

Radstock Town Centre Regeneration Action Plan

February 2024

**RADSTOCK
TOWN COUNCIL**

**Bath & North East
Somerset Council**

Improving People's Lives



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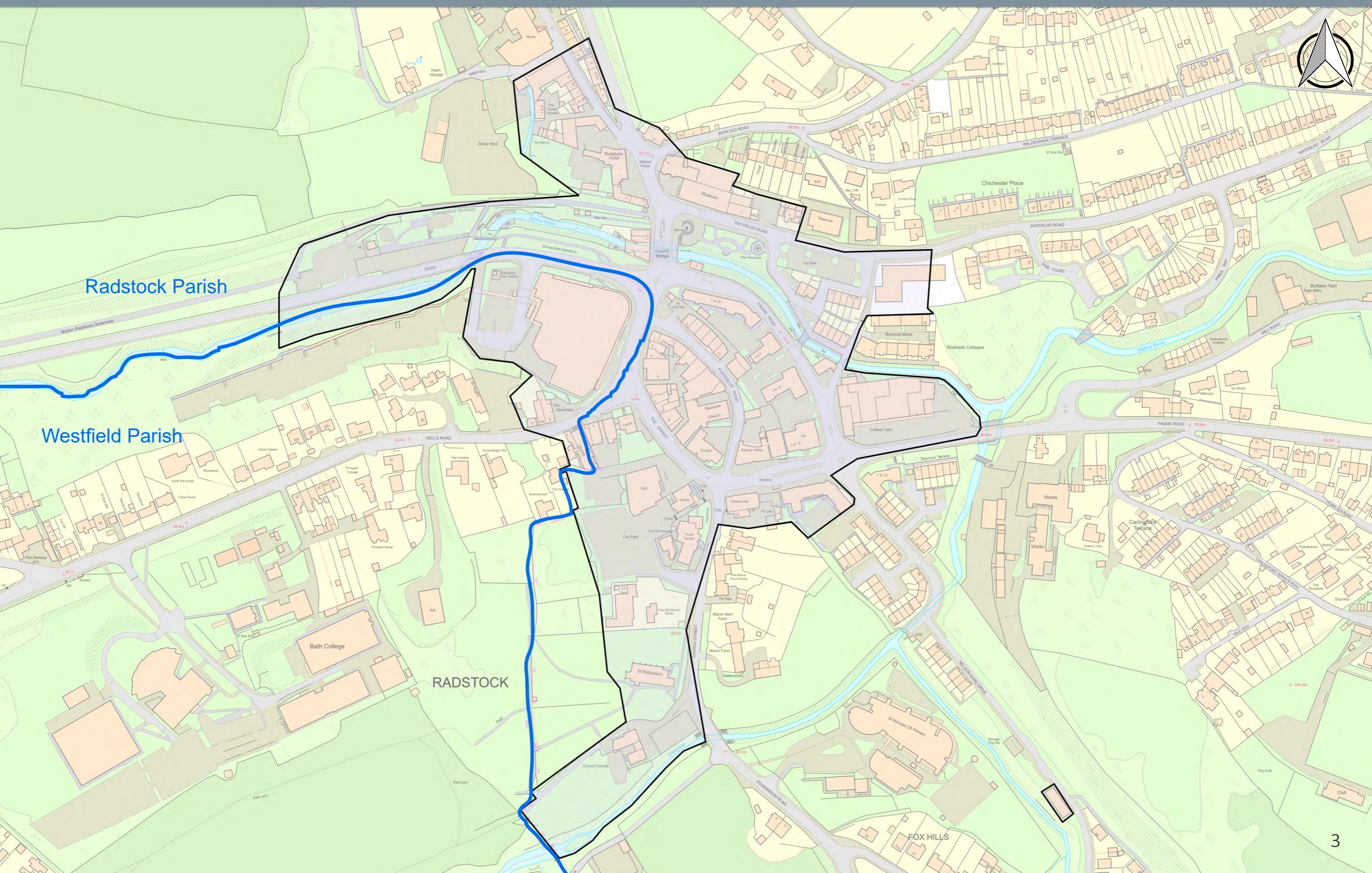
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Radstock Town Centre Regeneration Action Plan Area

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We are delighted to introduce the Radstock Regeneration Action Plan; a plan for regenerating Radstock Town Centre. Radstock is a town with a unique heritage, attractive green spaces and local facilities which serve a wide rural area. There is significant potential for increasing the vibrancy of the town centre and attracting more visitors and investment. The action plan highlights these strengths and shows areas and opportunities for improvement.

This action plan has been developed as a partnership between Radstock Town Council and Bath & North East Somerset Council. It aims to create a thriving town centre bringing vacant buildings back into use. We have identified the following ten priority projects;

- Provision of additional community space in the town centre;
- Development of a cultural programme;
- Outdoor events;
- Improvements to sites including the Old Printworks repurposed for arts and indoor events;
- Tree planting;
- Improvement to green spaces and waterways;
- Encourage the use of renewable energy;
- New wayfinding & improvements to streets and public spaces;
- Bringing vacant and derelict properties back into use
- Improvements to the town centre offer.

It will form a basis for funding bids and help to prioritise town centre projects that would benefit the community and make Radstock a more varied and welcoming place. The priority projects were informed by feedback from public consultation that took place during 2022-2023. The partnership has already secured £500,000 investment in the town centre in its initial two years.

We aim to deliver as many of the priority projects as we can and have high ambitions, the delivery of the projects will rely on collective action to secure funding and take forward these initiatives. There is more detailed work to be done for all of the projects, the action plan presents early ideas.

This is the start of a process to improve Radstock town centre for the future, and we are excited to see this next chapter unfold. We would like to thank all of those who engaged so positively in this work so far and we thank everyone involved in the process of creating this action plan.



Councillor Paul Roper
Cabinet Member for Economic and
Cultural Sustainable Development



Councillor Chris Dando
Mayor and Chairman, Radstock
Town Council

In 2022, Bath and North East Somerset Council obtained revenue funding from the West of England Combined Authority Housing Regeneration Enabling Fund to prepare delivery plans working in partnership with landowners and stakeholders. This has facilitated delivery and access to funding to support the infrastructure needs arising in communities including in response to strategic growth.

The Radstock Regeneration Action Plan has been developed following a scoping exercise and engagement which took place in 2022 & 2023. Housing and employment growth planned for the town and surrounding area means that there will be more reliance on the town centre for facilities, services, employment and entertainment. This links with the 15 minute neighbourhoods approach where local service centres are key nodes and accessible centres for large residential populations.

The Action Plan has been guided by the existing Local Plan and feeds into the development of the new Local Plan. Radstock is a designated town centre in the B&NES Local Plan and is a focal area for the community in terms of facilities, services, employment and entertainment.

The Radstock, focus will be on improvements to the vitality and viability of the Town Centre. There are opportunities to bring vacant buildings back into use, assist businesses & community organisations to find new premises to meet their needs and place branding. The plan will also focus on high street renewal activities such as community & cultural events and markets, improving the skills of the local workforce, improving town centre public realm, heritage assets, facilities, infrastructure & making Radstock a healthy neighbourhood. There is also potential for increased tourism given the town's heritage and encouragement of use of sustainable travel modes. The approach provides the framework to link green infrastructure & existing regeneration programmes.

The place we live has a large impact on our health and wellbeing. From the quality of housing we live in to our access to green space, every part of a neighbourhood can impact our health and happiness. This can be a big driver in health inequalities, with some people able to have access to better quality housing, more green space, and less traffic congestion for example, whilst people on lower incomes generally experience more overcrowding, lower quality housing, worse air and noise pollution, and more limited access to green space.

Working with key stakeholders including Radstock Town Council, businesses and the community, the Regeneration Action Plan identifies opportunities, develops a programme of projects and includes baseline work to secure funding. Projects will be developed further, methods of delivery identified and funding applications drawn up during the latter part of 2023. Project delivery will take place from mid-2024 onwards.

About Radstock

Radstock is located two miles east of the town of Midsomer Norton, 9 miles south-west of the city of Bath, 16 miles south of Bristol, and 117 miles west of London.

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.

The town is located on the northern edge of the Mendip Hills in the Wellow Brook valley in the former coalfields of north Somerset. One of the unique features of Radstock is the way the open countryside comes close to the heart of the town.

Particular strengths of the centre include its rich heritage. The most significant element is the Radstock Conservation Area and its well-preserved mining past. It has linkages with the National and local cycle network, a diverse range of services and a varied retail offer and a strong, high quality education sector across the age ranges including Bath College Somer Valley Campus in nearby Westfield and a strong network of established community groups.

Car is the main means of travelling to work for most residents in the Somer Valley. 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. Radstock has a higher level of bus use than much of the Somer Valley.

2021 Census Data

The Census 2021 took place during a period of rapid change. The labour market data reflects a situation when many more people than at the time of the 2011 Census were working from home or on furlough.

The 2021 Census shows that Radstock has a population of 6149 living in 2552 Households.

81.8% of Radstock residents reported their health as being 'good' or 'very good' in the 2021 census. This was below the B&NES average of 84.6%, coming 30th out of the 33 B&NES electoral wards.

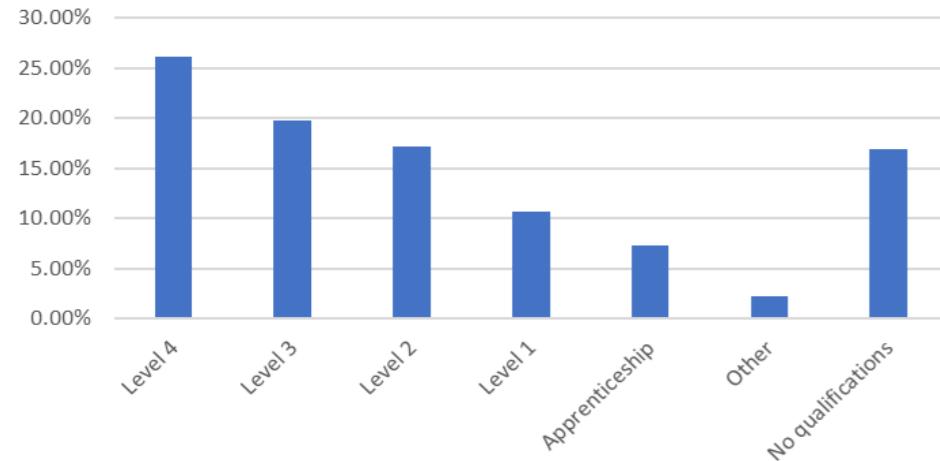
Radstock has the 2nd highest level of disability in B&NES, with 19.6% of residents reporting they have a long-term condition that impacts their day-to-day activities either 'a little' or 'a lot'. The B&NES average is 16.4%. Radstock has the 3rd highest number of residents providing unpaid care each week, with 9.8% of Radstock residents doing so, compared to 8.1% across B&NES.

The following tables show qualifications and occupations held by Radstock residents, economic activity, mode of transport and distance travelled to work and a break down of industry sectors.

National Child Measurement 2022

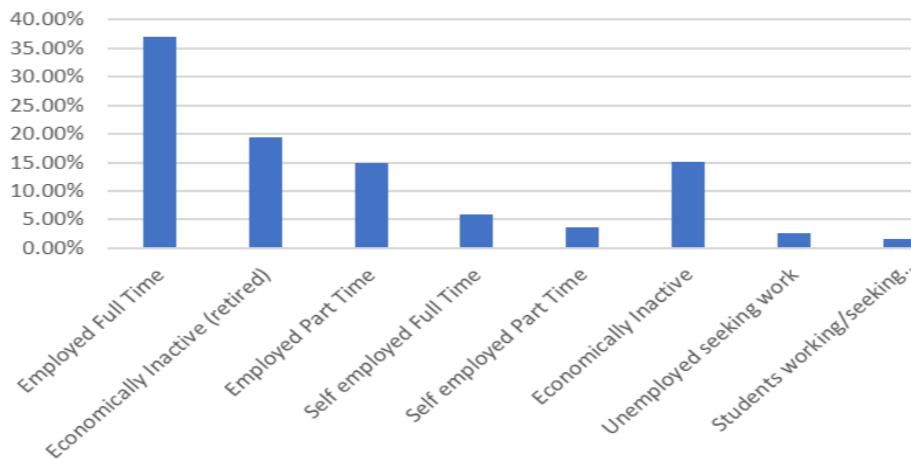
Radstock has the 5th highest level of obesity in year 6 pupils in B&NES, with 19.5% of year 6 pupils in Radstock being obese or severely obese, compared to 15.7% in B&NES.

Qualifications



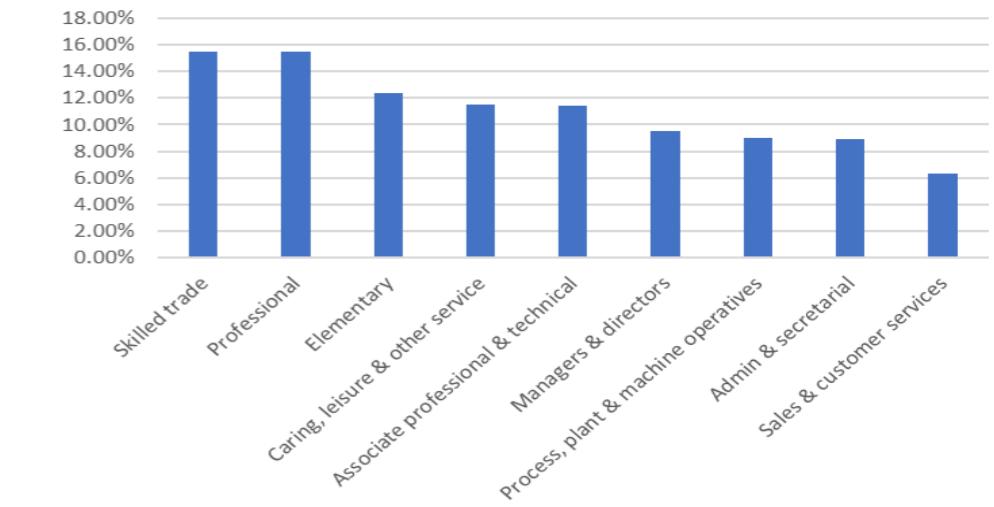
This bar chart highlights the qualifications held by Radstock residents. Approximately, 26% of residents have achieved a Level 4 qualification. In comparison, around 17% of residents having no qualifications.

Economic Activity



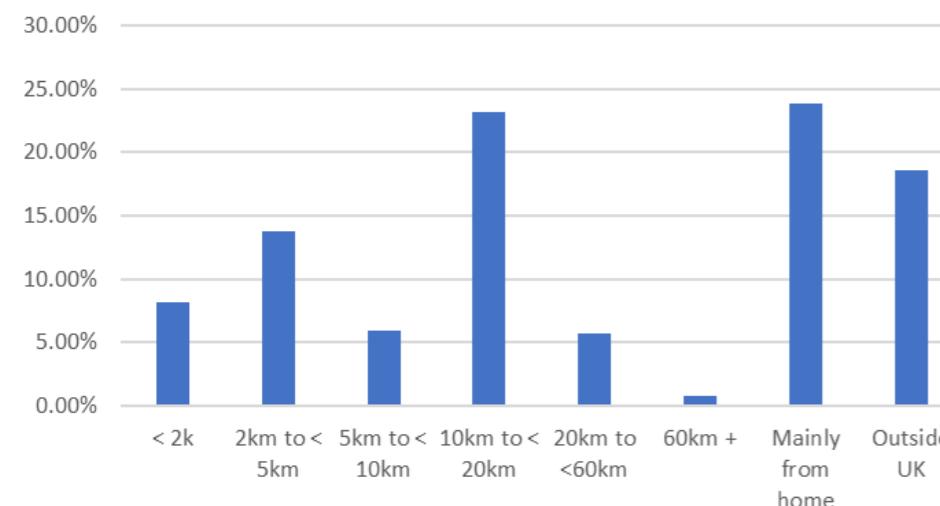
This bar chart highlights the different levels of economic activity of residents. Over half of all residents in Radstock are economically active. With less than 5% being unemployed and seeking work.

Occupation



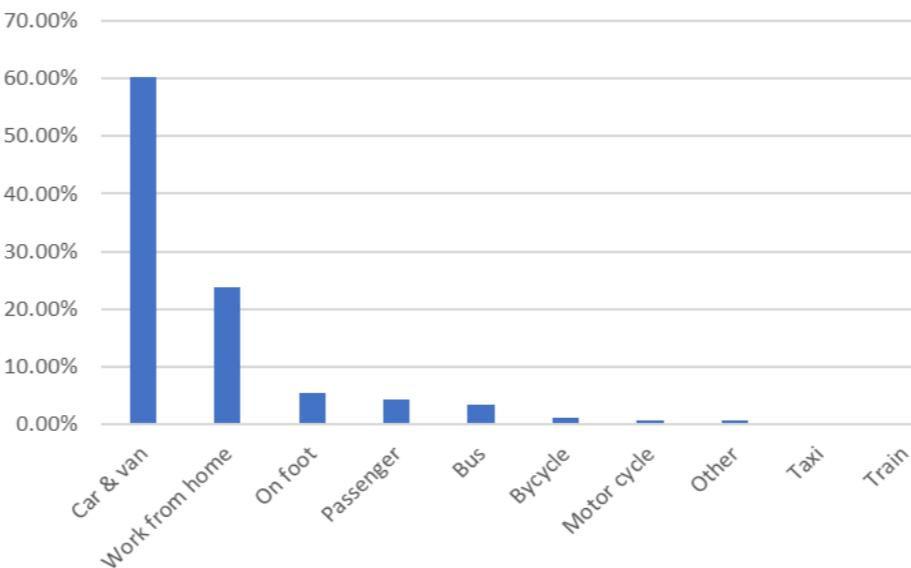
This bar chart highlights the different occupation types of residents.

Distance Travelled to Work



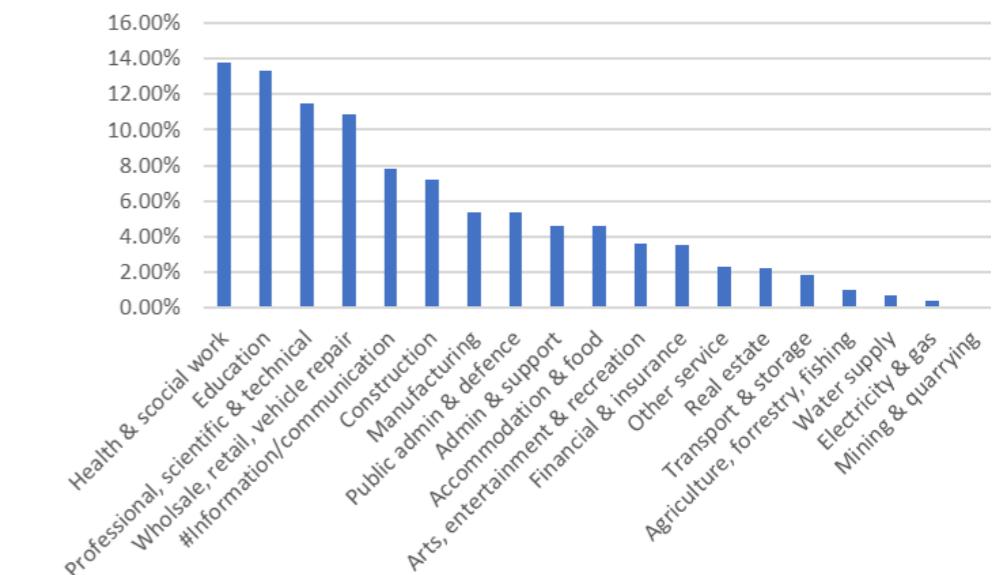
The bar chart highlights the distance residents travel to work. It identified the largest proportion of residents, around 24% work from home. While approximately 23% of those travelling to work, travel 10 - 20 km. Additionally, approximately 18 % of travel outside the UK.

Method of Transport to Work



The bar chart highlights the method of transport taken to work by residents. The majority of residents (approximately 80%) drive a car or van to work. In comparison to 0% of residents taking a taxi or train to work.

Industry



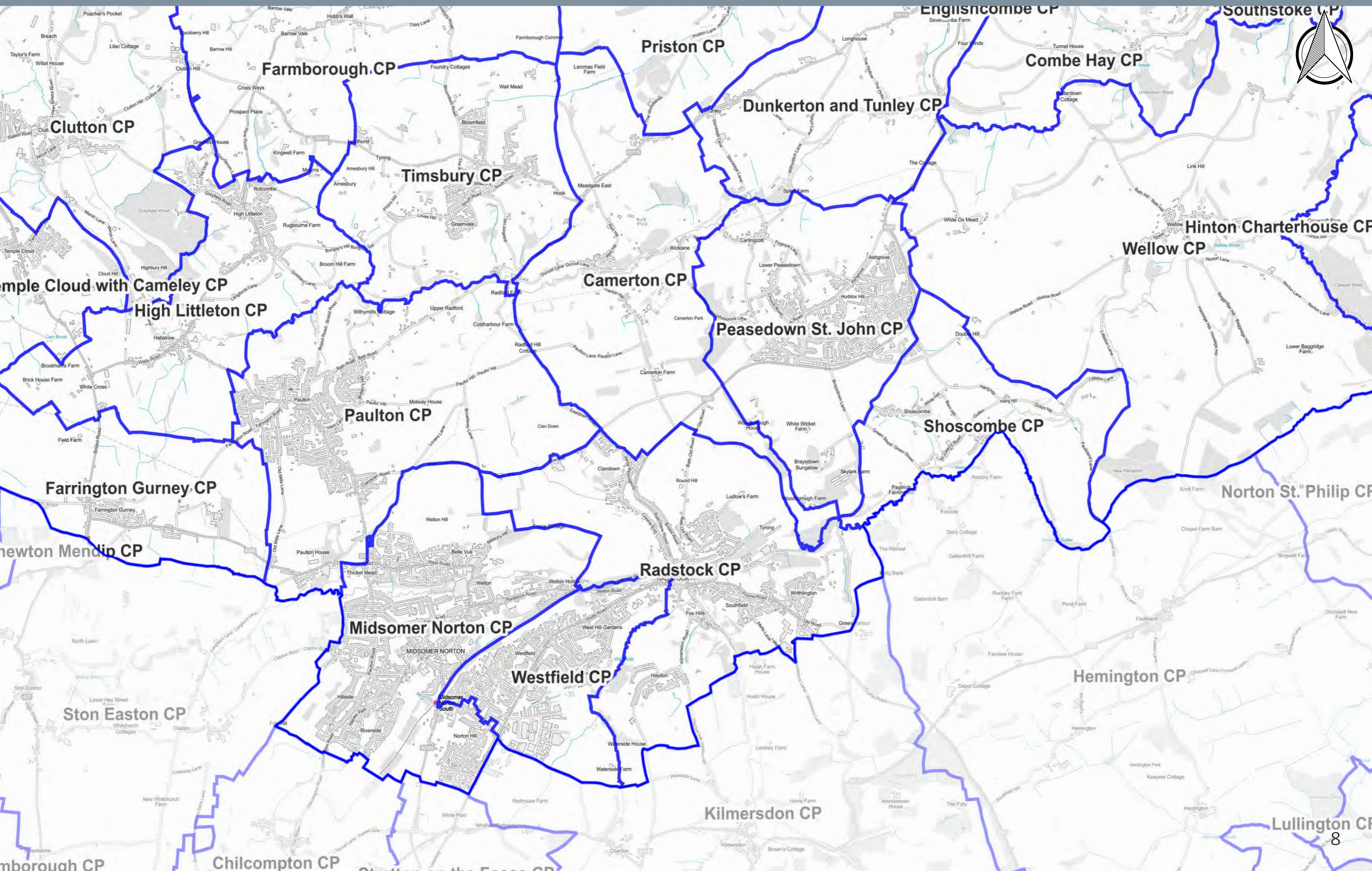
The bar chart highlights the different industries residents work in. This identifies a varied range of industries residents were a part of. The largest proportion of around 13% were involved in health and social work.

