

North Somerset Council  
**Local Development Framework**

**Weston Town Centre  
Area Action Plan  
Preferred Options**

**Consultation Statement**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION.**

North Somerset Council is producing an Area Action Plan for Weston Town Centre, as identified in the Local Development Scheme as part of the Local Development Framework.

The Preferred Options document went out to public consultation in July – September 2009 and the details and findings of the consultation process are set out in this report.

## **2. CONSULTATION OBJECTIVES.**

The Weston Town Centre Preferred Options stage is the second step in the production of the Area Action Plan. It is not a formal consultation stage, but sets out the council's preferred options for development and regeneration, and outlines alternative options and explains why they have been discounted. It sets out more detail for each of the key development sites identified and establishes the preferred policy approach for development in the town centre.

The consultation objectives were:

- To identify a specific mix and quantum of development for each site within the town centre, seafront and gateway area and to get feed back from stakeholders on the commercial viability and feasibility of the proposed uses.
- To widely communicate and reinforce the key messages relating to the regeneration of the town centre, in terms of the current issues facing the town, the facts and figures about Weston and to put forward a long term Vision for Weston-super-Mare town centre.
- To give stakeholders and interested parties the opportunity to fully engage in the consultation.
- To seek and obtain responses to the changes in the Preferred Options document that resulted from the Issues and Options consultation.
- To seek public opinion on the policy approach for the town centre and the preferred options identified for each site.

## **3. CHANGES FROM ISSUES AND OPTIONS TO PREFERRED OPTIONS:**

The Preferred Options document builds on the consultation undertaken at the Issues and Options stage in October 2007. As a result of comments received at the Issues and Options stage a number of changes were made and incorporated into the Preferred Options document. These were as follows:

1. The number of the sites identified as development opportunities/areas for improvement have been reduced from 19 as identified in the Issues and Options document to 15 in the Preferred Options document. The sites that were removed as priority development sites were Hutton Moor leisure centre, the retail parks area, Town Square, and the Sovereign Centre. These sites were discounted as, although they may undergo some improvements over the plan period, large-scale redevelopment or significant change on these sites was unlikely to occur.

2. The objectives were revised to include a reference to retaining Weston's historic identity in Objective 5, Objective 8 has been altered to remove the text regarding the provision of facilities for coach tour operators and Objective 9 has been added following advice from the Environment Agency.

3. A comment that was re-occurring from the Issues and Options consultation was that there wasn't enough detail on housing provision in the town centre. The preferred options document therefore, contains a detailed policy for housing and contains specific numbers for the amount of residential development contained on each site, and the overall amount of housing provision expected in the town centre over the plan period.

4. Car parking and the potential loss of car parks through the redevelopment of sites was raised as a concern. The Preferred Options document contains a car parking policy which states that developments containing retail and leisure uses within the town centre will include a net increase in the amount of short stay shoppers parking to replace existing provision. This safeguards against a loss in short stay shoppers car parking within Weston town centre.

5. Concerns were raised over a potential tension between the need for mixed use development including residential uses in the town centre in order to deliver viable redevelopment schemes, and the employment-led strategy for Weston-super-Mare. However, the Preferred Option for each site includes either an employment allocation or employment generating uses. Equally the Core Strategy policy for Weston-super-Mare requires that large sites proposed for residential development must either provide on-site employment opportunities or, where this is not appropriate, provide off-site contributions. The jobs to home ratio for the AAP area will be monitored throughout the plan period to ensure that the imbalance is not exacerbated through the town's regeneration strategy, taking into account policies and proposals elsewhere in the Weston urban area.

6. A number of respondents commented that there needs to be more recognition of the historic environment in the document, and the contribution it can make to the regeneration process. In response to this the Preferred Options document contains Policy CHE1: Conservation and the Historic Environment which outlines the town's historical background, the potential of regeneration through conservation, and provides safeguards to protect the historic environment of the town.

