

Connecting our Garden Communities

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

Consultation Draft

July 2022



Version Control

Version	Purpose	Date
0.1	For Corporate Scrutiny Committee	24/06/2022
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Role	Name	Date
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Senior Officer approval	Alison Blom-Cooper, Assistant Director Strategic Place Planning	22/06/2022
Portfolio Holder approval	Cllr Mike Rigby, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation	24/06/2022

Responding to this consultation

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

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



[Consultation portal](#)

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

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



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



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

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1. Foreword and Executive Summary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Councillor Mike Rigby

Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation

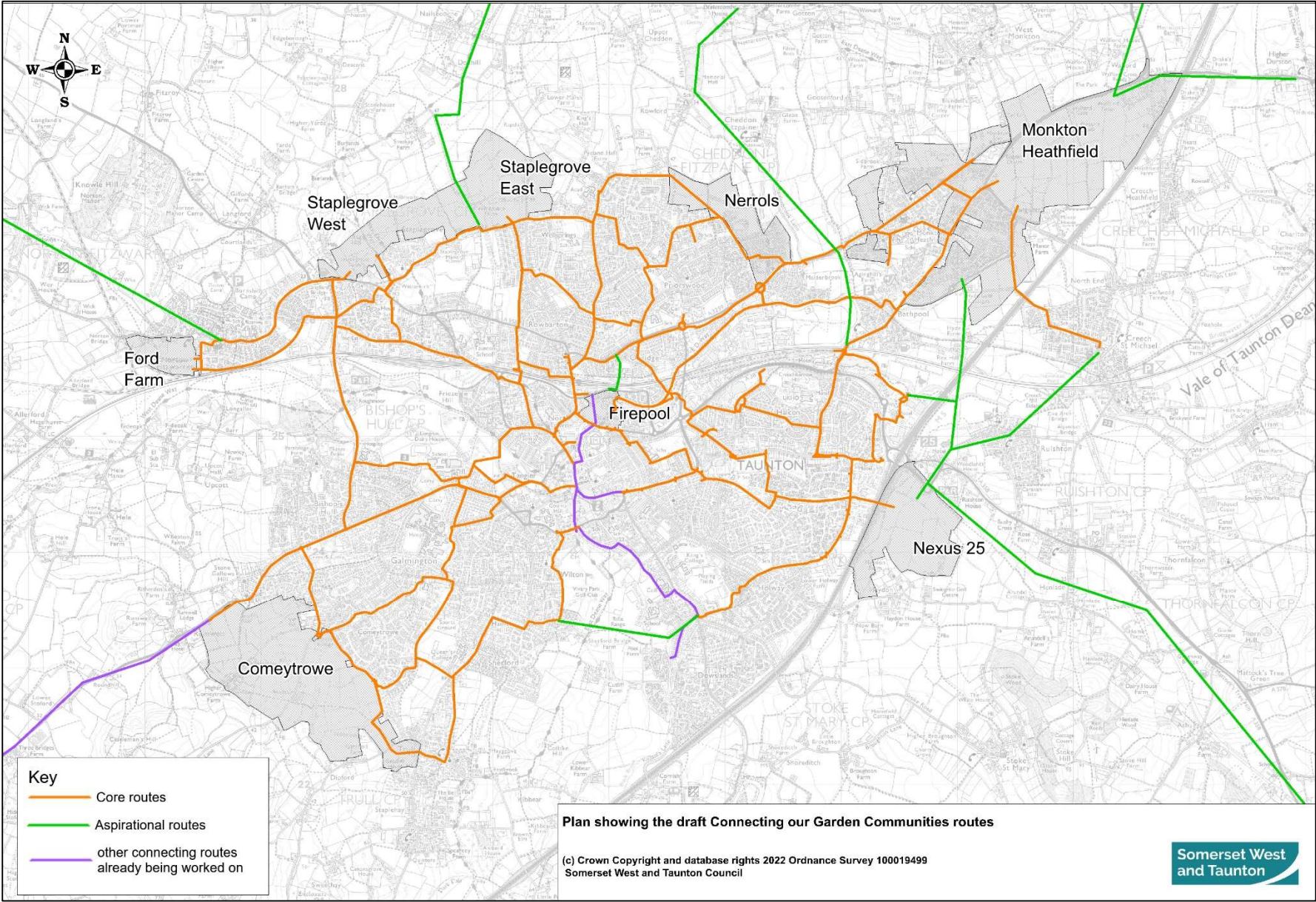


Figure 1 Connecting our Garden Communities draft Network Plan

2. Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

The plan responds directly to:

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

The plan will directly inform:

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

Taunton Garden Town

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

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

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

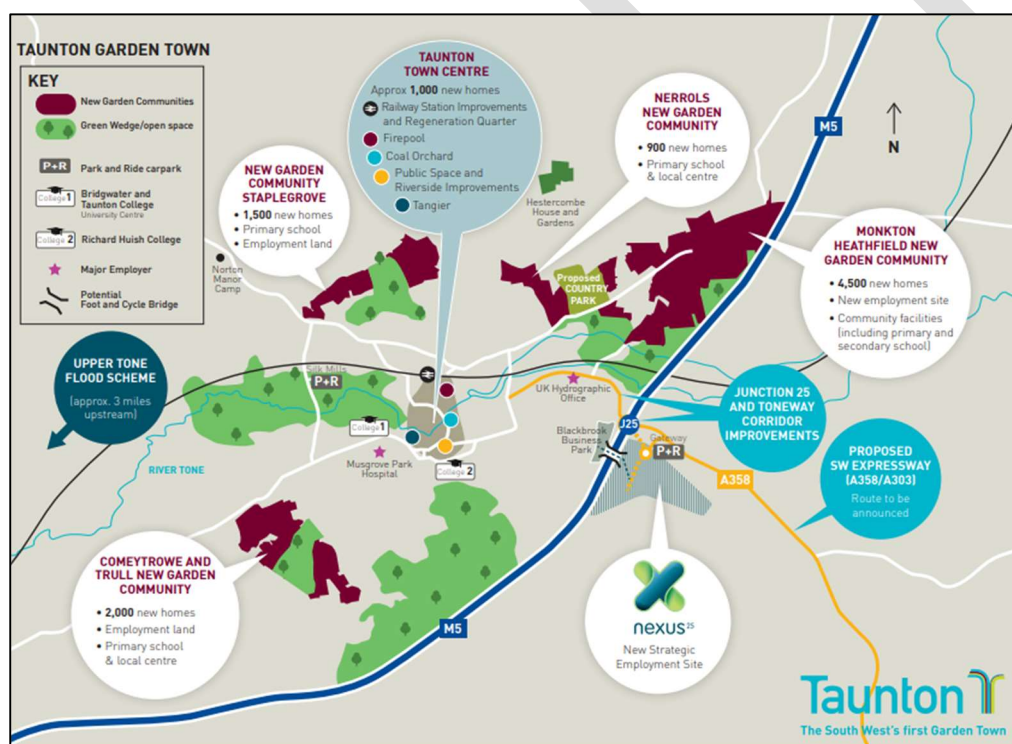


Figure 2 Taunton Garden Town

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

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

The Vision is organised around four main themes:

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

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

Scope and purpose

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

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

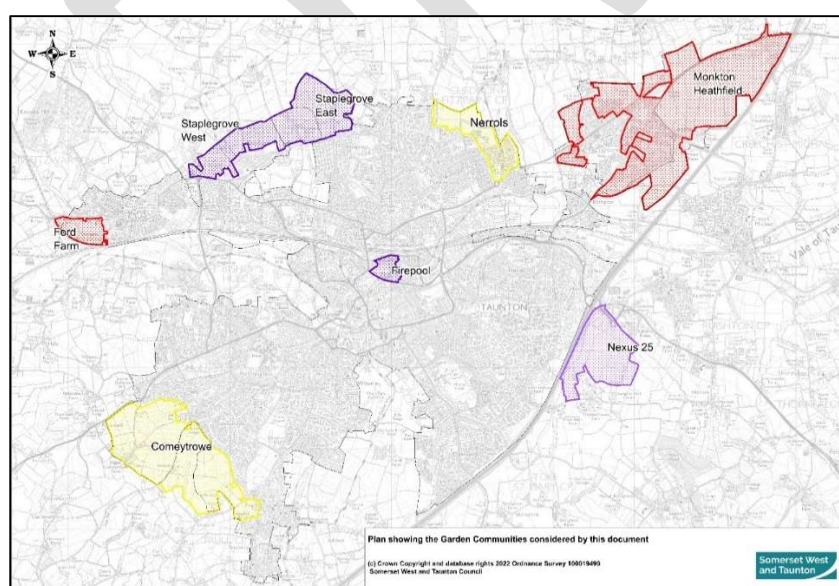


Figure 3 The Garden Communities considered by this document

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

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

National Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

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

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

National planning practice guidance

National planning practice guidance includes the following:

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

National Design Guide

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



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

In particular the National Design Guide states:

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

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

National Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS)

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

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

By 2025, the CWIS aims to:

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

Gear Change

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

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



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

Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN1/20)

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

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

The New Highway Code

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

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

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

Net Zero

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

Local Policy Context

Local Development Plan policy

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

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

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

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

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

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

Supplementary Planning Documents

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

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

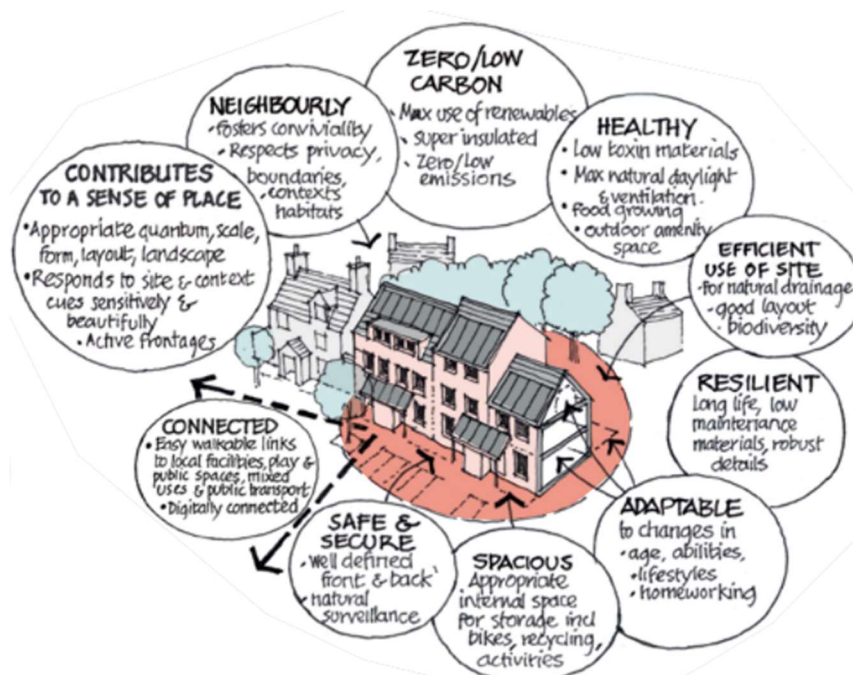


Figure 6 Achieving quality design, taken from the SWT Districtwide Design Guide SPD

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

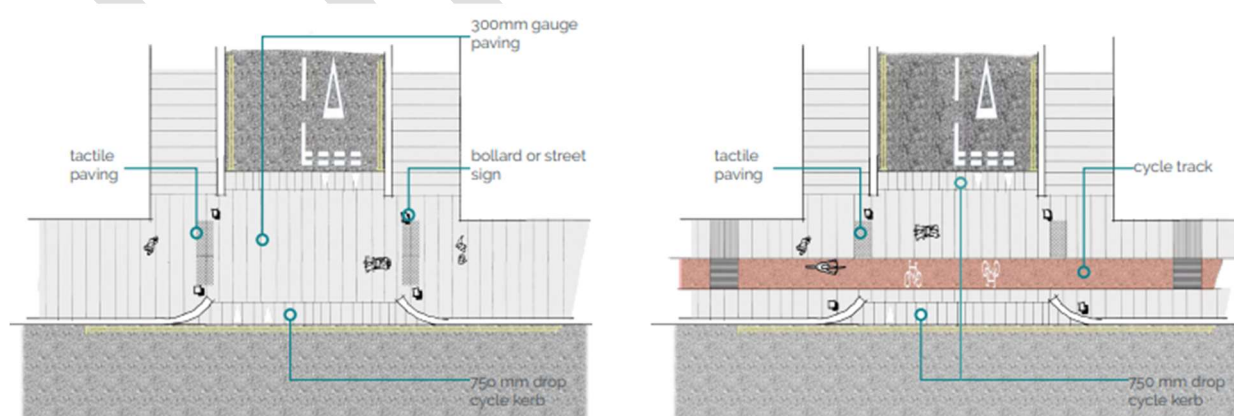


Figure 7 Example side road entry treatments, taken from the Garden Town Public Realm Design Guide SPD

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

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

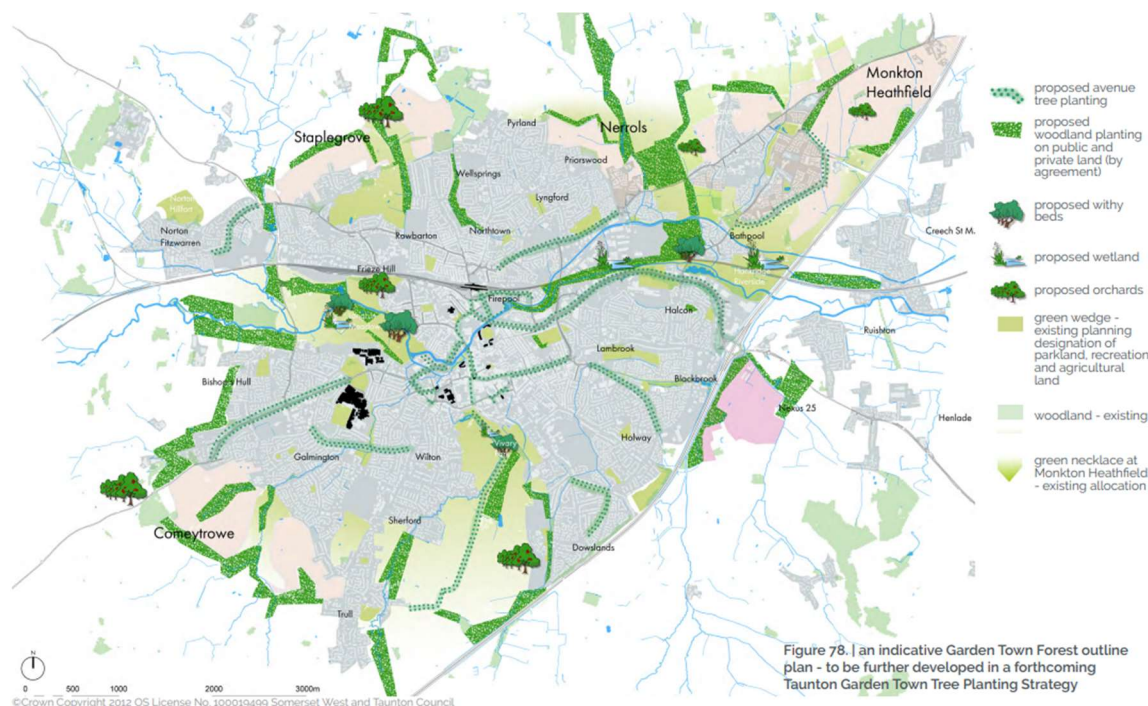


Figure 8 An indicative Garden Town Forest outline plan, taken from the Garden Town Public Realm Design Guide SPD

Taunton Garden Town

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

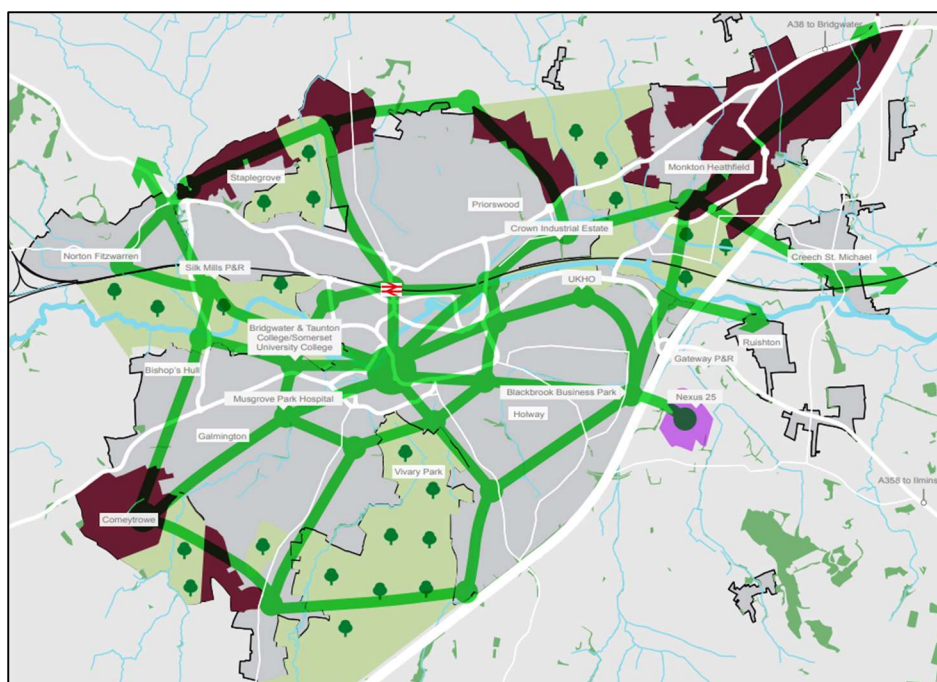


Figure 9 Indicative town-wide active travel network as identified in “Connecting our Garden Town”

