

Headline stats

Online exhibition & forum

W

Stage 2
consultation ran
between 10 and 23
October 2022



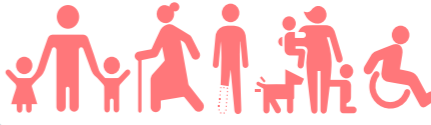
L

Stage 3
consultation ran
between 23 Jan
and 20 Feb 2023



Y

122
survey
responses



over the three stages

**E-mailed
comments**

1
community
workshop

18
attendees

E

**Drop-in session at
Quaker Meeting
House**

**Members
& officer
sessions**

108
schools
responses

Thank you
to everyone who
got involved.



2 Issues and opportunities



Wellington's past

Wellington developed along the linear Fore Street, nestled in the beautiful Tone Valley.

The town has expanded as an industrial settlement with a medieval core which remains largely unaltered.

Key industries that have shaped the town and influenced expansion:

- Brick making (seen today in the distinctive orange colour of the Victorian and Edwardian terraces).
- Wool trade and cloth-making where the Fox Brothers was a key business.
- Relyon mattresses, which is still a major local employer.
- Veterinary products, toiletries and cosmetics - Walter Gregory opened his first chemists in Fore Street in 1882, and in 1950s Gregory's became a pioneer of the aerosol industry. The company became known as Swallowfield in 1986 and is still a major employer in the town.

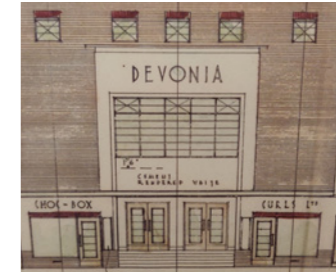
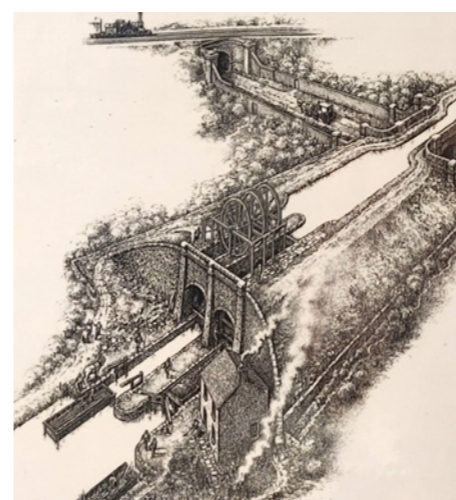
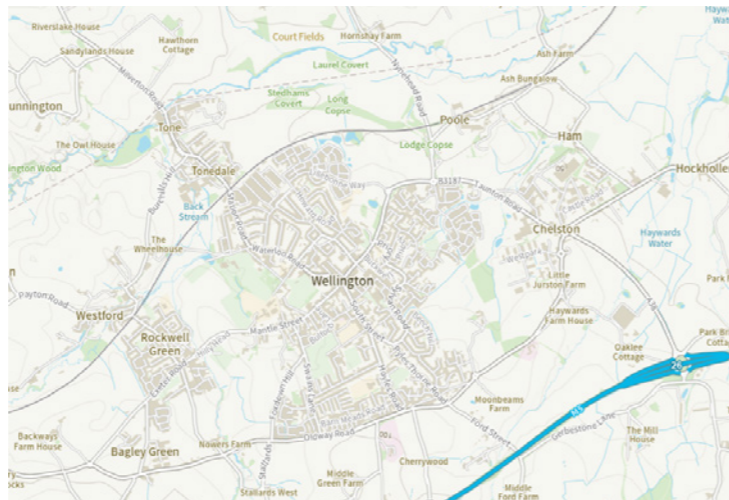
1890



1960



2022



Historic photos of Wellington and surrounds ©Wellington Museum

South Street, 1907	Architects drawing of Wellesley cinema	Wellington view, 1852
North Street, c1900s <small>before cars, North Street was a significant part of Wellington's shopping area</small>	Town centre, c1910 <small>the brick building beside the Town Hall was the Post Office between 1885 and 1911</small>	
Group of canal structures near Wellington, 1840s <small>the canal lift was a pioneering invention designed by James Green</small>	Waterloo Road	West along Fore St, 1938
Rockwell Green, c1910 looking north past The Weavers Arms	Inside woollen factory, 1910	

Historic photos captions

Wellington's past

Early & medieval

- Evidence of Bronze Age settlement and farming.
- Medieval settlement at Longforth Farm included complex of buildings and large medieval 'manor' house dating between 1200 and 1400 at Longforth Farm.
- Land named Weolington and Walintone.
- Medieval town newly laid out to encourage trade arranged along Bristol to Exeter road with moderately successful local market and fairs.
- Small scale cloth industry.

Georgian and Victorian

- Increasing prosperity, a "fine, thriving town" described by Collinson (1791).
- Industrial activity included iron foundries, wool and clothing manufacturing.
- Growth of Westford Mills and Tone Works textile mills provide local employment.
- Introduction of turnpikes, extension of Grand Western Canal and railway leads to expansion of town northwards.
- Wellington Monument built.

