

SWT Corporate Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 6th July, 2022,
6.15 pm

The logo for Somerset West and Taunton, featuring the text "Somerset West and Taunton" in white on a teal background with a white swoosh.

The John Meikle Room - The Deane
House

Members: Sue Buller (Chair), Nick Thwaites (Deputy Chair), Ian Aldridge, Norman Cavill, Simon Coles, Habib Farbahi, Ed Firmin, John Hassall, Nicole Hawkins, Marcus Kravis, Libby Lisgo, Simon Nicholls, Danny Wedderkopp, Loretta Whetlor and Gwil Wren

Agenda

1. Apologies

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. Minutes of the previous Corporate Scrutiny Committee

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on Wednesday 1st June, 2022.

(Pages 5 - 10)

3. Declarations of Interest

To receive and note any declarations of disclosable pecuniary or prejudicial or personal interests in respect of any matters included on the agenda for consideration at this meeting.

(The personal interests of Councillors and Clerks of Somerset County Council, Town or Parish Councils and other Local Authorities will automatically be recorded in the minutes.)

4. Public Participation

The Chair to advise the Committee of any items on which members of the public have requested to speak and advise those members of the public present of the details of the Council's public participation scheme.

For those members of the public who have submitted any questions or statements, please note, a three minute time limit applies to each speaker and you will be asked to speak before Councillors debate the issue.

We are now live webcasting most of our committee meetings and you are welcome to view and listen to the discussion. The link to each webcast will be available on the meeting webpage, but you can also access them on the [Somerset West and Taunton webcasting website](#).

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| <p>5. Corporate Scrutiny Request/Recommendation Trackers</p> <p>To update the Scrutiny Committee on the progress of resolutions and recommendations from previous meetings of the Committee.</p> <p>6. Corporate Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan</p> <p>To receive items and review the Forward Plan.</p> <p>7. Executive and Full Council Forward Plan</p> <p>8. Connecting out Garden Communities - Public Consultation</p> <p>This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Mike Rigby (Planning and Transportation)</p> <p>Report Author: Graeme Thompson, Principal Planning Policy Officer and Sophie Jones, Planning Policy Officer</p> <p>9. Corporate Performance report, Out-turn and Quarter 4 2021/22</p> <p>This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Member Benet Allen.</p> <p>Report Author: Malcolm Riches, Business Intelligence and Performance Manager.</p> <p>10. Access to Information - Exclusion of Press and Public</p> <p>During discussion of the following item (Appendix E only) it may be necessary to pass the following resolution to exclude the press and public having reflected on Article 13 13.02(e) (a presumption in favour of openness) of the Constitution. This decision may be required because consideration of this matter in public may disclose information falling within one of the descriptions of exempt information in Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. Corporate Scrutiny will need to decide whether, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption, outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.</p> <p>Recommend that under Section 100A(4) of the Local</p> | <p>(Pages 11 - 22)</p> <p>(Pages 23 - 24)</p> <p>(Pages 25 - 28)</p> <p>(Pages 29 - 262)</p> <p>(Pages 263 - 290)</p> |
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Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the next item of business (Appendix E only) on the ground that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 respectively of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

11. General Fund Financial Monitoring - Out-turn position 2021/22

(Pages 291 - 332)

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Benet Allen, Portfolio Holder for Communication and Corporate Resources

Report Author: Kerry Prisco, Management Accounting and Reporting Lead

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Pritchard', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**ANDREW PRITCHARD
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Please note that this meeting will be recorded. At the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being recorded and webcast. You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 2018. Data collected during the recording will be retained in accordance with the Council's policy. Therefore unless you are advised otherwise, by entering the Council Chamber and speaking during Public Participation you are consenting to being recorded and to the possible use of the sound recording for access via the website or for training purposes. If you have any queries regarding this please contact the officer as detailed above.

Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting and listen to the discussions. There is time set aside at the beginning of most meetings to allow the public to ask questions. Speaking under "Public Question Time" is limited to 3 minutes per person in an overall period of 15 minutes. The Committee Administrator will keep a close watch on the time and the Chair will be responsible for ensuring the time permitted does not overrun. The speaker will be allowed to address the Committee once only and will not be allowed to participate further in any debate. Except at meetings of Full Council, where public participation will be restricted to Public Question Time only, if a member of the public wishes to address the Committee on any matter appearing on the agenda, the Chair will normally permit this to occur when that item is reached and before the Councillors begin to debate the item.

If an item on the agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group. These arrangements do not apply to exempt (confidential) items on the agenda where any members of the press or public present will be asked to leave the Committee Room. Full Council, Executive, and Committee agendas, reports and minutes are available on our website: www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

The meeting room, including the Council Chamber at The Deane House are on the first floor and are fully accessible. Lift access to The John Meikle Room, is available from the main ground floor entrance at The Deane House. The Council Chamber at West Somerset House is on the ground floor and is fully accessible via a public entrance door. Toilet facilities, with wheelchair access, are available across both locations. An induction loop operates at both The Deane House and West Somerset House to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter. For further information about the meeting, please contact the Governance and Democracy Team via email: governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

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SWT Corporate Scrutiny Committee - 1 June 2022

Present: Councillor Sue Buller (Chair)

Councillors Nick Thwaites, Ian Aldridge, Norman Cavill, Simon Coles, Habib Farbahi, Ed Firmin, John Hassall, Nicole Hawkins, Libby Lisgo, Janet Lloyd and Loretta Whetlor.

Officers: Chris Hall, Joe Wharton, Joanne O'Hara, Paul Fitzgerald, Sam Murrell and Jessica Kemmish

Also Present: Councillors Benet Allen and Federica Smith-Roberts.

(The meeting commenced at 6.16 pm)

1. **Appointment of Vice Chair**

The Committee resolved to appoint councillor Nick Thwaites as Vice-Chair of the Committee.

The Chair thanked councillor Gwil Wren for his work as the Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee since 2019. The Chair outlined that one of the roles of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee this year was to ensure that the Council was prepared for a smooth transition to the new unitary Somerset Council next year.

2. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from councillors Marcus Kravis, Simon Nicholls and Gwil Wren who was substituted by Lloyd.

Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts was attending in place of the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Planning and Transportation, Mike Rigby, who had sent his apologies.

3. **Minutes of the previous Corporate Scrutiny Committee**

The Committee resolved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 2nd March 2022.

4. **Declarations of Interest**

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Councillor or Clerk of a County, Town or Parish Council or any other Local Authority:-

Name	Minute No.	Description of Interest	Reason	Action Taken
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Cllr I Aldridge	All Items	Williton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr N Cavill	All Items	SCC & West Monkton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Coles	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr H Farbahi	All Items	SCC	Personal	Spoked and Voted
Cllr L Lisgo	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr J Lloyd	All Items	Wellington & Sampford Arundel	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith-Roberts	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke
Cllr N Thwaites	All Items	Dulverton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Whetlor	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke and Voted

5. **Public Participation**

No requests for public participation had been received within the required notice period for the meeting.

The Chair updated that the order of the agenda would be changed so that item nine would be considered next, after which, items six, seven and eight would be resumed.

6. **Use of Urgency Powers and Supplementary Capital Budget for Coal Orchard Regeneration Project**

The Chair advised that there was an addendum to the agenda in addition to the report for this item.

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources introduced the report:

- Midas had completed most of the building of Coal Orchard before the contract with them ceased. The report detailed how urgency powers had been used to enable the authority to intervene at Coal Orchard to ensure the project could continue.
- Coal Orchard should still produce a profit for the Council despite the report detailing that increased funding for the project would now be needed.

The Director for Place and Climate provided a further introduction to the report:

- Had updated the Corporate Scrutiny Committee earlier in the year about the issues around the Midas contract and on the termination of Midas's contract due to poor performance ahead of Midas going into administration.
- The report primarily covered the financial procedures needed on behalf of the Council rather than a project update. It focused around the use of urgency powers.

- An urgency decision was made under the delegations to the Chief Executive due to the urgency of a decision needing to be made meaning that the timeframe of bringing a report to Full Council was not possible. The Chief Executive made the decision to spend £675,000 of funds and the Chair of Corporate Scrutiny at the time was consulted. As part of the Governance process a report on the decision then went to today's meeting of the Committee before it would proceed to Full Council.
- The report also requested approval of an additional £100,000 in terms of capital above and beyond the existing capital programme. This additional funding required a Full Council decision. The project would continue to fund itself in terms of capital.
- Now had to be established as a developer with the National House Building Council (NHBC) due to Midas no longer being involved in the project and a warranty process needed to be established for the properties. As part of that funds needed to be put into an earmarked reserve for the warranties. If a warranty process failed to be set up, then the properties would become un-mortgageable.
- The addendum included a change to how the warranties would be funded as well as some changes to the wording of the recommendations.

During the debate the following points were raised:

- Support was expressed for completing the work at Coal Orchard.
- It was asked what the original anticipated cost of completing the project was, what the current full cost projection for the project was and what the anticipated final outcome cost for the project was. Officers responded that the amount of the original contract and the anticipated final costs were not currently publicly available information due to ongoing negotiations based on the completion of the work so officers would provide a written response to committee members only after the meetings. Once the project was completed the figures would be made publicly available.
- It was asked whether the funding was coming from general reserves or the Future High Streets Fund. If it was coming from the Future High Streets Fund, then it was asked what was being stopped to allow the money to be used for Coal Orchard. Officers responded that the capital allocation included the use of Future High Streets money. This could be done because an aspect of Firepool came in below budget, freeing up the funds to use elsewhere. Although the Future High Street fund had not yet given formal approval for the funds to be used for Coal Orchard they had expressed support for this.
- It was asked if the 40 units mentioned in the report were the number sold or total number available. Officers responded that the 40 units were the total number of units on the site. 11 were rented on block to Plymouth University. Of the remaining 29 units, 26 had been sold.
- It was asked what the actual cost of joining the NHBC was. Officers responded that the warranties with contractors were to do with the contractors warranting for their work for the Council. The warranties for the properties the Council now had to own as the developer. The Council had become the developer because Midas had failed. The Council had to set itself up as a developer with NHBC. This had cost £45,000 but it was a refundable bond, and the money was only held by NHBC in case the Council ceased to be a going concern. In terms of cost, the true cost was therefore £0 to the Council.

These warranties for the properties were not in place with Midas because they went into administration before the warranties were established as it was before the units reached practical completion.

- It was asked why the warranties did not go to each of the contractors. Officers responded that as the developer and seller of the homes when they went to market the Council had to provide the warranties for the properties. However, if something did go wrong then the Council would seek to rely on the individual warranties for different aspects of the properties such as the plumbing.
- It was asked if the earmarked reserve for the warranties had been set up yet or not. Officers responded that the earmarked reserve had not yet been set up.
- It was asked whether the Council had any opportunity to seek recompense from Midas given that the Council had been financially hindered by Midas going into administration. Officers responded that the Council were not on the list of Midas's creditors due to the Council having terminated Midas's contract in advance of them going into administration. Midas did not owe the Council any money nor did the Council owe Midas any money. However, it became apparent that Midas would not have been able to complete the contract. Officers had written to Midas's administrators to notify them of the additional costs to the Council.
- It was asked whether the warranty for the homes at Coal Orchard would be guaranteed by the new unitary Council. Officers responded that they anticipated they would be as the bond would pass to the new authority.

The Committee resolved to note the recommendations included in the addendum to the report:

2.1 Full Council notes the use of urgency powers by the Chief Executive who approved the increased capital budget allocation of £675,000 towards the completion of the Coal Orchard regeneration scheme.

2.2 Full Council notes the allocation of a refundable £45,000 bond to National House Building Council, approved by the S151 Officer and managed through cash flow.

2.3 Full Council approves the transfer of £185,000 from General Reserves to a Coal Orchard Warranty Earmarked Reserve to manage any potential financial liabilities under warranty claims.

2.4 Full Council delegates authority to allocate funds from this reserve and approve related uplifts in relevant budgets to the Director of Development and Place, the Assistant Director Major and Special Projects and the S151 Officer.

2.5 Full Council approves a further supplementary capital budget increase of £100,000 for the Coal Orchard scheme, to be funded by capital receipts.

7. Corporate Scrutiny Request/Recommendation Trackers

- The issue of phosphates was raised as a topic for the Corporate Scrutiny Committee to review in future with stakeholders invited to the meeting.
- It was highlighted that the Committee was still awaiting several answers from officers to questions raised at previous meetings. The Scrutiny Officer would

contact the relevant officers to ask them to provide responses and then create a new Written Answer Tracker for the new municipal year.

The Chair noted the request and recommendation trackers.

8. **Corporate Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan**

- It was suggested that a monthly report on progress on Local Government Reorganisation would be a beneficial item for the committee to review.
- It was raised that having clarity on what was within the scrutiny remit of this council versus what was in the scrutiny remit of Somerset County Council would be useful. Officers advised that this could be discussed with the Monitoring Officer and the information then shared with the Committee.
- It was suggested that an update on phosphates be brought to the next Corporate Scrutiny Committee. It was also raised that more communications to the public about phosphates would be beneficial. Officers noted that an update could be brought to a future meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee but that there was also a Phosphates Subcommittee which was dedicated to looking at this issue. Information about phosphates was also available to the public on the Council's website.
- Councillor Hassall left the meeting at this point.
- The importance of the phosphates issue was highlighted and some of the issues around phosphates outlined.
- It was suggested that the Committee reviewing car parking would be worthwhile. The Chair noted that this was an item which was being brought forward to a meeting of the Community Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair noted the Corporate Scrutiny forward plan.

9. **Executive and Full Council Forward Plan**

The Chair noted the Executive and Full Council forward plans.

Councillor Farbahi left the room and Councillor Firmin left the meeting.

- It was raised that clarification was being sought on the contents of the Digital Information Policies which would be going forward to the Executive so a decision could be made about whether these should be reviewed at a scrutiny meeting.

10. **Access to Information - Exclusion of Press and Public (Appendix 1 and 4 only)**

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee resolved that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the next item of business (Appendix 1 and 4 only) on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 respectively of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, namely information relating to the financial or

business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

11. **Wellington Land Acquisition (The Green Spaces)**

Cllr Farbahi returned to the chamber.

The Leader of the Council introduced the report:

- The report related to land around the Tone Mill area of Wellington and protect open green space for community use.
- As outlined in the report Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allocated funds would be used.
- A long-term lease would be granted to Wellington Town Council of 125 years.
- This had been discussed at Full Council before as part of the Council's previous Levelling Up Bid which was unfortunately unsuccessful but another way to proceed with this part of the bid had now been found.

The Assistant Director for Major and Special Projects provided a further introduction:

- Wellington Town Council were supportive of the plans.
- The Council would retain control of the land into the future as it would be leased rather than sold to Wellington Town Council.
- The landowner was willing to sell the land to the Council.

During the Debate the following points were raised:

- It was raised that the purchase of the land for the community would benefit people in Wellington. CIL funds had already been used by Wellington Town Council to purchase land around Wellington however, the Town Council was not able to afford to purchase the piece of land which the report related to. The Town Council was supportive and pleased to be approached by Somerset West and Taunton Council regarding a long-term lease of the land.

The Committee entered confidential session.

The Committee resolved to note the recommendations in the Confidential Appendix 1.

(The Meeting ended at 7.45 pm)

SOMERSET WEST AND TAUNTON COUNCIL
CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WRITTEN ANSWERS TRACKER 2022/23

Date of Cttee	Scrutiny Cttee Request for information	Decision Maker /Directorate Responsible	Response to request for information	Date of response	Scrutiny Officer Comments/Update
01/06/2022 Page 11	Decision taken under the Emergency Rule – <i>Further information requested regarding costings etc</i>	Benet Allen / Chris Hall	Questions relating to the Coal Orchard Development. Due to commercial sensitivity these will be made available to Councillors confidentially after the public meeting.	06/06/2022	Answers provided by Joe Wharton and uploaded to MOD.GOV.
01/06/2022	Committee asked for further updates on the phosphate situation. <i>Would like a special Scrutiny meeting to highlight these issues.</i>	Mike Rigby / Chris Hall	<p>A members briefing has been set up to take place on 28 July to look at Phosphates and the current five-year housing land supply. The slides from the briefing will be made available afterwards for those who are unable to attend. Chris Hall has also highlighted that the Phosphates on the Somerset levels and moors (somerwestandtaunton.gov.uk) webpage does address most of the concerns.</p> <p>The correct platform for debating phosphate issues is the SWT Phosphates Planning Sub-Committee.</p>	08/06/2022	Answers provided by Chris Hall and Sam Murrell. Agenda Item 5

SOMERSET WEST AND TAUNTON COUNCIL

CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WRITTEN ANSWERS TRACKER 2021/22 - UPDATED

Date of Cttee	Scrutiny Cttee Request for information	Decision Maker /Directorate Responsible	Response to request for information	Date of response	Scrutiny Officer Comments/Update
1 Dec 21	QC) It was questioned how many quality employment opportunities the Council had attracted in the last few years, in terms of productivity what was the percentage increase and in which sector	Cllr Marcus Kravis / Development and Place	<i>Awaiting updated response from Lisa Tuck</i>		
26/01/22	<i>Draft General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Estimates 2022/23</i> <i>Enabling Innovation</i>	Cllr Marcus Kravis/ Development & Place			

	Q) It was questioned what the enabling innovation funding mentioned in the budget report was for. Officers responded that a response would be given after the meeting.				
26/05/22	<p><i>Draft General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Estimates 2022/23</i></p> <p><i>Bus Station</i></p> <p>Q) An update on Taunton Bus Station was requested. Officers responded that a response would be given</p>	Cllr Mike Rigby/ Development & Place	<p>The main building and car parking area at the old bus station is now being used by the NHS as a Vaccination Centre and is open to the public. Their license runs for 6 months until end of September 2022.</p> <p>To get the building ready for use, the NHS have refurbished much of the main building to a high standard. This has involved knocking down partition walls, resolving drainage issues, decorating, painting railings and windows, cutting back overgrown foliage, and making general adaptations so that nursing teams can operate safely and securely. The top floor is being used for office space and a staff area with kitchen, whilst downstairs there is the vaccination centre, storage areas and 1-2-1 consultancy rooms. The NHS are keen to extend the license once it expires.</p> <p>Following a joint application to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, SWT and Minehead Town Council were awarded £96,360 to support the installation of two Changing Places facilities – one in the office building at the Old Bus Station in Tower Street, and one in the Coop Car Park in Minehead. To take this project</p>	25/05/2022	Response provided by Robert Downes

	after the meeting.		<p>forward, work is required to remove asbestos from the office buildings and realign drainage and utility services. Once done part of the office building can be converted. The intention is to start developing the Changing Places facility in 2022/23.</p> <p>Work is also continuing to define the longer term use of the site. The focus of which has been on the inclusion of the old bus station site in proposals put forward by Somerset County Council to the Department for Transport for funding under the Bus Service Improvement Plan process. It was recently announced that Somerset has been awarded indicative funding of £11.9m. Although more work is required to refine proposals, they did include an allocation of funds for a Taunton Mobility Hub utilising the old Bus Station site. The project team is currently waiting to hear whether this specific proposal will progress further.</p> <p>Finally, it is worth noting that Natalie Kirbyshire, the Project Manager working on the plans for the Tower Street site, has now left SWT. A new project manager has been recruited and will start in July. In the meantime, if you have any queries, please contact Joe Wharton or Robert Downes (r.downes@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk) in the Major and Special Projects Team.</p>		
03/2/22	<p><i>Community Engagement Hubs</i></p> <p>Q) What is the budget for the community engagement Hubs?</p> <p>How does SWT assess value for money?</p>	Cllr Marcus Kravis / Economic Development			

	<p>Is 34 live cases good or bad?</p> <p>Was there ever a target set?</p> <p>Are the live cases only linked to the two open sites?</p>							
03/2/22	<p><i>Innovation Centre / Team</i></p> <p>Q) Who is on the Innovation Team?</p> <p>Who is the SWT Officer Lead?</p>	Cllr Marcus Kravis / Economic Development						
Page 16	2/3/22	<p><i>General Fund Financial Performance Report for Quarter 3 of 2021/22</i></p> <p>Q) It was asked how much the Council had received in grants from the government over the past two years.</p>	Finance / Internal Operations	COVID GRANTS TO SUPPORT SWT			01/06/2022	John Dyson, Corporate Finance Manager.
					2020/21	2021/22		
					£'000	£'000		
				New Burdens	-306	-		
				Surge Enforcement Funding	-74	-		
				Community Outbreak Management Fund (COMF)	-	-210		
				Outbreak Management Fund	-47	-		
				Coronavirus Response Fund - Rough Sleepers	-102	-		
				Protect & Vaccinate	-	-116		
				Vulnerable Renters	-	-93		
				Test and Trace New Burdens Admin	-58	-96		
				Covid 19 Grant	-	-813		
				Covid-19 LA Support Grant	-2,386	-		
Sales, Fees and Charges	-3,135	-415						

			<table><tr><td>New Burdens</td><td>-196</td><td>-190</td></tr><tr><td>Sub Total</td><td>-6,304</td><td>-1,933</td></tr></table>	New Burdens	-196	-190	Sub Total	-6,304	-1,933																				
New Burdens	-196	-190																											
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2/3/22	Corporate Performance Report as at Quarter 3 2021/22 Q) It was asked if figures were available for how many repeat calls were received for issues which were not dealt with in the first instance.	Customer Services / Internal Operations	Unfortunately, this isn't currently possible. Our phone system doesn't log calls against a customer record so repeat contact isn't identifiable. This will be raised as part of the Unitary work with the Telephony workstream, as a requirement for any Customer Relationship Management software we use in the future. It may be possible to analyse Firmstep to identify repeat requests for the same address and the Business Intelligence team are looking into the feasibility of this.	01/06/2022	Malcolm Riches																								
2/3/22	Corporate Performance Report as at Quarter 3 2021/22 Q) It was asked in which areas the higher numbers of complaints were being received and if these were the usual areas higher numbers of	Customer Services / Internal Operations	<table><tr><th>Directorate</th><th>Number of complaints up to end of Dec 2021</th><th>Answered within 10 working days</th><th>%</th></tr><tr><td>Internal Ops</td><td>218</td><td>160</td><td>76%</td></tr><tr><td>External Ops</td><td>318</td><td>285</td><td>90%</td></tr><tr><td>Housing</td><td>305</td><td>208</td><td>68%</td></tr><tr><td>Dev and Place</td><td>38</td><td>29</td><td>73%</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>879</td><td>682</td><td>78%</td></tr></table>	Directorate	Number of complaints up to end of Dec 2021	Answered within 10 working days	%	Internal Ops	218	160	76%	External Ops	318	285	90%	Housing	305	208	68%	Dev and Place	38	29	73%	Total	879	682	78%	01/06/2022	Malcolm Riches
Directorate	Number of complaints up to end of Dec 2021	Answered within 10 working days	%																										
Internal Ops	218	160	76%																										
External Ops	318	285	90%																										
Housing	305	208	68%																										
Dev and Place	38	29	73%																										
Total	879	682	78%																										

	complaints were seen in.				
2/3/22	<p><i>Corporate Performance Report as at Quarter 3 2021/22</i></p> <p>Q) It was asked whether, excluding the increase in housing complaints, the number of complaints had increased.</p>	Customer Services / Internal Operations			
2/3/22	<p><i>Corporate Performance Report as at Quarter 3 2021/22</i></p> <p>Q) It was asked how many planning enforcement orders were currently out and active versus had been closed down.</p>	Internal Operations	<p>In total in 2021 we had 310 Enforcement Cases across SWT.</p> <p>So far in 2022 we have had 87, which if this rate continues would be an increase for the year as whole.</p> <p>For open cases still open on the system the numbers are as follows</p> <p>2020 = 25 2021 = 178 2022 = 77 Total – 280</p>	01/06/2022	Malcolm Riches

2/3/22	<i>Corporate Performance Report as at Quarter 3 2021/22</i> Q) It was asked if any comparisons were available for call wait times with other Somerset authorities.	Customer Services / Internal Operations	We have compared service standards between the other councils as part of our work to prepare for the new Somerset Council. Regarding call waiting times, SWTs performance is currently equal to or in many cases actually better than those of our peers.	01/06/2022	Malcolm Riches
2/3/22 Page 19	<i>Corporate Performance Report as at Quarter 3 2021/22</i> Q) It was requested that long-term and short-term staff sickness be separated out in the report and asked whether Covid had had a big impact on staff sickness.	Human Resources / Internal Operations	The sickness data does not currently categorise sickness into long-term or short-term sickness, but this is being developed. The overall turnover data includes permanent and fixed term staff but not temporary or agency. A report is being prepared for SMT which will be available in mid-April and will be shared with Members.	05/03/2022	Malcolm Riches
2/3/22	<i>Corporate Performance Report as at</i>	Planning / Development and Place			

	<i>Quarter 3 2021/22</i> Q) It was asked if staff turnover figures could be provided, particularly for planning staff.				
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SOMERSET WEST AND TAUNTON COUNCIL

CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TRACKER 2022/23

Date of Cttee	Scrutiny Recommendation	Decision Maker /Directorate Responsible	Final Decision/ Response to recommendation/	Date of response	Implemented?	Officer Comments/Update

Total Recommendations for 22/23:

Agreed:

Agreed in Part:

Not Agreed:

TBD:

	CORPORATE SCRUTINY	
Meeting	Draft Agenda Items	Lead PFH/ Lead Officer
6 July 2022	GF Financial Monitoring – Outturn Position 2021/22	Kerry Prisco/ PFH Corporate Resources - Benet Allen
SRD - 24 June	Corporate Performance Report Q4	Malcolm Riches / PFH Corporate Resources - Benet Allen
Exec RD - 8 July	Connecting our Garden Communities	Graeme Thompson / PFH Planning & Transport - Mike Rigby
Informal Exec RD - 7 June		
SMT RD - 25 May		
3 August 2022		
SRD - 22 July		
Exec RD - 5 August		
Informal Exec RD - 5 July		
SMT RD - 22 June		
7 September 2022	GF Financial Performance 2022/23 Q1	Kerry Prisco / PFH Corporate Resources - Benet Allen
SRD - 25 August	Corporate Performance Report Q1	Malcolm Riches / PFH Corporate Resources - Benet Allen
Exec RD - 9 Sept	Firepool Design Guidance and Masterplan	Graeme Thompson / PFH Planning & Transport - Mike Rigby
Informal Exec RD - 9 August	NO MORE ITEMS	
SMT RD - 27 July		
5 October 2022		
SRD - 23 September		
Exec RD - 7 Oct		
Informal Exec RD - 6 Sept		
SMT RD - 24 August		
2 November 2022	Update on Somerset County Cricket Club	CEO Gordon Hollins SCCC
SRD - 21 Oct		
Exec RD - 4 Nov		
Informal Exec RD - 4 Oct		
SMT RD - 21 Sept		
7 December 2022	GF Financial Performance 2022/23 Q2	Kerry Prisco / PFH Corporate Resources - Benet Allen
SRD - 25 Nov	Corporate Performance Report Q2	Malcolm Riches / PFH Corporate Resources - Benet Allen
Exec RD - 9 Dec		
Informal Exec RD - 8 Nov		
SMT RD - 26 Oct		
4 January 2023		
SRD - 15 Dec		
Exec RD - 6 Jan		

Informal Exec RD - 6 Dec		
SMT RD - 23 Nov		
1 February 2023		
SRD - 20 Jan		
Exec RD - 3 Feb		
Informal Exec RD - 3 Jan		
SMT RD - 14 Dec		
1 March 2023	GF Financial Performance 2022/23 Q3	Kerry Prisco / PFH Corporate Resources - Benet Allen
SRD - 17 Feb	Corporate Performance Report Q3	Malcolm Riches / PFH Corporate Resources - Benet Allen
Exec RD - 3 March		
Informal Exec RD - 1 Feb		
SMT RD - 18 Jan		

	EXECUTIVE	
Executive Meeting	Draft Agenda Items	Lead Officer
20 July 2022	GF Financial Monitoring – Outturn Position 2021/22	Kerry Prisco
venue =	HRA Financial Monitoring – Outturn Position 2021/22	Kerry Prisco
Exec RD = 8 July	Corporate Performance Report - Outturn Position 2021/22	Malcolm Riches
Informal Exec RD = 7 June	Information and Records Management Policy	Lauren Davis
SMT RD = 25 May	Digital Information Policy	Lauren Davis
	Member Information Policy	Lauren Davis
	LGR Implementation Committee	Amy Tregellas
	Connecting our Garden Communities	Graeme Thompson
21 September 2022	GF Financial Performance 2022/23 Q1	Kerry Prisco
venue =	HRA Financial Performance 2022/23 Q1	Kerry Prisco
Exec RD = 9 September	Corporate Performance Report Q1	Malcolm Riches
Informal Exec RD = 9 August	Firepool Design Guidance and Masterplan	Graeme Thompson
SMT RD = 27 July	CCTV	Sally Parry/Scott Weetch
19 October 2022		
venue =		
Exec RD = 7 October		
Informal Exec RD = 6 September		
SMT RD = 24 August		
16 November 2022	Placeholder	Jonathan Stevens
venue =		
Exec RD = 4 November		
Informal Exec RD = 4 October		
SMT RD = 21 September		
21 December 2022	GF Financial Performance 2022/23 Q2	Kerry Prisco
venue =	HRA Financial Performance 2022/23 Q2	Kerry Prisco
Exec RD = 9 December	Corporate Performance Report Q2	Malcolm Riches
Informal Exec RD = 8 November		
SMT RD = 26 October		

18 January 2023		
venue =		
Exec RD = 6 January		
Informal Exec RD = 6 December		
SMT RD = 23 November		
15 February 2023		
venue =		
Exec RD = 3 February		
Informal Exec RD = 3 January		
SMT RD = 14 December		
15 March 2023	GF Financial Performance 2022/23 Q3	Kerry Prisco
venue =	HRA Financial Performance 2022/23 Q3	Kerry Prisco
Exec RD = 3 March	Corporate Performance Report Q3	Malcolm Riches
Informal Exec RD = 1 February		
SMT RD = 18 January		

FULL COUNCIL

Meeting	Report Deadline	Draft Agenda Items	Lead Officer
05 July 2022	23 June 2022	PFH Reports	
		Green Space Acquisition (confidential)	Jo O'Hara
		Ecological Vision and Action Plan	Katherine Church
		Decision taken under the urgency rule	Chris Hall
		Petition - TACC	Sarah Ellwood
		Scheme of Delegation	Kevin Williams/Marcus Prouse
		Capital Supplementary Budget for the Blue Anchor Coastal Defence Scheme	Steve Hughes
		Six Monthly Commercial Property Investment Performance	Joe Wharton
		SCC Joint Scrutiny Committee for Local Government Reorganisation	Amy Tregellas/Kevin Williams
06 September 2022	24 August 2022	PFH Reports	
		Constitution Update	Amy Tregellas/Kevin Williams
		Community Governance Review for the Unparished Area of Taunton	Marcus Prouse/Kevin Williams
		Placeholder	Joe Wharton
		Placeholder	Jonathan Stevens
04 October 2022	TBC	Firepool Design Guidance and Masterplan	Graeme Thompson
		SPECIAL MEETING - TO BE CONFIRMED	
06 December 2022	24 November 2022	PFH Reports	
		Review of the Commercial Property Investment Activity and Performance Report	Joe Wharton
		Appointment of Returning Officer for Taunton Parish Council Elections	Marcus Prouse/Kevin Williams
		CCTV	Sally Parry/Scott Weetch
07 February 2023	26 January 2023	PFH Reports	
		Delegation of Returning Officer for Potential Parish Election 2023	
28 March 2023	16 March 2023	PFH Reports	
		Scrutiny Annual Reports x 2	
		Audit and Governance Annual Report	

Report Number: SWT 95/22

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Corporate Scrutiny Committee – 6th July 2022

Connecting our Garden Communities – public consultation

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Mike Rigby (Planning and Transportation)

Report Author: Graeme Thompson, Principal Planning Policy Officer and Sophie Jones, Planning Policy Officer

1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 Connecting our Garden Communities is a plan for ensuring that modern, futureproofed walking and cycling infrastructure accompanies the delivery of key developments across Taunton Garden Town. The plan builds on and complements the existing Taunton Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan and other related projects being delivered via the Future High Streets Fund.
- 1.2 This report contains links to the draft plan (which forms the main detailed evidence base) and a short-form non-technical summary document (which is more accessible). These are to form the basis of the consultation materials, but an online platform is being used to better enable stakeholders to engage with the proposals spatially and leave targeted comments as well as respond to a survey.
- 1.3 This report recommends approval of the draft plan for public consultation. The final plan, taking account of feedback received during consultation, will return to Executive Committee likely in the autumn and subsequently be presented to Full Council for final approval as a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications likely in December 2022.

2 Recommendations

That Corporate Scrutiny Committee recommends:

- 2.1 That Executive Committee approve the Connecting our Garden Communities draft plan for public consultation.
- 2.2 That responsibility for any minor textual and visual changes and enhancements prior to publication for consultation are delegated to the Director for Development and Place and Climate Change in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation.

3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 There are risks associated with the Connecting our Garden Communities project. However, many of these risks are more associated with the delivery of the plan and routes themselves, rather in the decision to approve the draft plan for public consultation.
- 3.2 The main risks associated with approving the plan for consultation include:

Risk	Explanation and Mitigation
Failure to consult	Whilst consultation is not a statutory requirement for a discretionary plan like this, failure to consult at this stage, and to subsequently move forward with more detailed design work and delivery without involving the public would be irresponsible, unreasonable, and risk significantly greater backlash. Walking and cycling routes need to be delivered in the places people need to go and that they will use. Deliverable project further require at least an element of stakeholder support and ownership, and the most successful schemes are built with communities and other stakeholders playing an active part. This consultation starts this process, which future, more detailed work may develop from. Public consultation further strengthens the case for developer negotiations and funding bids.
Raising expectations / over promising, under-delivering	The plan includes careful wording to ensure it sets out our aspirations, and that each route is subject to detailed design (which may necessitate change) and that it is heavily reliant on developer negotiations and securing external funding in order to deliver.
Raising anxiety / concern in affected communities / parties	The plan identifies routes only, with some commentary about constraints and opportunities which hints at what the design solution may need to consider. It contains no specific detailed proposals. There will be parts of routes that are more sensitive to change than others and where controversy may arise as detail develops (e.g., removal of on-street parking may turn out to be necessary in places). Whilst this level of detail is not included in the plan, the identification of routes does have potential to 'set hares running' in certain locations. As such, the plan includes a commitment to work with communities to develop more detailed proposals, particularly where more transformational change may be required.
Public confusion with other more advanced active travel schemes in the town centre	The plan shows how routes that are more advanced / already referred to in the public domain (such as those funded by the Future High Streets Fund and the Wellington to Taunton route) link with and relate to the routes being proposed by this project. It makes it clear that this is about longer-term vision and aspiration and preparing the pool of projects to work towards delivery of next.
Public confusion with the Taunton LCWIP	The plan clearly states that it builds on and complements the LCWIP. It will influence future iterations of the LCWIP.

Risk of being seen to overly focus on Taunton	The plan states that it is directly related to the designation of Taunton as a Garden Town, and the capacity and capital funding related to this. It further justifies the focus on Taunton in terms of the scale of opportunity it provides for carbon reduction and health and wellbeing improvements in comparison to other parts of the district. It identifies the aspiration to develop future external linkages to neighbouring settlements. It explains our existing commitments to deliver an LCWIP for Wellington, and within the CNCR Action Plan to further widen work on active travel across the district over time. Furthermore, it references that there are wider community aspirations for other routes which are not captured within the plan and that this does not mean these linkages are not important, or that they won't be pursued – we remain open to considering further routes. However, it will be vital that we prioritise route delivery appropriately.
Risk of being seen to overly focus on the Garden Communities over existing communities.	As explained above, this plan is directly related to the designation of Taunton as a Garden Town. This designation is as much the town as a whole as it is about delivering the new communities and knitting them in with the existing. However, the Garden Town capacity funding from which the supporting evidence work has been funded is intended by Homes England for unlocking housing growth and development aspirations, as such this is the primary focus. Furthermore, it is routes to support these new developments which stand greatest chance of being externally funded, and only these routes which we stand a chance of being able to negotiate developer contributions towards. The routes included within the plan do not think of the Garden Community areas in isolation. They bear in mind existing users and communities, which were the key focus of the LCWIP routes, and collectively they will deliver a comprehensive network across the town. Early engagement with ward members and parish councils around the Taunton area was used to identify any local aspirations which the routes could look to respond to in part and where relevant to the Garden Communities. However, there may well be other routes felt to be necessary within and beyond the town, to serve existing communities, but which have no direct relationship with the Garden Communities themselves, in which case these are not picked up.

- 3.3 The following risks are relevant, but more in relation to final approval of the final plan and delivery of routes.

Risk	Explanation and Mitigation
Not achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 /	Developing the plan will contribute towards tackling climate change and the transport sector which is the source of most emissions locally. Delivery of new routes against an

failure to address climate change	evidence-based plan increases the effectiveness of this action.
Failure to deliver sufficient housing or demonstrate sufficient land supply for housing	The plan identifies infrastructure related to the Garden Community developments around Taunton. All developments generate finite values and therefore have finite viability. Over-burdening costs on new development may risk making development unviable and stymie the delivery of housing. The plan essentially sets out a starting point for developer negotiations at the planning application stage. Planning obligations must be necessary to make a development acceptable in planning terms, relevant to the development and fairly related in scale and kind. Planning must balance a wide range of policy requirements and material considerations in order to consider whether development proposals constitute sustainable development. As such, the plan itself does not result in failure to deliver housing / land supply.
Risk of slowing, stalling or pausing of major capital programmes and project delivery	The Firepool development is a key part of the Council's corporate plan (and local planning policy), capital programme and project delivery. As a Garden Community, the plan covers connections associated with the Firepool development which the emerging Masterplan and future planning applications will need to respond to. The same terms referred to in the risk above apply to Firepool as any other development.
Risk of stymying wider Council aspirations in relation to Council assets	The Council owns significant land holdings within Taunton as part of its general fund, housing and open spaces functions. The use of any of this land for delivery of walking and cycling routes could, in theory stymie wider aspirations that the Council may have for those assets (e.g., disposal, regeneration, tree planting etc.). The starting principle for the design of any of the emerging routes will be to accommodate the route in line with the following hierarchy: 1) Highways land; 2) Other SCC or SWT land; 3) Third party land. Following this hierarchy increases the likelihood and ability to deliver routes, potentially reduces costs, and avoids being overly and unnecessarily constrained solely by existing highway widths. The use of any SWT land will of course need to be subject to appropriate discussion and negotiation with the relevant asset holder within the Council to understand long term aspirations for that land and ensure that these would not be compromised. Early engagement has taken place with Housing, Assets and Open Spaces teams to raise awareness of the routes.
Failure to allocate and spend Section 106 funds	The plan provides an evidence-based approach against which to secure future planning obligations, making it easier to allocate and spend the funds and increasing the transparency of doing so.
Failure to act on low physical activity levels	Developing the plan will contribute towards tackling low levels of physical activity. The focus on enabling key

	journeys to be undertaken by active means increases the effectiveness of this action and focusing on schools in particular drives potential for greater long-term health gains.
Failure to deliver modal shift – congestion, air quality, road capacity improvements – vicious cycle	Continuation of the business-as-usual approach to addressing transport needs of new developments drives demand for roads. It is well established that freeing up road capacity encourages people to drive. Developing the plan will contribute pro-actively towards tackling these issues, though needs to be accompanied by wider action (e.g. around behavioural change) to have most impact. Delivery of some routes will likely require the reduction of road/junction capacity in places and as such there may be some shorter-term negative impacts in this regard, to be understood at the detailed design stage for routes. The focus on enabling key journeys to be undertaken by active means increases the effectiveness of this action.
Legal issues could arise in detailed design	The plan includes careful wording to ensure that it is clear that the exact routing of routes may change and the detail of provision is not set, to be determined through detailed design. The plan is at a high enough level to avoid triggering any legal issues at this stage. The plan includes text to clarify that routes will wherever possible look to avoid third party land and utilise SCC/SWT land (and in the main highways land).

4 Background and Full details of the Report

- 4.1 Connecting our Garden Communities is a plan for ensuring that modern, futureproofed walking and cycling infrastructure accompanies the delivery of key developments across Taunton Garden Town. The intention is to ensure that the Garden Communities of Comeytrove, Staplegrove, Monkton Heathfield, Firepool, Nexus25, Nerrols and Ford Farm:
- link in to the strategic routes identified in the Taunton Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP),
 - connect to key services and facilities beyond their site boundaries, and
 - ensure routes address associated links which may have been missed by the LCWIP, whilst delivering against strategic green infrastructure opportunities.
- 4.2 The plan includes an evidenced network plan which builds on the LCWIP and shows our ambition for connecting the garden communities across the town. Appendix A to this report identifies the draft network plan which will form the basis of the public consultation. This plan is not intended to show every single piece of existing cycling infrastructure across the town, but to show specific routes which will be important to meeting the needs of the Garden Communities.
- 4.3 The draft Connecting our Garden Communities plan (see Appendix B to this report) provides the written evidence base and explanation behind the routes. This detailed plan is likely of most interest to site developers/promoters and more technical stakeholders.
- 4.4 A short-form non-technical summary plan is being produced to distil key information for

the general public, making it more accessible. This will be available alongside the report to Executive Committee.

- 4.5 The plan focuses on Taunton and explicitly the Garden Communities because:
- Taunton has an already reasonably high modal share base for cycling and walking, and due to its size, range of services and facilities and reasonably flat topography, presents the greatest opportunity in the district for shifting modal choice to sustainable, zero carbon active travel.
 - The Garden Town Vision is closely linked with increasing active travel and delivery of associated infrastructure. The Garden Town designation provides access to funding opportunities which are not available in other parts of the district.
 - The CNCR Action Plan includes a number of actions associated with the delivery of active travel routes, with a particular focus on Taunton, which this builds on.
 - The Garden Communities present opportunities to negotiate and secure funding and delivery of routes. Taunton is the greatest focus for development in the district, and ensuring these new communities knit into and integrate with existing communities is key.
- 4.6 The plan responds directly to:
- The Vision for our Garden Town
 - Our declarations of Climate and Ecological Emergencies
 - The Taunton Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)
 - The Government's more recent positive policy shift in relation to walking and cycling infrastructure
 - Local community aspirations
- 4.7 The plan builds on and complements the existing Taunton LCWIP. The LCWIP did take account of the locations of the Garden Communities but was built primarily on data relating to existing/historic movements and travel demand, serving existing and new communities generally. Key connections associated with the Garden Communities were missed. The routes which emerged from the LCWIP are primarily radial, in that they connect from the more peripheral parts of the town into the town centre.
- 4.8 The Council's Climate Emergency Declaration, Corporate Strategy, Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy and the CNCR Action Plan set the authority for developing projects and proposals in line with the actions of the CNCR Action Plan. A significant number of actions within the CNCR Action Plan relate to the delivery of walking and cycling infrastructure, particularly in Taunton, or otherwise enabling the shift to more sustainable and healthy active modes of travel.
- 4.9 The Vision for our Garden Town is closely aligned to our aspirations of working towards carbon neutrality by 2030. This manifests itself in many ways within the Vision, but in particular in relation to the promotion of walking and cycling, removal of barriers to modal shift and the giving over of more street space to these modes in order to achieve this. Beyond climate/carbon factors, the Vision focuses in on active travel as a key part of placemaking with a focus on people, the creation of more attractive and investable environment, and using these to revitalise the town and connect communities.
- 4.10 There are a number of existing adopted planning policies through which the Local Planning Authority may seek contribution towards the improvement of off-site walking

and cycling connectivity from developments in Taunton including:

- Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan policies Tr4 (Travel Plans), Tr6 (Developer Contributions to Transport), Tr10 (Cycle Schemes), Tr11 (Signing).
- Taunton Deane Core Strategy Policy CP6 (Transport and Accessibility).
- Taunton Deane Site Allocations and Development Management Plan policies A2 (Travel Planning), A3 (Cycle Network), A5 (Accessibility of Development), D7 (Design Quality), and D9 (A Co-ordinated Approach to Development and Highway Planning).

The principle of seeking such infrastructure or contributions towards, is therefore already set in policy.

4.11 However, when determining relevant planning applications previously, there hasn't always been sufficient evidence available to negotiate or secure delivery of significant off-site routes or otherwise contribution towards via Section 106 Agreements. The publication of the LCWIP helps this position greatly, but it is felt that additional evidence is necessary to give the greatest chances of securing such routes/contributions from planning applications in the future. Connecting our Garden Communities looks to address some of the above elements considered to be missing from the LCWIP where they are relevant to the Garden Communities. This includes circumferential routes, missing radial routes, making finer grain connections to key services and facilities, and hinting at aspirations for future external linkages where associated with / relevant to these developments. This plan will provide an evidence-based pool of projects to act as a starting point for negotiation with developers of the Garden Communities.

4.12 Key objectives for the plan are to:

- Develop a network plan identifying key active travel routes linking the Garden Communities into the LCWIP strategic routes and key destinations in order to enable significant modal shift,
- Ensure infrastructure proposed will provide modern and futureproofed cycle and pedestrian routes,
- Ensure routes are informed by key community and technical stakeholder engagement to maximise support and chances of delivery, and
- Provide an evidence base to support developer negotiations, funding bids and further work.

4.13 The plan will be used as the starting point for negotiating improved connectivity in relation to the Garden Communities as and when relevant planning applications are received, and in relation to master planning activities. To these ends, the emerging network plan is already informing such negotiations, though consultation and approval of the plan will help to give greater weight to this. It will further become an important resource for use in funding bids and business case development, enabling projects to be moved forward towards delivery as and when opportunities arise.

4.14 The routes included in the draft plan have been arrived at through the following process:

- Considering the facilities planned to be delivered within the Garden Communities which residents of the sites will be able to access on-site,
- Mapping key off-site services and facilities that people living on the developments will reasonably need to access,
- Grouping destinations and considering any synergies between the destinations for each of the Garden Communities,
- Considering what facilities within the Garden Communities may be destination

- facilities for wider existing communities,
- Auditing potential route options, and
- Identifying preferred routes where possible.

Early engagement

- 4.15 The plan has already been subject to early informal engagement with selected key stakeholders including Taunton Area Cycling Campaign (TACC), relevant ward members, relevant parish councils, Somerset County Council highways, safety audit, transport policy and public health teams, as well as relevant teams internal to SWT.
- 4.16 TACC have provided significant volunteer support both in undertaking a large number of audits and discussing options, ideas and solutions. Officers would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their support.
- 4.17 In December 2021, officers wrote to relevant ward members and parish councils introducing them to the project and seeking early inputs on the key services that the Garden Communities should be linked to, specific barriers to walking and cycling, and to understand if there were any related community aspirations that this project could consider. Response received helped to inform the direction of the project.
- 4.18 In March 2022, officers invited relevant ward members, parish councils and TACC to a series of stakeholder workshops where attendees were briefed in the context of the project and the emerging objectives. Attendees were asked a series of questions relating to types of destination, specific key destinations to be picked up, route prioritisation. High quality walking and cycling infrastructure was seen by attendees as being essential to meeting the Vision for our Garden Town and our carbon neutrality commitments. Attendees generally supported the idea of re-allocating road space away from vehicular traffic to walking and cycling in the right places, though recognised that this will not always be appropriate.
- 4.19 Attendees of the sessions were asked about the top three types of destinations which need to be linked with the Garden Communities. There was generally fairly good correlation between responses which overall ranked the top 3 connections as being:
1. Schools
 2. Employment
 3. Town centre/station
- 4.20 This was further reflected in responses to how routes should be prioritised:
1. Connect to schools
 2. Connect to other essential services
 3. Serve existing users as well as the new communities
- “Community support” also came out reasonably well also in the sessions with ward members and parish councils, whilst “Transformational” was an important element for TACC in particular.
- 4.21 The process for considering the necessary connections, route options and the emerging routes were explained. A number of comments were made about various barriers to movement, key destinations, opportunities and aspirations. However, attendees of all sessions “mostly” supported the emerging routes at that point. The comments received have informed updated, amended and in some cases additional routes.

- 4.22 In addition to the above engagement with community stakeholders, officers have also engaged extensively with technical stakeholders, particularly Somerset County Council highways, transport policy and safety audit through route scoping workshops and the countywide Active Travel Group with a view to getting broad support for the routes included in the draft plan. The views of these technical stakeholders have informed the routes included and thinking on what may be possible along them. However, the routes will need to be subject to detailed design in time.

Draft plan proposals and future delivery

- 4.23 The draft plan explains the context for the project, the process through which the emerging routes have been arrived at, and the evidence for their inclusion. It sets out an aspiration for the delivery of a network of walking and cycling routes which serve the needs of the Garden Communities.
- 4.24 The draft plan identifies a total of 33 “core” routes, which are reasonably specific in terms of their routes. It also identifies 10 more “aspirational”, Green Infrastructure-led routes which are less specific, more indicative of the places they might look to connect. It places these routes spatially alongside routes which are already further progressed including those associated with the Future High Streets Fund, East Street, and the Killams route being progressed by SCC.
- 4.25 A number of the core routes included within the draft plan have been subject to broad scoping workshops and review by transport consultants Stantec, funded through the Garden Town Capacity Fund. The considerations arising from this scoping have informed the content of the draft plan. Some of the routes are also in the process of being concept planned with a view to informing more pressing negotiations and potential funding bid opportunities.
- 4.26 Going forward, all routes will need to go through concept planning, business case development and detailed design stages ahead of delivery. As routes progress through this design path, it may be that some routes fall away as infeasible once more detailed issues are understood or need tweaking to overcome such issues. The plan is clear that by identifying the routes, the Council is not bound to deliver any of them, and delivery will be heavily reliant upon successful negotiation with developers and securing of other external funding. A principal purpose of the plan is to enable negotiation with developers in order to secure developer contributions towards scheme delivery, and to inform business case development and funding bids to secure other external funding sources.
- 4.27 The Government has had a step change in its approach to walking and cycling over the last few years and committed to significant funding being made available towards delivery of active travel infrastructure. The Department for Transport’s new executive agency, Active Travel England has been set up to ensure that this, and wider transport investment, is well spent, and to help raise the standard of cycling and walking infrastructure to align with Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20 as far as at all possible. Having proposals sufficiently developed and ready to go is essential for making the best of these funding opportunities when they are announced, often with short timescales to submit bids.
- 4.28 The overall network of routes has an aspirational element to it. It sets out the extent of routes which are likely needed to meet our Climate Emergency commitments and Garden Town Vision, both of which realistically necessitate transformational change.

However, the overall cost associated with delivering all of the “core” routes only is likely in the region of £124-£150 million. As such, delivery of the plan as a whole is heavily reliant upon external funding and developer negotiations. As such it is likely that the Council will need to prioritise routes for delivery. One point which the public consultation will cover is views on how to prioritise.

- 4.29 An important part of delivery will be ensuring that this work fits with and influences future work on any new integrated transport strategy prepared by the new unitary Council. Delivery of active travel infrastructure cannot be considered completely in isolation from a sustainable transport strategy as a whole. Engagement with key officers within the SCC transport policy, highways and infrastructure and public health teams and through the county-wide Active Travel Group has been crucial to the development of the plan to date and will continue to be so into delivery. This engagement means that we are in a good position and working to ensure that this plan can directly influence future transport planning in the new Council.

Public consultation

- 4.30 Building on the early engagement which has informed the plan to date, the intention is to now publish the draft plan for public consultation. Consultation will have the following objectives:

- **Inform** – awareness of the project, it’s aims, specific proposals, opportunities and constraints etc. is understood by developers, residents, interest groups, businesses and wider stakeholders.
- **Consult** – views are gathered on the emerging proposals, their impacts and deliverability and the form they should take, and these views are taken into account in the final version of the plan.
- **Respond** – calls for greater action on walking and cycling in Taunton from TACC and others, are responded to.
- **Partnership** – encouraging and enabling an element of active participation and co-design with stakeholders through direct inputs and suggestions on routes, constraints, opportunities, potential solutions and alternatives for consideration. The pool of participants is widened to be more representative.

- 4.31 The consultation will be hosted online using the Commonplace platform, which the County Council hold a licence for, available to each of the district councils in Somerset to use. It will include:

- A “heatmap” style tool which enables participants to actively engage with the proposals spatially, adding comments about specific routes/parts of routes or otherwise about potential alternatives/solutions.
- A survey seeking written responses to specific questions.
- Key information about the plan and links to the main plan document and summary document.

The County Council previously successfully used the Commonplace “heatmap” function during the height of the pandemic to gather views on where quick interventions could improve the ability for people to socially distance. The levels of engagement through this platform were good and lead to fast and targeted action.

- 4.32 This online consultation will be supported by the usual Council press release and social media posts as well as potentially placing an article in the local press in order to drive wider interest and engagement.

- 4.33 An online session will be organised for town and parish councils to attend building on the early engagement workshops held previously. Officers are actively looking at ways to engage with harder to reach groups, particularly younger people.
- 4.34 Following public consultation, amendments may be made as considered necessary. The final version of the plan will then be reported back to Executive Committee and on to Full Council for formal approval as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

5 Links to Corporate Strategy

- 5.1 Connecting our Garden Communities responds directly to objectives 1, 2 and 5 of the “Our Environment and Economy” theme and objectives 6 and 7 of the “Homes and Communities” theme of the Corporate Strategy. The consultation responds directly to objective 5 of the “A Transparent and Customer Focused Council” theme of the Corporate Strategy. By engaging with TACC in the development of the plan to this point, and continuing to do so going forward, we are responding directly to objective 5 of the “Homes and Communities” theme of the Corporate Strategy. If Council assets are required to assist in the delivery of any of the routes, then this would be directly responding to objective 3 of the “An Enterprising Council” theme of the Corporate Strategy.

6 Finance / Resource Implications

- 6.1 The Connecting our Garden Communities plan sets out an aspiration for the delivery of a network of walking and cycling routes. There is no explicit request for funding, or expectation that the routes will be funded by the Council. All consultation activities are already funded / nil cost.
- 6.2 A principal purpose of the plan is to enable negotiation with developers in order to secure developer contributions towards scheme delivery, and to inform funding bids to secure other external funding sources. It is likely that the Council will need to contribute some funding towards the delivery of some routes, including through CIL receipts, capital and revenue budgets. However, such requests will be made on a project-by-project basis further down the line.
- 6.3 Finance have reviewed this report which is considered a strategic report. Finance comments will be made for the individual projects as they develop, and approval is sought for the associated costs and funding. It should be noted that there are currently two capital projects already approved in relation to active travel:
- CIL funded cycle and pedestrian improvements - The Infrastructure Funding Statement allocated CIL money towards cycle and pedestrian improvements, which may well contribute some towards delivery of certain routes emerging from this project. However, this report does not seek allocation of any of this funding at present.
 - XX169G – Future High Streets Fund active travel improvements – The routes funded by the FHSF project are related to, but not directly part of this project. The routes within this project will complement and add to those being delivered with the FHSF moneys.
- 6.4 Firepool is one of the Garden Communities considered by the plan. As the Council is also developer for this site, and the plan will identify key off-site walking and cycling

infrastructure relating to the Firepool development, there will be an indirect financial impact on the Council in this regard, subject to developer negotiations at the planning stage. This process is beginning now, in relation to the emerging Masterplan.

- 6.5 The above points relate as much to the new unitary council as they do to Somerset West and Taunton Council.

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are anticipated to be no legal implications of approving the draft plan for public consultation. The plan includes careful wording to ensure that it is clear that the exact routing of routes may change and the detail of provision is not set, to be determined through detailed design. The plan is at a high enough level to avoid triggering any legal issues at this stage. The plan includes text to clarify that routes will wherever possible look to avoid third party land and utilise SCC/SWT land (and in the main highways land).

8 Climate, Ecology and Sustainability Implications

- 8.1 Transport is the dominant source of carbon emissions in Somerset, making up 46% of carbon dioxide emissions in 2018, compared with just 28% as the UK average. For Somerset West and Taunton the figure is higher still at 51%. This is indicative of the rural nature and low density population of the area and the lack of realistic alternatives to the personal motorised vehicle in many cases, as well as the fact that the M5 motorway runs through the district. Replacing vehicular journeys with active travel modes (walking and cycling) is identified as central to the success of reducing emissions from transport. Taunton represents the greatest opportunity in the district (and county) for securing higher levels of walking and cycling, and new developments are a key catalyst and opportunity for moving forward delivery of the necessary infrastructure. This plan is intended to lead to modal shift of movements from/to the Garden Communities to more sustainable and zero emission, active travel modes. Delivery of the routes will also enable improved modal shift for existing communities.
- 8.2 The delivery of routes will, wherever possible look to retain existing vegetation, particularly where there is an important ecological benefit to doing so. However, there may be places along the routes where a balance needs to be found between delivering high quality, compliant infrastructure and retention of existing vegetation. Climate change poses a significant risk to our ecology, and the delivery of walking and cycling routes can help to mitigate this risk. However, the loss of biodiversity is also of significant concern and the right balance needs to be struck. A holistic view will be taken in developing more detailed proposals for route delivery, with a view to creating opportunities to enhance the green infrastructure along the route corridors. Wherever possible, route designs will look to make use of and enhance/improve existing infrastructure, improving the sustainability of proposals in terms of resource use. However, in some cases, new infrastructure will be necessary/more appropriate. Water management will need to be considered in detailed design. However, all of the above relates to project delivery and not the approval of the plan for public consultation.
- 8.3 The public consultation is being hosted online, as such this saves physical resources such as paper used for copies of the document or consultation materials. Otherwise, there are no direct climate, ecological or sustainability implications of approving the plan for consultation.

9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications

- 9.1 A key objective of the project is to work towards the delivery of modern and futureproofed infrastructure, which would be usable by all. The routes have directly considered the need to accommodate the safe movement of children to schools, and the need to ensure routes are safe, attractive, overlooked and with a reduced fear of crime. Further consideration will be needed as routes progress through concept and detailed design.

10 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 10.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken – this is included at Appendix C. Officers within the Council with an overview of the Equalities function, who have experience of identifying impacts on those with protected characteristics have been consulted for this initial identification of potential impacts. Overall, the plan is anticipated to have a positive impact across all protected groups. Alignment with the Government's LTN1/20 standards for cycle infrastructure design is identified as a key aspect to help ensure positive impacts are realised and negative impacts are avoided.

11 Social Value Implications

- 11.1 The delivery of walking and cycling routes can bring added social value to the town through the contribution to placemaking and the power this has to create environments that people are proud of, want to spend time and invest in. Furthermore, there are significant health benefits of walking and cycling that delivery of the right infrastructure in the right places can help to realise.

12 Partnership Implications

- 12.1 Whilst this project is being led by SWT, it relates to transport policy and highways which are functions of Somerset County Council. As such officers from these departments have been closely involved in the plan's development. Continued close partnership working will be necessary in relation to consideration of planning applications, funding bids and transport planning for the town.
- 12.2 The project has benefited greatly from close, transparent and trusted working with TACC. The delivery of any routes included within the plan will require ownership and drive from the community and the continuation of this positive relationship is key to this.

13 Health and Wellbeing Implications

- 13.1 Health and wellbeing are central to this plan. The routes directly consider this in their connection to the places people need to go for essential services and facilities. The prioritisation of routes connecting to schools is key. Enabling children to develop a habit of walking and cycling to school can set them up for more active lifestyles for the rest of their lives.
- 13.2 Some of the routes quite deliberately link to or through some of the most deprived wards in the district. This ensures that the routes not only benefit the new Garden Communities, but also enable these existing communities to access the opportunities that these linkages and the Garden Communities themselves provide.

14 Asset Management Implications

- 14.1 This report makes no recommendations or requirements in relation to specific SWT assets. At this stage, the consultation document discusses routes in general, rather than the specifics of route design and land holdings required.
- 14.2 The Council owns significant land holdings within Taunton as part of its general fund, housing and open spaces functions. The use of any of this land for delivery of walking and cycling routes could, in theory stymie wider aspirations that the Council may have for those assets (e.g. disposal, regeneration, tree planting etc.). The starting principle for the design of any of the emerging routes will be to accommodate the route in line with the following hierarchy: 1) Highways land; 2) Other SCC or SWT land; 3) Third party land. Following this hierarchy increases the likelihood and ability to deliver routes, potentially reduces costs, and avoids being overly and unnecessarily constrained solely by existing highway widths. The use of any SWT land will of course need to be subject to appropriate discussion and negotiation with the relevant asset holder within the Council so as to understand long term aspirations for that land and ensure that these would not be compromised. Early engagement has taken place with Housing, Assets and Open Spaces teams to raise awareness of the routes.

15 Data Protection Implications

- 15.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessment has been undertaken in relation to the consultation exercise. Officers with an overview of data protection have been consulted as part of this. The assessment highlights a number of measures to be taken forward as part of the consultation to ensure compliance with GDPR and reduce risks. An associated Privacy Notice will be published as part of consultation hub.

16 Consultation Implications

- 16.1 See above sections 4.14-4.21 and 4.26-4.29.

Democratic Path:

- **Corporate Scrutiny Committee – Yes (6th July 2022)**
- **Executive – Yes (20th July 2022)**

Reporting Frequency: Once only

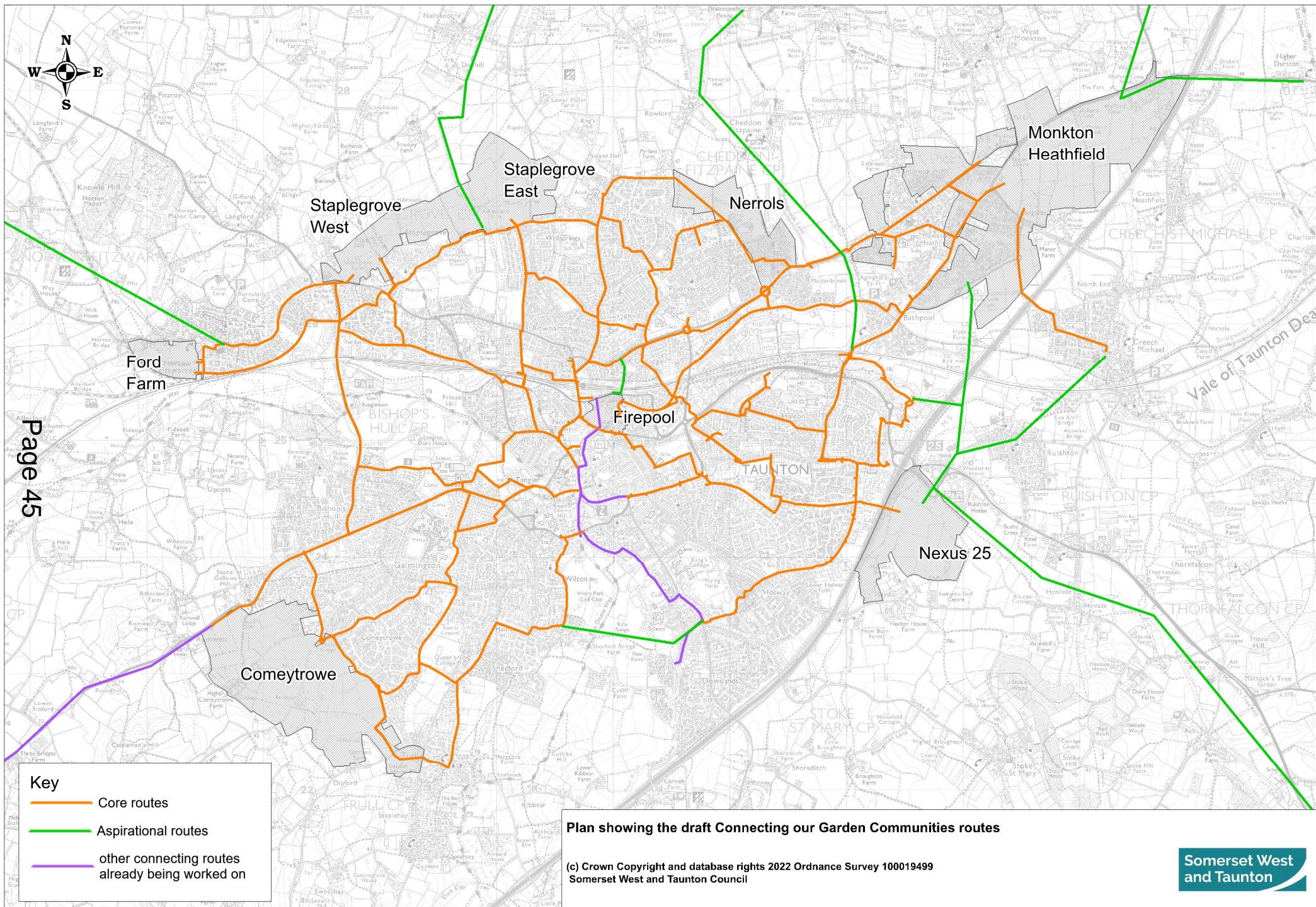
List of Appendices

Appendix A	Draft network plan
Appendix B	Connecting our Garden Communities (main draft plan and associated appendices A and B)
Appendix C	Equalities Impact Assessment

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Connecting our Garden Communities

A plan for ensuring modern, futureproofed walking and cycling links for key developments in Taunton Garden Town

Consultation Draft

June 2022

Version Control

Version	Purpose	Date
0.1	For Corporate Scrutiny Committee	24/06/2022

Role	Name	Date
Prepared by	Graeme Thompson MRTPI BA(Hons), Principal Planning Policy Officer Sophie Jones, MSc BSc(Hons), Planning Policy Officer	20/06/2022
Senior Officer approval	Alison Blom-Cooper, Assistant Director Strategic Place Planning	22/06/2022
Portfolio Holder approval	Cllr Mike Rigby, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation	

Responding to this consultation

We are seeking the views from the local community and development industry on this draft Plan. Wide engagement and participation is an important part of developing an effective plan, and community buy-in will be integral to successful scheme delivery. Therefore we want to know what you think.

To respond to the consultation, we encourage you to use the consultation portal:



[Consultation portal](#)

Here, you can view and comment directly on an **interactive map**, respond to **survey** questions and review all of the **supporting material**.

Alternatively, you can email responses or write to us at:



Strategy@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk



Strategy team, Somerset West and Taunton Council, Deane House,
Belvedere Rd, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 1HE.

You can also keep an eye on the Council's social media outlets, and respond directly through comments there:



@swtcouncil

Connecting our Garden Communities – a plan for ensuring modern, futureproofed walking and cycling links for key developments in Taunton Garden Town

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Appendix A – Route auditing

Appendix B – Route summaries

1. Foreword and Executive Summary

Increasing levels of walking and cycling is central to our Vision for Taunton Garden Town. The Vision is a progressive one which focuses on placemaking as a tool to not only support and enable our citizens to feel confident and safe to walk and cycle more, but also to deliver the wider benefits associated – creating a healthier, more sustainable, economically vibrant, safe and social place. In the context of our Climate Emergency declaration and target of working towards carbon neutrality by 2030, the focus is sharpened. Through our Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience (CNCR) Action Plan we commit to working towards Taunton becoming a Beacon Cycling Town – this plan is central to achieving that target.

Connecting our Garden Communities is about realising this vision in relation to the major new developments planned and taking place around Taunton Garden Town. It sets out our aspirations for a connected network of walking and cycling routes which not only meet the needs of the people living on, working in and visiting these new developments, but also existing communities both within and adjoining Taunton. The plan builds on the recently published Taunton Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and existing provision across the town to set out the case and supporting evidence for the routes which relate directly to the new Garden Communities.

This is an aspirational plan. Whilst in time, all the routes included within it will need to be delivered in one way or another, we have to be realistic about how this will happen. The plan includes “core”, “aspirational” and “other related routes”. To provide context, it is likely that the “core” routes alone will cost in the region of £124-£150 million. Therefore, delivery will be heavily reliant upon securing external funding in the form of planning obligations for developer contributions and grant funding as opportunities arise. It may be that we will need to ‘cut our cloth’ accordingly depending on the opportunities as they present themselves and how successful we are at securing this funding.

At this stage, the plan and this public consultation, are about the routes themselves. The plan includes comments in the route summaries about considerations to be taken into account in route design. However, it does not go as far as determining exactly what level of infrastructure will be delivered along every section of each route. Further work is required to take each route and specific interventions within them forward through concept and detailed design stages. As route design progresses, this may necessitate change, but this plan provides an important starting point from which to move delivery forward.

We are acutely aware of the importance of route delivery being based on strong and effective community and technical stakeholder engagement. As a result, this draft plan has already been informed by early engagement with ward members, parish councils, Somerset County Council and others. Engagement with Taunton Area Cycling Campaign (TACC) has been integral to the plan’s development, identifying existing issues and considering potential options to overcome. I would particularly like to thank the numerous TACC volunteers who assisted ably in auditing the great

many routes considered by this document – without their inputs this plan would have taken significantly longer to produce.

Finally, whilst this plan picks up on a number of aspirational routes external to Taunton itself where these are relevant to the Garden Communities in some way, we recognise that there are wider community aspirations for other routes which are not captured here. This does not mean these linkages are not important, or that they won't be pursued – we remain open to considering further routes. However, it will be vital that we prioritise route delivery appropriately. Whilst this plan focuses on Taunton due to its status as a Garden Town and the scale of opportunity for modal shift that it presents, we recognise the need for further work to come forward in other parts of the district too. Our CNCR Action Plan refers to widening work on active travel across the district over time, starting with an LCWIP for Wellington, currently in development.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Rigby'.

Councillor Mike Rigby

Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation

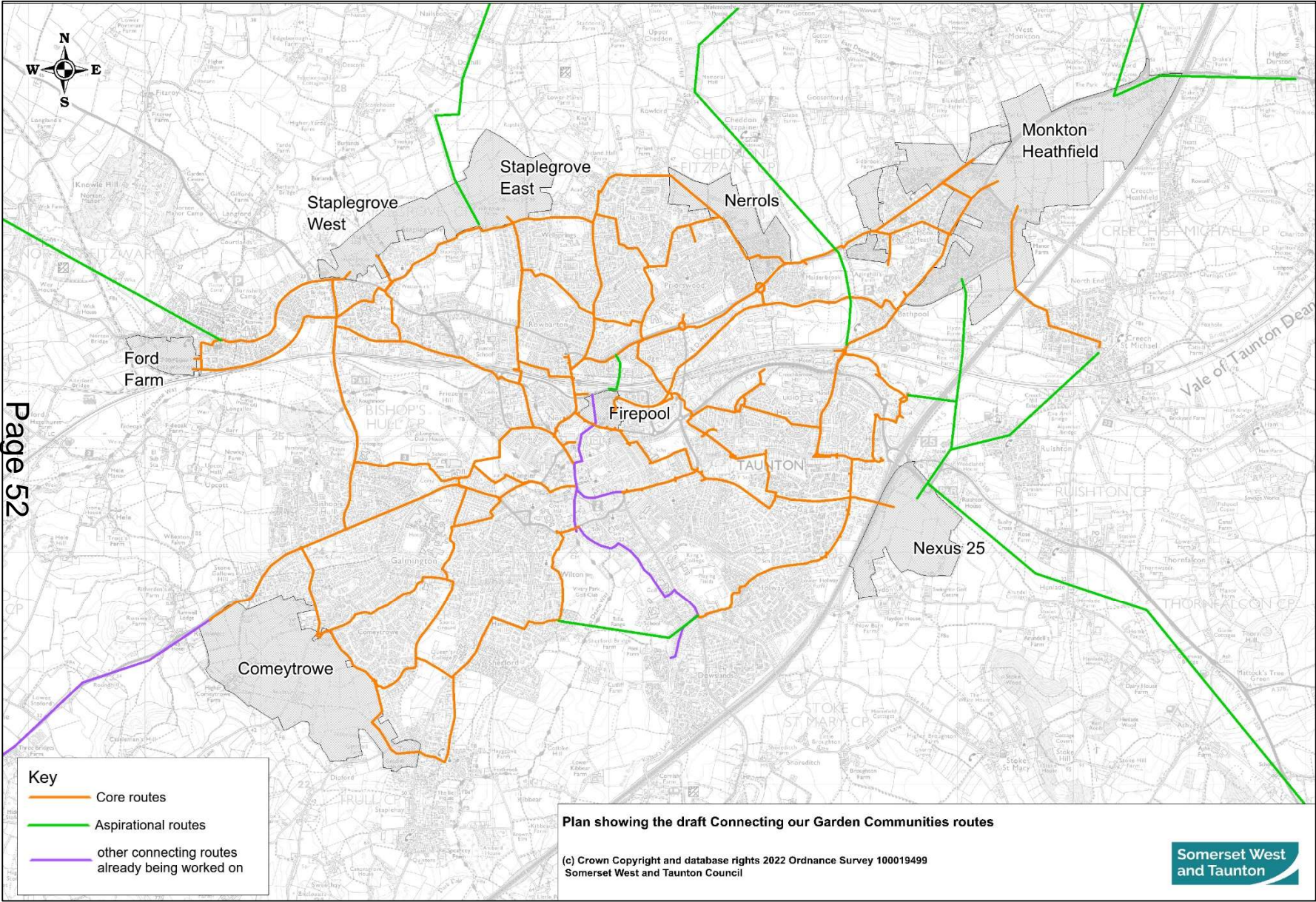


Figure 1 Connecting our Garden Communities draft Network Plan

2. Introduction

Connecting our Garden Communities is a plan for ensuring modern, futureproofed walking and cycling infrastructure accompanies the delivery of key developments across Taunton Garden Town.

The plan sets out our aspirations for delivery of a network of walking and cycling routes across the town, which are explicitly intended to serve the needs of the Garden Communities, whilst also serving existing communities. It builds on the work already in train in relation to town centre routes including that funded through the Future High Streets Fund, and the network planning undertaken in support of the Taunton Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

The plan is focused around the identification and appraisal of routes, and importantly not their detailed design, which will follow. Exact routings may be subject to change. The detail of the infrastructure provision is not set by this plan, and indeed types of infrastructure may be different for different parts of the network depending upon the opportunities, constraints and types of user the routes need to accommodate. As routes progress through concept and detailed design this may necessitate change, but the plan provides a starting point for these processes.

There will inevitably be parts of routes that are more sensitive to change than others. Successful delivery will be reliant upon community support and buy-in. As such, the Council commits to working with communities to develop more detailed proposals, particularly where more transformational change may be required.

The delivery of the routes identified in this plan will be heavily reliant upon external funding including through developer negotiations and external funding bids. By identifying the routes, the Council is not bound to fund or deliver any of them. As such, this plan provides an important evidence base to help secure external funding as opportunities arise.

The plan responds directly to:

- The Vision for our Garden Town
- Our declarations of Climate and Ecological Emergencies
- The Taunton Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)
- The Government's positive policy shift in relation to walking and cycling infrastructure
- Local community aspirations

The plan will directly inform:

- The Garden Town Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Future iteration of the Taunton LCWIP
- Development of a new Local Transport Plan
- Development of new statutory and non-statutory local planning policy
- Consideration of relevant planning applications
- Funding bids and business case development
- Delivery

Taunton Garden Town

The plan is directly related to the designation of Taunton as a Garden Town, and the supporting evidence has been funded through the Garden Town Capacity Fund, which has a particular focus on unlocking housing growth.

Taunton was designated as a Garden Town in early 2017 following a submission to Government. This submission reflected the Council's commitment to deliver significant new housing growth focused on a number of new Garden Communities as well as a regenerated town centre. We recognised the need to deliver a step change in the quality of new development and to ensure it was accompanied by essential infrastructure.

Whilst there are no hard boundaries to the Garden Town designation, it can broadly be seen to respond to the built-up area of Taunton¹, together with the growth areas for the town, allocated for development through adopted local plans or Local Development Order.

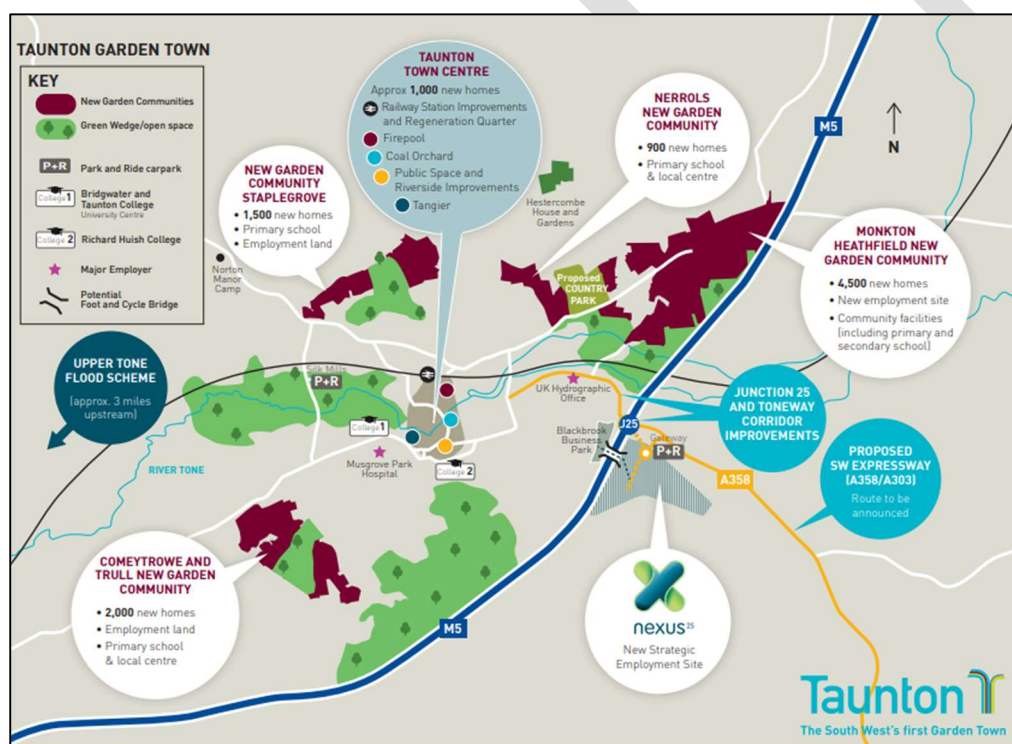


Figure 2 Taunton Garden Town

In 2019, the Council adopted the [Vision for Our Garden Town](#), which states:

“Taunton, the County Town of Somerset will be flourishing, distinctive, and healthy – and the country’s benchmark Garden Town. We will be proud to live and work in a place where the outstanding natural environment, diverse and thriving economy and inspiring cultural offer, contribute to an exceptional quality of life and well-being”.

The Vision is organised around four main themes:

¹ Including the associated settlements of Bathpool, Bishops Hull, Monkton Heathfield, Norton Fitzwarren, Staplegrove, Staplehay and Trull

- 1) **Grow our town greener** – transforming our open spaces and streets (relating to creating and joining up green infrastructure and water management throughout the town);
- 2) **Branching out** – moving cleaner, moving smarter (relating to prioritising walking and cycling and more sustainable and healthier alternatives to travelling by car);
- 3) **Growing quality places to live** – town centre, new and existing neighbourhoods (relating to creating high quality, people-focused and sustainable places); and
- 4) **New shoots and blossom** – a dynamic and prosperous community founded on knowledge, culture and business (relating to focusing economic prosperity and social value on utilising our specific strengths and opportunities).

Scope and purpose

The scope of this plan is limited to Taunton Garden Town and the connections most relevant to connecting the Garden Communities with modern, futureproofed walking and cycling infrastructure. However, it is important to recognise that the Garden Town does not sit in isolation. Whilst most of the external day to day services and facilities that people living on the Garden Communities may need to access are likely to be located within Taunton, the Garden Communities may themselves provide key services to surrounding areas, and often provide important opportunities for improving links between the town and other communities in the rural hinterland.

The “Garden Communities” considered by this document are the Comeytrove, Ford Farm, Monkton Heathfield, Nerrols and Staplegrove urban extensions, plus the major town centre regeneration site of Firepool, and the Nexus25 strategic employment site (as shown in figure 3, below).

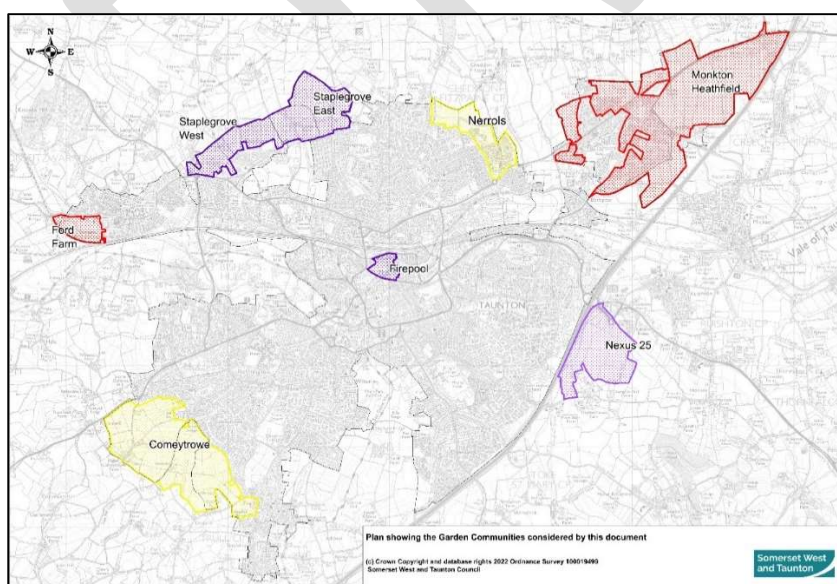


Figure 3 The Garden Communities considered by this document

The plan focuses on identifying connections for the Garden Communities. In many cases, these routes will also help to serve the existing communities within the Garden Town, and beyond. There may well be other routes felt to be necessary within and beyond the town, to serve existing communities, but which have no direct relationship with the Garden Communities themselves. The engagement exercises undertaken as part of this project may well help to identify some of these aspirations, though such routes are not central to or taken forward by this plan. Instead, such aspirations and routes should (alongside this plan) inform future iteration of the Taunton Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

Further information on the scope of this plan can be found in Chapter 4 – Scoping.

National Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF 2021 sets out national planning policy of key relevance as follows:

- Paragraph 92: *“Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which: a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example... street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods... b) are safe and accessible... – for example through the use of attractive, well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes... c) enable and support healthy lifestyles – for example... layouts that encourage walking and cycling”.*
- Paragraph 110: *“In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that: a) appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location; b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;... and d) the design of streets,... other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance”.*
- Paragraph 112: *“Within this context, applications for development should: a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas”.*
- Paragraph 152: *“The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure”*
- Paragraph 154: *“New development should be planned for in ways that:... b) can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design”.*

National planning practice guidance

National planning practice guidance includes the following:

- Paragraph: 001 Reference ID:53-001-20190722: *“How can positive planning contribute to healthier communities? The design and use of the built and natural environments, including green infrastructure are major determinants of health and wellbeing. Planning and health need to be considered together...[including] in terms of creating environments that support and encourage healthy lifestyles”.*

National Design Guide

The National Design Guide provides the Government’s primary guidance in relation to design. It illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. Ensuring that developments are accessible and easy to move around, safe, social and inclusive, responding to climate, community and character are identified key characteristics of a well-designed place.



Figure 4 The ten characteristics of well-designed places, taken from the National Design Guide

In particular the National Design Guide states:

- Paragraph 75: *“Patterns of movement for people are integral to well-designed places”.*
- Paragraph 76: *“Successful development depends upon a movement network that makes connections to destinations, places and communities, both within the site and beyond its boundaries”*
- Paragraph 82: *“Priority is given to pedestrian and cycle movements, subject to location and the potential to create connections. Prioritising pedestrians and cyclists mean creating routes that are safe, direct, convenient and accessible for people of all abilities. These are designed as part of attractive spaces with good sightlines, and well chosen junctions and crossings, so that people want to use them. Public rights of way are protected, enhanced and well-linked into the wider network of pedestrian and cycle routes.”*

- Paragraph 83: *“In well-designed places, people should not need to rely on the car for everyday journeys, including getting to workplaces, shops, schools and other facilities, open spaces or the natural environment. Safe and direct routes with visible destinations or clear signposting encourage people to walk and cycle.”*

National Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS)

The aim of the Government’s CWIS is *“to make cycling and walking the natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey”*. The ambition is, by 2040, to deliver:

- Better safety, a safe and reliable way to travel for short journeys,
- Better mobility, more people cycling and walking – easy, normal and enjoyable, and
- Better streets, places that have cycling and walking at their heart.

By 2025, the CWIS aims to:

- Double cycling stages made each year,
- Increase walking activity to 300 walking stages per person per year,
- Increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 that usually walk to school from 49% to 55%.

Gear Change

“Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking” sets out the Government’s vision to make England a great walking and cycling nation:

- It commits to half of all journeys in towns and cities being cycled or walked by 2030.
- It identifies the core design principles for active travel infrastructure, and
- It commits to putting cycling and walking at the heart of transport, policy making and health policy and decision making.



Figure 5 Key Design Principles, taken from the Government's Gear Change vision document

Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN1/20)

LTN1/20 provides Government guidance and good practice for the design of cycle infrastructure, in support of the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy:

- It supports the delivery of high-quality cycle infrastructure.
- It reflects current good practice, standards and legal requirements.
- Inclusive cycling is the underlying theme so that people of all ages and abilities are considered.
- It states that networks and routes should be Coherent, Direct, Safe, Comfortable and Attractive.
- It sets out guidance on appropriate levels of protection from motor traffic on highways and infrastructure design dimensions.
- It is widely understood that compliance to LTN1/20 will be a key aspect considered by Active Travel England when they commence their role as a statutory consultee on major development proposals, and in the allocation of funding for routes.

The New Highway Code

Introduced in January 2022, the new Highway Code includes a number of changes and clarifications relating to walking and cycling including:

- A hierarchy of road users which places those most at risk in the event of a collision at the top of the hierarchy,
- Clarification that traffic should give way to people crossing or waiting to cross at a junction, on a road being turned into, or on a zebra or parallel crossing, and
- New advice about use of special cycle facilities at junctions.

The delivery of appropriate infrastructure along evidence-based walking and cycling routes can directly assist in the safe implementation of the Code.

Net Zero

The Government's "Net Zero Strategy" and "Decarbonising Transport" plan recognise the scale of the problem with regards to emissions from transport in the UK, and the key role that active travel can and should play in reducing these emissions, particularly in towns and cities.

Local Policy Context

Local Development Plan policy

There are a number of adopted planning policies covering Taunton Garden Town, through which the Local Planning Authority may seek the delivery of on-site, and contribution towards the delivery/improvement of off-site walking and cycling connectivity, including:

- Taunton Deane Core Strategy policy
 - CP6 (Transport and Accessibility)
- Taunton Deane Site Allocations & Development Management Plan policies

- A2 (Travel Planning)
- A3 (Cycle Network)
- A5 (Accessibility of Development)
- D7 (Design Quality)
- D9 (A Co-ordinated Approach to Development and Highway Planning)

Each of the Garden Communities is either allocated by an adopted local plan or (in the case of Nexus25, is subject to a Local Development Order:

- Taunton Deane Core Strategy policy
 - SS1 (Monkton Heathfield)
 - SS2 (Priorswood/Nerrols)
 - SS6 (Broad location – Staplegrove)
 - SS7 (Broad location – Comeytrowe/Trull)
 - SS8 (Broad location – Employment)
- Taunton Deane Site Allocations & Development Management Plan policies
 - TAU1 (Comeytrowe/Trull)
 - TAU2 (Staplegrove)
 - TAU4 (Ford Farm)
- Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan policies
 - Fp1 (Riverside – Development Content) and Fp2 (Riverside – Transport Measures) – Firepool
- Nexus 25 Local Development Order

Further information on the specific and relevant policy requirements for each of the Garden Communities, arising from these policies is provided in chapter 5.

Supplementary Planning Documents

The Council has adopted a Districtwide Design Guide SPD and a Garden Town Public Realm Design Guide SPD. These documents firmly link the Garden Town Vision into existing planning policies with a focus on active travel as part of this.

The [Districtwide Design Guide SPD](#) includes guidance on the site design process which can directly influence how well development connects with existing communities and enables modal shift. It further provides guidance on integrating placemaking with sustainability, site structuring, street and place design, and accommodating storage of bicycles. “Easy walkable links to local facilities, play and public spaces, mixed uses and public transport” is identified as a key tenet of achieving quality design, as shown in figure 6, below. Furthermore, it references the principle of the ‘15 minute neighbourhood’, stating that these principles “should influence the layout of larger scale residential developments in terms of layout and connectivity, density and mix of uses, to encourage active travel”.

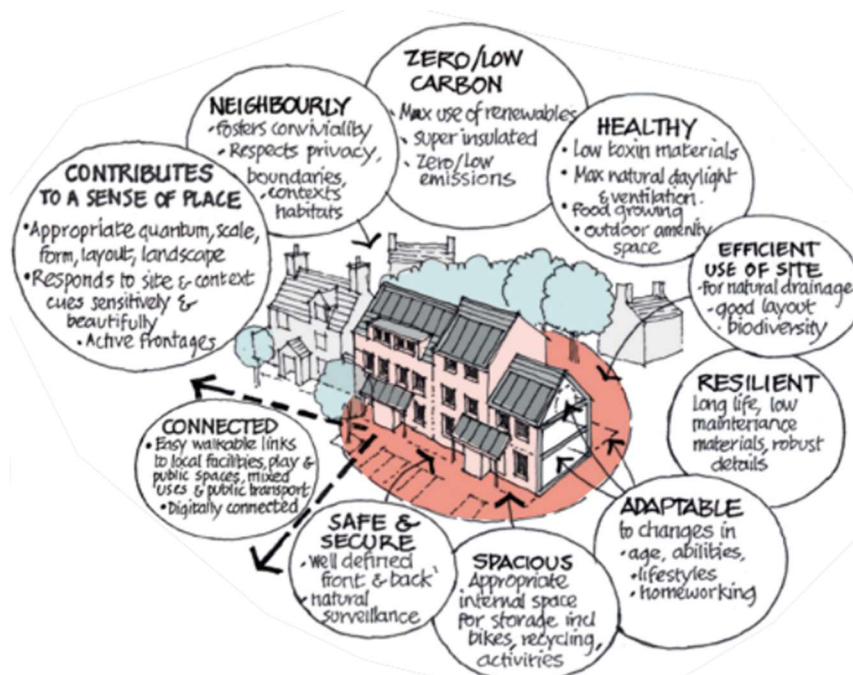


Figure 6 Achieving quality design, taken from the SWT Districtwide Design Guide SPD

The [Garden Town Public Realm Design Guide SPD](#) sets out the Council's objectives for Taunton to be healthy and well, quiet and slow, green and clean. It sets an ambition to raise the percentage of people walking to work or school to 20% by 2030. It identifies that public realm requires a 'people first' approach and that this can reap rewards across a wide range of Council objectives. It recognises that mobility needs to respect equalities and inclusive mobility, and that following LTN1/20 Guidance can assist in this respect. It identifies a range of design details (e.g. figure 7, below), material choices, signage and associated infrastructures such as cycle parking and storage to follow in relation to walking and cycling infrastructure, and applies this illustratively to examples of different street types and locations across the town.

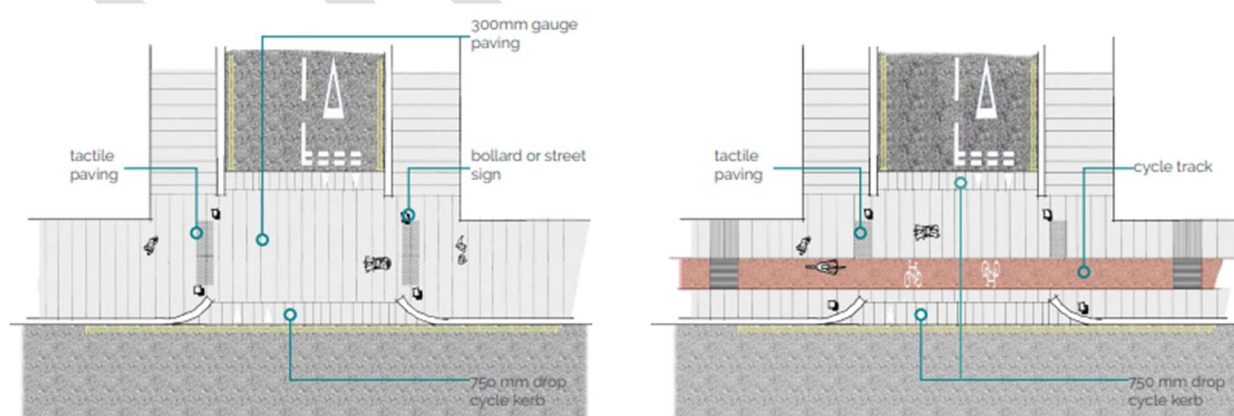


Figure 7 Example side road entry treatments, taken from the Garden Town Public Realm Design Guide SPD

Furthermore, it identifies the aspiration to grow a Garden Town Forest through a range of planting initiatives (see figure 8, below). It will be important for route design

proposals to respond to the SPD guidance and to simultaneously consider wide opportunities to deliver tree planting, SUDs and other green infrastructure.

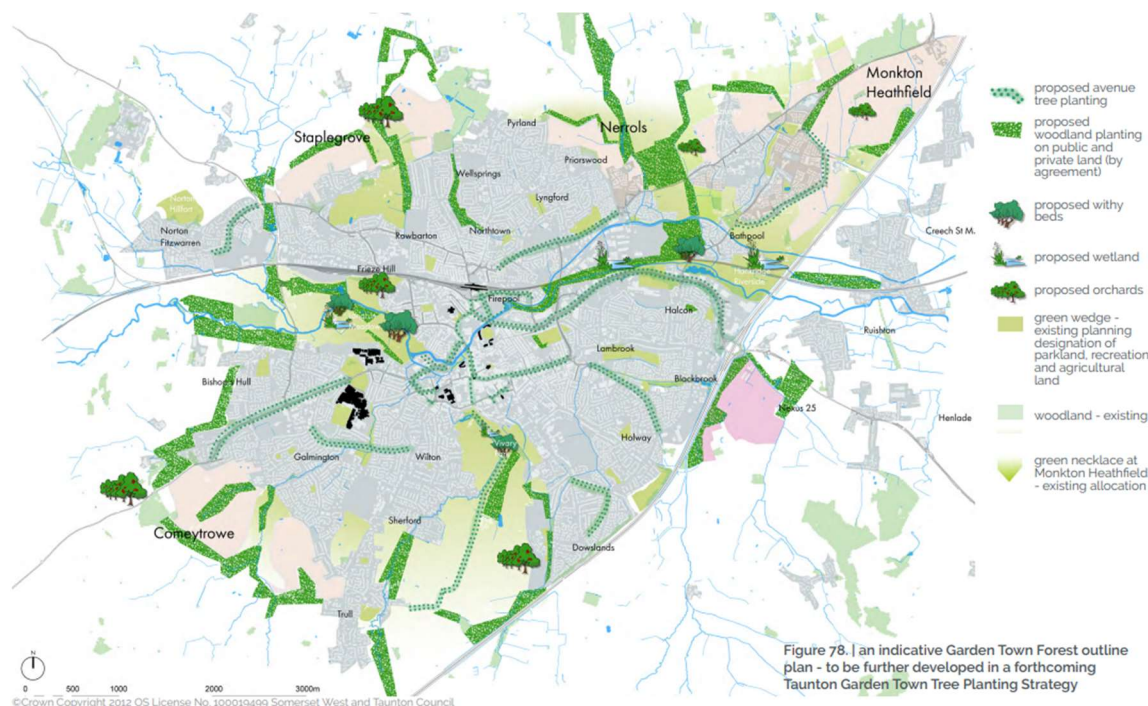


Figure 8 An indicative Garden Town Forest outline plan, taken from the Garden Town Public Realm Design Guide SPD

Taunton Garden Town

As set out above, the [Vision for Our Garden Town](#) is key to the context for this project. Whilst the 'Branching out' theme is of most obvious significance to this plan, modern, futureproofed walking and cycling infrastructure contributes to delivery against all four of the Vision themes, by:

- Being the catalyst for transforming our streets to work harder for us, rather than simply being a conduit for vehicular traffic,
- Creating the places that people want to live and can be proud of,
- Connecting and integrating our communities and
- Creating an environment that investors want to invest in.

The Vision is closely aligned to our aspirations of working towards carbon neutrality by 2030. This manifests itself in many ways within the Vision, but in particular in relation to the promotion of walking and cycling, removal of barriers to modal shift and the giving over of more street space to these modes in order to achieve this.

Linked to the Garden Town Vision, the Council has approved a [Garden Town Design Charter and Checklist](#) to consider new developments against. The Charter sets out (amongst other things) that:

- We expect green infrastructure to be fully integrated into the design of new residential developments, whilst re-establishing connections to our landscape, and connecting up our green corridors and watersides.

- We expect that the design and layout of the neighbourhoods of the Garden Town will promote sustainable and active modes of travel over all others.
- Provisions to facilitate the use of cycles and electric vehicles will be exemplary.
- The Town Centre will be made more attractive and accessible.
- New Garden Neighbourhoods should be designed to promote community cohesion and resilience.

The Checklist poses a number of questions for new development to respond to including around connecting and integrating development into existing communities and key facilities and services through walking and cycling connections; creating quality places with streets designed for all, and reducing energy demands.

A draft transport strategy for Taunton – [Connecting our Garden Town](#) was completed in 2017, identifying the transport issues in the town and the important role that walking and cycling needs to play as part of this in terms of shorter-term commitments and longer-term aspirations. The plan aims for delivery against the following key outcomes:

- Safer roads
- Develop a special status as a walking and cycling town
- Less car use per head of population
- Enhanced rail connections to the rest of the UK and continued strong growth in rail use
- Levels of cycling journeys doubled
- Good air quality for the whole town
- Congestion held at today's levels at key problem junctions
- Less traffic in Taunton town centre
- All residents of our new garden communities to be within walking distance of main bus corridors and have easy access onto a core walking and cycling network serving the town.

It states that *“the transport challenge arising from the additional new homes over the next 20 years cannot be underestimated. If people continue to travel in the same ways as today, congestion, road safety and public health problems will worsen and the town's economic performance may suffer. Whilst there will be investment in a range of transport proposals, use of technology and innovative solutions, Taunton residents and businesses will need to help make a difference, too. A few extra journeys made on foot, by bike or public transport by a number of Tauntonians would add up to make a large difference in how well the transport network operate”*. The plan shown in figure 9, below identifies an indicative active travel network across the town.

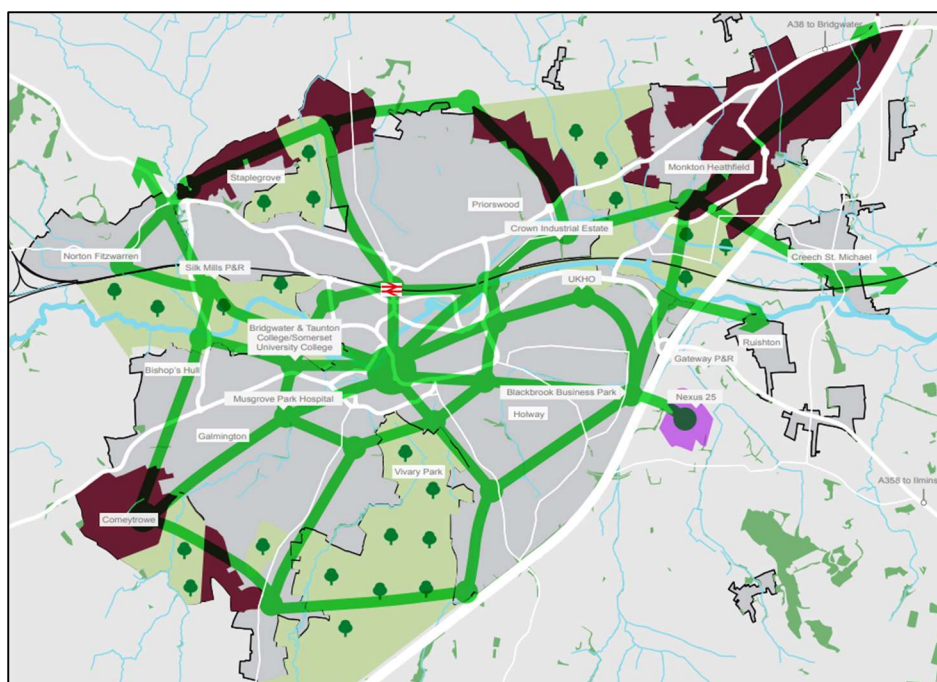


Figure 9 Indicative town-wide active travel network as identified in “Connecting our Garden Town”

This built in part on the existing [Green Infrastructure \(GI\) Strategy \(2009\)](#) and [GI Opportunities Update \(2017\)](#), which together promote the delivery of a network of green infrastructure across the town and linking the town to its landscape setting. Review and update of these strategies will inform the forthcoming Garden Town Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

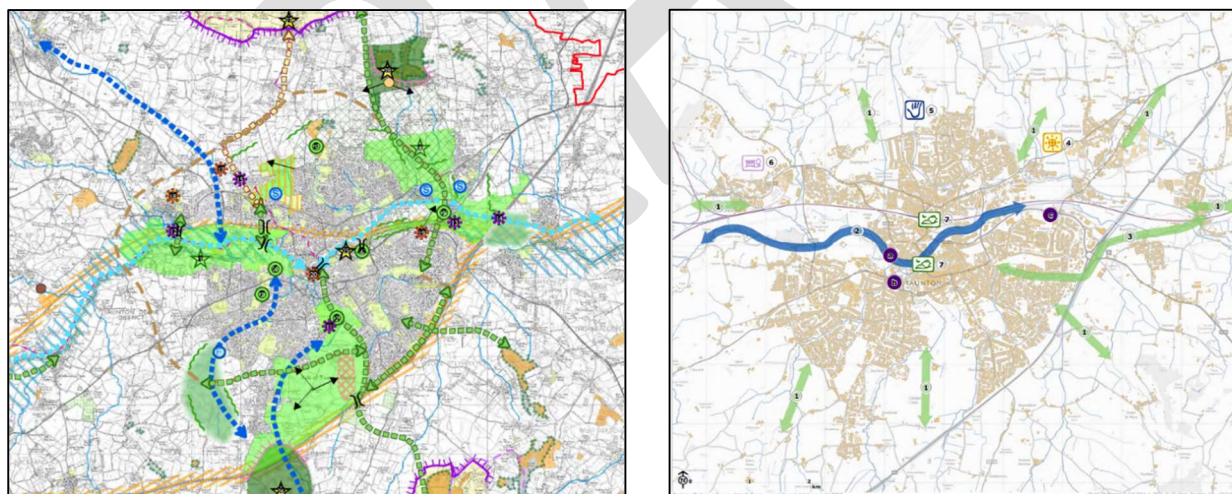


Figure 10 GI Strategy for Taunton (2009) and Taunton GI Opportunities Update (2017)

The Garden Town Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) referenced within the Vision is currently in development taking account of all of the work to date and establishing an updated and forward thinking IDP for the Garden Town. Connecting our Garden Communities has been produced to directly inform the IDP.

Climate and Ecological Emergencies

The Council declared a [Climate Emergency](#) in February 2019 and supplemented this with the declaration of an [Ecological Emergency](#) in October 2020. The [Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy](#) and the Somerset West and Taunton [Carbon Neutrality](#)

[and Climate Resilience \(CNCR\) Action Plan](#) set out the Council's strategic response and plan of action for responding to the Climate Emergency. The Strategy and CNCR both have the goal of working towards carbon neutrality by 2030.

Transport is the dominant source of carbon emissions in Somerset, making up 49% of carbon dioxide emissions in 2019, compared with just 36% as the UK average. For Somerset West and Taunton the figure is higher still at 52%.² This is indicative of the rural nature and low density population of the area and the lack of realistic alternatives to the personal motorised vehicle in many cases. Across the country, prior to the pandemic, annual transport emissions had stagnated for the last ten years, and in fact begun to rise.

Replacing vehicular journeys with active travel modes (walking and cycling) is identified as central to the success of reducing emissions from transport. Taunton, as the principal urban area in the district, and with an already reasonably high modal share base for cycling and walking (9% and 20% respectively)³ presents the greatest opportunity in the district for shifting modal choice to sustainable, zero carbon active travel.

The CNCR is based around a series of key focuses (including that of active travel), with some 345 actions within the indicative action plan to 2030. A significant number of these actions relate to the delivery of walking and cycling infrastructure, particularly in Taunton, or otherwise enabling the shift to more sustainable and healthy active modes of travel, including but not limited to, the below. Connecting our Garden Communities is a key part of working towards making Taunton a Beacon Cycling Town as per action 217.

57	Deliver priority cycle route in Taunton linking Vivary Park - Market House - Coal Orchard - Firepool - Train Station
58	Deliver priority cycle route in Taunton linking the Gateway and Silk Mills Park & Ride sites via the town centre
72	Adopt the Taunton Garden Town Public Realm Design Guide as SPD and use this as the blueprint for delivering sustainable streets, cycle infrastructure and street tree planting in Taunton
79	Ensure that cleansing and maintenance of cycle routes is prioritised in street cleansing schedules
216	Progress and deliver other remaining new/improved walking and cycling routes in and around Taunton in line with the priorities identified in the Taunton Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)
217	Deliver the other Taunton Cycle Network Upgrades identified by Taunton Area Cycle Campaign in order to make Taunton a Beacon Cycling Town
218	Develop proposals for a walking and cycling route between Comeytrove-Trull Garden Community and Vivary Park/South Road in Taunton
225	Explore opportunities to incentivise walking and cycling through infrastructure (e.g. installation of signs showing time to key destinations and CO2 saved, prioritised traffic lights, waiting rails, cycling bins etc.)

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2019>

³ Census 2011 – method of travel to work for those in employment within the Taunton built up area. 2021 Census data is expected to be released over the coming year and is expected to show these rates to have increased, not least as a result of the COVID pandemic.

[Climate Positive Planning](#) effectively integrates the Council’s Climate and Ecological Emergency declarations into planning. It confirms that the Climate Emergency is a material consideration and provides additional guidance and explanation to support existing local and national policy requirements. The planning policies referred to previously are referred to within Climate Positive Planning. In doing so, the document includes strong references to the Taunton Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and the emerging evidence upon which Connecting our Garden Communities is based.

Taunton Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

In October 2021, Somerset County Council published the [Taunton LCWIP](#). The LCWIP sets out a vision and objectives for an active travel network in the town and sets out the strategically prioritised routes based on an extensive evidence base.

The LCWIP vision is for “A green, healthy, and active Taunton that delivers a good-quality cycling and walking experience and improved journeys for all users. We want Taunton to be a place where everyone feels welcome and comfortable however they choose to travel”.

As mentioned above, Taunton already has a reasonably high base in terms of numbers of people walking and cycling as their primary mode of travelling to work. This is testament to the fact that the town is reasonably flat and compact, and because there are already the bones of a network in existence, provided by a combination of traffic-free cycle routes and connecting streets with lower traffic levels (see figure 11, below). The LCWIP takes this into account. However, reliance upon this existing network is insufficient to meet modern and future demands and standards. The LCWIP recognises that we need to plan for significantly more people cycling and walking, and a big part of enabling this is to deliver improved infrastructure connecting the places that people need to go.

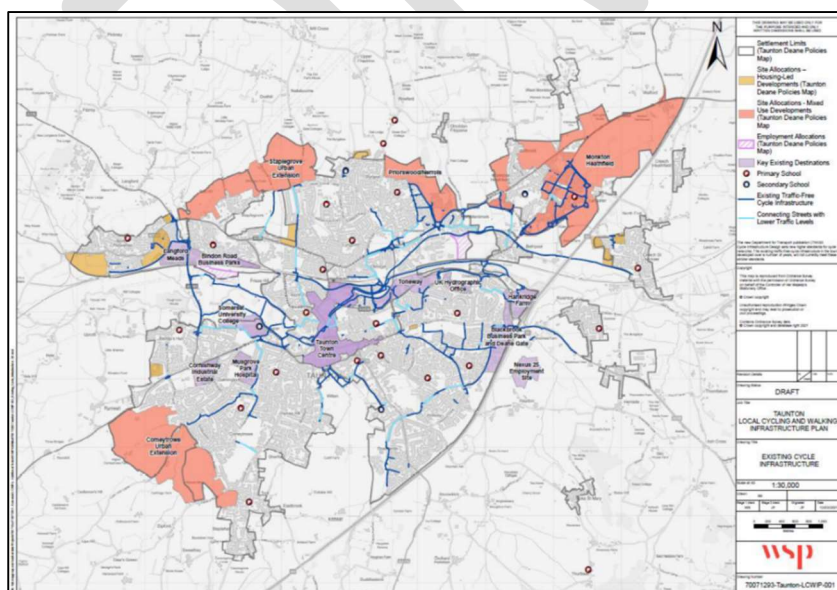


Figure 11 Existing cycle infrastructure as presented in the Taunton LCWIP

The LCWIP routes, (detailed below and in figure 12, over the page) are primarily radial in nature, and have a focus on getting people into the town centre. They are evidence-based routes informed by existing and historic travel demand, population centres and locations of key destinations (generally for the town as a whole). The location of the Garden Communities has influenced the routes, but the detailed connections into these developments are missing in some cases, and more local connections are not considered.

Route	Detail
Red	North-South Corridor connecting Taunton Academy through to Taunton Station, Firepool, the town centre, Vivary Park and on to Queens College.
Green	East-West Corridor connecting Norton Fitzwarren through to Silk Mills P&R, Bridgwater & Taunton College, the town centre, Leycroft, Blackbrook, Nexus 25 and on to Gateway P&R.
Blue	South-West to North-East Corridor connecting Comeytrove through to Musgrove Park Hospital, the town centre, Firepool, UKHO, Bathpool and on to Monkton Heathfield.
Purple	South-East to North-West Corridor connecting Downlands through to Richard Huish College, the town centre, North Town, Rowbarton and on to Staplegrove East.
Missing Links (shown pink) and Major Junctions	A series of other sections of network including a route from Bishops Hull to Bridgwater & Taunton College, a route from Cheddon Road through Priorswood/Pyrland to Obridge, a route along Lisieux Way, Blackbrook Way and Bridgwater Road, and clusters of junctions to be improved around Wellington Road, Compass Hill and Park Street, Staplegrove Road, and Rowbarton.

It identifies broad recommendations on infrastructure improvements and overall estimate costs for routes. Further work is required to add meat to the bones of these strategic routes and develop more detailed plans and costings in order to support funding bids, requests for developer contributions and ultimately delivery.

Connecting our Garden Communities is part of this next step, considering some more of the detail and finer grain in relation to routes relevant to the Garden Communities. It complements the existing LCWIP rather than replacing it and will inform future iterations of it.

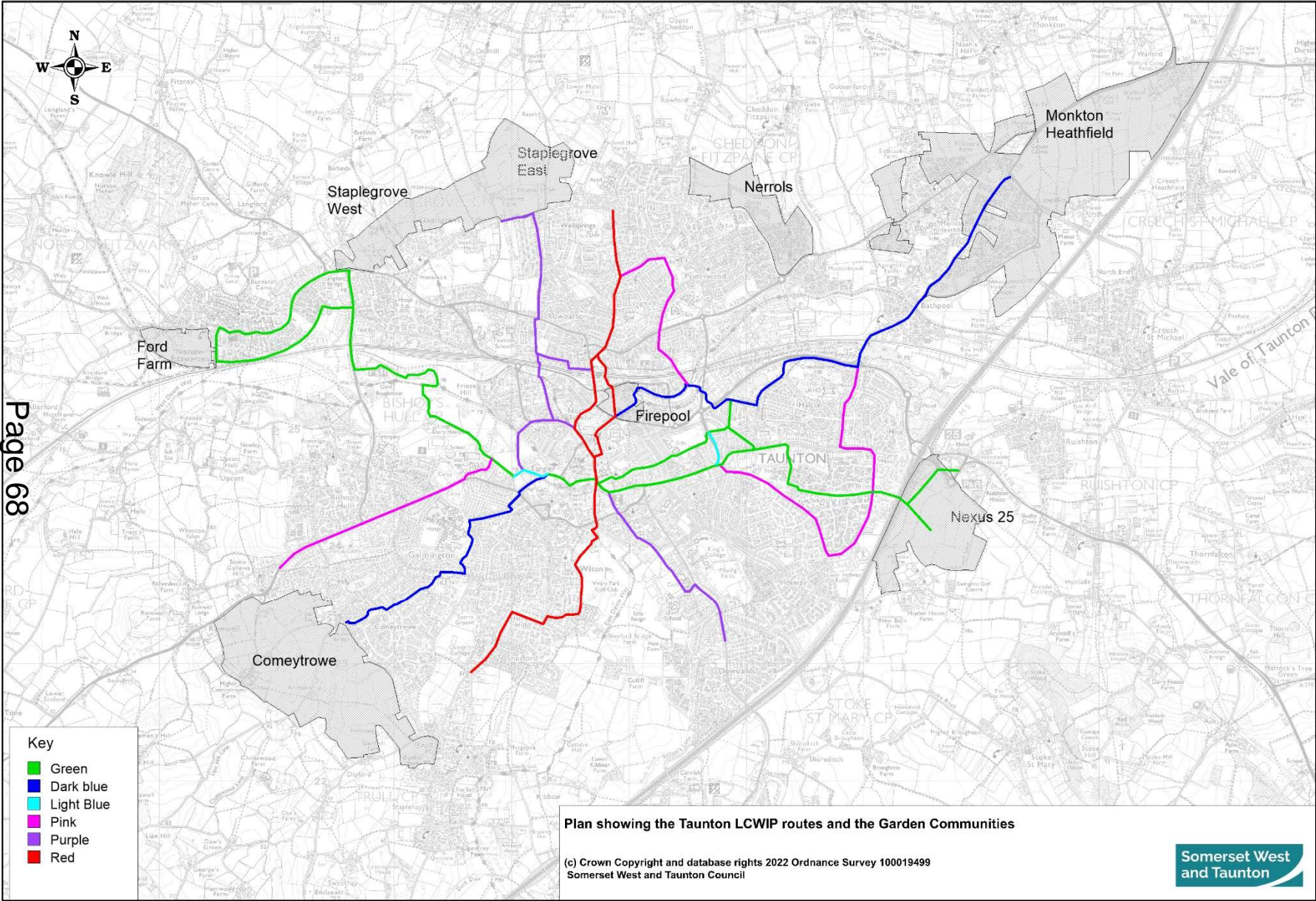


Figure 12 Taunton LCWIP routes and the Garden Communities

Co-benefits of action

As alluded to by the context above, delivering walking and cycling routes can deliver multiple benefits environmentally, socially and economically and on both a personal and societal level. Fundamentally, the delivery of the right infrastructure in the right places should lead to an increase physical activity levels and a decrease in use of motorised vehicles which in turn can lead to:

- **Health benefits** (including tackling obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular and respiratory conditions, depression, anxiety, stress, frailty);
- **Environmental benefits** (including reduced carbon emissions, reduced air pollution, improved resilience to climate change, placemaking);
- **Economic benefits** (including increased productivity, footfall and tourism, private investment, jobs growth and cost savings);
- **Safety benefits** (including reduced pedestrian and cyclist injuries, improved access for all user groups including those with reduced mobility or visual impairments and reduced crime through improved natural surveillance);
- **Social benefits** (including increased social interaction, better community cohesion, increased community engagement and increased sense of ownership of, pride in and affinity to local areas);

Whilst the delivery of the right infrastructure in the right place is key, in order to maximise these benefits, this needs to be accompanied by actions to reduce the speed, volume and convenience of motor vehicles on the road, as well as actions to achieve behavioural change across society.

3. Methodology

This plan has been developed following a straight forward methodology, loosely based around the process set out in the Government’s Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) Technical Guidance for Local Authorities, summarised below:

Stage	Name	Description
1	Determining Scope	Establish the geographical extent of the LCWIP, and arrangements for governing and preparing the plan.
2	Gathering Information	Identify existing patterns of walking and cycling and potential new journeys. Review existing conditions and identify barriers to cycling and walking. Review related transport and land use policies and programmes.
3	Network Planning for Cycling	Identify origin and destination points and cycle flows. Convert flows into a network of routes and determine the type of improvements required.
4	Network Planning for Walking	Identify key trip generators, core walking zones and routes, audit existing provision and determine the type of improvements required.
5	Prioritising Improvements	Prioritise improvements to develop a phased programme for future investment.
6	Integration and Application	Integrate outputs into local planning and transport policies, strategies, and delivery plans.

The guidance is clear that the process is scalable to suit the size and complexity of the area, and that a proportionate, though evidence-based approach should be taken. Considering the fact that Taunton already has an adopted LCWIP and that this plan builds upon this, a suitably proportionate approach has been taken.

Stage 1 – Determining Scope

This project has arisen off the back of publication of the Taunton LCWIP and Taunton’s status as a Garden Town. In particular, this project, and the underlying evidencing work has been funded via the Garden Town Capacity Fund, which is intended by Homes England for unlocking housing growth and development aspirations in particular. As such, connecting the new Garden Communities across Taunton Garden Town was always integral to the scope of the project.

This stage included establishing the:

- Purpose and objectives
- Geographical scope
- Project governance and internal stakeholders
- Key stakeholders and early engagement

- Timescale for the plan

More information on the process undertaken in establishing the scope of the plan can be found in Chapter 4.

Stage 2 – Gathering Information

The Connecting our Garden Communities plan builds directly on the LCWIP and the extensive background evidence prepared for that. It supplements it with additional evidence pertinent to the Garden Communities themselves and the connections they will require.

This stage (see Chapter 5) involved reviewing the planning status of the Garden Communities, considering the allocation policies, planning permissions and other relevant points influencing the potential for walking and cycling connections.

Stage 3/4 – Network Planning

A combined view was taken with regards to accommodating both walking and cycling needs. This stage can be split into three parts and included:

- Broad route identification (see Chapter 6)
 - Identifying the off-site key destinations which residents/users of the Garden Communities may need to access for essential services and facilities.
 - Straight line mapping of the key destinations and grouping of these straight line corridors to identify the broad directions for routes to aim for.
 - Consideration of where existing communities may need to access facilities within the Garden Communities (inverse review).
- Auditing and refining options (see Chapter 7)
 - Identifying potential routes and taking an initial view of whether there was merit in considering them further.
 - Auditing of potential routes using the LCWIP Route Selection Tool and Walking Route Audit Tool. A large number of the audits were helpfully undertaken by volunteers from Taunton Area Cycle Campaign.
 - Understanding of potential infrastructure improvements which may be necessary, from a brief review of audit comments. For a number of routes, these audits and improvement reviews were then supplemented with more detailed technical scopings, prepared by transport consultants Stantec and subject to review within a technical stakeholder group.
 - The routes summarised in Chapter 8 are the output of this process.

Stage 5 – Prioritising Improvements

This stage will involve assessing the various benefits and costs of the proposed routes and potential improvements within and using this to prioritise and assign timescales for delivery. At this stage, routes have not been subject to prioritisation. Early engagement which has informed the development of this draft plan provided some useful inputs on the approach to prioritisation. This draft plan therefore sets out

a number of criteria and an approach to prioritisation. Consultation is explicitly seeking views on these.

Aside from technical prioritisation, the status of the various Garden Communities is also directly relevant to the prioritisation of some routes. Where residents are already moving in, clearly there is a reason to prioritise delivery of key associated routes over routes associated with those developments not yet benefiting from planning permission.

Chapter 9 sets out the draft proposals in relation to route prioritisation.

Stage 6 – Integration and Adaptation

Chapter 10 sets out how the Connecting our Garden Communities plan will be used, delivered and reviewed, including in relation to influencing and integrating into other local plans and policies.

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4. Scoping

Scoping of the Connecting our Garden Communities Plan was an important step to ensure that it was focused and clear on its remit and intentions. The scope evolved from an initial concept which was established in response to the Taunton LCWIP and refined through engagement with internal and external stakeholders and consideration of issues as they arose.

Purpose and objectives

This project has arisen off the back of publication of the Taunton LCWIP and Taunton's status as a Garden Town. In particular, this project, and the underlying evidencing work has been funded via the Garden Town Capacity Fund, which is intended by Homes England for unlocking housing growth and development aspirations in particular. As such, connecting the new Garden Communities across Taunton Garden Town was always integral to the scope of the project.

Building on the LCWIP

The LCWIP routes were developed from an extensive evidence base, but one which primarily relied upon existing and historic movements and travel demand. This was supplemented by consideration of the location of major developments including the Garden Communities, but this was not central to its purpose. As a result, a series of primarily radial routes emerged from the LCWIP, with a key objective to connect the town's existing and new communities via the town centre. However, as summarised in figure 13 (over page), this missed opportunities:

- To effectively link the Garden Communities into the proposed routes.
- To establish the requirements for circumferential routes around the town as well as across it.
- To recognise the aspiration for external connections to neighbouring towns and villages.
- To respond to existing green infrastructure strategies.

In addition to this, some of the finer grain connections for the Garden Communities to key off-site services and facilities were not considered.

Despite the above, the LCWIP provides important proposals for a key core network across the town based primarily on connecting existing communities, and it would be important to build on this, rather than trying to reinvent the wheel. As such, it was considered that the LCWIP routes could be seen to provide the trunk of a tree, with a need to understand how each Garden Community links into these routes (the branches).

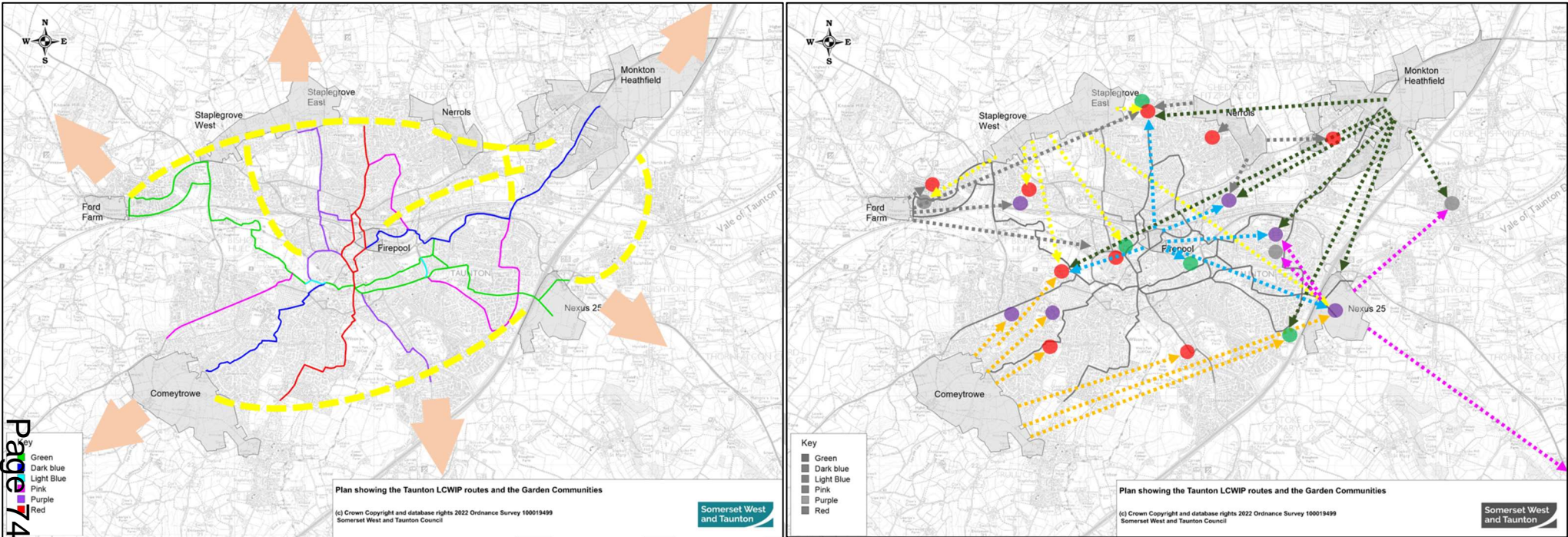


Figure 13 Building on the Taunton LCWIP (Indicative of strategic missing links, left and finer grain connections for the Garden Communities, right)

Modes/Users

The scope was decided to include both walking and cycling, with the initial objective being to accommodate full LTN1/20 compliant segregated walking and cycling routes. The expectation in this was that this would provide routes suitable for all users of all abilities. The guidance also refers to the importance of other potential users where relevant, including equestrians. There are a number of existing bridleways around Taunton, where accommodating equestrians is obviously of paramount importance. Most routes considered in the plan are intra-urban, and where they do not cross with an existing bridleway are unlikely to need to accommodate these movements. However, some of the routes identified within this plan may provide opportunities to improve connections for equestrians.

Plan Objectives

From this, a set of broad plan objectives were established:

- Develop a network plan identifying key active travel routes linking the Garden Communities into the LCWIP strategic routes and key destinations in order to enable significant modal shift.
- Ensure infrastructure proposed will provide modern and futureproofed cycle and pedestrian routes.
- Ensure routes are informed by key community and technical stakeholder engagement to maximise support and chances of delivery.
- Provide an evidence base to support developer negotiations, funding bids and further work.

Geographical scope

The Government's LCWIP guidance states that in most cases geographical extent will usually be focused on a particular town or regional centre. It states that cycling has the potential to replace trips by other modes up to 10km (and more for some users), and walking tends to be suitable for trips up to 2km. Figure 14 (over page) indicates 2km, 5km and 10km distances from Taunton town centre together with some nearby settlements.

Connection into Taunton is important across this whole area. With the advent of e-bikes, 10km distances and further will over time become more accessible to more people.



Figure 14 Distances from Taunton town centre

Despite this, considering the initial scope in relation to the Garden Communities, it was considered reasonable to focus the core of this plan on the area broadly within 5km of the town centre, where relevant key connections tend to be located for the Garden Communities. This is not to say that areas beyond 5km, or connections not directly relevant to the Garden Communities themselves are unimportant, but that they are not integral to the scope of this plan.

The plan identifies the need for connection to a number of places outside of Taunton, both within and beyond 5km, where there is some relevance to the Garden Communities, or a known community ambition for improved linkages of relevance.

Project Governance and internal stakeholders

Somerset West and Taunton Council chose to take this project forward, and as such, development and Governance of the plan has been initially rooted in Somerset West and Taunton Council, and its arrangements for Taunton Garden Town.

Within the Council, a number of internal stakeholders were identified and engaged in establishing and evolving the project scope. This internal group reflected the range of roles that the Council has in relation to identifying a strategy and plan for active travel infrastructure and were used as an informal steering group and sounding board:

- Planning Policy and Implementation (lead)
- Taunton Garden Town Implementation
- Development Management
- Placemaking and Green Infrastructure
- Major and Special Projects (delivering town centre walking and cycling improvements)
- Climate Change

The Council's Assets, Open Spaces and Housing teams were engaged later in the process as potential routes began to emerge.

Within the County Council, a number of other stakeholders were identified and engaged in establishing and evolving the project scope, including:

- Transport Policy
- Public Health
- Highways
- Infrastructure

Each of the above were engaged on the emerging plan scope and in relation to scoping individual routes as they developed.

During the height of the Pandemic, an Active Travel Group was set up comprising members of the above teams, each of the district councils in Somerset, and other relevant stakeholders. This group was used to help establish and steer the direction of this plan.

Going forwards, both of the above groups are likely to be key to implementing the plan. Furthermore, proposals for the ongoing stewardship of Taunton Garden Town are currently in development. These proposals will likely influence routes to delivery.

Key stakeholders and early engagement

Effective engagement is crucial for developing a good plan which meets the needs of users and communities. Furthermore, effective engagement can drastically improve the chances of delivery. As such, an engagement plan was established early on to ensure that both technical and community stakeholders were engaged in the project and integral to its development. This early engagement assisted in establishing the scope of the plan.

Initial engagement exercise (December 2021)

The initial engagement exercise focused on introducing the project and why we were undertaking it, and gathering thoughts, aspirations and ideas. An initial email was sent round in December 2021 to the relevant parish councils and ward members covering Taunton and adjoining areas, setting out our aim for delivering further active travel linkages relating to the Garden Communities and seeking their initial inputs to shape the direction of the project.

As part of this we were keen to collate responses to the following questions:

- Are there any particular key services, facilities or destinations beyond the boundaries of the Garden Communities which you think residents / users of the sites will need to access on a regular basis? (e.g. schools, shops, employment areas, recreational facilities).
- Are there any specific barriers to safe walking and cycling between the Garden Communities and these key services and facilities that need to be considered/overcome or which might be difficult to overcome? (e.g. critical road junctions, on-street parking on constrained width highways).
- Are there any particular opportunities worth exploring through this project (e.g. aligning with wider community aspirations around other walking and cycling links, health and wellbeing, landscape or biodiversity projects, climate change mitigation/adaptation, open space, developments, transport improvements, or specific route options)?

Responses have been grouped below against relevant Garden Communities:

Garden Community	Comments
Comeytrowe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential that Comeytrowe Road is converted to 2 cul-de-sacs ASAP and green space takes over the middle section linking up with Comeytrowe's Neighbourhood Park. • Advisable to look at installing a link from the A38 side of the development to link to the Town Centre. • We need to ensure active travel links to SCAT/Castle (and therefore Longrun/French Weir and on). • Ensure that relevant primary schools (Trull, Bishops Henderson, Bishops Hull, Parkfield) are linked in. • Need to link through to open areas around the stream and Comeytrowe Lane and around College Way. • Any cycle/ walking connection through the development must include arrangements for how it will connect through to the village of Trull across the Honiton Road. • Traffic on Honiton Road will increase incredibly. Many in the community are very concerned how people/ children can be kept safe walking or cycling from Trull into town or to Castle School.
Staplegrove / Ford Farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manor Road/Corkscrew Lane must be made safer for pedestrians, cyclists and all road users. Key route for Staplegrove residents to get to the Taunton Academy and the

	<p>Wellsprings leisure Centre; it is a narrow lane in places with two s-shaped bends and no pavement for most of the length of it, needs to be vastly improved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A safe route between Kingston St Mary and Taunton needs to be brought forward from the 10 year to 4 year plan. Key finding from the 2017 Community Survey. • Provision along Bindon Road would be a way to connect Norton Fitzwarren and other western villages.
Monkton Heathfield / Nerrols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long held ambition to create a link from the canal to the Country Park i.e. up to the crossing to be built at the bottom of Yallands Hill, likely using land east of Aginhills Wood. • Long held objective to create cycle way north of the A3259, from the Crown Medical roundabout, through the Country Park, allocated West of Greenway Development, along Monkton Heathfield Rd to Monkton Heathfield 2
Nexus 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linkage to Hawthorn Park, Holway, aligning with planting initiatives should be taken into consideration.

This parish council and ward member engagement was supplemented by a series of meetings with Taunton Area Cycle Campaign (TACC). Through these meetings the project aims were introduced and particular issues and ideas discussed. These ideas helped to shape the route options that were considered and subject to auditing. This engagement also led to a number of TACC volunteers helpfully putting themselves forward to assist in undertaking route audits. Further discussions took place early in the new year with TACC as auditing work progressed and the list of emerging routes began to take shape.

Early engagement workshops (March 2022)

Further early engagement took place in March 2022 with a series of workshops with parish councils, ward members and TACC. These workshops helped to refine the approach taken, key inputs and specific routes taking into consideration. More information about these workshops and the outputs from them can be found in Chapter 7 – Auditing and refining.

Route scoping workshops (March-April 2022)

In addition to the above initial and early engagement stages which focused on the plan and network as a whole, workshops were held in March and April to scope out specific options and interventions in relation to a number of the emerging routes. Through these workshops, the Council's transport consultants Stantec presented their views on the technical constraints and opportunities and options for interventions along those routes considered. Attendees from both Somerset West and Taunton Council (Planning Policy, Development Management, Major & Special Projects, Placemaking and Green Infrastructure) and Somerset County Council (Transport Policy, Highways and Safety Audit) then provided inputs in response to points raised. These workshops helped to ensure the routes were based on technical stakeholder as well as community stakeholder inputs, and to ensure that proposals broadly had the support of the highways authority.

Timescales for the plan

The Government's LCWIP guidance suggests a timescale of ideally 10 years. This makes sense for development of a general LCWIP. However, this plan is directly related to delivery of the Garden Communities. The Garden Communities are all at different stages of planning and delivery. Some are already on site and delivering now, others are likely to be some time before they reach that stage. Due to their scale and phasing, parts of some sites may be in delivery beyond 10 years. As such, this plan does not have a prescribed timescale overall but is likely to be delivered in phases in line with development over the next 10-15 years. Chapter 10 sets out the proposals for prioritising routes, including how timescales for route delivery will be relevant to delivery of relevant phases of development.

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5. Gathering Information

Comeytrowe/Trull Garden Community

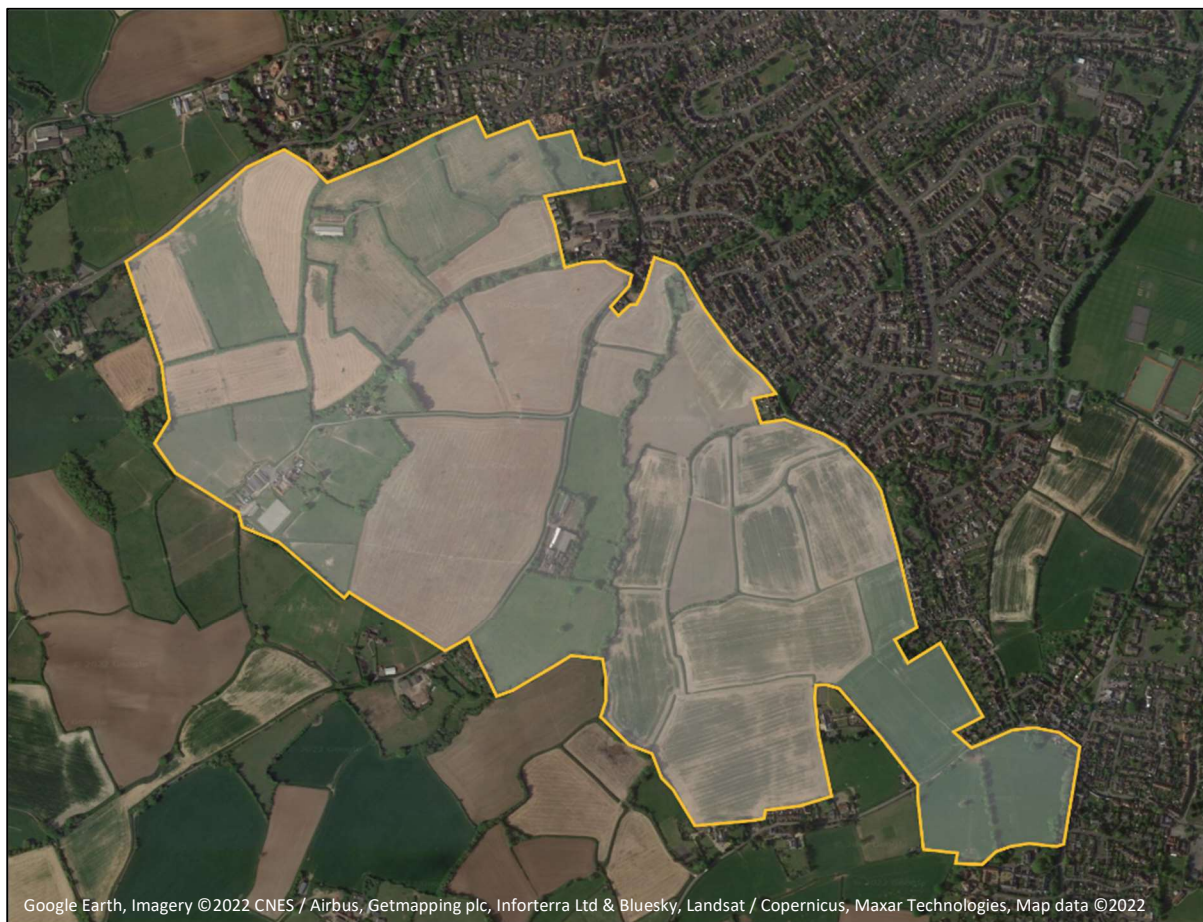


Figure 15 Indicative boundary of the allocation for Comeytrowe/Trull Garden Community

Comeytrowe/Trull Site allocation

Comeytrowe/Trull is a major housing-led, mixed-use urban extension to the south-west of Taunton Garden Town. The site is allocated by Policy TAU1 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP, 2016) for a new sustainable neighbourhood of around 2,000 homes, mixed-use local centre, 5ha employment land, primary school, open spaces and associated infrastructure. The allocation states it is to be delivered and coordinated in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan and phasing strategy. The policy outlines that the masterplan and phasing strategy should include (amongst other things):

- Provision of connected streets designed to be suitable for cycling and walking and, where appropriate, additional measures to ensure that cycling and walking are safe and attractive means of transport.
- Provision of direct and safe walking routes to access existing bus services on the A38 and Honiton Road.
- No through access by private car between the new development area and Comeytrowe Lane and Comeytrowe Road and explore options to close off Comeytrowe Lane and Comeytrowe Road as a through-route for private cars only, to prevent future 'rat-running'.

- A design that minimises private car access from the urban extension to the existing residential areas in Comeytrowe but maximises pedestrian and cycle links between the existing residential area and the proposed urban extension.

In addition to this, the SADMP suggests that percentage of trips made on foot and by bicycle should be a monitoring indicator for the site, with the aim of encouraging walking and cycling as an alternative to the private car.

Permissions, conditions and obligations relating to Comeytrowe/Trull

As shown in figure 16, below, a large proportion of the allocation benefits from outline planning permission (with all matters reserved except all points of access – 42/14/0069) for “a residential and mixed use urban extension at Comeytrowe/Trull to include up to 2000 dwellings, up to 5.25 hectares of employment land, 2.2 hectares of land for a primary school, a mixed use local centre, and a 300 space 'park and bus' facility on land at Comeytrowe/Trull”. The area of the allocation around Higher Comeytrowe Farm, does not yet benefit from any form of planning permission.



Figure 16 Planning status of indicative areas of the Comeytrowe/Trull Garden Community

The outline permission was accompanied by a Section 106 Agreement which includes a number of planning obligations in relation to various on and off-site highways improvements.

Various reserved matters applications have been approved (including 42/20/0006, 42/20/0031, 42/20/0056 and 42/21/0004) in relation to parcels of the ‘Western Neighbourhood’, totalling 376 dwellings. The majority of the outline permission

including up to 1,624 homes does not yet benefit from reserved matters permission. However, the Council is currently in receipt of applications 42/21/0035 and 42/22/0027 seeking reserved matters approval for a combined total of 125 dwellings, with decisions yet to be made in relation to these applications.

Amongst other things, the outline permission was granted in accordance with a Masterplan Principles Document which included an Urban Design Framework Plan (see figure 17, below) and an Access and Movement Parameter Plan, (see figure 18, below). These clearly identify the key locations where the development will link in to the fabric of the existing communities of Comeytrove and Trull through the retention of existing pedestrian/cycle access points and proposals for future pedestrian/cycle access points.

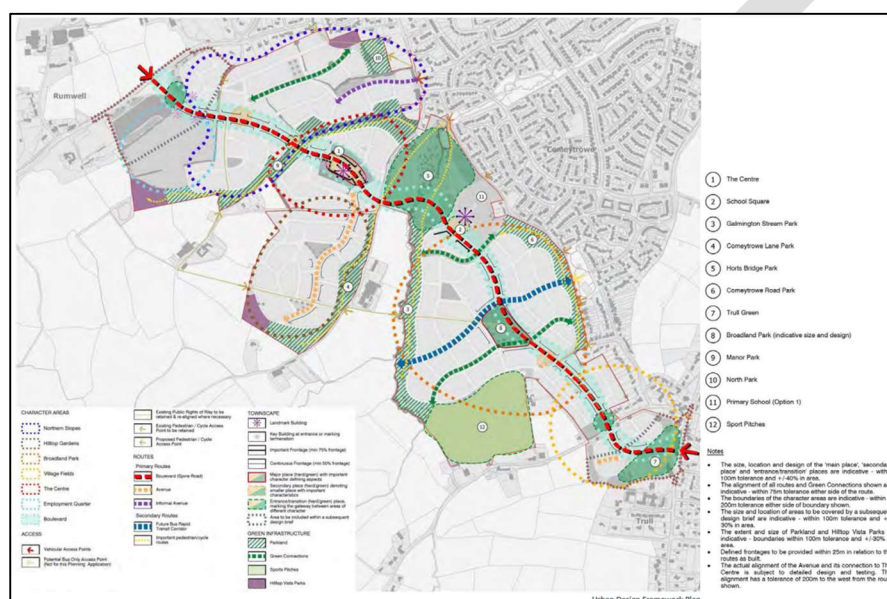


Figure 17 Urban Design Framework approved as part of 42/14/0069

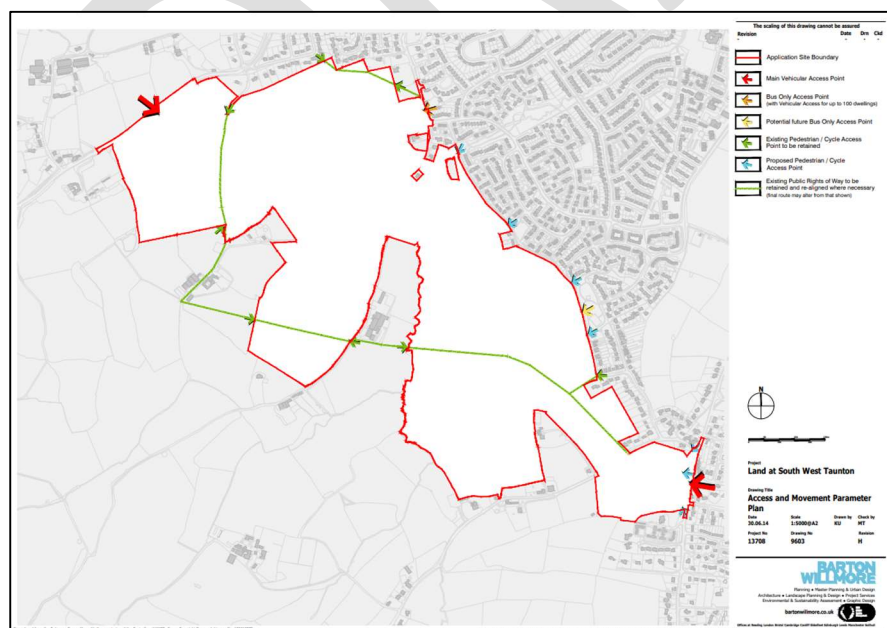


Figure 18 Access and Movement Parameter Plan approved as part of 42/14/0069

The Masterplan Principles Document also includes a series of 80 design principles for development to be guided by, which include:

15. Links to the adjacent settlement areas of Comeytrowe, Trull and Galmington will be created by retaining existing lanes and Public Rights of Way and providing routes through the development that respond to key desire lines.
16. Convenient links to Comeytrowe and Taunton town centre for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, will be provided.
17. Sustainable transport links with the surrounding areas, including bus routes and cycle and pedestrian links, will be provided.
51. The development will provide sustainable transport links with the surrounding area including bus routes and cycle and pedestrian links.

Condition 3 of the outline permission required a phasing and place-making strategy “*covering (where relevant) the phasing of the delivery of housing, infrastructure, transport links and community facilities within the development*” to be submitted and approved by the LPA before any reserved matters could be approved. This condition was in part discharged in relation to the ‘Western Neighbourhood’ only, in March 2020 through the approval of a CIL Phasing Plan for the ‘Western Neighbourhood’. The Condition remains live in relation to remaining parcels (namely the ‘Eastern Neighbourhood’).

Condition 4 of the outline permission requires a Neighbourhood Masterplan and Design Guide and statement explaining how it accords with the Masterplan Principles Document and Parameter Plans to be submitted and approved by the LPA before any reserved matters for the relevant phase or sub phase is submitted. This condition was in part discharged in relation to the ‘Western Neighbourhood’ only in March 2020 through the approval of the Western Neighbourhood Masterplan and Design Guide. The Condition remains live in relation to remaining parcels (namely the ‘Eastern Neighbourhood’).

The Western Neighbourhood Masterplan and Design Guide includes a Street Hierarchy and Movement Plan (see figure 19, below) which indicates a key walking and cycling connection into the existing community of Comeytrowe/Galmington and on towards the town centre at Horts Bridge. In addition to this, cycle routes are shown along the A38 both east and west of the new roundabout access junction, pedestrian accesses are shown from Stonegallows, Jeffrey’s Way and Comeytrowe Lane and the informal avenue which meets Comeytrowe Lane is identified as being for emergency vehicles and public transport only, but includes a shared use path suitable for cyclists.

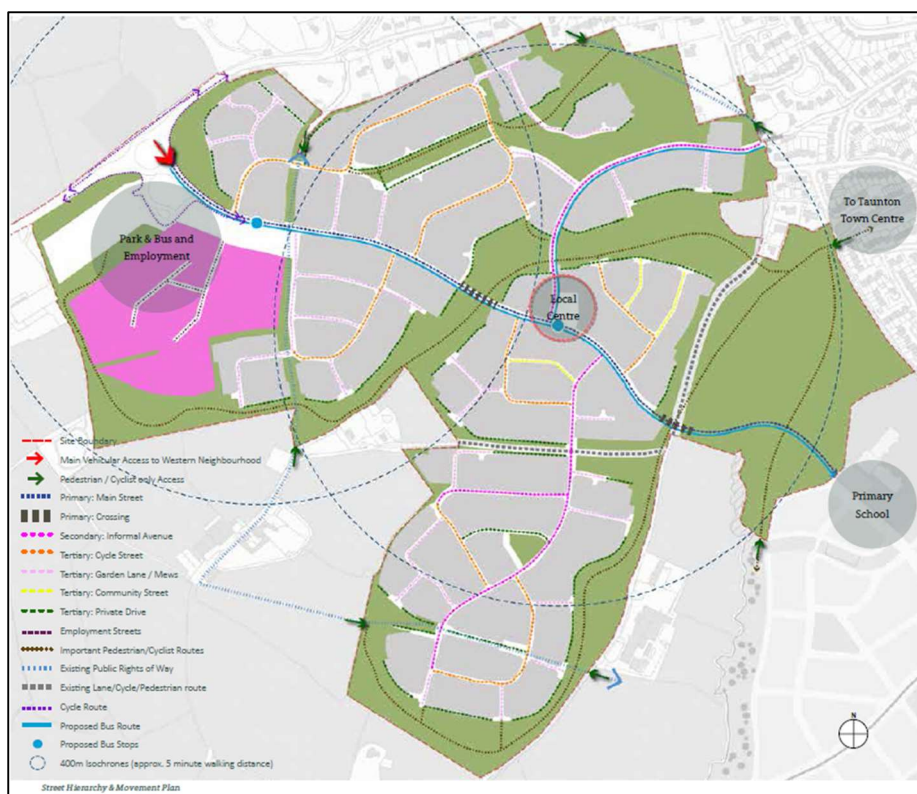


Figure 19 Street Hierarchy and Movement Plan for the Western Neighbourhood

Condition 26 of the outline permission requires a network of cycleway and footpath connections to be constructed within the site in accordance with a scheme to be approved by the LPA. To this end, and following negotiation, a series of plans, including that shown in Figure 20, were approved with improved compliance to Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN1/20) in December 2021. This indicates that a temporary link through Manor Park and Horts Bridge Park will be delivered early on, to be formalised in a later phase alongside the delivery of the parks themselves.

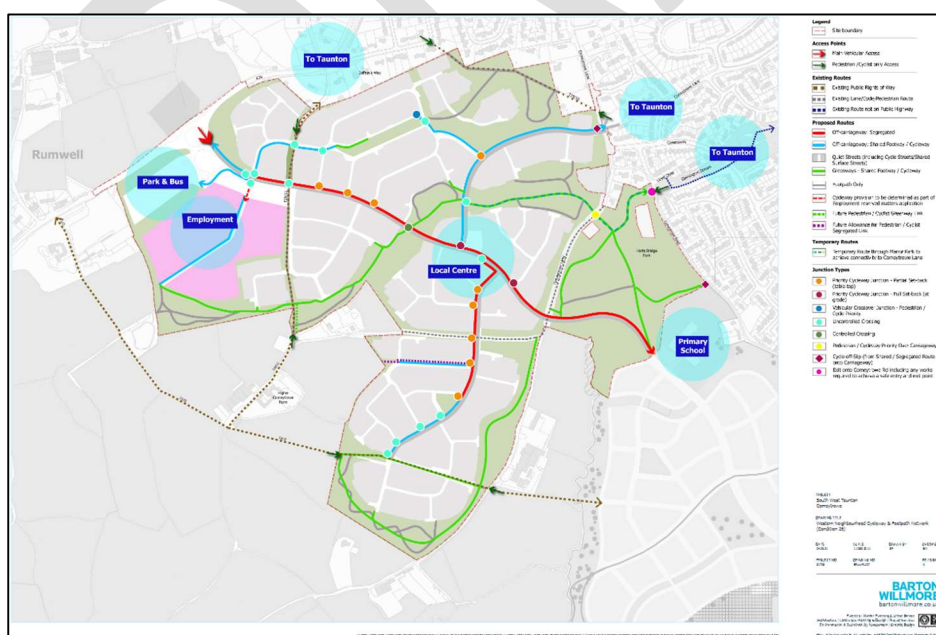


Figure 20 Western Neighbourhood Cycleway & Footpath Network (Condition 26)

The walking and cycling connection to Comeytrowe Road at Horts Bridge, is detailed as part of the reserved matters permission for common infrastructure (see figure 21, below), along with other walking and cycling infrastructure within the site itself. However, this connection ends where it meets Comeytrowe Road and does not continue to meet or upgrade the existing off-site walking and cycling provision along the Galmington Stream.



Figure 21 Extract from Common Infrastructure Landscape Proposals - Horts Bridge Park, approved as part of 42/19/0053

A planning application (SCC/3938/2022) is currently being considered by Somerset County Council in relation to the primary school. The school is proposed to be operational by September 2023. Pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access will be via the development spine road only (i.e. no access from Comeytrowe Road). The walking and cycling infrastructure to be delivered through Horts Bridge Park (above), will enable pedestrian and cyclist access to the spine road and on to the school from neighbouring communities.

Development parcels in the 'Western Neighbourhood' which do not yet benefit from reserved matters permission will need to respond to the contents of Connecting our Garden Communities in relation to any connections where they align with the approved Western Neighbourhood Masterplan and Design Guide. Further detail on expectations is included later in this note.

The Masterplan and Design Guide required by condition 4 and Phasing and Place-making Strategy required by condition 3 of the outline permission for the 'Eastern Neighbourhood', will need to respond to the contents of Connecting our Garden Communities. Development parcels within the 'Eastern Neighbourhood' will then need to be designed and brought forward in accordance with these documents. Further detail on expectations is included later in this note.

Future development at Comeytrowe/Trull

The remaining area of the Comeytrowe allocation around Higher Comeytrowe Farm as yet does not benefit from any form of planning permission. As such, development proposals for this area will need to respond to the contents of Connecting our Garden Communities and financial contribution towards the delivery of off-site walking and cycling routes will be sought where reasonable and appropriate. It will clearly need to link through to Taunton and existing communities via the Western Neighbourhood area.

DRAFT

Staplegrove Garden Community



Figure 22 Indicative boundary of the allocation for Staplegrove Garden Community

Staplegrove Site allocation

Staplegrove is a major housing-led, mixed-use urban extension to the north-west of Taunton Garden Town. The site is allocated by Policy TAU2 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP, 2016) for new sustainable neighbourhoods of around 1,500 homes, mixed-use local centre, 2ha employment land, primary school, open spaces and associated infrastructure. The allocation states it is to be delivered and coordinated in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan and phasing strategy. The policy outlines that the masterplan and phasing strategy should include (amongst other things):

- Closure of Corkscrew Lane and Manor Road, other than for local access.
- Design and travel planning measures to achieve a significant shift to more sustainable forms of transport including, within residential areas, a maximum 20mph design speed and shared surface streets.
- Provision of connected streets designed to be suitable for cycling and walking and, where appropriate, additional measures to ensure that cycling and walking are safe and attractive means of transport.
- Good cycle connections to existing cycle routes, in particular towards the town centre via Gipsy Lane, Clifford Avenue/The Uppers, Bindon Road, and along the route of the Northern Distributor Road.
- Provision of direct and safe walking routes to access existing bus services on the A358 and Kingston Road.
- Sensitive incorporation of the route of the West Deane Way.

In addition to this, the SADMP suggests that percentage of trips made on foot and by bicycle and length of designated cycle routes should be monitoring indicators for the site, with the aim of encouraging walking and cycling as an alternative to the private car.

In December 2015 the Council endorsed a Framework Masterplan for the Staplegrove strategic site allocation. The Framework Masterplan (shown in figure 23, below) is a high level document designed to ensure a co-ordinated approach is taken across both parcels, and to satisfy at a high level the need for a comprehensive masterplan. Some issues were not considered as part of this framework masterplan stage and were expected to be addressed over the course of the allocation coming forward.

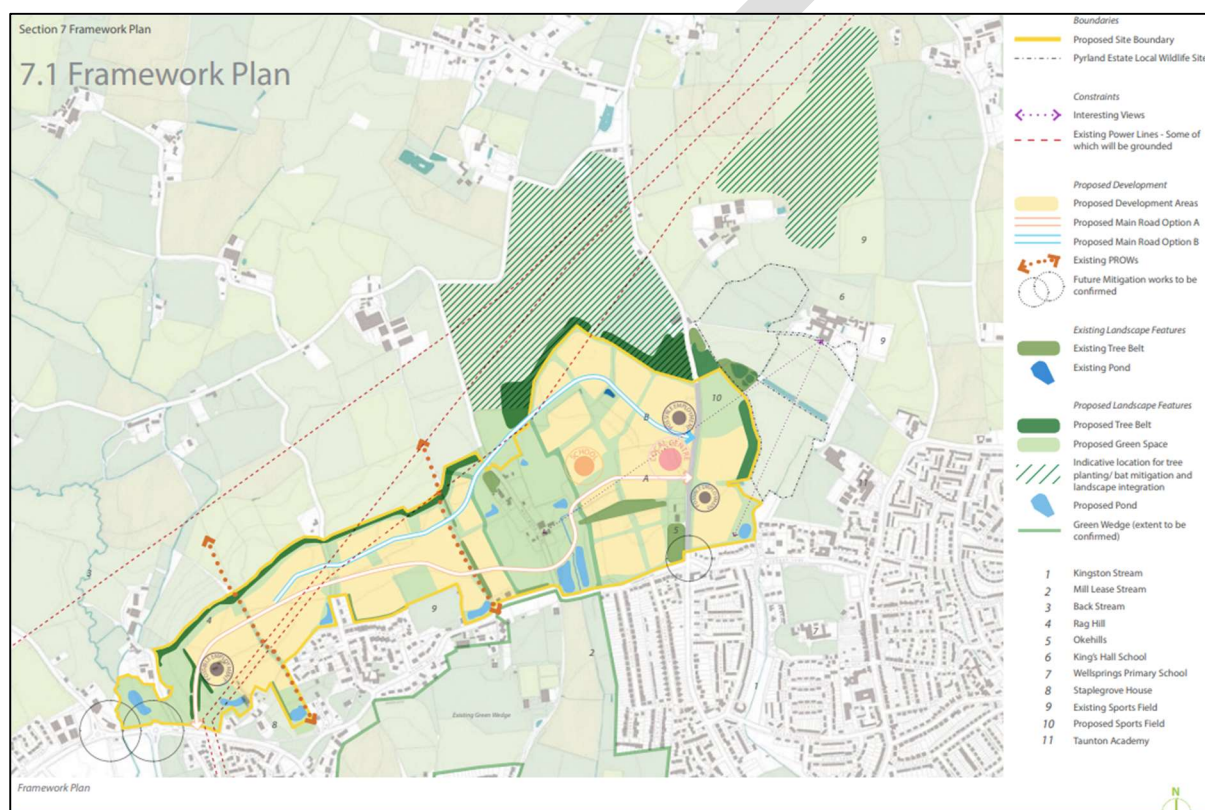


Figure 23 Approved Staplegrove Framework Masterplan

The Access Strategy (see figure 24, below), which underpinned the Framework Masterplan identified the broad locations for cycle routes within the site and leading from the site, as well as the public rights of way leading through the site which would need to be improved. In particular the Framework Masterplan intends for a shared use foot/cycleway along the spine road, hints at future off-site cycle routes towards the station and town centre utilising routes along Clifford Avenue and via the path running past Taunton Vale Sports Club together with enhancement of on-road improvements on Greenway Road and Staplegrove Road, a cycle route linking to Norton Fitzwarren via Collet Park and then presumably Great Western Way, and the enhancement of existing Public Rights of Way including the West Deane Way as an important link in the west of the site to the existing convenience store on the corner of Manor Road/Staplegrove Road. The delivery of the spine road would facilitate the removal of through traffic currently using Manor Road/Corkscrew Lane.

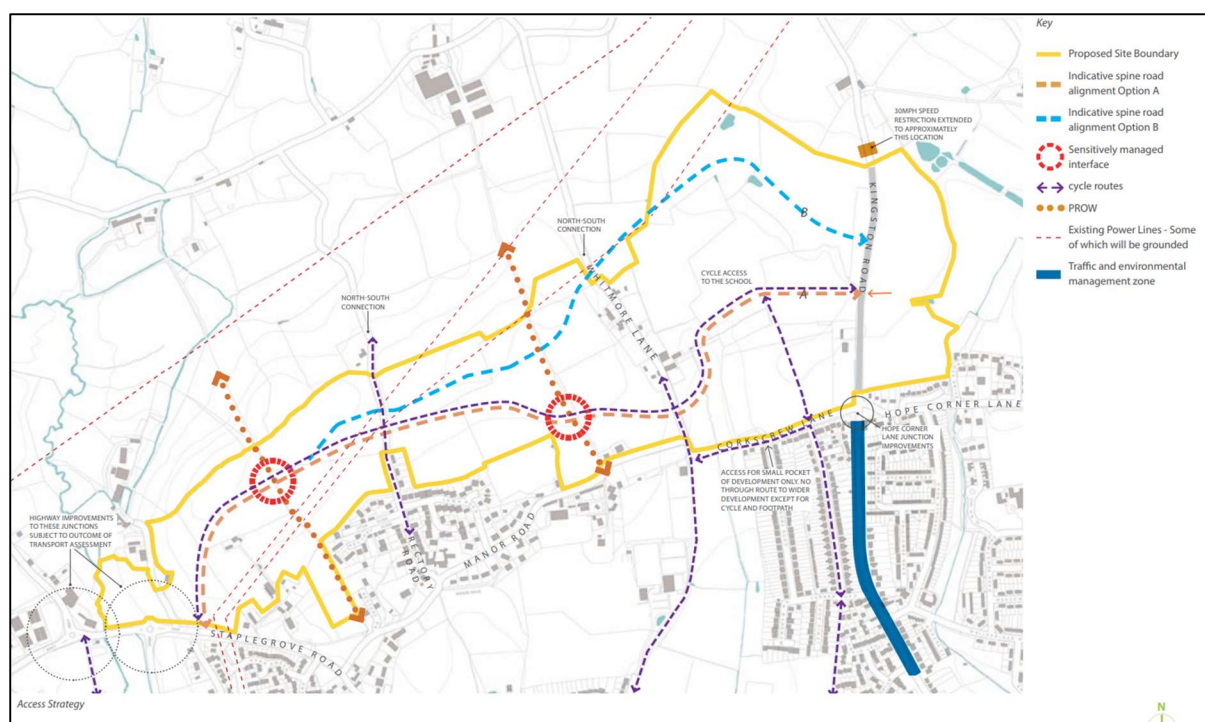


Figure 24 Approved Staplegrove Framework Access Strategy

Permissions, conditions and obligations relating to Staplegrove

Whilst allocated as a single site, and required by policy to work to a comprehensive masterplan, the Staplegrove site has come forward as two separate, but related developments. As shown in figure 25, below, Staplegrove West is subject to an extant outline permission with all matters reserved except for access, for “a residential-led, mixed use urban extension to include up to 713 dwellings, 1 ha of employment land comprising use classes B1(a) (up to a maximum of 2500sqm), B1(b), B1(c), B2, B8 together with green infrastructure, landscaping, play areas, sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) and associated works. An internal spine road is proposed to connect the A358 Staplegrove Road and Taunton Road”. Staplegrove East, meanwhile, has only a resolution to grant outline planning permission with all matters reserved except for access, subject to signing of a Section 106 Agreement for “the erection of up to 915 residential units, a primary school, 1 ha of employment land, local centre, open space including allotments and sports pitches, green infrastructure, landscaping, woodland planting, sustainable drainage systems and associated works; including provision of an internal spine road to connect A358 Staplegrove Road to Kingston Road”.



Figure 25 Planning status of indicative areas of the Staplegrove Garden Community

The outline planning permission for Staplegrove West was accompanied by a Section 106 Agreement which includes a number of planning obligations in relation to various on and off-site highways improvements, including specific requirements for improvement of off-site pedestrian and cycle links.

As yet, no reserved matters applications have been approved for Staplegrove West. However, the Council is currently in receipt of application 34/22/0011 seeking reserved matters approval for landscaping open space and drainage works for phase 1, with decisions yet to be made.

Amongst other things, the outline permission was granted in accordance with a Masterplan (see figure 26, below). This clearly identifies the route for the Spine Road through both Staplegrove West and East sites, a number of existing Public Rights of Way to be enhanced and key pedestrian access points from Manor Road, Rectory Road and Corkscrew Lane where the development will link in to the existing community of Staplegrove. The Masterplan also allows for a temporary vehicular access off Corkscrew Lane for phase 1. A series of highways plans were also approved in relation to this access point as well as amendment of the Staplegrove Road/Silk Mills junction and Corkscrew Lane/Kingston Road junction.

