

Appendix A - Projects within the Wells Neighbourhood Plan

Project 1: The City Council will work with Somerset Council to complete a Settlement Setting Assessment

Project 2: Wells City Council will work with Wells Civic Society and Somerset Council to create and maintain a Non Designated Heritage Assets list

Project 3: The City Council will seek to work with Somerset Council to keep the Housing Needs Assessment up to date.

Project 4: The City Council will seek involvement in negotiations relating to infrastructure and planning gain between developers and Somerset Council and Somerset Integrated Care Board

Project 5: A significant number of those consulted²⁹ identified a measure of prioritisation for pedestrians in the High Street as an important means of making shopping a more pleasant and safe experience - and hence supporting the local economy. This view was contradicted by a number of retailers who expressed the view that the ability of car drivers to have close access to shops would benefit all concerned. However, the potential benefits for retailers and shoppers alike are such that improved access for pedestrians in the High Street between 1000 and 1600 on market days is a project worth pursuing. Such a project could benefit not only retailers and shoppers but also provide an opportunity for the popular market to be expanded. This could also give opportunities to those waiting for a market stall allocation.

At their meeting on the 27th January, the Council decided to proceed with traffic calming measures in the High Street. Since then, discussions have taken place between the Council, Mendip and Somerset councils with a view to commissioning a feasibility study. The Council will pursue this initiative.

Project 6: The lack of adequate long-term car parking in Wells has not only been acknowledged by Mendip District Council³⁰ but also was a common response during the consultation process. Nearly 2000 commuters drive in to Wells every working day. Reluctant to pay for car parking, many commuters resort to on-street car parking which causes environmental and amenity problems – such as wasted energy by those driving around in a search of a space and the unattractive aspect of cars fronting the Bishop's Barn and along Silver Street, an attractive route to the Moat. In 2009, Mendip's Parking Strategy Report accepted that the worst parking problem was in Wells. They referred to evidence that the then demand for parking at peak

²⁹ 67.9% - 110 of the 146 consulted in 2015

³⁰ Parking Strategy Report 2009; Wells Conservation Area Appraisal 2011; Mendip Local Plan Core Policy 10

periods could not be met and the situation would worsen with time.

The Report concluded that as providing for visitors is such an element of the economic vitality and viability of Wells, the demand for additional parking needed to be addressed. Two years later, Mendip's Conservation Area Appraisal

acknowledged this problem and recommended that Mendip should work with the County Council to ensure that there is adequate car parking provision in the City centre and that new traffic management schemes should be produced if required. The Mendip Local Plan acknowledges the need for “provision of additional car parking to serve the needs of visitors, residents and users of the City centre”.³¹ Traffic management schemes would comprise not only re-consideration of the charging tariffs but also clearer signage and draw on the work done by the Civic Society in 2012 and presented to the City Council.

In the 2015 consultation, 74% - 120 out of 142 – who commented, supported the need to improve parking signage.

The City Council will work with Somerset Council to improve parking signage within Wells and seek appropriate solutions to the shortage of parking within the City.

Project 7: The introduction of additional housing during the Plan period on the western side of Wells will increase traffic flows on roads into Wells. To avoid reliance on the car and hence increased traffic flows on road into Wells and pressure on car parks adequate bus services are essential. In its Future Transport Plan, the County Council has committed to maintaining essential bus services and those linking housing on the edge of Wells with its centre are considered to be such.

Furthermore, the visitor economy is, to an extent, dependent on those coming to Bristol or Bath or Castle Cary by public transport, then being able to continue their journey via an adequate bus service to Wells. Such bus services are essential in terms of promotion of the visitor economy which underpins the vitality of Wells.

The FTP Implementation Plan 2013-2017 embraces the concept of “localism” as a positive process and as having “the potential to allow communities to take on local services such as Community Transport” and secure funding through the CIL process. The Plan aims to promote engagement with the County Council to maintain essential bus services to and from and also within and around Wells by whatever means.

Currently, there are plans to expand the 67 bus route to provide a service to and

³¹ Core Policy 10: Wells City Strategy

from Wells city centre from the outlying new estates on the west side of Wells.

81% - 131 out of 146 – who commented, supported the need referred to below for improved bus provision.

As part of the Government’s Climate Emergency agenda Somerset County Council has received funding to improve public transport in the form of an initiative called Bus Back Better (BBB). The money will be used to support a partnership between Somerset, which is our Local Transport Authority (LTA), bus operators and bus users with the intention of producing a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). At the June 2021 council meeting Wells City Council agreed to make a submission to Somerset County Council as part of the Government’s Bus Back Better Campaign. Councillors

have carried out surveys of passengers at the Wells Bus Station gaining their views on the bus service, the bus station and existing routes. We have also sought suggestions and views on possible new routes.

The City Council will work with Somerset Council and relevant service providers which have agreed an Enhanced Partnership (EP) to implement the Somerset Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). It has also recently set up a Wells Bus Users group which has links with the voluntary organisation, the Somerset Bus Partnership, to work with bus users and ensure the BSIP goals are achieved in Wells.

Project 8: The City Council will work with:

- a) Visit Somerset, the Cathedral, the Bishop's Palace and the Chamber of Commerce to promote the visitor economy;
- b) event and festival organisers to help ensure their success; and,
- c) Somerset Council to refurbish the Coach Station as a more attractive interchange for visitors.

Project 9: Because planning is spatial, the City Council will work with neighbouring parish councils to consider developments that may impact the environment beyond their respective boundaries.

Project 10: The City Council will develop projects to enhance biodiversity including:

- Restoring the cities streams and waterways for wildlife working with the Wild Trout Trust in the Town project⁶⁰
- Enhancing parks, allotments, cemeteries, school grounds, public spaces and verges for biodiversity working with the Blue Campaign⁶¹
- Work with the Diocese of Bath and Wells to enhance biodiversity in the cities churchyards⁶²