20th century

- Leisure offer grows with opening of Wellington Park and three cinemas: the Town Hall cinema in 1909 (renamed Rex Cinema), Castle Cinema in 1912 (renamed Tivoli) and Wellesley Cinema (1937) which still remains today.
- Train links and the opening of the M5 connects the town to Taunton, Exeter, Bristol, and the Midlands. This leads to significant expansion.
- Wellington functions as a dormitory settlement of Taunton.
- Fox Bros & Co nearly closes down but manages to stay afloat.
- Several horticultural nurseries in area.

21st century

- The resident population of Wellington grew from 12,845 in 2001 to 16,669 in 2021.
- Unique retail offer and a legacy of commercial and industrial innovation.
- Tone Works site currently at risk and underused but provides great opportunity.
- A railway station again at Wellington will bring further benefits to town with further development planned.

1086
Recorded in Domesday Book with the name Walintone, belonging to Bishop Giso of Wells.

1215
Town gains town status by Royal Charter.

1731
Fire causes major damage in the town.

1819
Only visit to the town by the first Duke of Wellington.

1830s
Wellington Hall built as market hall.
Tonedale Mill opens.
Wellington Union Workhouse opens on North Street (1837).

1843
Wellington Station opens.

1854
Wellington Monument erected in honour of Arthur Wellesley.

1866
William Thomas & Co Ltd install the biggest Hoffman brick kiln in Britain burning continuously for over 100 years (except for 6 weeks in 1921).

1903
Wellington Park opens on land given by Fox Bros.

1930s
Widening of Longforth Rd / High Street junction (1931).
Traffic lights first appear in town (1935).

1964
Wellington Railway station closes.
Creation of new Wellington Town Crest.

1978
Heavy snow closes roads into the town for two days.

2021
Decontamination works begin on Tone Works



Medieval floor tiles discovered at Longforth Farm



Beech Grove entrance to park, 1910
@Wellington Museum

The Town Crest shows a wool sack (representing the woollen industry), bulls head (veterinary products and Swallowfield), milk churn (milk factory in Champford Lane), mattress (Relyon mattresses), and a Chrysanthemum representing the horticultural nurseries formerly in the area ©Wellington Museum



Highlights

History

Wellington has a rich history which is evident in the built environment. There are many listed buildings in the town centre as well as the Grade I listed Church of St John the Baptist, included within the town centre Conservation Area (on the 'At Risk Register'). These assets in particular bring heritage tourism to Wellington. The town centre is compact and has a medieval street pattern as well as visual, architectural details that pay homage to Wellington's history including the red bricks which are commonplace in the town. These elements and other non-listed heritage assets must be protected and maintained. On the outskirts of town, Tone Works and Tonedale Mill are nationally significant assets (on the 'At Risk Register'). Wellington Monument stands proudly in the surrounding landscape. Wellington School was founded in 1837 and remains in historic buildings including the Grade II listed chapel. The school has a potential role in keeping young people and students in the town and supporting local industry.

Town centre and community pride

Wellington's town centre is well-loved, with high quality elements such as independent shops and eateries, Waitrose and Wellington School. In the future it will play a major role in attracting life and encouraging new business enterprises. The current adopted Core Strategy sets out the role of Wellington as a secondary focus for growth within the Borough, recognising the town's size, offer of services and facilities, and role as a

market town serving a wider rural hinterland. There is a large amount of civic pride within Wellington, with active groups like Wellington Transition Town and Wellington Town Council who are taking a lead on local regeneration projects, such as reuse of the Kings Arms Pub with plans to reopen for community use. The community is well-served by a large community infrastructure network including schools, faith buildings, outdoor play spaces, leisure facilities and arts / heritage uses.

Landscape setting

The town's landscape setting is an important part of its identity and historic evolution. The town is set just north of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which is popular amongst local people and those in the wider area for walking and to enjoy views out to the Quantock Hills and over Wellington. There are several viewpoints in the town too, such as the green wedge between Rockwell Green and Wellington.

The River Tone runs just north of the town centre, and is surrounded by wooded land. The town once had a strong agricultural function, and Wellington's limited urban sprawl is still today surrounded by green space, some of which is farmland. This landscape setting is a huge highlight for Wellington in terms of identity, access to green space and attracting visitors.

rich history



loved town centre



green landscape



visual details



Challenges

Retail trends

Wellington faces the challenges of shifting retail trends, as do many other towns and cities in the UK. The movement of retail online and to out-of-town locations brings challenges around the vitality of town centres in terms of investment, employment, and footfall. Wellington's town centre is filled with independent shops, eateries, and cafés in addition to Waitrose, Asda, the Co-operative and the new Lidl. The diversification of the town centre's offer to encourage competition and comparison, coupled with public realm improvements should see Wellington thrive.

Traffic management

Wellington's town centre sits at the meeting point of High Street, North Street, South Street and Fore Street which are all responsible for directing traffic in and out of central Wellington. However, this makes the presence of vehicular traffic and heavy lorries in the centre extremely prominent causing congestion. On a larger scale, Wellington is not well connected to the surrounding areas by public transport or cycling – for example, to Taunton. These issues contribute to vehicular dependence which has implications on sustainability and environmental factors. SWT has plans to improve cycleways and pedestrian routes as well as to reopen the railway station. There are also longer-term aspirations set out in the current adopted Core Strategy to provide a link road through Longforth to the B3187. However, this is dependent on Relyon, Swallowfield and Pritex relocating. An investigation into the feasibility of other options

is therefore considered to have merit. A link road has the potential to reduce town centre traffic and address access issues.

