

2 Primary aim and outcomes from investment

The primary aim for Taunton Waterways Strategy and Guidance is framed by the Taunton Garden Town Vision. The Strategy is firmly consistent with that overarching Vision and is designed to work with the direction established by the Garden Town initiative. As such, they are wholly compatible.

2.1 Taunton Waterways Vision

The Taunton Garden Town Vision was adopted in July 2019.

“Taunton will be flourishing, distinctive, and healthy – and the country’s benchmark Garden Town. We will be proud to live and work in a place where the outstanding natural environment, diverse and thriving economy and inspiring cultural offer, contribute to an exceptional quality of life and well-being.” (Taunton: The Vision for Our Garden Town, page 26).

“A key objective of the Garden Town Vision...is to re-establish connections between Taunton and the surrounding landscape by making the most of its rivers, canal, streams and watercourses.” (Taunton Garden Town 2040 Prospectus, page 25).

In this context, the primary aim of the Taunton Waterways Strategy and Guidance is to maximise the positive placemaking, environmental and community outcomes that can be achieved from every investment made in water management and waterside development.

The Vision for Taunton Garden Town includes four Vision Themes which provide important context for the Waterways Strategy and are reproduced here:

“Grow our town greener - transforming our open spaces and streets Quality of our Environment: Give Taunton a green makeover, joining up green spaces, waterways, parks and play spaces, planting more street trees and woodlands and

managing our water more imaginatively with wetlands and in gardens to improve it for recreation, tourism and wildlife.”

“Growing quality places to live - town centre, new and existing neighbourhoods Quality of our places and neighbourhoods: Deliver an outstanding built environment, focused on places and spaces with high quality neighbourhoods, green streets and public spaces and with homes and buildings that are distinctly local in appearance whilst embracing innovation, energy efficiency and exploiting the latest sustainable technologies.”

“Branching out – moving cleaner, moving smarter Quality of our Movement: Integrate our transport network so that it serves Taunton with much improved bus and appropriate vehicle links to our main destinations and make much better prioritised provision for walking and cycling, encouraging healthier and more sustainable journey choices as attractive alternatives to travelling by car.”

“New shoots and blossom – a dynamic and prosperous community founded on knowledge, culture and business Quality of opportunity: Responsibly nourish partnership, prosperity and growth in social value, through our strengths in knowledge, education, culture and business. Germinate and grow sustainable arts and cultural venues as hubs that foster excellence in the region. Pursue low carbon and digital infrastructure to make a town that connects businesses and markets well, drawing on our University Centre and growth industries in digital, land, marine informatics, health and nuclear.” (Taunton Garden Town 2040 Prospectus, page 7).

Firepool pumphouse



2.2 Outcomes from Investment

To achieve that primary aim, a set of desired ‘Outcomes from Investment’ has been agreed with the Stakeholder Group and these have been used, and will continue to be used, to evaluate and prioritise potential investments in the Waterways Corridor.

Intentionally, these encompass a wide range of potential benefits that extend beyond the considerations traditionally associated with investment in water-related projects. Consideration is still given to achieving operational water requirements, but the breadth of desired Outcomes includes improved awareness of the presence of water throughout the town and its importance in delivering biodiversity, health and wellbeing and decarbonisation benefits for example.

The Outcomes are specific to the Taunton Waterways Strategy but are compatible with the Garden Town Vision Themes set out above and, accordingly, encompass Placemaking, Environment and Community in addition to water-related Operations.

Desired outcomes from investment:

Placemaking

- the Waterways are an increasingly recognised component of Taunton’s Garden Town identity and sense of place
- more people are aware of the importance of the Waterways to the town
- waterside spaces and connections are sociable, safe and welcoming
- the water stimulates market interest, value and investment and is a positive factor in urban regeneration
- the Waterways are increasingly part of the attraction to Taunton, appealing to investors, residents, employees, and visitors

- enhanced management of water, flood prevention, environment and opportunities for healthy living helps to address constraints to development and unlocks growth of the Garden Town

Operations (Water)

