

**Somerset West
and Taunton**

Connecting our Garden Communities

Consultation Statement

December 2022

Version	Purpose	Date
1	For consultation	28/07/2022
2	Final Plan	02/12/2022

Connecting our Garden Communities

Consultation Statement

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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.

This Consultation Statement explains how Somerset West and Taunton Council have undertaken public consultation to inform the development of the Connecting our Garden Communities Plan (“the Plan”), and how the engagement, feedback and responses received have and will continue to influence its development.

This draft statement covers:

- Which bodies and persons were invited to make comments;
- How those bodies and persons were invited to make comment;
- The material subject to consultation;
- A summary of early engagement and how this has influenced the development of the Plan.

The final statement will also cover:

- A summary of the responses received; and
- A summary of how the responses influenced the development of the Plan.

The Council has an adopted [Statement of Community Involvement](#) (SCI). The SCI outlines that the Council is committed to effective community engagement, and seeks to use a wide range of methods for involving the community in the plan making process. SWT’s Statement of Community Involvement was adopted in November 2019. In relation to plan preparation, it primarily relates to the preparation of Development Plan Documents (DPDs), Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA), Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and Neighbourhood Plans. As the Plan is not any of these types of

documents and is not formally required by any legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions, there are no mandatory steps, methods or bodies for consultation to comply with. However, consultation has been designed to comply with the SCI in the interests of good practice.

Consultation Summary

In July 2022, the Council published “Connecting our Garden Communities” for public consultation (the “Draft Plan”). Consultation ran from 29th July 2022 to 30th September 2022.

The Plan was subject to early engagement with key community and technical stakeholders, which informed the proposals within the consultation draft.

The Draft Plan itself is a 122 page long PDF document, supported by two technical appendices totalling a further 86 pages. The Plan sets out its purpose, context, methodology, evidence and proposals. An executive summary was set out at the front of the document to summarise the document at a glance. By its nature, the document was fairly technical and text heavy, though officers tried to ensure that it was as accessible as possible through the use of diagrams and use of language, considering its nature and purpose. Furthermore, the Plan is accompanied to public consultation by a short-form, four page summary document, designed to cut to the key points and make the proposals more accessible. Consultation is focused around the use of the Commonplace online engagement platform, which presents the plan in an interactive format.

Purpose of the consultation

Public consultation had the following objectives:

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

Who was consulted?

A list of Specific Consultation Bodies, General Consultation Bodies, and other organisations and groups the Council seeks to involve in plan-making is included in the SCI. As a non-statutory plan, there was no statutory list of bodies and

organisations that the Council was required to consult in its preparation. Despite this, all those on this list have been included in this exercise.

In addition, the Council is committed to ensuring that local groups, organisations and individuals are provided with the opportunity to be involved in the preparation of planning policy documents.

The Council has a database of consultees, who have either commented upon, or expressed an interest in being involved with the development of local plans. This database is used to keep individuals, companies and organisations informed on the production of the Local Plan and other planning policy documents. New consultees are added to the consultation database via e-mail or letter to the Planning Policy and Implementation Team requesting inclusion on to the database. The General Data Protection Regulations are followed to ensure that personal data is only required and retained where proportionate and necessary, is only gathered where explicit consent has been provided, is kept securely and is not disclosed to others. All bodies and persons identified within this database were emailed with notification of the consultation.

In addition to the above, a number of specific consultees were identified as relevant to this project, and also invited to comment, including:

- Promoters/developers of the Garden Communities
- Other developers/agents more generally
- Musgrove Park Hospital
- Bridgwater & Taunton College
- Richard Huish College
- Secondary schools (maintained and academies)
- Primary schools (maintained and academies)
- Taunton School
- Queen's College
- King's College
- Kings Hall School
- UK Hydrographic Office
- Somerset County Cricket Club
- Kingston Area Cycle Campaign
- Taunton Bike Club
- Wellington Wheelers
- Taunton Running Club
- Active Travel England
- Young Somerset
- Centre for Ageing Better
- First Bus
- Hatch Green Coaches
- A1 Ace Taxis
- TLC Taxis
- Taunton Taxi Services
- Friends Taxis
- Taunton Transition Town

- Taunton Green Parents
- Extinction Rebellion Taunton
- Climate Action Taunton
- Friends of Longrun Meadow
- Taunton Green Forum
- Somerset Climate Action Network
- Blackbrook Green Forum

How we consulted

Consultation on the Draft Plan ran from 29th July 2022 until 30th September 2022. During this time, a variety of methods were employed. This section of the report details each of these methods. Responses to the consultation were encouraged:

- Online via the Council's [consultation portal](#), which contained a full survey and an opportunity to drop pins and leave comments on an interactive map;
- By email to strategy@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk;
- By post to Planning Policy and Implementation team, Somerset West and Taunton Council, Deane House, Belvedere Rd, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 1HE.

To publicise the consultation, the Council:

- Emailed a notification of the consultation to all bodies and persons identified within the consultation database;
- Made the above consultation documents available for inspection at the following locations:
 - Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton, TA1 1HE
 - Taunton Library, Priorswood Library
- Published the documents on the Council's website at <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/consultations/connecting-our-garden-communities/> and on the consultation portal at <https://tauntongardentown.commonplace.is/>. The Council's Consultation webpage at <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/consultations/> also contained information directing people to the consultation portal.
- Published a press release via the Council's website and social media posts, raising interest, communicating the consultation and encouraging participation.
- Posted a news article within SWT's Climate Newsletter.
- Organised and conducted presentations to various groups with associated opportunities for feedback.

Previous consultation and engagement

Prior to producing the Draft Plan and launching this public consultation, officers undertook early engagement with key technical and community stakeholders. This early engagement assisted in establishing the scope of the plan.

Engagement with Taunton Area Cycling Campaign (TACC)

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.

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 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. • 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)

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 Comeytrowe, 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 the Draft Plan.

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.

Draft Plan Consultation

After producing the Draft Plan, officers undertook public consultation with key technical and community stakeholders as well as the general public, for the nine-

week period from 29th July to 30th September using a variety of engagement methods. Through these various engagement methods, the Draft Plan could be further refined. This section of the report details each of these methods:

Emails

Emailed notification of the consultation was sent to all bodies and persons identified within the consultation database on Friday 29th July 2022. A screenshot of the email is shown below:

Dear Sir/Madam,

Somerset West and Taunton is holding a public consultation on its plans for a network of walking and cycling routes which would connect key developments (the Garden Communities) across Taunton Garden Town. The draft "Connecting our Garden Communities" plan and more information can be found on our [website](#) and via our [consultation portal](#) where you can view and comment directly on an interactive map, respond to survey questions and review all of the supporting material.

Consultation on the plan runs from today (29 July) for nine weeks until **30 September 2022**.

The plan builds on and complements the existing Taunton Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and is designed to ensure that futureproofed walking and cycling infrastructure accompanies the delivery of key developments. It aims to ensure that the Garden Communities at Comeytrowe, Staplegrove, Monkton Heathfield, Nerrols, Ford Farm, Firepool and Nexus25, link in to the strategic routes identified in the LCWIP; and connect to key services and facilities beyond their site boundaries.

When adopted the plan will be a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications and masterplanning activities, ensuring they knit into and integrate with existing communities.

We are seeking views from the public, local communities, technical stakeholders and the development industry on this draft Plan until Friday 30th September 2022. 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.

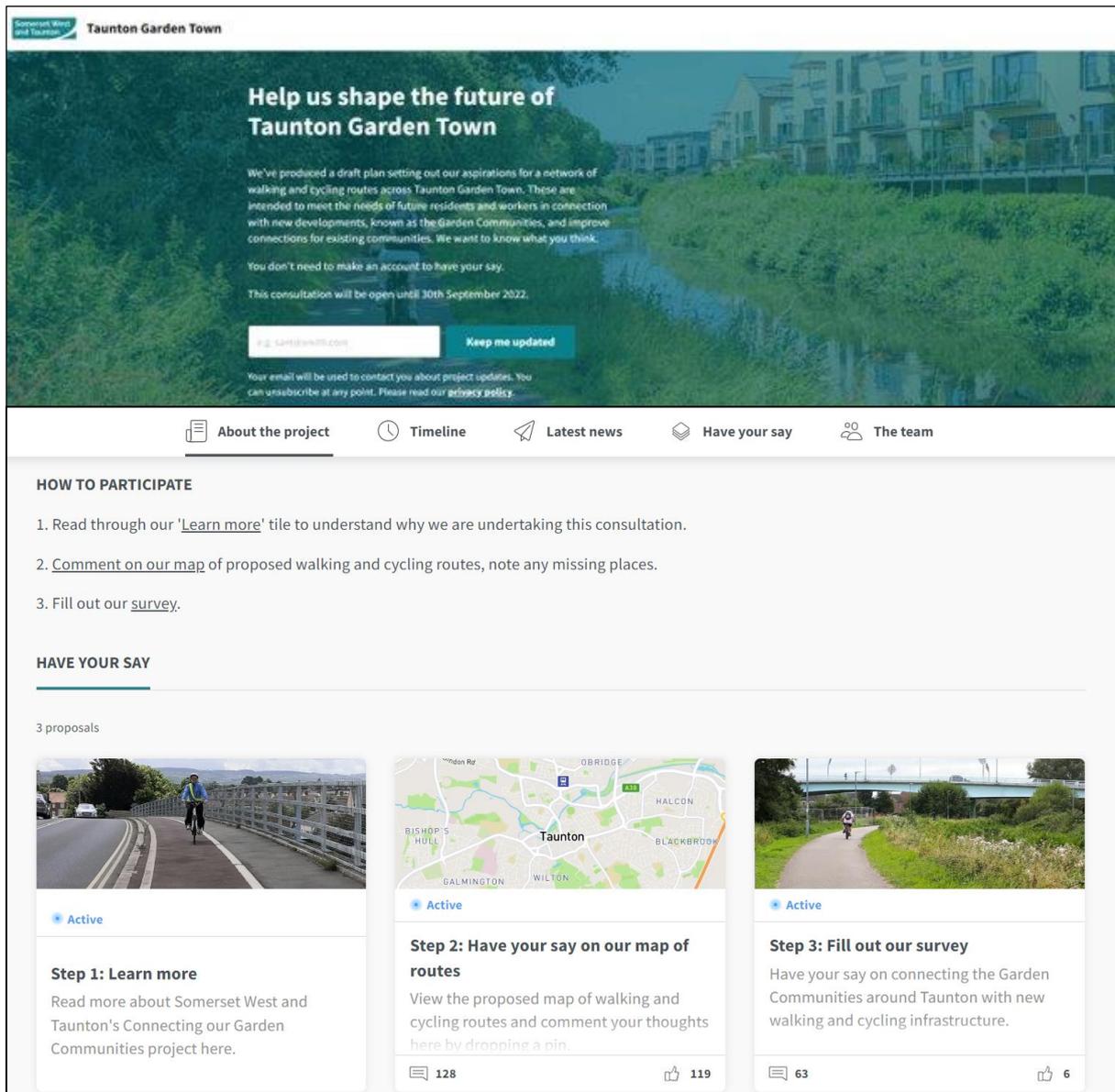
To respond to the consultation, we encourage you to use the [consultation portal](#). Alternatively, you can email responses to Strategy@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk or write to us at Planning Policy and Implementation team, Somerset West and Taunton Council, Deane House, Belvedere Rd, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 1HE.

Yours faithfully
Planning Policy and Implementation Team
Somerset West and Taunton Council

A total of 12 responses were received by email. (These were received either as a direct response to the email or through the email provided on Commonplace.)

Commonplace Consultation Platform

Officers met with the Commonplace team at the end of May to begin setting up a Commonplace Consultation Hub, using the license provided by Somerset County Council, and coordinating tasks through the June-July period before the portal was to be launched. A tile was set up on SCC's Somerset Sustainable Transport page, but the page had separate URL at <https://tauntongardentown.commonplace.is/> allowing a distinction between projects and enabling three additional tiles. A screenshot of the home page of the consultation hub with the three tiles is shown below along with the other features provided such as a timeline, latest news and the team:



The three tiles on the page were ‘learn more’, ‘have your say on our map of routes’ and ‘fill out our survey’. The tiles are discussed in more detail:

1. A ‘learn more’ tile was also published with more information about the project and links to all Draft Plan and associated appendices, non-technical summary and other supporting documents such as the Equalities Impact Assessment.
2. The map of the walking and cycling routes was also published on the Commonplace hub whereby respondents could ‘drop a pin’ on a specific place or issue on the map and a short survey of 7 questions would pop up. The survey received 152 responses and 133 likes.
3. An online survey was published on the Commonplace Consultation Hub portal at. The link to the survey was published in the consultation notification emails as well as the press release and on the website. The survey consisted of 11 questions with varying answer styles and received 63 responses and 6 likes. Screenshots of the tile content are shown on the following pages:

< Home Step 1: Learn more

1/1

Learn more

- Why are we seeking your views? +
- We have engaged before +
- What are we seeking your views on? +
- How do I provide feedback? +
- When do I need to provide feedback by? +

Check out the following documents

	Non-technical Summary.pdf	pdf	↓	🔗
	Main Plan (draft).pdf	pdf	↓	🔗
	Main Plan (draft) Appendix A - Route auditing.pdf	pdf	↓	🔗
	Main Plan (draft) Appendix B - Route Summaries.pdf	pdf	↓	🔗
	Consultation Statement.pdf	pdf	↓	🔗
	DraftSEAHRScreening.pdf	pdf	↓	🔗
	Equalities Impact Assessment.pdf	pdf	↓	🔗

< Home Step 2: Have your say on our map of routes

215 responses

Have your say ✕

What is the place you have marked on the map?

