

# Somer Valley Transport Strategy

DRAFT Non-Technical Summary

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Bath and North East Somerset Council

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## Key Actions

(References to **SV1** etc are to Delivery plan)

### Impact of New Employment Sites

To maximise the growth of jobs and to promote delivery of the Enterprise Zone, and in particular to improve access into the Old Mills site, the following measures will be brought forward:

- Developing a new access road from A362 into the site to reduce the impact of traffic on the narrow A362; **SV10**
- Improving cycle access through shared footway/cycleway routes from the existing Greenway to the east; **SV5** and
- Completing a cycle route to Farrington Gurney, west of Old Mills, subject to land acquisition or an alternative route being developed. **SV6**

In the short term undertake a review of parking along the A362 and the effectiveness of the current traffic management scheme. **SV16**

Improve pedestrian and cycle access to and through the former Welton Bibby Baron site, linking into existing nearby routes. Consider a possible junction improvement at Stoney Cross, taking into account interaction with the High Street. **SV3**

### Impact of Proposed Housing Developments

Improve access from new and existing housing developments by walking, cycling, and public transport. Request travel plans for all substantial new developments, both residential and business, as a planning condition and in accordance with the draft B&NES Travel Plan Guidance. **SV28**

Provide local traffic management schemes on the key routes and junctions to reduce delays and improve road safety and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

Junctions/Routes for review:

- North Road/Station Road/Radstock Road/High Street Roundabout (Stoney Cross); **SV11**
- B3355/West Road/Thicket Mead Roundabout; **SV12**
- A37 to Old Mills Enterprise Area (see section above);
- A37/A362 (see section above);
- A367 north of Radstock; **SV14/15** and
- A39/A37 traffic signal junction. **SV13**

Continue to support the development of Park and Ride sites as recommended in the Joint Transport Study to support the new Joint Spatial Plan for the West of England as a whole. **SV23**

## Public Car Parking

Ensure that any new developments in Midsomer Norton (including on South Road car park) provide sufficient parking to accommodate demand. **SV24**

In Radstock, monitor the impact of introducing limited lengths of stay in Church Street and Waterloo Road car parks on nearby on-street parking. **SV25**

Seek to maintain the level of parking for both centres to protect their local roles. In the future if demand continues to increase, additional spaces may be sought. **SV26**

Undertake a study/survey to see if a Park and Ride/car share could be promoted as a new transport interchange in Radstock. **SV22**

Support longer term use of the Co-Op car park particularly if demand for Park & Ride (or share) from Radstock develops. **SV27**

## Traffic Management on Major Routes

A367 to Bath:

Provide right turn lanes on the A367 south of Radstock where possible. **SV14**

Review the potential for provision of a new southern access to the Odd Down Park & Ride site off the A367 to make it more attractive to users and reduce queuing for all northbound traffic. **SV15**

Consider improving pedestrian facilities in Radstock for example by reviewing and improving signing. Audit the existing rural footways to identify where strategic gaps could be addressed for example from Farrington Gurney to the Enterprise Zone or Hallatrow to the A39. **SV4**

A362 Farrington Gurney to Frome:

Provide new pedestrian crossing facilities in Farrington Gurney and at Old Mills. Widen footways as part of any nearby development schemes, where possible. Review the operation of the recently installed priority scheme on the A362 east of the Paulton Road junction. Consider improvements to key junctions as part of development proposals. **SV16**

## Road Safety on the A367, A362

To undertake a safety review of the A362 and A367 routes building on the approach recently completed on the A37 focusing on vehicle speeds. **SV17**

## Supporting Cycling

Progress the Midsomer Norton Cross Town Link as a priority then extend links to the existing cycle routes from nearby residential areas. **SV7**

Improve cycle access to the Old Mills and Welton development sites. **SV8**

### **Promoting Safe Walking**

Implement improvements to the pedestrian environment in Midsomer Norton, as part of public realm/regeneration schemes and consider wider changes to the High Street road layout. Consider changes to junctions on the A367 in Radstock town centre where possible to improve pedestrian conditions. Take the opportunity of nearby developments to promote wider footways and complete missing footway links. **SV1**

At any locations where pedestrian and road safety issues are being addressed, ensure that the needs of people with mobility impairments are considered carefully. **SV2**

### **Passenger Transport Services**

The Council should continue its investment in key corridors to continue to promote bus use. Investigate options for improving east to west public transport provision. **SV18**

Promote greater use of the existing community transport services for all potential users. **SV19**

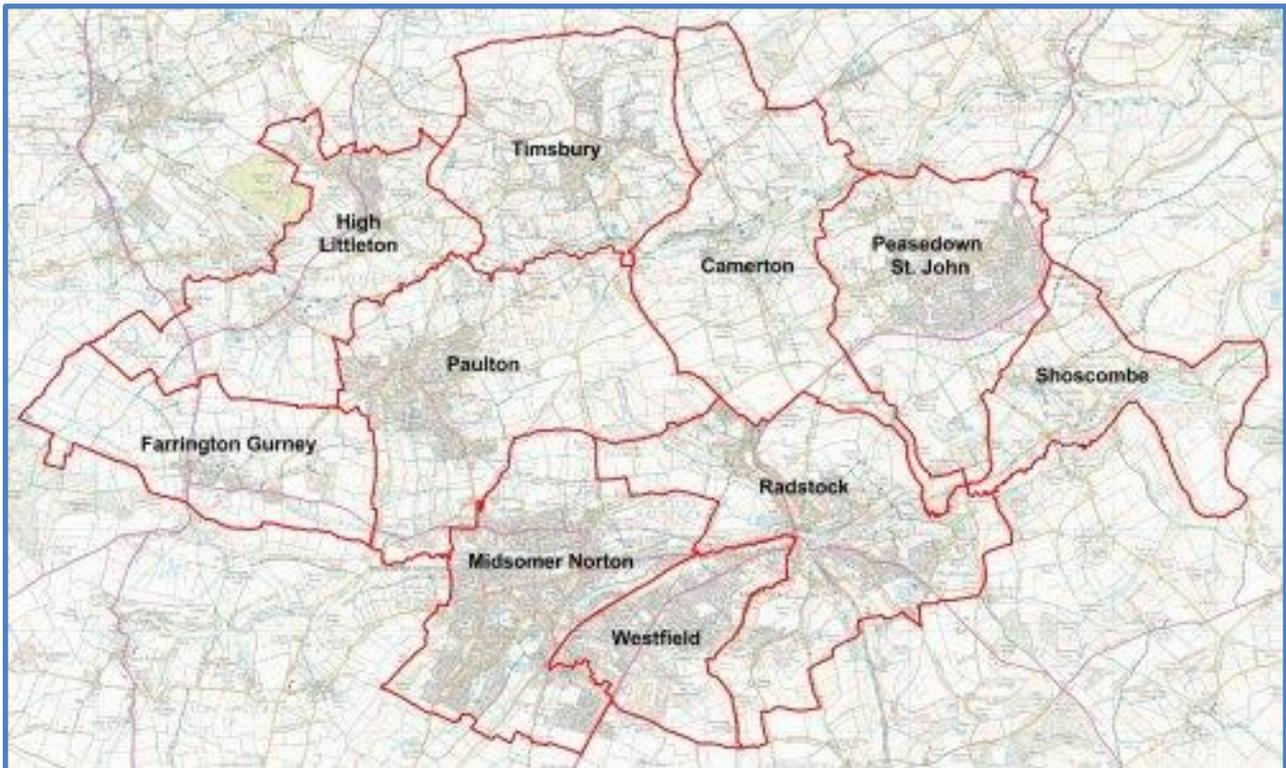
Continue to protect the disused railway line from Radstock to Frome as a sustainable route primarily for recreational and cycling use. **SV20**