- effective water conveyance is continued and improved (effective water courses, water/flood management, maintenance and operation)
- investment in water-related infrastructure is resource-efficient
- the Waterways incorporate nature-based solutions that help to improve water quality.
- water-related safety is not diminished
- the Waterways, including waterside communities and environments, are more resilient to the impacts of climate change
- strong collaboration across responsible agencies

Environment

- the Waterways serve as a green link connecting the town's natural assets to one another and to the countryside
- biodiversity is protected and enhanced
- investment in the Waterways assists with Nature Recovery across the town
- nature in the water corridors is more accessible to all
- waterways investment protects sequestered carbon where practical
- the Waterways assist decarbonisation in the town

Community

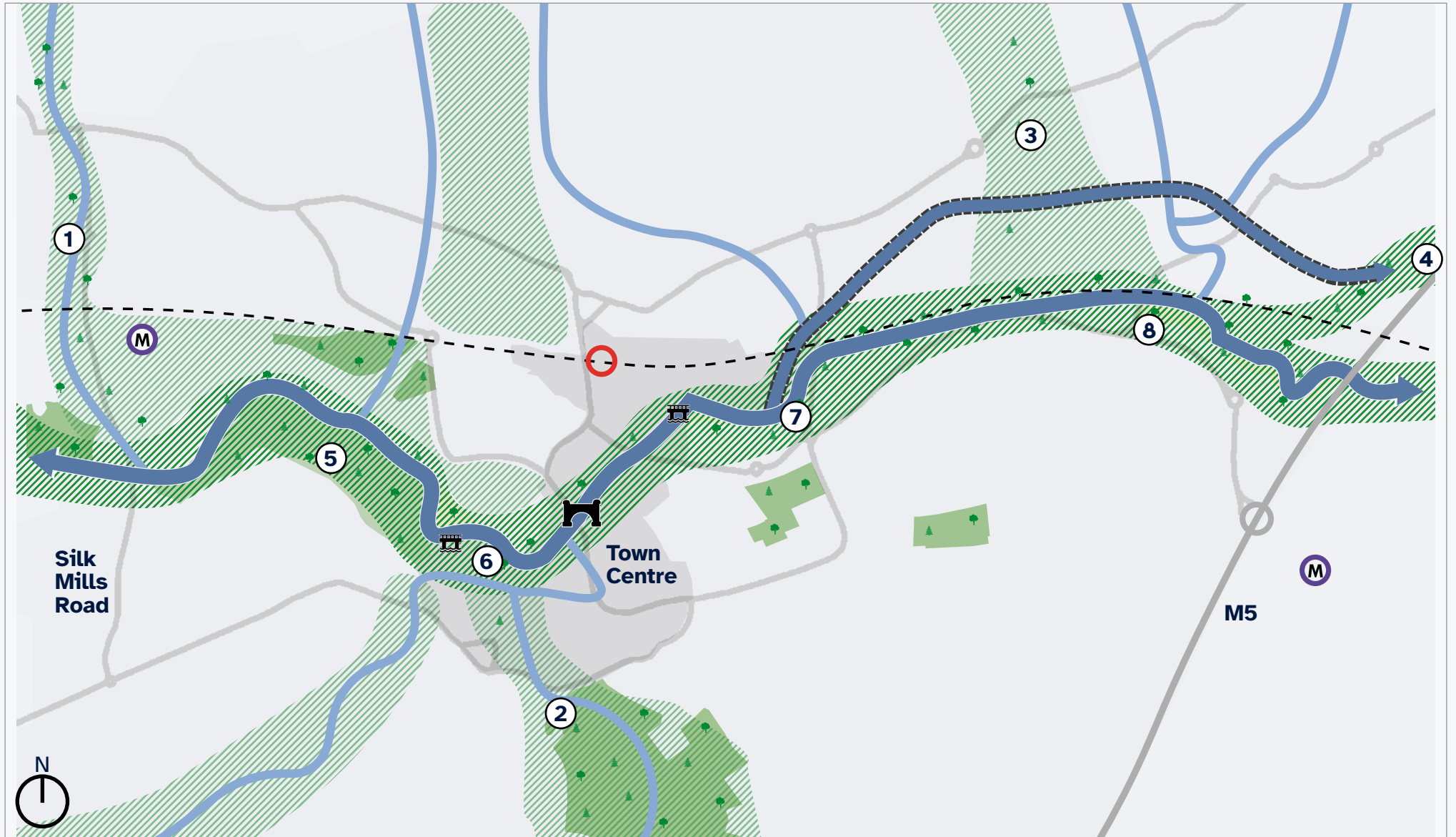
- community understanding of the special qualities of the waterways is improved (strategic through to detail)
- accessibility by all to the water corridors, and to the water, are improved
- the safety and convenience of active travel connections along the water corridors is enhanced
- the water assets are used to promote wellbeing and healthier lifestyles
- the Waterways are active corridors, connecting and uniting communities and points of interest in the town to one another and to the countryside
- reconnection between the town and the waterways stimulates Social Value
- the Waterways support a wide range of activities and uses
- the Waterways are the source of increased income generating opportunities

