

SWT Executive

Wednesday, 15th September, 2021,
6.15 pm



Somerset West
and Taunton

The John Meikle Room - The Deane
House

[SWT MEETING WEBCAST LINK](#)

Members: Federica Smith-Roberts (Chair), Derek Perry (Vice-Chair),
Chris Booth, Dixie Darch, Caroline Ellis, Ross Henley,
Marcus Kravis, Mike Rigby, Francesca Smith and
Andrew Sully

Agenda

1. Apologies

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting of the Executive

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting of the
Committee.

(Pages 5 - 8)

3. Declarations of Interest

To receive and note any declarations of disclosable
pecuniary or prejudicial or personal interests in respect of
any matters included on the agenda for consideration at this
meeting.

(The personal interests of Councillors and Clerks of
Somerset County Council, Town or Parish Councils and
other Local Authorities will automatically be recorded in the
minutes.)

4. Public Participation

The Chair to advise the Committee of any items on which
members of the public have requested to speak and advise
those members of the public present of the details of the
Council's public participation scheme.

For those members of the public who have submitted any
questions or statements, please note, a three minute time
limit applies to each speaker and you will be asked to speak
before Councillors debate the issue.

Temporary measures during the Coronavirus Pandemic

Due to the temporary legislation (within the Coronavirus Act 2020, which allowed for use of virtual meetings) coming to an end on 6 May 2021, the council's committee meetings will now take place in the office buildings within the John Meikle Meeting Room at the Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton. Unfortunately due to capacity requirements, the Chamber at West Somerset House is not able to be used at this current moment.

Following the Government guidance on measures to reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19), the council meeting rooms will have very limited capacity. With this in mind, we will only be allowing those members of the public who have registered to speak to attend the meetings in person in the office buildings, if they wish (we will still be offering to those members of the public that are not comfortable in attending, for their statements to be read out by a Governance and Democracy Case Manager). Please can we urge all members of the public who are only interested in listening to the debate to view our live webcasts from the safety of their own home to help prevent the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

- 5. Executive Forward Plan** (Pages 9 - 12)

To receive items and review the Forward Plan.

- 6. Corporate Performance Report, Quarter 1 2021/22** (Pages 13 - 28)

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor for Corporate Resources, Councillor Ross Henley.

This paper provides an update on the council's performance for the first quarter (1st April 2021 – 30th June 2021) of the 2021/22 financial year. The report includes information for a range of key performance indicators and includes the key business risks for the council.

- 7. 2021/22 General Fund Financial Monitoring as at Quarter 1 (30 June 2021)** (Pages 29 - 46)

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor for Corporate Resources, Councillor Ross Henley.

This report provides an update on the projected outturn financial position of the Council's General Fund (GF) for the financial year 2021/22 (as at 30 June 2021).

- 8. 2021/22 Housing Revenue Account Financial Monitoring as at Quarter 1 (30 June 2021)** (Pages 47 - 62)

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor for Housing, Councillor Fran Smith.

This report provides an update on the projected outturn financial position of the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the financial year 2021/22 (as at 30 June 2021).

9. Monkton Heathfield: SS1 Policy Area and MH2 Concept Plan and Design Principles

(Pages 63 - 148)

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor for Planning and Transportation, Councillor Mike Rigby.

The purpose of the report is to update Members on the Monkton Heathfield draft Policy SS1 area Framework Plan, draft Phase 2 Concept Plan and draft Design Principles document.

10. Monkton Heathfield: Land South of Manor Farm, Langaller – Masterplan and Development Guide

(Pages 149 - 232)

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor for Planning and Transportation, Councillor Mike Rigby.

The purpose of the report is to update and seek direction from Members on the Masterplan and Development Guide draft for the area known as Land South of Manor Farm, Langaller.



**JAMES HASSETT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Please note that this meeting will be recorded. You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 2018. Data collected during the recording will be retained in accordance with the Council's policy. Therefore unless you are advised otherwise, by taking part in the Council Meeting during Public Participation you are consenting to being recorded and to the possible use of the sound recording for access via the website or for training purposes. If you have any queries regarding this please contact the officer as detailed above.

Following Government guidance on measures to reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19), we will be live webcasting our committee meetings and you are welcome to view and listen to the discussion. The link to each webcast will be available on the meeting webpage, but you can also access them on the [Somerset West and Taunton webcasting website](#).

If you would like to ask a question or speak at a meeting, you will need to submit your request to a member of the Governance Team in advance of the meeting. You can request to speak at a Council meeting by emailing your full name, the agenda item and your question to the Governance Team using governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Any requests need to be received by 4pm on the day that provides 2 clear working days before the meeting (excluding the day of the meeting itself). For example, if the meeting is due to take place on a Tuesday, requests need to be received by 4pm on the Thursday prior to the meeting.

The Governance and Democracy Case Manager will take the details of your question or speech and will distribute them to the Committee prior to the meeting. The Chair will then invite you to speak at the beginning of the meeting under the agenda item Public Question Time, but speaking is limited to three minutes per person in an overall period of 15 minutes and you can only speak to the Committee once. If there are a group of people attending to speak about a particular item then a representative should be chosen to speak on behalf of the group.

Please see below for Temporary Measures during Coronavirus Pandemic and the changes we are making to public participation:-

Due to the temporary legislation (within the Coronavirus Act 2020, which allowed for use of virtual meetings) coming to an end on 6 May 2021, the council's committee meetings will now take place in the office buildings within the John Meikle Meeting Room at the Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton. Unfortunately due to capacity requirements, the Chamber at West Somerset House is not able to be used at this current moment.

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Full Council, Executive, and Committee agendas, reports and minutes are available on our website: www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

For further information about the meeting, please contact the Governance and Democracy Team via email: governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

If you would like an agenda, a report or the minutes of a meeting translated into another language or into Braille, large print, audio tape or CD, please email: governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

SWT Executive - 18 August 2021

- Present: Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts (Chair)
Councillors Chris Booth, Dixie Darch, Ross Henley, Francesca Smith and Andrew Sully
- Officers: Dawn Adey, James Barrah, Emily Collacott, Marcus Prouse, Chris Brown, Chris Hall and Joe Wharton. (Virtually via Zoom: James Hassett, Alison North, Amy Tregellas).
- Also Present: Councillors Janet Lloyd and Loretta Whetlor (Councillors Coles, Lisgo, Wren and Weston joined virtually via Zoom).

(The meeting commenced at 6.21 pm)

28. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Ellis, Kravis, Perry and Rigby.

29. **Minutes of the previous meeting of the Executive**

(Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 21st July 2021 were circulated with the agenda)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Executive held on 21st July 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

30. **Declarations of Interest**

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Councillor or Clerk of a County, Town or Parish Council or any other Local Authority:-

Name	Minute No.	Description of Interest	Reason	Action Taken
Cllr C Booth	All Items	Wellington and Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr J Lloyd	All Items	Wellington & Sampford Arundel	Personal	Spoke
Cllr F Smith	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith-Roberts	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Whetlor	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke
Cllr G Wren	All Items	Clerk to Milverton PC	Personal	Spoke

31. **Public Participation**

No members of the public had requested to speak on any item on the agenda.

32. **Executive Forward Plan**

(Copy of the Executive Forward Plan, circulated with the agenda).

Councillors were reminded that if they had an item they wanted to add to the agenda, that they should send their requests to the Governance Team.

- Councillor Lloyd questioned the Longforth Masterplan item and whether it would be deferred to the New Year?
- *The Leader requested this to be clarified*

Resolved that the Executive Forward Plan be noted.

33. **Access to Information - Exclusion of the Press and Public**

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, that the public be excluded from the next items of business (Item 7, Appendix 2 only and then Item 8 in totality) on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, namely information relation to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

34. **Single Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Accommodation Strategy & Delivery Plan**

During the discussion, the following points were raised: -

- A query was raised as to how confident officers were of obtaining investment from partners?
- *Partners had reassured the Council they were happy with the investment but there are risks to SWT. The model had worked for many years previously and new partners were seeking to join. The Government had encouraged SWT to bid for more funding and officers were confident, but there were challenges around the market and timing.*
- Concern was raised around the confirmation of Right to Buy receipts in supporting the Delivery Plan.
- *It was confirmed that this was why the delegation to the s151 Officer had been built into the recommendations.*
- Further detail was requested as to the Community Scrutiny's concerns regarding the Equality Impact Assessment.
- *Officers clarified that the concern ranged largely on the issue of female accommodation and the additional responsibilities on Local Authorities under the Domestic Abuse Act, for example, you now cannot place domestic abuse victims in a bed and breakfast.*

- *It was confirmed that Gender Re-assignment was not presenting across SWT at the current moment but that in place was an Assessment and Referral panel to discuss complex cases on a weekly basis.*
- The Leader stated that this was an ambitious strategy in line with the Government's aspirations, and SWT could be proud of this work due to its impact in turning people's lives around.

RESOLVED that the Executive recommended to Full Council to;

- a) Adopt the Single Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Accommodation Strategy (SHRSAS) (Appendix 1) and associated Delivery Plan (Confidential Appendix 2).
- b) To approve the virement of £1.17m and a supplementary General Fund capital budget of £0.38m to support the capital investment of £1.55m as set out in section 6 and Confidential appendix 2.
- c) To delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer to make the final funding decision for any capital budgets used in the GF or HRA, including any reallocation of part of the capital budget (b) from the General Fund to the HRA.
- d) For members to note the predicted increase in revenue costs 2022-2025, and to delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer to agree the revenue funding allocations 2022-2025 through a combination of homelessness earmarked reserves, future successful bids for government grant, and Better Care Fund grant (subject to Health and Wellbeing Board approval on 22nd November 2021).

35. **Levelling up Bid**

RESOLVED that the Executive approved the recommendations within the confidential report.

