BACKWELL FUTURE
Backwell Neighbourhood Plan
Consultation draft Plan: November 2012
Foreword by Bob Taylor
Chair of Backwell Parish Council

In 2010 Backwell produced its Community Plan. I am delighted that this is being upgraded to BACKWELL FUTURE the Backwell Neighbourhood Plan.

Many aspects of modern life are unsustainable and change is inevitable. This recurring theme runs throughout BACKWELL FUTURE.

A draft of BACKWELL FUTURE is now available for consultation. It provides the opportunity for the community to comment. Your comments are essential in order that the final version of BACKWELL FUTURE takes your views into account. Please use the questionnaire (available at the Parish Hall open days or from the Parish Office) to supply feedback to the Parish Council.

BACKWELL FUTURE is mainly strategic. Within the resources and time available it has not been possible to address all the detailed issues that have been brought to the Council’s attention.

BACKWELL FUTURE offers the community the opportunity to determine a blueprint for the future of Backwell. This blueprint can only be progressed however if the local community approves the final Plan at a Referendum.

The Referendum will be arranged by North Somerset Council and details will be announced in due course. It will ask the community to approve or reject the BACKWELL FUTURE Neighbourhood Plan.

Please help to develop the final version of our Plan by supplying your comments on the questionnaire. Thank you.

Bob Taylor   November 2012
**BACKWELL FUTURE SUMMARY**

**BACKWELL FUTURE** is the blueprint for the future of Backwell. It is largely based on the **Backwell Community Plan 2010** (BCPlan) which was compiled after extensive community consultation.

The difference between the BCPlan and the **BACKWELL FUTURE** Neighbourhood Plan is that, if approved by the community at Referendum, **BACKWELL FUTURE** will be adopted by North Somerset Council and become the statutory plan for Backwell.

The North Somerset **Core Strategy** 2012 sets out the broad long-term vision, objectives and strategic planning policies for North Somerset. It plans a minimum of 14000 new homes by 2026 principally at Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon, Portishead and Nailsea. It designates Backwell as a ‘Service Village’.

The majority view expressed in the BCPlan was that future development in Backwell should be modest. Congestion on the A370 was a major reason for these views. Highway consultants have subsequently advised that queues at the village traffic lights could be up to three times longer by 2026! **BACKWELL FUTURE** therefore proposes modest levels of development in order that problems caused by through traffic are not made worse.

**BACKWELL FUTURE** recognises the difficulty young people have to acquire housing in the village because there are insufficient smaller and less expensive properties. Similarly older residents, wishing to stay in Backwell, have difficulty in finding suitable smaller dwellings to downsize and make available larger properties for families.

**BACKWELL FUTURE**’s policy is to work towards a more mixed and balanced community and allocates:

a) Priority to smaller dwellings including:
   - starter homes for private purchase;
   - affordable (social) housing for rent or shared ownership;
   - smaller dwellings suitable for residents to downsize.

b) Low priority for larger dwellings.

**BACKWELL FUTURE** proposes up to 60 new dwellings in the period 2012 to 2026 all within the existing Settlement Boundary.

Core Strategy policy is to encourage appropriate new services and employment within the settlement boundaries of Service Villages in order to support their role as local hubs. **BACKWELL FUTURE** endorses this and includes plans to:

- create a ‘Local Centre’ for shops and businesses;
- improve car parking in the Local Centre where this is possible;
- designates 1 hectare of land for offices/research/light industry

**BACKWELL FUTURE** supports the Core Strategy policy of no-change in the Green Belt. Options are proposed for ‘Local Green Space’, to ascertain community views, and there is a policy of no development on the best and most versatile agricultural land.

Proposals in **BACKWELL FUTURE** are designed to improve the sustainability of the village, its environment and its community. The Parish Council will champion sustainability initiatives, for example the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions. Members of the community will need to embrace related lifestyle changes.

**BACKWELL FUTURE**’s key objective is to safeguard Backwell, for future generations, as an attractive place to live; with a sustainable village-feel in proximity to the countryside. Backwell Parish Council, with the community’s support, will help Backwell attain this objective.
1. **VISION STATEMENT and KEY OBJECTIVE:** To safeguard Backwell, for future generations, as an attractive place to live; with a sustainable village-feel in proximity to the countryside.

**OBJECTIVES**

- Formulate *BACKWELL FUTURE* based on community views;
- Develop *BACKWELL FUTURE* to support, and be consistent with, the North Somerset Core Strategy 2011-26;
- Promote a healthy community through the support of community and recreational facilities and the provision of high quality and accessible open spaces;
- Verify that schools, health and leisure facilities are adequate for community needs;
- Identify housing needs, taking into account demographic change, and where new development should take place;
- Promote appropriate opportunities for local employment;
- Ensure shops, offices and light industry are able to develop to provide a sustainable local service to the community;
- Promote sustainable transport including cycling, walking and public transport;
- Take account of highway, congestion and parking problems;
- Protect the environment by safeguarding areas designated for their nature conservation, heritage or landscape value;
- Safeguard the best and most versatile agricultural land in order that it is available for sustained food production;
- Promote more efficient energy use and renewable energy.
2. WHAT IS A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?

2.1. **The Localism Act 2012** provides a new planning regime that allows Parish Councils to draw up Neighbourhood Plans, such as *BACKWELL FUTURE*.

2.2. A Neighbourhood Plan allows communities to influence the planning of the area in which they live. It offers the community the opportunity to:

- Develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood;
- Identify where new homes, shops and any other development should be built;
- Designate important Local Green Spaces for protection;
- Identify other requirements such as highway improvements, car parking and community facilities.

2.3. **Neighbourhood plans**, as explained in the Communities and Local Government Plain English guide to the Localism Act says:

‘Provided a neighbourhood development plan is in line with national planning policy, with the strategic vision* for the wider area set by the local authority, and with other legal requirements, local people will be able to vote on it in a referendum. If the plan is approved by a majority of those who vote, then the local authority will bring it into force.’

