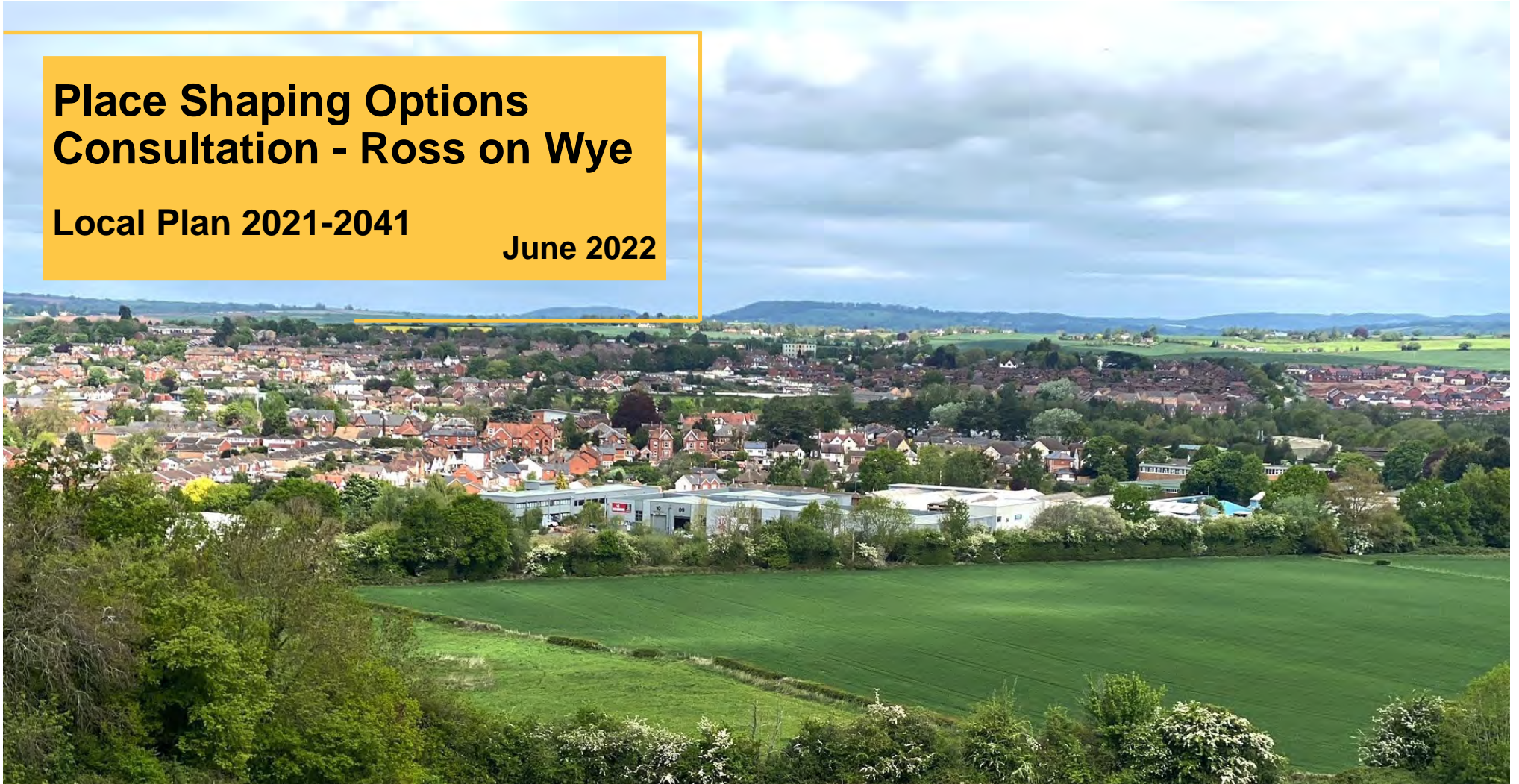


Place Shaping Options Consultation - Ross on Wye

Local Plan 2021-2041

June 2022



Ross on Wye Place Shaping Options

Background

Ross on Wye is located in the south east corner of Herefordshire close to the county's border with Gloucestershire. It is the largest of Herefordshire's five market towns and has a population of 10,582 in the town itself and a further 13,391 in the rural sub-locality (Census 2011). It acts as an urban centre for several parishes, providing essential services to these communities. It is a gateway to the lower Wye Valley and is known for its historic and niche shopping environment.

