Contents

Introduction 1
Planning context 1
Sustainability appraisal 2
Timetable for production 3
Plan production process 4
Background 5
Consultation so far 6
The context 7
The facts 8
Issues 10
Vision for Weston town centre 13
Objectives 14
Strategic options 15
Maps of indicative sites 16
Site specific options and opportunities 19
Opportunities for development 20
What do you think? 29
Weston-super-Mare Town Centre Area Action Plan

Introduction

Over the next twenty years Weston-super-Mare will experience a period of significant change. Major expansion of the town is planned linked to employment-led regeneration, with approximately 9000 new homes proposed as part of a mixed use development on the eastern edge of Weston-super-Mare. This future growth gives Weston-super-Mare the opportunity for major urban renewal and economic development resulting in an economically successful, self-contained, attractive, lively and exciting town. However, the future success of Weston-super-Mare depends upon improving the image, quality and retail provision of the town centre for the existing and future populations of the town.

This document has been produced by North Somerset Council and sets out the issues facing the town centre and the options for how this change could be achieved. This is the first stage in the preparation of the Area Action Plan for the town centre and this document is intended to generate discussion about the issues and opportunities. The area covered by this Area Action Plan includes the town centre, seafront and the gateway area including the station and retail park.

Planning context

North Somerset’s Local Development Framework (LDF) will replace the existing Local Plan and will provide a strategic planning framework for the district, guiding change to 2026 and beyond. When adopted, the LDF, together with the Regional Spatial Strategy, will form the statutory development plan for North Somerset.

The LDF is made up of a portfolio of documents, generally known as Local Development Documents (LDDs). Some of the LDDs will have the legal status of “development plan”. Documents with this status will be afforded great importance in guiding decisions on planning applications. They are called Development Plan Documents (DPDs). These include a Core Strategy, which is the district-wide strategic document, and other DPD’s which set out the policies and proposals for implementing the Core Strategy. The Weston-super-Mare Town Centre Area Action Plan is one of these documents.

This Weston Town Centre Area Action Plan expands on the strategic aims for Weston-super-Mare set out in the Core Strategy. It builds on the earlier work carried out in connection with the Weston Area Action Plan, see ‘Background’ section. It will provide detailed planning guidance for specific sites and will be an important mechanism for ensuring development of an appropriate scale, mix and quality is delivered in Weston-super-Mare town centre.
Sustainability appraisal

It is a statutory requirement for the council to produce a sustainability appraisal to accompany the Area Action Plan. The purpose of a sustainability appraisal is to integrate social, economic and environmental considerations into plan preparation in order to make such plans more sustainable.

The work undertaken by the consultants as part of the previous Weston Area Action Plan – Issues and Options exercise – included a Sustainability Appraisal Report. A Sustainability Appraisal will be carried out of this Area Action Plan whilst working up the Preferred Options.
Timetable for production of the Weston-super-Mare Town Centre Area Action Plan

The Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the timescales for the preparation and review of documents within the Local Development Framework. North Somerset’s LDS was updated in 2007. The timetable for producing the Area Action Plan is as follows:

- **Issues and options:** This document forms the first stage in the preparation, setting out the Issues and Options for the town centre, seafront and gateway area. Consultation on this document will be held during October/November 2007.

- **Preferred options:** Detailed policies and proposals will emerge as a result of this consultation and will inform the production of the Preferred Options Report for the town centre. This document will be consulted on in September/October 2008.

- **Submission stage:** Following the Preferred Options consultation, a final submission document will be produced and submitted to the Secretary of State in April/May 2009, together with a report setting out how representations made at the Preferred Options stage have been taken into account. Once the document has been submitted, there is also an opportunity to make representations on the soundness of the submission document during April/May 2009.

- If required, an **Examination in Public** is scheduled for February 2010.
Area Action Plan production process

Timescales

* Indicates the current stage in the production of the Weston Town Centre Area Action Plan.
Weston-super-Mare Town Centre Area Action Plan

Background

Following the publication of the Weston-super-Mare Area Development Framework (ADF) in June 2005, North Somerset Council commissioned consultants to start the first stages in the preparation of the Weston Area Action Plan in Autumn 2005. This Area Action Plan covered all the areas identified for regeneration and major new development within Weston-super-Mare in the ADF. During the preparation and consultation of this document it became apparent that due to the broad area the plan was covering different issues were emerging within the town centre compared to the regeneration area.