*The strategic vision * is explained in North Somerset Council’s Core Strategy 2012] see: [http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/E6A0DE5D-767B-4BE2-AAB9-78E9EFBC5F1B/0/FinalCoreStrategyTextwithallmods1.pdf](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/E6A0DE5D-767B-4BE2-AAB9-78E9EFBC5F1B/0/FinalCoreStrategyTextwithallmods1.pdf)

3. THE ‘BACKWELL FUTURE’ PROCESS

3.1. **Backwell Community Plan 2010** (BCPlan) is the foundation from which *BACKWELL FUTURE* has been developed. The BCPlan is based on extensive community consultation:

- In June 2008 the Parish Council organised an Open Day to promote the production of a community plan.
- Subsequently, consultations took place with individuals and organisations to identify the issues that should be explored.
- The results of the consultations were developed into a questionnaire which was delivered to each household in Backwell (56% responded). A Steering Group developed the BCPlan based on the responses to the questionnaire.
- The Parish Council published the BCPlan in March 2010. It is available at: [www.backwell-pc.gov.uk](http://www.backwell-pc.gov.uk)
3.2. The BCPlan, underpinned by a database of resident’s answers and comments, is both recent and robust. It properly forms the basis of BACKWELL FUTURE. Further research and consultation has however been conducted to inform on issues that, either were not included in the BCPlan, or required greater exploration or updating.

3.3. The Steering Group. In July 2011 Backwell Parish Council set up a Steering Group to develop BACKWELL FUTURE. The group included Parish Councillors and former members of the BCPlan Steering Group. The Council advertised within the community for others who possessed appropriate skills and experience to join the Group or to assist as observers.

3.4. North Somerset Council (NSC). Officers of NSC have worked closely with the Steering Group and have provided specialist and technical advice, information and additional data necessary to develop BACKWELL FUTURE.

3.5. Consultations. Stakeholders have been consulted throughout the preparation of BACKWELL FUTURE:

- Regular articles in the Parish Magazine and other local media have informed about the Plan and invited community participation to help the Steering Group;
- Explanatory presentations to many local organisations;
- Local landowners and developers were invited to contribute to BACKWELL FUTURE;
- Leaflets about the Plan and a questionnaire about Local Green Spaces were distributed;
- The November 2012 open sessions in the Parish Hall provide opportunity for the community to study the draft Plan and to make comments.

3.6. A Consultation Statement is at Appendix A.

3.7. The objective is to prepare BACKWELL FUTURE, the development plan for Backwell, using processes that take account of the views of the local community.
3.8 The area covered by BACKWELL FUTURE is the Parish of Backwell shown on this map. The Parish Council consulted about this by public notice. An example that appeared in the July 2012 edition of the Parish Magazine is shown below.

A Neighbourhood Development Plan for Backwell Parish

Backwell Parish Council, with help from the local community, are preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

This will build on the Parish Plan and help to shape the Parish over the next 15 years.

A formal part of the process is to give local residents, businesses and others with an interest in the plan, the chance to have a say in the area which is to be covered by the plan. The Parish Council have had to make an application to North Somerset Council in order to do this.

The logical area that has been chosen is the whole of Backwell Parish. Details of the application including a map to show the area covered by the Parish can be seen on parish notice boards, as well as North Somerset Councils website www.n-somerset.gov.uk.

If you have any comments about the area covered they must be received no later than Wednesday 18 July either:

Email to planning.policy@n-somerset.gov.uk
In writing to Planning Policy, Development and Environment, North Somerset Council Somerset House, Oxford St., Weston-super-Mare BS23 1TG

3.9 North Somerset Council advise that three representations were received, in response to public advertisements, all in favour.
4. THE BACKWELL COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT

4.1. A brief history of Backwell. Backwell is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086. In the 18th century the parish comprised the hamlets of Church Town, Farleigh, West Town, Downside and Moorside (Backwell Common).

The oldest settlement is Church Town. St Andrew’s Church dates from the 14th century. The road from Farleigh to Church Town to West Town was the medieval highway. The track from Farleigh to West Town was improved in the 18th century and is now the A370. Most of the modern housing was constructed in the period 1950-80.

4.2. The Bristol to Bridgwater railway line opened in 1841. Bristol Airport is adjacent to Backwell but within the parish of Wrington.

4.3. The Backwell Community resides in a vibrant village with a multitude of social, recreational, sporting and spiritual organisations.

The village and its community won the Calor Large Village of the Year competition for Avonside area in 2009/10. The village has not subsequently entered the competition because priority is being given to the preparation of BACKWELL FUTURE the Neighbourhood Plan.
4.4. The following tables are reproduced from the 2010 Backwell Community Plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Number of residents as 2001 census</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - 4</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 9</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 15</td>
<td>471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 - 20</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 30</td>
<td>542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 - 40</td>
<td>595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 - 60</td>
<td>1653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 60</td>
<td>1399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5455</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: to be updated when 2011 census data is available for Backwell Ward

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4.5. The village experiences high levels of commuting, mainly by road transport, especially to Bristol. The pattern of employment and transport in 2009 was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main place of employment, education or training</th>
<th>Backwell or Nailsea</th>
<th>Weston-s-Mare, Congresbury, Yatton, Claverham, Cleeve areas</th>
<th>Flax Bourton, Long Ashton or Bristol area</th>
<th>Other areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transport to place of employment, education or training</td>
<td>Car, van, lorry Or taxi</td>
<td>Bus or train</td>
<td>Motor cycle, scooter or moped</td>
<td>Bicycle or walking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backwell or Nailsea</td>
<td>775 (77%)</td>
<td>102 (10%)</td>
<td>16 (2%)</td>
<td>115 (11%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6. The Backwell environment. Backwell offers a semi-rural environment within 10 miles of Bristol. As a contrast to endemic traffic problems, residents place great value in the open spaces and attractive landscape that are features of the village.

4.7. Residents and local walking groups make extensive use of the many public footpaths, especially the Backwell Round shown on the next page. These were designated and way-marked by North Somerset Council and the Parish Council.

4.8. In 2011 the Parish Council published a booklet of local walks taking in local footpaths and bridleways. It proved so popular that a reprint was necessary.

4.9. Backwell Environment Trust manages an extensive area of woodland on Backwell Hill. Sustainable Backwell is a group taking action to deal with issues of sustainability. Both organisations have made inputs to BACKWELL FUTURE.

BACKWELL FUTURE policy, through the neighbourhood development plan, is to safeguard Backwell for future generations, as an attractive place to live; with a sustainable village-feel in close proximity to the countryside.
5. A SUSTAINABLE BACKWELL

North Somerset Council (NSC) is committed to reducing carbon emissions and tackling climate change, mitigating further impacts and supporting adaptation to its effects......:

[NSC Core Strategy Policy CS1]

5.1. NSC’s environmentally focused objectives, at paragraph 3.9 of the Core Strategy, are:

• reducing unsustainable carbon emissions;
• making all buildings more sustainable;
• encouraging sustainable transport patterns; and
• planning for a sustainable distribution of land uses.