Radstock Location Plan

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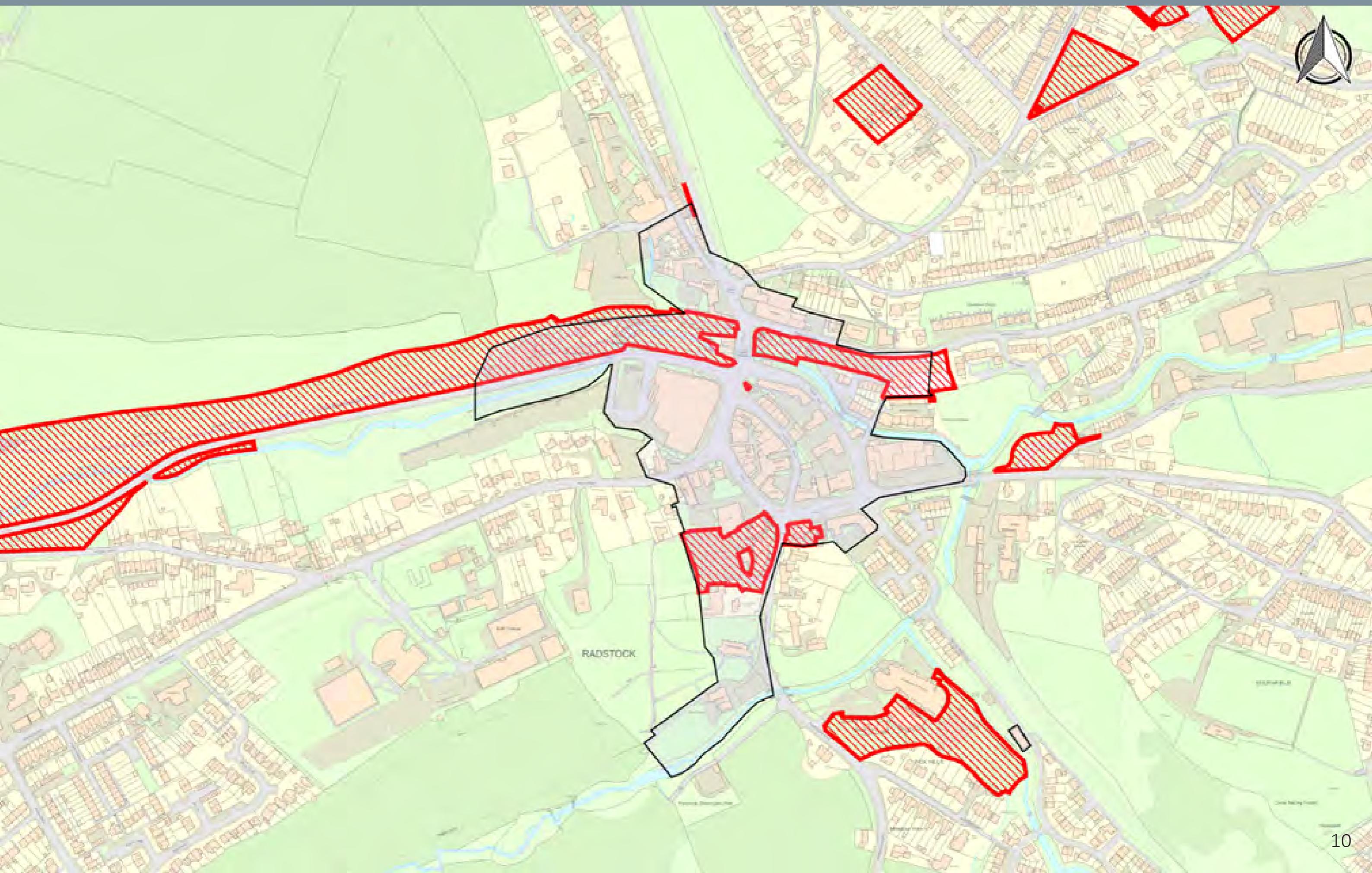
Background to Radstock



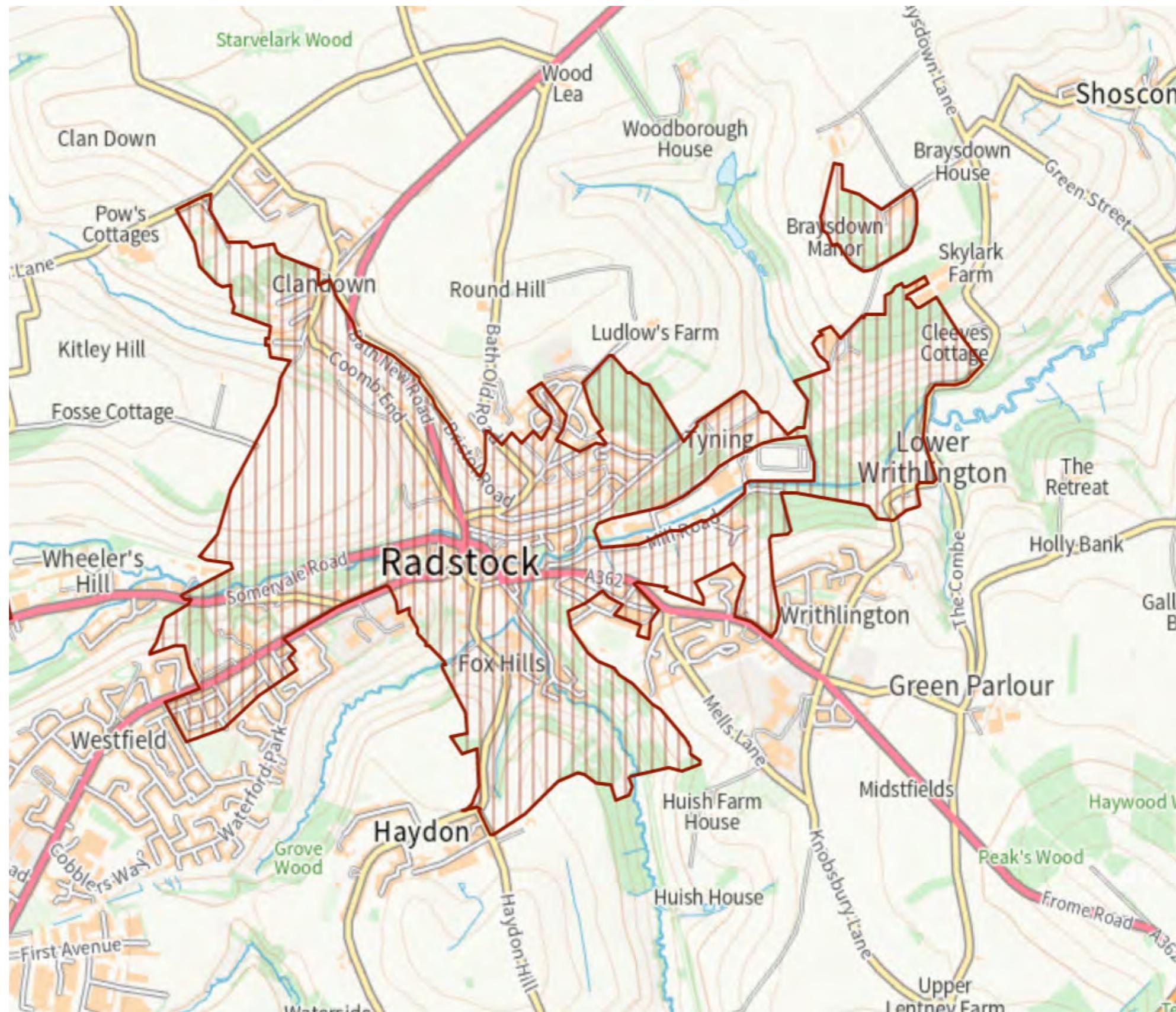
B&NES Land ownership plan - Radstock

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Conservation Area Plan



Radstock town centre encompassing virtually the whole town was designated a conservation area in 1999. Eight distinct character areas were identified in an appraisal carried out in that year. Each of the areas were considered to hold special interest derived from their 'almost unique character' which includes areas of open landscape, industrial archaeology, examples of planned workers' dwellings and individual historic buildings built in and around the town, the collieries, railways, and municipal buildings.

There remain a considerable number of railway and mining related structures and buildings in place despite a significant time lapse since the stations and collieries closed. Radstock West (Bristol & North Somerset Railway) closed in 1959 and Radstock North (Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway) closed to passengers in March 1966 and to goods after the last coal from the Somerset Coalfield was extracted from Writhlington Colliery on the 28th September 1973. Wide-scale removal of redundant railway infrastructure and buildings which cleared a large linear housing site on the south of Radstock, that was developed with a mix of two and three-storey houses and flats in the mid 2000s.

Selected buildings and structures have been identified as being worthy of retention which resulted in some becoming isolated, out of context and subsumed by new development. Nevertheless, Radstock retains a high level of historic buildings and structures connected to its industrial past, and in the town centre historic buildings of heritage value both nationally and locally designated. Of particular note is the Market Hall in use as Somerset Coalfield Life at Radstock Museum; Victoria Hall; several buildings associated with Radstock Co-operative Society; Trinity Methodist Church and a row of shops on Fortescue Road, all of which were built over a 50-year period.

The layout of the town, initially determined by an ancient road pattern with Radstock as a focal point was disrupted, firstly by the introduction of canals in the early 19th century, and later by railways, vital to the transportation of coal from local mines. Although the railways were late to develop in the area, in the second half of the 19th century Radstock became an important junction of the Somerset & Dorset Railway and the Bristol & North Somerset Railway, both of which passed through the centre of town creating a double level crossing that caused interminable delays for road users; two train stations and a plethora of associated train sheds, water towers and wagon works.

Radstock's industrial past is integral to the town's development shaping the physical relationships between work, home, and leisure activities that converge around a centre dominated and divided by competing transport networks.



The townscape once punctuated by tall industrial chimneys and pit headgear is now an unintentional assembly of disparate elements – proudly built late 19th century public buildings, chapels, hotels, worker's terraces, and shops interspersed with 20th and 21st century development situated to replace railway and mining infrastructure that had fallen out of use by the 1970s.

The medieval settlement of Radstock was arranged around St. Nicholas Church with a market area and village cross positioned at the junction of Church Street and The Street. Large private residences like the 18th century Radstock House (now Working Men's Club) and The Rectory had extensive grounds situated close to the centre sustaining a rural feel to the town that is maintained today by the creation of public parks and green spaces along Wellow Brook and at the rear of the Library and Community Hub. The focus of the town shifted in the 19th century from the church, to the train stations, hotels, and market hall on the north west.

Several developments and new road layouts in the late 19th century were named after Radstock's principal land and colliery owner Countess Waldegrave and her last husband, Lord Carlingford leaving an important legacy of ownership and patronage. Carlingford Villas, Waldegrave Terrace, Waldegrave Hotel (Radstock Hotel) are obvious examples, but Fortescue Road was also named after Lord Carlingford, his full name being Chichester Samuel Parkinson-Fortescue.

As the major landowner in Radstock the Trustees of the late Frances Countess Waldegrave's Radstock Collieries were responsible for building or granting leases for many of the town's buildings, and consequently exercising a degree of control over what was built and what they looked like leading to a relatively unified appearance. The use of local materials was prevalent, and the townspeople built in a confident and aesthetically pleasing manner resulting in visual coherence derived from the architectural style, scale, and materials of buildings.

Most of the later historic buildings are built in a local white lias stone, squared and laid in regular courses with fine decorative details and ashlar dressings in an oolitic limestone. Terraces of shops and houses, and public houses and hotels are proudly embellished with carved limestone plaques and shields with dates of construction and carvings associated with their use like the bell on the side elevation of the former Bell Inn, rebuilt by the Coombs family of brewers in the 1880s with the initials G.C. for George Coombs carved on the bell.

The ornate decorative style of these buildings is exemplified by the curved terrace of shops on Fortescue Road, a purpose-built development, completed in 1897 to face the train station. Other standout developments from this period include Victoria Hall, originally built as a Working Men's Institute in 1866 by Lord Carlingford, and renamed to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. The same year that the Market Hall was built by George Coombs replacing a hatted market on the same ground. Close to the market was Coombs Brewery, built in brick with ashlar dressings in 1898. The ground floor of the brewery now consists of a row of shops.



Another influence on the built form of Radstock was the local Co-operative movement who built a number of buildings in the town including a bakery, a dairy with a high brick chimney and terraced housing for workers. The row of shops on Wells Hill and a detached building with a shop frontage on Frome Road are tangible evidence of this historic connection. A further, but less prosaic connection can be found in the Radco site which is currently being re-developed.

Historic maps of the town (OS 25" 1884) show a dispersed settlement separated by train tracks with no obvious centre. The building of the Fortescue Road shops and the imposing dual aspect Trinity Methodist Church filled in large undeveloped plots in the centre of town, completed 1897 and 1902 respectively – they continue to anchor the town centre though later development has not been successful in creating a coherent central focus to the area. The Street and Frome Road form a contiguous ring around the centre dissected by Fortescue Road. Victoria Hall, the Library and Community Hub and Radstock Working Men's Club, previously Radstock House (grade II), are located on the outer perimeter of the ring. Between Frome Road and Fortescue Road, former railway land has now been developed and laid out on the south side with linked modern three-storey residential developments with entrances and parking arranged around inner courts. Modern developments have adopted the same colour palette as their historic counterparts through the use of coloured render, reconstituted stone and stone facades.

Frome Road follows the course of Wellow Brook with several crossing points linking the north of the town with the south. At the junction with The Street the single-storey end section of the train station has been retained and is in use as a pavement café: a few mature trees and self-seeded shrubs edge the Brook and roadside; one of several remaining Radstock Co-operative shops appears isolated on the junction with Riverside Cottages, a no through route for cars that provides a link to pedestrian and cycle paths to the



north. On the north east a tiny former fire station sits back from the road, aptly reused as a domestic fire stove showroom it lies adjacent to an old timber merchant, Colliers Yard sited on the back edge of the pavement. This has recently been sub-divided and re-developed to provide several mixed-use retail and leisure units.

Parts of the original routes of the railways have been retained as public footpaths, as have the many former colliers' paths and narrow-gauge tramway routes and branch railways that led from the main railway lines to the collieries. These provide pedestrian routes within the town centre, and small pockets of land and cleared areas alongside paths and junctions have been landscaped creating an attractive seated area and location for the re-sited war memorial adjacent to Waterloo Road. Recent high-quality development in this area includes a new doctor's surgery and children's centre. To the south and east is a recent housing development on former railway land and a large industrial estate off Mill Road concentrates commercial activity to this part of the town.

Between each developed offshoot radiating out from the town are large areas of open landscape, wooded areas, playing fields, allotments and informal areas that provide a strong connection to the countryside. A feature of the town and its topography are the views across the sparsely wooded valleys, glimpses of undeveloped strips of land contrasting with the formality, and rigid lines of the historic terraces. At its core the town centre is informal, seemingly unplanned, yet containing some fine late 19th century buildings, and largely overlooked by passing traffic – the impact of transport infrastructure continuing to dominate the character and experience of Radstock.



Radstock Conservation Area Review

A review of the Radstock Conservation Area is underway which is looking at the existing boundaries and character areas to assess the changes that have taken place since it was first designated in March 1999. At that time the Conservation Area was divided into eight character areas defined by amongst other things the use of distinctive materials, scale and layout and the current and past uses of land.

Since then a significant amount of post-industrial development has taken place and some of the boundaries and character areas no longer make sense. Conservation area designation can be an effective planning tool in ensuring that new development does not harm the special character and interest of the area. The appraisal will allow us to identify areas of concern, consider new inclusions and make recommendations for future management of the Conservation Area.

The Local Plan 2011-2029 comprises two separate Development Plan Documents: the Core Strategy (adopted July 2014) and the Place-making Plan (adopted July 2017) and puts in place a framework to guide development. The Local Plan Partial Update (LPPU) was adopted on 19th January 2023 and forms part of the development plan.

The Somer Valley section of the Placemaking Plan sets out policies to guide development in Radstock. Core Strategy Policy SV3 provides the strategic planning policy for Radstock Town Centre. The centre is to provide a focus for the neighbouring communities and villages with its local retail offer, job provision and community facilities. It 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 green infrastructure.

The vision for Radstock is:

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

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

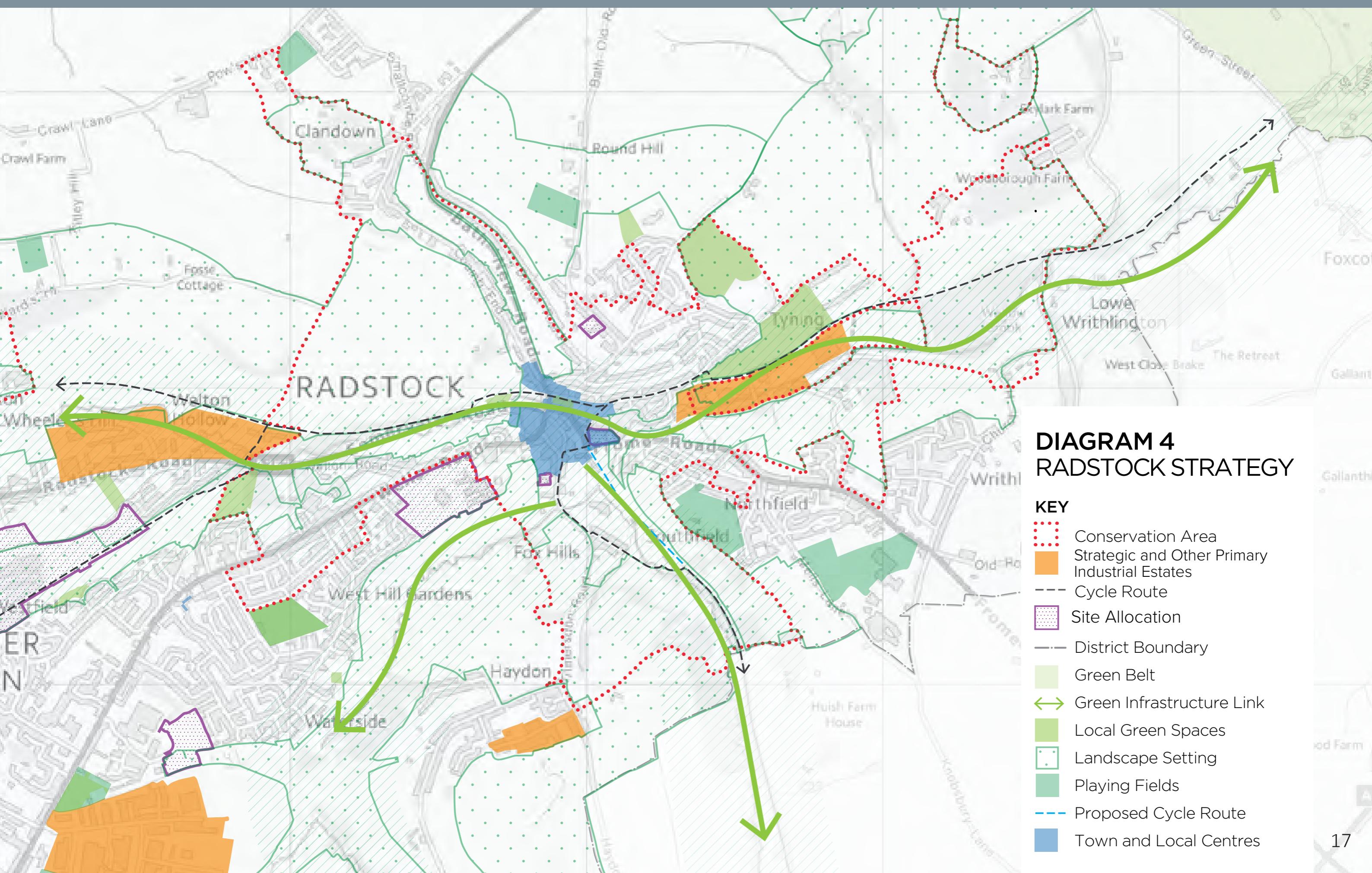


DIAGRAM 4 RADSTOCK STRATEGY

KEY

-  Conservation Area
-  Strategic and Other Primary Industrial Estates
-  Cycle Route
-  Site Allocation
-  District Boundary
-  Green Belt
-  Green Infrastructure Link
-  Local Green Spaces
-  Landscape Setting
-  Playing Fields
-  Proposed Cycle Route
-  Town and Local Centres

Project scoping was undertaken in the early part of 2022 and project ideas were put forward by B&NES Officers and Radstock Town Council. These project ideas were put forward during the engagement sessions that took place with businesses and members of the public in September & October 2022 and February 2023.

Issues facing the town centre include a highway network that compromises the pedestrian environment & sense of place, limited development opportunity sites, poor town centre connectivity and poor parking offer for those that need to use a car. There is also limited connectivity between villages and towns in the Somer Valley.

In Radstock, the focus will be on improvements to the vitality and viability of the Town Centre, in particular seeking to bring vacant and soon to be vacant buildings and shops back into active use and assisting community organisations in the town to find new premises to meet their needs.

There are also opportunities for place branding, high street renewal activities such as community & cultural events and markets, improving the skills of the local workforce and improving town centre public realm, heritage assets, facilities & infrastructure. There is also potential for increased tourism, creating new employment opportunities, given the towns heritage and encouragement of use of sustainable travel modes.

