



2022 - 2038

SUBMISSION DRAFT

SUMMER 2022

Together with its associated documentation this Neighbourhood Plan is to be used for its intended purpose only.

Related information and the Neighbourhood Plan evidence base can be found at:

www.portishead.gov.uk

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Special thanks to Bailey's Balloons for aerial photography.

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place

www.placestudio.com

Place Studio is a community planning and design consultancy which seeks to enable local communities to harness their local knowledge and objectives to produce sound and robust planning and design documents.

Thank you to Celia Dring, our North Somerset Council Link Officer, who has provided valuable support throughout the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan.

FOREWORD

Portishead is a vibrant community of 27,000 people which has experienced a 60 percent population growth over the last 20 years. It has a relatively young population and a strong community ethic. We believe that Portishead deserves a Neighbourhood Plan that supports a sustainable, prosperous and healthy future for our children and grandchildren.

The Portishead Neighbourhood Plan was prepared on behalf of the residents of Portishead by a Steering Group and working groups made up of local community volunteers and Portishead Town Council. We are very grateful for the work of community volunteers who have brought a range of knowledge about Portishead and expertise to help create this Plan. We would also like to thank the hundreds of people who have responded to Neighbourhood Plan surveys or provided input in other ways.

Our approach has been to develop a Plan for the people of Portishead, by the people of Portishead.

The membership of the Steering Group has changed a number of times since its formation. However, the following people have at some time played an active role on the committee:

Patricia Sterndale, Paul Gardner, Robert Bull, Nigel Chapman, Patrick Heaton-Armstrong, Rachel Nash, Tanya Slatter, Nicola Holland, Paul Davis, Ben Aldridge, Polly Shepperdson, Paul Thurston, Lin Sargent and Sarah Jackson.

CONTENTS

PART ONE	7	What is a Neighbourhood Plan?	PART TWO	21	Planning Policies
	9	Why Prepare a Neighbourhood Plan?		22	Introduction to this Section
	10	How has the Neighbourhood Plan been prepared, and how does it represent community views?		24	List of Planning Policies
	11	Where are we in the process?			Environment
	12	Policy Context			Natural Environment
	13	About Portishead			Sustainable Design, Character and Heritage
	14	A Brief History of Portishead		69	Wellbeing
	16	Overarching Issues for the Neighbourhood Plan			Community Facilities and Infrastructure
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Climate Crisis and Portishead• Pre-application Community Involvement			Housing
	18	Vision		99	Prosperity
19	Objectives		Economy		
			Transport		
		126	Area Based Policies and Community Actions		
			Priorities for the Wyndham Way Development Area		
			Priorities for Portishead Town Centre		

HOW TO READ THIS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

1.1 The Neighbourhood Plan should be read as a whole, but we have colour coded each section with the aim of making it easier to follow.

1.2 Part One introduces the Neighbourhood Plan and 'sets the scene' for why it has been produced and what it will achieve. This part includes the draft vision and objectives of the Plan, setting out how we can harness the town's assets and opportunities in order to 'Create a Modern Sustainable Town of the Future'.

1.3 Part Two covers different theme and topic areas, setting out local level planning policies and practical community actions. This part is structured around the three themes of Environment, Wellbeing and Prosperity. These themes are the three that support Portishead Town Council's strategy to 'Create a Modern Sustainable Town of the Future'.



**PORTISHEAD
NEIGHBOURHOOD
PLAN**

**PART ONE
INTRODUCTION**

1. INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?

1.4 How can the local community have a say in the future of Portishead? We face many challenges, as we emerge from the pandemic and look ahead to a future shaped by climate change. We need to protect our valued and loved environment and heritage whilst balancing the local need for jobs, housing, community facilities and other infrastructure that contributes to making Portishead a great place to live.

1.5 This document is the Portishead Neighbourhood Development Plan ('NDP', 'Neighbourhood Plan' or 'Plan'), and it is one of the tools we have to shape the future of the town. It builds on the views of the community and on research undertaken by local volunteers, and presents a vision for Portishead, looking ahead to 2038.

1.6 This Neighbourhood Plan is an opportunity for local people to have more control over the future of the town.

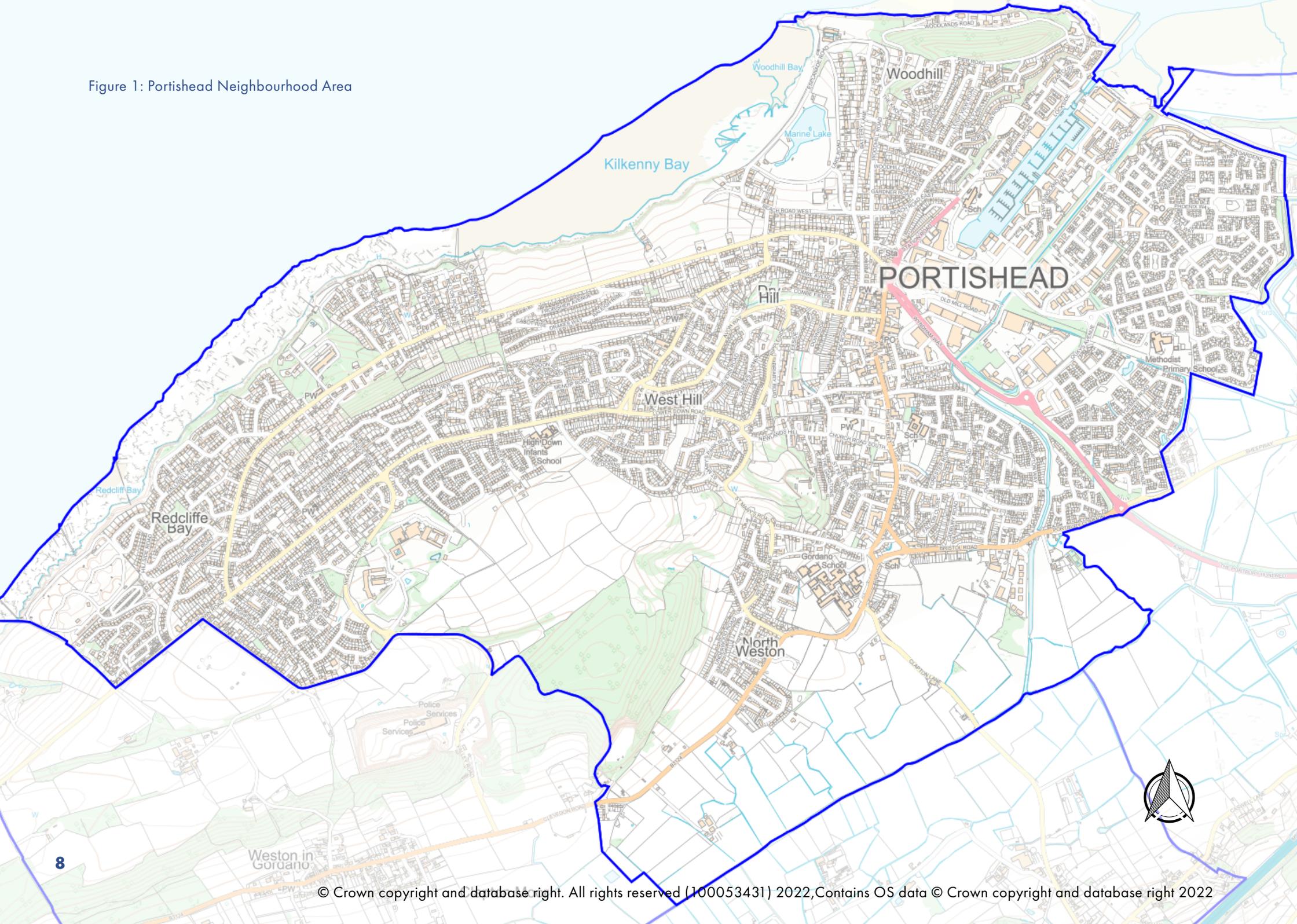
1.7 Neighbourhood Plans work alongside existing legislation and policy by providing developers and assessors with criteria that must be met, and detail on what the local community has told us they want and expect from development in their area to guide and inform future change in Portishead.

1.8 Once formally in place, the Portishead Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the statutory local development plan, and will be used to inform decisions on planning applications within Portishead.

1.9 The Neighbourhood Area that this document relates to is shown on Figure 1. The boundary for the Neighbourhood Area follows the Portishead Town Council administrative boundary.



Figure 1: Portishead Neighbourhood Area



WHY PREPARE A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FOR PORTISHEAD?

1.10 In 2011, the [Localism Act](#)¹ gave communities the power to produce their own Neighbourhood Plan, and develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood Plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan ([National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\), 2021](#))².

1.11 Before 2011 it was only local authorities who could produce planning documents, so Neighbourhood Plans are a significant opportunity which communities can choose to take up.

1.12 Once it has passed through a number of required stages, the Portishead NDP will become part of the Development Plan for North Somerset to be used to guide and inform both those proposing development, and those who consider and decide upon planning applications at North Somerset Council.

1.13 The planning system in England is based on legislation, planning policy and guidance. Policies are instructions that inform what development can and can't do. National planning policies are set by the government for the whole of England ([NPPF, 2021](#))² and by Local Planning

Authorities for their local areas (in our case, North Somerset Council). The Neighbourhood Plan gives local people greater ownership of the plans and policies that affect their area.

1.14 Through the Portishead Neighbourhood Plan, we can set out what we expect from any new development and, importantly, what we want protected and what is deficient.



HOW HAS THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN BEEN PREPARED, AND HOW DOES IT REPRESENT COMMUNITY VIEWS?

1.15 The preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan has been led by the Portishead Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The Steering Group is formed of representatives of Portishead Town Council and people from the local community.

1.16 Throughout 2019 and 2020, effort was put into explaining to local communities what the Plan involved, what challenges were facing the area, and how preparation of the Plan would proceed. Initial consultation in December 2019 revealed the key issues for the community. During 2020 and 2021, work moved onto evidence collection on these key issues.

1.17 Throughout the preparation of the Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has used a range of methods to collect the local community's views. The Steering Group has used online consultation portal Commonplace (<https://portisheadplanconsult.commonplace.is/>) to collect a range of local evidence, as well as share progress on plan preparation.

1.18 The Steering Group has also regularly updated the community on progress on the Neighbourhood Plan website (www.portisheadplan.uk).

1.19 Regulation 14 consultation (the first round of formal consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Plan) was held over April - May 2022. This is the submission version of the draft Neighbourhood Plan, which has been updated to reflect comments made by the local community during Regulation 14 consultation.

1.20 A summary of the consultation undertaken throughout the preparation of the Plan is included within the formal Consultation Statement, which is submitted with the Neighbourhood Plan and is available to view at www.portishead.gov.uk.

1.21 The NDP is based on research and evidence. The Local Evidence Base List in [Appendix 1](#) is a summary of the evidence collected and referred to from studies, investigations and the various consultation exercises undertaken. The Evidence Base is available to view at www.portishead.gov.uk.

WHERE ARE WE IN THE PROCESS?

1.22 The NDP must go through a series of required stages to ensure people who live, work and have an interest in Portishead have a say in the Plan. It must also be examined by an independent examiner in order to make sure it is positively prepared and meets prescribed 'basic conditions'.

1.23 If the NDP passes examination, it will be put to a referendum and local people can vote for or against the Plan. If the majority vote in favour of the NDP it will become part of the overall development plan for North Somerset to guide developers, planning officers and councillors when considering planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area.

NP PROCESS



- Defining the NDP area
- Preparing the Plan
- Formal 6 week consultation (Reg.14)
- Make changes and revisions in response to the consultation
- **Submit to North Somerset Council**
(We are here)
- Formal 6 week consultation (Reg.16)
- Examination
- Referendum
- Legal Force

POLICY CONTEXT

1.24 Although the [Localism Act \(2011\)](#)¹ gives communities a way to decide what goes on in their towns, The Portishead Neighbourhood Plan is an opportunity to positively help to shape the future of our town, ensuring that local needs and aspirations are taken into account in future environmental and development projects.

1.25 Legislation and [National Planning Practice Guidance](#) sets out rules, conditions and limitations. Neighbourhood Plans cannot be used to prevent development; they cannot say no to more houses when there is a national and regional shortage of housing.

1.26 As well as being set within the context of the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)\(2021\)](#)², and the latest National Planning Practice Guidance, the Portishead Neighbourhood Plan must also be in 'general conformity' with the strategic planning policies of North Somerset Council (our Local Planning Authority).

1.27 North Somerset Council is currently reviewing its adopted policy framework, to produce an updated Local Plan to

cover the period until 2038. A review is required because the Government requires local planning authorities to revisit their Local Plan every five years and review as necessary. The updated Local Plan for North Somerset will set out an overall strategy to meet housing, employment, leisure and other needs up to 2038, as well as management, conservation and enhancement policies for the built and natural environment.

1.28 The Portishead Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in parallel with the emerging North Somerset Local Plan. To meet requirements set out by National Planning Policy and Guidance, the draft Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to be in general conformity with the current adopted policy framework, which is the Core Strategy. However, as required by National Planning Policy, the Neighbourhood Plan looks ahead over the next 15 years, to anticipate and respond to long term needs. In doing this, it is intended that the Neighbourhood Plan policies are 'future-proofed' and capable of extending beyond the adopted Local Plan period.

1.29 Once the new North Somerset Local Plan is adopted, it is anticipated that this Neighbourhood Plan will be reviewed to fully align it with the new Local Plan policies. This should involve only minor changes such as updating policy references.

ABOUT PORTISHEAD

1.30 Portishead is a vibrant community of c.27,000 people which has experienced around 60% population growth over the last 20 years. It has a relatively young population and a strong community ethic.

1.31 The town is located on the Severn Estuary, about 8 miles to the west of Bristol and 6 miles north east of Clevedon along the coast. The built environment of Portishead is surrounded by locally valued landscape and biodiversity features; Portishead Down and Weston Big Wood, the Gordano Valley, East Wood, Kilkenny Fields and the Golf Course, and the Severn Estuary itself, which is an internationally important wildlife site.

1.32 Portishead town centre is home to a number of successful local businesses, with the High Street catering to a range of retail needs, including specialist stores that draw people to the town from elsewhere.

1.33 Local residents value Portishead's views and spectacular sunsets, but also the Lake Grounds, Eastwood, Battery Point, the varied architecture and shopping. Community spirit abounds and residents and visitors alike enjoy annual events such as the Christmas Victorian event under the

magically lit High Street, the Carnival in June and the Portishead Summer Show in July.

1.34 The Marina area has a rich history as a deep-water dock in the 1800s and then as home to a major coal-fed power station. The power station closed in 1980, and during the early 2000s the area was redeveloped, providing a range of residential and commercial uses, as well as a world-class sailing and leisure craft facility.

1.35 More information on the history of Portishead is available in the Portishead Community Character Statement, which is part of the Neighbourhood Plan's evidence base.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF PORTISHEAD

1.36 Portishead has always been much admired for its scenery and the wide reaching views of the River Severn. Its proximity to Bristol has meant that large swathes of its acreage have been owned by the Bristol Corporation from as early as the 1600s but long before this there is a brief mention of Portishead in the Domesday Book of 1086. At that time, it was part of the Portbury Hundred, with Portbury itself being the largest and most populated as well as the chief town of the Hundred. Portishead was its poor neighbour; there weren't many animals or men to tend them. Most important at that time though was the mill which probably stood near to the site of the White Lion/Old Mill pub in the High Street, itself a tidal mill until 1810. The White Lion/Old Mill stands at what was the head of the old pill (or creek) which meandered in for about half a mile from the River Severn right up to the northern tip of the High Street.

1.37 The early population of Portishead made their homes on the rising ground that had a water supply and was sheltered from most winds on the rectangle of land between Church Road North and Church Road South. Next to the fine St Peter's

Parish Church with its traditional North Somerset tower lies Courthouse Farm which has its origins in the Tudor period and was once the manor house for this part of Portishead.

1.38 An ancient way runs from the settlement at St. Peter's Church, along Slade and Battery Lanes, out to Battery Point just above the most northerly of the Somerset Levels called Rodmoor. This was dug out by the unemployed of Bristol in 1910 to form the Lake Grounds, now considered to be the jewel in Portishead's crown. Previous to this in the mid-1890s, an esplanade had been built along the seashore from Battery Point to Beach Road



West that enclosed the old marshland. Springs can still be seen seeping along the edge of the lake.

1.39 The wide street that became the High Street (formerly known as Mill Street and Duck Street) was once lined with apple and pear orchards. From the 1860s onwards shops were gradually built mostly in Victorian times with some Edwardian additions and an assortment of 20th century builds.

1.40 The topography of Portishead helped to disguise the industry that was coming to the dock area from the mid-19th century. Tourists were also arriving to admire the scenery and views. The old pill was converted into a dock: two railways arrived – the GWR branch line from Temple Meads and the Weston, Clevedon and Portishead Light Railway (access to which was through the archway of the White Lion/Old Mill pub) and a pier was built just along from the Royal Pier Hotel. Industry grew alongside the docks, the first being the Mustad nail factory in 1911. In 1926, construction began on the first of two coal fired power stations. Some local coal produced in the Somerset coalfields was delivered by train, but the main supply

of coal was imported by boat from South Wales. Further factories followed providing jobs for the majority of Portishead residents.

1.41 During the latter part of the 20th century and now in the 21st century, the population of Portishead has grown rapidly. The industry on the dock area and beyond (the Power Stations, Phosphorus plant, and Petroleum industry) has completely disappeared and the huge brown field site has become an area of considerably varied housing. It is hard now to believe that the agricultural and fishing community of 1801 numbered just about 300.

1.42 In the last twenty years the population has grown by 10,000 from 17,000 to 27,000. With traditional local industrial employment opportunities now mostly gone, most local jobs are in the service sector (where the Avon and Somerset Police headquarters is a major local employer), the creative sector and micro-businesses with many people working from home. These employment opportunities do not match the local population growth. Some of the reduction in employment land in Portishead is due to revised government

planning advice which gave preference to residential use over employment use. There have also been site allocations for employment development within the Local Plan which have not been delivered. This has resulted in many people commuting to Portbury and Avonmouth docks, Bristol or further afield to find employment. Portishead has become a commuter town.

1.43 Recent housing development was not accompanied by the necessary level of infrastructure investment, and there is a large infrastructure deficit in Portishead, which is particularly acute in transport as well as community facilities. Development

continues to put a lot of pressure on remaining green spaces and the natural green and blue environment.

1.44 The totemic example of inadequate infrastructure is the planned re-opening of the Bristol to Portishead railway line which has been promised for 25 years or more but still has no firm delivery date. Portishead is famously known as the largest cul-de-sac in Europe, its geography, location and the lack of public transport means that currently, people rely almost exclusively on car transport despite the inadequate road infrastructure into and out of the Town.



OVERARCHING ISSUES FOR THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

THE CLIMATE CRISIS AND PORTISHEAD

1.45 The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019³ (which is an update to the Climate Change Act 2008) commits the UK to a carbon emission reduction target of 100% by 2050 compared with a 1990 baseline. The 2050 commitment necessitates radical changes in how we live and how we plan our settlements to ensure our energy and transport systems are decarbonised.

1.46 In February 2019, North Somerset Council declared a 'climate emergency' in light of evidence that illustrates how urgent it is that action is taken, seeking to make the district of North Somerset carbon neutral by 2030. The since published [North Somerset Climate Emergency Strategic Action Plan](#)⁴ lists a series of actions to contribute towards this aim.

1.47 Like the rest of the world, we also are facing a biodiversity crisis as well as a climate emergency.

1.48 In Portishead, flooding is a major area of concern. The local coastline has one of the largest tidal ranges in the world, sometimes as great as 15m, and Portishead is susceptible to storm surges caused by the coincidence of a high tide and low-pressure

systems from the south-west, the prevailing wind direction. A deep low-pressure system can add 1 to 2m to an expected high tide. Portishead suffered significant storm surge flooding in December 1981 and February 1990. Fortunately recent storm surges have coincided with lower tides. The local rhynes are tidal so rainwater can back up at high tide causing localised flooding in some parts of the town on a regular basis. Climate change is predicted to increase the frequency and severity of this flooding problem.

1.49 Portishead is fortunate to be home to Salt Marshes on part of its coastline. Salt marshes are more effective than rainforests in their ability to store carbon and must be protected for this reason notwithstanding that they also support rare and endangered wildlife.

1.50 We are fortunate to also have ancient woodlands and wetlands within the settlement boundary. Although still viable, many local species, flora and fauna have declined over the last 25 years. It is a priority to protect and sustain these areas for the future, helping them to regenerate naturally through the process known as Rewilding.

1.51 The warming of the climate is evidenced locally by the fact that small leaved lime trees in Weston Big Wood are now flowering and seeding again after an interval of probably thousands of years during which time they have only propagated by growing out of old fallen down trees.

PRE-APPLICATION COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1.52 The importance and benefit of community engagement is widely acknowledged as key to shaping good places to live. Early discussion between planning applicants and the Portishead local community, as well as with Portishead and North Somerset Council, from the earliest stages enables a more collaborative approach to the process of preparing a development proposal that will need to balance many factors as the design evolves.

1.53 Portishead Town Council supports the notion that 'Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot' (NPPF, para. 132). The Portishead Pre-Application Community Engagement Protocol (see Appendix 2) is intended to facilitate a structured approach to enable effective, positive and early involvement of the local community in outline and full planning applications.



VISION & OBJECTIVES

1.54 The draft vision, and related objectives, are based on issues raised during consultation and highlighted through evidence gathering work. They have been refined by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering and Working Groups, and form the basis of the Portishead Neighbourhood Plan.

1.55 The vision is the long term goal describing what we want Portishead to be like at the end of the Neighbourhood Plan period (2038). The objectives set out what needs to be achieved in order to reach our vision.

VISION

Our vision is for a healthy, green, inclusive and prosperous community, met through sustainable change.

Over the Neighbourhood Plan period, Portishead will see sustainable development in line with the underpinning principle of all planning and development.

This means a town with:

- **A protected and enhanced natural green and blue environment, which provides a network and space for local wildlife, biodiversity and people to thrive;**
- **Sustainable growth that prioritises using brownfield land; responding positively to the climate emergency, and mitigating its local impacts;**
- **Valued local facilities, infrastructure and housing that are sufficient to meet local needs;**
- **An inclusive and green local transport network that provides everyone with safe opportunities for active travel;**
- **A mixed economy that supports our local businesses, town centre and High Street, and**
- **An outstanding and locally distinctive built environment.**

OBJECTIVES

Environment

01 To protect Portishead's locally valued views, landscape setting and valued relationship with the Gordano Valley, and maintain the separation of Portishead from other villages and towns.

02 To protect and enhance the multi-functional blue-green (water and green) spaces of our town and the links between them, recognising the importance of these areas for health and wellbeing.

03 To protect, maintain and expand Portishead's distinctive treescape and woodland areas such as Weston Big Wood.

04 To protect and enhance the biodiversity of our area, recognising the important sites in Portishead that act as carbon sinks and sustain species under threat, including our small locally valued green spaces, nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and internationally designated RAMSAR site and associated Salt Marshes.

05 To ensure that development protects and reinforces Portishead's character and distinctiveness, and encourages the highest standards of building, public space and landscape design and sustainability.

06 To ensure that new development is sympathetic to our local heritage, including its maritime and industrial history.

Wellbeing

07 To deliver sustainable development which prioritises brownfield land, responds positively to the climate crisis, reduces our carbon footprint and energy demand, and mitigates the local impacts of climate change.

08 To protect Portishead's stock of one and two bedroom and accessible homes, and ensure that any future housing that comes forward to meet government targets contains a diverse range of tenures, forms and sizes to meet the identified housing needs of the community, protects and enhances Portishead's distinct character and maintains resident amenity and highway safety.

09 To protect and improve health, wellbeing, leisure and recreation opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities by protecting and expanding community facilities and spaces for community activities to ensure that Portishead is a welcoming, safe and accessible place for everyone.

010 To ensure all residents have easy access to local green, blue and open spaces, and to promote environments and transport networks that offer all individuals and communities the greatest potential to lead active and healthy lifestyles.

Prosperity

011 To support Portishead's economy and local employment, and support the continued development of a diverse, high value and low carbon economy.

012 To deliver a connected, accessible, inclusive, attractive, vibrant and distinctive town centre at the heart of Portishead's community and economic life.

013 To deliver an integrated, sustainable, accessible and inclusive transport network that encourages active travel and reduces congestion within Portishead.



**PORTISHEAD
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

**PART TWO
DRAFT PLANNING POLICIES
AND COMMUNITY ACTIONS**

PART 2 PLANNING POLICIES AND COMMUNITY ACTIONS

INTRODUCTION TO THIS SECTION

2.0 The planning policies and community actions on the following pages will be used to help determine planning applications within the Portishead Neighbourhood Area. Each policy relates back to at least one objective, which in turn links to the overall vision.

2.1 Government guidance sets out that that a policy in a Neighbourhood Plan should be: 'clear and unambiguous... it should be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence. It should be distinct to reflect and respond to the unique characteristics and planning context of the specific neighbourhood area for which it has been prepared' (National Planning Practice Guidance 2020⁵).

2.2 The Neighbourhood Plan contains a total of 41 policies. These are organised around the three themes of the Town Council's strategy to 'Create a Modern Sustainable Town for the Future': Environment, Wellbeing and Prosperity.

2.3 The Neighbourhood Plan also contains a fourth planning policy section that includes area based policies for Portishead Town Centre.

UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

2.4 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute towards the achievement of 'sustainable development', which is defined by the United Nations as 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'⁶.

2.5 As a member of the United Nations, the UK has agreed to pursue the [17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development](#)⁷ in the period to 2030. These goals address environmental protections, social progress and economic wellbeing. These are priorities which are mirrored by Portishead Town Council's three themes of Environment, Wellbeing and Prosperity that support its strategy to 'Create a Modern Sustainable Town of the Future'.

2.6 The Portishead Neighbourhood Plan is drafted to link into the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. In doing so, we can contribute towards delivering and translating the high level goals of sustainable development into real local level action in Portishead.

2.7 The Sustainable Development Goals are threaded throughout the Neighbourhood Plan. At the beginning of

each theme we set out which of the goals are contributed towards by the planning policies and community actions within the following pages.

2.8 An overview of the goals can be seen below and clicking the goals will take you to an in depth description on the UN website:



STRUCTURE OF PART 2

INTRODUCTION TO THIS SECTION

We have colour coded this section to make it easier to navigate.

ENVIRONMENT

Page *Natural Environment*

- 28 Policy PEN1: Landscape Setting and Views
- 33 Policy PEN2: Portishead's Green and Blue Infrastructure
- 38 Policy PEN3: Flood Risk and Natural Flood Management
- 40 Policy PEN4: Biodiversity
- 45 Policy PEN5: Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland
- 49 Policy PEN6: Designation of Local Green Spaces
- 53 Policy PEN7: Other Green Spaces

Built Environment

- 56 Policy PEB1: Locally Distinctive, High Quality Design
- 59 Policy PEB2: Small and Infill Development
- 62 Policy PEB3: Local Heritage
- 66 Policy PEB4: Sustainable Design, Construction and Retrofitting

Renewable Energy

- 68 Policy PER1: Supporting Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Schemes in Portishead

WELLBEING

Page *Community Facilities and Infrastructure*

- 74 Policy PWC1: Protection of Existing Community Facilities and Infrastructure
- 78 Policy PWC2: New Community Facilities and Infrastructure

Housing

- 80 Policy PWH1: Protection of Portishead's Existing Housing Stock
- 82 Policy PWH2: Retaining Existing Valued Smaller and Accessible Housing Stock
- 85 Policy PWH3: New Housing to Meet Local Needs in Portishead
- 87 Policy PWH4: Housing Available to Local People in Housing Need
- 88 Policy PWH5: First Homes Discount in Portishead
- 90 Policy PWH6: Homes for Elderly, Disabled and Vulnerable People
- 92 Policy PWH7: Adaptable New Homes
- 94 Policy PWH8: Alterations to make Existing Homes Accessible
- 95 Policy PWH9: Community Led Development Projects
- 97 Policy PWH10: Self Build and Custom Build Housing
- 98 Policy PWH11: Sub-divisions and Conversions of Larger Residential Property

PROSPERITY

Page *Economy*

- 102 Policy PPE1: Protecting Portishead's Valued Employment Space
- 105 Policy PPE2: Supporting Business Investment, Start-ups and Low Carbon Business Enterprise
- 106 Policy PPE3: Supporting Low Carbon Local Businesses
- 108 Policy PPE4: Digital Connectivity and Telecommunications
- 110 Policy PPE5: Homeworking and Live-Work Units

Transport

- 112 Policy PPT1: Inclusive Active Travel
- 115 Policy PPT2: Encouraging Active Travel for Leisure and Recreation
- 118 Policy PPT3: Supporting the Shift to Ultra Low Emission Vehicles
- 120 Policy PPT4: Highways Impacts and Securing
- 122 Policy PPT5: Highway Safety
- 125 Policy PPT6: Development Proposals and Travel Planning

AREA BASED POLICIES AND COMMUNITY ACTIONS

Page *Priorities for Wyndham Way Study Area*

- 130 Community Action: Wyndham Way Study Area

Priorities for Portishead Town Centre

- 132 Policy PTC1: Protection of Portishead Town Centre Character and Vitality
- 134 Policy PTC2: Business Use of Upper Floors
- 136 Policy PTC3: Town Centre Housing
- 138 Policy PTC4: Keeping the Town Centre Accessible to Everybody
- 139 Policy PTC5: Shopfronts and Signage

ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

The following section of the neighbourhood plan contains policies related to the environment:

Natural Environment

- Policy PEN1: Landscape Setting and Views
- Policy PEN2: Portishead's Green and Blue Infrastructure
- Policy PEN3: Flood Risk and Natural Flood Management
- Policy PEN4: Biodiversity
- Policy PEN5: Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland
- Policy PEN6: Designation of Local Green Spaces
- Policy PEN7: Other Green Spaces

Built Environment

- Policy PEB1: Locally Distinctive, High Quality Design
- Policy PEB2: Small and Infill Development
- Policy PEB3: Local Heritage
- Policy PEB4: Sustainable Design, Construction and Retrofitting

Renewable Energy

- Policy PER1: Supporting Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Schemes in Portishead

UN SDGs

The policies in this section contribute to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:



ENVIRONMENT: INTRODUCTION

PORTISHEAD'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

3.0 Portishead has a rich blue and green environmental heritage. Located on the southern shore of the Severn Estuary at the mouth of the River Avon, the town has a line of cliffs, beaches and salt marsh along its northern and eastern fringes, opening into the watercourses known as rhynes which drain the low-lying Somerset Levels to the south. The whole of Portishead's coastline has various statutory protections due to its significant biodiversity and scientific value. There are also expanses of ancient and protected hillside woodland at East Wood and Weston Big Wood.

3.1 Since 2001, Portishead has undergone population growth of approximately 60%, with a significant expansion in the number of residential dwellings and a large increase in the size of the built area of the town. Whilst the availability of land for development has greatly reduced, the demand for housing in Portishead has remained strong and therefore the remaining areas of open space in and around the town are important to protect.

3.2 Portishead's location on the northernmost edge of the Somerset Levels, between the Gordano Valley and Rodmoor, means that there is continuing

pressure to encroach further onto the floodplain and into the rural fringes of the town which are part of the green-belt.

3.3 At present, Weston Big Wood dominates the slopes of the valley to the south and south west of Portishead, with the built area of the town lying behind the ridge of the hill. Around Weston Big Wood there are natural buffer areas of fields which consist of unimproved and improved grassland, hedgerows, shelterbelts (which act as windbreaks) and trees. These serve as vital wildlife links with the surrounding Gordano Valley. Even small amounts of development around the fringes of this woodland will significantly impact on the biodiversity of the area as well as the visual appearance of the wood from the valley.

3.4 The inter-relationships and inter-connections between the woodland, rhynes, grassland and agricultural land are what sustain the Woods, the Valley, its beauty, flora and fauna.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

3.5 The character of Portishead has been shaped over the years by a series of factors including landscape, the town's coastal location, its industry and the routes into and within the town. There is a wide variety of architectural styles and built characteristics across the town that contribute to a rich and diverse character

3.6 Portishead was a small village prior to the late Victorian era and the subsequent growth related to the dock. A number of buildings are currently designated through the listing system, including the nationally important former National Nautical School (now Fedden Village).

3.7 The Neighbourhood Plan identifies a number of buildings and heritage assets which are of value to the local area that are not currently listed. It also identifies features of the town which have a specific character related to the town's industrial past, including the rows of dock workers' housing adjacent to the High Street. In a post-industrial town with a relatively young population, many of whom have moved to the town from outside of the area in the last twenty years, the preservation and interpretation of aspects of the town's past, whilst looking forward to new uses, is essential.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

3.8 Work undertaken by the Centre for Sustainable Energy to support the Neighbourhood Plan concluded that immediate opportunities for developing renewable energy sources within the town are limited. Geography and urbanisation preclude wind and large-scale solar energy solutions. Other potential technologies such as tidal and micro-tidal solutions would potentially be viable within the area and may be a future solution but are not currently mature enough for full consideration, however we want to

encourage the use of new technologies as they become available. The recent start-up of a powerful tidal-powered turbine generating electricity in Orkney and the investment of billions of pounds in a tidal lagoon project with underwater turbines in Swansea Bay suggests that the capability to harness tidal power will soon become commercially viable. The introduction of some form of micro-tidal power generation in Portishead could play a crucial role in achieving our ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030.

3.9 Renewable Energy Community Interest Companies such as Low Carbon Gordano (Solar) and Channel Green Energy (Wind) are active in the town and in the wider area and we are keen to encourage these companies to develop further local renewable solutions.



