



Historic England

## URBAN PANEL REVIEW PAPER

### WESTON-SUPER-MARE

#### *Making Weston Better: Capturing and articulating identity*

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 There is a perception about Weston that it is “just” another English seaside town past its heyday and without a clear sense of its future. Whilst the traditional domestic holiday makers do still come in numbers, the majority (over 90%) come for a day rather than a week by the sea. For the newer and arguably more economically powerful tourists, with greater disposable income, Weston is not yet seen as a place to visit, although it is a potentially splendid base to explore both the town and surrounding countryside.
- 1.2 There is also a perception that central Weston is almost exclusively about the seaside and separate from its local communities. Central Weston is currently not seen as being a place in which to live as well as work. New residential development currently underway, with its potential expansion in population is being located away from the town centre and therefore potentially without having allegiance to it.
- 1.3 But these perceptions are in part based on a failure to appreciate the unique identity of Weston, to understand its great qualities and therefore to miss the opportunity of capitalising on, and enjoying, its assets. These assets are both natural and historic and can drive forward a successful new chapter in its history.
- 1.4 In order to begin to address these perceptions Weston has to once more connect with its surroundings and demonstrate from the point of first arrival that it is a special place with a distinct and different identity, one that is clearly derived from its past but one that is confident of its future.

## **2 Executive Summary and Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Panel were impressed by the natural advantages possessed by Weston-Super-Mare. They support and endorse the key strategic moves already taken by North Somerset Council and its consultants with regard to the introduction of Higher Education facilities into the centre of Weston and the support for greater residential uses within the town.
- 2.2 The Panel recommend that a strategic approach to the recognition of, the refurbishment and repair of existing assets should be developed alongside the proposals for new interventions and agree that the main challenge is to change perceptions of the town. They believe that this can be achieved by using the natural and built assets of Weston alongside fostering greater community involvement to re-establish it as a liveable town as well as one worth visiting and using as a base to explore Somerset.

### **Summary Recommendations**

To support the overarching vision:

Identify and articulate the identity of Weston based on its natural and built assets

Reconnect Weston with its hinterland by promoting access to the surrounding landscape, for example using its natural and built heritage e.g. the archaeology of previous settlements at Brean Down and Worlebury Hill.

Establish what needs to be done to provide the infrastructure for a new type of visitor through discussions with hotel developers such as the Cathedral Group that specialise in distinctive offers rather than standard chains.

Address the poor quality sense of arrival as a high priority with interim improvements put in place rapidly whilst longer term solutions are developed.

Develop and promote a comprehensive transport plan with improved and integrated cycling provision, key gateways identified and a long term aim of controlled access by car, with enhanced links to the hinterland and the new housing.

Deliver the consolidation of the retail core but look to support small scale independent shops of quality, like the Lanes in Brighton, in areas alongside the High Street and proposed college. Support the diversification of the retail offer by exploring the potential through pop-up and short term leases. Look to capitalise on the new communities being introduced into the town, especially those in higher education.

Re-invigorate the High Street as a key element of regenerating the town centre so that it provides local shopping for the town centre communities by improving the quality of shop fronts and having a supportive approach to integration of community and cultural events.

Develop a Civic Campaign – thinking strategically but acting at a small scale with a commitment to quality- enabling little actions with access to small amounts of funding.