The following graphic was represented on a panel at the events and feedback was received which has informed the priority projects that are included in the Radstock Town Centre Regeneration Action Plan.

Have your say on improvements to Radstock Town Centre

Public engagement - September 2022

Bath and North East Somerset Council has been successful in obtaining funding from the West of England Combined Authority to prepare action plans which will be developed working in partnership with the Town Council, the local community & businesses.

Radstock Town Centre Regeneration Action Plan will identify opportunities for improvements, agree priority project ideas and obtain funding to deliver improvements to revitalise the Town Centre. These improvements are scheduled for delivery from 2024 and will hopefully include the projects identified in the scoping process. The regeneration action plans will complement and inform the new Local Plan.

Project ideas

Skills	Property & Sites	Facilities & Infrastructure	Vibrant Town Centre	Green Infrastructure
				
				
Better pathways to apprenticeships & employment	Vacant property register & refuelling service	Improvement to road layout, crossings & integration of cycle routes	Place branding	Green energy generation
Improve skills in conjunction with local employers & Bath College Somer Valley Campus	Renew & improvement of property & sites	Parking Review	Events, cultural programme & markets	Improve biodiversity & attractiveness of Willow Brook
Green jobs creation	Shop Improvement scheme	Improvement to speeds & access to broadband	New facilities & services	Promote link between Norton Radstock Greenway and Colliers Way
Local company links with schools	Improved facilities in Tom Huxton Park	Bus shelter improvements	Develop tourism opportunities	Better integration of cycle routes in town centre
Increase volunteering opportunities	Redevelopment opportunities	Cycle storage facilities & electric bike charging points	Wayfinding & promotional maps	Street tree planting
		Improved community facilities and services	Street art	Green social prescribing

Project Scoping

A project scoping document was developed in 2022 through a process of baseline evidence gathering and engagement with B&NES officers & members which looks at the types of project areas that could be tested through the Action Plan.

Councillors and the Combined Authority were briefed verbally on the scoping document progress and involved in the press release that went out to publicise the engagement events.

This scoping document was the focus for the stakeholder & public engagement, the results of which have informed the development of the Radstock Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and Delivery Plan.

Stakeholder & Public Engagement 2022

Drop-in public engagement events were held in Radstock Library and on the street outside during Sept/Oct 2022 where stakeholders and members of the public were invited to comment on project areas that had been highlighted in the scoping exercise (green infrastructure, vibrant town centre, facilities & infrastructure, property, sites & skills).

An online survey was also available on the Town Council website between the 5th of September and the 14th of October 2022. Details of the engagement were published on the B&NES and Radstock Town Council websites. Display boards at the engagement events and the online survey invited stakeholders to provide feedback on project ideas, what might bring more people to Radstock, what uses and improvements would they like to see on vacant sites and if there were any other improvements they'd like to see in the project area.

People taking part in the engagement wanted to see more accessible green space in the town, a better variety of shops, cafes & pubs, more community events & event space, a review of car parking, improvements to bus services and infrastructure, accessible public toilets, improvements to roads, pavements & the 1960's row of shops in Fortescue Road, re-use & redevelopment of vacant sites and improvement of skills in the workforce.

The public were informed about the engagement events through articles published in the local media following the issue of a press release. Posters detailing the consultation were displayed in locations in the town centre and included the time, date and location of the drop-in engagement events. Details were also available on the B&NES & Radstock Town Council social media channels, email and through interview on local radio. Approximately 160 responses were received from attendees at the engagement events and via the online survey on the Town Council website.



Stakeholder & Public Consultation 2023

Further consultation took place in February 2023 to receive feedback on project ideas that were identified in the scoping exercise and feedback from the 2022 engagement.

Once again people were informed about the engagement events through articles published in the local media following the issue of a press release. Comments were sought on projects through an online survey on Radstock Town Council website, on boards that were in the library between 21st February and 7th March, including at a drop-in session on 28th February.

The following comments were received from 40 people and were generally positive:

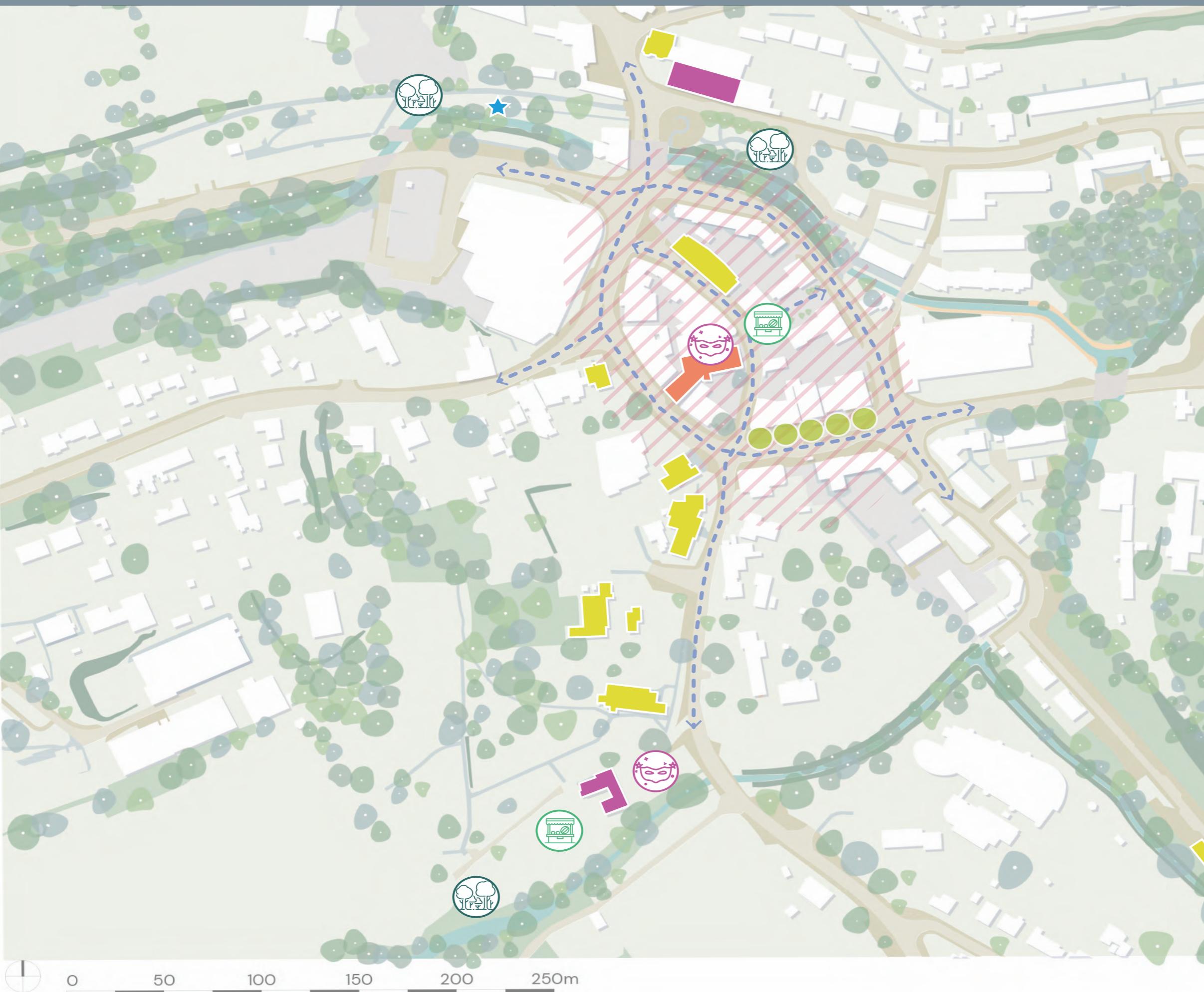
- People were keen to support the use of Trinity Church as a community hub & event space. They were keen for the library to relocate as it would free up the existing site for redevelopment.
- There was support for a for a cultural events programme, branding focused on the mining heritage, for Radstock Festival and building on the presence of Radstock museum to attract visitors.
- More events in the town would bring life to Radstock and there was support for weekly markets to attract locals and visitors to the town centre and investigation of venues that could be used for outdoor events.
- Anything that improves the visual appearance of the town centre and would help to attract visitors and planting of trees would contribute to this. Greenery softens the traffic noise, absorbs pollution and is beneficial for helping to offset climate change.

- People understood the need for incorporating renewable energy solutions and retrofitting into Trinity Church and other redevelopment projects to offset climate change.
- Green spaces should be developed as a priority for health & wellbeing & to visually improve the town centre.
- There was a mixed response on the parking offer with some people thinking that there wasn't a problem and others saying that there should be a review and provision of more long stay parking for workers especially given the loss of parking on the RADCO site.
- There was agreement that there should be an improvement in the pedestrian movement around the town and safer crossings with priority being given to pedestrians & cyclists over cars. Other suggestions were pedestrianisation of Fortescue Road, a one-way system around the centre & creation of wider pavements.
- There was also support for temporary creative uses in vacant properties including pop up shops, health services & art installations.

- 1 Town Centre Community Facility Improvements**
- 2 Outdoor Events**
- 3 Cultural Programme**
- 4 Brownfield Site Redevelopment, Reuse & Repurposing**
- 5 Tree Planting**
- 6 Green & Blue Improvements**
- 7 Energy Efficiency Improvements & Renewable Energy**
- 8 Wayfinding, Streetscape Improvements & Parking**
- 9 Reoccupation of Vacant Units**
- 10 Improve Town Centre Offer**



Concept Map



Projects

- 1: Trinity Methodist Church Hub
- 2: Outdoor Events
- 3: Town Centre Cultural Programme
- 4: Brownfield site redevelopment / Building re-use
- 5: Tree Planting
- 6: Green Energy and Green / Blue infrastructure
- 7: Energy Efficiency improvements & Renewable energy
- 8: Wayfinding, Streetscape Improvements
- 9: Reoccupation of Vacant Units Locations tbc
- 10: Improving Town Centre Offer

Radstock-wide

- Including Changing Places toilet
- 8: Wayfinding, Streetscape Improvements
- 10: Improving Town Centre Offer

Project Summary Table

Subject to funding being secured, the following projects have been identified to support the Regeneration of Radstock Town Centre:

Projects	Summary
1. Town Centre Community Facility Improvements	Working in partnership with Radstock Town Council to access funding to purchase & renovate Trinity Church for a community hub.
2. Outdoor Events	8 core opportunity spaces in Radstock Town Centre identified as offering potential for hosting events & scope for co-ordinating town-wide events along a recognised 'trail' involving multiple venues.
3. Cultural Programme	Cultural programme developed for Radstock including cultural network, support for Radstock festival & Radstock Museum & Outreach Programme.
4. Brownfield Site Redevelopment, Re - Use & Re-Purposing	Brownfield site assessment & concept designs for improvements to: Brunel Shed, St Nicholas Old School, St Nicolas Church Rooms, Old Print Works, Fortescue Road 60's shop, Leigh House & Children's Centre & Library.
5. Tree Planting	Section 106 funds are available to replace nine trees that were lost when Hope House Centre site developed.
6. Green & Blue Space Improvements	Working with the Nature Recovery Team and the Somer Valley Rediscovered, to identify green & blue space and resources to improve and manage for the benefit of the local community and nature.
7. Energy Efficiency Improvements & Renewable Energy	Radstock Town Council has aspirations to vastly improve the energy performance of Trinity Church incorporating renewable energy solutions into its retrofitting. Other site owners will be encouraged to incorporate renewable energy solutions into designs.
8. Wayfinding, Streetscape Improvements & Parking	Investigate carrying out a parking review, opportunities to improve signage and street furniture & to improve public realm, pedestrian movement.
9. Reoccupation of Vacant Units	Work with owners to find temporary & permanent uses & include link to Invest in Bristol & Bath Website on Radstock Town Council website and greening of the town centre.
10. Improve Town Centre Offer	Improve attractiveness of town centre to improve vitality and encourage business interest. Funding has been approved for a Changing Places toilet in Tom Huyton Park.

Project 1: Town Centre Community Facility Improvements

B&NES and Radstock Town Council are looking at options to improve community facilities in the town centre including the acquisition of Trinity Church or other premises in the town centre.

Key aims are to protect and develop space for the community and provide a home for the Radstock Town Council and library. The building will also provide a community café, hireable space for rehearsing and developing events (music, circus performance theatre, drama, arts and cultural events), a space for support networks (advisory groups and charities), meeting, desk space and networking opportunities for businesses, studio and workshop space.

There are currently no resources that can provide this range of services under one roof. This project will help to reverse a trend of townspeople of all ages having to leave Radstock to work, play, acquire new skills and training, and enjoy cultural activities not offered locally.



Project 1: Town Centre Community Facility Improvements

Trinity Church

One of the options being considered is Trinity Church. Other options will be investigated if the purchase of Trinity Church does not go ahead.

An asset of community interest was placed on the building that expired in August 2022. A bid was placed on behalf of Radstock Town Council and accepted by the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes just after the expiry. A Public Works Loan Board application for the purchase price of the building. Discussions between RTC and the Church to acquire the building have become protracted and a decision on the purchase is likely to be known by the end of 2023.

Radstock Trinity Methodist Church is in a prominent central location in the town. The site was likely undeveloped prior to 1902 an irregular shaped plot formed by surrounding development – an early 18th century farmhouse and attached rear range on the south and a densely arranged row of shops and cottages (late 19th century) on the north.

The church is not a statutory designated listed building, but it is regarded as a non-designated heritage asset by planning authorities by virtue of the quality and preservation of its primary architectural design and features, prominent dual-fronted presence and location within the Radstock Conservation Area. It has architectural features externally and internally, of sufficient merit to be considered for listing.

It retains all its constituent parts (school room; two lecture rooms; a large chapel and offices all interconnected). The building is dual aspect with principal frontages on two of Radstock's main high streets and is built in a Neo-Gothic style with a mainly

unaltered Arts and Crafts interior with gallery, ceiling and rostrum of fine quality that is comparable in quality to designated assets.

Heritage value is derived from its architectural features and the quality, design and execution of the building; and from its historic interest which is drawn from its social and spiritual role as a place of worship and support for Methodists associated with the industrial past of the town.

Trinity has always been available for community use - it was built by the community for the community, and as the size of the congregation waned community use increased.

Radstock Town Council have reviewed the viability of the building undertaking reports, surveys, valuations and costings to give a greater understanding of what is required to carry out repair and refurbishment.

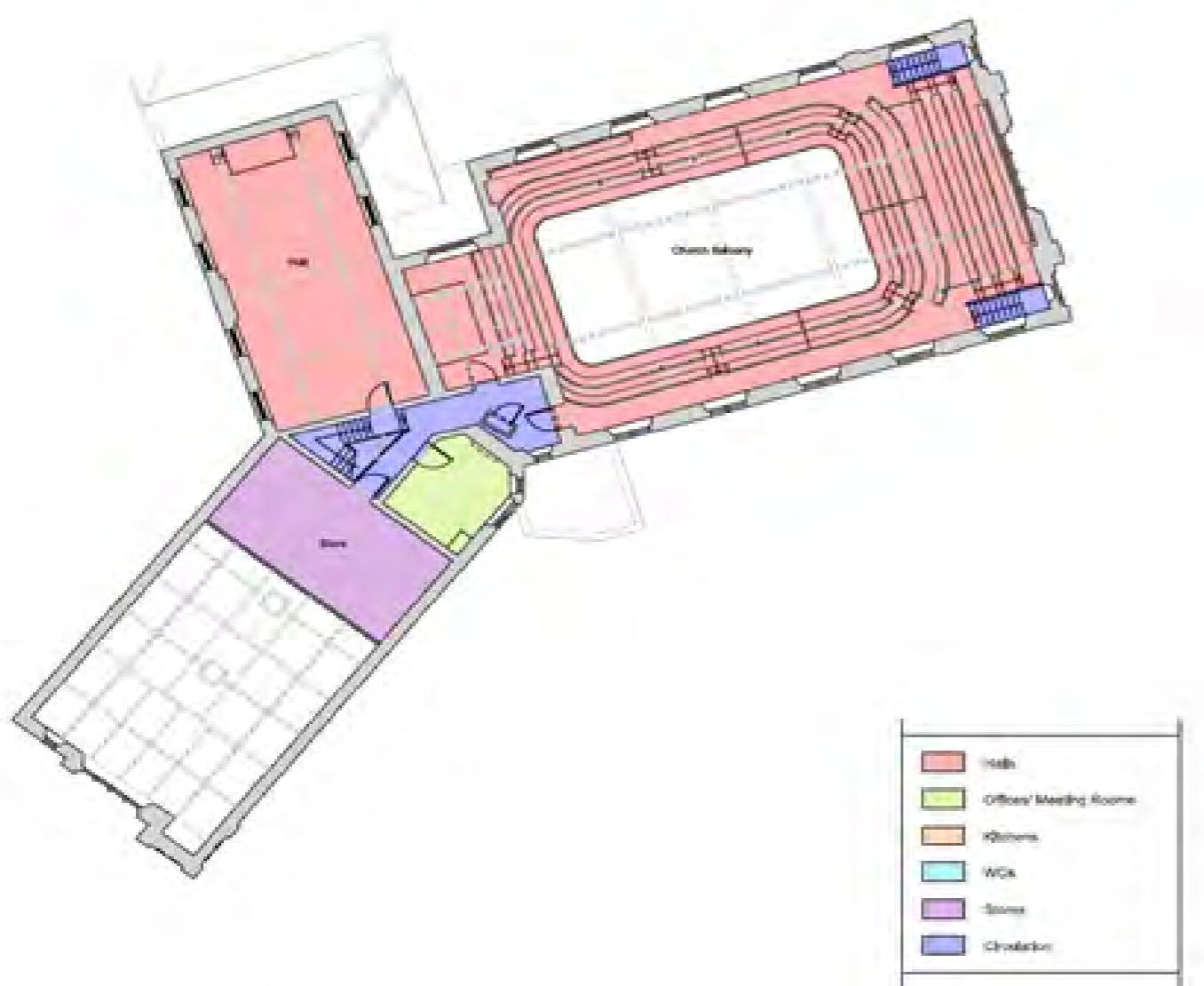
Architects were appointed in spring 2023 to carry out a feasibility study was commissioned to support Radstock Town Council in determining the viability of Trinity Church for re purposing of the space. The report recommended that it is possible to accommodate the desired brief and existing provision within Trinity Church. It is recognised that there is significant maintenance works and modernisation works associated with the property that need to be addressed in order for the building to be fit for purpose.

B&NES is working in partnership with Radstock Town Council to acquire the building and if successful will look to access funding for a phased retrofit and refurbishment of the building.

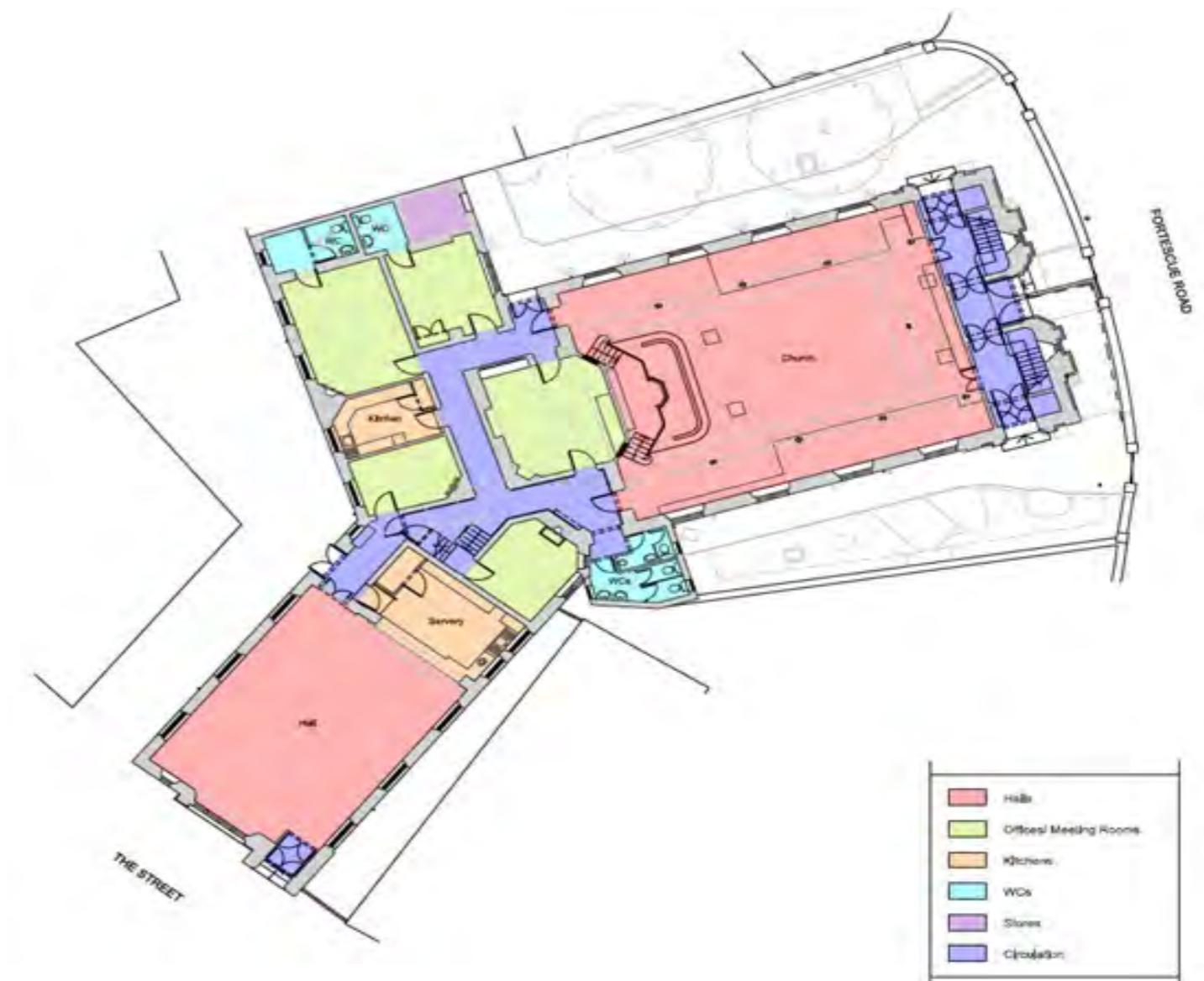
Project 1: Town Centre Community Facility Improvements

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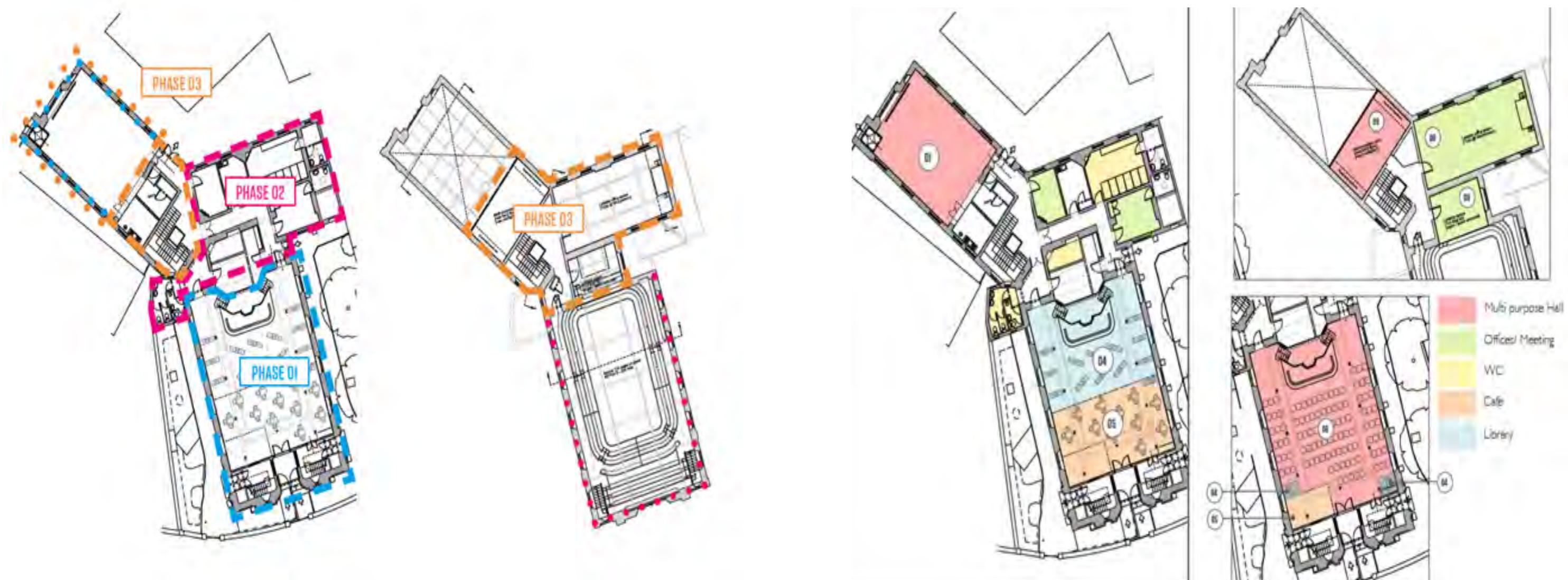


Zoning Diagram - First Floor - DKA



Zoning Diagram - Ground Floor - DKA

Project 1: Town Centre Community Facility Improvements



Preferred Option - B1- DKA

Preferred Option - B1 - DKA

Project 2: Outdoor Event Space

Working with Radstock Town Council and B&NES Markets Team, eight core opportunity spaces in Radstock Town Centre have been identified as offering potential for hosting vibrant, engaging events which meet the needs of the community and local businesses.

