

# North Somerset Futures Local Development Framework

## Weston-super-Mare Town Centre Area Action Plan



**Preferred options  
for consultation**

# Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2. Policy Framework</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3. Area Context</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>4. Vision</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>5. Objectives</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>6. General Policies</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>6.1</b> Retail – Policies RT1, RT2 and RT3	20
<b>6.2</b> Leisure – Policy L1	25
<b>6.3</b> Tourism – Policies T1 and T2	27
<b>6.4</b> Housing – Policies H1, H2 and H3	31
<b>6.5</b> Employment – Policy E1	36
<b>6.6</b> Urban Design, Place making and Movement – Policy TBS1	39
<b>6.7</b> Parking – Policy CP1	49
<b>6.8</b> Flood Risk – Policy FR1	53
<b>6.9</b> Conservation and the Historic Environment – Policy CHE1	54
<b>6.10</b> Education – Policy ED1	57
<b>6.11</b> Evening/Night-time Economy – Policy ENE1	60
<b>7. Key Areas of Change</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>7.1 Seafront Area</b> (Policy SF1)	<b>65</b>
SF2: Birnbeck Island and Environs	69
SF3: Melrose Car Park	74
SF4: Grand Pier	77
SF5: Tropicana	80
<b>7.2 Retail Core</b> (Policy RC1)	<b>83</b>
RC2: Victoria Square	87
RC3: Dolphin Square	92
RC4: Tesco	97
RC5: NCP Car Park	101
RC6: St James Street Area	104
<b>7.3 Gateway Area and A370 Corridor</b> (Policy GW1)	<b>108</b>
GW2: Locking Road Car Park	114
GW3: Train Station Car Parks	118
GW4: Sunnyside Road Site	121
GW5: Rugby Club Site	125
GW6: Gas Works Site	128
GW7: Avoncrest	131

# Weston-super-Mare **Town Centre Area Action Plan**

<b>8. Key Infrastructure/Community Benefits</b>	<b>134</b>
<b>9. Monitoring</b>	<b>138</b>
<b>10. Phasing</b>	<b>142</b>
<b>11. Delivery</b>	<b>144</b>
<b>12. Appendices</b>	<b>152</b>
<b>13. Glossary</b>	<b>159</b>

## List of Figures

Figure 1: <b>Timetable of plan production process</b>	<b>7</b>
Figure 2: <b>Local Development Framework Diagram</b>	<b>8</b>
Figure 3: <b>Proposals Map</b>	<b>19</b>
Figure 4: <b>Net provision of comparison retail floorspace.</b>	<b>22</b>
Figure 5: <b>Primary Retail Frontage</b>	<b>23</b>
Figure 6: <b>Proposed new residential units</b>	<b>32</b>
Figure 7: <b>Table of Land uses</b>	<b>32</b>
Figure 8: <b>Key pedestrian and cycle routes within Gateway Area</b>	<b>42</b>
Figure 9: <b>Artists impression of the Promenade</b>	<b>46</b>
Figure 10: <b>Indicative design for “Pier Square”</b>	<b>47</b>
Figure 11: <b>Current car parking capacity</b>	<b>49</b>
Figure 12: <b>AAP boundary, sub areas and priority sites</b>	<b>64</b>
Figure 13: <b>Seafront Regeneration Sites</b>	<b>66</b>
Figure 14: <b>Summary of key evidence for the seafront area</b>	<b>67</b>
Figure 15: <b>Indicative sketch of improvements to Melrose car park</b>	<b>76</b>
Figure 16: <b>Retail Core Regeneration Sites</b>	<b>84</b>
Figure 17: <b>Summary of key evidence for the Retail Core</b>	<b>85</b>
Figure 18: <b>Indicative drawing of Victoria Square</b>	<b>89</b>
Figure 19: <b>Gateway and A370 Corridor Regeneration Sites</b>	<b>108</b>
Figure 20: <b>Summary of key evidence for the Gateway Area</b>	<b>109</b>
Figure 21: <b>Indicative Master Plan Overview</b>	<b>111</b>
Figure 22: <b>Weston Gateway Area Movement Strategy</b>	<b>112</b>

# Weston-super-Mare **Town Centre Area Action Plan**

Figure 23: <b>Weston Gateway Area Proposed Building Heights</b>	<b>113</b>
Figure 24: <b>Developer Contribution Requirements</b>	<b>135</b>
Figure 25: <b>Monitoring of Housing Development</b>	<b>140</b>
Figure 26: <b>Monitoring of Retail, Leisure and Employment Development</b>	<b>141</b>
Figure 27: <b>Phasing of development sites</b>	<b>143</b>
Figure 28: <b>Delivery Issues Table</b>	<b>145</b>

# 1. Introduction

## Purpose of this Preferred Options report

- 1.1 This document has been produced by North Somerset Council as a basis for consultation on the emerging Weston-super-Mare Town Centre Area Action Plan which, when adopted, will form part of the Local Development Framework (LDF). It builds on the earlier Weston Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) Issues and Options consultation stage (Autumn 2007), developing ideas that emerged from the consultation, as to how to implement the vision for Weston Town Centre.
- 1.2 This area action plan is being prepared for Weston town centre as part of the LDF. Its purpose is to identify a strategy and proposals for the development and regeneration of Weston town centre.

## What is a Local Development Framework?

- 1.3 North Somerset's Local Development Framework will replace the existing North Somerset Replacement Local Plan. It will provide a strategic framework for the district, guiding change to 2026 and beyond. When adopted, the LDF, together with the South West Regional Spatial Strategy, will form the statutory Development Plan for this area.

## What is a 'Preferred Options Report'?

- 1.4 The Preferred Options Report is not a formal consultation stage, but sets out the council's preferred options for development and regeneration, and outlines alternative options and explains why they have been discounted. It sets out more detail for each of the key development sites identified, and establishes the preferred policy approach for development of the town centre.

## How can you get involved?

- 1.5 You may have already been involved through earlier consultation processes. The Weston Town Centre AAP builds on work done over several years, including consultation on documents such as the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan and the Weston Area Development Framework.
- 1.6 An Issues and Options Consultation took place in Autumn 2007 as part of the LDF process, along with the consultation on the Issues and Options stage of the Core Strategy, which included issues relating to Weston.

- 1.7 A period of eight weeks will now be given for people to make comments on the Preferred Options Report. The period for making representations on this Preferred Options report is from **13th July 2009 until the 4th September 2009**.
- 1.9 Comments should be made online at [www.n-somerset.gov.uk](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk) or by e-mail to [planning.policy@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@n-somerset.gov.uk) or by post to Planning Policy, North Somerset Council, Development and Environment, Somerset House, Oxford Street, Weston, Somerset, BS23 1TG.

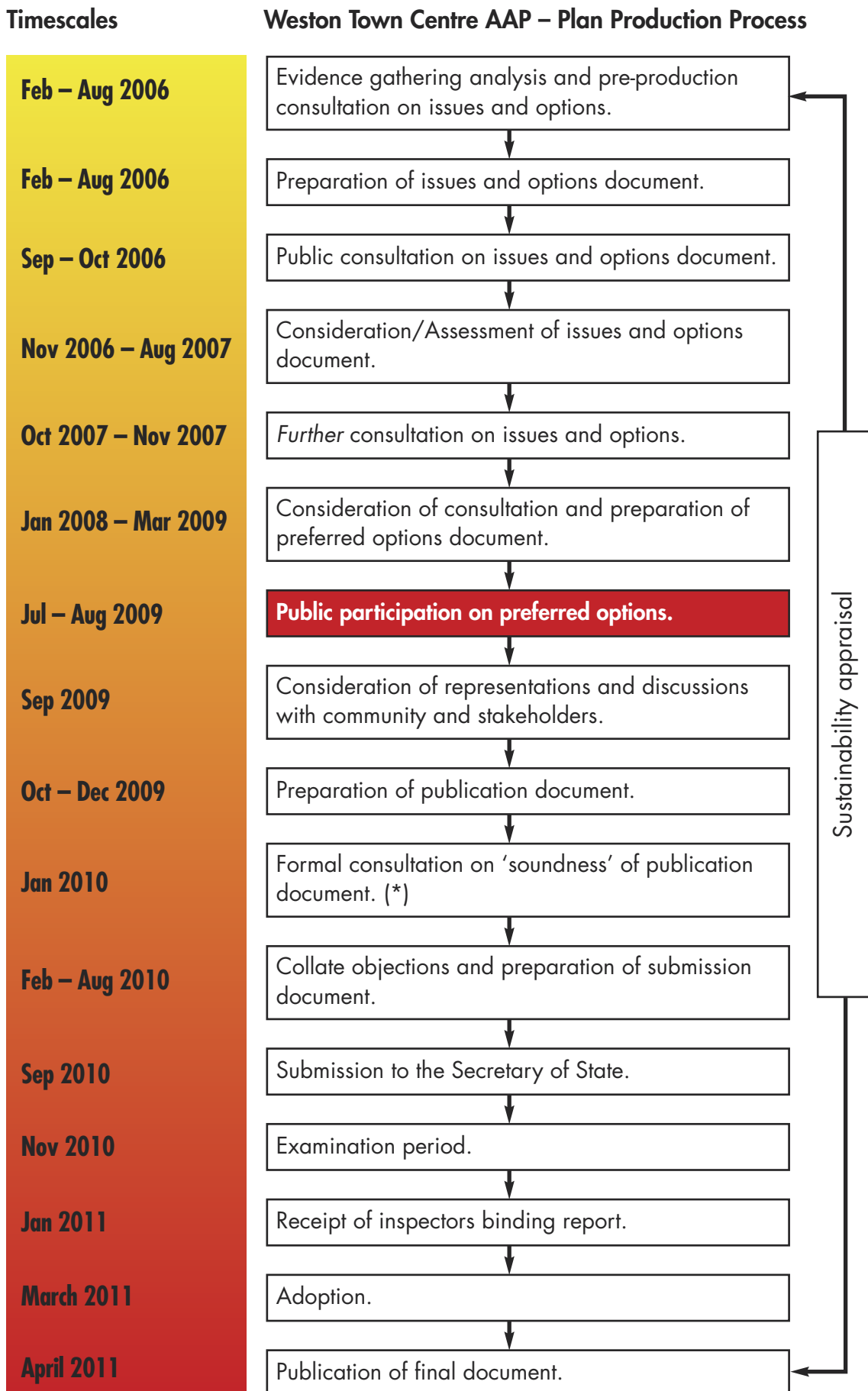
### What happens next?

- 1.10 The Council will carefully consider all comments received and, where appropriate, seek to resolve any issues or objections that may arise. The Area Action Plan will then be amended and formally consulted on through a Publication Document next year, following the consultation on the Core Strategy Publication Document.
- 1.11 Following this formal consultation stage where representations relating to the “soundness”<sup>1</sup> of the document can be made, the Area Action Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State.
- 1.12 All representations received will be considered at an Independent Examination to be conducted by a Planning Inspector. This may include a public hearing. The Inspector will test the “soundness” of the plan. The Inspectors report will be binding on the Council.



<sup>1</sup> To be sound a plan must be justified (founded on a robust and credible evidence base, and the most appropriate strategy when assessed against reasonable alternatives), effective (deliverable, flexible and able to be monitored) and consistent with national policy.)

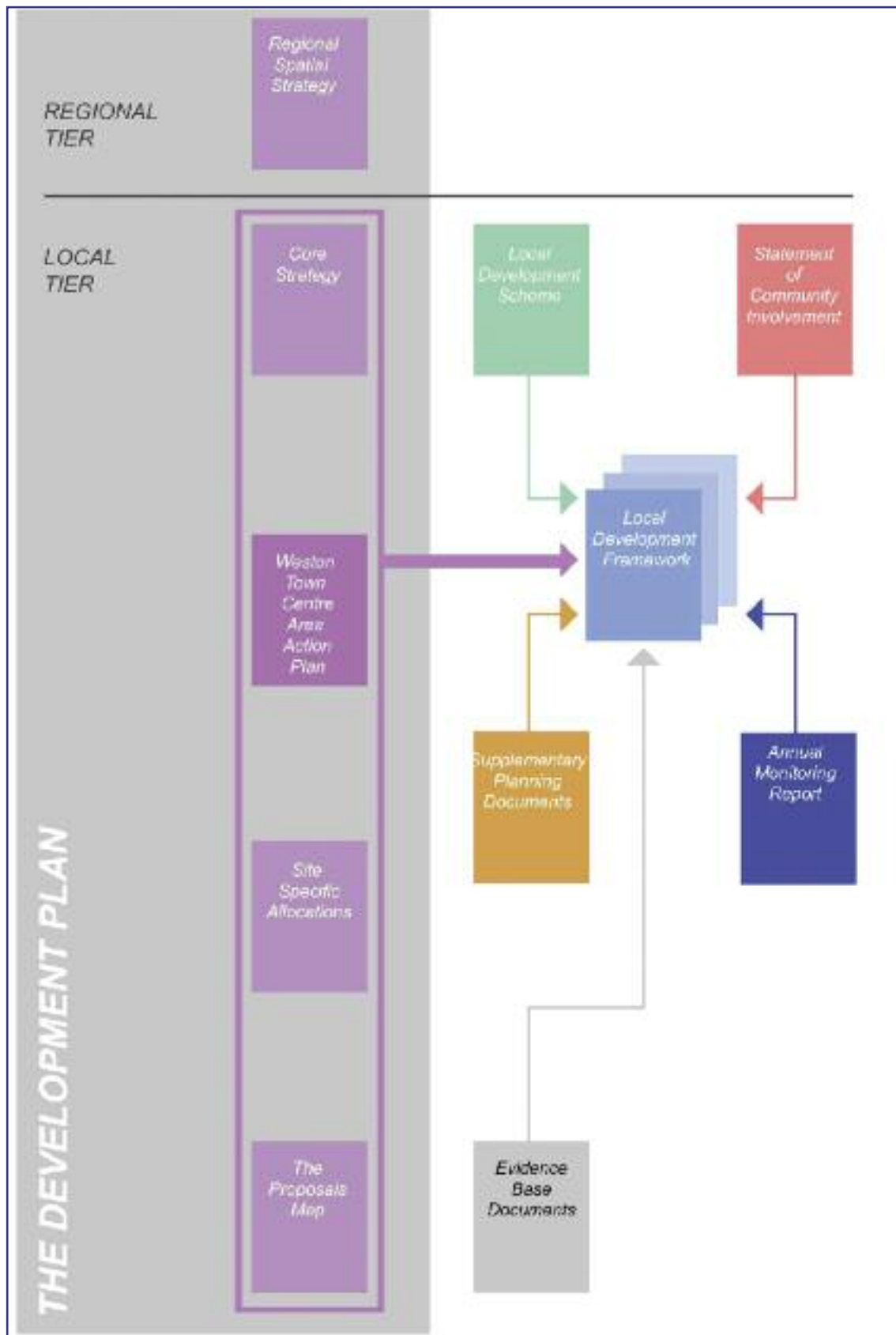
**Figure 1: Timetable of plan production process.**



(\*) subject to Core Strategy Progress



**Figure 2: Local Development Framework:**



## **2. Policy Framework**

### **South West Regional Spatial Strategy**

- 2.1 Weston has been identified as one of the 'Strategically Significant Cities and Towns' within the south west region under Development Policy A of the draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). This means that within North Somerset it is the town which offers the greatest opportunities for employment, and the greatest level of accessibility to cultural, transport, health, education and other services and will play a critical role in delivering development in the period to 2026.
- 2.2 Policy HMA1 of the draft Regional Spatial Strategy states that "Weston will secure concerted employment-led regeneration...by providing for revitalisation of the town centre and seafront through improved retail, leisure and cultural facilities; a better balance between homes and jobs, with an emphasis on significantly improving the employment offer of the town and reducing the impacts of car-based commuting; and housing growth to be phased and linked directly to job growth". The draft RSS allocates 3,000 new homes within the existing Weston urban area and 9,000 new homes as an urban extension to the south east of the town. In terms of planning for employment, the draft RSS states that provision should be made for approximately 10,000 jobs in the Weston Travel to Work Area (TTWA) including the provision of approximately 34ha of employment land.

### **North Somerset Replacement Local Plan**

- 2.3 The North Somerset Replacement Local Plan was adopted in March 2007. Policies E/1 and E1/A establish the regeneration policies for Weston town centre and identified priority sites for redevelopment. The AAP will update these original policies through the Local Development Framework.

### **Dolphin Square Supplementary Planning Document**

- 2.4 A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been prepared for the Dolphin Square site to expand on policy E1/A of the Replacement Local Plan which identifies this site as a priority location for regeneration and redevelopment. The SPD was adopted in May 2008 and proposes a comprehensive redevelopment of the site for a mix of uses including retail, bars, restaurants and cafes, offices, leisure uses, residential and community uses.

### **Core Strategy**

- 2.5 The Core Strategy is the district-wide strategic planning policy document which sets out the strategic policies for the district over the

next twenty years. The Issues and Options consultation stage of the Core Strategy was held in Autumn 2007 which identified a draft vision for Weston that “By 2026 Weston will be established as a major economic centre south of Bristol catering for the employment, social and leisure needs of its population whilst attracting visitors to support this role.” The next stage in the consultation on the Core Strategy will be a Preferred Options Stage.

## Sustainable Community Strategy

- 2.6 The North Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy (2008–2026) was adopted in February 2008. *Improving our Communities Together* identifies six shared priorities: developing strong inclusive communities, ensuring safer communities, improving health and well being, developing a prosperous economy and enterprising community, living within environmental limits and, tackling disadvantage and promoting equality of opportunity. These shared priorities have influenced and are consistent with the objectives and proposals of this Area Action Plan.

## Civic Pride Initiative Connecting Spaces, Places and People

- 2.7 Weston Civic Pride Initiative has been developed in partnership by North Somerset Council and the South West Regional Development Agency. The aim of the initiative is to stimulate economic regeneration of the town through a comprehensive “facelift” and upgrading of public and private spaces. The programme started in 2004 and three projects – Meadow Street Enhancements, Grove Village and Big Lamp Corner including Silica, and new pedestrian signage and information throughout the town centre, have now been completed. Schemes currently being implemented include the public realm element to the redevelopment of Knightstone Island, and Weston Seafront Enhancement and Sea Defence Scheme.



## 3. Area Context

- 3.1 Weston is a seaside, residential and commercial town serving the surrounding area of North Somerset and adjoining districts. It lies within the West of England sub-region which is home to over a million people and includes the other major towns and cities of Bristol and Bath as well as many smaller towns and villages. The West of England operates as a “city-region” with Bristol at its core being the key driver of the regional economy, with an economic influence that extends over a wide area.
- 3.2 As a town Weston-super-Mare has many positive and distinctive elements which, if used to their full potential, will result in major urban regeneration of the town centre and economic development for the town as a whole. The potential of the town is based on a number of key factors:
- Its strategic regional accessibility with mainline rail and motorway connections and easy access to Bristol International Airport.
  - Availability of employment land both within the town centre and on Weston Airfield and the former RAF Locking site.
  - The availability of a skilled local workforce with 35% of the town’s residents being classified as managers or professionals<sup>2</sup>.
  - The town’s seafront location which offers an outstanding quality of life and the qualities of the existing town and landscape around it offer the potential for high quality and distinctive design initiatives.
- 3.3 Substantial residential expansion has taken place over recent decades in Weston with approximately 12, 000 new homes built between 1981 and 2008 and the next twenty years will see further growth of the town. It is therefore crucial to harness the above factors to ensure that this residential growth is coupled with the creation of a strong local economy that provides a diverse range of employment opportunities for local people; that the town centre repositions itself as a major retail and leisure destination which serves the whole town and surrounding villages and that the unique qualities of the town, particularly its seaside location and vast expanse of beach, are utilised to promote the towns role as a tourist destination.

<sup>2</sup> 2001 Census figures.

- 3.4 Weston town centre and seafront is already undergoing significant changes which signify the start of its regeneration. The recently redeveloped Knightstone Island on the seafront has brought this once derelict area back into use resulting in the conversion of three historic buildings, two new buildings and the creation of a high quality public space to complement the marine setting. The Knightstone Island development has transformed this part of the seafront, and coupled with the recent enhancements to Marine Lake and the public realm enhancements to the Promenade, the seafront is set to become a high quality public space and a focal point for the town. The recently approved plans to redevelop the Grand Pier will add a further major all year leisure attraction to the seafront, and the presence of the "Weston Wheel" currently provides a unique attraction for the town as well as being a striking structure that is visible from miles around.



- 3.5 The public realm improvements implemented through the Civic Pride Initiative, including the pedestrianisation and re-paving of Big Lamp Corner including the distinctive Silica structure, pavement widening and resurfacing of streets within Grove Village and the forthcoming "Pier Square" initiative which will transform the area between the Grand Pier and Regent Street into an attractive and pedestrian-friendly area, all contribute to the upgrading of the environment within the town centre.

## **Issues and Options**

- 3.6 Issues and Options consultation for this AAP took place in October/November 2007 and generated 35 responses. Many issues were raised including the need for residential development within the town centre to facilitate its regeneration, protection of the historic environment, concern over the redevelopment proposals of the Tropicana site and concern over loss of car parking in the town centre.

## **Sustainability Appraisal**

3.7 A sustainability appraisal scoping report was carried out at the Issues and Options stage. The objectives of the Weston Town Centre Area Action Plan were tested and certain issues were flagged up that need to be considered as proposals are developed. In particular this included further work on:

- integrating conservation and development in respect of the local character;
- clarifying the role of tourism and its integration with socio-economic needs;
- clarifying the vision for the gateway area, specifically in terms of land-use mix;
- appropriately balancing inter-urban and intra-urban transport improvements;
- clarifying the role of housing in the town centre and its integration with other land uses;
- clarifying the nature of the evening economy and identifying/mitigating possible conflicts;
- clarifying the approach to flood risk.

## **Evidence and related projects to support the Preferred Options Proposals**

3.8 There have been a number of studies and documents that have supported the preparation of the Weston Town Centre Area Action Plan Preferred Options document. The key documents are outlined in Appendix 1.

## 4. Vision

- 4.1 The Weston Town Centre Issues and Options document published in October 2007 established a vision for the town centre. This vision was broadly accepted through the issues and options consultation, although a number of comments received felt that more emphasis should be put on conserving the town's historic qualities. This Preferred Options document carries this vision forward, but includes reference to retaining the historic identity of the town.

**By 2026, Weston town centre will be a good quality, diverse and year-round shopping and leisure destination set within a high quality built environment which has retained its historic identity and capitalises on its seafront location and the natural beauty of the area. More people will live and work in the town centre which will add vibrancy during the day and into the evening, resulting in a safe and desirable place for its residents and visitors.**

**By 2026 Weston town centre will have increased the amount of high quality tourist accommodation, and offer a range of indoor and outdoor attractions and activities catering for a wide range of visitor needs.**

**By 2026 the gateway area will have transformed itself into a distinctive entrance to the town creating a sense of arrival set within a consolidated, high quality built and landscaped environment, providing good pedestrian connections to the town centre.**

## 5. Objectives

5.1 At the issues and options stage a number of objectives were put forward and tested as part of the initial sustainability appraisal. The objectives have been formed through examining the issues facing the town centre, based on evidence and consultation, and responding to the priorities set out in North Somerset's Sustainable Community Strategy (2008). Following the issues and options consultation the objectives have been revised to include a reference to retaining Weston's historic identity in Objective 5, Objective 8 has been altered to remove the text regarding the provision of facilities for coach tour operators and Objective 9 has been added following advice from the Environment Agency.

5.2 **Objective 1: Make provision for an increase in retail and leisure uses within Weston town centre to create a more competitive retail and commercially active centre.**

- To increase the quality and quantity of Weston's retail offer within the town centre through the identification of specific sites for retail development in the retail core of the town.
- To provide a framework for the regeneration of the town centre.
- To sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre as a whole whilst promoting reinvestment in the existing retail core of the town.
- To strengthen the economy of the town centre and its role as a Strategically Significant Town.

5.3 **Objective 2: Seek a significant increase in the amount of high quality tourist accommodation and choice of indoor attractions and activities, and focus on the towns existing qualities to appeal to niche markets.**

- To improve the quality of leisure facilities in Weston, including the provision of more all weather leisure attractions.
- To redefine the image of Weston to appeal to a broader tourist market so it incorporates high quality and high value visitor spend.
- To promote Weston's beach as a unique and distinct attraction, and utilise the space for events.
- To improve the quality and range of tourist accommodation in Weston, including provision of a high quality 4/5\* hotel.



5.4 **Objective 3: Strengthen physical and visual connections between all areas of the town, particularly between the retail core and the seafront, to create an integrated town which maximises its seaside location.**

- To improve pedestrians links between the High Street and the promenade to increase pedestrian flows between these two areas.
- To ensure that the redevelopment of major sites along the seafront provide strong connections to the town centre, to ensure the town centre benefits from increase visitor numbers to these attractions.
- To integrate the gateway area into the town centre and strengthen links between the railway station and its environs and the High Street.
- To create a unified, consolidated town centre that is an attractive environment for pedestrians and cyclists, with legible and direct routes between the seafront, the high street and the gateway area.

5.5 **Objective 4: Encourage more people to live and work in the town centre making it an inclusive, desirable and safe place to live, work and visit offering a broad range of facilities and job opportunities in an attractive and accessible environment.**

- To strengthen the economy of the town centre and its role as an employment, administrative and educational centre.
- To increase the range of uses in the town centre to create activity throughout the day and into the evening to enhance the vitality and viability of the centre.

5.6 **Objective 5: Improve the urban fabric and raise the quality of urban design following the principles set out through the Civic Pride Initiative, whilst retaining Weston's historic identity. Redevelop key sites to a very high standard setting an exemplar for the future development of the town.**

- To promote the positive mixed use regeneration of disused or under used land or buildings through harnessing redevelopment opportunities.
- To protect, promote and enhance Weston's built heritage and to maximise the benefits of regeneration through conservation.
- To achieve high quality, innovative urban design using appropriate high quality materials and finishes.
- To achieve high quality public realm improvements including provision for management and maintenance.

5.7 **Objective 6: Enhance the gateway to the town centre through the high quality redevelopment of key sites, particularly around Weston train station, and public realm improvements to enhance approaches into the town centre.**

- To create a legible, coherent and distinctive progression along the main road corridor into the town.
- To create a strong sense of arrival and significant gateway into the town centre.
- To improve pedestrian links over the railway line to help facilitate the expansion of the town centre and the regeneration of adjacent sites.
- Enhance community pride and the visitor experience of the route into the town.
- Encourage further private sector investment within the area with the aim of creating a business quarter within the town centre.

5.8 **Objective 7: Ensure the public transport network provides an integrated, convenient and sustainable service for all parts of the town, with improved public transport services including the consideration of a future Park and Ride facility, and ensure that there's sufficient car parking to meet the needs of the future users of the town centre.**

- To reconfigure the one way system around Weston Retail Park in order to consolidate the retail park and create an easier, safer and more direct route into the town centre.
- To provide high quality and safe car parking provision targeted at shoppers and visitors rather than long stay parking.
- To improve non-car accessibility into the town centre, including consideration of a Park and Ride scheme, and improved pedestrian and cycle routes into town.

5.9 **Objective 8: Aim to develop a vibrant evening economy in Weston town centre to make it an attractive and safe place for all residents and visitors to enjoy throughout the day and into the evening.**

- To broaden the range of evening activities available in Weston focusing on family orientated entertainment and restaurants to encourage a broader mix of people and age groups to visit Weston during the evening.
- To increase activity in Weston town centre in the early evening to create a safer environment during this time of day.
- To raise the quality of bars and restaurants in Weston to broaden its appeal to a wider market.

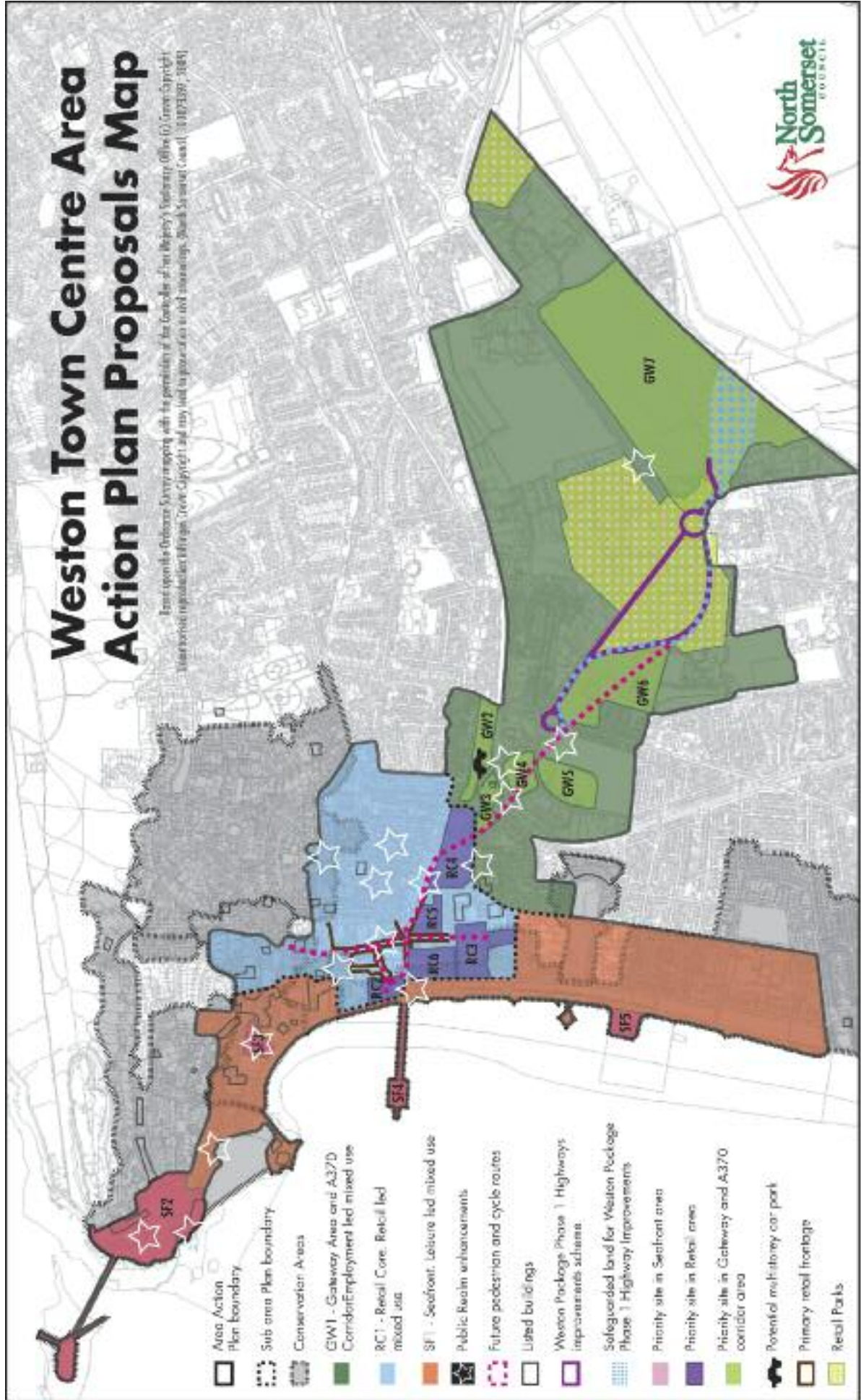
- To encourage more restaurants and cafes within the retail core, particularly in the St James Street area, in properties facing the seafront and around the High Street.