### **Review of Speed Limits**

Implement reduced speed limits to improve road safety in the identified areas, subject to community support. **SV21**

## Scope of the Strategy

The transport strategy covers the urban area of Midsomer Norton/Radstock/Westfield, smaller settlements including Paulton and Peasdown St John plus the rural area and villages in the central and southern part of the Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) Council area known as the Somer Valley.



## Vision and Objectives

A vision for transport is helpful in establishing objectives and priorities, provided that it is achievable and reflects the nature and circumstances of the area. Clearly the Somer Valley has very different characteristics to the other urban areas of B&NES and transport issues are particularly important. The proposed vision is:

***'To ensure that the Somer Valley transport network is as safe as possible for all road users, that the transport services available to residents address their needs as far as possible, and that people are appropriately connected to work and other facilities.'***

The emerging Joint Spatial Plan & Transport Study for the West of England has set out a number of transport objectives for Bristol, B&NES, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire, which are relevant for the Somer Valley:

- Support economic growth: transport should support growth and focus on connecting main employment areas to where people live;
- Reduce carbon emissions: proposals should aim to reduce carbon emissions by providing better travel choices such as walking, cycling and better public transport;
- Promote accessibility: scheme should make it easier for people to access jobs, education and services such as hospitals;
- Contribute to better safety, health and security: investment should contribute to better personal safety and reduce road traffic collisions; and
- Improve quality of life and a healthy, natural environment: projects should aim to reduce traffic volumes, noise and emissions and protect the natural environment.

Consistent with the above, the proposed objectives for the Somer Valley are:

- Improving access to employment both locally and in Bath and Bristol;
- Improving access to local facilities by walking and cycling (employment, learning, training, retail, leisure).
- Improving the quality of life for local residents;
- Improving road safety for all users;
- Promoting sustainable mobility where possible;
- Maintaining and enhancing the local environment;
- Addressing the needs of people with mobility impairments;

## Context

The **population** of the Somer Valley totals nearly 41,000. Midsomer Norton is the main settlement which, with adjacent Radstock and Westfield parishes, accommodates 55% of the Somer Valley residents. Some parishes have very low and dispersed populations, notably Shoscombe with less than five people per hectare. Based on 2011 Census data, the highest concentration of full time employees is in Westfield, with at least 34% of residents in full time employment in all parishes. Timsbury and High Littleton have the highest proportions of retired people, up to 21%. Radstock has the highest proportion of sick or disabled residents (5%). Working at home typically accounts for 3% to 8% of those in employment but in Shoscombe it is much higher at 18%.

**Car availability** is an important consideration as a determinant of how travel decisions are made and reinforces the fact that a car is an essential requirement for many people living in the more rural areas. However, 16% of households in Radstock do not have a car (Census 2011), 14% in Midsomer Norton, Paulton and Westfield and 12% in Peasedown St John and Timsbury.

**Car is the main means of travelling to work** for most residents in the Somer Valley, particularly in Farrington Gurney. Car ownership level are lower elsewhere.. There are relatively few car passengers travelling to work.

The Odd Down Park and Ride is a key facility which allows those residents from the Somer Valley who work in Bath to make some of their journey by public transport, reducing pressure on roads within the city. A Park and Ride to serve traffic approaching Bristol on the A37 would serve a similar function and is one of the recommendations in the JSPTS.

In contrast to the high levels of car use, relatively few residents **travel to work by bus**. This can be attributed to a lack of regular services operating at times that enable workers to travel but which may also be linked to affordability and locations of work. Peasedown St John has the highest bus use, presumably associated with the frequent bus service to Bath, with Radstock also higher than the rest of the area.

Somer Valley residents **work in a wide range of locations**; nearly 20,000 residents travel daily, of which around 27% work locally in Midsomer Norton/Radstock/Paulton. As might be expected, there is a high concentration of jobs in Bath (27%) but with a wide range of other destinations in Bristol, Mendip, South Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and beyond. There is a high degree of out-commuting, with 7,000 fewer jobs than employed residents in Somer Valley. As would be expected, driving a car is much quicker than using a bus, taking journey times from Midsomer Norton as an example, with all of Bath and parts of Bristol within 30 minutes' drive in off-peak conditions. In contrast, bus travel is relatively slow, taking an hour to get to central Bristol, 50 minutes to Frome and 40 minutes to Bath and to Wells.

## Planning Context

The **National Planning Policy Framework** (NPPF) provides the context for planning processes and decisions. It adopts simple principles to support 'sustainable' development with a presumption in favour of development to accommodate growth.

The **B&NES Core Strategy** adopted in 2014 sets out a planning framework for future developments in Somer Valley and for addressing the challenges in the area including traffic congestion, poor public transport in rural areas, limited local retail facilities and the imbalance between housing and jobs.

