

CONSULTATION NOVEMBER 2020

# NORTH SOMERSET LOCAL PLAN 2038 CHALLENGES AND CHOICES PART 2

## Choices for the Future





# Welcome

by Cllr Donald Davies, Leader of the Council and Cllr James Tonkin, Executive Member for Planning and Transport



**Thank you for joining the second part of our Challenges and Choices consultation on planning for North Somerset over the next 15 years.**

Over the summer we consulted on the Local Plan [Challenges for the Future document](#). This focussed on the key challenges facing North Somerset over the next 15 years and how the new Local Plan could respond to them. It identified six main challenges. These were how to tackle the climate emergency, how to support our economy, providing new homes and creating communities, creating a sustainable future, protecting important green and blue spaces and the future role of the Green Belt.

We've had a fantastic response to the consultation with a total of 3,464 comments received from 917 respondents. The main issues, themes, ideas and concerns that you raised are set out in our [Consultation Statement](#), and the first part of this document also sets out how your ideas and comments have helped shape this next stage of the plan – the Choices.

The Choices consultation is all about looking at alternative approaches for where new housing, employment and community uses might go over the next 15 years and which are the broad locations which best reflect your priorities.

This is not going to be easy given the large amount of housing the government has identified for North Somerset, but we need to plan positively for the future.

To plan properly, we need your views. No decisions have been taken on where or how new homes should be built yet, but those decisions will be taken in the next year or so.

We have prepared a short questionnaire and would encourage everyone to complete it – details of how to respond are set out at the end of this document. Please take the opportunity to get involved and let us know your thoughts.







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# Introduction

The Local Plan is a document which sets out where and how new development will take place in North Somerset over 15 years from 2023 to 2038. When finalised it will include allocations for different land uses such as housing and employment and policies to guide decision making on planning applications.

We are still at an early stage of plan-preparation. In Summer 2020 we consulted on the [Challenges for the Future](#) which related to the issues we need to consider and our suggested priorities. This document follows on from that first consultation. The feedback received has helped to clarify our priorities and shape this Choices document and will be used to inform the detailed policies and site allocations next year. The detailed feedback from the Challenges consultation is set out in our [Consultation Statement](#).

This Choices document is about the broad approaches to where new development might take place. This is known as the 'spatial strategy'. At this stage of the process the consultation relates to general locations, not detailed sites.

For that reason, the approaches are presented diagrammatically.

The alternative spatial strategy approaches will need to take into account the identified challenges, such as the housing requirement, infrastructure delivery and constraints to development, and will be assessed against our priorities and sustainability objectives which came out of the Challenges consultation.

This consultation will help us to identify the preferred strategy for addressing future needs within North Somerset. Once the spatial strategy has been identified, the next stage is to identify potential locations to deliver the growth required. This will be set out in a draft plan which will be subject to further consultation next year.



At the time of preparing this document the government is considering changes to the planning system. This could change the context for how local plans are prepared in the future and what they look like.

A more zonal approach is proposed which focuses on defining growth, renewal and protected areas, and also changes to the way the housing requirement is identified which could result in significantly more houses to find. Regardless of what happens to the planning reforms the Council will be in a strong position as by early 2021 the Challenges and Choices consultations will have provided a clear steer on the issues, priorities and spatial strategy which can then inform either the draft plan or a new-style local plan document.





# Summary of response to the Challenges Consultation

Many thanks to everyone who responded to the Challenges consultation this Summer.

This section provides an overall summary of the main comments made, but please have a look at our Consultation Statement to see the full picture of the responses received. We have considered all the comments made and these have helped to inform our understanding of the issues affecting North Somerset. We have used this feedback to revisit the priorities for North Somerset we proposed in Challenges, which will now be used to assess the different approaches for delivering the form and location of future growth.

**You said...** From the Challenges consultation some common themes emerged in response to all of the questions we asked. The following represent the most common themes that emerged from the consultation (they are not actual quotes) and on the following page we've set out how these themes will be taken forward through the Local Plan.

*Climate change is the most important issue facing humanity – the Local Plan must help tackle it.*

*There should be amendments to the Green Belt. It's the only way to achieve sustainable development.*

*The design of new housing developments should be high quality, interesting and individual. Design should fit within the local context...no more boring boxes!*

*Transport should be one of the main challenges and priorities. There needs to be a comprehensive transport strategy to accompany the Local Plan.*

*Prioritise brownfield land first before building on green fields.*

*New infrastructure needs to be delivered with new housing to avoid pressure on existing services and facilities and congestion on the roads.*

*Put housing near jobs, services, facilities and public transport to reduce the need to travel.*

*We must protect the natural environment and good quality agricultural land.*

*Encourage active travel (walking and cycling) for environmental and health reasons.*

*Provision of green space, facilities and footpaths is really important, and people must be able to access them easily.*

*Flooding is a serious issue. Areas prone to flooding should not be built on.*

*There needs to be more genuine affordable housing. This should include smaller properties for first time buyers and downsizers.*







## How the Local Plan will address these issues

The issues most often mentioned related primarily to climate emergency, quality design, protecting the natural environment, concerns around flooding, the challenges of delivering transport and social infrastructure, provision of genuine affordable housing and how to achieve truly sustainable development against the backdrop of a climate emergency. All of these issues and concerns that you have raised are important and interrelated in terms of delivering sustainable development.

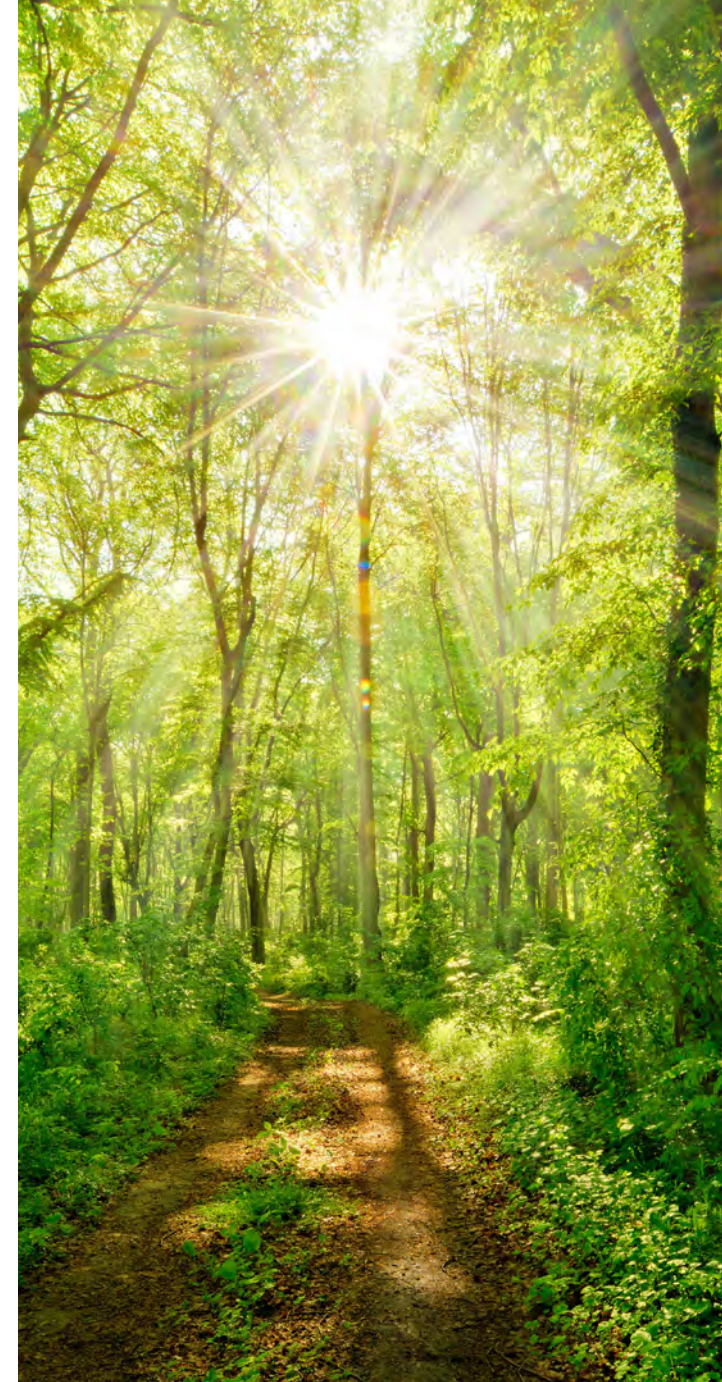
### ● Importance of climate change:

This is an issue which has implications for a wide number of aspects such as the design and construction of buildings, green spaces, and renewable energy. We will ensure that our planning policies and new development areas reflect climate change principles.



### ● Locate new houses near jobs and services:

Prioritising growth at sustainable places is key to responding to the climate emergency. The response to the consultation confirmed that we have identified the right principles for ensuring sustainable development in North Somerset and these principles can be carried forward in terms of examining spatial options and formulating a more detailed plan.





- **Don't build in the flood plain:**

Following this feedback, and in light of the climate emergency, our suggested approach is to develop a spatial strategy that avoids allocating land for new development in areas at highest risk of flooding.



- **Prioritise brownfield land:**

Using previously developed land (sometimes referred to as 'brownfield') first has been a priority for the government and in North Somerset's planning policies for many years. Whilst many large brownfield sites have been redeveloped there are still some opportunities within our towns. Making the best use of these sites not only reuses land but can help with regeneration. It helps to ensure development takes place close to existing facilities and services and is often well connected and accessible. However, brownfield sites do tend to be more expensive to develop and they can take longer. We will continue to prioritise the development of brownfield land through local plan policies as well as wider council place-making initiatives.



- **Encourage active travel:**

The Covid-19 pandemic has created a shift in how people use transport, with an emphasis on more local trips and more walking and cycling, and we would like this to continue. The provision of attractive cycle routes and networks and good direct safe pedestrian routes should make walking and cycling the preferred and most attractive option. This is something the Local Plan will seek to achieve through the spatial strategy (our preferred way of deciding where growth will go), detailed policies and masterplans.



- **More genuine affordable**

**housing:** Evidence is being prepared regarding the type of housing needed across North Somerset and the desire for smaller start up or downsizing housing is a factor we will take into account in the Local Plan, particularly where this can be shown at a local level. This is an issue that has also emerged through the preparation of neighbourhood plans and we will need to ensure that this is addressed through our policies.



- **Better Design:**

Standardised, unimaginative housing that does not relate to the local context should not be acceptable in North Somerset and detailed policies, design codes and masterplans will form part of the local plan to ensure that excellent design becomes the norm.



- **Green Belt:**

This Choices consultation sets out four approaches to the distribution of development around the district, three of which include the potential for some development in the Green Belt. If the agreed approach in the draft plan includes Green Belt elements, then this could require a reassessment of the Green Belt.





# Our priorities

In the last consultation on the challenges we face, we asked about the proposed priorities for North Somerset which should be used to shape the Local Plan in terms of where, when and how new development takes place. We have adjusted our priorities in the light of the responses received.





## Our revised priorities

✓ To promote sustainable development and address the climate emergency

✓ To deliver the zero-carbon ambition by maximising the opportunities for low carbon development and the use of renewable energy.

✓ To develop new and existing communities in a way which enhances health and wellbeing, reduces inequalities and is child and family friendly.

✓ To increase the number and range of job opportunities across the district, particularly at the towns to give people the opportunity to work near to where they live.

✓ To prioritise the importance and delivery of green spaces when considering new development, support priority habitats and species and safeguard areas at risk of flooding.

✓ To prioritise the location of new development close to places with a wide range of services, facilities and job opportunities.

✓ To provide essential infrastructure in step with development, both transport infrastructure and community infrastructure such as schools, healthcare facilities and community centres.

✓ To address the decline in the town centres of Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead through supporting regeneration and place-making initiatives which revitalise these places as the focus for retailing, community uses, housing and jobs.

✓ To deliver higher residential densities through good design, particularly at town centres, transport hubs and on brownfield sites.

✓ To deliver essential new strategic transport infrastructure to support new development and enable more sustainable travel options.

✓ To deliver a diverse range of housing in a variety of tenures, sizes and forms, particularly genuine affordable housing, to meet future needs of North Somerset residents at locations where they are most needed.

✓ To reduce car use, encourage walking and cycling, and high-quality and effective public transport.