Why are you dropping a pin here?

Select one option

To comment on a destination

To comment on part of proposed route

To comment on a potential alternative route

[Add something else](#)

How do you feel when walking, wheeling and cycling in this location?

😞 😐 😊 😄

Why do you feel this way?

Select one or more options

Clean air

Poor air quality

Bad for cycling

Cycle friendly

Feels unsafe

Feels safe

Speeding traffic

Calm traffic

Supports mobility

Hinders mobility

Good for walking

Bad for walking

[Add something else](#)

Please select any design solutions you think are needed or would be appropriate for the location you have plotted. (Select all that apply)

Select one or more options

Off road or separate cycle lanes away from traffic

Footpath provision or widening

Additional lighting

Reduction of speed limits

Traffic calming such as removing a lane or narrowing the street

Additional vegetation or planting

Cycle parking or increasing amount of existing provision

Less congestion and air pollution

Dropped kerbs and tactile paving

Signage and wayfinding

Quiet streets and neighbourhoods

Removal of barriers/ bollards

New or improved crossing

Improvements to cycle markings

Less on street car parking

Provision of disabled car parking

[Add something else](#)

If you selected a potential alternative route, why is this alternative better?

Please add any other comments or suggestions you have in the box below.

1/1

Have your say by filling out our survey below

How often do you make walking trips to the following destinations in Taunton? (Please tick one box for each row)

Turn your device horizontal - for a better experience

	Daily	2-3 times per week	Weekly	2-3 times per month	Monthly	Less often or never
Convenience Store	<input type="radio"/>					
GP Surgery	<input type="radio"/>					
Supermarket	<input type="radio"/>					
Schools	<input type="radio"/>					
Open Space	<input type="radio"/>					
Taunton Town Centre	<input type="radio"/>					
Taunton Station	<input type="radio"/>					
Employment	<input type="radio"/>					

How often do you make cycling trips to the following destinations in Taunton? (Please tick one box for each row)

Turn your device horizontal - for a better experience

	Daily	2-3 times per week	Weekly	2-3 times per month	Monthly	Less often or never
Convenience Store	<input type="radio"/>					
GP Surgery	<input type="radio"/>					
Supermarket	<input type="radio"/>					
Schools	<input type="radio"/>					
Open Space	<input type="radio"/>					
Taunton Town Centre	<input type="radio"/>					
Taunton Station	<input type="radio"/>					
Employment	<input type="radio"/>					

What are the most important connections to prioritise walking and cycling access to?

Sort in order of importance

- Convenience Store
- GP Surgery
- Supermarket
- Schools
- Open Space
- Taunton Town Centre
- Taunton Station
- Employment

Are there any other connections you would like to add to the list above?

Select your favourite example(s) of walking and cycling infrastructure.

Select one or more options



Fully segregated cycleway and separate footpath with double parking and dedicated signals



Segregated cycle path and footpath with sections of shared use



On-road advisory cycle lanes with pavements for pedestrians



No cycle paths and only pavements for pedestrians



Quiet street treatment with greenery, parking restrictions and lower speeds



Off street cycle paths that avoid the road and go through parks or open spaces

What is most important to you when prioritising the delivery of the proposed walking and cycling routes in Taunton?

Sort in order of importance

- 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
- Broad feasibility
- Performance against policy objectives (such as climate, planning and transport)
- Potential to attract funding
- Political acceptability
- Cost of route delivery
- Timing of delivery coordinated with development

Are there any missing key destinations that you feel the routes don't connect to?

Select one option

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

[Add something else](#)

If you answered yes to the question above, what destination(s)?

e.g. Bishop's Hull

Do you support the routes we have identified in the map?

Unsupportive Very Supportive

If the routes were delivered, would you be more likely to make walking and cycling trips?

Definitely not Definitely

Please leave any further comments you have below.

I think this destination is important for future residents of Staplegrove Garden Community because...

The website had 1828 visitors overall with a mix of email traffic, direct traffic, organic traffic and referral traffic, 145 respondents, 445 contributions made and 137 news subscribers as of 09:00 on Monday 3rd October 2022.

SWT Website

A new webpage was set up on the Council’s website at <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/consultations/connecting-our-garden-communities/>. The website sits within the Planning Policy webpages of the Council’s website and was easily linked to from the [Planning Policy homepage](#) and the [Taunton Garden Town homepage](#). The link to the webpage was published in the consultation notification emails as well as the press release. The website explained that the Council was seeking views from the public, local communities, technical stakeholders and the development industry on a draft plan. It then set out the details of the consultation, how to engage, and the broad purpose of the Draft Plan.

Social Media

A social media campaign was launched on the first day of the consultation posting the URL to the Commonplace Consultation Hub and an image of the Draft Plan.

Facebook [@SWTCouncil](#) – page followed by 8,176 people. The post was published at (insert time and how many people it went out to) on Friday 29th July 2022. The post received 16 likes, 19 shares and 1 comment which received 2 likes.

Twitter [@SWTCouncil](#) – page followed by 3,124 people. The post was published at 12:35 on Friday 29th July 2022. The post received 7 retweets and 12 likes.

On Cycle to Work Day on Thursday 4th August 2022 the social media posts for Cycle to Work Day were reposted with a new caption reminding followers to have their say on the proposals for the network of cycling routes across Taunton.

Facebook [@SWTCouncil](#) – the Cycle to Work Day post was ‘reposted’ at 17:13. The post received 7 likes and 1 share.

Twitter [@SWTCouncil](#) – the Cycle to Work Day post was ‘reposted’ at 17:13 with the new caption. The post received 1 retweet.

A further social media campaign was launched at around the four weeks to go mark whereby another round of the original social media posts were published.

Facebook [@SWTCouncil](#) – repost was published at 10:00 on Monday 5th September 2022. The post received 3 likes.

Twitter [@SWTCouncil](#) – repost was published at 10:00 on Monday 5th September 2022. The post received 10 retweets and 6 likes.

LinkedIn [@SWTCouncil](#) – page followed by 1,728 people. The repost was published on Monday 5th September 2022. The post received 10 likes.

Officer Social Media Posts

A social media post was shared by an officer using their LinkedIn platform.

LinkedIn [@SWTCouncil](#) – posted on 29th July 2022 by an officer with 397 connections. The post received 35 likes and 4 shares.

Press Release

A press release was published on our website at <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/connecting-our-garden-communities-consultation/> on 29th July 2022 and sent to all regional media.

Climate Newsletter

An officer prepared an article to go into the Somerset West and Taunton Climate Newsletter. This was released on Monday 1st August 2022 at 13:00.

Connecting our garden communities with walking and cycling routes

The Council is holding a public consultation on its plans for a network of walking and cycling routes which would connect key developments (the Garden Communities) across Taunton Garden Town.

The draft "Connecting our Garden Communities" plan builds on and complements the existing Taunton Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and is designed to ensure that futureproofed walking and cycling infrastructure accompanies the delivery of key developments.

It aims to ensure that the Garden Communities at Comeytrove, Staplegrove, Monkton Heathfield, Nerrols, Ford Farm, Firepool and Nexus25, link in to the strategic routes identified in the LCWIP; and connect to key services and facilities beyond their site boundaries.

When adopted the plan will be a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications and masterplanning activities, ensuring they knit into existing communities.

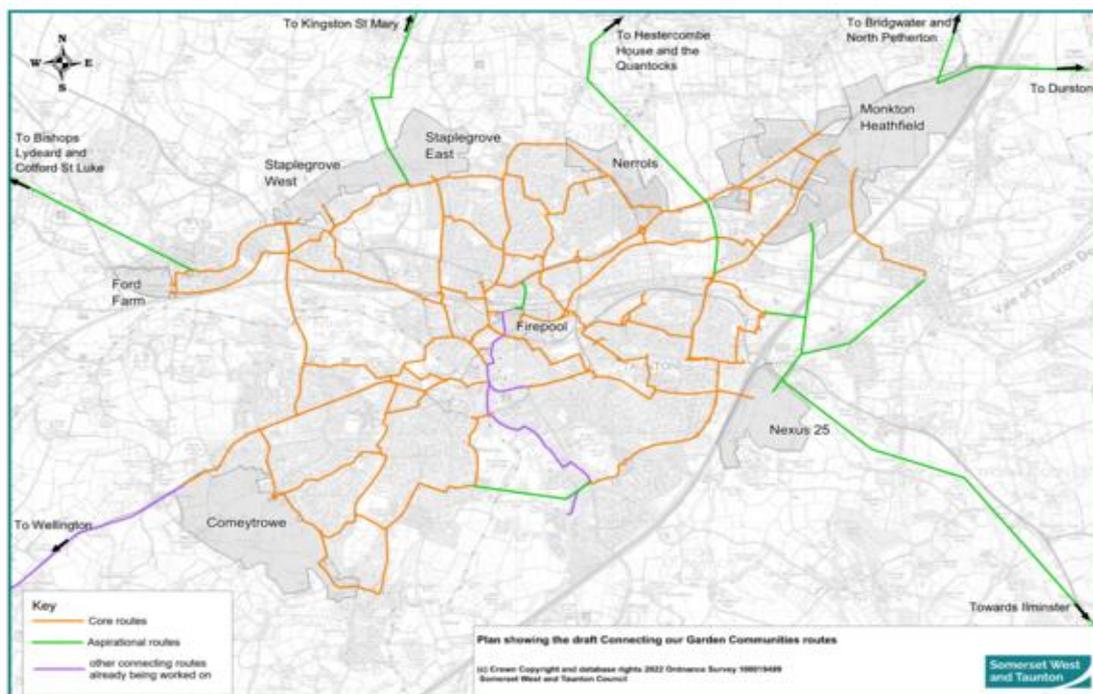
Wide engagement and participation is an important part of developing an effective plan, and community buy-in will be integral to successful scheme delivery. Therefore we want to know what you think.

To respond to the consultation, and view the draft plan and consultation documents, we encourage you to use the [consultation portal](#). Here you can view and comment directly on an interactive map, respond to survey questions and review all of the supporting material.

More information and alternative ways to comment can be found on our [website](#).

Consultation is open until **30 September 2022**.

we want to hear from you!



Articles in Newspapers Somerset Gazette and BBC News

The Somerset County Gazette posted the project in a news article on 3rd August with the title “*More than 30 new cycle links could connect Taunton at a cost of up to £150M*”. The article received 6 comments. View the article [here](#).

BBC news also posted an article about the project in a news article on 4th August with the title “*Somerset Council will need £150m for new cycle routes*”. No comments were received. View the article [here](#).

Taunton Area Cycling Campaign (TACC) Stall & Social Media

TACC hosted a cycling campaign stall on Friday 12th August 2022 in Taunton Town Centre outside Monsoon from 10:00 to 14:00. The stall displayed the network map of the proposed walking and cycling routes for Connecting our Garden Communities Draft Plan. An officer also printed one hundred ‘consultation cards’ for TACC to hand out from the stall with information about how to comment using Commonplace. As a result, two thirds were given out.

The link to Commonplace was also posted on Facebook [@Taunton Area Cycling Campaign](#) on Thursday 11th August 2022. The post received 7 likes and 5 shares. This was shared again on 22nd August reminding members of the consultation deadline, although the post received no likes or shares.

Somerset Youth Parliament

Officers arranged to attend a face-to-face meeting with Somerset Youth Parliament as part of their regular meetings at St Mary Magdalene Church in Taunton on Saturday 3rd September 2022 from 15:00-16:00. There were 10 attendees including two youth workers and plus two officers. An officer met with the organiser from Somerset County Council prior to the meeting to prepare materials and the link to the Commonplace Consultation Hub was sent out beforehand. During the meeting officers introduced themselves and what the project was about using an A1 map of the walking and cycling routes from the Draft Plan for context. Then, a discussion ensued around the barriers to cycling and what was needed to improve it. A number of activities were then set out for the attendees where they were each given three sticky dots to place in their top three priorities in answer to the questions:

- What are the most important connections to prioritise walking and cycling access to?
- What is most important to you when prioritising the delivery of the proposed walking and cycling routes in Taunton?

The final activity got the attendees into pairs to respond to the question “What would your dream street look like?”. A number of images of different types of streets in Taunton, such as residential streets with private parking either side or high streets, were handed out for them to draw on their ideas. Print-outs of types of cycle infrastructure were handed out to offer ideas and then each image was presented by each group on what they had come up with. Notes were taken throughout.

Meeting with Parish Councils/ Chartered Trustees/ Ward Members

An officer organised a meeting with relevant Parish Councils around Taunton as well as the Charter Trustees and other relevant Ward Members on Monday 5th September 2022 from 17:30-18:30. The date was discussed with Governance to ensure there was no clash with other governance commitments and other parish council meetings. The email was sent out to 45 potential attendees with a screenshot shown below:

Dear all,

Further to our previous informal engagement sessions back in March, hopefully you will have seen that we have now launched public consultation on the draft Connecting our Garden Communities plan – more info [here](#).