The **Somer Valley Spatial Strategy as set out in the Council's core strategy and placemaking plan** highlights the potential for economic development in the area, with significant new jobs to be made available between 2011 and 2029. The key employment site is Old Mills, which from 1 April 2017 will have full Enterprise Zone status meaning employers pay no Business Rates for the first five years, and enabling funding for

business growth or transport improvements can be sourced from the Local Enterprise Partnership. The should provide up to 2,000 new jobs during the plan period.

Other potential employment sites are identified at Westfield Industrial Estates, Midsomer Enterprise Park, Bath Business Park in Peasedown St John, sites in Midsomer Norton at Old Mills and the former Welton Bibby & Barron site and Midsomer Norton and Radstock town centres. The locations of these employment sites can be viewed in Figure 1 below.

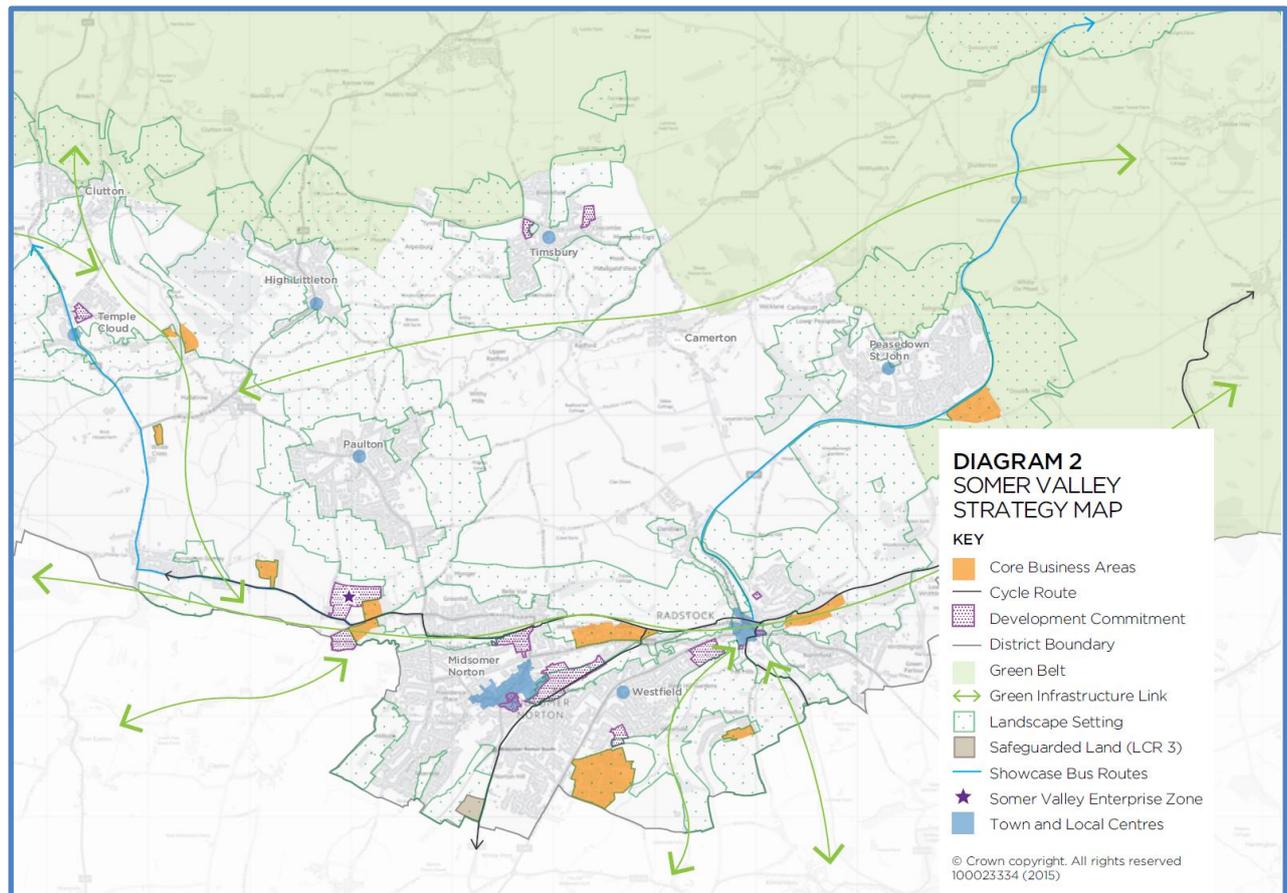


Figure 1 – Somer Valley Strategy Map (source – Placemaking Plan Pre-Submission Draft)

The Somer Valley Spatial Strategy within the Core Strategy also states that 2,470 new homes are to be built at Midsomer Norton, Radstock, Westfield, Paulton and Peasedown St John (many being underway) supported by an improved retail offer in Midsomer Norton, better transport links to and within the Somer Valley and the promotion of sustainable transport through ‘smarter choices’ (such as travel plans, community transport, car sharing and working from home).

The **Midsomer Norton** Town Centre Strategic Policy (again within the Core Strategy) supports this approach, including reducing traffic volumes in the High Street and improving the pedestrian environment. In addition, there is an aspiration to accommodate an additional food store using the South Road car park; this has been considered in more detail and it is evident that the car park is well used currently and that

many of the spaces would be displaced by the construction of any new retail unit. Should development proceed, then the existing number of spaces must be re-provided but with additional parking to cater for additional trips due to increased retail activity.

**Radstock** is also highlighted as a town centre which can be developed by bringing into use vacant and under-used sites and promoting residential development within mixed use schemes. Several roads converge in Radstock with the result that traffic dominates the streetscene to the detriment of people who walk or cycle and those who have mobility impairments. It appears that the current traffic arrangements generally cater for all movements but there are long queues at peak times. A review of the A362/A367 junction is recommended to identify if a comprehensive re-working of the current arrangements could re-balance the central area by addressing the needs of all users and reduce congestion, perhaps with the application of a 'shared use' scheme or traffic signal junction.

The **Placemaking Plan** complements the Core Strategy and details the proposed development sites in the Somer Valley and issues that need to be considered if these sites are to be developed. The Plan was subject to an Examination in Public during September 2016 and the results of this are awaited before the plan is formally adopted. In addition to infrastructure requirements, other measures will be sought or enhanced including 'smarter choices' (such as travel plans, community transport, car sharing and working from home), road and public realm improvements in the built-up areas and improved cycle links.

