

8 Prioritised investments

This section outlines the process of identifying, evaluating and prioritising potential investments. The recommended investments are currently unfunded.

8.1 Project identification

The Taunton Waterways Strategy builds on previous work carried out by the Council including the River Tone Task and Finish Group, established to identify projects which would improve the River Tone and its surroundings, and the Taunton Town Centre Rethink Framework that raised the importance of the River Tone to Taunton and stated that it should be placed at the centre of the Council's future development plans.

The Taunton Rethink highlighted the need for more detailed understanding and planning, leading to a commission undertaken by Atkins in 2018-19 which explored the complexity of river corridor issues, recommended actions and identified a long list of potential themed improvements projects. That list has

formed the starting point for Project Identification under the Taunton Waterways Strategy, as illustrated below.

The Atkins work identified 143 potential projects, which they reduced to 65 owing to duplication or lack of clear project definition. They were categorised under six themes (Biodiversity, Development and Regeneration, Landscape Enhancement, Leisure, Movement and Water Management) and relationships across themes were recorded.

The formation of the Taunton Waterways Strategy Stakeholder Team has enabled the list to be updated, evaluated and expanded, taking account of more recent policy and guidance, and an understanding of emerging and planned projects.

Following initial discussions with Somerset Council and the Stakeholder Team, the Consultant Team recorded over 300 potential projects and investments, reduced to 134 following removal of duplicated and inadequately defined projects, and projects that are planned by the various

programmes of the water management organisations. The latter were removed because they are already in process and are captured by the Management and Maintenance Plan summarised in the previous section.

Other potential projects associated with allocated redevelopment sites were excluded from the shortlist because they will be planned, assessed and delivered through the normal planning process for those sites. Site-specific Design Guidance for those sites, referencing potential projects where appropriate, is provided in Section 9.

8.2 Project evaluation and shortlisting

Somerset Council and the Consultant Team carried out a shortlisting exercise that considered potential project deliverability.

It included project ownership, responsibility and fundability, and considered the likelihood of potential projects delivering improvements to the town in a way that would achieve multiple positive outcomes. In response to both considerations, it became clear through the shortlisting process that:

The coordinated strategic planning and delivery of inter-related projects working together is more likely to achieve the range of desired Outcomes from Investment than the ad hoc implementation of multiple individual projects

That coordinated delivery relies on the development of both strategic proposals for key sites, and a series of themed frameworks to align investment projects such that they collectively strive to achieve common outcomes

Individual projects that are aligned with an agreed framework are generally more likely to secure political support and funding than ad hoc projects. This is of particular significance as the majority of the projects

are currently unfunded, relying on securing funding from non Council sources to secure their delivery

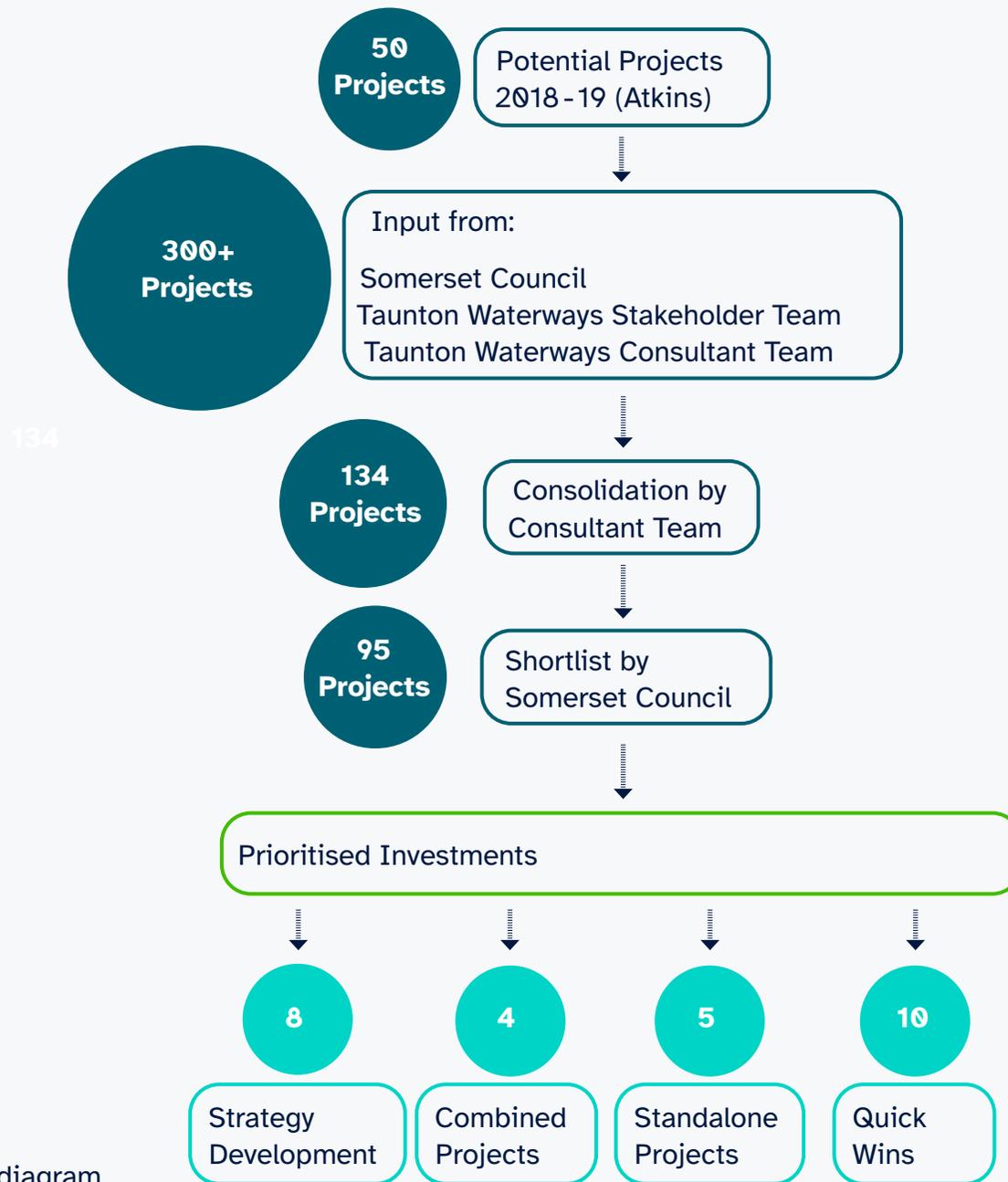
Accordingly, through shortlisting, the majority of individual projects were clustered into one of three categories:

- a. Strategic Frameworks: Frameworks will organise, rationalise and help to justify investment in a host of individual projects, enabling the collective benefits to be maximised. Individual projects (for example biodiversity enhancements) will need to demonstrate alignment with an overall diversity Framework for the Taunton Waterways;
- b. Combined Projects: In key areas of opportunity (for example Firepool Weir/ Lock), there are multiple potential individual projects. If not properly planned, one uncoordinated ad hoc project intervention could undermine the effectiveness of other projects or could compromise the opportunity to deliver a more comprehensive

solution with a wide range of possible benefits. These key areas should therefore be discussed, debated and planned collectively as part of a Combined Project to achieve a wider range of long-lasting outcomes.

- c. Standalone projects that could achieve positive outcomes and be delivered in isolation without compromising other investments. This includes a number of Quick Win projects.

To optimise the opportunities for Taunton through this coordinated approach requires emphasis on a strategic approach to investment that establishes a series of compatible Frameworks for the Waterways within which projects can come forward and work in combination with one another to deliver and sustain improvement. The approach also emphasises the need for strong central governance to oversee the more strategic process.



Prioritised investments flow diagram

a) Strategic frameworks

Top Priority		Medium Priority		
 <p>Linear Water Park Concept</p>	 <p>Governance</p>	 <p>Waterways Biodiversity Framework</p>	 <p>Community Framework</p>	
 <p>Tributaries Framework</p>		 <p>Waterways Connectivity Framework</p>	 <p>Waterways Public Realm Audit</p>	 <p>Waterways Lighting Framework</p>

b) Combined projects

	<p>Longrun Meadow Storage</p> 	<p>Goodland Gardens & Mill Stream</p> 	<p>French Weir</p> 	<p>Firepool Weir</p> 
	<p>Top Priority</p>	<p>Medium Priority</p>		<p>Low Priority</p>

c) Standalone projects

	<p>Standalone Projects</p> 
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That emphasis on the strategic approach is evident on the shortlist (Table 10.2 Taunton Waterways Matrix) that was carried through to the prioritisation process outlined below.

Together Somerset Council and the Consultant Team reduced the total number of potential projects to 95, indicating the category into which each fitted, ready for evaluation and prioritisation by the Stakeholder Team.

Given the shift in emphasis, it also became clear that ‘Prioritised Investments’ was a more accurate term to use going forward than ‘Prioritised Projects’.

8.3 Prioritised investments

The Stakeholder Team met with Somerset Council and the Consultant Team in a workshop to determine the prioritisation of potential investments in the Taunton Waterways.

The Team accepted the proposal to categorise potential projects as outlined in 8.2 above. The Frameworks were evaluated first, followed by the Combined Projects. Standalone Projects were subsequently evaluated and prioritised by the Consultant Team after the workshop, and were presented first to Somerset Council for review and then to the Stakeholder Team for approval.

Each Framework, Combined Project and Standalone Project was discussed, considered and prioritised according to:

- a. Likely timescale for delivery over the short, medium or longer term, taking account of potential for funding, project ownership and momentum; and
- b. The anticipated breadth of positive outcomes that could be achieved from investment.

The investments likely to be delivered in the short to medium term, and with a wider range of positive outcomes were prioritised. Results are shown in List 10.3 (Taunton Waterways Prioritised Investments) and are outlined below, noting that all are currently unfunded.

8.3.1 Strategic Frameworks

Given the resource and funding required to deliver the full suite of Strategic Frameworks identified, prioritisation has been particularly important.

Governance



Top priority

Governance:

The Taunton Waterways Strategy has been formed through a collaborative process with the Stakeholder Team and it has been clear throughout that, in order to achieve the wide-ranging positive outcomes endorsed by the Team, it will be necessary to maintain that constructive, collective approach.

A Top Priority is therefore to establish robust governance to oversee implementation of the Taunton Waterways Strategy. Guidance on how the governance can be provided is set out in Section 10 and will need to be explored with and endorsed by stakeholders.

Potential funding sources for establishing governance may include Ofwat Innovation Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

Linear Water Park Concept:

The Taunton Garden Town Vision establishes the importance of the green and blue infrastructure to the town's future prosperity, and the Green Infrastructure Plan provides a framework for the town as a whole. Whilst this Taunton Waterways Strategy provides direction and guidance, and identifies priority

investments, there is a need for a simple but compelling illustration of the Linear Water Park Concept to galvanise action, inspire interest, stimulate involvement and support the case for investment. The Concept Plan would encapsulate and communicate the essence of the aspirational Linear Water Park, and would illustrate the Park in, say, 20 years time, following incremental delivery.



Linear Water Park Concept

It would define the Park as a major asset to the Garden Town, encompassing the sequence of green spaces and green/blue interconnections. It would represent the ambition and target for implementation of the numerous Frameworks, Combined Projects and Standalone Projects over the coming years.

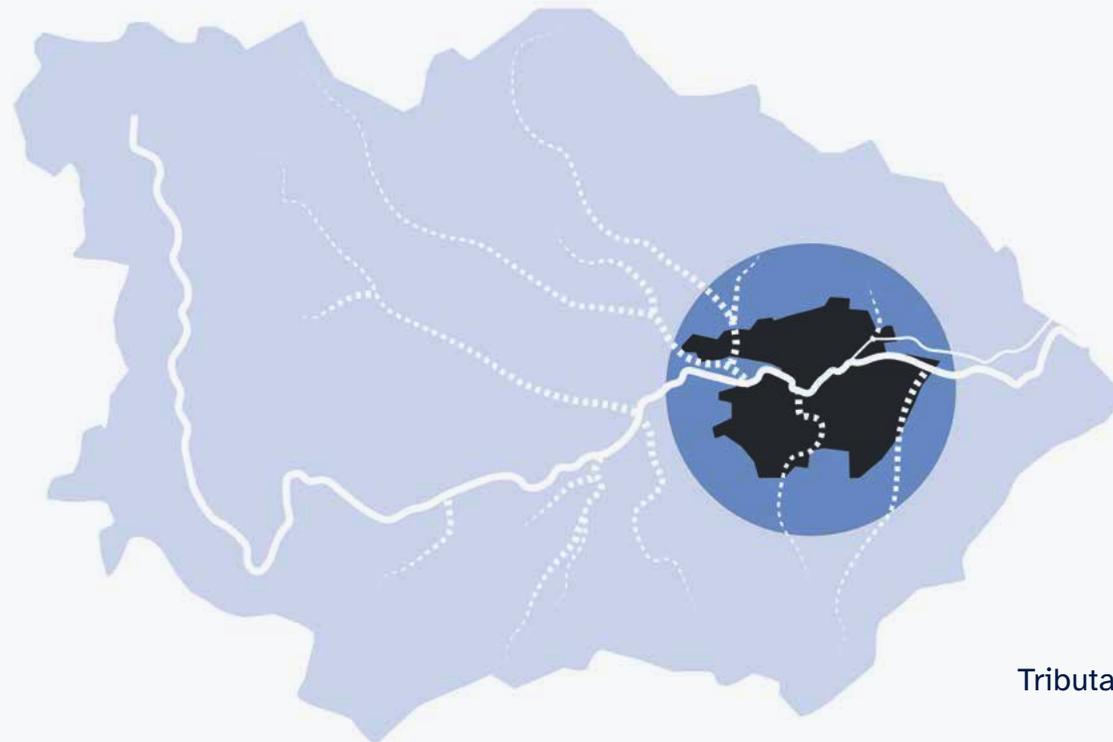
The format of the Concept Plan would need to be determined but it should be concise (c 10 sides), well illustrated and simple to understand by all, ideally including sketches and diagrams rather than CGI, and aerial and human scale perspectives rather than plans. It could be web-based, with an interactive 'story map' which changes as the reader scrolls through the narrative, and that is kept up to date as the asset is gradually implemented in full.

An indicative cost for preparing the Concept is £20,000 to £30,000, subject to scope. Potential funding sources include Somerset Rivers Authority, Wessex Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) Local Levy, Homes England, UKSPF and Nature Recovery Network (Landscape Recovery).

Town Tributaries Framework:

In the context of the Garden Town, the stretches of river tributaries that are within the town and flow through its neighbourhoods physically connect those areas of town to the Waterways Corridor and therefore offer opportunities for

enhancing the community's relationship with water. It will be beneficial if residents can better understand how the water in the ditch at the bottom of their garden, or the Sherford Stream running through Vivary Park for example, are connected to the flow and quality of water in the River.



Tributaries Framework

Projects already identified under the Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Improvements Project (TSFAIP) are intended to address flood management specifically, including works to Vivary Park and golf course, but the Town Tributaries Framework would help to organise a coordinated and consistent approach that draws in ecological enhancement, public access, wayfinding and landscape enhancement opportunities within the town's green wedges and neighbourhoods. It would identify opportunities for: de-culverting and revealing the water; creating wetland habitats and other natural solutions for both biodiversity enhancement and water management; public realm improvements focused on water; and improved wayfinding that makes it easier and more appealing to track the tributaries, including incorporation into walking loops.

The Framework would inform where these investments could be made, describing how they would benefit the communities, meet local aspirations and respond to the climate and ecological emergencies. It would also provide a rationale and

justification for watercourse investment in connection with potential housing infill or redevelopment opportunities that arise in proximity to the tributaries that are within the town.

The Town Tributaries Framework would also help to stimulate community involvement and could be the basis for Citizen Science and education programmes as well as localised water-related community events as part of a potential town-wide Water Festival.

An indicative cost for preparing the Framework is £7,500 to £10,000, subject to scope. Potential funding sources include FCERM Grant-in-Aid Funding, Somerset Rivers Authority, Wessex RFCC Local Levy and the National Lottery Community Fund.

Medium priority

Following development of the Linear Water Park Concept Plan and establishment

of the Steering Group, five additional Frameworks should be prepared, each providing more detailed spatial guidance, actions and targets related to specific themes.

Community Framework:

Community Involvement in the Taunton Waterways is one of the eight Strategic Goals. It will be beneficial to prepare a Community Framework that sets out an overarching approach to the involvement of local people, encompassing:

- Recommendations for working with the proposed Taunton Garden Town Community Forum, or establishing a Taunton Waterways Community Advisory Group or Citizens Panel, that would represent community interests and form a single body for efficient and transparent liaison
- A programme of consultation on the other emerging Waterways Frameworks and investments

- A programme of educational engagement that considers how to bring the local Waterways into the curriculum, and identifies opportunities for waterside learning
- An events programme themed around the Waterways, possibly expanding on Taunton River Watershed Alliance's annual River Festival but with events throughout the year, focusing on the Waterways Corridor as a whole, including the canal and the tributaries that run through some neighbourhoods
- A Citizens Science programme or monitoring and reporting, perhaps prepared with West Country Rivers Trust
- Recommendations for community leadership of 'task and finish' groups to address specific issues such as a recreation strategy or scope for interactive mapping of local walking and cycling loops

The intention is not to reinvent the wheel or duplicate other initiatives. It may be that the most effective way of preparing a form

of Community Framework would be to build on the Somerset Prepared Partnership engagement, and the Taunton Waterways Community Advisory Group would include representatives from established groups.

The indicative cost for preparing the Community Framework is £40,000



to £50,000, subject to scope and the extent and level of engagement required. Potential funding sources include Wessex Water Environment Fund, Wessex Water Community Fund, UKSPF, National Lottery Community Fund. Additional investment can be made through Social Value commitments by the professional teams that are appointed to prepare Frameworks.

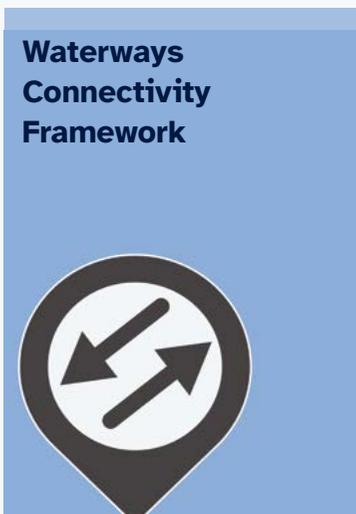
Waterways Connectivity Framework:

The Waterways Corridor offers considerable scope as an active travel resource, not just for recreational purposes but for accessing daily needs without use of the private car. In the context of the desired Outcomes from Investment in Taunton's Waterways, investment in active travel will deliver multiple benefits in terms of healthy living, physical and mental wellbeing, connection with place, awareness of nature, air quality and decarbonisation.

The Waterways Connectivity Framework will provide a focus for connectivity specifically within the Linear Water Park Concept.