Heritage-at-Risk

The town's Conservation Area is on Historic England's Heritage-at-Risk register. Notable features that need protecting are Tonedale Mill and Tone Works. SWT is hoping to regenerate and secure long-term management solutions for the two sites. It is a concern that flooding could be an issue for heritage assets. Heritage issues should be at the forefront of considerations in the Wellington Place Plan.

Landscape setting

There are concerns that future development will erode green spaces and the wider landscape setting. This landscape setting and green and blue infrastructure networks are key contributors to Wellington's identity as a rural town. Loss of agricultural land associated with strategic development or phosphate mitigation measures could threaten food security. SWT is seeking to ensure that strategic allocations for development are balanced with green wedges and access to green space is maintained.

Housing

Wellington has a local need for more affordable and private rented homes. A greater variety in housing types and tenures is needed to meet housing needs and cater for the town's population.

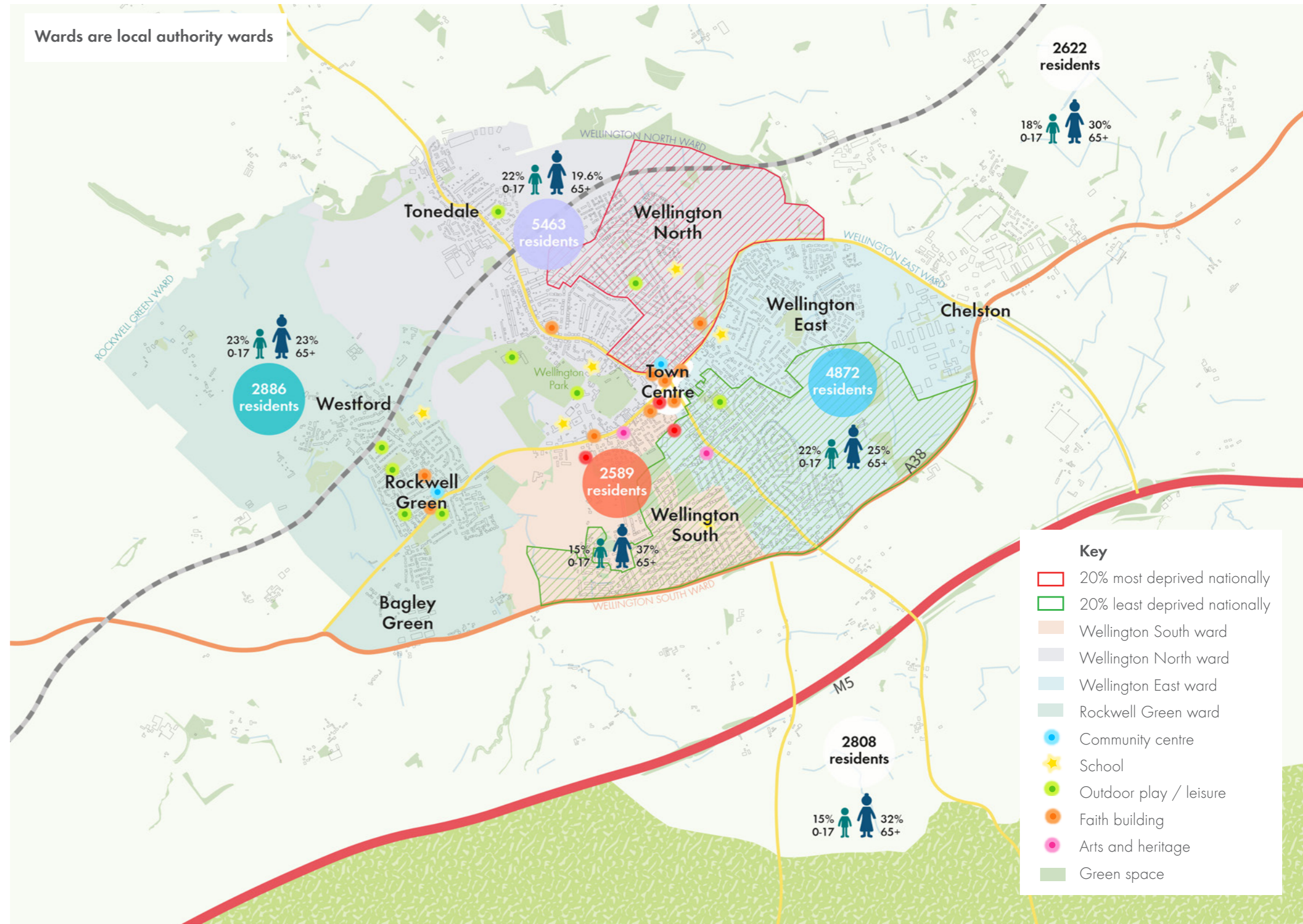


Social analysis

Introducing Wellington's residents

Wellington has a diverse population, but there are some common characteristics:

- Wellington has an ageing population. This is particularly striking in Wellington South ward, where nearly 1 in 5 residents are 75 or over, and 37% of residents are 65+ (ONS 2019 Mid-year estimates). Only 15% of Wellington South's residents are 0-17 year olds. Elsewhere in Wellington, 0-17 year olds make up 22% of the population, higher than the District average (19.2%).
- Most people are white British, although there is a small population of Polish and Portuguese residents, as well as those from a non-European background. In Wellington East, 2.3% speak a non-European language (2011 Census). The most ethnically diverse ward is Wellington North where 5.2% of residents are from a BAME background.
- There is a mix of religious and non-religious - those who identify as Christian make up between 59 and 64% across all wards. Between 1 and 2% of residents across wards belong to a non-Christian religion. The rest of residents identify as having no religion (2011 Census). This is similar to the Somerset and District figures.
- Social mobility is low in Taunton Deane and is in the bottom 20-40% within the South West region (Social Mobility Index, 2018)



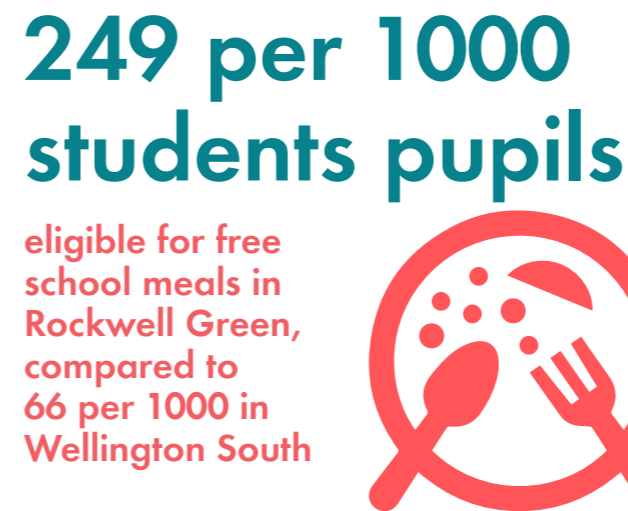
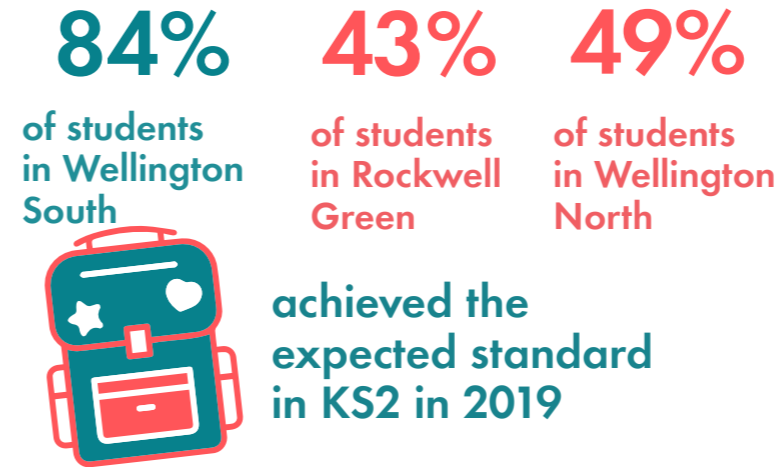
- Broadband speed for households is faster in Wellington than its rural hinterland. For example, 0.3% of properties in Wellington North have less than super fast broadband, compared to 34% for Milverton & District ward and 36% for Monument ward (Ofcom Connected Nations Report, 2020).

A key difference is that the northern parts of town, and Rockwell Green, are far more deprived than the south. Incomes are lower, educational performance is lower and crime is higher:

- Deprivation - parts of Wellington North (on either side of Lillebonne Way) are within the 20% most deprived LSOAs nationally (IMD, 2019). The picture is strikingly different in Wellington South, much of which is in the 20% least deprived. Longforth Farm would diversify the housing offer and community in the Wellington North ward. Income, employment, health and education deprivation are especially high, as is income deprivation affecting older people. Rockwell Green and Wellington East also have higher levels of deprivation (within 30% and 40% most deprived nationally across most indicators).
- Residents in the north and eastern parts of town, as well as Rockwell Green, are at high risk of feeling lonely (Somerset Social Isolation map, 2015) - according to the Somerset Social Isolation Index, 15 common factors, including age, financial stress, car ownership and health status, can influence

social isolation and loneliness. The Index identifies LSOAs that are particularly lonely, and these tend to be in urban, deprived areas, specifically the north and eastern parts of Wellington. The effect of loneliness and isolation can be as harmful to health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

- Social housing - over 4% of residents are waiting for social housing in Wellington North and Wellington East. This figure is lower at 3% for residents in Wellington South (Homefinder Housing Register, March 2017). The figure is much higher at 7% for Rockwell Green residents.
- Education - 84% of pupils in Wellington South achieved the expected standard in KS2 Reading, Writing and Maths in 2019, compared to 49% of pupils in Wellington North ward and 43% of Rockwell Green pupils (Somerset County Council, 2019). For Wellington East, 55% of pupils achieved the expected standard. In 2011, the ward with the highest % of those aged 16+ with no qualification was Wellington North, with 26% of residents without a qualification. This is higher than the 22% average for the District and County.
- Special educational needs - there are fewer students with Special Educational Needs in Wellington South (113 per 1000) compared to Rockwell Green (201 per 1000), Wellington North (166 per 1000) and Wellington East (152 per 1000). The District and County average is 146 pupils per 1000.