The council has therefore decided to produce two separate Area Action Plans:

- Weston Regeneration Area AAP, covering the areas of future major employment and residential growth, such as Weston Airfield, RAF Locking and West Wick/Worle (see map below).
- Weston Town Centre AAP covering the seafront, town centre and gateway area, which are established, mostly built-up areas in need of regeneration and which require a site-by-site analysis to accommodate future retail and leisure provision for the resident and visitor population.

The two Area Action Plans are separated by the main line railway as an easily recognisable barrier.

Figure 1: This map shows the boundary of the Weston Town Centre Area Action Plan in red, and the Weston Regeneration Area Action Plan boundary in yellow.
Consultation so far

An Issues and Options consultation was carried out on the Weston-super-Mare Area Action Plan in September 2006 prior to the decision to split the Area Action Plan into two documents. Methods of consultation included one-to-one meetings, workshops, exhibitions, interactive events, presentations with question and answer sessions and raising public awareness through the website and newspaper advertisements, a questionnaire and explanatory flyers. The consultation covered a broad range of issues but a lot of discussion focused on the future development of the outer Weston-super-Mare Regeneration Area.

The issues facing the town centre seafront and gateway area now need more detailed, site-specific consideration and this further Issues and Options consultation for the emerging Town Centre Area Action Plan focuses in more detail on key sites and town centre regeneration opportunities.

The results of the Weston-super-Mare Area Action Plan Issues and Options consultation are still valid and relevant and can be expanded upon further through this consultation. The results of the Issues and Options consultation carried out in September 2006 can be viewed on the councils website at: www.n-somerset.gov.uk
The context

The Town Centre Area Action Plan can be divided into two distinct areas, the town centre including the seafront, and the gateway area including the station and the retail park. At the moment, these two areas are poorly connected and are divided by barriers to pedestrian movement such as the railway line, major arterial roads and bridges. However, the town centre and activities within it have a close relationship with those in the gateway area and the relationships and links between the two areas, in both the commercial and physical sense, need to be strengthened.

The seafront and town centre:
Due to its coastal location Weston-super-Mare town centre is, to a certain extent, constrained in terms of expansion. However, this coastal setting is also the town’s main asset which it currently fails to capitalise upon fully, with poor connections between the High Street and promenade. The town centre has a relatively small High Street and is perceived to be uncompetitive with other centres in the sub-region because of a comparatively poor shopping experience. The built environment consists of traditional Victorian and Edwardian architecture as well as other architectural styles which emerged through gradual redevelopment of sites within the town centre over the last fifty years.

The gateway area:
This area consists of a fragmented retail park dominated by cars and a busy road network and a number of underused sites. Whilst it forms an important focal point and transport corridor interchange for visitors, commuters and shoppers to the town, the current physical environment does not reflect the importance of this transitional zone. The Civic Pride Initiative has been granted funding for improvements to Hildesheim Bridge and the connecting roundabouts to improve the public realm of this important entrance to Weston-super-Mare.

Civic Pride Initiative:
Weston-super-Mare Civic Pride Initiative has been developed in partnership by North Somerset Council and South West Regional Development Agency. The aim of the initiative is to stimulate economic regeneration of the town through a comprehensive “facelift” and upgrading of public and private spaces. The programme started in 2004 and three projects – Meadow Street Enhancement, Grove Village and Big Lamp Corner including the Silica – have now been completed. Schemes currently being implemented include the public realm element to the redevelopment of Knightstone Island, new pedestrian signage and information throughout the town centre, Weston-super-Mare Seafront Enhancement and Sea Defence Scheme, and as mentioned above, improvements to Hildesheim Bridge and the connecting roundabouts in the gateway area.
The Facts

Retail and leisure

North Somerset Council commissioned Donaldson’s to undertake a Retail Study in 2006, which identified a need for new comparison (non-food) shopping of about 6.8ha (equivalent to three more Sovereign Centres) and the need for 1 – 2 new supermarkets in Weston-super-Mare up to 2021. Not all of the floorspace needs to be accommodated in the boundary of the existing town centre, but accommodating further growth in the out-of-centre locations, such as the Retail Park will further undermine the town centre’s ambition to become a sub-regional shopping destination.

