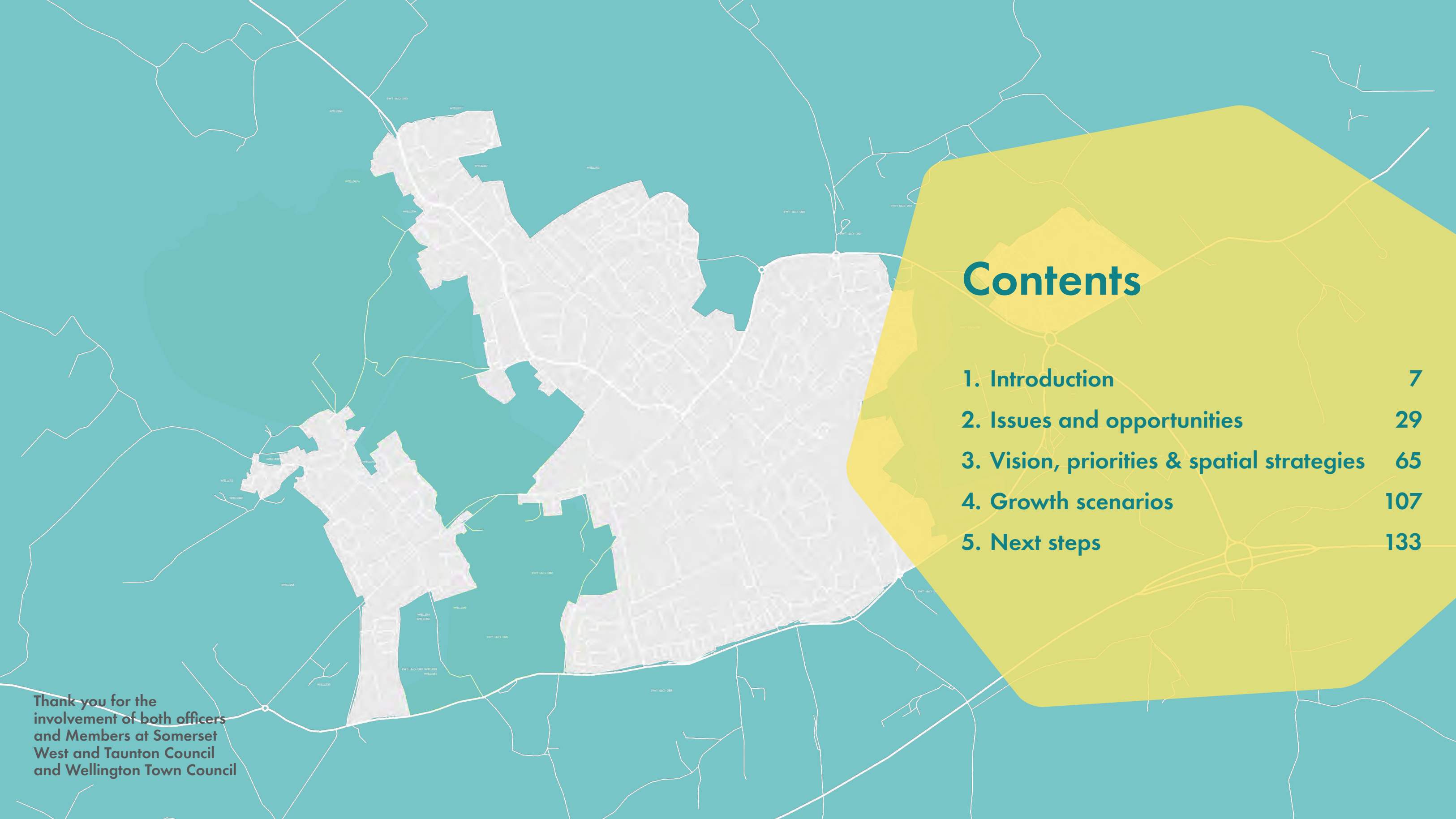


Wellington Place Plan

Final report
March 2023



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4. Growth scenarios	107
5. Next steps	133

Thank you for the
involvement of both officers
and Members at Somerset
West and Taunton Council
and Wellington Town Council

Executive summary



Regional context (chapter 1)



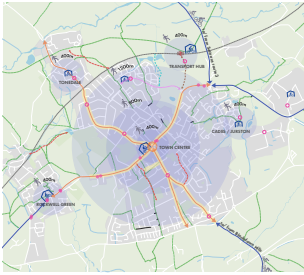
Engagement summary (cpt 1)



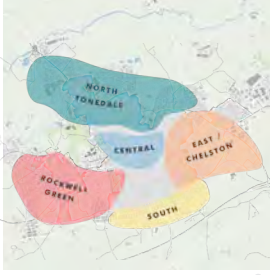
Landscape character (cpt 2)



Six thematic priorities (cpt 3 and 4)



Spatial strategy plans (cpt 4)



Growth scenarios (cpt 5)

#	Action	Objective	By when	Who	Impact	Cost	Notes
13	Improve the town's appearance and the quality of the environment in Wellington			N	O	H	M
14	Review the potential of the former Diglipin Pub for community use			B	O	H	L
15	Deliver the Public Realm Improvement Plan, including the landscape design for new public space in front of the former NO building			B	O	H	M
16	Establish Digital digital connectivity for existing and new homes and workplaces (see CHC20) by supporting operators and following statutory guidance "Infrastructure for electronic communications: Approved Document E"			E	S	H	L
17	Build awareness of support for businesses, available through the Council and the LEP			I	S	L	L
18	Work in partnership with the LEP to support the growth of green economy industries and identify particular opportunities for Wellington			E	O	M	L
19	Identify local renewable energy projects to support a Somerset-wide Renewable Energy Strategy, including the early identification of opportunities for new neighbourhoods with ground source heat pumps, hydro-electric, power and community heating networks (see CHC20)			E	O	M	L
20	Develop affordable homes in the town centre: new homes on small sites, and vacant holiday properties converted			B	O	H	H

Action Plan (Appendix)

Purpose of the Place Plan

Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT) has produced a Place Plan for Wellington comprising a Vision and a Spatial Framework. The Place Plan has been adopted as a material consideration in determining planning applications and considering conservation and regeneration activities in Wellington. The Place Plan is an Evidence Base document which will shape the new Somerset-wide Local Plan alongside the wider studies and strategies in the existing and emerging evidence base.

Structure of the document

The Place Plan is structured as follows:

- Introduction: Setting the scene for the project including engagement activities.
- Issues and opportunities: Outlining Wellington's rich context including historical analysis, socio-economic character, connectivity and landscape.
- Vision, priorities and spatial strategies: Identification of a vision for Wellington and six key thematic priorities. In addition, this chapter presents a spatial strategy and defines key

projects, guidelines and principles.

- Growth scenarios: Definition and initial qualitative evaluation of a number of potential geographic growth scenarios across Wellington.
- Next steps: Overview of ongoing activities to progress the thinking in the Place Plan, and develop the new Somerset-wide Local Plan.
- Action Plan (Appendix): SWT has prepared an Action Plan which distils the key project priorities.

Responding to context

As part of the Place Plan, we developed a Baseline Report and Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report to help us define an understanding of the key issues and opportunities for Wellington. Key topics include connectivity, landscape and identity, resilience of the town centre and community life, heritage and the environment and sustainability.

Vision and key themes

The Vision: "Wellington will be a successful, welcoming town, clearly rooted in its landscape

setting of the Blackdown Hills, and the proud industrial and commercial heritage at Tonedale Mill and Tone Works"

It is supplemented by six thematic priorities:

1. An accessible place
2. A town rooted in its setting
3. Celebrating our industrial and commercial heritage
4. A high bar for sustainability
5. A welcoming town and centre
6. A resilient town

Spatial strategies

Each of the six thematic priorities has been developed into a spatial strategy. The strategies define spatial priorities, potential projects and guidance in relation to the existing town, and its future growth.

The spatial strategies represent a direction of travel and an initial collation of opportunities. They will need to be progressed and developed via the new Somerset-wide Local Plan, and in partnership with local regeneration and

community partners, landowners and developers.

Growth scenarios

Based on an initial understanding of opportunities and constraints, we have defined a range of potential growth scenarios. These identify a potential range of broad locations and set out some of the key considerations which will help to shape future conversations and dialogue around place-making. Further assessments and evidence base studies will feed into the new Somerset-wide Local Plan, including a comprehensive site allocations process.

Delivery and Action Plan

The indicative Action Plan contains a list of potential actions to realise the vision and objectives set out in the Wellington Place Plan. The Action Plan is a working document, kept under periodic review, along with time-scales for delivery. The Action Plan will progress in alignment with the emerging new Somerset-wide Local Plan.

1 Introduction



Introduction

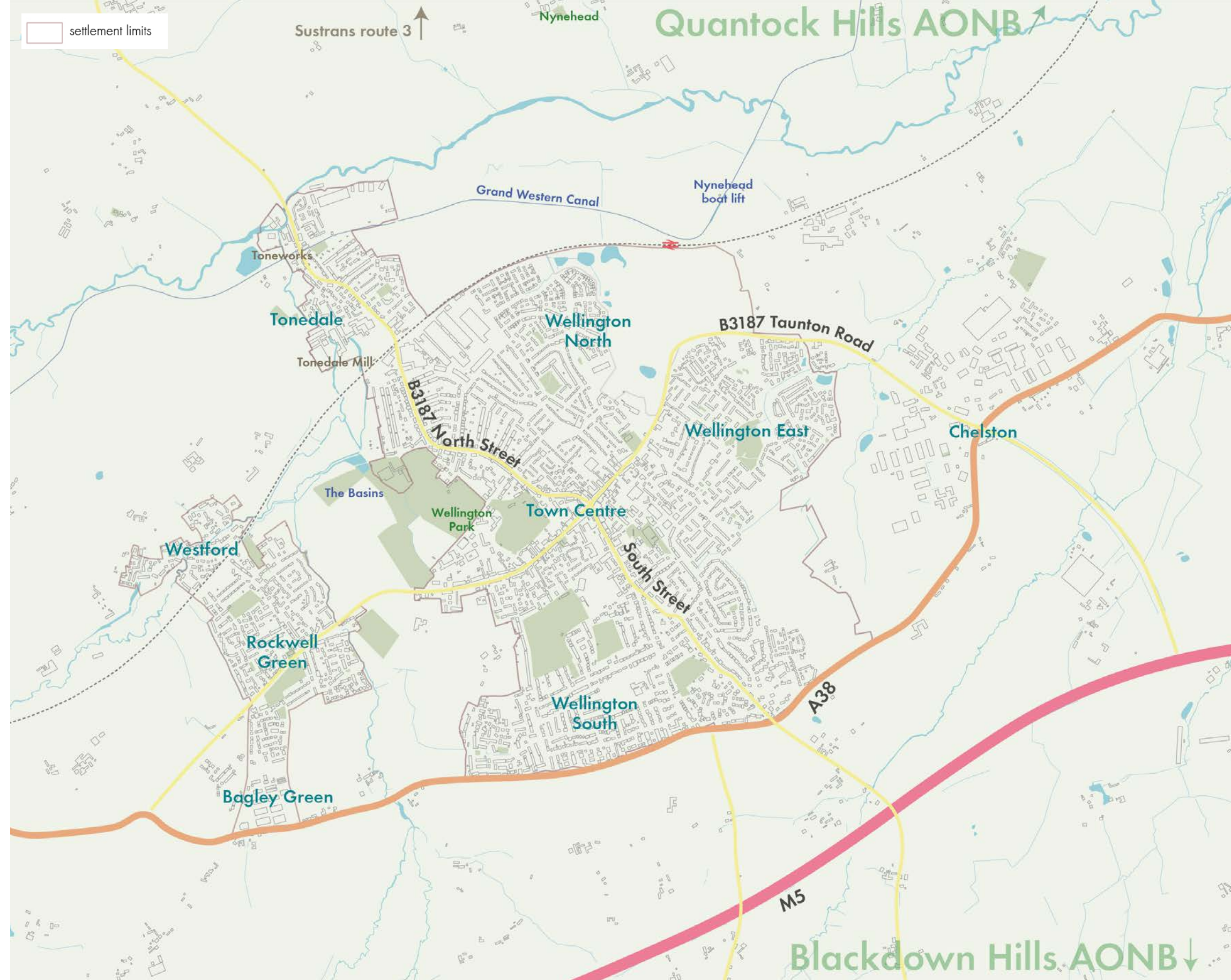
Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT) has produced a Place Plan for Wellington comprising a Vision and a Spatial Framework. Allies and Morrison, Avison Young and Land Use Consultants were commissioned to support SWT in preparing the document. The Place Plan will aid SWT in its decisions around the development, regeneration and conservation of Wellington. The Place Plan will feed into the evidence base for the new Somerset-wide Local Plan.

