

**West Monkton & Cheddon Fitzpaine Neighbourhood  
Plan  
(WM&CF NP)**

**Revised 2021**

**2021-2028**

**Supporting Document**

Sustainability Audit

**West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Councils**

**June 2021**

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Census 2011 information & SCC Demographics

## Introduction

The West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Plan (WM&CF NP) was made in 2017.

Revisions to the WM&CF NP were begun in 2019. The purpose of the review was to increase the Climate and Ecological robustness of the Neighbourhood Plan in the face of changing global and political thinking on Climate Change, and the Declarations of Climate and Ecological Emergency made in 2019 and 2020 by Somerset County Council (SCC), Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWTC) and both the Parish Councils of Cheddon Fitzpaine (CF PC) and West Monkton (WM PC).

Taunton Deane Borough Council ceased to exist in 2019 and was replaced by SWTC which adopted the majority of TDBC Core Strategy (CS) and Site Allocation and Development Management Policy (SADMP).

Since the original WM&CF NP was made, another Census took place in 2021, but the data has not been released. Hence the data quoted from Census 2011 is extant.

Neighbourhood Plans must meet a number of 'basic conditions' including that they contribute to sustainable development. The NP steering group has been mindful of this requirement at all stages of the NP preparation and has commissioned this audit to be fully satisfied that the proposed NP policies will contribute to sustainable development. The other 'basic conditions' are described in the Basic Conditions Statement (supporting document).

Sustainable development is described by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) (paragraph 7) as having three dimensions which are economic, social and environmental and repeated in the updated NPPF (2019) in para 8. These dimensions require the planning system to perform a number of roles which can be summarized as:

- **an economic role** - contributing to a strong economy by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places to support growth; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including infrastructure requirements;
- **a social role** - supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs;
- **an environmental role** - contributing to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment; and as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity as well as mitigating and adapting to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that;

*'A qualifying body must demonstrate how its plan...will contribute to improvements in environmental, economic and social conditions or that consideration has been given to how any potential adverse effects arising from the proposals may be prevented, reduced or offset (referred to as mitigation measures).'*

*'There is no legal requirement for a neighbourhood plan to have a sustainability appraisal. However, qualifying bodies may find this a useful approach for demonstrating how their draft plan...meets the basic condition.'*

To demonstrate how the WM&CF NP contributes to sustainable development the NP steering group commissioned this **proportionate and relevant** sustainability audit. The methodology used broadly follows PPG guidance for producing sustainability appraisals, but it has been tailored to be proportionate and meaningful for the unique circumstances and context for the WM&CF NP.

#### **In 2017:**

As described by PPG another of the basic conditions *'that will be tested by the independent examiner is whether the making of the neighbourhood plan is compatible with the European Union Obligations (including under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive).'* (or any equivalent UK legislation post BREXIT).

Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) is reviewing the WM&CF NP and have provided a 'screening opinion' on whether a formal Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required.

The SEA screening opinion has confirmed that the WM&CF NP will not have significant environmental impacts and therefore a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is not required. The WM&CF NP therefore does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations including the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC). A full Statement of compliance in regard to the Habitat Regulations and Environmental Impact is provided at Appendix 2 in Basic Conditions Statement.

TDBC have provided a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), dated February 2017 and which is included as a supporting document to the WM&CF NP. The recommendations made (p21) with respect to NP Policy R2 have been accepted and this policy has been amended accordingly.

#### **In 2021**

In preparing the Revised WM&CF NP in 2021, the proportionate and relevant sustainability audit prepared in 2017 was reviewed.

## Taunton - Garden Town Status

Taunton was granted Garden Town status by the Government in early January 2017. This status brings with it funding to cover master planning costs and to identify possible future infrastructure requirements and associated capital funding. These improvements will concentrate on the urban extensions already identified for Taunton including Monkton Heathfield and will follow well established Garden City principles and sustainability best practice. The implications of this status, with respect to sustainability for the WM&CF NP, are explored in more detail under the Opportunities to Contribute to Sustainable Development section of this report.

## Process and Consultation

This document was considered by the NP Steering Group on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2016 in tandem with the emerging draft NP and finally reviewed/approved by the Steering Group on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2017. The early draft was circulated to the Steering Group and topic sub-groups in November 2016.

In 2017 The Sustainability Audit was prepared by Mark Pollock Planning Ltd in close consultation with the Steering Group and sub-groups.

This document is a Supporting Document to the WM&CF NP and will, therefore, be subject to the full NP statutory consultation process. Prior to that formal process this document has been informed and lead by the results of the various public consultation events described in the Consultation Statement.

The review of the 2017 Sustainability Audit in support of the 2021 Revised WM&CF NP drew on comments and consultations described in the updated Consultation Statement.

## **1) Context and Local Sustainability Issues**

### National & Local Planning Policy Context

National planning policy is set out by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was published by the Government in March 2012, and revised in 2019. The NPPF 2019 makes a number of references in support of neighbourhood planning including that it '*gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need*' (para. 29).

As the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) is responsible for producing the Core Strategy (CS) for the Borough which was adopted in September 2012 and covers the period up to 2028, (or

until such time as it is refreshed). The CS sets out a vision for Taunton Deane and strategic objectives, spatial strategy, and policies for meeting that vision. The CS specifies the locations and quantity of growth to be accommodated within the Borough and identifies strategic site allocations, including mixed use urban extensions. Taunton Deane Borough Council ceased to exist in 2019, and a new Council, Somerset West and Taunton (SWTC) emerged. The Core Strategy policies were adopted by the new Council. References to the SWTC CS and SADMP remain unchanged. SWTC has started work on a new Local Plan: The new district wide plan will cover the time period up to 2040 setting out objectives and the key issues around development needs over the next 20 years.