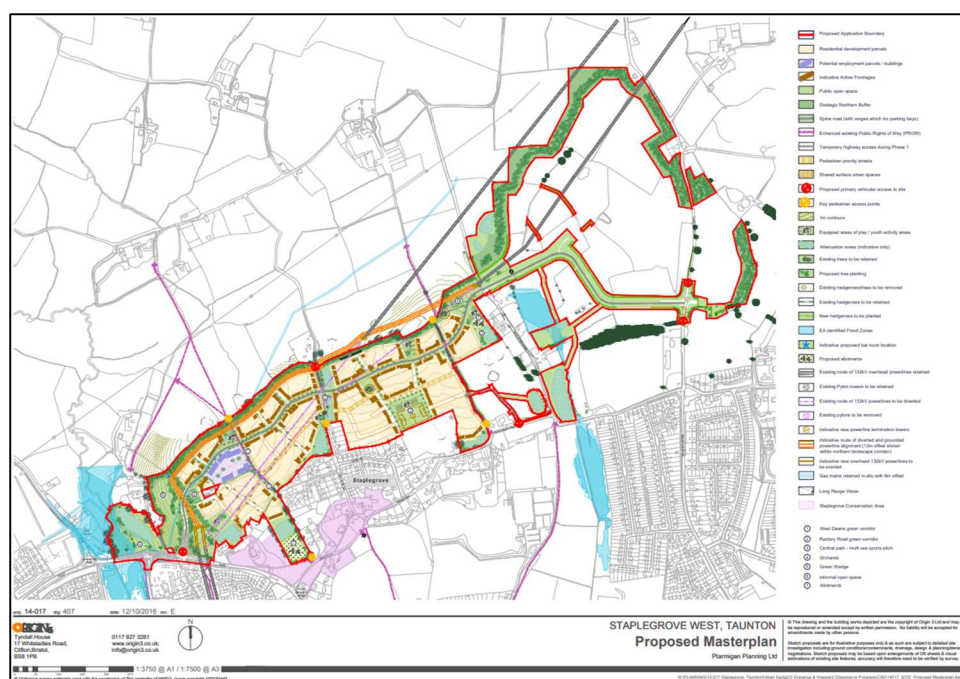


Figure 26 Staplegrove West Masterplan (as approved under 34/16/0007)

Condition 3 of the outline permission requires submission and approval of a phasing and place-making strategy as part of the first application for reserved matters. A non-material amendment changed this condition so that a phasing plan was required for the first reserved matters, and place-making strategy required for subsequent applications.

Condition 4 requires submission and approval alongside each reserved matters application, of a Neighbourhood Masterplan and Design Guide for the relevant neighbourhood area together with justification for how it accords with the overarching Framework Plan and Development Brief. These Masterplan and Design Guides will need to respond to the contents of Connecting our Garden Communities.

Condition 22 requires all highways infrastructure to be constructed and laid out in accordance with details to be approved by the LPA.

Condition 24 requires completion of the Spine Road within 5 years of the first occupation, or 200 dwellings being occupied (whichever is achieved first).

Condition 25 allows for the first phase of development to be accessed via a temporary access off Corkscrew Lane.

Condition 26 requires a network of cycleway and footpath connections to be constructed within the site in accordance with a scheme to be approved by the LPA.

Condition 29 requires traffic calming measures for Manor Road and Corkscrew Lane to have been submitted and approved prior to completion of the Spine Road.

An Access Parameter Plan (see figure 27, below) and a plan identifying proposed and existing cycle routes (see figure 28, below) were both submitted as part of the outline application. The latter plan was accompanied by a high level audit of existing off-site cycle routes. The Section 106 Agreement requires a plan to be submitted

with each reserved matters application detailing how pedestrian and cycle routes within that phase will link with existing and proposed routes in adjoining phases and along the Spine Road.

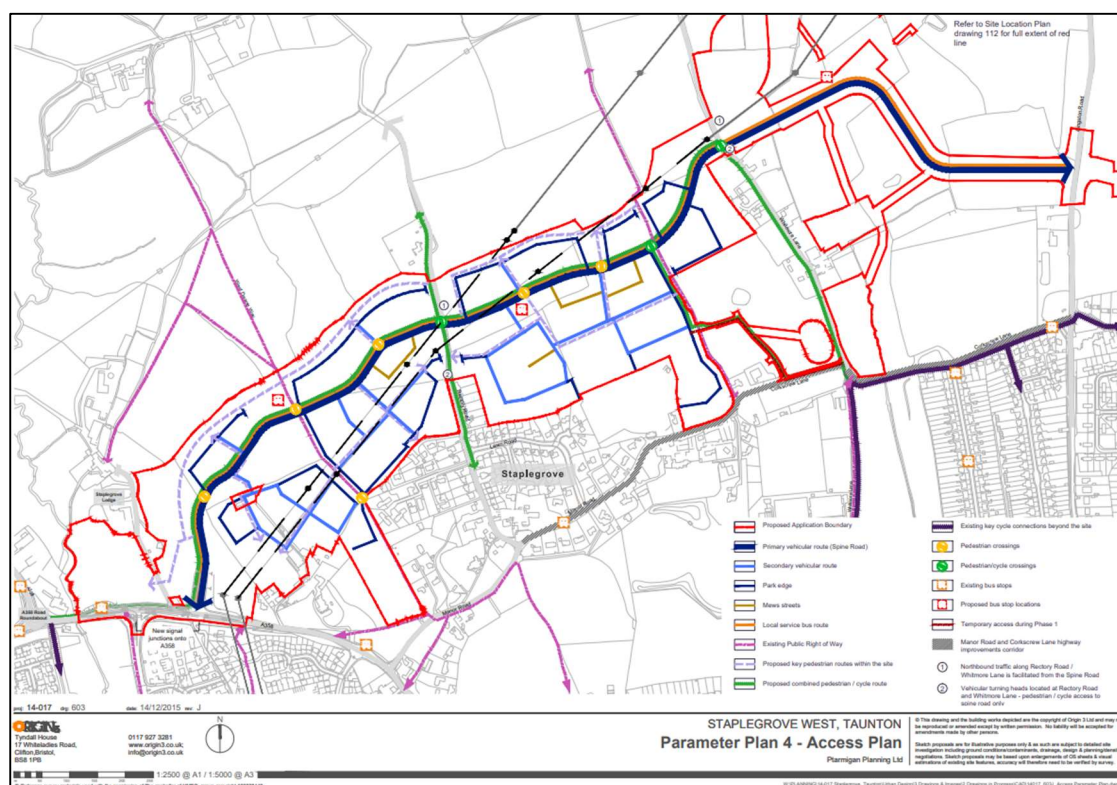


Figure 27 Access Parameter Plan (submitted as part of 34/16/0007)

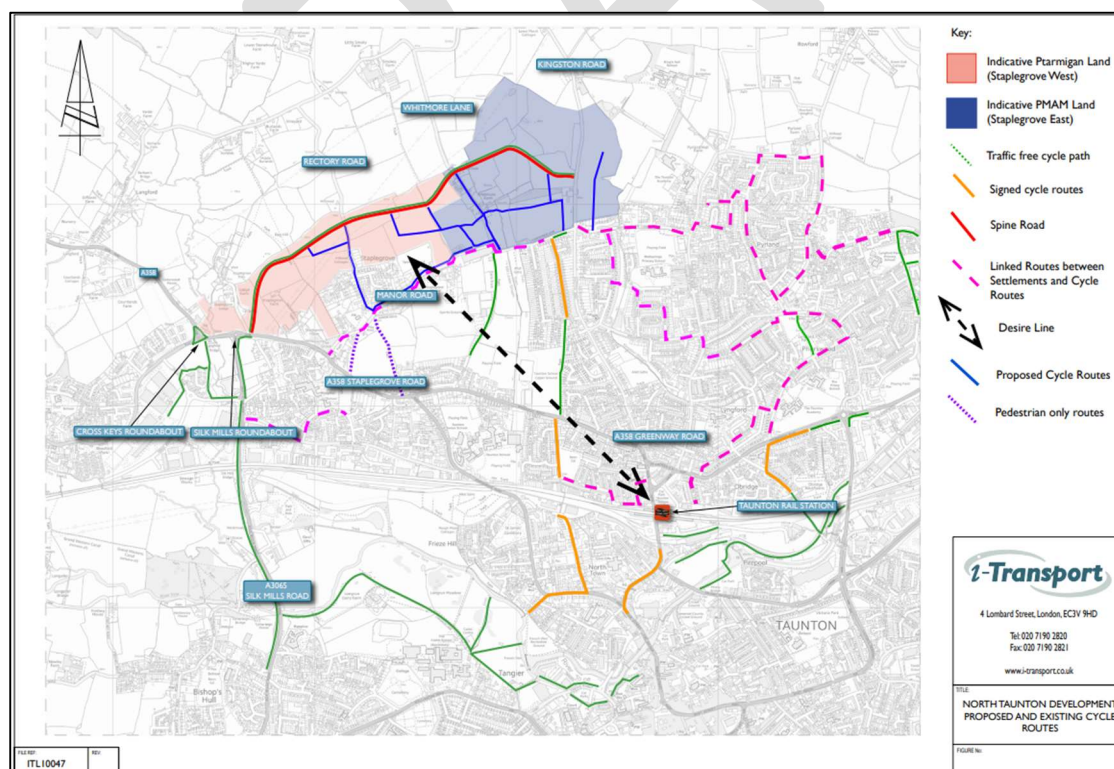


Figure 28 Plan identifying proposed and existing cycle routes (submitted as part of 34/16/0007)

Future development at Staplegrove

A resolution to grant outline planning permission for Staplegrove East was made in October 2017, subject to the signing of a Section 106 Agreement for the site. As yet, no Section 106 Agreement has not been signed, and as such, Staplegrove East does not yet benefit from any form of planning permission. However, the resolution to grant included draft planning conditions covering a number of the same issues as for Staplegrove West, plus reference to delivery of the access road for construction of the primary school being prior to occupation of the 151st dwelling, and to adoptable standard prior to occupation of the 327th dwelling. This hints at the potential for a reasonable time lag between first occupations in Staplegrove West, and delivery of the primary school on land within Staplegrove East. An illustrative Masterplan (see figure 29, below) was submitted in support of the application and this was accompanied by an Access Parameters Plan (see figure 30, below).

Because the application is not yet technically in receipt of planning permission, if development plan policy or material considerations are judged to have moved on sufficiently since the resolution to grant was made, then the application may need to be reconsidered. Similarly, if an agreement cannot be reached with regards to the Section 106 Agreement, then the application may need to be reconsidered. In these situations, the application will need to respond to the contents of Connecting our Garden Communities and financial contribution towards the delivery of off-site walking and cycling routes may be sought where reasonable and appropriate.

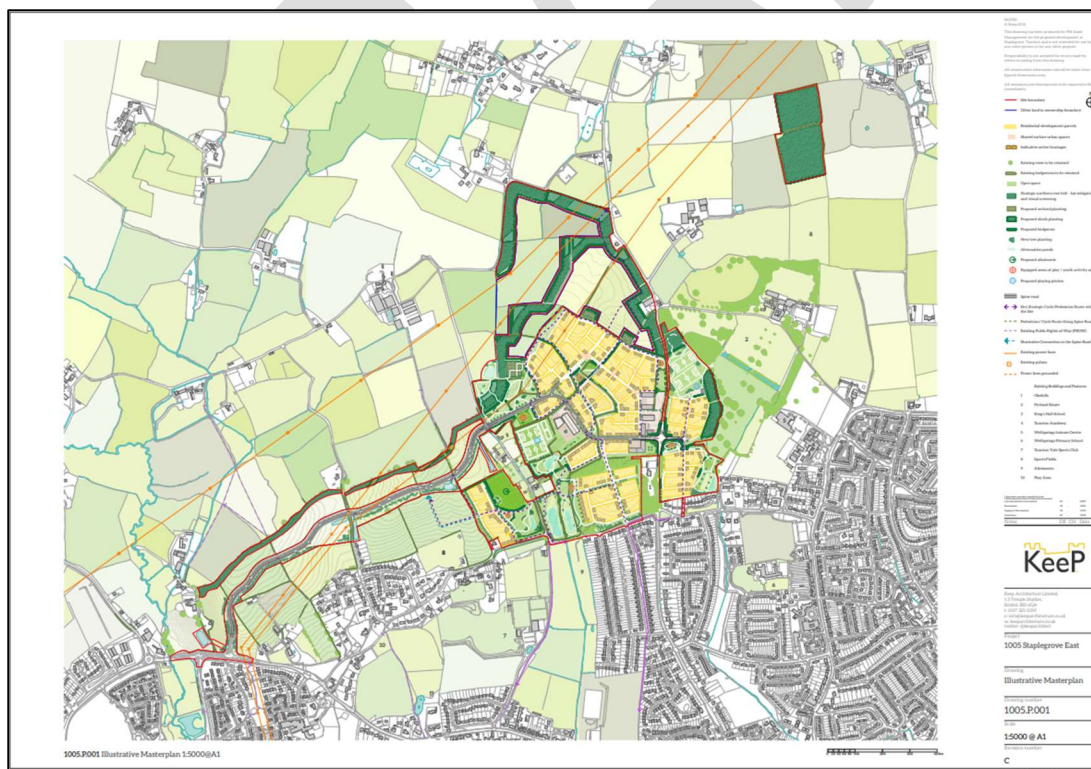


Figure 29 Illustrative Masterplan submitted in relation to application 34/16/0014

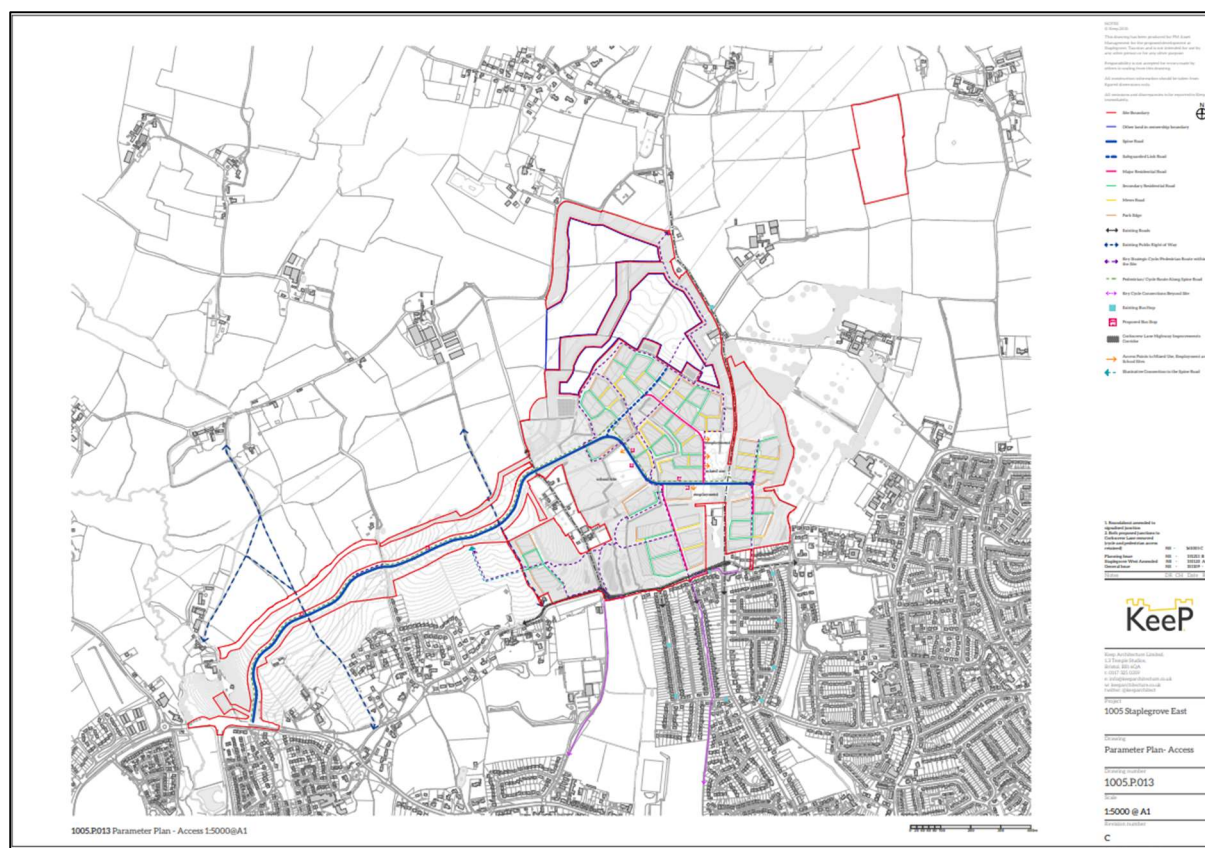


Figure 30 Access Parameters Plan submitted in relation to 34/16/0014)

Monkton Heathfield Garden Community



Figure 31 Indicative boundary of the allocation for the Monkton Heathfield Garden Community

Monkton Heathfield Site allocation

Monkton Heathfield is the largest of the Garden Communities, comprising of a housing-led, mixed-use urban extension to the north-east of Taunton Garden Town. The site is allocated by Policy SS1 of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy (2012) for a new sustainable neighbourhood of around 4,500 homes, mixed-use district centre, 22.5ha employment land, 3 primary schools, secondary school, park and ride, open spaces and associated infrastructure. The allocation states it is to be delivered in line with and coordinated by a comprehensive masterplan and design code SPD. The policy outlines that the development as a whole should include (amongst other things):

- Implementation of the A3259 strategy.
- Improvements to the A38 to transform it into an urban street.
- A connected street network which accommodates pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles and promotes a viable public transport system.
- A positive relationship between new housing and existing communities.

In addition to this, the Core Strategy suggests that percentage of trips made on foot and by bicycle and length of designated cycle routes should be monitoring indicators for the site, with the aim of encouraging walking and cycling as an alternative to the private car.

Monkton Heathfield has been a focus for growth around Taunton for many years. The 2004-2011 Local Plan originally allocated 1,000 dwellings here (phase 1). The Core Strategy took forward the emerging proposals of the South West Regional Spatial Strategy and re-allocated this and further land for an additional 3,500 dwellings as part of a more significant urban extension. The site has a complex patchwork of ownerships, promoters and developers.

The Council had taken steps towards production of a Framework Plan for the SS1 policy area, and Concept Plan and Design Guidance for the MH2 development site (which comprises the vast majority of remaining parts of the allocation). However, following public consultation, the decision was taken in September 2021, to not proceed towards adoption of these documents.

Permissions, conditions and obligations relating to Monkton Heathfield

Whilst allocated as a single site and required by policy to work to a comprehensive masterplan, Monkton Heathfield is under multiple controls and has come forward in various distinct parcels as identified in figure 32, below.



Figure 32 Indicative areas of the Monkton Heathfield Garden Community

Of these parcels, Monkton Heathfield Phase 1 and Aginhills are now more or less fully built out developments, delivering a total of 1,000 dwellings between them. A number of footway/cycleways were delivered across the Monkton Heathfield area through and alongside these permissions, which have established a core network in the immediate vicinity (as shown in figure 33, below). However, contexts have moved on since. These routes were designed to previous standards, were primarily

delivered within the application sites without continuing beyond, and as such significant gaps remain, off-site connections are incomplete and infrastructure is not up to current standards.

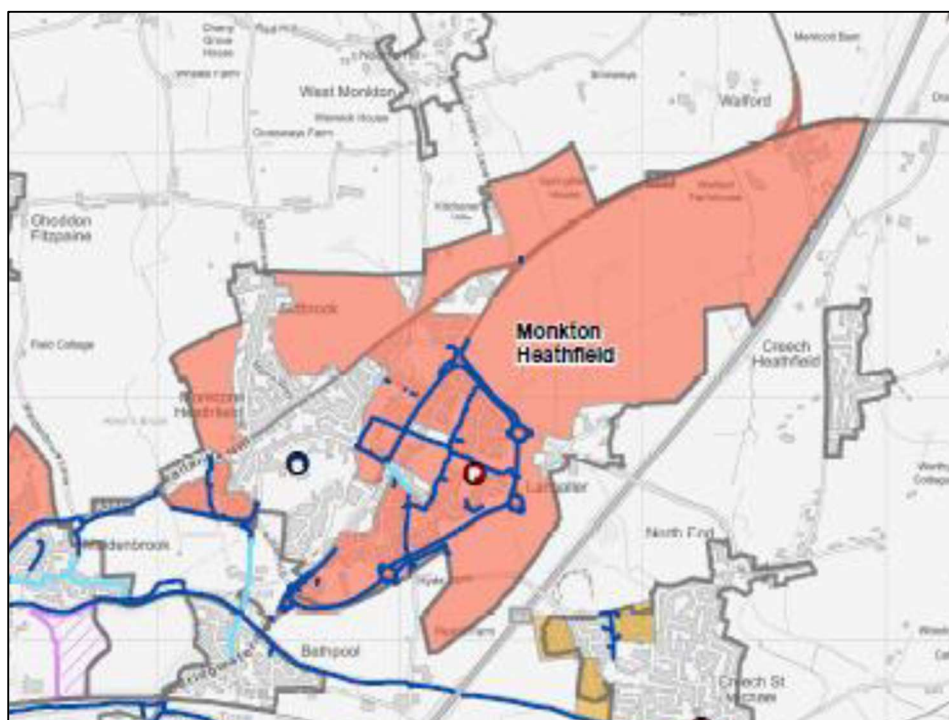


Figure 33 Existing cycle routes in Monkton Heathfield (taken from the Taunton LCWIP)

Hartnells Farm has outline planning permission with all matters reserved “for residential development (up to 320 dwellings), green infrastructure including Public Open Space, associated works and demolition of existing buildings”. Two reserved matters applications have been approved (including 48/18/0036 and 48/19/0069) in relation to parcels of Hartnells Farm, totalling 230 dwellings. Approximately 90 dwellings on that development do not yet have reserved matters permission. The Hartnells Farm permissions make reference to footpaths and cycleways within the site, but no further connections.

Future development at Monkton Heathfield

The remainder of the allocation, (including Monkton Heathfield Phase 2, West of Greenway, Prockters Farm, Manor Farm, South of Langaller, and the Alder King land) does not yet benefit from planning permission of any kind. As such, development proposals for this area will need to respond to the contents of Connecting our Garden Communities and financial contribution towards the delivery of off-site walking and cycling routes will be sought where reasonable and appropriate. Future developments will clearly need to link through to Taunton and other existing communities via the areas of the allocation which have already been built out. This may necessitate the upgrading of infrastructure in some cases.

The Council is currently in receipt of a planning application (14/21/0047) for a hybrid planning application relating to the Monkton Heathfield 2 site, for up to 1,450 dwellings, land for employment, land for a park and bus facility and associated infrastructure. A decision has yet to be made on this application.

Nerrols Garden Community



Figure 34 Nerrols Garden Community

Nerrols Site allocation

Priorswood/Nerrols is a major housing-led, mixed-use urban extension to the north of Taunton Garden Town. The site is allocated by Policy SS2 of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy (2012) for a new sustainable neighbourhood of around 900 homes, mixed-use local centre, 1ha employment land, primary school, open spaces and associated infrastructure. The policy outlines that development of the site should include (amongst other things):

- A country park within the green wedge between Priorswood and Monkton Heathfield, including part of the green link between Halcon and the Quantocks.
- A new highway link between Bossington Drive and Lyngford Lane / Cheddon Road.
- An accessible, compact local centre with a mix of uses and facilities that can be accessed easily and safely on foot.
- A positive relationship between the local centre, Priorswood roundabout and the Crown Medical Centre to create an attractive gateway to the neighbourhood.
- A permeable street network which accommodates pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, provides good access to Yallands Hill / Priorswood Road and the

public transport corridor and integrates with the existing street network in Priorswood.

- A positive relationship between new housing and existing communities.

In addition to this, the Core Strategy suggests that percentage of trips made on foot and by bicycle and length of designated cycle routes should be monitoring indicators for the site, with the aim of encouraging walking and cycling as an alternative to the private car.

Permissions, conditions and obligations relating to Nerrols

As shown in figure 35, below, a large proportion of the allocation benefits from outline planning permission (with all matters reserved except all points of access – 08/10/0024) for “erection of up to 630 residential dwellings, live-work units, retail space, other mixed use development and open space to include play areas and linear park, and associated landscaping”. The southern part of the area benefitting from outline permission is also currently subject to a full planning application for delivery of a local centre (08/20/0035). The area around Crosslands had full planning permission for construction of a single dwelling (08/13/0028), which has now been built out. The area immediately north-west of the outline permission referred to as the Lyngford Lane land does not have any planning permission.



Figure 35 Planning status of indicative areas of the Nerrols Garden Community

Reserved matters have been granted for phases 1 (08/15/0012) and 2 (08/19/0001) of the area benefitting from outline planning permission, which will deliver a total of 497 homes.

Condition 9 of the outline permission requires submission and approval of plans for a vehicular, pedestrian and cycle link road to the Lyngford Lane land prior to development taking place. This condition was discharged in December 2019 with the submission and approval of a plan which identifies a shared use foot/cycleway along the western side of the link road. The accompanying Section 106 Agreement further prevents the land for this link road from being built on for a period of 15 years.

Condition 10 requires the submission and approval of plans for land to be dedicated as public highway along the northern boundary of the A3259 prior to development taking place. This condition was discharged in June 2016. The approved plans have been delivered and include a shared use foot/cycleway along the A3259 from the eastern edge of the site to the Crown/Venture Way roundabout.

The Section 106 Agreement also included a “new footpath contribution” towards the delivery of a new foot/cycleway on the eastern side of Nerrols Drive. These works have been implemented and form the shared use foot/cycleway between the Crown/Venture Way roundabout and just north of the new primary school.

Future development at Nerrols

The Lyngford Lane land does not yet benefit from planning permission of any kind. As such, development proposals for this area will need to respond to the contents of Connecting our Garden Communities and financial contribution towards the delivery of off-site walking and cycling routes will be sought where reasonable and appropriate. This may necessitate the upgrading of existing infrastructure, potentially including that provided for via the S106 in relation to phases 1 and 2. This land is subject to a current full planning application for “*Erection of a residential development of up to 347 No. dwellings (87 No. affordable) with associated access, infrastructure, open space (formal and informal) and landscaping*”. A decision has yet to be made on this application.

The area identified for a local centre at the southern end of the Nerrols allocation site is covered by the extant outline permission. However, it does not yet benefit from reserved matters permission. The Council is currently in receipt of a full planning application for the local centre, rather than reserved matters application. The local centre is intended by policy to serve the wider area, and act as a key focal point, knitting together the communities of Nerrols, Priorswood and Maidenbook. Foot and cycle connections between the local centre and these communities are important. As such, the planning application should respond to the contents of Connecting our Garden Communities and financial contribution towards the delivery of off-site walking and cycling routes may be sought where reasonable and appropriate.

Ford Farm Garden Community



Figure 36 Ford Farm Garden Community

Ford Farm Site allocation

Ford Farm is a housing-led development site to the north-west of Taunton Garden Town. The site is allocated by Policy TAU4 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP, 2016) for around 400 homes, completion of flood channel works to the Halse Water, completion of the Norton Fitzwarren bypass, and 1ha employment land.

The accompanying design brief outlines that the development concept for the site should include (amongst other things):

- Completing the Norton Fitzwarren link road.
- Creating a sustainable network of streets and internal connections.
- Provision of pedestrian linkages across the Halsewater to facilitate access to local facilities, subject to land ownership considerations.

The design brief (see figure 37, below) shows pedestrian/cycle links crossing the Halsewater and the B3227 to the north and crossing the Halsewater into Marshall Court to the east. It also shows intention for a link to the north-west alongside the railway line.

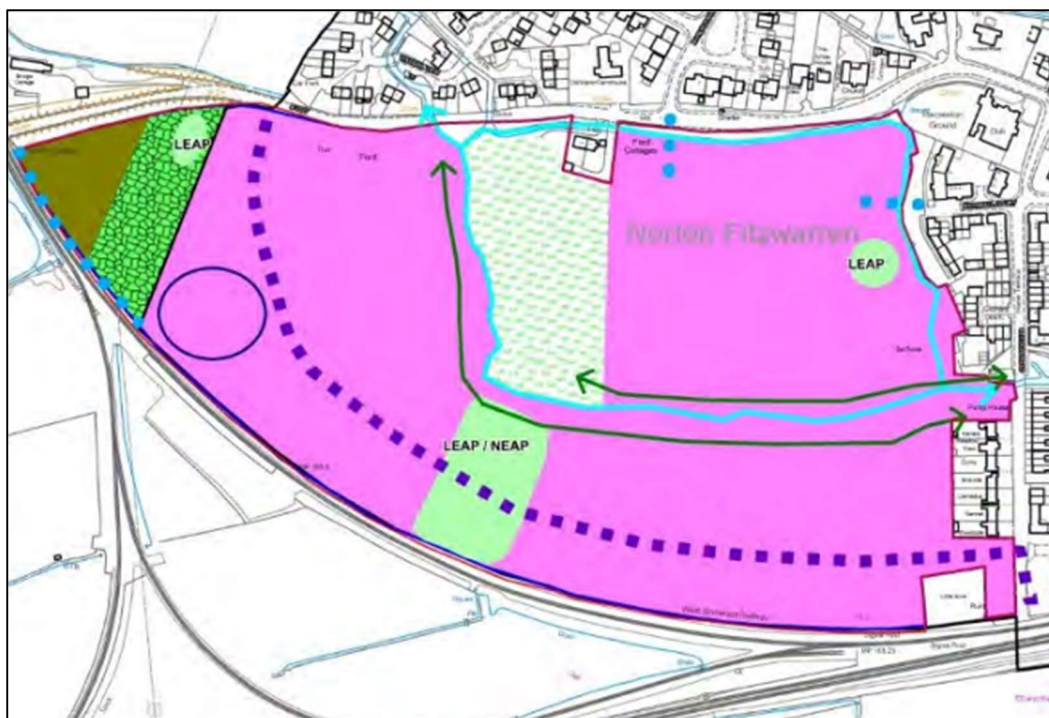


Figure 37 Design Brief for Ford Farm taken from the Taunton Deane Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (2016)

Permissions, conditions and obligations relating to Ford Farm

There have been a number of planning permissions granted in relation to the completion of the flood channel works and diversion of footpaths within the site. However, the site does not benefit from any planning permissions in relation to the wider development.

Future development at Ford Farm

The site does not yet benefit from planning permission of any kind in relation to the wider development. As such, development proposals for this site will need to respond to the contents of Connecting our Garden Communities and financial contribution towards the delivery of off-site walking and cycling routes will be sought where reasonable and appropriate.

The Council is currently in receipt of two planning applications: a full planning application for the completion of the bypass (25/21/0027), and a hybrid planning application “*comprising of a Full Application for the completion of Norton Fitzwarren bypass and the erection of 92. No dwellings with associated works and an Outline Application with all matters reserved, except for means of access from completed bypass, for up to 308 No. dwellings with public open space, ecological enhancements and associated works*”. Decisions are yet to be made on these applications.

Firepool Garden Community



Figure 38 Firepool Garden Community

Firepool Site allocation

Firepool is a major mixed-use brownfield development site on the edge of Taunton town centre. The site is allocated by Policies Fp1 and Fp2 of the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan (2008) as part of a wider suite of sites on the northern edge of the town centre. Specifically, the Riverside site is allocated for a mix of office, retail and leisure uses, approximately 400 dwellings, multi-storey car park, hotel, primary healthcare facilities and supporting infrastructure. The policies explicitly state that the development will provide (amongst other things):

- A 'boulevard' linking the railway station with the River Tone and Priory Bridge Road.
- High quality riverside promenades.
- Travel plans on the basis identified in Policy Tr4 and agreed with the County Council
- Cycle parking within developments in accordance with the Somerset Parking Strategy
- A cycle route from the railway station via the boulevard to Priory Bridge Road.
- High-quality pedestrian and segregated cycle routes along each bank of the River Tone
- Shared pedestrian and cycle bridges across the River Tone
- An internal layout that facilitates improved pedestrian and cycle links to North Taunton and Taunton East.

The Town Centre Design Code SPD includes further information on how some of these elements might be delivered upon and how they link with wider design aspirations. In particular it refers to:

- The importance of the riverside corridor as a strategic pedestrian and cycle link through the town centre and as the strategically important role they play in the pedestrian and cycle network of the town as a whole.
- The need to design the riverside corridor routes to contribute to the enhancement of existing wildlife corridors.
- The important strategic role of bridge links for pedestrian and cycle traffic.
- Two new footbridges directly linking Firepool with the town centre and the area to the north of the railway line.

The Council, as landowner, is currently in the process of developing a new Masterplan for Firepool with a view to the Local Planning Authority being able to approve the Masterplan as a material consideration to guide the site's development. This Masterplan is intended to respond to the many changes in context and circumstances which have arisen since the site was allocated, and since planning permissions (discussed below) were granted.

Permissions, conditions and obligations relating to Firepool

There have been various planning permissions granted in relation to development at Firepool over the years. These permissions are summarised in figure 39, below. The Viridor and WatersEdge developments on the south side of the river, and the Canal Court and Lock House developments fronting Trenchard Way have been fully built out. Other parts of the site are at varying stages of delivery. The majority of the remaining site was granted outline planning permission with some matters reserved for a retail-led mixed-use scheme in 2019. However, due to a number of significantly changed circumstances, this permission was not considered to be the right solution for the site to be taken forward. As such, work began in 2021 on a new Masterplan for the site, and in March 2022 the retail-led planning permission lapsed. Three planning applications of particular relevance have been approved in the past year: a full permission for the Innovation Centre office building (SCC/3775/2020, approved by Somerset County Council), a full permission for an office building and northern section of the “boulevard” within “block 3” (38/21/0436), and a full permission for the site access off Trenchard Way (38/21/0464). The Innovation Centre building is currently under construction and work is expected to begin on block 3 and the Trenchard Way access in the near future.



Figure 39 Planning status of indicative areas of the Firepool Garden Community

The Block 3 permission was granted subject to a number of relevant conditions including:

Condition 17 requires the Trenchard Way access scheme to be delivered prior to any part of the development being brought into use.

Condition 18 requires the cycle route as shown in principle in figure 40, below, to be delivered prior to any part of the development being brought into use.

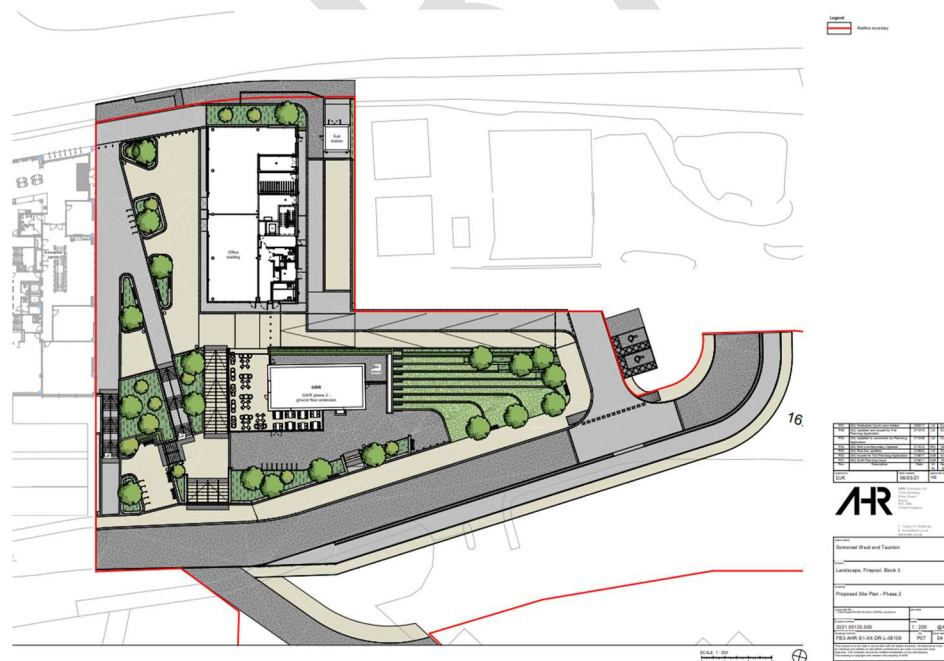


Figure 40 Approved Block 3 plan showing cycle route running to the east of the main office building to join Canal Road



A further full planning permission has recently been granted with regards to the land north of the river and south of canal road (38/21/0440) relating to site levels raising and drainage/infrastructure works. As part of this, the existing footpath through the site is being diverted temporarily within the wider Firepool site.

Following the expiration of the retail-led outline permission, save for the levels and drainage permission above, the majority of the site does not benefit from any planning permissions in relation to the wider development.

The areas of the site outside of those already constructed and those specific extant permissions referred to above does not yet benefit from planning permission in relation to the wider development. As such, development proposals within these remaining parts of the site will need to respond to the contents of Connecting our

Garden Communities and financial contribution towards the delivery of off-site walking and cycling routes will be sought where reasonable and appropriate.

As previously mentioned, the Council is currently working on a new Masterplan for the Firepool site. The Masterplan, which will be subject to public consultation in due course, will need to respond to Connecting our Garden Communities and identify what is likely to be a reasonable and appropriate level of on-site delivery and off-site contribution for future planning applications to meet.

The Council is currently in receipt of a full planning application for “*Formation of public realm to include landscaping and associated infrastructure works (includes Environment Statement) referred to as The Southern Boulevard*”, linking the area from the southern edge of the Block 3 permission down to the riverside. A decision has yet to be made on this application.

Nexus 25 Garden Community



Figure 42 Nexus 25 Garden Community

Nexus 25 Policy Context

Nexus 25 is a 25ha strategic employment development site located to the east of Taunton Garden Town on the opposite side of the M5 motorway. The site is subject to a Local Development Order (LDO) which simplifies planning within the boundaries of the site, effectively granting planning permission through an extension of 'permitted development' rights where proposals come forward in accordance with the provisions set out within. The LDO was developed and adopted pursuant to Policy SS8 of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy (2012) which set the ambition for future policy to allocate a site for strategic employment at Taunton where it complied with several criteria.

As yet, no parcels of development on the Nexus 25 site have come forward with applications for compliance or submission of further information to discharge any conditions.

Nexus 25 Local Development Order

The LDO includes:

- Justification for creating the LDO – which recognises the need for the strategic employment site to be sustainable and to help to realise the Taunton Growth Prospectus.⁴
- Development considerations – which considers the baseline situation and proposals for the site with regards to access and sustainable transport.
- Policy context – which explains how the LDO supports the implementation of existing strategies, plans and policies, including those relevant to sustainable travel, walking and cycling.
- Conditions – which development permitted by the LDO must comply with.

The LDO recognises that improvement works at J25 of the M5 will enhance facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. It also states that a dedicated pedestrian and cycle access will be provided from Nexus onto Haydon Lane on the southern boundary of the site.

It states that consideration is being given to construction of a pedestrian and cycle bridge over the M5 connecting Nexus with Blackbrook Business Park in order to link in to existing well-established pedestrian and cycle facilities in the area and facilitate cross-visitation between the two employment areas. However, it further notes that *“Whilst the construction of this infrastructure would benefit the development and the wider area, it is not strictly required in order to make the LDO acceptable on the basis that this report has already demonstrated that the site will be accessible on foot for some short journeys and by bike from the main residential areas of Taunton in the baseline situation. Whilst the pedestrian and cycle bridge is not fundamental to the scheme, the additional benefits and opportunities it could provide means that it remains an aspiration to the LDO, and is the focus of further technical investigations. Further potential funding options are also being considered. It therefore does not form part of the LDO and would be brought forward as a separate planning application if necessary”*.

The relevance of Highways England’s (now National Highways) A358 dualling proposals is referred to by the LDO.

A Framework Travel Plan accompanies the LDO, serving as an overarching travel plan for the development. Proposals for individual plots within the site need to prepare and implement their own subsidiary travel plans. The Travel Plan indicates that the baseline modal share for walking and cycling is likely to be between 0% and 7.1%, with vehicular trips (driver / passenger) making up between 78.7% and 100% of trips depending on the use type of the development parcel. The plan proposes a number of ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ measures, and subsequently sets a target to achieve a 12% reduction in the overall number of two-way external vehicle trips generated by the development during the weekday AM and PM peak hours. Whilst a new bridge over the M5 is identified as not being fundamental to the scheme, it is one of the measures considered in arriving at that 12% target.

⁴ The [Taunton Growth Prospectus](#), adopted in 2018, references the need for Nexus 25 to be well connected to Taunton by dedicated pedestrian and cycle routes and the aspiration for a foot/cycle bridge over the M5 connecting Nexus 25 directly with Blackbrook.

Condition 1 of the LDO sets the time limit for 15 years, though states that it will be subject to review after 5 years (March 2023).

Condition 2 requires development to comply with the criteria and conditions set out within the LDO and the accompanying Design Guide. The Design Guide sets out a number of guiding principles and key parameters of the Nexus 25 masterplan (see figure 43, below), which future development will need to comply with.



Figure 43 Concept Masterplan taken from the Nexus 25 Design Guide

The key parameters section of the Design Guide sets out that a network of footpaths and cycleways will be provided throughout the site, refers to the potential for a new connection over the M5, and providing for priority within the site being for more sustainable modes of transport. The Design Guide includes an indicative plan of pedestrian and cycle connections (see figure 44, below).



Figure 44 Indicative plan showing pedestrian and cycle connections within and beyond the Nexus 25 site, taken from the Nexus 25 Design Guide

It also refers to the site being accessed through the J25 improvements scheme, as shown in figure 45, below:



Figure 45 SCC J25 Highways Scheme, taken from the Nexus 25 Design Guide

Condition 3 requires any application for compliance with the LDO to include (amongst other things) “*arrangements for access for pedestrian, cycle, vehicular and other modes of transport*” and “*demonstration of compliance with the LDO Design Guide*”.

Condition 18 requires submission and approval of a Transport Appraisal Report and Site-Wide Framework Travel Plan prior to commencement. Condition 19 requires submission and approval of a Transport Statement and Subsidiary Travel Plan consistent with the above prior to occupation of each plot.

Future development at Nexus 25

Context and circumstances have changed since the LDO was adopted in March 2018. In particular the adoption of the Garden Town Vision, declaration of a Climate Emergency and subsequent adoption of the Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy and approval of the SWT Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Action Plan, and the Government’s publishing of the LTN1/20 cycle infrastructure design guidance. When the LDO is reviewed in March 2023, these considerations will need to be taken into account and the suitability of reliance on the pedestrian and cycle access via the J25 improvements reviewed.

Audit of the now delivered and functioning J25 pedestrian and cycle access suggests that despite significant improvements, this junction will continue to be a major blocker on active travel movements across the M5, due to the multiple stages and additional time required in crossing the junction, width of the crossings, volume and speed of traffic.

Considering all of the above, this increases the importance of the link across the M5 aspired to within the LDO and Nexus 25 Design Guide. Whilst technically pedestrian and cyclist access is possible to the site via J25, in reality, the numbers doing so will likely be very low. Delivery of a new crossing avoiding J25 would increase the likelihood of active travel being the modal choice for many people. Even ahead of reviewing the LDO in March 2023, in order to hit the Framework Travel Plan targets, further consideration may need to be given to the need for and appropriateness of a new crossing of the M5. Indeed, the J25 improvements have a finite vehicular capacity. If proposals come forward which would fail to deliver on the modal shift targets or fail to manage the use of this finite resource / vehicle capacity, then potential for a new crossing of the M5 will need to be revisited. The Transport Assessment which accompanied the LDO highlighted that delivery of a bridge over the M5 may lead to a 40% reduction of car trips of less than 1km, 30% for trips of 1.1-3km in length, 20% for trips of 3.1-5km in length and 5% for trips of 5.1-10km in length. This shows the potential scale of impact that delivery of a bridge might have.

In 2016, before the LDO was adopted, Sustrans undertook a project for the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Somerset County Council as part of the Sustainable Transport Delivery Excellence Programme. This project considered numerous different options for improving pedestrian and cycle access across the M5 in the context of the emerging location for the strategic employment site. It considered the following options identified in figure 46, below:

1. Utilising the existing riverside path north-east of Hankeridge Farm
2. An at grade, light controlled crossing at J25
3. A new bridge at J25
4. A new subway at J25
5. A new bridge at Blackbrook
6. A new subway/culvert at Blackbrook
7. Utilising the existing subway/culvert at Blackbrook

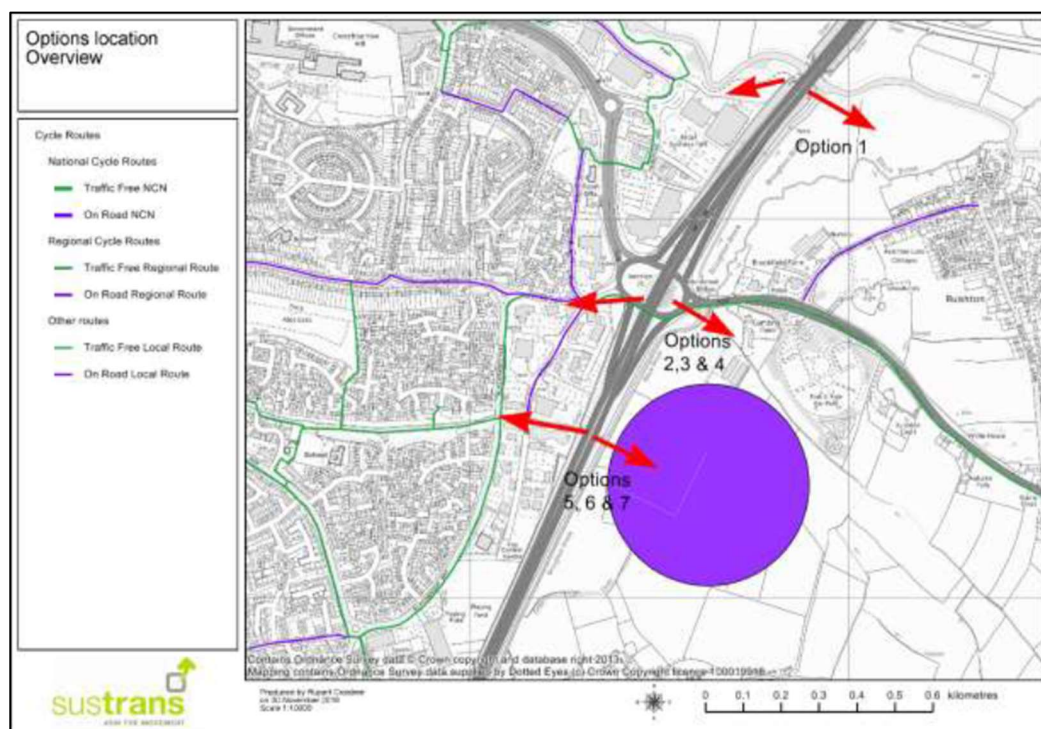


Figure 46 Location options for crossing the M5 considered by the 2016 Sustrans report

This report concluded that the preferred option was a new bridge at J25. It concluded that a bridge at Blackbrook should be dismissed as an option due to the extensive ramps and height of the structure that would be required and significant cost (estimated to be £4-6 million). It also concluded that the use of the existing culvert at Blackbrook should be dismissed as an option due to flood risk and being unattractive to users. Other options were recommended to be kept on the table should the preferred option be rejected after further investigation. Option 2 of an at-grade light controlled crossing at J25 was stated to be the lowest cost and lowest risk option but to appear as the poorest practicable option for users. Despite this, it ended up being the preferred option undertaken as part of the J25 improvement scheme.

Further work was undertaken in 2019 by Kier for Highways England which explored the option of a new crossing at Blackbrook again. This concluded that a new bridge was not feasible, but that a new subway/culvert may well be feasible at an approximate cost of around £5m if a “box-jack” approach were taken (to minimise delay costs to traffic on the Strategic Road Network). Furthermore, the report demonstrated the economic benefits of delivering a new culvert subway crossing over utilising the at grade crossing at J25. Further work by WSP built on this to demonstrate the wider benefits of delivering this new culvert crossing alongside the

“green route” identified in the LCWIP. As a result, this connection features in the LCWIP, and is considered to merit serious consideration going forwards.

Highways England’s (now National Highways) proposals for dualling the A358 are also of critical importance here. These proposals have been considered alongside each other for a number of years. In summer 2021, National Highways consulted on the preliminary design proposals for the A358 project. The Council’s consultation response highlighted the importance of ensuring pedestrian and cycle links both across (linking Nexus with Ruishton) and along the new A358, and the related importance of the connection across the M5 at Blackbrook. As both the A358 and Nexus proposals evolve and develop it will be of key importance to consider how these sustainable, active movements, which connect communities rather than divide them can be accommodated. It is noted that National Highways’ revised preliminary design published in June 2022 continues to not address these points.

6. Broad route identification

Building on the above initial scoping exercise, we began to assess the specific destinations that mattered for each Garden Community. This was then supplemented with understanding the inverse, in terms of considering the facilities within the developments which existing communities would need to access, and the specific opportunities that each Garden Community holds. This chapter details this part of the process in relation to each Garden Community.

Comeytrove/Trull Garden Community

Key destinations for Comeytrove/Trull

The following table sets out specific destinations relative to future residents of the Comeytrove/Trull Garden Community:

Type of destination	Commentary on specific destinations and their relevance
Schools	A two-form entry primary school will be delivered within the allocation site, with the aim for this to be operational by September 2023 with the potential for future expansion built-in. This will meet the needs of the vast majority of residents on the Comeytrove site. However, parental choice means that other local primary schools may also be used including Bishop Henderson Primary School, Trull Primary School and potentially to a lesser extent Parkfields Primary School . Furthermore, the location of the new primary school means that over time it is likely to be used by residents from the existing community also. There is no secondary school proposed for the site. The site is in the secondary school catchment for Castle School . However, parental choice means some residents will also use Bishop Fox Secondary school . Ensuring safe routes to school and establishing sustainable and healthy transport choices from an early age is a key route to behaviour change within the population as well as reducing childhood obesity and combatting other health and wellbeing issues.
College	Access to both Bridgwater & Taunton College and Richard Huish College will be important.
Employment	The Comeytrove site includes a decent amount of employment land close to the A38 access, and there will be further employment opportunities as part of the local centre. However, the vast majority of residents will likely be accessing employment opportunities off-site. There are two major employment areas within 2km of the site – Musgrove Park Hospital and Cornishway Industrial Estate . The town centre lies just under 3km from the site. Furthermore Taunton Station , provides access to wider employment opportunities. Residents may, to a lesser extent access employment opportunities at Bindon Road , Blackbrook and other locations across the town. Due to its location, some residents of the site may need to access employment opportunities around Chelston on the edge of Wellington. In time, Nexus25 , just over 5km from the site, will

	become a major employment node. The employment uses within the Comeytrowe site will be an important destination and source of employment for users beyond the boundaries of the site itself.
Healthcare	Residents of the site are likely to need to access the primary health care facilities at the existing College Way Surgery as well as Musgrove Park Hospital .
Convenience retail and supermarkets	The local centre within the site will include an element of convenience retail. However, taking consideration of the location of this provision, and the need to allow for consumer choice, other existing stores including those in Trull and within the existing College Way local centre will need to be accessed, and potentially to a lesser extent provision on Wellington Road . Supermarkets for more significant shopping trips are located further from the site, with Tesco and Lidl the closest stores in Tangier.
Leisure and Recreation	The Comeytrowe site is expected to deliver the vast majority of open space requirements within the site itself. Some of these facilities, particularly the playing pitches, planned for delivery in the Eastern Neighbourhood will become destination facilities in their own right for some neighbouring communities. However, indoor recreation/sport facilities are not being provided on-site. As such, residents will need to access such facilities, most likely at Blackbrook Leisure Centre , and to a lesser extent at Taunton Pool .
Bus stops	Policy TAU1 requires the provision of safe walking routes to access existing bus services on the A38 and Honiton Road . The new 'park and bus' facility will provide access to services along the A38. Bus stops on Honiton Road are found outside/opposite the local convenience store in Trull, or at the junctions with Wild Oak Lane and Claremont Lane.

The key destinations are set out in figure 47, below. Straight line mapping is used to indicate the direct desire line which any relevant walking and cycling route would ideally be broadly aligned with.

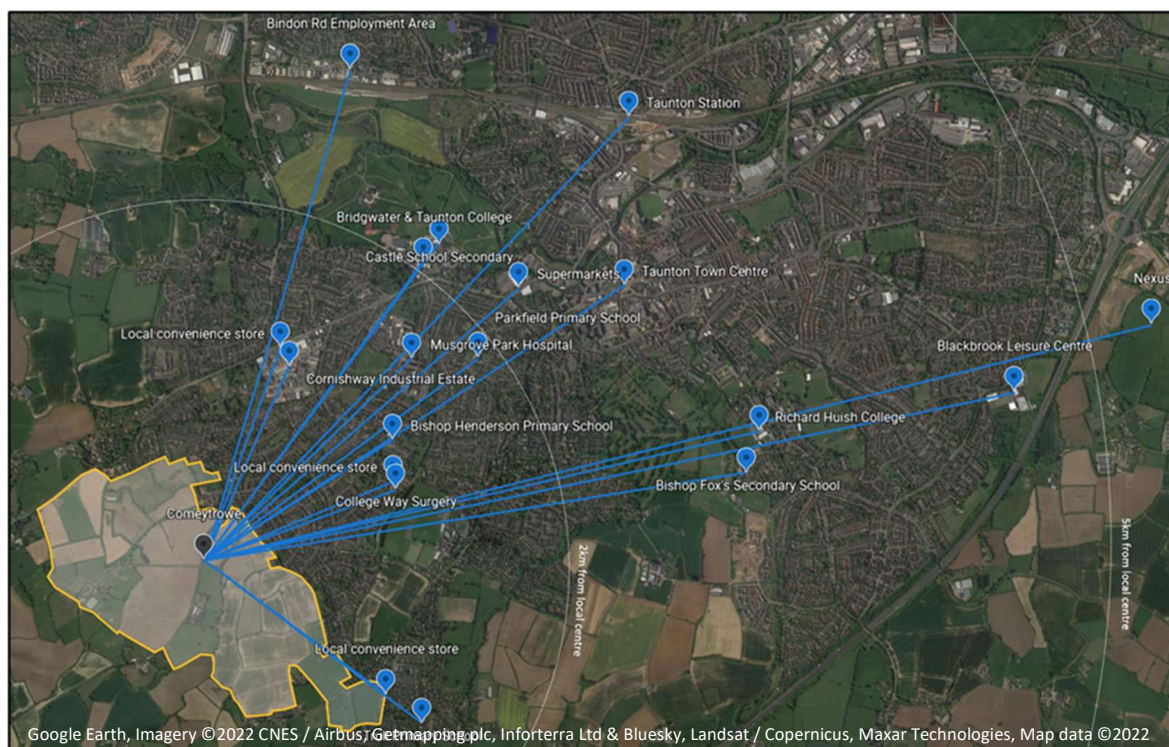


Figure 47 Key destinations and straight line mapping relevant to the Comeytrove/Trull allocation

In considering the above key destinations, there are some clear foci for routes linking from Comeytrove, as shown in figure 48, below:

- **North** – picking up access to Cornishway Industrial Estate and associated local convenience store and Bindon Road Employment Area.
- **North-east** – picking up access to College Way Surgery and convenience store, Bishop Henderson Primary School, Musgrove Park Hospital, Parkfield Primary School, Castle Secondary School, Bridgwater & Taunton College supermarkets, Taunton town centre and Taunton Station.
- **East** – picking up access to Bishop Fox's Secondary School, Richard Huish College, Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Nexus25.
- **South-east** – picking up access to Trull Primary School and local convenience store.

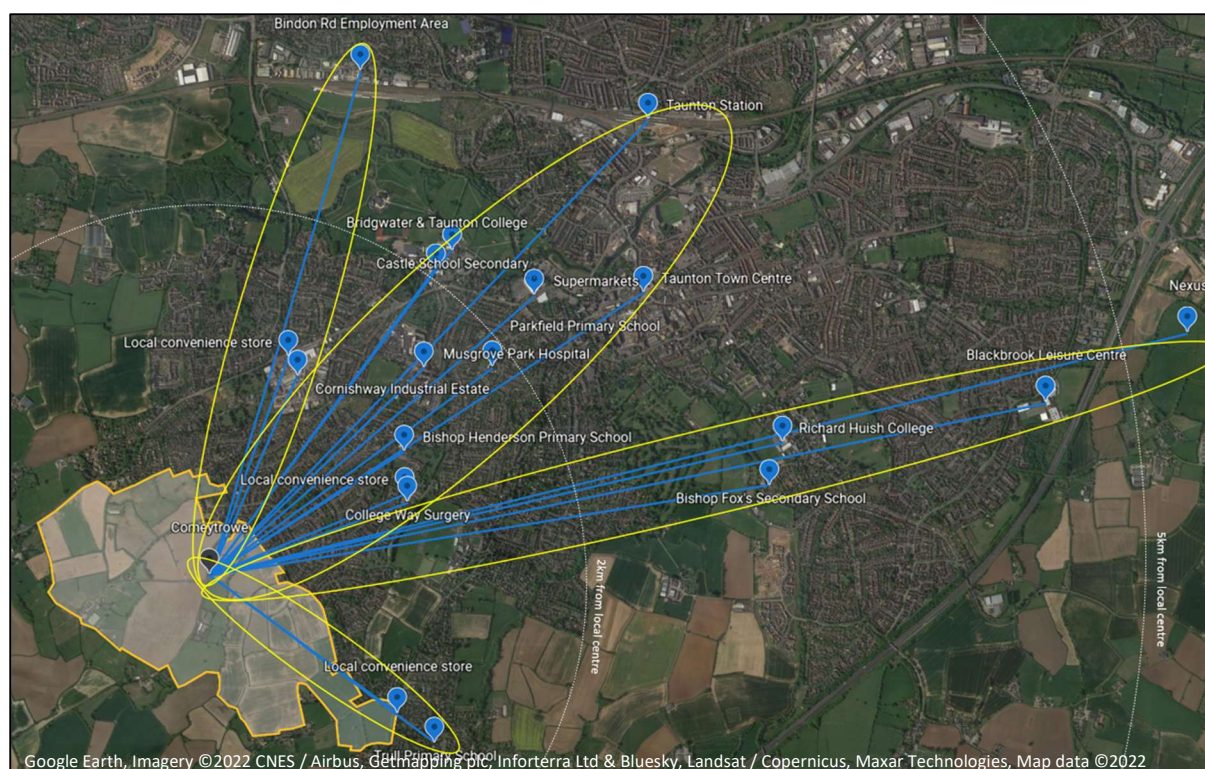


Figure 48 Groupings of key destinations indicating foci for routes relevant to the Comeytrove/Trull allocation

It needs to be borne in mind that the Comeytrove site runs for approximately 2.2km on its longest axis. This means that the source points within the development from which residents will need to access these off-site services and facilities is not as straight forward as the straight line mapping and groupings above may suggest.

Comeytrove/Trull on-site facilities acting as destinations for existing communities

Some of the facilities delivered on the Comeytrove site will in themselves become destinations drawing users from surrounding communities on the edge of Taunton and rural areas. In particular, the primary school, local centre, employment areas, 'park and bus' facility and playing pitches are likely to draw people to the site from surrounding communities as indicated in figure 49, below.

A combination of delivering routes associated with the four key destination groupings identified above, the wider networks proposed by the LCWIP and emerging through Connecting our Garden Communities, should meet the needs of the majority of people visiting facilities within the site from surrounding communities as well as residents of the site.



Figure 49 Comeytrove facilities as destinations

Specific opportunities

The Section 106 Agreement which accompanied the outline permission for the Comeytrove/Trull “Orchard Grove” development (42/14/0069) includes on and off-site highways improvement obligations including the following:

Works	Trigger
A38 bus priority measures	Prior to occupation of 200 dwellings
Honiton Road roundabout	Prior to occupation of 1,200 dwellings overall or any dwellings served via Honiton Rd (whichever is earliest)
Spine road	Prior to occupation of 1,450 dwellings

These specific obligations present opportunities to simultaneously deliver improved walking and cycling linkages, in particular along the A38, across the Honiton Road into Trull, and through the core of the site itself.

The County Council is also in the process of determining the detailed projects for delivery of its Bus Service Improvement Plan. A sustainable transport corridor incorporating bus priority and improved active travel connectivity along the A38 Wellington Road is likely to be part of this.

Furthermore, as set out in policy TAU1, the development needs to bring forward a scheme to close Comeytrove Road and Comeytrove Lane to private car through-traffic. The approved Urban Design Framework Plan indicates where pedestrian and cycle access will need to cross Comeytrove Road into the Eastern Neighbourhood.

As such, the Eastern Neighbourhood Masterplan presents an opportunity to secure improved walking and cycling linkages in line with these requirements.

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Staplegrove Garden Community

Key destinations for Staplegrove

The following table sets out specific destinations relative to future residents of the Staplegrove Garden Community:

Type of destination	Commentary on specific destinations and their relevance
Schools	A two-form entry primary school will be delivered within Staplegrove East. Once constructed this will meet the needs of the vast majority of residents on the Staplegrove site. Construction access is expected to be required prior to the 151 st occupation of Staplegrove East, and given that this does not yet benefit from outline permission, this would appear to be a number of years away. The potential lag between first residents (likely on Staplegrove West, and opening of the primary school could put pressure on other local schools. In addition to this, parental choice means that other local primary schools may also be used even once opened, including Staplegrove Primary School , Wellsprings Primary School and potentially to a lesser extent Norton Fitzwarren Primary School . Furthermore, the location of the new primary school means that over time it is likely to be used by residents from the existing community also. There is no secondary school proposed for the site. The site is in the secondary school catchment for Taunton Academy . However, parental choice means some residents may also use Castle Secondary School . Ensuring safe routes to school and establishing sustainable and healthy transport choices from an early age is a key route to behaviour change within the population as well as reducing childhood obesity and combatting other health and wellbeing issues.
College	Access to both Bridgwater & Taunton College and Richard Huish College will be important.
Employment	The Staplegrove site includes a small amount of employment land likely to be accommodated in two clusters, one in the west of Staplegrove East, and one associated with the Local Centre and junction of the Spine Road with Kingston Road within Staplegrove East. However, the vast majority of residents will likely be accessing employment opportunities off-site. There is one major employment area within 1km of the site – Bindon Road Employment Area , together with the smaller employment areas along Great Western Way and Chip Lane . The town centre , Musgrove Park Hospital and Crown Industrial Estate all lie around 2.5km from the site. Furthermore Taunton Station , just under 2km away provides access to wider employment opportunities. Residents may, to a lesser extent access employment opportunities at Cornishway, Blackbrook and other locations across the town. In time, Nexus25 , just under 5km from the site, will become a major employment node. The employment uses within the Staplegrove site will be an important destination

	and source of employment for users beyond the boundaries of the site itself.
Healthcare	Residents of the site are likely to need to access the primary health care facilities at a combination of the existing Orchard Medical Centre in Norton Fitzwarren, French Weir Health Centre and Lyngford Park Surgery .
Convenience retail and supermarkets	The local centre within the site will include an element of convenience retail. However, taking consideration of the location of this provision, and the need to allow for consumer choice, other existing stores including the existing convenience store in Staplegrove , and on Cheddon Road will need to be accessed. Supermarkets for more significant shopping trips are located further from the site, with Morrisons in the town centre the closest store. A planning application has been submitted proposing the construction of an Aldi supermarket on Chip Lane and is currently being considered. If this application were to be approved and constructed, then this would be the closest supermarket to the site.
Leisure and Recreation	The Staplegrove site is expected to deliver the vast majority of open space requirements within the site itself. Some of these facilities, particularly the playing pitches will become destination facilities in their own right for some neighbouring communities. However, indoor recreation/sport facilities are not being provided on-site. As such, residents will need to access such facilities, most likely at Wellsprings Leisure Centre and Taunton Pool .
Bus stops	Policy TAU2 requires the provision of safe walking routes to access existing bus services on the A358 and Kingston Road . Bus stops on the A358 Staplegrove Road are found approximately 45m north-west and 140m south-east of the junction with Manor Road, and around the Cross Keys junction. Bus routes using Kingston Road now divert via Turner Road, Whitmore Road and Corkscrew Lane before re-joining Kingston Road. Relevant bus stops are on Corkscrew Lane and Whitmore Road.

The key destinations are set out in figure 50, below. Straight line mapping is used to indicate the direct desire line which any relevant walking and cycling route would ideally be broadly aligned with.



Figure 50 Key destinations and straight line mapping relevant to the Staplegrove allocation

In considering the above key destinations, there are some clear foci for routes linking from Staplegrove. There are slightly different foci for Staplegrove East and West due to some of the off-site facilities they may need to access being different and their different source points:

Staplegrove West (see figure 51, below):

- **South-west** – picking up access to Orchard Medical Centre, bus stops around Cross Keys, and enabling access to Norton Primary School.
- **South** – picking up access to the existing Staplegrove convenience store, Staplegrove Primary School, Bindon Road Employment Area, Bridgwater & Taunton College, Castle Secondary School and Musgrove Park Hospital.
- **South-east 1** – picking up access to Taunton School, French Weir Health Centre, Taunton Pool, Taunton Station, the town centre and Richard Huish College.
- **South-east 2** – picking up access to Taunton Vale Sports Club and Nexus 25.
- **East** – picking up access to Taunton Academy and Wellsprings Leisure Centre.

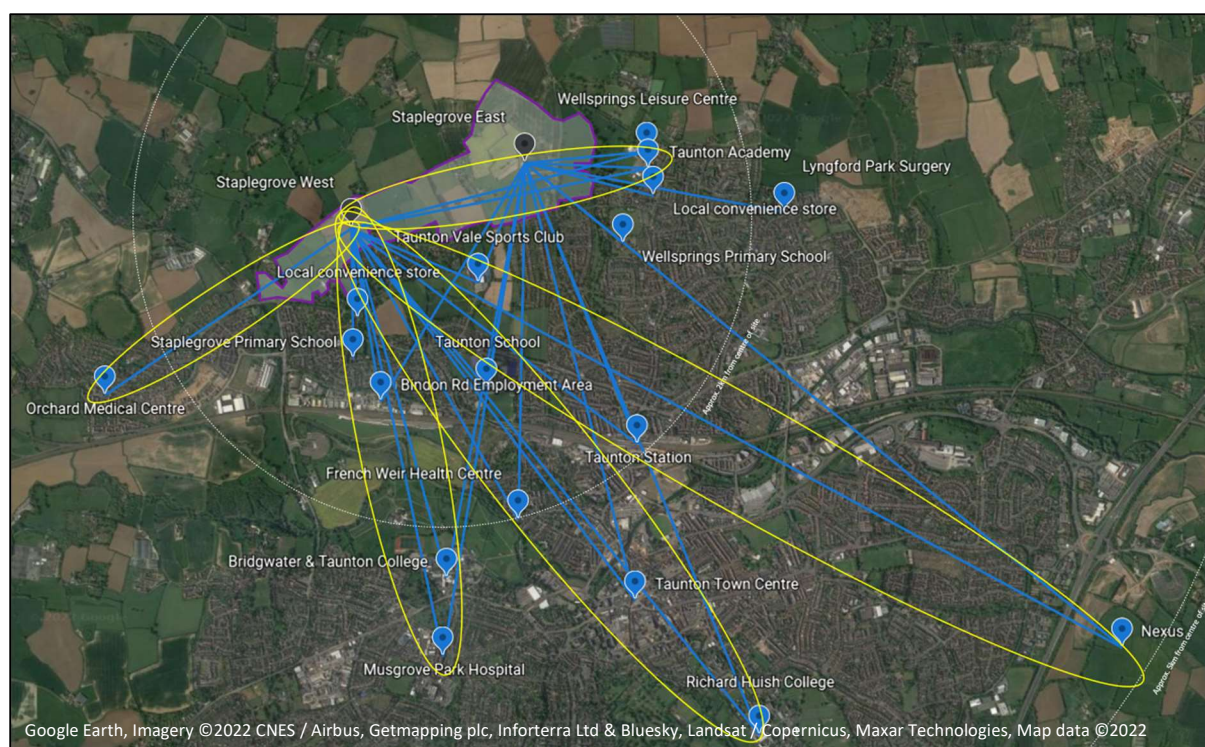


Figure 51 Groupings of key destinations indicating foci for routes relevant to Staplegrove West

Staplegrove East (see figure 52, below):

- **South-west** – picking up access to Taunton Vale Sports Club, Taunton School, Bindon Road Employment Area, French Weir Health Centre, Bridgwater & Taunton College, Castle Secondary School and Musgrove Park Hospital.
- **South** – picking up access to Taunton Station, Taunton Pool, the town centre and Richard Huish College.
- **South-east** – picking up access to Wellsprings Primary School and Nexus 25.
- **East** – picking up access to Taunton Academy, Wellsprings Leisure Centre, Cheddon Road convenience store and Lyngford Park Surgery.

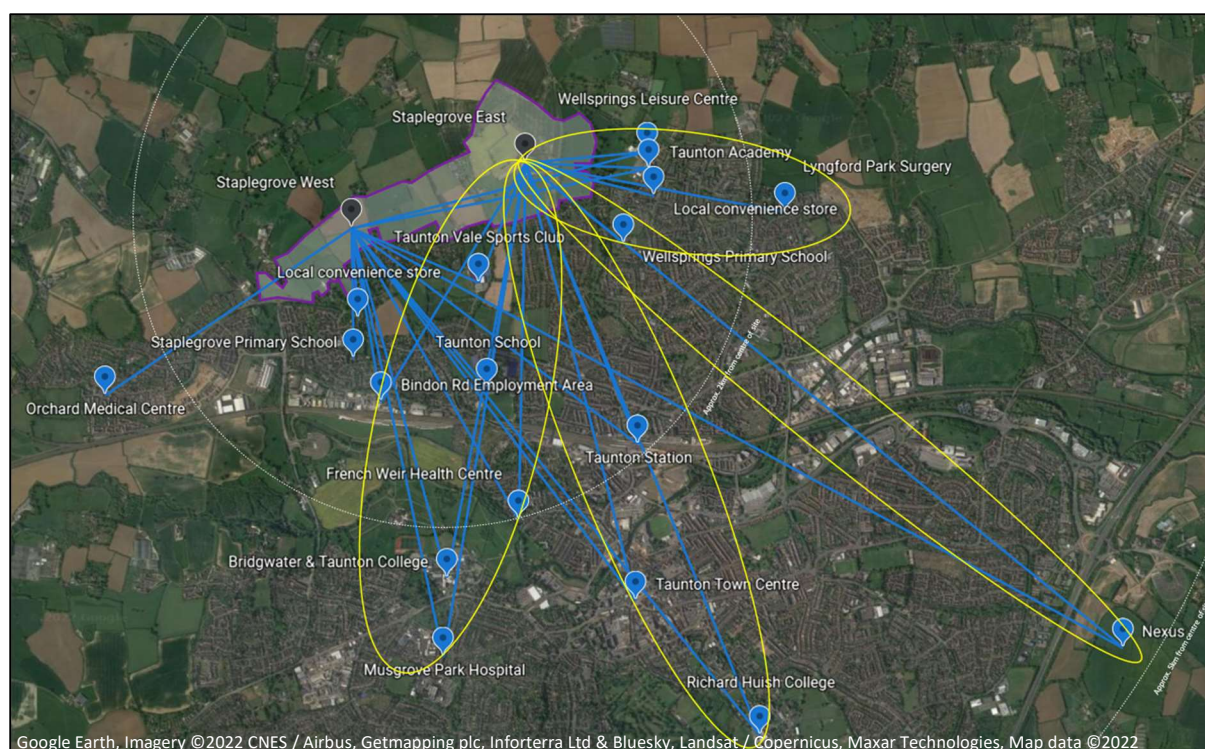


Figure 52 Groupings of key destinations indicating foci for routes relevant to Staplegrove East

Staplegrove on-site facilities acting as destinations for existing communities

Some of the facilities delivered on the Staplegrove site will in themselves become destinations drawing users from surrounding communities on the edge of Taunton and rural areas. In particular, the primary school, local centre, employment areas and playing pitches are likely to draw people to the site from surrounding communities as indicated in figure 53, below.

A combination of delivering routes associated with the key destination groupings identified above, the wider networks proposed by the LCWIP and emerging through Connecting our Garden Communities, should meet the needs of the majority of people visiting facilities within the site from surrounding communities as well as residents of the site.



Figure 53 Staplegrove facilities as destinations

Specific opportunities

The Section 106 Agreement which accompanied the outline permission for the Staplegrove West (34/16/0007) includes on and off-site highways improvement obligations including the following:

Works	Trigger
Improvements to pedestrian links to Taunton Academy including the provision of shared footway/cycleway on Corkscrew Lane	Prior to occupation of any units or dwellings
Improvements to Gipsy Lane cycle track including resurfacing and addition of lighting	Prior to occupation of 75 dwellings
Improvements to Silk Mills roundabout	Prior to occupation of 250 dwellings
Signalisation of Cross Keys roundabout	Prior to occupation of 250 dwellings
Improvements to the Corkscrew Lane/Hope Corner Lane junction	Prior to occupation of 250 dwellings
Access junction with Staplegrove Road and installation of traffic signal optimisation at the Manor Road/Staplegrove Road junction	Prior to occupation of 150 dwellings
Downgrading and traffic calming works on Manor Road	Prior to occupation of 350 dwellings
Improvements to Kingston Road junction	Prior to occupation of 400 dwellings

Traffic Regulation Orders for Rectory Road and Whitmore Lane	Once the Spine Road is opened and able to be used by vehicular traffic
Downgrade temporary access for vehicular access	Once the Spine Road is opened and able to be used by vehicular traffic or 5 years from occupation of first dwelling (whichever is the earlier)
Spine Road completion	Prior to occupation of 250 dwellings

These specific obligations present opportunities to simultaneously deliver improved walking and cycling linkages. Whilst the Section 106 agreement includes drawings relating to a number of the above obligations, detailed designs will need to respond to Connecting our Garden Communities where opportunities align. Other obligations included above (including the downgrading and traffic calming works for Manor Road) do not yet have drawings agreed, and are due to be identified in the Staplegrove West Highways Improvement Scheme, which will also need to respond to Connecting our Garden Communities where opportunities align.

The Section 106 Agreement for Staplegrove East is not yet signed, though the resolution to grant permission subject to Section 106 Agreement sets out the items for which planning obligations are to be secured, which include a similar list to those already agreed for West.

Monkton Heathfield Garden Community

Key destinations for Monkton Heathfield

The following table sets out specific destinations relative to future residents of the Monkton Heathfield Garden Community:

Type of destination	Commentary on specific destinations and their relevance
Schools	The allocation included a requirement for 3 primary schools and 1 secondary school. A two-form entry primary school has already been delivered in Phase 1 (West Monkton Primary School). Future phases will need to provide adequate primary school places and the site for a secondary school. This will meet the needs of the vast majority of residents on the Comeytrowe site. However, parental choice means that other local primary schools may also be used including Creech St Michael Primary School and potentially to a lesser extent Nerrols Primary School . The secondary school proposed for the site will likely take the vast majority of children. However, the site is currently in the secondary school catchment for and in close proximity to Heathfields Community College , and parental choice means some residents will also use Taunton Academy . Furthermore, the location of the schools within the site means that over time they are likely to be used by residents from other nearby existing communities also. Ensuring safe routes to school and establishing sustainable and healthy transport choices from an early age is a key route to behaviour change within the population as well as reducing childhood obesity and combatting other health and wellbeing issues.
College	Access to both Bridgwater & Taunton College and Richard Huish College will be important.
Employment	The Monkton Heathfield site is intended to include a significant amount of employment land, located within the district centre and employment areas, likely to primarily be within MH2 and the land south of Manor Farm, Langaller. However, it is likely that many residents will still need to access employment opportunities off-site. There are no major employment areas within 2km of the centre of the site, but the UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) , Hankridge Farm retail park , Crown Industrial Estate and Blackbrook Business Park all lie 2.5-3km from the centre of the site. The town centre lies just under 5km from the centre of the site. Furthermore Taunton Station , just over 4km away, provides access to wider employment opportunities. Despite being located beyond 5km from the site, Musgrove Park Hospital is a key employer in the area and it is likely that some residents of the site will work there. Due to its location, some residents of the site may need to access employment opportunities around North Petherton and Bridgwater . In time, Nexus25 , around 3km from the site, will become a major employment node. The employment uses within the Monkton Heathfield site will be an important

	destination and source of employment for users beyond the boundaries of the site itself.
Healthcare	Residents of the site are likely to need to access the primary health care facilities at the existing Creech St Michael Medical Centre as well as Crown Medical Centre .
Convenience retail and supermarkets	The allocation expects the district centre within the site to include a food store and elements of both convenience and comparison retail. However, the retail landscape has changed since the policy was written. The appropriate mix of uses for the District Centre will need to be justified and will influence this element. Despite this, taking consideration of the location of the scale and distribution of the allocation, the likely broad location for any District Centre, and the need to allow for consumer choice, other existing stores including the convenience store in Creech St Michael and supermarkets for more significant shopping trips including Aldi in Bathpool, Sainsbury's at Hankridge Farm and potentially Asda will also be used.
Leisure and Recreation	The Monkton Heathfield site is expected to deliver all open space requirements within the site itself. Some of these facilities, particularly the playing pitches, will become destination facilities in their own right for some neighbouring communities. However, indoor recreation/sport facilities are not being provided on-site. As such, residents will need to access such facilities, most likely at a combination of Wellsprings Leisure Centre and Blackbrook Leisure Centre . The Maidenbrook Country Park will also provide an important destination for leisure and recreation in the nearby vicinity. Furthermore, it is likely that residents will want to access the wider countryside, including linking to public rights of way and quiet lanes both north of the A38 and east of the M5.

The key destinations are set out in figure 54, below. Straight line mapping is used to indicate the direct desire line which any relevant walking and cycling route would ideally be broadly aligned with.

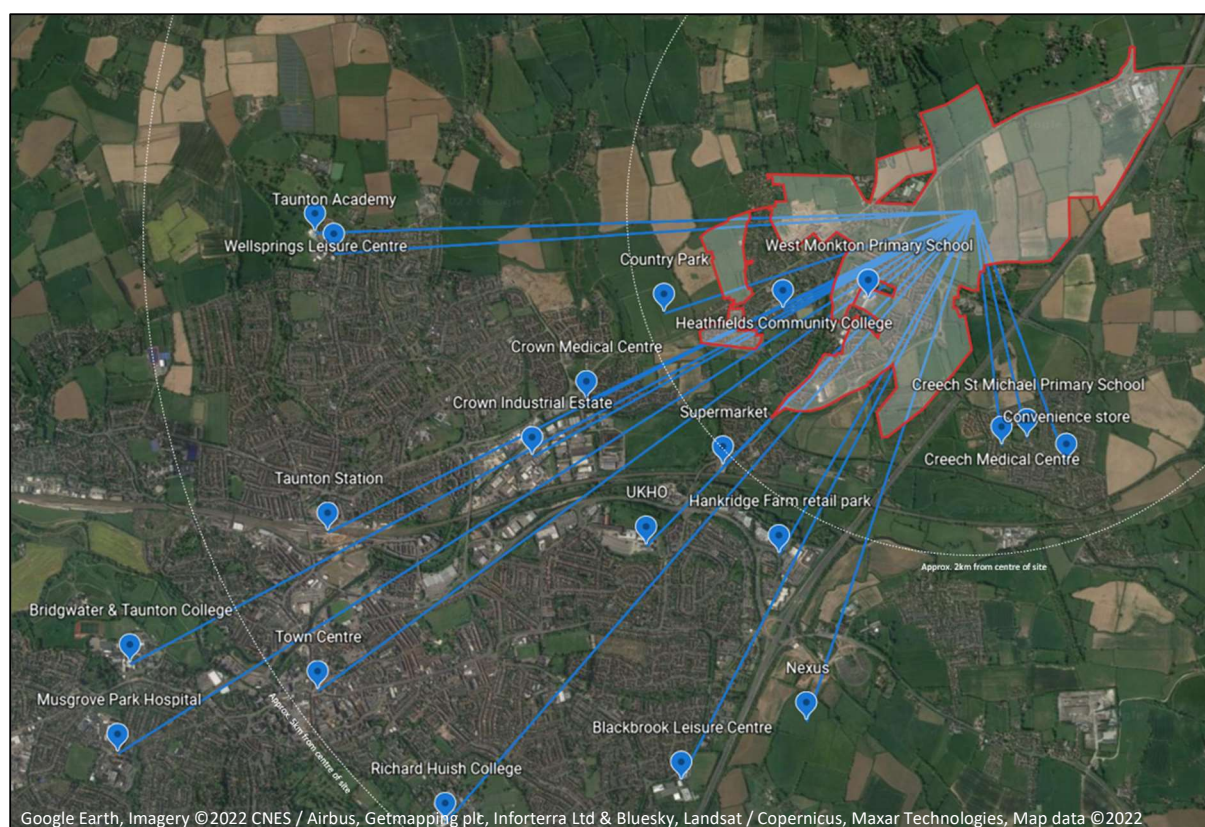


Figure 54 Key destinations and straight line mapping relevant to the Monkton Heathfield allocation

In considering the above key destinations, there are some clear foci for routes linking from Monkton Heathfield, as shown in figure 55, below:

- **West** – picking up access to Maidenbrook Country Park, Wellsprings Leisure Centre and Taunton Academy.
- **South-west** – picking up access to Heathfields Community College, Crown Medical Centre, Crown Industrial Estate, Taunton Station, Taunton town centre, Bridgwater & Taunton College and Musgrove Park Hospital.
- **South** – picking up access to West Monkton Primary School, Aldi, Hankridge Farm Retail Park, UKHO, Asda, Blackbrook Business Park, Nexus25, Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Richard Huish College.
- **South-east** – picking up access to services in Creech St Michael including primary school, medical centre, convenience store and open space facilities.

