

**West Monkton & Cheddon Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Plan
2021-2028**



**West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Councils
June 2021**

WEST MONKTON & CHEDDON FITZPAINE

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2017 - 2028

Revised in 2021 for the period 2021 - 2028

Preface

This is a revision to the Made Neighbourhood Plan.

The original Neighbourhood Plan (NP) was made in 2017. Following the guidance provided by the 2019 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), West Monkton (WM) and Cheddon Fitzpaine (CF) Parish Councils undertook a limited revision of that Plan to bring it up to date. The principal changes are:

- Amendments throughout so that policies attributable to Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) are now compliant with Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWTC) policies including those adopted from TDBC;
- SWTC is a district council that came into being on 1 April 2019, bringing together the former TDBC and West Somerset Council. The two councils had worked in partnership since 2013; and in May 2018, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government approved the business case for the councils to create a single new council;
- Reference to dated TDBC policies has been retained. In other places reference to TDBC should now be read as reference to SWTC.
- A new section added to reflect the Taunton's Garden Town status, and Monkton Heathfield's classification by SWTC as a garden community;
- Additions to and removals from the list of local green spaces;
- A revision of the policies for Housing, and for Recreation & Environment; with minor amendments to the policies for Transport, and Employment;

The data taken from the NPPF 2012 was relevant until 24 January 2019, when it was replaced by the NPPF dated February 2019. The revised Neighbourhood Plan therefore references the Feb 2019 NPPF.

A Neighbourhood Plan (NP) allows the community to grow whilst protecting existing community assets. It also identifies and makes provision for the realisation of community aspirations for the future.

The NP becomes part of the planning framework, influencing the form and content of any new development.

The advantages of having a NP are that community assets, such as conservation areas, remain protected and community aspirations, such as improved leisure access to parks, open spaces, sports areas and footpaths, become more achievable.

The aspiration for the NP area is that it becomes a place where families and people can grow and thrive in a sustainable and ecologically sensitive community.

Having made the NP 2017, the parishes of West Monkton (WM) and Cheddon Fitzpaine (CF) currently receive 25% of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The CIL money can be used for community projects, such as:

- The Country Park to be located from the Bridgwater & Taunton Canal north towards Hestercombe. At the time of this revision (2021) work is underway at the Maidenbrook Country Park, including tree planting of the Somerset Wood (to commemorate the fallen from Somerset in World War One).
- Improving surface water drainage locally.

In January 2017, Taunton was awarded Garden Town Status which will complement the various policies that have been developed by the NP Steering Group.

Key Members of the Revised NP Steering Group

Kelvin Tutill	Chairman NP Steering Group
Denise Webber	Chairman Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council
Stuart Haskins	Chairman West Monkton Parish Council

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1. INTRODUCTION

Neighbourhood Plan Definition

Neighbourhood Plans were introduced by Government under the Localism Act (2011). They are community led, locally specific planning policies which reflect priorities developed through community engagement, consultation, and objective evidence. The NP policies, in combination with national policy guidance issued by the Secretary of State, and local planning policy, form the framework by which planning applications are assessed.

Neighbourhood Plans are shaped through the collection of robust, locally specific evidence including subjective evidence (such as community and stakeholder engagement) and objective evidence (such as technical studies and factual data).

When Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) produced the Local Plan (2004) the communities in West Monkton (WM) and Cheddon Fitzpaine (CF) were voicing concerns about the development plans for the area. The Monkton Heathfield Urban Extension currently under construction spans the parishes of West Monkton and Creech St Michael. The first phase of the Urban Extension (UE) – MH1 is based in the parish of West Monkton, whilst MH2 (second phase of the UE), is located partly in West Monkton and mostly in the Parish of Creech St Michael. This Neighbourhood Plan includes reference to the MH2 land South of Langaller sites which have large areas outside of the WM & CF Neighbourhood Plan area. The SWTC document entitled 'Monkton Heathfield Annual Completions April 2013 to March 2020' indicates that 1202 dwellings have been completed which represents 80.2% of the total approved for MH1. The planning application for MH2 has not yet been submitted but is expected to bring a further 2500 dwellings into the local area.

A further 600 houses were allocated to land in Cheddon Fitzpaine (CF) Parish. Further development was proposed in the Core Strategy (2011-2028). In the past, the parish councils worked closely with the Taunton Deane Local Planning Authority by means of the Community Engagement Panel 2006 – 2008. However, with the advent of the Localism Act it was considered that a Neighbourhood Plan would offer the means to work with the Local Planning Authority and the developers to ensure that sustainable development was delivered, whilst protecting the local green space and tourism assets such as Hestercombe and the Bridgwater & Taunton Canal. These views were strongly reflected in the responses to the residents' questionnaires in March 2016. (*See consultation statement.*)

The West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Plan (WM&CF NP) will deliver real benefits for the local community. As a Development Plan Document for the area, it will be used when determining planning applications. The original Neighbourhood Plan (NP) covered the period 2017 to 2028 to be coterminous with

the TDBC Core Strategy which (subject to review) also covered the period to 2028. This NP revision covers the period 2021 – 2028. The SWTC Local Plan review for the period up to 2040 is underway.

West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Councils have agreed to work together to develop a NP to cover both parish areas. The original NP and this revision have been prepared by a Steering Group (formally established on 21st July 2015) which includes local councillors and local residents. The Steering Group will continue to work closely with the local community, including local businesses, to ensure that the NP accurately reflects local issues and priorities as described by the **Consultation Statement**. (See supporting document.)

Residents of the two local communities, including local businesses, received questionnaires designed to gauge opinion and gather evidence, in 2016, to inform the original Neighbourhood Plan, and again in 2019 to provide evidence for the revisions to the Neighbourhood Plan.

Additionally, a SWOT exercise (to canvas community opinion on perceived Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) was conducted with different groups of people, such as at coffee mornings, tea parties, village fetes and a sports event. There was also an exit poll of people collecting children from pre-school playgroup. Information gathering under the covid restrictions has accelerated the trend towards the more widespread electronic use of gathering, processing and disseminating information. The WM Village News and the CF Newsletter have also afforded valuable channels of communication.

Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) Core Strategy was adopted in 2011 for the period 2011-2028, and in 2017 Taunton was awarded Garden Town Status; 'A Vision for the Garden Town' was produced in February 2019. The link between the Garden Town and the two Parishes is that the Monkton Heathfield Urban Extension is referred to by SWTC as one of the new garden communities. The Garden Town supporting documents included the draft Design Guide, Taunton Design Charter, and the Design Checklist.

The 'Vision for the Garden Town' included a section on New Garden Neighbourhoods, and so this review has striven to ensure the West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Plan remains in line with and supports the aspirations of the Taunton Garden Town Vision.

Somerset County Council (SCC) and Somerset West & Taunton Council each made Climate Emergency Declarations in February 2019, joining the 265 out of 408 District, County, Unitary, and Metropolitan authorities in the UK, at the time (Nov 2019) listed as having declared Climate Emergency (latest figures, Feb 2021 show 300 out of 404 councils as having done so <https://www.climateemergency.uk/blog/list-of-councils/>).

The Parishes of the NP area (West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine) made similar declarations in December 2019/February 2020. The amendments to the NP Policies reflect the current position, and take into account the SWTC document, Climate Positive Planning: Interim Policy Statement on Planning for the Climate Emergency dated February 2021.

National Planning Policy is currently under review, (NPPF having been issued in 2019), the SWTC Local Plan review is underway, and the business case submitted by SCC and 5 districts including SWTC for a Unitary Authority has been accepted by MHCLG (July 2021), vesting will be 1 April 2023. However, despite these ongoing reviews, the goals of the Neighbourhood Plan remain the same.

It should be noted for the purpose of this document that any reference to the Local Planning Authority or District Council should be read as SWTC, and any reference to the previous council in document titles is referring to the former area to which they relate.

The development of the revisions to the made WM & CF NP were informed by a survey sent to all residents and businesses in the two Parishes in November 2019, covering open green space, amenity space and sports provision in particular. As a consequence of the analysis of the survey it was agreed to develop a pictorial map of all the play areas and green spaces in the NP area, which was sent to every property in the two parishes in February 2021. The artwork was further developed into signage which was installed at each of the 21 play parks and open spaces with an individualised 'You are here' marker, indicating the viewer's location in the network.

Our goals

Our Neighbourhood Plan will reflect and support Taunton Garden Town goals to

- design new neighbourhoods making places, whilst retaining green spaces and open vistas.
- use local materials and design features for new buildings and infrastructure wherever practicable to respect local context whilst welcoming innovative environmentally friendly design to ensure individuality and beauty in the built environment.
- support the development of a bespoke 'quality mark' for new development within the Garden Town Area so that high quality design and placemaking can be

recognised and rewarded. This will also serve to identify the high standards expected in future projects.

Regarding the bat population at Hestercombe House Special Area of Conservation (SAC), the revised NP policy must be considered on conjunction with Policy in the emerging SWTC Local Plan that relates to the former TDBC strategy 'CP8 Environment'. Taken together these policies will further the conservation objectives of Hestercombe House SAC¹ by ensuring that the bats suffer no adverse impact from: loss of feeding habitat; severance of flight lines; light affecting summer roosts; commuting routes and feeding areas; or loss damage or disturbance of night roosts.

Future developments of ten or more dwellings should have²:

Clear identity

A distinctive local identity as a new garden community with its own neighbourhood identity, marked by innovative building design, street planting and creation of stylish public spaces. Larger developments will include a functioning centre and public realm. Landmarks, key groupings, and character areas are an important element of identity and legibility.

Well-designed places

Larger developments should offer vibrant mixed-use communities that support a range of local employment types and premises, retail opportunities, recreational and community facilities – within 'walkable neighbourhoods' that follow good urban design principles and include greater greenspaces, trees, water features and street art. Design Guides or Design and Access Statements for allocated sites should clearly demonstrate measures that integrate landscape, parking and water sensitive design to provide attractive and functional places for public life. Future development should be of appropriate design, scale, and form with respect to locally important landscapes such as the Quantock Hills, the River Tone and the Bridgwater & Taunton Canal.

Great homes

Offering a wide range of high quality, distinctive homes reflecting local traditions wherever practicable, each area will offer sustainable lifestyle opportunities for a healthy community, whilst reducing our carbon footprint and increasing resilience to climate change. This includes affordable housing and a mix of tenures for all stages of life, including bungalows. Larger developments should have legacy and stewardship arrangements in place for the care of community assets, infrastructure and public realm, for the benefit of the whole community.

¹ SWTC: Garden Town supporting documents: draft Design Guide, Taunton Design Charter, and Design Checklist; and draft Climate Positive Planning: Interim Policy Statement on Planning for the Climate Emergency

² Create Streets: Set up in 2013, Create Streets exists to help solve the housing crisis and to help neighbourhood, communities, landowners, councils and developers create and manage beautiful, sustainable places of gentle density that will be popular, are likely to be correlated with good wellbeing and public health outcomes and which are likely to prove good long term investments.

Future proofed

Designed to be resilient places that allow for changing demographics, future growth, and the impacts of climate change including flood risk and water availability, with durable landscape and building design planned for generations to come. Designs should include tree planting along highways and innovative planting to mark public open spaces. Designs should include anticipation of the opportunities presented by technological change such as driverless cars and renewable energy measures.

SWOT Analysis Diagram 2016

Outcomes of the SWOT analysis: carried out at local events with different audiences in both parishes, Cheddon Fitzpaine and West Monkton between May and September 2016. (Responses have been summarised.)	
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Being close to the countryside	Lack of buses/inadequate bus shelters
Schools nearby	Lack of transport infrastructure especially regarding the Urban Extension
Good school provision: preschool, primary, secondary	Over stretched doctors' surgery, need for pharmacy and dentist
Canal towpath a useful route for footpath and cycleway	Not enough parking space on roads in the new estates
Lots of green space/public open space	Not building enough bungalows
Good community spirit	Will there be enough work for occupiers of new houses?
Village hall	Need more consideration of habitats for wildlife
Safe environment for children	Need more cycle ways and safe routes to school
Close to amenities such as Wellsprings fitness centre and Stoney Furlong football ground	Busy and congested roads, speeding traffic, not safe for children
Good communications by newsletter and website	No dog wardens
Friendly	Not a village anymore
Good doctors' surgery	Fly tipping
	Police not highly visible
	Youths misbehaving in public places
	Congestion at all schools, caused by pick-up and drop off
	Not enough local shops
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Need for more bungalows to protect the views to the Quantocks and the Blackdowns	Over-development will cause concrete wasteland
Increase connectivity by more paths (cycleways and footpaths)	Bus gates/no busgates/loss of bus routes

Increase employment opportunities by providing more start up units	Insufficient preservation of hedgerows/green space/trees
Build in ways to clean streams and pathways regularly, construct wildlife corridors	More traffic, dangerous junctions
Maximise and increase local employment opportunities	More people – overstressing doctors' surgery and causing shortage of beds at Musgrove Park Hospital
Increase provision of local stores/convenience store/pharmacy	Lack of community
Integrate new residents, build a community, make new friends	Lack of footpaths and cycleways
New intake for pre-school, new primary school building, new community hall	Increase in anti-social behaviour
Traffic calming by bus gates	

Covid restrictions prevented the development of an updated SWOT chart.

Neighbourhood Plan policies must relate to the development and use of land. Furthermore, a NP must also meet a number of 'basic conditions' which include ensuring that it contributes to sustainable development and is in general conformity with both local planning policies adopted by SWTC, and national planning policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Detailed confirmation that the WM&CF NP fully meets the 'basic conditions' is set out in the **Basic Conditions Statement**. (See supporting document.)

Local and National Planning Policy

As the Local Planning Authority, Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWTC) is responsible for the production of higher-level Strategic Planning Policy and the adopted TDBC Core Strategy (CS) which covers the period up to 2028. The CS sets out a vision for the council including strategic objectives, spatial strategy, and policies for meeting that vision. The CS specifies the locations and quantity of growth to be accommodated within SWTC and identifies strategic site allocations, including mixed use Urban Extensions.

West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine are defined as 'villages' by CS Policy SP1 and as such will retain defined settlement boundaries and will have no further allocations made through the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP). There is however some scope for small scale proposals within settlement limits. Outside the settlement limits, development proposals will be treated as being within the 'Open Countryside' and will be limited to certain types of development which comply with the criteria listed by CS Policy DM2.

The WM&CF NP area contains a large part (57%) of the emerging Monkton Heathfield Urban Extension (UE) as set out by CS Policies SS1 (Monkton Heathfield) and SS2 (Priorswood/Nerrols). The UE, when complete, will include in the region of 5,400 new homes (of which 25% will be affordable in line with CS Policy CP4), additional employment land (22.5 Ha), new primary and secondary schools, local shops and other community facilities and green space including a Green Park between Monkton Heathfield and Priorswood. Urban Initiatives produced a draft Masterplan and related Design Code in 2011 for the allocated Urban Extension.

A new Masterplan (2017) was produced through a fully inclusive approach between TDBC, the housing developers, local Parish Councils, and local people. The development of the WM&CF NP was an integral part of this process to ensure that the NP works positively with the Masterplan to help deliver the best outcomes possible for the local community.

The Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP) was adopted by TDBC in December 2016 and covers the period to 2028. This supplementary planning document (SPD) sets out detailed policies for the allocation of land for housing, employment and other development proposals across Taunton Deane which are not already covered by the Core Strategy. It also includes detailed development management policies against which planning applications will be considered. The SADMP allocates 16 hectares of the former Priorswood landfill site for community woodland and other recreation uses (Policy TAU11) and 5.5 hectares of land east of the Crown Industrial Estate for employment purposes (Policy TAU10). *(See relevant NP Policy sections for maps which define these allocations.)*

National planning policy is set out by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF makes a number of references in support of neighbourhood planning including:

Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct, and help to deliver sustainable development by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area or undermine those strategic policies. Para 29, NPPF, February 2019.

Ensuring Sustainable Development

The WM&CF NP aspires to sustainable development and the Steering Group has been mindful of this requirement, which is a 'basic condition', throughout the NP development process. Sustainable development has three dimensions as defined by the NPPF 2019, para 8. These dimensions are:

- **‘economic** - ensuring a strong local economy with the right mix of local jobs and land availability to support growth, innovation and improved productivity and providing co-ordinated, fit for purpose infrastructure;
- **social** - ensuring a strong, healthy, and vibrant community by ensuring a sufficient number and range of homes will meet present and future needs, fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces, for current and future needs, and support for health, social and cultural well-being;
- **environmental** - protecting and improving both the natural and historic built environment while also making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving towards a low carbon economy’.

Proximity to Taunton and readily available public transport have the potential to exert a big influence on the economic, social, and cultural activity of the residents. The Neighbourhood Plan offers an opportunity to facilitate the aspirations and wishes of residents to use the car less and public transport more. At present, there is no service in the rural parts of the NP area, and services have been cut/reduced in Nerrols and Monkton Heathfield due to commercial considerations. It is hoped that by highlighting the need for better public transport infrastructure, systems may be included in development plans to reduce the use of private vehicles. Census 2011 data showed a high proportion of dwellings in the NP area had more than one vehicle. A regular and efficient bus service could offer a replacement to the use of private vehicles.

Existing economic, social and environmental assets within the NP area are described by the NP Area Profile section of this plan. The topic areas covered by the plan, and the relevant NP policies, have been subject to a **Sustainability Audit (SA)** to demonstrate that they do indeed contribute to sustainable development.

The plan is based on a number of consultation exercises including a comprehensive questionnaire sent to local households in 2016. The draft revised NP was similarly informed by a survey sent to all households and businesses in the NP area in 2019.

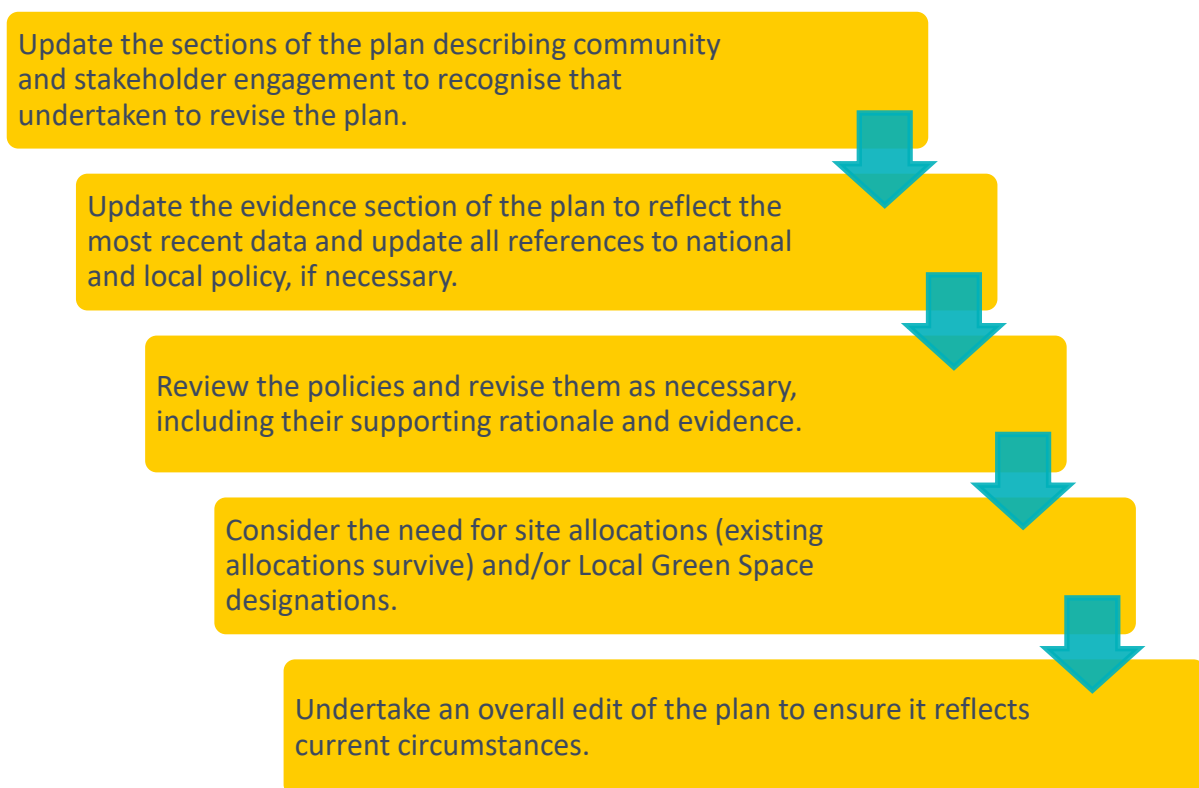
The process required to make the plan is illustrated by the following flowchart, followed by a flowchart for revision to a Neighbourhood Plan (Neighbourhood Planning by Locality ‘After the Neighbourhood Plan is made’ 2019).

The public draft NP Consultation Regulation 14 was widely advertised and took place between 10 April and 27 May 2017. The draft revised NP Consultation Regulation 14 was widely advertised and took place over 9 weeks from 22 February to 30 April 2021.

The plan was subject to submission consultation Regulation 16 between 3 August and 15 September 2017, Independent Examination between 17 November 2017 and 15 January 2018 and then a local referendum.

All the original policy 'writing group' members were asked to contribute to the revisions proposed for the policies.

Neighbourhood Plan Revision process

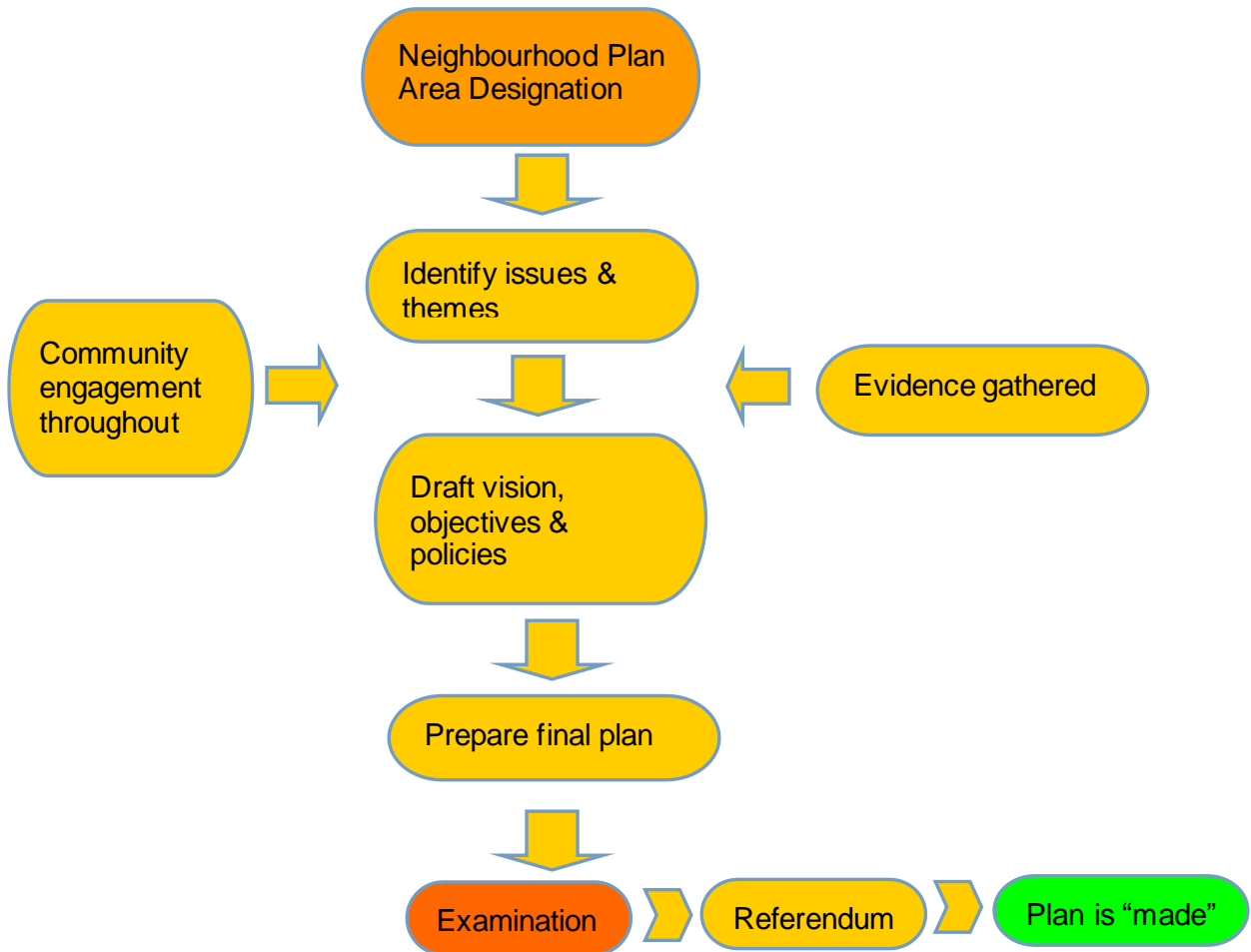


With a NP Review minor up-dates do not need Regulation 14 consultation. Modifications that materially affect the policies do need to follow the later stages of the statutory process. The Examiner decides if a referendum is required, depending on whether the revisions are viewed as changing the nature of the Plan (Neighbourhood Planning by Locality 'After the Neighbourhood Plan is made' 2019). Reference to the Change Record supporting document where the changes are identified as Minor (in blue typeface), or Substantial/Significant (in green typeface).

The idea of the Review was brought to the attention of both Parishes by the Chairman of the NP Delivery Group who reported in September 2018 on the

proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and the advice that in order to be effective, Neighbourhood Plans should be reviewed regularly to keep up to date with changing circumstances affecting the area and relevant changes in national policy.

Neighbourhood Plan Development Process



Neighbourhood Plan Area

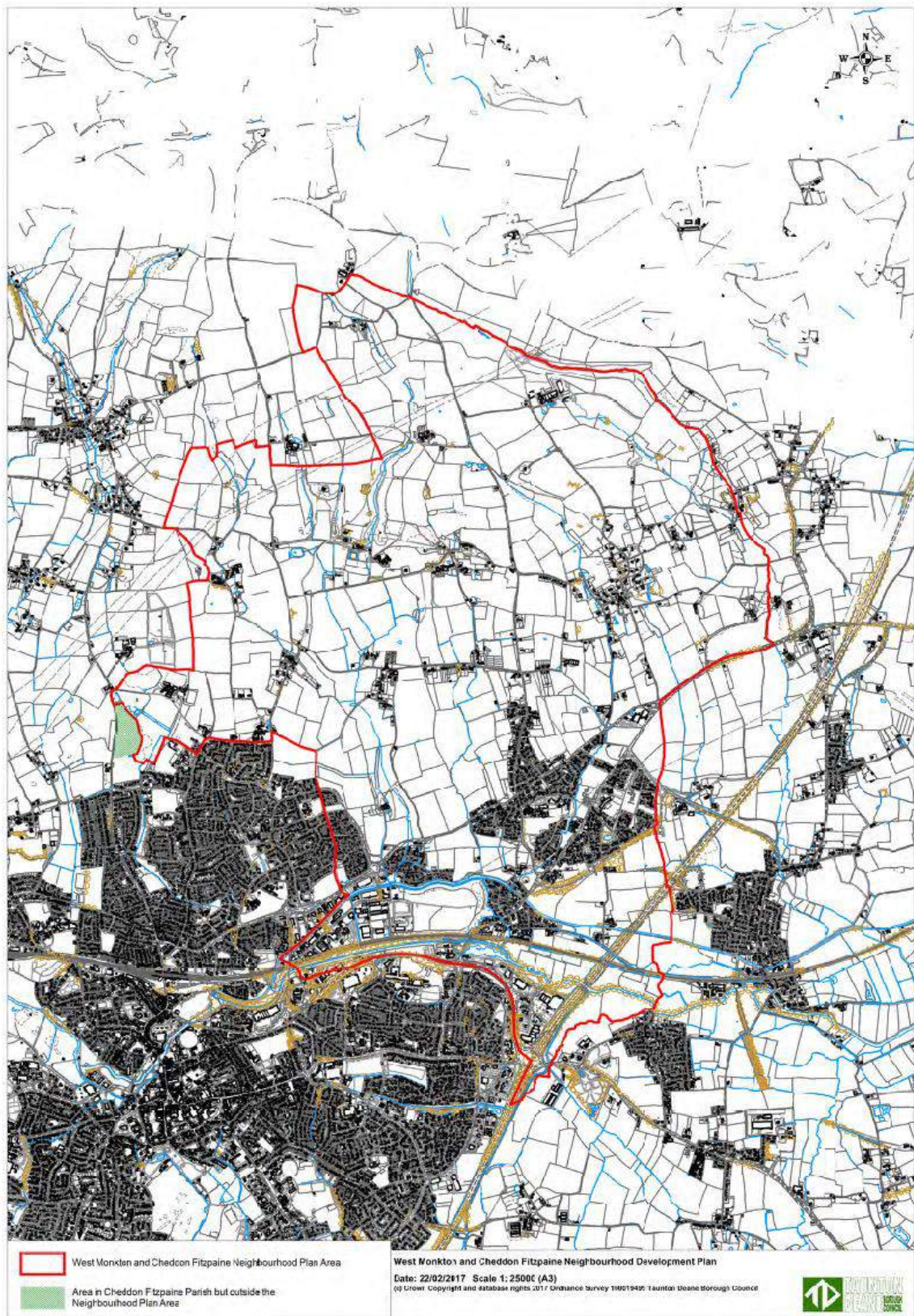
The NP area corresponds almost exactly with the West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine parish boundaries. Under Section 61G (meaning of 'neighbourhood area') the Local Authority has considered the Neighbourhood Area. The proposed Neighbourhood Area followed the joint parish boundaries. Consultation took place between 18th September and 30th October 2015. It was formally designated on 24th November 2015. Taunton Deane Borough Council has excluded an area which falls within the Staplegrove Urban Extension (also known as the North Taunton Development); this excluded area is shown in green on Map 1 on page 9.

Once the NP area was formally agreed, public exhibitions were held on 18th and 20th January 2016, at Cheddon Fitzpaine Memorial Hall and West Monkton Village Hall to show the Plan Area, features of the landscape, details of the topography, drainage systems, and development plans.

The Neighbourhood Plan area hasn't changed for the purpose of the proposed revisions (2021), because the original reasons for excluding the area which fell within the Staplegrove Urban Extension still pertain.

Covid restrictions prevented public exhibitions: however, the Plan Area, features of the landscape, details of the topography and drainage systems have not changed since the Plan was made. The proposed revisions to the Plan have been advertised and comments invited in local newsletters, on Facebook, on both Parish websites, notice boards in both parishes, mailing lists held by the Parish Councils (GDPR compliant) and by mailshot to every house and business premises in the NP area (as part of the covering letter for the distribution of the Pictorial Map).

Map 1: WM&CF NP Exclusion Area (shown in green)



2. AREA PROFILE

Description of the Parishes

The parishes of West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine are two adjacent Civil Parishes in Somerset which lie to the north east of Taunton. They are part of a network of locally distinctive villages and hamlets surrounded by an ecologically rich and diverse farmed landscape with business areas and retail on the southern periphery (Hankridge Retail Park, Creech Castle Business Area, and Crown Industrial Estate). The historic and picturesque parishes include the villages and hamlets of Upper Cheddon, Rowford, Gotton, Goosenford, parts of Coombe, Burlinch, Overton, Cheddon, Bathpool, Monkton Heathfield and West Monkton.

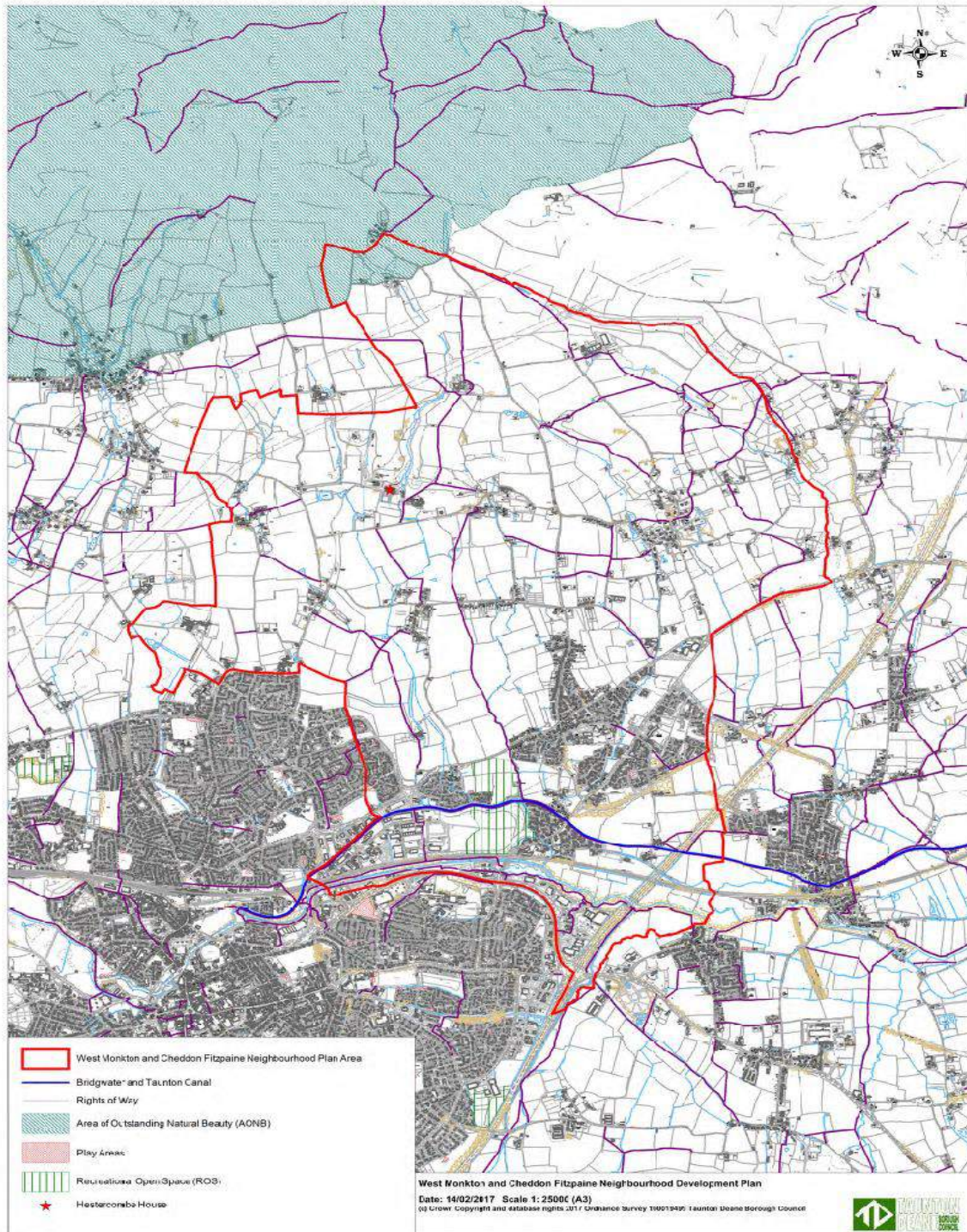
A small part to the northwest of the parish of West Monkton falls within the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). A significant landowner in the NP area is the Crown Estate. Since the Plan was made in 2017, the Crown Estate has sold all the Crown Farms in the area either to the farmers, private investors, or owners. Land use generally has not changed.

A map showing Listed Buildings, Quantock Hills AONB, Conservation Areas, and Rights of Way (ROW) can be found in the Recreation and Environment Policy section under 'Context' page 63.

The Neighbourhood Plan-making process bore in mind Somerset County Council's adopted minerals and waste plans: ref: www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/policies/minerals-and-waste/.

From a waste perspective, SCC has a zone for strategic waste management in Taunton which also covers a significant part of the NP area (Priorswood Landfill).

Map 2: The WM&CF NP Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) (as shown in blue)



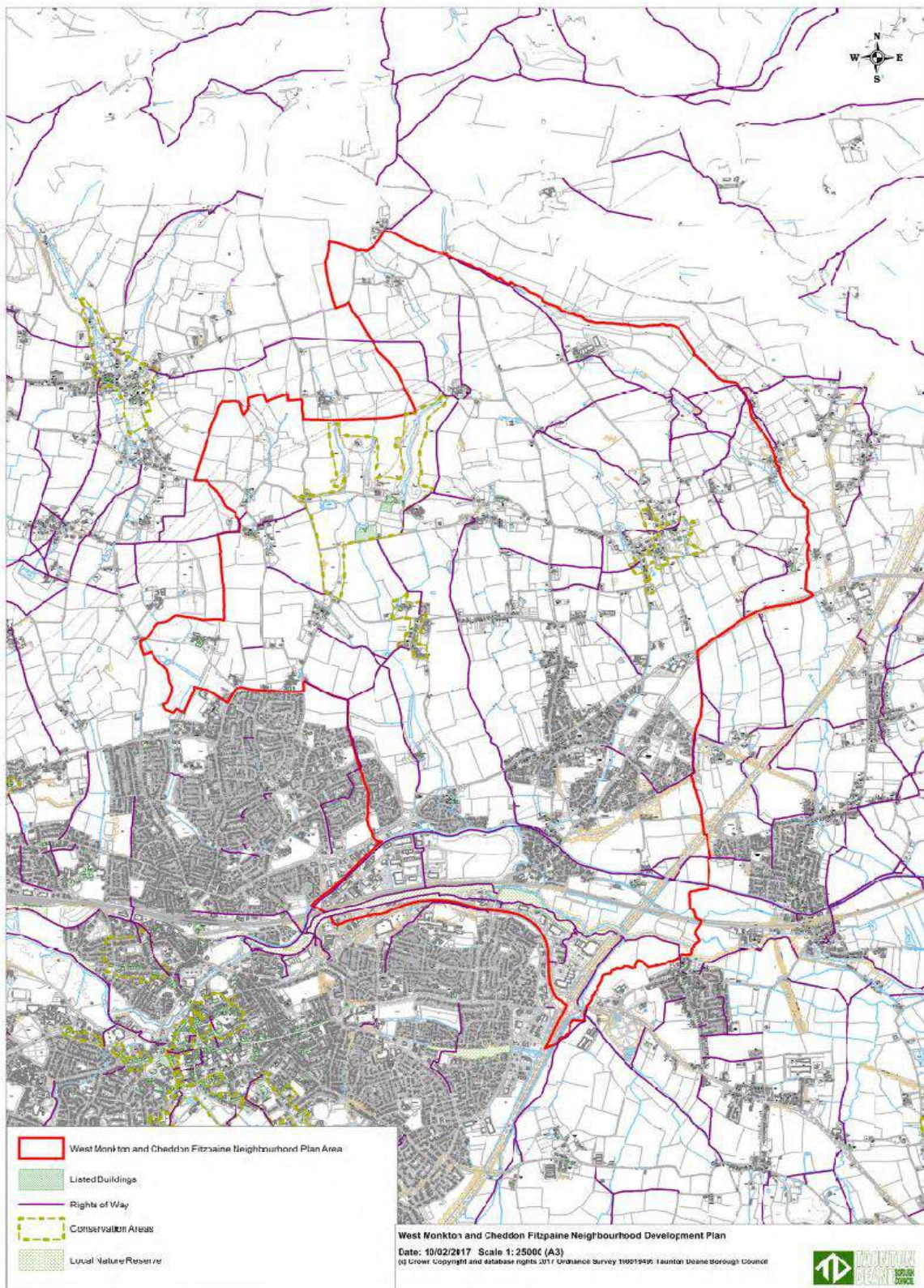
The villages of West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine are historic settlements originally laid out in a ribbon fashion. There have been some significant phases of development but, despite the growth of the villages, a semi-rural character and village-like feel remain. Although the villages historically orientate themselves towards the county town of Taunton, they also maintain a degree of independence with some employment opportunities including the availability of some local services and businesses. The parishes of Cheddon Fitzpaine and West Monkton share a north-south boundary, although this is crossed by farming and other business enterprises. The two parishes share cultural and other activities.