### **3 Panel Visit – Walking Tour**

- 3.1 The Panel arrived at Weston both by train and by car and in addition to the walking tour led by officers of the local authority, several members independently explored more widely during their stay.
- 3.2 Leaving the Winter Gardens the Panel headed for the seafront and experienced the activity along Royal Parade and the adjacent beach. The sheer expanse of high quality sandy beach and open panoramas available from the promenade were particularly striking. The high quality of the recently completed public realm was appreciated but the segregation of the promenade and beach from the adjacent town centre was very noticeable. The promenade also did not seem to encourage a leisurely exploration by providing sheltered places to stop and admire the surroundings. The Panel were fortunate to be experiencing fine, sunny weather, but it would obviously be very different in other weather conditions; although it was noted that seafronts attract people in all seasons.
- 3.3 Turning east the Panel then headed along Oxford Street past Dolphin Square towards the Town Hall and Station Road. Noting the recent improvements to the accessibility of the Town Hall entrance the Panel experienced the traffic dominated approach up Station Road, circling the superstore car park and petrol station before moving down Locking Road and Regent Street to the end of the High Street. The variation in quality of the townscape in such a short distance was striking and the separation of the station from the town centre by roads and car park was also noted.
- 3.4 Threading their way through Meadow and Hopkins streets and along Waterloo Street the Panel headed towards Grove Park and the higher slopes to the north of the town centre. Exploring the Shrubbery area before emerging onto the higher point above the Marine Lake, looking across the town from above Birnbeck Pier the Panel were struck by the fine vistas and surprise views; high quality townscape and variety of character within such a short distance so close to the heart of the town.
- 3.5 Descending back towards the seafront and Knightstone Road another change in character and quality became evident as the Panel returned to the Winter Gardens past surface car parks and unresolved spaces.
- 3.6 The Panel's observations on the tour were to note the quality evident in the town at both ends of the scale, good and bad. They were also struck by the landscape form of Weston, with some good and potentially stunning green

spaces in addition to the wooded, encircling hills. However, the topography was only one natural asset that was a surprise. Other assets were the amenity value arising from the open character and sheer expanse of the beach, the air quality and light, all of which appeared to be under promoted. The combination of the green spaces, the hills and the expanse of sandy beach was, in the view of the Panel, unique to Weston which could not be replicated and formed a strong element of its identity.

- 3.7 The Panel, in discussing with the local authority their experience of the town commented that the standard descriptions of Weston do not do it justice

## **4 Panel Visit – Exploring the Challenges**

- 4.1 The Deputy Director Development and Environment set the initial context for the challenge facing North Somerset Council. Geographically the council is one of four local authorities comprising the sub-regional area. The other authorities have defined themselves with Bath leading on its Heritage, Bristol its culture and South Gloucester its aerospace industries. The obvious challenge is for Weston to do the same and identify a leading idea.
- 4.2 North Somerset is relatively well connected in terms of transport infrastructure with easy access to motorways and airports. It has good rail connections but the potential improvements of electrification are eagerly awaited. Improvements to transport infrastructure have taken a number of years to deliver.
- 4.3 North Somerset is also well connected through the Local Enterprise Partnership which is bringing together Higher Education and Business with key partners. North Somerset has been proactive in trying to engage with government initiatives on Enterprise Zones, and was identified as one of six sub-regional examples. The Junction 21 (M5) Enterprise area, including the Weston Gateway Business Park is identified to receive 6-7000 homes and 9,000 jobs, all of which are dependent upon good transport links. But it is recognised that attention needs to be paid to rebalancing growth through re-focussing on the town centre.
- 4.4 Turning to the town centre of Weston the Council's Regeneration Manager provided an introduction to the issues as perceived. These include the sense from outsiders and residents alike that the town is "tired" and that a co-ordinated and coherent response to issues has been lacking.

