



2032

AXBRIDGE

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Shaping the future of our town

A Neighbourhood Plan gives a voice to the town's residents in how they would like the town to be developed. This document reflects the views of Axbridge people and will shape development between 2022 and 2032.



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CHAPTER 1

AXBRIDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN: LEGISLATION AND PROCESS

Overview

- 1.1. The Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan (ANP) has been produced to support the Government's approach to planning as contained in The Localism Act 2011. The intention of the Act is to allow local people to have a greater say on development in their area. This Neighbourhood Plan reflects the core themes of the Sedgemoor District Council (SDC) Local Plan (LP) as adopted 20 February 2019, and also conforms to the revised National Planning Policy Framework, 2021 (NPPF).
- 1.2. The NPPF was first published in 2012 (with amendments in 2018, 2019 and 2021) to replace previous national planning statements. A key element of the policy is the presumption in favour of sustainable development that requires planning authorities to assess economic, social and environmental impacts.
- 1.3. Paragraph 16 of the NPPF requires plans to be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. The Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan is aligned with this objective of the NPPF.

- 1.4. Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan, when adopted, will form part of the development plan as defined by s38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and will be used in conjunction with the Local Plan to determine planning applications that are submitted for the area covered by the Plan, namely the Parish of Axbridge, unless material considerations indicate otherwise (para 2 NPPF).

How the Plan was developed

- 1.5. Axbridge Town Council established the Axbridge Neighbourhood Planning Group (ANPG) in September 2015. The objectives were to allow local people to have a greater say on development within Axbridge and for the Town to benefit from the enhanced Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments resulting from an adopted Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.6. In May 2016 a consultation event was held focused on Axbridge Town Hall and the Town Council stall in the farmers' market. The event provided an opportunity to discuss the development of the Neighbourhood Plan and the issues that people felt important for Axbridge.

1.7 As well as the general discussions, people were asked to identify what they liked about Axbridge and what they would like to change. Many people filled in a pro forma that gave the two questions; others used yellow post it notes and boards provided for the answers. Details of this initial consultation can be found at:

<http://www.axbridgeneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/initial-consultation-2/>

1.8. In November 2016 questionnaires were issued to every household and businesses in Axbridge. The 339 questionnaires that were returned by January 2017 were collated and the findings published on the Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan website:

<http://www.axbridgeneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/survey-results/>

1.9. Following analysis of the survey results and consultation feedback specific Aims, Objectives and Policies were developed. The consultation material included a number of potential zones to obtain specific feedback from the Axbridge community on their preferences for sites of future development (See Appendix 7). A second round of consultation consisting of a further household survey (March 2018) and Town Hall meeting (April 2018) were then undertaken.

The results of this consultation can be seen at:

<http://www.axbridgeneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/second-consultation-results/>

1.10. A leaflet containing high level results from the 2018 consultation was produced and distributed to all Axbridge households and businesses. As well as summarising the consultation findings, the leaflet also asked for additional comments and welcomed further ideas and support for the Axbridge Neighbourhood Planning Group. A copy of the leaflet can be found at: <http://www.axbridgeneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Newsletter-June-2018.pdf>

1.11. The draft plan was opened for comment on 8th December 2019 via the Neighbourhood Plan website. This was publicised throughout the town via the Town Council's newsletter and flyers in local shops and at the farmers market. Comments were sought and resulted in 9 written submissions. The content of these has been discussed and considered.

1.12 Formal Reg 14 consultation was undertaken from 23rd April until 20th June. Submissions were invited from 135 organisations along with all residents. 23 submissions were received and a number of revisions made to the draft plan.'

339 **RESPONDENTS TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan - Timeline





The community

2.5. At the last census Axbridge had a population of 2,057². Appreciation of the community spirit of Axbridge was a highly conspicuous element in the ANP 2017 consultation. This was fully confirmed by the 2018 household survey, with 96% of respondents saying they particularly valued the community spirit of the town³.

2.6. It is difficult to define exactly 'a sense of community'. Some aspects, such as Axbridge Square, have a clear physical reality, while others - the willingness of individuals to help others and participate in community activity for instance⁴ - are less tangible. The Square, pub, cafe and restaurants and the Farmers' Market were the most highly rated physical features contributing to community spirit, closely followed by social events, the reservoir, and the Town Hall. To preserve the sense of community in Axbridge, policy must be guided by a need to maintain and increase social activities and amenities.

² Census 2011. Also see Appendix 5.

³ Community Consultation Question 20 & 21.

⁴ See <https://axbridge-tc.gov.uk/organisations/>

2.7. The town's size, which in turn is intimately tied to its geographical and environmental limits, generates a sense that most people feel able to know or get to know others in the town. Practically all of the addresses in the town and the central facilities of The Square are within reasonable walking distance.

2.8. Whole-town events are very well attended and generate wide networks of friendship and collaboration, such as those organised by the Axbridge Sports and Social Committee. Examples include Axbridge Fun Day held on the Furlong and Father Christmas in the Square, the Blackberry Carnival, The Civic Service and Rumble in the Jumble.

2.9. The most impressive of town events is undoubtedly the ten-yearly Axbridge pageant. The town is immensely proud to hold this event illustrating its history over the last 2000 years. It takes place in the Town Square and involves over 400 residents.



Axbridge Pageant 2010

2.10. The Axbridge Pageant embodies and maintains a strong awareness of the town's heritage and its enactment in The Square further highlights the unique value of the town's architecture and layout. Axbridge is the only town in England that continues to hold a pageant.

2.11. The sheer variety of activities and groups in the town reinforces many community connections. As well as weekly meetings for sports training and fixtures, various other societies and groups for all ages maintain a regular schedule of meetings⁵. In addition to the formal structures of school, churches, town council, health centre and so on, Axbridge enjoys a rich expression of wider interests in theatre, cinema, music, photography, gardening, walking and other leisure pursuits. Axbridge

Archaeological and Local History Society meets regularly, and Axbridge District Museum Trust provides a popular venue for residents and visitors alike in The National Trust's King John's Hunting Lodge.



Axbridge Day 2018

⁵ See <https://axbridge-tc.gov.uk/calendar>



2.12. These events demonstrate the connectivity between the nature of Axbridge's community assets and their value to the life of the residents of the town. The ANP seeks to protect this relationship. The important locations used by the community are listed in the Plan of Community Assets on page 84.

2.13. In addition to the rich community and cultural heritage expressed in the ANP community consultation, a number of recurring themes offer the potential to structure change and development whilst retaining and enhancing the feel and identity of Axbridge.

2.14. These themes revolve around: affordability of housing, design style, traffic and road safety, employment and business generation and self-containment in the supply and transport of resources and resilience in the face of climate change and energy supply. The ANP weaves in these themes as a way to structure planning policy that is responsive to community need and the physical constraints of Axbridge itself.



Vision for Axbridge

2.15. Axbridge is unique. It will need to respond positively to the Environment and Climate Change Emergency. The town will need to accommodate sustainable housing and employment growth. These challenges will be met by ensuring that new developments meet sound sustainable objectives whilst ensuring that opportunities for appropriate housing and business, focused on the needs of the community are delivered. The vibrant community spirit, historic background and local countryside, so valued by its residents will be preserved and enhanced.

CHAPTER 3

HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Neighbourhood Plan Area

3.1. Housing styles in Axbridge reflect its growth over the last few centuries with over 938 households in total⁶. This includes examples of Grade II listed properties directly fronting onto the street. Some are situated in the medieval square at the heart of Axbridge, others radiate outwards along High Street, West Street and St. Mary’s Street. They form part of the designated conservation area (see map on page 75), along with several old properties of character on Moorland Street.

3.2. In other locations, there are detached properties set back from the road, some of individual design. North of Cheddar Road several relatively modern brick-built cul-de-sacs offer a variety of house sizes. Orchard Road, Knightstone Close, and Parkfield Road embody a style of housing that was originally developed as social housing. Houlgate Way contains relatively modern properties, but with access to over 30 older apartment households in St John’s Court, the conversion of the former workhouse premises. Reads Garden, and adaptations of older premises off Penn Way and Meadow Street show carefully designed examples of recent infill. These housing developments contain a mixture of local authority,

ex local authority and privately owned housing. There are also a number of residential properties to the North of the A370 bypass. This variation of housing stock gives a diversity to the visual identity of the town.



⁶Current Town Council figure for newsletter distribution.

3.3. Although Axbridge has a rich and diverse architectural history the town recognises that future development, whilst honouring the visual identity of the town, must meet the need for suitable and sustainable housing that benefits its residents and fosters a sense of community.

3.4. Despite the breadth of architectural styles and streetscapes, there are key common aspects in terms of design and location that have been highlighted by consultation as being important to the community. These will have a positive impact in determining the future character of Axbridge and it is important that they are reflected within any further development. These include:

- the protection of green spaces;
- design that harmonises with the visual identity of Axbridge and its townscape;
- appropriate parking provision within any new development;
- the need for affordable homes;
- ecological and sustainability issues both in design and function.

3.5. These aspects of housing development need to be balanced against the need to retain the unique visual historic character of Axbridge. In addition, with Axbridge being within the setting of the Mendips Hills



High St

AONB, consideration to potential impacts on sensitive landscape and wildlife sites is required⁷. Development potential is also affected by a Flood Zone immediately to the south of the town⁸.

Housing numbers

3.6. Sedgemoor's Local Plan identifies the need for a minimum of 70 more dwellings in Axbridge outside of settlement boundary. The 2016 Axbridge Town Council Housing Needs Survey identified 28 respondents indicated a need to move within Axbridge within 5 years but do not have the ability to purchase a property outright. 17 of these respondents indicated a need for a one or two bedroomed property. In order to deliver a sustainable, mixed and balanced community all housing development proposals for residential development (both market and affordable) will be expected to provide a suitable mix of different types and sizes of housing to meet the needs of the community, based on best evidence. This is also a requirement of the Sedgemoor District Council Local Plan District Wide Policy D5. Details of Axbridge Town Council's Housing Needs Survey can be found at <http://www.axbridgeneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Infographic-Axbridge.pdf> and Axbridge Town Council's Affordable needs Policy at <https://axbridge-tc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Appendix-D-Council-Policies.pdf> (see Policy 3).

⁷ Axbridge Hill and Fry's Hill are designated as Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI).

⁸ Strategic flood risk assessment is provided by Sedgemoor District Council.

3.7. The Cheddar Road site (see appendix 8, page 75) in Axbridge has outline planning permission for 20 properties (Planning Application 02/17/0002202). All these dwellings will be 'affordable' and are to be built by Stonewater Housing Association. Sedgemoor District Council have agreed to make a contribution to the costs of this development to provide energy efficient features that will make the dwellings more affordable to live in. Only 10 of the properties sit outside of the current settlement boundary and therefore count towards the 70 dwellings required in the Sedgemoor Local Plan.

3.8. Outline planning permission has been given for a site on Houlgate Way for a further 53 homes, 30% of which will be affordable (Planning Application 02/16/00030). All 53 of these homes count towards the 70 dwellings required in the Sedgemoor Local Plan.

3.9 Infill development within the Axbridge Settlement Boundary is supported where possible over development outside the Settlement Boundary. However, it is recognised that more land outside and contiguous to the Settlement Boundary will be needed to reach the minimum required allocated housing numbers (70 homes).

3.10 Further to the public consultation in 2017 it was decided that a Call for Sites was required to ensure that viable sites could be identified for potential development. The Call for Sites in Axbridge conducted by the ANP in 2018 has identified 4 additional sites offering a potential of 9 new homes. Full details of these sites can be found in Appendix 4. The sites

identified through the Call for Sites process have been assessed against set criteria.

3.11. The number of homes identified for Cheddar's Yeo Valley site is outside of the Axbridge parish boundary (planning reference 17/18/00073 identifies 100 new homes, with 15 being affordable). If planning permission is granted this development will impact on Axbridge's infrastructure and amenities. This may include the school, doctor's surgery and, on a day-to-day basis, use of the post office, co-op and chemist . All would impact on road use and parking.

Planned development



3.12. In response to Sedgemoor's Local Plan which requires provision of a minimum of 70 homes, and acknowledging current development expectations as set out above, we have planned for the total provision to be 71 homes over the life of the plan. The planned provision is set out below:

Existing Commitments:

- **Mendip View: 10 homes**
- **Site AP01 (Sunnymead): 2 homes**
- **Site AP04 (Holly Tree): 1 home**

Allocations:

- **Houlgate Way: 53 homes**
- **Site AP02 (Hazeldene): 3 homes**
- **Site AP03 (land adjacent to Compton House): 2 homes**

Please see map in Appendix 8, page 80, for an overview of all development sites.

Housing and Development Aims and Objectives

Aims:

- Meet local housing, commercial and community needs in a way that fits with and enhances the character of the designated area.
- Ensure that any development of the town protects the natural and historic environment and availability of green spaces within the designated parish boundary.
- Maintain clear boundaries to protect the spatial integrity of the town.
- Ensure new building and alteration meets high standards of sustainability in construction, materials and ongoing use.

Objectives:

- Support the development of affordable housing, particularly for local and young people.
- Ensure the provision of an appropriate mix of housing sizes, property types and tenures.
- Support the use of contemporary and traditional design styles in the development of new homes provided they meet environmental and design standards as stated in ANP Town Design Statement. See Appendix 1.

- Support small scale developments and infill developments.
- Support retention and new development for retail and commercial uses that meet a clear majority of the town's policy criteria.

Housing and Development Policies

Policy HD-1:

Providing affordable homes to meet identified need

Development proposals that provide affordable housing will be supported where they:

- offer a range of tenures including social housing and shared ownership in accordance with the need identified in the most recent Axbridge Housing Needs Assessment*.
- give priority for occupation to meet local needs and the needs of qualifying young people (see Appendix 3) particularly those who were born or grew up in Axbridge
- are part of a mix of different housing types
- support schemes which provide long-term affordability for eligible households.

*The most recent Axbridge Housing Needs Assessment is dated February 2016

Justification

3.13. The 2017 ANP survey, and the ANP Public consultation in 2018, showed a widespread acceptance of the need for affordable housing, particularly for local and young people, with the emphasis on targeted provision for those with family here or if they were born or grew up here⁹. Indeed, there are strong family ties that link the Axbridge community.

3.14. Axbridge is classified as a Tier Two Settlement in the adopted Sedgemoor District Council 2011-32 Local Plan. Tier 2 settlements (along with higher tier settlements) are expected to accommodate the majority of the district's identified strategic housing growth requirements. Axbridge is an expensive place to buy property with an average price of £298K (October 2019)¹⁰. This exceeds the average of £231K for homes in Sedgemoor as a whole¹¹. This means housing affordability is a major barrier for local people in terms of accessing a suitable home. This is supported by the findings of the 2011 census identifies that the proportion of owner occupiers amongst those aged 16 to 49 has declined from 76% in 2001 to 64% in 2011 (See Appendix 5 page 65).

3.15. The Axbridge Town Council Affordable Housing Policy (see Appendix 3) is designed to provide local people with the opportunity to secure an affordable home on future qualifying housing developments in Axbridge, and to prioritise lettings of current housing stock to local people. The NPPF requires sufficient provision for affordable housing¹².

This is reflected in the affordable housing targets set out in the Sedgemoor Local Plan¹³ and the housing needs assessments undertaken by Sedgemoor and Axbridge Town Council¹⁴.



Policy HD-2:

Residential development

The Plan provides for a minimum of 71 dwellings over the Plan period 2020-2032.

The identified growth will be met through:

- existing commitments identified on the map on page 80
 - Mendip View, Cheddar Road. 10 dwellings
 - Site AP01 (Sunnymead). 2 dwellings
 - Site AP04 (Holly Tree), 1 dwelling and
- allocations identified on the map on page 80
 - Land at Houlgate Way. 53 dwellings
 - Site AP02 (Hazeldene). 3 dwellings
 - Site AP03 (land adjacent to Compton House). 2 dwellings.

⁹ http://www.axbridgeneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Survey_analysis7.pdf.

¹⁰ Rightmove tells us that Axbridge has an overall average price of £298,200.

¹¹ Average Sedgemoor house prices 2019.

¹² NPPF Strategic Policy 20.

¹³ SDCLP Policy D6.

¹⁴ See Infographic link in Evidence Base.

Further development proposals for residential use will only be supported if they:

- make use of suitable vacant sites within the settlement boundary, including brownfield sites or,
- are outside but well related to the settlement boundary, satisfy relevant Local Plan policies, and are either;
- to meet an identified local affordable housing need or local infrastructure priority (Local Plan policy T2b); or
- are for small scale self-build or self-commissioned projects of no more than 9 dwellings.

Elsewhere in the Parish residential development should be appropriately controlled in accordance with the Countryside Policies in the Local Plan.

Justification

3.16. The development of new housing in Axbridge is restricted by the features of its geographical location. The development of infill and small sites can maintain the integrity of town boundaries and protect the unique identity of Axbridge. This pattern of development also reflects the results of public consultation¹⁵.

3.17. ANP 2017 survey identified greatest support for small developments and individual plots containing a range of property types. 37% identified infill as preferred for site selection. One large development was seen as undesirable.

3.18. The National Planning Policy Framework identifies that larger scale developments or significant extensions to existing villages and towns need to be 'well located and designed and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities'¹⁸.

3.19. In addition to public consultation, as a way of identifying suitable locations for development, a Call for Sites was conducted in 2018 as part of the process of writing the Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan. The results identified 4 additional sites offering a potential of 8 new homes (See Appendix 4). These sites are in-line with the preferred sites for development as identified through public consultation. In addition to the above sites it is also understood that further land is also available for small scale residential development to the south of the already committed dwelling to the rear of Holly Tree Cottage (AP04), utilising the new access to provide a potential further phase of development. Any such proposal would extend development southwards, similar to the extent of the already committed development to the south of Sunny Mead. Any future proposals would therefore be considered in the context of relevant Development Plan policies, including those relating to development outside but well related to the settlement boundary.

Existing Commitments:

- Mendip View: 10 homes
- Site AP01 (Sunnymead): 2 homes
- Site AP04 (Holly Tree): 1 home

Allocations:

- Houlgate Way: 53 homes
- Site AP02 (Hazeldene): 3 homes
- Site AP03 (land adjacent to Compton House): 2 homes

Total: 71 homes

Please see map in Appendix 8, page 80, for an overview of all development sites.

¹⁵ See Question 13 & 14 in 2017 Survey.

¹⁶ (removed on instruction of the independent examiner)

¹⁷ (removed on instruction of the independent examiner)

¹⁸ National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 73.

**Policy HD-3:
Promoting good quality design**

Having regard to guidance in the Axbridge Town Design Statement, (Appendix 1), development proposals will be supported if they:

- positively contribute to the distinctive setting and characteristics of the town
- ensure the provision of an appropriate mix of housing sizes, property types and tenures, having regard to the latest mix set out in the most recent Sedgemoor Strategic Housing Land Assessment and latest Axbridge Housing Needs Assessment.
- use designs which make homes more easily adaptable for lifetime use
- include tree-lined streets unless in specific cases there are clear justifiable and compelling reasons why this would be inappropriate.
- demonstrate high quality design and environmental standards. Design which supports energy efficiency and resilience to climate change will be encouraged.

Justification

3.20. The environment of Axbridge is the most important factor in attracting people to live in the town. (See Question 6 in the 2017 ANP Survey http://www.axbridgeneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Survey_analysis7.pdf). This is a response to the diversity of its visual identity created through a breadth of housing styles. ANP 2017

survey respondents identified the need for a good mix of housing and property types¹⁹. New development needs to significantly enhance its immediate setting, whilst being sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

3.21. It is important to enhance the visual identity of the town by making use of the highest contemporary design and environmental standards that pay attention to scale, form, materials, layout, landscaping, access and design to encourage energy efficiency such as the retrofitting of solar panels. This will integrate new development with its surroundings and contribute to a sense of place for the community and visitors alike.

3.22. The aim of the Axbridge Town Design Statement is to promote high standards in the built environment (See Appendix 1). When assessing good quality design and environmental standards the Design Statement sets out the following principles in more detail.

3.23. When assessing good quality design and environmental standards, consideration will be given to developments that:

- will function well and add to the overall quality of the area
- are visually attractive
- are sympathetic to local character and history
- establish or maintain a strong sense of place
- optimise the potential of the site
- create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible

¹⁹ See Question 7 in 2017 Survey.

Policy HD-4

Meeting community needs

Where appropriate development proposals will be supported where they:

- take an integrated approach to housing and community facilities
- act to maintain and enhance local retail/commercial activity
- conserve and enhance access to the surrounding countryside
- support provision for live/work development.

Justification

3.24. This policy enables Axbridge to maintain and further develop its overall sustainability as a community with reference to the social and economic outcomes of town development. It aims to contribute towards the development of a lifetime neighbourhood²⁰.

3.25. The National Planning Policy Framework supports the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas including the conversion of existing buildings²¹. This fits with the existing commercial, retail, leisure and tourism pattern of employment within the town, where many residential buildings also house business activity. These are key areas of employment within the town. 26% of respondents

to the 2017 ANP survey identified as running a business or working from home in Axbridge, either full time or occasionally²².

3.26. The NPPF also approves well-designed new buildings to support expansion of business. In Axbridge this allows a focus to be placed on housing and development that allows/ encourages working from home, remote working, live/work. The South West has the highest percentage of employees working from home (9%) in the UK²³.

3.27. Axbridge is identified as a great place for the location or relocation of businesses. ANP Local business questionnaire identifies a wealth of small scale and specialist businesses already located in Axbridge, attracted by lifestyle and community attributes. For details see <http://www.axbridgechamber.co.uk/business-directory/>

3.38. Businesses support the development and sustainability of community through engagement in and/or sponsorship of community events such as the Blackberry Carnival, Christmas festivities, Axbridge Community Fun day and the pageant (every ten years). A strong town needs strong local businesses to support a thriving local economy, create sustainable jobs and economic prosperity. The Axbridge Chamber of Commerce has an essential role in achieving these aims. This is particularly relevant to further encourage and grow a strong sense of community and prosperity for the town and its residents.

²⁰ See <http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/pages/lifetime-homes-principles.html>

²¹ The National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 84.

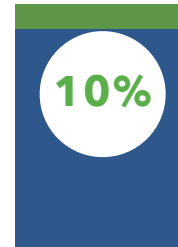
²² Question 16 in the 2017 ANP survey.