#### **4. METHODOLOGY.**

- The draft Preferred Options document was approved by North Somerset Council Executive for consultation purposes on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2009.
- The consultation period ran from 13<sup>th</sup> July 2009 until 4<sup>th</sup> September 2009. During this period staffed exhibitions were held at the following locations:
  - **Winter Gardens, Weston-super-Mare**  
20<sup>th</sup> July 2009, 12-7pm
  - **The Campus, Locking Castle, Weston-super-Mare**  
29<sup>th</sup> July 2009, 1-8pm
  - **The Winter Gardens, Weston-Super-Mare**  
4<sup>th</sup> August 2009, 12-7pm
  - **Town Hall, Weston-super-Mare**  
13<sup>th</sup> August 2009 9am-5pm

The Exhibition was also displayed in:

- **Sovereign Shopping Centre, Weston-super-Mare**  
Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2009
  - **Town Hall**  
13<sup>th</sup> August until 5pm on 28<sup>th</sup> August.
- Verbal comments which were received at the exhibitions have been documented and are set out in Appendix 2.
  - 500 copies of the Town Centre Area Action Plan Preferred Options document were produced. These were distributed to specific consultation bodies, local members and local libraries. Copies were available from Weston-super-Mare Town Hall reception where comment forms were also available for people to submit comments.
  - The document was available to download from North Somerset website. E-consult was also available giving people the option to submit their comments to the document online.
  - Copies of the document were also made available in large print, Braille or audio format on request.
  - 500 Leaflets summarising the document were also produced and distributed during the exhibitions and made available in the Town Hall reception and local libraries.
  - The Weston Town Centre Landowners Group, which was established in March 2007, has been consulted with throughout the AAP production process and were invited to comment on the AAP Preferred Options Document prior to it going to the Councils Executive. This was to get initial feed back from the group whilst the document was still at a draft stage so any issues could be addressed before the document was finalised for consultation.

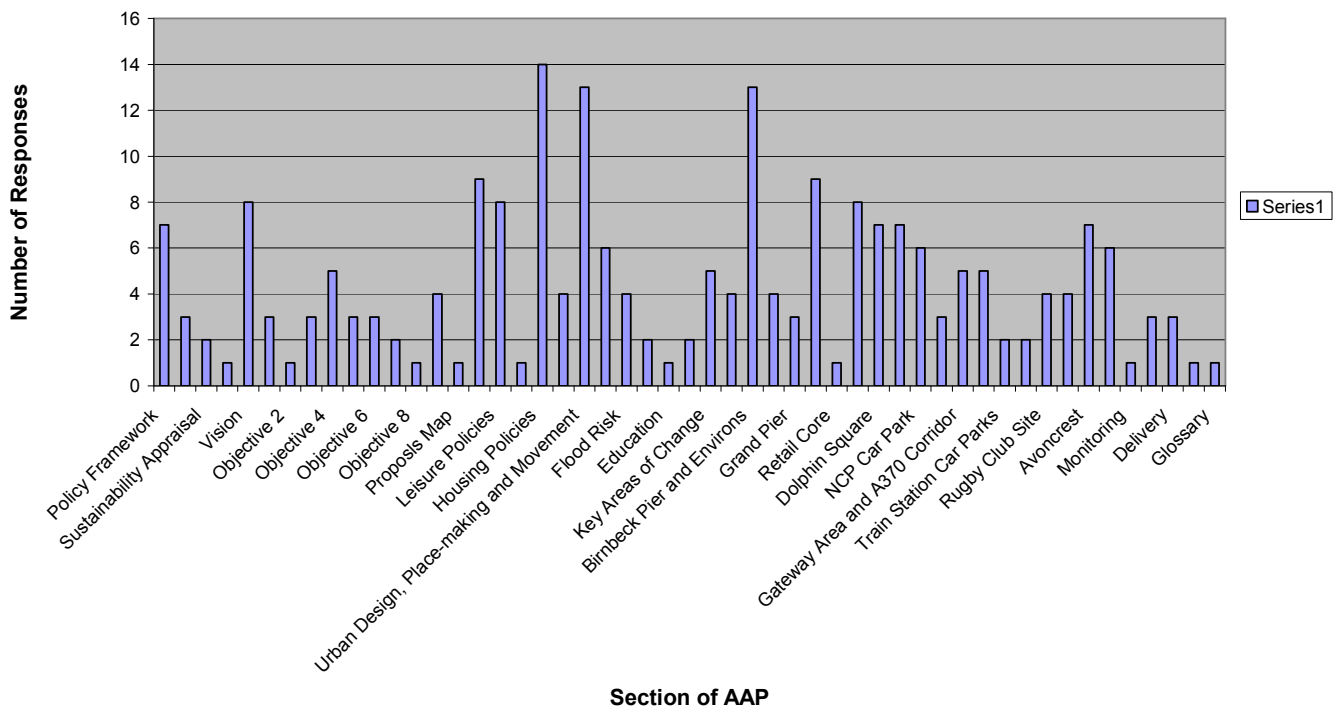
## 5. RESPONSE LEVELS.