- 4.5 The population of Weston is approximately 80,000, similar to Bath. However the perception of the two places could not be more different. The core issues facing Weston include the central areas of the town ranking highly in indices of multiple deprivation including those relating to health. Over half of the homes in the town centre are privately rented but have suffered from poor quality conversion and poor quality maintenance or lack of investment.
- 4.6 She outlined that an approach to regenerating the town centre based on retail, trying to draw in national names had not worked with the current perception of Weston. Regeneration through activities including beach based events, the Air day, the Winter Carnival and other festivals were one strand currently being used, although spreading the benefits arising from the events more widely across the town centre was the challenge.
- 4.7 As part of the attempt to tackle perceptions and stimulate new investment a promotional “Prospectus” had been developed based on the themes of Living, Learning and Lifestyle, which envisages 2-3000 new homes within or around the town centre but of a new quality. Under “Learning” a new academic presence in the town is proposed, informed by visits to other parts of the country e.g. Medway to understand how this can bring vitality and activity into the town. £14m has been identified from the LEP to be spent on the Winter Gardens to transform it into a Legal and Professional Services Academy and it is anticipated that the joint FE/HE college will become a University Centre. Under “Lifestyle” a whole range of liveability improvements are needed including public realm and highways projects. The council is leading the way by purchasing the police station and magistrates’ court site and working proactively with the Homes and Communities Agency to provide a landmark new wave of residential development in the centre of the town.
- 4.8 The Councils Transportation Service Manager presented the work being undertaken on the connectivity of Weston, both digitally and also physically to other west of England Growth Areas. Challenges to movement and accessibility across the town include dispersed and disconnected public transport connections, unclear cycling routes and increasing congestion. The extent of parking provision and its impact across the town remains a big challenge and whilst there is generous public realm for walking much is in poor condition and fragmented. Work on addressing these challenges is underway including highways public realm enhancements and public realm/public space enhancements being identified.
- 4.9 The Principal Planning Policy Officer provided the planning context for the regeneration approach being taken, identifying the three central documents that will facilitate change. These are the Core Strategy, the Sites and the Development Policies Plans. The process is not without difficulty, including a

legal challenge to the Core Strategy, but the policy element of the Site and Policies document had just been submitted. Under the Core Strategy Weston had been identified as the focus for growth with two strategic allocations for residential development totalling over 5,500 dwellings.

- 4.10 The other key challenge within the town centre of Weston is the extent of the current retail area, which is believed to be too large. The suggestion is therefore to reduce the size of the primary shopping area and maintain a “town centre first” approach to retail; encourage greater flexibility in town centre uses including introduction of further residential uses. These aims identified through the Prospectus for Change will be incorporated and developed in a Town Centre Regeneration Area Supplementary Planning Document.
- 4.11 The Homes and Communities Agency Area Manager South and South West, outlined the approach to the newly announced Housing Zones and what it could mean for North Somerset. The zone could be a collection of sites but had to be brownfield and in order to bid for the funding it had to be a specific site proposal. Weston had one of the largest potential allocations of 2,250 units and the HCA was willing to provide technical support for bids etc. through its pre-tendered technical panels.
- 4.12 Councillor John Crockford-Hawley, Vice Chairman of North Somerset Council and long standing Civic Society member, provided a vivid summary of the history of Weston and its legacy. The history of Weston as a leisure and health resort with its fortunes fluctuating over the centuries has left a built legacy of high interest but under appreciated. The key issue he identified was the fact that the town centre of Weston was only geographically the actual town centre for a short time and with subsequent development it has struggled to fulfil that purpose. The movement of “wealthy” people out of the town in the early C20 was the source of many of the problems that the town now faces. Councillor Crockford-Hawley also identified a need for Weston to start celebrating again and to encourage the idea of discovering itself.
- 4.13 Nora Tichy-Dundon, from Landscape Design Associates (LDA) appointed by North Somerset to take the Regeneration Framework forward then outlined the work carried out in the last four weeks since their appointment. The aim of the project was to focus on deliverable projects on the ground to act as a catalyst in changing perceptions of Weston and demonstrating a new benchmark for quality. The teams initial observations were that within a generally intact urban structure, diluted by 1980’s highways interventions, there were well defined character areas and some high quality architecture. Weston contained expansive retail areas although some were in obvious decline and the town centre was traffic dominated. The sense of arrival was



poor and there is an obvious gap in the urban form between the station and the seafront. There is a gap in the local demographics and a need to retain more local spend and whilst perceptions may be negative Weston is a place with lots of potential.