Weston-super-Mare town centre has a below average vacancy rate. Whilst rent values have increased since 2002, the town centre is still more at a level with Yeovil than Taunton or Exeter and the prime shop investment yields have remained constant since 2000. Nevertheless the perception of the town centre by shoppers is overall good and there is a reasonable level of demand from retailers.

The Donaldson’s study also identified a moderate need for more bars, restaurants and clubs to improve the night-time economy, which could more easily be accommodated within the current town centre boundary.

Whilst the town centre is currently well provided for in terms of meeting day-to-day shopping needs for the local residents, there is at present no apparent link between major tourist events (such as the motorbike beach race) and specialist shopping provision in the town centre or a particular niche market (e.g. St Ives is famous for small local art galleries) which would draw tourists in from the beach or be a tourist destination in itself.

Major redevelopment projects such as Knightstone Island are already underway and the redevelopment of other sites close to the town centre such as the Tropicana and Dolphin Square could help considerably in delivering additional, high quality retail and leisure uses to improve Weston-super-Mare’s offer for tourists and residents. However, in order to lift the image of Weston-super-Mare and accommodate ALL of the required need, other sites will be needed to help achieve the step-change in the quality and quantity of retail and leisure provision.
Tourism

North Somerset Council commissioned South West Tourism Research Department to undertake the Weston-super-Mare Visitor Survey 2005, which interviewed 400 visitors during June and September. Similar surveys had already been undertaken in 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 and thus allowed direct comparison of changes in the visitors coming to Weston-super-Mare and their perceptions.

According to this survey, over 60% of visitors are day visitors, 40% are staying visitors, of which around two thirds stayed in serviced accommodation (hotels and B&Bs). The average day visitor stays in Weston-super-Mare for six hours whilst overnight visitors stay for an average of five nights.

There are two distinct groups of visitors coming to Weston-super-Mare. One group consists of the ‘grey tourism market’ with visitors being typically over 60 and often staying overnight (about 45%) and another group consisting of the ‘children’s tourist market’ which mainly consists of families with young children (25%). With regard to social classifications, 68% of visitors were skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled manual workers (socio-economic groups C2/D). 30% of all staying visitors also said that they had/or were intending to visit the countryside, which could be an indication for Weston-super-Mare developing another niche of the tourism market, the so called ‘Health/Outdoor Market’.

85% of all visitors said that they were on a repeat visit, and around a third of visitors were on their main holiday of the year in Weston-super-Mare. Hence, Weston-super-Mare has a very loyal visitor base. Interestingly, only 10% of all visitors came from Bristol and by far the largest share of visitors came from the West Midlands (22%). Attracting more people from Bristol (through marketing and change of image) will be a major challenge for tourism in Weston-super-Mare.

With regard to spending, day visitors spent on average £21 per person, and overnight visitors spent £32 per person per night. Compared to other seaside resorts in 2005, day visitors spent more money but staying visitors spent less, particularly on accommodation.

With regard to perceptions, most visitors coming to Weston-super-Mare stated that they were very happy with what Weston-super-Mare has to offer and that the visit was value for money. Whilst 50% of respondents were happy with everything, 50% felt that there was a need for a swimming pool or redevelopment of Tropicana.

With regard to the overall numbers, a separate survey estimated that Weston-super-Mare had improved its day visitor numbers from four million in 1995 to 5.3 million in 2005, mainly due to a longer season with more day visitors coming in April, September and October and larger single events on the beach (e.g. T4). At the same time the number of overnight staying visitors was estimated to have remained around 500,000 a year.
Wes ton-super-Mare Town Centre Area Action Plan

Issues

The following issues are based on the list of issues identified by work undertaken in respect of the Weston Area Action Plan and taking into account the evidence collected and informal meetings with local landowners/interest groups.