²³ TUC (2018) <https://www.tuc.org.uk/news/growth-homeworking-has-stalled>

3.29. Local businesses identify that in order to grow and harness the potential for development in industry, support facilities, such as a local work hub or a commercial shared work space, need to be available. Support for this is seen in the ANP 2017 questionnaire with shared workspaces, home working and agricultural employment seen as most desirable in the development of businesses and local employment.

3.30. In Axbridge agriculture is an important part of local commercial activity and is a desirable sector for employment development²⁴. The NPPF supports the development of housing for rural and farm workers who need to live near to their place of work in the countryside²⁵.

3.31. Over the last decade the South West has maintained its status as the region of highest employment of the workforce in the UK (80.8%, October 2019) with a marked increase in working from home (18.7% in 2008 to 22.2% in 2018)²⁶. In Axbridge, the ANP questionnaire of 2017 shows 26.3% of respondents working full time or occasionally from home²⁷, and some local employment such as in servicing and sales depends on travelling to different places with home as a base. Given the town's further heavy dependence on commuting to a workplace, long term sustainability suggests meeting clear needs for local shared workspace, working from home, or local offices²⁸. As of 2020 anecdotal evidence suggests that more people will be working from home.



10% OF PEOPLE IN ENGLAND & WALES WORK FROM HOME



13% OF PEOPLE IN THE SOUTH WEST WORK FROM HOME



15% OF PEOPLE IN AXBRIDGE WORK FROM HOME

²⁴ Question 15 in the 2017 ANP survey.

²⁵ NPPF Paragraph 80.

²⁶ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes>

²⁷ Question 16 2017 ANP Survey.

²⁸ Question 17 2017 ANP Survey.

CHAPTER 4

COMMUNITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Background to policies

4.1. Much of Axbridge’s infrastructure has developed over its long history. Its geographical position, hemmed in between moorland and the Mendip Hills, leaves little opportunity for expansion and change. However, this has resulted in a tight knit community that wishes to resist coalescence with its neighbours of Cross or Cheddar to retain the unique character and identity of the town²⁹.

4.2. Appreciation of the community spirit of Axbridge was a highly conspicuous element in the ANP community consultations with 96% of respondents saying they particularly valued the community spirit of the town. Many went on to identify specific features of the town’s infrastructure, facilities and activities which they felt could preserve and develop that sense of community³⁰. These are explained in Chapter 2 of the ANP.

4.3. It is difficult to articulate these features into an exact set of ingredients. Some, such as Axbridge Square, have a clear physical reality – what can be termed as hard infrastructure. Others fall into the less tangible category of soft infrastructure, which refers to all the institutions and activities that support the economic, health, social, and cultural

standards of a community. Many aspects of soft infrastructure have a direct bearing on planning policy, but less obvious aspirations must also be noted as a guide to future sustainable development.

4.4. A guide to priorities can be found in ranking the main themes from a wide variety of questionnaire responses to what people felt would contribute to community spirit:

ACTIONS NEEDED	RANK
Preserve/expand community	1
Community hall/improve town hall	2
Improved communications	3
No/less parking in The Square	4
More shops/eateries	5
Traffic calming/more lighting	6
Inclusion for all	7
Encourage small business	8

4.5. Axbridge Square is the centre and the hub of the town. It helps to cement the community feeling and is a place where people meet. 99% of respondents felt that the Square made a contribution to the community spirit. In addition, 59% of respondents gave a medium or high priority to improving or expanding pubs/cafes/restaurants in the ANP 2017 Survey.

²⁹ See ANP Survey questions 9, 14 and 30.

³⁰ See ANP Survey question 20 & 21.

town. Protecting commercial activity in the square and throughout the parish is vitally important in maintaining this sense of community, and also in attracting visitors to the town.

4.6. The NPPF also emphasises the importance of supporting prosperous rural economies and aims to:

- support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside.
- promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship³¹.

4.7. Good quality new housing in appropriate locations within Axbridge will be planned to take into account the soft infrastructure that supports a strong sense of community coherence. It will also pay attention to any negative pressure on the hard infrastructure of the town that new development may bring.

4.8. Current information is limited on the long-term capacity of the drainage, sewerage, energy supply and telecommunications systems. This is an issue of concern. The 2013-14 winter floods left Axbridge Square and The Bank House under water and required urgent upgrading of the culverts beneath The Square.

4.9. Likewise the long-term capacity of medical and school facilities must be analysed. Initiatives to identify any weaknesses in hard infrastructure

must be supported by developers and are recommended before any significant development is permitted.

4.10. The ANP recognises the importance of renewable and low carbon energy initiatives as the hard infrastructure of Axbridge is developed. It adopts the broad Local Plan vision on this issue³² and offers further local detail in Chapter 7, Aspirations and in Appendix 2. The policies below seek to ensure a high level of sustainability for the infrastructure of Axbridge and in so doing ensure a positive effect on the viability of its community.

³¹ NPPF Supporting a prosperous rural economy, Paragraph 84.

³² SDCLP Living Sustainably, p.8.

Community and Infrastructure Aims & Objectives

Aims:

- Ensure that infrastructure provision keeps pace with development in the town.
- Seek to enhance and protect local services, utilities and infrastructure to support local needs.
- Protect and enhance the spaces, facilities and built environment which support a sense of community.
- Protect the sense of the town's identity by promoting its diverse mix of economic, cultural and social activity.

Objectives:

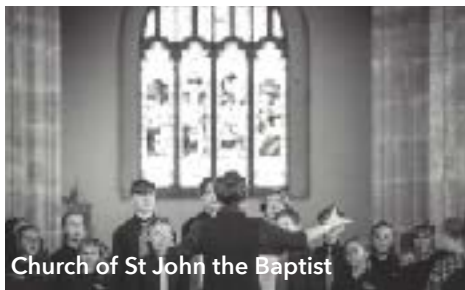
- Preserve and enhance the sense of identity by limiting town expansion to prevent coalescence with either Cross or Cheddar.
- Prevent overloading of current drainage, sewerage and road systems.
- Seek to protect and enhance the use of prioritised community assets including The Square, The Furlong, pubs and cafes, Farmers Market, access to Cheddar Reservoir (See Plan of Community Assets on page 80).
- Research and explore possibilities for enhancement and extension of community buildings and spaces.
- Encourage and support agricultural and small-scale local business initiatives within the parish.
- Measure, track, promote and act on the understanding and development of the town's hard infrastructure needs.
- Research and support sustainable local low carbon developments such as local renewable energy, micro-grid schemes and the use of solar panels.



Farmers Market



Blackberry Carnival



Church of St John the Baptist



Axbridge Day



Boxing Day Hunt



Axbridge Fun Day

Community and Infrastructure Policies

Policy C&I-1: Infrastructure

Development proposals will be supported where they:

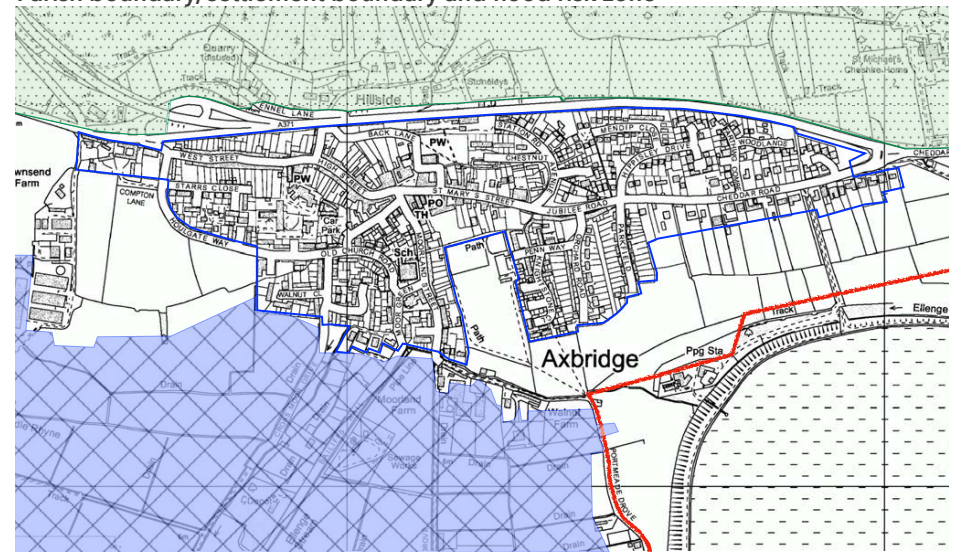
- protect the town's identity, maintaining the green spaces eastwards towards Cheddar and westwards towards Cross, identified on the maps on page 76
- avoid significant adverse impact on drainage, sewerage and drainage, sewerage and road systems or that suitable mitigation measures are in place. This should include the provision of a high quality SUDS system where possible on individual application sites and developments to meet any local policies in terms of discharge rates

Justification

4.11. There are already clear natural constraints on the residential boundary of Axbridge: flood plain to the south, the Mendip Hills AONB to the north and parish boundaries to the east and west.

4.12. Drainage and sewerage systems pose difficulties for development because of their age and capacity. Wessex Water has confirmed that the sewers in Axbridge are mostly adequate, but there are a few under some strain. It also insists that new developments only connect flows from kitchens, toilets and baths to the foul network. Surface water runoff (e.g. rainfall) should not be connected to the foul system and instead drained using sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS), so as not to increase flood risk.

Parish boundary, settlement boundary and flood risk zone

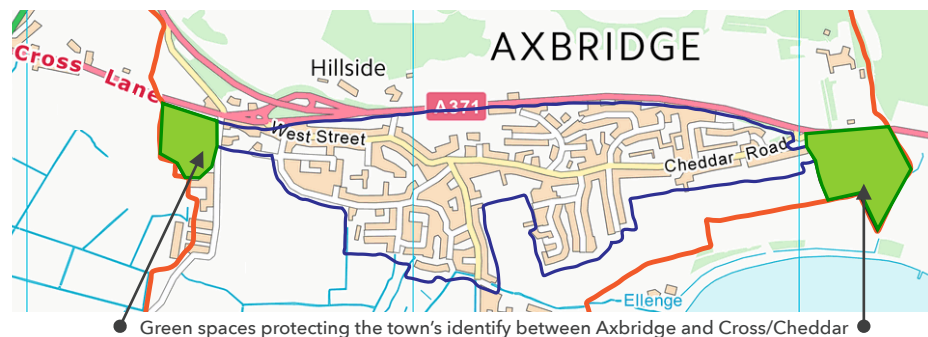


Date Created: 20-5-2017 | Map Centre (Easting/Northing): 343252 / 154452 | Scale: 1:6500 | © Crown copyright and database right. All rights reserved (0100051834) 2017

— Parish Boundary — Settlement Boundary AONB Flood Risk Zone

4.14. We seek to preserve Green Buffers to the East and West of the Town (See map below and also on page 76). The Green Buffers are small green areas intended to define the edges of Axbridge and to prevent development sprawl into neighbouring parishes. The areas have been selected with this single purpose and there is no intention to try and restrict sustainable development overall. The need for green spaces within the parish and their possible designation will continue to be examined in the light of housing developments. Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities³³. NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users. For example, by adding links to existing rights of way networks³⁴.

Proposed green 'buffer zone' spaces



³³NPPF Paragraph 98.

³⁴ NPPF Paragraph 100.

Policy C&I-2:

Protecting utilities, infrastructure and community coherence

Development proposals will be supported where they lead to a rate of growth which matches identified housing needs and facilitates the integration of new residents into the community.

Development proposals will be supported where they make the following contributions, as appropriate, in accordance with the statutory tests in the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010:

- Contribute to the enhancement or extension of the community assets identified in the Axbridge Town Design Statement (Appendix1).
- Maintain or improve facilities for the wide variety of groups and activities in the community which create sporting, leisure, artistic, educational, and caring opportunities at all age levels.
- Demonstrate sufficient capacity in the school and doctors' surgery to accommodate the new development.

Where it has been identified by the relevant authority that improvements are required to services and infrastructure as needs and requirements that are expected to arise from that development, development proposals will be supported where:

- They are implemented alongside the necessary improvements to the infrastructure to support them.
- Prior to occupation of a development site, the necessary improvements should be completed.

Justification

4.15. Axbridge First School Academy is already highly constrained for classroom space. There have been frequent efforts to modify and adapt the structure of existing school buildings, with the inevitable use of some portable cabin types of accommodation. The school would need to move to a new location to cope with an increase in pupils and it is therefore important that building a new school is supported by the town. School Governors have confirmed that there are no current plans for the school to move.

4.16. The First School Academy playground space is almost entirely tarmac and offers very limited scope for recreation and sports. The school field at the Furlong is available for such activities.

4.17. Axbridge Medical Practice has confirmed that its facilities and staffing are adequate for the current size of the community. They would expect increased funding for staff if their registered numbers increase, but there are clear logistical constraints on the size of the Axbridge surgery and access to it. Parking within the present surgery site on Houlgate Way is very limited, leading to overspill on-street parking. This effectively creates a single lane on Houlgate Way for what is both a bus route and a busy route for traffic in and out of the town. Future use of land near to the surgery must be carefully considered with regard to these concerns.

4.18. Access to locations in the town may be adversely affected by increased traffic caused by new housing development. Within the town there are already many pinch points for traffic on narrow roads. The Square is subject to the competing demands of local parking, public transport and large delivery vehicles. A number of roads have pavements that are either too narrow or non-existent for safe pedestrian use.

4.19. Increased housing in the town has the potential to outstrip the limited facilities of community leisure, business and retail facilities within the town.

Policy C&I-3:

Economic resilience and sustainability of the community

Development proposals will be supported where they

- Enhance the image of Axbridge as a business location.
- Increase self-containment, reduce the need to travel and are accessible by sustainable transport .
- Maintain or promote retail provision, especially in the Square and High Street, that complements the existing retail provision and/or promotes the unique town's environment to visitors.

Justification

4.20 48% of young people who live in Somerset live in rural areas³⁵.

Although unemployment over the whole of Somerset is decreasing, Sedgemoor's unemployment is higher than in other county districts, and youth unemployment figures (age 16 -24) remain higher than the county average³⁶. The long-term sustainability of the town and its community depends on how many young people and families feel they can achieve an acceptable livelihood to continue living here.

4.21. Small to medium enterprises (SME's) in total made up 99.9% of the total business stock within the district, with only 0.1% of businesses employing over 250. Small Businesses (value less than £5m and employ less than 50 people) make up 98.6%, with the majority (76.5%) employing less than 5 people. Retaining and enhancing local employment opportunities is critical in promoting greater self-containment.

4.22. Sustainability of the community means both economic and now, all the more urgently, environmental sustainability. Communities vary widely in their capacity to adapt to climate change and carbon reduction. It is therefore important to generate a specific local response, which is enlarged upon in Appendix 2. This contains for example, the requirements highlighted in the SDCLP 'Living Sustainably' Section 7 which emphasises the aspiration to engage fully in retrofit strategies for all buildings in adapting to climate change³⁷. This is important in

Axbridge where many older buildings are used for commercial and business purposes.

4.23. Axbridge is within the setting of the Mendip AONB (*see map on page 27*) and DEFRA's Landscape Review Final Report highlights the need to keep communities active and vibrant with good services and strong transport links³⁸.

4.24. The National Association of AONBs, supported by DEFRA, have an objective to: *Support the economic and social wellbeing of local communities in ways which contribute to the conservation, and enhancement of natural beauty*³⁹.

³⁵ See somerseintelligence.org.uk

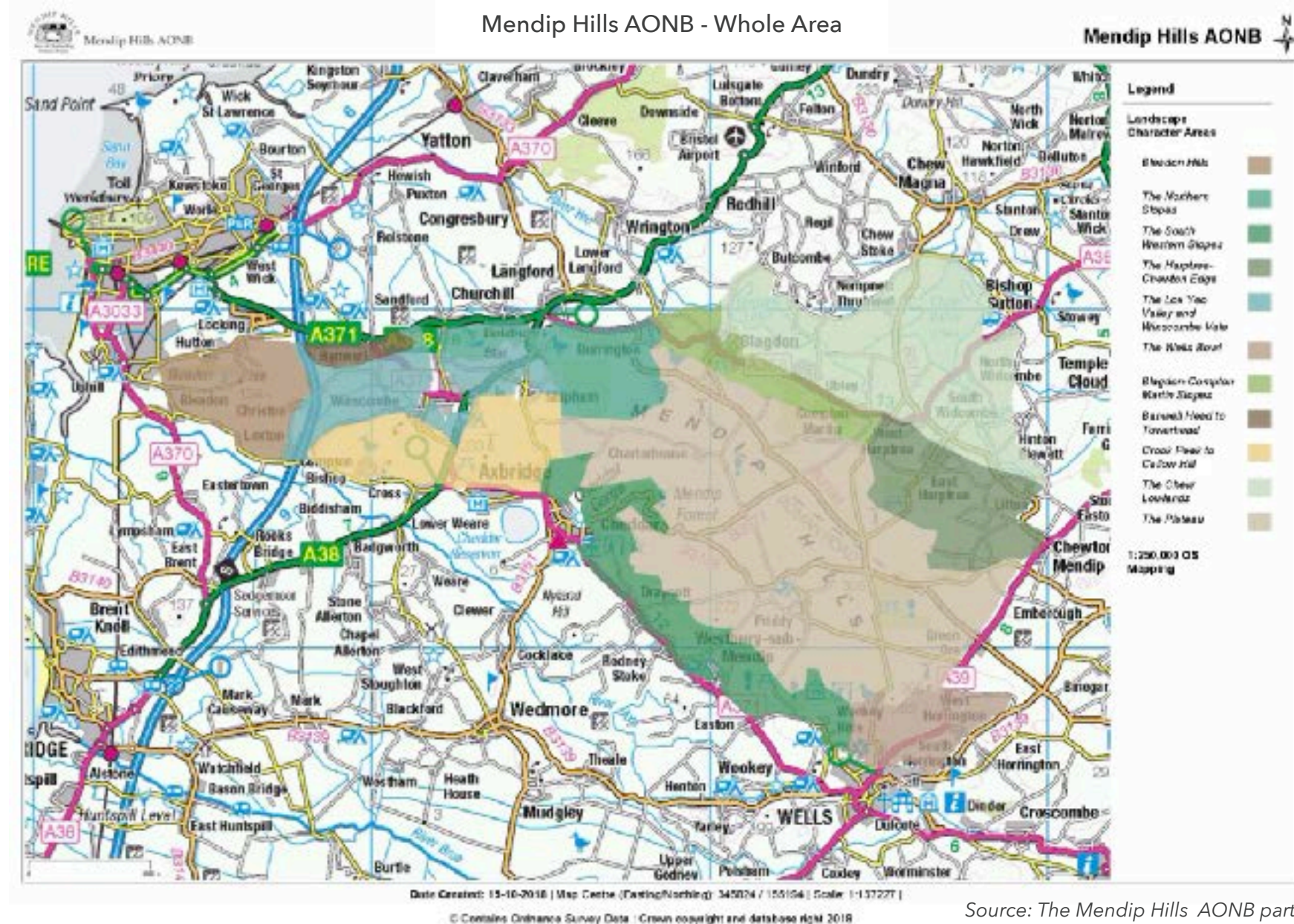
³⁶ See somerseintelligence.org.uk

³⁷ SDCLP: *Climate Change Adaptability*. Section 7. 28.

³⁸ Chapter 3 of Defra's *Landscape Review Final Report, Living in Landscape*

³⁹ See 2.6 Mendip Hills AONB and National Association for ANOBs shared objective.

Mendip Hills AONB - Whole Area



Source: The Mendip Hills AONB partnership

CHAPTER 5

HISTORIC AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



Background to policies

- 5.1. Axbridge has a particularly strong heritage that is linked to its environment.
- 5.2. The history of Axbridge can be traced back to the reign of King Alfred when it was part of the Saxons' defence system for Wessex against the Vikings. The area was inhabited during the Roman period and, earlier still, by prehistoric man, whose flint tools have been found on the slopes of the local hills.
- 5.3. By the time of Domesday there was a mint, market and 32 burgesses. In the C13 the town was granted a charter by King John when he sold the rest of the manor to the Bishop of Bath and Wells. In 1243 the town was represented as a borough by its own jury at the eyre. It is clear that the town enjoyed an autonomy largely unaffected by the Bishop, who probably only held a few rents in the town. There were numerous grants

of charters and the town enjoyed grants of markets and fairs and freedoms from tolls throughout the country. Its wealth was ultimately based on the wool trade and a craft guild was founded. After the medieval period the town declined, as it lay away from main roads and never expanded beyond its medieval limits. It is likely that the square market and the roads leading into it were developed between the C11 and the C13 when King John granted the town its charter. The site of the parish church of St John forms part of this plan. The linear development of West Street probably occurred as a suburb somewhat later - it was not made part of Axbridge until the C17.

- 5.4. Having prospered as a market town and local centre for the wool trade, Axbridge acquired a Charter of Incorporation in 1557, though this was lost at the end of the 19th century due to inability to expand due to topographical reasons.
- 5.5. There are still some traces and indeed still present closes or lanes that carry historic residential developments from the main St Mary street north to the church. These ancient lanes or closes are now either infilled with Georgian cottages or their primary street facing accommodation has grown thus closing off and engulfing the 14th century rows of cottages into the main structure. Whilst there is much evidence of the re-facing of buildings in the late 18th and early 19th century, the heart of Axbridge has changed little and it retains a high percentage of listed buildings (90 in all), both in the Square and in terraces along the main streets.

5.6. Axbridge has a designated Conservation area (1970, 1991) within the town. Its designation is due mainly to its collection of listed buildings that include The Square, Church of St. John the Baptist, King John's Hunting Lodge, Axbridge Drug Store, The Court House, former Axbridge workhouse, the Old Almshouse and St Michael's Cheshire Home amongst others.

5.7. Conservation area status has afforded planning control over alterations to existing buildings, and in the long term has safeguarded the area's character.

5.8. Residential development throughout the 20th century has encircled the historic core.

5.9. The town is surrounded by fields and hills. The Mendip Hills AONB lies to the immediate north of the town and Axbridge Hill, Shute Shelve Hill, and Fry's Hill are Sites of Special Scientific Interest. They are a nationally important botanical site, for both vascular and non-vascular plants. It also contains a roosting site for two nationally rare species of bat and a wide range of butterfly species. To the south the levels stretch to Weare and Brinscombe. Cheddar lies to the east; the Cheddar Reservoir and fields provide a much-needed buffer to separate Axbridge from Cheddar.

5.10. Over recent years the intact historic core and attractive rural setting has attracted visitors with associated tourism activity and has helped to develop a strong identity for the town.