- 4.14 The initial thoughts are to consolidate, strengthen and protect the prime retail area although the size of that core and its precise boundaries need defining especially the extent it should extend to the south. Residential-led regeneration is proposed for the area between the station and the sea front although there had to be a critical mass to interventions. It is thought important to produce “early wins” to generate impact, change perceptions and establish a new threshold for quality. It is important to create a strong sense of arrival for Weston and to tap into “Bristol Cool” to help make the town more attractive to a wider range of visitors and potential residents.
- 4.15 This could be achieved through creating a new place south of the town centre and between it and the station, which could be marketed and promoted as a new offer for the town. It isn’t just about that one place, there are other opportunities including around Alexandra Parade and the Town Square by the Sovereign Centre. Several key sites are being identified including Walliscote Road, Dolphin Square, Town Square, the Station Area and the Police Station and Magistrates Court site.
- 4.16 The Panel sought further information about cultural activity and what creative stakeholder analysis is being carried out. In addition they were interested in how the higher education offer was going to work and what type of student was being targeted. They probed further on the profile of visitors to Weston, discussing with the Chief Executive of North Somerset that whilst the town is a centre for day visits, the weekly” traditional” seaside holiday has declined. There is a need to develop the capacity and infrastructure to deliver a different sort of experience; one centred on Weston as a centre for trips out recognising that an enhanced town centre “offer” relies on an evolution of the current tourism model.
- 4.17 In the final session of open discussion with partners Frazer Osment, Director at LDA, raised two key questions for the panel to consider:
- What is the proposition for Weston - does it need a vision or does it need to be better at what it is?
  - How do you deal with the regeneration challenge of re-colonising spaces and getting people to invest in the town, rather than producing more strategizing?



His challenge to the Panel was to provide practical pointers to help change the investment cycle and context for regeneration in the town.

## **5 Panel Analysis**

- 5.1 The view of the Panel is that Weston is an under explored quality place of substance and great potential. The Panel also recognise that notwithstanding the challenges to the Local Plan and the limitation of resources, North Somerset Council has made a very positive start on identification of the challenges facing the town. They were also particularly impressed by the amount of work that has already been undertaken by the Council's consultants in a very short period.
- 5.2 The Panel believe that the initial objectives of bringing Higher Education into the heart of the town alongside more extensive residential use within the town centre are the appropriate ones. The Panel support the review of retail need as being realistic and they also applaud the aspiration to set new standards of quality within Weston, especially in the context of a history of mediocre development for much of the last 50 years.
- 5.3 However they believe that successful implementation will depend on quality thresholds across all aspects of activity so that Weston is revived in human terms as well as physical built terms.
- 5.4 There are therefore two further high level objectives that the Panel believe are essential to deliver the aspirations for Weston. The first is the need to maximise its catchment population by better connecting the town centre with its suburbs and the new settlements to the north and east, which should be an essential component of any transport strategy. The second is to articulate and enable the understanding of the town to be developed in a more inclusive way that places the regeneration of existing communities as an equal priority alongside the introduction of new communities and development.
- 5.5 The unique identity of the town arising from its natural and built heritage is the obvious mechanism for achieving these aims. Facilitating an improved understanding of the quality of the town is the foundation for greater community involvement and civic pride, whilst also being an important element in driving up potential value for external investment.
- 5.6 Whilst recognising the strong desire for implementation the Panel does caution against heading directly into delivery without further exploration of the context of the town centre and its heritage in a focussed manner. This could be delivered by a mix of targeted characterisation to inform the approach to

areas of proposed new development- e.g. around the area to the south of the town centre and Town Square alongside working up appraisals for the town centre conservation areas. The former could be in partnership with, or supported by, the local office of Historic England. The completion of appraisals presents opportunities for wider engagement that could establish new or and current key partnerships. The Planning School at the University of West of England is an obvious potential resource whilst the College of Further Education could be involved in provide designing “apps” with local communities for use in understanding their place or identifying locally valued buildings that should be integrated into physical regeneration proposals- see the Bristol “Know your Place” initiative and the “Oxford Characterisation Project”.