A number of **Neighbourhood Plans** are underway or planned. A Neighbourhood Plan is being developed for Midsomer Norton for which consultation included transport, communication and movement as key themes. Timsbury, Westfield and High Littleton are each developing a Neighbourhood Plan but no details are available at present. High Littleton is yet to be formally designated as a Neighbourhood Plan area.

Paulton is not currently progressing a Neighbourhood Plan although the Community Plan of 2010 emphasized the need to reduce traffic speeds through the village. This has recently been pursued through the introduction of 20mph zones throughout the village. Dissatisfaction with local bus services was expressed notably regarding fare levels and frequency but improved walking and cycling routes would be supported.

Peasedown St John is not currently progressing a Neighbourhood Plan but a Parish Plan of 2010 set out priorities including improved road safety (notably speeding), addressing problems of footway parking especially in residential areas, overnight lorry parking and improved street lighting. Similar to Paulton 20mph zones have been introduced within Peasedown St John in response to the concerns raised over road safety. Other suggestions included an improved walking network with dropped kerbs and wider footways. More use of Dial-a-Ride was also advocated alongside more reliable bus services with lower fares for commuters and maintaining home to school transport to

Writhlington School. Supporting local jobs was seen as a means of avoiding travel beyond the area. While there is a desire to reduce traffic levels, many local journeys are made by car, the consequence of which is local traffic.

In 2010 B&NES Council approved its first **Economic Strategy**, developed in conjunction with the B&NES Economic Partnership. More recently, the Strategy was reviewed with specific reference made to the Somer Valley market towns to support economic growth with local employment and a co-ordinated approach to traffic management, access and parking in the town centres. A key theme is to improve transport connectivity within and between major employment centres, with an action to improve public transport links.

## Impact of New Employment Sites

The Draft Placemaking Plan identifies two employment sites at **Old Mills** for light industrial, heavy industrial, warehousing and distribution, and car showrooms. Whilst the likely trip generation levels for such uses are relatively low, improved access to the site will be needed, particularly given the constraints in parts of the A362. However an office element may be included, meaning trip generation will be much higher so further improvements to local junctions will be required.

In terms of possible road/junction improvements, none are considered necessary to the main A362 route for safety reasons based on the casualty record. However, consultation indicates that there are access problems for properties. The A362/B3355 roundabout east of the Tesco roundabout currently experiences limited congestion at peak times but options are constrained by nearby properties.



The revised bus service 172 will stop at the nearby Tesco store en route from Wells and Paulton through to Midsomer Norton, Radstock and Bath. Service 179 will now also stop at Tesco, but this only runs every 1½ or 2 hours.

For cycling, access from the east would be improved by converting the existing footways alongside the B3335 and A362 to shared walk/cycleways. To the west, an off-road cycle route was previously considered to link to Farrington Gurney but the land required could only be acquired through compulsory purchase. Alternatives to this proposal are currently being investigated.

**Key actions: To maximise the growth of jobs and to promote delivery of the Enterprise Zone, and in particular to improve access into the Old Mills site, the following measures will be brought forward:**

- **Developing a new access road from A362 into the site to reduce the impact of traffic on the narrow A362;**
- **Improving cycle access through shared footway/cycleway routes from the existing Greenway to the east; and**
- **Completing a cycle route to Farrington Gurney, west of Old Mills, subject to land acquisition or an alternative route being developed.**
- **In the short term undertake a review of parking along the A362 and the effectiveness of the current traffic management scheme.**

The former **Welton Manufacturing Site** is intended to be a mixed use regeneration scheme with the opportunity to improve pedestrian and cycling connections both north to south and east to west for new and neighbouring residential communities.



An initial review suggests that the scope to increase road capacity at the nearby High Street/Station Road junction is limited.



The majority of buses stop at the Town Hall in the town centre and do not pass any closer to the development site. For cycling, the site benefits from the Radstock Norton Greenway to the north, so good internal cycle connections to this route should be provided.

**Key actions: Improve pedestrian and cycle access to and through the former Welton Bibby Baron site, linking into existing nearby routes. Consider a possible junction improvement at Stoney Cross, taking into account interaction with the High Street.**

## **Impact of Proposed Housing Developments**

The majority of new housing in the Somer Valley area will be provided in Midsomer Norton and Radstock. Between 2011 and 2014, 352 new houses were built in Midsomer Norton, with a further 826 houses with planning permission in Midsomer Norton and Radstock that are expected to be completed by 2020. Key routes in the area with regards to development are the A367 and B3335 routes in from the south, with two large sites having gained planning permission at Fosseway South (165 houses) and St Peter's factory (81 houses).

There are also two other sites for which outline planning applications have been submitted to Mendip District Council close to Midsomer Norton, including 151 houses south east of the A367 and 188 houses plus a three-form primary school, south of

Fosseway South. The majority of trips to work from these housing developments are expected to head north, passing through the town centres. Concern has been expressed that the impacts of housing developments are not being viewed in combination. A particular concern is that, despite sites being within apparent walking distance of the town centre, it is less attractive than car use. For example, the B3335 Silver Street has limited footway provision, a narrow carriageway and 60mph speed limit, making it totally unsuitable as a pedestrian route. There is also a lack of cycle facilities, especially any segregated cycle routes from the south, making cycling less attractive. The actions set out below should help address this issue.

In terms of **road traffic impacts**, it is recommended that a detailed traffic model is developed covering the whole of Midsomer Norton and Radstock, as well as the main routes into/out of this area. Without such a model it is very difficult to assess the cumulative effects of several developments, given that if longer delays in certain areas are predicted in the future, the effect of re-routing need to be considered. It is possible that it is not the capacity of the main junctions on the A367 that is causing existing congestion but is the combination of side road junctions and activity along the route that leads to longer journey times and 'stop-start' conditions.

In Paulton, 183 houses were completed between 2011 and 2014 as part of the Polestar development, with a further 291 that have planning permission and are expected to be built over the next five years. Outline planning permission has also been granted for 130 units as part of a 'Continuing Care Retirement Community'.