5.10 **Objective 9: To seek protection and enhancement of the environment, to reduce and manage flood risk, and to improve the quality of habitat for biodiversity interests, while taking into account climate change.**

- To adopt the sequential approach to managing flood risk within the town centre and ensure mitigation measures are in place for all sites within the flood zone.
- To ensure that proposals do not adversely impact on areas of nature conservation.
- To ensure that any new development proposals do not have an adverse impact on bathing water quality in the district.
- To ensure that any new development proposals do not have an adverse impact on sites of European significance, such as the Severn Estuary.
- To ensure that any new development takes into account the future impacts of Climate Change and are designed accordingly.



**Figure 3: Weston Town Centre Area Action Plan Proposals Map**



## 6. General Policies

### 6.1 Retail



- 6.1.0 In 2006 the council commissioned a retail and leisure survey to guide decisions on the amount and location of future retail floorspace and leisure development to be identified in the LDF. The study focused predominately on the four main towns in North Somerset, but particularly on Weston as the largest town and most important retail destination in the district.
- 6.1.1 Weston town centre is perceived to be relatively uncompetitive with other comparable centres in the sub-region due to access constraints and its relatively poor retail offer. There is an unclear retail hierarchy in the town with the out-of-town retail parks providing a significant amount of the retail offer, and within the town centre the quality and quantity of shops are insufficient to attract the shoppers or the expenditure expected for a sub-regional retail location.
- 6.1.2 In order to gain a clear and accurate assessment of how Weston is performing the study provided a health check and assessed the need and demand for additional retail, leisure facilities and offices in Weston, and assessed potential development sites in the town for their suitability to be developed for retail or leisure uses.

6.1.3 On the basis of this study the following conclusions have been drawn:

- In terms of attracting shoppers Bristol, Bath, Taunton and Exeter are Weston's key competing centres. All these centres are set to significantly improve their retail offer still further with major new retail schemes either recently completed, under construction or in the pipeline. Collectively, the level of investment planned will strengthen their role and increase their market share within the sub region.
- The major threats to the town centre arise from the continued expansion of larger, regional shopping centres and from the existing stock of 'out of centre' retail provision in Weston.
- Weston town centre has recently benefited from significant environmental improvements through the Civic Pride programme. In retail terms its strengths are its compact, pedestrianised retail core and its attractive seaside location. Its principal weakness in retail terms is the lack of large modern quality units capable of meeting the long term requirements of existing and new retailers and the poor quality of the existing retail offer.
- The study identifies a need for 32,100m<sup>2</sup> net of additional comparison floorspace by 2021 within Weston town centre. It identified a need of approximately 8,300m<sup>2</sup> of additional comparison floorspace up to 2011, increasing to 19,200m<sup>2</sup> by 2016 and increasing further to 32,100m<sup>2</sup> by 2021. This will nearly double the amount of existing comparison floorspace in Weston town centre which is approximately 40,700m<sup>2</sup>. The Area Action Plan will identify sites within the town centre for additional comparison retail to meet the identified need up to 2016. If by this period all sites identified have been developed the plan will be updated to reflect the current situation and identify future sites for the next stage of the plan period.
- Within the town centre the study identifies the need for 1566m<sup>2</sup> of convenience retail up to 2011, increasing to 2,250m<sup>2</sup> by 2016 and then further to 2,979m<sup>2</sup> by 2021. This is a total increase of 2,979m<sup>2</sup> which is a relatively low amount of convenience retail and it is likely to be met through expansion of existing sites.

6.1.4 The over riding conclusion of the North Somerset Retail and Leisure study is that in order for Weston to maintain its position in the sub-regional hierarchy, in light of the improved retail offer in other towns, and to provide the retail offer expected of a growing town, the town centre needs to significantly increase it's comparison retail floorspace. The following table identifies appropriate sites and the amount of retail floorspace that they could provide.

**Figure 4: Net provision of comparison retail floorspace on development sites identified within the Retail Core.**

<b>Net comparison retail floor space*</b>				
<b>Site</b>	<b>2008-2011</b>	<b>2011-2016</b>	<b>2016-2026</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Victoria Square		6800m <sup>2</sup>		
Dolphin Square		4000m <sup>2</sup>		
Tesco		2,250m <sup>2</sup>		
NCP Car Park Site			7000m <sup>2</sup>	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>13,050m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>7000m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>20,050m<sup>2</sup></b>

\* Figures calculated based on site footprint. Retail could potentially extend over two floors on redeveloped sites, plus there is the potential for intensification of existing sites with expansion onto second floors.

### **Policy RT1: Improving the retail offer.**

Provision will be made for approximately 20,050m<sup>2</sup> net additional comparison retail and approximately 2250m<sup>2</sup> net additional convenience goods retail floor space within the town centre retail core up to 2016.

The extent of the retail core is shown on the AAP proposals map and the preferred location for new retail development will be within or adjacent to the retail core.

Development proposals at out-of-centre locations that could be accommodated within the retail core, or would undermine the vitality or viability of the retail core will be refused.

*This policy contributes toward achieving objective 1.*

## Policy RT2: Primary Retail Frontages.

In order to prevent a loss of the existing retail offer, changes of use from retail (Class A1) to A2, A3, A4, A5 and other non-retail uses at ground floor level within the Primary Shopping Frontage, as defined on the AAP proposals map, will only be permitted where there is clear evidence to demonstrate that:

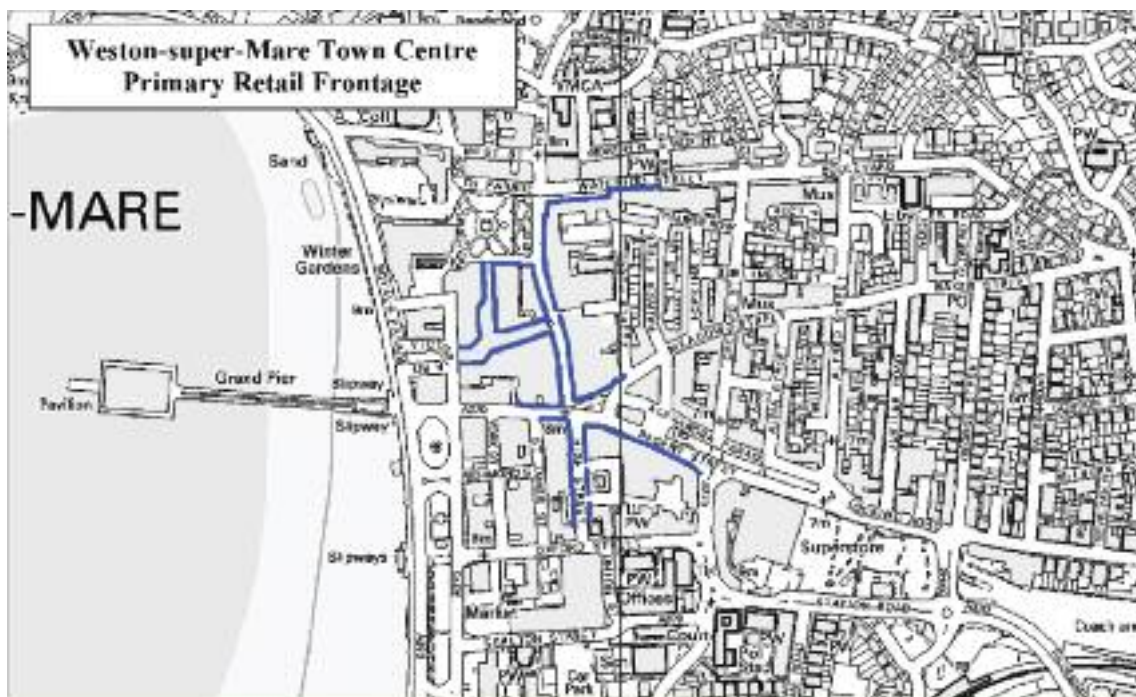
- i) the premises could not be retained in a viable retail use;
- ii) there would be clear benefits arising from the proposals for the vitality and viability of the town centre as a whole; and there would be no significant adverse consequences for the viability of nearby businesses;

Within the remainder of the town centre, proposals that would result in the loss of shops (Use Class A1) at ground floor level will be permitted unless;

- iii) it would result in the loss of an otherwise viable retail unit that makes a significant contribution to the well-being of adjacent retail uses;
- iv) there would be no clear additional benefits arising from the proposal for the vitality and viability of the centre as a whole.

*This policy contributes toward achieving objective 1.*

**Figure 5: Weston Town Centre Primary Retail Frontage**





## Weston Retail Parks

- 6.1.5 Weston retail parks located in the 'Gateway/Corridor area' have evolved over the years into an outer commercial area which provides a considerably large retail offer. This is an unsustainable trend which prejudices the viability of the town centre retail core. The retail parks largely emerged due to a lack of identified sites for large-scale retail provision in the town centre which is now being addressed through this Area Action Plan.
- 6.1.6. The retail parks (Weston Retail Park, Winterstoke Commercial Centre, and Flowerdown Way Retail Park) occupy a large area within the gateway/corridor area and are poorly configured in terms of pedestrian accessibility, particularly Weston Retail Park and Winterstoke Road Commercial centre which are intersected by both Winterstoke Road and Marchfields Way. The fragmented and dispersed nature of the retail parks, the fact that it's a road dominated environment and their distance from the town centre means access is predominantly by car. The physical environment does not provide an attractive approach to the town centre.
- 6.1.7 Policy RT3 aims to reverse this unsustainable pattern of retail development in order to concentrate retail provision within the retail core and ensure that future development within the retail parks, as defined on the AAP proposals map, enhance the physical environment on this main approach to Weston town centre.

### **Policy RT3: Weston Retail Parks.**

Within the area shown on the AAP Proposals Map development and redevelopment will be permitted where:

- i) It will not harm the viability and vitality of the retail core or seafront area;
- ii) It has been clearly demonstrated that the sequential approach to retail development has been applied and no other sustainable and appropriate location is available;
- iii) The design is of a high quality that will significantly enhance the visual image of this main approach to the town centre;
- iv) It minimises car trips by improving public transport, cycling and pedestrian links and improves connectivity and pedestrian movement between and within the retail parks and surrounding sites.

*This policy contributes toward achieving objective 1, 5 and 6.*

## **6.2 Leisure**

- 6.2.0 Weston is relatively poorly provided for in terms of indoor leisure facilities. There is only one cinema, a bowling alley, and limited good quality sports facilities. North Somerset's Retail and Leisure Study acknowledges that with major residential development in and around Weston (potentially 9,000 home urban extension, plus 3000 dwellings within the urban area over the next 20 years) an increase in demand for leisure facilities is highly likely in the medium to long term and should be planned for. The study assumed that the proposed Tropicana scheme will soak up the need for leisure facilities in the short term, and potential opportunities for further commercial leisure development in the town centre are likely to be part of mixed use schemes that could come forward in the medium to long term.
- 6.2.1 Additionally, the redevelopment of the Grand Pier, following the fire at the pavilion building in July 2008, will result in a significantly improved, landmark leisure attraction on the seafront which will form a major tourist attraction for the town. It is scheduled that the Grand Pier will re-open in summer 2010.
- 6.2.2 As well as the forthcoming Tropicana and Grand Pier developments along the seafront the Area Action Plan has identified the potential for leisure uses at Birnbeck Pier and Island to support its regeneration and enhance the attractiveness of this northern part of the seafront as a tourist destination. Leisure facilities will also be appropriate at other sites which may come forward for redevelopment within the seafront area as identified on the proposals map, and within the retail core.
- 6.2.3 Leisure uses can also play an important part in supporting and diversifying the evening and night time economy, and the North Somerset Retail and Leisure Study identified a moderate need for more bars and restaurants to improve the night-time economy, which should be accommodated within the seafront/retail core boundary as identified on the proposals map. This is discussed further in the Evening Economy section.

## Policy L1

The Council will support proposals for leisure and entertainment uses at key development sites along the seafront in the first instance, and then within the retail core. When considering proposals for leisure and entertainment uses at other locations within the town centre, the council will have regard to the following criteria:

- i) Whether the scale of the proposal is appropriate to a town centre location;
- ii) It has been clearly demonstrated that the sequential approach to leisure development has been applied and no other more sustainable and appropriate location is available;
- iii) The impact of the proposals in terms of traffic generation, anti-social behaviour, crime and where appropriate residential amenity;
- iv) The extent to which the proposal is accessible on foot, by cycle and by public transport;
- v) Whether the proposal will bring about benefits in terms of the regeneration of the town centre and its vitality and viability.

*This policy contributes toward achieving objectives 1, 2 and 8.*



## 6.3 Tourism

6.3.0 Weston, like many British seaside resorts, has over the last thirty years, experienced a decline in staying visitor numbers due to the increase in cheap package holidays abroad. This lack of demand has resulted in hotels and attractions lowering their prices (and inevitably quality) in order to compete for the few staying visitors the resort attracts. This has resulted in the “cheap and cheerful” image that Weston has today.

6.3.1 This image only appeals to a small section of the tourism market – mainly repeat and loyal visitors to Weston. According to the Weston Visitors Survey 85% of visitors to Weston in 2007 were on a repeat visit. The current image does not tap into the wider, more affluent tourist market who could make a more significant contribution to the local economy.

6.3.2 Improving the image of Weston as a holiday destination will depend on a number of factors. The provision of high quality accommodation, more upmarket retail, leisure and restaurant offer and an improved built environment are all factors that will significantly contribute to raising the image of Weston.

6.3.3 Equally, branding of the town and positive publicity such as high profile new developments or national events such as T4 on the beach, creates the necessary exposure to attract new visitors. North Somerset Council’s Destination Management Team have been exploring the possibility of developing a new brand for Weston which aims to establish a clear identity for the town which reflects and conveys its special qualities and can be used to link together and reinforce the range of products, experiences and attractions Weston has to offer.



6.3.4 The Area Action Plan focuses on three key areas which will collectively contribute to enhancing Weston as a tourist destination. These are Sustainable Tourism focusing on promoting the existing qualities Weston has to offer; improving the quality and quantity of year-round leisure facilities; and maintaining and enhancing the provision of tourist accommodation.

6.3.5 **Sustainable Tourism:** Weston has a major asset in its large expanse of beach which stretches from Knightstone Island to Uphill. The beach is the unique feature which gives Weston its identity and this asset should be promoted as part of Weston’s distinctiveness as a seaside resort. The

beach is excellent as an events space, and T4 pop concert on the beach is held annually on Weston beach attracting 40,000 concert goers in 2007 with an estimated £1.6 million boost to the local economy. The beach is also an excellent facility in terms of sports with wind surfing, kite surfing and volley ball and should be promoted nationally as a location for these activities. The long flat promenade is also a major attraction at Weston and a £1.2 million enhancements scheme of the promenade is underway as part of the sea defence works. This will include resurfacing the promenade, new seats and litter bins and repaired shelters.

- 6.3.6 **Leisure Facilities:** The Council realises the need to increase and diversify its tourism products and facilities, in particular providing high quality all weather attractions to reduce seasonality. Proposals for sustainable, well located, good quality, all-weather facilities will therefore be encouraged. This reflects the aims of the Blue Skies Tourism Strategy to enhance the sea front and recognise the demand for new attractions. It also accords with national guidance and advocates a plan-led sequential approach to selecting sites for entertainment, leisure and other such uses but reflects the circumstances of a seaside resort, where such uses are traditionally located close to the seafront and tourist accommodation rather than concentrating solely in the town centre. The Leisure Policy covers the Plans approach to this issue.
- 6.3.7 **Tourist Accommodation:** The steady reduction in recent years in the number of staying visitors has led to an over supply of accommodation in Weston. This has resulted in some cases in the lowering of prices and standards which has had a general effect on the appeal of the tourist accommodation on offer. Over recent years there has been a marked increase in the number of applications for change of use of serviced accommodation to permanent residential use, particularly around the seafront area. There has been some loss of prestigious hotel accommodation on the seafront and a rapid increase in the conversion of lower quality, unprofitable properties to residential bed and breakfast and then to largely unregulated single let rooms. The loss of large hotels undermines the appeal of Weston to conference organisers, while the proliferation of poorer quality accommodation often offering longer stay room lets has led to a lowering of the perception of the town as an attractive place and holiday destination.
- 6.3.8 The Replacement Local Plan operated a policy of managing the natural restructuring that is occurring in the hotel sector in a flexible way through assessing the contribution and impact each proposal would have on the range and type of tourist accommodation available and whether it would have a detrimental effect on the capacity, quality and attractiveness of tourist accommodation in Weston. The Area Action Plan will continue this approach.

6.3.9 In Weston tourist accommodation is concentrated in an area primarily adjacent to the seafront, which helps to maintain the town's position as a major resort and is an important focus of tourist and leisure activity. The area around Marine Lake is of particular concern in terms of loss of hotel accommodation as this is a prime location for tourist accommodation adjacent to the beach with sea views, and the high level of investment in the public realm in this area increases its attractiveness as part of the town for visitors to stay. This area will be of particular focus when assessing the loss of tourist accommodation and the impact this could have on the viability of the tourist industry in the town.

6.3.10 The Winter Gardens in Weston provides conference and business meeting facilities. However, there is a strong need for larger, high quality four or five-star hotels to service this market. It is important that this need is met close to the seafront and town



centre. A number of sites in Weston town centre or seafront have the potential to be developed for a high quality hotel such as Dolphin Square, Birnbeck Pier and Victoria Square. The latter is the most obvious location being situated adjacent to the Winter Gardens, and opposite the Grand Pier with its additional conference facilities which are included as part of the new Pier development.

## **Policy T1: New hotel and tourist facilities**

A site has been identified at Victoria Square, for a high quality 4★/5★ hotel to complement the conference facilities at the Winter Gardens and Grand Pier as part of a mixed use retail-led scheme. Proposals for new or extended tourist accommodation and facilities will be permitted elsewhere within the AAP boundary provided:

- i) Site selection complies with a sequential approach which firstly identifies sites within the seafront or retail core followed by locations adjoining, and failing that a location within the gateway area.

*This policy contributes toward achieving objective 2.*

**Policy T2: Proposals for change of use of hotel and tourist accommodation in the town centre.**

Within the Weston seafront and town centre, proposals that would result in the change of use of hotels, tourist accommodation and facilities will be permitted unless:

- i) the proposed use would reduce the overall capacity and attractiveness of Weston as a tourist destination and result in the loss of an otherwise viable hotel or tourist facility which would consequently harm the provision of tourist accommodation;
- ii) the proposed use or uses would be incompatible with the surrounding area and businesses and would harm the character of the town centre;
- iii) there would be no clear, additional benefits arising from the proposal in terms of improving the character of the area, the vitality and viability of the town centre and the economic, cultural and environmental impact on the town as a whole;

Applicants seeking change of use away from an existing hotel or tourist accommodation use will need to submit detailed evidence relating to the viability of the business and details of how the business has been marketed.

*This policy contributes toward achieving objective 2.*

## **6.4 Housing**

- 6.4.0 Successful regeneration of Weston town centre will be dependant on creating a vibrant lively mixed use area which is active throughout the day and into the evening. Housing will play a key role in contributing to this activity.
- 6.4.1 There is currently an imbalance in the ratio of homes to jobs in Weston which has led to low levels of self-containment in the town due to high levels of people out-commuting for work. The Council is attempting to redress this imbalance through an employment-led development strategy which involves closely linking housing development with job growth so additional housing is not provided out of step with the expansion of the economy and local employment.
- 6.4.2 However, within Weston town centre the Council recognises that residential development will be a significant driver for the regeneration of a large number of the sites, as part of mixed use schemes. Additionally, increasing the number of people living in the town centre will support services and facilities and improve its vitality and viability. The revitalisation of the town centre is a key element of the wider regeneration of Weston, and will play a crucial role in enhancing the image of the town and attracting inward investment.
- 6.4.3 Equally in order for development to be sustainable it should be on previously developed land, near services and public transport routes and should be high density to make the most efficient use of the land. Sites within the town centre meet all of these criteria and it is therefore the most appropriate location to focus housing delivery as part of mixed use developments.
- 6.4.4 Therefore, in order to promote the regeneration of town centre through mixed use development and ensure sustainable development, the council recognises that the balance of residential units to jobs cannot be determined on a site by site basis within the Area Action Plan boundary, but will be monitored for the whole of the AAP area to ensure that the imbalance of jobs to houses is not exacerbated through the towns regeneration strategy.
- 6.4.5 Figure 6 below sets out the potential number of new residential units within the town centre for each site. Figure 7 illustrates the potential number of new homes against the amount of potential new retail, leisure and employment floor space for each site.



**Figure 6: Number of proposed new residential units within Weston Town Centre Area Action Plan boundary.**

<b>Residential units per site*.</b>				
<b>Site</b>	<b>2008-2011</b>	<b>2011-2016</b>	<b>2016-2026</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Birnbeck Island and headland		188		
Victoria Square		157		
Dolphin Square		350		
NCP Car Park Site			164	
Locking Road Car Park			80	
Sunnyside Road			50	
Rugby Club			100	
Gas Works Site			500	
Avoncrest			600	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>695</b>	<b>1494</b>	<b>2189</b>

\* Detailed residential capacities for each site will be determined through a planning application process.

**Figure 7: Table of Land Uses and proposed floorspace figures.**

<b>Net Increase</b>							
<b>Site</b>	<b>Residential</b>	<b>Retail<sup>3</sup></b>		<b>Leisure<sup>4</sup></b>		<b>Employment<sup>5</sup></b>	
		<b>sqm</b>	<b>Jobs</b>	<b>sqm</b>	<b>Jobs</b>	<b>sqm</b>	<b>Jobs</b>
Birnbeck Island and headland	188	-	-	5500	289		
Grand Pier	-	232	5	1494	79	500	9
Tropicana	-	3850	77	17500	500 <sup>6</sup>		
Victoria Square	157	6800	136				
Dolphin Square	350	4000	80				
NCP Car Park Site	164	7000	140				
Tesco	-	4500	90	-	-		
Locking Road Car Park	80					16,500	311
Train Station Car Parks	-	-	-	-	-	11,500	217
Sunnyside Road	50					17,000	321
Rugby Club	100					19,000	358
Gas Works Site	500					19,000	358
Avoncrest (10ha)	600	-	-			50,000 <sup>7</sup>	1,250
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2189</b>	<b>26,382</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>24,494</b>	<b>868</b>	<b>133,500</b>	<b>2824</b>

**Jobs Total = 4220**



## Policy H1: Housing Development

Within the town centre, housing will play a crucial role in the creation of a vibrant viable town centre and will be a significant driver for the regeneration of the majority of the priority sites identified within the Area Action Plan boundary.

Residential development will therefore form an element of most mixed use schemes within the town centre and gateway area.

*This policy contributes toward achieving objective 4*

## Housing Mix

6.4.6 Creating mixed and balanced communities is one of the Government's aims for sustainable development. This means providing sufficient good quality, housing of the right types and mix, in the right places, which will be attractive to, and meet the identified needs of, different groups in society. The types of housing include both market housing and affordable housing. There will also be specialised housing to meet a variety of needs.

### Table opposite

3 Based on 50 jobs per 1000m<sup>2</sup> for town centre retailing.

4 Based on 19 jobs per 1000m<sup>2</sup> based on an average for town centre leisure and cultural uses.

5 Based on 53 jobs per 1000m<sup>2</sup> for general office development.

6 Based on the applicants assessment in information supporting the planning application for this site. Calculations used for the other sites would give an inaccurate result due to uses occupying large areas of floor space, but not requiring many staff e.g. cinema and swimming pool.

7 Based on 25 jobs per 1000m<sup>2</sup> for B2/B8 employment development.

## Weston-super-Mare **Town Centre Area Action Plan**

- 6.4.7 In the Central and South Ward areas of Weston there is a higher proportion of sub-divided properties than in the remainder of Weston or North Somerset. In Central Ward in Weston the proportion of the housing stock given over to flats is 70% compared to a Weston average of 30%.
- 6.4.8 The North Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy aims to tackle inequality and disadvantage in deprived areas with some areas in Weston in the top 10% most deprived in England. Overall North Somerset has the 11th biggest equality gap in the country and it will be one of the Core Strategy Objectives to reduce inequalities between areas.
- 6.4.9 Although the predominance of flats is not by any means the sole reason for the high levels of deprivation in these areas, it is one of the main reasons why these communities have a transient population and lack of family housing. Despite meeting a housing need, this predominance has an implication for the provision of services, community spirit and deprivation levels. Therefore, the Area Action Plan will seek to retain and where appropriate increase the level of family housing in these areas.

## **Policy H2: Housing mix**

The Council will expect the mix of housing types, tenures and sizes to reflect the needs of local residents, and to secure a mixed balanced community and will consider proposals for development in terms of the extent to which they:

- (i) Contribute to a well integrated mix of housing types and tenures to support a range of household sizes, ages and incomes to meet identified housing needs highlighted in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the Council's Housing Register;
- (ii) Reduce an existing proliferation of one housing type within certain areas through encouraging the development of a range housing types that meet an identified local housing need;
- (iii) Contribute to creating an accessible, inclusive and safe community with easy access to a range of services;
- (iv) Ensure a genuine integrated mix of affordable and market housing within new developments with 50% meeting the Lifetime Homes Standard on each development;

The affordable housing policy as set out in the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan of 30% of homes to be affordable on sites of 15 or more dwellings or 0.5 hectares or more, irrespective of the number of dwellings, will apply to town centre residential schemes.

*This policy contributes toward achieving objective 4*

## **Policy H3: Living over the shop.**

Within the town centre, planning permission will be granted for the conversion of vacant space above shops to residential uses.

*This policy contributes toward achieving objective 4.*

## 6.5 Employment

- 6.5.0 The economic regeneration of Weston is a key strategic aim of North Somerset Council and the draft Regional Spatial Strategy states that provision should be made for 34 hectares of employment land in Weston. The town centre lacks any existing good quality, modern, well located office space and there are few sites allocated for this use.
- 6.5.1 The Retail and Leisure Study (2006) identified that North Somerset is currently not recognised as an office location and, within North Somerset, Weston is not the main office location, with recent office development centred on Junction 19 (Portishead and Pill) and new build opportunities in Clevedon (Junction 20) due to their closer proximity to Bristol.
- 6.5.2 Delivery of office development has been constrained by low rental levels, lack of readily available land and lack of confidence in the local market. Low rental/freehold values have an effect on commercial viability and prevent the speculative building of commercial space, particularly if infrastructure is required to unlock development land. Furthermore, lack of suitable sites in Weston have helped locations such as Bridgwater which is not a traditional office location, experience an upturn in market activity. Any initial new build office space in Weston will essentially be “creating a market” through speculative development which, when supported with increased marketing and promotion of the area and the opportunities available, will encourage greater interest in businesses locating to the town.
- 6.5.3 A report by DTZ for the South West Regional Development Agency<sup>8</sup> identified that Weston is viewed as a suitable location for certain types of occupiers, but currently lacks any flagship developments. Under current employment land allocations, there is a large amount of employment land available in Weston and as allocated employment sites become scarcer in other locations, there is the potential for greater interest in Weston. When proposed employment development takes place, given the scale of demand for employment sites in the sub region as a



whole, it is likely that Weston could continue to attract further investment and employment growth. All of these factors provide greater opportunities to encourage inward investment into the town centre which will benefit investors and developers with increased interest and take up of employment space as it becomes available.

- 6.5.4 The lack of employment opportunities in the town has resulted in significant out-commuting, and increasing local employment opportunities will assist in minimising the number of residents who have to commute to work at destinations outside the town, increase the self containment level of Weston and result in a larger labour force which will support and sustain the services and facilities in the town centre.
- 6.5.5. The Town Centre Area Action Plan also has an important role to play in helping to deliver on a range of local employment priorities including providing a broader range of jobs, provision of training and helping to improve the range of local skills. There are areas, known as Super Output Areas, in and adjacent to the town centre that have been identified as being in the top 2% most deprived in the country (Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007). This brings a variety of social, environmental and economic issues that need to be addressed as part of the regeneration of the town, especially in terms of access to employment and training opportunities.
- 6.5.6 The town centre offers the most sustainable location for commercial office development and there is scope to provide significant new office floorspace around the railway station creating a new business quarter to the town. Allocating centrally located sites for office uses will intensify development in the gateway area creating a sense of arrival in the town centre, increase levels of activity and strengthen links with the town centre. Policy E1 aims to:
- Deliver new office development opportunities in Weston town centre with the aim of raising the profile of Weston as a regional and sub-regional office location;
  - Achieve a reduction in out-commuting to larger centres such as Bristol;
  - Incorporate office development within mixed use developments, to promote sustainability and the overall enhancement of the vitality and viability of Weston town centre;
  - Use office-led regeneration to diversify the local economy, thereby ensuring the town has less reliance on seasonal industries and tourism;
  - Encourage employment and training opportunities for local residents;
  - Support greater promotion and marketing of the area to encourage developer and business interest in Weston super Mare.

- 6.5.7 Weston Town Centre Partnership are currently looking into the feasibility of setting up a Business Improvement District in Weston Town Centre. A Business Improvement District (BID) is a funding mechanism to improve and manage a clearly defined commercial area. Improvements may include extra safety/security, cleansing and environmental measures, improved promotion of the area or improved events. In order to deliver additional improvements every non domestic ratepayer in the BID area is required to contribute an additional levy to their non domestic rates. This additional levy will provide a financial contribution towards delivering specific projects. In order to become a BID, proposals are voted on by the non domestic rate payers who will be responsible for paying the additional levy. Businesses must vote in favour of a BID in order for it to be established.

### Policy E1

Provision will be made for approximately 80,000m<sup>2</sup> of Class B1 floor space within the gateway area, as well as the provision of office space as part of mixed use developments within the retail core.

Developers and partners will work together to ensure that an optimum proportion of construction related jobs are sourced from within the local area.

Developers and partners will be required to invest in relevant training and local employment schemes to support local residents, particularly the long term unemployed and or in deprived areas with training and work experience including construction and/or allied trades.

Developers and partners will be required to invest in the promotion of the area to encourage inward investment through joint marketing of the opportunities and developments taking place.

Developers and partners will be required to invest in supporting the development and setting up of a Business Improvement District covering the town centre.

*This policy contributes toward achieving objectives 4 and 6.*

## **6.6 Urban Design, Place-making and Movement**

### **Urban Design Principles**

6.6.1 In preparing proposals for the redevelopment of sites within the town centre, developers will need to address a number of key urban design principles. The following urban design principles are based on work undertaken as part of the Weston Area Development Framework, the Weston Gateway Area Master Plan, as well as Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) Building for Life Standards.

#### **Character**

6.6.2 Weston has its own distinct identity characterised by its seafront setting and Victorian architecture. Any new development within the Area Action Plan boundary should:

- Respond to the scale and orientation of existing development and be of a confident and contemporary style.
- Within the gateway and A370 Corridor new development should face the A370/Herluin Way with the long term aim of establishing a well designed strong fronted urban boulevard. Significant brownfield sites within this area provide the opportunity for new development of a contemporary style.





