An aerial map of Portishead, showing a dense network of streets and buildings, rendered in a light blue color against a darker teal background.

# PORTISHEAD

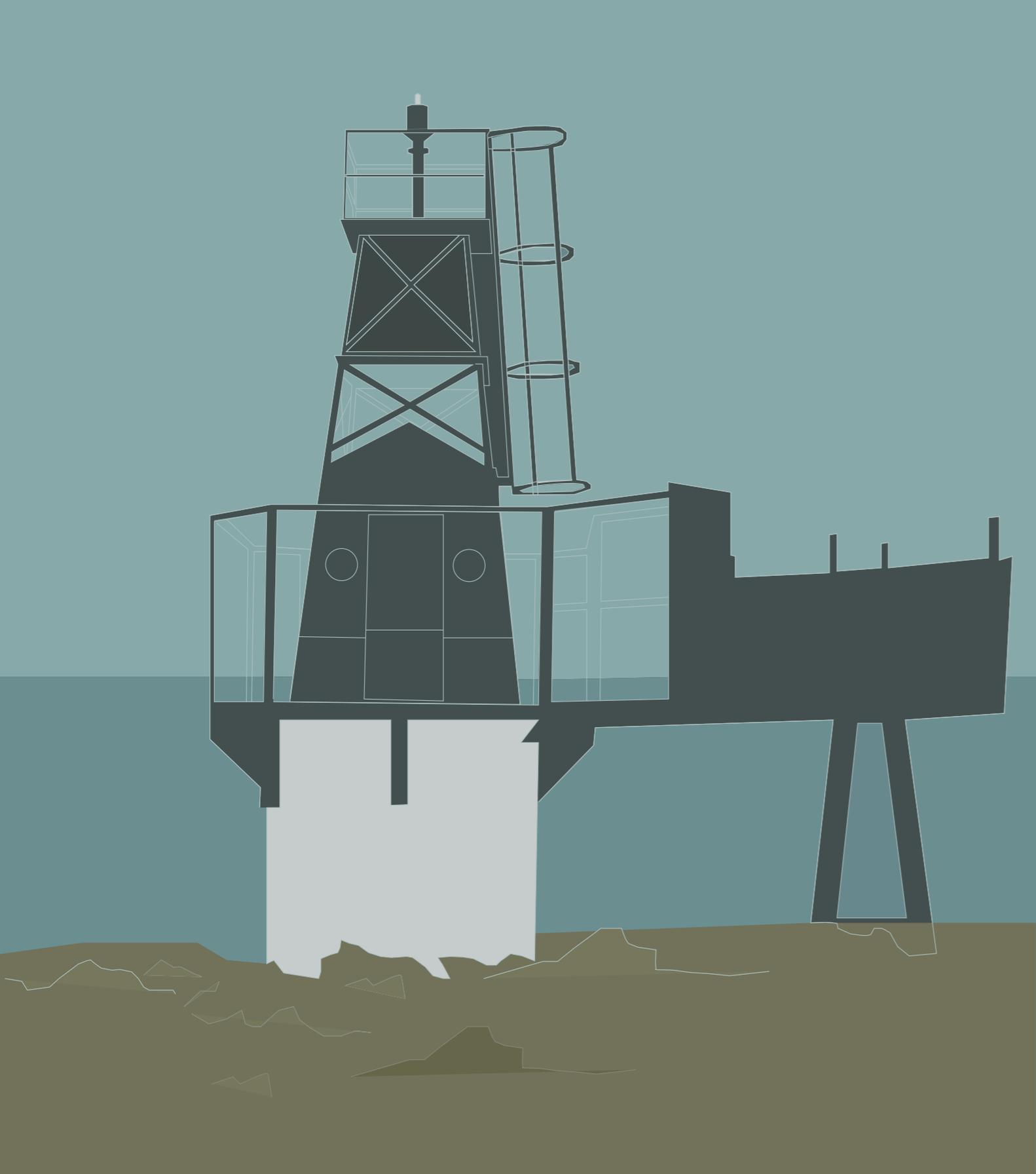
## Wyndham Way Opportunity Area Scoping Study

February 2021

**Aberdeen  
Standard**  
Investments



**Portishead  
Town  
Council**



## Project team

Allies and Morrison  
Urban Practitioners

Tulley Bunting



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# What we want to achieve

The Wyndham Way area is a pivotal opportunity to develop a place for Portishead, of Portishead, capturing the town's unique character and embracing the opportunities for living and working in a better way.

## A place to live and work

## A place to enjoy

## A healthy green place

## A connected, low-carbon place

Portishead has an opportunity. The area around Wyndham Way could unlock a new sustainable future for the town – better connecting Portishead's neighbourhoods.

New jobs and places for people to live, work and enjoy could be created. Having a proper plan to redevelop the missing link in the town's centre, connecting the high street to the marina and the planned railway station.

Portishead Town Council, North Somerset Council and Aberdeen Standard Investments have started exploring how this area – the Wyndham Way Study Area (WWSA) – could change to benefit Portishead.

We assembled a Steering Group with local businesses to do this collaboratively and appointed a team experienced in creating great places to inform the group.

We engaged with the community to understand what people think of Portishead – what they like, what they don't like and what could be improved.

Responding to this, the group has agreed a Vision, Principles and Strategy for the area's future. This will provide a guide for a future development framework.

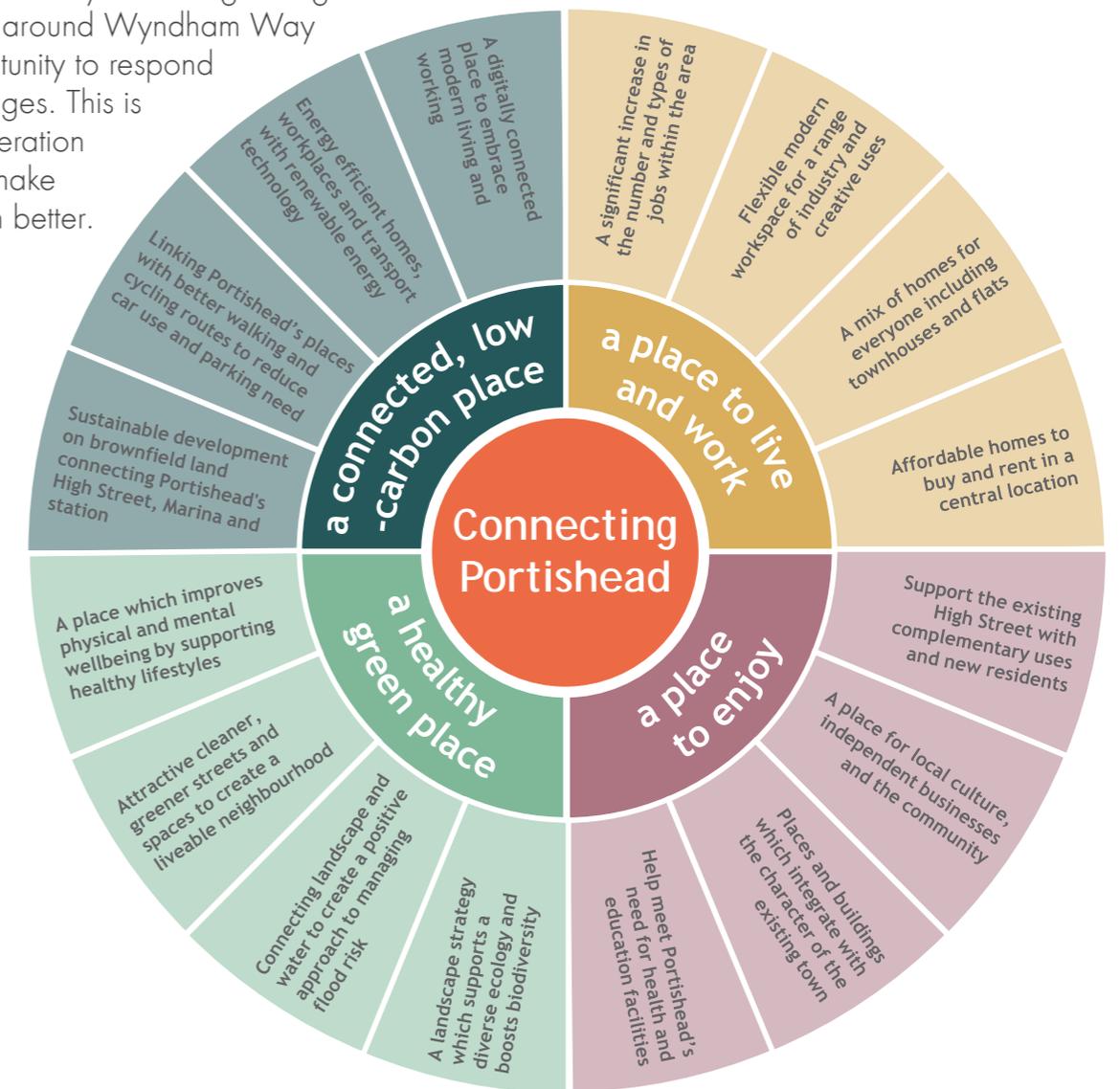
The group has considered how people move through the town. How creating green and pleasant spaces for people to walk and cycle can make Portishead a healthier place for people and improve the environment.

We explored sustainability. The need to reduce carbon emissions and make Portishead more resilient to climate change and the opportunities that emerge from planning a low-carbon place.

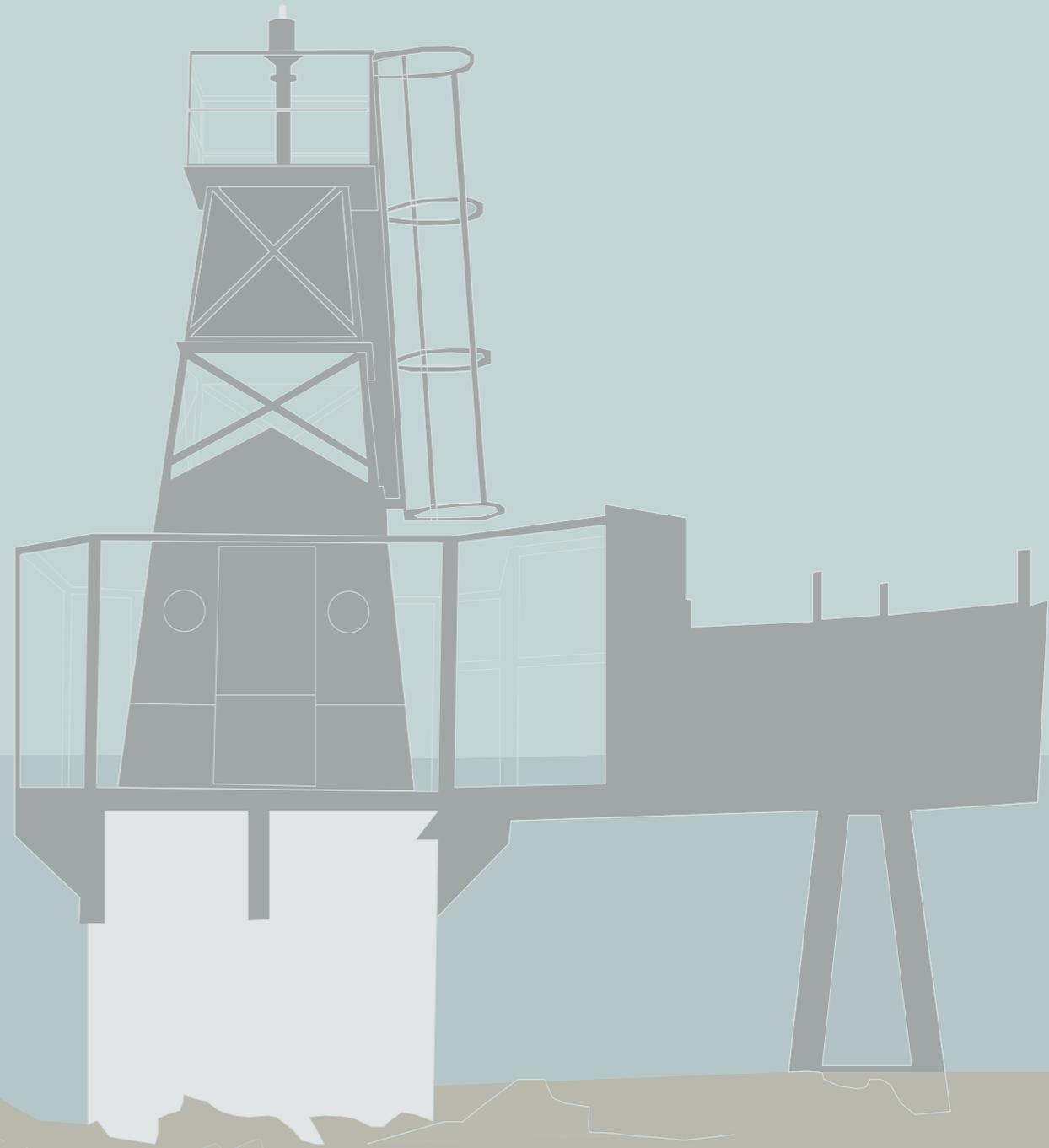
This report is a "Scoping Study" which reviews the evidence base and the key opportunities and challenges facing Portishead. It also sets out the approach for the next stage.

Stage 2 intends to build on the Scoping Study. In collaboration with local communities a WWSA Development Framework will be created to guide the future planning and delivery of development and associated infrastructure.

Portishead is a great place but like towns across the country faces a complex set of challenges. Covid-19, Brexit and the climate and ecological emergencies all demand that we do things differently. Nurturing the right kind of change around Wyndham Way offers an opportunity to respond to these challenges. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make Portishead even better.



# Introduction



# Purpose of the study

This study has been prepared to help guide potential future development of the central area of Portishead, between the High Street, the Marina and the planned new railway station - an area now known as the Wyndham Way Study Area (WWSA).

It has been prepared by a team led by a collaboration between North Somerset Council, Portishead Town Council and Aberdeen Standard Investments (ASI), one of the key land owners in the area.

Portishead has grown significantly through the Twentieth Century and into the Twenty First Century. However, the WWSA has seen very little change. Its location means redevelopment could bring great benefit to the town and its communities. It could also support the integration of the planned railway station.

This study has been undertaken to prepare a route map for the work which is needed to plan a new future for this important area. It has been a process of listening and research supporting the development of a shared Vision and key principles that will be used to guide what happens next. The study includes the following sections:

## Introduction

The first part of this report sets out how the study area boundary has been drawn up, as well as providing a summary of the wider national and local planning policy which a development framework will need to work within. It explores what we learnt from engagement undertaken to further understand community aspirations for the area. It also summarises the work of the WWSA Steering Group.

## Understanding the place

We have researched Portishead's history to understand the factors that have shaped the current town. This includes looking at the landscape, the industrial history and the ways that roads and buildings have changed over time. We have also looked at the existing town to understand the current challenges around movement and parking, flood risk and local ecology.

## Social and economic context

As well as looking at the physical form of the town, we have looked at the population and how it has grown and changed over time. This includes looking at the different age groups and skills of local people to help us understand what job opportunities, local facilities and homes people are likely to need in the future.

We have also looked at the economic context so that we understand the types of development that could benefit Portishead.

## Area evaluation

There are many different areas of land ownership within the study area. Our research shows which ones we think could be likely to change, and which ones may be less likely to be developed, because of their existing buildings and uses. This means that we have a

clearer idea of which areas could be included in future plans.

## Vision, principles and strategy

This has been developed with the guidance of the Steering Group informed by feedback from the local community. It defines the future direction for the area and provides the framework for the development of a future strategy.

## Initial ideas

To support the overarching approach, the team has also developed initial ideas around development options and the key sites, transport and movement, phasing and key challenges.

## Next steps

Finally, we recommend a process for delivering a framework for the Wyndham Way area.



## Study area boundary

A key part of the scoping study process has been to consider a suitable project boundary for a future framework. A number of factors have been considered through this process including a detailed review of the various buildings, existing uses and land ownerships in the area.

The identified boundary 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.

Established residential areas have been omitted from the study area, and whilst the connections with the High Street are important, the historic High Street itself is not intended to be the subject of the future framework.

Sites to the north of Harbour Road were considered. However, given the established uses and the relatively recent nature of some of the existing development, this area has also been excluded from the boundary.

The area is composed of a large number of ownerships. Not every part of the area identified will change and some parts will remain the same.