The Wellington Place Plan covers the Parish of Wellington and areas contiguous to the settlement boundaries identified in the Taunton Deane Local Plan (2011-2028). The Plan also acknowledges the role of the town in serving a wider rural hinterland.

Wellington is a town with a rich history, impressive landscape setting and strong retail, leisure and employment offer. The town has a market town function for the Somerset West and Taunton District alongside its extensive offer of independent shops and restaurants. The town is subject to unique challenges such as demands on infrastructure and heritage-at-risk, but is also subject to nation-wide challenges such as climate change and shifting retail patterns.

The Place Plan draws together a review of the evidence base, Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, outcomes from the first stage of engagement and the synthesis of a clear vision, themes, spatial plans, principles and projects.

The Place Plan was subject to a process of consultation in early 2023. This final version of the Place Plan takes into account representations received. Once adopted, it will have the status of a material consideration in determining planning applications and considering conservation and regeneration activities in Wellington.



Strategic context

The settlement of Wellington provides an important function in the District as a market town and acts as focus for a rural hinterland which extends into Devon. The town has a significant employment, retail and leisure offering and is the district's secondary centre, after Taunton. The town occupies an attractive setting at the foot of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The city of Exeter is only 28 miles away, a key destination for employment and tertiary education.

The character of Wellington is central to its identity as well as to the quality of life that it offers to residents and the experience that it offers to visitors. It is also important to the economic prosperity of the town, which is home to businesses of all sizes, and the offer to potential investors. The Place Plan seeks to improve the attractiveness and accessibility of the town centre, alongside diversification of its offer.

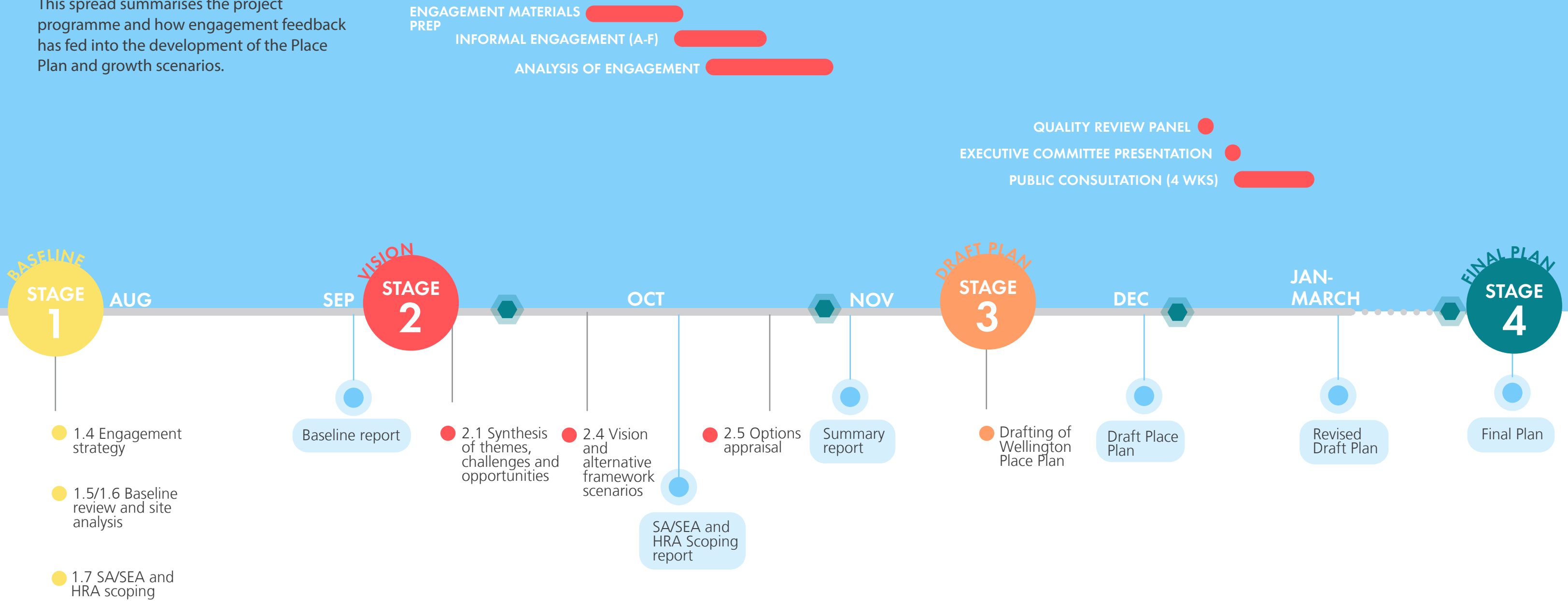
A key challenge relates to transport management, in the context of a growing town, and the environmental impact of traffic and increasing demands on infrastructure. The anticipated delivery of a new Wellington Railway Station by May 2025 and improvements to local walking and cycling infrastructure should help ease this pressure. The principles and priorities set out in the Place Plan will be progressed as set out in the accompanying Action Plan.

The Place Plan also seeks to address Heritage-at-Risk in the town and to secure new uses and long-term management of these heritage assets in a way which complements Wellington's built heritage and landscape assets.



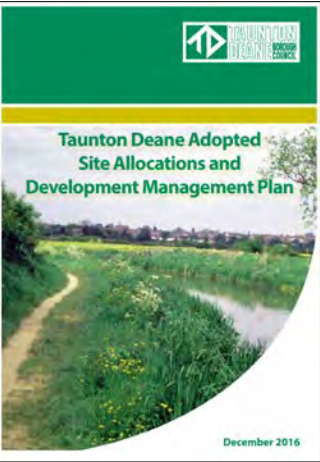
Project programme

This spread summarises the project programme and how engagement feedback has fed into the development of the Place Plan and growth scenarios.



Policy context

This policy context section provided a robust background to the Wellington Place Plan. The documents included within this section were thoroughly reviewed and considered for policy steering on the Wellington Place Plan.



Taunton Deane Adopted Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (2016)

A Plan that sets out policies and strategic objectives in line with the Core Strategy (themes including water management, employment, retail, design quality etc), as well as descriptions and justifications regarding their alignment with national policy.

The Plan sets out development management policies examining factors such as economic, design and infrastructure. The Plan also sets out spatial, strategic site allocations for mixed-use / residential development for the wider area. Policy WEL1 relates specifically to Wellington: Tonedale Mill.

SWT declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and Ecological Emergency in 2020. In response to this, SWT prepared a **Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience (CNCR) Action Plan**. The CNCR Action Plan identifies a proposed one-year action plan together with route maps for longer term action, and the role that SWT will need to play in delivery. Over 300 potential climate actions are identified to progress over the next ten years as part of SWT's corporate priority of working towards a carbon neutral district and Council by 2030.



Taunton Deane Green Infrastructure Strategy (2009)

A strategy that identifies opportunities for green infrastructure and identifies funding and implementation approaches to support greening throughout the borough. Much of the strategic allocations for the borough are going to be delivered by urban extensions, making the provision and retention of green infrastructure extremely important.

Themes include: open space, access, green links, landscape, ecology, biodiversity, cultural heritage, flooding, and socio-economic issues.

The plan identifies priorities for Wellington:

- Good provision and access to formal parks and gardens, however, a deficiency in access to local open space including town centre, Rockwell Green and Tonedale;
- Lack of safe routes for cycling between Wellington and Taunton.

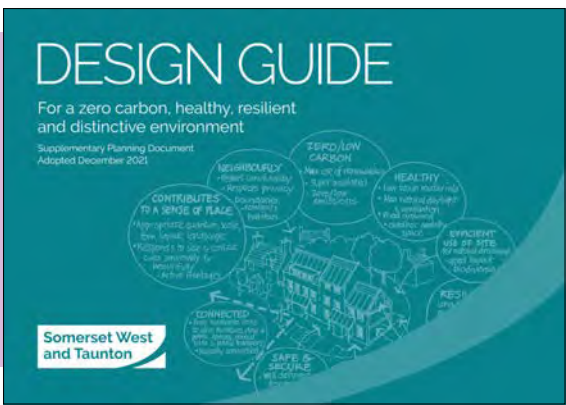
In addition, SWT are preparing a **Local Nature Recovery Strategy** as well as the **Somerset Tree Strategy** which is due to be adopted by the council in March 2023.



Somerset West and Taunton Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Action Plan (2020)

The **Playing Pitch Strategy 2016-2028** acknowledges the need for additional pitches in Wellington, and to improve drainage and the quality and capacity of its pitches. The Strategy sets out several options to accommodate demand to 2028, giving key considerations. Additionally, the Strategy highlights sharing issues between clubs, with the cricket ground being shared with the football club. There are linked issues to the provision of football and rugby grass pitches, as well as AGP provision for hockey and for football training in the town. Solutions for these issues will be explored as the Playing Pitch Strategy is developed.

The **Somerset West and Taunton Design Guide** provides design guidance in line with the National Design Guide, following this thematic structure: contributes to a sense of place, neighbourly, zero/low carbon, healthy, efficient use of site, resilient, adaptable, spacious, safe and secure, connected. The Design Guide informs design codes and design briefs, recommending a specific design process to follow for a successful



Somerset West and Taunton Design Guide (2021)

application and project. The guide provides detail on specific aspects of design and architectural features including spatially specific guidance for character areas.

Wellington lies within character area 6: Vale of Taunton Deane. Issues identified in Wellington regarding design:

- Retention and conversion of historic industrial buildings;
- Containing suburban growth and respecting the green setting;
- Erosion of field patterns, meadows, parkland and other green features;
- Flood-sensitive design.

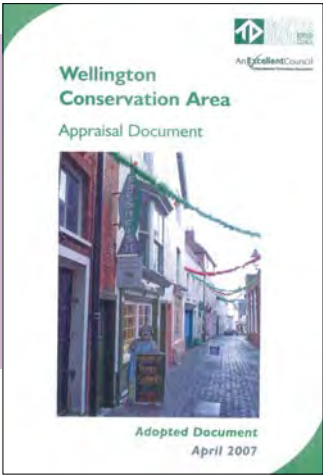
The Design Guide provides a reinterpretation of the town centre's high street, suggesting urban greening, breaking up large blocks and building along organic building lines. The guide picks up on local design and architectural details.



Somerset West and Taunton Economic Development Needs Assessment (2021)

A study drawing together evidence to inform an assessment of potential employment land needs across the Somerset West and Taunton local authority area. Findings:

- The area is home to 88,000 working age people and accommodates for 82,000 jobs;
- Unemployment rates are low and have been declining;
- Employment is well catered for by linkages to neighbouring districts, for example by the M5;
- Major employment growth forecast for: Health, Professional Services, Administrative Services, Education, Arts & Recreation, Accommodation & Food and Construction;
- Future employment sites requirements will be driven by the economic net growth and the need to provide suitable premises for the existing economy.



Wellington Conservation Area Appraisal (2007)

An appraisal defining the area of special historic interest in Wellington town centre, providing a description and evaluation of the historic features' contributions to the environment. Findings:

- The Conservation Area covers the town's main commercial streets and medieval street pattern which is dominated by specialist and independent retailers;
- Wellington has a large proportion of relatively plain but well-built and varied eighteenth-early nineteenth century buildings;
- The Conservation Area contains many listed buildings and is now considered Heritage-at-Risk;
- Factors affecting the Conservation Area:
 - Household alterations
 - Vacancy rates
 - Traffic and parking.



Taunton Green Space Strategy (2014)

A strategy prepared to cover 2010-2015, with key policy drivers relating to the NPPF, Taunton Deane Core Strategy, Play Policy and Play Strategy. This strategy supports the Taunton Deane Adopted Site Allocations and Development Management Plan and provides information based upon plans for future development.

Wellington:

- 72 green spaces in the town and wider area, totalling 64.89 Ha of open space;
- A large proportion of the 64.89Ha comes from outdoor sports facilities (39.2%);
- The provision of green space in the future for Wellington as the population is set to increase to nearly 20,000 people due to strategic developments. Strategic allocations include 52 Ha of land for green spaces associated with this development.



Employment, Retail and Leisure Study (2018)

A study assessing the need for additional land and floor space for employment land, retail and leisure spaces. The Somerset West and Taunton districts were found not to require any additional floorspace for these economic uses due to the low population growth predicted over the plan period.