For a town of its size, there is a good number of indoor arts and community venues in Radstock, by contrast, there is currently low availability of practical outdoor spaces in Radstock to complement the indoor offering.

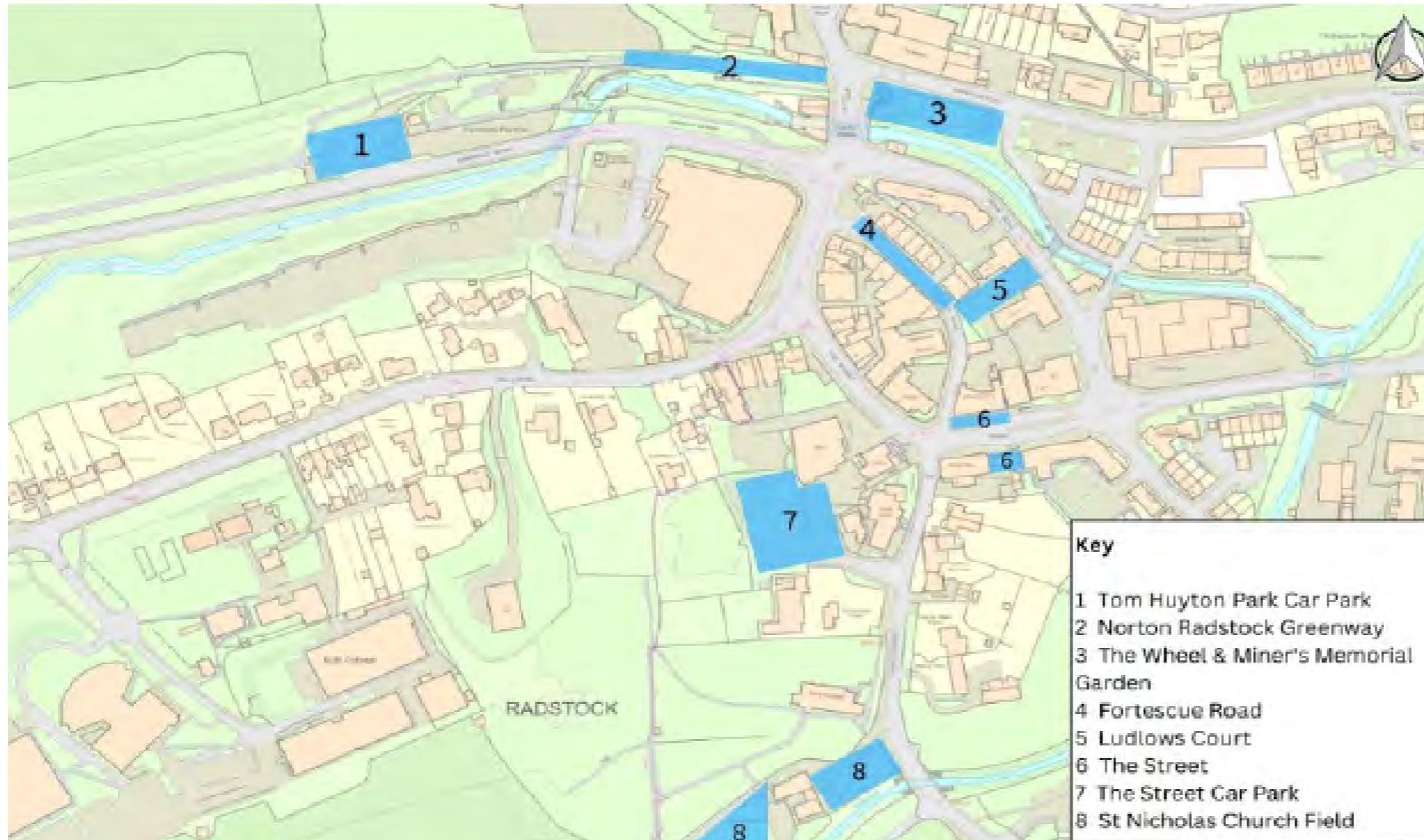
There is no single contained space which could comfortably accommodate an event or market large enough to be run sustainably. Where equivalent market towns may have the option of road closures to create event space, the roads in Radstock Town Centre are all essential thoroughfares to residential areas, making closures difficult to achieve.

There are several small outdoor spaces suitable for small community events. Recent successful and well-attended outdoor events held in St Nicholas Church Field demonstrate that there is a local audience for such programmes and there is strong evidence that such events can play a key role in health, wellbeing, sense of community, and sense of place identity.

Whilst none of these outdoor spaces could support regular outdoor markets individually, there is scope for co-ordinating town-wide events along a recognised 'trail' involving multiple venues and local organisations.

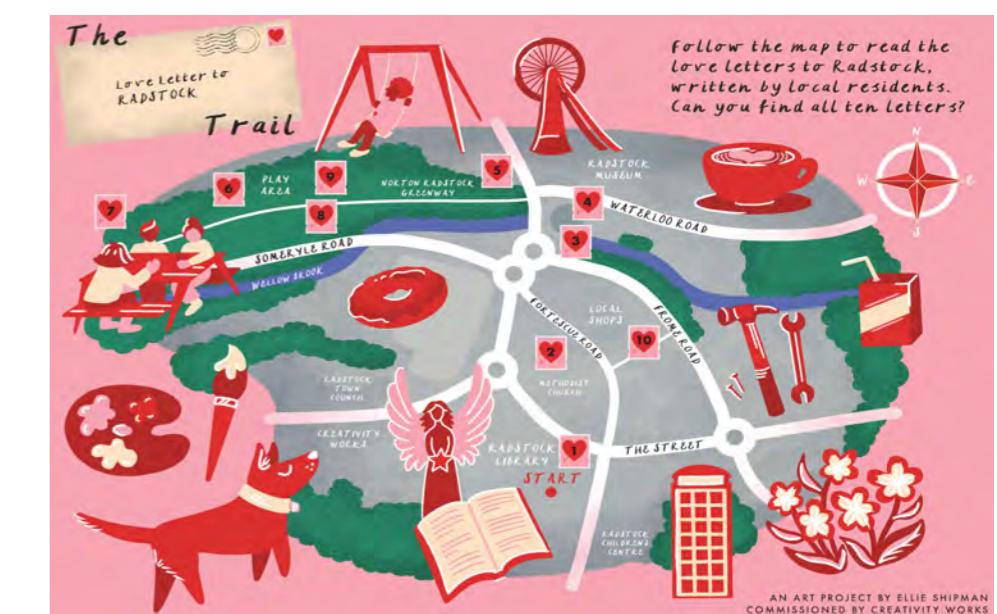


Project 2: Outdoor Event Space



Potential outdoor events spaces include the following and further information on each can be found in the evidence section of this report:

1. **Tom Huyton Park and Car Park (Radstock Town Council)**
2. **Norton Radstock Greenway (Radstock Town Council)**
3. **The Wheel and Miner's Memorial Garden (Radstock Town Council)**
4. **Fortescue Road**
5. **Ludlows Court (Firstport Management Company)**
6. **The Street (B&NES Council and Lewin House Management Company)**
7. **The Street Car Park (B&NES Council)**
8. **St Nicholas Church Field**



Project 3: Town Centre Cultural Programme

Radstock is home to acclaimed arts and wellbeing charities, Victoria Hall arts centre, Radstock Children's Centre, Youth Connect South West, Swallow Community Café, Radstock Library and the beautiful Trinity Church. There are several active and exhibiting arts collectives locally (notably the Old Bakery Artists and Cam Valley Arts Trail), and Bath's Natural Theatre Company has worked extensively in the area too. The town is also home to the Radstock Museum, situated in the Grade-II listed Market Hall. The museum offers a range of exhibits on life in the Somerset coalfield since the 19th century alongside a series of temporary exhibitions.

Consultation sessions in 2022 & 2023 revealed that local people believed that more community events would lead to a more vibrant town centre in the future. A cultural programme for Radstock could include:

- The creation of a new Radstock-based cultural network
- The creation of a recognisable town brand, focusing on Radstock's coal mining heritage and market history
- Installation of wayfinding between events spaces through the use of murals and floor stencils
- Fringe events in collaboration with Bath Fringe and Bath Carnival
- Supporting the existing Radstock Festival (formerly the Somer Valley Arts Day) with additional pop-up activities, workshops and community engagement, delivered in collaboration with the Natural Theatre Company, Little Lost Robot, Creativity Works and Radstock Town Council)
- Community grants/artist residencies
- Audio tours/soundscape trails
- Bring additional cultural events into the area



Radstock Museum

Radstock Museum operates an Outreach Programme to engage with local community groups and organisations (AgeUK, Alzheimer's Society, etc) to arrange and host a series of Community Cafés.

These cafés are designed to provide a social environment for various groups including people living with memory issues and their carers, service veterans and local history groups. The cafés are supported and run by a part-time Community Events Manager with additional support from a small core of Museum volunteers and usually operate on mornings when the Museum is otherwise closed to the public. The museum has recently appointed an Events Manager and are planning to channel other grant bids into their outreach work.



Trinity Methodist Church

Radstock Town Council is in the process of purchasing Trinity Church and hoping to complete in Summer 2023. It occupies a central position in the town and is built in a Neo-Gothic style with a mainly unaltered Arts and Crafts interior. The church has always been available for community use, and as the size of the congregation waned community use increased. It has recently been used for meetings and hosting large scale community events.

This project will be led by Radstock Town Council, with additional support from Bath Spa University and Bath and North East Somerset Council's Regeneration Team. The Regeneration Team will provide ongoing support to access funding to carry out phased works to the building. Public Engagement and outward facing community work will be undertaken by Radstock Town Council with local organisations (Creativity Works and Little Lost Robot). Early engagement with the community has shown a high level of support. and a new home for Radstock Town Council and the community library.

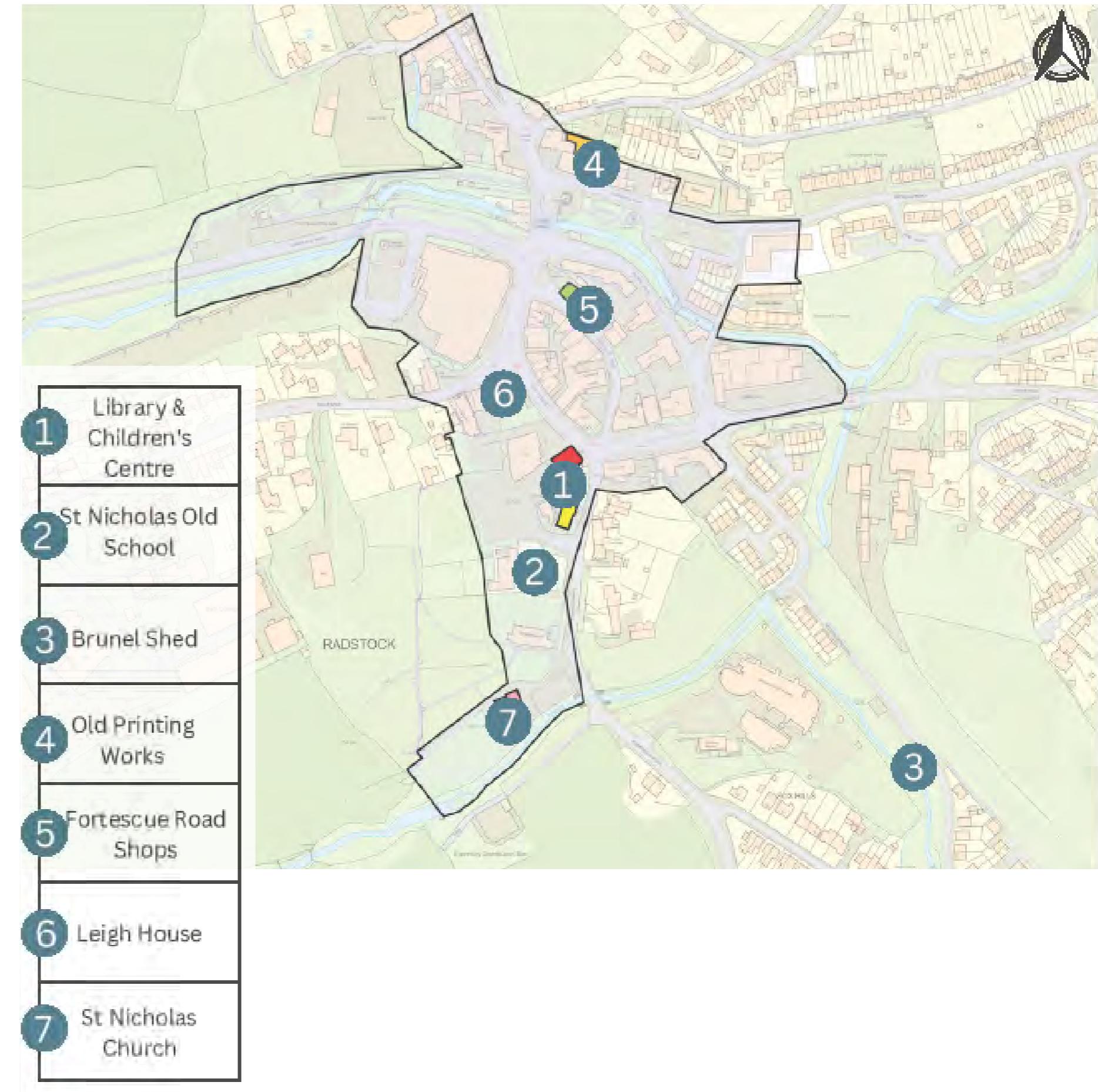
Radstock Hub & Community Library

The current home of Radstock Town Council, this venue is also a community library and hosts a range of community and civic activities.

Site Assessments

Sites have been identified in the Radstock town centre that are vacant or have potential for improvement. Holwest Ltd (trading as DKA) were appointed by B&NES in November 2022 to carry out the site assessments. A Stage 1 report was prepared in December 2022 and sought to summarise the constraints, opportunities and limitations of each site. Stage 2 report was produced in March 2022 and provided high level concept designs and costs for each of the sites.

Owners of properties have been contacted by B&NES and DKA and site visits have been undertaken. With the information from the assessments, it should be possible for site owners to develop a scheme independently or work with the Council's Regeneration Team to develop schemes.



The Library and Children's Centre

The Library and children's centre sites are located in the centre of Radstock, at the junction of The Street and Church Street. The site falls within the Radstock Conservation area and is in close proximity to a number of heritage assets. The properties are owned by Bath & North East Somerset Council. The library building appears to be in fair condition, retaining it would require substantial refurbishment, upgrades and maintenance to provide modern facilities. The building is likely to become vacant when Radstock Town Council moves to Trinity Church in 2023.

A mixed-use development on the site is supportable in principle within the scope of planning policy. Any development proposed needs to be sensitively designed and reinforce local character in such a way that it does not contribute demonstrable harm to its setting. Future proposals must wholly consider the impact to the surrounding heritage assets and not attribute additional harm to their setting. Flood risk shall play an important factor in the proposed layout of the site.

The Children's Centre site is currently occupied by Youth Connect on a lease. The youth centre operates during the day and in the evenings. A late 19th century detached house (locally known as Greystones) occupies the northern section of the site. This was extended in the 1960s with a single storey building to the south.

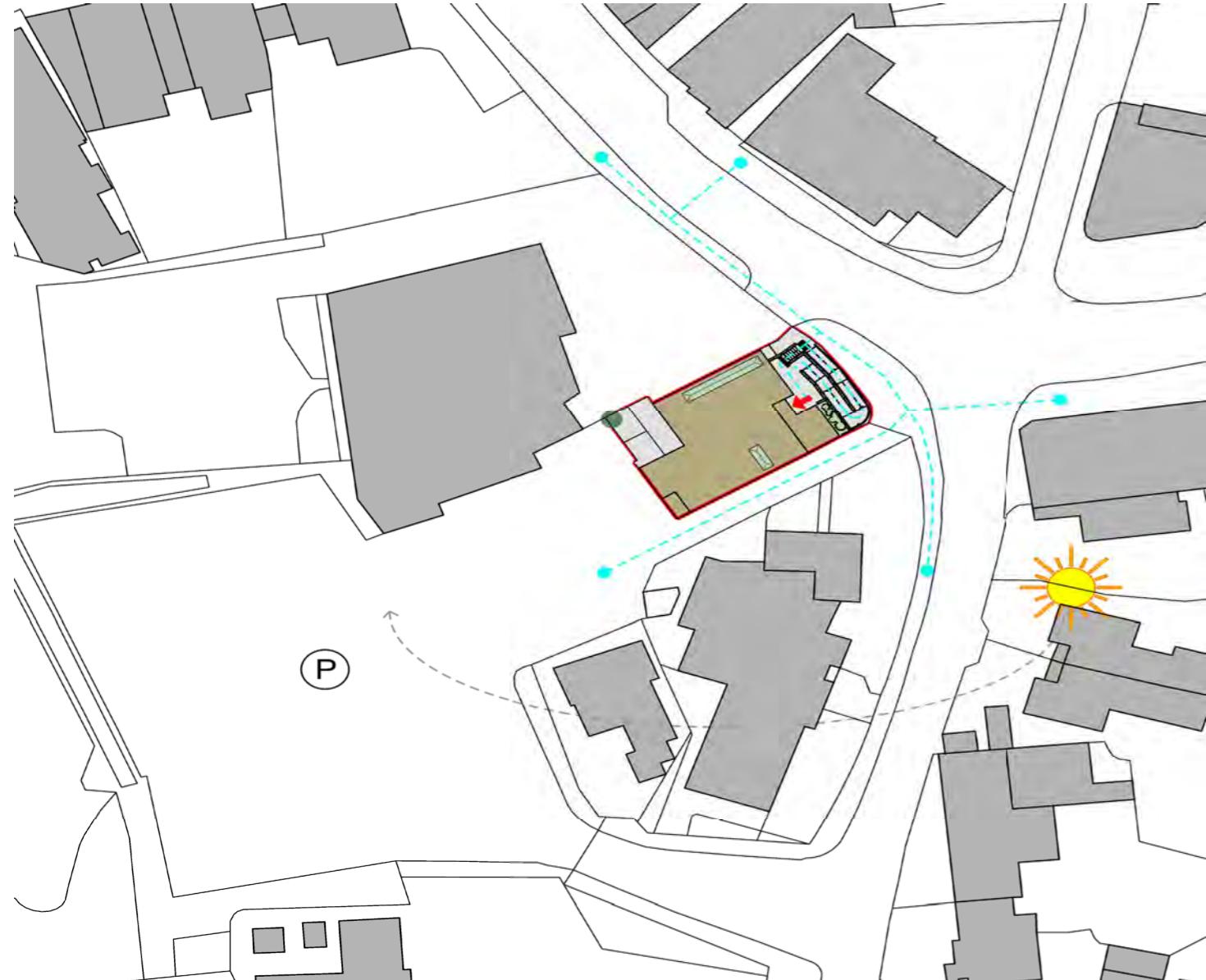
The report concluded that although requiring some maintenance, there is no reason why Greystones should not be retained. The 1960s extension would require a more substantial refurbishment, upgrade and maintenance to provide modern facilities. Demolishing this section of the building should not be considered a heritage loss.

A mixed-use development on the site is supportable in principle within the scope of planning policy. Any development proposed needs to be sensitively designed and reinforce local character in such a way that it does not contribute demonstrable harm to its setting. Future proposals must wholly consider the impact to the surrounding heritage assets and not attribute additional harm to their setting. Flood risk shall play an important factor in the proposed layout of the site.