PLANNING POLICIES: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

LANDSCAPE SETTING AND VIEWS

Context

3.10 The character and quality of landscape is key to maintaining a strong sense of place which is an important objective in the National Planning Policy Framework. Portishead has a distinct and varied landscape setting⁸ which is cherished by residents and visitors.

3.11 The Portishead Community Character Statement (2022) has been prepared as part of the evidence base to the Neighbourhood Plan. The Community Character Statement has been prepared by a working group of local people with the support of expert Plan consultants. It describes and analyses important and locally distinctive features of the town as a whole and in the landscape setting.

3.12 As set out in the Community Character Statement, the landscape setting to the town plays a vital role in the distinct and separate identity of Portishead. There are four distinct areas to the landscape setting, from the higher ground of Portishead Down, with its extensive and valued views and the ancient woods of Weston Big Wood. The ridge of Portishead Down then dips and rises again further to the east at East Wood. To the west is Portishead

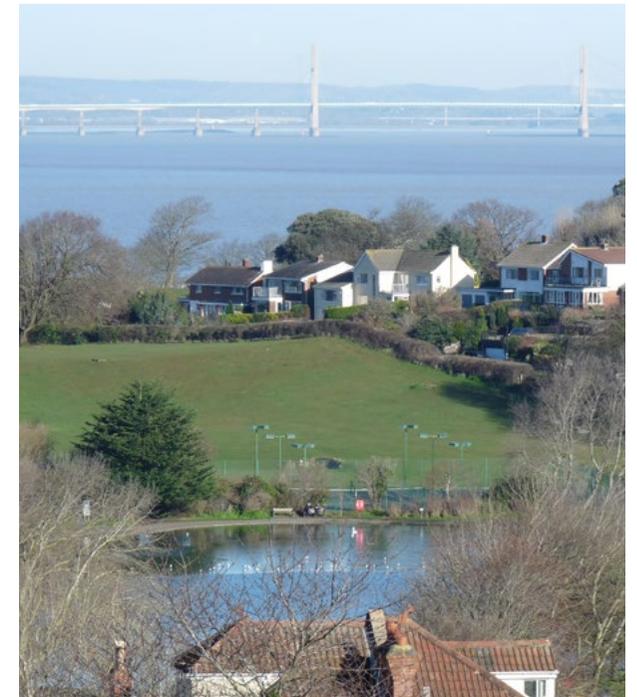
Bay, culturally and historically important to the town and its sense of place, again with wide expansive views. To the east of the town is the open flat landscape of the Gordano Valley.

3.13 These distinct areas that contribute to the distinct and highly valued setting of the town have been assessed and categorised into different character areas, both at a national level and by North Somerset Council. [The North Somerset Council 'Landscape Character Assessment' \(2018\)](#)⁸ supplementary Planning Guidance has identified different character types and areas in North Somerset. It is used to inform and guide planning decisions. The areas can be seen on Figure 2.

3.14 The last remaining open spaces, particularly the area around Weston Big Wood and farmland and floodplain outside the settlement boundary, are valued as settings to the town and for their role as local green spaces. They also deliver multiple ecosystem services and benefits (as set out in the Portishead Green and Blue Infrastructure Evidence Base Report 2022) and consequently should never be built on. Any future development needs to be carefully managed to protect and safeguard Portishead's assets, which

from the coastline to the ancient woodland, are unique assets that provide much value to the wellbeing of residents, the quality of the environment and the distinct character and visual amenity of Portishead.

3.15 As part of the character assessment work, the working group also identified key local views that should be protected. These are shown in detail in the Portishead Local Key Views Report (2021) also prepared as part of the evidence base to support this Plan.



Relevant Objective

O1 To protect Portishead's locally valued views, landscape setting and valued relationship with the Gordano Valley, and maintain the separation of Portishead from other villages and towns.

Local Policy Context

CS5	Landscape and the historic environment
CS6	North Somerset's green belt
DM10	Landscape
DM12	Development within the green belt

POLICY PEN1 – LANDSCAPE SETTING AND VIEWS

Any development should seek to conserve and enhance the landscape setting of Portishead and its landscape character, views and features, including those identified on Figure 2.

Development proposals will be expected to:

- i. integrate natural features such as groups of trees and the local rhyme system that contribute to both the landscape character and setting of the development; and
- ii. demonstrate that the whole scheme, including hard landscape and planting proposals, draws on local landscape characteristics and features through reference to relevant existing landscape and historic landscape assessments, the Portishead Community Character Statement, as well as any additional site specific assessments; and
- iii. respond sensitively to the transition between settlement edge and surrounding countryside and green belt, respecting the tranquillity of the landscape, and avoid any adverse impact on irreplaceable habitats such as Weston Big Wood and East Wood.

Development proposals that are likely to affect any of the local key views shown on Figure 3, and described in the Portishead Local Key Views Report, should assess the effect of the proposals on the view(s) and demonstrate how any adverse effects have been addressed.

The North Somerset Council 'Landscape Character Assessment' (2018) supplementary Planning Guidance has identified different character types and areas in North Somerset. Shown on the map and table below:



Landscape Character Area	Strategy	Character	Condition
E4 Portishead Ridges and Combes	Conserve and Enhance	Moderate	Declining
A2 Clapton Moor	Conserve/ Enhance and Strengthen	Moderate	Good
L4 Clevedon and Portishead Bays	Conserve	Strong	Good

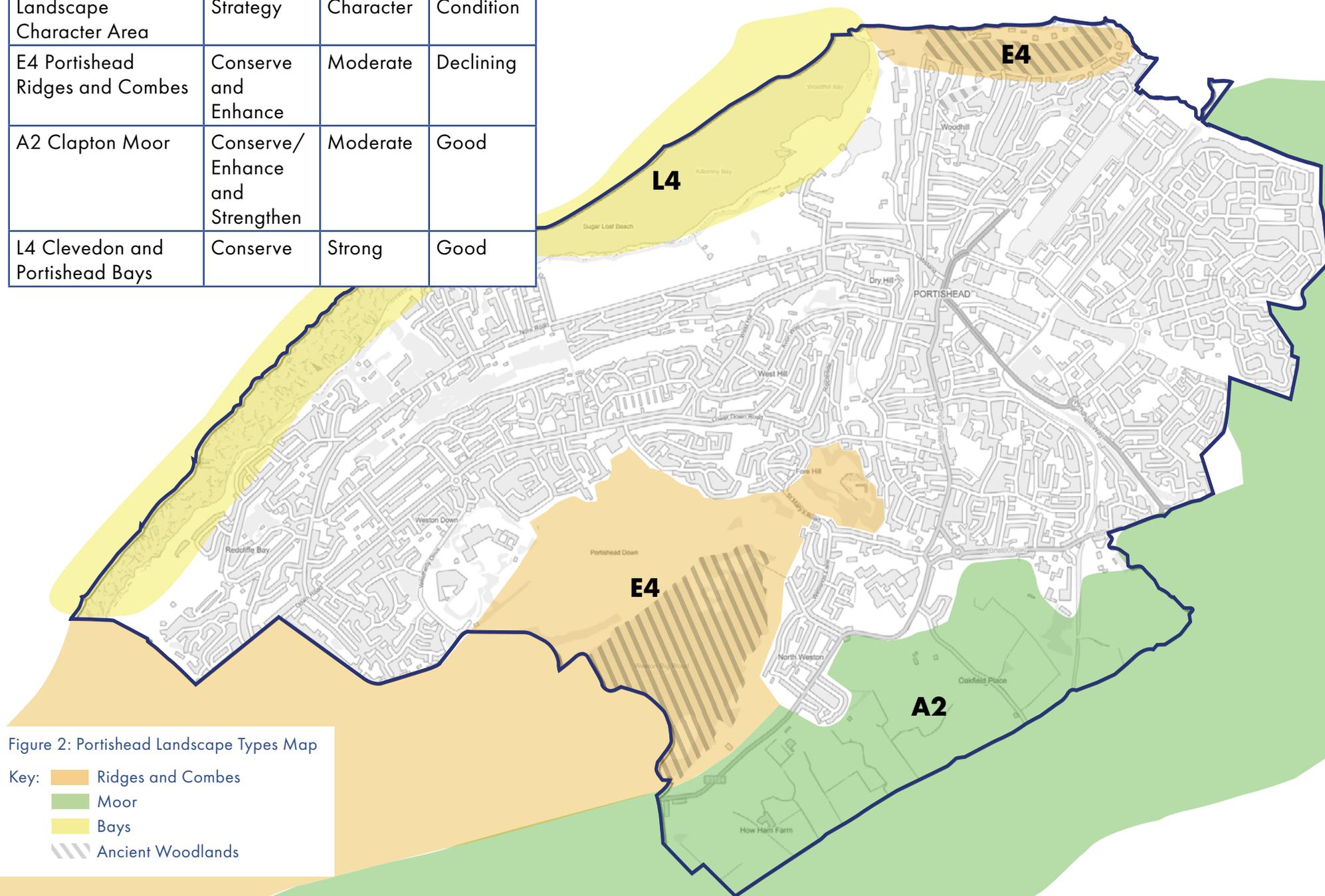
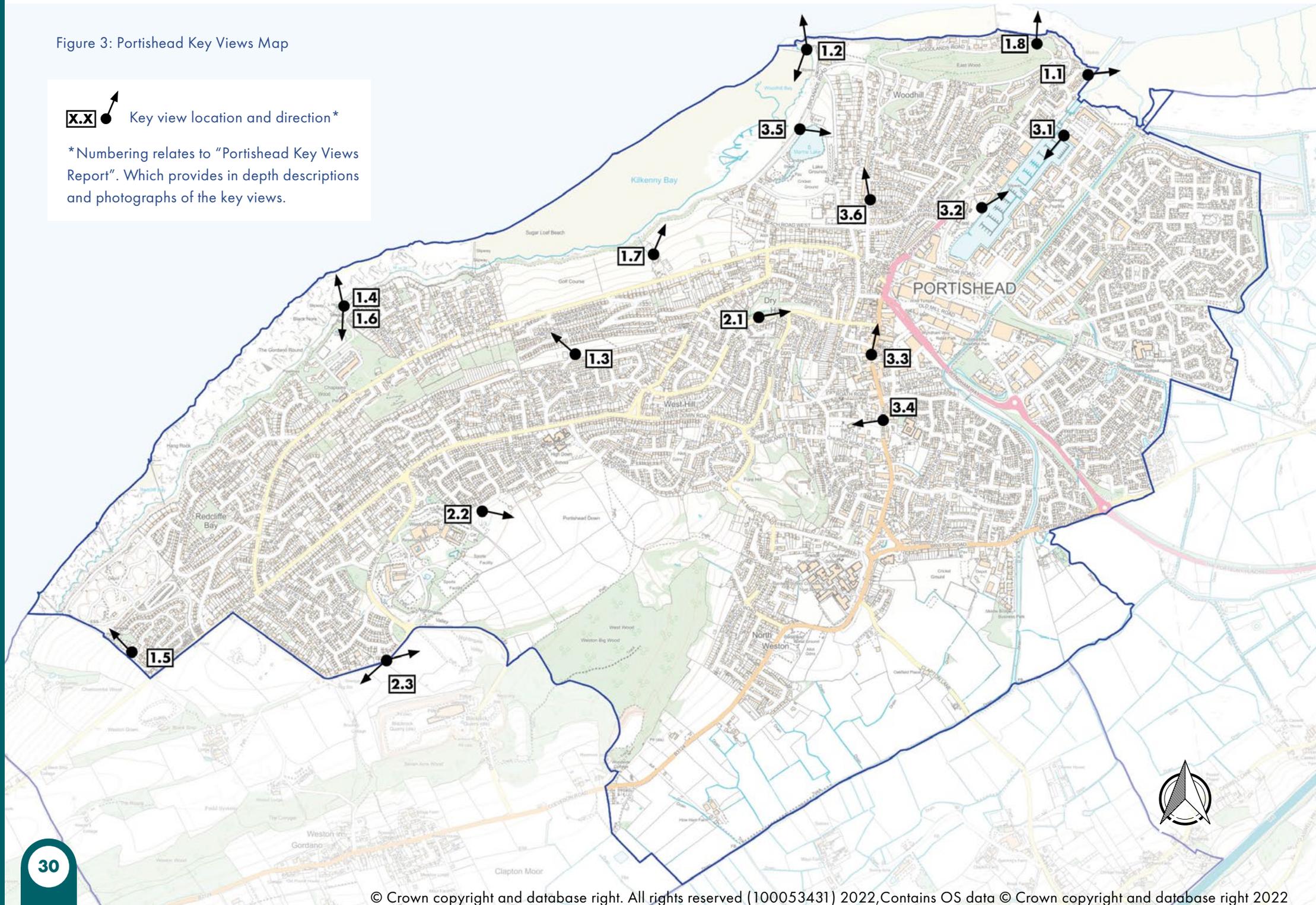


Figure 2: Portishead Landscape Types Map
 Key: Ridges and Combes
 Moor
 Bays
 Ancient Woodlands

Figure 3: Portishead Key Views Map

X.X ● ↗ Key view location and direction *

*Numbering relates to "Portishead Key Views Report". Which provides in depth descriptions and photographs of the key views.



GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

Context

3.16 Green and blue infrastructure encompasses the network of multifunctional green and blue spaces, and other natural features such as trees, verges and lakes, that give us a wide range of benefits for nature, climate and community wellbeing.

3.17 Green and blue infrastructure (GBI) in Portishead provides a huge range of 'ecosystem services'. From flood management at Portbury Ditch, to recreation opportunities at the Lake Grounds, through to supporting the local pollinator network in the Portishead in Bloom planters on the High Street; the green and blue infrastructure network in Portishead is multi-functional as well as integral to the quality of place of the town.

3.18 Portishead's green and blue assets are part of a network of green and blue infrastructure that is locally, regionally, nationally and internationally important. Figure 4 illustrates diagrammatically the key strategic green and blue infrastructure in the Neighbourhood Area to be protected and enhanced. The Severn Estuary has a number of designations recognising its local and international importance:

- The Severn Estuary Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Severn Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Severn Estuary Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention (Ramsar Site)
- Severn Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

3.19 More detail on Portishead's green and blue infrastructure, can be found in the Portishead Green and Blue Infrastructure Evidence Base Report (2022). Below an aerial shot looking north towards Severn Estuary with Weston Big Wood in the foreground.



WHAT ARE 'ECOSYSTEM SERVICES'?

Ecosystem services are the multiple benefits that the natural environment provides. Ecosystem services make human life possible and include - to name just a few - the production of food and water, flood regulation, space for recreation, air quality regulation and maintenance of biodiversity. A key aim of draft policy PEN2 is to support and diversify the range of ecosystem services provided by Portishead's green and blue infrastructure network.

3.20 North Somerset Council's [Green Infrastructure Strategy \(2020\)](#)⁹ provides a framework for protecting and enhancing the green and blue infrastructure network across the District. Using objectives from the Strategy, the Portishead GBI Evidence Report includes an assessment of how key GBI areas currently perform at various ecosystem services, as well as specific recommendations about how this performance could be improved. Proposals that affect Portishead's GBI network are expected to refer to the Portishead GBI Evidence Report and demonstrate how they protect and enhance the quantity and quality of the network, referring to the specific findings of the Report and priorities identified in Policy PEN2. Information included in the GBI Evidence Report, together with site specific analysis required for site proposals, will inform the content of the Climate Change Adaptation Statement which is required to be submitted by North Somerset Council's emerging Local Plan Policy DP5.

3.21 The [North Somerset Green Infrastructure Strategy](#)⁹ highlights the importance of the need to develop several linked policies that cover the full range of functions that green and blue infrastructure

covers. Policy PEN2 is therefore linked to other NDP policies on biodiversity, trees and woodland and open spaces. The protection and enhancement of Portishead's green and blue infrastructure network is threaded throughout further policies in the NDP, reflecting the GBI network's integral role in placemaking, wellbeing and mitigating the effects of the climate emergency.



Relevant Objective

O2 To protect and enhance the multi-functional blue-green (water and green) spaces of our town and the links between them, recognising the importance of these areas for health and wellbeing.

Local Policy Context

- CS1 Addressing climate change and carbon reduction
- CS4 Nature conservation
- CS9 Green infrastructure
- DM19 Green infrastructure

POLICY PEN2 - PORTISHEAD'S GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

The integrity, multi-functionality, quality and connectivity of the strategic Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) network will be protected, enhanced and managed. Development that will result in the creation of new green and/or blue infrastructure (GBI) and/or contribute to the protection, management, enhancement and connectivity of Portishead's existing GBI network, as illustrated diagrammatically on Figure 4, and detailed in the Portishead GBI Evidence Base Report, will be supported.

Proposals for developments must, where relevant to the proposed development:

- i. identify the existing GBI within and around the development site; and
- ii. demonstrate how GBI has been incorporated into the proposal, with particular reference to the Objectives and Recommendations included in the Portishead GBI Evidence Base Report; and
- iii. assess and address how the proposal will benefit a range of ecosystem services that the GBI network provides; and
- iv. assess and address how the proposal will benefit connectivity of GBI through the site and beyond; and
- v. demonstrate that GBI in the proposal has been designed to promote and enhance local diversity and distinctiveness, referring particularly to the Portishead GBI Evidence Base Report and the Key Positive Design Characteristics identified in the Portishead Community Character Statement.

RELATED COMMUNITY ACTIONS

Joined up working for a joined up strategic GBI network

The Portishead Neighbourhood Area is part of key strategic Green and Blue infrastructure corridors that sweep beyond the Neighbourhood Area and across North Somerset. It is key that Green and Blue Infrastructure assets in Portishead are managed appropriately and in collaboration with neighbouring parishes to ensure benefits to the strategic network. Portishead Town Council already works collaboratively with its neighbouring parishes and is committed to continuing this in relation to green and blue infrastructure where needed.

Greening the Grey

Identify opportunities for 'greening the grey' within the built area e.g. green roofs, walls and planting in built up areas where the opportunities to provide new open space is limited. Development around the Marina has been identified as an area where this could be particularly beneficial. Portishead Town Council owns a number of bus shelters around the town and a toilet block – these have been identified as potential green roofs.

GBI Network Assets and Priorities Diagram

Key:

 Neighbourhood Boundary

Statutory Designations:

 RAMSAR/Special Protection Areas/ Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

 Green Belt

 Local Nature Reserves

 Local Wildlife Sites

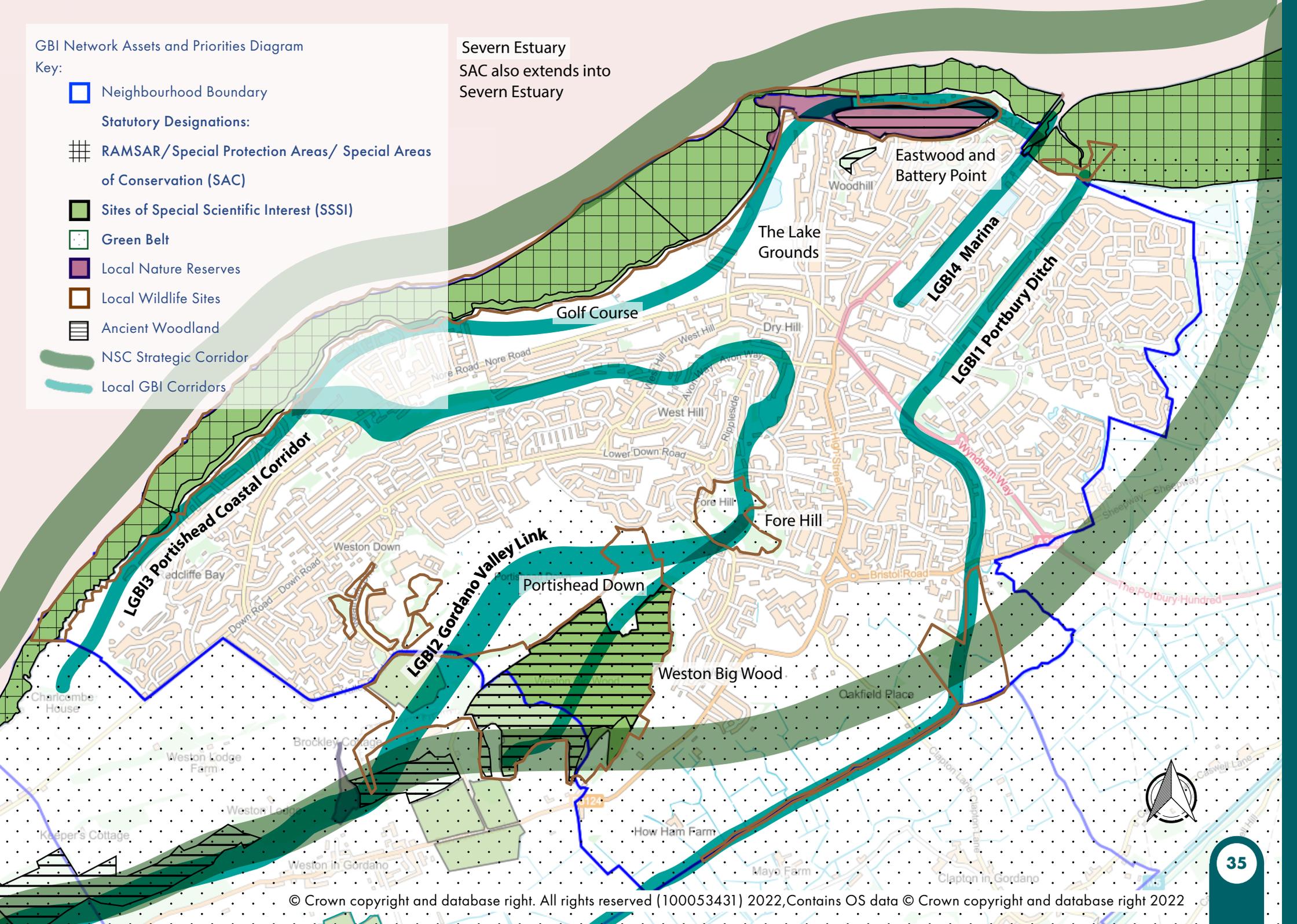
 Ancient Woodland

 NSC Strategic Corridor

 Local GBI Corridors

Severn Estuary

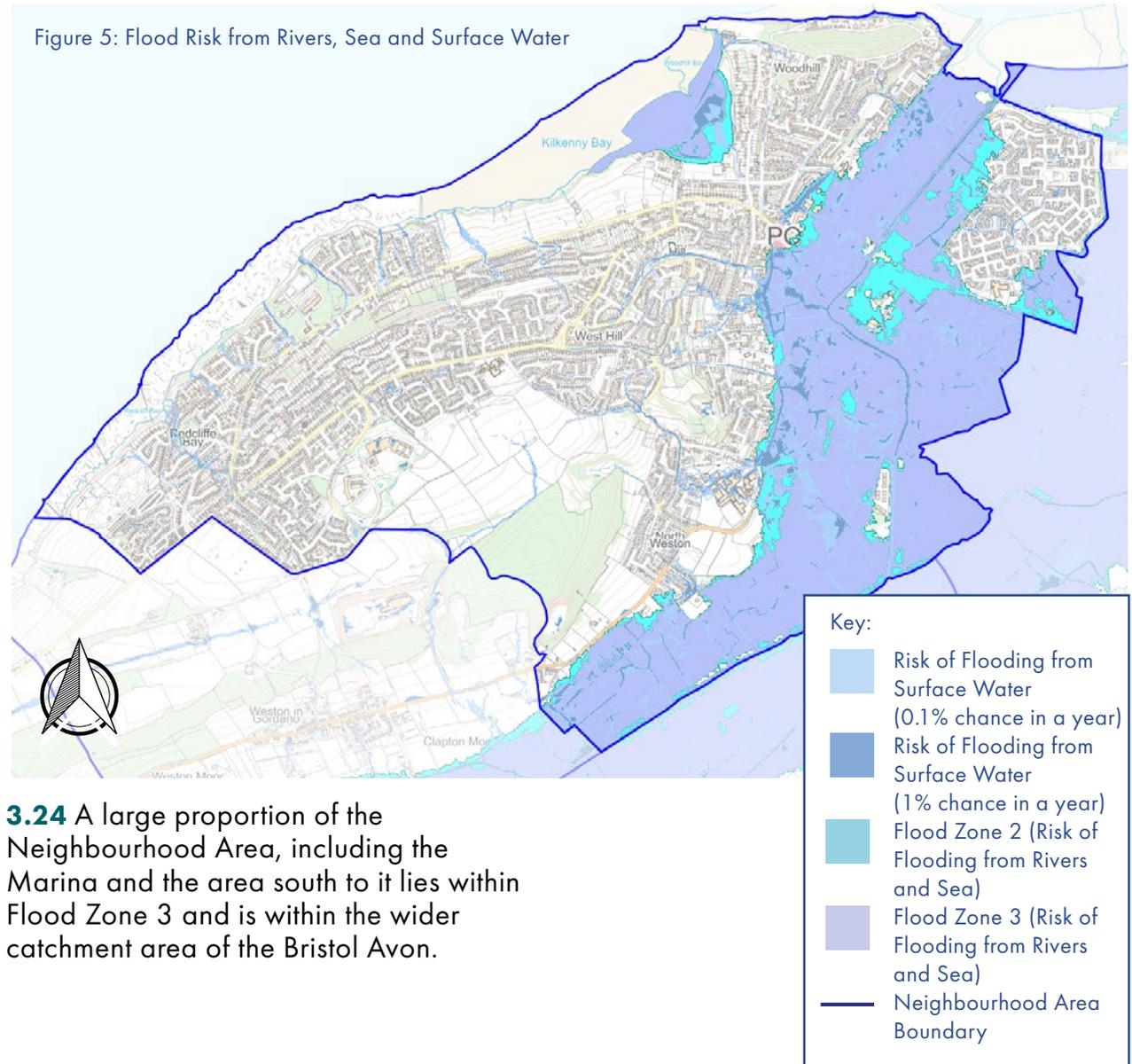
SAC also extends into
Severn Estuary



FLOOD RISK AND NATURAL FLOOD MANAGEMENT

3.22 During the preparation of this Plan, the wider community highlighted strong concerns over flood risk, including concerns over rising sea levels, risk of flooding from the local rhynes, particularly around Lipgate Place, Bristol Road and Clevedon Road and the risk of surface water flooding in more recent development around the Marina. *The North Somerset Strategic Flood Risk Assessment*¹⁰ identifies Portishead as susceptible to groundwater flooding, with more than a quarter of the town considered at risk.

3.23 One of the major impacts of a changing climate is a further increased risk of flooding. The UK Met Office predicts that in a business-as-usual scenario, Britain could experience a decrease in summer rainfall by up to 47%, and up to 35% more rain in winter by 2070¹¹. This flood risk is exacerbated by the presence of the tidal Portbury Ditch within the Neighbourhood Area. The regular combination of high tides and high rainfall means that rainwater draining off the surrounding hills effectively has nowhere to go for the period of time around the high tide, particularly during spring tides.



3.24 A large proportion of the Neighbourhood Area, including the Marina and the area south to it lies within Flood Zone 3 and is within the wider catchment area of the Bristol Avon.

3.25 Bristol Avon Rivers Trust (BART) is a local charity which delivers education, land and river management advice and practical river restoration work throughout the Bristol Avon catchment. One particular area of focus for the charity is Natural Flood Management (NFM), the 'soft engineering' of water on a landscape scale, in order to contribute towards "slowing the flow". NFM projects are designed to complement existing flood projects that are being delivered by other organisations already working in the area. Natural Flood Management involves working with nature to try and 'slow the flow' of water through a landscape. There are a variety of techniques and land-based interventions that can be used, including; subsoiling, cross drains, earth bunds, leaky ponds, cover crops, hedge planting, tree planting and grass buffers.

3.26 In terms of new development, and the important task of 'managing rainfall' in Portishead, drainage should be designed to match natural routes, infiltration rates and discharge rates as far as possible. Therefore the aim must be for water to be discharged as high up the drainage hierarchy¹² as possible:

1. into the ground (infiltration);
2. to a surface water body;
3. to a surface water sewer, highway drain, or another drainage system;
4. to a combined sewer.

3.27 The National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance together with the North Somerset Local Plan highlight the importance of development taking place in areas at least risk of flooding where possible, as well as the need to manage the flow of surface rainwater. North Somerset Council Development Advice Note 'Development

and Flood Risk Issues'¹³ provides further guidance for those applying for planning permission in the Neighbourhood Area. Draft policy PEN3 adds local detail to the North Somerset Council policies.

Photos below show flooding arounds Lippgate Place.



Relevant Objective:

O7 To deliver sustainable development which prioritises brownfield land, responds positively to the climate crisis, reduces our carbon footprint and energy demand, and mitigates the local impacts of climate change.

Local Policy Context

CS3 Environmental impacts and flood risk management

DM1 Flooding and drainage

POLICY PEN3 - FLOOD RISK AND NATURAL FLOOD MANAGEMENT

Natural flood management works to conserve and enhance the ecological flood storage value of the water environment, including watercourse corridors, such as the rhyne system and catchments will be supported.

Major development should include provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs), where appropriate, as part of the Natural Flood Management approach and the wider Green and Blue Infrastructure network of Portishead, paying particular attention to the Green and Blue Infrastructure Assets and Priorities shown on Figure 4 and the Objectives and Recommendations included in the Portishead GBI Evidence Base Report.

Where development proposals are in areas with known surface water flooding issues, they should include appropriate mitigation and construction methods.

Development in the neighbourhood area should also demonstrate adherence to the National Design Guide (2019), which includes guidance on integrated water management that enhances the character of a place and makes it more resilient to impacts of climate change.

BIODIVERSITY

Context

3.28 The Neighbourhood Area is host to a range of wildlife sites and features. From the internationally important Severn Estuary RAMSAR site (also a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest and Special Area of Conservation) through to nationally important sites of ancient woodland, such as Weston Big Wood, as well as local nature reserves at Fore Hill and East Wood and Battery Point, Portishead's wildlife sites and features support a rich overall wildlife network which contributes towards the wellbeing of wildlife and residents alike. However, we are also aware that human activity impacts on our local biodiversity such as with light pollution, and greater pressure on our ancient woodland, as demonstrated in the Portishead GBI Evidence Base Report (2022).

3.29 A record of habitats and biodiversity information has been obtained from Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre and from local group Wild Portishead, who are using online tool iNaturalist to map and record wildlife in Portishead. This information is also included in the GBI Evidence Base Report.

3.30 Emerging North Somerset Local Plan Policy DP32 (Nature Conservation) outlines the emerging approach to nature and biodiversity conservation in the District. The GBI Evidence Base Report sets out detailed information on the existing biodiversity assets and nature conservation in Portishead. Proposals should pay particular attention to the objectives and recommendations set out in the Portishead GBI Evidence Base Report to help ensure that biodiversity improvement benefits local ecosystems and improves the range of ecosystem services that the GBI network provides.

3.31 Policy PEN4 is consistent with paragraph 174(d) of the NPPF, which requires a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain in new schemes. The emerging North Somerset Local Plan looks to deliver this at the North Somerset level through emerging policy DP33 (Biodiversity Net Gain). The biodiversity net gain approach follows on from the Government's aim to 'leave the environment in a better state than we found it' in its 25 Year Environment Plan.

3.32 Policy PEN4 states that proposals that are within or outside a Site of Special

Scientific Interest will not normally be permitted. For instance, this would apply to proposals which could affect the sensitive bird species and other habitats and species of the Severn Estuary. All designated SSSIs in the Portishead Neighbourhood Area are shown on Figure 4.

3.33 Paragraph 179(b) of the NPPF states that 'plans should promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity'.



Relevant Objective

O4 To protect and enhance the biodiversity of our area, recognising the important sites in Portishead that act as carbon sinks and sustain species under threat, including our small locally valued green spaces, nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and internationally designated RAMSAR site and associated Salt Marshes.

Local Policy Context:

CS4 Nature conservation
DM8 Nature conservation
CS9 Green infrastructure

POLICY PEN4 - BIODIVERSITY

Development proposals will be expected to deliver a minimum of 10% net gain in biodiversity, including the enhancement and creation of ecological networks within and, where relevant, connecting with those beyond the Plan Area (see Figure 4). Proposals that exceed the minimum requirement of 10% biodiversity net gain will be particularly supported.

Protection, connection and enhancement of statutory and non-statutory nature conservation sites (as shown on Figure 4) is a priority for the Neighbourhood Area and development proposals must demonstrate sensitive responses to these sites where necessary, such as accommodating a buffer zone to protect sensitive habitats, or demonstrating that opportunities to reduce indirect impacts, such as light pollution, have been taken. Specific attention for priority habitats, as identified on Figure 6, and protected species should also be demonstrated.

Development that will adversely affect the integrity of sites of international importance for wildlife, including Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites, will not be permitted.