## **Achieving Connections and Links**

6.6.3 The essence of a successful urban environment lies in the integration of streets, buildings, transport modes and public spaces. New development should:

- Create a coherent and connected street pattern which creates clear and legible routes between three areas of the town centre, and between identified priority sites, and other sites that come forward for redevelopment.
- Each site should be characterised by a framework of interconnected routes – pedestrian, cycle and vehicular – that provide connectivity within and between sites.
- Use landmarks, focal points, views, clear routes, lighting, public art and signage to improve legibility and navigation around the town centre and gateway.

## **Making Clear Development Blocks**

6.6.4 New development should:

- Aim to provide a continuous building line along the street as a way of developing a strong visual structure to the street frontage.
- Have active ground floor frontages facing the public realm with frequent doors and windows to give animation to streets or square.
- Development blocks should aim to create a distinct urban grain contributing to the character of the area.

## **Creating a Vibrant and High Quality Public Realm**

6.6.5 The public realm is made up of a hierarchy of different spaces and places. Within Weston the beach and seafront provide the main public space. Within the town there are also a number of parks and gardens including Town Square and the Italian Gardens on the High Street, Grove Park, Ellenborough Park and Prince Consort Gardens. Drove Road playing field also provides an important public open space within the gateway area. Development proposals should:

- Respond to existing public realm making connections to existing routes and spaces.
- Establish clear routes through public space to enable people to move directly between destinations.
- Provide natural surveillance of spaces, footpaths and roads, to increase safety and activity within the public realm.
- Ensure public spaces are uncluttered, robust and safe and should build in a degree of versatility so that they enable people to enjoy different activities in the same space and can be used for a variety of uses over time.

## Secured by Design

6.6.5 The success of the public realm is dependant on the perceived and real safety of streets and spaces. Secured by Design is a police initiative to incorporate crime prevention measures in the design of developments to assist in reducing the opportunity for crime and the fear of crime, creating a safer and more secure environment. Secured by Design principles can be found on the following website [www.securedbydesign.com/pdfs/SBD-principles.pdf](http://www.securedbydesign.com/pdfs/SBD-principles.pdf) and should be considered as part of any development proposal.

## Achieving Flexibility

6.6.6 A sustainable urban environment needs to be adaptable with buildings and spaces supporting a range of different activities and uses over time. The adaptability of individual buildings and public spaces is important to allow for physical, as well as social and cultural change.

## Pedestrian and Cycling Improvements

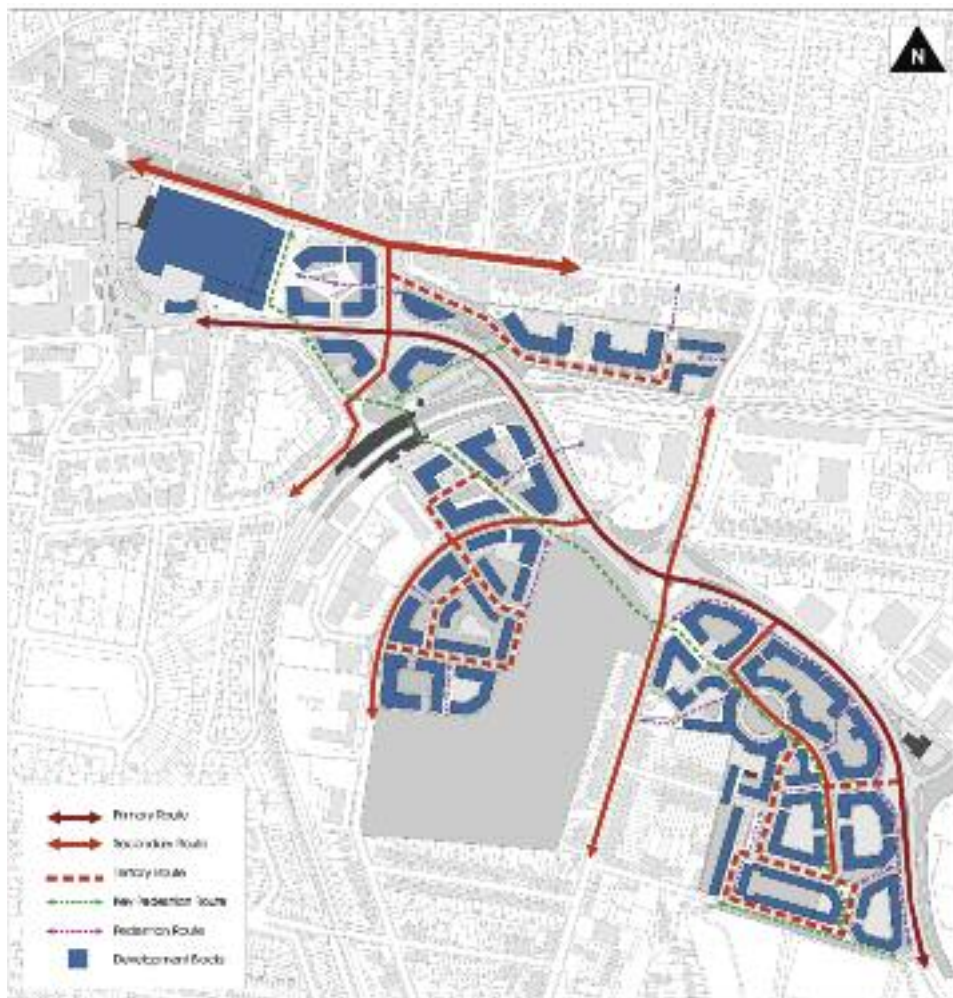
6.6.7 Weston has the benefit of being a predominantly flat town which makes it ideal for the promotion of walking and cycling. Encouraging people to walk and cycle has numerous benefits including reducing the amount of traffic in the town centre, improving air quality and in turn the pedestrian environment, and promoting healthy active lifestyles. In order to encourage walking and cycling the physical environment has to be attractive for these activities. This includes:

- creating safe and direct pedestrian routes
- clearly demarcated cycle routes
- pedestrian crossings in appropriate locations following natural desire lines.
- ensuring main pedestrian routes are overlooked with active ground floor uses.



- 6.6.8 Pedestrian and cycle links into and within the town centre will continue to be a priority and are important not only to improve accessibility but also to ensure that new development integrates well with existing areas. Many new pedestrian routes will be achieved through the design of new development, but equally the quality of the public realm must undergo further upgrading to make existing routes safe and attractive for users. The Weston Civic Pride Initiative provides a programme of projects for improvements to key pedestrian routes.
- 6.6.9 Detailed master planning work which has been undertaken for the gateway area identifies a new key pedestrian and cycle route through the priority development sites within this area which creates a new direct and safe route through the gateway area onto the retail core and seafront. This route would mean walkers and cyclists would have an alternative route to the busy car dominated A370. Any development on these sites should be designed to accommodate this key route, shown in Figure 8.

**Figure 8: Key pedestrian and cycle route within Gateway Area.**



## Green Infrastructure

- 6.6.10 Green Infrastructure consists of strategic networks of accessible, multifunctional sites such as parks, woodland, informal open spaces, nature reserves, wildlife corridors for example rivers and large hedgerows, streams and historic sites. Green infrastructure enhances biodiversity and landscape character, improves the quality of life of new and existing residents, makes a valuable contribution to climate change objectives and can encourage active and healthy lifestyles.
- 6.6.11 Within the Area Action Plan boundary there is a network of green spaces which contribute to the green infrastructure of the town. Prince Consort Gardens, Grove Park, Town Square and the Italian Gardens, Beach Lawns and Ellenborough Park, as well as Drove Road playing fields in the Gateway way area, all provide pockets of important public green space for users of the town to enjoy.
- 6.6.12 Green Infrastructure serves a number of important uses and the emphasis within this plan is on enhancing existing provision and ensuring that new development makes an appropriate contribution towards the provision of new Green Infrastructure. Additionally, public realm improvements can contribute to the Green Infrastructure through tree planting along roads and within public spaces in the town centre, and the provision of soft landscaping within new developments will also introduce the natural environment into an urban setting.



## Tall Buildings and Structures

- 6.6.13 The use of taller buildings or structures can serve a number of purposes. They provide landmarks to increase legibility; can assist in the intensification of land use activities resulting in a broader mix of uses creating a more sustainable, viable and vibrant development; and provide enclosure and identity to areas which lack character. However, tall buildings or structures can also harm the qualities that people value about a place if they are designed with a lack of appreciation or understanding of the context in which they sit.
- 6.6.14 The way that buildings address the seafront is a defining theme of the townscape of British resorts. This is no less true of Weston. However, the continuity of a relatively solid edge of mainly four storey urban buildings facing directly onto the sea has been broken in recent years – either by buildings that are too low or too high. In some cases there are glaring gap sites, for example on Beach Road between Oxford Street and Carlton Street. It is essential for the maintenance of this visual signature of Weston, and for the preservation and enhancement of the Beach Lawns conservation area, which much of the seafront lies within, that sites are redeveloped to restore this strong frontage as well as providing increase activity and footfall to the seafront area.
- 6.6.15 Within the retail core of the town, building heights are generally 4–5 storeys, with obvious landmark towers such as the town hall clock and the towers on Emmanuel Church, Victoria Methodist Church and Walliscote School. In recent years buildings which have exceeded this height, such as Weston College, Carlton Mansions and the Police Station have, due to their unimaginative designs, detracted from the Victorian townscape setting, rather than added value and interest.
- 6.6.16 Within the gateway area, current development is generally low rise, although structures such as the gas cylinders on Drove Road are significantly taller. The form of development within the gateway area and A370 corridor is generally piecemeal development which has evolved over the last twenty years. It does not reflect any important historical context and there is no existing continuity or style to development in this area. Therefore, a concentration of taller buildings maybe more appropriate to provide a focus and identity to this area, particularly to sites around the railway station and Hildesheim Bridge. The bridge measures 8 metres at its highest point and development on sites either side of the bridge should exceed this height to provide enclosure to the bridge to avoid overlooking roof tops.

## Policy TBS1: Tall Buildings and Structures Policy

Within the seafront and retail core building heights should reflect the existing context of 4-5 storeys to provide continuity and consistency and reflect the historical character of the townscape. Proposals for developments or structures which exceed this height will be considered if they:

- i. Are of an exceptional high quality design which enhances the seafront and townscape setting.
- ii. Provide a unique leisure attraction to the seafront where the feature of the attraction is related to its height.

Within the gateway area there is scope for some well designed high quality taller buildings at appropriate locations.

Proposals for tall buildings and structures within the Town Centre Area Action Plan Boundary should ensure that the following criteria are fully assessed as part of the planning application process:

- Relationship of the proposed development to context, including natural topography, scale, height, urban grain, streetscape and built form, open spaces, important views and the effect on the skyline;
- Effect on the historic context including the need to ensure that the proposal will preserve and/or enhance historic buildings, sites landscapes and skylines. Proposals must address their effect on the setting of, and views to and from historic buildings, sites and landscapes;
- The architectural quality of the building including scale, form, massing, proportion and silhouette, facing materials and relationship to other structures;
- The sustainable design and construction of the proposal;
- The effect on the local environment including microclimate, overshadowing, night-time appearance, vehicle movements and the environment and amenity of those in the vicinity of the building;
- Opportunities to offer improved accessibility, and, where appropriate, the opening up or effective enclosure, of views to improve the legibility of the wider townscape.

*This policy contributes to objective 5 and 6.*

## Related Schemes and Initiatives

### Seafront enhancements

**Figure 9: Artists impression of Promenade**



- 6.6.17 The seafront in Weston is undergoing a £30m enhancement programme. This has been generated principally by the need to upgrade the town's sea defences after a number of flooding incidents in the past. There are currently 4500 properties at risk of flooding from the sea which will soon be protected. Alongside this are further improvements to the public realm through the Civic Pride Programmes' Central Promenade project and a further £950,000 of investment via the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) Sea Change grant. Additionally there will also be improvements to public transport and cycling facilities funded by the Local Transport Plan.
- 6.6.18 The enhancements started with the repair and refurbishment of Marine Lake at the northern end of the seafront in August 2007; work in summer 2008 concentrated on the construction of a scour protection apron at the foot of the sea wall. This will not only protect the foundations of the Victorian wall but will provide a walkway and stone seating features. In late 2008 works switched to the upgrading of the road and the promenade. The promenade will be resurfaced for the whole of the 2km length, with granite paving and resin bound gravel and all the street furniture will be replaced. A secondary 'splash wall' will be installed between the kerb and the road, flood gates at signalised crossings will allow access across the road. The project team has been working with an artist, John Maine RA, who has designed a 6m high stone arch at one of the crossing locations to create a visual statement on the promenade. The road will be realigned and the landward pavement also widened and improved.

The works will continue until mid 2010 and are being carefully programmed to minimise disruption to the town.

## “Pier Square”

- 6.6.19 The proposed “Pier Square” lies at the heart of the seafront. In its current form as a traffic island alongside the entrance to the Grand Pier, it fails to contribute appropriately to the town and its activities. The concept of creating a pedestrian priority public space has been established within a number of urban design studies for the town, namely the Civic Pride Initiative, and was a key proposal within the Civic Pride bid.
- 6.6.20 The location provides the opportunity to create a distinctive space which not only links the Grand Pier, Regent Street and Big Lamp Corner, but also has a pivotal role in linking the town centre with the seafront and forming a gateway to Beach Lawns. Additionally, environmental enhancements to this key space on the seafront will encourage investment in properties fronting Beach Road, and add value to the redevelopment of Victoria Square.
- 6.6.21 Preliminary works for “Pier Square” will start in Autumn 2009, with the main works commencing in Spring 2010 to be completed at the end of that year.

**Figure 10: Indicative design for “Pier Square”**



## Weston Package Phase 1

- 6.6.22 The Joint Local Transport Plan, approved by the Council in 2006, contains the major transport scheme programme for the sub-region. Major transport schemes provide only capital and are funded by the Department for Transport. There are four schemes in the first Regional Funding Allocation that are wholly or partly in North Somerset that are programmed for implementation before 2016, one of which is the Weston Package Phase 1.



6.6.23 Weston package is a range of transport measures designed to address both existing and future transport issues as Weston develops. It comprises a package of schemes, namely:

- Selective carriageway widening and signal control at M5 Junction 21;
- The Cross Airfield Link (Winterstoke Road – A371);
- The Airfield Bridge Link (Cross Airfield Link – Winterstoke Road, crossing the main railway and via the Avoncrest site);
- The A370 Gateway (dualling Marchfields Way and associated traffic management measures on Winterstoke Road, improvements to Drove Road roundabout); and
- Worle station (new car/motorcycle/cycle parking and bus interchange on council-owned land on the south side, new bus interchange facilities on the north-side, bus priority measures on approaches to the station, better passenger facilities on the station).

Of these measures, the ones that relate specifically to the town centre are the A370 Gateway scheme and the Airfield Bridge Link.

6.6.24 The Gateway is dominated by retail and business activities and accessed by a sub-standard one-way gyratory system, with two traffic lanes in each direction. The Weston Package phase 1 scheme proposes widening Marchfields Way to allow two-way traffic, whilst the other part of the gyratory, Winterstoke Road, would be remodelled as a two-way access road with better priority for buses and cyclists. The westbound A370 approach to the Drove Road roundabout would be widened from 2 to 3 lanes to enable a bus lane.

6.6.25 The scheme would facilitate redevelopment of sites within the gateway and ensure the road network would better accommodate future development of this area. The majority of land required for the scheme is owned by the council, apart from a small area of former gas works land that could be required, as identified on the proposals map. The Weston Package proposal would facilitate access to this site and assist in its redevelopment.

6.6.26 The Airfield Bridge Link would provide a new single carriageway road between the Cross Airfield Link and Winterstoke Road, crossing the main railway line and the Avoncrest site; it would substantially improve access to the Avoncrest site from the Weston Regeneration Area to the south and east.

## 6.7 Parking

- 6.7.1 Weston town centre currently has a clear hierarchy of car parks for long and short stay use, as well as a large amount of on-street car parking. There are approximately 3059 spaces<sup>9</sup> in dedicated off-street car parks within the town centre, with an additional 330 on Marine Parade along the sea front and 1500 spaces for car parking on the beach during the peak summer months<sup>10</sup>.
- 6.7.2 The majority of the public car parks identified on the table below are well used throughout the year. The two main exceptions are Madeira car park and the NCP car park. Madeira car park is severely under used due to its relatively isolated location and because it is enclosed by mature trees and lacks natural surveillance. It is however, the cheapest car park within the town centre and seafront area being free of charge in the winter and only £3 for the whole day during the summer. The NCP car park in the town centre is also very under used, particularly for a car park located adjacent to the High Street. It is the most expensive car park within the town charging £1.70 an hour as opposed to all other town centre car parks which currently charge £1 an hour.

**Figure 11: Current car parking capacity within the town centre.**

LOCATION	Public	Disabled	Reserved	Motorcycle
NCP	399	3	0	8
Tesco	438	18	0	
Sovereign	827	43	0	9
Locking Rd*.	380	25	0	
Railway Stn.	105	4	0	
Melrose	210	9	15	
Grove Park	77	3	0	
Madeira	70	0	0	
Hampton	56	4	0	
Carlton	191	9	0	10
Somerset House	57	0	143	
Somerset House	125**	0	75**	
Somerset House Block D (fronting Beach Road)	124	0	0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3059</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>27</b>

\* Half of this site is used for coach/lorry parking.

\*\* Weekends/Bank Holidays

<sup>9</sup> North Somerset Council, Transport Policy Survey, Summer 2007

<sup>10</sup> North Somerset Council Car Parks Inventories, July 2007

6.7.3 Car parks in the town centre are essential, but surface parking is an inefficient use of prime urban land and large expanses of surface car parking result in a fragmented and unattractive public realm. For this reason a number of the sites identified for redevelopment within the Area Action Plan are surface car parks or sites which contain short stay public parking. This was raised as a concern through the Issues and Options consultation as it was felt that a considerable amount of public car parking within the town centre would be lost if these sites were to be redeveloped.



6.7.4 This car parking policy establishes a broad parking strategy for the town centre which will be flexible enough to accommodate future requirements taking account of the level of new development that could potentially be coming forward within the town centre over the next 20 years. The policy also acknowledges future changes to the wider parking strategy within Weston related to the potential provision of a Park and Ride facility in the longer term.

6.7.5 An appropriate balance needs to be struck between significantly increasing the amount of retail, leisure facilities, employment and housing within the town centre through the redevelopment of identified sites; providing the appropriate level of parking to serve all these uses; and encouraging the use of more sustainable modes of transport, such as bus, train, walking and cycling to reduce the need to use the private car.

6.7.6 It is also important to recognise that there needs to be sufficient parking within the town centre to maintain its attractiveness as a shopping and tourist destination and maintain its commercial viability. The policy proposes that retail and leisure developments within the town centre will need to provide off-street public parking spaces as part of any redevelopment proposal. This is to ensure that a sufficient amount of short stay public parking remains in the town centre to encourage and attract tourists, shoppers and visitors to Weston. It is anticipated that any net loss of parking spaces, *during* the redevelopment of sites in the town centre, will be compensated by greater use of existing facilities, such as the NCP car park.

- 6.7.7 The main long stay car park within the town centre is Locking Road car park. Half of this car park is also used for coach and lorry parking. This car park is identified for comprehensive redevelopment, with existing long-stay provision to be provided through a multi-storey public car park to be incorporated as part of any redevelopment proposal. If a Park and Ride scheme becomes a viable option before Locking Road car park comes forward for redevelopment a long stay multi-storey car park may no longer be required on this site. If proposals come forward to comprehensively redevelop Locking Road Car Park then the coach and lorry parking will need to be relocated, as discussed under Policy GW2.
- 6.7.8 The redevelopment of sites for employment or residential uses close to the train station, or at other locations which are easily accessible by public transport, should reflect this fact and a reduced level of car parking should be provided on these sites.
- 6.7.9 The council will also continue to invest in existing public car parks to ensure attractive, well used and safe facilities.

### **Park and Ride**

- 6.7.10 As part of the longer term strategy for the town a Park and Ride is being considered. A Park and Ride should be used as one tool in a package of others if it is to be effective. In particular, restricting central area long-stay parking availability and increasing long-stay parking charges will reduce the amount of traffic driving into the centre and increase the attractiveness of the park and ride service.
- 6.7.11 At the current time a Park and Ride is not an economically viable transport option for Weston. While on-street car parking in the town centre and surrounding area remains relatively unrestrained, and town centre parking charges remain low, the low number of park and ride users would require the payment of a significant subsidy to operate the bus service, on top of the operating costs for the park and ride site itself. The availability of suitable park and ride sites, and their construction costs, are also constraints on the development of Park and Ride at the current time.
- 6.7.12 It would be worthwhile revisiting the economics of Park and Ride in the event of a change of town centre parking policy, or the availability of a good site requiring little ground and construction work to be used for Park and Ride. A further option which could be considered in the future, possibly as a "stepping stone" to full Park and Ride, would be a seasonal Park and Ride site to operate in the summer peak holiday season only.

- 6.7.13 The parking strategy will be monitored during the plan period, and as development comes forward, to assess the capacity of car parking in the town centre linked to an increase in development and number of people visiting the town. The provision of a long stay multi-storey car park on Locking Road, may also need to be reassessed in line with Park and Ride proposals becoming more viable.

### **Policy CP1: Car Parking**

Developments containing retail and leisure uses within the town centre will include a net increase in the amount of short stay shoppers parking to replace existing provision and to reflect the scale of the new development. If on site provision is not possible a contribution towards the cost of providing or improving off-street public parking facilities will be required.

The redevelopment of Locking Road car park will include a well designed multi-storey public car park to provide long stay parking for the town<sup>11</sup>

At sites with good accessibility to facilities and services, and served by high quality public transport, the amount of parking provided should reflect their accessible location.

Sharing of parking spaces between uses, particularly between daytime and evening uses, will be a requirement of any mixed use development, in order to minimise provision.

To ensure the economy of the town centre is not adversely affected by redevelopment proposals the Council will require that during the development of sites, particularly within the retail core, provision for public car parking is retained either through phased development of each site or increased usage of currently underused sites.

Adequate provision should be made for secure parking for Powered Two Wheelers (PTWs) in any new development.

Cycle parking should be provided in accordance with the minimum standards set out in the NSRLP to ensure the provision of adequate secure parking, and encourage more sustainable modes of transport.

Car parks should be attractive, well used and safe facilities which meet Secured by Design standards.

*This policy contributes toward achieving objective 7.*

<sup>11</sup> This maybe reassessed when the site comes forward for redevelopment, if Park and Ride proposals become a viable option.

## 6.8 Flood Risk

- 6.8.0 Parts of the Town Centre are within Flood Zone 3 of the Environment Agency's Flood Map. Flood Zone 3 means that there is a 1 in 200 or greater annual probability of flooding from the sea. Proposed development within Flood Zone 3 is subject to onerous and potentially prohibitive development control measures.
- 6.8.1 However, the sea defences, recently enhanced at a cost of £20 million, ensure that in practice this risk is being managed. During the development of the sea defence scheme an agreement was reached between the Council and the Environment Agency that a residual flood risk map be produced, which will enable a more relaxed regime to be applied.
- 6.8.2 Specialist consultants are to be commissioned to produce this map, which will indicate the residual flooding of a 1 in 200 year event in 100 years time after allowing for completion of the sea defence scheme. Properties that fall within the residual flood risk area will continue to be subject to Flood Zone 3 development restrictions, while those outside will be subject to Flood Zone 2 development restrictions (between 1 in 200 and 1 in 1000 annual probability of flooding). These restrictions are currently set out in Annex D in PPS25: *Development and Flood Risk*.
- 6.8.3 Wyvern School site is at risk of fluvial flooding from local watercourses. This has been assessed as Flood Zone 3a in the North Somerset Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2009) and will be subject to the relevant restrictions set out in PPS25, Annex D.

### Policy FR1: Flood Risk

Within Flood Zone 3, but outside the residual flood risk area to be identified in a forthcoming study, development proposals will be assessed, in terms of tidal flood risk, as if located in Flood Zone 2.

In applying the PPS25 Sequential Test, the area of search will be:

- i) for town centre and mixed uses, the Retail Core;
- ii) for offices, the Gateway Area and the Retail Core; and
- iii) for leisure and tourist uses, the Seafront and the Retail Core.

*This policy contributes toward achieving objective 9.*

## **6.9 Conservation and the Historic Environment**

### **Historical background**

- 6.9.0 Until its development as a seaside resort in the nineteenth century Weston was a small village near the coast and the first mention of Weston is in the Bath and Wells Register for 1348. Change occurred in the nineteenth century due to a number of factors: change in land ownership, improved transport links with the first railway arriving in Weston in 1841 and increased leisure time and disposable income for the professional and middle classes. The beneficial effects of bathing and the sea air had been made fashionable by George IV when he was Prince Regent so the development of villages by the sea was inevitable. Staying by the sea became available to all. Even if a long stay could not be managed there was the possibility of the day excursion initially by boat from Wales, first to Knightstone Island and then to Birnbeck Pier, and by train from Bristol. By the end of the nineteenth century the first major expansion of Weston was complete. Some development continued during the first half of the twentieth century, but the next major expansion was after the Second World War when the development of industry and housing saw the town grow.
- 6.9.1 The growth of Weston has a strong historic identity as a Victorian seaside town. The town centre and seafront contains five conservation areas and numerous listed buildings including the Grand Pier, Birnbeck Pier, a number of buildings on Knightstone Island, Claremont Crescent and the Royal Crescent. There are four conservation areas within the Area Action Plan boundary which are:
- Birnbeck Conservation Area
  - Melrose/Grove Park Conservation Area
  - Boulevard/Montpelier Conservation Area
  - Beach Lawns Conservation Area.
- 6.9.2 Ellenborough Conservation Area is adjacent to the AAP boundary on the seafront. The Conservation Areas are shown on the proposals map.
- 6.9.3 The council is also considering designating a further Conservation Area covering Locking Road and incorporating the Town Hall, the Magistrates Court and Walliscote school. This Conservation Area would incorporate the historical approach to Weston, important civic buildings and the Victorian core of the town.
- 6.9.4 A Conservation Area Appraisal has been completed for Birnbeck Conservation Area and one is being produced for Beach Lawns Conservation Area. These will be accompanied by management plans.

## Regeneration through Conservation

- 6.9.5 English Heritage have published a number of reports about regeneration through conservation and heritage, and regeneration in coastal towns. "An Asset and a Challenge; Heritage and Regeneration in Coastal Towns in England" published in 2007 gives good practice examples of heritage-led regeneration in coastal towns around England. The report recognises the main challenges facing a lot of coastal towns however, the case studies illustrate how heritage can be a dynamic and valuable resource for regenerating historic coastal towns contributing to many different aspects of these town's identities, communities and economies.
- 6.9.6 The case studies show how historic buildings can be converted to meet contemporary needs, and how the historical environment can add value, and become a selling point for tourist and leisure uses. Historic buildings provide excellent settings for boutique hotels and upmarket restaurants and provide the quality demanded by the emerging short-break market.
- 6.9.7 The policy approach to the historic environment with Weston town centre is for new development to complement, not copy the historic environment, and wherever possible to retain, restore and enhance the existing historic environment.

### Policy CHE1: Conservation and the Historic Environment

- i. Development within or affecting a Conservation Area will need to retain and enhance the key characteristics of the Conservation Area. This does not exclude innovative or contemporary design solutions where the development is replacing existing buildings which are of little or no value to the Conservation Area.
- ii. Developers should contact the Conservation Officer at the outset to discuss any development proposals affecting the historic environment and agree an appropriate design strategy. The strategy should be set out in detail in the Design and Access statement accompanying any planning application.
- iii. Any development directly or indirectly affecting a listed building should be supported by a design rationale stating how the development maintains and/or enhances the historic integrity of the surrounding area.
- iv. Any development directly or indirectly affecting a Registered or Historic Park or Garden should be supported by a design rationale stating how the



development maintains and/or enhances the historic integrity of the surrounding area.

- v. Opportunities for sensitively incorporating heritage into new development and as part of public realm improvements should be always be explored as an alternative to demolition.

**This policy should be read in accordance with North Somerset Local Plan policies ECH/3, ECH/4, ECH/5 and ECH/6.**

*This policy contributes to objective 5.*

## **6.10 Education**

- 6.10.0 The regeneration of Weston town centre and gateway will include the continued improvement and expansion of education services and facilities.
- 6.10.1 There are three schools within the Action Area Plan boundary:
- Wyvern Community School
  - Walliscote Primary School
  - Christchurch Church of England Primary School
- 6.10.2 The schools not only provide valuable education facilities for the children within and beyond the town centre but foster community spirit with the area. Wyvern Community School in particular has excellent sport facilities that are available for the local community as well as pupils. With the town centre's population set to rise and the need to raise education standards wherever possible it is imperative that the schools and their facilities are retained and enhanced. Good quality school facilities will also help to make the town centre a more desirable and attractive place to live and work in.

### **Primary Education**

- 6.10.3 Walliscote and Christchurch schools are located within old buildings which are no longer "fit for purpose" to meet modern day educational standards. In order to improve their facilities it is proposed that Walliscote School is replaced with a new 420 place school building and Children's Centre potentially located within the redevelopment of Carlton Street Car Park and a new Christchurch primary school is built on its existing site. There has been an extensive search for alternative sites within the town centre area and this is the favoured option for both schools. Although both schools lack on site playing fields, unfortunately the built up nature of the Town Centre area does not allow for this deficiency to be rectified.
- 6.10.4 This plan puts forward the principle of providing new schools in these two locations and the design and layout details will be subject to extensive consultation with staff, residents, pupils, governors, parents and other relevant stakeholders at a later date.
- 6.10.5 Walliscote Primary School is a grade II listed building and once vacated its future use will very much depend on what use would be appropriate to retain the character and features that merit the building being listed in the first instance.



## Secondary Education

- 6.10.6 North Somerset Council has submitted a bid to the Building Schools for the Future fund to improve and remodel Wyvern Community School. The result of this bid will be known in 2009. In the long term the location of secondary schools will need to be reviewed in the light of major population growth in the remainder of the town.

## Further and Higher Education

- 6.10.7 Currently many young people leave the local area for higher education or employment opportunities. However, Weston College, which now offers degree courses and has many sites across the town including its new University Campus which opened in 2007, achieved the highest success rates in the West of England for learners over the last two years and is leading in a range of new initiatives including work based learning and higher education<sup>12</sup>.
- 6.10.8 A successful Weston College can provide the workforce with skills to support local businesses and the continued success of Weston College is critical to the future of the town. The town centre with its good public transport links is ideally located to support the future expansion of the College including facilities such as student's hall of residence.

## **Policy ED1: Education in Weston town centre.**

Education is a key element in the future economic and community development of Weston town centre. Support will be given to the modernisation of education and training facilities by:

- (i) relocating Walliscote Primary School within the redevelopment of Carlton Street Car Park ;
- (ii) the building of a new Christchurch Primary School on its existing site in Baker Street;
- (iii) encouraging the provision of further and higher education and training initiatives and facilities within the Town Centre; and
- (iv) ensuring that new developments contribute appropriately to meeting the educational needs of children, young people and adults generated by the proposal.

*This policy contributes toward achieving objective 4.*

## **6.11 Evening / Night-time Economy**

6.11.0 The evening and night-time economy is a particular area of activity in Weston town centre that presents a significant opportunity, as well as a considerable challenge. The evening economy generates jobs and has the potential to add vitality to the town. However, it can also lead to community safety problems, particularly in the case of nightclubs and large drinking establishments.