The likely new trip generation associated with the proposed level of housing in the Somer Valley area has been estimated, based on typical trip rates per household. Between 2014 and 2029 a total of 1,723 new houses are included in the Local Plan (with 747 of the total of 2,470 already built). This would be expected to generate a total of around 830 new vehicle trips in the AM peak hour and 860 in the PM peak hour. As these numbers cover the whole Somer Valley, they are not at a level that would warrant major road building in the area, such as a new bypass or relief road. Nevertheless, significant increases on some of the key links are expected which will need to be carefully managed.

Good links into the town centre and local schools by walking and cycling should be sought, together with good links to local bus stops, as these will be most effective in reducing the impact of car travel.

The production and implementation of effective **travel plans** can assist in mitigating some of the adverse impacts of new developments, both residential and business; and in supporting sustainable travel initiatives. Bath and North East Somerset Council is currently preparing its own bespoke Travel Plan Guidance for developers, and this should be completed and adopted by the end of 2017.

The main housing developments will generate some additional **demand for bus services**, although this will be limited and can be accommodated by the existing services; a bigger issue is bus accessibility in relation to some of the large development sites. For example, bus routes do not pass the new developments south of Radstock as they go to Midsomer Norton via Chilcompton then onto Radstock via Charlton Road.

While there are well developed bus services from Radstock to Bath they are not attractive to all those who wish to travel to Bath. The Odd Down Park and Ride is an essential facility for many in the Somer Valley. A similar facility at Whitchurch could provide a service for those who wish to travel to Bristol. Other sites are better served; the St Peter's factory site and former railway land in Radstock are both north of Charlton Road and close to bus stops, so could be well served by the more frequent bus services. The Monger Lane site in Midsomer Norton and the Polestar development in Paulton are also both on bus routes.

**Key actions: Improve access from new and existing housing developments by walking, cycling, and public transport. Request travel plans for all substantial new developments, both residential and business, as a planning condition and in accordance with the draft B&NES Travel Plan Guidance. This condition will specify time periods for surveys and monitoring reports, and the Council will provide support and assistance with the development, implementation and monitoring of the travel plans.**

**Provide local traffic management schemes on the key routes and junctions to reduce delays and improve road safety and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.**

**Junctions/Routes for review:**

- **North Road/Station Road/Radstock Road/High Street Roundabout (Stoney Cross);**
- **B3355/West Road/Thicket Mead Roundabout;**
- **A37 to Old Mills Enterprise Area (see section below);**
- **A37/A362;**
- **A367 north of Radstock; and**
- **A39/A37 traffic signal junction.**

**Continue to support the development of Park and Ride sites as recommended in the Joint Transport Study to support the new Joint Spatial Strategy for the WoE as a whole.**

## Public Car Parking

The continued growth of housing and commercial development within the Somer Valley is likely to lead to increased use of existing off-street car parking, which surveys show is well used at the moment. In the future there may be the need for further provision. Survey data indicates that car parks and on-street spaces in **Midsomer Norton** are well used but comfortably within the total capacity available, taking into



account parking for retail stores (765 spaces). There has been a view expressed that free public parking is constrained but is essential to support the town's economic activity. It can be concluded that new development in the town centre should be supported by appropriate parking provision and that any loss of parking due to redevelopment, such as on South Road, must be re-provided.

**Radstock** has limited public parking with small car parks at Waterloo Road and Church Street and limited on-street parking. Survey data shows that these are well used.



In addition, the Co-Operative store has 261 spaces but the survey showed a maximum occupancy of only 97 spaces. With the loss of Victoria Hall car park, the Co-Op car park became busier and a maximum stay of three hours was introduced. Around 20 spaces were also allocated for long stay use with a permit system for those working in the town centre.

Nevertheless, significant spare capacity is likely to remain in the Co-Op car park at present. It is also understood that B&NES Council has increased the capacity of the Church Street car park by 18 spaces, as well as limiting stays here to five hours (and four hours in part of Waterloo Road car park). It is suggested that discussions are held

with Co-op, with a view to allowing more spaces (or permits) to be made available for long stay.

Initial feedback is that the restriction has freed up spaces for more short stay users but those that wish to park all day (such as those working in the town centre) now park on-street in residential areas.

There is anecdotal evidence that some parking in Radstock is used by commuters who continue their journey to Bath by bus or car sharing. This is supported but should not take spaces away from town centre uses and shoppers.



**Key actions: Ensure that any new developments in Midsomer Norton (including on South Road car park) provide sufficient parking to accommodate demand. In Radstock, monitor the impact of introducing limited lengths of stay in Church Street and Waterloo Road car parks on nearby on-street parking.**

**Seek to maintain the level of parking for both centres to protect their local roles. In the future if demand continues to increase, additional spaces may be sought.**

**Undertake a study/survey to see if a Park and Ride/car share could be promoted as a new transport interchange in Radstock. Support longer term use of the Co-Op car park particularly if demand for Park & Ride (or share) from Radstock develops.**

## Traffic Management on Major Routes

### A367 to Bath

Traffic count data for the A367 Bath New Road in Radstock at the County Bridge in 2014 indicated around 11,000 vehicles in each direction on an average weekday. Peak congestion occurs regularly at the mini-roundabouts in Radstock town centre with long queues on the A367 southbound approach in the evening peak hour. Increasing capacity in Radstock town centre is very difficult due to the constraints of the built-up area and the need to allow for all movements.

On the A367 south of Radstock town centre, traffic is slow-moving in the peak hours but junction capacity may not be the problem but rather the number of junctions along a relatively short distance. It is likely that provision of right turn lanes from the A367 into

side roads where possible would improve the situation, by stopping the main traffic flow being obstructed by vehicles waiting to turn.

Long queues develop in the morning peak on the A367 into Bath, primarily due to the constrained road network to the north. Removing the bus lane towards Odd Down roundabout has been suggested as a way of increasing capacity but this is unlikely to reduce delays significantly. This is currently being reviewed. A better solution would be to provide a new access into the Park and Ride site from the south.

**Key actions: Provide right turn lanes on the A367 south of Radstock where possible. Review the potential for provision of a new southern access to the Odd Down Park & Ride site off the A367 to make it more attractive to users and reduce queuing for all northbound traffic.**

Within settlements there is reasonable **provision for walking** but roadside footways between settlements, where they are in place, tend to become overgrown with vegetation.



In Radstock, there are inconsistencies of footway width, junction arrangements and formal and informal crossing arrangements. In particular, the centre of Radstock is difficult for pedestrians to negotiate and controlled crossings are set back from natural desire lines.