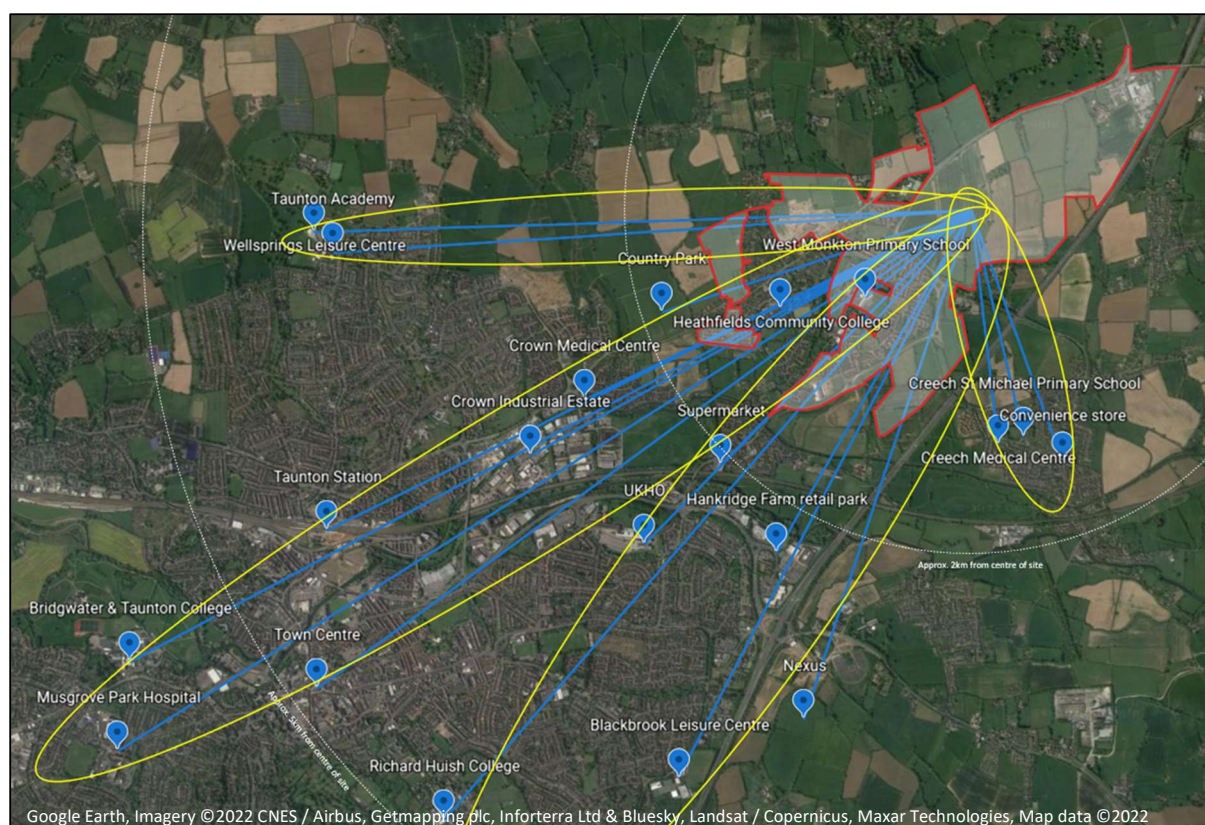


Figure 55 Groupings of key destinations indicating foci for routes relevant to Monkton Heathfield

Monkton Heathfield on-site facilities acting as destinations for existing communities

Some of the facilities delivered on the Monkton Heathfield site will in themselves become destinations drawing users from surrounding communities on the edge of Taunton and rural areas. In particular, the primary schools and secondary school, district centre, employment areas, 'park and bus' facility and playing pitches are likely to draw people to the site from surrounding communities as indicated in figure 56, below. Unlike some of the other sites considered in this plan, due to the planning status, the location of facilities within the remaining Monkton Heathfield development are not yet approved.

A combination of delivering routes associated with the four key destination groupings identified above, the wider networks proposed by the LCWIP and emerging through Connecting our Garden Communities, should meet the needs of the majority of people visiting facilities within the site from surrounding communities as well as residents of the site.

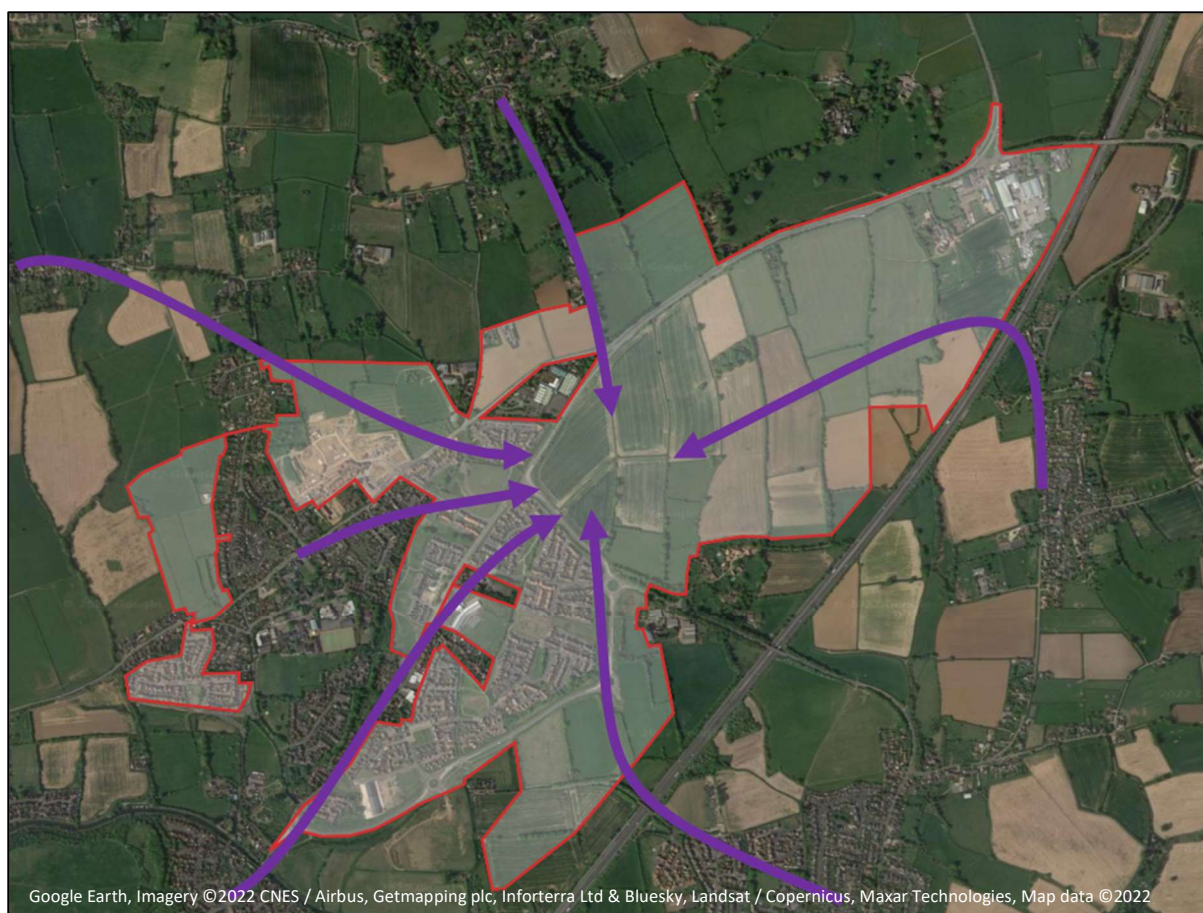


Figure 56 Monkton Heathfield (generally) as a destination

Specific opportunities

With completion of the Western Relief Road, it is anticipated that a bus gate will be implemented on Monkton Heathfield Road together with downgrading and traffic calming. This, together with provision of a park and bus facility, improved bus services and a continued aspiration for a priority bus route between the park and bus, Monkton Heathfield and the town centre, provides an opportunity to consider improved active travel infrastructure as part of this.

Planning applications and any Section 106 Agreements for future phases of development at Monkton Heathfield will need to consider and respond to Connecting our Garden Communities. Unlike the majority of the Comeytrove and Staplegrove developments, the absence of any planning permissions or resolutions to grant permission, means that there is potentially a greater opportunity to secure both on and off-site provision via the development.

Nerrols Garden Community

Key destinations for Nerrols

The following table sets out specific destinations relative to future residents of the Nerrols Garden Community:

Type of destination	Commentary on specific destinations and their relevance
Schools	A two-form entry primary school has already been delivered on the Nerrols site (Nerrols Primary School). However, parental choice means that other local primary schools may also be used including Lyngford Park Primary School and potentially to a lesser extent Cheddon Fitzpaine Primary School . The site is in the secondary school catchment for and in close proximity to Taunton Academy , however, parental choice means some residents will also use Heathfields Community College . Furthermore, the location of the primary school within the site means that over time it is likely to be used by residents from other nearby existing communities also. Ensuring safe routes to school and establishing sustainable and healthy transport choices from an early age is a key route to behaviour change within the population as well as reducing childhood obesity and combatting other health and wellbeing issues.
College	Access to both Bridgwater & Taunton College and Richard Huish College will be important.
Employment	Despite the allocation requirement, the extant planning permissions for the site will not deliver significant employment space. The local centre will deliver an element, but not significant amounts. Therefore, residents will still need to access employment opportunities off-site. There are major employment areas within 2km of the centre of the site, including Crown Industrial Estate , UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) , and parts of Hankridge Farm retail park . The town centre and Blackbrook Business Park lie just beyond 2km. Furthermore Taunton Station , is also less than 2km away, providing access to wider employment opportunities. Despite being located beyond nearly 4km from the site, Musgrove Park Hospital is a key employer in the area and it is likely that some residents of the site will work there. In time, Nexus25 , around 3km from the site, will become a major employment node. The employment uses within the Monkton Heathfield site will also become an important destination and source of employment.
Healthcare	Residents of the site are likely to need to access the primary health care facilities at the existing Crown Medical Centre as well as Lyngford Park Surgery .
Convenience retail and supermarkets	The allocation expects the local centre within the site to include an element of convenience retail. However, taking consideration of the location of this provision, and the need to allow for consumer choice, other existing stores including the existing convenience store in Priorswood/Pyrland local centre will need to be accessed. Supermarkets for more significant shopping trips are

	located further from the site, with Aldi in Bathpool the closest store. Morrisons , is likely the next most accessible store.
Leisure and Recreation	The Nerrols site is expected to deliver the majority of open space requirements within the site itself. However the site is not expected to deliver playing pitches, which will need to be accessed either at the Taunton Green pitches or Priorswood playing field . Indoor recreation/sport facilities are also not being provided on-site. As such, residents will need to access such facilities, most likely at Wellsprings Leisure Centre and Taunton Pool . The Maidenbrook Country Park immediately east of the site will be an important recreational resource.
Bus stops	Policy SS2 makes clear the importance of the relationship between the allocation and proposals for bus rapid transit along the A3259. Bus stops are located along Nerrols Drive and on the A3259 south-west of the Crown/Venture Way roundabout.

The key destinations are set out in figure 57, below. Straight line mapping is used to indicate the direct desire line which any relevant walking and cycling route would ideally be broadly aligned with.



Figure 57 Key destinations and straight line mapping relevant to the Nerrols allocation

In considering the above key destinations, there are some clear foci for routes linking from Nerrols, as shown in figure 58, below:

- **West** – picking up access to Taunton Academy, Wellsprings Leisure Centre and Taunton Green playing pitches.

- **South-west** – picking up access to Lyngford Park Surgery, Lyngford Park Primary School, Priorswood/Pyrland local centre, Taunton Station, Taunton Pool, Morrisons, Taunton town centre, Bridgwater & Taunton College and Musgrove Park Hospital.
- **South** – picking up access to Priorswood playing field, Crown Industrial Estate and Richard Huish College.
- **South-east** – picking up access to the future Nerrols local centre, Crown Medical Centre, Aldi, UKHO, Harkeridge Farm retail Park and Nexus 25.
- **East** – picking up access to the Country Park, Heathfields Community College and other existing and future services within Monkton Heathfield.

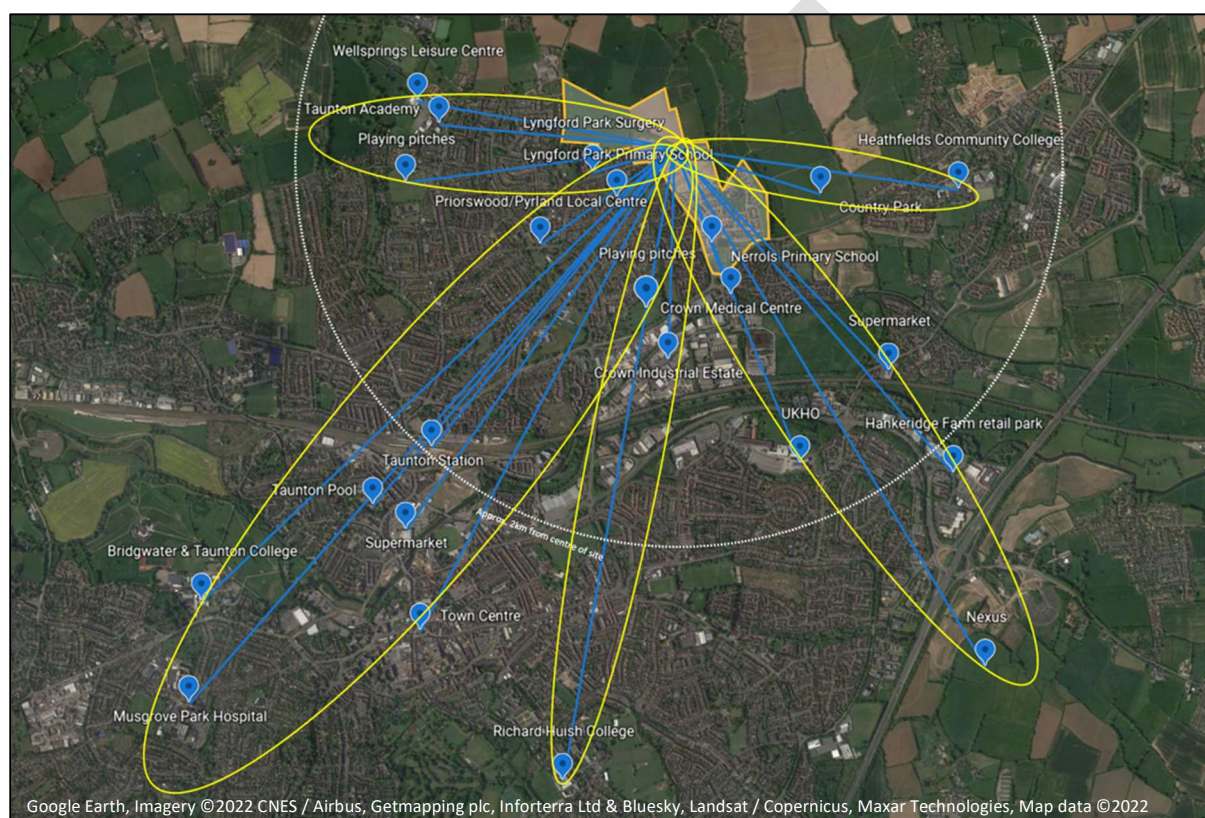


Figure 58 Groupings of key destinations indicating foci for routes relevant to Nerrols

Nerrols on-site facilities acting as destinations for existing communities

Some of the facilities delivered on the Nerrols site will in themselves become destinations drawing users from surrounding communities on the edge of Taunton and rural areas. In particular, the primary school and local centre are likely to draw people to the site from surrounding communities as indicated in figure 59, below.

A combination of delivering routes associated with the five key destination groupings identified above, the wider networks proposed by the LCWIP and emerging through Connecting our Garden Communities, should meet the needs of the majority of people visiting facilities within the site from surrounding communities as well as residents of the site.

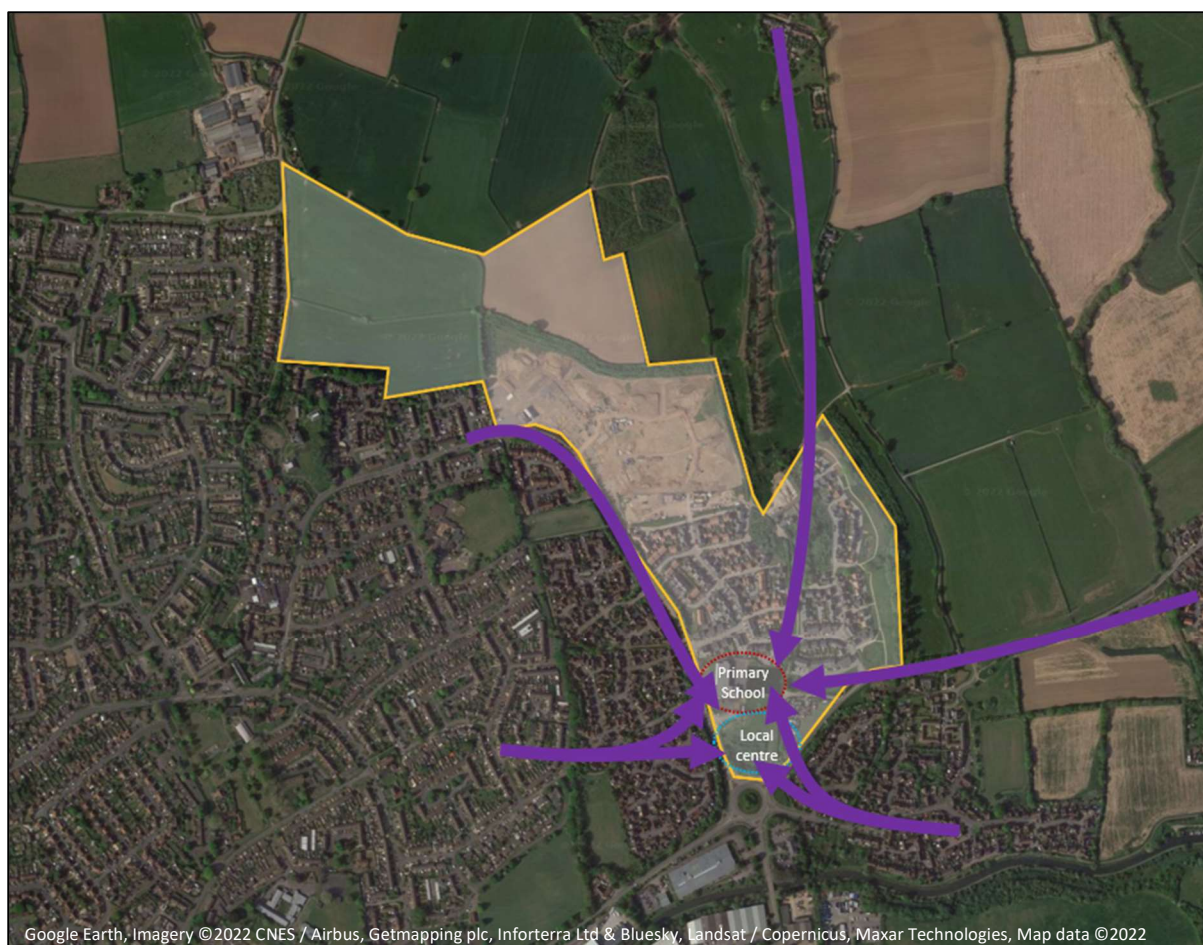


Figure 59 Nerrols facilities as destinations

Specific opportunities

The Section 106 Agreement which accompanied the outline permission (08/10/0024) includes on and off-site highways improvement obligations including the following:

Works	Trigger
Strategic Highway Contribution towards works to improve any or a combination of the junctions south of Obridge Viaduct (Wickes), at the roundabout to the north of the Obridge Viaduct (Obridge), the Venture Way roundabout or any such other schemes to improve the strategic highway network of north east Taunton on the A3259 or A38 routes.	Contribution to be paid 10% Prior to Commencement, remainder within 20 days of notice.
Bus Priority Land transfer	Within 28 days of notice.

Future improvements to the strategic highway network arising off the back of this financial contribution and future bus priority works on the bus priority land present opportunities to simultaneously deliver improved walking and cycling linkages. Whilst the Section 106 Agreement includes and planning permission references specific drawings relating to these obligations, detailed designs will need to respond to Connecting our Garden Communities where opportunities align. Other obligations

within the Section 106 Agreement relating to a new footpath contribution and new footpath works have already been implemented.

Further Section 106 Agreements will be required in relation to the Lyngford Lane application (38/19/0129) and local centre application (08/20/0035). These developments will need to consider and respond to Connecting our Garden Communities.

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Ford Farm Garden Community

Key destinations for Ford Farm

The following table sets out specific destinations relative to future residents of the Ford Farm Garden Community:

Type of destination	Commentary on specific destinations and their relevance
Schools	The Ford Farm site is not expected to accommodate a primary or secondary school on site. As such, young residents of the site will need to access education facilities off-site. The site is in the catchment for and in close proximity to Norton Fitzwarren Primary School . The site is in the secondary school catchment for Taunton Academy , however, parental choice means some residents will also use Castle Secondary School . Ensuring safe routes to school and establishing sustainable and healthy transport choices from an early age is a key route to behaviour change within the population as well as reducing childhood obesity and combatting other health and wellbeing issues.
College	Access to both Bridgwater & Taunton College and Richard Huish College will be important.
Employment	The allocation requires 1ha of serviced employment to be provided on the site. However, the vast majority of residents will still need to access employment opportunities off-site. There are major employment areas within 2km of the centre of the site, including Langford Mead Business Park and Bindon Road Employment Area . Cornishway Industrial Estate and Musgrove Park Hospital lie just beyond 2km. The town centre lies just under 4km from the site. Furthermore Taunton Station , is approximately 3.5km away, provides access to wider employment opportunities. In time, Nexus25 , around 6km from the site, will become a major employment node. The employment uses within the Staplegrove site will also become an important destination and source of employment.
Healthcare	Residents of the site are likely to need to access the primary health care facilities at the existing Orchard Medical Centre .
Convenience retail and supermarkets	Residents of the site will need to access the convenience store in Norton Fitzwarren local centre . Supermarkets for more significant shopping trips are located further from the site, with Tesco and Lidl in Tangier being the closest at present. A planning application has been submitted proposing the construction of an Aldi supermarket on Chip Lane and is currently being considered. If this application were to be approved and constructed, then this would be the closest supermarket to the site.
Leisure and Recreation	The Nerrols site is expected to deliver the majority of open space requirements within the site itself. However the site is not expected to deliver playing pitches, which will need to be accessed at the Norton playing fields . Indoor recreation/sport facilities are also not being provided on-site. As such, residents

	will need to access such facilities, most likely at Wellsprings Leisure Centre and Taunton Pool .
Bus stops	Bus stops are located on the B3227 Wiveliscombe Road immediately north of the site.

The key destinations are set out in figure 60, below. Straight line mapping is used to indicate the direct desire line which any relevant walking and cycling route would ideally be broadly aligned with.

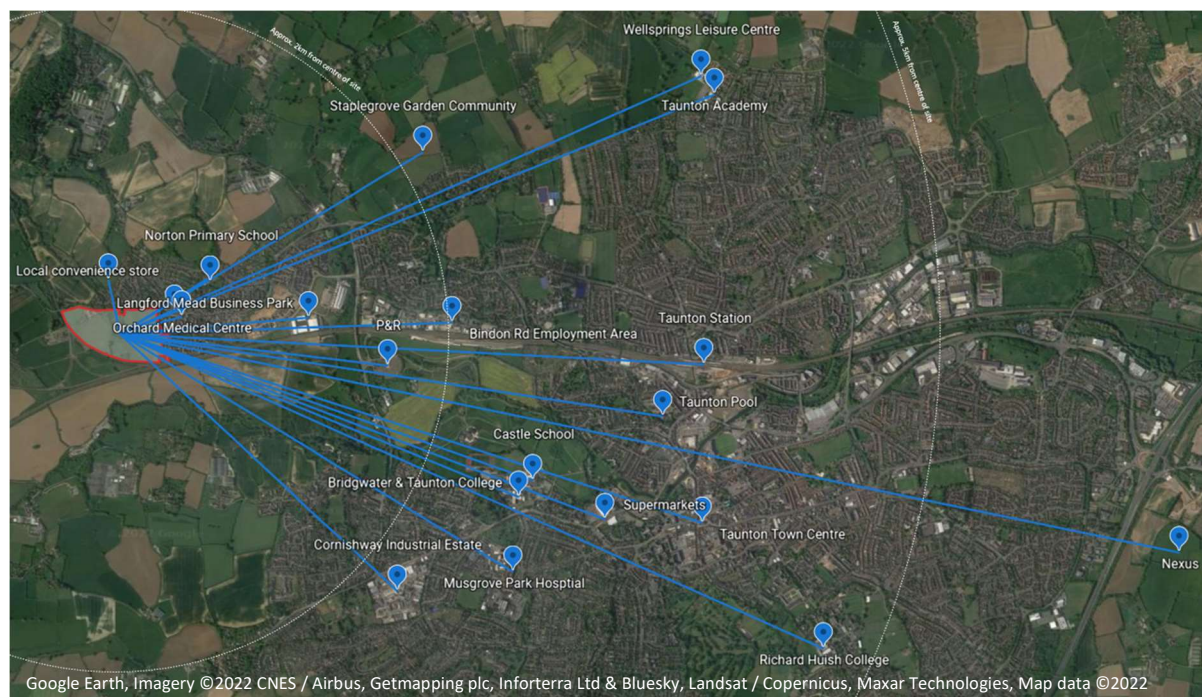


Figure 60 Key destinations and straight line mapping relevant to the Ford Farm allocation

In considering the above key destinations, there are some clear foci for routes linking from Ford Farm, as shown in figure 61, below:

- **South-east** – picking up access to the Park & Ride, Bridgwater & Taunton College, Castle School, Musgrove Park Hospital, Cornishway Industrial Estate, Tesco and Lidl supermarkets at Tangier, Taunton town centre and Richard Huish College.
- **East** – picking up access to Langford Mead Business Park, Bindon Road Employment Area, Taunton Station, Taunton Pool and Nexus 25.
- **North-east** – picking up access to Orchard Medical Centre and the Co-op convenience store in Norton local centre, Norton Primary School, the future Staplegrove Garden Community, Taunton Academy and Wellsprings Leisure Centre.
- **North** – picking up access to Norton playing fields.

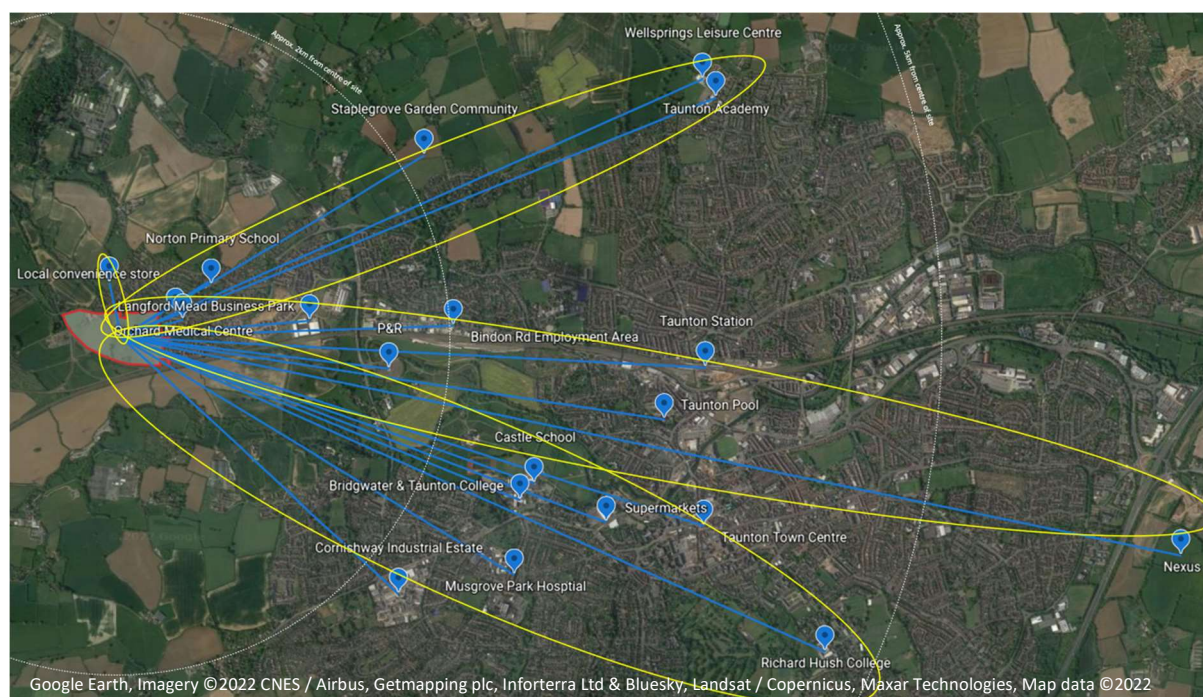


Figure 61 Groupings of key destinations indicating foci for routes relevant to Ford Farm

Ford Farm on-site facilities acting as destinations for existing communities

Some of the facilities delivered on the Ford Farm site will in themselves become destinations drawing users from surrounding communities. However, the draw to Ford Farm is likely to be minimal and very local, focusing on access to allotments and play areas by nearby residents, as indicated in figure 62, below. Unlike some of the other sites considered in this plan, due to the planning status, the location of facilities within Ford Farm are not yet approved.

A combination of delivering routes associated with the four key destination groupings identified above, the wider networks proposed by the LCWIP and emerging through Connecting our Garden Communities, should meet the needs of the majority of people visiting facilities within the site from surrounding communities as well as residents of the site.

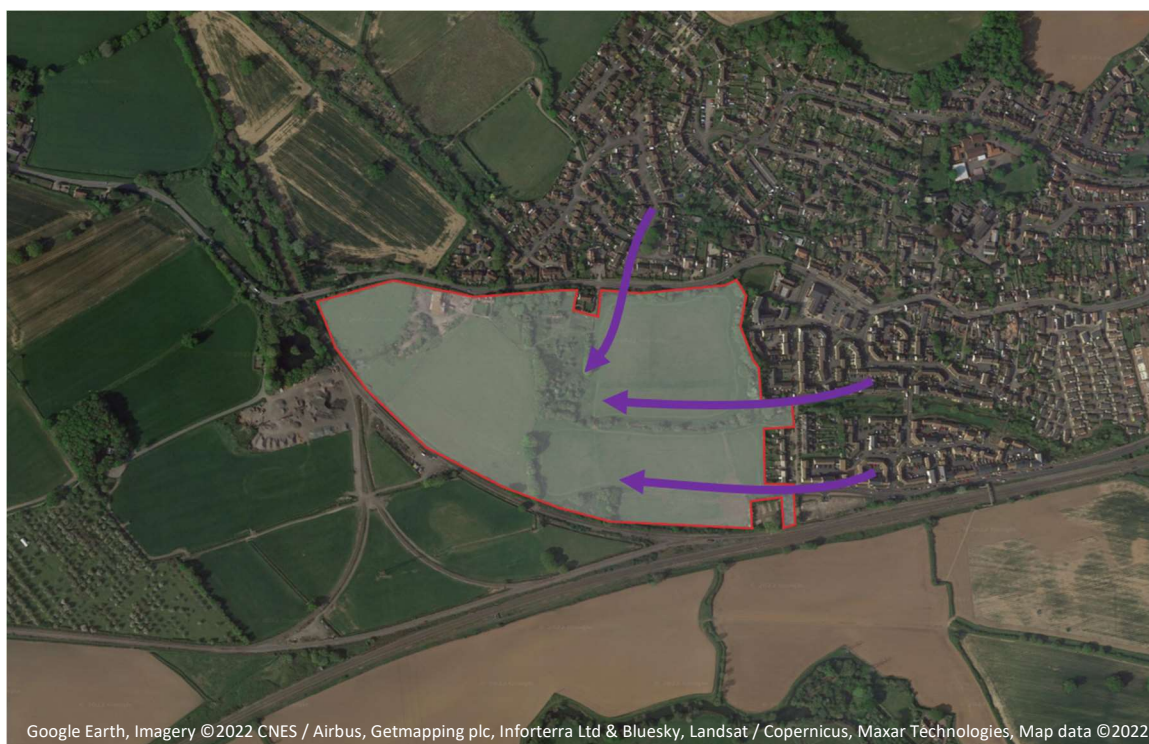


Figure 62 Ford Farm facilities as destinations

Specific opportunities

Specific opportunities may arise in consideration of any current and future planning applications.

Firepool Garden Community**Key destinations for Firepool**

The following table sets out specific destinations relative to future residents of the Firepool Garden Community:

Type of destination	Commentary on specific destinations and their relevance
Schools	The Firepool site is not expected to accommodate a primary or secondary school on site. As such, young residents of the site will need to access education facilities off-site. The site is in the catchment for North Town Primary School . However, with parental choice, residents will also access St. James Primary School and St. Andrews Primary School , both of which are there about the same distance from the centre of the site as North Town, and potentially also Priorswood Primary School . No one primary school is likely to have the capacity to accommodate all children from the site. The site is in the secondary school catchment for Taunton Academy . However, parental choice, proximity and ease of access means residents will also access Castle School and Bishop Fox Secondary School . Ensuring safe routes to school and establishing sustainable and healthy transport choices from an early age is a key route to behaviour change within the population as well as reducing childhood obesity and combatting other health and wellbeing issues.
College	Access to both Bridgwater & Taunton College and Richard Huish College will be important.
Employment	The Firepool allocation is for an office-led mixed-use development which would deliver significant employment opportunities through at least 47,000sqm of office space, 8,000 sqm retail and leisure floorspace, hotel development and primary health facilities. However, circumstances have moved on and the emerging Masterplan is currently considering an appropriate and up to date, evidence-based mix of uses for the site. It is highly likely that there will be a decent amount of employment generating uses within the site including the already constructed Viridor office building and the recently permitted Innovation Centre and Block 3 office building. Despite this, the majority of residents will likely be accessing employment opportunities off-site. There are major employment areas within 2km of the centre of the site, including Taunton town centre, Crown Industrial Estate, Bindon Road Employment Area, UKHO and Musgrove Park Hospital . Furthermore Taunton Station , immediately to the north of the site, provides access to wider employment opportunities. Blackbrook Business Park lies only just beyond 2km from the site. In time, Nexus25 , just under 3km from the site, will become a major employment node. The Council's Innovation District aspirations highlight the importance of linkages between the Innovation Centre on Firepool, UKHO and Nexus 25. Policy Fp2 of

	the TCAAP references the importance of linkages with Taunton East and North Taunton, primarily as a means of connecting more deprived parts of these areas to the opportunities which Firepool itself will provide.
Healthcare	Policy Fp1 requires primary healthcare facilities to be provided within the site. However, residents of the site are likely to still need to access a range of primary health care facilities including St James Medical Centre and French Weir Health Centre as well as Musgrove Park Hospital .
Convenience retail and supermarkets	The Firepool development will likely include an element of convenience retail. However, there will be a need to allow for consumer choice and consider proximity to other existing stores including on Station Road . For more significant shopping trips Morrisons supermarket is located on the opposite side of Priory Bridge Road. There is a significant opportunity to deliver modal shift here.
Leisure and Recreation	The Firepool site is expected to deliver some open space requirements within the site itself, though this is likely to primarily focus on children's play and public realm. However the site is not expected to deliver playing pitches or allotments. Playing pitches will need to be accessed at Victoria Park . Allotments are likely to be accessed at a combination of the Winckworth Way Allotments and Frieze Hill Allotments . Indoor recreation/sport facilities are also not being provided on-site. As such, residents will need to access such facilities at a combination of Taunton Pool , Wellsprings Leisure Centre and Blackbrook Leisure Centre . In addition to this, as a town centre site, it will be important to ensure residents of the site have good access out of the town via the canal/river corridor and Long Run Meadow green wedge into the wider countryside.
Bus stops	Bus stops are located on Station Road and Trenchard Way and in time are also planned to stop at the train Station. Policy Fp2 expects a priority bus route to be delivered through the site from the Station to Priory Bridge Road.

The key destinations are set out in figure 63, below. Straight line mapping is used to indicate the direct desire line which any relevant walking and cycling route would ideally be broadly aligned with.

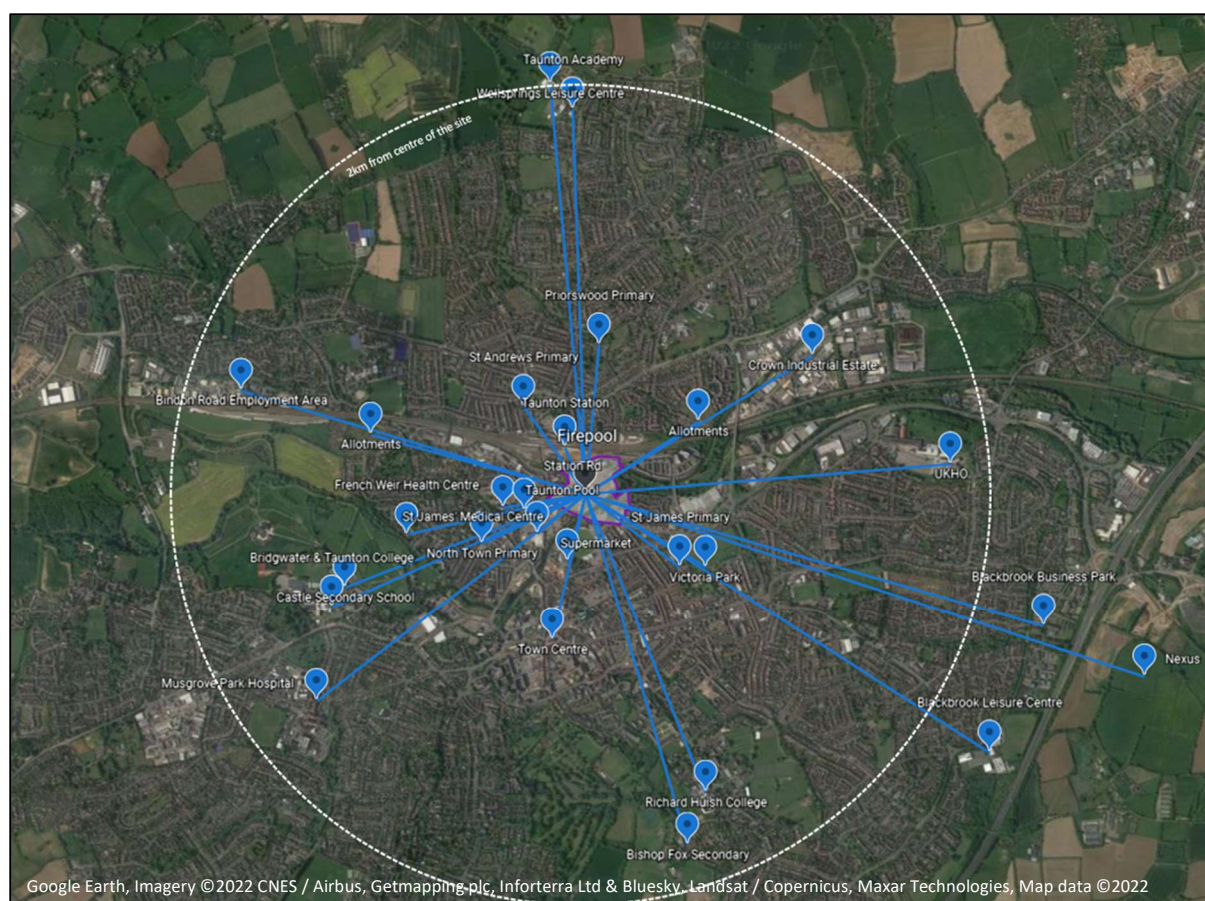


Figure 63 Key destinations and straight line mapping relevant to the Firepool allocation

In considering the above key destinations, there are some clear foci for routes linking from Firepool, as shown in figure 64, below:

- **North** – picking up access to the Station, St Andrews and Priorswood Primary Schools, Taunton Academy and Wellsprings Leisure Centre.
- **North-east** – picking up access to Crown Industrial Estate and the Winckworth Way allotments.
- **East** – picking up access to St James Primary School, Victoria Park, UKHO, Blackbrook Business Park, Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Nexus25.
- **South** – picking up access to Morrisons supermarket, St James Medical Centre, the town centre, Bishop Fox's Secondary School and Richard Huish College.
- **South-west** – picking up access to retail on Station Road, Taunton Pool, French Weir Health Centre, North Town Primary School, Castle Secondary School, Bridgwater & Taunton College and Musgrove Park Hospital.
- **West** – picking up access to Bindon Road Employment Area and Frieze Hill Allotments.

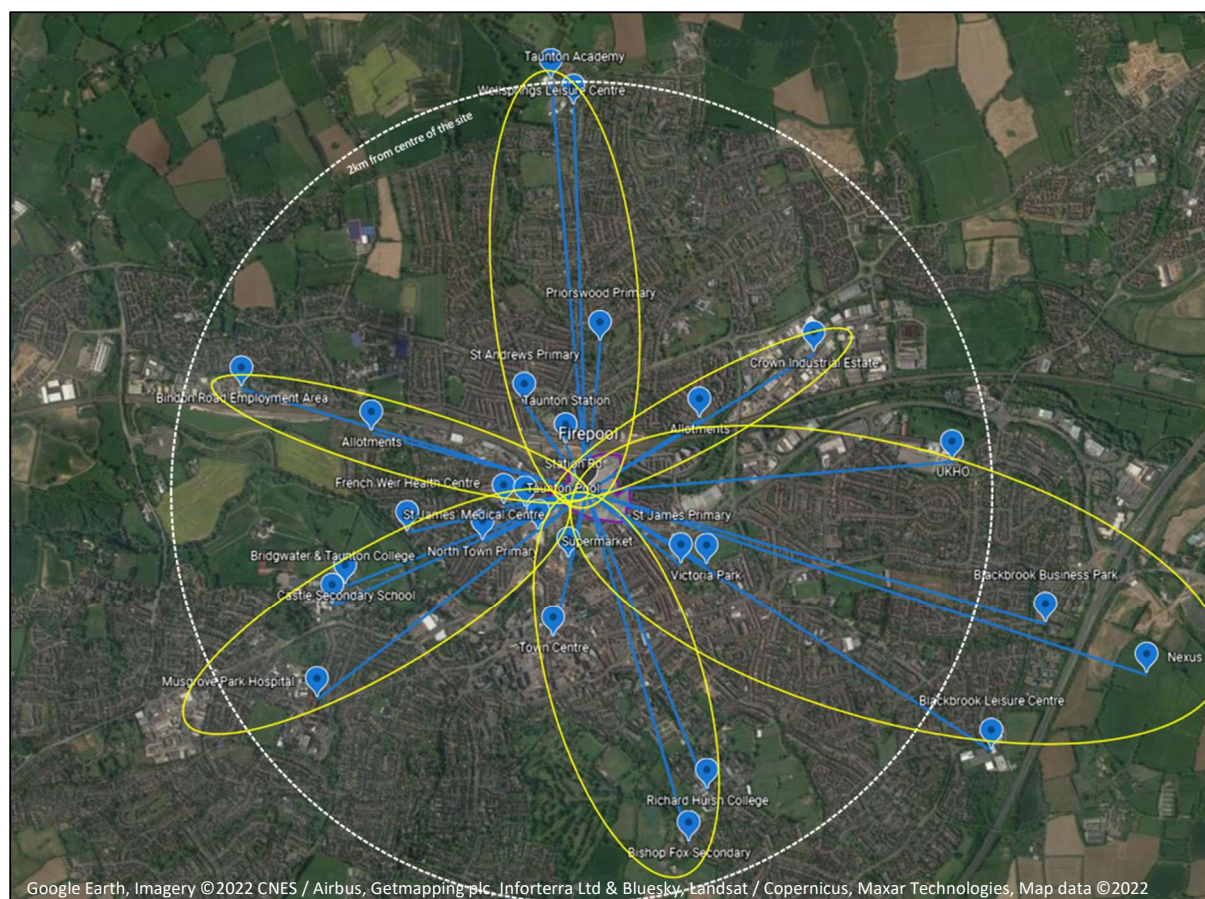


Figure 64 Groupings of key destinations indicating foci for routes relevant to Firepool

Firepool on-site facilities acting as destinations for existing communities

Some of the facilities delivered on the Firepool site will in themselves become destinations drawing users from surrounding communities on the edge of Taunton and rural areas. In contrast to the other Garden Communities, a key objective of the Firepool site is to become a destination. The forthcoming Firepool Masterplan will identify the updated mix of uses for the site, but the Innovation Centre/employment and leisure uses (emerging developer aspirations are for a multi-purpose venue, cinema and hotel for instance) are likely to draw people to the site from surrounding communities across Taunton, the rural hinterland, and potentially further afield, as indicated in figure 65, below.

Furthermore, Policy Fp2 highlights the importance of the site being accessible by improved pedestrian and cycle links to Taunton East and North Taunton. The intention here was primarily as a means of connecting more deprived parts of these areas to the opportunities which Firepool itself will provide.

A number of buses stop on Station Road, with some also on Trenchard Way/at the Station. Access to/from these stops must be considered. However, most buses, including the P&R services converge on the town centre around The Parade and Castle Green. Access from these services to the site must be considered – something that delivery of the LCWIP red route through the site will enable. Furthermore, the proximity of the station means that the site plays an important role in facilitating access from the wider communities, through the site to the station. The

opportunity to access the site by walking and cycling from the P&R sites on the edge of the town should also be considered.

A combination of delivering routes associated with the six key destination groupings identified above, the wider networks proposed by the LCWIP and emerging through Connecting our Garden Communities, should meet the needs of the majority of people visiting facilities within the site from surrounding communities as well as residents of the site.



Figure 65 Firepool facilities as destinations and Firepool as a conduit for access to Taunton Station and Town Centre

Specific opportunities

The Council was successful in its bid to the Future High Streets Fund. A significant part of the bid was focused around delivery of the priority parts of the LCWIP ‘red route’ between Vivary Park, the town centre, Coal Orchard, through Firepool to the Station. The Council continues to work apace on this project. The permitted Block 3 development and the current “southern boulevard” application are a part of delivering this route, which responds also to some of the off-site key destinations for Firepool as well as the through movements detailed above.

The emerging Masterplan will explore specific opportunities in relation to the Firepool site. It will also identify any off-site mitigations likely to be considered necessary for future development. Specific opportunities may also arise in consideration of any current and future planning applications.

The Section 106 Agreement which accompanied the now expired retail-led outline permission for the site (38/17/0150), included on and off-site highways improvement obligations including financial contributions towards the NIDR (Trenchard Way) access, Canal Road access, Firepool South access and road capacity improvement works at the Wickes roundabout. Whilst the same obligations may not apply to future development proposals of a different nature, they provide useful context.

In the case of the Canal Road and Firepool South accesses, schemes were to be submitted and approved by the County Council. These approval mechanisms provided an opportunity for pedestrian and cycle access arrangements to be appropriately considered as part of these designs. In the case of the Wickes roundabout capacity improvements, these were required in response to the traffic modelling undertaken for that particular development proposal. The Masterplan is considering an alternative mix of uses, and with the declaration of a Climate Emergency, the need to achieve modal shift is now seen as significantly more urgent and prominent in terms of material considerations. As such, and dependent on the development form brought forward, it may potentially be possible for future development proposals on Firepool to review the need for this traditional highways capacity improvement if sufficient active travel infrastructure is delivered connecting the right places.

Nexus 25 Garden Community

Key destinations for Nexus 25

The following table sets out specific destinations relative to future users of the Nexus 25 Garden Community. The types of connections are different to the other garden communities, recognising the different nature of Nexus as a strategic employment site:

Type of destination	Commentary on specific destinations and their relevance
Communities	As a strategic employment site, the areas from which potential workers may come from has potential to be extensive and will not be limited to Taunton. However, it can be expected that the majority of workers will come from the Taunton area, particularly to the west of the M5 motorway, and so long as the connections are there, especially from communities in east Taunton including Blackbrook, Holway and Halcon . Each of the Garden Communities will provide a pool of potential workers for the site, as will other existing communities within the town. Considering their proximity, the existing communities of Ruishton, Henlade and Creech St Michael will also provide a pool of potential workers. Beyond the Taunton area, considering its location, it is likely that the site will attract workers from Taunton's wider rural hinterland and from major urban areas further afield such as Wellington, Bridgwater, Yeovil, Ilminster and others.
Economic	The Council's Economic Development Strategy, Innovation Framework and inward investment SWITCH campaign place Nexus, and the connections with other sites across Taunton including the Digital Innovation Centre at Firepool, UKHO and Blackbrook Business Park at their heart. Enabling quick and easy, sustainable access between these economic assets will be key to the realisation of Taunton Garden Town's economic ambitions. Given proximity and an appropriate connection, it is likely that there could be a fair amount of cross-visitation between the Nexus site and Blackbrook Business Park.
Education	The Nexus 25 LDO allows for a quantum of supporting services to be developed alongside traditional employment space which may include nursery/creche facilities. Blackbrook Business Park also includes such facilities. There may be some relevance in connecting both Bridgwater & Taunton College and Richard Huish College with the site to encourage the development of linkages in terms of skills, learning and development.
Leisure and Recreation	The Nexus 25 LDO allows for a quantum of supporting services to be developed alongside traditional employment space including gymnasium, which may bring some users from nearby areas. The site may also include a hotel uses, with guests potentially needing access to Taunton Town Centre . However, it is likely, given proximity and a suitable connection, that some users of the site would utilise the facilities at Blackbrook Leisure Centre . It is likely that users of the site will want to access the wider

	countryside, including linking to public rights of way running from the site.
Convenience retail and supermarkets	The Nexus 25 LDO allows for a quantum of supporting services to be developed alongside traditional employment space including limited retail uses. For more significant shopping trips the closest supermarket is Sainsbury's at Hankeridge Farm retail park . It is likely that workers on the Blackbrook Business Park will also access some of the convenience retail / café type facilities within the Nexus development.
Bus stops	The Nexus development has potential to accommodate a bus service improvement through the site, and this is the high level expectation. Existing bus services stop at the Gateway Park & Ride, on the existing A358, in Ruishton, at the Deane Gate bus gate and on Blackbrook Way.

The key destinations are set out in figure 66, below. Straight line mapping is used to indicate the direct desire line which any relevant walking and cycling route would ideally be broadly aligned with.



Figure 66 Key destinations and straight line mapping relevant to the Nexus 25 site

In considering the above key destinations, there are some clear foci for routes linking from Nexus 25, as shown in figure 67, below:

- **North** – picking up access to the Park & Ride, Ruishton, Hankeridge Farm retail park, Creech St Michael, Monkton Heathfield and towards Bridgwater.
- **North-west** – picking up access to Blackbrook Business Park, Halcon, UKHO, North Taunton, Nerrols and Staplegrove.

- **West** – picking up access to Blackbrook, Firepool, Taunton Station, the Town Centre, Bridgwater & Taunton College and Ford Farm.
- **South-west** – picking up access to Blackbrook Leisure Centre, Holway, Richard Huish College, South West Taunton, Comeytrove and on towards Wellington.
- **East** – picking up access to Henlade and towards Yeovil, Ilminster and the rural hinterland.

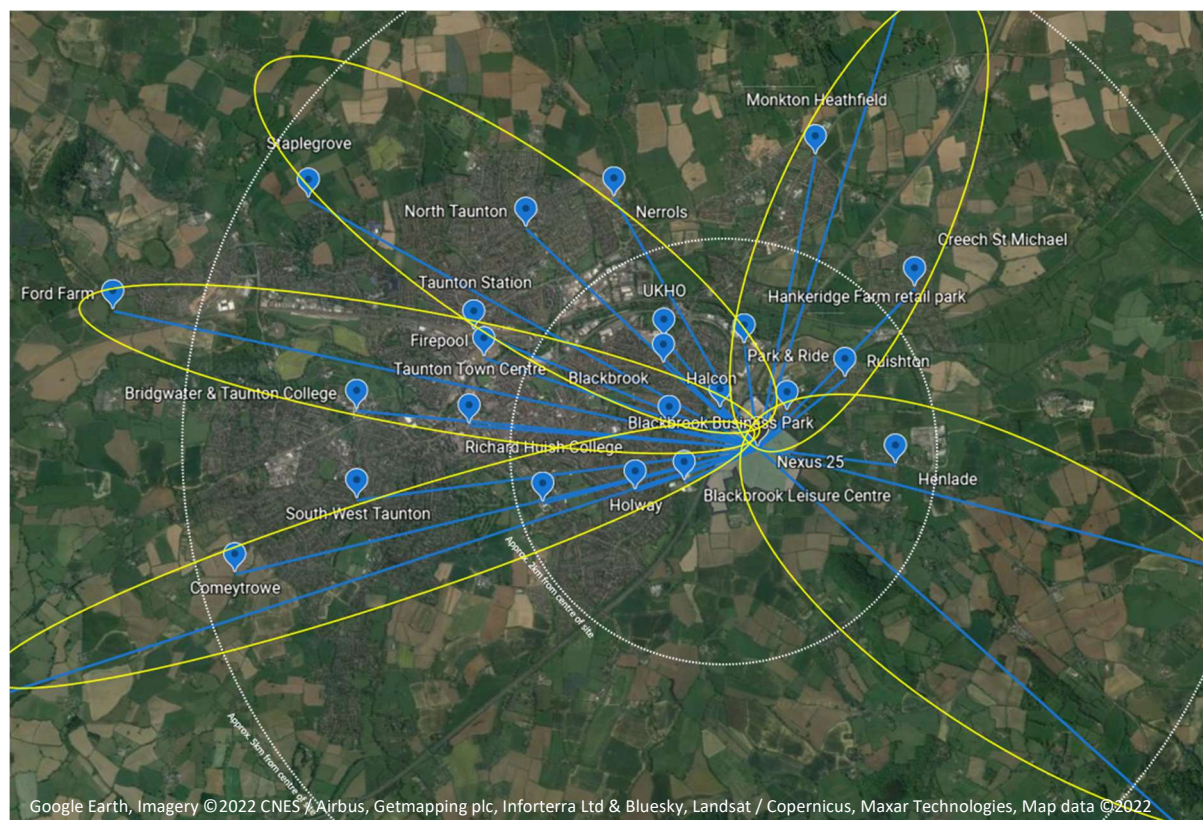


Figure 67 Groupings of key destinations indicating foci for routes relevant to Nexus 25

Nexus 25 on-site facilities acting as destinations for existing communities

The facilities delivered on the Nexus 25 site will in themselves become destinations drawing users from surrounding communities on the edge of Taunton and rural areas. In addition to the employment uses, people from nearby areas, including those both west of the M5 and north of the A358 are likely to need to access the site to visit other supporting uses including retail, cafes, gym, and nursery/creche should these be delivered. The LDO permits certain uses in certain parcels of the development, and these are indicated in figure 68, below.

A combination of delivering routes associated with the five key destination groupings identified above, the wider networks proposed by the LCWIP and emerging through Connecting our Garden Communities, should meet the needs of the majority of people visiting facilities within the site from surrounding communities as well as residents of the site.

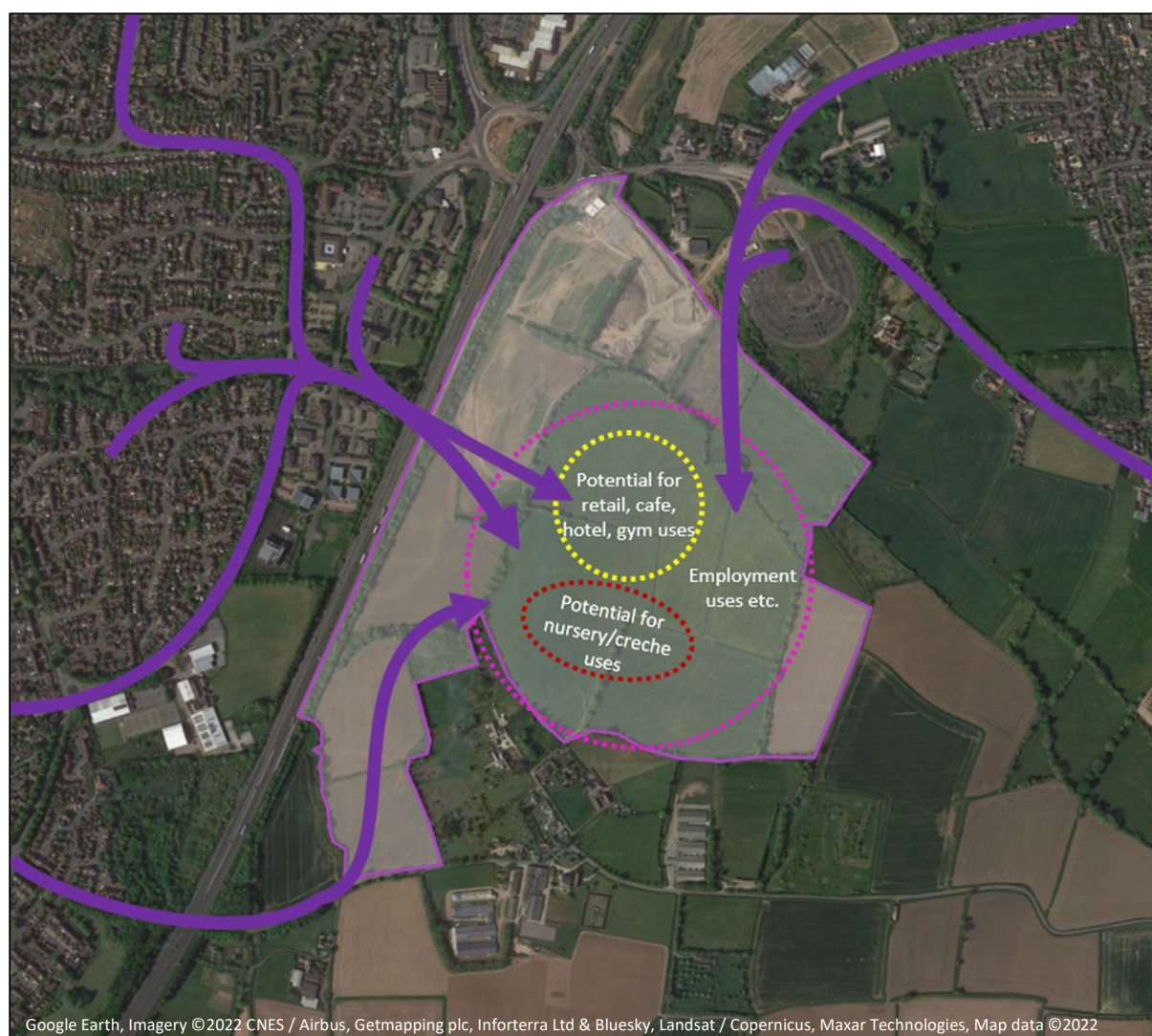


Figure 68 Nexus 25 facilities as destinations

Specific opportunities

The National Planning Practice Guidance states that “*Section 106 planning obligations cannot be required under a Local Development Order; however, this does not prevent section 106 agreements being offered by a developer. For example, if a condition attached to a Local Development Order requires mitigation of an impact from development then a section 106 agreement could be used to secure this*”. This means that if development proposals coming forward within the site are failing to meet the targets within the Framework Travel Plan, then other ‘hard’ or ‘soft’ interventions could potentially be required from development within the site and secured via a Section 106 Agreement. This is particularly relevant in relation to the potential future crossing of the M5. Furthermore, it is within the gift of a developer to enter into a Section 106 Agreement voluntarily to secure delivery of infrastructure. Depending on the future users of the site, some occupiers may see the benefits of providing such a crossing.

The required review of the LDO in March 2023 presents an opportunity to ensure that the LDO responds appropriately to Connecting our Garden Communities.

If development were to come forward that does not comply with the LDO, then it would need to be considered as a planning application. In these circumstances it would be expected that any planning application would need to respond to the contents of Connecting our Garden Communities.

National Highways' A358 dualling proposals also present a potential opportunity. The Council made representations during the 2021 preliminary design consultations to the effect of stating the importance of the scheme providing for walking and cycling linkages both across and along the length of the A358 scheme and linking into Taunton via a new crossing of the M5. The scheme's Development Consent Order application has not yet been submitted to the Secretary of State, but once it has, it will be subject to Examination, recommendation and subsequently decision by the Secretary of State.

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7. Auditing and refining options

Following broad route identification the key destination mapping for each of the Garden Communities was combined (as shown in Figure 69, below), this helped to identify potential routes for consideration.

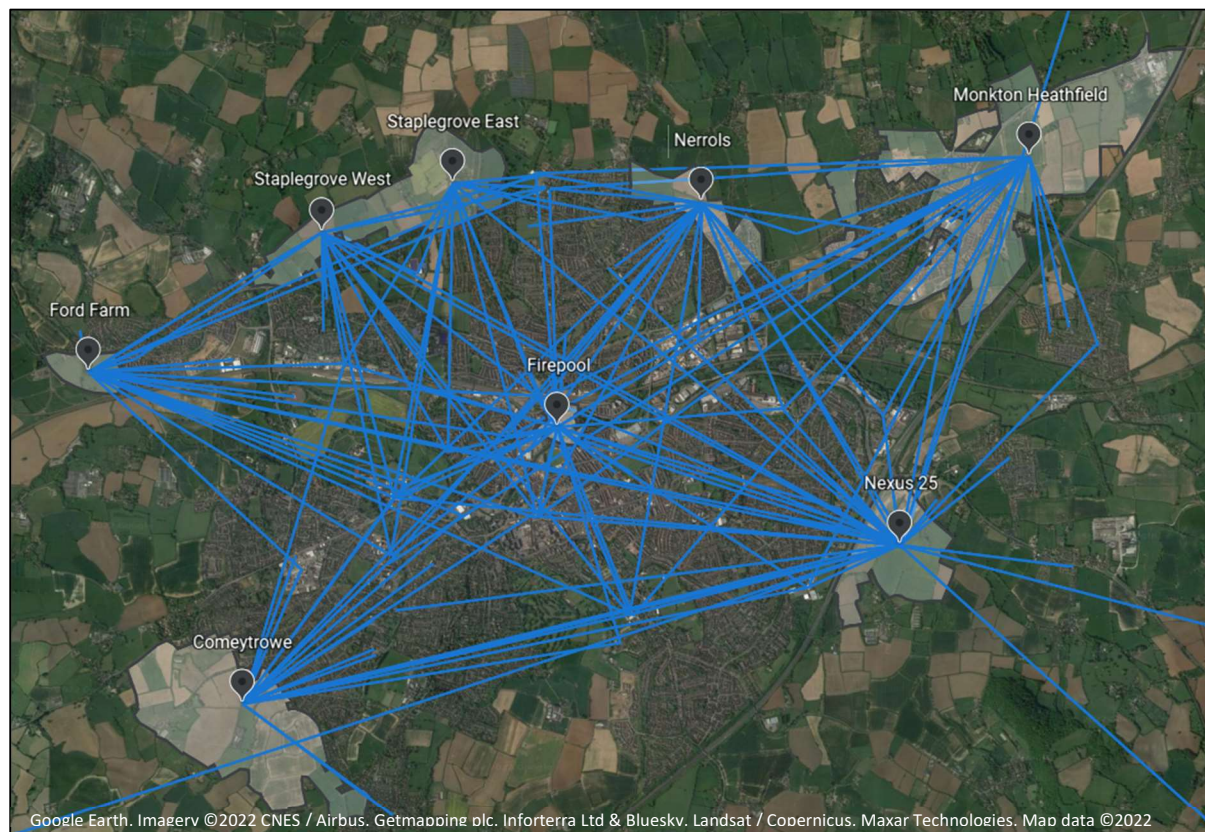


Figure 69 Combined key destination mapping

An initial exercise of considering and sifting potential routing options was undertaken. This cast the net wide in terms of identifying existing and potential routes.

These potential routing options were subject to sense checking, thinking about the key destinations that could be linked in, the relationship with already identified LCWIP routes, the potential for ongoing connections and the high level likelihood of modern and futureproofed infrastructure being able to be accommodated. This enabled us to filter out what seemed at this point to be non-starters. Through this process we discounted some of the possibilities (shown red in figure 70 below), and took forward a number of routes for auditing (shown in green in figure 70 below).

It should be noted that the initial routes considered were based on an early interpretation of the key destination groupings – these were refined and updated through early engagement workshops. This means that some routes which were initially discounted were later reintroduced after the initial set of audits were undertaken.

Taunton Area Cycling Campaign (TACC) were crucial to the auditing process. TACC volunteers undertook a significant number of the audits on the Council's behalf, and

discussion with them about options to consider and specific routings heavily influenced the process.

Engagement workshops were held in March 2022 with selected key community stakeholders including Ward Members, Parish Councils and TACC. Discussion and responses to specific questions at these workshops helped to refine and define the emerging routes.

This chapter summarises the process and the key points arising. For a full run through of all the audited and discounted routes please see Appendix A.



Figure 70 Audited (green) and discounted (red) routes. Note, some of the discounted routes came back into the process following the early engagement workshops

Discounted options

The routes shown in red in figure 70, above, were discounted through an initial sifting process. In the main, routes tended to be discounted at this stage for a number of reasons:

- Not responding sufficiently to opportunities or key destinations.
- Duplicating already identified LCWIP routes without obvious benefit.
- Being overly reliant upon third party land.
- Seeming particularly unlikely that the appropriate standard of infrastructure provision could be delivered due to carriageway widths and other constraints.
- Lacking obviousness for users and therefore unlikely to lead to a direct, coherent and legible network.

- Likely to have more significant issues in terms of natural surveillance and therefore perceived safety.
- Relatively newly installed cycling infrastructure already existing without reasonable need to upgrade as part of this project.

Audited options

The routes shown in green in figure 64, above, were taken through for auditing. Audits involved using a combination of in-person and virtual site visits to review existing infrastructure, opportunities and constraints. As with the LCWIP, the Government's LCWIP Route Selection Tool and Walking Route Audit Tool were used for the assessments

The Cycling Route Selection Tool assessed route options for cycling against 6 criteria.

- Directness
- Gradient
- Safety
- Connectivity
- Comfort
- Critical Junction Crossings

This provided an “existing” score and a “potential” score which was established by considering what interventions might help to resolve key constraints and how these might improve scores against each criterion.

The Walking Route Audit Tool assessed route options for walking against 5 criteria:

- Attractiveness
- Comfort
- Directness
- Safety
- Coherence

This provided an “existing” score. Where criteria scored poorly, or could obviously be improved, potential interventions were identified.

Following completion, the audits were reviewed on an individual basis, and collectively with an eye on connections across the wider network. It was considered how likely the initially suggested interventions to improve route “potential” scores might be. As a result of this, a set of emerging core routes were settled upon.

Early engagement workshop

In March 2022, the Council held a series of online engagement workshops with key community stakeholders including Ward Members, Parish Councils and TACC. As part of this, officers presented the context, scope and objectives of the project and sought inputs on a number of issues including key destinations, types of destination, prioritisation, barriers to delivery of appropriate infrastructure and alternative options or missing routes. An online mapping engagement tool was used to capture points raised in real-time during the meetings, enabling clarity on points raised and a more

involved engagement from attendees. Key outcomes of the workshops are identified below:

High quality infrastructure essential to a Garden Town and Climate Emergency response

Attendees agreed that high quality walking and cycling infrastructure is essential to meeting both the Garden Town Vision and Climate Emergency commitments. There was general support for the principle of road space re-allocation to more sustainable modes in the right places.

The LCWIP doesn't sufficiently meet the needs of the Garden Communities

Existing routes and LCWIP proposed routes were not considered to sufficiently address the walking and cycling needs of Monkton Heathfield, Staplegrove or Nerrols Garden Communities. The response was more mixed in relation to Comeytrove, Nexus, Firepool and Ford Farm, where LCWIP routes do more obviously serve them, though they weren't seen as meeting all needs.

Connecting to schools a key prioritisation factor

The factors considered to be of most importance for the prioritisation of route delivery were:

1. Connect to schools
2. Connect to other essential services
3. Serve existing as well as future users

Having community support and having potential to be transformational also performed well.

Schools, employment and town centre/station the most important destinations

The most important everyday services for the Garden Communities, generally, to be connected to were seen to be:

1. Schools
2. Employment
3. Town Centre/Station

However, other destinations including convenience store, supermarket, open spaces, leisure centres, GP surgery and other local centres were also referred to.

Attendees identified a number of specific destinations for each of the Garden Communities, many of which aligned with destinations which officers had already identified. However, a number of additional destinations not previously identified were suggested. In addition to this, certain destinations including Musgrove Park Hospital and both Bridgwater & Taunton College and Richard Huish College were seen as being of critical importance and relevant to all of the Garden Communities bar Nexus 25.

Emerging routes supported, but other routes identified

The principles of the emerging routes at that point were broadly supported. However, a number of barriers were identified, particularly around road space and capacity limitations, costs of infrastructure delivery, safety concerns of shared use paths, the importance of routes benefitting existing communities, the capacity of some of the

services/facilities being connected to, and the need for appropriate supporting infrastructure such as cycle parking, tools/pumps, traffic light prioritisation etc. The importance of routes serving existing communities, and helping to resolve potential congestion issues or safety concerns for walkers and cyclists arising from new traffic generated by the Garden Communities was also raised.

A number of routes were identified as being felt to be either missing or worth considering as an alternative, including:

- **Silk Mills Road to Wellington Road and Heron Drive** – seen as necessary to connect Ford Farm and Staplegrove to Musgrove Park Hospital and Bridgwater & Taunton College, and to connect Comeytrowe to Bindon Road Employment Area.
- **Silk Mills Park & Ride to Tangier/French Weir** through Longrun Meadow – seen as a well-used existing route necessary to connect Ford Farm with the town centre and French Weir Health Centre.
- **Creech Castle to Winckworth Way via the River Tone** – seen as a well-used existing route which could help connect Monkton Heathfield to Firepool and the town centre.
- **Creech Castle to Blackbrook via Hankridge Farm retail park** – seen as a well-used existing route in need of significant improvements, necessary for connecting Monkton Heathfield to Hankridge Farm retail park, Blackbrook Business Park and Nexus 25.
- **Crown/Venture Way roundabout to Taunton Station via Priorswood Road** – seen as a direct route from Monkton Heathfield to Crown Industrial Estate, the station and Firepool with better natural surveillance and scope for improvement than the canal.
- **Taunton Station to Taunton Academy via Cheddon Road** – seen as a vital part of the overall network providing a direct route on an alignment people want to use.
- **A more direct link from Monkton Heathfield to Nexus 25** – using existing motorway underbridges e.g. at Hankridge Farm. Seen as avoiding convoluted routes and also helping to link in Creech St Michael and Ruishton.

The importance of Cheddon Road, Station Road, East Reach and Wellington Road as core parts of any future network was reiterated by TACC.

Following the workshops, suggestions were reviewed and additional audits undertaken in some cases. Responses then directly fed into the proposed routes included in this plan, as set out in the following chapter.

Route Scoping

A number of the emerging routes were subsequently subject to more technical scoping by the Council's appointed consultants (Stantec). Scoping involved reviewing audit comments and recommendations, reviewing high level constraints such as highway boundaries, identifying issues to be considered further and identifying potential intervention options for consideration. Where prepared, these scopings have informed the route summaries in chapter 8.

8. Proposed routes

The draft Network Plan

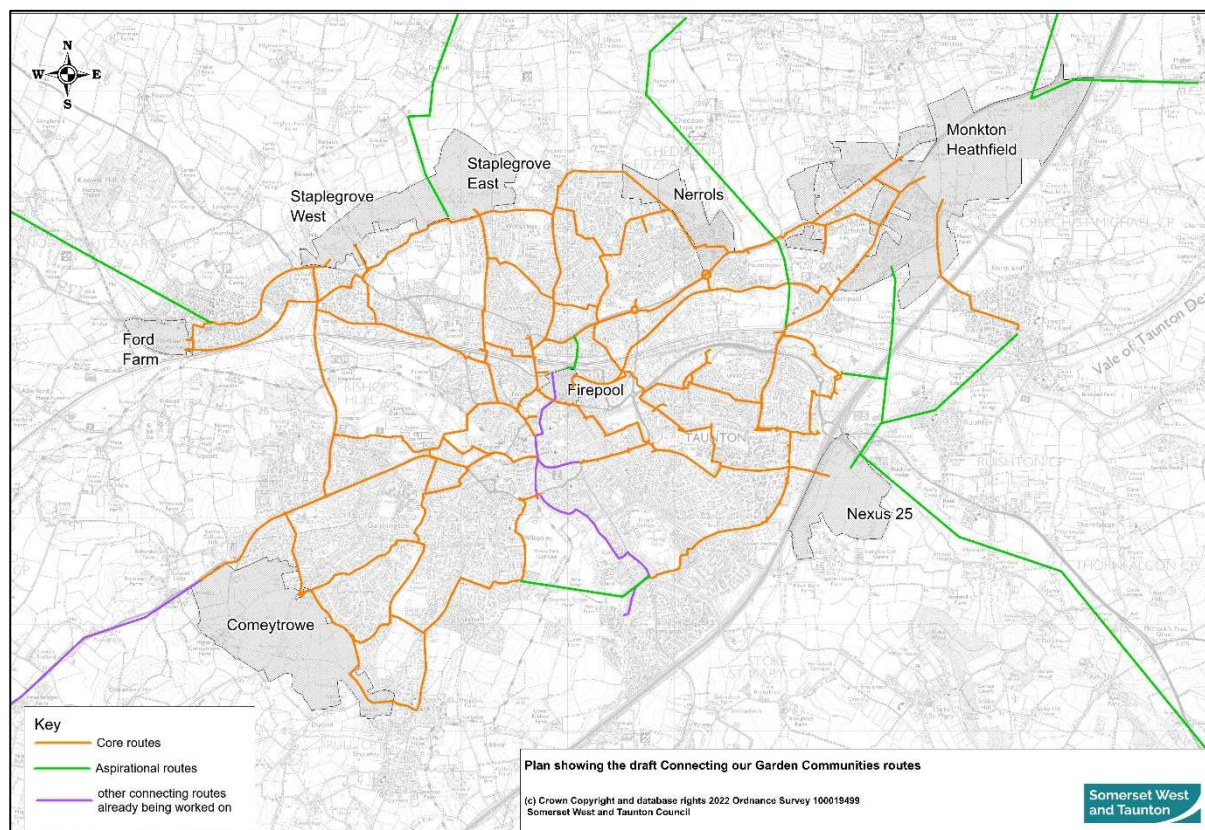


Figure 71 Connecting our Garden Communities draft Network Plan

As a result of the previous stages, the draft Network Plan (see figure 71, above) has been produced. These routes provide the necessary and appropriate connections for each of the Garden Communities.

It was considered appropriate to identify three types of route:

- Core routes (shown orange)
- Aspirational, green infrastructure-led routes (shown green)
- Other connecting and related routes (shown purple)

Core routes – the primary routes for connecting the Garden Communities to the places people will need to go. Broad routing has been identified based on the auditing and refinement process set out in chapter 7. For these routes, there is a clearer idea of what might be possible.

Aspirational, green infrastructure-led routes – more ambitious linkages, primarily to communities external to Taunton itself, arising from green infrastructure strategy proposals and identified community aspirations. For these routes, precise routing has not been identified, just the broad direction of the points needing connecting. Further work will be required to establish specific routes.

Other connecting and related routes – a series of routes for which preparatory and design work towards their delivery is already ongoing. These include the Future

High Streets Fund funded route from Taunton Station to Vivary Park, East Street, Killams to the town centre, and Wellington to Taunton. For these routes, the plan simply refers to them for information as they provide important connectivity through the town centre, to Richard Huish College and Wellington.

Summaries of the draft routes, the key connections they link with, route purposes, opportunities they respond to and the key constraints to route design can be found in Appendix B.

DRAFT

9. Prioritising

The Government's LCWIP guidance recommends that routes are prioritised. It suggests that these are prioritised into three categories:

- **Short term** (typically <3 years) – improvements which can be implemented quickly or are under development.
- **Medium term** (typically <5 years) – improvements where there is a clear intention to act, but delivery is dependent on further funding availability or other issues (e.g. detailed design, securing planning permissions, land acquisition).
- **Long term** (typically >5 years) – more aspirational improvements or those awaiting a defined solution.

The guidance suggests that priority should normally be given to improvements which are most likely to have the greatest impact on increasing the number of people who choose to walk and cycle, though it states that other factors such as deliverability, other opportunities, effectiveness and policy may also be relevant.

There are pros and cons to prioritising routes. On the one hand it is important to be realistic about what is feasible and deliverable in the shorter term in order to manage expectations and inform work programmes. This requires knowing which routes will make the biggest difference in relation to a range of objectives. Having a prioritised list ensures that where there is insufficient funding to go around, it is possible to focus in. On the other hand, it is important to recognise that in order to meet our Climate Emergency declaration commitments and Garden Town vision you need transformational change, essentially to deliver them all. There is a risk that prioritisation may mean that some routes struggle to access funding or to be negotiated from developments.

At this stage, routes have not been subject to full prioritisation. This draft plan sets out a number of criteria and an approach to prioritisation. Consultation is explicitly seeking views on these.

As set out in Chapters 4 and 8, early engagement has informed the development of this draft plan provided some useful inputs on the approach to prioritisation. This early engagement identified that connections to 1) Schools, 2) Employment and 3) Town centre/station were by far and away the most important connections to be made for the Garden Communities. This was then reflected in terms of views on how to prioritise routes where were stakeholders identified their top three factors to use in prioritising routes:

- 1) Connection to schools
- 2) Connection to other essential services and
- 3) Serves existing as well as future users

Beyond these factors responses highlighted the importance of routes having community support, and also delivering a transformational impact.

Based on the above, we are minded to prioritise routes through a matrix approach, scoring routes for their performance against a set of criteria as follows:

- Connection to schools
- Connection to other essential services
- Serves existing as well as new users
- Has community support
- Potential to be transformational
- Value for money (based on high level cost/benefit analysis)
- Broad feasibility
- Performance against policy objectives (inc. planning, transport, public health and climate)
- Potential to attract funding (inc. from developments and funding opportunities)
- Political acceptability

Each criterion would be scored on a scale of 1-3 in line with the general points identified below. More specific compliance indicators will be developed for each criterion.

1 point	2 points	3 points
Poor / no relevance	Good / some relevance	Excellent / full relevance

Not all factors are necessarily of equal importance, as demonstrated by the views expressed during the early engagement work on this project. As such, we are likely to weight certain factors more heavily than others in order to reflect this. Responses to the consultation will help to shape these criteria and their weightings.

Aside from technical prioritisation, the status of the various Garden Communities is also directly relevant to the prioritisation of some routes. Where residents are already moving in, clearly there is a reason to prioritise delivery of key associated routes over routes associated with those developments not yet benefiting from planning permission.

On this basis, in addition to prioritising the full list of routes, routes will subsequently be attributed timescales for delivery. However, these timescales will be relevant to key milestones in relation to the relevant Garden Communities (e.g. years from development/phase commencing).

Finally, all of the above needs to be balanced with the costs of delivery. Route delivery will be heavily reliant on securing external funding through developer negotiations and funding bids as pots of funding are announced. There may therefore be reasons to focus on certain routes or sections of routes/spot interventions of overall lower priority, if opportunities present themselves.

10. Delivery

Embedding the plan

Successful delivery of this plan and the routes contained within requires it to be embedded in a range of local strategies, policies and plans.

Garden Town

The project has been developed using funding from the Garden Town Capacity Fund, and is thoroughly embedded within the Garden Town programme, Infrastructure Delivery Plan and governance and stewardship arrangements which are currently being developed. This ensures that delivery of the routes identified in this plan are not considered in isolation but as a core part of overall Garden Town delivery.