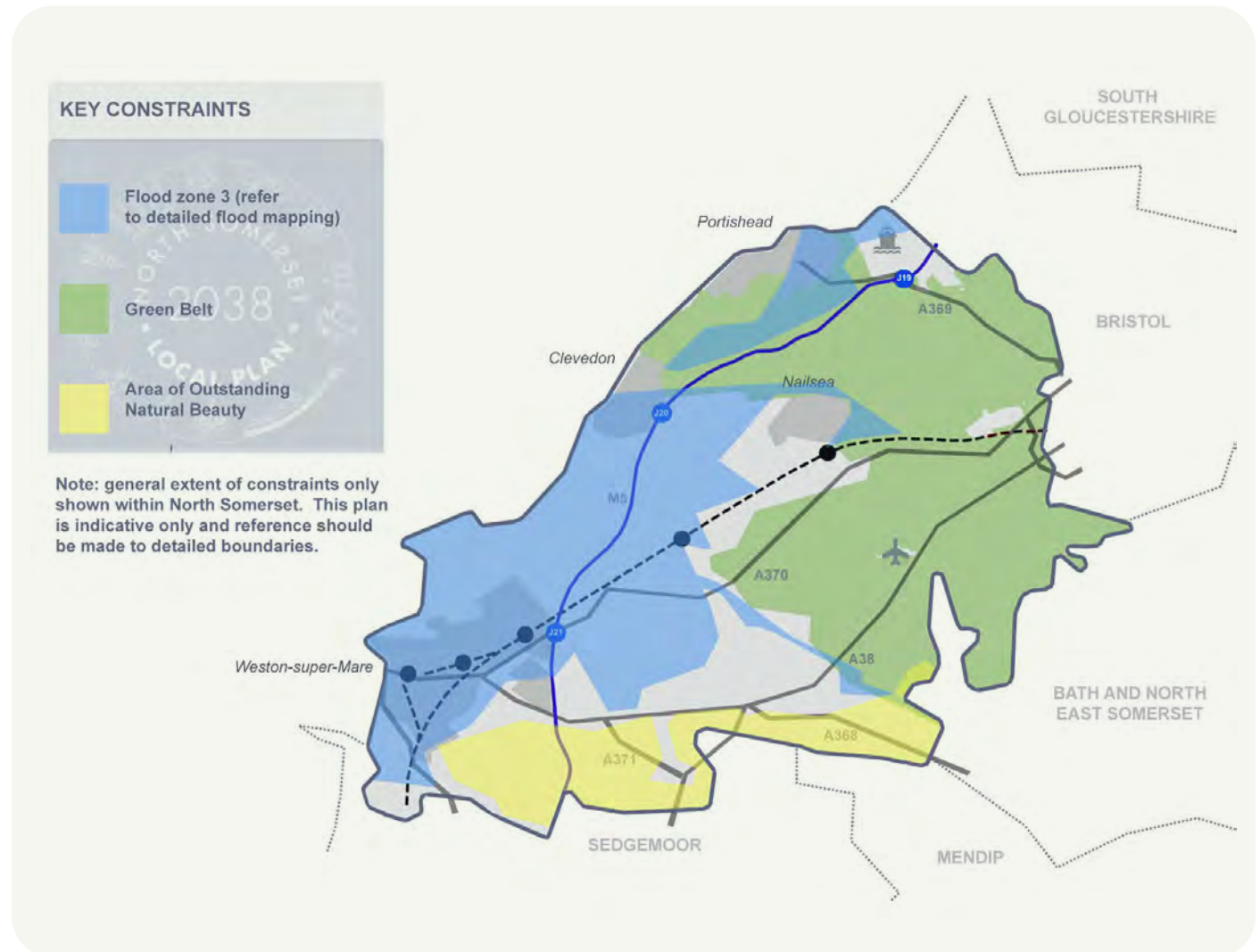
# Constraints to Development

North Somerset contains sensitive areas (referred to as constraints) which limit where new development can take place.

Some constraints mean that certain areas are unsuitable for new development. These include, for example, flood plain, nature reserves or ancient woodland.

Other constraints don't completely rule out new development. This plan shows three key constraints in North Somerset which cover the majority of the district: the Green Belt (a policy constraint), Flood Zone 3 and the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

North Somerset also has a wide range of other constraints that need to be taken into account when considering the location of new development. These are shown on our more detailed [interactive map](#).





# The Housing Requirement



## Current North Somerset target

1,049 per year

15,735 dwellings over 15 years

As we explained in the Challenges consultation, accommodating the scale of growth that the government has identified for North Somerset is one of the most significant challenges. The current housing requirement was established by the Core Strategy (2006-2026).



## Current government standard method (Local Plan housing target)

1,365 per year

20,475 dwellings over 15 years

The new Local Plan must now use the government's housing target (standard method number) as the starting point. The Council has no choice in this. The Choices consultation must therefore consider approaches which are capable of delivering the current standard method figure. This consultation will help explore whether this scale of growth can be delivered and what the implications might be in terms of addressing our priorities and delivering sustainable patterns of development. The housing target for the purposes of this consultation is 1,365 dwellings each year or 20,475 in total over the 15 year plan period. The four indicative approaches presented later on in this document are based on this level of growth.



## Proposed government standard method (possible future housing target)

1,708 per year

25,620 dwellings over 15 years

In August 2020 the government announced plans to amend the standard method for calculating housing requirements, which would result in a substantial increase in the housing target for North Somerset. Given the government's proposed changes, this consultation will also consider the implications of the higher figure of 1,708 dwellings a year or 25,620 over the plan period. The government's suggested reforms also propose that the final housing requirement will in future be set by central government, taking account of constraints such as designated areas of environmental and heritage value, Green Belt and flood risk.

**It is clear that both the current standard method and the proposed higher figure produce a housing requirement which is considerably higher than either the current rate of house building in North Somerset (868 new homes in 2019/20) or expected local household growth (826 dwellings per year). If it is demonstrated that the government's housing targets cannot be met in sustainable locations within North Somerset then we will need to talk to neighbouring authorities about whether there is any potential to accommodate our unmet housing need. Similarly, there may be requests from areas such as Bristol to help meet their needs.**





# Delivering the growth we need

This consultation suggests different broad approaches to accommodating the proposed growth (both housing and jobs) over the next 15 years.

This takes into account the major constraints in the district such as flood risk and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and reflects the priorities which have now been refined to reflect what you have told us about what you think matters in response to the Challenges consultation.

## Housing

While the starting point is the government's housing target of 20,475 dwellings, there will be some sources of new housing which will be common to all of the proposed approaches.

### Existing planning permissions

We need to take into account existing planning permissions which we expect to be delivered during the new plan period (2023-2038). These are primarily on the new developments around Weston-super-Mare and amount to about 3,000 homes.

### Development within urban areas

One of the clear messages to come from the Challenges consultation is to ensure that we maximise the opportunities for development and regeneration at the towns. Making the best use of these locations not only reuses land but can aid comprehensive regeneration. It helps ensure development takes place close to existing facilities, services and jobs and is often well connected and accessible. We have been working with Homes England in Weston-super-Mare to ensure that some of the larger redevelopment opportunities in the town centre and near transport hubs can be regenerated for housing and at the other towns to assess regeneration opportunities.

Redeveloping urban sites comes with a range of choices, especially concerning density and the height of buildings. Urban living can offer exciting opportunities but needs a strong commitment to high quality design to ensure people aspire to live in these locations, that there is adequate private and shared open space, there are services and access

to facilities and issues regarding car parking and increased congestion are dealt with. Often these sites take time to be delivered and do not offer the same returns to developers, so they can be particularly challenging.

Covid-19 has raised the possibility that there will be less demand for office space in future, some of which could be converted to housing. Changes in retailing will mean that shops will need to find new uses. Hotels, guest houses and some leisure facilities may go out of business which could all mean new opportunities. We will be assessing these trends over the coming months to assess the potential for housing from these sources.

The recent relaxation of planning rules now allows for the construction of additional storeys on top of houses. It is very unclear what the take-up is likely to be for creating additional homes above existing houses in our district. Our initial reaction is that it is likely to be very limited.





We estimate that somewhere between 1,000 and 2,000 homes could be developed on regeneration sites within our four towns over and above those that have already been identified. Work is on-going to identify potential opportunities. If further opportunities are identified this will reduce the number of greenfield sites we need to find.

### Development within rural areas

There will also be small scale sites coming forward in villages over the plan period. These may be identified through Neighbourhood Plans. The Local Plan will need to review the approach to the role of settlements and settlement boundaries, and this will be influenced by the priorities and the overall approach identified. At this stage no specific figure has been included for small scale growth in the rural areas.

### Overall housing capacity from these sources

We currently estimate that the potential capacity from the sources above will be about 5,000 new homes. This leaves a net figure of around 15,475 dwellings to find through the local plan. This figure will be refined as the plan making process progresses.

## Employment

Supporting economic growth and employment provision will be a key part of a sustainable plan for North Somerset. The strategy for growth needs to address the linkages between where people live, work, and how they commute - both within North Somerset and to other locations.

Work is ongoing to explore the scale of employment change that the plan needs to support, and the types of employment growth that the area is likely to experience. This must take into account the uncertainties and implications for how we work and travel post-pandemic and Brexit. Aligning infrastructure investment to stimulate economic growth and addressing environmental objectives are key considerations.

The approaches set out in this consultation integrate employment provision as part of a wider set of growth strategies. The main opportunities for delivering new jobs are:

- Urban regeneration and re-using previously developed land, particularly at town centres.
- Mixed use developments including housing and jobs at the larger Potential Growth Areas.
- New strategic business locations.

This would be in addition to the opportunity to support small-scale employment development, such as the expansion of existing local businesses.