6.11.1 Weston needs to achieve a better balance in terms of the range of evening and late night activities in order to attract a wider cross section of residents and visitors to visit Weston town centre in the evening. Policy ENE1 aims to support a diversification of



uses in the town centre, particularly in terms of introducing evening leisure uses which cater for a broader section of the population. Proposals for Grand Pier to remain open into the evening and for a wheel on Beach Lawns which will operate into the evening will all contribute to providing for a broader range of evening leisure uses.

6.11.2 A new initiative called "Street Cafes" has also been launched through the council's licensing team which encourages and regulates the use of space outside cafes for tables and chairs to develop a café culture within the town centre.

### **Policy ENE: Evening/Night-time Economy**

To encourage evening/night-time economy uses that contribute to the vitality of Weston retail core and seafront and that support the creation of a safe, balanced and socially inclusive evening/night-time economy, subject to the following considerations:

- i) The proposed use should not create an unacceptable impact on neighbouring uses in terms of noise, traffic and disturbance.
- ii) New uses should support the creation of a balanced provision of evening/night-time uses which attract all residents and visitors to Weston town centre and seafront during the evening.
- iii) Encouraging cultural uses including restaurants and café bars within the Town Centre and at tourist and leisure focus locations, such as Birnbeck Pier, Knightstone Island, Grand Pier and Tropicana, as part of a balanced mix of uses at these locations.

**This policy should be read in conjunction with North Somerset Council's *Statement of Licensing Policy 2008-2011*.**

*This policy contributes toward achieving objective 8.*

## 7. Key Areas of Change

7.1.0 This chapter divides the Weston Town Centre Area Action Plan into three areas based around their differing roles and functions. The three areas are the **Gateway Area**, the **Retail Core** and the **Seafront**, as shown on the proposals map. These areas all play an important role and contribute to the function of the town centre as a whole, but they are poorly connected and are divided by barriers to pedestrian movement such as the railway line, major arterial roads and bridges and poorly designed developments. All the activities within these areas have a close relationship with each other and their roles, connections and relationships need to be strengthened to complement each other and create a well functioning, consolidated town centre to serve the whole of Weston and the surrounding district.

7.1.1 The overarching objectives for these three areas are:

### **Seafront**

- Major redevelopment sites along Weston seafront will be allocated primarily for leisure uses to reinforce Weston's role as a tourist destination.
- Key redevelopment sites along the seafront include Tropicana, Grand Pier and Birnbeck Island.
- New development will be of the highest quality design which will enhance the quality and appearance of the built environment and capitalise on the qualities of the coastal setting.
- Development proposals will strengthen pedestrian and visual links and connections between the seafront and the retail core.

### **Retail Core**

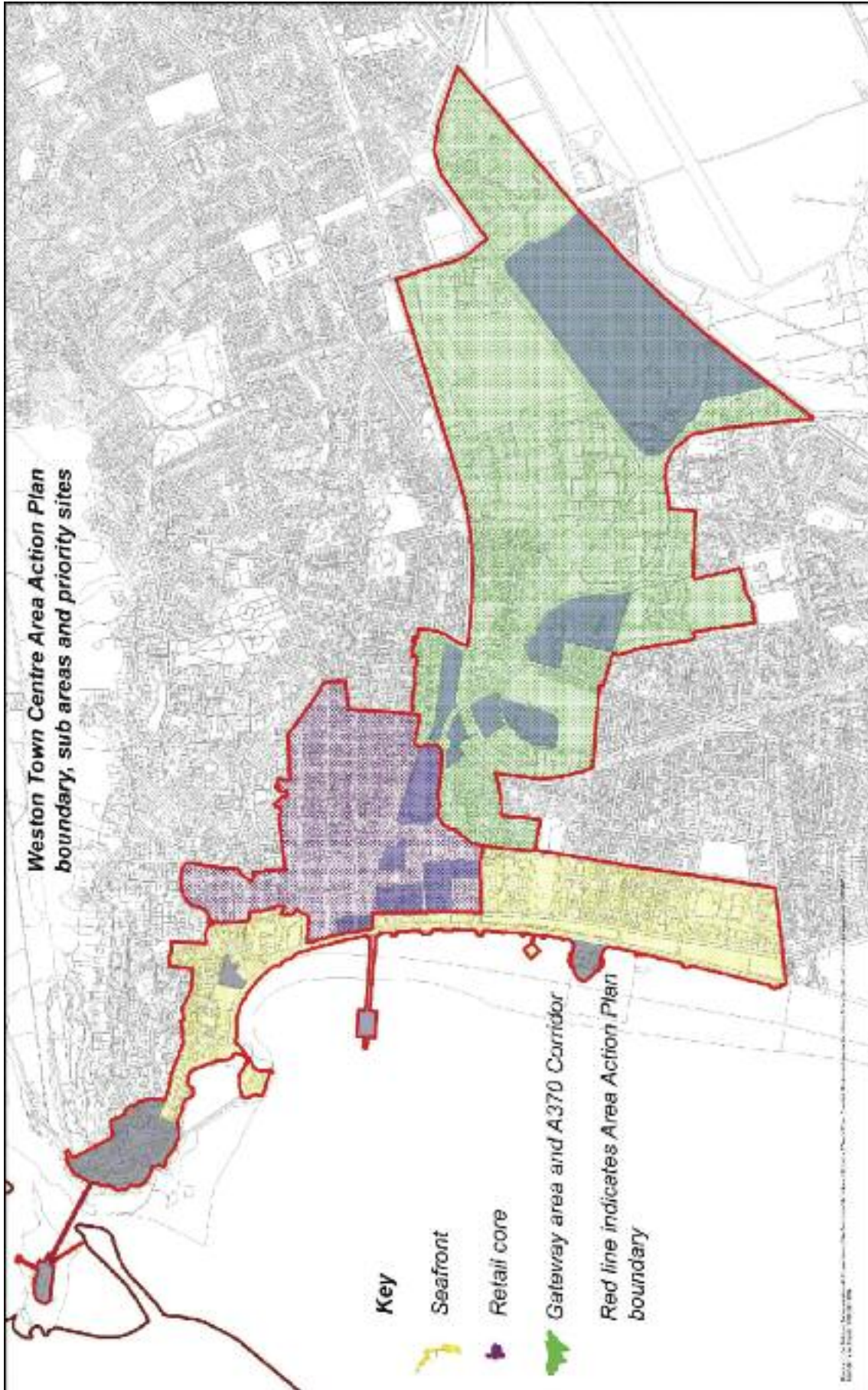
- The regeneration of Weston's town centre will be driven by the provision of land for major retail development within the retail core.
- The two main sites identified for retail-led development within the town centre are Victoria Square and Dolphin Square.
- Other uses that are appropriate and compatible with town centre activities and which will assist in the enhancement of the centre and the range of shops, services and facilities it has to offer will also be encouraged to increase the vitality and viability of the town centre.
- New development will strengthen physical and visual connections between the retail core, the seafront and gateway area.
- Development will be of the highest quality design which makes a positive and distinct contribution to the existing built environment.

## **Gateway Area and A370 Corridor**

- The redevelopment of sites within the gateway area will make more efficient use of land intensifying development in this area.
- Redevelopment proposals in the gateway area will focus on commercial office development and should not harm the viability or vitality of Weston's retail cove or seafront.
- Development will be of a high quality design that will enhance the visual image, and emphasise the importance of the gateway approach to the town centre.
- Concentrating uses around the train station will create an office quarter utilising the existing public transport facilities.
- Development will strengthen connections to the town centre through new and improved pedestrian and cycle routes.



**Figure 12: Weston Town Centre Area Action Plan site boundary, sub areas and priority sites.**



## 7.2 Seafront Area

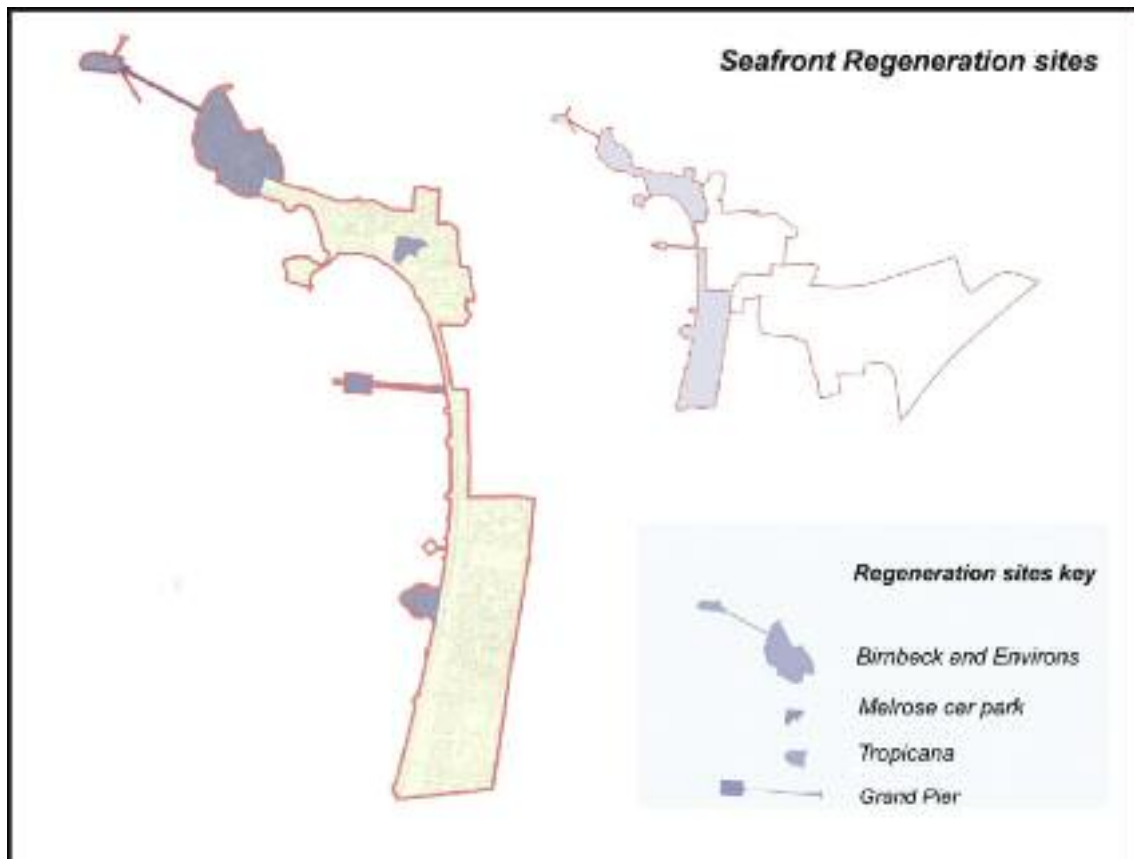
- 7.2.0 Weston's coastal setting is the town's main asset and its large expanse of beach is a locally unique feature to the town. The seafront forms a strong part of the character and identity of Weston and it is this attribute that the Area Action Plan recognises as a key element in the regeneration of the town. The seafront is a distinctive selling point in terms of attracting tourists, visitors, commercial and business investment to the town. By re-focusing attention on the seafront and the opportunities it offers in terms of leisure and recreation the image of Weston can be transformed to a vibrant seaside town for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- 7.2.1 The built frontage to the seafront currently contains a mix of building styles and heights including traditional Victorian and Edwardian architecture as well as other architectural styles which emerged through gradual redevelopment of sites along the seafront over the last fifty years. The seafront area contains a number of distinctive landmark features such as the Grand Pier, Knightstone Island, Marine Lake, Birnbeck Pier, Tropicana and the Winter Gardens Pavilion.
- 7.2.2 In July 2008 fire destroyed the Pavilion Building on the Grand Pier resulting in the loss of Weston's most iconic attraction. Since the fire the owners of the Pier have rapidly progressed a scheme for a new leisure attraction at the end of the pier with the aim of providing an improved all year round leisure facility on the seafront. The scheme received planning approval in March 2009 and is aiming to be completed for summer 2010.
- 7.2.3 Much of the seafront area is located within the Birnbeck, Melrose/Grove Park or Beach Lawns Conservation Areas and there are a number of listed buildings along the seafront including Birnbeck Pier, Claremont Crescent, buildings on Knightstone Island and the Grand Pier.
- 7.2.4 A large proportion of Weston's seafront is within a flood risk area categorised by the Environment Agency as



# Weston-super-Mare **Town Centre Area Action Plan**

Flood Risk 3. This means there is risk of tidal flooding in this area. North Somerset Council have recently embarked on a £20 million sea defence scheme from Marine Lake down to Royal Sands to protect over 4,500 properties in this high risk flood zone, and Policy FR1 within this plan sets out the approach to development in this area.

**Figure 13: Seafront Regeneration Sites.**



**Figure 14: Summary of key evidence for the seafront area**

Document	Evidence
Weston-super-Mare Visitor Survey 2007	This report presents the findings of a face to face survey of visitors to Weston conducted between July and September 2007 along the promenade/pier in the town. The key findings from the research include who was visiting Weston, where they were staying, for how long and how frequently, activities they were participating in, how visitors travelled to the town and spending patterns of visitors.
Blue Skies – A Vision for Tourism in North Somerset.	Blue Skies – A Vision for Tourism (2005) was the largest research and consultation exercise undertaken by North Somerset Council and establishes a long-term vision for the future of tourism in the district. The strategy states that “Weston will become a seaside destination renowned for its distinctiveness and quality”.
Connecting Spaces, Places and People – Weston Civic Pride Initiative.	Identifies specific public realm projects along the seafront including the completed Knightstone Island and improvements to the Promenade and Marine Lake, which are currently underway.
Seafront Enhancements Scheme	The seafront in Weston is undergoing a £30m enhancements programme. This has been generated principally by the need to upgrade the town’s sea defences after a number of flooding incidents in the past. There are currently 4500 properties at risk of flooding from the sea which will soon be protected.
CABE Sea Change Programme	North Somerset Council are working closely with CABE using their Sea Change grant to fund a range of cultural and artistic programmes to Weston-super-Mare. Sea Change aims to drive cultural and creative regeneration and economic growth in seaside resorts by funding inspiring, creative and innovative projects, bringing a sense of pride, enjoyment and celebration.

## **Policy SF1: Weston Seafront**

Within Weston Seafront, as defined on the Area Action Plan proposals map, development proposals will be required to:

- i). Deliver leisure and tourist related schemes which are appropriate to the coastal setting and the regeneration of the town as a tourist destination;
- ii) Significantly improve pedestrian linkages between the seafront and the retail core;
- iii) Make a positive and distinctive contribution to the existing built environment and coastal setting.

*This policy should also be read in accordance with Policy T2.*

## Priority Sites within the Seafront Area

### SF2: Birnbeck Island and Environs

**Site:** Located on the northern headland of Weston's seafront.

**Size:** Birnbeck pier, island and headland are approximately 2 hectares. The area around Birnbeck Pier including the surrounding sites such as Prince Consort Garden, Madeira Car Park, Royal Pier Hotel and Westcliffe College equal an area of approximately 4.6 hectares.



**Landownership:** The pier, island and headland are owned by Urban Splash. North Somerset Council own land nearby including Prince Consort Gardens and Madeira Road Car Park. There are also some key sites included within the environs of Birnbeck Pier such as the Royal Pier Hotel and Westcliffe College which are all in private ownership.

**Existing Uses:** Birnbeck Pier and Island has been closed for a number of years, although the RNLI have a fully operational station on the island. The Royal Pier Hotel is in a state of decline and no longer operates as a hotel. The former Westcliffe College is currently vacant.

#### Constraints:

- The site and its environs are within the Birnbeck Conservation Area.
- The main pier structure is grade II\* listed, the gates, turnstiles, Toll House lodge, north jetty and clock tower are all grade II listed.
- The former Westcliffe College buildings are grade II listed
- Claremont Crescent, adjacent to the Royal Pier Hotel and Captains Cabin, is grade II listed.
- Prince Consort Gardens is public open space and protected as amenity space in the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan.

## Description/Issues:

7.2.5 Birnbeck Island is located on the northern headland of Weston's seafront. The Grade II\* Listed pier was opened in 1867 and enjoyed great success as a major tourist attraction, with paddle steamers using it to ferry passengers between Weston and



Wales. It holds a unique place among British piers, being the only one in the country that links to an island. Over the last 20 years the pier has gradually fallen into disrepair and neglect. Today the site is largely derelict, although the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) has a fully operational lifeboat station on the island which has been there for over 125 years.

7.2.6 The regeneration of Birnbeck Pier and Island is key to reinvigorating this part of Weston's seafront. In its current state it is a significant eyesore, and has led to a general decline of the area. Many hotels, such as the Royal Pier Hotel and Dorville are run down or closed, and the former Westcliffe College is also vacant.

7.2.7 Birnbeck Pier, Island and Headland were acquired by Urban Splash in September 2006. In 2007 Urban Splash held an International Design Competition to secure an architect to work with them to deliver commercially viable development which realises the potential of the site and reinforces the regeneration of Weston. In March 2008 Levitate Architects were chosen as the winning architects.

7.2.8 The AAP identifies Birnbeck Island as a key development site on the proposals map, but the headland area around the pier and island is also likely to experience significant change over the plan period with a number of sites such as the Royal Pier Hotel, the Dorville Hotel and Westcliffe College likely to be redeveloped. Westcliffe College secured planning permission to convert the existing college buildings into 28 residential apartments with 29 car parking spaces in April 2008. The owners of the Royal Pier Hotel have also been in pre-application discussions with officers at North Somerset Council regarding redeveloping this site and the adjacent Captains Cabin for a new high quality hotel and apartments.

- 7.2.9 Land uses within this area are predominantly residential and hotel uses. Prince Consort Gardens lies on raised land directly behind the Pier entrance and provides a pleasant amenity space for local residents with superb views across the Severn Estuary to Brean Down and Wales.
- 7.2.10 The redevelopment of Birnbeck Pier and surrounding sites will have a significant impact on the level of activity within this area, and the increase in the level of traffic will need to be managed in a comprehensive way. Madeira Road car park is the main public car park within the area, and is currently under used. Any development which includes leisure attractions within the Birnbeck area will need to include sufficient public car parking to serve the needs of the development. Developments will also need to significantly strengthen walking, cycling and public transport links to the retail core and main seafront area including investigating the potential to extend the route of the land train to this area.
- 7.2.11 A Conservation Area Appraisal has recently been completed for Birnbeck Conservation Area and this sets the context for appropriate development in the area. Any application will need to accord with the Management Plan accompanying the Birnbeck Conservation Area Appraisal.

### **Preferred Option for Birnbeck Pier and Environs**

To comprehensively plan the area with a mix of uses including:

- Leisure and tourism related uses.
- Tourist accommodation including a high quality hotel.
- Residential uses as an element of a mixed use scheme – Approx 188 for Birnbeck Island development. Plus additional residential as part of the redevelopment of other sites such as Royal Pier Hotel.
- Cafes, restaurants and bars.
- A small element of retail which is ancillary to leisure uses maybe acceptable.
- Community Facilities

Development proposals should include:

- Proposals that create a “destination” at this part of the seafront which attract people to this part of the town;



- A comprehensive mixed used development on Birnbeck Island which brings the island back into use and is accessible for all residents and visitors of Weston to enjoy.
- An innovative and iconic building on Birnbeck Island which forms an identifiable landmark at the northern end of the seafront;
- Strong links between the Island and the Retail Core to ensure the activity created at Birnbeck Island and surrounding sites benefits the town centre and visa versa;
- Innovative car parking solutions to accommodate the increase in cars to the area. Underground car parking will be required on a number of sites;
- High quality public realm throughout the area;
- Improve pedestrian access to and along the water front, particularly in terms of disabled access from Marine Parade to Birnbeck Road and the steps by the Royal Pier Hotel;
- Protection of important views and vistas within the area, as identified in the Birnbeck Conservation Area Appraisal;
- Conservation and enhancement of key historic features within the area.

Within the Birnbeck area developer contributions will be sought specifically towards:

- Public realm improvements to Prince Consort Gardens and Melrose Car Park;
- Improvements to the promenade around Marine Lake and the steps up to the pier by the Royal Pier Hotel;
- Transport links to the town centre including a land train, and strategic and cycle-friendly transport measures;
- Provision of signage to the town centre and its attractions;
- Appropriate facilities for cyclists including secure cycle parking.

**Delivery of the preferred option** will be achieved through private sector investment. However, the Council recognises that due to the seriously poor structural condition of the pier restoration costs will be very high. In order to ensure restoration costs do not prohibit the redevelopment of the pier and island, enabling development will be necessary on landward sites on the headland. North Somerset Council own land within this headland area and are willing to explore the inclusion of its landholding, subject to detailed negotiations, to help secure a viable redevelopment scheme for the Island.

## Alternatives considered for Birnbeck Island and Environs

**Do Nothing:** Birnbeck Island has been a derelict site for a number of years. Over the past forty years it has had four different owners, but prohibitively high restoration costs have, to date, prevented any viable schemes coming forward for this site resulting in further neglect and dereliction. Redevelopment of this site is paramount to the regeneration of Weston and will create a destination at the northern end of the town. Due to the site's historic importance to Weston, its current dereliction which due to its prominent position is a significant eyesore on Weston's seafront, and difficulties in redevelopment due to its structural decay, there are no realistic alternatives other than a commercially viable comprehensive redevelopment of the site.

**Demolition:** One option would be to demolish the pier and buildings on the island. However, it is one of only four Grade II\* listed piers in the country and is the only pier in the UK which links land to an island. The pier and island are situated in the Birnbeck Conservation Area and in total comprise 6 listed buildings. The historic importance of the pier, its uniqueness and its regeneration potential all mean that demolition is not an acceptable option.

**Piecemeal approach:** To focus solely on the regeneration of Birnbeck Pier and Island, and not include the surrounding area or sites. This approach would fail to comprehensively plan for an area which is likely to experience significant change over the plan period and therefore is not an acceptable long term option.

## SF3: Melrose Car Park

**Site:** Located on Knightstone Road fronting the seafront. Access to the car park is off Knightstone Road.

**Size:** 0.8 hectares

**Landownership:** North Somerset Council

**Existing Uses:** Car Park

### Constraints:

- The site is within the Melrose/Grove Park Conservation Area
- Located within Flood Zone 3.
- Views from and to the grade II listed Royal Crescent to be protected.

### Description/Issues:

7.2.12 Melrose car park is one of three public car parks on the northern end of Weston seafront (the others being Madeira Road Car Park and Hampton Car Park). It is situated on the seafront, accessed off Knightstone Road, and is only about 300 metres from Marine Lake and Knightstone Island and therefore in a prime location for visitors to the northern end of the seafront. It is bounded by hotels and residential properties to its north, a pub to its east and an open grassed area and crazy golf green to its west, with Marine Parade to the south.

7.2.13 Melrose Car Park currently contains approximately 210 car parking spaces with 9 disabled spaces and reaches near capacity at peak season. With a number of regeneration proposals coming forward at the northern end of the seafront such as the redevelopment of Birnbeck Pier, the recently completed Knightstone Island development, enhancements to Marine Lake, and the sea defence works including enhancements to the promenade and the children's water feature due to be built on the adjacent putting green, it is anticipated that activity at this end of Weston will increase leading to a higher demand for car parking.

7.2.14 The site is located within the Melrose and Grove Park conservation area. Adjacent to the site, to the north east is the Royal Crescent, a grade II listed building of great character and historic interest within Weston. A restrictive covenant has been placed on the site restricting building of more than 6 feet in height presumably to protect views



across to Knightstone Island from the Royal Crescent and other properties within the conservation area.

## Preferred Option

To retain as a car park, but improve the layout and landscaping:

- Reconfigure car park to increase capacity through a new layout to maximise car parking spaces.
- Resurface and re-landscape the car park to provide an attractive surface car park on the seafront.

Environmental enhancement proposals should provide for:

- Re-landscaped seafront entrance to incorporate improvements to frontage wall and salt/wind resistant planting to soften and improve the impact of the car park for passers by and make entrance more welcoming.
- Incorporate soft landscaping within the car park in order to break up the existing expanse of tarmac surfacing. To be incorporated into enhanced layout to maximise capacity and improve circulation of vehicles.
- An information panel/map to improve visitor information and orientation.
- Repair of perimeter walls
- Planting of existing beds
- A long term maintenance regime in place in order to guarantee long term quality of improvements.
- Increased pedestrian accessibility into the car park.
- Improved surfacing in order to ensure there are clear and prominent pedestrian routes into/out of/through the site.
- Improved landscaping to north east corner and associated open space in order to enhance context of Grade II listed Royal Crescent.
- The enhancement of the character and setting of the grade II listed Royal Crescent and the Melrose/Grove Park Conservation Area.

**Delivery of the preferred option** will be achieved through securing developer contributions from major planning applications within the town centre.

**Fig 15: Indicative sketch showing potential environment enhancements to Melrose car park.**



## Alternatives considered for Melrose Car Park

The Council has considered a number of alternative options for Melrose Car Park.

**1. Redevelop all or part of the site.** This option was put forward through the Issues and Options consultation as a possible way to make better use of a seafront site. However, with the completion of Knightstone Island, the enhancements to Marine Lake and the future redevelopment of Birnbeck Island there is likely to be much more activity in the northern end of the seafront which will increase the need for car parking in this area. Additionally, the views across the bay from Royal Crescent and surrounding properties would need to be protected and therefore redevelopment of the site has been discounted as an option.

**2. Use part of the site as a coach park for coach tour operators.** This option was put forward in order for the day tripping coach operators to have a central location in which to park during the day. However, on balance, the need for car parking in this area of Weston outweighs the need to provide this service for coach tour operators who already have day parking at other locations within the town.

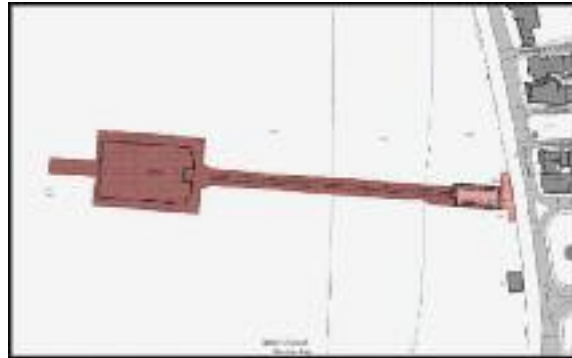
## SF4: Grand Pier

**Site:** Located on the central promenade.

**Size:** The Pier Structure measures 1 hectare

**Landownership:** Grand Pier Ltd

**Existing Uses:** Leisure attraction



### Constraints:

- Grade II listed building.
- The site is within the Beach Lawns Conservation Area.
- Severn Estuary European Marine Site.
- The site is located within Flood Zone 3.

### Description/Issues:

7.2.15 The Pier is located on the central Promenade at the end of Regent Street which leads to the High Street. The Pier forms a key focal point for the town due to its central position on the seafront and its close proximity to the retail core. The Pier is grade II listed and is located within the Beach Lawns Conservation Area. It also lies within the Severn Estuary which has the status of Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar Site) and the Pier immediately adjoins the area of the Severn Estuary designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) and candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) known as the Severn Estuary European Marine Site.

7.2.16 In July 2008 a fire completely destroyed the main pavilion building on the end of the pier resulting in the loss of the town's main leisure and tourist attraction. In October 2008 a design competition was held for the new pavilion building with architects Angus Meeks being the winning design.

7.2.17 In March 2009 a planning application was approved for the replacement of the Pavilion Building over three floors as a family entertainment centre with indoor recreational rides. Other ancillary uses include retail, restaurants and cafes, conference facilities, offices and staff accommodation. The new scheme also includes the erection of a 91m high observation viewing tower at the end of the Pier and the provision of a new central covered canopy along the pavilion waist.

The re-development of the Pier will provide a major all year round indoor leisure and tourist attraction. It is anticipated that the new Pier will be completed by summer 2010.



## **Preferred Option**

To redevelop the site to provide a year round all weather leisure facility within the town, and a major tourist attraction. Uses should include:

- Leisure and entertainment uses
- Restaurants, cafes and bars.
- A small element of retail, if ancillary to leisure uses.
- Conference facilities and ancillary office uses.

Development proposals should:

- Be of a high quality design which is appropriate in scale, massing and design at this highly prominent seafront setting within the Beach Lawns conservation area.
- Relate positively to the retail core and other regeneration schemes and initiatives along the seafront.
- Include mitigation measures to minimize the impacts of the final development to the Severn Estuary, and during the construction of the development.

**Delivery of the preferred option** will be achieved by the Council working closely with landowners/ developers. Multi-disciplinary teams will be set up within the Council to facilitate the planning application process and ensure that any development is of a high quality and secures the wider objectives of the Area Action Plan. The Council have already set up a Weston Town Centre Landowners Group and this group will be used as a vehicle for co-ordination between different landowning interests.

The council will continue to engage with major landowners and highlight the role their site can play in the regeneration of Weston Town Centre.

### **Alternatives considered for Grand Pier**

This site has been included in the Area Action Plan for completeness. It was not part of the issues and options consultation as it was a fully functioning leisure attraction at that stage. The loss of the Pavilion Building, due to a fire in July 2008, changed these circumstances and the site is now in need of redevelopment. The swift progress being made in redeveloping the Pier in terms of securing planning permission and commencement of work, means that the new Pier is likely to be completed by summer 2010.



## SF5: Tropicana

**Site:** Located on the beach at the southern end of the seafront.

**Size:** 0.9 hectares

**Landownership:** North Somerset Council



**Existing Uses:** Its previous use was as a lido, but the building has been vacant since 2000 when the lido closed.

### Constraints:

- The site is within the Beach Lawns Conservation Area.
- Severn Estuary European Marine Site.
- Seafront pavilion adjacent to the northern side of the site is grade II listed.
- The site is also located within Flood Zone Risk Category 3.

### Description/Issues:

7.2.18 The Weston open air swimming pool was originally opened in 1937 and in its hey-day could cater for 1,500 bathers. Following a number of post war extensions and alterations including the demolition of the iconic art deco diving platform in 1982, the pool was refurbished and re-branded as the Tropicana in 1983. The pool was finally closed by North Somerset Council in 2000 as a result of declining numbers and rising costs. The site adjoins the western side of Marine Parade, and is south of the Seaquarium and opposite Clevedon Road.



- 7.2.19 Since the Tropicana closed in 2000 it has degenerated into a state of disrepair resulting in a fairly significant eyesore which has blighted this part of Weston's seafront for the last nine years.
- 7.2.20 Henry Boot submitted a planning application in February 2008 for a multi-use leisure complex comprising an indoor leisure pool, a multiplex cinema, bowling, restaurants, retail units and a 96 bed hotel. The application was approved by North Somerset Council in October 2008.
- 7.2.21 Weston lacks any large scale indoor leisure attractions and the need for such a facility is highlighted in the North Somerset Retail and Leisure Study. The location of the Tropicana provides a destination attraction and the redevelopment of this site for a major leisure facility will act as a catalyst for further redevelopment projects within the town centre, and will result in a significant boost for the town as a leisure destination.
- 7.2.22 It is crucial to the successful regeneration of Weston that the redevelopment of Tropicana does not detract from the vitality and viability of the town centre, but instead creates positive spin offs which will benefit the town centre in terms of activity and visitor numbers. It is therefore paramount that links between the Tropicana, other seafront attractions and the retail core are significantly strengthened to increase the connectivity of the seafront and the retail core.