It will supplement the wider work of the LCWIP and deliver on its aim of “providing green, active and sustainable travel opportunities”. The Waterways Connectivity Framework will also be compatible with the Council’s ‘Connecting Our Garden Communities’ work which references the Town Centre Design Code SPD and the importance of routes out of the town centre into the wider countryside and the need for a comprehensive approach.

The intention is not to duplicate those other documents, but to draw out



the proposals that are specific to the Waterways in response to the Linear Water Park Concept. To minimise the risk of confusion, the Waterways Connectivity Framework could form an appendix or standalone supplement to one of those documents.

WSP are currently preparing a report for Somerset Council on mobility hubs and connectivity, with a primary focus on bus service provision and accessibility. It provides important guidance on the provision of a Mobility Hub Network for park and ride facilities in particular and will establish an important high level strategy for the town.

Taunton lends itself to a ‘Hub and Spoke’ mobility approach which provides mobility offerings at different tiers to cater for varying catchments and demand. By strategically designing and locating Central, Secondary and Neighbourhood tier hubs, the town can create a comprehensive and standardised network that serves its local communities and land uses whilst

encouraging a positive mode shift onto sustainable modes.

Implementation of a ‘Hub and Spoke’ approach to Mobility Hubs in Taunton offers a scalable and adaptable solution to significantly enhance connectivity and promote the uptake of sustainable transport. Additionally, there is a benefit in a wholly compatible but Waterways-specific Connectivity Framework, or Active Travel Framework.

The point about scalability is important. A ‘mobility hub’ can range from a virtual bus stop or cycle rack up to a multimodal transport interchange. There is an opportunity for a Waterways Connectivity Framework to structure the delivery of a network of more, smaller-scale facilities, throughout the Linear Water Park, all connected back to the town centre, neighbourhoods and larger mobility hubs, to encourage the uptake of active travel modes.

There is potential integration of small-scale mobility elements alongside existing community facilities (for example at French Weir or Coal Orchard), and to introduce new elements where no facilities currently exist (eg Firepool Weir and the Pumphouse). These may consist of micro-mobility elements such as cycle/scooter hire, cycle storage with lockers, e-scooter docking bays bus interchanges and seating. There is scope to combine with café culture, cycle repair, walking loops and, potentially, with recreational use of the water, for example paddle board, canoe and pedalo hire at Coal Orchard and the two weirs.

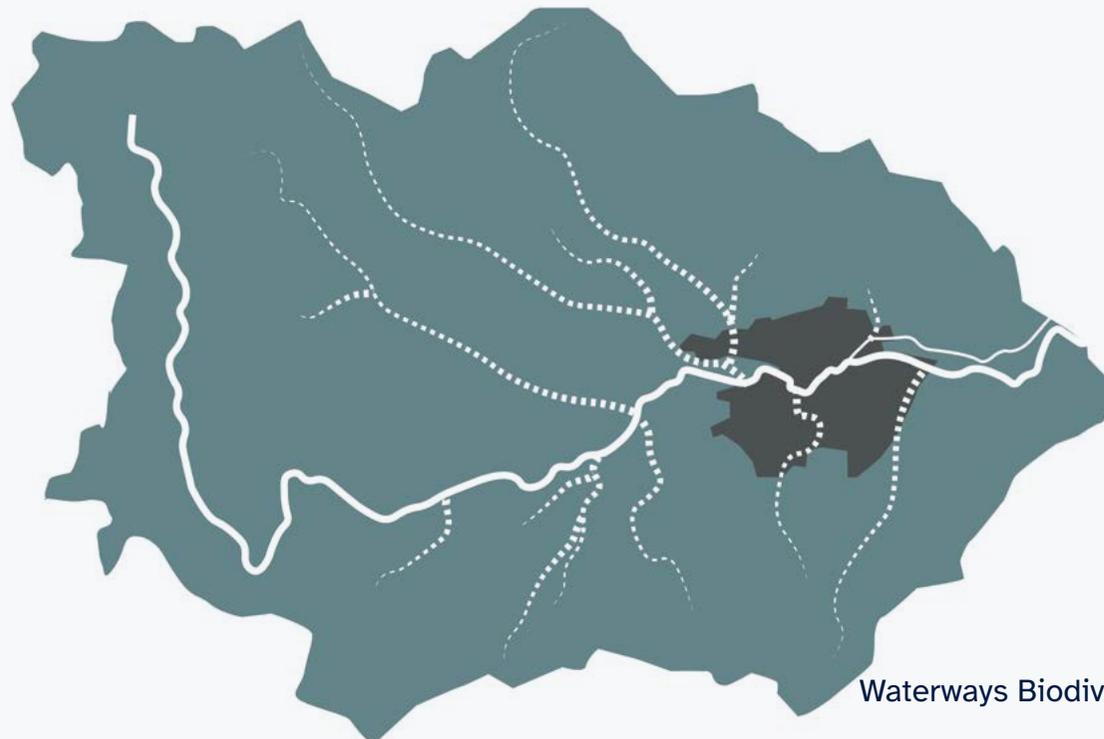
The indicative cost for preparing the Connectivity Framework is influenced by the extent to which the WSP provides a suitable base. If that work can be reviewed and expanded in the light of the Linear Water Park Concept, the cost may in the region of £10,000 to £20,000. Potential funding sources may include future rounds of Active Travel Funding.

Waterways Biodiversity Framework (Only recommended if not addressed by the emerging Local Recovery Strategy):

The Waterways Corridor is a crucial biodiversity resource for the town. It is an enormous continuous linear ecological asset that offers strategic opportunities

to deliver substantial positive biodiversity benefits for the town.

Responsibility for developing a **Local Nature Recovery Strategy** lies with the Somerset Local Nature Partnership. Still at an early stage, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy will establish the basis within which Council decisions on planning and investment will be made.



Waterways Biodiversity Framework

Given the importance of Taunton's waterways, including the catchments and tributaries, it would be beneficial to incorporate a specific Waterways section into the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. If that is not appropriate, a separate but entirely compatible Waterways Biodiversity Framework should be prepared.

It would provide a detailed action plan and targets for coordinated biodiversity enhancement within and throughout the Linear Water Park, reflecting the varying roles and priorities associated with each green space and the interventions necessary to connect them to one another. The Biodiversity Framework would establish a strong and justified rationale for enhancements in relation to potential waterside development sites, therefore assisting in the determination of planning applications.

If not addressed by the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy, the Waterways Biodiversity Framework would identify areas for the potential creation

of strategic waterside biodiversity off-setting, particularly along the watercourse and riparian corridor; with the aim of supporting the feasibility, viability and delivery of the waterside redevelopment sites. The off-set areas would enable the mandatory requirements for Biodiversity Net Gain for numerous redevelopments to be delivered in a coordinated manner, consolidating investment in a way that would achieve more positive outcomes for nature than could be delivered on multiple individual sites. In that way, a Biodiversity Framework that is compatible with the Local Nature Recovery Plan and that would be key to implementing Taunton's Linear Water Park would be major contributor to unlocking investment in the growth of the town.

An indicative cost for preparing the Biodiversity Framework is £15,000 to £30,000 depending on scope. A specific BNG strategy, focused on unlocking potential development sites, could be prepared for between £5,000 and £20,000. Potential funding sources include Somerset Rivers Authority, Wessex RFCC

Local Levy, the Natural England Species Recovery Programme, Nature Recovery Network (Local Nature Recovery and/or Landscape Recovery and Homes England in the context of unlocking strategic growth.

Waterways Public Realm Audit:

The Linear Water Park Concept Plan will define the role of different stretches of water corridor and will provide the foundation for the coordinated delivery of improvements over time. The most influential design tool for raising the quality of experience of the Waterways and for making the Corridor feel like one huge asset for the town is public realm design. Materials and Components should be selected as set out in the Standard within the Public Realm design guide for Taunton garden Town SPD December 2021.

Consistent use of materials, street furniture designs that are compatible with one another and continuous high quality connections alongside the water are fundamental to creating a cohesive asset that can be understood, appreciated and promoted as an attractive entity. In that way, the Waterways will become more easily understood as an important attractor and value generator.

An important part of planning for the future is to understand the present. A

Waterways Public Realm Audit



public realm audit of wayfinding, street furniture, plants and trees, materials, surfacing, public art and so on, including bespoke features such as the Space Walk. It would inform understanding of condition, quality, legibility, levels of clutter and general provision which, in turn, inform understanding of shortfalls, and the level and location of investment required to create the cohesive whole. That would also be informed by the Biodiversity Framework.

As funding, investment and development opportunities arise, identified gaps can then be plugged and standards raised in a coordinated manner that brings the unified Linear Water Park into being.

Depending on the scope and level of detail required in respect of condition survey, the indicative cost for preparing the Public Realm Audit would be in the region of £50,000, but considerably more if a condition survey is required. Funding may be available from UKSPF.

Waterways Lighting Framework:

A review of existing lighting forms part of the public realm audit but a Lighting Framework is about more than just the design of lighting columns. Lighting on the water's edge is a sensitive subject because there can be diametrically opposed views on the most appropriate provision. Continuous public access alongside the river and canal is highly desirable and demands an appropriate level of lighting for safety and security.

Waterways Lighting Framework



Conversely, the waterways are also a continuous linear biodiversity asset which generally demands a low level of lighting or, preferably, no lighting.

Development of a Lighting Framework that encompasses all Character Areas will improve consistency for protecting species and habitats whilst delivering safe and secure connections and high quality and coherent public realm. The process of formulating the Framework will stimulate discussion and demand resolution of potential conflicting opinions. Endorsement of the Lighting Framework by Somerset Council will assist with the determination of planning applications for waterside proposals.

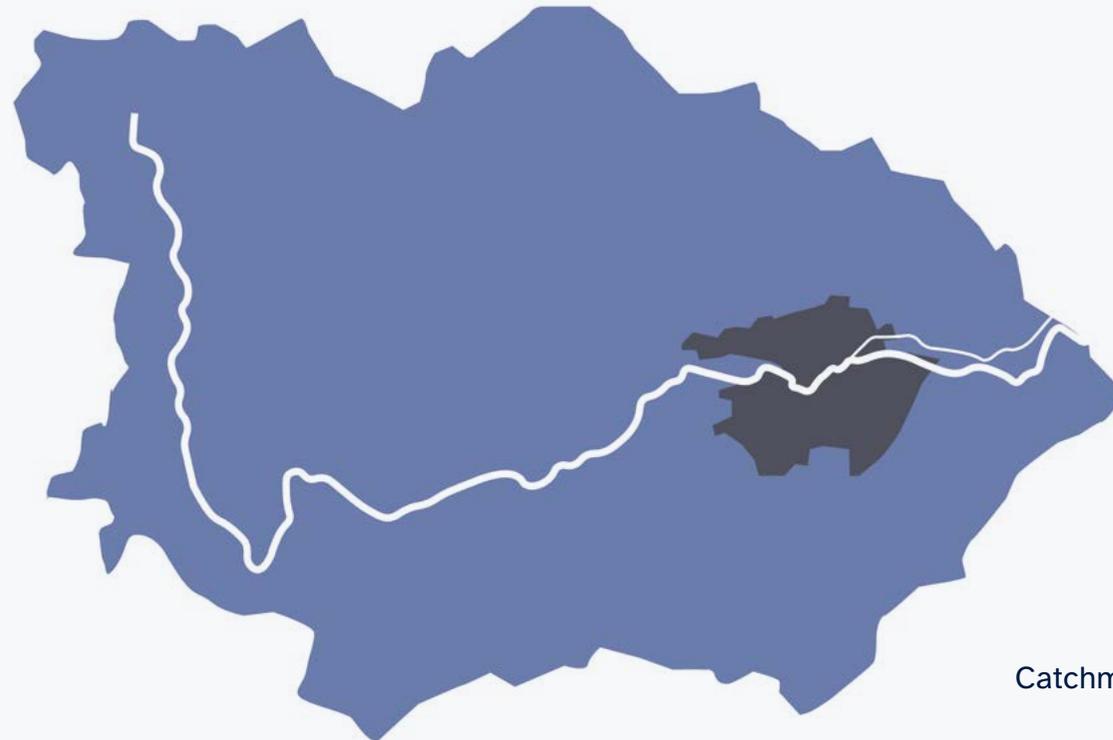
A Lighting Strategy is expected to cost in the region of £50,000. Funding sources include Somerset Council and Taunton Town Council.

Additional Recommendation

Catchment Framework:

Stakeholder engagement has made it clear that significant investment decisions about water management in the wider catchment

could influence the Waterways through the town, so planning for the wider catchment cannot be ignored. That lies beyond the geographical remit and commission scope of the Taunton Waterways Strategy and, accordingly, it is not for the Strategy to prioritise, but it is recommended that a more coordinated approach to planning the catchment be implemented.



Catchment Framework

Multiple projects have been identified upstream and downstream of the town. Some are potentially very substantial in scale and some ideas are more developed than others, but there is, as yet, no overarching catchment framework to ensure a coordinated, efficient approach to that wider investment.

A Catchment Framework could consider not only water attenuation projects for the purposes of flood risk management, but potential changes to agricultural management and natural solutions for the positive management of phosphates, nature recovery and carbon sequestration, some of which may help to unlock development prospects in the town. It may also be possible to introduce recreational, active travel and healthy living opportunities into potential investments through creative planning and design, helping to achieve the widest range of positive outcomes, and ensuring compatibility and coordination of proposals.

Potential funding sources include Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Grant-in-Aid Funding from the Environment Agency, Natural England's Nutrient Mitigation Scheme, Somerset Rivers Authority, FWAG South West's Somerset Catchment Partnership and Wessex RFCC Local Levy. Depending on scope, there may be potential for funding through Ofwat's Innovation Fund and the Nature Recovery Network. There are several potential funding sources for tree planting, ecological enhancement and land management, as referenced in Section 10.

8.3.2 Combined Projects



Longrun Meadow Storage



Top Priority

Longrun Meadow Storage:

This is a high priority because the TSFAIP has already set out a proposal to optimise water storage at Longrun Meadow. This would be achieved by construction of raised embankments between the River Tone and the Meadow so that the storage capacity is only used when the downstream capacity is about to be exceeded. The amenity area in Longrun Meadow would be flooded less frequently as a result and, by holding water back, the level of the Tone downstream of French Weir would be reduced, enabling tributaries to discharge freely.

TSFAIP Factsheet LRM identifies environmental issues and constraints, including the need to maintain adequate flow in the Meadow to support wetland and ditch habitats, and the need to minimise tree loss when constructing the bunds. Although not stated on the factsheet, the LLFA is willing to work with stakeholder partners to consider how a wider range of

positive outcomes can be achieved through appropriate design and implementation of the optimised storage solution.

The concept is at an early enough stage to consider a range of perspectives with a view to accommodating new ideas that are compatible with the primary water management purpose. Potential opportunities will need to be explored for wet and dry recreational use of the area, active travel along the proposed bund and through the Meadow and landscaped placemaking that makes the revised Meadow a more appealing destination for residents and visitors to the town.

Noting that implementation of the storage solution will itself have environmental impact and that a solution will need to incorporate biodiversity net gain, there may be an additional opportunity for a level of gain that exceeds the mandated requirement. If that is the case, it may be possible for the additional biodiversity capacity to be used to offset the BNG requirements of one or more of the waterside development sites.

Medium priority



Goodland Gardens and Millstream:

Millstream is the old leat from French Weir, powering the former Town Mill in the eastern corner of what is now Goodland Gardens, to the rear of the former Debenhams store. The Taunton Waterways Strategy, aligned with the Garden Town Vision, aims to raise local awareness of the significance of water to the town's historical success and ambitious

future. Millstream and Goodland Gardens are at the core of Taunton's historic centre and are an ideal real-world example of how the town developed with the water at its heart.

Projects MS1 and MS2 in the TSFAIP are purposefully focused on water conveyance and are intended to, respectively, reduce the constriction of water flow on the Millstream (by raising the Castle Street highway bridge and footbridge that connects the Gardens to the bus station) and divert flows from the Sherford and Galmington streams to the River Tone at French Weir. Additionally, it is very desirable to introduce active frontage overlooking the footpath alongside Millstream, to improve natural surveillance and make it a more attractive route.

Goodland Gardens themselves are an important historical and placemaking asset, in very close proximity to heart of the town centre, Museum of Somerset and Castle Green and strongly connected to the River, Town Bridge and, by extension to French Weir. Yet the interface with the water is not as positive as it could be, particularly as the

current pedestrian bridge over the river is in need of replacement.

The relationships between the Gardens, Millstream, the town centre and the numerous potential redevelopment sites to the west (including Tangier, the two small sites either side of the Tangier Way and the car parks) is not clear. As a consequence, there is a risk that any proposals that come forward for works to the Gardens, the stream, bridges or development sites could compromise the opportunity to realise the full potential value of this area. It therefore requires a more collaborative approach to comprehensive planning, prepared in the light of the Linear Water Park and the other emerging Frameworks mentioned above.

French Weir:

Through the Stakeholder Team workshops and engagement it is apparent that there are a number of possible interventions at French Weir but none is urgent and none are related to essential water management because the weir does not perform a primary flood management purpose. Instead, possibilities exist for non-essential projects such as hydropower generation, improvements for navigation, improving fish passage and provision of a viewing platform.

French Weir



However, collaborative discussion about the future of the weir is important in connection with other potential investments, including the water storage on Longrun Meadow, the possibility of diverting flow from Sherford and Galmington streams and the aspirations for improved and continuous public access to the water's edge including Marshalsea Walk and in connection with redevelopment of the Tangier site. Additionally, the Waterways Connectivity Strategy is likely to identify French Weir Park as a small but important hub, and the Weir and Park both become increasingly important destinations as the town focuses increasingly on its water and the Linear Water Park asset, both of which may demand improved pedestrian and cycle access over the weir which is currently narrow.

It is recommended that discussion about an ideal package of works for French Weir that achieves positive outcomes should commence while there is no urgency to act. That would then form the basis of planning and investment decisions and funding requests.

Lower Priority

Firepool Weir:

Similar to French Weir, there are a number of potential investments in Firepool Weir, the adjacent Firepool Lock and their environs but with no requirement to carry out urgent works. Opportunities include a canoe pass, fish pass, renewable energy generation and, importantly, the reinstatement of pedestrian access across the weir which would form a looping walk through Children's Wood in conjunction with Obridge footbridge.

Firepool Weir



There is also scope to remove or reprofile the water's edge which has become unmanaged and overgrown, in a way that delivers enhanced biodiversity value.

All of this should be considered in the light of the potential importance of Firepool Weir, Lock and Pumphouse as a destination for walkers, wheelers and waterborne recreationists as part of a waterside loop connected to the town centre and French Weir. Investment in facilities and placemaking at the two weirs, and in the quality of the public realm that connects them, is an important ingredient in making the Linear Water Park into a recognised asset for the town.

There is an important opportunity to collectively discuss the ideal plan for investment in Firepool Weir so that a coordinated approach can be pursued that would deliver the maximum range of positive outcomes alongside operational requirements.