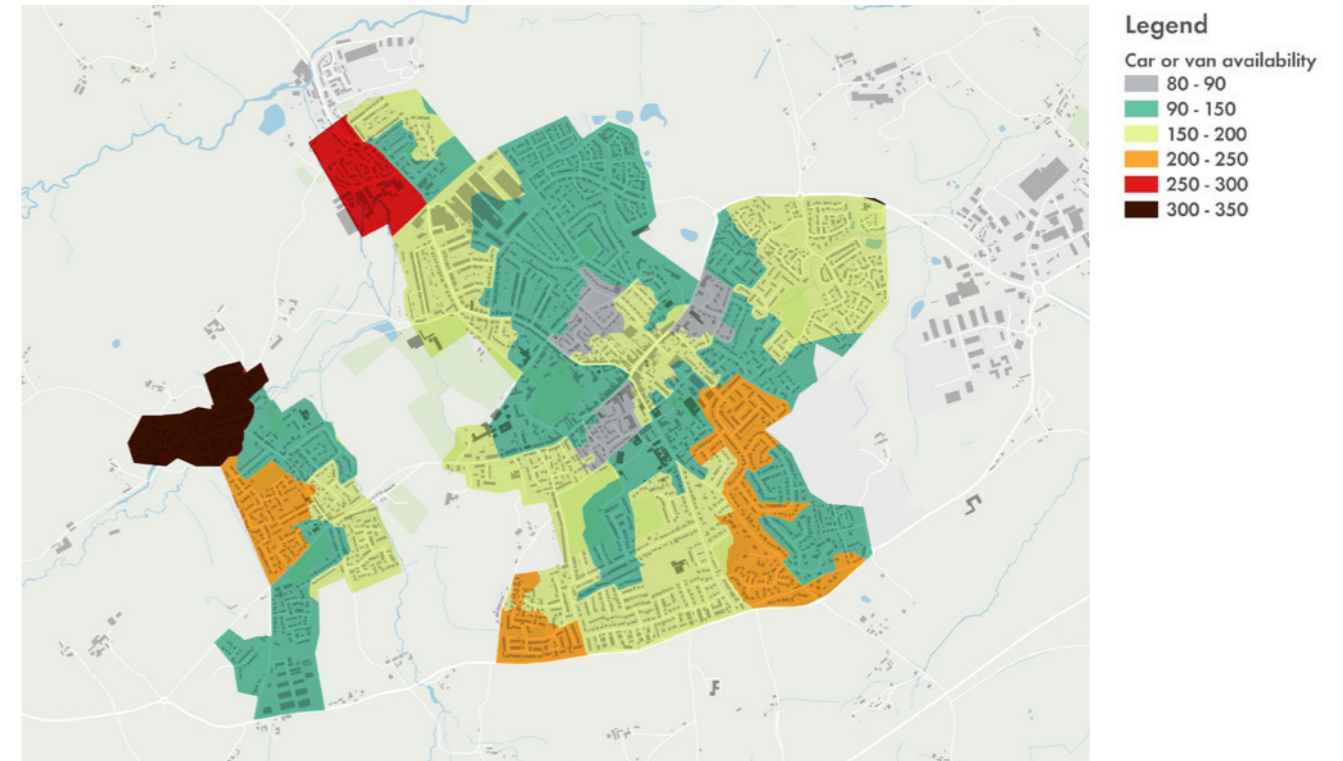
- Free School Meals - the number of pupils eligible for Free School Meals is higher than the District average in Wellington North (177 per 1000), Wellington East (166 per 1000) and Rockwell Green (249 per 1000). In Wellington South, numbers are far lower, at 66 per 1000 students. In the rural hinterland figures remain low too.
- Car ownership - 21% of householders in Wellington North do not own a car or van, compared to 18% in Wellington South and Wellington East, and 14% in Rockwell Green (2011 Census).
- Mortality - mortality is highest in Wellington North Ward, higher than the Somerset and District average mortality rates. Monument ward, which covers Wellington's rural hinterland to the south, also has surprisingly high mortality figures (NHS Digital: Civil Registrations Data & ONS Mid-year pop estimates 2015-2019).
- Crime - Wellington East had the highest number of violence and sexual offences in April 2019 - 3161 per 100,000 people. Wellington North closely followed. Wellington South has much lower reported violence and sexual offences (1352 per 100,000 people in April, 2019). Antisocial behaviour and criminal damage rates are highest in Wellington North, more than double that of Wellington South. Crime figures are higher

in Wellington North than the Somerset and District averages.