Current and emerging policy background

Core Strategy

The [Core Strategy](#) identifies Ross on Wye as an area of focus for strategic growth in the county. Of relevance to Ross on Wye in the plan includes:

- Policies provide the guidance in support of the future development objectives for the town.
- Land at Hildersley, allocated for housing in the Core Strategy, has since planning permission for 210 mixed market and affordable dwellings, and open space, with an associated application under consideration for a new footpath and cycle link to the Town and Country Trail.
- The creation and enhancement of new green infrastructure (GI) links/footpaths/cycleways into the town and surrounding countryside are considered a key element of both residential and employment development to the south east of Ross on Wye.
- The Model Farm employment allocation has not come forward as planned, due to viability issues. However, there is potential for these issues to be overcome if external funding were to be obtained or if additional residential development to the East of the A40 were to be incorporated into an overall masterplan for this area.

Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

The [Ross on Wye NDP 2019 - 2031](#) supports a number of measures, some of which include:

- Mixed use development at the Broadmeadows/Tanyard Lane site - the NDP describes this site as 'extremely important' despite serious flooding and possible contamination issues. The NDP allocates several smaller sites for residential development throughout the town, including at Cleeve Field, Merrivale Lane, and Stoney Stile.
- The establishment of a green infrastructure network connecting green spaces across the whole plan area, emphasising the importance of ensuring that new development does not damage the existing network.
- It requires new developments to demonstrate how they contribute to encouraging active travel around the town.
- The development of new community facilities such as a cinema, arts centre, museum and river-based facilities. It suggests that the Broadmeadows/Tanyard site could be a good option for new community facilities.
- The provision of new allotment sites as part of new large-scale developments and the designation of six green spaces as [Local Green Spaces](#).

Market Town Investment Plan

The [Ross on Wye Investment Plan 2021](#) proposes a series of projects to encourage investment in the town and to support the local economy. Among these are:

- Model Farm - Ross Enterprise Park – 15 ha of new employment land, to bring forward 24,900 m² of premises.
- Brampton and Sellack Cycleway (Brackney picnic area) - 5 miles of new cycle path.
- Broadmeadow and Tanyard Lane Development - mixed use sustainable development covering 18ha.
- Skate park - enhanced community facilities.
- Sports centre - enhanced community facilities.

The investment plan provides further detail on each of the above proposed projects.

Other local documents

In May 2021, Herefordshire Council published the [Ross on Wye Movement Study](#) which presents the findings of a review of potential enhancements to the town centre to ease the flow of traffic and support active travel in the town. Suggested schemes of note include:

- New crossing facilities at numerous locations within the town.
- Enhanced cycle parking.
- Consideration of bus stop provision and supporting facilities on Cantilupe Road.
- Consideration of 20mph zones within the town.
- Improvements to Wilton Road car park and the linkages to and from the town centre.
- Change to Gloucester Road/Broad Street/High Street junction.
- Consideration of part time pedestrianisation of High Street.

Ross on Wye Town Council have published a [Green Infrastructure Report](#) which sets out the existing key green infrastructure in the town and suggests opportunities to create new 'corridors' by creating and enhancing both existing and potential footpaths and wildlife corridors throughout the town.

Issues from the Spatial Options Consultation

The main issues gathered from the comments to the Strategic Options Consultation in regards to Ross on Wye are shown below:

- Some respondents were in favour of regenerating towns such as Ross-on-Wye.
- Some concerns that towns such as Ross are becoming commuter towns and thus need the support to develop the local economy to provide more local employment opportunities.
- There is a lack of sustainable transport options in Ross, and responses indicated an interest in an improved coach and bus stop at Ross Labels.
- Respondents expressed an interest for development in Ross to be geared toward the east and north as the limited road capacity in the south due to single-track roads could not withstand more development.
- However, it was generally agreed that Ross has a lack of available sites for housing.

Spatial option growth for Ross on Wye

The preferred spatial option indicates that strategic growth of approximately 1,500 units (+ 680 existing commitments) within Ross on Wye is required up to 2041.

The Model Farm site to the east of the A40 was allocated in the adopted Herefordshire Core Strategy for mixed use development and currently has planning permission for 29,400 m² of new employment land floor space and full consent for access off the A40.

Capacity for development

Built April 2021- April 2022	Commitments at April 2022
110	approx. 680

Opportunities and constraints

Key constraints to development in Ross on Wye are:

- Flooding (from both the River Wye and Rudhall Brook).
- Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) (this covers a large area across the town).
- River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC)/Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)/ Local Wildlife Site (LWS).