The villages of Cheddon Fitzpaine and West Monkton are Conservation Areas (as illustrated by the following maps) with Listed Buildings. All Listed Buildings within the NP area, along with other heritage and archaeological assets, are described in the Sustainability Audit. This document also describes in more detail the landscape, public Rights of Way (ROW), flooding, waste, air pollution and socio-economic characteristics of the NP area, with surrounding context where relevant.

The two conservation villages (WM and CF) found in the northern part of the NP area contain a mix of building styles. While many reflect their origins as housing for agricultural labourers, interspersed within these are numerous individual buildings of particular interest, importance, and quality. Some are of late medieval origin, preserving a local vernacular (*see glossary*); and several more are architect designed set pieces. The building material used was largely 'Quantock Stone' of mid Devonian origin, mined out of small roadside quarries or on farms. The most significant commercial quarry was Triscombe Quarry which closed in 1999. (Triscombe Quarry Products Ltd, Triscombe.) There is an opportunity for opening small scale local quarries to provide local vernacular stone. These would be supported by the Parishes.

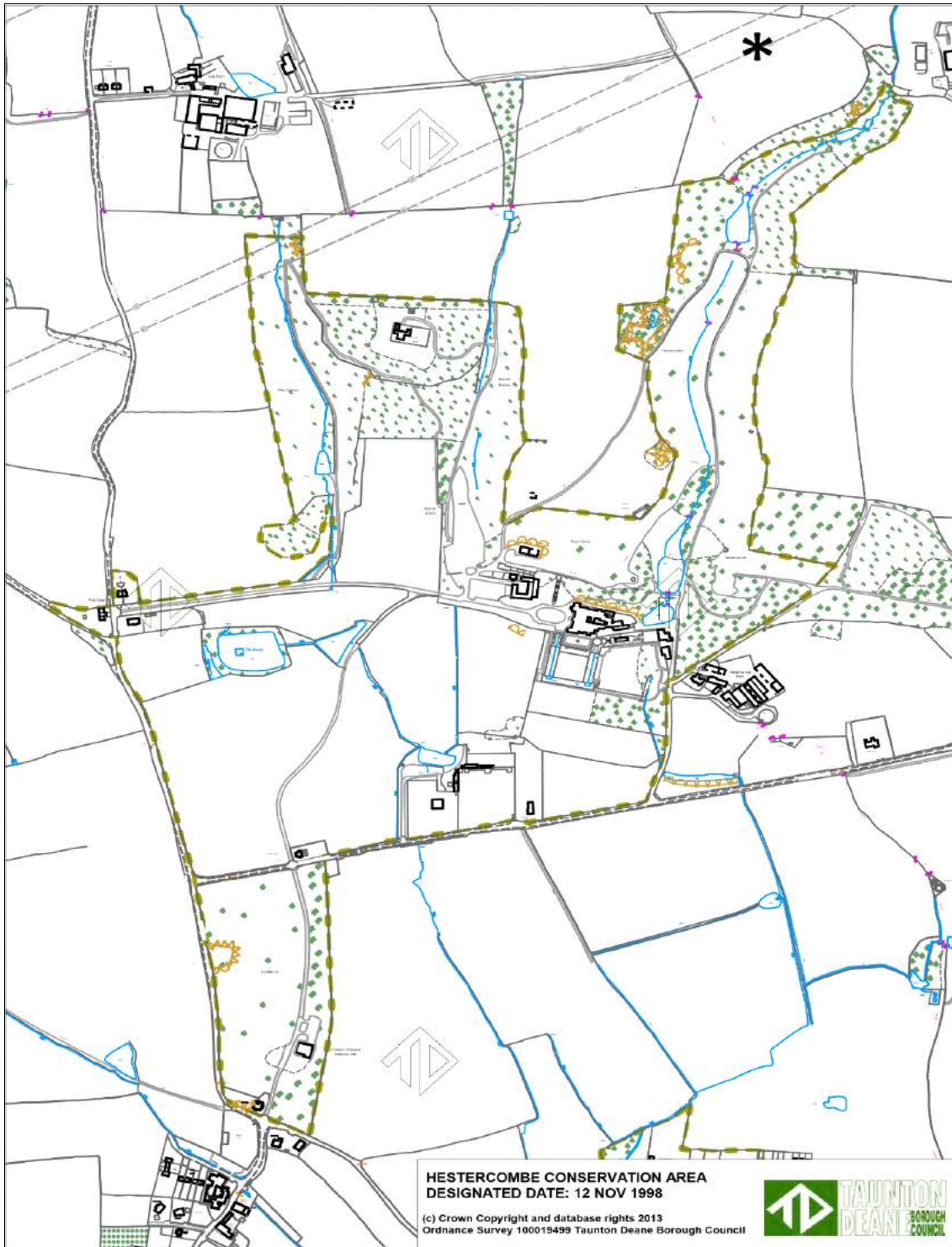
The buildings of historic interest are listed at www.historicengland.org.uk. The records indicate that the area is quite rich in designated heritage assets, having three Grade I, seven Grade II* and 59 Grade II Listed Buildings, and one Grade I listed park and garden. In addition, the Grade I St Augustine Church in West Monkton is on the National Heritage At Risk Register. These assets are significant and add to the NP area. (*Response from Historic England on the SEA Screening, see Other Evidence*).

Map 3: WM&CF NP Showing Listed Buildings, Rights of Way, Conservation Areas and Local Nature Reserve

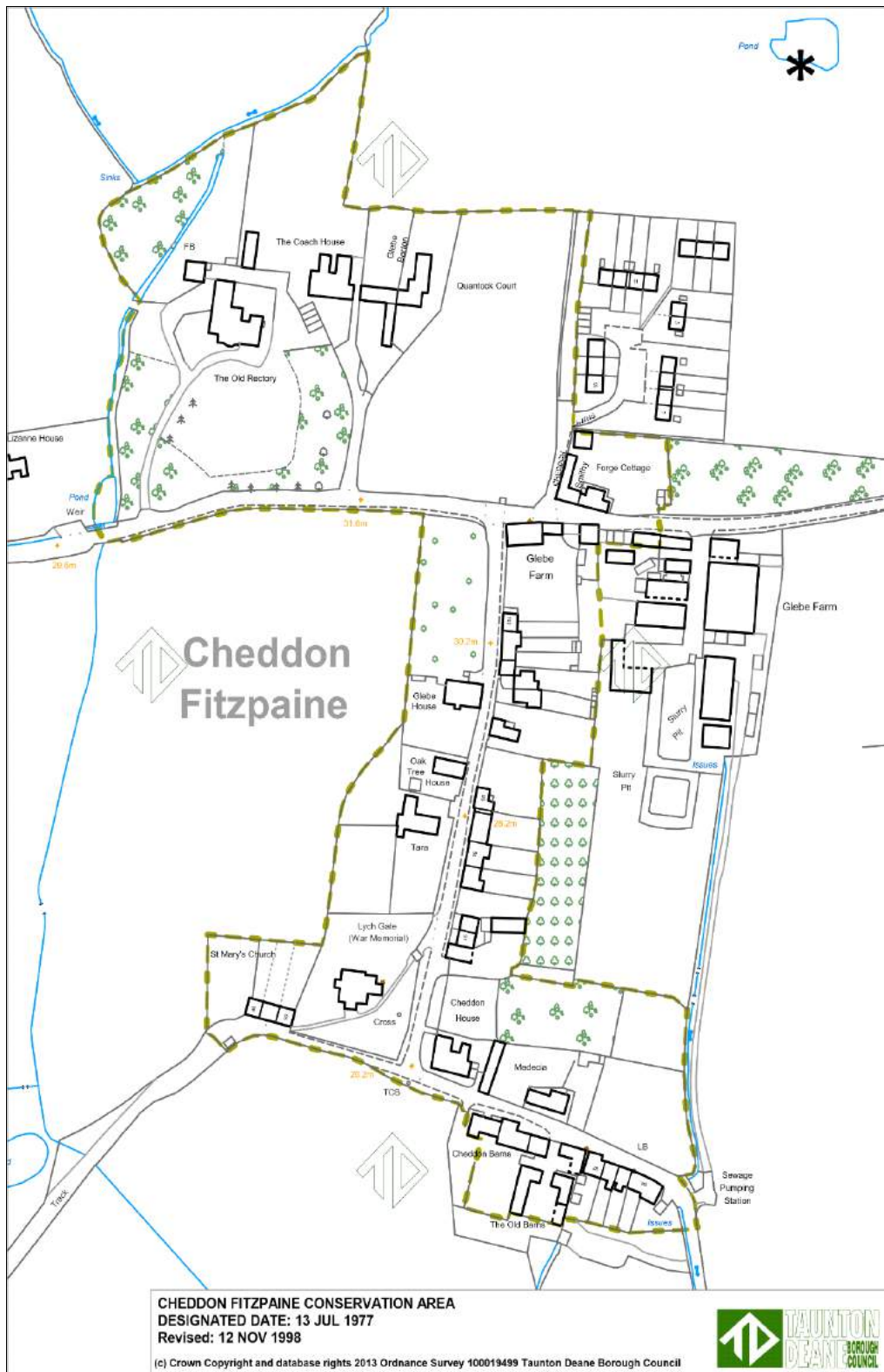


Conservation Maps

Map 4: Hestercombe Conservation Area (Designated 1998)



Map 5: Cheddon Conservation Area (Designated 1977)



The following photographs are taken from the Taunton Deane Landscape Character Assessment document (adopted 2011) to illustrate character types found in the northern part of the NP area, including:

- Farmed and Settled Low Vale – Vale of Taunton Deane;
- Farmed and Settled High Vale – Quantock Fringes and West Vale;
- Hills and Fringes with Wooded Coombes – South East Quantock;

The southern part of the NP area includes:

- River Floodplain – The Tone.

Photos A–F: TDBC Landscape 7 Hills and Fringes with Wooded Combes

Landscape Type 7: Hills and Fringes with Wooded Combes



South facing sloping landform defined by a predominantly arable land use.



Narrow, wooded combes cut through the sloping agricultural land.



High walls (of sandstone and mortar slates) define property boundaries.



Short-tailed hedges.

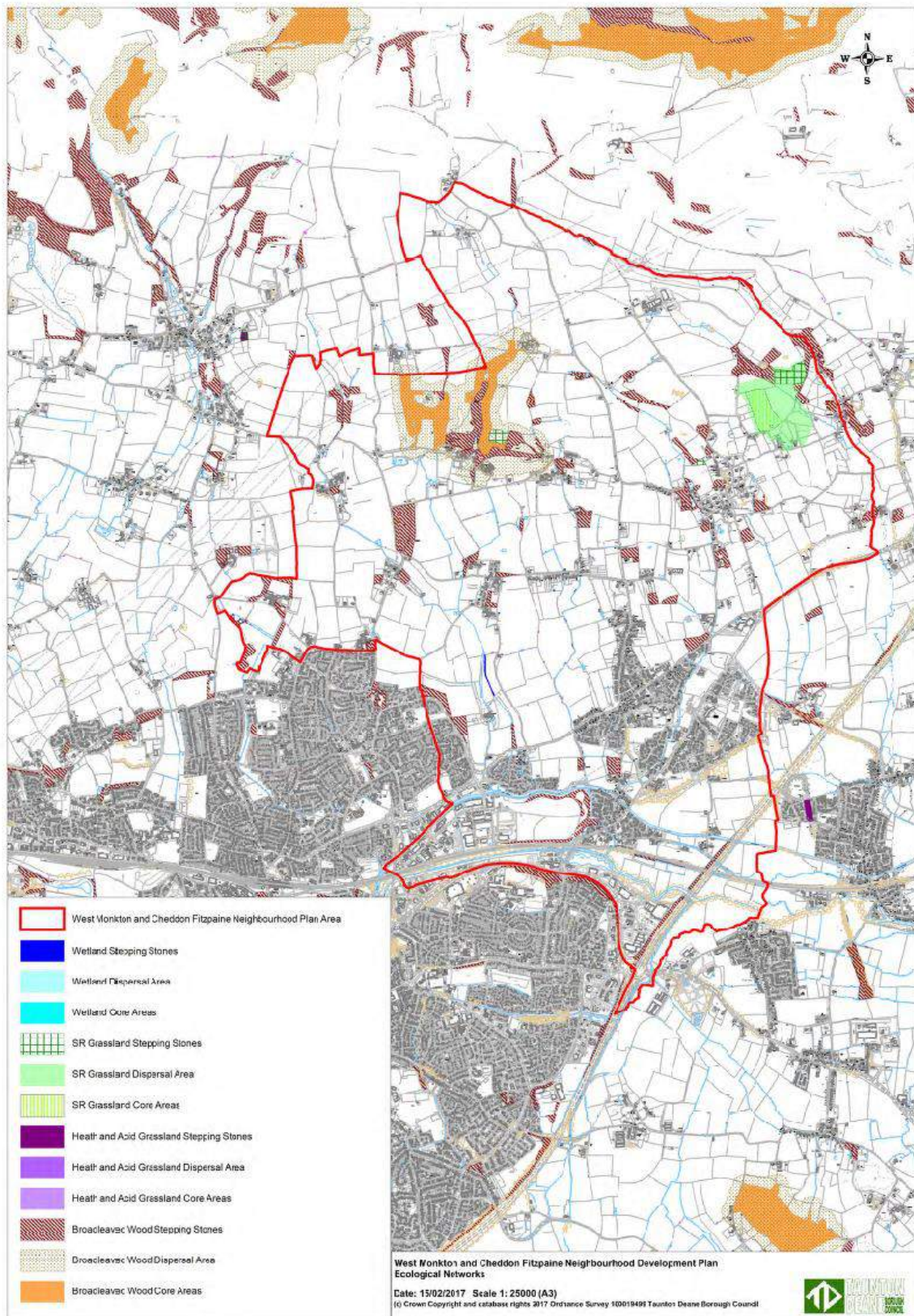


Distinctive local vernacular.



Higher ground marks the transition to hills and ridges lying further north.

Map 7: WM&CF NP Ecological Networks

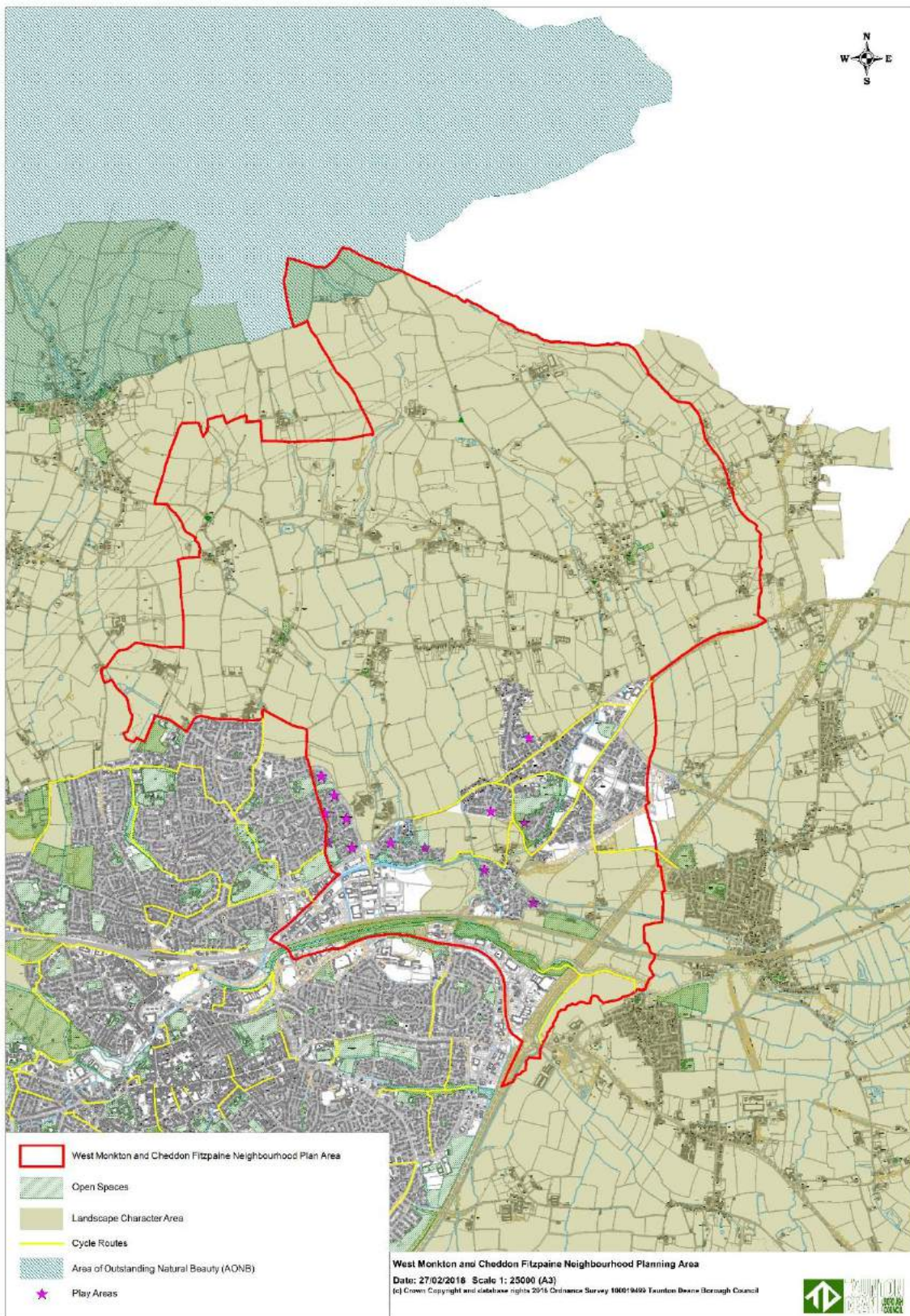


The southern part of the NP area is different. It is the location of Junction 25 of the M5 motorway and there is a nearby retail park and employment areas (at Hankridge and adjacent to the motorway junction, at Nexus). This part of the NP area is traversed by the railway line (mainline services to Paddington) and the now closed landfill site is in this location as well. The landfill site will need to be vented for a significant number of years before the land use can be changed but lends itself for use as a wildlife area. (See *TDBC Site Allocation and Development Management Policy*.)

The historic and rural nature of the hamlets in the northern part, (e.g., Gotton, Goosenford, Coombe) means that the roads traversing the northern NP area are mostly narrow country lanes without pavements. However, in those areas to the south where houses have been built (e.g., Monkton Heathfield Urban Extension) and employment areas have been developed, (e.g., the Crown and Priorswood Industrial Estates) roads tend to be wider with pavements. Currently the NP area is crossed by the A3259 and the A38. The Urban Extension will be served by the Eastern Relief Road (ERR) and the Western Relief Road (WRR). The planned new developments reflect the Transport Policies of Somerset County Council (SCC) and SWTC insofar as footpath and cycle ways are being included, providing the opportunity to reduce reliance on cars and increase the use of sustainable transport modes. The Bridgwater & Taunton canal towpath is an important cycle and pedestrian route from the NP area into Taunton.

Both parishes offer good employment opportunities, including Hankridge Retail Park, Creech Castle Business Area, and Crown Industrial Estate. Planned new development offers the opportunity to provide additional local employment at Nexus. The Neighbourhood Plan (NP) area has a number of recreational facilities including: a rugby club, a cricket club, an arts and theatre centre (Tacchi-Morris Centre), Public Open Spaces (POS) with play areas, the Bridgwater & Taunton Canal, the River Tone, and a network of footpaths leading from Taunton and the railway line up to, and into, the Quantock Hills AONB. Development in the NP area will provide the opportunity to improve the range of open space, including the provision of allotments.

Map 8: WM&CF NP Showing Play Areas and Public Open Spaces (POS)



The two parishes (WM and CF) offer a mix of services and facilities including shops, pubs, a village hall and a Memorial Hall, three primary schools, two churches, two

chapels, a doctors' surgery and a pharmacy, which support residents and businesses across the NP area. Planned new development provides the opportunity to improve facilities for the community: the new community hall at Brittons Ash (Brittons Ash Community Hall, BACH) opened in 2016 and is firmly established as a community hub whilst the new 420 pupil primary school also opened in October 2016. The primary school replaces a smaller older school next door to Heathfield School. A new primary school opened at Nerrols in 2020.

The need for more locally based pharmacies has been referred to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and fed into the Somerset Health and Well-being Strategy 2013-2018. (*See other evidence: Consultation Statement, Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment correspondence July/August 2016.*). Previous attempts to open a pharmacy failed because the retail units in the Local Centre in the approved plans have not been delivered (2021) and so plans for a pharmacy at an alternative location are underway.

Hestercombe House and Gardens is a significant tourist attraction and cultural asset, with 100,000 visitors in 2016. The gardens are internationally recognized, whilst the house accommodates regular art exhibitions and visiting theatre companies.

There are reasonable transport links to the County Town of Taunton and community links to the wider South West.

Socio-economic profile of the WM and CF parishes

The following information has been drawn from the Census results of 2011. The results of the Census held in March 2021 have not yet been published. However, it is important to note that since 2011 the two parishes have grown significantly with the addition of more than 1000 houses forming part of the Urban Extension proposed in the TD Core Strategy. Growth in the Conservation Areas of Cheddon Fitzpaine and West Monkton has been minimal, and there has been no growth in the Hestercombe Gardens Conservation Area other than development of the site as a tourist destination. However, significant housing estates have been built in the southern half of the NP area, from Pyrland in the west to Monkton Heathfield in the east.

The NP area will be subject to significant change over the period to 2028, and beyond, as a result of large-scale developments, including the Urban Extension, as agreed through the SWT CS and SADMP. This change will result in a significantly different NP area profile in terms of both socio-economic and environmental factors over the lifetime of the plan. This dynamic is acknowledged by the NP process and will be monitored as part of the NP Action Plan over the plan period to ensure that the NP continues to contribute to sustainable development.

Population

Note: in the period between making the NP and its first revision, there has been a significant change in the local population. The trend is illustrated in the key figures below and will be further reflected in the results of the March 2021 Census, which are not yet published at the time of this revision (June 2021).

The total population of the two parishes was 4,716 (2,787 in West Monkton and 1,929 in Cheddon) at the last census in 2011. This represents approximately 4.27% of the total population (110,200) of the Borough of Taunton Deane.

Baseline Office for National Statistics census data (ONS, 2011) shows the West Monkton (WM) population to be 2,787 and the Cheddon Fitzpaine (CF) population to be 1,929. TDBC (TDBC comments 16/2/2017) estimate that by the end of March 2016, based on housing completions data since 2011, there were an additional 1,462 persons in WM and 76 additional persons in CF.

Based on TDBC allocations, from the 2011 baseline it is estimated that by 2028 there will be an additional c.7,997 persons in WM and an additional c.1,510 persons in CF. These figures exclude 'windfall' sites and any general population flux.

This will result in a significant additional population from 2011 within the designated NP area estimated to be c.9,507 persons, largely due to the Urban Extension.

Key figures demonstrating growth in Somerset (Somerset Intelligence 2021):

- In mid-2019 the population of Somerset was estimated to be 562,225, a rise of 2,825 from 2018 and 28,225 more than at the 2011 Census.
- 24.8% of the Somerset population are aged 65 and over, an increase of about 3% since the 2011 Census and 6% higher than the UK proportion
- Nearly 90% of the population growth in Somerset between 2011 and 2019 has been in the 65 and over age group.

Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

Police reports of anti-social behaviour and crime rates show lower rates than in Somerset generally. Compared with the Somerset average a higher proportion (69%) of people in the area feel safe going out after dark. (*Partnership Intelligence Unit, SCC*)

Health and Wellbeing

All-cause mortality rates for the under 75's is 266.5 in Taunton Deane compared with 258.5 in Somerset (rate per 100,000). Mortality rates for cancer are slightly below the Somerset average, at 101.8 per 100,000 compared with 104.0. (See *Partnership*

Intelligence Unit, SCC). Updated figures from Somerset Intelligence 2019 for the two parishes combined show all-cause mortality rate for the under 75's is 229.50 in the former Taunton Deane area; whilst all cancer all ages rate is 205.91 per 100,000 (standardised rate).

In West Monkton 81% of residents and in Cheddon Fitzpaine 86% of residents are said to be in Good or Very Good Health: the figure for Taunton Deane is 47.1%. (See *Rural Services Network/Census, 2011*)

Ethnicity

Within the Parish of Cheddon Fitzpaine 1,795 residents are 'White British' and 54 are 'Black and Minority Ethnic'. In the Parish of West Monkton there are 2,710 'White British' residents and 46 'Black and Minority Ethnic' residents. Somerset Intelligence Network shows that for the West Monkton ward (not coterminous with the NP area) the proportion of 'White British' residents is 95.8% compared with 93.5% in the Taunton Deane district. (See Census 2011.). Updated figures from Somerset Intelligence 2019 show the combined figures for West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine as being 95.53% White British, 95.23 residents having been born in UK, and 98.15% speaking English as their prime language.

Housing

West Monkton Parish has 1178 dwellings (1,146 households) and Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish has 750 dwellings (731 households; see Census 2011). These figures will increase significantly during the Neighbourhood Plan period as the Urban Extension is built out.

Somerset Intelligence 2019 indicates that 2.6% of the population of the two parishes are on the Social Housing Register/waiting list.

Travel

Households in West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine both have a higher-than-average number of cars per household as shown in the Supporting Document 'Other Evidence' (Census 2011). This reflects the rurality of the northern half of the NP area and the fact that public transport provision currently does not adequately support the need for transportation to work and school. Somerset Intelligence 2019 data shows that only 7.7% of the population of the two parishes does not have either a van or a car in the household. The evidence from the household questionnaire reflects the lack of current provision and a desire to use more sustainable means of transport than the car.

Ecology and Conservation

The human population projections, plus local indigenous bat populations e.g. the Lesser Horseshoe bat, have a bearing on the recreation, wildlife and ecology provision in the NP area. Housing settlements have made allowances for bat roosting and foraging pathways, and will continue to do so, whilst the need to protect local wildlife has encouraged a robust position to be taken over the use of Public Open Space. This position is supported by the results of the residents' questionnaire. It is recognized, nationally and locally, that access to public open space, good recreation opportunities and dark skies encourage health and well-being essential for bats. (See *Council for the Protection of Rural England, CPRE.*) The draft Revised Neighbourhood Plan continues to support and protect the community's health and well-being.

Summary

Although it is widely recognized that Somerset is a favoured retirement destination, it is important to appreciate that the WM and CF NP area is shown to be an area with a younger population, i.e., more of the population are economically active. Both the 2013 data and the projection to 2033 show that the NP area will have a population where the proportion aged 65 and over is less than 15%. (See *Somerset Intelligence Network: SINE 2011.*) Somerset Intelligence 2019 shows the ward profile (West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine) compared to District and Somerset rates.

	0-17 years	18-64 years	65 – 74 years	75+ years
Ward	26.6%	58.6%	8.9%	5.9%
District	14.2%	54.9%	13.6%	12.3%
County	19.8%	55.3%	13.4%	11.5%

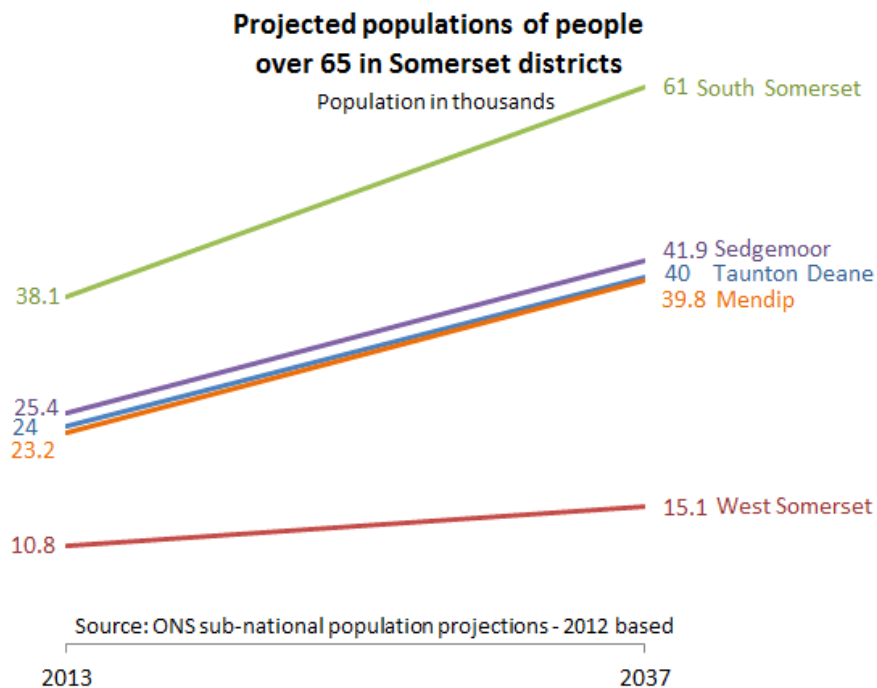
This demographic continues to be important in the consideration of land use in the Neighbourhood Plan area with implications for the provision of schools, public open spaces, opportunities for sport and recreation, and the focus for health provision. The NP area does not have any areas of deprivation, although parts of Taunton, not far away, are classified as such. (See *Sustainability Audit for detail.*)

The crime statistics reported for the Ward of West Monkton, which is not coterminous with the NP area (that includes part of CF Parish) show that for every 100,000 people the greatest crime rate is for anti-social behaviour (2.5k), followed by violence (1.5k), criminal damage (0.5k), theft (0.5k), burglary (0.25k), vehicle damage (0.75k) and drugs use (less than 0.25k). Figures are per 100,000 people. Updated figures from Somerset intelligence 2019 for the ward (which now refers to the two parishes) are anti-social behaviour 2181, violence 2115, criminal damage 692, theft 810, burglary 601, vehicle crime 470, drugs 94.

Each Somerset district can expect to see a significant increase in the numbers of people over 65 by 2037. The chart below shows the projected increase of over 65s between 2013 and 2037; in most cases, it is over 50%. (See *other evidence*)

Somerset Demographics which puts the Neighbourhood Plan area into a context within Somerset.)

Projected populations of people over 65 in Somerset districts



The population projections are significant to this Neighbourhood Plan. The responses to the housing provision questions in the household questionnaire and the population projections indicate two main trends in the sort of accommodation that will be required in the NP area: accommodation for downsizers/economically inactive on the one hand, and on the other – affordable accommodation for young families. The high proportion of part time workers in Somerset and average earnings in the area have encouraged the suggestion that as high a proportion of housing as is viable should be affordable housing or social housing. Whilst gated or sheltered communities for the older population were not favoured, there seemed to be support for apartments and one and two bedroomed houses. (See *results of supplementary questionnaire.*)

It is noteworthy that local indigenous bat populations have a bearing on housing and infrastructure development, (ref Hestercombe SAC).

3. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Vision

To successfully accommodate the significant growth planned for the area.

To ensure a high quality of design with the creation of sustainable places with excellent community facilities for local people to enjoy.

During this period of growth, the historic settlements and surrounding countryside will be protected to maintain and enhance the locally distinctive characteristics of the area for future generations. The revisions include measures reflecting current thinking on addressing climate change. Rather than present Climate Change mitigation as a separate objective, the revisions to the Neighbourhood Plan have attempted to include an awareness of the need for measures which address climate change in every objective and its policies, and measures to deliver the aims of the Climate and Emergency declaration made by both Parish Councils.

Objectives

(i) Housing Objective

The NP area will see significant housing growth over the plan period. This is an opportunity to provide a range of property types at affordable prices with a particular emphasis to meet the housing needs of young and older people. This housing provision should include both affordable and market housing to ensure inclusive communities and allow people with local connections to return or remain as part of a growing community.

This objective will promote the following:

- provision of a range of property types with a particular emphasis to meet the housing needs of young and older people;
- an increased proportion of 1 and 2 bed dwellings favouring bungalows over apartments to allow first time buyers and downsizers to remain in the area;
- an increased proportion of single storey dwellings to give older residents the opportunity to downsize, thus releasing mid-range and larger properties onto the market;
- recognition that not everyone has the ability to buy their home at current price

levels on the open market. Therefore, affordable housing must be provided in accordance with relevant Core Strategy Policies and Supplementary Planning Documents adopted by TDBC taken on and by SWTC;

- the NP area includes good examples of locally distinctive design and external finishing materials which reflects the local architectural and historic heritage. New residential development design and materials could continue to respect this context with the use of more traditional finishing materials on prominent buildings within the larger new residential areas planned for the NP area, however any well-designed buildings that are energy efficient, utilize renewables, and are climate resilient respecting the context in which they are delivered will be viewed positively. Proposed buildings should support the move towards zero carbon buildings. At present (2021) there is no requirement nationally or locally to require zero carbon/emission buildings in new development. New Homes are required to follow Building Regulations and the Future Homes Standards set by the Government. The regulations bring changes to Part L (conservation of fuel and power) and F (ventilation) of the Building Regulations to improve the energy efficiency of new homes. The new Future Homes Standard will eventually ensure that all new homes built from 2025 will produce 75-80% less carbon emissions than homes delivered under current regulations. The Government will first update the Building Regulations later this year to ensure new homes built from 2022 produce 31% less carbon emissions compared to current standards. In 2023 the government will consult about technical aspects of the Future Homes Standard before updating the Regulations again to come into force in 2025. This timetable reflects that technology and construction practice will need to adapt and deliver cost effective solutions which cannot happen straight away. Development in the NP area must deliver on the standards set out above as part of a managed transition towards much lower carbon emissions in new development in West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine.

In exceptional circumstances, proportionate new housing development across the Neighbourhood Plan area may be supported, providing that a) it helps enable the delivery of wider community aspirations (e.g., the Country Park) or public open space or accessibility improvements in the Parishes or b) it is brought forward with community support and a comprehensive masterplan.

(ii) Transport Objective

To provide sustainable transport infrastructure to meet the existing and future travel needs of local people. This will include a joined-up foot and cycle path network within new development and linking to the wider network beyond and improved public transport options to encourage bus and rail use.

This objective will seek to:

- encourage people to use public transport;
- encourage people to walk and cycle within the NP area, to destinations at the surrounding parishes and Taunton, such as the town centre and railway station, by providing a well-connected and convenient foot and cycle path network;
- provide improved safe routes to existing and proposed schools and to local centres.

(iii) Employment Objective

To bring an economic advantage to the NP area by encouraging a broad range of local employment opportunities, at a scale appropriate to the planned population growth.

To create and maintain local jobs to allow residents to work as close as possible to where they live so as to encourage sustainable commuting, whilst at the same time preserving the rural character of the NP area.

This objective will help to:

- bring an economic advantage to the NP area;
- create a range of employment opportunities which are of a scale commensurate with local population growth;
- minimise commuting by encouraging local employment opportunities, either through expansion, relocation or start-up, allowing local residents to work near to where they live, and encourage working from home where appropriate;
- maintain the rural character areas of the NP area by locating larger new employment initiatives within employment land allocations proposed by the Core Strategy (CS) and Site Allocations & Development Management Plan (SADMP), or on brownfield sites.

(iv) Recreation and Environment Objective

To successfully accommodate the significant growth planned for the NP area by ensuring that sustainable places are created to support the provision of excellent community facilities for local people to enjoy, benefitting their health and well-being. Future developments must provide a high-quality mix of private and open space uses which meet local needs, including children's play areas, sports pitches, allotments, and amenity green spaces which safeguard and enhance the natural environment by promoting connectivity for people and wildlife. The creation of sustainable places must also include measures to attenuate extreme rainfall events (which often adversely impact the NP area due to its position at the foot of the

Quantock Hills) by working closely with partner organisations to reduce the overall flow of upstream floodwater down into the NP area and further downstream.

This objective will seek to:

- encourage all relevant stakeholders to contribute to the development and delivery of the Green Wedge and Country Park to the north of the A3259 to ensure excellent access arrangements to a quality green space environment for people and wildlife;
- protect and enhance the NP area heritage, landscape, and wildlife assets;
- increase the provision of outdoor and indoor recreation and community facilities to meet the needs of the local community through, for example, provision of a community cafe and toilets along the canal in the vicinity of the Swingbridge area to create a community meeting point;
- protect and enhance the dark skies quality of the area for the health and well-being of both people and wildlife;
- improve local green space infrastructure within existing and proposed green spaces with, for example, the provision of seating along public footpaths and canal side walkways;
- encourage all relevant stakeholders to make improvements of the surface water run-off systems to restrict flooding in the three main feeder brooks into the River Tone using recognised field work initiatives to restrict flows during periods of heavy rain;
- work with local upstream farming communities to help the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) implement field work initiatives to reduce peak water flows across farmland.

4. POLICIES

Housing

Context

The NP area housing stock comprises a wide range of housing including houses of traditional design within the historic villages of West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine (both designated Conservation Areas), more established suburban areas and extensive new housing developments which are part of Taunton's Urban Extension (the Monkton Heathfield Urban Extension is the largest within Taunton area, with other significant developments at Nerrols, both currently under construction). Significant additional residential growth is planned for the NP area, and it will therefore be important that this growth is properly integrated with existing settlements with respect to visual appearance and in terms of creating new communities which work well with existing communities, and which provide for the housing needs of local people as well as for the wider Taunton housing market area.

Census 2011 parish summaries for West Monkton (WM) and Cheddon Fitzpaine (CF) as prepared by Somerset Intelligence show that there were 1,178 dwellings in WM (around 1,000 dwellings can be added to the WM total as a result of the Urban Extension build since 2011) and 750 dwellings in CF. In terms of house types, WM has a higher percentage of detached houses and a lower percentage of smaller properties such as semi-detached, terraced and flats as compared to the rest of Somerset. This is also true for CF, except for terraced houses, as CF has a higher percentage of these property types compared to the rest of Somerset. The percentage of flats in CF is particularly low at just 2.4% compared to 13% in the rest of Somerset.

In terms of planned future housing growth, which is currently being built out, the relevant SWT Core Strategy Policies are SS1 (*Monkton Heathfield*) and SS2 (*Priorswood/Nerrols*). The Monkton Heathfield Urban Extension is a key part of Taunton's planned growth strategy and will eventually deliver a self-contained settlement of around 4,500 new homes. The Priorswood/Nerrols development will create a new sustainable neighbourhood of around 900 new homes. Around 57% of the Monkton Heathfield site area and 75% of the Priorswood/Nerrols site area is within the NP area designated boundary.