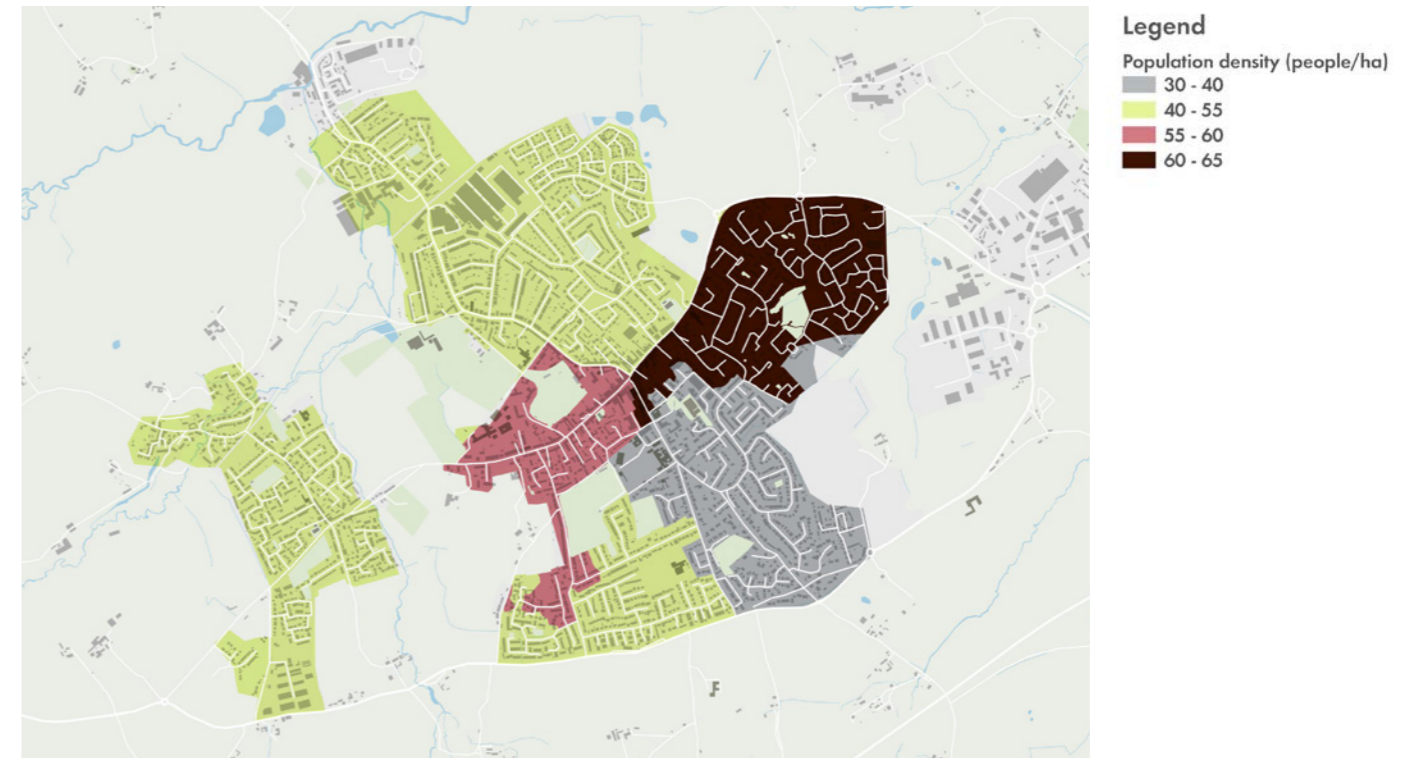
- Population density - the number of people per hectare living in parts of Wellington East (in the northern half of the ward) is considerably higher than elsewhere in Wellington.
- Health - at the district level, 81.6% of residents in Taunton Deane (in which Wellington was located prior to the formation of Somerset West and Taunton District) described themselves as having 'very good health' or 'good health'. This is slightly higher

than the national average for England and Wales of 81.2%. The figure for the three Wellington wards is slightly lower, at 79.9%. Like the majority of Somerset, Wellington has an ageing population which is likely to lead to more cases of residents suffering from age-related conditions such as dementia.

- Wellington has a lack of junior sports pitches and limited outdoor facilities for young people. The Skate Park is in need of improvements overall and to improve its safety. Roller sports, in general, are poorly provided for in Wellington.



