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We want Weston to celebrate its unique natural setting, its heritage, its sense of fun.
1.0 INTRODUCTION

Weston-super-Mare is at an important point in its evolution. The Prospectus for Change has set out ambitious plans for the future of the town centre, building on the town’s core strengths of living, learning and leisure.

The national economy is on the up and neighbouring Bristol is thriving, creating the perfect opportunity for Weston to capitalise and build on its special qualities and create a place with a unique identity that offers a great environment to live, study, start a business or raise a family.

North Somerset Council is committed to taking Weston into the future with confidence, delivering the quality and critical mass of development required to make a real change to the town centre and attracting a wider demographic to stay in and move to the town centre. A significant growth in residential development will sustain the vitality of the town centre with thriving retail, leisure and cultural facilities.

The spatial investment framework sets the context for the regeneration and redevelopment of the town centre. It is the spatial expression of North Somerset Council’s (NSC) aspirations for the town centre that will underpin the Town Centre Regeneration Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

The framework establishes the physical structure within which development and regeneration will take place. It is a qualitative tool that helps decision makers and development managers to determine whether development proposals contribute to the regeneration and development aims for specific areas and the town centre as a whole.

The framework sets out a number of key moves to strengthen and reinforce the positive character and identity of the town centre, removes barriers to investment and identifies the spatial infrastructure required to deliver development, infrastructure enabling projects and other potential future investment opportunities that together will deliver the vision for Weston set out in the Prospectus for Change.

This document sets out recommendations of an independent design team comprising LDA Design, PB-WSP, Studio Hive, GVA, GL Hearn, Towncentred and Stride Treglown, based on design, assessment and appraisal work undertaken between June and December 2015.

We want to increase the number of people living in the town centre to sustain a thriving retail, leisure and cultural heart
2.0 WHAT SETS WESTON APART

Weston-super-Mare is an attractive heritage seaside town with a number of strong qualities and lifestyle opportunities that will help drive forward a new chapter in its history. The spatial investment framework will help to accentuate and build on Weston’s unique qualities.

Well-connected

- Located just off the M5
- 18 miles (29 km) south west of Bristol
- Main line rail service to London

A stunning countryside setting

- A panoramic setting along sweeping Weston Bay
- Surrounded by green hills and the Somerset levels
- A great base from which to explore town, sea- and countryside

A town centre with a seafront

- Intimate relationship between town centre and seaside
- Somerset’s biggest seaside resort attracting regular high profile events
- Miles of sandy beach with stunning views towards Wales and Exmoor

A place with a unique Victorian, Art Deco and post-war heritage

- An elegant Victorian resort with many attractive heritage buildings
- A town centre with a friendly, intimate scale

A great place to live, learn and visit

- Approximately 900 new high quality homes planned in the town centre
- A range of interesting development opportunities
- Attractive leafy Victorian streets close to all amenities
- A network of well-maintained parks and open spaces
- Easy access to the beach
- A healthy place to live with abundance of walks and beach front activities
- A good range of high street and independent shops, cafes and restaurants
- A vibrant and growing cultural and leisure scene
- Weston College with university centre status rated ‘outstanding’
- Value for money
FIG. 1. CONTEXT
2.1 SPATIAL CONTEXT

Weston-super-Mare is located on the north Somerset coast, 18 miles (29km) southwest of Bristol and separated from Cardiff’s coast by 11 miles (18km) of the Severn Estuary.

The town has a distinctive topography defined by two hills. The ridge of Worlebury Hill is a prominent feature, with Weston Woods giving a strong wooded backdrop to the northern edge of the town. The southern settlement edge is contained by Uphill Brean down which form the western end of the Mendips. One of the most defining features of Weston is its stunning south and west facing bay which affords distant views of the Welsh coast beyond a seascape punctuated by islands. The seafront has been a destination for beach-goers since the 18th Century and remains popular with day visitors today.

The majority of the town centre structure dates back to Victorian times, with some notable early 19th century and postwar development. Some of the recognisable qualities of the town centre are its modest scale and architectural variety and quality, its open spaces offering a contrasting environment to the seafront, its generous green east-west approach routes (Alexandra Parade and the Boulevard) and the more intimate and characterful lanes along Orchard Meadows and the Grove. The town centre is extensive and would benefit from consolidation and a clearer definition of the role of the different character areas of the town. Despite its proximity, the town centre feels separate from the seafront.

Weston is well connected, located just off Jct 21 of the M5 motorway, on a mainline rail route and served by a comprehensive bus network. Summer visitors create seasonal pressure on the transport network.

Traffic is a dominant feature in the town. The streets are lacking an obvious user hierarchy and there is a resulting lack of legibility. The town is structured along a series of primary east-west links connecting the town with the seafront. The generous tree-lined corridors of the Boulevard and Alexandra Parade are attractive and potentially grand approach routes; however the more recent east-west corridor between the M5, the Station and the seafront disrupts the urban form and character and offers an opportunity for catalytic change.

Areas with particular potential for improving pedestrian legibility include Regent Street, Big Lamp Corner and Alexandra Parade, currently dominated by cars or buses. Whilst the bus network is comprehensive, it lacks a focal interchange and connection with the train station and is not easily navigable. Cycle infrastructure is lacking in the town centre.
FIG. 2. TOWN CENTRE HERITAGE CONTEXT

KEY
- TOWN CENTRE BOUNDARY
- BIRNBECK CONSERVATION AREA
- MELROSE CONSERVATION AREA
- BEACH LAWN CONSERVATION AREA
- ELLENBOROUGH CRESCENT CONSERVATION AREA
- BOULEVARD / MONTPELIER CONSERVATION AREA
- GROVE PARK (REGISTERED HISTORIC PARK)
- LISTED BUILDINGS
- BUILDINGS OF LOCAL TOWNSCAPE AND HERITAGE INTEREST (SOURCE: NSC HERITAGE & URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY 2000)

OLD TOWN HALL
OLD LIBRARY
2-16 WALLISCOTE ROAD
ODEON CINEMA
2.2 HERITAGE CONTEXT

2.2.1 Townscape Development
The majority of Weston-super-Mare’s urban form dates from Victorian times, when the town expanded rapidly from its origins as a small village into a popular seaside resort following the arrival of the railway in 1841. Weston’s urban form is significantly influenced by its situation between the bay to the west and Worlebury Hill to the north, with an distorted grid pattern defining the level town centre and more organic development reflecting the topography of Worlebury Hill. The strong east-west axis of Regent Street/Alexandra Parade and The Boulevard link the town with its seafront; the secondary north-south grain affords some stunning views towards the wooded hill and its grand Victorian residences.

Pre-1940s, the town was relatively compact, spreading eastwards post-WWII, with another significant period of growth to the east in recent years. Major 1980s road infrastructure connecting the town with the M5 to the east disrupts the urban form and adversely affects the arrival experience from the east.

The majority of the town centre is of modest 2-4 storey height with few buildings standing significantly proud of the skyline; these include modest church spires and the tower of the town hall, as well as more recent blocks of lower quality, including the Police Station, Weston College and a number of Mansion blocks along the seafront typically ranging between 6 and 8 storeys.

2.2.2 Conservation Areas
There are five Conservation Areas in proximity to the town centre (Fig. 4). These include Birnbeck, Boulevard/Montpelier, Melrose/Grove Park (all on the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register), Ellenborough Crescent and the more recently designated Beach lawns. Of the character areas identified in this document, only Grove Village, The Seafront and areas of the Victorian Residential Suburbs fall within Conservation Areas. Orchard Meadows / Artisans Town has also been recognised to possess significant merit due to its distinct street pattern, the predominance of limestone as a building material as found in all of the Conservation Areas, and as changes to buildings have mainly been limited to doors and windows allowing its character to be largely retained. The Conservation Area potential of this area should be subject to further assessment.

2.2.3 Architecture and Buildings
There are almost 100 listed buildings and buildings/structures of local town- scape and heritage interest (as identified in the 2000 NSC Heritage and Urban Design Strategy) within the town centre as illustrated on Figure 51. Arguably the most notable of these are the Town Hall, the Mercury Office and a number of residential buildings designed by the distinguished 19th century architect Hans Price. The town also features a number of interesting Art Deco, inter and post-war buildings, including the Grade II Listed Odeon Cinema on Alexandra Parade and the building occupied by Costa Coffee on Big Lamp Corner.

The listed buildings of Weston and those identified as being of local interest are essential components contributing to the character of the town. Whilst there are no buildings or structures formally identified as at risk within the town centre (with Birnbeck Pier being the town’s only building on Historic England’s Heritage at Risk Register), several historic or significant buildings are in poor condition. The North Somerset Council Heritage and Urban Design Strategy (2000) identifies the town’s examples of early 20th century development (including its Art Deco buildings) as the town’s most neglected asset. Many are in poor condition and in need of paintwork or the replacement of glazing, including the parade of shops at The Centre.