North Somerset Council received 44 responses to the consultation equalling 225 representations. Of these 41 people responded by e-mail/post and 3 people responded using the online consultation system.

All the comments which have been made on the document as part of the Preferred Options consultation can be viewed via the Council’s online consultation system at [www.consult-ldf.n-somerset.gov.uk](http://www.consult-ldf.n-somerset.gov.uk). In addition, a schedule of individual comments with an officers response to each comment is available on the [Weston Town Centre Area Action Plan](#) page of the Council’s website.

The chart below shows the number of comments that were received in relation to each section of the document.

**Number of responses received for each section of the Area Action Plan.**



## **6. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES RAISED.**

- Concern over impact of any development in Weston-super-Mare on congestion at Junction 21 of the M5 and the strategic road network.
- AAP needs to be more detailed in relation to assessing flood risk of the proposed development sites and outlining the sequential and exceptions tests for sites and the flood mitigation measures that may be necessary. Also there should be more promotion of sustainable urban drainage systems within the document.
- Concerns over feasibility and deliverability of options presented in the plan.
- A number of comments requested a new bus station and/or a transport interchange facility near the train station.
- General support for increasing and improving the retail offer in the town centre, although some concerns about the deliverability of retail on identified sites as they are not located directly on the main High Street and therefore may not be attractive to commercial operators.
- Concern that a two tier approach to residential development is emerging in Weston-super-Mare where sites in the town centre are treated differently to sites elsewhere in the town in relation to the employment-led strategy.
- A number of comments were received about the level of affordable housing required and the fact that it would need to be viability tested.
- Proposals in the AAP need to make sure there are in accordance with, and complement, the proposed urban extension at Weston-super-Mare, particularly in terms of the provision of office space given the current insufficient level of demand for office space in Weston.
- Could be more detail on Green Infrastructure including a specific policy for Green Infrastructure.
- A number of comments were received about the Tropicana site. There was concern that the scheme was undeliverable as nothing has happened on the site since planning permission was granted in October 2008. A number of comments received suggested that the uses proposed for the Tropicana site would be better suited on the Dolphin Square site. Concern about the amount of retail proposed and the impact this will have on the town centre.
- Residents of Hildesheim Court above Tesco expressed concern about the future of their properties if the Tesco site were to be redeveloped.
- A number of comments objecting to Policy DC1 which requires developer contributions from schemes that have an indirect impact on the town centre, as some respondents thought this was contrary to government advice in Circular 05/05.

## **7. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS**

The comments received in response to the Weston Town Centre Area Action Plan Preferred Options consultation were generally supportive of the Vision and Objectives set out in the document and the overall town centre regeneration strategy.

The Council will carefully consider all comments received and, where appropriate, seek to resolve any issues or objections that have arisen. The Area Action Plan will then be amended and formally consulted on through a Publication Document in Summer 2010. This will be a formal consultation stage where representations relating to the “soundness”<sup>1</sup> of the document can be made. Following this the Area Action Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State.