(The Meeting ended at 7.04 pm)

EXECUTIVE

Executive Meeting	Draft Agenda Items	Lead Officer
15 September 2021	Financial Performance 2021/22 Q1	Emily Collacott
venue =	Corporate Performance Report	Malcolm Riches
Exec RD = 3 September	Monkton Heathfield Masterplan	Alison Blom-Cooper
Informal Exec RD = 3 August		
SMT RD = 21 July		
20 October 2021	Firepool Design Guidance and Masterplan (will need moving back, dates to be confirmed)	Graeme Thompson/Tim Bacon
venue =	RIPA Policy	Amy Tregellas
Exec RD = 8 October	North Taunton CPO	Chris Brown/Jane Windebank
Informal Exec RD = 7 September		
SMT RD = 24 August		
17 November 2021	Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Review	Scott Weetch
venue =	General Fund 2022/23 Draft Budget Update	Paul Fitzgerald
Exec RD = 5 November	Housing Revenue Account 2022/23 Draft Budget Update	Paul Fitzgerald
Informal Exec RD = 5 October	Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town – Feedback	Fiona Webb
SMT RD = 22 September	Somerset West and Taunton Districtwide Design Guide	Fiona Webb
	Marina Lease	Chris Hall
	Employment Land Feasibility Study in West Somerset	Robert Downes
15 December 2021	Financial Performance 2021/22 Q2	Paul Fitzgerald
venue =	Corporate Performance Report	Malcolm Riches
Exec RD = 3 December	Refresh of the Income and Arrears Management Policy	Steve Perkins/Richard Sealy
Informal Exec RD = 2 November	Tower Street	Natalie Kirbyshire
SMT RD = 20 October		

19 January 2022	CCTV		Sally Parry/Scott Weetch
venue =	Housing Revenue and Capital Budget Setting 2022/23 including Dwelling Rent Setting 2022/23 and 30 Year Business Plan Review		Paul Fitzgerald
Exec RD = 7 January	Longforth Masterplan		Sarah Povall
Informal Exec RD = 30 November			
SMT RD = 17 November			
Budget - 9 February 2022	General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Estimates 2022/23		Paul Fitzgerald
venue =	Council Tax Setting 2022/23		Paul Fitzgerald
Exec RD = 28 January			
Informal Exec RD = 4 January			
SMT RD = 8 December			
16 February 2022			
venue =			
Exec RD = 4 February			
Informal Exec RD = 4 January			
SMT RD = 8 December			
16 March 2022	Financial Performance 2021/22 Q3		Emily Collacott
venue =	Capital, Investment and Treasury Strategy 2022/23		Paul Fitzgerald
Exec RD = 4 March	Corporate Performance Report		Malcolm Riches
Informal Exec RD = 1 February			
SMT RD = 19 January			
20 April 2022			
venue =			

Exec RD = 6 April		
Informal Exec RD = 8 March		
SMT RD = 23 February		

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Executive – 15 September 2021

Corporate Performance Report, Quarter 1 2021/22

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Member Ross Henley.

Report Author: Malcolm Riches, Business Intelligence and Performance Manager.

1. Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

This paper provides an update on the council's performance for the first quarter (1st April 2021 – 30th June 2021) of the 2021/22 financial year. The report includes information for a range of key performance indicators and includes the key business risks for the council.

The Corporate Performance Report was considered by Corporate Scrutiny on 1 September 2021. Scrutiny requested that the risk scoring matrix be included with future reports and is therefore included within this report at Appendix 3. More detail has been provided below to explain that the Key Performance Indicators detailed in this report are not intended to provide a complete overview of progress against our key Corporate Priorities.

2. Recommendations

Councillors are asked to consider the performance report.

3. Risk Assessment

Failure to regularly monitor performance could lead to the council not delivering on some of its corporate priorities.

4. Background and Full details of the Report

As part of the Councils commitment to transparency and accountability this report provides an update on performance for a number of key indicators. The pandemic continues to have a significant impact and the council's response is being achieved in addition to the regular day-to-day responsibilities.

4.1 Key Performance Indicators

The table in Appendix 1 includes the councils Key Performance Indicators and shows how the council has performed for the first quarter of 2021/22 financial year against those indicators. For this financial year, the number of key performance indicators has been increased so that more council services are included. The table includes a

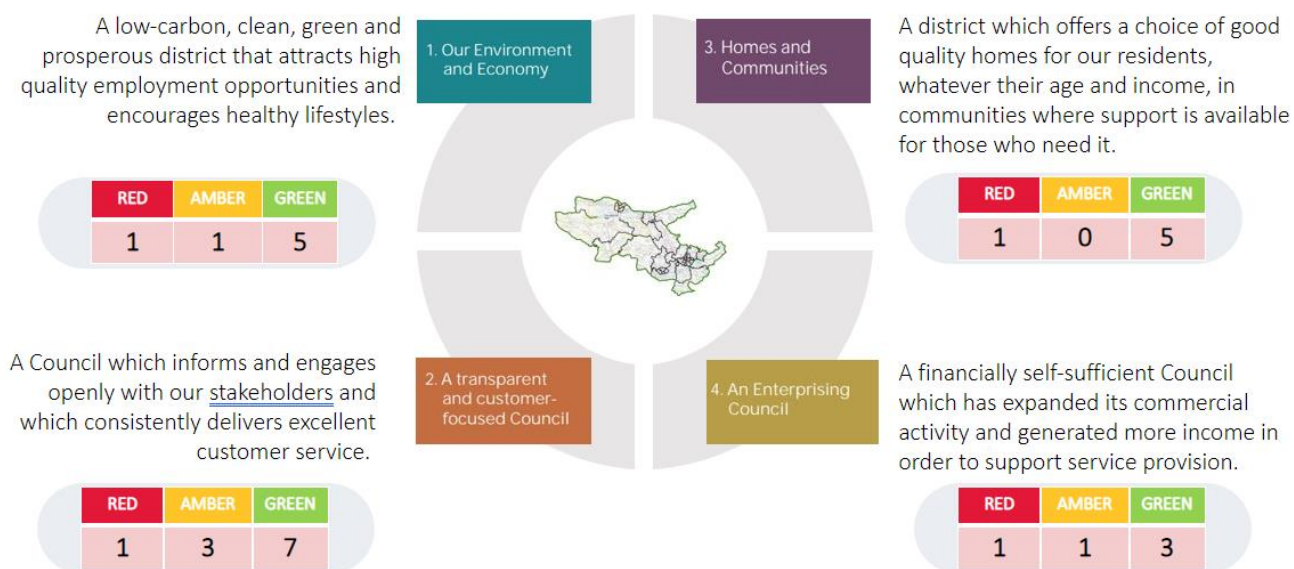
“direction of travel” arrow to show whether performance has improved, worsened or stayed the same, since the end of 2020/21.

We have aligned the Key Performance Indicators shown in Appendix 1 to the four key Corporate Priorities within the Corporate Strategy to show which indicators are linked to which priority. The diagram below summarises the split and RAG status of the indicators.

The Council’s Annual Plan for 2021/22 details specific actions and projects which are being implemented to deliver the Corporate Priorities. Progress against these actions are reported to Members on a six-monthly basis and are not shown below, but will be reported in the Quarter 2 report.

Corporate Key Performance Indicators 2021/22 – Quarter 1

Somerset West
and Taunton



For the majority of indicators the target has either been met or, in many cases, has been exceeded. Overall there are 4 ‘Red’ and 5 ‘Amber’ indicators, which are being monitored closely. More information is provided below regarding the red and amber indicators.

Percentage of complaints responded to in 10 working days:

The percentage of complaints responded to in 10 days during the quarter was 86%, which is slightly below target. Although below target, 86% still represents a significant improvement on the position this time last year when only 50% of complaints were responded to on time. This demonstrates that the focussed work we are undertaking to address the way complaints are managed continues to be successful.

We also monitor the response rates monthly and have included those figures in Appendix 1. The monthly figures indicate a worsening response rate each month from April through to June (April: 89%, May: 86% and June: 83%). Clearly this is of concern so we have looked in detail at the reasons for this.

There is no single reason why the response rates have dropped. The number of complaints received during quarter 1 of this financial year (391) has increased significantly from those received in the final quarter of the previous financial year (247). Having a greater volume of complaints to deal with is presenting challenges in some areas in being able to respond within the target time frame during what is usually a very busy period. In addition, we are aware of a small number of complex cases, where, due to their complexity, it is not realistic for us to be able to respond within the timeframe.

We also now operate a two-stage complaints process. 31 of the 391 complaints received during quarter 1 are second stage appeals, which we would not previously have received under the single stage process in operation last year.

The increase in the number is in part seasonal and is also reflective of the ongoing issues we are experiencing with waste collection and in response to our switching back on our full debt recovery processes for unpaid debts and taxes. In addition, these issues are generating increased numbers of telephone calls and an increased number of resultant complaints where we are unable to answer those calls in a timely manner.

We reviewed our complaints process last year, introduced changes, provided training and have continued to maintain a focus on complaints response times. Overall these changes and focus on complaints continues to deliver significantly improved response times. Action is being taken to address the issues which have generated additional complaints during quarter 1.

Average call wait times:

The aim is to answer calls within 60 seconds, but for June, the average call answering time was 113 seconds. The target has not been met any month this quarter. This is as a result of an increased number of calls and due to the nature of the calls and an increase in the duration of the calls. Much of this is attributed to the unprecedented issues currently being faced by the Somerset Waste Partnership and the contractor Suez. We have also restarted our normal recovery processes for Council Tax, Business Rates and miscellaneous income which has also influenced call volume and duration. Call performance has also been impacted by the reopening of the Customer Hubs which has drawn Customer Champions away from call handling to manning the offices. A more detailed update on the issues and our response is included in Appendix 2.