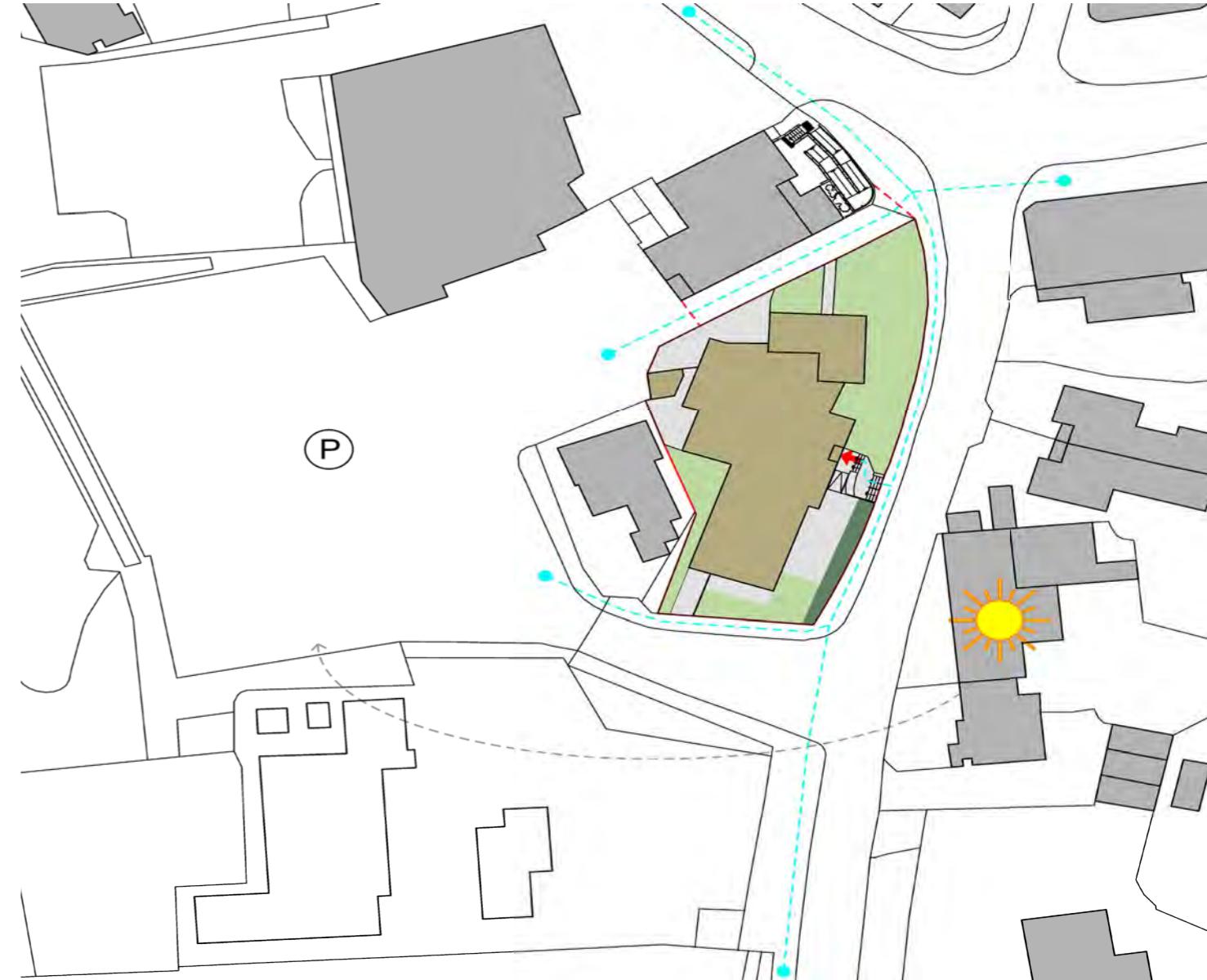
The Library and Children's Centre

Youth Centre sites were considered together for the following uses:



Option 1

A new mixed-use development, with commercial space at ground floor and residential units at first and second floor. The existing Greystones building would be demolished. This option would provide new streetscape, activating the corner of The Street and Church Street.



Option 2

New residential development of townhouses, retaining the existing Greystones building. This would provide new streetscape, activating the corner of The Street and Church Street and Massing to reflect local vernacular & surrounding properties rather than single storey existing buildings.

St Nicholas Old School

The St Nicholas old school site is located to the south of the town centre, on Church Street. The site was used as a primary school until 2006, when the school was relocated to purpose-built premises on Church Street / Kilmersdon Road, towards Haydon. The former headmaster's house was converted to residential flats around 2012, with the rest of the site left vacant and the school building being derelict to this day.

Built in 1857, the school building is a typical Victorian high ceiling single storey structure. This was extended / added to during the 19th and 20th centuries. The former headmaster's house is a two-storey detached building of domestic scale. This was once attached to the rest of the school buildings, but it is understood that this was detached when the property was converted into flats.

The report concluded the former headmaster's house is worth retaining. Although the other buildings appear to be in a derelict state, it is likely that the structure can be salvaged and reused, however this would require substantial reconstruction, refurbishment, upgrade and maintenance to provide modern facilities. It is also understood that the former school buildings 'are regarded in planning terms as a non-designated heritage asset of local interest', which would mean that demolition is unlikely to be granted as it would be considered a material loss to the setting of the Conservation Area.

Notwithstanding the constraints of the site and its inherent historic value, it benefits from being allocated for development in the local plan, albeit this also constrains new development seeking demolition of the existing building. In light of the above, a sensitively designed scheme seeking to retain the existing building, as much as is viable, is envisaged to be well received by the Council.



St Nicholas Old School

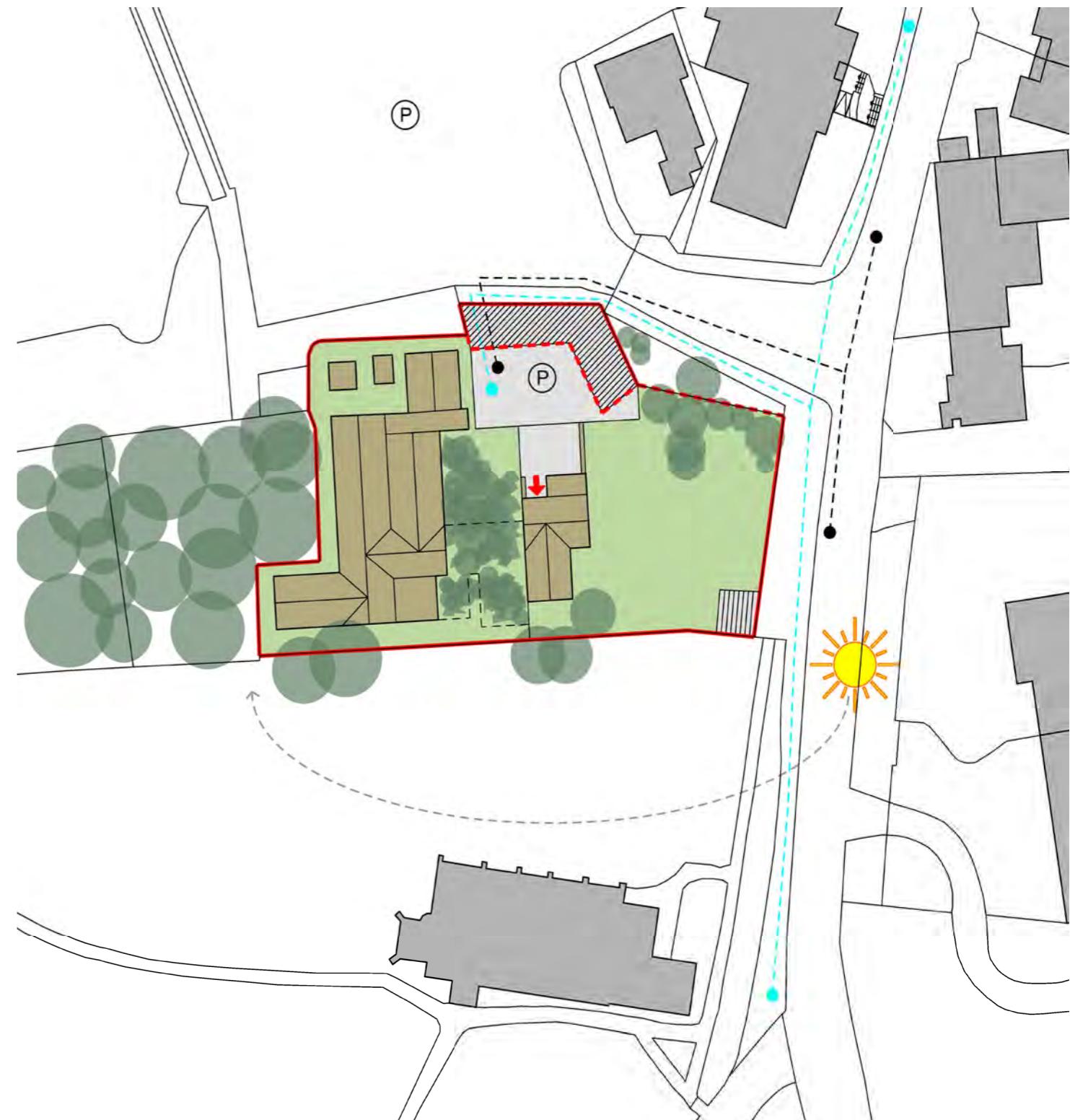
The following options were considered:

Option 1

Conversion of St Nicholas Old School to accommodate new offices, within the existing fabric footprint. A new path would lead to a central reception/ breakout area, which serves offices of varying sizes. The full double height spaces, and therefore character of the original building would be retained. Co-working & circulation space facilitates, access to further offices and welfare facilities would be accessed from the main entrance which would align with opening created in the existing external facade when the section connecting the Old School to the Headmaster's House was demolished.

Option 2

Conversion to accommodate four new residential units that exceed minimum national standards. A new path would lead to a new lobby serving units 3 & 4, unit 1 would be accessed from a separate entrance. The entrance would be located to align with the opening created in the existing external facade when the section connecting the Old School to the Headmaster's House was demolished.



Brunel Shed

The Brunel Shed site is located to the south of Radstock town centre on Nelson Ward Drive, near the start of the cycle path connecting Radstock to Frome. To the north, the residential properties along Nelson Ward Drive are recent and built in the last 10 years.

The site is currently vacant. The shed was originally built in 1896 as a single-road engine shed, sitting alongside the Great Western Railway (Radstock Branch), just north of the Radstock Wagon Works. The engine shed was formerly used by GWR, and officially closed in 1966.

The building is currently a shell, with no internal fit out. A new small lean-to extension to the west to accommodate toilets has been constructed in 2022. The northern gable end comprises of a large opening which is currently boarded up. The southern gable end is a large opening which was recently infilled with blockwork, with a small pedestrian doorway created. The roof has been recently replaced which secures the structure for the foreseeable future.

The report concluded that the structure is in good condition and is therefore worth being retained.

As the site falls outside the designated town centre and Housing Development Boundary, retail and housing developments would be harder to achieve. A commercial or community use is an appropriate aspiration for the site within its policy context. A precedent for this was set with a previous planning application for the site for a café and cycle repair shop.

Norton Radstock Regeneration Company (NRR) was formed in 1998 with a broad agenda relating to regeneration within a benefit area of Norton Radstock. In 2001, the 8-hectare former railway lands site was

purchased and redeveloped to provide residential units on three areas, retail & commercial floorspace, car parking, new roads to service the development, a new footbridge, public realm works, ground remediation, works to trees and habitat areas, new children's play areas and a new Sustrans sustainable travel route.

NRR, the current owner of the Brunel Shed has advised B&NES that they intend to wind up their company. A decision has been made by B&NES Council that they could acquire the shed from NRR, if proper due diligence was undertaken to understand the risks and costs of acquisition. However, NRR is seeking to dispose of the building to a third party.

The Brunel Shed is the only remaining built feature of the NRR site's former historic railway use; all other railway buildings have either been demolished or removed to facilitate the redevelopment.



Brunel Shed

For all the options below, in addition to provision of screens to the east and west, the windows facing south are to be blocked up to minimise light spills to the bat corridor. From a conservation point of view, this option can easily be detailed to be reversible.

Option 1

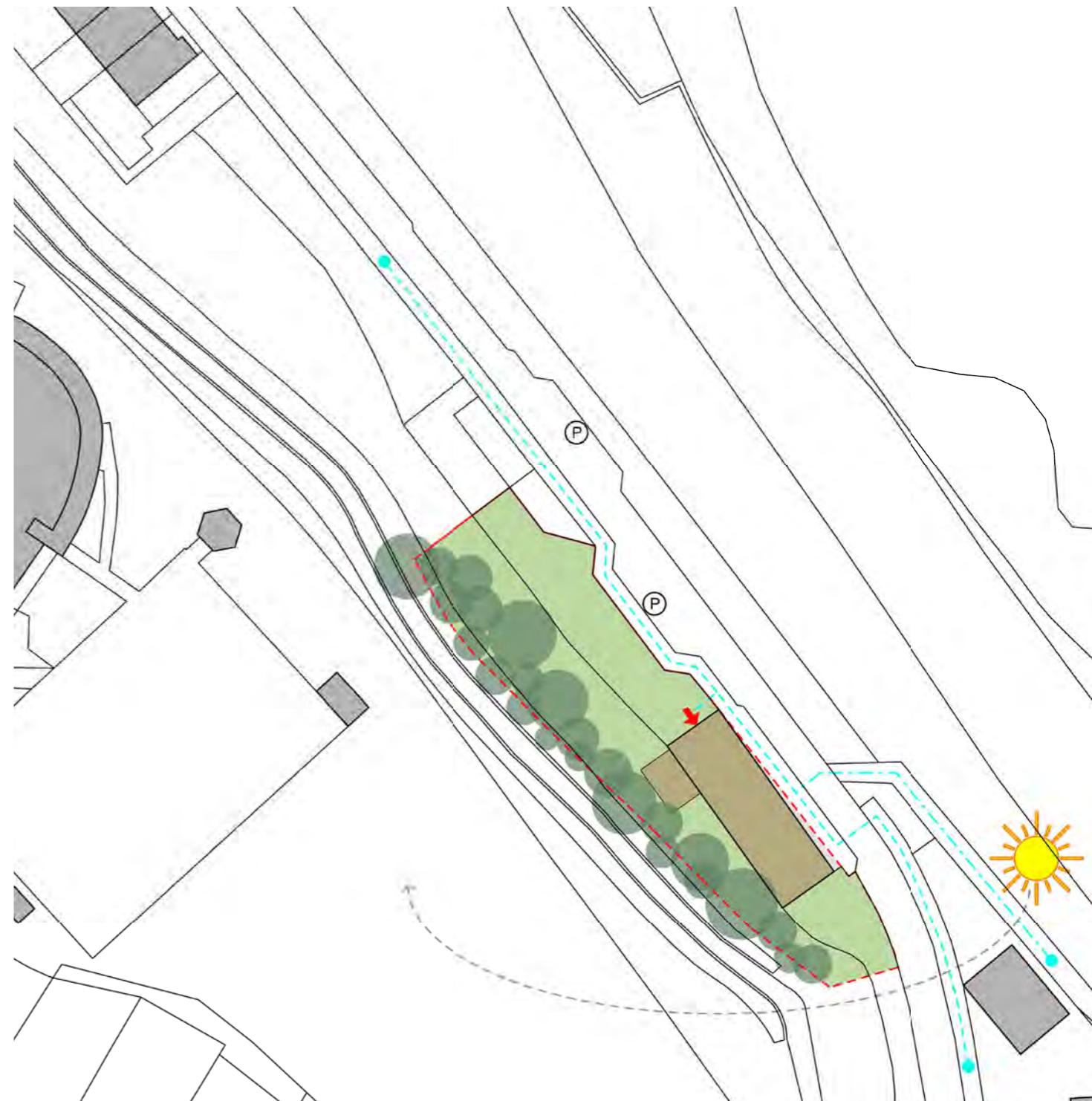
Conversion of the building to accommodate a cafe, and retail or commercial unit. This option is similar to extant planning approval. This retains the lean-to toilet block, while subdividing the main shed space into two. From a conservation point of view, this option is can easily be detailed to be reversible.

Option 2

Conversion to accommodate two 3 bed accessible housing units. Each unit is accessed from one end of the building and provides accessible accommodation. From a conservation point of view, this option requires new floor plates across the length of the building, with a detail at the full height windows to prevent noise and fire transfer between ground and first floors.

Option 3

Conversion to accommodate a small industrial unit. An office is located to the north, with a workshop or storage section located in the southern half. The toilets provision in the lean-to are adjusted. From a conservation point of view, this option is can easily be detailed to be reversible.



Leigh House

Leigh House in its current form was built in mid-19th century and located in the centre of Radstock town centre, opposite the former Radstock Co-operative site. It occupies a prominent corner site, visible to anyone circulating through Radstock, located at the major intersection of Wells Hill (A367) and The Street, opposite the former Radstock Co-op site.

The site falls within the Radstock Conservation Area and is in close proximity to a number of heritage assets.

Leigh House is owned by the Leigh House Trust Limited and developed as a base for various voluntary sector groups working in Radstock and the wider north-east Somerset area.

The internal layout appears to be largely original and the building's interiors generally suffer from wear and tear, and would benefit from general redecoration and refurbishment. The 1940s extension is in poor condition, with visible cracks in the brickwork. The external fabric of Leigh House and the slate roof looks to be in fair condition.

The building would benefit from substantial refurbishment, upgrades and maintenance to provide modern, accessible facilities with the exception of the 1940s flat roof extension at the rear which could be demolished.

The site's location within the Housing Development Boundary and the designated Town Centre is beneficial for applications proposing housing or office developments as these are considered acceptable in principle within these designations.



Leigh House

The following options are both hampered by limited parking onsite:

Option 1

Accessible offices. As the main entrance is via a set of steps from the adjacent pavement, the side entrance could be altered at basement level to provide level access. Some ground floor lean-to facilities could be demolished to allow the construction of a new lift linking all three levels. New accessible toilets could be provided at ground floor.

Option 2

The existing property could be split into three residential units. The basement unit is to be accessed from street level to the side of Leigh House, the ground floor unit accessed via the main entrance and the first-floor unit accessed through a new access via a shared garden. Off street parking is provided to the east, along with new bin and bike storage.



Project 4: Brownfield Site Redevelopment, Reuse and Repurposing

Old Printworks

Old Printworks site is located in the centre of Radstock, just north of the Radstock Museum, off the A367 / Bath New Road, on the approach from Bath. It is in the Radstock Conservation Area, is not listed and the site benefits from frontages on both Waterloo Road and the Bath Old Road.

The site is currently vacant, with the last tenants having vacated the premises in the summer of 2022. The last occupancy comprised of a gym on the ground floor, and offices on the upper floors. Previous usage was a carpentry workshop, printworks, and brewery.

The report concludes that although the majority of the structures on site are of no discernible merit, the central tower appears structurally sound and a remnant of the site's history. As such the tower should be retained in any proposed development. This would however, benefit from substantial refurbishment, upgrade and maintenance.

The site's location within the Housing Development Boundary and the designated Town Centre is beneficial for applications proposing housing, retail or commercial mixed-used developments as these are considered acceptable in principle.

The site falls in very close proximity to a number of heritage assets, future development proposals must therefore carefully consider any harm that may arise to the historic environment.

Early discussions between new landlords and a local arts organisation have led to a proposal for the use of this site as an arts and making space, potentially including other recreational uses .



Project 4: Brownfield Site Redevelopment, Reuse and Repurposing

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Old Printworks

The following options were considered and all would benefit from onsite parking:

Option 1

Temporary use of the car park and for meanwhile and temporary arts and cultural uses are being explored, including studio space, maker space, recreational uses and flexible spaces for hire for workshops.

Option 2

Commercial units at ground and upper floors, with access to onsite parking from Bath Old Road and Waterloo Road. Separate commercial unit annex near Waterloo Road entrance due to rights of access to adjacent garages & flats. Existing tower to be retained and converted to accommodate circulation.

Option 3

Combination of commercial (ground floor) and residential above, however, this would be a loss of employment generating floor space in the town centre.



Project 4: Brownfield Site Redevelopment, Reuse and Repurposing

St Nicholas Church

The St Nicholas Church site is located in the Conservation Area to the south of Radstock town centre, on Church Road. St Nicholas Church is located immediately to the north, a field and St Nicholas CofE Primary school are located to the east on the opposite side of the road. It is in close proximity to a number of heritage assets including the Grade II listed St Nicholas Church.

The site is currently occupied by the St Nicholas Church centre and Swallows Community Café, which rents the space from the church. The hard play area to the front of the site and the field to the rear are used by the community.

The report concludes retaining the huts on the site would require substantial refurbishment, upgrade and maintenance to provide modern facilities. The issue of asbestos roof would also need to be considered. Demolishing this building would not be a heritage loss, however it is to be noted that as the huts appear to have been built prior to 1947 and are within the curtilage St Nicholas Church, listed building consent would be required.

A change of use from a community facility will only be permitted if alternative facilities of equivalent value can be provided in the town centre. If the loss can be justified with an appropriate alternative use and off-site remediation takes place, then a commercial scheme could become feasible.

Flood risk and the proximity of a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation must be carefully considered in the design of any future developments.



St Nicholas Church

The following options were considered:

Option 1

Demolition of existing church centre and construction of new church centre on footprint of the existing building. Use of the existing centre would not be possible during construction. The existing fenced court and community field would remain unaffected by the development. The design footprint would be based on the existing facility.

Option 2

Demolition of existing church centre and construction of new church centre on the adjacent field. The existing centre to be retained operational during construction, with final access, parking and soft landscape to be completed following demolition. Existing fenced court unaffected by development.

In addition, there are opportunities to improve the functioning of the Church itself for community use which could be explored. The use of the Church Field for events has proved successful and related basic infrastructure to support this use could also be further be investigated.



Project 4: Brownfield Site Redevelopment, Reuse and Repurposing

Fortescue Road 1960's Shops

The Fortescue Road site occupies a prominent location in the centre of Radstock, with the northern end of the site sitting at the major intersection of the A367 and A362. The road appears to have been created in the 1890s and the site faces an attractive terrace of purpose-built shops. The site of the 1960s terrace of shops is located on the east side of Fortescue Road.

The site is currently used as shops to the ground floor, with flats above for Numbers 8-13; with Number 14 being a standalone convenience store. There are currently 8 landlords. It is understood that some tenants have long leases.

A modern residential development borders the site to the north and east. A new public piazza, built as part of this development is located to the southeast corner, along with an undeveloped small triangular piece of land.

The varying different uses for the units, including shops, residences, cafes and local services mean the site may be considered as mixed use.