Any proposals that could affect sites of international importance for wildlife, including Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Ramsar Sites must carry out screening for Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

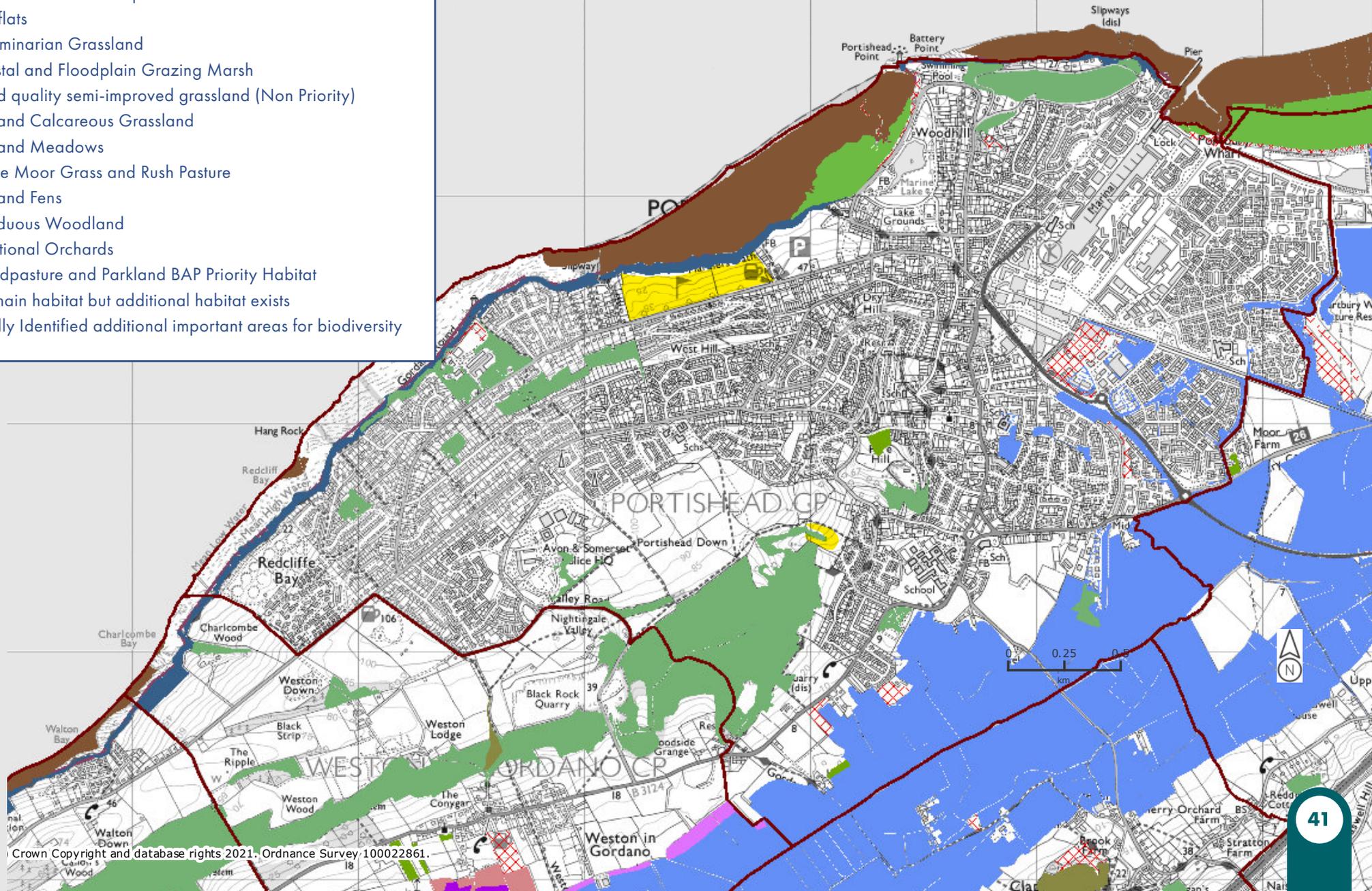
Development which is likely to have an adverse effect on an Site of Special Scientific Interest (either individually or in combination with other developments), will not normally be permitted.

Development which could harm, directly or indirectly, species which are legally protected, or species and habitats that have been identified as Species or Habitats of Principal Importance in England (also known as Section 41 or 'Priority' species and habitats) will not be permitted unless the harm can be avoided or mitigated by appropriate measures.

Figure 6: Priority Habitats

Key:

-  Parishes (GB)
-  Coastal Saltmarsh (England)
-  Maritime Cliffs and Slopes
-  Mudflats
-  Calaminarian Grassland
-  Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh
-  Good quality semi-improved grassland (Non Priority)
-  Lowland Calcareous Grassland
-  Lowland Meadows
-  Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pasture
-  Lowland Fens
-  Deciduous Woodland
-  Traditional Orchards
-  Woodpasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat
-  No main habitat but additional habitat exists
-  Locally Identified additional important areas for biodiversity



RELATED COMMUNITY ACTIONS

- *Expand rewilding management regimes in order to increase biodiversity.* Portishead Town Council support appropriately designed rewilding projects within the Town, understanding 'rewilding' as the 'large-scale restoration of ecosystems to the point where nature is allowed to take care of itself'¹⁷. In Portishead, it is important that potential rewilding projects are well communicated with the nearby community and informed by community engagement to inform the type of project (including species etc.) that is suitable in each particular location. Recent NSC-led projects for tree planting in Portishead have had mixed results as a number of the saplings did not survive, either through lack of watering/care and/or accidental damage or vandalism due to trees being planted in the wrong locations. Better collaboration with knowledgeable local partners would help to ensure that appropriate projects are brought forward. There may be an opportunity for appropriate rewilding projects on the Portishead Town Council-owned land at the football fields on Bristol Road. This would need to be carefully managed to ensure that the recreation function of this important green space was protected and enhanced where possible.
- *Reduce pesticide usage and/or go pesticide free in some areas.* Portishead Town Council supports this and has already banned the use of Glyphosate herbicide by Portishead Town Council in Portishead.
- *Encourage and support wildlife friendly gardening.* Wild Portishead promotes this through campaigns such as the Metre Meadow¹⁸ which encourages people to leave a 1 m² unmown area of their garden and keep a note of how it develops; the species it attracts etc. Portishead in Bloom is another relevant local partner that already does a lot of good work to promote biodiversity.

PROMOTING PORTISHEAD'S BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

The recently passed legislation in the Environment Act requires developments to increase biodiversity value on site by at least 10%. This is a positive step towards nature recovery, but it relates only to sites that are being developed.

North Somerset Council recently declared an ecological emergency, recognising that the survival of our society and economy relies on the health of the natural environment and ecosystems.¹⁴ We need to do all that we can to increase biodiversity in Portishead, not just in areas where development is taking place.

There is opportunity for us to improve the wildlife value of our public realm and spaces; improving, rewilding and restoring natural habitats, increasing the range of ecosystem services they provide to improve health and wellbeing of residents as well as of ecological networks. These local community assets are within our management and have potential to secure biodiversity gains well in excess of 10%.

Portishead Town Council will work with local organisations and community groups to identify the best opportunities. This should be informed by Nature Recovery Network and Opportunities mapping from the West of England Nature Partnership and North Somerset Council's rewilding map. These projects identify particular areas for biodiversity improvements, as well as the type of habitat most appropriate.

TREES, HEDGEROWS AND WOODLAND

Context

3.34 Portishead has a distinctive treescape, with large areas of woodland visible from within the built environment as well as locally valued significant trees located within and around the town. The number and diversity of street trees is an important feature of the town (many of which are protected with Tree Protection Orders) and the Neighbourhood Area is also home to large areas of Ancient Woodland - nearly 45 hectares in total.

3.35 Ancient Woodlands are our richest land-based habitat for wildlife. According to the Woodland Trust they are home to more threatened species than any other habitat. Ancient Woodland covers a significant proportion of the land in the town area at around 4.7%, which is significantly higher than the national average of 2.5%¹⁹ - much of this Ancient Woodland is within Weston Big Wood outside the settlement in the green belt, but also includes East Wood and Wood Hill within the town.

3.36 Weston Big Wood is also home to the rare Round-leaved Whitebeam. The Round-leaved Whitebeam is only found within the Neighbourhood Area, within the

Avon Gorge and over the Severn Estuary in the Forest of Dean. The Round-leaved Whitebeam is classed as 'vulnerable' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.²⁰

3.37 The Standing Advice from Natural England and the Forestry Commission²¹ relating to buffers for ancient woodlands, is that the proposal should have a buffer zone of at least 15 metres from the boundary of the woodland to avoid root damage (known as the root protection area). In their 'Planners' Manual for Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees' (2019) the Woodland Trust state in relation to providing adequate buffers, "Although there is no 'one size fits all' with buffer design, each one should be designed to fulfil the specific requirements of its location and the type of proposed development. In order to protect Weston Big Wood as an irreplaceable habitats in Portishead, the biggest possible buffers should separate ancient woodland and any development that comes forward. As a precautionary principle, a 50-150 metre buffer should be maintained between a development and the ancient woodland, including through the construction phase, unless the applicant can demonstrate very clearly how a smaller buffer would suffice. Weston Big Wood is designated as a Site of Special

Scientific Interest (SSSI). SSSI impact risk zones around the wood are used as a tool to make an assessment of any development proposals - the first risk zone around the wood extends to 50meters (and there is currently no development within this zone) and the second to 150m.

3.38 Overall tree canopy coverage in Portishead in 2020 is estimated to be an average of 20% which has been mapped to date using the i-tree canopy tool²². The Woodland Trust recommend an increase in UK woodland cover from its current 13% of land area to 19% by 2050 to tackle this country's biodiversity and climate crises.²³ The Urban Forestry and Woodland Advisory Committee Network²⁴ advise that 'a minimum standard for tree canopy cover is set for a local area, with evidence showing that 20% is a good aspiration'. It is therefore considered necessary and achievable, for any development proposals in Portishead to continue to deliver 20% tree canopy coverage.

3.39 Trees in Portishead have a range of functions, be it contributing towards biodiversity and amenity value, providing shade and helping with other adaptations to the effects of climate change. There

are a significant number of trees with Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) reflecting the importance of trees and woodland in and around this town, which are highly valued by the local community. Existing Tree Protection Orders can be viewed on North Somerset Council’s online planning map.²⁵

3.40 Inspired by work on the NDP, a group of local people started the Significant Trees of Portishead project which aims to record, map and collect key data on the trees in the Neighbourhood Area, with a view to protect valuable trees and sustainably increase the overall tree cover in Portishead. The aim of the project was to work with ecologists, arboriculturalists and local people to ensure the appropriate species and size of tree are planted in the right places to maximise their chance of survival and ensure that the overall GBI network is protected and enhanced through tree planting. The project used *iNaturalist*²⁶ – an online mapping tool – to map and record data. Detail and analysis of the treescape in Portishead is included in the Portishead GBI Evidence Base Report (2022), with key features shown on Figure 7.

3.41 As stated in North Somerset Council’s adopted policy framework, retaining trees and hedgerows can influence both the design and layout of any development, and

arrangements for their protection should be made during the construction phase. Designs should also take account of the long term setting for important trees and how they will relate to the use of the area in the future. It is important to note here that a Neighbourhood Plan in itself cannot protect a tree from being felled, unless it is protected by a Tree Preservation Order or is within a Conservation Area.

3.42 Hedgerows, like trees, can make an important contribution to the character and can also be important historically as indications of land use and previous ownership. They also contribute significantly to biodiversity and amenity value of the natural and, in places, built environment. Trees will also help with adaptation to the effects of climate change.

3.43 Where tree loss is unavoidable, a Tree Replacement Standard can be used to inform the number of replacement trees for the loss in canopy cover.

3.44 Whilst a particular site or design approach to trees will inform the number and approach to tree planting, the standard below is an established methodology to underpin discussions on the replacement of these key assets.

3.45 The Neighbourhood Area is located within the Forest of Avon, which is part of a national programme of Community Forests across England, delivering more trees and woodlands. In 2021, the Forest of Avon published its *Tree and Woodland Strategy for the West of England*²⁷, which the NDP Community Actions aim to contribute towards. Looking ahead, the aim is to ensure that the city’s tree cover is, at the very least, protected and maintained in keeping with SDG 15 – Life on Land.

Trunk Diameter of Tree lost to development (cm measured at 1.5 metres above ground level)	Number of Replacement Trees
Less than 15	0 - 1
15 - 19.9	1
20 - 29.9	2
30 - 39.9	3
40 - 49.9	4
50 - 59.9	5
60 - 69.9	6
70 - 79.9	7
80 +	8

Table 1: Tree Replacement Standard (based on the Bristol Tree Replacement Standard (known as BTRS – see page 21 of Bristol City Council’s Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document)

Relevant Objective

O3 To protect, maintain and expand Portishead's distinctive treescape and woodland areas such as Weston Big Wood.

Local Policy Context

CS4 Nature conservation
CS9 Green Infrastructure
DM8 Nature Conservation
DM9 Trees and Woodlands
Biodiversity and Trees SPD



POLICY PEN5 – TREES, HEDGEROWS AND WOODLAND

Ancient and Veteran Trees

Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate no loss, or deterioration of the irreplaceable habitats of Ancient Woodland (as shown on Figure 7). Development proposals directly or indirectly affecting Ancient Woodland and ancient trees or veteran trees identified in the Neighbourhood Plan Area will be resisted. A 50 - 150metre buffer should be maintained between any development and the Ancient Woodland of the SSSI Weston Big Wood, including during the construction phase, in order to avoid adverse impacts on this irreplaceable habitat, unless the applicant can demonstrate very clearly how a smaller buffer would be acceptable.

Any ancient or veteran trees must be retained within a development site, including a root protection area and appropriate buffer zone, which should be whichever is greater of, either an area which is a radius of 15 times the diameter of the tree with no cap or (b) 5 metres beyond the crown.

Other Existing Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

Existing trees and hedgerows on development sites should be considered throughout the design process to be retained and incorporated as placemaking features in new development.

Development proposals affecting other existing trees or hedgerows should ensure that there is no damage, or loss of value, to those which demonstrate good arboricultural, biodiversity value nor to the Locally Identified Significant Trees identified on Figure 7 (and as part of the ongoing Significant Trees of Portishead project). Protection before and after development should be in accordance with British Standard BS5837.

Where there is an unavoidable loss of trees on site, the number and type of replacement trees should be informed by the quality and size of the lost trees.

cont.

POLICY PEN5 – TREES, HEDGEROWS AND WOODLAND CONTINUED

New Trees

New tree planting, in development proposals and throughout the built and natural environments of the Plan area, will be supported to maintain and increase the overall tree canopy cover of the Neighbourhood Area, and to provide gateway and landmark trees that contribute to local distinctiveness. This should be informed by relevant ecology and arboricultural assessment and should have regard to the advice set out in the Portishead GBI Evidence Base Report - with a preference for native, large-canopied and orchard species.

Tree Canopy Cover

Proposals should clearly set out what the future tree canopy coverage of a site will be with a target of 20% of the site area on sites outside of the town centre and greater than 0.5 ha in size. This will principally be achieved through retention and planting of trees, but where it can be demonstrated that this is impractical, the use of other green infrastructure (e.g. green roofs) can be used to deliver equivalent benefit. On residential development sites, some of this tree canopy cover will be expected to be met through new trees on streets as well as within gardens.

SIGNIFICANT TREES OF PORTISHEAD PROJECT

During the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, members of the Environment Working Group took part in a project to log significant trees in Portishead to catalogue key information such as their species, size, health, function and location. Part of the project's aim was to identify trees with potential for tree preservation orders (TPOs) and / or for listing on the Woodland Trust's Ancient Tree Inventory²⁸, which would grant them further protection.

Figure 7 shows those that have been identified as part of the project, although there will be many more within the Neighbourhood Area.

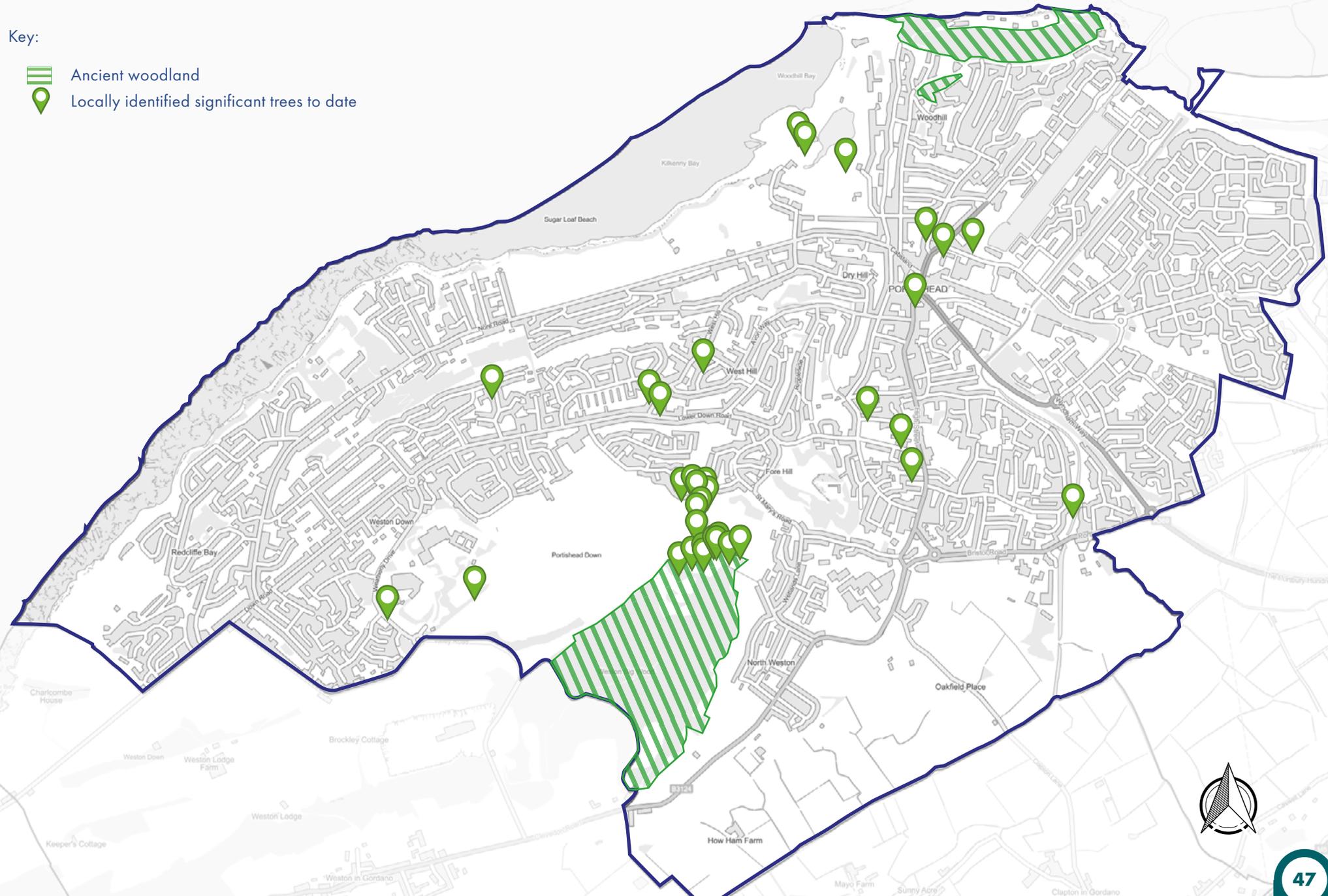
Nominations and suggestions for significant trees were made directly from the community via online engagement and other methods.

The project builds evidence around what makes a tree valuable and successful in particular places in Portishead, locations for potential tree planting; useful to inform rewilding projects within the Neighbourhood Area to help ensure that the 'right trees are planted in the right places' (NPPF paragraph 131).

Figure 7: Ancient Woodland, Locally Identified Significant Trees

Key:

-  Ancient woodland
-  Locally identified significant trees to date



DESIGNATION OF LOCAL GREEN SPACES

Context

3.46 The Neighbourhood Plan proposes the designation of Local Green Spaces. The designation, introduced by the NPPF, provides special protection against development for green areas of importance to communities. The designation can be used:

- where the green space is in reasonably proximity to the community it serves
- where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife.
- where the green area is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

Local Green Spaces do not have to be publicly accessible, and do not need to be in public ownership.

3.47 North Somerset Council's Sites and Policies Plan Part 2 document designates Local Green Spaces in Portishead. These designations are carried forward into the emerging Local Plan (specifically

emerging policy LP14 Local Green Space). The Neighbourhood Plan identifies further spaces for designation that are particularly special to Portishead's local community.

3.48 A full explanation of the methodology, evidence and justification to support the designation of the nominated Local Green Spaces is set out in the Portishead Local Green Space Evidence Base Report (2022).

3.49 Local policy for managing development on a Local Green Space should be consistent with policy for Green Belt. This means 'inappropriate development of the space would not be allowed except for in very special circumstances'. (NPPF 2021, para 147)². It is possible that limited development affecting a Local Green Space could be acceptable, for example new / replacement facilities relating to the functions normally associated with the space (e.g. changing rooms for recreation spaces). Development and uses unrelated to those functions, such as residential development, would not normally be acceptable and would need to meet the exception test requiring 'very special circumstances'

3.50 Only those spaces which meet the Local Green Space criteria above are included in the draft designations in Policy PEN6. The Portishead Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has also identified a wider network of undesignated green spaces which spans the whole town and encompasses the spaces which do not fit the Local Green Space criteria and so cannot be included as Local Green Space. NDP Policy PEN7 (Other Green Space) includes more information on this network of spaces.

North Somerset Council Sites and Policies Plan para 4.38-9 <https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-03/site%20allocations%20plan.pdf>

Relevant Objective

09 To protect and improve health, wellbeing, leisure and recreation opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities by protecting and expanding community facilities and spaces for community activities to ensure that Portishead is a welcoming, safe and accessible place for everyone.

010 To ensure all residents have easy access to local green, blue and open spaces, and to promote environments and transport networks that offer all individuals and communities the greatest potential to lead active and healthy lifestyles.

Local Policy Context

SA5 Local Green Space

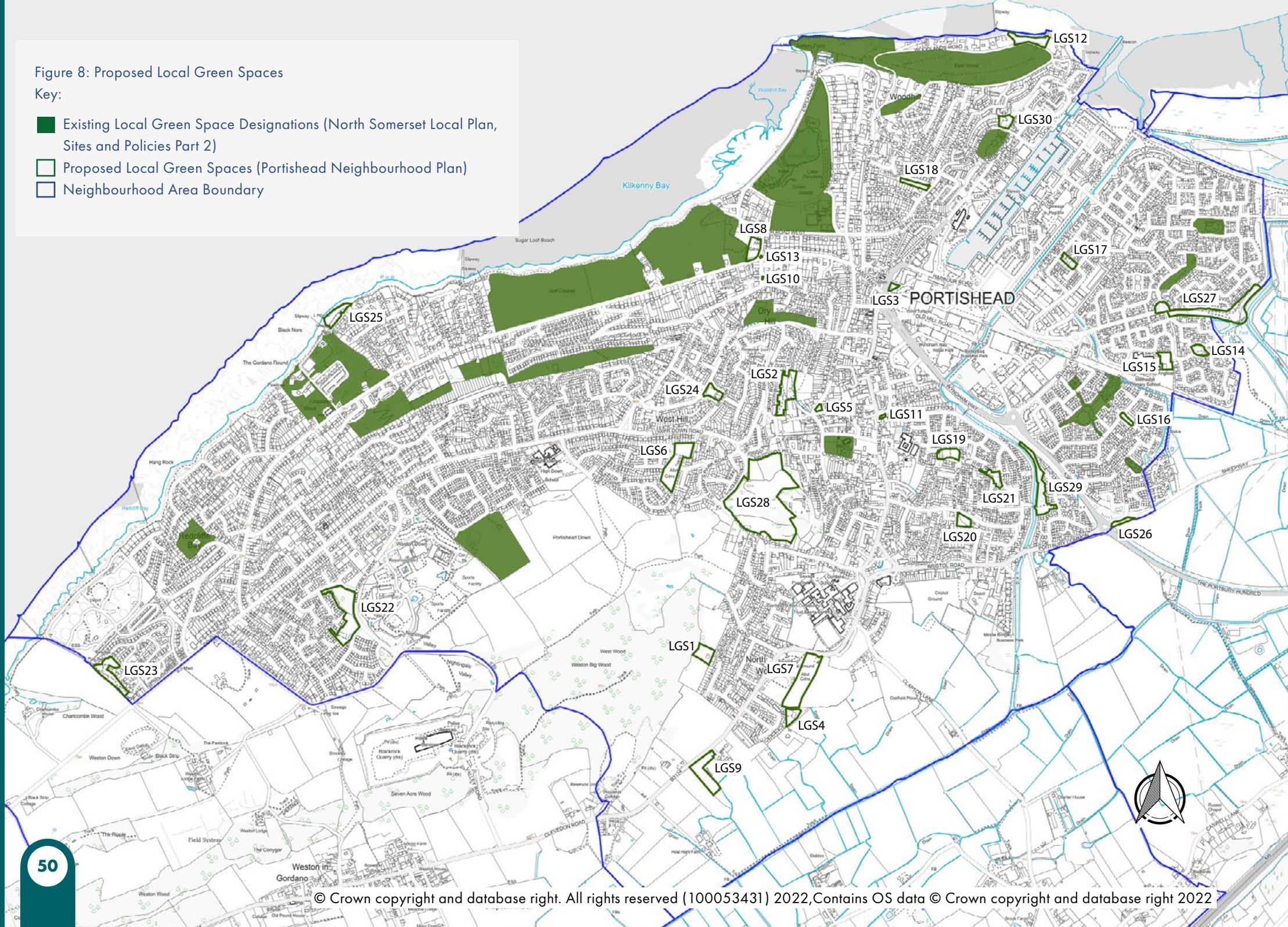
SA6 Undesignated Green Space

POLICY PEN6 – DESIGNATION OF LOCAL GREEN SPACES

In accordance with NPPF paragraphs 101-103, planning permission will not be granted except in very special circumstances for development which adversely affects a designated Local Green Space as shown on Figure 8 and detailed in the Local Green Space Evidence Base Report, particularly regarding the characteristics underpinning its designation, such as beauty, historic importance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of wildlife.

Figure 8: Proposed Local Green Spaces
Key:

- Existing Local Green Space Designations (North Somerset Local Plan, Sites and Policies Part 2)
- Proposed Local Green Spaces (Portishead Neighbourhood Plan)
- Neighbourhood Area Boundary



OTHER GREEN SPACES

Context

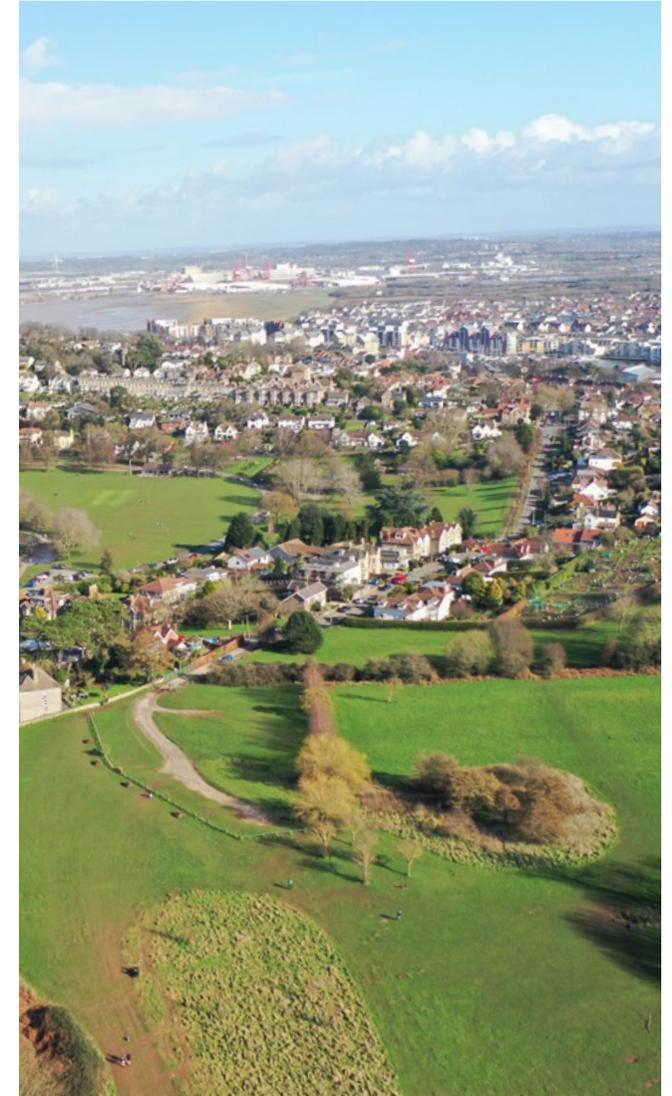
3.51 Green spaces within and around the built environment are a key component of Portishead's GBI network. Increasing development pressure on the town has highlighted the importance of nearby and accessible open spaces in Portishead for the local community; a sentiment that has only increased throughout the pandemic.

3.52 North Somerset policy SA6 recognises the value of open green spaces which are not designated as Local Green Spaces in making worthwhile contributions to the townscape, character, setting and visual attractiveness of a place. The policies require development proposals that affect undesignated open spaces to not have a detrimental impact on green infrastructure by adversely affecting spaces that make this worthwhile contribution. In Portishead, our undesignated open spaces have a range of functions and provide a range of ecosystem services, for example providing space for recreation and play, providing an important community value, local food production, contributing towards the townscape and distinctive character of an area, and providing space for biodiversity to thrive through rewilding projects.

3.53 The Portishead GBI Evidence Base Report (2022) includes an audit of open spaces in Portishead, which includes identification of spaces and their function and value, as well as opportunities for improvement where appropriate. The open space audit and Policy PEN7 adds local detail to North Somerset policy by identifying the open spaces in Portishead and their valued functions and contributions. The open spaces are identified on Figure 9.

3.54 Some of the undesignated green spaces in Portishead are identified as Community Open Spaces. These green spaces are where limited development is supported, so long as it is in keeping with the existing use and community value of the site. For example, a school may wish to build a sports pavilion on its playing field, or a medical centre may need to build additional healthcare facilities on its land.

3.55 Throughout the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, Slade Road open area has been highlighted as an important open green space for the local community. In planning terms, two distinct areas make



up this space. The first is the western, wooded area, which this Neighbourhood Plan proposes to designate as a Local Green Space (see policy PEN6 above), to be protected from development in line with Green Belt policy.

3.56 The second area is the eastern, more open area, which local people value for its recreation and biodiversity. The space is used informally for bmx and other activities, and there is an informal footpath that crosses the area.

3.57 This eastern area is allocated for residential development in North Somerset's Local Plan Policy SA1. This is an allocation that is brought forward into emerging Local Plan material from North Somerset. The Neighbourhood Plan cannot be used to block development, so it is not appropriate for the Neighbourhood Plan to identify this space in PEN7. However, it is important that the recreational and biodiversity value of this space is noted.

3.58 The Other Green Spaces map and policy should be read in conjunction with draft Neighbourhood Plan Policy PEN6.



Relevant Objectives:

O2 To protect and enhance the multi-functional blue-green (water and green) spaces of our town and the links between them, recognising the importance of these areas for health and wellbeing.

O10 To ensure all residents have easy access to local green, blue and open spaces, and to promote environments and transport networks that offer all individuals and communities the greatest potential to lead active and healthy lifestyles.

Local Policy Context

CS9 Green infrastructure
SA5 Local Green Space
SA6 Undesignated Green Space

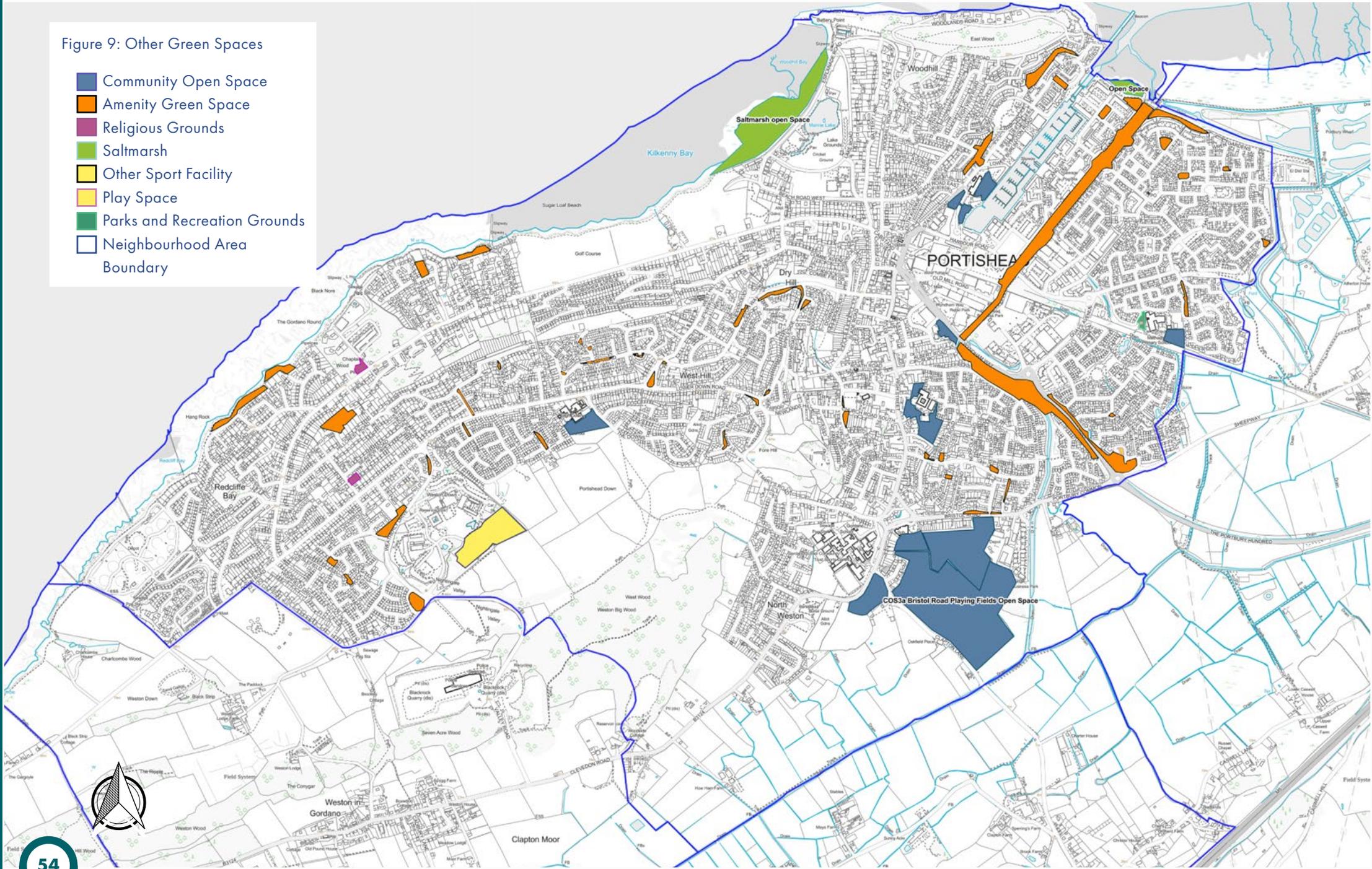
POLICY PEN7 - OTHER GREEN SPACES

Development proposals affecting green spaces, not designated as Local Green Spaces, as identified on Figure 9, will only be acceptable provided they:

- do not have a detrimental impact on green infrastructure by adversely affecting spaces which provide an important community and/or biodiversity value, and/or make a worthwhile contribution to amenity and/or the townscape, character, setting, visual attractiveness of the settlement, and
- demonstrate from an assessment of open space provision, using the quantity and access standards for open space as set out by North Somerset Council²⁹, that there is a surplus in the catchment area of open space beyond that required to meet both current and forecast need, and full consideration has been given to all functions that the open space performs, or
- demonstrate that a replacement open space (or enhancement of the remainder of the existing site) provides a net benefit to the community in terms of the quantity, quality and accessibility of the open space including by walking and cycling.
- Any proposed development on school playing fields must be for education purposes or where the Department for Education is satisfied that the land is no longer required for school use and its loss would not result in a shortfall in recreational open space/playing pitches for the local community.