Percentage of Licensing applications processed within timescales:

The percentage of Licensing requests processed within timescales is 89%, against a target of 90%. Following a drop in performance during quarter 3 and 4 last year, performance has improved, and continues to do so. In April 86% of requests were completed on time, and this has increased to 90% in May and 91% in June.

Despite falling short of the target this quarter, the Licensing service have met all statutory obligations. The majority of applications not completed within the target timeframe were made in accordance with the Licensing Act 2003 and received tacit consent; this is where a licence is treated as having been granted if the objection period passes without an objection or a Licensing Authority does not determine the

application within a prescribed time period. Tacit consent is something the Licensing service is wary of as it can, in some cases such as caravan site and pavement licensing, result in the granting of a licence without conditions which are required to uphold the principals and objectives of those regimes. This is not the case with applications made in accordance with the Licensing Act 2003, where conditions do apply whether that application receives tacit consent or not.

The delay in completing these Licensing Act 2003 applications was at the end of the process; issuing the licence document following the completion of all initial steps i.e. their being logged on the Licensing back office system, circulation to responsible authorities and determination following the objection period. This was part of a deliberate prioritisation and balancing of work pressures. The backfilling of vacant roles within the team has enabled the service to catch up and clear the bulk of this backlog, and the trajectory of improved performance is expected to continue.

Forecast budget variance for General Fund and for Housing Revenue Account.

Detailed commentary is included in the separate Budget Monitoring Report.

Cumulative percentage of the amount of Business Rates collected.

The Quarter 1 figure is 25.98% which is down 5.61% (£2.7 million) compared to the same period last year. However, a like for like comparison is impossible because the amount of Business Rates being collected rose significantly from 1 July 2021 from £23 million to £49 million. This is due to the ending of the Covid related 100% Retail Relief on 30 June 2021. We anticipate collection rates improving steadily over the year as businesses, who were previously receiving the 100% relief, start to pay the additional amounts that they have been billed. However, the raising of a significant additional debit part way through the year will skew the collection figures throughout this year and it will be difficult to predict the year end collection position.

The Council is in a much better position compared to last year because all recovery actions are back to normal. Automated monthly reminders and regular Summonses are both being issued prompting more cashflow. We are actively encouraging people and businesses who are experiencing difficulty in making payments to contact us in order that we can agree affordable payment arrangements with them. Unpaid court cases are now being sent to our Enforcement Agents and this will result in higher collection rates in the future.

Percentage of reported fly tipping incidents responded to in 5 working days.

The performance target for fly tipping is 80% to be collected within five working days. The performance for the quarter was 75% which is below the target of 80%. In April, performance was 71% and in May it was 66%. Importantly, this is not a failure to collect, but that the contractor has missed its target of collecting within five working days. This was due to a number of extenuating factors, including a rise in the amount of fly-tipping. The below target performance was addressed with the contractor, Idverde, at monthly contractual meetings and there has subsequently been a significant improvement in performance in June to 93%. The contract continues to be tightly managed to ensure that a high level of performance is maintained.

Percentage of planning appeals that have had the decision overturned.

The number of planning appeals is generally low (there have been 48 in the past 12 months), and because of the low numbers, it only takes a few appeals to have a big impact on the percentage. Of the 48 appeals, 20 have had the decision overturned by the Planning Inspectorate. Of the decisions overturned 2 were Committee decisions where the officer recommendation was for approval.

For the indicators which measure the length of time taken to process planning applications, the nationally prescribed definition for these indicators calculates applications at the point when they are determined. Due to the current phosphates issues, there are approximately 100 planning applications on hold which equates to approximately 2300 dwellings. There are also 13 sites where the Council has not been able to discharge pre-commencement conditions and this affects approximately 450 dwellings.

Average re-let time in calendar days

The average re-let time for council properties over the past quarter was 52.1 days, and did not achieve the target of 44 days. This performance indicator is widely used by housing providers, and the target has been set to reflect national best practice. Good progress is being made towards achieving specific targets for both Major voids and Minor voids. However, there have been a higher proportion of major voids, which take longer, and this has a negative impact on the average re-let time which is why it is above target. This is a large area of work with approximately 100 voids every quarter. There are a number of challenges facing void work, particularly regarding some of the compliance issues, which are having an impact across the housing sector.

Performance for the indicator which measures the “Income collected as a percentage of rent owed, excluding arrears brought forward” is better the target, and is rated as green. The performance is over 100% because tenants have paid more than is due in the period i.e. they are paying towards their rent arrears as well as paying the current rent due in the period – in setting the target the formula assumes arrears balances brought forward are being excluded but the income tenants have actually paid towards their arrears is not being excluded.

4.2 Risk Management update

As outlined in the separate report on Risk Management in May, the quarterly Corporate Performance Reports will include an update on the key business risks and issues for the Council.

Processes are in place within each directorate to regularly review existing and identify any new risks. As new risks are identified they are included on the risk register and mitigations are identified and planned. A target date is set as to when the mitigations should be in place, and a lead officer is appointed.

The risks are all scored based on their probability and potential impact. The Risk Scoring Matrix used to score the risks is attached at Appendix 3. Risks with a higher score are likely to have a more detailed mitigation plan. Issues are things which have already happened, so they are not scored in the same way as risks, but they have a RAG status which relates to the severity of the issue.

As of the end of June there were 6 Key Business Risks (with a score of 15 or higher) on the risk register.

Key Business Risks at 30th June:

REF	Corporate Objective	Risk area	Risk Title	Risk Score			Owner
				Impact	Probability	Overall score	
CR11	A Transparent and Customer Focused Council	ICT	Cyber security threats.	4	4	16	Alison North
CR15	Our Environment and Economy	Emergency Planning	Civil contingencies and organisational resilience	5	3	15	Stuart Noyce
CR22	A Transparent and Customer Focused Council	Health and Safety Compliance	Failure of Risk Assessment process for staff operations leading to incident or near miss.	4	4	16	Alison North
CR23	Homes and Communities	Health and Safety Compliance	Failure to comply with Landlord Property Safety Compliance requirements leading to regulatory failure, failure to comply with the law, incident causing injury or death, negative PR, and financial loss (compensation and / or fine).	4	4	16	James Barra
CR27	All	Unitary	Maintaining operational delivery during period of significant change.	4	4	16	James Hassett
CR29	Our Environment and Economy	Major contracts	Delay in "Recycle More" project	5	4	20	Stuart Noyce

As of the end of June the Corporate Issues Log contained 2 Issues that had a red RAG status.

Red rated Issues from the Corporate Issues Log at 30th June:

REF	Directorate	Issue Title	RAG	Owner
CI 8	Internal Ops	Improvements in ICT infrastructure and connectivity to meet required standards.	R	Sean Papworth
CI 9	Dev & Place	Management of phosphate levels in Tone catchment, particularly regarding impact on planning applications.	R	Gerry Mills

The risk register and issues log are updated as necessary and new risks/issues can be added at any point. They are routinely reviewed each month through the regular cycle of meetings. The lead officer is responsible for updating the risk register with progress made regarding mitigations, and this is reported back to Directorate performance meetings, and to the Corporate Performance Board where SMT review the key risks monthly.

5. Links to Corporate Strategy

This performance report provides an update on Corporate Performance which is fundamental to the implementation of the Corporate Strategy.

6. Finance / Resource Implications

The detailed financial out-turn position is available in a separate report.

Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees – Yes**
- **Cabinet/Executive – Yes**
- **Full Council – No**

Reporting Frequency: **Quarterly**

List of Appendices (delete if not applicable)

Appendix 1	2021/22 Performance Indicators Report
Appendix 2	Further detail on average call waiting times
Appendix 3	Risk Scoring Matrix

Contact Officers

Name	Richard Sealy	Name	Malcolm Riches
Direct Dial	01823 217558	Direct Dial	01823 219459
Email	r.sealy@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk	Email	m.riches@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

SWT Performance report 2021/22

Link to Corporate Strategy	Full definition	Target 2021/22	Quarter 1	Direction of Travel since Q4	Denominator	Year to date	Numerator	Year to date
Transparent & Customer Focused	% of complaints responded to in 10 working days	90%	86%	↑	Total number of complaints received	391	Number of complaints responded to within 10 working days	336
	Monthly figure for complaints responded to in 10 working days	Apr 89%	May 86%	June 83%				
	% of FOI requests responded to in 20 working days	75%	97%	↑	Total number of FOI requests received	96	Number of FOI responded to within 20 working days	93
	Monthly figure for FOI requests responded to in 20 working days	Apr 96%	May 97%	June 92%				
	% of calls to Deane Helpline answered in < 60 seconds	90%	94%	↑	Total number of calls to Deane Helpline	90346	Number of calls answered in under 60 seconds	85291
	Average call wait time (secs) for the last month	60 secs	113	↓				
	Cumulative percentage of the amount of Council Tax collected*	97%	34.08%	↑	Total amount of Council Tax to be collected by the 31st March	£109,550,330	Amount of Council Tax collected in the year so far	£37,338,525
	Cumulative percentage of the amount of Business Rates collected*	95%	25.98%	↓	Total amount of Business Rates to be collected by the 31st March	£48,782,205	Amount of Business Rates collected in the year so far	£12,674,854
	Average processing times of new Housing Benefit claims	19 dys	17.11	↓	Number of new Housing Benefit claims received	149	Total number of days	2549
	Average processing times for changes in circumstances for HB claims	9 dys	4.76	↓	Number of new Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances received	2644	Total number of days	12591
	% of Licensing applications processed within required timescales	90%	89%	↑	Number of licensing applications processed	327	Number of licensing applications responded within timescales	291
	Sickness Absence	7.2 dys	1.28	↔	Total working days lost for all employees	746.5	Total number of staff	579
Staff Turnover	< 12	2.42	↓	Total number of staff	579	Total number of leavers	14	
An Enterprising Council	Forecast budget variance for General Fund	£0	+£237k	↓				
	Forecast budget variance for Housing Revenue Account	£0	+£610k	↓				
	Forecast level of uncommitted reserves for General Fund.	£2.4m	£5.556m	↓				
	Forecast level of reserves for Housing Revenue Account.	£2m	£2.273m	↓				
	On target for Commercial Income Generation	£2.9m	Yes	↔				