A significant number of shop fronts in the town centre distract from the architectural quality of the built form and architecture. Insensitive signage distracts from- or covers up- the architectural detailing of many buildings, degrading the quality of their appearance and their contribution to the streetscape. This is notable in many area but particularly along High Street and Walliscote Road.

We want the richness of Weston’s scenery and heritage to be expressed throughout its streets and spaces.
FIG. 3. TOWN CENTRE AREA

[Map showing the town centre area with streets and landmarks labeled]
2.3 DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

2.3.1 A University Town
Weston College has recently gained University Centre status and will make a significant contribution to higher education in the area and attract a growing student population. An increased student population will bring vitality and activity to the town centre, which will have a positive effect on urban character. A new Legal and Professional Services Academy at the Winter Gardens will become a new destination for Town Square and the seafront and will significantly increase footfall and activity in the town centre, as well as helping to address the current local skills gap.

Over time, a greater emphasis on learning in the town centre will encourage employment and entrepreneurship in the town. Having the right employment and housing opportunities in the town to retain skilled professionals is a key aim of the regeneration process.

2.3.2 Retail and Leisure Growth
With currently few residents living within the central area, town centre business is dependent on seasonal trade from tourists. A significant increase in the quality and quantity of town centre homes, as well as the growth of Weston as a University Centre, will help to retain more local spend year-round and support an improvement in the local retail and leisure offer.

The existing retail, leisure and culture offer in the town centre needs to be enhanced to create more defined destinations and develop a unique and vibrant offer in the context of the seaside location, with a primary focus on a consolidated primary retail area between Big Lamp corner and Town Square. The new leisure development at Dolphin Square (under construction) will create a key destination at the southern end of the town centre.

2.3.3 A Creative Economy
NSC are actively encouraging the move of Weston towards a knowledge, information and ‘creative’ economy, capitalising on its proximity to Bristol and potential spill-over demand, as well as building on already existing enterprises in the town. To support this transition, the establishment of both a meanwhile facility and a permanent creative/incubator hub facility is recommended, with potential locations in the St James Town or Orchard Meadows/Artisan Quarters areas.

BOX 1: SUMMARY OF ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Stunning landscape and seaside setting
- Limited connection between town centre and seafront
- Generally intact urban structure
- Clearly defined character areas and rich mix of architecture
- Victorian and early-mid 20th century heritage (partially degraded)
- Extensive, partially underperforming town centre in need of an improved and refined offer
- Traffic dominated environment with poorly defined user hierarchy
- Poor legibility
- Poor sense of arrival and gap in urban form between station and seafront
- Lack of cycle infrastructure
- Lack of coordinated public realm, shop front design and signage
- A gap in demography and opportunity to retain more local spend
- An outstanding College with university centre status
- An opportunity to establish Weston as a Creative Economy Centre
We want to retain homegrown talent and enable young people to invest their creative drive and entrepreneurship to help grow the local economy.

**BOX 2: A NEW TOWN CENTRE HOUSING PRODUCT**

One of the main ambitions of the Prospectus for Change and the town centre regeneration project, is to significantly improve the housing quality and availability in the town centre to attract a younger, enterprising demographic into the town centre and help to create mixed and balanced communities. This includes a diverse population with people at all stages of their lives and is not dominated by a single group of the population to encourage stability and community cohesion.

To attract a wider demographic profile, offer greater choice and quality, the housing product in the town centre has to be significantly improved. The town centre currently has a proliferation of poor quality housing, HMOs and buy-to-lets. New development will need to offer a range of spacious and contemporary apartments and townhouses close to the Station and seafront, as well as high quality conversions of heritage buildings. Importantly, such developments need to be of sufficient critical mass to create a new community.

With the recent university centre status of Weston College, student accommodation is anticipated to become another key part of the mix in the town centre and will contribute to its character, vitality and distinctiveness. To contribute to the quality and community aspirations, student accommodation must be well-designed and spread across the town centre quarters to encourage footfall, spread the ‘campus effect’ across the town and avoid any quarters becoming deserted during the holidays. Typically, more than 20% student population per quarter is considered to risk unbalancing the local community. Planning for purpose-built accommodation in strategic locations, together with control over additional HMOs, will be required to ensure a positive and balanced mix across the town.

A range of housing products in the town centre, coupled with local business and employment opportunities, will assist in attracting graduates to remain and invest in the town, as well as attracting more established professionals from further afield.

Weston town centre already has a number of assets that are attractive to the target demographic and focused improvements on these will be critical success factors for the regeneration of the town centre:

**Accessibility**
Weston town centre is well connected and accessible to Bristol and employment along the M5 corridor. Critical improvements include making the station more commuter-friendly, for example by increasing the number of on-site amenities and making the route to the station more attractive for pedestrians. This will be critical in attracting professionals working outside of the town.

**Affordability**
Weston-super-Mare is comparatively affordable to young aspirational buyers in the local context. In order to attract a wider demographic profile into the town centre, including young professionals, new development in the town centre needs to be of markedly higher quality and project a new image and confidence to the market. To compete with cities such as Bath and Bristol, new development will need to offer similar qualities, high specification and amenities than comparable urban development in these cities at a more affordable price.

**Lifestyles**
With its beach, university centre status and growing town centre offer, Weston has a lot of potential to attract a wider target demographic, however further changes are required over time to create the right lifestyle offer, evening economy and cultural landscape that will result in a long-term transition towards a vibrant and balanced town centre community. This will include a wider range of fashionable bars and restaurants; an attractive pedestrian-friendly public that can accommodate markets and cultural events; modern recreational facilities such as a gymnasium and a good range of retail outlets.
3.0 HOUSING-LED REGENERATION

3.1 PROSPECTUS FOR CHANGE

The 2015 Prospectus for Change sets out a vision for Weston-super-Mare’s future that is characterised by ambition and economic drive, with the aim to deliver a ‘stronger, vibrant and growing town centre, better equipped to deal with current and future challenges’. The areas of ‘living, learning, leisure’ form the focus of town centre development and regeneration, with the aim to attract more people permanently into the town centre and increase the footfall and vitality. The Council is prepared to take an active role, investing where necessary to implement this vision.

This vision is translated into eight objectives:
- Significant growth and investment in high quality residential developments
- A new (integrated town centre) university campus used by students and the community
- Increasing the range and improving the quality of leisure attractions so that the town becomes a year round destination
- A more focussed shopping area
- Understanding and refurbishing the best of Weston’s heritage
- Providing town centre space for entrepreneurs and enterprises
- Creating a digitally enabled town
- Creating better accessibility to the town centre

Of these objectives, creating a new high quality town centre housing offer is critical to attract a younger, enterprising demographic into the town centre and help to create mixed and balanced communities as a basis for a vibrant and sustainable place. The box on the left summarises the new housing product required to transform the town centre into an attractive and vibrant place to live.

3.2. HOUSING ZONE STATUS

Weston-super-Mare town centre is a designated Housing Zone. The House and Communities Agency (HCA) Housing Zones programme offers the chance to unlock brownfield land that has the potential to provide viable housing schemes through a combination of:
- Long-term recoverable investment funding
- Planning simplification (LDO)
- Local Authority leadership and
- Dedicated brokerage and planning support from the government

The town centre sites identified in this framework have the potential to deliver in the region of 900 homes in the town centre area.
FIG. 5. SPATIAL CONCEPT DIAGRAM

KEY
- WOODLAND BACKDROP
- TOWN CENTRE AREA
- CONSOLIDATED RETAIL AREA
- PRIORITY REGENERATION AREA (SOUTHSIDE GROVE)
- KEY TOWN CENTRE GREEN SPACES
- SEAFRONT
- STRATEGIC MOVEMENT FRAMEWORK
- ‘SOUTHSIDE AVENUE’
- RAILWAY LINE
- HIGH STREET
The spatial investment framework establishes a clear structure within which a range of regeneration projects and developments can take place. The framework is made up of five ‘layers’, supported by a series of design quality principles:

- The urban form
- The movement network
- The public and green space network
- Legibility and wayfinding elements
- Character areas

4.1 SPATIAL VISION

Weston’s attractive built form, coupled with its seafront location and wooded backdrop, are the town’s strongest assets and unique selling points. The existing strengths of the town centre, including its natural setting, its seafront location and its urban and built qualities, need to be more clearly drawn out, strengthened and protected.

