

# Somer Valley

**as proposed to be adopted**

**incorporating Inspector's recommended  
Main Modifications and additional  
modifications**

**July 2017**

## EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Placemaking Plan allocates specific sites for development and outlines a district-wide suite of planning policies. It complements and seeks to deliver the strategic framework set out in the Adopted Core Strategy. The Core Strategy forms Part 1 of the B&NES Local Plan and the Placemaking Plan is Part 2.

For the purposes of clarity and convenience for plan users the Plans have been combined. Placemaking Plan text is highlighted in grey. Any changes to the Core Strategy text are also highlighted in grey. In these instances the Placemaking Plan policy or text will supersede that set out in the Core Strategy. In combining the two Plans the text has been numbered sequentially. Core Strategy policy numbers remain unchanged. The Placemaking Plan is presented in six volumes (as listed below) and plan users should ensure they refer to all relevant policies in relation to proposals:

1. District-wide
2. Bath
3. Keynsham
4. Somer Valley
5. Rural Areas
6. Appendices, including Policies map changes

The Inspector has found the Placemaking Plan 'sound' subject to a number of modifications. This version of the Placemaking Plan identifies the Main Modifications in red recommended by the Inspector. Additional (minor) Modifications are shown in blue and have been made by the Council for the purposes of clarity, consistency and accuracy. Deletions to existing text are shown as strike through, whilst new or additional text is underlined. Other minor textual amendments may be made to the Placemaking Plan prior to its publication under delegated authority.

**The Inspector's Report and the recommended modifications will be discussed at Full Council on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2017 when adoption of the Placemaking Plan will be considered.**

*Whilst every attempt has been made to reproduce this composite version of the Placemaking Plan accurately, any editorial or formatting errors that come to light prior to the publication of the adopted version of the Placemaking Plan will be rectified provided they are within the scope of the recommendations to be agreed by Council on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2017.*

# SOMER VALLEY - CONTENTS

## **1. SETTING THE AGENDA**

1. Diagram 1: Somer Valley Location

## **5. VISION AND SPATIAL STRATEGY**

6. **Policy SV1:** Somer Valley Spatial Strategy

8. Diagram 2: Somer Valley Strategy Map

9. Diagram 3: Midsomer Norton and Westfield

10. Diagram 4: Radstock Strategy

## **11. Green Infrastructure, Open space and Landscape**

13. Diagram 5: Strategic Green Infrastructure Network

14. Diagram 6: Key Components of the Ecological Network

15. Diagram 7: Biodiversity, Trees and Local Food

16. Diagram 8: landscape and Cultural Heritage Assets

17. Diagram 9: Green Setting (Landscape Setting)

18. Diagram 10: Green Infrastructure - active access and accessible open space

## **19. MIDSOMER NORTON TOWN CENTRE**

20. Diagram 11: Map of Neighbourhood Area

21. Diagram 12: Midsomer Norton Town Centre Functional Areas

22. Diagram 13: Midsomer Norton Town Centre Strategy Map

23. **Policy SV2** Midsomer Norton Town Centre Strategic Policy

24. Diagram 14: South Road Car Park and Central High Street Core Site Boundaries

26. **Policy SSV2** South Road Car Park

27. Policy SSV1 Central High Street Core

29. Diagram 15: Former Welton Manufacturing site boundary

29. **Policy SSV4** Former Welton Manufacturing Site

31. Diagram 16: Town Park site boundary

32. **Policy SSV3** Midsomer Norton Town Park

33. Diagram 17: Midsomer Norton Strategic Industrial Sites

34. Diagram 18: Land at Silver Street

35. Diagram 19: Midsomer Norton Local Green Space designations

38. **Policy SV3** Radstock Town Centre Strategic Policy

40. Diagram 20: Radstock Town Centre Strategy

43. Diagram 21: Charlton Timber Yard site boundary

43. **Policy SSV14** Charlton Timber Yard

44. Diagram 22: Rymans Engineering site

45. **Policy SSV17** Former Radstock County Infants

46. Diagram 23: Former Radstock County Infants site boundary

47. Diagram 24: Former St Nicholas School site boundary

48. **Policy SSV20** Former St Nicholas School

48. Diagram 25: Radstock Local Green Space designations

## **49. WESTFIELD**

50. **Policy SSV18** Bath College Somer Valley Campus

51. Diagram 26: Somer Valley Campus site boundary

52. **Policy SSV11** St Peter's Factory site

53. Diagram 27: St. Peter's Factory site boundary

53. Diagram 28: Westfield Local Green Space designations

## **54. PAULTON AND PEASEDOWN ST JOHN**

56. Diagram 29: Old Mills site boundary

56. **Policy SSV9** Old Mills Industrial Estate

57. Diagram 30: Paulton Local Green Space designations

58. Diagram 31: Peasedown St John Local Green Space designations

## **59. INFRASTRUCTURE**

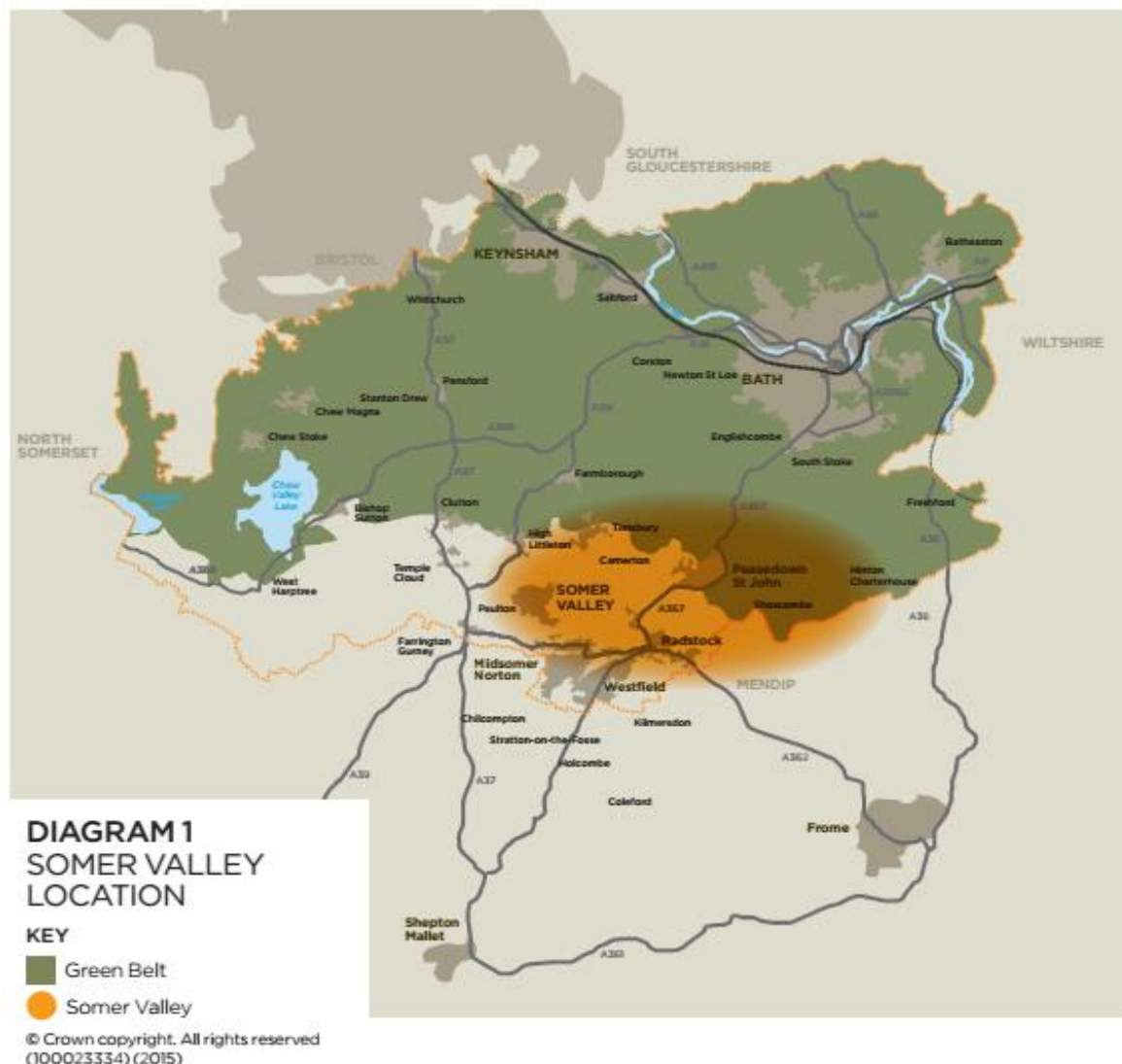
60. Table 7 Summary of Key Infrastructure in the Somer Valley



# SETTING THE AGENDA

## CONTEXT

1. The Southern part of the District, with its range of distinctive characteristics, identities, communities and history makes a strong contribution to the overall character of the District.
2. From Medieval Market town roots, the area was transformed during the industrial revolution to exploit its mineral resources. Once known as the 'powerhouse' for Bath, life in the area was dominated by coal mining, leading to a proud heritage of energy production. This relatively short lived but intense period of local history has passed, with formerly industrial landscapes having long returned to beautiful countryside with some distinctive landscape features. The strength of community and identity borne out of this heritage remains, as do the towns and villages which developed in this period.



3. The Somerset and Dorset Railway route now forms part of the National Cycle Network (Colliers Way) connecting Bath to the South Coast. The loss of the railways, whilst providing green infrastructure, means that strategic links now rely entirely on the road network.
4. Manufacturing industries including printing, binding and packaging continue to provide important local employment opportunities. Despite closures and relocations of some large scale manufacturing business, the area presents positive opportunities to increase economic competitiveness particularly with small and medium scale local business and highly skilled entrepreneurs.
5. The Somer Valley Area includes Midsomer Norton, Westfield, Radstock, Peasedown St John, Paulton, Shoscombe, Camerton, Timsbury, High Littleton and Farrington Gurney.
6. Midsomer Norton is a market town dating back to medieval times. It became an important coal-mining town in the nineteenth century and continues to cater for key services, employment, shopping and leisure facilities to the wider communities. Its historic core runs along the River Somer which remains an attractive feature in the High Street.
7. Radstock is located on the northern edge of the Mendip Hills in the Wellow Brook Valley. The town lies at the confluence of five steep-sided valleys and the tributaries of the Wellow Brook. Radstock has been settled since the Iron Age and is one of the best preserved former coal-mining towns in England, the basis of its Conservation Area status. The Great Western Railway, and the Somerset and Dorset Railway established stations and marshalling yards in the town. Radstock was at the heart of the Somerset Coalfield and became a central point for railway development. Radstock comprises distinctive communities of Coombend, Clandown, Writhlington, Haydon and Radstock.
8. Paulton and Peasedown St. John are the two largest villages in the Somer Valley. Following the closure of the Somerset Coalfield, there have been periods of substantial housing development in Peasedown during the 1960s and 70s, and more recently in the late 1990s. A sizeable Business Park is also located on the south eastern edge of the village which is home to a number of major employers including the Circle Bath Hospital. Paulton was originally an agricultural village which grew significantly as a result of coal mining. Following closure of the mines its economic base became industrial, including printing. In the last twenty years a number of the larger local employers including Polestar have closed resulting in reduced local employment opportunities, increased out- commuting, but also a number of redevelopment opportunities.
9. The local population identifies itself as separate small communities, mainly based on the former mining settlements. However, residents also recognise that new opportunities and projects need to bring about change and enable these separate communities to work together to benefit the Somer Valley as a whole.

## STRATEGIC ISSUES

10. Recent incremental housing development and a decline in the manufacturing sector has led to an imbalance between jobs and homes. The area provides a high quality environment to live with good accessibility to services, particularly highly successful schools and open countryside. However in order for the Somer Valley to continue to thrive, it is necessary to create a more sustainable balance by enhancing economic activities and wealth creation. Tourism opportunities to build upon a mining and industrial heritage and rich natural environment are not yet realised.
11. The Somer Valley has a number of strengths and challenges which the Core Strategy seeks to address in order to realise the area's potential.

### Strengths

- High quality natural environment within and surrounding the towns.
- Mining heritage - basis for recreation (disused rail lines) and tourism (especially Radstock).
- Critical mass of a combined Somer Valley area offers greater potential than towns and villages individually.
- Active local communities and existing community networks.
- Good schools and a local hospital.
- Existing engineering skills and expertise.
- Potential for local small to medium size companies to grow further.
- Relative lower cost of housing compared to elsewhere in the District.
- Basis of a good cycle network.

### Challenges

- Vulnerable local economy dependent on a narrow range of industries and a few large employers.
- A number of large vacant, underused or ageing factory sites.
- High levels of out-commuting due to lack of local employment opportunities.
- Perceived difficulty in attracting economic investment in the area.
- Limited broadband infrastructure capacity.
- Transport congestion and limited opportunities for large scale transport intervention.
- Poor public transport in rural areas leading to isolation for those without private transport.
- Competition with neighbouring towns in Somerset - mixed quality of Midsomer Norton town centre, dominance of road network in Radstock centre.
- Access to community facilities
- maintaining and enhancing local village centres.
- High level of existing housing commitments of about 2,470 dwellings, exacerbating imbalance of housing over jobs.

- Lack of formal open space.
- Poor town centre environments and insufficient retail offer.

## REGENERATION, PLACE AND COMMUNITIES

12. The B&NES Economic Strategy seeks to improve the prosperity and well-being of Bath and North East Somerset residents through a more productive, competitive and expanded economy. It includes priority actions to bring forward new employment space in Midsomer Norton and Radstock centres and identifies a new strategic employment location in the Somer Valley.

### Bristol, Bath and Somer Valley Enterprise Zone

13. The Somer Valley element of the Bristol, Bath & Somer Valley Enterprise Zone (EZ) will prioritize the establishment of a new strategic employment location for the area and provide incentives to bring forward existing sites. Based on land allocated in the Placemaking Plan it will promote the delivery of new business investment and employment growth and address the Core Strategy Vision & Spatial Strategy for the area. This is in response to the major factory closures that have affected the area which is suffering from increasing out-commuting as local job growth is not keeping pace with residential expansion. By acting as the catalyst for new investment in the Somer Valley the EZ will also seek to enable the regeneration of brownfield employment locations and the revitalization of the areas town centres. The EZ sites are indicated on the Somer Valley and Midsomer Norton & Westfield strategy maps (diagrams 2 and 3).

14. Engagement with local communities has revealed an ambition to take advantage of the critical mass of the various communities in the area and to become more self-reliant socially and economically.

15. The Core Strategy sets out a planning framework to guide new development to achieve community aspirations expressed through the Brighter Futures Community Plan and the 'Future' for the Somer Valley.

#### ***The Brighter Futures Community Plan***

##### ***By the Somer Valley Partnership***

*The 'Brighter Futures' Community Plan covers the Somer Valley area, comprising the towns of Midsomer Norton and Radstock and the North East Somerset communities of Camerton, Farrington Gurney, High Littleton, Paulton, Peasedown St John, Shoscombe and Timsbury. Key themes cover businesses and the local economy, the town centres, transport, the environment, public services and housing. The Plan's ambition is to create a thriving and vibrant area with a sense of wellbeing, its own identity and promoted as a whole, with Midsomer Norton and Radstock as the focus. Facilities in Midsomer Norton and Radstock will be available and accessible for the communities in the surrounding villages. Village communities will have the support and resources necessary to develop solutions to their particular needs.*



## VISION AND SPATIAL STRATEGY

16. The strategy seeks to deliver the vision for the Somer Valley and the strategic objectives for the District (set out in Chapter 1). In addition to the strategy and policies outlined in this chapter, the policies in Chapter 5 on the rural areas apply specifically to the villages in the Somer Valley. The strategy for the Somer Valley is to make provision for the development of the economic and community facilities needed to increase self-reliance and economic revitalisation. There are particular opportunities to facilitate local energy generation. Provision of sufficient space in the Somer Valley will contribute to economic diversification, enable local firms to expand and provide space for new businesses to locate in the area thereby providing an improved range of local employment opportunities to target workers with different skills to replace jobs lost in traditional manufacturing industries. This approach will be underpinned by the Council's Economic Strategy to attract new business to the area and improved education and training linking local businesses with key training providers such as Norton Radstock Bath College and the secondary schools and building on existing academic and vocational courses.
17. Whilst there is land available with capacity within the Somer Valley to provide more than 2,000 jobs, it is unlikely that any more than around 900 of these jobs will come forward in the Plan period. Their delivery will require strong partnership with public and private sectors. With limited resources available, targeted efforts will be required as set out in the Economic Strategy.
18. There is already a significant number of housing commitments in the Somer Valley and a limited capacity to generate new jobs. New housing in the Somer Valley will therefore be restrained in the interest of sustainability but some additional housing is likely to come forward on brownfield sites. The Housing Development Boundary has been reviewed in the Placemaking Plan to facilitate this and to reflect recent planning permissions on greenfield sites. However in light of the objective of economic led revitalisation, it is important that the additional housing does not significantly worsen the balance between homes and jobs and the out-commuting problems and the Council may therefore seek to ensure an economic benefit from new housing.
19. Local designations such as Housing Development Boundaries and [Core Business Areas Strategy and Other Primary Industrial Estates](#) have been reviewed and are shown on the Policies Map.
20. The distinctive character of the countryside surrounding the towns and villages will be protected and the urban environments, especially in the town centres will be improved to make them more appealing for residents, businesses and visitors.
21. The area does not benefit from direct trunk road links to the motorway network, but does connect to Bath via the A367 and A39, Bristol via the A37 and south via the A37 and A367 to Somerset towns. Apart from the funding for Greater Bristol Bus Network, there is no immediate prospect of new large scale funding or any major development to trigger substantial road infrastructure improvements within the plan period. Therefore,

improvements to public transport, cycling infrastructure and the implementation of 'Smarter Choices for transport' should be pursued in this area in support of the spatial strategy. The Joint Local Transport Plan which was adopted in March 2011 includes reference to further rail enhancements by 2026, for example re-opening the Radstock to Frome line as part of 'Plans and Aspirations for other Significant Transport Schemes'.