Retail:

- **Poor image** of the town centre as a retail and leisure destination.
- **Lack of a clear retail hierarchy** – the retail park dominates the town centre with regard to floorspace and area and does not provide a welcoming approach into Weston-super-Mare town centre.
- **Not enough shops** to attract enough shoppers/expenditure for a sub-regional retail location.
- **Lack of vacant and/or available sites** – increase of retail floorspace or expansion of town centre is constrained by a lack of available sites and demand is thus met away from the town centre or in other towns.
- **Lack of a niche retail market** – there is no obvious link between tourism events (e.g. beach races) and specialised shops drawing tourists into the High Street; or a specialist retail offer as a tourist destination in itself.
- **Lack of modern and large retail units** required by multiple retailers, hence the current retail provision caters only for the lower mid-market and is not catering for upmarket shoppers.
Socio-economic:

- **Levels of deprivation** and crime are disproportionate to the regional or national level in some Weston-super-Mare wards close to and within the town-centre.

- **Service sector dominance** – within the town the principle employment sectors are within distribution, hotels and restaurants. These tend to be low paid, seasonal and require a low skilled, part-time workforce.

- **Lack of high-quality office accommodation** in the town centre.

Education:

- **Future of schools** – a potential need for expanding/relocating schools due to more residents over the next 10 – 20 years.

- **Future need for student accommodation** – the University Campus at Weston College opens Sept 2007 and might require student accommodation near or within the town centre.

Urban design

- **Poor connections** (visual and physical) of the town centre with surrounding areas, particularly with the seafront and the retail park; and across some public spaces, i.e. the town square/Italian gardens and Pier Square (the large grass area situated at the end of Grand Pier).

- **Lack of coherence and design in retail park** – current design is dated and the layout does not allow shoppers to park once and visit all units on foot which causes extra traffic and safety issues.

- **Multiple land ownership** – could stall redevelopment of key sites and/or require Compulsory Purchase Order.

- **Poor urban fabric** in parts of the town centre (particularly facing the seafront, not making the best use of their primary location) and in the majority of the Retail Park.

- **Derelict key sites** – key sites such as Birnbeck Pier and Tropicana have remained derelict for a considerable time adding to the poor image of the town centre.
Tourism

- **Poor image** – Weston-super-Mare’s image as a tourist destination is that of a cheap and cheerful resort, which does not attract affluent tourists and does not market itself to a particular niche tourist market.

- **Quality of leisure and cultural facilities** – the seafront and town centre is dominated by facilities such as amusement arcades which cater for a narrow niche of tourists and requires broadening and diversifying.

- **Night-time economy** – there is a lack of residential properties together with a lack of café-bars/restaurants and family restaurants which are open during the day and the evening. This results in a deserted town centre in the early evening (6 – 8pm) and binge drinking and associated antisocial behaviour later during the night.

- **Amount of leisure/culture facilities** – there is a need to identify sites for new leisure and culture uses to improve Weston-super-Mare’s tourism offer.

- **Quality of accommodation** – many hotels and B&Bs are in the low to mid-range with a lack of upmarket hotels to cater for the conference sector and/or the up-market tourism sector.

- **Honey pot sites** – a few key leisure/tourism sites developed in the wrong location and could draw visitors to them without benefiting the town centre and the high street.

- **Strong competition** from nearby, higher-order centres such as Bath, Bristol and Taunton for shoppers and tourists.

Transport and Accessibility

- **Poor accessibility and congestion problems** within the town centre and the retail park which require improved transport facilities and clearly identified walking/cycling routes.

- **Car parking** – some of the town centre’s car parking provision is not up to standard and difficult to find; during peak periods (i.e. the summer holidays), much of the town centre and seafront is at practical capacity. Hence sufficient provision needs to be maintained, especially given the possible redevelopment of some existing car parking sites; plus consideration of a Park and Ride facility for the town centre and seafront.

- **Lack of convenient parking and facilities for coach operators** – results in coach operators choosing alternative destinations for day trips.

Questions:

Have we identified all the key issues?

Are there any other issues which should be included?
Vision for Weston Town Centre

The work undertaken in respect of the previously completed Weston Area Action Plan developed a Weston-super-Mare wide vision, which is still applicable. However, as this Area Action Plan is specifically covering the town centre, seafront and gateway area, a new, more focused vision has been developed, tailored to the aspirations of this smaller area, which is based on the principles of the wider vision.