As part of this, we are organising an **online consultation session on Monday 5th September 2022 at 5.30pm** for relevant parish councils around Taunton, as well as the Charter Trustees and other relevant district ward members. This session will be to present the draft plan proposals and provide more information on how to respond to the consultation, as well as give an opportunity for Q&A. The idea is that this should supplement your own review of the consultation documents, catching you after the holidays, but before your September cycle of parish council meetings, so that you are armed with the information you need to be able to respond to the consultation before the closing date of 30th September 2022.

Details of the online consultation session are provided below. You will also receive a calendar invite with the same details in a moment. Noting the difficulties some experienced with using Teams in the March engagement session, this time we are hosting the session using Zoom.

Meeting date: 5th September 2022
Meeting time: 5:30pm – 6:30pm

Two officers hosted the meeting and conducted a presentation to attendees to discuss how comments received in the early engagement had been considered within the Draft Plan. Further information was also provided about how to respond to public consultation using Commonplace and the other ways in which responses could be made. Zoom was used during this meeting to overcome the difficulties with Teams experienced during early engagement. There were fifteen attendees of the meeting. No further correspondence was received.

Blackbrook Green Forum

An officer attended a meeting of Blackbrook Green Forum (a locally self-organised group of representatives from businesses based on Blackbrook Business Park which meet regularly to receive presentations and discuss local sustainability issues) on Thursday 8th September 2022. The meeting was attended by approximately 17 people from a range of local businesses. The officer gave a 20 minute presentation setting out the policy context and key objectives, early engagement results, how the routes were developed, key points for consideration such as funding availability and key factors needed for route delivery as well as details on how to respond to the consultation. This was followed by 40 minutes of Q&A and general discussion about pertinent active travel / transport issues.

No further correspondence was received, though many attendees indicated their intention to respond directly via Commonplace.

Agents Forum

An officer organised a forum with Planning Agents and developers on Monday 12th September 2022 from 15:30-17:30. The email was sent out to 77 potential

attendees. Only 5 planning agents and developers attended the meeting. A screenshot of the email is shown below:

Hi all,

Somerset West and Taunton Officers will be holding an Agents Forum on Monday 12th September from 15:30-17:30 on specifically **Taunton Garden Town** related matters.

The initial agenda with approximate timings is set out below:

1. Welcome and introductions from SWT Officer team. 15:30-15:40
2. Connecting Our Garden Communities consultation. (Plans for a network of walking and cycling routes to connect key developments across the Garden Town) 15:40-16:40
3. Infrastructure Delivery Plan (Garden Town) 16:40-17:00
4. Stewardship (Garden Town) 17:00-17:15
5. Update on other Garden Town work 17.15-17.30

The Forum will give you the opportunity to hear the latest updates on the work being progressed. Further information may be issued closer to the time.

Please could you confirm your attendance in advance of the meeting.

If you have any queries I will be on leave from 19th August to 30th August but please email Jenny Clifford at J.Clifford@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk.

The forum was conducted by three officers with a Taunton Garden Town themed agenda. The first hour was allocated to the Connecting our Garden Communities project. The presentation set out the policy context and key objectives, early engagement results, how the routes were developed, key points for consideration such as funding availability and key factors needed for route delivery. Information on how to respond to the consultation, including Commonplace, was then presented, as well as the next steps for the project. No further correspondence received.

TACC Full Meeting

An officer attended a TACC 'full meeting' on Monday 12th September, which ran from 19:00-20:00, with a small number of TACC supporters in attendance. The officer conducted a short, 15 minute presentation to brief the project and listen to feedback.

Meeting with Somerset County Council (SCC)

Officers held a meeting with Somerset County Council highways and transport policy officers on Thursday 22nd September from 14:00-15:00. The aim was to discuss and clarify the comments received from SCC in response to the Draft Connecting our Garden Communities Plan, listed in the 'Summary of Responses Received' section.

Richard Huish College

Officers organised to attend the Richard Huish Bike Day on Wednesday 28th September 2022 from 08:00-13:30. A gazebo was set up next to the reception entrance with a table laying out the consultation materials. A number of other stalls were also in attendance including SCC, the Police and On Your Bike. Two officers attended on behalf of SWT Connecting our Garden Communities project to speak to students, teachers and other members of the public.

A series of materials were organised for the consultation, following a similar approach to the Somerset Youth Parliament event. The A1 map was set out on the

table for context, images of streets around Taunton to get ideas for potential interventions, A3 sheets with the questions below and answer options were also printed out with sticky dots available for respondents:

- What are the most important connections to prioritise walking and cycling access to?
- What is most important to you when prioritising the delivery of the proposed walking and cycling routes in Taunton?

Overall, six comments from students and teachers were received. However, officers found on the day that people only wanted to stop briefly so the preferred method of engaging was to introduce the project, listen to comments made (which were noted down) and then to hand out consultation cards with the Commonplace link. A QR code was also printed out for easy access to Commonplace.

Level of response

Overall, there were 276 responses to the consultation. As set out in the table below, of the 276 responses, 20 were submitted by email, 0 by post, 249 using the two available tiles on Commonplace, 1 by social media and the remaining 6 by commenting on the various news articles that had been published. While this summarises the formal responses, it is important to note the many other responses and comments received through the consultation events and workshops hosted by SWT officers, summarised in the following section.

Method	Number of respondents
Email	20
Post	0
Consultation Map & Short Survey	167
Consultation Main Survey	82
Social Media	1
News Articles	6

Summary of Responses Received

This section summarises the responses received through the Council's consultation portal, by email/post, via social media and within the consultation events.

Commonplace Survey

A total of 145 respondents answered the survey with 167 comments left on the map and associated survey and 82 responses received through the main survey. The remainder of the 445 contributions are from those who have liked existing comments and responses. Responses were received from eleven organisations including community groups and non-governmental organisations. The remaining 134 responses were from individuals. There were also a number of comments left by individuals answering 'on behalf of all cyclists in the wider Taunton area' or 'on behalf of all cyclists'. The table below sets out the organisations who responded via the consultation hub:

Organisation
Lisieux Way Community Garden
The Friends of Comeytrowe Park
Taunton Fitness Club (Cycling & Walking groups)
Friends of Longrun Meadow
David Orr Consulting
Railfuture
Somerset Youth Parliament
Taunton Unitarian Chapel
Victoria Park Action Group
The Canal & River Trust

There were no comments made about the Draft Plan itself within the survey responses. The Draft Plan and associated documents were available to view.

The online survey consisted of two main sections:

1. Map and associated survey (167 comments)
2. Main survey (82 comments)

Not all respondents filled out the demographics and some respondents answered more than once so the number of respondents associated with these comments could not be determined accurately.

Demographics of respondents

Out of the 145 respondents, 108 filled out their name and postcode. The following demographic questions had a varying level of response:

- 'If answering as an individual, tick all of the following that apply' was answered by 100 respondents, 65 for 'I live in Taunton', 26 for 'I live nearby Taunton', 26 for 'I work in Taunton', 25 for 'I visit Taunton' and 1 for 'I study in Taunton'.
- 'What is your employment status?' was answered by 102 respondents, for which 43% work full time, 33% were retired, 11% work part time, 5% self-

employed, 4% 'other', 2% students, 1% undertaking apprenticeship or training, and 1% were on a zero-hour contract.

- 'Are you acting on behalf of an agent or on behalf of an organisation?' was answered by 54 respondents, 51 answered 'no' (94%), 2 answered 'yes' (4%) and 1 answered on behalf of an individual and organisation (1%). Many people chose not to answer this question considering the eleven organisations listed in the table above.
- 'What is your gender' was answered by 98 respondents, 60% were male, 37% were female, 2% answered 'prefer not to say' and 1% 'other'.
- 'What is your age group' was answered by 103 respondents, 23% were between 65-74, 19% were 35-44, 18% were 55-64, 13% were 45-54, 10% were 25-34, 7% were 75-84, 3% were 16-24, 1% were 13-15 and 1% answered 'prefer not to say'. Out of these respondents, 50% were between the ages of 35-64 and 83% were between 25-74.

Map-based Survey

1. What is the place you have marked on the map?

Respondents were first asked to write the location in which they had dropped a pin on the map. The pin was associated with a set of coordinates to allow a location to be identified if the respondent did not fill out the location question. The locations were then assigned to a route number by an officer to identify comments more effectively. Out of the 43 routes in the proposed walking and cycling network map, 35 were commented on, and all four of the related routes: Wellington Link, East Street, Station to Vivary and Killams Link. The 35 routes and 4 related routes received a total of 136 comments out of the 167 comments. The routes that did not receive any comments from respondents are listed below:

- 12 – Monkton Heathfield - Creech St Michael;
- 13 – Monkton Heathfield - Yallands Hill via Bawler Road;
- 15 – Cheddon Road;
- 16 – Firepool – Priorswood Road – Lyngford Park – Cheddon Road;
- 25 – Staplegrove Road – Bridgwater & Taunton College – Longrun Meadow;
- 27 – Heron Drive;
- 39 – GI-led Durston Link;
- 41 – GI-led railway bridge Link.

Multiple comments were received on all routes except those listed below, all of which received one comment:

- 5a – Henley Road – Longrun Meadow – Tangier;
- 23 – Clifford Avenue – Lyngford Road via Cheddon Road;
- 30 – Priorswood Road;
- 31 – Bossington Drive – Eastwick Road;
- 34 – GI-led Hestercombe Link;
- Other related routes: Wellington Link and East Street.

A further 31 comments were then left that did not have a location relating to the network map and were either relating to a potential alternative route, additional destination, or commenting on the walking and cycling infrastructure issues or positives on sections of routes that were not on the proposed network map. The comments that included proposed alternative and additional routes include:

- Mountfields Park instead of South Road (Killams Link);
- Extending River Tone path (Route 29 and 35) from Hankridge Retail Park into Ruishton, which acts as an alternative to J25/A358/M5 crossing;
- Extending proposed Route 4 along Staplegrove Road to connect to Manor Road junction (Route 1) to use while Staplegrove core road is being built;
- Longrun Meadow;
- Tangier Way/Wood Street (A3807) for connections from the Galmington area to North Town (connecting Route 1 and 5);
- Chip Lane instead of turning onto The Avenue (Route 1);
- Connecting Wessex Road to Pikes Crescent rather than Trull Road (Route 9);
- Adding routes connecting South Taunton including Haydon Lane to Nexus, and Dowsland Way, Stoke Road and Chestnut Road route and junctions;
- Park Street/Cann Street and Corporation Street alternative to Route 5;
- Upper High Street alternative to Route 9;
- Connecting Wood Street to Station Road via existing junction from Portland Street and French Weir Park;
- Manor Road to Staplegrove Village Hall via field PRoW path;
- Lisieux Way to Blackbrook Stream via Lisieux Way Community Garden;
- Barrington Close alternative to Route 8 through Comeytrove Park.

2. *Why are you dropping a pin here?*

Respondents were then asked why they had dropped a pin. Out of 153 responses to the question, 56% dropped a pin 'to comment on part of a proposed route', 22% 'to comment on a potential alternative route', 16% 'to comment on a destination' and 7% to 'add something else. Not all comments left on the map and associated survey had answered this question, therefore, by assigning the route number to the location given allowed the additional 14 comments to be included as well as the 11 'add something else' comments. In addition, the comments that did have an answer to the question could be double-checked as to whether the category chosen by the respondent applied to the location and comment made. This made the data easier to analyse for SWT officers by allowing comments for potential changes to the project to be identified. Overall, 136 comment related to part of a proposed route or destination on a proposed route and 31 were for 'alternative routes'.

3. *How do you feel when walking, wheeling or cycling in this location?*

Out of the 167 comments left on the map, 40% were 'unhappy', 27% were 'dissatisfied', 22% were 'neutral', 5% were satisfied and 6% were 'happy'. In total, 67% were either 'unhappy' or 'dissatisfied' with a destination or route in Taunton.

The data was then analysed to extract any destinations or routes where there were multiple negative and positive sentiments. There were several negative sentiments for the existing walking and cycling provision on Staplegrove Road and Bindon Road on Route 1/1a, the path along Taunton School Playing Fields on Route 3, Castle Street (Route 5), Wellington Road (Route 7), Bridgwater & Taunton Canal path (Route 14), Blackbrook Way (Route 18), over the M5 from Blackbrook (Route 19), East Reach/Lisieux Way crossing (Route 20), Bishops Lydeard link (Route 32), Ruishton Lane on Route 36 and the link across the green wedge (Route 37). There were positive sentiments for Comeytrowe Park (Route 8) as the infrastructure currently stands and for existing walking and cycling provision through Childrens Wood and Blackbrook (Route 19) with only minor changes needed.

4. Why do you feel this way?

For the 167 comments, there were 159 responses to the multiple choice question, with 8 comments leaving it blank. There were, however, 379 selections as a result for the issues and positives about walking and cycling in and around Taunton. From this, 26% selected 'bad for cycling', 20% 'feels unsafe', 13% 'speeding traffic', 10% 'bad for walking', 9% 'hinders mobility', 6% 'add something else', 3% 'clean air', 3% 'cycle friendly', 3% 'feels safe', 3% 'good for walking', 2% 'poor air quality', 1% 'calm traffic' and 1% 'supports mobility'.