5.11. The ANP seeks to protect and enhance the town's distinctive built heritage and natural environment through alignment with both national and local planning policy.

5.12. The NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment⁴⁰. Some of its provisions are particularly relevant to Axbridge:

- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value
- recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services
- minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity
- preventing new and existing development from contributing to unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

⁴⁰ NPPF paragraph 174.



5.13. The NPPF further emphasises that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty⁴¹. In addition DEFRA's 25 Year Environment Plan states that planning

authorities, can shape the way development is used to contribute to their social, economic and environmental enhancement. While development is not prohibited in National Parks or AONBs, major development should take place only in exceptional circumstances⁴².

5.14. The National Association for AONBs have an objective to Conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the UK's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, ensuring they can meet the challenges of the future.

5.15. The Mendip Hills AONB extends into the parish of Axbridge, therefore conservation of the townscape directly impinges on the setting and scenic beauty of the AONB to the north.

5.16. Moving on to the historic environment, the NPPF states that heritage assets such as sites and buildings of local historic value should be conserved "so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations"⁴³. It further emphasises:

- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness⁴⁴.

5.17. The NPPF places clear obligations on local planning authorities to support these and other provisions in heritage and environment. They now appear as one of the strategic priorities of the Sedgemoor Local Plan:

Enjoying and Achieving: To conserve and enhance the natural assets and heritage of Sedgemoor including its natural resources, wildlife habitats, landscape character and historic environment, including appropriate adaptation to climate change⁴⁵.

5.18. This priority is amplified throughout Policies D19 Landscape, D20 Biodiversity and Geodiversity, D21 Ecological Networks and D22 Trees and Woodland⁴⁶. Of particular importance to Axbridge is the further policy on the Historic Environment, D26⁴⁷.

⁴¹ NPPF paragraph 176.

⁴² DEFRA 25 Year Environment Plan page 57

⁴³ NPPF paragraph 189.

⁴⁴ NPPF paragraph 197.

⁴⁵ SDCLP p.14.

⁴⁶ SDCLP pp. 147-153.

⁴⁷ SDCLP p.158.

5.19. The ANP seeks to ensure that we are enacting wider district council and general government policy ambitions. These include the need to:

- protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of natural landscapes and townscapes
- promote access to the countryside
- promote high quality design that respects and enhances local character minimise pollution and other adverse effects on the local and natural environment
- encourage the use of previously developed (brownfield) land
- promote the re-use of derelict land and buildings
- remediate land contamination

Historic and Natural Environment aims and objectives

Aims:

- Protect historic buildings
- Protect natural environment and enhance biodiversity
- Minimise impact of new development

Objectives:

- Protect and enhance historic local buildings
- Protect and enhance the Square as a community and heritage space
- Protect and enhance existing green spaces
- Protect and enhance existing town views
- Seek to protect and extend the conservation area



King John's Hunting Lodge, The Square

Policy H&NE-1:

Natural Environment

Development proposals will be supported where they:

- demonstrate that there are no significant impacts on the natural environment (landscape, biodiversity and habitats) or where impacts are identified they are satisfactorily mitigated against,
- are of a scale, mass and density appropriate to their landscape setting,
- enhance the natural environment
- provide for appropriate planting which can enrich the biodiversity of the area such as locally 'indigenous' trees and hedges (secured through planning conditions or planning permissions).

Justification

5.20. The high quality of the surrounding natural environment and setting gives Axbridge its unique identity. This should not be compromised. Valued features such as views to and from the Mendip Hills and the levels and fields to south of Houlgate Way should be protected.

5.21. The 2016/17 community questionnaire (question 30) expressed strong support for protecting the town’s natural environment. Particular areas of strong support include: Increased provision of playing fields and green space, enhanced protection of historic & natural features, enhanced protection of surrounding landscape, management of green space to improve biodiversity, measures to cope with extreme weather events and high levels of energy conservation in new buildings.

5.22. NPPF and Sedgemoor Local plan both support valuing and protecting natural assets.



Western edge of the Mendips from Crook Peak to Axbridge

Policy H&NE-2:

Community Assets

Proposals that will result in the loss of or significant harm to the character or appearance of a community asset identified in the Axbridge Town Design Statement in Appendix 1 will be strongly resisted.

Justification

- 5.23. The high quality of the town's historic built environment and setting gives Axbridge its unique identity.
- 5.24. The 2016/17 community questionnaire (Question 29) expressed a strong emphasis on protecting the heritage of the town and the scale and size of the buildings.
- 5.25. The Square and surrounding buildings provide both a rich heritage context and valued practical facilities for community use.
- 5.26. The NPPF and Sedgemoor Local Plan both support valuing and protecting community and built heritage assets.

Policy H&NE-3:

Heritage Environment

Any designated historic heritage assets in the town and their settings will be conserved and enhanced for their historic significance and their importance to local distinctiveness, character and sense of place. This includes both above and below ground, listed buildings, and any monuments that may be scheduled or in the conservation area.

Development proposals that would lead to harm to the significance of designated heritage assets will be determined in accordance with Local Plan policy.

Consideration of developments that affect non-designated historic assets will take account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the assets.

Justification

- 5.27. The 2016/17 community questionnaire (Question 29) expressed a strong emphasis on protecting the heritage of the town and the scale and size of the buildings.
- 5.28. The quality of the environment in and surrounding the town played a key role for respondents to attract them to live/stay in the town. 17.2% of respondents (the highest) stated this preference in Question 30 of the 2016/17 Community questionnaire.
- 5.29. NPPF and Sedgemoor Local plan both support valuing and protecting community and built heritage assets.

Policy H&NE-4:

Town Views

Proposals for development within a Town View identified on the map on page 83 (in Appendix 8) should ensure that they respect and take account of the view concerned. Developments which would have unacceptable adverse impacts on the landscape or character of the Town Views will not be supported, especially where they damage the visual integrity of the Conservation Area.

New, high quality medium and long views should, as much as possible, be integrated into new developments to provide visual linkage to the surrounding environmental context.



Axbridge from Cheddar Reservoir

streets into The Square and the central area of town; fields to south of Houlgate Way.

Justification

5.31. The close visual relationship between the town and its surrounding rural context is realised through current high-quality views, along streets, out on to the levels and moorland and up to Fry's and Axbridge Hill. Question 31 of the 2016/17 Community questionnaire supported key views and assets that should be protected. These included: The Square and the buildings around The Square; views to and from the Mendip Hills and the levels; churches; King John's Hunting Lodge; main

Policy H&NE-5:

Protection of the AONB

Development proposals in the setting of an AONB which will have a material impact on the AONB and on people's enjoyment of it will have to submit an assessment of landscape and visual effects (including cumulative effects where relevant) and demonstrate, including through siting and design could be rendered acceptable. Development in the setting of the AONB should be in accordance with good practice guidance produced by the Mendip Hills AONB Partnership⁴⁸.

Justification

5.32. The Sedgemoor Local Plan policy D19 states that there is a need to protect the landscape in the setting of an AONB⁴⁹.



⁴⁸ See Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan, section 3.8

⁴⁹ See SLP, policy D19.

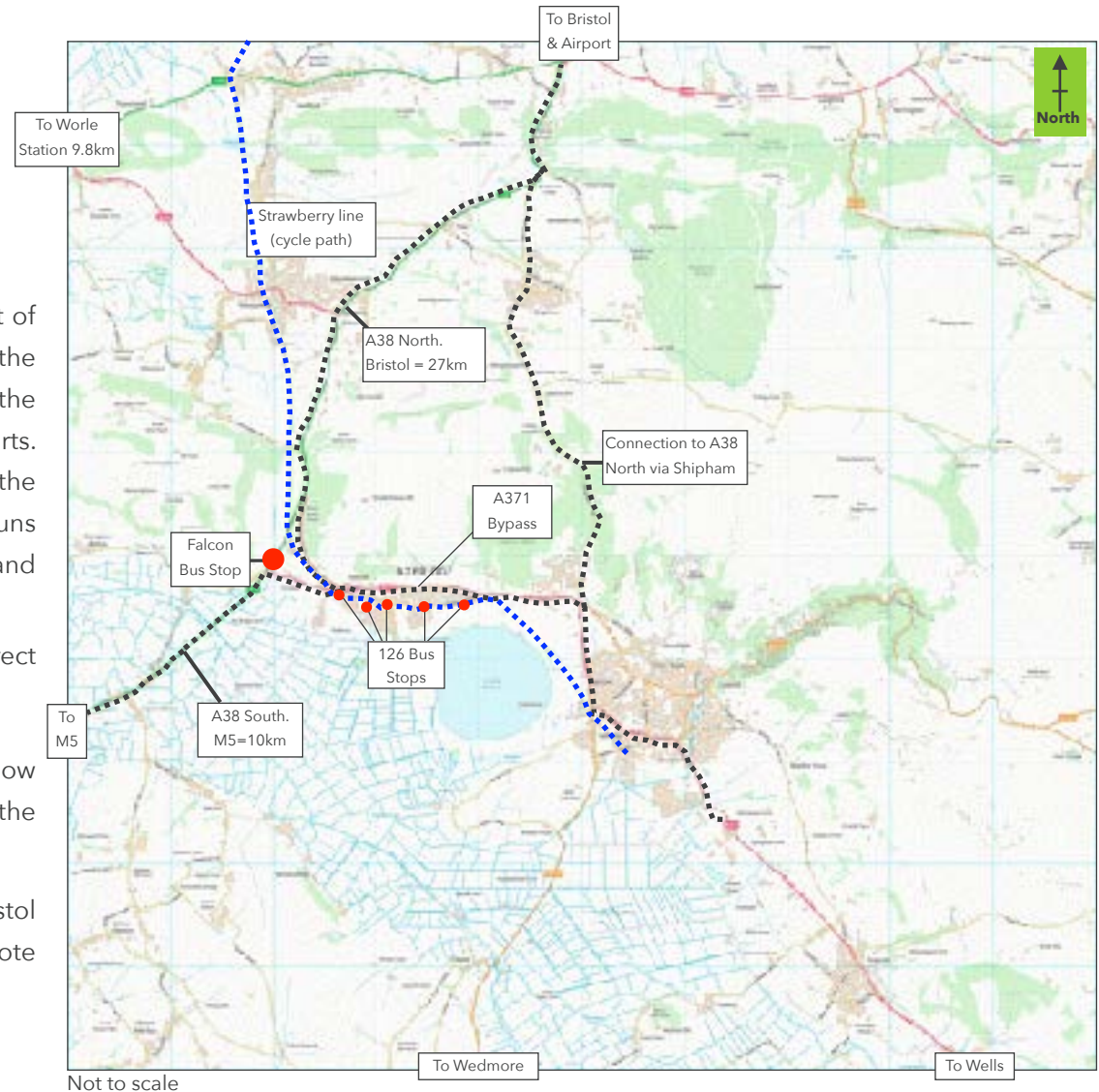
CHAPTER 6

TRANSPORT

Background to policies

6.1. The transport systems serving Axbridge are as follows:

- The road plan of Axbridge follows the medieval development of the town, with a number of very narrow streets centring on the Square. The A371 Axbridge bypass runs to the north of the development and boundaries the Mendip Hills AONB in parts. This road also divides houses on Hillside from the rest of the town. The Strawberry Line cycle path (Sustrans route 26) runs through the town and links with Cheddar to the East and Winscombe to the Northwest.
- The nearest train station is Worle (9.8km) but there is no direct public transport link.
- The bus services have been reduced in recent years and now mainly serve Weston-Super-Mare and Wells, but only during the day. The public transport links from Axbridge are:
 - The Falcon Bus to Taunton (Journey time: 1 hour) and Bristol (Journey time: 1 hour). Frequency: Hourly. It is important to note that this provision is not reliable for timing.

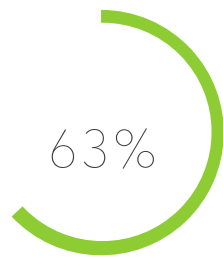


In addition, accessibility is not suitable for disabled passengers. The bus stop is 1.5km from the centre of Axbridge.

- Route 126 to Wells (Journey time: 37 minutes) and Weston-Super-Mare (Journey time: 49 minutes). Frequency: Hourly. The last bus from Weston to Axbridge leaves at 19:05, whilst the first bus from Axbridge to Wells leaves at 07:36. Buses do not run on route 126 on Sundays during winter.
- There is one bus a day to and from Bridgwater College term time only.

This picture of transport facility raises several points of concern.

6.2. For many residents the limited public transport provision is infrequent and inadequate to provide a reliable and consistent method of commuting to work. This is amplified by the fact that only 11% of Axbridge households do not have access to a car, compared with the Somerset average of 16% and the national average of 25%. (Source: 2011 census). For many, public transport is therefore impractical for work.



63% DISAGREE WITH THE ASSERTION THAT AXBRIDGE HAS GOOD TRANSPORT LINKS

6.3. Respondents to the ANP consultation questionnaire saw the town as lacking in transport links. Improving and expanding public transport was a high priority⁵⁰.

6.4. 2011 Census data relating to travel to work shows that Axbridge has a higher percentage of people working from home (5.2% in Axbridge compared to 3.5% nationally) and a lower percentage of people who travel less than 2km to work. However, the percentage of people travelling 40km or more to work is the same for Axbridge as for the rest of England. Average travel times to the nearest employment centres by car, cycle and by public transport are considered to be the same for Axbridge as the Somerset County average. Whilst strongly supporting sustainability measures and the environment, it is necessary to recognise that for the majority of the Axbridge working population the car remains the only option (See Appendix 5 for Census 2011 information).

6.5. This issue directly links with the needs and requirements of the local workforce and highlights the limitations of public transport and parking within the town itself. 2017 ANP survey identified the need to address issues relating to roads, parking, traffic calming and safety – particularly relevant if there is more pedestrian traffic in the town due to increased homeworking, and if small-scale commercial, industrial or manufacturing is developed with a resulting increase in traffic.

⁵⁰ See ANP 2018 Consultation question3.

- 6.6. This means that safe public footpaths and roads, as part of town development, are vital and relevant for access to work, school and leisure activity within the town itself and more widely for access to the surrounding countryside for leisure and community activity, including access for wheelchair and pushchair users.
- 6.7. Encouraging walking and access to the surrounding countryside has the potential to contribute to the health of the population of Axbridge. All foot and cycle routes are to be agreed between developers and the Town and Parish Councils before any new construction starts.
- 6.8. Reliance on cars as a means of transport contributes to pressure on parking and road safety. The ANP traffic survey conducted in 2018 gives a picture of the volume of traffic entering and exiting the town and moving through the narrow streets⁵¹. The community engagement work undertaken by the 'Streets of Axbridge' group in 2015 highlighted the real conflict between vehicular traffic and pedestrians in terms of speed, size, volume and the impact this has on daily life. There is a lack of parking for a large number of older properties in the town. During the second round of community consultation in March and April 2018 'Road Safety' was the second and 'Additional Parking' 4th among the proposed transport policies obtaining 'broad agreement' from the participants.
- 6.9. It is felt essential by the people of the town that existing car parks need to be preserved and appropriate new, or parking extension, initiatives should be supported⁵². Local consultation and a community survey highlighted the concern and need to maintain and, where

possible, expand the provision of new public parking. In order to preserve the limited public car parking within Axbridge the Town Council has over recent years bought Meadow Street and Moorland Street car parks from Sedgemoor District Council. While providing 69 spaces in Meadow Street (including 2 disabled bays and a Walking Bus shelter) and 21 spaces in Moorland Street (along with a disabled bay) this existing provision is frequently full. Where possible, opportunities should be sought to provide new or extensions to parking provision.

- 6.10. Axbridge needs to ensure that all new developments provide appropriate off-street parking. The specific public transport limitations and the resultant private car use are such that the ANP asserts that the minimum parking spaces for new developments should, as a minimum, be:
- 6.11. Where more than half the spaces are unallocated then there is no requirement for visitor parking. Where less than half is allocated visitor parking must be provided at 0.2 spaces per dwelling



Parking in Meadow Street Carpark

⁵¹ See ANP Traffic survey.

⁵² See ANP Survey 2017 question 23 and ANP 2018 Consultation question 3.

BEDROOMS	PARKING SPACES
1	2
2	2.5
3	3
4	3.5

These figures correspond to those stipulated in the Somerset County Council Transport Policies Parking Strategy September 2013⁵³.

6.12. While it is important that any new development has adequate access and parking, this should not be at the expense of the character of the area or the environment for pedestrians and cyclists. 98% of survey respondents believe it important to protect the heritage of Axbridge⁵⁴.

6.13. The medieval square at the heart of Axbridge is the town focal point and an important asset in attracting visitors to Axbridge. A balance needs to be struck between the importance of parking to local businesses and residents and the importance of The Square to visitors. Parking provision needs to be constantly reviewed.

6.14. The Strawberry Line cycle and walking path (National Cycle Network Route 26) passes through Axbridge and extends to Cheddar. Generally well maintained, it attracts visitors to the town as well as providing a valued facility for residents and visitors alike. As a town Axbridge is supportive of the Health and Wellbeing initiatives being promoted by Sedgemoor District Council⁵⁵. To combine wellbeing with improved safety for walkers and cyclists, Axbridge would seek safe access routes to any new developments as well as safe access to the A38 at Cross and improving safe access across the A371 from and to Hillside. The ability for residents to access Hillside safely will provide access to Hillside allotments and for widely supported use of the



Parking on both sides of Jubilee Road

AONB as a recreational resource⁵⁶. The need for improved crossing to Hillside and better pedestrian access to Cross are seen as important, echoing the emphasis on 'Countryside walks' in the community consultation responses⁵⁷.

6.15. When looking to establish or maintain pedestrian and cycle paths, much better consideration needs to be given to the access and practicalities of using these facilities by people with limited mobility such as the disabled. Local consultation and the community questionnaire indicated broad support for such improvements⁵⁸.

6.16. Whilst the subject of Road Safety was not included in the consultation

⁵³ Somerset County Council Parking Strategy 2013, p99 and p104.

⁵⁴ See ANP 2017 survey question 29.

⁵⁵ See the various initiatives in Health and Wellbeing in Somerset.

⁵⁶ Reference to Chapter 2 of the Landscapes Final Review Plan ⁵⁷ ANP 2018 Consultation Q.3.

⁵⁶ The Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan R4, page 29 ⁵⁸ ANP 2017 Survey Q.27.

process, three local initiatives that have started in Axbridge since 2018 highlight a growing resident concern. The Resident Speed Watch Group, the 'Twenty is Plenty' campaign, Streets of Axbridge community engagement work, and the Axbridge Town Council Traffic Incident Report are all indicators of an awareness of and a concern with Road Safety in the Town.

Transport Aims and Objectives

Aims:

To promote and support safe travel for all, by promoting integration of public transport, cycle paths, footpaths and rights of way; support appropriate traffic management initiatives and the provision of additional parking to ease the strain on local roads.

Objectives:

- Ensure that any new development provides appropriate off-street parking.
- Support services providing public and community transport.
- Preserve existing car parks and support appropriate new parking initiatives.
- Oversee a town wide study to review integrated transport needs including road safety.
- Review parking in the Square in the light of its importance to the town.
- Maintain and improve pedestrian and cycle access to neighbouring communities.
- Support initiatives to unite the town through improving access across the bypass.

Policy T-1

Car Parking

Development proposals which seek to provide off-street parking will be encouraged and supported where the development accords with other relevant Development Plan policies. Development proposals that seek to reduce existing parking provision will be resisted unless appropriate replacements are provided.

Justification

- 6.17. Whilst sustainable development is an essential part of everyone's future the move away from the car will be extremely difficult for a town with such poor public transport links and minimal shopping outlets.
- 6.18. The vitality of the town depends to a considerable extent on visitors and tourism. Existing public car parks are at capacity. At the same time on-street parking presents problems of safety for vehicles and pedestrians.

Policy T-2

New Development Parking

Development proposals for residential use will be supported if they provide parking in line with the Somerset County Council Transport Policies Parking Strategy 2013 and accord with other relevant Development Plan policies.



Justification

6.19 The town has limited employment, education and retail facilities. Public transport links are restricted in both frequency and destination. With town car parks at capacity and on-street parking both restrictive and dangerous, adequate parking provision is essential.

6.20. In the Somerset County Council Transport Policies Parking Strategy 2013, Axbridge is identified as Zone C for residential Parking Standards. At the minimum, parking for new developments should follow the standards stipulated in that strategy.

Justification

Policy T-3

Footpath Provision

All new housing developments should provide safe pedestrian access to link with existing or proposed footpaths ensuring that residents can walk safely to bus stops, schools and other facilities.

6.21. The ANP community consultation highlighted the need to improve walking routes, as well as the need for improvements to disabled access. Providing safe, convenient and pleasant routes to schools, the square,

bus stops, public and other facilities is particularly important and necessitates safe and convenient crossings of main roads and railway lines.

6.22. Pedestrian and cycle safety is a high priority for the town. Schools report that over 30 children a day cycle to school in Cheddar. Residents and visitors require protection from traffic risks within the town and its adjoining road links. The practical and recreational benefits of improving non-vehicular access to and from Cheddar, Cross, Winscombe and Lower Weare are increasingly important on both sustainability and safety grounds.



Strawberry Line Cycleway

Policy T-4

Road Safety

For residential development proposals, any required traffic calming and road safety initiatives should be in place prior to first occupation of the dwellings.

Proposals that rebalance the use and safety of streets in favour of pedestrians throughout the town to improve residents' well-being will be supported.

Justification

6.23. The growing unease over road safety within the Town is indicated by three recent initiatives. Even where issues are identified and mitigation is agreed it is felt necessary to insist upon completion prior to occupation. This follows examples of developers failing to fulfil their commitments to ensure road safety, such as during completion of Butcher's Yard in Axbridge.

6.24 The existing road infrastructure is very narrow in a number of places and increasing traffic levels will exacerbate the problems of traffic flow. The Square with its limited parking suffers from the conflicting demands of local and visiting traffic.

Issues Include:

- the need to improve narrow footpaths and generally enhance road safety for pedestrians and cyclists in streets pre-dating motorised traffic;
- the need to limit parking in The Square;
- improvements to the road system.

Opportunities for the latter are limited, but signage could be improved, and the bypass is capable of adequately diverting all through traffic away from the town centre.



⁵⁹(removed on instruction of the independent examiner)

⁶⁰(removed on instruction of the independent examiner)

CHAPTER 7

COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

The Community Aspirations identified in this chapter are confirmed by local consultation and survey combined with opportunities identified in writing the ANP.