Wellington:

- Wellington has a strong convenience offer with Waitrose, the Co-operative, Asda and the new Lidl.
- Small independent retailers offering high quality goods to cater to a mid-luxury market.
- Vacancy rates in the centre are higher than the national average.
- The centre is performing well, however, there is room for improvement in enhancing the public realm in the centre and its peripheral streets.

Emerging planning context



Local Plan 2040 Issues and Opportunities Document (2020)

This document was consulted upon for SWT's Local Plan 2040, but has since been put on hold as the Local Government Review for Somerset has taken place (see Section 1 Introduction).

This document sets out: draft objectives; projected issues for the area; and opportunities to address these and meet the objectives.

Findings:

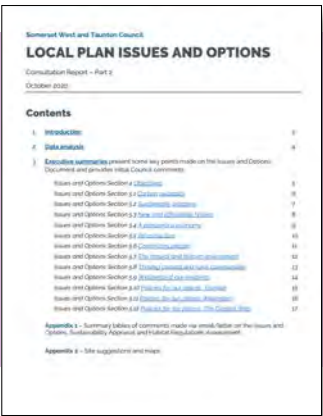
- There is a need to retain the integrity of the retail core providing opportunities for competition and consumer choice.
- Ancillary facilities need to be supported.
- The town centre environment has much room for improvement. There are several public realm projects and preservation projects of historic buildings that would add to these improvements.
- The reopening of the Railway station would encourage public transport use and aid regeneration initiatives of Tonedale Mill and Tone Works.

Objective 1	To ensure all new development works towards the District's "carbon neutrality by 2030" target
Objective 2	To enhance the role of Taunton town centre in the sub-region and to strengthen the function, vitality and self-containment of all our towns
Objective 3	To provide a sufficient and varied supply of high quality and affordable homes to meet the needs of all sections of our communities
Objective 4	To create a prosperous, resilient and entrepreneurial economy ensuring competitiveness across the wider sub-region and attracting the most talented workers to the District
Objective 5	To ensure that new development is supported by essential infrastructure in a timely manner
Objective 6	To achieve a major change in travel behaviour towards walking, cycling and public transport and to reduce the need to travel
Objective 7	To protect and enhance the environmental, historic, economic and wellbeing value of the District's distinctive landscapes biodiversity and local character.
Objective 8	To boost tourism, economic development, agricultural transformation and deliver more affordable homes in our rural and coastal communities
Objective 9	To improve wellbeing, inclusivity and a reduction in inequalities enabling independence and facilitating social interaction

- There are several risks to the heritage assets including changes to doors and windows, vehicle dominance in the centre, infill development.

Policy approaches to support the issues include the following themes:

- Maximising retail frontages.
- Support retail, employment and service uses in strategic land allocations.
- Protection of Tonedale Mill and Tone Works is needed.
- Historic character needs to be retained.



Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation Reports 1 & 2 (2020)

The consultation reports set out findings in response to the Issues and Options Consultation, as part of the SWT's Local Plan 2040 review. The first report sets out the general results of these consultations, and the second report assesses these results in much more detail to inform the next stage of drafting for the Local Plan.

Findings:

- The public and stakeholders felt that the Local Plan had appropriate and encouraging objectives.
- The carbon neutrality target should be as soon as possible, suggestions for 2025 instead of 2030. Climate change should be a priority for developer contributions.
- There should be a mix of specifically allocated sites and broad areas for specific renewable energy development.
- The settlement tiers presented seem correct.

- Housing distribution should continue in its current pattern or increase in Wellington / Taunton and reduce in Minehead / other rural centres.
- Affordable homes should be in line with national recommendations of 702 per annum.
- Specific sites should be allocated for allocated for gypsy, traveller and show people communities.
- There should be a defined percentage of accessible and adaptable homes.
- There should be realistic growth ambitions in terms of providing employment.
- Development in rural areas should be managed by effective settlement boundaries.
- Housing in Taunton town centre should be car free and more energy-efficient.

Emerging Local Plan next steps

The new Somerset West and Taunton Council came into being on Monday 1 April 2019 and combined the former West Somerset Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council into a brand new District council.

Subsequently, in July 2021, the Secretary of State approved a proposal for a new single unitary council to be formed in Somerset, to replace Somerset’s current five councils. The new Somerset Council will come into being on 1 April 2023.

The formation of a unitary council in Somerset will have a significant impact on the way all public services (including planning and the Local Plan) are delivered for years to come. The Local Plan (or its equivalent if changed by central government), will need to be embedded into any new structures and cover the geographical area of the new local authority.

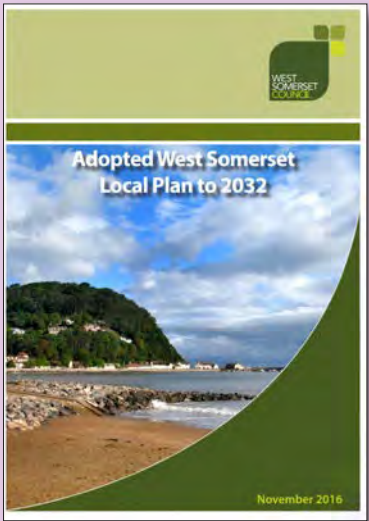
The Wellington Place Plan is an evidence base document which will shape the new Local Plan alongside the wider studies and strategies in the existing and emerging evidence base. The Place Plan is not currently part of the Development Plan. References to potential guidance, projects, priorities and growth scenarios will require further development through the plan-making process. This includes a range of robust evidence base documents and considerations relating to delivery and viability.

The scoping report

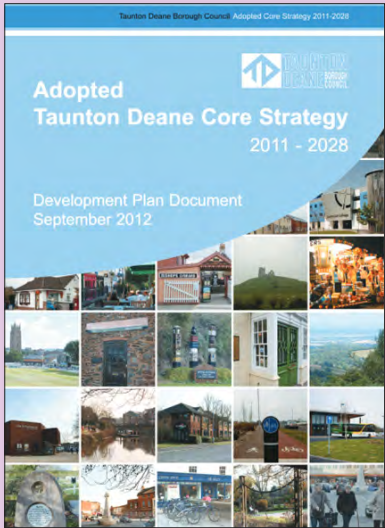
LUC have prepared a report that includes a focused assessment of baseline, that will cover the following aspects:

- Climate change
- Population, health and well-being
- Equalities
- Deprivation
- Economy
- Transport
- Water resources including quality and phosphates, supply and flooding
- Landscape
- Soils
- Biodiversity
- Historic environment

West Somerset Council
Local Plan 2016-2032



Taunton Deane Borough Council
Core Strategy 2011-2028



Local Plan 2040 Issues and
Options Consultation



Local Plan production
early stages

Somerset West and Taunton
Local Plan 2040



Wellington Place Plan



evidence base

Sites context

This section provides information on:

- Sites that have been allocated for development in the current adopted Taunton Deane Borough Council Core Strategy (2011-2028) (red on the map)
- Sites that have been either identified or allocated as green space (green on the map)

Sites promoted in the call for sites, as part of the Issues and Options Local Plan consultation and through the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA), have informed options for potential growth areas in the Place Plan.

The sites information will inform options for potential growth areas in the Place Plan.

Subject to the planning policy process, it is anticipated that existing employment sites and designations would be protected for economic uses, finding opportunities for growth and other employment benefits.

Green Space - Acquired Sites

Land at the basins

Type: Greenfield

Proposals: Expansion to existing allotments; Country Park and Conservation Area; community garden and community sports

Fox's Field (3.44 ha)

Type: Greenfield

Proposals: The land was acquired by SWT in 2019 with the aim to create a forest garden to enhance biodiversity and provide a local community orchard. The site is leased to Wellington Town Council who are working with Wellington Transition Town on the project.

Core Strategy Site Allocations

SS3

Longforth Farm, Wellington (60.4 ha)

Type: Part allocated, Greenfield and Brownfield

Status: Longforth Farm complete, other parts of site have no current planning apps. Bloor Homes area has 503dw completed, areas occupied by Relyon and Swallowfield currently retain existing commercial uses.

Description and Promoted uses: 900 dwellings; 35-40 dph; centre; community, leisure and educational uses; 11 Ha of employment land

SS4

Cades / Jurston, Wellington (33.5 ha)

Type: Allocated, Greenfield

Status: Cades is built out, Jurston under construction with just over half the site granted Reserve Matters permission.

Description and Promoted uses: 900 dwellings; 35-40 dph; community; leisure and educational uses; 30 Ha of green wedge

SS5

Strategic employment site, Chelston (8.67 ha)

Type: Allocated, Greenfield

Status: Not yet progressed

Description and Promoted uses: Employment land use class B1 b & c; B2; B8

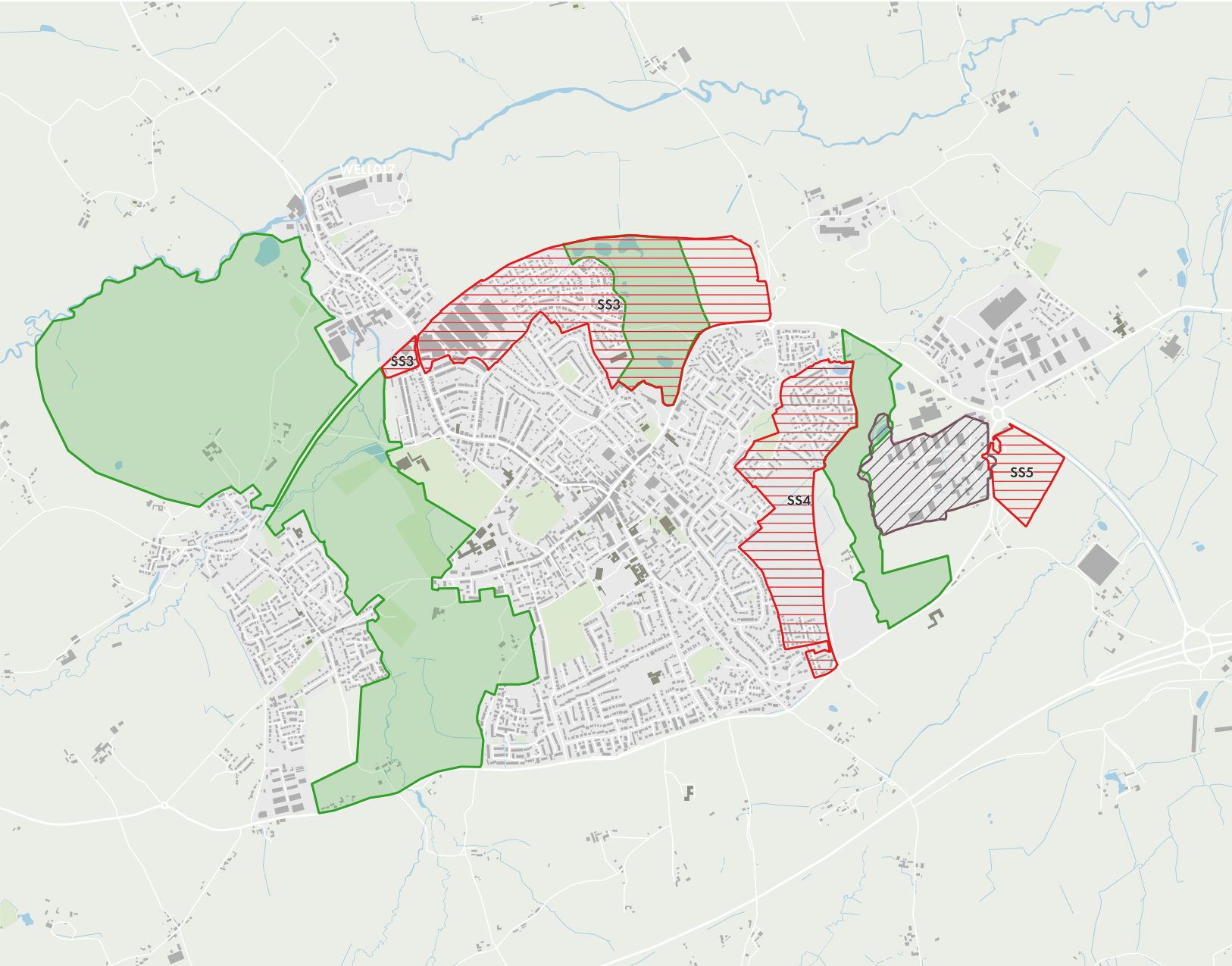
WEL1

Tonedale Mill (5.7 ha)

Type: Allocated, Brownfield

Status: Some commercial and leisure elements completed. Recently urgent repairs have been undertaken on the other parts of historic structure. Homes England and Historic England have signed a MoU to focus on Tonedale as a priority site; SWT working with owner to bring forward the site.