### **Preferred Option**

To redevelop the site with a mix of uses including:

- Public Swimming pool.
- Other leisure uses appropriate to its seafront location which do not prejudice the vitality and viability of the retail core.
- Restaurants, cafes and bars.
- A small element of retail if ancillary to leisure uses.
- Hotel.
- Car parking.

Development proposals should provide for:

- Strong visual, pedestrian and cycle links to the retail core area.
- High quality design which is appropriate in scale, massing and design at this highly prominent seafront setting within the Beach Lawns conservation area.
- Mitigation measures to minimize the impacts of the final development to the Severn Estuary, and during the construction of the development.

**Delivery of the preferred option** will be achieved by the Council working closely with landowners/ developers. Multi- disciplinary teams will be set up within the Council to facilitate the planning application process and ensure that any development is of a high quality and secures the wider objectives of the Area Action Plan. The Council have already set up a Weston Town Centre Landowners Group and this group will be used as a vehicle for co-ordination between different landowning interests.

The council will continue to engage with major landowners and highlight the role their site can play in the regeneration of Weston Town Centre.

As landowner the council will ensure that its land is used effectively to meet the wider Town Centre objectives and will where appropriate work closely with other landowning interests and developers

### Alternatives considered for Tropicana

Alternative options the Council has considered for Tropicana are:

1. **Reinstate to its former use as a lido.** If the use was restricted to just a swimming pool it is highly unlikely that the site would be redeveloped as it would not be commercially viable and it would remain an eyesore on Weston's seafront. By allowing other leisure uses in addition to an indoor swimming pool it enables a commercially viable scheme, whilst reinstating a swimming pool to Weston's seafront and providing an indoor all year round leisure attraction for the town.
2. **Demolish the existing building.** This option would result in the loss of a site for a leisure facility. As discussed, Weston lacks indoor all weather leisure attractions and as a seaside resort it is important to the town's tourist economy to enable attractions along the seafront near the beach and hotels, as well as in the town centre.

## **7.3 Retail Core**

7.3.0 This area covers the main retail core of the town centre as shown on the proposals map. Weston town centre is perceived to be uncompetitive with other centres in the sub-region because of access constraints and a relatively poor retail offer. The town centre is relatively small in comparison with the size of the town, and currently accommodates approximately 642 units with 318 of those units being A1 retail. Vacancy levels have traditionally been relatively low, although since the economic down turn they have risen from 10% in September 2008 to 14% in March 2009<sup>13</sup>.

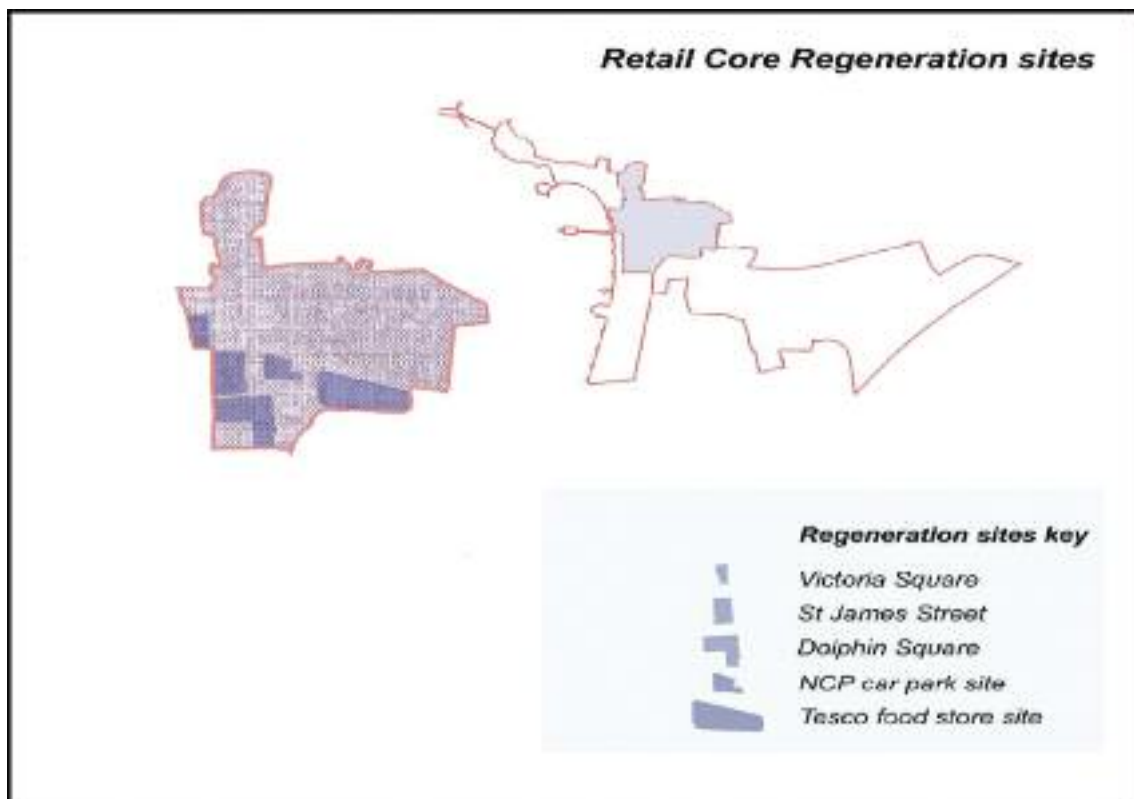


<sup>13</sup> North Somerset Local Economy Monitoring Paper April 2009

# Weston-super-Mare **Town Centre Area Action Plan**

- 7.3.1 The High Street has been wholly or partially pedestrianised and it contains a wide variety of architectural styles. Victoria Square located between the Sovereign Centre and the seafront, and Dolphin Square located at the southern end of the High Street provide the greatest opportunities to improve Weston's town centre retail offer through large-scale comprehensive redevelopment of these sites for retail-led mixed use schemes.
- 7.3.2 The Orchard Street, Meadow Street and Grove Village areas of the retail core provide smaller scale independent retail units which provide character and distinctiveness to this area, as well as an alternative retail offer to the standard High Street chain stores. This character should be preserved and encouraged through retaining small shop units and discouraging the creation of large units through the amalgamation of several smaller units.
- 7.3.3 Policy RC1 sets out the general retail policy for the town centre and outlines issues facing the town in terms of its retail offer.

**Figure 16: Retail Core Regeneration Sites.**



**Figure 17: Summary of key evidence for the Retail Core**

Document	Evidence
North Somerset's Retail and Leisure Study April 2006	Identified the need for up to 32,100m <sup>2</sup> net additional comparison and up to 2979m <sup>2</sup> net additional convenience goods retail floorspace within the town centre up to 2016
Connecting Spaces, Places and People – Weston Civic Pride Initiative.	Resulted in the public realm improvements to Big Lamp Corner including the landmark Silica building which have significantly enhanced this end of the High Street, as well as enhancements to Grove Village and Meadow Street. Further phases of the project within the town centre include improvements to Regents Street, Alexandra parade and High Street.
St James Street – Richmond Street Study Area Development Framework (December 2004).	Identified that the prominent location and current poor conditions make it vital to enhance this area for leisure and visitor activity.
Weston Area Development Framework (2005)	<p>Identifies need to increase residential population of the town centre to increase vitality and natural surveillance. Recommends bringing forward redevelopment of key sites and identifies the need to improve the quality and quantity of the retail offer in the town centre.</p> <p>Identifies the need to provide a new mixed use landmark building in the town centre, visible from the seafront, to improve legibility from the seafront and trading core.</p> <p>Recommends cultivating a quality café culture to improve the image of the town.</p>

## **Policy RC1: Regeneration of the Retail Core.**

The extent of the retail core is shown on the proposals map.

The regeneration of Weston retail core will be achieved through the allocation of land for major retail development within and adjacent to the primary shopping area. The two main sites identified for retail development are Victoria Square and Dolphin Square, as shown on the proposals map. These sites may include other uses that are appropriate and compatible with town centre activities and which will assist in the enhancement of the centre and the range of shops, services and facilities it has to offer.

Encouraging a range and mix of uses within the retail core will reinforce its role as a major commercial and tourist location and enhance the vitality and viability of the centre as a whole. Any proposal within the retail core should be retail-led, but additional appropriate uses include:

- Retail (Class A1)
- Employment (B1 office uses).
- Restaurants/cafes/bars (Class A3, A4 and A5)
- Financial and Professional Services (Class A2)
- Leisure (Class D2)
- Hotels (Class C1)
- Residential (Class C3)
- Community uses

Within the Orchard Street, Meadow Street and Grove Village areas of the retail core the amalgamation of two or more shop units will be resisted in order to retain the character of these areas defined through small independent retailers.

## Priority Sites within the Retail Core

### RC2: Victoria Square

**Site:** Bounded by St Margret's Terrace, Salisbury Terrace, Royal Parade and Regents Street.

**Size:** 0.74 hectares

**Landownership:** Approximately 17 separate landowners. The landowners are seeking to form a consortium to facilitate comprehensive redevelopment of the site.



**Existing Uses:** Retail, Bar, B&B and Hotel, Residential, and a 'Crazy Golf' Green occupies the middle of the site.

#### Constraints:

- The site lies within the Beach Lawns Conservation Area.
- Located within Flood Zone 3

#### Description/Issues:

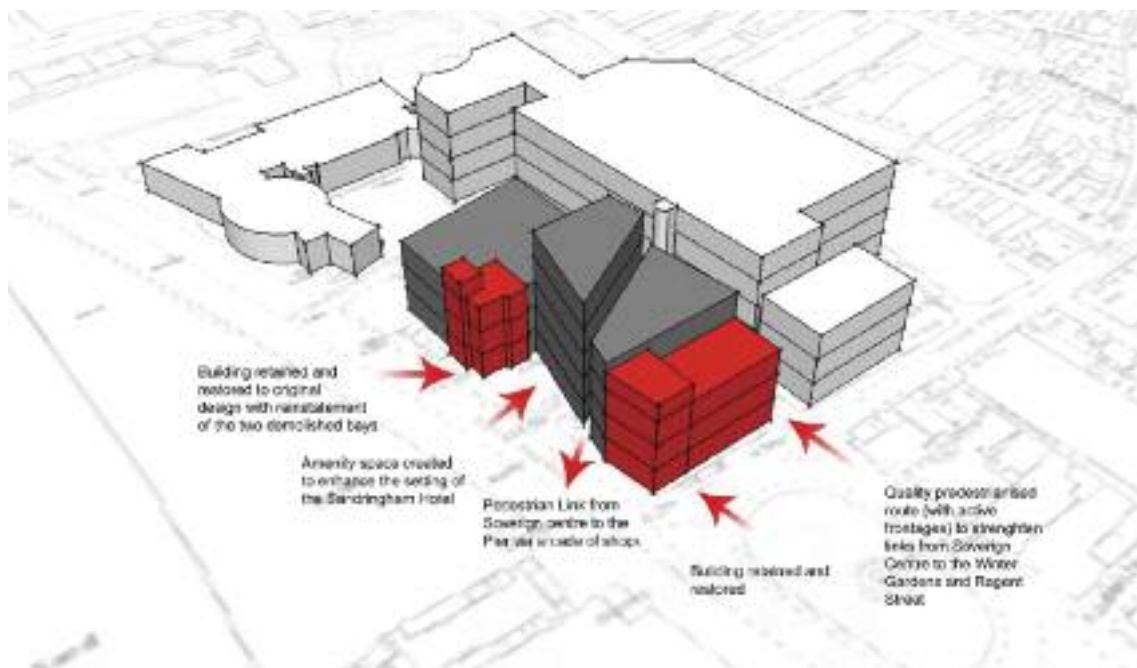
- 7.3.4 This site represents a key opportunity to expand Weston's retail offer and provide connections between the High Street and the Seafront. It occupies a prime seafront location situated next to the Grand Pier with views across the Severn Estuary, as well as being adjacent to the Sovereign Shopping Centre providing links to the town centre's retail core.
- 7.3.5 Development of the site will require collaboration with the owners of the Sovereign Shopping Centre to achieve a comprehensive development which enhances the rear of the Sovereign Shopping Centre and improves connections from the High Street through the shopping centre and onto the seafront. Active ground floor frontages should be a key feature of any development (providing shops, café's and restaurants) to create lively, active routes that draw people through the site.
- 7.3.6 The site is also located next to "Pier Square", which is identified through the Civic Pride Initiative for an environmental enhancements project incorporating an improved road layout to create a large pedestrian friendly public square on the seafront. Any development proposal on Victoria Square should enhance this setting, incorporating lively ground floor uses fronting the square, and strengthening connections to the redeveloped Grand Pier.



- 7.3.7 The development of Victoria Square, given its plot size and shape, gives the opportunity for perimeter block development, utilising all sides of the site to provide continuity and enclosure to the street and public realm. Proposals should reflect and respond to the neighbouring buildings in terms of their height, scale and massing to help new development integrate into the existing built form.
- 7.3.8 The site is located within the Beach Lawns Conservation Area. Any redevelopment proposal will preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area and features of special architectural interest of the area, as well as other elements of the townscape, including traditional buildings and public realm that make a positive contribution to the quality of the area's character and appearance.
- 7.3.9 The general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area. Two buildings within Victoria Square – The Sandringham Hotel and Beach Hotel – are "locally listed" which means they have been identified as have particular historic significance and make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. Proposals to demolish such buildings should be assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals to demolish listed buildings (as set out in paragraphs 3.16-3.19 of Planning Policy Guidance Note 15).



**Figure 18: Indicative drawing of potential future development of Victoria Square.**



## Preferred Option

To redevelop the site with a mix of uses including:

- Approximately 6,800m<sup>2</sup> of comparison retail uses.
- A high quality hotel.
- Residential uses above ground floor – approximately 157 units.
- Cafés and restaurants.
- Office uses above ground floor.
- Creation of a clear and direct pedestrian route through the site from Royal Parade to the Sovereign Shopping Centre.

Development proposals should provide for:

- A comprehensive retail-led mixed used development which makes the best use of its seafront location whilst providing vital connections to the High Street;
- High quality and innovative/imaginative design which has been informed by the local context of the site and makes a positive and distinctive contribution to the existing built environment;
- A higher density development, which makes effective use of the land;

- Retaining and restoring the Sandringham and Beach hotel buildings due to their positive contribution to the Conservation Area and seafront;
- Development of a similar height, scale and massing of surrounding buildings. Acceptable building heights will be determined by the impact of the design in the context of the location.
- Vistas aligned with key buildings to promote legible routes.
- Safe and direct pedestrian links to the Sovereign Centre, Winter Gardens, Promenade and Regent Street.
- Active ground floor frontages to enliven streets and spaces.
- A high quality public realm including an attractive, active pedestrian route through the site creating better connections between the Promenade and the High Street.
- Contemporary design and materials that will enhance the existing built environment.
- Innovative parking solutions, potentially linking with existing parking facilities with the Sovereign Shopping Centre.
- Cycle parking and storage.

**Delivery of the preferred option** Delivery of the preferred option will be achieved by the Council working closely with landowners/developers. Multi-disciplinary teams will be set up within the Council to facilitate the planning application process and ensure that any development is of a high quality and secures the wider objectives of the Area Action Plan. The Council have already set up a Weston Town Centre Landowners Group and this group will be used as a vehicle for co-ordination between different landowning interests.

The council will continue to engage with major landowners and highlight the role their site can play in the regeneration of Weston Town Centre.

### **Alternatives considered for Victoria Square**

The Council has considered a number of alternatives to redeveloping Victoria Square.

1. **Refurbish or expand the northern side of the Sovereign Centre.**  
This option would increase activity facing Town Square and provide some of the retail offer identified as necessary to sustain Weston over the next 20 years. This option was put forward as part of the Issues and Options consultation. However, it raised concerns over the loss of open space around Town Square which is valued as an important amenity space in the

town centre. Additionally, this option would not provide such strong linkages between the seafront and the High Street that would be provided through redeveloping Victoria Square with a retail-led scheme which will draw people from the seafront to the High Street and visa versa.

2. **Do Nothing.** The site's current environmental quality does not positively reflect its prime location between the seafront and the retail core of the town. It is under utilised for such a prime position and doing nothing on this site would fail to provide the much needed retail uses that Weston requires to sustain its position over the next 20 years and fail to capitalise on the opportunity to significantly enhance this part of the seafront. All the responses from the Issues and Option consultation recognised the benefits of redeveloping this site. Therefore, to do nothing would not be an acceptable option.

## RC3: Dolphin Square and Carlton Street Car Park

**Site:** Bounded by Oxford Street, Union Street, Carlton Street and Beach Road.

**Size:** 2.3 hectares

**Landownership:** Dolphin Square is owned by North Somerset Council and is on a long lease to Kilmartin Property Ltd. Carlton Street Car Park is owned by North Somerset Council. Other parts of this site are in private ownerships.



**Existing Uses:** Retail, office, restaurants, cafes, pubs, bowling alley, residential units and car parking.

### **Constraints:**

- The front of the site is within the Beach Lawns Conservation Area
- The site is within Flood Zone 3.
- Emmanuel Church and Walliscote Primary School which are adjacent to the site are grade II listed buildings.
- There is a need to retain and maintain access to the electricity sub-station that currently lies in the middle of the Dolphin Square site.

### **Description/Issues:**

- 7.3.11 The Dolphin Square site was identified in North Somerset's Replacement Local Plan as a priority location for regeneration and redevelopment in the town centre. Due to the high levels of interest in redeveloping the site a Supplementary Planning Document was produced and adopted in May 2008 to provide guidance to future developers and investors as to the appropriate uses, design and other considerations the Council would expect from any future planning application.
- 7.3.12 The site is situated at the southern end of the High Street and includes Dolphin Square with its covered market and car park, Sands nightclub, the Oxford restaurant and takeaway (no 2a-2b Oxford Street), the Chicken Inn (no 12-16 Oxford Street) and Carlton Street car park opposite including Scally's Pub and the former National Association of Local Government Officers (NALGO) building.



- 7.3.13 Dolphin Square is predominantly in Council ownership subject to a long lease interest by Kilmartin Property Ltd. Dolphin Square is a courtyard development with a five storey, four storey and two storey building constructed in the 1960's surrounding a public open square with children's play facilities. The buildings have limited architectural merit and are not considered worthy of retention. Its current use consists of approximately 3,400m<sup>2</sup> of office space, 200 car parking spaces at first floor level, 18 residential flats (subject to short term tenancies), 19 shops and cafes covering about 3,300m<sup>2</sup>, a covered market with market stalls measuring approximately 1,100m<sup>2</sup> and a ten pin bowling alley.
- 7.3.14 The Chicken Inn and the Oxford Restaurant bound the western end of Oxford Street towards the seafront and are in private ownership. The Sands nightclub fronts Royal Parade, as does a surface level car park which is jointly owned by the council and Kilmartin Property Ltd and has approximately 125 spaces. Carlton Street car park to the south of Carlton Street has 200 delineated car parking spaces at surface level and extends to 0.53 hectares in size. This car park is in council ownership as is the former NALGO building, a small, single storey building of about 108m<sup>2</sup> in size which is currently used for storage. Scally's pub on the western edge of Carlton Street car park is a well know "Biker" pub with a floorspace of about 285m<sup>2</sup> in private ownership.

- 7.3.15 The Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides detailed guidance for the future development of the site. Since the adoption of the SPD for Dolphin Square, further discussions have been had in relation to Walliscote School adjacent to the site. The school is operating at capacity and is no longer fit for purpose. The Children and Young Peoples Services department of North Somerset Council have conducted a thorough site search within the catchment to find an alternative site for the school, but are unable to find a suitable site, and costs of refurbishing the existing school are prohibitive, particularly given its listed building status. Therefore, the possibility of relocating Walliscote School on Carlton Street car park as part of the overall redevelopment of Dolphin Square is being explored. The re-use/conversion of the Walliscote School building would also need to be considered as part of the wider redevelopment of the site.

### Preferred Option

To comprehensively redevelop the site with a mix of uses including:

- In the region of 8,000m<sup>2</sup> of retail uses (net increase of 4,000m<sup>2</sup>).
- Bars/Restaurants/Cafes – these should replace the existing amount of approximately 1,000m<sup>2</sup> and make a substantial contribution towards meeting the additional need identified in the North Somerset Retail and Leisure Study (2006) of 1,500m<sup>2</sup> – 2,200m<sup>2</sup>.
- Leisure and tourist uses.
- Replace the existing office accommodation of 3,400m<sup>2</sup>. The council would also encourage additional office space as part of a vibrant, mixed use scheme.
- Residential – approx 350 units.
- Community uses including a library, children's centre, primary school, health centre, would be appropriate on this site.
- Sufficient car parking to meet the needs of the development, as well as providing the equivalent level of short stay shoppers car parking that currently exists on the site.

Development proposals should provide for:

- Active ground floor frontages throughout the day and into the evening, particularly along Oxford Street and the seafront.
- Obvious and visible nodes of activity to draw pedestrians further south along the High Street to the development.

- Safe and direct pedestrian access from the site to the High Street, St James Street and the seafront to help create a safe, pedestrian friendly environment.
- More sustainable transportation alternatives to the private car, including a comprehensive travel plan for visitors, residents and workers (incorporating a travel plan co-ordinator, transport information 'hub' and car club).
- Safety for all highway users on adjacent streets (in particular pedestrians and cyclists)
- Cycle parking and storage.
- A high quality public realm
- Contemporary design and materials should be used that will enhance the existing built environment.
- Vistas aligned with key buildings to create clear and direct routes.

**Delivery of the preferred option** will be achieved by the Council working closely with landowners/ developers. Multi- disciplinary teams will be set up within the Council to facilitate the planning application process and ensure that any development is of a high quality and secures the wider objectives of the Area Action Plan. The Council have already set up a Weston Town Centre Landowners Group and this group will be used as a vehicle for co-ordination between different landowning interests.

The council will continue to engage with major landowners and highlight the role their site can play in the regeneration of Weston Town Centre.

As landowner the council will ensure that its land is used effectively to meet the wider town centre objectives and will where appropriate work closely with other landowning interests and developers



## Alternatives considered for Dolphin Square

The Council has considered a number of alternatives to redeveloping Dolphin Square.

1. **Partial redevelopment.** Redevelop just the Dolphin Square complex which is in single ownership and would be a simpler scheme to deliver. However, this would miss the opportunity to redevelop the entire block, particularly the western part of the site fronting the seafront which is a prime development opportunity and would significantly enhance the seafront area. Partial redevelopment would not deliver a high quality comprehensive scheme which would significantly transform this end of the High Street and therefore, is not an acceptable option.
2. **Refurbishment of Dolphin Square.** This option would not address the poor physical layout of Dolphin Square, the poor use of space and again miss the opportunity to comprehensively redevelop the whole site to create a significant attraction at this end of the High Street.

## RC4: Tesco Site

**Site:** Bounded by Regent Street, Walliscote Road, Station Road, and Francis Fox Road.

**Size:** Approximately 3 hectares

**Landownership:** Tesco is the predominant landowner, but there are multiple landowners for the units fronting Walliscote Road.



**Existing Uses:** Currently occupied by Tesco Supermarket with two levels of residential accommodation above it, Tesco car park and petrol station, terraced shops with residential flats above and the Odeon cinema to the north western corner of the site.

### Constraints:

- The Odeon cinema is a grade II listed building.
- The impact on any intensification of development on the road network will be a key consideration.
- The location of the petrol station currently restricts alternative layout options on the site and presents a barrier to creating a pedestrian link through the site from the train station to the town centre.
- Existing residential properties above the store could constrain comprehensive redevelopment of the site.
- The need to retain sufficient short term car parking provision on site.

### Description/Issues:

7.3.16 The site is located to the south east of the main shopping street in and retail core and is the main food store within the town centre. The site identified for redevelopment is split into two areas – the main store which is located to the western side of the site and the car park on the eastern half of the site. The western edge of the site is enclosed by three storey terraced art deco buildings including the grade II listed Odeon cinema which fronts Walliscote Road and “The Centre”. These currently provide important screening of the main Tesco building and it’s service yard. The main Tesco building consists of three storeys with retail on the ground floor and Hildesheim Court providing 32 retirement apartments on the first and second floors. The height of the retail premises on the ground floor result in the building being the equivalent to four storeys.



- 7.3.17 The current food store provides approximately 4,500m<sup>2</sup> of net retail space with its entrance fronting the car park on its eastern side. Vehicular access to the site is via Locking Road on its northern side and vehicles exit onto Station Road on the south side. A petrol station is also located on the southern side of the site with a separate access off Station Road, but due to the one-way vehicular movement within the site the car park is not accessible from this point.
- 7.3.18 In terms of the surrounding context there is a mix of uses within the area with predominantly commercial/retail uses adjacent to the site, as well as institutional buildings such as the grade II listed Town Hall, the police station and former Magistrate Courts which is also grade II listed, and some art deco residential properties opposite the site on Station Road. The buildings surrounding the site range from 3 to 6 storeys in height.
- 7.3.19 The site is located within the retail core. However, it is an important transitional site between the gateway area and the retail core and provides a key link in connecting these areas. The food store is currently operating at capacity and the site is cramped. Its current configuration means it relates poorly to its surrounding environment and creates a visual and physical barrier between the train station/gateway area and the retail core. The outdated design of the food store coupled with the large expanse of car parking on the corner of Station Road roundabout result in an uninspiring and confusing approach to Weston town centre.
- 7.3.20 Equally there is a poor relationship between the northern elevation of the Tesco's store which forms a blank frontage onto Alexandra Parade which leads into the High Street. The lack of activity along this frontage serves to isolate the site from the retail core.

- 7.3.21 It became evident through the issues and options consultation that this site is extremely well used as a food store and retention of a food store on this site was a popular option. However, the site is operating at capacity and therefore expansion of a food store is necessary in order to retain the facility within the town centre, and to provide an improved, high quality designed store with better pedestrian connections across the site.
- 7.2.22 The North Somerset Retail and Leisure Study (2006) identifies a need for approximately 2,250m<sup>2</sup> of convenience retail within the town centre up to 2016. This could be accommodated on the site of the existing food store through redevelopment and expansion of this store, which is well located for the town centre and is easily accessible by public transport. This would also provide the opportunity for a brand new high quality designed development at this key gateway site.

### Preferred Option

- To retain a food store on this site through expansion and reconfiguration of the food store along with design and environmental enhancements to improve the appearance and connectivity of this key site.
- Increase size of the food store to include approximately 4,500m<sup>2</sup> of net additional retail floorspace, a minimum of 2250m<sup>2</sup> to be convenience retail.

Development proposals should provide for:

- High quality store design with active frontages and interesting design elements – standardized 'box store' design to be avoided;
- The main food store building to be the equivalent to three or four storeys in height;
- An obvious and direct safe public pedestrian route through the site from the Train Station to Alexandra Parade;
- The main entrance to the store fronting Alexandra Parade with an attractive and animated frontage along this elevation;
- Innovative parking scheme to be implemented which does not result in large expanses of surface level car parking;
- Strong frontage development along Francis Fox Road with a high quality designed corner development fronting Station Road roundabout. A landmark building up to six storeys in height would be appropriate on this corner;

- Comprehensive redevelopment of the site should be carried out in consultation with residents of Hildesheim Court and suitable new housing or compensation provided;
- Appropriate provision for cyclists and cycle parking.

Developer Contributions will be sought specifically towards:

- Enhancements to Alexandra Parade.
- Enhancements to the Odeon cinema and the art deco properties fronting "The Centre" including shop front improvements;
- Improvement of the pedestrian footbridge at the train station;
- Appropriate contributions towards improved pedestrian and cycle routes between the gateway area/train station and the retail core.

**Delivery of the preferred option** will be achieved by the Council working closely with landowners/ developers. Multi- disciplinary teams will be set up within the Council to facilitate the planning application process and ensure that any development is of a high quality and secures the wider objectives of the Area Action Plan. The Council have already set up a Weston Town Centre Landowners Group and this group will be used as a vehicle for co-ordination between different landowning interests.

The council will continue to engage with major landowners and highlight the role their site can play in the regeneration of Weston Town Centre.

## Alternatives considered for Tesco Site

The Council has considered a number of alternatives for the Tesco Site.

1. **Comprehensive redevelopment of the whole block including the properties within 'The Centre'.** This option was suggested through the issues and options stage of the AAP. However, the cinema on the corner of Walliscote Road and Alexandra Parade is a grade II listed building and this protection would limit comprehensive redevelopment. Equally, the retail units along Walliscote Road, although in need of upgrading do provide a strong active frontage to this block and successfully provide important screening of the Tesco's service yard. Therefore, due to conservation and multiple ownership issues comprehensive redevelopment of the site is not a realistic or deliverable option.
2. **Do Nothing.** This site is key in terms of improving connections between the town centre and the gateway and station area. To not identify this site within the AAP would miss the opportunity to improve the connections between these areas of Weston town centre and would fail to meet the objectives of the Area Action Plan.

## RC5: NCP Car Park Site

**Site:** Bounded by Regent Street and High Street

**Size:** 0.6 ha

**Landownership:** The NCP own the multi-storey car park which constitutes a large proportion of the site, the front of the site facing onto Big Lamp Corner is in multiple ownership.



**Existing Uses:** Multi-storey car park, offices, retail units, takeaway restaurant.

### Constraints:

- The site is in multiple ownership. The main landowners have not expressed an interest in redeveloping the site at the current time.

### Description/Issues:

7.3.23 The NCP car park is situated in the heart of Weston's retail core. However, poor signage, confusing access and higher than average charges mean that this car park currently operates under capacity. The building is also dated and architecturally unattractive which has a negative impact on the areas environmental quality particularly in light of the recent improvements through the Civic Pride Initiative around Big Lamp Corner. The ground floor level of the car park has retail units fronting Regents Street. The car park represents a significant under use of a prime retail site in the central retail area.

7.3.24 The retail core lacks suitable sites for large scale redevelopment to provide the amount of retail needed by the town. This site is in a prime position fronting the newly pedestrianised and enhanced Big Lamp Corner and at a key junction with the main pedestrianised section of the High Street and Regents Street which leads to the Grand Pier and the seafront. The comprehensive redevelopment of this site for a high quality retail development would contribute to the expansion of the town's retail offer and significantly enhance this part of the retail core. It would increase footfall between the pedestrianised section of the High Street and the section of the High Street leading to Oxford Street thus increase connectivity between the proposed Dolphin Square redevelopment and the Sovereign Centre. Redevelopment of this site would also provide the opportunity to improve physical and visual connections between "The Centre" and the High Street and links towards the train station.

## Preferred Option

To redevelop the site with a mix of uses including:

- Approximately 7,000m<sup>2</sup> of comparison retail uses.
- Residential uses above ground floor – approximately 164 units.
- Cafes and restaurants on the ground floor.
- Office uses above ground floor.
- Creation of distinct landmark building on the corner of High Street/Regent Street facing Big Lamp Corner.

Development proposals should provide for:

- A comprehensive retail-led mixed used development which makes the best use of its prime location within the retail core.
- Active ground floor frontages to generate further activity at Big Lamp Corner.
- High quality and innovative/imaginative design which makes a positive and distinctive contribution to the existing built environment.
- High quality public realm. Explore possibility of making this area more pedestrian friendly, by limiting car access on the High Street from Regents Street to Oxford Street to create stronger pedestrian links with Dolphin Square at the southern end of the High Street.
- Strengthening connections between the gateway area/train station and the retail core.