New development needs to positively respond to- and build upon- the existing characteristics, heritage and charm of the town, communicating Weston’s unique and special qualities and its ambitions for the future as a contemporary and creative place to live, work and visit. The connection between the town centre and the seafront needs to be improved by establishing better physical and visual links.

The majority of the town centre has a strong character which needs to be celebrated, restored and strengthened. The main retail centre in the town needs to be consolidated and turned into a lively mixed use area with daytime and evening activity.

To achieve the critical mass required to deliver the range of development needed to attract a more representative demographic into the town centre, to establish the town centre as an attractive place to live, and to achieve a step change in quality, a priority regeneration area (referred to as Southside Grove) has been identified between the Station and the seafront. The area has the potential to deliver in the region of 500 to 600 new dwellings with strong visibility from the street network upon arrival in the town centre, linked by a primary and high quality public realm corridor.

Three new place names have been introduced to assist with the development of a sense of place:

- ‘Southside Grove’ identifies the priority regeneration area.
- ‘Walliscote Place’ identifies a new town centre arrival and orientation space at the junction of Station Road, Walliscote Road and Walliscote Grove Road that showcases the town’s unique qualities, combining its Victorian and modernist heritage with high quality 21st century architecture and public realm.
- ‘Southside Avenue’ identifies the tree-lined street corridor between the Station and the seafront, including Station Road, Walliscote Grove Road and Carlton Street.

We want Weston to make the most of its distinct identity, repairing its urban fabric and expressing confidence about its future.
FIGURE 6. SPATIAL INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK
The following list sets out the critical spatial moves necessary to transform the Town Centre in line with the Council’s ambitions:

- Improve the physical and visual connection between the town centre, the seafront and the surrounding landscape
- Strengthen and draw out the unique characteristics of Weston’s established quarters
- Transform the arrival experience between the Station / Hildesheim Bridge and the town centre through development on underused and brownfield sites, enabling infrastructure and public realm improvements
- Improve legibility and natural wayfinding across the town centre by creating an easily navigable network of streets and spaces, improving the setting of key landmarks and improving the public realm to draw people into and through the town and extend dwell time
- Improve cycle links into and around the town centre, establishing Weston as a sustainable and cycle friendly destination
- Improve Regent Street as the primary pedestrian link between the town centre and the seafront
- Strengthen the character of High Street as the main pedestrian spine between Dolphin Square and Grove Park
- Reconfigure Alexandra Parade as a transport interchange and high quality public space at the heart of the town
- Establish Walliscote Place, the space in front of Town Hall, as a key town centre arrival space
- Improve Town Square as the main town centre public space and a high quality retail and leisure destination
- Consolidate the primary town centre retail area
- Strengthen and draw out the unique characteristics of Weston’s established quarters
- Establish the ‘Weston lanes’ as a distinctive town centre destination
- Attract more people to live in the town centre through new development of the highest quality and of the required scale to have a perception-changing impact
- Deliver high quality development on Dolphin Square to increase footfall along High Street and repair the urban form
- Protect, restore and improve visibility of Weston’s architectural and built heritage
- Deliver integrated Sustainable Urban Drainage systems (SUDs) strategy within the town centre public realm and streetscape
- Maximise views towards the wooded backdrop of Worlebury Hill
- Draw in the green character of the surrounding hills and leafy residential streets by increasing the amount of strategic tree planting and secondary green spaces
FIGURE 7. URBAN FORM
4.2 THE URBAN FORM

The majority of Weston’s urban form dates from Victorian times, when the town expanded rapidly as a popular seaside resort. The seafront forms part of the town centre and this close interface with the bay has shaped the urban form. A series of primary east-west links connect the town with the seafront.

The urban form of the old town is strongly shaped by topography, with its distorted grid pattern defining the level town centre and more organic development reflecting the topography of Worlebury Hill. The north-south grain of the majority of town centre streets affords some stunning views towards the wooded hill and its grand Victorian residences. High Street acts as the main town centre spine, connecting Grove Gardens to the north with Dolphin Square to the south.

The disrupted urban form between Drove Road and Dolphin Square will be repaired by new development that is sensitively integrated with its surroundings, whilst contributing to the 21st century character of the town.

Buildings in the town centre are generally low, comprising predominantly two to three storeys with some four storey blocks, with some taller 5-8 storey residential and hotel accommodation blocks along the seafront towards the southern end of the town centre.

The framework plan illustrates the main block pattern that responds to established lines of movement and is capable of delivering the vision for Weston town centre. They build on the existing urban fabric of the town centre and repair the urban fabric between the Station and the seafront at Dolphin Square/Carlton Street.

4.2.1 Key Urban Design Principles

New development in Weston town centre should complement and enhance the qualities of the existing urban form by

- maintaining important glimpse views of the sea and the wooded backdrop of Worlebury Hill from within the town centre;
- improving physical and visual links between the seafront and town centre;
- respecting and expressing the distinct qualities, urban form and scale of the character area within which they are located;
- maintaining and strengthening the elegance, legibility, proportion and scale of the Victorian seaside resort character;
- providing appropriate levels of enclosure and respects the surrounding urban form. Proposed development that exceeds the typical existing height and massing should be supported by a clear design rationale and make a positive contribution to the surrounding urban form, historic roofscape and skyline;
- optimising passive solar gain, as long as this does not adversely affect the urban form;
- fronting onto and animating the streets and enhancing the public realm;
- maintaining and strengthening the tight urban grain of the town centre;
- taking account of and minimising wind effects and using built form to create areas of shelter; and
- integrating service space and bin storage within the architecture and/or away from the street frontage.
FIGURE 8. MOVEMENT FRAMEWORK

KEY
- **TOWN CENTRE BOUNDARY**
- **PRIMARY ROUTE**
- **HIGH STREET**
- **SECONDARY ROUTE**
- **KEY PEDESTRIAN LINK**
- **RAILWAY**
- **BUS ROUTE**
- **BUS STOP**
- **CYCLE ROUTE**
- **LANEWAY**
- **RAILWAY STATION**
- **BUS HUB**
4.3 THE MOVEMENT NETWORK

In terms of changing perceptions, attracting new people to live in the town centre, creating a better functioning place and extracting value, there needs to be reduction in traffic movement and dominance, as well as improvements to the public realm. The spatial investment framework is underpinned by a clear movement network for all users and modes that creates a simplified transport structure and improves legibility (see also separate topic paper and supporting evidence). The movement framework sets out the main street pattern and hierarchy that need to be clearly expressed through transport design and public realm treatment to deliver a legible and well functioning, well connected place. It will form the basis for a number of enabling infrastructure projects that will set the context for new development.

The framework proposes a rationalised bus network with a focal bus interchange at Alexandra Parade and buses removed from Regent Street west of Alexandra Parade to enable its pedestrianisation as the town centre’s central spine.

The framework includes significant improvements to the town’s cycle infrastructure, linked into the wider strategic network, with direct, visible and legible cycle links required to support sustainable residential growth in the town centre with and the impending University status and growth of Weston College.

4.3.1 Network Hierarchy

Key streets and spaces are categorised by their role as primary and secondary routes, local links and laneways, each described briefly below. The categories are not intended to express a user hierarchy, but are defined by the strategic role the streets play in connecting up a legible urban form.

Primary Routes
Primary routes represent the main strategic movement corridors that form the skeleton for the urban form. They play a critical role in defining the structure of the town centre and linking it with the wider network. The streets in this category are essential to the operation and legibility of the town.

Secondary Routes
Secondary routes provide a finer grain structure that links up the primary routes with each other or with other secondary routes. Secondary routes tend to be more intimate in scale with a reduced strategic traffic function.

Local Links
Local links do not carry strategic traffic but fulfil an important role in connecting up the finer grain network and contributing significantly to the place function of the town centre. Important local links include the link between the Station and Alexandra Parade, Spider Lane, Union Street and a new link between Carlton and Oxford Streets.

High Street
High Street holds a unique position in the town centre and as such is attributed its own category in the movement framework. High Street forms the main continuous north-south spine through the primary retail area and its importance should be expressed through its design and public realm treatment. High Street is pedestrianised between Regent Street and West Street.

Laneways
Weston’s laneways at Orchard Meadows, Grove Village and St James Street are a distinctive feature of the town centre and have potential to offer a unique, finer grain and more intimate environment contrasting with the open seafront and main commercial high street. The lanes’ potential role and character should be recognised and strengthened to provide an animated, high quality pedestrian friendly environment.