Other constraints include:

- Lack of brownfield sites within the built up area.
- Limited highway capacity and traffic congestion.

There are more specific weaknesses and opportunities in relation to certain sites/areas:

- Tanyard/Broadmeadows Brownfield land– contaminated land, flooding and complex land ownership issues, which could affect viability. This is a good site in a built up area, with valuable opportunities for links to town centre and mixed use development.
- Land to South of Ross on Wye (West of Hildersley site allocation) – there is a question over the availability of the Ministry Of Defense's (MOD) rifle range, limited access to the site, land ownership issues and highway capacity issues. The site would have good access to employment opportunities once Model Farm is developed and it is well contained in the landscape, with Penyard Hill to the South.

Other opportunities:

- Opportunities to make most of the River Wye, AONB and central Conservation Area in attracting visitors.
- Sufficient land availability to ensure comprehensive, attractive, mixed-use developments and the creation of sustainable, cohesive communities through careful master planning of future strategic urban extension.

Options

Strategic housing growth options

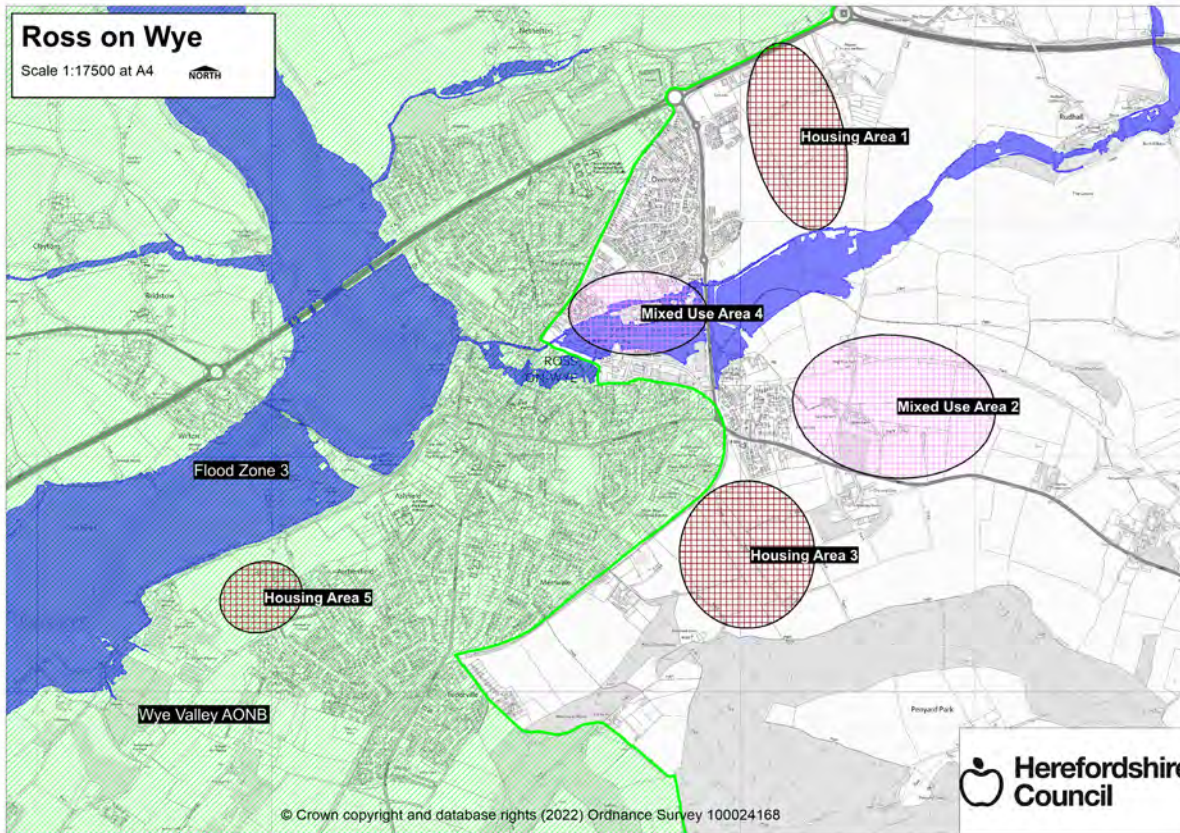
There are three main options for future directions of strategic growth. Due to the constraints of land liable to flood and the Wye Valley AONB, these all lie to the eastern side of Ross on Wye. For ease of reference, they are labelled as follows:

- Land to the North.
- Land to the East.
- Land to the South.