The following high-level vision graphics illustrate the Outcomes from Investment themes and incorporate the Taunton Garden Town Vision themes on Active Travel and Placemaking principles. They set the scene - exploring opportunities in Taunton's town centre and town-wide areas, referred to in more detail in Section 9 of this document.















Firepool Weir

Environment and water: continuous green and blue corridor



Key

-  French Weir (west)/ Firepool Weir (east)
-  A road network / M5 (east)
-  Silk Mill Park & Ride (west) / Taunton Gateway Park & Ride (east)
-  Town Bridge
-  town centre
-  railway and train station
-  parks / greenspaces
-  watercourse (river)
-  watercourse (canal)
-  continuous green corridor
-  tributary stream connections
-  green connections

- ① Backstream Green Wedge
- ② Vivary Green Wedge
- ③ Allen's Brook Green Wedge
- ④ Tone Levels Green Wedge
- ⑤ Longrun Meadow
- ⑥ Goodland Gardens
- ⑦ Children's Woods
- ⑧ Hankridge Riverside

Connecting green parks along corridor, enhancing connection to water and children's physical activity


















The River Tone is central to Taunton - this will be emphasised with the creation of a continuous green corridor running east to west. This will be multi-functional, providing a linear park and active travel connectivity along its length, with improved access and frontage to the water, whether adjacent green space or buildings or public spaces in the town centre. This will serve as a green link connecting the town's natural assets to one another and to the countryside, also protecting and enhancing biodiversity and making Taunton more resilient to the impacts of climate change.



Active lifestyle: cycle infrastructure and stream connections



Key

-  French Weir (west)/ Firepool Weir (east)
-  A road network / M5 (east)
-  Silk Mill Park & Ride (west)/ Taunton Gateway Park & Ride (east)
-  Town bridge
-  Town centre
-  railway and train station
-  parks / greenspaces
-  watercourses
-  National cycle network (NCN route 3, Green Route)
-  Strategic cycle route (Blue Route)
-  aspirational cycle routes 35/36
-  local cycle routes
-  connecting garden communities cycle routes
-  tributary stream connections
-  town centre connections

- ① Galmington Stream
- ② Sherford Stream
- ③a ③b Black Brook
- ④ Allen's Brook
- ⑤ Nexus
- ⑥ Longrun Meadow
- ⑦ Children's Wood
- ⑧ Bathpool
- ⑨ Creech St. Michael
- ⑩ Firepool
- ⑪ Silk Mills