The town centre has two main types of primary route:
• three primary east-west links connecting the town with the seafront - The Boulevard, Waterloo Street and South Parade to the north; Alexandra Parade and Regent Street at the centre and ‘Southside Avenue’, the corridor linking Weston Station with the seafront via Station Road and Carlton Street, to the south; the north and south routes fulfill a key transport function for all modes; The axis of Alexandra Parade and Regent Street, terminating at the Pier, forms the main east-west spine and is prioritised for pedestrians, with bus access to Alexandra Parade;
• two north-south routes defining the outer boundaries of the town centre network - the seafront spine comprising Beach Road and Royal Parade and the eastern connector comprising Drove Road and Ashcombe Road.
Performance Specification for ‘Southside Avenue’

‘Southside Avenue’ is one of the three primary east-west routes. It includes Station Road, Walliscote Grove Road and Carlton Street and forms the spine for the ‘Southside Grove’ new urban quarter. ‘Southside Avenue’ is envisaged as a strong tree-lined east-west ‘boulevard’ for all modes, providing access between the station, the town centre and the seafront.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Primary Route</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design objectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To support function as main cross town street between Hildesheim Bridge and Beach Road for cars, buses, cyclists and pedestrians</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attractive, green and pedestrian-friendly street with generous pavements, uncluttered public realm and safe crossing points and high quality, coordinated street furniture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To positively contribute to the arrival experience and town centre character</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street dimensions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carriageway</td>
<td>4m each way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footways</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East of Walliscote Place:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Min 3m south side (including tree planting)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Typically 5m north side (including tree planting)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West of Walliscote Place:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Min 2m south side</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• North side adjacent to town hall as existing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• North side at Dolphin Square 3.5-4.6m including SUDs (swales), subject to feasibility, and tree planting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycleway</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East of Walliscote Place: 3m two-way cycleway to south side</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West of Walliscote Place: no cycle route (strategic cycle link routed through Walliscote Place north via Oxford Street)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Trees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East of Walliscote Place:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Single species clear stem street trees planted in row on either side of street</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Row of single species clear stem street trees planted in central reservation (subject to detail design/services)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West of Walliscote Place:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Row of single species clear stem street trees planted on northern side adjacent to Dolphin Square</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public transport</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bus access on carriageway</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>On street parking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Speed limit</td>
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<tr>
<td>20mph</td>
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<td>Character and materials</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Character area</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Southside Grove</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Public realm to be coordinated throughout character area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Limited palette of materials</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4.3.1 Key Movement Principles

The movement network of Weston town centre should

- Strengthen the legibility and natural wayfinding through a clearly expressed movement network hierarchy (including street design, user hierarchy and coordinated public realm);
- Improve the quality and prominence of the links between the town centre and the seafront as high quality, overlooked, pedestrian friendly spaces, including Regent Street, Spider Lane, Carlton Street (‘Southside Avenue’ corridor) and Oxford Street, including full pedestrianisation of Regent Street west of Alexandra Parade;
- Create a pedestrian friendly public space at Walliscote Place incorporating a primary east-west link (‘Southside Avenue’) and downgrading general vehicular traffic turning north;
- Transform the arrival experience and connectivity between the Station / Hildesheim Bridge and the town centre through improved street design and the provision of an additional pedestrian link between the Station and Alexandra Parade;
- Strengthen the character of High Street as the main pedestrian spine between Dolphin Square and Grove Park;
- Reconfigure Alexandra Parade as a transport (bus) interchange and high quality public space at the heart of the town, limiting vehicular access;
- Establish a direct north-bound link between Locking Road and Alfred Street, removing the gyratory function of Alexandra Parade for general traffic;
- Integrate South Parade within the improved Town Square public realm, widening pavement space and integrating safe and direct pedestrian north-south crossing points;
- Create a well-connected, safe and direct network of dedicated cycle links into and around the town centre;
- Create an additional local link between Dolphin Square Phases 3 and 4 as a key pedestrian route and access street;
- Draw out the layers and richness of historic character through responsive design and materials choice;
- Draw out and the character of the lanes and improve their pedestrian qualities through shared surface treatment, traffic calming and pavement widening; and
- Feasibility of potential longer-term stopping of through traffic along the seafront at Regent Street to be tested.

4.3.2 General Street and Junction Design Principles

- All streets and footways should be barrier free and lead directly where people want to go. Footways should be overlooked and, where possible and adjacent to new development, should be wide enough for two pedestrians to pass in comfort. The use of pedestrian barriers should be avoided.
- Street and public realm design should be informed by an understanding of historic character whilst meeting modern requirements.
- Wherever possible, the arrangement of buildings, spaces and activities should be used to act as natural traffic calming devices.
- The use of traffic signs and other street furniture should be considered carefully and the excessive use of lighting columns/bollards, kerbing, signage and road markings should be avoided. Examples of reducing clutter include:
  - using the minimum of highway design features necessary to make streets work properly;
  - mounting streetlights onto buildings, or traffic signals onto lighting columns;
  - locating service inspection boxes within buildings or boundary walls;
  - specifying the location and orientation of inspection covers in the footway;
  - ensuring that household bins and recycling containers can be stored off the footway;
- Materials choice should reflect the position of each street in the hierarchy and should be coordinated across the town centre.
- Key town centre spaces, including Town Square and Walliscote Place, shall incorporate traffic in shared surfaces to create legible, continuous spaces and communicate pedestrian priority.
- Cycling is promoted in the town centre as an alternative mode of transport. Safety considerations permitting, the alignment of routes should avoid the need for cyclists to dismount.
- Corners should be kept as tight as possible to aid traffic calming and reflect the historic urban context of Weston town centre.
- Crossings should be located on, or as close as possible to pedestrian desire lines.
- Weston town centre shall be a 20mph zone.
- Streets and footways shall be constructed using techniques that allow trees to flourish, for example using structural soil.
- Where possible primary streets shall incorporate SUDs.
FIGURE 10. OPEN SPACE NETWORK

KEY
- TOWN CENTRE BOUNDARY
- PRIMARY ROUTE
- HIGH STREET
- SECONDARY ROUTE
- KEY PEDESTRIAN LINK
- RAILWAY
- RAILWAY STATION
- BUS HUB
- SEAFRONT GREEN SPACE
- SHELTERED GARDENS
- KEY URBAN PUBLIC SPACE

1. GROVE PARK
2. TOWN SQUARE
3. ELLENSBOROUGH PARK
4. BEACH GARDENS
4.4 THE PUBLIC AND GREEN SPACE NETWORK

A key characteristic of the town centre is the network of sheltered green spaces set back from the exposed seafront and the lawns overlooking Marine Parade and the beach. Grove Park, at the northern end of the town centre, and Ellenborough Park at the southern end act as ‘dumbbells’ as either end of the town centre. These parks are the largest and public of a series of smaller green spaces enclosed by villas, terraces or crescents that give the most successful parts of the town a leafy garden ambience.

4.4.1 Key Urban Public Spaces

The movement framework connects a sequence of primary public spaces that are critical in terms of their contribution to town centre character, orientation, sense of arrival and maximising dwell time and quality.

**Town Square** with its Italianate Gardens is the main public space at the heart of the town centre. Located at the intersection of High Street and Waterloo Street/South Parade, the space has the potential to fulfil an important function as a central civic and leisure space sheltered from the immediate seafront, but its current layout ignores desire lines and potential visual links. The Town Square design brief sets the ambition and design principles for the space.

**Big Lamp Corner**, at the intersection of High Street and Regent Street, acts as the main pedestrian hub and is located in direct line between the proposed transport hub at Alexandra Parade and the Grand Pier. The strategic importance of this space should be recognised by reducing, and if possible removing, vehicular traffic from the space. The public realm of Big Lamp Corner should be extended to the east to take in the western part of Alexandra Parade as a high quality pedestrian link and arrival space adjacent to the proposed transport hub.

**Princess Royal Square** is a strategic and high quality public space at the western end of Regent Street and at the interface of the seafront and the town centre. It should set the standard for all future public realm improvement schemes in the town centre.

**Walliscote Place**, a proposed high quality public space and series of development opportunities between the Old Town Hall, Magistrates Court, Police Station and the Centre Buildings at the western end of Station Road, will become a new arrival and orientation space from the Station and Station Road, and a showcase of both Weston’s heritage - with an improved setting for the town hall and Magistrates Court, as well as re-use and re-furbishment of the latter - and its future ambition expressed in a new high quality development focused on the former Police Station and Roselawn buildings site. The Walliscote Place design brief sets out the ambition and performance requirements for the development.

The **Station Plaza** (forecourt) will become a high quality, urban arrival space at the entrance to Weston Station that will be overlooked by new development and provide an attractive setting to the Station. The space will act as a gathering and orientation space and will incorporate vehicular access/pick-up/drop-off and a link between Neva Road and the A370. The Station Gateway Site Brief sets a framework for the development area and sets design principles for the public realm improvements.