National and Local Housing Policies

The Government has stated that it intends to introduce, by Ministerial Statement, a new tenure of affordable homes called First Home. It is appreciated that this Government Ministerial Statement will affect how the tenure of affordable housing is proportioned in the future.

The NPPF (2019) advocates that planning policies should reflect an assessment of the size, type, and tenure of the housing needs of different groups in the community, including but not limited to those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes, and people wishing to commission or build their own homes (Paragraph 61).

The relevant SWTC Core Strategy (CS) Policies are CP4 (Housing) which promotes the delivery of the required mix of new housing types, sizes, and tenures to meet the needs of the SWTC area and CP5 (Inclusive Communities). Policy DM4 (Design) seeks to encourage a sense of place and high-quality building design.

The Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP) also has a range of detailed policies which are relevant to new housing development. Core Strategy DM5 promotes sustainable design and use of resources in new housing development. SWTC published in February 2021 a document entitled Climate Positive Planning Interim Guidance Statement on Planning for the Climate Emergency which explains how current SWTC policies can be applied to ensure new planning applications include measures to ameliorate the effects of climate change.

The results of the questionnaire sent to all homes and businesses in the NP area in 2019 found that:

‘the weighted scores favour more bungalows (3.30), closely followed by privately owned supported accommodation (3.23). Rented accommodation was less well supported. This finding adds support to the NP policy H1 that requires 10% of dwellings *on the open market* to be single storey. Currently this does not appear to be either supported or reinforced by the Planning Authority, which is disappointing, since the demographic overall for the area indicates an aging population³. The support for privately owned, supported accommodation is evidenced in the responses and it is hoped that a development opportunity may be spotted by a provider of such accommodation in future development in the area that would serve the needs of the older members of the community by offering an alternative to bungalows.’

³ SCC population data

Housing Policy H1: Housing Suitable for Older People

Justification

The NP questionnaire conducted in early 2016 included “Housing Needs” questions. A number of respondents indicated that they were looking to move within the NP area and of those a significant number expressed a wish to stay within the NP area; most of those respondents said that they would like to live in bungalows. The questionnaire responses also indicated support for one, two and three bed houses. A further supplementary questionnaire confirmed that the sort of housing most wanted by the elderly was bungalows, followed by sheltered housing.

The elderly population within the NP area is expected to grow in line with both national and local trends. A proportion of the large number of new residents within the Urban Extension, and other new residential developments within the NP area will be elderly. The largest total change is expected to be in the number of people aged 55 and over, while the proportion of people aged 15-25 and 40-50 is unlikely to change significantly. (*See paragraph 3.5 - TDBC Locally Based Housing Projections 2008 - 2026: Fordham Research 2010*).

The term ‘Older People’ is therefore defined for the purposes of this NP Policy as referring to those who are aged 55 and above. This definition is in line with the ‘Housing and Older People Study’ also produced by Fordham Research in 2010. This study found that 35.9% of the total population of the Taunton Housing Market Area (HMA) were older people, larger than the regional and national average. This study also found that there was a preference for downsizing (in terms of number of bedrooms) and for sheltered housing. Older people would prefer to stay within their own homes for as long as possible. To do this the most common adaptations required were a downstairs toilet and handrails.

Core Strategy paragraph 3.78 in support of Policy CP5 states that, ‘*The population of the Borough is older than the national average which will require adaptability of homes, and a range of specialist housing such as provision of Care and Residential institutions...*’ Furthermore, this paragraph goes on to state that ‘*It is important that the location of new accommodation is well related to community facilities.*’

The Census 2011 figures show that in WM older people (aged 65 and over) comprise 22.8% (636 people) of the parish population as compared to 21.1% in Somerset and 16.4% in England and Wales. In CF, just 7.9% (153) of the population were older people. The total number of older people is therefore significant across the NP area as a whole and their specific housing needs should be properly addressed now and in the future.

Often older people can remain living independently with a little support, and such

measures help hospitals reduce bed blocking and provide a happier elderly population.

This policy is in line with the current SCC strategy for caring for older/vulnerable people in their own homes wherever possible.

The proposed policy (H1) for the provision of 10% single storey dwellings, as clearly evidenced by the results of the questionnaire, and as a percentage of the private units only, equates to a minimum of seven to eight dwellings out of every 100 units built. This should not materially affect the viability of any scheme as the reduction in overall square footage should be offset by increased sales revenue per square foot, a decreased build cost, and a reduction in CIL payments.

Providing the developer is aware of the requirement to provide these units prior to land purchase the only loss, if indeed there is one, will be to the landowner. A wise developer will plot the bungalows in areas where the sales revenue can be maximised with the smaller ones closer to facilities. This would improve saleability, and be more convenient for the purchasers, who are more likely to be in the over 55 age bracket.

Housing Policy H1: Housing Suitable for Older People

Subject to a viability assessment, new major* residential developments of 10 or more net additional dwellings (or if the site area is more than 0.5 hectares if dwelling numbers are yet to be agreed) will provide not less than 10% of dwellings** to be sold on the open market, evidenced by local need, suitable for occupation by older people. Such accommodation shall fulfil all the following criteria:

- Be single storey and either 1,2 or 3 bed,
- Be situated within easy access of either existing or proposed local facilities and services.
- Applications that include supported-living style accommodation will also be supported (see also NP Policy E4) e.g., warden controlled flats/bungalows.

* Major development for the purposes of this Policy is as defined by The Town and Country (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 Part 1, paragraph 2(c)

** The current Urban Extension allocates 3500 new homes to West Monkton

Part of the Monkton Heathfield Urban Extension lies within Creech St Michael Parish: fifty-seven per cent of the emerging Urban Extension lies within the parish of West Monkton, giving a total of approximately 2000 dwellings gross, or 1500 private after the deduction of 25% social and affordable housing in line with current policy.

There have been very few bungalows built in the NP area over recent years and the Questionnaire returns, supported by current demographics and open market requirements, revealed that there was a need for this type of 1, 2, and 3 bedroomed properties.

The NP proposal of a minimum of 10% of private dwellings to be single storey properties would result in approximately 200 units being built over a probable 14-year period, equating to around 14 per year (or 7 per year per developer assuming the current 2 developers continued). It is felt that this is not unreasonable and will enable the Taunton Garden Town concept to give a greater feeling of space and community inclusion whilst providing for the proven need.

Conformity with Core Strategy & NPPF

This NP Policy is considered to be in general conformity with CS Policies CP4 (*Housing*) and CP5 (*Inclusive Communities*) and the NPPF (para 61).

What difference will it make?

This NP Policy will help to achieve the WM&CF NP Housing Objective by providing house types suitable for older people, enabling them to downsize and to remain independent and within their local community. These house types need not necessarily be in blocked compounds but can be pepper-potted through the community. This will be of benefit to the older people concerned and their families and will also support a diverse and cohesive community. This policy will also reduce the need to travel by car.

Housing Policies H2 & H3: External Materials and Refuse Bin Storage

Justification

Proposed development within the NP area is on a very large scale and therefore must be carefully planned and managed to achieve high quality design outcomes which do not swamp existing local settlements or threaten locally distinctive architectural and historic characteristics. Towards this end, TDBC commissioned the Taunton Urban Extension Masterplan and related Design Code for the Urban Extension in 2011. A new Masterplan is currently being produced and the parishes will wish to continue their close involvement with its development to ensure, amongst other things, high quality design outcomes.

The NP questionnaire (2016) responses to question 6 confirmed a widely held view by local people that there is enough existing and planned housing development in the NP area and that existing heritage assets, such as the historic villages and rural

landscape, should be protected and enhanced. With respect to new residential developments, responses from the questionnaire indicate strong local support for the use of local red sandstone and other more traditional building materials typical of the NP area.

The use of local and traditional materials should be encouraged where they will make the greatest visual impact such as prominent entrance buildings to new residential areas and prominent buildings which turn corners.

The NPPF states that:

'...non-strategic policies should be used to set out more detailed policies for specific areas or neighbourhoods... This can include... the provision of...community facilities at a local level, establishing design principles...'
NPPF para 28.

Furthermore, developments should take into account that:

'Neighbourhood Plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development' NPPF para 125.

The relevant CS Policy is DM4 (Design) which states that a sense of place will be encouraged by addressing design at a range of scales, including village, neighbourhood, street, and building.

The SADMP has a range of detailed design policies covering a number of issues including Policy D12 (Amenity Space). While this Policy does require safe, discreet, and conveniently accessed storage of refuse and recycling off the public highway, NP Policy H2 seeks to bring added local design requirements to this issue. This is particularly important given the scale and density of planned residential developments within the NP area and the potential for extensive unsightly bin storage.

SADMP Policy D7 (Design Quality) requires that new housing and commercial developments create a high standard of design quality and sense of place by applying a number of criteria. The NP Parishes support these design principles which will work well with the added design requirements set out in NP Policies H2 and H3 and which seek to address more locally based design considerations.

Photos G – H: Buildings of local stone with slate roof tiles and clay pantiles



Housing Policy H2: External Materials for Residential Development

- Residential developments will be required to be of high-quality functionality which appropriately responds to the distinctive local context whilst delivering modern, energy efficient and climate resilient design.
- Use of traditional materials specifically in prominent locations will be acceptable, as well as innovative architectural designs.
- Materials used should be high quality, energy efficient, climate resilient and sustainable, which maximise a) opportunities to reduce embodied carbon (e.g., through re-use and individual material properties and provenances), and b) carbon storing potential of buildings (e.g., through building with biomass).

Housing Policy H3: Refuse Bin Storage for Residential Development

Where there is no provision for direct access to the rear of a new dwelling, other than through the dwelling itself, a suitable refuse bin-store must be incorporated into the front of the dwelling/curtilage so that wheelie bins, or other containers for household refuse and recycling, can be stored in a concealed position. The store must be large enough to accommodate sufficient bins to fulfil local recycling opportunities, with room to spare as more and more recycling is done.

Conformity with Core Strategy & NPPF

These NP Policies are considered to be in general conformity with CS Policy DM4 (Design), SADMP Policy (Amenity Space) and the NPPF (para 127).

Furthermore, developments should take into account that currently, (2021), Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) manages waste and recycling functions on behalf of the four District Councils (Mendip, Sedgemoor, Somerset West & Taunton and South Somerset) and Somerset County Council.

A checklist for developers can be accessed on

<https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/developer-guidance>.

Tables are provided for the minimum container requirements (including dimensions) for a property, so that developers can calculate the appropriate size of the refuse bin store.

What difference will it make?

These NP Policies will help to achieve the WM&CF NP Housing Objective by ensuring that new residential developments within the NP area achieve high quality design

outcomes. These NP policies will also enhance the overall appearance of new residential developments and will help to maintain the local distinctiveness of the wider NP area.

Housing Policy H4: Affordable Housing

Justification

Affordable Housing: demonstrated need

Over recent decades there has been a significant shortfall in homes built in the UK to meet demand. According to the Government (Fixing the Foundations, July 2015) this harms productivity and restricts labour market flexibility as well as providing insufficient homes for individuals and families.

In 2014 building starts reached 136,000 in England, however, according to the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) we should be building at least 240,000 new houses a year in England to 2031 (Planning for Housing Need, Savills, 2015). This ongoing shortfall has led to affordability and availability issues for people trying to find homes to meet their needs. This, in turn, has resulted in a variety of negative social and economic issues as described by the National Housing Federation (Home Truths, NHF, 2014/15).

House price affordability ratios in 2013 (prices as a multiple of earnings) were 8.77 to 10.6 within the Heart of the SW (HotSW) Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area for Somerset and Devon. TDBC in 2017 have advised they do not hold data on current house prices to earnings ratios. The Home Truths report (NHF 2016-17) comments that house prices are more than 10 times the average salary and households would need a pay rise of £33,600 to afford the average home.

Affordability ratios of seven or more are considered to be unaffordable. This disparity is shown even more starkly within the private rented sector with average rental costs of between 31% and 37% of the average gross salary across the HotSW. (Broken Market, Broken Dreams, NHF, 2015). (Home Truths NHF, 2014/15).

Home Truths 2016-17 reports that the average cost of renting is over £700 a month, swallowing up around 35% of local incomes.

SWTC Affordable Housing policy

Policy CP4 of the Core Strategy requires that all housing schemes of five or more net additional dwellings shall include 25% as affordable units. It is 10 units or more in urban areas. Recent work has established that Cheddon Fitzpaine and West Monkton villages fall into the category of a designated rural area, which triggers

affordable housing at 5 dwellings; the urban extensions are an exception to this. The detailed requirements of this Policy are set out in the TDBC Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) adopted in May 2014. This SPD defines what is meant by affordable housing and how it will be delivered. The SPD also requires:

- A local connections clause in Section 106 agreements in relation to all schemes outside the Taunton and Wellington urban area to ensure that local people have priority access to affordable homes which can contribute to meeting the local housing needs. (Where a scheme provides 25 or more affordable homes on one site a local connection clause is not required).
- Design, quality, and sustainability standards to include a requirement that affordable housing should not be visually distinguishable from the market housing on the site in terms of build quality, materials, architectural details, levels of amenity space, parking provision and privacy. The 2021-2026 Homes England Affordable Homes program includes 'Encouraging uptake of the National Design Guide' which is part of the government's collection of planning practice guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework. Note that SADMP D10 Dwelling Sizes should now apply to all dwellings.
- That all types of residential development should be provided to meet local housing needs and that a developer *may* be required to undertake a local Housing Needs Survey in close liaison with the relevant parish. This approach should be followed for all allocated residential sites within the NP area to ensure that the right affordable housing mix is provided to help deliver the NP Housing Objective and Policies. This would include the right mix of affordable housing for families, young and older people to allow them to remain within the NP area whenever possible.

The SPD also defines the required affordable housing tenure split as follows:

'The Council will seek a tenure split of 60% social rented and 40% intermediate housing or Affordable Rented on affordable housing provision of 3 affordable dwellings or more.'

The definition of affordable housing is provided in the NPPF (paras 62-66), although changes may be imminent with the introduction of the 'New Home' product.

The Affordable Housing SPD is supported by the two parish councils and the delivery of affordable housing within the NP area will be closely monitored as part of the Neighbourhood Action Plan.

The two parishes do, however, wish to be more ambitious in addressing affordable housing needs within the NP area and this is set out in NP Policy H4 which seeks an 80% social rented to 20% intermediate housing tenure split with respect to affordable housing provided to meet CS Policy and SPD requirements.

The two parishes also wish to see a number of market price or affordable self-build plots provided as part of NP Policy H4. This is justified in the following paragraph.

Self-build homes

Although responses to the NP questionnaire (question 4) did not prioritise self-build opportunities, other evidence in the form of the SWTC Register of Interest in Self Build and Custom Housebuilding (also known as 'Right to Build Register') of individuals and associations of individuals who are seeking to acquire serviced plots in the area for their own self build and custom house building does show some demand for this sort of development. At the time of writing this review (2021) the number of persons on the register (March 2021) stands at 93, although only 2 people listed their first choice as the NP area (1 in West Monkton, 1 in Monkton Heathfield, 0 in Cheddon Fitzpaine). The register was established following the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act (2015) therefore numbers are likely to grow as the register and associated opportunities for self-build as required by the 2015 Act increase. This form of housing provision is strongly supported by the Government as part of their overall strategy to deliver more housing. It is also supported locally by the WM and CF parishes, subject to further evidence of local need, as this new initiative grows and becomes more widely known over the NP period to 2028 (NPPF para 61 and 62).

Teignbridge District Council was the first planning authority in England to produce and adopt (July 2016) a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on the topic of '*Custom and Self-Build Housing*'. This planning policy document sets out requirements for this type of housing delivery (both open market-price and affordable) and includes definitions of 'self-build' and 'affordable self-build' housing.

Self-build is defined in the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016). This definition includes both 'custom' and 'self-build' dwellings. 'Custom-build' is where an individual commissions a specialist developer to help deliver their home, whereas 'self-build' is when an individual is more directly involved in the construction process.

The 'affordable self-build' definition defines a range of detailed issues such as eligible households and how affordable self-build will be retained as affordable housing in perpetuity through Section 106 legal agreements.

With respect to WM&CF NP Policy H4 until such time as SWTC may produce an equivalent SPD and definitions, the NP allows that Self-build housing may be

considered as affordable housing where affordable housing is only provided to eligible households (as determined by local incomes and house prices), that affordable housing remains affordable for future households and that it costs no more than 80% of market rates.

Opportunities to meet local needs

The Urban Extension and other large new developments planned within the NP area will provide opportunities to meet housing needs expressed by local people, now and in the future, in response to the NP questionnaire, and in compliance with CS Policy CP4 and the Affordable Housing SPD.

The NP questionnaire responses (2016) to Question 4 prioritised low cost-to-buy for local people, family homes, affordable-to-rent for local people and starter homes, in that order, as the types of housing most needed in the NP area.

The SPD definition of 'intermediate housing' can include shared-equity and other low-cost homes for sale and intermediate rent. Shared equity and other low-cost homes require a deposit/mortgage which is often unaffordable for those in housing need. Therefore, the tenure split proposed by NP Policy H4 seeks to reduce the percentage of such homes as part of the overall affordable housing mix for future housing developments within the NP area. (See *Other Evidence: Gibbons Richards email dated 3/4/17.*)

NPPF 2019 para 57 states that viability should be a primary consideration at the plan making stage and only at the application stage when properly justified. In the case of policy compliant schemes, it should be assumed the scheme is viable unless justifiably evidenced otherwise. Reference should be made to NPPF and PPG guidance on viability.

Housing Policy H4: Affordable Housing

Evidence of local and wider housing need should be used. Currently, viability assessments are only carried out on schemes where less than the policy requirement of 25% affordable housing (or no provision for affordable housing) is being delivered. A tenure split of 80% social rented and 20% intermediate housing or affordable rent on affordable housing provision of three affordable dwellings or more* is encouraged where there is evidence to support this and subject to viability considerations.

In addition, affordable and market self-build housing** to meet local demand is particularly encouraged. Affordable self-build must be retained as affordable in perpetuity through legal agreement. Developers will be encouraged, wherever practicable, to offer sites available for private self-build within a development area.

** Definitions of 'social rented', 'intermediate housing' and 'affordable rented' are provided by the NPPF*

*** Self-build housing may be considered as affordable housing where affordable housing is only provided to eligible households (as determined by local incomes and house prices), that affordable housing remains affordable for future households and that it costs no more than 80% of market rates*

Conformity with Core Strategy & NPPF

This NP Policy is considered to be in general conformity with CS Policies CP4 (*Housing*) and CP5 (*Inclusive Communities*) and the NPPF para 64 and 65.

What difference will it make?

This NP Policy will help to achieve the WM&CF NP Housing Objective by providing more affordable housing opportunities for people to live in the NP area. This will be of benefit to the local economy, individuals and families and will help to maintain a diverse and cohesive community. This policy will also reduce the need to travel by car.

Housing Policy H5: Building and Climate Change

Justification

The policy is introduced to reflect the commitment of the two Parishes to support measures that ameliorate the Climate Emergency, in accordance with national and local policies on Climate Change.

The policy requires all new build, extensions/renovations, and some change of use applications to address the Climate Emergency as far as is reasonably and viably possible and encourages the move towards zero carbon emission buildings. It recognises that some conversions or listed buildings may not be able to comply. Viability assessments would be undertaken in conjunction with SWTC.

All development sites of one or more dwellings should be able to demonstrate nutrient neutrality in respect of phosphates, in accordance with SWTC policies CP8 and use of water in conformity with DM5.

It is anticipated that design policies in respect of usable outdoor space will include provision of private outdoor seating areas and communal gardens for apartment blocks; and all apartments to have either a balcony or Juliet balcony. Such measures, whilst not mitigating climate change will have directly beneficial effects on the health and well-being of the residents of the neighbourhood.

Whilst there is no strategic policy explicitly requiring EV charge points, the strategic direction is there in policy CP6 to be in broad conformity with. Model policy requirements are included in the Somerset EV Charging Strategy <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/climate-emergency/electric-vehicle-charging-strategy/>

The Climate Positive Planning Draft Interim Policy Statement on Planning for the Climate Emergency was issued by SWTC dated February 2021, providing additional guidance to support existing adopted planning policies, including DM5.

Housing Policy H5: Building and Climate Change

Building styles and materials that address the climate change emergency should be included in all new builds and extensions/restorations. Highly Energy Efficient Buildings Development proposals should demonstrate that the proposed buildings will show on performance monitoring a net emission rate of zero or below or are proposed to be certified by a quality regime, e.g., Passivhaus.

Measures which reduce Carbon Emissions will be supported, having regard to feasibility and viability:⁴

Development should consider:

⁴ Key criterion described in Building Regulations Approved Document L include:

1. The designed carbon emission rate (Dwelling Emission Rate (DER) for self-contained dwellings and individual flats (excluding common areas) and Building Emission Rate (BER) for buildings other than dwellings) must not exceed the Target Emission Rate (TER) for a notional building of similar type, size and shape. Both are expressed in kgCO₂/m² per year.
2. Fixed building services should achieve a reasonable standard of energy efficiency. This is intended to prevent inappropriate trade-offs between different elements of the building. Minimum limiting parameters are set for key components of the building fabric to ensure that this is the case.
3. Solar gains should be limited.
4. As-built performance should be consistent with the DER. This includes air-permeability testing and appropriate commissioning of building services systems.
5. Provision should be made for energy efficient operation by providing the building owner with information enabling them to operate the building in a way that uses no more fuel and power than is reasonable. This might be done by the preparation of a building log book.
6. Limiting fabric parameters.

- The orientation, massing and landscaping of buildings wherever practicable to ensure maximum solar gain in line with NPPF and DM5; roof structures designed to accommodate PVs without need for additional structural reinforcement (NB while solar panels offer a feasible and viable means of achieving emissions-reduction targets, strategies to maximise solar gain should also include strategies to avoid overheating).
- A fabric-first approach to efficiency is more beneficial in reducing carbon emissions and reducing fuel poverty than just solar panels and direct electric heating; external materials and extra insulation to increase energy efficiency should make maximum possible use of sustainable modern technologies.
- Increasing water resilience in dwellings by use of systems that reduce water consumption and allow for the re-use of rain water; any measures which enhance the environment and make more of managing our water, e.g. reducing the water footprint or increasing water efficiency in conformity with the national BR optional requirement of 110 litres per person per day (see 'Buildings Regulations Approved Document G – **Hot Water Safety**, Efficient use of Water within a Property and Sanitary Conveniences Including Washing Facilities and Food Preparation Areas', which addresses the water supply and flow within a property).
- Heating from low-carbon and renewable reductions, e.g., air, water, and ground source; biomass as a low-carbon source of heat; energy-efficient boilers; district heating schemes; site-wide solutions across areas such as the urban extensions.
- Provision of accessible electric charging points for all new dwellings and appropriate infrastructure in the public realm.
- Power generation from on-site renewable sources.
- Inclusion of green roofs, walls, and other similar measures where appropriate.
- Following any ecological survey identifying key species at risk, the 'building-in' of permanent biodiversity measures designed to support their retention and re-establishment, e.g., bee bricks and swift boxes.

Conformity with Core Strategy & NPPF

This NP Policy is considered to be in general conformity with SWTC DM5, and CS policies. Policy DM5 refers to zero carbon requirements, although these were in relation to the Code for Sustainable Homes and the National Zero Carbon Homes policy that were both cancelled. As such, the Council cannot require zero carbon homes through DM5, but the policy still remains, and the strategic intent and direction is still zero carbon homes. Policy DM5 can allow for a requirement of up to 20% carbon reduction over Building Regulations Part L.

Mitigation and adaptation measures for climate change and opportunities to ensure future resilience to climate change impacts (such as nature-based solutions) are in accordance with paragraph 149 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 and the climate and ecological emergency (declared by Somerset County Council, Somerset West and Taunton Council, West Monkton Parish Council and Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council).

The statutory requirement associated with the Dutch N case, to ensure development reaches nutrient neutrality, should be considered for all new allocation sites.

Building Regulations especially Sections G and L are of particular relevance to this policy.

What difference will it make?

It will encourage all new development to make a positive contribution to measures that combat climate change and to protect the environment and residents in the NP area. It encourages developments which have future-proofed buildings as their base. Policy H5 supports developers who take full advantage of Building Regulations and Future Homes Standards that reduce the impact of the environment, (particularly those reducing greenhouse gas emissions) by minimising and adapting to climate change. Policy H5 encourages the submission of and adherence to a Sustainability Checklist by the developers, including an Energy Statement to show how the measures have been incorporated. ⁵

Transport

Context

The NP area highway network forms an important, and at times congested, part of the wider Taunton area transport infrastructure. It includes busy main roads such as the A38 and A3259 which carry significant levels of local and through traffic into, and from, Taunton town centre. These through routes, and other parts of the NP area, are also at times adversely impacted by high levels of traffic when there are problems with the nearby M5 and Junction 25. Post pandemic and with the possibility of more people working from home, added to the yet to be built part of the Urban Extension, the traffic landscape particularly at peak times may change. Travel analysis pre-Covid was carried out and has contributed to the Taunton Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

⁵ SWTC Climate Positive Planning Interim Guidance Statement on Planning for the Climate Emergency approved February 2021

In contrast, other parts of the NP area are suburban or rural in character with both quiet residential roads and narrow country lanes. Some of these roads and lanes are used as “rat runs” by traffic looking for short cuts, including large lorries despite appropriate signage.

In view of the above, many of the NP area roads are judged not safe for walking, and/or cycling. This problem is compounded by high levels of construction traffic and road disruption associated with significant levels of new development, including the Urban Extension, which will take many years to complete. These new developments will include extensive new residential areas, new schools, local centres, employment areas and green space, which will generate additional movement challenges. These developments will provide opportunities to improve, by creating convenient high quality transport infrastructure for active and sustainable transport modes. The NP Action Plan undertakes to develop the Safe Routes to School network as the NP area is developed.

The NP seeks to make the most of these opportunities to shape and create the best sustainable transport infrastructure network possible for the NP area. The NP will help to add to the existing foot and cycle network, including National Cycleway NCN3. The plan below illustrates the existing foot and cycle network (shown in green) and the gaps which therefore need to be filled.

Map 9: The WM&CF NP area transport network with cycle paths in green (including National Cycleway NCN3)



Local issues

The NP questionnaire conducted in early 2016 included a number of “Highways and Transportation” questions and the responses to these questions demonstrated support for sustainable and active modes of transport as well as raising concerns about traffic congestion and highway safety.

A sizable minority of those who responded to the questionnaire indicated that they cycle frequently, mostly for pleasure, at least weekly or fortnightly. There was, however, limited cycling activity to work, into town and to schools. This would seem to reflect the overall feeling from residents that there is too much traffic on the roads in the NP area, specifically along the two main roads (A38 & A3259) and that vehicular traffic avoided congestion by ‘rat running’ through narrow back roads. This ‘local knowledge’ was reflected in responses to the NP Questionnaire of March 2016 from residents of both parishes.

The analysis of the 2019 questionnaire revealed the situation was little changed:

‘Cycling in the parish to a greater or lesser degree was undertaken by circa 65% of respondents, whilst 35% never rode a bike. Suggestions for Commuter Route (85%) and Leisure cycling (64%)

attracted the most suggestions. Separation of vehicles and cyclists was important for commuters, whilst joined up routes were important for leisure cyclists. Improvements to the cycle network by making routes safe and easy to use was supported by 86% of respondents. 50% supported making junctions safer to use and providing secure cycle parking. 49% wanted accessible information about routes whilst 40% supported clearer way marking. Specific improvements included better cycle paths separated from traffic on the roads. Parishes can assist by including waymarking/signage in their budget considerations and monitor the location of secure cycle parking. Cycle Parking provision could be included in Parish Council budgets if a suitable site is available. The delivery of joined up cycle routes would be the remit of those who develop the roads infrastructure and is stated in NP Policy T1. Responses to this section of the questionnaire will be sent to Mike Ginger, Taunton Area Cycling Campaign'.

In response to these concerns many suggestions and comments were made about encouraging cycling in the NP area including:

- better/safer and dedicated cycle routes;
- safer cycling routes to Park & Ride (P & R) sites and schools;
- traffic and cycle segregation;
- restricting through traffic in the villages;
- more secure cycle parking in town;
- better surfaces and lighting, especially around schools;
- vehicle speed restrictions.

These responses suggest a demand for cycling if improvements are made to provide a more extensive cycleway network which is segregated from vehicular traffic as far as possible. This is confirmed by responses to Question 14 (2016 questionnaire) which confirms that providing new routes for cycle lanes, footpaths and bridleways is considered the single most important thing to encourage sustainable transport modes, closely followed by improved bus services.

The top three destinations for additional 'Safe Routes' are existing schools, proposed schools and local centres as prioritised by the questionnaire responses.

National and local transport policies

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 emphasizes:

'that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be -or have been- taken up given the type of development and its location'(Para108 a)).

And applications for development should give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second as far as possible- to facilitating

access to high quality public transport with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use'. (Para 110 a)).

The NPPF 2019 states in Para 110 c)

'That applications for development should create places that are safe secure and attractive – which minimises the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter and respond to local character and design standards.'

The relevant SWTC Core Strategy (CS) Policy is CP6 (Transport & Accessibility). This policy requires that development should contribute to reducing the need to travel. This will be achieved by measures such as improving accessibility by public transport, cycling, and walking to key destinations in Taunton and the surrounding villages; for example, to Musgrove Park Hospital, *'especially from North Taunton and Taunton East'*. It is intended that this policy will be delivered in partnership with Somerset County Council (SCC) which is the Local Transport Authority. Towards this end, SCC has produced a Future Transport Plan (FTP) for the period 2011-2026.

The SADMP, produced in 2016 and valid through to 2028, has a number of detailed transport policies covering a range of issues including parking requirements (see standards in SADMP, Appendix E), developing the cycle network, protection of disused transport corridors (such as rail lines and canals) and accessibility of development.

SADMP Policy A3 (Cycle Network) seeks to promote a number of measures to improve the cycle network in new developments including:

- the provision of on and off-road cycleways;
- traffic calming;
- traffic management and junction re-design to benefit cyclists;
- convenient and secure cycle parking;
- provision of lighting on paths within, and where appropriate, between urban areas to enable cycling after dark;
- the implementation of cycle schemes identified in the FTP.

The supporting justification states that *'the proposed Urban Extensions around Taunton...provide good opportunities to extend the core cycle network'*. The issue of lighting to cycle paths is addressed in more detail by the NP within the Recreation and Environment Section.

The FTP seeks to ‘*support the provision of appropriate and well-connected cycling facilities*’ and ‘*will help people make more trips on foot and help people see the benefits of walking*’.

These objectives are supported by detailed SCC Active Travel Strategies (2012) for walking, cycling and schools’ travel.

All relevant County Council transport policies are comprehensively listed by the Transport Policy Directory.

Taunton Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan takes account of current patterns, including the built-out parts of the Urban extension in Monkton Heathfield and new estates at Nerrols.

Transport Policy T1: Developing A Comprehensive and High-Quality Cycle and Footpath Network

Justification

As demonstrated by the questionnaire responses already described there is considerable local support for improvements and additions to the cycle and footpath network within the NP area. Furthermore, there is support for additional safe routes to existing schools, proposed schools and local centres.

If such routes are provided, cycling/walking to schools and local centres will be encouraged with associated benefits with respect to reducing traffic congestion/pollution and improvements to health, particularly for children. An improved cycle/footpath network should also encourage more adults to cycle/walk to work both within the NP area and into the wider Taunton area, including to the town’s railway station. Finally, cycling for pleasure will also be encouraged, bringing further health benefits. These benefits are fully evidenced by Somerset County Council ‘Cycling and Walking Strategies’ (August 2012), which are part of the ‘Active Travel Strategy’ (2012) supporting the Future Travel Plan (FTP). SCC quote (2021) ‘*We have long recognised the benefits of sustainable modes of transport and is committed to encouraging residents, businesses and visitors to the county to adopt a positive, healthy lifestyle which embraces walking and cycling as a regular part of their daily routine wherever possible*’.

The Urban Extension and other large new developments within the NP area will provide opportunities to ensure that an excellent cycle and footpath network is provided in a timely manner for both existing and future residents. Given the very significant scale of new developments within the NP area (including several new schools) it will be essential that such a network is provided to ensure sustainable

development and avoid further traffic congestion within the NP parishes and the wider Taunton area. It will also be essential that the cycle and footpath network is proactively promoted through an active and deliverable Travel Plan (as required by SADMP Policy A2) to encourage more cycling and walking by both existing and future residents. On larger scale development the delivery of footpath links and cycleways would be phased and delivered in line with a phasing programme which should be agreed with the Planning Authority and the Highways Authority. The network delivery should be at the earliest practicable opportunity and any requests to delay the delivery should be resisted.

The following policy will ensure that new residential and employment developments make a positive and exemplary contribution to completing a comprehensive cycle and footpath network throughout the NP area which follows natural 'desire lines', avoids gaps and which is well connected into the wider Taunton area network. Where there are gaps in the network which this policy is unable to complete, consideration will be given to using Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds or other grant funding to complete missing cycle and foot path infrastructure.

Network Rail have a level crossing located over the railway where public footpath 5/13 crosses the railway at Cheddon Fitzpaine, TA2 8RX. The Monkton Heathfield Urban Extension is located north of the railway, so increased usage and change in environment surrounding the crossing would likely lead to an increased safety risk. Any additional use of this public footpath through extra linkages or development close by may require mitigation to ensure the works do not have an adverse effect on the risk to users of the level crossing. Mitigation could be in the form of a footbridge if required. Both Parish Councils view this positively.

Transport Policy T1: Developing a comprehensive and high-quality cycle and footpath network

New residential and employment/commercial development must meet our goal to provide fully integrated walking and cycling networks* which are user friendly for all with wheelchair access included; to ensure they provide door to door connectivity within new developments and to key destinations such as education, workplaces and retail; lit in accordance with the Dark Skies Policy R1; in place before or soonest after first occupancy in the case of new developments.

To achieve this goal all new residential and employment/commercial development must:

- Provide safe and convenient public cycle and footpaths which connect with existing foot and cycle networks within the NP area, and which also link into cycle and foot networks adjoining the NP area, particularly with respect to the Urban Extension and associated green space areas such as the green necklace, country park and waterways;

- Ensure that existing and proposed schools and local centres are provided with safe and convenient cycle and footpath connections from surrounding existing and proposed residential and employment areas.
- Provide secure, easy to use covered cycle parking at public places in the urban extensions, in close proximity to essential services and facilities or local centres. The cycle parking should be robustly made and finished using high quality materials. It must be easily accessible and should be covered to keep the weather off the parked cycles.

New residential and employment/commercial development must provide parking spaces for residential developments in accordance with the provision and dimensions given in SADMP 2016 appendix E.

** Major residential developments of 10 units or more; and employment/commercial developments of 1000m² or one Hectare*

Conformity with Core Strategy & NPPF

NP Policy T1 is considered to be in general conformity with the FTP and Core Strategy Policies CP1 (*Climate Change*), CP6 (*Transport*) and CP7 (*Infrastructure*) and SADMP Policy A5 (*Accessibility of development*) and A3 (*Cycle network*). This Policy is also considered to be in general conformity with the NPPF 2019 para 109 and 110 a).

What difference will it make?

NP Policy T1 will help to achieve the WM&CF NP Transport Objective by delivering a high quality sustainable and comprehensive infrastructure network for walking, cycling and public transport to meet the needs of both existing and future residents of all ages within the NP area. In order to ensure the rapid establishment of walking and cycling routes in new developments it is crucial to ensure that the network of footpaths and cycleways is in place as soon as practically possible. Delaying the establishment of a cycle and footpath network denies the opportunities for developing vibrant communities which support environmental improvement and sustainable ways of getting around. Furthermore, this Policy adds to the requirements made by relevant CS and SADMP Policies and helps to shape and deliver those policies so as to meet particular local needs and circumstances unique to the NP area.

Data from the Canal and River Trust indicates that the use of the canal towpath NCN3 for both recreational and commuter cycling, and walking will increase following the

Covid pandemic, and as more houses are built as part of the Urban Extension at Monkton Heathfield. There may be resultant degradation of the existing provision, and it is likely that the existing provision will need to be enhanced if increased usage is likely to occur because of new development. The Canal and River Trust has indicated that it would not be averse to the consideration of a bridge over the canal to open the routes from Taunton to the Quantocks. Both Parish Councils view this positively.

Employment

Context and Area Profile

The current employment landscape within the NP area encompasses a wide variety of businesses. The major employment areas are:

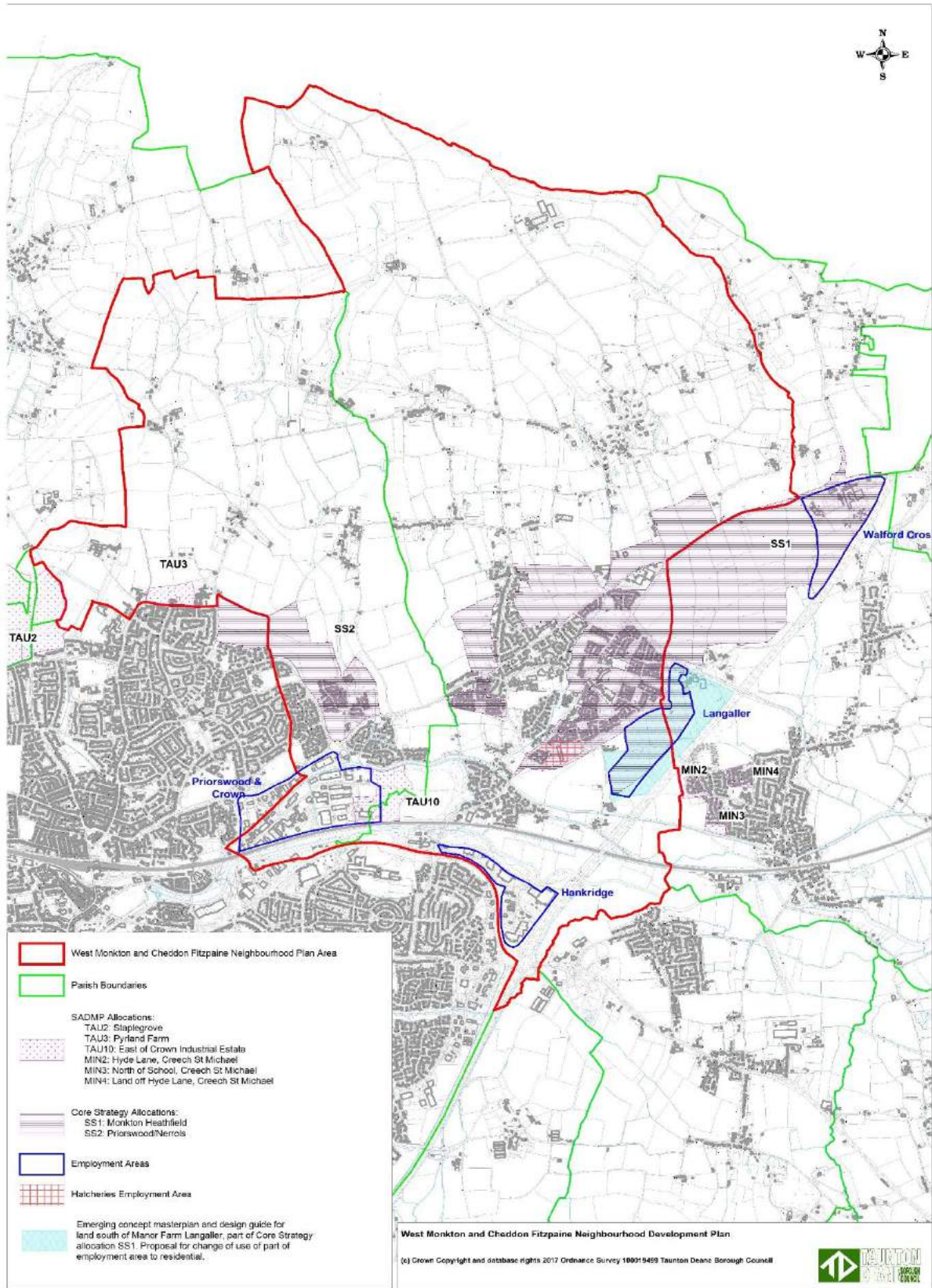
- Hankridge Farm - primarily retail and leisure outlets, but with some hospitality facilities and offices;
- Crown Industrial Estate - a mix of light industrial premises, a recycling centre, medical centre, small scale public sector and some trade wholesale/retail businesses;
- Priorswood Industrial Estate - both light and heavier industrial premises, with a significant concentration of automotive-related retail units at the western end.