Locking Parklands

# The alternative approaches

We are consulting on a number of alternative approaches for identifying how the new growth could be delivered. This stage of the process is about the overall strategy, not specific development sites, although we are aware of specific development opportunities which have been put forward. It is only once the preferred strategy has been agreed that consideration will be given to potential development opportunities. These will be subject to consultation at the next stage of plan preparation. The four broad alternatives are: Retain Green Belt, Urban Focus, Transport Corridors and Greater Dispersal.

We believe that the approaches we have presented represent the principal alternatives, but they are not definitive and there will be other variations. In fact, the preferred approach may be a hybrid containing several different elements. If you have any other ideas about how the growth requirement might be met, please let us know.

The approaches presented avoid the use of areas at risk of flooding for residential use. However, development in flood risk areas is an issue we are consulting on and if it is accepted that such locations are acceptable, subject to safeguards, the spread of development locations and their capacity could vary as a result.

As part of the plan-making process we must also consider the impacts of the different scenarios on our existing communities and transport infrastructure such as congestion on existing roads and the M5, what opportunities there might be for addressing or alleviating existing problems and how changes such as greater use of electric cars might affect future patterns and behaviours.

A high-level sustainability appraisal of each approach has been undertaken in relation to 16 identified sustainability objectives. This provides a broad indication of the relative effectiveness of each approach and will be used as a guide to decision making alongside other factors.







Weston-super-Mare

## Introduction to the diagrams showing the possible approaches to growth

- Each of the four alternatives is **illustrative only** – they indicate the possible pattern and scale of development which might be required.
- A diagrammatic base map is used to give a visual impression of where growth might take place but is not intended to identify specific locations for growth and no inference should be made about actual sites.
- The broad distribution of growth is indicated through the identification of a range of places (Potential Growth Areas).
- All four approaches are broadly capable of accommodating the 20,475 dwellings (about 15,475 dwellings net) currently required by government. (It should be noted that the government's proposed changes would require locations for an additional 5,000 dwellings to be identified).
- The plans use symbols to illustrate a potential scale of growth at each place.
- The larger Potential Growth Areas (shown as octagons) are assumed to deliver both housing and employment.
- The plans do not indicate that there is a maximum or target capacity at any place. It must not be assumed that places identified on the plan for 'up to 500 houses', for example, are expected to accommodate as much as 500 (it could be significantly less).
- A place identified on the plan indicates a potential capacity across a range of different sites and opportunities – it would not necessarily be delivered as a single site. The scale of growth identified broadly reflects existing constraints and known development opportunities.
- Residential locations are not currently proposed in flood zones 3a (although there will be opportunities within urban areas) but employment developments are identified.
- The proposed Portishead Rail and proposed Banwell Bypass are shown as current planned infrastructure schemes. Further work will be required to identify the additional range of transport infrastructure required, including road improvements, to support the Local Plan proposals as they emerge.





# 1: Retain Green Belt

## Description

The Green Belt is a specific area of North Somerset; it is different from the term 'greenfield' which relates to undeveloped sites and does not include all the rural areas. Green Belt covers about 40% of North Somerset generally between Bristol and the edges of Clevedon, Nailsea and Yatton. Government advice is that Green Belt can only be altered in exceptional circumstances, so it is important to demonstrate that all other reasonable options for meeting needs have been fully explored first, such as using brownfield sites, increased densities and assessing the potential for growth in neighbouring areas. This approach therefore assumes that any new development areas are located outside the Green Belt.

This approach is similar to that previously included in the, now withdrawn, Joint Spatial Plan, but with additional locations and increased levels of growth given the higher number of homes now required.

### It includes:

- Urban extensions generally to the south/south west of Nailsea
- Growth to the north and east of Weston on land east of the M5 and a new settlement near Churchill.
- Development to the west of Backwell and at a number of other village locations that could be explored to accommodate growth under this approach.

Given Green Belt and flooding constraints there is very little growth potential proposed at Clevedon and Portishead other than within the existing urban areas.

Employment growth would be on brownfield sites at the four towns including potential as part of new mixed use town centre regeneration, with new greenfield opportunities primarily at Weston (east of the M5), and Clevedon J20 where there is the opportunity to explore potential well-connected to the M5 corridor. Appropriate types and scale of employment would also be considered at the larger Potential Growth Areas.



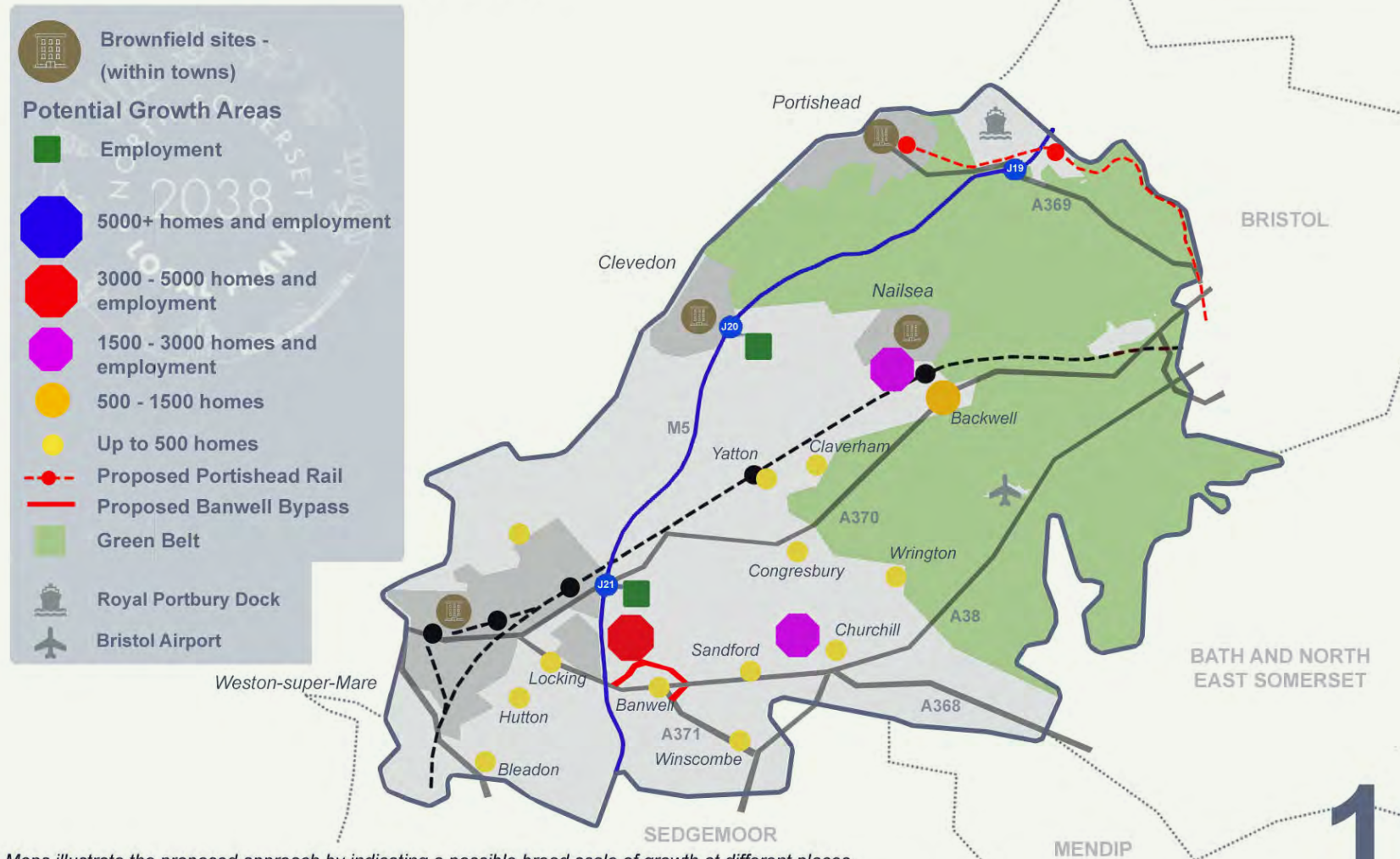
Should it not be possible to meet the full housing need in sustainable locations, there is also an opportunity to consider growth in the neighbouring authority at Burnham-on-Sea. This is an option identified in the Sedgemoor Local Plan; however, this location is affected by flooding constraints.