Link to Corporate Strategy	Full definition	Target 2021/22	Quarter 1	Direction of Travel since Q4	Denominator	Year to date	Numerator	Year to date
Environment & Economy	% of reported fly tipping incidents responded to within 5 working days	80%	75%	↓	Number of fly tipping incidents	247	Number of fly tipping incidents responded to within 5 days	186
	% of service requests for street cleansing actioned within 5 working days	85%	93%	↑	Number of service requests for street cleansing	254	Number of service requests actioned within 5 working days	237
	% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks (or within agreed extension of time)	75%	100%	↑	Total number of major planning applications received	5	Total number of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks or agreed extension	5
	% of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks or agreed extension of time	65%	80%	↔	Total number of minor planning applications received	76	Total number of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks	61
	% of other planning applications determined within 8 weeks or an agreed extension of time.	80%	90%	↑	Total number of other planning applications received	263	Total number of other planning applications determined within 8 weeks or an agreed extension	236
	% of appeals that have had the decision overturned (figure is for the previous 12 months)	33%	41.6%	↓	Number of appeals received	48	Number of appeals where the decision is overturned	20
% Play area inspections completed to schedule	100%	100%	↔					
Homes and Communities	Income collected as a % of rent owed excluding arrears brought forward	98.30%	102.97%	↑	Total amount of rent debit owed (excluding rent arrears)	£2,517,727.94	Total amount of income and housing benefit received	£2,614,680.12
	Number of families in B&B over 6 weeks (position at end of Quarter)	0	0	↑				
	Average re-let time in calendar days (key to key)	44 dys	52.1	↑	Total Number of dwellings let following void process	92		
	% of housing dwellings with a valid gas safety certificate (LGSR)	100%	100%	↑	Total number of dwellings requiring a valid gas safety certificate	4480	Total number of dwellings without a valid gas safety certificate	0
	% of communal areas with a Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) in place and FRA Review complete (where applicable)	100%	100%	↔				
	Completion of housing emergency repairs within 24 hours	99%	100%	↔	Total number of emergency housing repairs	739	Total number of emergency housing repairs completed in 24hrs	739

* The current figures appear well below target, but these are cumulative indicators.

The column titled Direction of Travel, shows whether performance has improved, worsened or is similar to the last report for the end of July.

- ↑ Performance has improved
- ↓ Performance has got worse
- ↔ Performance is similar

Average Call Waiting Times

Background

The indicator measures the length of time it takes one of our Customer Services Team to answer a call once the customer has listened to the initial recorded options and selected an appropriate queue.

Our target is to answer all calls within 60 seconds. This is an ambitious target when compared with many other organisations where it is not uncommon to be waiting in excess of 5 minutes. Obviously there is a clear relationship between the number and length of calls and the levels of staff resourcing required to maintain an answer rate of 60 seconds or below.

We have largely managed to meet this target over the past 2 years since the current Customer Services team and approach was implemented. There are periods of the year when we are more busy. March and April in particular tend to see us receiving more calls because of the issue of things such as Council Tax and Business Rate bills, garden waste renewal letters etc.

The current position

This year we have missed the target of 60 seconds or below in April, May and June. The figures for each month are detailed below.

April 21	May 21	June 21
112 seconds	163 seconds	113 seconds

Call data analysis

We have undertaken detailed analysis of the call data we hold to try and understand why this is happening. This analysis indicates that:

- *Call volumes have increased* – call volumes in each month from April to June 2021 have been higher than at any point during the preceding 12 months. The overall trend of call volumes mapped over the past 2 years indicates that volumes are increasing.
- *Call duration has increased* – the length of calls during the period April to June 2021 is higher than the previous average. The average has increased from 265 seconds to 345 seconds per call. Whilst this change appears small this equates to an additional 22 hours of work per day.

We have identified a range of factors which we believe are impacting on call volumes, call duration and our capacity to answer calls within the target time. The key message is that there is no single reason or simple answer. The factors are summarised below:

- Organisation wide we are now operating again at pretty much full capacity following the Covid crisis. This means, for example, that we have recommenced things such

as our full recovery activities for Revenues and Benefits, miscellaneous income etc. In addition the public are now expecting us to be operating largely as normal. All of this generates calls and some services will be dealing with backlogs that developed as a result of the Covid restrictions.

- Waste collection issues – in April we received calls regarding the changes to the garden waste schedules, which were anticipated. However, we are now receiving calls regarding the problems with missed waste collection, which were not anticipated. Calls regarding the latter are increasingly taking longer to deal with as often the same caller is experiencing multiple collection issues and are frustrated.
- There has been a general increase in the length of calls. This is both a good and a bad thing. In some cases, as with waste, it indicates problems that are simply taking longer to deal with. However, this also indicates that our customer champions are increasingly able to deal with more at the first point of contact i.e. the calls are longer because they are sorting the issue for the customer rather than passing the call to the back office.
- Channel shift – we have, through necessity during the Covid crisis, channel-shifted many of our customers to the telephone who would previously have visited our offices. This is good news in respect of moving them to a more cost-effective way of dealing with them. However, our area offices are now starting to re-open which requires us to pull staff away from the phones to man the various front desks, which obviously reduces our telephone answering capacity. Footfall at all of our offices is low.
- Staff turnover – a number of staff within the team have moved on to other roles. We are in the process of replacing them, but it obviously takes time to recruit and train new staff. Again this reduces our capacity for short periods.

Actions being taken

We are taking immediate actions to alleviate the problem and also identifying longer term actions. Action is already underway through the Customer Experience Programme to identify areas for improvements and we are using some of the findings from the programme to identify changes.

We have a key risk relating to staff welfare. Ongoing high call volumes backed up by increasingly frustrated customers has an impact on the resilience of the staff. We are not currently experiencing any issues, but we could do if we do not take appropriate action.

In the short term we have recruited additional, temporary resource into the team. This is simply to increase our capacity to answer calls. Specifically these staff will be focussed on dealing with waste calls.

A further increase in waste related calls is anticipated when we go live with Recycle More in late September 2021. We are working closely with the other districts who have already gone live to identify the likely impact on call volumes in order to identify a realistic resourcing plan.

We are also using the data we have collected in relation to the waste issues and more generally for the Customer Experience Programme to identify our longer-term approach and resourcing requirements. In part this involves reviewing our resourcing to ensure that we have sufficient staff with the right skills to answer the anticipated volume of calls. However, we are also looking at other changes we can make e.g. improvements to our website layout and web forms in order to increase the amount of self-service.

APPENDIX 3

Risk Scoring Matrix

Impact

Risk Impact/Severity The impact of the threat being realised is defined as:

	Score	Impact	Definition
Very Low	1	No impact	No notable impact identifiable
Low	2	Minor	Affects only one group of stakeholders, with minimum impact
Medium	3	Significant	Affects more than one group of stakeholders, with widespread but short-term impact. May attract the short-term attention of legislative/regulatory bodies
High	4	Major	Affects more than one group of stakeholders with widespread medium-term impact. Attracts the medium-term attention of legislative/regulatory bodies
Very High	5	Catastrophic	Medium to long term impact on performance and delivery of services. Affects all groups of stakeholders, with a long-term impact. National impact with the rapid intervention of legislative/regulatory bodies

Risk Likelihood

The likelihood of the threat being realised is expressed on a scale of 1-5, using the definitions below

	Score	Likelihood	Definition
Very Low	1	Rare	May occur in exceptional circumstances
Low	2	Possible	Risk may occur in the next 3 years
Medium	3	Likely	The risk is likely to occur more than once in the next 3 years
High	4	Almost certain	The risk is likely to occur this year
Very High	5	Certain	The risk has occurred and will continue to do so without action being taken

Report Number: SWT 70/21

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Executive – 15 September 2021

2021/22 General Fund Financial Monitoring as at Quarter 1 (30 June 2021)

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Henley, Corporate Resources

Report Author: Kerry Prisco (Management Accounting and Reporting Lead)

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the projected outturn financial position of the Council's General Fund (GF) for the financial year 2021/22 (as at 30 June 2021).
- 1.2 The position this year continues to be significantly affected by the ongoing impact of COVID and the pace of economic recovery; and is relying heavily on the reserves prudently set aside to mitigate business volatility and risk. A thorough analysis of additional risks and uncertainties facing the Council have been identified and careful monitoring of these will continue for early indications of emerging financial pressures.
- 1.3 Whilst there is currently headroom in general reserves to cover new in-year pressures this may fall to minimum levels as estimated costs to implement a unitary council start to develop. It is prudent to retain funding for what will inevitably be unavoidable costs of structural change not currently within budget. This is the first reported forecast to Members at an early stage in the financial year, and whilst best endeavours are used to forecast with as much accuracy as possible, we have previously experienced change in forecasts each quarter and to year end. Despite this, the Council remains financially resilient and continues to forecast adequate reserve balances at this stage.
- 1.4 The **Revenue Budget** forecast is currently projecting an overspend of £237k.
- 1.5 The total approved **Capital Budget** is £158.7m. The profiled budget spend for 2021/22 is £76.6m and this is currently forecasting a net overspend of £158k.
- 1.6 The **unearmarked reserves** are projected to be £5.556m which is £3.156m above the recommended minimum balance.
- 1.7 The **earmarked reserves** closing balance is projected to be £23m.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Executive Committee is recommended to:
 - a) review and note the Council's forecast financial performance and projected reserves

position for 2021/22 financial year as at 30 June 2021.

- b) support the transfer of £1.145m from the Budget Volatility and Risk Earmarked Reserve to contribute towards the estimated shortfall in parking income.
- c) approve a budget virement to realign Capital Budgets funded by Better Care Fund grant income.