These larger existing employment areas are illustrated on Map10 (issued 2021) (below) relative to the NP designated area boundary.

Map 10 illustrates current and future employment areas, designated by the Core Strategy (CS) which will be a part of the Monkton Heathfield Urban Extension. The first phase includes 3 hectares adjacent to The Hatcheries and 19.5 hectares south of Langaller, with a later phase of 10 hectares reserved for longer term release around Walford Cross. As illustrated by the map, the Walford Cross site is outside the NP designated boundary, listed as an employment land reserve in the adopted policy SS1. The Langaller site is partly within the NP boundary and The Hatcheries is within the NP boundary. These areas have been designated by CS Policy SS1 (*Monkton Heathfield*) which defines the proposed employment uses as research and development, light industrial, general industrial and storage and distribution. Part of the Langaller site was re-allocated as residential in December 2018, which enabled the Hyde Farm employment area to come forward, subject to detailed design guidance.

A further employment land allocation has been made by the Site and Development Management Plan (SADMP) Policy TAU10 which allocates 5.5 hectares of land east of the Crown Industrial Estate for employment purposes, subject to a number of criteria. This allocation is also illustrated on the map.

Map 10: WM&CF NP Employment Sites



Over the three financial years up to 2017 there was a consistent and strong level of demand for employment land and property within the Taunton Deane area as demonstrated by the TDBC Employment Site Enquiries Database (see ‘Other Evidence’) which shows a total of 36 enquiries over that period. This includes only enquiries for commercial land and/or property (rather than town centre or single unit requirements). The TDBC Business Development Manager observed that the enquiry database may not include direct approaches to commercial agents, so in fact the level of interest may have been greater than the database suggests.

This evidence supports the employment land allocations made by the CS and SADMP within the NP area, driving the need for further employment land and for property more generally. The allocated employment land within the Urban Extension and elsewhere in the NP area will help to realise the aspiration to enable residents to live and work within the same community.

In addition to the larger employment areas described above, the NP area includes a range of other small and medium sized enterprises (SME’s) distributed throughout the area as well as other employers such as the local schools.

Workforce

As at the last census (2011), economic activity within the parishes highlighted the following summary data of those aged 16-74⁶ as compared to Somerset and the wider country. Although this shows a relatively healthy local economy compared with the rest of Somerset there is no room for complacency; there are still significant numbers of unemployed and economically inactive people within the NP designated area.

Parish	West Monkton	Cheddon Fitzpaine	Somerset	England & Wales
Employed	1324 (66.2%)	1060 (76.0%)	65.2%	61.9%
Unemployed	35 (1.7%)	26 (1.9%)	3.0%	4.4%
Economically Inactive	569 (28.4%)	262 (18.8%)	29.2%	30.3%

With the scale of residential development, both delivered and planned, it is anticipated that the figures above will have changed substantially when the data collected in the Census 2021 is published.

Leisure and Tourism Opportunities

Tourism is a thriving and growing industry in the beautiful WM&CF area and wider Quantock Hills AONB. The plans at Hestercombe for the future growth and

⁶ Derived from <http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/files/Somerset%20Census%20Key%20Statistics%20-%20Summary%20Profiles.xls>

development by the Hestercombe Gardens Trust will inevitably bring demand for more accommodation and visitor facilities, thereby creating employment and housing opportunities. Future plans for Hestercombe Gardens Trust are in 'Other Evidence'. Whilst there are public houses in the villages of West Monkton, Monkton Heathfield and Bathpool, there are none in Cheddon Fitzpaine. However, facilities including public houses and retail shops are planned for the development at Nerrols and for Phase 2 of the Urban Extension development at Monkton Heathfield.

Employment Provision in the Immediate Vicinity

Within the wider Taunton area, significant employment sites can be found in the healthcare, retail, education, and public sectors. As befitting a county town, there are also other retail parks and business parks in addition to the town centre businesses.

At Blackbrook Business Park, which borders the NP area to the south, there is a concentration of office accommodation combined with premises serving the hospitality and leisure sectors. This area, in conjunction with some town-centre properties, currently addresses the needs of most professional organisations in Taunton.

Growth industries within the Taunton Deane Borough Council⁷ area include health, ICT, and creative industries. The construction of the new nuclear power plant at Hinckley Point will bring further economic growth benefits and opportunities to the Borough, including to the NP area. (See 'Consultation' and 'Other Evidence').

Land to the south-east of the M5 has also been earmarked for employment use as part of wider upgrade plans for Junction 25 and A358 improvements⁸. The Core Strategy policy CP2 sets out a vision for employment land use borough wide.

From SWTC website in 2021: 'The Nexus site, approved by LDO in 2018, could offer up to 3500 jobs local to the Monkton Heathfield Urban Extension'.

Perspective from Local Consultation

The desire to further improve the local economy is demonstrated by consultation within the NP area which has overwhelmingly supported encouraging local employment. In survey responses (2016 Residents' Questionnaire), residents placed particular emphasis on small businesses to create a sense of identity for the rapidly growing community whilst, at the same time, preserving the rural character of the

⁷ Derived from <http://www.taunton.uk.com/relocate/growth-sectors.htm> in late October 2016

⁸ More details (as at March 2017) can be found at: <http://www.taunton.uk.com/regeneration/j25-employment-site.htm>

area. Examples cited specifically were Monkton Elm Garden Centre and the units at Prockter's Farm.

The main employment challenges highlighted during consultation by both residents and businesses were:

- transport, particularly traffic levels and congestion;
- digital connectivity, primarily the restricted roll-out of high speed broadband;
- concerns about the number and range of local employment opportunities needed to support the growth in population within the NP area;
- barriers to entry for new businesses such as availability of affordable premises.

National and Local Economic Planning Policy

1. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 Section 6

The NPPF outlines a number of roles the planning system must fulfill to ensure sustainable development, including a strong competitive economy:

'Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development...' NPPF 2019 para 80.

The NPPF includes a number of paragraphs relating to the building of a strong, competitive economy and seeks to support a prosperous rural economy. To promote a strong rural economy, the NPPF 2019 sets out a number of measures which neighbourhood plans can support. These are referred to as appropriate later in this section.

2. The Heart of Partnership (HotSW LEP) H5 the South West Local Enterprise

The HotSW LEP covers both Somerset and Devon and has published a Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) for the period 2014 to 2030. The SEP has three Core Aims for Growth which are:

- i) Creating the conditions for growth;
 - *infrastructure and services underpin growth (transport infrastructure, broadband, mobile connectivity, skills and infrastructure)*
- ii) Maximising productivity and employment;

- *stimulating jobs and growth across the whole economy to benefit ALL sectors (including tourism, agriculture, and food/drink)*

iii) Capitalising on our distinctive assets;

- *to create higher value growth and better jobs.*

These core aims are underpinned by cross cutting aims of environmental sustainability and social inclusion.

3. Core Strategy (CS) and Site Allocations and Management Plan (SADMP) H5

The CS includes Policy CP2 (Economy) which makes provision for additional land and commercial floorspace to create jobs and seeks to protect existing or identified business, industrial or warehousing from change of use to other uses.

The SADMP includes Policy EC1 (Other Uses in Employment Areas) which allows, under certain circumstances, employment uses other than traditional industrial and warehousing type uses within permitted employment areas.

These policies are supported by detailed justifications and a comprehensive evidence base which is used, where appropriate, to support the following NP employment policies.

Consultation

A Residents' Questionnaire (circulated to NP area households in March 2016) included an 'Employment' section (questions 27 to 33). Subsequently, in December 2016 a Business Survey was sent to 150 local businesses located within the NP area, with the circulation determined by an amalgamation of three sources:

- Royal Mail (PAF)
- Google
- The Office for National Statistics (ONS).

These surveys are referenced within this section of the NP and the detailed results can be found within the Consultation Statement.

The survey questionnaire sent to all houses and businesses in the NP area did not explore issues relating to employment or infrastructure.

All these considerations informed the Employment Objective, and flowing from the objective, the formulation of specific employment Policies. In addition to the Policies, which are restricted to land-use considerations, consultation yielded other useful contributions in the employment area. These included stressing the value of

apprenticeships as a sustainable programme of ongoing training offering up-skilling opportunities to local employees.

Employment Policy E1: Starter Workshop Units

Justification

There is local support for 'starter units' as demonstrated by the responses to the NP Residents' Questionnaire (Q32) and NP business survey (Q7).

There is also wider support for the NP to encourage local employment as demonstrated by responses to questions 27 and 30 in the Residents' Questionnaire. Question 27 asked whether the NP should encourage further business and commercial development in the area and there was a clear majority in favour of this suggestion. Question 30 asked whether the NP should encourage local employment and overwhelmingly the respondents said 'yes'. Furthermore, responses to question 32 indicated that there was a strong preference to see future employment provision provided within 'existing employment zones.'

The NPPF 2019 Section 6 para 80 states that the Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity and that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Changes were made to the Use Classes in September 2020⁹

A new Class E came into force in 2020 which replaces former classes A1/2/3 and B1 and includes uses applicable in the NP area.

- **E(g)** Uses which can be carried out in a residential area without detriment to its amenity:
 - **E(g)(i)** Offices to carry out any operational or administrative functions,
 - **E(g)(ii)** Research and development of products or processes
 - **E(g)(iii)** Industrial processes

NP Policy E1 seeks to ensure that there will be units of the right size, including the former B1a, now referenced as E(g) (i) (office) in these smaller units, at the right cost for new start-up businesses and for those who wish to move from live/work units or homeworking into larger premises, while continuing to live and work within the NP area.

In 2017, this policy received particular support from the TDBC Business Development Manager, citing a recently commissioned demand-mapping study which concluded that there would probably be a strong demand for new, start-up office space in Taunton and the surrounding area. The limited supply of industrial

⁹ https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common_projects/9/change_of_use

start-up premises in the West Monkton vicinity, coupled with developer interest and the high level of demand for similar units marketed in an area to the southwest of Taunton, all highlight the need for property of this type. (See 'Other Evidence'.)

The Taunton Deane Employment Land Supply Report 2012 (final, March 2013) was produced as evidence to support the SADMP. The overall conclusions at paragraph 8.20 raise a number of issues including:

'A wider choice of sites. The Urban Extension at Monkton Heathfield accounts for the bulk of committed land supply. The Site Allocation Plan will widen opportunities although the Council should continue to work with the development industry to identify appropriate short-term opportunities.'

The Small-Scale Employment Space (Affordable Employment) LDO was adopted by SWTC Full Council on 29th September 2020.

'The LDO and accompanying Design Code will provide clarity on how to deliver high quality small-scale employment space appropriate to the site. It will ensure that a high and consistent standard of design is delivered, providing sustainable and stimulating working environments whilst at the same time enabling the diverse requirements of individual occupiers to be met.'

Data from Somerset West and Taunton Council Economic Development Strategy 2020-2024:

'The former Taunton Deane area is projected to experience the second highest population growth in Somerset of 14% by 2041. The former West Somerset area is due to experience a change of just 5% by 2041.

*The number of people over the age of 65 is set to increase significantly over the next 20 years, and the number of people aged 85 or over is forecast to double. ***

**(Somerset Economic Assessment Report 2016)*

*** (2017 ONS Mid-year estimates and 2016 ONS population projections)*

Employment: 41,000 full time employee jobs and 27,000 part time employee jobs

Population: 153,866 17% are aged 0-15 8.5% are aged 16-24 28% are aged 25-49 21% are aged 50-64 25.5% are aged 65+.

Human health and social work activities 23.5%

Wholesale and trade 16.2%

Accommodation and food services 10.3%

Education 8.8%

Professional, scientific, and technical activities 6.6%

Manufacturing 5.9%

Public administration and defence 5.1%

Construction 5.1%

NP Employment policies seek to encourage local development of business enterprises, using the facilities available in the area, for example redundant farm buildings, and maximising on provision for those residents of the NP area who may need it, particularly those over the age of 65 in years to come’.

NP Policy E1 will help to contribute to a wider choice of sites and accommodation particularly for smaller and start-up businesses.

Employment Policy E1: Starter Workshop Units

The construction of starter workshop units* for Class E (g) (i) offices, (g) (ii) research and development and (g) (iii) light industrial; (formerly B1a (offices), Class-B1b (research and development), Class B1c (light industrial); and other uses normally associated with an employment area, will be supported on land with an established or allocated employment use and/or brownfield land subject to the following:

- satisfactory parking and access arrangements** including for cyclists and pedestrians;
- a sustainable travel plan*** to encourage workers to walk, cycle and travel by public transport to and from work whenever possible.

* defined as units with a floor area less than 200m² and outside the defined settlement limits as up to 500m² where CS Policy DM 2 will apply.

** as defined by SADMP Appendix E ‘Non-residential parking standards’ - Table 3

*** as defined by SADMP Policy A2 (Travel Planning)

Conformity with Core Strategy & NPPF

NP Policy E1 is considered to be in general conformity with Core Strategy Policy CP2 (Economy) which seeks to make provision for employment land and floorspace, and SADMP Policy A2 (Travel Planning).

NP Policy E1 is also considered to be in general conformity with NPPF 2019 Section 6 which sets out how neighbourhood plans should support a prosperous rural community.

What difference will it make?

This NP Policy will help to deliver the WM&CF NP Employment Objective by bringing an economic advantage to the area, providing a range of employment opportunities and by reducing the need to commute to work.

Employment Policy E2: Sustainable Diversification of Rural Buildings for Other Employment Uses

Justification

There is local support for the conversion of existing/disused rural buildings to commercial use as demonstrated by the residents' questionnaire responses (Q27, Q30, Q31 & Q32) and the business survey responses (Q8).

Good local examples of farm diversification include the converted barn units at Prockters Farm which provide a practical template for the sustainable diversification of farm buildings.

Core Strategy Policy DM2 (Development in the Countryside, paragraph 7)) allows for the conversion of 'existing buildings' in the open countryside and outside defined settlement limits to a number of specified uses in certain circumstances (and only to residential in exceptional circumstances). NP Policy E2 will bring added value to CS Policy DM2 (7) by specifically supporting the conversion of traditional, redundant farm buildings to other employment uses subject to a number of criteria unique to the NP.

The justification for CS Policy DM2 recognises that, *'the countryside is ... characterised by low paying jobs and lack of access to work'*. (See paragraph 6.11.) This NP Policy will help to address this issue by supporting the provision of additional employment opportunities within the rural parts of the NP area.

The Small-Scale Employment Space (Affordable Employment) LDO was adopted by SWT Full Council on 29th September 2020.

This LDO is a proactive planning tool to enable increased delivery of small-scale employment space in rural parts of Somerset West and Taunton and was developed in response to demand from small businesses to set up or expand their existing operations.

Paragraph 8.11 of the Taunton Deane Employment Land Supply 2012 report states that:

'On the grounds of 'sustainability', further small-scale provision in the rural areas should still be encouraged and is allowed for in current policy...' (i.e., CS Policy DM2).

NP Policy E2 will help to encourage further small-scale employment provision as recommended by the above-mentioned report.

The owner of Prockters Farm Business Units, which include converted farm buildings, has provided the following quote which demonstrates ongoing demand for a variety of employment space within the local area, including the sort of space that could be provided by the diversification of farm buildings:

'In the last year, 2016 (I wasn't actually advertising for the full year so this is really without full advertising) and from only one online website called 'InstantOffices.com' we received approximately 30 enquiries of which:

- *six were for large space i.e., over ten desks (one of these was for 20);*
- *nine were for small space i.e., three or less;*
- *three or four were for studio space i.e., photography, upholstery;*
- *three were for service sectors i.e., dog grooming, beauty, hairdressing;*
- *five were medium size i.e., for eight or nine desks.*

In the past, we have also had enquiries for a children's nursery, a vet, a pet undertaker, and a couple of magazines.'

Employment Policy E2: Sustainable Diversification of Rural Buildings for other Employment Uses

The diversification of traditional farm buildings to other employment uses will be supported where these provide additional employment opportunities.

Such diversification is supported subject to all the criteria listed below:

- The buildings must be traditional Somerset rural buildings constructed in local stone, brick, tile, slate and timber or be of historical or architectural merit;
- There should be minimal alteration of the building footprint and the existing structure, (re-building should be kept to a minimum); and lighting should be compliant with the Dark Skies Policy R1;
- Alterations are unobtrusive, proportionate, and sympathetic to both the original buildings and to the surrounding area;
- Satisfactory parking and access arrangements* including for cyclists and pedestrians;
- A sustainable travel plan** to encourage workers to walk, cycle and travel by public transport to and from work whenever possible;

* as defined by SADMP Appendix E 'Non-residential parking standards' – Table 3

** as defined by SADMP Policy A2 (Travel Planning)

Conformity with Core Strategy & NPPF

NP Policy E2 is considered to be in general conformity with Core Strategy Policies CP2 (*Economy*) which seeks to make provision for employment land and floorspace and DM2 (*Development in the Countryside*).

NP Policy E2 is also in general conformity with NPPF 2019 Section 6 which sets out how neighbourhood plans should support a prosperous rural community.

What difference will it make?

This NP Policy will help to deliver the WM&CF NP Employment Objective by bringing an economic advantage to the area, providing a range of employment opportunities, preserving the rural built and landscape character and by reducing the need to commute to work. It will allow furtherance of the tourism offering in the NP area, as a contribution to the local economy.

Employment Policy E3: Retain Existing Employment Land/Buildings for Employment Usage

Justification

The NP residents' questionnaire (2016) demonstrates strong local support for the retention of areas currently designated as employment land (Q29). Further responses demonstrate strong support to retain and support existing local businesses (Q3). There is further support for this in the business survey responses (Q10).

CS Policy CP2 includes the following statement:

'Proposals which lead to the loss of existing or identified business, industrial or warehousing land to other uses, including retail, will not be permitted unless the overall benefit of the proposal outweighs the disadvantages of the loss of employment or potential employment on the site.'

NP Policy E3 will bring added value to CS Policy CP2 by specifically seeking to protect existing employment land and buildings from change of use to non-employment uses within the NP area unless it is demonstrated that the existing use is no longer viable.

The supporting justification for this part of Policy CP2 makes it clear that an important part of the CS strategy:

'...is to retain existing employment provision and allocations in the urban area to provide local opportunities for employment and economic growth and to react to changing economic requirements.' (paragraph 3.34).

The following NP Policy seeks to support this CS objective for both the rural and significant existing and future urban parts of the NP area.

The Taunton Deane Employment Land Supply 2012 report states:

'In order to retain opportunities for smaller companies on lesser quality sites it is considered important to retain existing employment estates in Class B (non-office) use in order to retain choice and opportunity, especially in the Taunton area. The Site Allocations Plan provides further opportunity to identify smaller site opportunities.'* (paragraph 8.8)

'Although recent employment land losses in the Taunton area have been minimal, it is important to retain existing employment land from alternative uses to ensure a continuing range and choice of opportunities.' (paragraph 8.20)

**Category B has since been reclassified (2020)*

Over recent years, areas such as the Hatcheries in the vicinity of Canal View at Bathpool have seen employment land lost to residential development. The NP seeks to ensure that sufficient employment land and buildings will be retained in the face of ongoing pressures to build houses, and thereby ensure the right balance between homes and jobs.

Employment Policy E3: Retain Existing Employment Land/Buildings for Employment Usage

Change of use of land or buildings currently allocated or used for employment/commercial uses to non-employment uses (which include for the purposes of this policy main Taunton town centre uses such as retail and leisure) will not normally be supported (Permitted Development Rights notwithstanding*) unless considerable efforts have been made to market the land/buildings for employment purposes for at least two years or in line with a pre agreed marketing strategy that would avoid stagnation of key sites and buildings. Where such change of use is permitted, it must be justified by a viability assessment, a demonstration of the marketing strategy used and results obtained, and an explanation of why the existing/previous employment use is no longer viable. If purely due to location, where practicable an equivalent area of similar use employment land could be relocated within the NP area. Evidence of need should be provided.

In addition, any development permitted must be appropriate for its location and ensure that it is compatible with existing and nearby land uses.

**Permitted Development Rights are a national grant of planning permission which allow certain building works and changes of use to be carried out without having to make a planning application. Permitted Development Rights are subject to conditions and limitations to control impact and to protect local amenity (Gov.UK).*

In respect of this policy, a planning application would therefore not be required for certain changes of use, such as B8 (Storage/distribution) to C3 (Dwelling-houses). Another example to which this policy would not apply are the Permitted Development Rights for change of use from E (a) Shops or E (b) (Financial/Professional Services) to E(d) and F2 (c-d) (Assembly and Leisure) e.g., Cinemas, Gymnasiums.

Conformity with Core Strategy & NPPF

NP Policy E3 is considered to be in general conformity with Core Strategy Policy CP2 (Economy) which seeks to make provision for employment land and floor-space.

NP Policy E3 is also considered to be in general conformity with SADMP Policy EC1 (Other Uses in Employment Areas). This policy allows for employment uses (except for main town centre uses such as retail, leisure and office) other than the traditional industry and warehousing employment type uses, acknowledging the changing nature of employment provision in the 21st century.

Finally, NP Policy E3 is also considered to be in general conformity with NPPF 2019 Para 81:

*'Planning policies should...
be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan...'*

The NPPF also sets out how neighbourhood plans should support a prosperous rural community.

What difference will it make?

This NP Policy will help to deliver the WM&CF NP Employment Objective by bringing an economic advantage to the area, providing a range of employment opportunities and by reducing the need to commute to work.

Employment Policy E4: Social Care Employment Opportunities

Justification

Demographic projections identified by the Joint Strategic Needs Analysis by Public Health at SCC¹⁰ show that the average age of the population within Somerset, including the NP area, is increasing. This is likely to result in greater demand, over time, for residential and nursing home accommodation, with associated employment opportunities.

A growing elderly population is also confirmed by the TDBC Locally Based Housing Projections 2008 – 2026, referenced within the Housing Section to support Housing Policy H1. Furthermore ‘Residential Institutions’ are recognised as an employment sector within Table 3.1 to CS Policy CP2, which estimates the creation of 2,192 jobs in this sector across Taunton Deane, through development including “Urban Extensions”.

This issue also attracted national attention with increased funding for social care announced in the March 2017 Budget. The following NP policy is therefore helping to address a well-established case for improved residential care facilities for older people, which will also create employment opportunities for local people.

Employment Policy E4: Social Care Employment Opportunities

Proposals which meet demand for residential, nursing home or sheltered housing accommodation for older people and thereby provide local employment opportunities within the NP area will be supported, provided the highway authority is satisfied with the access and parking arrangements, particularly for the emergency services.

Conformity with Core Strategy & NPPF

NP Policy E4 is considered to be in general conformity with Core Strategy Policy CP2 (Economy) and NPPF 2019 Section 6 (Building a Strong, Competitive Economy).

What difference will it make?

This policy will help to deliver the WM&CF NP Employment Objective by bringing jobs to the NP area and associated economic advantage.

¹⁰ Derived from <http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/jsna-key-issues.html>

Employment Policy E5: Wider Roll out of Broadband Connectivity

Justification

Core Strategy (CS) Policy DM1 (General Requirements, paragraph G) requires that:

'The site will be served by utility services necessary for the development proposed, including high speed broadband connectivity'.

The supporting justification for this CS Policy states that:

'High speed broadband connectivity is required to facilitate the growth of home working and assist sustainable travel demand'.

The Parishes support the CS Policy DM1 (section G) requirement as poor broadband connectivity was highlighted as a barrier to existing businesses expanding, or people getting jobs locally. (See responses to Q28 in the Residents' Questionnaire, 2016).

There was also a comment from a respondent to the business survey (Q11), supporting the need for 'exceptional' broadband infrastructure in order to attract businesses to the area. The February 2016 agreement between Openreach and the House Builders Federation to support wider broadband roll-out demonstrates further progress on this topic. Developers should be encouraged to sign up to this.

The importance of improving broadband connectivity is recognised in 'Creating the Conditions For Growth' (Strategic Economic Plan, 2014). Evidence of the specific benefits to businesses can be found on the Connecting Devon and Somerset website, which highlights a number of case studies which clearly detail the advantages. Innovation Technical Solutions, based in the adjoining Parish of Creech St Michael, is one such business which makes the case for faster broadband connectivity as being essential to keep ahead of the competition. The current provider (2021) supported by government is Airband under the project 'Connecting Devon and Somerset'.

Finally, the NPPF 2019 [Section 10 para 112](#) states that:

'Advanced high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being...'

Employment Policy E5: Wider Roll-out of Broadband Connectivity

Open access broadband infrastructure will be supported throughout the NP area. All new development, be it residential or employment/commercial, must demonstrate how it supports this objective. It is expected that all new buildings will be supplied with fibre to the premises.

Conformity with Core Strategy & NPPF

NP Policy E5 is considered to be in general conformity with Core Strategy Policies CP7 (Infrastructure) and DM1 (General Requirements, paragraph G) which requires that:

'The site will be served by utility services necessary for the development proposed, including high speed broadband connectivity'.

NP Policy E5 is also considered to be in general conformity with NPPF 2019 Section 10 which sets out how neighbourhood plans should support a prosperous rural community and supports the provision of high quality communications infrastructure.

What difference will it make?

This NP Policy will help to deliver the WM&CF NP Employment Objective by bringing an economic advantage to the area, providing, and retaining a range of employment opportunities and by reducing the need to commute to work.

Recreation and Environment

The Neighbourhood Plan made in 2017 linked Recreation and Environment in one section. Since that time, current and emerging policy and legislation suggest that the 'environment' may warrant an independent chapter in the next iteration of this Neighbourhood Plan. There can often be a direct linkage between recreation and environment, which in some cases can be of positive benefit to both but can also mean that ill-considered changes to one can harm the other (or even both in some cases). An example would be the introduction of recreational amenity that disturbs the priority habitats of protected species.

Objectives

To successfully accommodate the significant growth planned for the NP area by ensuring that sustainable places are created to support the provision of excellent community facilities for local people to enjoy, benefitting their health and well-being. Following the survey in 2019, all residents received a pictorial map of Play Areas and Open Spaces to ensure that all residents were aware of all the community amenities available to them.

Future developments must provide a high-quality mix of private and open space uses which meet local needs, including children's play areas, sports pitches, allotments, plus natural as well as amenity green spaces which safeguard and enhance the natural environment by promoting connectivity for people and wildlife. Of particular note for any schemes developed within the NP area must be the Hestercombe Special area of Conservation, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and Local Recovery Networks and Local Wildlife Sites, which contribute key features to the local ecological network and nature recovery networks, and form part of individual sites' management plans and conservation objectives. For example: Any future development within, or in close proximity to the Quantock Hills AONB should ensure it aligns with the goals of the AONB Management Plan and the Quantock Hills Landscape Partnership Scheme to protect and enhance the special qualities of the wider area surrounding the nationally designated landscapes.

Creating sustainable places must also include measures to attenuate extreme rainfall events which often adversely impact the NP area due to its position at the foot of the Quantock Hills by working closely with partner organisations such as Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) and Somerset Wildlife Trust (SWTC) to reduce the overall flow of upstream floodwater down into the NP area and further downstream.

This objective will seek to:

- encourage all relevant stakeholders to contribute to the development of the Green Wedge and Country Park to the north of the A3259 to ensure excellent access arrangements to a quality green space environment for people and wildlife;
- protect and enhance the NP area heritage, landscape, and wildlife assets; and support initiatives to combat the effects of climate change and support nature recovery;
- enhance the historic environment and preserve the significance of historic assets including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, non-designated historic assets and important archaeological sites;
- increase the provision of outdoor and indoor recreation and community facilities to meet the needs of the local community whilst protecting against loss or degradation of habitat, for example, provision of a community cafe and toilets along the canal in the vicinity of the Swingbridge area to create a community meeting point, whilst being aware of the potential to impact on towpath habitats;
- protect and enhance the dark skies quality of the area for the health and well-being of both people and wildlife;
- improve local green space infrastructure within existing and proposed green spaces with, for example, the provision of seating and wheelchair access along public footpaths and canal side walkways;
- seek to make the canal towpath between Bathpool Swingbridge and Taunton a multi-functional asset for the benefit of all users: all users are expected to be considerate to other users;
- encourage all relevant stakeholders to make improvements of the surface water run-off systems to restrict flooding in the three main feeder brooks into the River Tone, using recognised field work initiatives to restrict flows during periods of heavy rain;
- work with local upstream farming communities to help the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) implement field work initiatives to reduce peak water flows across farmland;
- establish nutrient neutrality for all new development which is likely to add additional phosphates to the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar site;

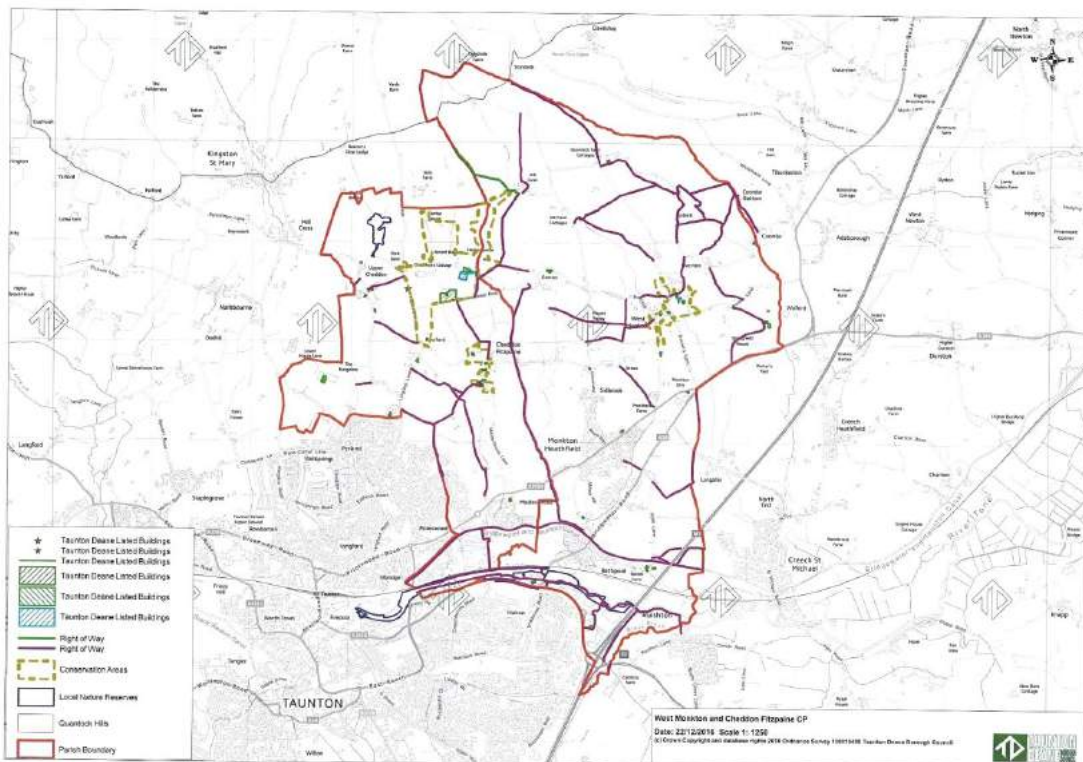
- ensure all new and existing green spaces accommodate habitat for pollinators and work towards the key objectives within the Somerset Pollinator Action Plan.

The Bridgwater & Taunton Canal traverses both parishes within the NP area. The waterway benefits described in the document, *“What your local waterway can do for your community”* are largely in agreement with the Objectives described above. The Canal and River Trust considers that the canal is a non-designated heritage asset. The NPPF and Local Plan consider non-designated assets as well as those with formal designation.

Context

The WM and CF NP area is largely rural to the north, whilst the majority of dwellings and employment areas are in the southern part. The southern limit of the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) fringes the northern part of the NP area, and the historic Bridgwater & Taunton Canal runs through the southern part.

Map 11: WM&CF NP Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Quantock Hills AONB and Rights of Way



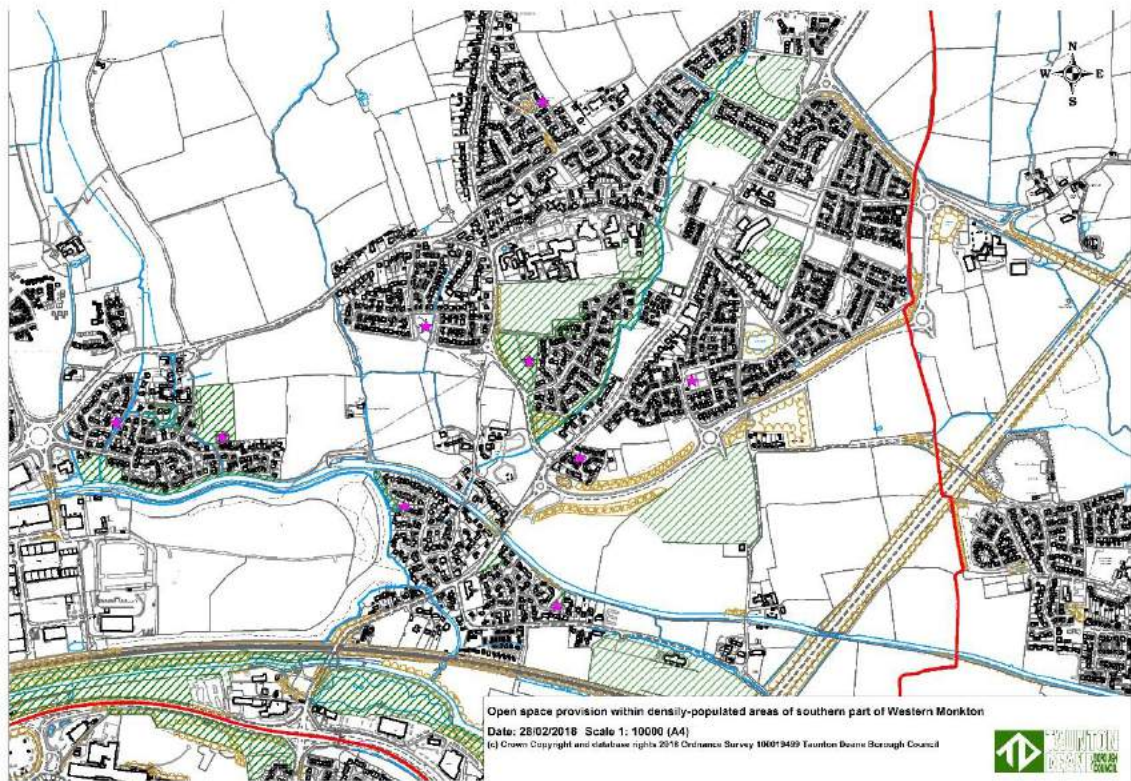
There are a number of recreational and wildlife features within the area including:

- sports pitches and a club house plus extra land as part of phase one of the Monkton Heathfield Urban Extension;

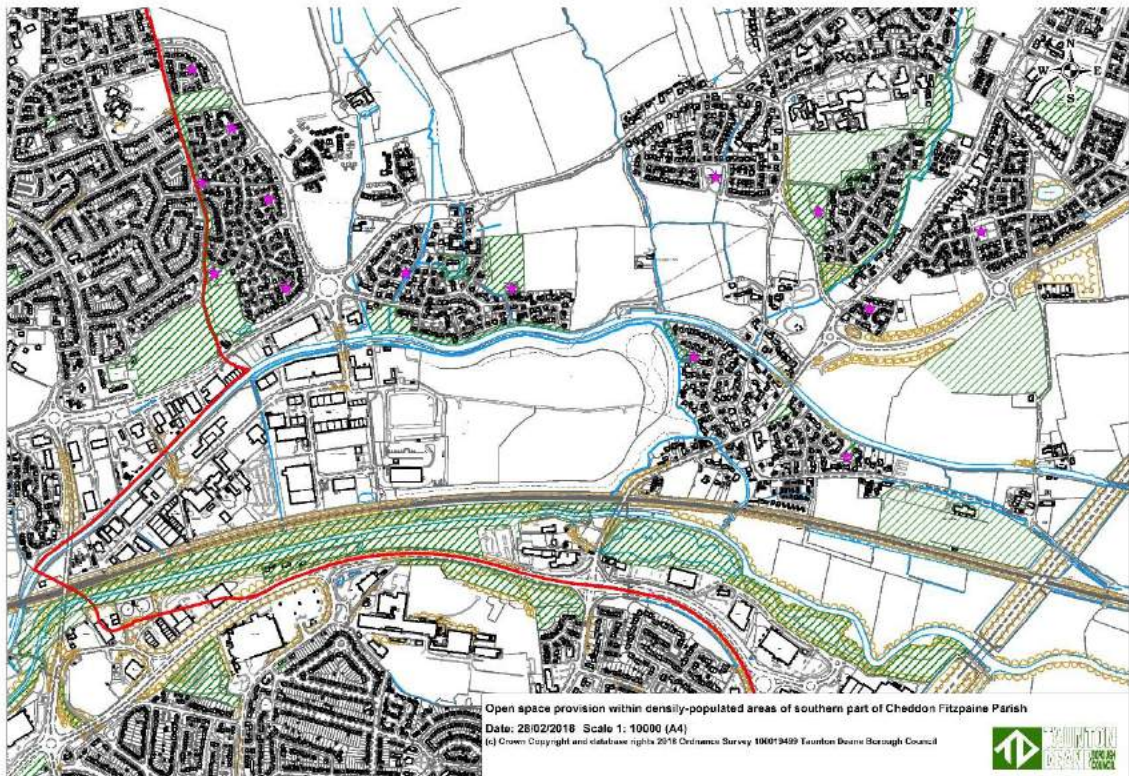
- Dyers Brook nature area as part of the MH Urban Extension to link the new and existing communities;
- Heathfield Community School playing fields;
- Kings Hall School playing fields;
- Cashford Gate playing field;
- Stoney Furlong public open spaces;
- New West Monkton Primary School;
- Cricket ground at Monkton Heathfield;
- Childrens play areas at various locations;
- Hankridge Riverside and Children's Wood local nature reserves;
- Taunton Rugby Club;
- Bridgwater & Taunton Canal.