In order to achieve the proposed growth targets for housing and employment, it is likely that a combination of the three main options may be required; either in part or in whole.

In addition, there is potential for a smaller area of housing growth to the South-West of the town and also for mixed use development at Tanyard/ Broadmeadows ('Brownfield land') and these may also contribute to achieving the housing target for Ross on Wye.

A summary of the opportunities and constraints for each direction of growth is provided below. This will be followed by a more detailed breakdown of the key points in relation to a number of place-based topics.



Area 1: Land to the North

This option covers an area to the East of the A40 and to the South of the A449.

Opportunities:

- Located directly adjacent to the A40 and A449, therefore providing opportunities for good road access links.
- Opportunities to design green infrastructure and pedestrian/cycle links into the town centre.

Constraints:

- The A40 to the west of the area presents a physical barrier between it and the town centre, making it more difficult for people to travel on foot.
- Ensuring a sensitively designed urban edge in the rural landscape.

Area 2: Land to the East

This option covers an area to the east of the town on farmland beyond the A40.

Opportunities:

- Green infrastructure and pedestrian/cycle links into the town centre.
- Good access to the A40.
- Large land parcel with potential for mixed use development, community uses and open space.
- Creating local heat networks between housing and industrial sites, or other innovative low/zero carbon methods of producing electricity/heat.

Constraints:

- Potential highway capacity issues on the local road network.
- Ensuring that the visual impacts of large scale development on this gateway into Ross on Wye from the east are satisfactorily addressed.
- Part of the Marsh Farm site is affected by flood risk. These areas will need to be appropriately considered in the masterplanning stage.

Area 3: Land to the South

This option covers an area to the south east of Alton Business Park and the Town and Country Trail.

Opportunities:

- MOD are considering closing their rifle range, which would release the land for development.
- There is the potential for this area to be extended further to the south west.
- Opportunities for sustainable transport links into town centre.
- Close to employment opportunities in the town and proposed employment development at Model Farm.

Constraints:

- MOD rifle range is currently in use.
- Limited scope for satisfactory road access to this land parcel.
- Potential capacity constraints on the existing local road network. If the site is extended to the south west it will worsen these constraints.

Area 4: Brownfield land

This option covers an area between the Morrison's supermarket market and the A40 to the east.

Opportunities:

- Locals would like the existing employment part of the land tidied and re-developed.
- Mixed use sustainable development covering 18 ha; including tourism, housing, employment and open space
- Upgrades to road infrastructure.
- Good links to the town centre.
- Potential to create pedestrian/cycle links and green infrastructure networks from this area to newer developments to the east of the town.

Constraints:

- Parts of the site could be considered conventionally viable, but other areas (notably the core of Broadmeadows) would not be viable for housing.
- This area of land runs directly through a flood zone and therefore, if it is developed, measures will need to be employed to manage both present and future flood risk. This is likely to significantly increase the cost of developing the land.
- Both contamination and flooding are significant issues in this area which may limit the type, extent and scale of potential new development.
- Complex to bring forward (multiple owners).

Area 5: Land to the South-West

This option covers an area directly to the north west of Archenfield Road and to the east of the Beyond Storage site.

Opportunities:

- Allocated for custom-build housing in the Ross on Wye NDP.
- New green infrastructure and pedestrian links to local footpath network.

Constraints:

- Local road infrastructure may require improvement.
- Congestion at town centre road pinch point may be exacerbated with development to the south west of the town.

Environment:

Open Space:

- There will be a need for new provision of open space and children's play areas with new developments. This will be met as strategic new housing/mixed use sites are brought forward for development.
- There is a lack of allotment provision at present. The NDP calls for allotments to be provided as part of large-scale new development. This need could be addressed through the comprehensive redevelopment of new urban extensions as they come forward.
- High quality open space and/or allotments should be included as part of new development.

Green infrastructure and Active Travel routes:

- Ross on Wye Town Council's Green Infrastructure Report identifies a number of areas as requiring work to improve their wildlife value and/or connecting to larger sites to fulfil their potential.
- The Green Infrastructure Report also identifies nine existing and potential combined footpaths/cyclepaths and wildlife corridors which it argues should be retained and enhanced where possible.
- All new development should conserve, enhance, and create new multifunctional green infrastructure, taking into account the Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zones outlined in the adopted Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011 – 2031 and its connection to existing green corridors.
- The Town and Country (T&C) Trail acts as a green corridor along the south-eastern boundary of the town, which is well-used by the local population, as well as forming a wildlife corridor. This could help to ease the additional traffic congestion expected with large-scale development if it were to be developed. Green Infrastructure links from the T&C Trail to a new strategic allocation to the South should be created to provide an extended foraging corridor for bats.