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

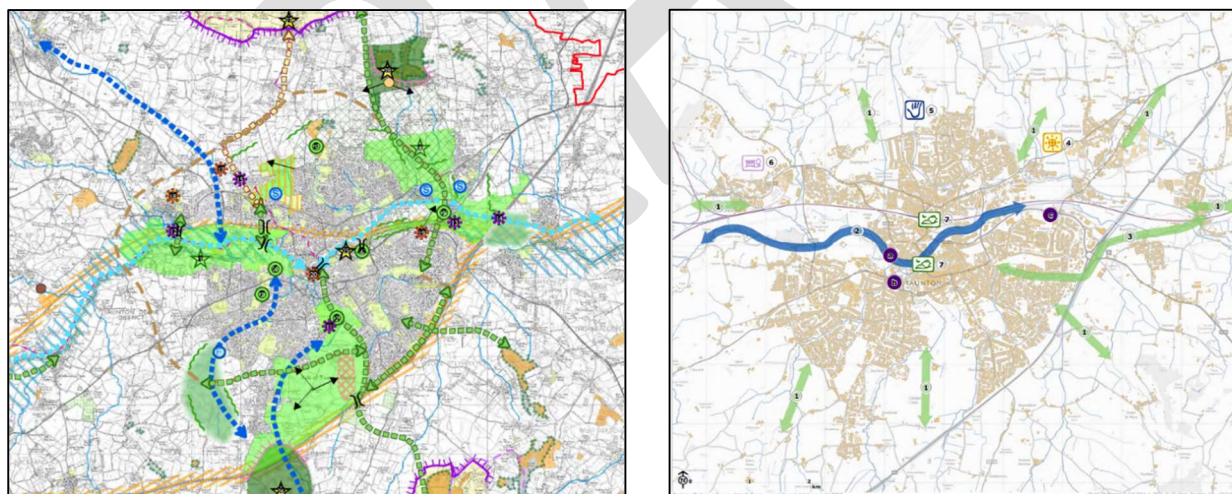


Figure 10 GI Strategy for Taunton (2009) and Taunton GI Opportunities Update (2017)

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

Climate and Ecological Emergencies

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Taunton Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

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

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

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

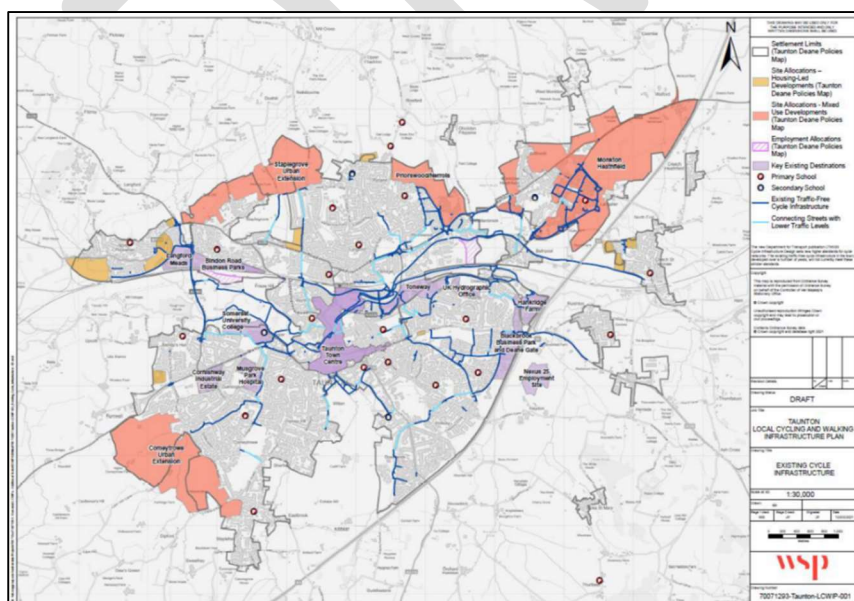


Figure 11 Existing cycle infrastructure as presented in the Taunton LCWIP

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

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

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

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

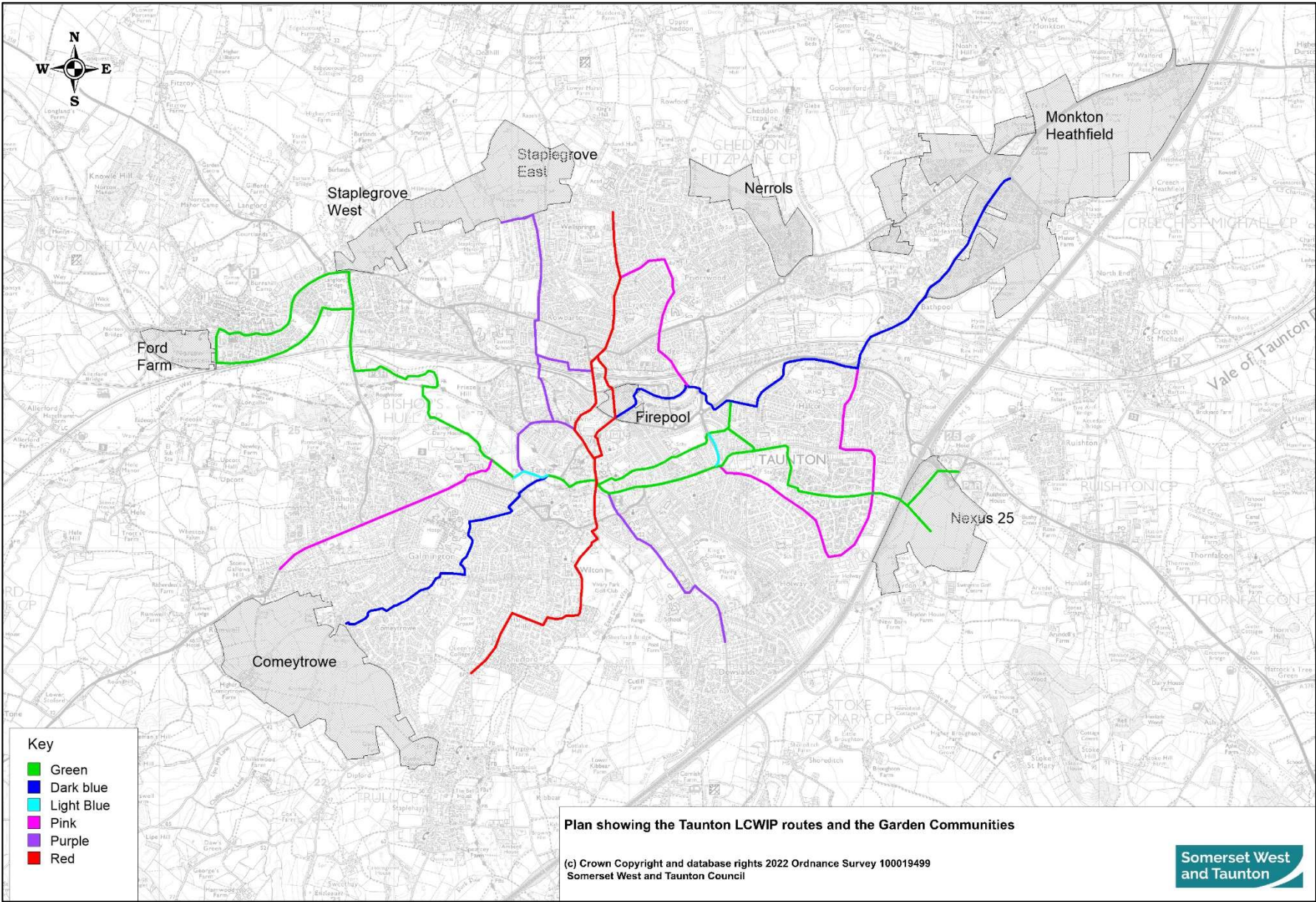


Figure 12 Taunton LCWIP routes and the Garden Communities

Co-benefits of action

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

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

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

3. Methodology

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

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

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

Stage 1 – Determining Scope

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

This stage included establishing the:

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

- Timescale for the plan

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

Stage 2 – Gathering Information

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

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

Stage 3/4 – Network Planning

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

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

Stage 5 – Prioritising Improvements

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

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

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

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

Stage 6 – Integration and Adaptation

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

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4. Scoping

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

Purpose and objectives

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

Building on the LCWIP

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

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

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

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

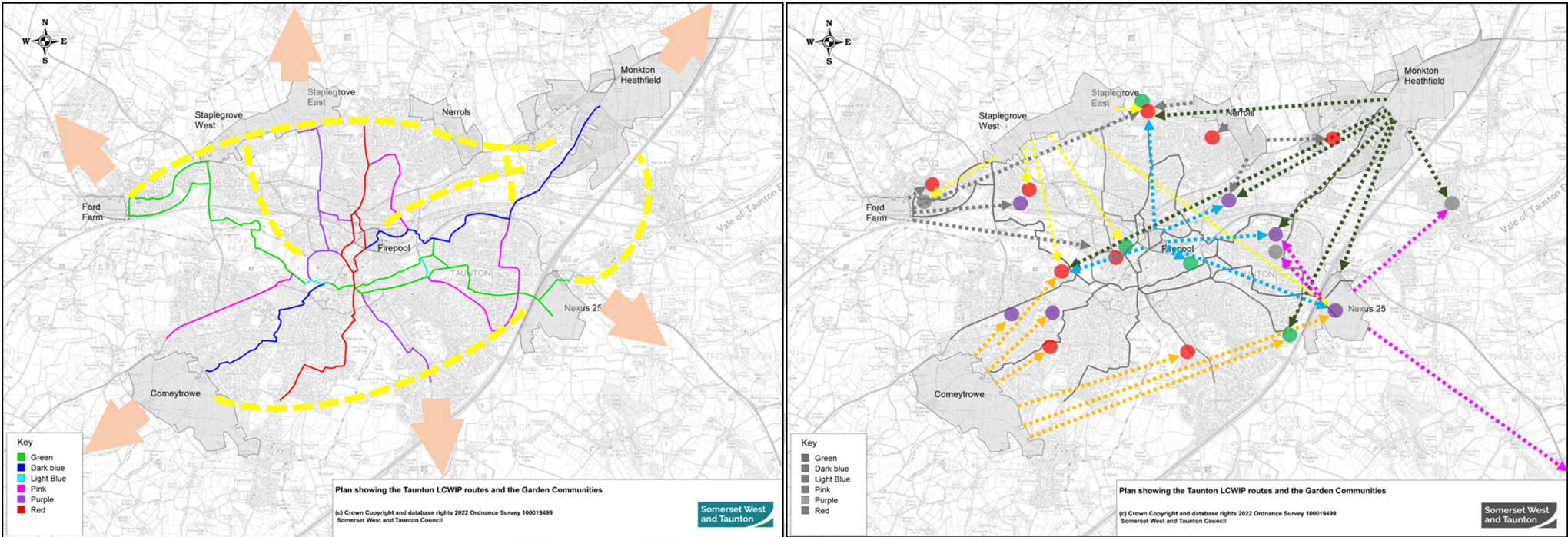


Figure 13 Building on the Taunton LCWIP (Indicative of strategic missing links, left and finer grain connections for the Garden Communities, right)

Modes/Users

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

Plan Objectives

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

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

Geographical scope

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

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



Figure 14 Distances from Taunton town centre

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

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

Project Governance and internal stakeholders

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

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

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

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

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

- Transport Policy
- Public Health
- Highways
- Infrastructure

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

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

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

Key stakeholders and early engagement

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

Initial engagement exercise (December 2021)

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

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

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

Responses have been grouped below against relevant Garden Communities:

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

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

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

Early engagement workshops (March 2022)

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

Route scoping workshops (March-April 2022)