Other responses that were to 'add something else' included volume of traffic, narrow road, speeding traffic and speed limit too high, lack of connection of River Tone and Bridgwater & Taunton Canal, indirect route, width of walking and cycling paths, proximity to traffic, lack of segregation between walkers and cyclists and from the road, poor quality route, poor surfacing, vehicles blocking walking and cycling path, severance from M5, cycling prohibited and lack of linkage to other cycle paths.

The reasons for 'why do you feel this way' were also pulled out for the destinations and routes mentioned under the previous question. The negative sentiment related routes and destinations are listed below:

- Staplegrove Road/Bindon Road - 'bad for walking', 'hinders mobility', 'speeding traffic', 'feels unsafe', 'bad for cycling', unsafe movements associated with Taunton School and the railway bridge, and lack of priority across the bridge and roundabout.
- Taunton School fields path - 'bad for walking', 'hinders mobility', 'bad for cycling', poor maintenance on paths, poor visibility and dangerous to use.
- Castle Street - 'feels unsafe' and 'bad for cycling', cycle path too close to traffic on busy road, particularly for children, and lack of segregation.
- Wellington Road - 'speeding traffic', 'feels unsafe', 'bad for cycling', 'poor air quality', issue with roundabouts and high speed limits.

- Taunton & Bridgwater Canal - 'bad for walking', 'feels unsafe' and 'bad for cycling', path is narrow without segregation, and needs better maintenance.
- Blackbrook Way - 'bad for walking', 'speeding traffic', 'feels unsafe', 'bad for cycling', cycle path too narrow and close to traffic, lack of signage and clear markings, and overgrown vegetation.
- M5 crossing - needed to overcome severance although some views that infrastructure within the town should be a priority.
- East Reach/Lisieux Way junction - 'hinders mobility', 'speeding traffic', 'feels unsafe' and 'bad for cycling', general consensus is that the junction is terrible with long wait times.
- Bishops Lydeard link - 'speeding traffic', 'feels unsafe', 'bad for cycling', need for segregated cycle provision away from traffic.
- Ruishton Lane - 'bad for walking', 'hinders mobility', 'feels unsafe' and 'bad for cycling', high volume of traffic, lack of footpaths and narrow road.
- Green wedge link - lack of existing provision 'hinders mobility' and is 'bad for cycling', route would link up two physically close areas.

The positive sentiment related routes and destinations are listed below:

- Comeytrowe Park - 'good for walking' and 'feels safe', concerns for conflict between cycling and play area and other park users.
- Blackbrook/Childrens Wood - 'good for walking', 'supports mobility', 'cycle friendly', 'clean air', smooth/comfortable path which allows for a quick journey.

5. Please select any design solutions you think are needed or would be appropriate for the location you have plotted.

Out of the 167 comments, there were 151 responses to the multiple choice question resulting in 329 selections of design solutions. From this, 22% thought 'off road or separate cycle lanes away from traffic' would be needed, 21% selected 'footpath provision or widening', 10% 'added something else', 8% selected a 'new or improved crossing', 7% for a 'reduction of speed limits', 6% for 'additional lighting', 6% for 'traffic calming such as removing a lane or narrowing the street', 4% 'removal of barriers or bollards', 4% 'improvements to cycle markings', 3% 'signage and wayfinding', 3% 'cycle parking or increasing the amount of existing provision', 2% 'less congestion and air pollution', 2% 'less on street car parking', 2% 'quiet streets and neighbourhoods', 1% 'additional vegetation or planting' and 1% 'dropped kerbs and tactile paving'. There were no responses for provision of disabled car parking.

Other responses that were to 'add something else' with regards to design solutions included use of the existing A358 for a cycle way once the dualling scheme is complete, painted cycle lanes, make a walking and cycling only route, better maintenance, improved surfacing, cycling underpass/overpass, more direct or segregated route, provision and widening of a cycle path, allowing cycling along an existing route or path, redesign of roundabout to allow greater priority such as the Dutch-style design, traffic calming and bus priority, priority crossings and signals, removal of railings, public realm improvements and better visibility and CCTV.

6. If you selected a potential alternative route, why is the alternative better?

Out of 31 alternative route comments, eleven included a response to the question. However, considering some comments included an answer to this question despite dropping a pin on a proposed route or destination, all comments that did provide an answer were analysed. In total this included 41 responses. Furthermore, not all the alternative locations listed under Question 1 had an associated reason as to why it was better and some comments from the Question 7 have been included as the answer provided further reasoning and detail. The reasons are provided below:

- Tangier Way/Wood Street (A3807) – Several comments suggested this route was needed as it provided a convenient route to north Taunton from French Weir; segregated cycle lanes along the road would provide an alternative route to North Town from Galmington; and from south-west Taunton to Firepool/Taunton Station this way is better than going via Corporation Street, The Parade and North Street;
- Goodland Gardens – The route is well-used by pedestrians and cyclists to access Taunton Brewhouse, Somerset Cricket Ground and shops in the northern part of the retail area;
- Chip Lane – The route is completely free of motor traffic and there is no need to turn right from Staplegrove Road into The Avenue; while the route is narrow in places and not suitable for shared use, there should be a strategy to seek widening of the path in conjunction with future redevelopment adjacent to it;
- River Tone path – The path is safer and away from J25/A358 traffic and any pavement or cycle path crossing the J25/A358 is likely to be problematic. The use of the River Tone path was mentioned a number of times in responses particularly connecting Hankridge to Ruishton and Creech St Michael;
- Staplegrove Road – Likely that the core road through Staplegrove Garden Community will come later and, therefore, a connection along this part of the road (Silk Mills to Manor Road) should be provided. This will allow those to cycle safely to Taunton Academy without a long diversion;
- Wessex Road/Pikes Crescent – Providing a link may result in less need to use Trull Road, which is fairly heavily trafficked;
- Stoke Road/Chestnut Drive/Dowland Way – These roads and routes were mentioned several times among respondents. Coming into Taunton from the south, this is an important junction; currently there is a lack cycling provision and there are many families with children who may want to cycle;
- Corporation Street – This route from Galmington was mentioned a number of times to be the natural and established eastern approach to the retail core; and by using Tower Street (Route 5) the long established commercial and leisure facilities are bypassed;
- Park Street/Cann Street – Alternatives are too far out of the way (Castle Street) if Trull Road or Wilton is being accessed and current cycle experience is terrifying with fast cars on one way loop and the need to do a hill start;
- Upper High Street – There were many comments suggesting it is not feasible to go through Vivary Park in the winter or in the dark; and East Street to the Hospital needs access without going through town or around to Castle Street;

- Parkfield Road – Many cyclists already use this route, and it should be made a cycle route and designated as walking and cycling only;
- Longrun Meadow – Would provide a quicker route for Bishops Hull and from Silk Mills Park and Ride to the town centre avoiding the college campus;
- A358 – The cycle route should utilise the old A358 when the bypass is completed as it would provide a safer, quieter and less trafficked road;
- Norton Fitzwarren (B3227) – Improving connections on Great Western Way would present better value for money than a new route through the village with limited space and where traffic is an issue. However, this presented mixed comments with others wanting to see a segregated path on Route 4;
- South Road/Mountfields Park – Most people use the footpath cut-through which is Mountfields Park to Calway Road and this should be made the cycle route. This section of South Road is the narrowest and there is no safe route to the next section behind Richard Huish;
- Sherford Lane – Upgrade the current footpath at the end of Sherford Road, south of the golf course to the back of Vivary Park.
- Wood Street - Any update of Staplegrove Road/Station Road junction needs to consider cycle movements north from Wood Street. The route through French Weir and along Portland Street is the most direct route from south-west Taunton to Firepool and the railway street.

7. Please add any other comments or suggestions you have in the box below.

Out of the 167 responses to the survey, 127 comments were left. Some of the points raised within multiple comments have been listed below:

- The speed limit on Galmington Road/ College Way should be made 20mph.
- Concerns about a cycle route through Comeytrove Park with suggestions it should be diverted through Barrington Close.
- Connections to outlying villages with housing developments need to be prioritised, particularly including Norton Fitzwarren to Bishop's Lydeard via Cotford St Luke and Taunton to Kingston St Mary.
- Concerns with speed limit and traffic volume on roads around Ruishton and comments on improving the path to Hankridge with better surfacing and lighting. Better connection was also needed to CSM and Gateway P&R.
- Concerns about increasing cycling along the canal due to existing narrow width and potential disruption to wildlife.
- Canal does offer potential to connect to CSM.
- Poor width of paths on Blackbrook Way and concerns about Blackbrook Way/Lisieux Way roundabout due to poor visibility and speed of traffic.
- Need for priority contraflow cycle path along Lisieux Way.
- A number of roundabouts need to be redesigned with greater cycle priority including Staplegrove Road/Trenchard Way, Wellington Road/Silk Mills Road and several along Priorswood Road include the junction with Eastwick Road.
- Existing cycle lanes need to be better maintained e.g., Route 3.

- Issue with cars turning into Taunton School on Staplegrove Road or mounting the pavement to drop off. Further issues with the existing cycle path finishing on a hill with a blind summit before the railway bridge encouraging dangerous overtakes. A dedicated route is needed here linking to Bindon Road.
- Preference for an alternative link to J25 to avoid the current provisions.
- Large support for Route 37 although some suggestions for CCTV.
- Large support for Wellington Link with speed reductions and segregation.
- Comments in support for Tower Street and North Street closures for only cycling and bus use or introducing a shared space design.
- Issues with currently feeling unsafe cycling along Castle Street.
- Area of conflict along Route 5 (Hoveland Crescent/Musgrove Park Hospital) with staff standing on the cycle path and poor visibility with Parkfield Drive.
- Existing bridge across the top of French Weir is a major barrier on the cycle network because it is narrow, shared with pedestrians and cycling is not permitted. Rebuilding with greater dimensions needs to be considered.
- Route 17 needs to consider northern movements to Cheddon Road and a new crossing from Railway Street to the station is needed.
- Improving priority and safety at the Toneway/Bridgwater Road junction.
- Several comments reaffirming difficulty of East Reach/Lisieux Way junction.
- Concerns around removing parking for the school on Church Road, Trull.
- Hammet Street concerns as private vehicles use it as a shortcut from East Reach to access the western side of town despite the street being one of the most important and widely recognised places in Taunton.
- Finally, improvements should be made to the junction between Parkfield Road and Wellington Road to remove the guard railings.

Main Survey

1. How often do you make walking trips to the following destinations?

The responses to the survey of all ages between 13-84 were first analysed. The overall trends that emerged from responses to this question are summarised below:

- The destinations of GP Surgery, employment and schools had the largest proportion (over 80%) of people 'less often or never' walking to access them.
- GP was only accessed 'less often or never', 'monthly' or '2-3 times a month'.
- Schools had a higher daily 'on foot' access rate than employment at 12% compared to 6% for employment. However, employment was accessed on foot between monthly and 2-3 times per week more greatly than schools. This may be due to the rise of home working and hybrid-working.
- Taunton Station was also accessed less often, having the lowest rates of daily trips, alongside supermarkets, and over 70% accessing it 'less often or never'.
- Open space was the most frequently accessed by foot with 23% accessing it daily and 23% 'less often or never', much lower than other destinations.

- Convenience stores were also accessed more frequently than other services, and while the daily rate was higher than supermarkets, they were accessed more frequently on a weekly or 2-3 times per week basis than supermarkets.
- The town centre was also frequently accessed on a high monthly to weekly basis and only 34% less often or never walking into the town centre.

It is important to note that the data trends may have been impacted by the large proportion of retired respondents and those over the age of 64. Considering the large number of respondents accessing schools and employment on a 'less often or never' basis, the data was extracted for those between 25-44 who were employed and may be more likely to have children of school age. The findings are listed below:

- Schools still had a large proportion of those 'less often or never' accessing by foot at 72% though the weekly and monthly rates increased.
- Employment was more frequently accessed on foot with 50% 'less often or never' making trips on foot and the monthly to daily frequencies were higher.
- Despite this, there is a large proportion of the sample that are not accessing schools on foot in relation to the daily basis they would be attended.

2. How often do you make cycling trips to the following destinations?

The responses to the survey of all ages between 13-84 were first analysed. The overall trends that emerged from responses to this question are summarised below:

- Schools had the highest proportion of respondents 'less often or never' cycling at 87%. Employment also had a high proportion never cycling at 66% although less than the walking rates and this also applies to GP surgeries and Taunton Station, which are seeing more people cycling to reach them.
- Open space and Taunton town centre had frequent rates of cycling to access them, although rates for 'less often or never' were higher, particularly for open space, which is likely to be accessed more so on foot.
- Taunton Station was accessed more frequently by bike among respondents.
- Convenience store and supermarkets were accessed less frequently by bike among respondents, although still saw lower rates of 'less often or never' cycling to reach them than other destinations such as schools.

As similar to the walking question, the data is likely to have been skewed by responses from those who are retired and will, therefore, not need to access schools or employment. The data was then extracted for those between the ages of 25-44, a sample size of 14 with a mix of male and female respondents, for schools and employment, with the findings listed below:

- Schools still showed a large proportion of those 'less often or never' cycling to access them at 69%, although less than walking though 31% do weekly or daily. This identifies a large potential for change among respondents.
- For employment, 57% 'less often or never' cycled to work and the remaining 43% did between 2-3 times a month and 2-3 times a week.

- While there are positives levels of cycling to schools and employment there is still a large potential to encourage those ‘less often or never’ to cycle.

It is also important to note that respondents who are answering the survey and these questions in particular may be those with more of a cycling interest than walking.

