



West Monkton Parish Council

Comments in respect of the MH2 Vision Document April 2023

[Introduction, context and considerations](#)

The Parish Council has prepared these comments in relation to the MH2 Vision Document.

At the SWT Planning Committee meeting on 30th March, it was indicated that the Parish Council has contributed to the emerging masterplan but this is not the case. This is the first opportunity that the Parish Council has had to comment on the masterplan, although a presentation was received on 9th March, the vision document was not shared with the Parish Council until 6th April and a limited period of time has been given for the Parish Council to provide feedback. The Parish Council therefore provides these comments without having the opportunity to consult the community. As the Emerging Masterplan is in the public domain, a copy of these comments will be published on the PCs community website 'Monkton Matters'.

The Parish Council's comments on the masterplan are based on the assumption, confirmed by Somerset Council Highways Officers that the bus gate, proposed to be installed on Monkton Heathfield Road, will not be delivered. Because of this, the Parish Council objects strongly to the emerging masterplan as drawn because the proposed road layout will have an extremely detrimental impact on traffic flows on Monkton Heathfield Road.

Through this document the Parish Council has suggested changes to the masterplan which will be effective in discouraging traffic from using the Monkton Heathfield Road whilst also enabling better active travel access to and from the development, particularly the District Centre. The suggested changes are illustrated by annotating the existing proposed masterplan. In addition, the Parish Council has made other comments on other elements of the Vision Document.

Although it is accepted that not all the suggestions set out in this document will be incorporated into an amended masterplan, the Parish Council would like a response to each of the suggestions included in these comments. The Parish Council would also like to send a representative to Design Meetings that are scheduled to enable the views of the community to be fed in throughout the development of the proposals for MH2.

The Parish Council has been a reliable sounding board with the Local Planning Authority, the Developers and their consultants regarding all discussions in relation to MH2 and it is keen to work with all parties to enable the development of a masterplan for MH2 that it can support being taken forward.

Suggested Amendments to the Emerging Masterplan:

1. Change road layout
 - New straight / sweeping road should be incorporated. This could either be lowered, enabling pedestrians / cyclists to cross above it or level with pedestrian / cycle crossing points. The new road would run across the development from the A38 junction with Monkton Heathfield Road and could be connected into the existing Langaller roundabout.
 - In addition to the new road layout build outs should be incorporated on Monkton Heathfield Road and a 'no left turn' should be put in place at the junction of the WRR with Monkton Heathfield Road at the Yallands Hill end of the village.
 - The advantages of this change in road layout include:
 - Traffic is discouraged from using the Monkton Heathfield Road but instead to continue on the A38 / ERR.
 - A 20mph speed limit would not be required on an A class road (the urban streets on the existing masterplan).
 - A more direct route is provided.
 - Easier active travel access is enabled from MH1 to facilities in the District Centre of MH2.
 - No additional road building is required so there is no increase in cost to the developer.
 - The road would provide access for construction traffic and access to phases of development.
2. Traffic Light Controlled T-Junction to access and exit Monkton Heathfield Road from A38.
 - This would make it more inconvenient for road users to turn onto Monkton Heathfield Road and more convenient to continue on the A38 to the ERR.
3. Close A38 from existing A38 / Monkton Heathfield Road junction to Cricket Club roundabout
 - With the change in road layout there is no need to keep this roads open. Providing better access between the MH1 and MH2 developments.
4. Reposition School
 - Move the school to the other side of the playing pitches so that it is away from the proposed road.
 - Move the houses that were proposed on the new proposed school location to the location where the school was previously proposed.
5. Scout Hut
 - Include a scout hut next to the woodland. The woodland could be fenced off and managed and used by the Scouts / Guides.
 - All the existing woodland should be retained – the woodland that is in existence is not reflected correctly in the Masterplan.
6. Allotments

No allotments were delivered in MH1 or in the Hartnells development due to phasing. The number of allotments to be delivered in the development should be set as part of the outline planning permission to ensure delivery of an adequate number. Set at an amount per 50 or 100 homes. These should also be provided throughout the development rather than on the edges of it to enable easy access and use. It is suggested that at least three sites should be identified across the development. Possible locations of these are included in the illustration below.
7. Replace sports pavilion with multi-purpose large community hall

A sports pavilion is not required but a multi-purpose building for archery, place of worship, bowls, cricket nets should be included at this location instead.

