

NEW MILTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Connectivity Task Group Report

Revision	Author	Date	Amendments
A	S. Eleftheriou	30.03.18	Removal of SANG information (now listed in separate report) and amendment of references to proposed sites.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Brief

This report has been produced to collate the input and discussions of the connectivity task group on behalf of the New Milton Neighbourhood Plan working group.

New Milton (excluding Barton on Sea) is a conventional form of town centre located centrally, with rail station close by and various suburbs surrounding it. It is connected by the main roads leading into the centre from N, W, E and S. The main patterns of movement generated from within NM are car-based, comprising mostly one of three types of trip:

- Out-commuting from across New Milton to Southampton and SE Dorset
- Shopping trips from suburbs to the town centre
- The school run

In addition, there is traffic passing through NM on the E-W A337. There is already considerable congestion at peak hours on the road system, especially on roads heading north to the A35 and Gore Road/A337 heading west. The congestion on Station Road/Ashley Road through the town centre is common across the day.

The station (which benefits from frequent and reasonably fast services to Southampton/Thames Valley/London and SE Dorset) is busy but subject to a number of proposed improvements to the rail network likely to be capable of handling significantly higher levels of use for commuting.

1.2 Objectives

Significant growth on the outskirts and particularly the town centre of New Milton is likely to increase congestion. The main objectives of this report are to advise on potential connectivity improvements and key ideas to help achieve the overall vision for New Milton. See below for key areas to be discussed:

- Road junction improvements
- Realistic alternatives to car journeys
- Train station access improvements
- Town centre reconfiguration (cross-cutting with Town Centre Task Group)
- Cycle and footway improvements
- Connections between green sites

2 TRANSPORT

2.1 Bus

2.1.1 Bus Routes

Existing bus routes offer good connectivity across New Milton but as can be seen in *Appendix A*, improvements could be made.

A better link between Bashley and the town centre would help lower car journeys in that direction. There is currently a 'hop on' seasonal bus route which is useful but may be beneficial to imitate for other months too.

An additional bus route linking Ashley with Sway Road would also be beneficial, especially with the proposed Brockhills Lane development adding to demand. The existing geometry of Brockhills Lane is not suitable for buses (or pedestrians/cyclists) so would require carriageway realignment and cutback of vegetation to improve visibility.

2.1.2 Bus Frequencies

It is recommended that the potential to increase frequency of bus journeys from Barton on Sea to New Milton town centre be pursued as this could potentially reduce car journeys into the centre.

Car journeys from Barton are likely to be fairly regular at the moment due to lack of amenities. A more regular bus service may encourage residents of Barton on Sea to use the bus rather than their car.

2.2 Train

2.2.1 Train Station Usage

Station usage for New Milton is very high in comparison to other similar station in the New Forest. The Office for Rail and Road (ORR) provide usage estimates for financial years based on ticket purchases (see Table 1 for an indicative extract).

New Milton usage figures are approximately 60% of Brockenhurst Station which is a major interchange serving Lymington and the Isle of Wight. Brockenhurst Station is currently undergoing major refurbishment and has recently benefited from the installation of new walkways, ramps and elevators. It is also a station for cross country services which run at very regular intervals.

This would suggest that New Milton station is a prime candidate for refurbishment/improvement and possible for an increase in service provision. This would help attract businesses and potential residents who would benefit from faster links to Bournemouth, Southampton and even London.

An additional benefit would be to attract additional tourism into New Milton through improved services.

Table 1

Station	15/16 Usage
Ashurst	26,508
Brockenhurst	1,094,160
Christchurch	498,016
Hinton Admiral	167,106
New Milton	619,686
Southampton Central	6,359,692
Sway	111,560
Totton	311,406

2.2.2 Station Access

Access in and around the station has partly been covered within the Town Centre task group this task group agrees that proposed redevelopment of the Drew site opposite the station as it is currently an eyesore.

Potential replacement of the eastern footbridge over the railway line would also benefit pedestrian connectivity and generally improve northern gateway into the town.

The southern vehicular access for the station would benefit from improvement to reduce conflict between vehicles and pedestrians and visibility.

A direct pedestrian link from the southern platform through to Whitefield Road (and the recreation ground to the south) would allow pedestrians to avoid crossroads of Station Road and Osborne Road where visibility is not good and conflict between users is potentially an issue.