7.1. Housing and Development:

- **Community Land Trust** - To support provision of affordable housing⁶¹.
- **Facilities for community activities** - develop facilities to provide opportunities for members of the community to mix and meet.
- **Provision for the local recharging of electric vehicles.** New housing should ideally include provision for dedicated charging units.

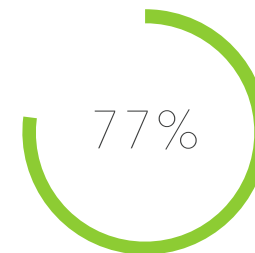
7.2. Community and Infrastructure:

- **A new community building** - A more open and multi-functional design than the existing Town Hall.
- **Enhance the use of community spaces** - Produce a plan to detail how community facilities might be developed and the priorities for this.
- **Local business hub** to support business development.

- **Community Assets** - explore opportunities to designate or acquire such assets.
- **Extend medical and educational services within the town.** Support planning initiatives to achieve this.

7.3. Historic and Natural Environment

- **Improvement of footways and footpaths.** Respondents from the Community questionnaire survey were concerned about the width and upkeep of pavements and footpaths within Axbridge. Footpaths and cycle paths are highly valued with 77% of respondents seeking improvements to footpaths generally, with a similar level of support for the establishment of safe access to Cross. The need for improved crossing to the Hillside and better pedestrian access to Cross were also seen as important as well as access to countryside walks.



**77% WANT TO SEE
IMPROVEMENTS
MADE TO
FOOTPATHS**

⁶¹ Rural Housing Alliance Affordable Rural Housing: A practical guide for parish councils p.13



- **Improvements to encourage recreation and play.** There is demand for increased playing fields, improved recreation and play facilities, especially within the Furlong and Play area.

- **Character assessment** - A character assessment was proposed as a result of the community survey. This would help protect the identity of the town

and its conservation area as well as provide a framework to support future development.

- **Compile local practical guidance on appropriate retrofit methods for various types of housing in the town.** In addition to the requirements highlighted in SDCLP, we would emphasise the aspiration for Axbridge to engage fully in retrofit strategies for adaptation to climate change.

7.4. Transport

- **Services providing public and community transport should be supported.** Axbridge is served poorly by public transport. To redress this it is essential that there should be effective lobbying of all relevant bodies led by Axbridge Town Council.

- **Oversee a town wide study to review integrated transport needs including road safety for pedestrians and cyclists in streets pre-dating motorised traffic.** In part this has been commenced as road traffic surveys and some limited speed surveys have been undertaken. The precise process and delivery are best determined by Axbridge Town Council. Joint work with Somerset Highways would seem to command high support with over 76% of respondents favouring traffic calming.
- **Prioritise initiatives to unite the town through improving access across the bypass.** More than 57% of respondents supported improved access across the A371. Dialogue needs to be opened with Somerset County Council regarding this issue.



7.5 Pedestrian and non-vehicular access

- **Upgrade the right of way from Axbridge to Cross** and make it safe from cattle, and accessible to those with disabilities and pushchairs
- **Support realistic proposals to improve access to Hillside across the bypass.** The Community Survey and local consultation highlighted the dangers and difficulties for residents and visitors in crossing the A371 Axbridge Bypass. As well as a variety of households, Hillside contains the vital town allotments and the entrance to several public rights of way into the Mendip AONB.
- **Protect and enhance access to The Strawberry Line (National Cycle Network 26) at eastern and western limits of the parish**
- **Protect and enhance access to all public rights of way linking to the parish**

Maintaining connections with the AONB is supported by a number of initiatives including DEFRA's 25-year Environmental Plan⁶⁰ and The Mendip AONB Management Plan⁶¹ which states that: *The AONB landscape is a resource to be enjoyed by all sectors of our diverse society, for active, and quieter recreational pursuits. Outdoor recreation is proved to benefit people's health and wellbeing through exercise, and opportunities to escape the pressure of everyday life. Being within a 30 minute drive from Bristol, Weston Super Mare, and Bath, the Mendip Hills*

AONB is accessible to these urban populations, as well as the local rural communities.

⁶⁰See Chapter 3, DEFRA 25-year Environmental Plan

⁶¹ See 3.5.1. page 29 of the AONB Management Plan

APPENDIX 1

AXBRIDGE TOWN DESIGN STATEMENT

The aim of this statement is to promote high standards in the built environment including landscape and building design.

1. The environment of Axbridge is often one of the main factors in residents choice to live in the town. This is a response to the diversity of its visual identity created through a breadth of housing styles. ANP 2017 survey respondents identified the need for a good mix of housing and property types⁶².
2. The Government's policy for design in the planning system is contained in the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 Para 130 states that 'Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:
 - a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
 - b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
 - c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not

preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience⁶³.

This statement identifies key areas of design consideration that are deemed important to the character of the town. This applies if it is a repair, refurbishment, regeneration or development project.

3. The local character of the town and surrounding green spaces should be safeguarded to encourage sensitive, high-quality design where new development occurs, through a process of development guidance and control. As such, the ANP's purpose is to manage change and to encourage regeneration and enhancement, and not to prevent it.

⁶² See ANP 2017 Survey question 9.

⁶³ National Planning Policy Framework NPPF Para 130.

4. It is recognised that Axbridge is primarily defined by its historic buildings and streets with a focus on The Square and adjoining streets however the character of the whole town and its relationship with its surrounding countryside is very important.
5. The traditional architecture and use of materials provides the core identity of the town. It is also understood that contemporary architecture and design contributes to the vitality of living environments and this will be supported where development can be shown to sensitively support through the use of high quality materials and building techniques the distinctive character of the town.
6. New development should significantly enhance its immediate setting, whilst being sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area. Development proposals will be supported where they are of high-quality design, enhance visual amenity of the setting and minimise any adverse visual impact on locally valued character and on neighbouring properties to the proposed development site.

Key areas of consideration:

7. **Development on the settlement edges:** Applicants for development proposals adjoining the settlement boundary should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community to create a sensitive transition between the town and the countryside.
8. **Land use:** Land use proposals should be appropriate to: site characteristics, biodiversity and environment; site location in terms of accessibility to services and facilities; the potential impact on existing communities and businesses. Wherever possible, a mix of land uses and a range of densities should be encouraged to promote diversity and viability.
9. **Appropriate siting of development:** Development should be sited and designed to make the most of public transport linkages and encourage walking and cycling.
10. **Quality of the environment.**
 - **Visibility:** Any development should be considered in relation to its visibility from both within and from outside the town, so that it is appropriate to its location.
 - **Scale of development:** Any development should be substantially of the same or lesser scale, height and mass of adjacent buildings, unless proposed as a key feature or landmark, to ensure a consistent street scene. Variation in height is acceptable, as it is a characteristic of Axbridge, but the overall heights should be respectful of those of adjoining and nearby buildings.
 - **Roofscape:** Any development should provide a roofscape appropriate to its location and visibility within the town.

- **Infill development:** Infill development within existing gaps sites in the town is encouraged. Building in gardens should only be allowed where the loss of the space is not detrimental to the overall quality and amenity of the area and where the proposals respect the character and appearance of the area.
- **Development density:** While the density of residential development should normally fall within the range defined by government guidance, it should also respect its setting and context.

11. Boundaries: New boundaries and changes to existing boundaries, both between properties and to the street, should make close reference to the traditional treatment of similar boundaries in the locality, such as height, material, planting species and style. They should be of high quality and be appropriately durable or maintainable.

12. Front gardens/areas: Any development should not result in frontages being dominated by hard surfacing and parked cars. The conversion of front gardens to hard surfaced areas should be avoided where possible. The area of hard landscaping should be minimised to enable soft landscaping to dominate and reduce the potential of flooding from water run-off.

13. Public realm: Public realm materials, street furniture and signage should be of a high quality, and reflect the character of the town. Materials of hard landscaping should be of high quality and reflect the character of adjoining buildings and areas. There should be a presumption against the

alteration of any part of remaining historic paving or street furniture. Historic iron kerbing, paving, gratings and gulleys, bollards, railings and street name signs should be protected and repaired as necessary, using traditional techniques and materials.

Street lighting furniture should be of a quality appropriate to the area it is located within. Lighting should be designed to minimise light spillage and to have the minimum brightness and period of illumination necessary for its location and purpose. Energy efficient lighting should be used where possible in preference to conventional external lighting.

Unnecessary signs should be removed within the town and street furniture should be consistent and in keeping with an historic market town.

14. Building design:

- **Architectural treatment:** New development should be of high quality, raising the standard of architectural treatment and respecting the qualities of its surroundings, such as scale, style, materials and attention to detail. Innovative designs and the contemporary interpretation of traditional design and construction will be welcomed; they should be to the highest standards and be complementary to their context. Site character, topography, vegetation, watercourses and built heritage should be valued, sustained or improved.

- **Materials:** Building materials should respect the vernacular of Axbridge and the immediate context of the development in particular in the use of local materials such as brick, lime render, pitched pantile roofs and limestone walling together with rendered frontages are prevalent in many parts of the conservation area. The use of such locally-sourced natural materials for new development should be encouraged. The use of reconstructed stone blocks should be avoided. Elsewhere, the addition of more contemporary materials would be appropriate. Materials should be locally sourced where possible.

Materials proposed should be carefully considered as some are harmful to the environment, others benign and a few have positive inputs. Regard should be given to locally-sourced materials that reduce transport costs and help to contribute to local identity.

- **Building refurbishment:** The energy-efficient refurbishment of existing properties in a manner appropriate to their quality and historic origins should be encouraged.
- **Building lines:** In areas where a clear historic building line has been established, new development should generally follow the existing line of development, whether it is along the back edge of the pavement or set back.
- **Building frontage:** Any development should relate to the surrounding street, creating an appropriate and active frontage. The ground floor of new developments should be encouraged where possible to

position windows of habitable rooms overlooking the street to promote active frontages, improve surveillance and help reduce crime.

- **Roof design:** The shape and pitch of the roof on any new development throughout the town should be considered in terms of its visibility and contribution to the quality of the roofscape of the town. In addition, for the historic core and the conservation area, the roof design should generally reflect those of the properties nearby.
- **Shop fronts:** Where traditional shop fronts remain in the historic areas of town, they should be retained and any alterations should incorporate traditional elements and materials. Where the traditional shopfront has already been removed, the reinstatement of a traditional shopfront will be encouraged so that it can contribute to the character of the building in terms of its scale and style.

- **Replacement windows:** Windows should be in keeping with the original design of the building, and should incorporate technological improvements such as double glazing where possible.
- **Ancillary facilities:** Refuse and recycling facilities, car and cycle parking should be sufficient for the development and should not dominate the street scene

15. **Listed buildings:** Any development to listed buildings and structures should be in accordance with planning policy requirements and should not have a detrimental impact on the significance of the building.

16. **Community assets:** Policies in the Neighbourhood Plan seek to prevent the loss of or significant harm to the character or appearance of community assets, as well as supporting their enhancement or extension as appropriate. Community assets that are deemed to be important in this regard are detailed on the map and table on pages 84 to 86.

17.

18. **Accessibility:** All new development should consider the needs of people with disabilities and ages.

19. **Green spaces:** Existing areas of public open space should be retained and managed appropriately. Adequate provision of green/open space should form part of new developments

New development should have a quality landscape scheme, which incorporates new tree planting and retains as many of the natural landscape features as possible. The hard and soft landscape design

should successfully integrate the development into the local environment. Include tree-lined streets unless in specific cases there are clear justifiable and compelling reasons why this would be inappropriate.

19. **Protection of trees:** Consideration should be given to the assessment of the importance of all trees within the town to assess which would warrant formal protection. Development which is likely to have a detrimental impact on important trees within the town will be resisted. All development proposals should consider the amenity value of trees and an assessment of their contribution to their immediate and wider setting and the character of the town should be included in the development proposals.

20. **Parking resulting from new development:** The impact of any increased car parking resulting from new developments should be assessed in terms of its effect on townscape character. Car parking restrictions and alternative forms of accessing transport should be considered to limit the number of car parking spaces required. Undercroft car parking should also be considered as part of any future development proposals.

21. **Sustainable drainage systems:** Environmentally-friendly water drainage systems should be promoted.

22. Large-scale development: A development brief should be prepared for large-scale development sites.

All new development should respect, maintain and enhance local distinctiveness and character. Proposals should provide for a variety of house types and sizes appropriate to the setting and character of the local area. Groups of houses should be arranged in a manner appropriate to the locality, whether it is in a structured street layout or in a more organic arrangement to form variety and the appearance of natural growth. All new development should be of an appropriate scale and reflect the existing settlement pattern.

The style of building should be sympathetic with and complementary to the older buildings of the town; fussy combinations of too many details should be avoided. Inappropriate use of pastiche and the use of porticos and styles foreign to the town should be avoided. Innovative designs using a contemporary design approach and modern materials should be encouraged, providing they respect and enhance local distinctiveness and character.

23. Design and Access Statements: Reference to the Town Design Statement should be made within Design and Access Statements where required.

24. Community involvement: the involvement of the community in the preparation of design proposals should be encouraged.

APPENDIX 2:

SUSTAINABILITY IN AXBRIDGE

Several sustainability issues are particularly relevant to Axbridge. Some of these are difficult to address within strict policy details, but we wish to emphasise them as aspirations. Within the overall framework of the NPPF and the SDCLP the increasing urgency of measures to create low carbon neighbourhoods demands specific local responses. We consider that Axbridge lacks resilience under two main headings: Housing and Building Stock; Transport.

1. Housing Stock

Traditionally Somerset has suffered from a large proportion of housing with a low Energy Performance Certificate. In Somerset, one in six properties have a Category 1 Excess Cold Hazard, below the regional average but above the national average of 12%. Private sector dwellings in Somerset are much more likely than the national average to have a low EPC rating (F or G)⁶⁴. Axbridge certainly reflects these overall statistics. The town has a large proportion of pre-1900 housing, and almost all subsequent housing predates the 1984 Building Regulations Act. Relatively few houses approach more recent standards of energy efficiency and possibly micro-generation.

We therefore emphasise the need to:

- support sensitive retrofitting of energy efficiency measures and the appropriate use of micro renewables in historic buildings
- compile local practical guidance on appropriate retrofit methods for various types of housing in the town
- ensure that all new housing achieves a high EPC and uses micro-generation if possible.

Looking more widely than individual housing stock, we wish to explore the advantages of local renewable energy and micro-grid schemes. These would offer resilience in balancing local supply with local demand and possibly create revenues for local reinvestment, or mitigate local cases of fuel poverty. It is regrettable that some large housing developments in the area have gone up without the benefit of solar panels as an integral part of their construction. Land within or very near Axbridge parish is suitable for larger scale solar installation. It may be that rising energy costs and increasing carbon reduction concerns modify public and official opinions of visual impact. Planning law and practice accepts that the adverse impacts from a proposed development can be weighed against the benefits delivered by the scheme.

It is not appropriate to refer to any additional local technical standards or requirements relating to the construction or performance of new dwellings in neighbourhood plans. The housing performance measures in this Appendix are therefore aspirations rather than policy requirements.

⁶⁴ <http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/energy-efficiency.html>

⁶⁵ SDCLP p35, section 4.51.

2. Transport

Reducing the need to travel is a key element in Sedgemoor's Local Plan and linked to economic sustainability⁶⁵. However, Axbridge is doubly vulnerable if travel has to be reduced or becomes increasingly expensive. Many people in the town cannot avoid vehicle use in jobs such as delivery and services, construction, maintenance work, and so on.

Many more are tied to daily commuting for work, some over large distances, for which public transport is either non-existent or impossibly timed. It will be a difficult and slow process to modify these patterns of travel and employment. Also, the government has announced that new diesel and petrol cars and vans will be banned in the UK from 2040. So, again we emphasise the need for:

- planning support for building (new-build or alteration) and activities that increase self-containment and enhance local employment⁶⁶
- radical reassessment of public transport options
- early provision for the local recharging of electric vehicles

The latter point reinforces the need for enhanced renewable electricity provision in the town. New housing should ideally include provision for dedicated charging units. Existing properties will require careful rewiring for such units. Given the scarcity of parking spaces in the town, provision will have to be made for powerful multi-use units in streets and car parks.

Radical reassessment of public transport could build on existing patterns of community bus use but also embrace the advent of smaller shared vehicles using alternatives to fossil fuels. The initial cost of such vehicles is high at the moment, but the long term environmental and financial benefits of avoiding fossil fuels are remarkable. A typical calculation for an average car suggests running costs of under 5p per mile⁶⁷. The eventual consequences for Axbridge's dependence on transport are not yet clear, but we should start preparing for them in planning aspirations.

⁶⁶See SDCLP Policy D15.

⁶⁷<https://www.buyacar.co.uk/cars/economical-cars/electric-cars/650/cost-of-running-an-electric-car>

APPENDIX 3

AXBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL AFFORDABLE HOUSING POLICY

Axbridge Town Council accepts that, as a Tier 2 community within the Sedgemoor Local Plan, it has a duty to meet assessed affordable housing need by 2032.

Current Policy

1. Any housing should have regard to the Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan.
2. Tier 2 settlements (along with higher tier settlements) are expected to accommodate the majority of the District's identified strategic housing growth requirements. Qualifying sites will be expected to provide affordable homes and allocated in accordance with the homefindersomerset housing system (or any subsequent replacement). Qualifying sites within the settlement boundary, including the site typography and the percentage of new units to be affordable are detailed in the Sedgemoor Local Plan.
3. Underpinning the Axbridge Affordable Housing policy is the justification that affordable housing is needed in Axbridge and that this should be available in the first instance to residents and people with a strong connection with the Axbridge area and are in housing need.
4. A household is considered to be in housing need if they are assessed as being an emergency, gold or silver band household in accordance with Homefindersomerset housing policy and rules (or any subsequent replacement), plus applicants with no dependent children and are lodging with friends or family or living in accommodation with shared living facilities.
5. Properties built as affordable should remain affordable whatever tenure (where legally possible).
6. Any development must take into account the infrastructure necessary to support both the buildings themselves and their residents. The impact of new developments stretches beyond Axbridge as they include schools, doctors' surgeries, parking, travel, sewerage and drainage systems.
7. As a Tier 2 community under the Sedgemoor Local Plan, Axbridge Town Council accepts the delivery of the minimum housing requirement. Once the minimum requirement (currently 70 homes) has been met any further housing should be sited on brownfield/ infill sites in the first instance and affordable housing development outside the settlement boundary (see definition below) should be in accordance with Local Plan Policy T2b.

8. Axbridge Town Council should be appraised of any outline negotiations or discussions between landowners/developers and Sedgemoor District Council whenever possible.
9. The Council will seek to be consulted on who will be allocated affordable housing in Axbridge. (It should be noted that in all Affordable Housing Assessments carried out to date, the vast majority needed were smaller rented properties.)
10. Any new affordable housing units provided in Axbridge should be allocated to eligible households in accordance with the priorities given in paragraph 12, having regard to the Homefindersomerset housing policy and rules (or any subsequent replacement) and the Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan.
11. For any new affordable housing unit in Axbridge, initial priority (and subsequent future allocation of the affordable home) will be given to eligible households who are in housing need (as defined above) and who have the following local connection with the Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan area:
 - Currently live in (and have done so for 5 years or more) the Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan area.
 - Previously lived for 5 years or more (within the previous 10 years) in the Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan area.
 - Work 16 hours or more a week in the Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan area.
 - Have immediate family (who currently live in, and have done so for 5 years or more) the Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan area - means grandparent(s), parent(s), child(ren) or sibling(s)

- Provides or received care for immediate family in the parish (immediate family as defined above)

Should any affordable homes be left unallocated after exhausting the above list, the unallocated affordable homes will be allocated in accordance with the Homefindersomerset housing policy and rules (or any subsequent replacement).

Aspiration

The Town Council would look to enable the formation of Axbridge Community Land Trust to retain affordable housing for young people, young families and older people, providing a variety of types and tenures.

Definition

Settlement Boundary is defined in the Sedgemoor Local Plan as “the existing built up area of the settlements identified in the settlement hierarchy. For the avoidance of doubt new allocations for development identified in this plan which have been subsequently built out should be judged to fall within the settlement boundary until such time as the boundaries are extended through the next Local Plan review.”

Adopted by Council: 3rd August 2020 (minute 106/20(b) refers)

Reviewed by Council: 3rd August 2020 (minute 106/20(b) refers)

APPENDIX 4

CALL FOR SITES ADVERTISEMENT AND ASSESSMENT FORMS



This is a call to all owners of land in the parish of Axbridge who have an interest in proposing their land for development as part of the Axbridge Neighbourhood planning process.

The public consultation in April 2018 proposed Zones 1-5 as being potentially suitable for development. There was a wide range of comments for each zone, with some zones preferred over others. You can see the views of respondents to the consultation at

<http://www.axbridgeneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/second-consultation-results/>

The next stage in the process of forming the Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan is to move to an identification of potential development sites within Axbridge parish. We are calling for small/medium sized sites of 1 hectare or less accommodating up to a maximum of 10 houses.

We are primarily looking for sites suitable for a mix of social, affordable and open market housing, but will also consider other proposals, such as any for commercial or light industrial use.

The Neighbourhood Planning Group will be assessing all submissions based on suitability, availability and achievability, which is in line with Sedgemoor District Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) process. This assessment process will prioritise infill development within the settlement boundary followed by sites falling within the identified zones.

If you are a landowner, business, developer or agent who would like to propose land for development, please email us and we will send a 'A Call For Sites Application Form' alan.wells9@btopenworld.com

Advertisements were delivered to homes as flyers, made available in local shops and printed in local newspapers.



This is a call to all owners of land in the parish of Axbridge who have an interest in proposing their land for development as part of the Axbridge neighbourhood planning process. This builds on the results of public engagement in the process of forming the Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan.

The public consultation in April 2018 proposed Zones 1-5 as being potentially suitable for development. There was a wide range of comments for each zone, with some zones preferred over others. You can see the views of respondents to the consultation at

<http://www.axbridgeneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/second-consultation-results/>

The next stage in the process of forming the Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan is to move to an identification of potential development sites within Axbridge parish. In light of two existing planning applications (Cheddar Road and Houlgate Way), totalling 74 houses, and in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (paras 68 and 69) we are calling for small/medium sized sites of 1 hectare or less accommodating up to a maximum of 10 houses.