**Key actions: Consider improving pedestrian facilities in Radstock for example by reviewing and improving signing. Audit the existing rural footways to identify**

**where strategic gaps could be addressed for example from Farrington Gurney to the Enterprise Zone or Hallatrow to the A39.**

### **A362 Farrington Gurney to Frome**

Traffic flows on the A362 to the west of Farrington Fields Industrial Estate were around 11,000 vehicles/day in each direction in 2015. Data for south east of Radstock at Writhlington shows that traffic flows are much lower than those approaching Radstock from the west and are relatively low for an 'A' road. This is expected as many of those approaching Radstock from the west on the A362 head north at Radstock towards Bath on the A367. Between Radstock and Frome there is generally limited congestion with some delays related to trips to Writhlington school. There does not appear to be a case for major road improvements for the A362 from Radstock to Frome.

Between Radstock and Farrington Gurney, some delays occur at junctions, mainly those in Midsomer Norton, such as at the High Street mini-roundabout and B3355 roundabout. East of the Paulton Road junction, a scheme has been implemented recently to give priority to eastbound traffic where on-street parking arrangements have been formalised on the westbound side. This arrangement causes delays to traffic in both directions but especially those heading westbound and is also confusing as there are no signs to inform drivers who has priority at the build outs.

**Key actions: Provide new pedestrian crossing facilities in Farrington Gurney and at Old Mills. Widen footways as part of any nearby development schemes, where possible. Review the operation of the recently installed priority scheme on the A362 east of the Paulton Road junction. Consider improvements to key junctions as part of development proposals.**

### **Road Safety on the A367, A362**

Reported collision data has been collated for these main routes. A number of locations have been identified that have clusters of incidents in the five year period between 2010 and 2015.

On the A367, 34 incidents were recorded at seven locations in Peasedown St John, Clandown and five locations in Radstock, the majority being slight injury accidents but with three serious and one fatal. There appear to be various causes including driver error with loss of control, speed-related collisions, impacts with pedestrians and conflicting movements for which various remedial measures are proposed.

On the A362, 20 incidents occurred at four clusters at junctions, two of which were in Radstock (excluding the A367/A362 mini-roundabouts reported earlier). 19 incidents resulted in slight casualties and one serious; incidents with pedestrians occurred in five instances and causes included driver error with one incident in icy conditions.

The A37 had 35 incidents recorded at ten cluster locations between Whitchurch and Farrington Gurney. Two casualties were fatal, two serious and the remainder were slight. Causes included loss of control, including some on the sections with higher speed limits and on bends. Elsewhere, collisions occurred at junctions, some of which took place in adverse weather conditions or where misjudgements led to collisions. Two clusters were in the Somer Valley.

West of Hallatrow, a cluster of three accidents has occurred at the A37/A39 junction, being vehicle shunts at the traffic signals although there is no obvious cause relating to the design or layout of the junction. Possible measures in response could include reducing the speed limit and providing a right turn lane from Wells Road. A four-incident cluster in Farrington Gurney could be addressed by reducing the speed limit, providing an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing across the Co-Op access road and other measures.

**Key action: To undertake a review of the A362 and A367 routes building on the approach recently completed on the A37 focusing on vehicle speeds.**

## Supporting Cycling

Current cycle facilities include a mixture of traffic-free and on-road routes, with two main routes travelling from Radstock to the north east and south east but none to the west or north from Midsomer Norton. The main route to the north east travels from Radstock to Wellow and Midford, leading to Bath and Freshford via a range of route types. The main route to the south east travels from Radstock to Kilmersdon and Great Elm,



leading to Frome via a range of route types. To the west, two short traffic-free routes are offered from Radstock to Midsomer Norton via the Norton Radstock Greenway to the B3355 Northmead Road and via The Five Arches cycle route to the B3355 Silver Street.

Cycling represents a significant opportunity to make local journeys by means other than car, provided that routes are safe. Achieving this may require changes to roads such as reducing speed limits and signing. Off-road routes have a broad appeal for regular ('utility') cycling as well as leisure use. In addition to physical measures, cycle training and education is important to give new or returning cyclists the confidence they need, especially when interacting with larger vehicles.

Outside the built-up areas, cycling is more challenging, mainly due to the narrow roads and traffic levels. Some routes have gradients and other physical constraints which make cycling uncomfortable and potentially dangerous given the apparent vehicle speeds



B&NES Council appointed Sustrans to undertake a **Cycle Network Review** in 2014 in order to monitor the existing cycle facilities available to date and to provide further recommendations for new priority routes. The report recommends that investment in cycling improvements should be prioritised in Bath, Keynsham, Radstock and Midsomer Norton and the communities of the Chew Valley, with possible schemes identified for each location. These have been selected as priorities as they present the highest potential for improvement to daily journeys. A review of the proposed priority schemes was undertaken as part of this strategy and the most important routes identified.

**Key actions: Progress the Midsomer Norton Cross Town Link as a priority then extend links to the existing cycle routes from nearby residential areas. Improve cycle access to the Old Mills and Welton development sites.**

## Promoting Safe Walking

Barriers to walking often deter short journeys being made on foot, particularly where it is difficult to cross the road or where footways are narrow or incomplete. Other issues include the quality of the surface, especially for people with sight or physical impairments, lighting and the continuity of routes. There are numerous crossings, some formal and some informal, for which pedestrians need to watch traffic closely and move swiftly. Impairments affecting people's mobility take a number of forms ranging from visual and hearing impairments to more apparent mobility issues. People of all abilities need to be confident when walking but where pedestrian and road safety issues are being addressed, the needs of people with mobility impairments need to be considered carefully.





As mentioned earlier, the Midsomer Norton Town Centre Strategic Policy looks to improve conditions for pedestrians in the town centre including the pedestrian links to the town centre and to encourage development, reinforcing the High Street as the retail core.

Changes to the road layout are also being considered as it is recognised that the current road layout in the town centre has a number of deficiencies, with vehicle/pedestrian conflicts and restricted movements with the one-way road.

Reduced traffic volumes could be achieved on the southern end of the High Street if all through traffic was diverted via South Road, noting that access/egress for Sainsbury's would need to be retained. This will require a revised junction arrangement of South Road with Silver Street, with detailed modelling to assess junction capacities in order to understand the implications on the wider highway network.