Illustration of proposed amendments to the Masterplan:



1. Change road layout.

2. Traffic light controlled T – Junction to and from Monkton Heathfield Road

3. Close road from existing A38 junction with Monkton Heathfield Road to Cricket Pitch roundabout

4. Reposition school location and use existing school location for housing

5. Scout Hut

6. Suggested allotment locations

7. Replace sports pavilion with large multi-purpose community hall

Other comments:

District Centre

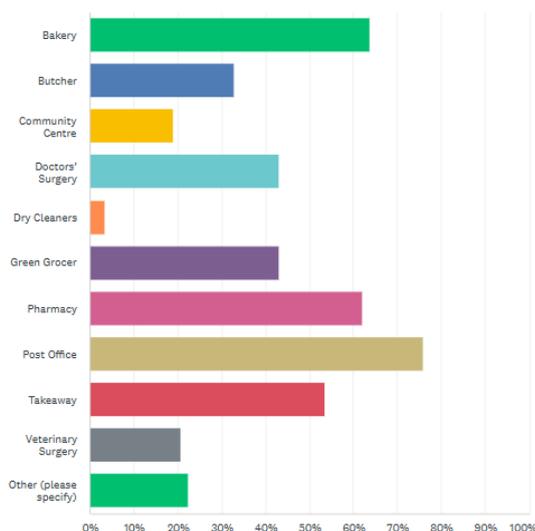
- A sufficient number of retail units should be included in the District Centre for both the MH1 and MH2 development as no retail units have been delivered as planned in MH1.
- The Core Strategy Policy SS1 Monkton Heathfield states that:

'A new mixed-use district centre comprising a 4,400m² (gross) food store, 8000m² (gross) of other convenience and comparison retail (A1), financial and professional services (A2), restaurants and cafes (A3), drinking establishments (A4) and hot food takeaways (A5), 1000m² (gross) offices (B1) which could be on upper floors of buildings and multi-functional community facilities around a village green including land for a range of opportunities including places for worship, community hall, health facilities and care and residential accommodation for the elderly'.

- The Vision Document includes:
 - 2340m² offices
 - 800m² community hub
 - 3400m² retail
 - 160m² mobility hub
 - 400m² energy centre
- The vision document provides significantly less retail than that required in policy SS1. Although it is accepted that there has been a decrease in demand for retail, there has been an increase in demand for leisure facilities, restaurants, cafes and takeaways.
- A recent survey conducted by the Parish Council indicates a demand for the following shops in the District Centre:

It is anticipated that a planning application will be submitted during 2021 for the next stage of development in West Monkton and neighbouring Creech St Michael - the Urban Extension Phase 2. Within the development, a District Centre will be delivered. To inform the comments that the Parish Council submit to Somerset West and Taunton Council (the Local Planning Authority) in relation to the upcoming planning application, a poll has been developed to understand the services and shops that the community most need in the District Centre. Please complete the poll below to indicate your preferences, if a shop / service you would like to see doesn't appear in the poll, please select 'Other' and add your suggestion. Thanks for your time.

Answered: 58 Skipped: 0



- All properties in the District Centre should have identified uses and vents for takeaways should be included. Offices above retail is preferred by the Parish Council.
- It isn't clear in the masterplan where the energy centre is going to be, this should be delivered in an early phase.
- Marketing plan / company should be in place for all mixed use, employment and retail land included in the development.
- Electric charging points should be included in the District Centre

Mobility Hub

- Page 41 of the vision document refers to 1.7 acres of car parking being provided for a park and ride facility. Is a park and ride facility being delivered? Please clarify.

Community Hall

- One small parish office should be included in the District Centre which could have a combined use as an information centre / café / library.
- A larger multi use/ purpose hall should be delivered where the sport pavilion is indicated on the plans. This could house activities like bowls, badminton, archery, a place of worship, community use for large functions. If a 35m x 20m x 7.5m height facility was provided with 3 x 40ft containers with access doors into the hall (with changing room facilities and toilets) the following sports would be able to take place in the hall:
 - Badminton = 13.4M x 10.5M
 - Basketball court = 32M x 19M
 - Cricket nets = 32M x 10M (4 nets)
 - Netball = 35M x 20M
 - Archery = 35M x 20M
 - Indoor bowls = 33M x 18M

Employment Land

- Starter units / light industrial are needed which can be evidenced by local need.
- Requirements in respect of marketing should be set out in any planning permission as a condition. Land allocated for employment should be sold on if it is not marketed or developed.
- The amount of employment land must be proportionate to the housing delivered.

Wetland Areas and Attenuation Ponds

- One of the attenuation ponds should be held wet (approximately 200m x 10m) to enable it to become a useable area for community use for activities like boating, rowing, canoeing and paddleboarding.
- The flow rates of the attenuation ponds should be clearly explained alongside any holding capacity and where. There are more frequent, heavy outbursts of rain being experienced and these should be an additional consideration in the design of attenuation ponds.

Phasing

- An implementation plan for the development and trigger points are important, as certain details of infrastructure need to be in place before very many houses are built e.g. school and District Centre facilities.

- The Parish Council would like to see a detailed staging plan for the development to show how access into the development will be achieved throughout construction of MH2. This will enable the Parish Council to understand the impact on the community throughout the construction of MH2. The Parish Council would like to be consulted on the staging plan prior to its approval and to be kept informed of amendments to the staging plan, especially in light of the duration of the build.
- Due to non-delivery of the retail units in MH1, the Parish Council seeks the inclusion of the construction of the District Centre in phase 1 of the construction.