All representations received will be considered at an independent examination to be conducted by a Planning Inspector. The Inspector will test the “soundness” of the plan and the Inspectors report will be binding on the Council.

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

**Appendix 1:**  
**Consultation / Engagement Record (2007 onwards)**

Date	General topic area	With whom	Nature of Event	Outcomes
<b>Issues and Options Consultation and Engagement 2007 – 2008:</b>				
20.03.07 24.04.07 05.06.07 24.07.07 09.11.07	Weston Town Centre		Town Centre Landowners Meetings	Ongoing discussions regarding the regeneration of Weston Town Centre to feed into the AAP process.
12.06.07	Tourism in Weston	Meeting with Destination Management	Preliminary Discussions re: Tourism Data	Discuss tourism evidence base and joint working in terms of Weston branding/vision
21.06.07	Car Parking in Weston	Meeting with Transport Officers	Discussions over car parking situation in the town centre and DPE and CPZ plans.	Data Sharing.
02.08.07 - 16.08.07	Weston Town Centre AAP	Internal Consultation	Internal Consultation	To address issues concerns of other sections/departments within NSC on this document.
05.10.07	Weston Town Centre AAP	Avon and Somerset Constabulary	Meeting	To discuss the future needs of the police within the plan period
25.10.07	Core Strategy & Weston AAP	Demist – Internal information sharing forum.	Presentation to NSC officers	Information Sharing.
6.11.07	Core Strategy & Weston AAP	Federation of Small Business	Presentation	Contacts established – will encourage feedback & continual engagement.
28.11.07	Core Strategy & Weston AAPs	Bristol Fire Authority	Meeting with fire officers to discuss future development proposals, implications for the service.	Fire service to be kept up to date and invited to comment on emerging proposals.
23.11.07 & 05.02.08	Weston Town Centre AAP and Regeneration Area	Children’s and Young Peoples Services	Meeting to discuss future education requirements during the plan period.	Initial requirements discussed – discussions will be ongoing.
22.01.07	Weston Town	Local Ward	Regular meeting to keep local	Will meet regularly as the plan

<b>Date</b>	<b>General topic area</b>	<b>With whom</b>	<b>Nature of Event</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
	<b>Centre Members Steering Group</b>	<b>Members and relevant portfolio holders.</b>	<b>members informed and involved in the production of the plan.</b>	<b>progresses.</b>
<b>11.02.08</b>	<b>Weston Town Centre AAP and Regeneration Area</b>	<b>Primary Care Trust</b>	<b>Meeting to discuss future health care requirements during the plan period.</b>	<b>Initial requirements discussed – discussions will be ongoing.</b>
<b>15.02.08</b>	<b>Weston Town Centre AAP and Regeneration Area</b>	<b>Leisure and Open Spaces Team</b>	<b>Meeting to discuss future leisure requirements during the plan period.</b>	<b>Initial requirements discussed – discussions will be ongoing.</b>
<b>Preferred Options Consultation and Engagement 2008 – 2009:</b>				
<b>19.02.08</b>	<b>Dolphin Square</b>	<b>Leaseholders</b>	<b>To discuss proposals for the redevelopment of the site.</b>	<b>To continue regular meetings.</b>
<b>26.02.08</b>	<b>Weston Town Centre Members Steering Group</b>	<b>Local Ward Members and relevant portfolio holders.</b>	<b>Regular meeting to keep local members informed and involved in the production of the plan.</b>	<b>Will meet regularly as the plan progresses</b>
<b>29.02.08</b>	<b>Sunnyside Road North.</b>	<b>Landowner</b>	<b>Meeting to discuss the future of the site.</b>	<b>Discussions ongoing.</b>
<b>06.03.08</b>	<b>Weston Town Centre</b>	<b>Town Centre Landowners.</b>	<b>Town Centre Landowners Meetings.</b>	<b>Ongoing discussions regarding the regeneration of Weston Town Centre to feed into the AAP process.</b>
<b>12.03.08</b>	<b>Provision of Police facilities in Weston Town Centre</b>	<b>Avon and Somerset Constabulary.</b>	<b>Meeting.</b>	<b>To continue involvement with the police in the plan making process to ensure there needs are met in the plan.</b>
<b>18.03.08</b>	<b>Victoria Square</b>	<b>Landowners and their agent.</b>	<b>To discuss the future development of the site.</b>	<b>To form a consortium of landowners in order to progress the development of the site.</b>
<b>20.03.08</b>	<b>Tesco</b>	<b>Landowners</b>	<b>To discuss the future development of the site.</b>	<b>To continue regular meetings.</b>
<b>25.03.08</b>	<b>Gas Works Site</b>	<b>Landowners and their agent.</b>	<b>To discuss decommissioning of the gas cylinders and future development of the site.</b>	<b>For landowners to investigate possible decommissioning options, and assess the viability of the future development of the site based on the AAP Preferred Option.</b>