3. *What are the most important connections to prioritise walking and cycling access to?*

Out of 70 responses, the most important connection to prioritise walking and cycling access to is employment, followed by schools, Taunton town centre and open space, although this was also middling for a large proportion of respondents). Other middling prioritised connections included supermarkets, convenience stores and Taunton Station, although this was a large 7th priority for many people, out of the eight connections. GP surgery was a common low priority for many respondents as was schools and employment. This mix of priority for schools and employment may be due to the high proportion of retired respondents in the sample.

Considering this, the data for the age groups of 25-44 were further extracted for schools and employment only, which resulted in a sample size of 13. This time schools were noticeably the most important, however, employment responses still varied with some selecting higher up their priorities and others lower. This may again be due to the movement towards working from home or hybrid working.

4. *Are there any other connections you would like to add to the list above?*

Out of the 82 survey responses, 17 comments were left adding other connections to the ones officers had identified. Among these leisure centres and fitness centres were common as was Musgrove Park Hospital and out of town shopping centres and venues. Other venues and cultural centres mentioned included Taunton Brewhouse, Museum of Somerset and the Odeon.

5. *Select your favourite example(s) of walking and cycling infrastructure?*

Based on 62 responses to the multiple choice question and 152 resultant selections of infrastructure types, the favourite example of walking and cycling infrastructure was ‘off street cycle paths that avoid the roads and go through parks or open spaces’ with 34% of selections. The 2nd favourite was ‘fully segregated cycleways and separate footpaths with disabled parking and dedicated signals’ with 27%, followed by ‘segregated cycle path and footpath with sections of shared routes’ at 20%, ‘quiet street treatment with greening, parking restrictions and lower speeds’ with 11%, ‘on-road advisory cycle lanes with pavements for pedestrians’ at 6% and ‘no cycle paths and only pavements for pedestrians’ with 2% of selections.

However, considering the demographics of the survey respondents, while this may be favourable for older age groups and male respondents, younger populations and female-identifying active travel users may prefer overlooked routes. A sample of

those who selected 'female' as their gender was then extracted. However, this only included two responses. Both selected the 'fully segregated cycleways and separate footpath with disabled parking and dedicated signals' option.

There were also a number of comments left in survey regarding good examples of walking and cycling infrastructure to consider in designs. These are listed below:

- Canal Road, north of the canal to Obridge, *"this route is great as it is away from roads and traffic"*;
- Exeter bridge example, *"access without need to go via M5 roundabout is a must. Other sites (such as Exeter) built impressive cycle bridges"*;
- Blackbrook and Longrun Meadow with only minor changes needed;
- Manchester CYCLOPs junction and signals for increased cycle priority.

6. What is the most important to you when prioritising the delivery of the proposed walking and cycling routes in Taunton?

Out of 61 responses, the most important when prioritising the delivery of routes was the 'potential to be transformational', followed by 'connection to schools' and 'serves existing as well as new users', which were all consistently high factors. 'Connection to other essential services' was also consistently high and 'has community support' followed closely behind, although it was more middling. Other middling factors included 'value for money', 'broad feasibility' and 'performance against policy objectives'. Lower priorities for respondents were 'potential to attract funding', 'cost of route delivery' followed by 'political acceptability' and the lowest priority 'timing of delivery coordinated with development'. 'Broad feasibility', 'potential to attract funding', 'cost of route delivery', 'political acceptability' were not selected by anyone as their top priority. 'Political acceptability' was only selected as 8th-12th priorities.

7. Are there any missing key destinations that you feel the routes don't connect to?

Out of 59 responses, 20 thought there were missing destinations, 20 weren't sure if there were missing destinations, 17 thought there were not missing destinations and a further 2 selected 'add something else'. More people thought there were missing destinations than did not think there were missing destinations. The 'add something else' comments mentioned the lack of cycle paths into town from outlying villages.

8. If you answered yes to the question above, what destination(s)?

Out of the 82 survey responses, 24 comments were left. A number of missing destinations were listed including Musgrove Park Hospital, Bishops Lydeard, Cotford St Luke, Trull/Sherford, Taunton Racecourse; Oake, Milverton, Wiveliscombe and Bampton via the old railway line, Staplegrove Road along the entire length, Taunton Library, Longrun Meadow, Wellsprings Leisure Centre, Taunton Pool, Bathpool to Hankridge, Park Street, Bishops Hull, Priory Bridge Road and south Taunton.

9. Do you support the routes we have identified in the map?

On a scale from happy to unhappy, the largest majority of respondents at 51% were 'satisfied' with the routes identified in the map, 27% were 'happy', 16% were 'neutral', 5% were 'unhappy' and 1% 'dissatisfied'.

10. If the routes were delivered, would you be more likely to make walking and cycling trips?

Out of 63 responses, 54% said they would definitely make more walking and cycling trips if the routes were delivered, 22% would be likely to make more walking and cycling trips, 14% were neutral, and 10% said they were either unlikely or definitely not going to make more walking and cycling trips.

11. Please leave any further comments in the box below.

Out of the 82 survey responses, 34 included further comments. To identify the key trends, each comment was assigned to a scale of support from 'in support of the project', 'supportive but proposed further changes', 'neutral or did not mention any support for the project' and 'unsupportive'. The improvements are listed below:

- Prioritise areas where people commute by bike already such as Wellington, Bishops Lydeard, Kingston St Mary and Ilminster;
- Integrate e-mobility services such as Zipp Scooters into this expansion and ensure there are pick-up and drop-off zones in key locations such as schools and supermarkets. Usage restrictions should also be removed;
- Existing and new routes need better maintenance such as vegetation management with upkeep similar to that done with roads;
- Routes need to be of a good quality i.e., wide enough and to Dutch standards with segregation and priority;
- Routes should be away from roads, go through back paths and open spaces and be well marked with signage (Blackbrook Way and Hoveland Crescent/Parkfield Drive mentioned as a must on several occasions);
- Routes should be up and running from the completion of a new development and there should be incentives to promote cycling over the car;
- More secure cycle parking in and around the town and station;
- Deprived communities should be connecting such as Halcon;
- Junctions should be designed to make right turns easier for cyclists or permit cycle crossings e.g., Toucan crossings and CYCLOPs junctions.

Some concerns of the project raised in the comments are listed below:

- Damage to the canal path if cycle paths were implemented;
- Decrease in road space will impact those who need to use a car.

Emailed comments

Twenty emailed comments were received from developers, non-governmental organisations, Somerset County Council, parish councils, community groups and the public. These are broadly summarised in the table below:

Respondent	Summary of comments
Somerset County Council (Traffic and Transport Development Management)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the funding mechanisms for the LCWIP projects, clarify funding will not be used to support CoGC proposals and impact of Unitary. • Show alignment between LCWIP and CoGC network plan. • Estimate of the future demand for walking and cycling in relation to the Garden Communities in Section 6 to demonstrate the importance of the route, prioritise delivery and to present a 'vision and validate' approach. • Priority order based on demand/type of user/destination e.g., delivering routes to schools rather than less popular destinations, while referenced in Section 7 and 9, should be brought in earlier with more weight applied. • Figure 71 should also show the LCWIP network. • Fit CoGC within Local Transport Plan. Report is in development, include reference to this and active travel ambitions in Taunton. • Identify the need for impact on highway capacity and traffic modelling as a significant aspect of future work and confirm how this could be secured. • For Appendix B, consider conflicting priorities for space such as BSIP priority measures on corridor routes, EV Charging Strategy impact on residential areas and parking and servicing requirements. • Align CoGC routes with signal improvement schemes in Taunton. • Gender is a policy priority. Need to create an equitable transport system for all users. Consider perceptions of safety, lighting and trip chaining etc. • Interventions need to be appropriate/proportionate. Define a hierarchy of interventions to help target funding.
Gladman Developments Limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive of the aspirations of the consultation and the aims of promoting active and sustainable travel. • Particular relation to the CoGC proposals through the live application (08/19/0035) at the adopted TAU3 Pyrland Farm Allocation. • Proposals on the site have ensured sustainable travel including improved connectivity to the existing PRoW No. T5/9; public access to land previously not available; and a proposed footway along Lyngford Lane. • Will discuss additional concerns that arise for Route 11 that have not been mitigated as long as they are proportionate and relevant.
Barratt Homes & David Wilson Homes (BDW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relation to CoGC proposals through the land at Lyngford Lane, allocated in the Development Plan, subject to the planning application (38/19/0129). • Response gave background to policy allocation for a vehicular link between Bossington Drive and Cheddon Road and the original intention for a northern link road. However, this would be impossible to achieve in the modern context considering the likelihood of requiring a CPO, and the costs associated, as well as the movement to minimise new road building, which <i>"would seem at odds with the CoGC proposals"</i>. • Pedestrian/cycle link will be provided between the Nerrols development and Cheddon Road considering a vehicular link would provide a rat-run for local traffic, encourage local car trips, compromise the design of the Lyngford site and create a physical barrier between the east and west fields, and is outdated and undeliverable. • The other specific comments provided by BDW include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Route 11 shows a link between Nerrols and Cheddon Road. The Plan should be state this is a pedestrian/cycle link, not a vehicular link. ➢ Route 11 can only be achieved if the Crown Estate are willing to facilitate a link across Crown land.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The CoGC must make it clear that either, (a) the Crown support and are 'bought in' to assist delivery of route 11 pedestrian/cycle link or, (b) should set out how the route can be achieved. ➤ Without Crown involvement/approval, it would seem the only way a pedestrian/cycle link could be delivered is via a CPO. Whilst CPO of Crown Land is possible, it is complicated, unwieldy and costly. ➤ If the Crown will support the delivery of route 11 as a pedestrian/cycle link between Nerrols and Cheddon Road, BDW can recognise route 11 in the emerging revised application. ➤ In absence of Crown involvement, if required to, BDW will show the potential for such a link, up to the boundary of land within BDW control, within the redline of application 38/19/0129. ➤ If the Crown are not involved, BDW believe that a pedestrian/cycle connection from Bossington Drive to Cheddon Road/Lyngford Lane is still capable of being delivered. ➤ BDW have previously engaged with SWT and reached in principle agreement that links can be achieved via Leigh Road and land adjacent to 43/45 Bossington Drive. Both of these routes are achievable using SWT land. ➤ Furthermore, it will be possible to connect from the Lyngford site south, via existing T5/15 to Bossington Drive. ➤ These routes would provide direct and convenient access from Cheddon Road to Bossington Drive, achieving the aspiration of the CoGC and Route 11 in particular. ➤ BDW consider that the CoGC should set out potential alternatives to route 11 on plans in the document. ➤ BDW are able to provide plans to show these alternatives, and which will also be a part of application 38/19/0129. ● If financial contributions from CoGC proposals can be appropriately related to the current application, BDW are in principle willing to consider a contribution towards the delivery of walking and cycling routes.
<p>Persimmon Homes & Redrow Homes (via Vectos)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promoting the strategic development site at Monkton Heathfield Phase 2. ● Representation reflects emerging and recent transport policy such as the movement away from 'predict and provide' to 'vision and validate'. ● The specific comments provided are listed below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CoGC should refer to the rapidly changing approach to travel, mobility and attitudes, alongside material changes to the aspirations of the authority to meet climate emergency and net zero carbon goals. While routing is important, the future of mobility is a key consideration. ➤ TGT Vision fails on core fundamentals. It promotes the protection of road capacity whilst seeking to promote public transport and active travel. This is out of date with current best practice and emerging policy. CoGC should seek to clarify SWT's position otherwise the protection of road space has the potential to compromise the success. ➤ Significant investment in sustainable transport modes results in little change unless matched with restrictions in capacity and road space. ➤ CoGC should genuinely prioritise sustainable modes over the car, accepting congestion is necessary to change travel habits. ➤ Those that can travel by alternative modes will be forced to do so, whilst those that cannot, will need to accept a level of congestion and delay. Many people who still depend on the car are travelling less now and are able to access the network outside of traditional 'peak hours'. ➤ Important to ensure suitable alternatives are targeted where they can best alleviate bottlenecks within the network;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CoGC must make important reference to the fact that infrastructure needed may be different for different parts of the network depending on the opportunities, constraints and types of user. ➤ A bold approach to capturing existing road space and using it for more sustainable travel modes, while accepting this may cause some operational inconvenience to the car driver, should be considered; ➤ Implementation of a comprehensive strategy should not rely on S106 contributions alone, but form part of the IDP allowing CIL contributions to be collected across Taunton. CIL contributions will address issues of securing contributions to mitigate cumulative development impacts. ➤ The plan should explain what weight and relevance it will be given for decision making purposes and highlight that the starting point for determining planning applications will be policies contained within the adopted Development Plan. Where conflict arises between the CoGC Plan and Development Plan, the latter will be given priority. • With specific reference to Monkton Heathfield 2, the downgrading of the existing A38 should not be funded directly by the development but instead completed by the local planning and highway authorities via appropriate CIL contributions, where benefits are considered to the wider community of Monkton Heathfield or those traveling into Taunton along the A38.
National Highways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CoGC viewed as a positive document seeking to facilitate an increase in walking and cycling for Taunton Garden Town. • National Highways wherever possible support plans to replace vehicular journeys with active travel modes. • CoGC is helpful in advancing discussion of infrastructure that might enable this shift at Taunton. Stress that license with DfT requires focus on the safe and effective operation of the SRN and this cannot be compromised for sustainable travel initiatives. • Some proposals included in the report affect/interact with our network, so as strategic highway authority, would welcome involvement in future. • While we recognise limitations in user experience using J25 facilities, they provide an option while the Nexus 25 site becomes operational. Support the principle of providing a segregated M5 crossing point. Detail of such proposals need to be reviewed as scheme/options progress. Alternative crossing options to a bridge appear to merit ongoing consideration. • Plan recognises National Highway's project to improve the A358. One aim of National Highways is to enhance access for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders including disabled users who use the route. • Latest design proposals for A358 Dualling scheme seek to provide an offline cycle route serving cyclists in the local communities. It connects to the local road network and existing Sustrans national cycle network and provides new off-road routes from Henlade to Southfields roundabout. • As identified in the LCWIP/CoGC, there also appears an identified need to enable movement across the M5 north of Junction 25, between Monkton Heathfield and Creech St Michael, with potential movements to Ruishton and Nexus 25. These appear in part facilitated by existing structures over the M5, with also identification of aspirational routes that would require new infrastructure. CoGC states that further work is required to establish specific routes and we welcome discussion as this workstream develops. • National Highways endorse CoGC approach to require developments at Taunton to make financial contribution towards the delivery of offsite walking and cycling routes. The identification of key destinations for the different sites is helpful in identifying appropriate infrastructure for sites to