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

Timescales for the plan

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

5. Gathering Information

Comeytrowe/Trull Garden Community



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

Comeytrowe/Trull Site allocation

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

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

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

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

Permissions, conditions and obligations relating to Comeytrowe/Trull

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



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

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

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

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

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

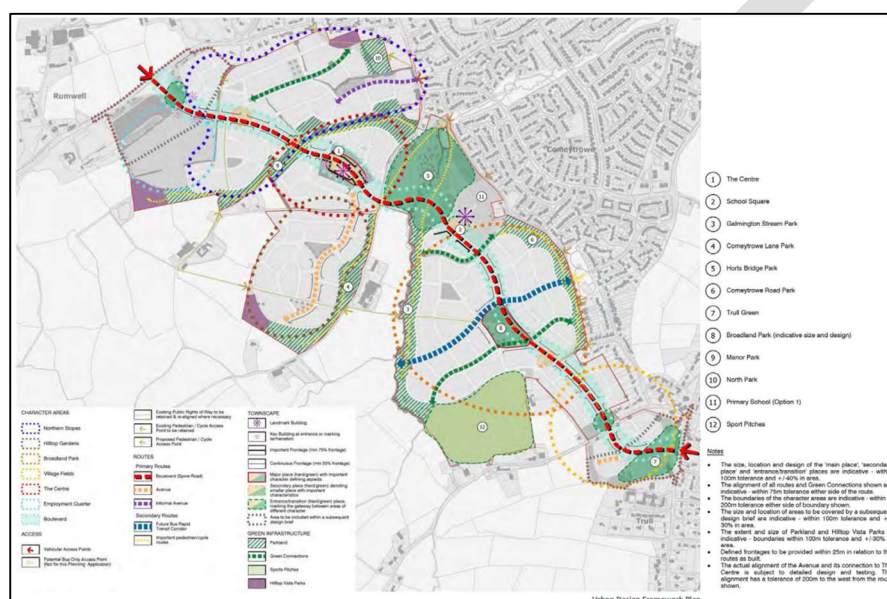


Figure 17 Urban Design Framework approved as part of 42/14/0069

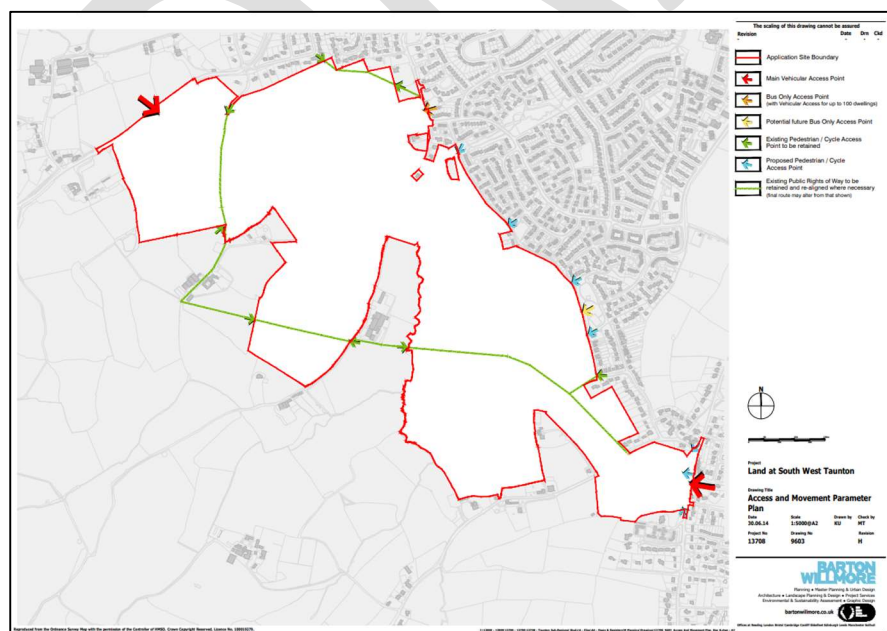


Figure 18 Access and Movement Parameter Plan approved as part of 42/14/0069

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

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

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

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

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

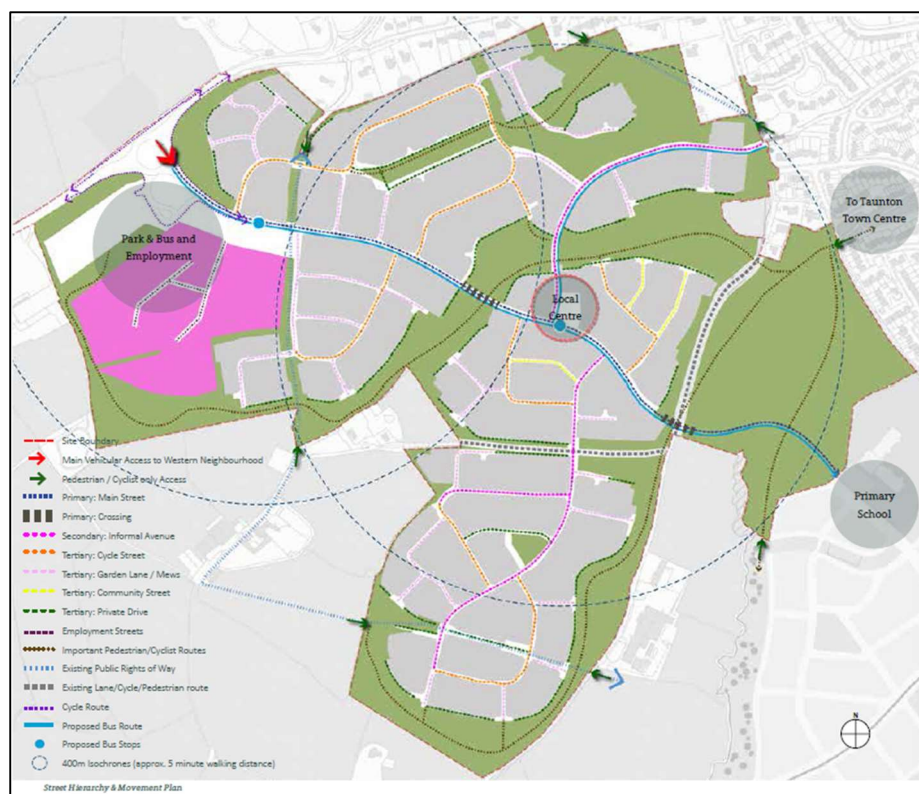


Figure 19 Street Hierarchy and Movement Plan for the Western Neighbourhood

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

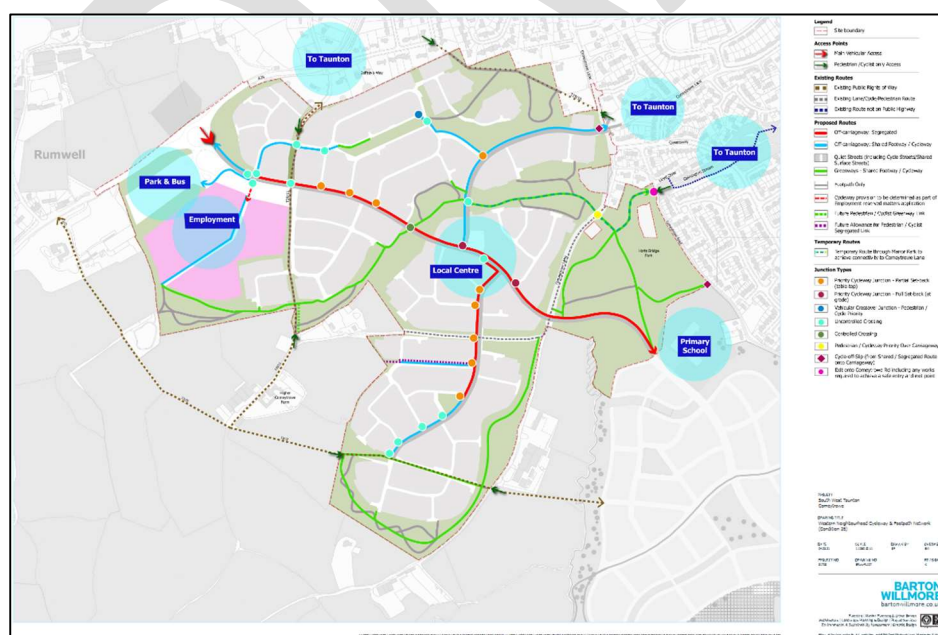


Figure 20 Western Neighbourhood Cycleway & Footpath Network (Condition 26)

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



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

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

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

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

Future development at Comeytrowe/Trull

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

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Staplegrave Garden Community



Figure 22 Indicative boundary of the allocation for Staplegrave Garden Community

Staplegrave Site allocation

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

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

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

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

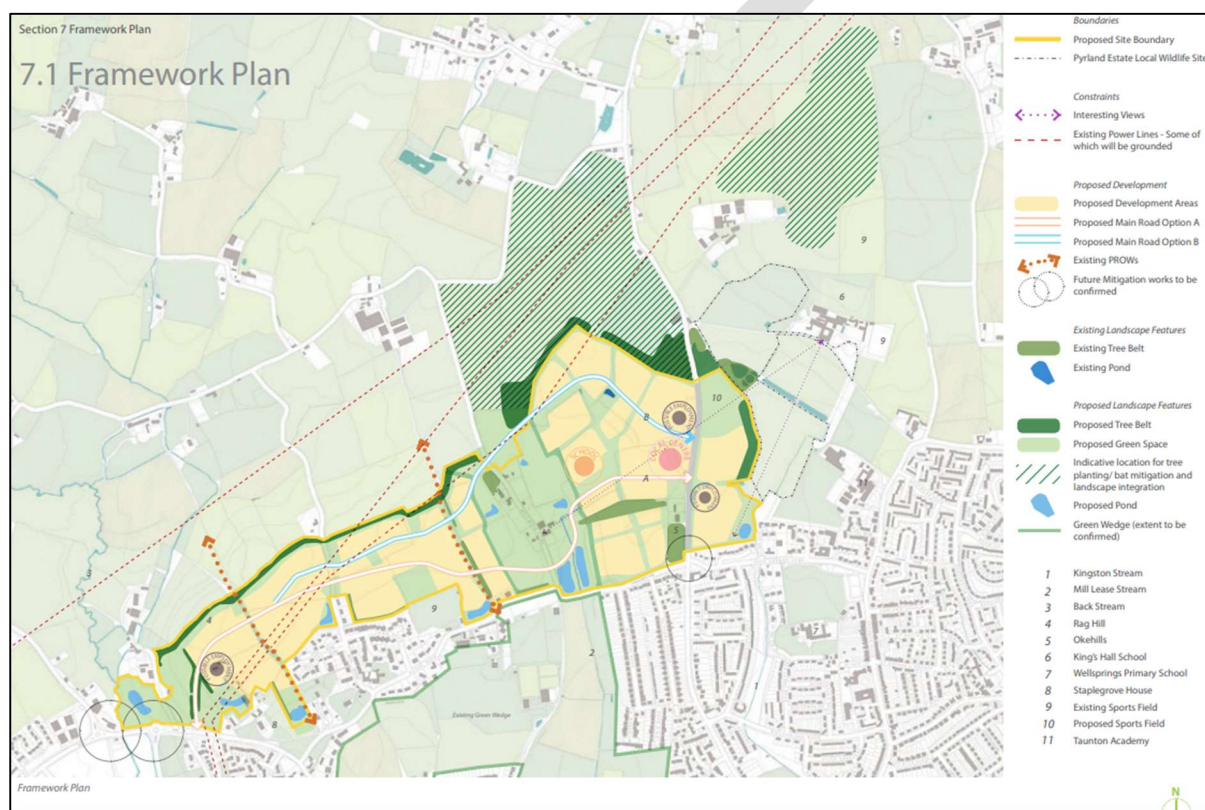


Figure 23 Approved Staplegrove Framework Masterplan

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

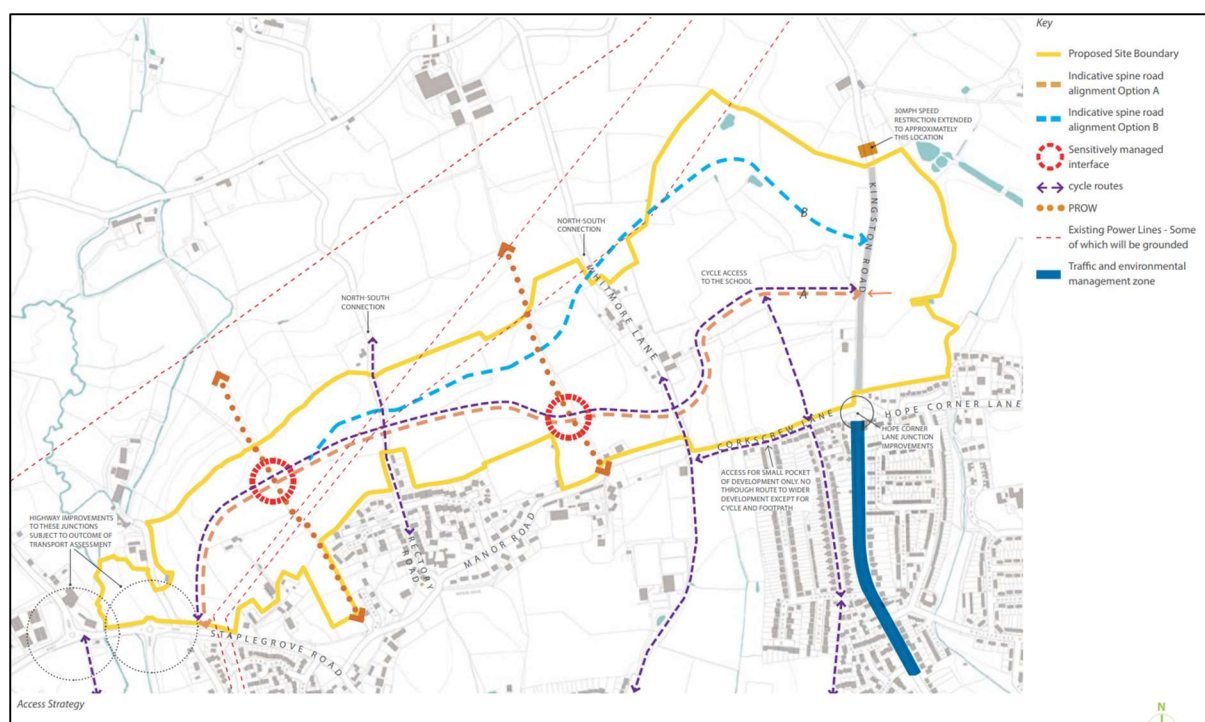


Figure 24 Approved Staplegrove Framework Access Strategy

Permissions, conditions and obligations relating to Staplegrove

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



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

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

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

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

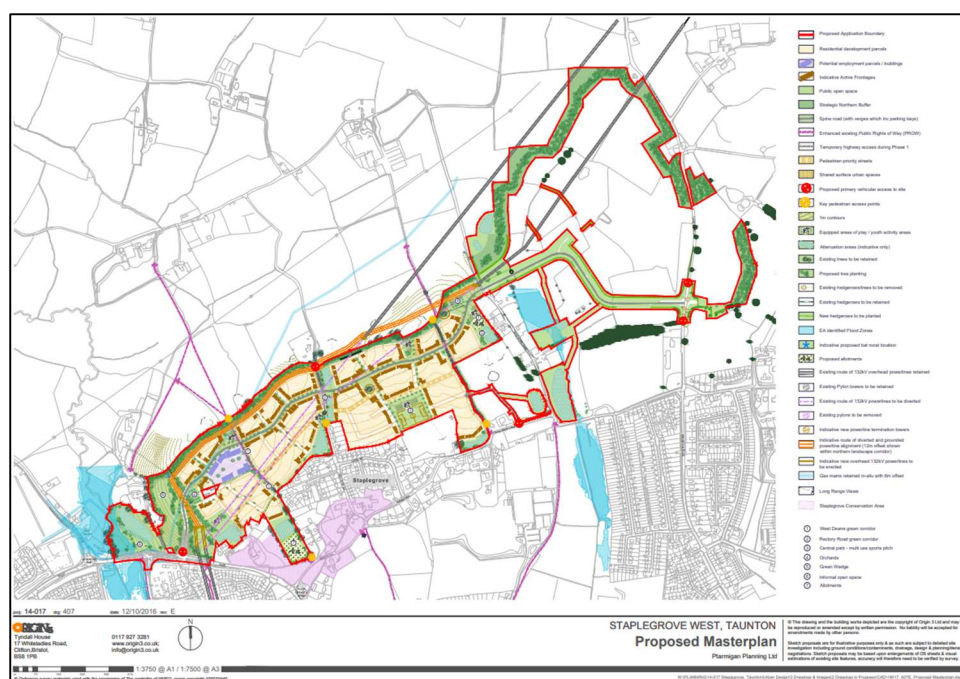


Figure 26 Staplegrove West Masterplan (as approved under 34/16/0007)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

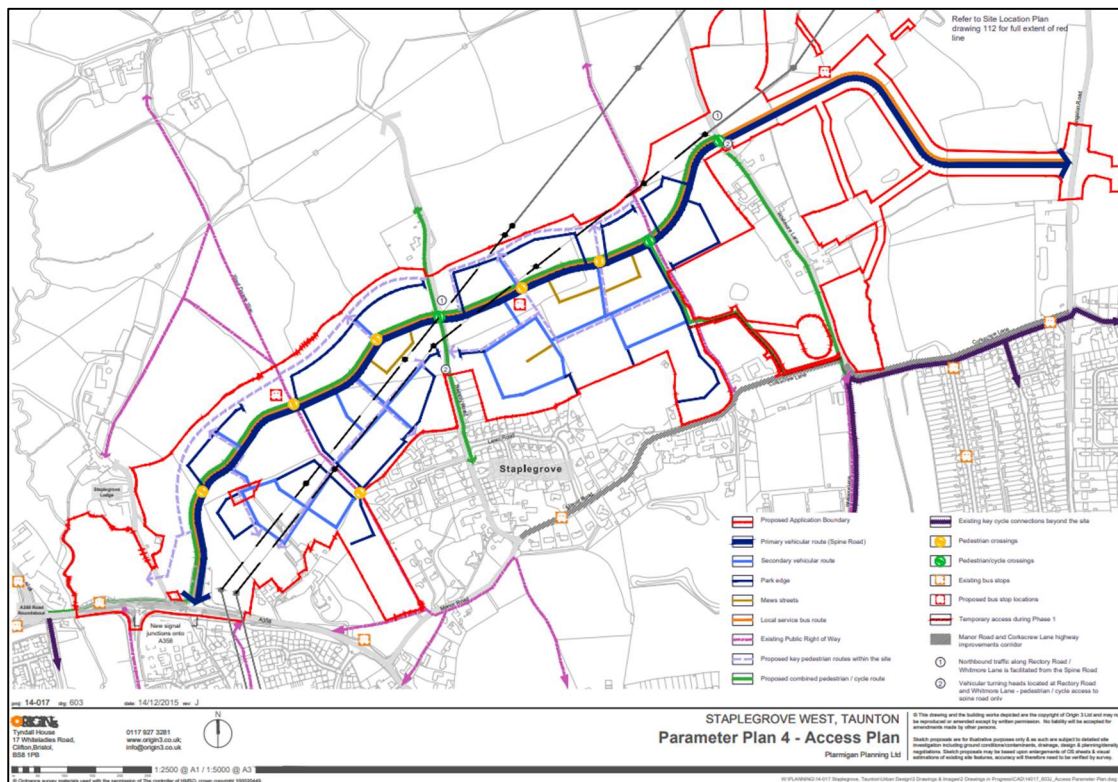


Figure 27 Access Parameter Plan (submitted as part of 34/16/0007)

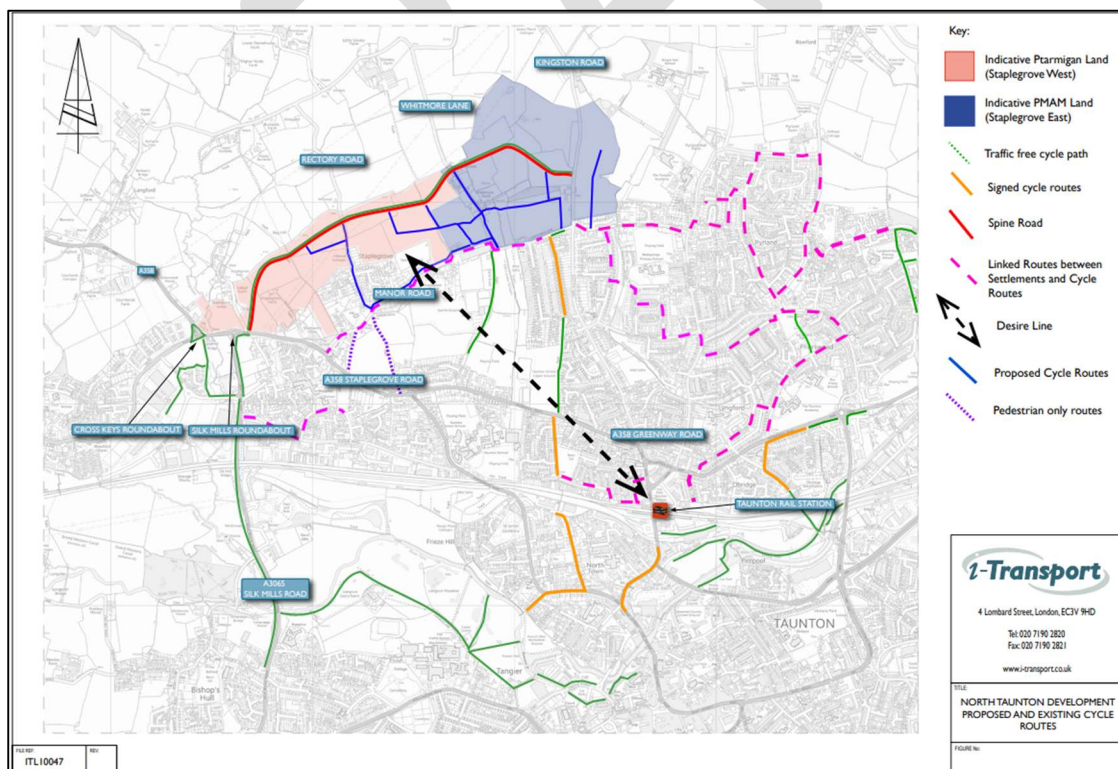


Figure 28 Plan identifying proposed and existing cycle routes (submitted as part of 34/16/0007)