Description and Promoted uses: 220 dwellings; mix-used; 1.5Ha of employment land (class B)



LEGEND

Allocated sites

Other sites

Wellington green space

Engagement overview

The Place Plan has been informed by a diverse programme of engagement which closed with drop-in events as a part of a formal consultation. Activities took place alongside our review of the evidence base, feeding into our understanding of opportunities, constraints and key priorities. This has shaped a clear set of thematic principles, projects and plans which respond to the main outcomes from a wide range of conversations with different stakeholders and members of the community. Key findings from the engagement activity are set out on pages 57 to 62.

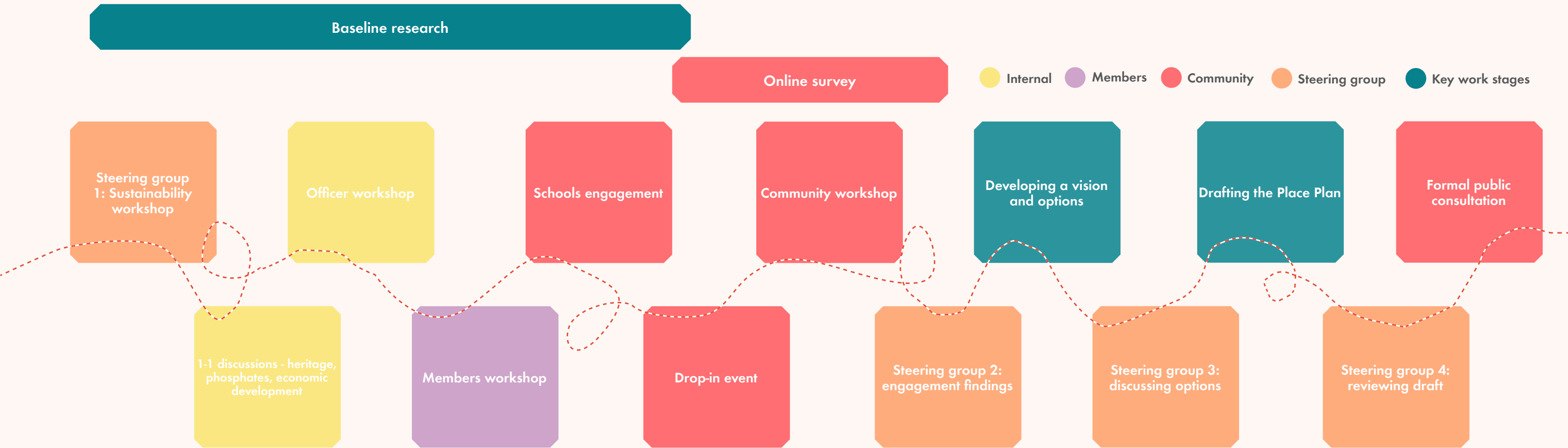


September 2022

October 2022

December 2022

January 2023



Headline stats

Online
exhibition &
forum



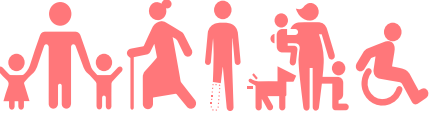
Stage 2
consultation ran
between 10 and 23
October 2022



Stage 3
consultation ran
between 23 Jan
and 20 Feb 2023



122
survey
responses



over the three stages

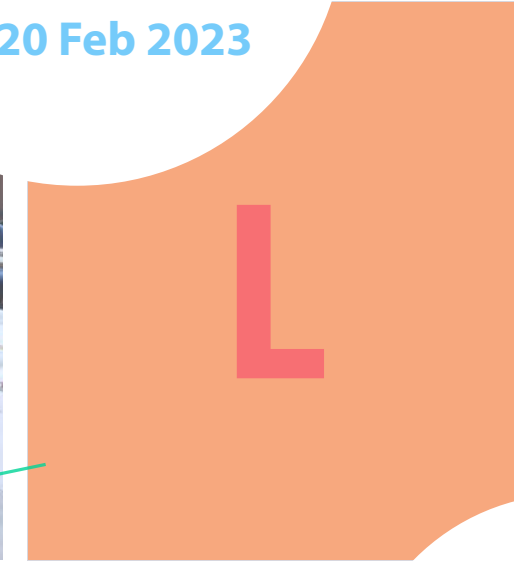


1
community
workshop

18
attendees



Drop-in session at
Quaker Meeting
House



Members
& officer
sessions



108
schools
responses

E-mailed
comments



Thank you
to everyone who
got involved.

Wellington's past

Wellington developed along the linear Fore Street, nestled in the beautiful Tone Valley.

The town has expanded as an industrial settlement with a medieval core which remains largely unaltered.

Key industries that have shaped the town and influenced expansion:

- Brick making (seen today in the distinctive orange colour of the Victorian and Edwardian terraces).
- Wool trade and cloth-making where the Fox Brothers was a key business.
- Relyon mattresses, which is still a major local employer.
- Veterinary products, toiletries and cosmetics - Walter Gregory opened his first chemists in Fore Street in 1882, and in 1950s Gregory's became a pioneer of the aerosol industry. The company became known as Swallowfield in 1986 and is still a major employer in the town.

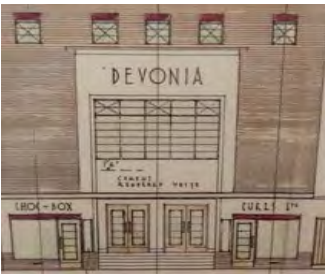
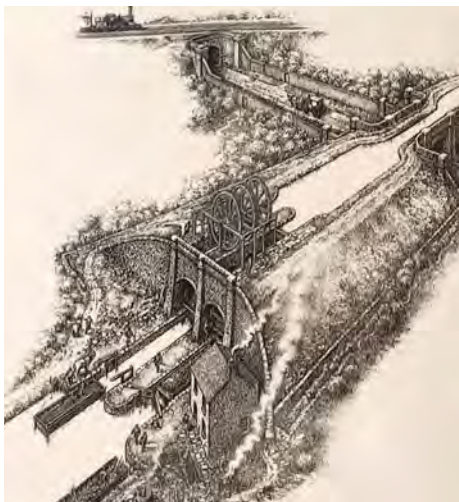
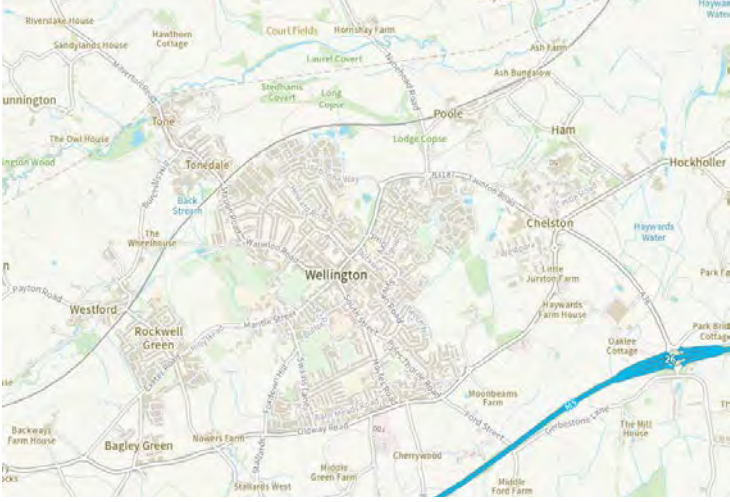
1890



1960



2022



Historic photos of Wellington and surrounds ©Wellington Museum

South Street, 1907

Architects drawing of Wellesley cinema

Wellington view, 1852

Town centre, c1910

the brick building beside the Town Hall was the Post Office between 1885 and 1911

North Street, c1900s

before cars, North Street was a significant part of Wellington's shopping area

Waterloo Road

West along Fore St, 1938

Group of canal structures near Wellington, 1840s

the canal lift was a pioneering invention designed by James Green

Rockwell Green, c1910 looking north past The Weavers Arms

Inside woollen factory, 1910

Historic photos captions

Wellington's past

Early & medieval

- Evidence of Bronze Age settlement and farming.
- Medieval settlement at Longforth Farm included complex of buildings and large medieval 'manor' house dating between 1200 and 1400 at Longforth Farm.
- Land named Weolington and Walintone.
- Medieval town newly laid out to encourage trade arranged along Bristol to Exeter road with moderately successful local market and fairs.
- Small scale cloth industry.

Georgian and Victorian

- Increasing prosperity, a "fine, thriving town" described by Collinson (1791).
- Industrial activity included iron foundries, wool and clothing manufacturing.
- Growth of Westford Mills and Tone Works textile mills provide local employment.
- Introduction of turnpikes, extension of Grand Western Canal and railway leads to expansion of town northwards.
- Wellington Monument built.

20th century

- Leisure offer grows with opening of Wellington Park and three cinemas: the Town Hall cinema in 1909 (renamed Rex Cinema), Castle Cinema in 1912 (renamed Tivoli) and Wellesley Cinema (1937) which still remains today.
- Train links and the opening of the M5 connects the town to Taunton, Exeter, Bristol, and the Midlands. This leads to significant expansion.
- Wellington functions as a dormitory settlement of Taunton.
- Fox Bros & Co nearly closes down but manages to stay afloat.
- Several horticultural nurseries in area.

21st century

- The resident population of Wellington grew from 12,845 in 2001 to 16,669 in 2021.
- Unique retail offer and a legacy of commercial and industrial innovation.
- Tone Works site currently at risk and underused but provides great opportunity.
- A railway station again at Wellington will bring further benefits to town with further development planned.

1086

Recorded in Domesday Book with the name Walintone, belonging to Bishop Giso of Wells.

1215

Town gains town status by Royal Charter.

1731

Fire causes major damage in the town.

1819

Only visit to the town by the first Duke of Wellington.

1830s

Wellington Hall built as market hall.
Tonedale Mill opens.

Wellington Union Workhouse opens on North Street (1837).

1843

Wellington Station opens.

1854

Wellington Monument erected in honour of Arthur Wellesley.

1866

William Thomas & Co Ltd install the biggest Hoffman brick kiln in Britain burning continuously for over 100 years (except for 6 weeks in 1921).

1903

Wellington Park opens on land given by Fox Bros.



Beech Grove entrance to park, 1910
@Wellington Museum

1930s

Widening of Longforth Rd / High Street junction (1931).
Traffic lights first appear in town (1935).

1964

Wellington Railway station closes.
Creation of new Wellington Town Crest.

1978

Heavy snow closes roads into the town for two days.



The Town Crest shows a wool sack (representing the woollen industry), bulls head (veterinary products and Swallowfield), milk churn (milk factory in Champford Lane), mattress (Relyon mattresses), and a Chrysanthemum representing the horticultural nurseries formerly in the area ©Wellington Museum

2021

Decontamination works begin on Tone Works



Medieval floor tiles discovered at Longforth Farm

Highlights

History

Wellington has a rich history which is evident in the built environment. There are many listed buildings in the town centre as well as the Grade I listed Church of St John the Baptist, included within the town centre Conservation Area (on the 'At Risk Register'). These assets in particular bring heritage tourism to Wellington. The town centre is compact and has a medieval street pattern as well as visual, architectural details that pay homage to Wellington's history including the red bricks which are commonplace in the town. These elements and other non-listed heritage assets must be protected and maintained. On the outskirts of town, Tone Works and Tonedale Mill are nationally significant assets (on the 'At Risk Register'). Wellington Monument stands proudly in the surrounding landscape. Wellington School was founded in 1837 and remains in historic buildings including the Grade II listed chapel. The school has a potential role in keeping young people and students in the town and supporting local industry.

Town centre and community pride

Wellington's town centre is well-loved, with high quality elements such as independent shops and eateries, Waitrose and Wellington School. In the future it will play a major role in attracting life and encouraging new business enterprises. The current adopted Core Strategy sets out the role of Wellington as a secondary focus for growth within the Borough, recognising the town's size, offer of services and facilities, and role as a

market town serving a wider rural hinterland. There is a large amount of civic pride within Wellington, with active groups like Wellington Transition Town and Wellington Town Council who are taking a lead on local regeneration projects, such as reuse of the Kings Arms Pub with plans to reopen for community use. The community is well-served by a large community infrastructure network including schools, faith buildings, outdoor play spaces, leisure facilities and arts / heritage uses.

Landscape setting

The town's landscape setting is an important part of its identity and historic evolution. The town is set just north of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which is popular amongst local people and those in the wider area for walking and to enjoy views out to the Quantock Hills and over Wellington. There are several viewpoints in the town too, such as the green wedge between Rockwell Green and Wellington.

