

DP12 : Safeguarding Corridors for Sustainable Travel

Local Context

- 6.99 The likely availability and use of public transport is a very important element in reducing the need for travel by car. The availability of safe, coherent and easy to use footpaths and cycle routes can also have a significant impact on people's choice of transport mode.
- 6.100 To this end, national policy requires local planning authorities to explore the potential and identify any proposals for improving public transport by rail, including the re-opening of rail lines. Former railway land can also be used to provide walking and cycling routes (sometimes as an interim measure prior to the introduction of rail services).
- 6.101 For a considerable period the County and District Councils have engaged local stakeholders about making best use of former railway routes and a number of proposals remain realistic and deliverable. The Frome to Radstock route has seen partial investment to deliver a multi user path, community groups and Sustrans are committed to delivering the Strawberry Line route running from Cheddar to Wells and then onwards to Shepton Mallet. Whilst aspirational in the current climate, there are still some who view the possibility of Shepton Mallet seeing a reinstatement of its position on the railway network making use of the active mineral line which extends as far as Cranmore. Other former railway corridors present opportunities although there are no current firm plans.
- 6.102 Whilst it can be argued that the Local Development Framework process is concerned with promoting certainty and delivery through the planning process leaving no room for such schemes, the Council, supported by the Highway Authority, believes that to allow the incremental compromise of these routes is to take a very short term view and puts barriers in the way of future opportunities to deliver these routes for more sustainable patterns of movement.
- 6.103 On a broader level, the council will seek to facilitate the delivery of sustainable access networks to encourage walking and cycling, particularly within and radiating from the towns.
- 6.104 A final aspect of this policy seeks to safeguard opportunities for transport related development at the districts only railway station at Frome. Land exists adjacent the station, including former sidings which provide an opportunity to deliver a more comprehensive travel interchange.

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Railway Land

Former railway land will be protected from development that would be prejudicial to the re-use of railway, or other sustainable transport links and facilities, in the following locations (as identified on the Proposals Map):

- land between Mendip Vale and Fosse Lane, Shepton Mallet;
- the Frome to Radstock railway;
- land adjacent to Frome station;
- all other former railway land identified on the Proposals Map

Land for Footpaths and Cyclepaths

Land will be safeguarded from development which would prejudice the construction or potential function, convenience or attractiveness of a cycle and/or pedestrian path along the alignments shown on the Proposals Map. Where it is decided to permit development which cannot be sited or designed to avoid an adverse effect on a safeguarded alignment, the developer will be required to make satisfactory alternative provision.