3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 Financial forecasts are based on known information and projections based on assumptions. As such any forecast carries an element of risk. The current forecasts included in this report are considered reasonable given the extra element of risk around COVID and based on experience it is feasible the year end position could change. It is common for underspends to emerge during the last quarter, reflecting an optimism bias within previous forecasting.
- 3.2 Salient in year budget risks are summarised in section 8 in this report. The Council manages financial risk in a number of ways including setting prudent budgets, carrying out appropriate monitoring and control of spend, operating robust financial procedures, and so on. The Council also holds both general and earmarked reserves which include contingencies to manage budget risk.

4 Background and Full details of the Report

- 4.1 This report provides the Council's General Fund forecast end of year financial position in March 2022 for revenue and capital expenditure, as at 30 June 2021.
- 4.2 The regular monitoring of financial information is a key element in the Council's Performance Management Framework. Crucially it enables remedial action to be taken in response to significant budget variances, some of which may be unavoidable. It also provides the opportunity to assess any consequent impact on reserves and the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 4.3 Members will be aware from previous experience that the position can change between 'in-year' projections and the final outturn position, mainly due to demand-led service costs and income levels and where actual costs and income can vary from initial estimates and assumptions. The budget monitoring process involves a detailed review of the more volatile budgets and a proportionate review of low risk/low volatility budget areas. Budget Holders, with support and advice from their finance business partners, update their forecasts on a monthly basis based on currently available information and knowledge of service requirements for the remainder of the year. As with any forecast there is always a risk that some unforeseen changes could influence the position at the year-end, and several risks and uncertainties are highlighted within this report. However, the following forecast is reasonable based on current information.

5 General Fund Revenue Budget 2021/22 Forecast Outturn

- 5.1 The Council's General Fund is currently forecasting an overall net overspend of £237k (1.3% of £18.7m Net Budget), as summarised below. The main reasons for this are

shown in table 2 below.

- 5.2 The forecast remains volatile and subject to change. It includes a significant number of assumptions about demand for services and the timing of planned spend to meet service objectives. The level of uncertainty is still increased this year as the continuing impact of COVID and the pace of economic recovery is not yet certain. There has been an immediate impact on service costs and income, for example a significant reduction in parking income due to lock down measures. The Government has so far provided emergency additional funding of £813k, which is included in our budget. We are also able to claim grant to partly offset the loss of income from fees and charges for the first quarter of the year.
- 5.3 As previously reported, despite the reported pressures and uncertainties summarised in this report, the Council is currently resilient to estimated losses this year. This financial strength is a direct result of the being able to reallocate reserves last year to support economic recovery in this financial year.
- 5.4 The following table presents a summary of the revenue budget and current forecast outturn for the year by directorate.

Table 1 - General Fund Revenue Outturn Summary 2021/22

	Current Budget	Outturn Forecast	Variance	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Development and Place	2,598	2,595	-3	-0.1%
External Operations & Climate Change	9,228	10,726	1,498	16.2%
Housing & Communities	3,348	3,353	5	0.2%
Internal Operations	9,770	9,980	210	2.1%
Senior Management Team	640	640	0	0.0%
Staff pay award – To be confirmed	0	303	303	100.0%
Net Cost of Services	25,584	27,597	2,013	7.9%
COVID General Grants	0	-431	-431	0.0%
Investment Properties Net Income	-3,407	-3,382	25	-0.7%
Interest and Investment Income	-202	-507	-305	150.9%
Expected Credit Losses	0	0	0	0.0%
Net Transfers to / from Earmarked Reserves	-414	-1,559	-1,145	276.4%
Transfers from General Reserves	-1,246	-1,246	0	0.0%
Capital and Other Adjustments	-1,602	-1,522	80	-5.0%
Net Budget	18,714	18,951	237	1.3%
Funding	-18,714	-18,714	0	0.0%
Variance	0	237	237	1.3%

- 5.5 A summary of the forecast outturn position is summarised per directorate below.

Development & Place:

5.6 The Development and Place directorate has a net expenditure budget of £2.598m in 2021/22, which plans to deliver a range of services and projects including:

- Strategy and policy development
- Planning services including Local Plan development, planning applications processing and enforcement
- Economic development
- Town centre regeneration
- Heritage projects
- Major Capital Projects for regeneration purposes and where possible to generate a return to the Council
- Commercial investment (investment properties budget is reported 'below the line')

5.7 The directorate's budget volatility and forecast has been managed via robust contract and financial / budget management by budget holders. The directorate is currently forecasting a net underspend of £3k for the year, therefore essentially on target.

Table 2: Development & Place Forecast Variances as at Q1

Department Notes	Q1 Variance £000
Strategy and Policy: This relates to staff vacancies which are in the process of recruitment.	-55
Planning: The service has struggled to recruit to vacant posts resulting in higher agency backfill costs. This variance also relates to budgeted grant income that is not expected and other minor overspend on operational costs. The budget holder hopes to be able to offset any overspend including supporting our Planning Guarantee requirements, staff funding and additional legal advice using existing earmarked reserves.	59
Other Minor Variances	-7
Total	-3

External Operations and Climate Change:

5.8 The External Operations and Climate Change directorate has reported net expenditure budget of £9.228m in 2021/22, which plans to deliver a range of services and projects including:

- Climate change strategy development and Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience (CNCR) action plan implementation
- Asset and property management for general fund assets
- Regulatory services such as environmental health and licensing
- Service resilience and emergency planning
- Open spaces and street scene
- Client for major contracts including waste, building control, leisure, street cleansing
- Harbours, coastal protection, and flood management
- Cemeteries and crematorium
- Car parks

- 5.9 The directorate has reported a current forecast net overspend for the year of £1.498m as at the end of quarter 1.
- 5.10 The current forecast assumes that c£450k of directorate underspends will help to support the parking income loss. However, there are possible future pressures emerging particularly around asset management that could further increase the net overspend if agreed and implemented. Most of the projected parking income shortfall not covered by COVID grant is currently planned to be mitigated through the Budget Volatility and Risk Earmarked Reserve. Further updates will be provided in the quarter 2 financial monitoring report.
- 5.11 The headline for the Directorate is to look beyond the car park income figure to the improved performance in most of the other business areas of the Directorate. Specifically, income from the Assets team and Bereavement services. As a team we continue to manage our workforce and ensure we adapt to provide resources at the point of need. The Directorate Plan for 2021/22 is both a reflection of new ambition for the year and a catch up from a pandemic hit 2020/21; that programme of work will inevitably draw on our ability to take on new tasks. As we better understand our legacy assets, we better understand our financial liabilities. Those liabilities will manifest in year and in future years as new costs.
- 5.12 Car Parking income is significantly down on the 2019/20 pre-pandemic level used to benchmark the income figure for 2021/22. In tracking income, it is broadly one third down on where it was pre-pandemic. That activity will be tracked through the year, in setting a budget for 2022/23 the income figure for car parking will need to reflect the know activity for 2021/22.

Table 3: External Operations and Climate Change Forecast Variances as at Q1

Department Notes	Q1 Variance £000
Street Scene / Open Spaces: This is a combination of a net loss of income of £16k from the loss of the NHS open spaces contract offset by other cost savings within the service such as a predicted reduction in fuel costs for the year.	-47
Asset Management: This favourable variance is mainly due to additional income, new lettings and completion of leases earlier than expected. As a result of these new lettings the council may incur additional building costs, which would then offset in part this favourable variance.	-247
Public Health: A budget carry forward of £15k was approved for the Seagull Culling programme for 2021/22 however this has been postponed for a further year creating an underspend. The cost of staff re-directed (and not backfilled) onto COVID-19 activities has been fully funded through the Community Outbreak Management fund creating an underspend of c£39k.	-54
Licensing: updated projections for income evidence related to both general and taxi licensing have identified a possible shortfall for this year.	47

Bereavement Services: This is a demand led service where the income budget is estimated each year. The current forecast is an over recovery on income.	-184
Parking: The parking income baseline budgets were maintained at historic levels as part of budget process, with a known risk. The current forecast income loss for the year due to ongoing fall in demand, mainly due to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, is £1.997m. This has been calculated using both 2020/21 and 2019/20 data and reflects a 30% reduction in income. It is estimated we can claim £402k through the COVID Income Compensation Scheme for 71% of losses for April to June 2021. It is assumed any further losses against budget will have to be funded by the Council. The Leadership Team proposes withdrawing £1.145m from the Budget Volatility and Risk Earmarked Reserve. This assumes the rest can be offset from directorate underspends (c£450k).	1,937
Other Minor Variances	46
Total	1,498

Housing & Communities:

- 5.13 The Housing and Communities directorate has a net expenditure budget of £3.348m in 2021/22, which plans to deliver a range of services and projects including:
- Housing options include accommodation and support for homelessness and rough sleepers including the 'everyone in' priority due to COVID
 - Housing strategy development
 - Housing enabling, including affordable and rural housing
 - Community resilience services such as CCTV, public safety and community engagement
 - The service also manages council housing and supported housing services through the Housing Revenue Account which is accounted for separately.
- 5.14 The directorate has reported a current forecast net overspend of £5k at the end of quarter 1.
- 5.15 Whilst we are currently reporting a very small variance, we are expecting some volatility particularly in our homelessness service as a legacy of the COVID restrictions and in the knowledge that patterns of substantial community hardship are already starting to become apparent. We have some ability to manage the financial impacts of this by the use of some earmarked reserves of specific Government funding, however we will need to keep this under close review. There is also substantial pressure on our resources to deliver our ambitions for single homeless customers and our need to decant the Canonsgrove facility.