Standalone Projects



8.3.3 Standalone Projects

Most of the potential standalone projects identified through the Waterways Strategy have become absorbed into the Strategic Frameworks or Combined Projects. Of those that remain, most are Top Priority / Quick Win projects, as outlined below.

Quick Wins / Top Priority

Taunton Garden Town / Waterways drop-in exhibition:

Open an unmanned exhibition in a vacant unit in a convenient town centre location ideally adjacent to the River. The exhibition would include the information about the Garden Town and Waterways Strategy initiatives, and progress on both. The aim would be to raise awareness and inspire involvement in the process of growing the town in a sustainable way. Having it unmanned makes it more affordable and therefore deliverable, but it would be preferable if it could be manned by volunteers.

Floating business units:

In advance of studying the economics of introducing permanent floating business units on the water, establish a temporary floating pop-up unit at a convenient town centre location as a demonstration of intent and a physical intervention that puts activity onto the water. The unit would be experimental and may be a loss-leader, but income could be generated if it were a café for example, either just a kiosk counter or potentially with a small deck for seating.

Pumphouse conversion:

Explore the viability of introducing café space and other active frontage into the ground floor of the Pumphouse, or between the Pumphouse and Firepool Lock, as part of a comprehensive conversion of the landmark building. The aim is to take the opportunity of conversion to create an eastern 'bookend' to the town centre, along with French Weir to the west.

Emphasise the importance of water to the past, present and future of Taunton:

Prepare an update to the Somerset Cultural Strategy, or create a Taunton Waterways-specific information pack, to reflect the importance of water to Taunton through the ages, and to project the role of water in delivering the Taunton Garden Town Vision. If that is not appropriate, use the opportunity of developing the Community Framework to determine the best means of conveying the cultural importance of water in the town and making part of the town's DNA.

Data counts:

As an evidence base for future funding requests, investment decisions and on-going monitoring and recording to demonstrate the success of the Garden Town and Waterways Strategy initiatives, carry out pedestrian and cycle counts on the canal towpath and at key points along the river.

GIS mapping:

Share GIS mapping from the Waterways Strategy with the Stakeholder Team to

supplement information banks and provide consistency of baseline data.

Strategic advice in relation to potential new town centre bridges:

It is important that potential new bridge crossings would not compromise the ability to deliver other initiatives, such as introducing more activity onto the water in the vicinity of the town centre. Decisions about a potential cycle bridge should therefore be informed by the Linear Water Park Concept, Connectivity Framework and the feasibility of introducing floating business units.

Priory Bridge Road cycle path:

Investigate with Somerset Highways the potential cost-benefit of providing a cycle path across the road bridge to link the north and south sides of the river, between Youngman Place and the path on the south side of Morrisons supermarket.

Plan for Firepool Boulevard:

In the event that the Firepool Boulevard is constructed in advance of built development on either side, consider scope for public art and/or pop-up units.

Utilities pipe art project:

Work with Bridgwater & Taunton College and the Environment Agency to investigate interest in, and the feasibility of, implementing a temporary art project that utilises the service pipe that crosses the river between the Tangier site and the south east corner of French Weir Park.

Medium priority**Floating business units:**

Somerset Council Economic Development Team to investigate the feasibility of introducing permanent floating business units, drawing on operational advice from the Taunton Waterways Steering Group. The units would serve to draw people directly to the water's edge and may encompass

the likes of refreshments, micro-brewery, watersports hire, cycle hire or water-related maker space for example.

Renewable energy and heat:

In the event that comprehensive refurbishment is planned for the Musgrove Park Hospital, investigate the scope for water source heating and hydropower generation.

Cricket Ground interface with the river:

Continue dialogue with Somerset County Cricket Club about the Waterways Strategy ambition for the town to engage directly with the river, and to explore the scope for stronger positive interface between the cricket ground and the Linear Park asset.

Taunton and Bridgwater Canal Recreation Strategy:

The Canal and River Trust has not considered the preparation of a recreation strategy for the canal in Taunton as a priority, focusing instead on facilities in Bridgwater. Whilst this is understandable,

the development of the Taunton Waterways Strategy places new emphasis on the role and use of both the canal and river, which has increased the importance of understanding the potential for recreational use of the canal.

Lower Priority**Improvements to pedestrian and cycle routes in the vicinity of Marshalsea Walk, French Weir and Millstream:**

The quality of the routes in this area to the north of Tesco supermarket is substandard and opportunities should be sought for improvement. This should be considered in the context of one or all of the following:

- the potential redevelopment of the Tangier site
- the design of the Longrun Meadow water storage project and/or
- longer term proposals for French Weir

8.4 Indicative costings for public realm

Indicative Budget Costs for material types as specified for the Public Realm Standards. (Note: Costs assume no abnormal costs associated with the carrying out of works and assume a base specification of sub base build up, i.e. no regulating layers, no concrete slabs, etc.):

Core Standard

Pavings Slabs Smooth; fine to medium grained sandstone; Forest of Dean Pennant/Scoutmoor York Stone; 300mm, 450mm, 600mm x 300mm - 1000mm random (£155/m² - £175/m²)

Paving Slabs textured; fine to medium grained sandstone; Forest of Dean Pennant /Scoutmoor York Stone; 300mm, 450mm, 600mm x 300mm - 1000mm random (£180/m² - £200/m²)

Paving Setts in Footways; fine to medium grained sandstone; Forest of Dean Pennant /Scoutmoor York Stone; 300mm x 200mm, 300mm x 150mm, 300mm x 100mm, & 200mm x 100mm (£190/m² - £210/m²)

Paving imprint setts; imprint asphalt; 300mm x 200mm, 300mm x 150mm, 300mm x 100mm, & 200mm x 100mm (Carriageway) 9 £80/m² - £100/m²)

Kerbs; granite (Special Cycle) (£80/m - £100/m)

Kerbs; granite (general standard) (£60/m - £75/m)

Cycle tracks; self coloured asphalt binder; Tarmac Uticolor or similar (£80/m² - £100/m²)

Town Standard

Paving slabs smooth; textured concrete paving with granite aggregate; 450mm x 600mm; Marshalls conservation or similar (£120/m² - £140/m²)

Smooth concrete paving with granite aggregate; 450mm x 600mm; Marshalls conservation or similar (£110/m² - £130/m²)

Textured concrete paving with granite aggregate on footways; 200mm-210mm x 100mm; Marshalls conservation or similar (£125/m² - £150/m²)

Textured concrete kerbing with granite aggregate (£40/m² - £55/m²)

Textured concrete cycle edge kerb (£65/m² - £80/m²)

Street furniture zones; resin Bound Gravel; Colas, Nataratex or similar (£75/m² - £95/m²)

Cycle tracks; self coloured asphalt binder; Tarmac Uticolor or similar (£80/m² - £100/m²)

General Standard

Paving Slabs; Concrete paving with granite aggregate; 450mm x 600mm; Charcon or Marshalls (£90/m² - £110/m²)

Paving Setts: Concrete paving with granite aggregate; 200mm x 100mm; Charcon or Marshalls (£100/m² - £120/m²)

Macadam footways - 10mm bitumen macadam, hot rolled asphalt (£55/m² - £75/m²)

Precast concrete textured kerbs (£35/m² - £50/m²)

Cycle edge kerb - precast concrete; Eco-Country side, Charcon (£55/m² - £70/m²)

Street furniture zones; resin Bound Gravel; Colas, Nataratex or similar (£75/m² - £95/m²)

Green Standard

Sealed cycle paths; town centre; resin bound surface dressing to bitumen base course; Natratex, Colas Fibredeck or similar (£75/m² - £95/m²)

Sealed cycle paths; outer areas; Ultifastpath or similar single layer bitumen macadam surface (£65/m² - £85/m²)

Unsealed surface cycle paths; recycled UltiTrec aggregate; Tarmac or similar (£45/m² - £65/m²)

Extra over above: 25mm Softwood timber edging (£10/m - £15/m)

Water access slips/steps; textured concrete or fine picked granite; paving slabs, setts, steps, slipways (TBA subject to specific detail)

9 Design Guidance for development sites within the Waterways corridor

9.1 Introduction to Design Principles

This section introduces Design Principles to guide all development alongside the Bridgwater Canal and the River Tone in Taunton from the M5 to the east and Silk Mills Park and Ride to the West.

The purpose of these Design Principles is to set clear objectives for all developments coming forward in Taunton that align with Taunton's Garden Town ambitions.

The Design Principles set out information for applicants, designers, developers, and the local planning authority to ensure that waterside development in Taunton makes the maximum contribution to the success of the town and is shaped to benefit the local community, celebrate the town's heritage and make the most of the linear green/blue asset that runs through the town.

Somerset Council should use the Design principles in support of a proactive approach to working with developers in order to deliver the types of development that the town needs, whilst achieving a step up in design quality.

Overarching Design Principles

Overarching Design Principles in section 9.2 cover all areas of Taunton and include the following topics:

- Overarching Ambitions
- Riverside Development
- Street Design

Character Area Guideline Principles

The Character Area Guideline Principles in section 9.3 set out what the character of each Character Area should be. They highlight what the area is seeking to achieve. All designs coming forward, whether a small play park or a large urban development, should follow these guidelines and endeavour to contribute to achieving these principles.

Site Design Principles

More detailed information is provided in section 9.4 for Character Area 2 - (Waterside Living (West)) and Character Area 3 (Town Centre). Within these areas are key development sites which require a more detailed level of guidance.

Waterside Living (West) is located in the Tangier area of Taunton, just west of the town centre and south east of the green spaces of French Weir Park and Longrun Meadow.

'Town Centre' is located from Goodland Gardens, along the River Tone, stretching past the Morrisons site and Cricket Ground, and including the development at Firepool.

These Site Design Principles are related to the Investment Outcomes (see chapter 2) of:

- Placemaking
- Environment & Water
- Community (including Movement/Active Travel)

The Design Principles are influenced and informed by a wide range of documents and reference should be made to the following for further information.

Planning Documents

Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan (October 2008):

The Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan provides the policy framework to guide the redevelopment of several important sites including Firepool, Morrisons, Tangier, Wood Street and Goodland Gardens. Whilst it is now over fifteen years old, much of the Vision and Objectives set out in the document remain relevant and admirably ambitious and aligns with the intentions of this document. This includes a strategic objective to be “A town centre that maximises the potential of the River Tone”.

Policies for these key sites are set out in the Action Plan and referenced in this document on subsequent pages that refer to the same sites. Whilst the political, economic, social and technological

environment may have changed in subsequent years, much of the key information remains relevant.

District Wide Design guide Supplementary Planning Document (2021)

The Design Guide seeks a step change in the quality of new development in support of existing adopted planning policies. It provides additional guidance on how existing adopted planning policy should be responded to in relation to securing high quality design. It sets out what is expected of developments through these existing policies, but also sets out examples beyond policy requirements for developments to consider aspiring towards. The Design Guide was adopted by the Council in December 2021 as a Supplementary Planning Document and as a material consideration in determining planning proposals and applications.

Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town, Supplementary Planning Document (December 2021):

The Public Realm Design Guide document aims to raise the standard of the public realm and streetworks across Taunton. It also seeks to increase walking and cycling and improve associated infrastructure.

Objectives are set for the public realm to be ‘green and clean, healthy and well’ and ‘quiet and slow’. Area standards are set out through four area types – Core, Town, General or Green, with materials and components set out for each area and checklists for applicants to ensure these are met.

All public realm works should accord with this document.

Taunton Green Infrastructure Strategy 2009 / Taunton Deane Green Infrastructure Opportunities Update - December 2017:

The Opportunities Update document was prepared as a follow up to the Green Infrastructure Strategy from 2009.

The document sets out how the Green Wedge Policy has been instrumental in shaping the green character of Taunton and, these have remained central in the Garden Town Vision. Through the Green Infrastructure Opportunities Update green and blue links are set out together with wider links to the Quantock Hills and Blackdown Hills National Landscape. Topics of play, biodiversity and active travel are covered through the document, as is the importance of green infrastructure in relation to climate change. The document concludes by identifying green infrastructure priorities, either location-specific or borough-wide. Figure 4.1 sets out these green infrastructure opportunities, including Enhancing Taunton's Waterways.

In addition to these planning documents other relevant documents include:

Garden Town

- Garden Town Vision and Prospectus
- Taunton Design Charter and Checklist

Design Code

- Taunton Town Centre Design Code SPD 2008

Climate and Ecology

- Climate Positive planning toolkit
- Tree Strategy
- Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Action Plan (CNCR)
- Ecological Emergency Vision and Proposed Action Plan

Flood and drainage

- Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Improvements Scheme project (TSFAI)
- Firepool Weir Appraisal

Movement

- Somerset Rights of Way Improvement
- Connecting our Garden Communities plan
- Taunton LCWIP

Sustainable Energy

- Taunton Heat Network Masterplanning and Early Feasibility Study
- Net Zero Carbon Toolkit

Other upcoming documents include:

- Water Modelling project (~2025), refer to section 5, Character Area 4
- Local Nature Recovery Strategy, refer to sections 3 and 89.2 Overarching Ambitions

9.2 Overarching Ambitions

The Overarching Design Principles are linked to the overall Concept and Strategic Frameworks as set out in the previous section.

The three Overarching Design Principles are:

1. Creation of a Linear Water Park including public realm enhancements and improvements to sustainable transport connectivity along the water corridor to create and promote a more cohesive Waterways asset over time. Every proposed investment or development should be required to demonstrate how it contributes towards implementation of the Linear Water Park.
2. A defined network of mobility hubs of varying scales along the corridor(s) and throughout the town. To include eco-travel and community services and facilities.
3. Continuous public pedestrian, cycle and wheeling access along the Waterways by providing minimum distance segregated footpath/cycleway, also integrating smaller waterways and identifying and optimising points of connection from surrounding areas, to create coherent routes of quality.



Riverside walk

Design considerations to inform development along the water

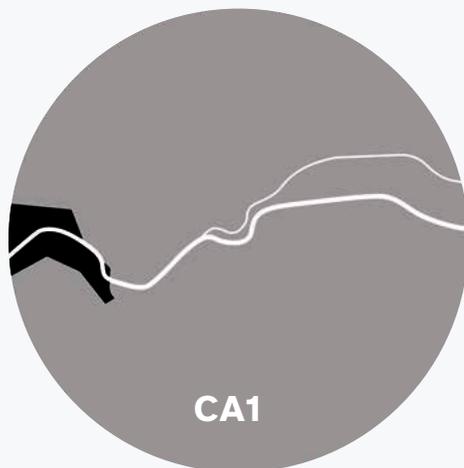
1. Improved physical public access to the water and improved visual connection to the river.
2. Existing moorings, slipways, angling points and associated facilities (e.g. toilets, showers, water and electricity points, waste collection points) should be improved.
3. All design proposals within 8m from the river edge are subject to Environment Agency consent. Refer to the Management and Maintenance Plan.
4. The riverside will generally be closed to vehicular traffic, except maintenance vehicles.
5. Development along the riverside must improve the existing riverside promenade as part of a continuous east-west link.
6. All shared public footpaths / cycleways along the riverside will need to be designed to a sufficient width in accordance with guidance in Local Transport Note 1/20 - Cycle Infrastructure Design. Designs should follow guidance in the Public Realm design guide for Taunton Garden Town Supplementary Planning Guidance. Public access to the river should be visible and safe.
7. A minimum 5m trafficable maintenance access must be maintained for access along both riverbanks, surfaced to take maintenance vehicle loading within 1m from top of bank (this can include permeable surfaces including reinforced grass or gravel). Heavy engineering solutions should be avoided where possible. (Pedestrian and cyclist routes can be used as maintenance access, if meeting the width requirement).
8. The visual relationship with the river should be improved, for example by replacing walls with railings or using stepped defences, however this objective needs to be balanced with biodiversity objectives to avoid unnecessary wildlife disturbance.
9. Cross-river pedestrian, cycle and wheeling access shall be improved through provision of new and enhancement of existing bridges. Bridges should be purpose designed for their location and provide an opportunity for high quality public realm design and public art. Bridges should be DDA compliant and have a minimum width of 3m.
10. New development should be connected to the river through strong and clear pedestrian, cycle and wheeling links.
11. Buildings should front the river to create an active and overlooked public realm. The provision of facilities such as cafés, restaurants is encouraged to increase public activity and enjoyment along the river.

12. Built form should reflect the transition of urban character from a tighter urban environment in the town centre to looser, more open development towards the urban edge. A 'softer', more natural appearance should be created in the less urbanised sections of the river.
13. Continuous overshadowing of public realm areas on the south side of the river should be avoided through appropriate building heights and breaks in built form.
14. Visibility between the promenade and the river should be improved and existing key views and viewing corridors retained. Tree planting can be used creatively to frame key views and screen unsightly views.
15. Implement a wayfinding strategy throughout the Waterway Corridor and select appropriate materials to strengthen local identity and aid wayfinding.
16. All projects brought forward should include a focus on improving biodiversity, wildlife and natural habitats along the river corridor. All projects should:
 - Consider and integrate opportunities for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in their design from the outset;
 - Aim to achieve a minimum of 10% BNG onsite, to be secured and delivered in accordance with an agreed management plan. If appropriate, development may be able to optimise strategic areas of BNG offsetting within the Linear Water Park;
 - Avoid impacts on irreplaceable and very high distinctiveness habitats, such as ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees and unimproved grassland;
 - Explore all possible measures to avoid impacts on biodiversity, and adhere to the Mitigation Hierarchy (avoid - minimise - restore - offset);
- Be supported by core biodiversity gain information following the latest Defra Metric and guidance;
- Be supported where their primary objective is to deliver BNG;
- Seek additional measures for species and habitats enhancement (e.g. bird, bat, invertebrate infrastructure, wildlife hibernacula and lighting impacts).
17. All proposals should plan for management of water and mitigation of flood risk.
18. Where tributaries exist within or alongside a site, new proposals should consider the opportunities that exist in terms of both the practicalities of management and maintenance and placemaking. This could include deculverting a culverted tributary, providing improved access for management and maintenance, improving habitat and increasing biodiversity along the tributary, making a positive feature of the watercourse and bringing the local communities attention to the tributary.