Transport Planning

An important part of delivery will be ensuring that this work fits with and influences future work on any new integrated transport strategy or Local Transport Plan prepared by the new unitary Council. Delivery of active travel infrastructure cannot be considered completely in isolation from a sustainable transport strategy as a whole. Engagement with key officers within the SCC transport policy, highways and infrastructure and public health teams and through the county-wide Active Travel Group has been crucial to the development of the plan to date and will continue to be so into delivery. This engagement means we are in a good position and working to ensure that this plan can directly influence future transport planning in the new Council. In a similar vein, it is intended that this plan will influence the next iteration of the Taunton LCWIP (which is intended to be regularly updated). The project is actively recognised as a key interdependency with delivery of the County Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan which is seeking (amongst other things) to establish bus priority improvements in Taunton.

Land-use Planning

The plan also needs to embed itself with land-use planning. Chapters 2 and 5 of this plan set out the existing planning context strategically and in relation to the Garden Communities themselves. The intention is that the plan provides evidence-based and specific proposals which planning applications will need to respond to as relevant and appropriate. Where appropriate, the approach and aspirations set out within the plan will influence policy development in relation to specific sites (e.g. Masterplans) and more strategically (e.g. future Local Plan development).

This plan will be adopted as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. This means that when relevant and appropriate planning applications are submitted, developers/applicants will need to actively respond to the routes and proposals included within it. This will primarily apply to planning applications relating to the Garden Communities. However, there may be other relevant planning applications along the routes or nearby which will also need to respond.

Neighbourhood Plans

Local communities wishing to produce or review existing Neighbourhood Plans should consider how their plans can reflect the routes. Furthermore neighbourhood

plan groups and town and parish councils (where they are not the same) may wish to consider how they are able to assist in moving proposals forward where relevant to their area. The Council will continue to provide support for the development of Neighbourhood Plans.

Project delivery

The Council has various teams with a focus on project delivery including the Major & Special Projects, Climate and Policy and Implementation teams. These teams will likely all play a major role in delivery of the plan as resources and funding allows. As mentioned previously, delivery will be heavily reliant on external funding being secured. By identifying the routes, the Council is not bound to deliver any of them.

But the Council cannot deliver all of these routes alone. It will work closely with other parties including the County Council, town and parish councils, TACC, developers, Active Travel England and other public and private bodies to work towards route delivery.

The role of the County Council as the Highways Authority will be crucial, as many routes relate to highways. There are likely to be a range of organisations which need to be engaged as delivery partners, depending on the specifics of the route.

Wider considerations

It is important to remember that the delivery of walking and cycling routes is just a part of the solution. To realise the full range of health, environmental, economic, safety and social benefits identified in chapter 2, this plan will need to be accompanied by a range of other measures to reduce the speed, volume and convenience of motor vehicles on the road, as well as actions to achieve behavioural change across society. Enabling the integration of multi-modal journeys where walking and cycling provides just one stage of a wider sustainable journey will be highly relevant. Furthermore, with the Council's aspirations to grow a Garden Town Forest in mind, there may be opportunities created through the reallocation of road space to simultaneously deliver tree planting, SUDs and other green infrastructure.

Cycle parking

Safe, secure and sufficient cycle parking provided in the right locations is essential for enabling cycling to be a practical transport choice. A lack of appropriate cycle parking is often identified as a barrier to people choosing to cycle or to own a bike. A lack of investment in the right cycle parking infrastructure both at source and destination could constrain future growth of cycling as the mode of choice.

The Council is actively working to deliver modern, safe and secure cycle parking provision throughout the town centre with cycle parking hubs providing more significant storage with enhanced security and related services, a key aspect of this.

Key destinations identified within this plan will need to deliver appropriate cycle parking facilities also. The Council will work to encourage this and take steps to secure such facilities where opportunities arise, such as when appropriate planning applications are submitted within the destination facilities identified in this plan or where new destination facilities are proposed. However, in most cases, the onus for

funding and delivery of this provision is likely to remain with facility owners/operators. Any provision at destination facilities will need to be fit for purpose, secure and well-located in relation to related cycle route infrastructure and access to the facility itself.

Within the Garden Communities themselves it will be essential for sufficient and appropriate cycle parking/storage to be provided for both alongside new homes and destination facilities within them. As set out in the Districtwide Design Guide SPD, cycle storage should be located where the bikes can easily be accessed, making it easier for them to be the default modal choice. This usually means near the front door, preferably in the front garden or front boundary area as part of a secure storage solution. As an alternative, small communal storage solutions may be appropriate in some cases.

Enabling multi-modal journeys

For many people, even if it is not possible for journeys they make to be made solely by walking or cycling, it may be able to play an increased role as a stage within a longer overall journey by other modes. Facilitating this requires a comprehensive view of different transport services and infrastructure and a range of trip types to be understood. Mobility hubs can play an important role in then aligning these different services and infrastructures at key nodes to enable multi-modal trips, thereby breaking down barriers to walking and cycling as a stage within these. Somerset West and Taunton and Somerset County Councils are working together to review opportunities for mobility hubs around Taunton and to define their purpose and the infrastructure they should accommodate. However, a mobility hub would typically be located on a key node interface between public transport corridors, active travel routes and the highways network, and accommodate a range of different transport modes including cycle parking, public transport stops with enhanced passenger waiting facilities, car parking with EV charging facilities, potentially car club / bike / e-bike / e-scooter hire facilities, and associated services.

Within the Garden Communities, opportunities exist to align services and infrastructure, particularly as part of local centres, and park and bus facilities. The Council will encourage applications to actively seek out and deliver on such opportunities where appropriate.

Hire schemes

Not everyone has access to their own bike, has the space to store one at home, or the opportunity to park it at their destination. Whilst the measures discussed above regarding cycle parking will help to address this, there will remain an unserved section of society and destination. On-demand hire schemes provide a potential mobility as a service solution. Taunton's e-scooter hire trial has proven very successful. Opportunities to expand the coverage of this scheme and to enable a similar bike-hire scheme are actively being explored.

Behaviour change

Most people currently choose to travel by car, and this has become so ingrained in society that it is now the default choice, and it can sometimes be very difficult to see how alternative, more sustainable modes can realistically be chosen for these journeys. Car journeys will inevitably remain an important modal choice for some

people due to a wide range of reasons, indeed for less physically able people travel by car can be the only viable option for journeys they make. However, with the delivery of the appropriate infrastructure, in many cases people will be able to shift their modal choices to more sustainable and active modes. Securing individual and societal behavioural change can be difficult but is required to fully realise the potential of delivering this infrastructure.

Retaining and creating constraints

For decades, transport planning has focused on removing barriers to vehicular travel – focusing on maintaining vehicular flow, resolving congestion pinch points and increasing capacity of highways. However, it is well documented that this approach serves to increase the attractiveness of driving by car and the levels of vehicular use. In order to increase the attractiveness of walking and cycling, this approach cannot continue. Constraints to the convenience and speed of travelling by private car can actively push people towards seeking alternative, faster and more sustainable modal choices. As such, the delivery of active travel infrastructure such as that set out in this plan will increasingly be seen as a part of the solution for addressing highway congestion.

Through the Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Action Plan, the Council has committed to reviewing the Taunton Parking Strategy with a view to enabling drivers to use more sustainable modes.

Simultaneously, the creation of new constraints including traffic calming, reduced speeds and filtered permeability will be key to the safe and effective delivery of many walking and cycle routes. This will not only improve the environment for walking and cycling, but also create opportunities for better placemaking, as set out in the Council's Public Realm Design Guide SPD.

There is of course an appropriate balance to be found here recognising the rural area in which Taunton sits, and the need for certain users to be able to travel by car including those who are physically less able. However, the need to move towards more sustainable modes is now imperative and as such the balance has shifted.

Other walking and cycling routes

This plan is focused on connecting the Garden Communities. Whilst a strong network of routes is proposed by a combination of this plan and the LCWIP which cover a significant proportion of the town, there will be other routes both internal and external to the town (such as south towards Corfe, west towards Wiveliscombe and east towards North Curry), that people feel also need to be considered which perhaps don't directly relate to the Garden Communities. The Council remains open to considering further routes. However, considering the large number of routes already identified and the funding shortfall already identified, it will be vital for the Council to prioritise route delivery appropriately.

Next Steps

Going forward, all of the routes identified within this plan will need to go through concept planning, business case development and detailed design stages ahead of delivery. As routes progress through this design path, it may be that some routes fall

away as infeasible once more detailed issues are understood, or need tweaking to overcome such issues. Detailed designs will need to comply with regulatory and legislative requirements and make necessary assessments under Equalities, Construction Design and Management (CDM) regulations and Road Safety Audit where required. All designs affecting or to be adopted as public highways will need to be agreed with the Highways Authority.

The overall network of routes has an aspirational element to it. It sets out the extent of routes which are likely needed to meet our Climate Emergency commitments and Garden Town Vision, both of which realistically necessitate transformational change. However, the overall cost associated with delivering all of the “core” routes only is likely in the region of £124-£150 million. As such, delivery of the plan as a whole is heavily reliant upon external funding and developer negotiations. By identifying the routes, the Council is not bound to deliver any of them. We will need to prioritise any delivery efforts and funding that is available.

Developer negotiations

A key purpose of this plan is to provide the evidence base to enable negotiation with developers for developer contributions towards scheme delivery.

Applicants/developers of relevant schemes will need to actively respond to the contents of this plan as part of planning applications, showing how they can and will accommodate the necessary movements to key destinations via active travel. In appropriate cases, the Council will require applicants to provide / fund concept planning of relevant routes, will seek to secure the necessary connections into and through development sites, and will seek proportionate financial contribution towards overall route delivery where justified. As set out in chapter 5, due to the differences in the planning status for each of the Garden Communities, the scale of opportunity in this regard varies from one site to another.

In accordance with regulations and Government guidance, delivery and/or funding of routes and associated infrastructure relevant to any Garden Community will generally be secured via Section 106 Agreement where it is justified as necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; directly related to the development; and fairly related in scale and kind.

Other funding sources

This plan and subsequent business case development will be used to evidence and justify funding bids for other funding sources, both internally and externally.

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) presents one opportunity for the Council to potentially financially contribute towards delivery. However, CIL has only ever been intended to contribute part of the funding towards the delivery of infrastructure. As evidenced by the Council’s Infrastructure Funding Statements, there is a significant funding shortfall across all required infrastructure projects. As such, additional funding sources will need to be considered including:

- Council budget setting,
- Garden Town Capacity Fund and Capital Fund,
- Town and parish councils,

- Private sector investment, and
- Government funding opportunities.

The Government has had a step change in its approach to walking and cycling over the last few years and committed to significant funding being made available towards delivery of active travel infrastructure. The Department for Transport's new executive agency, Active Travel England has been set up to ensure that this, and wider transport investment, is well spent, and to help raise the standard of cycling and walking infrastructure to align with Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20 as far as at all possible.

In addition to this, opportunities may arise from other sources based on the contribution the delivery of such infrastructure may have towards addressing specific issues, for instance: air quality; physical inactivity; poor health and wellbeing issues; carbon emissions; safe routes to school.

Having proposals sufficiently developed and ready to go is essential for making the best of these funding opportunities when they are announced, often with short timescales to submit bids. This reinforces the importance of this plan and subsequent concept planning and business case development.

Review

In line with Government guidance this plan will be reviewed and updated every four or five years to reflect progress made with implementation.

It may be appropriate to review and update in advance of this if there are significant changes in local circumstances, such as the publication of new policies or strategies, major new development sites, or new sources of funding.

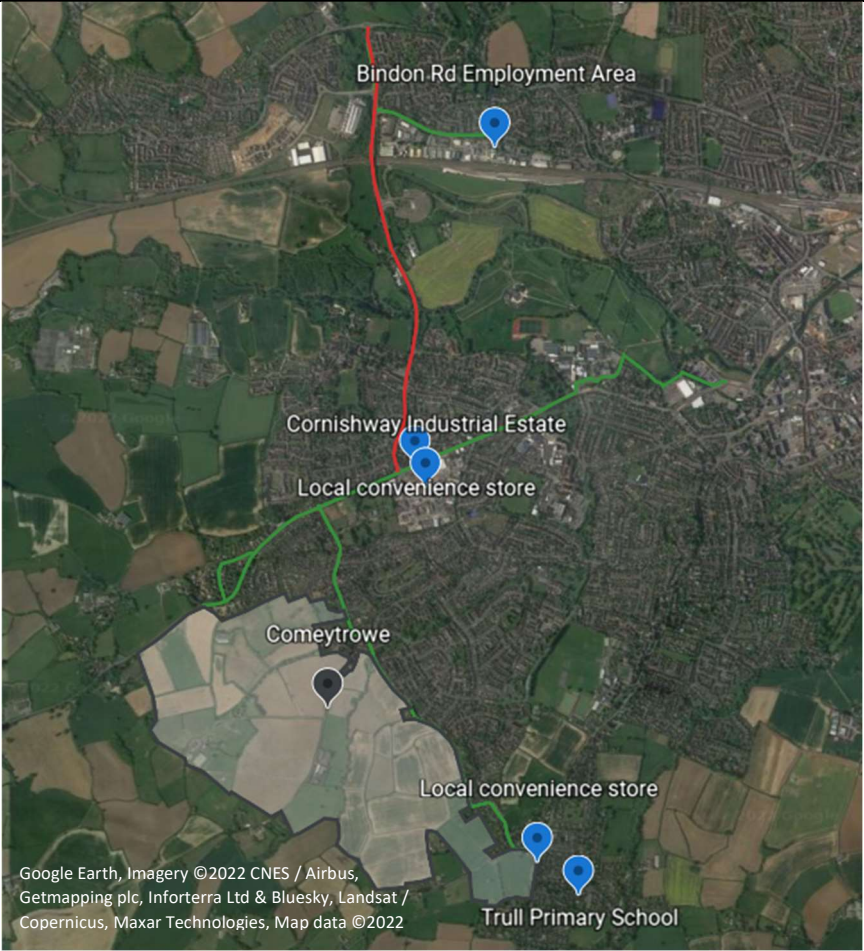
The principle indicators for monitoring delivery of the plan as a whole will be as follows:

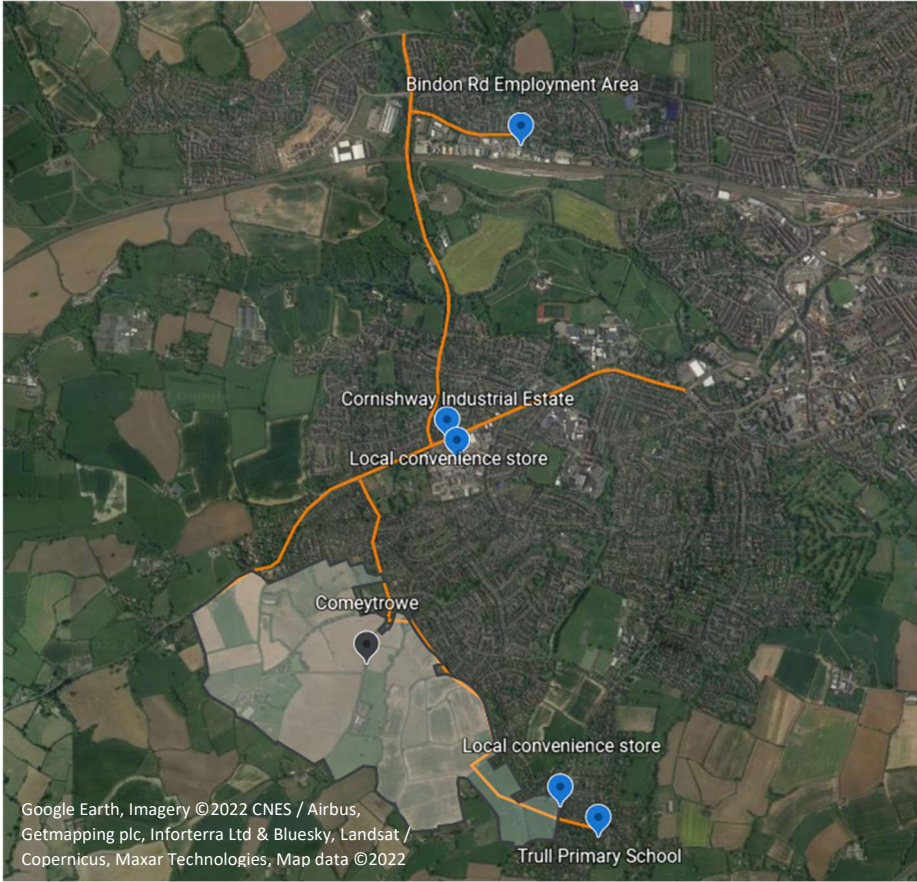
- Routes and specific interventions delivered.
- Funding contributions secured from new developments towards route delivery.
- Direct infrastructure delivery secured from new developments.
- Funding contributions secured from other sources.
- Planning applications approved with a reasonable and proportionate response to this plan.
- Progress made towards the target of doubling levels of cycling and walking across the town.
- Progress made towards achieving "Beacon Cycling Town" or similar such status.

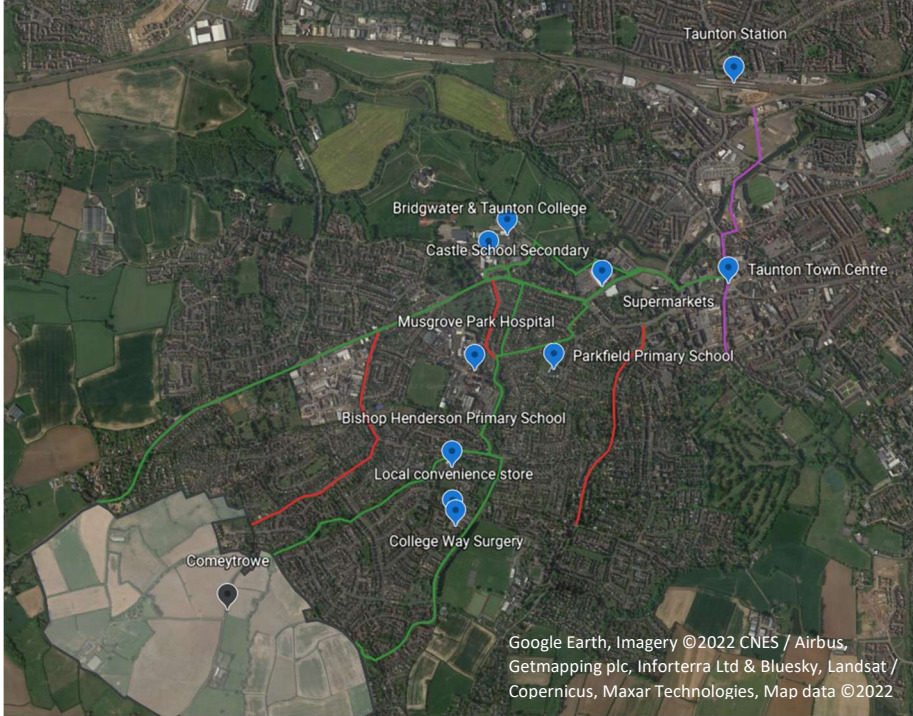
In addition to this, as specific projects develop for individual routes/interventions, more detailed indicators will need to be established around the specific issues each project is looking to address.

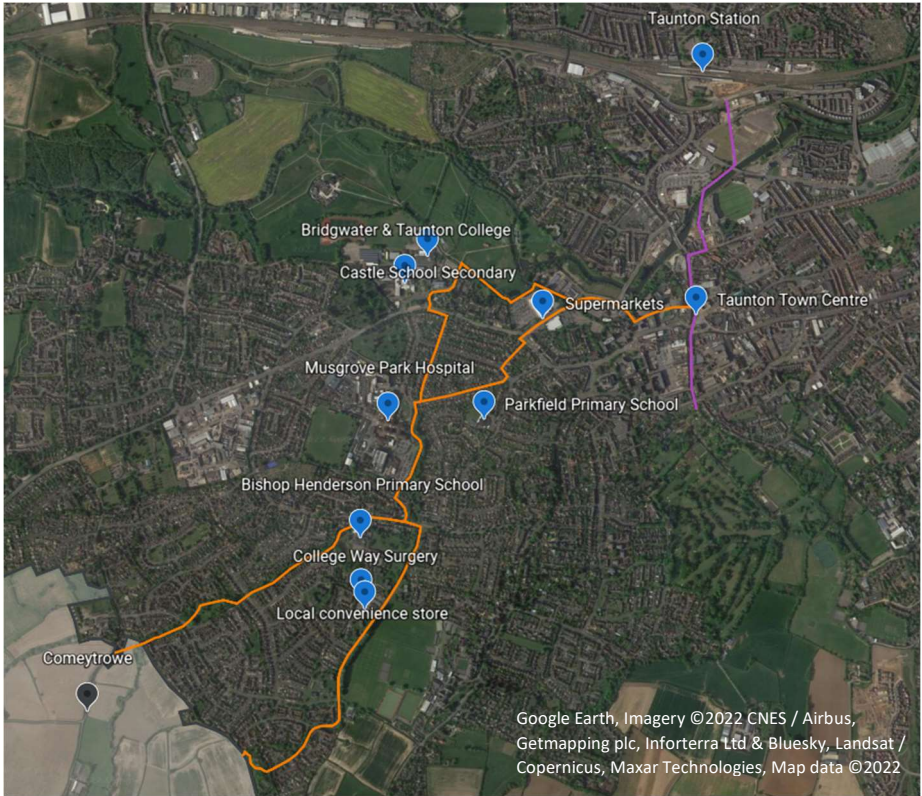
Appendix A – Route Auditing

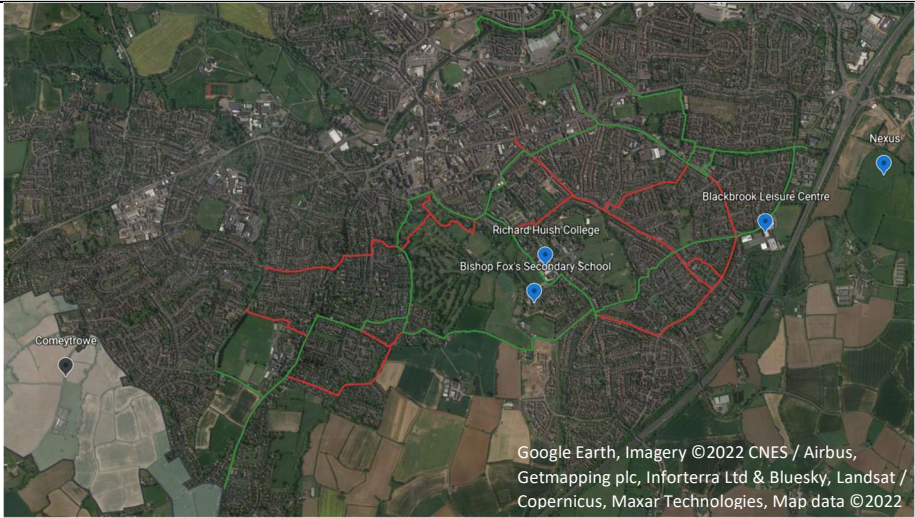
Comeytrowe/ Trull

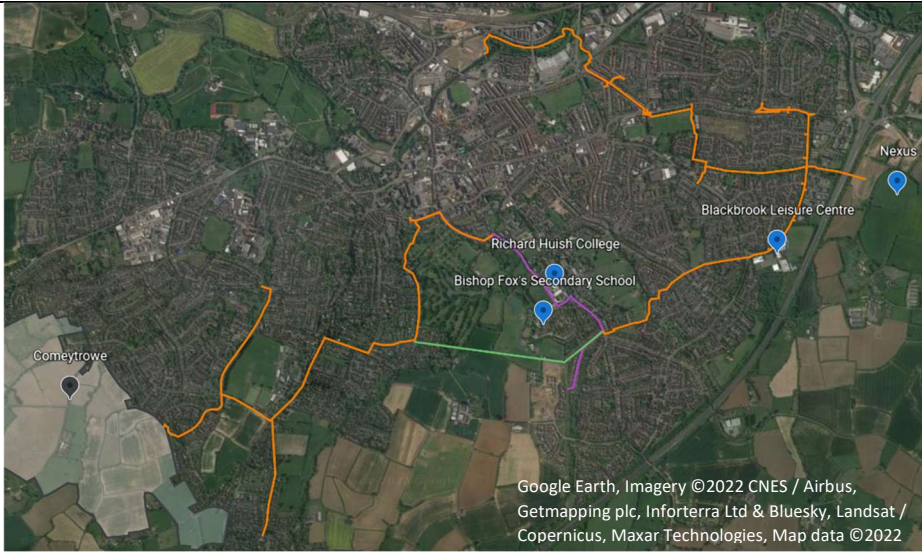
Comeytrowe/ Trull: North and South-east Connections	
Services to connect	Cornishway Industrial Estate, local convenience store and Bindon Road Employment Area, Trull Primary School and convenience store.
Options initially considered and audited <i>Green = audited routes</i> <i>Red = discounted before auditing</i>	 <p>Google Earth, Imagery ©2022 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Inforterra Ltd & Bluesky, Landsat / Copernicus, Maxar Technologies, Map data ©2022</p>
Services routes intercept	Cornishway Industrial Estate and local convenience store. Bindon Road Employment Area, Trull Primary School and Trull local convenience store have not been connected.
Other routes considered	<p><u>Green Routes</u></p> <p>Comeytrowe Rd/ Ln = the audit found potential for intervention along northern sections, however there is little scope for intervention along the southern section of Comeytrowe Road and Dipford Lane due to a narrow carriageway width and existing settlements. Therefore, the emerging route aimed to divert the southern section onto Comeytrowe Spine Road, which also improves connections to/from Trull.</p> <p>Wellington Road inc. Stonegallows = access immediately north of the new roundabout for Comeytrowe Spine Road has limited width, is fast and dangerous. Initially a crossing was considered into Stonegallows, but it was decided it didn't add much advantage and formalising a crossing of the A38 here would not be possible. The route also offers an additional connection to Bridgwater & Taunton College.</p>

	<p>Top of Silk Mills and Bindon Road (west) = after the March engagement, Bindon Road Employment Area was identified as a key destination. The audit identified potential for interventions in these locations, and it was decided to carry this route forward.</p>
	<p><u>Red routes</u></p> <p>Silk Mills Road = in relation to Bindon Rd Employment Area, which was initially not considered key, Silk Mills was discounted. However, after the public engagement the route was carried forward with potential to extend the existing provision in the southern section. Also connects Staplegrove and Ford Farm to facilities in SW Taunton.</p>
Emerging routes	 <p>Google Earth, Imagery ©2022 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Inforterra Ltd & Bluesky, Landsat / Copernicus, Maxar Technologies, Map data ©2022</p>
Initial recommendations for interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-way cycle lane and additional crossings along western section of Bindon Road connecting to eastern section. • Filtered permeability to be implemented at a suitable point along Comeytrowe Road to stop through-vehicular traffic, allowing only active travel through and facilitate safe crossing to/from the Comeytrowe site as part of route 8. • Wellington Road interventions to be confirmed with bus priority measures, however, potential for two-way cycle lane. • Current Silk Mills provision is basic segregation and in places shared use. Southern end has none at all. Interventions would include extending the existing off road provision to Wellington Rd utilising verges, likely to a reduced standard. • Segregated cycleway along Heron Rd where possible.

Comeytrove/ Trull: North-east Connections	
Services to connect	College Way Surgery and convenience store, Bishop Henderson Primary School, Musgrove Park Hospital, Parkfield Primary School, Castle Secondary School, Bridgwater & Taunton College, Tangier supermarkets, Taunton Town Centre and Taunton Station.
Options initially considered and audited	
Services routes intercept	All destinations have been connected – Taunton Station has been linked up by a separate project ‘FHSF Station to Vivary’ link.
Other routes considered	<p><u>Green Routes</u></p> <p>Galmington Stream = capacity for walking and cycling interventions by upgrading the existing path to LTN1/20 standards with some exceptions and links up with and extends the LCWIP “red route”, therefore the route was carried forward.</p> <p>College Way = capacity to extend the existing cycle path south to Comeytrove Park and implement cycle infrastructure through the park following the existing path.</p> <p>Marshalsea Walk = already an issue at peak times so there is an opportunity to resolve existing issues.</p> <p>Eastern section of Wellington Road = opportunity to extend route to Tangier by upgrading the existing footway and cycleway.</p> <p><u>Red Routes</u></p> <p>Comeytrove Ln/Cornish Way/Wellington Rd = much of route runs parallel to and duplicates existing Galmington Stream route. Northern section of Galmington Rd is narrow. Doesn't present major advantage over LCWIP Wellington Rd route.</p>


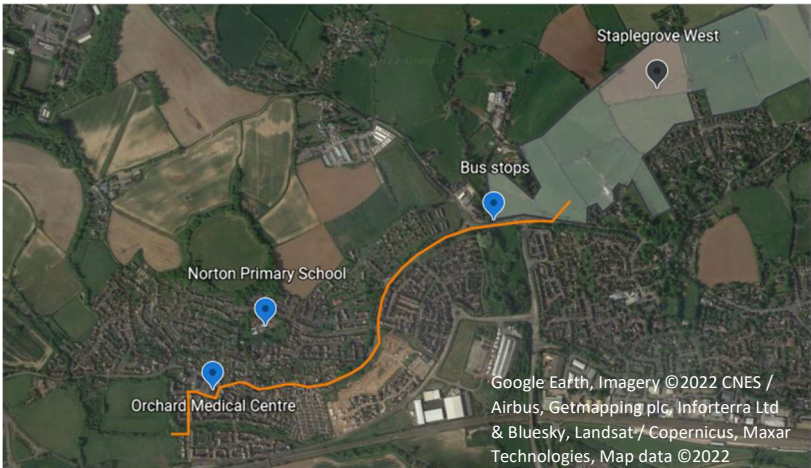
	<p>Ashley Road = Relies on third party (MPH) land, otherwise not that different to Henley Rd option.</p> <p>Trull Rd/Park Street = Trull Road likely too narrow and too steep a gradient for most. Compass Hill a major hotspot in need of significant walking and cycling improvements, but not directly related to Comeytrove development.</p>
<p>Routes carried forward</p> <p><i>Wellington Road also carried forward as shown previously.</i></p>	
Initial recommendations for interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-way cycle lane for majority of Galmington Stream route and with exceptions along Parkfield Drive, with advisory lanes and Manor Rd/ Henley Rd with quiet street treatment. • Careful treatment of route through Comeytrove Park to minimise loss of trees, avoid conflict with play area users and connect into Comeytrove site at the most appropriate place. • Raised table priority crossings over Queensway and Claremont Drive. • Widening and resurfacing of Galmington Stream path where possible noting tree constraints. • Plugging in Galmington Stream route to the Comeytrove site and introducing traffic calming/ filtered permeability on Comeytrove Road to achieve a safe crossing. • Widening and resurfacing of route through Longrun Meadow with potential for a new provision bypassing Marshalsea Walk to be explored. However, this would involve construction of a new bridge, increasing costs and potentially relying on third party land for a small section. • Two-way cycleway and priority crossings on Castle Street. • Extension of shared space surfacing along Tower Street.

Comeytrowe/ Trull: East Connections	
Services to connect	Bishop Fox's Secondary School, Richard Huish College, Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Nexus 25.
Options initially considered and audited <i>Green = audited routes</i> <i>Red = routes discounted before auditing</i>	 <p>Google Earth, Imagery ©2022 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Inforterra Ltd & Bluesky, Landsat / Copernicus, Maxar Technologies, Map data ©2022</p>
Services routes intercept	From College Way, all destinations have been connected.
Other routes considered	<p><u>Green Routes</u></p> <p>Honiton Road = constrained width with little opportunity for walking and cycling interventions. Wild Oak Lane offers greater opportunity and also provides a connection from southern part of Comeytrowe and Trull to Nexus/ Town Centre.</p> <p>Claremont Lane/ Trull Road/ Vivary Park/ Upper High Street/ Stockwell Stream/ Holway/ Blackbrook Way = potential for walking and cycling interventions for the most part and most direct route outside of green wedge. Also aligns with SCC Killams Link and connects to Richard Huish College and Bishop Fox's Secondary, which will not need to be taken forward in this project.</p> <p>Alma Street/ Queen Street = Queen Street route is less direct than Blackbrook Route and doesn't intercept Richard Huish College or Bishop Fox's. Little capacity for intervention also likely.</p> <p>Lisieux Way (with two options for Blackbrook connection) = connects to Queen Street route, not taken forward, and while it offers potential for improvement, in relation to Comeytrowe it is less significant.</p> <p>Blackbrook/ Firepool = significant in terms of the connection underneath the M5 to Nexus.</p>

	<p><u>Red Routes</u></p> <p>College Way to Trull Road via Hoveland Drive = route requires third party land and misses opportunity to improve connectivity to Trull.</p> <p>Queens Drive to Sherford Road path = more direct than Trull Rd - Sherford Rd option and well used by walkers, but too narrow and reliant upon third party land for expanding streamside footpath.</p> <p>Sherford Road (east) = more direct than Churchill Way option, but very narrow with no real opportunity to improve.</p> <p>Galmington Road to Wilton = Links in with Galmington Stream and College Way route and possibly more direct than some options, but very steep gradient and Trull Road particularly narrow at this point.</p> <p>Links through Vivary Park = both are existing routes which will continue to be used, but which are locked after dusk.</p> <p>Stockwell Stream to Lisieux Way = reasonably direct route compared to Queen Street route but hillier and less obvious, also does not align with the GI opportunity across the Vivary green wedge.</p> <p>Chestnut Drive = probably space to run infrastructure through verges along most of length, but less direct adding extra 150m to journey. Slightly less elevation gain, but over a longer distance.</p>
<p>Routes carried forward</p> <p><i>Routes also provide an alternative connection to the town centre linking onto FHSF Station to Vivary route</i></p>	 <p>Google Earth, Imagery ©2022 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Inforterra Ltd & Bluesky, Landsat / Copernicus, Maxar Technologies, Map data ©2022</p>
<p>Initial recommendations for interventions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resurfacing, lighting and widening of path along Claremont Lane depending on land ownership. • Quiet road treatment and reduction of speed limits on Wild Oak Lane with traffic calming scheme to be considered. • Potential to change environment outside schools on Trull Rd to highlight presence of cyclists and pedestrians. • Potential for cycle paths on Churchill Rd and parking management on Sherford Rd to free up space. • Shared path on Upper High Street connecting Killams Link. • Direct/ surfaced walking and cycle path through green wedge.

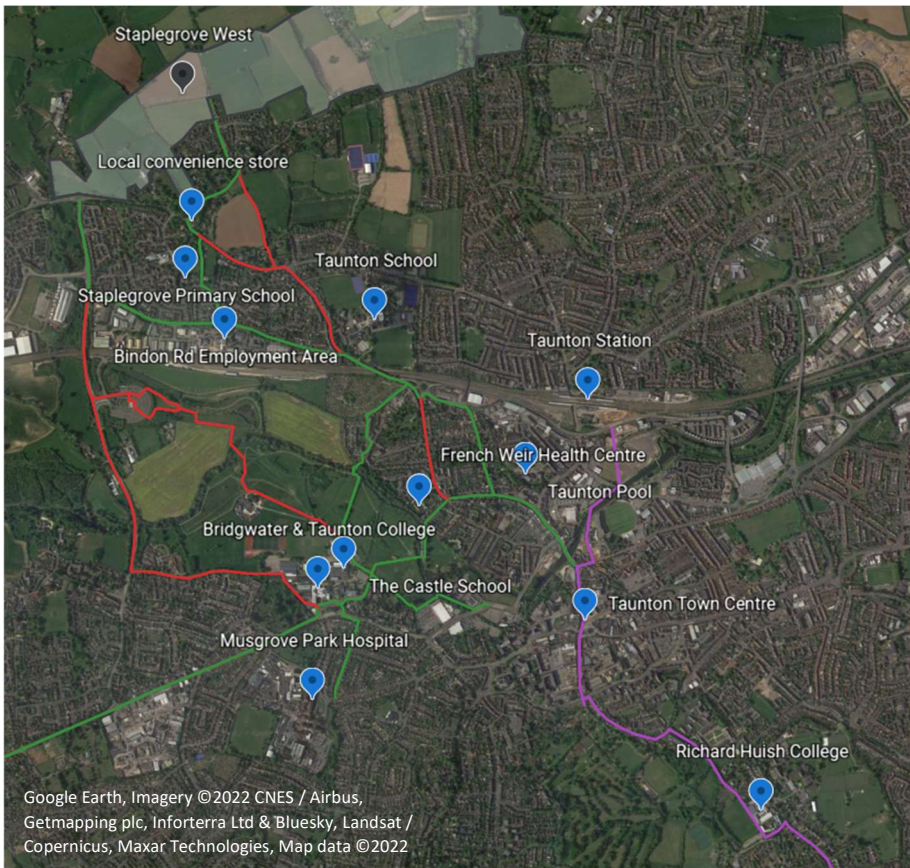
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additional signage and management of vegetation between South Road and Hillyfields.• Management of parking on Haywood Road to free up space.• Extension of cycle path along Blackbrook Way and reduction of junction width at Blackbrook Leisure Centre.
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Staplegrove West

Staplegrove West: South-west Connections	
Services to connect	Orchard Medical Centre, Norton Fitzwarren Primary School and bus stops around Cross Keys
Options initially considered and audited	
Services routes intercept	All destinations connected – Norton Primary School via quiet roads.
Other routes considered	<p>Staplegrove Road/ B3227 = little ability for LTN1/20 compliant or segregated intervention along here with high speeds and no overlooking. Better to focus on access from Staplegrove Spine Road. Also presents the opportunity to downgrade the existing B3227 through Norton Fitzwarren village centre with the bypass of Great Western Way, which is part of a wider placemaking scheme.</p> <p>Manor Road = very narrow road with no ability for LTN1/20 compliant or segregated intervention justifying focus on Spine Road.</p>
Routes carried forward	
Initial recommendations for interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two-way segregated cycleway from Cross Keys Roundabout to Norton Fitzwarren village centre, stopping just west the new development along the south of the B3227. Greater cycle and walking priority on Cross Keys and Silk Mills roundabouts including a connection between the two, to be developed through the schemes coming forward.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction of speed limits through Norton village centre, potential for on-road advisory lanes or placemaking scheme.
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Staplegrove West: South/ South-east 1 Connections

Services to connect	Staplegrove convenience store, Staplegrove Primary School, Bindon Road Employment Area, Bridgwater & Taunton College, Castle Secondary School and Musgrove Park Hospital, French Weir Health Centre, Taunton Station/pool/town centre and Richard Huish College
Options initially considered and audited	 <p>Google Earth, Imagery © 2022 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Inforterra Ltd & Bluesky, Landsat / Copernicus, Maxar Technologies, Map data © 2022</p>
Services routes intercept	All destinations connected. Use FHSF Station to Vivary Link for Taunton Town Centre and Trenchard Way for Taunton Station.

Other routes considered	<p><u>Green Routes</u></p> <p>Manor Rd to Bridge Street = two-way cycleway can be delivered along majority of route, however, not up to LTN1/20 standards and in some areas shared paths will need required. Width constrained along Manor Rd with church walls so route could be adjusted to plug into Staplegrove via a proposed southern path with an additional cycle link and then also connects to the West Deane Way.</p> <p>Silk Mills and Bindon Rd (west) = route provides alternative link from Staplegrove Spine Road and links from Form Farm with capacity for two-way segregated provision. Also crucial for links to SW Taunton. Staplegrove Rd/ French Weir Ave = provides access to Bridgwater & Taunton College and the Health Centre with potential for intervention.</p> <p>Longrun Meadow = route provides little benefit as it doesn't connect to French Weir Health Centre and offers poor natural surveillance.</p> <p><u>Red Routes</u></p> <p>Manor Road through green space to Taunton School = runs through third party land, isn't well-overlooked, interventions unlikely along Staplegrove Road due to limited carriageway width. Doesn't connect Bindon Road Employment Area, Staplegrove Primary School and convenience store and West Deane Way.</p> <p>Northern section of Staplegrove Road from Manor Rd to Staplegrove Village Hall = limited carriageway width for meaningful provision of walking and cycling infrastructure. Does not connect to Staplegrove Primary School and Bindon Road Employment Area.</p> <p>Staplegrove Rd to French Weir Ave = limited carriageway width for walking and cycling infrastructure, alternative route provides opportunity for interventions on Chip Lane and connections onto pedestrianised section of Chip Lane and onto Trenchard Way.</p> <p>Longrun = route provides poor overlooking, which is of particular concern for likely younger users. Does not connect to French Weir Health Centre. Is likely to be brought forward through other projects.</p> <p>Silk Mills/ Heron Rd = initially didn't seem necessary due to existing provision on Silk Mills Rd and with the green route along Bindon Road. However, the March engagement identified that the access from Staplegrove West could be improved by being made more direct such as using Silk Mills Rd/Ln. Also crucial for links to SW Taunton.</p>
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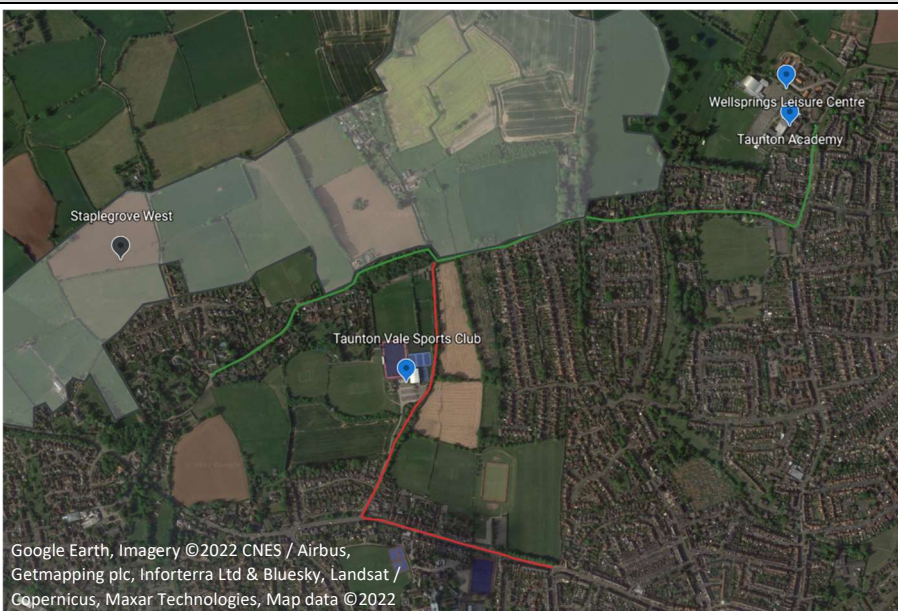
Additional routes

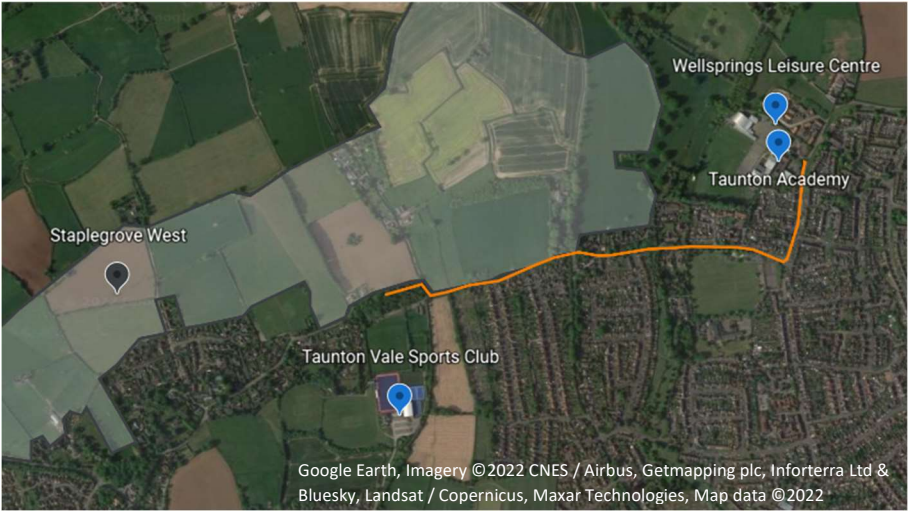
Aspiration for a bridge over the railway as per the GI Strategy instead of using the existing Staplegrove Rd rail bridge: however, it doesn't appear to contribute to route directness more so than the existing bridge and would be reliant on third party land. It would also be a significant cost for a bridge of this span over the widths of tracks in this location. The GI aspiration for a connection in this area remains, but it is not directly needed or relevant for this project.

Emerging routes

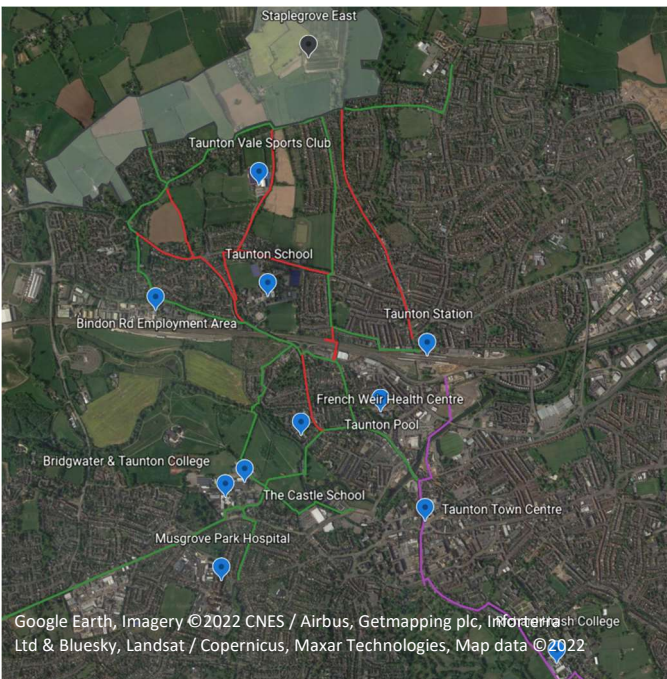
Initial recommendations for interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segregated two-way cycle path as far as possible, with reduced standard in locations where carriageway is restricted including Manor Rd and sections of Staplegrove Rd and Bindon Rd. Segregated cycle lane through French Weir Park. • On carriageway advisory cycle lanes along Bridge Street. • Improved crossing facilities to North Town Primary School. • Lighting and specified cycle path through Hudson Park. • Quiet road treatment along The Avenue and Heron Road. • Connection from Bridge Street to Morrisons Bridge ideally included, but reliant on third party land. • Extension of cycle path along southern section of Silk Mills Rd, which may consist of a shared walking and cycle path.
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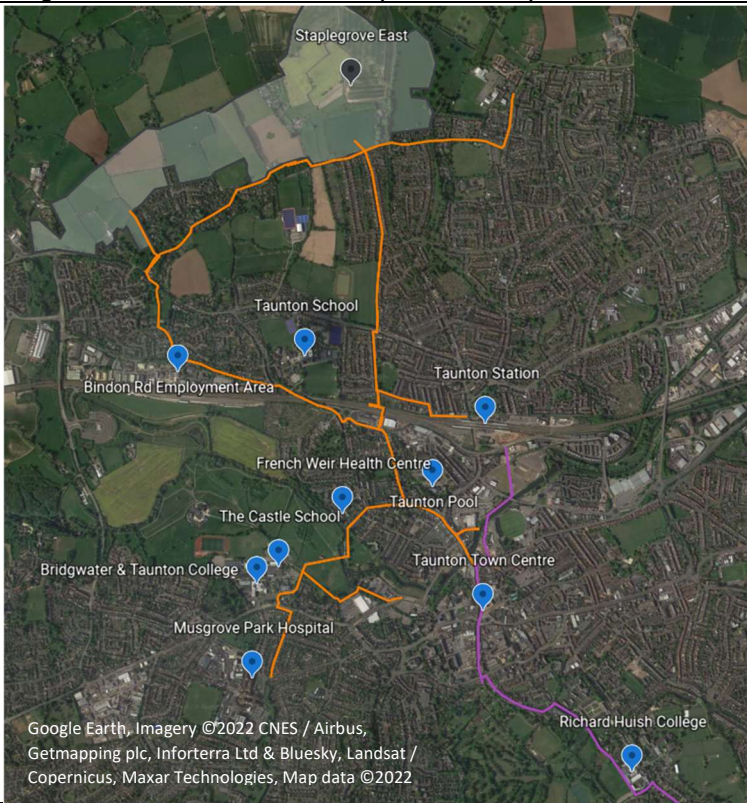
Staplegrove West: East/ South-east 2 Connections

Services to connect	Taunton Vale Sports Club, Taunton Academy and Wellsprings Leisure Centre
Options initially considered and audited	 <p>Google Earth, Imagery ©2022 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Inforterra Ltd & Bluesky, Landsat / Copernicus, Maxar Technologies, Map data ©2022</p>
Services routes intercept	Taunton Academy and Wellsprings Leisure Centre – Taunton Vale Sports Club accessed via secured Gipsy Lane path.
Other routes considered	<p><u>Green Route</u></p> <p>Manor Rd/ Corkscrew Ln/ Hope Corner Ln/ Cheddon Rd = potential for intervention along Corkscrew Ln, Hope Corner Ln and Cheddon Rd although not LTN1/20 compliant. Constraints along Corkscrew Ln north of allotments and Whitmore Rd with shared provision required. Role of Manor Road still undetermined so access to destinations will be preferred via the Spine Road.</p> <p><u>Red Route</u></p> <p>Gipsy Lane = Taunton Vale Sports Club will be connected by Staplegrove Spine Road and via Gipsy Lane improvements already secured via S106, which is part of a separate project.</p>

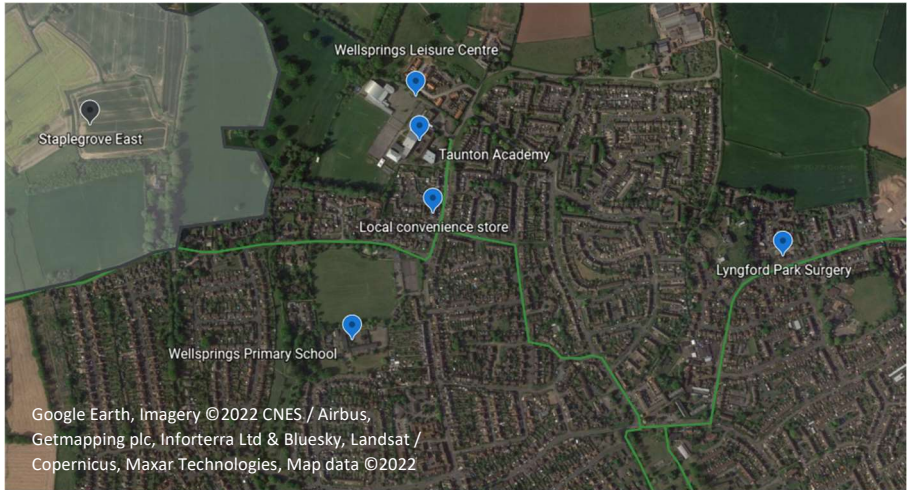
<p>Emerging routes</p>	
<p>Initial recommendations for interventions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crossing from Whitmore Lane junction and existing provision to Gipsy Lane and existing shared space path along south side of Corkscrew Lane. • Shared space path along Corkscrew Lane with filtered permeability to free up space. • Two-way cycle lane east of Clifford Ave to Kingston Road with improved greater-priority crossing. • Shared space provision to Beech Cl and two-way cycle path to Cheddon Rd with crossing and up to Taunton Academy.


Staplegrove East

Staplegrove East: South/ South-west Connections	
Services to connect	Taunton Vale Sports Club, Taunton School, Bindon Road Employment Area, French Weir Health Centre, Bridgwater & Taunton College, Castle School, Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton Pool, Town Centre and Richard Huish College
Options initially considered and audited	
Services routes intercept	All destinations can be accessed via audited routes – would be beneficial to include Rowbarton Bridge as a route carried forward.
Other routes considered <i>Includes those that have not been previously discussed.</i>	<p><u>Green Routes</u></p> <p>Manor Road = spine road delivery provides opportunity for downgrading Manor Road/Corkscrew Lane, with walking and cycling improvements as part of a wider placemaking scheme.</p> <p>Clifford Ave = potential for intervention, well-used desire line at present and also identified in LCWIP as a “purple route”. Constrained around south-eastern leg, however offers more-direct link to station.</p> <p><u>Red Routes</u></p> <p>Gipsy Lane from Corkscrew Lane to Greenway Road = Gipsy Lane improvements already secured via S106 and key for access to recreational facilities including Taunton Vale Sports Club. Greenway Rd dog-leg not as direct as Clifford Avenue option. Clifford Avenue has already been identified as a key route through the LCWIP work.</p> <p>Greenway Road and turning south along an existing PROW west of Taunton School = Existing PROW, but narrow, with no scope for widening and still have to tackle narrowest part of Staplegrove Rd.</p> <p>Kingston Road = more direct for Staplegrove East, but likely too narrow in places and significant complexities around the Greenway Rd junction / Rowbarton Gyratory.</p>

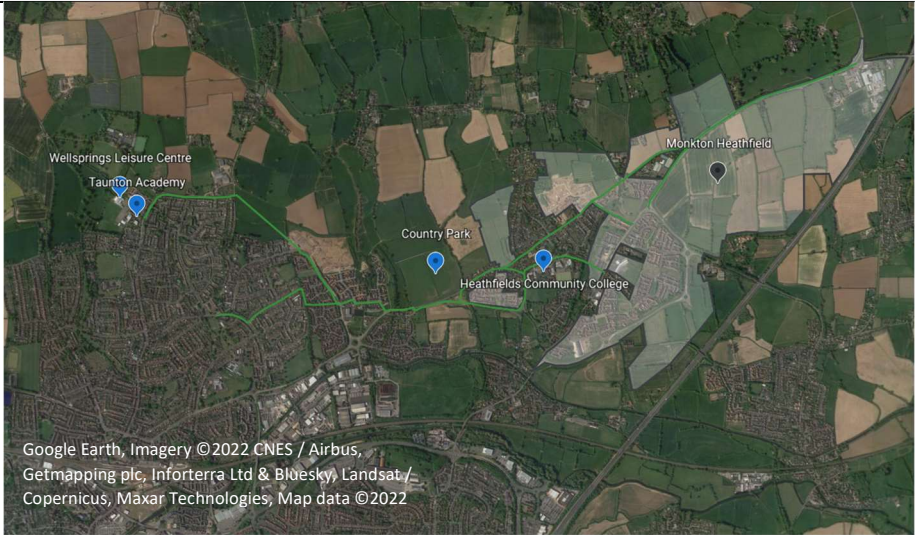
	Rowbarton Bridge = key part of the existing network, important part in linking future routes but is incapable of improvements.
Emerging routes	
Initial recommendations for interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet street treatment and speed reductions on Clifford Ave. • Vegetation management along playing fields path and potential to obtain land from Taunton School to widen path. • Opportunity for pedestrian/ cycle access only on Railway St. • Traffic calming measures and potential filtered permeability along Manor Road as part of placemaking scheme.


Staplegrove East: South-east/ East Connections

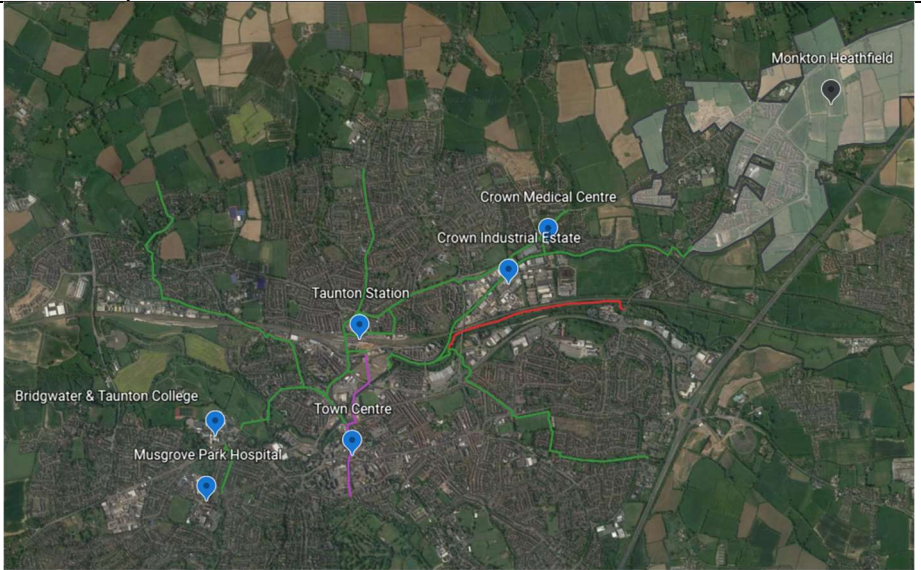
Services to connect	Wellsprings Primary School, Taunton Academy, Wellsprings Leisure Centre, Cheddon Road convenience store, Lyngford Park Surgery.
Options initially considered and audited	

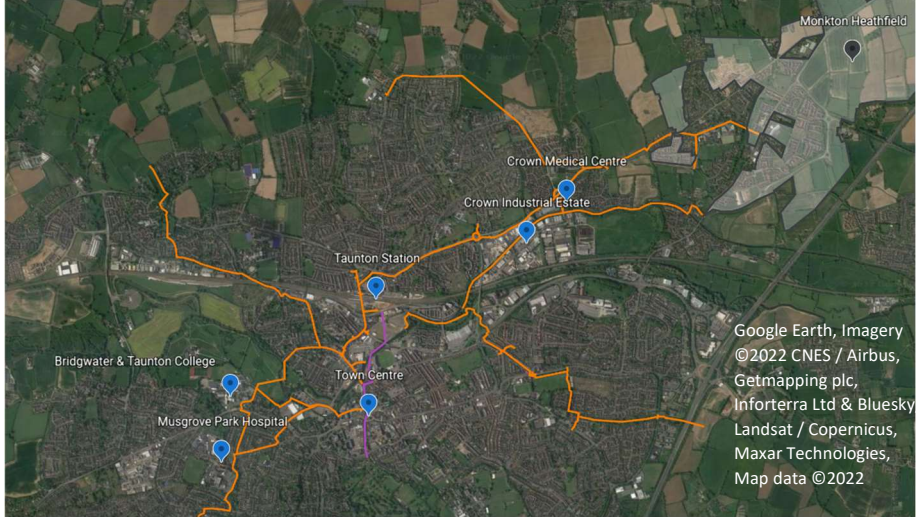
Services routes intercept	All destinations connected by audited routes.
Other routes considered <i>Includes those that have not been previously discussed.</i>	<p><u>Green Routes</u></p> <p>St Albans Place to Eastwick Road via St Patricks Rd = intervention likely to include quiet road treatment with additional signage, reduction of speed limits and traffic calming measures.</p> <p>Selworthy Road = potential for two-way cycle path and reduction of speed limits. Extend route south along Bircham Rd for a connection to Lyngford Park Primary School.</p>
Emerging routes	
Initial recommendations for interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Staplegrove West: East/ South-east 2 connections for Hope Corner Lane/ Cheddon Road interventions. • Quiet road treatment along St Albans and St Patricks Rd. • Extension of two-way segregated cycle lane on Eastwick Rd along Dorchester/ Bodmin Rd connecting St Michaels Cres. • Two-way segregated cycle lane along Selworthy Road. • Quiet route treatment and surface changes on Bircham Rd.


Monkton Heathfield

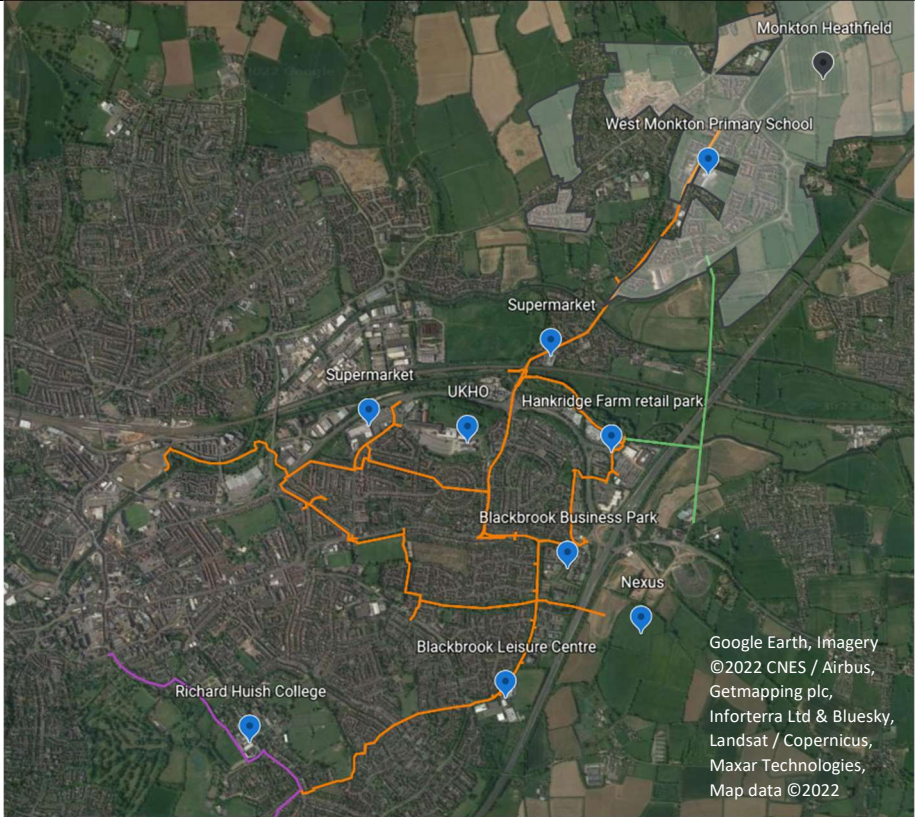
Monkton Heathfield: West Connections	
Services to connect	Maidenbrook Country Park, Wellsprings Leisure Centre and Taunton Academy
Options initially considered and audited	
Services routes intercept	All destinations connected with the addition of Heathfields Community College and Nerrols local centre.
Other options considered	<p><u>Green Routes</u></p> <p>Monkton Heathfield Road inc. Bawler Rd = width of cycle route constrained through built up area, likely to be on-road provision. However, likely Bridgwater Rd will play a more important role for vehicles in the future and therefore offers opportunity for active travel.</p> <p>A38 (north) = currently no walking and cycling provision, however, walking and cycling is likely to be directed through Monkton Heathfield 2 site from the proposed P&R.</p> <p>Bridgwater Rd to Heathfields Community College/ Yallands Hill/ Nerrols/ Summerleaze Crescent/ Buckland Rd = potential for improving existing walking and cycling infrastructure along most part of route. Section from Nerrols Rd may be better directed through Nerrols to connect the local centre and up to Taunton Academy.</p> <p>Western Relief Road = likely to have missed the boat for the walking and cycling infrastructure delivered along here.</p>

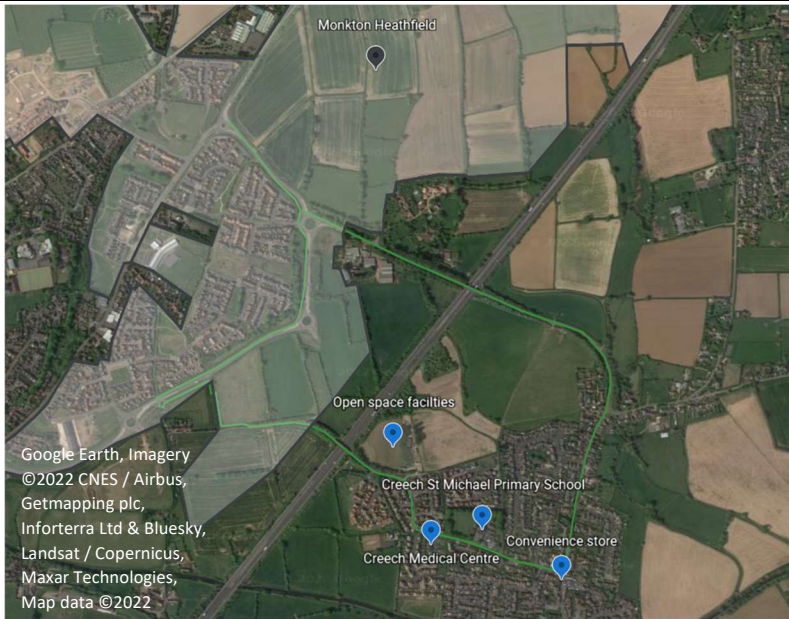

Emerging routes	 <p>Google Earth, Imagery ©2022 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Inforterra Ltd & Bluesky, Landsat / Copernicus, Maxar Technologies, Map data ©2022</p>
Initial recommendations for interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On road cycle provision with lining, signage and speed restrictions at 20mph on Monkton Heathfield Road. • Existing one-way on Milton Hill except for residential access could be made one-way to allow space for cycle provision. • Reduction of speed limit around Heathfield School with changes to surfacing and raised table junctions. • Widen cycle provision along Nerrols Drive and provide priority crossings over junctions. • Install two-way segregated cycleway on Cheddon Rd (north).

Monkton Heathfield: South-west Connections	
Services to connect	Crown Medical Centre, Crown Industrial Estate, Taunton Station, Taunton town centre, Bridgwater & Taunton College and Musgrove Park Hospital
Options initially considered and audited	
Services routes intercept	Using additional routes, destinations connected include Crown Medical Centre, Crown Industrial Estate, Taunton Station, the town centre, Bridgwater & Taunton College and Musgrove Park Hospital.
Other options considered	<u>Green Routes</u>

<p><i>Includes those that have not been previously discussed.</i></p>	<p>Priorswood Road = potential for LTN1/20 compliant infrastructure or at minimum a two-way segregated cycle path and traffic calming and speed reduction measures while addressing LCWIP “missing links”.</p> <p>Canal path = some opportunity for widening where impact to mature trees and vegetation permits. Potential for shared space path from canal to Priorswood Road roundabout and speed reductions. Path is a major desire line and will see increased use from users in MH.</p> <p>Heavitree Road = narrow with little opportunity for widening and lack of overlooking. Provides little benefit to Priorswood Road alternative.</p> <p>Station Road = potential for segregated cycleway along street and acts as a key “transformational” link for majority of garden communities. Also, opportunity for placemaking and traffic calming.</p> <p><u>Red Routes</u></p> <p>River Tone corridor = important GI link in need of improvement, but duplicates canal route without servicing industrial areas. More space to implement LTN1/20 compliant infrastructure and soft dig, but more isolated with difficulties likely on acceptability of lighting.</p>
<p>Emerging routes</p>	
<p>Initial recommendations for interventions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widening and resurfacing of canal path where space permits. • Cycle and walking priority measures on Nerrols Drive/ Priorswood Road roundabout and A358/ A3259 roundabout potential for “go-Dutch” designs. • LTN1/20 or two-way cycle lane along Priorswood Road and traffic calming. • Additional signage and encouraging slower speeds along canal and under bridges. Additional lighting to be reviewed. • Two-way segregated cycle way along Station Road.

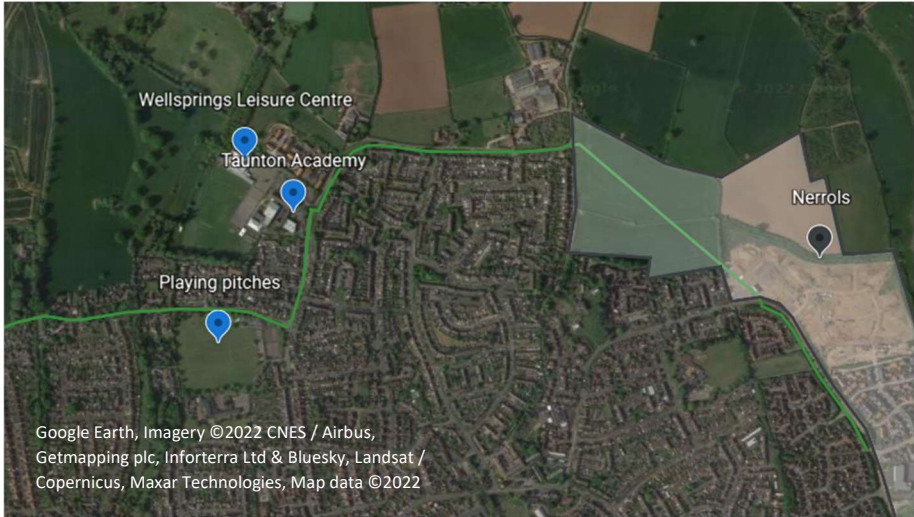
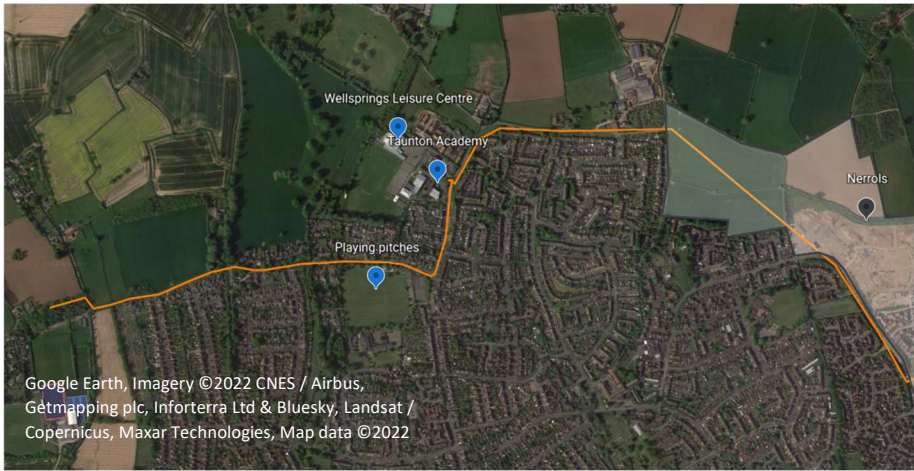
Monkton Heathfield: South Connections	
Services to connect	West Monkton Primary School, Aldi, Hankridge Farm Retail Park, UKHO, Asda, Blackbrook Business Park, Nexus 25, Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Richard Huish College
Options initially considered and audited	
Services routes intercept	All destinations connected – Richard Huish College accessed via SCC Killams Link.
Other options considered <i>Includes those that have not been previously discussed.</i>	<p><u>Green Routes</u></p> <p>Bridgwater Rd through via Halcon = the audit found potential for intervention along Bridgwater Road extending from existing infrastructure through Creech Castle along southern section of Bridgwater Road. The route also connects Halcon to links into the town centre and beyond or over to Nexus. The emerging route aimed to overcome width constraints through Roman Rd by following Moorland Rd, which also improves connections to UKHO and Asda.</p> <p>Toneway = mature trees running along route which act as a major constraint for delivering compliant infrastructure. The route is poorly overlooked and does not offer the opportunity to connect Halcon.</p> <p>Hankridge link = provides an opportunity for connecting Monkton Heathfield and Halcon to facilities in Hankridge and onto Nexus.</p> <p>Blackbrook Way/ Ilminster Rd = follows current desire line for accessing facilities on Blackbrook Way and onto Nexus. Potential for improving cycle provision from southern section of Blackbrook Way.</p> <p><u>Red Routes</u></p>

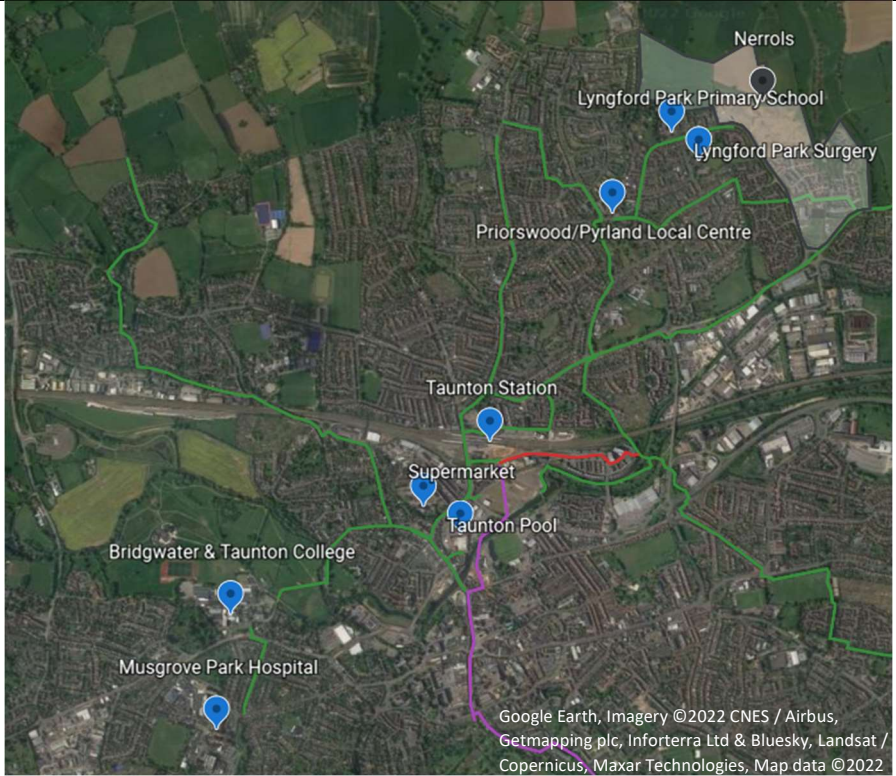
	<p>New A38 link: while it provides existing (shared) infrastructure, most MH2 movements are likely to come via Bridgwater Rd, which also services proposed district centre and primary school.</p> <p>River Tone corridor: duplicates Halcon route without servicing UKHO/deprived areas.</p> <p>Blackbrook/ Ilminster Rd = desire line is continuation along Blackbrook Way.</p> <p><u>Alternative Routes</u></p> <p>Monkton, Ruishton, Hankridge and Nexus link = potential for a more direct link between these destinations, exact route undetermined.</p>
Emerging routes	
Initial recommendations for interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off road cycle infrastructure to be provided along section of Bridgwater Rd south of Creech Castle and raised table junction or priority crossing at junction with Roman Rd. • Improving signage and lining through Roman/ Moorland Rd. • Remove planter blocking existing route and provide cycle cut-through as modal filter. • Off road cycle infrastructure along Wheatley Crescent. • Two-way cycle route to be provided along Hankridge link in additional to footway. • Restrict parking and reduce speeds along Deane Gate Ave with crossing facilities to connect Blackbrook Business Park. • Off road two-way cycleway along Blackbrook Way with cycle priority crossing at Lisieux Way roundabout and reduction of junction width with Blackbrook Leisure Centre.


Monkton Heathfield: South-east Connections	
Services to connect	Creech St Michael including primary school, medical centre, convenience store and open space facilities
Options initially considered and audited	
Services routes intercept	All destinations connected by routes audited.
Other options considered	<p><u>Green Routes</u></p> <p>Langaller Lane to Creech St Michael = constrained width of carriageway unlikely to deliver LTN1/20 compliant infrastructure with little overlooking for most part. Does not connect to services and Route along Hyde Ln would continue to be used to access facilities.</p> <p>Hyde Ln = cycle infrastructure potential, however, route could be made more direct by connecting from 'middle' roundabout.</p>
Emerging routes	


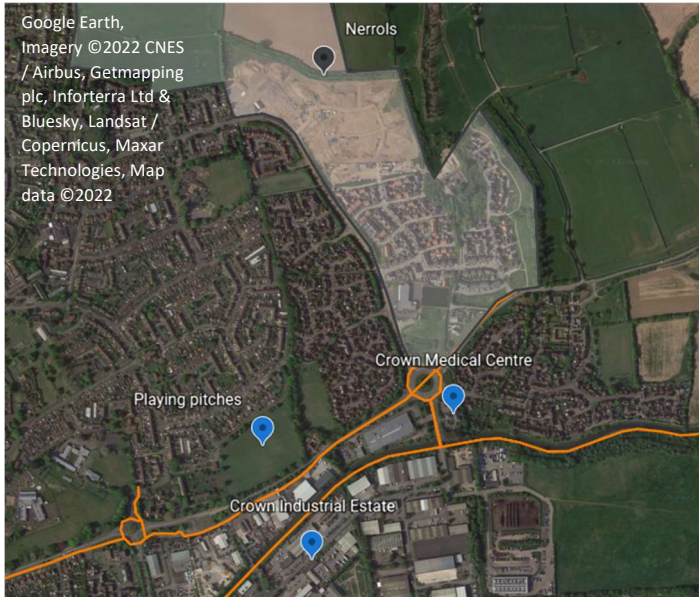
Initial recommendations for interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two way segregated cycle lane through green space with lighting and signposting to be provided as part of potential development of this site. • Possible priority crossing facilities at A38 roundabout(s). • On-road cycle lanes over M5 bridge on Hyde Lane connecting to existing off-road provision around play facilities. • Speed limit to be extended to all of Hyde Lane at 20mph with additional signing, lining provided and raised table junctions.
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Nerrols

Nerrols: West Connections	
Services to connect	Taunton Academy, Wellsprings Leisure Centre and Taunton Green playing pitches
Options initially considered and audited	 <p>Google Earth, Imagery ©2022 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Inforterra Ltd & Bluesky, Landsat / Copernicus, Maxar Technologies, Map data ©2022</p>
Services routes intercept	All destinations are connected.
Other options considered	<p><u>Green Routes</u></p> <p>Discussed in relation to Staplegrove West east connections and Monkton Heathfield west connections. Routes allow a connection between Staplegrove, Nerrols and Monkton Heathfield.</p>
Emerging routes	 <p>Google Earth, Imagery ©2022 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Inforterra Ltd & Bluesky, Landsat / Copernicus, Maxar Technologies, Map data ©2022</p>
Initial recommendations for interventions	See Staplegrove east connections and Monkton Heathfield west connections.

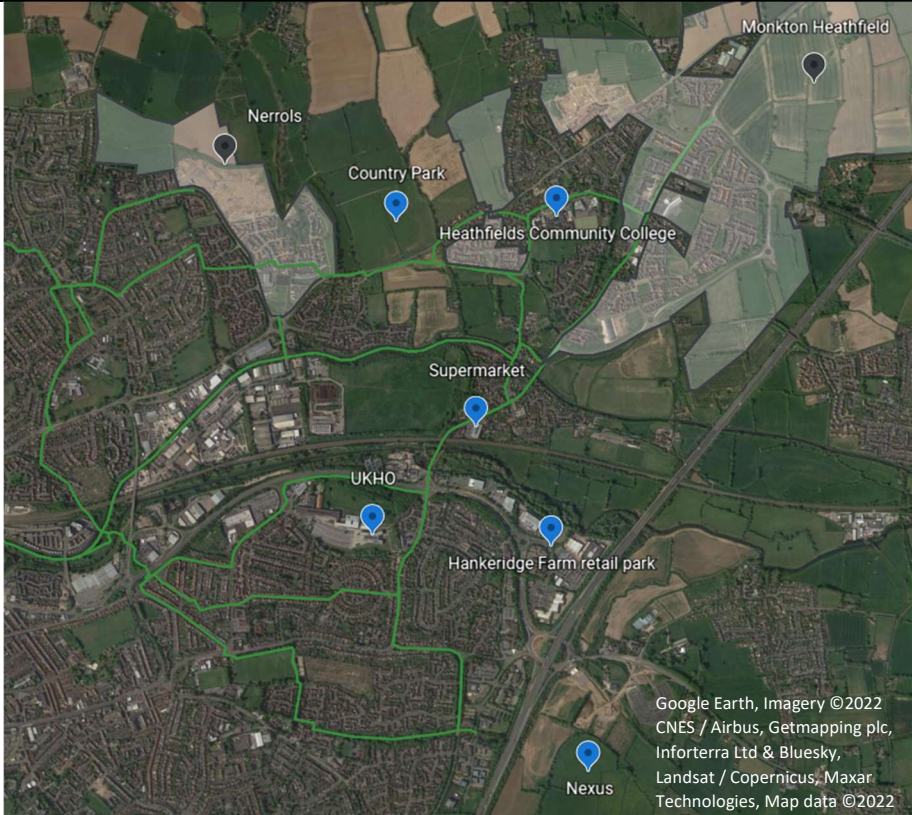
Nerrols: South-west Connections	
Services to connect	Lyngford Park Surgery/ Primary School, Priorswood/Pyrland local centre, Taunton Station, Taunton Pool, Morrisons, Taunton town centre, Bridgwater & Taunton College and Musgrove Park Hospital.
Options initially considered and audited	 <p>Google Earth, Imagery ©2022 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Inforterra Ltd & Bluesky, Landsat / Copernicus, Maxar Technologies, Map data ©2022</p>
Services routes intercept	All destinations connected. Continue on using FHSF Station to Vivary Link and SCC Killams Link for Richard Huish College.
Other options considered <i>Includes those that have not been previously discussed.</i>	<p><u>Green Routes</u></p> <p>Bossington Drive = road suitable for quiet street treatment with reductions of speed limits to 20mph with some capacity for off street two-way or shared path along Selworthy Rd section.</p> <p>Lyngford Park to Firepool link = audit identified potential to extend two-way cycle provision on Eastwick Road through Lyngford Park and Lyngford Road with improvements to Winckworth Way.</p> <p><u>Red Routes</u></p> <p>Trenchard Way = alternative existing shared use connection between Winckworth Way and Station, with potential for improvement of crossing wide access roads, but improvement of Children's Wood route a clear preference for strategic connectivity, GI, funnelling people to and through Firepool etc.</p>

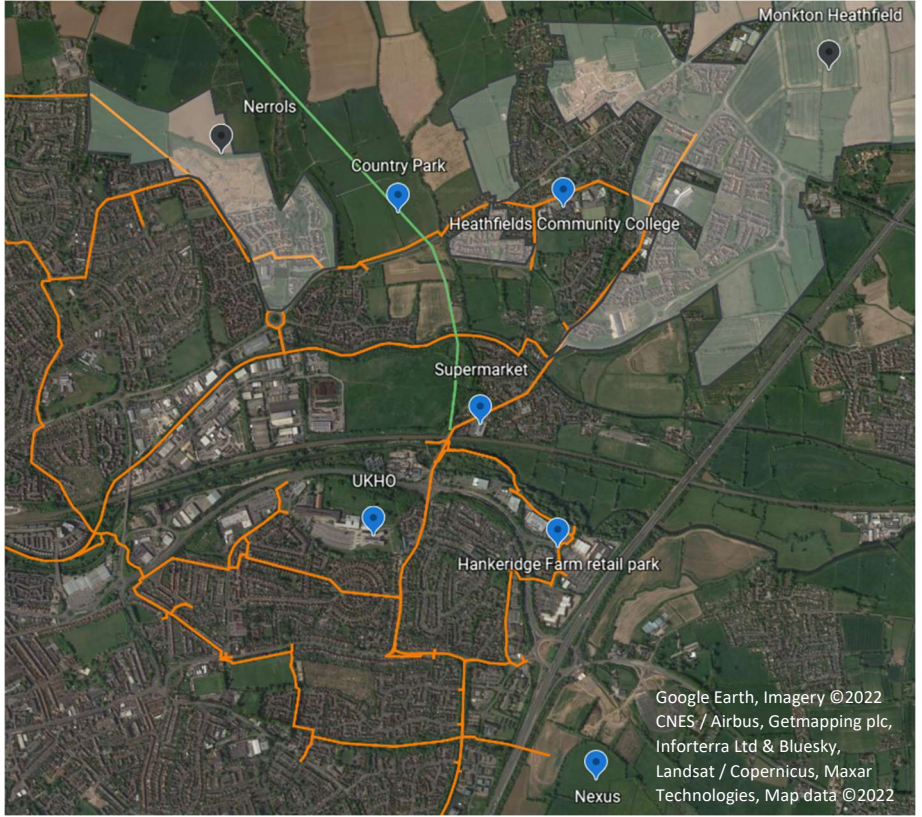
<p>Emerging routes</p>	 <p>Google Earth, Imagery ©2022 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Inforterra Ltd & Bluesky, Landsat / Copernicus, Maxar Technologies, Map data ©2022</p>
<p>Initial recommendations for interventions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension of two-way cycle on Eastwick Rd through Selworthy Road where land ownership allows and onto Bossington Drive with short sections of shared provision. • Speed limit reductions and lining strategy on Bircham Road. • LTN1/20 compliant cycle infrastructure through Lyngford Park. • Segregated cycle route through Lyngford Road with speed reductions to 20mph. • Quiet street treatment through Winckworth Way, add signage directing to station and improve coherence.