Table 4: Housing & Communities Forecast Variances as at Q1

Department Notes	Q1 Variance £000
Minor Variances	5
Total	5

Internal Operations:

- 5.16 The Internal Operations directorate has a net expenditure budget of £9.770m in 2021/22. This delivers a range of support services and corporate projects, as well as budgets for a range of centrally held corporate costs. The main services and projects delivered within this directorate include:
- Customer Services including call-handling, front of house, Deane Helpline and Emergency Response Team
 - Council Tax and Business Rates administration and income collection services
 - Housing benefits and local council tax support administration
 - Income control and collection from customers ('Accounts Receivable')
 - Payments to suppliers ('Accounts Payable')
 - Corporate strategy, corporate performance, and business intelligence
 - Operational support and digital mailroom
 - Finance and procurement services
 - Corporate Services including Communications and Engagement, People Management including HR and Payroll, Corporate Health and Safety, ICT services
 - Corporate governance including Committee administration and Elections services
 - Internal Change programmes and projects
- 5.17 The directorate is currently forecasting a net overspend of £209k at the end of quarter 1. This includes additional resources identified as needed to meet service requirements over and above existing approved budgets.
- 5.18 The organisation is facing significant change through the implementation of Unitary. Governance & Democratic Services and supporting our staff will be fundamental. It is anticipated additional costs will be funded through savings and in year vacancies where possible. However, it should be noted that pressures on all services will grow as the unitary transition plan comes into force and full budget savings may not be possible giving rise to the potential need to seek approval for additional allocation from reserves. Monthly budget monitoring through the Directorate Performance Board will ensure close monitoring and identification of savings.
- 5.19 There may be opportunities to mitigate some of this reported pressure, for example through:
- Surplus balances if released from the review of earmarked reserves
 - In year receipt of new burdens grant funding
 - Vacancy savings exceeding expectations
 - Capitalising IT equipment costs
 - Managed control of spend in remainder of the year.

Table 5: Internal Operations Forecast Variances as at Q1

Department Notes	Q1 Variance £000
<p>ICT: The service has managed to identify savings of c£29k to date from rationalising ICT network circuits at the West Somerset House site, replacement of equipment and removing third party support costs and migration of the Mobile Device Management solution.</p> <p>A further underspend of £31k has been identified where budget allocations are not required in the current financial year. This position takes into account that we have already incurred non budgeted £20k spend due to new starters above existing establishment (at approximately £1k per starter for laptop, licences etc) and have estimated another £10k until a system is in place for these costs to be picked up by the relevant service.</p>	-53
<p>Benefits: The position at the end of Q1 is showing a potential ‘underspend’ at year-end. This underspend largely results from receiving a greater amount of administration grant from DWP for administering Housing Benefit than we had originally budgeted for. The grant from DWP is to ensure we have sufficient funding to adequately resource the administration of Benefits on their behalf. DWP are also requiring us to undertake an increased amount of review work on claims this year. We may need to utilise some or all of this budget later in the year to ensure that we have sufficient resourcing to deliver to the required DWP standards.</p>	-87
<p>Governance: The service has requested to draw upon in-year underspends to fund £50k for the Community Governance Review for the Unparished Area of Taunton and £216k of additional staffing to cover a significant increase in workload.</p>	266
<p>People / HR: The base budget had an expectation of a £100k vacancy saving target. This is currently not considered by the Leadership Team to be achievable due to ongoing and expected operational staffing pressures across services.</p>	92
<p>Other Minor Variances</p>	-9
<p>Total</p>	209

Senior Management Team (SMT)

- 5.20 The SMT has a net expenditure budget of £640k in 2021/22. This budget line holds the costs of the Chief Executive and four directors, a contingency to support strategic priorities in-year, and funding approved to support Stronger Somerset business case development and related costs.
- 5.21 The directorate has not reported a variance to budget at the end of quarter 1.

Staff Pay Award 2021

- 5.22 The staff pay award has been estimated at 1.75%, reflecting the employers’ final offer. The pay award has not yet been accepted by the unions, and therefore not yet implemented. The 2021/22 approved budget assumed a 0% pay award, consistent with

the Government's proposals for civil service pay, therefore any pay increase presents a budget pressure in year. A provision for estimated costs of £303k across General Fund services based on 1.75% is currently presented within SMT but will be reflected across all service budgets once settlement is reached and implemented.

5.23 Other Costs, Income and Reserve Transfers:

5.24 As well as budgets allocated to directorates for the delivery of services, several budgets are reported 'below the line' as centrally held/corporate items.

5.25 For 2021/22 this includes accounting for additional emergency COVID grant funding that has been received to mitigate additional costs and income losses due to national and local restrictions. This area also includes items such as:

- Investment properties net income
- Other interest costs and income
- Accounting provisions for Expected Credit Losses (commonly known as bad debt provisions)
- Capital accounting adjustments including capital debt repayment, revenue financing of capital costs, and transfers to and from capital reserves
- Transfers to and from general and earmarked revenue reserves

5.26 A net underspend / income surplus of £1.775m is currently forecast as at the end of quarter 1, predominantly due to proposed transfers from reserves and estimated income loss grant funding from Government.

Table 6: Forecast Variances as at Q1

Department Notes	Q1 Variance £000
<p>COVID General Grants: The current COVID grant budget of £813k is not yet allocated in full, however it is assumed it will be and commitments against this will be tracked monthly by SMT.</p> <p>The SFC compensation is only running until end of June 2021. The estimated income from this scheme is £402k for parking and £28k leisure income loss.</p>	-430
<p>Interest and Investment Income: After a volatile and difficult year for non-property based investment performance shaped by the pandemic, recovery has been excellent. SWT's good performance is from strategic investments.</p> <p>We have received 4.5% income from strategic pooled funds in year. It means the income return from the total investment portfolio is 1.5% which, in terms of current money market investment returns, is particularly healthy.</p>	-305
<p>Net Transfers from Earmarked Reserves: The SFC Compensation from Government does not cover all of the expected loss for the financial year. Therefore it is recommended for the car parking income shortfall to be funded in part from the Budget and Risk Volatility Reserve.</p>	-1,145
<p>Capital and Other Adjustments: An additional revenue contribution is planned to fund the finance system contract renewal license.</p>	80
Other Minor Variances	25
Total	1,775

6 General Fund (GF) Reserves

Unearmarked Reserves

- 6.1 The opening general reserves balance as at 1 April 2021 is £7.914m.
- 6.2 As part of the budget proposals to Full Council on 18 February 2021 and the Financial Strategy agreed by the Executive in July 2021, £2.160m of current reserves are planned to be used to soften the budget gap across two financial years (£1.16m in 21/22 and £1m in 22/23). Further draw down from general reserves are shown in the table below.

Table 7 – GF General Reserve Balance

	Approval	£000
Balance Brought Forward 1 April 2021		7,914
2021/22 Original Budget Transfer From Reserve	Council – 18/02/21	-1,160
Supplementary Budget - Local Poll	Council – 04/05/21	-86
Supplementary Budget - Phosphates	Executive – 21/07/21	-200
Supplementary Budget - Health & Safety	Executive – 21/07/21	-126
Supplementary Budget - Parks & Open Spaces	Executive – 21/07/21	-100
Supplementary Budget - Asset Management	Executive – 21/07/21	-150
Supplementary Budget - Asset Management Compliance	Executive – 21/07/21	-100
Supplementary Budget - Revenues Service Capacity	Executive – 21/07/21	-130
Supplementary Budget - Business Intelligence Capacity	SMT – 23/06/21	-50
Supplementary Budget - Project Management Resources	Director/S151 – 15/07/21	-19
Current Balance		5,793
Forecast - Q1 Projected Overspend		-237
Projected Balance 31 March 2022		5,556
Planned Use of Reserve in 2022/23 for Base Budget		-1,000
Projected Balance 1 April 2022		4,556
Recommended Minimum Balance		2,400
Projected Balance above Minimum Reserve Balance		2,156

- 6.3 The projected balance remains above the minimum adequate reserves requirement as assessed by the S151 Officer. It is prudent to continue to hold reserves above the minimum at this stage as in-year budget risks remain higher than normal due to COVID, and the Council will need to contribute towards costs of implementing a new unitary council structure in Somerset. **There is a high probability that all the projected ‘headroom’ identified above will be needed for this purpose.**

Earmarked Reserves

- 6.4 The General Fund Earmarked Reserves brought forward balance for 2021/22 is £33.844m. This includes a £14.8m Business Rates S31 Grant reserve created in 2020/21 to set aside grant from Government that will be needed to mitigate the Collection Fund Deficit in the 2021/22 budget. The current budgeted transfers to earmarked reserves in 2021/22 are £10.537m.

6.5 The following table details those reserves with balances greater than £500,000.

Table 8 – General Fund Earmarked Reserves

	Opening Balance 1 April 2021 £000	Budgeted Transfers £000	Closing Balance 31 March 2022 £000
2020/21 Business Rate Holiday S31 Grant	11,695	-11,118	577
2020/21 Business Rate Losses S31 Grant	3,081	-999	2,083
Business Rates Volatility	5,375	1,665	7,040
Investment Risk	3,673		3,673
Budget Volatility & Risk	2,400		2,400
General Carry Forwards	2,112		2,112
Garden Town Fund	870	-68	802
Economic Development Initiatives	769		769
Asset Management	687		687
Community Housing Grant (ring-fenced)	533		533
Other Smaller Balances	2,648	-18	2,630
Total	33,844	-10,537	23,306

6.6 Earmarked reserves are reviewed during the year. This is to confirm they align to current priorities, and to identify any surplus balances that can be redirected to mitigate in-year financial risks or be returned to general reserves.

6.7 The current forecast proposes to utilise £1.145m if the Budget Volatility and Risk Reserve to mitigate the loss of car Parking income due to COVID. If approved by the Executive this would reduce projected reserves to £22.1m.