9.3 Character Area Guideline Principles

Character Area 1: Longrun Meadow Park

Designs within this Character Area should follow the three Overarching Design Principles, the Design considerations to inform development along the water and the following Character Area specific principles:

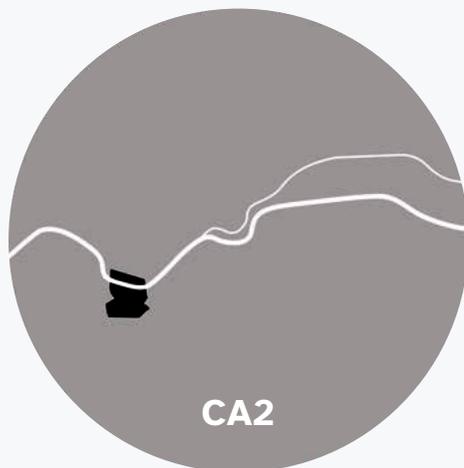


- Maintain and strengthen the semi rural meadow character
- Maintain and strengthen green links to the wider countryside
- Improvement to the routes to the west (over Silk Mills Road) to Netherclay community woodland
- Maintain and strengthen the important relationship with water – both to the Tone and as a floodplain
- Utilise the planned water storage area and relationship with French Weir Park to form a focal point and destination, working with Firepool Weir to ‘book-end’ the town centre
- Provide improvements for nature and wildlife with increased habitat, improvements for biodiversity and more tree planting
- Continue to support outdoor recreational activities and an active lifestyle, with provision for activities such as walking, cycling, watersports, play, community gatherings, without impacting nature and wildlife
- Seek ways to provide renewable energy generation
- Make opportunities for learning and education about the environment (e.g. nature, water, wildlife) in innovative ways
- Refer to the Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town, Supplementary Planning Document (December 2021) – and comply with the “Green standards” for public realm elements
- Refer to the District wide Design Guide SPD
- Identify space for provision of elements of a Taunton wide mobility strategy (e.g. mobility hub / e-bike hire / cycle parking / workplace showers etc)

Character Area 2: Waterside Living (West)

Designs within this Character Area should follow the three Overarching Design Principles, the Design considerations to inform development along the water and the following Character Area specific these principles:

- Proposals should contribute to the Linear Water Park concept - e.g. a strong green corridor alongside the river, pocket parks within developments and strong green links connecting them

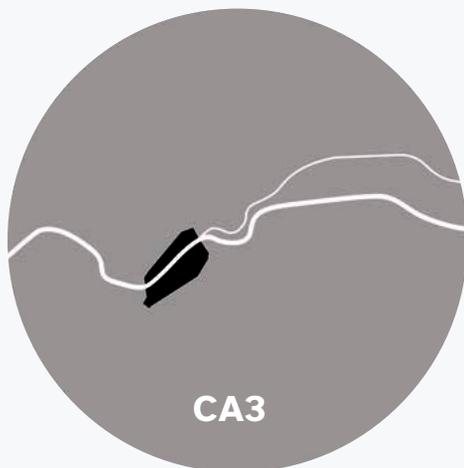


- Create a sense of arrival point into Taunton town centre
- Incorporate the waterside and former industrial character of the area whilst reflecting the character of the nearby green spaces (Longrun Meadow and French Weir Park), with a careful balance of urban and green space
- Give a strong presence to water – with strong relationships to the Tone, Mill Stream, de-culverting of streams and provision of visible SuDS, habitat creation and water play
- Provide active frontage, overlooking (i.e. roof terraces) and generous public spaces along the watercourses with opportunities for activity (e.g. café, small businesses, play)
- Generous green corridors alongside watercourses, providing for improved nature and wildlife with increased habitat and improvements to biodiversity, and where appropriate tree planting
- Provide active travel routes through the site, especially along the River Tone connecting between Longrun Meadow and the town centre
- Provide for improved water access for people, without impacting nature and wildlife
- Incorporate strong routes through new development for people to get to and along the waterside
 - Make sure the public realm is a place for people, with a community focus (e.g. places to sit, meet, gather and play) and strong greening (e.g. raingardens and tree planting). Make provision within public realm for events to take place, for meanwhile uses and community uses that help to celebrate the town's relationship with the water
- Seek ways to provide renewable energy generation
- Refer to the Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town, Supplementary Planning Document (December 2021) – and comply with the “Town standards” for public realm elements
- Refer to the District-wide Design Guide SPD

Character Area 3: Town Centre

Designs within this Character Area should follow the three Overarching Design Principles, the Design considerations to inform development along the water and the following Character Area specific these principles:

- Proposals should contribute to the Linear Water Park concept - e.g. a strong green corridor alongside the river, pocket parks within developments and strong green links connecting them



- Strengthen and build upon what already exists within the town centre including green spaces such as Goodland Gardens, public space at Taunton Castle, retail within the town centre, the Brewhouse Theatre and the Cricket Ground
- Character within this area should reflect the heritage of key sites - e.g. the old town Town Bridge, wharfs, industrial heritage and crafts of the area. Proposals should be appropriate to the town centre location – with appropriate density, building height and massing – with grain and permeability to encourage pedestrian movement and connections to the river.
- Generous green corridors alongside watercourses, providing for improved nature and wildlife with increased habitat and improvements to biodiversity, and where appropriate tree planting
- Give a strong presence to water – with strong relationships to the Tone including public spaces overlooking it and bridges over it, and provision of visible SuDS and water play
- Provide active travel routes along the River Tone and connecting through Firepool to the train station and linking to the historic centre and new development sites at Tangier
- Incorporate strong routes through any development for people to get to and along the waterside
- Identify space for provision of elements of a Taunton wide mobility strategy (e.g. mobility hub / e-bike hire / cycle parking / workplace showers etc)
- Provide active frontage, overlooking (e.g. roof terraces) and generous public spaces along the Tone with opportunities for activity (e.g. café, small businesses, play)
- Make sure the public realm is a place for people, with a community focus (e.g. places to sit, meet, gather and play) and strong greening (e.g. raingardens and tree planting)
- Make provision within the public realm for events to take place, for meanwhile uses and community uses that help celebrate the town's relationship to water
- Seek ways to provide renewable energy generation

- Refer to the Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town, Supplementary Planning Document (December 2021) – and comply with the “Core standards” for public realm elements
- Refer to the District-wide Design Guide SPD.

Character Area 4: Waterside Living (East)

Designs within this Character Area should follow the three Overarching Design Principles, the Design considerations to



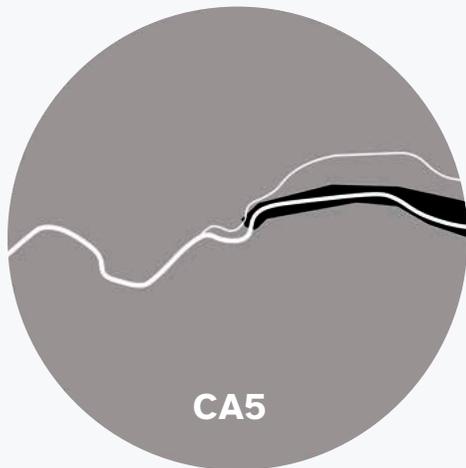
inform development along the water and the following Character Area specific these principles:

- Proposals should contribute to the Linear Water Park concept - e.g. a strong green corridor alongside the river, pocket parks within developments and strong green links connecting them
- Form an arrival point into Taunton town centre
- Incorporate the waterside and former industrial character of the area with a careful balance of urban and green space
- Optimise the Weir and Pumphouse as a focal point and destination for visitors to the town centre
- Give a strong presence to water – with strong relationships to the Tone and canal and provision of visible SuDS and water play
- Provide active frontage (as at Firepool Lock), overlooking and generous public spaces along the watercourses with opportunities for activity (e.g. café, small businesses, play)
- Generous green corridors and green spaces alongside watercourses, providing for improved nature and wildlife with increased habitat and improvements to biodiversity, and where appropriate tree planting
- Provide active travel routes along the River Tone and canal and connecting to the train station
- Provision for improved water access for people, without impacting nature and wildlife
- Incorporate strong routes through any development for people to get to the waterside
- Make sure the public realm is a place for people, with a community focus (e.g. places to sit, meet, gather and play) and strong greening (e.g. raingardens and tree planting)
- Make provision within the public realm for events to take place, for meanwhile uses and community uses that help to celebrate the town’s relationship with the water
- Seek ways to provide renewable energy generation

- Refer to the Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town, Supplementary Planning Document (December 2021).
- Refer to the District-wide Design Guide SPD.

Character Area 5: River corridor

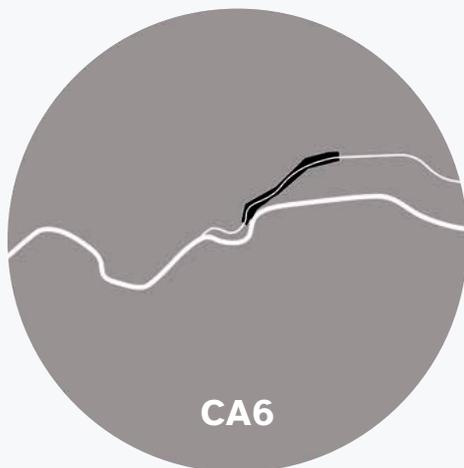
Designs within this Character Area should follow the three Overarching Design Principles, the Design considerations to inform development along the water and the following Character Area specific these principles:



- Be responsive and sensitive to the Hankridge Nature Reserve
- Maintain and strengthen the semi rural character of the green spaces adjacent to the river (with occasional adjacent relationships with nearby buildings)
- Maintain and strengthen the important relationship with the Tone, with potential channel improvements and reprofiling
- Maintain and strengthen green links to the wider countryside
- Provide improvements for nature and wildlife with increased habitat, improvements for biodiversity and more tree planting (including in the floodplain)
- Continue to support outdoor recreational activities and an active lifestyle, with provision for activities such as walking, cycling, watersports, play, community gatherings and events, without impacting nature and wildlife
- Optimise Children's' Wood as a community asset and improve pedestrian crossing facilities over the river at Childrens' Wood (raised walkways)
- Make opportunities for learning and education about the environment (e.g. nature, water, wildlife) in innovative ways
- Seek to improve relationship (frontage, connectivity, overlooking) with buildings to the south
- Refer to the Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town, Supplementary Planning Document (December 2021) – and comply with the “Green standards” for public realm elements
- Refer to the District-wide Design Guide SPD.

Character Area 6: Urban canal

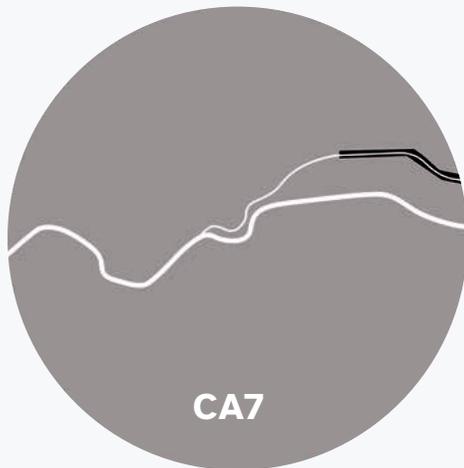
Designs within this Character Area should follow the three Overarching Design Principles, the Design considerations to inform development along the water and the following Character Area specific these principles:



- Maintain and improve Active Travel routes along the canal, including mobility hubs, cycle parking and provision at employment sites to encourage Active Travel
- Generous green corridors alongside watercourses, providing for improved nature and wildlife with increased habitat and improvements to biodiversity, and where appropriate tree planting
- Provide improved water access for people for activities such as kayaking and angling (including mooring of boats), without impacting nature and wildlife
- Improved relationship with employment sites along the canal with additional access points, stronger overlooking, public spaces for employees to access (e.g. for lunch breaks)
- Refer to the Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town, Supplementary Planning Document (December 2021).
- Refer to the District-wide Design Guide SPD.

Character Area 7: Rural canal

Designs within this Character Area should follow the three Overarching Design Principles, the Design considerations to inform development along the water and the following Character Area specific these principles:



- Maintain and strengthen the semi rural character
- Maintain and strengthen green links to the wider countryside
- Maintain and improve Active Travel routes along the canal
- Make improvement to the routes to the east (under the M5)
- Generous green corridors alongside watercourses, providing for improved nature and wildlife with increased habitat and improvements to biodiversity, and where appropriate tree planting
- Provision for improved water access for people for activities such as kayaking and angling (including mooring of boats), without impacting nature and wildlife
- Refer to the Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town, Supplementary Planning Document (December 2021) – and comply with the “Green standards” for public realm elements
- Refer to the District-wide Design Guide SPD.



Rural canal

9.4 Site Design Principles: Character Area 2 - Waterside Living (West)

9.4.1 Overview

Context and Background

CA2 Waterside Living (West) is located in the Tangier area of Taunton, just west of the town centre and south east of the green spaces of French Weir Park and Longrun Meadow. The River Tone and Mill Stream diverge at French Weir and reconverge at Town Bridge effectively creating a physical island that is part of the site.

Waterside Living (West) plays a key role in providing connections between Longrun Meadow and the town centre, in making improvements to waterside connection and creating an improved arrival point into the town centre.

The area has great potential in terms of its historic character and riverside setting, town centre location, proximity to key growth areas such as the University Centre Somerset and Musgrove Park Hospital, as well as the scale of its development opportunities.

This area is covered by Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan 'Tangier' TG2, Sites 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8.

Key Design Principles

- Waterside living
- Active frontage to the River Tone and Mill Stream
- Strong active travel connectivity along the water's edge
- Revealing industrial heritage, including Mill Stream
- Connected to nature
- Draw water through the development sites
- Create positive connections between the town centre and the French Weir Park destination.

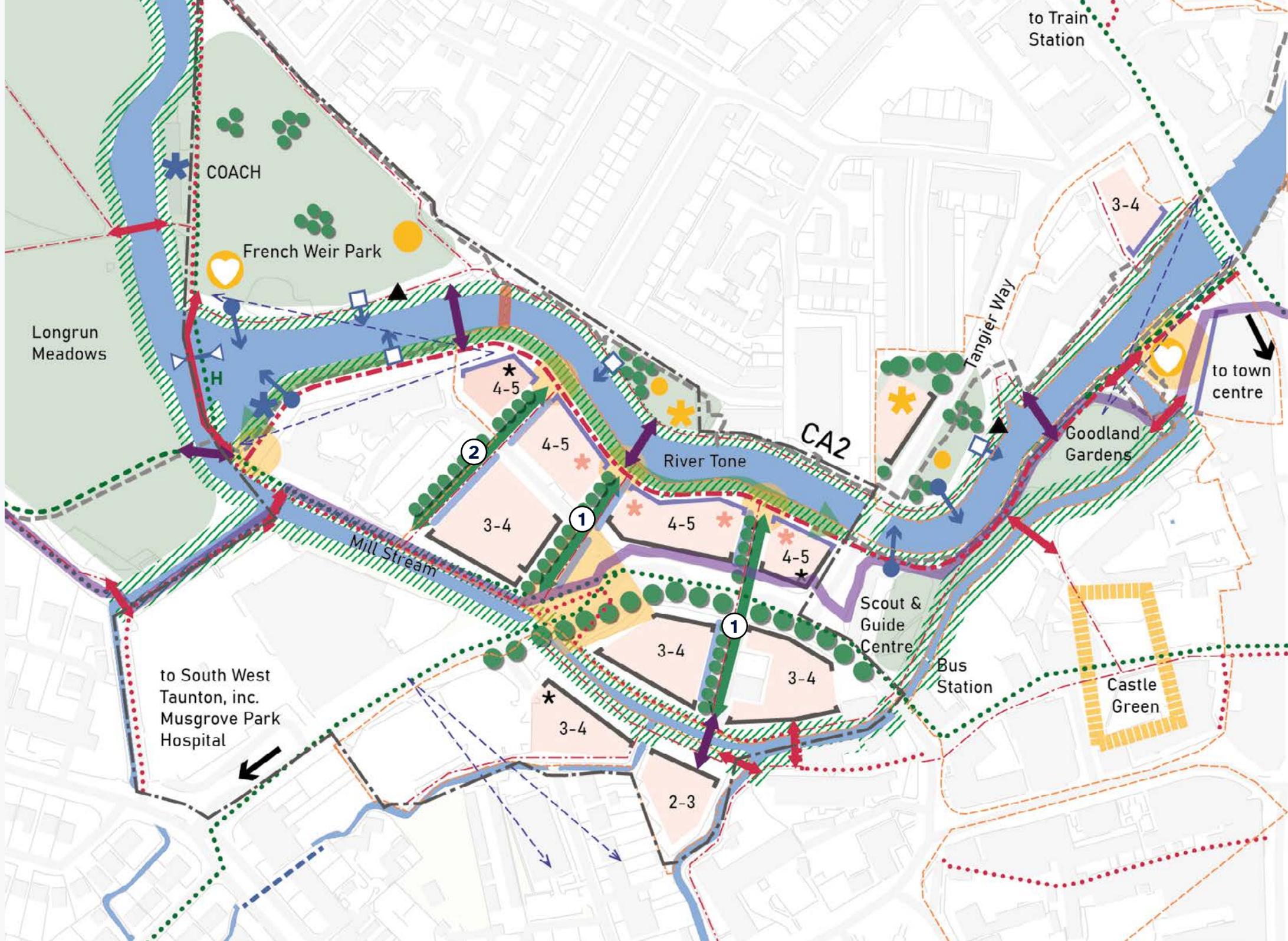
Key site considerations

- River Tone and Mill Stream and water management challenges and opportunities of connecting the two through development sites
- Connections to Longrun Meadows, French Weir Park and town centre
- Located in flood zone 3
- Possible contamination on former industrial site

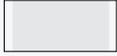
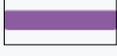
Site allocation policy - Tangier sites



Aerial Photography - World Imagery (Clarity): Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, IGN and the GIS User Community. World Hillshade: Sources: Esri, Airbus DS, USGS, NGA, NASA, CGIAR, N Robinson, NCEAS, NLS, OS, NMA, Geodatastyrelsen, Rijkswaterstaat, GSA, Geoland, FEMA, Intermap and the GIS User Community.

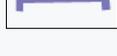
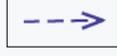
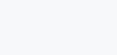
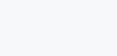


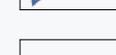
Existing

-  Watercourse
-  Buildings
-  Pedestrian/cycle bridge
-  Cycle route
-  Sustrans National Cycle Route
-  Public Right of Way
-  Flood Defences
-  Service pipe (to remove) MM9
-  Public Space
-  Town Centre Action Plan Policy Areas
-  Slipway

Proposed

-  Area of opportunity for destination
-  Proposed or improved public space
-  Proposed or improved play space
-  Development - Housing led, with roof terraces

-  Development - Housing led, with roof terraces
-  Maximum storey height/focal point
-  Location for key active frontage
-  Location for key enhanced frontage (e.g. 'front' doors, overlooking, active facades of residential or commercial properties)
-  Views to St. John's church, the Weir, Town Bridge
-  Character Area
-  Minimum 8m offset from watercourse; riparian zone - to create continuous public access to water's edge & provide wildlife habitat, tree planting & green space
-  Proposed or improved Green Spaces
-  Proposed Riverside Green Connections
-  Proposed Green Connections (main/secondary) with SuDS (e.g. raingardens, swales) & trees
-  Proposed tree planting

-  Potential for Hydropower and Water Source Heat Pumps
-  Potential to deculvert watercourses to south
-  Fish pass
-  Proposed SuDS
-  Proposed cycle route
-  Proposed pedestrian / cycle bridge
-  Proposed Primary Active Travel Route
-  Proposed Secondary Active Travel Route
-  Indicative water launch location
-  Indicative watersport facility location
-  Indicative angling location
-  Proposed meanwhile use (e.g. cultural, arts, creative industries, innovation hub, pop-up)
-  Proposed community use or small local business

9.4.2 Placemaking

Character

1. Waterside Living (West) should have a locally distinctive identity reflecting the industrial heritage of site and its waterside location.
2. Proposals should demonstrate a commitment to the creation of an attractive, vibrant waterfront at every stage in the design process.
3. Proposals should be distinctive - integrating contemporary, innovative architecture with the historic environment to reveal and celebrate the historic layers, including the water management structure.
4. Proposals should express the informal, leafy waterside character of the area through the architecture and planting.
5. Proposals should create a place to live that allows great access to water and nature, whilst the convenience of being on the doorstep of the town centre for work or leisure.
6. The viability of small floating commercial units moored alongside the Tangier site should be considered.