Open green spaces have been included in the Monkton Heathfield Urban Extension and Northwalls development in Cheddon Fitzpaine as a planning requirement. See maps 12a and 12b.

Map 12a: Open space provision within the densely populated areas of the southern part of West Monkton Parish



Map 12b: Open space provision within the densely populated areas of the southern part of Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish



Recreational and Environmental Strengths and Weaknesses of the area have been identified by the NP Steering Group, based on local knowledge, public consultation, wildlife consultants, and can be summarised as follows:

<p>Strengths</p> <p>Quantock Hills AONB and its fringes has high quality landscape.</p> <p>Historic Bridgwater & Taunton Canal and water courses which include parts of the River Tone linking the area to Taunton and the countryside beyond.</p> <p>Hestercombe House and Gardens which are Grade I listed including roost of Lesser Horseshoe Bats</p> <p>Three conservation areas of Cheddon Fitzpaine, Hestercombe and West Monkton.</p> <p>Seventy-four listed buildings.</p> <p>A number of sports pitches.</p> <p>Extensive hedgerow network.</p>	<p>Weaknesses</p> <p>A38 is a busy road which presently divides the built-up areas of Monkton Heathfield.</p> <p>Noise from the M5 motorway</p> <p>Commuter traffic passing through the area.</p> <p>Phosphates within the RAMSAR catchment area on the Somerset Moors and Levels (re letter from Natural England August 2020)</p>
<p>Opportunities</p> <p>Given the level of new development proposed within the area there is considerable scope for providing new facilities.</p> <p>The new housing areas will attract new people to the area with skills and expertise.</p> <p>To attract new sporting activities such as the local baseball team.</p> <p>To expand the community with a new influx of people.</p> <p>Tree planting for bat mitigation.</p> <p>Improve links between Green Wedges and Quantock Hills.</p> <p>To develop long term phosphate mitigation strategies which will provide phosphate reduction, allow carbon offsetting and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).</p>	<p>Threats</p> <p>With the high level of new development there is potential for pressure on the existing facilities unless the developers bring forward open space features.</p> <p>The extensive new development has the potential to significantly reduce the dark skies quality of the area.</p> <p>It would be easy for new people moving to the area to look to Taunton rather than the NP area for facilities and community and therefore create a 'commuter' community.</p>

National and Local Recreation and Environment Policies

The NPPF 2019 para 92 b) states that planning policies and decisions should take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health and well-being, both social and cultural for all sections of the community. Furthermore, the NPPF 2019 has extensive sections relating to conserving and enhancing the natural (Section 15) and historic (Section 16) environments as well as a section covering climate change and flooding (Section 14). The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by measures including protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, recognizing the wider benefits of ecosystem services, minimizing impacts on biodiversity and by establishing coherent ecological networks. (See *Landscape Institutes Technical Information Note on 'Connectivity and Ecological Networks'*, January 2016.)

Further planning guidance provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on the Natural Environment (January 2016) clearly defines 'Landscape', 'Biodiversity and Ecosystems' and 'Green Infrastructure' and their importance in designing new places.

Similarly, the planning system should plan positively for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment including heritage assets such as listed buildings and registered parks and gardens.

Core Strategy Policy CP8 (Environment) seeks to conserve the natural and historic environment. This policy states that a network of green infrastructure assets has been identified which should be retained and enhanced through the Taunton Deane Green Infrastructure Strategy. This includes the Green Wedge and Country Park between Monkton Heathfield and Nerrols and green links through to the Quantock Hills AONB. This policy also seeks to reduce flood risk through the adoption of multi-functional Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs).

Core Strategy Policy CP5 (Inclusive Communities) seeks to ensure that development proposals will make provision for all to access recreational space to improve health and interaction through provision of formal and informal green space, such as play spaces, allotments, playing pitches and sports facilities.

The Landscape Institute position statement on 'Public Health and Landscape' (2013) seeks to define five principles for creating healthy places. For example:

- healthy places improve air, water and soil quality, incorporating measures that help us adapt, and where possible mitigate, climate change;
- healthy places help overcome health inequalities and can promote healthy lifestyles;

- healthy places make people feel comfortable and at ease, increasing social interaction and reducing antisocial behaviour, isolation and stress;
- healthy places optimise opportunities for working, learning and development;
- healthy places are restorative, uplifting and healing for both physical and mental health conditions.

Urban Initiatives produced a draft masterplan for the Taunton Urban Extension in 2011. As part of the development, a 'green necklace' of open space and linked walkways and cycleways would encircle the new houses and link through the 'Country Park'. (See Policy R2 Map 16 for concept plan.) TDBC confirmed that a new Masterplan would be produced with a fully inclusive approach between TDBC (and all consultees) the developers, local parish councils and local people and this has been taken forward by the new council Somerset West and Taunton.

The Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP) has a number of policies relating to the natural and historic environment. These include Policy ENV1, which seeks to protect trees, woodlands, orchards, hedgerows and historic parks and Policy ENV5, which seeks to control development in the vicinity of rivers and canals. Policy ENV2 seeks to promote tree planting within residential developments. With respect to recreation provision the SADMP includes detailed policies to provide recreational open space (Policy C2) and to protect recreational open space (Policy C3).

The SADMP makes one new land allocation relevant to this section which is Policy TAU11. This allocates 16 hectares of land at the former Priorswood landfill site for community woodland and other recreational uses. The allocation will positively add to the green open space network within the NP area with a linking bridge from the canal towpath and a ramped access to the A38. As such this plan is supported by the parishes. (*See policy extract and plan below.*)

The Parishes wish to see the construction of a foot and cycle bridge to cross the canal to the south of this allocation and thereby link the proposed public open space with the A38. The Parishes will therefore work with TDBC and relevant landowners/developers, in consultation with the Canal and River Trust to achieve this objective through appropriate legal agreements and planning permissions. The provision of such a bridge will better connect the green open space network with surrounding communities.

The Neighbourhood Plan was considered to have the potential to affect a European and/or Ramsar site and therefore, under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2010, a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) has been carried out and sent to Natural England. The NP was deemed to have the potential to affect the lesser horseshoe bat feature of the Hestercombe House Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Following a slight amendment to Policy R2, it is considered by

WM and CF Parish Councils that its Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have a significant effect on the conservation objectives of the European site assessed.

Map 13: Priorswood SADMP Plan – Area Proposed for Community Woodland

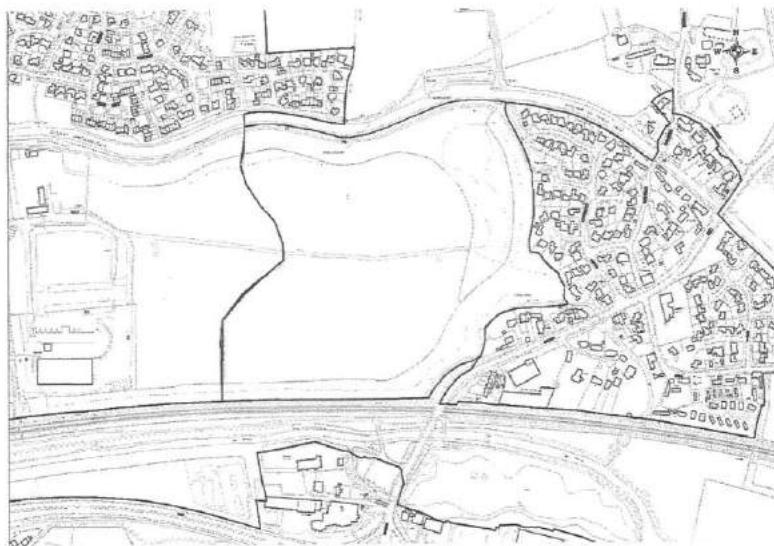
Spatial Policies 2

Policy TAU11: Former Priorswood Landfill

A site of 16 hectares at the former Priorswood landfill site, as indicated on the Policies Map, is allocated for community woodland or other appropriate recreational uses.

Justification:

- 2.2.65 The site extends to 16 hectares and forms the easternmost part of the former landfill site. The site is capped by only a foot of clay and soil, the putrescible tipped material beneath making development a very costly, if not wholly unrealistic proposition. However, the site is suitable for community woodland or other appropriate recreational uses, being flat and adequately settled. The site lies within the established Monkton Heathfield / Cheddon Fitzpaine green wedge and links to the Bridgwater and Taunton canal and by the public footpath network to the proposed country park to the north, required under the Core Strategy urban extension policies SS1 and SS2.
- 2.2.66 The proposal would enhance the green wedge and reinforce its functions, which include provision of a buffer separating Taunton from Monkton Heathfield and Bathpool; provision for informal recreation opportunities close to the town residents; provision of a wildlife corridor and protection and enhancement of areas of landscape importance.



Recreation and Environment Policy R1: Dark Skies

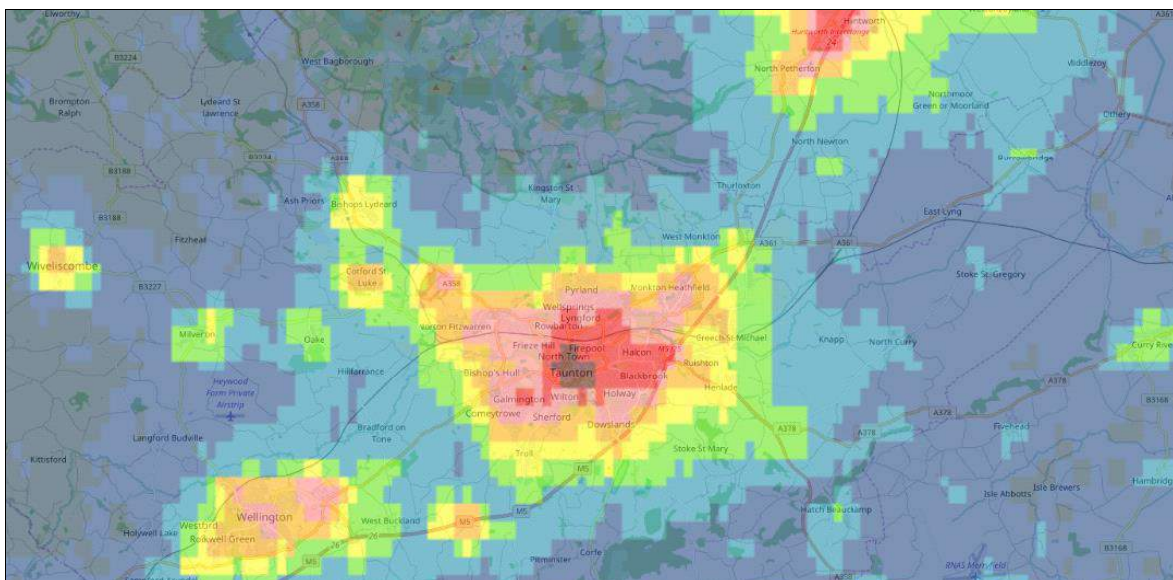
Justification

Darkness at night is one of the key characteristics of rural areas and it represents a major difference between what is rural and what is urban. Security lights, floodlights and streetlights all break into the darkness and create a veil of light across the night sky.

Some of this light is necessary: for example, the roads around the Hankridge Retail Park and Junction 25 of the M5 motorway. However, the NP seeks to ensure that lighting does not waste energy by shining upwards where it isn't needed but is suitably directed and controlled so there is light only where and when necessary. This policy seeks to ensure that the most efficient lighting techniques are employed to ensure that new developments are lit appropriately and that areas of existing dark skies are protected.

The various degrees of light pollution in the NP area are shown in the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) map below. The dark blue of the northern part represents the NanoWatts/cm²/sr <0.25 (darkest) becoming brighter towards Junction 25 of the M5 motorway where the area is rated 16-32 NanoWatts/cm²/sr (one level short of the brightest category).

Map 14: Extract from CPRE interactive map showing light pollution and dark skies in and around the Taunton, including the NP area



Light pollution should be restricted, and dark skies promoted, within the existing and expanding urban parts of the NP area, in addition to the rural parts, because light pollution has been shown to negatively affect human beings and wildlife. The policy

will help to ‘*enhance the locally distinctive characteristics of the area for future generations*’ (as described in the NP Vision) by maintaining the night-time character and tranquillity of the NP rural areas, particularly in the foothills of the Quantocks, whilst seeking to ameliorate the effects of the necessary lighting of the Hankridge Retail Park, the Urban Extension and the local road infrastructure.

Light pollution is a particularly sensitive issue with respect to the conservation of bats. Within the NP area the Hestercombe House Special Area for Conservation (SAC) was specifically established to help conserve lesser horseshoe bats. This issue has been subject to an Appropriate Assessment as part of the Urban Extension proposals put forward by CS Policy SS1.

There is local support for restricting light pollution and promoting dark skies across the NP area as demonstrated by responses to the supplementary questionnaire conducted in October 2016.

This local support for dark skies is backed up by the CPRE and their “*Night Blight*” interactive maps which illustrate England’s light pollution and dark skies. (See <http://www.cpre.org.uk/media-centre/latest-news-releases/item/4314-new-interactive-maps-reveal-england-s-darkest-and-most-light-polluted-skies> (June 2016).)

Dark Skies are important for the NP area as a whole and particularly important for the Quantock Hills AONB as explained by Chris Edwards, the AONB Manager:

‘This new definitive map that shows 95.5% of the Quantock Hills as dark skies will help to protect the essential element of the Quantocks...The darkness of the skies in our wilder and more natural areas is so important to the character we are trying to protect. Not only astronomers and stargazer groups appreciate this, but it is crucial to much of our wildlife...’ (AONB website post June 2016).

Darker skies are also more widely important to the NP area as a whole with respect to human health and well-being as confirmed by the following studies:

- The CPRE found that light pollution can cause a great deal of distress to humans, including disrupted sleep and, in some cases, can result in people moving house to get away from light pollution. (Light Nuisance Survey 2009/10).
- The British Astronomical Association publication ‘*Blinded by the Light*’ (Chapter 4) suggests that exposure to light at night can disrupt the body’s production of melatonin, a brain hormone best known for its daily role in resetting the body’s biological clock.

External lighting schemes should fully accord with *Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and artificial lighting in the UK* (ILP and BCT 2018). Lighting should be designed so that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent bats using their territory or having access to their resting places, in order to maintain the 'Favourable Conservation Status' of populations of European Protected Species and in accordance with Mendip District Local Plan Policies DP5 (Biodiversity and Ecological Networks) and DP6 (Bat Protection).

Recreation and Environment Policy R1: Dark Skies

Otherwise acceptable development proposals which include measures to maintain and enhance dark skies within the NP area will be supported. Applications for new development requiring a lighting scheme, and new external lighting on premises should show how dark skies will be protected and must seek to minimise additional light pollution. Schemes such as dimming technology, running part-time lighting schemes (in consultation with the local community*) or replacing street lighting with new fixtures and fittings to meet or exceed current best practice will be supported, subject to meeting health and safety and crime prevention standards.

**relevant parish council*

Conformity with Core Strategy & NPPF

This Policy is considered to be in general conformity with Core Strategy Policy DM1 (General Requirements) which includes criteria which seek to minimise light pollution and glare. This policy is also considered to be in general conformity with the NPPF 2019 para 180 c) which states that:

'Planning policies and decisions should ...limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation'.

What difference will it make?

This policy will help to achieve the WM&CF NP Vision by limiting light spill from planned new developments and maintaining darker skies within the rural parts of the area. Furthermore, it will help to maintain the health and well-being of local people as well as an improving the health of the European protected Lesser Horseshoe Bats at Hestercombe (see *HRA*).

The installation of external lighting on business premises and dwellings should only be of warm white LED or other equivalent. Lux levels from these lamps on habitats and resting places used by bats and other wildlife must not cause disturbance or prevent the use of those habitats and resting places by those species.

Where lighting is needed but the area is sensitive for bats, red lamps could also be used (e.g., The Netherlands, and Warwickshire in the UK). Bats are not affected by red light.

Recreation and Environment Policy R2: Green Space and Wildlife

Justification

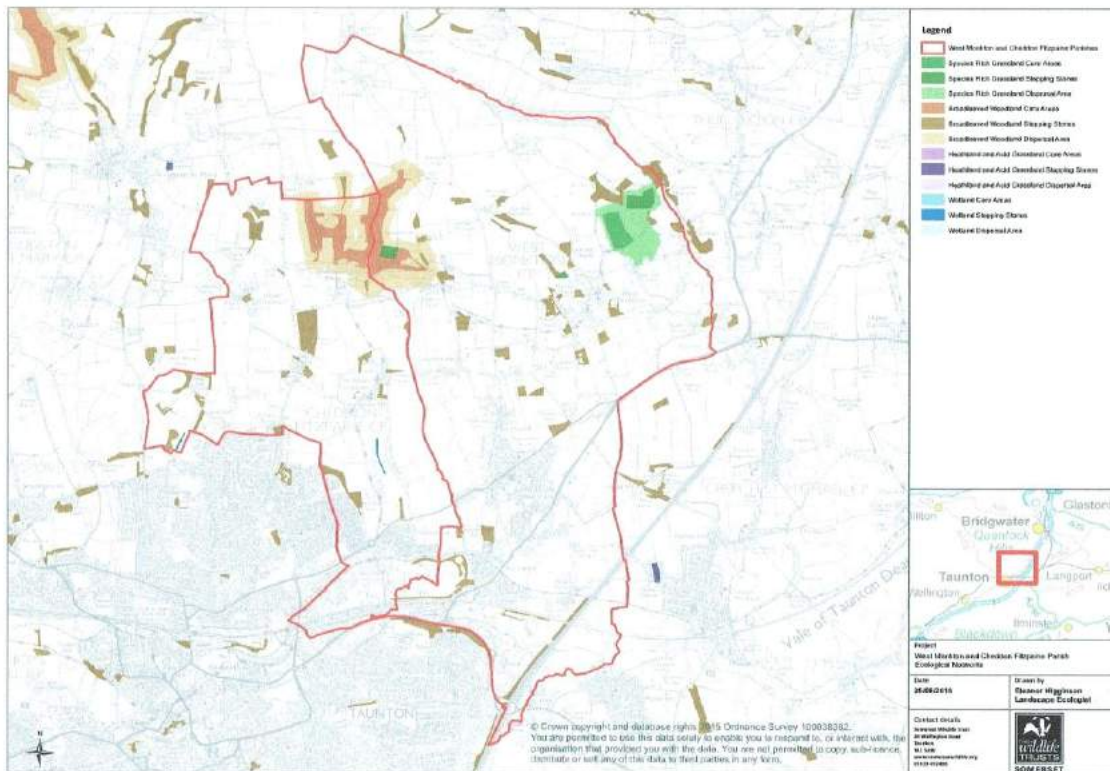
The Sustainability Audit (SA) (*see supporting document*) provides an overview of the NP area with respect to its natural and historic environment. This includes reference to local nature reserves within the NP area and the Hestercombe House Special Area for Conservation (SAC). Wild Somerset, The Somerset Biodiversity Action Plan 2008-2018, Somerset County Council Pollinator Action Plan 2018-2028, Taunton Deane Biodiversity Action Plan (2008) and Taunton Deane Green Infrastructure Strategy (2009), and Green Infrastructure Opportunities Update 2017 are also referenced. Furthermore, key environmental sustainability issues for local people as expressed through the residents' questionnaire and other consultation exercises are described.

Community access to quality green space (not just grass fields, but higher-level habitats including trees, natural blue/green features e.g., ponds, bogs, wet areas and species-rich spaces etc) has been scientifically proven to have a number of important benefits:

- Reducing stress levels and improving general wellbeing;
- moderating temperatures and thus providing 'cooling' spaces in towns and cities – increasingly important given the growing trend in extreme-temperature events;
- absorbing air pollution, especially particulate PM2.5s.

Improved habitats can provide sanctuaries and movement corridors for wildlife which are also under stress from climate change.

Map 15: Somerset Wildlife Trust (SWTC) Ecological Networks within the NP area



The NPPF 2019 states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment through various measures, including the establishment of coherent ecological networks (para170). This NP Policy seeks to protect and enhance existing ecological networks as illustrated by the ecological networks plan above. Furthermore, there will be opportunities to create new ecological networks as a result of the considerable development proposed within the NP area which will, to some extent, compensate for the loss of habitat resulting from such development.

The protection of existing ecological networks and the creation of opportunities to restore and enhance these networks through good development design, are in accordance with paragraphs 170(d), 174(a) and (b) of the NPPF 2019 and in accordance with SWC environmental policy.

The many benefits of local access to quality green space and wildlife areas are now widely accepted and described in documents, such as the TDBC Green Infrastructure Strategy (Update 2017) and Somerset Biodiversity Action Plan. And also, through local projects such as the '*Routes to the River Tone*' completed in the first half of 2017, which was a three-year partnership led by Somerset Wildlife Trust that aimed to better connect local people with the wildlife of Taunton's waterways. These benefits include improved health and well-being for local people, flood

attenuation and support for ecosystem services which provide healthy soils and clean air/water.

The Urban Extension now being developed within the NP area is described in some detail elsewhere within this plan. A key part of this proposal, as set out by Core Strategy (CS) Policies SS1 and SS2, is the provision of a comprehensive network of green open spaces. A country park is being developed within the green wedge between Monkton Heathfield and Priorswood.

Map 16: Plan showing ‘green space proposals’ associated with the Urban Extension

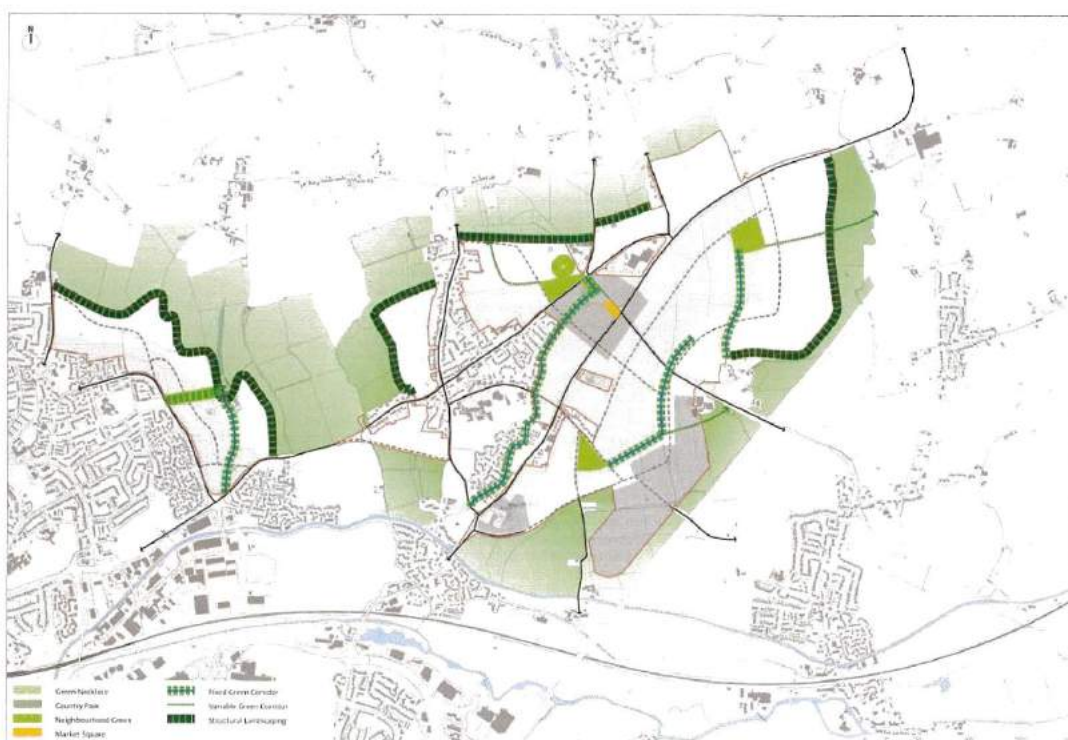


Figure 2.4 Fixed and Variable Landscape Elements

Regulating Plan and Area-wide Code

21

A multi-purpose “*green necklace*” of landscape and public open space is also proposed to provide allotments, outdoor recreation, and wildlife habitat. This will also include woodland planting associated with the Hestercombe Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a belt of landscaping between the motorway and the Urban Extension. Within the proposed residential development there should be well designed public open spaces and a well-defined green edge to the urban area that protects views to Hestercombe House and the Quantocks. Natural green space is as important as amenity green space for ecological emergency strategies.

These green space proposals were developed further by Urban Initiatives in 2011 when they produced a masterplan for the Urban Extension. This was revised and updated in consultation with WM and CF Parishes.

Responses to the residents' questionnaire (March 2016) demonstrate strong support for:

- measures within development proposals to encourage wildlife such as 'nature buffer zones' around developments to protect/enhance wildlife;
- maintaining verges in the interests of wildlife (although maintenance/management considerations cannot be NP policies);
- defining wildlife areas in the NP area, with a number of locations suggested;
- the preservation or creation of traditional Somerset orchards in new developments.

Most responses considered the NP environment to be well looked after. Those that did not agree were concerned about litter, dog waste and overall maintenance. Concerns were also expressed about loss of open spaces and habitats due to development. The need for bird and bat boxes was also highlighted.

Strong demand was expressed for litter and dog waste bins and for seats. The importance of seats or benches for local communities is highlighted by the Young Foundation's Report 'Benches for Everyone' (November 2015).

There was also strong support for protecting locally 'important trees', ancient trees and hedgerows as well as for the use of native species in new tree planting. It is recommended that BS3998 (2010), (promotion of good arboricultural practice), is applied in reference to good maintenance and management practices.

A number of meetings have been held locally to discuss ways to improve features and facilities throughout the NP. (See *Consultation Statement*.)

Recreation and Environment Policy R2: Green Space and Wildlife

New major* residential developments of 10 or more net additional dwellings (or if the site area is more than 0.5 hectares if dwelling numbers are yet to be agreed) must provide new green space** and wildlife areas to meet local needs and/or minimise impacts on local biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity wherever practicable.

Access to quality and interconnected green space must be provided in all new major developments.

In particular, every opportunity will be taken to:

- Protect, maintain, link, and enhance our existing green spaces, water, and woodland, for people and wildlife (e.g., supporting Somerset Pollinator Action Plan), whilst providing new wildlife and wildflower habitats and networks which enhance and protect local watercourses for wildlife and flood attenuation purposes.

- Protect and create hedgerows, woodlands, individual specimen trees and orchards.
- Ensure that all new and existing green spaces achieve their full potential to accommodate habitat for pollinators and work towards the key objectives within the Somerset Pollinator Action Plan.***

* Major development for the purposes of this Policy is as defined by The Town and Country (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 Part 1, paragraph 2(c)

**Green space is defined as areas of usable and publicly accessible land over 0.4ha. These can be mixed use areas containing for example, wildlife areas, hedgerows, woodlands, specimen trees and orchards.

*** The aims and objectives of Somerset County Council's Somerset Pollinator Action Plan (see <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/waste-planning-and-land/biodiversity/#Somerset-Pollinator-Action-Plan>), to protect and increase the amount and quality of pollinator habitat and manage greenspace to provide greater benefits for pollinators.

Conformity with Core Strategy & NPPF

This Policy is considered to be in general conformity with Core Strategy Policies CP8 (*Environment*) which seeks to conserve the natural and historic environment; DM1 (*General Requirements*) paragraph c which protects wildlife species and their habitats (and also SADMP Policy ENV1 (*Protection of trees, woodlands, orchards, and hedgerows*)) and finally CS Policies SS1&2. This NP Policy is also considered to be in general conformity with the NPPF, 2019 particularly Section 15.

Protection and enhancement of biodiversity is referred to in Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP8 and taken with the NPPF guidance a case could be made for requiring net gain through this policy. National policy and metrics may supersede this policy and the metrics referred to.

The protection of priority habitats and species whilst creating opportunities to secure measurable net gains for biodiversity through good development design, is in accordance with paragraphs 170(d) and 174(a) and (b) of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019, the draft Environment Bill and Somerset West and Taunton environmental policy.

This NP Policy is also considered to be in general conformity with the NPPF 2019 particularly Section 15 which seeks to promote sustainable development in rural areas and states that 'housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.'

What difference will it make?

The NP area is rich in landscape quality, heritage features and wildlife. Protection of these features and, where practical, their enhancement with improved access will add to the quality of life of local people and benefit their health and well-being.

The proposed policy will help to:

‘successfully accommodate the significant growth planned for the area to ensure a high quality of design and that sustainable places are created with excellent community facilities for local people to enjoy’. (See NP Vision.)

The vision is to provide quality green space that will help to improve the health and well-being of local people.

Furthermore, the proposed policy will help to deliver the recreation and environment objective by helping to provide a suitable mix of private and open space uses which meet local needs, including children’s play areas, sports pitches, allotments and amenity green spaces and which safeguard and enhance the natural environment by promoting connectivity for people and wildlife.

Net gain from development is proposed to be mandatory through the Environment Bill, which has not yet received Royal Assent. This is an aim the Parish Councils would like to see implemented. This can be identified and evaluated through the use of Natural England’s Biodiversity Metric 2.0 and the Somerset Habitat Evaluation Procedure (where a site is found to be of local significance for the conservation of populations of important species). Natural England’s Biodiversity Metric 2.0 allows for local species metrics. Planning obligations contributing to phosphate stripping, carbon sequestration and biodiversity net gain should be required for all development wherever practicable. This Net Gain aspiration is detailed in the National Planning Policy Framework and is further supported by the 25 Year Environment Plan (published Jan 2018, updated 2019 by www.gov.uk ‘A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment’, sets out what we will do to improve the environment, within a generation). This sets an expectation for development, including housing and infrastructure, by all organisations and individuals, that will help deliver net gain.

Recreation and Environment Policy R3: Flood Attenuation

Justification

The underlying impermeable soils of the area lead to localised flooding which is exacerbated by reduced roadside ditch maintenance and management. Flooding

seems to occur most often following exceptional rainfall rather than on a regular basis and the greatest impact was reported to be on local roads. The residents' questionnaire (March 2016) highlighted various locations within the NP area which are liable to be flooded and possible measures to improve drainage were described.

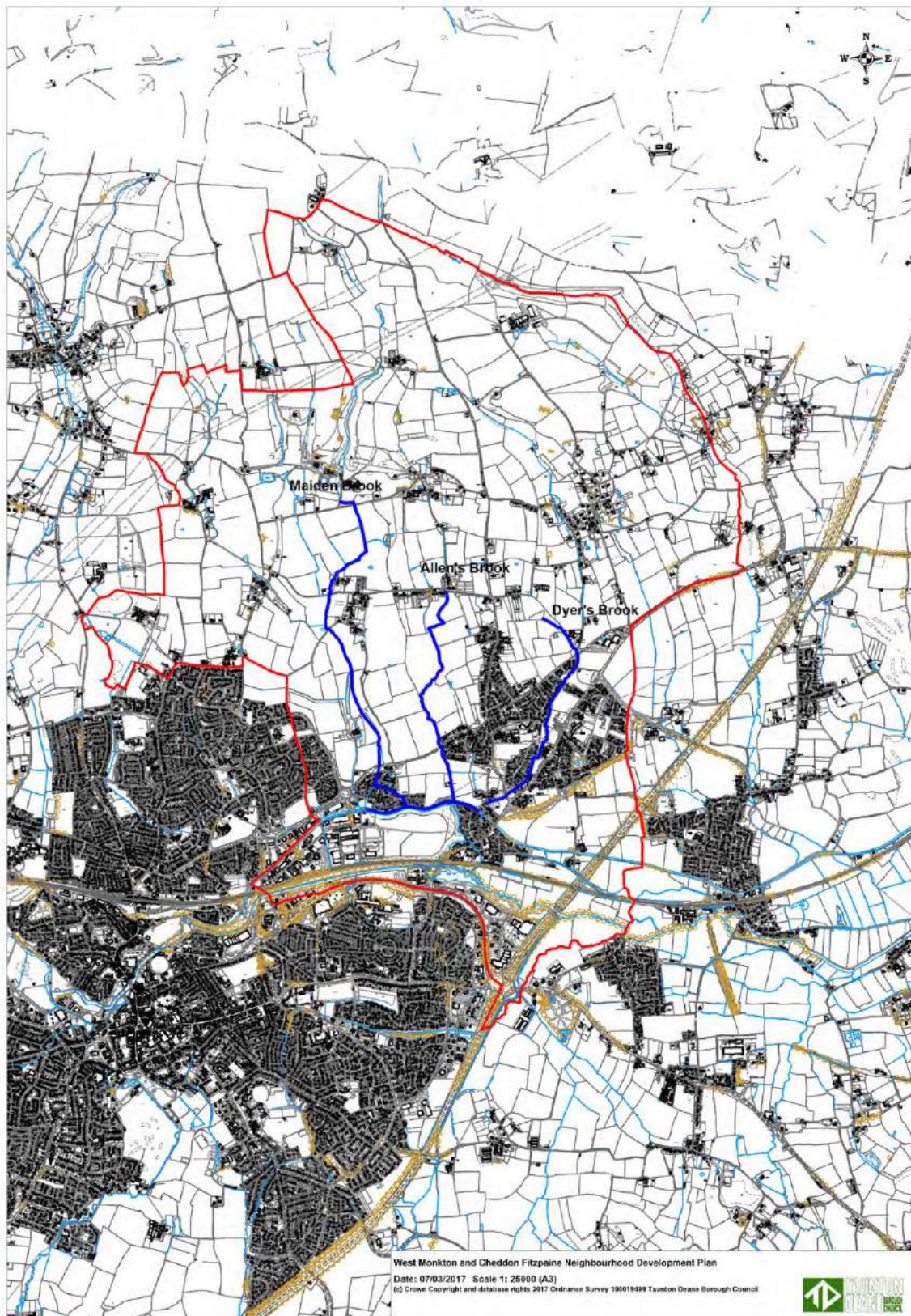
The Parishes will pursue local solutions to improve ditch maintenance such as greater use of 'Lengthsmen' (i.e., local people employed, usually on a part time basis, to undertake routine outdoor maintenance jobs such as unblocking surface water drains and ditches).

Development sites in Taunton require use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems measures e.g., semi-permeable drives. (See paragraph 6.2.6, Taunton Surface Water Management Plan, 2013.) Somerset County Council is the Lead Local Flood Authority and issues guidance and advice ref West of England Sustainable Drainage Developer Guide (March 2015).

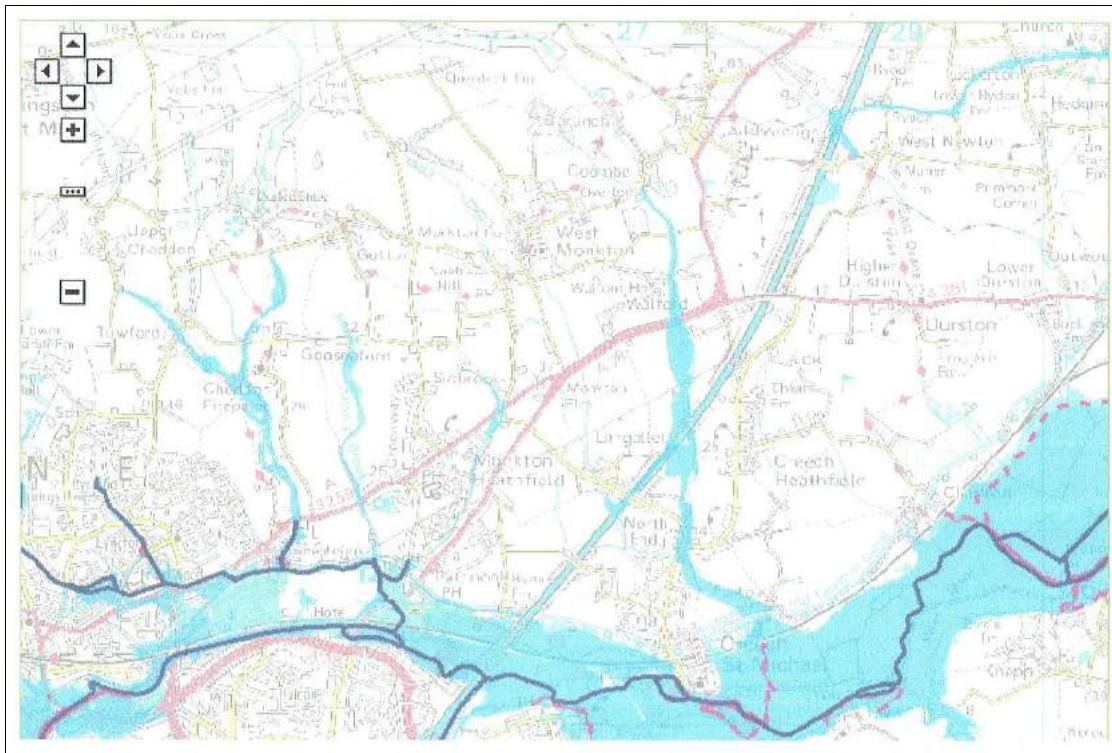
The following map identifies the three main watercourses in blue flowing from the north of the NP area in a southerly direction to the River Tone. These three streams pick up underground watercourses draining from the Quantocks.

Comments received 31 March 2017 from the Environment Agency Consultation on SEA Screening have been incorporated. (See Other Evidence.)

Map 17: WM&CF NP Main Watercourses



Map 18: Plan showing floodable areas as identified by the EA within the NP area



In response to Question 52 of the 2016 questionnaire, which asked what additional remedial action should be taken to prevent flooding, a number of detailed comments were made by local residents including:

- the creation of attenuation ponds;
- improving water management;
- unblocking drains and better drain maintenance;
- ditch clearance;
- larger storm drains;
- keeping water courses clear;
- flood protection measures;
- ensuring good flows in the rivers Tone and Parrett.

Other relevant comments made included that:

- building on greenfield sites destroys habitats and recreation areas and increases surface water run-off (Q34);
- streams and brooks that feed the River Tone from the southern foothills of the Quantocks, and fields designated as flood plains, should be protected (Q45).

The SADMP Proposals Map illustrates the extent of flood zones located within the NP area particularly in the vicinity of the River Tone.

The Taunton Deane Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA, 2011) and related studies provide more detail on flood risk and management, both within the Taunton rural area and surrounding rural areas.

Somerset County Council is the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and as such works closely with other key stakeholders including the Environment Agency (EA), SWTC, Internal Drainage Boards and relevant landowners.

The EA flood risk maps indicate flood risk zones associated with the brooks which flow down from the Quantocks, through the NP area, and into the River Tone, which also generates its own flood risk zone. The concept of Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) is encouraged, and the following Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA) guidance document provides useful information on the concept and how to apply it in urban planning – [wsud_ideas_book.pdf](#) ([susdrain.org](#)).