Car and van availability



Population density



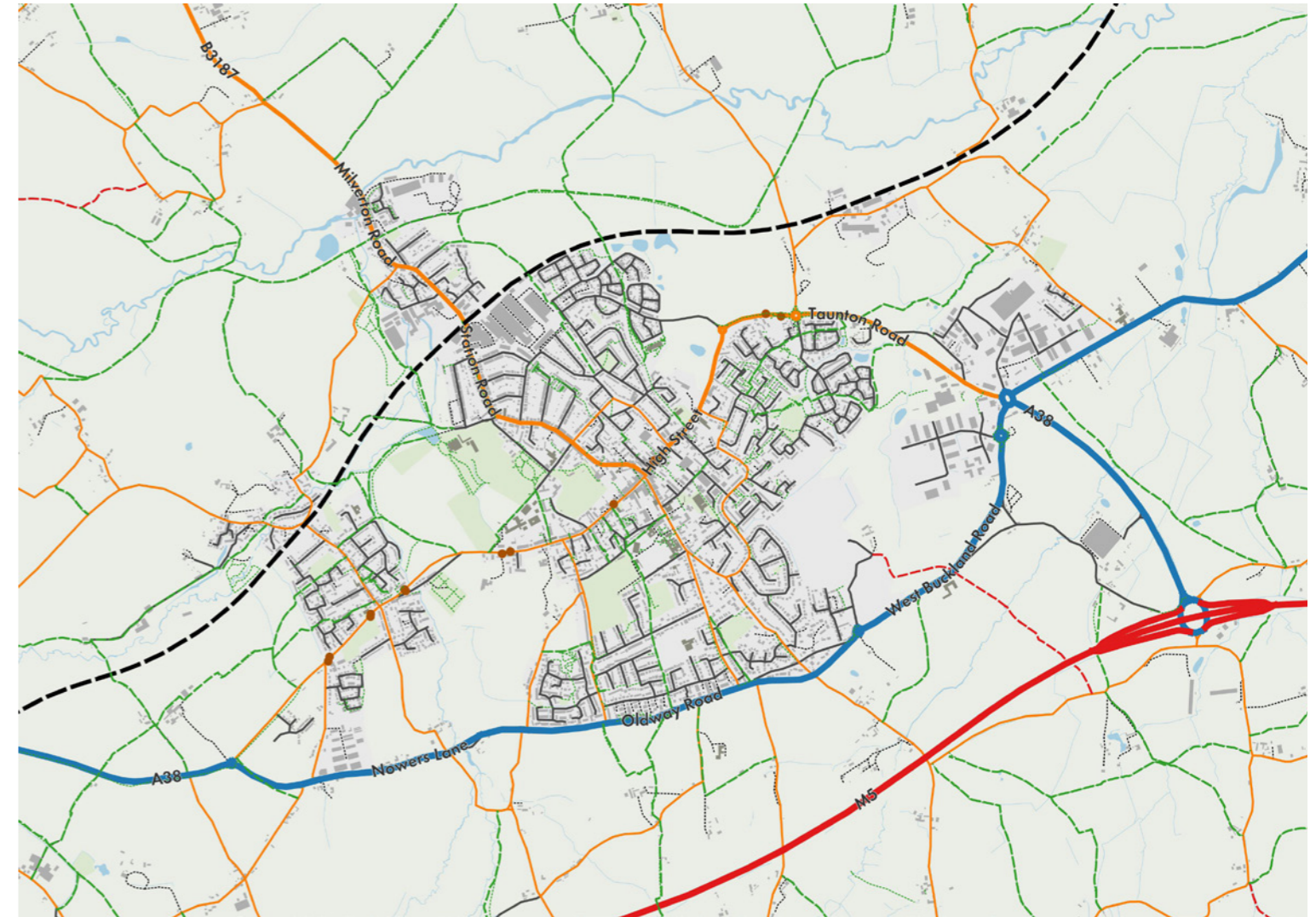
Connectivity

Wellington is well-connected both regionally and nationally by the Strategic Road Network, namely the M5, which links to Exeter, Bristol, Birmingham and beyond. The A38, part of the Major Road Network, runs south of the town, linking to the M5.

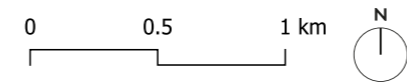
The town centre is well-connected in all directions by B roads, however, experiences major congestion problems due to the confluence of four key roads being at the very centre of Wellington. The town's relatively historic street pattern has a finer grain which complicates these issues and places strain on infrastructure, accessibility to the centre and produces sustainability issues.

Local roads in Wellington often take the form of cul-de-sacs which do not lend themselves well to positive internal connectivity, again placing strain on the B roads (Exeter Rd, Taunton Rd, North St, South St).

Public transport is limited with the only bus stops connecting east and west Wellington, leaving no north to south routes. There are plans for the opening of a Wellington railway station north of the town centre which will provide sustainable connectivity and transport options and encourage walkability in the town.