5.2. Reducing unsustainable carbon emissions. There is growing evidence that the climate is warming due to increasing amounts of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. ‘Because of its long lifespan, as we emit more CO\textsubscript{2} from burning fossil fuels and other activities, the amount of CO\textsubscript{2} will continue to rise. This means the extra CO\textsubscript{2} will trap more and more of the sun’s heat, and this will warm our climate.’ [http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/climate-change/guide/what-is-it/why]

5.3. The government is committed to a target that 15% of our energy demand will be met by renewable energy, in the most cost effective way, by 2020.

5.4. The ‘Sustainable Backwell’ group are developing proposals for a community wind turbine. Backwell Parish Council will support suitable proposals that accord with the following policy.

BACKWELL FUTURE policy supports the generation of renewable energy provided the aesthetic impact, noise and emissions are environmentally and socially acceptable.

5.5. Making buildings more sustainable. The Government is committed to moving towards zero carbon for all new homes by 2016, as set out in the Building a Greener Future policy statement (July 2007), and all non-domestic buildings by 2019 through a 10 year programme of increasing building performance through the Building Regulations.

5.6. The Core Strategy Policy CS2 for new development requires:
  a) designs that are energy efficient and designed to reduce their energy demands;
  b) the use of on-site renewable energy sources or by linking with/contributing to available local off-site renewable energy sources to meet a minimum of 10% of energy use;
  c) a minimum Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 for all new dwellings from October 2010, Level 4 from 2013, rising to Level 6 (zero carbon) by 2016;
  d) developments of 10 or more new homes to be constructed to the Lifetime Homes standard from 2013.

BACKWELL FUTURE policy supports CS2 with the following exception. Current Building Regulations require new dwellings to be constructed to Code Level 3. It would appear that moves towards higher standards are likely to be delayed. BACKWELL FUTURE will seek developments to Code Level 4 and will require higher standards as they are introduced in Building Regulations.

5.7. BACKWELL FUTURE policy supports planning applications which introduce appropriate green improvements to properties. It will support the Government’s Green Deal initiative for existing properties.
5.8. **Drainage.** There is an increased risk of intense rainfall which it is argued is associated with climate change and other factors. Some areas of the village, mainly highways, already experience flash flooding and it is vital that run-off from new development does not exacerbate the situation.

5.9. New development will therefore need to include sustainable drainage systems to reduce surface water run-off. The environmental infrastructure needs to be integrated into the design of the building and landscaping features, and be easily maintained.

5.10. The highway drainage system suffers from inadequate capacity and poor maintenance often results in road drains becoming blocked. The Parish Council will press North Somerset Council to carry out remedial works at priority locations.

5.11. **Encouraging sustainable transport.** The Core Strategy includes schemes to provide better bus and rail services and improvements to major highways. A more frequent X1 bus service has been recently introduced but it is notable that no significant improvements are proposed to the major highways through Backwell. Problems of congestion in Backwell are described in Highways and Transport section 6 of this Plan.

5.12. To a large extent Backwell is unable to influence ‘through commuting’ that occurs through the centre of the village. **BACKWELL FUTURE** therefore focuses on sustainable transport relating to the everyday journeys made by residents, within the village, as an exemplar which, if replicated elsewhere might ease congestion on the A370 as well as improving the sustainability of local travel.
5.13. The Backwell Community Plan reported that 10% of Backwellians commute by bus or rail, and only 2% by cycle or moped. Greater use of public transport would improve sustainability. The Parish Council will consider:
   a) Lobbying the transport utilities to introduce a smart (oyster) card scheme with discounted ticket rates for travel from Backwell by train and bus.
   b) Supporting schemes promoting Car Share (2+ commuting) and a Car Club (car hire only when needed). These schemes can reduce road congestion and parking pressures and break the link with habitual car use.

5.14. The Parish Council will consult the community about the development of local initiatives, with the emphasis on providing safe travel, other than by car, for pedestrians, young families with prams, electric wheel chairs and cycling. These include:
   a) A 20 mph speed limit for all roads in the village except the A370 and Station Road. The Council would first evaluate the success of completed schemes elsewhere including the level of enforcement required;
   b) Identification and signing of safe walking and cycling routes to schools. The Council will consult local schools to identify what improvements may be practical and affordable. This could include new cycle routes.
   c) The provision of cycle racks/stands and child buggy parks at retail centres and public buildings in the village;
   d) The creation of a mountain bike track on Backwell Hill to encourage interest in cycling.

5.15. Other initiatives. The Parish Council will encourage other sustainability initiatives. Examples are:
   a) The use of battery driven cars and the provision of high speed charging points at car parks and at designated roadside bays in the village.
   b) The creation of a local trader / supplier directory, equivalent to that now provided in the Chew Valley, to reduce ‘food miles’;
   c) Encouraging the community to grow more food at home;
   d) The provision of allotments, additional to those available at Fairfield Road, when the waiting list justifies this. The location to be more easily accessed by residents to the west and north of the village;
   e) The provision of community orchards to offer potential income, recreational activity and an educational resource for the village;
   f) New developments to have safe access for pedestrians and cyclists to amenity areas such as green spaces and play areas.

5.16. ‘Sustainable Backwell’ is a group of residents who are taking action to deal with the issues of climate change and shrinking supplies of cheap energy. Three groups of volunteers are working on energy, local food and transport sustainability issues. The Parish Council envisages a partnership with Sustainable Backwell in promoting sustainability initiatives.
6. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT.

Transport schemes should: reduce the adverse environmental impacts of transport and contribute towards carbon reduction (and) mitigate against increased traffic congestion.

Transport proposals will be supported which increase accessibility by public transport, community transport, cycling and walking. [NSC Core Strategy: policies CS10 and CS32]

6.1. Overview. This section sets out:

a) The conclusions from a report by highway consultants commissioned by the Parish Council. The main findings are:
   - the length of traffic queues, at the village cross-roads traffic lights, could be about three times longer by 2026;
   - there are no readily achievable improvements that can be implemented at the junction to improve throughput;
   - the use of Rodney Road and Church Lane, as ‘rat-runs’, is likely to increase.

b) Initiatives to reduce the use of private cars.

c) Key policies:
   - the Parish Council will encourage residents to adopt more sustainable travel (6.24).
   - housing development in Backwell must be modest and focused on local priority needs because of the unsustainable highway situation (6.24).

6.2. The need for expert advice. Residents’ principal concerns about highway problems are recorded in the 2010 Backwell Community Plan and relate to:

   - congestion on the A370;
   - safety concerns about Station Road;
   - the use of ‘rat runs’ that take through traffic along residential streets and narrow lanes because of congestion on the through routes.