Future development at Staplegrove

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

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

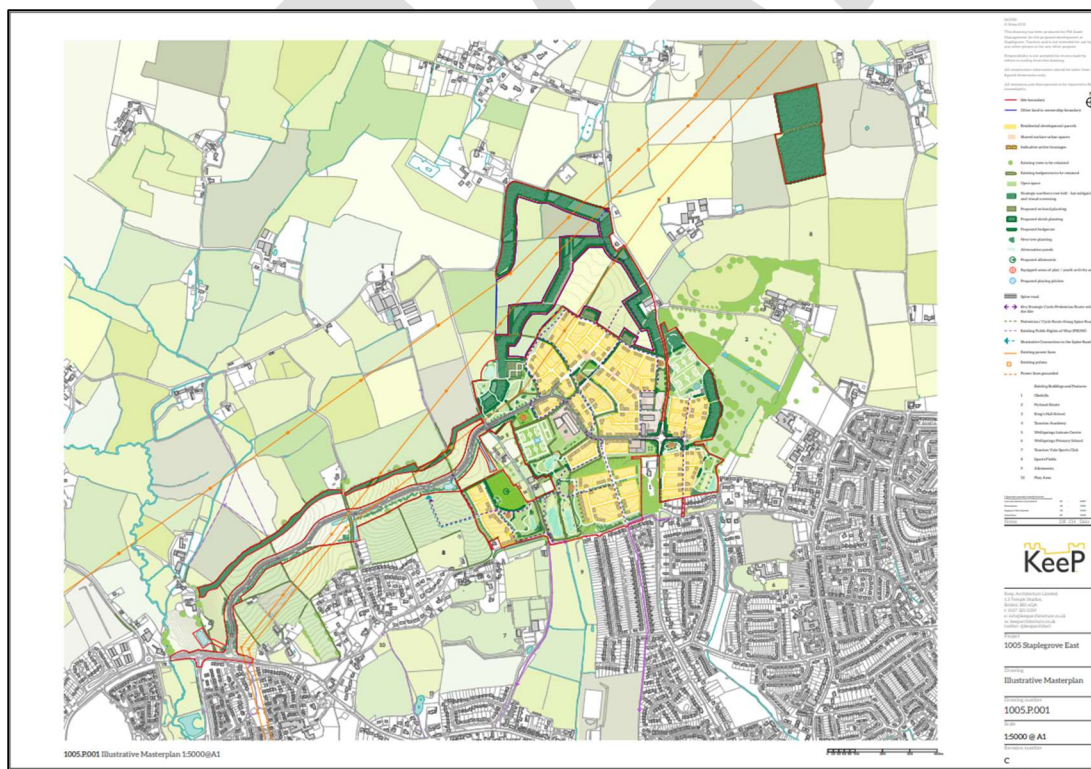


Figure 29 Illustrative Masterplan submitted in relation to application 34/16/0014

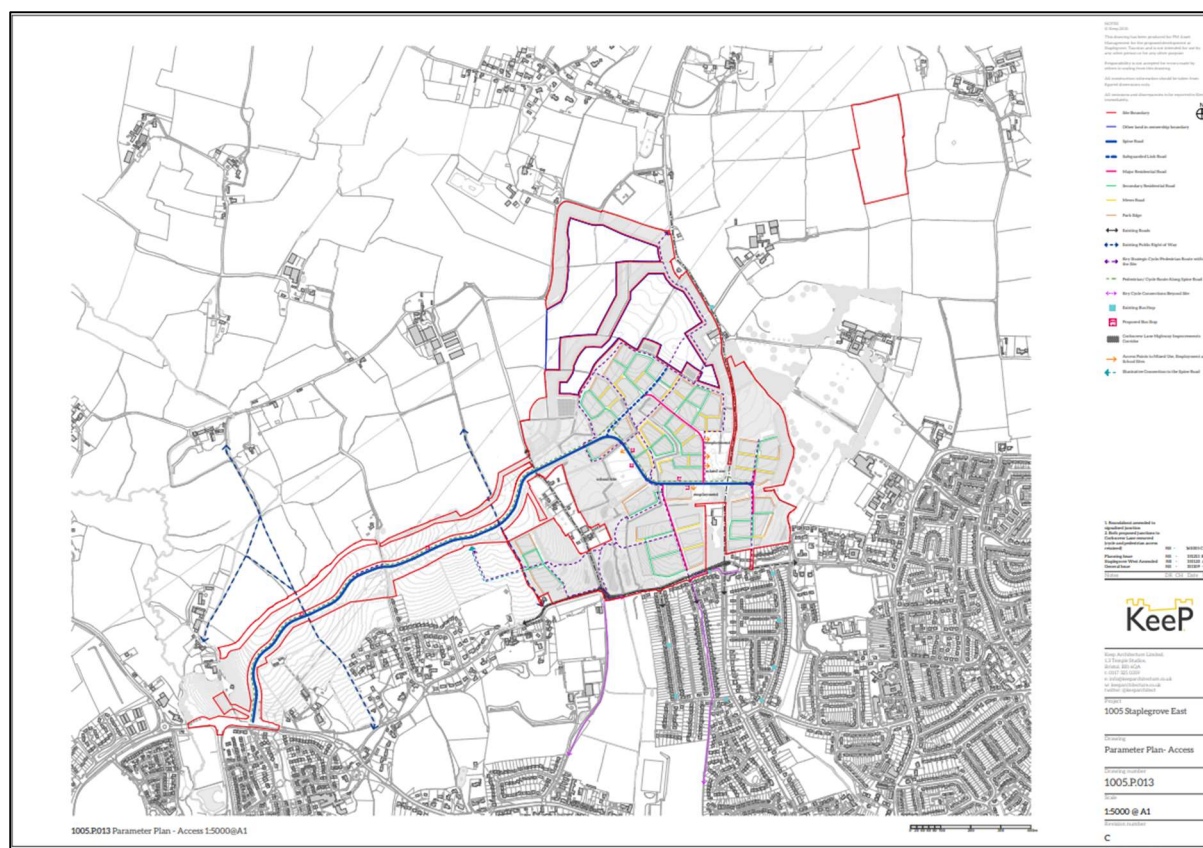


Figure 30 Access Parameters Plan submitted in relation to 34/16/0014)

Monkton Heathfield Garden Community



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

Monkton Heathfield Site allocation

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

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

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

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

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

Permissions, conditions and obligations relating to Monkton Heathfield

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



Figure 32 Indicative areas of the Monkton Heathfield Garden Community

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

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

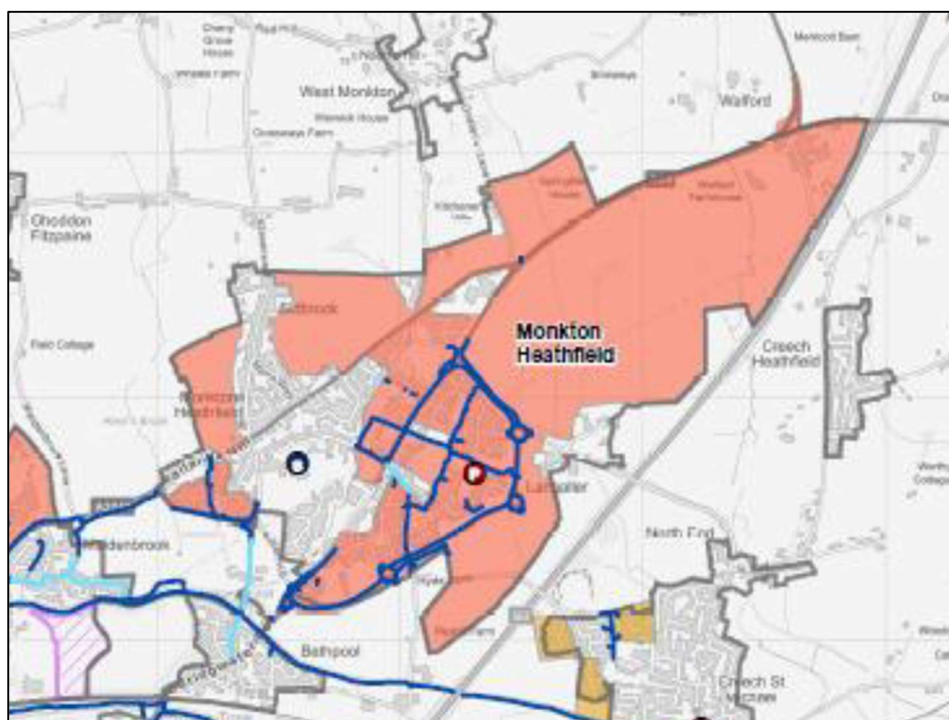


Figure 33 Existing cycle routes in Monkton Heathfield (taken from the Taunton LCWIP)

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

Future development at Monkton Heathfield

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

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

Nerrols Garden Community



Figure 34 Nerrols Garden Community

Nerrols Site allocation

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

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

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

- A positive relationship between new housing and existing communities.

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

Permissions, conditions and obligations relating to Nerrols

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



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

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

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

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

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

Future development at Nerrols

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

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

Ford Farm Garden Community



Figure 36 Ford Farm Garden Community

Ford Farm Site allocation

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

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

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

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

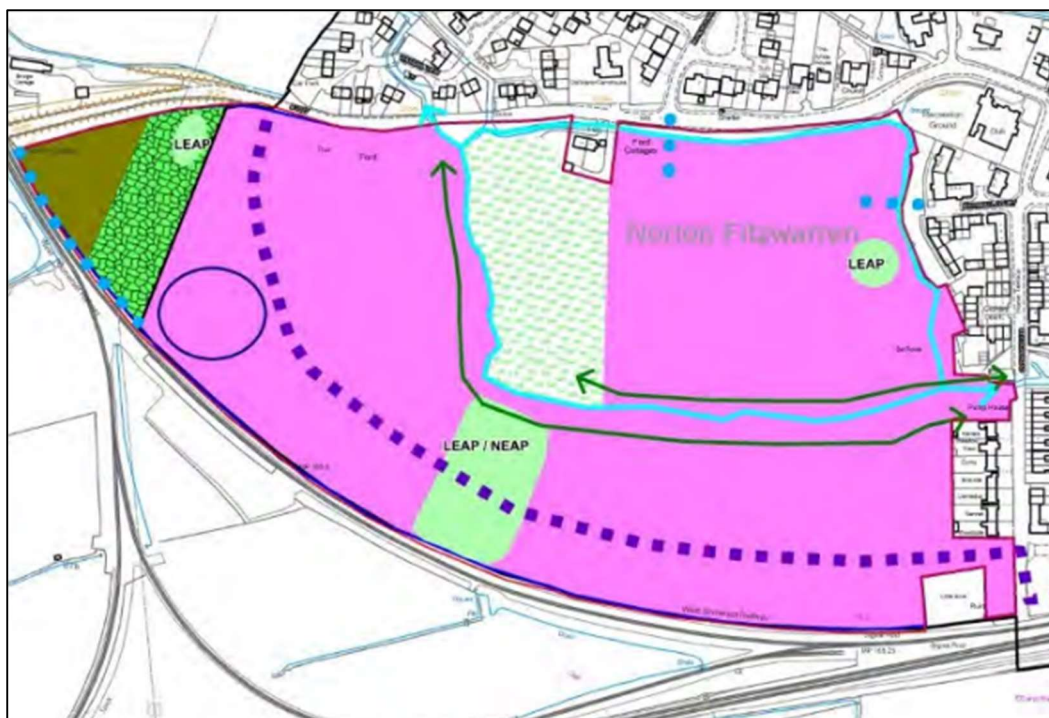


Figure 37 Design Brief for Ford Farm taken from the Taunton Deane Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (2016)

Permissions, conditions and obligations relating to Ford Farm

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

Future development at Ford Farm

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

The Council is currently in receipt of two planning applications: a full planning application for the completion of the bypass (25/21/0027), and a hybrid planning application (25/21/0024) “comprising of a Full Application for the completion of Norton Fitzwarren bypass and the erection of 92. No dwellings with associated works and an Outline Application with all matters reserved, except for means of access from completed bypass, for up to 308 No. dwellings with public open space, ecological enhancements and associated works”. Decisions are yet to be made on these applications.

Firepool Garden Community



Figure 38 Firepool Garden Community

Firepool Site allocation

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

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

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

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

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

Permissions, conditions and obligations relating to Firepool

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



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

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

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

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

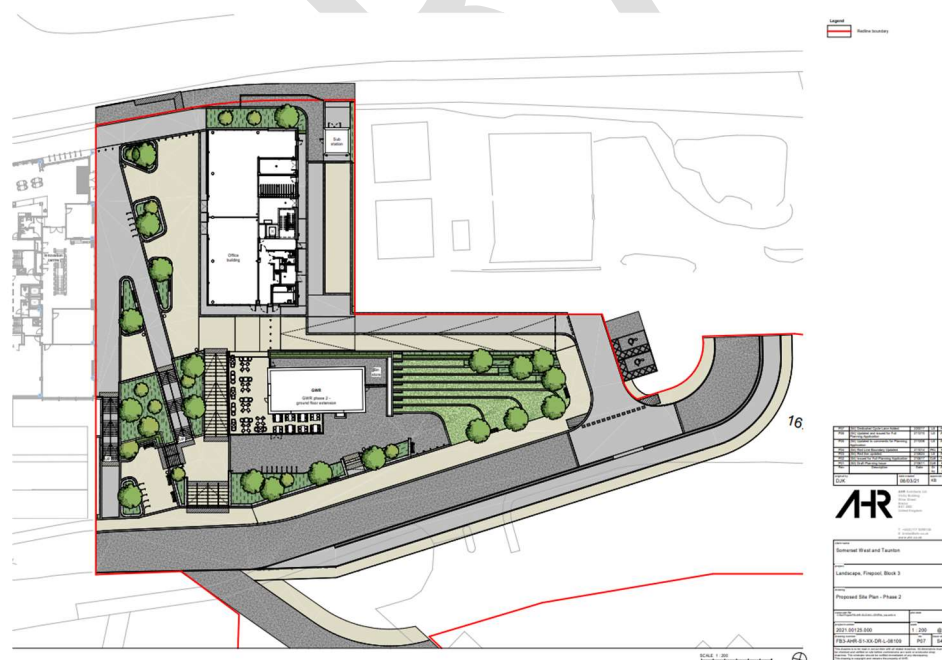


Figure 40 Approved Block 3 plan showing cycle route running to the east of the main office building to join Canal Road



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

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

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

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

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

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

Nexus 25 Garden Community



Figure 42 Nexus 25 Garden Community

Nexus 25 Policy Context

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

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

Nexus 25 Local Development Order

The LDO includes:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Figure 43 Concept Masterplan taken from the Nexus 25 Design Guide