An alternative to this approach would be to maximise sustainable locations outside of the Green Belt and only then, should additional capacity be required, consider options for meeting any identified residual within the Green Belt.





# 1: RETAIN GREEN BELT



Maps illustrate the proposed approach by indicating a possible broad scale of growth at different places. The places identified are indicative only and must not be taken to imply any specific site. The scale of development identified for each place is not a target and may be much less, and may include more than one possible location.



## How well does the Retain Green Belt approach reflect our priorities and sustainability objectives?

Many of the proposed local plan priorities and sustainability objectives are supported by growth which targets the towns and urban areas that contain the greatest range of services, facilities and job opportunities. Developments at Weston and Nailsea generally score well in relation to supporting regeneration at these locations for example, but the more dispersed elements less so. By avoiding development close to Bristol, it fails to maximise some of the opportunities such as encouraging active travel, minimising commuting and providing job opportunities. The amount of dispersed growth means that this approach could potentially increase the number of car trips, particularly long-distance commuting to jobs, including to Bristol which given the distances to major service centres and employment areas could not be bridged with public transport. Car trips would be dispersed across the network which may mean a wider package of transport improvement measures would be required. This approach has the potential to undermine the sustainability objective relating to protecting good quality agricultural land, where Best and Most Versatile land is identified.

## Can it deliver the growth required?

It would be challenging to meet the scale of growth required outside of the Green Belt at sustainable locations. Even with delivery at the most sustainable locations maximised, this still results in a high proportion of more dispersed growth and significant impacts at a range of village locations.

The higher level of growth would lead to an even bigger proportion of the overall requirement to be directed to more dispersed locations, particularly the need for a greater range of village locations and more growth at each. This is likely to result in the need to include more sensitive locations at which point the scale of growth needed may require the consideration of limited Green Belt releases.



Blagdon Lake





# 2: Urban Focus

## Description

This approach seeks to maximise as much growth as possible close to the largest urban centres of Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead and locations well related to the Bristol urban area. It is characterised by a relatively small number of larger Potential Growth Areas focussed close to the urban centres where services and facilities are already located, and where a larger scale of development can assist with infrastructure provision.

- The largest opportunity is generally to the south west of Bristol in the Green Belt.
- The main opportunity at Weston is on land east of the M5, plus smaller opportunities.
- There is potential for significant growth at Nailsea.
- Opportunities are maximised at Clevedon and Portishead although at a smaller scale given constraints.
- There will be brownfield regeneration at the towns.

Employment growth will be on brownfield sites at the four towns including potential as part of new mixed-use town centre regeneration, with new greenfield opportunities primarily at Weston (east of M5) and Clevedon J20 where there is opportunity to explore potential well-connected to the M5 corridor. There is also an opportunity to explore potential new employment provision associated with the airport and Royal Portbury Dock. Appropriate types and scale of employment would also be considered at the larger Potential Growth Areas, where employment could support the wider functioning of the town and be well-connected to transport infrastructure and nearby workforce.

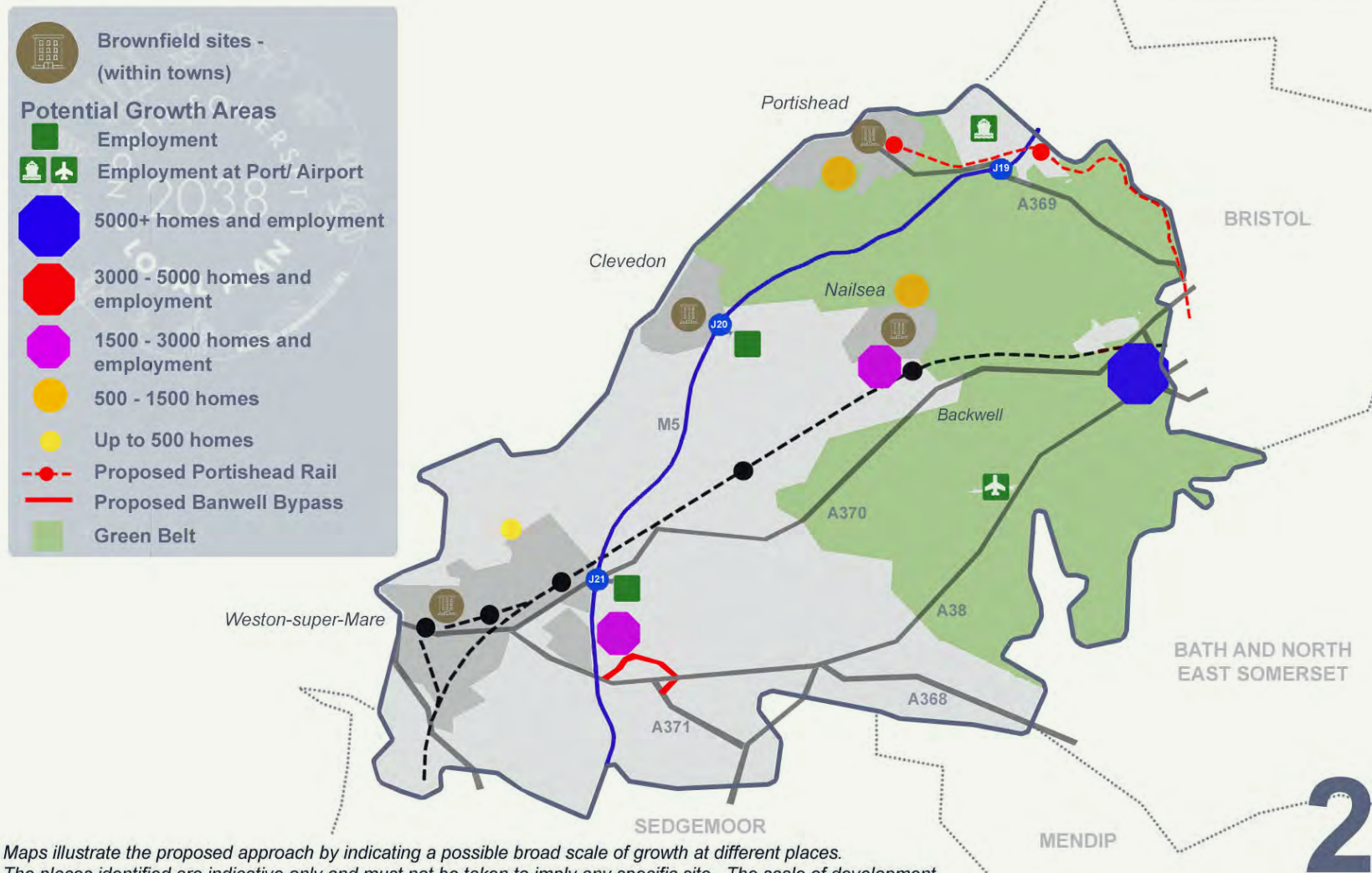


Weston-super-Mare - Christian Mueller / Shutterstock.com





## 2: URBAN FOCUS



Maps illustrate the proposed approach by indicating a possible broad scale of growth at different places. The places identified are indicative only and must not be taken to imply any specific site. The scale of development identified for each place is not a target and may be much less, and may include more than one possible location.