6.3. The Parish Council decided that it needed expert advice about the highway situation and the likely impact of future development. It therefore appointed TPA [Town Planning Associates] of Bristol to:

   - Establish the 2011 baseline traffic flows and estimate 2026 traffic flows on the A370 West Town Road, Farleigh Road, Station Road and Dark Lane that intersect at the village cross-roads;
   - Model the current and 2026 estimated traffic flows at the cross-roads;
   - Examine the impact upon ‘rat-runs’;
   - Examine potential mitigation measures.

6.4. TPA’s findings are contained in their March 2012 report to the Parish Council. The report is a supporting document to BACKWELL FUTURE. The study has not assessed traffic effects resulting from the approved expansion of Bristol Airport, potential developments in Nailsea, or from the South Bristol Link Road.
The following sections briefly summarise the work carried out by TPA together with their conclusions and recommendations.

Current traffic flows. These derive from traffic counts at the crossroads carried out by North Somerset Council. Computer modelling shows that the light signal controlled cross-roads are operating just below capacity during the morning peak period and at capacity in the afternoon peak period. TPA advise:

'It is our view, and the view of North Somerset Council, that there is no potential for improving the A370/Station Road signals. It already operates Microprocessor Optimised Vehicle Actuation which allows signals to respond to on street conditions. There are no readily achievable improvements that can be implemented at the junction to improve throughput.'

2026 traffic flows. Future flows at the cross-roads have been estimated using a computer modelling tool developed by the Department for Transport. The model provides a forecast of traffic flows taking account of planned development in the North Somerset area, the changing pattern of car ownership and other factors. A scenario has also been modelled that uses the 2026 predicted traffic flows and, the additional traffic generated by a possible development of 50 new dwellings in Backwell. This scenario is designated 2026B in Table A.

Queue lengths. Queue lengths are an indicator of the operation of a junction. Queue lengths, at the cross-roads, obtained by computer modelling are shown in Table A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Light controlled highway</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Queue length in metres</th>
<th>Future queue as % of 2011 queue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Station Road</td>
<td>Week day</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AM peak</td>
<td>2026</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2026B</td>
<td>222</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark Lane</td>
<td>Week day</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AM peak</td>
<td>2026</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2026B</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Town Road</td>
<td>Week day</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AM peak</td>
<td>2026</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2026B</td>
<td>360</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farleigh Road</td>
<td>Week day</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AM peak</td>
<td>2026</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2026B</td>
<td>102</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A shows that in 2026, even without any development in Backwell, the expected traffic growth resulting from development outside Backwell, will require the light controlled...
cross roads to deal with traffic flows very substantially in excess of its theoretical capacity both in the AM and PM Peaks. Any development in Backwell will exacerbate the position.

6.10. Compared with the 2011 predicted queues, by 2026 queue lengths are predicted to increase on all roads approaching the traffic lights. Most notably the queue lengths increase from:

- 138 to 360 metres on West Town Road in morning peak;
- 252 to 936 metres on Farleigh Road in the evening peak.

6.11. These increases are shown on the map below. The predictions have been obtained by modelling from a normal 2011 weekday. Residents will observe however that current queue lengths, when traffic is heavy, are already as long as the 2026 predictions for normal conditions. It follows that, at times of heavy traffic in 2026, the queues will be greater than the model predictions. The map illustrates the likely relative change in queue lengths and is not an absolute measure.

6.12. With regard to the cross-roads TPA conclude:

a) ‘The analysis demonstrates that even without any further major residential development in the village, or growth in traffic from e.g. Bristol Airport’s expansion, forecast growth in the sub-region will cause very substantial increases in queues and delays at the junction, which in turn will lead to the length of the peak periods extending as drivers seek to minimise their journey times, and to the prospect of rat-running in order to avoid the delays that would be encountered at the junction.

b) The prospect for air quality deterioration in the vicinity of the junction, owing to stationary traffic volumes increasing, should be considered.

c) There are no readily achievable improvements that can be implemented at the junction to improve throughput. Given concerns about traffic already on Station Road, and the consequential issues related to its substandard nature, it is arguable that increased capacity at the A370 junction could have undesirable consequences in the neighbourhood.’
6.13. ‘Rat-running’. When faced with queues at the village cross-roads many motorists use alternative routes:

a) A370 east bound traffic wishing to turn left at the cross-roads into Station Road uses Rodney Road and Embercourt Drive (or Moor Lane). This route is through residential streets usually encumbered with parked vehicles and is unsuitable for through traffic.

b) A370 west bound through-traffic uses Church Lane in order to avoid the cross-roads. Church Lane is residential. The eastern section is narrow, without pavements or street lighting, and runs through a conservation area near St Andrews Church and past the Junior School. It can result in traffic jams.

6.14. TPA recommend that:

- ....the effectiveness of the traffic calming in Church Lane and Dark Lane be reviewed, to ascertain the acceptability of the measures to local people, and establish whether the additional travel times resulting from the traffic calming measures have been sufficient to off-set the perceived desirability of the route for rat running;

- If the outcome is affirmative, then similar measures should be considered for other routes of concern, such as Rodney Road, where a 20mph speed limit appears to be the favoured option to address speeding on the route;

- It should be borne in mind that physical traffic calming measures are, when properly designed, self-enforcing. 20 mph speed limits generally need to be enforced to materially reduce local measured speeds.
6.15. The forecast increase in queue lengths, at the cross-roads, is likely to result in a significant increase in the use of these ‘rat runs’. It appears likely that the need for, and acceptability of, additional measures will need regular review.

6.16. **Mitigation Measures.** TPA have identified possible measures:

- **the need for a transport assessment to support any [planning] application that is forecast to generate 30 or more vehicles in any hour.** [e.g. 50 houses];

- **the need for a travel plan to:**
  - ensure all [new] houses are provided with footpath and cycle links to the existing network before occupation;
  - to persuade new residents to experience the benefits of good public transport provision as soon as they become residents, then travel patterns can become established even to the extent that car ownership levels are reduced. This is important in Backwell, where car ownership is higher than the regional average.

- **the Council could consider....Personalised Travel Planning.** This delivers information helping travellers make sustainable travel choices and is proven to reduce car driver trips by up to 11% [the Council consider this optimistic]. It seeks to overcome habitual use of the car, enabling more journeys to be made on foot, bike, bus, train or in shared cars;

- **the current package of measures aimed at improving the attractiveness of bus travel that includes Corridor 8 which uses the A370 between Bristol and Weston super Mare.... (new fully-accessible low floor buses... improved passenger facilities...bus priority measures; improved X1 service);**

- **Sustrans (a UK charity that supports sustainable travel choices) has a proposal for a cycle link, The Festival Way, which will link Nailsea and Backwell with the city.**

6.17. **Station Road.** TPA report ‘The absence of footways and narrow width of existing footways....presents a safety risk to pedestrians which is increased when a large number school children are walking to or from the nearby Backwell School.’