We are primarily looking for sites suitable for a mix of social, affordable and open market housing, but will also consider other proposals, such as any for commercial or light industrial use.

The Axbridge Neighbourhood Planning Group will be assessing all submissions based on suitability, availability and achievability, which is in line with Sedgemoor District Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) process. This assessment process will prioritise infill development within the settlement boundary followed by sites falling within Zones 1-5. In addition, these proposals will be made available as part of the continuing public consultation process.

If you are a landowner, business, developer or agent who would like to propose land for development, please complete a Call for Sites Application Form. Please complete a separate form for each site you would like to be considered. To receive a form, please email us: at alan.wells9@btopenworld.com





**Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan
Call for Sites Assessment form**

January 2019

NP ref:	AP01 (Sunnymead)
Site location/OS ref	ST 4367954430
Site size:	0.124 Hectares
Address:	Sunnymead, Cheddar Rd, Axbridge, BS26 2DL

1. General location and use	
Surrounding land uses	The proposed site is surrounded by greenfield land that is used as garden for neighbouring property. The area consists of large detached houses on big plots of land. This property is fronted by Cheddar Road which is suitable to allow for traffic access to the site.
Current/previous use	Residential garden
Planning history	None known. The site is being taken from a large residential garden
2. Availability	
Land owner/agent	Owner has responded to this call for sites.
Evidence from call for site submission to support availability	Owner states that the land is available for development.
Timescale suggested by call for site reply	Immediate
Type and size of development being considered by developer	Residential. One house or two bungalows. Low density being considered due to desired low impact on neighbours. <i>(Information gained from telephone call with applicant)</i>
Any further comments	
3. Suitability	
Would development relate well to existing development	This would be an infill site on a residential road build at the rear of existing property. There is mixed housing on

	the road, originally large houses on big plots but also includes newer housing developments nearby that are accessed by a single road leading off from Cheddar road. The development of this site would fit well with this existing pattern of development.
How is the site currently accessed?	The site is the rear garden of the property so there is no current access from Cheddar Rd. This is a straight road with good visibility and as such offers ease of access for vehicles turning into the site. Access would be made via the left of the site which is wide enough for vehicular access.
How close is site to local services	Walking distance to Axbridge square and amenities within town. Walking distance to bus route to Cheddar, Wells, Weston Super Mare and the Falcon Bus into Bristol.
3a: Suitability: Planning policy	
Is the site within the Settlement boundary	No It also falls within Zone 4 of preferred sites for development that were identified as part of the Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan. This means development of this site reflects preferred location for development as identified through the public consultation.
Is the site within any Environmental Designations?	No.
Is the site within a Conservation Area?	No
Does the site contribute to the visual/landscape character of the area?	The site is located on level ground – slightly sloping downwards towards the reservoir to the south. This provides a discreet location for development and as such would not impinge on the visual character of the area if development is sympathetic to local housing styles.
Are there any restrictive covenants?	No. <i>(Information gained from telephone call with applicant)</i>
Are there any other Policy restrictions?	N/A
3b: Suitability: Physical	

constraints	
Topography	Level land
Flood risk	No
Water courses	No
Power lines/other infrastructure	No
Biodiversity	There are a number of trees and shrubs on site
Contamination	No
Mature trees/TPO's	No TPO's
Listed buildings on or close to the site	Not on site but Axbridge conservation area is nearby
Archaeology, heritage constraints on or near by	Not on site but Axbridge conservation area is nearby
Any other factors	No
4. Potential impacts	
Neighbouring uses	No significant impact on neighbouring properties.
Economic, social and environmental factors	
5. Deliverability: Affects on	
Highways	Access via A371 at east end of Axbridge into Cheddar Rd. This is a straight road with good visibility and as such offers ease of access for vehicles turning into the site.
Sewerage	Likely to have minimal impact.
Pedestrian/Cycle access	Cheddar Rd is part of the Strawberry line cycle and walk way which gives access to Cheddar and Axbridge town. There would be minimal disruption to access to this route.
6. Steering group decision	
Totally inappropriate	
Significant constraints	
Minor constraints	Yes
Unconstrained	
Reasons:	Constraints relate to the creation of access to the site in that currently there is no access. Pedestrian access on Cheddar road would be minimally

affected by the development of this site.

The site is not designated best agricultural land nor of any specific archaeological significance.

This would be a good infill site for a well-designed affordable housing.

In addition, the proposed site falls within Zone 4 of preferred sites for development that were identified as part of the Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan. This means development of this site reflects preferred location for development as identified through the public consultation.

Application Number: 20/018/0011

Barbly Town Council: Strudge

Application Progress:
The use that is highlighted in dark green shows how the application is progressing. If the "Comments Received" box is highlighted you can make a comment about the application.

Application Progress: APLS/046

Application is Under Consideration

Subscribe to this application:



Sites were deemed to be outside of the settlement boundary where the majority of the site area lay outside of the said boundary.



Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan

Call for Sites Assessment form

January 2019

NP ref:	AP02 (Hazeldene)
Site location/OS ref	ST 438545
Site size:	0.22 Hectares
Address:	Hazeldene, Cheddar Rd, Axbridge, BS26 2DL

1. General location and use	
Surrounding land uses	The proposed site is surrounded by greenfield land that is used as garden for neighbouring property. The area consists of large detached houses on big plots of land. This property is fronted by Cheddar Road which is suitable to allow for traffic access to the site.
Current/previous use	Residential garden
Planning history	None known. The site is being taken from a large residential garden
2. Availability	
Land owner/agent	Owner has responded to this call for sites.
Evidence from call for site submission to support availability	Owner states that the land is available for development.
Timescale suggested by call for site reply	2019 onwards.
Type and size of development being considered by developer	Residential. Up to three affordable low impact, low level, eco houses. 50 -60m ² per unit. <i>(Information gained from telephone call with applicant)</i>
Any further comments	
3. Suitability	
Would development relate well to existing development	This would be an infill site on a residential road build at the rear of existing property. There is mixed housing on

	the road, originally large houses on big plots but also includes newer housing developments nearby that are accessed by a single road leading off from Cheddar road. The development of this site would fit well with this existing pattern of development.
How is the site currently accessed?	The site is the rear garden of the property so there is no current access from Cheddar Rd. This is a straight road with good visibility and as such offers ease of access for vehicles turning into the site. Access would be made via the right hand side looking from the road.
How close is site to local services	Walking distance to Axbridge square and amenities within town. Walking distance to bus route to Cheddar, Wells, Weston Super Mare and the Falcon Bus into Bristol.
3a: Suitability: Planning policy	
Is the site within the Settlement boundary	No It also falls within Zone 4 of preferred sites for development that were identified as part of the Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan. This means development of this site reflects preferred location for development as identified through the public consultation.
Is the site within any Environmental Designations?	No.
Is the site within a Conservation Area?	No
Does the site contribute to the visual/landscape character of the area?	The site is located on level ground – slightly sloping downwards towards the reservoir to the south. This provides a discreet location for development and as such would not impinge on the visual character of the area if development is sympathetic to local housing styles.
Are there any restrictive covenants?	N/A
Are there any other Policy restrictions?	N/A
3b: Suitability: Physical constraints	

Topography	Level land
Flood risk	No
Water courses	No
Power lines/other infrastructure	No
Biodiversity	Garden with mature hedging
Contamination	No
Mature trees/TPO's	No TPO's
Listed buildings on or close to the site	Not on site but Axbridge conservation area is nearby
Archaeology, heritage constraints on or near by	Not on site but Axbridge conservation area is nearby
Any other factors	No
4. Potential impacts	
Neighbouring uses	No significant impact on neighbouring properties.
Economic, social and environmental factors	Proposal for affordable low impact housing should be supported.
5. Deliverability: Affects on	
Highways	Access via A371 at east end of Axbridge into Cheddar Rd. This is a straight road with good visibility and as such offers ease of access for vehicles turning into the site.
Sewerage	Likely to have minimal impact.
Pedestrian/Cycle access	Cheddar Rd is part of the Strawberry line cycle and walk way which gives access to Cheddar and Axbridge town. There would be minimal disruption to access to this route.
6. Steering group decision	
Totally inappropriate	
Significant constraints	
Minor constraints	Yes
Unconstrained	
Reasons:	Constraints relate to the creation of access to the site in that currently there is no access. Pedestrian access on Cheddar road would be minimally

affected by the development of this site.

The site is not designated best agricultural land nor of any specific archaeological significance.

This would be a good infill site for a well-designed development of houses.

In addition the proposed site falls within Zone 4 of preferred sites for development that were identified as part of the Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan. This means development of this site reflects preferred location for development as identified through the public consultation.



Sites were deemed to be outside of the settlement boundary where the majority of the site area lay outside of the said boundary.



**Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan
Call for Sites Assessment form**

January 2019

NP ref:	AP03 - Land adjacent to Compton Lane
Site location/OS ref	ST 42636 54565
Site size:	0.039 Hectares
Address:	Land to rear of Compton House: BS26 2HP

1. General location and use	
Surrounding land uses	The proposed site is bounded by housing on three sides with a large area of agricultural land to the south.
Current/previous use	Grass verge off private road
Planning history	None known.
2. Availability	
Land owner/agent	Mr. M Taylor and Mrs. AK Taylor
Evidence from call for site submission to support availability	Owner may develop if adjacent Houlgate way housing development proceeds. Owner unlikely to develop if not.
Timescale suggested by call for site reply	Not known.
Type and size of development being considered by developer	Residential infill. One or two small houses. <i>(Information gained from telephone call with applicant)</i>
Any further comments	
3. Suitability	
Would development relate well to existing development	The applicant proposes that the development would come forward if the larger Houlgate Way development proceeds and as such would form infill development. The site lies adjacent to the Conservation area and a listed building (Compton House: Grade 2). Consideration of design and scale would be important because any development would impinge on the setting of Compton House.

How is the site currently accessed?	Directly from Houlgate Way. Compton Lane (private road) runs adjacent to the site.
How close is site to local services	Good potential connectivity to utilities. Walking distance to Axbridge square and amenities within town. Walking distance to bus route to Cheddar, Wells, Weston Super Mare and the Falcon Bus into Bristol.
3a: Suitability: Planning policy	
Is the site within the Settlement boundary	No The site lies adjacent to Zone 1.
Is the site within any Environmental Designations?	No.
Is the site within a Conservation Area?	No. Site lies contiguous to conservation area boundary.
Does the site contribute to the visual/landscape character of the area?	No. The site forms part of the setting to Compton House (Listed building).
Are there any restrictive covenants?	N/A
Are there any other Policy restrictions?	N/A
3b: Suitability: Physical constraints	
Topography	Level land
Flood risk	No
Water courses	No
Power lines/other infrastructure	No
Biodiversity	Grassland.
Contamination	NA
Mature trees/TPO's	No TPO's
Listed buildings on or close to the site	Compton House (Grade 2) is a potential neighbour.
Archaeology, heritage constraints on or near by	Unknown.
Any other factors	N/A

4. Potential impacts	
Neighbouring uses	Potential impact on the setting of Compton House.
Economic, social and environmental factors	If development proceeds without the built context of previous development off Houlgate Way then there is potential for an adverse effect on the setting of Compton House. If the Houlgate Way development is built then this site would provide supportable infill development within the Settlement boundary.
5. Deliverability: Affects on	
Highways	Access on to Houlgate Way is achievable through an existing private road.
Sewerage	Likely to have minimal impact.
Pedestrian/Cycle access	Minimal impact.
6. Steering group decision	
Totally inappropriate	
Significant constraints	
Minor constraints	Yes
Unconstrained	
Reasons:	As a site coming forward as only to be developed as infill development if Houlgate Way is built out then it is suggested that there are only minor constraints. If the site is proposed for development without the adjacent Houlgate Way development, then it is suggested that the development would not be infill and that it could have an adverse impact on the setting of Compton House.



Following the submission of this Call for Sites Assessment form, as part of the public consultation 2 objections were raised to this proposal. As indicated opposite in the ANP assessment of this site, any mitigating factors would be considered as part of a planning application. A Heritage Statement will need to be submitted with any planning application, ideally at a pre-application stage, to fully understand the impacts on the listed heritage asset. Development will need to sustain and enhance the setting in accordance with Policy H &NE-3 and Policy D26 of the Sedgemoor Local Plan.

Sites were deemed to be outside of the settlement boundary where the majority of the site area lay outside of the said boundary.



**Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan
Call for Sites Assessment form**

January 2019

NP ref:	AP04 (Holly Tree)
Site location/OS ref	ST 437545
Site size:	0.25 Hectares
Address:	Holly Tree Cottage, Cheddar Road, Axbridge, BS26 2DL

1. General location and use	
Surrounding land uses	The proposed site is surrounded by greenfield land that is used as garden for neighbouring property. The area consists of large detached houses on big plots of land. This property is fronted by Cheddar Road which is suitable to allow for traffic access to the site.
Current/previous use	Residential garden
Planning history	None known. The site is being taken from a large residential garden
2. Availability	
Land owner/agent	Owner has responded to this call for sites.
Evidence from call for site submission to support availability	Owner states that the land may be available for development.
Timescale suggested by call for site reply	Imminent
Type and size of development being considered by developer	Development for two 3 or 4 bedroom houses.
Any further comments	
3. Suitability	
Would development relate well to existing development	This would be an infill site on a residential road build at the rear of existing property. There is mixed housing on the road, originally large houses on big plots but also

	includes newer housing developments nearby that are accessed by a single road leading off from Cheddar road. The development of this site would fit well with this existing pattern of development.
How is the site currently accessed?	The site is the rear garden of the property so there is no current access from Cheddar Rd. This is a straight road with good visibility and as such offers ease of access for vehicles turning into the site. Access would be made via Holly Tree Cottage.
How close is site to local services	Walking distance to Axbridge square and amenities within town. Walking distance to bus route to Cheddar, Wells, Weston Super Mare and the Falcon Bus into Bristol.
3a: Suitability: Planning policy	
Is the site within the Settlement boundary	No It also falls within Zone 4 of preferred sites for development that were identified as part of the Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan. This means development of this site reflects preferred location for development as identified through the public consultation.
Is the site within any Environmental Designations?	No
Is the site within a Conservation Area?	No
Does the site contribute to the visual/landscape character of the area?	The site is located on level ground – slightly sloping downwards to the south. This provides a discreet location for development and as such would not impinge on the visual character of the area if development is sympathetic to local housing styles.
Are there any restrictive covenants?	N/A
Are there any other Policy restrictions?	N/A
3b: Suitability: Physical constraints	
Topography	Level land

Flood risk	No?
Water courses	No
Power lines/other infrastructure	No
Biodiversity	Garden, largely grass, with mature hedging
Contamination	No
Mature trees/TPO's	No TPO's
Listed buildings on or close to the site	Not on site but Axbridge conservation area is nearby
Archaeology, heritage constraints on or near by	Not on site but Axbridge conservation area is nearby
Any other factors	No
4. Potential impacts	
Neighbouring uses	No Significant impact on neighbouring properties
Economic, social and environmental factors	No significant impact.
5. Deliverability: Affects on	
Highways	Access via A371 at east end of Axbridge into Cheddar Rd. This is a straight road with good visibility and as such offers ease of access for vehicles turning into the site.
Sewerage	Likely to have minimal impact.
Pedestrian/Cycle access	Cheddar Rd is part of the Strawberry line cycle and walk way which gives access to Cheddar and Axbridge town. There would be minimal disruption to access to this route.
6. Steering group decision	
Totally inappropriate	
Significant constraints	
Minor constraints	Yes
Unconstrained	
Reasons:	<p>Constraints relate to the creation of access to the site in that currently there is no access.</p> <p>Pedestrian access on Cheddar road would be minimally affected by the development of this site.</p>

<p>The site is not designated best agricultural land nor of any specific archaeological significance.</p> <p>This would be a good infill site for a well-designed development of houses.</p> <p>In addition the proposed site falls within Zone 4 of preferred sites for development that were identified as part of the Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan. This means development of this site reflects preferred location for development as identified through the public consultation.</p>
--

Application Number: 22/26/20007

Parish/Town Council: Axbridge

Application Progress:

The bar that is highlighted in dark green shows how the application is progressing. If the "Comments Welcome" box is highlighted, you can make a comment about the application.

Application Registered: 31/05/2022

Application Decided: 18/05/2022

Subscribe to this application:

SUBSCRIBE



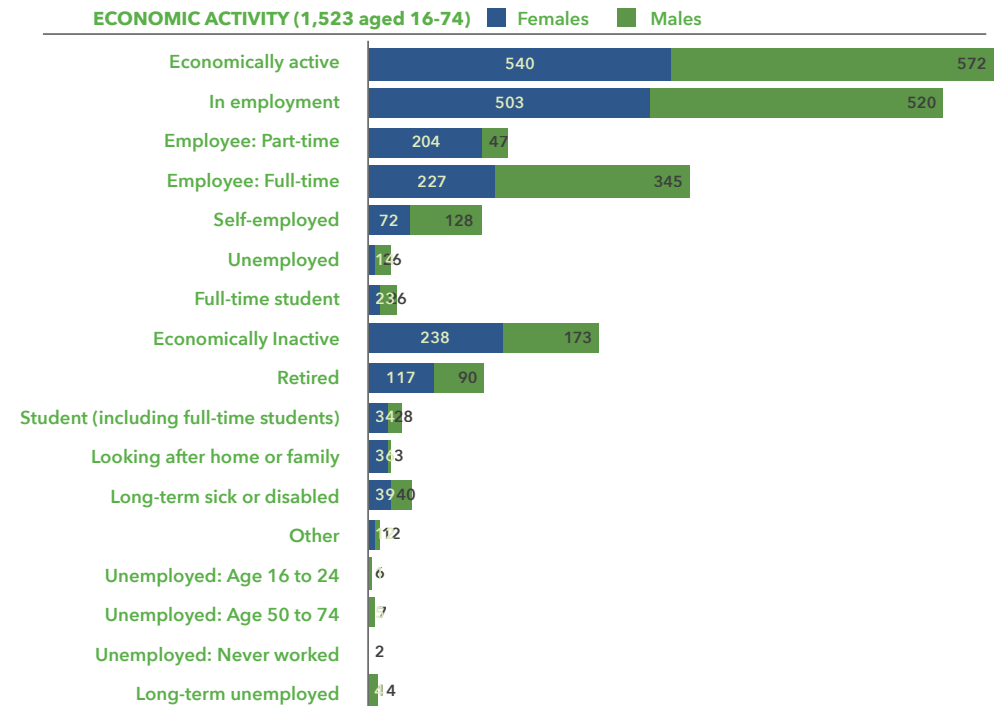
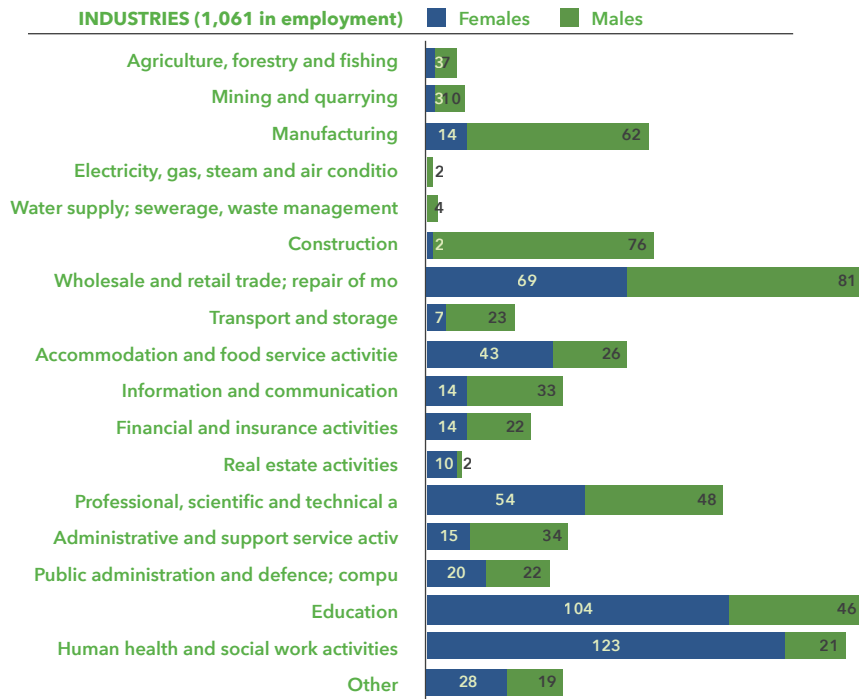
Sites were deemed to be outside of the settlement boundary where the majority of the site area lay outside of the said boundary.

APPENDIX 5

CENSUS DATA

WORK Source: UK Office for National Statistics (web).

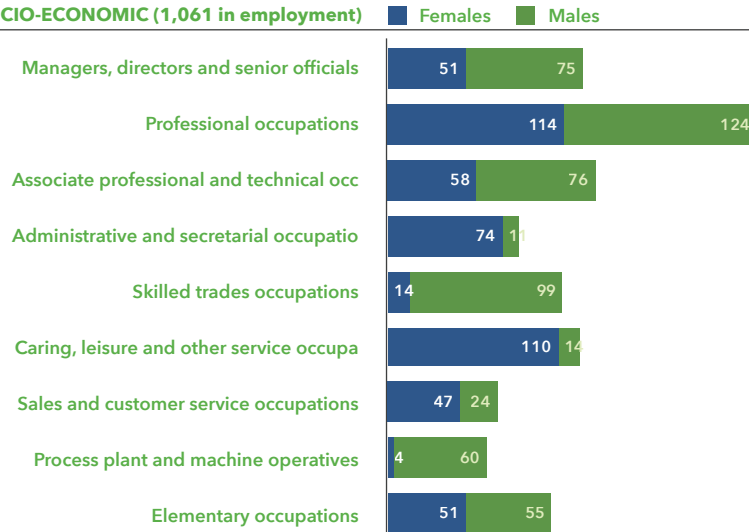
Explanation: All population figures and depicted boundaries are based on the output area of Axbridge officially assigned to the built-up areas in the 2011 census. Output areas often include some unbuilt parts.