	<p>contribute to. Ongoing consideration of Nexus 25's responsibility in enabling a new M5 sustainable transport crossing is also supported.</p>
Network Rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As Network Rail is a publicly funded organisation with a regulated remit it would not be reasonable to require Network Rail to fund rail improvements necessitated by commercial development. It is therefore appropriate to require developer contributions to fund such improvements. • Three level crossings within the plan area that could be affected by the aspirational routes which are in within close proximity are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Taunton 5 & 13 Public Footpath (MLN1) ➢ Broomhay UWCT (MLN1) ➢ Hyde UWCT (MLN1) • Network Rail has a strong policy to guide and improve its management of level crossings, which aims to; reduce risk at level crossings, reduce the number and types of level crossings, ensure level crossings are fit for purpose, ensure Network Rail works with users/ stakeholders and supports enforcement initiatives. • Network Rail and Office of Rail Regulation's (ORR) policy to reduce risk at level crossings not to increase risk as could be the case with an increase in usage at the level crossings in question. Risk control should, where practicable, be achieved through the elimination of level crossings in favour of bridges or diversions.
Somerset Wildlife Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome the initiative to develop Connected Garden Communities in Taunton. The co-benefits achieved by this approach for health and wellbeing as well as ease of transport are well known. • In the years since Taunton received Garden Town status there have been many changes that have made an initiative such as this even more important including the Covid-19 pandemic and the large increase in population from significant housing developments. It is timely to look at how active travel in the town can be supported to address concerns including air pollution, traffic congestion and water management. • CoGC is in line with our own vision for a Nature Recovery Network in the area, where opportunities for active travel are encouraged, car usage and atmospheric pollution are reduced, health and wellbeing is supported, and people are able to access and connect with nature as they go. • Work delivered in Taunton such as Routes to the River Tone and Green Spaces, Healthy Places, has demonstrated the importance of access to green and blue spaces and the value local communities place on this. It also demonstrated how areas support wildlife, and the existing networks of waterways, parks and the paths that connect them enable not just people but wildlife to move more freely around the town. Well located and designed footpaths and cycle ways can enhance these wildlife corridors, bringing benefits that can contribute to the Nature Recovery Network and SWT Council's plans to tackle the climate and ecological emergency. • Interested to see more detailed design plans as the initiative develops to ensure that maximum benefit can be achieved from route development. • Encourage the designs to consider enhancing habitats along routes, incorporating Sustainable Drainage Solutions (SuDS) that support wildlife and mitigate flood risk, and ensure that lighting is ecologically sensitive to support the many bats that live in Taunton. • Note that prioritisation is to be based on connection to schools, connection to other essential services and servicing future as well as existing users. While these are important considerations, co-benefits including access to green spaces and nature networks will be valuable.
Wessex Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific comments.
Environment Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the Draft Plan but wishes to make the following comments: • Stated a number of factors to consider such as creating space for wildlife and access for maintenance alongside watercourse paths. For main

	<p>rivers, cycle paths should be permeable, gravel or rolled shale to allow machinery to undertake annual maintenance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be no interruption to surface water drainage system of surrounding land because of cycleways. • Consider opportunities to link up floodplains when proposed route cross floodplains to create a more significant environmental feature. When cycle paths are on Flood Zones 2 and 3, ground levels must remain unchanged. • Lighting also needs to be suitably designed with wildlife in mind.
Historic England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Plan could encourage the following in section 10 'Delivery'. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Avoid the loss of, or harm to, the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets including their settings, as well as consider the potential for impacts on yet unknown archaeological remains or deposits (bearing in mind the historic environment is an irreplaceable resource as explained in the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 chapter 16); ➢ Minimise and mitigate any negative impacts on the historic environment, e.g., sympathetic choice of materials or siting of cycle stands/seating/lighting/planting; and ➢ Maximise opportunities for enhancing public understanding, appreciation, access and enjoyment of the historic environment along or near to the routes. Examples may include wayfinding and signposting nearby heritage assets, installing interpretation, making the most of any views of heritage assets along the routes. • In respect of the SEA Screening Report, we note that recommendation that full SEA is not required. From a cultural heritage/historic environment perspective, we are satisfied with that conclusion alongside the recommendation that environmental assessment is undertaken to help design and develop the infrastructure necessary to deliver the routes. • Historic England's advice within the following may assist with this: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ GPA2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (2015); ➢ GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017); ➢ HEAN 12: Statements of Heritage Significance (2019); ➢ Streets for All (2018) ➢ South West version.
Musgrove Park Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Plan should allow reasoning behind the position of new cycle facilities in the future and will hopefully make cycling to Musgrove Park Hospital a more attractive option for more people.
Bridgwater & Taunton College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very interested in the CoGC project overall. • The College own Longrun Lane with shared maintenance with Castle School (Route 5a). The section connecting to Longrun Meadow is an active artificial badger sett so there are limitations.
Comeytrove Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWT has inherited huge, planned housing development growth from its previous administration; a planned growth that was always quite naturally going to invite a significant influx of additional retired population from larger areas looking to relocate to the southwest - and in particular Taunton Deane. Consequently, Taunton and its surrounding areas now has an aged demographic that is far more pronounced than other comparable towns. Cycling and walking is not the sole answer to the needs of its present and growing population. Taunton Deane planners of the time should have planned sufficiently for the consequences of this demographic shift upon its infrastructure and this consultation exercise must now include an effective public transport network that will connect with the outlying 'garden' communities the previous administration signed up to - with all the obvious and conscious consequences, and which should have been worked into its plans for growth. • Please include public transport plans and commitment into this connectivity consultation exercise alongside the cycling and walking

	<p>which, although a cheap authority solution, is not an option for many people living in SWTs outlying Taunton areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcomes any additional footpaths and cycleways, but it must not be at the expense or compromise the necessary infrastructure requirements for any new housing development or growth area.
Bishops Hull Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bishops Hull Parish Council supports the Connecting our Garden Communities Plan but would like to add that it is essential that any implemented cycle or walking paths are completed from start to finish rather than a piecemeal approach. We would also suggest that relates infrastructure is put in place such as shelters and locations to lock bikes to ensure that the cycle and walking paths are welcoming to all users. It is also essential to connect the Orchard Grove development with the wider community via a safe route, and that a reduced speed limit on the A38 is imposed approaching the Orchard Grove site and a safe crossing is installed allowing pedestrian and cycle access.
Victoria Park Action Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victoria Park Action Group comments are summarised below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Proposed route – Alfred Street is better than Victoria Gate link, offer support for cycling, important link to Blackbrook/Holway beyond East Reach, street good for cycling, could be 20mph. ➤ Proposed route – support Cranmer Road cycle route due to presence of school, need safer junction in wide bend at Victoria Park end, 20mph should be extended to adjoining similar streets. ➤ Proposed route – potential whether Winchester Street route should be moved to parallel St Augustine Street. Nervous cyclists would benefit from light controlled crossing on Priory Ave/ St Augustine St. St Augustine Street/ Winchester Street both rat runs, closure to all but active travel would create quiet streets and two T-junctions on Priory Ave with controlled pedestrian crossings at St Augustine Street. This would meet reasons listed in policy M6 Traffic Calming, similar to streets around Eastbourne Terrace were improved. Major safety improvement for pedestrians on along the south side of Priory Bridge Road, will help establish coach drop off zones and new junctions to suit commercial interests on Priory Bridge Road. ➤ Other – light controlled crossing required on Priory Bridge Road dual carriageway from Victoria Park to Wickes Retail Park due to threatening crossing points on Shell Garage roundabout. Members cross here on foot, bike, mobility scooter, distance between roundabouts would allow, destination is important to town centre and beyond. If in interests of retail park, could they fund? ➤ Other – propose pathway parallel to Chritchard Way dual carriageway on east edge of park, which helps complete a non-trafficked link to Retail Park crossing place above and forms a cycle crossroad at end of St Alfred Street. Route part maintained by Group, potential to widen, from 1.65m, depends on maintaining/adapting planting barrier on west side, obstructions of barrier on PBR and bollard in subway.
Mr David and Mr Brian Coate (via Vectos)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two routes transect the land holding Route 35/36. The Coates support these proposals, recognising the benefit to their business, and as vested members of the Ruishton community would be pleased to provide improved connections to/through their site for the residents of Ruishton. • Route 35: The Coates Lane is important to delivering these routes. The landowner is committed to working with SWT to realise the vision of this route, and will incorporate high-quality links through the land, providing routes do not compromise the current commercial operations of the site. • Route 36: Somerset County Council (SCC) have proposed a Small Improvement Scheme (SIS) along Ruishton Lane, which compliments the aspirational link. The SIS would provide thermal activated pedestrian warning signs to reinforce pedestrian safety along Ruishton Lane by indicating to drivers that pedestrians are walking within the highway.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Coate Land could enhance the proposed SIS along Ruishton Lane, and extend the link towards Nexus 25, forming a significant part of the aspirational Route 36. The land has the ability to provide a connection from the SIS along Ruishton Lane towards Route 35 and onwards to Taunton and Monkton Heathfield. Routing west along Ruishton Lane, the land holding has the ability to provide off road pedestrian and cycle provision for Route 36, which is of high quality and compliant with LTN 1/20 guidance. ➤ The landowner is committed to helping where practicable to facilitate Route 35, provided it does not negatively impact the existing commercial operation. The Coate Land also has the ability to enhance the SCC Highways proposals along Ruishton Lane, which also seeks to deliver the aspirations of Route 35. • The routes within SWT's 'Connecting our Garden Communities' offer the potential to enact positive change that will improve health and wellbeing of existing and new communities and contribute towards a Net Zero future. • Routes 35/36 would provide attractive alternative pedestrian and cycle connections to the Coate Land from key local settlements including Monkton Heathfield, Creech St Michael and Nexus 25. • The constraints to both aspirational routes include overcoming third party ownership and funding sources. The land holding within the control of the Coates has the ability to deliver part of these routes, and therefore the Coates would be pleased to assist with delivery in their land, subject to further details and understanding the impact on commercial operation.
<p>Member of the public: Ruishton resident</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a resident of Ruishton I am interested to see [Route 35]. The Ruishton and Thornfalcon draft Neighbourhood Plan has a number of proposals for foot and cycle paths in the parish. I don't see these proposed routes reflected in these proposals. The specific route referred to above is mainly outside Ruishton Parish and consequently barely features in the Neighbourhood Plan, but it is an aspiration for the Parish to see the current footpath, running alongside the river, up-graded to a cycle path. This would enable parishioners to walk and cycle to Hankridge and beyond into town without having to cross the hazardous J25 roundabout. This is particularly dangerous for people with pushchairs, mobility scooters and electric scooters, all of whom I have seen attempting to cross this junction. It would also provide a safe route for schoolchildren.
<p>Member of the public: Staplegrove resident</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a resident of Manor Road, Staplegrove I look forward to the completion of the spine road through the proposed Staplegrove West and East developments. Those developments will create many more traffic movements as well as taking traffic away from Manor Road; but how will they get to and from Cheddon Road and Lyngford and beyond? Mainly along Hope Corner Lane. However, it is not fit for 2 way traffic. Please plan for the spine road to continue on to Cheddon Road around the back of the Pyrland Fields development, it is only a few hundred yards. Then not only will Manor Road and Corkscrew Lane be safer for cyclists and walkers, Hope Corner Lane also will be safer for cyclists. Much of the town centre congestion results from traffic having to go through the centre in order to reach the other side, e.g., Musgrove Park Hospital and Richard Huish College. That congestion makes cycling in particular, and walking, hazardous. There will be more congestion as a result of all the planned developments. Please plan for a road to connect South Road/Shoreditch Road with Trull Road/ Honiton Road as a matter of urgency. The more traffic that can get around the outside of the town centre, the safer will it be for cyclists and walkers to get to and from the centre. It will also result in lower levels of pollution, especially in the centre. I was told some years ago that Taunton has more retirees as a percentage of its overall population than anywhere in England except Bournemouth. I do not know if that is correct, but I do know that it is a high percentage, many of whom are not able to walk, cycle, or use the bus. Of necessity they can travel

	only by car, and please remember that we are all transitioning to hybrid/ electric cars, so motorists should not be treated as the enemy.
Member of the public: Milverton query	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At what point will there be a corresponding plan for cycle paths from Wivey-Milverton, Milverton-Wellington. For example?