Housing Led Development

1. Waterside Living (West) should provide housing led development that is predominantly residential with a small amount of mixed use (e.g. cafés, work hub, pub) integrated on the ground floor of mixed development blocks.
2. Waterside Living (West) should provide for an inter-generational community, through the provision of a range of types of homes.
3. Smaller mixed use units should be located along the River Tone frontage.
4. Large urban blocks should be avoided, and a finer urban grain established, to increase permeability through sites and to the river.
5. Street level façades should be activated with appropriate uses (such as retail, café, gallery etc.) on ground floors to provide passive surveillance and create safe and welcoming spaces.
6. Active frontage should be provided along all waterfronts and streets.



CA1: Distinctive identity reflecting industrial heritage

Public Spaces

The distribution of public spaces should reflect the overarching principles of the Linear Water Park Concept which will establish the core functions of spaces and communications that combine to form the Linear Water Park.

1. Allow for movement - Development proposals should establish clear routes through the space to enable people to pass directly from A to B, in line with the movement hierarchy.
2. Spaces should be easy to navigate – with a framework for movement provided by strong east-west and north-south routes, strong waterside edges with active frontage and elevational treatment, key public spaces along the River Tone, strong active travel routes, key buildings at key corner to aid legibility.
3. New public spaces should be located on key routes and which are well overlooked, with adjacent active frontage or community uses.
4. Public spaces should connect to a network of green routes through the development, which should provide opportunities for interaction across all age groups with plenty of opportunities to meet with neighbours in shared spaces. These green routes should be pedestrian friendly with traffic measures to aid driver awareness of pedestrians and street activities.
5. Provide for different activity - design nodes of activity should be complemented by ‘resting’ zones facing the space. Outdoor catering is encouraged around the edges of a space to animate the public realm.
6. Public spaces and green spaces should provide new play space, with a small play space alongside Clarence Street to provide for ‘doorstep play’.
7. Design for all - the design of spaces should build in a degree of versatility so that they enable people to enjoy different activities in the same space and can be used for a variety of uses over time. Design should take account of different user group and should adequately integrate facilities for the elderly, disabled and children.
8. Spaces should be uncluttered, robust and safe. Specifications of materials and maintenance regimes must demonstrate high standards of visual quality, durability and environmental performance. Spaces should be laid out so that their functions are clear without the need for unnecessary signs or barriers.
9. Open space design should seek opportunities to incorporate BNG through use of appropriate planting to compliment the public use function of the spaces (wildflower lawn, wetlands, trees) and incorporate infrastructure for protected species (bat and bird boxes, hibernacula).
10. Opportunities for green space should be maximised, and tarmacked areas should be minimised to strengthen the contribution of public spaces to reducing embodied carbon and improving biodiversity.
11. Reference should be made to the Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town, Supplementary Planning Document (December 2021)
12. Public art should be included within public open space as a landmark and as a wayfinding element.



PS4: A network of green routes

Building Heights

1. Building height, scale and massing should be appropriate to the location.
2. Well considered building heights and active frontage provide an opportunity to create a development that provides positive interaction in many ways – life where you chat with your neighbour in the street, relax in the terraced communal garden overlooking the river or grab a coffee in the local café.
3. Storey heights should reduce to the south adjacent to smaller dwellings.
4. Solar access should be ensured to the streams and river through reduced building heights, adequate front garden offsets and breaks in the built frontage
5. Building heights should consider important views – for example to St John’s Church, the Weir and the Town Bridge.

Elevational treatment

1. Elevations along River Tone should be designed to provide variety and interest (rather than one monotonous elevation), with the possibility for differing setbacks to provide smaller scale meeting places along the river. This should be supported by a varied roofscape and roof terraces.
2. Where possible boundaries to adjacent properties should be open, or defined by planting or a low ‘open’ fence, rather than tall solid fencing in order to provide visual connections and overlooking of the waterways.

Parking

1. Low levels of parking are expected in very accessible town centre location. Parking and service access should be located to be discrete; generally internal to development blocks or on street.

Retained access

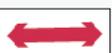
1. Access should be maintained to buildings next to French Weir and to Parkhaven.



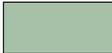
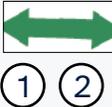
EL1: Variety and interest in elevations

9.4.3 Environment and Water

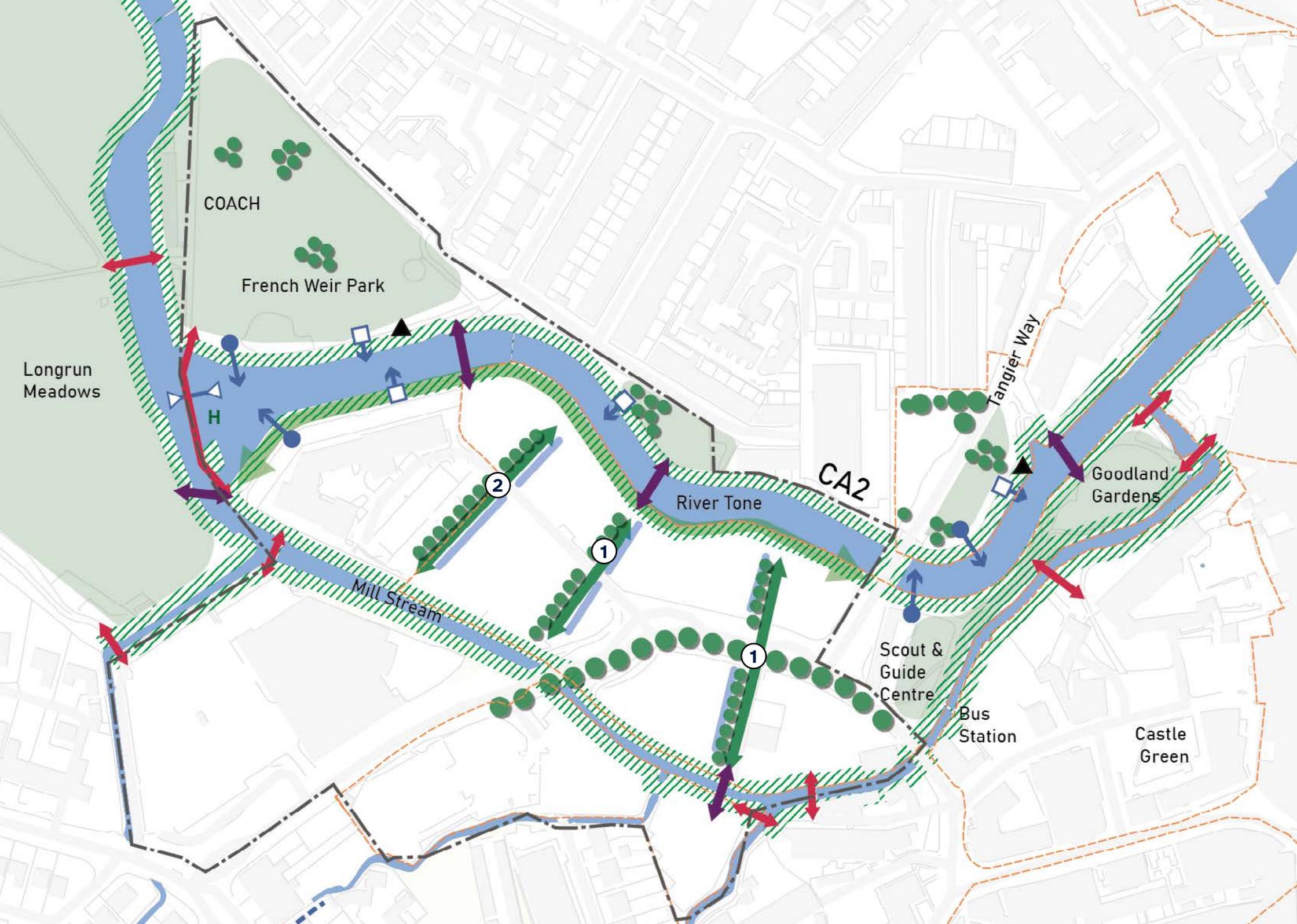
Existing

-  Watercourse
-  Buildings
-  Pedestrian/cycle bridge
-  Slipway

Proposed

-  Character Area
-  Minimum 8m offset from watercourse; riparian zone - to create continuous public access to water's edge & provide wildlife habitat, tree planting & green space
-  Proposed or improved Green Spaces
-  Proposed Riverside Green Connections
-  Proposed Green Connections (main/secondary) including SuDS (e.g. raingardens, swales) and trees

-  Proposed tree planting
-  Proposed pedestrian/cycle bridge
-  Potential to deculvert watercourses to south
-  Fish pass
-  Proposed SuDS
-  Indicative water launch location
-  Indicative watersport facility location
-  Indicative angling location



Water Corridors and Nature

1. Waterside Living (West) should create well maintained and enhanced River Tone and Mill Stream corridors, with a continuous waterside wildlife and landscape corridor - providing a river edge treatment that encourages interaction with water and creates nature-based solutions that create active spaces, improve health and well-being and are positive for both the environment and economy. This should provide a minimum 8m riparian zone, to maintain access, create habitat for wildlife and provide green spaces and trees along the watercourse. Soft engineering options should be provided with increased bank side vegetation encourage biodiversity, with tree cover along the river corridor.
2. Service access should be maintained along the river and stream for maintenance. To minimise hard surfaces adjacent to the river, the pavement and/or cycle route should meet the requirements for a service route and may be used as such when necessary.
3. Connections to French Weir Park, Longrun Meadow and Goodland Gardens should be maintained and improved alongside the River Tone and Mill Stream.
4. Proposals should be assessed by Building with Nature and should meet Nature Core Standards, Well-being Standards, Water Standards and Wildlife Standards.
5. A fish pass should be provided at French Weir.
6. Achieve at least the mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain with the ambition for a higher percentage - refer to Somerset Council Biodiversity Net Gain Guidance Note (February 2024).
7. Development will take account of the Nature Recovery Plan.
8. Proposals should reflect the different character of the north and south banks of the river, with the north having a more natural character (offering opportunities for biodiversity and ecology according to the Waterways Biodiversity Framework) and the south more urban.

Connections to watercourses

1. Water should be visible so that residents and visitors experience a connection, a positive relationship and understanding of the importance of water to their urban environment and sense of place.
2. Waterside Living (West) should provide a minimum of three multi-functional green connections; that provide good permeability and clear links between new development areas to both the River Tone and Mill Stream. These should include SuDS – for example raingardens or swales and tree planting, as well as prioritising pedestrians, cyclists and wheeling.

Access to Water

1. Better access to the River Tone should be provided - proposals should include locations for watersport facilities and angling platforms; with new launch points at key locations for boating, canoeing etc. and key facilities such as boat storage and changing facilities and toilets.



WCN6: Improvements for biodiversity

Larger facilities, to expand access to the water and provide supplementary facilities to TASC, should also be considered.

2. The French Weir Combined Project will determine its future form and function. A lock structure could allow for navigation further upstream.

Tree planting

1. Opportunities should be taken along key routes to increase tree planting, including street trees, orchards and trees within green spaces. Trees should be in keeping with the local character and it should be ensured that the local environment is suitable for them. This will be informed by the Biodiversity Framework.
2. Proposed trees including street trees along Tangier Way, trees within green links and new trees in existing and proposed green spaces.
3. Trees should be native (unless there are overriding reasons) and once established, should be allowed to mature with little or no impact

from humans, i.e. should not be subject to pruning or management regimes unless in the interest of public safety. Trees should be planted in groups where possible with complimentary landscaping to maximise ecological value.

4. Tree pits should be sufficient and large enough to support tree growth.
5. Trees should be incorporated into plazas and areas with extensive hard surfaces.
6. Tree canopies should cover large areas.

SuDS

1. Ensure high-quality SuDS and water management with the creation of a multitude of green SuDS throughout to give opportunities for community spaces and/ or water play and contribute towards improved water quality.
2. Design for greener streets prioritising SuDS and permeable surfacing over tarmac / concrete and piped drainage.
3. Incorporate permeable surfaces and where possible rain gardens.

Energy

1. Buildings should meet with the requirements of Somerset West and Taunton's Net Zero Carbon Toolkit in relation to energy efficiency, low carbon heating, renewable energy generation and embodied carbon.
2. The potential should be explored for site wide energy solutions, e.g. Hydropower powered by the weir and Water Source Heat Pumps.
3. Energy demand should be minimised, by careful building orientation optimised to balance solar gain and increase south facing roof area.
4. Proposals should engage with Taunton's early techno-economic feasibility work on the mapping of heat network opportunities (demands, heat sources, energy centre locations) at an early stage
5. Opportunities should be taken for homes to include battery storage with onsite renewable generation, to maximise the benefit to the homeowner.



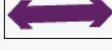
CTW1: Multi-functional green connections

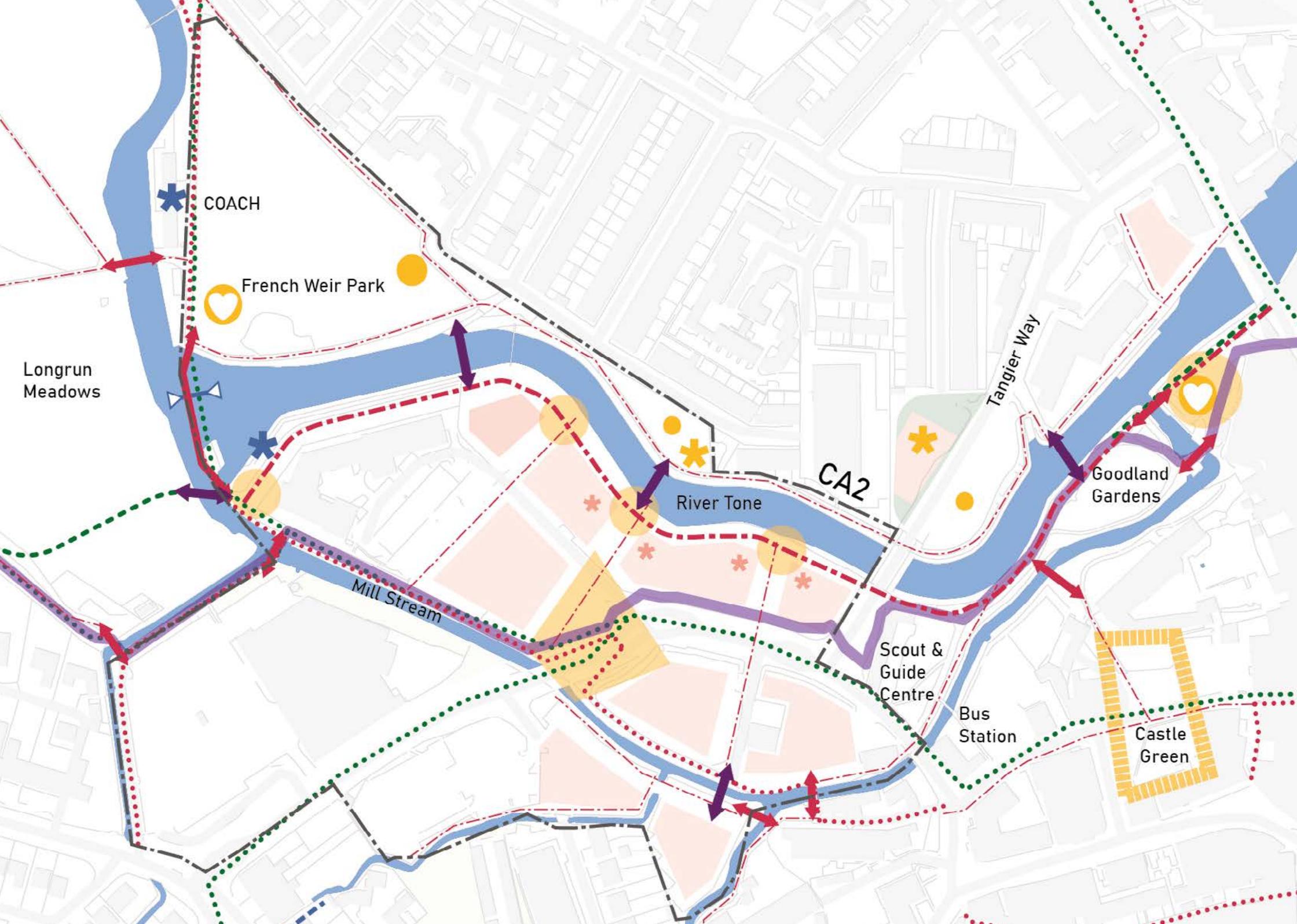
9.4.4 Community

Existing

	Watercourse
	Buildings
	Pedestrian/cycle bridge
	Cycle route
	Sustrans National Cycle Route
	Public Right of Way

Proposed

	Area of opportunity for destination		Indicative water launch location
	Proposed or improved public space		Indicative watersport facility location
	Proposed or improved play space		Indicative angling location
	Development - Housing led, with roof terraces		Proposed meanwhile use (e.g. cultural, arts, creative industries, innovation hub, pop-up)
	Character Area		Proposed community use or small local business
	Proposed cycle route		
	Proposed pedestrian / cycle bridge		
	Proposed Primary Active Travel Route		
	Proposed Secondary Active Travel Route		



COACH

French Weir Park

Longrun Meadows

River Tone

CA2

Tangier Way

Goodland Gardens

Mill Stream

Scout & Guide Centre

Bus Station

Castle Green

Enhancing Active Travel

1. Taking an 'Active Travel' first approach, in this town centre location which is walkable to most facilities and near the bus station and bus stops. Pedestrians, cyclists and wheeling should be prioritised and promoted, with vehicle ownership dissuaded in an area with such good public transport links. Cycle storage should be generously provided, and car parking limited to schemes such as carshare and electric pool cars.
2. A Primary Active Travel Route should run along the south bank of the River Tone providing good east-west connectivity connect to French Weir Park & Longrun Meadow to the west and the Goodman Gardens, town centre and onto Firepool and the railway station to the east. Improvements should be made to the pedestrian, cycle and wheeling routes along the length of the river with improved access and widening in some parts to create an overlooked footpath and cycleway.
3. Existing cycle routes and the long distance Sustrans route 3 (from Land's End through Taunton to Bristol) should be retained and reinforced, with minor enhancements by Debenhams and the Weir to improve connectivity.
4. Secondary Active Travel Routes plus new bridge crossings for pedestrians, cyclists and wheeling should ensure permeability through the area and ensure routes alongside the water. Bridge design should be used as an opportunity to strengthen local identity.
5. Design for cyclists - proposals should follow the guidance in Local Transport Note 1/20 - Cycle Infrastructure Design. Designs should follow guidance in the Public Realm design guide for Taunton Garden Town Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Supporting Activity

1. Waterside Living (West) should provide locations for meanwhile and seasonal uses e.g. cultural, arts, creative industries and leisure, to support the growth of new businesses in Taunton.
2. Provide areas for community use and small local business to foster and encourage the development of a close-knit community.
3. A foot/cycle bridge connection to Clarence Street should be provided to strengthen the relationship with the existing community to allow shared use of facilities and / community spaces.
4. Engagement should take place with local interested groups such as the residential communities to north and south, Tangier Scout and Guide Centre and Taunton Adventurous Sports and Canoe Club.