The site falls within the Radstock Conservation Area and is in close proximity to a number of heritage assets and falls within the designated Primary Shopping Area and benefits from a Primary Shopping Frontage.

The report concludes the lack of unity in materials to the first-floor front elevation, fenestration pattern, shop front treatment and poor condition of elements such as the masonry or canopy means that the 1960's shops is considered of poor quality, and low visual appeal, especially when compared to the intricate Victorian shops across the road. A coordinated approach to the maintenance of the fabric of the building (no 8-13) would be beneficial to ensure integrity of any system installed,

without the risk of water tracking to adjacent properties, as well as enhance the public realm.

There is no doubt that the buildings would benefit from substantial refurbishment, upgrade and maintenance to provide modern facilities. Although demolishing this building would not be considered a heritage loss, this would need to be weighed against the environmental impact of doing so.



Fortescue Road 1960's Shops

Both options considered would include refurbishment of the 1960s shops, to provide a coordinated approach to the streetscape including works to include replacement canopy, shop fronts windows & first floor cladding. The options would also include additional work to include new roof covering and localised brickwork repairs. This would provide new coordinated facade at ground and first floor along length of shops.

Option 1

Retail & residential as current use. Unit 14 (Morrisons Local) and internal refurbishment of retail and residential units is out of scope. Works undertaken would require agreements with all owners. Multiple ownerships limits more ambitious development opportunities.

Option 2

Commercial at ground with offices above. This would also require agreement with all owners.



Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency is one of two core policies outlined in B&NES Corporate Strategy 2020-2024. The goal is to be carbon neutral by 2030. Increasing tree canopy cover will play a key role in working towards this target. Increased tree cover will also increase biodiversity and improve public health and wellbeing.

B&NES is a member of the West of England Nature Partnership (WENP). It also aims to support the West of England Nature Recovery Network's (NRN) ambition to double woodland cover and urban tree cover across the district by 2050. The WENP launched 'The Forest of Avon Plan, a West of England Tree and Woodland Strategy' in June 2021. Bath and North East Somerset falls within the Forest of Avon, one of England's Community Forests. Community Forests were established to connect people with trees locally.

Planting more trees deliver 'ecosystem services' – benefits for nature and communities, which include:

- Slowing the impacts of climate change by absorbing and storing carbon dioxide
- Regulating air temperature with water vapour and shade provision
- Enhancing biodiversity by providing habitat and food for birds and pollinators
- Minimising the effects of air pollution by absorbing some vehicle emissions
- Helping to manage storm water by absorbing excess rainwater runoff
- Encouraging people to enjoy the outdoors, promoting good physical and mental wellbeing
- Improving how the streetscape looks by adding colour and texture

We select species of trees with characteristics that will fit into the urban environment, applying the 'right tree, right place' principle to ensure the trees will thrive and fulfil their true potential to provide ecosystem services and complement landscape character. We will consider the mature height and width of the trees, as well as how planted trees would affect utilities and the surrounding infrastructure. Final plans for urban tree planting are approved by our Highways Department to ensure road user safety, accessibility, and

functionality of existing street furniture. We will undertake the long-term management of new trees, with regular inspections throughout their lifetime and routine maintenance works carried out where appropriate.

Replacement Tree Planting in Radstock

Section 106 funds to replace nine trees that were lost when the site in Waterloo Road was developed for the Hope House Centre. This could fund 5 soft replacements (in verges/grass) and 4 hard replacements (with tree pit construction). The terms of the S106 agreement dictate the new trees must be planted in the Radstock Conservation Area. Working with Radstock Town Council, locations to plant the trees will be identified and planting is likely to take place in 2024. Other opportunities for greening of the town centre will be identified and funding identified for delivery.



Green Infrastructure provides a wide range of evidenced economic, social and environmental benefits including:

- Supporting resilient ecosystems and biodiversity.
- Mitigating and adapting the natural and built environment to climate change.
- Conserving and enhancing a legible network of physical green spaces.
- Reducing and managing flood risks and drought.
- Improving mental and physical health, and the cohesion of local communities.
- Increasing the sustainability of food production
- Maintaining and enhancing cultural heritage, landscapes and natural resources.
- Promoting economic growth, employment and skills improvement

A number of sites have been identified for having potential for improvement. One of these is the Miners Pool. Whilst it is not currently known who owns this land - (it is not registered with Land Registry) it has been identified as a site valued by Radstock residents, for both its ecological and cultural importance. Before management of this site can begin, a process to claim the land will need to be identified and agreed.

The Miners Pool links well with Waterside Valley, a greenspace owned by Westfield Parish Council which is also one of the five key greenspaces being improved by Somer Valley Rediscovered Greenspaces Project, funded by the WECA Green Recovery Fund. The field adjacent to the Miners Pool is part of the St Nicholas Church Rooms site and is a great space for community events having hosted a very successful jubilee event in 2022 and the Radstock Fayre in 2023 which marked the 50 year anniversary of the final closure of the coal mines.

St Nicholas' churchyard links with Waterside Valley and is in close proximity to the open space behind the Church Street car park. The churchyard is large and includes grassland and trees. It could benefit from some sympathetic management for wildlife balance with the need to access graves. There is also a section of land between the churchyard and the open space, behind Church St carpark which has no access and looks from aerial photos to be dense scrub, ownership of this land is currently unclear. This area of land could be investigated to see whether it could be an extension to Church Street Community Orchard.

There is also potential to improve both the visual amenity and the habitat of the Wellow Brook which flows through Radstock. The brook is in a deep straight channel where it flows the town and there should be further investigations to discuss what options might be feasible.

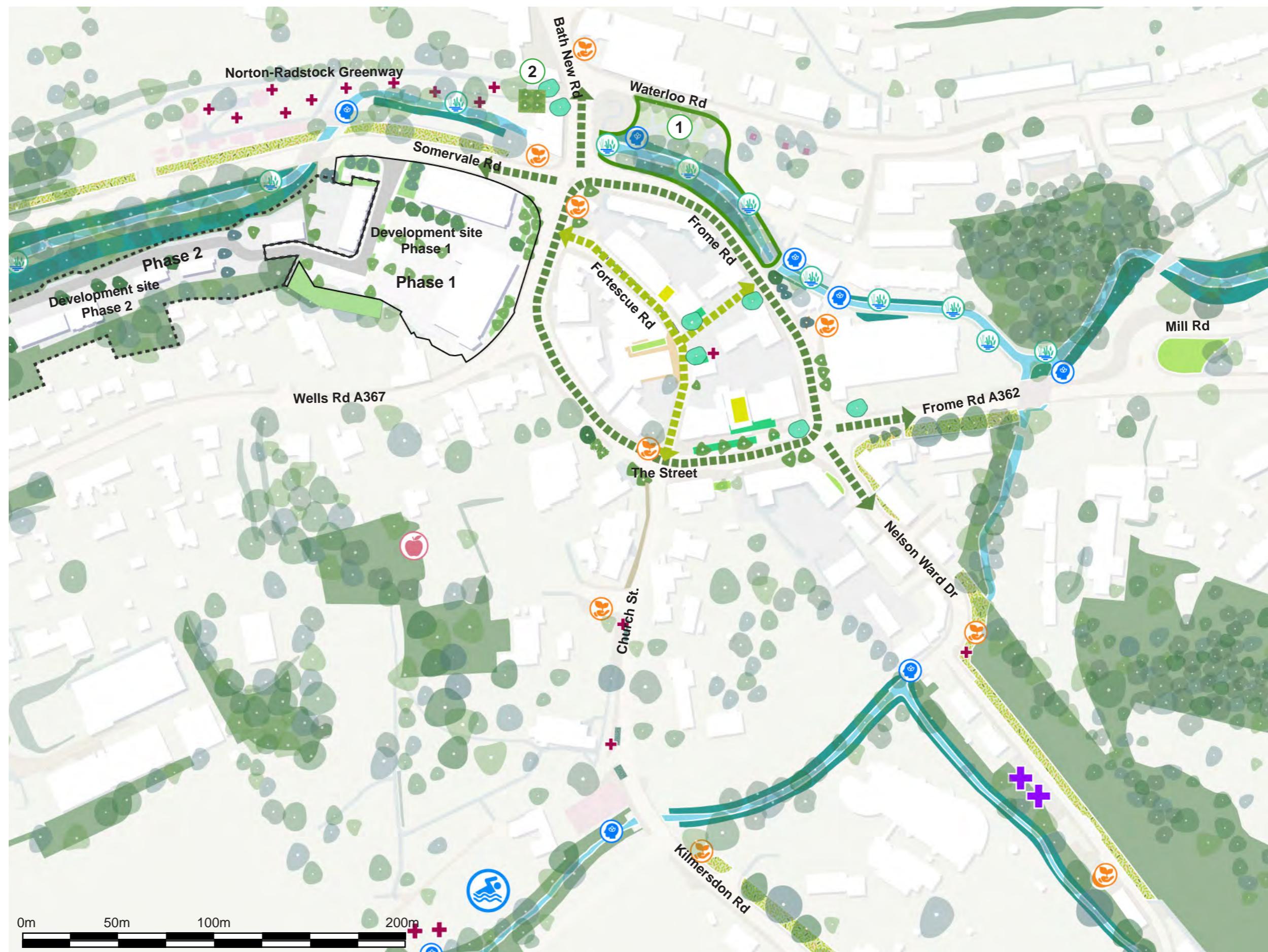
Although not in the project area, there are two other greenspaces that will be brought back into management in 2023. These are Radstock Railway Sidings and Foxhills. Radstock Railway Sidings is a linear strip of grassland, scrub and woodland with some steep embankments that can be viewed from the Colliers Way. This will be managed to maintain a mosaic of habitats. Foxhills is a steeply sloping field which has no public access but due to the topography is very visible from the surrounding landscape. Options for maintaining and enhancing the grassland will be investigated.

Work needs to be undertaken to explore how these sites, in various and unknown ownership, might be improved and managed for the benefit of the local community and nature. Working with the Town and parish councils, B&NES Council will identify outline programme of work to maximise use of various teams expertise, capacity and access potential funding streams.

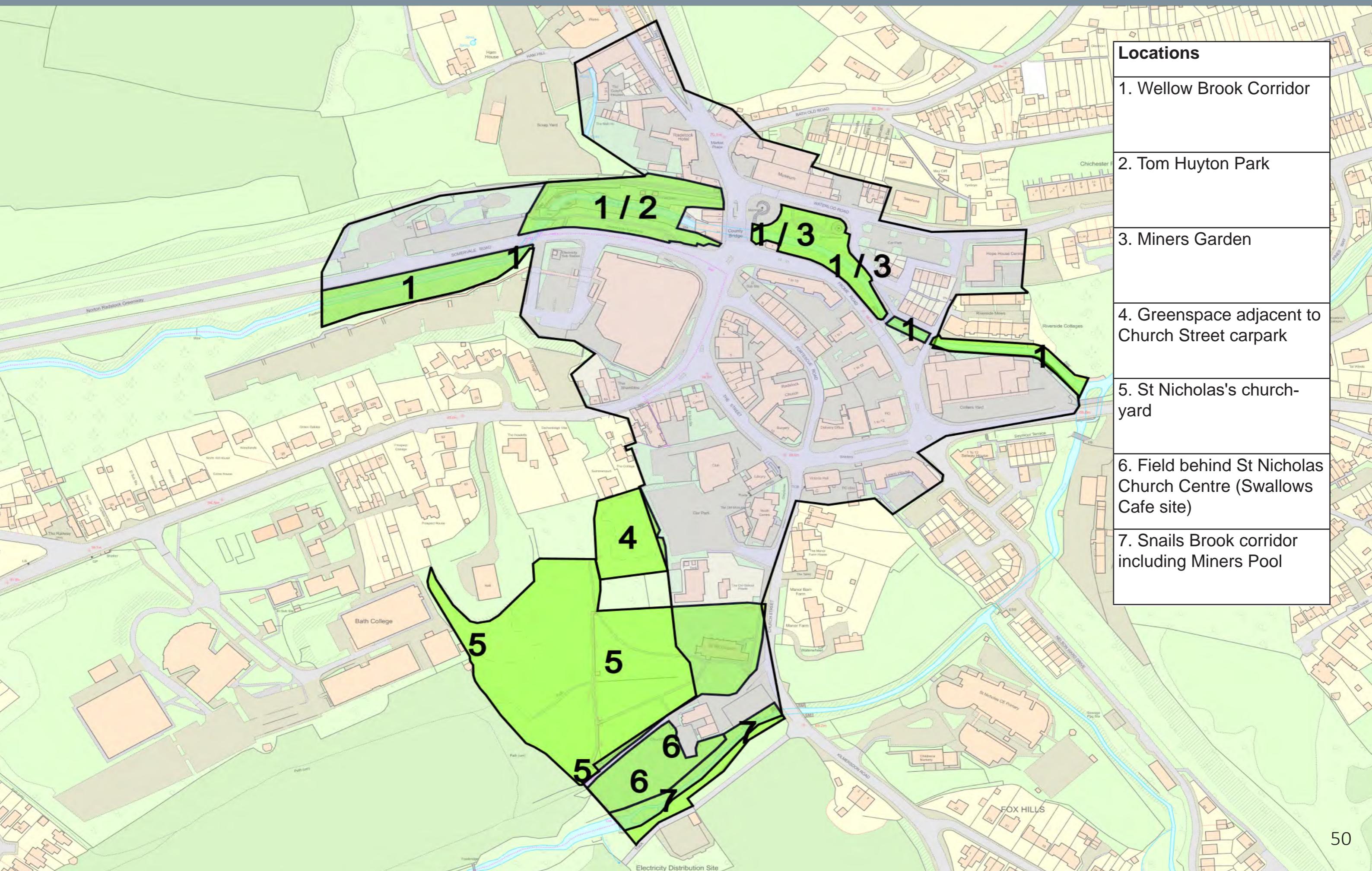
Project 6: Green & Blue Space Improvements & Opportunities

GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE OPPORTUNITIES

- ➡ Green loop
- ➡ Central green streets with linear gardens or parklets
- 1 Gateway garden
- 2 Gateway garden extended
- ➡ Community mini productive gardens
- ➡ Mindful place by Wellow Brook
- ➡ Orchard
- ➡ Specimen tree to arrival and heart spaces
- ➡ Street trees
- ➡ Existing trees
- ➡ Wildflower verges and greening to approaches to Radstock
- ➡ Rain gardens
- ➡ Natural play
- ➡ Wellow Brook habitat creation
- ➡ Natural swimming space



Project 6: Green & Blue Space Project Focus Areas



Bath and North East Somerset has declared a climate emergency and has committed to providing the leadership for the district to be carbon neutral by 2030. This will contribute to the UK's legally binding target of net zero carbon by 2050. There are three key priorities to achieve this:

- Energy efficiency improvement of the majority of existing buildings (domestic and non-domestic) and zero carbon new build
- A major shift to mass transport, walking and cycling to reduce transport emissions
- A rapid and large-scale increase in local renewable energy generation

The council's Climate Emergency Progress Report was adopted in 2019 and sets out the scale of action needed to meet these priorities, including that new homes and development need to be zero carbon or net positive carbon from now on. As part of this work, the council is seeking to update their adopted policies on climate change, including a net zero carbon construction policy.

The Council is seeking to encourage and enable the sensitive retrofitting of energy efficiency measures and the appropriate use of micro-renewables in historic buildings and in conservation areas, whilst safeguarding the special characteristics of these heritage assets for the future. Development should contribute to achieving a minimum level of Renewable Electricity and contribute to the need to balance electricity demand and supply in order to assist the

transition to 100% renewable electricity. A new local plan policy is harnessing wind power by identifying suitable areas for wind energy development.

Trinity Methodist Church

The Town Council has aspirations to vastly improve the energy performance of the building and will incorporate renewable energy solutions into its retrofitting. Other site improvements that take place in Radstock will also be encouraged to incorporate retrofitting and renewable energy solutions. A survey was carried out in December 2022 which identified work required included the following suggestions:

- Replacement of fluorescent lighting with commercial LED lighting & intelligent controls for improved efficiency;
- Replacement of gas fired boiler with a high efficiency gas condensing boiler, improved controls, pump set & pipework;
- Replacement of electric hot water heaters with high efficiency point of use units;
- Replacement of gas-fired heating system with a decarbonised solution;
- A heat recovery solution for large volume spaces.

The next steps will be to investigate further the feasibility of renewable energy installations with the community energy company Bath and West Community Energy in light of new potential grant funding from WECA.

Bath & West Community Energy

Bath & West Community Energy (BWCE) is a community owned business that develops renewable energy projects, runs innovative energy demand programmes and provides local community benefit. It has a growing portfolio of rooftop solar and ground mounted solar arrays, has installed one small hydro scheme and plans to develop other renewables.

For the last nine years BWCE has given a portion of its surplus income from renewable energy generation to the independently run BWCE Fund for the benefit of local communities including those in Bath & North East Somerset. The grants will be used by local charitable and community organisations on a range of important projects, intended to cut carbon emissions, reduce energy bills and waste and help with the cost of living crisis by tackling fuel poverty.

<https://www.bwce.coop/>

Centre For Sustainable Energy

The Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) will run drop in sessions in Radstock Library in 2023.

CSE provides strategic support for energy planners to establish or improve heating and cooling infrastructure through Act!onHeat. Advice is provided on planning, pre-feasibility and finance. Act!onHeat is an EU-funded project that will accelerate the take-up of strategic heating and cooling - such as low or zero-carbon district heating systems - in order to dramatically reduce dependency on fossil fuels.

Support is being offered to energy planners because few councils or municipalities possess the know-how, resources or experience necessary to plan heating and cooling developments which are large, complex and expensive undertakings.

<https://www.cse.org.uk/>

Solar Together

All residents living in B&NES and who own their own house (or have permission from the landlord to install a solar PV system) can register for the Solar Together group-buying scheme. Small and medium-sized enterprises (non-domestic) and Commonhold Associations meeting this requirement can participate as well. The scheme is likely to open for a second round in 2023.

Solar PV systems and battery storage can be purchased through this scheme. Electricity generated that is not being used will automatically be exported to the national grid. Battery storage stores the unused energy that is generated by your solar panels, meaning you can use it whenever you want.

<https://solartogether.co.uk/bathnes/home>

Project 8: Wayfinding, Streetscape Improvements & Parking

Wayfinding

Work has been undertaken to identify opportunities for new wayfinding in the town centre to help link up routes and circuits and highlight places of interest. An opportunity for quick wins related to signage and maps for the greenway and linear park alongside new branding has been identified in Tom Huyton Park.

Streetscape

During the action plan consultation, there was agreement that there should be improvement in the pedestrian movement around the town and safer crossings with priority being given to pedestrians & cyclists over cars. Opportunities to improve pedestrian links, crossings within the Town Centre and reducing the highway dominance on key streets and junctions will be investigated.

Opportunities to improve The Street with additional greening, street trees, street furniture upgrades and initiatives to improve pedestrian priority will also be identified.

With the development of the Trinity Church site, it should be possible to create a coherent and unified space that links the frontage of the church into the Linden Homes 'market square' including removing the walls, hedges and re-configuring the existing planting.

Parking

During the consultation on the Radstock Regeneration Action Plan, there was a mixed response on the parking offer with some people thinking that there wasn't a problem and others saying that there should be a review and provision of more long stay parking for workers especially given the loss of parking on the RADCO site, some of which were used by long stay users.

Anecdotal evidence seems to suggest that the loss of the RADCO spaces and the development of the new Hope House Centre on Waterloo Road has meant that there has been a change in use of car parks and on street parking which has created pressure on available parking spaces in the town centre.

Time restrictions on car parks is having a negative affect on people working in the town as they have to move their cars during the working day. The issue of parking permits for staff will be investigated

We will work with the B&NES Parking Team to investigate the possibility of carrying out a further review of parking in Radstock given the recent changes.

A survey of on street parking in Radstock took place over a week in early November 2022. The data has been collected for the New Local Plan in order to establish a baseline in terms of parking in the Somer Valley. It may be that the data is used at some stage to develop an updated parking strategy or other transport policies.



Project 8: Streetscape Improvements

**RADSTOCK
TOWN COUNCIL**

**Bath & North East
Somerset Council**
Improving People's Lives

LANDSCAPE AND PUBLIC REALM OPPORTUNITIES

Central heart and market place

Create an open and flexible space for events and markets, connecting the Trinity to Wellow Brook. Specimen trees and rain gardens will green the space with generous and social seating elements.

Fortescue Road

Thicken the public realm and create linear gardens and places to dwell in between narrow linear gardens or parklets. Deliver shop front enhancements and pop up opportunities in vacant plots to animate the street.

The Street

Create a series of rain gardens and spacious bus shelters to provide a green and attractive gateway to Radstock. Enhance connections for pedestrian and cyclists with enhanced crossings.