The River Tone runs just north of the town centre, and is surrounded by wooded land. The town once had a strong agricultural function, and Wellington's limited urban sprawl is still today surrounded by green space, some of which is farmland. This landscape setting is a huge highlight for Wellington in terms of identity, access to green space and attracting visitors.

rich history



loved town centre



green landscape



visual details



Challenges

Retail trends

Wellington faces the challenges of shifting retail trends, as do many other towns and cities in the UK. The movement of retail online and to out-of-town locations brings challenges around the vitality of town centres in terms of investment, employment, and footfall. Wellington's town centre is filled with independent shops, eateries, and cafés in addition to Waitrose, Asda, the Co-operative and the new Lidl. The diversification of the town centre's offer to encourage competition and comparison, coupled with public realm improvements should see Wellington thrive.

Traffic management

Wellington's town centre sits at the meeting point of High Street, North Street, South Street and Fore Street which are all responsible for directing traffic in and out of central Wellington. However, this makes the presence of vehicular traffic and heavy lorries in the centre extremely prominent causing congestion. On a larger scale, Wellington is not well connected to the surrounding areas by public transport or cycling – for example, to Taunton. These issues contribute to vehicular dependence which has implications on sustainability and environmental factors. SWT has plans to improve cycleways and pedestrian routes as well as to reopen the railway station. There are also longer-term aspirations set out in the current adopted Core Strategy to provide a link road through Longforth to the B3187. However, this is dependent on Relyon, Swallowfield and Pritex relocating. An investigation into the feasibility of other options

is therefore considered to have merit. A link road has the potential to reduce town centre traffic and address access issues.

Heritage-at-Risk

The town's Conservation Area is on Historic England's Heritage-at-Risk register. Notable features that need protecting are Tonedale Mill and Tone Works. SWT is hoping to regenerate and secure long-term management solutions for the two sites. It is a concern that flooding could be an issue for heritage assets. Heritage issues should be at the forefront of considerations in the Wellington Place Plan.

Landscape setting

There are concerns that future development will erode green spaces and the wider landscape setting. This landscape setting and green and blue infrastructure networks are key contributors to Wellington's identity as a rural town. Loss of agricultural land associated with strategic development or phosphate mitigation measures could threaten food security. SWT is seeking to ensure that strategic allocations for development are balanced with green wedges and access to green space is maintained.

Housing

Wellington has a local need for more affordable and private rented homes. A greater variety in housing types and tenures is needed to meet housing needs and cater for the town's population.

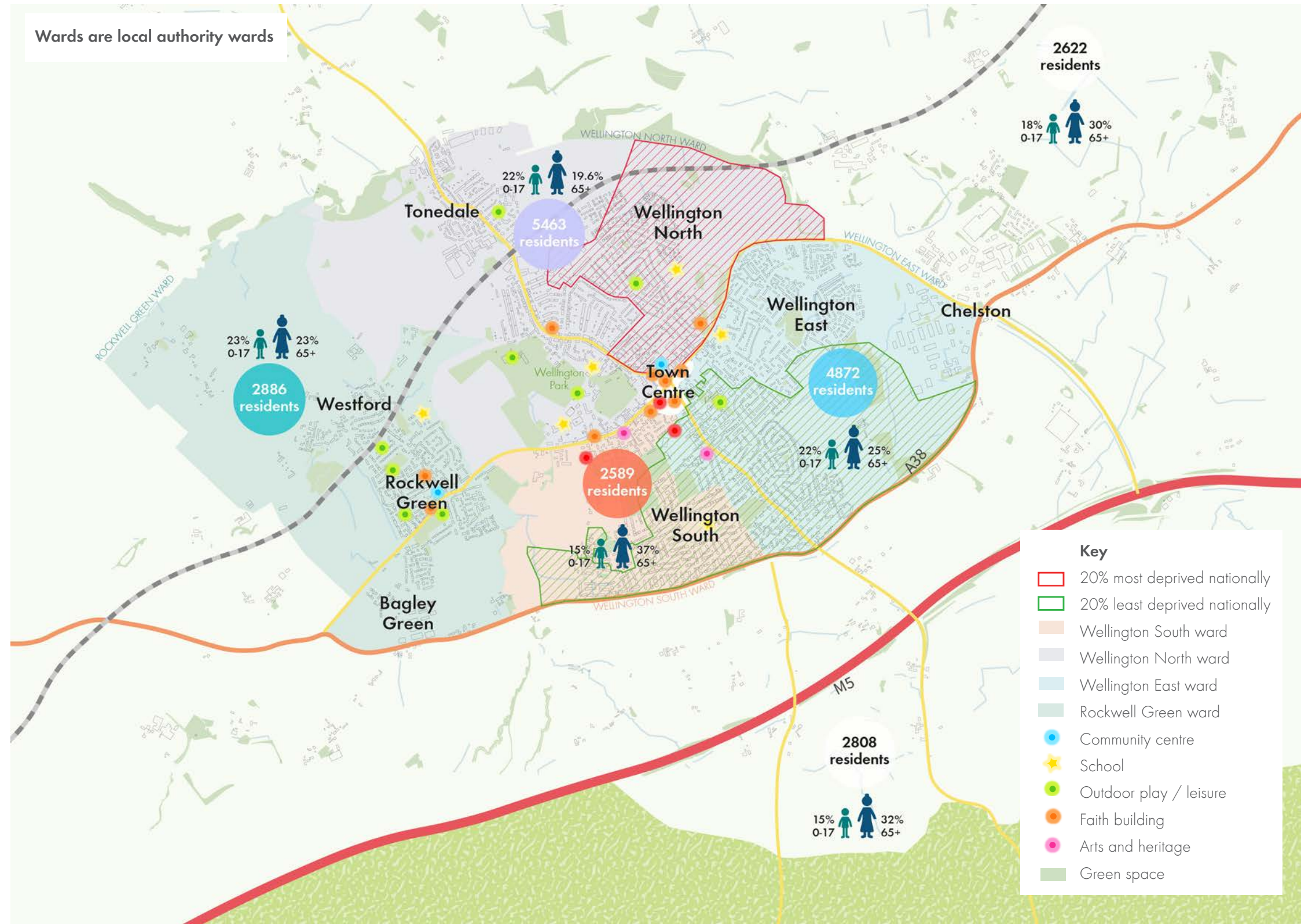


Social analysis

Introducing Wellington's residents

Wellington has a diverse population, but there are some common characteristics:

- Wellington has an ageing population. This is particularly striking in Wellington South ward, where nearly 1 in 5 residents are 75 or over, and 37% of residents are 65+ (ONS 2019 Mid-year estimates). Only 15% of Wellington South's residents are 0-17 year olds. Elsewhere in Wellington, 0-17 year olds make up 22% of the population, higher than the District average (19.2%).
- Most people are white British, although there is a small population of Polish and Portuguese residents, as well as those from a non-European background. In Wellington East, 2.3% speak a non-European language (2011 Census). The most ethnically diverse ward is Wellington North where 5.2% of residents are from a BAME background.
- There is a mix of religious and non-religious - those who identify as Christian make up between 59 and 64% across all wards. Between 1 and 2% of residents across wards belong to a non-Christian religion. The rest of residents identify as having no religion (2011 Census). This is similar to the Somerset and District figures.
- Social mobility is low in Taunton Deane and is in the bottom 20-40% within the South West region (Social Mobility Index, 2018)



- Broadband speed for households is faster in Wellington than its rural hinterland. For example, 0.3% of properties in Wellington North have less than super fast broadband, compared to 34% for Milverton & District ward and 36% for Monument ward (Ofcom Connected Nations Report, 2020).

A key difference is that the northern parts of town, and Rockwell Green, are far more deprived than the south. Incomes are lower, educational performance is lower and crime is higher:

- Deprivation - parts of Wellington North (on either side of Lillebonne Way) are within the 20% most deprived LSOAs nationally (IMD, 2019). The picture is strikingly different in Wellington South, much of which is in the 20% least deprived. Longforth Farm would diversify the housing offer and community in the Wellington North ward. Income, employment, health and education deprivation are especially high, as is income deprivation affecting older people. Rockwell Green and Wellington East also have higher levels of deprivation (within 30% and 40% most deprived nationally across most indicators).
- Residents in the north and eastern parts of town, as well as Rockwell Green, are at high risk of feeling lonely (Somerset Social Isolation map, 2015) - according to the Somerset Social Isolation Index, 15 common factors, including age, financial stress, car ownership and health status, can influence

social isolation and loneliness. The Index identifies LSOAs that are particularly lonely, and these tend to be in urban, deprived areas, specifically the north and eastern parts of Wellington. The effect of loneliness and isolation can be as harmful to health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

- Social housing - over 4% of residents are waiting for social housing in Wellington North and Wellington East. This figure is lower at 3% for residents in Wellington South (Homefinder Housing Register, March 2017). The figure is much higher at 7% for Rockwell Green residents.
- Education - 84% of pupils in Wellington South achieved the expected standard in KS2 Reading, Writing and Maths in 2019, compared to 49% of pupils in Wellington North ward and 43% of Rockwell Green pupils (Somerset County Council, 2019). For Wellington East, 55% of pupils achieved the expected standard. In 2011, the ward with the highest % of those aged 16+ with no qualification was Wellington North, with 26% of residents without a qualification. This is higher than the 22% average for the District and County.
- Special educational needs - there are fewer students with Special Educational Needs in Wellington South (113 per 1000) compared to Rockwell Green (201 per 1000), Wellington North (166 per 1000) and Wellington East (152 per 1000). The District and County average is 146 pupils per 1000.



84%
of students
in Wellington
South



43%
of students
in Rockwell
Green

49%
of students
in Wellington
North

**achieved the
expected standard
in KS2 in 2019**

**249 per 1000
students pupils**

**eligible for free
school meals in
Rockwell Green,
compared to
66 per 1000 in
Wellington South**



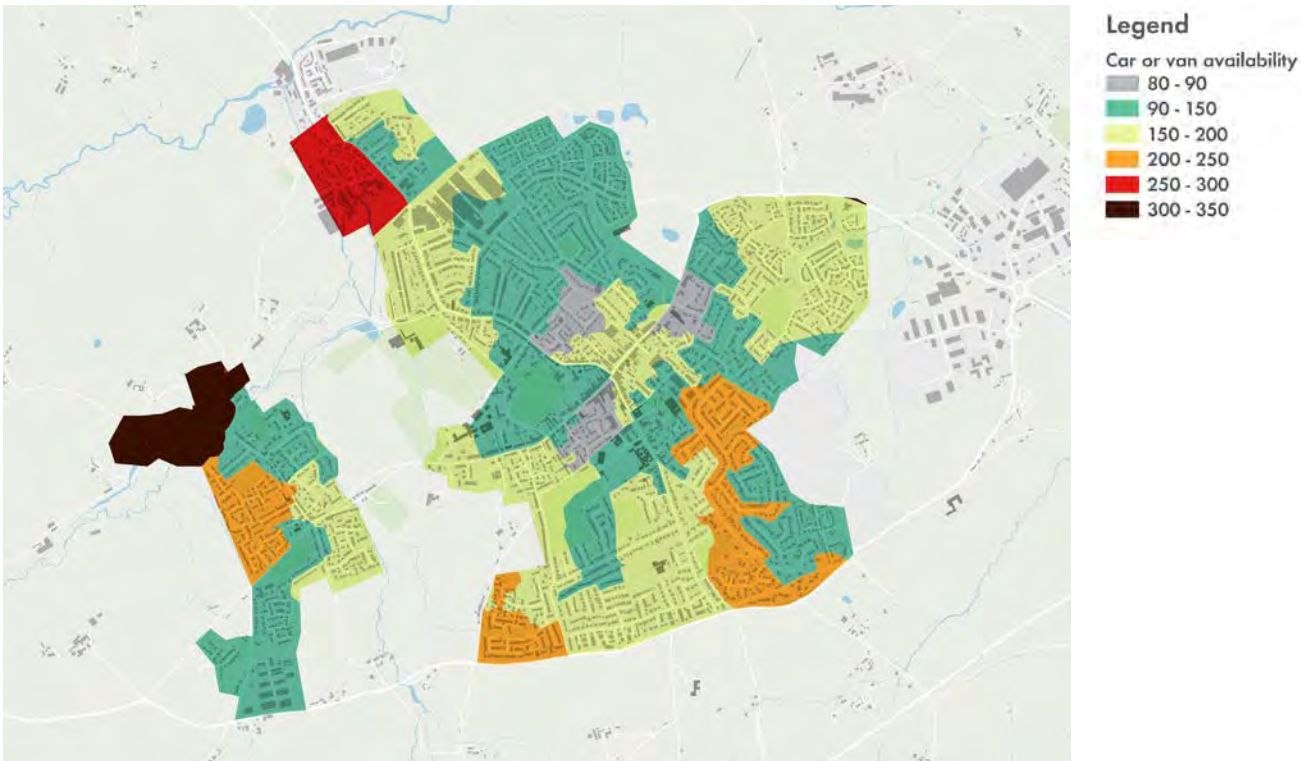
- Free School Meals - the number of pupils eligible for Free School Meals is higher than the District average in Wellington North (177 per 1000), Wellington East (166 per 1000) and Rockwell Green (249 per 1000). In Wellington South, numbers are far lower, at 66 per 1000 students. In the rural hinterland figures remain low too.
- Car ownership - 21% of householders in Wellington North do not own a car or van, compared to 18% in Wellington South and Wellington East, and 14% in Rockwell Green (2011 Census).
- Mortality - mortality is highest in Wellington North Ward, higher than the Somerset and District average mortality rates. Monument ward, which covers Wellington's rural hinterland to the south, also has surprisingly high mortality figures (NHS Digital: Civil Registrations Data & ONS Mid-year pop estimates 2015-2019).
- Crime - Wellington East had the highest number of violence and sexual offences in April 2019 - 3161 per 100,000 people. Wellington North closely followed. Wellington South has much lower reported violence and sexual offences (1352 per 100,000 people in April, 2019). Antisocial behaviour and criminal damage rates are highest in Wellington North, more than double that of Wellington South. Crime figures are higher

in Wellington North than the Somerset and District averages.