Figure 9: Other Green Spaces

- Community Open Space
- Amenity Green Space
- Religious Grounds
- Saltmarsh
- Other Sport Facility
- Play Space
- Parks and Recreation Grounds
- Neighbourhood Area Boundary



PLANNING POLICIES: BUILT ENVIRONMENT

LOCALLY DISTINCTIVE, HIGH QUALITY DESIGN

Context

3.59 In 2019 the Government published a 'National Design Guide'³⁰ which highlights the importance of understanding and responding to local character. In early 2021 a National Model Design Code³¹ was introduced as part of the government's planning practice guidance. It expands the National Design Guide and reflects the government's priorities and provides a common overarching framework for design.

3.60 The 2021 update of the NPPF also underscores the importance of high quality design: "the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve."³²

3.61 The NPPF sets out that "Neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development".³³

3.62 An in-depth survey and analysis of the locally distinctive character and design of the built and natural environment is summarised in the Portishead Community

Character Statement (2022), which forms a key part of the evidence base for our Neighbourhood Plan. It has been produced by the Steering Group with guidance from Plan consultants. The core of this document is a description and analysis of important and locally distinctive features of the town as a whole and the distinctive areas within it.

3.63 The Portishead Community Character Statement complements and informs our Neighbourhood Plan. It reflects local aspirations and sets out how the identified special qualities and locally distinctive characteristics should be reflected in development proposals. The combination of Portishead's distinctive landscape setting that ranges from coastal to ridges with areas of ancient woodland, to pastoral farmland in the Gordano Valley, and its diverse settlement pattern, as well as a rich variety of building forms and architectural styles contribute to a rich and diverse character.

3.64 The Community Character Statement should be used at the earliest possible stages of design and as part of early pre-application community engagement.

3.65 Policy PEB1 includes requirements for 'major' development proposals. 'Major' development is generally defined as development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or where the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more.

3.66 Policy PEB1 encourages developments to take note of the twelve design quality considerations in *Building for a Healthy Life*³⁴ which cover the themes of 'integrated neighbourhoods', 'distinctive places' and 'streets for all'. If developments achieve nine out of twelve 'green' indicators within these themes, they can secure a Building for a Healthy Life commendation.

Relevant Objective

O5 To ensure that development protects and reinforces Portishead's character and distinctiveness, and encourages the highest standards of building, public space and landscape design and sustainability.

Local Policy Context

- CS12 Achieving High Quality Design and Placemaking
- DM32 Quality Design

POLICY PEB1 - LOCALLY DISTINCTIVE, HIGH QUALITY DESIGN

High quality development proposals which protect, conserve and enhance the built and natural environment of Portishead and deliver locally distinct places and high quality design where people can live well will be supported.

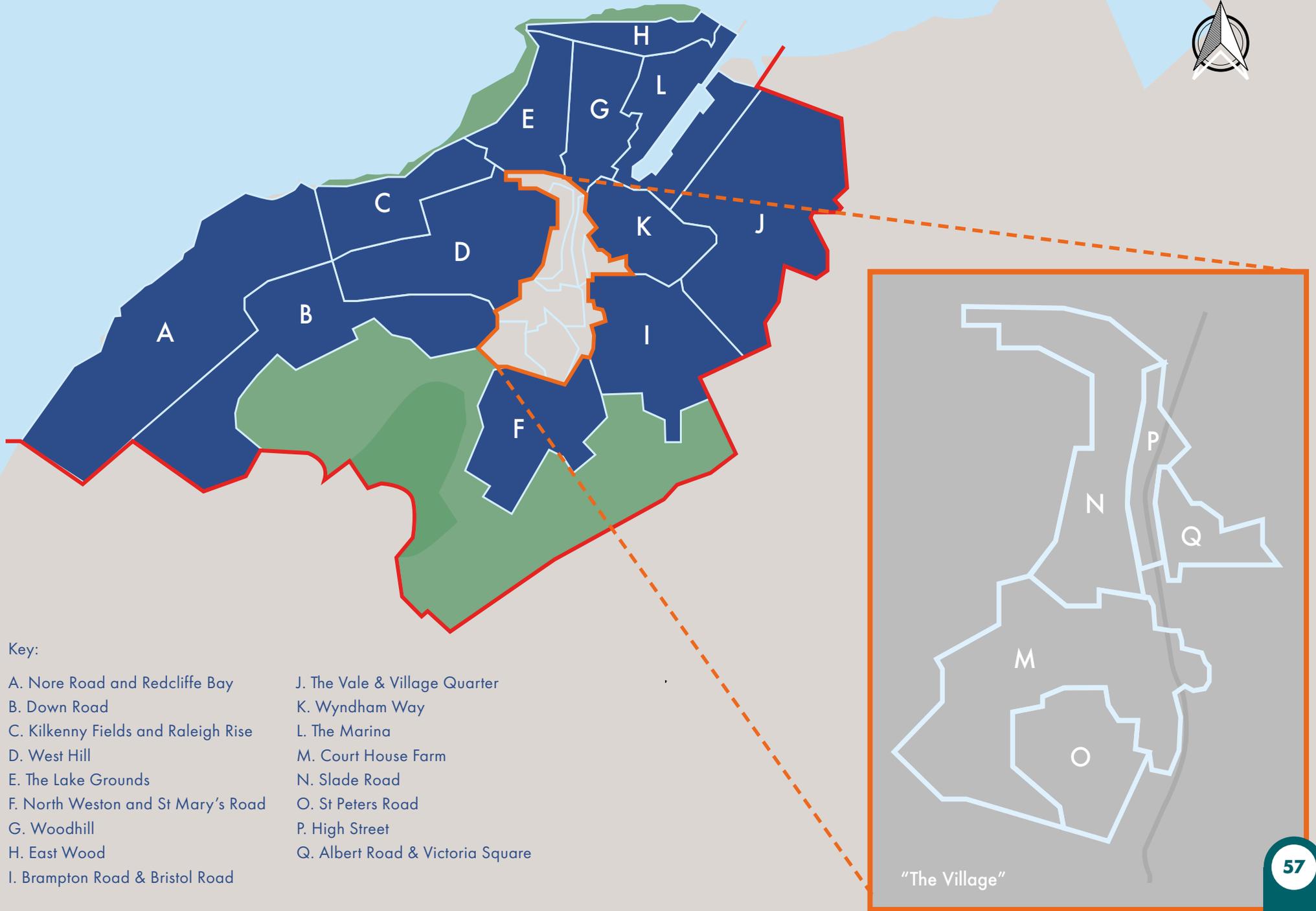
All new development must be based on thorough site and context appraisal, and must draw upon positive and distinctive features of Portishead's built and natural character and heritage.

Any proposals for major development must demonstrate how the proposed development layout, density, access proposals and building design approach complement and extend the positive characteristics of the immediate area, wider settlement and landscape of Portishead.

In addition to having regard to the National Design Guidance and North Somerset Council design policy, development proposals must demonstrate how they have been informed by the Portishead Community Character Assessment, and therefore how they have responded positively to the history and characteristics of the area in which the site is located.

Major development scheme proposals with a residential component should be shaped using the Building for a Healthy Life design assessment tool or similar, and have regard to National Design Guidance and Secured by Design standards. Major residential development schemes that demonstrate that they achieve nine out of twelve 'green' indicators, securing Building for a Healthy Life Commendation, will be supported.

Figure 10: Character Areas



SMALL AND INFILL DEVELOPMENT

Context

3.67 Adopted North Somerset policy SA2 identifies Portishead's settlement boundary, within which residential development is acceptable in principle (subject to the other detailed policies of the Local Plan). The built area of Portishead has a tightly drawn settlement boundary, outside of which is either the Severn Estuary or current Green Belt land – see Figure 11.

3.68 During the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan and its associated Community Character Statement, the community highlighted concerns over levels of development pressure on land within the Settlement Boundary and the impact of this being instances of residential development 'squeezed into' inappropriate locations which do not reflect the character of nearby existing development, for example, there has been strong and successful resistance to any change to the status quo on the large section of open grassland at Portishead Golf Course.

3.69 Local Plan policies SA2 (Settlement Boundaries) and DM37 (Residential development within existing residential areas) set criteria for acceptable

residential development within existing residential areas. NDP Policy PEB2 below sets out Portishead-specific criteria for how this should be delivered within the Neighbourhood Area. It also broadens the scope of this topic to include criteria for infill development to provide other land uses such as employment opportunities or new facilities.

3.70 Infill development is defined as the filling of a relatively small gap between existing buildings³⁵.

3.71 A priority objective of the Core Strategy is to maximise brownfield opportunities in Portishead. Brownfield land is defined as land that has been 'previously developed'; this definition excludes agricultural or forestry buildings and gardens.

3.72 Local planning authorities, including North Somerset Council, are required to publish a brownfield land register for their area which sets out previously developed land that a local planning authority considers suitable for residential development. Whether a brownfield is

considered 'suitable' will be decided by North Somerset Planning officers taking into account considerations such as biodiversity, highways and identified local needs.

3.73 During the preparation of the Plan, local people highlighted the key concern that infrastructure in Portishead must be improved in order to support any new residential development. Any proposals for infill residential development in Portishead should ensure that they do not negatively impact on local infrastructure provision, particularly health and education services.



Relevant Objectives:

O7 To deliver sustainable development which prioritises brownfield land, responds positively to the climate crisis, reduces our carbon footprint and energy demand, and mitigates the local impacts of climate change.

O5 To ensure that development protects and reinforces Portishead's character and distinctiveness, and encourages the highest standards of building, public space and landscape design and sustainability.

Local Policy Context

SA2 Settlement boundaries
CS14 Distribution of new housing
CS31 Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead
DM37 Residential development in existing residential areas
Residential Design Guide SPD

POLICY PEB2 - SMALL AND INFILL DEVELOPMENT

Proposals for new or improved local employment opportunities, small housing developments for up to and including 9 units, and / or new services and facilities that contribute to the continued and sustainable growth of Portishead will be supported in principle provided that development is located within the Settlement Boundary and accords with the limits of development provisions set out in the North Somerset Local Plan (policies SA2 and DM37).

Small and infill development within the Settlement Boundary that ensures the regeneration of previously developed land, or conversion and/or refurbishment of existing premises will be supported in principle, subject to compliance with other policies in the development plan.

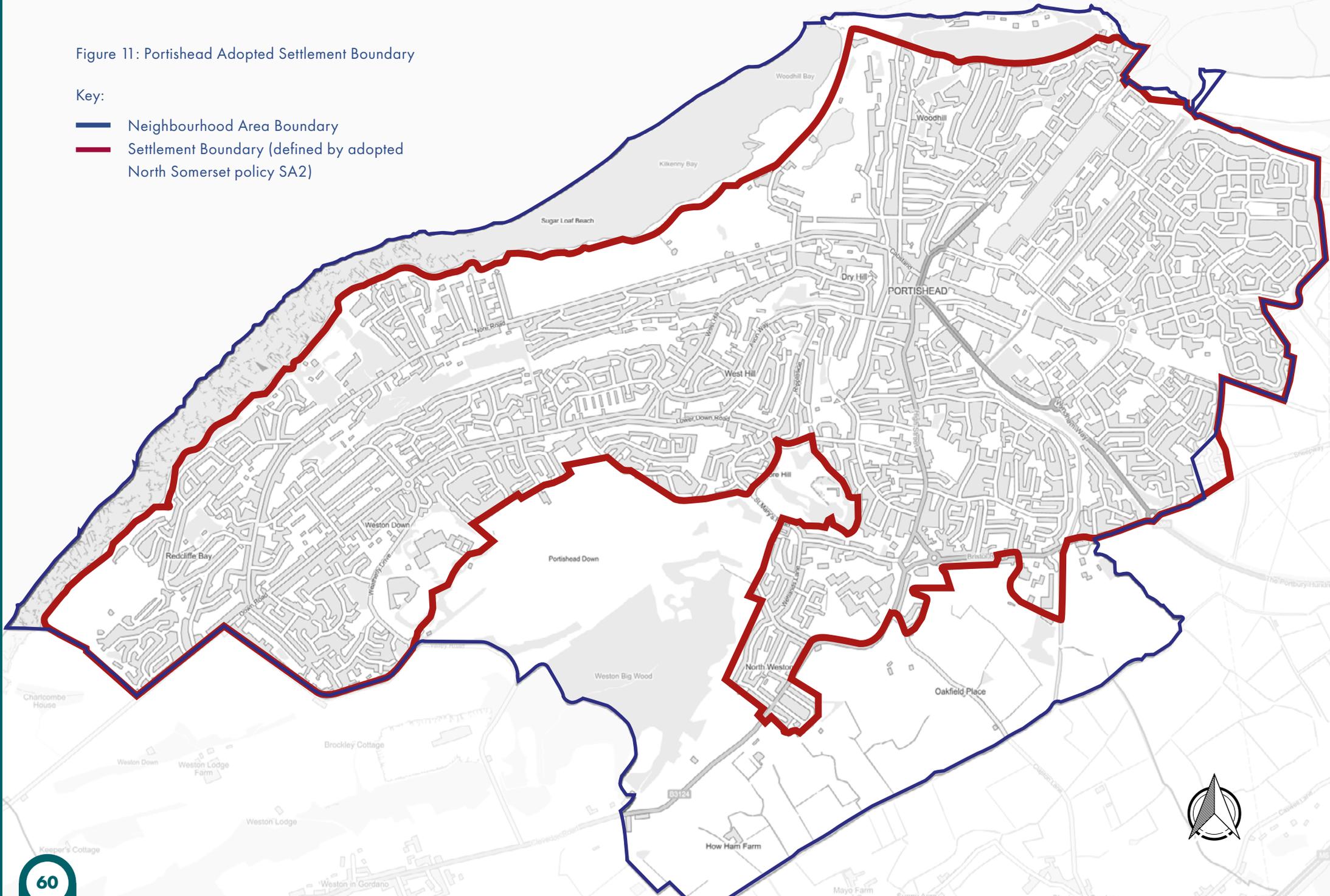
Any small and infill development should:

- Not adversely affect the character of the area, paying particular attention to the rhythms of existing plot sizes and the volumes of houses, as identified in the Portishead Community Character Statement; and
- Deliver an improvement in biodiversity within and, where appropriate, beyond the site, with particular reference to policy PEN4 in this Neighbourhood Plan, where an improvement of over 10% in net gain in biodiversity will be particularly supported.

Figure 11: Portishead Adopted Settlement Boundary

Key:

- Neighbourhood Area Boundary
- Settlement Boundary (defined by adopted North Somerset policy SA2)



LOCAL HERITAGE

Context

3.74 Portishead is rich in local heritage and has an active local history group – The Gordano Civic Society. There are 39 listed buildings in the town, as well as one scheduled ancient monument, and four Conservation Areas, as shown on Figure 12.

3.75 A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural character and historic interest which is protected by law against certain changes. Unlike listed buildings, which are designated by Historic England, Conservation Areas are appointed and managed by the Local Authority - in this case North Somerset District Council. [The Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990 \(Part II section 72\)](#)⁶⁰ requires planning authorities to pay special attention to the 'preserving or enhancing the character or appearance' of a Conservation Area.

3.76 National policy states that, in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. This should be a thorough assessment of impact proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset which can range from the Conservation Area itself to specific

buildings or structures. Heritage statements are a method of ensuring that this work is undertaken as part of any development procedures.

3.77 There are also many more buildings, and structures in Portishead that play a role in collective heritage and identity of the town even though they do not meet the listing criteria for nationally significant heritage assets for Grade I or II listing (such as the grade II listed Fedden Village/ National Nautical School), are valued as part of the local heritage story. Their heritage value places them in the category of 'buildings of local interest', otherwise called 'non-designated heritage assets'. Through research and consultation, a number of such locally valued non-designated heritage assets have been identified. Some of these are also recorded on the North Somerset Historic Environment Record. These are shown on Figure 12 and detailed information is set out in the Portishead Locally Valued Non-designated Heritage Assets Report (2022) which is part of the evidence base to the Neighbourhood Plan.

3.78 By identifying buildings and structures of local interest, the local community has the chance to recognise buildings or other heritage assets that are of importance to

the sense of place and local heritage and that these need to be regarded with care in planning decisions. This will benefit both owners and developers regarding better understanding of opportunities and constraints of the local area.

3.79 North Somerset Council are working in collaboration with Historic England to launch a Local Heritage List for North Somerset. The Local Heritage List for the district has a nomination and assessment process. Buildings and structures of local interest identified in this Neighbourhood Plan may be nominated for consideration for the North Somerset List and are considered to be strong candidates having been identified locally using Historic England guidance and have also been through a rigorous public consultation process.

"There are a number of processes through which non-designated heritage assets may be identified, including the local and neighbourhood plan-making processes and conservation area appraisals and reviews. Irrespective of how they are identified, it is important that the decisions to identify them as non-designated heritage assets are based on sound evidence."

Paragraph 40 Historic Environment PPG⁶²

Relevant Objective:

O6 To ensure that new development is sympathetic to our local heritage, including its maritime and industrial history.

Local Policy Context

- CS5 Landscape and the Historic Environment
- DM3 Conservation Areas
- DM4 Listed Buildings
- DM5 Historic Parks and Gardens
- DM6 Archaeology
- DM7 Non-designated Heritage

POLICY PEB3: LOCAL HERITAGE

A. Designated Heritage Assets

Development will be expected to preserve and where appropriate enhance the character, appearance, special interest and setting of:

- the four Conservation Areas in Portishead, existing open green space, including private gardens, should be protected from unsympathetic development where this would have an adverse impact on the historic character of a Conservation Area; and
- Listed buildings and structures across the town.

B. Non-designated Heritage Assets

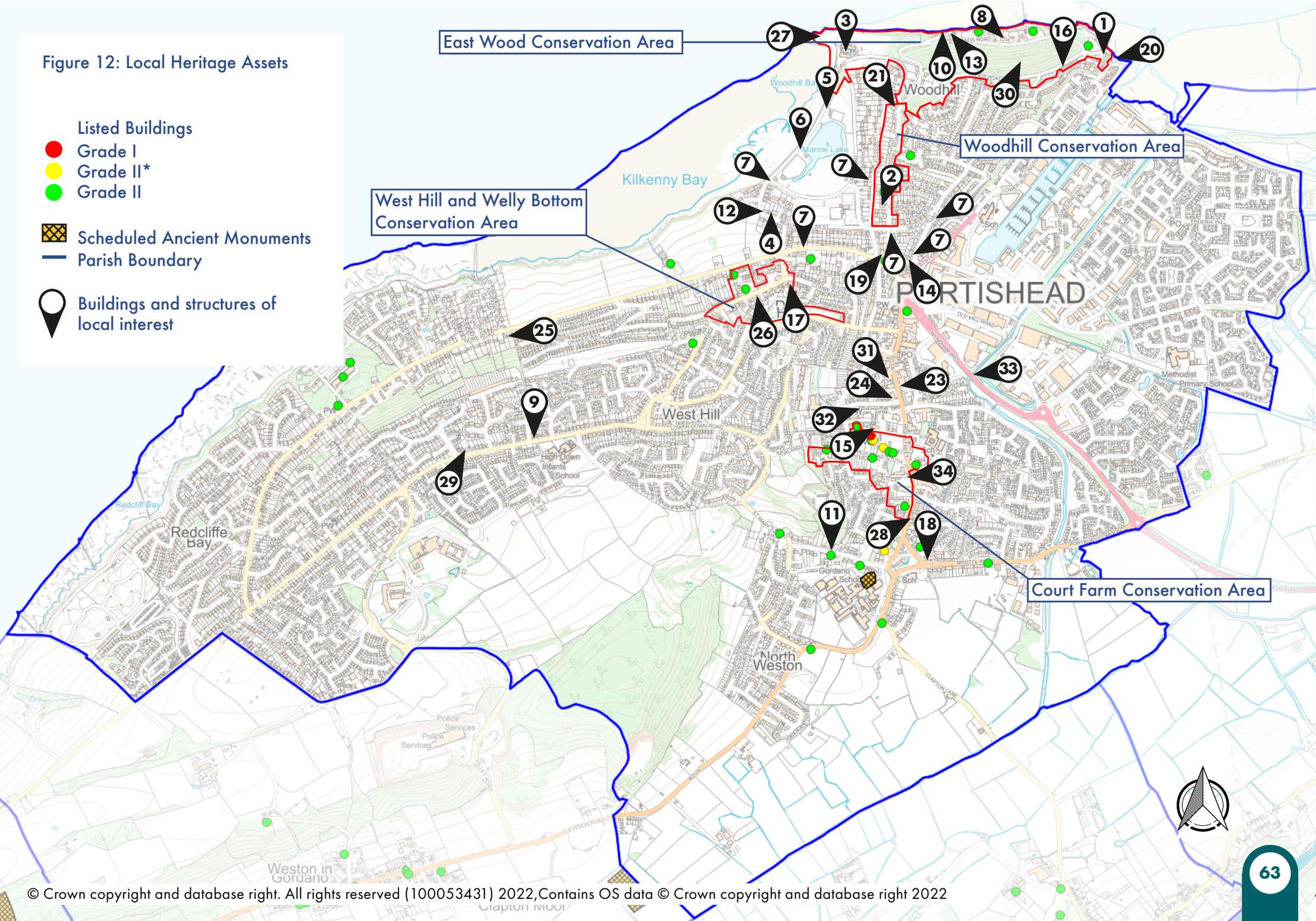
Development proposals that affect non-designated Heritage Assets (including buildings or structures of local interest as shown on Figure 12) will be required to take into account the character, context and setting, including important views towards and from the building or structure. Development proposals must demonstrate that appropriate consideration has been given to:

- i. the significance of the heritage asset;
- ii. its most distinctive and important features;
- iii. the elements of its setting and immediate surrounds that contribute to its significance; and,
- iv. the contribution the asset and its setting makes to the character of the local area (whether in a Conservation Area or not).

A heritage impact assessment should accompany planning applications in Portishead which have the potential to impact upon heritage assets (designated and non-designated) and/or its setting.

Figure 12: Local Heritage Assets

- Listed Buildings
 - Grade I
 - Grade II*
 - Grade II
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Parish Boundary
- Buildings and structures of local interest



BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES OF LOCAL INTEREST

1. Historic Building (House): The Dock Master's House
2. Historic Building (House): The Abbey' Woodhill Road
3. Swimming Pool: Portishead Open Air Pool
4. Historic Building (House): Mariners Cottage
5. Street Furniture: Street Lamps*
6. Street Furniture: Street Benches*
7. Street Furniture: Ventilation Columns*
8. Historic Buildings (House): Woodlands and Holmleigh
9. Historic Building (House): The Upper Lodge
10. Historic Building (Salt Water Bathhouse): The Saltings
11. Historic Building (House): The Cot
12. Historic Building (House): Myrtle Cottage
13. Historic Building (House): Anchorage
14. Historic Building: "The old police station" **
15. Historic Building (House): Church Cottage
16. Street Furniture: Fencing and Gates: Power Station original Fencing
17. Historic Building (House): Avon View House & Annex
18. Historic Building (Public House): The Albion **
19. Historic Building (Church): United Reform Church **
20. Historic Pier and Building: Lifeboat station, Slipway and Pier **
21. Historic Building (House): 71-73 Woodhill Road
22. Historic Building (Church): Methodist Church **
23. Historic Building (Public House): The Plough **
24. Historic Building (Public House): The Poacher **
25. Historic Building (House): Nore Lodge
26. Historic Building (Converted Church/Dwelling): Moose Hall **
27. Historic Lighthouse: Battery Point Lighthouse
28. Historic Building (House): Clarence House
29. Historic Building (House): Down House
30. Iron Age Hill Fort: East Wood **
31. Historic Building: Former Portishead Post Office
32. Historic Building: Roath Road Chapel **
33. Historic Bridge: Weston, Clevedon and Portishead Light Railway bridge
34. Historic Building (Lodge House): Clarence House Lodge

Note: planning policy only has an impact where planning consent is needed. There will be little control over street furniture which is covered instead by the Highways Act unless it is actually fully listed (Grade I, Grade II or Grade II listed).

** Non-designated heritage assets also recorded on the North Somerset Historic Environment Record.

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND RETROFITTING

3.80 The emissions from the UK's buildings account for 26% of the UK's total emissions. 18% of this total is from our homes (32% in Portishead) (Centre for Sustainable Energy, 2021)³⁶. This is not only bad for the planet, it is bad for the occupants; new homes need to be designed and built to use significantly less energy (which also means they would cost a lot less to run) (Net Carbon Toolkit, 2021)³⁷.

3.81 The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019³⁸ commits the UK government by law to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 'net zero' by 2050, and constitutes a legally binding commitment to end the UK's contribution to climate change. 'Net zero' refers to the balance between the amount of greenhouse gas produced and the amount removed from the atmosphere.

3.82 North Somerset Council's Climate Emergency Strategic Action Plan³⁹ sets out the Council's aim to become a carbon neutral area by 2030 and is updated every year. Every redevelopment project or new build in Portishead provides an opportunity to make a difference and a contribution towards meeting North Somerset's climate change targets for 2030 and beyond.

3.83 Achieving an energy efficient built environment is a key theme in North Somerset Council's Climate Emergency Strategic Action Plan, including the aim for all new homes and commercial space to be carbon neutral or carbon neutral plus. Addressing climate change and carbon reduction (Policy CS1), and delivering sustainable design and construction (Policy CS2) are leading policies within North Somerset Council's adopted Local Plan. Policy PEB4 is part of Portishead Town Council's local response to the climate emergency.

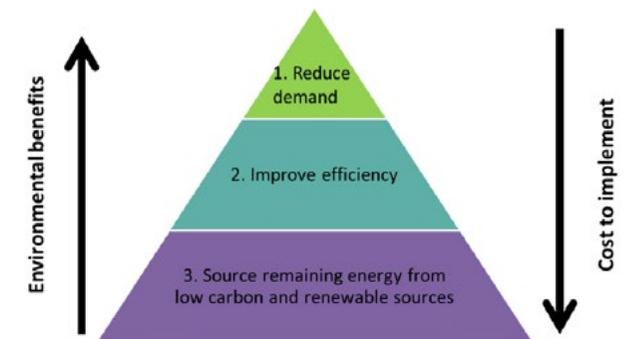
3.84 Responding to the climate emergency is also a priority in North Somerset Council's emerging Local Plan (see footnote links). Evidence underpinning emerging Local Plan Policy DP6 (Net Zero Construction) is particularly relevant to NDP policy PEB4; this evidence illustrates the need for the measures set out in policy PEB4, as well as their deliverability and viability.

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-03/net%20zero%20new%20build%20policy%20evidence%20December%202021.pdf>

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-02/Operational%20Carbon%20non-domestic%20Jul21.pdf>

3.85 The Net Zero Carbon Framework (2021) is a key reference for NDP policy PEB4. The Framework has been created to make Net Zero carbon new build and retrofit more accessible. The Framework is for use by building professionals (developers, contractors, architects and engineers) and is also relevant to self-builders, planning officers and other housing professionals. The UK Green Building Council also provides a framework definition to help guide the implementation of net zero building.

3.86 The energy use of existing buildings in Portishead represents a large proportion of our total carbon emissions. The sensitive retrofitting of these buildings is supported. The [LETI Climate Emergency Retrofit Guide](#)⁴⁰ provides some further key guidance on how we can retrofit our homes to make them fit for the future and support our net zero targets.



The Energy Hierarchy

Relevant Objective

O5 To ensure that development protects and reinforces Portishead's character and distinctiveness, and encourages the highest standards of building, public space and landscape design and sustainability.

Existing Local Policy Context

- CS1 Addressing climate change and carbon reduction
- CS2 Delivering sustainable design and construction

RELATED COMMUNITY ACTIONS

- The Town Council should encourage and stimulate improvement of the energy efficiency of the existing housing stock

POLICY PEB4: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND RETROFITTING

Development should be designed to reduce carbon emissions and energy demand in response to Climate Change, and must follow the principles of the energy hierarchy. High standards of sustainable design and construction will be supported, and it should achieve measures such as:

- a. sustainable construction techniques, with measures to minimise energy use and maximise renewable energy production. Both new build and refurbishment of existing homes should seek to meet energy use targets as set out in the [Net Zero Carbon Toolkit \(2021\)](#)⁴¹;
- b. opportunities to maximise green infrastructure to sequester carbon and provide other benefits such as shade;
- c. good connections to existing services and facilities, and/or a mix of uses in the proposed development that minimises the need to travel by car;
- d. addressing the potential for overheating, all new development should include a recognised overheating risk assessment ([Home Quality Mark \(HQM\)](#)⁴² or equivalent);
- e. conservation of water resources through incorporation of water efficiency and water reuse measures minimising vulnerability to flooding.
- f. use of sustainably sourced materials during construction (HQM or equivalent); and
- g. minimising waste and maximising recycling waste generated during construction.

The retrofit of existing and heritage properties/assets is encouraged to reduce energy demand and to generate renewable energy where appropriate, providing it safeguards historic and/or positive distinctive characteristics (as identified in the Portishead Community Design Statement) and development is done with engagement and permissions of relevant organisations.

For major applications, applicants are encouraged to use appropriate sustainability assessment tools such as the [Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method \(BREEAM\)](#)⁴³, [Home Quality Mark for residential Development and/or CEEQUAL](#)⁴⁴ (or equivalents) for infrastructure development.

PLANNING POLICIES: RENEWABLE ENERGY

SUPPORTING RENEWABLE AND LOW CARBON ENERGY SCHEMES IN PORTISHEAD

Context

3.87 Strategic policies in the emerging North Somerset Local Plan (particularly policies SP1 Sustainable Development and SP2 Climate Change) require, where appropriate, development proposals to demonstrate how they address the climate emergency and contribute towards the aim of a carbon neutral North Somerset by 2030. One of the key methods to do this is maximising, supporting and encouraging decentralised renewable energy generation in new development.

3.88 Government advice requires that 'the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate. It should help to shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions... including (supporting) ...renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure' (NPPF paragraph 152⁴⁵).

3.89 Emerging North Somerset Policy DP7 supports development for renewable energy generation in principle, and identifies particular 'areas of search' within Portishead where this might be appropriate.

3.90 During the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Centre for Sustainable Energy produced the Portishead Renewable Energy Study (2021), exploring the potential for renewable energy generation in Portishead. The Study concluded that currently, opportunities for developing large-scale renewable energy projects in the Neighbourhood Area, such as solar or wind, are limited, largely due to Green Belt constraints.

3.91 However, Portishead's location on the Severn Estuary presents an opportunity to harness its huge tidal range. The recent start-up of a powerful tidal-powered turbine generating electricity in Orkney⁴⁶ and the investment of billions of pounds in a tidal lagoon project with underwater turbines in Swansea Bay⁴⁷ suggests that the capability to harness tidal power will soon become commercially viable. The introduction of some form of tidal power generation in Portishead could play a crucial role in achieving our ambition to becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

3.92 Tidal and micro-tidal solutions would potentially be viable within the Neighbourhood Area and may be a future solution. These ideas and technologies are not currently developed sufficiently for full consideration, however NDP policy PED5 supports innovative thinking around this approach and encourages projects harnessing this potential.

3.93 The exploration and delivery of alternative renewable energy generation, such as solar and wind, is supported by the Town Council and NDP policy PER1. There are active local renewable energy Community Interest Companies in Portishead, such as Low Carbon Gordano (solar) and Channel Green Energy (wind). These groups are active in the town and the wider area and explore the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy developments that are led by and/or meet the needs of the local Portishead community. These developments are particularly supported by NDP policy PER1.

Related Objective

O7 To deliver sustainable development which prioritises brownfield land, responds positively to the climate crisis, reduces our carbon footprint and energy demand, and mitigates the local impacts of climate change.

Local Policy Context

- CS1 Addressing climate change and carbon reduction
 - CS2 Delivering sustainable design and construction,
 - CS3 Environmental Impacts and Flood Risk Management
- Solar photovoltaic array SPD

RELATED COMMUNITY ACTIONS:

- In principle, the Town Council supports the installation of solar photovoltaic panels on residential properties - and is exploring opportunities for undertaking a project to map areas of opportunity.

POLICY PER1 - SUPPORTING RENEWABLE AND LOW CARBON ENERGY SCHEMES IN PORTISHEAD

Decentralised renewable and low carbon energy schemes will be supported and encouraged, and will be approved where their impact is, or can be made, acceptable.