Events and forums comments

The comments and questions received from the consultation events are broadly summarised in the table below.

Event	Summary of comments
Parish Council and Ward Member(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can you ask developers who have already secured planning permission on their site for S106 agreements? How can people cycle during wet weather conditions? Will you provide shelters for rainy conditions along the routes? What do you perceive to be a realistic distance for people to walk and cycle? “Taunton is becoming a place where people in England retire, and the developments are getting further and further away from the town centre. How would people get from Comeytrowe to Hankridge for example? They may want to walk there and get the bus back and that needs to be provided for.” “Walking and cycling infrastructure cannot be a substitute for good car infrastructure as this will be required.” Can we influence schools and the hospitals to accommodate racks and electric charging for bikes? Will National Highways want to have a part of CoGC? There is an issue with volume on the A38 and trying to narrow the road with bus lanes and walking and cycling infrastructure may pose more of an issue and create more traffic. There were many comments about Ruishton suggesting it was excluded from the map and that there are no safe routes to Ruishton at present. For example, “How can schools be prioritised when Ruishton is not connected?”.
Somerset Youth Parliament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasons for not cycling at present included safety issues such as personal safety or safety from cars from lack of infrastructure or confusing infrastructure. Cycle paths need lighting and vegetation needs to be cut back and managed. Often cycle paths go through areas that are not well overlooked or through areas that feel unsafe. Not keen on cycle paths along water bodies as they were scared they'll fall in, and areas often feel vulnerable with no overlooking. Suggested there needs to be greater work into mapping to encourage more cycling. Cycle paths need to show up on Google Maps when you search for a route; a cycle network map would be useful in the town centre or in areas around the town along the network, which clearly identify the cycle routes; digital marketing of the cycle map needs to happen; satnavs could be on electric bikes or hire bikes to guide directions as people tend not to pay attention to signs and are lacking in coherence. Cycle parking is also a critical element of making the network successful as people worry they will get their bikes stolen. Routes also need to come forward before people move in and become set in their ways and behaviours. The outcomes of the ‘sticky dot’ prioritising activities are set out below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In response to, “what are the most important destinations to prioritise walking and cycling access to?”, schools were the top priority, followed by town centres, then the rail station and employment. There were also votes for open space, supermarkets and ‘other’ (community centres). ➤ In response to, “what is the most important to you when prioritising the delivery of proposed walking and cycling routes?”, ‘connection to schools’ was the top priority, followed by ‘potential to be transformational’ and ‘performance against policy objectives’ as joint second priorities. ‘Connection to other essential services’ also had a few selections and

	<p>there was one vote each for ‘timing of delivery coordinated with development’, ‘potential to attract funding’ and ‘value for money’.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some other comments received back as a result of the “what is your dream street?” exercise are listed below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Station Road feels really unsafe and doesn’t feel appropriate for walking to the station often due to the drinking establishments and the dark tunnels. ➢ An idea for Cranmer Road is to cut back the vegetation along the school fence. Parents want to see their children go through the school gates and cutting vegetation down or moving the entrance could shift behaviour.
Agents Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the document a material consideration? • Have you got any critically prioritised areas or infrastructure? • How do you ensure development can come forward if it does not provide walking and cycling infrastructure?
Blackbrook Green Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally a good level of support for the initiatives and the routes identified. • Specifically good support for routes 18 and 19. Route 18 (along Blackbrook Way) was seen as being far too narrow and didn’t feel safe at present due to widths, overgrown vegetation, traffic speeds and poor junction at Leisure Centre access. Route 19 was identified as really well used at present but in need of maintenance and widening. The potential linkage of route 19 across the M5 into Nexus would be seen as a real asset (considering some of the ancillary uses planned there) and opportunity for linked business trips. • Vehicles using the cycle path on Blackbrook Way as a drop-off point for nursery on the business park identified as an issue and questioned whether additional walking and cycling accesses could be opened up along here. • Questions were raised about whether vehicular access could be opened up from Blackbrook Way, though it was recognised that this was probably against the spirit of the consultation. • There was support for the idea of mobility hubs in appropriate places across the town, that could intercept drivers to the business park and provide real opportunities to switch to more active and sustainable modes. • The majority of attendees suggested that they would be more inclined to walk and cycle more if the routes proposed were delivered and made to feel safe and attractive, particularly when linked with the idea of mobility hubs containing bike/e-bike/e-scooter hire. • Recognised that many people working on the business park live a good distance beyond Taunton and so active travel proposals for some would only ever be able to play a small part in their journey.
Richard Huish College (bike day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two comments of strong support for Route 37 (Vivary link) due to the large amount of travel via Vivary Park at present. • Concern for cycling on the roads as many drivers do not give priority to cyclists. • Support for Cotford St Luke – Bishops Lydeard Link (Route 32) suggesting at present the roads are very dangerous and a link here would be ‘life-saving’. • Current cycle routes in Monkton Heathfield are awkward and the roads are busy. While they are 20mph, cycling through the area is not pleasant. • Another comment suggesting the project was a “good idea”.

Social media comments

One individual commented on the Facebook post that went out at the end of July. The comment related to agreeing with implementing cycleways, however, safe and secure cycle storage was also needed. This was ‘liked’ by a further two individuals.

You said, we did

The comments received through the consultation have directly informed development of the final version of the Draft Plan. We have considered all comments

received and applied professional judgement as to whether or not they merit changes. In some cases, this has resulted in specific changes, in others it has resulted in a shift of emphasis. However, not every comment was deemed to require a change to be made.

The table below details some of the main issues raised in consultation representations and the officer response. In some cases, the response has been to make changes to the document, in others the response provides written justification, but no change is deemed to be necessary.

Issue raised	Officer response
<i>Potential alternative routes</i>	
Tangier Way/Wood Street (A3807)	The proposed CoGC route is between Staplegrove in south-west Taunton and Firepool, the College/Castle School/Musgrove. Crossing Longrun Meadow makes sense as part of this as does using the Station to Vivary Link. Further consideration will be given to existing provision along Tangier and Wood Street within junction design as studies progress and route design evolves in relation to routes connecting to Firepool.
Goodland Gardens	While SWT officers recognise this is a well-used path, by directing the route through Goodlands Gardens, the services along Tower Street/Castle Green and North Street are bypassed. The route also provides little overlooking.
Chip Lane (section running parallel to The Avenue)	There is little scope for widening along Chip Lane and there is a lack of overlooking making it unsuitable for all users and unlikely to be used by all during winter and outside of daylight hours. Using The Avenue allows for overlooking of the cycle route and equitable access.
River Tone path (from Hankridge to Creech St Michael via Ruishton)	The River Tone path is currently in the network map via Route 39 and there are aspirational routes (Route 35 and Route 36) that aim to connect Ruishton and Creech St Michael. While the exact path for connecting these settlements has not been precisely identified, we recognise the potential for using the River Tone path. We must still consider the impacts of lighting on surrounding wildlife, interaction with floodplain and the lack of overlooking that would be inevitable.
Silk Mills roundabout to Manor Road (Staplegrove Road)	While this section of road would be a beneficial additional to the network before the Staplegrove development spine road, there is little scope for adding a cycle path through here due to width constraints, gradient increases either side and well established vegetation, as well as the high volume of mixed traffic. Instead, the key link follows Great Western Way via Showell Park (Route 22), which is easier to segregate users from traffic and offers a more pleasant environment. This then connects to The Taunton Academy using Routes 21 and 2.
Wessex Road to Pikes Crescent link	While this is a well-used footpath along the Sherford Stream there is little potential to widen as it is not overlooked, there is likely to be impacts on wildlife and flooding and it is reliant on third party land.
Stoke Road, Chestnut Drive and Dowsland Way	While the need for a connection to south Taunton is recognised, the scope of this project is primarily to connect the planned garden communities around the town. This will be noted however and considered within future iterations of the Taunton LCWIP.
Corporation Street (inc. Park Street and Cann Street route)	A number of comments suggested this was the more natural and well-established route into town from south-west Taunton and something needed to be done along Park Street and Cann Street. Further consideration will be given to detailed routing as studies progress and route design evolves in relation to routes connecting to and through the town centre.

Upper High Street alternative to Vivary Park and for access to MPH	The route (Route 9) proposal follows the boundary of Vivary Park but would not be subject to opening times like that of a route through Vivary Park. Further consideration will be given to detailed routing as studies progress and route design evolves in relation to routes connecting to and through the town centre.
Parkfield Road	Whilst used by existing communities, Parkfield Road does not feel directly relevant to connecting the Garden Communities. Where route 5 passes close by the junction of Parkfield Drive and Parkfield Road it may be appropriate to consider wider connectivity and safety as part of detailed design as this evolves.
Longrun Meadow	Longrun Meadow is a well-used and favoured route by many people in Taunton. However, it has not been included in this network as it already features in the LCWIP. Furthermore, the aim of creating a route from Staplegrove/ Ford Farm developments to Bridgwater & Taunton College and The Castle School means likely young people are the primary types of user and, therefore, routes may need to provide natural surveillance and lighting.
The 'old' A358	Route 40 is currently the aspirational route connecting Taunton to the Southfields Roundabout. The exact route is underdetermined at present and, therefore, there may be potential for it to follow the old A358 once the dual road is complete.
Great Western Way and B3227	We received mixed comments regarding Route 4 along the B3227 through Norton Fitzwarren village with some suggesting the focus should be on Great Western Way (Route 22) once complete and others wanting to see a segregated cycle path along the B3227, where space permits. In response, we have proposed two routes through Norton Fitzwarren, both of which are in the adopted LCWIP. The reason being is that Great Western Way will divert traffic away from travelling through the village, decreasing the road traffic dominance through the centre of the village and potentially freeing up road space. Therefore, there is greater potential for safe and convenient active travel through the centre of the village. Detailed design stages will consider an appropriate response for this location. However, this may not necessarily be a segregated cycle path, particularly due to space constraints in the village itself, instead it may be a speed limit reduction and traffic calming to make it safer to walk and cycle, should some users need to use the B3227 to access services.
Mountfields Park	Currently the Killams Link follows South Road, shown in the adopted LCWIP, rather than using Mountfields Park. While this is well used, there is constrained width and a lack of overlooking, which may be an issue during the winter or outside of daylight hours. Furthermore, connecting South Road links up to many other potential routes. Further consideration will be given to detailed routing as studies progress and route design evolves.
Priory Bridge Road	Priory Bridge Road is already featured in the CoGC network map, particularly for connecting Firepool via Route 24. The full length of Priory Bridge Road was not deemed needed to connect the likely destinations for future Firepool residents. However, accessibility by active modes along and across the length of Priory Bridge Road and the A3038 Priory Avenue is something for consideration in future iterations of the overall Taunton LCWIP.
St Augustine Street	The main aim of route 24, which follows Winchester Street and Cranmer Road, is to connect Firepool to St James School and a route via St Augustine Street would not be very direct for this. However, further consideration will be given to detailed routing as studies progress and route design evolves.
<i>Additional design issues and suggestions relating to the proposed routes</i>	

<p>Routes 1, 5, 8, 17, 18 and 24 issues raised regarding additional considerations to vehicular movements, cycle movements, speeds and priority.</p>	<p>The following issues will be considered as studies progress and route design evolves, and have been added to Appendix B 'Route Summaries' for consideration at these later stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Taunton School vehicular movements with drop-off and pick-up and vehicle speeds in this area; ➤ Cycle and walking movements across the railway bridge on Staplegrove Road, links with Bindon Road and the need for safer provision through this area; ➤ Look into the potential for greater cycle priority at Staplegrove Road/Trenchard Way roundabout; ➤ Reducing vehicle speeds along Galmington Road; ➤ Address area of conflict between Hoveland Crescent and Musgrove Park Hospital; ➤ Improve active travel visibility between Hoveland Crescent and Parkfield Drive; ➤ Reduce speed limit on College Way; ➤ Consider alternative route to Comeytrove Park such as through Barrington Close; ➤ Consider movements from Station to Cheddon Road in designs; ➤ Greater signage and markings along Blackbrook Way; ➤ Additional walking and cycling access into Blackbrook business park to allow access to the nursery; ➤ Alfred Street needs a 20mph speed limit and 20mph on Cranmer Road should be extended to the adjoining streets; ➤ A safer junction is needed in the wide road bend on Cranmer Street on the southern end; ➤ Consider location of access into St James Primary School and the management of vegetation to influence drop-off behaviour; ➤ Control rat runs along St Augustine Street and Winchester Street by closing to private vehicles, creating quiet streets.
<p><i>Prioritisation of route destination and route delivery</i></p>	
<p>Most important route connections</p>	<p>You told us, within the consultation hub and the engagement events, that the most important connections to prioritise walking and cycling access to is schools, employment, Taunton town centre/station and open space. This was followed by supermarkets, convenience stores, and GP surgeries. These results have therefore informed the prioritisation of routes in the Final CoGC Plan and beyond. We will also note the varying responses for employment and consider the changes to working patterns with more people working from home or in a hybrid pattern while considering locations where this is unlikely.</p>
<p>Most important priorities for route delivery</p>	<p>You told us that the most important factors when prioritising the delivery of walking and cycling routes was 'the potential to be transformational', 'connection to schools' and 'serves existing as well as new users'. Other high factors were 'connection to other essential services' and 'has community support'. This was followed by 'value for money', 'broad feasibility', 'performance against policy objectives', 'potential to attract funding', 'cost of route delivery', 'political acceptability' and 'timing of delivery coordinated with development'. These results have therefore informed the prioritisation of routes in the Final Plan and beyond. We also note the importance of coordinating route delivery with development, despite the response on Commonplace, to influence a behaviour change at the start.</p>
<p><i>Missing connections and destinations</i></p>	