Nerrols: South Connections	
Services to connect	Priorswood playing field , Crown Industrial Estate/ Medical Centre
Options initially considered and audited	
Services routes intercept	All destinations connected – utilising some existing infrastructure.
Other options considered	<p><u>Green Routes</u></p> <p>Summerleaze crescent = little opportunity for improvement due to constrained width of path and provides suitable link to playing pitches.</p> <p>Nerrols Dr/ A3259 Roundabout = potential for improving priority.</p>
Emerging routes	

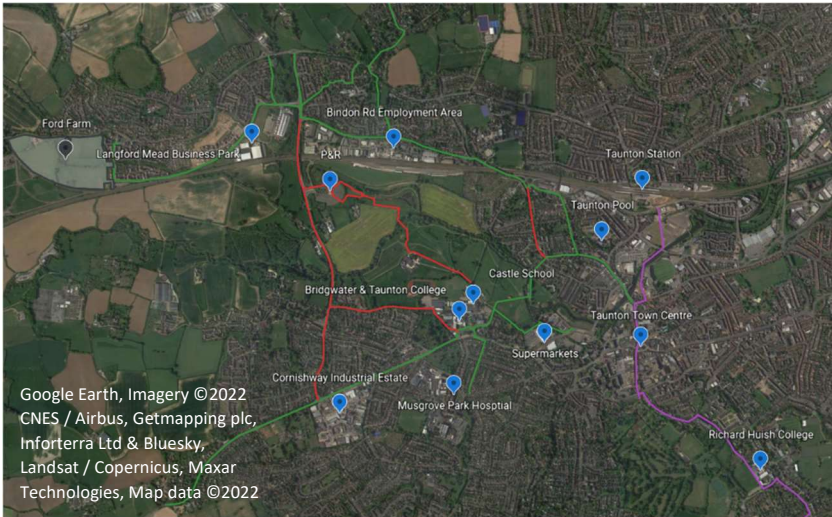
Initial recommendations for interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for “go-Dutch” roundabout design and extension of cycle path south to a shared path over the canal bridge to allow cohesive access to Crown Industrial Estate.
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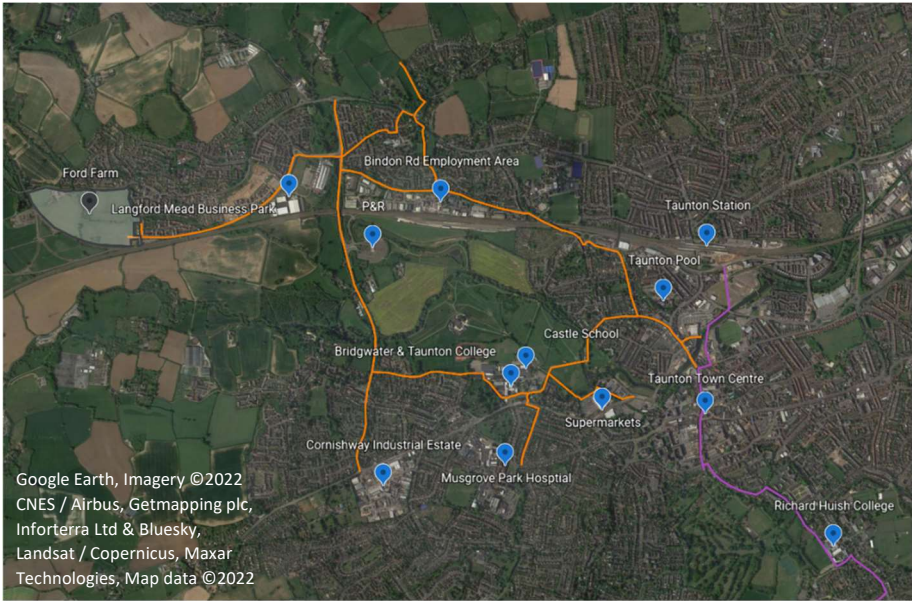
Nerrols: South-east and East Connections

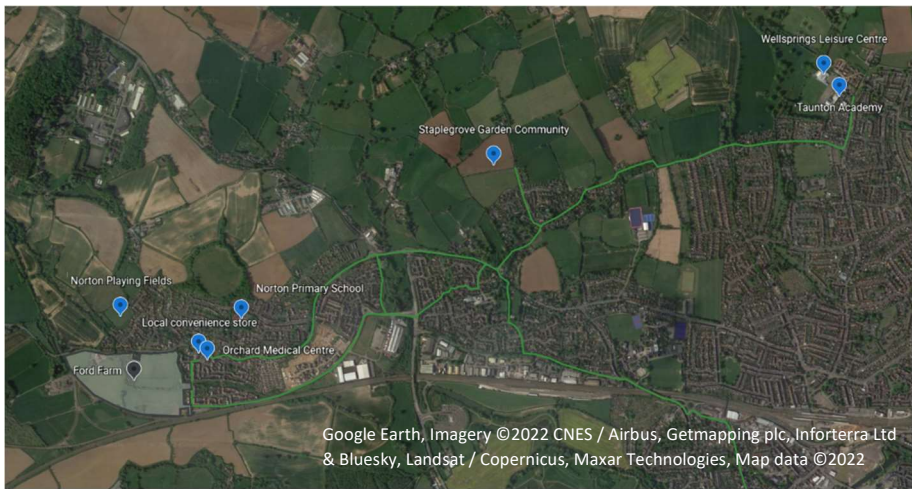
Services to connect	Nerrols local centre, Aldi, UKHO, Hankridge Farm Retail Park, Country Park, Heathfields Community College and existing/ future services in Monkton Heathfield.
Options initially considered and audited <i>Nexus 25 considered separately.</i>	
Services routes intercept	All destinations connected – aspiration for a north-south GI link, which should help to improve directness to destinations, as currently the links divert either significantly to the east or west.
Other options considered <i>Includes those that have not been previously discussed. See Monkton Heathfield summaries for further details.</i>	<p><u>Green Routes</u></p> <p>Dyer's Ln = Aspiration for GI-link connecting Taunton to Maidenbrook Country Park, which will enable a more-direct link between Nerrols and the south-east destinations. Route has some potential for improvement with speed reductions, however, due to existing settlements there is little opportunity for segregated provision. Therefore, the route is still to be determined.</p> <p>For Lyngford Park route see Firepool north connections.</p>

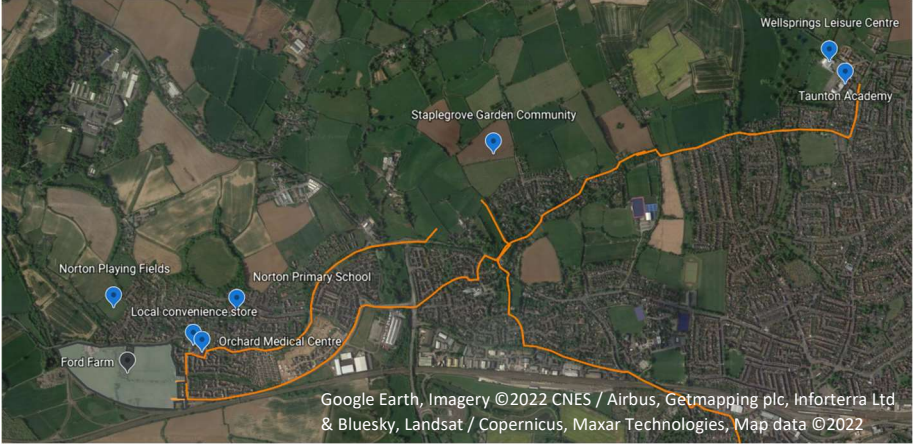
<p>Routes carried forward</p>	
<p>Initial recommendations for interventions</p>	<p>See all Monkton Heathfield connections and Firepool east connections for interventions.</p>

Ford Farm

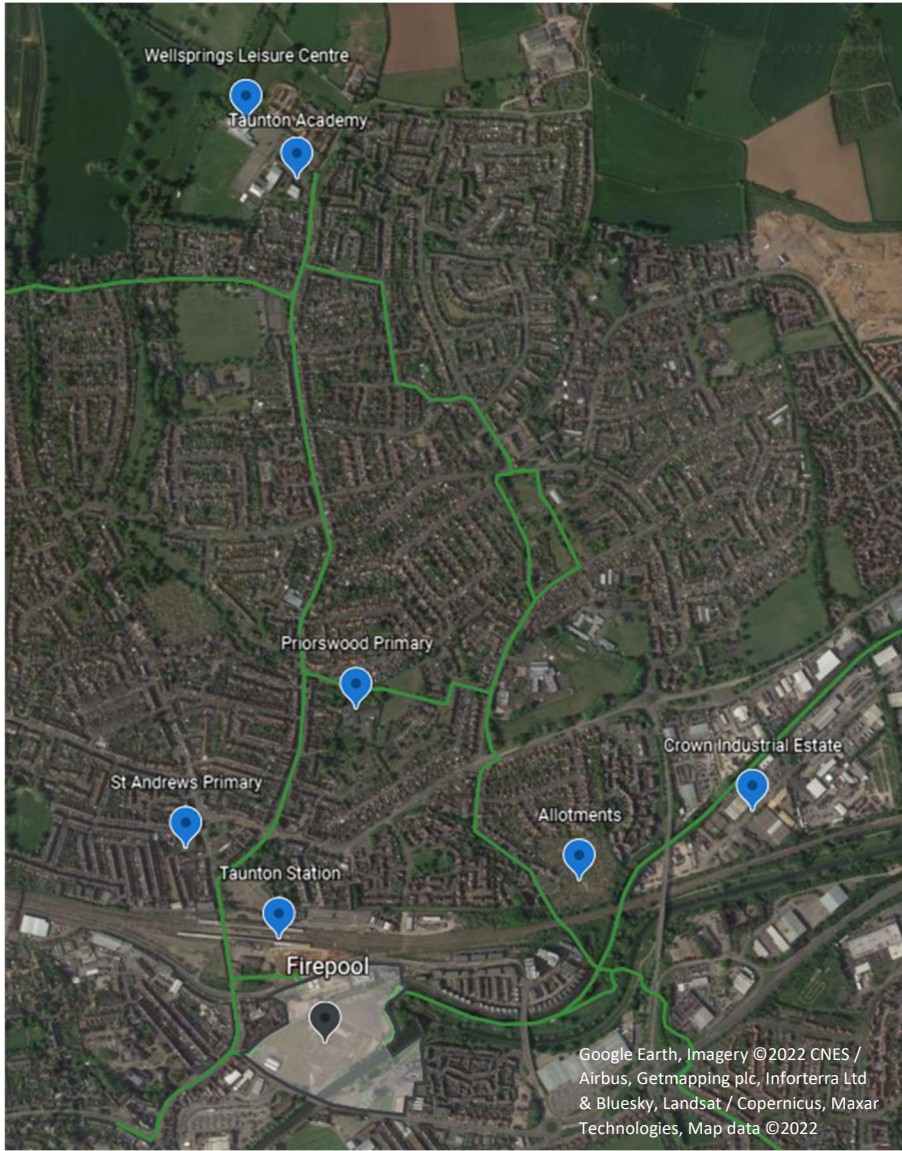
Ford Farm: East/ South-east Connections	
Services to connect	Park & Ride, Bridgwater & Taunton College, Castle School, Musgrove Park Hospital, Cornishway Industrial Estate, Tesco/ Lidl at Tangier, the town centre, Richard Huish College, Langford Mead Business Park, Bindon Rd Employment Area and Taunton Station/ Pool.
Options initially considered and audited	
Services routes intercept	Silk Mills P&R has not been connected – March engagement suggested access to Bridgwater & Taunton College, The Castle School and SW Taunton could be more direct.
Other options considered <i>Includes those that have not been previously discussed.</i>	<p><u>Green Routes</u></p> <p>Great Western Way = most of this route is what it is now. Some potential to widen and add priority crossings if felt necessary. There is also little opportunity to improve the access north to Cross Keys along Back Stream with constrained widths. Both still act as a crucial link from Ford Farm to key destinations.</p> <p><u>Red Routes</u></p> <p>Discussed in relation to Staplegrove south/ south-east 1 connections. Initially, it was felt that Silk Mills Rd/ Heron Rd would not be required with the Bindon Rd route. However, the engagement suggested it provides a crucial route for Ford Farm users while benefiting Staplegrove West. Longrun Meadow did not prove suitable.</p> <p>Taunton Station can be access via Trenchard Way.</p>

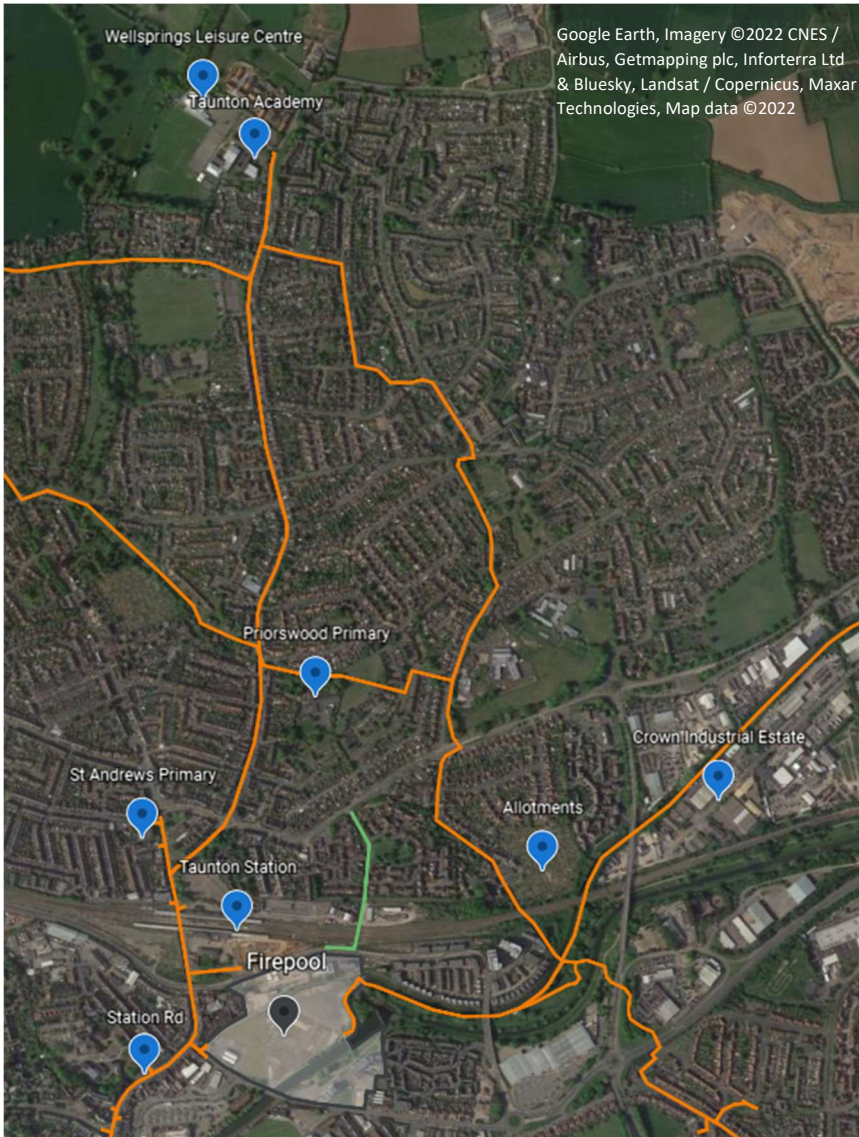
Emerging routes	
Initial recommendations for interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Staplegrove West south/ south-east connections and Comeytrowe north-east connections. • No interventions on Great Western Way unless adding priority crossings and widening is considered necessary. • Two-way cycle lane along northern side of Bindon Road. • Improvements to crossing times on Silk Mills Rd/ Bindon Rd.

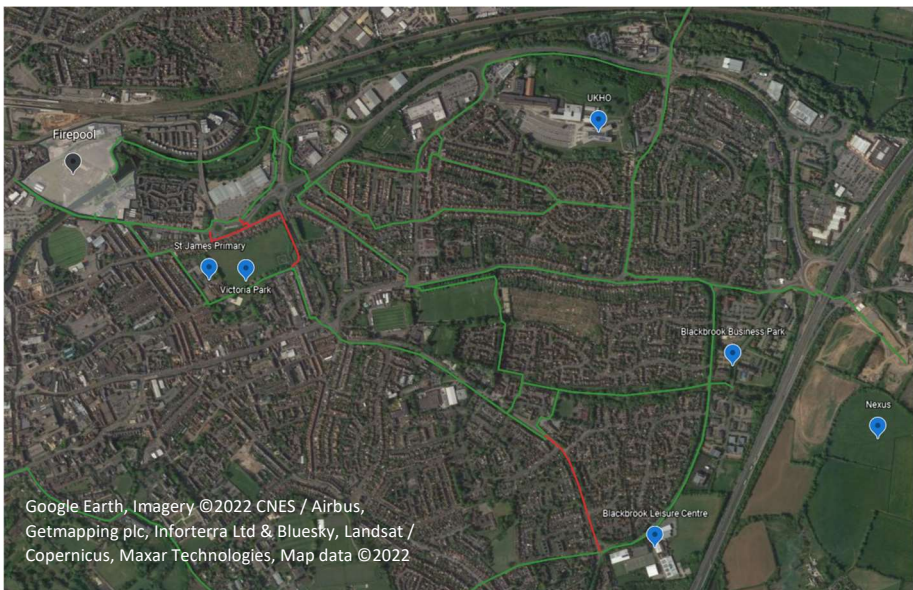
Ford Farm: North/ North-east Connections	
Services to connect	Orchard Medical Centre, Co-op convenience store in Norton local centre, Norton Primary School and playing fields, Staplegrove Garden Community, Taunton Academy and Wellsprings Leisure Centre.
Options initially considered and audited	
Services routes intercept	All destinations have been connected – connect to Norton Playing Fields and Primary School via existing quiet streets. There may be some opportunity through any future planning applications.

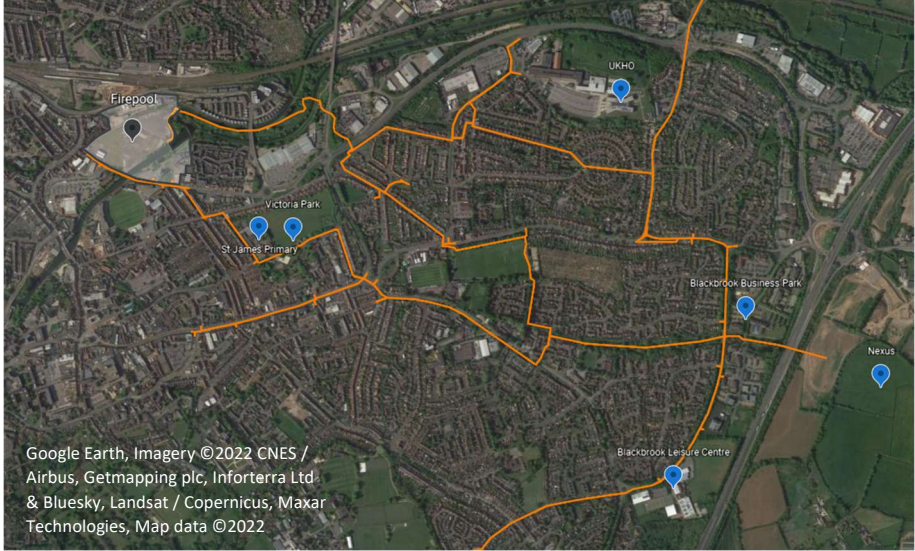
<p>Other options considered</p> <p><i>See Staplegrove West/ East and previous Ford Farm summaries for further detail.</i></p>	<p><u>Green Routes</u></p> <p>Showell Park from Silk Mills to Staplegrove Rd = potential for improvement through this section, consider role of road. Acts as a key route from Ford Farm to Staplegrove and beyond to Taunton Academy and avoids the busy and fast Staplegrove Road.</p>
<p>Emerging routes</p> <p><i>Includes those that have not been previously discussed.</i></p>	
<p>Initial recommendations for interventions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend segregated cycle route along Great Western Way south of park to connect to Silk Mills Road and Bindon Road. • Remove barriers to Showell Park and widen entrances. • Add signage along quiet residential streets.

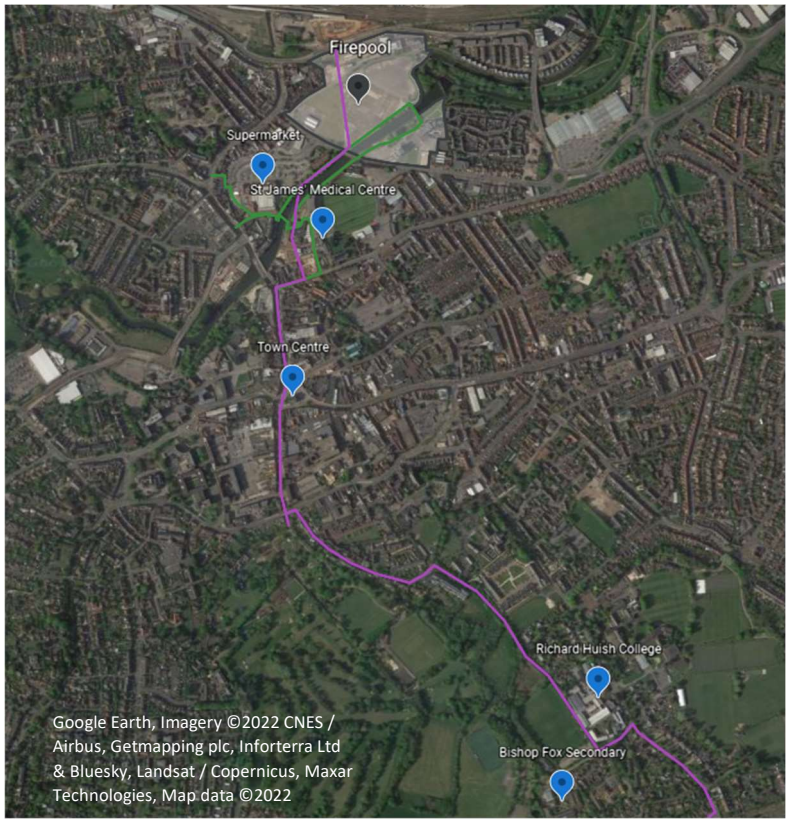
Firepool

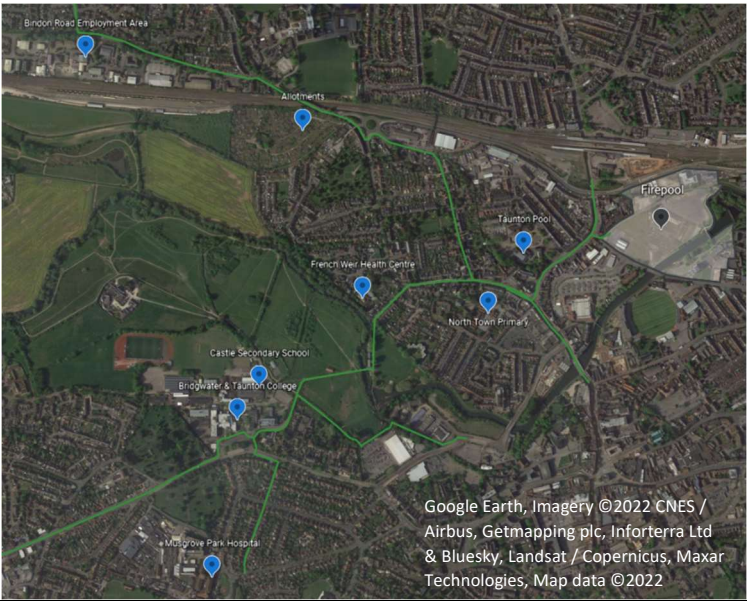
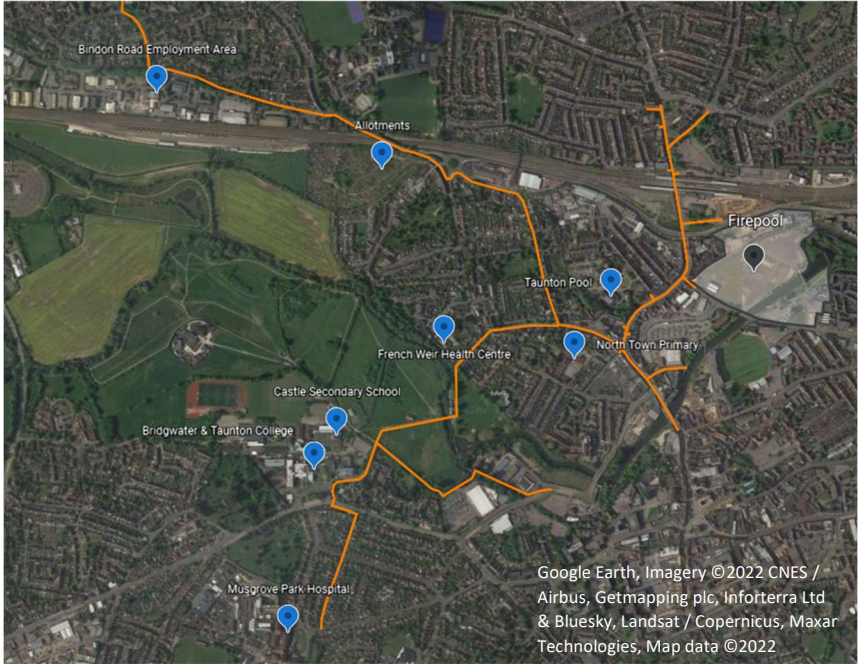
Firepool: North/ North-east Connections	
Services to connect	Taunton Station, St Andrews and Priorswood Primary Schools, Taunton Academy, Wellsprings Leisure Centre, Winckworth Way allotments and Crown Industrial Estate
Options initially considered and audited	 <p>Google Earth, Imagery ©2022 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Inforterra Ltd & Bluesky, Landsat / Copernicus, Maxar Technologies, Map data ©2022</p>
Services routes intercept	All destinations have been connected.
Other options considered	<p><u>Green Routes</u></p> <p>Cheddon Road = while it does have potential it needs a larger, more transformational, intervention. Instead, Lyngford Park route can be used in the meantime for connections to the key destinations and still acts as a crucial link for Nerrols.</p> <p>Lyngford Park (east) = potential for additional segregated cycleways and quiet road treatment and additional signage. Eastern section of the path doesn't follow desire lines and is likely to have maximum</p>

	<p>provision already with surrounding trees. Greater potential for western path while following desire lines.</p> <p>Priorswood School path = potential for widening and acts as a key link from Firepool to Priorswood Primary while avoiding Cheddon Rd.</p> <p><u>Alternative Routes</u></p> <p>Also potential for improving the connection from Firepool to North Taunton through a GI-led bridge over the railway (part of GI Strategy).</p>
Emerging routes	 <p>Google Earth, Imagery ©2022 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Inforterra Ltd & Bluesky, Landsat / Copernicus, Maxar Technologies, Map data ©2022</p>
Initial recommendations for interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to question the role of Cheddon Rd and explore traffic calming or low traffic neighbourhood interventions. • Potential for cycle lane along northern section of Cheddon Rd. • Narrowing Wellsprings Road junction. • Potential for reduce speed limits on Cheddon Rd to 20mph. • Provide direct crossings over Priorswood Rd/ Cheddon Rd and Clifford Terrace junction. • Widening Grange Walk path and improving access points.

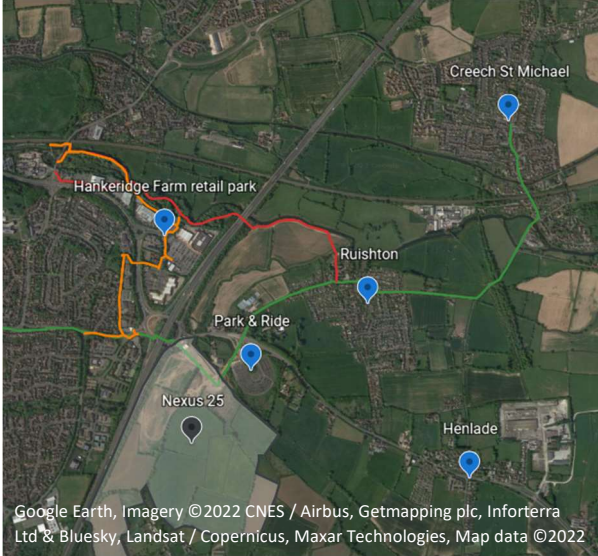
Firepool: East Connections	
Services to connect	St James Primary School, Victoria Park, UKHO, Blackbrook Business Park, Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Nexus 25.
Options initially considered and audited	
Services routes intercept	All destinations connected.
Other options considered	<p><u>Green Routes</u></p> <p>Priory Bridge Rd = little capacity for intervention and doesn't offer major benefit for connecting to destinations.</p> <p>Lisieux Way options = little opportunity for route passing Tesco convenience store, greater opportunity for path through Severn drive.</p> <p>Victoria Park = offers an alternative for Blackbrook route with overlooking and connects to St James Primary School.</p> <p>Toneway = section heading north from Wheatley Crescent to UKHO has potential for intervention such as extending the existing two-way path on Creechbarrow Rd and connects to key destinations.</p> <p>Iminster Rd = little opportunity for intervention with mature trees, misses opportunity to connect a deprived neighbourhood and desire line is through Hamilton Park to Blackbrook/ Nexus.</p> <p>Blackbrook Route = addresses connection along canal, which is a crucial route for the majority of the Garden Communities and also improves a well-used route between Taunton Station/ Firepool and area around J25, Blackbrook and Nexus.</p> <p><u>Red Routes</u></p> <p>Lisieux Way = less direct route between Firepool/ town centre and Nexus than Blackbrook Way.</p>


	<p>Victoria Gate = connects into PBR route and Victoria Park route but is narrow and offer little natural surveillance. Would be unable to deliver a compliant, comfortable and attractive route.</p>
Emerging routes	 <p>Google Earth, Imagery ©2022 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Inforterra Ltd. & Bluesky, Landsat / Copernicus, Maxar Technologies, Map data ©2022</p>
Initial recommendations for interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-way cycle way along Priory Bridge Rd working with Firepool to deliver the relevant section. • Quiet road treatment with speed reductions and filtered permeability. Potential for woonerf/home zone designs along Winchester St and Cranmer Rd with shared paths a priority. • Placemaking along Somerset Place with on-road provision. • Two-way cycle path along East Reach with placemaking and removing one lane. Widening existing path on Lisieux Way. • Widening and resurfacing of canal path with addition of lighting through Children's Wood section if deemed suitable. • Two-way cycle lane along Lambrook Rd west of Leycroft Rd connecting to existing crossing. On-road provision on eastern section either with additional signage or traffic calming. • Two-way through Hamilton park and widening of Blackbrook path and switching of lane from south to north with aligning of crossings over Blackbrook Way and Blackbrook Park Ave. • Tunnel under M5 connecting to Nexus Garden Community.

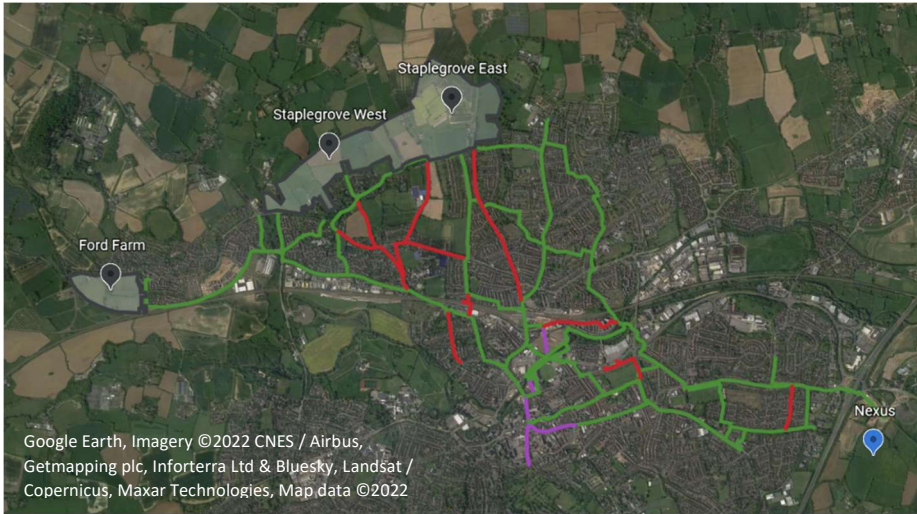
Firepool: South Connections	
Services to connect	Morrisons Supermarket, St James Medical Centre, the town centre, Bishop Fox's Secondary School and Richard Huish College
Options initially considered/ emerging from other projects	
Services routes intercept	All destinations connected - from Firepool utilise FHSF Station to Vivary and SCC Killams Link being built out through other projects.
Other options considered	<p><u>Green Routes</u></p> <p>River Tone circle = potential for improvements with widening and resurfacing but likely to be delivered as part of Firepool Masterplan and FHSF Station to Vivary Link.</p> <p>Morrisons paths = partly aimed to be delivered through Staplegrove to Bridge Street route but dependent on third party land. Focus more so on Station Road as a “transformational” link to access the intended destinations such as North Town Primary School.</p> <p>Decision made to focus only on the routes brought forward through other projects as all destinations have been connected.</p>

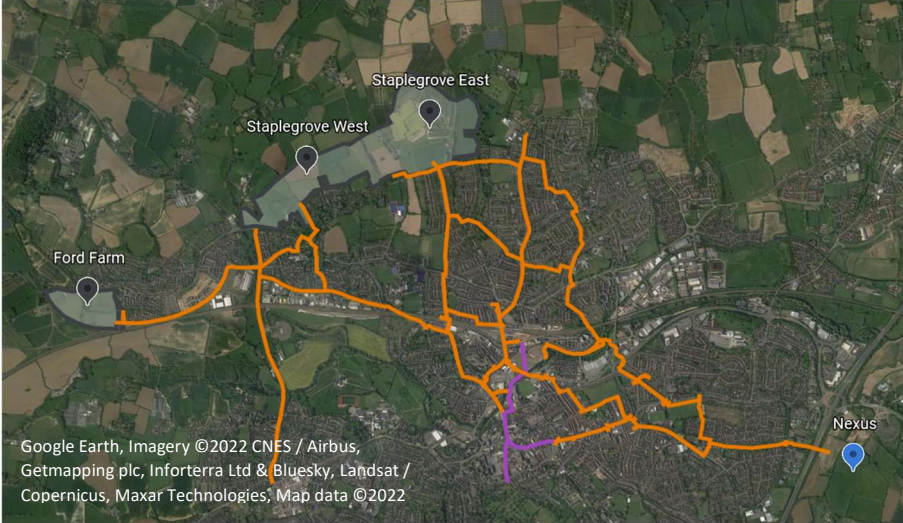
Firepool: South-west/West Connections	
Services to connect	Taunton Pool, French Weir Health Centre, North Town Primary, The Castle School, Bridgwater & Taunton College, Musgrove Park Hospital, Bindon Rd Employment Area and Frieze Hill Allotments
Options initially considered and audited	 <p>Google Earth, Imagery ©2022 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Inforterra Ltd & Bluesky, Landsat / Copernicus, Maxar Technologies, Map data ©2022</p>
Services routes intercept	All destinations connected using audited routes – Trenchard Way likely to be used for allotments and Bindon Rd access.
Other options considered	Trenchard Way = mentioned previously as a connection between Firepool/ Station and Bindon Road onto Staplegrove, however, was not considered necessary in terms of suggesting improvements.
Emerging routes	 <p>Google Earth, Imagery ©2022 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Inforterra Ltd & Bluesky, Landsat / Copernicus, Maxar Technologies, Map data ©2022</p>
Initial recommendations for interventions	See route summaries in associated Garden Community.

Nexus

Nexus: North/ East Connections	
Services to connect	Picking up access to the Park & Ride, Ruishton, Hankridge Farm Retail park, Creech St Michael and Bridgwater. Also access towards Henlade, Yeovil, Ilminster and rural hinterland.
Options initially considered and audited	
Services routes intercept	Connections and exact routes towards Bridgwater, Henlade, Ilminster, Yeovil and rural hinterland still to be determined. Monkton Heathfield considered in relation to the southern connections.
Other options considered	<p><u>Green Routes</u></p> <p>Nexus to Ruishton to Creech = route very constrained by existing built up area, narrow roads (particularly Cheats Rd) and adjacent third party land. Potential to utilise existing PROW along River Tone, however route will likely require third party land and construction of a new bridge over the railway and the River Tone.</p> <p><u>Red Routes</u></p> <p>Hankridge to Ruishton = important GI link in need of much improvement, but not relevant to connecting the garden communities and offers poor natural surveillance.</p> <p><u>Alternative Links</u></p> <p>Link to Hankridge Farm Retail Park could be made more direct as could links in from Monkton Heathfield to connect potential Bridgwater Link. Links down to Henlade, Ilminster and Yeovil are also important connection aspirations for Nexus and Taunton urban area.</p>

Emerging routes	 <p>Google Earth, Imagery ©2022 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Inforterra Ltd & Bluesky, Landsat / Copernicus, Maxar Technologies, Map data ©2022</p>
Initial recommendations for interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-way cycle lanes along existing main roads to Ilminster and Bridgwater and improved signage. • New GI-led walking and cycling routes to Creech St Michael, Ruishton and Monkton Heathfield via Hankridge Retail Park with LTN 1/20 compliant, lit and well-surfaced two-way links.

Nexus to Staplegrove West, East & Ford Farm	
Services to connect	Nexus
Options initially considered and audited	 <p>Google Earth, Imagery ©2022 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Inforterra Ltd & Bluesky, Landsat / Copernicus, Maxar Technologies, Map data ©2022</p>
Services route intercepts	Nexus – destination connected. Green routes along Bridge Street and Hammet Street have been linked up through a separated ongoing project from Taunton Station to Vivary Park.

<p>Audit outcomes</p>	<p>Refer to all previous Garden Community summaries for details on the green and red routes shown above.</p> <p>A variety of options from Ford Farm and Staplegrove West and East are available for accessing Nexus:</p> <p><u>Green routes</u></p> <p>Clifford Ave to Lyngford Road = provides a link from Staplegrove East not only to Priorswood primary school and Crown Industrial Estate but to the route heading south towards the canal and onto Nexus. Users from Staplegrove West and Ford Farm are likely to use the Bindon Road link into Taunton town centre with a variety of options from there. Either to join onto the existing Trenchard Way infrastructure and onto Blackbrook route, go through Firepool and onto the Blackbrook route or through Victoria Park, Lisieux Way etc or even use East Reach.</p> <p>Hammet Street = while this route provides a link towards Nexus from Ford Farm or Staplegrove West, the route focus would be better placed on East Reach with a greater “transformational” change possible.</p>
<p>Emerging routes</p>	
<p>Initial recommendations for interventions</p>	<p>Refer to all previous Garden Community summaries for details on the potential interventions on the emerging routes shown above.</p>

Appendix B – Route Summaries

Route 1 – Staplegrove – Bindon Road – Town Centre



Route

Staplegrove West – Manor Road – Hudson Park – Hudson Way – Bindon Road – Staplegrove Road – Chip Lane – The Avenue – Staplegrove Road – Bridge Street

Type of user

- Younger users and commuters

Key connections made

- Staplegrove convenience store
- Staplegrove Primary School
- Bindon Road Employment Area
- Taunton School
- North Town Primary School
- Town Centre

Onward connections to

- Station via existing provision along Trenchard Way.
- French Weir Health Centre, The Castle School and Bridgwater & Taunton College via Route 25 and MPH via Route 5a.
- Taunton Pool via Route 17.

Opportunities responded to

- Connection of Staplegrove West to key destinations.
- Alongside route 1a, facilitates access to key destinations for Ford Farm.
- Alongside routes 17, 25 and 5a, facilitates access to key destinations for Firepool.
- Enhancement of the West Deane Way.
- Downgrading and traffic calming of Manor Road.
- Enables wider community access to employment in Staplegrove West.
- Tackles existing barrier to walking/cycling over Staplegrove Bridge.
- Utilises and enhances existing cycling route via Chip Lane and the Avenue
- Tackles existing barrier to walking/cycling at Bridge St/Staplegrove Rd/ Station Rd Jn.
- Links in with existing and proposed provision at the town Bridge.
- Delivery of LCWIP “purple route” south-east to north-west corridor in town centre.

Constraints to route design

- Third party land between highway and site boundaries on Manor Road.
- Staplegrove Road narrow on approach to junction with Manor Road and Tree Protection Orders in Hudson Park may necessitate reduced standard of route.
- Bus and HGV access on Bindon Road.
- Bridge structural review required.
- Traffic flow and capacity at Staplegrove Rd/Manor Rd Jn and Bridge St/Staplegrove Rd/ Station Rd Jn.

Route 2 – Staplegrove – Corkscrew Lane – Taunton Academy



Route
Staplegrove West – Corkscrew Lane – Kingston Road – Hope Corner Lane – Cheddon Road – Taunton Academy

Type of user

- Younger and leisure users

Key connections made

- Taunton Academy
- Wellsprings Leisure Centre
- Local Convenience Store
- Kingston Road Bus Stop
- Corkscrew Ln allotments

Onward connections to

- Wellsprings Primary School via Route 15.
- Taunton Station via Route 3 or onwards to French Weir Health Centre/ Town Centre via existing rail bridge provision & Route 1.
- Lyngford Park Surgery via Route 16/31.
- Kingston St Mary via GI-led Route 33 link.

Opportunities responded to

- Connection of Staplegrove West to key destinations.
- Alongside Route 15 and 16, facilitates access to key destinations for Firepool.
- Improvements to pedestrian links to Taunton Academy.
- Downgrading and traffic calming of Corkscrew Lane.
- Enables wider community access to employment in Staplegrove West.
- Tackles existing barrier to walking/cycling over Corkscrew Lane.
- Improves walking/cycle access at Corkscrew Lane/Hope Corner Lane junction and to/ across Kingston Road.
- Provides walking/cycling access to link in with Gipsy Lane with added crossing facility.
- Alongside Route 3, facilitates access to Taunton Station.

Constraints to route design

- Constrained adopted highway along Corkscrew Lane and sections of Hope Corner Lane with narrow carriageway may necessitate a reduced standard of route – securing a route via Staplegrove East bypassing the narrowest section west of Clifford Avenue may be beneficial.
- Kingston Road crossing amendments subject to the design of the proposed signalised junction at Hope Corner Lane/ Kingston Road/ Corkscrew Lane.
- Route subject to the location of Tree Protection Orders.

Route 3 – Staplegrove – Clifford Ave – Taunton Station



Route

Staplegrove East – Clifford Ave – path along playing fields – Leslie Ave – Cyril Street – Rupert Street – Herbert Street – Railway Street – Taunton Station

Type of user

- Younger users and commuters

Key connections made

- Taunton Station

Onward connections to

- Priorswood Primary School via Route 23.
- French Weir Health Centre via existing rail bridge and Chip Lane provision.
- Taunton Pool/ Town Centre via Route 17/1.
- Firepool and onwards to Nexus via Route 17 and Route 24.
- Richard Huish College via existing provision, Route 1 and route being built out.
- Bridgwater & Taunton College and Castle School via Chip Ln, Route 1 and Route 25.
- Kingston St Mary via Route 2 and GI-led Route 33.

Opportunities responded to

- Connection of Staplegrove East to key destinations.
- Improvements to pedestrian/cycle links to Taunton Station.
- Enables wider community access to employment in Staplegrove East and West.
- Connections onto wider destinations including Firepool, Nexus, Richard Huish College, Bridgwater & Taunton College and Castle School.
- Delivery on LCWIP “purple route” south-east to north-west corridor.

Constraints to route design

- Constrained adopted highway along route, particularly on path along playing fields, which may necessitate reduced standard of route or land will need to be acquired.
- Parking on narrow residential streets of Leslie Ave – Railway Street limits ability for intervention.
- Movement of station entrance to focus on south side.

Route 4 – Ford Farm – B3227 – Staplegrove West



Route

Ford Farm – Station Road – B3227 – A358 – Staplegrove Road – Staplegrove West

Types of users

- Younger and leisure users

Key connections made

- Orchard Medical Centre
- Norton Fitzwarren
- Staplegrove local centre, employment and school
- Cross Keys

Onward connections to

- Norton Fitzwarren Primary School through quiet lanes (Church Yard).
- Bindon Road Employment Area via Route 1a and Route 26.
- Musgrove Park Hospital via Route 26, 27 and 5a.
- Taunton Station via Route 26, 1a, 1 and existing infrastructure on Trenchard Way.
- Town Centre via Route 26, 1a and 1.
- Castle School/ B&T College via Route 26 and 27.
- Bishops Lydeard via GI-led Route 32.

Opportunities responded to

- Connecting Ford Farm to key destinations.
- Delivery on LCWIP “green route” east-west cycle corridor.
- Rethinking the role of the B3227 through Norton Fitzwarren with the implementation of Great Western Way, which is to serve as the main route into Taunton.
- Connecting Taunton into Norton Fitzwarren, better improving access to Norton Hillfort as part of Green Infrastructure Opportunity 6.
- Helping to deliver connections into Taunton town centre from Bishop’s Lydeard and Cotford St Luke from the GI-led Route 32 link.

Constraints to route design

- Limited carriageway width through Cross Keys and Norton village centre.
- Great Western Way (NFW bypass) emerging creates questions about role of B3227 while this is also an opportunity.

Route 5 – Comeytrowe – Galmington Stream – Castle Street – Town Centre



Route

Comeytrowe – Comeytrowe Lane – Queensway – Galmington Stream – Galmington Road – Hoveland Crescent – Hoveland Lane – Parkfield Drive – Manor Road – Castle Street – Tower Street – Town Centre

Types of users

- Younger users and commuters

Key connections made

- Bishop Henderson School
- Musgrove Park Hospital
- Parkfield Primary School
- Supermarket (Tesco and Lidl)
- Taunton Town Centre
- Park & Bus on A38

Onward connections to

- Taunton Station via Route 1/ Route 17.
- Taunton Pool via Route 1/ Route 17.
- Somerset College & Castle School via Route 5a.
- Firepool via Route 1/ Route 17.
- Taunton Academy via FHSF Vivary Park to Station link and Routes 1, 17 and 15.

Opportunities responded to

- Connecting of Comeytrowe to key destinations.
- Improvements to pedestrian/cycle links to nearby schools.
- Alongside route 5a, facilitates access to the key destination Musgrove Park Hospital.
- Alongside route 1 and route 17, facilitates access to Taunton Station.
- Wider community access to employment and local centre in Comeytrowe.
- Downgrading of Comeytrowe Road/ Lane and improved walking and cycling linkages.
- Overcoming barrier of Tangier, creating simplified cycleway.
- Providing walking/cycle access from site to Lloyd Close utilising Galmington Stream.
- Delivery on LCWIP “blue route” south-west to north-east corridor and sections of LCWIP “green route” east-west corridor.

Constraints to route design

- Tree Protection Orders along Galmington Stream need to be confirmed.
- Character of Parkfield Drive (preference to be retained with only advisory intervention).
- Bus and emergency vehicle access along Parkfield Drive.
- Modelling of Castle Street/ Wellington Road junction for “transformational” signals.
- Third party land ownership along Galmington Stream in some areas may necessitate a reduced standard of provision.
- Location of private driveways along Galmington Road need to be confirmed.

Route 5a – Comeytrowe – Galmington Stream – Long Run Meadow – Tangier



Route

Parkfield Drive – Henley Road – Wellington Road – Longrun Lane – Longrun Meadow – Tesco – Tangier

Types of users

- Younger and leisure users

Key connections made

- Musgrove Park Hospital
- Somerset College
- Castle School
- Supermarket (Tesco)

Onward connections to


- Taunton Station via Route 1/ Route 17.
- Taunton Pool via Route 1/ Route 17.
- Firepool via Route 1/ Route 17.

Opportunities responded to

- Connecting Comeytrowe to key destinations.
- Improvements to pedestrian/cycle links to nearby schools and nearest supermarkets.
- Alongside route 5, facilitates access to the key destination Musgrove Park Hospital.
- Alongside route 1, 5 and 17, facilitates access to Taunton Station and Taunton Pool.
- Widening capacity of route through Longrun Meadow to provide the capacity for commuting, leisure and utility journeys alongside school and college students.
- Delivering LCWIP “green” route on section through south west of Longrun Meadow.
- Potential for a low traffic neighbourhood around Henley Road/ Manor Road.

Constraints to route design

- Widening and resurfacing of cycleway through Longrun Meadow is subject to detailed mapping of existing trees and subject to review by the relevant specialist.
- Constrained highway width on Henley Rd may necessitate reduced standard of route.
- Bus lane to be provided on Wellington Road creates little room to widen the existing footpath and cycleway running along the southern side.
- Widening of foot and cycle path along Longrun Lane to an extent will require conversations with the landowner as it may lead to potential loss of disabled parking.
- Section running north of Tesco car park (Marshalsea Walk) does not sit within adopted highway land and has limited capacity for widening. Instead, an option could be to divert via SWT land along the top of existing levee banks and connect via a new bridge south of French Weir. This is subject to detailed costings and mapping.
- Section running north-east of Tesco does not sit within adopted highway land subject to confirmation that it can be used for cycle improvements as it is within an LNR and LWS.

Route 6 – Honiton Road – Spine Road – Comeytrowe Road – Wellington New Road	
 <p>Google Earth, Imagery ©2022 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Inforterra Ltd & Bluesky, Landsat / Copernicus, Maxar Technologies, Map data ©2022</p>	
<p>Route Church Road – Comeytrowe Spine Road – Comeytrowe Road – Comeytrowe Lane – Wellington New Road/ Stonegallows</p>	
<p>Types of users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leisure users and commuters 	
<p>Key connections made</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trull Primary School Convenience store Wellington New Road 	<p>Onward connections to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wellington via Wellington Link. Cornishway Industrial Estate including local convenience store via Route 7. Staplegrove West via route 7 and 26 and onwards to Ford Farm via route 4 or 16. Bindon Road Employment Area via Route 26 and 1a. Musgrove Park Hospital via Route 5 and 8. Richard Huish College/ Bishop Fox's Community School via Route 28, 9 and SCC Killams Link (currently being built out) or Route 28, 9, GI-led 37 and SCC Killams Link. Nexus via Route 28, 9, 37 and 18.
<p>Opportunities responded to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connecting Comeytrowe and Trull to key destinations. Improvements to pedestrian/cycle links to nearby schools and employment. Road closure and priority to cycle/walking links along Comeytrowe Road/ Lane. Alongside route 5, 8, facilitates access to the key destination Musgrove Park Hospital. Improved walking and cycling linkages with Eastern Neighbourhood. Considerations given to walking/cycle provisions on Honiton Road. 	
<p>Constraints to route design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tree Protection Orders along Comeytrowe Road. Traffic modelling of Comeytrowe Road and Lane to understand function. Limited adopted highway through Comeytrowe Road, may necessitate a reduced standard of route. Gradient of Comeytrowe Lane on northern section. 	

Route 7 – Wellington Road



Route

Stonegallows – Wellington New Road – Wellington Road – Castle Street/Tangier

Types of users

- Leisure users (possible Wellington link) and commuters.

Key connections made

- Cornishway Industrial Estate/ Convenience store
- Bridgwater & Taunton College
- The Castle School

Onward connections to

- Wellington via Wellington Link.
- Musgrove Park Hospital via Route 5a.
- Staplegrove West via Route 26 and onwards to Ford Farm via Route 4 or 16.
- Bindon Road Employment Area via Route 26 and 1a.
- Town Centre/ Taunton Station via Route 1 and FHSF Station to Vivary Link.

Opportunities responded to

- Connecting Comeytrowe to key destinations.
- Improvements to pedestrian/cycle links to nearby schools and employment.
- Connecting cycle lane from Wellington into Taunton Town Centre.
- Alongside route 5a, facilitates access to the key destination Musgrove Park Hospital.
- Delivery on LCWIP strategic “missing links”.

Constraints to route design

- Bus priority corridor measures along Wellington Road (A38) as part of the County Council Bus Service Improvement Plan.
- Limited adopted highway space along Wellington Road, alongside bus corridor, may necessitate a reduced standard of route.

Route 8 – Comeytrowe - College Way



Route

Comeytrowe Road – College Way – Galmington Road – Hoveland Crescent

Types of users

- All types of users.

Key connections made

- Comeytrowe Park
- College Way Surgery
- Convenience Store
- Primary school/ playing pitches on site.

Onward connections to

- Musgrove Park Hospital via Route 5.
- Town Centre/ Taunton Station via Route 5 and 17.
- Queens College & Richard Huish College, Bishop Fox's School via Route 9 and SCC Killams Link.
- Nexus and Blackbrook Leisure Centre/ Business Park via Route 9/9a and LCWIP "red" route (or green strategic link across green wedge, Route 37).

Opportunities responded to

- Connecting Comeytrowe to key destinations.
- Improvements to pedestrian/cycle links to nearby GP, schools and employment.
- Alongside Route 5, facilitates access to the key destination Musgrove Park Hospital.
- Connecting existing communities to new Comeytrowe Primary School site.

Constraints to route design

- Exact location of access between Comeytrowe development and College Way to be determined.
- Impacts of the significant removal of vegetation will need to be discussed.
- Location of Tree Protection Orders along College Way will require detailed mapping.
- Crossing between College Way and Claremont Lane subject to land ownership.

Route 9 – College Way – Trull Road – Vivary Park – South Road



Route

College Way – Claremont Lane – Trull Road – Sherford Road – Middleway – Churchill Way – Cherry Tree Lane – Fons George – Vivary Park – Upper High Street – Mount Street – Stockwell Stream cycle path – Calway Road – South Road

Types of users

- All types of users.

Key connections made

- Queens College
- Vivary Park
- Richard Huish College
- King's College
- Bishops Fox's School

Onward connections to

- Blackbrook Leisure Centre, Blackbrook Business Park and Nexus via Route 9a/ LCWIP "red" route.
- Town Centre through FHSF Vivary Park to Station route.
- Taunton Station via FHSF Vivary Park to Station route.
- Richard Huish College/ Bishop Fox's Community School via Route 37 and SCC Killams Link.

Opportunities responded to

- Connecting Comeytrowe and Trull to key destinations.
- Delivering on LCWIP "red route" north-south corridor.
- Links to Blackdown Hills AONB through Green Infrastructure Strategy Opportunity 1.

Constraints to route design

- Limited adopted highway along Trull Road and Upper High Street, may necessitate a reduced standard of provision.
- Constrained width through Fons George and Vivary Park, may necessitate a reduced standard of provision.
- Claremont Lane runs through third party land, ownership will need to be determined.

Route 10 – Monkton Heathfield – Creech Castle – UKHO – Wheatley Crescent



Route

Bridgwater Rd/ A38 Roundabout at Monkton Heathfield 2 – Bridgwater Rd/ A38 Roundabout (south) – Bridgwater Rd/A38 – Creech Castle/ Toneway junction – Bridgwater Rd (extends south to Hamilton Rd) – Roman Rd – Outer Circle – Moorland Close – Moorland Rd – other leg through Seabrook Close.

Extra: Admiralty Way – Creechbarrow Rd – Wheatley Crescent to Toneway underpass.

Types of users

- Mainly commuter with some leisure and initial younger users on northern section.

Key connections made

- Monkton Heathfield 2
- West Monkton CoE School
- Aldi/ Asda supermarkets
- Creech Castle (and to some extent Hankridge Retail Park)
- Halcon/ UKHO

Onward connections to

- Firepool via Route 14 connecting to Crown Medical Centre or Route 19 with connections to Taunton Station and onwards connections to the town centre on Route 17 and Route 1.
- Multiple possibilities for access to Bridgwater & Taunton College, from Route 14/ 19, take Route 17-1-25 or Route 17-1-5/5a connecting to Musgrove Park Hospital.
- Blackbrook Leisure Centre via Route 18 and connections to cycle route being built out connecting to Bishop Fox School and Richard Huish College. Take Route 19 to Nexus.
- Hankridge Retail Park via Route 29.
- Heathfield Community School, Maidenbrook Country Park, Nerrols Primary School, Nerrols, Taunton Academy, Wellsprings Leisure Centre via Route 11.
- Creech St Michael Primary School via existing cycle path on A38 and Route 12.

Opportunities responded to

- Connecting Monkton Heathfield to key destinations.
- Providing part of the aspirational route connecting Halcon towards the Quantock Hills AONB through improving cycle and walking connections to Monkton Heathfield.
- Delivery on LCWIP “blue route” (south west to north east corridor) and missing links.

Constraints to route design

- Limited carriageway width along route, particularly sections of Bridgwater Rd and Creechbarrow Rd may necessitate a reduced standard of provision.

Route 11 – Monkton Heathfield – Nerrols – Taunton Academy



Route

Bridgwater Rd/ A38 – through green space to School Rd – Milton Hill (and extension to Western Relief Road) – Yallands Hill – A3259 – Batt Drive – Stubby Lane – Nerrols Drive – via proposed Nerrols development to Cheddon Rd – Taunton Academy.

Types of users

- Mainly leisure and younger users with commuters on A3259.

Key connections made

- Heathfield Community School and Sixth Form College
- Maidenbrook Country Park
- Nerrols Primary School
- Nerrols Garden Community
- Taunton Academy
- Wellsprings Leisure Centre

Onward connections to

- Taunton Station via Route 30 and Route 17, from here take Route 1 for Taunton Town Centre or Route 1 – Route 25 – Route 5a for Bridgwater & Taunton College and Musgrove Park Hospital.
- Priorswood including Lyngford Park Surgery, Lyngford Park Primary School, and Eastwick Rd services via Route 31.
- Firepool and Taunton Station via Route 30 and onto Route 14/16/19 (canal).

Opportunities responded to

- Connecting Monkton Heathfield to key destinations.
- Providing walking and cycling connections to Maidenbrook Country Park and Hestercombe House Green Infrastructure link from the canal through improvements to active travel provision Milton Hill and Yallands Hill and the A3259.
- Connecting from proposed 'Park and Bus' at Monkton Heathfield phase 2.

Constraints to route design

- Limited carriageway width along route, particularly Yallands Hill, Milton Hill and A3259, which may necessitate a reduced standard of provision.
- Route depends on third party land (through Nerrols) and will be subject to site design.

Route 12 – Monkton Heathfield – Creech St Michael



Route

A38/ Langaller Lane Roundabout – A38 – Hyde Ln through fields – St Michael's Road

Types of users

- Mainly younger users.

Key connections made

- Creech Medical Centre
- Creech St Michael Primary School & Pre-School
- Open space facilities and convenience store.

Onward connections to

- Ruishton and Nexus via Route 36 GI-led link.
- A358/ Ilminster via Route 36 and 40 GI-led links.
- Onto Route 10 via existing infrastructure on A38 to connect into the centre of Taunton.

Opportunities responded to

- Connecting Monkton Heathfield to key destinations and enabling existing communities in Creech St Michael to safely and sustainably access facilities within Monkton Heathfield.
- Reviewing existing pedestrian/cycles bridges over the M5, the location and ability to accommodate cyclists as well as pedestrians.

Constraints to route design

- Narrow width on pedestrian bridge over M5, will need a structural and capacity review.
- Route may require access to third party land from A38 to Hyde Lane and route will therefore be determined by any development sites coming forward in this area.
- Limited carriageway width along Hyde Lane through Creech St Michael may necessitate a reduced standard of provision where applicable.

Route 13 – Monkton Heathfield – Yallands Hill via Bawler Rd



Route

Monkton Heathfield 2 access at A38/ Bridgwater Rd roundabout – Bridgwater Rd – Bawler Rd – Monkton Heathfield Rd (heading north east and south west) – Yallands Hill

Types of users

- Commuters.

Key connections made

- West Monkton Cricket Club
- Existing development of Monkton Heathfield
- Monkton Elm Garden Centre

Onward connections to

- Bridgwater and Durston via Route 38 and Route 39 GI-led links from Monkton Heathfield 2.
- Taunton Academy, Nerrols Primary School, Priorswood and Maidenbrook Country Park/ Hestercombe House via Route 11 and Route 34.

Opportunities responded to

- Connecting Monkton Heathfield to key destinations.
- Linking Garden Communities to Hestercombe House & Gardens as part of Green Infrastructure Strategy Opportunities 1 and 4.
- Improving connections to on-site facilities in Monkton Heathfield 2 and beyond to Bridgwater and Durston through GI-led projects.
- Completion of Western Relief Road enables review of function and permeability of the existing A3259 through Monkton Heathfield.

Constraints to route design

- Limited carriageway width along Monkton Heathfield Road may necessitate a reduced standard of provision.
- Role of Monkton Heathfield Road as part of any bus priority measures.

Route 14 – Monkton Heathfield – Canal tow path



Route

A38/Bridgwater Rd – Bridgwater Rd – Dyers Lane – southern path along canal – A3259/ Priorswood Rd roundabout – Winckworth Way/ Firepool bridge

Types of user

- Leisure users and commuters.

Key connections made

- Crown Industrial Estate
- Crown Medical Centre
- Nerrols Primary School

Onward connections to

- Taunton Town Centre via Routes 16, 19 and FHSF Station to Vivary Link with Firepool cycle and walking infrastructure provision along the River Tone. Onwards to:
 - Musgrove Park Hospital via Route 5.
 - Bridgwater & Taunton College via Route 5a.
 - Richard Huish College via SCC Killams Link.
- Taunton Station via Route 16 and existing provision on Abbey Close and Trenchard Way.
- Firepool via Routes 16 and 19.
- Priorswood/ Pyrland local centre and Taunton Academy via Route 16.

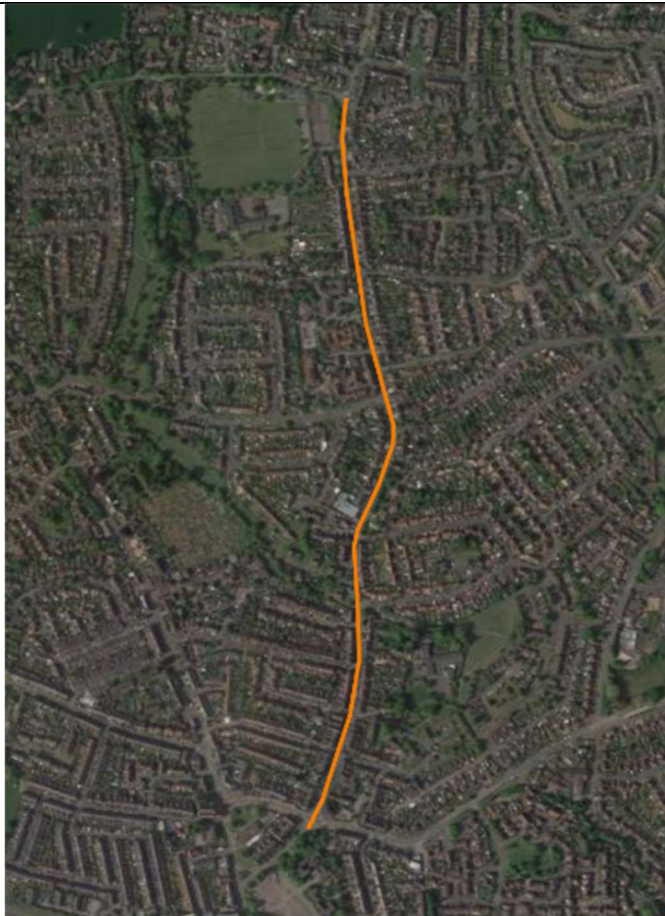
Opportunities responded to

- Connecting Monkton Heathfield to key destinations.
- Improve walking and cycle priorities at major roundabouts in Taunton.
- Linking to Hestercombe House through aspirational Green Infrastructure link.
- Creates links to A3259 Roundabout connecting to future cycleway north of A3259 through to Maidenbrook Country Park.
- Well-used existing route.

Constraints to route design

- Third party ownership of land adjacent to canal waterways may prevent any adjustments to provision of walking and cycling infrastructure along the canal.
- Flood risk and management from the canal running parallel to the route may prevent adding impermeable surfacing or widening the existing surfacing.
- Limited space along the canal to widen existing walking/ cycling path and the wide range of users to accommodate may necessitate a reduced standard of provision.
- Additional lighting to be determined regarding ecological impacts.

Route 15 – Cheddon Road



Route

Cheddon Rd – Cheddon Rd/ Priorswood Rd Junction

Types of users

- All types of users.

Key connections made

- Wellsprings Primary School
- Convenience store

Onward connections to

- Taunton Academy/ Wellsprings Leisure Centre via Route 2.
- Firepool and Town Centre via Route 17 and FHSF Station to Vivary Link.
- Bridgwater & Taunton College via Route 17, 1 and 25 and onwards to Musgrove Park Hospital via Route 5a.
- Priorswood Primary School via Route 23.

Opportunities responded to

- Connecting Firepool to key destinations such as Taunton Academy. Also plays an important role for Staplegrove East and Nerrols.
- Connecting Priorswood/ Pyrland into Taunton Centre, alongside Routes 2 and 26 as part of the aim to connect areas of socio-economic deprivation and GI Opportunity 5.
- Implementing LCWIP “red” route north-south corridor and major junctions.

Constraints to route design

- Narrow adopted carriageway along entirety of Cheddon Rd, but particularly the section of bends around the shop mean that for improved cycle and walking infrastructure provision, the role of the road will need to be better understood. Greater considerations are needed to traffic flows and importance of road.

Route 16 – Firepool – Priorswood Road – Lyngford Park – Cheddon Road



Route

Canal path (south) – Winckworth Way bridge – Winckworth Way – Obridge Rd – Priorswood Road – Lyngford Road – Victory Road – Woodland Road – Lyngford Park – Eastwick Road – Dorchester Road – Bodmin Road – St Michaels Crescent (north) – St Patricks Road – St Albans Place – Cheddon Road

Types of users

- Younger users with some leisure and commuting.

Key connections made

- Taunton Academy/ Wellsprings Leisure Centre
- Firepool/ Town Centre
- Lyngford Park
- Priorswood Post Office/ Shops
- Winckworth Way allotments

Onward connections to

- Kingston St Mary via Route 2 and 33.
- Firepool via Route 19.
- Taunton Station via existing provision on Abbey Close and Trenchard Way.
- Taunton Town Centre via Route 19 and FHSF Station to Vivary Link.
- Priorswood Primary School via Route 23.
- Nerrols/ Lyngford Park Surgery via Route 31.

Opportunities responded to

- Connecting Firepool to key destinations.
- Connecting Priorswood/ Pyrland Park as part of Green Infrastructure Strategy Opportunity 5 and aim of connecting areas of socio-economic deprivation.
- Delivering on LCWIP strategic missing links on Firepool to Wellsprings section.
- Potential to link in with updating flood defences along River Tone
- Steep path up to Winckworth Way bridge an existing barrier for some – could be addressed.

Constraints to route design

- Third party land along canal including canal path may restrict ability to widen.
- Adjustments to gradient of the path at Winckworth Way bridge dependent on further consultation and investigation re services and flood defences.
- Limited carriageway width particularly on Winckworth Way and Obridge Rd (north).
- Woolaways project diverts route away from Dorchester Road as potential for such walking and cycling infrastructure provision may now create conflict.
- Crossing time on Priorswood Road dependent on traffic flow and modelling by SCC.

Route 17 – Station Road



Route

Kingston Road/ Clifton Terrace – Station Road – Bridge Street/ Staplegrove Junction
(includes Priory Bridge Road junction and southern access to Taunton Station)

Types of users

- Commuters and some younger users during peak times.

Key connections made

- Firepool
- Supermarket (Morrisons)
- Taunton Pool/ Deane House
- Taunton Station
- St Andrew's Church School

Onward connections to


- Taunton Academy/ Wellsprings Leisure Centre via Route 15.
- Kingston St Mary via Route 3, 2 and 33.
- Town Centre via Route 1.
- North Town Primary School via Route 1.
- St James Primary School via Route 24.
- Bridgwater and Taunton College via Route 1, 25 and onwards to Musgrove Park Hospital via Route 5a.
- Nexus via Route 24, 20 and 19.
- Bishop Fox's Community School and Richard Huish College via Route 1, FHSF Station to Vivary and SCC Killams Link.

Opportunities responded to

- Connecting all Garden Communities to key destinations, in particular, Firepool.
- Connecting Firepool to key facilities (Taunton Pool and towards North Town Primary).
- Missing links and major junctions addressed as part of LCWIP (Kingston Rd/ Priorswood Road/ Clifton Terrace junction).
- Delivering on part of LCWIP "red route" north-south corridor.
- Public realm and GI opportunities.

Constraints to route design

- Potential for Station Road to become a bus priority corridor/ sustainable transport corridor – cycling will still remain a considered use along this road.
- HGV access for deliveries and drop-off bays, particularly along northern section.
- Need to understand the role and importance of Station Road with traffic modelling.
- Need to consider Priory Bridge Road and Firepool proposals and how they link into Station Road particularly at the existing junction.

Route 18 – South Road – Ilminster Road via Blackbrook Way	
 <p>Google Earth, Imagery ©2022 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Inforterra Ltd & Bluesky, Landsat / Copernicus, Maxar Technologies, Map data ©2022</p>	
<p>Route South Road – Path behind allotments – Fields End – The Square – Hillyfields – Upper Holway Road – cycle path connecting to Haywood Road – Blackbrook Way – Ilminster Road – Bridgwater Road/ Hamilton Road junction (include Hamilton Road side street)</p>	
<p>Types of users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commuters and some leisure users. 	
<p>Key connections made</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackbrook Leisure Centre • Blackbrook Business Park • Blackbrook cycle path 	<p>Onward connections to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nexus via Route 19. • Hankridge Retail Park via Route 29. • Richard Huish College and Bishop Fox's Community School via SCC Killams Link. • Monkton Heathfield/ Creech Castle via Route 10. • Town Centre via Route 19, 20 and East Street. • Firepool/ Taunton Station via Route 19 and walking/ cycle infrastructure to be provided at Firepool or Route 20, 24 and FHSF Station to Vivary Link. • Comeytrowe via Route 37, 9 and 8.
<p>Opportunities responded to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting Comeytrowe, Nexus25 and Monkton Heathfield to key destinations. • Serves existing employment area at Blackbrook Business Park. • Delivery of LCWIP strategic missing links through Blackbrook Way. • Resolving existing well-used but poor quality infrastructure along Blackbrook Way including dangerously wide access to Blackbrook Leisure Centre. 	
<p>Constraints to route design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited carriageway width on route may necessitate a reduced standard of provision on Blackbrook Way with pinch points in some sections. 	

Route 19 – South Road - Iminster Road via Blackbrook Way



Route

Nexus – under M5 – along Blackbrook - Blackbrook Park Ave – Blackbrook – Severn Drive – northern path through Hamilton Gault Park – cross Hamilton Road – Lambrook Rd – Wheatley Crescent – under Toneway and Obridge – Childrens Wood path - Firepool

Types of users

- Commuters.

Key connections made

- Nexus 25
- Blackbrook Business Park
- Blackbrook Community Primary School
- Hamilton Gault Park
- Firepool
- Taunton Station (via infrastructure to be provided in Firepool site)

Onward connections to

- From Firepool side, UKHO (onto Monkton Heathfield) via Route 10. From Nexus, UKHO (onto Monkton Heathfield) via Route 18 and Route 10.
- From Nexus, Town Centre via Route 20 and East Street and onwards to MPH via Route 5.
- From Gateway P&R, Ruishton, Creech St Michael and Iminster on the GI-led links Routes 36 and 40.
- From Nexus to Bridgwater & Taunton College via Route 20, East Street, Route 5 and 7. Onwards to Silk Mills P&R via Route 5a, 27 and 26.
- Taunton Station via on-site Firepool walking/ cycling infrastructure or Route 16 and Trenchard Way provision or Routes 20, 24 and FHSF Station Link.

Opportunities responded to

- Connecting Firepool and Nexus to key destinations, although route acts as a crucial link for all the Garden Communities.
- Implementing Green Infrastructure Opportunity 3 aim to create a cycle/ pedestrian link from Taunton along the Blackbrook path towards Ruishton via GI-led Route 36.
- Delivery on LCWIP “green” route and “blue” route and providing LCWIP aim for M5 underpass connecting Nexus into Taunton via active travel.

Constraints to route design

- Runs through LNR/ flood plain along Blackbrook, and this section of the canal, which may restrict path widening and resurfacing. Impact to biodiversity to be considered.
- Limited highway width along Lambrook Road, may necessitate a reduced standard of provision. Blackbrook path ownership to be confirmed around Avill Crescent section.
- Lack of overlooking in places may not be suitable for all users or in the dark.
- Additional lighting in certain locations to be confirmed due to ecological impacts.
- Recommended “box-jack” solution for the underpass requires further investigation.

Route 20 – East Reach



Route

Lisieux Way at cycle path south east of Taunton Vale Healthcare – Wordsworth Drive – Grays Terrace – East Reach up to East Street junction

Types of users

- Commuters.

Key connections made

- East Reach
- Taunton Vale Healthcare

Onward connections to

- Taunton Town Centre via East Street project.
- St James Primary School/ Firepool via Route 24.
- Musgrove Park Hospital via East Street and Route 5. On to The Castle School and Bridgwater & Taunton College using either Route 7 or Route 5a.

Opportunities responded to

- Implementing Green Infrastructure Opportunity 3 by connecting the cycle/pedestrian link along Blackbrook to the town centre.
- Integral to delivering East-West corridor in LCWIP “green” route.
- Enhancement of East Reach including GI and public realm opportunities.
- Downgrading and traffic calming of East reach and junction with Chritchard Way and Wordsworth Drive (highlighted as hotspot by TACC).
- Acts as a potential “transformational” route for Taunton.

Constraints to route design

- Route dependent on traffic modelling on whether capacity can be reduced on East reach and given to cycle space. The role of the street needs to be understood.
- Questions around East Reach/ Wordsworth Way/ Chritchard Way junction and what a suitable design is here to enable safe walking and cycling use. A detailed review of the junction is required including modelling to understand capacity and inform design.
- Need to consider public realm and placemaking uses and designs here as well.
- HGV and bus use also need to be accounted for as well as loading bay space.

Route 21 – Manor Road



Route

Manor Road/ Staplegrove Rd – Manor Rd – Corkscrew Ln (stops shy of Whitmore Lane)

Types of users

- All types of users.

Key connections made

- Manor Road park
- Staplegrove post office/ convenience store
- Staplegrove West
- Taunton Vale Sports Club (through Gipsy Lane improvements)

Onward connections to

- Kingston St Mary via Route 2 and 33.
- Taunton Academy/ Wellsprings Leisure Centre/ Kingston Rd bus stops/ Corkscrew Lane allotments via Route 2.
- Norton Fitzwarren and Ford Farm via Route 22 and 16.
- Town Centre and Taunton Station via Route 1 and existing provision on Trenchard Way for the Station or via Route 3, rail bridge and Route 1.
- Castle Secondary School/ Bridgwater & Taunton College via Routes 22, 26 and 27 and onwards to Musgrove Park Hospital via Route 5a.
- Orchard Medical Centre via Route 22.
- Bus stops on A358 and Bindon Road Employment Area via Route 1.

Opportunities responded to

- Connecting Ford Farm and Staplegrove to key destinations.
- Addressing objective to make Manor Road and Corkscrew Lane safer for pedestrians, cyclists and all road users.
- Downgrading and traffic calming works on Manor Road addressed.
- Connecting Staplegrove and Ford Farm residents to Taunton Academy and Wellsprings Leisure Centre.

Constraints to route design

- Role of Manor Rd still to be determined.
- Dependent upon delivery of new Spine Road and appropriate traffic flow and modelling studies.
- Limited adopted carriageway width due to adjacent third party land.

Route 22 – Great Western Way – Showell Park – Manor Road



Route

Great Western Way – Mill Rise – through Showell Park – Showell Park (heading north) – Staplegrove Road – Manor Road

Types of users

- All types of users.

Key connections made

- Collet Park
- Nuffield Health Taunton Hospital
- Ford Farm/ Norton Fitzwarren
- Staplegrove West

Onward connections to

- Bishops Lydeard/ Cotford St Luke via Route 32.
- Kingston St Mary via Route 21 and 33.
- Taunton Academy and Wellsprings Leisure Centre via Route 21 and 2.
- Bindon Road Employment via Route 26 and 1a.
- Castle School/ Bridgwater & Taunton College via Route 26 and 27 and onwards to Musgrove Park Hospital via Route 5a.

Opportunities responded to

- Connecting Ford Farm and Staplegrove to key destinations.
- Addressing objective to make Manor Road and Corkscrew Lane safer for pedestrians, cyclists and all road users.
- Connecting Staplegrove and Ford Farm residents to Taunton Academy and Wellsprings Leisure Centre.
- Improvements to existing informal route through Showell Park.

Constraints to route design

- Role of Manor Rd to be determined once Staplegrove is nearer completion.
- Limited adopted carriageway width with adjacent third party land through Mill Rise.

Route 23 – Clifford Ave – Lyngford Road via Cheddon Road



Route

Clifford Avenue – Turner Road – Kingston Road – Wellsprings Road – through green space along Kingston Stream – Enmore Road – Cheddon Road – Wedlands – through green space via Grange Walk – Grange Drive – Lyngford Road

Types of users

- Younger users.

Key connections made

- Priorswood Primary School
- Rowbarton Allotments

Onward connections to

- Cheddon Road convenience store via Route 15.
- Taunton Station/ Taunton Pool/ Firepool via Route 15 and 17.
- Town Centre via Route 15, 7 and 1.
- Crown Industrial Centre via Routes 16 and 30.
- Nexus via Routes 16 and 19.