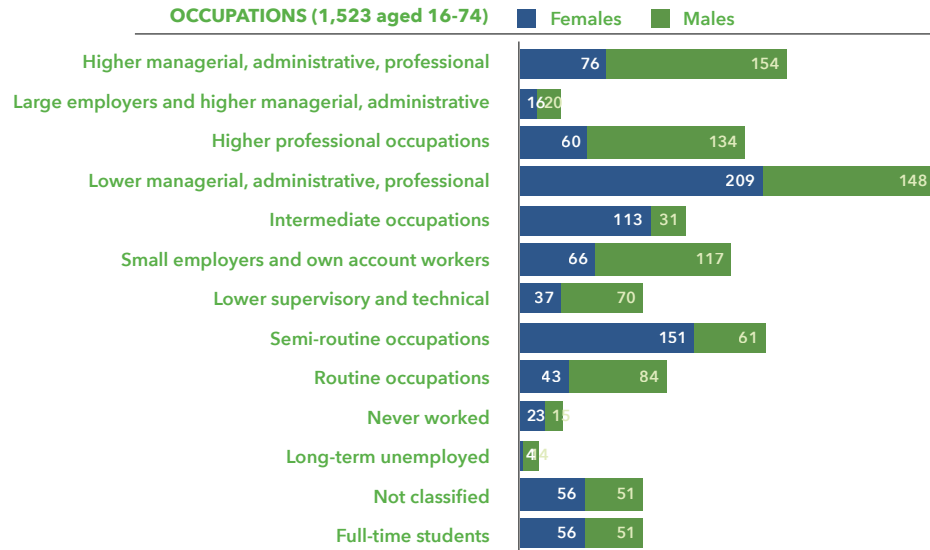
CENSUS - WORK CONTINUED

Source: UK Office for National Statistics (web).

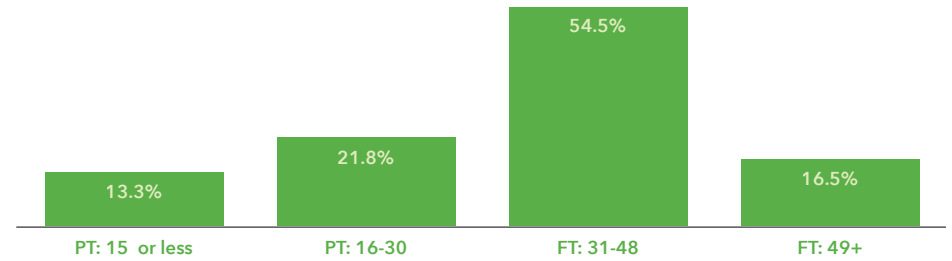
SOCIO-ECONOMIC (1,061 in employment)



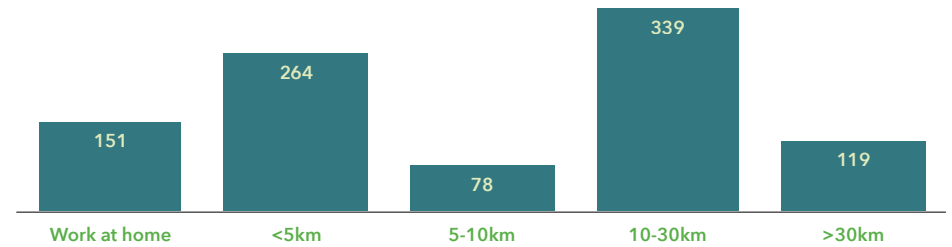
OCCUPATIONS (1,523 aged 16-74)



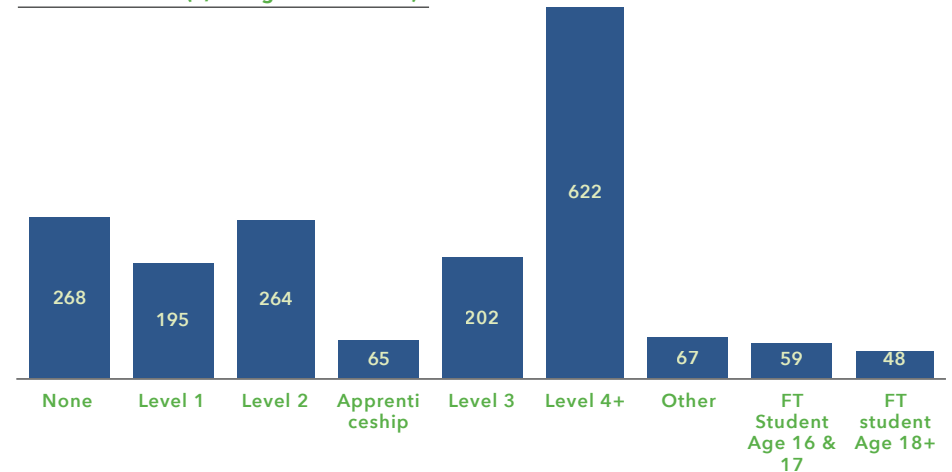
HOURS WORKED PER WEEK (1061 employed in 2011)



DISTANCE TRAVELLED TO WORK (2011 ONS data not from census)



QUALIFICATIONS (1,683 aged 16 and over)



CENSUS - AGE/GENDER/BACKGROUND

Source: UK Office for National Statistics (web).

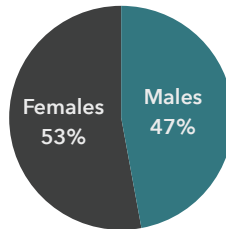
AGE GROUPS (EST 2018)

Age Group	Population
0-9 years	206
10-19 years	263
20-29 years	196
30-39 years	161
40-49 years	285
50-59 years	334
60-69 years	291
70-79 years	210
80+ years	94

NAME	COUNTY / DISTRICT	POPULATION CENSUS 29/04/2001	POPULATION CENSUS 27/03/2011	POPULATION CENSUS 30/06/2018
Axbridge	Somerset	2,025	2,057	2,040

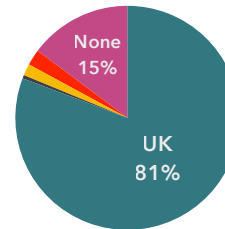
GENDER (EST 2018)

Males	961
Females	1,079



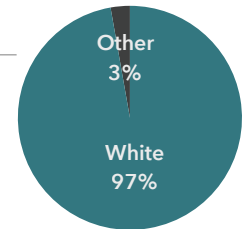
PASSPORT (2011)

UK	1,677
Republic of	10
EU (Other)	35
Other Country	48
No Passport	307



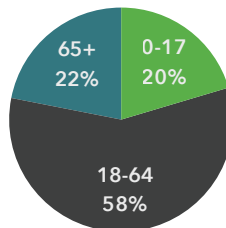
ETHNIC GROUP (2011)

White	2,000
Asian	27
Black	3
Mixed/multiple	26
Other ethnic	1



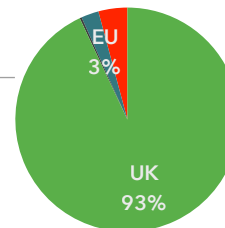
AGE GROUPS (EST 2018)

0-17 years	416
18-64 years	1177
65+ years	447



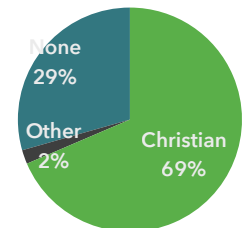
COUNTRY OF BIRTH (2011)

UK	1,913
Republic of Ireland	6
EU (Other)	52
Other Country	86



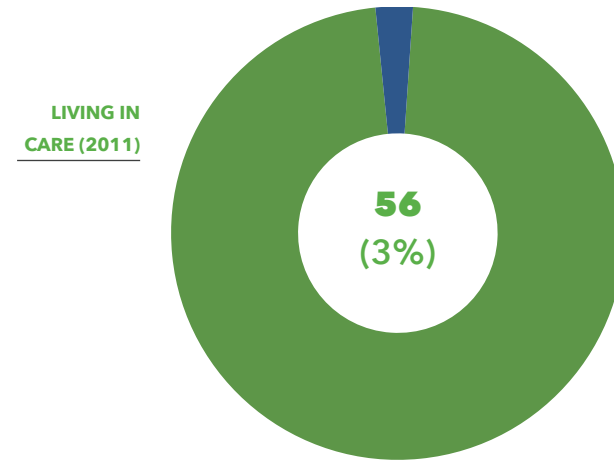
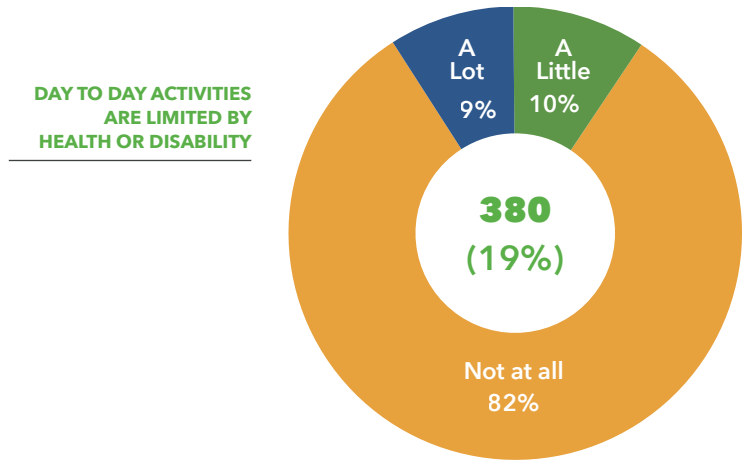
RELIGION

Christian	1,289
Muslim	6
Hindu	5
Sikh	2
Jewish	3
Buddhist	10
Other religion	12
No religion	553



CENSUS - HEALTH

Source: UK Office for National Statistics (web).



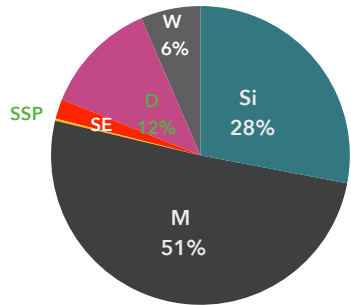
QUALITY OF HEALTH (2011)



PROVIDES UNPAID CARE (hours p/week, 2011)



CENSUS - HOUSEHOLDS. Source: UK Office for National Statistics (web).

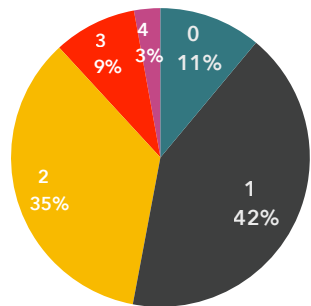


MARITAL STATUS (2011 / 1683 16+)

Single (Si)	471
Married (M)	854
Same-Sex Civil (SSP) Partnership	4
Separated (Se)	36
Divorced (D)	209
Widowed (W)	109

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS (1627 adults in 2011)

Living as a couple		Not living in a couple				
Married or sam-sex civil	Cohabiting	Single	Married or sam-sex civil	Separated	Divorced	Widowed
826	194	327	18	29	144	89

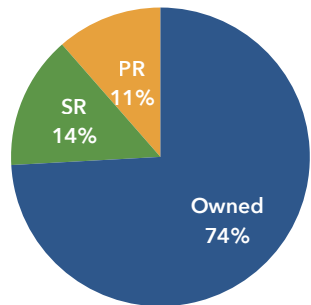


#CARS IN HOUSEHOLD (1,342 total cars in 2011)

0	97
1	368
2	309
3	79
4	25

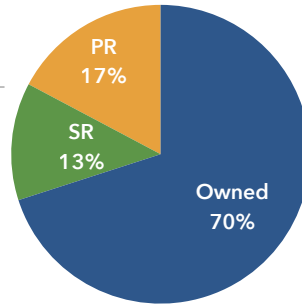
HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION (878 households in 2011)

No adults in employment		Households with dependent children		One person with long-term health problem or disability	
with dependent children	no dependent children	All households	Age 0 to 4	with dependent children	no dependent children
18	241	256	74	31	181



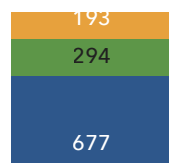
2001 TENURE 2011

596	Owned	605
116	Social rented	110
92	Private rented	149

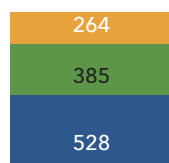


LONE PARENT HOUSEHOLDS (2011)

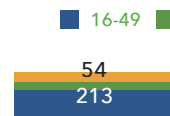
Lone Parent			Female Lone Parent			Male Lone Parent		
PT work	FT work	No Work	PT work	FT work	No Work	PT work	FT work	No Work
30	13	13	29	10	10	1	3	3



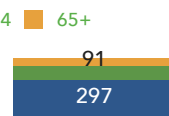
Owned 2001



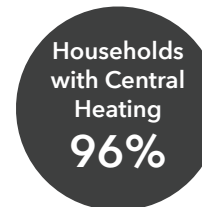
Owned 2011



Rented 2001

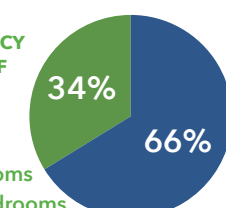


Rented 2011



OCCUPANCY RATING OF 1 OR LESS (2011)

- Rooms
- Bedrooms



APPENDIX 6

EVIDENCE BASE

Chapter 1. Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan: Legislation and Process

No references

Chapter 2. About Axbridge

1. <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england/axbridge-sedgemoor-somerset#.XNVDGi-ZNBw>
2. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census/2011censusdata>
3. <http://www.axbridgeneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/feedback-from-the-community/>
4. <https://axbridge-tc.gov.uk/organisations/>
5. <https://axbridge-tc.gov.uk/calendar>

Chapter 3. Housing and Development

6. Total households in receipt of Axbridge Town Council 'Oyez' monthly bulletin is 938
7. <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=S1005812>
8. <https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/sfra>
9. http://www.axbridgeneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Survey_analysis7.pdf
10. <https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/Axbridge.html>

11. <https://www.somersetlive.co.uk/news/somerset-news/areas-somerset-house-prices-rising-3460726>
12. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf Paragraph 20
13. <https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/LocalPlan>
14. <http://www.axbridgeneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Infographic-Axbridge.pdf>
15. http://www.axbridgeneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/feedback-from-the-community/Survey_Results
16. (removed on instruction of the independent examiner)
17. (removed on instruction of the independent examiner)
18. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf . Paragraph 73
19. <http://www.axbridgeneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/feedback-from-the-community/>
20. <http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/pages/lifetime-homes-principles.html>
21. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf Paragraph 84
22. <http://www.axbridgeneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/feedback-from-the-community/>
23. <https://www.tuc.org.uk/news/growth-homeworking-has-stalled>
24. <http://www.axbridgeneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/feedback-from-the-community/>

25. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf Paragraph 80
26. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes>
27. <http://www.axbridgeneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/feedback-from-the-community/>
28. <http://www.axbridgeneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/feedback-from-the-community/>

Chapter 4. Community and Infrastructure

29. <http://www.axbridgeneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/feedback-from-the-community/>
30. <http://www.axbridgeneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/feedback-from-the-community/>
31. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf Paragraph 84
32. <https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/LocalPlan>
33. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf Paragraph 98
34. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf Paragraph 100
35. <http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/>
36. <http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/>
37. <https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/LocalPlan>
38. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/833726/landscapes-review-final-report.pdf Chapter 3

39. <https://www.mendiphillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/FINAL-Mendip-Hills-AONB-Management-Plan-Review-2019-v1.pdf> Section 2.6

Chapter 5. Historic and Natural Environment

40. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf Paragraph 174
41. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf Paragraph 176
42. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf Page 57
43. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf Paragraph 189
44. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf Paragraph 197
45. <https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/LocalPlan>
46. <https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/LocalPlan>
47. <https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/LocalPlan>
48. <https://www.mendiphillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/FINAL-Mendip-Hills-AONB-Management-Plan-Review-2019-v1.pdf> Section 3.8
49. <https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/LocalPlan> Policy D19

Chapter 6. Transport

50. <http://www.axbridgeneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/feedback-from-the-community/>
51. <http://www.axbridgeneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/feedback-from-the-community/>
52. <http://www.axbridgeneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/feedback-from-the-community/>
53. <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/transport-strategy/> p99 and p104
54. <http://www.axbridgeneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/feedback-from-the-community/>
55. <https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/healthyliving>
56. Support for recreational use of the AONB includes;
 - 56.1. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/833726/landscapes-review-final-report.pdf Chapter 3 and,
 - 56.2. <https://www.mendiphillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/FINAL-Mendip-Hills-AONB-Management-Plan-Review-2019-v1.pdf> Section R4
57. <http://www.axbridgeneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/feedback-from-the-community/>
58. <http://www.axbridgeneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/feedback-from-the-community/>

Chapter 7. Community Aspirations

59. <https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/images/files/ruralhousing-guideforparishcouncils2014.pdf> Page 13
60. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf Chapter 3

61. <https://www.mendiphillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/FINAL-Mendip-Hills-AONB-Management-Plan-Review-2019-v1.pdf> Section 3.5.1

Appendix 1. Axbridge Town Design Statement

62. <http://www.axbridgeneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/feedback-from-the-community/>
63. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf Paragraph 130

Appendix 2. Sustainability in Axbridge

64. <http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/energy-efficiency.html>
65. <https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/LocalPlan>
66. <https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/LocalPlan>
67. <https://www.buyacar.co.uk/cars/economical-cars/electric-cars/650/cost-of-running-an-electric-car>

APPENDIX 7

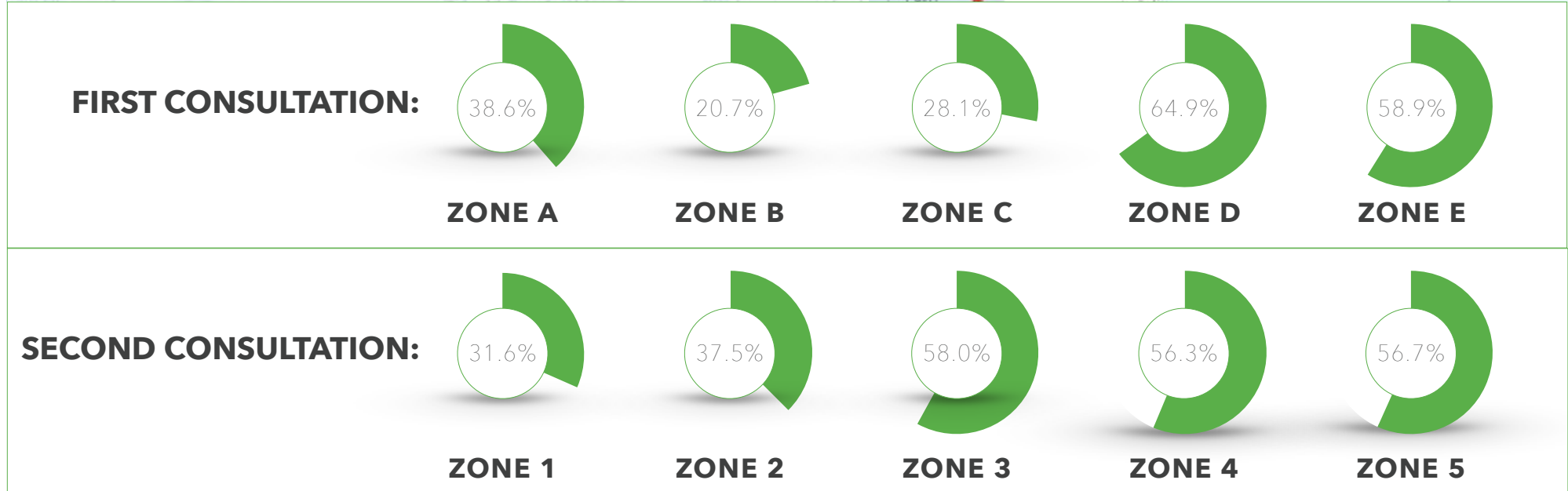
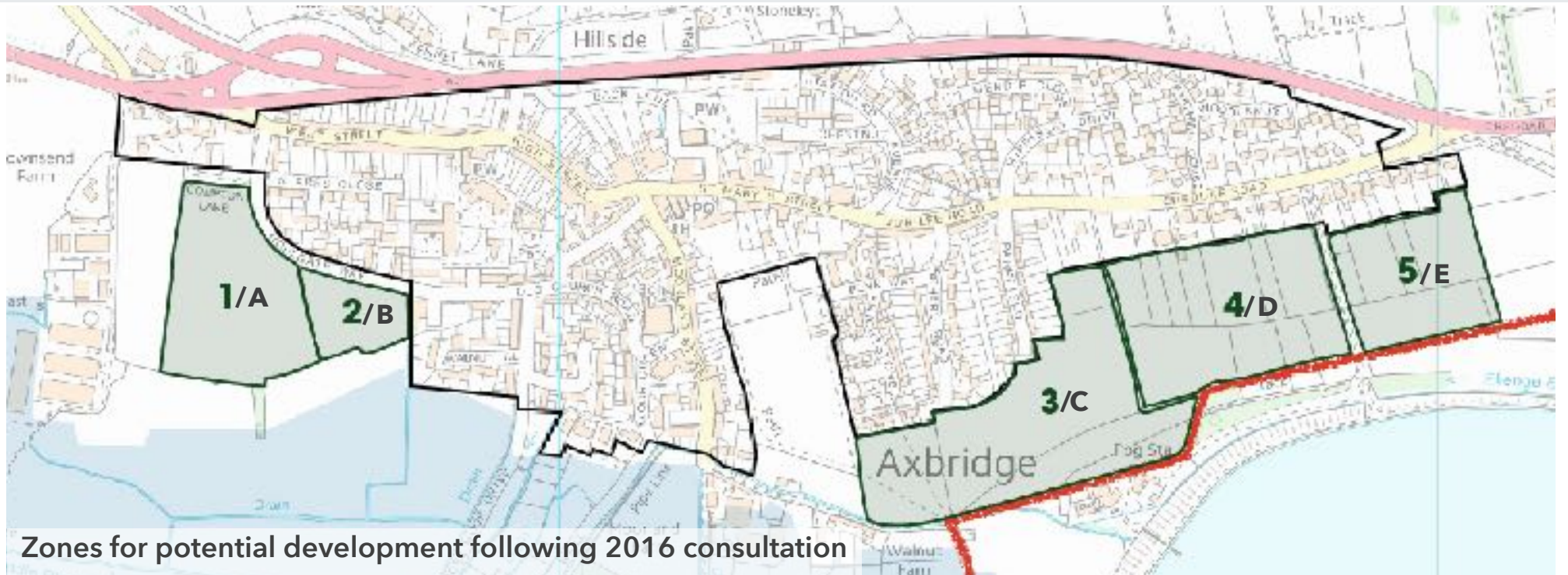
CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN ON POTENTIAL ZONES FOR DEVELOPMENT

In the 2016 consultation by the ANPG broad zones of the town were suggested as areas for potential development. These zones were identified as Zones A to E. Attendees were asked to rank their preferences. It was felt that this approach would enable the community to provide feedback on their preferences.