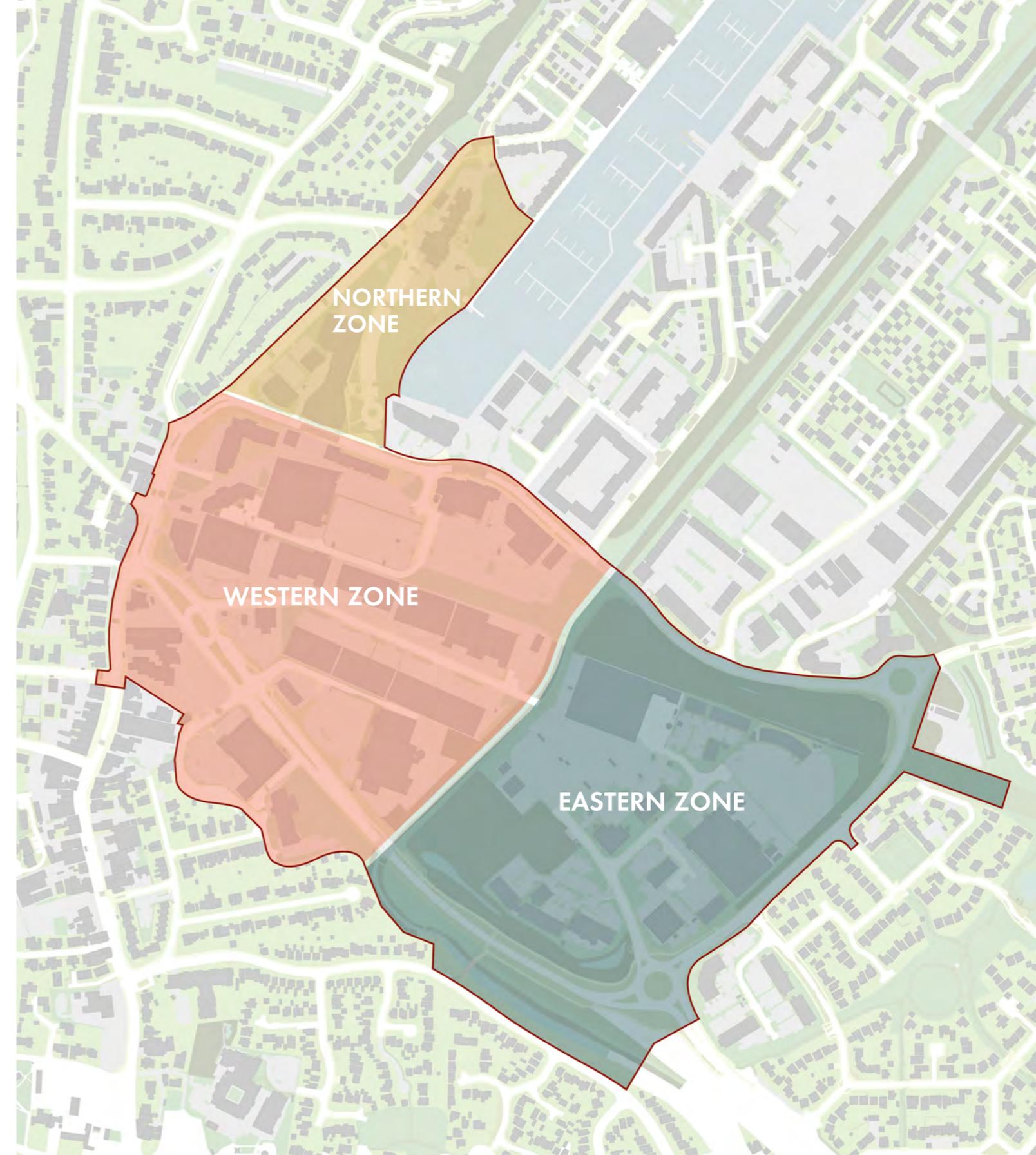
Similarly, the fact that a site is excluded from the study area does not mean that it won't change through the normal planning process.

Three distinct zones have been identified:

**Northern zone** - comprising the public uses north of Harbour Road, including Portishead Primary School and the Leisure Centre. This area has been included to make sure change in the wider area also benefits the leisure centre and school.

**Western zone** - including the core area of sites where the most significant change is likely, as well as other areas where a coordinated approach is needed; and

**Eastern Zone** - the area around the planned station where more gradual change is likely. This includes some vacant land which could be developed soon, as well as other established uses which might change in the longer term.



# Planning context

Relevant planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), in the North Somerset Development Plan (Local Plan) and within other local planning guidance.

At the national level, the Government’s objective in the Framework is to significantly boost the supply of homes across the country and also support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local needs and wider opportunities for development.

Development is encouraged on ‘brownfield’ sites – areas that have been previously developed and are generally underutilised - in central locations close to existing transport (including where improvements are planned) and services, to reduce the need to travel.

At the local level, North Somerset’s adopted Local Plan policies provide for the building of more homes, including within Portishead, and that this should include affordable homes, especially on land which has already been developed.

The Council also supports a successful economy providing for new facilities, employment opportunities and services for local populations in accessible locations, including within town centres. Town centre regeneration is supported within Portishead

and it is expected that the town will maintain and enhance its roles in providing facilities, employment opportunities and services for its populations and local catchments.

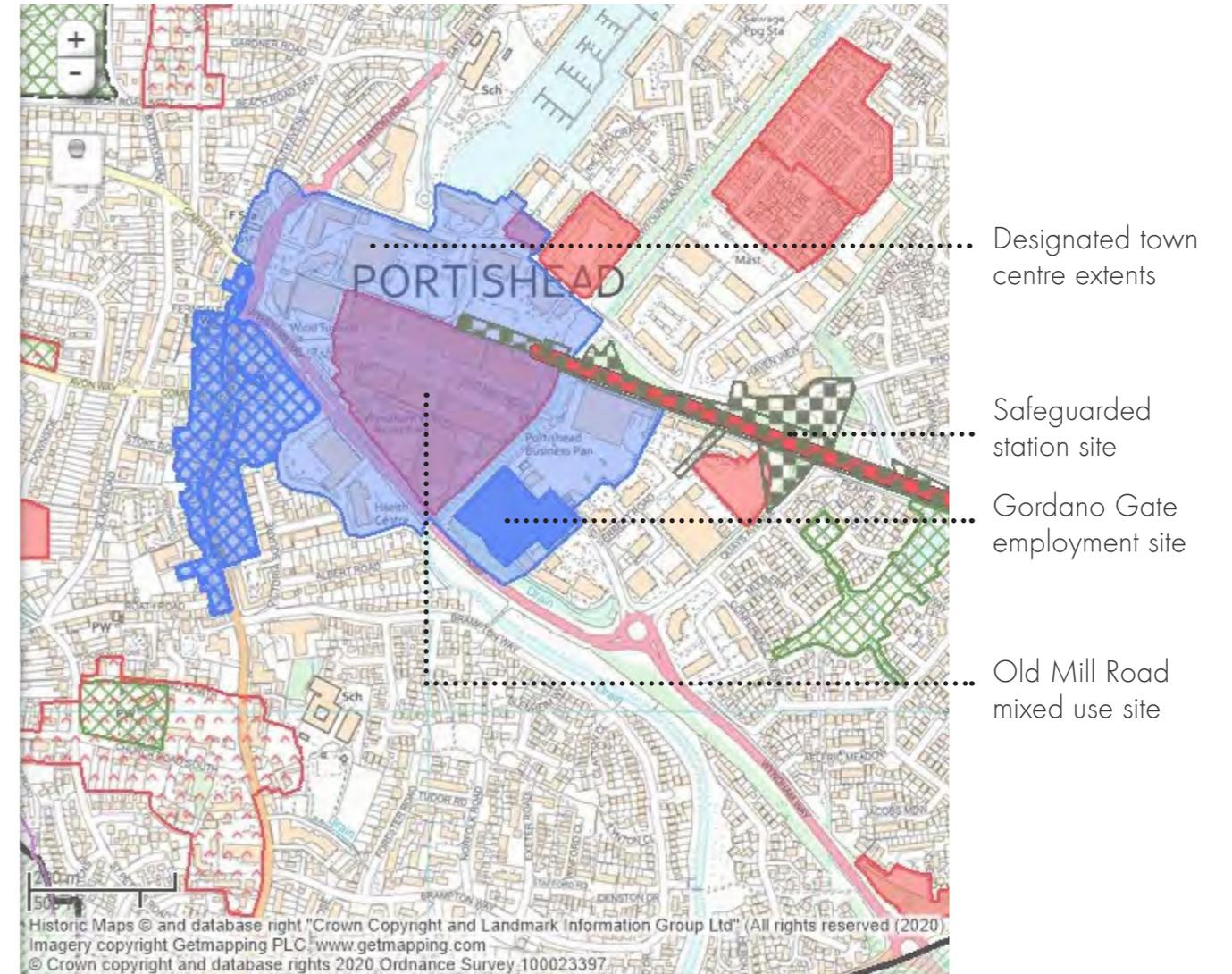
The WWSA forms part of Portishead town centre and also includes sites allocated for residential development, mixed use development, employment use plus a new railway line.

The 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.

The extract from the adopted Policies Map shows the designations in and around the WWSA.

Other local planning policy guidance is found in Supplementary Planning Documents including Development Contributions, Affordable Housing and Parking Standards. NSC also operates a Community Infrastructure Levy.

The Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan for North Somerset to meet government expectations for growth and intends to complete this by 2023. The new Plan will address the need to deliver a higher level of



Extract from North Somerset Council Planning Policy map

- Designated town centre extents
- Safeguarded station site
- Gordano Gate employment site
- Old Mill Road mixed use site

new homes within the area, and other issues including:

- Climate emergency
- Supporting our economy
- The future role of the Green Belt
- Providing homes and creating communities
- Protecting important green and blue spaces
- Creating a sustainable future

Portishead Town Council has also started work on a new Neighbourhood Plan for Portishead which will look at the need for homes, community facilities, local green spaces, the economy, transport as well as environmental issues such as energy, landscape, and design as well as important heritage considerations.

The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan - it cannot contradict the District's planning policy.

### Some Planning Implications for the Scoping Study

The WWSA is mostly brownfield - previously developed and underutilised - land comprising industrial estates, large retail stores, roads and surface car parking. It is also where a new station is expected to open in 2024 as part

of the MetroWest programme. Much of the area falls within the Portishead town centre boundary and several sites are identified for development by North Somerset Council.

The UK planning system has a general presumption in favour of sustainable development. National and local planning policy fully supports the regeneration of previously developed brownfield sites within accessible locations for mixed-use development including residential and employment uses together with related infrastructure and other facilities.

Some of the land within the WWSA is already being promoted for development and there is an opportunity to shape investment in a way that brings a mix of homes, space for business and working, active uses, community facilities and new connections in an environment designed for people.

Having a framework to guide change that can come forward through the planning process, and for local decision making will be important to ensuring we create a place that benefits Portishead with the right mix of uses, design quality, energy efficiency and connections.

**Facing page: photographs of Portishead today**  
(Allies and Morrison)



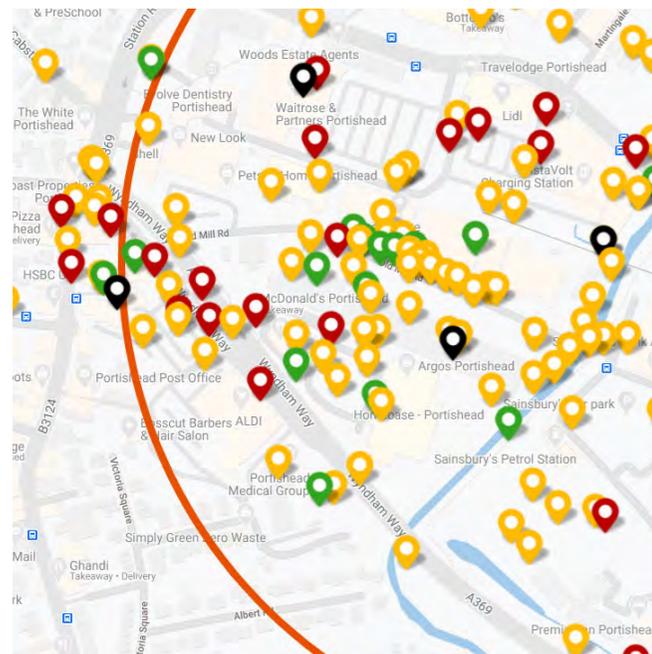
# Engagement

Working closely with the local community and other stakeholders is a key priority for the partners.

Engagement on the WWSA has started from the earliest opportunity - far earlier than is usual for similar projects.

This means the initial work of the Steering Group and Project Technical Team has been informed by what the community wants to see happen in Portishead.

It's also helped to ensure the project begins as it will go on; in collaboration with the local community, benefitting from collective local insight.



## What we did

A dedicated website was a hub for all engagement. It contained information on the WWSA and an innovative interactive map for people to add what they think about the town as it is now - what's good, what could be improved and how Portishead can be made even better.

The website and the opportunity for people to have their say were promoted through the local media, engagement with stakeholders and on social media.

187 comments were made on the interactive map. These have been invaluable to understanding what people think of the area and how change can benefit the town.

There were 5,888 visits to the website in total and Facebook posts targeted at people living, working and visiting Portishead reached more than 50,000 people.

## What we found out

The Steering Group and Project Technical Team regularly reviewed all comments to inform their work. Comments were also categorised into themes to help understand trends in what was being said. The top themes were:

- Community infrastructure - more medical services, facilities for families such as schools and nurseries, community spaces and improving community use of and access to the marina.
- Look and feel of the public space - improve how it looks with more greenery and less rubbish and make the area feel more welcoming.
- Walking and cycling - better walking and cycling connections to make the experience of travelling through the area safer, easier and more enjoyable. This included comments on improving accessibility for disabled people.
- Highways and road safety - reducing the impact of the roads whilst improving the experience for drivers.
- Parking - too much, too little, in the wrong place and arranged inappropriately. A few comments reference and most parking

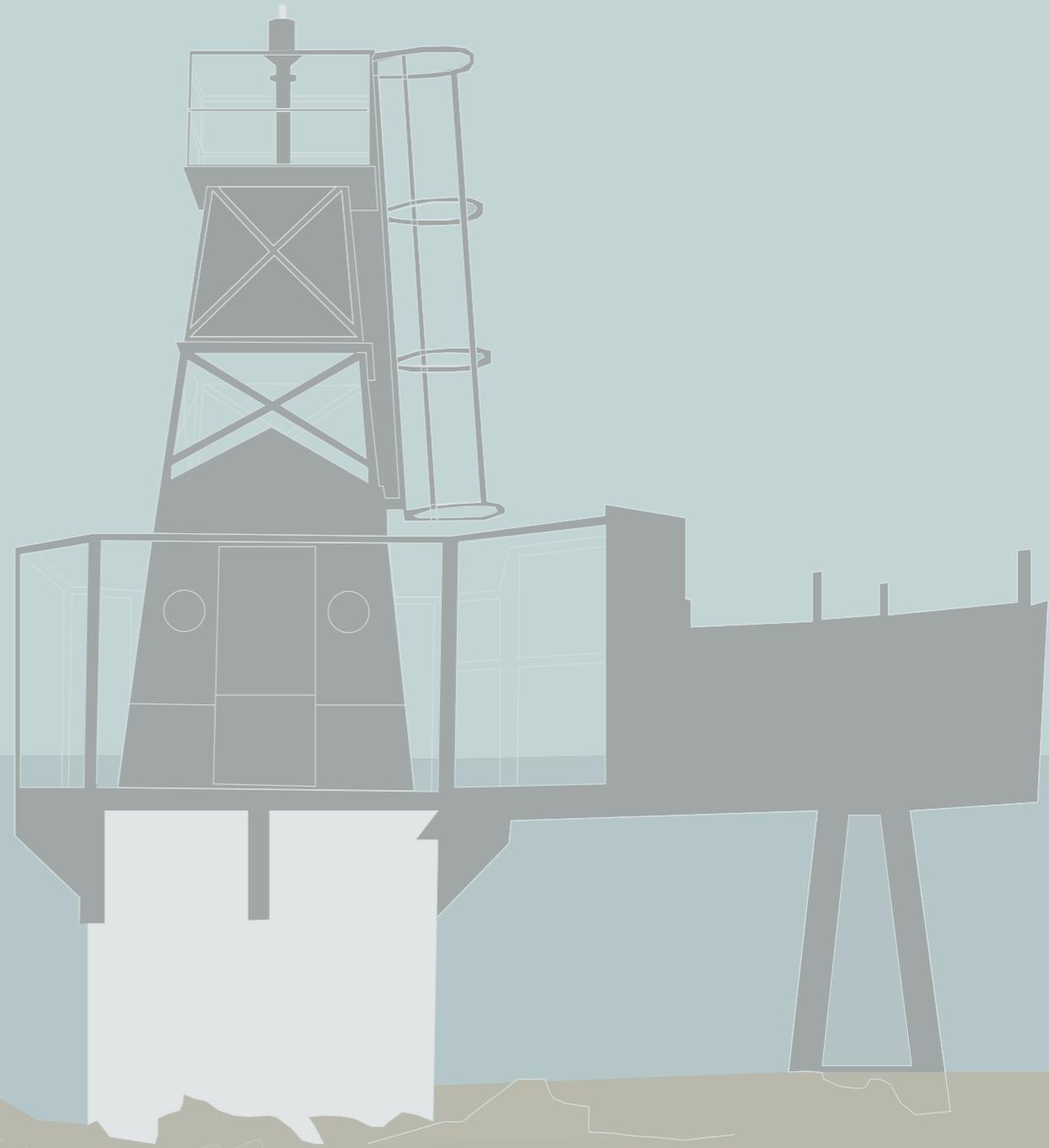
related comments can be summarised by a desire for a better parking strategy.