By 2026, Weston town centre will be a good quality, diverse and year-round shopping and leisure destination set within a high quality built environment which capitalises on its seafront location and the natural beauty of the area. More people will live and work in the town centre which will add vibrancy during the day and into the evening, resulting in a safe and desirable place for its residents and visitors.

By 2026 Weston town centre will have re-established itself as a major tourist destination with high quality accommodation, a range of indoor and outdoor attractions and activities catering for a wide range of visitor needs.

By 2026 the gateway area will have transformed itself into a distinctive entrance to the town creating a sense of arrival set within a consolidated, high quality built and landscaped environment, providing good pedestrian connections to the town centre.

Questions:

What is your vision for Weston-super-Mare Town Centre over the next 20 years?

What is good about Weston-super-Mare Town Centre and should be promoted?

What tourism market should Weston-super-Mare aim for?
Objectives

The following objectives have been developed from the strategic objectives which emerged from the previous issues and options report for the Weston Area Action Plan. They have been expanded upon to specifically address issues facing the town centre.

- Make provision for an increase in retail and leisure uses within the town centre to create a more competitive retail and commercially active centre.

- Re-establish the role of Weston-super-Mare as a tourist destination by capitalising on the natural asset of the beach, and through the provision of high quality accommodation, indoor attractions and activities, and developing niche markets.

- Strengthen physical and visual connections between all areas of the town centre, particularly between the town centre and the seafront to create an integrated town which maximises its seaside location.

- Improve the urban fabric and raise the quality of urban design following the principles set out in the Civic Pride document. Redevelop key sites to a very high standard setting an exemplar for the future development of the town.

- Enhance the gateway to the town centre through the high quality redevelopment of key sites, particularly around Weston-super-Mare train station, and public realm improvements to enhance approaches into the town centre.

- Ensure the transport network provides an integrated, convenient and sustainable service for all parts of the town, with significantly improved public transport services, and appropriate facilities to attract and retain coach operators visiting Weston-super-Mare. Develop a comprehensive parking strategy, which should include consideration of a Park and Ride facility.

- Encourage more people to live and work in the town centre making it a desirable and safe place to live, work and visit offering a broad range of facilities and job opportunities in an attractive and accessible environment.

- Aim to develop a vibrant evening economy in Weston-super-Mare town centre to make it an attractive and safe place for all residents and visitors to enjoy throughout the day and into the evening.

Questions:
Are these the right Objectives?

Should there be additional Objectives?
Strategic options for the future of Weston-super-Mare as a major retail and tourism destination

Retail
From the evidence presented, three distinct strategic options emerge about the type of retail that might be appropriate for Weston-super-Mare town centre to improve its quality as a sub-regional shopping destination, which require different development strategies and sites:

a) Provide a major department store, either on its own or as an extension to the Sovereign Centre and improve the range of high street stores.

b) Increase the number of vibrant, smaller-scale, independent shops (like Orchard Meadow) to complement the mainstream shopping provision in the High Street.

c) Develop Weston town centre’s retail offer to complement major tourist events on the beach to develop a niche-market drawing visitors into the town centre from the seafront.

Tourism
From the evidence presented, three distinct strategic options for maximising the economic potential from tourists could be pursued, each of which would require different branding/marketing strategies, types of facilities and accommodation:

a) Increase the number of visitors (particularly staying), by targeting existing tourist markets, or

b) Increase spending of existing visitors, or

c) Attract a different and more affluent type of visitor (for example breaking into the conference market or another specialised niche-market).

Question:
Are these the right Options for the future?
Based upon the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. (North Somerset Council, 100023397, 2007).
Wes ton-super-Mare Town Centre Area Action Plan

Detailed town centre proposals map

- Existing and proposed pedestrian Nodal Points
- Opportunity Zone for Tall(er) Buildings
- Pedestrian Priority Retail Zone
- Future Retail Zones
- Desirable Connection

Detailed town centre proposals map
Site specific options and opportunities

This Area Action Plan will ultimately allocate sites for redevelopment and improvement, and set out delivery mechanisms for each site. The first stage in the process will involve examining various sites and areas in the town centre and assessing their redevelopment potential, or possibilities for their enhancement and improvement to meet the objectives set out on page 14. This will be done in a comprehensive way so that proposals for various sites complement each other in terms of uses, design and connectivity, to ensure the overall vision for the town centre is achieved.