2.3 Cycle

2.3.1 Benefits

Cycling is to be a big focus of any connectivity improvements within New Milton as there are many benefits:

- Improved health and wellbeing
- Reduced pollution
- Reduced congestion

2.3.2 Potential Improvements

There are a number of cycling provisions and improvements that have been identified as part of this report and consideration should be made to implement most if not all:

- § Current traffic calming on **Lower Ashley Lane** is not inviting for cyclists and needs improvement as volumes of cyclists are likely to increase due to it being a link between Brockhills Lane site and both Ashley schools.
- § **Oakwood Avenue** will also likely see an increase in cycle traffic as it directly connects the town centre to Brockhills Lane site. Consideration should be given to provision of a dedicated cycle lane or shared use footway.
- § **Arnewood School** has a large catchment area so more general improvements around the school for cyclists need to be made which connect new and existing cycle routes to the school grounds.
- § **Barton Court Road** is an important cycle link between the Town Centre and Barton Sea (plus the seafront beyond). This route is significant for tourists as it could form part of a 'Rail Trail' link (see Town Centre Task Group report) between the station and the sea. A potential improvement which has been discussed is to widen the existing cycle lane and if necessary change the road to one-way only for motorised vehicles (this is a likely necessity due to current tree-lined layout of road not being conducive to major alteration).
- § Bashley is currently quite cut off from New Milton and Ashley and would benefit from a new shared use footway on **Bashley Road** between the roundabout and village centre. Alternatively;
- § The northern end of **Marks Lane** could be stopped up and instead be the starting point for a shared use footway into the village centre with pedestrians and cyclists using Marks Lane to connect on to Sway Road.
- § **Sway Road** would massively benefit for an off-carriageway shared use footway to the south of the carriageway. This could then link in to a new footway provision along **Brockhills Lane** which would connect Ashley and Bashley as well as Bashley Park and The Plough PH beyond.
- § Consideration should be given to upgrades of the following junctions if increased volumes of cycles trigger improvement criteria;

- Ashley Road/Station Road
 - Barton Court Road/Station Road
 - Barton Court Road/A337
- § The **B3058** which leads to the Golf Club is a popular cycle route and would benefit from improvement, especially to inter visibility. An NMU audit of the roundabout at the top of B3058 would be useful to ascertain current usage and identify potential improvements, especially as Caird Avenue site is within close proximity.

Other potential improvements identified by the task group are shown in *Appendix B*, elsewhere in this document or within the Town Centre task group report.

2.4 Car

2.4.1 Junction Improvements

The following junction improvements have been identified by the task group as necessary to better deal with increased traffic in and around New Milton.

- § Southern end of **Stem Lane** would benefit from improvement as the queue lengths on Gore Road are likely to be significantly higher than existing with the construction of recent developments and proposed Gore Road development site.
- § The northern junction of **Stem Lane** with Sway Road should be upgraded to a single lane dualling junction with physical islands either side of a right turn lane. This has the added benefit of providing a pedestrian refuge for a potential crossing from the old Stem Lane (which is now a footway) to an off-carriageway footway link (identified in local plan) which would allow pedestrians to safely walk to Bashley via the fishing lake access road.
- § Various alterations to the **Town Centre** as identified in the Town Centre task group.
- § The increase in vehicle movements in and out of the Gore Road development is likely to increase traffic using the residential feeder roads within existing housing to the south west of Ballard School as 'rat runs' avoiding Gore Road. This is already a problem and this report strongly recommends traffic calming or similar measures on the following roads to combat the problem;
 - Beechwood Avenue
 - Marley Avenue
 - Kennard Road
 - Hazelwood Avenue
 - Lake Grove Road

§ The southern end of **Old Milton Road** is quite a complex junction and consideration should be given to a major improvement to better cope with increased traffic levels and shifted focus to non-motorised users.

2.5 Pedestrian

2.5.1 Improvements

Most potential pedestrian improvements identified by the task group have been mentioned in this report already or are better shown in *Appendix B*.

2.5.2 School Run

An issue discussed within the task group and raised within consultations is congestion around schools and the associated safety issues this causes. A huge improvement to this problem would be subsidising of alternative school transport.

Walking buses were identified as a particular scheme to focus on due to the health benefits and reduction in pollution and congestion.

For these walking buses to operate safely, improvements to existing school crossings will be necessary as will consideration to new school sites included within proposed developments.

2.5.3 Holiday Parks

There are several holiday parks / caravan sites within New Milton and pedestrian links from these to the potential pedestrian and cycle links mentioned previously in this report are key to ensuring tourism is directed into a thriving town centre rather than neighbouring towns and villages.