- Sustainability - both through the design of any new buildings and spaces but also in helping people live more sustainable lives i.e. making it easier to recycle and increasing the quality and quantity of green spaces for people and wildlife.

There were also many comments on increasing the amount and quality of jobs in the area and ideas about the kinds of uses that could be built.

Many comments cover more than one theme and so were categorised in multiple themes. Engaging and consulting the local community will remain a priority for partners as the project progresses.

# Place analysis



# Origins and growth

Before making recommendations about the future of Portishead, it is important to understand the existing town and the factors that have shaped it. By listening to local people and looking through historic maps, aerial photographs and records, it is possible to tell how the town has grown and to start to understand its story.

This approach reveals important things which any future plans can help to protect and build upon, such as the historic role of the High Street as well as the more recent significance of the Marina as a place where people live work and play rather than a place of industry.

It also helps to understand the former industrial life of the core of the study area, subdivided by numerous railway lines, factories and yards.

This has left a legacy of disconnected places. This has become particularly important as Portishead has grown to the east within the new development at Port Marine. Here, a new neighbourhood has been created but doesn't yet have a good safe network of streets connecting it back to the town centre.

**Looking at the detail of the hills, watercourses and coastline against the form of the town reveals interesting and important details. It shows that most of the historic town has been on the hills, with the High Street following the low contour just above the historic estuary. Most of Portishead's modern growth has happened on lower-lying land to the east.**



## Victorian

Looking back at maps from the Victorian Period shows the historic High Street and the streets immediately around it as clearly established. The maps also show industrial activity at the wharf and newer housing being developed on West Hill.

## 1930s

The inter-war period saw the growth of industrial activity around the wharf and residential consolidation around Woodhill, to the north of the High Street. Redcliffe Bay was also being developed as a new neighbourhood to the west.

## 1970s

The post-war period shows substantial infill along the ridge of West Hill and Woodhill as well as urban expansion to the south, creating the North Weston area and Gordano School.

## 1980s

The later years of the Twentieth Century shows development in and around the town centre, including Brampton Way to the south as well as steeper sites off Avon Way.

## 2020

Development up to the present day has included the significant eastward expansion of Portishead in the form of the Port Marine area as well as the transformation of the Wharf itself to create today's modern marina.

# The 'port at the head of the river'



**1883**

By the 1880s the town has expanded

**1910**

Another tourist attraction, The Lake Grounds, open



**1970s**

Portishead Precinct



**2001**

Residential development at Portishead Marina begins.

**1086**

A farming and fishing community population of 13

**1879**

Granary, flour mill and timber wharf emerge

**1867**

Great Western Railway opens, linking Bristol to Portishead

**1907**

Portishead to Clevedon and Weston-Super-Mare Light Railway opens



**1911**

Mustad's nail factory was built

**1931**

Battery Point Lighthouse opens

**1944**

In June, the docks support the 'D Day' landings

**1926**

Construction of the first of two power stations begins



**1970s**

Industry begins to decline in the late 1970s and the last of the two power station chimney stacks are demolished in 1992, marking a new era for Portishead

**1836**

An important deep-water dock is built to accommodate large import and export ships

**1908**

Visitor numbers grew and tourist attractions started to emerge with the Approach Golf Course opening in 1908

**1967-77**

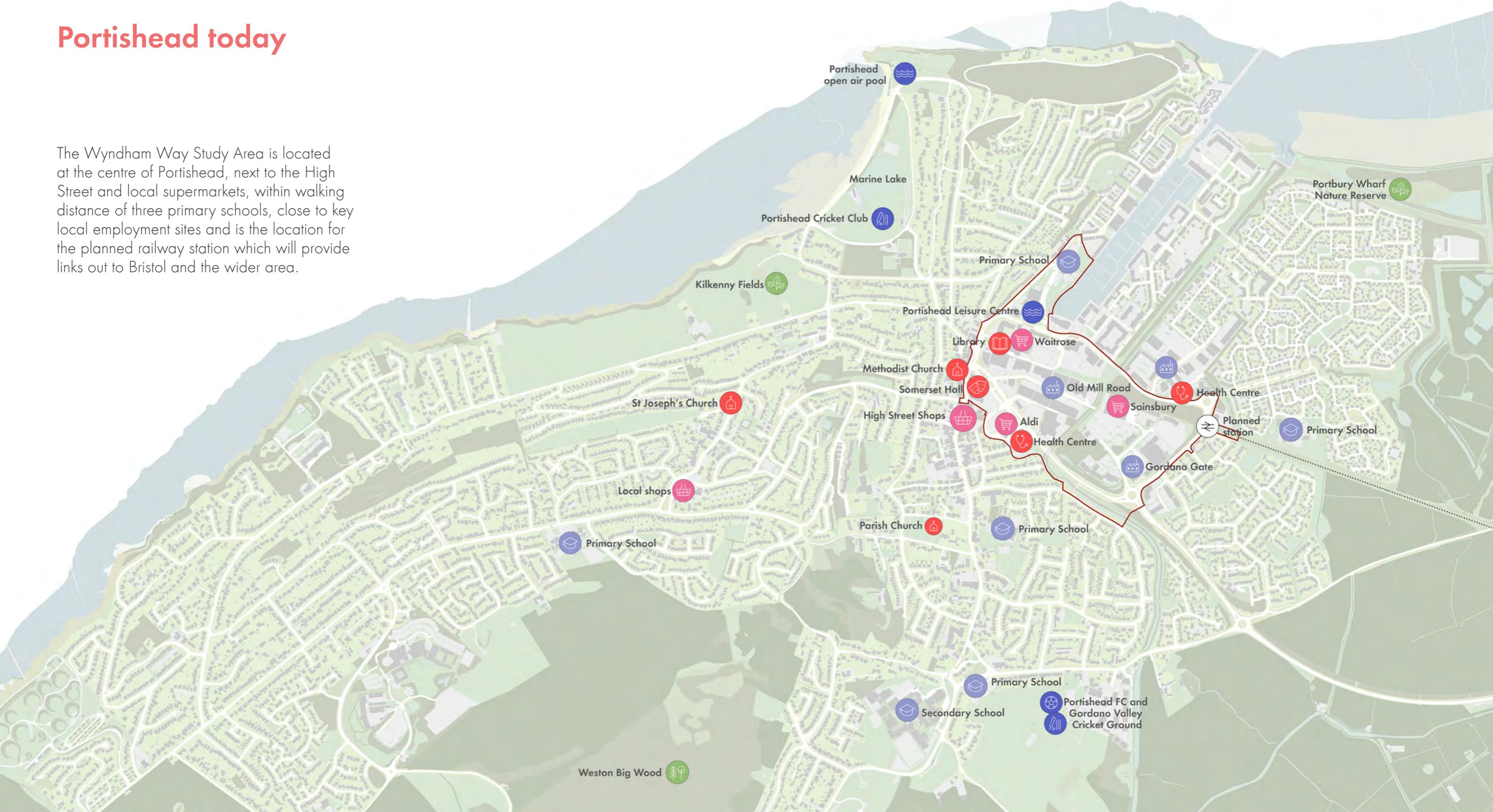
The M5 is constructed from Bristol to Weston-Super-Mare along the Tickenham Ridge



Photographs of Portishead today  
(Allies and Morrison)

# Portishead today

The Wyndham Way Study Area is located at the centre of Portishead, next to the High Street and local supermarkets, within walking distance of three primary schools, close to key local employment sites and is the location for the planned railway station which will provide links out to Bristol and the wider area.



## Key constraints

1 The boundary between The Old Mill Road area and the Waitrose site follows the line of the former Portishead railway. This forms a strong barrier through the area, including a noted level change along much of its length.

2 Wyndham Way is both an important route but also a significant barrier. It is a modern road which uses the historic route of a former railway, and so it not integrated into the town centre's historic street pattern. The existing road lacks easy options for crossing and ground floor activity, resulting in a hostile environment for pedestrians.

3 The back boundaries of the developments on the Gordano Gate area create a significant barrier to walking and cycling from the Port Marine area and station site to the north east. It has been gradually developed as a mixed retail, industrial and more recently residential area and is accessed from a single point at the roundabout with Wyndham Way.

4 The original historic High Street is a cohesive and attractive street. It includes an attractive set of buildings with a clear form and is well integrated with a series of connecting streets.

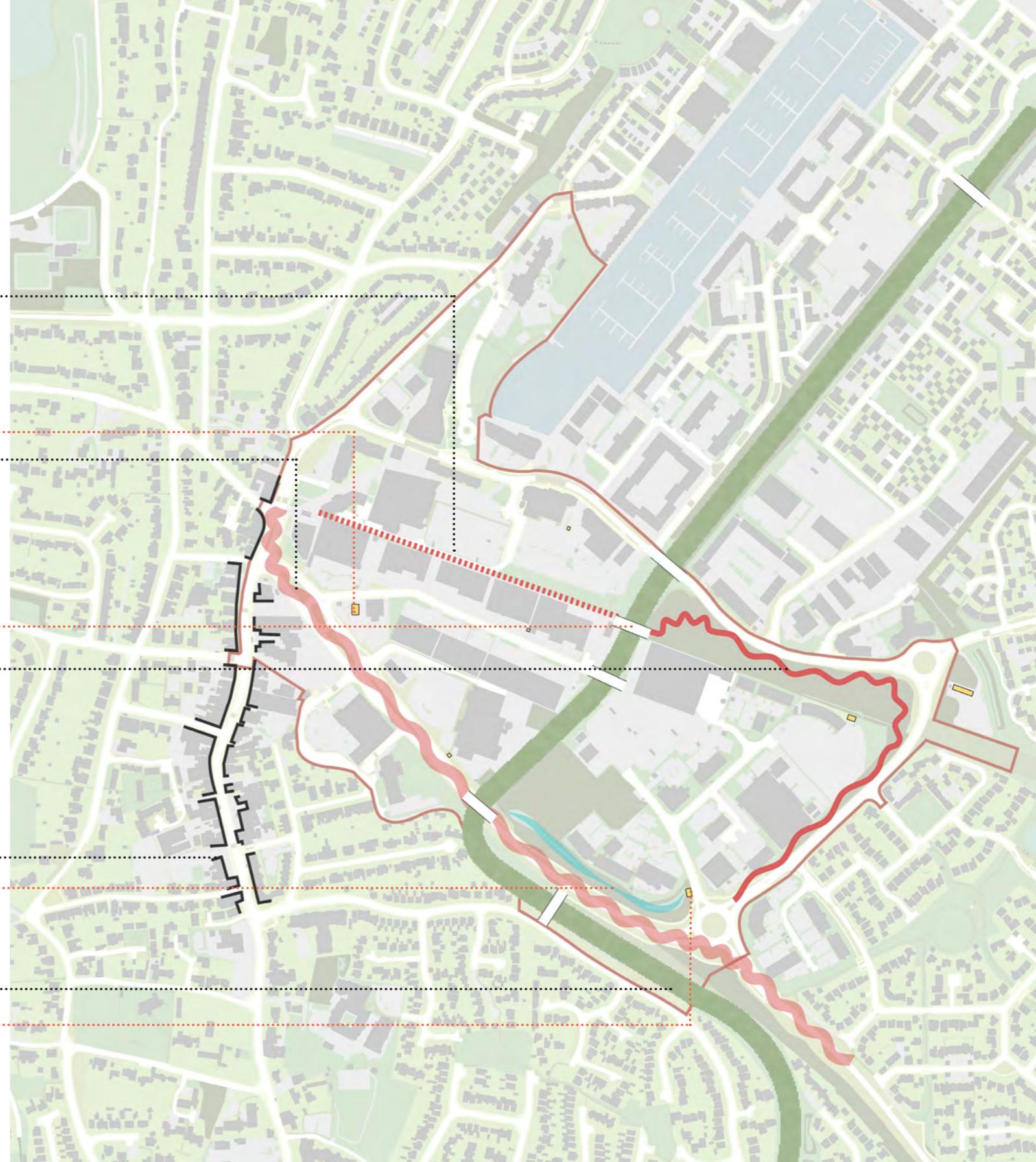
5 The Portbury Ditch provides a strong corridor of green space and water through the area, important for wildlife as well as providing local walking and cycling connections. In places it does provide a barrier to movement, but is crossed by bridges in key locations.

Major sub-station

Former railway line bridge

Drainage pond

Gas governor



# Movement

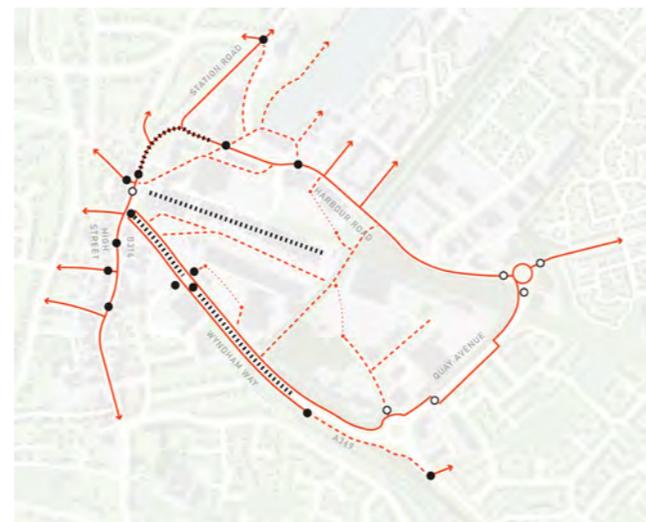
**Road Network** - Portishead Town Centre is served by a road network with a mix of road types, the most significant being Wyndham Way (A369) which links the town with Bristol and the M5, via The Portbury Hundred. The town has an attractive and busy local High Street. Quay Avenue and Harbour Road act as a town centre ring road and provide access to local neighbourhoods and the harbour area.

**Pedestrian Movement** - this is critical to the future success of Portishead town centre and the whole central area is identified as a Core Walking Zone by NSC, meaning walking improvement projects should be planned and prioritised. A walking audit has revealed the following issues.

- Generally, the town centre roads have footways, but these are narrow in places.
- Within the study area there are many barriers to movement between land uses and this particularly affects the relationship between the Town Car park and Harbour area.
- Wyndham Way acts a barrier to north-south movement and is a hostile street to walk along or cross.



Existing road hierarchy



Existing pedestrian movement

- The Cabstand junction can be confusing for pedestrians but is located on an important route from the High Street to the Harbour.

Concerns about pedestrian movement form a large proportion of responses from the recent community engagement.

**Cycling Movement** - there are some dedicated cycle facilities within the town however the Council, through its ongoing plans, wants to make further improvements and will be seeking central government funding.

**Road Safety** - there have been several recent accidents on Wyndham Way and the High Street, some involving pedestrians.

**Local Buses** - buses serve the town operating on the High Street, Quay Avenue, Harbour Road and Station Road with several frequent services to nearby places, including Bristol, Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon and Nailsea.

**Rail Station Proposal** - the Council, in partnership with WECA, is at an advanced stage in the planning of the new MetroWest rail line which will connect Bristol with Portishead town centre. The station will be located near the Harbour Road / Quay Ave roundabout. The new rail line is the subject of a Development Consent Order (DCO) - a form of planning permission - and will include a small transport interchange, taxi waiting and

on-street bus stopping, together with a long-stay car park and new walking and cycling routes linking to the town centre.

**Car Parking** - there are many car parks and parking spaces within the town centre area. However only a small proportion of these are managed Council owned public car parks. Most parking spaces are free and associated with retail or employment land uses.

In summary the Scoping Study has highlighted the following issues and opportunities.

- the WWSA is a major barrier to local movement;
- the routes that exist around the WWSA are mainly designed for cars and other motor vehicles;
- pedestrian and cycle movement has emerged as an afterthought, probably encouraging more local journeys to be made by car; and,
- there is a real opportunity for the WWSA to better connect to existing neighbourhoods around it, and to encourage walking and cycling within the area, including to and from the new station when it opens.

## Movement and Access Recommendations

The Development Framework for Portishead town centre will be informed by transport and movement considerations, drawing on best practice and recognising the needs of all residents / town centre users, whilst embracing new technology. As part of the next stage of work consideration should be given to developing new transport and movement initiatives aimed at improving movement within and around the area and creating new environments that encourage walking and cycling.

Such new interventions could include the following.

### 20-Minute Town

A 20-minute town is a place where neighbourhoods can access a range of town centre functions within a 20-minute walk from their home. Portishead is suited to this approach as the town centre is fairly central and a new station is planned. This would include improved walking and cycling connections to the surrounding neighbourhoods.



## Embrace the Big Street

Like the High Street, Wyndham Way would benefit from new development frontage. The current highway engineering creates a hostile feel and would benefit from a 'street like' environment better suited to a town centre location, whilst providing for improved footpaths and cycleways.