Flooding:

- Parts of the town are in either [Flood Zone 2 or 3](#) (areas affected by flood risk). This includes large areas to the west of the town where the River Wye runs, parts of the town centre including Broadmeadows, as well as to the east of the A40 caused by the Rudhall Brook. Any new development in areas prone to flooding should be avoided and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be utilised to prevent future flooding.

Renewable energy and energy efficiency:

- The land to the east of Ross on Wye is suggested to be developed as a mixed-use site, with both extensive commercial and residential buildings. Due to the close proximity of residential and commercial development in this location, there may be the opportunity to employ low carbon/ renewable energy technologies, such as an underground heat network, which could distribute waste heat produced by the commercial buildings to heat residential buildings.

Community:

Community facilities:

- The Herefordshire Council Built Indoor Sports Facilities – Draft Needs Assessment 2022 recommends that new village halls/multi-purpose community facilities should be included as part of new housing developments in Ross on Wye. The Ross on Wye Investment Plan 2021 also recognises that there is an under-supply of sports pitches in the town.
- The Ross on Wye NDP states that most essential shops and services are concentrated in the centre of the town, with few (three) in ‘peripheral neighbourhoods’ (two in Tudorville and one on Springfield Road).
- The Ross on Wye Investment Plan 2021 recommends improving community spaces and providing a medium-sized teared auditorium for arts events.
- Residential developments of the size proposed in Options 1, 2 and 3 will require the provision of new community facilities. This may include, but is not limited to, a childrens’ centre, sports pitch/hall, community hall, arts studio and display space, cinema, or theatre.
- Due to the close proximity of the Brownfield land option to the town centre and other residential development nearby, a new mixed development in this area may also provide opportunities for new community facilities.

Public Realm:

- The Ross on Wye Investment Plan 2021 recommends improvements to the public realm in the town centre to enhance social capital and increase footfall. There may be the opportunity to obtain S106 agreement funding from any new development in the town to fund such improvements.

Affordable/Specialist Housing:

- Herefordshire Council's [Housing Market Needs Assessment 2021](#) identifies a 'net need' of 110 (75 rented, 35 affordable home ownership) additional affordable homes per annum in Ross on Wye. This need will be met by requiring developers to deliver affordable housing as part of new development.
- Information on specialist housing need for Ross on Wye can be found in Table 17.19 on page 235 of the Housing Market Area Needs Assessment 2021. S106 agreements could be sought with developers to provide the funding to deliver the additional need up to 2041.

Education:

- It is likely that additional school capacity will be needed alongside new development in Ross on Wye, particularly for larger residential developments. This will be assessed in detail in due course.

Healthcare:

- The town is currently served by two GP practices, which are currently under pressure. It is likely that additional capacity will be needed alongside new development in Ross on Wye and should be included as part of the comprehensive redevelopment of new urban extensions.

Economy

Employment Land:

- Included within the area to the east of Ross on Wye is the Council owned Model Farm. The Model Farm site was identified in the Herefordshire Core Strategy for mixed use development and currently has planning permission for 29,400 m² of new B1, B2 and B8 floor space and full consent for access off the A40. However it has not yet come forward for development due to viability issues. If funding can be sought, there is still the potential for the site to be developed for employment purposes.

Transport facilities/car parks/cycleways:

- There are specific challenges associated with movement around the town for people with limited mobility, pedestrians and cyclists. Problems of access and movement from town into the surrounding countryside. Improvements to pedestrian and cycling infrastructure are therefore needed, and opportunities exist to create new linkages through the town.
- Strategic development sites on the fringes of the town are some distance from the town centre and therefore pedestrian and cycle links leading from these developments into the town centre may need to be provided. The A40 creates a barrier for pedestrians and cyclists wishing to travel into the town centre.
- The land to the south is not easily accessible by car, and any new development in this area will need to be accompanied by an appropriate access to link the area into the local road network and the A40. It is however well served by the Town and Country Trail, a well-used pedestrian and cycle route.

- As part of the Brownfield land option there may be an opportunity to create new pedestrian and cycling links from this development, across the A40 and into new development sites on the fringes of the town.
- Adjacent to the land in the south west there is a pedestrianised route which runs from the end of Cleeve Lane into the centre of town, which could provide a good active travel route for a new development, which may ease the impact it has on the limited capacity of the road network in this part of the town.