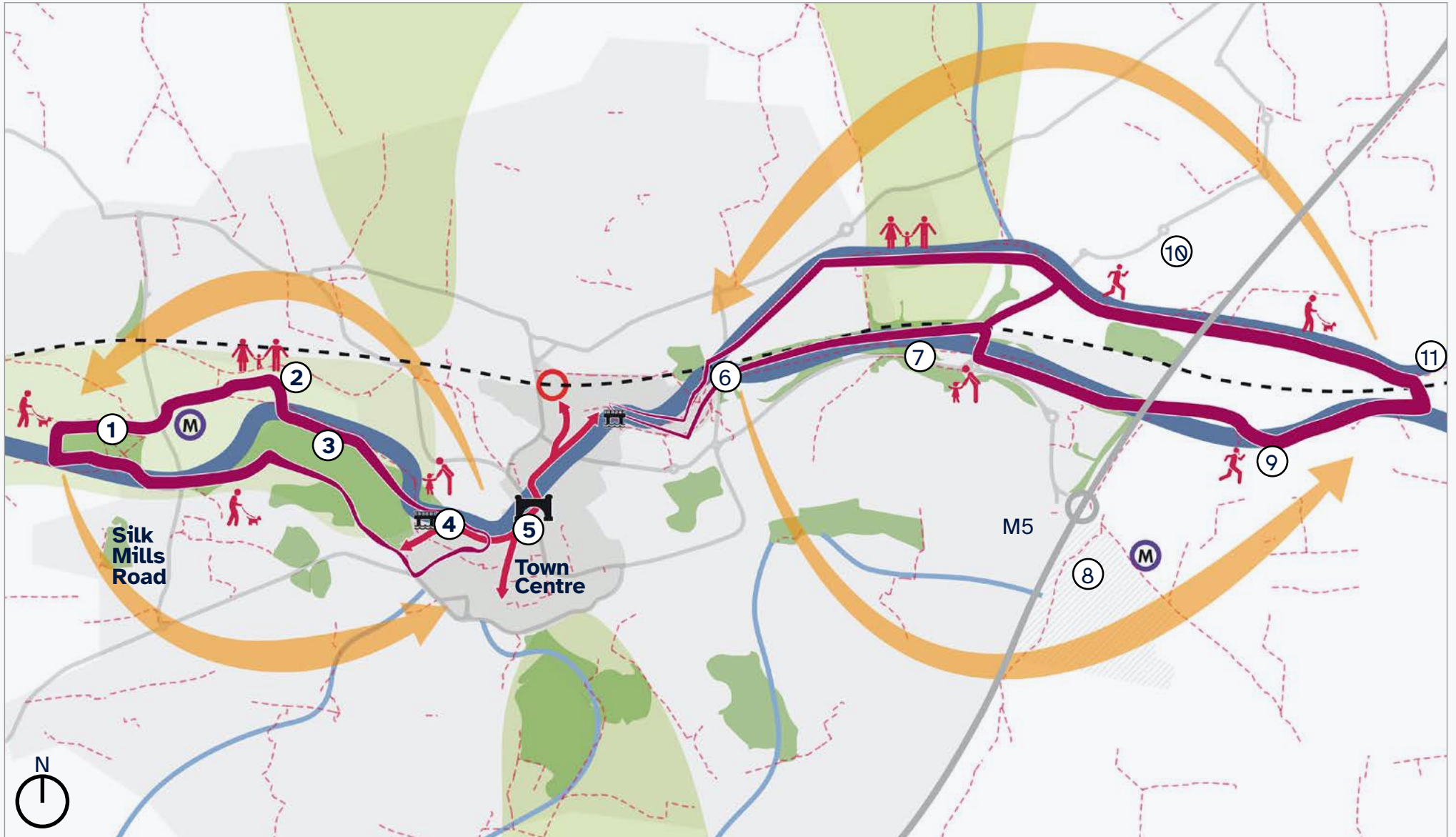
Enhanced cycling connectivity, activity in outskirts and rural areas
















Proposals for Taunton will create wider connectivity for active travel along the River Tone and the canal through key green spaces, building on the existing National Cycle Network route 3 (that connects all the way from Land's End to Bristol) and introducing new strategic connections to the east and west out of Taunton town centre to mobility hubs and employment sites such as Nexus for both commuting and leisure cycling, wheeling and scooting. Additionally supporting routes alongside tributary streams will provide connections between the town centre, the neighbourhoods and surrounding countryside, joining with the key strategic routes for active travel.