## Go Dutch with Junctions

Many of the junctions on Wyndham Way do not fulfil the latest guidelines on walking and cycling. There are several ways of improving local junctions, including a Dutch style roundabout which is one way of achieving better walking and cycling, whilst still retaining reasonable road capacity.



## Slow Streets for Walking and Cycling

To improve movement through the WWSA, a series of new connections aimed at walking and slow cycling would improve permeability and connection of the town centre and help people navigate through the area. These would need to cater for several key routes including; station to High Street and High Street to harbour.

## Optimise the High Street and Cabstand Junction

Parts of the High Street and Cabstand junction would benefit from public realm improvement to help manage traffic speed, improve walkability and better cater for buses and HGV servicing needs.



# Environmental context

## Ecology and Biodiversity

The study area is located within a predominantly urban environment, but there are a number of important ecological sites in the surrounding area, including areas of ancient woodland located to the north and south-west of the study area.

The Severn Estuary is protected by a number of ecological designations to reflect the importance of the habitats and species and has been identified as having national and international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering and migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds.

The mudflats and sandflats, saltmarsh, shingle and rocky shore habitats support the protected bird species. Future development within the Study Area would not directly impact these designated sites, and due consideration would be given to them as plans emerge.

Improving the natural environment within Portishead is a key aspect of the overall vision, which includes aspirations for biodiversity net gain, and wider environmental net gain. This could be achieved by increasing the amount of green spaces and thinking carefully about how rainwater is managed, including features such as green roofs.

## Noise

There are a number of noise sources within and surrounding the study area, particularly the main road network (A369, Quays Avenue, Harbour Road, Station Road).

## Air Quality

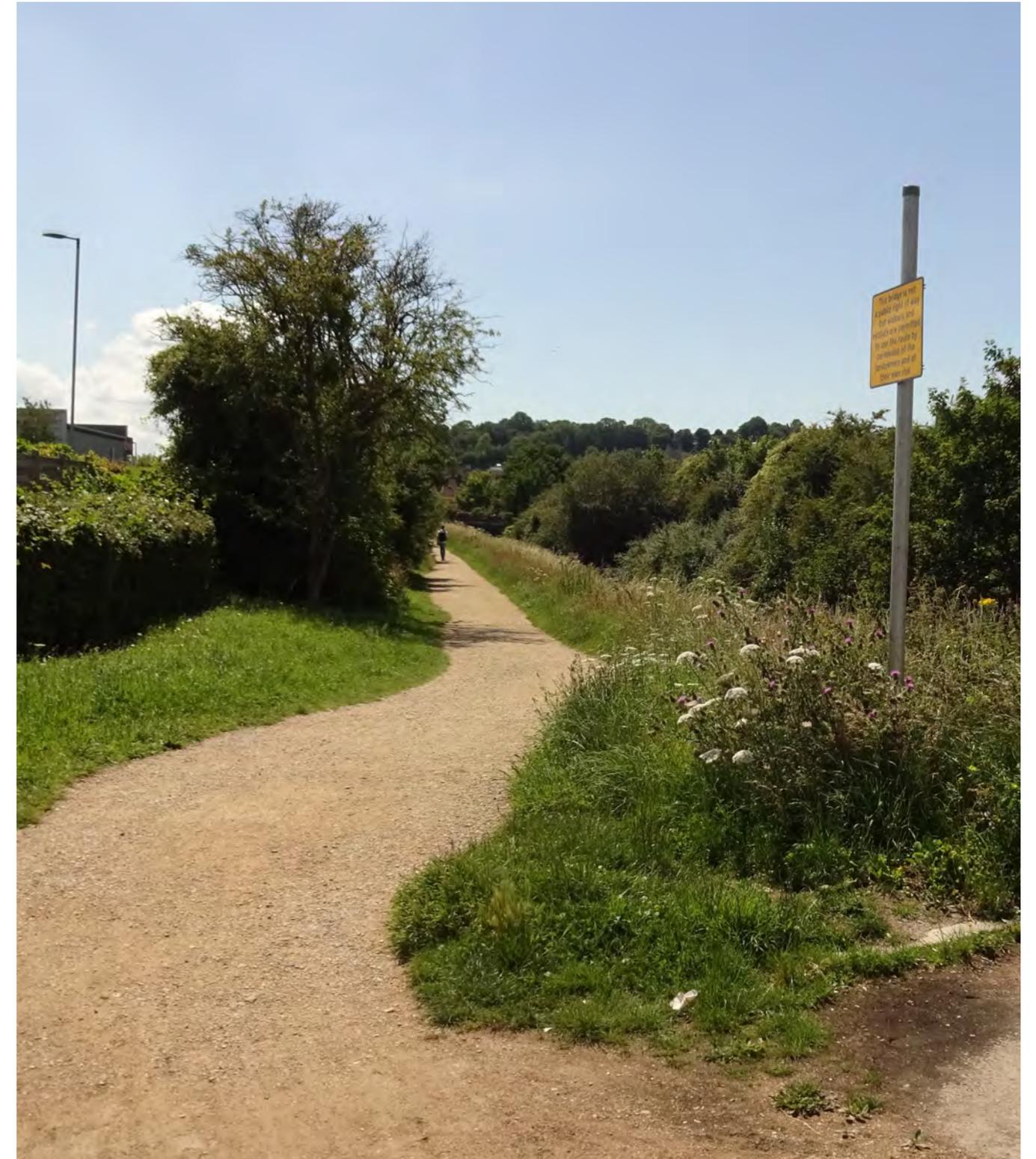
The site is not located within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) but improving the area for walking and cycling, and thinking carefully about the type of development will aspire to improve local air quality.

## Climate Change Resilience

Any future plans will need to consider the resilience of new development in the study area and explore how development in this location can make Portishead more resilient.

## Sustainable Construction

Sustainable design initiatives will need to be incorporated into any future design. For example, any construction materials can be selected following the Building Research Establishment (BRE) 'Green Guide to Specification' to reduce the environmental impacts of these materials, and the carbon emissions associated with construction would need to be key drivers in the design process.



## Heritage

The site contains one Grade II listed building - the White Lion Public House and Former Sea Wall. Other surrounding sensitive buildings include a number of Grade II and II\* listed buildings, with the Grade I listed Parish Church of St Peter approximately 300m south-west of the site.

## Water

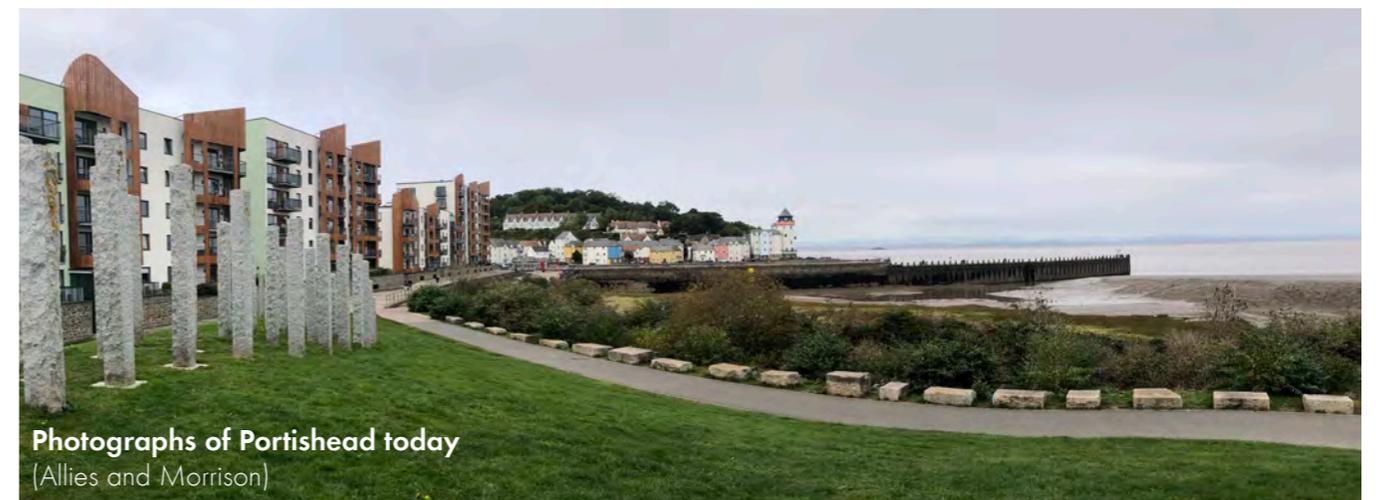
The main flood risk is associated with tidal flooding from the coast to the north and northeast. However, there are tidal flood defences which are managed by the Environment Agency (EA) and which appropriately protect Portishead from tidal flooding.

The site and surrounding area is located within Flood Zone 3 - land assessed as having 1 in 200 or greater annual probability of flooding from the sea in any year - but this designation does not take account of the coastal flood defences and therefore the actual (tidal) flood risk may be considered to be lower than that typically associated with Flood Zone 3. The Portbury Ditch flows past the Portishead Business Park, flowing from the Clevedon hills before discharging into the Severn Estuary at Portishead Docks. The Portishead Ditch does not contribute to the Flood Zone 3 designation.

There have been incidents of surface water flooding and ponding in areas of Portishead, as well as some instances of flooding from the Portbury Ditch affecting land when an intense storm occurs at the same time as high tide conditions. This is different from the coastal flood risk which is managed by flood defences.

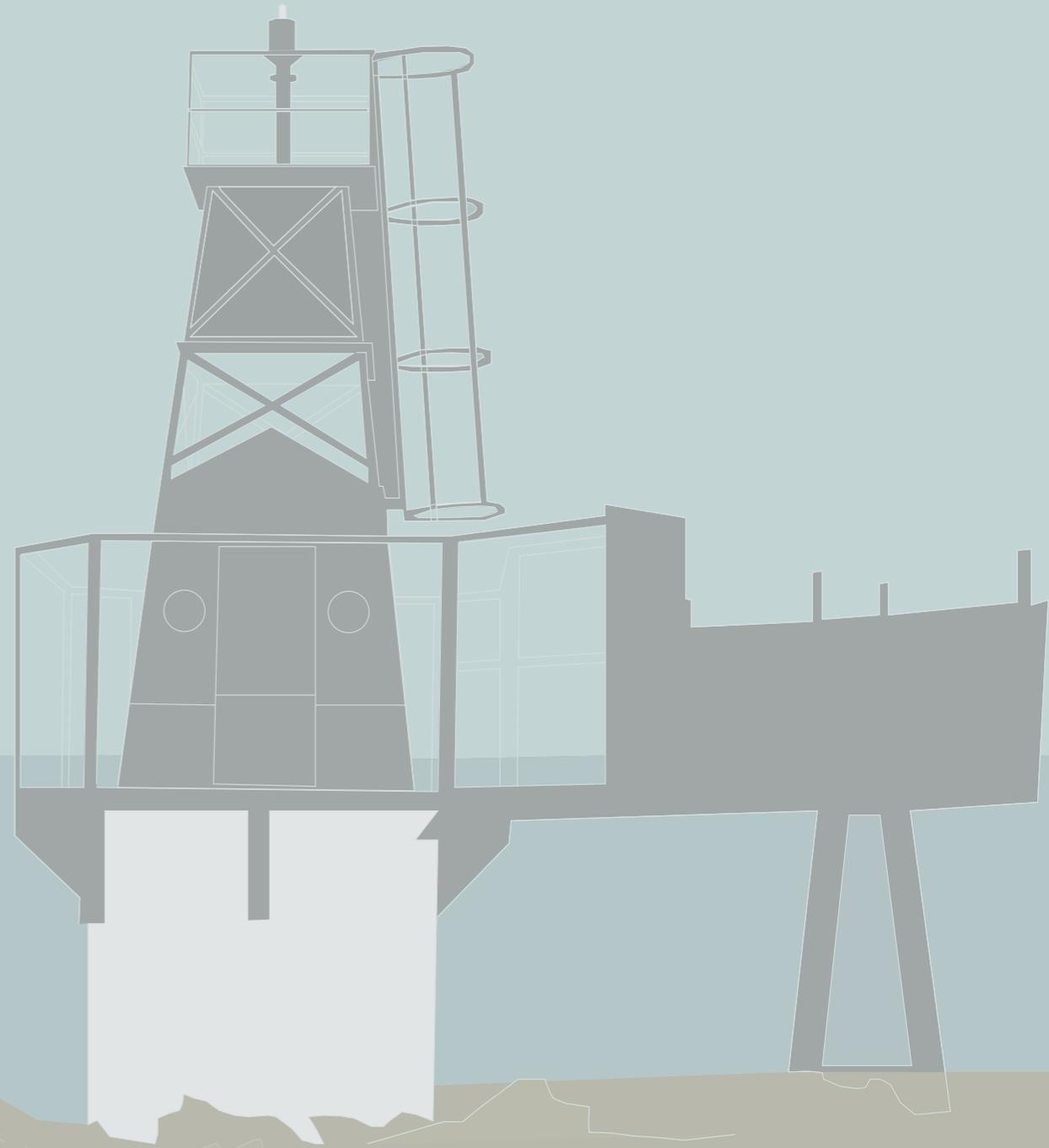
As development plans emerge, a full and detailed Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) would be undertaken, in line with relevant planning requirements. This would determine the risks of flooding at the site from sources including rivers, the sea, sewers and groundwater. The vulnerability of different development uses would be a key consideration in this process, as well as appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) will form an important part of the development proposals. It is recognised that surface water arising from a developed site should, as far as is practicable, be managed to mimic the surface water flows arising from the site prior to the proposed development while reducing flood risks to the site itself and elsewhere. Proposed drainage measures would also take climate change into account and would have benefits for both drainage and biodiversity.



Photographs of Portishead today  
(Allies and Morrison)

# Social and economic analysis



# Portishead's community

The project team has reviewed data on the socio-economic profile of Portishead, collected from a number of sources. The data largely reflects pre Covid-19 circumstances.

Providing context, North Somerset's population (215,100) is growing faster than the national and regional average, this includes growth in both working age groups and older age groups.

Within North Somerset, Portishead is strategically located as a gateway to the South West. The town benefits from good accessibility, some 30 mins drive time to Bristol city centre, with Bristol Airport (the fifth largest airport outside of London in the UK), Bristol Port (the UK's most centrally located deep water port), and the M5 motorway all close by.

Portishead (2017 pop. 26, 286) is also expected to see continued population and household growth, with the town centre having a younger age profile than the wider North Somerset area.

The town has a relatively affluent catchment with below average unemployment, higher levels of "managerial, administrative, professional" jobs and what Experian describes as "Domestic Success" and "Aspiring Homemakers" residents. Experian suggest such groups include families with good career prospects.

The central area of Portishead caters well for young families in that they appear to stay in the town as their property needs grow. There is an above average level of renters, reflected in the larger quantum of apartments in/around the marina.

Portishead has above average wage earners living in the town, but there is significant reliance (circa 75% journeys) on commuting by car to either Bristol city centre or strategic employment locations on the North Bristol fringe (for example Aztec West, Bristol Business Park) or Avonmouth.

This out commuting helps drive Portishead affluence (by accessing higher earning employment), but creates its own parking, congestion and sustainability issues for Portishead.

Passenger rail services (MetroWest) returning to Temple Mead should offer the prospect of some modal shift in travel to Bristol city centre.