### **The Vision**

#### **What the spatial strategy seeks to achieve**

**The southern part of the District will become more self-reliant, facilitated by economic-led revitalisation alongside local energy generation, building on its industrial expertise and improving skill levels. Transport connections to other centres, as well as connections between settlements within the Somer Valley area will continue to be improved.**

**The roles of Midsomer Norton and Radstock Town Centres will be complementary, providing key employment opportunities, services and leisure provision to the communities in the Somer Valley area. Midsomer Norton town centre will continue to be the principal centre with an improved public realm and enhanced townscape and a Town Park. Radstock will continue to provide a focal point for local communities and realise its potential for tourism based on its green infrastructure, mining heritage, cycle ways and attractive rural hinterland.**

**Villages of the Somer Valley will continue to provide for the needs of their local communities.**

## **POLICY SV1 SOMER VALLEY SPATIAL STRATEGY**

**The Strategy for the Somer Valley is to:**

- 1 Natural & Built Environment**
  - a) Protect and enhance the distinctive character of the area including the landscape and built and historic environment.**
  - b) Strengthen the green links between the two town centres and the rest of the Somer Valley via a cycle and walking link along the route of the former railway as part of the Town Park and Five Arches route proposals.**
- 2 Previously Developed Land**
  - a) Prioritise development on brownfield sites focussing on Midsomer Norton and Radstock Centres (See Policies SV2 and SV3) and the redevelopment of vacant and underused industrial land and factories.**
- 3 Economic Development**
  - a) Enable the delivery of around 900 net additional jobs between 2011 and 2029 and facilitate further jobs if economic circumstances allow.**
  - b) Encourage the retention and expansion of local companies and the growth of new businesses by making provision for the changes in employment floorspace set out below:**
    - Office floorspace: from about 31,000m<sup>2</sup> in 2011 to about 33,700m<sup>2</sup> in 2029**
    - Industrial/Warehouse floorspace: from about 126,400m<sup>2</sup> in 2011 to about**

**112,000m2 in 2029. New employment floorspace will be focussed at:**

- **the Westfield Industrial Estates, Midsomer-Enterprise Park and Bath Business Park in Peasedown St John**
- **Old Mills in Paulton (Policy SSV9)**
- **Midsomer Norton and Radstock Town Centres**

**c) Protect land in existing business use and, consider alternative use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose and it does not lead to an unacceptable loss of employment land.**

#### **4 Housing**

**Enable around 2,470 new homes to be built at Midsomer Norton, Radstock, Westfield, Paulton and Peasedown St John within the housing development boundary. Residential development on previously developed sites falling within the scope of Policy ED2B adjoining and closely related to the housing development boundary will be acceptable if the requirements of Policy ED2B and other relevant policies are met. Residential development on sites outside the Housing Development Boundary will also be acceptable ~~only~~ if identified in an adopted Neighbourhood Plan. This will include affordable housing, providing more choices of housing to meet the needs of the local communities. (Policies RA1 and RA2 are applicable to the other settlements in Somer Valley.)**

#### **5 Shopping**

- a) Strengthen the shopping offer in Midsomer Norton town centre to serve the Somer Valley by facilitating redevelopment and improving the public realm.**
- b) Enable Radstock centre to continue to provide local needs and support specialist shops.**
- c) Protect and enhance the local centres at Westfield, Paulton, Peasedown St John and Timsbury.**

#### **6 Transport**

- a) Implement necessary transport infrastructure to improve public transport links to major settlements and links within the Somer Valley and safeguard and extend sustainable transport routes.**
- b) Encourage Smarter Choices to facilitate increased movement by sustainable modes of transport. (Transport infrastructure and Smarter Choices measures are set out in the Infrastructure and Delivery section.)**

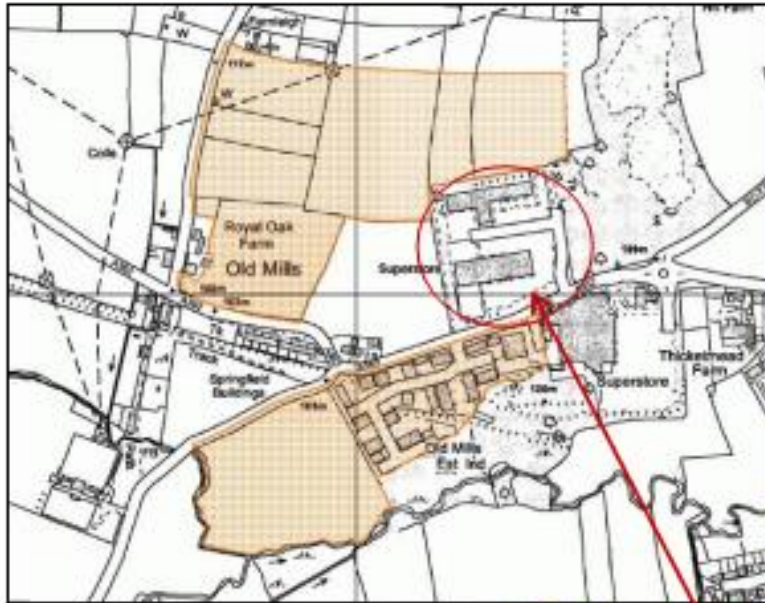
#### **7 Energy conservation and sustainable energy generation**

- a) Encourage renewable and low-carbon energy generation schemes, particularly those led by local communities.**
- b) Facilitate district heating system in the centres of Midsomer Norton and Radstock.**

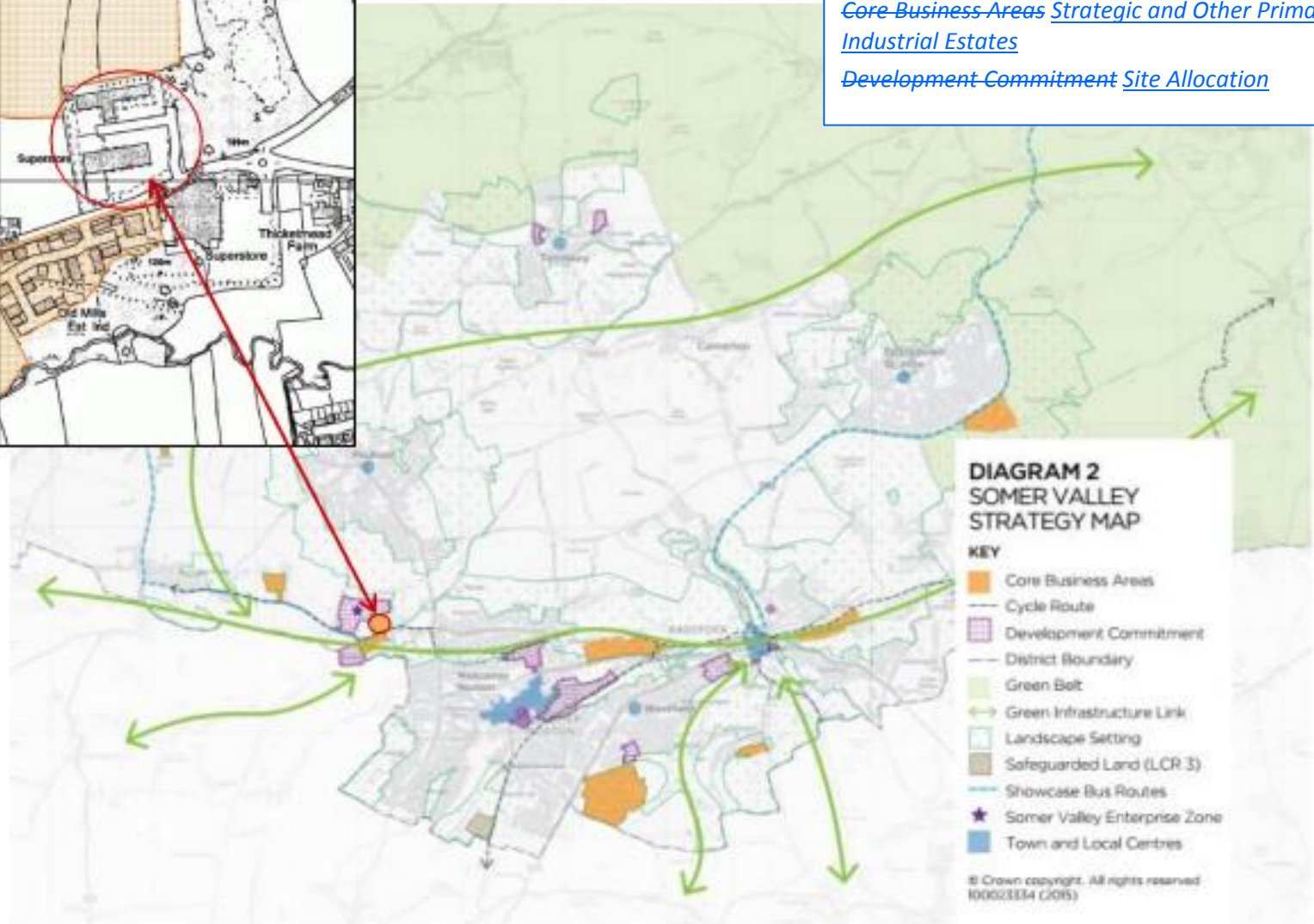
#### **8 Leisure**

- a) Increase and enhance access to local heritage, woodlands and green spaces including implementation of the proposed Town Park in Midsomer Norton.**
- b) Facilitate the provision of the proposed Town Park in Midsomer Norton as a recreational facility serving the Somer Valley.**
- c) Increase allotment provision where deficiencies have been identified.**

**Remove the Paulton House site from the Primary Industrial Estate on Diagram 2 (Volume 4 Somer Valley)**



Amend the Key to Diagram 2 as follows:  
Core Business Areas Strategic and Other Primary Industrial Estates  
Development Commitment Site Allocation





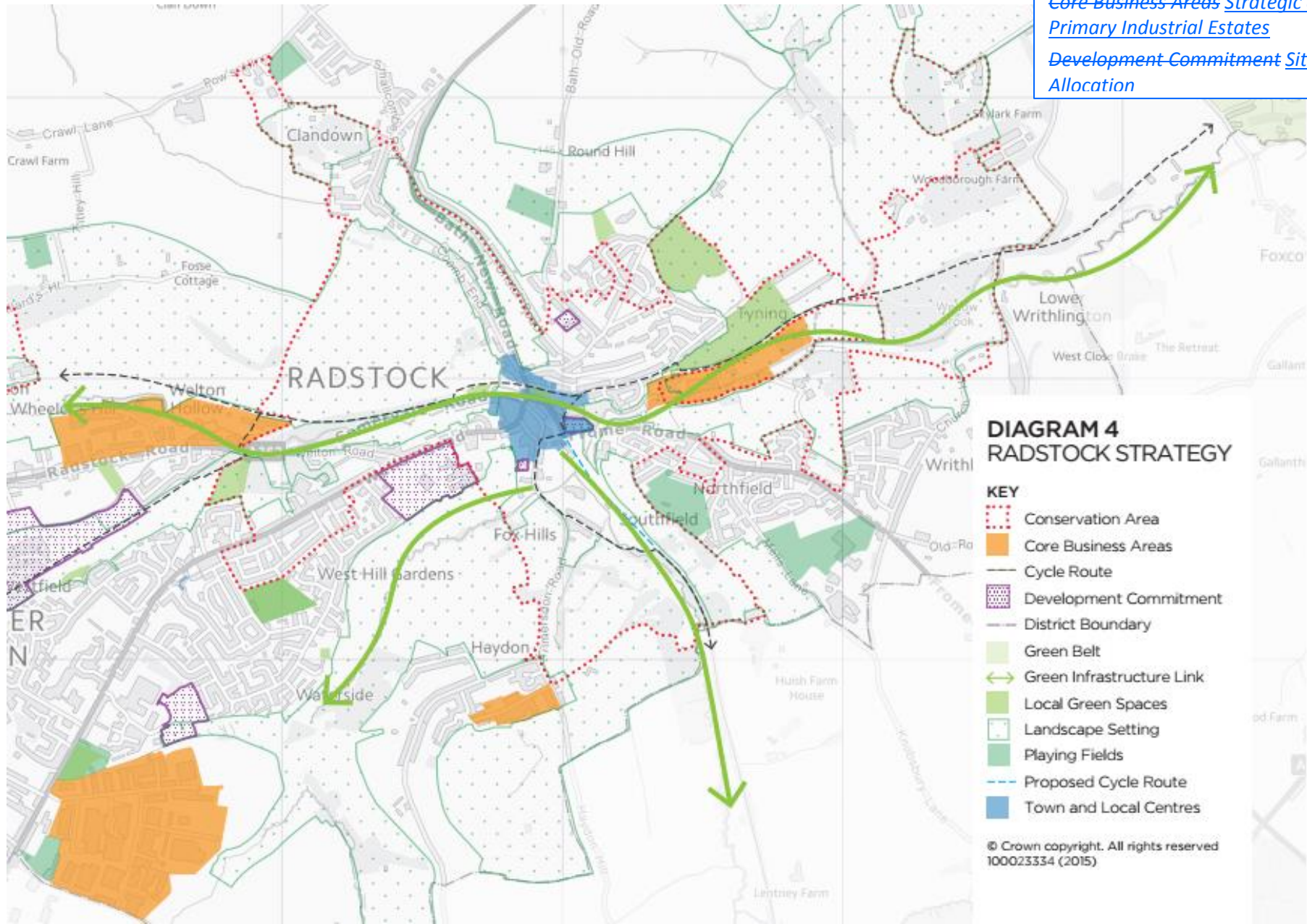
## Remove the Paulton House site from the Primary Industrial Estate on Diagram 3 (Volume 4 Somer Valley)

Amend the Key to Diagram 3 as follows:  
Core Business Areas Strategic and Other Primary Industrial Estates  
Development Commitment Site Allocation



Placemaking Plan as proposed to be adopted - July 2017

Amend the Key to Diagram 2 as follows:  
Core-Business-Areas Strategic and Other Primary Industrial Estates  
Development Commitment Site Allocation



Placemaking Plan as proposed to be adopted - July 2017

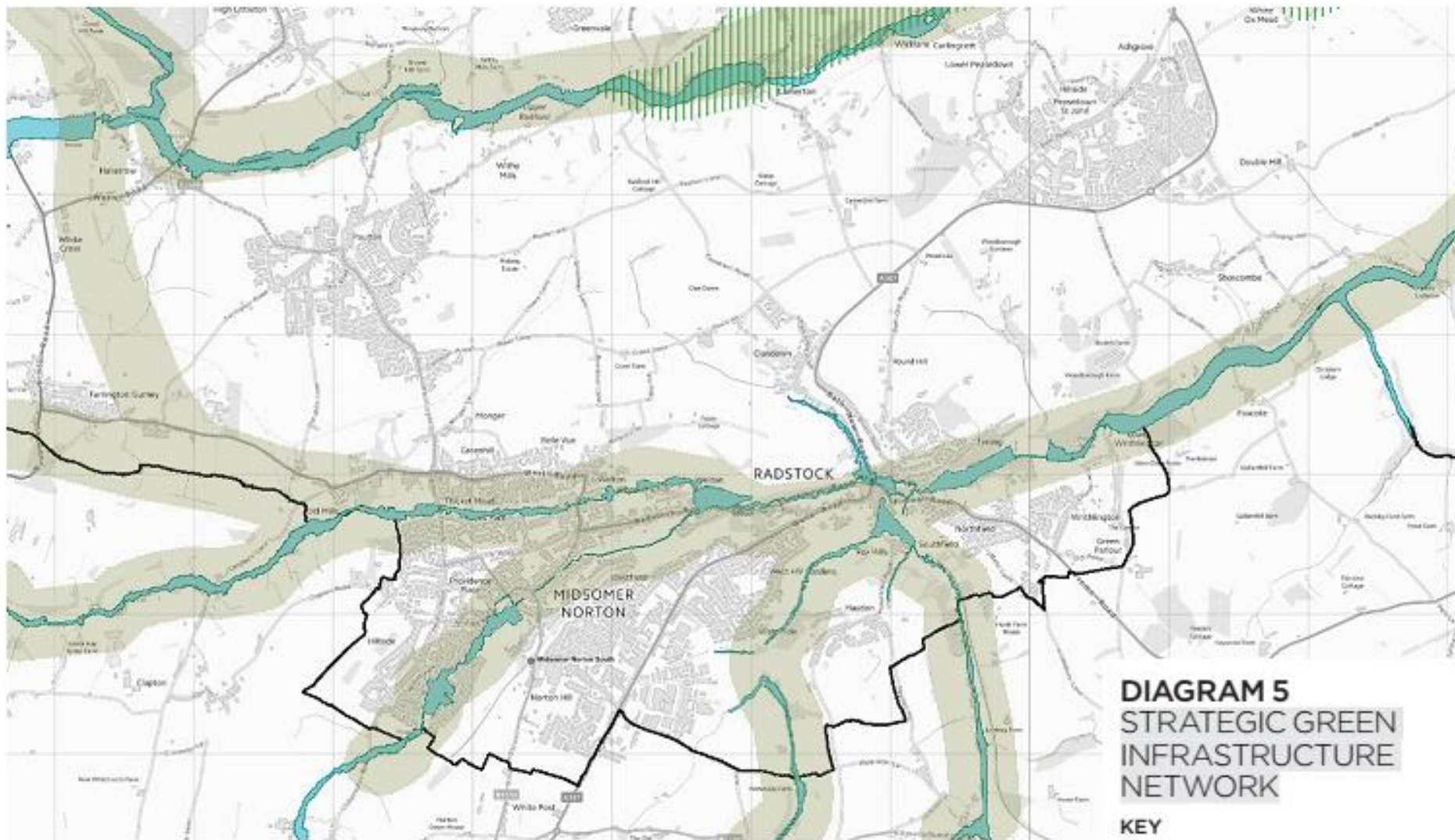


## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE, OPEN SPACE AND LANDSCAPE

22. Part of the overall strategy for the Somer Valley contained in Policy SV1 is to protect and enhance the distinctive character of the area including the landscape and built and historic environment and strengthen the green links between the two town centres via a cycle and walking link along the route of the former railway as part of Town Park and Five Arches route proposals.
23. Diagram 4 shows the Strategic Green Infrastructure Corridors which are made up of the 'project sites' identified in the Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy, strategic GI features and ecological networks. The Somer Valley area is identified as an 'Area Outstanding Natural Beauty linkway' to strengthen the habitat and connectivity between the Mendip Hills and southern part of the Cotswolds AONB.
24. GI assets comprise open spaces; parks and gardens; allotments; woodlands; street trees; green roofs; fields; ponds; and meadows, as well as 'green' / off road footpaths; cycleways and waterways. These will provide the broad context and starting point for the production of detailed GI asset plans required by Policy NE1.
25. Wellow Brook and River Somer provide an important role in linking ecological networks, enabling animals to move between sites, and in and out of the area. There is a relatively small total area of woodland, though much of what is present is ancient woodland. This has been continuously wooded for many years and acts as important refuge for many plant and animal species.
26. Being a former mining area, there are a number of post-industrial sites and features such as disused rail land, canals and coal spoil tips which became great assets to the biodiversity of the area. In the years following their abandonment for industrial use, many of these have developed into very important wildlife sites, with locally and nationally rare species.
27. Core Strategy Policy CP.6 sets out the high level policy approach to the natural environment and NE.3 and NE.4 provide further details. It highlights the need to create a coherent network of more robust and resilient natural habitats, including larger protected sites and a greater extent and connectivity of natural habitats.
28. An extensive area in and around Radstock and Midsomer Norton Town Centre and the Welton area are designated Conservation Areas.
29. The towns of Radstock, Westfield and Midsomer Norton have grown up in and around the highly distinctive confluence of five valleys and are also defined by the coal industry and the local coal field which contributes to their unique character. Predominantly the developed areas follow the more sheltered and shallow valley sides and also the intervening, lower level, narrow ridge tops between the brooks. The higher level valley sides and ridge/plateau tops surrounding the towns have remained largely undeveloped apart from the nearby hamlet of Haydon associated with its mine. Development proposals within these areas should respond to Policy NE.2A.