The centres of the settlements of West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine are defined as 'villages' by CS Policy Spatial Policies and identified as Conservation Areas and as such will retain defined settlement boundaries and will have no further allocations made through the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP).

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 Development Management Policy DM2.

The WM&CF NP area contains a large part (57%) of the emerging Taunton Urban Extension (UE) as set out by CS Policies SS1(Monkton Heathfield) and SS2 (Priorswood/Nerrols). (Note: - the percentage split is an approximation based on geographical area and does not equate to the split of the built-up area uses (housing, employment, greenspace, etc).

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 C4), 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. In 2018 some of the employment land was released for Housing.

A new Masterplan is currently being produced through a fully inclusive approach between TDBC, the developers, local Parish Councils and local people. The development of the NP will be 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 development of the Revised WM&NP NP reflects changing legislation on Environment and Climate and reflects the experiences gained during the build-out of the Urban Extension at Monkton Heathfield (CS Policy SS1) and the development at Nerrols (CS Policy SS2). Data from SWTC in March 2020

indicated the number of completions in MH1 was 1020 which represented 80.2% of the total approved.

The SADMP adopted by TDBC covers the period to 2028. SADMP policies have been adopted by SWTC. This planning document sets out detailed policies for the allocation of land for housing, employment and other development proposals across Taunton Deane and 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 proposes two new allocations within the NP area; Policy TAU10 allocates 5.5 ha of land east of the Crown Industrial Estate for employment purposes and Policy TAU11 allocates 16 ha of land at the former Priorswood Landfill site for community woodland or other recreational uses. These allocations are defined by the SADMP Proposals Map; [http://tauntondeane.objective.co.uk/portal/sadmpp/d\\_sadmp/draft\\_sadmp\\_consultation?pointId=s1419340548149#section-s1419340548149](http://tauntondeane.objective.co.uk/portal/sadmpp/d_sadmp/draft_sadmp_consultation?pointId=s1419340548149#section-s1419340548149)

The SADMP Proposals Map has a wealth of detailed planning, historic and natural environmental information, including detailed insert maps for both West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine and which illustrate the Settlement Limits for these villages and other relevant information. Many of the historic and environmental designations defined by the Proposals Map are linked to CS Policy CP8 (*Environment*) which sets out detailed measures to protect and conserve the environment including landscape, biodiversity, green infrastructure and flood risk issues.

TDBC has produced an Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which was adopted by TDBC in May 2014. This document remains current.

Somerset County Council (SCC) as the local highway authority have adopted a Future Transport Plan (FTP) 2011 to 2026. The FTP is supported by an Active Travel Strategy, and which includes Cycling, Walking and School Travel Strategies - August 2012. A Transport Passenger Strategy (bus and rail) is currently being developed by SCC. All relevant County Council transport policies are comprehensively listed by the Transport Policy Directory.

These policy documents are referenced throughout the NP and relevant policies along with supporting evidence is quoted and described in detail where appropriate. It is not therefore intended to duplicate this information in the sustainability audit.

It is important to note that WM&CF NP makes no new site allocations in addition to those already made by the CS and SADMP. This remains the case in the Revised WM&CF NP document (2021).

## NP Area Profile and Baseline Information

A detailed description of the Parishes making up the NP area is provided by the NP document within the Area Profile section. This includes a map to illustrate the designated NP area which corresponds almost exactly with the West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish boundaries except for a small area, excluded in agreement with TDBC, of the designated Staplegrove employment area on the western boundary of the NP area.

The NP includes a socio-economic profile of the Parishes, and which is mainly derived from census 2011 data. This census data is summarized for both West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Parishes by Somerset Intelligence Network (SINe) <http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/>

This information provides detailed data on population, identity, health and care, economic activity, housing and housing type. As such this information provides good socio-economic baseline data for the NP area and which will be updated at the next census in 2021. At the time of this document, the results of the 2021 Census have not been released.

## Demographics and Social Issues

Data obtained from Somerset Intelligence Network: Rural Services Network – guide to Neighbourhood Planning: and Census 2011.

Interpretation: Since the last Census in 2011 there has been significant growth of Taunton Deane and the WM and CF NP area. TDBC has Growth Area Status, and one of the 5 Urban Extensions proposed for Taunton has commenced building in Monkton Heathfield (within NP area) ref: TDBC Core Strategy. Therefore, some of the figures from the Census 2011 do not reflect the current situation in the Neighbourhood Plan area. The north of the NP area is largely agricultural, with long established farming families. In the south, the housing estates attract a different demographic, although the Census 2011 figures do not completely reflect the changes that have taken place. Further details are provided at the Appendices.

Appendices show that households in West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine both have a higher than average number of cars per household.

Somerset is a well-established retirement destination which, together with a growing local elderly population, is rapidly increasing the number of older people within the Taunton area (as evidenced by Core Strategy evidence base - see NP Housing Policies justification) and as demonstrated for the county as a whole by the demographic maps in the appendices.