Walking loops: east to west connectivity

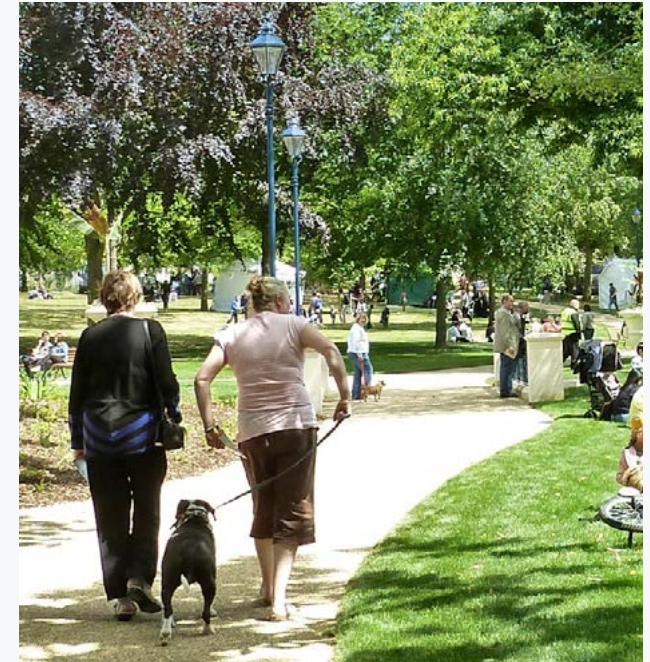


Key

-  French Weir (west)/ Firepool Weir (east)
-  A road network / M5 (east)
-  Silk Mill Park & Ride (west) / Taunton Gateway Park & Ride (east)
-  Town bridge
-  Town centre
-  railway and train station
-  public rights of way
-  parks / greenspaces
-  green wedges
-  watercourses
-  walking loops
-  town centre connections
-  strategic connectivity

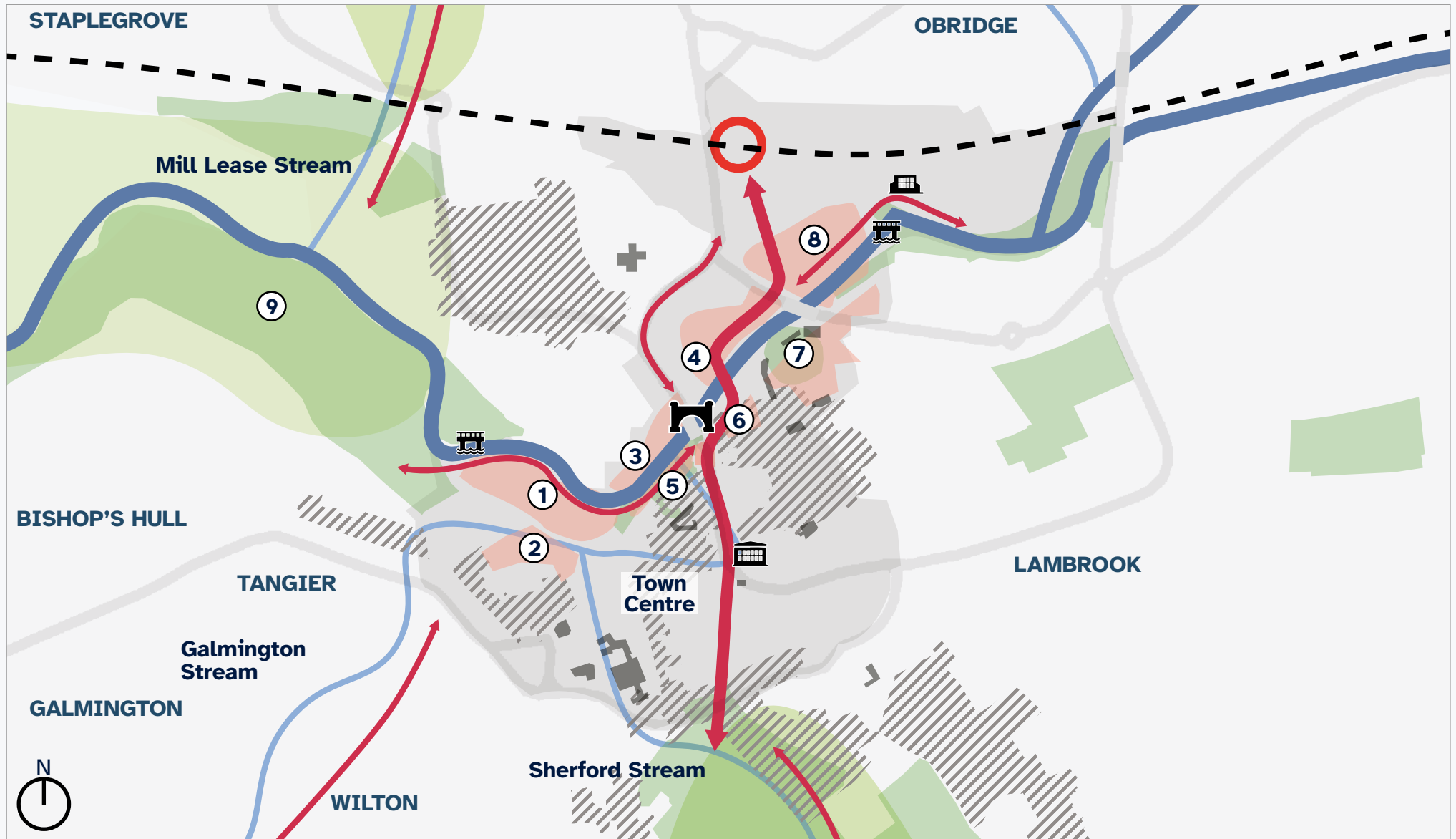
- ① Netherclay Community Woodland
- ② Frieze Hill
- ③ Longrun Meadow
- ④ Tangier
- ⑤ Goodland Gardens
- ⑥ Children's Wood
- ⑦ Hankridge Riverside
- ⑧ Nexus
- ⑨ Ruishton
- ⑩ Monkton Heathfield
- ⑪ Creech St Michael