Opportunities responded to

- Connection of Staplegrove East to key destinations.
- Alongside route 3 and 21, facilitates access to key destinations for Staplegrove West.
- Partially addresses LCWIP “red” route north-south corridor for Cheddon Road and the need to widen and resurface footways and potential conversations around low traffic neighbourhoods or traffic calming.
- Utilises Taunton’s waterways through creating a cycle path along Kingston Stream, as part of the aim of Green Infrastructure Opportunity 2.
- Enables wider community access to employment in Staplegrove West.

Constraints to route design

- Possible impact to biodiversity and flood risk will need to be considered.
- Limited adopted carriageway along Kingston Road and Cheddon Road may necessitate a reduced standard of provision.
- Provision of walking and cycling infrastructure dependent on capacity for bus use along Kingston Road and role of Cheddon Road after traffic modelling is undertaken.

Route 24 – Priory Bridge Road – East Reach via Victoria Park



Route

Priory Bridge Road – Winchester Street – Cranmer Road – path south of St James School off Hugo Street – Victoria Gate – Alfred Street – Grays Terrace

Types of users

- Younger users – some commuters.

Key connections made

- Firepool
- Supermarket
- St James Church School
- Victoria Park/ Play Area
- Somerset County Cricket Club

Onward connections to

- Nexus/ Blackbrook Business Park via Routes 20 and 19.
- Taunton Station via FHSF Vivary to Station Link.
- Taunton Pool via Route 17.
- Town Centre via FHSF Station to Vivary Link or via Route 20 and East Street.

Opportunities responded to

- Connection of Firepool to key destinations.
- Linking Firepool and Nexus through a route suitable for all users throughout the day with greater natural surveillance.
- Alongside, routes 19/20, facilitates access to key destinations for Firepool and Nexus.
- Enhancement of Priory Bridge Road.
- Enables wider access to employment and leisure uses in Firepool.
- Tackles existing barrier to cycling along Priory Bridge Road.
- Enhances existing cycle route through Victoria Park.
- Delivery of part of LCWIP “green” route east-west cycle corridor such as Victoria Park, Victoria Gate and potential adjustments to Hugo Street.
- Links in with proposed provision within the Firepool site and along the River Tone.
- Opportunity to provide GI or EV charging points within breaks of on-street parking.

Constraints to route design

- Bridge structural review required on Priory Bridge Road.
- Considerations to potential bus and likely HGV access on Priory Bridge Road.
- Limited carriageway and adopted highway space with narrow residential streets with parking including Cranmer Road, Winchester Road and Alfred Street.
- Victoria Park entrance narrow and close to mature trees, may restrict widening.
- High level of parking along street may cause conflict for removal or reduction.

Route 25 – Staplegrove Road – Bridgwater & Taunton College via Longrun Meadow



Route

Staplegrove Road – French Weir Avenue – French Weir Park – across Longrun Meadow south of Longrun Barn following the cycle path to Longrun Lane

Types of users

- All types of users.

Key connections made

- French Weir Medical Centre
- The Castle School
- Bridgwater & Taunton College
- French Weir Park/ Longrun Meadow

Onward connections to

- Musgrove Park Hospital via Route 5a.
- North Town Primary and Town Centre via Route 1.
- Tangier supermarkets via 5a.
- Firepool via Route 1, 17 and 24.
- Taunton Station/ Taunton Pool via Route 1 and 17.
- Staplegrove East via Route 1, Staplegrove West via Route, existing rail bridge and Route 3.
- Comeytrowe via Route 5.

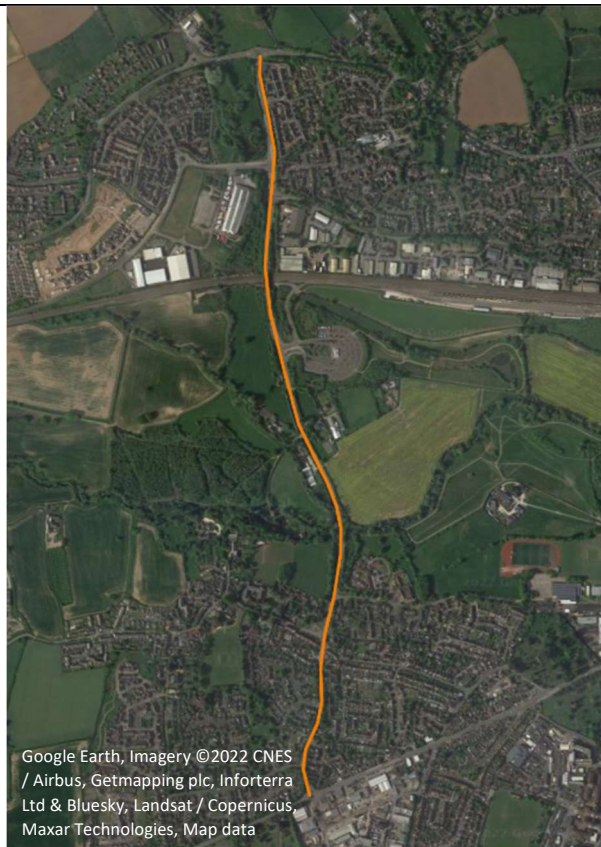
Opportunities responded to

- Connection of the Garden Communities to key destinations, particularly Staplegrove.
- Linking Staplegrove East residents to Castle School and Bridgwater & Taunton College through a route with greater surveillance (as opposed to the entire length of Longrun meadow from the 'park and bus').
- Alongside Route 1, facilitates access to key destinations for Staplegrove West.
- Alongside Route 1 and 3 (using existing rail bridge), facilitates access to key destinations for Staplegrove East.
- Alongside Route 1 and 17, facilitates access to key destinations for Firepool.
- Enhancement of Staplegrove Road, tackling an existing barrier.
- Enhances existing cycle route through Longrun Meadow while delivering part of LCWIP "green" and "purple" routes by upgrading the existing path.

Constraints to route design

- Considerations given to flood risk in Longrun Meadow and issues with widening and resurfacing the existing path in terms of flooding impact.
- Greater understanding of land ownership and costs associated with a new bridge.
- Limited capacity on French Weir Park/ Long Run Meadow bridge, may necessitate a reduced standard of provision or widened bridge.

Route 26 – Silk Mills Road



Route

Staplegrove Rd/ Silk Mills Roundabout – Silk Mills Ln – Silk Mills Rd – Wellington New Rd

Types of users

- All types of users – mainly commuters and younger users.

Key connections made

- Silk Mills P&R
- Cornishway Industrial Estate

Onward connections to

- Bindon Road Employment Area via Route 1/1a.
- Staplegrove Primary School via Route 1/1a.
- Taunton School via Route 1/1a.
- French Weir Medical Centre via Route 1/1a.
- Castle School/ Bridgwater & Taunton College via Route 27
- Musgrove Park Hospital via Route 27 and 5a.
- Supermarkets (Tesco and Lidl) via Route 27 and 5a.
- Norton Fitzwarren/ Ford Farm/Bishops Lydeard via Route 22.

Opportunities responded to

- Connection of Ford Farm and Staplegrove West to key destinations.
- Linking Staplegrove West residents to Castle School, Bridgwater & Taunton College and Musgrove Park Hospital through a well-overlooked route.
- Improving cycle connections from Silk Mills P&R into Taunton.
- Alongside Route 5a/ 27, facilitates access to key destinations for Staplegrove West.
- Alongside Route 1/1a, 6 and 7, facilitates access to key destinations for Comeytrowe.
- Enhancement of southern-end of Silk Mills Road, tackling an existing barrier.
- Delivering on part of LCWIP “green” route along Silk Mills Lane.
- Utilises and enhances the existing cycle route along Silk Mills Lane/Silk Mills Road.

Constraints to route design

- Limited width/ adopted highway on southern-end of Silk Mills Road, may necessitate a reduced standard of provision
- Bridge structural review may be required for enhanced provision.

Route 27 – Heron Drive



Route

Silk Mills Road – Heron Drive – Longrun Lane

Types of users

- Younger users.

Key connections made

- The Castle School
- Bridgwater & Taunton College

Onward connections to

- Musgrove Park Hospital via Route 5a.
- Town Centre/Tangier supermarkets Route 5/5a.
- Nexus via Route 5a, 5, East Street, 20 and 19.

Opportunities responded to

- Connection of Ford Farm and Staplegrove West to key destinations alongside route 26, route 4 and route 5a.
- Enables wider community access to employment in Staplegrove West.
- Creates a well-overlooked walking/ cycle link to school and employment destinations.
- Tackles existing barrier to walking/ cycling along Silk Mills Rd/ Heron Drive including poor alignment of existing crossing point on Silk Mills Road.

Constraints to route design

- Third party land through Bridgwater & Taunton College site.
- Some instances of pinch points in carriageway along Heron Drive.

Route 28 – Wild Oak Lane



Route
Church Rd – Wild Oak Lane – Trull Road

Types of users

- All types of users – mainly younger users.

Key connections made

- Trull Church of England Primary School

Onward connections to

- Trull convenience store via Route 6.
- Comeytrove on site services via Route 6.
- Bishop Fox's Community School, Richard Huish College, Queen's College and Town Centre via Route 9 or GI-led Route 37.

Opportunities responded to

- Connection of Comeytrove and Trull to key destinations.
- Alongside route 6/9, facilitates access to key destinations for Comeytrove and Trull.
- Enhances LCWIP "red" route by extending south in to Trull along Wild Oak Lane.
- Creates walking/cycle link through Trull, enhancing the existing barrier of Honiton Rd.
- Traffic calming and downgrading of Wild Oak Lane.

Constraints to route design

- Limited carriageway width along Wild Oak Lane and parking along southern end, which may necessitate a reduced standard of provision.
- Traffic flow and modelling study to be undertaken for Wild Oak Lane to understand the role of the road and ability to traffic calm.

Route 29 – Hankridge Link



Route

River Tone northern path crossing over bridge to south path/ A38 path heading north to River Tone south path – along the river to Heron Gate – River Tone Roundabout – Heron Gate – Hankridge Way – path running south of The Hankridge Arms crossing Toneway – Deane Gate Avenue – Blackbrook Park Avenue (east)/ Bus and bike only route – Ilminster Road/ Blackbrook Way roundabout

Types of users

- Mainly leisure users.

Key connections made

- Hankridge Farm Retail Park inc. Sainsburys
- J25 Roundabout

Onward connections to

- Ruishton and Nexus via Route 35 and 36 GI-led links.
- Blackbrook via Route 18.
- Town Centre via Route 10, 19 and Station to Vivary link.
- Monkton Heathfield and Halcon via Route 10.
- Hestercombe House via GI-led Route 34.

Opportunities responded to

- Helping to deliver Green Infrastructure Opportunity 11 by connecting a cycling/ walking path onto a potential pedestrian/ cycle bridge over the M5 towards Ruishton/ Nexus.
- Formalising an existing route with many barriers to pedestrian and cyclist movements.
- Improving access for all communities to facilities on Hankridge Farm.

Constraints to route design

- The route runs through the floodplain of the River Tone which may restrict the ability to widen or resurface the existing path.
- The path also runs through a Local Nature Reserve (Children's Wood/ Riverside) and therefore widening and resurfacing the existing path will need to be considered in relation to biodiversity, movements and habitat.

Route 30 – Priorswood Road



Route

Priorswood Rd/ Batt Dr junction – Priorswood Rd - Clifton Terrace/ Priorswood Rd junction

Types of users

- Commuters.

Key connections made

- Crown Industrial Estate

Onward connections to

- Taunton Station via GI-led Route 41 and existing infrastructure on Trenchard Way or Route 17. Onwards into Firepool using the Station to Vivary Link.
- Town Centre via Route 17 and 1 or GI-led Route 41, Trenchard Way and Station to Vivary Link.
- The Castle School/ Bridgwater & Taunton School via Route 17, 1, 25 and onwards to Musgrove Park Hospital using Route 5a.

Opportunities responded to

- Connecting Nerrols and Monkton Heathfield to key destinations.
- Enables wider community access to facilities within Nerrols and Monkton Heathfield.
- Delivery of Obridge roundabout improvements as part of the S106 Agreement.
- Serves as a fast, direct, more overlooked and potentially more deliverable alternative to the Canal tow path.

Constraints to route design

- Bus routes along A3259/ A358 and HGV access to Crown Industrial Estate.
- Role of road (A-road) and the adjacent side road access for the industrial estate may necessitate a reduced standard of provision if it cannot be utilised.

Route 31 – Bossington Drive – Eastwick Road



Route
Bossington Drive – Selworthy Road – Eastwick Road

Types of users

- Mainly younger users – will be some commuting and leisure trips.

Key connections made

- Lyngford Park Surgery
- Lyngford Park Primary School
- Lyngford Park
- Priorswood/ Pyrland local centre

Onward connections to

- Firepool/Taunton Station via Route 16 and Trenchard Way existing provision or using Route 19 to access Firepool and continuing through the Garden Community.
- Town Centre, Taunton Pool and Morrisons via Route 16, 19 and Station to Vivary Link.
- The Castle School/ Bridgwater & Taunton College via Route 16, 30, 17, 1 and 25 and onwards to Musgrove Park Hospital using Route 5a.

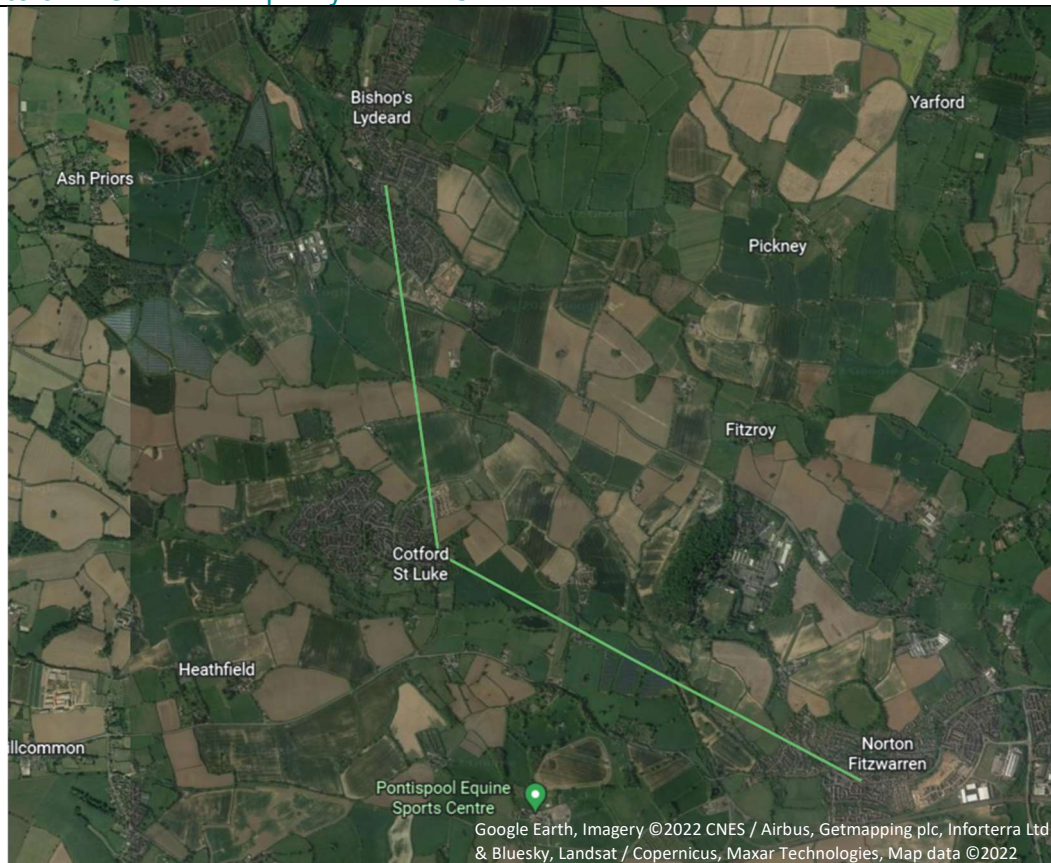
Opportunities responded to

- Connection of Nerrols to key destinations.
- Linking into and extending the LCWIP “missing link” route on Eastwick Road.
- Ensuring new facilities on site can be accessed safely by cycle and on foot by the wider community.
- Connecting Nerrols to Cheddon Road by walking/ cycle links through route 16 delivery or LCWIP “missing link”.
- Utilising and enhancing the existing cycle route provided along Nerrols Drive.

Constraints to route design

- Constrained adopted highway in some areas, which may offer difficulties in delivering segregated provision of active travel infrastructure along the whole route.

Route 32 – GI-led Bishop's Lydeard – Cotford St Luke Link



Route

Norton Fitzwarren – Cotford St Luke – Bishop's Lydeard

Key connections made

- Norton Fitzwarren
- Cotford St Luke
- Bishop's Lydeard

Onward connections to

- Taunton Town Centre via Route 22, 26 and 1a and 1 and onwards to Taunton Station via existing provision on Trenchard Way.
- The Castle School/ Bridgwater & Taunton College via Route 22, 26 and 27.

Opportunities responded to

- Encouraging walking and cycling for local commuting, leisure and utility journeys.
- Connecting into and extending the LCWIP "green" route.
- Enhancing access to Norton Fitzwarren including to Norton Camp Hillfort as part of the aspirations for Green Infrastructure Objective 6.
- Community aspirations for such a route.

Constraints to route design

- Third party ownership of land running parallel to West Somerset Railway.
- Legal status of the path has not yet been considered.
- Funding sources have not been identified.
- Impact to biodiversity by implementing such a walking and cycling path.

Route 33 – GI-led Taunton – Kingston St Mary Link



Route

Whitmore Lane – Dodhill Road – Taunton Road (north) – Kingston Road

Key connections made

- Kingston St Mary
- Taunton
- Taunton School International Middle School

Onward connections to

- Taunton Town Centre via Route 2, 3, rail bridge and 1.
- Taunton Train Station via Route 2 and 3.
- Taunton Academy/ Wellsprings Leisure Centre via Route 2.
- Staplegrove on-site facilities accessed via spine road or using Routes 2 and 21.


Opportunities responded to

- Encouraging walking and cycling for local commuting, leisure and utility journeys.
- Connecting into and extending the LCWIP “green” route.
- Community aspirations for such a route.

Constraints to route design

- Funding sources have not been identified.
- Impact to biodiversity by implementing such a walking and cycling path.
- Main road (Kingston/Taunton Road) unlikely sufficient width within highway boundaries. Consider more direct option across third party land.
- Third party land ownership along route.
- Narrow carriageway along route may necessitate a reduced standard of provision.

Route 34 – GI-led Hestercombe Link

	
<p>Route Bridgwater Road (A38) – across green space and canal – path along Allen's Brook – A3259/ Yallands Hill – north through Maidenbrook Country Park – Cheddon Fitzpaine – Hestercombe House & Gardens (exact path unknown)</p>	
<p>Key connections made</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maidenbrook Country Park • Hestercombe House & Gardens • Quantock Hills AONB • Cheddon Fitzpaine • Monkton Heathfield and Nerrols 	<p>Onward connections to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taunton Town Centre via Route 10, 19 and Station to Vivary Link. • Nexus via Route 29 and GI-led links 35 and 36.
<p>Opportunities responded to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community aspirations for such a route. • Linking external and rural communities into Taunton. • Walking/cycling route acts as a gateway to the Quantock Hills AONB helping to deliver Green Infrastructure Opportunity 1. • Connection from Taunton urban area and the planned garden communities of Monkton Heathfield and Nerrols to Monkton Heathfield Country Park and beyond to Hestercombe House and Quantock Hills AONB contributing to Green Infrastructure Opportunity 4 creating a north/south route. 	
<p>Constraints to route design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding sources have not been identified. • Impact to biodiversity by implementing such a walking and cycling path. 	

Route 35 – GI-led Monkton – Ruishton – Nexus Link



Route

Hankridge Farm Retail Park/ Ruishton Lane – Monkton Heathfield (exact route unknown)

Key connections made

- Hankridge Farm Retail Park
- Ruishton
- Monkton Heathfield

Onward connections to

- Nexus and Creech St Michael via GI-led Route 36.
- Ilminster via A358 GI-led Route 40 link.

Opportunities responded to

- Long-held ambition to connect Monkton Heathfield with Nexus, Hankridge Retail Park and Ruishton.
- Helping to enhance Taunton's waterways, contributing to Green Infrastructure Opportunity 2 by improving the route under the M5.

Constraints to route design

- Third party ownership of land.
- Legal status of the path has not yet been considered.
- Funding sources have not been identified.
- Impact to biodiversity by implementing such a walking and cycling path.

Route 36 – GI-led Ruishton – Creech St Michael Link



Route

Nexus – J25 Park & Ride – Ruishton Lane – Creech St Michael (exact route unknown)

Key connections made

- Nexus
- J25 Park and Ride
- Creech St Michael local centre

Onward connections to

- Creech St Michael Primary School and Creech Medical Centre via Route 12.
- Taunton Town Centre via Route 19, 20 and East Street. Onwards to Musgrove Park Hospital using Routes 5 and 5a.
- Blackbrook Leisure Centre/ Business Park via Route 19 and 18 and onwards to Richard Huish College and Bishop Fox's Community School using SCC Killams Link.
- Hankridge Retail Park via Route 19, 18 and 29 or GI-led Route 35.
- Halcon/ UKHO via Route 19, 18 and 10 or 35, 29 and 10.
- Taunton Station via Route 19 and using Firepool provision.

Opportunities responded to

- Connecting Nexus Garden Community to Taunton urban area and other planned garden communities.
- Contributing to Green Infrastructure Opportunity 3 to create a cycle/ walking link along the Blackbrook path to Ruishton from Nexus (connecting from Route 19).
- Extending the LCWIP “green” route east-west corridor to Ruishton and Creech St Michael, connecting from Nexus and Taunton.
- National Highways’ A358 Henlade Bypass proposals potentially present an opportunity to secure the first section of this route.
- Community aspirations for such a route.

Constraints to route design

- Third party ownership of land.
- Legal status of the path has not yet been considered.
- Funding sources have not been identified.
- Impact to biodiversity by implementing such a walking and cycling path.

Route 37 – GI-led Sherford – Mountfields Link



Route

Cherry Tree Lane – Sherford Road – Mountfields Road (exact route unknown)

Key connections made

- Killams development and open space play area

Onward connections to

- Bishop Fox's Community School and Richard Huish College using SCC Killams Link.
- Blackbrook/ Nexus via Route 18 and 19 (for Nexus).
- Comeytrowe and Trull via Route 9 and 28/ 8.

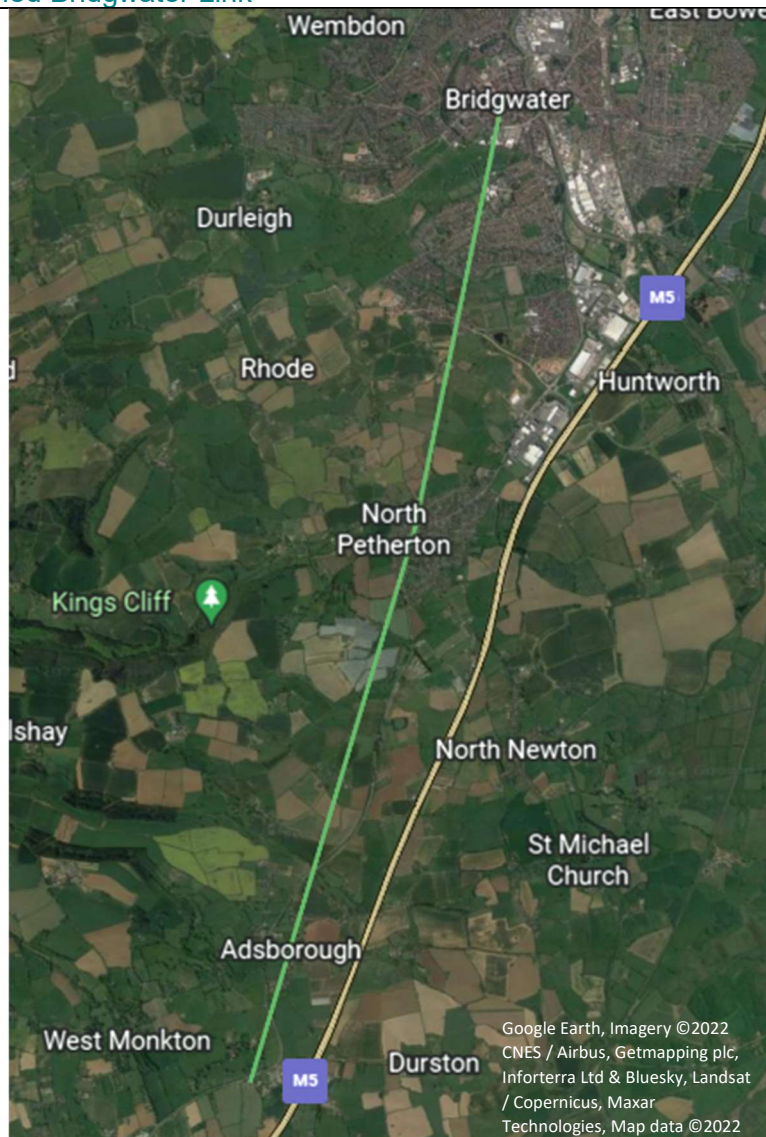
Opportunities responded to

- Connecting Comeytrowe to key destinations.
- Long-held ambition to create a walking/cycling link across the green wedge.
- Connecting LCWIP "red" and "purples" routes.
- Community aspirations for such a route.

Constraints to route design

- Third party ownership of land.
- Legal status of the path has not yet been considered.
- Funding sources have not been identified.
- Impact to biodiversity by implementing such a walking and cycling path.

Route 38 – GI-led Bridgwater Link



Route

Monkton Heathfield – A38 Park and Ride – Adsbrough – North Petherton – Bridgwater (exact route unknown)

Key connections made

- Adsbrough
- Shearston
- North Petherton
- Bridgwater

Onward connections to

- Taunton Town Centre via Route 10, 19 and Station to Vivary Link. Onwards to Wellington using Route 5, 7 and Wellington Link after reaching Stonegallows.
- Ilminster via A38 existing provision and GI-led links of Routes 35, 36 and 40.

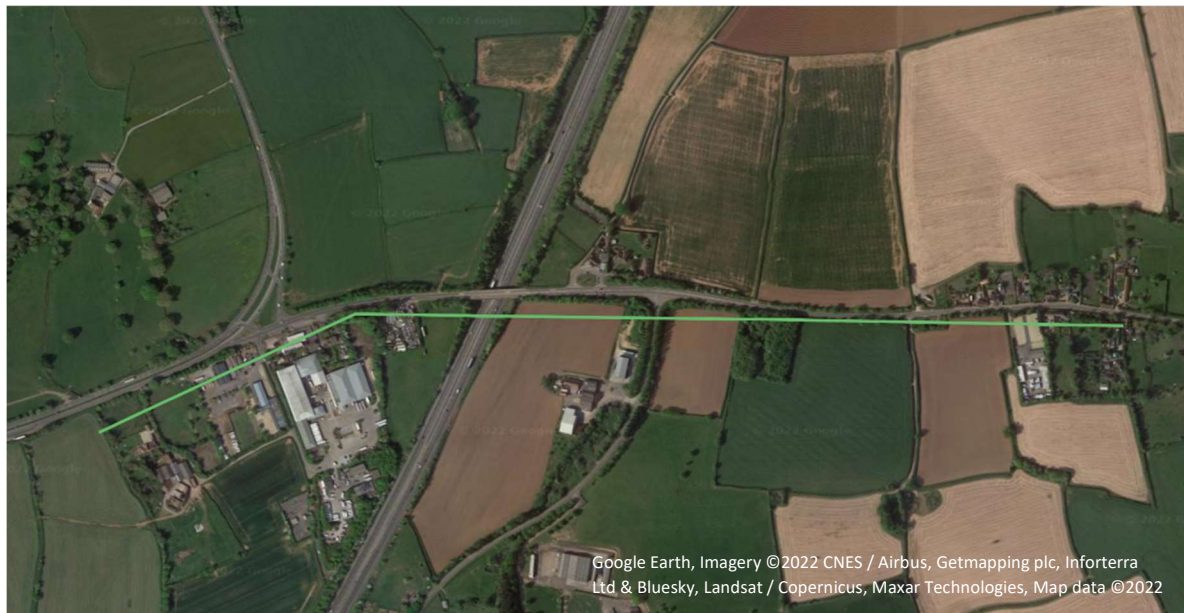
Opportunities responded to

- Connecting Monkton Heathfield to key destinations.
- Linking in external and rural communities into Taunton.
- Improving walking/cycling routes between Taunton and Bridgwater.
- Encouraging walking and cycling for local commuting, leisure and utility journeys.
- Extending north the LCWIP “blue” route from Monkton Heathfield phase 2.

Constraints to route design

- Funding sources have not been identified.
- Impact to biodiversity by implementing such a walking and cycling path.
- Third party ownership of land.

Route 39 – GI-led Durston Link



Route

A38 (Monkton Heathfield Park and Ride) – A361 - Durston

Key connections made

- Durston
- Monkton Heathfield Park and Ride

Onward connections to

- Hankridge Retail Park via existing A38 provision and Route 35 (or 10 and 29). Onwards to Nexus using Route 36.
- Taunton Town Centre and Taunton Station via Route 10, 19 and Station to Vivary Link.
- North Petherton/ Bridgwater via GI-led Route 38.
- Creech St Michael via Route 12.
- Taunton Academy via Route 13 and 11.

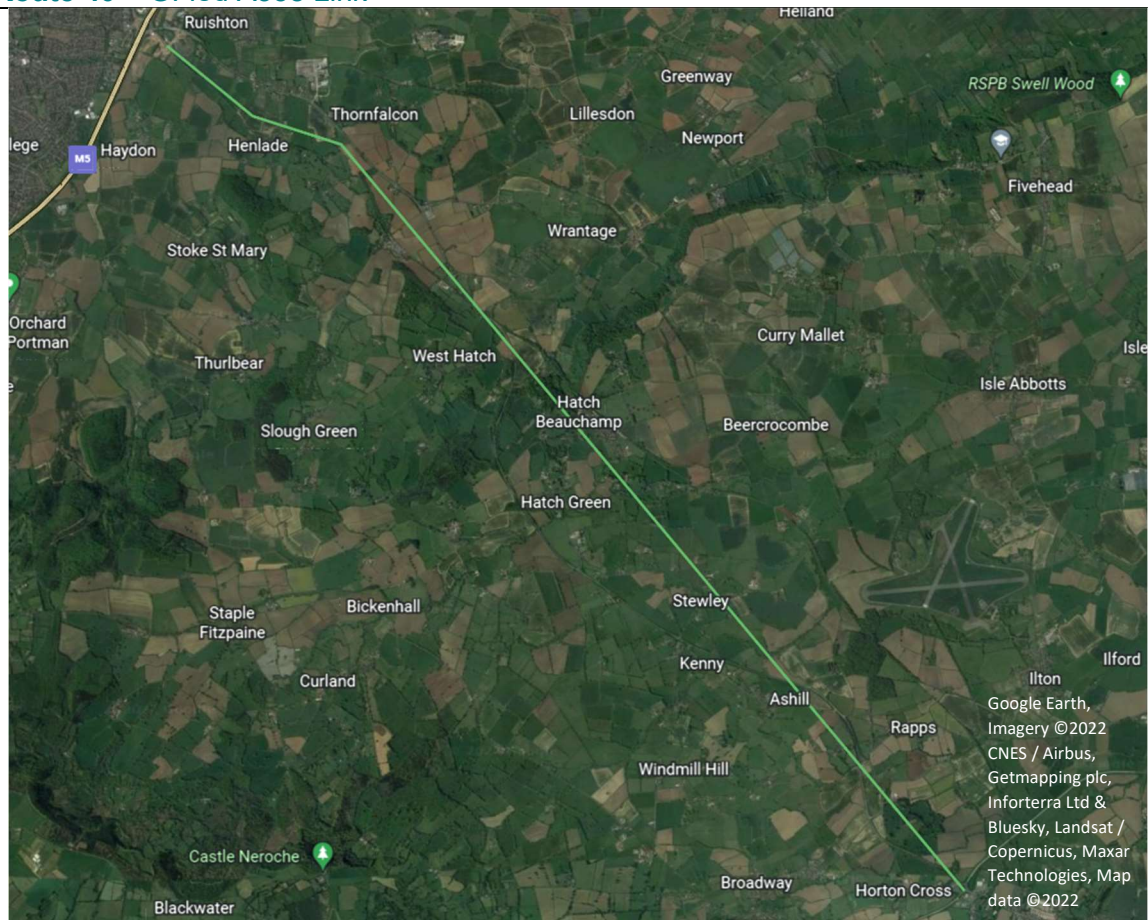
Opportunities responded to

- Linking external and rural communities into Taunton and facilities within Monkton Heathfield.
- Encouraging walking and cycling for local commuting, leisure and utility journeys.
- Encouraging use of the park and ride facilities around Taunton.
- Building on Green Infrastructure Opportunity 11 with the aim to install pedestrian and cycle crossings over the M5 by improving an existing bridge north-east of Taunton.

Constraints to route design

- Funding sources have not been identified.
- Impact to biodiversity by implementing such a walking and cycling path.
- Bridge structural review required on A361.

Route 40 – GI-led A358 Link



Route

J25 – Ilminster via Henlade and Hatch Beauchamp along existing A358

Key connections made

- Nexus/ J25
- Henlade
- Hatch Beauchamp
- Ilminster (Southfields Roundabout)

Onward connections to

- Taunton Town Centre via Route 19, 20 and East Street.
- Onwards to Wellington via Route 5, 7 and on the Wellington Link.
- Bridgwater via Route 36, 35, existing infrastructure on A38 and through Monkton Heathfield and Route 38.

Opportunities responded to

- National Highways A358 Taunton to Southfields scheme a key opportunity to deliver this as a fast, dedicated direct link. Ensuring the new A358 becomes an opportunity and not a barrier to active travel and community connectivity.
- Provision of a direct cycle route connecting to Ilminster, a long-held ambition.
- Can enable wider connections into this route from other rural areas.

Constraints to route design

- Space for cycle and walking infrastructure dependent on planning permission granted for the A358 bypass proposal.
- Impact to biodiversity by possibly widening the existing path and resurfacing.
- Third party ownership of land.

Route 41 – GI-led Firepool Railway Bridge Link



Route

Trenchard Way – over rail line – onto existing cycle path south of Heavitree Way

Key

connections
made

- Firepool

Onward connections to

- Taunton Station via existing segregated cycle and walking path on Trenchard Way. Onwards to Firepool using infrastructure to be provided within the site.
- Priorswood Primary School via 30, 16 and 23 or 30 and 15.
- Taunton Town Centre via Station to Vivary Link.
- Taunton Pool via Trenchard Way provision and Route 17.
- Taunton Academy/ Wellsprings Leisure Centre via Route 30 and 16.
- Winckworth Way/ Obridge allotments using existing cycle path.

Opportunities responded to

- Connection of Firepool to key destinations.
- Encouraging walking and cycling for local commuting, leisure and utility journeys.
- Linking into LCWIP “red” route, north-south corridor.
- Links in with the walking/cycling provision on Firepool boulevard connecting into the town centre and on to Vivary Park through the Future High Streets Fund.
- Tackles existing lack of north-south walking/cycle connections in Taunton.
- Responds to GI Strategy and Town Centre Design Code SPD aspiration for new bridge creating faster, more direct links with North Taunton and Firepool / town centre.

Constraints to route design

- Third party/ Network Rail ownership of land running across the Exeter-Bristol train line.
- Legal status of the path has not yet been considered.
- Funding sources have not been identified.
- Impact to biodiversity by implementing such a walking and cycling path.

Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer

Organisation prepared for	Somerset West and Taunton Council		
Version	0.1	Date Completed	20/06/2022

Description of what is being impact assessed

Connecting our Garden Communities

Connecting our Garden Communities is a plan for ensuring that modern, futureproofed walking and cycling infrastructure accompanies the delivery of key developments across Taunton Garden Town. The plan focuses on the evidence and justification for a network of connecting routes across the town. The plan includes comments in the route summaries about considerations to be taken into account in route design. However, it does not go as far as determining exactly what level of infrastructure will be delivered along every section of each route. Further work is required to take each route and specific interventions within them forward through concept and detailed design stages. The plan references the Public Realm Design Guide SPD and the Government's Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20 guidance on cycle infrastructure design, for which inclusive cycling is the underlying theme so that people of all ages and abilities are considered. It recognises that mobility needs to respect equalities and inclusive mobility, and that following LTN1/20 Guidance can assist in this respect. The scope was decided to include both walking and cycling, with the initial objective being to accommodate full LTN1/20 compliant segregated walking and cycling routes. The expectation in this was that this would provide routes suitable for all users of all abilities. As routes progress through the design path, it may be that full compliance with LTN1/20 will not be possible in every location, and as such further work to assure an inclusive approach may be required at that point – but this is beyond the scope of this plan.

This EqlA identifies in general terms the likely impact of the general focus on provision of walking and cycling routes on different groups of people taken in the round, rather than on a detailed basis. The plan relates to major developments at the Garden Communities around Taunton, which will be subject to future planning applications for which it is intended that this document will become a material consideration. Where the Council determines planning applications, it exercises a statutory function, and as such the Public Sector Equality Duty is relevant. If necessary, depending upon the detail and context of proposed development, (specifically where an individual or group would see or experience a direct physical change as a result), specific EqlAs may be necessary to understand the impacts of that specific development.

It also needs to be recognised that not all people sharing a protected characteristic within SWT will necessarily experience the same impact (be it positive or negative) from a particular policy, decision or focus.

Evidence

What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#), should be detailed here

The Council's draft Connecting our Garden Communities plan has been reviewed.

Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

Officers within the Council with an overview of the Equalities function, who have experience of identifying impacts on those with protected characteristics have been consulted for this initial identification of potential impacts.

The Draft plan is due to be subject to public consultation, including with relevant community and interest groups and individuals associated with protected characteristics. Responses to the consultation will inform the final plan proposed for approval.

Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	Walking and cycling are active modes of travel which are the most accessible means of travel for the vast majority of the population across all ages.			x

	<p><u>Older people</u> Older people are statistically more likely to be affected by reduced physical mobility. Therefore, a plan/strategy focusing on improving walking and cycling links may not affect older people as positively as it may younger people. In addition to this, older people with reduced mobility are more likely to therefore rely upon travel by vehicular transport, as such, a plan focusing on improving walking and cycling links, which may in places necessitate a detriment to vehicular traffic access, flows and capacity could have potential to adversely impact older people. However, the provision of such infrastructure designed in compliance with LTN1/20 has the potential ability to improve safety for all, and the added prospect of improving health and wellbeing of the elderly in the long term.</p> <p><u>Younger people</u> Younger people are statistically less likely to be affected by reduced physical mobility. Younger people under the legal age limit are unable to drive, and as such are more likely to need to walk and cycle. Therefore, a plan/strategy focusing on improving walking and cycling links may affect younger people more positively than it may older people. Additionally, the provision of such infrastructure designed in compliance with LTN1/20 has the potential ability to improve safety for all, and the added prospect of improving health and wellbeing of the population in general over the long term, particularly if journeys to school are prioritised as suggested – instilling an active lifestyle from a young age. E-scooters tend to be popular within younger age groups. At this stage, the Taunton trial e-scooters are able to be used on roads and on cycleways, however, personal e-scooters are illegal to be used on cycleways and only legal to be used on roads if registered, taxed and insured. If e-scooters (trial or private following legislative review) were to be restricted from using cycleways then this could disproportionately negatively affect younger people. The plan makes</p>			<p>x</p> <p>x</p>
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	no reference to the suitability or treating of e-scooters in relation to the routes as this is beyond the scope of the document.			
Disability	Walking and cycling are active modes of travel which are the most accessible means of travel for the vast majority of the population. Designed in the right way, in accordance with LTN1/20, such infrastructure should enable safe, convenient access for all irrespective of disability or not.			x
	<u>Reduced physical mobility</u> A plan/strategy focusing on improving walking and cycling links may not affect people with reduced physical mobility as positively as it may others. In addition to this, people with reduced mobility are more likely to therefore rely upon travel by vehicular transport, as such, a plan focusing on improving walking and cycling links, which may in places necessitate a detriment to vehicular traffic access, flows and capacity could have potential to adversely impact older people. However, the provision of such infrastructure designed in compliance with LTN1/20 has the potential ability to improve safety for all, and the added prospect of improving health and wellbeing of the population in general over the long term – including reducing frailty and risks of reduced mobility in the long term. LTN1/20 standards have been designed with all users including adaptive cycles (e.g. hand cycling, tricycles) and wheelchairs in mind. This reinforces the importance of working to accommodate full LTN1/20 standards wherever possible.			x
	<u>Visually impaired</u> Inappropriately designed walking and cycling routes can be of serious detriment to the visually impaired. Failure to design appropriately may lead to the environment being illegible to the visually impaired, increasing the likelihood for collisions and injury and severing access for such users. However, the provision of such infrastructure designed			x

	<p>in compliance with LTN1/20 has the potential ability to improve safety for all.</p> <p><u>Respiratory conditions</u> Air pollutants can worsen respiratory conditions such as asthma. The aim of this plan is to improve the ability for people to walk and cycle through provision of associated infrastructure, and as such increase modal shift away from motorised vehicles. This approach serves to mitigate and avoid air pollution impacts, particularly associate with travel from the new Garden Community developments. As such, over time and in combination with other policies and proposals it should help improve air quality across Taunton and should therefore, have a particularly positive impact for those with such conditions. Importantly, the plan proposes that East Reach (an Air Quality Management Zone) is a key part of the walking and cycling network. Shifting people from motorised vehicles to walking and cycling along this corridor could drastically improve outcomes for this group in this area.</p>			
Gender reassignment	<p>Walking and cycling are active modes of travel which are the most accessible means of travel for the vast majority of the population. There may be a higher perceived risk / fear of assault in public spaces for people in this group. The final design of particular schemes must consider appropriate levels of lighting and visibility in order for the routes to be welcoming, and to feel safe for people using them, particularly people sharing this particular characteristic. No additional impacts have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.</p>			X
Marriage and civil partnership	<p>Walking and cycling are active modes of travel which are the most accessible means of travel for the vast majority of the population. No additional impacts have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.</p>			X

Pregnancy and maternity	Walking and cycling are active modes of travel which are the most accessible means of travel for the vast majority of the population. Air pollutants can cause respiratory illness in pregnant women and also lead to low birth weight or pre-term birth. The aim of this plan is to improve the ability for people to walk and cycle through provision of associated infrastructure, and as such increase modal shift away from motorised vehicles. This approach serves to mitigate and avoid air pollution impacts, particularly associated with travel from the new Garden Community developments. As such, over time and in combination with other policies and proposals it should help improve air quality across Taunton and should therefore, have a particularly positive impact for this group. LTN1/20 standards have been designed with all users including people pushing buggies/double buggies and using bikes with child trailers/cargo-bike type models in mind. This reinforces the importance of working to accommodate full LTN1/20 standards wherever possible. No additional impacts have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.			X
Race and ethnicity	Walking and cycling are active modes of travel which are the most accessible means of travel for the vast majority of the population. There may be a higher perceived risk / fear of assault in public spaces for people in this group. The final design of particular schemes must consider appropriate levels of lighting and visibility in order for the routes to be welcoming, and to feel safe for people using them, particularly people sharing this particular characteristic. No additional impacts have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.			X
Religion or belief	Walking and cycling are active modes of travel which are the most accessible means of travel for the vast majority of the population. No additional impacts have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.			X

Sex	Walking and cycling are active modes of travel which are the most accessible means of travel for the vast majority of the population. Studies have shown that men and women tend to have different travel patterns and choices of transport mode, influenced by the types of trip being undertaken as well as actual and perceived barriers to movement. Personal safety, convenience and appearance/perception are key factors in this regard. The provision of such infrastructure designed in compliance with LTN1/20 has the potential ability to improve safety for all. Route audits have actively considered these issues, and the choice of routes has been influenced by the potential to improve outcomes in this regard. Detailed design will further need to consider these points. There may be a higher perceived risk / fear of assault in public spaces for people in this group. The final design of particular schemes must consider appropriate levels of lighting and visibility in order for the routes to be welcoming, and to feel safe for people using them, particularly people sharing this particular characteristic. No additional impacts have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.			X
Sexual orientation	Walking and cycling are active modes of travel which are the most accessible means of travel for the vast majority of the population. There may be a higher perceived risk / fear of assault in public spaces for people in this group. The final design of particular schemes must consider appropriate levels of lighting and visibility in order for the routes to be welcoming, and to feel safe for people using them, particularly people sharing this particular characteristic. No additional impacts have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.			X
Other, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.	<u>Low Income</u> Walking and cycling are active modes of travel which are the most accessible means of travel for the vast majority of the population. It is also the cheapest form of transport. No additional impacts have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.			X

	<p><u>Rural Isolation</u></p> <p>Walking and cycling are active modes of travel which are the most accessible means of travel for the vast majority of the population. The plan identifies a number of aspirational links between rural areas and services and facilities within the Garden Communities and wider Garden Town, as such it has the potential to positively impact upon this group in the rural areas immediately surrounding Taunton. However, most affected by rural isolation are significantly beyond the boundaries of this plan – for people in these areas the plan would provide very little positive or negative impact. Although, connection with the Park & Ride sites may suggest some minor positive impact. The document refers to the reasoning behind its geographical scope. No additional impacts have been identified that would disproportionately affect this group.</p>			X
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Report Number: SWT 96/22

Somerset West and Taunton Council Scrutiny – 6th July 2022

Corporate Performance Report, Outturn and Quarter 4 2021/22

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Member Benet Allen.

Report Author: Malcolm Riches, Business Intelligence and Performance Manager.

1. Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

This paper provides an update on the council's performance for the 2021/22 financial year. The report includes information for a range of key performance indicators and provides an update on progress against the council's annual plan commitments for the year. The report also includes the key business risks for the council.

Given the breadth of information contained in the report, it is unlikely that all questions can be answered at the meeting. It would be helpful if any detailed questions could be submitted in advance.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to note the Council's performance report for 2021/22.

3. Risk Assessment

Failure to regularly monitor performance could lead to the council not delivering on some of its corporate priorities or key services.

4. Background and Full details of the Report

As part of the Council's commitment to transparency and accountability this report provides an update on performance. The Covid pandemic and economic climate continue to have an impact and the Council's response to these issues is being achieved in addition to the regular day-to-day responsibilities. In addition services are increasingly having to focus on the transition to the new unitary council from 1 April 2023.

Specifically, the report provides:

- A progress update against the actions to deliver the Council's Annual Plan at the end of the first six months of the financial year
- The position in respect of our key performance indicators at the end of the financial year; and
- A summary of the Council's key business risks and issues together with the current status of the actions being taken to respond to them.

4.1 Summary of Performance

The Council's Corporate Strategy contains four priority strategic themes. Each year the Council produces a plan (the Annual Plan) to identify actions to assist in the delivery of the four strategic priorities. The plan for this year identifies 31 actions.

Progress against a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) is reported quarterly. These KPI's are used to monitor progress in delivering key services and to enable us to quickly identify and rectify any problem areas. These indicators are also linked to one of the four corporate priorities to indicate how they support the delivery of the Corporate Strategy.

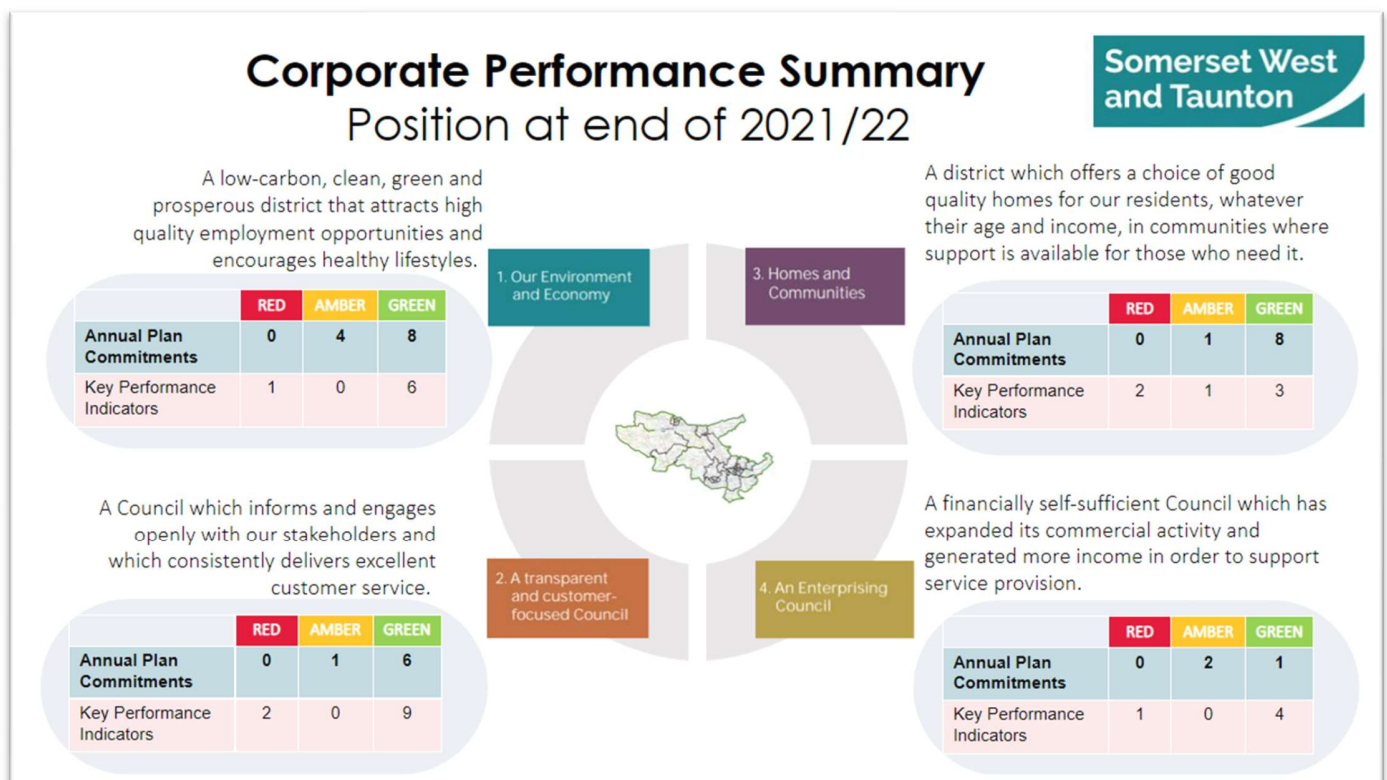
The graphic below provides an overview of performance for the end of the 2021/22 financial year for the 31 commitments in the Annual Plan and our Key Performance Indicators.

Each commitment has been rated as either Red, Amber or Green to indicate whether we are on schedule.

Full details of the progress to date against each of the KPIs and the Annual Plan actions can be found in appendices 1 & 2 below.

In summary this indicates that of the 31 Annual Plan commitments, 23 are Green, 8 are Amber, and none are Red.

Of the Key Performance indicators, 22 are Green, 1 is Amber and 6 are Red.



4.2 Key Performance Indicators

The table in Appendix 1 includes the councils Key Performance Indicators and shows how the council has performed during 2021/22. The table includes a “direction of travel” arrow to show whether performance has improved, worsened, or stayed the same, since the end of Quarter 3.

For the majority of indicators, the target has either been met or, in many cases, has been exceeded. Overall, there are 6 ‘Red’ and 1 ‘Amber’ indicators, which are being monitored closely. More information is provided below regarding the red and amber indicators:

Percentage of complaints responded to in 10 working days:

The percentage of complaints responded to in 10 days for the year is 78%, which is below the target of 90%.

As mentioned in the Quarter 3 report, the reasons for this are varied and are summarised below:

- *Increased numbers of complaints* - the number of complaints received continue to be significantly higher than in the previous financial years. Higher volumes of complaints present challenges in some areas in being able to respond within the target time.
- *Complexity* - we are continuing to receive a greater number of more complex complaints. These take longer to investigate and respond to and often cannot be responded to within target. Where this is the case officers are under instruction to contact the complainant and agree a new realistic deadline for response.
- *Capacity* - the increased volumes and complexity are highlighting capacity problems in some areas around having enough sufficiently skilled officers to respond to complaints.
- *Customer expectations* - customer expectations are increasing resulting in a growth in the number of complaints being registered. This is a sector wide trend across local government. The Housing Ombudsman is reporting a 230% increase in the complaints reported for the period April to June 2021 from the same period in the previous year.
- *Local service-related issues* – we have recommenced normal recovery and enforcement activity in respect of Council Tax, Business Rates and Miscellaneous Income debts. In addition, we have recently launched a project to target a backlog of previous year Council Tax and Business Rate debts. There were also problems with waste collection in the earlier part of the financial year. All of this has acted to increase complaints.

We are actively taking steps to improve our performance on response times, and these remain significantly better than in the previous financial year. These steps include:

- Refining and re-writing elements of the IT software (Firmstep) that manages the complaints process to make the routing of complaints easier. These changes are currently being tested and will be rolled out shortly.
- Training is being delivered across the organisation to both build capacity and improve the quality of responses to complaints.
- Over 70 staff within the Housing Directorate have received specific complaints training from the Housing Quality Network which has focussed on improving the quality of responses. In addition, all Housing staff have completed refresher customer care training to ensure customers are treated with fairness and respect.
- A complaints dashboard is being developed to improve the quality of feedback and trend analysis for individual areas.
- Learning from complaints and complaint trends are driving new work. In Housing, for example, a working group is looking at damp and mould issues, and deep dive activity is being undertaken with other authorities to compare performance and share good practice.
- Our complaints lead continues to work closely with services to resolve issues and to ensure we can issue responses as quickly as possible. Localised reporting in some directorates has also started in detail, for example weekly follow up on cases within Housing.

We are actively monitoring the workload in this area together with response times and implementing improvements. However, we are conscious that demand will continue to grow particularly in view of the anticipated impact of the fuel price increase and inflation all of which will continue to make this a challenging target.

Average call wait times:

Detailed commentary is included in Appendix 1a.

% of planning appeals that have had the decision overturned

The number of planning appeals is generally low (there have been 45 in the past 12 months), and because of the low numbers, it only takes a few appeals to have a big impact on the percentage. Of the 45 appeals, 20 have had the decision overturned by the Planning Inspectorate.

Number of families in B&B over 6 weeks (position at the end of the quarter)

At the end of March there was one family that had been in B&B for more than 6 weeks. This was a misunderstanding by the team, as for recording purposes the definition of families includes individuals who do not have children but who are pregnant and expecting. The family were moved as soon as this was realised and training has been provided to the team for the correct definition of families. A monitoring process is also now in place for families that have been in B&B for 4 weeks so that they can be found alternative temporary accommodation before the 6 week deadline.

Average re-let times.

The average re-let time for council properties was 54.7 days, which exceeded our target of 44 days. While performance for October and November was above the target, for December both Minor and Major voids have shown a reduction in turnaround times. The average target was achieved in March and recent months have continued to show an improvement, which is encouraging.

This has been a challenging time for void management and all Housing Providers across Somerset have struggled with increasing void times. Common factors include scarcity of key tradespeople (such as electricians), both in-house and through external contractors, many of whom have been attracted to other work such as Hinkley; Refocussing trades staff to clear repairs backlogs built up during the pandemic; lack of availability of some materials, which inevitably holds up work. For SWT, we have also noted a higher proportion of Major Voids (compared to Minor Voids) which skews our turnaround times higher. That said, we are progressing against our plan to improve void turnaround times. The plan includes:

- Strengthening our approach with departing tenants to ensure they leave the property clean and tidy
- Providing decoration packs for non-disabled tenants, rather than undertaking full redecoration to let the property quicker
- Investigating how we streamline the asbestos process to reduce delays due to surveys and works
- Implementation of the voids module on Open Housing which will allow improved performance management of the overall voids process
- Look to undertake major capital works as part of the capital programme where possible, after the tenant moves in, rather than during the void. This will also be more cost effective through economies of scale.
- Explore voids inspections and scheduling software that can lead to a more efficient inspection and scheduling of trades staff into the properties and flag up capacity issues to allow earlier resolution.

The 44 day target was set in December 2020 and was based on Quarter 2 Housemark metrics that showed a median performance of 44.5 days for District Councils that held housing stock at that time. Housemark data now shows District Council average void turnaround time has increased to 49.8 days by Quarter 4 of 2020/21. Reasons for this increase across the sector are described above.

The Housing Management team monitors wider metrics to give a rounded view of performance with respect to voids. The Pulse data for March 2022 places us in the top quartile for the indicators "Proportion of dwellings vacant, but available to let", and 'Proportion of social homes let", so our performance overall does give confidence that although improvement is required, we are not significantly out of step with other Housing Providers.

Completion of emergency housing repairs in 24 hours.

The target is to complete 100% of emergency repairs within 24 hours and a total of 2809 repairs have been undertaken in the past year. Over the past 3 months 100% of

emergency repairs have been completed within 24 hours. The performance of 99.9% for the year is due to one emergency repair in quarter 2 that took 15 minutes longer to complete than the 24 hour target.

Forecast budget variance for General Fund.

Detailed commentary for this indicator is provided in the finance outturn report.

4.3 Risk Management update

As outlined in the separate report on Risk Management in May 2021, the quarterly Corporate Performance Reports will include an update on the key business risks and issues for the Council.

Processes are in place within each directorate to regularly review existing and identify any new risks and issues. As new risks or issues are identified they are included on the risk register or issues log and mitigations are identified and planned. A target date is set as to when the mitigations should be in place, and a lead officer is appointed.

The risks are all scored based on their probability and potential impact. The Risk Scoring Matrix used to score the risks is attached at Appendix 3. Risks with a higher score are likely to have a more detailed mitigation plan. Issues are things which have already happened, so they are not scored in the same way as risks, but they have a RAG status which relates to the severity of the issue.

As of the end of March there were 3 Key Business Risks (with a score of 15 or higher) on the risk register which are shown in Appendix 4.

As of the end of March the Corporate Issues Log contained 3 Issues which are shown in Appendix 5.

Appendices 4 and 5 provide a summary of the key risk or issue together with the current status of the development and delivery of any mitigation plans required to address them.

The risk register and issues log are updated as necessary and new risks/issues can be added at any point. They are routinely reviewed each month through the regular cycle of meetings. The lead officer is responsible for updating the risk register with progress made regarding mitigations, and this is reported back to Directorate performance meetings, and to the Corporate Performance Board where SMT review the key risks monthly

5. Links to Corporate Strategy

This performance report provides an update on Corporate Performance which is fundamental to the implementation of the Corporate Strategy.

6. Finance / Resource Implications

The detailed financial position is available in a separate budget monitoring report.

Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees – Yes**
- **Cabinet/Executive – Yes**
- **Full Council – No**

Reporting Frequency: ☐ **Once only** ☐ **Ad-hoc** **Y Quarterly**
 ☐ **Twice-yearly** ☐ **Annually**

List of Appendices

Appendix 1	Key Performance Indicators Report
Appendix 1a	Update on Average Call Wait Times
Appendix 2	Annual Plan update
Appendix 3	Risk Scoring Matrix
Appendix 4	Corporate Risk Register – Key Business Risks
Appendix 5	Corporate Issues

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SWT Performance report 2021/22

Link to Corporate Strategy	Full definition	Target	Quarter 3	Outturn	Direction of Travel since Q3	Denominator	Outturn	Numerator	Outturn
Transparent & Customer Focused	% of complaints responded to in 10 working days	90%	78%	78%	↔	Total number of complaints received	1102	Number of complaints responded to within 10 working days	860
	% of FOI requests responded to in 20 working days	75%	92%	91%	↓	Total number of FOI requests received	395	Number of FOI responded to within 20 working days	361
	% of calls to Deane Helpline answered in < 60 seconds	90%	95%	95%	↔	Total number of calls to Deane Helpline in the month	366349	Number of calls answered in under 60 seconds	348572
	Average call wait time (secs) for the last month	60 secs	164	240	↓				
	Cumulative percentage of the amount of Council Tax collected	97%	88.14%	97.38%	↑	Total amount of Council Tax to be collected by the 31st March	£109,685,893	Amount of Council Tax collected in the year so far	£106,817,564
	Cumulative percentage of the amount of Business Rates collected	95%	79.86%	97.55%	↑	Total amount of Business Rates to be collected by the 31st March	£48,023,946	Amount of Business Rates collected in the year so far	£46,846,029
	Average processing times of new Housing Benefit claims	19 dys	15.28	15.77	↓	Number of new Housing Benefit claims received	549	Total number of days	8659
	Average processing times for changes in circumstances for Housing Benefit claims	9 dys	4.71	3.42	↑	Number of new Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances received	10695	Total number of days	36610
	% of Licensing applications process within required timescales	90%	91%	92%	↑	Number of licensing applications processed	1398	Number of licensing applications responded within timescales	1282
	Sickness Absence (average days sickness per employee)	7.2 dys	5.33	7.2	↔	Total working days lost for all employees (cumulative)	4281	Number of FTE staff	591
	Staff Turnover	< 12	7.35	8.9	↔	Total number of staff	591	Total number of leavers	52
An Enterprising Council	Forecast budget variance for General Fund	£0	-£620k	-£2.349m	↓				
	Forecast budget variance for Housing Revenue Account	£0	+£354k	-£170k	↑				
	Forecast level of uncommitted reserves for General Fund.	£2.4m	£5.863m	£7.592m	↑				
	Forecast level of reserves for Housing Revenue Account.	£2m	£2.708m	£3.288m	↑				
	On target for Commercial Income Generation	£2.9m	Yes	Yes	↔				

Link to Corporate Strategy	Full definition	Target 2022/23	Quarter 3	Outturn	Direction of Travel since Q3	Denominator	Outturn	Numerator	Outturn
Environment & Economy	% of reported fly tipping incidents responded to within 5 working days	80%	82%	82%	↔	Number of fly tipping incidents	867	Number of fly tipping incidents repoded to within 5 days	708
	% of service requests for street cleansing actioned within 5 working days	85%	89%	87%	↓	Number of service requests for street cleansing	1465	Number of service requests actioned within 5 working days	1279
	% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks or within agreed extension of time**	75%	100%	100%	↔	Total number of major planning applications received	14	Total number of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks or agreed extension	14
	% of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks or agreed extension of time**	65%	80%	80%	↔	Total number of minor planning applications received	287	Total number of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks	229
	% of other planning applications determined within 8 weeks or an agreed extension of time**	80%	86%	84%	↓	Total number of other planning applications received	890	Total number of other planning applications determined within 8 weeks or an agreed extension	752
	% of planning appeals that have had the decision overturned	33%	33%	44%	↓	Number of appeals received	45	Number of appeals where the decision is overturned	20
	% Play area inspections completed to schedule	100%	100%	100%	↔	Play areas to be inspected	1764	Inspections carried out	1764
Homes and Communities	Income collected as a % of rent owed excluding arrears brought forward	98.30%	99.90%	99.49%	↓				
	Number of families in B&B over 6 weeks (position at the end of the quarter)	0	0	1	↓				
	Average re-let time in calendar days (key to key)	44 dys	54.9	54.7	↔	Total Number of dwellings let following void process	380		
	% of housing dwellings with a valid gas safety certificate (LGSR)	100%	100%	100%	↔	Total number of dwellings requiring a valid gas safety certificate	4460	Total number of dwellings without a valid gas safety certificate	0
	% of communal areas with a Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) in place and FRA Review complete (where applicable)	100%	99.72%	100%	↑				
	Completion of housing emergency repairs within 24 hours	100%	99.9%	99.9%	↔	Total number of emergency housing repairs	2809	Total number of emergency housing repairs completed in 24hrs	2808

The column titled Direction of Travel, shows whether performance has improved, worsened or is similar to the last report.

- ↑ Performance has improved
- ↓ Performance has got worse
- ↔ Performance is similar

** The planning indicators included in this report are calculated using nationally prescribed definitions to ensure performance is consistently reported and to allow for benchmarking and comparisons. The indicators calculate timescales upon completion. Due to the current issues with Phosphates, there are a number of applications which are held in abeyance, the details of which are available here: <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning/phosphates-on-the-somerset-levels-and-moors>

APPENDIX 1a

Average Call Waiting Times

Background

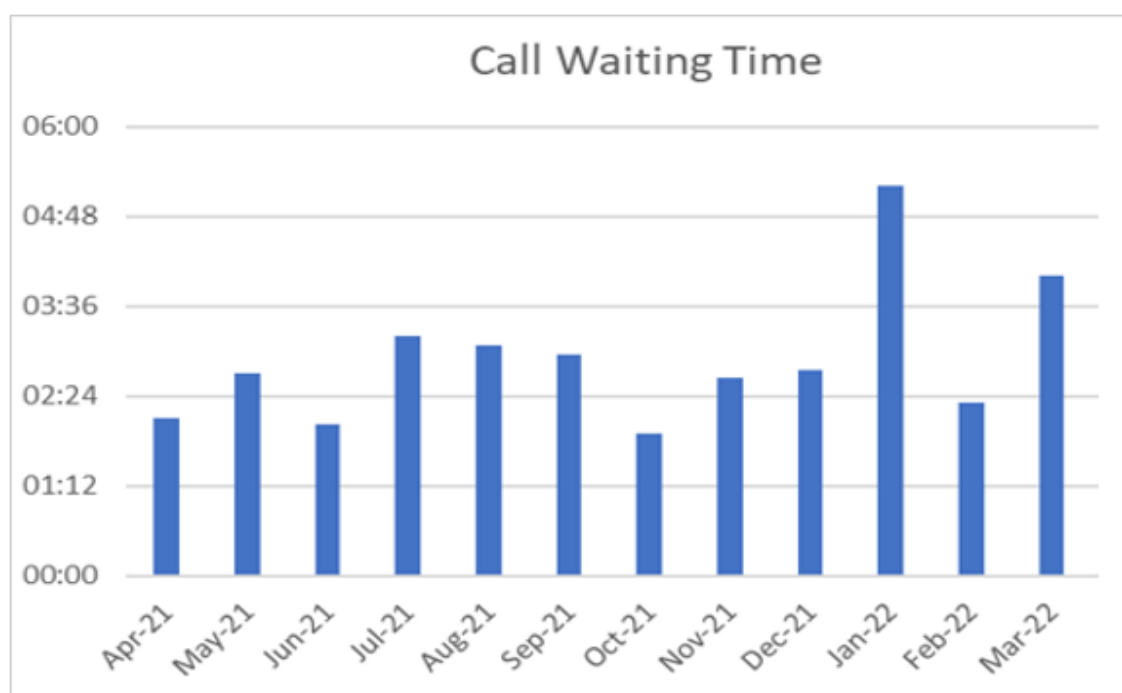
The indicator measures the length of time it takes one of our Customer Services Team to answer a call once the customer has listened to the initial recorded options and selected an appropriate queue.

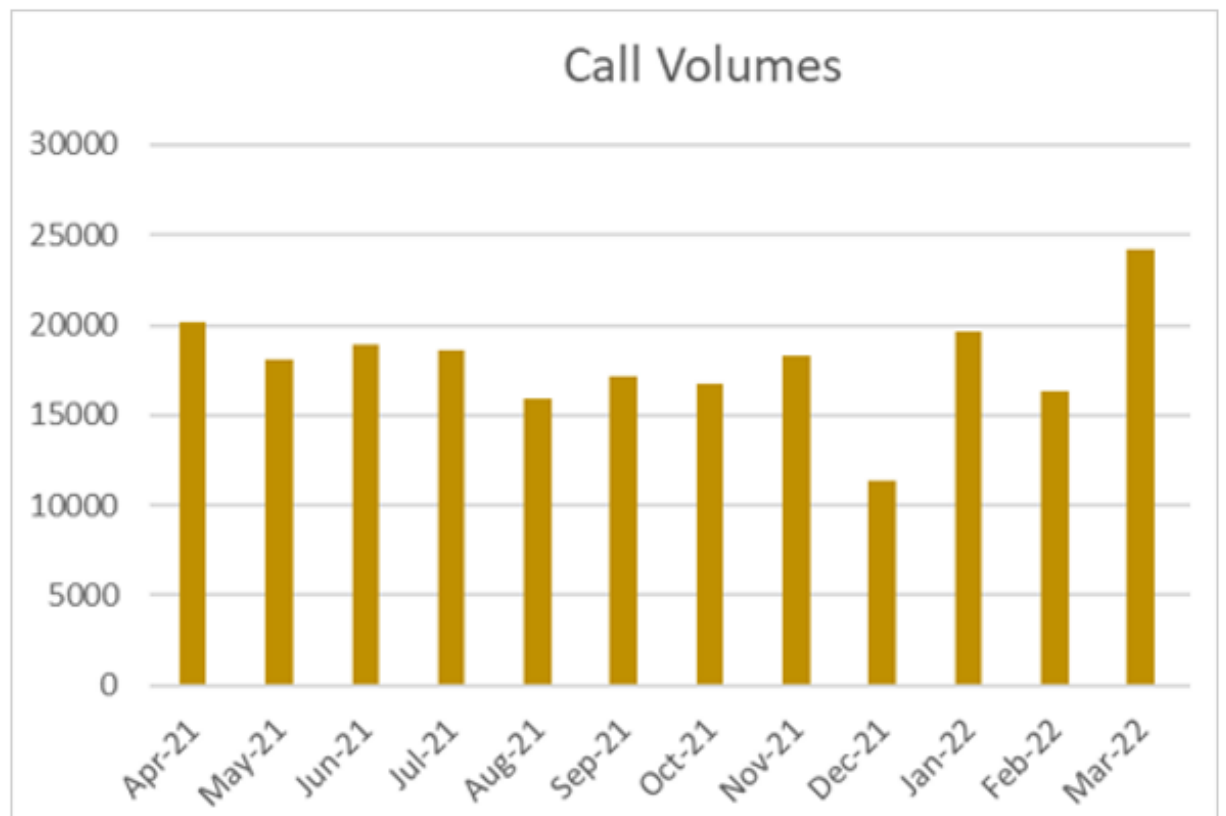
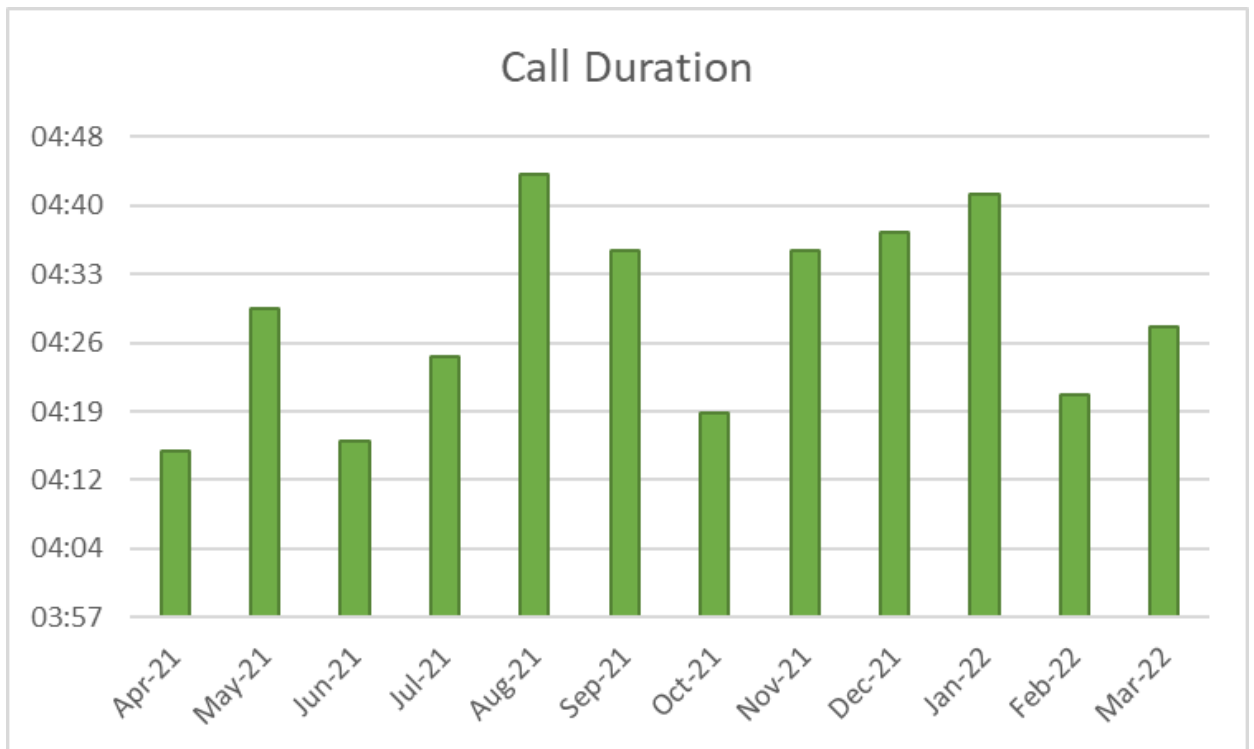
Our target is to answer all calls within 60 seconds. This is an ambitious target when compared with many other organisations where it is not uncommon to be waiting longer than 5 minutes. There is a clear relationship between the number and length of calls and the levels of staff resourcing required to maintain an answer rate of 60 seconds or below.

We have largely managed to meet this target since the current Customer Services team and approach was implemented. There are periods of the year when we are busier, March and April tend to see us receiving more calls due to Council Tax and Business Rate bills, garden waste renewal letters etc.

The current position

During 2021/2022 and the beginning of the current financial year we have missed the target of 60 seconds for most months. The performance figures for each month are detailed below.





Call data analysis

We have undertaken detailed analysis of the call data we hold to try and understand why this is happening. This analysis indicates that:

- Call volumes have increased – call volumes in 2021 have been higher than in 2020. The overall trend of call volumes mapped over the past 2 years indicates that volumes are increasing although this appears to now have stabilised at the higher rate.
- Call duration has increased – the length of calls each month in 2021 is higher than the previous average. The average has increased from 265 seconds to 326 seconds per call. Whilst this change appears small this equates to an additional 12 hours of work per day.

We have identified a range of factors which we believe are impacting on call volumes, call duration and our capacity to answer calls within the target time. The key message is that there is no single reason or simple answer. The factors are summarised below:

- Organisation wide we are now operating again at pretty much full capacity following the Covid crisis. This means, for example, that we have recommenced things such as our full recovery activities for Revenues and Benefits, miscellaneous income etc.

In addition the public are now expecting us to be operating largely as normal. All of this generates calls and some services will be dealing with backlogs that developed as a result of the Covid restrictions.

- Waste collection issues – over the summer and autumn we received significantly increased numbers of calls due to the disruption to waste collection.
- Following the waste disruption we introduced the Recycle More program which increased call volumes
- There has been a general increase in the length of calls. This is both a good and a bad thing. In some cases, as with waste, it indicates problems that are simply taking longer to deal with. However, this also indicates that our customer champions are increasingly able to deal with more at the first point of contact i.e. the calls are longer because they are sorting the issue for the customer rather than passing the call to the back office.
- Channel shift – we have, through necessity during the Covid crisis, channel-shifted many of our customers to the telephone who would previously have visited our offices. This is good news in respect of moving them to a more cost-effective way of dealing with them. However, our area offices are now starting to re-open which requires us to pull staff away

from the phones to man the various front desks, which obviously reduces our telephone answering capacity. Footfall at all of our offices is low.

- Staff turnover – Over the last three months we have seen a number of our most experienced staff move on to other roles within the Council. We are recruiting to minimise the gap this causes but it takes time to recruit and train new staff.
- Experience Gap – With the staff turnover we've experienced a skills gap, especially in areas that require experience such as Council Tax and Repairs.
- The government's announcement of the £150 Energy Payments has caused a significant increase in call volumes over the last 2 months, these were mostly concerning Direct Debits and arrears so required highly skilled staff to resolve them. In one week we received over 6500 calls which is a 50% increase on what we would expect for this time of year. Two additional agency staff were recruited and staff from other teams were brought in to help manage this situation but the availability of Council Tax trained staff at year end was low.

Actions being taken

We are taking immediate actions to alleviate the problem and also identifying longer term actions. Action is already underway through the Customer Experience Programme to identify areas for improvement, and we are using some of the findings from the programme to identify changes.

In the latter part of last year we identified that we had a key risk relating to staff welfare. Ongoing high call volumes backed up by increasingly frustrated customers has an impact on the resilience of the staff. This is likely a driver for the increased number of staff moving to other teams.

In preparation for Recycle More and to provide additional call handling capacity we recruited additional, temporary resource into the team to help manage the demand and waste calls were handled well. We have retained several of these agency workers to cover the staff who have moved to other teams.

We have also been working closely with the Housing team to improve the customer experience by increasing the number of cases Customer Champions can deal with at first point of contact and to provide an escalation route to resolve issues that would otherwise become complaints.

We have used the data we collected to analyse our resourcing requirements. In part this involves reviewing if we had sufficient staff with the right skills to answer the anticipated volume of calls and this has lead to us approving the recruitment of two additional staff above our usual headcount for the rest of the financial year. We are also looking at other changes that will increase customer self serve and reduce calls such as improving our website layout and web forms.