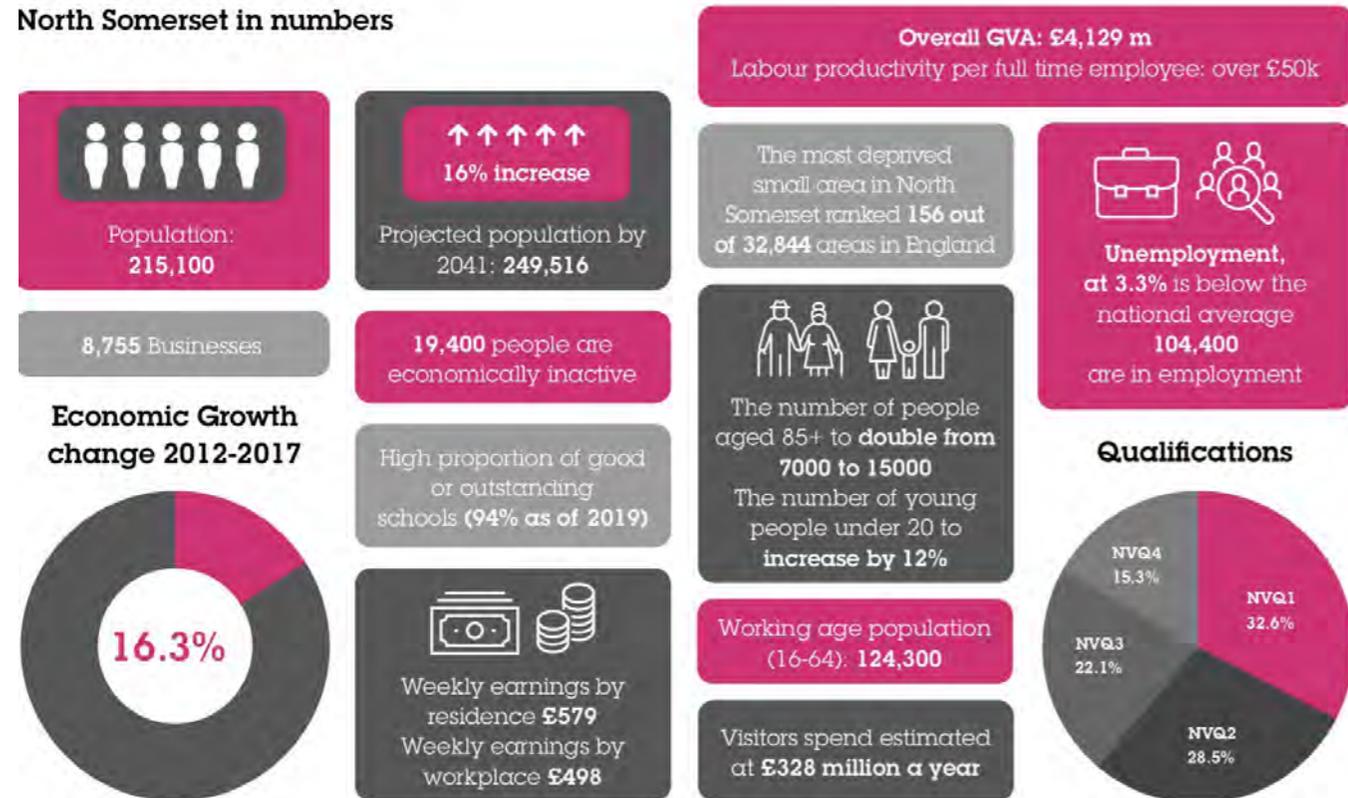
Portishead has seen growth in economic sectors often associated (pre Covid 19) with regenerating urban centres such as IT, finance, property, retail and accommodation and food and entertainment and recreation.

Portishead residents have above average qualification levels and self-evident civic pride in the town. This suggests there could be entrepreneurial capacity for start-ups and growth of SMEs, which could help underpin the local economy in a post Covid 19 world.

Whilst most inward migration to Portishead is locally generated (from other parts of NSC) there is also inward movement from Bristol residents, no doubt drawn by the greater affordability of Portishead.

The implications for a sustainable Portishead community and solid economic base going forward should be factored into regeneration options for WWSA. This will need to include land use mix (e.g. housing and workspace styles, products, tenures etc) as well as infrastructure needs (social, community, green and blue) and improved public transport offering the prospect of more sustainable movement patterns.

## North Somerset in numbers



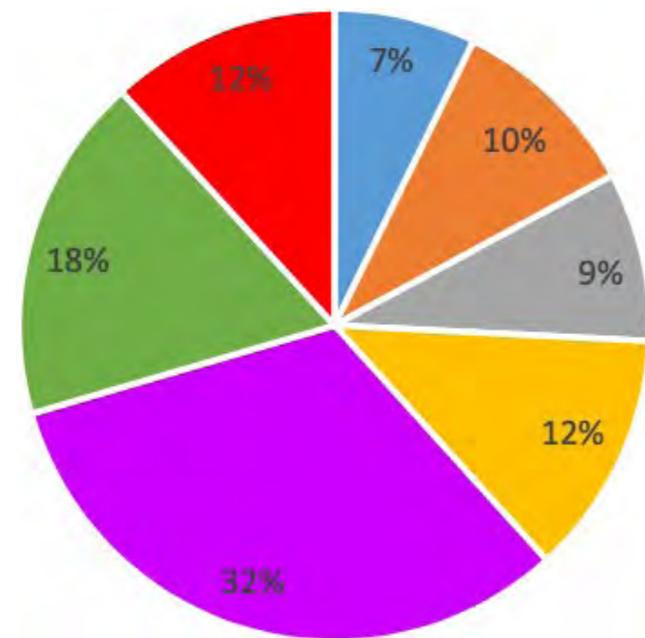
Key North Somerset demographic data from the North Somerset Employment and Skills Strategy

# Evidence Base

The project team has reviewed North Somerset Councils (NSC) land use and infrastructure "evidence base". This is currently being updated by NSC for the new emerging Local Plan. Below is a summary of the key evidence and the project team's commentary on some implications for the Scoping Study.

## Housing Needs

Compared with Government expectations and requirements for local planning authorities, there is an under supply of new housing in North Somerset coming through the planning process, and this is set against a growing population across the region, the district and in Portishead itself.



The Core Strategy sets out the district's housing requirement of 20,985 dwellings for 2006 -2026, which equates to 1,049 dwellings per annum. The Council's 2019 Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) notes that in the period 2006 - 2019, a total of 10,439 homes were delivered which leaves a requirement of 10,546 units to be provided between 2019 and 2026.

Based on the Government's 2017 "Standard Methodology", North Somerset's annual target will rise from 1,049 to 1,369 dwellings per annum.

Local communities across North Somerset often report that new development has been

## NET COMPLETIONS BY AREA 2018/19

- Clevedon
- Nailsea
- Portishead
- Weston-super-Mare
- Weston Villages
- Service Villages
- Infill Villages and countryside

North Somerset housing completions 2018-2019 from the Council's 2019 Annual Monitoring Report

significant in the last decade or so, and needs to be accompanied with investment in infrastructure and that this can support the view that there are deficits in infrastructure. Portishead in particular has seen significant housing development in the early 2000s but has seen comparatively little since Port Marine and the Marina.

As such the Wyndham Way area provides a strategically important and sustainable opportunity for residential led mixed-use regeneration that can help to knit together the surrounding neighbourhoods.

## Employment Land

The North Somerset Employment Land Review (ELR) 2018 found that in terms of employment space there was a relative surplus of 17 ha to 27 ha in the district. However, the ELR noted that this "oversupply" could be for "step change" opportunities, such as expanded development at Bristol Airport and the Port of Bristol.

Working with the West of England Combined Authority, NSC has commissioned a new 2020 employment land study known as the Employment Land Strategic Needs Assessment. We understand this identifies potential, post Covid 19, for North Somerset and Portishead to attract office investment away from Bristol and Bath.

A post Covid world may provide opportunities for Portishead to attract investment from Bristol and Bath for work at home, managed and co-working space. Regeneration of the WWSA could include workspace as part of a mixed-use development, in turn helping provide a sustainable economic base for Portishead.

## Portishead Town centre

NSC undertook a town centre retail survey in October 2020 as part of its annual monitoring. For Portishead town centre, the Council reports a low vacancy rate of 7%, healthy mix of national and regional chains, strong independent offer, and "with barbers, dentists and opticians well placed to adjust to experience based activity". Looking forward there is unlikely to be need for additional "traditional" comparison shopping space given the structural changes in retail (such as the move to online shopping), as well as the potential lasting impacts of Covid. The need for greater differentiation and uses in town centres with increasingly local, independent, meanwhile, leisure, culture and event programmes are becoming key to a town's sustainable future.

However, town centre regeneration opportunities such as Wyndham Way need to embrace and curate attractive and lively ground floor uses - local, independent,

meanwhile retail and leisure, but also increasingly community, cultural and arts space.

### Infrastructure needs

NSC is currently reviewing infrastructure needs in the district and Portishead. Initial findings are outlined below.

In terms of social and community infrastructure needs, NSC report that Portishead currently has a surplus number of primary school places and a small and declining deficit of secondary spaces. However, not all primary schools have capacity and Gordano School (secondary) is already very large; therefore engagement with schools will be required in determining future provision.

Future requirements will be based on an assessment of local school demand, proposed developments, size, tenure, phasing and delivery, against future school rolls, existing capacity, and potential for extension of existing facilities.

It is reported that the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is satisfied about current GP health provision in Portishead.

In terms of future requirements, NSC suggests a new GP practice is triggered by an additional 4000 homes.

In terms of current provision NSC report that Portishead is relatively well provided for by private and public sports and leisure facilities.

Use of current leisure facilities is growing. Parish Wharf leisure centre is well used and

has no dedicated learning swimming pool. A need for a 3G playing pitch has been identified.

Significant residential development would raise the issues of additional sports and leisure facilities and especially children's play areas.

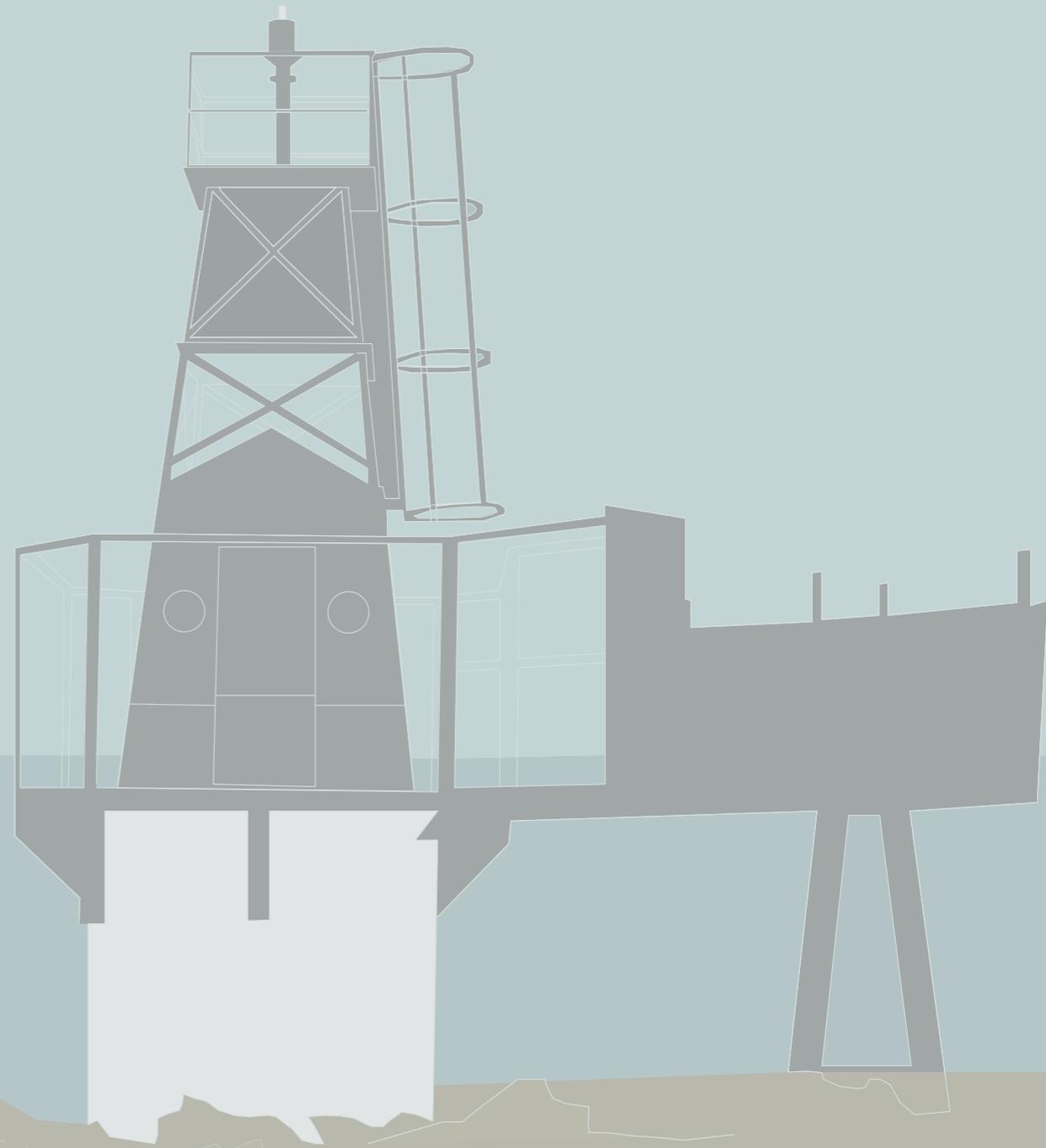
In terms of green infrastructure, the existing development along Old Mill Road presently acts as a barrier between Harbour Road and Wyndham Way and on to the High Street. There is a lack of immediate green open space in the town centre and larger open spaces within Portishead. Further integration of the existing (Portbury Ditch) and new green spaces and corridors would increase permeability and biodiversity.

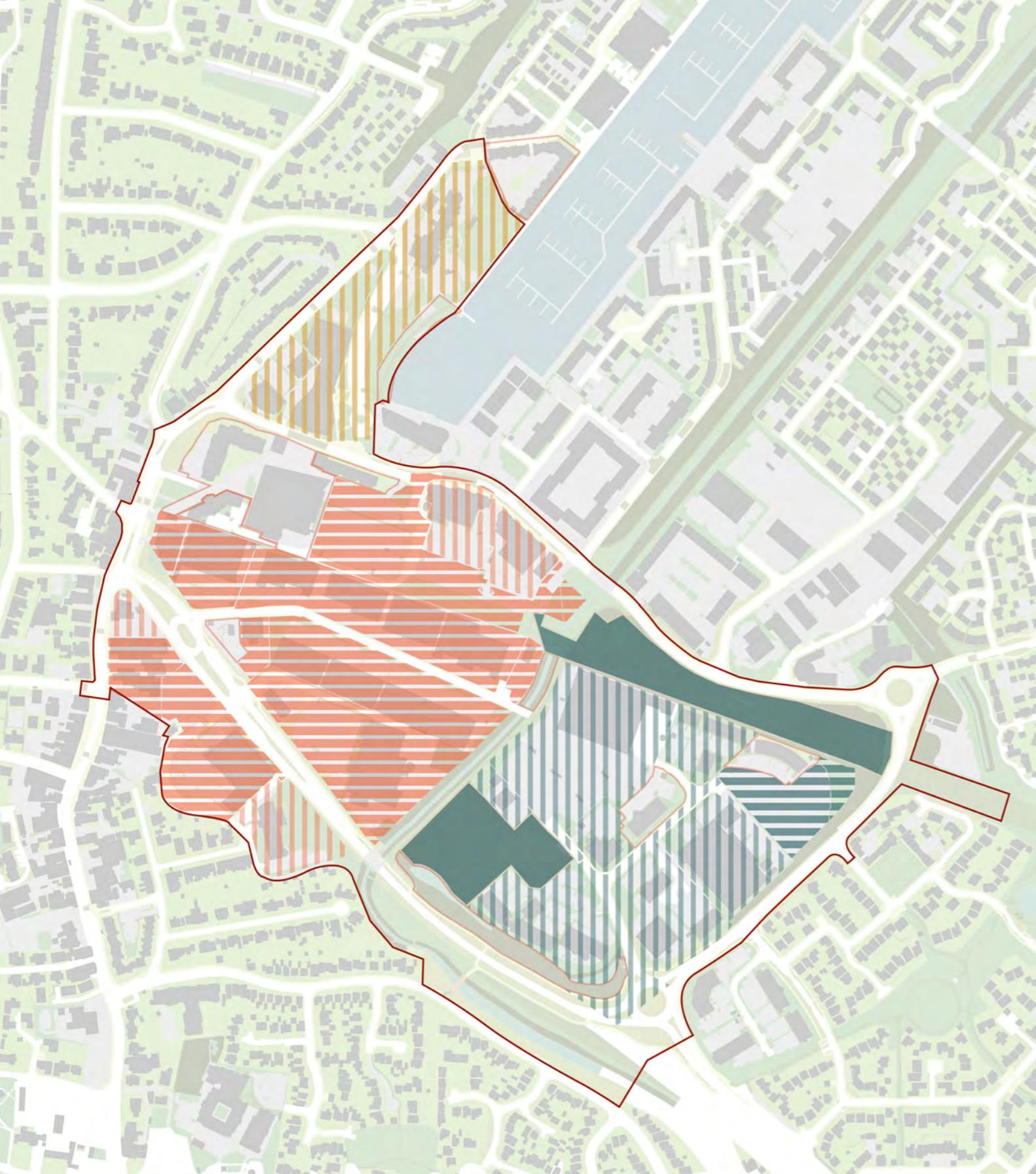
In terms of transport, congestion at Junction 19 of the M5 will need to be addressed through future improvements in partnership with Highways England, and Metro West will bring more sustainable access to Bristol and some modal shift from the private car. Nevertheless, there remain parking problems within the town, especially around the marina and Port Marine.

This Scoping Study identifies the WWSA as a regeneration opportunity area that could meet some of Portishead's needs. However, the form, nature and extent of potential new development is a matter for more detailed work. It will be on the basis of that more detailed development assessment that associated and required future social, community, green, blue and grey infrastructure will need to be identified.



# Area evaluation





## Area evaluation

### Category one sites



This category of land identifies those sites which are considered as highly likely to come forward for development and which have the potential to make a significant contribution to the delivery of development and connections in the area. This description particularly includes vacant sites in the eastern area, but could be applied to other areas where land owners express a clear commitment to deliver development.