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



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

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



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

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

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

Future development at Nexus 25

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

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

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

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

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

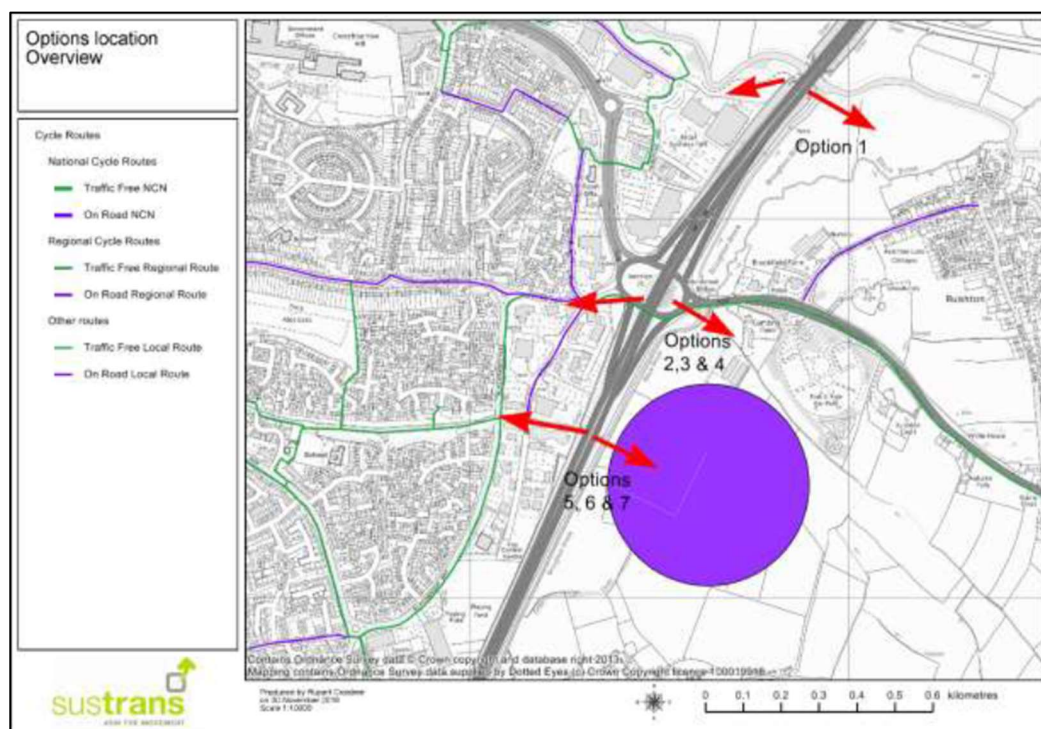


Figure 46 Location options for crossing the M5 considered by the 2016 Sustrans report

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

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

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

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

6. Broad route identification

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

Comeytrove/Trull Garden Community

Key destinations for Comeytrove/Trull

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

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

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

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

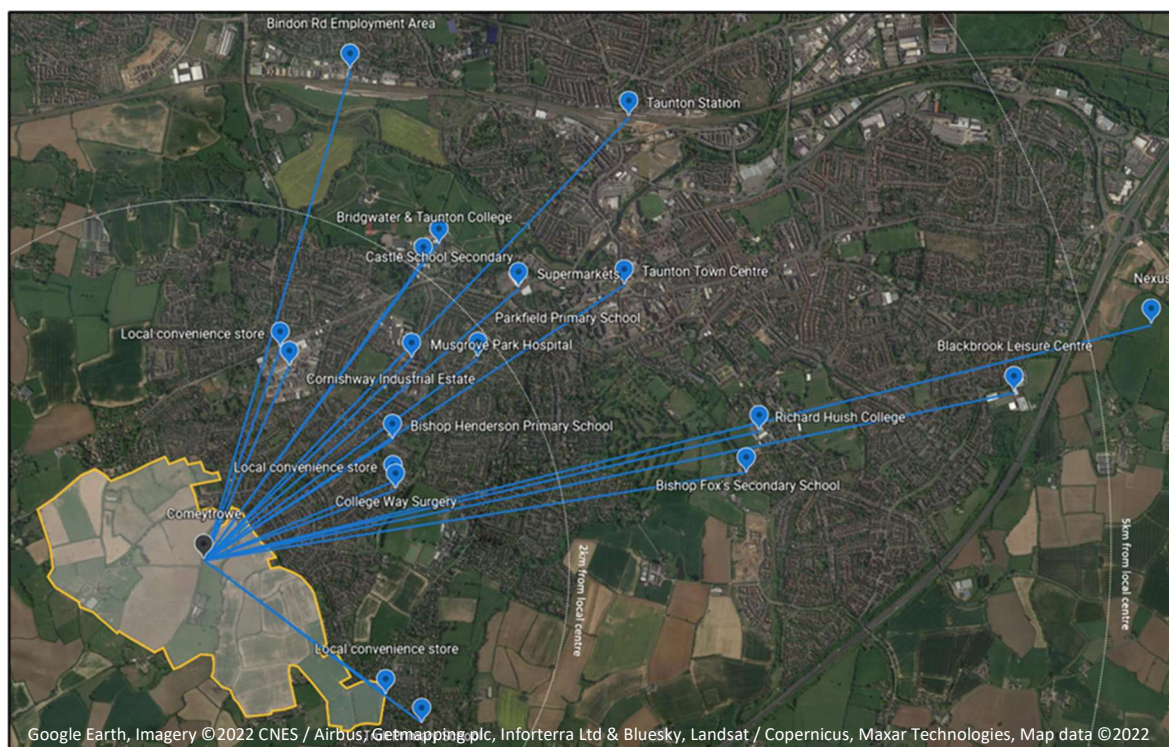


Figure 47 Key destinations and straight line mapping relevant to the Comeytrove/Trull allocation

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

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

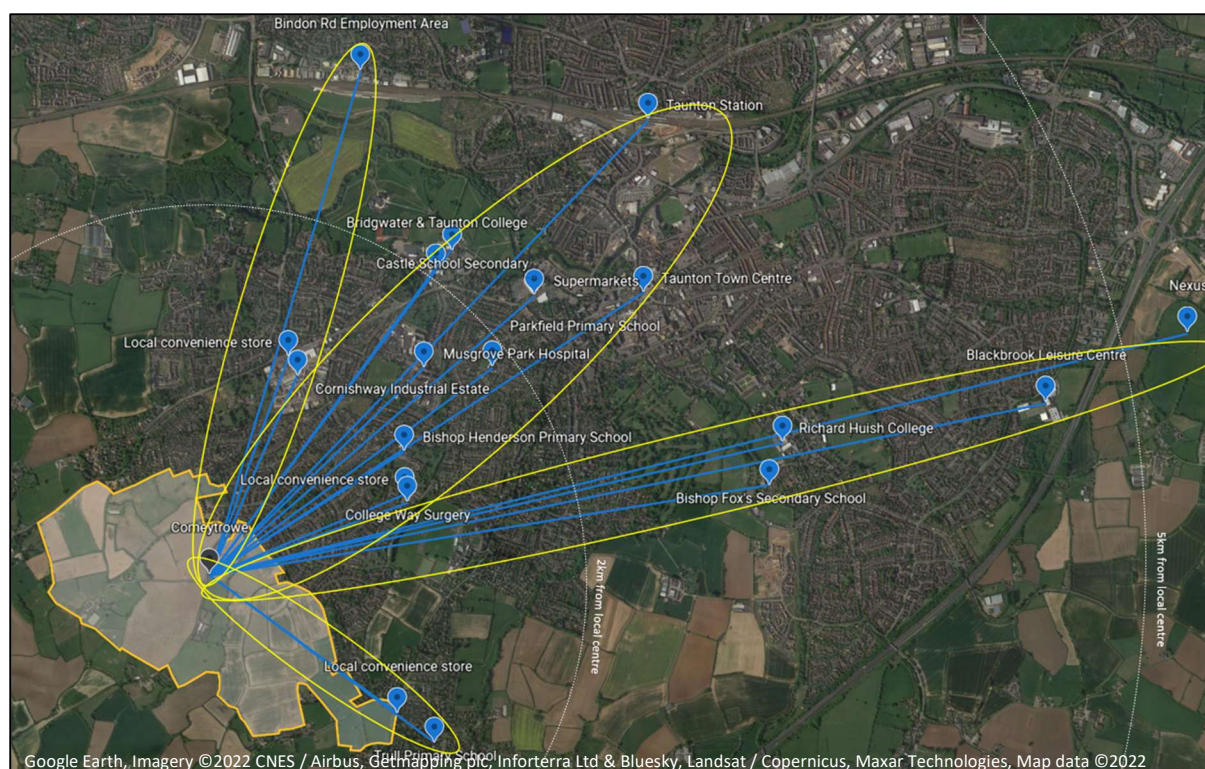


Figure 48 Groupings of key destinations indicating foci for routes relevant to the Comeytrove/Trull allocation

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

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

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

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

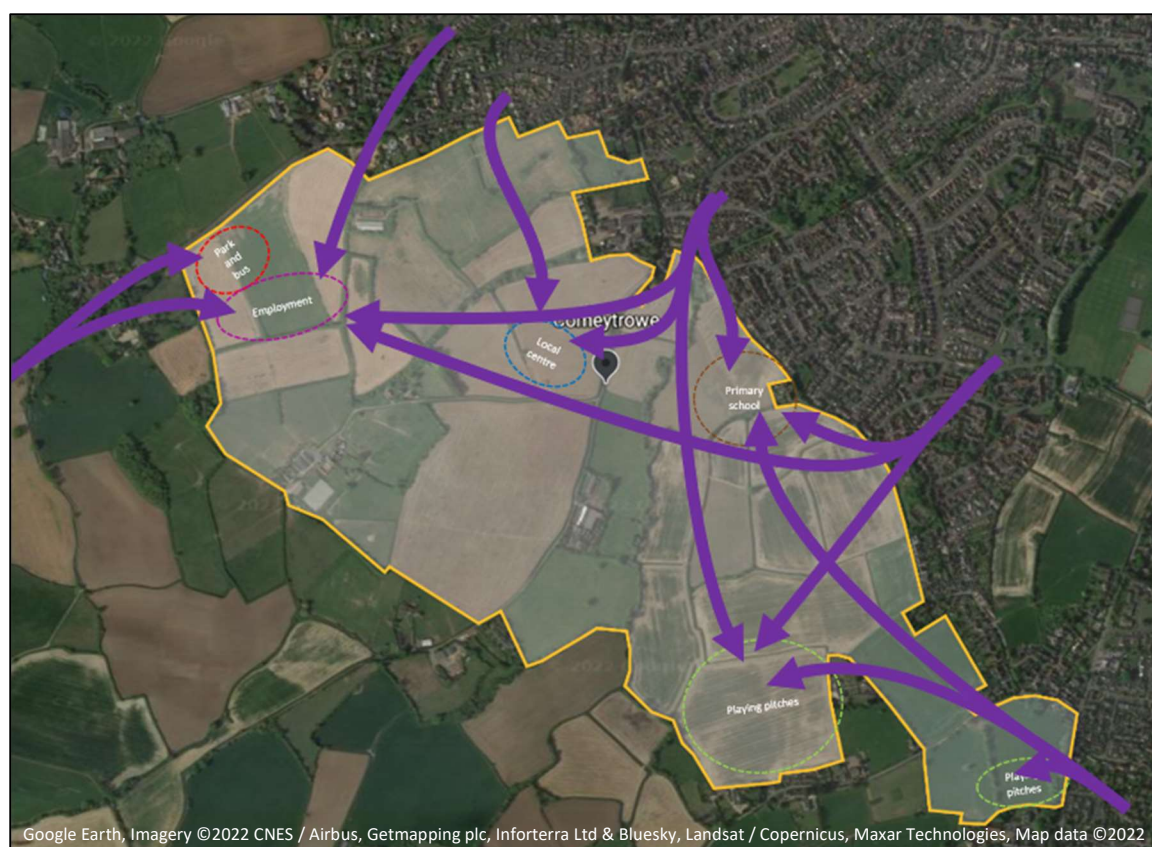


Figure 49 Comeytrove facilities as destinations

Specific opportunities

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

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

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

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

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

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

DRAFT

Staplegrove Garden Community

Key destinations for Staplegrove

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

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

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

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



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

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

Staplegrove West (see figure 51, below):

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

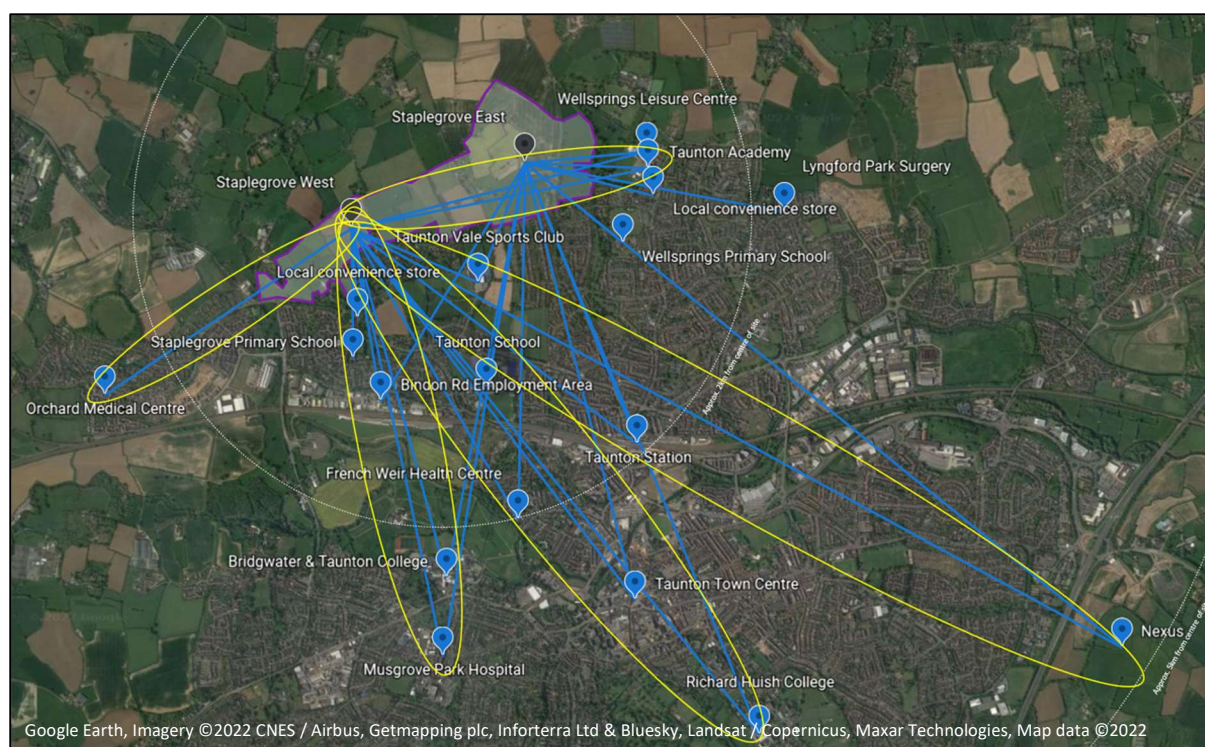


Figure 51 Groupings of key destinations indicating foci for routes relevant to Staplegrove West

Staplegrove East (see figure 52, below):

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

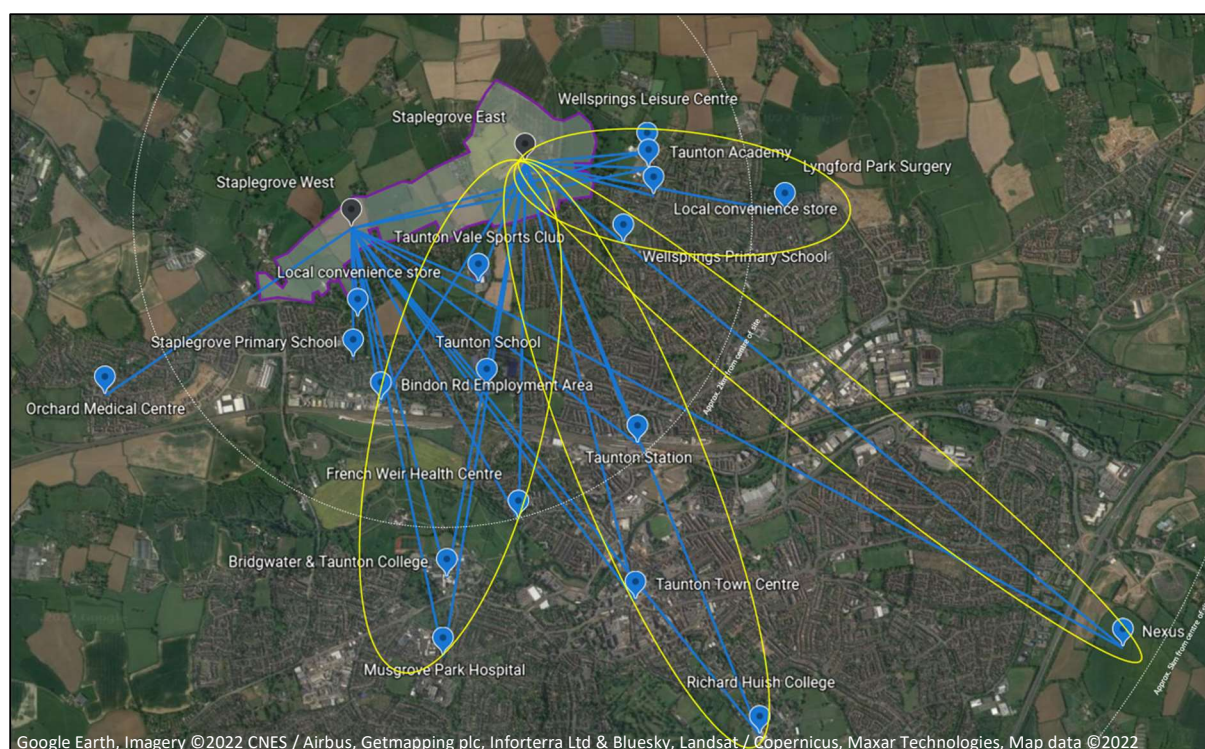


Figure 52 Groupings of key destinations indicating foci for routes relevant to Staplegrove East