30. From Radstock existing routes provide longer distance connections to Bath and Frome as part of the National Cycle network. To the north of Midsomer Norton town centre the Norton Radstock Greenway follows the Wellow Brook valley and delivers a traffic free path along the former railway line between Radstock, Welton and beyond. The Five Arches links Radstock and Midsomer Norton/Westfield. The route runs through the area earmarked to deliver the much anticipated Town Park and will form an integral part.
31. The Green Spaces Strategy states that when provision is compared to population Midsomer Norton, Radstock & Westfield has the lowest levels of formal provision in the district and the second highest level of natural provision for an urban settlement. However once a Town Park in Midsomer Norton is implemented, it will, along with the Skate and Adventure Play Park, offer an excellent leisure facility to Midsomer Norton and the whole of Somer Valley.

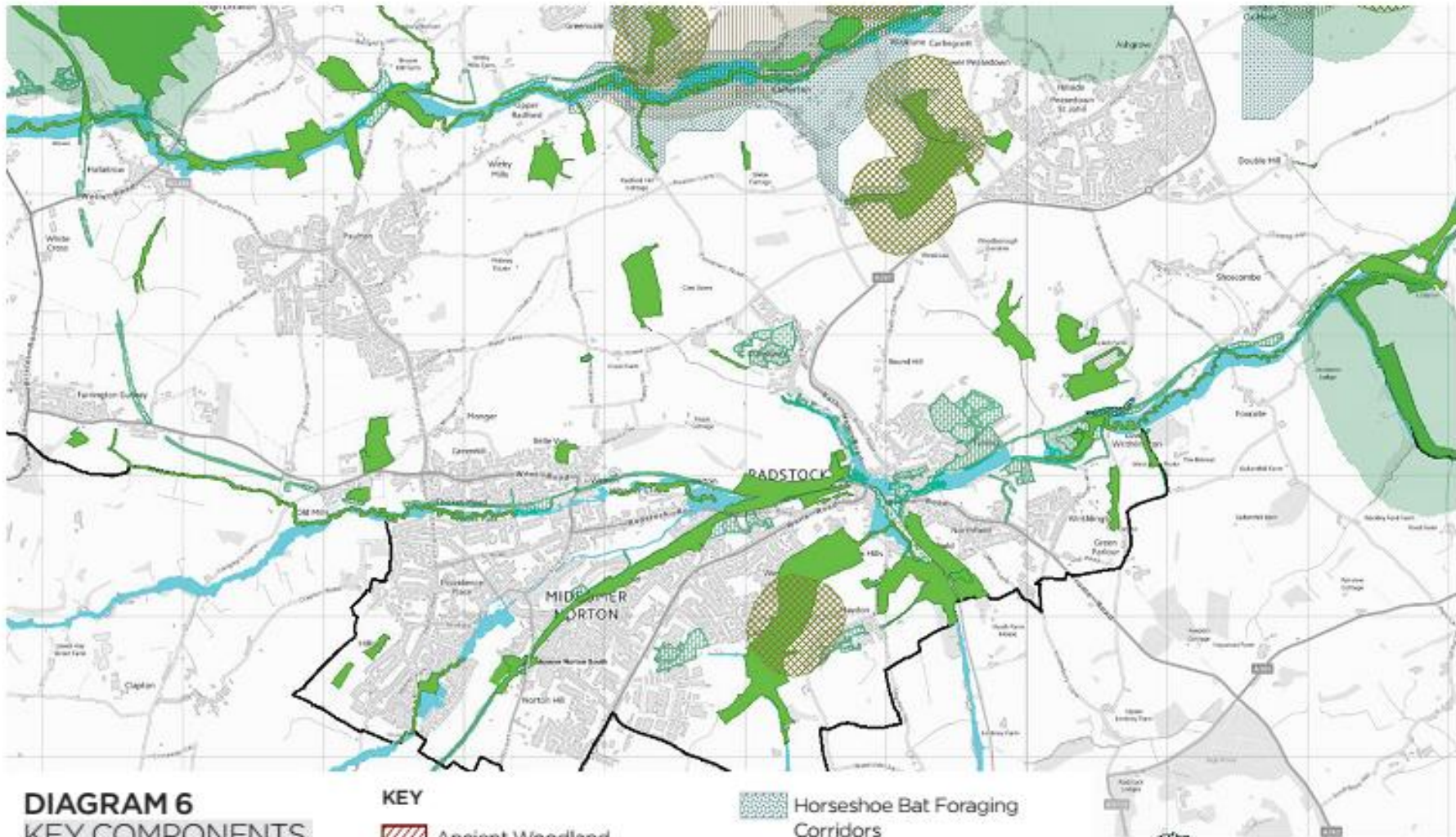




**DIAGRAM 5**  
**STRATEGIC GREEN**  
**INFRASTRUCTURE**  
**NETWORK**

- KEY**
-  Floodplain
  -  Strategic Green Infrastructure Corridors
  -  Strategic Nature Areas

© Crown copyright. All rights reserved (100023334) (2015)

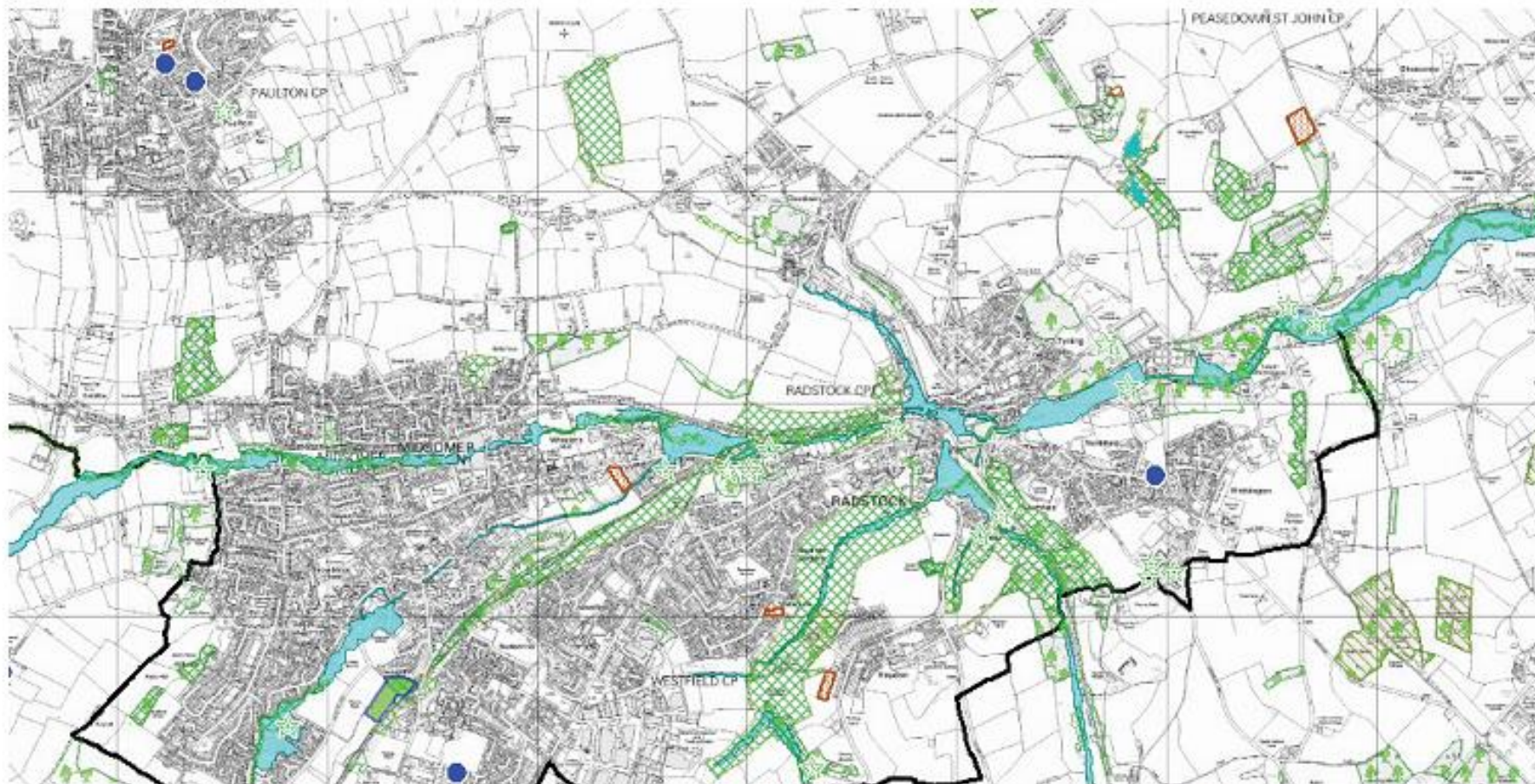


**DIAGRAM 6**  
**KEY COMPONENTS**  
**OF THE ECOLOGICAL**  
**NETWORK**

- KEY**
-  Ancient Woodland
  -  Cotswolds Nature Improvement Area
  -  Floodplain
  -  Grassland Buffer
  -  Horseshoe Bat Foraging Corridors
  -  Strategic Nature Areas
  -  UK Priority Habitat
  -  Woodland Buffer
- © Crown copyright. All rights reserved (100023334) (2015)



*Diagram 6 to be amended to distinguish between UK Priority Habitat and Local BAP habitat.*





**DIAGRAM 7**  
**BIODIVERSITY, TREES**  
**AND LOCAL FOOD**

**KEY**

-  Allotments
-  Ancient Woodland

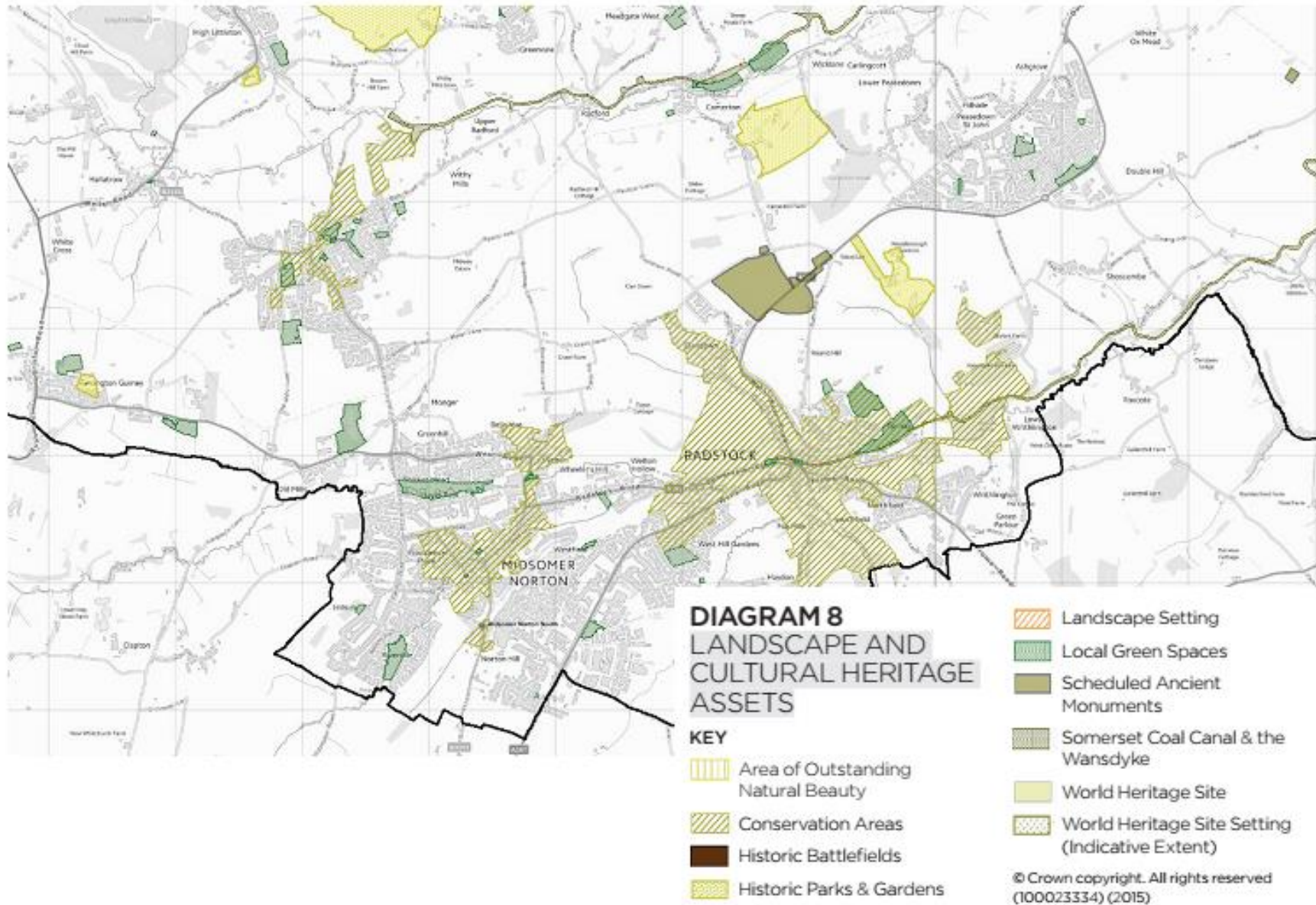
-  Cotswolds Nature Improvement Area
-  Floodplain
-  Horseshoe Bat Foraging Corridors
-  Local Nature Reserves
-  National Inventory of Woodland Site

-  Ponds
-  Site of Special Scientific Interest
-  Site of Nature Conservation Importance
-  Special Area of Conservation
-  Special Protection Area

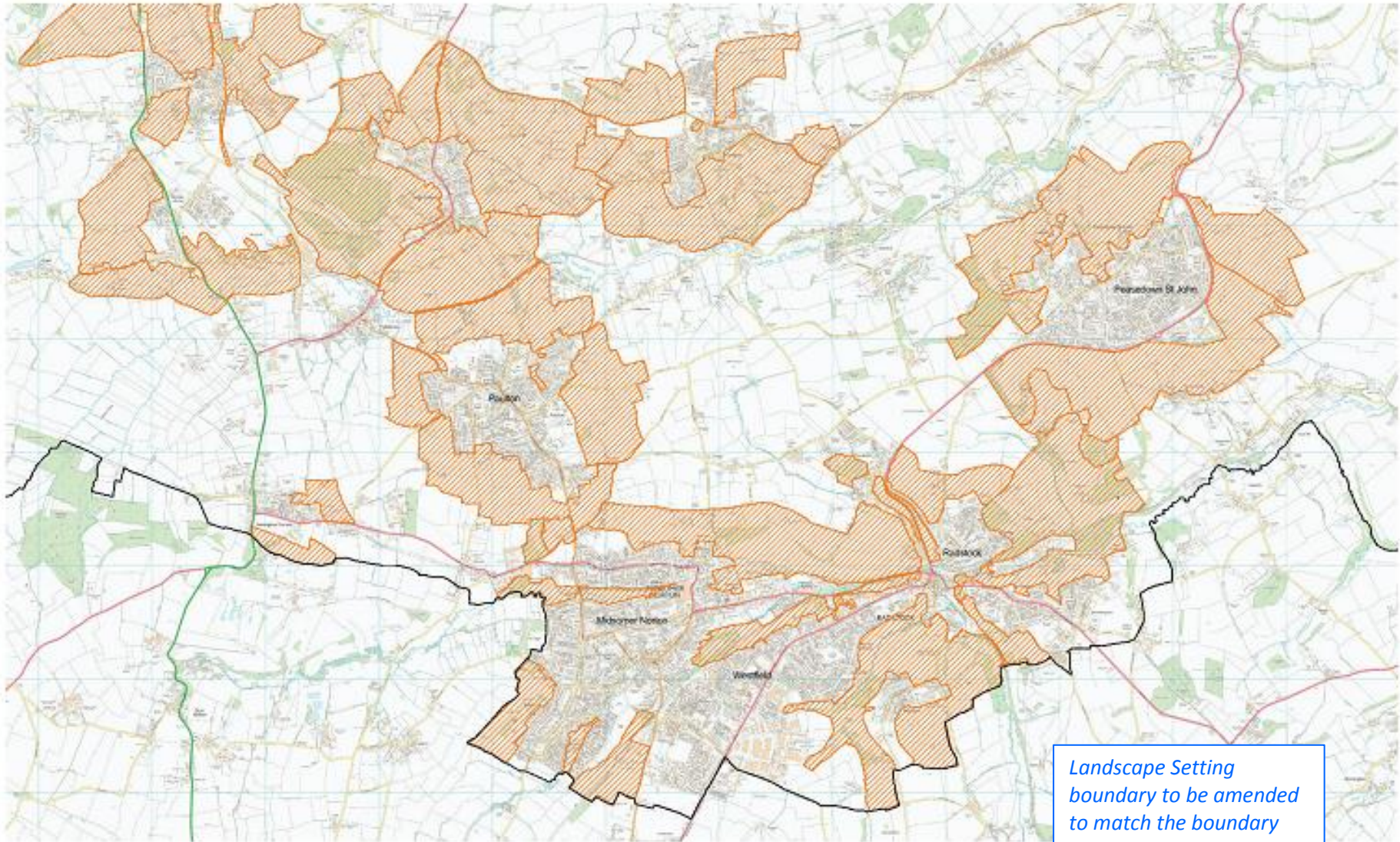
-  Traditional Orchards
  -  Strategic Nature Areas
  -  UK Priority Habitat
  -  UK Priority Species
  -  Water Bodies > 0.25 Ha
- © Crown copyright. All rights reserved (100023334) (2015)

*Diagram 7 to be amended to distinguish between UK Priority Habitat and Local BAP*