**Delivery of the preferred option** will be achieved by the Council working closely with landowners/ developers. Multi-disciplinary teams will be set up within the Council to facilitate the planning application process and ensure that any development is of a high quality and secures the wider objectives of the Area Action Plan. The Council have already set up a Weston Town Centre Landowners Group and this group will be used as a vehicle for co-ordination between different landowning interests.

The council will continue to engage with major landowners and highlight the role their site can play in the regeneration of Weston Town Centre.

### **Alternatives considered for NCP**

The Council has considered a number of alternatives to redeveloping the NCP Car Park:

1. **Exclude Regents House.** The issues and options stage of the AAP did not include Regents House as part of this site, but suggested its inclusion as an option. Further analysis of the site indicates that the inclusion of Regents House would make a more viable development as it would increase the floorspace of the development block, and increase the amount of retail fronting the High Street and extend the retail core along this section of the High Street.
2. **Do Nothing.** One option is not to identify this site for redevelopment through the AAP process. However, this site represents a major opportunity to improve the buildings along Regent Street surrounding Big Lamp Corner, and provide a key retail development on the corner of Regents Street and the High Street which would extend the retail offer down the southern part of the High Street linking it to the Dolphin Square development. This option would not address the negative visual effects of the NCP car park on this part of Regents Street and would fail to identify a key site for retail use within the heart of Weston town centre.



## RC6: St James Street Area

**Site:** Bounded by Regent Street, Oxford Street, St James Street and Royal Parade.

**Size:** 2.2 hectares

**Landownership:** Multiple landownership.

**Existing Uses:** Mixed use area including retail, cafes and restaurants, leisure uses, business uses and residential uses.



### Constraints:

- The front of the site from Gloucester Street/York Street to Beach Road is within the Beach Lawns Conservation area
- The site is within Flood Zone 3.

### Description/Issues:

- 7.3.25 This is a prominent area between the seafront and the High Street with a burgeoning café and restaurant culture developing along St James Street itself. The area is characterised by a variety of building styles and sizes and a number of the units are vacant.
- 7.3.26 The area's prominent location coupled with its poor condition makes it vital that the area is enhanced and developed as a focus for leisure and visitor activity. The value placed on much of the surrounding townscape offers the opportunity to secure significant regeneration through improvement and in some cases new development.
- 7.3.27 The origins of this area date back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century starting with the construction of grand houses on Beach Road followed by the development of smaller cottages and businesses. Up until the 1950's St James Street and the rest of the area was a thriving commercial quarter with a mix of retail and business uses as well as cafes and restaurants which created activity within this seafront block.
- 7.3.28 Post war reconstruction resulted in dramatic changes in the south of Regent Street with large-scale demolition making way for new development. Decline in tourism had a considerable effect on this area, and whilst some major buildings survived, others have lost much of their original presence, through poor alterations and lack of effective

## Weston-super-Mare Town Centre Area Action Plan

maintenance. Modern extensions and intrusive signage were added to the area at a time when appreciation for buildings with historic value was less apparent. Modern infill development and replacements have done little to contribute to the appearance of the townscape within this area.

- 7.3.29 In terms of the wider area, this area makes up an important part of the jigsaw. "Pier Square" has been identified through the Civic Pride Initiative for public realm improvements and an improved road network to create a large pedestrianised public square on the seafront. These enhancements will provide the opportunity for the renovation and refurbishment of buildings fronting Beach Road to create a fantastic setting to enclose "Pier Square". Wider pavements and reduced traffic will provide an ideal opportunity to expand the café and restaurant offer maximising the seafront setting.
- 7.3.30 Additionally, the redevelopment of the Dolphin Square site which is adjacent to the area would provide the opportunity of increasing connections between Regents Street and Oxford Street along St James Street.
- 7.3.31 Linkages between the High Street and St James Street are poor, and the only direct pedestrian link is through an unattractive covered walkway under TJ Hughes department store.
- 7.3.32 However, there is an opportunity to create a vibrant quarter based around its expanding café and restaurant culture, as well as encouraging a mix of other activities appropriate to the seafront/retail core location. The main elements to enhancing this area are:



- **Making it easily accessible** through traffic management and reducing the number of parked cars, making it more accessible for pedestrians. Additionally explore the opportunity of pedestrianising St James Street, or widening the pavements to encourage outside seating, thus increasing activity.
- **Varied mix and attractive uses.** The attractiveness of the area will be determined by the mix and vitality of uses contained within it. The inclusion of pavement cafes, a continued and improved mix of restaurants, bars and specialist shops, as well as office/business uses will create a distinct identity to complement the High Street, Regent Street and Beach Road. A number of key sites on St James Street, Regents Street are vacant or have an inactive frontages at street level. Landowners and developers will be encouraged to invest in these properties and intensify activity in the area.
- **Well defined and good quality public realm.** In order to achieve its full potential as a destination the area between St James Street and Beach Road will need to provide a high quality environment. Improvements to the public realm will be promoted through high standards of design, better surface treatments, improved lighting and street furniture and well designed and maintained building facades. This will provide a significant boost to pride and confidence in people to use and invest in the area. Proposed improvements to “Pier Square” will play a crucial role in this aspect of enhancing the area.
- **Increased sense of safety.** Regent Street and Beach Road house the majority of the late nightclubs and bars in Weston, which sometimes results in late night antisocial behaviour. In order to increase the feeling of safety and encourage families and broader mix of people to spend time in the area through the day and into the evening, a varied and balanced mix of activities will be encouraged.

## Preferred Option

- Encourage the developing café and restaurant culture along St James Street.
- Encourage refurbishment of properties fronting Beach Road in line with proposals to enhance “Pier Square”.
- The potential to refurbish or redevelop certain blocks within this area, particularly sites fronting Richmond Street, St James Street and Beach Road with high quality mixed use development, in accordance with conservation policies.

Development proposals within this area should:

- Strengthen pedestrian links between the High Street and the seafront, and Regents Street and Oxford Street through this area;

- Provide high quality public realm improvements, in accordance with the strategies established through the Civic Pride initiative;
- Include active ground floor frontages to enliven public streets and spaces, particularly along the Beach Road frontage in order to provide activity and focus for the new “Pier Square” proposals;
- Be of a high quality design which preserves and enhances the character of the area and enhances the appearance of the seafront and Beach Lawns Conservation Area;
- Reduce on-street parking to provide a more pedestrian-friendly environment;
- Building heights, particularly along Beach Road should respect the context of existing buildings along the seafront and provide a strong frontage to “Pier Square”.

**Delivery of the preferred option** will be achieved by the Council working closely with landowners/ developers. Multi-disciplinary teams will be set up within the Council to facilitate the planning application process and ensure that any development is of a high quality and secures the wider objectives of the Area Action Plan. The Council have already set up a Weston Town Centre Landowners Group and this group will be used as a vehicle for co-ordination between different landowning interests.

The council will continue to engage with major landowners and highlight the role their site can play in the regeneration of Weston Town Centre.

### **Alternatives considered for St James Street area:**

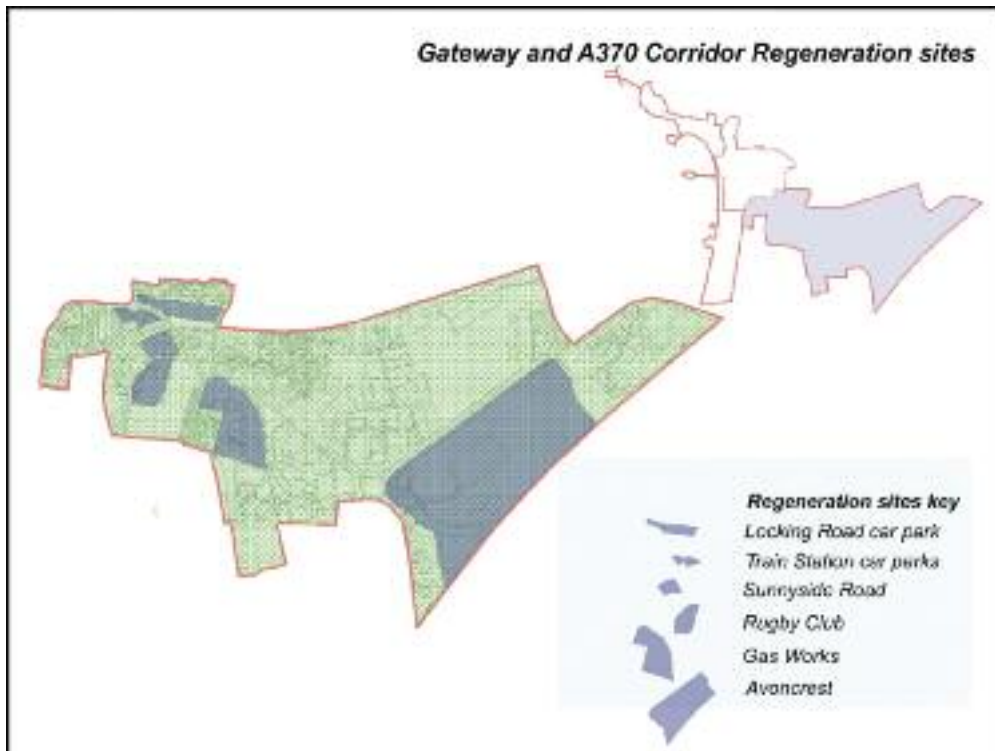
The Council has considered the following alternative option for the St James Street area.

**Identify the whole area for comprehensive redevelopment.** One option would be to identify the whole area for comprehensive redevelopment. However, half of the site is within the Beach Lawns Conservation Area, and although a number of properties within the area are poorly maintained or have had inappropriate alterations, the area still retains much of its original character and charm, with narrow streets and sea views. Whole scale demolition of this area would mean the loss of an area which provides an important link to Weston’s history and has the potential to become a thriving and vibrant restaurant quarter. Additionally, multiple landownership issues would complicate comprehensive delivery this area. Therefore, comprehensive redevelopment is not an option.

## **7.4 Gateway Area and A370 Corridor**

7.4.0 The gateway area and A370 corridor, as shown on the proposals map, is the first impression people get of Weston town centre as they approach from the A370. The area along the approach to the town centre does not provide a high quality or welcoming image for visitors to the town. There is a need for a strong distinctive visual image that provides visitors with a sense of arrival and any development that takes place within this area should reflect that. The area currently consists of fragmented retail parks on the outskirts which are car dominated and intersected by a busy road network, a number of large surface car parks, particularly around the railway station and large vacant or underused sites at prominent locations along the main route into the town. Due to the particularly fragmented and disparate nature of this area detailed master planning work has been undertaken for six key development sites which are clustered together around or within close proximity to the railway station. The master plan aims to provide a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to the development of sites within this area, and to demonstrate how better links between the gateway area and retail core can be achieved.

**Figure 19: Gateway and A370 Corridor Regeneration Sites.**



- 7.4.1 The focus in this area will be for employment-led development, due to the close proximity of the majority of key development sites to the train station, the relatively unconstrained nature of a number of the sites which are currently undeveloped and in single ownerships, and the identified need to deliver new office development within the town centre.

**Figure 20: Summary of key evidence for the Gateway Area**

Document	Evidence
North Somerset's Retail and Leisure Study April 2006	Identifies the need to use office led regeneration to diversify the local economy; deliver new office development opportunities within town centre locations and incorporate office development within mixed use developments to promote the sustainability of the town.
Connecting Spaces, Places and People – Weston Civic Pride Initiative.	Identifies public realm projects within Weston Gateway, particularly at the two roundabouts either side of Hildesheim bridge.
Weston Gateway Master Plan January 2009	A detailed master plan for six sites around the train station which are under used or have little or no role in creating a distinctive character to the this part of the Weston town centre. The master plan provides design codes, indicative block layouts for the sites, appropriate building heights illustrates key pedestrian routes and identified the amount and type of development which is appropriate for each site.
Weston Package Transport Bid	Weston Package Phase comprises a package of schemes designed to address both existing and future transport issues as Weston develops.

## **Policy GW1: Gateway Area and A370 Corridor**

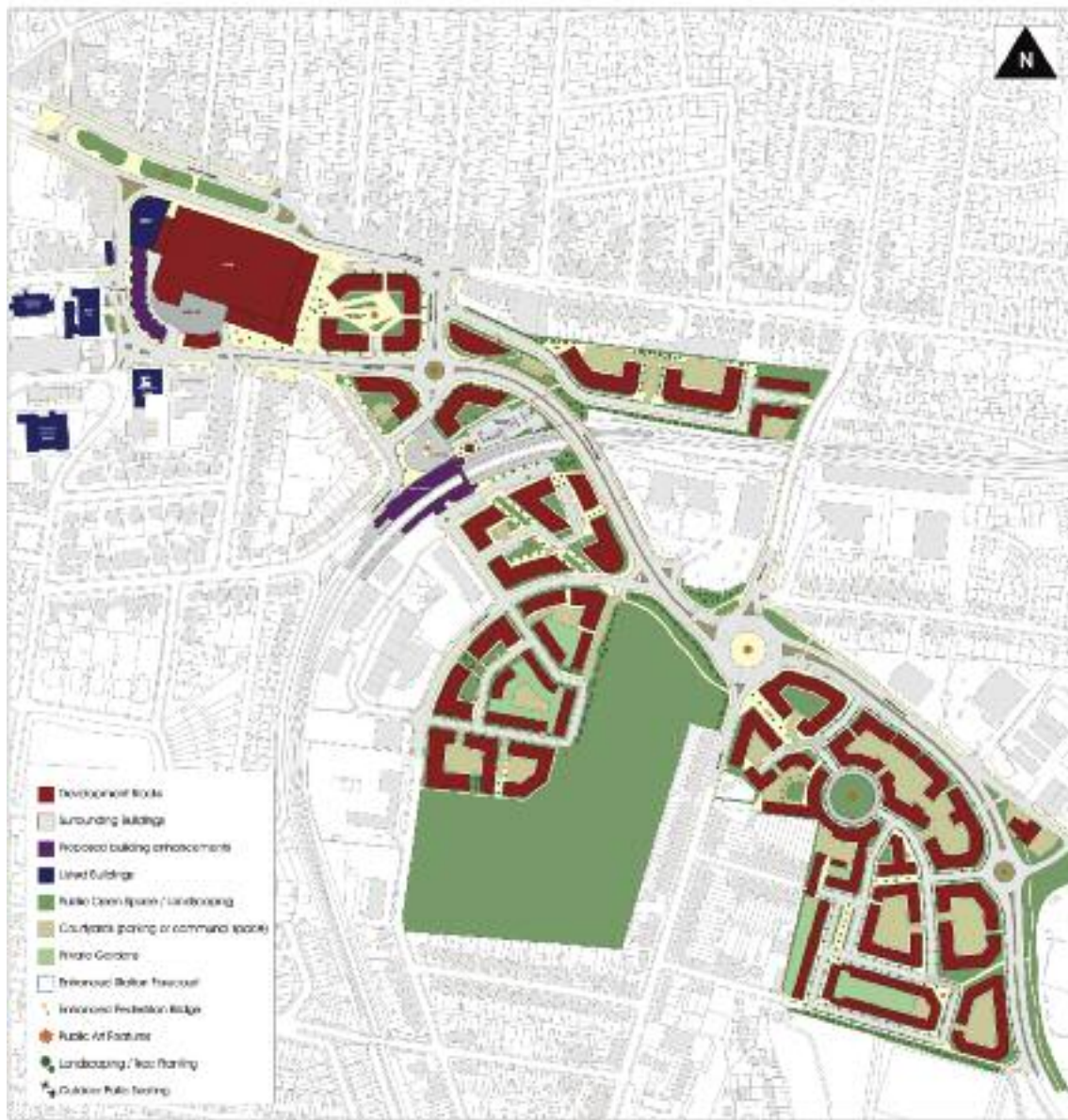
Within the Gateway Area, as defined on the proposals map, development proposals should:

- i) be office-led mixed use development, particularly concentrated on the sites around the station area;
- ii) contribute to the comprehensive and co-ordinated regeneration of sites within the area strengthening its role as an office quarter within the town centre;
- iii) not harm the viability and vitality of the seafront and retail core;
- iv) be of a high quality design that will create a strong sense of arrival and significant gateway into the town centre;
- v) create a legible, coherent, and distinctive progression along the main road corridor into the town;
- vi) improve links between the gateway area and retail core and seafront areas of the town centre;
- vii) improve pedestrian links over the railway line to help facilitate the expansion of the town centre and the regeneration of adjacent vacant sites.

## **Weston Gateway Area Master Plan**

- 7.4.2 In September 2008 North Somerset Council commissioned urban design consultants to carry out some detailed master planning work for the gateway area of the town. The master plan focused on the six sites around the train station, as well as the Tesco's site, which was identified as a key transitional site between the gateway area and the retail core.
- 7.4.3 The gateway area was specifically identified for more detailed master planning as it consisted of a series of sites which are under used or have little or no role in creating a distinctive character to this part of Weston town centre. All of these sites have the potential to collectively provide a commercial office core for the town giving a distinct identity to this area and providing a sense of arrival for visitors to the town.

**Figure 21: Indicative Master Plan Overview. (Not to scale).**



7.4.4 One of the key issues with this area is the lack of connectivity between the sites and to the retail core. The busy A370 dominates the area making it inhospitable for pedestrians, and other physical barriers such as the railway line and Hildesheim Bridge restrict movement between the sites.

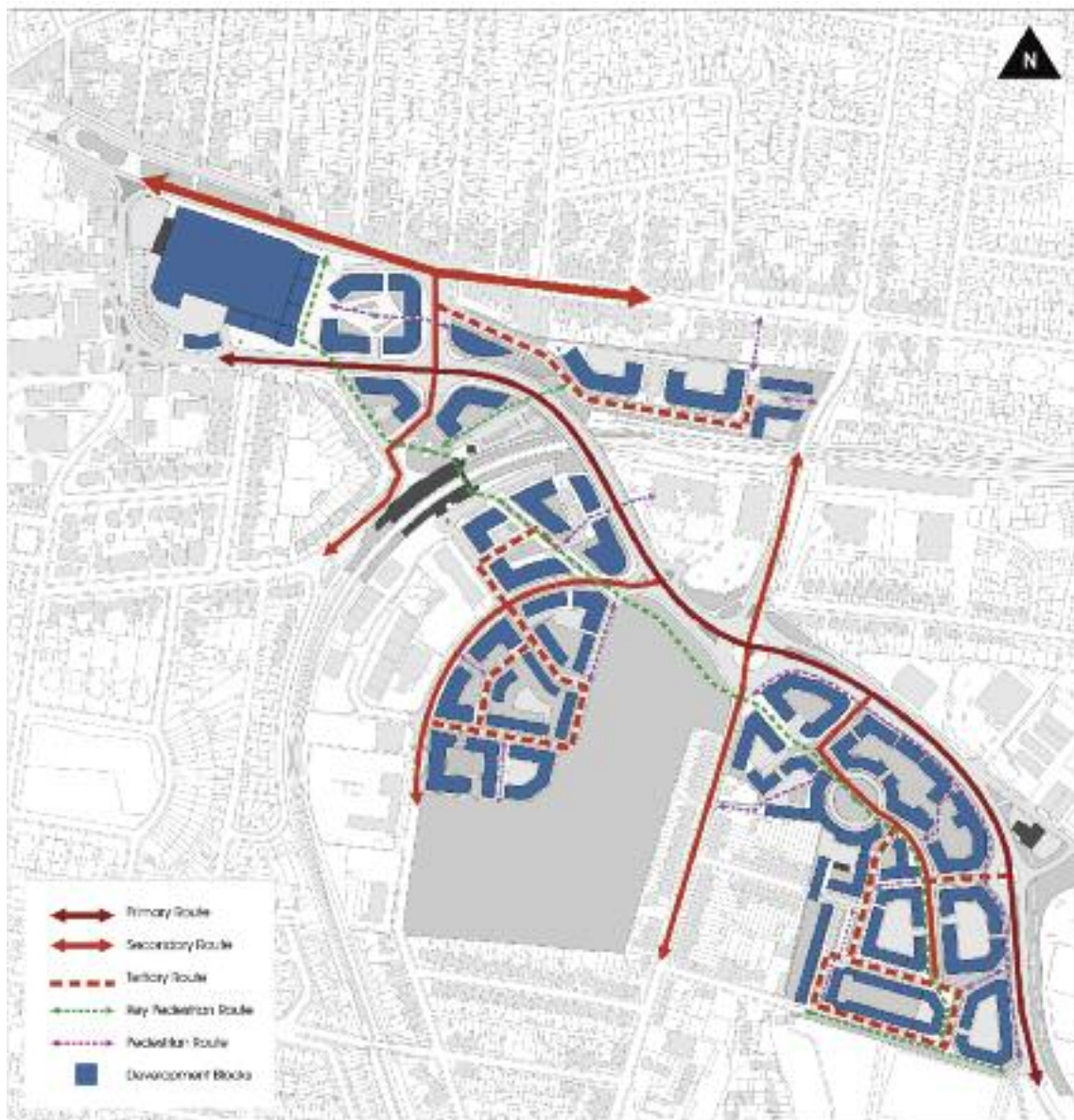
7.4.5 The master plan work has provided indicative block layouts for each of the sites indicating the level of development that would be appropriate for each site, and providing a breakdown for the mix of uses for each site. This information has been used to inform the preferred options put forward. The master plan has also identified key pedestrian routes and linkages between sites including a main direct route which links through



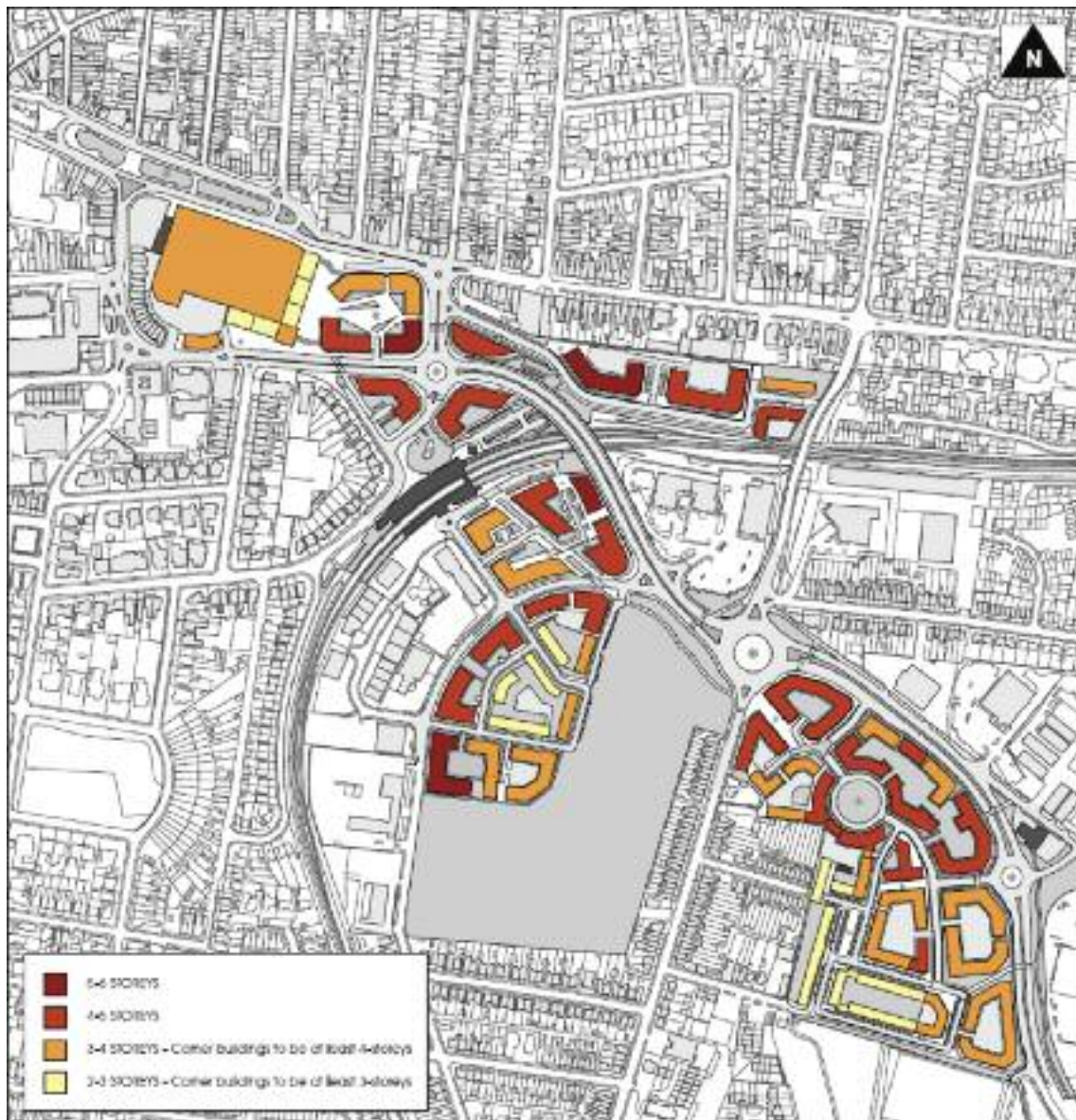
all the sites and on to the retail core. This route is a key element in delivering connectivity in the gateway area and should be incorporated into the development of these sites. This key route is shown on the Movement Strategy Plan (Figure 22), as well as on the main master plan. The master plan also provides information on appropriate building heights (Figure 23) for this area identifying where taller buildings may be acceptable.

7.4.6 The master planning work has informed the preferred options for each site in the gateway area, and the full document can be viewed on the council website as a background document.

**Figure 22: Weston Gateway Area Movement Strategy.**



**Figure 23: Weston Gateway Area Proposed Building Heights.**



## Priority Sites within the Gateway Area

### GW2: Locking Road Car Park

**Site:** Bounded by Francis Fox Road, Hildesheim Bridge, the railway line, Drove Road and residential development along Locking Road.

**Size:** 1.9 hectares

**Landownership:** North Somerset Council

**Existing Uses:** Car park, coach station and over night lorry park.

#### Constraints:

- The sites position adjacent to the railway line and Hildesheim Bridge
- Coach and Lorry Parking

#### Description/Issues:

7.4.7 This is one of the larger public car parks within the town with approximately 380 spaces (excluding coach and lorry parking). The site is flat with surrounding roads and features creating elevated edges to the site. It is bound to the north by a mixture of residential and commercial properties.

7.4.8 The railway creates a significant barrier within the gateway area for both pedestrians and vehicles and bounds the site on its southern side. Hildesheim bridge is the main vehicular and pedestrian route over the railway line connecting the gateway area with the town centre. This bridge forms part of the sites southern boundary and at its highest point is approximately 8m in height. There is a pedestrian link under the bridge which provides access to the railway station and beyond into the town centre. A second bridge delineates the eastern edge of the site which links Drove Road with Locking Road. Here the ground rises up to the road with levels increasing north to south along this eastern edge.

7.4.9 The west is the main entry point into the site. This area of the site is relatively open and includes a bus and coach stop as well as public toilets. There is a pedestrian crossing at this end of the site across Francis Fox Road providing a link from the site to Tesco and beyond to the retail core and seafront.



## Weston-super-Mare Town Centre Area Action Plan

7.4.10 The main issues with this site are its current use as an overnight coach and lorry park. The site is well located for town centre services and facilities, which make it a popular overnight resting point for long distance lorry drivers. Equally it is in a central location for Bakers Dolphin coaches to park at night-time. The site is also used as the base for Carnival floats for two nights in November for the Somerset Carnival.



- 7.4.11 However, this site is an unsightly surface level car park in a highly visible position on the approach to the town and the tarmac surface is cracked and crumbling due to continual use by heavy articulated lorries. It is a large and important site within the Gateway area and its redevelopment could transform the approach to the town. On balance it is considered that the coach, lorry and carnival parking should be re-located to alternative sites, to enable the comprehensive redevelopment of this site. An alternative site has not yet been identified, but various options are being investigated.
- 7.4.12 The sites other main use as a long stay car park will also need to be considered as part of the redevelopment of the site. Locking Road provides a significant amount of long-stay car parking for the town, and the loss of this car parking could have detrimental effects on the vitality and viability of the town centre. It is proposed that a public multi-storey car park should be provided as part of the comprehensive redevelopment of the site. Any multi-storey car park on this site should be well designed, integrated into the overall development of the site and "wrapped" with development to create active and attractive frontages to the rest of the site.
- 7.4.13 The provision of long stay car parking for the town centre is linked to the viability of a Park and Ride for Weston. The provision of a long-stay multi-storey car park on Locking Road may need to be reassessed if Park and Ride proposals become more viable or have been provided, as discussed in Policy CP1.

## Preferred Option

To comprehensively redevelop the site with a mix of uses including:

- Approximately 16,500m<sup>2</sup> of office uses.
- Residential uses as an element of the mixed use scheme – approximately 80 units.
- A well designed public multi-storey car park, “wrapped” with development, to provide long stay car parking for the town.

Development proposals should provide for:

- An employment-led mixed used development which enhances this gateway site and strengthens links into the town centre;
- Prominent high quality designed buildings along the Francis Fox Road and Hildesheim Bridge frontages which step up in height in accordance with the height of the bridge;
- Enclosure to the bridge to achieve a higher density urban feel to the gateway area;
- Relocation of the coach and lorry parking to a large easily accessible, safe and secure site with equivalent facilities;
- Improved pedestrian routes through the site to the train station and the retail core;
- Pedestrian and cycle access from Drove Road bridge onto the site with clear route through to the train station/Francis Fox Road.

Developer Contributions will be sought specifically towards:

- Public realm improvements to Hildesheim Bridge and the pedestrian route under the bridge to the train station.
- Improvements to the pedestrian footbridge at the train station.
- Improved cycle routes into the town centre and out of town towards Weston Airfield.

**Delivery of the preferred option** will be achieved by the Council working closely with landowners/ developers. Multi- disciplinary teams will be set up within the Council to facilitate the planning application process and ensure that any development is of a high quality and secures the wider objectives of the Area Action Plan. The Council have already set up a Weston Town Centre Landowners Group and this group will be used as a vehicle for co-ordination between different landowning interests.

The council will continue to engage with major landowners and highlight the role their site can play in the regeneration of Weston Town Centre.

As landowner the council will ensure that its land is used effectively to meet the wider Town Centre objectives and will where appropriate work closely with other landowning interests and developers.

### **Alternatives considered for Locking Road Car Park:**

The Council has considered a number of alternatives for Locking Road Car Park.

1. **Remain as a car park.** This option would not make the best use of this site which is a key site in the gateway area. It is currently a poorly maintained surface level car park, which does not provide an attractive approach to the town. To leave it as a car park would miss the opportunity to provide land for employment opportunities, increase the level of uses and activity in the area and enhance a key gateway site.
2. **Keep the coach and lorry parking on this site.** This option would involve redeveloping the western side of the site to provide a prominent corner development and designate the eastern part of the site as a coach and lorry park to retain a centrally located site for these uses. However, this option rules out comprehensive redevelopment of the site, limits opportunities for a larger scale development, and raises issues of access and safety.

## **GW3: Train Station Car Parks.**

**Site:** Bounded by the A370/Station Road to the north, Hildesheim Bridge to the east, the railway line to the south and Station Road/Neva Road to the west.