Corporate Priority Area	Ref	Annual Plan Commitments 2021/22 https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/your-council/annual-plan/	Update on position at the end of March 2022	RAG
Our environment and economy	1	Continue to deliver projects that work towards making ours a carbon neutral district by 2030 through our Carbon Neutral Climate Resilience Action Plan.	Our climate change delivery team continues to deliver projects as set out in our CNCR 10 year plan. In the first year we delivered actions identified as 'immediate' such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided climate change training to all our staff and elected members • Started the transition of our pool car fleet to electric vehicles • Installed Electric Vehicle Charging Units at Blackbrook Leisure Centre in Taunton, Alexandra Road car park in Minehead and Exmoor House car park in Dulverton • Been awarded OZEV funding to install Electric Vehicle Charging Points within our SWT owned car parks across the district • Launched our free tree scheme for parish and town councils • Supported parish and town councils with grant funding to install Electric Vehicle Charging Points • Worked with Wessex Water to install water refill stations in Taunton, Wellington and Minehead • Retrofitted waterless urinals within our public toilets • We are leading on the 'Recycling on the Go' project for Somerset Waste Partnership • Approved to take part in the Department for Transport EScooter trials and have launched schemes in Taunton and Minehead Work is now underway to identify priority projects from year 2 and year 3 of the plan to deliver from 2022 onwards.	Green
	2	Deliver Recycle More, the expanded household recycling service, to make it easier for everyone to increase the amount they recycle.	Phase 3 (Taunton Deane) was rolled out in Q3 and Phase 4 (West Somerset) was rolled out in Q4. The roll out of communal collections for phase 4 has been delayed until 22/23 due to resourcing concerns. Contractor performance issues continue to have impact on the household collection service. Early indications have shown a significant increase in recycling rates as seen in earlier phases.	Amber
	3	Deliver a programme of creative initiatives to support the recovery and growth of our town centre businesses.	Delivered 124 schemes in Taunton, Wellington, Minehead, Watchet, Porlock, Dulverton, Dunster and Wiveliscombe enabled through the delivery of a £535k grant scheme, and 100% expenditure of SWTs Welcome Back Fund allocation (£235k). These included events, markets, public realm improvements, business support, visitor and shopper guides etc. All town centre's have recorded an increase in footfall and the overall vibrancy and reputation of the towns. The ED team continue to facilitate and deliver a range of schemes to fill empty shop units, provide events, offer business support and regular conversations with Town Centre Businesses and Representative Groups.	Green
	4	Complete the redevelopment of one of our prime riverside quarters, Coal Orchard in Taunton.	Scheme has been delayed due to contractor going into administration in Jan '22. Now programmed to finish in Summer 22	Amber
	5	Progress individual planning applications on Firepool, for Block 1 (Firepool South, next to the Viridor building) as well as Block 3 (Firepool North next to Trenchard Way) with a view to starting work on site in late 2021 and start on site of the Digital Innovation Centre at Block 6 (Firepool North).	Block 3 and Infrastructure applications now approved, starting on site Summer 22. Block 1 is caught by phosphates with a timeline to be determined by mitigation solutions.	Green

Corporate Priority Area	Ref	Annual Plan Commitments 2021/22 https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/your-council/annual-plan/	Update on position at the end of March 2022	RAG
	6	Increase opportunity for new jobs and businesses in Minehead and West Somerset by completing an employment land sites feasibility study.	<p>A feasibility study was carried out in Summer 2021, which reviewed a wide range of sites, as well as assessed business demand. The development appraisal concluded that one specific site and another location both offered potentially viable options for investment and development. A decision was made to further explore these sites in more detail (rather than bring forward business cases for the Council to consider), and in particular firm up some of the key variable costs, which in turn would lead to more robust business cases. Significant work has been going on to investigate costs and issues associated with each site.</p> <p>This work has progressed as far as it can prior to new financial rules coming into place for the Unitary authority summer '22</p>	Green
	7	Present a full business case to open a train station in Wellington (if given the go ahead from the 'Restoring Your Railway Panel')	<p>Following the funding announcement in the autumn budget statement in October 2021, the Steering Group have been working closely with Network Rail and the Department for Transport (DfT) to finalise next steps in relation to the new stations at Wellington and Cullompton.</p> <p>The £5 million of funding announced will enable the project to advance significantly through the next two stages of project development and design, following the submission of the Strategic Outline Business Case at the beginning of 2021. The £5m will be administered by Network Rail as part of the Restoring Your Railway, Rail Network Enhancements budget with specific outputs and milestones agreed between DfT and Network Rail.</p> <p>The promoters, Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT) and Mid Devon District Council (MDDC), have agreed with DfT that Network Rail will lead on the project from this point onwards, with support from their alliance partner Great Western Railway. It is felt that this will bring significant benefits to the project.</p>	Green
	8	Continue to gather evidence to support the review of the Council's Local Plan. The Local Plan is a very important set of policies that will set out how the district will develop over the next 20 years, such as where new housing will go and what we expect from developers in terms of affordable housing, infrastructure, how biodiversity will be improved and how our landscapes and heritage will be protected.	<p>Given the new unitary council for Somerset will be formed on 1 April 2023 and the numerous stages in Local, Mineral and Waste Plan preparation, the existing councils will therefore no longer be progressing new plans through the statutory process based on their individual geographies. Existing county and district councils are working closely to scope the content and timescales for new Development Plan(s) to be prepared in the future as part the single unitary council. This includes ongoing work to progress and align key evidence base documents. Relevant documents, including an updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) for the new Somerset Council will be published in due course as the councils work through the transitional arrangements.</p> <p>There are a number of workstreams currently being progressed to ensure a smooth transition to the new council. There is a clear commitment to ensuring effective plan-making arrangements are implemented going forward and we will update our web pages when there is further information regarding timescales and scope of any new Development Plan Documents.</p>	Amber
	9	Keep delivering our new Garden Communities toward delivery.	<p>Garden Town Implementation Manager and Green Infrastructure Officer were appointed in Autumn 2021 to support delivery of the project. Delivery is ultimately in the hands of landowners, land promoters and developers - however SWT as planning authority has dedicated Development Management resource facilitating approvals, legal queries, assisting project management and engagement with local communities in order to move matters forward. The 'phosphates issue' remains a overarching problem which will hamper delivery, viability and commercial confidence in the sites moving forward.</p> <p>Comeytrove - Circa 380 homes with reserved matters or resolution to approve with phosphate mitigation, show home open, and first occupations. SCC is currently considering a planning application for a primary school and associated nursery.</p> <p>Staplegrove East - Resolution to approve outline consent now implicated by the 'phosphates issue' and therefore delayed awaiting a separate proposal for a wetland phosphate solution.</p> <p>Staplegrove West - Outline consent granted, reserved matters now implicated by the 'phosphate issue' and therefore delayed, however a 'integrated constructed wetland' is being pursued as mitigation with a live planning application.</p> <p>Monkton Heathfield Phase 2 - Hybrid planning application received December 2021 and is live. Phosphate mitigation will be required.</p>	Amber

Corporate Priority Area	Ref	Annual Plan Commitments 2021/22 https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/your-council/annual-plan/	Update on position at the end of March 2022	RAG
	10	Enable development by finding a long-term solution to manage the phosphates issue on the Somerset Levels and Moors while finding a way to unblock stalled sites as soon as possible.	<p>As previously reported, SWT Interim phosphate programme was considered at SWT Full Council on the 5th October 2021. The interim programme allows some of the planning applications currently held in abeyance to be determined. Since then, the Council has put in place an Interim Phosphates Mitigation Strategy, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The establishment of Phosphates Planning Sub-Committee to oversee the strategy and the recruitment of 2 no. dedicated Officers. •Progressing projects (e.g. wetland creation) to generate 'Phosphate Credits' that can be used by applicants as mitigation and measures as to how this can be implemented. •A criteria-based process for phosphate (P) credit allocation once the programme is 'up and running' which was agreed by the Phosphates Planning Sub Committee.. •A draft template Section 106 agreement which planning applications which apply for Council-generate P credits will be subject to. •With the other Somerset Councils , jointly commissioned a strategic solutions report which has recently been published and its findings reported to Phosphates Planning Sub-Committee. This report sets out suitable mitigation options that could potentially be used to offset the additional phosphorus load from a new development within the catchment of the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar site. It also included an updated map showing the affected area or 'area of risk'. •Ongoing engagement with key stakeholders including Natural England, Wessex Water, the Environment Agency, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DHLUC), Somerset Rivers Authority and the development industry . <p>The actions taken to date by SWT are interim in nature and will not address the scale of the issue but means that the Council will shortly be able to determine some of the applications held in abeyance. As at 28th April 2022 this involved circa 150 planning applications including 39 applications for the discharge of conditions. This equates to circa 3,163 homes in limbo . Given the growing impact that excessive nutrients are having on the delivery of development across the country, officers are of the opinion that strategic national solutions are required to address the fundamental issues of farming practices and the function of wastewater treatment works which contribute to the problem. To this end, lobbying of national government continues in order to develop long-term strategic scale solutions and support to Local Authorities affected by this issue.</p>	Green
	11	Maximise the benefits from the decommissioning of the Hinkley Point B power station for local business and employment.	SCC are in discussion with the Nuclear Decommissioning Agency to draw down funding to support Sedgemoor and West Somerset coastal areas and implement the recent Minehead development strategy.	Green
	12	Complete decontamination and structural repairs at Toneworks, Wellington, to help preserve this place of significant historic interest.	Phase 1 decontamination works completed in Summer 2021. Phase 2 planning underway for further structural repairs to the heritage asset from Jan 2022 onwards.	Green

Corporate Priority Area	Ref	Annual Plan Commitments 2021/22 https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/your-council/annual-plan/	Update on position at the end of March 2022	RAG
A Transparenet and Customer Focused Council	13	Deliver a Customer Experience Programme to get a clearer picture of our customers and identify ways in which we can improve their experience of the Council.	This programme has been formally closed and a project closure gateway review undertaken. The focus of the programme has in large part now been overtaken by evenents; in particular the decision to create a single new Council for Somerset.The remaining items will be incorporated within the service improvement project or are being picked up within the LGR for Somerset programme. The deliverables / benefits achieved to date will be useful resources for the LGR programme.	Green
	14	Commence a Service Efficiency and Improvement Programme to improve our internal processes to increase productivity and efficiency.	The programme has delivered 6 projects this financial year for a total saving of 268.3K. These projects also enabled a robust corporate programme management and contributed to prepare the organisation for an easier and quicker unitary transition. At least, 4 projects are planning to be deliver during the next financial year. They will contribute to enable the organisation progress towards excellence by ingraining supporting tools, process and developing internal capabilities. The programme continue to support the organisation financial sustainability by forecasting 360K of financial saving for the next financial year and ambition to deliver an improved customer experience by developing a systematic and simple approach to solve the problem to the root cause.	Green
	15	Deliver a new system to manage of programmes and projects within the Council to ensure better efficiency and effectiveness.	The process is in place, with the monthly PMO report presented to SMT. Further stakeholder liaison is taking place to promote process, refine benefits reporting and realise cashable savings.	Green
	16	Launch the newly elected Tenants' Strategic Group.	Launched in April 2021, already had 3 meetings	Green
	17	Update and distribute our housing tenancy handbook and new tenant's welcome pack.	Handbook and welcome pack have been combined into 1 document, currently in it's second draft. This is being checked by relevant managers and will be presented to Directors for sign off for publication in summer 2022.	Amber
	18	We will carry on live streaming our public meetings in order to continue to make them accessible and inclusive for residents who want to participate but who are unable, or do not wish to, attend in person.	All SWT Committee meetings are live webcast or live-streamed (depending on the location of the meeting)	Green
	19	We will work to make the most of the talents that disabled people can bring to our workplace, with specific focus on how we can adapt to best support our current and prospective neurodivergent employees.	Highly commended award received for Neurodiversity project at MJ Awards. Disability confident employer status achived. Neurodiversity project now ingrained with Equalities working group as a standard agenda. Work continuing on training for managers and staff on Neurodiverse conditions to embrace inclusivity and diversity in the workplace.	Green

Corporate Priority Area	Ref	Annual Plan Commitments 2021/22 https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/your-council/annual-plan/	Update on position at the end of March 2022	RAG
Homes and Communities	20	Start building 47 new low carbon Council homes and a new community facility at North Taunton.	SWT is on site building 101 New Carbon Homes with planning approval for 100 more and planning applications awaiting approval for an additional 46. NTWP Phase A commenced on site July 2021 and will deliver 47 new low carbon affordable Council homes. The first homes are expected to complete will be complete August 2022 and all by June/July 2023. Future phases are planned to overlap. Phase A bringing forward more low carbon affordable council homes by 2025. Seaward Way, Minehead is on site where 54 zero carbon homes are being built, practical completion summer 2024. 6 planning applications for a total of 46 zero carbon homes are awaiting planning approvals and SWT has submitted a phosphate mitigation strategy in support of the applications. Natural England as a consultee in the planning process have provided their support for the councils approach.	Green
	21	Acquire planning consent and start on site at Seaward Way, Minehead for the construction of 54 zero carbon homes.	JCT contract has now been entered into, and works have commenced on site with Classic Builders. Estimated completion date for whole scheme is Summer 2024, although some phased completions are anticipated prior to this.	Green
	22	Complete an options appraisal for Oake. This will identify the investment needed and timescales to manage the Council's defective non-traditional Woolaway homes in Oake, and any contribution to new affordable housing in that area.	The project has recieved SHDF Wave 1 funding and has an established budget. The scheme is mirroring NTWP phase 5 but the timeline has a 4 month leg due to ecology serveys pre planning application. Housing needs assessments have been completed, a route map for the works has been established, the sepcification is being finalised and the procurement of a contractor will commence in June 22	Green
	23	Complete a Housing Strategy Demand Study which allow the Council to develop a joined-up approach to affordable housing investment focusing on where it's most needed.	This work was completed during November 2021. The Study identified that there is significant demand for more 2 bed houses and 1 bed flats. 1 bed move-on accommodation is required for those who are ready to leave supported housing. The study also provided clearer evidence of the demand for 2,3 and 4 bed wheelchair adapted properties. There is an increasing trend of young children requiring support via Somerset Independence Plus (e.g. for Disabled Facilities Grants). There is also significant demand for more sheltered housing, especially in the west of the District. This indicates a need for more prevention focussed activity. The quality of accommodation in the Private Rented Sector is exacerbating fuel poverty. With rents increasing, along with the cost of living, fuel poverty will undoubtedly worsen acrssoss all tenures. The cost of home ownership is increasing and there is a continued struggle to identify rural housing demand through Homefinder Somerset. These findings (as well as others) are being used to influence a range of housing interventions.	Green
	24	Deliver a Homelessness Improvement Plan designed to minimise homelessness, promote prevention and lead to reduced bed and breakfast costs.	Since December 2021 there has been a renewed focus on the improving opportunities to prevent homelessness therefore reducing the cost of temporary accommodation. A range of new procedures have been implemented to ensure that all opportunities to prevent homelessness are explored prior to placement in temporary accommodation. In addition, a fortnightly, cross team task and targeting meeting has been implemented to ensure that, where placements are made, there is a clear focus on move on. Rent and service charge procedures are being aligned with those already in place within the Council's own stock to both maximise income and reduce arrears. These positive improvements are being made at a time when the service is under increasing pressure including a 20% increase in service demand, ongoing competition from the development at Hinckley and changes to legislation designed to support households from Ukraine including the requirement to provide accommodation, including B&B, for all Homes for Ukraine placements which break down.	Amber
	25	Approve and commence delivery, of an accommodation strategy to meet the housing and support needs of single homeless people in the District.	The Single Homeless and Rough Sleeper Accommodation Strategy, together with the associated delivery plan, was approved by Full Council on October 5th 2021. Delivery is progressing. SWT has been successful in recievig grant funding in 2 RSAP rounds and has a live grant application awaiting a decision. SWT is working with partners and using the Housing service to create 36 new home in 2022/2023. The coordination of support services is being developed through the Better Futures Programme and the Somerset Homelessness Reduction Board.	Green
	26	As part of the move to a new IT system for Homefinder Somerset, we will introduce a new and improved form for applying for social housing within the district, that is as easy as possible for people to complete.	The new online application form went live on 2nd August 2021, offering an easier more intuitive means to access Homefinder and social housing. The new form was developed following consultation with partner local authorities and landlords, and wider stakeholders including applicants.	Green
	27	Introduce at least two community pantry schemes into the District offering subsidised food for communities affected by Covid-19.	The first pantry has been operating for a year in Rowbarton, Taunton. They have acted as a learning centre for others. New schemes in Rockwell Green, Wellington and Minehead will be operational from the spring of 2022 (May). Other schemes are progressing towards being operational in due course.	Green
	28	Review and improve the Council's CCTV to provide a more effective service and better value for money.	This review is underway and savings have been identified and moved back into general reserve. There is further work to be done on overall improvement of the estate, such as digital upgrade and linking the existing scheme in West Somerset to the monitoring service at Sedgemoor. These proposals will come forward fully during 2022/23 for a decision on delivery.	Green

Corporate Priority Area	Ref	Annual Plan Commitments 2021/22 https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/your-council/annual-plan/	Update on position at the end of March 2022	RAG
An Enterprising Council	29	Complete our programme of commercial property acquisitions that generate additional income.	The portfolio was completed in Dec 21	Green
	30	Deliver an asset management plan so we can make informed decisions on the investment or disposal of our land and property assets to maximise future income.	Asset Review Project has assembled information, pending implementation of Asset Database for data collation and analysis (joint procurement with SCC, live 2022-2023).	Amber
	31	Form a dedicated delivery company, owned by the Council, to deliver Town Centre Regeneration projects in addition to those brought forward by the private sector.	This work remains paused whilst issues resulting from phosphates are worked through and workable solutions found	Amber

APPENDIX 3

Risk Scoring Matrix

Impact

Risk Impact/Severity The impact of the threat being realised is defined as:

	Score	Impact	Definition
Very Low	1	No impact	No notable impact identifiable
Low	2	Minor	Affects only one group of stakeholders, with minimum impact
Medium	3	Significant	Affects more than one group of stakeholders, with widespread but short-term impact. May attract the short-term attention of legislative/regulatory bodies
High	4	Major	Affects more than one group of stakeholders with widespread medium-term impact. Attracts the medium-term attention of legislative/regulatory bodies
Very High	5	Catastrophic	Medium to long term impact on performance and delivery of services. Affects all groups of stakeholders, with a long-term impact. National impact with the rapid intervention of legislative/regulatory bodies

Risk Likelihood

The likelihood of the threat being realised is expressed on a scale of 1-5, using the definitions below

	Score	Likelihood	Definition
Very Low	1	Rare	May occur in exceptional circumstances
Low	2	Possible	Risk may occur in the next 3 years
Medium	3	Likely	The risk is likely to occur more than once in the next 3 years
High	4	Almost certain	The risk is likely to occur this year
Very High	5	Certain	The risk has occurred and will continue to do so without action being taken

Appendix 4 Key Business Risks

REF	Risk details			Current score			Action summary		
	Name	Summary of the risk (cause) / What is the impact?	Date added	Imp.	Prob.	Total	Owner	Mitigation plan development status	Mitigation plan implementation status
CR11	Cyber attack	Cause - Cyber Attack Impact - Potential for financial, legal and reputational damage or that we are targeted and locked out of essential systems.	Jun-20	4	5	20	Sean Papworth	G	G
CR23	Landlord Safety Checks	Cause: Failure to comply with Landlord Property Safety Compliance requirements. Impact: Regulatory failure, failure to comply with the law, incident causing injury or death, negative PR, and financial loss (compensation and / or fine)	Mar-21	4	4	16	Ian Candlish	G	A
CR34	Unitary council transition	Cause: Inability to adequately resource the unitary transition activities, business as usual service delivery and key programmes. Impact: Failure to deliver corporate objectives, inability to maintain key services, inability to deliver key functions in the new council, reputational damage, financial loss, legal challenge.	Sep-21	4	4	16	Alison North	A	A

Green = key actions identified & mitigation plan in place	Green = mitigation actions on target or completed
Amber = key actions identified but plan not fully developed	Amber = mitigation actions behind target, but impact not significant
Red = key actions NOT identified & NO plan in place	Red = mitigation actions significantly behind target

Appendix 5 Corporate Issues

REF	Issue details					
	Name	Summary of the issue	Date added	Owner	Mitigation plan development status	Mitigation plan implementaton status
CI 9	Phosphates	Management of phosphate levels in Tone catchment, particularly regarding impact on planning applications.	Nov-20	Alison Blom Cooper	A	R*
CI 12	System Reconciliation	Work is underway by finance officers and the CIL/S106 team to reconcile system entries. Whilst there is a current discrepancy there is no financial loss to the authority.	Nov-21	Alison Blom Cooper	G	A
CI 14	Health and Safety Improvement Programme	Low maturity health and safety management systems leading to increased risk of injury, reputational damage, legal challenge and financial loss.	Oct-21	Sean Papworth	G	A

Green = key actions identified & mitigation plan in place	Green = mitigation actions on target or completed
Amber = key actions identified but plan not fully developed	Amber = mitigation actions behind target, but impact not significant
Red = key actions NOT identified & NO plan in place	Red = mitigation actions significantly behind target

* further details are in the technical report, published in March 2022: <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/media/3232/solutions-report.pdf>

Report Number: SWT 97/22

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Corporate Scrutiny – 06 July 2022

Executive – 20 July 2022

Full Council – 06 September 2022

General Fund Financial Monitoring – Outturn Position 2021/22

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Benet Allen, Portfolio Holder for Communication and Corporate Resources

Report Author: Kerry Prisco, Management Accounting and Reporting Lead

1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report contains information related to Somerset West and Taunton Council's (SWT) financial performance for the 2021/22 financial year. The outturn figures included are provisional subject to the completion of the external audit of the statutory financial statements. The audit is due to be completed between July and September with the findings due to be reported to the Audit and Governance Committee on 27th September this year.
- 1.2 A balanced and robust budget for 2021/22 was prepared in the context of increased economic uncertainty. This included the use of temporary funding from reserves to soften the budget gap in the face of current service demands and funding uncertainty, along with specific reserves set aside to mitigate the risk of in-year budget volatility. Despite this the Council entered 2021/22 carrying a high level of financial risk.
- 1.3 During 2021/22, the Council has been impacted by and has had to adapt to many challenges in light of the number of economic events affecting the UK during the last 12 months. These include, but are not limited to, the COVID-19 pandemic, struggling worldwide supply chains, price inflation, rising interest rates, global conflicts (particularly in Ukraine), and the continuing adjustments needed to adapt to Brexit.
- 1.4 The Council has successfully managed its financial risks during the year through continued effective budget control and using in-year underspends to absorb financial pressures within budget, whilst maintaining a healthy reserves position.
- 1.5 Planned spend of just over £2m has been rolled into 2022/23 with budget carry forwards mainly representing delays in delivering activity due to circumstances such as procurement and contractor delays, availability of in-house resources and contractors, and lead time on building supplies.
- 1.6 The overall net underspend represents a combination of improved performance across corporate contracts, income generation, efficiency savings, additional income from COVID grants, and treasury investments; as well as active management of contractor spend and delays in activity due to COVID reducing costs.

- 1.7 The **revenue outturn position** for the financial year 2021/22 is as follows:
- a) The General Fund (GF) Revenue Outturn position for 2021/22 is a net underspend of £2.349m (-12.5% of net budget). This is net of £2.075m of budget carried forward to 2022/23 for deferred / delayed costs.
- 1.8 The **capital outturn position** for 2021/22 is as follows:
- a) The total approved General Fund Capital Programme budget in place as at 31 March 2022, including schemes brought forward from previous years, was £165.327m (see **Appendix C**). This relates to a combination of schemes to be delivered in 2021/22 and 2022/23 and some longer-term projects that will continue further into later years.
 - b) The actual capital spend during 2021/22 was £69.722m. There are overspends totalling £683k against some schemes, budget returns of £35.312m and a carry forward proposed of £60.977m for schemes in 2022/23 and future years.
- 1.9 The **reserves position** for 2021/22 is as follows:
- a) The **unearmarked reserves** are projected to be £7.591m which is £5.191m above the recommended minimum balance of £2.4m.
 - b) The **earmarked reserves** are projected to be £27.990m of which c£13.7m relates to S31 business rates grant and volatility reserves.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Executive is recommended to:
- a) Note the reported General Fund Revenue Budget underspend of £2.349m in 2021/22 and the General Reserves Balance of £7.592m as at 31 March 2022.
 - b) Note the S151 has approved General Fund Revenue Budget carry forwards totalling £735,400 as detailed in **Appendix A**.
 - c) Approve an additional General Fund Revenue Budget carry forward of £1,339,320 for items greater than £150,000 as detailed in Section 7.
 - d) Approve the transfer of £455,764, with respect to S106 monies, to the Capital Funding earmarked reserve to be available to finance capital projects in 2022/23.
 - e) Note the Capital Outturn position.
 - f) Approve the proposed reductions to the Capital Programme Budget of £35.312m for underspends on schemes where budget is no longer required, and the continuation of £60.977m approved budget rolled forward for the 2022/23 General Fund Capital Programme (as per **Appendix C**).
 - g) Recommend Full Council approves a reduction of £35m to the Approved Borrowing Limit in the Capital, Investment and Treasury Management Strategies reflecting reduction in capital financing requirement for expenditure no longer required.

3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 This is a retrospective report therefore no risk assessment has been completed. Risk assessments regarding budget monitoring were carried out during the year and included with these reports. Financial risks and uncertainties are included in budget setting and budget monitoring reports presented to Members.
- 3.2 The Council has managed significant financial risks during the past financial year, notably due to the volatility in costs and income continuing due to COVID and economic recovery. Through financial control and in-year underspends we have managed to absorb financial pressures within budget and have not required the use of £2.4m budget contingency, which was released from earmarked reserves when Council approved the annual budget report in February 2022.

4 Background and Full details of the Report

- 4.1 This report informs Members of SWT's financial outturn (a comparison of net spending against the budget for the year) for revenue and capital budgets in 2021/22 for the Council's General Fund (GF).
- 4.2 Corporate Scrutiny and the Executive have received quarterly budget monitoring reports throughout the year which have highlighted variances from budgets and comments from the budget holders, as well as summarising the main risks and uncertainties as explained above. The forecast position has fluctuated during the year.
- 4.3 The outturn figures contained in this report are provisional at this stage. The financial outturn has been taken into account when preparing the Council's Draft Statement of Accounts, which is due to be approved by the Assistant Director – Finance (S151 Officer) by the end of June, and is subject to review by the Council's External Auditor. Should the External Auditor identify the need for any changes to the Accounts these will be reported to the Audit and Governance Committee on 27th September this year.

5 2021/22 Financial Performance

- 5.1 Members will be aware from previous experience that the position can change between 'in-year' projections and the final outturn position, mainly due to demand-led service costs and income levels and certain items that are not finalised until year end. The budget monitoring process involves a regular review of all budgets. Budget Holders, with support and advice from their finance business partners, review the position, and update their forecasts based on currently available information and knowledge of service requirements for the remainder of the year. As with any forecast there is always a risk that assumptions and estimates will differ from the eventual outcome, and several risks and uncertainties have been highlighted in previous budget monitoring reports.
- 5.2 The Council has continued to operate within the framework of its Financial Strategy and the overall financial standing at the end of the financial year is sound. The Reserve balances for the General Fund are above their respective recommended minimums, which provides added financial resilience which is prudent given the scale of risk and uncertainty. The Medium Term Financial Plan incorporates planned use of reserves to support the 2022/23 budget, and the current reserves balance is sufficient to support this approach.

6 Budget Outturn Summary

- 6.1 The General Fund Revenue Outturn position for 2021/22 is a net underspend of £2.349m (-12.5% of Net Budget). This is net of £2.075m of budget carried forward to meet expenditure now planned to be delivered in 2022/23.

Table 1: General Fund Revenue Outturn Summary

General Fund Outturn 2021/22	Current Budget Net of Carry Forwards £000	Outturn £000	Variance	
			£000	%
Development & Place	2,735	2,759	24	0.9%
External Operations & Climate Change	8,578	7,996	-582	-6.8%
Housing & Communities	3,321	2,928	-393	-11.8%
Internal Operations	10,172	9,483	-689	-6.8%
Senior Management Team	554	473	-81	-14.7%
Net Cost of Services	25,360	23,638	-1,721	-6.8%
COVID General Grants	-813	-1,432	-620	76.2%
Investment Properties	-4,137	-4,155	-19	0.5%
Interest and Investment Income	-282	-832	-551	195.3%
Somerset Rivers Authority Contribution	98	98	0	0.00%
Expected Credit Losses	0	-138	-138	0.0%
Net Transfers from (-) / to Earmarked Reserves	419	-159	-578	-138.0%
Net Transfers to General Reserves	-2,671	-2,671	0	0.0%
Capital and Other Adjustments	785	2,969	2,185	278.5%
Net Budget	18,759	17,317	-1,441	-7.7%
Funding	-18,759	-19,666	-908	4.8%
Variance	0	-2,349	-2,349	-12.5%

Note: Negative figures represent income / underspend.

Variances are calculated after deduction of carry forwards.

- 6.2 The Forecast Outturn as at Quarter 3 (December 2021) was a projected £3.204m net underspend within the General Fund Revenue Budget, reflecting known differences reported at that stage and budget holders' plans and assumptions about the costs and income anticipated in the remainder of the year. There were proposed carry forwards of £2.014m for costs slipping into 2022/23 at year end and a transfer to capital financing of £570k, which reduced the projected underspend to £620k.
- 6.3 The variances reported at the end of the financial year indicate some changes since that time, reflecting more recent information and a degree of caution and/or optimism in previous forecasts. This also includes any carry forward requests agreed by the Section 151 Officer under delegated powers of authority.
- 6.4 A summary of the outturn position, and the differences between the reported variances at Quarter 3 and the year-end Outturn, are summarised per directorate below.

6.5 Development & Place:

- a) The Development and Place directorate has reported net expenditure of £2.759m in 2021/22, which has delivered a range of services and projects including:
- Strategy and policy development
 - Planning services including Local Plan development, planning applications processing and enforcement
 - Economic development
 - Town centre regeneration
 - Heritage projects
 - Major Capital Projects for regeneration purposes and where possible to generate a return to the Council
 - Commercial investment (investment properties budget is reported 'below the line')
- b) The directorate has reported a net overspend of £24k at the end of the financial year, after taking into account £366k of budget carried forward (see **Appendix A**) to 2022/23 financial year.
- c) The outturn for the year reflects an underspend in staffing due to vacancies and difficulty in recruiting to key roles. This is offset by the deferral of planning income on significant undetermined applications and a refund provision for those approaching the 'Planning Guarantee' date with no signed extension which is largely Phosphate driven. The Director & S151 Officer approved transfer £101k of savings as RCCO to fund additional costs following the administration of the Principal Contractor on the Coal Orchard regeneration project.
- d) The Quarter 3 to Outturn movement for Development and Place has come about due to a review of costs and re-profiling of when the related services can realistically be delivered given current staffing and operational constraints. It also includes the transfer of savings reported in c) above and an adjustment following completion of the CIL reconciliation.

**Table 2: Development & Place
Main Differences between Quarter 3 and Outturn Variances**

Department Notes	Q3 £000	Movement £000	Outturn After Carry Forwards £000
Strategy and Policy: A budget carry forward request of £185k is pending approval by the Executive which has reduced the outturn to £74k underspend which is a shared service variance partially offset by the receipt of a bio diversity grant.	-265	191	-74
Phosphates: A budget carry forward request of £182k is pending approval by the Executive which has reduced the outturn to £25k underspend of staff vacancy savings.	-182	157	-25
Economic Development: The underspend of £62k relates to higher than expected staff recharges (HPC/SCC/DWP*), lower cost	-34	-28	-62

Department Notes	Q3 £000	Movement £000	Outturn After Carry Forwards £000
relating to Comms & Engagement activities and the refund of costs incurred in 2020/21 by SCC partially offsetting an earlier than anticipated Innovation District contribution and increased grant funding.			
Planning (Development Management): Principally driven by an assessment at year end for the deferral of planning income on applications not fully determined as well as a provision for refunds for applications approaching the 'Planning Guarantee' date but with no signed extension notice.	96	88	184
Major and Special Projects: Mainly relates to the RCCO budget transfer of £101k of in-year savings to fund additional costs on the Coal Orchard project following the administration of the Principal Contractor, net of underspend due to staff vacancies	-133	92	-41
Planning obligations: Vacancy savings net of adjustment to clear the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) reconciliation and move this item to from red to amber on the Corporate Risk Register. Currently being reviewed by internal and external audit.	-10	52	42
Total	-528	552	24

*HPC = Hinkley Point C, SCC = Somerset County Council, DWP = Department for Work and Pensions

6.6 External Operations and Climate Change:

a) The External Operations and Climate Change directorate has reported net expenditure of £7.996m in 2021/22, which has delivered a range of services and projects including:

- Climate change strategy development and Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience (CNCR) action plan implementation
- Asset and property management for general fund assets
- Regulatory services such as environmental health and licensing
- Service resilience and emergency planning
- Open spaces and street scene
- Client for major contracts including waste, building control, leisure, street cleansing
- Harbours, coastal protection, and flood management
- Cemeteries and crematorium
- Car parks

- b) The directorate has reported a net underspend of £582k at the end of the financial year, after taking into account £1.587m of budget carried forward (see **Appendix A**) to 2022/23 financial year.
- c) The headlines for the Directorate look beyond the car park income figures to improved performance in most of the other business areas of the Directorate. Specifically, income from the Assets Team, introduction of a new fleet contract, active management of contractor spend and income in Bereavement Services.
- d) As reflected across the construction sector, COVID has impacted on in house resources as well as contractor availability and lead times on building supplies. That is reflected in the level of budget carry forward planned from 2021/22 into 2022/23. It is work we need to do, and it will be added to the planned activity described in the Directorate Plan for 2022/23.
- e) The budgets for the Directorate have evolved post Transformation. With each iteration costs are challenged, assumptions unpicked, and efficiencies delivered. This is an iterative process that will continue through 2022/23 to support budget setting for the Somerset Council for 2023/24 and beyond.

**Table 3: External Operations and Climate Change
Main Differences between Quarter 3 and Outturn Variances**

Department Notes	Q3 £000	Movement £000	Outturn After Carry Forwards £000
Major Contracts: This includes the following areas: Leisure Partnership, Building Control, Street Cleansing and Fleet Management. There is a £209k saving following a fleet review and the introduction of a new fleet contract. Waste contract inflationary increase less than budget £103k and garden waste income above budget £115k. Reduction in public convenience maintenance £57k. The movement is the approval of a carry forward of £370k, offset by insurance savings previously reported corporately and garden waste income.	-721	215	-506
Street Scene/Open Spaces: This underspend is derived from: vehicle running costs £115k, salaries £40k due to vacant posts, reduction in use of contractors £90k, additional income in the Nursery £26k and reduction in responsive maintenance for buildings across Parks and Open Spaces £37k. The movement is the approval of carry forwards of £230k, offset by insurance savings previously reported corporately and additional income and cost savings.	-451	143	-308
Asset Management: There is an overall underspend across building costs and planned maintenance of £287k. Business rates revaluations has led to an underspend of £116k.	-1,003	69	-934

	Q3 £000	Movement £000	Outturn After Carry Forwards £000
Department Notes			
New lettings, completion of leases earlier than expected and proactive recovery of proportionate costs has led to an increase in income levels of £531k. The movement is the approval of carry forwards £114,250, offset by maintenance works delayed and costs now falling into 2022/23.			
Licensing: This variance represents an under recovery on income that was anticipated by the budget holder for the whole year. The end of year transfers to reserves have been accounted for in the movement of reserves cost centre.	62	-15	47
Bereavement Services: This is a demand led service where the income budget is estimated each year. There is an over recovery on income of £163k a reduction in maintenance and servicing of buildings £63k, and other minor cost savings.	-262	19	-243
Parking: The parking income baseline budgets were maintained at historic levels as part of the budget setting process, with a known risk. The income loss for the year due to ongoing fall in demand, following COVID is £1.982m. Of this, £155k COVID grant has been allocated to help offset this income loss with the remainder being offset by £390k COVID compensation claim and underspends across the Directorate. The movement is the approval of a carry forward request of £230k which has been part offset by £155k COVID grant allocated in month 10 and an improved position on income.	1,599	43	1,642
Climate Change: A carry forward request of £450,860, which is the total underspend against the CNCR budget, is pending approval by the Executive.	-580	527	-53
Floods and Harbours: £70k was set aside for the procurement of the design for slope stabilisation works at North Hill, Minehead. Despite best efforts the work and payment will fall into 2022/23. The Council received a commuted sum for future coastal maintenance work at Blue Anchor, £94k. This has been transferred to an earmarked reserve and is accounted for in the movement in reserves cost centre.	-11	-162	-173
Other Minor Variances	-32	-22	-54
Total	-1,399	817	-582

6.7 Housing & Communities:

- a) The Housing and Communities directorate has reported net expenditure of £2.928m in 2021/22, which has delivered a range of services and projects including:
- Housing options include accommodation and support for homelessness and rough sleepers including the 'everyone in' priority due to COVID
 - Housing strategy development
 - Housing enabling, including affordable and rural housing
 - Community resilience services such as CCTV, public safety and community engagement
 - The service also manages council housing and supported housing services through the Housing Revenue Account which is accounted for separately.
- b) The directorate has reported a net underspend of £393k at the end of the financial year. The reason for this variance is explained in the table below.

**Table 4: Housing and Communities
Main Differences between Quarter 3 and Outturn Variances**

	Q3 £000	Movement £000	Outturn After Carry Forwards £000
Department Notes			
Community Resilience: This underspend relates to a one-off rebate on the CCTV maintenance sinking fund offset in part by spend on CCTV maintenance in the old West Somerset area.	-55	-95	-150
Homelessness: The service had budgeted for an overspend on staffing to be offset by underspend on other budgets, however we received significant additional government grant in year, which ultimately led to an overall underspend. The staffing overspend included additional management to drive our improvement plan and resolve Canonsgrove as well as costs incurred through higher levels of agency staff. It should be noted that it is very difficult to accurately forecast homelessness demand and the costs related to this.	0	-198	-198
Other Minor Variances	-31	-14	-45
Total	-86	-307	-393

6.8 Internal Operations:

- a) The Internal Operations directorate has reported net expenditure of £9.483m in 2021/22. This delivers a range of support services and corporate projects, as well as budgets for a range of centrally-held corporate costs. The main services and projects delivered within this directorate include:
- Customer Services including call-handling, front of house, Deane Helpline and Emergency Response Team

- Council Tax and Business Rates administration and income collection services
- Housing benefits and local council tax support administration
- Income control and collection from customers ('Accounts Receivable')
- Payments to suppliers ('Accounts Payable')
- Corporate strategy, corporate performance, and business intelligence
- Operational support and digital mailroom
- Finance and procurement services
- Corporate Services including Communications and Engagement, People Management including HR and Payroll, Corporate Health and Safety, ICT services
- Corporate governance including Committee administration and Elections services
- Internal Change programmes and projects

- b) The directorate has reported a net underspend of just £689k at the end of the financial year, after taking into account £121k of budget carried forward to 2022/23 financial year.
- c) Overall, the directorate has maintained service delivery against planned budget. Key areas of variances are due to fixed points of annual reconciliation within revenues and benefits which are beyond our control. Reprofiting of accrued costs specifically in ICT have also contributed to the variance.
- d) Efficiencies have continued to be delivered in ICT infrastructure, equipment, and compliance costs. Where services have required additional capacity to meet customer demand, additional spend has been allocated leading to an overspend for example in Customer Services where key campaigns have increased call volumes.

Table 5: Internal Operations
Main Differences between Quarter 3 and Outturn Variances

Department Notes	Q3 £000	Movement £000	Outturn After Carry Forwards £000
IT : The accounting exercise carried out in early 21/22 anticipated a number of costs that had previously been paid in the 20/21 financial year. Having received the invoices for the costs stated below and noting the period they covered, they were not paid from the 21/22 budget but have been paid from the 22/23 budget as that is the correct period covered. Also there has been an increased underspend in the ICT staffing budget.	-71	-108	-179
Governance: The movement between Q3 and Outturn is mainly non pay savings in elections, community governance review (due to 2nd stage of CGR consultancy not needed) and members. There was also no spend required on fraud investigation services contract £30k.	128	-112	16
Benefits: This is a high risk area within the authority. The year-end position is very difficult to	-128	149	21

	Q3 £000	Movement £000	Outturn After Carry Forwards £000
Department Notes			
predict for these budgets and the variance only represents a small proportion of the overall budget of £29m. The variance represents the difference between the benefit payments we make to claimants and the money we receive in subsidy and is due to many factors. These include meeting local costs towards War Pensions, Subsidy errors, Rent Officer shortfalls, and contributions to Supported and Temporary housing which are not covered in full by the DWP. These costs are monitored and challenged but many of these shortfalls are out of our control and we are legislatively bound to meet the costs, as are all other administering local authorities.			
Revenues: The 'underspend' results from the amount of court cost income being higher than budgeted for. This results from our catching up with arrears cases from the previous (Covid) year, where court action was delayed. In addition, we received a refund of £87k in overpaid court fees from the Ministry of Justice. The movement is due to £121k relating to the budget for the ongoing Enforcement Project being transferred to the 2022/23 budget thereby reducing the underspend in 2021/22.	-245	131	-114
Customer Services: The overspend is predominantly due to a one-off correction in historical payments to some members of staff following a review of their anti-social hours enhancement entitlements. The additional agency costs required to cover additional call volumes due to the Waste disruption over the summer and the expected increase in demand due to the launch of Recycle More has been covered by existing vacancies. The movement between Q3 and Outturn results from Visitor Centre income received in 2021/22 being accrued into 2022/23. In addition, further adjustments to anti-social hours entitlements were identified in Q4.	66	82	148
Finance/Corporate Management: The underspend is due to the insurance position now being shown across services (£46k), new burdens funding of £32k received late in March, higher than anticipated income from the HRA for shared staff £16k, plus adjustments relating to resolving and clearing items of £50k.	1	-179	-178

	Q3 £000	Movement £000	Outturn After Carry Forwards £000
Department Notes			
S106: A comprehensive review of Developer Contributions held on the Balance Sheet has identified historical receipts to be transferred to the General Fund. This £456k favourable variance, accumulated during earlier financial years in which spending obligations had been financed from other sources, has been offset below the line by a planned transfer to earmarked reserves.	0	-456	-456
Other Minor Variances	37	16	53
Total	-212	-477	-689

6.9 Senior Management Team:

- a) This budget line holds the costs of the Chief Executive and four directors. Net costs totalled £473k and resulted in a small underspend of £81k at the end of the financial year.

**Table 6: Senior Management Team
Main Differences between Quarter 3 and Outturn Variances**

	Q3 £000	Movement £000	Outturn After Carry Forwards £000
Department Notes			
An estimate of the costs of the 21/22 pay award was temporarily put here before the actual costs were allocated to the actual staff costs across the services	312	-393	-81

6.10 Other Costs, Income and Reserve Transfers:

- a) As well as budgets allocated to directorates for the delivery of services, a number of budgets are reported 'below the line' as centrally held/corporate items.
- b) For 2021/22 this includes accounting for additional COVID grant funding that has been received to mitigate additional costs and income losses. This area also includes items such as:
- Investment properties income
 - Other interest costs and income
 - Accounting provisions for Expected Credit Losses (commonly known as bad debt provisions)
 - Capital accounting adjustments including debt repayment, revenue financing of capital costs, and transfers to and from capital reserves
 - Transfers to and from general and earmarked revenue reserves

- c) In summary, the overall position against budget for these items is a net underspend/income of £628k. The reasons for this variance are explained in the table below.

Table 7: Other Costs, Income and Reserve Transfers ('below the line')
Main Differences between Quarter 3 and Outturn Variances

Department Notes	Q3 £000	Movement £000	Outturn After Carry Forwards £000
COVID General Grants: £415k was received from the Sales Fees and Charges compensation claim which ran until the end of June 2021. This is offsetting income losses across the council, mainly relating to carparking. New burdens grant of £205k was received, £85k of which was received after quarter 3 reporting. Carry forwards of £135k to fund the leisure contract deferred savings and £172k to fund waste contract pressures were agreed after quarter 3 reporting.	-843	223	-620
Investment Properties: Commercial Investment income higher than budgeted. This is partially offset by net income from legacy properties being £50k lower than budgeted.	0	-19	-19
Interest and Investment Income: After a volatile and difficult year for non-property based investment performance shaped by the pandemic, recovery has been excellent. SWT's good performance is from strategic investments. We have received 4.5% income from strategic pooled funds in year. It means the income return from the total investment portfolio is 1.5% which, in terms of current money market investment returns, is particularly healthy.	-603	52	-551
Expected Credit Losses: This represents a reduction in the provision for Sundry Debtors and housing benefit bad debts / credit losses, despite a more cautious allowance for risk of losses due to COVID / economic pressures on customers.	0	-138	-138
Transfers from Earmarked Reserves: The movement relates to items processed at the end of the year including: A contribution of £456k to the Capital Financing earmarked reserves related to S106 (see table 5). A contribution from reserves of for capital funding. Contributions to/from reserves for year end services adjustments. A contribution from the Business Rates Volatility Reserve of £432k.	0	-578	-578

	Q3 £000	Movement £000	Outturn After Carry Forwards £000
Department Notes			
Capital and Other Adjustments: This relates to a slight increase from budget in the MRP charge of £43k. The remaining movement is in respect of funding of capital from earmarked reserves and a further RCCO contribution of £1.347m utilising business rates pooling surplus (see section 8.3)	194	1,991	2,185
Funding: Additional grant of £44k towards council tax discounts and losses received at end of year. Pooling gain income of £1.347m above budget (see section 8.3). A net deficit position on the S31 Funding and Business Rates income funded from the Business Rates Volatility Reserve	-39	-869	-908
Total	-1,291	662	-629

7 Revenue Budget Carry Forwards

- 7.1 Budget carry forward requests are where a budget holder wishes to retain an underspend for use by the service in the following year. It is usual practice to consider requests for budget carry forwards at the year end, however this year the requests for budget carry forwards were established as part of the quarter 3 budget monitoring process (see Financial Monitoring report presented to the Executive 16 March 2022).
- 7.2 Carry Forwards for items up to £150k can be approved by the S151 Officer, which would follow consultation with SMT and portfolio holders. Carry Forwards for items above £150k require Executive Committee approval.
- 7.3 As per **Appendix A** there are £2,074,720 of carry forward requests being put forward by SMT and the S151 Officer. This is based on the information proved in the Quarter 3 report with only a minor adjustment to reflect changes in the Climate Change Budget. Of these £982k relates to carry forwards that are already reflected in planned expenditure profiled in the 2022/23 budget approved by Full Council on 24 February 2022. The S151 Officer, in consultation with SMT, has approved carry forwards totalling £735,400 for those under £150k.
- 7.4 Five of the carry forwards were agreed in principle and are recommended to the Executive for approval as they are individually over £150k. These total £1,339,320 and are as follows:
- **Climate Change for £451k:** A budget of £500k and the principle of any under spend to be carried forward was approved at full Council on 26 October 2020.
 - **Leisure Maintenance - Wellington Sports Centre for £370k:** A new roof replacement has been programmed during 2022/23. This budget underspend will be used to help finance the capital cost of this, so that further borrowing is not required.

- **COVID Contingency – Somerset Waste Partnership for £172k:** To fund forecast 2022/23 budget pressure due to COVID-19 from the remaining COVID grant received in 2021-22.
- **Phosphates for £182k:** Due to the evolving nature of the phosphates work and resourcing delay to the project there is a requirement to role the funds forward and continue the work in 2022/23.
- **Strategy & Policy - Local Plan Feasibility for £165k:** As a result of team vacancies and local government reorganisation, the spend in this area has been delayed. Roles have now been filled but minimal spend was incurred in 2021/22. In addition, we are awaiting the Draft Order for Local Reorganisation which will set out the timeline for the adoption of a local plan for the new authority.

8 Business Rates

- 8.1 The Business Rates Retention (BRR) funding system is both challenging and volatile, with the Council facing significant risks particularly in respect of appeals against rateable values by rate payers. The required accounting arrangements also result in some 'timing differences' which can skew the funding position across financial years. SWTC's standard share of net rates income is 40%.
- 8.2 During 2021/22 SWT, together with Somerset County Council, Mendip, Sedgemoor and South Somerset district councils, operate as a business rates pool, enabling a higher proportion of business rates growth to be retained by the Councils.
- 8.3 **Business Rates Retention Pooling Gain:** The Council receives a share of gains from the Somerset Business Rates Pool arrangement when business rates income is above the baseline target set by Government. The budget for the gain in 2021/22 is £150,000, which was cautiously set reflecting risks around Hinkley B and wider economic effects of COVID and Brexit. Based on forecasts prior to finalising the NNDR3 collection fund outturn statement an estimated gain of £1.497m has been accrued for 2021/22, presenting a surplus income of £1.347m for the year. In consultation with the Leader, Portfolio Holder for finance, and SMT the S151 Officer has prudently used this surplus towards financing of capital expenditure in 2021/22 thus reducing the requirement for borrowing. This supports measures to reduce risk around investment and borrowing in response to the recommendation from our external auditor as reported in December 2021 (see Investment Properties commentary in this report).
- 8.4 The following table summarises the net position in respect of retained business rates funding for SWT in 2021/22 based on required accounting entries.

Table 8: Business Rates Funding Outturn 2021/22

	Budget £000	Outturn £000	Variance £000
40% Share of Business Rates Income (per original budget)	-23,446	-23,446	0
Tariff to Government (fixed amount)	18,395	18,395	0
Section 31 Grant funding for enhanced Small Business Rates Relief/Flooding Relief/Retail Reliefs	-2,608	-7,822	-5,214
Renewable Energy Rates – 100% retained by SWT	-205	-549	-344
50% Levy Payment	1,682	1,949	267
Adjustment For TIG/Levy/Pooling Gain	145	-208	-353
Total Retained Business Rates Funding 2021/22	-6,037	-11,681	-5,644
Previous Year's Collection Fund Deficit	12,556	12,556	0

- 8.5 The Council maintains a Business Rates Volatility Reserve, which enables the council to 'smooth out' accounting timing differences within the BRR system, and provide a prudent contingency to protect the revenue budget from large reductions in business rates income – e.g. through larger than estimated appeal refunds and large variances in S31 grant income – and collection fund deficits.
- 8.6 Separate earmarked reserves have been created to hold the S31 grants received in respect of business rates discounts due to COVID. One grant relates to the business rates holiday, and this is needed to fund the resulting Collection Fund Deficit repayment in 2021/22 and 2022/23. £11.7m has been transferred from the earmarked reserve in 21/22 towards the previous year's deficit and £5.23m transferred into the earmarked reserve for 2022/23. There is also a transfer of £998k from the earmarked reserves for the tax income guarantee.

9 Investment Properties / Capital Financing:

- 9.1 In the Annual Auditor's Report presented to the Audit and Governance Committee in December 2021, a key recommendation was made by our external auditor in respect of the risks related to the Council's investment in property for yield and the related borrowing requirements. A full update on the response to the auditor's recommendation will be reported to the Audit and Governance Committee on the 27th September 2022.
- 9.2 One of the measures to reduce risk includes reducing the level of borrowing needed to support the strategy. To this end we have an established policy of reducing debt through the annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and have, through the budget and outturn, made further steps to accelerate debt repayment. This includes using additional business rates funding surplus as highlighted in this report. The funding position for the investment fund can be summarised below.

Table 9: Investment Properties Fund Summary 2021/22

	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	Cumulative £000
Capital Expenditure	44,084	54,881	0	98,965
<i>Financing:</i>				
Annual MRP per policy (proportion related to investment properties)	0	-882	-1,888	-2,770

Cumulative borrowing requirement balance before additional measures	44,084	98,083	96,195	96,195
<i>Accelerated Financing Measures:</i>				
MRP overpayments – Per Budget Report Feb 2022 for 2021/22	0	-1,000	-112	-1,112
Revenue Funding (“RCCO”) – per Budget Report Feb 2022	0	-2,000	0	-2,000
Revenue Funding (“RCCO”) – Investment Financing Reserve surplus	0	-173	0	-173
Revenue Funding (“RCCO”) – 2021/22 outturn using Pooling Gain surplus	0	-1,347	0	-1,347
Sub-total: Accelerated funding to reduce borrowing requirement	0	-4,520	-112	-4,632
Cumulative borrowing requirement balance after additional measures	0	93,563	91,563	91,563
Debt as % of Total Capital Expenditure	100%	94.5%	92.5%	92.5%

- 9.3 The table shows that the borrowing requirement will have been reduced by over £4.6m due to accelerated financing of the up-front spend since the auditor’s recommendation. The total amount of debt repayment (MRP) plus revenue financing is planned to be £7.402m by 31 March 2023 leaving a borrowing requirement balance of £91.563m with 7.5% of the upfront investment fully financed. The acceleration of financing reduces debt costs and refinancing risks.

10 Debt Write Off

- 10.1 The total write-offs during 2021/22 amount to £2,009,001. Of this £524,094 is SWT’s share of the loss. The fact that SWT’s share of the loss is less than the total reflects the fact that for Council Tax and Business Rates we collect on behalf of other organisations and for Housing Benefits we receive a subsidy.
- 10.2 The table below provides a breakdown of debts written off between the General Fund and the Collection Fund. Of this there were four individual customers where individual debts greater than £25,000 were written off (please see confidential **Appendix E**).
- 10.3 The table also provides the corresponding figures for the previous financial year (2020/21) for comparison.
- 10.4 The amounts written off in respect of Council Tax and Business Rates have increased since the previous financial year. During 2021/22 we commenced a project and provided additional resourcing to tackle our backlog of Council Tax (33,000 accounts) and Business Rate (1,262 accounts) arrears totalling £9.6m and £3.3m respectively,

as at mid November 2021. These arrears stretch back over a number of financial years. The approach to tackling the arrears is twofold:

- a) To identify cases where we can take action to recover the debt and commence action. Since starting the project in November 2021 we have collected a total of £1.4m of arrears. Of this figure we estimate that £749k relates directly to the project of which we retain £240k.
 - b) To undertake a 'housekeeping' exercise to identify and write-off cases that are essentially irrecoverable either because of the age of the debt, our not knowing the current address of the debtor, insolvency, all enforcement options being exhausted or because the balance due is uneconomic to pursue.
- 10.5 Whilst the amount written off is a high number we do make an Expected Credit Loss provision within each years Council Tax for a small proportion of the debt to be written off. Consequently, this amount is already budgeted for. Overall, our collection rates for Council Tax and Business Rates remain high and in excess of 97% of the debt raised.

Table 10: Value of Debts Written Off

	2020/21		2021/22	
	Total £	SWT share of loss £	Total £	SWT share of loss £
General Fund:				
Sundry Debts	21,763	21,763	15,061	15,061
Housing Benefits	22,253	13,352	100,140	60,084
Collection Fund:				
Council Tax	163,963	18,692	1,081,474	124,019
Business Rates	104,957	41,983	812,326	324,930
Total	312,936	95,790	2,009,001	524,094

11 General Fund Earmarked Reserves

- 11.1 The Council sets aside funds for specific purposes in earmarked reserves to be used in future years to meet planned spend on services not yet incurred, and specific contingencies for material financial risks.
- 11.2 **Appendix B** provides a summary of the earmarked reserves and their movement during the year. The total balance of General Fund earmarked reserves at the end of the financial year is £27.990m. The balance is skewed again this year end with the significant transfers of S31 grant received in 2020/21 and 2021/22 for business rates discounts through Government policy leading to funding losses that will hit the General Fund in 2021/22 and 2022/23 and tax income guarantee in 2021/22 to 2023/24 (see section 8 above).

12 General Fund Unearmarked Reserves

- 12.1 The following table summarises the movement on the General Reserves Balance during the year, representing the balance of uncommitted funds held to mitigate unexpected financial pressures and service demands.

Table 11: General Reserve Balance

	£000
Balance Brought Forward 1 April 2021	7,914
Use of Reserves for 2021/22 Base Budget	-1,160
Approved Transfers in 2021/22 for Services	-912
Approved Transfers in 2021/22 for Debt Repayment	-1,000
Approved Returns in 2021/22	400
Outturn 2021/22 revenue budget underspend	2,349
Balance Carried Forward 31 March 2022	7,591
Future Use of Reserve in 2022/23 for LGR	-1,375
Projected Balance	6,216
Recommended Minimum Balance	2,400
Balance above recommended minimum	3,816

- 12.2 The reserve balance as at 31 March 2022 (subject to audit) is £7.591m. This provides sufficient capacity to support the Medium Term Financial Plan which incorporates the planned use of £1.375m of reserves to support the 2022/23 budget.
- 12.3 This leaves a projected balance of £6.216m of uncommitted reserves which is above the risk-assessed adequate minimum balance of £2.4m. In the current circumstances, it is prudent to maintain this headroom to enhance financial resilience and to provide flexibility for any in year pressures such as unforeseen cost increases and income reductions, and to hold funds that are likely to be needed to support transition to and implementation of local government restructuring.

13 Land Charges, Licensing and Taxi Licensing

- 13.1 Under regulations the Council needs to report how its Licencing and Land Charges services perform in the financial year. These services set fees and charges based on estimated reasonable costs and aim to break even each year. However, due to fluctuations in demand and costs the services may report an under- or over-recovery in any one year and the Council therefore transfers any surplus/deficit to a self-financing reserve.
- 13.2 **Land Charges:** During 2021/22 the Council has over-recovered its costs adjusting the self-financing reserve to a year end credit balance of £124,284. During the next round of fees and charges setting adjustments will be made with the view achieving a break-even position on a three-year rolling basis.
- 13.3 **Licencing:** During 2021/22 income targets were realigned for the Licensing Act 2003 fees and unrecoverable costs. Overall, the self-financing reserve has reduced by £59,906 to give a year end debit balance of £8,905. During the next round of fees and charges setting adjustments will be made with the view to achieving a break-even position on a three-year rolling basis.
- 13.4 **Taxi Licencing:** During 2021/22 income targets were realigned to reflect updated volumes and the reserve was adjusted. Overall, the self-financing reserve has reduced by £6,775 to give a year end debit balance of £34,067. During the next round of fees and charges setting, adjustments will be made with the view to achieving a break-even position on a three-year rolling basis.

Table 12: Licensing and Land Charges Self-Financing Reserves

	Balance Brought Forward £	Net Reserve Transfers £	Balance Carried Forward £
Land Charges	-10,737	-113,547	-124,284
Licencing	68,811	-59,906	8,905
Taxi-Licencing	40,842	-6,775	34,067

Note: minus (-) = funds in hand

14 Taunton Unparished Area Fund (Special Expenses)

- 14.1 In previous years the Council set an annual budget for the Unparished Area of Taunton, which was funded through a “Special Expenses” Council Tax charge to households in the area plus funding provided towards the impact of Council Tax Support on the Unparished area tax base. The Council agreed to transfer the management of these funds to the Charter Trustees in 2019/20. The following table summarises the income and expenditure for the Fund in 2021/22.

Table 13: Unparished Area Fund Income and Expenditure

	£	£
Fund balance brought forward 1 April 2021		-57,801
Special Expenses Precept 2021/22		-29,090
<i>Expenditure funded in the year:</i>		
6 bins: Ramshorn Green, Holley Close, Killams (2), Sycamore (2)	5,430	
1 Bench - Blackbrook	947	
Notice Board - Eaton Crescent	515	
Devon and Somerset Fire - Course at Taunton Academy	2,500	
Huish Tigers – grant for equipment	3,973	
Friends of Longrun Meadow – grant for equipment	800	
COACH - grant for defibrillator	500	
Taunton Street Pastors – grant for radio use	648	
Bath Place Traders Association – shopfronts repainting	5,400	
Unlocking Potential Somerset – grant for work in schools in Taunton	24,000	
Southern Sinfonia Orchestra – grant for care home concerts in Taunton	2,600	
GoCreate CIC Corgi Trail	2,000	
Somerset Armed Forces Day – grant towards event	2,000	
Crimestoppers in the West Country – grant for ‘what would you do?’ programme	2,000	
Total Expenditure		53,313
Fund Balance in hand carried forward 31 March 2022		-33,578

Note: minus (-) = funds in hand

- 14.2 The Fund was generally used to support minor works, worthwhile community activities and individual projects. The balance of funds at the end of the year remains held by the Council. For 2021/22, the Charter Trustees has raised its own precept for civic and mayoralty costs, and the Council has continued to raise special expenses

for supporting initiatives and projects in the unparished area. These funds are distinct from the Charter Trustees' precept.

15 General Fund Capital Programme

- 15.1 The **approved General Fund Capital Programme** at the end of 2021/22 is £165.327m (see **Appendix C**). This consists of £153.899m of prior year approvals plus new budgets approved by Full Council on 18 February 2021 for 2021/22 of £3.117m and for 2022/23 of £2.034m. There were also supplementary budgets of £6.949m approved during the year and £672k of approved budget reductions where budget was no longer required.
- 15.2 The General Fund approved Capital Programme relates to in-year works and longer-term regeneration schemes that will be completed over the next four years. The Council is financing this investment through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts, Capital Receipts, Capital Grants, Revenue Funding and Borrowing.
- 15.3 The **actual spend** on the General Fund Capital Programme during 2021/22 was £69.722m (see **Appendix C**). The major areas of investment related to (a) the completion of the Commercial Investment portfolio (£54.9m), (b) continuing regeneration projects such as Firepool (£1.7m) and Coal Orchard (£2.1m), (c) Coastal Communities Fund grants towards Watchet East Quay development (£1.4m) and (d) a contribution to the cost of M5 Junction 25 major highways improvements (£1.5m). As well as grants to parishes and investment in infrastructure and equipment. The expenditure has been financed using a combination of Capital Grants, Capital Receipts, CIL funding and borrowing.
- 15.4 The capital outturn position includes overspends totalling £683k across a number of schemes (see **Appendix C**).
- 15.5 However, it is also proposed to reduce the approved capital programme budget for reported underspends totalling some £35.312m (see **Appendix C**). Of this £1m was on the Commercial Investment portfolio and £252k on vehicle acquisitions. In addition, in September 2020 Full Council through a confidential report approved a large capital investment of over £33m for town centre regeneration development in Taunton. Agreement for land acquisition was not concluded with the owners for a variety of reasons including purchase and development costs, and the impact of phosphates on new schemes that incorporate overnight accommodation. We are no longer in an active negotiation on the purchase of the site and conclude that the capital programme should be updated to reflect the removal of this scheme.
- 15.6 Given the recommended reduction in the overall capital programme for budget allocations no longer required it is recommended that Full Council approves a reduction of £35m in the Approved Borrowing Limit within the Capital, Investment and Treasury Management Strategies that were approved by Council in March 2022.
- 15.7 The total capital programme budget to be continued into 2022/23 and future years is £60.977m, before net additions approved by Council in February 2022 (see **Appendix C**). Full Council on 24th February 2022 approved additions of £1.896m that were prioritised on the grounds that they remedy health and safety risk, deliver essential maintenance and essential assets for service delivery; and a reduction of previously approved 2022/23 scheme allocations of £181k, to give an additional net

increase in capital budget for 2022/23 of £1.715m. This gives a residual total approved capital budget of £62.692m to be spent in 2022/23 and future years.

16 Links to Corporate Strategy

- 16.1 The financial performance of the Council underpins the delivery of corporate priorities and therefore all Corporate Aims.

17 Corporate Scrutiny Comments / Recommendations

- 17.1 The report will be considered by Corporate Scrutiny on 6 July 2022. A summary of the comments and recommendations discussed will be provided here for the Executive to consider.

Democratic Path:

- **Corporate Scrutiny – 6 July 2022**
- **Executive – 20 July 2022**
- **Full Council – 6 September 2022**

Reporting Frequency: Annually

List of Appendices

Appendix A	GF List of Carry Forward Requests
Appendix B	GF Summary of Movement in Earmarked Reserves
Appendix C	GF Capital Outturn Position 2021/22
Appendix D	GF Original v Current Budget Position
Appendix E	Confidential – Write Offs Over £25k

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Appendix A: List of Carry Forwards
[* note five require Executive approval]

Request Title	Amount Requested £	Notes
Total Carry Forward	2,074,720	
Development & Place:	366,460	
*Phosphates	181,950	Due to the evolving nature of the phosphates work and the fact that has been a delay in recruiting staff (roles filled in late Nov) budget spend has been delayed with the requirement to role the funds forward to 22/23.
*Strategy & Policy: Local Plan Feasibility	164,510	As a result of team vacancies and Unitary the spend in this area has been delayed. Roles have now been filled but minimal spend was incurred in 21/22. In addition, we are awaiting the Draft Order for Local Reorganisation which will set out the timeline for the adoption of a local plan for the new authority.
Strategy & Policy: Wellington Station feasibility work	20,000	The overall project will now be funded by Network Rail, but there is the likely requirement for additional feasibility works by SWT in 2022.
External Operations & Climate Change:	1,586,810	
Air Source - Market House	14,250	For the installation of energy efficient heating in the Market House that was delayed due to seeking listed building consent.
*Climate Change (CNCR Budget)	450,860	A budget of £500k and the principle of any under spend to be carried forward was approved at FC 26.10.2020. This carry forward is to meet significant commitments to key projects that will run into 2022/23.
Tree Planting	100,000	This was a one-off budget for 2021/22 to further tree planting across the district. The Climate Change Team are working with a partner organisation to identify suitable areas for planting. The tree planting will take place in 2022/23.
*Leisure Maintenance – Wellington Sports Centre	370,000	A new roof replacement has been programmed during 2022/23. This budget will be used to help finance the capital cost of this, so that further borrowing is not required.
Footpath Works	30,000	Works programmed for footpaths in Vivary Park.
Seagull Control Programme	15,000	This will be used to deliver the Seagull Control Programme, approved by the Executive during 2021/22. Due to changes in legislation this work was delayed and will now fall into next financial year.

Request Title	Amount Requested £	Notes
Hankridge Pond Work	100,000	This was a 2021/22 supplementary budget funded from reserves. Works have been delayed and cannot take place during winter meaning that the spend will fall into 2022/23.
Vivary Park Bandstand	100,000	There are some subsidence issues requiring structural investigation works which will delay actual refurbishment works into 2022/23.
Stogursey Wall	100,000	Work is in progress and will continue into 2022/23.
COVID Contingency - Leisure	134,700	To fund forecast 2022/23 budget pressure arising due to COVID-19 and to be funded from the remaining COVID grant received in 2021/22.
*COVID Contingency – Somerset Waste Partnership	172,000	Contingency to fund forecast 2022/23 budget pressure due to COVID-19 from the remaining COVID grant received in 2021-22.
Internal Operations:	121,450	
Council Tax Collection (Revenues)	121,450	SMT agreed to fund a debt recovery project for 5 months in 2021/22 and for the whole of 2022/23. The carry forward is the amount to cover salary costs for 3 posts involved in this project for 2022/23.

Appendix B: Summary of Movement in Earmarked Reserves 2021/22

	Opening Balance 1 April 2021	Transfer In	Transfer Out	Closing Balance 31 March 2022
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Business Rates Retention Volatility	5,375	1,989	-2,011	5,353
Business Rate Holiday S31 Grant	11,695	5,234	-11,118	5,811
Tax Income Guarantee S31 Grant	3,081	416	-999	2,499
Investment Risk Reserve	3,673	151	-673	3,151
General Carry Forwards (GF)	2,112	2,075	-2,112	2,075
Commercial Investment Financing Fund	0	2,173	-173	2,000
Capital Funding Reserve (RCCO)	143	1,270		1,413
Garden Town Fund	870	340	-231	978
Economic Development Initiatives	769	25	-151	643
Homelessness Prevention	164	400		564
Asset Management	687		-168	519
Investment Property Sinking Fund	0	500		500
Community Housing Fund (SHLAA)	533		-36	497
Budget Volatility & Risk reserve	2,400		-2,400	0
Other Smaller Balances	2,342	1,757	-2,111	1,987
Total	33,844	16,330	-22,183	27,990

Note: the net movement in reserves is £5.853m. This is different to table 1 net movement in reserves as some of the transfers to / from Earmarked reserves are undertaken and reported within services and there are also the S31 movements are taken into account and reported through funding.

Appendix C: General Fund Capital Outturn Position 2021/22

General Fund Capital Programme Summary:

	Approved Budget as at 31 March 2022	Actual Capital Outturn 2021/22	Underspend (-) / Overspend on Completed Projects	Underspends – Budget No Longer Required	Remaining Approved Budget (ongoing projects)	Net 2022/23 Budget Additions Approved (Feb 2022)	Total Approved Budget 2022/23 and future years
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Development and Place	146,028	63,193	548	- 34,540	48,843	-	48,843
External Operations and Climate Change	9,672	3,481	110	- 365	5,937	1,667	7,604
Housing & Communities	5,770	701	-	- 58	5,011	228	5,239
Internal Operations	2,110	1,472	25	- 105	557	- 180	377
Hinkley Capital Schemes	857	484	-	- 243	130	-	130
S106 Capital Schemes	890	391	-	- 1	499	-	499
Total GF	165,327	69,722	683	- 35,312	60,977	1,715	62,692

General Fund Capital Programme Detailed Listing:

SWT Capital Programme: Detailed listing	Approved Budget as at 31 March 2022	Actual Capital Expenditure 2021/22	Underspend (-) / Overspend on Completed Projects	Underspends – Budget No Longer Required	Remaining Approved Budget (ongoing projects)	Net 2022/23 Budget Additions Approved (Feb 2022)	Total Approved Budget 2022/23 and future years
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Total Development & Place	146,028	63,193	548	-34,540	48,843	0	48,843
Investment Properties	55,930	54,902		-1,028	0		0
Taunton Bus Station	50	16			33		33
Coal Orchard Construction	2,824	2,132			692		692
Coal Orchard Dev costs	278	43			235		235
Major Transport Schemes	580				580		580
Superfast Broadband (Legacy TD)	380				380		380
Superfast Broadband (Legacy WSC)	170				170		170
Steam Coast Trail	102	4			98		98
Seaward Way	92	20		-27	45		45
Firepool Development	476	66			410		410
Firepool Infrastructure	1,831	1,652			179		179
J25 Improvement Scheme Contribution	1,500	1,500			0		0
Flooding Alleviation	6,000	244			5,756		5,756
CIL - Cycle & Pedestrian Improvements	1,500				1,500		1,500
CIL - Education Provision	4,000	867			3,133		3,133
CIL - Town centre regeneration	1,404	7			1,397		1,397
CIL Grant Transferred to Parishes	433	930	497		0		0
Minehead Esplanade	15			-15	0		0
Heritage at Risk	744	708			36		36
Regeneration Projects	2,926	3		-2,923	0		0
Employment Land Schemes	575	34			541		541
Phosphates	2,000	14			1,986		1,986
Active Travel Cycle & Walking improvements	2,258				2,258		2,258
Taunton Technology Park	0	12	12		0		0
Parking & Access Signage	0	39	39		0		0
CIL - Community Development	500				500		500
Firepool Phase 1 Infrastructure	5,159				5,159		5,159
Firepool Phase 1 Car Parks	10,323				10,323		10,323
Firepool Block 1 Construction	13,431				13,431		13,431

SWT Capital Programme: Detailed listing	Approved Budget as at 31 March 2022 £000	Actual Capital Expenditure 2021/22 £000	Underspend (-) / Overspend on Completed Projects £000	Underspends – Budget No Longer Required £000	Remaining Approved Budget (ongoing projects) £000	Net 2022/23 Budget Additions Approved (Feb 2022) £000	Total Approved Budget 2022/23 and future years £000
Other Town Centre Regeneration Schemes (Confidential approvals)	30,546			-30,546	0		0
Total External Operations and Climate Change	9,672	3,481	110	-365	5,937	1,667	7,604
Closed Church Yards	0				0	50	50
Wellington Sports Centre Replacement Roof	0				0	500	500
Vivary Park Footpaths	0				0	180	180
Brewhouse Theatre Roofing	0				0	200	200
Vehicles Acquisition	404			-252	152	-27	125
Waste Containers	200	116	16		100	26	126
Grants to Parishes Play	15				15	-15	0
Replacement Play Equipment	178	128			50	15	65
SWP Waste Vehicle & Depot Works Loan	822	234			588		588
Deane Depot Plant	46	47	24		23		23
Wellington Leisure Centre Air Handling Unit	252	15			237		237
Watchet East Quay Wall	740	764	24		0		0
Coastal Communities Fund Grant	1,450	1,450			0		0
Orchard Car Park - Rewire and lighting replacement	150	147	-3		0		0
Blue Anchor Coast Protection	3,528	23			3,505		3,505
Watchet, Cleve Hill	50	45			5		5
Compliance for Assets	605	10		-113	482		482
Car Parks Capital Improvements	809	151			658	738	1,396
New Boiler - Crematorium	20	25	5		0		0
Wellington Park Lodge	20				20		20
Watchet Splashpoint Hole	0	44	44		0		0
Litter Bins	113	109			4		4
Elec Vehicle Charging Points	270	173			97		97
Total Housing & Communities	5,770	701	0	-58	5,011	228	5,239
Grants to Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)	850			-58	791	228	1,019
Gypsy Site	109				109		109

SWT Capital Programme: Detailed listing	Approved Budget as at 31 March 2022 £000	Actual Capital Expenditure 2021/22 £000	Underspend (-) / Overspend on Completed Projects £000	Underspends – Budget No Longer Required £000	Remaining Approved Budget (ongoing projects) £000	Net 2022/23 Budget Additions Approved (Feb 2022) £000	Total Approved Budget 2022/23 and future years £000
Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	1,856	517			1,339		1,339
IAC Staffing and Support	408				408		408
North Taunton Equity loans	600				600		600
Energy Efficiency Grants	368	120			248		248
Home Maintenance	228				228		228
Homelessness Strategy	1,176	61			1,115		1,115
Prevention Grants	176	3			173		173
Total Internal Operations	2,110	1,472	25	-105	557	-180	377
Members IT Equipment	4				4		4
Community Alarms	50	21			29		29
IT Server Refresh	20				20		20
Resources for Change Programme	333	358	25		0		0
Finance System	14			-14	0		0
SIP	311	273			38		38
PC Refresh Project	389	14			376	-180	196
Microsoft 365 Migration	57				57		57
Community Loan	776	685		-91	0		0
Intranet Project	75	42			33		33
Finance System Licences	80	80			0		0
Total Hinkley Funded Projects	857	484	0	-243	130	0	130
South B/W & North Petherton	251	251			0		0
Bridgwater Town Centre Sup	54	0		-54	0		0
Holford & District Village Hall	76	0		-76	0		0
Watchet Bowling Club	98	88			10		10
Williton Shooting Club	23	0		-23	0		0
Cheddar Parish Council	65	45			20		20
Burnham On Sea & Highbridge Council	200	100			100		100
Empty Homes & LOTS	90	0		-90	0		0

SWT Capital Programme: Detailed listing	Approved Budget as at 31 March 2022 £000	Actual Capital Expenditure 2021/22 £000	Underspend (-) / Overspend on Completed Projects £000	Underspends – Budget No Longer Required £000	Remaining Approved Budget (ongoing projects) £000	Net 2022/23 Budget Additions Approved (Feb 2022) £000	Total Approved Budget 2022/23 and future years £000
Total S106 Funded Projects	890	391	0	-1	499	0	499
GF C S106 Creech St Michael Vi	6	6			0		0
S106 Watchet Bowling Club	23	23			0		0
S106 Open Door	32	32			0		0
Salvation Army	24	24			0		0
Norton FW playing pitches	524	9			515		515
Ruishton PC Outdoor Gym/Fence	27	27			0		0
Wellington CC Nets Project	15	15			0		0
Cotford St Luke Village Hall	5	5			0		0
Compass Construction Ltd	3	3			0		0
Victoria Park Resurfacing	1	1			0		0
North Curry Village Hall	10	9		-1	0		0
Bishops Lydeard play equipment	17	17			0		0
Rufus Strong unspent funds	3	3			0		0
Tottle Developers	32	32			0		0
Minehead TC - 3 Sites New Play	41	41			0		0
Bradford on tone PC	12	28			-17		-17
YMCA Fitness Suite & Corn Café	58	58			0		0
Cotford St Luke play panel	1	1			0		0
Williton Memorial Ground	22	22			0		0
Celandine Mead Play Area	37	37			0		0

Appendix D: General Fund Budget Movement for 2021/22 per Cost Centre

Cost Centre	Cost Centre Name	Original Budget £	Approved Changes £	Current Budget £
GENERAL FUND REVENUE ACCOUNT				
Development & Place				
CC000G	Major and Special Projects	396,080	52,250	448,330
PG006G	Firepool	0	41,420	41,420
PG009G	Growth Programme	150,000	-101,150	48,850
PG011G	Regeneration & Infrastructure	1,190	0	1,190
SD001G	Planning Policy	0	39,000	39,000
SD005G	Phosphates	0	77,860	77,860
SG100G	Hinkley	-11,500	0	-11,500
SE005G	Community Infrastructure Levy	-57,000	0	-57,000
SE008G	Conservation & Listed Build	55,150	0	55,150
SE033G	Local Land Charges	-58,150	4,480	-53,670
SE035G	Planning Obligations	69,610	100,820	100,820
SE036G	Planning Admin Footpath Div	137,070	228,160	365,230
SE038G	Planning Applications & Advice	-84,820	0	-84,820
SE045G	Sports Develop & Community	40,000	18,470	58,470
SG005G	Indoor Sports & Recreation	-7,690	0	-7,690
FD000G	Strategy and Policy	797,480	-303,930	493,550
SD002G	Garden Town	118,480	-49,760	68,720
SE011G	Culture & The Arts	202,890	0	202,890
SE015G	Economic Development	551,680	396,520	948,200
		2,300,470	504,140	2,735,000
External Operations & Climate Change				
SG004G	Central Service Overheads	104,380	16,490	120,870
SG006G	Facilities Management	145,810	-6,160	139,650
SE016G	Dog Warden Service	36,010	0	36,010
SE017G	Public Health	513,630	-214,720	298,910
SE021G	Food Safety	21,890	267,980	289,870
SE032G	Licensing	34,540	-82,670	-48,130
SE039G	Pollution Control	-8,120	237,790	229,670
SE040G	Private Sector Housing	215,770	-159,930	55,840
SE043G	Taxi Licensing	-73,610	0	-73,610
SE046G	Welfare Funerals	32,000	0	32,000
FF000G	Localities - Operational Costs	10,710	-10,710	0
SF001G	Grounds Maintenance	289,510	-363,970	-74,460
SF004G	Community Parks & Open Spaces	1,654,500	229,950	1,884,450
SF010G	Litter Bins	140,000	-93,340	46,660
CC001G	Leisure Partnership	535,160	251,210	786,370
CC002G	Building Control Partnership	58,060	0	58,060
CC003G	Street Scene	1,197,060	-154,120	1,042,940
CC006G	Parking Partnership	-4,032,370	141,070	-3,891,300
CC007G	Waste Partnership	4,403,160	170,000	4,573,160
CC009G	Major Contracts	198,520	-12,610	185,910
CC010G	Fleet Management	184,750	58,200	242,950

CC011G	Public Conveniences	0	216,420	216,420
SF002G	Bereavement Services	-699,870	-11,590	-711,460
SF007G	Nursery	84,690	-4,640	80,050
SF021G	Trees	177,860	6,960	184,820
SF022G	Play Areas	102,520	7,090	109,610
SF023G	Community Improvement Fund	0	100,000	100,000
SG003G	Asset Management	827,810	189,152	1,016,962
SG008G	Deane House	410,780	40,450	451,230
SG009G	Westpark	135,530	-17,500	118,030
SG010G	Roughmoor Depot	-25,610	3,200	-22,410
SG011G	Brunel Way Depot	36,900	0	36,900
SG012G	West Somerset House	89,700	17,360	107,060
SG013G	Roughmoor Enterprise Centre	16,780	-16,780	0
SG014G	Barnsclose Units	3,770	-3,770	0
SG015G	Lisieux Way	0	-250,650	-250,650
SG016G	Market House	0	-12,480	-12,480
SG017G	Flook House	0	-13,000	-13,000
SG024G	Seaward Way - Minehead	-60,000	0	-60,000
SF005G	Flood Defence & Land Drainage	401,451	229,319	630,770
SF006G	Harbours	87,370	12,110	99,480
SF008G	Coast Protection	11,000	17,230	28,230
SC005G	Emergency Planning	128,590	-30,000	98,590
SD004G	Climate Change	723,110	-191,342	531,768
		8,113,741	561,999	8,675,740

Housing & Communities

CC008G	Housing Partnership	175,620	0	175,620
HS003G	GF Corporate Property Team	329,370	-65,310	264,060
HS023G	GF Housing Strategy Team	107,880	0	107,880
HS014G	GF Housing Enabling Team	153,690	0	153,690
SE022G	Housing Enabling	154,980	0	154,980
HS021G	GF Community Resilience	292,700	-42,000	250,700
SC008G	Shopmobility	43,770	-32,000	11,770
SE007G	Community Safety	128,460	0	128,460
SF003G	Community Grants	215,870	87,000	302,870
HS015G	GF Homelessness Team	735,550	0	735,550
SE026G	Homelessness	642,000	369,990	1,011,990
SE023G	Housing Options	48,400	0	48,400
SF095G	Cuckoo Meadow	0	-25,000	-25,000
		3,028,290	292,680	3,320,970

Internal Operations

CC004G	SHAPE Legal Partnership	410,150	0	410,150
FB000G	Comms and Engage Oper Costs	191,580	-148,660	42,920
FC000G	Governance	406,610	5,700	412,310
FC001G	Strategy	76,500	3,000	79,500
FE000G	People - HR	959,770	85,850	1,045,620
PH003G	Information Management	0	70,360	70,360
PH006G	SIP	0	11,420	11,420
PH007G	MS/0365	0	27,760	27,760
PH009G	Business Analyst Project	0	186,000	186,000
RH000G	Internal Change	272,940	95,670	368,610
SC001G	Register of Elections	64,350	0	64,350
SC002G	Conducting Elections	14,930	0	14,930

SC003G	Learning & Develop	133,300	0	133,300
SC004G	Members	498,540	35,300	533,840
SC006G	Internal Audit	132,320	0	132,320
SC007G	Non-Distributed Costs	1,904,460	0	1,904,460
SC009G	Corporate Management	-1,223,480	-97,560	-1,321,040
SC012G	External Audit Fees	0	97,560	97,560
SE006G	Deane Helpline	-108,890	35,280	-73,610
SE009G	Council Tax Collection (rev)	66,170	32,820	98,990
SE010G	Council Tax Support (Benefits)	77,580	28,880	106,460
SE012G	Customer Contact Centre	1,000,450	78,560	1,079,010
SE018G	Business Intelligence	281,790	59,470	341,260
SE020G	Operational Support	671,530	10,110	681,640
SE029G	Income Control and Sundry Debt	342,910	60	342,970
SE030G	Visitor Centres	-22,480	14,830	-7,650
SE041G	Rent Allowances	-159,930	0	-159,930
SE042G	Rent Rebates	-80,080	0	-80,080
SE059G	Powys Fraud Contract	30,250	0	30,250
SG007G	Health and Safety at Work	80,200	125,800	206,000
SH004G	Insurance	97,030	-20,000	77,030
SH001G	ICT Staff/Operations	1,173,190	-405,950	767,240
SH002G	ICT Communications	350,050	25,910	375,960
SH003G	ICT Systems	551,020	-115,740	435,280
SH006G	ICT Infrastructure	0	406,540	406,540
SH012G	Finance	897,305	131,855	1,029,160
SH014G	Comms and Engagement	234,090	-48,280	185,810
TT000G	Test and Trace Support	0	29,080	29,080
UN002G	Unitary Poll	0	86,000	86,000
		9,324,155	847,625	10,171,780
Senior Management Team				
SM000G	Senior Management Team	554,210	0	554,210
SM100G	COVID Contingency	0	-812,700	-812,700
		554,210	-812,700	-258,490
Other Operating Costs & Income				
LL001G	Other Operating Expenditure	2,537,450	-29,090	2,508,360
LL002G	Financing/Invest Inc & Exp	-3,609,030	3,327,100	-281,930
LL003G	Capital Grants & Contributions	-9,134,590	9,109,830	-24,760
LL009G	Comm. Inv. Property	0	-3,650,000	-3,650,000
LL010G	Legacy Comm. Inv. Property	0	-486,550	-486,550
LL011G	Collections Fund	0	-5,666,260	-5,666,260
LL012G	Revenue Grants	0	-3,223,480	-3,223,480
SC014G	Special Expenses	0	29,090	29,090
	Somerset Rivers Authority Levy	97,914	0	0
		-10,108,256	-1,499,974	-11,608,230
Transfer to/From Reserves				
MM000G	GF MIRS	-13,212,610	-636,860	-13,849,470
		-13,212,610	-636,860	-13,849,470
GF Balance		0	0	0

By virtue of paragraph(s) 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