### Category three sites



Some parcels of land are considered as less likely to change in the foreseeable future, either due to the nature of the use or other factors such as the presence of relatively new buildings. These sites are expected to form part of the wider framework. However, any framework should not rely on them providing critical links or required uses due to the relative lack of certainty that they could contribute.

### Category two sites



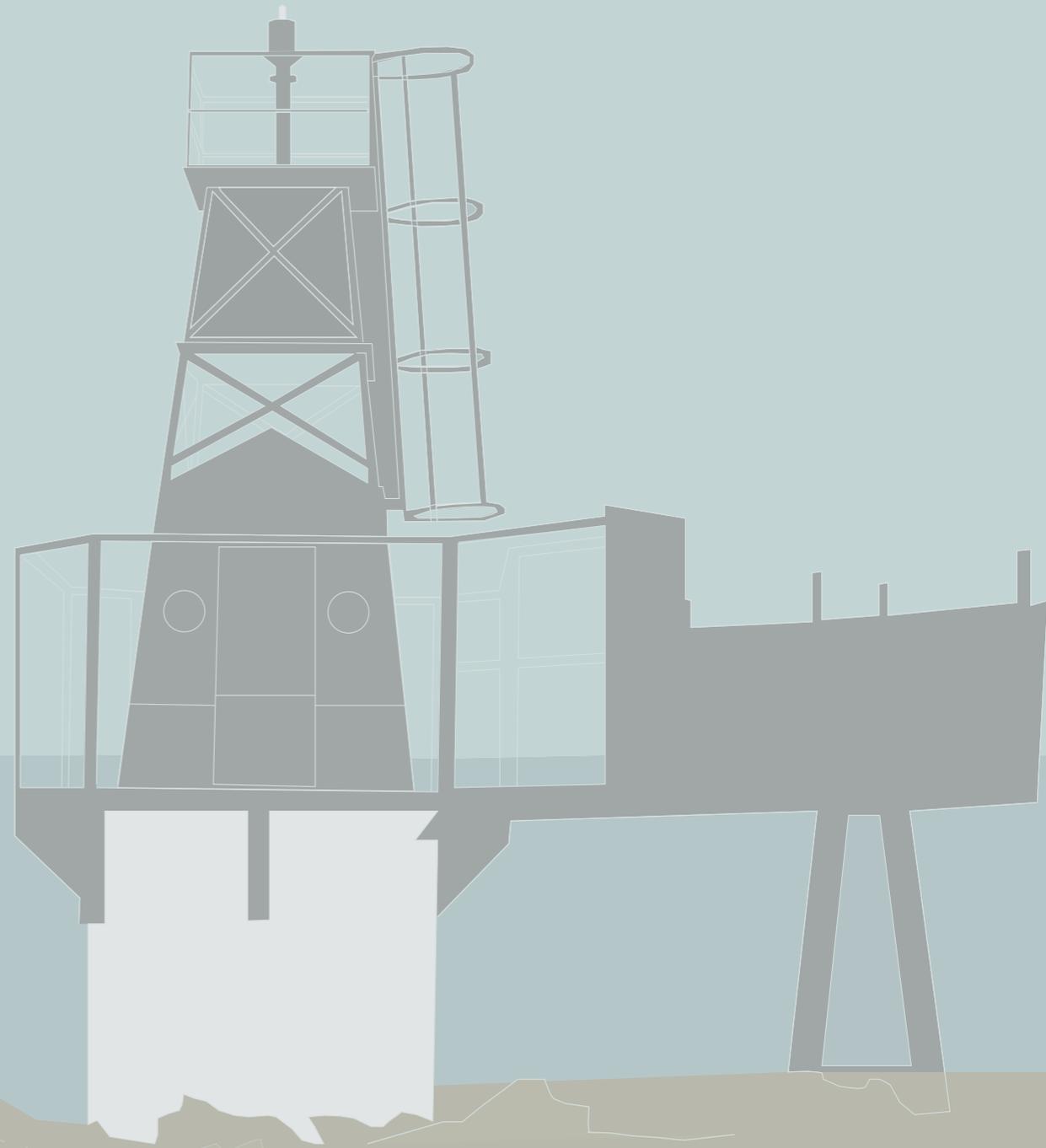
There are a number of areas of landownership where change is considered to be both possible and also desirable, to create a more integrated place. The sites which are described as category two sites could reasonably form part of a coordinated and phased approach to redevelopment over time.

### Retained sites



A number of sites in and around the study area have been identified as very unlikely to change. These include private homes and elements of infrastructure such as the large substation at the western end of Old Mill Road. Within a future framework these sites should be regarded as fixed.

# Vision, principles and strategy



# Vision

Develop a place for Portishead, of Portishead, capturing the town's unique character and embracing the opportunities for living and working in a better way.

# Principles



# Strategy

This section of the report sets out the Vision, Principles and Strategy that should shape the development of the future framework for the Wyndham Way area.

They have been developed by the project team in collaboration with the Project Steering Group and respond to the particular issues and opportunities which the research and engagement have identified are important for the Wyndham Way area.

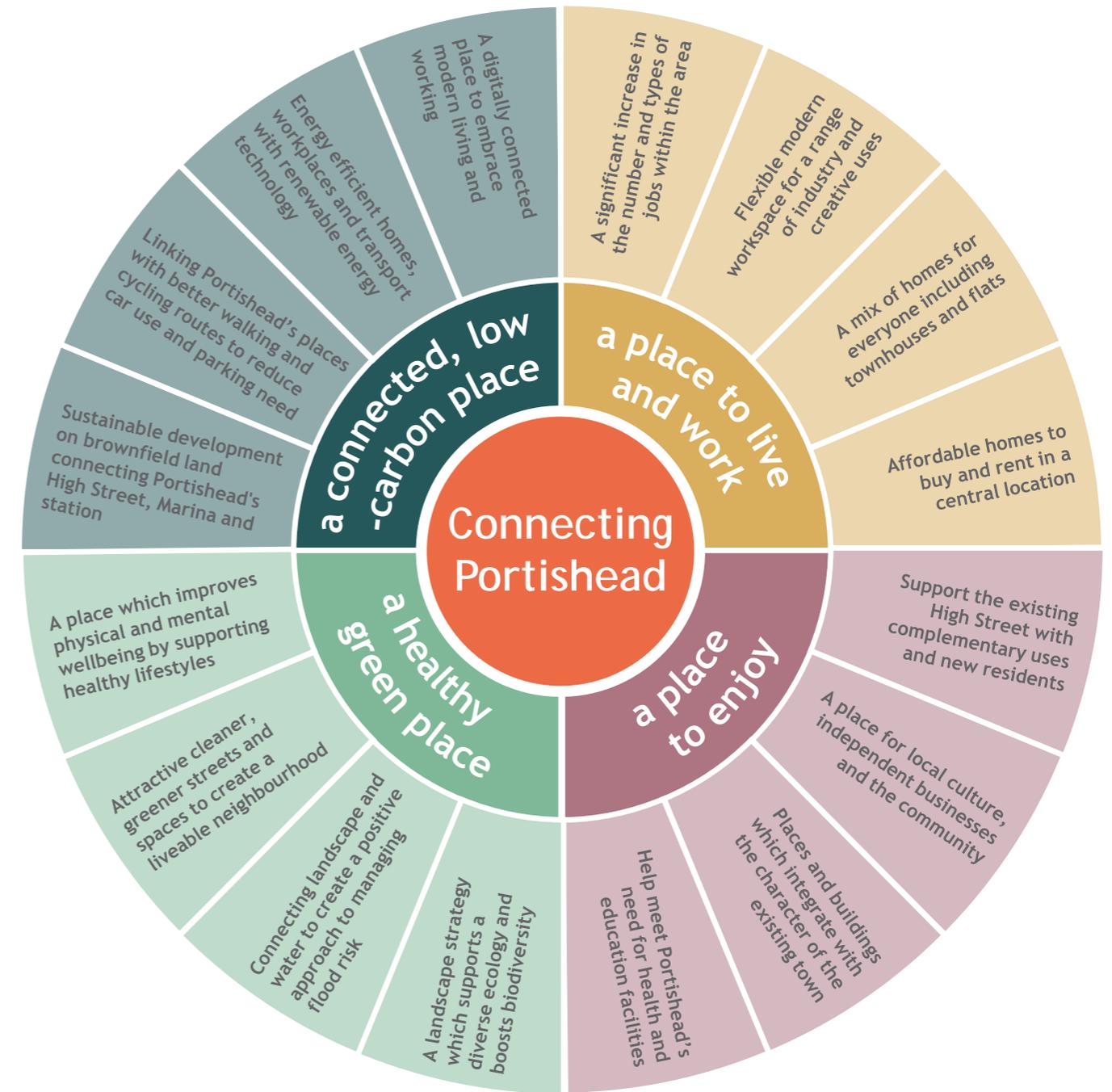
This approach has also drawn on the North Somerset Local Plan Challenges and Choices consultation as well as the emerging Portishead Neighbourhood Plan and its key themes.

This Scoping Study and the framework that will follow from it are being developed through a significant period of change. North Somerset has recently declared both Climate and Nature Emergencies and has championed bold proposals through its emerging planning policy. The Neighbourhood Plan will also set out a strong green agenda for change. The direction of travel is clearly set towards more sustainable growth on central previously developed 'brownfield' sites with better opportunity for sustainable travel and reduced reliance on the car.

Over 40% of carbon emissions in North Somerset come from transport and this is not currently forecast to fall in future years. Real gains have however been made in emissions from homes and commercial buildings, though there is so much more to achieve.

This work is being undertaken through the COVID-19 pandemic which has significantly challenged the ways in which people live, work, travel and shop. This has accelerated the trend towards local working rather than commuting into larger cities, and as a consequence, many smaller towns have seen a resurgence in local shops due to the increased numbers of people working from home.

This combination of the opportunity to remake a significant central part of Portishead to address some of the key challenges and opportunities of the moment is truly significant. The approach set out here is intended to provide a guide for the development of the future framework, mapping a positive way forward for the benefit of the whole town and the wider area





Digital connectivity and infrastructure have become as important as transport infrastructure for business, and the COVID pandemic has accelerated the emerging trends for remote working to the point where a large number of people are home working.

Towns like Portishead are well-placed to benefit from this trend for smaller digitally enabled businesses, workplace hubs and home working, provided that good highspeed infrastructure is in place.



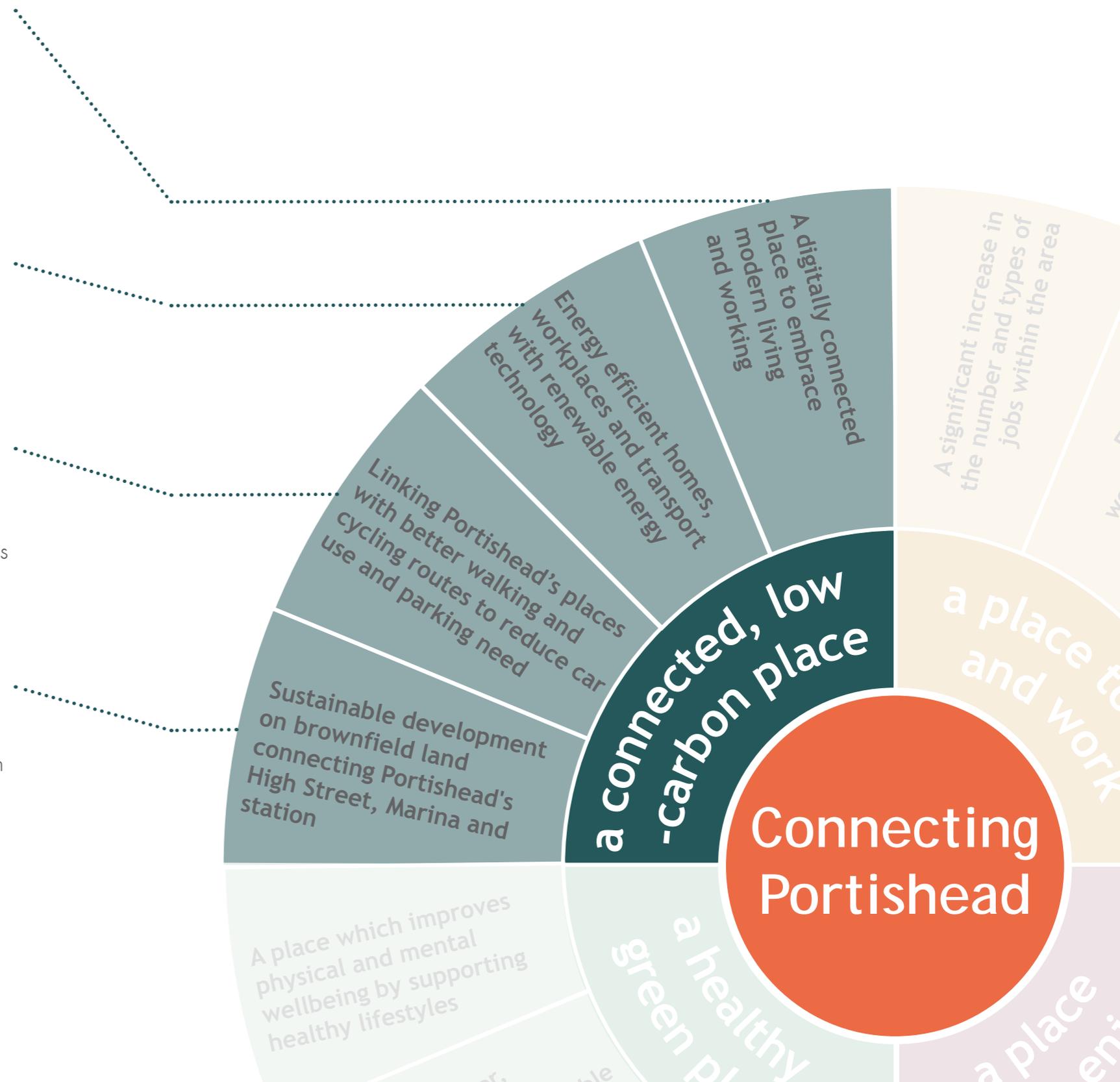
National regulations set minimum standards for the insulation and energy efficiency of homes, gradually increasing to the point where new homes will be able to operate at zero carbon. The scale of new development and the potential mix of uses also means that both renewable energy generation and smart energy network technology could be applied.

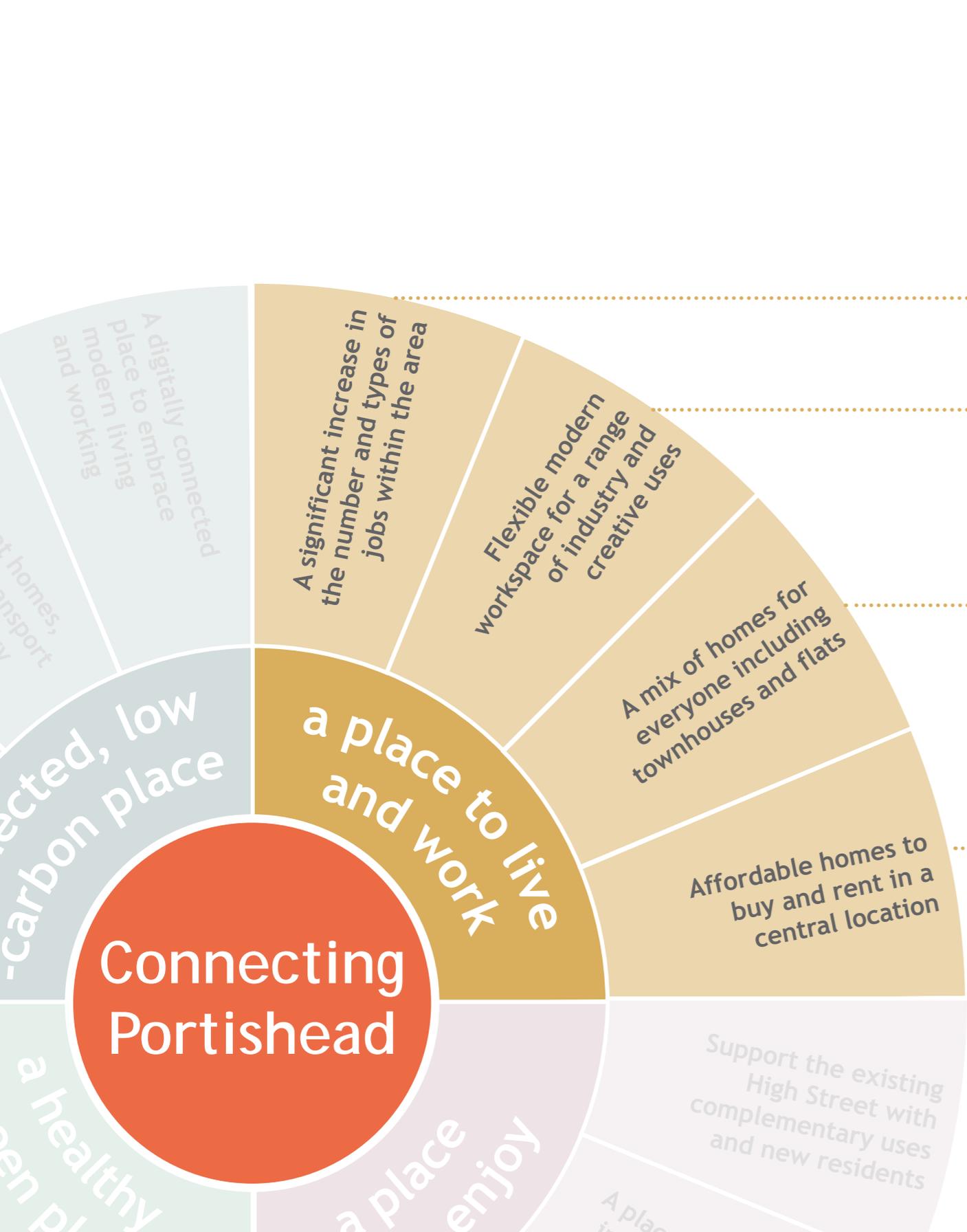


Recent development around Portishead, including the Marina and Port Marine have walkable streets within them, but lack good connections to the town centre. Development of this central area is a good opportunity to create clear and safe street links for walking and cycling which can help to reduce the need for short car trips within the town. This could help to reduce car dependency in existing neighbourhoods as well as any new development. Making walking and cycling safe for younger people will also help to build healthy lifestyles and reduce traffic congestion at peak times.