- 5.7 **Reconnecting Weston with its wider hinterland:** The new developments around Junction 21 are an opportunity to increase the size of the population of the town and to fill the “missing demographic” by capturing the significant proportion of inhabitants of wider Weston-Super-Mare who do not currently identify strongly with Weston as their town. The challenge, already identified but not clearly articulated, is to make Weston relevant to these newer communities and especially to overcome the disconnect that exists between Weston and the north. The creation of the Enterprise Area should be taken forward in a way that will not only develop new economic activity but be mutually supportive of the regeneration of Weston town centre. This implies developing both the physical and cultural links that will encourage this new population to automatically regard the town centre as ‘its own’. There is also a need to develop Weston’s own distinctive cultural offers and improve community animation, to bring out the hidden talent within the town and use it to help regeneration.
- 5.8 This would involve sustaining and looking to expand the capacity of the Weston Town Centre Partnership and using the BID Business Plan to celebrate what is already successful, as part of a conscious effort to change perceptions. The current themes of the BID Business plan could be part of the framework of the community prospectus highlighting community initiatives. These would complement the existing Food Festival event, the open air film season run by Backyard Cinema, the Air Show event and the flower festival etc.. Exploring how these could be bundled together and promoted under a themed cultural festival or offer, using the unique identity provided by natural and built assets could be powerful.
- 5.9 There is a clear need for an integrated transport strategy that looks at the experience of the visitor approaching Weston and how to ensure that people are drawn through the town on foot rather than by car. Creating a better sense

of arrival, especially at the station, is vital and probably the first project that should be delivered. The Station should be a transport interchange with bus and cycling hubs adjacent and community transport facilities also located here to enable easy access to the centre for those wanting to shop or with less mobility.

- 5.10 The long term strategy should be to move in a managed way to a car free zone for more of the town centre linked in with a cycling strategy providing a clearly signposted and attractive network of cycle routes that take advantage of the flat topography of the town centre. In the short and medium term meanwhile uses could be encouraged for a controlled number of surface car parks until they are transformed either for development or as part of improved green space and public realm network. Creating a direct route from the station across the superstore car park is obviously desirable and could be framed by development to create a sense of welcome and a boulevard or avenue accompanied by signage indicating the proximity of the sea front. This would be an opportunity for a statement of the commitment to quality set out by the council and has a precedent in the work carried out at Sheffield to reconnect the station with the city centre. This will be a challenge because of the number of partners involved but could be delivered in phases.
- 5.11 **The Green Town by the sea brand:** Weston needs to articulate what differentiates it from its neighbours with an organising idea similar to Bath and Heritage or Bristol and Culture. A starting point is recognising that in essence the green spaces that are already in and around the town can provide one very effective method of connecting the hinterland with the town centre and the seafront. Weston could be the Green Town by the Sea and green infrastructure should play a greater part in mitigation of the impact of roads. It can also assist in widening the variety and quality of spaces in which to dwell and experience the town and its seafront, providing the glue that repairs both the small physical disconnects between areas of the town as well as helping to bring communities together. The production of a Green Infrastructure SPD would put the council in the lead and enable them to take control, promoting the variety and layering of green space, especially alongside the sea front. Green infrastructure could be used as part of new development- as proposed with the boulevard- but could also connect and reinforce existing vistas and views within and between the town centre, sea front and the surrounding hills.
- 5.12 An early move by the council to increase awareness of the role of green infrastructure and the way it assists with health, recreation and quality of place would be to reverse the practice of removing street trees and promote an “adopt” a tree programme with schools and children who could be encouraged to plant trees or tend pop-up, or meanwhile, gardens on development sites. This has been done with huge success at Kings Cross through their “skip

garden” initiative, which has included the production of food for local restaurants and pop up cafes in the area.