## How well does the Urban Focus approach reflect our priorities and sustainability objectives?

This approach generally addresses many of the proposed local plan priorities and sustainability objectives particularly in terms of concentrating development at accessible locations close to services, facilities and jobs, supporting brownfield opportunities and regeneration. By focussing growth at the main service and employment areas it could be seen to maximise the opportunities for walking and cycling. New or improved public transport is likely to be more affordable and commercially viable. Mass Transit proposals are being developed and could support development near Bristol. However, there will still be trips accessing the motorway network particularly at Weston which will require highway improvements. A potential issue with this approach is the time taken for the delivery of new large-scale development areas and associated infrastructure requirements and a perceived lack of a range and choice of development opportunities. This proposal is likely to have a significant impact on the Green Belt. This approach has potential for renewable and low carbon energy generation as larger scale development can improve the deliverability of heat networks.

## Can it deliver the growth required?

This scenario proposes large scale developments at a relatively limited number of locations. While this is good in terms of focussing resources on infrastructure and achieving a sufficient critical mass of development, it raises questions of deliverability over the plan period, including in relation to the infrastructure that would be required to be delivered.

At higher growth levels the concentration of development at Potential Growth Areas such as south west Bristol means that deliverability over the plan period becomes less certain.





# 3: Transport corridors

## Description

This approach seeks to identify Potential Growth Areas which are located on existing or enhanced public transport corridors where targeted growth locations (for both housing and employment) could be directly linked to transport investment, maximising opportunities for sustainable travel choices. The following corridors of interest have been identified where there is the potential for new growth to be linked to the main urban centres of Weston-super-Mare and Bristol through significant public transport enhancement:

- The A370/rail corridor connecting housing and employment at South West Bristol and other locations towards Nailsea, and by rail connecting Yatton.
- The A369/rail corridor connecting Bristol, Portishead and Easton-in-Gordano.
- The A38 corridor to the airport.
- Improvements to transport corridors at Weston, particularly linking potential development east of M5 (housing and employment) to the town and the rail network.

In this scenario there would also be brownfield opportunities at the four towns including locations where transport hubs could be improved such as at stations and town centres. Employment growth will be on brownfield sites at the four towns including potential as part of new mixed use town centre regeneration, with new greenfield opportunities primarily at Weston (east of M5), and Clevedon J20 where there is opportunity to explore potential well-connected to the M5 corridor. There is also an opportunity to explore potential new employment provision associated with the airport and Royal Portbury Dock. Appropriate types and scale of employment would also be considered at the larger Potential Growth Areas including those locations located along key transport corridors where new infrastructure provision can support economic growth that is well-connected to Bristol.

This approach has the potential for supporting Mass Transit, but this will require long-term transport infrastructure. A possible new Mass Transit transport system for Bristol, including an alignment to Bristol Airport, is currently being investigated. Neither the form of the technology to be used nor potential



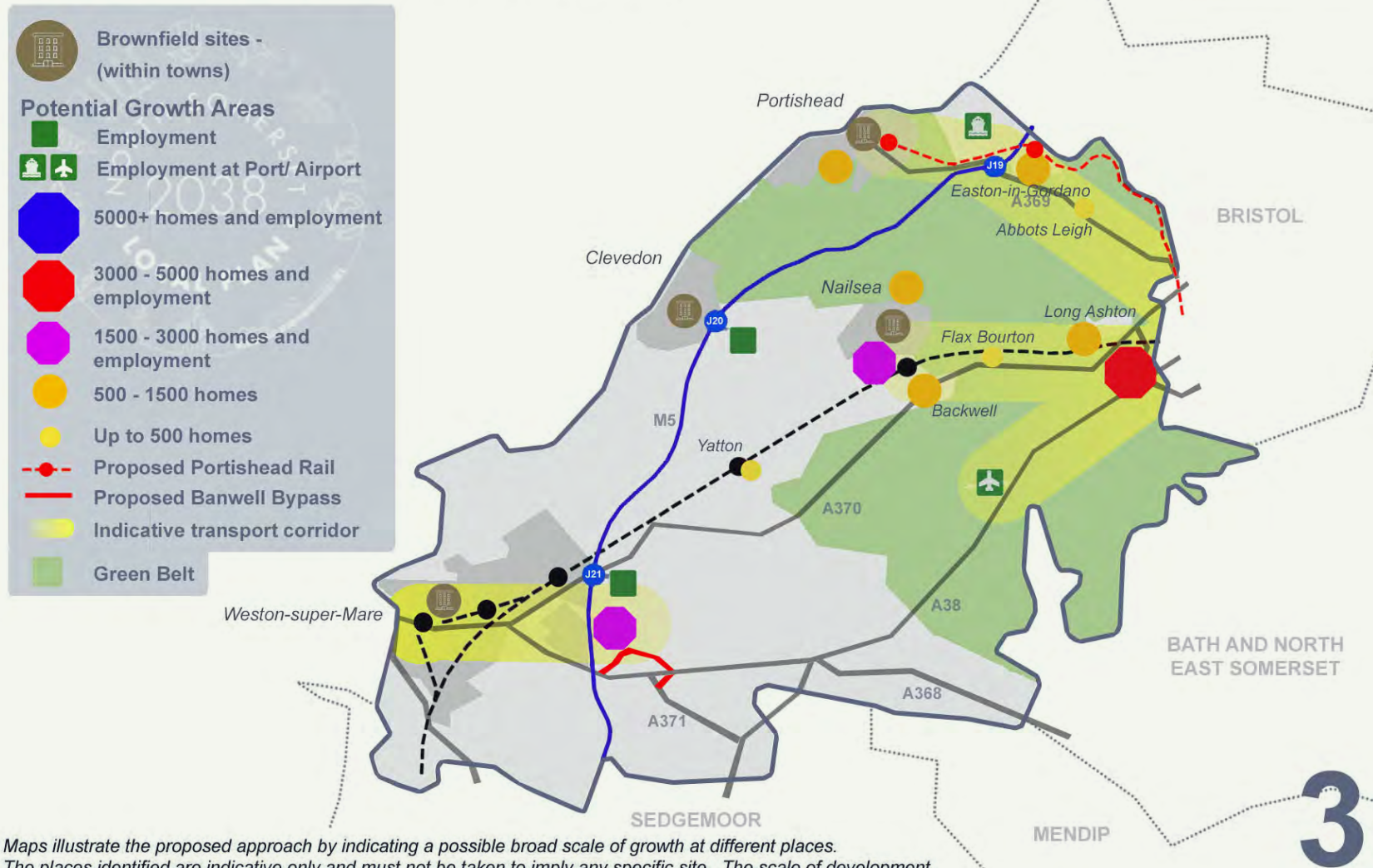
alignments have been defined yet. If agreed, the delivery of Mass Transit isn't likely to be until towards 2038, so other public transport will be required in the meantime to deliver housing and employment. However, Mass Transit has the potential to deliver significant public transport infrastructure in North Somerset and across the West of England and it should be considered in the formulation of the North Somerset Local Plan.