The EA supports policy R3 Flood Attenuation directing development away from flood zones 2 and 3, and encourages natural flood management schemes, which is a holistic concept and is most effective when not limited to individual development sites. It links closely to Water Sensitive Urban Design and to the preservation and building of soils.

Wastewater infrastructure improvements are particularly encouraged as nutrient enrichment in the surrounding area is particularly sensitive and its control would be welcomed.

Wetlands and reed beds are encouraged for nutrient stripping, although it must be ensured that there is no increase of flood risk to third parties.

Planning obligations contributing to phosphate stripping, carbon sequestration and biodiversity net gain should be required for all development.

New guidance of SUDs in Somerset is likely to be adopted in coming months (May 2021).

The Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) was launched in January 2015 as a response to the Somerset floods during winter 2013/14 as a key part of the Somerset Levels and Moors Flood Action Plan which was agreed in March 2014. The SRA's remit includes the whole of Somerset, and its purpose is to deliver higher standards of flood protection than would be funded nationally, and to create better flood protection and resilience against further flooding by joint planning and delivery as far as possible.

The Flood Action Plan has a number of 'targets' including support to maximise the benefits from catchment sensitive farming, especially regarding run-off in the upper catchment.

As part of meeting this target, the Hills to Levels partnership was established in May 2015. This is a partnership between wildlife Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs), the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group South West (FWAG SW) and The Royal Bath & West of England Society.

The work of this partnership includes advising landowners on ways in which they can 'slow the flow' of run-off to help reduce flood peaks, improve water quality, decrease soil erosion, and increase wildlife.

The Hill to Levels project has identified over 200 natural flood management features to install in the landscape including: leaky ponds, leaky woody dams, filter fences, filter dams, tree planting, new hedge banks, flow spreaders, soil bunds and check dams.

Other Flood Action Plan 'targets' relevant to this NP Policy include the following:

- to manage urban runoff by ensuring best practice in planning and SUDS implementation. This will include the use of 'swales', which are shallow, broad and vegetated channels designed to store and/or convey run-off and remove pollutants. They can, for instance, be constructed to run parallel with roads, foot, and cycle paths;
- to sustain and enhance business and community resilience;
- to ensure strong local leadership with full engagement of local partners and communities.

Recreation and Environment Policy R3: Flood Attenuation

Policy R3 seeks to achieve substantial environmental change, improved biodiversity, reduction in run-off from impermeable areas into combined sewers, amenity improvements and higher water quality (ref. www.susdrain.org).

Any major development should holistically demonstrate environmental net gain.

Strategic flood works will be delivered in conformity with the Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Improvements Scheme; most of the schemes will be implemented out of the area, but will have a positive effect on flooding, by reducing the capacity/flow of the River Tone as it passes through the two Parishes and in turn reducing fluvial flooding in the NDP area. Some of the interventions may be implemented within the NDP area, for example, the pumping station at Bathpool and improvements to the railway culverts near Priorswood Business Park and the Crown Industrial Estate.

New residential developments, residential extensions/renovations and commercial developments will only be supported if they include water management design features, which have already proved to be effective in the buildings and public

spaces of the same neighbourhood by minimising flooding, facilitating irrigation, and making habitats resilient against flooding and climate change. Given the proximity of the RAMSAR sites on the Somerset Levels, compliance with Natural England's phosphate's planning advice will also be required.¹¹

Specifically, developments that utilise nature-based solutions (soft solutions) in preference to engineered solutions (hard solutions) wherever possible, including the following will be supported:

- SuDs (Sustainable Drainage Systems) schemes within new developments (ref emerging Somerset SuDs guidance). The development management process should give due regard to the design, ownership, and maintenance of proposed SuDS schemes, which can be adopted by Water Companies if they comply with the new Design and Construction Guidance for surface water sewers, and should be of an acceptable standard of operation for the lifetime of the development;
- proposals which include swales, water butts and other rainwater capture features such as ponds and wetland areas, rainwater harvesting and rainwater gardens;
- up-stream flood attenuation* measures such as “leaky dams”, re-meandering, reed beds, ponds, or any other means of natural flood management, hedge, and tree planting to ‘slow the flow’ of water run-off, to be co-ordinated with local partners. (Ref leaky dam consideration with FWAG at Allens Brook, planned for 2021);
- features of the landscape which minimise flooding, facilitate irrigation and promote habitats resilient to flooding and climate change. (Ref Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Scheme).

**this may be outside the development area. Reference: Environment Agency Standing Advice*

Conformity with Core Strategy & NPPF

This Policy is considered to be in general conformity with Core Strategy Policies CP8 (Environment) which seeks to reduce flood risk through the adoption of SUDS and CP1 (Climate Change, paragraph f) which requires development to incorporate design and construction measures to reduce the effects of flooding. Strategic flood works will be delivered in conformity with the Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Improvement Scheme.

¹¹ Natural England phosphates advice issued August 2020

This Policy is also considered to be in general conformity with the NPPF 2019 Section 14, para 155 -165 which comprehensively addresses issues of climate change and flooding, and flooding issues as they relate to planning.

The NPPF explains what is acceptable development in different flood zones with particular reference to flood zones 2 and 3, taking account of climate change for the lifetime of development and the sequential test and exceptions test for development. The LPA must be provided with evidence that in all cases of flooding the proposed development would be safe and not lead to increased flood risk elsewhere (sequential test), and evidence must be provided to show that any residual flood risk can be overcome (exceptions test). It is preferable that flood risk areas in the NP area should be turned into green spaces enhancing biodiversity and recreation, with wildlife corridors provided alongside watercourses.

The environmental net gain principle is applied by weighing the total loss of benefits provided by the natural environment against the maximum potential ecological gains. Net losses should demonstrate an understanding that many natural capital assets are a) spatially and context specific; b) provide a service because of where they are located; c) applicable to a number of areas, including river-catchment and landscape; d) are often not linked to biodiversity habitat types. Ecological gains can be maximised by promoting a coherent network of habitats; providing benefit to those people who currently experience the lowest quality environments; proximity and providing benefits as close as possible to where the impact occurs.

What difference will it make?

This NP Policy will help to create 'sustainable places' by attenuating extreme rainfall events which are likely to become more frequent in the future due to climate change. The Policy will thereby help to reduce flooding both locally within the NP area and also in other areas of Somerset downstream of the NP area. The Policy will therefore contribute to the delivery of the overall objective for this section, particularly the last three bullet points which relate to flood attenuation, and which could lead to provision of multifunctional benefits.

Recreation and Environment Policy R4: Recreation & Community Facilities

Justification

There is a very wide and diverse range of both formal and informal recreational facilities within the NP area as listed by Question 53 in the residents' questionnaire (March 2016). The Bridgwater & Taunton Canal is the most used on a daily and weekly basis by local residents. Hestercombe Gardens, the West Monkton village

hall, the Cheddon Fitzpaine Memorial Hall, the rugby club, cricket club and Tacchi-Morris Centre are also well used, but generally on a less regular basis.

The use of outdoor recreational facilities is limited, as indicated by the residents' questionnaire responses, particularly teenage recreation areas, play areas and allotments. (This may, however, be due to the questionnaire being sent out in early March, which was a cold and wet period less favourable to these outdoor activities.) In terms of potential demand, respondents 'would like to use' allotments most, followed by the cricket ground and Hankridge Nature Reserve. Clearance of the overgrown nature of the Hankridge Nature Reserve during 2020 has significantly increased the attractiveness of the area as open green space.

A range of barriers to greater use of the recreational facilities on offer were listed by residents, most of which could be addressed, particularly through better communication with respect to what is available and how to access it.

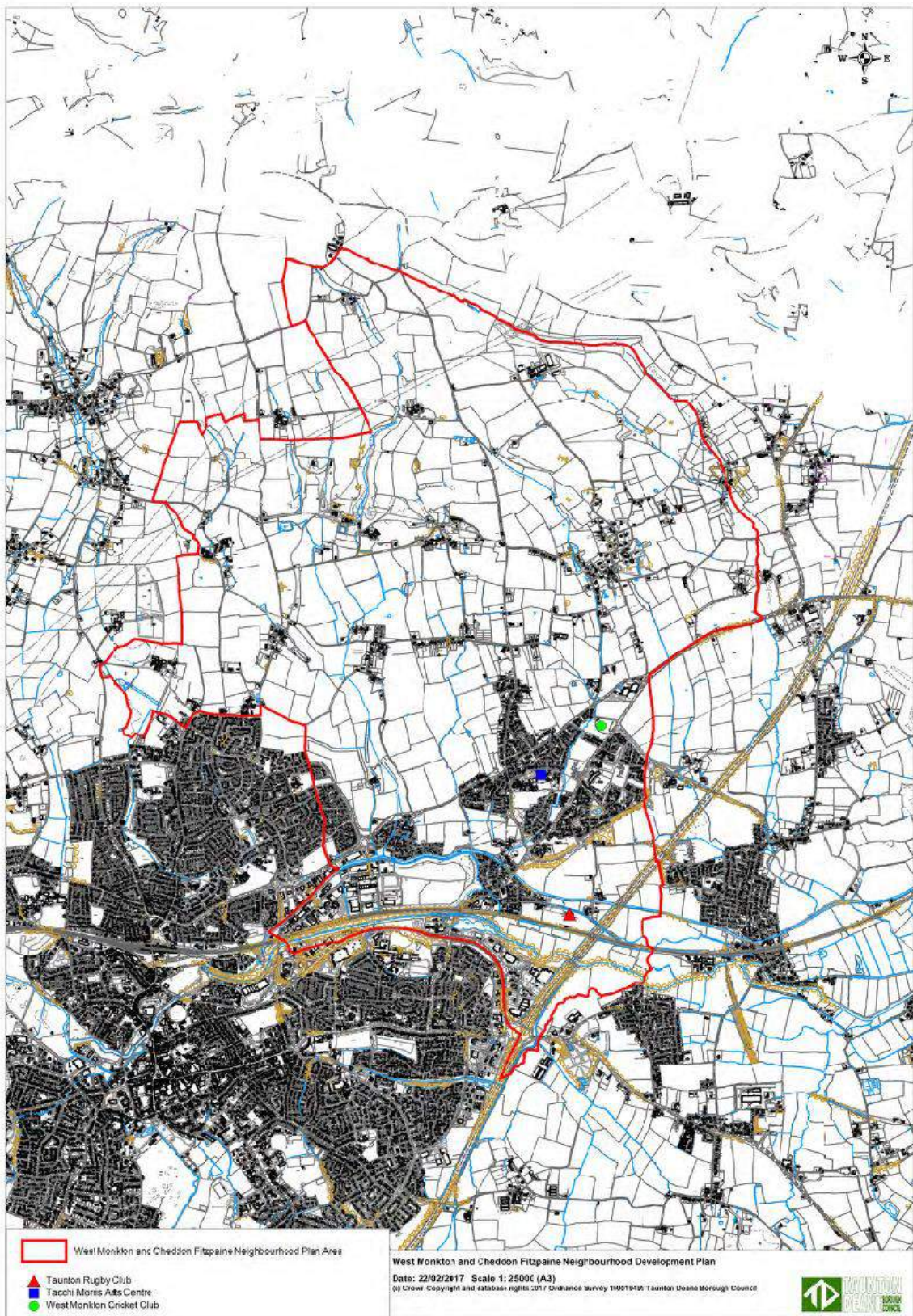
The residents' questionnaire responses indicate a strong desire to establish a youth club and related activities such as skate/bmx park, zip wire and a 5 a-side pitch. Other sports facilities were also requested, such as tennis courts, playing fields, play areas and an astro turf pitch. A Youth Club has been established in West Monkton (opened in July 2021). It is expected the catchment will be from Heathfield Comprehensive School which serves the NP area.

There is a strong unmet demand, as demonstrated by the resident's questionnaire responses, for more retail and other commercial facilities within the NP area, particularly for a Post Office, small supermarket and a range of local convenience shops, a public house, a take-away and a café¹². The Local Centre of 5-6 retail units below two apartment blocks, included in the plans for MH1 Urban Extension, has not been delivered.

A design framework, in line with the Garden Town Vision, for small local parks will promote opportunities for the local community to socialise, play, grow food, and support local management of stormwater and ecosystems.

¹² A second questionnaire sent to all premises in the NP Area in November 2019 reiterated the same responses.

Map 19: WM&CF NP sport and art locations



Core Strategy (CS) Policy CP5 (Inclusive Communities) seeks to promote sustainable development that creates socially cohesive and inclusive communities through a range of measures, including the requirement for development proposals to make provision for community accessible services and social facilities, including 'meeting spaces.'

A core NPPF 2019 Section 8 planning principle is to:

“provide the social recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs...”

Furthermore, the NPPF 2019 para 92 states that planning policies and decisions should:

‘...plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open spaces, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;’

In further justification of this NP Policy, other relevant extracts from the NPPF 2019 state that:

- *Para 96: ‘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 communities...’*

The developing Urban Extension includes a new mixed-use district centre as required by CS Policy SS1 (*Monkton Heathfield*). This will comprise a mix of new shops, restaurants, and cafes, drinking establishments and hot food take-away outlets. There will also be multi-functional community facilities around a village green, including land for a range of uses such as places of worship, community halls, health facilities and care and residential accommodation for the elderly.

CS Policies SS1 and SS2 (*Priorswood/Nerrols*) also require ‘a multi-purpose ‘green necklace’ of landscape and public open space surrounding the settlement, providing allotments, outdoor recreation and wildlife habitats.’

Policy SS2 requires a new mixed-use local centre for the Priorswood/Nerrols development which will include shops, restaurants/cafes, drinking establishments and other community facilities.

These recreation and community facility proposals were developed further by Urban Initiatives in 2011 when they produced a masterplan for the Urban Extension which

is currently being revised and up-dated in consultation with the WM and CF parishes. Where allotments and other public open space is to be provided as part of new residential developments the parishes request that they should be given the opportunity to manage and maintain these areas in the future, subject to appropriate legal agreements and reasonable commuted sum payments.

CS Policy CP5 (Inclusive Communities) requires that development proposals make provision and access for all to:

- *'services, community and social facilities - providing a range of education, health, indoor sports, retail and meeting spaces';*
- *'recreational space - improving health and interaction through provision of formal and informal green space such as play areas, allotments, playing pitches, sports facilities as well as walking and cycling'.*

The CS evidence base includes a number of adopted TDBC strategies that are relevant to this NP Policy including 'The Playing Pitch, Sports Facilities and Green Space Strategies' (2010). Additionally, the 'Allotments Strategy' which was produced in 2010 and then revised in 2015, details the health, social and environmental benefits of providing allotments. This strategy also sets out standards for allotment provision, including that each allotment should be 290 metres square and within 1km of new homes.

SADMP Policy ENV5 (Development in the Vicinity of Rivers and Canals) requires that development near rivers and canals should improve public access to and along the waterway and improve the environmental quality of the waterway corridor.

SADMP Policies C2 to C5 are concerned with the provision and protection of both recreational open space and community facilities.

Recreation and Environment Policy R4: Recreation and Community Facilities

Subject to a viability assessment new major* residential development of 10 or more net additional dwellings (or if the site area is more than 0.5 hectares if dwelling numbers are yet to be agreed) will only be supported if proposals for new recreation and, or, community facilities are included to meet demonstrated local needs. These might include the following:

- proposals which include the provision of or contribution to new play areas and public open spaces, playing fields, baseball park, skate and bmx/cycle parks, tennis courts and all-weather 5 a-side pitches, or the improvement and enhancement of existing facilities which will continue to meet a local need;

- proposals for new allotments in accordance with the SWTC Allotments Strategy to support food production that meets the needs of local people and markets;
- proposals for improvements along the line of the Bridgwater & Taunton canal, and within the NP area, such as towpath improvements and enhanced linkages to it including meeting places (e.g., community café), toilets and new moorings in accordance with SADMP Policy ENV5 (A); **
- opportunities taken to create linkages between sites and address gaps in existing networks by the creation of new rights of way;
- improved rights of way networks, possibly by permissive paths, to encourage walking, cycling, and riding through and between green space areas and including foot/cycle bridges, exercise and nature trails along with community facilities such as meeting places, cafes and toilets, and wheelchair accessibility wherever possible.

** Major development for the purposes of this Policy is as defined by The Town and Country (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 Part 1, paragraph 2(c)*

*** <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/refresh/media/thumbnail/30984-planning-advice-note-inland-waterways.pdf>*

New moorings may need planning permission, and applicants should consult the CRT.

Conformity with Core Strategy & NPPF

This Policy is considered to be in general conformity with Core Strategy Policies CP5 (Inclusive Communities) and SS 1 and 2. It is also considered to be in general conformity with SADMP Policies ENV5 (Development in the Vicinity of Rivers and Canals) (A) and SADMP Policies C2 to C5. Finally, this NP Policy is considered to be in general conformity with the NPPF 2019 Section 8.

What difference will it make?

This policy will contribute to more healthy, inclusive, and cohesive communities, whether they be established, emerging or proposed and as such will help to deliver the overall recreation and environment objective for this section.

The realisation of the objectives for the NP area should link in well with the Quantock Hills Landscape Partnership Scheme. (A bid to Heritage Lottery Fund will be submitted end of May 2017.) One or two fields in the northern most tip of the NP area lie within the Quantock Hills AONB.

Recreation and Environment Policy R5: Local Green Spaces (LGS)

Context

A design framework for small local parks will promote opportunities for the local community to socialise, play, grow food, support the localised management of stormwater and local ecosystems, and protect historical features of the rural environment.

Green Triangle Junctions

In the rural lanes of the NP area there are a few 'green triangle junctions.' These are often under threat from heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) and large agricultural machinery that cannot negotiate the junction without eroding the edges of the triangle. *(See pages 90-99 for further details and photographs.)*

Local residents indicate that a significant volume of traffic 'takes to the back lanes' whenever an element of the main road infrastructure (M5, A38 or A3259) is blocked. The residents' questionnaire (2016) responses, combined with Census 2011 data, indicates a significant proportion of the local population use their vehicles to get to work (although the Transport Policies of this NP encourage other means of transport). The growth plans for Taunton, including the Urban Extension at Monkton Heathfield and the development at Nerrols, indicate that the use of the country lanes

will continue to prove damaging to the 'green triangle junctions' unless they can be protected.

Evidence nationally suggests that some of these 'green triangle junctions' are very ancient. In some areas, they are known as 'remnant greens' (Tunbridge Wells BC 2004).

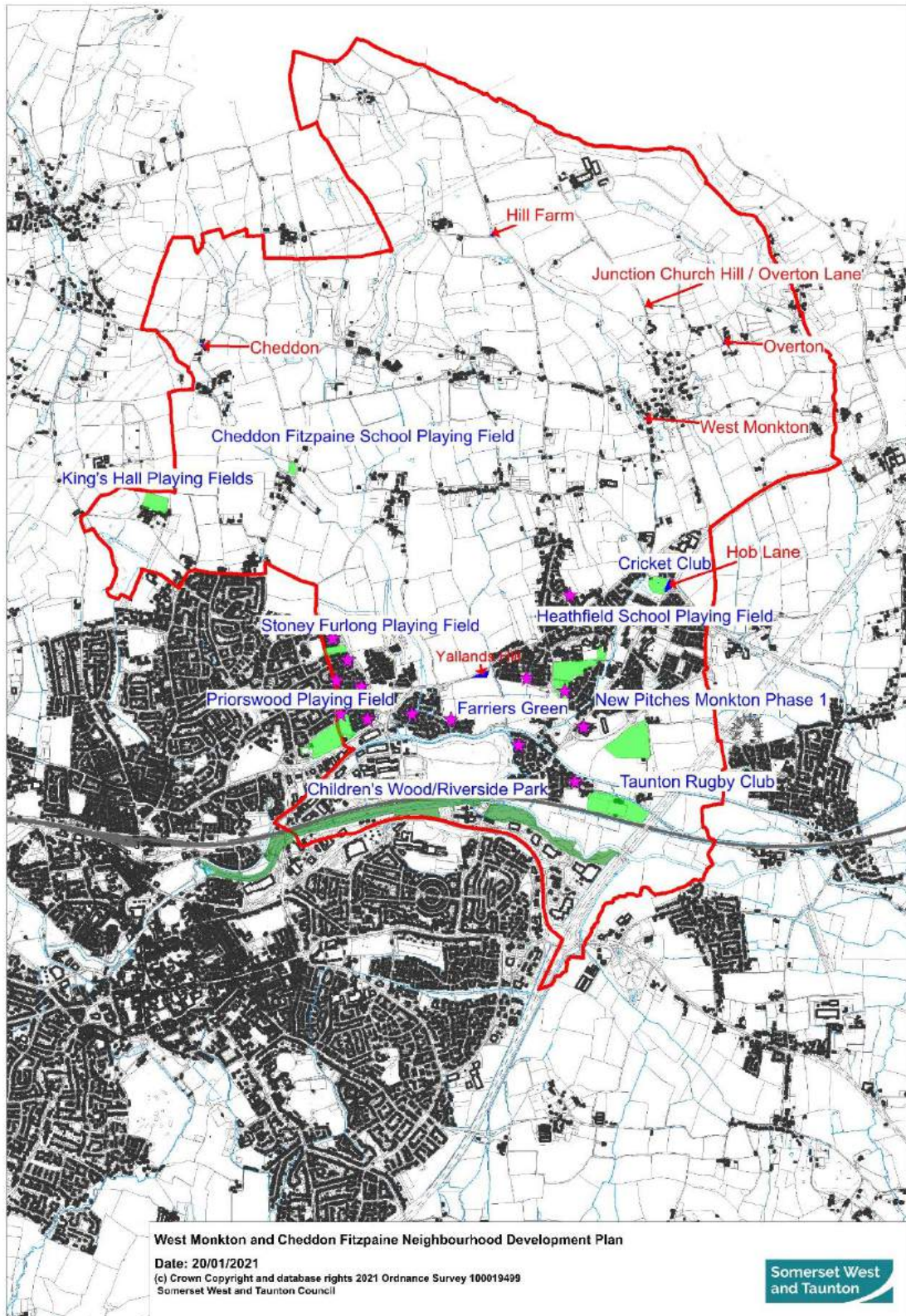
Justification

Four 'green triangles junctions' are to be designated as Local Green Spaces (LGSs) in the NP. The purpose of the designation is to protect them from erosion by traffic, to ensure that their vegetation is preserved and maintained, and to prevent them from being covered in tarmac. The green triangles are used by large HGVs for turning, as the lanes are not wide enough, which damages the edges. Some lanes are only accessible by HGVs in one direction, thereby necessitating the need to turn at the green triangles. None of the designated LGSs is large enough for development *per se*, but they need to be protected from the effects of other development and growth in the NP area. They are local landmarks reflecting the agricultural heritage of this part of the NP area, adding to its character. They are capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period. The proposed policy will help to *'enhance the locally distinctive characteristics of the area for future generations'* as described in the NP Vision.

The designated LGSs are shown in Map 20.

Map 20: WM&CF NP Local Green Spaces, Play Pitches and Highway Triangles

Issued Jan 2021

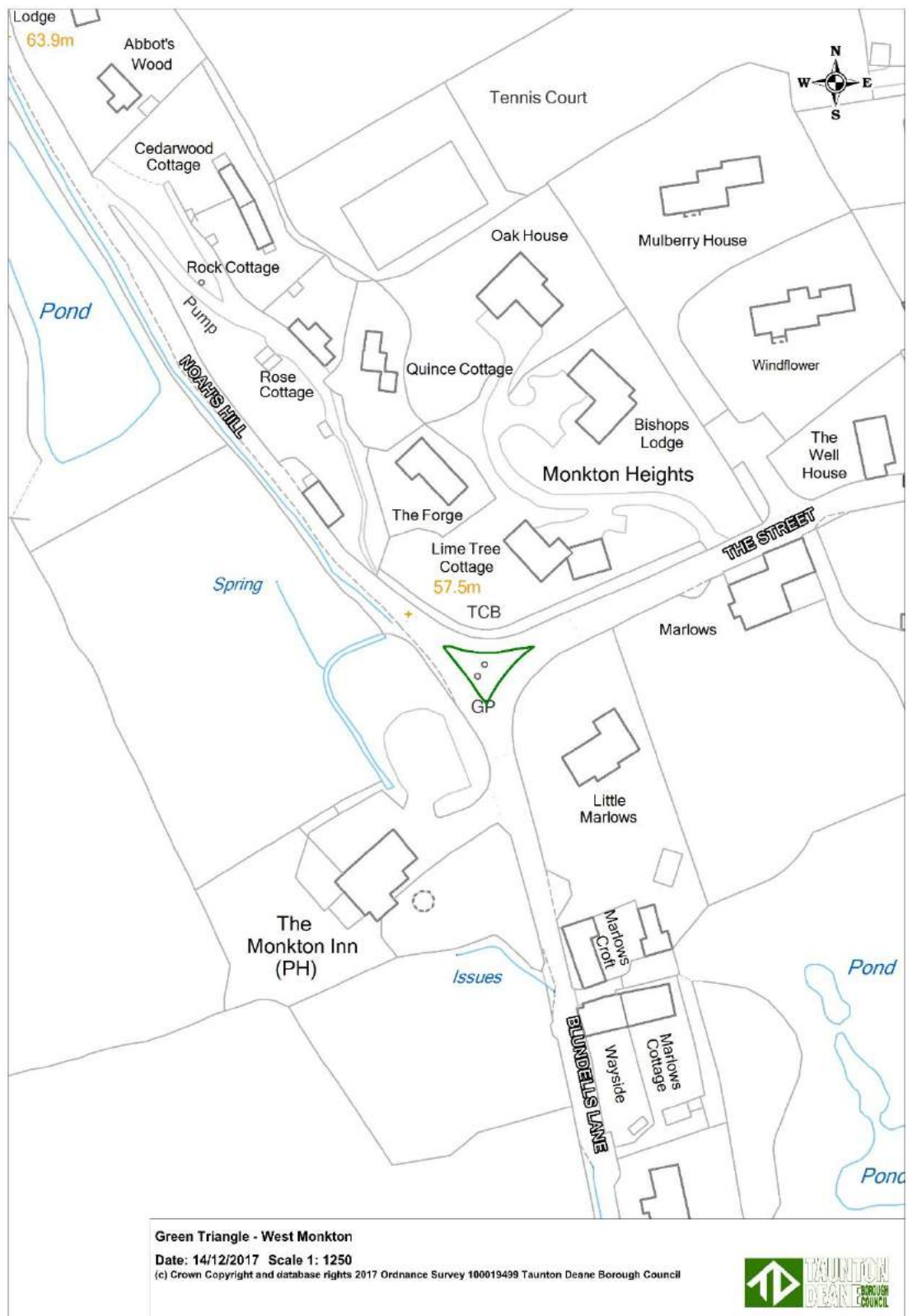


Green Triangle at The Street, West Monkton. This triangle has historical significance. It lies within the conservation village of West Monkton. It has on it a memorial seat, a converted phone box (red K6 type) converted into a book exchange, a litter bin, and a finger post. The northerly edge is protected from traffic erosion by oak bollards. It is a significant feature of the centre of the village, marking one end of 'The Street', and the other end at 'Church Drive'. The seat and book exchange are much used by local residents. (The book exchange is also a geo-caching site.)



Photo I: Green Triangle at The Street, West Monkton

Map 21 - Green Triangle at The Street, West Monkton



Green Triangle at Hill Farm/Yalway Lane. This triangle marks the junction of the old bridle way (running past Hill Farm and on to Volis Farm) with the main country lane (Yalway Lane) running north/south into the Quantocks. It has four large oak trees, centrally positioned, surrounded by grass. The edges of the triangle are unprotected and subject to erosion by large vehicles associated with farm businesses in the area. It is of historical importance and local interest.



Photo K: Green Triangle at Hill Farm/Yalway Lane

Map 23 - Green Triangle at Hill Farm/Yalway Lane

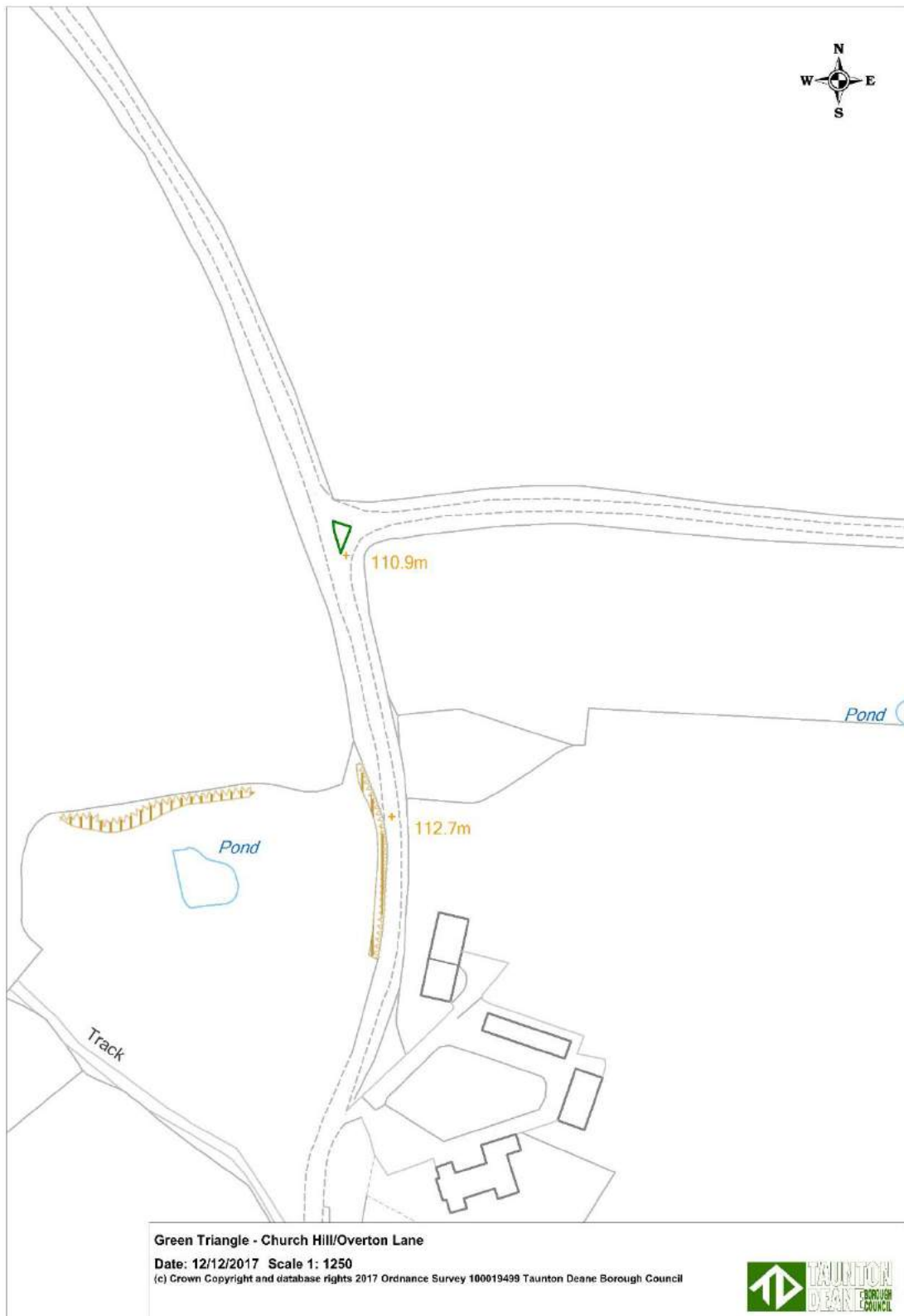


Green Triangle at junction of Church Hill and Overton Lane. This triangle lies just outside the village of West Monkton. Having no trees on it, it is under great threat from traffic erosion, and has been repaired by SCC in the past for erosion of vegetation. Its significance is historical.



Photo L: Green Triangle at junction of Church Hill and Overton Lane

Map 24 - Green Triangle at junction of Church Hill and Overton Lane

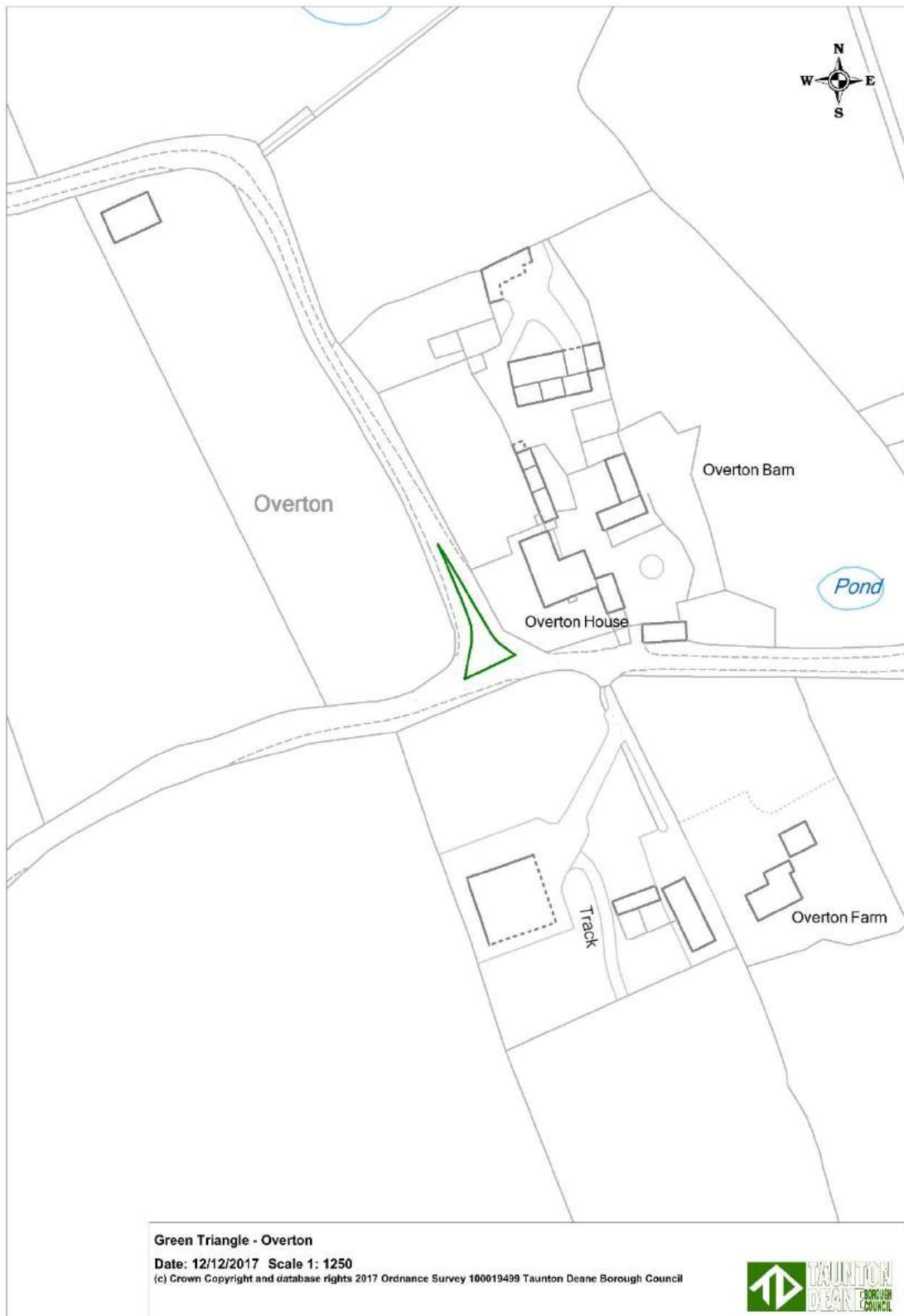


Green Triangle at Overton. This triangle lies just outside the village of West Monkton but is also under threat from traffic erosion. Its significance is historical.