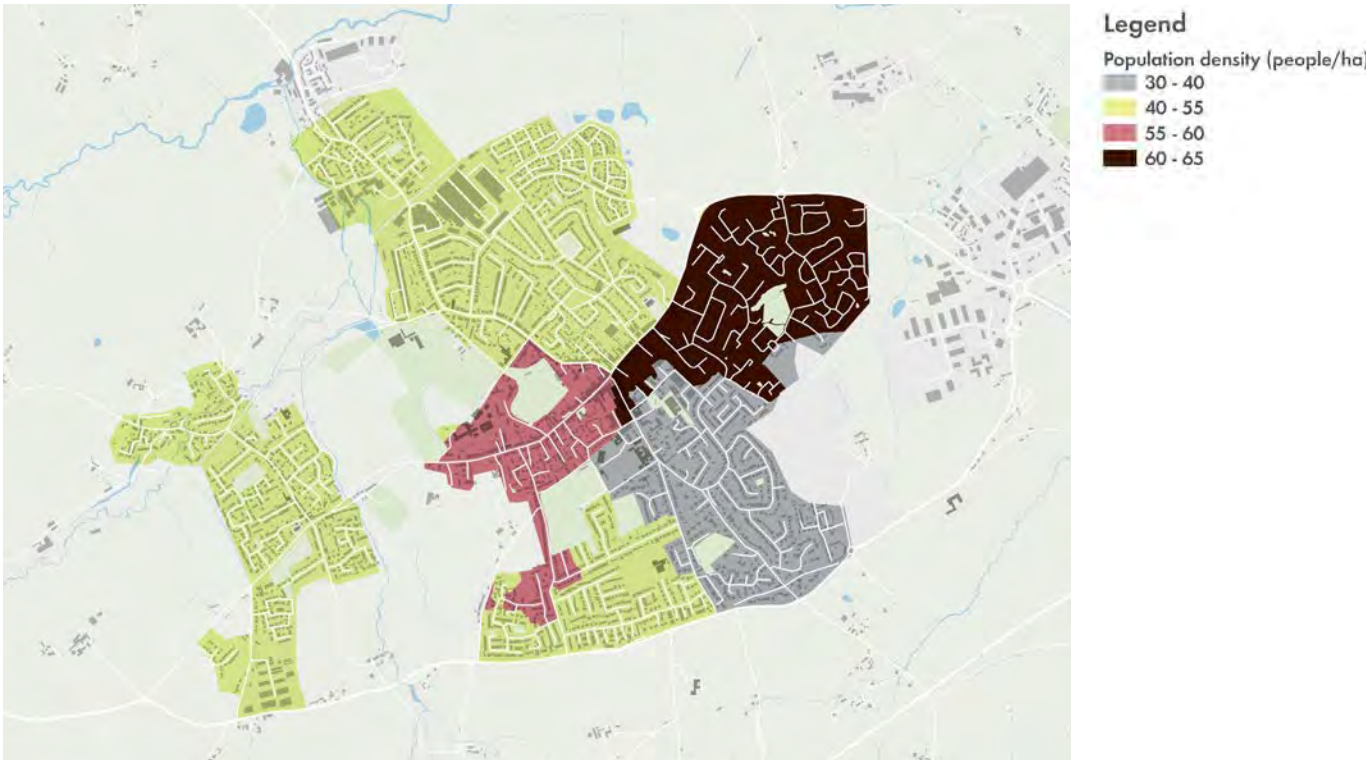
- Population density - the number of people per hectare living in parts of Wellington East (in the northern half of the ward) is considerably higher than elsewhere in Wellington.
- Health - at the district level, 81.6% of residents in Taunton Deane (in which Wellington was located prior to the formation of Somerset West and Taunton District) described themselves as having 'very good health' or 'good health'. This is slightly higher

than the national average for England and Wales of 81.2%. The figure for the three Wellington wards is slightly lower, at 79.9%. Like the majority of Somerset, Wellington has an ageing population which is likely to lead to more cases of residents suffering from age-related conditions such as dementia.

- Wellington has a lack of junior sports pitches and limited outdoor facilities for young people. The Skate Park is in need of improvements overall and to improve its safety. Roller sports, in general, are poorly provided for in Wellington.



Car and van availability



Population density



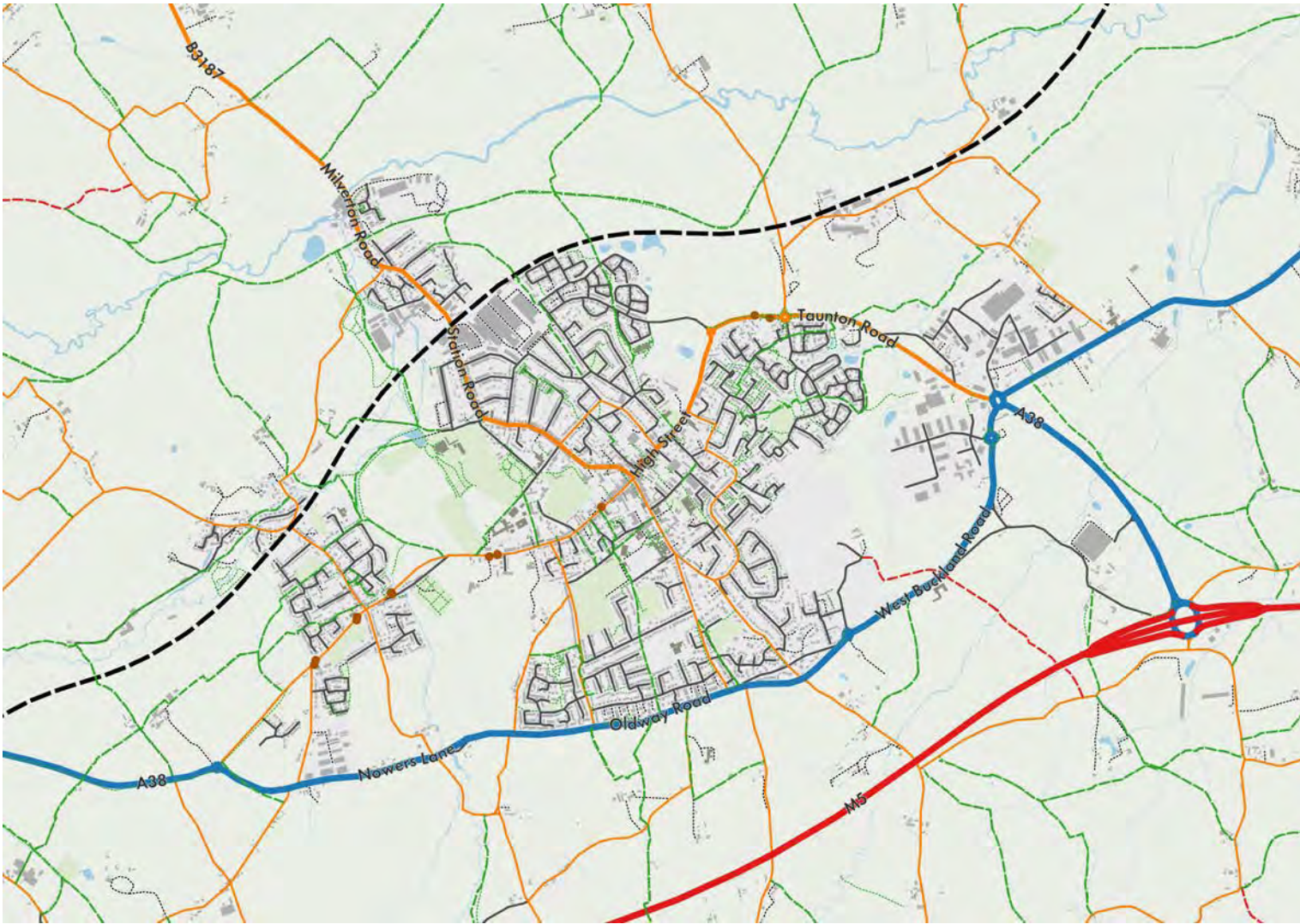
Connectivity

Wellington is well-connected both regionally and nationally by the Strategic Road Network, namely the M5, which links to Exeter, Bristol, Birmingham and beyond. The A38, part of the Major Road Network, runs south of the town, linking to the M5.

The town centre is well-connected in all directions by B roads, however, experiences major congestion problems due to the confluence of four key roads being at the very centre of Wellington. The town's relatively historic street pattern has a finer grain which complicates these issues and places strain on infrastructure, accessibility to the centre and produces sustainability issues.

Local roads in Wellington often take the form of cul-de-sacs which do not lend themselves well to positive internal connectivity, again placing strain on the B roads (Exeter Rd, Taunton Rd, North St, South St).

Public transport is limited with the only bus stops connecting east and west Wellington, leaving no north to south routes. There are plans for the opening of a Wellington railway station north of the town centre which will provide sustainable connectivity and transport options and encourage walkability in the town.