This approach potentially has a greater impact on the Green Belt with multiple developments along corridors potentially adding to the impression of urban sprawl and the merger of settlements.





### 3: TRANSPORT CORRIDORS



Maps illustrate the proposed approach by indicating a possible broad scale of growth at different places. The places identified are indicative only and must not be taken to imply any specific site. The scale of development identified for each place is not a target and may be much less, and may include more than one possible location.



## How well does the Transport Corridors approach reflect our priorities and sustainability objectives?

This approach helps to address low carbon objectives and the delivery of strategic transport infrastructure to support better accessibility. It performs the best under the sustainability objective relating to reducing the need to travel by car with enhanced sustainable travel opportunities. However, it could potentially be harder to create successful communities and could have a disproportionate impact on valued habitats and biodiversity.

It assumes significant targeted investment in public transport throughout the plan period and beyond, with development (housing and employment) at locations designed to maximise patronage, particularly Mass Transit opportunities which could significantly enhance existing bus services and provide new bus and metrobus services. While the railway corridor is attractive, it is difficult to secure significant capacity and improvements in quality. However, a more linear development pattern could result in lengthy trips to schools and services and discourage cycling. Transport investment is very expensive and takes time to deliver which may mean that projects or corridors need to be prioritised, and there is the danger that housing pressures may result in developments taking place in advance of the necessary transport provision to support it. This approach potentially has a significant impact on the Green Belt with multiple developments along corridors adding to the impression of sprawl and the merger of settlements.

## Can it deliver the growth required?

At this scale of requirement, a significant supply of strategic development opportunities would be required along various corridors, maximising growth at both larger sites and smaller locations.

Growth is very much reliant on timely delivery of infrastructure, particularly transport related to ensure that development does not exacerbate existing unsustainable trends and associated congestion. The choice and variety of development opportunities is likely to be limited.

A higher housing requirement would require exploring additional transport infrastructure options to unlock significant further growth.

The reliance on timely infrastructure delivery becomes more critical as the scale of development increases. However in general terms, infrastructure provision may be better supported by increased development, providing the impacts can be sufficiently mitigated.





# 4: Greater Dispersal

## Description

This approach assumes a broad spread of development across North Somerset, maximising growth where there are opportunities to do so. It assumes a much more even spread of the growth across all communities and avoids focussing growth at fewer large strategic sites. This means more communities will be impacted than for other approaches, although the scale of development at some places may be less.

It assumes that brownfield opportunities will be delivered at the four towns.

As this is a dispersed approach, if further capacity was required, more growth could come from increasing the size of allocations or the number of potential locations.

The symbol of the map showing 'up to 500' must not be taken to imply that this would be 500 houses; it could be a smaller number and could be delivered at a range of locations.

Employment growth would be on brownfield sites at the four towns including potential as part of new mixed-use town centre regeneration, with new greenfield opportunities primarily at Weston (east of M5) and Clevedon J20 where there is opportunity to explore potential well-connected to the M5 corridor. There is also an opportunity to explore potential new employment provision associated with the airport and Royal Portbury Dock as well as at the towns and larger villages. The dispersal of growth generally may reduce the potential to support new employment development as part of the Potential Growth Areas, especially in more peripheral locations that are not well-connected to main urban centres or the strategic transport network.

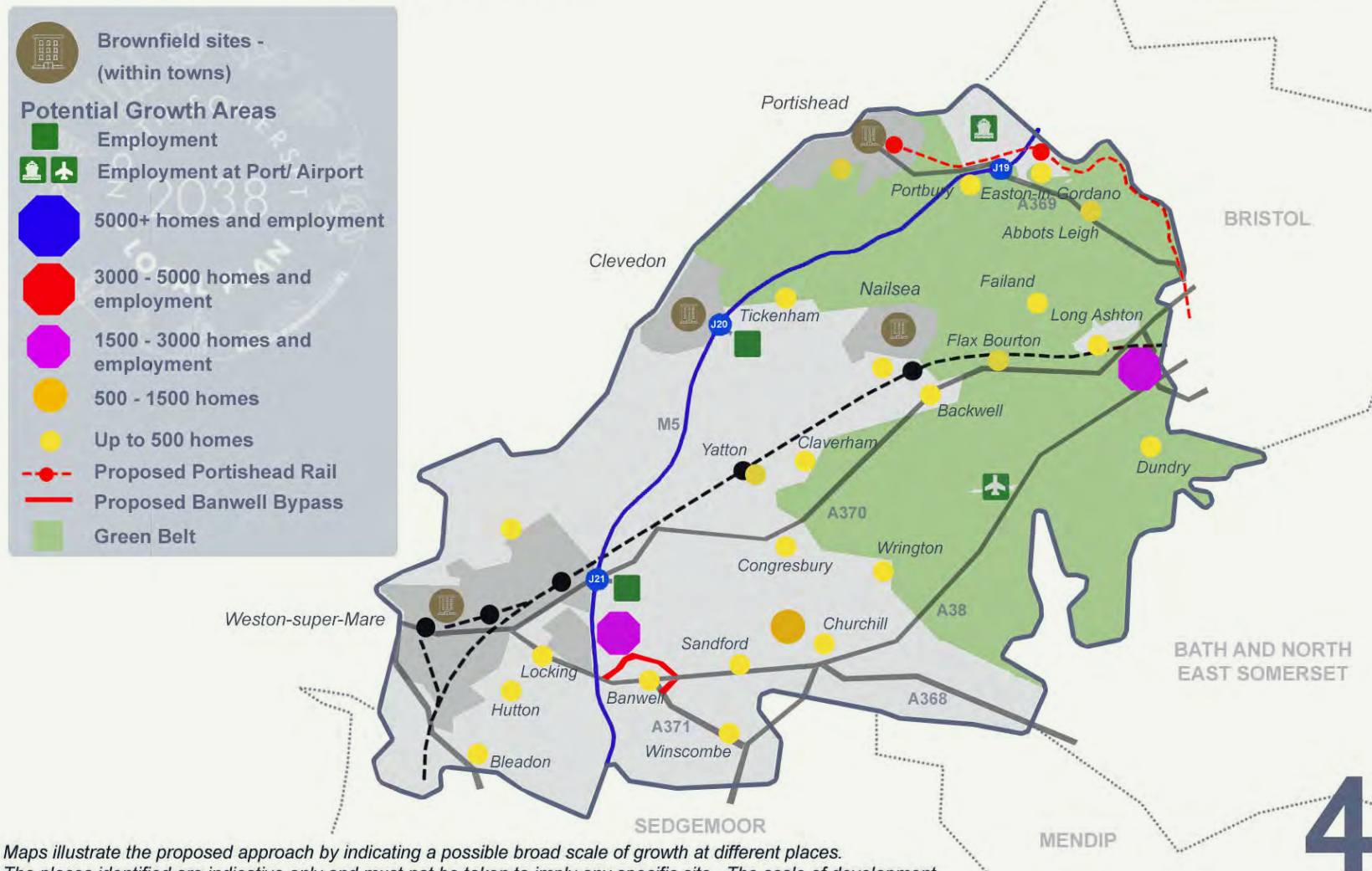


Rickford





## 4: GREATER DISPERSAL



Maps illustrate the proposed approach by indicating a possible broad scale of growth at different places. The places identified are indicative only and must not be taken to imply any specific site. The scale of development identified for each place is not a target and may be much less, and may include more than one possible location.