- 5.13 The green concept could then expand to embrace the approach to transport especially through a cycling strategy and community transport initiatives and could underpin the commitment to quality in new development identified for the town centre. The concept would also form an important part of thinking strategically about re-use and repair of existing buildings which the Panel felt was missing in the presentations they received.
- 5.14 **Re-establishing the Town Centre:** The Panel detected a physical and cultural separation between the local people living in the town and the visitors to it. The challenge will be to reconnect the two and to capture the opportunities that the student population will bring for both. The potential for the centre of Weston to be improved for older living should also be examined, retaining families who currently live in the area by enabling downsizing into the town centre. Approaching developers specialising in this market, like Pegasus, for exploratory discussions could be beneficial.
- 5.15 Part of what makes Weston-Super-Mare unique is the beach, which needs to be connected back into the town centre so it becomes once again part of the whole. In order to do that the council should be facilitating “reputation conversations” to identify the experiences that will make Weston great for visitors, but also for the existing communities and the potential new student and residential communities. These could take the form of “a day in the life” discussions and could help to build on the infrastructure that is already here, including the fantastically good sandy beach and a generally clean public realm. These existing assets and aspirations should also be set out in a prospectus developed to complement the existing Prospectus for Change but one which showcases the strong community already here that makes the town what it is. The production of the prospectus could also be used to engender civic pride through, for example, photographic competitions identifying what makes Weston “Super” to be included as illustrations in the document.
- 5.16 Whilst the Panel appreciated the approach of delivering a series of signature projects to demonstrate a step change in Weston they were also strongly of the view that an equally compelling series of actions need to happen that signal a similar determination to repair and improve the existing fabric of the town. This is important to ensure the new developments are perceived as belonging to existing communities and encouraging them to be seen as part of a positive future for the whole town. This is particularly important for the area

around the Magistrates Court and Town Hall and the proposed college in the Winter Gardens.

- 5.17 The opportunities presented by the Magistrates Court and Police Station site are exciting and could be an exemplar on the integration of new with old and demonstrating renewal alongside re-use. The housing led approach also represents an opportunity to encourage wider community involvement through a design competition which could have representatives from within Weston and key partners on the jury. Attracting developer interest would be made easier if the council could demonstrate a clear vision for the adjacent area including the High Street and especially the parades of shops immediately to the north of the Town Hall linking to Regent Street.
- 5.18 The relatively poor condition and lack of vitality of these parades will hamper investment in adjacent areas and has to be addressed. Small shop front or shop window schemes have been used effectively elsewhere – e.g. Grantham, Bexhill –on-Sea and Stratford upon Avon- but there would also need to be investment in the public realm. Council support for a “meanwhile use” project providing the freehold owners with advice and facilitating invitations to artists or pop-up uses from other towns, e.g. Bristol would help to establish whether there is interest and could potentially result in a new character for the area. This activity could leverage in funds from Historic England and other partners e.g. The Heritage Lottery Fund.
- 5.19 The Panel recommend that before briefs are issued for the Police Station site historic characterisation of the immediate context should be completed to ensure that integration with adjacent areas is successful. The current scale and arrangement of the existing Police Station is carefully considered and the Panel recommends that any proposals for a taller building should be developed with a clear understanding of what that would mean in the context of the wider town centre.
- 5.20 The Panel recommend that Dolphin Square is not developed to provide further retail and whilst leisure uses have already been permitted as phase one, the council should prepare a design brief for phase two which should include a design competition. The regeneration and intensification of the Sovereign Shopping Centre is clearly desirable, but the Panel did not think that it should extend on any significant scale into Town Square. The relationship of the Square with the Winter Gardens and shopping centre requires careful consideration including the scale of potential new development around it. There could be significantly increased activity so the Square could have a role as the key town centre green space providing “respite”. It could also be a critical element of the garden approach, providing improved connections to

the sea front and its future should be the subject of a design competition with community involvement.