There is also the potential for a more efficient road layout, coupled with an improved public realm. Again the implications of such changes would need to be modelled to understand both the localised and wider impacts.

**Key actions: Implement improvements to the pedestrian environment in Midsomer Norton, as part of public realm/regeneration schemes and consider wider changes to the High Street road layout. Consider changes to junctions on the A367 in Radstock town centre where possible, to improve pedestrian conditions. Take the opportunity of nearby developments to promote wider footways and complete missing footway links.**

**At any locations where pedestrian and road safety issues are being addressed, ensure that the needs of people with mobility impairments are considered carefully.**

## Passenger Transport Services

**Bus services** 173, 175, 178, 179, 376 and 379 provide regular journeys to main centres of activity including Bath, Keynsham, Bristol and Wells. These services enable Somer Valley residents to access work in the larger centres provided they can access the stops on the relevant routes. Service 376 is particularly frequent with services all day every day but this is concentrated on the A37 corridor. Several services combine to give a frequent route from Midsomer Norton, through Radstock and Peasedown St John to Bath. A number of other bus services provide access to supermarkets from rural communities on particular days of the week. Concern has been expressed that although the availability and frequency of bus services appears to be good, there are significant

shortcomings, particularly the location of bus stops and the journey options available.



For those with easy access to the internet or mobile phones there have been significant improvements to bus information particularly through the 'Bus Checker App'. The Council's investment in this technology has improved people's access to the bus network.

The network currently provides good services heading north to Bristol from the west of the Somer Valley and to Bath from the east of the Somer Valley but poor provision exists east to west. This means that those in the west of the Somer Valley often have to rely on their

car if they wish to travel to Midsomer Norton, Radstock and onto Bath. There have been recent improvements in Radstock where the link by Victoria Hall provides new stops and in Midsomer Norton, the focus is at the High Street/Silver Street/The Island junction. Better information needs to be available at stops, and other information outlets.

**Key actions: The Council should continue its investment in key corridors to continue to promote bus use. Investigate options for improving east to west public transport provision.**

A number of **community transport services** are available in the area. These look to address the particular needs of people who are unable to use mainstream services through infirmity or disability although there is actually no restriction on who can use the services. Therefore, there is the potential to widen the demand base to serve more people.

Midsomer Norton and Radstock Dial-a-Ride is a fully accessible service used for shopping, attending appointments, visiting friends and playing an active part in community life. Other services include those provided by charities such as Age Concern, an accessible minibus used by Midsomer Norton and Radstock Community Service Vehicle Trust for group travel and the Combe



Hay, Shoscombe, South Stoke & Wellow Area Fare Car scheme. The latter offers a taxi service at special rates for residents within the Fare Car Zones.

**Key action: Promote greater use of the existing community transport services for all potential users.**

**Rail Services** Local campaigners have for many years promoted the restoration of local rail services to Radstock. In particular, they have been acquiring parts of the former railway alignment and rolling stock. Previous feasibility work highlighted the challenges including the use of a National Cycle Network route and part use of a freight railway for passengers. New stations would be required and gaining operating rights is a major issue with a significant difference between the services provided by heritage railways and aspirations for a regular public service. Infrastructure and staffing need to be in place to stringent standards. To create a service operating at speeds that would appeal to regular users, the regulatory framework will need to be that of a train operating company. The former Radstock station site has been lost to development, making a replacement station impossible to provide; an additional station in Frome would also be required.

Due to the significant issues outlined above, which would require considerable funding, the support of the rail industry and many years of negotiation to resolve, there will not be a role for local rail as a public service in the foreseeable future.

**Key actions: Continue to protect the disused railway line from Radstock to Frome primarily as a sustainable route for recreational and cycling use.**

## Review of Speed Limits

Based on the assessments of the main routes, the following changes to speed limits in the Somer Valley are proposed:

- A37 through Farrington Gurney reduced to 30mph from 40mph;
- 30mph limit (currently 40mph) on the A37 approach to the A39 signalised junction; and
- 40mph limit (currently 50mph) introduced on the B3335 Silver Street into Midsomer Norton.

Other changes at a more local level should also be considered to address specific road safety issues and improve conditions for walking and cycling. Where new development extends the edge of the built-up area, the start of 30mph limits will need to be adjusted accordingly.

**Key actions: Implement reduced speed limits to improve road safety in the identified areas, subject to community support.**

## Consultation

In addition to a range of stakeholders who were approached for their views, a public consultation event was held at Midsomer Norton Town Hall with an online questionnaire available that aimed to obtain views on existing transport problems and priorities for improvements. The questionnaire asked if all of the key issues had been identified including:

- High traffic volumes through built-up areas;
- High levels of out-commuting;
- Local peak period traffic congestion;
- Significant numbers of road traffic accidents;
- Narrow footways and limited pedestrian crossing facilities in some areas;
- Limited cycle routes;
- Frequent bus service to Bath from the main towns, limited services to other destinations;
- Relatively long bus travel times and bus fares perceived to be high;
- Accessibility to schools, colleges and health facilities;
- No direct access to the rail network; and
- Limited spare parking capacity in Midsomer Norton.

The main reasons quoted for this were inadequate parking in Radstock (16 responses), a specific issue of conditions on Silver Street for pedestrians due to lack of footpaths and unreasonable speed limits (7 responses) and on-street parking adding to congestion (4 responses).

75% (out of 67 responses received) agreed in principle with the proposed objectives:

- Improving the quality of life for local residents;
- Improving road safety for all users;
- Promoting sustainable mobility where possible;
- Maintaining and enhancing the local environment;
- Addressing the needs of people with mobility impairments;
- Improving access to employment in Bath and Bristol; and
- Improving access to local facilities by walking and cycling (employment, learning, training, retail, leisure, bus stops).

For those that did not agree, four respondents wanted to see improved access to the rail network, specifically through reinstating the Radstock-Frome line. Other objectives suggested included:

- Creating more local jobs;
- Reducing bus fares;
- Providing more off-road cycle routes;
- Improving traffic flow at peak times;
- Providing a new series of bypasses; and
- Improving access to the motorways and airport.

Of the possible improvements presented, better maintenance of roads and footways was highlighted as the top priority and increased public car parking capacity, improved bus services and road safety improvements were all also favoured, as shown below.