Connectivity



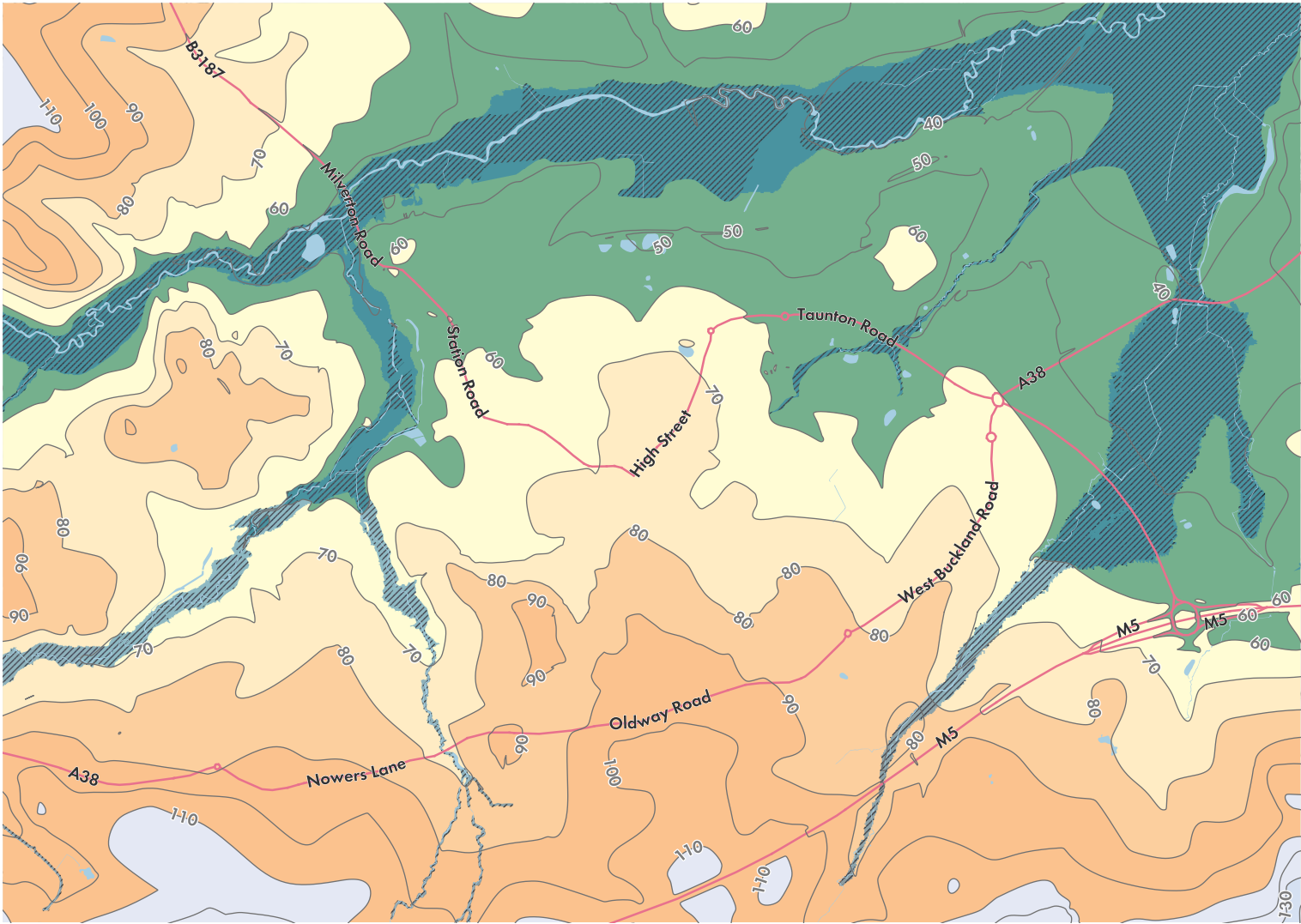
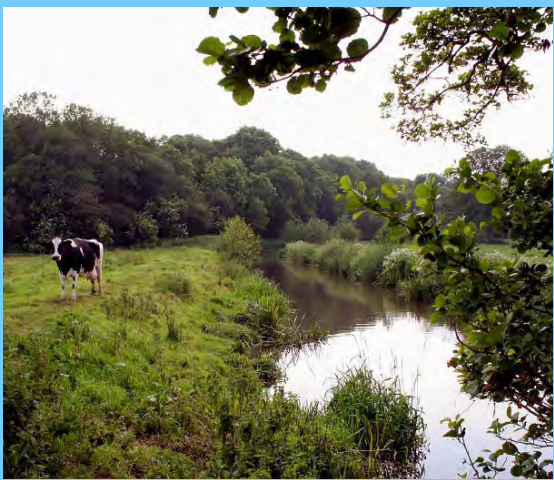
- Bus stop
- Rail track
- Public rights of way
 - Footpath
 - Restricted Byway
 - unofficial paths
- Roads
 - Motorway
 - A Road
 - B Road
 - Minor Road
 - Local Road
 - Restricted Local Access Road

Flooding

Wellington lies within the valley of the River Tone, meaning that part of the town and its surrounds are susceptible to flooding from the river and its tributaries. This area is characterised by Low Vale Farmland that produce clay and peat moors. Flood zone 2 areas surround the town, following the south-westerly path of the River Tone. The river is surrounded by flat green land which acts as effective flood plains, and are zone 3 flood zones.

Future stages of the plan-making process will need to consider flood risk and the approach to phosphate mitigation, drawing on more detailed evidence base studies and strategies. The Place Plan makes a number of references to areas where assessments will be required, but these are not exhaustive, and do not prejudge or replace the need for future studies including SFRA as part of the development of future planning policy guidance and site allocations. Future studies will need to consider:

- Appropriate locations for development in response to flood risk assessments.
- Blue green infrastructure including the multi-functional benefits of green infrastructure for flood alleviation, SUDS and health benefits.
- An examination of catchment-based improvement works to alleviate flood risk and the need for preparation of flood risk plans.
- The strategic interface between flood risk management and phosphates mitigation.



Flooding and topography



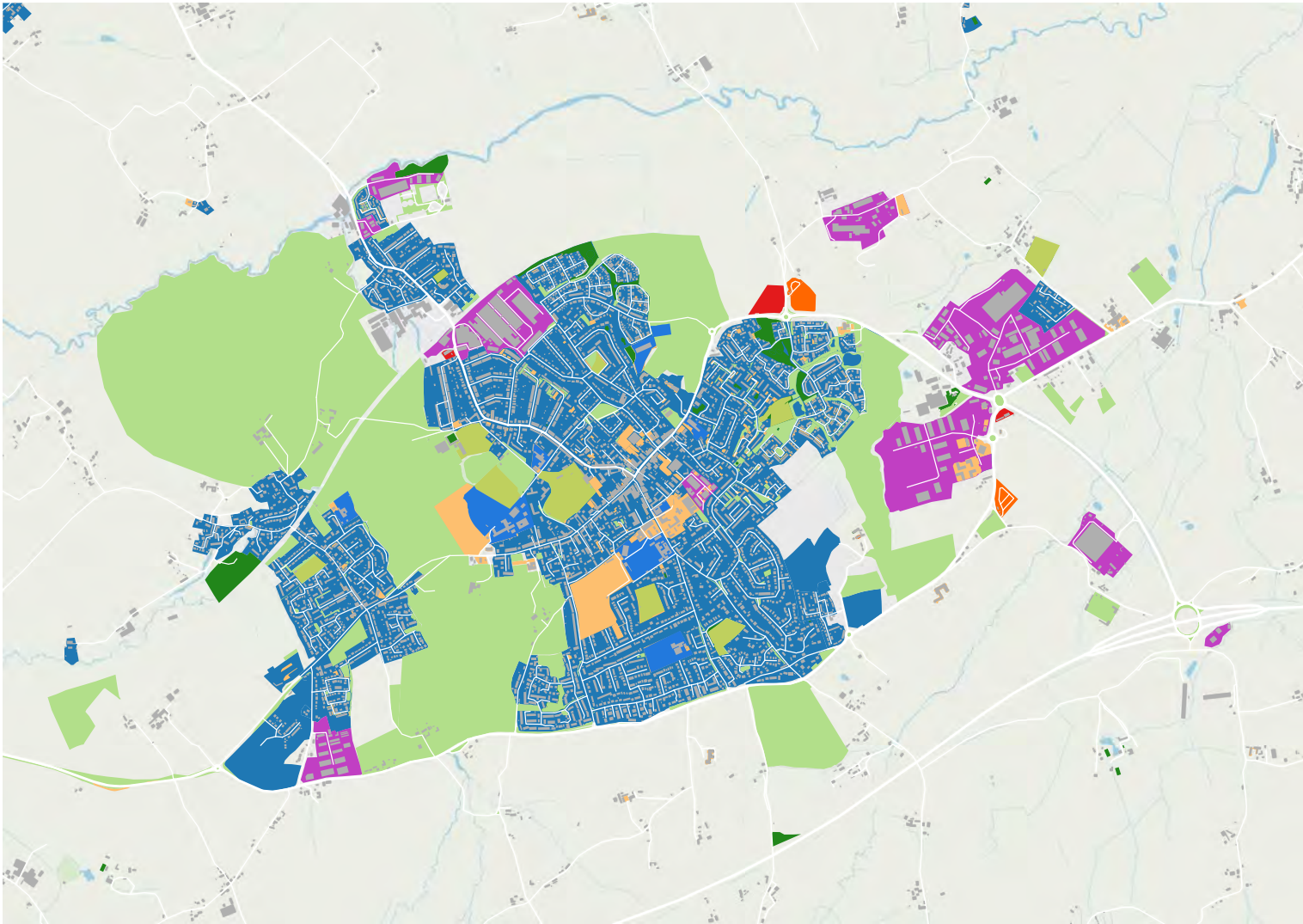
- Legend**
- Flood and topography**
- Contours all
 - Surface water
 - nat_floodzone3_v2
- Flood zones**
- Flood Zone 2
- Topography (metres)**
- 40 - 50
 - 50 - 60
 - 60 - 70
 - 70 - 80

Land uses

Wellington is heavily dominated by residential use which stretches right up to the town centre and is surrounded by green space and farmland.

The town centre is characterised by retail and commercial use with local amenities spreading out into and dotted throughout the residential sprawl. These uses in and around the town centre are important for the long-term vitality and economy of Wellington, relevant in the context of shifting retail and working patterns.

Wellington has industrial and employment land clustered around main roads and along the railway line which serve both jobs and services to the local and wider community.



Land use

- Legend**
- Land use
- Residential
 - Retail/commercial
 - Tourism
 - Industrial / employment
 - Under construction
 - Amenity
 - Leisure
 - Green space, Open space
 - Play fields
 - Education

Wellington's heritage today

- Wellington's rich history is seen today in the prevalence of heritage assets in the centre and on its edges.
- The town has over 90 listed buildings and a Conservation Area in the town centre.
- The historic core is a medieval pattern of burgage plots either side of the main road with later redevelopment.
- Georgian and Regency houses are located on the edge of town and there are early Victorian villas on South Street.
- Small Victorian town houses and modest terraces along Mantle Street and North Street.
- 20th century housing at Wellesely Park.
- One Grade I listed building, St John the Baptist Church, built in 1510 and a handsome Gothic building.
- Grade II* Registered Park and Garden north of town at Nynehead.



Heritage-at-Risk

There are substantial heritage assets identified as 'at risk' on Historic England's Heritage-at-Risk register. These are:

- Tone Works (Grade II*)
- Tonedale Mill (Grade II*)
- Wellington Conservation Area

Tone Works and Tonedale Mill have high heritage significance:

- Former Fox Brothers' woollen mills founded in 1790.
- At the height of its success, employed over 5000 local people.
- Largest and most comprehensive representative textile manufacturing in the south-west.
- Range of surviving structures and old machinery, the last of their kind.
- Rare example of a textile factory where all processes are carried on by the same firm on the same premises.

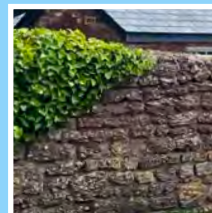
The main challenges regarding Tone Works and Tonedale Mill are:

- Vacant, derelict buildings.
- Fragmented land ownership, and landowner carrying out unauthorised, inappropriate works to Tonedale House (2017).
- Significant funding and long term repairs required to carry out urgent works.

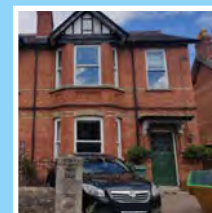
SWT submitted an application to the first round of the Levelling up Fund (LUF) but was unsuccessful. A further submission has been made to the LUF Round 2, to remove the mills from the Risk Register. The aim is to "return them to their original status (as industrial hearts of the community), breathing new life into the town by stabilising and securing these assets with the aim of transforming them into an exciting mix of cultural, community and commercial uses, alongside a unique and desirable residential community."

Boundary treatments

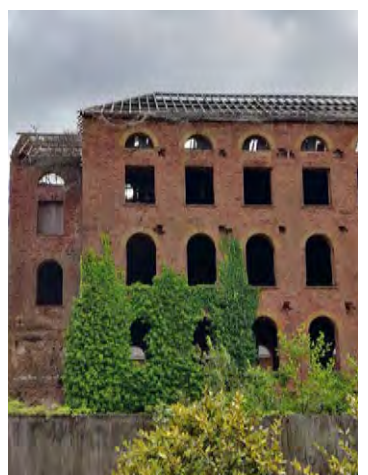
Historic boundary treatments contribute significantly to the heritage and cohesive character of Wellington. Old stone walls, brick walls and wrought iron railings are at risk of decay, neglect, insensitive alterations or even demolition to make way for off-street car-parking.



Walls bring a cohesive, historic character to Wellington



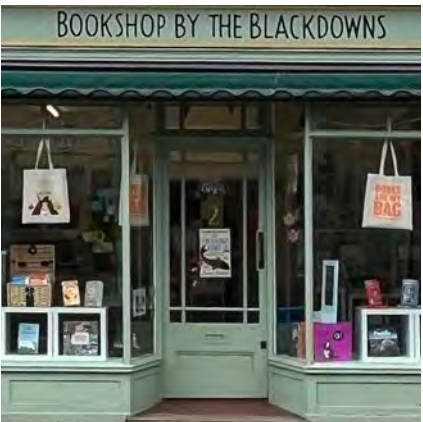
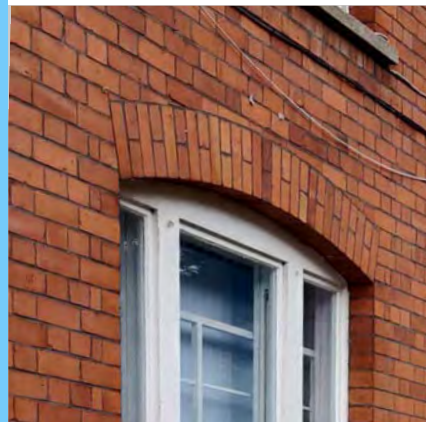
Alterations and demolition of walls can erode character incrementally



Town centre character

We have identified a number of key themes which define the particular character of Wellington town centre. This has been derived from the Wellington Conservation Area Appraisal (2007) and our own visual analysis.