3 CIRCULAR ROUTE

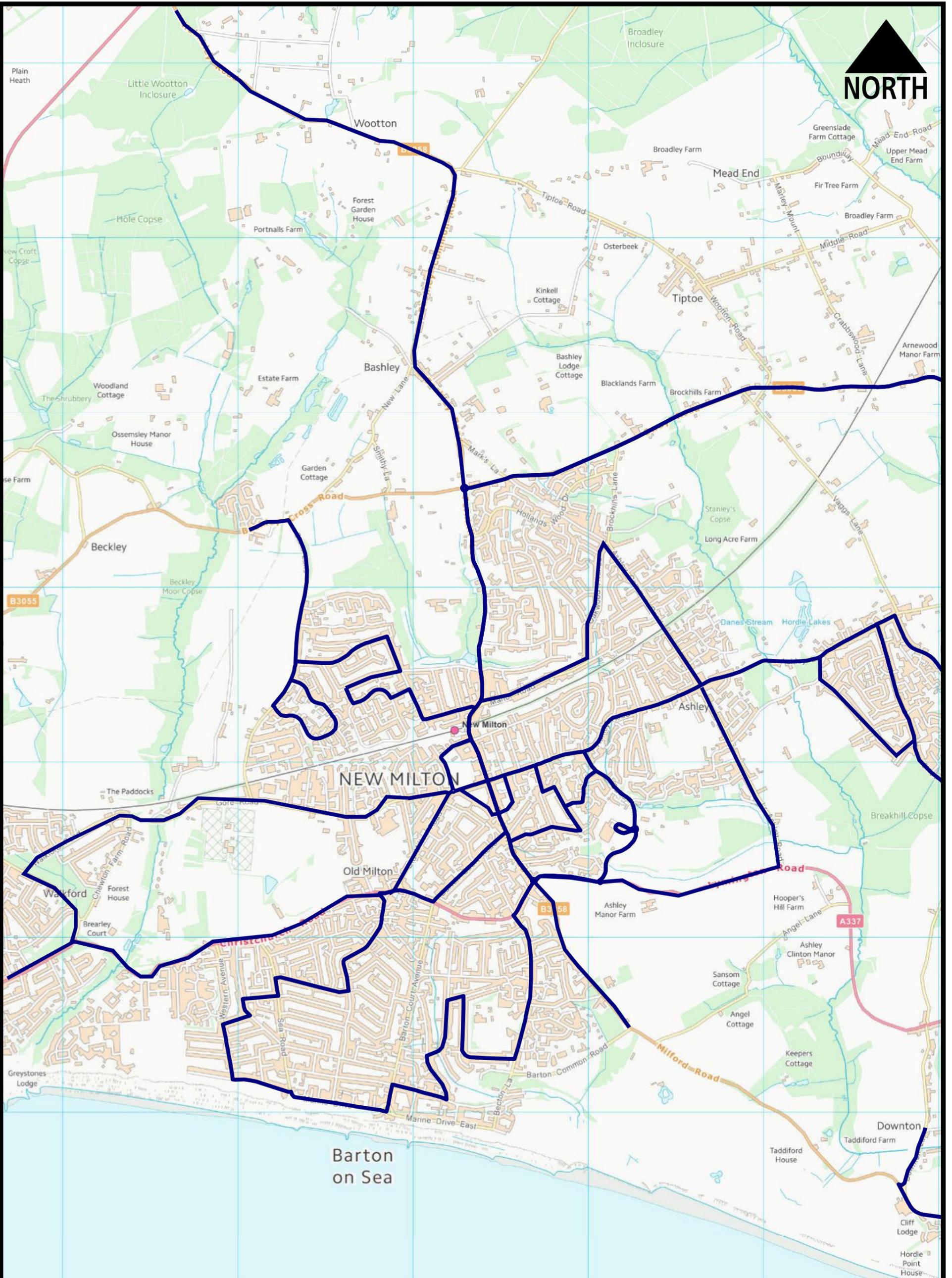
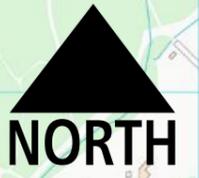
3.1 Green Way

One of the key concepts raised in this task group is the provision of a 'Green Way' – a circular shared use footway suitable for cyclists and where possible horse riders which would link all development sites and provide a leisurely route around New Milton.

It would help reinforce the 'twixt the forest and the coast' appeal of New Milton by linking New Milton with Barton on Sea and provide a tourist attraction in itself.

The route can be interspersed with seating, exercise equipment, local artwork and other points of interest.

The approximate route of the proposed loop is shown in *Appendix B* and aims to connect existing rights of way, green spaces and potential SANG areas provided through development.