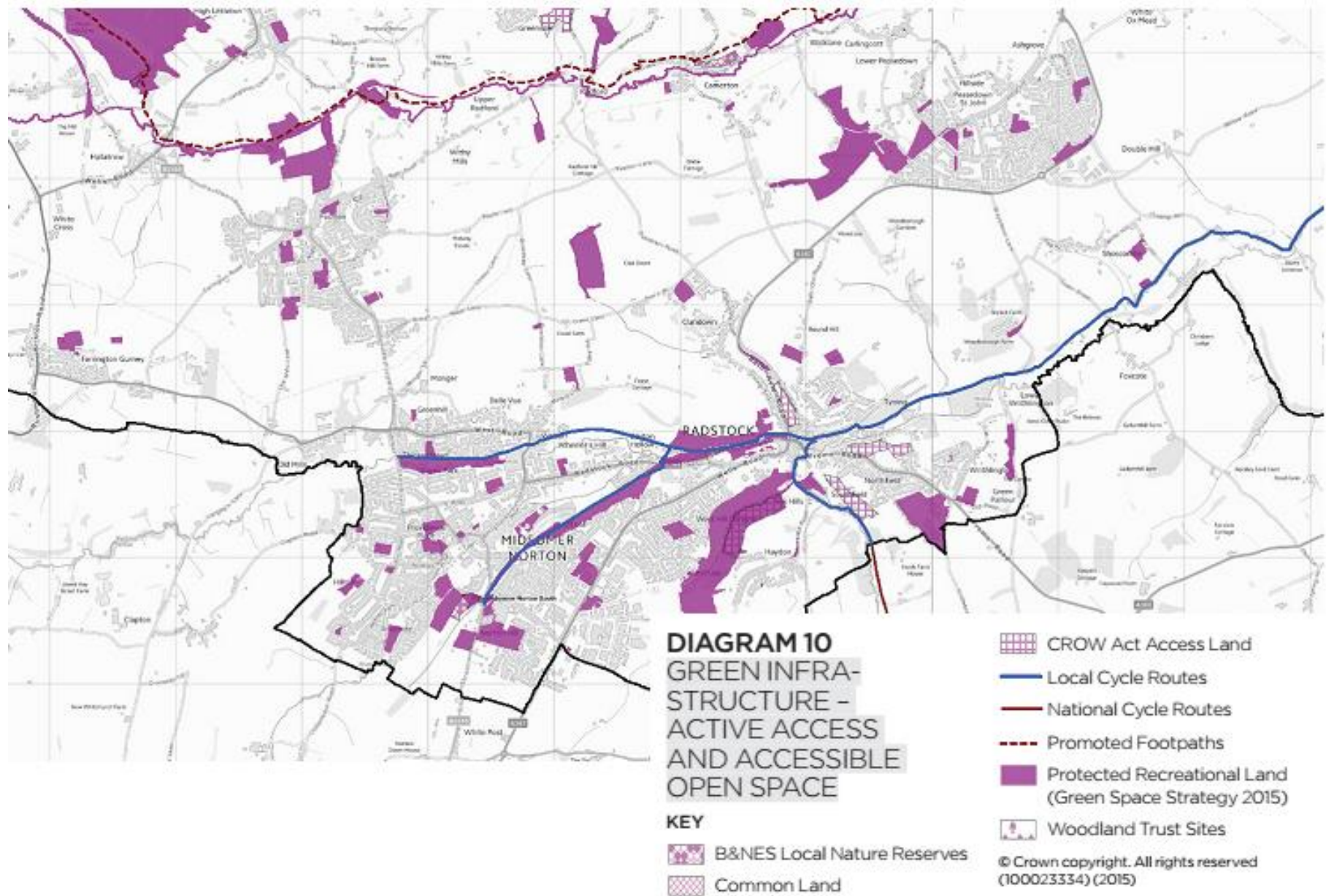






**Diagram 9: Green Setting (Landscape setting)**





# MIDSOMER NORTON TOWN CENTRE

## ROLE OF THE CENTRE

32. Midsomer Norton Town Centre will continue to play the role of the market town serving a wider catchment population from surrounding towns and villages. It forms a key link in the strong network of settlements that make the area more self-reliant in terms of access to key services, leisure, jobs and shops.
33. Midsomer Norton is the principal market town for the Somer Valley. The town centre provides a range of retail outlets, a library, community spaces and leisure facilities, and caters for the majority of the local service needs in the Somer Valley area attracting frequent shoppers from its catchment. The High Street follows the valley base, with the larger residential areas positioned on higher ground either side.
34. The River Somer, which flows through the heart of the town, has had a strong influence on the history and the focus of growth in Midsomer Norton. The historic core of the town is termed as the 'Island' which contains the oldest buildings in the town such as the 17th century Priory and the Tithe Barn (now the Catholic Church) dating back to the 15th century. The town centre also includes the heritage of Victorian buildings, St John's Parish Church, the Italianate Gothic Town Hall, Bank House, Grey Hound and National Westminster Bank.
35. The qualities of this area are recognised through the Conservation Area designation which extends the length of the High Street and into Welton. The distinctive white lias limestone is a unifying feature of Midsomer Norton's historic buildings, and represents a defining element of the built character of the town across an eclectic mix of architectural styles.
36. The Conservation Area Appraisal highlights the town character as 'compact and arranged around a linear High Street' and describes how the town is 'enclosed by higher ground which affords characteristic views from the town to open fields and wooded skylines'. It also notes the significant contribution made by trees to parts of the town, particularly along the High Street.
37. The High Street is predominately characterised by two-storey buildings which limits the sense of enclosure and variety in the street scene. The larger retail buildings on the north side of the High Street are often single storey buildings, but their prominence is increased due to the rising topography. In particular, the Sainsbury's building imposes significantly on the High Street area despite being set back from the street by the Hollies Garden. The Methodist Church and St John the Baptist Church are landmark taller buildings in the central area, along with the Town Hall building that occupies a prominent position at the junction of the High Street with Silver Street and the Island.

38. The High Street presents an opportunity to create greater depth by encouraging new and enhanced walking links within the centre itself and to the residential areas surrounding it. Future development needs to consider how the various elements of the town centre (such as the Stones Cross gateway, the retail core and the historic core) can be brought together and considered as a whole. Developing the functionality of civic spaces (such as the Town Hall and Hollies Gardens) in parallel with a range of activities (such as regular markets) will assist in this.
39. Coal mining had a significant influence on the town. A number of 'batches', evidence of the coal mining heritage, now form important landscape features around the edges of the town. Much of the architecture stems from the period of coal mining prosperity in late Victorian times, including the half-timbered Alms houses on the High Street and the Town Hall in Silver Street.
40. The River Somer and Wellow Brook create two green valley's passing through Midsomer Norton. Historically the level nature of the valley bases has been used to facilitate strategic movement connections to and from the town, particularly by rail. The former railway lines should continue to provide a strategic movement role, linking Midsomer Norton with neighbouring towns and villages. The river corridors should be celebrated and used to deliver attractive waterside routes, both for people and nature.

## EMERGING MIDSOMER NORTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

41. Midsomer Norton was designated as a Neighbourhood Area in November 2013 and Midsomer Norton Town Council is progressing a Neighbourhood Plan which will become the plan for the town complementing the Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan, and be part of the statutory Development Plan upon its adoption. Midsomer Norton Neighbourhood Plan will set out the vision and objectives for the Town. The Council will work with Midsomer Norton Town Council to ensure the Neighbourhood Plan is consistent and complementary with the Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan.



**Diagram 11: Map of Neighbourhood Area**



## MIDSOMER NORTON TOWN CENTRE FUNCTIONAL AREAS

42. The core retail, business, community and leisure facilities in Midsomer Norton can be considered in terms of four broad areas reflecting the different character and qualities of the town centre. These are shown on diagram 12 below.

**The Island:** The distinctive historic core area encompassing the Island space and lower end of the High Street to St John the Baptist Church with key buildings such as the Town Hall and Catholic Church (Tithe Barn).

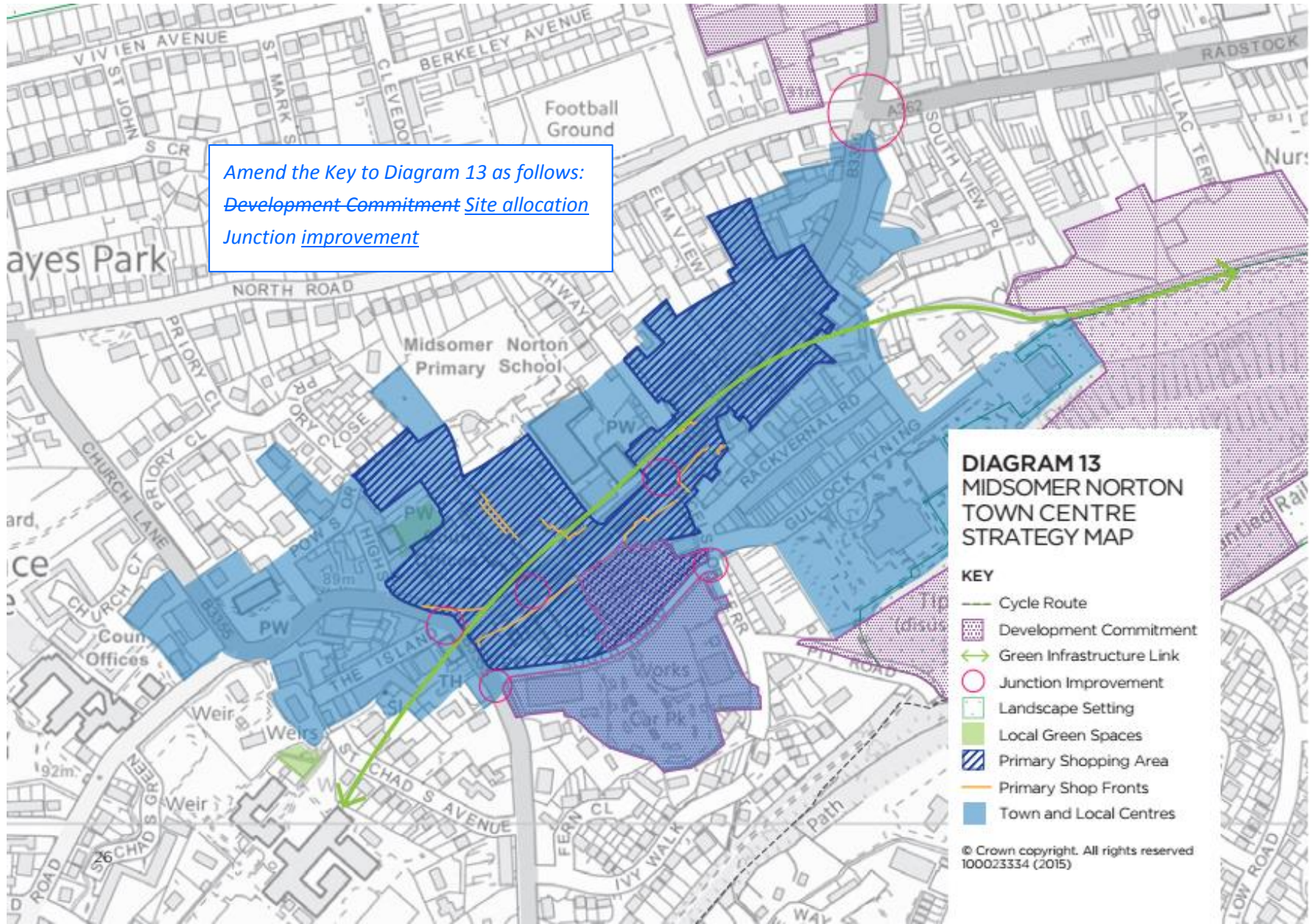
**High Street Core:** The widened part of the High Street, extending from the Alms Houses through to the Island, incorporating the exposed River Somer.

**Local Shopping:** The upper end of the High Street, extending from the Stone's Cross gateway and following the curve entrance to the High Street through to the Alms Houses.

**Leisure and Community:** The area between the leisure centre and the Somer Centre which contains community and leisure facilities for town, leading to the Town Park.



Diagram 12: Midsomer Norton Town Centre Functional Areas



Final making plan as proposed to be adopted - July 2017

## Assets

43. Midsomer Norton Town Centre has significant potential to inspire and influence new development such as the:
- Distinctive and appealing townscape with historic buildings, the River Somer flowing through the High Street and the Conservation Area,
  - Distinctive views from the town to green skylines.
  - Enhanced leisure facilities on the edge of the centre including a skate board park.
  - Accessible parking.
  - Improvement of the existing cycle network and use of the sustainable transport links.
  - Strong community support that will benefit implementation.

## Risks

44. The following issues are identified as key risks to achieving the ambitions for Midsomer Norton.
- Increasingly strong competition from nearby market towns in surrounding districts.
  - Lack of medium and large sized shopping units.
  - The dominance of parking in the street scene, poor pedestrian links, busy roads and a lack of public space.
  - Under-developed evening economy to contribute to a sense of vibrancy and community.

### **POLICY SV2 MIDSOMER NORTON TOWN CENTRE STRATEGIC POLICY**

*The Strategy for the Midsomer Norton Town Centre is to:*

#### **1 Key Opportunities/Priorities**

- a. Unlock redevelopment sites in the town centre (boundary defined on the Policies Map) to avoid the need for out of centre retail development, particularly in respect of vacant/underused buildings such as the former Palladium cinema and former brewery.*
- b Enhance the public realm.*
- c Enhance leisure provision including the Town Park.*
- d Focus new retail development on the southern end of the High Street as the retail core.*

#### **2 Scope and Scale of Change**

*Make provision for:*

- a Residential development as part of mixed use schemes*
- b Some larger retail units in the core areas of the High Street.*
- c Modern office space to offset the loss of manufacturing jobs.*
- d A district heating network.*

### **3 Placemaking Principles**

- a Strengthen the shopping offer in the southern end of the High Street and provide better pedestrian connections from the main car parks to the core retail area, creating a stronger frontage to South Road.*
- b Enable more intensive use of the South Road car park providing the opportunity to accommodate a modern food store. Any development here should retain public car parking for the town centre.*
- c Conserve the town centre's heritage and unique townscape character.*
- d Enhance the positive feature of the River Somer.*
- e Reduce the amount of traffic using the retail core of the High Street and improve the environment for pedestrians.*
- f Improve routes and major entrances into the centre.*
- g Improve access to green infrastructure including the proposed Town Park.*
- h Improve linkage to Sustainable Transport Routes.*
- i Improve the range of leisure and visitor attractions as part of the total town centre offer.*

## **KEY DEVELOPMENT SITES**

### **SSV2 - South Road Car Park and SSV1 - Central High Street Core including the Palladium and Brewery sites**

#### **Context**

45. Core Strategy Policy SV2 states that a key principle for the town centre is to strengthen the shopping offer in the southern end of the High Street and provide better pedestrian connections from the main car parks to the core retail area, creating a stronger frontage to South Road.

#### **SSV2 - South Road Car Park**

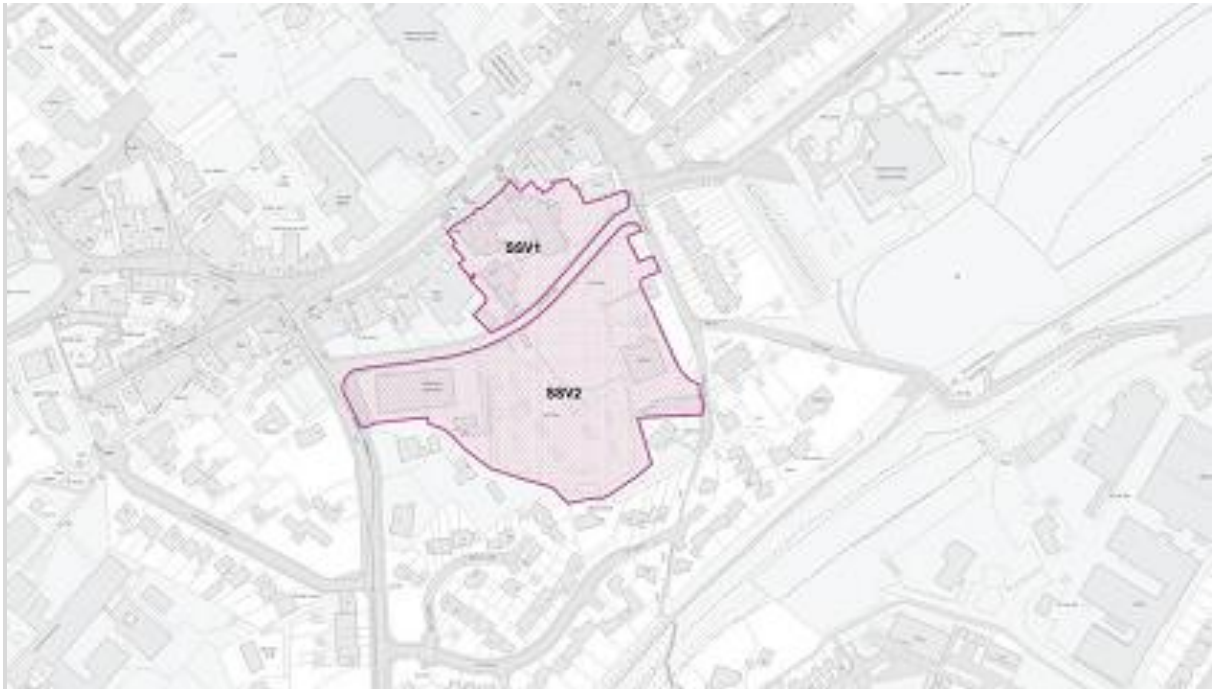
46. The South Road site is currently one of the main long stay car parking areas for the town centre. The location of the car park, just south of the core High Street area, reinforces the importance of this site in providing accessible public car parking to support town centre activity.
47. However, this important town centre car park site could also be a catalyst for wider regeneration in Midsomer Norton. Core Strategy Policy SV2 states that a key principle for the town centre is to enable more intensive use of this site providing an opportunity to accommodate a modern food store.



48. Midsomer Norton Town Council commissioned a retail study which identified that a new supermarket of around 45,000sqft is feasible on the site with parking underneath the store.
49. The B&NES retail study (July 2015) shows that there is 1,949 m<sup>2</sup> convenience goods floorspace capacity in 2014 increasing to 3,078m<sup>2</sup> by 2029 in Midsomer Norton and Radstock. It also shows 922m<sup>2</sup> comparison goods floorspace capacity in 2014 increasing to 3,588m<sup>2</sup> by 2029. It concludes that the prime retail development site is the South Road Car Park. Redevelopment of the site should help stimulate the delivery of new retail floorspace in the High Street core and facilitate significant public realm improvements. Key to this is the need to improve the pedestrian link from South Road car park to the High Street. Currently there is no pedestrian crossing and the narrow footpath detracts from the eventual open vista of the High Street.
50. There are a number of challenges that need to be addressed in delivering this site, including how a new food store will relate to and connect with the town centre; how development can continue to offer an adequate quantity of convenient and accessible public car parking for the town centre; and how development will integrate with the topography of the site and neighbouring areas.

### **SSV1 - Central High Street Core Site**

51. Whilst the town centre overall benefits from a wide range of independent shops, at present the core area is relatively weak and fails to fulfil its potential. It is dominated by non-retail uses and small units of a poor character. There are a number of prominent vacant units in a poor state of repair. The poor quality buildings detract from the town centre environment. Redevelopment opportunities along the rear of High Street properties present further scope for physical improvement to the South Road.
52. The Conservation Area Appraisal recognises the need for restoration of key buildings such as Palladium and former Brewery to bring them into full use and make a positive contribution to the street.
53. The historic features of the Palladium and the Brewery should be retained, enhancing the Conservation Area. A fundamental role for the core site would be to provide an attractive link between the new supermarket at South Road car park and the High Street, and to improve the public realm.
54. Regeneration of the retail core, either as a whole or in phases, would result in an enhanced offer by providing mixed use retail and office units which have been identified by the Town Council as important requirements for the town centre. Attracting larger retail units which complement and support the existing independent shops will be important.
55. Both sites lie within the Surface Coal Resource Plan Area defined by the Coal Authority. Placemaking Plan Policy M1 clarifies how applications for non-mineral development within Mineral Safeguarding Areas will be considered.



**Diagram 14: South Road Car Park and Central High Street Core Site Boundaries**

## **Vision**

56. Redevelopment of South Road Car Park and Central High Street Core site will help stimulate the delivery of new retail floorspace and facilitate significant public realm improvements. Key to this is the need to improve the pedestrian link from South Road car park to the High Street. Improving the public realm and establishing a better balance between traffic and pedestrians are key priorities to ensure that Midsomer Norton maximises the potential for retail investment and growth.