7 General Fund (GF) Capital Programme

7.1 The current Capital Programme Budget is £158.702m in total. This consists of £5.151m of new schemes approved in February 2021 (for £3.116m in 2021/22 and £2.034m in 2022/23), plus £153.551m of previously approved schemes from prior years (see **Appendix A**).

7.2 The Council plans to finance this investment through Capital Receipts, Capital Grants, Revenue Funding and Borrowing (see **Appendix B**).

7.3 The General Fund Capital Budget relates to schemes which are estimated to be completed over the next four years. The current annual profiling of approved budget is summarised in **Appendix C**.

7.4 Financial performance to date against this profiled spend for this financial year can be found below and in **Appendix D** with an update from each directorate provided below. Overall the Council is currently forecasting a net underspend against profiled budget for 2021/22 of £158k.

- 7.5 **Development and Place:** Capital Funding is provided for Development activity and Property Investment Activity. These budgets are governed via the Programme Board before being reported to Full Council. The Hinkley funded projects have been delayed by the COVID pandemic but are expected to be completed in the current financial year. The current forecast for this financial year is an overspend of £179k.
- 7.6 **External Operations and Climate Change:** The Capital programme spans a diverse range of activities that in part span several financial years. The Directorate has a robust programme management system to ensure the capital spend is tracked and drawn down in a timely manner. The current forecast for this financial year is a slight overspend of £26k.
- 7.7 **Housing and Communities:** The Directorate is proposing the realignment of the Better Care Fund grant to support areas of greatest need and demand. The grant income from the Better Care Fund will be used to assist vulnerable clients to live independently through the delivery of a number of schemes. The Executive is requested to approve a virement of the approved capital budget so that this is realigned to match planned service delivery, as shown in **Table 9** below. The Section 151 Officer has approved a budget reduction of £522k to offset a historic over-provision of approved budget compared to the total Better Care Fund income held.

Table 9 – Realignment of Capital Budgets Funded By The Better Care Fund

	Total Approved Budget	Capital Spend 2021/22	Capital Spend 2022/23	Capital Spend 2023/24	Capital Spend 2024/25	Un-allocated	Revised Approved Budget	Return	Virement
Disabled Facilities Grant	2,960,793	464,000	464,000	464,000	464,000	1,318,033	2,651,935	-522,098	213,240
IAC Staffing and Support	-	102,000	102,000	102,000	102,000	-	408,000		408,000
North Taunton Equity loans	1,000,000	-	-	300,000	300,000	-	600,000		- 400,000
Energy Efficiency Grants	182,000	92,000	92,000	92,000	92,000	-	368,000		186,000
Home Maintenance	320,000	57,000	57,000	57,000	57,000	-	228,000		- 92,000
Prevention Grants	491,240	44,000	44,000	44,000	44,000	-	176,000		- 315,240
Total Capital Budget	4,954,033	759,000	759,000	1,059,000	1,059,000	1,318,033	4,431,935	-522,098	- 0
Net Receipts	4,431,935								
Budget Return	522,098								

- 7.8 The unallocated amount of £1.3m is currently earmarked to fund costs as detailed within the Single Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Accommodation Strategy & Delivery Plan report (Community Scrutiny – 29th July 2021). If approved by Members, this capital budget (and Better Care Funding) will be reallocated in part towards the capital grant and also towards revenue costs to deliver this strategy. The latter will need a reclassification of the Better Care Funding as revenue income and a reduction in capital budget from the unallocated balance in Table 9 above.
- 7.9 **Internal Operations:** Capital funding is profiled against technology projects including infrastructure upgrades to support cyber security improvements, finance system upgrades. Annual PC refresh upgrades and alarms for the lifeline service are also profiled here. Capital funding has also been allocated to support change programmes that have realigned the digital delivery programme and service improvement & efficiency programmes. The current forecast is an underspend of £105k for budgets that are no longer required.

8 General Fund - Risk and Uncertainty

8.1 Budgets and forecasts are based on known information and the best estimates of the Council's future spending and income. Income and expenditure over the 2021/22 financial year are estimated by budget holders and then reported through the budget monitoring process. During this process risks and uncertainties are identified which could impact on the financial projections, but for which the likelihood, and/or amount are uncertain. The Council carries protection against risk and uncertainty in several ways, such as insurances and maintaining reserves. This is a prudent approach and helps to mitigate unforeseen pressures.

8.2 The following general risks and uncertainties have been identified:

- a) **Year-end Adjustments:** There are certain items that are not determined or finalised until the financial year-end. For example, the final assessment of provisions required for bad debts and final allocations of support service recharges. These can result in potentially significant differences to current forecasts.
- b) **COVID 19:** Although work continues to identify as much as we can the impacts of COVID, there could still be short, medium and long term impacts to both income and expenditure which have not yet been identified.
- c) **Unitary Council:** The Secretary of State has announced his decision on the future of local government in Somerset and has chosen the "One Somerset" option put forward by the County Council. This means there will be one new council for Somerset replacing the existing five councils in April 2023. The costs of implementation will be significant and will bring significant additional demand on officers to support the process with potential additional capacity required.
- d) **Fluctuation in demand for services:** We operate a number of demand-led services and the levels of demand do not always follow a recognisable trend. We therefore have to caveat the forecasts in these areas to account for fluctuations.
- e) **Forecasting Assumptions:** It is conceivable that, whilst budget holders are optimistic that they will spend all their budget, experience shows an increase in underspends often reported in the last quarter of the financial year. The pace of spending may also reduce as capacity and delivery of priorities is affected by local government structural change.
- f) **Job Costing Charges via Open Contractor (OC):** A project lead is now in post to thoroughly review and improve the efficient and accurate operational use of OC. The ability of affected services to accurately forecast their outturn position on job costs coming from OC remains at risk until improvements are fully implemented, although officers are working through ways to mitigate this issue in the interim.
- g) **Pay Award:** The budgets have been set based on 0% pay award for 2021/22 following the Government's announcement in respect of public sector pay restraint. However pay negotiations for local government are still being undertaken. The

current forecast estimates a 1.75% pay award increasing direct staffing costs by c£478k (£303k GF / £175k HRA).

- h) **Fleet Contract:** From the 1st October 2021, the Council is entering into a new contract for the maintenance and supply of its fleet. Actual vehicle requirements for each service area are being finalised. Once this work is complete then costs and budgets can be realigned and updated forecasts reported. Therefore, for Q1 the fleet maintenance costs have been forecast to budget until a more accurate forecast can be calculated. It is not anticipated that costs will be higher than budget. The contract will deliver year on year savings.
- i) **Landlord Property Compliance:** A review of all compliance areas against every property for which Somerset West and Taunton Council is responsible has largely been undertaken. The compliance works required following this review are currently being planned and procured. Whilst additional budget provision has been added for 2021/22 the full extent of the financial pressure remains uncertain as more information is gathered.
- j) **Asset Management:** The budgets for maintaining our assets do not hold any contingency for significant unforeseen repairs or improvement works. The Asset Management plan is evolving but progress has been, in part, been slowed by staff turnover. Significant budget carry forwards and earmarked reserves supplement the 2021/22 budgets in this area. An example of this would be North Hill, Minehead.
- k) **Homelessness:** This is a demand led service supporting a variety of complex needs. This service has received further Homelessness Prevention Grant and Rough Sleeper Initiative Government funding in 2021/22. The position needs to be kept under review pending the delivery of the Homelessness Strategy including the planned decant from the Canonsgrove site.
- l) **Revenues & Benefits:** The position on rent allowances/rent rebates could change significantly as a result of the recoupmnt and debt impairment adjustments. We can calculate these at a given point in time but are unable to reliably forecast what these will be at year end as the financial implications are volatile.
- m) **New Burdens:** SWT is expected to receive more New Burdens Grant Funding during the year which will increase our revenue income, but the amount is not yet known.
- n) **Interest and Investment Income:** There are two aspects impacting on investment returns. The first relates to cashflows, particularly in a year when substantial capital purchases are due to be made which, in turn, adds high risk of variations to budget because of the timing of transactions. Careful management of liquidity and borrowing decisions can, to some degree, mitigate this and produce favourable investment returns and in-year cost of borrowing. The second aspect relates to non-property investment performance. After a volatile and difficult year for investment performance shaped by the pandemic, recovery has been excellent. SWT's good performance is from strategic investments. We have received 4.5% income from strategic pooled funds in year. It means the income return from the

total investment portfolio is 1.5% which, in terms of current money market investment returns, is particularly healthy.

- o) **Business Rates (Risk):** There are inherent risks and uncertainties within the Business Rates Retention system. The Council's share of business rates funding is directly linked to the total amount of business rates due and collected in the area, which can fluctuate throughout the year and be affected by the result of Rateable Value changes e.g. as a result of Appeals.
- p) **Business Rates (Issue):** The Government's calculator for Tax Income Guarantee grant included an error. A corrected version was issued after the 2020/21 accounts were closed. The impact of the error is that we over-accrued business rates, TIG income and BRR Pooling Gain by £244,850, which will adversely affect funding in 2021/22 when corrected. This will need to be offset by a transfer from the Business Rates Volatility Reserve.
- q) **Council Tax:** This income is under pressure due to the increase in discounts being issued. This will have an impact on the current year and future years. Regular review of statistics will be undertaken to monitor the situation.

9 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities

- 9.1 The financial performance of the Council underpins the delivery of corporate priorities and therefore all Corporate Aims.

10 Partnership Implications

- 10.1 A wide range of Council services are provided through partnership arrangements e.g. SLM for leisure services and Somerset Waste Partnership for Waste and Recycling services. The cost of these services is reflected in the Council's financial outturn position for the year.