SA1: Supporting growth of new businesses

9.4.5 Design Briefs

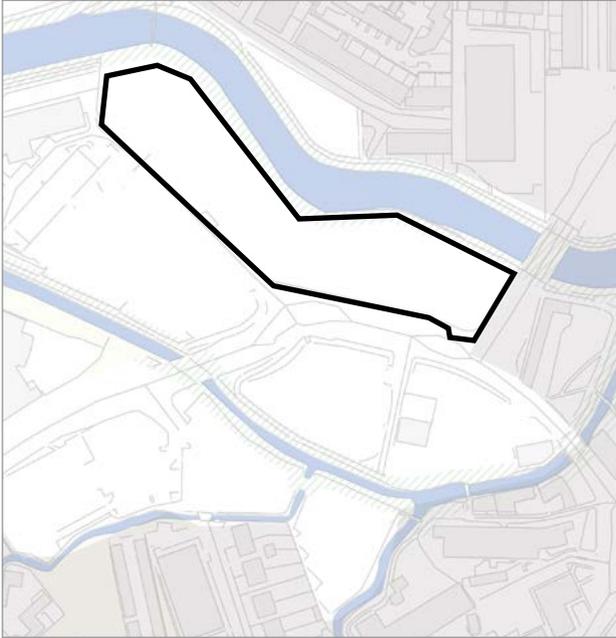
Tangier Policy TG2 / Site 1

(Sites bounded by Wood Street, Greenbrook Terrace and the River Tone) - Residential only, allocated for 225 residential units

Existing

Sustrans National Cycle Route 3: Retain and enhance along Tangier Way

Service Pipe: Investigate removal (at north of site across River Tone)



Placemaking

Proposed public space: Creation of minimum three public spaces alongside River Tone as part of riverside improvements, at connection points with north-south green connections as part of linear route and to enhance the establishment of French Weir Park as a destination.

Proposed play space: Provide doorstep play within green connections and/or roof terraces as well as developing bridge connections to French Weir Park and green space alongside Clarence Road, with appropriate long term stewardship.

Development: Housing led, predominantly residential, with coordinated urban design across all Tangier sites. Active frontage to the water and key streets including roof terraces.

Maximum storey height: 4-5 storeys with variety of roofscape and key focal points at most northerly point and as Tangier Way turns to cross the River Tone

Location for key active frontage: North-east edge alongside the River Tone and onto Tangier Way, and improved natural surveillance over Mill Stream.

Environment and water (Green & Blue)

Watercourse: Retain and enhance existing access to River Tone. Minimum 8m offset from watercourse; riparian zone - to create continuous public access to water's edge & provide wildlife habitat, tree planting & green space

Proposed Riverside Green Connections: Strong linear green space alongside River Tone and Mill Stream accommodating movement (active travel) and providing attractive waterside public open space with generous planting

Proposed Green Connections: Minimum 3 no. north-south connections to create a permeable development with strong pedestrian, cycle and wheeling connections between Mill Stream and the River Tone, Connections to include SuDS (e.g. raingardens, swales) and trees

Proposed tree planting: generous tree planting within Green Connections

Proposed Green Spaces: Riverside Green Connection

Community

Proposed bridges: Minimum 1 no. pedestrian/cycle/wheeling bridge with aspiration for 2 no. to connect across River Tone - one to French Weir Park, one to Clarence Street

Proposed Active Travel Routes: Primary Route to run alongside River Tone and Secondary Routes to run through Green Corridors

Proposed water launch location: Minimum 1 no. launch point onto River Tone to be created

Locations for watersport facilities: Explore potential for northern most area of site to provide complementary uses to The Centre for Outdoor Activity & Community Hub (COACH)

Proposed locations for angling: Explore best locations for angling provision, suggest north bank within green spaces

Proposed meanwhile use: Explore potential meanwhile uses within green space by Clarence Street

Proposed community use or small local business: provide space adjacent key proposed public spaces for these uses

Proposed artwork: Potential for public art along the river / at the connections of the river promenade and routes to the river



Tangier Policy TG2 / Site 2

Mix of uses, allocated for 50 residential units and retail

Existing

Buildings: Retention of existing adjacent building (and access)

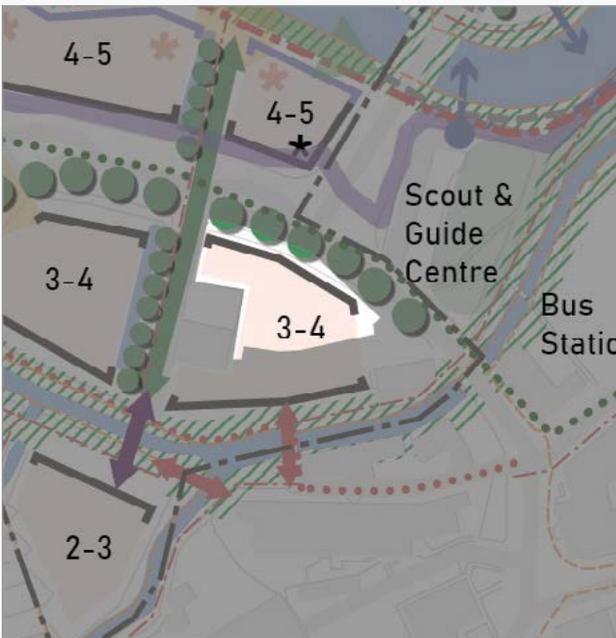
Cycle Route: Retain existing cycle route along Tangier Way

Placemaking

Development: Housing led, predominantly residential, with coordinated urban design across all Tangier sites.

Maximum storey height: 3-4 storeys

Location for key active frontage: Tangier Way



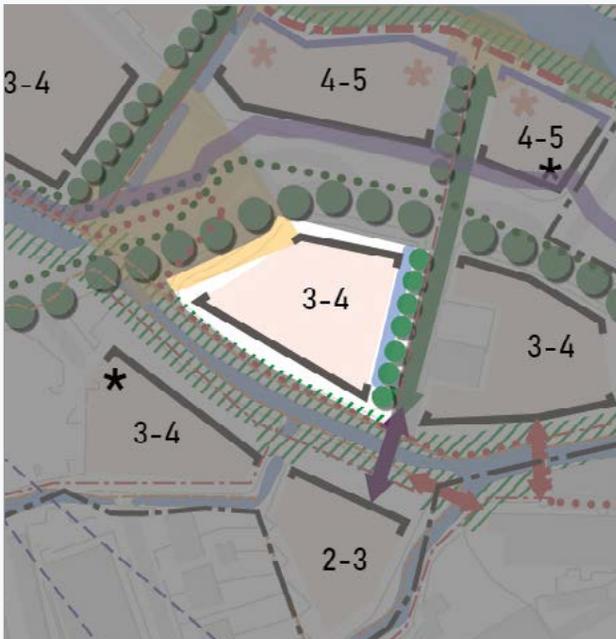
Environment and Water (Green & Blue)

Proposed Green Connections: North-south connections to west of site to create a permeable development with strong pedestrian, cycle and wheeling connections to the River Tone and Mill Stream, connections to include SuDS (e.g. raingardens, swales) and trees

Proposed tree planting: Within green connection and street trees along Tangier Way

Community

Active Travel Routes: Secondary routes to run through Green Corridor



Tangier Policy TG2 / Site 3

Mix of uses, allocated for 60 residential units and retail

Existing

Road: Potential to consider how Tangier Way runs through public space

Cycle Route: Retain existing cycle route along Tangier Way

Public Right of Way: Retain alongside Mill Stream

Placemaking

Development: Housing led, predominantly residential, with coordinated urban design across all Tangier sites.

Maximum storey height: 3-4 storeys

Location for key active frontage: Alongside Mill Stream and onto Tangier Way

Environment and Water (Green & Blue)

Watercourse: Retain and enhance existing Mill Stream. Minimum 8m offset from watercourse; riparian zone - to create continuous public access to water's edge & provide wildlife habitat, tree planting & green space

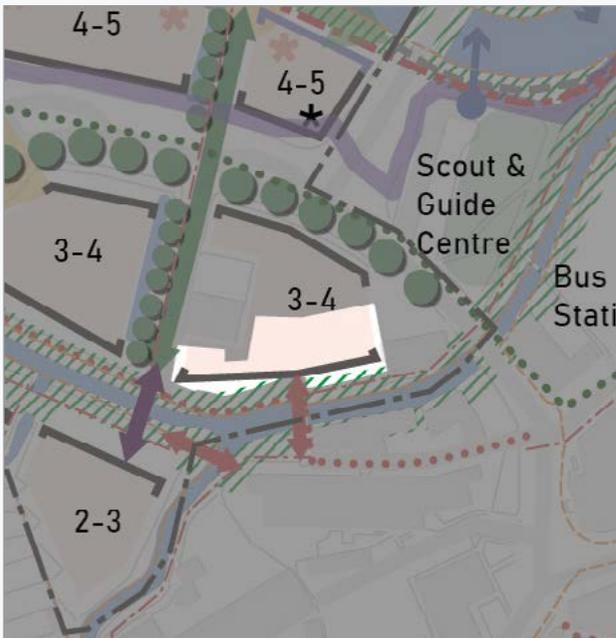
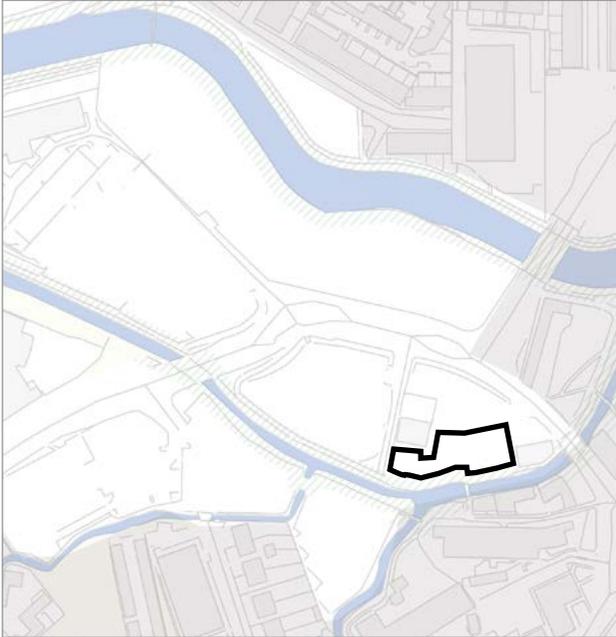
Proposed Green Connections: North-south connections to east of site to create a permeable development with strong pedestrian, cycle and wheeling connections to the River Tone and Mill Stream, connections to include SuDS (e.g. raingardens, swales) and trees

Proposed tree planting: Within green connection and street trees along Tangier Way

Community

Proposed pedestrian/cycle/wheeling bridge: To connect at south-east corner of site over Mill Stream

Active Travel Route: Secondary Routes to run through Green Corridor



Policy TG2 / Site 4

Residential only, allocated for 20 residential units

Existing

Buildings: Retention of existing building (and access)

Public Right of Way: Retain along Mill Stream

Placemaking

Development: Housing led, predominantly residential, with coordinated urban design across of Tangier sites.

Maximum storey height: 3-4 storeys

Location for key active frontage: Mill Stream

Environment and Water (Green & Blue)

Watercourse: Retain and enhance existing Mill Stream. Minimum 8m offset from watercourse; riparian zone - to create continuous public access to water's edge & provide wildlife habitat, tree planting & green space

Proposed Green Connections: North-south connections to west of site to create a permeable development with strong pedestrian, cycle and wheeling connections to the River Tone and Mill Stream, connections to include SuDS (e.g. raingardens, swales) and trees

Proposed tree planting: Within green connection

Community

Proposed pedestrian/cycle/wheeling bridge: To connect at south-west corner of site over Mill Stream

Proposed Active Travel Route: Secondary Route to connect from PROW into Goodland Gardens



Policy TG2 / Site 5

Residential only, allocated for 60 residential units

Existing

Buildings: Appropriate edge to existing buildings to south

Road: Potential for connection to St John's Road

Cycle Route: Retain existing route along Tangier Way

Placemaking

Development: Housing led, predominantly residential, with coordinated urban design with the Tangier sites.

Maximum storey height: Varied from 2-4 storeys

Location for key active frontage: Onto Mill Stream and Tangier Way

View to St John's church: Maintain views

Environment and Water (Green & Blue)

Watercourse: Retain and enhance existing Mill Stream. Minimum 8m offset from watercourse; riparian zone - to create continuous public access to water's edge & provide wildlife habitat, tree planting & green space.

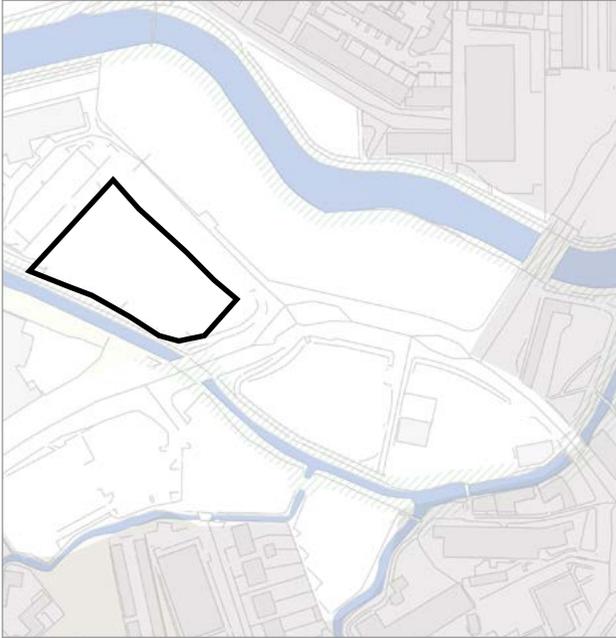
Tributaries: Reveal the points at which the two tributaries join the Mill Stream, optimising the opportunity to improve connection between the town centre, Linear Water Park and adjoining neighbourhoods by means of water connections.

Proposed tree planting: Street trees along Tangier Way

Community

Proposed pedestrian/cycle/wheeling bridge: Over Mill Stream to join green connection towards River Tone

Active Travel Routes: Secondary routes along Mill Stream and adjoining watercourse



Policy TG2 / Site 8

Mix of uses, allocated for 50 residential units and retail

Existing

Buildings: Retained buildings to north-west

Road: Tangier retained to access buildings to north-west

Cycle Route: Retain route around south of site

Sustrans National Cycle Route 3: Retain route around south of site

Public Right of Way: Retain route around south of site

Placemaking

Proposed public space: to south of site

Development: Housing led, predominantly residential, with coordinated urban design with the Tangier sites

Maximum storey height: 3-4 storeys

Location for key active frontage: Mill Stream and Tangier Way

Environment and Water (Green & Blue)

Watercourse: Retain and enhance existing Mill Stream. Minimum 8m offset from watercourse; riparian zone - to create continuous public access to water's edge & provide wildlife habitat, tree planting & green space.

Proposed Green Connections: North-south connections to north-west and south-east of site to create a permeable development with strong pedestrian, cycle and wheeling connections to the River Tone and Mill Stream, connections to include SuDS (e.g. raingardens, swales) and trees.

Proposed tree planting: within green connections

Community

Proposed Active Travel Routes: Secondary routes through green connections



Tangier site



Taunton Town Bridge

9.5 Site Design Principles: Character Area 3 - Town Centre

9.5.1 Overview

Context and Background

CA3 'Town Centre' encompasses Goodland Gardens, Town Bridge and Coal Orchard, extending eastwards, past the Morrisons site and Cricket Ground, and including the development at Firepool.

The Character Area plays a key role in providing connections through the town centre, and strengthening the vibrancy of the town centre, particularly with the potential redevelopment of the Morrisons site.

The area has potential in terms of its historic character and riverside setting, town centre location, good connections and accessibility, proximity to recent growth areas such as Firepool and Coal Orchard, as well as the scale of its development opportunities.

This area is covered by Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan 'Morrisons' CR5, Debenhams G2 (within Goodland Gardens) and Wood Street TG1, sites 2,3 and 4.