### ***POLICY SSV2: SOUTH ROAD CAR PARK***

#### ***Development Requirements and Design Principles***

- 1. Retail-led mixed use development***
- 2. Enhance the Conservation Area and its setting.***
- 3. Provide high standard of pedestrian, cyclists and vehicular access with principal access to the site from South Road.***
- 4. Create a well-designed frontage with the entrance of a new store orientated towards the High Street to help integrate new development and encourage pedestrian connections. The store and parking layout should create an easy and obvious pedestrian route through the site.***
- 5. Provide landscape, tree planting and public realm enhancements to ensure a positive relationship with South Road and to enhance the Town's Green Infrastructure, (e.g. Links to Town Park) and ecological networks, with specific consideration for bat flight lines.***
- 6. Continue to offer sufficient public car parking for the town centre through the provision of parking spaces on site or off site in locations well related and easily accessible to the town centre.***

## ***POLICY SSV1: Central High Street Core***

### ***Development Requirements and Design Principles***

- 1. Mixed use redevelopment comprising main town centre uses with active frontages on the High Street.***
- 2. Enhance the Conservation Area and its setting including retention and reuse of the former Brewery building and former Palladium cinema***
- 3. Provide a clear and attractive pedestrian link between High Street and the South Road Car Park site.***
- 4. Improve the functional and visual relationship between High Street and South Road.***
- 5. Provide measures to protect and retain the bat roosts on site***
- 6. Lighting at this location must be designed to be responsive to the bat roost on site.***

## **SSV4 - Former Welton Manufacturing Site**

### **Context**

57. The Former Welton Manufacturing site located to the north east of the town centre and provides a substantial redevelopment opportunity. The site is positioned on the steep north facing valley side, sloping down from the ridge at North Road to the Wellow Brook base. There is a drop of approximately 10m from the valley ridge down to Wellow Brook, and a similar level change on the south facing slope on the other side of the brook against the former railway line.
58. The factory buildings and ancillary uses occupy the majority of the 5.3ha site. The core complex straddles the valley base, culverting the Wellow Brook, and fronting on to Station Road. The position of the factory interrupts the valley setting and creates a significant barrier to a potential west-east strategic green infrastructure route following the Wellow Brook. An existing shared public footpath with bridleway and cycleway rights (ST Route T9/NR Greenway/Public Footpath CL24/21) extends along the northern boundary of the site.
59. There are no buildings at the ridge where the site fronts North Road and consequently the site remains fairly hidden from this prominent position and the top of the High Street. Aside from a collection of historic buildings within the adjoining Conservation Area including the site's former brewery use, the majority of the buildings on site are of limited quality. The 1850s brewery buildings survive largely untouched and with most of their external architectural features intact. These present a considerable asset to incorporate into future development of the site.
60. The priority will be to deliver an appropriate mix of employment floorspace and housing, and to improve connections through to the High Street. The Stone's Cross

roundabout is the key point of arrival to the High Street but fails to capitalise on the range of attractive Victorian buildings to announce the beginning of the High Street successfully. The steep, single sided pavement route along Station Road combined with heavy traffic creates an unattractive pedestrian environment and difficulties integrating the site.

61. The Retail Study (July 2015) considers this site as a potential retail development site. It is concluded that the site is sequentially inferior to the South Road car park site in delivering new retail floorspace, due to it being an 'edge of centre' location outside the town centre. The issue of suitable pedestrian links between the High Street and this site also make it difficult for retail uses to function as an integral part of the town centre.
62. An important focus is the frontage to North Road, where an area of hard standing is divided from the valley top by a high wall. This area presents the only real opportunity to establish a more direct and attractive connection between the site and the High Street via the Stone's Cross gateway. It is also important to consider options for improving existing road and pedestrian routes as well as highway safety along Station Road.
63. Incorporation of a high quality GI link along the Wellow Brook through the site will also be a key priority, linking with the attractive Welton Green community space.
64. The site lies within the Surface Coal Resource Plan area defined by the Coal Authority. Placemaking Plan Policy M1 clarifies how applications for non-mineral development within Mineral Safeguarding Areas will be considered. A small part of the site is within the Coal Authority defined Development High Risk Area and therefore the submission of a Coal Mining Risk Assessment would be necessary to support a development proposal.

## **Vision**

65. Regeneration scheme to deliver an appropriate mix of employment floorspace and housing, and to improve connections through to the High Street. Incorporation of a high quality GI link along the Wellow Brook through the site will also be a key priority, linking with the attractive Welton Green community space.



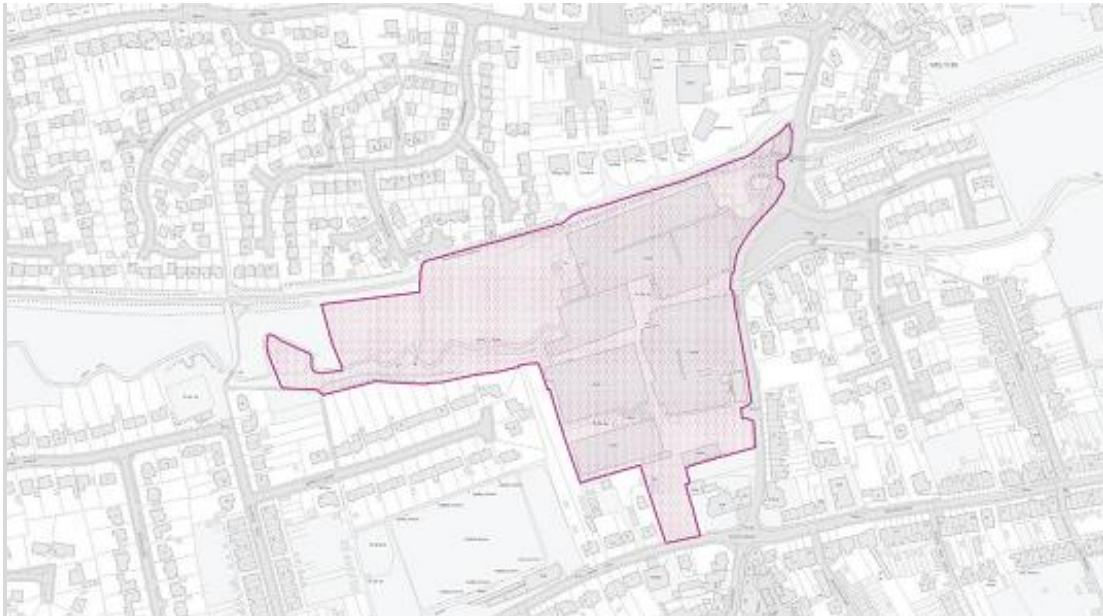


Diagram 15: Former Welton Manufacturing site boundary

## **POLICY SSV4: FORMER WELTON MANUFACTURING SITE**

### ***Development Requirements and Design Principles***

1. ***Comprehensive mixed use redevelopment comprising residential, community facilities and employment uses including small scale retail which does not adversely impact on the existing town centre.***
2. ***Provide at least 100 dwellings***
3. ***Enhance the Conservation Area and its setting including the retention and reuse of the former brewery building, with a strong presumption in favour of its physical preservation, subject to robust economic viability testing measured against the value of the whole development allocation, and taking full account of the heritage value and wider possible uses of the former brewery building.***
4. ***Provide new streets and spaces through the site that improve pedestrian and cycling connections both north to south and east to west connecting to existing cycle and bridleway for new and neighbouring residential communities.***
5. ***De-culvert the Wellow Brook to provide continued natural sections through the site, and provide habitat creation/enhancement which will be part of the west-east strategic green infrastructure route.***
6. ***Appropriate ecological mitigation to be included for bats, reptiles and invertebrates. Bat flight lines are to be maintained with no increase to light levels along this boundary.***
7. ***Main vehicular access from Station Road.***
8. ***Land remediation as necessary.***
9. ***Coal Mining Risk Assessment is necessary.***
10. ***The sequential approach to site layout is required informed by a site specific Flood Risk Assessment.***
11. ***Provision of SuDs (excluding infiltration techniques)***

## SSV3 - Midsomer Norton Town Park

### Context

66. The Town Council voted unanimously in 2012 to secure a Town Park for Midsomer Norton, which will be broadly located between Gullock Tynning and Five Arches. Once achieved, a Town Park, along with the Skate and Adventure Play Park, will offer a fantastic leisure facility serving Midsomer Norton and the whole of the Somer Valley, helping to attract visitors to the town.
67. The Town Park therefore should be considered as a fundamental element of the town's offering, alongside areas such as the civic core around the Town Hall and the retail core. This fits well with its status as a monument to the Somerset Coalfield and its significant position in the skyline of the town.
68. The Core Strategy vision for the Somer Valley states that Midsomer Norton town centre will include a new Town Park as part of the regeneration of the town. Core Strategy Policy SV1 includes a requirement for the implementation of a new Town Park at Midsomer Norton, and Policy SV2 states that the strategy for Midsomer Norton town centre includes the enhancement of leisure provision and improving access to GI including the Town Park. The 2007 Local Plan allocated the land as a Town Park and the Placemaking Plan will continue this allocation in order to convert the existing significant green resource at the centre of the town into a recognised Town Park. Planning application 14/01020/FUL was granted permission on 9/6/2014 for changing the use of the land for a new Town Park of around 8.28ha set to the south of the River Somer. An associated planning application (14/01019/FUL) for further land to be designated as a Town Park east of Gullock Tynning and north of the River Somer has also been granted permission.
69. Including land both to the north and south of the River Somer is crucial because it provides the opportunity to provide linkages between Midsomer Norton and Westfield on a north south axis. The inclusion of a pedestrian/cycle bridge will allow people to travel from Radstock Road, through the park to Westfield. This will also allow cyclists travelling along the existing cycle path to enter the town centre and use its facilities, bringing much valued footfall for the retail core. Including land both to the north and south of the River Somer also creates a park with a river running through the heart of it.
70. The site currently comprises predominantly open ground with a number of footpaths, the majority of which have evolved as people have walked through the site. Much of the site is a remnant of the coal mining era, and was a colliery spoil heap. Although greatly valued by the community, it currently has no specific function, and whilst in close proximity, it presently feels rather isolated from the High Street. After 50 years of growing wild, the land offers excellent potential to create a town park which respects and harnesses the ecology of the area. The detailed design of the Town Park will evolve over time, but should be made up of an organic combination of spaces and paths utilising the landscape to fulfil its potential as an exciting and interesting destination for leisure and recreation which can play its role in the economic regeneration of Midsomer Norton and the wider Somer Valley. Initial concepts to date

have included a large natural amphitheatre and space to hold community events and activities.

71. Different areas could be developed for different uses such as green open spaces, steep slopes with trees, paths and other features utilising the topography. This is considered to be appropriate for the character of the area and will protect the setting of the Conservation Area. The park will be delivered incrementally over time to an overall masterplan as and when funding streams arise.
72. There is potential to improve the provision of car parking that could be used for both the Town Park and the High Street, helping to reinforce this area as an accessible town centre arrival point. In conjunction with improved pedestrian connections this could encourage greater movement to and from the High Street and greater use of the park and leisure facilities as a combined town centre trip.
73. Ecology should be integral to the design of the park. The Five Arches path adjacent to the site is known for commuting and foraging by several species of bat, including Horseshoe Bats. The western and southern areas of the site are covered by a woodland Tree Preservation Order. The detailed layout of the park should be informed by the trees and their quality on the site.
74. The detailed design should take into account residential amenity. Lighting should not encourage people to gather in the lit areas during unsociable hours.
75. The site lies within the Surface Coal Resource Plan area by the Coal Authority. Placemaking Plan Policy M1 clarifies how applications for non-mineral development within Mineral Safeguarding Areas will be considered.



**Diagram 16: Town Park site boundary**

## Vision

76. A Town Park, along with the Skate and Adventure Play Park, will offer a fantastic leisure facility to Midsomer Norton and the whole of the Somer Valley, helping to attract visitors to the town and making contribution to the success of the local economy. The Town Park will be an organic combination of open spaces, paths and features utilising the landscape to its full potential.

### **POLICY SSV3: MIDSOMER NORTON TOWN PARK**

#### *Development Requirements and Design Principles*

1. *Town Park scheme with some residential development.*
2. *Provide about 35 dwellings to be located at the eastern part of the site accessing from Wheelers Road within the HDB.*
3. *Maintain and improve existing Public Rights of Way, particularly along the River Somer for habitat creation/enhancement which will be part of an important Strategic Green Infrastructure route.*
4. *Provide links to the Five Arches cycle route.*
4. *Enhance the setting of the adjacent Conservation Area*
5. *Appropriate ecological mitigation to be included for bats, reptiles and invertebrates. Bat flight lines are to be maintained and no increase to light levels along this boundary*
6. *Land remediation as necessary following a geotechnical and geo-environmental desk study and site walkover survey*
7. *Provision of SuDs*

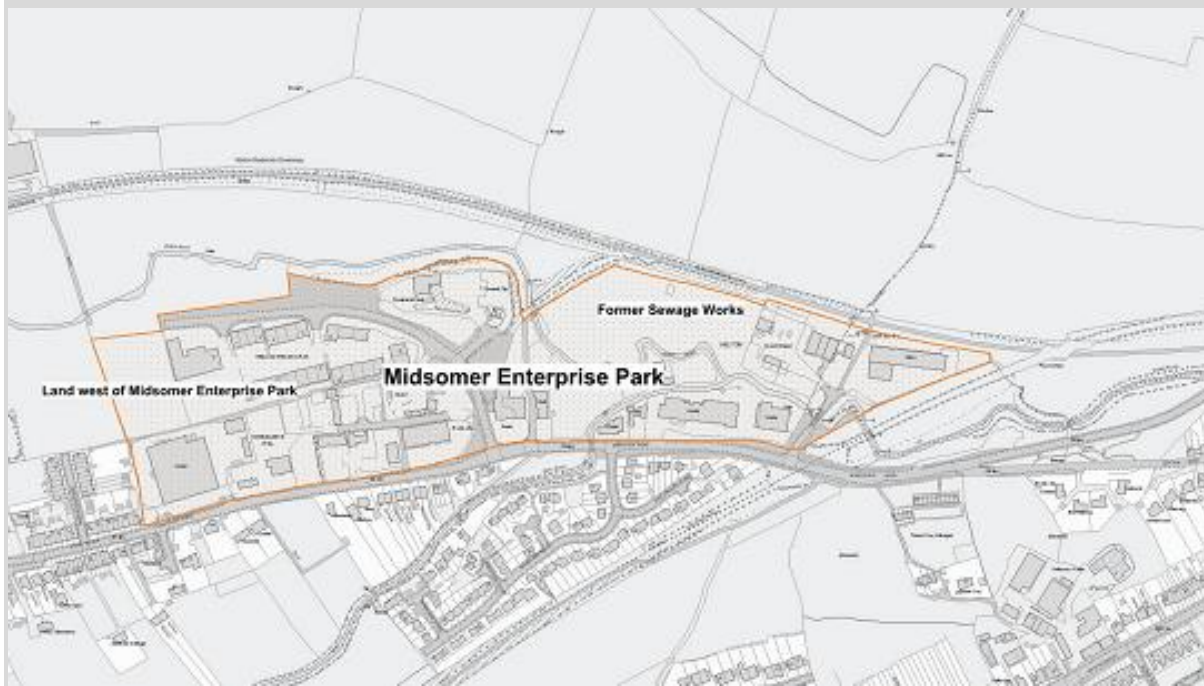
## **Former Sewage Works, Welton Hollow and Land West of Midsomer Enterprise Park within Midsomer Enterprise Park**

### **Context**

77. The former sewage works at Welton Hollow and Land West of the Midsomer Enterprise Park are included as part of the Strategic Industrial Sites in Midsomer Norton because they are important in delivering the economic strategy for this part of the District. Therefore proposals for light industrial, heavy industrial, warehousing (classes B1c, B2 and B8) and builders merchants (sui generis) will be acceptable in principle as Policy ED.2A applies.
78. Both sites lie close to the Midsomer Norton Conservation Area. Therefore, proposals for industrial development will need to ensure the significance of the heritage asset is understood and how development should respond to it is fully considered. In this

regard Policy HE1 is particularly relevant and requires that development should sustain and enhance the significance of the Conservation Area and its setting.

79. Special Area of Conservation bat records nearby Welton Hollow and the area lies within Strategic GI and ecological Network. Therefore, proposals for development will need to protect and enhance biodiversity. In this regard Policies NE 1 NE3, NE4 and NE5 are particularly relevant.

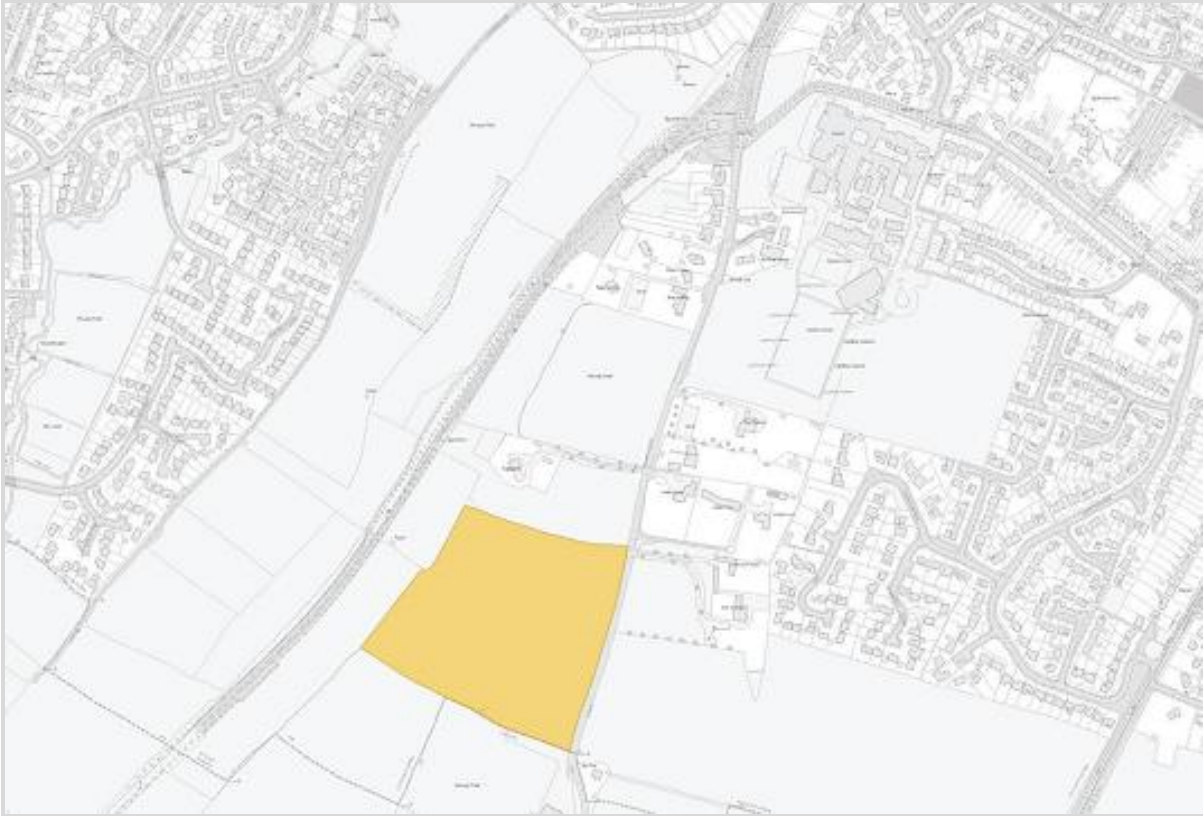


**Diagram 17: Midsomer Norton Strategic Industrial Sites**

## Land at Silver Street, Midsomer Norton

80. Land at Silver Street is safeguarded for primary education purposes under Policy LCR3 to facilitate the provision of increased primary school capacity in the Somer Valley.
81. LCR3 (5) Land at Silver Street (Midsomer Norton) is safeguarded for Norton Hill School, following the approval by the Education Funding Agency for primary school provision managed by Norton Hill School. This new primary school (630 places) will serve Midsomer Norton and surrounding areas. The safeguarded land could facilitate Norton Hill School to make more efficient use of their existing site for example by relocating playing pitches to the land at Silver Street to facilitate provision of the primary school. However, should a primary school be implemented and opened elsewhere to meet the needs of primary education of Midsomer Norton and surrounding areas the safeguarded land will no longer be needed.
82. Proposals for development of this land will need to meet the requirements of the Development Management Policies set out in the District-wide chapter, including the need to minimise landscape and visual impact and ensuring satisfactory vehicular access can be provided.