Creating wider connectivity along the river and canal and through key green spaces, creating loops for walking both through the town centre and east (beyond the M5) and west (beyond Silk Mills Road) linking to Netherclay Community Woodland, Frieze Hill and to Ruishton, Monkton Heathfield and Creech St Michael. Improved connections between Public Rights of Way and the Waterways Corridor.
















Key activities - dog walking

Placemaking : connecting old and new communities



Key

-  French Weir (west)/ Firepool Weir (east)
-  town bridge
-  market house
-  pumphouse
-  town centre
-  train station
-  parks / greenspaces
-  green wedges
-  conservation areas
-  development sites
-  watercourses
-  north-south active travel route
-  connections between old and new

- ① Tangier
- ② Tesco
- ③ Wood Street
- ④ Morrisons
- ⑤ Debenhams
- ⑥ Coal Orchard
- ⑦ Cricket Ground
- ⑧ Firepool
- ⑨ Longrun Meadow

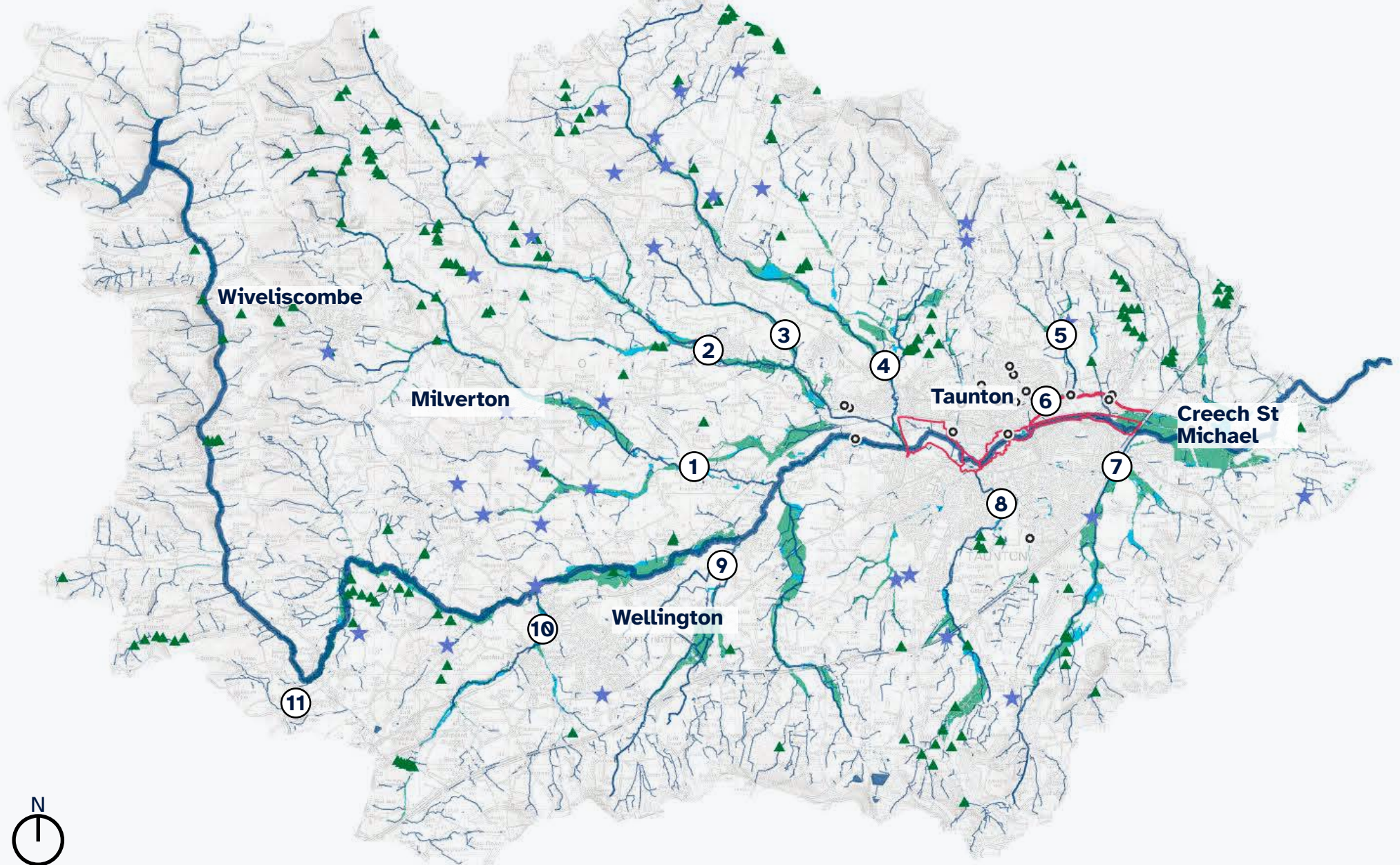


To illustrate: Old versus new architecture, activity and movement within the town

The Tone will increasingly be recognised as part of Taunton's Garden Town identity, central to its sense of place. New development that sits between the two weirs, will strengthen the town's relationship with the River Tone, respect the Conservation Areas within the town centre, encourage movement and activity both through new development and to