Brownfield development is the most sustainable option for new development. It reduces the need to further expand the town, saving green-field sites from development. It also places new development in a central location where people can easily walk and cycle to local facilities as well as use the new station. This boosts the viability of the existing High Street, and also makes the development a good location for complementary shops, employment space and leisure facilities.





The existing industrial and retail uses which provide the bulk of the employment within the study area at the moment tend to provide a relatively low number of jobs. They are in single storey buildings, with large areas of parking and yard space and include uses such as warehousing.

As new development is delivered, it can include new business space and support a wider range of activities to support employment for local people.



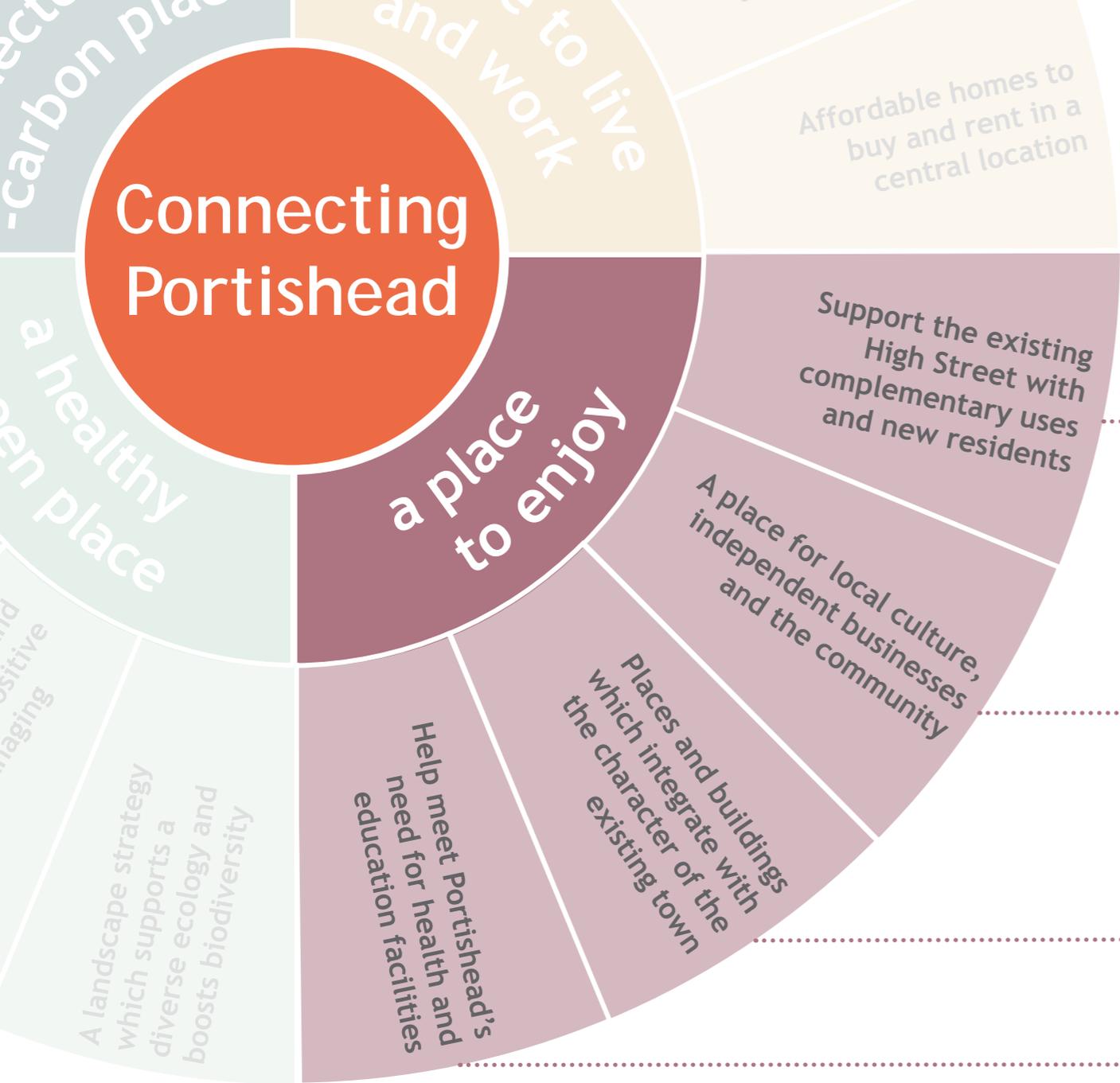
Delivering new workspace as part of a larger development also means that it can be designed to accommodate a wider range of uses and can adapt well to a wide range of workspace needs including workshop, studio and office uses alongside more traditional light industrial uses. Key to this flexibility will be creating modular units which can allow businesses to expand, providing good service access and dealing with infrastructure such as services and ventilation.



As part of contributing to a balanced local community, any development of this size should seek to address the identified need to deliver new housing within Portishead. This should include a range of types, densities tenures of new homes (including affordable housing) from flats through to larger family homes, together with associated amenity spaces.



North Somerset Council requires affordable homes to be delivered in any new residential development, subject to viability considerations, and these requirements will apply to schemes put forward in the Wyndham Way area.



The existing High Street is the retail heart of Portishead, and is complemented by the Marina, with its selection of shops and restaurants. The aim of new development should be to complement it by adding further uses which will benefit Portishead as a growing town.

More people living within a short walk of the High Street will boost businesses by increasing the number of customers on their doorsteps.



The Wyndham Way area provides a key growth opportunity right in the heart of Portishead in a district that has long been the focus of the town's industry. A central location like this is an ideal place to locate space for small businesses, flexible workspace and creative spaces that can help to expand opportunities in Portishead. It also offers the potential to expand Portishead's cultural and community provision, with the potential for new cinema and venue space that could either complement or replace the existing Somerset Hall.



Portishead has a characterful historic centre and an attractive Marina area, including attractive buildings, but also great streets and spaces. The local landscape, with hills to the west, means that the roofscape of the central area of Portishead is really visible. The aim for new development should be to create a place with a distinctive character which reflects this existing context and feels like it belongs in Portishead. The development should include streets and spaces which create clear links to help integrate and connect, as well as provide distinctive and characterful design.



Portishead has grown substantially over the last few decades. North Somerset Council and Portishead Town Council have been working to assess what facilities the larger community needs, including the demand for essential services such as school places, healthcare and things like local leisure provision. As well as providing new jobs and homes, any development will need to address the associated infrastructure requirements related to the development providing funding and/or provide new or improved local facilities.



New development in Portishead should provide buildings and spaces which support a healthy, happy lifestyle. This includes providing good outdoor space in the form of private gardens and terraces, as well as creating public spaces for play and relaxation. Enabling walking and cycling and reducing local car trips is a well-established way to promote healthy lifestyles. The creation of safe and clear links between different parts of Portishead will help to make walking and cycling easier and replace short car trips for some existing residents as well as new residents.



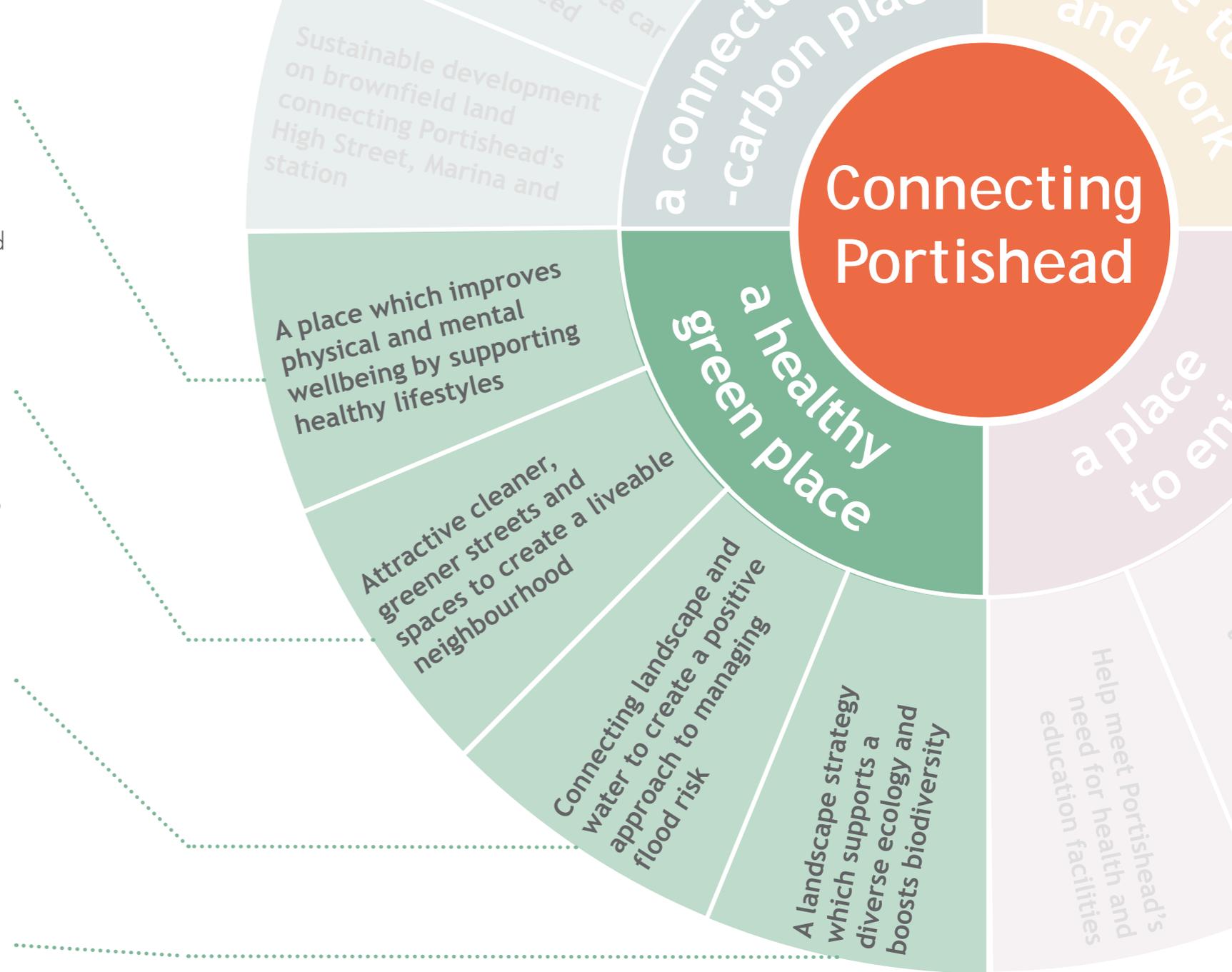
For the central area of Portishead to be an attractive location for people to want to live, work and spend time the streets and spaces need to provide an attractive environment. This could range from central pedestrian spaces which enable cafes or restaurants to provide outdoor seating, to safe streets which enable children to walk and cycle safely to school, to green spaces which provide pockets of space to play in, relax in, or look on to. Green spaces which are interlinked, and which connect into the green corridor of the watercourse will also feel larger and more generous.



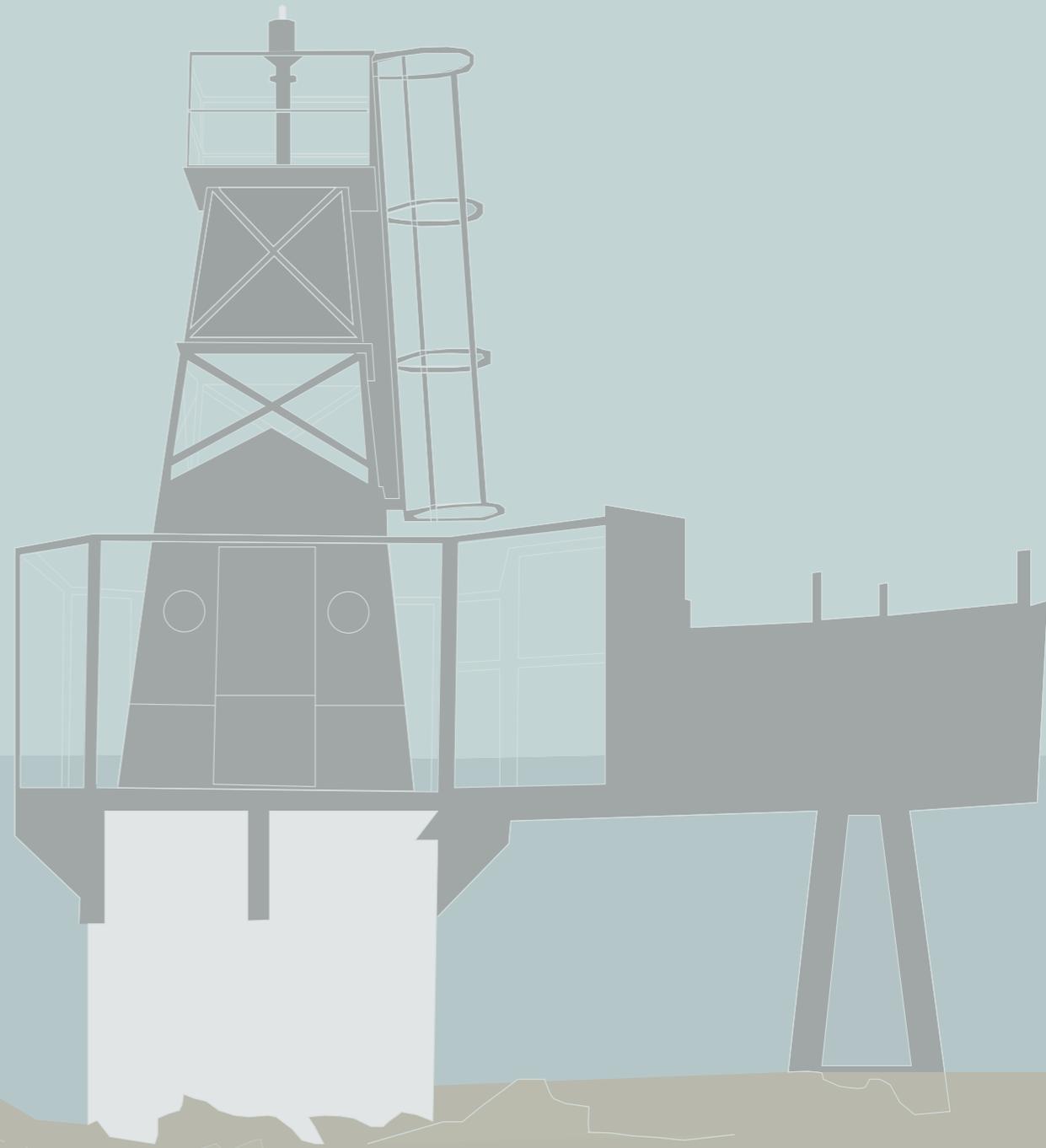
The Wyndham Way area is susceptible to flood risk but does benefit from tidal flood protection. The large areas of roof and hard standing in the area contribute to the management and design of the existing watercourse to balance drainage, storage capacity and biodiversity. This should also be complemented by good provision of permeable surfaces within any development, including rain gardens, green or brown roofs and tree planting which can all help to slow down the flow of rainwater and at the same time create a more attractive place.



As well as declaring a climate emergency, North Somerset Council has also declared a nature emergency, drawing attention to the urgent need to improve biodiversity in the district. The existing study area has elements of strong ecological value in its watercourse and some significant trees, but also has large areas of hard roof and paved surface. As plans are developed for the area, extending fingers of green space into new development which connect with the green corridor of the watercourse will help to connect and support a much richer and more diverse ecology, as well as benefiting the people who live there.