The zones used in the public consultation has provided a tool for the ANPG to identify prioritised areas of potential development as part of developing the Neighbourhood Plan. The zones are not identified or allocated sites.

Further public consultation in 2017 tested public preference for slightly refined potential development zones, now numbered 1 to 5. The most favourable Zone identified for development is Zone 4, followed by Zone 5, Zone 1, Zone 3 and lastly Zone 2 (See page 74).

Further investigation of the zones will need to be undertaken to confirm or otherwise their in-principle suitability for development and that of individual sites within them.



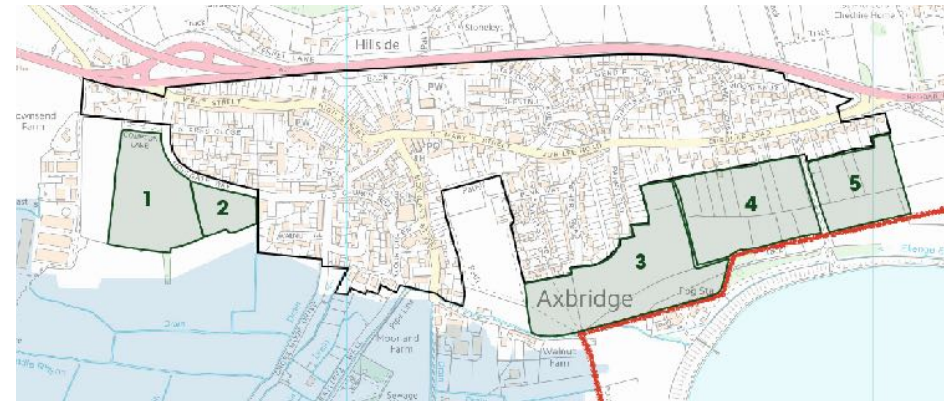
Percentage of respondents to the questionnaire who regarded the zone suitable for development

APPENDIX 8

MAPS

	Page
Zones for potential development	This page
Conservation area	This page
Eastern & Western Buffer Zones	76
Parish Boundary (B&W / Colour)	77
Flood Risk Zones	78 & 79
Site Allocation	80
Mendip Hills AONB	81
Transport Links	82
Town Views	83
Community Assets	84 to 86

Zones for potential development from 2016 consultation



Conservation area



Western Buffer Zone

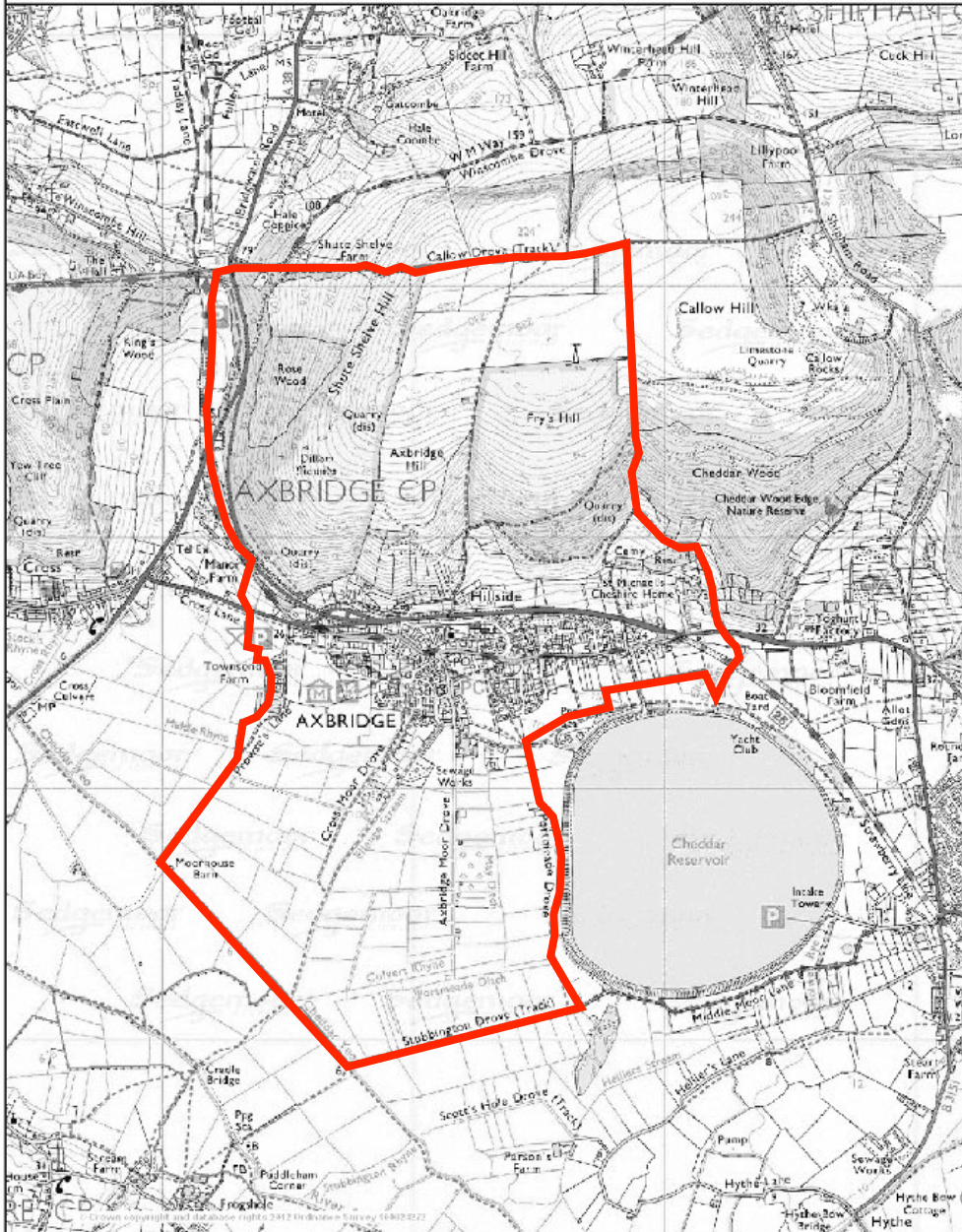


Proposed green 'buffer zone' spaces

Eastern Buffer Zone



Axbridge Parish Boundary

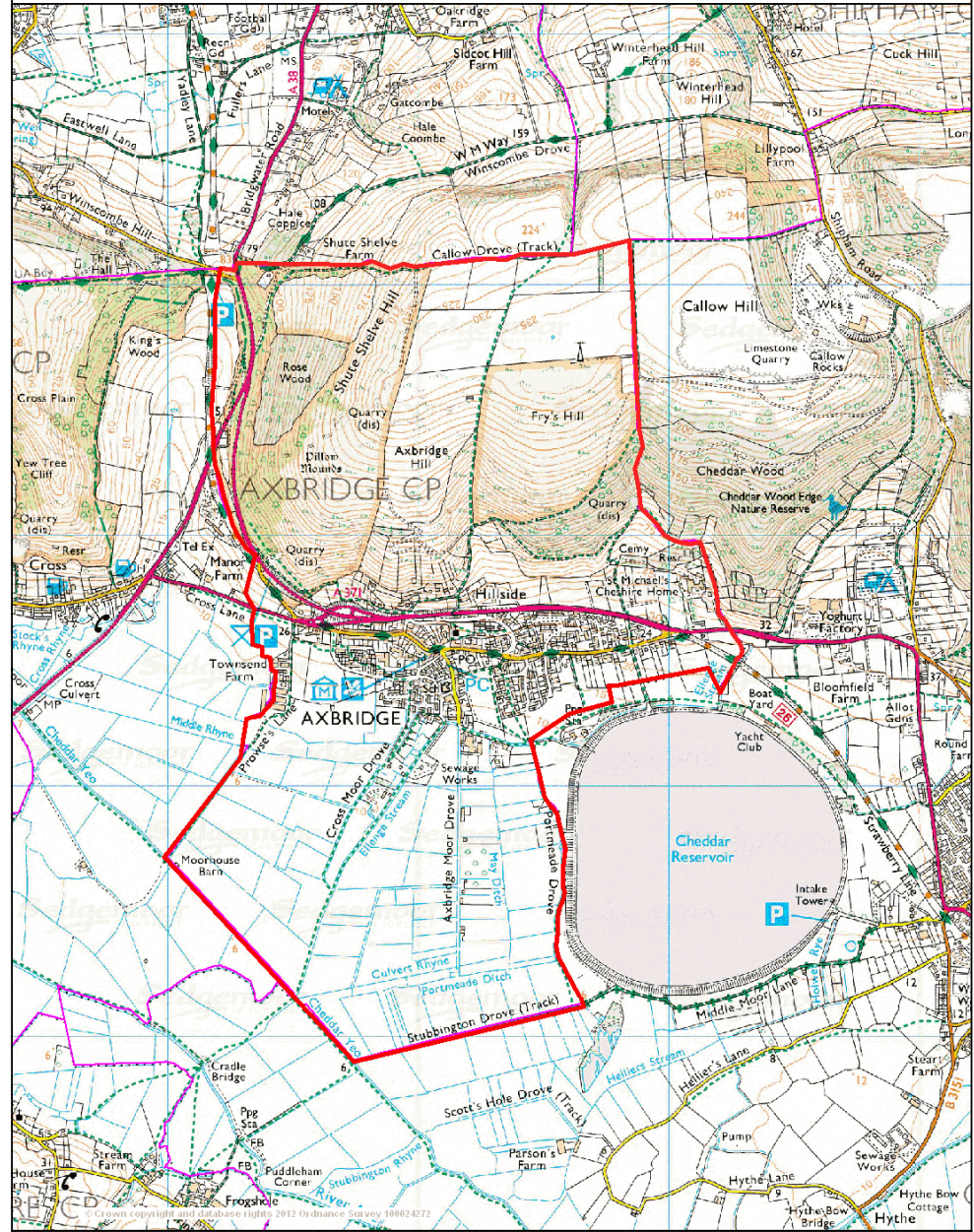


Sedgemoor
IN SOMERSET

© Crown copyright and database rights 2012
Ordnance Survey 100024272

Date 1/8/2012
Scale 1/19779
at A4 size

Axbridge Parish Boundary



Sedgemoor
IN SOMERSET

© Crown copyright and database rights 2012
Ordnance Survey 100024272

Date 1/8/2012
Scale 1/19779
at A4 size

Flood map for planning

Your reference

Axbridge3

Location (easting/northing)









343122/154586

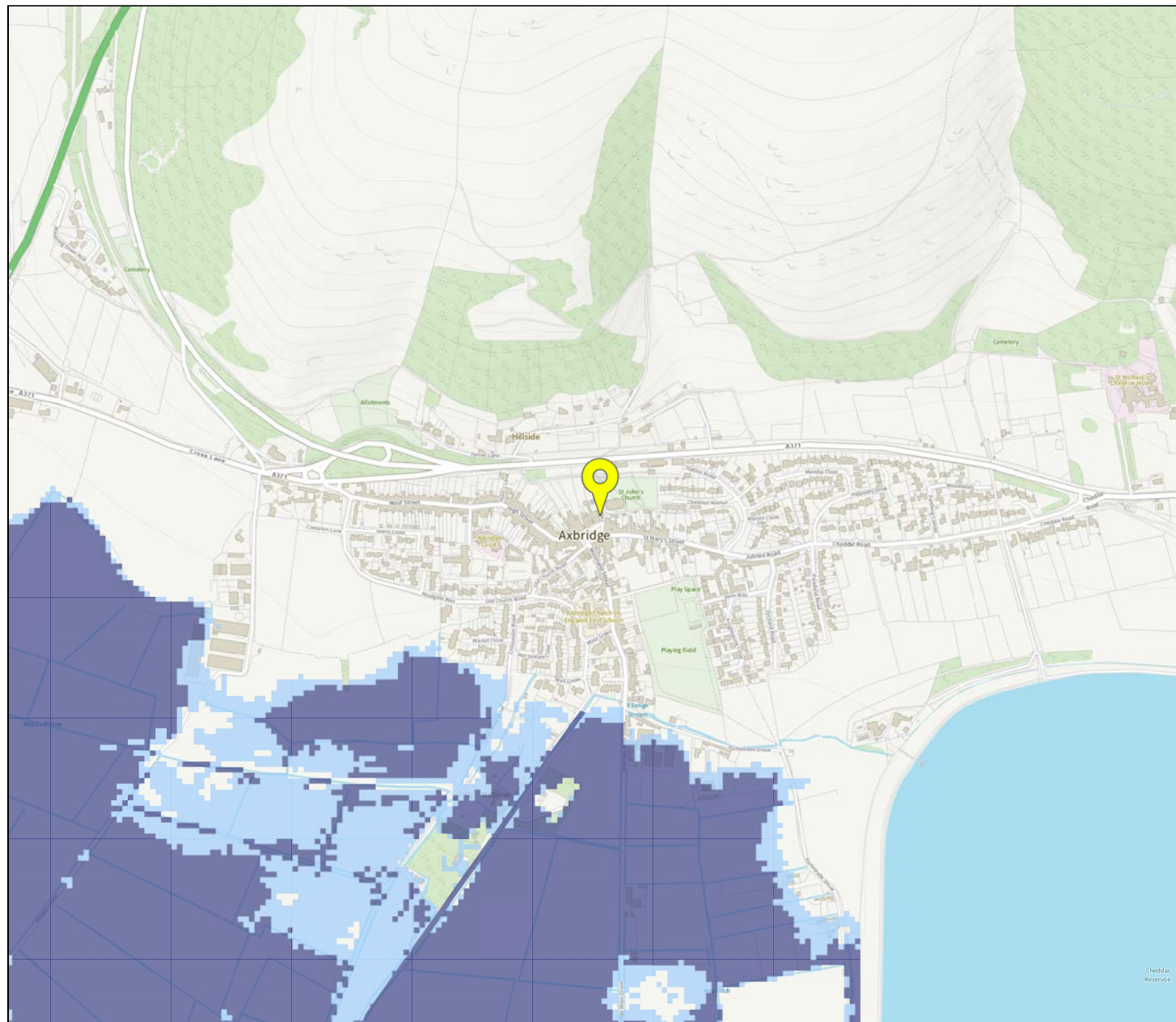
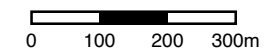
Scale

1:10000

Created

14 Nov 2021 16:17

-  Selected point
-  Flood zone 3
-  Flood zone 3: areas benefitting from flood defences
-  Flood zone 2
-  Flood zone 1
-  Flood defence
-  Main river
-  Flood storage area



..... Parish Boundary



Environment Agency

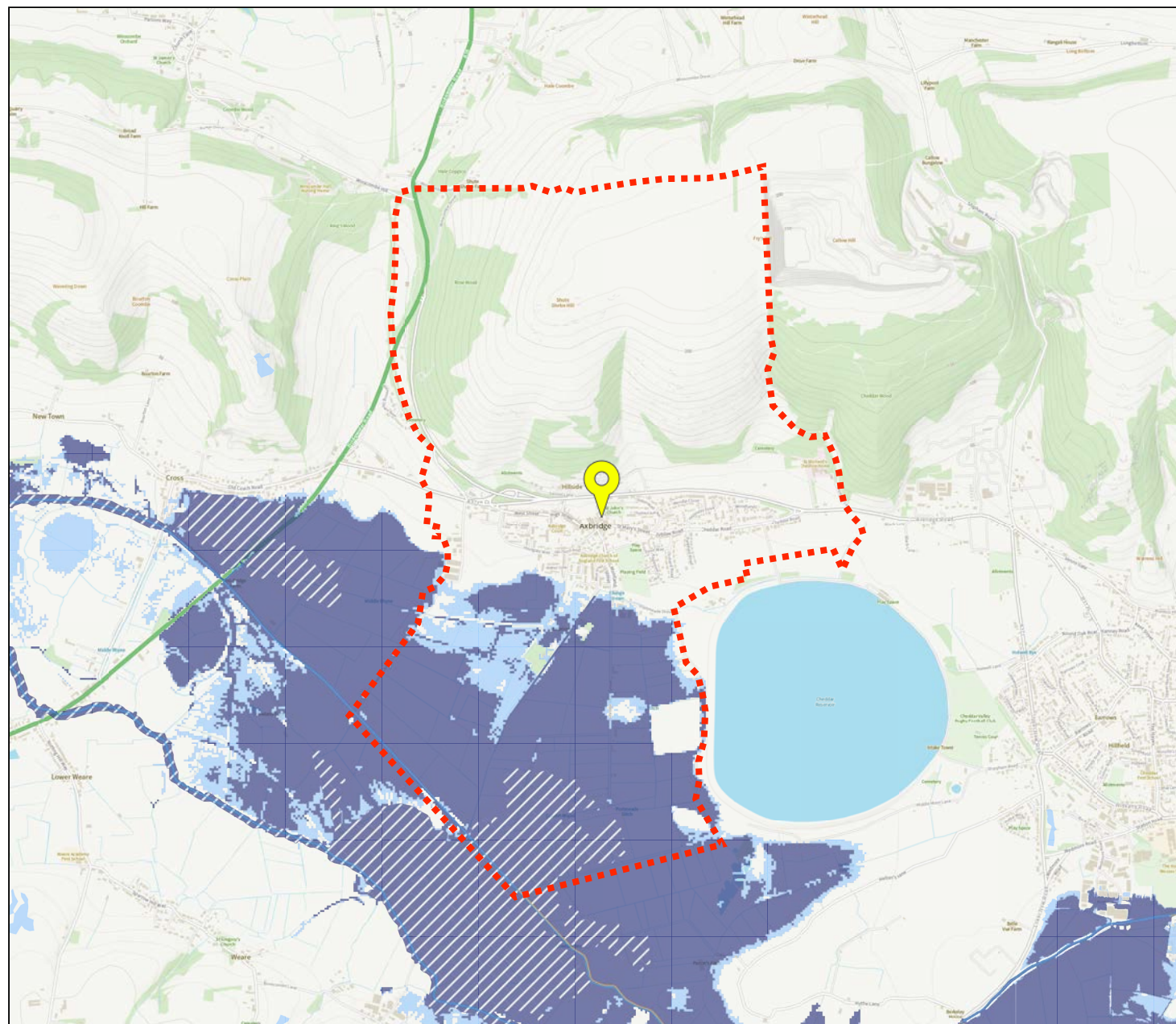
Flood map for planning

Your reference
Axbridge2

Location (easting/northing)
343122/154586

Scale
1:25000

Created
14 Nov 2021 16:16



Selected point



Flood zone 3



Flood zone 3: areas benefitting from flood defences



Flood zone 2



Flood zone 1



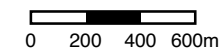
Flood defence



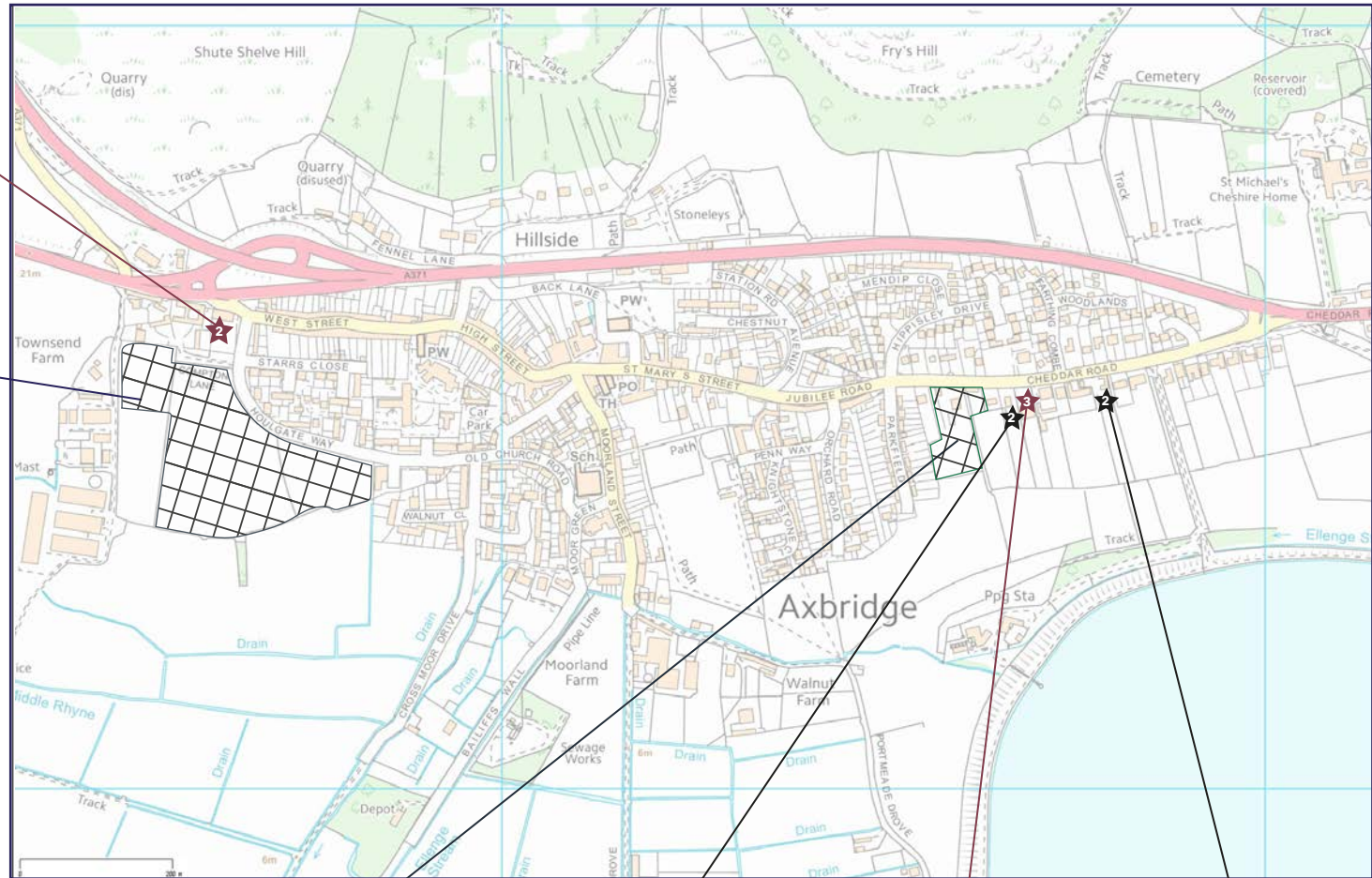
Main river



Flood storage area



Development sites





ALLOCATION

AP03
SITE SUBMITTED TO AXBRIDGE
NP CALL FOR SITES (2 homes)
See page 61

ALLOCATION

PLANNING APPLICATION
02/16/00030
 Hannick Homes application for up to 53 dwellings with approximately 35% affordable dwellings. (Hatched area only).