Staplegrove on-site facilities acting as destinations for existing communities

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

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



Figure 53 Staplegrove facilities as destinations

Specific opportunities

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

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

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

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

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

Monkton Heathfield Garden Community

Key destinations for Monkton Heathfield

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

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

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

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

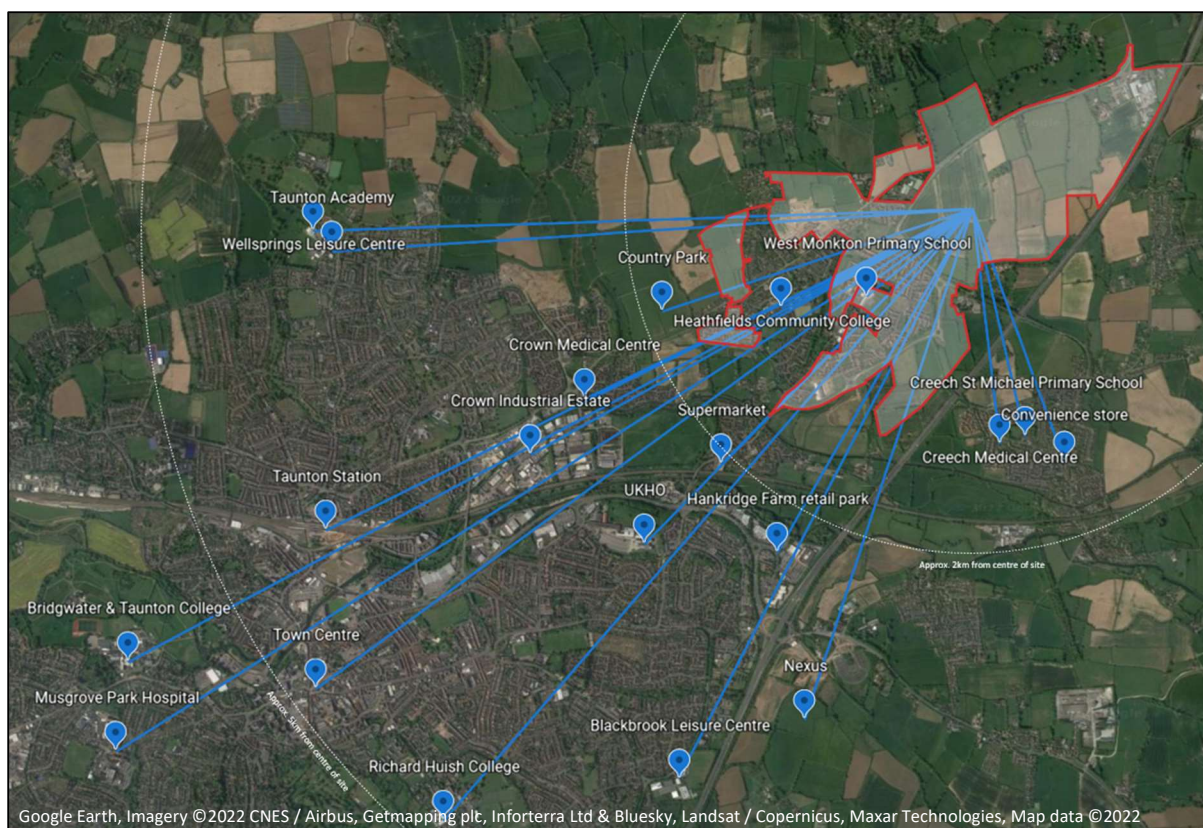


Figure 54 Key destinations and straight line mapping relevant to the Monkton Heathfield allocation

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

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

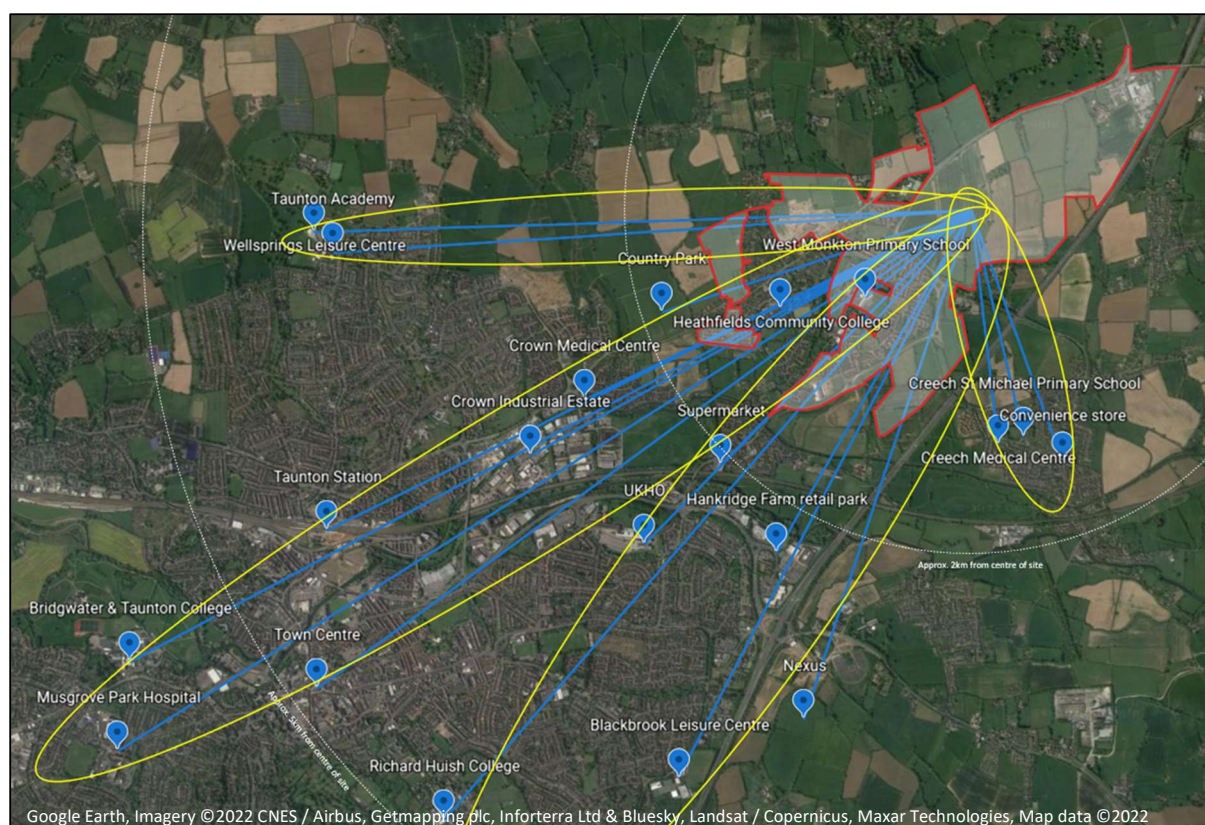


Figure 55 Groupings of key destinations indicating foci for routes relevant to Monkton Heathfield

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

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

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

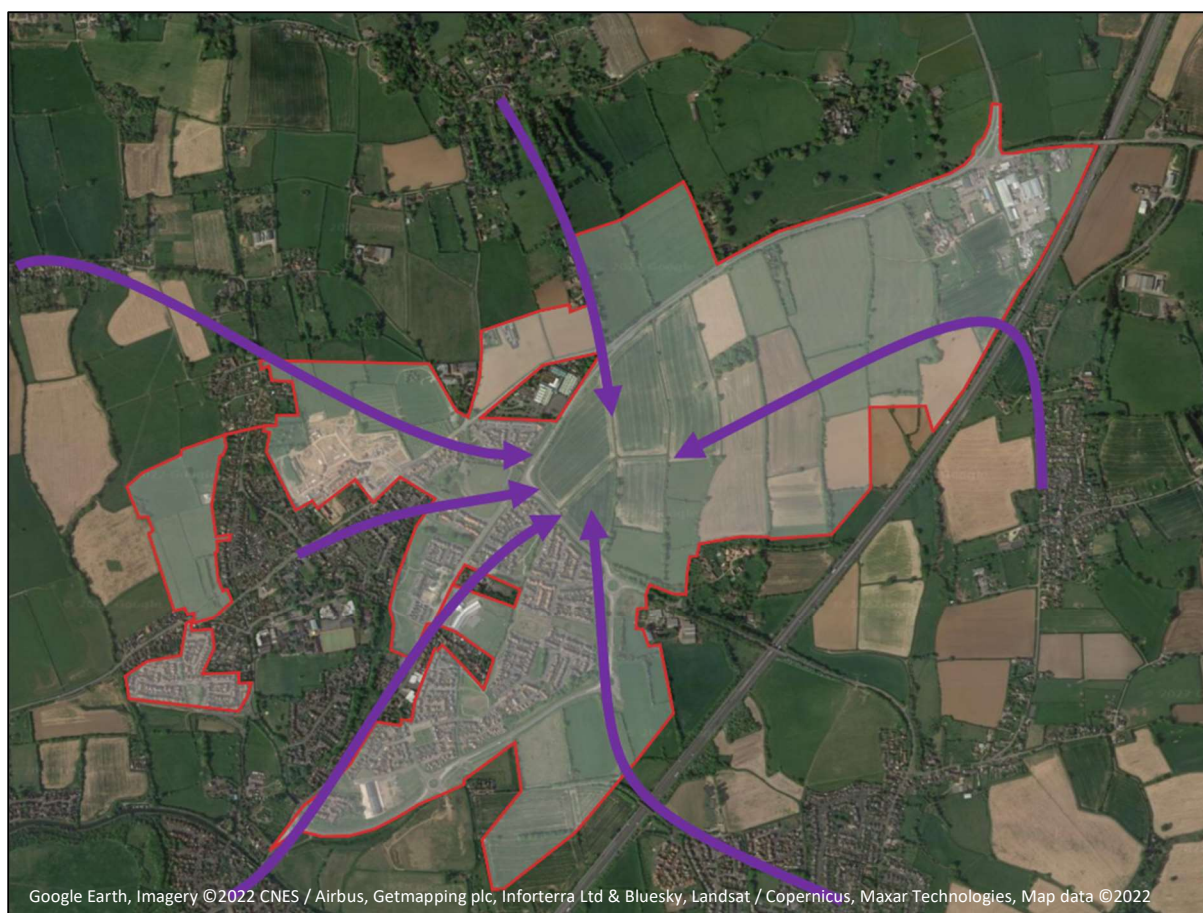


Figure 56 Monkton Heathfield (generally) as a destination

Specific opportunities

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

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

Nerrols Garden Community

Key destinations for Nerrols

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

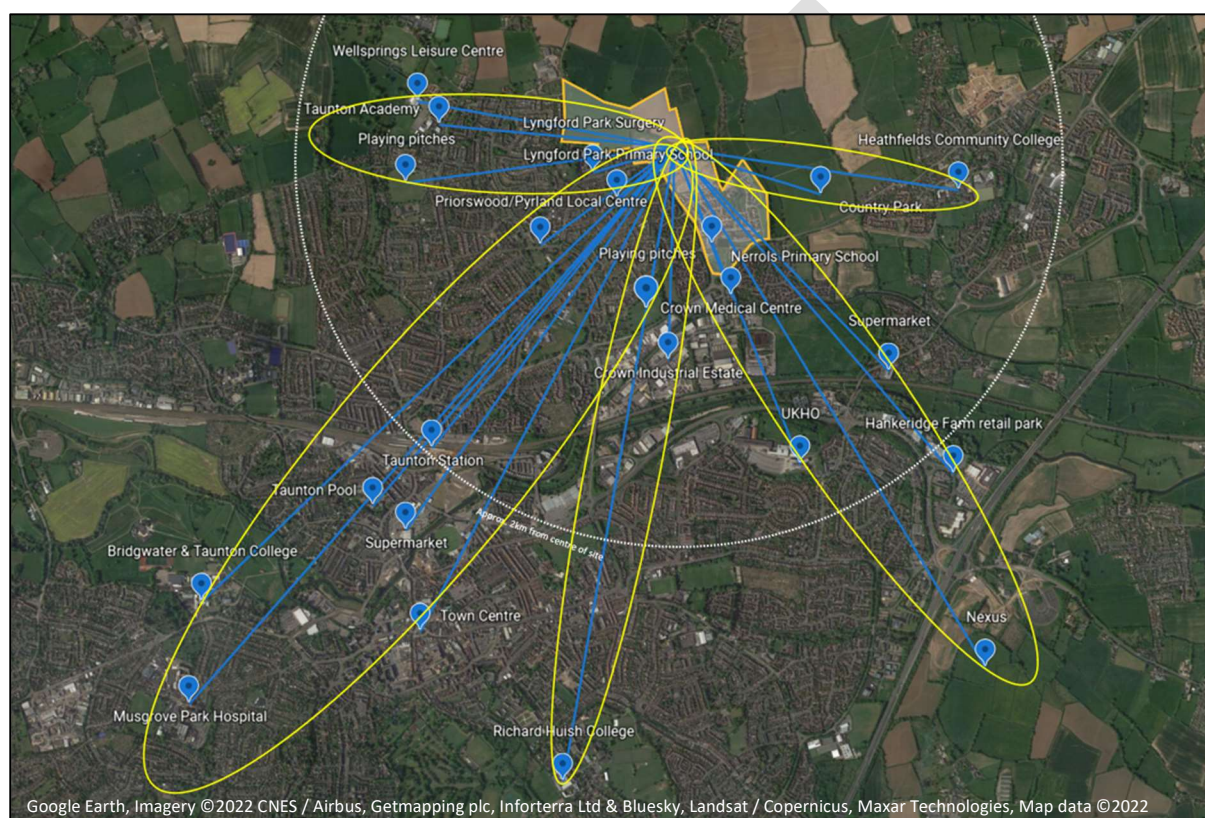


Figure 58 Groupings of key destinations indicating foci for routes relevant to Nerrols