<b>Date</b>	<b>General topic area</b>	<b>With whom</b>	<b>Nature of Event</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
01.04.08	Tourism Issues	Destination Management Team	To discuss the co-ordination of their tourism objectives with policies/proposals in the AAP.	Continued discussion and consultation on the AAP.
05.06.08	Rugby Club	NSC Leisure and agent for the Rugby Club	To discuss the future of the Rugby Club site, and its relationship to Drove Road playing fields.	Agreed to just identify the Rugby Club for redevelopment in the AAP and retain Drove Road playing fields as public open space.
25.07.08 - 01.01.09	Gateway Area	Cdn Planning	Commission of Weston Town Centre Gateway Master Plan.	For consultants to complete a piece of detailed site specific master planning work for the gateway area of the town centre.
09.10.08	Gateway Area	Cdn Planning, NSC and Stakeholders	Workshop	To amend plans according to discussions from at workshop.
13.10.08	Weston Town Centre	Town Centre Landowners.	Town Centre Landowners Meetings.	Ongoing discussions regarding the regeneration of Weston Town Centre to feed into the AAP process.
14.09.08	Weston Town Centre Members Steering Group	Local Ward Members and relevant portfolio holders.	Regular meeting to keep local members informed and involved in the production of the plan.	To continue regular meetings.
16.10.08	Birnbeck Island and Environs	Relevant landowners and NSC officers	Meeting to discuss the future development of Birnbeck Island and the surrounding area to achieve a comprehensive approach to the development of this part of the town.	To continue discussion and agree guiding development principles for this area.
18.02.09	Weston Town Centre Regeneration.	Executive Members and NSC officers	Workshop	To increase co-ordination of projects to ensure a joined-up approach to town centre regeneration. Keeping Executive Members informed.
28.04.09	Weston Town Centre	Town Centre Landowners.	Town Centre Landowners Meetings.	Ongoing discussions regarding the regeneration of Weston Town Centre to feed into the AAP process.
15.05.09	Weston Town Centre	Weston Town Council – Chair and	Meeting	Agreed to give a presentation about the AAP at a town council meeting.

<b>Date</b>	<b>General topic area</b>	<b>With whom</b>	<b>Nature of Event</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
		<b>Secretary.</b>		
<b>01.06.09</b>	<b>Weston Town Centre</b>	<b>Weston Town Council</b>	<b>Presentation</b>	<b>Information sharing.</b>
<b>01.07.09</b>	<b>Weston Town Centre</b>	<b>Senior Citizens Forum</b>	<b>Presentation.</b>	<b>Information sharing.</b>

## **APPENDIX 2:**

### **VERBAL COMMENTS RECEIVED AT STAFFED EXHIBITIONS.**

#### **The Winter Gardens, Weston-super-Mare Monday 20 July 2009, Staffed 12-7pm**

Comments received were:

- The swimming pool should be located on Dolphin Square site, rather than on Tropicana, and the Tropicana site should be used for a bar/restaurant.
- The extension of the land train to the north of the seafront should be investigated.
- More public toilets are needed in the town, particularly at the northern end of the seafront between Birnbeck and the Winter Gardens as all the toilets have now been shut.
- There is only one route in and out of Weston to the seafront and this is too congested. Need more routes into the town.
- Residents of Hildesheim Court were very worried about the future of their properties above the Tesco store if this site were to be redeveloped.
- There should be a main transport interchange next to the train station so it is easy to catch a bus straight from the train and visa versa.