4.4.2 General Public Space Design Principles

- All public spaces shall positively contribute to the legibility of the town centre and maximise views towards natural and built landmarks.
- Public realm design should accommodate clear routes through the space along key desire lines.
- Design nodes of activity should be complemented by ‘resting’ zones facing the space and provide space for people to relax.
- The design of spaces should build in a degree of versatility so that they enable people to enjoy different activities in the same space and can be used for a variety of uses over time. Design should take account of different user group and should provide attractive facilities that meet the needs of the elderly, disabled and children.
- Public realm should be uncluttered, robust and safe. Specifications of materials and maintenance regimes must demonstrate high standards of visual quality, durability and environmental performance. Spaces should be laid out so that their functions are clear without the need for unnecessary signs or barriers.
- Public realm design shall clearly express the characteristics of the local area.
- New development should incorporate high quality incidental public and green spaces where they can make a positive contribution to the public realm and character.
FIGURE 11. TOWN CENTRE LEGIBILITY & WAYFINDING
4.5 LEGIBILITY AND WAYFINDING

The urban form and movement frameworks set create a legible urban structure, a place that makes it easier for people to understand the structure of the town and find their way around without the need for excessive signage. A legible town centre will allow residents to direct someone with reference to landmarks, streets and spaces. The clear street hierarchy and built form is strengthened by the design quality of particular elements of the plan, such as the careful positioning and design of landmark buildings and coordinated surface finishes unifying key routes.

Despite its mostly intact historic urban structure, Weston is currently suffering from poor legibility, with a lack of clarity in the movement hierarchy, uncoordinated, rapidly changing public realm character and significant gaps in the urban form, in particular around the Station Gateway.

Weston’s skyline is typically low (2-3 storeys) with higher buildings of up to 8 storeys primarily concentrated towards the seafront. Weston’s landmarks are an important part of the townscape but are modest in scale. Figure 9 identifies a number of strategic and local landmarks. Strategic landmarks have an impact beyond their immediate surroundings. Local landmarks make a contribution to their immediate setting but are less noticeable in the wider context, usually due to their modest scale. A few vertical landmarks punctuate the skyline, notably the tower on Old Town Hall and Emmanuel Parish Church on Oxford Street. Weston College on Knightstone Road north-west of Town Square and the Police Station on Walliscote Road are the two most noticeable 20th century buildings away from the seafront in terms of scale and massing.

Future development in the town centre should improve legibility and wayfinding as set out in the principles below:

4.5.1 Legibility and Wayfinding Principles

- Any new development should reinforce the movement hierarchy and character area principles through appropriate design, scale and public realm treatment.
- The strong east-west routes linking the town centre with the seafront should be clearly recognisable as the primary structuring elements through public realm enhancements.
- Key views towards and setting of existing landmarks, natural features (seafront and Worlebury Hill) shall be protected and enhanced.
- New development, including proposed feature buildings, should be designed to respect and enhance the skyline of the street and surrounding area. Where taller buildings are proposed, these must not take away from the existing skyline or impact of existing key buildings.
- The framework identifies a potential opportunity to introduce a sequence of 21st century marker buildings as part of the Southside Grove regeneration area, marking the route between the station, Walliscote Place and the seafront at Dolphin Square, as a recognition of the new chapter in Weston’s history. These should be elegant orientation markers and should not take away from the existing built form and buildings of quality. Final decisions on their location, scale and design should be informed by a townscape heritage assessment.
- The distinct character of the existing town centre quarters (see Section 4.5) should be clearly recognisable in any new development and improvements.
- The public realm within the same character area or for each street of the movement hierarchy must be designed either as part of a coordinated project for a wider area or needs to demonstrate how the public realm and development proposals fit within the surrounding area.
- In the case of a smaller scheme coming forward for a larger coordinated public realm area, subsequent development proposals need to demonstrate how they tie in with the first approved proposal.
- All public realm proposals should be in line with the guidance on colours and materials set out in this document and reflect the strategic importance of the street in the movement hierarchy.
- The public realm will be an important unifying element for the town centre, providing a coordinated, restraint backdrop as a foil for a rich mix of architectural elevations and materials. The selected palette of materials should reflect the street hierarchy in terms of scale and materials choice.
- The character of Weston-super-Mare is intrinsically linked with its surrounding countryside. The Victorian residential areas surrounding the town centre are characterised by attractive tree-lined streets. The ambition for the regeneration area is to draw on this green character and bring it into the town centre area. Strategic tree and other planting along key routes and spaces shall be coordinated to support the street hierarchy and aid legibility. The use of a variety of native trees as well as interesting cultivars is encouraged and will contribute to the educational, cultural and biodiversity offer of the town centre.
Figure 12. Character Areas

Key:
- Town Centre Boundary
- Primary Route
- High Street
- Secondary Route
- Key Pedestrian Link
- Railway
- The Seafort
- Grove Village
- Orchard Meadows
- Victorian Residential Suburbs
- Primary Retail Area
- The Boulevard
- Alexandra Parade
- St. James Town
- Southside Grove

Legend:
- Regent Street
- Alexandra Parade
- The Boulevard
- St. James Town
- Southside Grove
- The Seafort
- Grove Village
- Orchard Meadows
- Victorian Residential Suburbs
- Primary Retail Area
- The Boulevard
- Alexandra Parade
- St. James Town
- Southside Grove
4.6 CHARACTER AREAS

The framework identifies eight main character areas within Weston Town Centre, in addition to the Victorian residential neighbourhoods that define the edges of the town centre.

The definition of character area boundaries has been informed by the following:
- Character Areas as identified in the NSC Heritage & Urban Design Strategy
- The boundaries of the three areas identified in Core Strategy Policy CS29 Weston-super-Mare Town Centre (Seafront, Gateway and Retail Core)
- Conservation Area boundaries.
- Site survey and desk-based studies of historic development, street pattern, urban grain, massing, architectural character, urban greening and land use pattern.
- Mapping of opportunity and regeneration sites between the Station and Dolphin Square, leading to the identification of the priority regeneration and new character area referred to as ‘Southside Grove’.

Character area boundaries should be reviewed following the completion of any future more detailed townscape character and heritage assessment work. Character areas are refined following are defined mid-block where the building and street frontages contribute to the character of the area, with the exception of the extent of the Seafront area, the extent of which is defined to be consistent with Core Strategy policy.

The aim of the character area summaries set out in this section is to ensure that new development contributes to the desired future character of the area. Each area summary defines:
- a list of key existing characteristics that make the area different or distinctive, including land use, urban form, scale, architectural character, landscape setting and views and public realm character;
- a future character statement summarising the future direction for development in the area, supported by a selection of images of the existing qualities of the area and precedents from elsewhere; and
- a list of development principles setting out the type of new development that would be permitted and how it should function in design terms, supported by a spatial diagram.
3.6.1 THE SEAFRONT

Key Existing Characteristics

- Weston’s ‘signature’ area, with panoramic views across beach and bay, exposed seaside environment and the Grand Pier at its centre
- Large in scale with spacious built set-backs ranging from typically 25m between built front and beach north of the Grand Pier and 70m to the south
- Traffic along Royal and Marine Parade separate the built edge from the 11m wide pedestrian promenade and beach, with intermittent crossing points
- Area north of Pier characterised by a combination of predominantly three storey painted and stone hotel buildings with generous set-backs from the road, interspersed by areas of private open space and car parking
- Grand Pier is the main focus of activity and terminates the primary axis along Regent Street;
- The area south of the Pier characterised by the ‘Lawns’, providing a uniform typically 20m wide green setback to primarily residential and hotel accommodation ranging from predominantly 3 storeys north of Oxford Street and large-scale 5-8 storey Mansion Blocks south;
- Land use is primarily hotel accommodation of mixed quality with active ground floor uses (food & drink) north of Carlton Street, care homes and amusements associated with the Grand Pier and Regent Street;
- Located in Beach Lawns Conservation Area;
- Boundaries are defined by a combination of low walls and railings;
Future Character Statement

The significance and prominence of the seafront as the primary visitor and leisure destination in Weston town centre will be maintained and strengthened, with a focus on high quality entertainment, leisure and accommodation.

The town centre and promenade will be linked by direct and high quality pedestrian and cycle links along clear desire lines. Regent Street will be pedestrianized and improved as the main pedestrian east-west spine between the town centre area and the seafront.

The Lawns will continue to be promoted as a key place for large scale events. Historic buildings along the seafront will be retained and complemented by high quality contemporary development that is respectful to the scale, massing and proportions of the seafront, and maintains key views and sightlines. New buildings will be sited in accordance with the predominant pattern of setbacks.