 Community mini productive gardens

 Mindful place by Wellow Brook

 Create a natural swimming spot

 1 Gateway garden with Radstock Pit Wheel

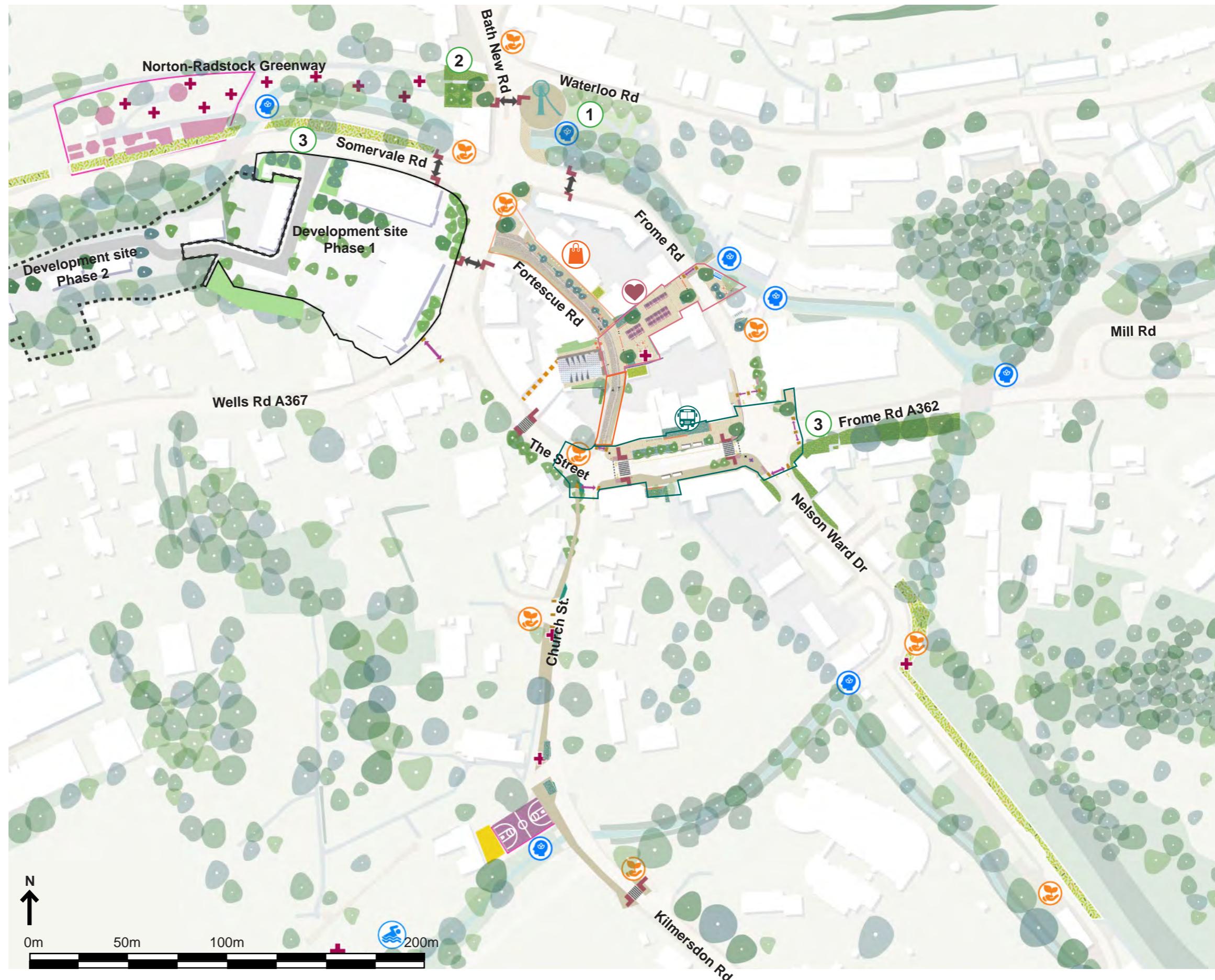
 2 Extension to the gateway garden

 3 Enhance the green approaches to Radstock

 Natural play

 Enhance MUGA with surfacing, seating and extended offer for youth user groups

 Enhance crossings for cyclists and pedestrians



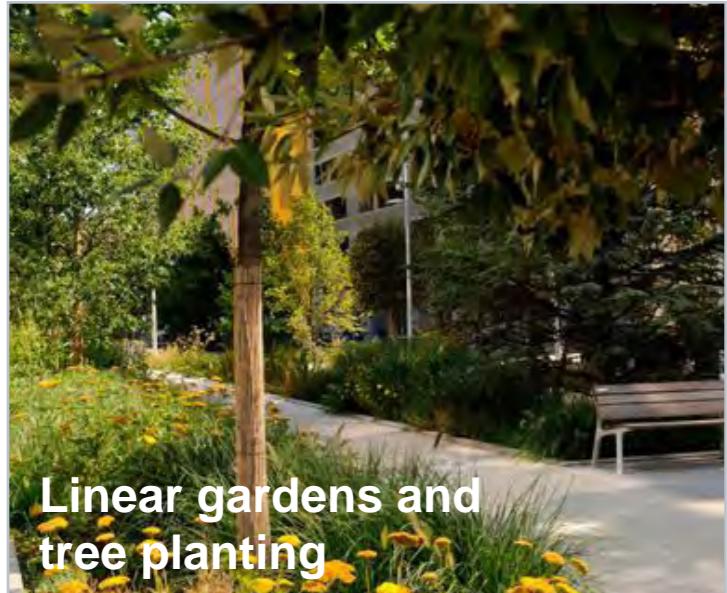
Project 8: Streetscape Improvements (Fortescue Road Design Idea)

OPPORTUNITIES

1. Specimen trees
2. Large gardens
3. Biodiversity roof
4. Linear gardens / parklets with integrated seating and cycle storage
5. High quality surface finishes and extended public realm
6. Buff tone to Fortescue Road with quiet cycle route and contraflow lane
7. Integrated pick up/drop off and loading bays
8. Generous seating elements
9. Art wall and climbing plants to blank facades
10. Flexible space for markets / seasonal events
11. Opportunities for active uses to occupy ground floor levels and activate the space with external seating
12. Improved access to the Trinity with accessible ramps and wide steps
13. Pop up unit to infil vacant plot on Fortescue Road



Project 8: Streetscape Improvements (Fortescue Road Design Idea)



Linear gardens and tree planting



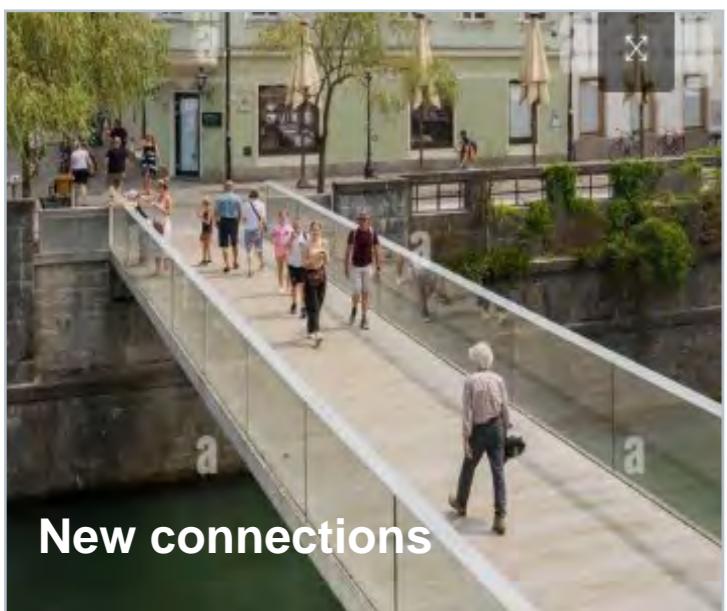
Mural artworks



Place-making



Parklets



New connections



Flexible active space



Waterside reflective space



Community workspace/
hub pop up



Integrated cycle storage



Celebrate historic buildings



Rain gardens

1. Trapèze linear gardens, Paris - AAUPC
2. Mural - Tara Johnston
3. East Street branding, Southwark - We made that Architects
4. Footbridge, Ljubljana
5. Central Parade event, New Adlington
6. Southgate, pop up event, Bath - MGS
7. Riverside pontoon, Ljubljana
8. East Street Exchange, Southwark - We Made That Architects
9. Integrated cycle storage, Manchester
10. Notre Dame de Calais illuminated, Calais
11. Bridget Joyce Square, London - Robert Bray Associates

Project 8: Streetscape Improvements (The Street Design Idea)

OPPORTUNITIES

1. Toucan crossing with tactile paving and surface markings
2. High quality pavement with wide footways
3. Extended footways
4. Buff tone to carriageway and contra flow cycle lane
5. Generous bus shelters with green roofs
6. Potential to redesign junction, creating pedestrian friendly crossings and reduce widths of the carriageway

- Rain gardens
- Biodiversity roof
- Wild verges
- Existing soft landscape
- Proposed specimen gateway tree
- Proposed street trees
- Existing trees
- × Gateway feature bench
- Cycle parking
- × Wayfinding finger post sign
- Generous seating
- Art wall
- Clad wall with natural stone

0m 5m 10m 20m



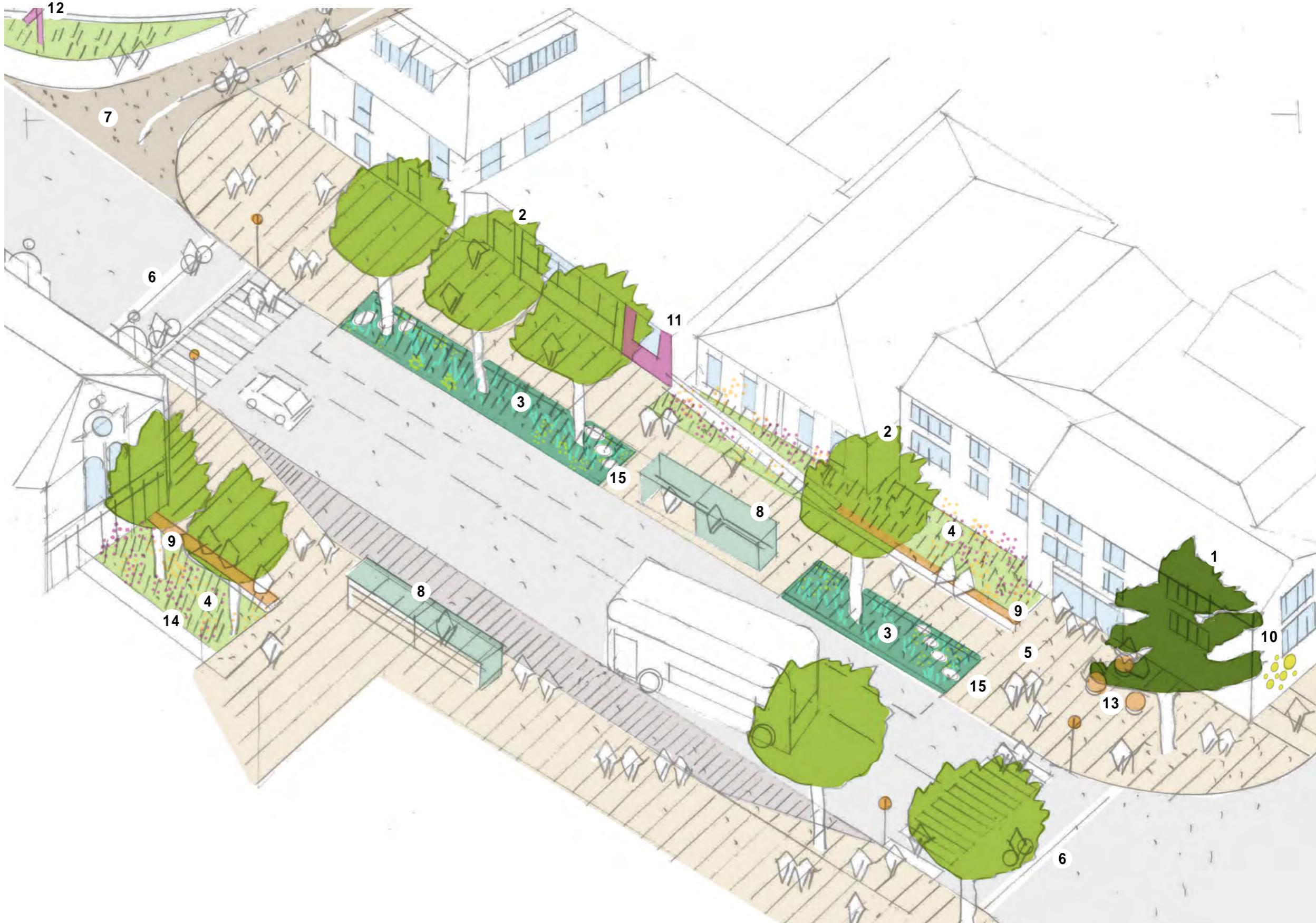
Project 8: Streetscape Improvements (Fortescue Road Design Idea)

**RADSTOCK
TOWN COUNCIL**

Bath & North East
Somerset Council
Improving People's Lives

OPPORTUNITIES

1. Specimen gateway tree
2. Street tree planting
3. Rain gardens
4. Ornamental gardens
5. High quality surface finishes and extended public realm
6. Enhanced pedestrian and cyclist crossings
7. Buff tone to Fortescue Road with quiet cycle route
8. Large bus shelters
9. Generous seating elements
10. Art wall
11. Pop-up/hole in the wall small business opportunity
12. Wayfinding finger post sign
13. Gateway feature seating
14. Clad the wall in natural stone to match historic building
15. Stepping stone paths



Project 8: Streetscape Improvements (Fortescue Road Design Idea)



Rain gardens and dwell spaces



Generous social seating



Rain garden planting



Radstock stone walls



Sculptural feature bench to gateway



Hole in the wall / facade enhancement to post office



Finger post sign



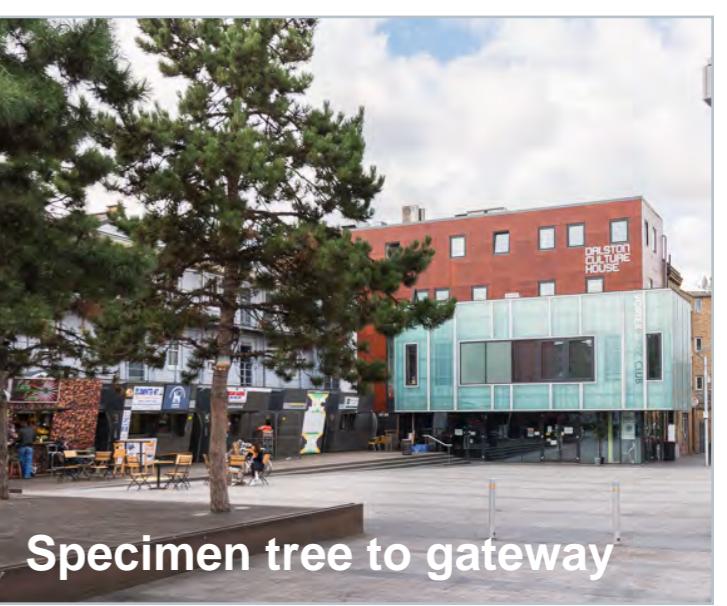
Cycling connections



Natural play



Interactive bus stop with green roof



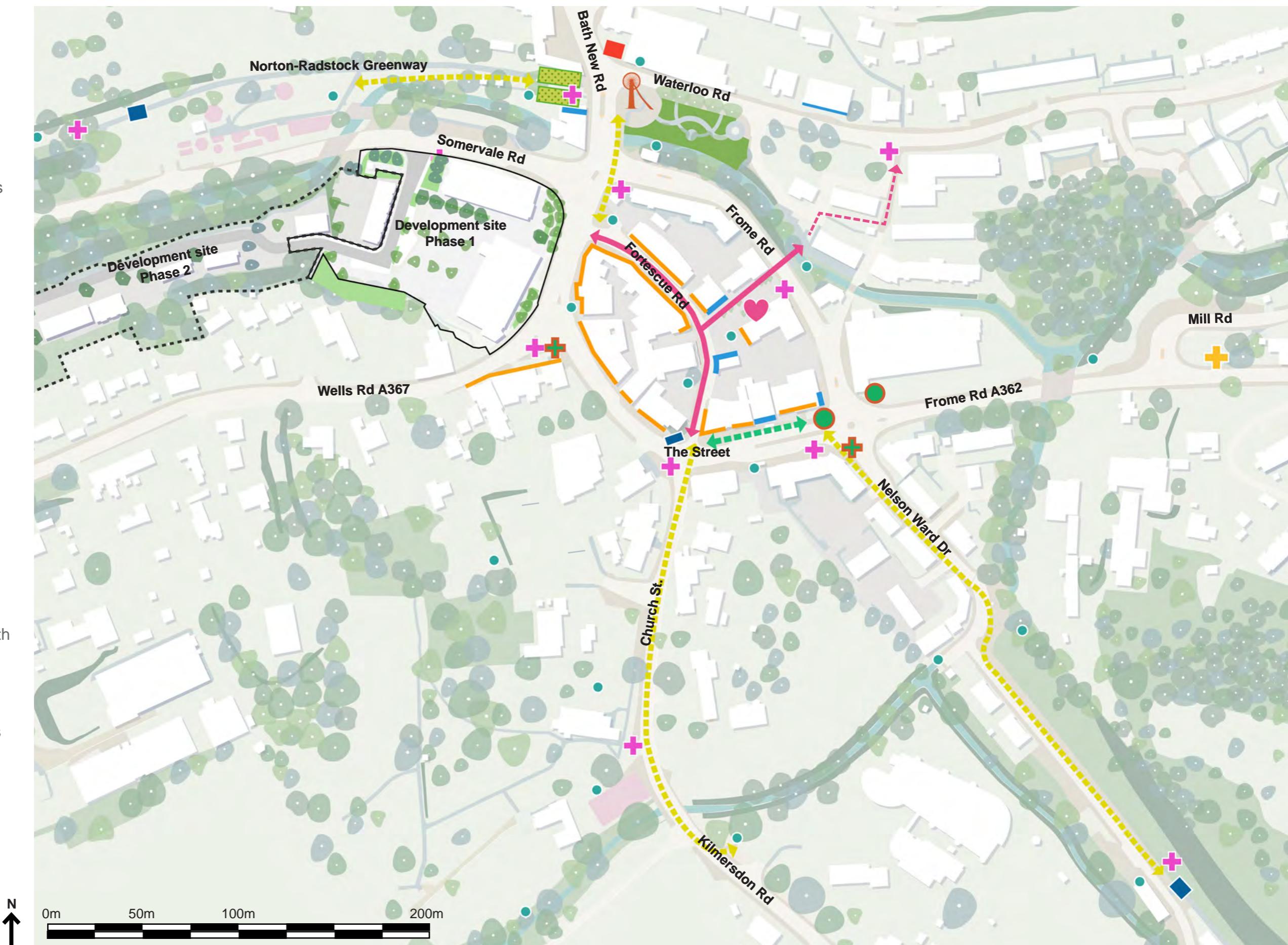
Specimen tree to gateway

1. White Hart Lane Bust stop gardens, Tottenham - MUF
2. Generous timber bench, Seattle - GGN LA
3. Grey to green rain garden, Sheffield - Nigel Dunnett
4. Radstock stone walling
5. Sculptural featre bench, Stone Forest
6. Burnt Oak News Stand, London - We made that Architects
7. Finger post sign, mmcite
8. Toucan crossing example
9. Natural stepping stones, incidental play
10. Interactive bus stop, Department for Transport
11. Specimen pine tree, Gillette Square, London - JL Gibbons

Project 9: Wayfinding Strategy

**WAYFINDING
AND ARTWORKS
OPPORTUNITIES**

- + Gateway features
- Radstock Pit Wheel - illuminate for evening impact
- Gateway Specimen trees (pine trees to reflect existing mature trees)
- Existing gateway garden
- Extension of gateway garden
- Information boards
- Hidden treasures/ discoveries
- + Fingerposts
- Art walls
- > Playful routes
- Shop front enhancement and signage strategy
- > Green gateway street with interactive bus signage
- Heart space
- Enhanced central streets promoting walking and cycling through the town



Project 10: Temporary Use of Vacant Properties

The term 'meanwhile use' refer to the short-term use of temporary empty buildings until they can be brought back into commercial use. It takes a problem and turns it into an opportunity to keep an area vibrant. Landlords can usually continue to look for new occupants whilst the temporary use is taking place. These uses benefit the local community by providing new uses such as meeting & rehearsal spaces, popup shops, exhibitions & art installations.

Commercial spaces in a town centre can remain empty when one occupant leaves and another has yet to be found. These empty spaces can have a detrimental effect on the vitality of a town centre.

Meanwhile use has become recognised as a serious tool for regeneration in recent years and has the power to test ideas and capacity, build local consensus, prove local demand for spaces and provide space or facilities required by local people. They can also increase footfall through events, provide local employment and training opportunities enlivening high streets.

All of the shops and most of the commercial premises in Radstock town centre are privately owned so interventions would require landlord buy-in and funding support to deliver temporary uses.

When premises become vacant, B&NES will work with owners to find temporary & permanent uses to improve the vitality of the town centre. Where possible grant funding can be used to incentivise bringing vacant buildings into use where there are social and economic benefits generated .

Advertising Vacant shops

The Invest Bristol & Bath team offer extensive tailored support to companies interested in relocating and growing in the area. Bath & North East Somerset Council works with partners to provide access to a searchable online database of commercial property for the B&NES area including Radstock.

A link to Invest in Bristol & Bath will be included on the Radstock Town Council website for businesses wishing to advertise their vacant properties and for those wishing to find a property in Radstock.



Project 11: Improve Town Centre Offer

Retail

The B&NES 2018 Retail Study stated that for convenience goods retail provision, the combined Midsomer Norton and Radstock area are well provided for in terms of the range of stores and scale of floorspace, albeit it is heavily orientated towards Midsomer Norton, with the Lidl, Tesco and Sainsburys stores. These stores, along with other stores in the town centre, allow Midsomer Norton to retain the majority of grocery shopping trips generated by local residents. They also attract a large proportion of grocery shopping trips from Radstock residents. The general trend in terms of food shopping provision in Radstock is for a falling market share with retained trips generally concentrating upon top-up food shopping. This reinforces the conclusions of previous studies that there is a particular qualitative need for improvement within Radstock in order to rebalance provision.

The B&NES 2021 Retail Study update was prepared to contribute to the B&NES Local Plan Partial Update to cover a number of issues including policies to deliver on the Council's declaration of climate and ecological emergencies, along with transport and travel policies, the district's housing and employment land supply, the role of city and town centres in the green recovery and a review of existing allocated sites. The study reviewed recent and current retail trends, including how the COVID-19 pandemic has effected the high street, retail and food/beverage sectors, recent changes in national planning policy and legislation relating to retailing and town centres. It provided advice on how local planning policy in B&NES for retail and town centre development may need to adapt to respond to current trends and changes to policy & legislation. Preparation of the study began shortly before and then during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has had a significant effect upon the UK

economy and how the population went about their working and day-to-day lives, with a particular impact upon retailing and town centres. Whilst the immediate effects of the pandemic through 2020 and the early part of 2021 are plain to see, the longer term effects on the UK economy and the retail sector have yet to be fully realised.



Influencing the business mix

The Department for Levelling up, Housing & Communities provides guidance on planning for retail and other town centre uses. Local planning authorities can take a leading role in promoting a positive vision for these areas, bringing together stakeholders and supporting sustainable economic and employment growth. They need to consider structural changes in the economy, in particular changes in shopping and leisure patterns and formats, the impact these are likely to have on individual town centres, and how the planning tools available to them can support necessary adaptation and change. A wide range of complementary uses can help to support the vitality of town centres, including residential, employment, office, commercial, leisure/entertainment, healthcare and educational development. The same is true of temporary activities such as 'pop ups', which will often benefit from permitted development rights. Residential development in particular can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of town centres, giving communities easier access to a range of services.

Effective and creative leadership by local authorities and other stakeholders is key in bringing forward a vision for town centres that meets wider economic and community needs. Stakeholders with an interest in the success of the town centre should be encouraged to engage in the evolving vision for it. Radstock stakeholders and residents have been involved in the development of this action plan and will continue to be involved in the further development of the priority projects. The central policy aims for the B&NES Local Plan 2022 - 2042 includes creating opportunities for sustainable economic development, the types of jobs that are needed in our communities, and the right type of space available for businesses to grow.