Existing Bus Routes

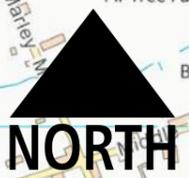
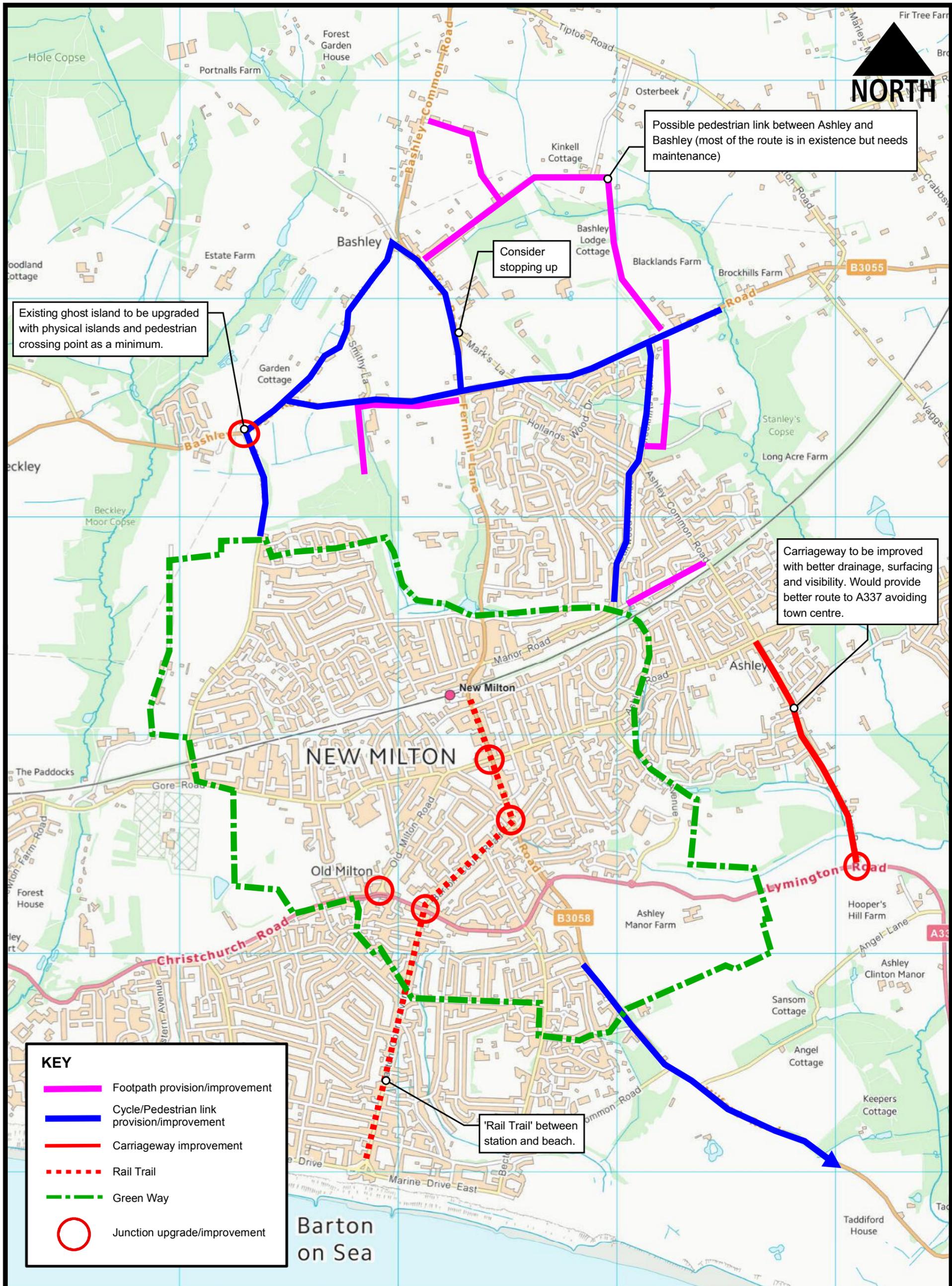
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KEY

 Bus Routes



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Possible pedestrian link between Ashley and Bashley (most of the route is in existence but needs maintenance)

Consider stopping up

Existing ghost island to be upgraded with physical islands and pedestrian crossing point as a minimum.

Carriageway to be improved with better drainage, surfacing and visibility. Would provide better route to A337 avoiding town centre.

'Rail Trail' between station and beach.

KEY

- Footpath provision/improvement
- Cycle/Pedestrian link provision/improvement
- Carriageway improvement
- - - Rail Trail
- - - Green Way
- Junction upgrade/improvement

Proposed Connectivity Routes/Improvements

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