Trigger points

- The Parish Council considers that the delivery of the District Centre and the School are the priorities for the local community. As mentioned above a detailed staging plan should be developed confirming when these key priorities will be delivered. In addition, trigger points should be agreed for their delivery. The Parish Council would like to be consulted on the trigger points, including any re-negotiation of them. Once the trigger points are agreed they must be enforceable and preferably guaranteed by a Bond.

S106 Agreement

- The Parish Council would like to be a partner of the S106 agreement to ensure that it is consulted should a variation be applied for.
- Financial penalties should be included in S106 agreement should elements of it not be delivered.
- A fixed number of affordable housing to be delivered in the development of 25% should be included in the S106, this proportion should not be negotiable.
- There is an indication that a commuted sum will be included in the S106 for the delivery of the play parks. The Parish Council supports this method of delivery but asks that the commuted sum is index linked.

Active Travel

- A cycle route to Nexus Park should be incorporated using the footpath under the motorway which could be opened as a cycle path .
- There is a need for a full understanding of all cycle / pedestrian routes to Nexus.
- It isn't clear where the green arrows to the north of the development on page 22 of the vision document lead.
- Bus routes in the estate are not clear (only in the mobility hub). Bus routes need to be in place through the estate from first occupation to enable travel habits to include methods of transport other than the car to be developed.
- All bus stops proposed in the development should include bus shelters with the capacity to have an electric timetable facility
- Travel plans are needed reflecting on the mistakes made in MH1 and in the Hartnells development.
- Canal bridge to the New Mill Inn pavement widening should be included as an off-site requirement of the development.

Energy Hub

- The location of the Energy Hub is unclear, this should be delivered in phase 1, how and when delivered should be explained. A commitment to the installation of solar panels should also be included in the design principles for the development.

Design

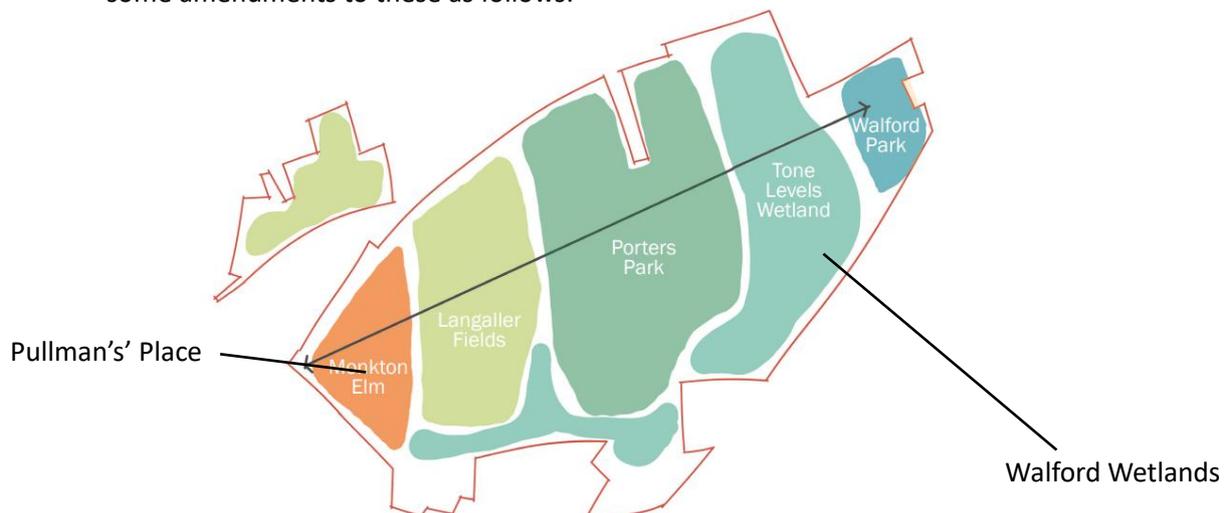
- The size of gardens in the illustrative sketches of the District Centre indicate large gardens, can the anticipated average size of garden in the development be confirmed?
- As the existing use of the land is agricultural, a condition should be included whereby the top four inches of soil is removed and stored on site for use in each garden. This will enable each garden to have at least 4 inches of top soil which will enable growing of vegetables in support of declared climate emergency objectives.
- More tree lined boulevards and open spaces should be included in the development in line with Garden Town principles.
- The West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Plan specifies that buildings should not be more than three storeys and the Creech St Michael Neighbourhood Plan specifies 2.5 storeys.

Parking

- Needs to be factored in for all residential areas including in the District Centre.
- Page 24 – reference to parking and lower car use – the Parish Council considers this to be an unrealistic aspiration.

Layered Mixed Use Development

- Page 19 suggests names for the layers of the development. The Parish Council has suggested some amendments to these as follows:



- The Parish Council also does not believe that Walford Cross is the right name for the development.