### Consultation Responses to Which Improvements Should Be Prioritised



# Somer Valley Transport Strategy Delivery Plan

**NB this is a live document which will be updated periodically**

**May-17**

Reference	Project	Timeline	Funding	
<b>Walking</b>				
SV1	Implement improvements to the pedestrian environment in Midsomer Norton, as part of public realm/regeneration schemes and consider wider changes to the High Street road layout. Consider changes to junctions on the A367 in Radstock town centre where possible, to improve pedestrian conditions. Take the opportunity of nearby developments to promote wider footways and complete missing footway links	Highway schemes will include improvements for pedestrians and cycling. Ongoing liaison with Regeneration Team to identify opportunities for improvements.	Ongoing	TIP and external grants
SV2	At any locations where pedestrian and road safety issues are being addressed, ensure that the needs of people with mobility impairments are considered carefully.	This is a standard approach adopted Highways and Traffic.	Ongoing	TIP and external grants
SV3	Improve pedestrian and cycle access to and through the former Welton Bibby Baron site, linking into existing nearby routes. Consider a possible junction improvement at Stoney Cross, taking into account interaction with the High Street.	The scheme will be brought forward as part of the planning proposal for the site and associated 106 contributions.	Development dependant	S106 contribution

SV4	Consider improving pedestrian facilities in Radstock for example by reviewing and improving signing. Audit the existing rural footways to identify where strategic gaps could be addressed for example from Farrington Gurney to the Enterprise Zone or Hallatrow to the A39	Feasibility study progressing for Enterprise Zone links	Nov-17	Regen
<b>Cycling</b>				
SV5	Improved cycle access through shared footway/cycleway routes from the existing Greenway to the east of Old Mills	Requires land assembly, add to task register for future capital funding.	Future	Under review
SV6	Completing a cycle route to Farrington Gurney, west of Old Mills, subject to land acquisition or an alternative route being developed	Requires land assembly, add to task register for scheme prioritisation with in the capital programme.	Future	Under review
SV7	Progress the Midsomer Norton Cross Town Link as a priority then extend links to the existing cycle routes from nearby residential areas	Assess as part of the Access fund and LGF and develop a staged delivery plan	Oct-17	Access Funding and LGF
SV8	Improve cycle access to the Old Mills and Welton development sites	Linked to SV5 and SV3	Future	Under review
SV9	Improve cycle routes to main schools	Assess through prioritisation tools and add to task register for future capital funding.	Future	Under review
<b>Route and Junction Improvements</b>				
SV10	Developing a new access road from A362 into the site to reduce the impact of traffic on the narrow A362	Feasibility study commissioned	2017/18	Regen

SV11	Junction / Route review North Road/ Station Road /Radstock Road/High Street Roundabout (Stoney Cross)	Add to task register for future capital funding	Future	Under review
SV12	Route review B3355/West Road/Thicket Mead Roundabout;	Add to task register for future capital funding	Future	Under review
SV13	A39/A37 traffic signal junction.	Add to task register for future capital funding	Future	Under review
SV14	A367 to Bath Provide right turn lanes on the A367 south of Radstock where possible.	Add to task register for future capital funding and bring forward through developments	Future	Under review
SV15	Review the potential for provision of a new southern access to the Odd Down Park & Ride site off the A367 to make it more attractive to users and reduce queuing for all northbound traffic.	Add to task register for future capital funding and bring forward through developments	Future	Under review
SV16	A362 Farrington Gurney to Frome. Provide new pedestrian crossing facilities in Farrington Gurney and at Old Mills. Widen footways as part of any nearby development schemes, where possible. Review the operation of the recently installed priority scheme on the A362 east of the Paulton Road junction. Consider improvements to key junctions as part of development proposals	Add to task register for future capital funding and bring forward through developments	Future	Under review
SV17	Road Safety on the A367, A362 Key action: To undertake a safety review of the A362 and A367 routes building on the approach recently completed on the A37 focusing on vehicle speeds.	Include in current rolling programme of route reviews and confirm programme	Sep-17	TIP and external grants

<b>Passenger Transport Services</b>				
SV18	The Council should continue its investment in key corridors to continue to promote bus use. Investigate options for improving east to west public transport provision.	Public Transport Team continue to work with Bus Operators and through Bus improvement Panel identify opportunities.	Ongoing	Revenue
SV19	Promote greater use of the existing community transport services for all potential users.	Public Transport Team continue to work with Bus Operators and through Bus improvement Panel identify opportunities.	Ongoing	Revenue
SV20	Continue to protect the disused railway line from Radstock to Frome primarily as a sustainable route for recreational and cycling use.	Protect through Policy documents.	Ongoing	Revenue
SV23	Continue to support the development of Park and Ride sites as recommended in the Joint Transport Study to support the new Joint Spatial Strategy for the WoE as a whole.	Developed through JTS programme	Future	Capital
<b>Speed Limits</b>				
SV21	Implement reduced speed limits to improve road safety in the identified areas, subject to community support.	Add to task register for future capital funding and bring forward through developments	Future	Under review
<b>Public Car Parking</b>				
SV22	Undertake a study/survey to see if a Park and Ride/car share could be promoted as a new transport interchange in Radstock.	Add to work programme for Policy team to undertake survey	Future	Revenue
SV24	Ensure that any new developments in Midsomer Norton (including on South Road car park) provide sufficient parking to accommodate demand.	The scheme will be brought forward as part of the planning proposal for the site	Development dependent	S106 Contribution

SV25	In Radstock, monitor the impact of introducing limited lengths of stay in Church Street and Waterloo Road car parks on nearby on-street parking.	Add to work programme for Policy team to undertake survey	Ongoing	Revenue
SV26	Seek to maintain the level of parking for both centres to protect their local roles. In the future if demand continues to increase, additional spaces may be sought.	Protect through Policy documents.	Future	Revenue
SV27	Support longer term use of the Co-Op car park particularly if demand for Park & Ride (or share) from Radstock develops.	Monitor any planning proposals for the site	Development dependent	S106 Contribution
<b>Travel Planning</b>				
SV28	Request travel plans for all substantial new developments, both residential and business, as a planning condition and in accordance with the draft B&NES Travel Plan Guidance.	Monitor any planning proposals for major development	Development dependent	Planning Conditions