#### **The Campus, Weston-super-Mare Wednesday 29 July 2009. Staffed 1 – 8pm**

Comments received were:

- 2,000 new dwellings in the town centre are very ambitious.
- Why is there no mention of a bus station? Bus transport is an important issue and the current bus pick up points are not convenient.
- The train station car park site should come forward earlier than 2016 – 2026.
- Good idea to relocated Weston Rugby Club as they need improved facilities.
- Locking Road car park is needed as a car park and for coach and lorry parking. This facility should not be given up easily.
- Dolphin Square should be relocated for executive apartments.
- Parking is a problem in Locking Road.
- Need to create more office jobs in the town centre, not just jobs in retail.
- Need to find a temporary use for Tropicana and its art deco frontage must be retained/conserved.
- Where will the Old Town Clock be relocated due to the Pier Square works. Discussion about various possible sites.

#### **The Winter Gardens, Weston-super-Mare Tuesday 4 August 2009. Staffed 12 – 7pm**

Comments received were:

- The new seats on the seafront don't face the sea.

- There are no bus stops between the Technical Collage and Pier Square and the road has been narrowed in front of Victoria Square.
- Would like to have covered walkways along with new development to encourage walking and a better experience.
- There need to be bus stops in both directions outside Tesco and Weston College.
- Bus stops should have real time displays.
- There should be bus stops in front of the Winter Gardens.
- Traffic wardens are needed in the town centre.
- Car parks are currently too expensive. This results in on-street car parking around the town and this prevents people with disabled badges from parking.
- Surprised at the amount of additional retail needed in the town over the plan period.
- Car parking is essential in the town centre.
- Cycle ways from Locking Castle into town don't feel safe after dark. They also need to be signed.
- Need landscaping of new developments using trees to soften the urban landscape.
- Alexandra Parade is currently quite nice so it doesn't necessarily need improving.
- Weston's plans should reflect its rectangular and linear shapes that are commonly found around the town.
- Will the sea defences really work?
- More open areas are needed. The back streets don't feel safe. If a piazza is being created at Pier Square, then the same should be considered for Alexandra Parade. Need a space to develop a café culture here and currently the traffic is intimidating so this needs to be removed and pedestrianised. Try to create a "critical mass" destination linked to Big Lamp Corner.
- The town centre needs to be more inviting for families in the early evenings including easy parking and good restaurants.
- The seafront is a key opportunity to capitalise on.
- Need another swimming pool as Hutton Moor is often inaccessible due to competitions held there.
- Page 80 of the AAP is very confusing. The map doesn't show the full extent of the proposed Tropicana development including the potential loss of beach lawns.

**Town Hall, Weston-super-Mare**  
**Thursday 13 August 2009. Staffed 9am – 5pm**

Comments received were:

- Keep the south of the seafront residential in character.
- Need to improve the quality of retailing.
- Accommodation offer is poor.
- Primary Care Trust – discussed changing demographics and implications for health care.
- The proposals map doesn't show the current outline planning permission for Tropicana.
- Cycle paths are not wide enough to allow disability vehicles and the bollards at the end mean disability vehicles cannot get through.
- The plan is boring – extremely disappointed.
- There should be a Park and Ride and no parking in the town centre.
- The site opposite Weston Football Club should be developed.
- Concern over loss of market stall at Dolphin Square. They could be relocated to Victoria Square. Norwich City Council have created a Market Square in their town centre.
- Weston needs a water feature.
- Knightstone Island is well designed but not well street cleaned – too far for the street cleaner to walk.

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

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

**Please contact 01934 426 177**



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