Information on the level of deprivation across Taunton, and including within the NP area, is provided by Lower Layer Super Output Areas, or neighbourhood, indices of multiple deprivation data as summarized by

Somerset Intelligence (October 2015) and May 2021. This does not show any areas of significant deprivation within the NP area, however, some adjoining urban areas are within the most deprived 20% in England. It is striking to note the contrast between some of the least deprived areas in England within parts of the NP area with some of the most deprived areas in England just outside the NP area.

The CS and SADMP evidence base also provides useful data concerning the Parishes but which is not always specific to the NP area. Nevertheless, this information, including future trends, is referenced by the NP where appropriate. Of particular note is the recently completed Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), October 2016, which has been prepared jointly for four Somerset District Councils including TDBC.

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 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 life-time 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.

Baseline ONS 2011 census data shows the West Monkton (WM) population to be 2,787 and the Cheddon Fitzpaine (CF) population to be 1,929. TDBC (16<sup>th</sup> February 2017 TDBC Comments) 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. By 2028 (based on TDBC allocations only, no windfall estimates are included) from the 2011 baseline: it is estimated that there will be an additional c.1,510 persons in CF and an additional c.7,997 persons in WM. 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. The most recent data can be found in Somerset Intelligence, and the figures published in the NP have been updated. As at March 2020 the number of completions on the MH1 site stood at 1020 which represents 80.2% of the total approved. (Data released by SWTC).

## **2) Environmental Baseline Data**

### Local Nature Reserves

There are two Local Nature Reserves within the NP area which are the Children's' Wood & Hankridge Riverside. Gadd's Valley has been deleted from the list as it has reverted to private ownership. A narrow strip of the Children's' Wood adjacent to the A38 was de-declared in Feb 2021 to allow for junction improvements at the Creech Castle.

The Taunton Deane website no longer exists, and with it the list of Local Nature reserves in the NP area.

### Biodiversity

The Taunton Deane Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) (2008) includes conservation strategies for both habitat types and for specific species across the Borough. This has been updated and adopted by SWTC.

<https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/media/1328/taunton-deane-green-infrastructure-strategy-luc-2009.pdf>

The Somerset BAP (2008) is also of some relevance and the Somerset Pollinator Action Plan (2018-2028) has been referenced.

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/waste-planning-and-land/biodiversity/#Somerset-Pollinator-Action-Plan>.

The Hestercombe House Special Area for Conservation (SAC) (and SSSI) has been designated to conserve lesser horseshoe bats as the site is a summer maternity roost for this species. This designation has been subject to an Appropriate Assessment as part of the Urban Extension proposal put forward by CS Policy SS1. This work has resulted in the designation of bat consultation zones which cover parts of the NP area including West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine. Furthermore, the CS requires certain planned new development within the NP area to provide off-site offset woodland planting where bat foraging areas will be lost or diminished. The legislation relating to the Hestercombe SAC is current (2021).

In addition to protection afforded by Conservation Area Status a number of trees and groups of trees within the NP area are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) which are made and recorded by TDBC. SWTC has adopted the TPO register:

<https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning/trees-and-tree-protection/>

Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC) (hosted by Somerset Wildlife Trust) has comprehensive natural history records for the County and including for the NP area. The two Parishes have worked with Somerset Wildlife Trust in the tree planting at the Country Park. By 2021, 3500 trees had been planted for the Somerset Wood – a scheme initiated by SCC in 2019 to plant a tree to commemorate every fallen soldier from Somerset in World War 1, totalling 11821. To allow for natural waste and thinning it is anticipated that 14000 trees will be planted overall, in land within the NP area.

### Landscape and Geology

Landscape Character Assessments have been completed for Taunton's Rural-Urban Fringe (2005) which assesses the potential capacity to accommodate growth around the town and the Taunton Deane Landscape

Character Assessment (2011) has also been completed. The former document divides the Borough into a number of Landscape Character Types of which three are wholly or partly within the NP area. These Landscape Character Types are:

- 1B: Cheddon Fitzpaine Farmed and Settled Low Vale
- 1C: Creech Farmed and Settled Low Vale
- 2B: Tone River Floodplain - East Taunton.

A detailed description of each landscape area is provided including their geology, hydrology, agricultural land use types, natural and man-made features.

Taunton Deane Green Infrastructure Strategy (2009) assesses the need and demand for green infrastructure in relation to open space, access links, landscape, ecology and biodiversity, cultural heritage, flood risk management and socio-economic issues. The Strategy is referenced and described by CS Policy CP8 (*Environment*). This policy has been adopted by SWTC, and an update was published in Jan 2020.

A small north western part of the Parish of West Monkton is within the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) as illustrated by a plan contained within the NP. Comprehensive information concerning this AONB can be found at <http://www.quantockhills.com/> including a link to the CPRE interactive maps of dark skies and light pollution for the AONB and NP area. The Quantocks SSSI is contained within the Quantock Hills.

The Quantock Hills are largely formed by rocks of the Devonian period, but the lower fringes are composed of younger New Red Sandstone rocks of the Triassic period.

The Triscombe quarry described by the NP Area Profile was extracting Hangman Grit stone, which are among the oldest rocks of the Quantocks. These hard rocks were formed, under water from 490 million years ago and underlie the wilder northern part of the hills. The stone is a grey/rust colour, caused by weathering during their formation, which has been matched successfully in recent years by man-made building materials. The Triscombe Quarry is now closed, although some stone is released occasionally for heritage work.