# Findings and recommmendations

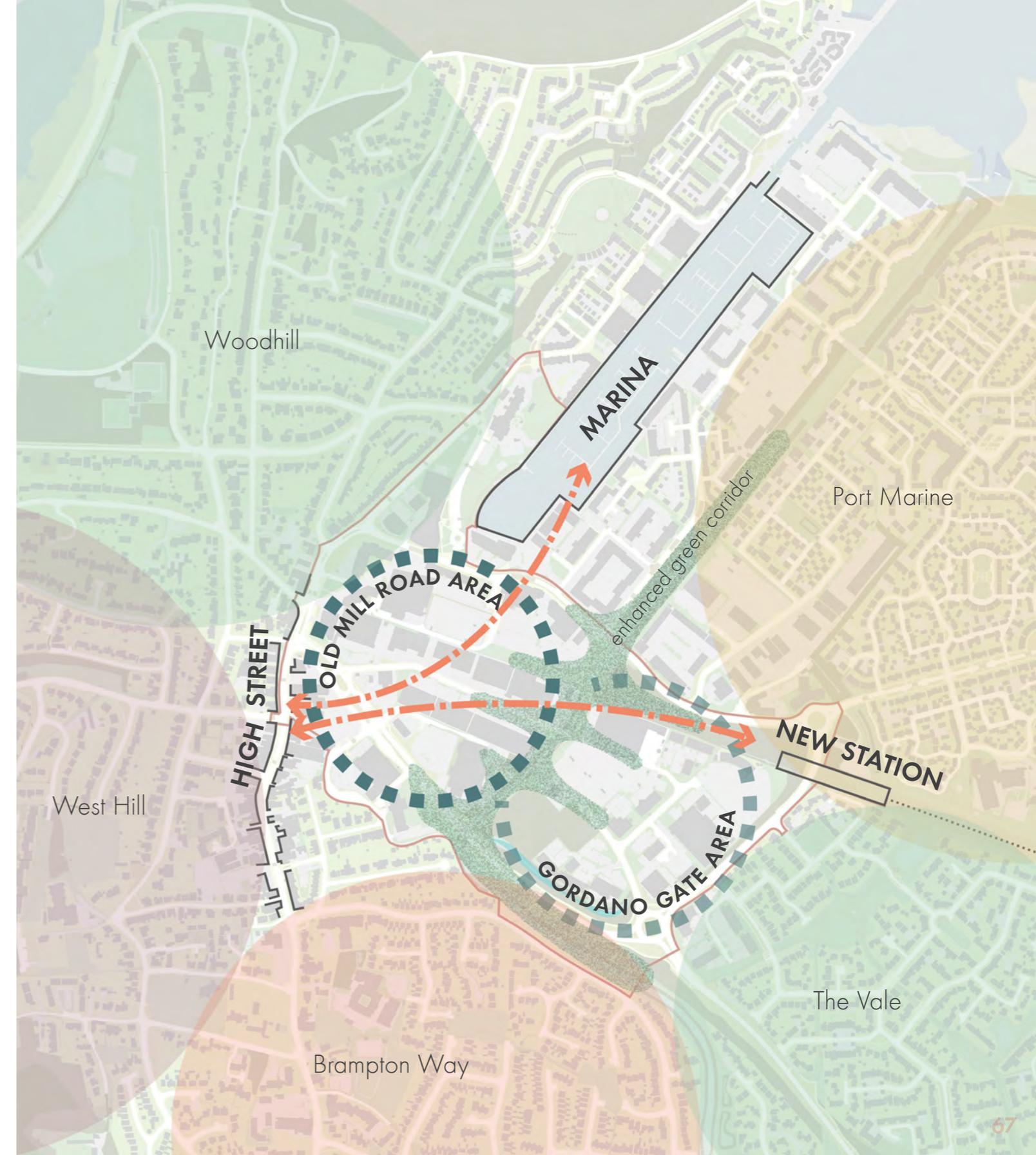


## Spatial options

The project team has drawn up the following key ideas to guide the development of a future framework for the site:

- Better use of land and integration of the area around Old Mill Road, including the trading estate, Argos and Homebase, the retail park and elements of the Waitrose site. The objective should be to create a place with new employment opportunities supported by the right type of homes which helps to form a strong connection between the historic High Street and the Marina area;
- Better use of the Gordano Gate area around what will be the location of the new station including improved walking and cycling links. An overall framework will help to ensure that early development on sites that are available in the short term helps to anticipate longer term development on sites with existing uses.
- An enhanced green corridor along the Portbury Ditch supporting clear walking and cycling links. Green spaces within new development could connect into this green corridor to boost biodiversity in the wider area.

- An improved Wyndham Way, providing a street with safe, attractive walking and cycling, and with key junction improvements. Development fronting onto Wyndham Way will help to transform its character into a more attractive street.
- Potential redevelopment of the High Street Precinct, car park and Aldi sites, integrating with the listed Old Mill to create an improved town centre area and provide better linkages.
- A new station with supporting infrastructure to improve active travel options.
- Attractive streets and spaces which provide key walking and cycling links between the Marina, the High Street and the Station, helping to reduce car dependency for local trips.



# Creating a framework

Not all sites and buildings within the study area will be redeveloped through this process. However, it is important that a coordinated framework is developed to help influence the delivery of the many sites that may change and ensure that they work together with the existing town. As a starting point for development, it makes good sense to retain existing roads where ever possible. They are often the route for underground services which are expensive to divert and keeping them in the same place can help significantly with delivering individual phases.

Overlaid with the road network there is also an existing network of pedestrian routes, including the one linking the High Street to Waitrose past the library and the important route which runs to the eastern side of the watercourse. There are also planned changes which are anticipated around the location of the new railway station in the next few years. This includes diverting the northern end of Quays Avenue to form a new junction and release space for the planned station and forecourt. It also includes a proposed surface car park in the existing land south of Harbour Road to service the station.

Taking the existing pattern of established routes and connections and making further links starts to establish a more complete network of streets throughout the study area. At this early stage, it is assumed that no new vehicle connections are provided which cut through the study area and that most of these routes are likely to prioritise walking and cycling. The location of new routes needs to balance the impulse to follow strong desire lines with the practical aim of achieving workable and practical buildings as well as taking account of land ownership constraints and likely phasing lines which could be a significant constraint on how new routes are delivered.

This network of possible routes then also helps to inform how a series of urban blocks can be created to accommodate a range of new buildings. The aim of the framework should be to develop blocks which are flexible, and which can accommodate a range of uses as well as continue to change over time.

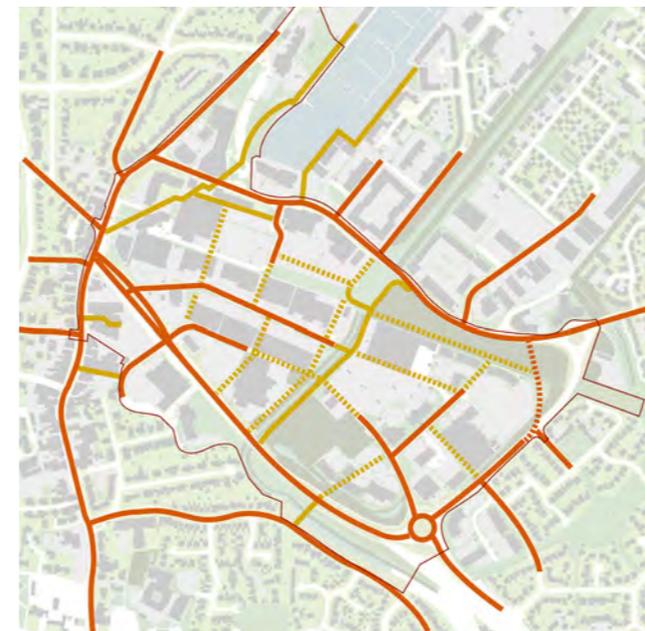
Existing roads



Existing pedestrian and cycling routes



Potential new routes



Potential urban block structure



# Deliverability

## Key considerations

Portishead is a really popular place to live and the town is well positioned for distributed working, wellbeing and occasional commuting.

The new rail service and station surrounded by brownfield land will likely stimulate the property market, thus making a coordinated and planned approach to viably delivering growth critical.

Mixed use development can bring forward new homes and places to work and enjoy.

There is an opportunity for a mix of types of homes to meet housing need including homes for sale and to rent, including affordable housing.

A town centre location supported by improved public transport can support a range of appropriate development densities.

Deliverable development needs to take account of land ownership, existing uses, phasing, infrastructure requirements and financial viability.

Change will likely happen over many years and several development cycles. Any future masterplan needs to allow for flexibility to accommodate how people are going to live, work, move and enjoy themselves.



## Next steps

This Scoping Study has been prepared collaboratively between North Somerset Council (NSC), Portishead Town Council (PTC) and Aberdeen Standard Investments (ASI) (the “Parties” or “Partners”).

The Scoping Study is Stage 1 of a 2-stage process. The vision and key development principles included in the Scoping Study have been agreed by the Partners.

Given its size, strategic town centre location, relative low density and brownfield status, the Partners agree that the WWSA has potential for sustainable mixed-use regeneration to help meet Portishead’s local needs and support the region.

Stage 2 intends to build on the Scoping Study to deliver a WWSA Development Framework to guide the future planning and delivery of development and associated infrastructure.

The “guiding principles” for Stage 2 are set out below.

### Guiding principles for Stage 2 brief

#### Shared vision

The Scoping Study has identified that the Partners share an ambition for the WWSA for sustainable placemaking, achieved through design quality, mixed-use development and effective public engagement.

#### Stakeholder and community engagement

The Scoping Study has sought, assessed and built-in the views of stakeholders and the local community, through the Partners communications strategy. The Stage 2 work will maintain this process, to inform the emerging Development Framework.

#### Meeting needs and demands

The Scoping Study has identified that Portishead (and the wider North Somerset area), has a number of growing needs and demands. These include new development, associated infrastructure and enhanced sustainability. The Stage 2 work should reflect these needs and demands.

#### A coordinated – but phased approach

The WWSA comprises a number of different public and private ownerships and tenancies. Development and infrastructure needs should be planned for in a coordinated way.

However, it is inevitable different land parcels will come forward at different times. As such the WWSA Development Framework will embrace and plan for phased development and infrastructure provision.

#### Deliverability

The WWSA Development Framework needs to ensure that development and infrastructure proposals are deliverable using a phased approach. Proposals will therefore need to be commercially viable and/or funded through identified public sector sources.

#### Flexibility

The WWSA Development Framework should build in significant flexibility to address changing community needs, market trends, different owners/operators bringing forward their land, and to address the uncertainties and future opportunities posed by the Covid 19 pandemic.

#### A greener future

The WWSA Development Framework should target a greener, lower carbon and sustainable future for Portishead.

#### Planning policy

The North Somerset Core Strategy was adopted in 2017 and a Site Allocations DPD

in 2018. North Somerset is now working on its new Local Plan (expected to be adopted in 2023). Portishead Town Council is working on its Neighbourhood Plan (expected to be adopted in 2022). The WWSA Development Framework should therefore seek to inform and complement the emerging Local and Neighbourhood Plans.

### Stage 2 - Purpose and Brief

The Scoping Study has identified common ground between the Partners on opportunities within the WWSA. The purpose of Stage 2 is to translate that common ground into a “Development Framework” which will show, in clear and practical terms, how the WWSA will look, function, and contribute to Portishead’s resident, civic and business communities over the coming years.

The WWSA Development Framework will also have a clear role in building the Portishead “brand”. This will be an opportunity to support indigenous and inward investment decisions in Portishead that helps to secure a sustainable and robust social and economic future for the town in a world transformed by Covid-19. Stage 2 will look to hear the views of community and business interests through engagement.

## Status of WWSA Development Framework

The “status” of development frameworks can be important in terms of being a relevant material consideration in determining planning applications.

It will be for the local planning authority (LPA) to consider how it might wish to “take forward” any WWSA Development Framework. For example, it could take the form of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to the Local Plan, or informal planning policy to help guide applicants on planning applications.

## Route Map for Next Steps

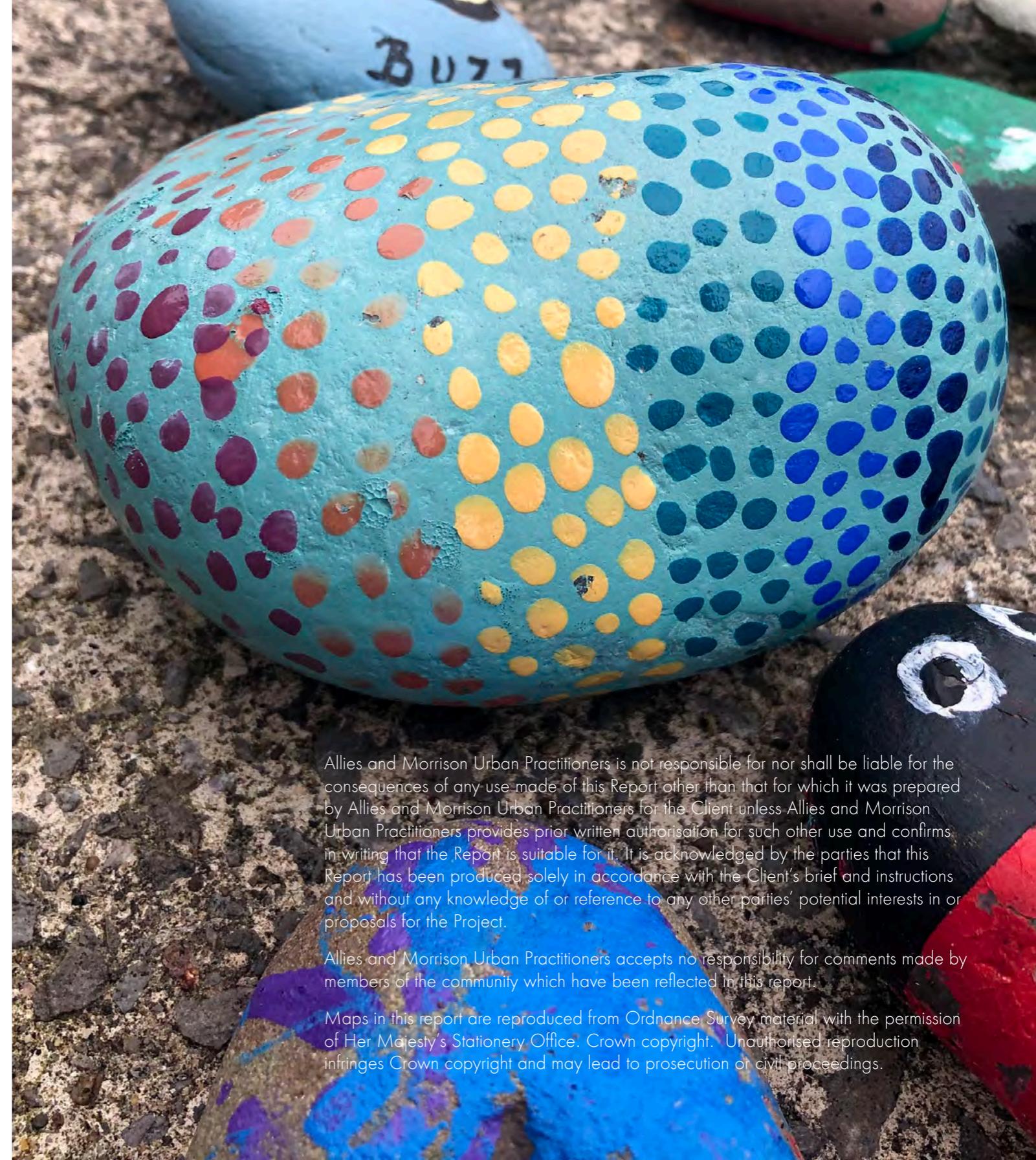
The Partners agree the following next steps for Stage 2:

- Preparation of the Stage 2 WWSA Development Framework will be based on the guiding principles set out in the Scoping Study;
- Stage 2 will be led by North Somerset Council in its role as Local Planning Authority (LPA);
- The current Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Partners will be

updated to include the Stage 2 process, with the Partners continuing their steering group role;

- The LPA will work proactively and collaboratively with the Partners, including NSC in its role as landowner, Portishead TC and ASI;
- The Partners will work proactively and collaboratively to fund, resource and deliver Stage 2;
- The LPA will prepare the brief, programme, governance structures, and determine the status of the Stage 2 process, in conjunction with the Partners;
- The Partners will review their WWSA landholdings and interests in the context of the principles set out in the Scoping Study to help inform the Development Framework; and
- The Partners will encourage the active participation in the Stage 2 process of other WWSA landowners, as appropriate.

As set out in the current MoU, nothing contained or implied in the Stage 1 and Stage 2 process shall fetter the statutory duties of the local authorities or create any legally binding obligations on or between any of the Partners.



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