Nerrols on-site facilities acting as destinations for existing communities

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

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

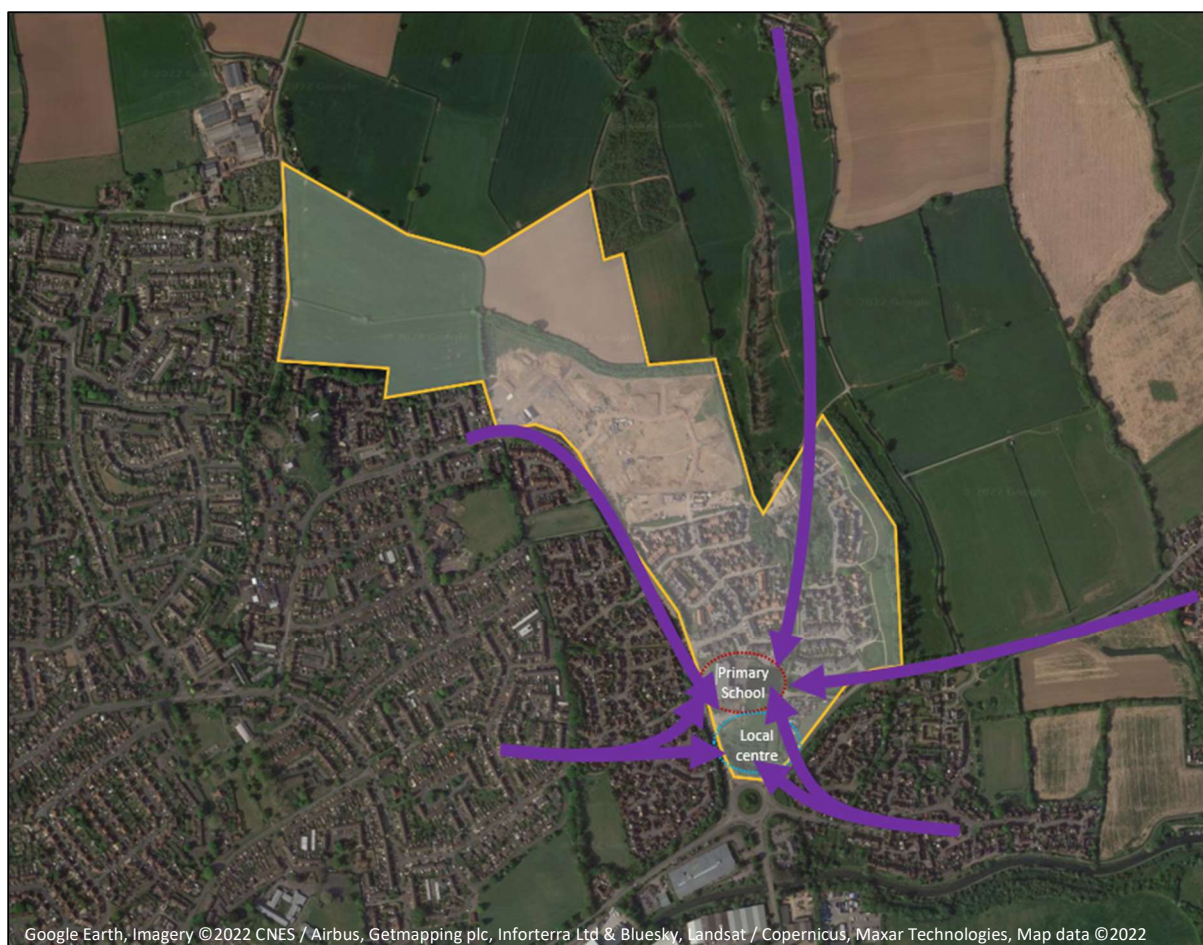


Figure 59 Nerrols facilities as destinations

Specific opportunities

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

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

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

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

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

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Ford Farm Garden Community

Key destinations for Ford Farm

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

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

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

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

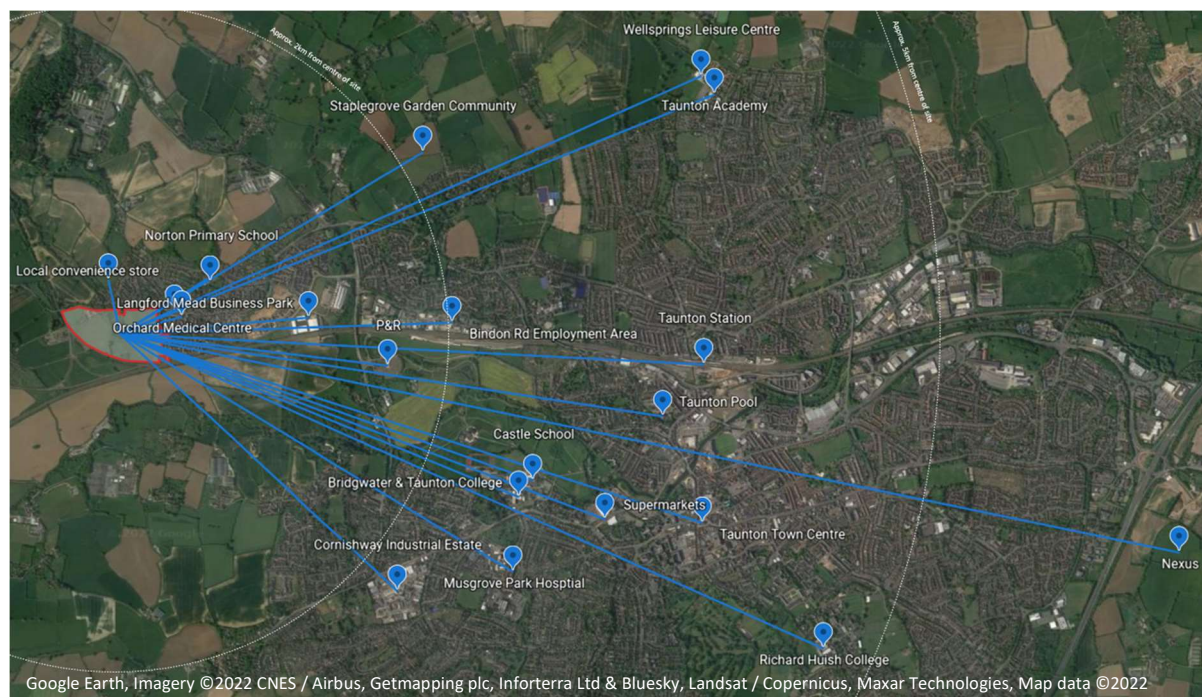


Figure 60 Key destinations and straight line mapping relevant to the Ford Farm allocation

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

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

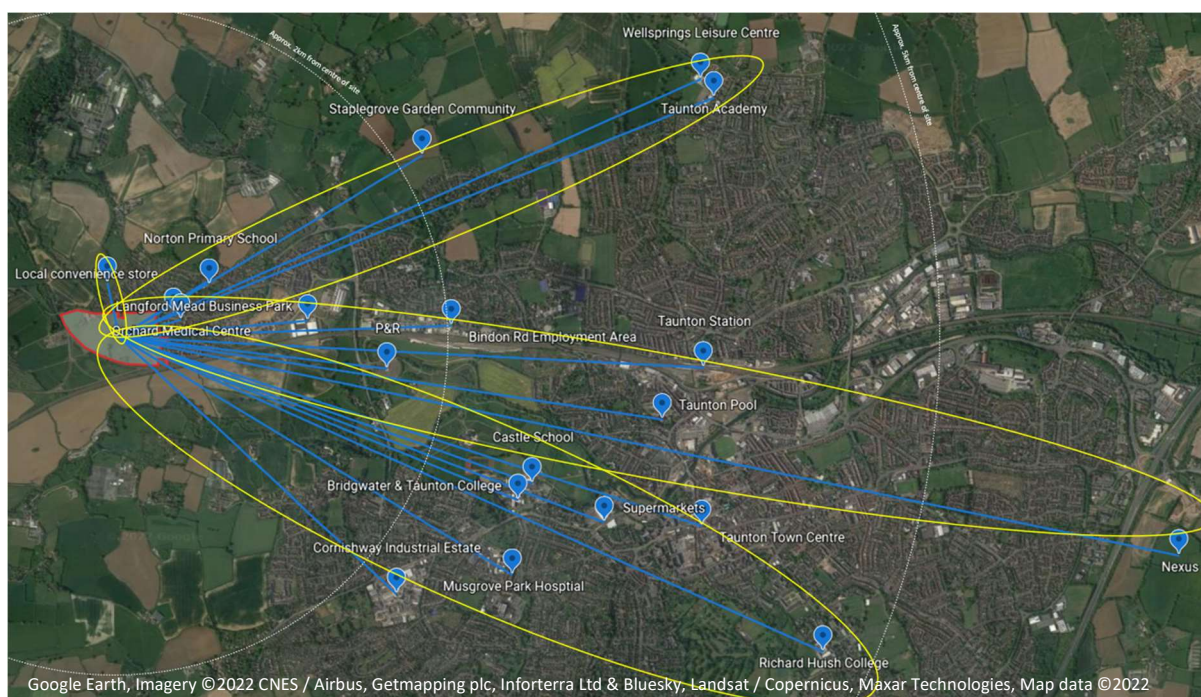


Figure 61 Groupings of key destinations indicating foci for routes relevant to Ford Farm

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

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

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

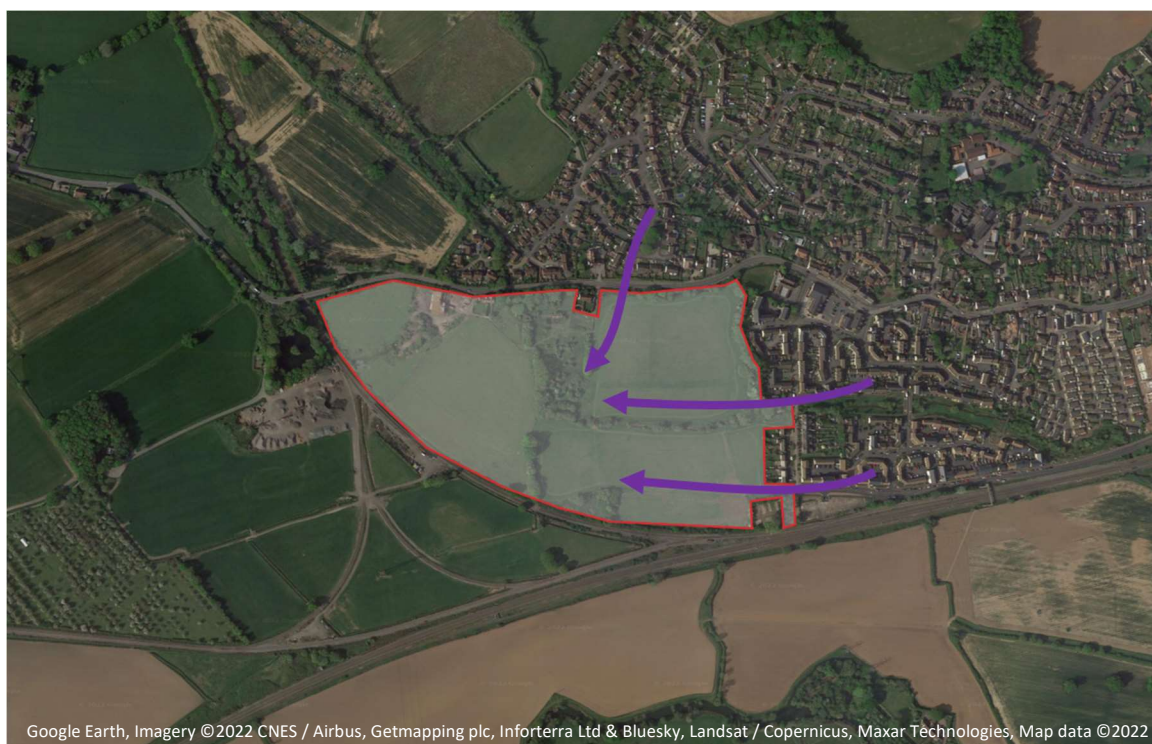


Figure 62 Ford Farm facilities as destinations

Specific opportunities

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

Firepool Garden Community

Key destinations for Firepool

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

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

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

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

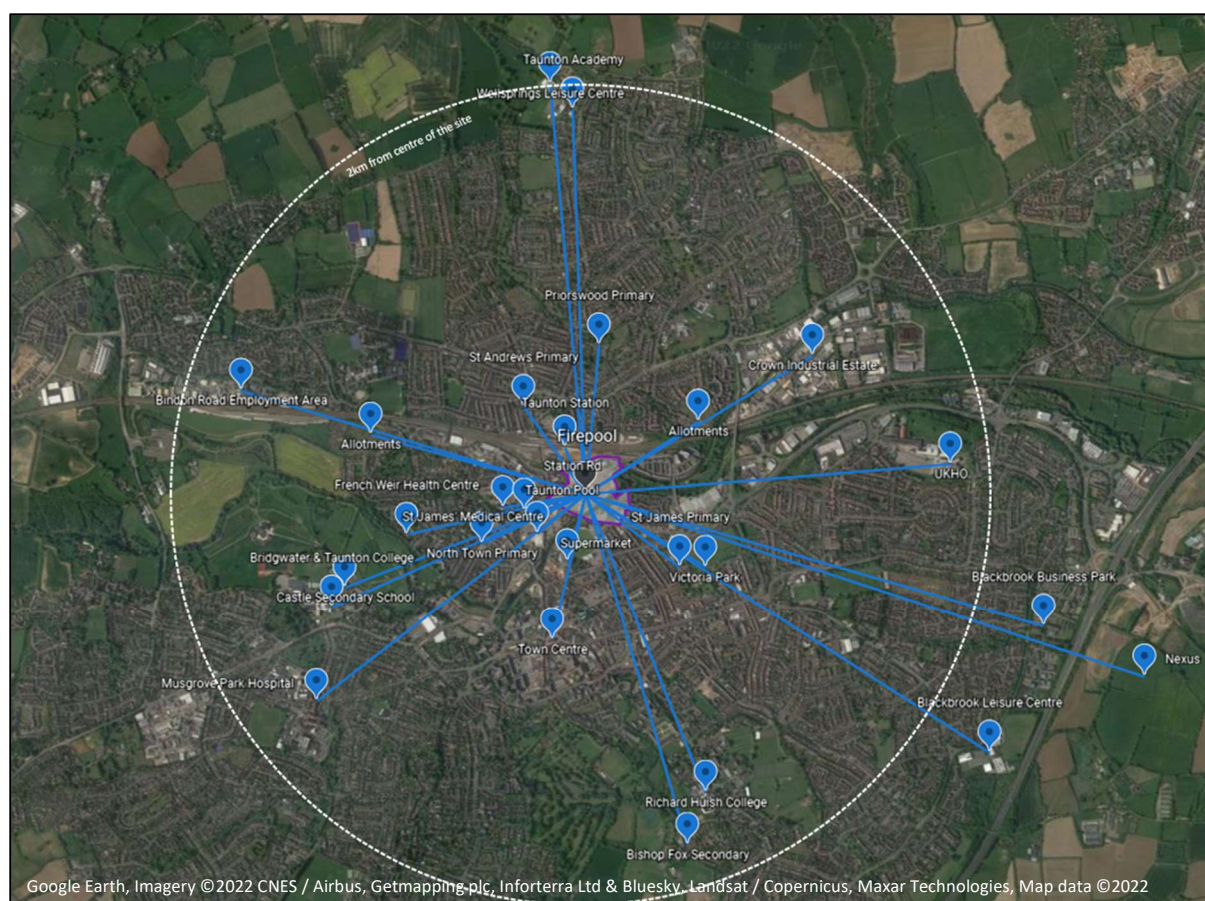


Figure 63 Key destinations and straight line mapping relevant to the Firepool allocation

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

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

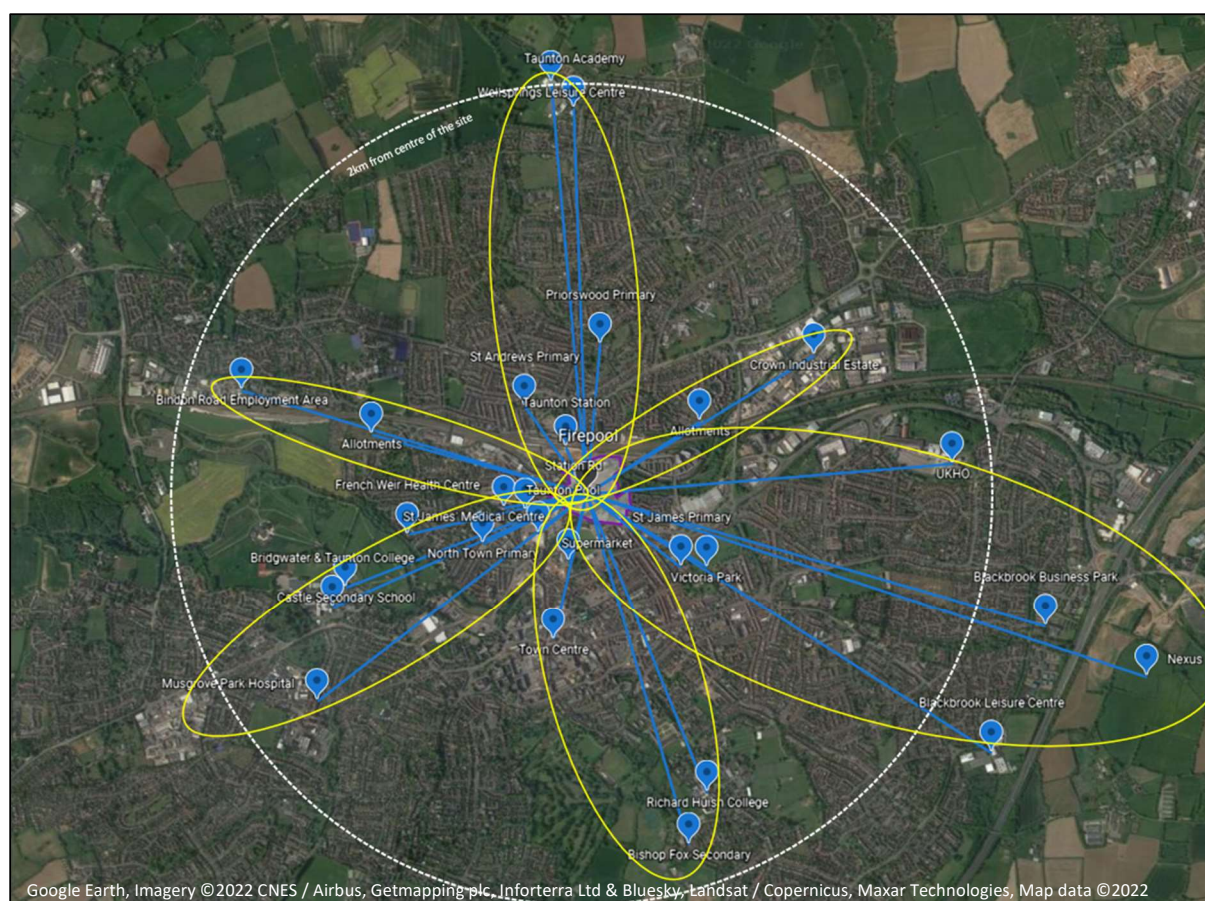


Figure 64 Groupings of key destinations indicating foci for routes relevant to Firepool