Connectivity



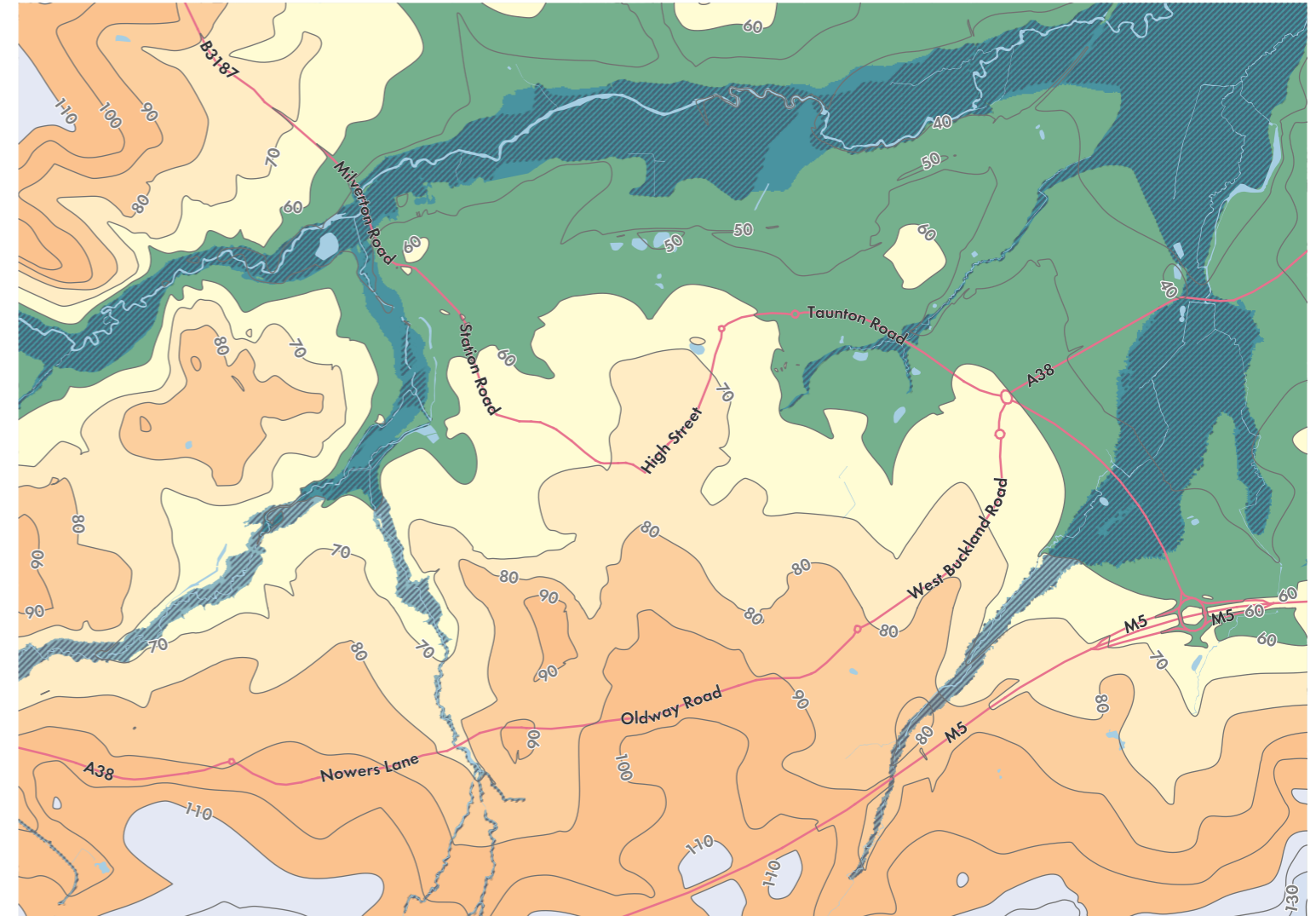
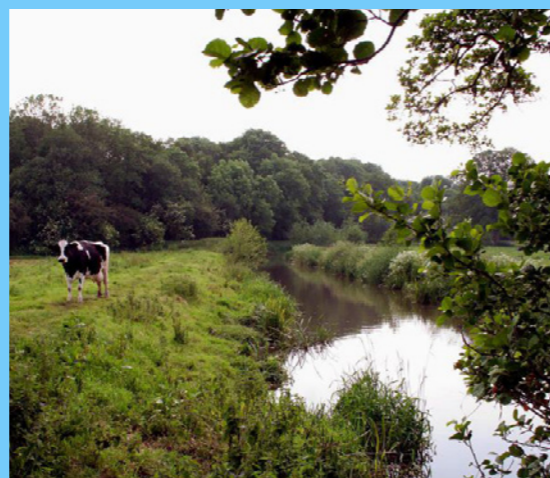
- Bus stop
- Rail track
- Public rights of way
- Footpath
- Restricted Byway
- unofficial paths
- Roads
- Motorway
- A Road
- B Road
- Minor Road
- Local Road
- Restricted Local Access Road

Flooding

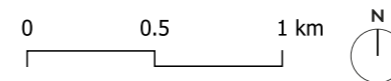
Wellington lies within the valley of the River Tone, meaning that part of the town and its surrounds are susceptible to flooding from the river and its tributaries. This area is characterised by Low Vale Farmland that produce clay and peat moors. Flood zone 2 areas surround the town, following the south-westerly path of the River Tone. The river is surrounded by flat green land which acts as effective flood plains, and are zone 3 flood zones.

Future stages of the plan-making process will need to consider flood risk and the approach to phosphate mitigation, drawing on more detailed evidence base studies and strategies. The Place Plan makes a number of references to areas where assessments will be required, but these are not exhaustive, and do not prejudice or replace the need for future studies including SFRA as part of the development of future planning policy guidance and site allocations. Future studies will need to consider:

- Appropriate locations for development in response to flood risk assessments.
- Blue green infrastructure including the multi-functional benefits of green infrastructure for flood alleviation, SUDS and health benefits.
- An examination of catchment-based improvement works to alleviate flood risk and the need for preparation of flood risk plans.
- The strategic interface between flood risk management and phosphates mitigation.



Flooding and topography



Legend

- Flood and topography**
- Contours all
 - Surface water
 - nat_floodzone3_v2
- Flood zones**
- Flood Zone 2
- Topography (metres)**
- 40 - 50
 - 50 - 60
 - 60 - 70
 - 70 - 80