existing areas. Waterside activity and uses will be complementary to the town's offer, enhancing attraction to Taunton - building on the existing Independent Quarter and shopping offer along Station Road, Bridge Street, North Street and Fore Street.

A new pedestrian and cycle bridge would strengthen the active travel movement from the train station, through the historic town centre to Vivary park in the South. Plans are to extend the cycle route to the recently completed Coal Orchard regeneration site, building a new bridge over the river connecting to the planned boulevard within the Firepool regeneration site. This is a key connector and it is important to determine the ideal location and design solution.

Map showing the catchment-wide opportunities for the River Tone



Key

- study area
- River Tone
- secondary watercourses
- opportunity to reduce debris screen maintenance
- ▲ hills to levels Natural Flood Management schemes
- ★ FWAG future projects (highway referrals)
- floodplain tree planting opportunities
- floodplain reconnection opportunities

- ① Hillfarance Brook
- ② Halse Water
- ③ Norton Brook
- ④ Back Stream
- ⑤ Allen's Brook
- ⑥ Bridgwater & Taunton Canal
- ⑦ Broughton Brook
- ⑧ Sherford Stream
- ⑨ Haywards Water
- ⑩ Westford Stream
- ⑪ Grand Western Canal



Wider catchment areas - wetland area at Longrun Meadow Park



Wider catchment areas - rural Canal