**Diagram 18: Land at Silver Street**

## **LOCAL GREEN SPACE DESIGNATIONS IN MIDSOMER NORTON**

83. 8 spaces nominated are designated as Local Green Spaces:

- Allotments
- Charlton Park
- [Hayes Park Wellow Brook Walk](#)
- Hillside Recreational Ground
- Holy Ghost Church
- Staddlestones
- St Chad's Well
- Welton Green

84. The Local Green Space Designations are shown on the map below.



**Diagram 19: Midsomer Norton Local Green Space designations**

## Role of the Centre

85. Radstock Town Centre provides a focus for the surrounding communities and villages with its local retail offer, job provision and community facilities. It is also an attractive place to visit with a unique mining heritage and rich rural environment sitting directly on National Cycle Route 24.
86. Radstock is located on the northern edge of the Mendip Hills in the Wellow Brook valley in the former coalfields of north Somerset. The town lies at the nexus of five steep-sided valleys and the tributaries of the Wellow Brook flow into the town from the north and south. One of the unique features of Radstock is the way the open countryside comes close to the heart of the town.
87. The sub-surface geology of the area is complex; of particular interest are the white lias limestones, which give rise to the local building stone of Radstock and contribute markedly to its local identity. Beneath the sub-surface formations are the upper coal measures, which give rise to much of the town's development when the resources were being exploited. Many houses in town are situated above the valley floor, perched on the valley sides.
88. The topography of Radstock reflects the underlying geology, which made coal mining possible, but also contributed to its eventual collapse due to its uneconomic nature. Surrounded by hillsides and sited at the confluence of the Wellow Brook and its tributaries, the town has a distinct landscape backdrop with the countryside encroaching close to the centre of town. The ridges comprise extensive tree cover, with remnant strips of woodland providing a sense of enclosure and focusing views across the town's valleys to the wider countryside beyond. In addition to this natural tree cover, plantations on the spoil heaps, locally referred to as batches, and quarries form distinctive tree groups on or up to the surrounding ridge tops and reflect the natural phenomenon of the highly folded topography and the intense coal-mining activity.
89. The discovery of coal in 1763 led to the development of Radstock as the centre of coal mining activity in northern Somerset until the 1950s. In the mid-nineteenth century there were six large collieries working in the town with further pits to the north and west beyond the main centre.
90. The most striking remainder of the coal industry is the transport infrastructure in the town. In the second half of the nineteenth century Radstock became an important junction of the Somerset and Dorset Railway and the Bristol and North Somerset Railway which subsequently formed part of the Great Western Railway and passed through the town. The development of transport was essential to the survival of the coal industry and resulted in the opening of the Somerset Coal Canal. The tramways and the eventual arrival of the railways in 1854 had a significant impact on the morphology of the town with a shift away from the old historic core around the church of St Nicholas, to the hillsides surrounding the coalmines. Although the



railways are no longer in use for trains, parts of their original routes have been retained as public footpaths, as have the many former collier's paths and narrow gauge tramway routes and branch railways that led from the main railway lines to the collieries.

91. The town still retains many important colliery features, and is a rare example of an early industrial landscape where small-scale mining existed in a rural community and has left an important local legacy. This includes engine houses, colliery buildings, huge planted spoil heaps and haulage inclines used to transport the coal. The industrial architecture contrasts sharply with the traditional farming communities of southern Somerset.
92. As the size and number of collieries increased in the Radstock area, more people were required and were often housed in small terraces erected by the coal owners. Some groups of these terraces survive and their contribution to the town is unparalleled in their exceptional quality and character. With a shift away from the old medieval core of the town, a scattered settlement developed on the valley sides close to the coalmines forming a separate industrial community. The terraces were built on the edge of established agricultural settlements, each with their own privies and extensive allotment garden.
93. The prevalent and traditional building materials reflect the local geology of the area. White lias stone laid as squared coursed rubble is the common building material, Welsh slate pitched roofs are the dominant roof form, and pennant sandstone is found in boundary and retaining walls. Carved bargeboards emphasise important elevations. It is these locally distinct architectural details that help to shape the character of Radstock, emphasise the town's industrial legacy and impact upon the views into and out of the town contributing significantly to the atmosphere of the town. It is vital that future development within Radstock references and builds upon these qualities; modern development within the centre has generally not been sympathetic to the more ornate, Victorian buildings, lacking their detail and visual variety. This is particularly evident in Fortescue Road where the alien materials and over-simplified proportions of the 1960s shops contrast sharply (and detrimentally) with the Victorian façade on the opposite side of the road.
94. With a shift away from the old medieval core of the town, a scattered settlement developed on the valley sides close to the coalmines forming a separate industrial community. The terraces were built on the edge of established agricultural settlements, each with their own privies and extensive allotment garden.
95. These key features of historical and architectural significance must be taken into account in applying Policy HE1 to development proposals in the town and ensuring they sustain and enhance the significance of the heritage assets.

## Assets

96. Particular strengths of the centre include:
  - Rich heritage: The most significant element is the Radstock Conservation Area and its well preserved mining past.

- An outstanding natural environment within and around the town, boasting prominent hills and valleys, woodlands, rivers and streams, and important biodiversity.
- Linkages with the National and local cycle network.
- Diverse range of services and a varied retail offer.
- A strong, high quality education sector across the age ranges including Bath College Somer Valley Campus.
- Existing and potential allotments provision which mirrors the traditional miner's cottage long- gardens and self-sufficient tradition.
- Strong network of established community groups.

## Risks

97. The following issues are identified as key risks to achieving the ambitions for Radstock.
- The highway network whereby the town is situated at the meeting point of a number of busy roads, compromising pedestrian environment and severely compromising the creation of a strong sense of place in the centre.
  - Potential flood risk.
  - Limited development opportunity sites to achieve overall ambitions for the town.

## STRATEGIC POLICY CONTEXT

98. The Core Strategy Policy SV3 provides the strategic planning policy position for Radstock Town Centre (Policy SV3). The centre is to provide a focus for the neighbouring communities and villages with its local retail offer, job provision and community facilities. Policy SV3 seeks to bring into use the under-used and vacant sites within the town centre, whilst enhancing the public realm, heritage assets and links to / quality of green infrastructure.

### ***POLICY SV3: RADSTOCK TOWN CENTRE STRATEGIC POLICY***

***The Strategy for Radstock Town Centre is:***

#### ***1 Key Regeneration Opportunities***

- a) Bring into use the under-used and vacant sites within the town centre (boundary defined on the Policies Map).***
- b) Enhance the public realm.***

#### ***2 Scope and Scale of Change***

***Make provision for:***

- a) Residential development as part of mixed use schemes***
- b) Modern office space and community facilities.***
- c) A district heating network.***
- d) Placemaking Principles***
- e) Protect and enhance heritage assets: The built form should retain its historical***

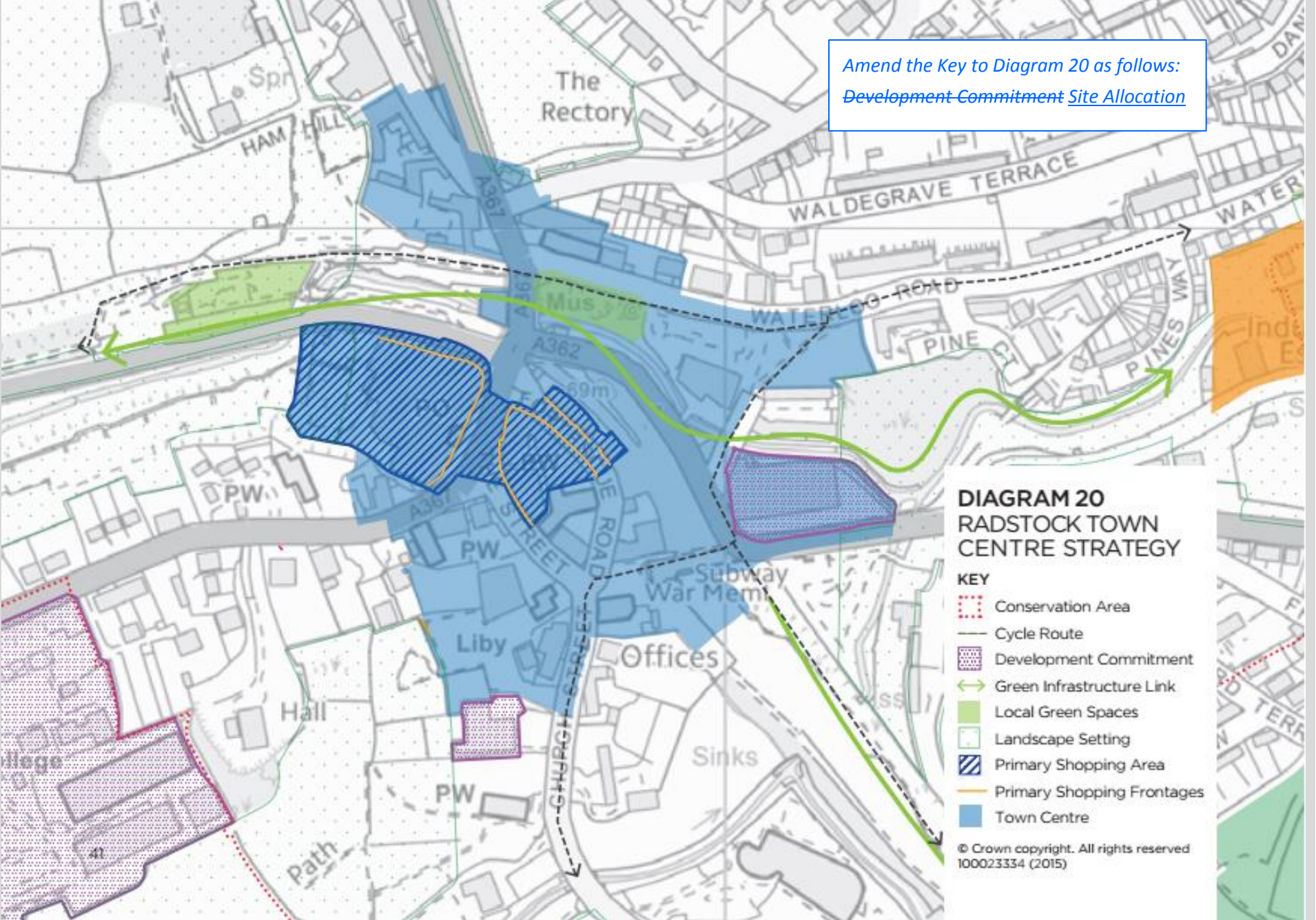
*and architectural value and development should attempt to integrate these features and carefully consider materials appropriate to the locality and building style.*

- f) Ensure that linkages to green spaces and sustainable transport routes are prioritised.*
- g) Protect and enhance areas of visual significance and views to open landscape, in light of their close relationship with the history of the town.*
- h) Protect and enhance the green infrastructure of the town centre associated with the river, particularly to help counterbalance the negative effect of traffic.*
- i) Establish greater provision for pedestrians and cyclists in the town centre including secured cycle parking facilities.*
- j) Secure a high quality of building design, townscape and public realm.*
- k) Improve connectivity between the core shopping area, community amenity areas including the library, Victoria Hall, Radstock Museum and key car parks.*
- l) Secure a more balanced mix of retail by supporting independent retailers (including those supporting cultural activities such as arts and crafts), leisure, tourist and commercial uses.*

## **THE VISION AND OBJECTIVES FOR RADSTOCK TOWN CENTRE**

- 99. There are a number of development opportunities within and adjoining the town centre. The Core Strategy Policy SV3 provides a high level context. A more detailed vision and objectives for the town centre have been developed in partnership with Radstock Town Council. This will form the framework for determining the future use of available or potentially available sites, and the infrastructure measures to mitigate the impact of development.
- 100. Discussions with the Town Council have highlighted important issues such as improving the town centre environment and retail offer, improving GI, infrastructure provision, and provision of medium sized industrial units.
- 101. The Local Trust has consulted on their 'Big Local Plan' covering Radstock and Westfield. In November 2010 the two areas were awarded £1 million by the Big Lottery under the Big Local programme. This funding is to be spent over a 10 year period to meet needs identified by local residents.

Amend the Key to Diagram 20 as follows:  
Development Commitment Site Allocation



**DIAGRAM 20**  
RADSTOCK TOWN  
CENTRE STRATEGY

- KEY**
- Conservation Area
  - Cycle Route
  - Development Commitment
  - Green Infrastructure Link
  - Local Green Spaces
  - Landscape Setting
  - Primary Shopping Area
  - Primary Shopping Frontages
  - Town Centre

© Crown copyright. All rights reserved  
100023334 (2015)

102. The vision of the 'Big Local Plan' is for a community that is participating in its future and working in partnership to make things happen. This will involve unlocking potential, getting people and communities connected and working together, managing the transition from old mining, printing and industrial to social enterprises and small businesses, and building on the ability of the communities to identify and respond to local need.
103. The 'Big Local Plan' consultation document recognises the need to work together with the Council on the Placemaking Plan to ensure that the needs and desires of the residents of Radstock and Westfield are fully considered. The 'Big Local Plan' will include the main elements of what will make the physical environment of Radstock and Westfield a great place to be; the Council will work closely with the 'Big Local Plan' team to ensure this happens.

## Vision for Radstock

### **Natural Environment**

*A place where the economic, social and environmental worth of the natural environment is fully recognised, valued and utilised within an enhanced, extended and more accessible green infrastructure network; where biodiversity value and ecological functionality is enhanced and managed; and where a proactive approach is taken towards reducing Radstock's carbon footprint.*

### **Health, wellbeing and social infrastructure**

*Radstock Town Centre will be a hub for health, wellbeing and social infrastructure, as well as improved local shops and premises for small business.*

### **Connectivity**

*A walkable town, making full use of Radstock's good access to the national cycleway network, and this along with the heritage legacy should provide a context for regeneration of the town. Pavements, cycleways and walkways designed to facilitate access other than by the private car. Improved transport connections / public transport provision to other settlements.*

### **Economic Development and Employment**

*Regeneration of the town providing more employment opportunities, based upon its strengths: the setting of the town, its geology, industrial history and legacy, the growing interest in the performing arts.*

*A modern market town that remains distinctive, with a coherent, locally well connected town centre with an extended and enhanced retail function, acting as a focal point for local communities, and with an improved public realm.*

### **Heritage and the Built Environment**

*Radstock is one of the best preserved coal mining towns in England, with many features well preserved, set in the largely agricultural Somerset countryside; the built form of the town will retain its historical and architectural value; new development will integrate these features and consider carefully materials appropriate to the locality and building style.*

*Its setting, a mix of mainly wooded slag heaps, grazing and arable land to be preserved.*

### **Tourism**

*The potential for tourism based on Radstock's attractive green infrastructure, mining heritage, cycle routes and attractive hinterland will be encouraged and promoted.*

## SITE ALLOCATIONS

### SSV14 - Charlton Timber Yard

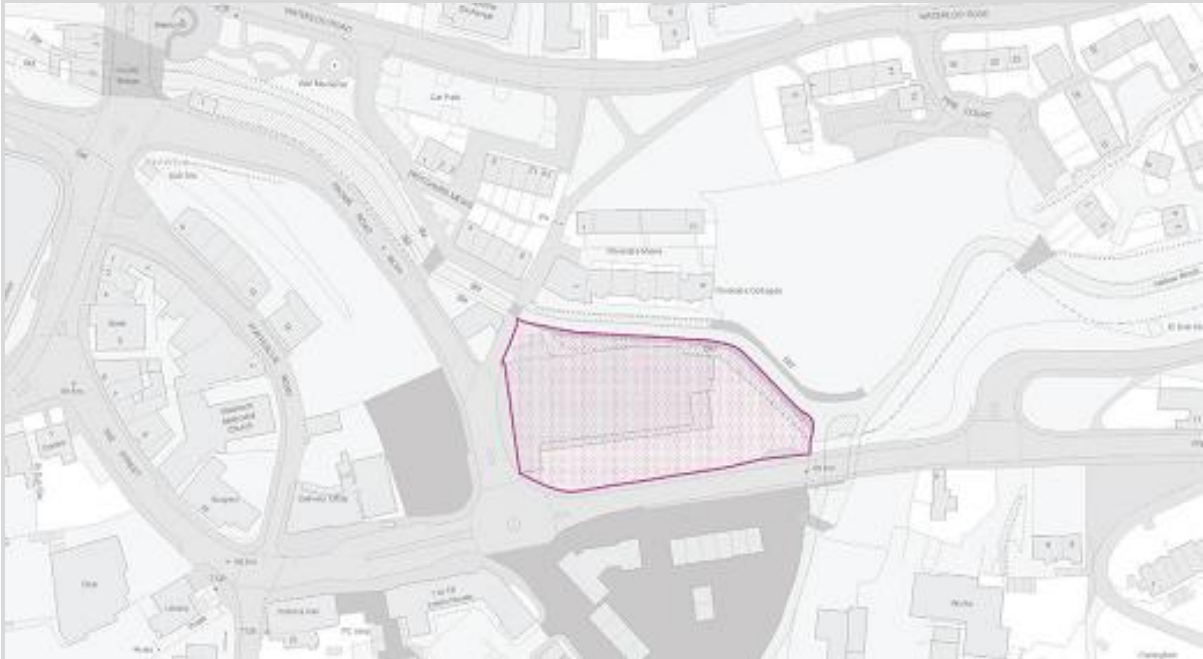
#### Context

104. The Timber Yard site is c.0.43ha, bounded to the north and east by the Wellow Brook, and to the south and east by Frome Road. This site was until recently the home of Charlton's World of Wood, a former timber yard with ancillary retail use. The site is occupied by a single building, constructed over a considerable length of time in several stages, with a gross floor area of around 2,000sqm. It is predominantly single storey, with a small two storey area in the north / north east part of the site. It is currently being used by Wessex Water as a compound for works being undertaken to Fortescue Road.
105. It is located in a prominent position on a bend in Frome Road, and is believed to have originally consisted of workshops linked to the collieries, constructed between 1880 and 1930 with subsequent amendments and additions. It is conceivable that some elements of the building are older than this and have been incorporated into the structure.
106. Along with the adjacent gabled Co-operative building to the north west of the site, the stone landmark buildings including the former Fire Station and boundary walls are a very important local landmark and have group value which should be retained and enhanced as part of any development. Emphasis should be given to the need for development to seek a positive and appropriate road frontage to Frome Road, rather than the car dominated frontage at present. The new Frome Road link delivered by the Council for the railway land development makes the site much more closely linked to the existing town centre. Redevelopment provides the opportunity to incorporate town centre uses that complement the existing uses in the town centre, and those being provided by the NRR development. Therefore the Town Centre boundary is extended to include this site.
107. Ecology is of particular importance in this area due to known bat roosts in close proximity to the site and known bat activity in the area, including Greater and Lesser Horseshoe bats. The tree-line and watercourse to the north and east are likely to be used by the bats.