The following sites and areas have been identified as places where redevelopment or improvement would significantly enhance the environment of the town centre and where, in certain instances, their redevelopment could also provide the improved retail and leisure uses that are needed in the town centre. The sites identified here are for discussion purposes and may change or be adapted as the document evolves through the various stages of consultation.

The maps on the previous pages show the indicative sites and how they connect together.
Opportunities for improvement or development:

1) Birnbeck Pier:

Birnbeck Pier has been bought by Urban Splash – a development company. Discussions regarding the future of Birnbeck Pier are ongoing and because of its seriously poor structural condition restoration costs will be very high. At this stage no commercially feasible options are apparent, but development of land side sites adjacent to the Pier may enable its redevelopment. An architectural competition has now been launched for this site.

- What would you like to see at Birnbeck Pier?
- What uses would be suitable on this site?

2) Melrose Car Park:

A council owned car park currently operating at less than full capacity.

- Use part of the site as a coach park for coach tour operators?
- Leave as a car park?
- Redevelop all or part of site – if so for what uses?

3) Tropicana:

There are proposals to revitalise the vacant Tropicana building on the seafront to provide a commercial leisure development incorporating a hotel, indoor swimming pool, ten pin bowling, multi screen cinema, health and fitness centre and restaurants, cafes and bars. A planning application is expected to be submitted in the Winter for this scheme which would significantly enhance the leisure provision of the town.

This redevelopment should seek to:

- Improve pedestrian links to the town centre via Dolphin Square.
- Ensure the uses complement other proposals in the town centre.
4) Weston beach:

Weston beach is a unique asset to Weston-super-Mare which, due to its size and ability to stage major events, sets it apart from other seaside resorts. This asset should be capitalised upon and used to its full potential to put Weston-super-Mare on the map.

These are potential options for the beach.

- Promote the beach as an events space.
- Encourage more cafes and restaurants along the beach front.
- Enhance/refurbish concessions buildings.
- Look to benefit from the success of Knightstone Island by attracting people along the seafront to the town centre.

5) Marine Parade/Beach Road/Pier Square/Beach Lawns:

A £1.8million civic pride project to upgrade the public realm and redistribute traffic around Pier Square is being developed. This proposal will result in an enhanced public space in this location and will play a pivotal role in linking the town centre and seafront. The sea defence improvements also provide an opportunity to reassess this area.

- As part of this enhancement scheme should this AreaAction Plan explore the opportunity to enhance Beach Lawns to make them more useable, for example re-landscaping/play areas/palm trees/croquet?
- Provide attractive pedestrian/cycle routes?
- Have linked attractions/features along the seafront?
6) Dolphin Square and Carlton Street Car Park:

This is a large site facing the seafront and adjacent to the High Street. It currently contains a mix of uses including council offices, Dolphin Square Shopping Centre, and Carlton Street Car Park. The principle of redeveloping the whole site incorporating a mix of uses including offices and a health centre has now been agreed by the council. However, options still remain in terms of:

- How should the mix of other uses such as residential/retail/leisure/bars/restaurants be proportioned?
- What should the new development look like in terms of design/height/scale?
- How will the new development relate to its surroundings?
- What sort of retail will it have and how will the retail relate to the existing town centre retail offer and the high street?