6.18. The Community Plan revealed that the width of some footways in Station Road was reduced by encroaching banks/vegetation. TPA recommend: the Parish Council engage with the highway authority, which has a duty to ensure that highways are maintained (Highways Act 1980 s41) and powers to have obstructions removed. The Parish Council has [no power] to maintain footways contiguous with a carriageway; letters to frontagers from the Parish Council may carry little weight.

6.19. **Rail services.** Long desired improvements to Nailsea and Backwell Rail Station appear to be imminent. These are:

   a) Provision of a ramp, on the south platform, so that disabled passengers can gain access;
   
   b) Extension of the station car park [Section 10 refers].
6.20. **Conclusions.** Backwell Parish Council concludes:

a) residents’ traffic concerns (reported in the Community Plan) about the A370, Station Road and ‘rat runs’ are borne out by the findings of TPA;

b) growth in through traffic, which is predicted to increase queue lengths at the village cross-roads by a factor between 2 and 3½ times, is a major concern. Residential development in the village will exacerbate the problems;

c) the consequential increased use of residential streets (Rodney Road, Embercourt Drive, Church Lane and adjoining roads) as ‘rat runs’ will prejudice safety and the quality of village life;

d) the situation is unsustainable.

6.21. **Sustainability.** TPA’s report considers emerging policies and schemes associated with the Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP3) of the West of England Partnership; and schemes of other local transport providers, which can help mitigate the effects of growth in traffic through improvements to all sustainable modes of transport serving Backwell.

6.22. TPA report ‘JLTP3 has been developed for the whole ....area to support improved transport conditions, but the outcomes cannot be guaranteed, because of external influences (e.g. economic outlook, travel costs etc) and personal choice (e.g. of mode of travel, home/work proximity).

6.23. Most traffic passing through the village on the A370, or rat-runs, is of distant origin over which the Parish Council has no influence. TPA’s recommended mitigation measures may not therefore reduce traffic levels, sufficient to achieve reasonable queue lengths at the cross-roads, and arrest the use of rat-runs by through traffic. TPA concedes: Some of the measures suggested rely heavily on community attitudes to travel, and successful outcomes cannot be relied upon. The Parish Council considers that mitigation measures, even if successful, will not achieve sustainable operation of the principal village highways.

6.24. **BACKWELL FUTURE Policy:**

a) New development

The Parish Council will engage with promoters and policy makers to ensure that transport infrastructure is satisfactory within any proposed development

b) The Core Strategy contains no improvements to the major highways in Backwell. An unsustainable situation is arising with queues at the cross-roads and inadequate pavements along Station Road, and the Parish Council has concluded:

Housing development in Backwell must be modest and focussed on local priority needs (see Section 7). Housing development, in excess of that proposed in this Plan, should not be considered until major highway improvements, sufficient to significantly relieve the village of through traffic, have been carried out and shown to be effective in reducing traffic queues and the use of ‘rat-runs’. Appropriate business development providing local employment and reducing commuting will however be supported.

c) Sustainable modes of transport.

The Parish Council will encourage residents to adopt more sustainable travel as outlined in Section 5 (Sustainability).

d) Station Road

The Parish Council will keep under review the pavements in Station Road and will, when necessary, prepare plans to have any encroaching banks and hedgerows removed. This will maximise the usable width of pavements and improve safety for pedestrians. It will liaise with residents and NSC in preparing, executing and enforcing any plan.

e) Traffic calming

The need for traffic calming, and other measures to reduce traffic, along Rodney Road, Church Lane and other ‘rat-runs’, will be monitored. Residents will be consulted before any works are decided.
7. **NEW DEVELOPMENT**

*Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the Local Plan*. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan.

[Para 184; National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)]
The Local Plan is the North Somerset Core Strategy.

7.1. **Overview.** This section sets out:

a) **BACKWELL FUTURE’s housing strategy (7.16)** that gives priority for smaller dwellings comprising:
- starter homes for private purchase;
- affordable (social) housing for rent or shared ownership;
- smaller dwellings suitable for residents to downsize.

b) Proposals for up to 60 new dwellings (7.66) in the period 2012 to 2026.

c) 1 hectare for offices/research/light industry development (7.54).

d) Key policies:
- Priority for smaller dwellings (7.30);
- Occupational priority for local residents (7.42);
- Restrictions on enlarging new smaller properties (7.48);
- No development in the Green Belt (7.12);
- No development between Backwell and Nailsea (7.14);
- No development on the best and most versatile agricultural land (7.51 refers; details at Appendix C);
- Highway constraint on future major development (7.21).

7.2. **North Somerset Core Strategy.**

North Somerset Council’s Core Strategy sets out the broad long-term vision, objectives and strategic planning policies for North Somerset up to 2026.

http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/E6A0DE5D-767B-4BE2-AAB9-78E9EFBC5F1B/0/FinalCoreStrategyTextwithallmods1.pdf

7.3 The strategy plans a minimum of 14000 new homes in North Somerset by 2026 principally at Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon, Portishead and Nailsea. It designates Backwell as a ‘Service Village’ for which the following key policies apply:

7.4 4.87 Service Villages are places where a small amount of development….may be appropriate. New residential development will generally be acceptable….within settlement boundaries, provided it respects the scale and character of the village and the site’s location. Affordable housing will only be permitted either within settlement boundaries or in the form of rural exception sites, and then only adjacent to settlement boundaries. Affordable housing will not be permitted in the Green Belt unless justified by very special circumstances.

7.5 With regard to non-housing or mixed uses, the…..approach provides opportunity for appropriate new service and employment uses within the settlement boundaries....

7.6 Where there is a demonstrable need for new development ….which cannot be met within the settlement boundary …proposals must be brought forward through ..... Neighbourhood Development Plans,…..Such proposals will not be acceptable in the Green Belt. Such development proposals must be community led with clear evidence that they are supported by the community and will address local objectives.
7.7 **New housing.** Policy CS14 prescribes: 3.192 *In the rural areas the Core Strategy approach is to support an appropriate level of small scale growth which reflects the function and character of individual villages. Nine of the larger villages...[that] act as a hub for surrounding areas are identified as Service Villages.*

7.8 The Core Strategy, at 3.195, anticipates a housing trajectory that includes 295 new dwellings in the 9 Service villages viz:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011-16</th>
<th>2016-21</th>
<th>2022-26</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>225</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.9 After deducting existing permissions the Core Strategy identifies a minimum of about 90 new dwellings to be provided in Service Villages. There are no numerical allocations to individual Service Villages and no specific allocation for Backwell.