Development Principles

Development proposals within Orchard Meadows will need to demonstrate that they support the following principles:

- Contribute to a mix of uses compatible with Core Strategy Policy CS29 Seafront, including high quality entertainment, leisure, tourist facilities and accommodation, without prejudicing the vitality and viability of the retail core;
- Improve physical and visual links to the rest of the town centre, including frequent and direct east-west pedestrian and cycle links along key desire lines;
- Maintain continuous and direct north-south pedestrian and cycle movement;
- Maintain or create a positive built frontage overlooking the seafront with pavement use encouraged;
- Retain and protect buildings and other elements and characteristics that contribute to the special character of the area and the Beach Lawns Conservation Area;
- Be sympathetic to the scale and massing of the existing built form;
- Make the most of the views and has considered the effects of wind and the seafront environment;
- Contribute positively to a coordinated public realm treatment for the character area; and
- Does not increase, and if possible reduce, the amount of poor quality accommodation in the area.
3.6.2 GROVE VILLAGE

Key Existing Characteristics

- Distinct and vibrant character defined by the student presence at Weston College and a well-established night time and cultural economy, with venues including the Playhouse Theatre, Heritage Café and Blakehay Centre;
- Fine grain urban form structured by an informal grid of intimate lanes enclosed by typically 3 storey buildings;
- Narrow pavements and on-street parking restrict pedestrian movement and limit the opportunity for businesses to spill out and animate the public realm;
- Strongly characterised by its proximity to Grove Park, with attractive views to the wooded backdrop of Worlebury Hill and the Upper Stone Town;
- Many interesting buildings including listed examples of Hans Price’s work and buildings dating from Weston’s early growth from a small village;
- A rich mix of architecture, including beautifully detailed and proportioned Italianate and Flemish architecture, Victorian and post-war buildings in varying condition, many in need of repair;
- Limestone rubble, limestone ashlar and red brick are prevalent building materials which create a warm and textured character;
- Boundaries defined by strong closed building lines which abut the streets.
Development Principles

Development proposals within Orchard Meadows will need to demonstrate that they support the following principles:

- Respect and where possible strengthens the area’s role as Weston’s ‘cultural quarter’ by sympathetic improvements to the built form and providing complementary uses to the existing mix, focused around arts, culture, entertainment, education and the night-time economy including food and drink;
- Respect existing development scale (typically 2-4 storeys) and reflects the rich variety in plot widths, architectural style and materials through appropriate shop front and signage design, sensitive restoration and complementary contemporary design;
- Provide clear, direct and safe pedestrian links to surrounding character areas, particularly the Seafront and High Street, and between Weston College and the Winter Gardens, including the provision of improved pavement space, shared treatment, coordinated public realm, incorporating clear and safe crossing points, all in keeping with the heritage and character of the area;
- Improve legibility and natural wayfinding through a coordinated approach to public realm design and street furniture selection;
- Is of the highest quality and makes a positive contribution to the existing built environment in line with Core Strategy Policy CS29 Retail Core; and
- Retain and frames views of Worlebury Hill and Grove Park to the north.

Future Character Statement

Grove Village will increasingly be recognised as the cultural and university quarter of Weston-super-Mare - a destination at the northern end of the High Street with a strong focus on culture, leisure and the evening economy. As an enhanced destination in the north of the primary retail area, Grove Village will play an important role in drawing footfall northwards across the town centre and will become a year-round daytime and evening destination for local residents and visitors. The growing student population attending Weston College and its new Legal and Professional Services Academy at the Winter Gardens will strengthen this role, introducing a new energy and vitality to the area whilst also contributing towards the establishment of a mixed and balanced town centre community.

Public realm improvements will allow the intimate streets to provide valuable spill out space for a mix of cafes, restaurants and bars. The quality of the street scenes will be enhanced by sympathetic improvements to buildings and their frontages, including shop frontage and signage.
3.6.3 ORCHARD MEADOWS / ARTISANS TOWN

Key Existing Characteristics

- Historically forming the ‘working class’ quarter of Weston-super-Mare, characterised by a dense, fine grained urban form comprising tight lanes lined by a mix of narrow 2 and 3 storey buildings
- Mixed use area including residential, independent retail and business (with a wider range of uses and activity on Meadow and Orchard Street and primarily residential use further east)
- An eclectic palette of building materials including brick, painted brick, render, tiles and limestone ashlar;
- North-south grain providing links between Alexandra Parade and the Boulevard;
- Boundaries are defined by continuous building lines which tightly abut the streets and have a strong influence over their character;
- A concentration of poor quality dwellings and HMOs, which, coupled with vacancy and associated disrepair of commercial premises, are eroding the area's character;
- Building facades and streets are overpopulated by signage and visual clutter which competes with character defining details;
- Narrow pavements and on-street parking inhibit pedestrian movement and restrict the opportunity for businesses to spill out and animate the public realm;
- Limited connectivity to High Street and Boulevard.
Development Principles

Development proposals within Orchard Meadows will need to demonstrate that they support the following principles:

- Retain and strengthen the urban form and lanes character with appropriate uses including independent food, drink, retail and small-scale commercial promises focused on Orchard and Meadow Street;
- Support appropriate conversions and repair and enhancement of existing buildings of heritage value;
- Unify the character and quality of the area and improve legibility and natural wayfinding through coordinated public realm treatment and coordinated and sympathetic shop front design;
- Support and enables pavement cafe culture;
- Reflect and brings out rich variety in plot widths, architectural style and materials;
- Draw people into the area by improving public realm links visibility from Big Lamp corner and Alexandra Parade as key gateway spaces into the area;
- Improve physical and visual connectivity between the lanes and High Street and Waterloo Street;
- Incorporate north-south cycle link on Orchard Street;
- Control the number of HMOs and improve quality of existing buildings;
- Development to be of the highest quality design and to make a positive and distinct contribution to the existing built environment in line with Core Strategy Policy CS29 Retail Core; and
- New development to respect existing closed and generally continuous building line; occasional well-designed setbacks acceptable to increase spill-out/sitting out space along streets with consolidated commercial premises.

Future Character Statement

Orchard Meadows will be recognised as Weston’s ‘lanes’ quarter, providing a lively and colourful mix of independent shops, food and drink outlets, cafes and independent business focused on Orchard and Meadow Street, leading to a town centre residential community to the east. Orchard Meadows will be a clearly defined neighbourhood with a strong identity. Located between two primary east-west routes- Alexandra Parade to the south and the Boulevard to the north- Orchard Meadows plays an important role in improving the connectivity and legibility of the town centre. Pedestrian and cycle access will be prioritised, made safer and more attractive and public realm improvements at Big Lamp Corner and Alexandra Parade will bind Orchard Meadows to surrounding character areas and the High Street, improve legibility and uplift the quality of the streetscape. Reducing the number of poor quality HMOs and vacant commercial premises, combined with the repair of the urban fabric and improved public realm will attract a wider mix of people and contribute towards a diverse and balanced town centre community with a sense of ownership over their neighbourhood.
3.6.4 HIGH STREET AREA

Key Existing Characteristics

- The retail heart of Weston centred on High Street, the main link between Grove Village to the north and St James Town to the south;
- A considerable number of buildings of interest in a variety of architectural styles and quality;
- A rich variety of building materials in warm tones typical of Weston, including brick, painted brick, render, tiles and limestone ashlar;
- Characterised by a closed continuous building line with a variety of plot sizes and a typical building height of 2-3 storeys;
- The Sovereign Centre occupies a large urban block west of the High Street behind existing buildings, with internal access to Town Square and one of the largest plots in the town centre;
- Pedestrianised High Street between Town Square and Big Lamp Corner, two of the key public spaces in the Town Centre;
- Town Square is a fragmented space with limited permeability and animation;
- Lack of cohesion in the public realm in terms of design and materials;
- Poor visibility and connection between the Seafront and High Street Areas;
- Uncontrolled shopfront design and signage reduce the coherence of the streetscape and adversely affect architectural and streetscape character;
- Views north to Worlebury Hill and Upper Stone Town along High Street is a key feature and roots High Street in its locality.
Development Principles

Development proposals in the High Street area will need to demonstrate that they support the following principles:

- Strengthen the area as the main town centre retail and leisure destination by enhancing the range of shops, services and facilities offered, and creating a focused, high quality food and beverage outlet attached to Town Square;
- Create improved direct links to Orchard Meadows and St James Town to the south and east, Grove Village to the north and the Seafront to the west;
- Contribute to an improved and coordinated public realm of the highest quality;
- New development to respect existing development scale (typically 2-4 storeys) and reflect rich variety in plot widths, architectural style and materials through appropriate shop front and signage design, sensitive restoration and complementary contemporary development;
- Make a positive contribution to the vitality, viability and diversity of the town by encouraging a greater mix of uses including retail, food and drink, leisure, residential and education to encourage a continuous daytime and evening economy;
- Improve the setting of the Royal Hotel including transformation of the linkage to the Seafront along Spider Lane and the creation of an animated and active western edge to the square;
- Encourage greater footfall in the town centre in particular better linkages between the seafront and the primary shopping area.
- Proposals for the development or enhancement of Victoria Square will be supported; and
- All development to be of the highest quality design and to make a positive and distinct contribution to the existing built environment in line with Core Strategy Policy CS29 Retail Core.