7) St James Street Area:

This is a prominent area fronting the seafront with a burgeoning café and restaurant culture developing along St James Street. The area is characterised by a variety of building styles and sizes and a number of the units are vacant. Parts of the area currently fail to maximise on their seafront location. Some options for improvement include:

- Strengthen pedestrian links between town centre and seafront through this area.
- Encourage the developing café culture along St James Street.
- Redevelop certain blocks within this area, particularly sites fronting Richmond Street, St James Street and the seafront, with high quality mixed use development.
- Increase building heights along seafront to create a more prominent frontage.
- Possible Pier Square improvements could offer the opportunity for complementary development through the refurbishment of existing buildings and the introduction of new uses. Creation of wider pavements and connections to the Beach Lawns may facilitate café culture along Beach Road.
- Opportunity to encourage an individual character within the area.
8) Victoria Square:

This is a prime seafront location which is currently fairly quiet due to the lack of commercial uses on surrounding roads. A crazy golf course currently operates on the centre of the site, and the buildings comprise of traditional Victorian/Edwardian terraces which typify the architectural character of Weston-super-Mare. Options for this site include:

- Refurbish existing buildings and encourage more active uses on the ground floors.
- Expand the Sovereign Centre westwards onto the seafront to create retail units along Royal Parade.
- Redevelopment/partial redevelopment for a mix of uses to create a more dynamic seafront.
- Should the crazy golf course remain or could better use be made of this space?

9) Sovereign Centre:

The Sovereign Centre is the main indoor shopping centre in Weston-super-Mare. It’s in a key location between the sea front and the High Street. There is the potential to increase the retail provision for the town through the expansion of the Sovereign Centre. Some possible options include:

- Refurbish the back of the Sovereign Centre to increase activity on to Salisbury Terrace creating better links between the High Street and Seafront.
- Expand Sovereign centre westwards onto the seafront to create retail units along Royal Parade.
- Refurbish or expand the northern side of the Sovereign Centre to increase activity facing Town Square.
- Investigate the opportunity to increase the pedestrian movement between the seafront and the town centre via this site?
10) Town Square and surroundings:

Town Square provides an important public open space within the town centre, but its full potential as a central civic square is not currently realised. Here are some possible options to increase the use of Town Square and increase its connections to the High Street and the Seafront:

- Improve connections between the Town Square and the seafront, through the Royal Hotel Car Park.
- Re-landscape Town Square to create better pedestrian links between the seafront and High Street through Town Square and the Italian Gardens.
- Establish a high quality and flexible space for performance and events.
11) NCP car park site:

This is a central site which faces Big Lamp Corner. The NCP car park occupies part of the site, but there is a large area of vacant under used land to the rear of the site. Options for redevelopment of this site include:

- Redevelop site with high quality retail or mixed use development incorporating a landmark frontage onto Big Lamp Corner – Silica provides a focal point.
- Incorporate Regent House into the development site to increase its size.
- Refurbish existing corner building and redevelop the land behind.
- Provide a link between High Street and the railway station/car parks on the approach to Weston-super-Mare through this site as part of its redevelopment.
- Closure of the NCP car park would enable that part of the High Street between Big Lamp Corner and Oxford Street to be closed to cars creating a more pedestrian friendly environment.

12) Tesco site:

Tesco are currently the main food supermarket in the town centre and this is an important facility to retain. However, the supermarket is on a key gateway site into the town centre as most traffic approaches Weston-super-Mare over the Hildesheim Bridge. This site fails to provide a distinctive landmark which would create a sense of arrival in Weston town centre and fails to provide obvious pedestrian links to the town centre.

- If the opportunity arose, should the whole site be redeveloped? If so what for?
- Should the corner of Station Road and Francis Fox Road be developed with a landmark building?
- Is there the potential to develop frontages along Francis Fox, Locking and Station Roads to provide a defined frontage to this block?
- Should the food store remain as it is but upgrade the retail units on Walliscote Road?
- Should car parking capacity be increased through the provision of multi-storey car parking?
13) **Locking Road Car Park:**

This is a key site on the approach to Weston-super-Mare town centre. The site is adjacent to the railway line and Hildesheim Bridge and links through to the railway station. The site is currently used for long-stay car, coach and lorry parking, but the physical environment is poor. Options for redevelopment could include:

- Create a high quality, high density mixed use scheme at this major transport node, incorporating a landmark development at the gateway to the town centre.
- Redevelop site with a mix of office and residential incorporating car parking.
- Keep the coach station and lorry parking on this site.
- Multi-storey car parking could be concentrated on part of this site providing the opportunity for the redevelopment of other sites.