Other stones of about the same period and appearance, the Morte Slates, were quarried on the Quantocks and used as the building material in Cheddon Fitzpaine and West Monkton. The use of these stones as a major construction material petered out as supplies diminished, but some buildings show evidence of salvaged stone being used in front garden walls or quoins on

houses. Taken from [www.devon.gov.uk](http://www.devon.gov.uk) and SCC Minerals and Waste Development Framework Dec 2012 which identifies the Hangman Sandstones as 'needed building stones formerly quarried in Somerset. This stone is one of three key Devonian building stones used within the Quantock Hills and surrounding area and makes a major contribution to the built heritage in this part of Somerset. Formerly much quarried from the area although there are no current active workings'.

The Devonian Sandstones Mineral Safeguarding area, - shown in Map 9 in the SCC document - lies within the Neighbourhood Plan area, the map is derived from 1:50000 scale BGS digital geological map data.

### Flooding, Landfill and Air Pollution

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 provides more detail on flood risk and management both within the Taunton rural area and surrounding rural areas. The area of Bathpool has been included in the Taunton Deane Strategic Flood Risk Assessment area.

SCC 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 land owners.

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 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 (where possible).

It will not lessen partners' and land owners' existing responsibilities or accountabilities. The existing Flood Risk Management Authorities, including the Internal Drainage Boards, will continue - with increased opportunities to link activities and ensure they benefit from members' collective experience and knowledge.

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.

Other EA environmental maps on the EA website show historic landfill sites located in and around the NP area and including the Priorswood landfill site to the east of the Crown Industrial Estate.

EA data mapping air pollution did not highlight any areas of concern within the NP area at the time of writing.

With respect to the wider Taunton area TDBC has declared two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's) at Henlade and East Reach for exceedance of the annual mean nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) objective. SWTC has taken these areas forward, the most recent publication was the Annual report dated 2020. There are no AQMA areas within the NWM&CF NP area.

Although both these AQMA's are outside the NP designated area the NP has the potential to contribute to air quality improvements across Taunton through policies designed to promote more sustainable modes of travel.

In addition to support for cycling and walking initiatives in Taunton and the NP area, (see Policy TA1), the Revised WM&CF NP seeks to encourage use of public transport, although the success of the delivery of promised Travel Plans in the Urban Extension has been limited.

The NP revisions include suggestions for planting in development areas of those species found to be particularly good at absorbing particulates from the air where traffic emissions are high (e.g. *Cotoneaster franchetii*).

### Heritage and Archaeology

There are three Conservation Areas within the NP area and these are at Hestercombe, Cheddon Fitzpaine and West Monkton (none have yet been subject to a Conservation Area appraisal) (Maps are provided within the NP to illustrate their extent).

The TDBC website held lists of heritage properties in each of the two parishes but the website no longer exists and searches on [www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](http://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk) are directed to: Somerset historic environmental record, Historic England, British Listed Buildings.

In the Historic England database (2021), West Monkton Parish shows 45 results in Historic England listings and Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish shows 37, including Hestercombe House and various other buildings and structures within the estate. Historic England has also listed the park and gardens as Grade 1.

In addition to listed buildings it is important to note that all buildings of traditional construction and using traditional materials such as Monkton Stone (a morte slate) contribute to the heritage and local distinctiveness of the NP area and should therefore also be valued in terms of defining local character.

The Historic Environment Record throughout Somerset has been digitised and is available on the South West Historic Trust website(which has been updated); <http://www.somersetheritage.org.uk/>  
This lists 100 results for Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish and 98 for West Monkton Parish.

Areas of High Archaeological Potential and County Archaeology Sites within the NP area are defined by the SADMP Proposals Map and the relevant SADMP Policy is ENVA: (*Archaeology*).

### **3) Key Sustainability Issues and Options**

Raised by Residents' (including supplementary) & Business Questionnaires and by other consultation (see the Consultation Statement) (2016)

#### Economic Issues

- Support to encourage further business and commercial development in the area to provide local jobs for local people in order to bring economic advantage to the NP area and which will reduce the need to travel to and from work
- the top three types of local employment wanted are small shops, small businesses and jobs in the leisure industry. There was also significant support for farming diversification, agriculture, office/professional and for homeworking
- strong support to retain currently designated employment land and local businesses such as local shops, pubs and cafes
- in terms of new employment provision the favoured option is to expand existing employment zones followed by rural farm units and then starter units. There was also some support for live/work units
- limited employment opportunities in rural areas
- barriers to businesses expanding included traffic congestion and poor broadband connections.

#### Social Issues

- Achieving the right mix of house types to allow people of all age groups to remain living within the NP area, particularly the young, families and older people
- support for starter and affordable housing for local people
- a lack of nursery school places within the NP area
- a need for more local shops, cafes, and other local services and community facilities such as a post office
- a strong desire to establish a youth club and related activities for young people
- other sports facilities were requested such as tennis courts, playing fields, play areas and an astro-turf pitch.

An overarching social sustainability issue will be achieving community cohesion and social inclusion with the building of new housing on the significant scale proposed by the CS. This will mean forming new and successful communities and ensuring that these new communities integrate well with adjoining and established communities within, and adjoining, the NP area.

Since the Sustainability Audit was written in 2017, the Urban Extension at Monkton Heathfield has grown, occupancy figures issued in 2020 indicate 1020 homes completed. Similar increase in communities is shown in the growth of the Northwalls estate at Nerrolls.

West Monkton Parish Council has one of its Members particularly responsible for Community matters, and a second Assistant Clerk is soon to be appointed with responsibility for Community Development.

