential developments of 10 dwellings or more (or on sites of 0.3 hectares or above). On sites of 5 – 9 dwellings the council will seek to negotiate either on-site provision or a financial contribution towards the provision of affordable housing.</p>	Local Plan policy should seek to achieve these objectives
North Somerset <b>Economic Plan</b> (2017 – 2036)	<p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To create the conditions for higher value local employment - to raise average wages and raise standards of living, recognising the need for a range of job opportunities for all;</li> <li>2. To grow and enhance the competitiveness of our businesses base – to address the productivity challenge;</li> <li>3. To foster a culture of enterprise, innovation and aspiration – to become an outstanding place to start and grow a business;</li> <li>4. To enhance the area's skills profile – to meet the needs of the current and future economy;</li> <li>5. To nurture and build on the area's distinctive identity – to attract and retain young people, families, visitors and investment.</li> </ol>	Consider policies to achieve Economic objectives
North Somerset <b>Biodiversity and Trees</b> SPD (2005)	<p>The purpose is to ensure that biodiversity is full incorporated and best practice is observed in development proposals.</p> <p>Follows a five-point Royal Town Planning Institute approach:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. information – questions will be asked to decide if more information is needed on the potential effects of the development and on the expertise required to inform the decision</li> <li>2. avoidance – wherever possible all the adverse effects on wildlife species and habitats</li> </ol>	Consider policies which will achieve the approach taken in the SPD

Title of Policy, plan and programme	Objectives	Relationship with Local Plan and Sustainability Appraisal
	<p>should be identified and avoided</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. mitigation – to minimise any adverse effects and aim to guarantee proposed mitigation with planning conditions</li> <li>4. compensation – to offset any residual harm and aim to guarantee this with planning obligations or agreements</li> <li>5. new Benefits – what and where are the opportunities to provide new benefits for wildlife?</li> </ol>	
<p><b>North Somerset and Mendip Bats Special Area of Conservation</b> (SAC) guidance on development – SPD (2018)</p>	<p>Advice for developers, consultants, and planners involved in planning and assessing development proposals in the landscapes surrounding the North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to provide a clearer approach to considering impacts of development on the SAC.</li> <li>• to provide a consistent basis for understanding how rare horseshoe bats use the landscape and where there is likely to be greater risk or opportunity for development.</li> <li>• the guidance will help identify key issues at pre-application stage that can inform the location and sensitive design of development proposals and minimise delays and uncertainty.</li> <li>• guidance explains how development activities can impact the SAC and the steps required to avoid or mitigate any impacts.</li> <li>• guidance brings together best practice and learning from areas with similar approaches.</li> </ul>	<p>Cross reference to seek compliance with the guidance in the local plan</p>
<p><b>Landscape Character Assessment</b> Supplementary Planning Document (2018)</p>	<p>An update report to the original landscape and character assessment report of 2005</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifies areas of high and moderate landscape sensitivity</li> <li>• highlights areas in need of enhancement and conservation</li> <li>• to enable better-informed decisions on the future management of the landscape.</li> </ul>	<p>Will inform policy relating to landscape consideration in Local Plan</p>
<p>North Somerset Local <b>Flood Risk Management Strategy</b> (2014)</p>	<p>The strategy focuses on managing the risk of flooding to people and property due to surface water runoff, ordinary water courses and groundwater. It identifies proposed actions to reduce flood risk. Strategic objectives include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve understanding of flood and coastal erosion risk</li> <li>2. Develop plans and policies to manage these risks sustainably</li> </ol>	<p>Where appropriate develop policies to address strategic objectives</p>

Title of Policy, plan and programme	Objectives	Relationship with Local Plan and Sustainability Appraisal
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Work in partnership with other flood risk management authorities and lead by example</li> <li>4. Maintain and improve flood and coastal erosion risk management infrastructure</li> <li>5. Avoid inappropriate development in areas of flood and coastal erosion risk and ensure that development doesn't increase flood risk elsewhere</li> <li>6. Increase public awareness of flooding and promote individual and community level flood resilience</li> </ol>	
<p>North Somerset <b>Climate Local Commitment</b> (2013-8)</p>	<p>The council signed up to the Local Government Associations Climate Local Commitment in 2013 to demonstrate its commitment to action on Climate Change. An annual progress report was published on the council's website.</p> <p>The Council's commitment was refreshed in 2018 with the inclusion of an area-wide carbon reduction target of 50% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2035 (from a 2014 baseline)</p>	<p>The Plan must contain policies which address carbon reduction and climate change adaptation</p>
<p>North Somerset <b>Climate Emergency Strategy and Action</b> (2019)</p>	<p><b>Key principles:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Become a carbon neutral council</li> <li>2. An energy efficient built environment</li> <li>3. Renewable energy generation</li> <li>4. Reduce emissions from transport</li> <li>5. Replenish our carbon stores</li> <li>6. Adapting to climate change</li> <li>7. Repair reuse reduce and recycle</li> </ol>	<p>The Plan must contain policies which address carbon reduction and climate change adaptation</p>

## Appendix 2: Assumptions made when applying Sustainability Appraisal scoring

### 1. Accessibility criteria

Accessibility rating	Walking distance	Cycling distance	Distance from rail station	Frequency of train services	Distance from bus stop	Frequency of bus services	Criteria met
<b>Very good access</b>	Within 800m (10 minutes) with pavement	Within 2.5 km (10 mins) with cycle path	Within 400m	5 or more per hour	Within 200m	Every 15 minutes or less	Meets walking and cycling criteria
<b>Good access</b>		Within 2.5 km (10 mins)	Within 800m	3 – 4 per hour	Within 400m	Between 15 and 30 mins	Meets rail and bus criteria only
<b>Limited access</b>	Between 800m – 2000 m	More than 2.5km with no cycle paths	Within 1200m	1 – 2 per house	Within 800m	Between 30 and 60 mins	Meets 1 or 2 criteria only
<b>Poor access</b>	More than 2000 m		Greater than 1200m	Less than 1 per hour	Greater than 800m	More than 60 mins between services	None of the criteria met

### 2. Facilities provided with different scales of development

Scale of development	Dwelling Number	Facilities likely to be delivered
<b>Very large scale</b>	3001+	e.g. Secondary school, Multiple primary schools Mixed use local centre, Employment GP surgery/community hall Facilities relocated from elsewhere with opportunity for improved provision Extensive GI provision – multi-functional and interconnected. Major contribution to utilities upgrades.

		Major transport infrastructure delivered through development + case for bid funding.
<b>Large scale</b>	1501-3000	e.g. Primary schools, small local centre GI provision – multi-functional and interconnected. Transport infrastructure delivered through development + case for bid funding though lower number weakens case for public funding.
<b>Medium scale</b>	501-1500	Primary school(s) play space. Improved access, surrounding network.
<b>Small scale</b>	0 - 500	Play space, immediate site access.

### 3. Areas identified with specific employment demand

<p><b>Employment</b> Detail from the <u>North Somerset Employment Land</u> review (2018)</p>	<p><b>[++]</b> for areas of high demand (sites in or adjacent to Weston-super-Mare, South Bristol Fringe, J21 Enterprise Area, Land surrounding the Airport and Royal Portbury Dock, Portishead, Clevedon, Nailsea, and locations adjacent to M5 motorway)  <b>[+]</b> for some demand (Backwell, Yatton)  <b>[?]</b> untested location (if not listed above)  <b>[--]</b> difficult to attract employment (Mendip Spring)</p>
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