7.10 CS32, at 4.90, notes that *Not all service villages will be appropriate locations for such development such as in Wrington where there are surface water flooding constraints.*

7.11 Backwell’s share could therefore be greater than one-ninth of the 90 required new dwellings (even though Backwell also experiences surface water flooding (see section 5)). **BACKWELL FUTURE** assumes that a total of approximately 25 new dwellings, of all types, constructed in the period 2012 to 2026 would be consistent with the Core Strategy. This represents 28% of the total for all 9 Service Villages.

7.12 **Green Belt.** Core Strategy Policy CS6 prescribes no change.

**BACKWELL FUTURE** policy is for no change in the Green Belt consistent with Core Strategy Policy CS6.

7.13 **Strategic Gap.** Policy CS19 protects strategic gaps to help retain the separate identity of settlements and prevent their erosion by development and coalescence of settlements. It refers to the Backwell/Nailsea Gap. **BACKWELL FUTURE** confirms the importance of a Strategic Gap between Backwell and Nailsea so that the settlements do not coalesce and the landscape is preserved where it is not protected by the Green Belt.

7.14 Backwell Parish Council has agreed that the railway line forms the southern boundary of the Gap between Backwell and Nailsea. The map shows the Green Belt (hatched green) and the Strategic Gap (solid green). Nailsea Town Council has yet to agree the northern boundary of the Gap and therefore the area of the Gap within Nailsea Parish is provisional. The Strategic Gap excludes the Station car park and proposed extension.

7.15 **Alignment with the Core Strategy.** **BACKWELL FUTURE** is consistent with the Core Strategy. Details are at Appendix B.
7.16 **Strategy for new housing in Backwell.** BACKWELL FUTURE’s proposals for new housing are based on three studies:

a) North Somerset Council’s Core Strategy;
b) The Backwell Community Plan 2010;
c) Recent information about local needs.

7.17 **The Core Strategy.** The Core Strategy takes account of:

1) Population growth and declining household size;
2) The effect of, and prospects for, economic growth;
3) The dynamics of the local housing market.

7.18 7.11 explains that **25 new dwellings** in Backwell between 2012 and 2026 appears to be consistent with the Core Strategy.

7.19 **The Backwell Community Plan 2010 (BCPlan).** This questionnaire based plan asked for resident’s views about development ‘assuming infrastructure and services remain largely as at present’. Only 21% of responses* were in favour of development exceeding 50 properties [BCPlan page 46]. Given that required improvements to infrastructure cannot be met in the foreseeable economic climate the indication is that, at Referendum, proposals for more than about 50 new dwellings in total would probably meet significant community opposition.

*The BCPlan was prepared in the context of a Government objective for 26750 new homes to be built in North Somerset by 2026. The Core Strategy now calls for a minimum of 14000 dwellings, a 48% reduction. If the BCPlan had been prepared in 2012 it is probable that a lower percentage of residents would have been in favour of development exceeding 50 properties.

7.20 **Surveys and studies.** A recurring theme in the BCPlan was the rejection of large scale development due to the inadequacy of existing highways, congestion, and use of ‘rat-runs’ that take through traffic along residential streets and narrow lanes. This has been justified by the independent highway study carried out in 2012 (see section 6) that refers to the unacceptable growth in queue lengths at the light controlled village cross roads and confirms that the Core Strategy contains no improvements to the major highways in Backwell.

7.21 Because an unsustainable situation is arising, with queues at the cross-roads, and inadequate pavements along Station Road, the Parish Council agreed a policy (at 6.24) that:

- Housing development in Backwell must be modest and focussed on local priority needs. Housing development, in excess of that proposed in this Plan, should not be considered until major highway improvements, sufficient to significantly relieve the village of through traffic, have been carried out and shown to be effective in reducing traffic queues and the use of residential ‘rat-runs’. Appropriate business development providing local employment and reducing commuting will however be supported.
7.22 The BCPlan identified that Backwell contains a significantly higher percentage of detached houses and lower percentages of smaller dwellings than the North Somerset average:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accommodation type</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Backwell %</th>
<th>N Somerset average %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detached</td>
<td>1210</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-detached</td>
<td>662</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terraced</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flats, maisonettes, etc.</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2001 census ward information, North Somerset Council.

7.23 The BCPlan concluded that planning policy should discourage new larger properties and favour affordable (social) and smaller housing. BACKWELL FUTURE supports this view. It is notable that contributors to the BCPlan, and recent correspondence (Appendix A), make the point that there are too few smaller and affordable dwellings for young people to be able to live in the village.

7.24 The age distribution of the Backwell population is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census</th>
<th>0 - 9</th>
<th>10-15</th>
<th>16-24</th>
<th>25-44</th>
<th>45-64</th>
<th>65+</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>1031</td>
<td>1001</td>
<td>671</td>
<td>4171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>1229</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>4223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>869</td>
<td>1338</td>
<td>834</td>
<td>4151</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Backwell Ward information North Somerset Council

Note: to be updated when 2011 census data is available for Backwell Ward

7.25 The number of people living to more advanced ages is increasing. Residents report, in the BCPlan and in BACKWELL FUTURE (Appendix A), that there are inadequate numbers of dwellings in Backwell suitable for older residents to down-size. This forms a bottleneck preventing some larger properties becoming available for younger larger families.

7.26 Market Needs (Estate Agent Survey). In spring 2012 a questionnaire was distributed to Estate Agents in Backwell, Nailsea and Bristol to help quantify demand for dwellings. Backwell’s agent and the Bristol agents responded promptly. The Nailsea agents did not respond.

7.27 Anecdotal evidence, received when briefing for the survey, is invaluable. This pointed to many potential purchasers and tenants being aspirational, rather than realistic, who were prepared to settle in areas other than Backwell that better suited their financial capacity. The limited conclusions are that Backwell is an attractive destination with enquiries outweighing properties for sale - particularly in the case of 3 and 4 bedroom properties. During briefing visits to agents, unsolicited comments were received that the major driver to inward migration, from outside North Somerset (particularly Bristol), was the quality of Backwell School and parents’ strategies of moving into its catchment area.

7.28 It is concluded that the market for large properties is driven by external factors that do not represent Backwell’s needs. Backwell’s need is for more smaller properties.