Future Character Statement

The High Street Area will be strengthened as the primary retail heart and an attractive town centre destination, centred on the pedestrianised High Street and two key public spaces at either. At one end, Town Square will be the focus of an improved leisure, food and drink offer at the Sovereign Centre, the new college facility at the Winter Gardens and the Royal Hotel. The role of Big Lamp Corner as an important public space at the heart of a consolidated, enlivened town centre and at one end of the pedestrianised Regent Street linking the town centre to the seafront and the Pier will also be strengthened. The qualities of some of the existing built form will be strengthened, with opportunities to gradually upgrade some of the lower quality post war buildings and a more sympathetic treatment to shop fronts.
3.6.5 THE GREEN AVENUES:
THE BOULEVARD / WATERLOO STREET

Key Existing Characteristics

- Primary east-west approach route terminating at Town Square;
- Boulevard to the east: straight and generously proportioned tree-lined street (predominantly cherry) with consistent section including on street parking and generous pavements;
- Waterloo Street to the west: Buildings step in locally with narrower pavements and inconsistent tree planting;
- Separates Upper Stone Town (Victorian residential area) to the north and Orchard Meadows/Artisan Quarter to the south;
- Enclosed by predominantly 2-3 storey terraced buildings typical of varying style typical of the local Victorian character, with uniform offsets and close building lines;
- Predominant building material local limestone, with some red brick (Central library);
- Some fine buildings including the Grade II listed Central library and Mercury building;
- Occasional attractive views towards Worlebury Hill and Upper Stone Town to the north;
- Land use mostly residential above independent retail, restaurants and businesses;
- Falls within the Boulevard/ Montpelier Conservation Area
- Majority of the area falls within the Retail Core area as defined by Core Strategy Policy CS29.
Development Principles (Boulevard / Waterloo Street)

Development proposals along the Boulevard and Waterloo Street will need to demonstrate that they support the following principles:

- Reinforce and strengthen the local character;
- All development to be of the highest quality design and to make a positive and distinct contribution to the existing built environment in line with Core Strategy Policy CS29 Retail Core;
- Reinforce the strong east-west connectivity towards the town centre through appropriate transport and public realm design and establishing safe and clearly legible north-south crossing points;
- Reinforce the green character of the street by maintaining, planting and, where necessary, replacing single species avenue trees;
- Encourage use of pavement cafe space;
- Ensure shopfronts and signage are of high quality design, contribute to a coordinated palette along the streetscene, are sympathetic to the character of the area and subservient to the architecture of the building; and
- New development to respect the massing and form of the surrounding built form; buildings to front the street and maintain the existing uniform and continuous building line.

Future Character Statement

The Boulevard and Waterloo Street will maintain their role as one of the key east-west approach routes into the town centre and the local centre between the Upper Stone Town and Orchard Meadow/Artisan Quarter neighbourhoods.

The Boulevard and Waterloo Street will be maintained and strengthened as a secondary, specialist town centre area with a mix of smaller independent and niche retail outlets, restaurants, cafes, professional services and small businesses.

The grandeur of the street will be enhanced through sympathetic and coordinated treatment to shopfronts and signage and a clean, uncluttered and coordinated public realm treatment. Trees are an important part of the street’s character and will be retained, managed and replaced if necessary.
3.6.5 THE GREEN AVENUES: ALEXANDRA PARADE

Key Existing Characteristics

- The site of the original railway station, Alexandra Parade was laid out as an open space following the construction of the new railway station in 1866, and after failed attempts to sell the site off as development plots.
- Today the primary east-west approach route linking Locking Road with Big Lamp corner.
- Located between Orchard Meadows character area to the north and High Street to the west.
- Characterised by an elongated circular one way street system (Regent Street and Alexandra Parade) around an area of mature trees and raised lawns.
- Dominated by circulating traffic with a number of bus stops on street.
- Public realm in need of updating, cluttered with pedestrian barriers and traffic lights.
- Built form typically 3-4 storeys in on Regent Street and 2-3 storeys on Alexandra Parade, with continuous closed building line.
- Variety of architectural styles including several interesting buildings of varying state of repair, especially on Regent Street, including the Grade II listed Art Deco Odeon Cinema.
- Building elevations dominated by uncoordinated shop front signs and advertising boards.
- Falls within Core Strategy Policy Area CS29 Retail Core.
Development Principles (Alexandra Parade)

Development proposals along Alexandra Parade will need to demonstrate that they support the following principles:

- Reinforce the strong east-west connectivity towards the town centre through appropriate transport and public realm design;
- Accommodate the town centre bus interchange with a focus to the east of Orchard Street;
- Improve pedestrian, cycle and visual north-south connectivity;
- Reinforce the green character of the space by retaining and planting avenue trees and creating a high quality coordinated public realm design that creates a high quality and complementary sequence of spaces with the new space at Walliscote Place and Big Lamp corner;
- Create a high quality and flexible public space at the Western end linking into Big Lamp corner and the High Street area;
- Reinforce and strengthen the urban form along routes in keeping with the existing scale and massing;
- Any new development to be of the highest quality in line with Core Strategy Policy CS29 Retail Core.

Future Character Statement

Alexandra Parade will become a key arrival space into the town centre and will accommodate a bus interchange at its eastern end. Vehicular traffic around the space will be removed, with traffic from the east directed onto Alfred Street northwards, freeing up space on the Parade for a bus interchange to the east of Orchard Street and a high quality pedestrian arrival space to the west. The direct visual and physical link between Walliscote Road and Orchard Street will be strengthened.

The central green space to the west of Orchard Street will be retained and improved with cafe and sitting out space encouraged.

The frontages of key buildings will be restored and signage and visual clutter reduced. Visual and physical links to Big Lamp Corner, Walliscote Place and Orchard Street will be improved through a coordinate approach to public realm design.
3.6.6 SOUTHSIDE GROVE

Key Existing Characteristics

- Proposed priority regeneration area comprising the corridor between Hildesheim Bridge and Dolphin Square;
- Main approach into the town from the east (Station Rd, Walliscote Grove Rd and Carlton Street) dominated by highway infrastructure;
- Mostly poor quality and disjointed urban form with main east-west road corridor, a number of development and surface car park sites;
- A cluster of high quality Grade II listed heritage buildings around Walliscote Road and Town Hall, including Town Hall itself, the Magistrates Court, Emmanuel Church, Walliscote School and the Odeon Cinema on Alexandra Parade, signalling the arrival in the town centre;
- Railway station feels peripheral to the town centre due to its surroundings of surface car parks, major road infrastructure and under-used land;
- Proximity to town centre and seafront largely inconspicuous;
- Area has key link and arrival function and is in urgent need of re-development to change perceptions of the town centre; and
- Major opportunity for a priority regeneration corridor with the potential to introduce a new coherent character to the area and repair the urban form.
Future Character Statement

Southside Grove will be a new leafy urban quarter that introduces a confident 21st century layer to the urban form while building on the best of its existing character. New development will be of a clearly identifiable and coherent character that resonates the elegance, style and warmth of Weston’s finest Art Deco and Victorian heritage and combines them with the best of contemporary architecture. New development will enrich Weston’s built form and create a foil for its existing quality buildings. The area will be further unified by a strong public realm centred on ‘Southside Avenue’ (Station Road and Carlton Street) and create a sequence of well-enclosed, overlooked and attractive green streets and spaces, influenced by Weston’s best Victorian tree-lined streets and sheltered coastal gardens. At the heart of the area, Walliscote Place, a new public space based around Weston’s original civic quarter, will become a key town centre arrival and orientation space. The massing of the new development will be designed to complement the historic built form, with selected marker buildings to help orientation and place-making, and send a positive message about the regeneration of the town centre.