Firepool on-site facilities acting as destinations for existing communities

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

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

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

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

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



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

Specific opportunities

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

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

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

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

Nexus 25 Garden Community

Key destinations for Nexus 25

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

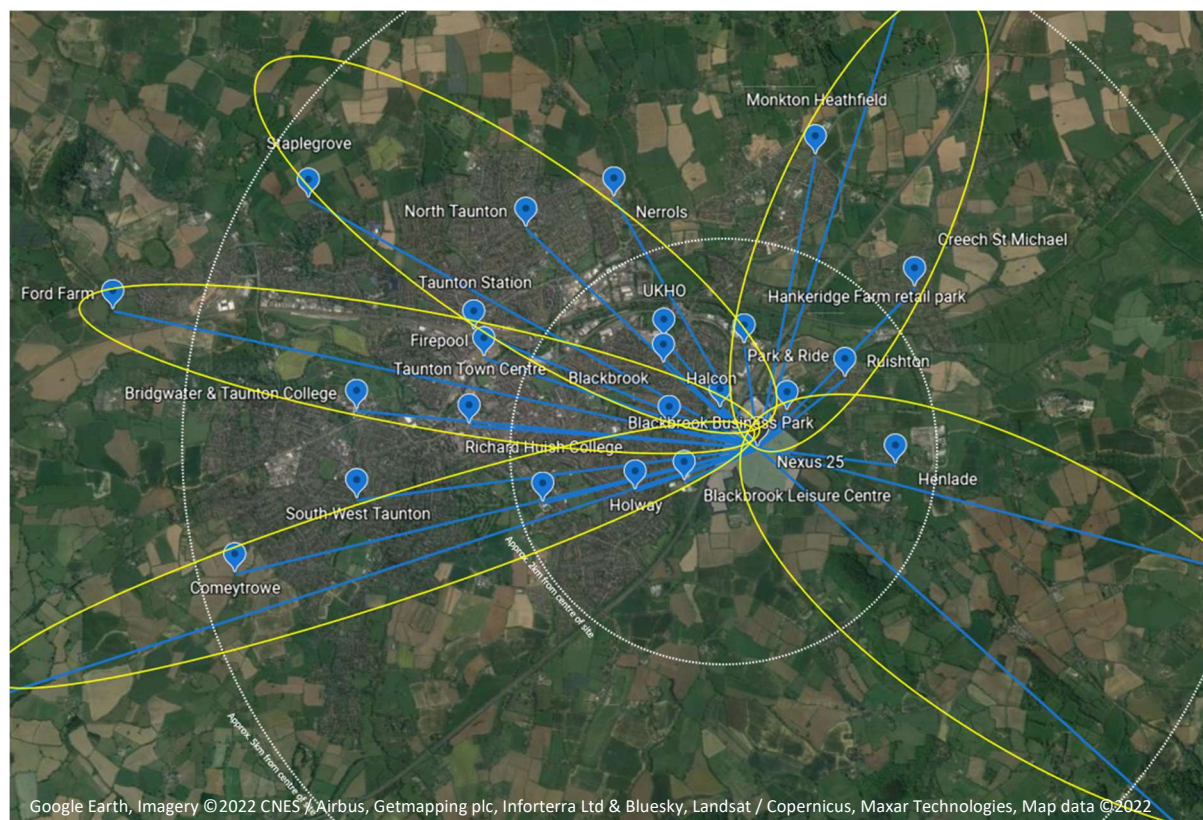


Figure 67 Groupings of key destinations indicating foci for routes relevant to Nexus 25

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

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

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

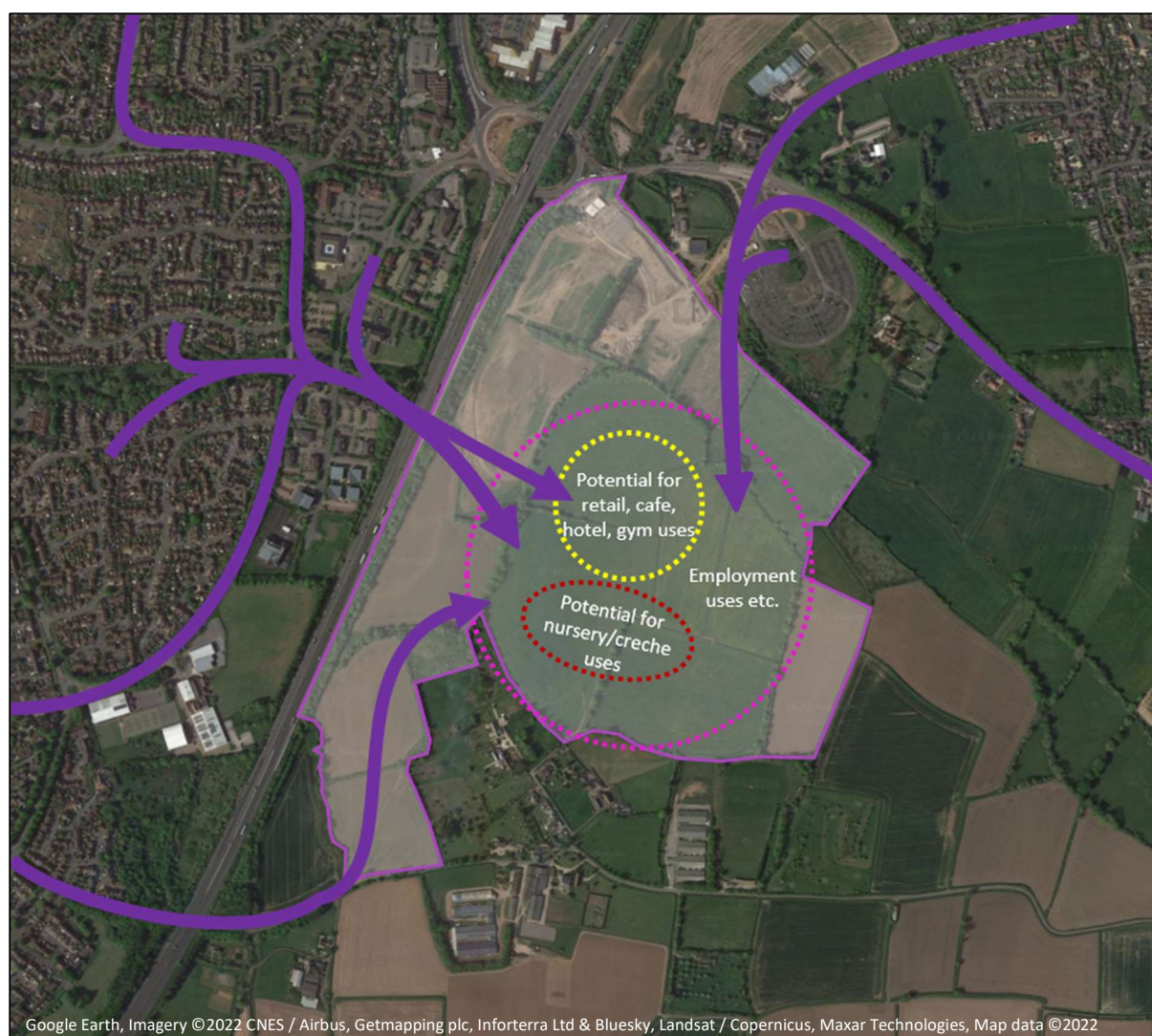


Figure 68 Nexus 25 facilities as destinations

Specific opportunities

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

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

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

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

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7. Auditing and refining options

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

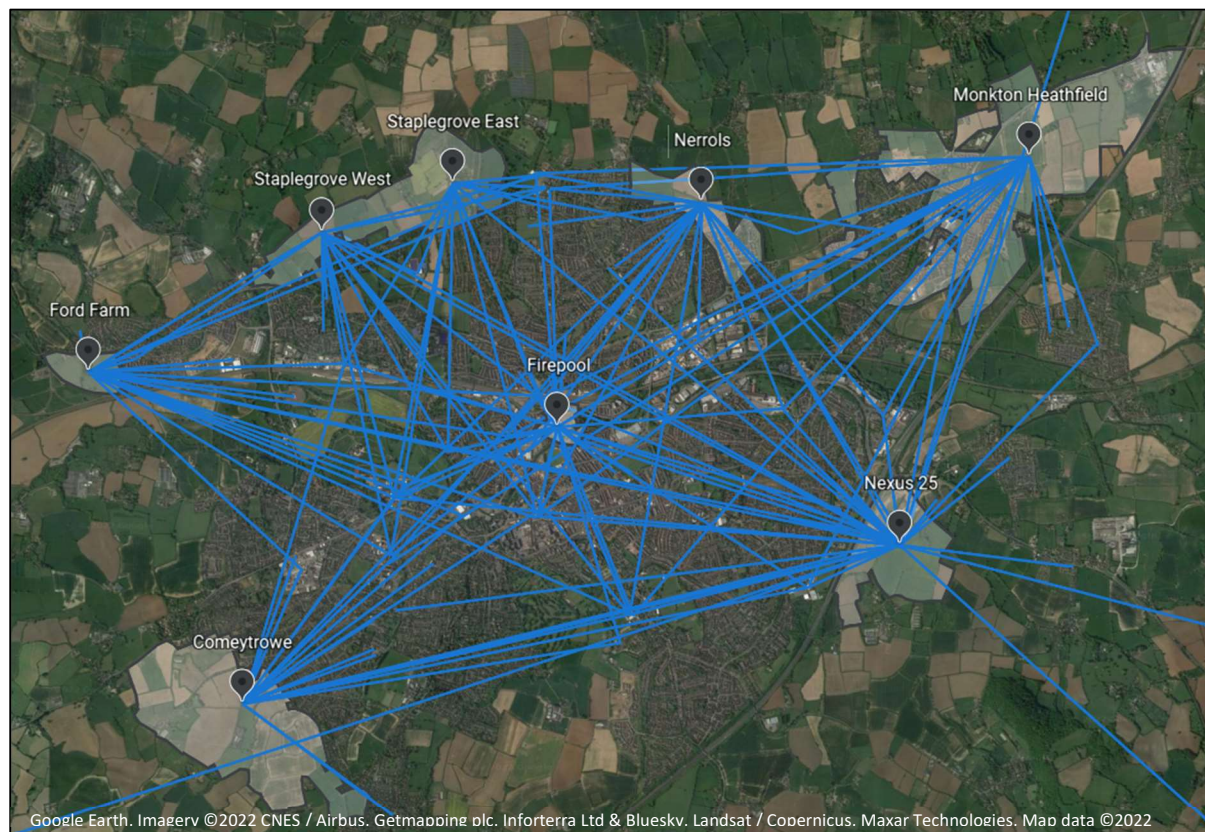


Figure 69 Combined key destination mapping

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Discounted options

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

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

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

Audited options

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

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

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

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

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

- Attractiveness
- Comfort
- Directness
- Safety
- Coherence

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

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

Early engagement workshop

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

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

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

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

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

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

Connecting to schools a key prioritisation factor

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Emerging routes supported, but other routes identified

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

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

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

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

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

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

Route Scoping

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

8. Proposed routes

The draft Network Plan

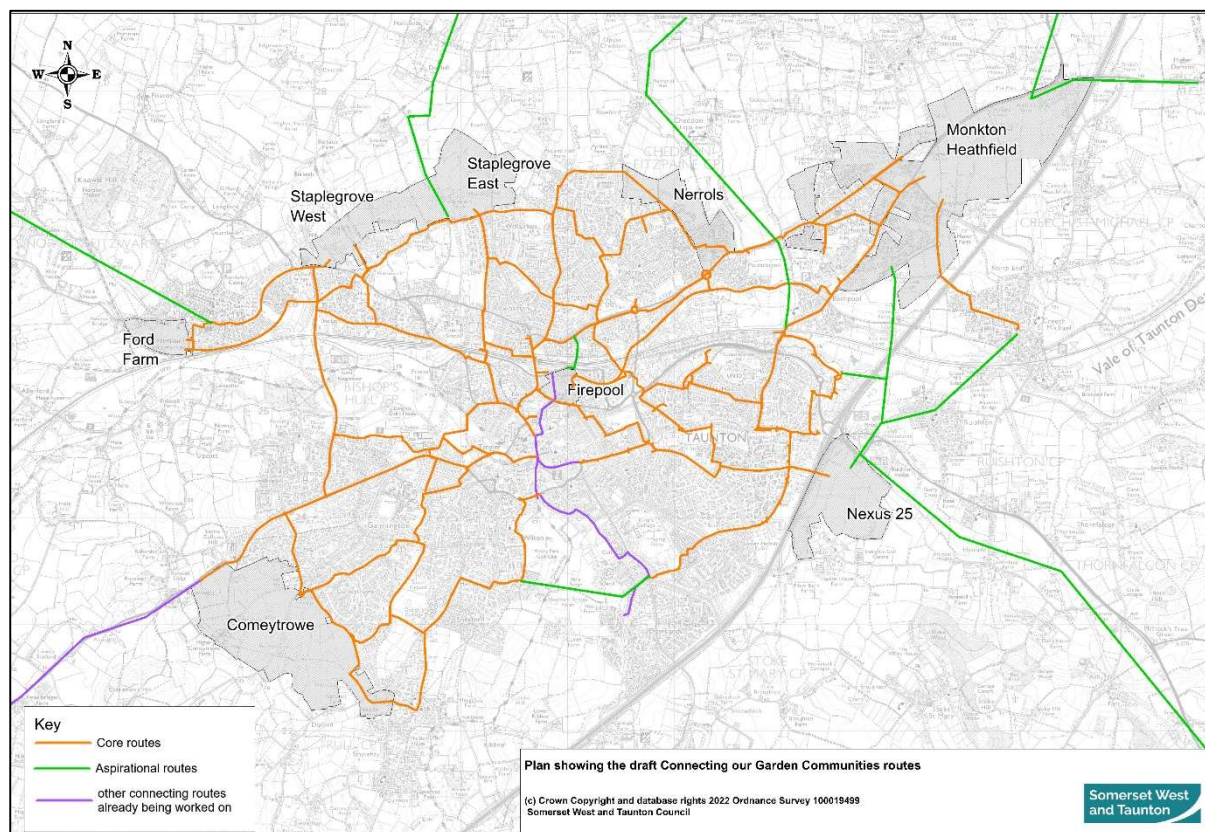


Figure 71 Connecting our Garden Communities draft Network Plan

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

It was considered appropriate to identify three types of route:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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9. Prioritising

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

10. Delivery

Embedding the plan

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

Garden Town

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

Transport Planning

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

Land-use Planning

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

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

Neighbourhood Plans

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

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

Project delivery

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

But the Council cannot deliver all of these routes alone. It will work closely with other parties including the County Council, town and parish councils, TACC, developers, Active Travel England and other public and private bodies to work towards route delivery. The role of the County Council as the Highways Authority will be crucial, as many routes relate to highways. There are likely to be a range of organisations which need to be engaged as delivery partners, depending on the specifics of the route.

As projects progress through the design process it will be important that they take an inclusive approach. Following the Government's LTN1/20 design guidance can be a valuable way of ensuring suitable access for all.

Wider considerations

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

Cycle parking

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

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

Key destinations identified within this plan will need to deliver appropriate cycle parking facilities also. The Council will work to encourage this and take steps to secure such facilities where opportunities arise, such as when appropriate planning

applications are submitted within the destination facilities identified in this plan or where new destination facilities are proposed. However, in most cases, the onus for funding and delivery of this provision is likely to remain with facility owners/operators. Any provision at destination facilities will need to be fit for purpose, secure and well-located in relation to related cycle route infrastructure and access to the facility itself.

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

Enabling multi-modal journeys

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

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

Hire schemes

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

Behaviour change

Most people currently choose to travel by car, and this has become so ingrained in society that it is now the default choice, and it can sometimes be very difficult to see

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

Retaining and creating constraints

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

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

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

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

Other walking and cycling routes

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

Next Steps

Going forward, all of the routes identified within this plan will need to go through concept planning, business case development and detailed design stages ahead of delivery. As routes progress through this design path, it may be that some routes fall away as infeasible once more detailed issues are understood, or need tweaking to overcome such issues. Detailed designs will need to comply with regulatory and legislative requirements and make necessary assessments under Equalities, Construction Design and Management (CDM) regulations and Road Safety Audit where required. All designs affecting or to be adopted as public highways will need to be agreed with the Highways Authority.

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

Developer negotiations

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

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

Other funding sources

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

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) presents one opportunity for the Council to potentially financially contribute towards delivery. However, CIL has only ever been intended to contribute part of the funding towards the delivery of infrastructure. As evidenced by the Council's Infrastructure Funding Statements, there is a significant

funding shortfall across all required infrastructure projects. As such, additional funding sources will need to be considered including:

- Council budget setting,
- Garden Town Capacity Fund and Capital Fund,
- Town and parish councils,
- Private sector investment, and
- Government funding opportunities.

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

In addition to this, opportunities may arise from other sources based on the contribution the delivery of such infrastructure may have towards addressing specific issues, for instance: air quality; physical inactivity; poor health and wellbeing issues; carbon emissions; safe routes to school. Having proposals sufficiently developed and ready to go is essential for making the best of these funding opportunities when they are announced, often with short timescales to submit bids. This reinforces the importance of this plan and subsequent concept planning and business case development.

Review

In line with Government guidance this plan will be reviewed and updated every four or five years to reflect progress made with implementation. It may be appropriate to review and update in advance of this if there are significant changes in local circumstances, such as the publication of new policies or strategies, major new development sites, or new sources of funding. The principle indicators for monitoring delivery of the plan as a whole will be as follows:

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

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