Particular support will be given to local renewable and low carbon energy generation developments that:

- are led by local renewable energy groups, and/or meet the needs of the local community;
- provide energy storage opportunities
- provide solar canopies over surface car parks
- harness the tidal energy stemming from the tidal range of the Severn Estuary
- harness Portishead marina for the use of water source heat pumps.

In determining applications for local renewable and low carbon energy generation developments, the following issues will be considered:

- i. the contribution of the proposals, in light of North Somerset Council's aim for a carbon neutral North Somerset by 2030, to cutting greenhouse gas emissions and decarbonising our energy system; and
- ii. the impact of the scheme, together with any cumulative issues, on landscape character, visual amenity, water quality and flood risk, heritage significance, local character and distinctiveness (as identified in the Portishead Community Character Statement), recreation, biodiversity and, where appropriate, agricultural land use, aviation and telecommunications; and
- iii. the impact on users and residents of the local area, including where relevant, shadow flicker, glint and glare, air quality, vibration and noise.

Any proposals that could affect the sensitive bird species and other habitats and species of the River Severn Estuary must carry out screening for Habitats Regulation Assessment.

WELLBEING POLICIES

The following section of the neighbourhood plan contains policies related to wellbeing:

Community Facilities and Infrastructure

- Policy PWC1: Protection of Existing Community Facilities and Infrastructure
- Policy PWC2: New Community Facilities and Infrastructure

Housing

- Policy PWH1: Protection of Portishead’s Existing Housing Stock
- Policy PWH2: Retaining Existing Valued Smaller and Accessible Housing Stock
- Policy PWH3: New Housing to Meet Local Needs in Portishead
- Policy PWH4: Making Housing Available to Local People in Housing Need
- Policy PWH5: First Homes Discount in Portishead
- Policy PWH6: Homes for Elderly, Disabled and Vulnerable People
- Policy PWH7: Adaptable New Homes
- Policy PWH8: Alterations to make Existing Homes Accessible
- Policy PWH9: Community Led Development Projects
- Policy PWH10: Self Build and Custom Build Housing
- Policy PWH11: Sub-divisions and Conversions of Larger Residential Property

UN SDGs

The policies in this section contribute to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:



WELLBEING: INTRODUCTION

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

4.0 Portishead has a strong community spirit which is supported by a range of facilities and infrastructure that provide for its health, welfare, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs.

4.1 Whilst Portishead has pockets of deprivation, it is generally classified as being in the top 20% of the least deprived areas in England.⁴⁸

4.2 The Town is subject to the same national trends as the rest of the country. COVID-19 and the national lockdowns have seen a great increase in the use of and appreciation of Portishead's local facilities and amenities.

4.3 Portishead has in recent years undergone rapid growth, with a significant expansion of the number of residential dwellings and an increase of around 25% in the size of the built area of the town. The population has increased by 60% since 2011 to total more than 27,000. There is a general feeling in the town that infrastructure investment has not kept up with the huge increase in housing that Portishead has seen over the last 20 years.

4.4 Older areas of Portishead such as the West Hill Area in the Portishead West Ward have been left behind in terms of investment as much focus has been on the new developments situated on the old docks now known as the Marina area. Portishead West Ward is the largest Ward in North Somerset but has very limited community facilities. Merlin Park is one of the few in the area.



HOUSING

4.5 Despite the issues with poor infrastructure, Portishead remains a highly desirable place to live with a continued strong demand for housing.

4.6 Housing availability and affordability is a very significant issue for Portishead. The local Housing Needs Assessment carried out for this Neighbourhood Plan has evidenced that it suffers from a severe lack of smaller and affordable rented housing and market housing. Households now need an annual income of £90,000 to afford to buy a house in Portishead, meaning that young people and those with an average annual income of c.£46,000 cannot afford to live in Portishead and are forced to move out and find accommodation in neighbouring towns where housing is less expensive.

4.7 We have a growing community of older people. This is forecast to rise by more than 65% during this plan's lifetime. We therefore need to plan positively to provide comfortable accommodation for our ageing population.

4.8 The opportunity for further development is constrained, and there are a number of factors that affect this:

- Nearly all undeveloped land within the Portishead settlement boundary is either part of the Green Belt or on the flood plain or both.
- Portishead's geography and position, surrounded on one side by the Bristol Channel and on the other by a SSSI and the regionally important ecosystem of the Gordano valley.
- Whilst a number of highway improvements are now in place at Wyndham Way and Junction 19 to address peak traffic flow, there is only one major road between Portishead and the M5, meaning that any issues nearby on the motorway can cause the town to be congested and gridlocked. It is not without good reason that Portishead has been dubbed the "largest cul-de-sac in Europe".
- Public transport is variable. There is a bus service between Bristol and Portishead that runs every 30 minutes, however the service is often unreliable and relatively expensive. Public transport services are affected by congestion both within Portishead and at Junction 19 of the M5.
- The long-promised reinstatement of rail services is currently forecast for late 2024 but even if the railway does finally arrive, the limited frequency and carrying capacity of services is not expected to

have a major positive impact, unless the railway line capacity of the rail link to Bristol is increased.

- There is a lack of community infrastructure, even such basic facilities such as semi-permanent storage for community groups or rooms and venues to hold functions are lacking, the facilities that do exist are invariably booked up far in advance. There are no entertainment, cultural or arts venues. Community infrastructure that does exist is often "tired" and of poor quality due to a lack of maintenance and underfunding over recent decades.

PLANNING POLICIES: COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

PROTECTION OF EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Context

4.9 Portishead's vibrant community is supported by a range of facilities and infrastructure that provide for its health, welfare, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs. The existing community facilities in Portishead are highly valued by the community, and need to be protected.

It is important that our range of community facilities is accessible to, and meet the needs of, everyone in our community. Policy PWC1 should be considered particularly through the lens of UN SDGs 5 (Gender Equality), 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), which are about inclusivity across gender, age, background, and ability.

4.10 North Somerset Council policy DM68 protects educational, sporting, leisure, cultural, health and community facilities from change of use. Policy PWC1 adds local detail by identifying those in Portishead. The Portishead Community Facilities Evidence Base Report (2022) details the existing facilities in the Neighbourhood Area, including detail on Assets of Community Value and healthcare provision.

4.11 For the purposes of policy PWC1, land or buildings which are considered 'community facilities' include the following:

- Use class F1, such as schools, museums, libraries and places of worship
- Use class F2, such as community meeting places, community halls, parks or sports pitches
- Use class E(e), such as healthcare and childcare facilities
- Pubs, cinemas, cemeteries and allotments
- Utilities and telecommunications infrastructure
- Registered Assets of Community Value (currently one in Portishead - the Potager Garden).

4.12 Recent changes to the planning system mean that it is now easier for some community facilities such as doctor's surgeries or nurseries to change use into shops or restaurants, or into homes, without planning permission. This change in legislation makes it even more important that the Portishead Neighbourhood Plan identifies the existing facilities in our community to protect, as far as possible within the possibilities of the planning system, to ensure that our town continues



to provide for our social, cultural and recreational needs.

4.13 The majority of facilities identified in Figure 13, and protected by policy PWC1, fall under the new Use Class F – Local Community and Learning. These facilities are protected from change of use without planning permission by legislation.

4.14 Insofar as planning permission is required, Policy PCW1 aims to protect our identified community facilities from change of use. The Town Council will only support redevelopment of existing community facilities for non-community use as a last resort and where all other options have been exhausted.

4.15 There is a growing international interest in creating '20-minute communities'. In 2021, the Town and Country Planning Association published '[20-Minute Neighbourhoods](#)'⁶¹ which is about creating compact and connected places that offer a range of services to meet most people's daily needs. This involves the creation of attractive, safe, walkable environments that invite people of all ages to travel actively for short distances to use day-to-day facilities such as shops,

school, community, employment and health and wellbeing facilities. The 'catchment area' of a facility is therefore generally understood to be within a 20 minute walk. In Portishead, particular attention must be paid to the impact of our hills on the time it takes to walk around the town.



Relevant Objective

O9 To protect and improve health, wellbeing, leisure and recreation opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities by protecting and expanding community facilities and spaces for community activities to ensure that Portishead is a welcoming, safe and accessible place for everyone.

Local Policy Context

- CS25 Children, young people and higher education
- CS26 Supporting healthy living and the provision of health care facilities
- CS27 Sport, recreation and community facilities
- DM68 Protection of sporting, cultural and community facilities

POLICY PWC1 – PROTECTION OF EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Where planning permission is required, development proposals that involve the loss, in whole or part, of a community facility (as identified in Figure 13 and/or detailed in the Community Facilities Report) must demonstrate that:

- i. adequate alternative provision of at least equivalent community benefit exists or will be provided in an equally or more accessible location, including by walking and cycling, within the catchment area of the facility; or
- ii. the site or building is genuinely redundant / surplus to requirements for community uses and does not comprise open space or undeveloped land with recreational or amenity value; or
- iii. if relevant, the partial development of the site will secure the retention and improvement of the remainder of the site for community use; or
- iv. it would not be possible (economically viable, feasible or practicable) to retain the building or site for use as a community facility.

RELATED COMMUNITY ACTIONS:

- Publish a compendium of community facilities in Portishead, to include name, function, location and contact details, for the community to use.
- Continued financial and other support by Portishead Town Council to community organisations.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES LIST

The community facilities identified in the Community Facilities Report are listed below and mapped on the following page:

Schools

- 1 Gordano School
- 2 High Down School
- 3 Portishead Primary School
- 4 St Joseph's School
- 5 St Peter's School
- 6 Trinity School

Nurseries / pre-schools / children's centres

- 7 Brampton Way Pre-school
- 8 Busy Bees Nursery
- 9 Honey Tree Nursery
- 10 Lakehouse Nursery
- 11 Stationhouse Nursery
- 12 The Academy Nursery School
- 13 The Nursery

Halls / Community Centres

- 14 The Folk Hall
- 15 Jubilee Hall
- 16 North Weston Village Hall
- 17 Redcliffe Bay Hall
- 18 Somerset Hall
- 19 Clarence House
- 58 Portishead Youth Centre

Places of Worship

- 20 Bristol Quakers
- 21 Portishead Methodist Church
- 22 Redcliffe Bay Methodist Church
- 23 Roath Road Chapel
- 24 St Joseph's Roman Catholic Church
- 25 St Peter's Church
- 26 St Nicholas' Church / Portishead United Reformed Church

Allotments and Community Growing Spaces

- 27 Beach Hill Allotments
- 28 Gertie Gales Allotments
- 29 Lower Down Road Allotments
- 30 North Weston Allotments
- 31 Town Potager Garden

Health Care Facilities

- 32 Combe Road Dental Practice
- 33 The Dental Clinic
- 34 Evolve Dentistry
- 35 Harbourside Surgery
- 36 Lime Tree Dental Practice
- 37 Living Strong Chiropractic
- 38 Moose Hall Chiropractic & Wellness
- 39 Portishead Chiropractic Clinic
- 40 Portishead Dental Practice
- 41 Portishead Medical Centre
- 42 The Reinge Clinic

- 43 Walnut Grove
- 44 Woodburn Cottage Dental Clinic

Leisure & Sports Facilities

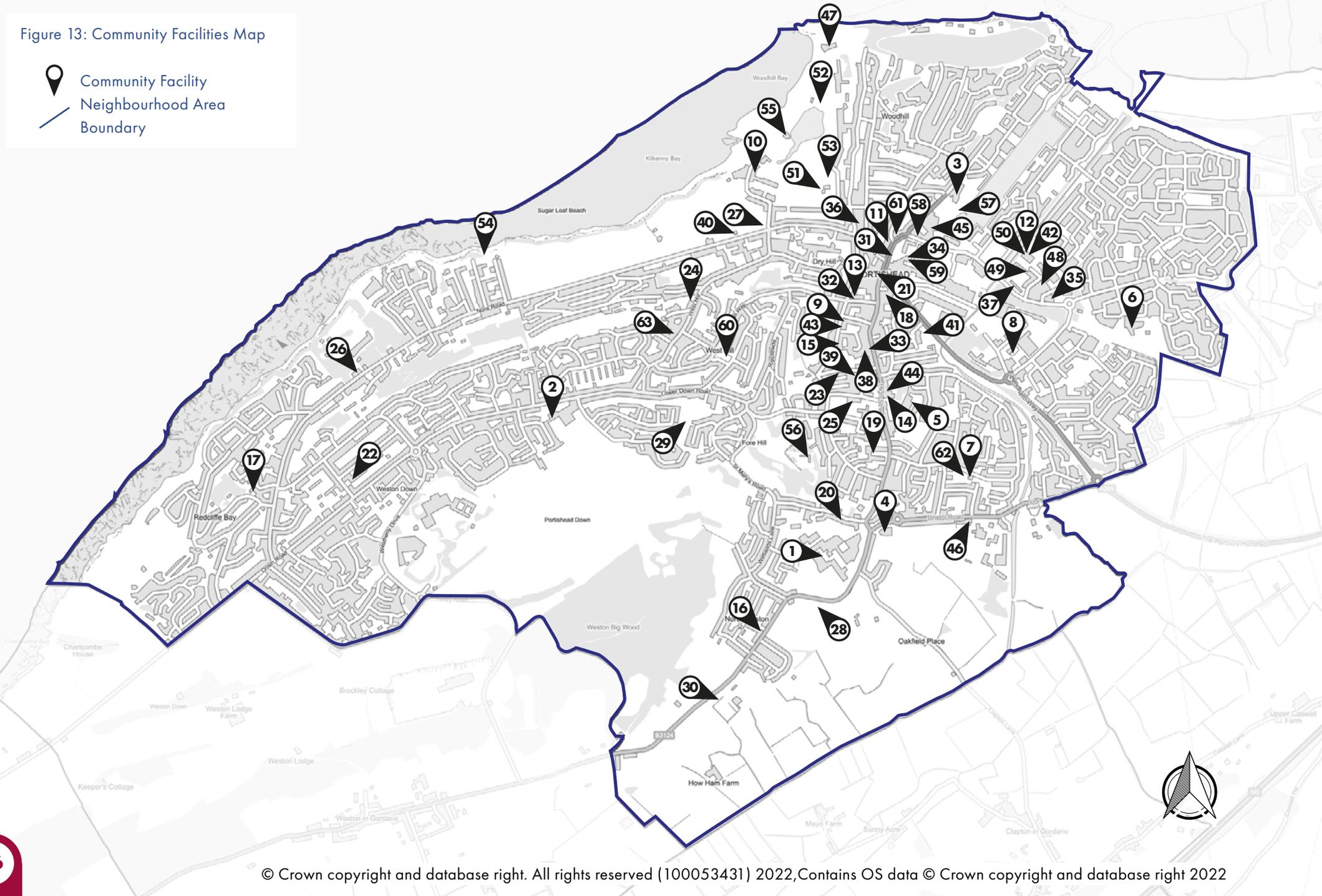
- 45 Parish Wharf Leisure Centre
- 46 Portishead Town Football Club
- 47 Portishead Open Air Pool
- 48 Epic Gym
- 49 Pure Results Fitness
- 50 The Academy of Gymnastics
- 51 Portishead / British Legion Bowls Clubs
- 52 Portishead Tennis Club
- 53 Portishead Cricket Club
- 54 Portishead Sailing Club
- 55 Lake Grounds Boat House
- 56 Portishead Shooting Club
- 57 Portishead Gig Club

Youth & Other Facilities

- 59 Portishead Library
- 60 2nd Portishead Scout Group Headquarters
- 61 1st Portishead Scouts
- 62 Portishead Air Cadets / Army Cadets
- 63 St Barnabas Children's Centre

Figure 13: Community Facilities Map

-  Community Facility
-  Neighbourhood Area Boundary



NEW COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

4.16 During the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, residents made it clear that they felt there is a lack of provision of particular types of community facilities, and in particular areas.

4.17 Portishead has an active and vibrant community with a range of clubs, societies and groups that meet regularly. However, there is a lack of space within the town for these groups to hold events and meetings or use for storage; the few facilities that do exist are often booked up far in advance. Our surveys also identified a local demand for spaces for creative arts activities and health care facilities.

4.18 A key issue that arose through our community surveys was the need for more facilities for young people, and tackling this is a priority for the Town Council. Policy PWC2 supports the provision of facilities for young people, in particular a wheels and skate park, which is currently being planned for at the Lake Grounds.

4.19 As with policy PWC1, it is important any new community facilities are accessible to, and meet the needs of, everyone in our community. Policy PWC2 should therefore be considered particularly through the

lens of UN SDGs 5 (Gender Equality), 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), which promote inclusivity across gender, age, background, and ability.

4.20 Comments received throughout the preparation of the plan also indicated that the community feel there is a particular shortage of community facilities in older areas of Portishead (such as West Hill, Redcliffe Bay and Avon Way) as well as The Vale.

4.21 In line with North Somerset Local Plan policy DM69, the provision of new community facilities and infrastructure is supported within the settlement boundary where the facility is well related to the community, is in a sustainable and genuinely accessible location, does not negatively affect living conditions of neighbouring properties, and is designed to facilitate combining community needs (where appropriate).



Relevant Objective

O9 To protect and improve health, wellbeing, leisure and recreation opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities by protecting and expanding community facilities and spaces for community activities to ensure that Portishead is a welcoming, safe and accessible place for everyone.

Local Policy Context

- CS25 Children, young people and higher education
- CS26 Supporting healthy living and the provision of health care facilities
- CS27 Sport, recreation and community facilities
- DM69 Location of sporting, cultural and community facilities

POLICY PWC2 – NEW COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Development proposals within the settlement boundary that improve the quality and range of community infrastructure shall be supported where the development:

- a. has appropriate regard to the Portishead Community Character Statement, and
- b. is genuinely accessible by a choice of modes of sustainable and active travel modes and to disabled, elderly and vulnerable people, and
- c. will not result in unacceptable traffic movements or impact on residential amenity, and
- d. will achieve North Somerset Council multi-modal parking standards for staff and visitors.

Specifically, development leading to the improvement of the quality or additional provision of the following community infrastructures should be looked at favourably:

- Places to meet and socialise
- Facilities for young people, for example a wheels and skate park
- Improvements to Parish Wharf Leisure Centre
- Improvements to the Lake Grounds
- Additional health services and facilities
- Facilities for the creative arts, particularly places to showcase art e.g. galleries, performance spaces.

PLANNING POLICIES: HOUSING

PROTECTION OF PORTISHEAD'S EXISTING HOUSING STOCK

Context

4.21 Portishead's existing range of homes is the foundation for our community's quality of life and opportunities for lifetime living in the town.

4.22 The range of existing homes in Portishead provides open market housing to buy and rent, affordable social rented housing, discounted market shared ownership homes and supported living choices for older and disabled residents. Whilst this goes part of the way to meeting current needs, the 2021 Portishead Housing Needs Assessment and survey undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan has established that there is an existing shortage of smaller and affordable one, two and three bedroom and accessible homes to buy or rent.

4.23 Portishead contains a higher proportion of larger properties than the national average. Local analysis of housing within Portishead suggests that 3 bedroom properties (48%); followed by 2 bedroom homes (32%); plus a smaller number of 1 bedroom properties (15%) are most needed to be built over the plan period.

4.24 North Somerset Core Strategy Policy CS14 establishes that Portishead is classified

as a local service centre where development should be of a locally significant scale and take place within or abutting the settlement boundary, but not in the Green Belt.

4.25 Between 2005 and 2015 Portishead accommodated more than 2780 new homes, rapidly expanding the population. Due to the town's significant expansion and environmental and infrastructure constraints to development, capacity for future growth at Portishead is severely limited. The draft North Somerset Local Plan indicates that a further c.570 homes may need to be delivered in Portishead between 2023 and 2038. This is an average of 38 homes delivered per annum, below that of the major focus of growth at Weston Super Mare.

4.26 With an evidenced need for smaller and accessible homes, previous significant housing expansion and highly constrained capacity for future growth throughout the lifetime of the Neighbourhood Plan, it is especially important that the foundation of the existing stock of smaller homes at Portishead is protected from loss to enable it to continue to meet the housing needs of our community.



Relevant Objective

O8 To protect Portishead's stock of one and two bedroom and accessible homes, and ensure that any future housing that comes forward to meet government targets contains a diverse range of tenures, forms and sizes to meet the identified housing needs of the community, protects and enhances Portishead's distinct character and maintains resident amenity and highway safety.

Local Policy Context

CS14 Distribution of New Housing
CS15 Mixed and Balanced Communities

POLICY PWH1 – PROTECTION OF PORTISHEAD'S EXISTING HOUSING STOCK

Development proposals that retain existing one, two and three bedroom residential property in Portishead will be supported. Support will not be given to proposals that would result in the loss of existing residential use.

RETAINING EXISTING VALUED SMALLER AND ACCESSIBLE HOUSING

Context

4.27 Smaller homes provide the opportunity for our younger people to build their long term future in Portishead and enable local down-sizers to continue to secure homes in their community that meet changing needs.

4.28 The Portishead Housing Needs Assessment (2021), produced to support the Neighbourhood Plan, identifies an existing shortfall and a growing demand for smaller single, double and triple bedroom homes in Portishead within the open market and affordable housing sectors.

4.29 There is an existing shortage of accessible homes that enable older and disabled local people to live more active lives at home for the optimum period. The 2011 census found that 18.5% of the North Somerset population had a limiting long-term illness (LLTI) and that 33% of households in the district contained one or more persons with a LLTI. There is forecast to be a 54% increase in Portishead's community of people over the age of 65 during the lifetime of the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.30 Existing bungalows provide Portishead with a distinct opportunity for accessible housing, where larger and two storey houses do not. It is important that Portishead retains this choice of smaller and single storey housing.

4.31 Bungalows and areas of smaller houses make a distinct contribution to Portishead's townscape, as identified in the Portishead Community Character Statement (2021). Older neighbourhoods including Albert Road and Victoria Square are unable to appropriately accommodate intensified residential use.

4.32 The cumulative effect of adding floorspace and storeys randomly to smaller houses may cause harm to the distinct character of neighbourhoods identified in the Portishead Community Character Statement (2021), where single storey homes create a distinct and positive contribution to the town. Enlargement of smaller homes within our neighbourhoods including at North Weston and St Mary's Road has eroded its character and denuded the existing stock of accessible homes.

4.33 National permitted development rights set parameters that enable extensions and additions to houses that can add bedrooms and intensify use without the need for planning consent and outside of the power of the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.34 North Somerset Development Management Policy DM37 (Residential development in existing residential areas) and DM38 (Residential extensions) set criteria to assess acceptable proposals to replace, infill or extend properties to protect existing neighbourhood character, the amenity of existing residents and require the adherence to current residential parking standards.

4.35 Intensification of the residential use brings additional traffic and car parking needs, but often without the infrastructure to accommodate it, overloading parking and highway infrastructure to a point where it is well below [North Somerset's Residential Parking Standards \(2021\)](#) causing risk and obstructions to emergency and service vehicles, impacting resident access and other road users and pedestrians.

Relevant Objective

O8 To protect Portishead's stock of one and two bedroom and accessible homes, and ensure that any future housing that comes forward to meet government targets contains a diverse range of tenures, forms and sizes to meet the identified housing needs of the community, protects and enhances Portishead's distinct character and maintains resident amenity and highway safety.

Local Policy Context

CS15 Mixed and Balanced Communities
CS12 Achieving High Quality Design and Place-Making
CS11 Parking
DM37 Residential development in existing residential areas
DM38 Extensions to Dwellings
North Somerset Parking Standards SPD

POLICY PWH2 – RETAINING EXISTING VALUED SMALLER AND ACCESSIBLE HOUSING STOCK

Proposals to enlarge or add residential floorspace to existing residential properties will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposed development would:

- Meet criteria set out in North Somerset Core Strategy Policy CS12 (Achieving high quality design) and Development Management Policy DM38 (Extensions to dwellings) and
- Comply with North Somerset Parking Standards SPD (2021) and
- Demonstrate how it has protected and complimented the distinctive residential character and appearance of the host neighbourhood identified within the Portishead Community Character Statement (2021).

NEW HOUSING TO MEET LOCAL NEEDS IN PORTISHEAD

Context

4.36 One of the most important priorities of the Neighbourhood Plan is to help meet the housing needs of Portishead's community. In preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, the Steering Group has combined evidence gained from both technical housing needs analysis and local engagement.

4.37 Whilst there has been very significant housing development in the last decade, house prices in Portishead have risen by more than 50%. In 2021, the average UK house price was £250,000, similar to the average price in Weston Super Mare. The average house in Portishead now costs in excess of £400,000 (Rightmove 2022). The Portishead Housing Needs Assessment 2021 has identified that a household income of at least £90,000 is required to afford repayments on a market home in Portishead. However, the average total household income before housing costs locally was £46,833 in Portishead in 2018 (ONS). It provides distinct evidence that buying a home is impossible for single people and households even on average incomes. As a result there has been a significant growth in market renting in Portishead. Whilst this is affordable to average income households,

this option remains too expensive for many below this.

4.38 The 2021 proposal to convert the "Marina Gardens" retirement development to 127 studio, one and two-bedroom affordable and shared ownership homes, which was supported by North Somerset Council, demonstrates the need and demand for smaller affordable homes in Portishead.

4.39 North Somerset Core Strategy policy CS15 (Mixed and balanced communities) seeks to ensure a genuine mix of housing types within existing and future communities. Within this balance, policy CS16 (Affordable housing) requires at least 30% of the homes provided on applicable sites, including those of more than 10 homes, are provided as on-site affordable housing. This policy identifies the tenure split between social rented housing and intermediate, discounted market housing. The balance of tenures and house types may be adjusted on individual sites to address distinct and changing local needs and delivery viability.

4.40 North Somerset Council's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document

(2013) provides housing providers with further detailed criteria guidance which should be read in conjunction with meeting housing policies.

4.41 The Neighbourhood Plan and associated local needs evidence aims to add the local housing needs detail to increase the effectiveness of adopted North Somerset affordable housing policy framework to deliver the right types of housing to help local people secure a home that meets their needs, whether through open market or through subsidised pathways.

4.42 Throughout the lifetime of the Neighbourhood Plan strategic housing policy and local needs may change. Proposals for housing development will be assessed against the adopted policy and guidance at the time of an application.

WHAT IS AFFORDABLE HOUSING?

Affordable housing is a planning term that is applied to very specific types of discounted housing which is available to people who meet qualifying criteria.

Through the NPPF, the Government requires developers to provide or fund affordable housing as a proportion of what is given planning permission. North Somerset Core Strategy Policy CS15 (Mixed and Balanced Communities) and development management policy DM 34 states proposals on strategic housing sites of 100+ houses should include a range of building types and tenures.

Affordable housing can be broadly broken into social rented housing and discounted affordable housing to buy. The Portishead Housing Needs Assessment 2021 provides a picture of how effective each is for Portishead, and how local criteria to maximise their benefit for local people may be applied.

Social Rented Housing

Social Rented housing provides homes at rents that are below the market rate. They are managed by registered social landlords like housing associations or community housing trusts. Social rental homes are the most affordable route into housing for eligible people on the local housing list and who are not able

to afford to buy. It meets acute need and is undersupplied. Therefore Social Rented housing should represent 75% of all affordable homes provided through developer contributions.

Discounted Market Housing

Discounted market housing provides a discounted route into home ownership. Discounted market homes are most often leasehold and maintained within the discounted market sector in perpetuity. This is provided through:

Shared Ownership

This allows buyers to purchase a share of a home – usually between 10% and 75%. Purchasers will pay a mortgage on the share that they own, and a below-market-value rent on the remainder to a housing association, along with any service charge and ground rent. Shared ownership at a 10-25% equity share makes housing affordable to average Portishead household incomes.

First Homes

This is a newer government-backed product. It offers:

- A discount of a minimum of 30% against the market value;

- Sale price no higher than £250,000 after the discount is applied, and in perpetuity;
- Restriction to first-time buyers with a household with a combined annual income of less than £80,000.

A local connection requirement based on current residency may be imposed on the initial 3 months of first home purchase. Local criteria can be applied where this is justified by evidence. A deeper minimum discount of either 40% or 50% may be set. In Portishead, the Housing Needs Assessment 2021 has identified that a discount of 50% will be required to begin to make First Homes affordable for households on average income. A household income of £45,000 is required to be able to afford repayments on a 50% discounted First home.

Rent to buy

This provides the option of buying your house after a leased period of renting runs out. In some cases, a percentage of the rent is applied to the purchase price. The income required is the same as that to afford market rents and affordable to average household incomes, but without a deposit.

Relevant Objective

O8 To protect Portishead's stock of one and two bedroom and accessible homes, and ensure that any future housing that comes forward to meet government targets contains a diverse range of tenures, forms and sizes to meet the identified housing needs of the community, protects and enhances Portishead's distinct character and maintains resident amenity and highway safety.

Local Policy Context

CS15 Mixed and Balanced
Communities Replacement
CS16 Affordable Housing

POLICY PWH3 - NEW HOUSING TO MEET LOCAL NEEDS IN PORTISHEAD

Proposals for new housing development will be supported where:

- Proposals are in conformity with adopted North Somerset Core Strategy Policies CS14; Mixed and Balanced Communities and CS16; Affordable Housing, or subsequent adopted Local Plan Policy
- All affordable housing provided through developer contribution will be expected to contribute to meeting the specific affordable housing needs of Portishead's community as set out in the Portishead Housing Needs Assessment 2021.
- Market housing prioritises the delivery of housing types that contribute to meeting Portishead's specific housing needs, and
- Schemes are in conformity with related Neighbourhood Plan sustainable construction, active travel and sustainable transportation objectives, protect Portishead's local heritage assets and enhance Portishead's distinctive character and environment and community wellbeing.

MAKING HOUSING AVAILABLE TO LOCAL PEOPLE IN HOUSING NEED

Context

4.43 The local Portishead Housing Needs Assessment has identified that there remains a significant proportion of our community who cannot afford market housing in Portishead, and who are more likely to be forced to move away from family, employment and their associations with Portishead to find suitable housing. Portishead's more acute housing affordability issues require a distinct approach to help local people secure affordable housing within Portishead.

4.44 The Neighbourhood Plan cannot control the allocation of affordable rented housing. However, the Town Council wishes to maximise the opportunity for people with a housing need, who have an existing association with Portishead, to be able to secure suitable new open market or discounted market homes through encouraging providers to offer a reasonable short initial period of exclusive home marketing.

4.45 The Government's latest "First Homes" discounted market affordable housing

product can enable local criteria to be applied to require an initial marketing period of three months for qualifying local people. The Town Council will support this being applied to the sale of First Homes in Portishead. First Homes may not be the only discounted housing provided. Shared ownership is the more commonly applied discounted market housing approach within North Somerset. To maximise the responsiveness to meeting Portishead's distinct housing needs, the Town Council will support and encourage housing providers to extend this criteria to all intermediate affordable market housing types.

4.46 The Town Council will also encourage and welcome open market house-builders offering a similar initial three month "off-plan" marketing period to people within Portishead who may wish or need to move to meet their changing needs either to accommodate a growing family or relative or to down-size to a more manageable and accessible home.

Relevant Objective

O8 To protect Portishead's stock of one and two bedroom and accessible homes, and ensure that any future housing that comes forward to meet government targets contains a diverse range of tenures, forms and sizes to meet the identified housing needs of the community, protects and enhances Portishead's distinct character and maintains resident amenity and highway safety.

Local Policy Context

CS16 Affordable Housing
North Somerset Affordable Housing SPD
(2013)

POLICY PWH4 - MAKING HOUSING AVAILABLE TO LOCAL PEOPLE IN HOUSING NEED

Encouragement will be given to housing providers where open market, First Homes and all other discounted market housing provided within Portishead Neighbourhood Area is offered for an initial three month marketing period exclusively to local people who fall into any of the following categories (in order of priority stated):

- i. Either the prospective applicant or buyer has continuously lived in Portishead for a minimum of 3 years immediately preceding the date of bidding or offer, in the case of Shared Ownership housing;
- ii. Either the applicant or partner has previously lived in Portishead for 10 years continuously, not more than 5 years ago, immediately preceding the date of bidding or offer, in the case of Shared Ownership housing;
- iii. Either the applicant or partner has been continuously employed in Portishead for at least 12 months immediately preceding the date of bidding or offer in the case of Shared Ownership housing, in work of a non-casual nature;
- iv. Either the applicant or partner has a close relative that lives in Portishead and has done so for at least 5 years immediately preceding the date of bidding or offer in the case of Shared Ownership housing.

House builders are encouraged to market all new open market housing for an initial three month period at the commencement of marketing, exclusively to residents of Portishead.

FIRST HOMES DISCOUNT IN PORTISHEAD

Context

4.47 A minority proportion of affordable housing provided through developer contribution is likely to be offered as intermediate discounted market housing. North Somerset Council's preferred approach is that this is through "shared ownership". This enables a home buyer to purchase a percentage share of a leasehold home and pay a subsidised rent to a social landlord on the remainder. The house should remain as shared ownership in perpetuity.

4.48 First Homes is a recent government backed affordable housing product. It offers:

- A discount on the purchase price of a minimum of 30% against the market value;
- Sale price no higher than £250,000 after the discount is applied in perpetuity;
- Restriction to first-time buyers with a household with a combined annual income of less than £80,000.

4.49 Where justified by local evidence of affordability, a deeper minimum discount of up to 50% may be set.

4.50 In 2021, The UK average house price was £250,000. This is similar to the average price in Weston Super Mare. An

average house in Portishead now costs in excess of £400,000 (Rightmove 2022). The Portishead Housing Needs Assessment (2021) has identified that a household income of at least £90,000 is required to afford repayments on a market home in Portishead. The average total household income before housing costs locally was £46,833 in Portishead in 2018 (ONS).