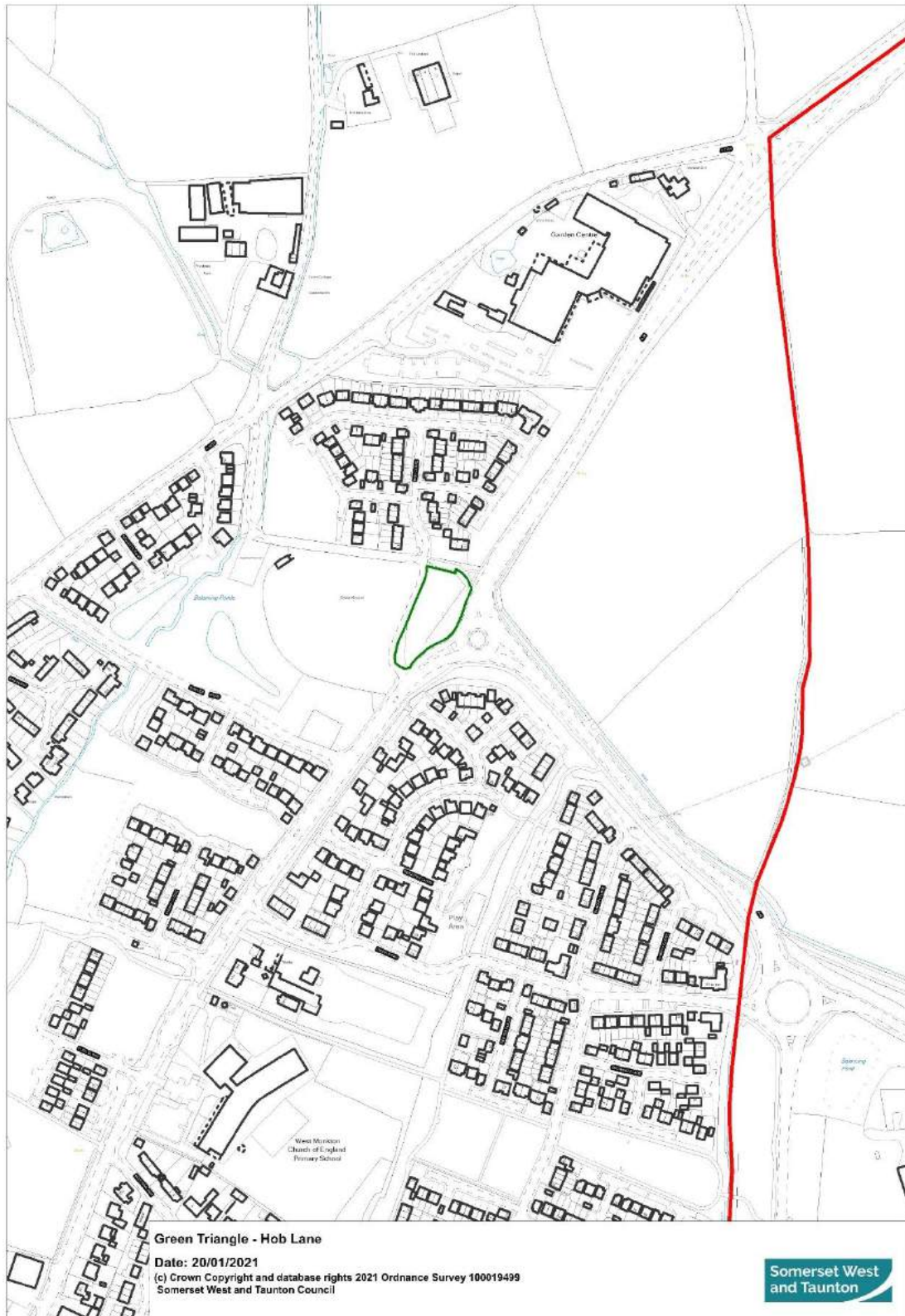
Photo M: Green Triangle at Overton

Map 25 - Green Triangle at Overton

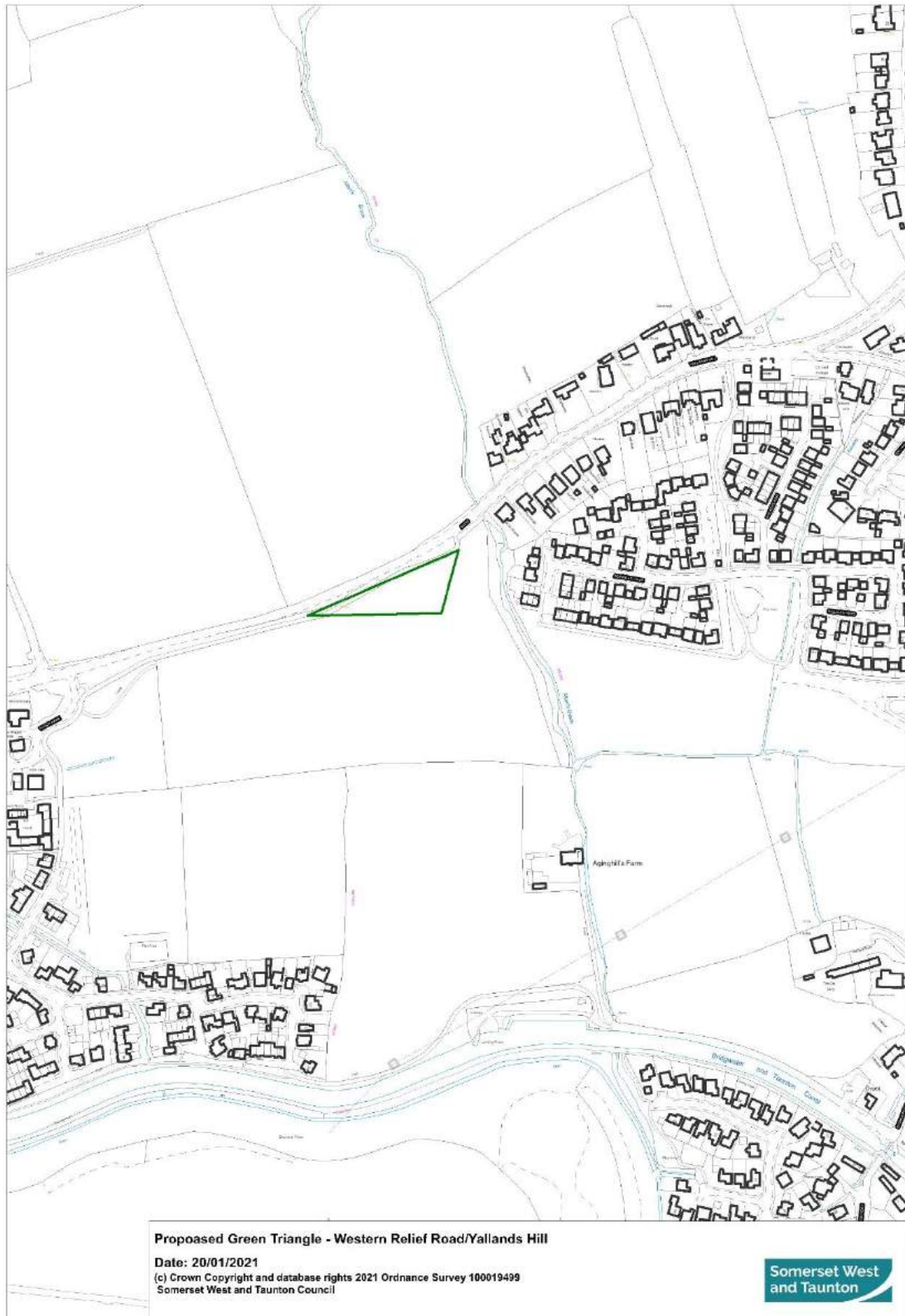


Additional green triangles at Hob Lane and at Yallands Hill, both in Monkton Heathfield, have been added.

Map 43 Hob Lane, Monkton Heathfield



Map 44 Green Triangle at Yallands Hill

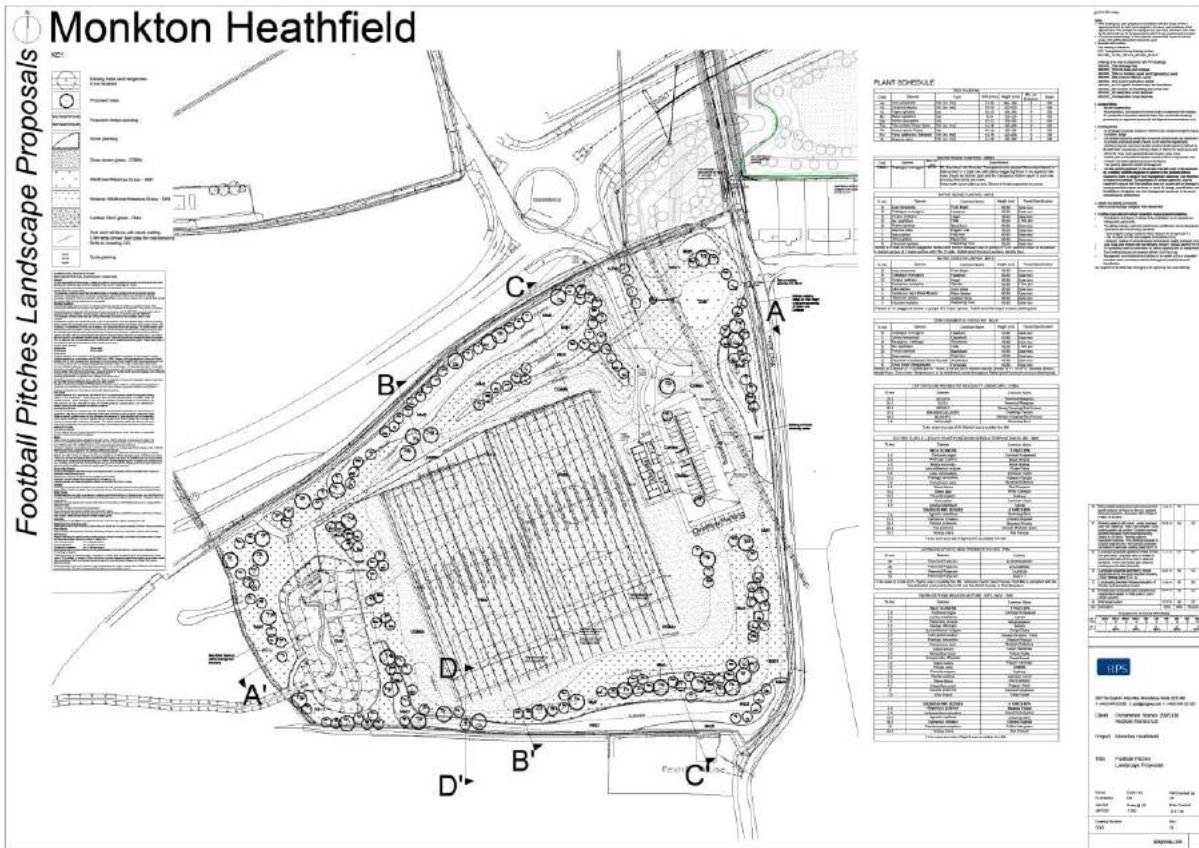


Recreational and other local green spaces

These sites contribute to sustainable development and compliment investment in the community. They are capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period. The sites that are playing fields have recreational value and are in reasonably close proximity to the community they serve. The sites that are wildlife/nature reserve areas are of particular local significance because of their beauty, tranquillity, and the richness of their wildlife. *(NPPF 2019 paragraph 99)*.

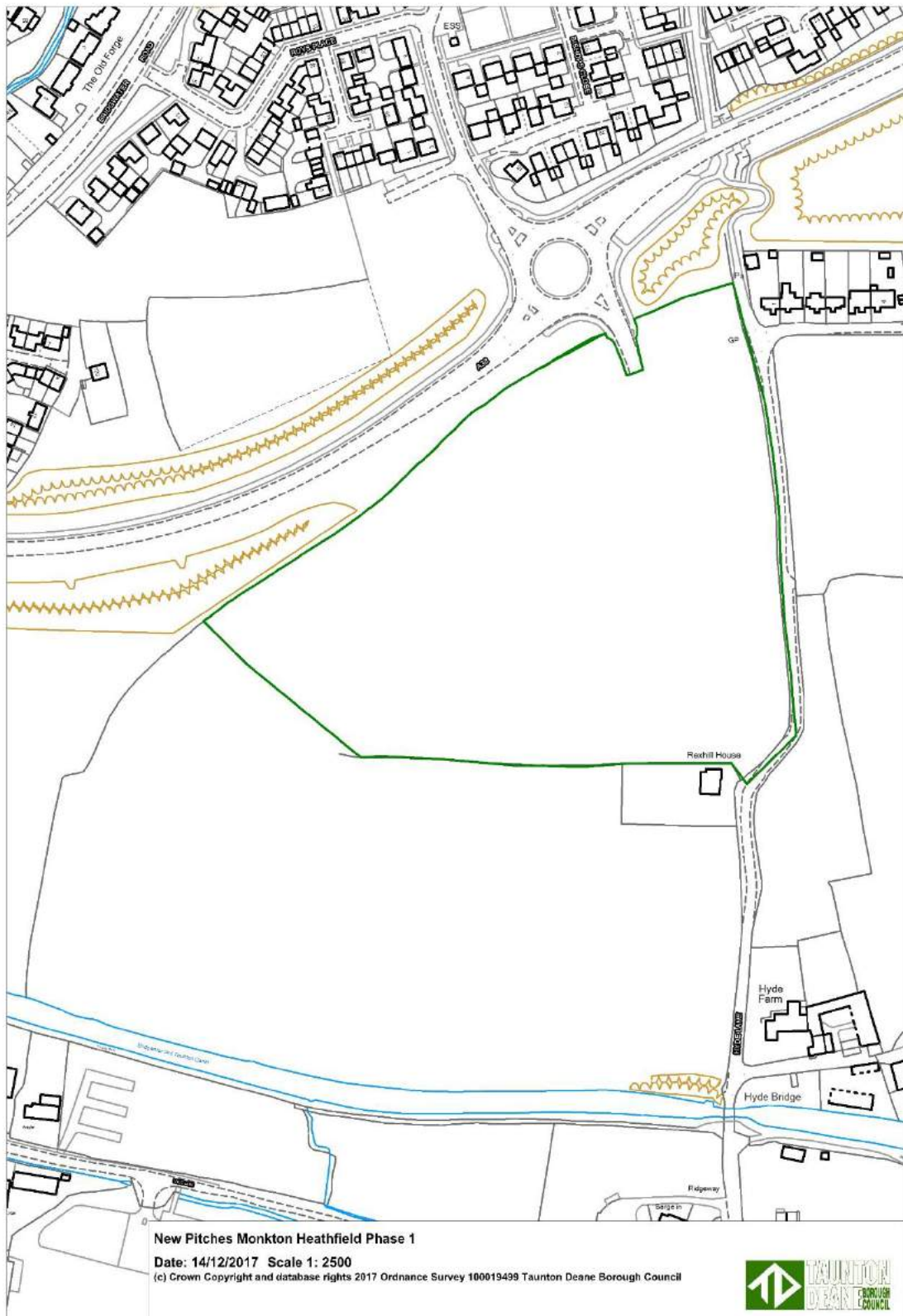
Sports pitches and club house phase I of the Monkton Heathfield

Development: the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves and will have particular significance as a playing field whilst the out-field area is much used by dog walkers and enjoyed for its tranquillity and wildlife diversity. Whilst football pitches will be needed in the future, recent surveys have shown the areas of growth in the sport don't currently require new pitches, because the most growth in football has been in the youth and women's teams. Provision for football and other sports pitches will be sought as part of the MH2 Urban Extension. Discussions are ongoing with SWTC and the Football Association to provide rugby and cricket on the site as recent growth in these sports has seen a need for new capacity for the local teams. The responses to the survey to all residents and businesses in 2019 supports this position (see Supporting Documents, Analysis of survey responses para 3.4.1).



Plan i - Two new sports and club house phase I of the Monkton Heathfield Development

Map 26 - Two new sports pitches and club house phase I of the Monkton Heathfield Development

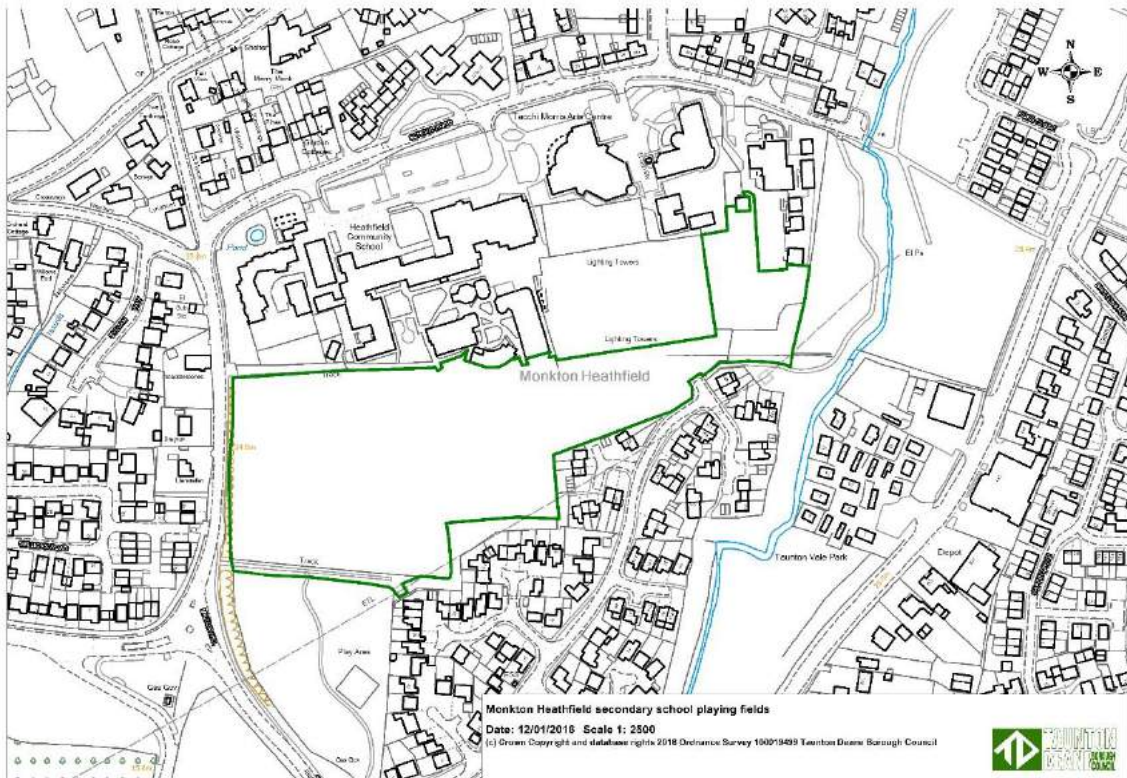


Heathfield Community School playing fields where the green area is demonstrably special to the local community and holds a particular significance to local families as a playing field.



Photo N - Heathfield Community School playing fields

Map 27 - Heathfield Community School playing fields



Kings Hall playing fields: part of Kings Hall Preparatory School, an Independent school providing playing fields for educational purposes. Historically part of the parkland associated with the listed building, and so has significance for its beauty, tranquility, richness of its wildlife as well as a recreational area for the school community it serves.



Photo O: Kings Hall playing fields

Map 28 - Kings Hall playing fields

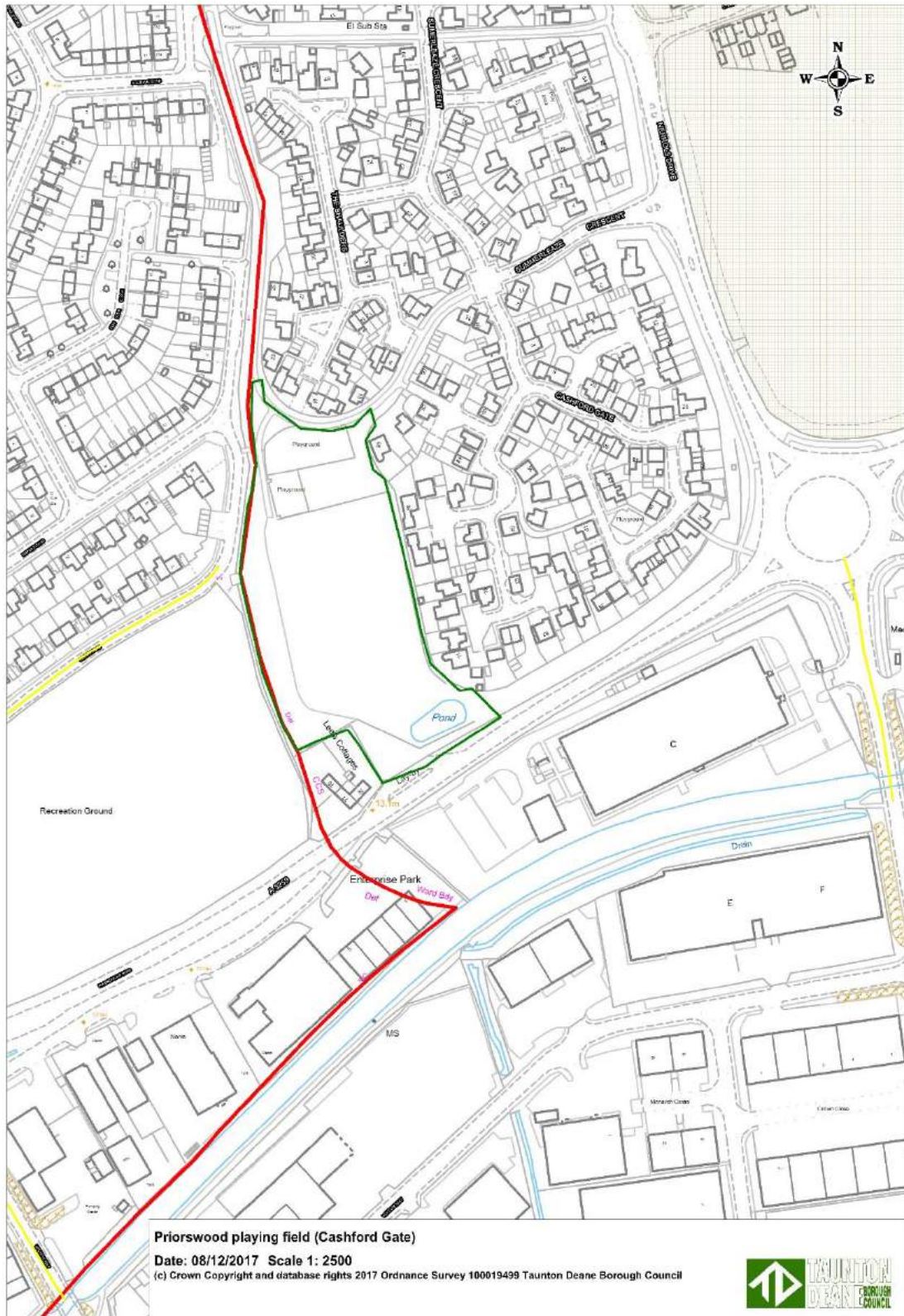


Cashford Gate playing field: this forms part of the leisure provision required by former TDBC (now SWTC) as a result of housing development. The area is in close proximity to the communities it serves and holds a specific recreational value.



Photo P: Cashford Gate playing field

Map 29 - Cashford Gate playing field



Stoney Furlong public open space: forms part of the Children’s Play Areas for older Children required by former TDBC (now SWTC) as a result of housing development in the area. Stoney Furlong Public Open Space/Football Pitch and Cashford Gate Football Pitch site are sites adopted by former TDBC, and carried forward to SWTC, and have value as playing fields used for recreational purposes(transferred to SWTC in 2019).

(Maidenbrook Estate (Waterleaze) Public Open Space awaits formal adoption by SWTC– May 2021).



Photo Q: Stoney Furlong public open space

Map 30 - Stoney Furlong public open space

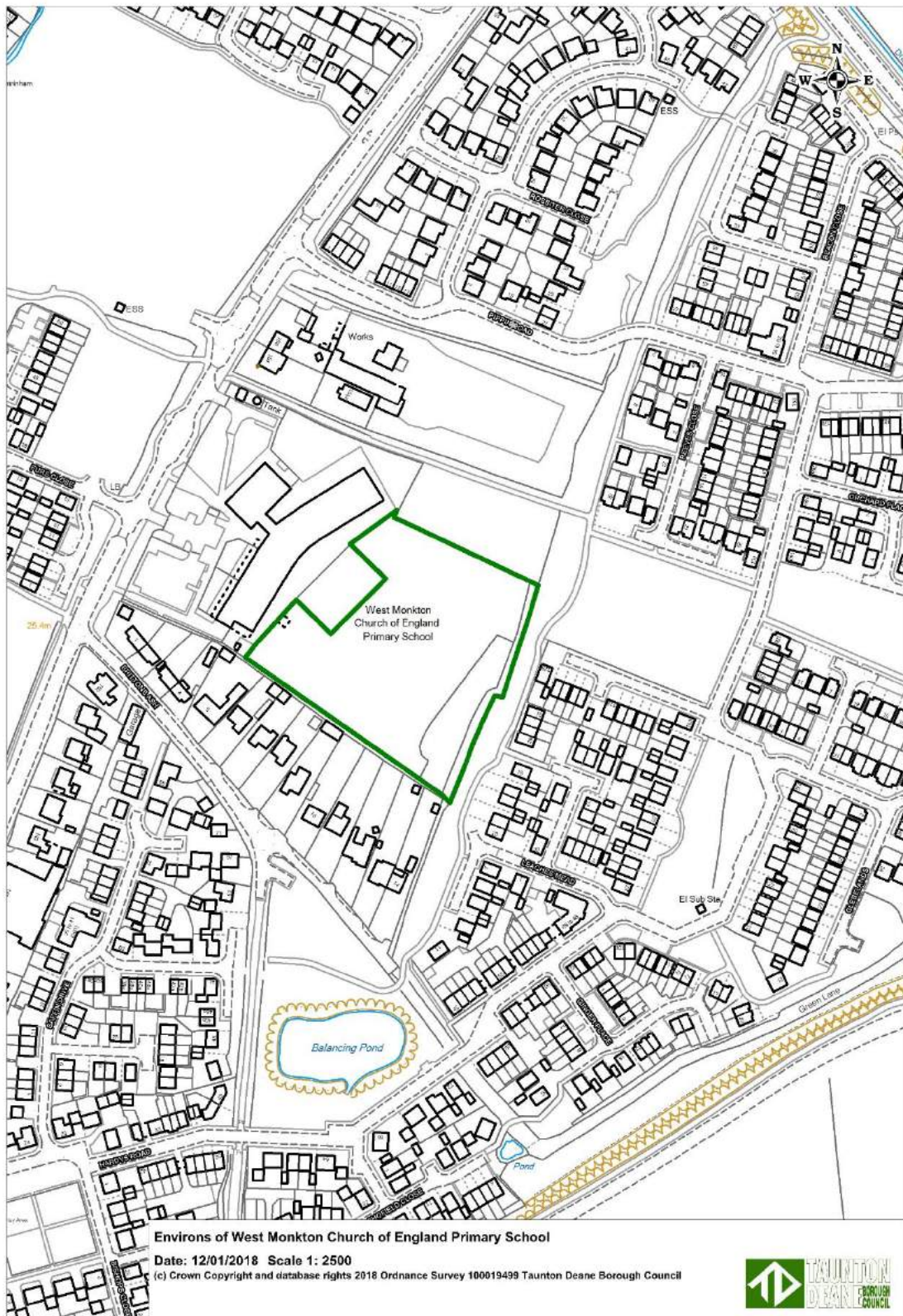


Environs of West Monkton Church of England Primary School: the school is surrounded by playing areas which are special to the local community for their recreational value and their historic significance to older residents.



Photo R: Environs of West Monkton Church of England Primary School

Map 31 - Environs of West Monkton Church of England Primary School



Cheddon Fitzpaine Primary School Playing Field: a Bath & Wells Multi-academy Trust School with playing field adjacent used for educational purposes by the local school community.



Photo S: Cheddon Fitzpaine Primary School Playing Field

Map 32 - Cheddon Fitzpaine Primary School Playing Field



Cricket Ground at Monkton Heathfield: the green space is in close proximity to the community it serves. The green area is demonstrably special to the local community and holds a particular historical significance, and recreational value. The green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.



Photo T: Cricket Ground at Monkton Heathfield

Map 33 - Cricket Ground at Monkton Heathfield



Children's Play Areas: These all have three or four pieces of equipment for the Under 5 age group, being close to the communities they serve and having recreational value.

Within Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish: Stoney Furlong, Standfast Place, Summerleaze Crescent (aka Warres Road), Summerleaze Crescent No.2, The Shoulders, Cashford Gate, Barbers Mead, and Maidenbrook (aka Waterleaze Play Area), Northwalls Grange (opened in June 2021).

Within West Monkton Parish: at St Quintins, Acacia Gardens, Meadway, Farriers Green, Canal View, Roy's Place, Agin hills Drive, play areas have all been created as part of former TDBC (now SWTC) requirement for play provision associated with housing development.



Photo U – Stoney Furlong Play Area



Photo V – Standfast Play Area



Photo W – Summerleaze aka Warres Road



Photo X – Summerleaze Crescent No.2 Children's Play Area

Map 34 – Stoney Furlong, Standfast Place, Summerleaze and Summerleaze No.2 Children’s Play Area

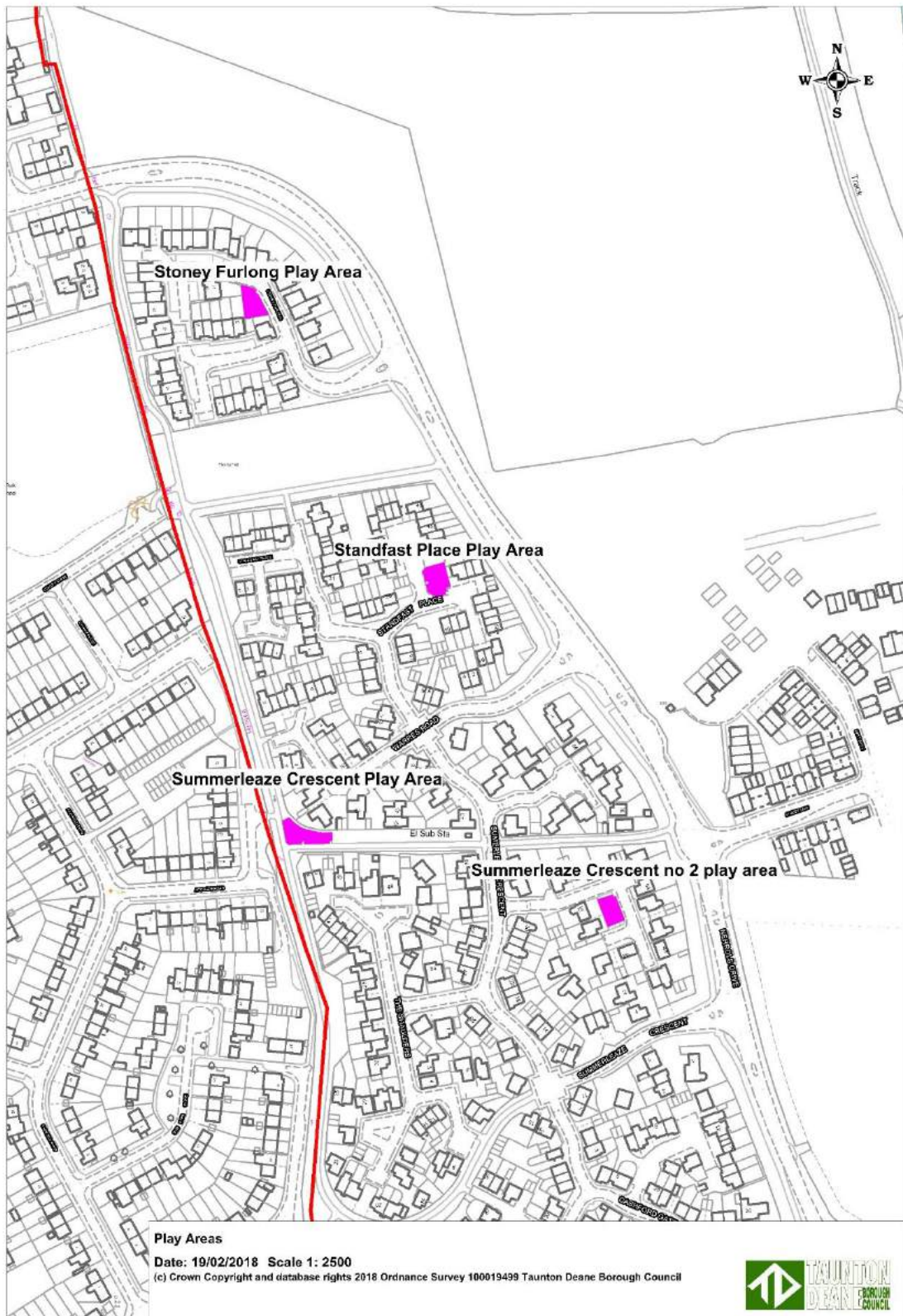




Photo Y – Shoulders Children’s Play Area



Photo Z – Cashford Gate Children’s Play Area

Map 35 – The Shoulders and Cashford Gate Children’s Play Area





Photo AA – Barbers Mead Children’s Play Area



Photo BB – Maidenbrook (aka Waterleaze) Children’s Play Area

Map 36 – Barbers Mead and Maidenbrook Children’s Play Area

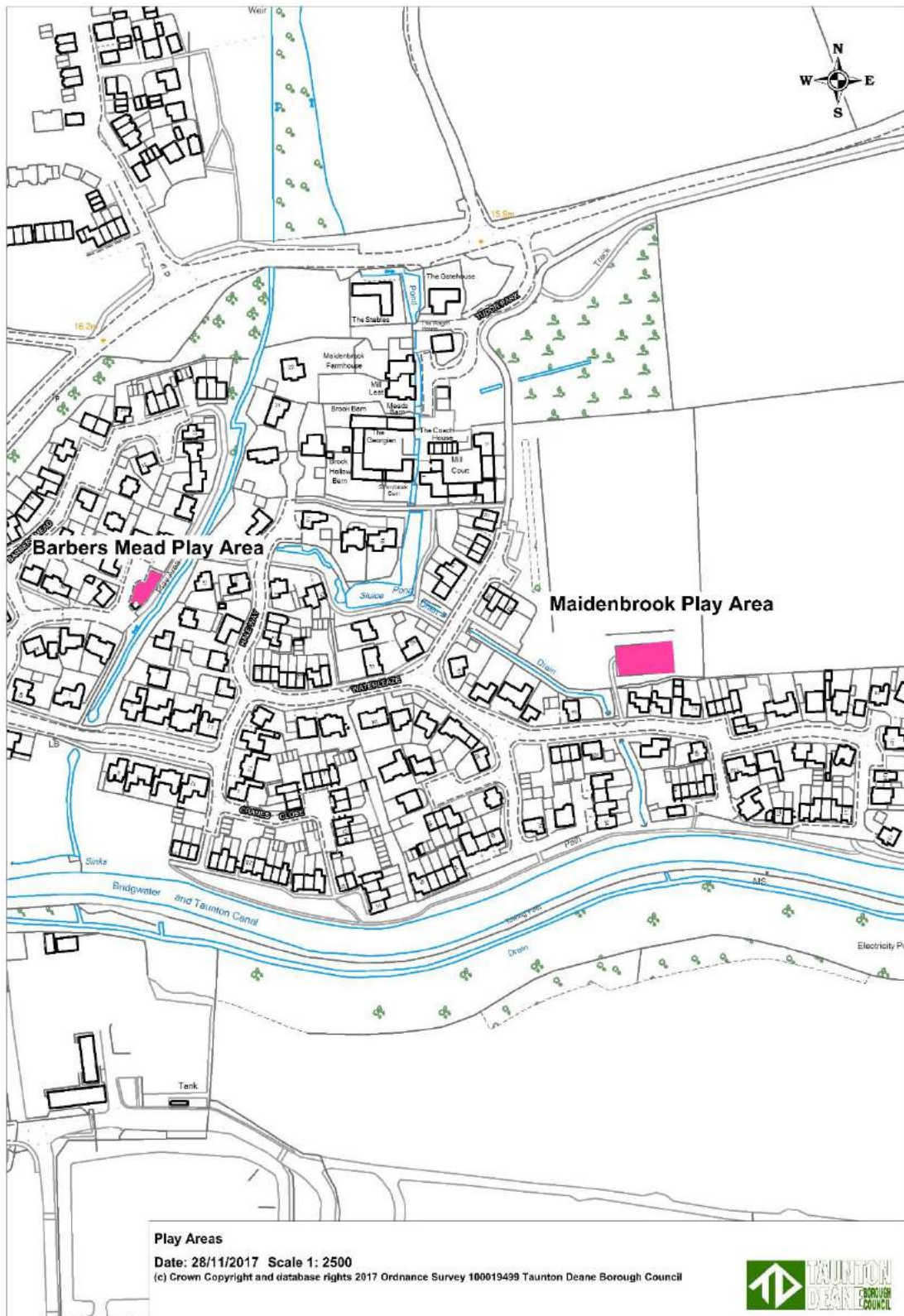




Photo CC – St Quintins Children's Play Area



Photo DD – Acacia Gardens Children's Play Area

Map 37 – St Quintins and Acacia Gardens Children’s Play Area





Photo EE – Meadway Children’s Play Area

Map 38 – Meadway Children’s Play Area





Photo FF – Farriers Green Children’s Play Area



Photo GG – Canal View Children’s Play Area

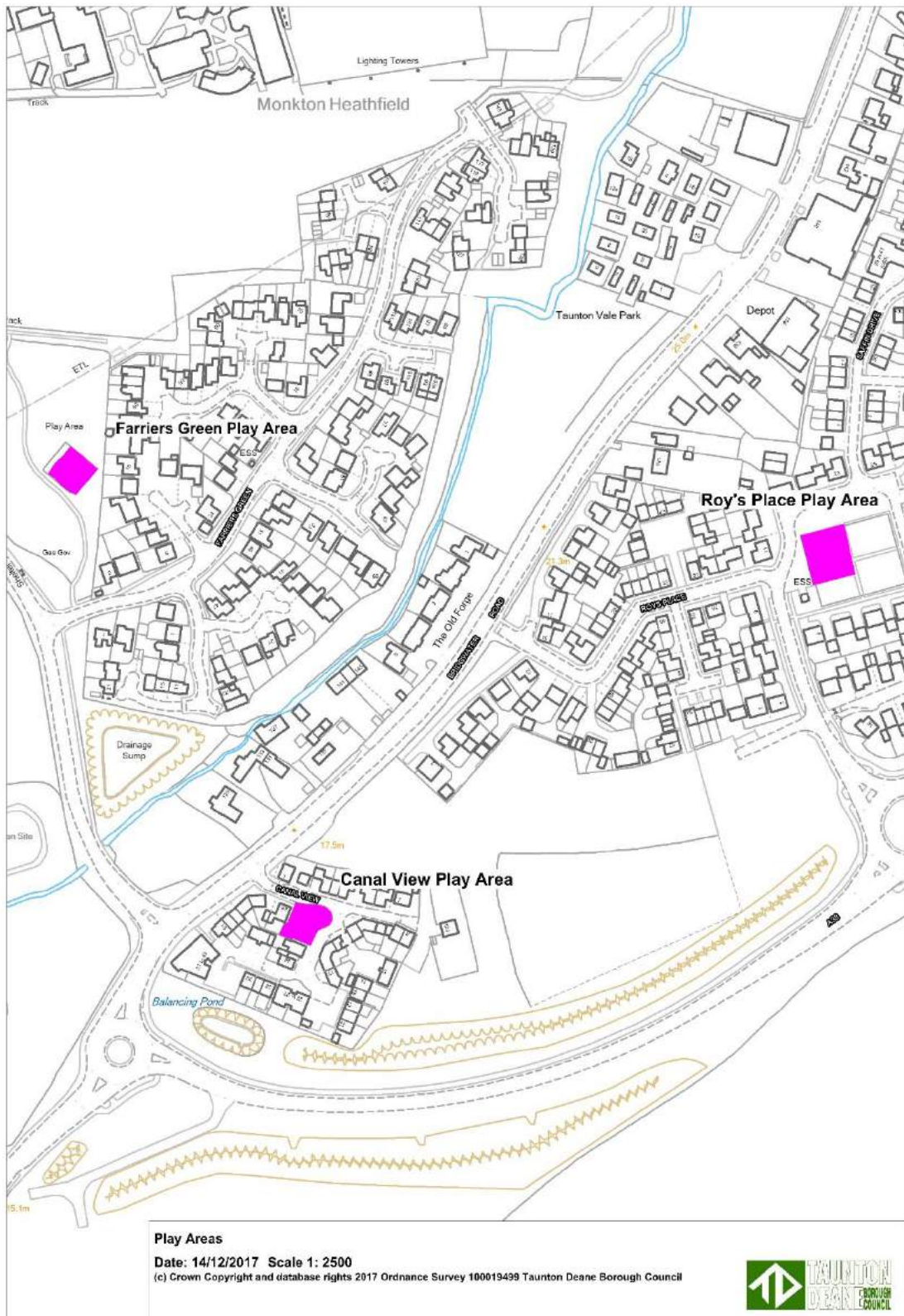


Photo HH – Roys Place Children’s Play Area (aka Community Square)

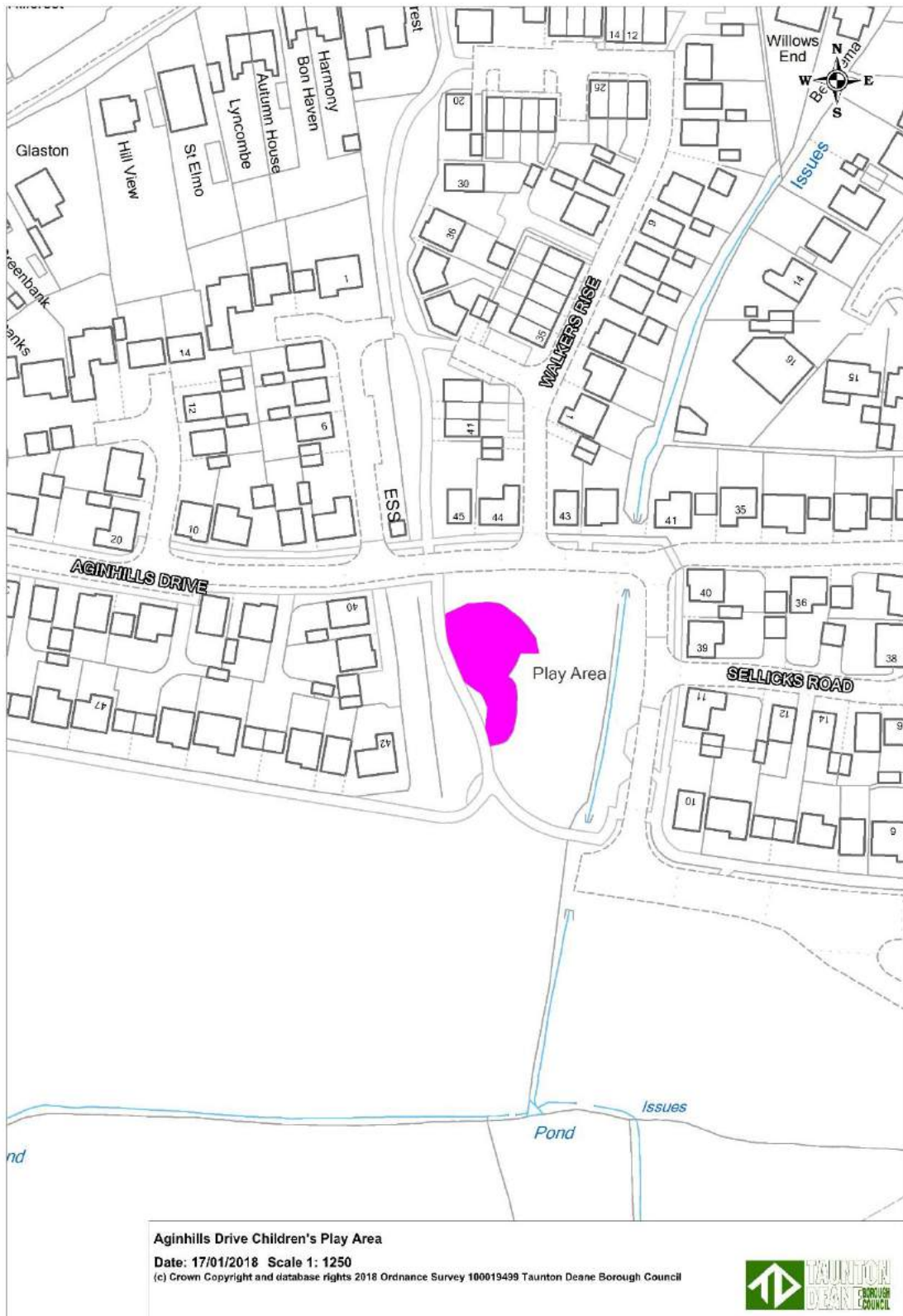


Photo II – Aginhills Drive Children’s Play Area

Map 39 – Farriers Green, Canal View, and Roy's Place Children's Play Area



Map 40 – Aginhills Drive Children’s Play Area



Dyers Brook local nature area: being laid out by the MH1 Urban Extension Developer's Consortium, to link the new and existing communities which are in very close proximity to it. The wildlife corridor is demonstrably special to the local community, having historical significance and valued for its tranquility and the richness of its wildlife.