<p>A number of missing connections and destinations were raised in the comments.</p>	<p>The network of proposed routes currently connects Blackbrook Leisure Centre via Route 18, Wellsprings Leisure Centre via Route via Route 2/11 and Hankridge Retail Park via Route 29 for leisure and fitness centres and Taunton Town Centre for other fitness classes via Station-Vivary. Musgrove Park Hospital and Museum of Somerset are also connected on the map via Route 5/5a, which has been identified as a major employment site. Cultural centres mentioned such as Taunton Brewhouse have also been connected using the Station-Vivary Link. Bishops Lydeard and Cotford St Luke are also connected via Route 32 and Trull and Sherford via Route 9 and 28. Taunton Library also connected off East Street. Bathpool to Hankridge is connected via Route 10 and 29. The Odeon cinema is also connected via Route 29. Priory Bridge Road is also included on the map for some part, associated with Firepool, on Route 24. Bishops Hull is also connected via Silk Mills on Route 26 and either Route 27 or Route 7 along Wellington Road. Halcon has been linked via Route 10.</p> <p>Destinations that have been mentioned that are not in the proposed network include Taunton Racecourse, Oake/Milverton/Wiveliscombe and Bampton, Staplegrove Road (between Silk Mills and Manor Road) and south Taunton. The response to these routes is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Taunton Racecourse not identified as a significant or essential destination for the Garden Communities. This destination alongside links to south Taunton may be considered in future iterations of the main Taunton LCWIP document; ➤ Links to Wiveliscombe and Milverton are not of relevance to the Garden Communities so not included here. However, there is an aspiration to link these towns within the Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Action Plan. See action 222 in Appendix 1 - Indicative action plan 2030 (somerwestandtaunton.gov.uk) ➤ An alternative route is proposed for the link between Silk Mills roundabout and Manor Road, which is Route 22.
<p><i>Design of walking and cycling infrastructure</i></p>	
<p>Favourite examples of walking and cycling infrastructure</p>	<p>You told us that your favourite example of walking and cycling infrastructure was ‘off street cycle paths that avoid the roads and go through parks or open spaces’, followed by ‘fully segregated cycleways and separate footpaths with disabled parking and dedicated signals’ and thirdly, ‘segregated cycle paths and footpaths with sections of shared routes’. There was in general a preference for greater walking and cycling priority over that of the car. In response, while paths through open spaces are good examples of walking and cycling infrastructure, there were many concerns raised among young people in our responses that one major barrier to cycling was the lack of natural surveillance and feelings of safety. We need to ensure we are creating an equitable transport system, with all users in mind and avoid an unconscious bias. Perceptions of safety have been factored in when selecting routes, especially if they are off road or through rural areas, by providing alternatives where possible (for example route 10 as an alternative to route 14) and considered the need for lighting in the hierarchy of interventions set out in Chapter 10. The potential for trip-chaining has been identified in Appendix B ‘onwards connections’. Furthermore, the Plan states LTN1/20 will enable the delivery of inclusive infrastructure.</p>
<p><i>Integration with other plans and transport modes</i></p>	
<p>The Plan must note secured funding and funding mechanisms for the LCWIP routes, the progress to date, clarify</p>	<p>The Plan has now included information about funding. This includes that funding will come from a variety of sources. Some sources are known for example, Future High Streets Fund for Station to Vivary Link and S106 and ATF3 for Killams Link. The Plan, alongside the LCWIP will, however, inform bids to the Government and other</p>

the distinction with CoGC and the Unitary impact.	competitive funds including in relation to the forthcoming ATF4. All potential funding options will be considered as opportunities allow.
The Plan must align with the LCWIP network plan.	The Plan has now included a combined map of the proposed CoGC network map of walking and cycling routes and the adopted LCWIP routes (Chapter 8) and had already set out the difference between the projects in Chapter 4.
The Plan needs to be consistent with the LCWIP guidance such as considering prioritisation earlier in the Plan.	In terms of consideration for route prioritisation, CoGC Plan has followed the LCWIP structure in that it is considered towards the end of the document. However, Chapter 6 now includes an element of prioritisation by identifying the highest priority destinations and connections for each garden community.
How can CoGC fit within the Local Transport Plan?	The CoGC Plan in Chapter 10 'Delivery' sets out how the Local Transport Plan will bring together sustainable transport as a whole and how the CoGC Plan will be incorporated alongside the LCWIP.
Consider conflicting priorities for corridor space such as the BSIP priority measures and EV Charging Strategy	The Final CoGC Plan explains at a high level that there are conflicting priorities for corridor space and that appropriate consideration will need to be given to these through the design process. These may include the Bus Service Improvement Plan corridor routes and other sustainable travel projects around Taunton. The Local Transport Plan, set out in Chapter 10, will set out a comprehensive plan to bring these priorities together recognising one mode cannot be viewed in isolation. Where conflict may arise, this has been raised in Appendix B where comments were previously absent.
Include public transport plans alongside walking and cycling plans.	The CoGC Plan recognises the aging demographic within Taunton in Chapter 10. The Local Transport Plan will bring together plans for other projects such as the Bus Service Improvement Plan, which will offer other sustainable transport options.
The active travel expansion needs to ensure the inclusion of mobility hubs including hire for bikes, e-bikes and e-scooters.	The Local Transport Plan to be prepared by the new unitary Council, set out in Chapter 10, will bring together a plan for multiple sustainable transport modes considering the recognition that active travel cannot be viewed in isolation to sustainable transport. The Council is also working to provide safe and secure cycle parking, which may work in conjunction with the key destinations identified in the CoGC Plan. Furthermore, Somerset West and Taunton and Somerset County Council are working together to review opportunities for mobility hubs around Taunton. This may potentially include different transport modes such as bike/e-bike and e-scooter hire facilities. This will enable people to make multi-modal journeys should it not be possible for them to make a trip solely by walking and cycling. See Chapter 10 in CoGC Plan for further details.
Scope of the document	
Consider impact on highway capacity.	Chapter 7 now refers to the need for considerations on highway capacity as an aspect of future work. Chapter 10 sets out the role of developers in this future work and how it could be secured.
Consider other constraints and opportunities.	Appendix B 'Route Summaries' sets out the constraints and opportunities associated with each route. Further points raised in the consultation have been incorporated into these summaries. In addition, further constraints and opportunities may arise as route design evolves and these will need to be responded to.
Align signal improvement schemes with project.	There may be opportunities for alignment with signal improvement schemes which need to be understood. Relevant engagement will take place where appropriate. These opportunities have been stated in Appendix B where comments were previously absent.
Route 11 clarification and alternatives.	Climate Positive Planning states " <i>The policy [SS2 of the Core Strategy] includes a requirement to deliver a new highway link between Bossington Drive and Lyngford Lane/Cheddon Road. In line with the Climate Emergency, the expectation will be that this connection has filtered permeability for active travel modes, and potentially public transport only</i> ". The Plan now includes reference to this policy in Chapter 5. The exact routing of this connection is not

	dealt with in detail by the Plan as this is to be determined in relation to the live planning application. However, the exact routing should ensure that it meets with the objectives of the route, LTN1/20 and be coherent, direct, safe, comfortable and attractive.
Provide an estimate or range of the future demand for walking and cycling in relation to the Garden Communities in Chapter 6.	The Plan is currently about setting out a vision for walking and cycling connections to the planned Garden Communities around Taunton. Therefore, detailed flow modelling will be considered as designs evolve. However, Chapter 6 now includes text regarding likely demand for access to the prioritised destinations, for each garden community, based on the consultation responses stating schools and employment as the top two priority destinations. Chapter 9 also considers the prioritisation of routes to establish a priority order through a 'matrix' style scoring system based on the consultation responses.
CoGC should genuinely prioritise sustainable modes over the car.	Chapter 10 of the CoGC Plan sets out 'retaining and creating constraints' which sets out the approach for prioritising sustainable transport modes over the private car. Constraints to the convenience and speed of travelling by car are crucial towards pushing people to seek alternative, faster and more sustainable modal choices. This includes restricting capacity and road space alongside investment in sustainable transport modes. Chapter 10 also sets out the 'vision and validate' approach in which this project follows and expects from applicants whereby a vision is set out in terms of future demand and designing it to make it happen. This section alongside the policy context, refers to the changing approach to travel, mobility and attitudes alongside material changes to the aspirations SWT to meet the climate emergency and net zero carbon goals.
Infrastructure needed may be different for different parts of network and needs to be appropriate and proportionate	The Plan currently states in Chapter 2 that the types of infrastructure may be different for different parts of the network. The infrastructure also depends on the opportunities, constraints, and types of users the route needs to accommodate. Chapter 10 now includes a hierarchy of different types of cycling infrastructure, which establishes a scale of appropriate infrastructure types.
Consider co-benefits such as access to green spaces and nature.	The Plan recognises open space as a key destination to connect walking and cycling infrastructure and the consultation identified that access to open space is a priority to people. The Plan has now also included local policy context from the GI Opportunities Update (2017) , which states the wider co-benefits to mental and physical health and connection with nature by facilitating better access to green space and the natural environment. Such opportunities are noted in Appendix B where relevant and previously absent.
The Plan needs to encourage a number of design considerations.	Detailed design will need to consider the local context such as potential heritage, biodiversity, flood risk and landscape constraints and opportunities and respond accordingly. This has been identified for each route where relevant in Appendix B.
<i>Developer contributions and weight of document</i>	
CoGC Plan should not rely on S106 contributions alone.	Due to the comprehensive nature of the strategy it will not, and cannot, rely on S106 contributions alone. Viability of development proposals is an important consideration, and this has been further set out in Chapter 10 of CoGC Plan. The delivery of these routes will be reliant on securing funding from multiple sources such as CIL, S106 and other external funding.
Document needs to explain the weight and relevance it will be given in decision-making.	Chapter 10 sets out what weight and relevance the Plan will be given for decision-making purposes in relation to the Development Plan. It also sets out how the Plan should be used by applicants.
<i>Further concerns of the project</i>	
The decrease in road space (as a result of cycling infrastructure) will	We received a number of comments stating concerns for the removal of road space for walking and cycling infrastructure in Taunton with the proposed garden communities likely to bring increased car use. However, the Plan follows a 'vision and validate' approach whereby

<p>impact those who need to use a car.</p>	<p>providing greater active travel infrastructure as well as other sustainable transport initiatives at the expense of road space will encourage people out of their cars for journeys they can make on foot or by bike due to increased congestion. This will free up road space for those who really need to make journeys by car. This approach has been set out within the CoGC Plan in Chapter 10.</p>
<p>The canal path will be damaged if cycle paths are implemented.</p>	<p>Several concerns were raised about the need to consider potential heritage, biodiversity, flood risk and landscape impacts and opportunities, particularly in relation to the canal path. The Plan recognises the constraints of the canal path and conflicting user interests, and that developments must therefore avoid over-reliance upon it. However, it is an NCN route and is well-used. As such the route is included (with caveats) but necessary alternatives are identified to reduce such reliance. Furthermore, a sustainable and appropriate balance needs to be found between the constraints and opportunities, such as the connection to green spaces and access to heritage. Appropriate mitigations for associated impacts, such as environmental and biodiversity impacts, will be put in place for paths along watercourses. These include permeable surfaces, appropriate and considerate lighting and sensitive designs and materials. The final plan includes explicit wording to explain the need to consider wider constraints and opportunities associated with routes as they progress through the design stages and potential impacts and opportunities have been added to Appendix B where previously absent.</p>

Importantly, we understand the need to integrate the active travel namely walking and cycling plans with other modes of sustainable transport and other cycling facilities, which has been voiced in a number of comments. Somerset County Council is developing a Local Transport Plan, which will include reference to all sustainable transport Strategies, offering a holistic approach.

In addition to the changes referred to above, made directly in response to comments received during the consultation, the following changes were also made:

- Updates to all text from referring to pre-draft plan consultation to post-draft plan consultation, ensuring consistency with the Final Plan.
- Inclusion of Manual for Streets within the policy context and updating 'The Second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy' policy in Chapter 2.
- Recognition for increasing use of e-bikes and distances travelled in Chapter 4.
- Inclusion a summary of the key stakeholders and draft plan consultation in Chapter 4, setting out the various workshops and meetings conducted.
- Inclusion of plans identifying existing cycle infrastructure nearby each Garden Community in Chapter 5.
- Updated Monkton Heathfield 2 in relation to the deferred application decision.
- Updated details with regards to planning decisions and the Draft Masterplan for Firepool.
- Inclusion of the key outcomes of the draft plan consultation in Chapter 7, which summaries the 'you said, we did' comments raised.
- Finalised matrix approach to prioritisation included in Chapter 9, based on the draft plan consultation responses.