4.51 The assessment concluded that households on an average income in Portishead would not be able to afford a 50% share of a First Home if the standard 30% discount was applied. In Portishead, acquiring a First Home product would only be likely to be affordable for people on an average income if a discount of 50% is applied.

Relevant Objective

O8 To protect Portishead's stock of one and two bedroom and accessible homes, and ensure that any future housing that comes forward to meet government targets contains a diverse range of tenures, forms and sizes to meet the identified housing needs of the community, protects and enhances Portishead's distinct character and maintains resident amenity and highway safety.

Local Policy Context

- CS15 Mixed and Balanced Communities
CS16 Affordable Housing

POLICY - PWH5 FIRST HOMES DISCOUNT IN PORTISHEAD

Where First Home discounted market housing is provided within Portishead, all First Homes provision will be offered at a discount of 50% of market value in perpetuity, subject to viability.

HOMES FOR ELDERLY, DISABLED AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Context

4.52 18.5% of the North Somerset population and 33% of households in the district contain one or more persons with a long term illness. There is forecast to be a 54% increase in people over the age of 65 in Portishead during the Neighbourhood Plan period. Aging and illness bring changing mobility needs and the highest possible proportion of our new homes need to be designed to make it possible for local people to live in homes that enable them to lead inclusive and active lifestyles that meet changing needs.

4.53 North Somerset Core Strategy policy CS15 (Mixed and balanced communities) recognises the importance of providing a choice of housing to meet changing needs of the community. Development management policy DM40 (Retirement accommodation and supported independent living for older and vulnerable people) enables supported living developments in accessible locations meeting the needs of older people. It also requires developments of more than 100 homes to consider the accommodation needs of older people. The emerging North Somerset Policy DP47 (Older persons accommodation) continues to support

supported living choices for older people to meet changing needs. All new supported living development for older people should be sustainably located close to local facilities and carers. It should be of a quality of space and design to provide a good standard of healthy living for all residents.

4.54 To help respond to Portishead's forecast age profile, support will be given to schemes that make a positive contribution to meeting Portishead's particular supported living needs subject to being in accordance with Development Management policy DM40 and any adopted replacement Local Plan policy. Due to Portishead's recorded shortage of housing, proposals must not result in the loss of existing smaller and affordable housing, which is protected by Neighbourhood Plan policies PWH1 and PWH2.

4.55 The Portishead "Wyndham Way Placemaking Study" being led by North Somerset Council, in partnership with Portishead Town Council, aims to guide the future development of the Wyndham Way area to create a new mixed use community at the heart of the town. This

highly sustainable and well-connected area provides an opportunity within Portishead to deliver new supported housing.



Relevant Objective

O8 To protect Portishead's stock of one and two bedroom and accessible homes, and ensure that any future housing that comes forward to meet government targets contains a diverse range of tenures, forms and sizes to meet the identified housing needs of the community, protects and enhances Portishead's distinct character and maintains resident amenity and highway safety.

Local Policy Context

- CS15 Mixed and Balanced Communities
- CS26 Supporting Healthy Living and the provision of health care facilities
- DM40 Retirement accommodation and supported independent living for older and vulnerable people
- DM41 Nursing and care homes for older people and other vulnerable people

POLICY PWH6 - HOMES FOR ELDERLY, DISABLED AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Proposals for age restricted housing for older people, extra care housing (Class C3) and residential nursing home facilities (Class C2) will be supported where they:

- Are in conformity with North Somerset Development Management Policy DM40, and
- Do not result in the loss of existing housing contrary to Neighbourhood Plan Policy PWH1: Protecting Portishead's Existing Housing Stock, and
- Are within 10 minutes safe and convenient walking distance of community facilities, shops, green space and public transport facilities and minimise the need for residents to use cars.

ADAPTABLE NEW HOMES

Context

4.56 The Government's reform of Health and Adult Social Care is underpinned by a principle of sustaining people at home for as long as possible. This has been reflected in recent changes to building regulations relating to adaptations and wheelchair accessible homes published in the [Building Regulations 2010 Approved Document Part M: Access to and use of buildings](#)⁴⁹.

4.57 Part M states that local authorities should identify the proportion of dwellings in new developments that should comply with the requirements for accessible and adaptable homes based on the likely future need for housing for older and disabled people (including wheelchair user dwellings) and taking account of the overall impact on viability.

4.58 Planning Practice Guidance for Housing expects local authorities to plan for households with specific needs.

4.59 The [North Somerset Housing Needs Assessment](#)⁵⁰ identifies that the number of households over the plan period living with an existing illness or disability that affects their housing need will be 16,647,

of which 960 are households likely to need wheelchair adapted housing.

4.60 It identifies that the population of North Somerset aged 75+ is likely to increase by around 10,092 between 2023 and 2038, and there is already a shortfall in the provision of housing for elderly people of just over 4,500 in North Somerset. The proportion of older people in Portishead is predicted to increase by 54% during the lifetime of the Neighbourhood Plan period. The Portishead Local Housing Needs Assessment has evidenced the projected increase in the proportion of older people living in Portishead by 54% by 2038. It is therefore locally necessary that residential developments now provide accessible housing in accordance with the levels and qualities set out in draft policy DP44 (Accessible and adaptable homes).

4.61 The proportions of new accessible homes set out in Neighbourhood Plan Policy PWH7 reflect projected need for accessible and adaptable homes over the plan period. The higher requirement for affordable homes reflects the Portishead Housing Needs Assessment's conclusion that *'the rates of limiting long-term illness or disability affecting housing needs are much*

higher in the affordable tenures (affordable tenures are more than three times more likely to need an adapted home), the evidence supports consideration of a high proportion of affordable homes being built to at least M4(2) standards where viability allows, perhaps as much as 100%.'

4.62 North Somerset Development Management Policy DM42 (Accessible and adaptable housing) seeks to deliver accessible and adaptable homes and expects development proposals to provide accessible and adaptable homes built to Category 2 standards where practical and viable.

4.63 Emerging draft North Somerset Local Plan policy DP44 (Accessible and adaptable homes) reflects increased standards for the provision and specification of accessible housing to meet both forecast needs and current building regulations. Upon adoption, policy DP44 will replace existing North Somerset policy DM42. It will strengthen the requirement to provide accessible and adaptable homes - as currently drafted, policy DM42 states:

"on residential development sites of 10 dwellings or more the following proportions

of accessible and adaptable homes will be required:

- For market housing within a scheme 50% of homes will be required to meet Building Regulations M4 (2) category 2 standard (to be 'accessible and adaptable dwellings') and a further 10% will be required to meet Building Regulations M4 (3) category 3 ('wheelchair user dwellings').
- For affordable housing within a scheme 80% of homes will be required to meet Building Regulations M4 (2) category 2 standard (to be 'accessible and adaptable dwellings') and a further 20% will be required to meet Building Regulations M4 (3) category 3 ('wheelchair user dwellings')."



Relevant Objective

O8 To protect Portishead's stock of one and two bedroom and accessible homes, and ensure that any future housing that comes forward to meet government targets contains a diverse range of tenures, forms and sizes to meet the identified housing needs of the community, protects and enhances Portishead's distinct character and maintains resident amenity and highway safety.

Local Policy Context

- CS2 Delivering sustainable design and construction.
- DM42 Accessible and adaptable Housing

POLICY PWH7 - ADAPTABLE NEW HOMES

Residential schemes of 10 units or more will be supported where they are in conformity with Building Regulations Part M and demonstrate how they have responded positively to the Portishead Local Housing Needs Assessment.

ALTERATIONS TO MAKE EXISTING HOMES ACCESSIBLE

Context

4.64 Policy PWH7 will seek to ensure that at least 50% of new homes to be provided in Portishead through the emerging Local Plan to 2038 will be designed to accessible standards, however this will be unlikely to meet the changing needs of our existing community.

4.65 Because of our town's distinct constraints on growth and resulting limitations on capacity for new homes, it is particularly important that our existing homes are able to meet changing housing accessibility needs to make it possible for residents to continue to live actively at home or accommodate a relative in Portishead should their mobility needs require.

4.66 Consistent with the Government's Health and Social Care reforms, the Town Council will provide in-principle support for proposed alterations to existing housing that will contribute to enabling older and disabled people to remain active and included members of the community whilst remaining at their home.

4.67 Adaptations and additional accessible accommodation often enables existing property to become more accessible.

Many adaptations will not require planning consent. But some external alterations and extensions will. Alterations to make listed buildings accessible will also be likely to require heritage consent.

4.68 North Somerset Development Management Policies DM32 (High quality design and place-making) DM37 (Residential development in existing residential areas), and North Somerset Council's Residential Design Guide provide a strategic policy framework within which proposals to improve access can be assessed. In addition, the Portishead Community Character Statement (2021) provides detailed specific analysis of neighbourhood character. North Somerset policies DM3 (Conservation Areas) and DM4 (Listed Buildings) set assessment and design quality standards that aim to ensure proposed alterations and development within Portishead Conservation Area and to listed buildings protect the historic character and fabric of the host listed building.

Relevant Objective

O8 To protect Portishead's stock of one and two bedroom and accessible homes, and ensure that any future housing that comes forward to meet government targets contains a diverse range of tenures, forms and sizes to meet the identified housing needs of the community, protects and enhances Portishead's distinct character and maintains resident amenity and highway safety.

Local Policy Context

DM3	Conservation Areas
DM4	Listed Buildings
DM32	High Quality Design and Place-making
DM37	Residential Development in Existing Residential Areas

POLICY - PWH8 ALTERATIONS TO MAKE EXISTING HOMES ACCESSIBLE

Where planning, conservation area consent or listed building consent is required, proposals to adapt an existing dwelling to improve accessibility will be supported where proposals:

- Are of a high standard of design in conformity with Portishead Neighbourhood Plan Policies PEB1 (High Quality Design) and PEB3 (Local Heritage) and North Somerset Council Policies
- Do not cause unacceptable or irreversible harm to the fabric and setting of the host listed building and local heritage assets
- Conserve the character of Portishead Conservation Area; and
- Do not harm neighbouring residential amenity;
- Do not result in a loss of car parking.

COMMUNITY LED DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Context

4.69 Community led housing can qualify as a recognised affordable housing sector. It can provide 100% affordable housing schemes to rent, now including the Government's new First Homes discounted market housing product. With the particular constraints on housing delivery and affordability issues identified in the Portishead Housing Needs Assessment 2021, this form of affordable housing can supplement affordable housing delivered through developer contributions, where land becomes available.

4.70 'Community development' must be delivered by an appropriately established community development organisation such as a community land trust. Community led housing and development can provide additional affordable housing choices and meet specific community needs.

4.71 North Somerset Core Strategy Policy CS16 (Affordable Housing) sets the in principle expectations for its delivery, but does not set a ceiling on the percentage to be delivered within each housing development. The emerging North Somerset policy DP46 (Homes

for all) provides in principle support for community led affordable housing schemes. Portishead Town Council supports this approach and will give in principle support to proposals for community led housing on previously developed land within Portishead.

4.72 The Town Council will continue to work with North Somerset Council, landowners and community development organisations to support opportunities to deliver community led housing on previously used land, underused buildings and upper floors during the Neighbourhood Plan period.

Relevant Objective

O8 To protect Portishead's stock of one and two bedroom and accessible homes, and ensure that any future housing that comes forward to meet government targets contains a diverse range of tenures, forms and sizes to meet the identified housing needs of the community, protects and enhances Portishead's distinct character and maintains resident amenity and highway safety.

Local Policy Context

CS16 Affordable housing
DM34 Housing type and mix
Affordable Housing SPD

POLICY - PWH9 COMMUNITY LED DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Proposals for community led affordable housing and facilities including proposals that include discounted market affordable housing will be supported when they:

- Conform with North Somerset Council Core Strategy policy CS16 (Affordable Housing) and The North Somerset Affordable Housing SPD 2013 (or any subsequent adopted revision);
- Conserve the character of Portishead's landscape setting;
- Protect or enhance the local character
- Do not harm the amenity of the neighbouring residents.

SELF-BUILD AND CUSTOM-BUILD HOUSING

Context

4.73 Portishead Housing Needs Assessment (2021) identifies the current need for all types of affordable housing and a severe issue of affordability. Custom-build housing should form part of how this is provided. Due to the identified distinct and acute affordability issues, and constraints that limit the scale of potential housing growth within the Portishead Neighbourhood Area, it is essential that all possible and viable approaches to making home ownership affordable are harnessed to the fullest extent.

4.74 The 2015 Self Build and Custom Building Act sets the Government's aim to help more people build or commission their own homes. If you organise the design and construction of your own home, it is classed as self-build housing. If you work with a developer, either as an individual or as part of a group, to help create your own home, it is classed as custom-build housing. Self-build and custom-build housing offers choices for a potentially affordable route into home ownership as well as design creativity. However, securing land to achieve this is often difficult, especially where land is in short supply and values high, as in Portishead. The Neighbourhood

Plan will seek to maximise land made available for such development through larger development sites.

4.75 Core Strategy Policy CS16 (Affordable housing) requires the delivery of affordable housing within housing developments. The emerging North Somerset Local Plan policy DP46 (Homes for All) sets out the criteria for securing opportunities for self and custom-build housing on development sites of more than 100 Homes. Self-build and custom housebuilding covers a wide spectrum, from projects where individuals are involved in building or managing the construction of their home from beginning to end, to projects where individuals commission their home, making key design and layout decisions, but the home is built ready for occupation ('turnkey'). North Somerset Council registers people and organisations who have an aim to build their own homes. The register currently contains 443 records stating a desire to undertake a custom build or self build within North Somerset. Sixty-seven of those specifically express a preference to build in Portishead.

4.76 By reducing the threshold for provision of self-build or custom-build homes to 50

home schemes, the delivery of the policy objective within the context of Portishead's pattern of allocated housing growth can be enabled.

4.77 In response to Portishead's particular land availability and affordability issues, self-build or custom-build home purchase should be maximised though maintaining the emerging Policy DP46 (Homes for all) requirement for 5% of homes, but relating this to sites of 50 homes or more that should be made available as serviced self build plots or custom-build houses for the initial 18 months of house marketing.



Relevant Objective

O8 To protect Portishead's stock of one and two bedroom and accessible homes, and ensure that any future housing that comes forward to meet government targets contains a diverse range of tenures, forms and sizes to meet the identified housing needs of the community, protects and enhances Portishead's distinct character and maintains resident amenity and highway safety.

Local Policy Context

CS16 Affordable Housing
DM34 Housing type and mix

POLICY PWH10 - SELF-BUILD AND CUSTOM-BUILD HOUSING

Proposals for self build and custom housing will be supported.

On allocated development sites, proposals for development of 50 homes or more, 5%, or 3 dwellings of the total homes, whichever is the greater, should be made available for sale as self build or custom house building plots. For phased developments, self-build plots must be delivered and serviced at the earliest stage possible.

Plots must be made available and priced and marketed appropriately as self-build or custom build plots for at least 18 months.

SUB-DIVISIONS AND CONVERSIONS OF LARGER RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY

Context

4.78 The Portishead Housing Needs Assessment (2021) identifies a higher than average proportion of under-occupied larger houses within the town, contrasting with the shortage of smaller single, two and three bedroom properties.

4.79 North Somerset development management policies DM32 (High quality design) and DM38 (Residential extensions) provide overarching criteria to inform appropriate conversions to protect character and amenity. The Portishead Community Character Assessment (2021) identifies that larger and detached homes make a positive contribution to local distinction including within the conservation areas.

4.80 The subdivision of large properties to create smaller self-contained homes can help meet our local housing needs. It may also breathe new life and investment into houses that are now too large to be single family dwellings.

4.81 Inappropriate flat conversions and concentrations of flats can harm the amenity and residential character of existing areas. For example, large numbers of flats can lead to problems such as a shortage of on-street parking and bin storage areas and

harmful changes to local heritage. Whilst applying to Weston Super Mare, North Somerset policy DM39 (Sub-division of properties) also provides principles relating to cumulative impacts that should be taken into account at Portishead.

4.82 Enabling such conversions must therefore be managed within planning policy criteria to ensure harmful impacts are avoided.

Relevant Objective

O8 To protect Portishead's stock of one and two bedroom and accessible homes, and ensure that any future housing that comes forward to meet government targets contains a diverse range of tenures, forms and sizes to meet the identified housing needs of the community, protects and enhances Portishead's distinct character and maintains resident amenity and highway safety.

Existing Local Policy Context

CS15	Mixed and Balanced
DM32	Communities
DM38	High Quality Design and Place-making
DM39	Extensions to Dwellings Sub-division of Properties

POLICY PWH11 - SUB-DIVISIONS AND CONVERSIONS OF LARGER RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY

Proposals for the sub-division of existing large residential properties will be supported where:

- Sub-division would result in the provision of smaller housing units that contribute positively towards meeting Portishead's particular housing needs for one, two and three bedroom homes; and
- Proposed accommodation meets current national space standards; and
- The amenity of existing residents is maintained and proposed accommodation provides acceptable standards of amenity for new residents; and
- Proposals do not harm the fabric and setting of Portishead's designated and locally valued heritage assets and conserves the character of Portishead Conservation Areas; and
- Proposals protect the residential character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding neighbourhood; and
- Proposed locations are well connected to pedestrian and cycle routes to community facilities and public transport; and
- Resident and visitor car and cycle parking achieves North Somerset Council multi-modal parking standards (2021).

PROSPERITY POLICIES

The following section of the neighbourhood plan contains policies related to prosperity:

Economy

- Policy PPE1: Protecting Portishead's Valued Employment Space
- Policy PPE2: Supporting Business Investment, Start-ups and Low Carbon Business Enterprise
- Policy PPE3: Supporting Low Carbon Local Businesses
- Policy PPE4: Digital Connectivity and Telecommunications
- Policy PPE5: Homeworking and Live Work Units

Transport

- Policy PPT1: Inclusive Active Travel
- Policy PPT2: Encouraging Active Travel for Leisure and Recreation
- Policy PPT3: Supporting the Shift to Ultra Low Emission Vehicles
- Policy PPT4: Parking
- Policy PPT5: Highways Impacts and Securing Highway Safety
- Policy PPT6: Development Proposals and Travel Planning

UN SDGs

The policies in this section contribute to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:



PROSPERITY: INTRODUCTION

PORTISHEAD ECONOMY

5.0 Portishead is a relatively affluent town, although with some pockets of deprivation. Nothing is left of its industrial village heritage. The economy today is based on the services sector and very limited small-scale manufacturing. Portishead is not famous for any particular area of commerce, although there is a wide variety of mostly small businesses covering sectors such as hospitality, health care, retail, manufacturing, marine, communications, creative industries, office and professional services. Avon and Somerset Police is a large employer. Home working, already popular, has increased greatly during the COVID-19 pandemic following national and international trends.

5.1 Commerce is focussed on a small number of sites including Old Mill Road, The High Street, West Hill Triangle, Harbour Road including Kestrel Court, Paper Mill Gardens, Newfoundland Way, and Middle Bridge Business Park.

5.2 The High Street rarely has vacant units for long, in contrast to many other towns locally and across the country. There is a strong core of independent shops as well as regional and national retailers, albeit a disproportionately large number of charity shops and estate agents.

5.3 In recent years, numerous sites have been turned from commercial into residential despite there being continued demand for commercial premises as proven by high occupancy and relatively high rents compared with neighbouring towns.

5.4 An attempt through a Planning Application to turn one of the last remaining commercial areas (Old Mill Road) into residential and retail led to a huge public outcry and three public demonstrations. Eventually the application was withdrawn.

5.5 There is a lack of available commercial land within the settlement boundary, so Portishead business owners often locate to Bristol, Portbury, Avonmouth or further afield.

5.6 Our surveys of businesses and residents revealed a strong desire to retain commercial land as well as allocating more commercial land if possible. With the plethora of small businesses, there is unsatisfied demand for flexible and scalable business premises to support growing businesses.

5.7 Local businesses report that the main biggest challenges are the lack of infrastructure such as transport, conference facilities and hotels. There is also a lack of premises to be able to expand in the right price.

5.8 The main employment hubs offering better paid employment for Portishead residents are predominantly outside of Portishead, notably in North and Central Bristol, Avonmouth and Portbury docks and wider afield.

5.9 This exacerbates the position of Portishead as a commuter town and puts particular pressure on local road infrastructure.



TRANSPORT

5.10 Transport infrastructure includes roads and motorways, public transport facilities including rail facilities and bus routes, footpaths, cycleways and bridleways and vehicle parking.

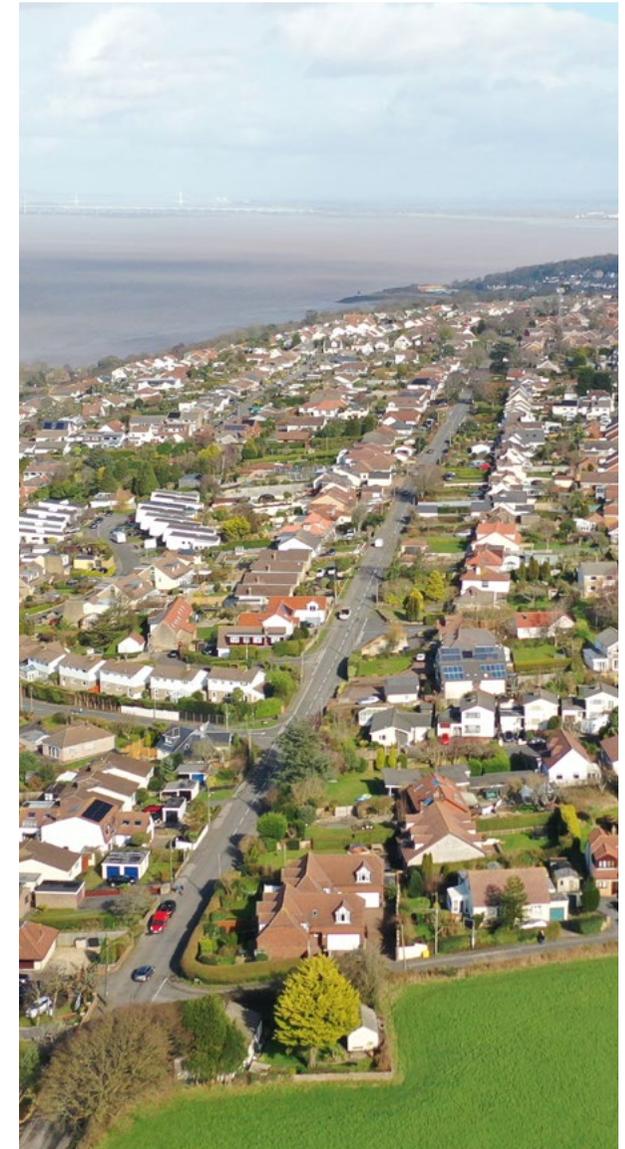
5.11 Transport infrastructure is also important in terms of supporting economic development such as haulage and freight to and from the port and airport.

5.12 'Active Travel' refers to the movement of people or goods by using the physical activity of a person for movement. That is, mainly walking and cycling. Active travel also helps to address the growing health emergency as a range of diseases can be significantly reduced by increased physical activity. The Town Council and the policies within this section of the Neighbourhood Plan support the development of an inclusive sustainable transport network that is accessible to all; not just those that are most able to walk or cycle.

5.13 The approach to transport in the Neighbourhood Plan has a significant role to play in delivering sustainable patterns of development consistent with the Town Council's climate emergency ambition. The

priority is to maximise the opportunities for active travel and access to effective public transport and so reduce the overall number of car trips. This reflects the approach in emerging policy from North Somerset Council, which sets out that trips should be accommodated by investing in non-car infrastructure first and foremost, then only increasing capacity for cars to deal with residual trips that cannot be accommodated on public transport or active travel options.

5.14 Car ownership and use is higher than average in Portishead. Local topography and perceived risks of cycling mean there will still be a need for highway improvements to address local issues.



PLANNING POLICIES: ECONOMY

PROTECTING PORTISHEAD'S EXISTING EMPLOYMENT SPACE

Context

5.15 Portishead has the potential to support a highly sustainable balance of housing, places to work and community services.

5.16 Core Strategy policy CS20 (Supporting a successful economy) aspires to ensure that all new development is sustainable and contributes to reducing the existing problems of out-commuting, lack of local employment opportunities and associated problems such as congestion and deprivation. The Core Strategy seeks to better align job growth with residential development. In Portishead, new employment development will be supported primarily on allocated land with a key objective of improving self containment and reducing out-commuting. Such opportunities are likely to take the form of either small scale development or regeneration on existing employment sites or allocated land.

5.17 The Neighbourhood Plan places a high priority on protecting existing opportunities for employment which simultaneously provide community facilities and local services. This reflects North Somerset Local Plan policy SA4, which contains criteria to protect existing employment uses and discourage change of use from employment to other uses. PPE1 aims to reinforce and add to North Somerset

Council policies through adding protection for identified valued places of local employment.

5.18 Figure 14 identifies valued employment locations and uses that would be applicable to this policy.

5.19 In 2020, changes to the Town and Country Planning Act Use Class Order amalgamated business use class B1 with other retail, office and community sports and health employment uses, within a new Class E. This enables flexible changes of use without planning consent within the new class. But it does also remove much of the ability to protect B1 office uses as well as town centre shop frontage uses.

5.20 Use class MA now also enables vacant class E uses to be converted to residential use through a simplified "prior consent" process. Such a route does enable the delivery of affordable housing as part of the change of use. This more recent employment use context must be taken into account when seeking to protect office, retail and some sport, health and childcare uses within Portishead. Such prior consent and permitted development rights do not affect the need for planning permission for other "operational development" which may materially alter the appearance or the operational characteristics of the land or buildings.

Relevant Objective

O11 To support Portishead's economy and local employment, and support the continued development of a diverse, high value and low carbon economy.

Local Policy Context

CS20 Supporting a successful economy
DM47 Proposals for economic development within towns and defined settlements.

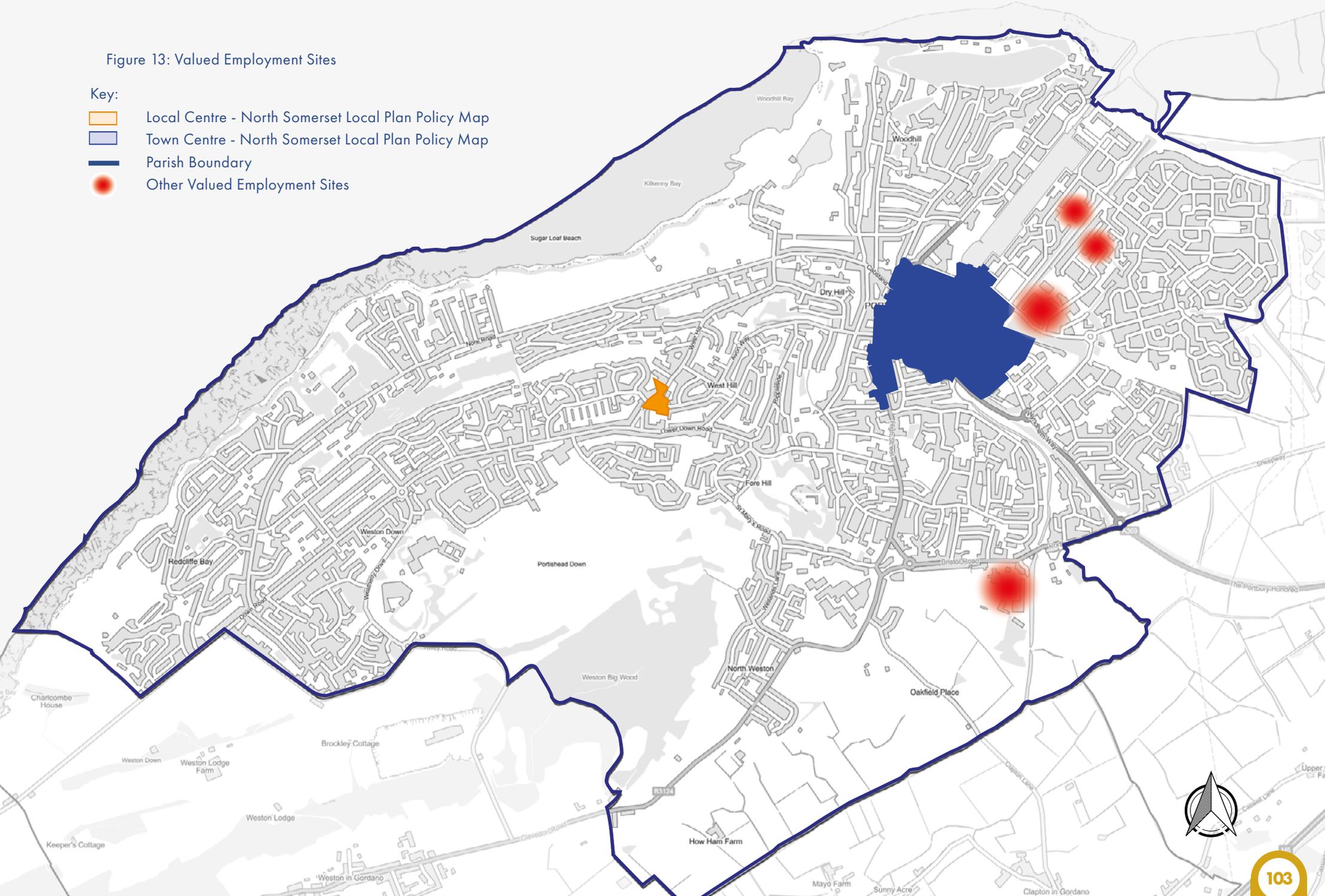
POLICY PPE1 – PROTECTING PORTISHEAD'S VALUED EMPLOYMENT SPACE

At 'Valued Employment Sites' within Portishead, listed in Figure 13, development proposals that retain, restore or increase employment levels within use classes E(g), B2 or B8, will be supported in principle subject to compliance with other relevant policies within the development plan in relation to development that changes the character or appearance of the proposal land or buildings.

Figure 13: Valued Employment Sites

Key:

- Local Centre - North Somerset Local Plan Policy Map
- Town Centre - North Somerset Local Plan Policy Map
- Parish Boundary
- Other Valued Employment Sites



SUPPORTING BUSINESS INVESTMENT, START-UPS AND LOW CARBON BUSINESS ENTERPRISE

Context

5.21 Portishead provides a very high quality of life, a pleasant environment and has a buoyant economy. New opportunities are in the service and public sector industries (Avon and Somerset Police headquarters is a major local employer), the creative sector and a huge increase in micro-businesses with many people working from home. These employment opportunities in no way match the local population growth, with many people commuting out of Portishead.

5.22 In preparing this plan, the Steering Group conducted both community surveys and held in-depth discussions with a cross-section of local employers. The results of this research are summarised in the Employment and Business Survey Analysis 2021. Local business owners identified the need for high quality mixed use business space as a priority for their future needs.

5.23 North Somerset's Core Strategy policy CS20 identifies Portishead as a focus for either small scale employment development or regeneration. Portishead has attractive and varied neighbourhoods that are well-connected to a high quality

built and coastal environment. The Lake Grounds, Lido, marina, leisure centre and the town centre offer a rich and varied resident and visitor experience, which contribute significantly to the vitality and viability of our economy.

5.24 The potential for future development within the Wyndham Way study area creates an opportunity to deliver significant additional employment space, including smaller start-up units in a highly sustainable location. The Community Action for Wyndham Way Study Area sets out the Neighbourhood Plan's approach to this area.

5.25 The Neighbourhood Plan aims to protect existing employment and harness the town's qualities to attract new investment. The Town Council is committed to supporting and working with the business community to build and sustain a strong and diverse local business and visitor economy that meets the employment needs of the community and supports development needs of employers.



Relevant Objective

O11 To support Portishead's economy and local employment, and support the continued development of a diverse, high value and low carbon economy.

Local Policy Context

- CS20 Supporting a successful economy.
- DM47 Proposals for economic development within towns and defined settlements

POLICY PPE2 - SUPPORTING BUSINESS INVESTMENT AND START-UPS

New employment development, including but not limited to, the provision of starter units, shared service accommodation and the development of offices will be supported where it will maintain resident amenity, the character of Portishead (as set out in the Portishead Community Character Statement) and maintain highway safety.

Tourism and leisure development that enhances the offer and which does not detract from the vitality and viability of the town centre will be supported.

SUPPORTING LOW CARBON LOCAL BUSINESSES

Context

Climate change and sustainable development principles are woven through the Neighbourhood Plan. Core Strategy Policy CS1 states that all development should demonstrate a commitment to reducing carbon emissions, including through reducing energy demand through good design, and utilising renewable energy. Policy is now underpinned by the North Somerset Council Climate Strategy and Action Plan towards achieving a carbon neutral area by 2030. Portishead Town Council has committed to embedding sustainable development into the Neighbourhood Plan and its own activities.

The Town Council will support development proposals for both new low carbon business investment and existing business investment in technology and equipment that contribute towards achieving carbon neutrality within the area by 2030.

Relevant Objective

O11 To support Portishead's economy and local employment, and support the continued development of a diverse, high value and low carbon economy.

Local Policy Context

- CS20 Supporting a successful economy.
DM47 Proposals for economic development within towns and defined settlements

POLICY PPE3 - SUPPORTING LOW CARBON LOCAL BUSINESSES

Proposals for development that will enable local businesses to contribute to delivery of The North Somerset Climate Emergency Strategic Action Plan, which aims to achieve carbon neutrality within North Somerset by 2030, will be supported, where proposals do not harm Portishead's character (as set out in the Portishead Community Character Statement) and residential amenity.

Proposals for the development of new green technology and low carbon employment will be particularly supported in principle.