14) **Vacant land at Sunnyside Road:**

This land has been vacant for a long time and again is a key gateway site. Due to its close proximity to the railway station and town centre, and its key corner location on the approach to Weston-super-Mare, high quality design is an essential element of any development proposals. Redevelopment would significantly enhance the area surrounding the station. Potential options include:

- High density mixed use development including B1 office, leisure, community facilities.
- Is this site appropriate for residential use as part of a mixed use scheme?

15) **The Rugby Club:**

The potential relocation of the Rugby Club to a new stadium adjacent to Hutton Moor and the proposed Green Heart (a new strategic public open space for Weston-super-Mare), would free up this site for redevelopment. Options for redevelopment include:

- High density mixed use development.
- Improvements to the appearance and function of the existing ground.
- Possibility to extend into playing fields, whilst improving quality of pitches.
16) Gas Works:

This site is a significant eyesore on the approach into the town centre. The gas works are currently operational and would obviously have contamination issues in terms of their redevelopment. The corner of the site may be needed for improvements to Drove Road roundabout. However, the redevelopment of the whole site would significantly enhance the approach to Weston-super-Mare town centre. Potential uses for this site would include:

- Residential/office development, incorporating a high quality landmark building on the corner of Drove Road and Winterstoke Road.
- If the whole site becomes available, redevelopment or possibly reuse of the gasometers for residential/business use, to create a significant landmark and design feature, with a mix of uses on the rest of the site.

17) Retail park:

Much of the town centre gateway area has evolved, over the years into an out-of-town retail warehouse park. This low density form of development does not provide an attractive approach to the town centre. It lacks any local distinctiveness and the current road layout is confusing to motorists, and there is poor pedestrian access between parts of the retail park which are separated by major roads. Options for consideration include:

- Alterations/improvements to the road network to consolidate the retail park.
- Opportunities to redevelop parts of the site.
- Develop the key gateway sites around the retail park to a high standard providing a mix of employment and residential uses to increase activity in this area.

18) Avoncrest site:

This 30 hectare site has been allocated in the Replacement Local Plan for a mix of 1/3 employment, retail, and leisure uses including public open space. However, the site was allocated for out-of-centre retail before the publication of the Donaldson’s retail study which demonstrated that there was no need for further out-of-centre retail until 2011. The site will provide part of the strategic open space/recreational facilities for “Green Heart” linking the new communities on
the former Weston Airfield site to Weston town centre. Proposals should ensure there are pedestrian links to other parts of the gateway retail centre and adjacent leisure uses. There is the need for a high quality design solution on this site. The site is a former landfill site – any proposals will need to address contamination/stability issues. Potential options are:

- To develop the site in accordance with the adopted Replacement Local Plan.
- To develop the site after the employment uses on the airfield site have come forward to achieve an integrated approach to the proposed Green Heart (and its connection across both sites) and the likely location of the new district centre to serve the new urban extension. In this instance consider a different mix of uses, including more high-value office uses.

19) Hutton Moor Leisure Centre:

Hutton Moor Leisure Centre is likely to be incorporated into the wider Weston Vision through the strategic Green Heart proposals.

- Expand the community leisure facilities surrounding the Hutton Moor Leisure Centre to provide a regionally significant leisure offer that acts as the northern anchor to the Green Heart. This could include the provision of a new community stadium within the Green Heart, adjacent to Hutton Moor to enable the relocation of the Rugby Club.
- Improve pedestrian/cycle links via the Green Heart to the south.

Questions:

Have we identified the right sites for potential redevelopment/improvement and the right options for each site?

Are there other sites which would be suitable for redevelopment which would enhance Weston town centre, seafront and gateway areas?
We need to know what you think!

Consultation starts in October and runs until 30 November 2007

All comments must be received within this period and can be sent to:

Planning Policy
Development and Environment
North Somerset Council
Somerset House
Oxford Street
Weston-super-Mare
BS23 1TG

or

By e-mail: planning.policy@n-somerset.gov.uk

Further copies of the document are available from:

- 01275 884 599
- www.n-somerset.gov.uk
- Somerset House, Oxford Street, Weston-super-Mare
- All local libraries
This publication is available in large print, Braille or audio formats on request.

Help is also available for people who require council information in languages other than English.

Please contact 01275 884 599