### Environmental Issues

- Support for preserving and enhancing local areas which are considered to have heritage, ecological and landscape value
- a strong feeling that there has been enough development and that the local villages and surrounding open countryside should be protected from further development
- the three most important (which emerged from the resident's Questionnaire) sustainable residential construction issues in urban areas are considered to be energy use, water use and drainage impact

- the three most important (which emerged from the resident's Questionnaire) sustainable residential construction issues in rural areas are considered to be protection of ecology, impact of materials and drainage impact
- local red sandstone and other traditional building materials and construction techniques are considered to be locally distinctive to the NP area
- there is a preference for higher density dwelling types within urban areas and lower density dwelling types in rural areas
- strong support to encourage wildlife such as "nature buffer zones" around developments and protecting/enhancing wildlife within development proposals
- support to preserve and create traditional Somerset orchards
- concerns about loss of open space and wildlife habitats due to development
- strong demand for litter and dog waste bins and for seats within public open space areas
- strong support for protecting locally "important trees", ancient trees and hedgerows as well as for the use of native species in new landscaping schemes
- a number of small locally significant green spaces were identified which should be protected
- various locations liable to flooding were listed and possible measures to improve drainage were described.

The overarching sustainability challenge within the NP area will be accommodating the proposed urban extension in a way which is not detrimental to existing or future communities or to the local built and natural heritage.

### Sustainable Transport

- Improving sustainable transport links to reduce traffic congestion
- improving sustainable transport links to improve access to community facilities and services

- improving sustainable transport links and bus infrastructure to reduce traffic congestion and the creation of safe routes to schools and community facilities
- traffic calming to the existing highway network and restricting through traffic.

Successful sustainable transport is a cross-cutting issue which has economic, social and environmental implications which have the potential to contribute to sustainable development.

The questionnaire sent to all residents and businesses in 2019, focussed on Sports and Leisure provision. The analysis of results is appended to the updated Consultation Statement.

### Opportunities to Contribute to Sustainable Development

The NP provides an opportunity for local people to shape large scale housing and employment development proposed by the CS and SADMP to address as far as possible local sustainability issues where they relate to land use planning matters.

There will be opportunities to ensure that the right mix of both house types and housing tenure are provided to meet the needs of local people and to allow them to remain living locally should they wish to do so. Self and custom build opportunities should be encouraged to meet identified local demand over the life-time of the NP.

New sustainable communities will need to be created which are as self-contained as possible and which integrate well with existing communities.

There will be opportunities to retain and create local jobs to improve economic well-being and to reduce the need to travel by car. Home working should also be encouraged through the provision of live/work units and by improving broadband connections and speeds. Starter workshop units will allow small businesses to expand from home or live/work units.

Opportunities to improve and add to foot and cycle path networks should be taken to improve safety and convenience and thereby encourage more people to use active modes of travel with associated health benefits. Opportunities to improve the bus infrastructure should also be taken to encourage people to use public transport whenever possible thereby reducing the need to travel by car. These measures will help to reduce traffic congestion and related air pollution.

Significant green space is proposed as part of the urban extension and this provides recreation, wildlife and flood attenuation opportunities through the

careful design of multi-use open spaces, although the net gain needs to be assessed against the loss of open countryside.

Taunton's Garden Town status is a great opportunity to ensure that exceptional green and other infrastructure is central to the design and layout of new developments proposed within the NP area, thereby creating sustainable Garden communities.

Finally, the NP has the opportunity to influence and shape the revised urban extension master-plan in partnership with the developers and other key stakeholders.

The statements written above in 2017 remain the same in 2021.

#### **4) Sustainability Audit Aims**

The aims have been derived from the key sustainability issues and opportunities described above and have helped to shape the NP Policies through the Sustainability Audit (table 1) to ensure that they contribute to sustainable development as far as possible.

##### Economic

Create and retain local employment opportunities and to remove local barriers as far as possible to business expansion such as lack of floorspace/land, traffic congestion and poor broadband.

##### Social

Provide the right mix of house types and tenures for local people and to ensure that cohesive and inclusive communities are established with good local services and facilities.

##### Environmental

Conserve and enhance the local built and natural heritage. Ensure new public green space is used to its full potential to deliver recreational (both informal and formal), wildlife and flood attenuation benefits for local people now and for future generations. Ensure new developments are of a high-quality design which respects and integrates as far as possible with the existing built environment and local architectural styles and materials.

The Revised WM&CF NP has some changes in this section of the Neighbourhood Plan, informed by current thinking and Climate Change Initiatives. Two extra policies have been added:

An extra policy has been added to the Housing Policy section: Policy H6 Building and Climate which seeks to promote use of sustainable materials, use resources wisely and reduce carbon emissions.

An extra policy has been added to the Recreation and Environment policy section: Policy R6 Trees and Hedgerows, which seeks to encourage planting, achieve biodiversity net gain, retain existing trees and hedgerows wherever possible, and enhance the built environment with plentiful planting in streets and open spaces.

### Sustainable Transport

Encourage more sustainable modes of transport is an overarching sustainability aim with economic, social and environmental benefits. More efficient transport will allow people to be more productive; more active modes of transport will result in health benefits and safer and more convenient sustainable transport routes to schools, recreation and community facilities will have safety and community cohesion benefits.

Since the Plan was made in 2017, section 106 funds allocated to the Travel Plan have been mobilised in conjunction with SCC to run a bus service for MH1 linking it to Taunton and the hospital.