Key design principles

- Waterside living
- Strong active travel connectivity
- Strong relationship with Coal Orchard and Firepool
- New 'retail quarter' with potential to strengthening existing retail but encouraging footfall through the site
- Reveal the historic relationship between the town centre and the river

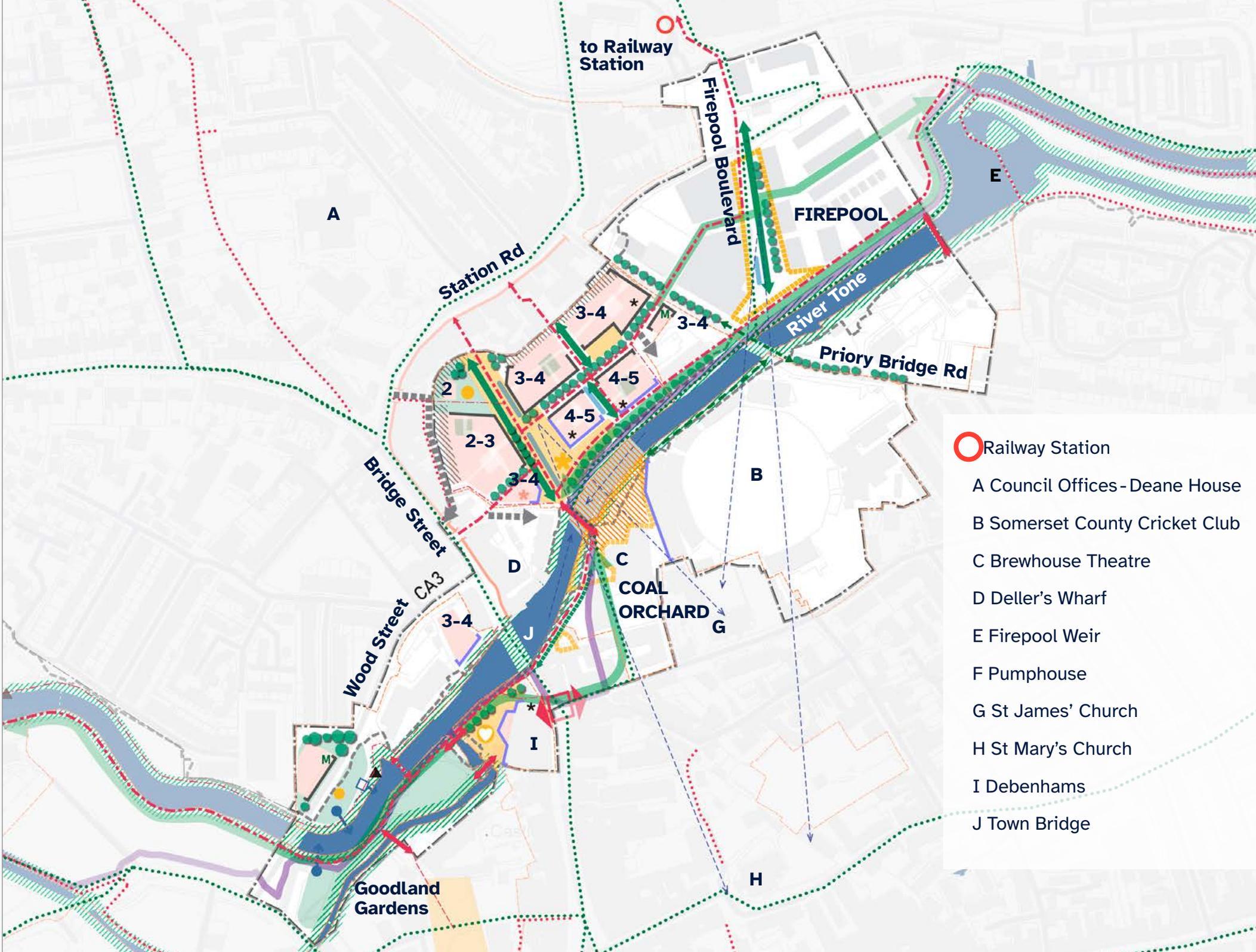
Key site considerations:

- Management of the River Tone and Mill Stream
- Circular connection through site including Station, Firepool and historic Taunton High Street
- Located in flood zone 3
- Adjacent Firepool development and Brewhouse Theatre
- Historic water-related infrastructure assets
- The international draw of the Somerset County Cricket Ground

Site allocation policy - Firepool, Morrisons, Cricket Club, Coal Orchard and Wood Street sites

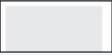
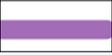


Aerial Photography - World Imagery (Clarity): Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, IGN and the GIS User Community. World Hillshade: Sources: Esri, Airbus DS, USGS, NGA, NASA, CGIAR, N Robinson, NCEAS, NLS, OS, NMA, Geodatastyrelsen, Rijkswaterstaat, GSA, Geoland, FEMA, Intermap and the GIS User Community.



- Railway Station
- A Council Offices - Deane House
- B Somerset County Cricket Club
- C Brewhouse Theatre
- D Deller's Wharf
- E Firepool Weir
- F Pumphouse
- G St James' Church
- H St Mary's Church
- I Debenhams
- J Town Bridge

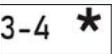
Existing

-  Watercourse
-  Buildings
-  Pedestrian/cycle bridge
-  Cycle route
-  Sustrans National Cycle Route
-  Public Right of Way
-  Flood Defences
-  Vehicle access
-  Public Space
-  Rear boundary to adjacent property
-  Town Centre Action Plan Policy Areas
-  Slipway

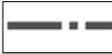
Proposed

Placemaking

-  Area of opportunity for destination
-  Proposed or improved public space

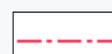
-  Proposed or improved play space
-  Development - Mixed uses - predominantly retail, with internal courts/gardens and roof terraces
-  Maximum storey height/focal point
-  Location for key active frontage
-  Location for enhanced frontage
-  Key views

Environment and Water (Green and Blue)

-  Character Area
-  Minimum 8m offset from watercourse; riparian zone - to create continuous public access to water's edge & provide wildlife habitat, tree planting & green space
-  Proposed or improved Green Spaces
-  Proposed Riverside Green Connections
-  Proposed Green Connections including SuDS (e.g. raingardens, swales) and trees

-  Proposed tree planting
-  Proposed SuDS
-  Desire line along river edge
-  Indicative angling location
-  Indicative water launch location

Community

-  Proposed Primary Active Travel Route
-  Proposed Secondary Active Travel Routes
-  Improved cycle connection
-  Improved pedestrian cycle connection
-  Potential for Mobility Hub
-  Improved road crossing point
-  Proposed meanwhile use (e.g. cultural, arts, creative industries, innovation hub, pop-up)
-  Proposed community use or small local business
-  Connection with existing theatre

9.5.2 Placemaking

Character

1. CA3 should have a locally distinctive identity reflecting the industrial heritage of the site (including previous mill, wharf, coal and timber yards and green space -nursery) and their key role in the positive relationship between the town centre uses/



Paddington Folding Bridge
Photo credit: SNappa2006

activity and the river. Proposals should demonstrate a commitment to the creation of an attractive, vibrant waterfront at every stage in the design process. Proposals should be distinctive - integrating contemporary, innovative architecture with the historic environment to reflect the identity of the River Corridor.

2. Introduce opportunities for higher profile placemaking features that celebrate the uniqueness of Taunton, such as innovative bridge design that doubles as public art.
3. Preserve views to St James' Church and St Mary's Church where possible in order to retain the local character.

Retail-led Development

1. Town Centre' should provide mixed-use development with a balance of residential, large format retail and office space, with large format retail integrated on the ground floor of mixed development blocks.
2. Flexible and adaptable design solutions are encouraged, to accommodate

change of use over time as necessary. A 'phase 0' should consider potential for the site to be used for meanwhile uses or 'pop-up' retail. This could include 'grid' building frame systems, with offsite construction methods and building elements that can change over time to accommodate different size units or uses. It may also include temporary and/or permanent floating commercial units.

3. Opportunities should be sought to provide a mix of uses that are complementary to the cricket ground and theatre, with potential for sport related or food and drink retail options.
4. Opportunities should be taken to understand the need locally for flexible workspaces, workshops and light production or craft industries which could be accommodated as part of the development and reflect the type of historic uses of the site.
5. Large urban blocks should be avoided, and a finer urban grain established, to increase permeability through sites and to the river.



CA1: Distinctive identity reflecting industrial heritage

Larger blocks with a more regular organisation should be located nearer the river and smaller blocks with less regularity would be suited to knit into existing development, with reflects the historic pattern of the site.

6. Street level façades should be activated with appropriate uses (such as retail, café etc) on ground floors to provide passive surveillance and create safe and welcoming spaces.
7. Active frontage should be provided along all waterfronts and key streets.
8. All building uses should be designed to allow for permeability through the blocks – with internal pedestrian routes, squares, courts and garden spaces – predominantly at ground floor level but also could be included over all levels to provided roof terraces and gardens that overlook the river.
9. The ground floor adjacent the main public space should be considered for a use such as a market or food hall.

Public Spaces

1. Allow for movement - Development proposals should establish clear routes through the space
2. Spaces should be easy to navigate – with a framework for movement provided by strong east west and north south routes, strong waterside edges with active frontage and elevational treatment, key public spaces along River Tone, strong active travel routes, key buildings at key corner to aid legibility.
3. New public spaces should be located at key points alongside the river and on the location of the previous nursery. These should be located on key routes and which are well overlooked, with adjacent retail or community uses.
4. Public spaces should connect to a network of green routes through the development, which should provide opportunities for interaction across all age groups with plenty of opportunities to meet with people in shared spaces. These green routes should be pedestrian friendly with traffic measures to aid driver awareness of pedestrians and street activities.
5. Provide for different activity - design nodes of activity should be complemented by ‘resting’ zones facing the space. Outdoor catering is encouraged around the edges of a space to animate the waterside public realm.
6. Public spaces and green spaces should provide new play space.
7. Design for all - the design of spaces should build in a degree of versatility so that they enable people to enjoy different activities in the same space and can be used for a variety of uses over time. Design should take account of different user group and should adequately integrate facilities for the elderly, disabled and children.
8. Spaces should be uncluttered, robust and safe. Specifications of materials and maintenance regimes must demonstrate high standards of visual quality, durability and environmental performance. Spaces should be laid out so that their functions are clear without the need for unnecessary signs or barriers.



PS9: Amphitheatre space

9. The main public space within the Morrisons site should be well connected with the existing bridge and create a wider connection with the Brewhouse theatre, incorporating an amphitheatre space with views across the river.
10. The area of public space north of Debenhams should better address the water, Town Bridge and Goodland Gardens, drawing attention to the important historic interface between Town and Water.
11. Open space design should seek opportunities to incorporate BNG through use of appropriate planting to compliment the public use function of the spaces (wildflower lawn, wetlands, trees) and incorporate infrastructure for protected species (bat and bird boxes, hibernacula).
12. Opportunities for green space should be maximised, and tarmacked areas should be minimised to strengthen the contribution of public spaces to reducing embodied carbon and improving biodiversity.

Building Heights

1. Building height, scale and massing should be appropriate to the location.
2. Well considered building heights and active frontage provide an opportunity to create a development that provides positive interaction in many ways – life where you chat with your neighbour in the street, relax in the terraced communal garden overlooking the river or grab a coffee in the local café.
3. Storey heights should reduce to the south adjacent to smaller dwellings.
4. Solar access should be ensured to the streams and river through reduced building heights, adequate front garden offsets and breaks in the built frontage.
5. Building heights should consider important views – for example to St John’s Church and St Mary’s Church.

Elevational treatment

1. Active façades – frontages should avoid blank walls, include frequent access points, windows and other

features which create and contribute to an active and welcoming feeling

2. Enhanced façades – provide a degree of passive surveillance and provide frequent areas of glazing.
3. Elevations along River Tone should be designed to provide variety and interest (rather than one monotonous elevation), with the possibility for differing setbacks to provide smaller scale meeting places along the river. This should be supported by a varied roofscape and roof terraces.
4. Any redevelopment of the Debenhams building, or new building should provide enhanced frontage overlooking the public space to the north-west and should emphasise Town Bridge as a key asset.

Parking

1. Low levels or zero parking are expected in this town centre location. Parking and service access should be located to be discrete; generally internal to development blocks or on street.



EL1: Active façades to create a welcoming feeling

Retained access

1. Access should be maintained to the rear of buildings along the north and west of the site, with an appropriate interface that does not become car dominated.
2. Access should be retained to the building at the east corner of the site by Priory Bridge Road.
3. Black Horse Lane must be retained with an appropriate interface to new building and should not be car dominated.
4. Access should be retained to the buildings behind Deller's Wharf.

Vehicle Access & Servicing

1. All vehicle access into and through the site must not dominate proposals and should be designed to be discrete, giving priority to active travel routes.
2. Routes and parking for delivery vehicles should be designed so to be discrete.

9.5.3 Environment and Water

A Council Offices - Deane House

B Somerset County Cricket Club

C Brewhouse Theatre

D Deller's Wharf

E Firepool Weir

F Pumphouse

G St James' Church

H St Mary's Church

I Debenhams

J Town Bridge

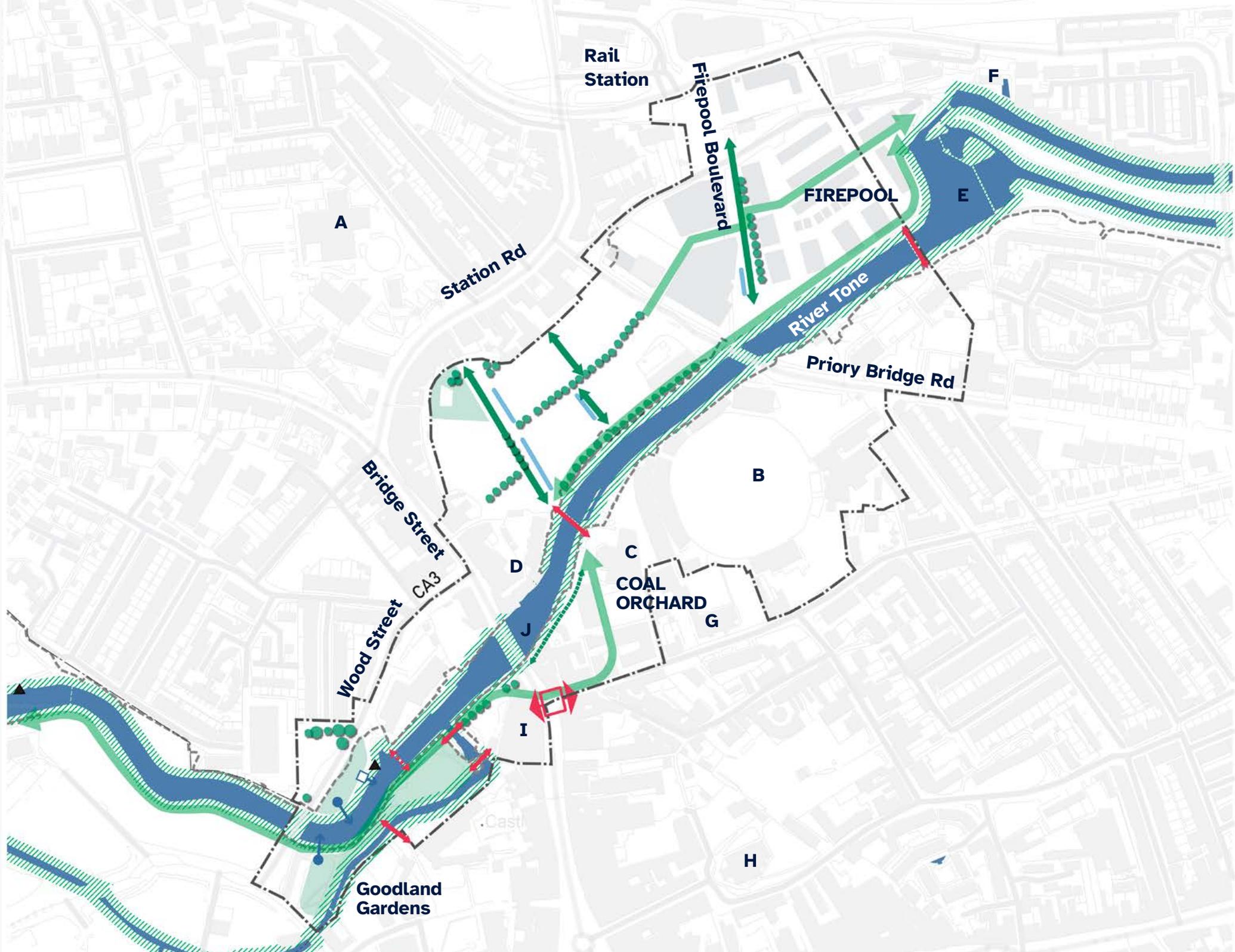
Existing

	Watercourse
	Buildings
	Pedestrian/cycle bridge
	Slipway

Proposed

Environment and Water (Green and Blue)

	Character Area
	Minimum 8m offset from watercourse; riparian zone - to create continuous public access to water's edge & provide wildlife habitat, tree planting & green space
	Proposed or improved Green Spaces
	Proposed Riverside Green Connections
	Proposed Green Connections including SuDS (e.g. raingardens, swales) and trees
	Proposed tree planting
	Proposed SuDS
	Desire line along river edge
	Indicative water launch location
	Indicative watersport facility location
	Indicative angling location



Water Corridors and Nature

1. 'Town Centre' should create a well maintained and enhanced River Tone corridor, with a continuous waterside wildlife and landscape corridor - providing a river edge treatment that encourages interaction with water and creates nature-based solutions that create active spaces, improve health and well-being and are positive for both the environment and economy. This should provide a minimum 8m riparian zone, to maintain access, create habitat for wildlife and provide green spaces and trees along the watercourse.
2. Service access should be maintained along the river and mill stream for the Environment Agency - to minimise hard surface adjacent to the river pedestrian routes would be acceptable to use for service access.
3. Connections to Firepool Lock, Weir and the Pumphouse should be maintained and improved alongside the River Tone.

4. Proposals will be assessed by Building with Nature and should meet Nature Core Standards, Well-being Standards, Water Standards and Wildlife Standards.
5. Achieve at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain - refer to Somerset Council Biodiversity Net Gain Guidance Note (February 2024).

Connections to watercourses

1. 'Town Centre' should provide a minimum of two multi-functional green connections; that provide good permeability and clear links between new development areas to the River Tone. These should include SuDS - for example raingardens or swales and tree planting, as well as prioritise pedestrians, cyclists and wheeling.
2. Improvements should be made to the cricket club's relationship with the river through widening the footpath along the river and creating better visual connections

Tree planting

1. Opportunities should be taken along key routes to increase tree planting, including street trees, orchards and trees within green spaces. Trees should be in keeping with the local character and it should be ensured that the local environment is suitable for them.
2. Proposed trees including along the key east-west route connecting to Firepool, trees within green links and new trees in proposed green spaces.
3. Trees should be native (unless there are overriding reasons) and once established, should be allowed to mature with little or no impact from humans, i.e. should not be subject to pruning or management regimes unless in the interest of public safety. Trees should be planted in groups where possible with complimentary landscaping to maximise ecological value.
4. Tree pits should be sufficient and large enough to support tree growth.



WCN1: Enhanced River Tone corridor

5. Trees should be incorporated into plazas and areas with extensive hard surfaces.
6. Tree canopies should cover large areas.

SuDS

1. Ensure high-quality SuDS and water management with the creation of a multitude of green SuDS throughout to give opportunities for community spaces and/or water play.
2. Design for greener streets prioritising SuDS and permeable surfacing over tarmac / concrete and piped drainage.

Energy

1. Buildings should meet with the requirements of Somerset West and Taunton's Net Zero Carbon Toolkit in relation to energy efficiency, low carbon heating, renewable energy generation and embodied carbon.
2. The potential should be explored for site wide energy solutions, e.g. Hydropower powered by the weir and Water Source Heat Pumps.
3. Energy demand should be minimised, by careful building orientation optimised to balance solar gain and increase south facing roof area.
4. Proposals should engage with Taunton's early techno-economic feasibility work on the mapping of heat network opportunities (demands, heat sources, energy centre locations) at an early stage.
5. Opportunities should be taken for homes to include battery storage with onsite renewable generation, to maximise the benefit to the homeowner.