Public Toilet Provision

During the engagement in 2022, people said that they would like to see more public toilets in Radstock Town Centre. Toilets will be available for public use in the Trinity Methodist Church and B&NES has been successful in obtaining a grant from the Changing Places fund to provide a fully accessible toilet in Tom Huyton Park. This was installed and opened to the public in November 2023.

Digital Technology

Rather than seeing changing shopping habits as a threat, it is important to be forward thinking in how digital opportunities can help town centres develop. Whilst global shopping habits have changed with the internet, leading to concerns about the changing role of our town centres, there are also tremendous opportunities to use digital technologies to improve how people enjoy and experience what town and city centres have to offer. By embracing digital in planning and providing for its uptake, councils can help boost the way local town centres are promoted, accessed, used, organised and understood. It is an essential part of giving places a commercial advantage and should be a building block of wider tourism promotion too.

- A The Active Way**
- B Broadband**
- C Green infrastructure - Green & Blue Space in Radstock**
- D Hope House Centre**
- E RADCO Redevelopment**
- F Skills & Better Pathways to Employment**
- G Somervalley Links to Bristol and Bath**
- H Transport Strategy**



Bath & North East Somerset Council was awarded national funding from Active Travel England in September 2022, following a successful bid which was supported by the West of England Combined Authority. This three-year pilot will focus on the Somer Valley, due to there being a higher than B&NES average percentage of inactive adults, higher levels of childhood obesity, lower levels of active travel, higher rates of car ownership and limited public transport options.

The Active Way project promotes social prescribing into a range of active travel activities, and has a broad cycling, walking and wheeling offer with interventions for all age groups. It will build people's confidence, motivation, knowledge and skills to engage with walking and cycling activities long-term. Active Travel is defined by Sports England as "walking to school, cycling to work, or other everyday journeys you make to get from place to place – rather than solely for leisure or fitness". There is strong evidence that active travel interventions (such as The Active Way) increase walking, cycling and physical activity and encourage local interventions and build or improve local walking and cycling routes or networks. Social prescribing is a means of enabling health professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services recognising that people's health and wellbeing are influenced by many different factors. Schemes can involve a range of activities that are typically provided by voluntary and community sector organisations. Examples include volunteering, arts activities, group learning, gardening, befriending, cookery, healthy eating advice and sports.

The Active Way can be accessed through self-referral as well as referrals from community services, local health professionals, and the 'The Active Way Hub' in the Healthy Living Centre Radstock. The service acts as a one stop shop for walking and cycling

support, activities, cycle hire, cycle repair, and information on active travel routes. There will also be regular pop-up hubs in high-street locations in Midsomer Norton (unit 14 on the high street), Radstock (library) and Paulton (library), offering the same interventions.

The project aims to improve people's health by increasing levels of physical activity, rates of mobility and target under-represented groups. It will seek to reduce dependence on prescribed pain medication, reduce morbidity, mental health need, health inequalities, and improve life expectancy.

The project will also bring greater awareness of the benefits of active travel, tackle barriers to accessing sustainable transport, support a modal and cultural shift to active travel providing people with travel choices and supporting changes in behaviour. Intended environmental benefits include the creation of clear links between infrastructure development and the proposed social prescribing schemes, and reduced traffic congestion, air, noise and water pollution.

Further information can be found here: www.theactivewaybathnes.co.uk

The following programmes provide broadband infrastructure in Bath & North East Somerset:

Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme

The Government is providing up to £210m worth of voucher funding as immediate help for people experiencing slow broadband speeds in rural areas. Businesses in Bath & North East Somerset could benefit from grants of up to £3000 to get gigabit broadband installed as part of a £2 million trial taking place in four areas around the UK. Suppliers will be offering vouchers worth between £500 and £3000 each to local businesses which can then be used to pay for the installation of gigabit speed connections. The aim of the trial is to encourage the market to extend full fibre infrastructure in the UK by increasing demand and reducing the cost to customers. An effective broadband connection is a "must-have" for the vast majority of businesses, whether small or large. Improvements are being made to broadband infrastructure across Bath and North East Somerset which will allow businesses to take advantage of the benefits and efficiencies that greater connectivity allows. While the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme is only a test project, it is anticipated that there will be further Government-backed schemes to help businesses get connection speeds approaching one gigabit.

The many benefits of a full fibre gigabit connection include:

- allowing businesses to upload and download massive files quickly
- enabling widespread use of videoconferencing throughout an organisation
- providing an unprecedented level of reliability whilst greatly enhancing resilience
- future proofing - making sure that businesses have the technology in place to deal with the ever increasing demands for internet speed and connectivity
- allowing businesses in remote communities to compete on a technologically level playing field

Information about the scheme and to search for broadband suppliers can be found on the website <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk>.

Connecting Devon & Somerset

Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) is a local government-led partnership which helps to deliver next generation broadband infrastructure to areas where the market has failed to invest. Over 315,000 homes and businesses already have access to superfast broadband as a direct result of investment by CDS. It is also one of the most cost-effective broadband programmes in England with costs per premise in the lowest quartile nationally, according to BDUK figures.

More than 40,828 rural homes and businesses in Devon and Somerset will receive access to full fibre broadband by the end of 2024 through contracts with Airband and Wessex Internet. The contractual commitment from all suppliers is for full fibre which is Gigabit capable. This means that even if residents only require a Superfast (30Mbps) connection now, from day one it is capable of Ultrafast (100Mbps) or Gigabit (1,000Mbps) speeds when they require it. Although the contracts seek to connect as many homes and businesses without superfast (minimum 30Mbps download speed) broadband as possible, not every premise can be included within the public funding available. The contracts are also for open access which means other internet service providers (ISPs) can provide their content over the new networks. Get Up To Speed is a programme of free workshops and talks on the benefits of broadband to business is being coordinated by the Get Up To Speed team, which is part of the Connecting Devon and Somerset programme.

<https://www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk>

Green Infrastructure is the network of planned and managed natural and semi natural green and blue spaces and provides a wide range of evidenced economic, social and environmental benefits. It is also increasingly recognised for ways in which it helps address the climate and ecological emergencies. This includes mitigating extremes of weather by absorbing flood water through provision of sustainable urban drainage, rain gardens and green roofs and by, providing urban cooling in extreme heatwaves by provision of green space, access to water and increasing tree canopy.

Improving the connections between green and blue spaces also improves connectivity for species to move between habitats and for people to access them, as well as improving the wider green network to enable people to walk and cycle to local community facilities and services.

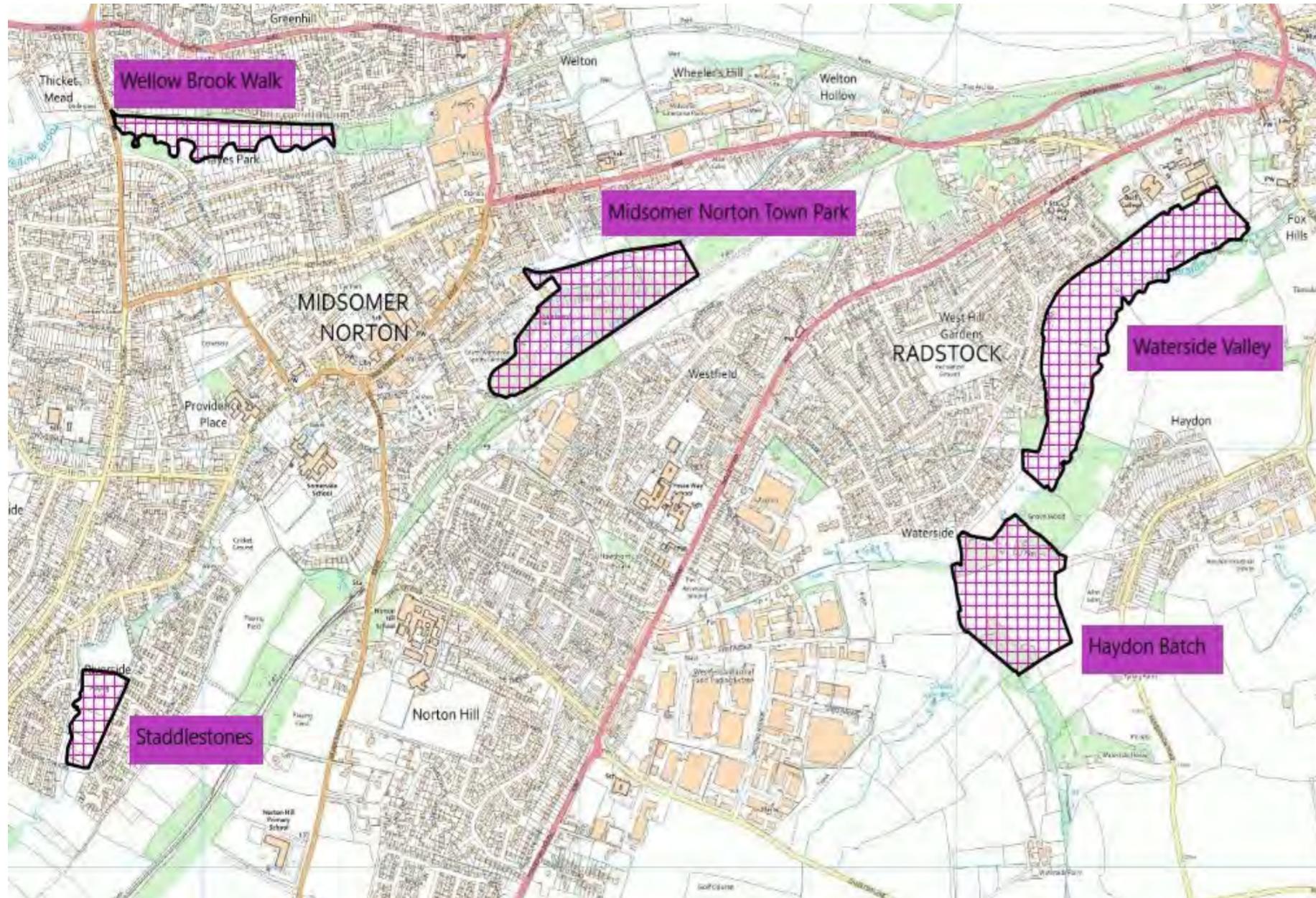
In Radstock, improving existing, and creating new green infrastructure will also develop Radstock as a visitor destination. It will enhance the town centre, heritage assets and facilities including the award-winning museum and will better connect well established active travel routes such as the popular Colliers Way and Greenway, that connect Radstock to neighbouring settlements and countryside.

Somer Valley Rediscovered is a strategic green infrastructure project led by Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES) Council, Wessex Water, B&NES Public Health and Natural England.

In response to growing evidence that access to greenspace has positive effects on both physical and mental health Somer Valley Rediscovered aims to improve biodiversity and, by increasing people's connections to nature, improve health and wellbeing.

Projects will include providing better access to greenspace, habitat restoration, setting up volunteer networks to manage sites and a programme of events to intrigue and inspire people to enjoy and value their local natural spaces. It will enable communities to 'rediscover' their local walks, natural environment and heritage.

Project C: Green Infrastructure - Green & Blue Space in Radstock



Following a project development phase, a successful bid to the WECA Green Recovery Fund has provided funding for a three-year project. This focuses on the following 5 key greenspaces:

1. Haydon Batch (Radstock)
2. Waterside Valley (Westfield),
3. Midsomer Norton Town Park,
4. Wellow Brook Walk (Midsomer Norton)
5. Staddlestones

Somer Valley rediscovered aims to:

- Re-connect people to their local greenspaces
- Improve Biodiversity and build Climate Change resilience
- Improve the Health and Wellbeing of all sectors of the community
- Promote the area as a visitor destination for walking and cycling

Working with the town and parish councils there will be projects to improve biodiversity, along with access and interpretation improvements to the sites. There will also be an extensive programme of community engagement including volunteering opportunities, events and activities, and working with the local health authorities, green social prescribing activities.

As all the sites are within urban areas close to where people live, they also have the potential to be places that people can visit on foot or by bike, rather than using the car to visit sites further afield. A Community Engagement Programme will include volunteering, events and activities and Green Social Prescribing. Going forward, funding will be sought for other projects that fall under the objectives of Somer Valley Rediscovered. As well as improving existing greenspaces, the project will also look for new opportunities.

Further information can be found here: <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/green-infrastructure>

GI & Nature Recovery Prospectus <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/GI%20and%20NR%20prospectus.pdf>

Project D: Hope House Centre

Hope House Surgery, working in Partnership with B&NES, has designed and built a new state of the art health and wellbeing facility for Radstock. The Hope House Centre, in Waterloo Road, opened in July 2022 and houses the Hope House doctors surgery, Children's Centre, health visitors and bookable community space.

The relocation of Hope House Surgery to a purpose-built facility has provided an opportunity to improve patient services and address the inadequacies of the previous accommodation and to respond to the growing population in the locality.

The Hope House Centre incorporates a Community Health and Wellbeing space supported by the Radstock and Westfield Big Local Partnership, with a Big Local grant administered on behalf of the Big Lottery Fund. This space allows for local voluntary organisations to provide additional mental health support, as well as space for child and parent groups, exercise programmes, family support and general health improvement programmes.

It also offers a range of services such as minor operations, chronic disease management and family planning. It also offer physiotherapy, a diabetes prevention programme and counselling services which local people would otherwise need to travel to further afield to access.

The centre will house The Active Way Hub, a one stop shop for walking and cycling support, activities, cycle hire, cycle repair, and information on active travel routes.



The Radstock Co-operative Society (Radco)

In October 2019 the B&NES Planning Committee approved a hybrid planning application seeking full planning permission for the demolition of the existing 'Radco' co-operative supermarket and its replacement with 1795sqm of retail floor space (of which 1123sqm relates to the replacement supermarket), office floor space (722sqm) and 28 flats; these elements of the scheme are to be provided within two mixed-use three-storey buildings. Full permission was also granted for the associated infrastructure including a 54 car park short stay spaces (90 minutes) serving the retail & commercial element customers and 30 spaces serving the residential element. The full permission element of the application was referred to in the submission as Phase 1.

The application also sought outline permission for residential development towards the rear of the site along with its associated infrastructure. Permission was sought at this stage for the means of access, scale and landscaping of this element of the site with all other matters reserved. Outline permission was sought for 26 dwellings in this area and this element of the proposal is referred to as Phase 2 in the submission. Work was not to commence on Phase 2 until the completion of all piling operations on Phase 1.



The site is situated within the Parish of Westfield and the Radstock Conservation Area in the heart of Radstock in a high profile position on the corner of Wells Road and Somervale Road (A362). The previous Radco supermarket building was constructed in 1959 and was a well-known landmark in the town. A service yard and the store's large car park was located to the rear of the store and is a locally designated Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI). The Wellow Brook runs through the northern part of the site and is a designated Environment Agency 'Main River'.

Prior to receiving planning permission, the plans for the site were consulted on widely in 2018. Demolition of the old store commenced in early December 2022. An internal soft strip took place first, with Bath Demolitions moving on to the external demolition. Project works have taken into consideration the environmental impact. Bath Demolition aimed to recycle concrete & repurpose old materials for reuse on site. Measures have also been implemented to protect the local wildlife, such as otters; the riverscape & trees.

Discussions have taken place with the Local Planning Authority on how to bring the site forward given the current economic pressures. It is likely that some small amendments will be made to the scheme. The construction contract is due to be awarded in the summer of 2023. Whilst the new site is being redeveloped, Radstock Co-op is operating from a purpose built, light and spacious community store located on The Street in Radstock. It has an extensive product range beyond the typical convenience store offering.



Businesses need support

Businesses can access support to engage with employability and skills benefits:

Universal Business Support Service (UBS)

The Universal Business Support Service provides free expert advice to help any start up or established SME business grow and succeed. This West of England initiative is delivered in partnership with Bath & North East Somerset Council.

For more information visit: <https://www.investinbath.co.uk/business/support/free-advice-service>

Invest in B&NES

Invest in B&NES provide in person workshops and networking events in Midsomer Norton, allowing people to connect with other local businesses and learn new business skills. These events are funded by B&NES as part of the Universal Business Support and Recover, Evolve, Grow Programmes.

For more information visit: <https://www.investinbath.co.uk/>

Company links with schools

Students in Radstock can also access opportunities to engage with employability and skills benefits:

Workforce for the future

The programme is designed to help address enterprises future skills needs through diagnostics and by upskilling and retraining staff. There is also support to bring in new staff, including placement ready students or apprentices to help develop the future workforce. School engagement can support with:

- The development of a talent pipeline and your brand's social value
- The opportunity to address skills shortages
- The structure, the content & the delivery of a range activities to inspire students
- A supported introduction to 95 secondary schools & colleges (including SEND & alternative education) in the region
- Staff upskilling

For more information visit: <https://engine-shed.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/School-Engagement-Workforce-for-the-Future-Flyer-WE-CA.pdf>

Careers Hub

The Careers Hub works with secondary schools and colleges to transform careers for education the West of England's young people. The Hub encourages collaboration between providers, the public and the business community to provide positive career outcomes for young people. The Hub is also supported by the Careers and Enterprise Company.

For more information visit: <https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/employment-skills/careers-hub/>

Project G: Somer Valley links to Bristol and Bath

The ‘Somer Valley Links to Bristol and Bath’ project forms one of the Strategic Corridor projects being delivered by the West of England Combined Authority in coordination with Bath & North East Somerset Council (B&NES) as part of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS). The project seeks to improve connectivity between the towns and villages in the Somer Valley and Bristol (principally, via the A37 and A362 corridors) and Bath (principally, via the A362 and A367 corridors).

Analysis undertaken by the Combined Authority and B&NES has identified that the principal corridors are dominated by high-levels of car use, with limited prioritisation for Public Transport and generally low-quality active mode infrastructure. This, in turn, leads to low levels of bus use, walking, wheeling and cycling to, from, and within the Somer Valley, reinforces car dominance, and restricts opportunities for residents and businesses in the area. The project, therefore, seeks to redress the balance of transport modes within the Somer Valley by delivering bus prioritisation, high-quality active mode infrastructure and by better facilitating access to public transport through community connections, which will provide residents with a genuine choice of modes that is reliable and improves their access to services and future employment and leisure opportunities.

The project forms the mechanism by which the West of England Bus Strategy, Joint Local Transport Plan and Bus Infrastructure Programme overarching objectives will be taken forward for the Somer Valley corridors. The project is currently being progressed by the Combined Authority through the transport business case process, where it is currently at Outline Business Case (OBC) stage. At OBC stage, the list of options across the corridors developed at the earlier stage is refined and a set of deliverable packages produced that meet the aims and objectives of the CRSTS programme. Whilst options for Radstock are being considered, it is only following the completion of the OBC and the development of the Full Business Case (FBC) that specific

interventions to be taken forward will be identified. However, residents of Radstock are likely to benefit from: improved bus reliability delivered through prioritisation measures on the A362 and A367 corridors; increased opportunity for walking and cycling in the town and between Radstock and other towns and villages in the Somer Valley; and targeted improvements to junctions along the corridors that will deliver bus prioritisation and other operational efficiencies. With improvements to infrastructure and a subsequent shift to more sustainable transport modes, it is anticipated that there will be improvements to existing congestion on routes to and from Radstock.

The current timeline for the project is as follows:

- Completion of the Outline Business Case – early 2024
- Completion of the Full Business Case – late 2024
- Construction and implementation of infrastructure – commencement in 2025



Somer Valley Transport Strategy 2017

The report noted that the car is the main means of travelling to work for most residents in the Somer Valley. In 2017, Somer Valley residents worked in a wide range of locations; nearly 20,000 residents travelled daily, of which around 27% worked locally in Midsomer Norton/Radstock/Paulton.

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 showed was well used. In the future there may be the need for further provision.

The report also noted that 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 was supported but should not take spaces away from town centre uses and shoppers.

Survey data indicated that Radstock has limited public parking with small car parks at Waterloo Road and Church Street and limited on-street parking. Survey data showed that these were well used. In addition, the CoOperative store had 261 spaces but the survey showed a maximum occupancy of only 97 spaces. Around 20 spaces were also allocated for long stay use with a permit system for those working in the town centre. With the redevelopment of the RADCO site in 2023, these spaces are no longer available.

Key actions included monitoring the impact of introducing limited lengths of stay in Church Street and Waterloo Road car parks on nearby on-street parking and seek to maintain the level of parking to protect the towns local role. In the future if demand continues to increase, additional spaces may be sought. A study or survey could be undertaken to see if a Park and Ride/car share could be promoted as a new transport interchange in Radstock.

Balancing Your Needs: A parking strategy for Bath & North East Somerset, 2018

This Parking Strategy was commissioned by Bath and North East Somerset Council to provide an effective long-term plan for the management of all aspects of parking.

A consultation process was undertaken to inform the strategy and involved interviews with public and private parking operators, surveys to resident associations, parish & town councils and other organisations active in the area and targeted letters to certain business groups.

The strategy was developed in line with the Placemaking Plan, Core Strategy & the Somer Valley Transport Strategy. To promote sustainable transport, it aims to include enabling a shift to more sustainable modes of transport away from car use, provision of safe sustainable transport routes, promoting walking & cycling and improving accessibility.

The report says that evidence at the time suggested that there is available capacity on-street parking in Radstock. The current levels of off-street parking in the Somer Valley will be maintained to ensure access to facilities.

Car parks in rural areas will remain free of charge where charges do not currently apply in order to improve the economic viability of the settlements.

The strategy will remain in place until such time as circumstances demonstrate that it is in need of review and alteration. To determine the point at which this is required, a number of key performance indicators have been identified against which the strategy can be monitored. This includes occupancy levels of public off-street car parks.

The report notes that monitoring should be undertaken as a minimum every two years, with an interim review of strategy taking place in 2022 and a full review in 2026 prior to a revised strategy being produced from 2027.

The following evidence was used in preparing the Radstock Regeneration Action Plan:

- Radstock Town Centre Action Plan Scoping Document, July 2022
- Radstock Conservation Area Assessment, 1999
- Jubilee Festival Audience Survey, June 2022
- Radstock Town Centre Vitality Audit, July 2022
- Radstock Trinity Methodist Church Report, Wendy Tomlinson, September 2022
- Radstock Heritage Report, Wendy Tomlinson, October 2022
- Outdoor Events Space Initial Scope, Bath Whalley, October 2022
- Activating Radstock Town Centre: Outdoor Events & Cultural Programme, Beth Whalley, January 2023
- Radstock Sites & Premises Assessment, Holwest Ltd trading as DKA, Stage 1 report December 2022 & Stage 2 report March 2023
- 2021 Census data
- Radstock Town Centre Public Realm Opportunity Study, July 2023

February 2024

**RADSTOCK
TOWN COUNCIL**

**Bath & North East
Somerset Council**

Improving People's Lives