### **5) Sustainability Audit (table 1)**

NP Policies	Do the NP policies contribute to the SA sustainability aims?	Negative sustainability impacts - mitigation/policy amendments, and, or alternatives needed?
<p><b>Transport Policy T1 was rejected by the Examiner prior to the NP Plan being made.</b></p>		

<p>Transport Policy T1: Developing high quality bus infrastructure</p>	<p>The proposed policy will encourage the use of public transport thereby reducing the need to travel by car with related traffic congestion and air pollution benefits.</p>	<p>Cleaner bus engines will be required but this is outside the scope of the NP. Bus stops/shelters will need to be carefully sited to minimize potential disturbance to any nearby residents &amp; highway safety issues. The Steering Group noted this issue but considered it would be better addressed separately from the NP by the Parishes. This policy was rejected by the Examiner and reallocated as Community Action 1 in the NP made in 2017. Hence retained here with strikethrough.</p>
<p>Transport Policy T2: Developing a comprehensive &amp; high-quality cycle &amp; foot path network</p>	<p>The proposed policy will encourage active modes of transport with health, safety, air pollution &amp; traffic reduction benefits. The policy will help to bring communities together with improved access to community facilities &amp; local schools.</p>	<p>Need to consider potential impact of light pollution from foot and cycle paths, particularly in the more rural parts of the NP area and also the impact of such lighting on wildlife, particularly bats. (See Policy R1).</p>
<p>Rec/Env Policy R1: Dark Skies</p>	<p>The proposed policy will reduce energy use, help to maintain biodiversity and will be beneficial to human health and well-being. Extra information about protecting bats from external lighting has been added in 2021 revisions.</p>	<p>Need to be mindful of potentially negative impacts on health and safety which might result from reduced lighting in terms of both highway and crime issues. Policy amended accordingly. LED Downlighters recommended.</p>

<p>Rec/Env Policy R2: Green Space &amp; Wildlife</p>	<p>The proposed policy will maintain and enhance biodiversity and will be beneficial to human health and well-being. It will also assist with flood attenuation measures. In 2021 further details were added to existing policy to reflect current Environmental and Climate considerations.</p>	<p>Insignificant. The reference to bat boxes has been omitted as recommended by the HRA.</p>
<p>Rec/Env Policy R3: Flood Attenuation</p>	<p>The proposed policy will help to alleviate flooding impacts both within the NP area and downstream. 2021 Revisions include Improvement to SUDs arrangements and protection of RAMSAR sites on Somerset Levels and Moors</p>	<p>Unintended consequences from piecemeal flood attenuation works. Need to ensure that any works resulting from this policy are properly integrated with wider flood attenuation schemes co-ordinated by the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA). Policy amended accordingly</p>
<p>Rec/Env Policy R4: Recreation &amp; Community Facilities</p>	<p>The proposed policy will encourage more people to become active and engaged with their local community improving their health and community cohesion/integration Improvements to canal towpath las a leisure and commuter route.</p>	<p>Need to ensure that the siting of play areas and other recreation features are sensitive to adjoining residential areas to reduce the potential for any future conflict/anti-social behaviour. Noted by the Steering Group. Increased use of towpath may cause structural damage.</p>
<p>Rec/Env Policy R5 Local Green Spaces</p>	<p>Policy R5 was part of the made NP in 2017, but not included in this table. Policy designed to protect ancient junction triangles from the impact of heavy agricultural and other machinery on the narrow lanes of the rural northern parts of the NP</p>	<p>Protection considered necessary as the Local Green Spaces are part of the natural character of the area and essential for health and well-being.</p>

	<p>area. Some of the junction triangles are very ancient, representing resting and safe passing places for horse and cart transportation.</p> <p>Local play areas were also included in Policy R5 as an essential to health and wellbeing of the residents of the new estates in the urban south of the NP area, and to protect against any loss of green space in developed areas.</p>	
Rec/Env Policy R6 Trees and Hedgerows	<p>This policy has been added to protect the existing trees and hedgerows in the NP area as they are threatened by the impact of development in the area. Trees and Hedgerows are important to the NP area for their sequestration of carbon, and some hedgerows can absorb particulates from traffic emissions</p>	<p>Need to ascertain that British bred/native species are used to avoid risk of diseases and upset of the natural local ecology.</p>
Housing Policy H1: Housing Suitable for Older People	<p>The proposed policy will contribute to sustainable development by ensuring that there is the right mix of housing to meet local needs thereby contributing to inclusive and cohesive communities and it will also reduce the need to travel by car</p>	<p>Need to avoid too many older person dwellings in one place to ensure a mixed and vibrant community. The Steering Group did not feel that this will result in any significant issues and that in any event the proposed policy is for housing suitable for older people and not exclusively for older people.</p>

<p>Housing Policy H2: Housing Suitable for Young People &amp; First Time Buyers <b>Deleted from revised NP document</b></p>	<p>The proposed policy will contribute to sustainable development by ensuring that there is the right mix of housing to meet local needs thereby contributing to inclusive and cohesive communities and it will also reduce the need to travel by car</p>	<p>The unavoidable impact of new housing on landscape and wildlife. Mitigation through the creation of new open space and wildlife areas – see Recreation &amp; Environment Policies (and also CS &amp; SADMP Policies) -In the Revised WM &amp; CF NP (2021) this policy has been deleted hence shown with strikethrough</p>
<p>Housing Policy: H2: External Materials</p>	<p>The proposed policy will contribute to sustainable development by helping to ensure a high quality of building design with the use of traditional local building materials on prominent new buildings. This will contribute to a positive “sense of place” and community well-being. In 2021 building materials which improve the environmental impact of buildings were added.</p>	<p>Insignificant</p>
<p>Housing Policy: H3 Refuse Bin Storage</p>	<p>The proposed policy will contribute to sustainable development by helping to ensure a high quality of building design. This will contribute to a positive “sense of place” and community well-being. In 2021 the need to provide Refuse Bin storage suitable to allow recycling was added.</p>	<p>Insignificant By allowing adequate bin storage to comply with Recycling Policies, take up by residents should be encouraged.</p>