KEY

-  Development area for large-scale sites
-  Sites submitted to Axbridge NP call for sites (#, number of homes)

COMMITMENT

PLANNING APPLICATION
02/17/00022
 Clarke, Clarke, Norton & Maskell application for up to 20 dwellings with approximately 35% affordable dwellings.

COMMITMENT

AP01
PLANNING APPLICATION
02/20/00014
 Application for demolition of outbuildings and erection of 2 detached bungalows.
See page 57

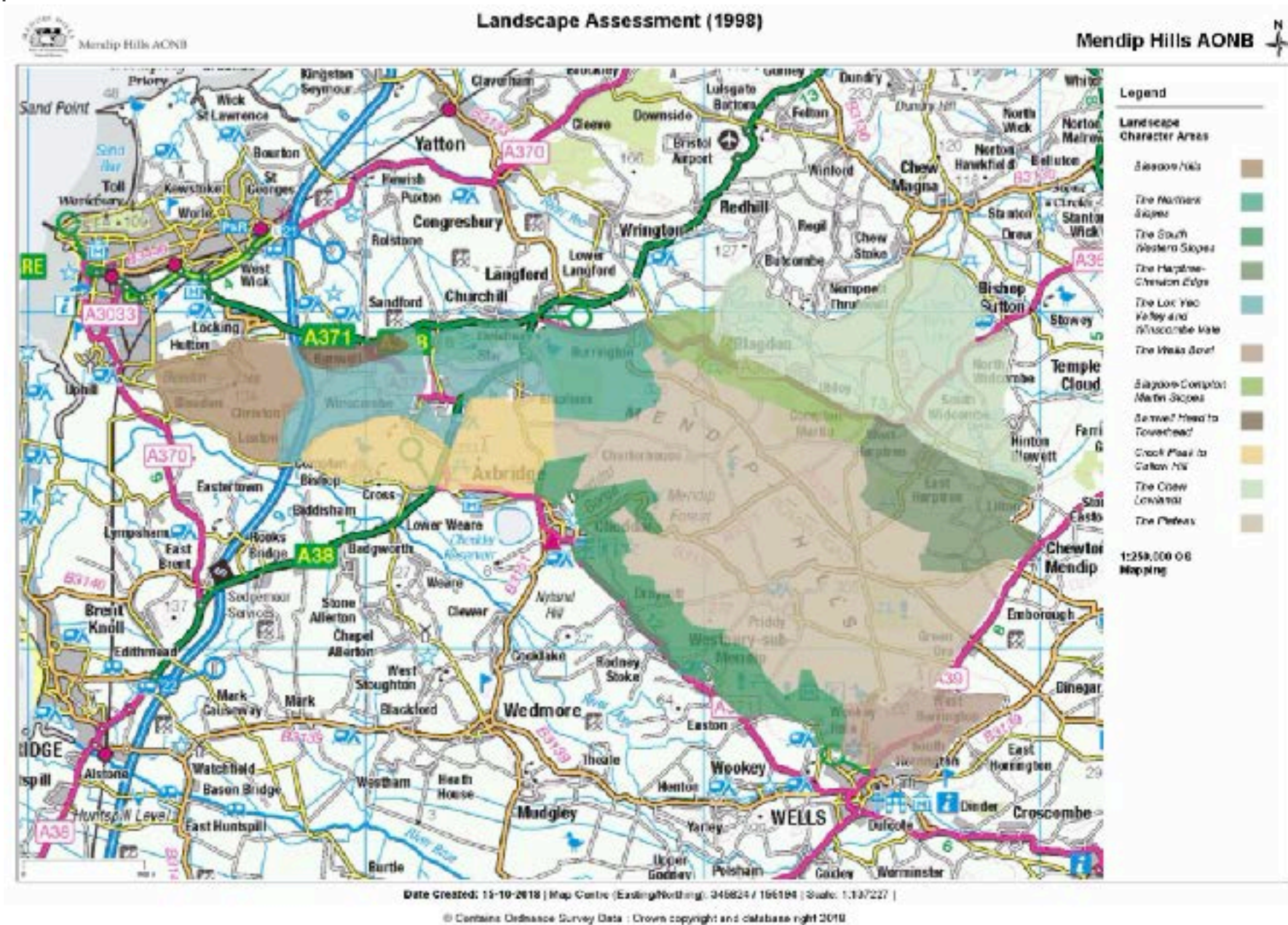
ALLOCATION

AP02
SITE SUBMITTED TO AXBRIDGE NP CALL FOR SITES (3 homes)
See page 59

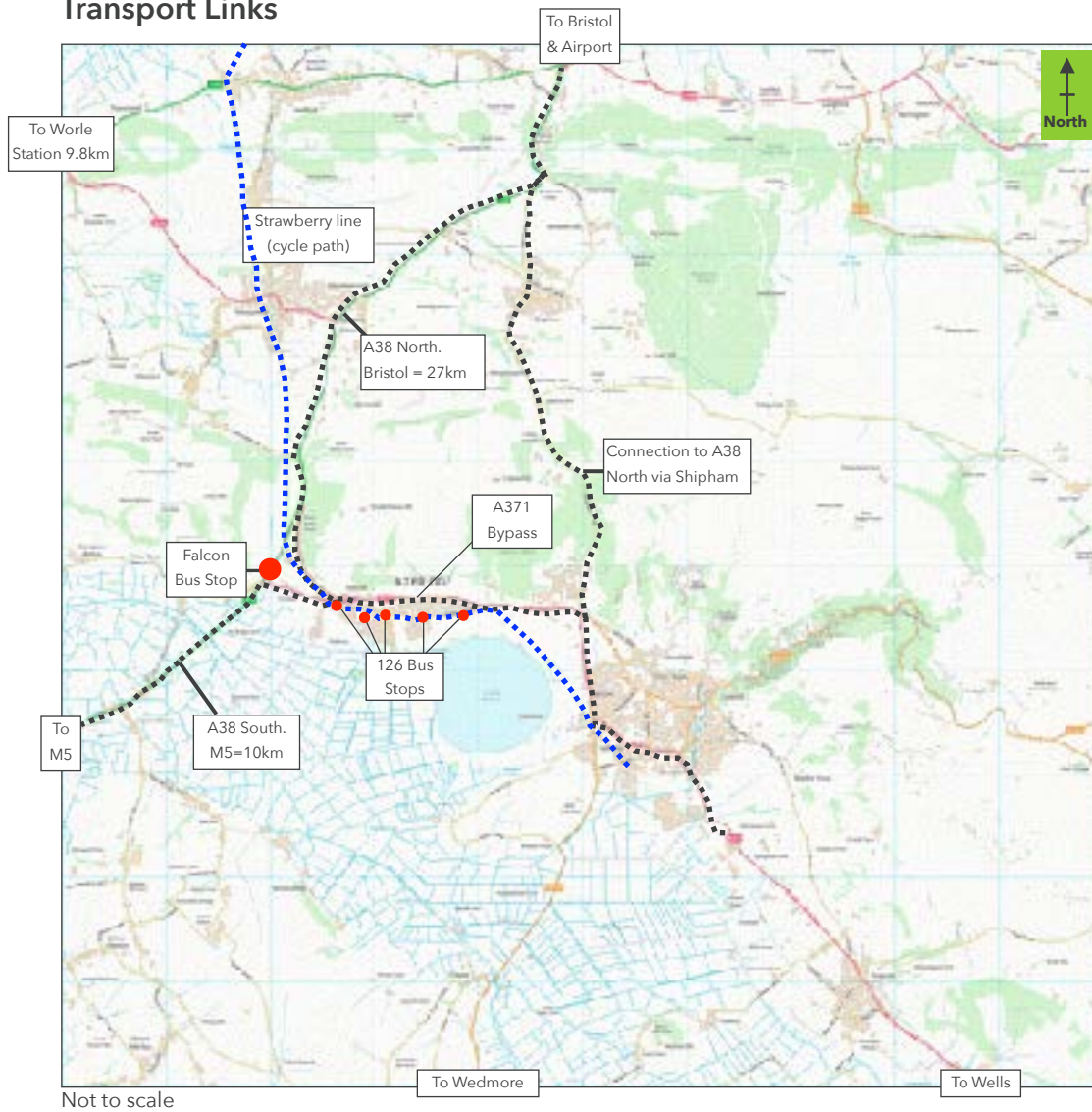
COMMITMENT

AP04
PLANNING APPLICATION
02/20/00007
 Application for the erection of a self-built dwelling
See page 64

Mendip Hills AONB - whole area

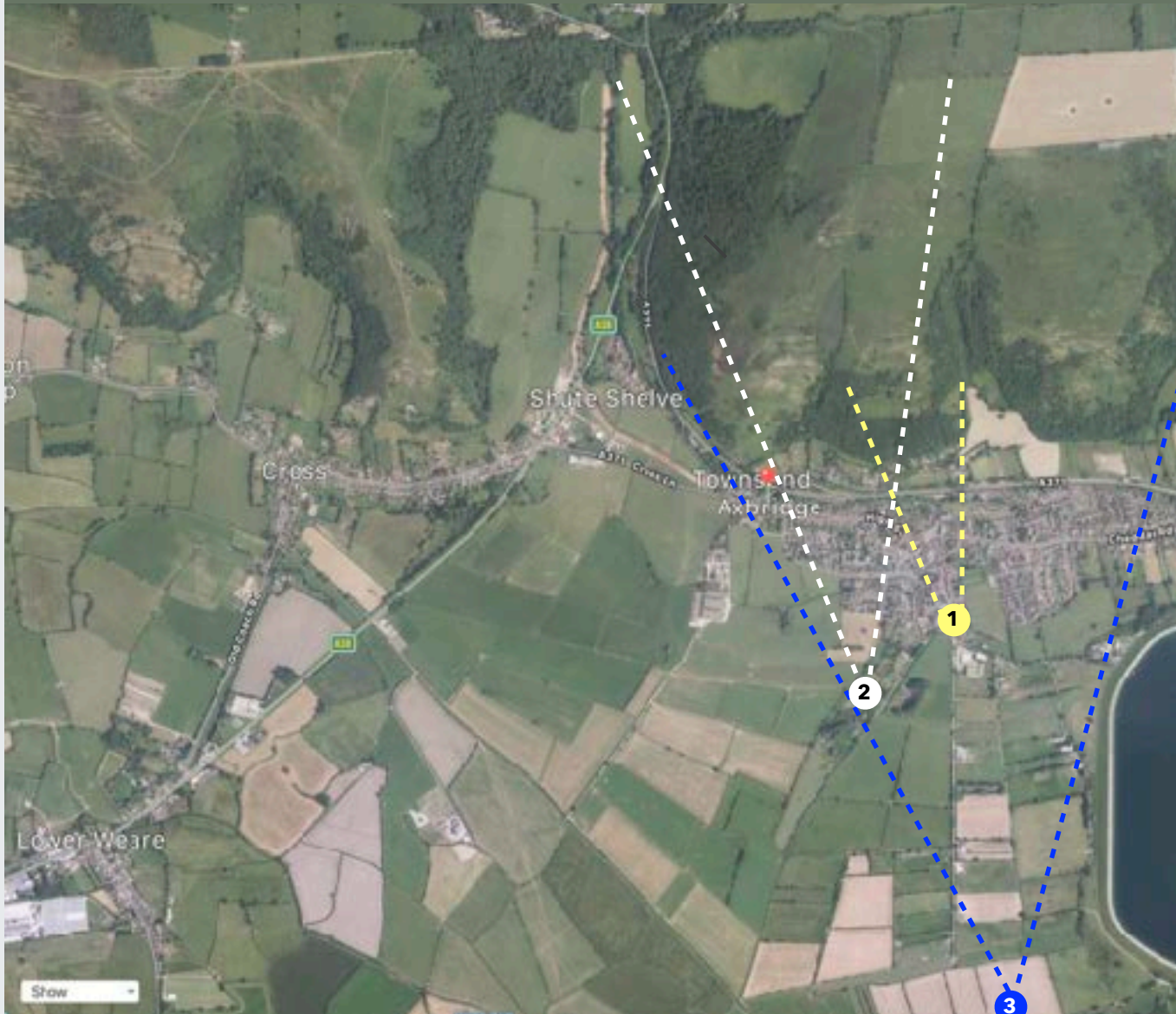


Transport Links



Town views

Images show some key views of and within the town. Within the town it is important to keep visual links between the town and surrounding countryside. Looking into the town it is important to keep the key landmarks such as the church of St John the Baptist identifiable and to keep the framing of the town within the context of the surrounding hills.



View from Moorland St showing connectivity to surrounding countryside

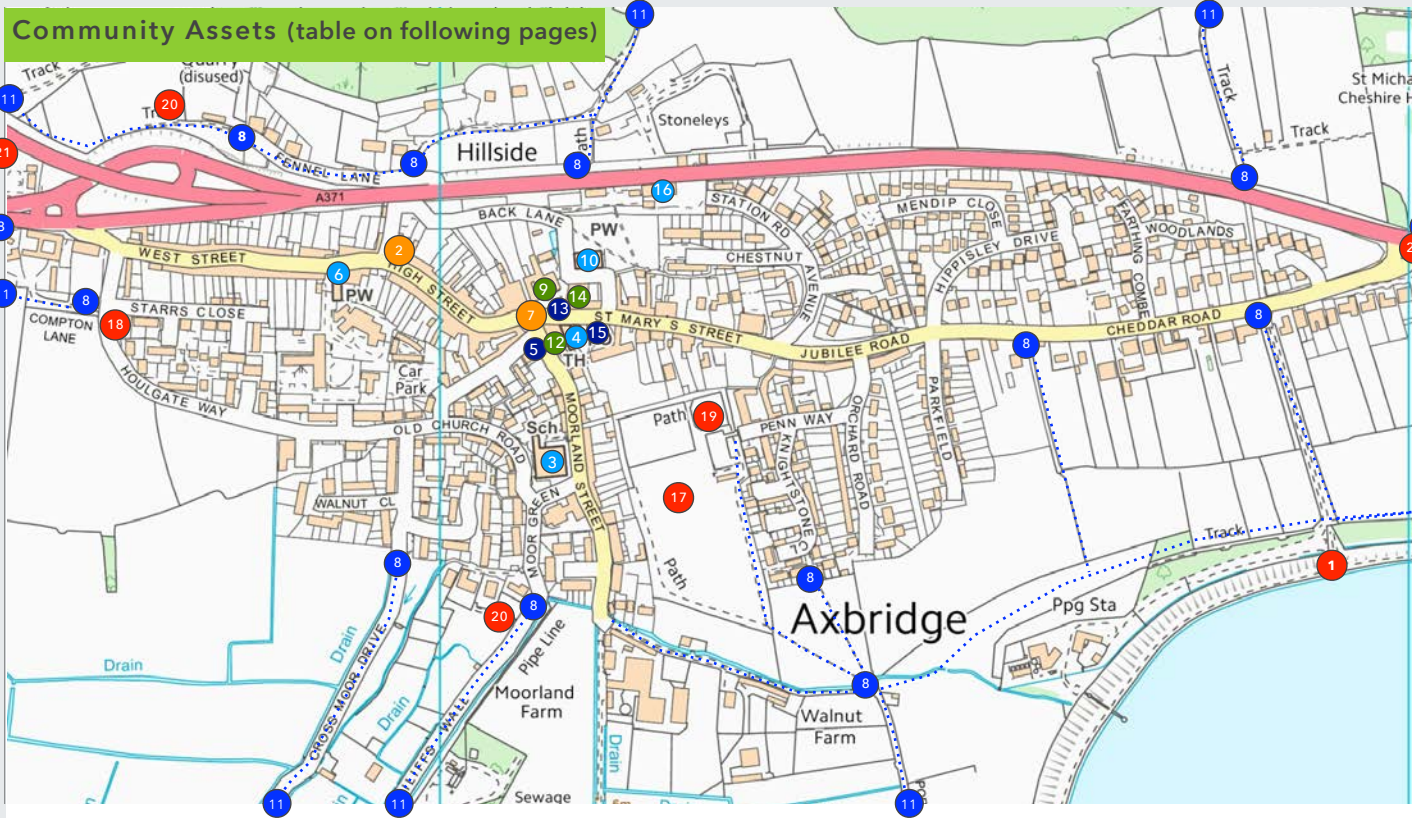


View from Cross Moor Drove towards town



View from Middle Moor Lane towards town

Community Assets (table on following pages)



The Alms House



The Square & various shops



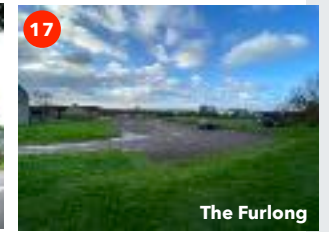
The Oak House



Post Office



Old Railway Station



The Furlong



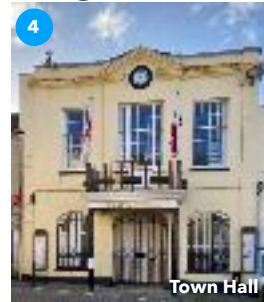
Reservoir & sailing club



Roxy Cinema



First School



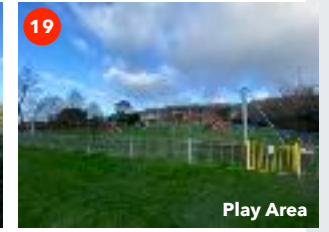
Town Hall



Pharmacy



Jack Todd Memorial Garden



Play Area



Community allotments



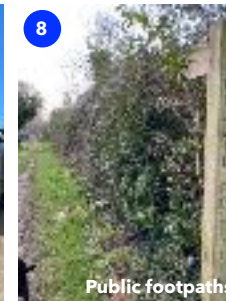
Axbridge-Cheddar Cycle Walkway, the Strawberry Line



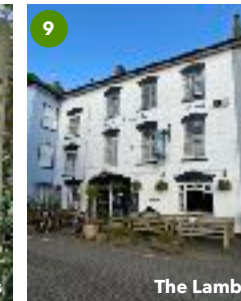
Methodist Church



Museum



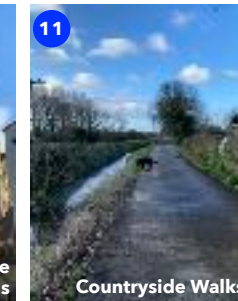
Public footpaths



The Lamb



Church of St John the Baptist & Church Rooms



Countryside Walks



Church of St John the Baptist

Key to Community Assets map on page 84

Map no.	Name	Category on Map	Commentary on Heritage
1	Reservoir & Sailing club	Recreational Space and Open Space/Green Space.	Identified on Somerset Historic Environment Record.
2	Roxy Cinema	Culture	Within Conservation Area and is a Grade 2 Listed Building.
3	First School	Civic Buildings	The school is not listed but has been previously subject to archaeological investigation given it falls within the conservation area and medieval settlement of Axbridge. The building also falls within the conservation area (designated heritage asset).
4	Town Hall	Civic Buildings	Within Conservation Area and is a Grade 2 Listed Building.
5	Pharmacy	Local Shops	Was previously a restaurant based on listing description. Within Conservation Area and is a Grade 2 Listed Building.
6	Methodist Church	Civic Buildings	Within Conservation Area and is a Grade 2 Listed Building.

Map no.	Name	Category on Map	Commentary on Heritage
7	Museum	Culture	Within Conservation Area and is a Grade 2 Listed Building.
8	Public Footpath	Footpaths	
9	The Lamb	Pubs/Cafes/ Restaurants	Within Conservation Area and is a Grade 2 Listed Building.
10	Church of St John the Baptist and Church Rooms	Civic Buildings	Within Conservation Area and is a Grade 1 Listed Building.
11	Countryside Walks	Footpaths	
12	The Alms House	Pubs/Cafes/ Restaurants	Within Conservation Area and is a Grade 2 Listed Building.

Map no.	Name	Category on Map	Commentary on Heritage	Map no.	Name	Category on Map	Commentary on Heritage
13	The Square and Various Shops	Local Shops	<p>The majority of the shops surrounding the square are listed buildings.</p> <p>The Square itself falls within a conservation area and has entries in the Somerset Historic Environment Record.</p>	17	The Furlong	Recreational Space and Open Space/Green Space.	<p>The area does not have any listings or entries on the Somerset Historic Environment Record.</p> <p>It does however falls within the conservation area which is a designated heritage asset under the NPPF.</p> <p>The northern boundary marks the extent of the medieval town.</p>
14	The Oak House	Pubs/Cafes/ Restaurants	Within Conservation Area and is a Grade 2 Listed Building.	18	Jack Todd Memorial Garden	Recreational Space and Open Space/Green Space.	
15	Post Office	Local Shops	<p>Building is not itself listed but falls within the town conservation area. Previous planning history indicates that the building is important to the contributing to the character of the conservation area.</p>	19	Play Area	Recreational Space and Open Space/Green Space.	<p>The area does not have any listings but falls within the conservation area which is a designated heritage asset under the NPPF.</p> <p>The northern boundary marks the extent of the medieval town.</p>
16	Old Railway Station	Civic Buildings	Building is not itself listed but falls within the town conservation area. It is also identified on the Somerset Historic Environment Record.	20	Community Allotments	Recreational Space and Open Space/Green Space.	
				21	Strawberry Line Axbridge-Cheddar Cycle Walkway	Recreational Space and Open Space/Green Space.	Across much of its route the cycle way follows the route of old Cheddar Valley and Yatton Railway. Identified on the Somerset Historic England Record.



Shaping the future of our town

The neighbourhood planning process is an opportunity for us, as a town, to have a voice in how we would like our town to be shaped over the coming years.

The group leading this project is determined to ensure that this plan is a true reflection of what the people of the town think. There is a genuine appetite to listen and to collect ideas and opinions. There is no room for personal agendas.

This website will act as a place for you to learn more about what a neighbourhood plan is, to keep up to date with what is happening and to submit your views. We urge you to get engaged, because the plan we produce will only be as good as the ideas and information you provide.

The Neighbourhood Planning Group