7.29 The survey also showed the rental need was for unfurnished properties. The major need was for 1 and 2 bedrooms with enquiries exceeding availability. The absolute need was difficult to determine however because many applicants register with multiple agents. It is safe however to conclude that there is a short-fall in supply against demand.
7.30 **BACKWELL FUTURE’s housing strategy.** This is directed at working towards the Core Strategy’s policy CS15 of mixed and balanced communities. It therefore targets:

a) Priority for smaller dwellings to address the imbalances identified at 7.22 to 7.29. This includes:
   - starter and smaller homes for private purchase;
   - affordable (social) housing for rent or shared ownership;
   - smaller dwellings suitable for residents to downsize.

b) Low priority for larger dwellings. It is accepted however that a small number of larger dwellings may be necessary in order to secure the viability of particular sites and deliver 30% affordable (social) housing.

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**BACKWELL FUTURE Housing policy is that new development should favour smaller dwellings.**

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The strategy for development in Backwell including the proposals described below will, if approved at Referendum, be adopted by the planning authority North Somerset Council.

Planning approval, design issues together with Building Regulation approval and control, will remain with North Somerset Council.

Backwell Parish Council will continue to be consulted about particular proposals but will not employ professional planning and control staff. **BACKWELL FUTURE** addresses the strategy, need and location of development; not the detail.

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7.31 **Affordable housing**

| Affordable Housing comprises social rented and intermediate housing (shared ownership) provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market (Core Strategy CS15). |

7.32 In Backwell, including Downside, Affordable (social) houses total 94 dwellings plus 23 sheltered units at Lawnside.

7.33 The Core Strategy targets 150 new dwellings per annum (2,250 over the 15 years to 2026) and is informed by the 2009 SHMA*. The 9 Service Villages represent 3.3% of the outstanding requirement at CS14 which equates with 8 Affordable Houses per Service Village. *2009 Strategic Housing Market Assessment http://www.westofengland.org/media/157046/wofe%20shma%20main%20report%20jun e%202009%20v2.pdf

7.34 The Backwell Community Plan (BCPlan) survey asked “How many individuals in your household are, within 5 years, likely to be in need of Affordable Housing for the first time in Backwell, either to rent or buy?” The answer given was 185.

7.35 The BCPlan adjusted this figure to take account of local factors and extrapolated the result over the full parish population. It arrived at an estimated need of about 100 affordable dwellings.

7.36 The Community Plan [at page 18] uses a different definition of affordable housing from that in the Core Strategy. It defines affordable housing as:

a) low cost apartments, small houses and ‘starter homes’ for rent or purchase; (i.e. market housing)

b) housing rented from a Registered Social Landlord.
7.37 Only the latter category corresponds with the Core Strategy’s definition of affordable housing. It is estimated that 14% of the BCPlan’s 100 dwellings are in that category. [The Ward Profile 2001 shows 14% of properties are rented]. The Affordable (social) Housing need estimated from the BCPlan, as defined in the Core Strategy, is therefore likely to be around 14 dwellings.

7.38 North Somerset Council’s housing registration system is called HomeChoice. Applicants are categorised thus:
- Band A: approved homeless, high medical need, etc.
- Band B: significant medical or welfare priority, etc.
- Band C: minor medical or welfare needs, etc.
- Band D: owner occupiers with financial resources, etc.


7.39 At 14.11.11 there were 47 applicants, from Backwell, seeking accommodation in Backwell. 29 were in bands A to C, with the greatest requirement for 2 and 1 bedroom properties.

* The final plan will take account of figures over a longer period and will not rely on two snapshots.*

7.40 By August 2012, the total had fallen to 42 applicants with 24 in bands A to C. NSC advised that 8 of the 24 households were existing social tenants looking to relocate within the Parish. The net local demand was therefore an additional 16 units* of accommodation of which, up to 4 applications were for sheltered accommodation.

*This correlates well with the figure of 14 Affordable (social) dwellings derived from the BCPlan. Band D households are unlikely to obtain properties through HomeChoice because they are low priority and some have the resources to acquire market housing.

7.41 BACKWELL FUTURE is based on a requirement for 15 to 20 Affordable General Needs social houses (double that implied by the Core Strategy see 7.33) including some units near to existing sheltered accommodation (7.64).

7.42 The BCPlan reports.... ‘A large majority [70%] of parishioners support the provision of lower cost homes, with the proviso that the accommodation is for Backwell residents. We conclude that the concept of providing lower cost housing for those currently residing elsewhere is unpopular.’

**BACKWELL FUTURE** policy is therefore that priority be given to residents of Backwell and the immediate adjacent parishes, and to those with very close family or employment connections, implemented through local lettings agreements made at the time of development approval.

7.43 The Core Strategy at CS17 provides for Rural exception sites for Affordable (social) housing where the development:
- meets an identified local need....;
- is supported or initiated by the parish council;....
- site search has followed a sequential approach with priority given to sites within any settlement boundary....

7.44 CS17 continues....the process will be bottom-up, championed by the local community to meet identified housing needs, and involving a site assessment process which considers wider issues than simply the merits of a particular.... proposal.

7.45 Previous proposals in Backwell have demonstrated strong opposition to development outside of the Settlement Boundary. BACKWELL FUTURE makes adequate provision for new affordable (social) houses within the existing Settlement Boundary and therefore an exception site is not required.
7.46 **Retirement housing provision.** The demographics (7.24) indicate that there will be an increasing need for housing provision for the elderly.

7.47 Most residents are content to continue into retirement in their homes within the village. Others seek alternative housing and are considered in four general categories:

a) **Homes for those who wish to downsize from larger houses:** The stock of these homes has been reduced as many smaller dwellings have been purchased and then extended. The need is for minimum 2 bedroom, high specification dwellings with modest gardens.

b) **Homes for surviving partners:** These homes need to be located near to essential services (Post Office, Doctors) and with a level approach; suitable dwellings are mainly single storey with 2 bedrooms and small gardens.

c) **Sheltered housing,** for those capable of independent living with support, comprise 23 units at Lawnside. Units are largely 1 bedroom flats; in the last 3 years there have been 246 bids for 13 vacancies. The unsatisfied bids evidence a shortfall in this type of accommodation [albeit the number on the HomeChoice register is sometimes in single figures and Alliance Homes reports that it has sheltered accommodation available to let elsewhere in the North Somerset area]. **BACKWELL FUTURE** proposes an additional 5 units of affordable (social) dwellings near to Lawnside but delivery is not assured (see 7.64).

d) **Care Home provision** for those who are no longer capable of independent living. Backwell has no Care Homes. A Continuing Care Retirement Community, at the former Barrow Hospital (within Backwell Ward), will be constructed shortly for completion in 2015. This will provide approximately 136 Assisted Living Units, 38 Specialist Care and a 56 bed nursing home. [http://www.ecvpartnerships.com/](http://www.ecvpartnerships.com/) It is anticipated that this should meet local demand for the foreseeable future.