- 5.21 In addition to the areas being examined in the current framework there are a number of important historic buildings in the town that could lead the way in regenerating Weston. In particular the Royal Hotel and the Odeon, both of which are undervalued assets. They should be prime candidates for greater promotion and physical improvement. Making more of the rare organ within the cinema and developing a unique film or variety offer (seaside or themed film events) to re-create a now forgotten cinema going experience is one idea that could be explored. It would be worth exploring how this approach was taken by Thanet Council and the regeneration of Dreamland. More needs to be done to improve the setting of the Royal Hotel, part of which should address the impact of car parking, provide a more accessible link to the seafront and a better quality approach to the hotel.

## **6 Conclusions**

- 6.1 The Panel recognised that Weston faces considerable challenges but that positive steps have been taken by North Somerset Council and they support the strategic direction. The Panel felt that Weston is a town in transition that needs to be supported through a process of incremental regeneration so that its essential qualities are brought out, rather than being subjected to a transformation into a different town.
- 6.2 In order to support the transition further understanding of the special qualities of the place are required so they can be cherished as part of the process. This does not mean further strategizing delaying implementation but a focussed series of projects to inform the emerging design approach for key sites alongside a wider, potentially phased programme of assessment and study. This is a vital step for the existing town centre where the three conservation areas are all identified as being at risk and understanding the reasons for that risk will underpin successful measures to tackle it.
- 6.3 The Panel agree that the Station and the Magistrates Court sites are priorities that could, if handled well, provide a clear step change in perceptions of what Weston deserves and lead the way for further interventions across the town. However, that intervention needs to be a mixed programme of larger and smaller actions to heal the scars and the fractures in the townscape and they all need to be underpinned by the commitment to quality.



- 6.4 Linking the projects identified through the regeneration framework with potential community initiatives is the next step and whilst a design guide produced as part of an SPD or Master plan is necessary, especially for potential housing action zones, demonstrating and getting the commitment of existing communities to good design, so they can understand and champion what it can deliver for them, especially in the creation and management of the public realm, is also required.
- 6.5 If the council is clear about the physical and community assets of Weston and can articulate them convincingly they have a better chance of unlocking further funding, particularly from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Coastal Communities Fund and potentially Historic England.

#### **Immediate actions or “quick wins”**

- Improve signposting from the station to the sea front
- Commission targeted characterisation for south of town centre area
- Commission brief for Phase II of Dolphin Square which includes a design competition
- Invite external hotel provider – e.g. Cathedral Group- to assess opportunities for improving visitor infrastructure for missing visitor demographic
- Set up adopt a tree programme
- Run community design competition for Town Square
- Run a photographic competition “What makes this place Super” as first stage of parallel prospectus
- Establish a shop front repair scheme for the High Street
- Create civic campaign “operation eyesore” or “Weston Quietways” to encourage community management of public realm – removing litter and clutter from alleyways
- Encourage pop-up and meanwhile uses or art installations particularly around area adjacent to the college- invite artists in to set up in empty shops
- Provide advice on meanwhile leases see [www.meanwhile.org.uk](http://www.meanwhile.org.uk)



‘North Somerset Council found the visit by the Urban Panel extremely informative and helpful. The visit occurred while the Council was in the process of developing a masterplan for the ambitious regeneration of Weston-super-Mare’s town centre. The Panel’s insightful and independent specialist advice was welcomed and has subsequently been incorporated into the Delivery Plans and Development Site Briefs for the regeneration area. In particular the advice to improve the public realm through a variety of means including the addition of street trees and other planting, reducing the impact of vehicular traffic and increasing the opportunities for cycling, walking and places to ‘linger’ has been taken on board and is now an underpinning objective in our regeneration work and will be included in the forthcoming SPD for the area.

The independent external recognition of the quality of the town’s architectural heritage and stunning natural environment has also boosted our confidence in celebrating and promoting the town.’

Mike Jackson, Chief Executive, North Somerset Council.

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