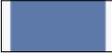
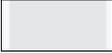


En3: Building orientation optimised for south facing roof area

9.5.4 Community

- A Council Offices - Deane House
- B Somerset County Cricket Club
- C Brewhouse Theatre
- D Deller's Wharf
- E Firepool Weir
- F Pumphouse
- G St James' Church
- H St Mary's Church
- I Debenhams
- J Town Bridge

Existing

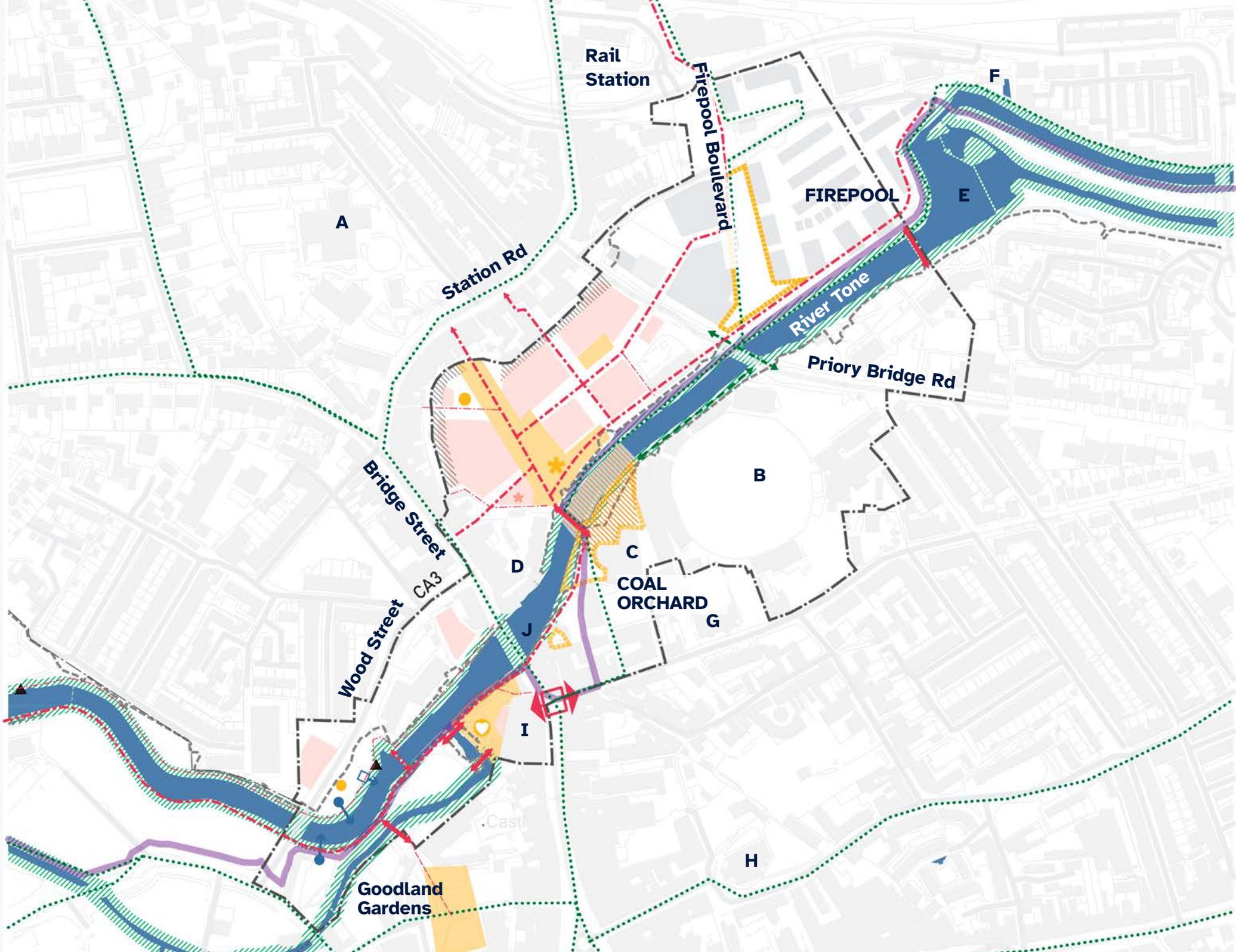
-  Watercourse
-  Buildings
-  Pedestrian/cycle bridge
-  Cycle route
-  Sustrans National Cycle Route
-  Public Right of Way

Proposed

Community

-  Proposed or improved public space
-  Proposed or improved play space
-  Development
-  Character Area
-  Proposed Primary Active Travel Route
-  Proposed Secondary Active Travel Route

-  Improved cycle connection
-  Improved pedestrian cycle connection
-  Indicative water launch location
-  Indicative watersport facility location
-  Indicative angling location
-  Proposed meanwhile use (e.g. cultural, arts, creative industries, innovation hub, pop-up)
-  Proposed community use or small local business



Rail Station

Firepool Boulevard

A

FIREPOOL

E

Station Rd

River Tone

Priory Bridge Rd

Bridge Street
CA3

B

D

COAL ORCHARD

G

Wood Street

J

I

H

Goodland Gardens

Castl

Enhancing Active Travel

1. Taking an 'Active Travel' first approach, in this town centre location which is walkable to most facilities and near bus station and bus stops. Pedestrians, cyclists and wheeling should be prioritised, with vehicle ownership dissuaded in an area with such good public transport links. Cycle storage should be generously provided, and car parking limited to schemes such as car share and electric pool cars. Positive connections are important to the Train Station and High Street.
2. A Primary Active Travel Route should run along the north bank of the River Tone providing good east-west connectivity to French Weir Park & Longrun Meadow to the west and onto Firepool and beyond to the east, as leisure/recreational 'book-ends' to the town centre.
3. Improvements should be made to the pedestrian, cycle and wheeling routes along the length of the river with improved access and widening in some parts to create an overlooked footpath and cycleway.
4. A strong Primary Active Travel Route should run through the centre of the site from Bridge Street to Firepool.
5. Two strong north-south Primary Active Travel Routes should connect from Station Road through to the River.
6. Secondary Active Travel routes should connect to Bridge Street and Station Road.
7. Existing cycle routes and the long distance Sustrans route 3 should be retained and reinforced.
8. Mobility hubs should be provided, potentially adjacent to Priory Bridge Road, Third Way Bridge and at Coal Orchard.
9. Improved connections should be created for pedestrians, cyclists and wheeling between Goodland Gardens and Coal Orchard, particularly at the road crossing next to Debenhams.
10. Design for cyclists - proposals should follow the guidance in Local Transport Note 1/20 - Cycle Infrastructure Design. Designs should follow guidance in the Public Realm design guide for Taunton Garden Town Supplementary Planning Guidance.

11. Refer to Taunton LCWIP and Connecting our Garden Communities plan

Supporting Activity

1. 'Town Centre' should provide locations for meanwhile uses e.g. cultural, arts, leisure and creative industries to support the growth of new businesses in Taunton.
2. Provide areas for community use and small local business to foster and encourage the development of a close-knit community.
3. Engagement should take place with local interested groups and businesses.
4. The design process should engage with the idea of creating a 'circular neighbourhood', promoting bottom-up design development.

5. Explore the viability of introducing café space and other active frontage into the ground floor of the Pumphouse, or between the Pumphouse and Firepool Lock, as part of a comprehensive conversion of the landmark building. The aim is to take the opportunity of conversion to create an eastern 'bookend' to the town centre, along with French Weir to the west.



SA1: Locations for meanwhile uses to support growth

9.5.5 Design Briefs

Debenhams (Goodland Gardens Policy G2)

Existing

Buildings: Retention of existing Debenhams building for re-use. Retention of existing buildings to north of Debenhams (short terrace).

Sustrans National Cycle Route 3: Retain existing cycle route with potential re-routing through public space.

Flood Defence: Retention or replacement of existing.

Placemaking

Improved public space: Potential to reconfigure public space to better connect the town centre to waterside heritage.

Development: Potential extension to Debenhams (west side).

Maximum storey height: Maximum 2 storey extension.

Location for key active frontage: Overlooking public space, the River Tone and Goodlands Gardens.

Views: Key corner of Debenhams to mark entrance to public space.

Environment and Water (Green & Blue)

Minimum 8m offset from watercourse; riparian zone – to maintain access, provide wildlife habitat, tree planting & green space: To be provided along the edge of public space.

Proposed Riverside Green Connections: Improved relationship to river from public space and continuous green connection towards Tangier and Firepool.

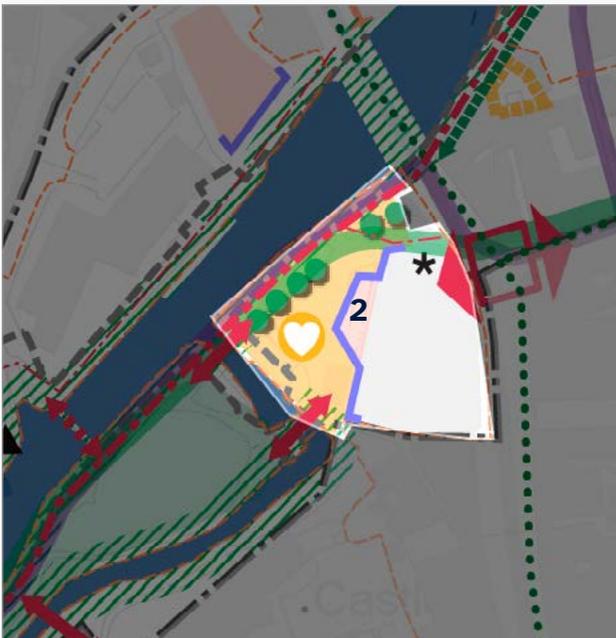
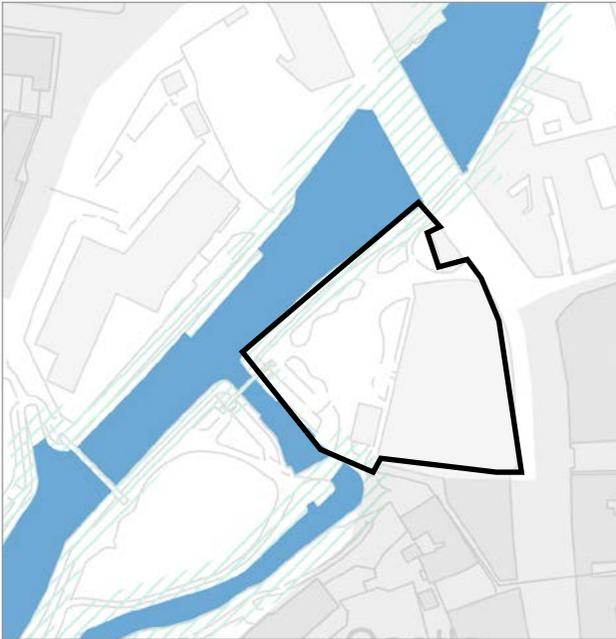
Proposed tree planting: Tree planting within public space.

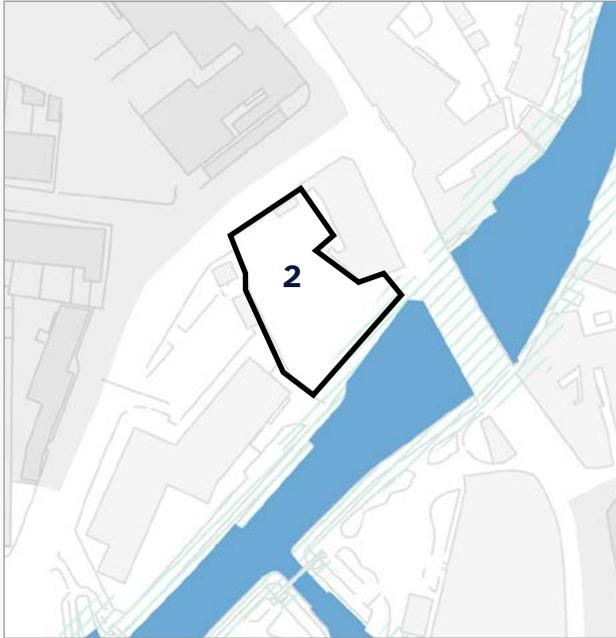
Improved Green Spaces: Improved interrelationship between public space and Goodland Gardens.

Community

Proposed cycle route: Improved crossing to St. James' Street for cyclists, pedestrians and wheeling towards Coal Orchard.

Proposed Active Travel Routes: Maintain connection alongside the river and make improvements where possible.





Wood Street (Wood Street Policy TG1 - Site 2)

Mix of uses, allocated for 20 residential units, retail and leisure

Existing

Road: Access from Wood Street.

Flood Defences: Retain

Placemaking

Development: Leisure led mixed use

Maximum storey height: 3-4 storeys

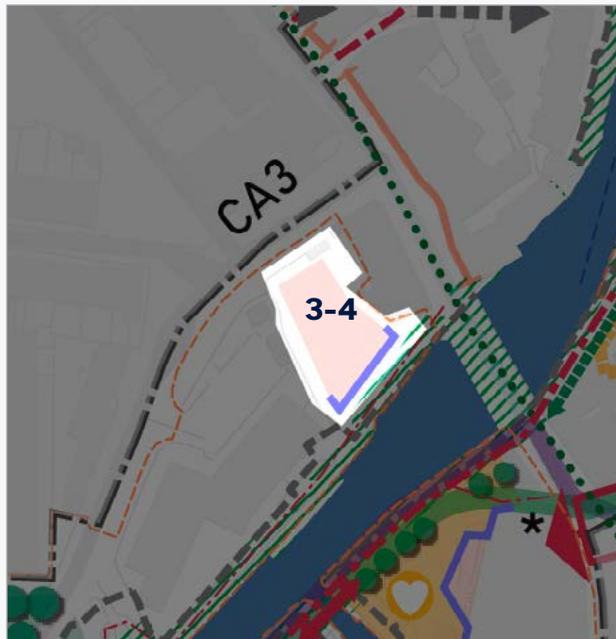
Location for key active frontage:
Towards River Tone and enhancement

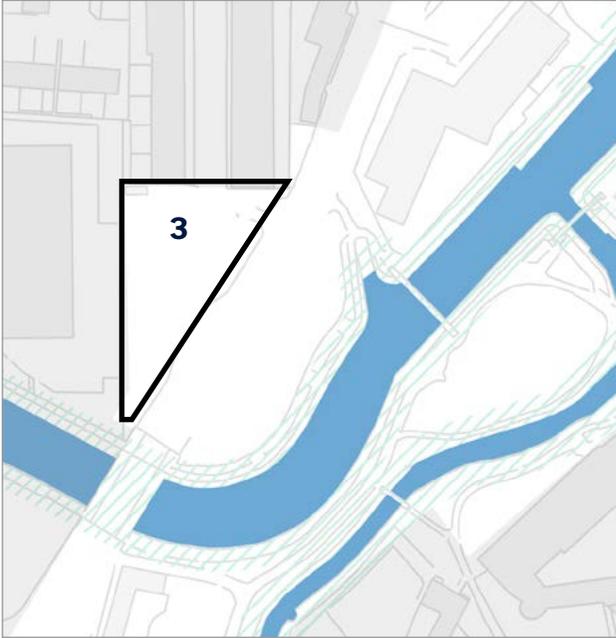
Environment and Water (Green & Blue)

Minimum 8m offset from watercourse; riparian zone - to maintain access, provide wildlife habitat, tree planting & green space: To be provided along edge of site.

Community

Proposed Active Travel Routes: Maintain secondary active travel connection alongside river and make improvements where possible including completing the missing public riverside path connection.





Wood Street (Wood Street Policy TG1 - Site 3)

Residential only, allocated for 20 residential units

Existing

Buildings: Buildings on Site 3 may be demolished.

Road: Access from Wood Street.

Flood Defences: Retain.

Placemaking

Development: Housing led mixed use, with potential for a mobility hub and an element of community use.

Maximum storey height: 4 storey

Location for key active frontage: Fronting Wood Street

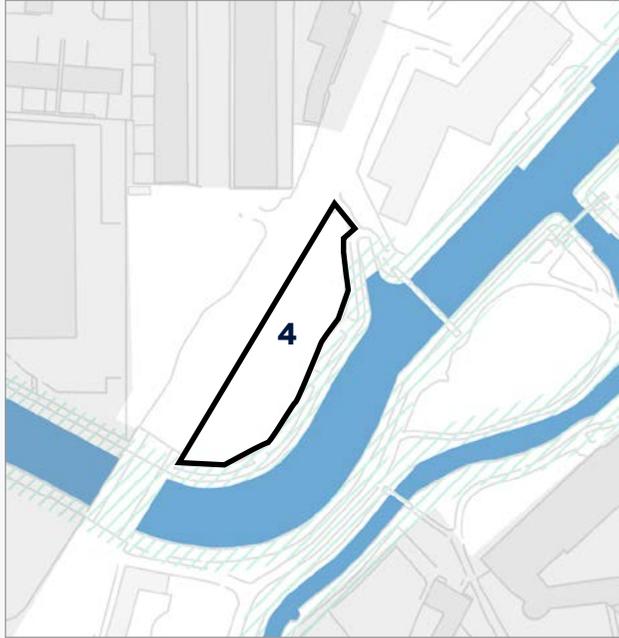
Environment and Water (Green & Blue)

Proposed Green Spaces: Potential to draw on the character of adjacent site with mature trees and green space.

Community

Use: Opportunity for community use on site.





Wood Street (Wood Street Policy TG1 - Site 4)

Allocated as landscaped open space and/or boating facilities

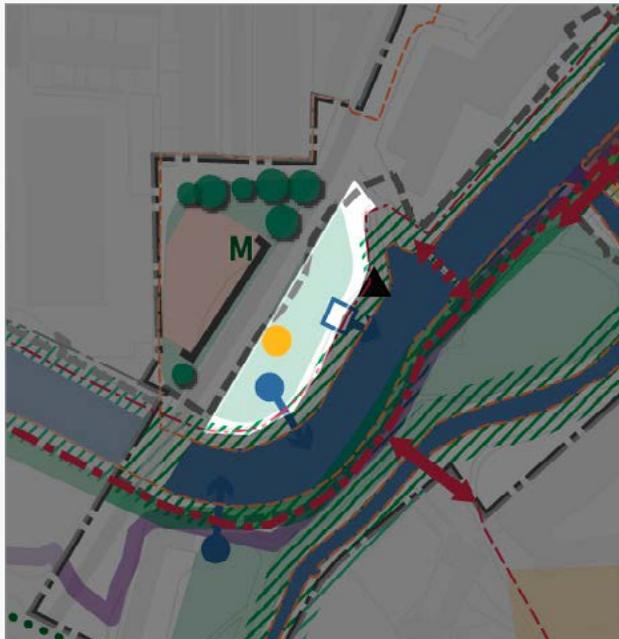
Existing

Road: Access from Wood Street.

Flood Defences: Retain

Placemaking

Proposed play space: Within existing green space.



Environment and Water (Green & Blue)

Minimum 8m offset from watercourse; riparian zone - to maintain access, provide wildlife habitat, tree planting & green space: To be provided alongside River.

Improved Green Spaces: Improvements to improve access to water.

Community

Proposed water launch location: Alongside river.

Proposed angling location: Alongside river.