Housing Policy:H4: Affordable Housing	This policy will help more local people to remain within the NP area and to live closer to where they work thereby reducing the need to travel by car	The unavoidable impact of new housing on landscape and wildlife. Mitigation through the creation of new open space and wildlife areas - see Recreation & Environment Policies (and also CS & SADMP Policies)
Housing Policy H5: Building and climate change	This policy was added to the 2021 Revised NP to ensure that future building in the area addresses the Climate Emergency with measures to reduce carbon emissions, recycle water, reduce fuel poverty and enhance biodiversity.	Without positive policy to support reduction of carbon from buildings, re-use of water, enhancement of biodiversity, the impact of large new housing developments on the environment is considerable.
Employment Policy E1: Starter Workshop Units	The proposed policy will assist start-ups and those wishing to move from live/work units or working from home to expand their businesses locally thereby reducing the need to travel by car and supporting economic well-being New use classes explained.	The unavoidable impact of new employment units on landscape and wildlife, unless on brownfield sites. Mitigation through landscaping and creation of green space - see Recreation & Environment Policies (and also CS & SADMP Policies)
Employment Policy E2: Sustainable Diversification of Farm Buildings for other Employment Uses	The proposed policy will contribute to sustainable development by re-using existing buildings and by helping to support rural communities	Insignificant

Employment Policy E3: Retain Existing Employment Land/Buildings for Employment Usage	The proposed policy will contribute to sustainable development by helping to support the local economy and retain associated jobs and services retained	Insignificant
Employment Policy E4: Social Care Employment Opportunities	The proposed policy will contribute to sustainable development by helping to create local jobs which service the needs of a growing elderly local population	Minimal subject to the use of best practice sustainable construction techniques
Employment Policy E5: Broadband	The proposed policy will contribute to sustainable development by reducing the need to travel for employment, recreation & shopping. Improved broadband speeds will help to support the local economy Fibre to the premises added as a requirement.	Insignificant

## 6) Conclusion

The Sustainability Audit and associated process clearly demonstrates that the Neighbourhood Plan Policies will contribute to sustainable development. The Steering Group have carefully considered the scope of this audit and how each NP Policy contributes to sustainable development and whether any negative sustainability impacts from the proposed NP Policies can be mitigated.

It is considered that the NP Policies will help to support the CS, SADMP and Urban Extension master-plan (under revision) to contribute to sustainable development. There is a clear opportunity to create exemplar sustainable communities within the supporting context of Taunton's Garden Town status. The Neighbourhood Plan is well aligned with Garden Town principles and will help to support the creation of sustainable Garden communities.

Finally, the local community and Parish Councils will monitor the delivery of sustainable communities through the NP Action Plan. Furthermore, they expect best practice methodologies to be used to ensure the creation of sustainability places and communities such as BREEAM Communities 2012.

The Revised NP (2021) has updated policies and introduced two new ones: H5 Building and Climate and R6 Trees and Hedgerows, which aim to encourage developers to build more sympathetically with more sustainable materials and protect the existing ecology of the area whilst reducing the impact of further building development on the natural landscape and environment. Protecting and promoting the health and wellbeing of residents has been an aim of the Revisions, hence the emphasis of access for all to public open and green spaces.

### **Appendices**

**The figures appended are taken from the Census 2011 published data. The data collected by the Census held in 2021 has not yet been published (June 2021).**

#### **Age structure:**

The demographic profile of the Parishes compared against the Borough, and regional profile

(Ref: The Rural Services Network – Neighbourhood Planning Evidence Base for Taunton Deane, 2011 Census).

**Cheddon Fitzpaine (CF)** percentage of population age 30-44 is 24.3% which is significantly higher than Taunton Deane at 18.4% and Somerset at 18.5%. Children 0-4 years at CF is 8% compared with TD at 5.7%, and Somerset 5.4%.

Age group 65-74 years is 5.2% compared to TD 9.8% and Somerset 10.8%

**West Monkton (WM)** percentage of population age 30-44 is 16.3% which is lower than TD at 18.4% and Somerset at 17.5%.

Age group 0-4 years for WM is similar to TD and Somerset at approx. 5% Age group 65-74 years is 12.2% compared with TD at 9.8% and Somerset 10.8%.

#### **Comment:**

There is a housing estate the Northwalls development, in the south-western part of the NP area in the Parish of Cheddon Fitzpaine, including social and affordable housing.

West Monkton data is based on 2011 Census and building on the Urban Extension at Monkton Heathfield (West Monkton) has now started and has added 1,000 houses to the parish to date – thus the census figures do not reflect the current situation in Monkton Heathfield. SWTC information to March 2020 indicates 1020 completions of dwellings, i.e. 80.2% of the total

approved. The application to develop MH2, which includes part of the NP area is expected to be submitted later in 2021.