Photo's JJ and KK - Dyers Brook Nature Area, view west and east

Northwalls Grange play area, completed in June 2021: having a local significance because of its recreational value for the residents of the Northwalls Grange development completed since the NP was made in 2018.



Photo PP Northwalls Grange Play area.

Map 41 – Dyers Brook Nature Area



Hankridge local nature reserve (80% within the NDP Area): is reasonably close to the communities it serves (including Taunton). The green areas are special to the local communities and hold a particular local significance, because of the beauty, tranquility and richness of the wildlife.

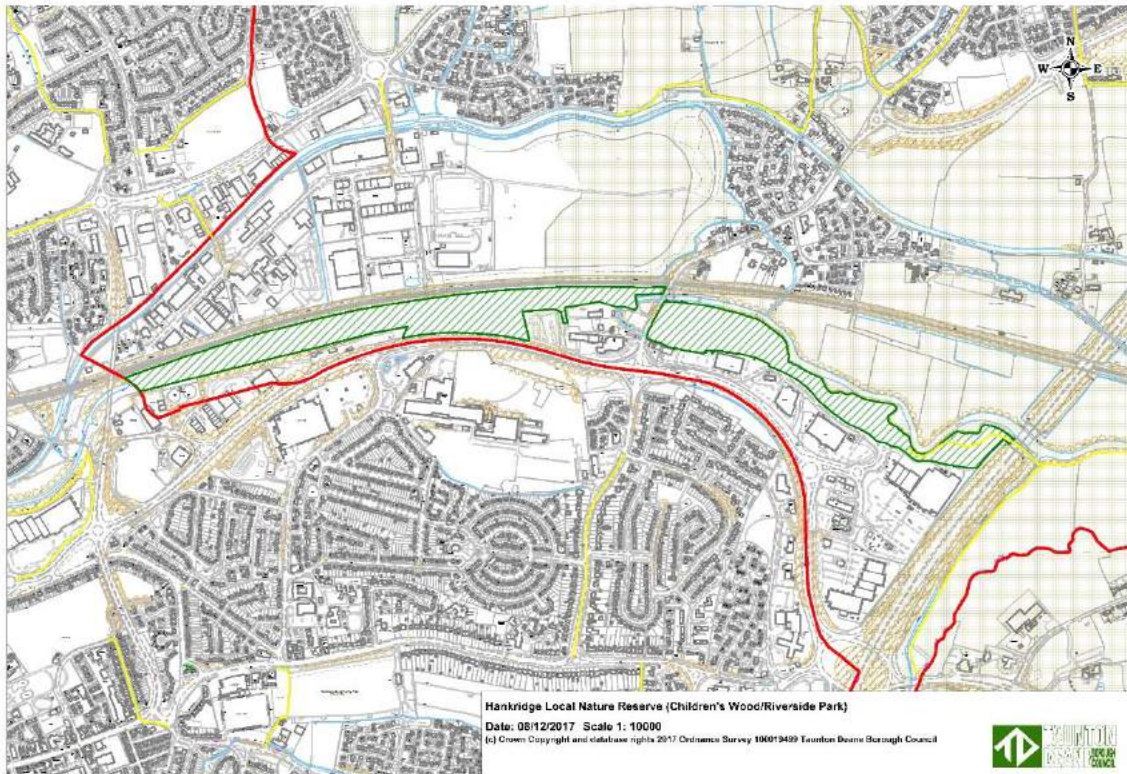


Photo LL: Hankridge Riverside and Children's Wood local nature reserve



Photo MM: Hankridge Riverside and Children's Wood local nature reserve

Map 42 - Hankridge Riverside and Children's Wood local nature reserve



Recreation and Environment Policy R5: Local Green Spaces (Highway Triangles and Recreational Sites)

The following areas, as shown broadly on Map 20 and in more detail on maps 21-43, are designated as Local Green Space:

Highway triangles

- Green Triangle at The Street, West Monkton (Map 21);
- Green Triangle at Hill Farm/Yalway Hill (Map 23);
- Green Triangle at junction of Church Hill and Overton Lane (Map 24);
- Green Triangle at Overton (Map 25).
- Green Triangle at Hobb Lane/Bridgwater Road
- Green Triangle as part of Western Relief Road WRR construction at bottom of Yallands Hill.

Development on these designated areas will not be permitted unless it preserves and enhances the existing use and local historic character of these green triangle areas.

Recreational sites

- Sports pitches and club house, ground levelled and awaiting construction as part of phase one of the Monkton Heathfield Consortium development (over supply of football pitches locally may facilitate instead rugby pitch and cricket ground to satisfy local need);(Map 26);
- Monkton Heathfield secondary school playing fields, not open to the public; (Map 27);
- Kings Hall School playing fields, not open to the public;(Map 28);
- Cashford Gate playing field/football pitch; (Map 29);
- Stoney Furlong public open space/football pitch and basketball; and Maidenbrook (Waterleaze) football pitch and playing area; (Map 30);
- Environs of West Monkton Church of England Primary School, not open to the public; (Map 31);
- Cheddon Fitzpaine Primary School Playing Field, not open to the public; (Map 32);
- Cricket ground at Monkton Heathfield, cricket pitch is not open to the public, outlying areas are; (Map 33);
- Children's play areas; (Map 34-40) open to the public;
- Dyers Brook nature area, to link the new and existing communities; (Map 41) open to the public;
- Hankridge, Riverside and Childrens Wood local nature reserve (Map 42);
- Further recreational sites are expected to be delivered with the Monkton Heathfield 2 (MH2) development;
- Stoney Furlong public open space (Map 30).

Development on the designated areas listed above will not be permitted unless it preserves and enhances the existing use and local historic character of the recreational spaces.

The Local Green Spaces will be subjected to regular review as part of the NP Action Plan of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

<i>Link between policy and local support/evidence?</i>	
Local support?	The residents' questionnaire (2016) has shown support for the Local Green Space policy (Q. 47: 71% in favour of LGS)
Evidence?	<p>Dorset Rural Roads Policy (2008)</p> <p>http://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/assets/downloads/Rural_Roads_Protocol/RORH_55-108.pdf</p> <p>Tunbridge Wells BC 2004</p> <p>Suffolk CC 2003</p> <p>NPPF (2019): paragraphs 99 to 100</p>

Conformity with Core Strategy & NPPF

This policy is in line with the NPPF (2019 paras 99 and 100) which states that:

'The designation of land as Local Green Spaces through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green spaces of particular importance to them...the green space should be demonstrably special to a local community and hold a particular significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including a playing field) tranquillity or richness of its wildlife...'

This NP Policy is considered to be in general conformity with relevant Core Strategy Policies, particularly DM1 (*General Requirements*) DM2 (*Development in the Countryside*) and DM4 (*Design*). It is also considered to be in general conformity with relevant SADMP policies, particularly ENV1 (Protection of Trees, Woodlands, Orchards and Hedgerows).

What difference will it make?

The proposed policy will contribute to the health and well-being of the community by preserving local spaces of historical and local significance and preserving flora and fauna found in these LGSs.

The impact of the growth of the community and its associated transportation requirements will be minimised by preserving the designated Local Green Spaces. This policy will help to deliver WM&CF NP Ecology Recreation and Environment objectives by seeking to protect environmental assets that are not currently protected through statutory or planning designations. The policy also seeks to maintain, manage, and enhance the quality of environmental assets.

Recreation and Environment Policy R6

Justification

Trees are an important climate emergency measure; the suite of benefits is well documented, and includes support for wildlife, increase in biodiversity, and enhancement of landscape and amenity (ref SADMP ENV2).

Recreation and Environment Policy R6 Trees and hedgerows

All new developments are required to include plentiful tree planting and subsequent care to ensure their establishment. Appropriate species should be used (native/British grown), taking into account soil type and volume and the surrounding architecture.

- Tree planting within the street scene, appropriate to the location and surrounding context, will be encouraged to support the climate change agenda wherever practicable or, if not possible, then compensatory planting should be done in the closest Public Open Space (POS). Trees should be planted to contribute to health and wellbeing of communities, support biodiversity and wildlife, and the 'grow and green' agenda.
- When tree loss due to development is unavoidable, mature trees must be replaced 'like for like' wherever possible; regardless of the state of health of the tree unless the entire tree is declared dead by an arboriculturist. Policy ENV1 of the SADMP states that development which would result in the loss of Ancient Woodland or Aged/Veteran Trees will not be permitted. Where replacement is unavoidable, like for like species replacement is required, and the rate should be 3 for every 1 lost.
- Trees and significant hedge and shrub masses should be retained and maintained in good order as an integral part of the design of the development except where their long-term survival would be compromised by their age or physical condition or there are exceptional and overriding benefits in accepting their loss. Trees and significant hedge and shrub plants lost to natural causes should be replaced by disease resistant strains to ensure the trees, shrubs or hedge mass are retained.
- Where the loss of trees is accepted in these circumstances, developers will be required to provide at least equivalent replacement. The biodiversity enhancement required will be at least in accordance with the Environment Bill (2019 -2021). This should be provided on-site unless the developer can show exceptional circumstances which would justify replacement provision elsewhere. The DEFRA Biodiversity Metric 2.0 Calculation tool '... can measure the value of habitats ranging in scale from individual street trees and green roofs through to very important priority habitats.'
- Re suitability of trees within the built environment, they should always complement the architecture, historic environment and the local landscape

in the longer term. Colour of backdrop should also be taken into consideration (for example a Birch will not be clearly visible against a light background). Given the local historic association with cider and perry making, apple and pear community orchards will be encouraged. Attention should be paid to the ratio of evergreen to deciduous trees on the street scene. Measures to counteract the effect of fallen leaves on drainage systems should be included.

- Space should be allowed for newly planted trees to reach their full mature height and spread without causing nuisance or structural damage.
- British grown trees should be purchased to reduce risk of importing diseases and remove the need to quarantine tree stock prior to planting. Tree and shrub planting should be plastic free i.e., no plastic tree guards and supports; biodegradable plastic is not acceptable as it takes too long to degrade. Tree stakes should be FSC certified wood. Where hedges are planted, some could be laid to provide variety in habitats and growth form.
- Management Companies should set up maintenance plans which secure the ongoing stewardship of trees.

Conformity

Mitigation and adaptation measures for climate change and opportunities to ensure future resilience to climate change impacts (such as nature-based solutions) are in accordance with paragraph 149, NPPF 2019, and the climate and ecological emergency (declared by Somerset County Council, Somerset West and Taunton Council, West Monkton, and Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Councils).

The statutory requirement associated within the Dutch N case, to ensure development reaches nutrient neutrality, should be considered for all new allocation sites.

5. ACTION PLAN

Expectations

Proposals should be sustainable and deliverable. This will be achieved through ongoing liaison by the WM and CF Parish Councils with Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWTC) throughout the Masterplanning process for the Urban Extension. Owing to the land already allocated in the Core Strategy, there are no residential

sites listed in the TDBC SADMP (approved Dec 2016) in the NP area. However, allocation of land for community woodland, recreation and employment has been made in the SADMP and included in the Recreation and Environment section, (Objectives) of the NP made in 2017.

If viability is disputed due to the affordable housing and other requirements necessary to create a satisfactory and sustainable form of development, the process detailed in paragraph 1.7 of the TDBC Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (May 2014) will be followed.

Conclusion

A Neighbourhood Action Plan for each Parish will be developed in consultation with local people and regularly reviewed by each Parish Council to ensure that the NP policies are monitored and delivered.

The need to develop Safe Routes to School and High-Quality Bus Infrastructure, as the Urban Extension and other building takes place, will be developed as a detailed part of the Action Plan and cross referenced to the Transport Policy section as appropriate. *(See Transport Policy section of this document).*

The Action Plan will also set out to monitor in more detail:

- how Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions will be allocated and aligned by each Parish Council to the priorities set out in Section 6 Appendices;
- how some of the POSs should be set up as community gardens (for growing food) or community orchards, and allotments (other areas should be equipped with 'trim trails', which are wheelchair accessible where possible).
- a review of the Local Green Spaces (LGS) nominated in Policy R5.

This information will be used during the regular reviews of the NP and the CIL list by both WM and CF Parishes at Parish Council meetings.

Action Identified through the Neighbourhood Plan

Community Action Transport CA1: Developing High Quality Bus Infrastructure

As described above, improving bus services is considered to be important by those who responded to the residents' questionnaire (2016) (217 responses to Question 14).

Furthermore, additional consultation indicates that the provision of quality bus infrastructure such as bus shelters will encourage bus usage. Bus services are particularly important to young people who study at Taunton colleges and are also important to both the young and to the elderly with respect to a number of other town centre destinations, including the hospital, bus and rail stations. The young and elderly population within the NP area is now increasing due to the expanding Urban Extension and other residential developments. Therefore, good bus services/infrastructure will be important to these age groups. Good bus infrastructure will also help to achieve sustainable transport objectives. The increasing population density more generally within the NP area will help to make quality bus services with convenient and reasonable frequency more viable.

The social benefits of public transport, such as improved access to employment, education and health services, are systematically evidenced by the Department of Transport (Valuing the Social Impacts of Public Transport, March 2013).

The supplementary residents' questionnaire conducted in October 2016 indicates how residents would like to see local bus infrastructure improved to encourage more people to use existing and future bus services. The responses demonstrate strong support for the provision of bus shelters (72.7% of responses).

How can bus stops, planned as part of new developments, be improved to encourage more people to use existing and future bus services?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
bus stop	3.0%	2
bus shelter	72.7%	48
digital display	1.5%	1
seat	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)	22.7%	15

Supplementary Residents' Questionnaire - October 2016

Good bus services/infrastructure will also be important to those who travel to work within the NP area, to surrounding commercial and industrial sites and into the town centre.

The Urban Extension will include a Park & Ride (P&R) scheme to serve those traveling to work from areas to the north of Taunton. This P&R scheme provides the opportunity to create a rapid transport link into town for those living in the NP area but working in and around the town centre, with conveniently sited bus stops along the A3259.

Development schemes which help to support and deliver this objective will be supported and the Parishes expect SCC and relevant landowners/developers to work together to secure any further land required to facilitate the rapid transport link/priority bus lane. This can be achieved through relevant legal agreements and/or planning permissions and is particularly relevant to a five-metre-wide strip of land immediately to the north of the A3259, and between Maidenbrook Lane and Yallands Hill within the Maidenbrook Country Park. This is required to provide a widened and unbroken public highway for the rapid transport link/priority bus lane.

CS Policy CP6 (Transport & Accessibility) requires that development should contribute to reducing the need to travel by car through measures such as improving accessibility to public transport, cycling and walking. Furthermore, the supporting text states that the proposed employment development at Monkton Heathfield will be served by high quality bus routes along main road corridors.

SADMP Policy A5 (Accessibility of Development) requires that:

'residential development should be within walking distance of, or should have access by public transport to employment, convenience and comparison shopping, primary and secondary health care, leisure and other essential facilities.'

In addition, the Policy states that:

'all major non-residential development should be accessible within walking distance or by public transport to a majority of potential users.'

Community Action Transport CA1: Developing high quality bus infrastructure

New residential and employment/commercial developments* will be encouraged to provide bus stops to meet bus service requirements, and where bus stops are planned, bus shelters also should be planned. Wherever practicable, every bus stop will have a bus shelter with perch rail, which should be provided with suitable power supply for installation of electronic timetable information. Other measures which contribute to physical improvements in the quality of bus services and/or support bus infrastructure improvements such as priority bus lanes, (Bus Rapid Transport), Park & Ride, seating and litter bins will be strongly supported.

** Major residential developments of 10 units or more, and employment/commercial developments of 1000m² or one Hectare*

What difference will it make?

This Community Action will help to achieve the WM&CF NP Transport Objective by encouraging the delivery of a high quality sustainable and comprehensive infrastructure network for walking, cycling and public transport to meet the particular local needs of both existing and future residents of all ages within the NP area.

Delivery of CA1: Since 2017, bus shelters have been installed at a number of bus stops in the NP area.

Community Action CA2: Place Marking Information

Analysis of the survey of residents in 2019 demonstrated the strong need for map/leaflet/display board information showing all play areas in the two parishes together with the equipment and natural history to be found in each area. A survey of available seating was planned at the same time to identify the need for replacement or refurbishment.

Community Action CA2: Place Marking Information:

Commission a pictorial map of the Play Areas and Open Spaces of the NP area.
Distribute folded map paper copy to every household in the NP area.
Commission park signage using the pictorial map, with location marker 'You are here' for each location.
Install 23 signs at parks, play areas and open spaces across NP area.
Initiate survey of seating in the NP area.

Community Action CA2, with the exception of the seating survey, was delivered in February 2021.

6. APPENDICES

a) Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Spend Priorities

As an area with a 'made' Neighbourhood Plan, the community receives 25% of CIL receipts collected by the SWTC Local Planning Authority in its area. WM & CF Parish Councils used the NP process to engage and consult with the community to establish the types of projects on which each Parish will spend their meaningful proportion of the CIL.

For both parishes within the NP area the CIL lists were developed in 2016, and reviewed in 2020: See Parish Council minutes as follows:

- 8th Dec 2016 Cheddon Fitzpaine (PC paragraph 15)
- 8th February 2017 West Monkton (PC paragraph 22/17)
- 10th November 2020 West Monkton (PC paragraph 187/20 (b))
- 14th December 2020 Cheddon Fitzpaine (PC paragraph 5c)

CIL 123 Headings for Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council

- **In accordance with the Planning Act (2008) as amended by the Localism Act (2011) and the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations (2010) as amended.**
- The list set out below identifies the types of infrastructure and/or specific infrastructure projects for which CIL receipts raised by Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council can be used:
- **Parish Regeneration:**
- To include policies in the Neighbourhood Plan adopted 2018, and subsequent NP Review during 2020-2021.
- **Transport**
- Strategic transport improvements associated with the growth of Taunton excluding site specific matters needed to make the development acceptable in planning terms. Site specific matters can include on-site and off-site transport mitigation works and infrastructure improvements, where the need for such measures has been identified in a Transport Assessment.
- **Community Development**
- Sport and recreation (excluding children's play); Community Halls, places of assembly and other community facilities; Arts and Culture; Green Infrastructure (excluding site specific open space requirements necessary to comply with Development Plan policy);
- Improvements to walking routes to schools;

- Where there are gaps in the cycle or footpath network, consideration will be given to using Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds to complete missing cycle and foot path infrastructure.
- **Surface Water and Flood Risk Mitigation**
- Strategic works only (i.e. excluding mitigation of surface water run-off back to greenfield).
- **This Regulation 123 List will take effect from 14 December 2020.**
- **It will be reviewed annually.**

Parish Clerk

28.11.2020

CIL 123 Headings for West Monkton Parish Council

- Flooding and drainage
- Support for infrastructure required by the new development for the benefit of the Parish, including safety at level crossings
 - Footpaths
 - Cycleways
- Green Infrastructure
 - Public Open Spaces and facilities
 - Footpaths
 - Watercourses/streams
- Health and Well-Being
 - Cycle paths
 - Tennis courts
 - Outdoor activities
- Youth support
- Climate Resilience

Reviewed on:

3rd October 2016

13th November 2018

10th November 2020

Other Matters

On 17 August 2020 SWTC received a letter from Natural England about high levels of phosphates in the Somerset Levels and Moors Special Protection Area (SPA). In light of a court Judgement (known as Dutch N) and the unfavourable condition of the Somerset Levels and Moors RAMSAR site, the Council (SWT) needs to understand whether there is likely to be a significant adverse effect from development and, if

required, an appropriate solution. This has caused a delay to the granting of planning permission and a backlog of applications. The Council is taking advice on whether this also impacts on planning policy documents and their preparation. Since August 2020, SWTC published a Natural England approved phosphates calculator; to provide a transparent and rapid calculation of net phosphate loading from developments including phosphate offsetting calculations for on or off-site locations; published advice for small scale development; and commissioned a county wide nutrient strategy to identify both short term solutions and longer-term strategic solutions to address existing and future growth commitments. The revisions to this Neighbourhood Plan have been prepared to include reference to the Natural England statement of August 2020.

b) Glossary of Terms

ANGSt Natural England's Accessible Natural Green Space Standards	Natural England's Accessible Natural Green Space Standard (ANGSt) provides a set of benchmarks for ensuring access to places near to where people live.
AHVS Affordable Housing Viability Study	An assessment of the implications of affordable housing on the viability of development schemes. The AHVS broadly indicates the amount of affordable housing that could be provided without undermining viability.
AONB Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 for their outstanding landscape quality. There are 37 AONBs in England covering 15.6% of the land area and a wide range of landscape types. In Taunton Deane, there are two designated AONBs: Blackdown Hills and Quantock Hills.
BCZ Bat Consultation Zone	The Bat Consultation Zone marked on the Proposals Map are areas where protected Lesser Horseshoe Bats are known to be and barbastelle bats likely to be regularly using for commuting and/or foraging and in night roosting. The mapping is drawn from radio tracking studies and aerial photographic interpretation of habitat used by bats that are features of the SACs.
BFA Building for Life Assessment	Building for Life assessments score the design quality of planned or completed housing developments against the 20 Building for Life criteria. Anyone can do an informal assessment but formal assessments, now required by several agencies, can only be carried out by an accredited Building for Life assessor.
BFL Building for Life	Building for Life is the national standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods.
BNG Biodiversity net gain	Biodiversity net gain is an approach to development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before. ... Biodiversity net gain still relies on the application of the mitigation hierarchy to avoid, mitigate or compensate for biodiversity losses. It is additional to these approaches, not instead of them.
BREEAM Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method	The leading and most widely used environmental assessment method for buildings. It sets the standard for best practice in sustainable design and has become the de facto measure used to describe a building's environmental performance.
BRT Bus Rapid Transit	Bus rapid transit (BRT) is a term applied to a variety of public transportation systems using buses to provide faster, more efficient service than an ordinary bus line. Often this is achieved by making improvements to existing infrastructure, vehicles and scheduling.
Census 2011	provides data on local communities in 27 March 2011
CF Carbon footprint	A measure of the amount of carbon dioxide produced by a person, organisation or state in a given time.
CfSH Code for Sustainable Homes	The Code for Sustainable Homes is an environmental impact rating system for housing in England & Wales, setting new standards for energy efficiency (above those in current building regulations) and sustainability which are not mandatory under current building regulations but represent important developments towards limiting the environmental impact of housing.
CHSR Conservation of Habitat and Species	The Regulations provide for the designation and protection of 'European sites', the protection of 'European protected species', and the adaptation of planning

Regulations (2010)	and other controls for the protection of European Sites.
CCS Community Council for Somerset	Community Council for Somerset: Supports community groups, organisations and individuals in Somerset's communities.
CIL Community Infrastructure Levy	A mechanism by which councils can secure monies from development to help fund both strategic and local infrastructure needs.
CP Country Park	A designated area for people to visit and enjoy recreation in a countryside environment.
CRPE Campaign to Protect Rural England	National charity devoted to protecting and enhancing rural England. Encourages the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country.
CS Core Strategy	Taunton Deane Borough Council's Core Strategy: forward plan to 2028.
(CSH) Code for Sustainable Homes	The Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) is an environmental assessment method for rating and certifying the performance of new homes based on BRE Global's EcoHomes scheme. It is a Government owned national standard intended to encourage continuous improvement in sustainable home building.
DC District Centre	A large group of shops often containing at least one supermarket or superstore, and a range of non-retail services, such as banks, building societies and restaurants, as well as local public facilities such as a library.
DCLG Department for Communities and Local Government	The Department for Communities and Local Government is the UK Government department for communities and local government in England which aims to foster prosperous and cohesive communities, offering a safe, healthy and sustainable environment for all.
DPD Development Plan Document	This includes adopted Local Plans and neighbourhood plans and is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
EA Environment Agency	A government advisor on the natural environment. Its aim, defined under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.
Employment Land Monitoring	Employment Land Monitoring – The TDBC Employment Land Report provides evidence on the level of Class B1 (Business), Class B2 (General Industrial), Class B8 (Storage and Distribution) and other appropriate uses within employment areas across the Borough. Data is collected on new sites granted permission and changes in floor space, the amount of employment land under construction and completions, and the percentages of these which are on brownfield land, employment land loss is also recorded. The monitor excludes office proposals under 100 sq.m. floor space and 0.20 ha of other employment land. It is published annually and covers the period 1 April to 31st March.
EC Wild Birds Directive (1979) European Commission for Wild Birds Directive	The European Union Directive aims to protect all European wild birds and the habitats of listed species, in particular through the designation of <u>Special Protection Areas</u> " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special_Protection_Area " often known by the acronym SPA.
EDS Economic Development Strategy	The Council's Economic Development Strategy is based on previous quantitative and qualitative research, refreshed with further analysis to capture changes within the local economy driven by the economic crisis, and further

	consultations with representatives of business, education, local government and regional agencies, and the local community.
Examination NP	Neighbourhood Plan Examination is the process undertaken by an Examiner (independent from the LPA and QB) who is testing whether the plan meets the basic conditions and other relevant legal requirements.
FTP Future Transport Plan	A long-term strategy for getting the best from transport for the next 15 year period.
FWAG SW Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group South West	Seeks to support, enthuse and inspire fellow farmers to value the environmental assets on their land and use them to secure sustainable and profitable businesses for the future.
GI Green Infrastructure	Strategically planned and delivered network of high quality green spaces and other environmental features. It should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. Green infrastructure includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, allotments and private gardens.
HE Highways England	Highways England is a government company responsible for operating, maintaining and improving England's motorways and major A roads. It operates a variety of information services, liaises with other government agencies as well as providing traffic officers who patrol the motorways and deal with a range of incidents on their roads
HCA Homes and Communities Agency	The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) is non-departmental public body which provides enabling support for Local Planning Authorities.
HR Habitats Regulations	The Conservation (Natural Habitats & c) Regulations 1994 (SI 1994 no. 2716) is the mechanism by which the UK Government has implemented the Habitats Directive in England, Scotland and Wales.
HRA Habitat Regulations Assessment	The application of HRA to land use plans is a requirement of the Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1994 as amended. The process assesses the potential for a land use plan to affect the conservation objectives of any sites designated for their nature conservation importance as part of a system known collectively as the Natura 2000 network of European Sites.
IDP Infrastructure Delivery Plan	A plan which Identifies what physical, social and green infrastructure is needed, such as new roads, schools and open spaces, who will deliver this and when.
IMD Index of Multiple Deprivation	The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) combines a number of economic, social and housing issues into a single deprivation score for small areas known as Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA). This allows each area to be ranked relative to each other according to their level of deprivation. It should be noted that any comparison is measuring deprivation relative to other areas.
JSNA Joint Strategic Needs Assessment	The JSNA describes the current and future health, care and wellbeing needs of the local population.
LBAP Local Biodiversity Action Plan	The Local Biodiversity Action Plan seeks to turn national biodiversity targets into action along with meeting council biodiversity conservation priorities. The Action Plan includes a number of actions that relate to the protection of threatened species and habitats.

LCA Landscape Character Assessment	An assessment to identify different landscape areas which have a distinct character based on a recognisable pattern of elements, including combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement.
LDF Local Development Framework	The name for the portfolio of Local Development Documents. It consists of Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents, a Statement of Community Involvement, the Local Development Scheme and Annual Monitoring Reports. Together these documents will provide the framework for delivering the spatial planning strategy for a local authority area and may also include local development orders and simplified planning zones.
LDS Local Development Scheme	The local planning authority's time-scaled programme for the preparation of Local Development Documents that must be agreed with Government and reviewed every year.
LEP Local Enterprise Partnership	Local Enterprise Partnerships are locally-owned partnerships between local authorities and businesses. Local Enterprise Partnerships will play a central role in determining local economic priorities and undertaking activities to drive economic growth and the creation of local jobs.
LGS Local Green Space(s)	The NPPF introduced a new concept of a Local Green Space designation (paragraph 76). It is a discretionary designation to be made by inclusion in a Neighbourhood Development Plan.
LPA Local Planning Authority	The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area.
LTP Local Transport Plan	5-year strategy prepared by each local authority for the development of local, integrated transport, supported by a programme of transport improvements. It is used to bid to Government for funding transport improvements.
LWS Local Wildlife Site	A site or area of land protected for its local wildlife and/or habitat value.
LC Local Centre	A range of small shops of a local nature, serving a small catchment.
Masterplan	A Masterplan is a framework which provides comprehensive guidance for a specific location where development and change is encouraged.
Natura 2000 sites	Wildlife sites of European importance. The Birds Directive requires the establishment of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds. The Habitats Directive similarly requires Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to be designated for species other than birds, and for habitats. Together, SPAs and SACs make up the Natura 2000 network of protected areas.
NE Natural England	Natural England is the non-departmental public body of the UK government responsible for ensuring that England's natural environment, including its land, flora and fauna, fresh water and marine environments, geology and soils, are protected and improved. It also has a responsibility to help people enjoy, understand and access the natural environment.
NGO Non Governmental Organisation	A not-for-profit organisation that is independent from state and international governmental organisations.
NHB New Homes Bonus	The New Homes Bonus commenced in April 2011, and will match fund the additional council tax raised for new homes and properties brought back into use, with an additional amount for affordable homes, for the following six

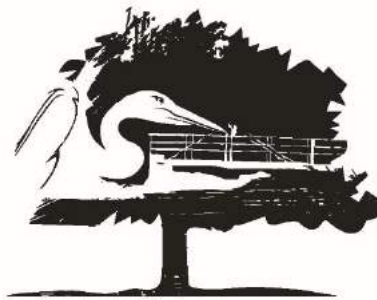
	years.
NDP Neighbourhood Development Plan	The NDP can set out policies and plans for that area, like a Development Plan Document but on a very local scale.
NP Neighbourhood Plan	A planning document created by a Parish Council which sets out vision for the neighbourhood area and contains policies for the development and use of land in the area.
NPPF National Planning Policy Framework	Published in 2012, and re-issued in 2019 , this sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
ONS Office for National Statistics	The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is the executive office of the UK Statistics Authority. It is charged with the collection and publication of statistics related to the economy, population and society of the United Kingdom at national and local levels.
OS Open Space	All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.
PCFMP Parrett Catchment Flood Management Plan (2008)	The Catchment Flood Management Plan provides an overview of flood risk management in a particular catchment.
PDR Permitted Development Rights	Permitted Development Rights are a national grant of planning permission which allow certain building works and changes of use to be carried out without having to make a planning application. Permitted development rights are subject to conditions and limitations to control impact and to protect local amenity. (Gov.UK)
Place making	Placemaking is a multi-faceted approach to planning, design and management of public spaces. It allows for creative patterns of use, with particular attention paid to the physical, cultural and social identities that define a place and support its on-going evolution.
PPG Planning Practice Guidance	A web-based resource which brings together English Planning Guidance linked to the National Planning Policy Framework
PPS Planning Policy Statement	These are issued by central Government and provide policies for local authorities on planning and the operation of the planning system. PPSs replace Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG).
PCT Primary Care Trust	An organisation legally established in the United Kingdom whose purpose is to develop health services for a particular community.
QHLPS Quantock Hills Landscape Partnership Scheme	A collection of projects to conserve and enhance the landscape and heritage of the Quantock Hills and Vale; within the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural beauty (AONB).
ROW Rights of Way	A Right of Way is a path that anyone has a legal right to use on foot.
RS Ramsar Sites	Wetland of international importance designated by the Government under the terms of the Ramsar Convention.
RSN Rural Services	Represents the interest of rural service providers and their rural communities

Network	in England. The newsletters provide latest news, comments and analysis.
S106 Section 106	Contributions secured by the Council to help provide or fund infrastructure items or services that will help make development acceptable in planning terms.
SA Sustainability Appraisal	Tool for appraising policies to ensure they reflect sustainable development objectives (i.e. social, environmental and economic factors) and required in the Act to be undertaken for all local development documents.
SAC Special Area of Conservation	A Special Area of Conservation recommended by the Government under the European Habitats Directive. An area considered important for its wildlife population and diversity.
SBG Somerset Bat Group	The Somerset Bat Group is a very active group making an important contribution to the conservation of bats across the county and nationally. Members conduct systematic recording and regular monitoring of a large number of roost sites across the county. Raising awareness about bats and aiding their conservation is an important part of the group's work. Trained and licensed volunteers visit home owners and give advice on bats in relation to conversions or home improvements.
SAP Standards Assessment Procedure	The Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) is the UK Government's recommended method system for measuring the energy rating of residential dwellings. The first version was published in 1995, to be replaced by newer versions in 1998, 2001 and 2005. It calculates the typical annual energy costs for space and water heating, and, from 2005, lighting. The CO ₂ emissions are also calculated.
SCC Somerset County Council	Somerset County Council – First tier authority
SCI Statement of Community Involvement	The SCI explains how the council will involve stakeholders and members of the public in devising planning policies and determining planning applications.
SEA Strategic Environmental Assessment	A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.
SFRA Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	An assessment of the likelihood of flooding in a particular area so that development needs and mitigation measures can be carefully considered.
SHLAA Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment	The SHLAA is a key component of the evidence base to support the delivery of sufficient land for housing.
SINE Somerset Intelligence Network	Somerset Intelligence Network: is a partnership linking different funding organisations to share data.
SHNA Strategic Housing Needs Assessment	An assessment of housing need and demand which informs the Borough's local development documents.
SPA Special Protection Area	Special Protection Area designated by the Government under the terms of the European Communities Council Directive 79/404/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds. A site of European importance for birds.

SPD Supplementary Planning Document	Provide supplementary information in respect of the policies in <i>Development Plan Documents</i> . They are not subject to an independent examination.
SSSI Sites of Special Scientific Interest	Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are the best examples of our natural heritage of wildlife habitats, geological features and landforms. An SSSI is an area that has been notified as being of special interest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
SUDS Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems	Include a range of different drainage systems that are designed to promote the filtration and evaporation of water as close to the source as possible and to break down pollutants. SUDS are an alternative to drainage through pipes directly to a water course and will help enhance water quality and biodiversity, maintain groundwater levels and reduce the risk of flooding.
SWTC Somerset Wildlife Trust	A non-profit organisation that protects wildlife in Somerset and preserves wild places.
SWTC Somerset West and Taunton	Somerset West and Taunton District Council created in 2019 from former district councils of Taunton and West Somerset.
TA Transport Assessment	A Transport Assessment is statutory document which accompanies a planning application, and is used by planning authorities and highways authorities (and if necessary Highways England) to determine whether the impact of a new development on the transport network is acceptable.
TDBAP Taunton Deane Biodiversity Action Plan	The Action Plan includes a number of actions that relate to the protection of threatened species and habitats and is designed to protect and restore biological systems, particularly in relation to development planning and policy. The BAP seeks to turn national biodiversity targets into action along with meeting council biodiversity conservation priorities.
TDBC Taunton Deane Borough Council	TDBC was the local planning authority new council Somerset West and Taunton replaced it in 2019.
Teignbridge District Council	TDC, Supplementary Planning Document on self-build policy www.teignbridge.gov.uk/selfbuild
TUA Taunton Urban Area	For the purposes of the Core Strategy, the definition of Taunton is taken to include the Taunton Urban Area as shown on the Proposals Map but also including the associated settlements of Bathpool, Bishops Hull, Monkton Heathfield, Norton Fitzwarren, Staplegrove, Staplehay and Trull. The TUA will provide the strategic focus for growth within the Borough.
UE Urban Extension	Involves the planned expansion of a city or town and can contribute to creating more sustainable patterns of development when located in the right place, with well-planned infrastructure including access to a range of facilities, and when developed at appropriate densities.
Use class	The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories known as 'Use Classes'. For example, Class A1 are shops, Class B1a offices, Class B1c light industry and Class C3 dwelling houses
Urban Initiatives	Consultation company appointed briefly by TDBC in 2011 looking at urban extensions especially Monkton Heathfield.
Vernacular	Vernacular Architecture is an architectural style that is designed based on



Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council



West Monkton Parish Council