#### Vision

108. Redevelopment should be a heritage led regeneration scheme, enhancing the significance of the Conservation Area, retaining and appropriately incorporating the distinctive historical buildings on site as part of the redevelopment, and forming an expansion of the town centre, complementing existing uses.





**Diagram 21: Charlton Timber Yard site boundary**

### ***POLICY SSV14: CHARLTON TIMBER YARD***

#### ***Development Requirements and Design Principles***

1. *Mixed use scheme encompassing town centre uses providing an active ground floor frontage onto Frome Road.*
2. *Heritage led regeneration scheme which will enhance the Conservation Area. The scale and massing of any scheme must respect local character and include a predominance of white lias stone as the external walling material.*
3. *Retention and reuse of the historic stone buildings and wall fronting the road including the former fire station, which are important local landmarks in the Conservation Area.*
4. *Reinstate windows within the historic stone buildings on the western boundary that are currently blocked up.*
5. *Protect and enhance the Wellow Brook boundary as a bat corridor, with additional planting using native species local to the area and no increase to light levels along this boundary. A buffer zone should also be included.*
6. *Bat boxes to be erected with provision of suitable monitoring.*
7. *Provision of SuDs (excluding infiltration techniques).*
8. *Remediation of any land contamination caused by the former industrial use.*



## Ryman Engineering Services

109. The site is currently in industrial use on a long narrow piece of land located on Frome Road located between the Norton Radstock Regeneration development to the west and an industrial estate to the east which incorporates former colliery buildings. This site is located adjacent to but outside both the town centre boundary and the housing development boundary.
110. The site is of local heritage and cultural significance and is an important element, and surviving remnant, of the Somerset coalfields, an intrinsic and significant aspect of Radstock's cultural identity and former historic economic activity employing large numbers of local people. The site comprises former railway sidings, which provided a connection for the collieries to the Great Western railway to the south, and the Somerset Coal Canal tramway to the north. There is surviving fabric and features from this use including tracks and a building constructed in the distinctive locally sourced white lias in common with much of Radstock. The site lies within Radstock Conservation Area.
111. Any redevelopment should take into account the historic location of the site, and its dual character as having both an industrial and rural character which should be reflected in the design approach.
112. The most significant ecology issue at this site is likely to be the potential for impacts on bats, including the light sensitive greater and lesser horseshoe bat. There is also potential for reptiles and rare invertebrate species on site.



**Diagram 22: Ryman's Engineering site**

113. Potential redevelopment for uses compatible with its location close to the town centre would be appropriate. However, assessments undertaken suggest that redevelopment may not be viable or deliverable. Therefore, the site is not allocated in the Placemaking Plan. However, should these circumstances change the issues

highlighted above need to be taken into account in bringing forward development proposals.

## **SSV17 - Former Radstock County Infants**

### **Context**

114. This site formerly accommodated Radstock Primary School, constructed in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and closed in 2005, replaced by Trinity Primary School on Woodborough Lane. The site is vacant and redundant, and within the Housing Development Boundary and Conservation Area. Prefabricated buildings remain on site, which are all single storey pitched roof (asbestos sheeting) structures located along the southerly edge of the site. The remainder of the site has been cleared. The surrounding area is residential, with Bath Old Road to the east and all three off-road boundaries to private residential gardens with 1m high stone walls along the west and north limits of the site. The site slopes steeply from north to south and also from the frontage to Bath Old Road and to the rear.
115. The site at present has a neutral effect on the Conservation Area with relatively low scale buildings on the site. Redevelopment offers the opportunity to enhance the Conservation Area. The surrounding area is generally residential and presents a strong character of natural stone, two storey terraced cottages with dressed stone window and door surrounds.

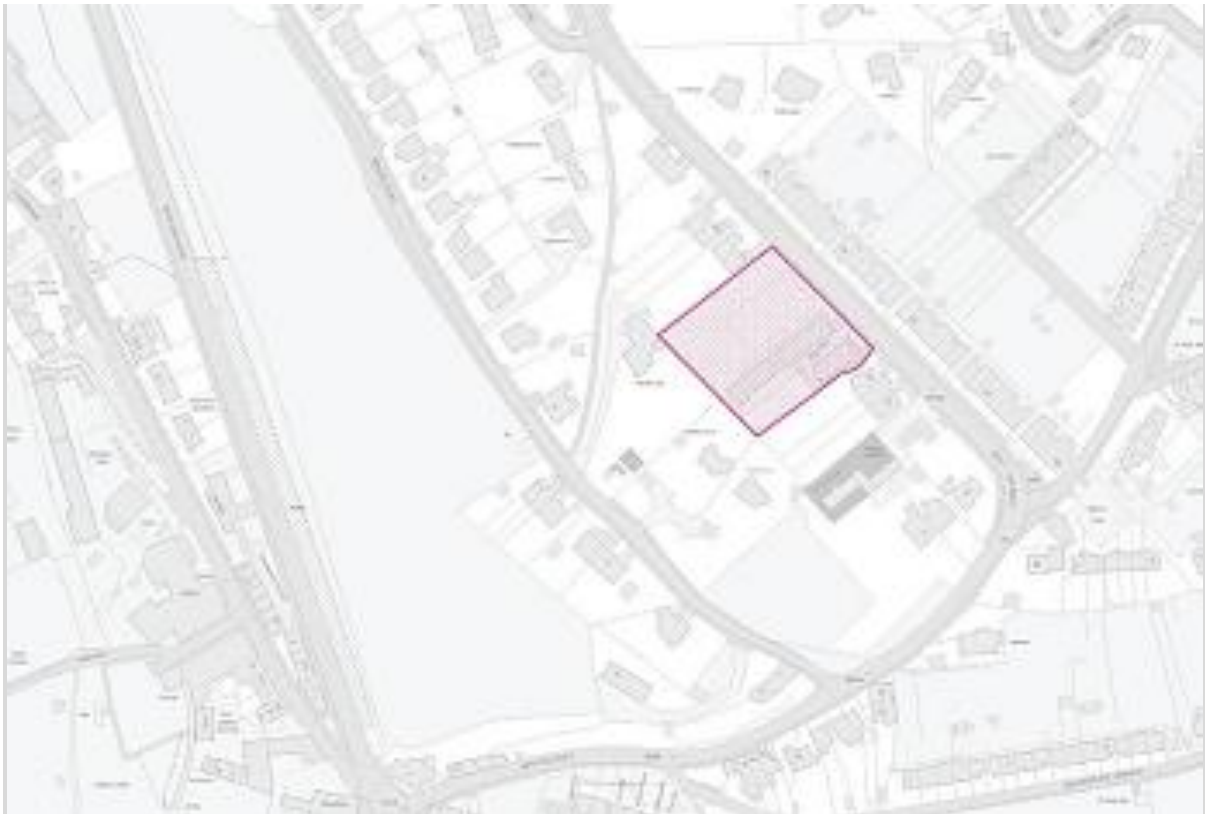
### **Vision**

116. Residential scheme which responds positively to the established character of the immediate area and which enhances the Conservation Area.

### ***POLICY SSV17: FORMER RADSTOCK COUNTY INFANTS***

#### ***Development and Design Principles***

- 1. Provide around 10 dwellings***
- 2. The frontage of the site should be consistent with and respond positively to the distinct building line and to this part of the Conservation Area***
- 3. The development shall incorporate a predominance of white lias stone as the external walling material***
- 4. Vehicular and pedestrian access from Bath Old Road.***
- 5. Protection of existing trees on the western boundary, including those designated with Tree Preservation Orders***
- 6. Car parking and highways should not dominate or dictate the design of the development or dominate the quality of the public realm***
- 7. Provision of SuDs by using infiltration techniques***



**Diagram 23: Former Radstock County Infants site boundary**

## **SSV20 - Former St Nicholas School**

### **Context**

117. This site is the former St Nicholas Infant School, which lies to the south of Radstock town centre and is adjacent to the public car park. The site is located within the Conservation Area.
118. The 19th century buildings are regarded as an important heritage asset to Radstock, which display interesting architectural qualities such as the bell tower, and have been constructed using high quality local materials. Historic England has described it as a 'handsome, imposing building, predating the 1870 Education Act, which retains its dignified presence on Church Street'. They confirm that the buildings are of local significance which occupy a prominent place in the streetscape, and make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.
119. The buildings have a direct, physical, visual and historical connection with the adjacent Church of St Nicholas and together as an ensemble of historic buildings they make a significant and positive contribution to what is the historic core of Radstock and the Conservation Area and make a positive contribution to the local scene, are locally distinctive and reinforce the sense of place and local character of the Conservation Area.
120. The site has been subject of recent planning applications to demolish the buildings for redevelopment, with the applicant stating that the building is not safe and should

be demolished for safety reasons. It is clear that the building has been subject to significant neglect and this has resulted in considerable internal damage from the ingress of water following the removal of lead flashings and a section of the building adjoining the headmaster's house.

121. The Council has refused these applications, and believes that the buildings are capable of meaningful adaption and reuse for a variety of purposes, the most viable of which would appear to be residential. Recent examples of similar conversions in the district include the Temple Infant and Primary school sites in Keynsham. If the buildings were demolished, the harm to the Conservation Area caused by the loss of the historic fabric would be considerable. This was supported by the appeal inspector.
122. The retention of the building through the restoration and conversion of the buildings would preserve a historic asset in a town which is undergoing significant regeneration which will further enhance the heritage of Radstock.



**Diagram 24: Former St Nicholas School site boundary**

## **Vision**

123. Restoration and reuse of the 19th century buildings for residential use, harnessing the heritage of the site, greatly enhancing the Conservation Area and forming a key part of the regeneration of Radstock.

## **POLICY SSV20: FORMER ST NICHOLAS SCHOOL**

### ***Development Requirements and Design Principles***

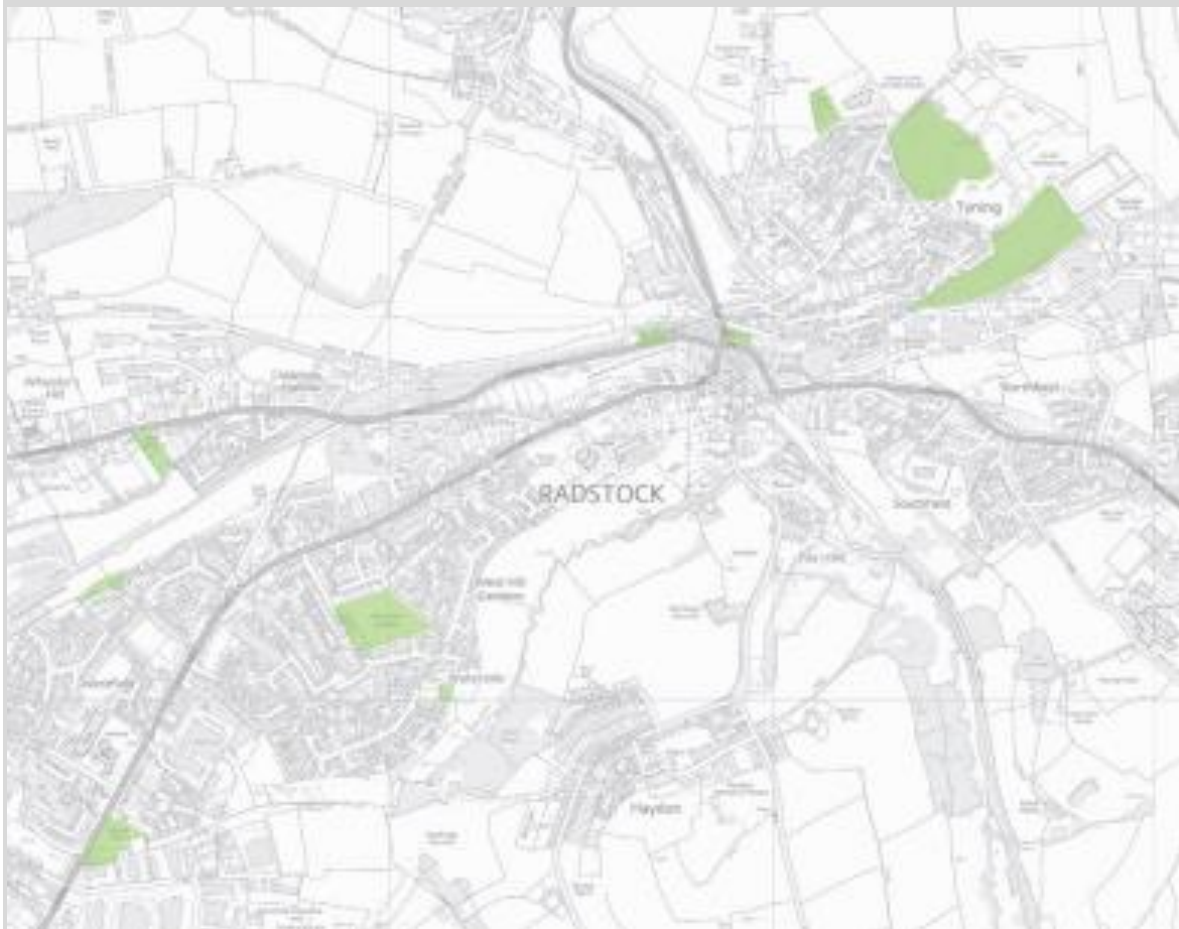
- 1. Conservation and reuse of the 19th century buildings as part of a residential development and/or community use***
- 2. Development should reinstate the important historic features to enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and preserve the setting of the surrounding Grade II listed buildings***
- 3. Appropriate mitigation to be included for bats which takes account of the significance of bat populations in this area.***

## **LOCAL GREEN SPACE**

124. Four spaces nominated are designated as Local Green Spaces:

- The Tynings Allotments
- Whitelands Batches
- The Tom Huyton Play Area
- Radstock Memorial Garden

125. The Local Green Space Designations are shown on the map below.



**Diagram 25: Radstock Local Green Space designations**

## WESTFIELD

126. The Parish of Westfield lies between Midsomer Norton and Radstock. It is intrinsically linked to these two settlements but has its own separate identity. It is an important base for services for the population centres of the old Somerset Coalfield area, and hosts important facilities such as Bath College Somer Valley Campus and Westfield Industrial Estate. There have been a high number of small housing developments in recent years, and one significant project at the former Alcan factory site which is currently being constructed. There are however only a small number of local shops in the immediate area at Westfield local centre.
127. The Placemaking Plan will focus on potential development sites such as the college grounds and the land adjacent to the St Peters Factory site.

### SSV18 - Bath College Somer Valley Campus

#### Context

128. In April 2015, Norton Radstock College was merged with the City of Bath College. Prior to the merger, Norton Radstock College was a small general Further Education College which had its main site within Westfield Parish. The College has undertaken a major transformation of its Estate and learning environment through a 20 year Capital Investment programme replacing a single 'unfit for purpose' steel framed and clad 1959 building and 42 temporary Elliot blocks with a high quality modern learning environment. This has included the provision of ICT infrastructure and well-equipped learning spaces, professional and industrial standard workshops and practical training facilities. Some £10 million has been invested since 1994 to provide new engineering workshops, a Construction Centre incorporating a Green Skills (low carbon) workshop alongside a Centre for Vocational Excellence in Care and new Land-based facilities for Horticulture, Animal Care, Equine Studies and Veterinary Nursing.
129. The new wider estates strategy, following the merger, involves reducing the total amount of sites occupied by the Colleges and the introduction of a construction skills centre of excellence at the Somer Valley campus. This provides local people with training opportunities and practical skills that can be utilised in the local employment market in line with the Core Strategy Vision for the Somer Valley. Bath College has secured circa £2.2m of funding from the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership to support the development of this new training facility. This development will see provision for training in construction relating trades currently delivered in the centre of Bath relocating to the Somer Valley campus in Westfield.
130. The allocation site comprises main campus buildings and playing fields adjacent to open fields and flood plain (a Site of Nature Conservation Interest) associated with Waterside, a tributary of Wellow Brook to the south, existing houses on the Ding to the west, and Wells Road to the north.
131. The campus has a relatively strong landscape structure that is capable of helping to assimilate and screen appropriately scaled and designed new development without



causing harm to neighbouring properties and longer distance views. A comprehensive masterplan illustrating the total development targets for the estate plan would help ensure operational matters and allow open space to be future proofed.

132. Trees should be retained along the Wells Road, western and eastern boundaries. Building scale and height should not cause an intrusion into views from the south east, and redevelopment should enhance the setting of the adjacent Conservation Area and Listed Buildings.
133. The development site lies in close proximity to a number of undesignated heritage assets. The most recent are three WW2 pillboxes along the southern boundary of the site (B&NES Historic Environment Record: MBN30293 and MBN30294) and whilst these would not be directly impacted by the development, their setting may be a consideration. There is the historic record of a Bronze Age round barrow within the playing field area (MBN2232) which may not have been an isolated feature as such monuments often occur in groups or in associated with earlier /later monuments.
134. Sustainability is a key corporate priority for the College; therefore redevelopment offers the opportunity for the College to showcase this aspect by delivering a sustainable development in line with Core Strategy Policy CP2.