**Qualifications & Students:**

**Highest Level of Qualification (Level 4 and above)**

CF 32.8% and WM 29.5% compared with TD 28.1%, and Somerset at 25.6%.

**No Qualifications:**

CF 11.1% and WM 20.3% compared with TD 20.5% and Somerset at 22.4%.

**Housing:**

**One Family Household:**

CF 74.1%, WM 70.2%, compared with TD 63.7% and Somerset 64.8%.

**One Family Married or Same Sex Civil Partnership Couple:**

CF 44.2%, WM 43.5% compared with TD 34.7% and Somerset 35.4%.

**One Family all age 65 Years & over:**

CF 4.5%, WM 13.4% compared with TD 10.3% and Somerset 11.1%.

**One Family only with a lone parent:**

CF 11.6%, WM 6.3% compared with TD 8.9% and Somerset 8.4%.

**Tenure:**

**Owned property:**

CF 65.7%, WM 77.6% compared with TD 66.9% and Somerset 69.6%.

**Owned outright:**

CF 21.5%, WM 39.9% compared with TD 34.8% and Somerset 37.8%.

**Owned with a mortgage or loan:**

CF 44.2%, WM 37.7% compared with TD 32.1% and Somerset 31.8%.

**Private rental:**

CF 25.2%, WM 9.1% compared with TD 15.4% and Somerset 14.7%.

**Social rented from Council: (Local Authority)**

CF 2.2%, WM 9.3% compared with TD 11.6% and Somerset 5.9%.

Comment: A significant number of houses in CF Village are owned by the Crown Estate.

**Occupation:**

**Professional:**

CF 19.5%, WM 17.9% compared with TD 16.7% and Somerset 14.8%.

**Elementary Occupations:**

CF 8.3%, WM 8.5% compared with TD 10.5% and Somerset 11.5%.

**Economic Activity:**

**Economically Active:**

CF 81.2%, WM 71.6% compared with TD 72% and Somerset 70.8%.

**Unemployed:**

CF 1.9% WM 1.7% compared with TD 2.8% and Somerset 3%.

**Economically Inactive: Retired**

CF 8% WM 19.3% compared with TD 15.6% and Somerset 17%.

### Car or Van Availability:

#### No Car or van:

CF 5.3%, WM 9.2% compared with TD 17.5% and Somerset 15.9%.

#### Two car or van in household:

CF 40.2% WM 36.5% compared with TD 28.3% and Somerset 30.1%.

Comment: This may reflect the rurality of the northern part of the NP area. (Note: one either needs a vehicle to live in the rural areas, or needs more bus services).

### Accommodation type:

The total Unshared Dwellings in CF & WM are at the same data level as TDBC and Somerset. But breaking down the data shows that 'Whole House or Bungalow (Unshared)' in CF is higher TDBC. (CF 97.3%, TDBC 84.1%). WM is also higher than TDBC at 90.8%.

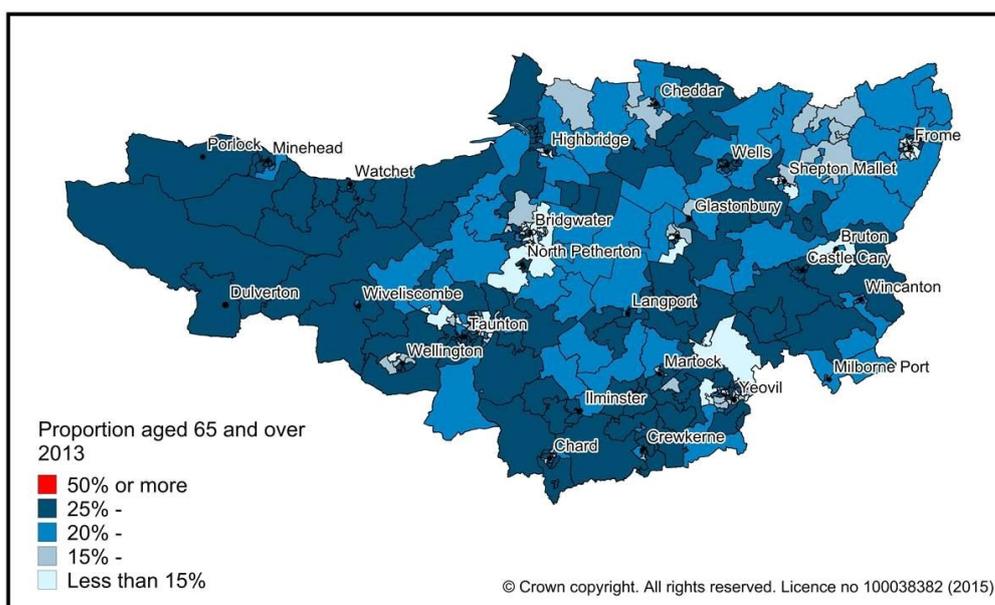
Detached houses and Bungalows (Unshared) are significantly higher in CF and WM than TDBC - CF 40.1%, WM 57.3%, TDBC 29.7%.

Flats/Maisonettes and apartments: TDBC 14.9%, CF 2.5%, WM 6.2%. – the housing stock did not exist within the parishes in 2011.

However, data from Somerset Demographics and the CF & WM Household Questionnaire indicates the community perceives a strong need for bungalows suitable for downsizers and older people, and one and two bedroom dwellings suitable for aspirational young people.

## Somerset County Council Demographics

Proportion of population aged 65 and over, 2013



### Proportion of population aged 65 and over, 2033