4







## How well does the Greater Dispersal approach reflect our priorities and sustainability objectives?

A more dispersed pattern of growth means that there is likely to be further to travel to services, facilities and jobs and walking, cycling and public transport use would be expected to be less attractive. A more dispersed strategy is also potentially more costly in terms of the supporting infrastructure and services required and smaller scale housing developments may not be able to fund the local infrastructure needed. This approach would require improved public transport services in a greater number of locations and require highway investment measures across the whole network. This approach performs poorly against the sustainability objectives relating to protecting good quality agricultural land and minimising landscape impact, where Best and Most Versatile (BMV) and highly sensitive landscapes are identified. It also performs less well in terms of the protection of biodiversity and green infrastructure. It does however provide a range and variety of development locations which would support delivery.

## Can it deliver the growth required?

This scale of requirement would require a significant amount of growth at a large number of locations, including places which are relatively less sustainable.

At higher levels of growth this would mean substantial and disproportionate growth at a large number of villages across North Somerset.





# 5: Other ways of delivering the growth?

We have identified what we believe are the four principal approaches for addressing future growth, but we appreciate that there will be several variations or possibly alternative scenarios.

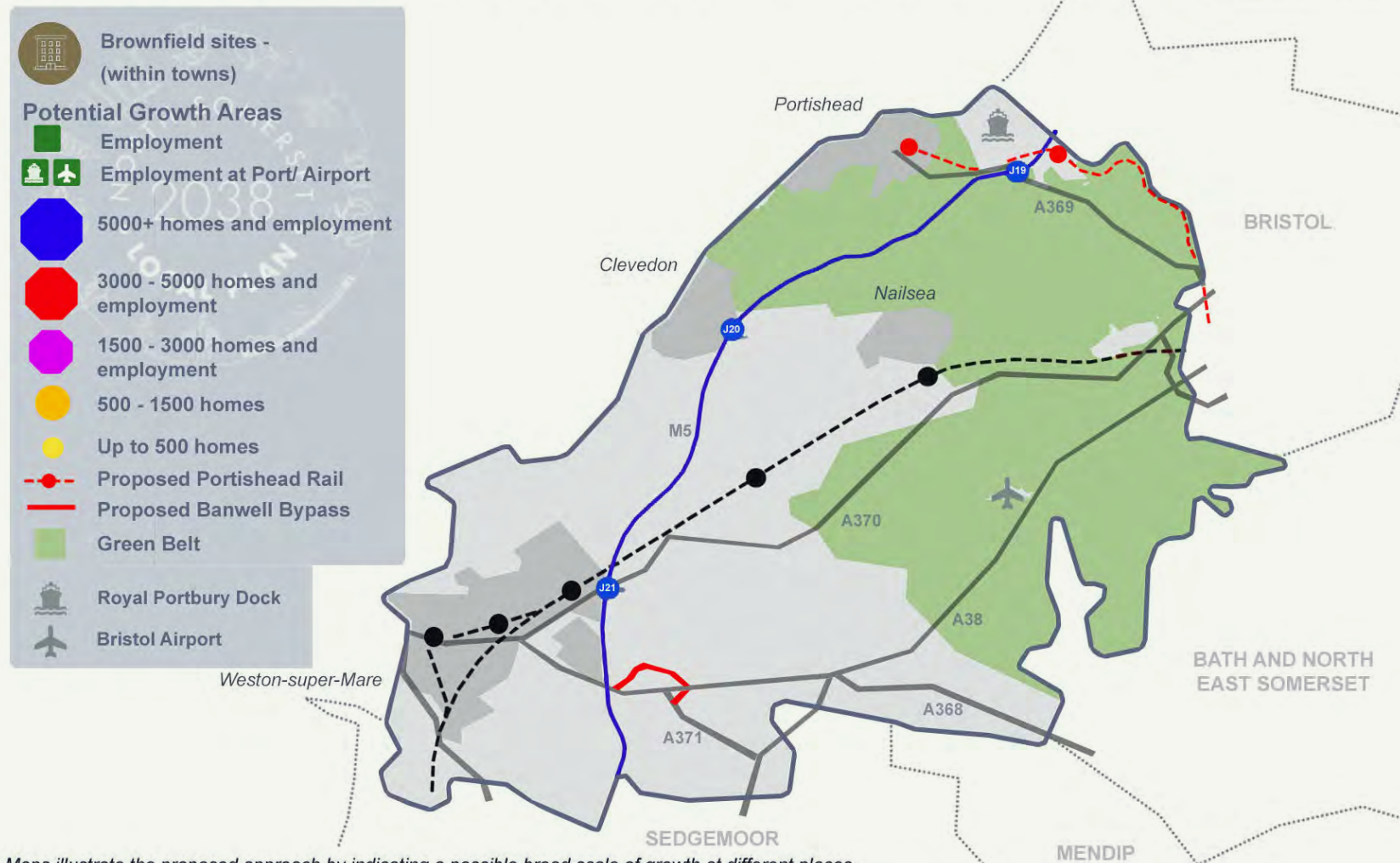
**If you have any thoughts on possible alternatives, we would like to hear from you.**

**We have included a blank base map on p.30 for you to annotate, or you can download one from our online questionnaire. The base map can be uploaded onto our online questionnaire so we can see your alternative ideas and suggestions for where growth should go. Please remember at this stage we are considering the overarching strategy and general locations for where development might take place, not specific sites which should or shouldn't be included. Don't forget that the mix of locations on the plan needs to broadly add up to 15,500 houses.**





## 5: OTHER WAYS OF DELIVERING THE GROWTH



Maps illustrate the proposed approach by indicating a possible broad scale of growth at different places. The places identified are indicative only and must not be taken to imply any specific site. The scale of development identified for each place is not a target and may be much less, and may include more than one possible location.



# How can I comment?

The most important thing you can do is get involved. The process for planning where homes and other development will take place in the future has to address many issues, but the key messages are simple, and we are determined to help as many people join the conversation as possible.

**Consultation on the Choices document will start on 2 November 2020 and will run for 6 weeks, closing on 14 December 2020.**

Given the continuing Covid-19 restrictions, the emphasis will again be on online consultation. We want to hear from as wide a range of people as possible including young people, businesses, community groups, interest groups, town and parish councils, landowners, house builders, transport providers, retailers and anyone else who wants to have a say! Please fill out our online questionnaire to tell us your views.





# Questionnaire

We have prepared a short **questionnaire** to help you feedback your thoughts on the alternative choices and your reasons. Please take a few minutes to answer the questions and inform us of your views.

Please use the questionnaire to provide your views, as it ensures that we can analyse everyone's views consistently and succinctly. There is an opportunity at the end of the questionnaire to express any additional views you may have.

Please note that we do not have the resources to upload, interpret and disentangle large submissions emailed to us. **Everyone with access to a computer is asked to use our online system. Instructions are clearly set out on the website.**

This consultation focusses on the strategy, not on individual sites. Anyone wishing to promote a particular site has had the opportunity to let us know about it through the recent Call for Sites process. If there is a new site you would like to tell us about, this can be added and will be considered as plan-making progresses.

Please do not resubmit sites or supporting information that you have already sent us.

**Thank you for taking the time to read our consultation document, we look forward to receiving your feedback.**

Please only use post if you do not have access to a computer – staff are working from home and do not have immediate access to posted comments. There is no need to duplicate information submitted electronically. **The postal address is Planning Policy Team, Post Point 15, First Floor, Town Hall, Walliscote Grove Road, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1UJ.**





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 888 888