**Size:** 1 hectare



**Landownership:** Network Rail

**Existing Uses:** The eastern end is used mainly as a station car park and for service vehicles by Network Rail. The north end of the site is used for commercial uses and also car parking. Some public realm improvements to the area outside the station have been implemented.

### **Constraints:**

- The sites position adjacent to Hildesheim Bridge
- Loss of car parking

### **Description/Issues:**

- 7.4.14 Weston train station is a low rise building dating from 1884. It is located approximately 670m from the main High Street, but feels fairly detached from the retail core and seafront due to unclear and convoluted pedestrian routes to reach these areas. As a key transport node and arrival point in the town the area surrounding the train station is often the first impression visitors get of the town.
- 7.4.15 The area directly outside the station is a taxi rank and a bus stop and to the north east and north west of the front of the station are two car parks which provide commuter car parking. The area in front of the station is very open with little enclosure from the busy Station Road roundabout.
- 7.4.16 Some improvements have recently been made to the station forecourt resulting in improved safer pedestrian and vehicular circulation, and new signage improving links to the town centre and seafront.
- 7.4.17 The preferred option aims to transform this area into a high quality distinctive, identifiable and memorable environment to provide a positive first impression of the town. The redevelopment of the commuter car parks for high quality landmark office-led development will provide a distinctive focal point at the front of the train station, create a higher density more urban environment, and provide for office-led development.



## Preferred Option

To redevelop the existing car parks to the front of the station with a mix of uses including:

- Approximately 11,500m<sup>2</sup> of office uses.
- A small element of ancillary retail on the ground floor.
- Car parking to serve the development, as well as retaining an element of commuter car parking in the south western corner of the site.
- Retain taxi rank in front of the station.

Development proposals should provide for:

- An employment-led mixed used development which enhances this gateway site and strengthens links into the town centre.
- Prominent high quality designed buildings fronting Station Road roundabout providing a built up urban feel to this key gateway junction.
- Buildings should be four to five storeys in height to create a sense of enclosure and activity on this junction.
- Include an element of surface level commuter car parking at the rear of the site.

Developer Contributions will be sought specifically towards:

- Public realm improvements to Hildesheim Bridge and the pedestrian route under the bridge to the train station.
- Enhancements to the facades of the art deco properties fronting Station Road to improve the street scene along this route into town.
- Improvements to the pedestrian footbridge at the train station.
- Improved cycle routes into the town centre.
- Improved information and facilities within the train station.



**Delivery of the preferred option** will be achieved by the Council working closely with landowners/ developers. Multi- disciplinary teams will be set up within the Council to facilitate the planning application process and ensure that any development is of a high quality and secures the wider objectives of the Area Action Plan. The Council have already set up a Weston Town Centre Landowners Group and this group will be used as a vehicle for co-ordination between different landowning interests.

The council will continue to engage with major landowners and highlight the role their site can play in the regeneration of Weston Town Centre.

## **Alternatives considered for Train Station Car Parks**

The Council has considered a number of alternatives for the Train Station Car Parks.

1. **Remain as commuter car parks.** This option would not make the best use of these sites which form a key approach to the town centre when arriving from the train station or by car as you approach the town over Hildesheim Bridge. The car parks are currently well used, as they provide inexpensive long stay commuter car parking. However, they contribute to the nondescript appearance of the gateway area, and do not provide a positive approach to the town centre.

## GW4: Sunnyside Road Site.

**Site:** Bounded by Sunnyside Road North, Hildesheim Bridge and the railway line.

**Size:** 1.4 ha

**Landownership:** AGM Holdings Plc

**Existing Uses:** Vacant land



### Constraints:

- The sites position adjacent to Hildesheim Bridge.
- Foul sewer crosses the site.

### Description/Issues:

7.4.18 The site is situated between Sunnyside Road North to the south, the railway station to the north, office buildings to the west and Hildesheim Bridge to the east. The site comprises level scrub land bounded by security fencing. Advertisement hoardings exist on the Sunnyside Road North frontage. Planning permission was granted in 2003 for five buildings on the site predominantly for use by Weston College, with some speculative office development. This development was not implemented and the permission has subsequently lapsed.

7.4.19 The site is situated in a highly prominent location and is visible on the approach to Weston town centre from Hildesheim Bridge. The site is flat and bound on all sides by roads although there is currently no through access for pedestrians or vehicles. Although Hildesheim Bridge creates a harsh eastern edge to the site, there is the potential to create an access/link underneath the bridge to the car showroom site on the other side.

7.4.20 To the west of the site is the local headquarters for Homeserve who occupy a three storey office building. It provides some enclosure to Station Approach, although it is set back from the road. To the north of the site is the train station and some station car parking. There is access to the station from this side, including a pedestrian footbridge over the railway line to the front of the station, although it is not open 24 hours a day and does not provide wheelchair access. To the south of the site is Weston Rugby Club with Drove Road playing fields beyond.

7.4.21 Uses surrounding the site include office and light industrial uses and buildings are generally 2 to 3 storey's in height in this area. The train station is a particularly low building being only one storey in height.



7.4.22 Located directly behind the train station this site is in a prime location for employment development and forms a key connection between the train station and the rest of the gateway sites.

## Preferred Option

To redevelop the site with a mix of uses including:

- Approximately 17,000m<sup>2</sup> of office uses.
- Residential uses as an element of the mixed use scheme – approximately 50 units.
- Some community uses would also be appropriate on this site.

Development proposals should provide for:

- A mixed used employment-led development which enhances this gateway site and strengthens links into the town centre;
- A direct pedestrian route through the site from the rear of the train station to the corner of Sunnyside Road North and Hildesheim Bridge;
- Active ground floor frontages along pedestrian routes and public spaces;
- A prominent landmark building on the south east corner of the site at the junction of Sunnyside Road and Hildesheim Bridge;
- Building heights ranging from 3–6 storeys as identified in the Gateway Master Plan shown on Figure 23;

- Improving the appearance of the railway station environs in a manner that will provide attractive views from the station;
- An attractive environment for users with useable and pleasant outdoor spaces integrated into the layout of the development;
- High quality public realm and landscaping throughout the development;
- Car parking that has high levels of natural surveillance from surrounding development blocks and designed to meet Secured by Design standards. The visual impact of car parking should be reduced through soft landscaping and tree planting;
- Appropriate provision for cyclists and cycle parking.

Developer contributions will be sought specifically towards:

- Contributions to public realm improvements to the car parking area between the train station and the development site, and around the site.
- Contributions towards enhancements to Hildesheim Bridge.
- Contributions towards the improvement of the train station pedestrian footbridge to improve accessibility and allow for 24 hour access.
- Contribution towards improved cycle routes into the town centre and beyond.

**Delivery of the preferred option** will be achieved by the Council working closely with landowners/ developers. Multi-disciplinary teams will be set up within the Council to facilitate the planning application process and ensure that any development is of a high quality and secures the wider objectives of the Area Action Plan. The Council have already set up a Weston Town Centre Landowners Group and this group will be used as a vehicle for co-ordination between different landowning interests.

The council will continue to engage with major landowners and highlight the role their site can play in the regeneration of Weston Town Centre.

## Alternatives considered for Sunnyside Road Site

The Council has considered a number of alternatives for the Sunnyside Road site.

1. **Remain as employment use.** This site is allocated for employment in the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan. However, this is a well located, accessible site adjacent to the railway station and would benefit from a mix of uses in order to increase activity in this area throughout the day and into the evening. Continuing with only employment uses on this site would not

## Weston-super-Mare **Town Centre Area Action Plan**

achieve the vibrancy and activity which is needed to incorporate this gateway area into the town centre.

2. **Do nothing.** This site has been vacant for many years, and its unkempt and derelict appearance creates a poor image on the approach to Weston town centre. To not identify this site for development would fail to meet Objective 6 to enhance the gateway to the town centre through high quality development of key sites.

## GW5: Rugby Club

**Site:** Bounded by Sunnyside Road North and Drove Road Recreation Ground.



**Size:** 2.4 hectares

**Landownership:** Weston Rugby Club

**Existing Uses:** A Rugby Club.

### Constraints:

Need to find and develop a suitable alternative site for the Rugby Club prior to the redevelopment of this site.

### Description/Issues:

7.4.23 The Rugby Club site is located south of the train station adjacent to the Sunnyside Road site on its northern side, and Drove Road playing fields on its south and eastern sides. The site itself is largely flat. A surface level car park forms the north eastern part of the site which also includes a cafe, and the rugby ground and caravan park on the southern half of the site, are enclosed by a 2m high concrete wall. The site is therefore fairly inward looking and provides a poor frontage onto Sunnyside Road.

7.4.24 Weston RFC are looking to relocate to new grounds. The current club has poor quality changing facilities, and only one pitch which results in the club sharing pitches with the adjacent Drove Road playing fields.



The Rugby Club would consider selling this site to raise funds to relocate to a new site, potentially on the Avoncrest site or within the Airfield/RAF Locking area, which would enable them to build a new ground with two pitches and modern facilities.

- 7.4.25 The site presents a poor image on the approach to Weston town centre. Although it provides an important leisure facility the site would benefit from redevelopment, but only if the Rugby Club could secure a new site elsewhere in the town. The redevelopment of this site will provide land for employment opportunities within the town, as well as other appropriate uses to create more activity within this part of the gateway area. Its' close links with the Sunnyside Road site will also result in strengthened connections between sites within the area and improved pedestrian access to the town centre.

### Preferred Option

To redevelop the site with a mix of uses including:

- Approximately 19,000m<sup>2</sup> of office uses.
- Residential uses as an element of the mixed use scheme – approximately 100 units.
- Community uses.

Development proposals should provide for:

- An employment-led development, which is accessible for all users and provides increased access/linkages to Drove Road playing fields.
- A mix of employment spaces including a range of office accommodation, managed workspace, and live work units.
- An high quality designed landmark building on the northern corner of Sunnyside Road which will, along with the Sunnyside Road site create an attractive gateway feature at the start of Hildesheim Bridge. This will be achieved through appropriate building heights and architectural design.
- A clear pedestrian route through the northern corner of the site from Drove Road playing fields through to the Sunnyside Road site and beyond, as illustrated on the Gateway Area Master Plan (Figures 21 and 22).
- High quality public realm and landscaping throughout the development.
- Appropriate provision for cyclists and cycle parking within the site.

Developer Contributions will be sought towards:

- Improvements to the train station pedestrian footbridge.

- Contributions towards improved cycle routes into the town centre.
- Contributions towards public realm improvements on Hildesheim Bridge and Drove Road roundabout.
- Contributions toward the creation of a new footpath across the northern edge of Drove Road playing fields.
- Enhancements to Drove Road playing fields.
- A new changing room facility for the users of Drove Road playing fields.

**Delivery of the preferred option** will be achieved by the Council working closely with landowners/ developers. Multi- disciplinary teams will be set up within the Council to facilitate the planning application process and ensure that any development is of a high quality and secures the wider objectives of the Area Action Plan. The Council have already set up a Weston Town Centre Landowners Group and this group will be used as a vehicle for co-ordination between different landowning interests.

The council will continue to engage with major landowners and highlight the role their site can play in the regeneration of Weston Town Centre and will work closely with the Rugby Club to help secure a suitable alternative site.

## **Alternatives considered for the Rugby Club Site:**

The Council has considered a number of alternatives for the Rugby Club site.

1. **Relocate to the southern side of Drove Road playing fields.** One option considered was for the rugby club to relocate to the southern side of the Drove Road playing fields. However, this option would result in a loss of playing fields and strategic public open space. Therefore, this option has been discounted.
2. **Do nothing.** The owners of this site are willing to consider the sale of the site to finance a new improved facility. The current site does not make the best use of its prominent location on the main route into the town centre, and there is significant potential for a high quality new development. To not identify the site for future development would fail to meet Objective 6 to enhance the gateway to the town centre through high quality development of key sites.



## GW6: Gas Works Site.

**Site:** Site is bounded by Winterstoke Road, Marchfields Way and Drove Road.



**Size:** The total size of the site is 5.8 hectares. However, excluding the operational gas works the site area is 3.5 hectares.

**Landownership:** National Grid Property Holdings Limited own the area of land surrounding the operational gas works and Wales and West Utilities own the operational gas works.

**Existing Uses:** Gas Works and vacant land.

### Constraints:

- Operational gas cylinders
- Contamination
- Health and Safety Issues.

### Description/Issues:

- 7.4.26 This site presents a key opportunity to enhance the gateway area to Weston town centre. It is situated on the corner of a main roundabout junction within the gateway area and is highly visible on the approach to Weston town centre and on the main route out of Weston coming over Hildesheim Bridge.
- 7.4.27 The site currently consists of two low pressure operational gas cylinders behind which are underground high pressure operational cylinders. The extent of the operational gas works is approximately 2.3ha. Surrounding the operational gas works is approximately 3.5ha of flat vacant land. The site is bounded by high meshed metal fencing and barbed wire.
- 7.4.28 The land uses surrounding the site are predominantly retail. To the east of the site is Weston Retail Park and Gallagher Retail Park, to the north is car showrooms and residential properties, and to the west there are residential properties and Weston Rugby Club.
- 7.4.29 Directly behind the site to the south is Wyvern Community School and leisure centre, some allotments and housing.

- 7.4.30 Comprehensive redevelopment of the site is dependant on the decommissioning of the gas cylinders and remediation of the site.

## Preferred Option

To redevelop the site with a mix of uses including:

- Approximately 19,000m<sup>2</sup> of office uses.
- Approximately 500 residential units.
- Community uses.

Development proposals should provide for:

- Employment uses to be clustered at the north western corner of the site to benefit from high visibility from the roundabout and closer links to the train station.
- Development fronting Drove Road roundabout must be of excellent quality design to provide an attractive building facing this junction.
- A direct and obvious pedestrian route through the site linking with the proposed pedestrian route across Drove Road playing fields, as shown on the Gateway Area Master Plan (Figures 21 and 22).
- Provide attractive and safe public open space within the development.
- Active ground floor frontages along pedestrian routes and public spaces.
- Public realm improvements along Marchfields Way.
- Possibility of a combined Heat and Power system should be investigated in order to achieve a more sustainable development.
- Assessment of the Health and Safety implications of redeveloping this site, in line with HSE guidelines.
- Safeguarding 4-5m of the eastern side of the site from Drove Road roundabout to the proposed new roundabout on Marchfields Way for a future bus lane, as part of the Weston Package transport bid proposals. Safeguarded rate as shown on the Proposals Map.

**Delivery of the preferred option** will be achieved by the Council working closely with landowners/ developers. Multi- disciplinary teams will be set up within the Council to facilitate the planning application process and ensure that any development is of a high quality and secures the wider objectives of the Area Action Plan. The Council have already set up a Weston Town Centre Landowners Group and this group will be used as a vehicle for co-ordination between different landowning interests.

The council will continue to engage with major landowners and highlight the role their site can play in the regeneration of Weston Town Centre.

### **Alternatives considered for the Gas Works Site**

The Council has considered a number of alternatives for the Gas Works site.

1. **Retail/Leisure Uses.** The adopted North Somerset Replacement Local Plan allocates this site for retail and leisure uses. The Inspectors Report to the Local Plan Inquiry justifies these uses at an out of town location due to the sites close proximity to the existing retail park, and because higher value development will help fund the remediation work necessary to make this a commercially viable development site. However, this Area Action Plan focuses on providing all the retail and leisure uses within the retail core and seafront, in the first instance. Retaining this retail/leisure allocation would potentially lead to a loss of vitality and viability of Weston town centre contrary to the AAP's vision and objectives and the sequential approach advocated by PPS6. Therefore, this has been rejected as an alternative option and instead residential uses have been incorporated into the allocation to add the necessary value to the site.
2. **Redevelop the non operation part of the site as identified in the current Local Plan.** The vacant land around the gas works is poorly configured and redevelopment of this part of the site only would not achieve a well designed, well functioning development and result in the unsightly cylinders remaining.

## GW7: Avoncrest Site

**Site:** Bounded by Herluin Way to the north, the railway line to the south, Weston Express Business Park, Refuse Transfer Station, industrial uses and a small triangle of residential uses to the east and a mix of uses including A3 restaurants, a video shop and a car wash to the west.



**Size:** 30 ha

**Landownership:** The freehold of the site is owned by North Somerset Council and leased to Avoncrest Development Ltd on a long lease.

**Existing Uses:** The southern end of this highly visible gateway site was uncontaminated and has been developed for a variety of commercial uses but the remaining 30ha of this brownfield site remains undeveloped and derelict.

### Constraints:

- Former landfill site – Contamination issues.

### Description/Issues:

- 7.4.31 This 30 hectare site is the former site of Weston's tip and is situated alongside the main gateway approach to the town. The site operated as a landfill site for household domestic waste between the late 1960's and the early 1980's and there are major land stability and possible contamination issues associated with the site.
- 7.4.32 In 1991 permission was granted for a 9 hole golf course and driving range on the site. Although the golf course was never implemented the driving range was opened and then subsequently closed in about 2000. In 1994 planning consent was granted for a motor cycle training facility on its northern boundary and in the same year planning permission was given for the redevelopment of the south-western corner plot with two A3 restaurants, a video rental shop and a car wash.
- 7.4.33 Due to the contamination issues and remediation costs this site has historically been very difficult to develop. Within the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan the site is allocated for a mix of employment, retail and leisure including public open space. The retail use was allocated on this site through the Replacement Local Plan Inquiry to generate the land value to enable remediation of the site. However, emerging regional planning policy in the form of the draft Regional

Spatial Strategy (RSS) requires the focus for town centre uses to be met within the town centre. Additionally the draft RSS requires a large proportion of new housing development to be accommodated in Weston, and as a result of this change in regional policy it is appropriate to reconsider the uses on this site.

- 7.4.34 The site is strategic to the successful regeneration of Weston. Although separated from Weston Airfield by the main railway line, the site's development will help to link Weston Airfield to the remaining areas of the town. At the southern end the possibility of a road bridge over the railway line is being investigated as part of the Weston Package Transport bid, and the connection between the Airfield and the town centre is critical. In terms of its relationship to the town centre this site presents an opportunity to provide a distinctive development on the approach to Weston which will significantly enhance the gateway to the town.

### **Preferred Option**

To comprehensively redevelop the site with the following mix of uses:

- Residential as part of a comprehensive master plan and linked to the wider regeneration of the area – approximately 600 units.
- Employment uses – approximately 10 hectares
- Open space/sport facilities – approximately 5 hectares.

Development proposals should provide for:

- A master plan approved by the Council to ensure the site's redevelopment successfully integrates with the future proposals for Weston Airfield and the town centre objectives;
- A bridge over the railway line linking the site with Weston Airfield;
- New convenient and direct pedestrian/cycle links to Weston town centre, Weston Airfield and Hutton Moor Leisure Centre;
- High quality design throughout the development, particularly development fronting Herluin Way to enhance the approach to Weston town centre;
- A Combined Heat and Power system as part of an integrated approach to sustainable development, in conjunction with plans for Weston Airfield.

Developer Contributions will be sought specifically towards:

- The delivery of strategic and cycle-friendly transport measures;

- Education provision related to the scale of development proposed;
- Enhancements to the A370 Corridor in terms of landscaping and public realm improvements.

**Delivery of the preferred option** will be achieved by the Council working closely with landowners/ developers. Multi- disciplinary teams will be set up within the Council to facilitate the planning application process and ensure that any development is of a high quality and secures the wider objectives of the Area Action Plan. The Council have already set up a Weston Town Centre Landowners Group and this group will be used as a vehicle for co-ordination between different landowning interests.

The council will continue to engage with major landowners and highlight the role their site can play in the regeneration of Weston Town Centre.

As landowner the council will ensure that its land is used effectively to meet the wider Town Centre objectives and will where appropriate work closely with other landowning interests and developers.

## **Alternatives considered for Avoncrest**

The Council has considered a number of alternatives to redeveloping the Avoncrest site.

1. **To develop the site in accordance with the Replacement Local Plan allocation.** This option would not result in the site being developed for the most appropriate uses for this location. Retail uses would not be appropriate on this site due to its out of centre location and lack of connectivity with proposed development areas. Additionally, a new district centre will be included a part of the proposed urban extension on Weston Airfield and allowing retail uses on this site would potentially jeopardise the future viability of a new district centre which is considered a key element to creating a sustainable new community.
2. **Do Nothing.** This is a strategic site in terms of linking the future urban extension with Weston town centre. This option would result in this site effectively acting as a barrier between the development on the Airfield and the town centre which would be contrary to the objectives of the Area Action Plan.

## 8. Key Infrastructure/ Community Benefits

In accordance with saved and emerging planning policies, development will, where necessary and appropriate, be required to contribute to the provision of affordable housing, landscaping, highway, public transport improvements and other measures required to mitigate any impacts arising from that proposal. It is the view of North Somerset Council that given the scale of the development proposed in the town centre, it is not appropriate to consider the impact of proposals solely at the individual site level. The wider context needs to be addressed, including the town centre as a whole, as well as further a field. This is particularly the case with the impact on the existing highway network both within the centre and on the approaches to it.

In parallel, North Somerset Council will seek to secure funding from central government through growth area programmes, and the Joint Local Transport Plan process, including the Weston Package Transport Bid which is a package of schemes which seek to address both existing transport problems and support the increased development proposed for the town.



In keeping with the holistic approach to regeneration of the town and the fact that development will individually and collectively have an impact on the existing fabric of the town centre, contributions will also be sought towards the management and maintenance of the town centre as a whole. In particular the council will seek funding towards improvements to the public realm, to achieve a fully co-ordinated approach to street furniture, landscaping, and materials within the town centre in line with the Civic Pride Initiative. Specific locations identified for public realm improvements are listed in Figure 24.

## Policy DC1: Developer Contributions

In order to achieve the comprehensive regeneration of the town centre developer contributions will be sought from all schemes that have a proven indirect or direct impact on the town centre, towards the delivery of key elements of highway and other infrastructure (including where appropriate education and community infrastructure), public transport improvements, environmental improvements, pedestrian and cycling improvements, CCTV and other crime and disorder initiatives, public art and the management and maintenance of the public realm of the town centre as a whole.

Figure 24 below indicates specific projects which contributions will be sought towards.

**Figure 24: Developer Contribution Requirements**

Requirement	Justification	Delivery
Public Realm Improvements	Identified as a priority in the Core Strategy and through the Civic Pride Initiative.	This will include the contributions towards public realm improvements at the following locations to be implemented by North Somerset Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town Square</li> <li>• High Street</li> <li>• Spider Lane</li> <li>• Beach Lawns</li> <li>• Melrose Car Park</li> <li>• Prince Consort Gardens</li> <li>• The Boulevard</li> <li>• Alexandra Parade</li> <li>• Station Road/Wallicote Road</li> <li>• Hildesheim Bridge</li> <li>• Marine Lake</li> <li>• Promenade North</li> <li>• Promenade South</li> <li>• Alfred Street</li> <li>• Orchard Street/Meadow Street area.</li> <li>• Drove Road Playing Field</li> </ul>
30% Affordable housing on all developments of 15 dwellings or more, or 0.5 hectares.	As identified through the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan, and emerging Core Strategy policies.	

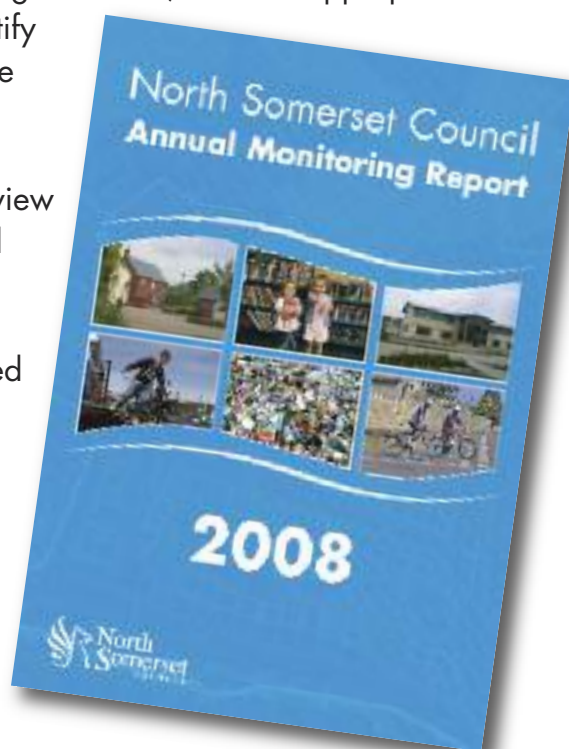


Requirement	Justification	Delivery
<p>Measures to enhance pedestrian and cycle links.</p>	<p>As identified through the Weston Package Phase 1 and part of the Joint Local Transport Plan.</p> <p>Needed to improve road safety and to reduce the dependency on the private car.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extended foot/cycle ways and additional crossing points on Marchfields Way.</li> <li>• Pedestrian and cycle improvements along Winterstoke Road (north).</li> <li>• Cross Airfield Link (Winterstoke Road – A371)</li> <li>• The Airfield Bridge Link (Cross Airfield Link – Winterstoke Road, crossing the main railway and via the Avoncrest site);</li> <li>• Modification of Hildeshiem Bridge to allow cycle link, or new dual purpose bridge over railway line by the train station which would be ramped to provide disabled access to both platforms.</li> <li>• Widening and upgrading of the Rectors Road link.</li> </ul>
<p>Highways and Transport Improvements.</p>	<p>As identified through the Weston Package Phase 1 and part of the Joint Local Transport Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selective carriageway widening and signal control at M5 Junction 21;</li> <li>• The Cross Airfield Link (Winterstoke Road – A371);</li> <li>• The Airfield Bridge Link (Cross Airfield Link – Winterstoke Road, crossing the main railway and via the Avoncrest site);</li> <li>• The A370 Gateway (dualling Marchfields Way and associated traffic management measures on Winterstoke Road, improvements to Drove Road roundabout); and</li> <li>• Worle station (new car/motorcycle/cycle parking and bus interchange on council-owned land on the south side, new bus interchange facilities on the north-side, bus priority measures on approaches to the station, better passenger facilities on the station).</li> </ul>

Requirement	Justification	Delivery
Employment Programmes	Identified in Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007, Sustainable Community Strategy as an LAA and MAA Target, Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public transport improvements (including Park and Ride).</li> </ul> <p>This will include contributions to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ready4Work Scheme, training provision and support</li> <li>• Skills Centre – South Ward</li> </ul>
Business Improvement District	Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy.	<p>Contributions to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feasibility work.</li> <li>• Promotion</li> <li>• Environmental improvements.</li> </ul>
Inward Investment	Employment Led Regeneration Strategy for Weston, Adopted Local Plan, Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy.	<p>This will include Contributions to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publicity</li> <li>• Promotion</li> <li>• Events</li> <li>• Economic data</li> <li>• Information.</li> </ul>
Educational Facilities	Advice on Developer Contributions Document	New or expanded facilities to meet increase pupil numbers.
Youth	Advice on Developer Contributions Document	Improved provision to meet the increased demand.
Libraries	Advice on Developer Contributions Document	Improved provision to meet the increased demand.
Public Open Space	Advice on Developer Contributions Document	Improved provision to meet the increased demand.

## 9. Monitoring

- 9.1 Review and monitoring is an important aspect of evidence based policy making and it is a key factor of the “plan, monitor and manage” approach. An important aspect of the new planning system is the flexibility to update components of the Local Development Framework and respond quickly to changing priorities in the area. Monitoring will play a critical part in identifying any review of the Weston Town Centre Area Action Plan that may be required. It will also enable early action to be taken to overcome any barriers to delivery of the Plans objectives and/or proposals and policies.
- 9.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local planning authorities to produce an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) every year and this will be the main mechanism for assessing the Area Action Plan’s performance and effects. It must be based on the period from 1 April to 31 March and be submitted to the Secretary of State no later than the end of the following December. AMRs are required to assess the implementation of the Local Development Scheme, and the extent to which policies in local development documents are being successfully implemented.
- 9.3 The Council will measure the performance of this Area Action Plan against targets, objectives and related policies set out in this document. It will also undertake more general monitoring for the district and its sub-region as a whole to assess the extent that the Local Development Framework spatial strategy is being delivered, remains appropriate and is sustainable. The AMR will identify potential measures that need to be taken to rectify any issues raised through monitoring. This will potentially include the need to review parts or all of any particular local development document.
- 9.4 Significant issues will be monitored through the Annual Monitoring Report process, although it is accepted that in relation to some indicators the impact of the Plan will only be felt after a number of years. In relation to this Area Action Plan, monitoring will specifically include:



- Checking that the development targets identified in the Area Action Plan are being met and identify the actions needed to address any barriers and blockages. Areas that will specifically be monitored are:
  - Retail
  - Employment
  - Housing
  - Car Parking
  - Leisure
- Assessing the potential impacts on the Area Action Plan of new or updated national, regional and local policy guidance.
- Measuring the performance of the Plan against the Plan's Vision and Objectives and assessing whether the Objectives are still appropriate.
- Measuring the performance of the Plan against other relevant local, regional and national targets.
- Assessing whether the Plan is contributing to the creation of a vibrant, viable town centre and whether there are any unforeseen adverse effects.
- Sharing information collected as part of this monitoring regime with other partners and the community.

9.5 As a result of this monitoring regime, conclusions maybe reached which have implications for the objectives, policies and proposals of the Plan. In some cases, monitoring of the delivery of the Area Action Plan may identify supportive actions that need to be taken by other partners or as part of other initiatives.

9.6 A full review of the Plan will take place after five years, from the date of adoption, unless the results of any of the above suggest an earlier review is necessary.

9.7 The following tables bring together the targets for each of the Plan's proposals, clearly showing the relationship between the indicators and targets for the Weston Town Centre Area Action Plan.

9.8 Figure 25 shows the potential level of housing that could be accommodated on sites within the Area Action Plan as well as the total numbers of affordable and Lifetime Homes.

9.9 Figure 26 shows the potential level of employment land provision in the Area Action Plan, including B1, B2, B8, leisure and retail.