RELATED COMMUNITY ACTIONS:

Supporting local businesses to be carbon positive

DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Context

5.26 The quality of digital connectivity is critical to the success of Portishead's business growth, at employment buildings and sites and for homeworking. For Portishead, digital communication quality was identified as a key factor in discussions with employers undertaken during preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan (Employment and Business Survey Analysis 2021). It also has the potential to make a significant contribution to reducing commuting and its carbon emissions by supporting working from home and digital conferencing. COVID-19 remains a threat to business continuity, and businesses that are able to connect with customers and do business online are significantly more resilient to its impacts on society.

5.27 Core Strategy employment policy CS20 links to Development Management Policy DM48; Broadband, requires housing developments above 10 dwellings and employment proposals above 200 sqm to be flexibly connected to high speed broadband provision.

5.28 The Neighbourhood Plan recognises the heightened importance of enabling

and maintaining digital connectivity to the highest standard for Portishead. Over the lifetime of the plan, it is likely that technologies will change. Installation of future proofed infrastructure will be vital. Whilst future broadband infrastructure may be largely delivered beneath ground, it will also be necessary to be ready for the installation of new infrastructure that could affect the appearance of buildings or streetscape.

5.29 The strategic policy framework and Neighbourhood Plan combine policies to ensure such proposals can be managed to protect character and amenity and health. However, the Neighbourhood Plan provides in principle support for proposals that ensure Portishead's businesses and residents can have access to the latest and highest quality of digital connectivity.



Relevant Objective

O11 To support Portishead's economy and local employment, and support the continued development of a diverse, high value and low carbon economy.

Local Policy Context

CS20 Supporting a successful economy
DM48 Broadband

POLICY PPE4 – DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Development proposals that contribute to providing Portishead's residents, businesses and community facilities with access to state-of-the-art digital connectivity will be supported where development protects the amenity of neighbouring residents and the character of Portishead (as set out in the Portishead Community Character Statement).

HOMEWORKING AND LIVE WORK UNITS

Context

5.30 Home working provides a seedbed platform for entrepreneurs and micro businesses and enables traditional office based businesses to offer hybrid working patterns. In doing so, car commuting can be reduced and local businesses and services have the opportunity to build a larger local customer base.

5.31 Since the COVID-19 pandemic, working from home has become and is likely to remain an integral part of many peoples' working patterns. Census data from 2001 showed homeworking rates for Portishead at 9%⁵¹, while Portishead Neighbourhood Plan surveys undertaken in 2021 put this figure now at 25%.

5.32 Working from home does not need planning permission, as long as the residential character and amenity of the area is maintained. In some cases, planning permission will be needed for extensions and annexes to enable home working at existing houses. Specific live-work units can define distinct employment

and residential components. The Neighbourhood Plan will give support to both residential annexes, subject to conformity with adopted strategic and Neighbourhood Plan design and transport policies that safeguard area character, traffic and parking considerations and residents' amenity.

5.33 The Neighbourhood Plan encourages new homes built in Portishead to provide viable space as well as digital connectivity to enable home working. Support will also be given to proposals for appropriately designed and located live/work units which can support micro and start up use class E businesses linked to residential and commercial accommodation.



Relevant Objective

O11 To support Portishead's economy and local employment, and support the continued development of a diverse, high value and low carbon economy.

Local Policy Context

- CS1 Addressing climate change and carbon reduction
- CS12 Achieving High Quality Design and Place-making
- DM43 Residential annexes

POLICY PPE5 - HOMEWORKING AND LIVE WORK UNITS

New housing development should be designed to enable home working and viable live/work accommodation.

Support will be given to planning or listed building applications to create additional residential space to enable ancillary home working, subject to the proposed development maintaining existing residential amenity, being of an appropriate scale and design and preserving the fabric and setting of affected historic fabric and locally valued green infrastructure.

PLANNING POLICIES: TRANSPORT

INCLUSIVE ACTIVE TRAVEL

Context

5.34 Maximising active and carbon zero travel within Portishead will make a significant contribution to delivery of the North Somerset Climate Emergency Strategic Action Plan (2019). Whilst cars remain a popular way of getting around in Portishead, we would like to see more opportunities to get around the town without the use of a private vehicle. Accessible, inclusive and safe infrastructure that promotes and enables walking, wheeling (using a wheelchair or mobility aid), cycling and public transport for local journeys to key facilities such as schools, medical centres and open green spaces are important.

5.35 Throughout all of this, the needs of disabled people, children, those with pushchairs and the elderly should be considered and provided for. The active travel network should reflect the core principles of:

- Coherence
- Safety
- Directness
- Comfort
- Attractiveness
- Integration

5.36 The Joint Local Transport Plan 4⁵² sets the scene for Policy PPT1, setting out how the West of England Combined Authority (North Somerset, Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire) will have carbon neutral transport by 2036. Related to this document is the [West of England Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan](#)⁵³, which sets out priorities for improvements to the active travel network in Portishead.

5.37 Portishead has a higher than average percentage of car ownership which exacerbates our shared challenge of reducing car use by 40% by 2030 in line with local carbon targets. In seeking to meet the needs of a balanced and diverse community, our local transport network must address the needs of people who cannot drive, children, some older and disabled people, or those who choose not to drive.

5.38 North Somerset Council and the West of England Combined Authority recently secured 'Bus Service Improvement Plan' funding which should contribute positively towards this.

5.39 Congestion is a key issue for local residents. Whilst switching to electric vehicles may assist in reducing harmful vehicle emissions, it will not reduce congestion. Only using our cars less will achieve that. Improvements to public transport network have the potential to alleviate this if they can be delivered.

5.40 During the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, local people identified particular priorities for improvement within the existing active travel network:

- Creation of direct walking or cycling access from the Lake Ground to High Street
- Dedicated cycle routes for schools
- Dedicated cycle route between the 'top' of the town and the town centre.

5.41 Whilst local topography presents a challenge to make walking and cycling attractive to everyone, Portishead is a compact town with a well-connected network of local walking and cycling routes. This enables many trips to local facilities and the town centre to be convenient on foot or bike within 20 minutes. Together with its high quality

of environment, it provides a distinct opportunity to facilitate change in how people choose to make local trips. Increased use of e-bikes will also help to address the topographical challenges to active travel.

5.42 Emerging North Somerset Policy DP14 sets district wide active travel objectives and expectations of development. The Neighbourhood Plan supports this approach and will support development proposals that conform with and make proportionate contribution to delivering its aims in Portishead, through the connections to and enhancement of its active travel network illustrated on the [North Somerset Public Rights of Way Map](#)⁵⁴ and in Figure 15.

Relevant Objectives

O10 To ensure all residents have easy access to local green, blue and open spaces, and to promote environments and transport networks that offer all individuals and communities the greatest potential to lead active and healthy lifestyles.

O13 To deliver an integrated, sustainable, accessible and inclusive transport network that encourages active travel and reduces congestion within Portishead.

Local Policy Context

CS1	Addressing climate change and carbon reduction
CS10	Transportation and Movement
DM25	Public rights of way, pedestrian and cycle access

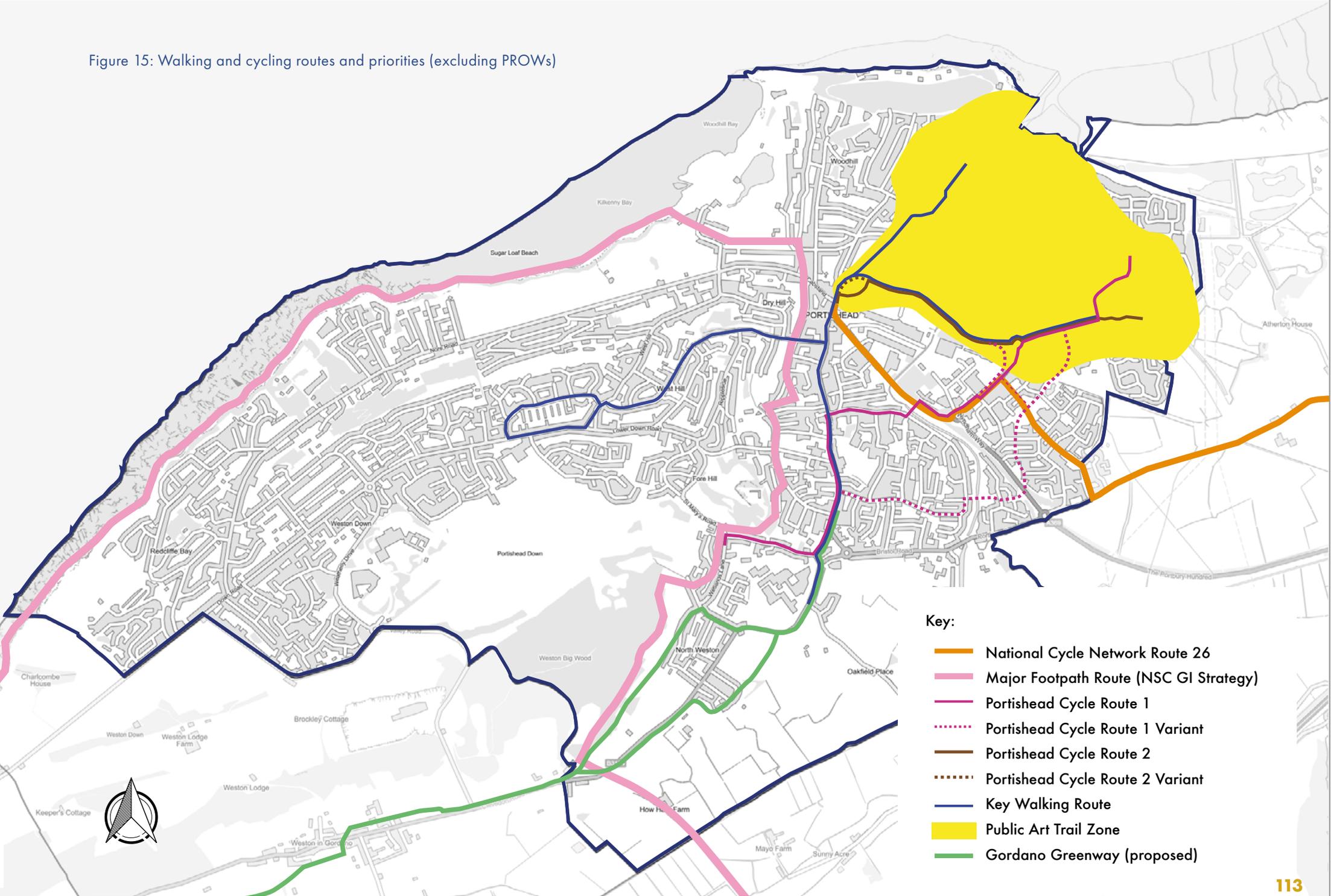
POLICY PPT1 – INCLUSIVE ACTIVE TRAVEL

Development proposals will only be supported where they contribute proportionately and positively towards the protection of, connection to and enhancement of Portishead’s active and sustainable transport network as illustrated on Figure 15 and the Definitive Public Rights of Way Map.

Proposals will be supported where they:

- optimise inclusive measures to encourage walking, cycling and connections to public transport in conformity with North Somerset Policy CS10 (Transportation and Movement)
- integrate with public transport services and achieve accessible and safe pedestrian connections of no more than 400m or 5 minutes safe and convenient walking distance to an active bus stop.

Figure 15: Walking and cycling routes and priorities (excluding PROWs)



Key:

- National Cycle Network Route 26
- Major Footpath Route (NSC GI Strategy)
- Portishead Cycle Route 1
- ⋯ Portishead Cycle Route 1 Variant
- Portishead Cycle Route 2
- ⋯ Portishead Cycle Route 2 Variant
- Key Walking Route
- Public Art Trail Zone
- Gordano Greenway (proposed)

ENCOURAGING ACTIVE TRAVEL FOR LEISURE AND RECREATION

Context

5.43 The benefits of walking and cycling for recreation and leisure for our health and wellbeing are widely reported. Portishead's outstanding environment presents a particularly distinct opportunity to harness its benefits. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted just how important it is to be able to get out and about in our local environment and to exercise locally. The pandemic also created a shift where lots of people interacted with their familiar surroundings in new ways; appreciating what's on their doorstep and spending more time outdoors.

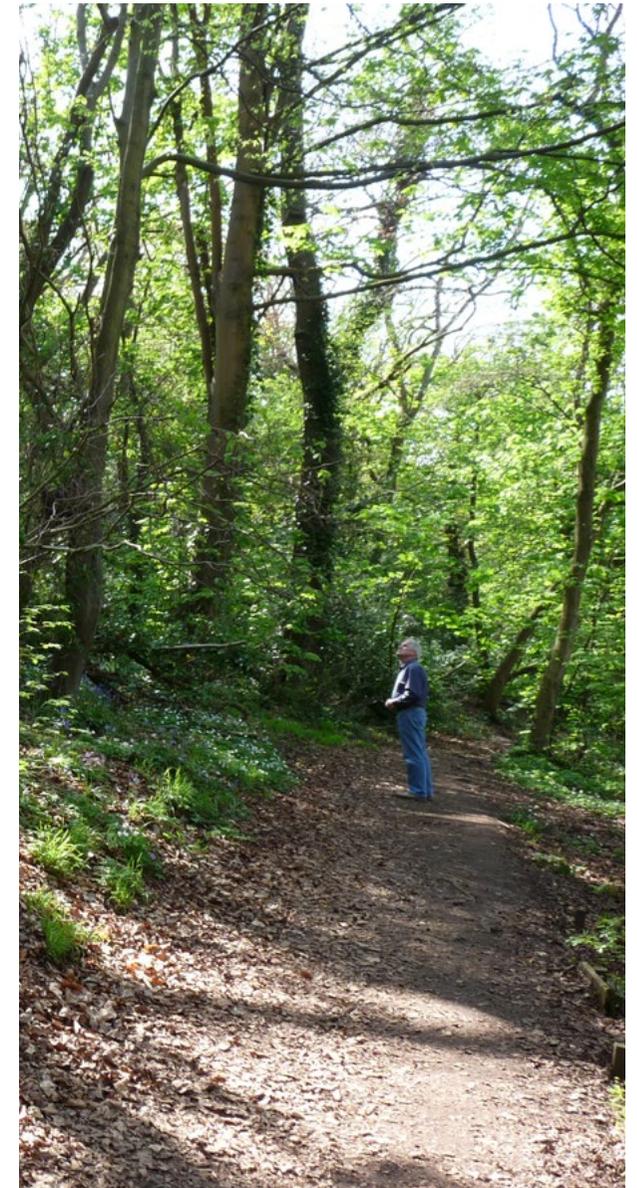
5.44 From our coastline, to ancient woodland, to the Marina and High Street; Portishead has a distinct wealth of attractive areas and features for residents and visitors alike to enjoy. Many people already take advantage of the extensive public right of way network that links a number of these assets.

5.45 Portishead has key strategic green transport routes used for recreation including the English coastal path and National Cycle Route 26, which links Portishead to Easton-in-Gordano and

further west towards Bristol along the Pill Path.

5.46 During the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, the working groups identified an opportunity to better link our assets and strategic routes through wayfinding signage, interpretation and better maintenance. But securing their protection and delivering connections to these routes must be a baseline action.

5.47 The overall aim is to deliver improved connections that will enable all of our community to access and enjoy Portishead's open spaces, landscape, heritage and leisure facilities as well as make connections into the strategic footpath network. More information on this can be found in the Green and Blue Infrastructure Evidence Base Report 2022.



Relevant Objective

O10 To ensure all residents have easy access to local green, blue and open spaces, and to promote environments and transport networks that offer all individuals and communities the greatest potential to lead active and healthy lifestyles.

O13 To deliver an integrated, sustainable, accessible and inclusive transport network that encourages active travel and reduces congestion within Portishead.

Local Policy Context

CS9 Green Infrastructure
CS10 Transportation and Movement
CS26 Supporting healthy living and the provision of health care facilities
DM25 Public rights of way, pedestrian and cycle access

POLICY PPT2 - ENCOURAGING ACTIVE TRAVEL FOR LEISURE AND RECREATION

Walking and cycling routes that connect Portishead's coastline, woodland landscapes, town centre and marina to its local neighbourhoods will be protected and enhanced to enable and encourage walking and cycling for leisure, health and wellbeing.

Development proposals and engineering works that maintain or enhance existing strategic public rights of way and permissive footpaths and connections to them will be supported.

Portishead Town Council will support the enhancement and extension of the sections of strategic walking and cycling routes within Portishead, including:

- The South West Coastal Path
- National Cycle Network Route 26
- Gordano Greenway
- Cycle route along full length of Portbury Ditch on both sides
- Cycle lane from Portishead to Clapton in Gordano
- Cycle lane from Sheepway to Portbury using Gypsy Lane with a safe crossing across the A369

RELATED COMMUNITY ACTIONS

Portishead Town Council will work with the community, landowners, neighbouring parishes, local partners and North Somerset Council to protect, enhance and extend Portishead's pedestrian and cycling network.

A priority will be the delivery of a connected and accessible "leisure walking loop" within the town. This will harness existing public rights of way and provide new and improved connections that will enable all of our community to access and enjoy Portishead's open spaces, landscape, heritage and leisure facilities as well as make connections into the strategic footpath network.

Other actions:

- Key Routes to School Project
- Improvements to infrastructure (e.g. dropped kerbs and disabled parking) for older people and people with a disability should be made where appropriate.
- The Town Council will explore the means of prevention of pavement parking where it is considered to be a hazard.

SUPPORTING THE SHIFT TO ULTRA LOW EMISSION VEHICLES

Context

5.48 Ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) use electric and other new power sources and produce no exhaust fumes or engine noise. Whilst still only accounting for about 8% of the cars on the road in 2020, electric car (EV) sales increased by 186%. The growth of the EV market is expected to accelerate as the UK prepares for the 2030 ban on new petrol and diesel vehicle sales.

5.49 Portishead has a higher than national average car ownership level where only 13% of households do not own a car⁵⁵. Cars are convenient and often essential to people in our community and whilst we need to significantly reduce overall usage, they are likely to remain a significant part of Portishead's transport system for the foreseeable future. But within the lifetime of the Neighbourhood Plan nearly all cars are likely to be replaced. This presents an opportunity to fast-track Portishead's conversion to ultra-low emission vehicles.

5.50 Using a combination of local policy and community actions, we aim to make choosing to use an ultra-low emission vehicle feasible, attractive and the norm

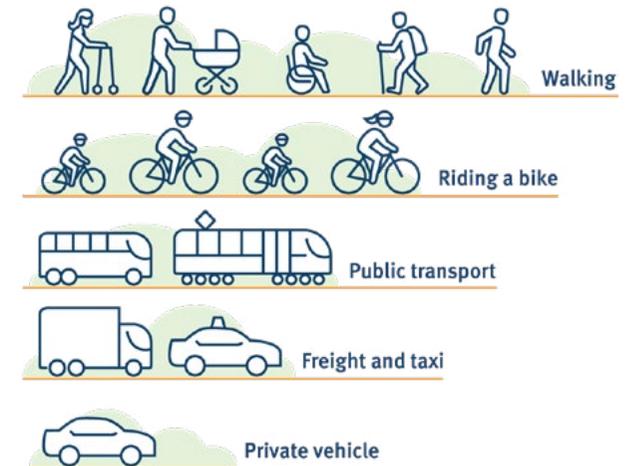
in Portishead, and preferred over internal combustion alternatives. This will be achieved through a combination of local community actions, working alongside North Somerset planning and transport policies, building regulations, and NDP policy PPT3. The Neighbourhood Plan requires new development to provide for charging of ultra-low emission vehicles and be future proofed to accommodate changing technology. The Town Council will also work with North Somerset Council and local businesses to install public facilities to enable charging.

5.51 ULEVs alone cannot address all transport-related issues in Portishead. Issues such as affordability, congestion and wider environmental impacts remain. North Somerset Council's emerging policy prioritises all other modes of transport above the private vehicle, whether powered by internal combustion or other low emission methods. This reflects the approach in the Transport Hierarchy.

5.52 ULEVs therefore, are just one piece of the puzzle in addressing the wider challenges of transport and transport

infrastructure and must be implemented alongside improvements to the public transport and active travel networks addressed elsewhere in this Plan and within emerging North Somerset policy. Notwithstanding this, ULEVs can effectively address the transport needs of those who may not be in a position to utilise active or public transport alternatives due to health or timetabling constraints in a way that minimises the local environmental impact.

Sustainable transport hierarchy





Relevant Objective

O13 To deliver an integrated, sustainable, accessible and inclusive transport network that encourages active travel and reduces congestion within Portishead.

Local Policy Context

CS1 Addressing climate change and carbon reduction

POLICY PPT3 – SUPPORTING THE SHIFT TO ULTRA-LOW EMISSION VEHICLES

To future proof new development and to ensure that sufficient electric vehicle parking provision and infrastructure is provided in both public and private parking areas, development proposals will only be supported where they conform with The North Somerset Council, Revised Parking Standards SPD (2021), (Principle 19; Electric Vehicle Parking)

Additional Public e-vehicle Charging Points

To increase the attractiveness and use of ultra-low emission vehicles, additional infrastructure for low emission vehicle charging is encouraged at public parking locations where space allows, particularly at the following destinations and locations:

- Esplanade Road car park
- Parking facilities at the Folk Hall
- Avon Way car park

PARKING

Context

5.53 Community feedback identified parking as a key issue for many people within Portishead. In particular, the tight knit development of “The Village Quarter” has been a hotspot of incidents of inconsiderate parking and obstruction of the highway.

5.54 Town centre parking is valued in supporting local business vitality, and parking adjacent to the coast, Lake Grounds and Lido supports its leisure and visitor economy.

5.55 Many of Portishead’s existing homes were constructed without car parking provision. Some older homes with garages are now too small to accommodate today’s cars. Garages are also re-purposed as storage or living accommodation.

5.56 The rise in car ownership places further pressure on highway space for parking. It also results in the replacement of front garden landscape with hard standing, removing on-street parking and valuable green infrastructure and increasing run-off thus putting further pressure on the overloaded drainage system.

5.57 North Somerset Policy CS11 provides district level direction for provision of and changes to car parking. The adopted and

updated [Parking Standards supplementary planning guidance document \(2020\)](#)⁵⁶ sets new standards for all new development including increased garage size, and car and cycle parking provision for homes and businesses.

5.58 In line with North Somerset’s aspiration to become carbon neutral by 2030, North Somerset Council’s emerging spatial strategy is supportive of development that provides lower levels of car parking in accessible locations that are well served by public and active modes of travel, have good local facilities and are less reliant on private vehicle ownership. Proposals must be accompanied by sufficient evidence to demonstrate that a lower level of parking will not have a detrimental impact on local highway conditions.

5.59 However, whilst the Neighbourhood Plan acknowledges the primary goal of reducing car ownership and usage, parking issues remain a priority for local people in Portishead.

5.60 Where no planning permission is required for changes to property and uses, associated impact on car parking cannot be controlled. Where planning controls can be applied, the Neighbourhood Plan will

expect current district parking standards to be applied to prevent intensification of car parking issues through inappropriate enlargement of houses or changes of use that generate additional parking demands.

5.61 Public car parks at the town centre and at leisure attractions are valued. But all members of the community need to be able to utilise this valued space including those in greatest need of car parking, bicycles and ultra-low emission vehicles.

5.62 The Neighbourhood Plan will support proposals to manage existing and new car parks to maximise their contribution to making travel accessible and sustainable.

5.63 It is recognised that future improvements to public transport may be able to alleviate some of the existing parking issues in Portishead. During the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, it was highlighted that many residents are currently unable to utilise the available public transport due to a perceived unreliability as well as timetabling practicalities - these issues need to be resolved in order to encourage more people to use public transport and make a contribution towards improving parking issues in the Neighbourhood Area.

Relevant Objective

O13 To deliver an integrated, sustainable, accessible and inclusive transport network that encourages active travel and reduces congestion within Portishead.

Local Policy Context

CS1 Addressing Climate Change and Carbon Reduction
CS10 Transportation and Movement
CS11 Parking
DM28 Parking Standards
DM 29 Car Parks
North Somerset Parking Standards SPD 2021

POLICY PPT4 - PARKING

Parking Standards

Residential and non-residential development proposals will be expected to conform with North Somerset council's Revised Parking Standards SPD (2021).

Car Parking Provision

Proposals that would result in the loss of parking will only be supported where they conform with North Somerset Council's Revised Parking Standards SPD (2021).

Car Parks

Proposals that re-prioritise existing car parking to increase provision for disabled people, ultra-low emission vehicle charging and secured cycle parking will be supported.

HIGHWAYS IMPACTS AND SECURING HIGHWAY SAFETY

Context

5.64 Maintaining and improving highway safety for all users is a primary consideration in assessing all proposals for development that are likely to generate or alter how people access and move around a site or how it may impact on the connecting network. North Somerset Policy DM24 applies district level requirements upon applicants to provide safe transport environments and mitigate problems they cause, including through financial contributions to off-site measures. This will be applied to all development within Portishead.

5.65 Traffic congestion within Portishead is a priority to the local community.

5.66 The cumulative impact of the intensification of residential buildings and plots within Portishead's existing neighbourhoods is already causing significant highway safety issues, particularly when it increases demands for on-street parking that causes obstructions to pedestrians and service and emergency vehicles. Neighbourhood Plan Policy PWH2 seeks to prioritise planning control

of such development through requirements to meet North Somerset Council's Parking Standards (2021).

5.67 The Wyndham Way area is the only location within Portishead that may accommodate significant development within the lifetime of the Neighbourhood Plan. The future for the Wyndham Way area is being developed through a partnership of Portishead Town Council, North Somerset Council and relevant landowners. The Wyndham Way Community Action included in this Plan (see page 128) sets out transportation criteria that the community has expressed as important for this development, including integration with the new railway station, managing car parking and avoiding wider transport impacts.

5.68 Particularly within the town's conservation area and where the Portishead Community Character assessment has identified green infrastructure and highway boundary treatments make a positive contribution to local character, proposals to address

highway safety will only be supported where they conserve or mitigate for environmental or heritage harm caused.

5.69 Development can be expected to ensure it does not exacerbate or create highway safety issues for all users. It can also be expected to contribute towards wider highway safety and sustainability improvement measures. The Neighbourhood Plan supports and reinforces North Somerset Policy.

Relevant Objective

O13 To deliver an integrated, sustainable, accessible and inclusive transport network that encourages active travel and reduces congestion within Portishead.

Local Policy Context

CS10 Transportation and Movement
DM24 Safety, traffic and provision of infrastructure, etc. associated with development

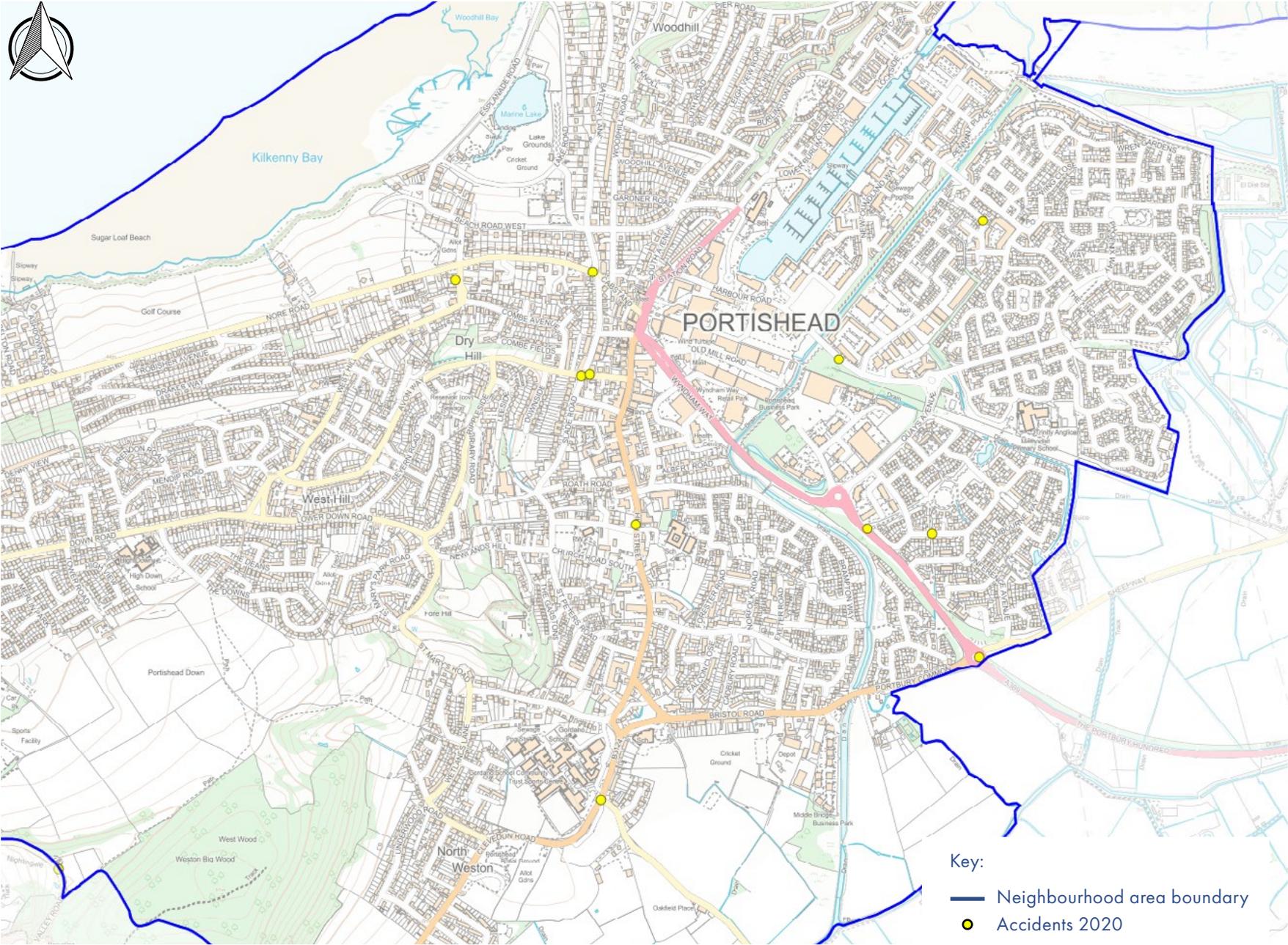
POLICY PPT5 – HIGHWAY IMPACTS AND SECURING HIGHWAY SAFETY

Where development proposals will create demands for additional pedestrian, cycle and vehicle movements and parking, they will be only be supported where they are in conformity with North Somerset Local Plan Policy DM24 (Safety, traffic and provision of infrastructure, etc. associated with development) addressing the assessed safety impacts of the proposed development on the local highway, adopted cycle routes and highway footway network. Proposals will be expected to make proportionate contribution towards the improvement to connecting multi-modal routes to enable safe connections to be achieved for pedestrians, cyclists and all vehicle users to local facilities.

RELATED COMMUNITY ACTIONS

A review of parking restrictions (including double yellow lines), should be regularly conducted, focusing on safety concerns.

Figure 16: Recent Traffic Accidents in Portishead



DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AND TRAVEL PLANNING

Context

5.70 Transport and traffic is a major issue and priority for Portishead's community. The existing highway network is often heavily congested. Any major development within the town is likely to exacerbate this issue unless it can minimise the need for car use and maximise public transport use and walking and cycling choices. In addition to directly delivering necessary infrastructure, any development should also adopt measures to embed use of these modes from the outset. Travel Plans can set out how this is achieved to optimum effect.

5.71 North Somerset Council Portishead Town Council and relevant landowners are leading the "Placemaking Plan" master planning to guide the potential development of The Wyndham Way study area. The area may accommodate significant development within the lifetime of the Neighbourhood Plan and potentially beyond, including a linking to the new railway station and local highway network. The scale of change will require a comprehensive master planned approach to design of sustainable and active travel infrastructure to be delivered through major development proposals.

5.72 North Somerset Local Plan will address any proposal for allocation of land for strategic housing growth. This will be likely to be at the edge of Portishead's existing developed area. Proposals for any associated development would be likely to represent major development.

5.73 The Neighbourhood Plan will only support development proposals which would generate significant amounts of movement when they are submitted with a Travel Plan that demonstrates the proposal meets criteria set out in North Somerset policy DM26, and is compliant with the North Somerset Travel Planning Supplementary Planning Document.



Relevant Objective

O13 To deliver an integrated, sustainable, accessible and inclusive transport network that encourages active travel and reduces congestion within Portishead.

Local Policy Context

CS1 Addressing climate change and carbon reduction
CS10 Transportation and Movement
DM26 Travel Plans
DM24 Safety, traffic and provision of infrastructure, etc. associated with development
North Somerset Travel Plans SPD

POLICY PPT6 – DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AND TRAVEL PLANNING

Applications for development of 10 homes or more must be submitted with a Travel Plan in accordance with North Somerset Local Plan Policy DM26 (Travel Plans) and the North Somerset Travel Plans SPD (2010) (or any subsequent adopted version).

Proposals for major development proposals will only be supported where the travel plan demonstrates that opportunities to enable active and low carbon transport choices, community safety, inclusive accessibility and avoidance of adverse transport impacts on residential amenity and business vitality within Portishead has been achieved.

Any master plan and major development proposals within the Wyndham Way redevelopment area will only be supported when it is submitted with a policy compliant travel plan. This must take account of pre-existing and future transport demands and infrastructure identified within an approved Wyndham Way “Placemaking Plan” or master plan.

RELATED COMMUNITY ACTIONS

- Town Council commitment to involvement in Railway Station development.