7.48 In order that older residents can continue to live in the village suitable accommodation must be available near to essential services. **BACKWELL FUTURE** includes a policy to limit the extension of future new smaller houses to prevent them being over-enlarged.

**BACKWELL FUTURE** policy is that new smaller properties within or near to the Local Centre (see Section 9) should be protected from major extensions in order that they remain smaller properties. This would be achieved by the removal of permitted development rights through an Article 4 Direction, under the Town and Country Planning Act, made by the planning authority.

7.49 **Identification of potential development sites.** **BACKWELL FUTURE** identified all available sites in order to provide choice in selecting the most appropriate. The sources were:

a) North Somerset Council’s Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment August 2011;

b) Records of past applications to develop in Backwell;

c) Local advertisements asking land owners to come forward.
7.50 The Parish Council invited 17 Landowners/Agents to make submissions. 12 made submissions; 4 did not respond to invitation to clarify proposals and one identified an additional site. In total these submissions proposed almost 2000 dwellings. 9 submissions proceeded to clarification meetings proposing about 550 dwellings in total. The map below shows the land holdings for which submissions were made for housing; some included proposals for open space and community facilities.

7.51 Selection of development sites. The Parish Council decided that the principal criteria used to identify the preferred sites would be based on the Core Strategy and the NPPF:

➤ Not in the Green Belt;
➤ Not in a Strategic Gap;
➤ Within the Settlement Boundary
➤ Within an area of acceptably low flood risk
➤ Not on land with an environmental designation
➤ Not on land to be designated Local Green Space
➤ The site is available with the prospect of housing delivery
➤ Not containing the best & most versatile agricultural land

See Appendix C for BACKWELL FUTURE policy about the best and most versatile agricultural land.

7.52 Of the 9 submissions, 6 proposed building in the Green Belt or outside of the Settlement Boundary. Attention therefore focused on the remaining three sites (see map at 7.66):

a) Site A, 1.4 hectares at Moor Lane adjacent to houses at The Briars and Backwell Motors. This land was identified for employment purposes in the 1990’s, and is designated B1 for office/research/light industry use in the 2007 Replacement Plan. No plans for this type of development have materialised. The land is in agricultural use.

b) Site B, approximately 1.6 hectares is adjacent and to the west of Site A. This land is also designated B1 as referred to above. The land is partially overgrown.

c) Site C, 0.23 hectares, is located at Manor Farm, West Town Road to the north of the New Inn public house.

7.53 These three sites meet all the principal criteria.
7.54 Sites A and B Moor Lane. It is proposed that, the long standing B1 designation for offices, etc. be changed to Mixed Use comprising: 0.5ha wildlife buffer zone; 1.0ha B1 offices, etc.; 1.5ha for up to 55 dwellings to include approximately 15 to 20 affordable (social) dwellings depending on the detailed layout.

7.55 Delivery of development at Moor Lane requires improved parking at the Station and parking restrictions along Moor Lane, and nearby roads, to prevent obstructions by parked cars (see 10.2). North Somerset Council is committed to extending the Station Car Park and Backwell PC to the introduction of appropriate parking restrictions (see 10.26).

7.56 North Somerset Council has commissioned an Ecology survey of the Moor Lane sites that contain wildlife habitats. Subject to survey the provisional view is that the sites are suitable for development provided appropriate habitats for wildlife are secured. This could take the form of a habitat corridor adjacent to the railway. In addition a phased plan for site clearance linked to the creation of new habitat would be essential.

CONFIRMATION AWAITED OF ECOLOGY SURVEY

7.57 BACKWELL FUTURE encourages growth in local employment to make Backwell more sustainable. By allocating part of Sites A and B for housing development, this should enable access and services infrastructure to be provided so that development of the area reserved for B1 offices, etc. becomes economically viable. The change to Mixed Use development is therefore considered advantageous.

7.58 Site C at Manor Farm is suitable for about 5 good quality dwellings suitable for those wishing to downsize.

7.59 The landowners of sites A, B and C have confirmed that developments are deliverable subject to planning consent.

7.60 Ettrick Garage and the Red Cross Hall, West Town Road. Sites D and E are adjacent, combined area 0.2 hectares, and very near the ‘Local Centre’ (Section 9) and the Rodney Road area that requires additional parking (Section 10).

7.61 In February 2012, when both sites were for sale, the Parish Council wrote to the owners advising (a) BACKWELL FUTURE would identify these sites as suitable for combined redevelopment as sheltered accommodation and (b) that it should be expected that the Council would ask for public car parking provision to be included in any planned redevelopment of the site. Subsequently North Somerset Council reports that there is no interest, from housing associations, in providing sheltered accommodation on these sites.

7.62 These two sites occupy the only area currently available that is in close proximity to the Local Centre and on a reasonably level site. Additionally these sites are almost immediately adjacent to existing sheltered accommodation at Lawside. BACKWELL FUTURE therefore considers that the unique location would be appropriate for small dwellings suitable for, but not exclusive to, older residents.

7.63 The owners of sites D and E did not engage with the BACKWELL FUTURE process. The Red Cross Hall site has recently been sold. The Ettrick Garage site is for sale as a going concern or possibly for alternative business use.

7.64 BACKWELL FUTURE considers that the ideal redevelopment of these sites would therefore be:
a) Business use providing employment on site D.
b) If business use is not viable on site D, then a development of smaller market housing with 30% affordable (social) dwellings. BACKWELL FUTURE assumes 5 affordable units;
c) With respect to b) above, integrated redevelopment of sites D and E to achieve an economic layout, and viability for landowners.
d) Public parking to be provided adjacent to the highway.

7.65 BACKWELL FUTURE’s proposals for sites D and E are for consultation. The Parish Council will approach the landowners again before finalising the Neighbourhood Plan. Delivery of appropriate housing on these sites cannot be guaranteed.

7.66 Proposed Development 2012 to 2026. The location of proposed development is shown on the adjacent plan. Indicative proposals based on meeting local needs comprise:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing:</th>
<th>Affordable social</th>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sites A and B</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1 hectare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site C</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally Sites D and E: market housing and 30% assume 5 affordable (social) dwellings (delivery is not assured see 7.60).

The Localism Act has put the power to plan back in the hands of communities, but with this power comes responsibility: a responsibility to meet their needs for development and growth, and to deal quickly and effectively with proposals that will deliver homes, jobs and facilities. [Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. September 2012].
http://www.communities.gov.uk/statements/newsroom/2211838