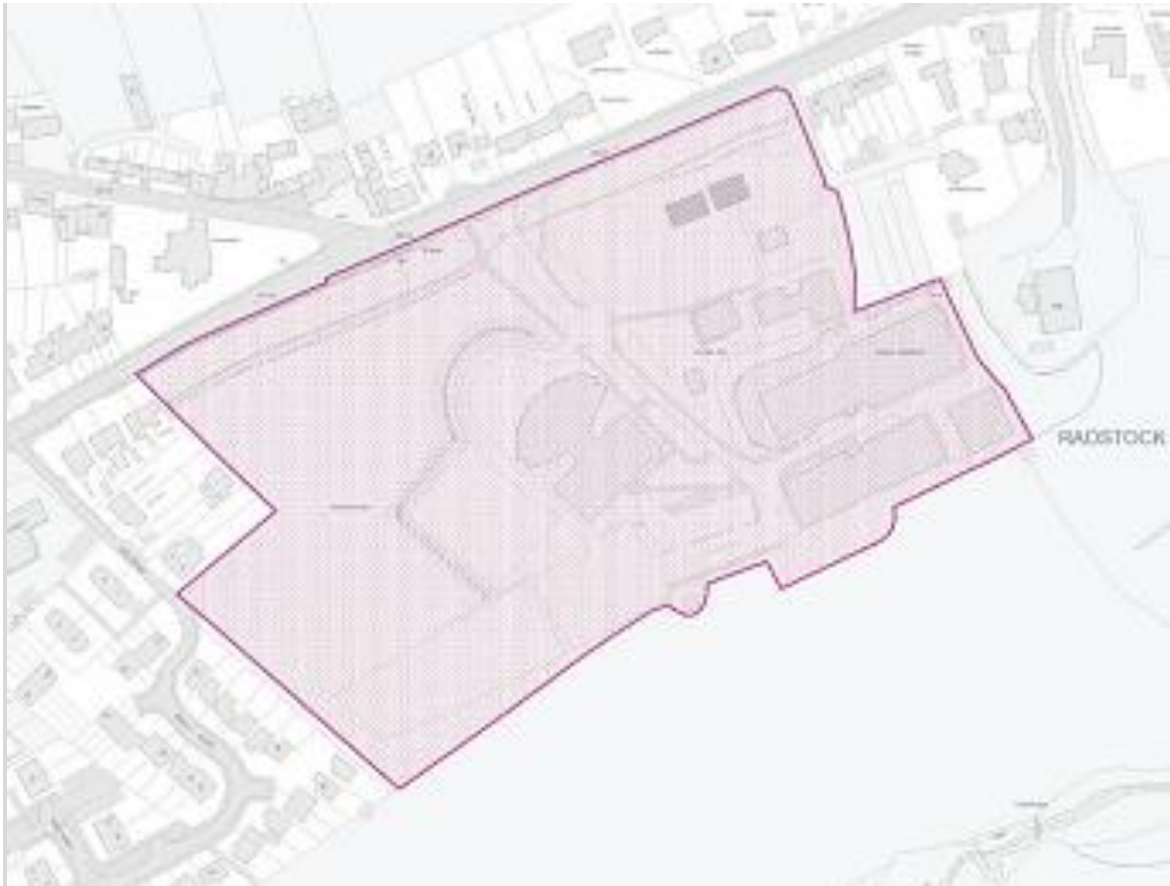
## **Vision**

135. Mixed use development with primarily education facilities and some employment uses supporting economic regeneration of the Somer Valley. New buildings will be constructed to a high level of design and sustainability which will be used as an educational tool for the Construction Skills training programme.

### ***POLICY SSV18: SOMER VALLEY CAMPUS***

#### ***Development Requirements and Design Principles***

- 1. Provide education facility led mixed use development with some employment uses***
- 2. Enhance the setting of the adjacent Conservation Area and Listed Buildings***
- 3. Retain existing trees particularly around the boundaries and enhance this planting if appropriate***
- 4. A pre-determination desk-based archaeological assessment needs to be carried out to assess all previous observations in the vicinity and the likely impact of the new development. Geophysical survey of the site is also necessary.***
- 5. Building scale and height should not cause intrusion into long distance views of the site. A landscape and visual impact assessment is required.***
- 6. Provision of SuDs by using infiltration techniques.***
- 7. Provide dark corridors to protect bat feeding and commuting routes around the sites perimeter***



**Diagram 26: Somer Valley Campus site boundary**

## **SSV11 - St Peter's Factory / Cobblers Way**

### **Context**

136. This site was an area of former quarrying and limekiln operations, and formed part of Local Plan allocation GDS.1 NR4 for a mixed use development for residential (100 houses by 2011) and business uses (B1, B2 and B8) with associated site requirements.
137. The majority of the 2007 Local Plan General Development Site site gained permission in 2008 for 107 dwellings and commercial development which has since been completed. The remainder of the site gained outline permission for 81 dwellings recently (14/04003/OUT).
138. The site is bounded to the north by an area of woodland, and to the east by residential development along Lincombe Road. To the north west the site is bounded by commercial and industrial units and to the south by the Waterside Valley and open countryside. The site is connected to the wider landscape by trees and hedge lines. In the main the site is laid to grass and relatively level with the land dropping away to the south into the valley where the boundary is bordered by a watercourse.
139. The site is of high ecological value having been identified as an important post-industrial site with particular value for bats, reptiles and invertebrates. The site also needs to carefully consider the relationship between the surrounding employment uses to the west, the current residential area to the east, and the Waterside Valley

and open countryside to the south. These considerations limit the amount of development that the site can acceptably accommodate.

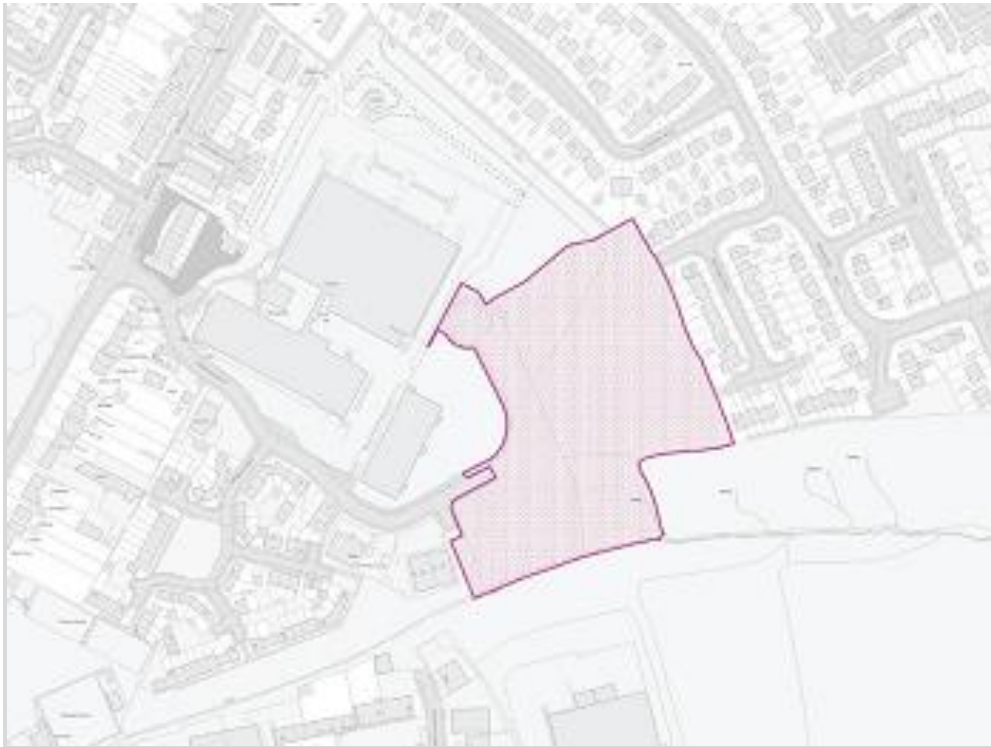
## **Vision**

140. New housing development which works in harmony with the site by incorporating multi-functional green infrastructure space as a key component.

### ***POLICY SSV11: ST PETER'S FACTORY SITE***

#### ***Development Requirements and Design Principles***

1. ***Provide around 80 dwellings***
2. ***Vehicular access from Cobblers Way.***
3. ***Pedestrian and cycle access from Lincombe Road.***
4. ***In the southern part of the site residential development is to face the open countryside setting of the Waterside Valley, with development set well back from the plateau edge.***
5. ***Enhancement of the Waterside stream at the southern boundary including restoration and buffering of the stream channel, provision of a recreation route along the route of stream linking with existing public rights of way. Marshy grassland to be created near the stream for invertebrate habitats and an area set aside for wildflower meadow creation.***
6. ***Retention and strengthening of tree belts (including the row of ash trees adjacent to the western boundary) and hedgerows around the perimeter of the site as commuting routes for bats, using native species local to the area, filling in gaps where present.***
7. ***Dark corridors to be in place to protect bat feeding and commuting routes around the sites perimeter.***
8. ***Bat boxes to be erected within the site with provision of suitable monitoring***
9. ***Refuges to be created and maintained in suitable areas on the edge of and/or adjacent to the site for reptiles.***
10. ***Protect minor aquifer underlying the site***
11. ***Provision of SuDs by using infiltration techniques***



**Diagram 27: St. Peter's Factory site boundary**

## **LOCAL GREEN SPACE IN WESTFIELD**

141. Four spaces nominated are designated as Local Green Spaces:

- LGS25 Shakespeare Close
- LGS26 Westfield Allotments
- LGS27 Westfield Playing Field
- LGS28 Westhill Recreation Ground

142. The Local Green Space Designations are shown on the map below.



**Diagram 28: Westfield Local Green Space designations**

# PAULTON AND PEASEDOWN ST JOHN

143. Paulton is located along the west end of a long, gently undulating limestone ridge with Peasedown St John at the eastern end. The ridge separates the Cam Brook from the Wellow Brook and River Somer valleys.
144. The southern part of Paulton is set back from the edge of the ridge so little of the village is seen from the Somer Valley. The village has spread down the gentler northern slopes of the Cam Valley. Located on the lower slopes the former printing works dominated the village and the valley landscape. Over the last few years these buildings have been replaced by new housing being built by Barratt Homes and Bovis Homes. The village is framed by attractive countryside. The village has a proud coal mining and industrial heritage which is reflected in its buildings and landscape.
145. Peasedown is a large village located to the east of Paulton, and also has a proud mining past. The main settlement is aligned along the same ridge as Paulton, which follows the line of the Fosse Way Roman Road. The small hamlet of Carlingcott existed before the large 19<sup>th</sup> century expansion when the Somerset coalfield was expanded as the Industrial Revolution increased demand for coal. By the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there were at least six collieries within 3km of Peasedown St John. The evolution of the village did not end with the closure of the coal mines in the 1950s; two periods of construction in the 1950s/60s and early 2000s involved the construction of large numbers of new homes. The southern boundary of the village is now formed by the Peasedown by-pass. Bath Business Park is located to the south east and is now nearing full occupation.
146. Both Paulton and Peasedown have accommodated large numbers of new dwellings in the recent past; a recent planning permission for large scale development at Greenlands (Peasedown) will add to this number in the future. Because of this, and because additional greenfield sites adjoining the Somer Valley settlements of Midsomer Norton, Radstock, Westfield, Paulton and Peasedown St John do not need to be allocated in the Placemaking Plan in order to meet the Core Strategy housing requirement, no housing sites are identified for inclusion within the Placemaking Plan.

## SITE ALLOCATIONS

### SSV9 - Old Mills Industrial Estate

#### Context

147. The Old Mills employment site which was allocated in the B&NES Local Plan (2007) is reallocated. This site is situated to the west of Midsomer Norton, but falls within Paulton Parish. The site boundary has been amended from the previous Local Plan allocation to reflect land ownership, availability and likelihood of delivery. Additional land has been included to the west of the existing industrial estate. Land immediately to the west of Paulton House and the former Focus DIY store has been excluded as it is not available for development.

148. The land forms an important site in the Somer Valley element of the Bristol, Bath and Somer Valley EZ and is allocated primarily in order to provide a long term supply of new employment land and to boost jobs in the area in light of the high levels of out-commuting. This land also provides the opportunity for some of the older factories in less suitable locations to relocate locally instead of leaving the area. The Core Strategy seeks to boost economic growth in the Somer Valley and this allocation can provide a long term supply of employment development opportunities. The site may also facilitate the relocation of a large employer within the area.
149. The allocation forms two broad areas; firstly an extension of the existing Old Mills Industrial Estate to the south of the A362, and secondly a new industrial estate to the north of the A362.
150. The northern area comprises around 11ha of agricultural land located to the north of the A362. To the north of the site a series of agricultural fields, well defined by hedgerows, slope upwards towards the village of Paulton. There are a number of internal hedgerows within the site boundary. A mixed use employment / retail development, including the former Focus DIY superstore, adjoins to the east, densely enclosed by planting. The western edge of the site is bound by Old Mills Lane and surrounding farmland, with views out towards the valley base. The A362 road borders the south of the site, with a row of terraced cottages linked to the former railway to the south west. The coal mining past is evident within the surrounding landscape, including the widely visible and distinct conical shape of the Old Mills Batch. Development will need to respond carefully to the site's contrasting edges. The gradient should not constrain the ability to develop the site, but it is likely to impact on the appropriate position and scale of development to ensure impact on the surrounding landscape is minimised. Additional planting and screening may also be required to help mitigate potential impacts.
151. The southern area comprises around 4ha of agricultural land which is immediately to the east of the existing Old Mills industrial estate, south of Langley's Lane and the A362. The site is bounded by hedgerows to the north, south, east and west, with the Wellow Brook running along the southern and western boundaries. Langley's Lane runs along the northern boundary of the site, and the Langley's Lane / A362 junction lies to the northeast. The site slopes from north to south, falling away at the northwest corner towards the Wellow Brook. The boundary features of the site are of intrinsic nature conservation value, and may support protected species such as breeding birds, dormice and commuting/foraging bats. The majority of the site is in Flood Zone 1, with the Wellow Brook corridor being Flood Zone 2 and 3.
152. The sites lie in a rural, predominantly agricultural valley and are visible from a long distance from the North, West and South especially from the edge of Paulton and Langley Down Lane. The northern site in particular is highly visible, but both sites are sensitively positioned in the landscape with a strong visual connection between both sides of the valley.
153. Redevelopment for industrial uses would bring localised increases in traffic demand on the western side of Midsomer Norton.



154. Together, the sites form part of the Old Mills Strategic Industrial Estate, defined in Policy ED.2A.



Diagram 29: Old Mills site boundary

### ***POLICY: SSV9: OLD MILLS INDUSTRIAL ESTATE***

#### ***Development Requirements and Design Principles for both areas***

1. **Development of light industrial, heavy industrial, warehousing (classes B1c, B2, B8), builders merchants and car show rooms (sui generis)**
2. **Major landscaping in order to mitigate the impact on the surrounding countryside and nearby residential properties**
3. **Retention and enhancement of existing hedgerows along perimeter of site (with on-site replacement of any habitat lost in accommodating the access roads).**
4. **Protection, diversion or undergrounding of overhead electricity lines**
5. **Improvements to the transport network to mitigate the impact of the scheme**
6. **Provision of community facilities to meet the needs of workers**
7. **Incorporation of SuDS as part of the surface water drainage strategy**

#### ***Additional Development Requirements and Design Principles for the Northern area***

8. **Minimise and mitigate impact on the Batch which is identified as an undesigned heritage asset, a Regionally Important Geological Site and a Site of Nature Conservation Interest**
9. **Access from the A362 (west of Langley's Lane) and Paulton House / former Focus DIY access road**
10. **Retention and incorporation of existing public rights of way into the scheme**
11. **Careful consideration of the appropriate position and scale of development to ensure impact on the surrounding landscape is minimised**

### ***Additional Development Requirements and Design Principles for the Southern area***

12. **Access from existing Old Mills Industrial Estate**
13. **Flood mitigation measures along the southern and western boundaries of the site, which should also incorporate ecological improvements**
14. **Appropriate lighting strategy to incorporate dark corridors to mitigate impact on bats**

## **LOCAL GREEN SPACE**

155. Ten spaces nominated are designated as Local Green Spaces in Paulton:

- Miners Welfare Recreation Ground
- Wallenge Open Space
- Memorial Park
- Car Park Wildlife Area
- Brookside
- Chivers' Knoll
- Cemetery
- Allotments
- Boxberry Hill Spoil Tip
- Paulton Paddock

156. The Local Green Space Designations are shown on the map below.



**Diagram 30: Paulton Local Green Space designations**

157. Five spaces nominated are designated as Local Green Spaces in Peasedown St John:

- Ecewiche Green
- Eckweek Lane Play Area
- Frederick Avenue/~~Albert Avenue~~
- ~~Land between Pippin Close and Russett Way~~ Land on Orchard Way between Frenchfield Road and Russett Way
- ~~Beacon Hall Play Area~~ Beacon Field Public Open Space

158. The Local Green Space Designations are shown on the map below.



**Diagram 31: Peasedown St John Local Green Space designations**

# INFRASTRUCTURE

159. The key infrastructure requirements for the Somer Valley as identified in the B&NES Infrastructure Delivery Programme (IDP) are summarised in Table 7, these are supplemented by District-wide infrastructure requirements. The IDP also contains a number of desirable infrastructure items (see paragraph 4.25). Infrastructure planning involves an ongoing process of dialogue and communication with infrastructure providers and as further evidence is developed and future funding is secured additional items may be added to the IDP or their status may be upgraded or altered.
160. In addition to the key infrastructure requirements, desirable infrastructure items that the Council will seek include:
- Smarter Choices Measures, which could include:
    - Travel Plans - new development to be required to contribute to improvements identified by School Travel Plans
    - Community Transport e.g. Ring and Ride services
    - Encouraging car sharing e.g. via car clubs
    - Working from Home
  - Highway network improvements to Midsomer Norton & Radstock.
  - Town centre public realm improvements in Midsomer Norton and Radstock.
  - Improved Cycle links and Green Infrastructure.
  - Proposed Town Parkin Midsomer Norton.

## Delivery

161. The main sources of public sector funding to help support the delivery of infrastructure and the strategy itself are as follows:
- West of England Partnership Single Conversation: West of England Delivery and infrastructure investment plan. Some £7.7 m of public investment by 2015 is included in the plan to enable the regeneration of brownfield sites in the town centres and to bring forward employment land in the Somer Valley area.
  - The 'place based' public investment priority through the West of England Delivery and Infrastructure Plan is intended to offer benefits in terms of 'Improving local communities' in the Somer Valley area.
  - 'Big Local Trust' Lottery fund for Radstock and Westfield: The local funding schemes will enable people to make their communities better places to live in, now and in the future.
  - HCA Rural Masterplan Fund.
162. Delivery of the strategy and infrastructure required to support it will be facilitated by the planning framework summarised below:
- Planning Obligations SPD
  - Placemaking Plan
  - Community Infrastructure Levy



- Midsomer Norton Town Centre Economic Regeneration Delivery Plan which will form a basis for bids to national and sub-regional funds (for example the West of England Local Investment Plan) that may become available to support development and enable the Council to maximise the potential of its physical assets.
- Radstock and Westfield Economic Plan

163. The Council will work in partnership with adjoining authorities and the different landowners to ensure that the regeneration of the town centre is comprehensive and conforms to the future Masterplan to avoid further piecemeal development.

**Table 7**

**Summary of Key Infrastructure in the Somer Valley**

IDP Ref	Key infrastructure item	Phasing	Cost	Funding & Delivery
MNRI.1	Public Investment for Site preparation and planning including site specific infrastructure.	2010-2015	£7.7m	Homes & Communities Agency Funding through the West of England Single Conversation: West of England Delivery & Infrastructure Plan
MNRI.2	Part of Greater Bristol Bus Network Major Scheme A37 Bristol to Midsomer Norton and Bath and Bath to Midsomer Norton and Radstock	2006-2011/12	£70m (at 2006 prices) for overall project	West of England Authorities, First Group, DfT.
MNRI.3	Site Base infrastructure requirements for Old Mills II	2010 onwards	Under investigation	HCA Rural Masterplanning fund - Investigative site infrastructure work being undertaken