**Figure 25: Monitoring of Housing Development.**

Indicator	Plan Target									
	SF2: Birnbeck Pier	RC1: Victoria Square	RC2: NCP Car Park	RC3: Dolphin Square	GW1: Locking Road Car Park	GW2: Sunnyside Road	GW4: WSM Rugby Club	GW5: Gas Works Site	GW6: Avoncrest Site	<b>TOTAL</b>
Building of new dwellings	188	157	164	350	80	50	100	500	600	<b>2189</b>
of which, affordable homes (30%)	56	47	49	105	24	15	30	150	180	<b>656</b>
of which, lifetime homes (50%)	94	78	82	175	40	25	50	250	300	<b>1094</b>
of which, on PDL	188	157	164	350	80	50	100	500	600	<b>2189</b>
Overall net increase in dwellings	188	94	164	332	80	60	100	500	600	<b>2118</b>

**Figure 26: Monitoring of Retail, Leisure and Employment Development.**

Indicator	Plan Target													
Retail space m <sup>2</sup>	SF2: Birnbeck Pier	SF4: Grand Pier	SF5: Tropicana	RC2: Victoria Square	RC3: Dolphin Square	RC4: Tesco Site	RC5: NCP Car Park	GW2: Locking Road Car Park	GW3: Train Station Car Parks	GW4: Sunnyside Road	GW5: WSM Rugby Club	GW6: Gas Works Site	GW7: Avoncrest Site	<b>TOTAL (M<sup>2</sup>)</b>
Leisure Space m <sup>2</sup>	-	232	3850	6800	4000	4500	7000	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>26,382</b>
Employment space m <sup>2</sup>	5500	1494	17500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>24,494</b>
Employment space m <sup>2</sup>	-	500	-	-	-	-	-	16,500	11,500	17,000	19,000	19,000	50,000	<b>133,500</b>

## 10. Phasing

- 10.1 The Action Plan proposes major developments across the town centre. The Plan covers the period 2008–2026 and its proposals will be phased within this time-frame.
- 10.2 Although the precise timing of the development of sites in some events is uncertain, there is usually a clear sequence of actions. For example, the development of the Rugby Club is dependant on the Club finding and relocating to another site first, and the comprehensive development of the Gas Works site is dependant on the currently operational gas cylinders being decommissioned and the site remediated.
- 10.3 In terms of development, early priorities are the retail-led schemes at Dolphin Square and Victoria Square. The new retail space along with other key town centre uses, which these sites can provide in sustainable locations, are key to regenerating the retail core of the town, as well as providing high quality new developments facing the seafront. These two developments will act as major catalysts to the regeneration of the town as well as meeting the needs of Weston’s growing population over the Plan period.
- 10.4 Some of the sites identified have recently secured planning permissions such as the leisure developments at Tropicana and the Grand Pier on the seafront. These will significantly improve the leisure offer on the seafront, particularly in terms of year round leisure attractions. Furthermore, the sea defence works and environmental enhancements to the promenade and Marine Lake will also enhance the seafront area.
- 10.5 In terms of car parking phasing of development sites will be important to ensure adequate public car parking is available within the town centre. Within the retail core the NCP car park, should not be developed simultaneously with the Dolphin Square development. Equally, the development of Locking Road car park is reliant on finding a new site for coach and lorry parking, and the provision of a long stay multi-storey car park on this site may need to be reassessed in line with Park and Ride proposals becoming more viable.
- 10.6 The timing of projects will depend on resources and levels of developer interest. Flexibility is needed to respond to funding opportunities and to allow time to put together funding packages to assist bringing sites forward for development where necessary. If it is necessary to use the Compulsory Purchase Order process to assemble sites this may also impact on the phasing of developments. Phasing is not meant to be a rigid blueprint, and the Council will adopt a positive approach where developers wish to progress schemes earlier than anticipated.

**Figure 27: Phasing of Priority Development Sites over the plan period**

Site	2008-2011	2011-2016	2016-2026
Grand Pier	█		
Tropicana	█		
Melrose Car Park		█	
St James Street Area		█	
Birnbeck Island and headland		█	
Victoria Square		█	
Dolphin Square		█	
Tesco		█	
Locking Road Car Park		█	
Sunnyside Road		█	
Avoncrest		█	█
NCP Car Park Site			█
Train Station Car Park			█
Rugby Club			█
Gas Works Site			█

## Question 1:

Is the proposed phasing a realistic reflection of when sites within the Area Action Plan are likely to be developed?



## **11. Delivery**

- 11.1 The delivery of many of the proposals contained in this Area Action plan will involve partnership working between North Somerset Council either as landowners, or in their role as the Local Planning Authority, and landowners, developers and other key stakeholders.
- 11.2 At pre-planning application stage multi-disciplinary teams will be established for each site to ensure a consistent and co-ordinated approach through the progression of the planning application.
- 11.3 Figure 28 gives an indication of the main delivery issues including delivery mechanisms, resourcing issues and likely timescales for each site.

### **Compulsory purchase**

- 11.4 The Council will consider exercising its powers of compulsory acquisition in circumstances where adequate funding is secured by the promoter of the development and where the development accords with the policies and proposals set out in the Area Action Plan.

#### **Question 2:**

**Are the delivery mechanisms and targets identified realistic?**

#### **Question 3:**

**Are there any other phasing or land issues that need to be included?**

**Figure 28: Delivery Issues Table**

<b>Area Action Plan Proposal</b>	<b>/Policy</b>	<b>Body responsible for delivery</b>	<b>Delivery mechanism</b>	<b>Delivery Funding</b>	<b>Delivery land issue</b>	<b>Phasing issue Targeting/phasing /timescales</b>
<b>Birnbeck Pier and Island</b>	Landowners (Urban Splash own Birnbeck Island and Pier, Weston College own Westcliffe, Royal Pier Hotel is owned by CNM Estates)	Close working between NSC, landowners/ developers. Multi- disciplinary teams will be set up within the Council to facilitate the planning application process. Continued engagement with major landowners	Private development. Possible grant funding to assist with costs related to restoration of the pier.	North Somerset Council own land within this headland area and are willing to explore the inclusion of its land holding, subject to detailed negotiations, to help secure a viable redevelopment scheme for the island.	Development within this area should be phased to ensure that sufficient public car parking is retained	2011 – 2016
<b>Melrose Car Park</b>	North Somerset Council.	Funding of environmental enhancements through developer contributions. Implementation by NSC	S106 contributions towards public realm enhancements	Loss of car parking whilst works are undertaken.	Environmental enhancement works to be undertaken outside the main tourist season.	2011 – 2016

Area Action Plan Proposal	/Policy	Body responsible for delivery	Delivery mechanism	Delivery Funding	Delivery land issue	Phasing issue Targeting/phasing /timescales
<b>Grand Pier</b>	Landowners (AGM Holdings)	Planning permission granted in March 2009.	Private development.	None.	Can be completed in one phase	2008 – 2011
<b>Tropicana</b>	Landowners (Henry Boot Ltd)	Planning permission granted in October 2008.	Private development.	None.	Can be completed in one phase	2008 – 2011
<b>Victoria Square</b>	Landowners (Victoria Square Consortium) Close working between NSC, landowners/ developers. Multi-disciplinary teams will be set up within the Council to facilitate the planning application process. Continued engagement with major landowners.	Private development.	Possible use of compulsory purchase powers.	Access to Sovereign Shopping Centre.	Co-ordination with "Pier Square" works.	2011 – 2016

<p><b>Dolphin Square</b></p>	<p>North Somerset Council as landowners.</p>	<p>North Somerset Council will seek a development partner to deliver the development of this site.</p>	<p>Private Development</p>	<p>Possible use of compulsory purchase powers.</p>	<p>Need to retain sufficient short term public car parking provision on site. A comprehensive master plan will be required for the site, but phasing of the scheme may be necessary to assist in implementation.</p>	<p>2011 – 2016</p>
<p><b>St James Street</b></p>	<p>Landowners (Multiple ownership)</p>	<p>Close working between NSC, landowners/ developers. Multi-disciplinary teams will be set up within the Council to facilitate any planning application process.</p>	<p>Private development.</p>	<p>The area consists of many properties in multiple ownership.</p>	<p>Development in this area will be incremental.</p>	<p>2008 – 2016</p>

Area Action Plan Proposal	/Policy	Body responsible for delivery	Delivery mechanism	Delivery Funding	Delivery land issue	Phasing issue Targeting/phasing /timescales
<b>NCP Car Park</b>	Landowners (Multiple ownership)	Close working between NSC, landowners/ developers. Multi-disciplinary teams will be set up within the Council to facilitate the planning application process. Continued engagement with major landowners	Private development.	Multiple Ownership.	Not to be developed at the same time as Dolphin Square to ensure adequate public car parking in the town centre at all times	2016 – 2021
<b>Tesco</b>	Landowners (Tesco Ltd)	Close working between NSC, landowners/ developers. Multi-disciplinary teams will be set up within the Council to facilitate the planning application process.	Private development.	Comprehensive redevelopment of the site should be carried out in consultation with residents of Hildesheim Court and suitable new housing or compensation provided.	Site for temporary store needed whilst redevelopment takes place. Need to retain sufficient short term car parking provision on site.	2011 – 2016

<p><b>Train Station Car Parks</b></p>	<p>Landowners (Network Rail)</p>	<p>Close working between NSC, landowners/ developers. Multi-disciplinary teams will be set up within the Council to facilitate the planning application process.</p>	<p>Private development.</p>	<p>Discussions to be held with landowners.</p>	<p>Need to retain sufficient commuter parking provision on site.</p>	<p>2016 – 2021</p>
<p><b>Locking Road Car Park</b></p>	<p>North Somerset Council as landowner</p>	<p>As landowner the council will ensure that its land is used effectively to meet the wider Town Centre objectives and work closely with other landowning interests and developers.</p>	<p>Private Development</p>	<p>Relocation of coach and lorry parking necessary for comprehensive redevelopment of the site.</p>	<p>Provision of a long stay multi-storey car park on this site should be assessed when the site comes forward for redevelopment dependant on the viability of Park and Ride proposals.</p>	<p>2011 – 2016</p>

Area Action Plan Proposal	/Policy	Body responsible for delivery	Delivery mechanism	Delivery Funding	Delivery land issue	Phasing issue Targeting/phasing /timescales
<b>Sunnyside Road</b>	Landowners (AGM Holdings)	Close working between NSC, landowners/ developers. Multi- disciplinary teams will be set up within the Council to facilitate the planning application process.	Private development.	None	None	2011- 2016
<b>Rugby Club</b>	Landowners (Weston Rugby Club)	Close working between NSC, landowners/ developers. Multi- disciplinary teams will be set up within the Council to facilitate the planning application process.	Private development.	Discussion necessary over current leasehold agreement between North Somerset Council and Weston Rugby Club.	Redevelopment dependant on re- locating Rugby Club.	2016 – 2021

# Weston-super-Mare Town Centre Area Action Plan

<p><b>Gas Works</b></p>	<p>Landowners (National Grid Property Holdings Ltd/Wales and West Utilities).</p>	<p>Closely working between NSC, landowners/ developers. Multi-disciplinary teams will be set up within the Council to facilitate the planning application process.</p>	<p>Private development.</p>	<p>Remediation of site necessary prior to development.</p>	<p>Comprehensive development of site dependant on decommissioning of gas cylinders and remediation of land.</p>	<p>2016 – 2021</p>
<p><b>Avoncrest</b></p>	<p>North Somerset Council/Avoncrest Developments Ltd</p>	<p>Joint working between NSC and Avoncrest Development Ltd.</p>	<p>Potential for public sector funding to assist with remediation costs.</p>	<p>Remediation of site necessary prior to development.</p>	<p>Comprehensive master plan of proposed development of the entire site will be necessary.</p>	<p>2011 – 2026</p>



## 12. Appendices

### Appendix 1: Evidence and related projects to support the Preferred Options proposals

- 1. Weston Area Development Framework Final Report**, published in June 2005, was jointly commissioned by North Somerset Council, English Partnerships and the South West Regional Development Agency. The document provides the first comprehensive vision for the future role of Weston and acts as an advocacy tool for building the local, regional and national support required to deliver a 'step-change'. It identifies Weston town centre and seafront area as the highest regeneration priority in Weston and identifies a number of key regeneration principles which are being brought forward through this AAP.
- 2. Weston Area Action Plan Vision and Options Report**, published in December 2006, provides the first stage in the process of producing the Area Action Plan. This first stage initially covered the whole of the Weston area but was subsequently split into two area action plans – one covering the town centre, seafront and gateway area, and one covering the Regeneration Area. The report established the principle of Polycentric Growth for the town and wider regeneration area which identified four growth centres – Weston Town Centre, Weston Airfield, Locking Parklands and Worle.
- 3. North Somerset Retail and Leisure Study**, published in April 2006, recommends that Weston town centre needs to provide 43,674m<sup>2</sup> of comparison and 2979m<sup>2</sup> of food retail up to 2021 in order to sustain its current position in the regional retail hierarchy. It also identified a moderate need for more bars, restaurants and clubs to support the night-time economy, as well as a range of office development in the town centre, edge of centre and out of centre locations with the aim of raising the profile of Weston as a regional and sub-regional office location.
- 4. Weston Gateway Area Master Plan**, completed in January 2009, provides detailed guidance for the development within the gateway area of the town centre. This includes key routes and linkages, building heights, where active frontages should go and the amount and mix of uses for each site.

4. The aim of the **Civic Pride Initiative: Connecting Spaces, Places and People** document, published in 2003, is to act as the catalyst in the economic regeneration of the seafront and town centre through a comprehensive “facelift” and upgrading of public and private spaces. It identifies 12 public realm enhancement projects within the gateway area, the town centre and the seafront. A number of these projects including Big Lamp Corner and Silica, Grove Village, Meadow Street, and a pedestrian signage scheme are now complete.
5. **“Pier Square” Public Realm and Traffic Management Strategy** is part of the Civic Pride Initiative. The project involves changes to the road layout around Regent Street and “Pier Square” (the area in front of Grand Pier) to create a pedestrian friendly attractive public open space. The project is currently in the design stage and public consultation will be held on any draft ideas or proposals during 2009.
6. **Weston Sea Defence Scheme** is a multi-million pound enhancements programme to the seafront in Weston. The project has two main objectives. Firstly, to repair and strengthen the town’s sea defences after a number of flooding incidents in the past. There are currently 4500 properties at risk of flooding from the sea which will need to be protected. Secondly, to improve the promenade and create a quality public space. The project extends from Marine Lake over 2km to Royal Sands and will be implemented between 2009 and 2011. Additionally there will also be improvements to public transport and cycling facilities funded by the Local Transport Plan.
7. North Somerset Council are working closely with CABI using their **Sea Change** grant to fund a range of cultural and artistic programmes to Weston-super-Mare. Sea Change aims to drive cultural and creative regeneration and economic growth in seaside resorts by funding inspiring, creative and innovative projects, bringing a sense of pride, enjoyment and celebration.
8. **St James Street – Richmond Street Study Area Development Framework**, published in December 2004, recognises the prominent location of this area between the High Street and the Seafront, but also the fact that a number of buildings are in poor condition or vacant meaning that the parts of the area are failing to capitalise on their seafront location. The document suggests enhancing this area as a focus for leisure and visitor activity, improving pedestrian connections with the surrounding shopping quarter and seafront and enhancing the quality of the public realm.
9. **Blue Skies – A Vision for Tourism in North Somerset** was updated in July 2005 and sets out a long-term vision for tourism in North Somerset. The study makes recommendations regarding the direction of tourist growth in Weston and sets out key actions to meet their vision for Weston of “a seaside destination known for its distinctiveness and quality”.

- 10. Weston-super- Mare Visitor Survey Final Report 2007**, published in January 2008, presents the findings of a face to face survey of visitors to Weston conducted between July and September 2007 along the promenade/pier in the town. The key findings from the research include who was visiting Weston, where they were staying, for how long and how frequently, activities they were participating in, how visitors travelled to the town and spending patterns of visitors.
- 11.** A restoration fund of £1.2m is available under the **Townscape Heritage Initiative** to help residents and businesses repair run down buildings. The fund aims to repair and regenerate some of Weston's key terraces and crescents by offering grants of 70 per cent towards the cost of eligible works. The scheme is designed to help preserve an area of heritage while acting as a catalyst for economic development. The initiative – which is being run in the Birnbeck and Melrose/Grove Park conservation areas – is funded by North Somerset Council, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Weston Regeneration Partnership.
- 12. North Somerset's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)** was completed in March 2009. The Assessment has been prepared to inform the Core Strategy. Future updates will be made to the Assessment to inform the production of other planning documents and to make sure it remains up-to-date. The assessment has three key objectives: identify sites with potential for housing; assess the housing potential of these sites; and assess when they are likely to be developed. As well as identifying specific sites such as existing housing allocations or sites being considered through other Development Plan Documents, other sources of supply are to be included to gain a comprehensive picture of housing supply across North Somerset. The assessment does not allocate sites but instead gives an initial overview of their potential.
- 13.** The **Employment Land Survey (ELS) April 2008** is produced to review the current availability of employment land, the distribution of employment development and the annual completions of employment sites in North Somerset. This ELR covers planning permissions granted and developments completed between April 2007 and March 2008.
- 14. Residential Land Survey (RLS) April 2008** details sites within North Somerset that are potentially available for housing development under current planning policies as well as those sites that currently have planning approval for housing. The government requires Local Planning Authorities to maintain an adequate supply of land and buildings for housing development and the RLS has a key role in this review process.

- 15. North Somerset Annual Monitoring Report 2008** assesses the progress made against local and national planning policy documents and the Local Development Framework. It reports on how the Local Development Framework (LDF) is progressing and how the policies in the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan are performing. The following three sets of indicators are used to assess the planning policies:
- contextual indicators – describe the main characteristics of the district such as the number of households, unemployment rates and house prices
  - core indicators – report on a set of key development themes including employment, housing, local services and transport set by Communities and Local Government
  - local indicators – report on the policies checking progress is being made towards relevant targets and expected outcomes.
- 16. North Somerset Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)** is an overview of Flood Risk within the district to provide general guidance to planners, developers and other interests parties about locations where flood risk is a potential issue. It is a government requirement that flood risk is considered in the process of allocating land for development and guidance recommends that sites for developments should be allocated using a sequential approach starting from those of lowest flood risk. If the SFRA indicates that a property or possible area for development is within or adjacent to a flood risk area, then a detailed Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) will be required to assess the site before any decisions can be made.
- 17. Weston Flood Management Study Phase II Options Report**, published in June 2007, develops a strategy for delivering a comprehensive flood management scheme in Weston to protect both existing property and to assess and facilitate new development expected to come forward in Weston over the next twenty years.
- 18. Weston Package Phase 1 Major Transport Scheme [WP1]** comprises a series of transport improvements in Weston. A bid for funding was submitted to the Department for Transport in April 2009, if successful, improvements would include a new link between Weston Airfield and Winterstoke Road, widening of Marchfields Way in Weston Gateway and improvements to the Drove Road Roundabout.
- 19. A Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)** has been produced for the West of England Housing Market Partnership Area covering South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset, Mendip West Wiltshire. The SHMA assesses the housing need and demand within the defined area which informs the development of spatial housing policies.

- 20. The 10 Year Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy for North Somerset** sets out a framework to promote sustainable long term economic development and regeneration and was approved by the Executive and North Somerset Partnership board in January 2007. It identifies the major areas of work to be addressed to strengthen the local economy, expand the range of opportunities for residents and businesses, provide housing that matches the needs of communities, and ensure that the benefits of economic prosperity are spread for everyone's benefit.
- 21.** English Heritage's report **An Asset and a Challenge: Heritage and Regeneration in Coastal Towns in England** gives good practice examples of heritage-led regeneration in coastal towns around England.
- 22.** North Somerset Councils **Statement of Licensing Policy 2008 – 2011** was adopted in November 2008 and provides guidance on all aspects of licensing including the licensing objectives, legislation, policies and strategies, decision making and operational matters, as well as the relationship with planning policies.
- 23. Single Regeneration Budget Round 6 (SRB6)** was run across Central and West wards of Weston-super-Mare between 2000–2006. The £2.4 m Scheme, attracted over £11m of additional funding into the area through over 80 projects supporting physical improvements and tackling community issues. Projects supported included Townscape Heritage Initiative and Civic Pride, IT training, health support, community safety programmes and support to voluntary and community groups. The exit strategy identified a range of future actions that would support further work and regeneration of the area.

## **Appendix 2: Conformity with Consultation Preferences**

### **Summary of comments received through the Issues and Options consultation and the Councils response**

A number of issues were raised regarding the town centre as a result of the issues and options consultation. They are summarised below, with the Councils response to each comment in *italics*.

1. There was general agreement with the need for more and better quality retail within the town centre.

*Agreed.*

2. A number of respondents commented that there wasn't enough detail on future housing policies within the town centre including affordable housing.

*Detailed housing policies have been included in the preferred options document of the Area Action Plan.*

3. There was a general view that there needs to be more flexibility in the town centre in terms of the employment-led strategy for Weston, and that a very strict application of the current policy may limit regeneration initiatives.

*The Council recognises that in order to achieve successful regeneration of sites in the town centre a mix of uses will be required on those sites including residential uses, and that the balance of residential units to jobs may have to be treated with some flexibility on town centre sites to ensure delivery of financially viable schemes and the realisation of the Vision that "more people will live and work in the town centre which will add vibrancy during the day and into the evening, resulting in a safe and desirable place for its residents and visitors".*

4. A number of comments were received regarding the proposals for the Tropicana site. There was concern that reliance on the delivery of a leisure scheme at the Tropicana could preclude the delivery of a leisure complex in the town centre which maybe better located in sustainability terms. There were also concerns regarding the scale, size and massing of the proposals and that it would be out of keeping with the character of Weston.

*Weston lacks any large scale indoor leisure attractions. Although not in the heart of the town centre, the location of the Tropicana provides a destination and major leisure and tourist attraction. The redevelopment of*

*this site for a major leisure facility will act as a catalyst for further redevelopment projects within the town centre, and will result in a significant boost for the town as a leisure destination.*

*The Council recognises that it is crucial to the successful regeneration of Weston that the redevelopment of Tropicana does not detract from the vitality and viability of the town centre, but instead creates positive spin offs which will benefit the town centre in terms of activity and visitor numbers. For this reason it is paramount that links between the Tropicana and the town centre core are significantly strengthened.*

- 5.** A number of respondents commented that there should be more recognition of the historic environment in Weston town centre and the contribution it can make to the regeneration process.

*The Weston Town Centre Area Action Plan preferred options document will examine the role of Weston's historic environment in more detail and provide guidance detailing how new development should related to existing historic buildings.*

- 6.** Car parking and the potential loss of car parks through the redevelopment of sites was raised as a concern

*Weston Town Centre AAP will set out a series of principles which will aim to deliver a broad car parking strategy for the town centre which will be flexible enough to accommodate current car parking requirements, future requirements taking account of the amount of new development that could potentially be coming forward within the town centre over the next 20 years, and future changes to the wider car parking strategy within Weston related to the provision of a Park and Ride facility.*

- 7.** More information should be included regarding the role of Green Infrastructure in the town centre.

*Weston town centre contains a number of valuable and important green spaces namely, Grove Park, Town Square and Beach Lawns. The relationship of these green spaces, how they contribute to the character of the town and their role and function within the town centre as amenity spaces, events spaces, areas for people to walk through will all be examined through further stages of Weston Town Centre Area Action Plan.*

## 13. Glossary

**Accessibility** – The opportunity to reach jobs, services, housing, recreation, shopping and entertainment within a reasonable time frame and without being impeded by physical, social or economic barriers.

**Active frontage** – A building frontage that responds positively to the street and particularly at the ground floor promotes uses, entrances, and windows that generate activity and promote safety on the street.

**Affordable housing** – Housing, whether for rent, shared ownership or outright purchase, provided at a cost considered affordable in relation to incomes that are average or below average, or in relation to the price of general market housing.

**Amenity** – A positive element or elements that contribute to the overall character or enjoyment of an area. For example, open land, trees, historic buildings and the relationship between them, or less tangible factors such as tranquillity.

**Amenity open space** – Open space with the principle purpose of creating a pleasant amenity in an area, rather than use for recreation and leisure.

**Area Action Plan (AAP)** – A type of Development Plan Document that will be used to provide a planning framework for areas of significant change or conservation.

**Built form** – Buildings and structures.

**CABE** – Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment.

**Character (of area)** – Individual distinctiveness created from a combination of natural and man – made elements with historic, socio – economic and other factors.

**Compulsory Purchase Order** – Powers available to the Council to compulsorily acquire property and land for specific purposes. The protocol for acquisition should follow the provisions outlined in the Land Acquisition Act 1981.

**Conservation Area** – An area of special architectural and/or historic interest that deserves preservation or enhancement of its character or appearance.



**Constraint** – A limiting factor that affects development, conservation etc.

**Core Strategy** – One of the key Development Plan Documents in the Local Development Framework. It will set out the long – term spatial vision and spatial objectives for the local planning authority area and the strategic policies and proposals to deliver that vision. It will contain a set of primary policies for delivering the core strategy. Broad locations for development may be set out in a key diagram.

**Council** – The local authority, North Somerset Council.

**Delivery** – The implementation of an objective or planned proposal within the criteria set by the plan.

**Design and Access Statement** –

**Developer Contribution** (see Legal Agreement)

**Development Plan** – This will consist of Regional Spatial Strategies (Spatial Development Strategy in London) and Development Plan Documents contained within a Local Development Framework. It will also contain any ‘saved plans’ that affect the area.

**Development Plan Documents (DPDs)** – These are prepared by the relevant plan – making authority. They will be spatial planning documents and subject to independent examination. There will be a right for those making representations seeking change to be heard at an independent examination.

**Evidence Base** – The researched, documented, analysed and verified basis for all the components of a Local Development Framework.

**Habitats Regulations Assessment** – The Habitat Regulation Assessment (often referred to as ‘Appropriate Assessment’) plays an important role in protecting important European habitats from inappropriate development. It is a legal requirement for council’s to produce a HRA alongside the planning policy documents it prepares.

**Health and Safety Executive** – The Health and Safety Commission is responsible for health and safety regulation in Great Britain. The Health and Safety Executive and local Government are the enforcing authorities who work in support of the Commission.

**Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)** – The HLF is charged with distributing funds from the National Lottery. It supports a wide range of projects involving the local, regional and national heritage of the United Kingdom.

**Implementation** – Carrying out the proposed actions to required standards that are set out in the plan.

**Independent Examination** – An examination held in public by an Inspector from the Planning Inspectorate.

**Index of Multiple Deprivation** – The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 (IMD 2004) is a measure of multiple deprivation at the small area level. The factors taken into consideration are income, employment, health and disability, education, skills and training, barriers to housing and services, crime and living environment.

**Infrastructure** – The basic facilities, services and installations needed for the functioning of a community. It normally includes transport, communications, water and power.

**Inset Maps** – will form part of the proposals map but are likely to be at a more detailed scale depending on the nature of the area covered and the degree of detail required.

**Legal Agreement / (Section 106)** – A legally binding contract, between a developer and the local planning authority that constitutes a planning obligation .

**Listed Building** – A building mentioned in statutory lists as being of special architectural or historic interest under the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act. There are different grades of listing to indicate relative interest.

**Lifetime homes** – The Lifetime Homes standards and the Housing Association Scheme Development Standards go a little further than Building Regulations in their requirements for adaptability and flexibility to be designed into the home. It seems sensible to design homes, which achieve all of these requirements, and are 'universal' in their appeal and application. A 16 – point standard devised by Joseph Rowntree Foundation can be found at the following web address, and includes features such as wider driveways, level thresholds, wider hallways, a downstairs WC etc.

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/housingandcare/lifetimehomes>

**Local Development Framework (LDF)** – This will include a portfolio of Local Development Documents that provide a framework for delivering the spatial planning strategy for the area. It will also contain a number of other documents, including the annual monitoring report, and any 'saved' plans that affect the area.

**Local Development Document (LDD)** – This it will be either a Development Plan Document or a Supplementary Planning Document and will be contained in a Local Development Framework.

**Local Transport Plan (LTP)** – A five year rolling plan produced by the Highway Authority.

**Local Development Scheme (LDS)** – This sets out the programme for preparing local development documents. All plan – making authorities have submitted a local development scheme to the First Secretary of State.

**Monitoring (and review)** – The process of measuring (in terms of quantity and quality) the changes in conditions and trends, impact of policies, performance of the plan against its objectives and targets, and progress in delivering outputs.

**Objective** – A statement that specifies the direction and amount of desired change in trends or conditions.

**PINS** – The Planning Inspectorate

**Previously Developed Land** – Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings), and associated infrastructure. The definition covers the boundaries of the development.

**Proposal** – A positively worded policy of the Local Planning Authority that proposes a course of action or an allocation of land for a particular use or development.

**Proposals Map** – The function of the proposals map is to illustrate the policies and proposals in the Development Plan documents and any saved policies that are included in the Local Development Framework. It will have a geographical base at a scale that allows the policies and proposals to be illustrated clearly in map form.

**Public Realm** – Those areas in cities and towns that are visible, useable, and accessible by the public.

**PPG and PPS** – Planning Policy Guidance Note and Planning Policy Statement.

**Public open space** – An allocation or a requirement in a development plan for open space with easy access by the public.

**Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)** – The regional spatial strategy covers at least a 15 to 20 year period and will set out the policies in relation to the development and use of land in the South West region.

**Secretary of State** – The Government Minister responsible for specific areas of Government.

**Sequential Approach** – The logical choice of development sites following a sequence designed to: maximise the use of previously developed land, favour retail sites within town centres and locate waste management facilities within settlements (for example, see PPS3, PPS6).

**Single Regeneration Budget (SRB)** – The SRB programme provides resources to support regeneration initiatives in England carried out by local regeneration partnerships. Its priority is to enhance the quality of life of local people in areas of need, by reducing the gap between deprived and other areas and between different groups. The SRB programme ends in 2007.

**Social inclusion** – Positive action to include all sectors of society in planning, decision – making and implementation.

**Socio-economic** – The combination of social factors and economic factors that act upon all, or part of, a plan area.

**‘Soundness’ (of plan)** – A judgement of quality and procedure based upon key elements of the plan – making process. (see the tests of soundness set out in para 4.24 of PPS12).

**Spatial Plan** – One or more Local Development Documents; also includes a Regional Spatial Strategy.

**Stakeholder** – Individuals or groups that are affected by a decision and have an interest in its outcome.

**Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)** – This will set out the standards which the plan – making authority intend to achieve in relation to involving the community in the preparation, alteration and continuing review of all local development documents and in development control decisions, and also how the local planning authority intends to achieve those standards. The Statement of Community Involvement will not be a development plan document but will be subject to independent examination. In respect of every local development document, the LPA is required to publish a statement showing how it complied with its Statement of Community Involvement.

**Statutory** – Required by law (statute), usually through an Act of Parliament

**Strategic** – A strategy-based policy or decision that operates at a higher level than a policy or decision created to deal with local and day-to-day issues.

**Strategic Housing Market Assessment** – Assesses the housing need and demand within a defined area which informs the development of spatial housing policies.

**Strategically Significant Towns and Cities** – Towns and Cities that currently play a critical strategic role regionally or sub-regionally and have potential to achieve further significant development sustainably.

**Super Output Area** – Super Output Areas (SOAs) are a new national geography created by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) for collecting, aggregating and reporting statistics.

**Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)** – They will cover a wide range of issues on which the plan-making authority wishes to provide policies or guidance to supplement the policies and proposals in development plan documents. They will not form part of the development plan or be subject to independent examination.

**Supplementary Planning Guidance** – Supplementary Planning Guidance may cover a range of issues, theme and site specific and provide further detail of policies and proposals in a development plan.

**Sustainable Development** – A widely used definition drawn up by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987:

“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

**Sustainability Appraisal** – This is a mandatory process under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and is used to promote sustainable development through the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations into DPDs and SPDs.

**Targets** – Objectives expressed in terms of specified amounts of change in specified periods of time.

**Tenure** – The conditions on which property is held. Examples are owner occupation, renting and shared ownership.

**Townscape** – The general appearance of a built – up area, for example a street a town or city.

**Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)** – A grant scheme to help communities to regenerate the historic parts of their towns and cities. The programme is designed to address problems in areas of particular social and economic need throughout the UK. It encourages partnerships to carry out repairs and other works to a number of different historic properties within those areas and improve the quality of life for all those who live, work and visit there.

**Travel to Work Area (TTWA)** – A broadly self-contained labour market area usually focused on an urban employment centre.

**This publication is available in large print,  
Braille or audio formats on request.**

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

**Please contact 01934 426 816**