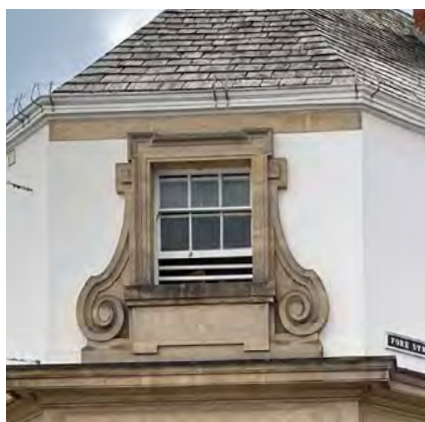
Colour



Materials



Details



'Of Wellington':

Simple and functional

Brick-built

High quality building composition along High Street

Footways, lanes & courtyards

Intact traditional shop fronts

Cast iron street name plates and railings

High stone & brick walls

Engagement headlines

This section summarises the key findings from community engagement

GETTING AROUND

An accessible place, linking existing and new neighbourhoods with the town centre, prioritising active travel and buses. Making safe and easy connections to the railway station, community facilities, employment areas, surrounding landscape and settlements including Taunton.

Wellington has plenty of well-loved footpaths that people use to get to the town centre and out to nearby countryside. People want to see these improved, joined up and well-signposted. Consideration should be given to new and safe walking connections through green spaces between neighbourhoods, employment areas, the station and the town centre.

Lots of people already cycle in Wellington. People want to see a cycle network which is safe and easy to use, for young and old, linking the town with nearby towns and villages, the new station, and improving access into the countryside.



Whilst the day bus service to Taunton is really good, people want to see an evening service as an alternative to driving. An improved bus network in and around town is welcomed - frequent, reliable and cheaper services linking new and existing residential areas with the new station, the town centre and nearby villages.

Providing a link road to take congestion out of the town centre will be complicated and challenging. In the short-term, measures should focus on reducing the number of short-range car journeys through the town, including school journeys, to create a safer, more pleasant experience in town for those on foot.



LANDSCAPE & IDENTITY

A town respectful of its rural setting, rooted in a productive landscape of growing, craft and industry.

Access to and provision of green and open space is very important to Wellington's community with many people identifying it as their favourite thing about the town. Community groups and projects such as Transition Town and Wellington in Bloom are key initiatives that residents are invested in to continue to celebrate and enhance the town's landscape. Prioritising green and open space will be an important way of ensuring that community needs are met.

People enjoy the benefits of Wellington's size - it is small and compact enough for fostering community, and big enough to provide a range of services and activities for local people. Maintaining both positive aspects in the context of growth will be key to Wellington's future. Residents have identified the River Tone to the north and the A38 to the south as appropriate edges for any development in order to maintain this size.

Many residents identify with the historic agricultural identity that contributes to the town's culture. Enhancing this identity through supporting local businesses and a wide range of community events will keep this spirit alive.



Similarly, residents feel that the views to and from the town centre are important, including from Chelston towards the Blackdown Hills and Monument which provide a unique setting for the town.

Considering the local vernacular, architecture, scale, and massing of the wider settlement and surrounding villages is important in maintaining local distinctiveness and connections between Wellington and its satellite villages. People would like there to be a cohesive identity between the town and villages while maintaining green spaces as buffers between the settlements.

New developments are very enclosed and new homes sometimes face infrastructure. Development should face onto green space and relate well to create safer, attractive walking / cycling routes through green spaces into Wellington, the station and other amenities.



TOWN CENTRE RESILIENCE & COMMUNITY LIFE

A welcoming and cared-for centre for all at the heart of Wellington, which meets local needs and draws people in with its charming buildings, social spaces and varied activities and uses. A town which young and old continue to be proud of and where community life grows.

Wellington's town centre is well loved, described as vibrant and home to key assets for the community. It is an attractive town centre with many appreciated independent shops. The traffic and congestion through the town centre was identified as a key issue and undermines the many positive aspects of the High Street and Fore Street. Residents would like to see more pedestrian friendly streets with traffic reduced, with social spaces and places outside to spend time. Some locals would like to see pedestrianisation of certain streets in the town centre.

Community spirit and pride is strong within Wellington and many people feel proud of their town. It is important to continue this civic pride with events and local projects that will harness this. Transition Town, the Film Festival, the regular markets and Wellington in Bloom are good examples of this.

Though Villa Verde, The Iron Duke and The Pump House are well loved and visited venues, residents and the Town Centre Health Check deem that the town would strongly benefit from a stronger



night-time economy.

Residents explored issues of vacancy rates and higher rates of turnover and how this affects the feel of the town centre and its level of resilience. Engagement feedback shows that it is important to reuse vacant buildings to bring more life into the town centre, at all times of the day. Residents explored whether these vacant buildings could be used for affordable town centre homes, given the current cost of living crisis. Other ideas included using upper storeys to help diversify the employment base in Wellington and bring small businesses into town.

Residents are concerned that local services and social infrastructure such as Post Offices, GP surgeries and local roads are already suffering and currently above capacity, and therefore new development will only place further pressure on social and transport infrastructure. Access to and provision of services and good connections in the context of future growth will be important to address within the Wellington Place Plan.

The provision of facilities specifically for young people was identified as a key priority, as well as more flexible community space to cater for all of Wellington's residents. Opportunities for adult education in town would also be welcome.

HERITAGE & HISTORIC SETTING

A town proud of its outstanding heritage and Fox Brothers legacy, re-imagining its old buildings and landscapes for the 21st century.

The historic environment is important to residents in Wellington, particularly the opportunity that the regeneration of Tonedale Mill and Tone Works has for a distinct local offer. Residents explored different uses that these buildings could house for example, crafts, workspace, homes, community uses and eateries. Most people see the value of Tonedale Mill and Tone Works providing a mix of uses which meet local needs and also bring in visitors.

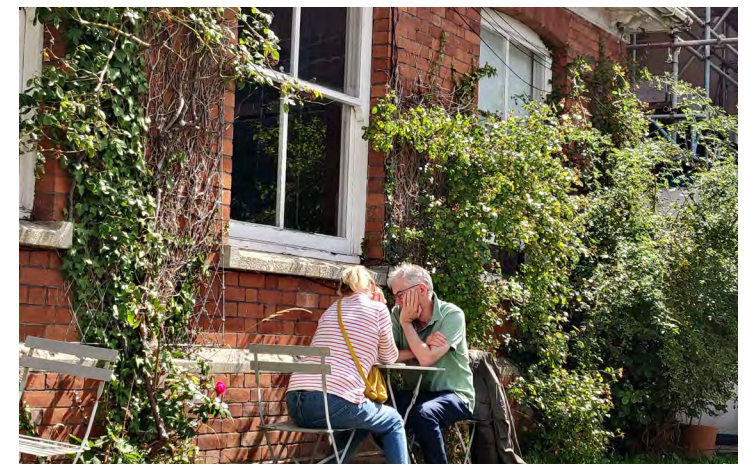
Residents feel that Wellington's heritage assets and historic buildings are in poor condition, and advocate for the general cleaning up and preservation of these to ensure that Wellington's historic character remains. Ideas to reuse historic buildings and improve shopfronts will help take care of Wellington's heritage.

The industrial farming landscape is an important part of Wellington's identity and has resulted in distinctly local historic farmstead architecture which should be celebrated, maintained, and reflected in proposals for new development. Similarly, the protection of the town's historic landscapes and waterways needs to be central



to the Wellington Place Plan.

The role of the Fox Family is important to the town's history including their influence on the Mill, rugby club, basins and homes built at the time. Promoting this heritage through way-finding, heritage trails and other initiatives will help to celebrate the unique history of the town.



SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENT

A town which sets a high bar for sustainability, drawing on its rich natural resources and local passion for a resilient future.

Encouraging sustainable transport is the highest priority among local people to achieve a more sustainable town, seeing the benefits for the environment, town centre experience and health. Easily accessible green spaces with walking and cycling routes through them are important to the community to encourage active travel.

The reuse of historic buildings as opposed to demolition and rebuilding is important to the community, in maintaining historic character and embodied carbon.

Urban greening is needed and well advocated for through engagement for a more sustainable Wellington. Options for urban greening, particularly in the town centre, will be a key consideration for the Place Plan.

The allotments are valued assets by residents, including at the Basins and Rockwell Green.. These are important to keep and promote as a land use in new developments. This links to the historic food-growing identity that Wellington has and loves.

Small-scale solutions were explored within the engagement such as living walls, eco bus



shelters, solar panels and recycling schemes to support the environment and sustainability on an everyday basis.

Attracting sustainable businesses is an important step towards achieving SWT's sustainability goals.



Inspiration from elsewhere..



Exeter



Frome



Wiveliscombe



Frome

Places people mentioned through the engagement highlighting positive aspects to draw on



Wiveliscombe



Hay-on-Wye



Exmouth

3 Vision, priorities and spatial strategies



OUR VISION FOR WELLINGTON

Wellington will be a successful, welcoming town, clearly rooted in its landscape setting of the Blackdown Hills, and the proud industrial and commercial heritage at Tonedale Mill and Tone Works.

The town centre will form the beating heart of Wellington, a focus for local people and visitors who enjoy its vibrant uses, charming and restored historic buildings, and social spaces.

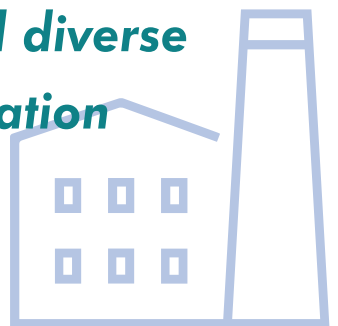
Wellington will be easily accessible, with walking, cycling and buses creating safe and easy connections between the town centre, community facilities, neighbourhoods, the new railway station and beyond to Taunton.



Wellington will be resilient, embracing an ambitious approach to sustainability in all its forms, and being responsive to changing economic context through a wide range of employment and training opportunities.

New, sustainable neighbourhoods and employment areas will be integrated with the existing settlement, complementing Wellington's character, and having a well-rounded sense of identity and community.

The town will benefit from generous swathes of green open space connecting to the surrounding countryside, and well managed waterways. These will provide rich and diverse habitats, community open space, sports and recreation facilities and productive landscapes.



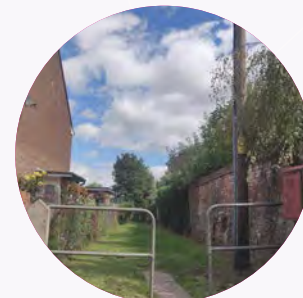


AN ACCESSIBLE PLACE

linking existing and new neighbourhoods with the town centre, prioritising active travel and buses within a sustainable travel hierarchy. Making safe and easy connections to the railway station, community facilities, employment areas, surrounding landscape and settlements including Taunton.

Principles /objectives

- A town where existing residents can easily walk or cycle to their destination rather than relying on the car; where short car journeys are minimised and town centre congestion is reduced
- A town in which all residents can rely on buses throughout the day and evening and are within a 5 minute walk of a bus stop
- A well-used railway station that is easily accessible by walking routes, cycling links and infrastructure and on bus routes
- New neighbourhoods with active travel as a feasible and attractive alternative to car journeys
- Industry and workspace in accessible locations that do not create congestion
- A town that is accessible to all levels of mobility including provision for mobility scooters and wheelchairs





A TOWN ROOTED IN ITS SETTING

respectful of its productive landscapes of growing, craft and industry

Principles/objectives

- A town which maintains its identity as a discrete market town in a rural setting
- A town with visual and physical links to its surrounding landscapes, particularly the Blackdown Hills
- A town connected to its surrounding productive landscapes and craft heritage
- A town serving a network of satellite villages, each also discrete in their rural setting
- The town and villages' craft and industry evident through the building types and vernacular
- A town which invests in its historic waterways to realise their character, and environmental and recreational benefits
- A town with irreplaceable habitats such as Ancient Woodland