Development Principles

Development proposals within Southside Grove will need to demonstrate that they support the following principles:

• Contribute positively to the future character for Southside Grove through a coordinated design approach to new development and public realm, a coordinated tree planting strategy along key routes, the integration of a series of visible green spaces within new developments and creating developments of an appropriate scale and character that combine the elegance, style and colour of Weston’s built heritage with the best of contemporary architecture and design;
• All new development to be of the highest quality and demonstrably contribute to the regeneration aims for the town centre;
• Align with Core Strategy Policy CS29 (Retail Core and Gateway)
• Support the primarily residential function of the area, with potential supporting land uses including commercial, car parking, primary school;
• Contribute to the establishment of a strong linear east-west link for all modes between the Station and the seafront along Station Road, Walliscote Grove Road and Carlton Street with a coordinated public realm, generous tree-lined pavements, dedicated cycle lanes, safe crossing points and buildings fronting the street;
• Minimise intrusive signage and clutter in the streetscape; and
• Use sensitively designed lighting to enhance key buildings and strengthen legibility of ‘Southside Avenue’ at night.
3.6.7 ST JAMES TOWN

Key Existing Characteristics

- Historically part of the mid-19th century expansion of Weston village, with the original north-south orientated grid of streets remaining intact;
- Original character of small scale commercial and residential terraces significantly eroded by larger scale post-war redevelopment of varying quality;
- Remnants of the older terrace buildings remain, concentrated in St James Street including public houses and a few isolated cottages;
- Mix of town centre land uses including independent retail and food and drink outlets, especially along St James Street and High Street, bars and clubs towards Regent Street and low quality residential accommodation;
- Area currently suffers from lack of activity to the south until the completion of the Dolphin Square development (under construction), with a high percentage of empty units;
- Closed and generally continuous building line with typical storey height ranging from 2-4 storeys;
- Some local colour and interest especially along St James Street, but area generally in need of improvement, with potential for sympathetic re-development of individual plots and the need for comprehensive public realm improvements.
Development Principles

Development proposals within St James Town will need to demonstrate that they support the following principles:

- Contribute to the quarter’s character as Weston’s ‘creative/innovation quarter’ through incremental, high quality redevelopment, encouraging independent business and meanwhile uses (temporary use of empty properties), mixed with existing and new independent retail, food and drink outlets, residential and student accommodation uses;
- Development to be of the highest quality design and to make a positive and distinct contribution to the existing built environment, in line with Core Strategy Policy CS29 Retail Core;
- Potential opportunity to expand and enhance comparison floor space towards the Big Lamp corner end of High Street in line with Core Strategy Policy CS29 Retail Core;
- All land uses, including those supporting the night-time economy, to ensure a safe and attractive environment can be maintained at all times, controlling noise and anti-social behaviour;
- Encourage creative re-use and sensitive contemporary re-development of existing buildings within the existing urban form;
- Retain vehicular access for access and servicing, including access to NCP car park off High Street;
- Improve public realm to create a coherent identity, strengthen physical and visual connections between the retail core, the seafront and Dolphin Square / ‘Southside Grove’;
- Where it is demonstrated that re-development of existing plots is appropriate, new development to respect existing closed and generally continuous building line; occasional well-designed setbacks acceptable to increase spill-out/sitting out space.

Future Character Statement

James will be recognised as a distinctive, independent mixed use town centre quarter, providing a key link between the High Street retail area to the north and the Dolphin Square development and Southside Grove priority regeneration corridor to the south. To support this increased footfall and bring back some of the colour, activity and finer grain of the historic St James Town, a vibrant mix of creative uses, small businesses, restaurants and cafes will be encouraged, alongside contemporary residential conversions and re-development and student housing to animate the area in the daytime and evening. The general grain of the built form will be retained, with the opportunity for incremental appropriate re-development of lower quality buildings within the existing street pattern.

The area is identified as having potential to become a ‘seedbed’ for the creative industries who are priced out of Bristol and like to capitalise on the regeneration of the town. An improved coordinated public realm will unify the area’s character and act as a backdrop to the activities taking place within it. Whilst it is anticipated that the area will remain a night-time destination, the control of associated noise and antisocial behaviour will be enforced to create a safe and attractive environment for a growing number of town centre residents and visitors.
4.7 COLOURS, MATERIALS AND ARCHITECTURAL DETAIL

Weston’s built form comprises a rich mix of colours, textures and architectural styles, which together create a warm and distinct local character. Reflecting this mix of styles and colours in the built form is an important characteristic of the town centre.

Weston’s public realm is in the process of being upgraded, resulting in a variety of materials and quality, and resulting lack of cohesion in the public realm.

As the public realm is gradually improved over time, selection criteria should be consistent and complement the local character.

4.7.1 Selection Criteria for Colours and Materials

• Materials of new development should complement the character and colours of the historic built form. The predominant material for historic buildings is local limestone in a range of warm mid-grey to sand coloured tones, used in various ways including as coursed blocks and random rubble facing. Red brick and painted render are also commonly used.

• External building materials should be selected to complement the rich colour palette of the historic built form. The public realm will become the main unifying design element in the town centre, establishing a clear physical and visual hierarchy that leaves flexibility for the material and design of the buildings. Deliberate departures from or the colour and materials palette should be carefully considered and supported by a clear design rationale.

• Connecting routes should be paved with a consistent, approved palette of materials appropriate to the local character, with key spaces express individuality whilst still contributing to an overall coordinated public realm.

• When selecting materials and colours for individual buildings, care must be taken to ensure that the overall street frontage appears as a harmonious ensemble, befitting of the relevant character area.

• Street furniture should be coordinated across the town centre and should generally be neutral and of the same colour. Any diversions from the standard agreed furniture palette should be agreed with the Council and supported by a clear design rationale.
FIGURE 21. SPATIAL INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK

KEY
- WOODLAND
- TOWN CENTRE BOUNDARY
- PRIORITY REGENERATION AREA
- PRIMARY ROUTE
- HIGH STREET
- SECONDARY ROUTE
- KEY PEDESTRIAN LINK
- RAILWAY
- STATION GATEWAY PROJECT
- WALLISCOTE PLACE PROJECT
- DOLPHIN SQUARE PROJECT
- TOWN SQUARE PROJECT
4.8 MAJOR DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION SITES

A number of major development sites have been identified in the spatial investment framework, each delivering the comprehensive improvement of a significant part of the town centre.

Each project creates a range of specific investment opportunities in the context of an overall uplift of the town centre offer and environment quality. The framework creates a whole series of other smaller scale development opportunities, held together by an improved investment environment. The four main development opportunities identified as catalytic early opportunities are summarised below. The vision and development principles underpinning the regeneration of each area are captured in separate site briefs.

4.8.1 SOUTHSIDE GROVE

Southside Grove describes the regeneration priority area and new urban quarter between Hildesheim Bridge to the east and the seafront at Dolphin Square to the west. With a currently fragmented urban character, the area has the potential to make a high quality 21st century contribution to the town’s urban form, a new place with the critical mass required to deliver real regeneration benefits to the town. A leafy urban quarter defined by the qualities of seaside living and sheltered coastal gardens, the area brings together a number of opportunity sites and infrastructure projects:

Walliscote Place
Walliscote Place comprises a series of sites around the area surrounded by the Town Hall, Magistrates Court and Police Station and the Centre Buildings at the western end of Station Road. The development opportunity proposes a fundamental repositioning of the area as a new arrival space and destination in the town centre by building on the area’s heritage assets, improving the quality of public realm, and by capitalising on the availability of publicly owned land to bring forward a series of high quality new developments.

Dolphin Square
Dolphin Square Phase 4, together with the Sands Car Park, offers a development opportunity to bring forward a high quality predominantly residential scheme that makes a significant contribution to the Southside Grove regeneration area as a leafy urban living quarter for the town centre.

Station Gateway
The Station Gateway is envisioned as a the main town centre arrival area, a mixed use, contemporary, leafy and urban quarter that signifies Weston’s ambition, creates strong and clear links to the town centre and makes a significant contribution to the Southside Grove regeneration area. The area offers a number of development sites, linked together by a series of strategic infrastructure projects.

4.8.2 TOWN SQUARE

The proposed re-development of the Winter Gardens and the Sovereign Centre, combined with the wider Town Centre regeneration plans offer a prime opportunity to re-establish Town Square as a key leisure destination and public space at the heart of the Town Centre.

We want to retain and attract a wider demographic into Weston, including young talented people and families
FIGURE 22. ILLUSTRATIVE FRAMEWORK PLAN
4.9 ILLUSTRATIVE FRAMEWORK PLAN

The illustrative framework plan shows a typical outcome of implementing the various development opportunities and priority infrastructure improvements summarised in this document. These will be seen in the context of gradual improvements of the already established town centre character areas, in line with the principles set out in this document.

Together, these will create a high quality and coherent town centre environment that celebrates Weston’s history and identity whilst bringing in modern and aspirational development.