AREA BASED POLICIES AND COMMUNITY ACTIONS

The following section of the neighbourhood plan contains policies related to wellbeing:

Priorities for Wyndham Way Study Area

Community Action Wyndham Way Study Area

Priorities for Portishead Town Centre

Policy PTC1: Protection of Portishead Town Centre Character and Vitality

Policy PTC2: Business Use of Upper Floors

Policy PTC3: Town Centre Housing

Policy PTC4: Keeping the Town Centre Accessible to Everybody

Policy PTC5: Shopfronts and Signage

UN SDGs

The policies in this section contribute to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:



PLACE FOCUSED POLICIES AND CRITERIA

INTRODUCTION

6.0 Portishead Town Centre and the Wyndham Way study area are at the heart of the town's economic, community and cultural life. The shaping and future of both areas bring together development themes covered by the Neighbourhood Plan, but also, in the case of the town centre, very specific and distinct issues and opportunities. The Neighbourhood Plan therefore sets out clear and distinct policies for the town centre and provides conditions to inform support for future proposals that may emerge from Placemaking Plan proposals for the Wyndham Way Study Area.

6.1 Our town centre remains a vibrant local hub but it faces challenges from alternative forms of retailing and has recently suffered the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. These changes, together with changes in Government planning legislation, create a need for the Neighbourhood Plan to provide a locally distinct set of place specific policies to direct and guide its ongoing quality and long term vitality at the hub of the community. This may be reinforced by a future town centre strategy.

6.2 At the time of drafting the Neighbourhood Plan, the Wyndham Way Study Area is the focus of a regeneration

and development strategy, being led by North Somerset Council, in partnership with the landowners and Portishead Town Council. The Placemaking Plan work has included a distinct stream of community engagement which has been referenced in drafting town centre Neighborhood Plan policies.

6.3 Upon adoption, North Somerset's emerging guidance and policy framework will take the lead in setting the development agenda for the Wyndham Way study area. Neighbourhood Plan policy can inform how the proposals have regard to our community needs and priorities.

6.4 The Neighbourhood Plan can inform how the proposals have regard to our community needs and priorities. However, the Town Council's input is distinct and separate from its role as the "Qualifying Body" for the Neighbourhood Plan.



WYNDHAM WAY STUDY AREA

CONTEXT

6.5 North Somerset Council are leading a partnership with Portishead Town Council and Aberdeen Standard Investments (ASI), one of the key land owners, to work together to guide future development of land between the High Street, the Marina and the planned new transport hub, known as the Wyndham Way Study Area (WWSA).

6.6 The identified boundary of the WWSA reflects areas where change is considered possible and also where it could help to unlock potential wider benefits such as new routes and connections or improved use of previously developed, 'brownfield', land.

6.7 The WWSA forms part of Portishead town centre. Allocated sites within the WWSA include Old Mill Road (mixed use development), Gordano Gate (employment use) and Harbour Road / Gordano Gate (residential). There are further allocations beyond the WWSA boundary, and the High Street is designated as a Primary Shopping Area.

6.8 The study area contains existing employment and retail uses that make an existing contribution to the value and offer of the town centre and local employment

opportunities. These valued uses are protected by Neighbourhood Plan town centre and employment policies PTC1 and PPE1. Proposals that may come forward for these sites will only be supported where these uses and employment are retained.

6.9 The WWSA is adjacent to land reserved in the Local Plan for the construction of a new integrated transport hub for Portishead including a railway station. It will be essential that all proposals for the study area do not prejudice delivery of this facility and are fully connected to it.

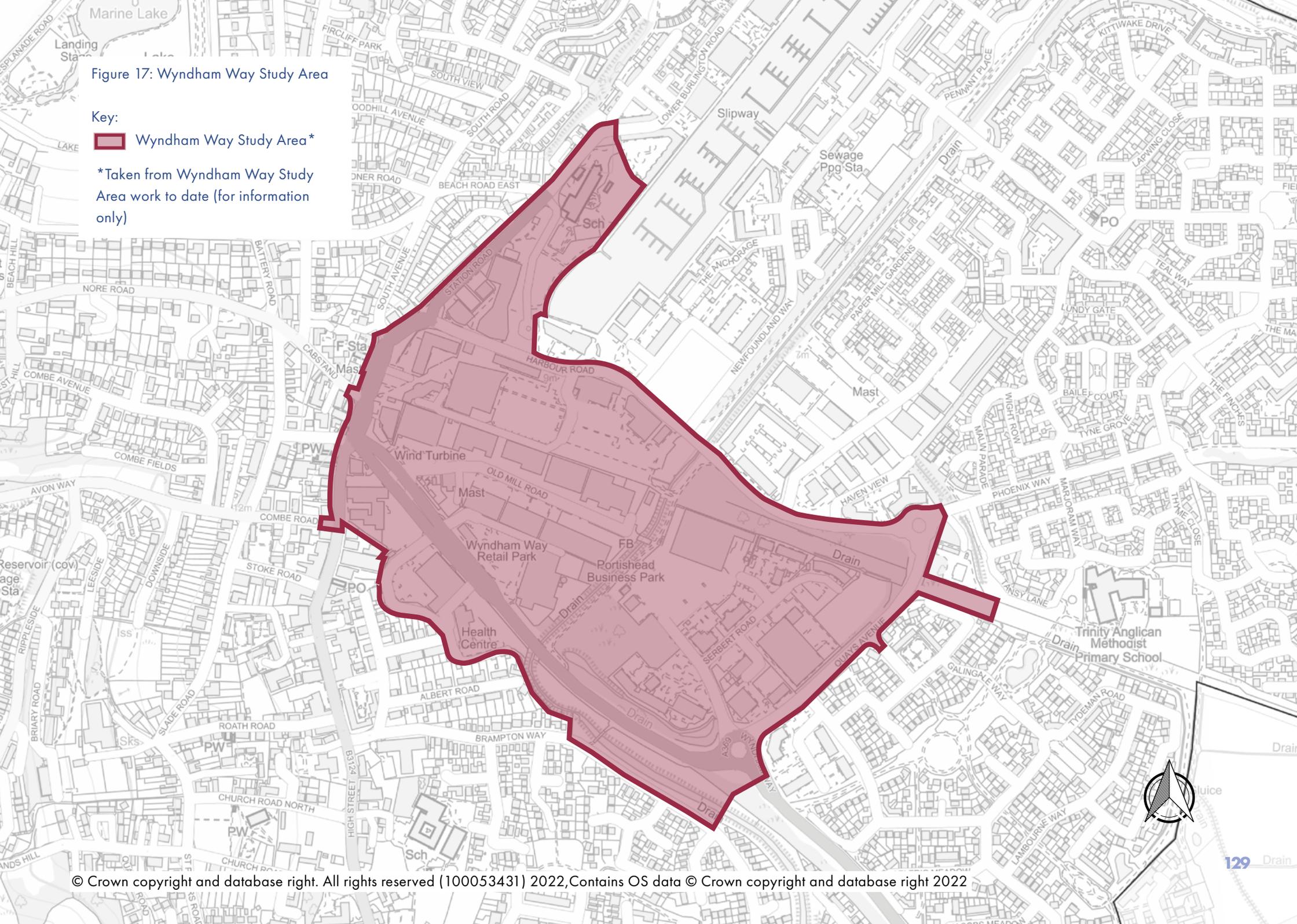
6.10 Work on the Neighbourhood Plan has identified some emerging priorities for the community for the Wyndham Way Study Area. These are summarised in the Wyndham Way Emerging Community Priorities Document (2022).

Figure 17: Wyndham Way Study Area

Key:

 Wyndham Way Study Area*

*Taken from Wyndham Way Study Area work to date (for information only)



Relevant Objective

O12 To deliver a connected, accessible, inclusive, attractive, vibrant and distinctive town centre at the heart of Portishead's community and economic life.

To provide input and policy support to enable and require North Somerset Council to secure the delivery of high quality, sustainable employment-led development and regeneration of land within the Wyndham Way Study Area.

Local Policy Context

CS1	Addressing climate change and carbon reduction
CS10	Transportation and Movement
CS20	Supporting a successful economy
DM47	Proposals for economic development within towns and defined settlements
DM22	Existing and proposed railway lines

WYNDHAM WAY STUDY AREA

The Town Council will continue to work in partnership with North Somerset Council and landowners to progress future plans for the Wyndham Way Study Area as defined in Figure 17.

In particular, regard will be given to:

- Addressing Portishead's community needs and aspirations for the area, evidenced by Neighbourhood Plan and North Somerset Council public consultation feedback relating to the Wyndham Way Study Area development framework and any subsequent adopted SPD.
- Ensuring the ongoing viability of existing valued employment and town centre retail uses within the study area is protected
- Ensuring proposals are fully integrated with proposals for Portishead Railway Station and contribute to delivery of sustainable transportation and active travel policies and North Somerset Council parking standards.

PORTISHEAD TOWN CENTRE

CONTEXT

6.11 Portishead High Street is the historic focus of the town's retailing and community services. It retains a vibrant mix of uses and a distinct character. It also retains its role as a vibrant focus of local shopping, services and community life. The Neighbourhood Plan aims to protect this vitality and support its ongoing resilience and potential for transformation to achieve long term viability as a community hub.

6.12 North Somerset Development Management Policies DM60 and DM47 (Town Centres) state that within defined boundaries of the town centre of Portishead (as illustrated on Figure 18), the vibrancy, vitality and community focus provided by the town centres will be maintained and enhanced. Proposals for main town centre uses within these areas will, in principle, be supported provided they contribute to the improvement of the town centre.

6.13 Emerging North Somerset Policy DP26 (Primary shopping areas) provides support for retail uses (Class Ea) and for other Class E uses, conditional upon their supporting town centre footfall and vitality and extend business hours within defined primary frontages (defined on the North

Somerset Local Plan Policies Map), but it resists inappropriate or overly large floorspace uses that could harm the character and vitality of the centre.

6.14 Policy DM47 also seeks to ensure that Portishead town centre will be maintained as the focus for town centre uses, requiring a sequential assessment approach to be applied to optimise the use of available town centres sites before out of centre.

6.15 Changes to the Town and Country Planning Act Use Class Order in 2020 and 2021 have consolidated the majority of high street uses within a new single use class E, enabling changes of use within the class through permitted development. This does not apply to proposed changes to the appearance of the frontage or building. New Class MA also enables vacant class E premises to be changed to residential accommodation through the simplified Prior Approvals process. This may make it easier for new ventures to bring new vitality to an ailing high street. However, it also removes layers of previous protection given to primary retail frontages, risking their loss.

6.16 Within the limitations of planning legislation, Portishead Neighbourhood Plan aims to protect the vitality, viability and character of our high street through supporting the protection and investment in active business and service frontages, but also by seeking to prevent harm to both neighbouring uses and character through inappropriate changes to frontages or service areas which do require permission.



Relevant Objective

O11 To support Portishead's economy and local employment, and support the continued development of a diverse, high value and low carbon economy.

Local Policy Context

CS1	Addressing climate change and carbon reduction
CS20	Supporting a successful economy.
DM 47	Proposals for Economic Development
DM 60	Town Centres
DM 63	Primary Frontages
DM 66	Sequential Approach to Retail Development within or Adjacent to Town Centres

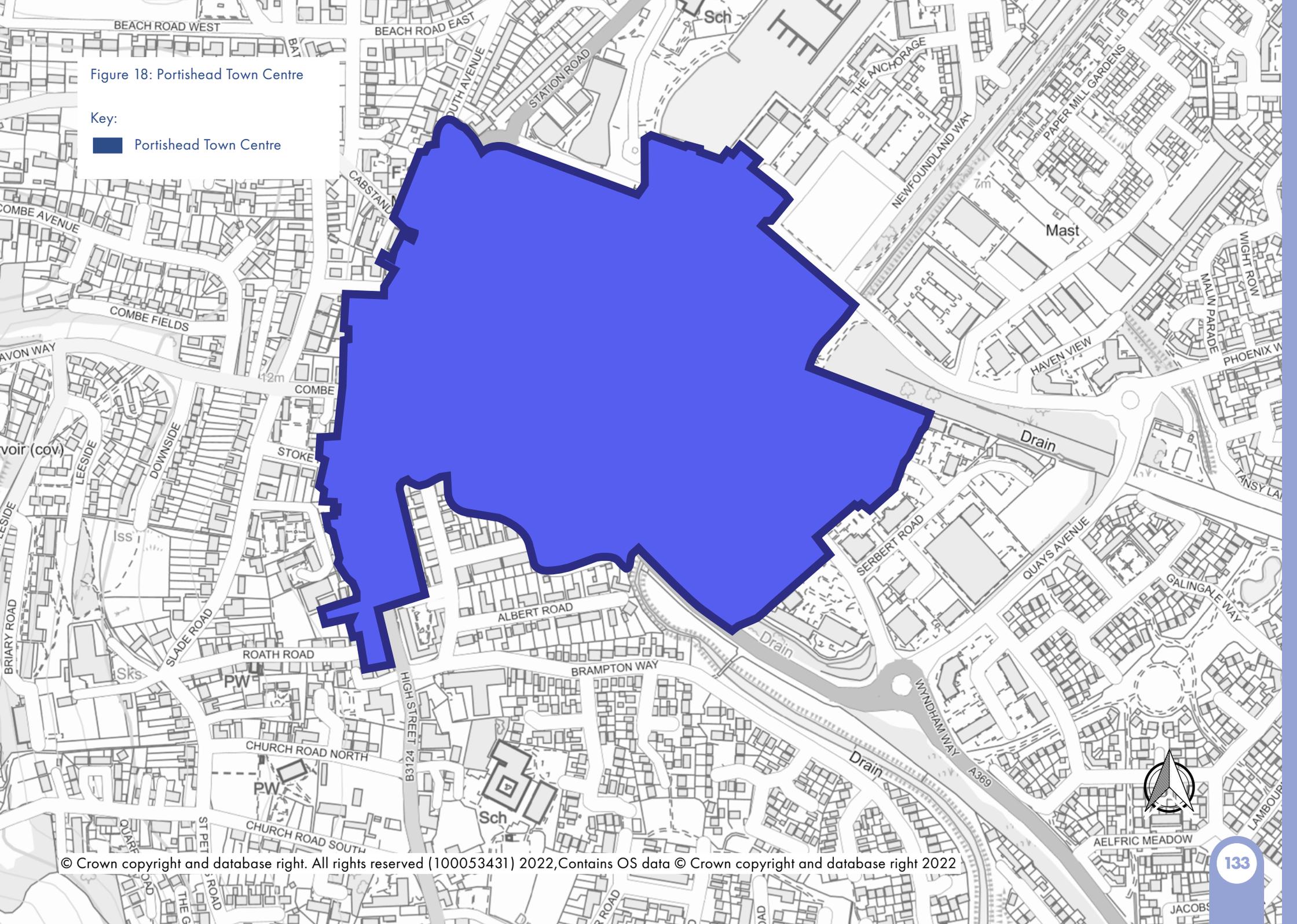
POLICY PTC1 - PROTECTION OF PORTISHEAD TOWN CENTRE CHARACTER AND VITALITY

Within Portishead Town Centre (defined by North Somerset emerging Local Plan (policy DM60) and illustrated in Figure 17, proposals for development including changes of use and operational development will be supported where they:

- Conform with North Somerset Local Plan Policies DM60 (Town Centres)
- Contribute to the continued development of a diverse, high value and low carbon economy
- Protect or increase the viability and quality of retailing, commercial and community service ground floor frontages, and the vitality of the evening economy
- Conserve or enhance the character of the town centre and, where appropriate, the Town Centre Conservation Area.

Figure 18: Portishead Town Centre

Key:
■ Portishead Town Centre



BUSINESS USE OF UPPER FLOORS

Context

6.17 Portishead town centre is characterised by terraces and groups of largely two storey buildings. Ground floor frontage uses provide the primary activity and vitality. However, upper floors make a meaningful contribution to business, service floorspace and also residential accommodation.

6.18 Visual surveys undertaken as part of evidence for the Portishead Community Character Statement 2021 have estimated Portishead High Street contains about 6000 sq.m of upper floor space. Surveys concluded that just over 50% of the space over shops was used for offices or residential and the remainder appeared currently under-used. This could amount to about 3000 sq.m of underused space that could be harnessed to deliver greater local economic, community facility benefit or to contribute to addressing the local need for smaller and cheaper places to live, in a highly sustainable location.

6.19 The Neighbourhood Plan aims to encourage owners to optimise the value of their upper floor space through supporting new business and service uses.

6.20 North Somerset Council has published a shopfront design guide that includes a section with guidance to inform the change of use of upper floor use.

Relevant Objective

O11 To support Portishead's economy and local employment, and support the continued development of a diverse, high value and low carbon economy.

Local Policy Context

CS1 Addressing climate change and carbon reduction
CS12 Achieving High Quality Design and Place Making
CS20 Supporting a successful economy
DM 47 Proposals for Economic Development
DM 60 Town Centres
DM 63 Primary Frontages
North Somerset Shopfront Design Guide SPD 2019

POLICY PTC2 - BUSINESS USE OF UPPER FLOORS

Proposals that make greater use of upper floors of town centre premises, including for offices and small businesses uses (within use class E) will be supported where they:

- Do not conflict with the operations of neighbouring existing uses
- Have independent pedestrian access
- Incorporate appropriate measures to manage refuse and servicing
- Incorporate accessibility measures to optimise inclusivity
- Sustain or enhance the vitality of Portishead town centre
- Maintain or enhance the quality of the host building.

TOWN CENTRE HOUSING

6.21 The Portishead Local Housing Needs Assessment 2021 identified a severe shortage of smaller and affordable market housing to buy or rent. Portishead is also not capable of expanding to meet housing need on greenfield sites. Policies must therefore optimise the opportunities for housing to meet local needs to be delivered on previously used land and through the appropriate re-purposing of existing sites and buildings.

6.22 As town centres move away from a largely retail led economy, new approaches to their vitality and resilience have recognised that balanced amounts of appropriately located residential accommodation can make a positive contribution to town centre attractiveness and vitality. Under-used floorspace within Portishead High Street may present an opportunity to provide small and affordable housing contributing to meeting local needs.

6.23 However, protection of the viability and operations of existing businesses is paramount. It will be vital that development of particularly residential accommodation does not conflict with existing business uses that affect viability and resident amenity.

6.24 Upper floor residential accommodation must be self-contained. Entrances and stairs should be accessed from the front of the property and must not compromise the existing ground floor uses. Servicing arrangements must not harm high street accessibility or character or existing access. This should be located at the rear of properties and not on the private forecourts that characterise the high street. Within the town centre, under-used back land plots provide potential to accommodate such infrastructure and parking.

6.25 Accommodation must provide an acceptable standard of accommodation, meeting government space standards for small dwellings. They must also meet building regulation standards for quality of light and ventilation.

Relevant Objective

O11 To support Portishead's economy and local employment, and support the continued development of a diverse, high value and low carbon economy.

Local Policy Context

CS20 Supporting a successful economy

POLICY PTC3 - TOWN CENTRE HOUSING

Change of use of existing town centre floorspace to residential will be supported where:

- It is restricted to the use of upper floors
- It would not result in the loss of an existing viable town centre use
- It would contribute positively to the vitality and diversity of the town centre
- It would not cause conflicts with existing neighbouring commercial or community facility town centre uses
- Internal space meets current Government space standard guidelines.
- There is a good quality of natural light and ventilation
- It has a separate dedicated access
- It provides adequate accessible space for the storage of refuse and recycling
- Accommodation conforms with North Somerset Council Car Parking Standards.

Proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they have had regard to the North Somerset Shopfront Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (Adopted 2019).

KEEPING THE TOWN CENTRE ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYBODY

Context

6.26 The 2011 census found that 18.5% of the North Somerset population had a limiting long-term illness (LLTI) and that 33% of households in the district contained one or more persons with a LLTI. There is forecast to be a 54% increase in Portishead's community of people over the age of 65 during the lifetime of the Neighbourhood Plan. Unless our buildings, streets and spaces are designed and adapted to meet changing access needs, many local people will be excluded from our community and its everyday activities.

6.27 Maximising the viability and attractiveness of Portishead town centre is inextricably linked to providing an inclusive and accessible public realm, connecting to inclusive accessible shops and services. This includes maintaining accessible frontage forecourts as much as accessible entrances and internal spaces.

6.28 Outside trading and hospitality has boomed during the pandemic. It has enhanced street life and is likely to become a permanent feature of our high street.

6.29 Outside trading and dining requires planning consent where it changes the use of the external space. Maintaining safe access along the high street for all pedestrians and in particular people with sight and mobility impairment is essential. The Town Council will support proposals that demonstrate this has been achieved. It also encourages high street businesses to utilise outside forecourt space with consideration to all members of the community.

Relevant Objective

O11 To support Portishead's economy and local employment, and support the continued development of a diverse, high value and low carbon economy.

Existing Policy Context

- CS12 Achieving High Quality Design and Place-making,
- DM32 High quality design and place-making
- DM33 Inclusive Access into Non-residential Buildings

POLICY PTC4 - KEEPING THE TOWN CENTRE ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYBODY

Development proposals for new shopfronts and community facility premises will be supported where they provide inclusive and step-less connections between the public realm and the premises.

Proposals to change the use of outside frontage spaces to enable external hospitality or trading will only be supported where;

- they maintain at least a 2m clear footway access,
- are operated within hours to avoid harm to neighbouring residents and
- associated outdoor street furniture makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the town centre.

Businesses which utilise external private forecourts are encouraged to sensitively locate seating and goods to provide accessible connections to the public pavement and to install cycle and buggy parking as well as opportunities for customers to sit.

SHOPFRONTS & SIGNAGE

Context

6.30 Shopfront design quality and the amount, location and quality of commercial signage is a key factor in protecting, enhancing and celebrating the town centre's distinction and character. [North Somerset Council's Shopfront Design Guidance \(2019\)](#)⁵⁷ provides detailed district wide advice on how good design quality and appropriate signage should be incorporated into high streets.

6.31 The heritage and distinctive character of the town centre, recorded in the Portishead Community Design Statement 2021, make a significant contribution to its attractiveness as a local destination and its lasting vitality. The Design Statement identifies pairs of shops on the High Street built in the Victorian period as making a particular contribution to the town centre's quality. Changes in shopfronts and proposals for new signage on these buildings will be of particular importance.

6.32 The Neighbourhood Plan supports the use of upper floors for town centre businesses that complement ground floor uses. Signage for these uses must be limited to small signs at ground floor

level, associated with the entrances. Wall mounted and projecting signs above ground floor fascia level are harmful to character and will not be supported.

Relevant Objective

O11 To support Portishead's economy and local employment, and support the continued development of a diverse, high value and low carbon economy.

Local Policy Context

CS12 Achieving High Quality Design
DM32 and Placemaking
DM63 High Quality Design and
 Placemaking
North Somerset Shopfront Design Guide
SPD 2019

POLICY PTC5 - SHOPFRONTS & SIGNAGE

Shopfront and town centre business planning and advertisement applications will be supported where they conserve or enhance the existing quality of the shopfront and signage.

Proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they have had regard to the North Somerset Shopfront Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (Adopted 2019).

Proposed signage for upper floor uses must be limited to small signs at ground floor level, associated with their dedicated entrance. Projecting signs above ground floor level are harmful to character and will not be supported where they are judged to be harmful to the character of the town centre or the host building.

TOWN CENTRE COMMUNITY ACTIONS

Article Four Direction

6.33 Where protection of town centre Class E uses is considered to be critical to protecting the vitality and viability of Portishead Town Centre, the Town Council will work with North Somerset Council to test the feasibility of, and potentially implement, an Article Four Direction within the central core of the town centre. This may remove current Use Class MA Prior Approval/Permitted Development rights to change the use of vacant town centre frontages to residential use.

Town Centre Strategy

6.34 The Town Council will work with local stakeholders to test the feasibility of and potentially lead the development of a vision and strategy to guide and support the long-term vitality and viability of Portishead town centre.

6.35 It would be a freestanding strategy and not part of the Portishead Neighbourhood Plan. Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan provides planning policy support towards delivery of a strategy, the Strategy could consider the future priorities for the town centre

in greater detail and address initiatives and projects beyond the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Key Short Term Town Centre Recovery and Enhancement Projects

6.36 The Portishead Community Design Statement has identified potential areas for improvement in the appearance and public realm quality within the town centre. Some improvements may be possible as short term or “quick win” investments. They have the added potential to contribute to rebuilding lost customer footfall and vitality following the impacts of COVID-19.

6.37 Prior to and without prejudice to the production of a longer-term vision and town centre strategy, the Town Council will work with local stakeholders to identify, prioritise and plan implementation of short term and “quick win” enhancement projects within the town centre.

WHAT IS ARTICLE FOUR?

New use Class MA permits vacant smaller business premises including shops, restaurants, offices and health services, now in Class E, to be changed to residential use without planning permission and with greatly reduced restrictions.

An Article Four Direction is a planning tool that enables Local Authorities to remove permitted development rights when they would cause unacceptable harm. The NPPF allows their very restricted use to remove Class MA rights to avoid wholly unacceptable impacts to essential core primary shopping, that would seriously undermine vitality and viability.

APPENDIX 1: LOCAL EVIDENCE BASE LIST

All of the locally produced evidence base documents are available to view online at: www.portishead.gov.uk

To request a paper copy of an evidence base report, please contact the Town Council office by emailing:

office@portishead.gov.uk

or calling:

01275 847078

ENVIRONMENT

Portishead Community Character Statement (NDP Steering Group and Place Studio, 2022)

Portishead Local Key Views Report (NDP Steering Group and Place Studio, 2022)

Portishead Green and Blue Infrastructure Evidence Base Report (NDP Steering Group and Place Studio, 2022)

Portishead Local Green Space Evidence Base Report (NDP Steering Group and Place Studio, 2022)

Portishead Locally valued Non-Designated Heritage Assets Report (NDP Steering Group and Place Studio, 2022)

Portishead Renewable Energy Study – Task 1 – Proposed Scope of the Renewable Energy Study (Centre for Sustainable Energy, 2021)

WELLBEING

Portishead Community Facilities Evidence Base Report (NDP Steering Group and Place Studio, 2022)

Portishead Housing Needs Assessment (AECOM 2021)

Local Housing Needs Local Data Analysis (NDP Steering Group 2021)

PROSPERITY

Employment and Business Survey Analysis 2021 (NDP Steering Group 2021)

AREA BASED POLICIES AND COMMUNITY ACTIONS

Wyndham Way Study Area: Emerging Community Priorities (Place Studio and NDP Steering Group 2022)

APPENDIX 2: THE PORTISHEAD PRE-APPLICATION COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROTOCOL

The aim of this Protocol is to do all possible so that new development in Portishead Neighbourhood Area helps to shape good quality places to live and work and as a means of working towards improved outcomes for the current and future communities. One particularly effective way of achieving this is through early, planned engagement with the community via the Town Council.

Use of this Protocol is without prejudice to the eventual judgement of Portishead Town Council on the merits of any final application, even if a good engagement process has been agreed and followed.

Context

National Planning Policy and Guidance: The National Planning Policy Framework (2021) makes several mentions of the considerable value of pre-application involvement, for example in paragraph 39:

“Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private

resources and improved outcomes for the community.”

The Planning Practice Guidance Note Design: process and tools (2019) also highlights the importance and benefits of early engagement:

“Communities can effectively shape both design policies and development through a collaborative process of meaningful participation. Early engagement and linking engagement activities to key stages of design decision-making and plan-making can empower people to inform the vision, design policies and the design of schemes.”

“It is important that local planning authorities or applicants demonstrate how all views are listened to and considered.”

[North Somerset Council – Statement of Community Involvement \(2019\)⁵⁸](#): The SCI explains the Council’s policy on consultation and involvement in the preparation of planning policy documents and planning applications.

[The 10 Commitments for Effective Pre-application Engagement⁵⁹](#) published by a

group representing planning, industry and community groups states that:

“Early, collaborative discussions between developers, public sector agencies and the communities affected by a new development can help to shape better quality, more accepted schemes and ensure improved outcomes for the community. These discussions also avoid wasted effort and costs.”

Whilst there is an emphasis on early and positive pre-application engagement in ‘major development’ proposals, it is the view of Portishead Town Council that, for their community, the above should also apply to smaller developments in the town because these can have at least as much impact as larger ones. Portishead Town Council fully supports and endorses all of the above and will play its appropriate role in delivering high quality pre-application engagement with themselves and the wider Portishead community as proposals come forward.

Process

Drawing from the 10 Commitments and other guidance on best practice, potential applicants should work with Portishead Town Council to fulfil the following principles:

- 'Day One' contact: By far the best results for all emerge when contact is made with our Town Council, and through us with our local community, at the very start of any process; consulting people late with already prepared schemes is not productive.
- Agreed Process: A key aim of this early contact is to discuss and agree the nature, scope, timetable, information and so forth of the engagement – i.e. the process to be followed.
- Applicant Leadership but Shared Responsibility: Although it is the applicant's role to lead and fund engagement, the Town Council will offer as much support as possible to any agreed process; for example by providing local information, contact details for local groups, advice on meeting places, access to newsletters and so forth.
- Openness and Transparency: Building

trust between all and ensuring an agreed outcome depend heavily on having a process that is as open as possible on all sides, though the Town Council will respect any issues of clear commercial confidentiality.

- Agreed Community: A project may have an impact on a limited number of people or on the whole town. The details of those to be involved will need to be discussed and agreed for any project, as will the potential ways to contact and engage them.
- Agreed Scope: There will also need to be agreement about the scope of the engagement, i.e. what is and is not open to change (e.g. layout, quantum of development, design etc.).
- Proportionality: The nature and scale of engagement will be balanced in appropriate proportion to the scale and likely impact of any proposals.
- Final Reporting: The applicant should submit, with any final application, a thorough report describing and summarising the outcomes of the engagement, demonstrating how the proposals have (or have not) responded to results. If they have not, a short note should be included to explain this. If the process has been

followed fully, Portishead Town Council will endorse this report; if not they may submit their own evaluation of it.

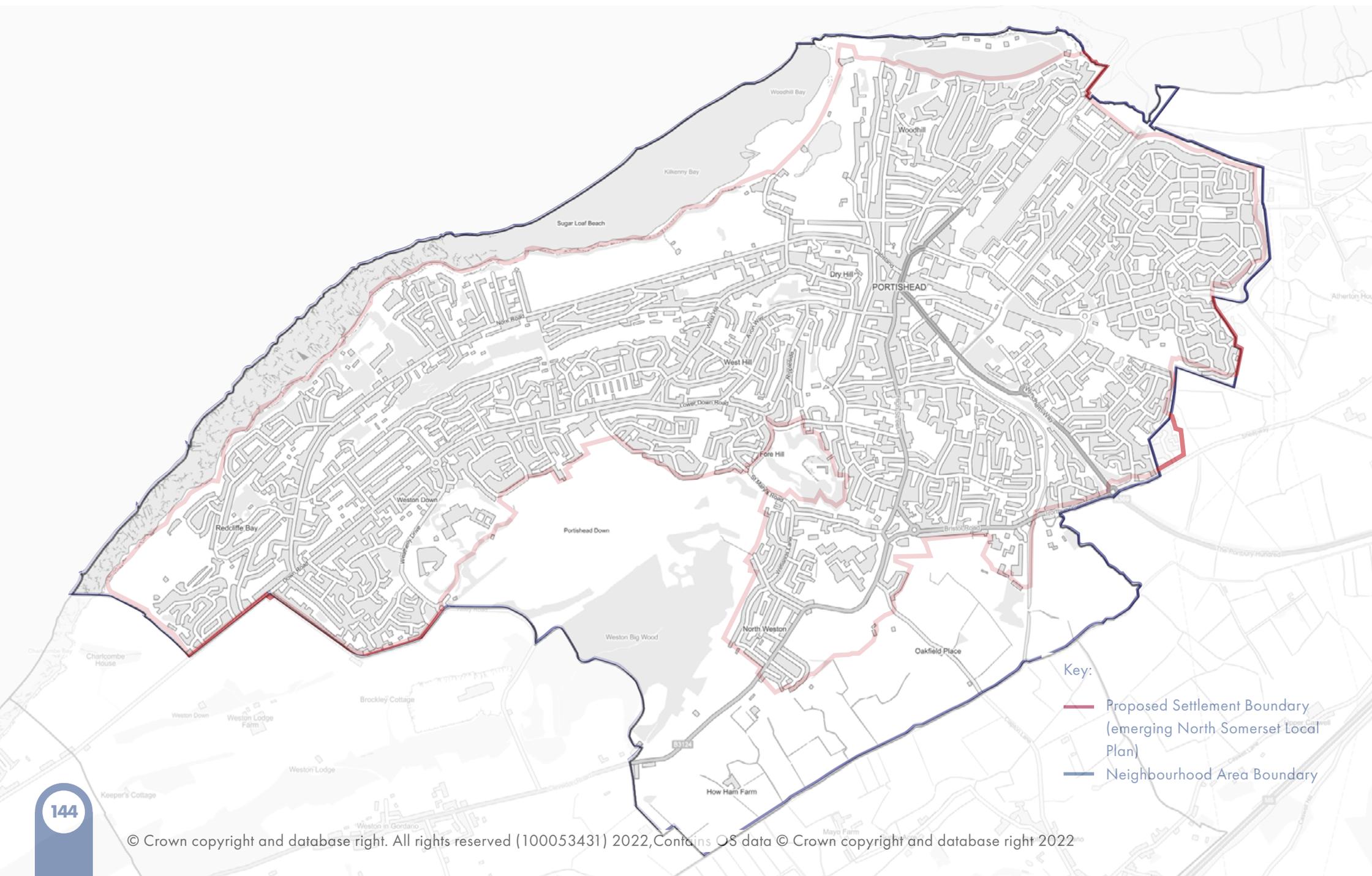
Initial contact should be made at the very outset with the Town Council via:

office@portishead.gov.uk

The Town Council commits to doing all possible to arrange an initial meeting as soon as possible following this contact.

There is considerable benefit for applicants in also sharing any process with North Somerset Council, as planning authority, and securing their agreement to it. As per the opening proviso, endorsement of an engagement process and results does not necessarily mean support for the resulting proposals.

APPENDIX 3: PROPOSED PORTISHEAD SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY (EMERGING NORTH SOMERSET LOCAL PLAN)



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