11 Scrutiny Comments / Recommendations

- 11.1 This report was considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 1 September and the recommendations supported.
- 11.2 The main comments and questions were:
 - a. There were a number of questions raised relating to the reduction in income from Car Parking. The Director of External Operations provided explanations as to how the car parking information is collected and tracked and informed that an Officer has been assigned to review the capacity and usage of the car parks. The Director also advised that given the continued downturn of the car parking income this year the 2022/23 budget estimate would be based on this information and reasonable assumptions about future trends to inform. This will be a judgement to be applied for budget setting with appropriate contingency to underwrite ongoing risk.
 - b. The S151 explained that car parking income had not returned to pre-COVID levels, and that there was £2.4m transfer from reserves identified at budget setting based

on significant financial risks including the expectation that the car parking income would potentially need to be supported. This had become a reality in Q1 resulting in the recommendation 2.1b) that £1.145m be transferred out of reserves.

- c. The reason for the SMT overspend was explained as a central adjustment to the forecast to provide for the expected increase in staff costs by 1.75%. This had been budgeted at 0% based on guidance from central government at the time of budget setting. The cost is currently reported within the SMT budget, but Table 1 has been updated to show this on a separately line in the summary following feedback from Scrutiny.
- d. The Investment Properties Net Income was the total income earned from both the legacy investment properties and the recent investments in commercial properties. Performance against the Investment Strategy is scheduled to report to members on a 6-monthly basis as agreed by Council.
- e. The S151 confirmed that there is currently no provision for the cost of Unitary within the forecast, as this is in the early stages and there is currently no information on which to base a forecast cost.

Democratic Path:

- **Corporate Scrutiny - 1 September 2021**
- **Executive - 15 September 2021**
- **Full Council - No**

Reporting Frequency: Quarterly

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Appendix A	Approved Capital Budget
Appendix B	Capital Financing of Total Approved Budget
Appendix C	Annual Profiling of Approved Capital Budget
Appendix D	Profiled Capital Budget for 2021/22 Vs Forecast Capital Outturn for 2021/22

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Appendix A: General Fund Approved Capital Budget

SWT Capital Programme	Prior Year Slippage	Approved Supplements not yet loaded into e5	Current Year Approval Feb 2021 Budget Setting	Total Approved Budget	Current year Virements	Current year Supplements	Current year Returns	Revised Current year Approved Capital Budget
Development and Place	28,088,143	111,993,577	575,000	140,656,720	-	-	-	140,656,720
External Operations and Climate Change	6,986,727	-	2,358,720	9,345,447	91,000	-	-	9,254,447
Housing & Communities	4,110,423	-	1,702,240	5,812,663	91,000	-	-	5,903,663
Internal Operations	1,515,070	-	515,000	2,030,070	-	-	-	2,030,070
Hinkley Capital Schemes	856,875	-	-	856,875	-	-	-	856,875
S106 Capital Schemes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total GF	41,557,237	111,993,577	5,150,960	158,701,774	-	-	-	158,701,774

Appendix B: Capital Financing of Total Approved Budget

SWT Capital Programme	TOTAL CAPITAL FINANCING	Capital Grants CIL	Capital Grants	Section 106 Agreements	Capital Receipts	Unallocated Capital resources	General Fund RCCO	New Homes Bonus Reserve	Capital Funding Reserve	Other Earmarked Reserves	Borrowing
Development and Place	140,656,720	13,165,992	11,899,386	283,437	745,000	-	-	-	-	-	114,562,905
External Operations and Climate Change	9,254,447	-	4,993,461	-	2,153,720	-	45,000	-	-	-	2,062,266
Housing & Communities	5,903,663	-	4,954,033	455,682	385,446	-	-	-	108,502	-	-
Internal Operations	2,030,070	-	-	-	1,101,900	-	-	-	20,000	-	908,170
Hinkley Capital Schemes	856,875	-	856,875	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
S106 Capital Schemes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total GF	158,701,774	13,165,992	22,703,754	739,119	4,386,066	-	45,000	-	128,502	-	117,533,341

Appendix C: General Fund Annual Profiling of Approved Capital Budget

SWT Capital Programme	Total Approved Budget	Capital Spend 2021/22	Capital Spend 2022/23	Capital Spend 2023/24	Capital Spend 2024/25	Capital Spend 2025/26	Capital Spend 2026/27	Capital Spend 2027/28	Capital Spend 2028/29
Development and Place	140,656,720	67,512,404	28,209,203	36,996,966	7,938,146	-	-	-	-
External Operations and Climate Change	9,254,447	5,191,860	4,062,586	-	-	-	-	-	-
Housing & Communities	5,903,663	1,502,601	965,029	1,059,000	1,059,000	1,318,033	-	-	-
Internal Operations	2,030,070	1,600,418	429,652	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hinkley Capital Schemes	856,875	856,875	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
S106 Capital Schemes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total GF	158,701,774	76,664,158	33,666,470	38,055,966	8,997,146	1,318,033	-	-	-

Appendix D: Profiled Capital Budget for 2021/22 Vs Forecast Capital Outturn for 2021/22

SWT Capital Programme	Profiled Capex Budget 2021/22	Expenditure YTD	Forecast Outturn 2021/22	Variance; - underspend + overspend
Development and Place	67,512,404	26,104,415	67,691,514	179,110
External Operations and Climate Change	5,191,860	1,642,496	5,217,798	25,938
Housing & Communities	1,502,601	91,757	1,502,601	-
Internal Operations	1,600,418	1,058,280	1,495,111	- 105,307
Hinkley Capital Schemes	856,875	93,000	856,875	0
S106 Capital Schemes	-	58,331	58,331	58,331
Total GF	76,664,158	29,048,279	76,822,230	158,072

Report Number: SWT 71/21

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Executive – 15 September 2021

2021/22 Housing Revenue Account Financial Monitoring as at Quarter 1 (30 June 2021)

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Smith, Housing

Report Author: Kerry Prisco (Management Accounting and Reporting Lead)

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the projected outturn financial position of the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the financial year 2021/22 (as at 30 June 2021).
- 1.2 The revenue position is under significant pressure as it continues to be affected by the ongoing impact of COVID and operating within an environment of economic recovery. The service has a backlog of responsive and planned maintenance and compliance works to be undertaken. Costs are escalating in terms of materials, staffing, compliance, and servicing costs. Future financial pressures are still to be confirmed in terms of staff pay award, income collection, cost of implementing regulatory changes, and the cost of implementing a unitary authority. A thorough analysis of risks and uncertainties facing the HRA has been undertaken and careful monitoring of these will continue for early indications of emerging financial pressures.
- 1.3 There is currently sufficient capacity in reserves to cover new in-year pressures identified to date and the current forecast outturn position. However, this significantly reduces the HRA's headroom to react to any new pressures that may emerge in this or future financial years.
- 1.4 Whilst best endeavours to forecast with as much accuracy as possible we have seen a historical change in forecasts each quarter and to year end. However, action is required to control spending to ensure the outturn is on or close to budget.
- 1.5 The housing senior management team are currently working through options to see what can be done to contain the overall position.
- 1.6 The current HRA **Revenue Budget** forecast is a projected overspend of £610k.
- 1.7 The HRA **Capital Programme** has a total approved budget of £118m. The profiled budgeted spend for 2021/22 is £29m and this is currently forecast to underspend by £7.7m.

1.8 The **unearmarked reserves** are projected to be £2.273m which is £273k above the recommended minimum balance of £2m.

1.9 The **earmarked reserves** opening balance is £1.1m. It is proposed that some earmarked reserve balances will need to be returned to general reserves to mitigate in-year budget pressures.

2 Recommendations

2.1 The Executive Committee reviews and notes the HRA's forecast financial performance and projected reserves position for 2021/22 financial year as at 30 June 2021.

2.2 The Executive recommends that Full Council approves the reallocation of £869k of earmarked reserves to general reserves to support the Revenue Budget.
[Note – this recommendation will be included in summary in the Financial Strategy report to Council 5 October 2021]

2.3 The Executive agrees in principle that the final pay award will be funded from General Reserves, and delegates authority to the Director of Housing and Communities and the S151 Officer to approve a supplementary budget funded from HRA general reserve to cover the 2021/22 estimated cost of the 2021/22 pay award once agreed.

3 Risk Assessment

3.1 Financial forecasts are based on known information and projections based on assumptions and reasonable estimates. As such any forecast carries an element of risk. The current forecasts included in this report are considered reasonable given the extra element of risk around COVID and pace of economic recovery and based on experience it is feasible the year end position could change. It is common for further variances to emerge during the last quarter, reflecting an optimism bias within previous forecasting.

3.2 Salient in year budget risks are summarised in section 9 in this report. The Council manages financial risk in several ways including setting prudent budgets, carrying out appropriate monitoring and control of spend, and operating robust financial procedures. The Council also holds both general and earmarked reserves which include contingencies to manage budget risk, though these are low for the HRA.

4 Background and Full details of the Report

4.1 This report provides the HRA's forecast end of year financial position for revenue and capital expenditure as at 30 June 2021 for the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

4.2 The regular monitoring of financial information is a key element in the HRA's Performance Management Framework. Crucially it enables remedial action to be taken in response to significant budget variances, some of which may be unavoidable. It also provides the opportunity to assess any consequent impact on reserves and the HRA's Medium Term Financial Plan and 30-Year Business Plan.

4.3 Members will be aware from previous experience that the position can change between 'in-year' projections and the final outturn position, mainly due to demand-led service costs and income levels. The budget monitoring process involves a detailed review of the more volatile budgets and a proportionate review of low risk/low volatility budget areas. Budget Holders, with support and advice from their finance business partners, update their forecasts monthly based on currently available information and knowledge of service requirements for the remainder of the year. As with any forecast there is always a risk that some unforeseen changes could influence the position at the year-end, and several risks and uncertainties are highlighted within this report. However, the following forecast is reasonable based on current information.

5 HRA Revenue Budget 2021/22 Forecast Outturn

- 5.1 The HRA is a ring-fenced, self-financing, account used to manage the Council's housing stock of some 5,700 properties, with the Council acting as the Landlord.
- 5.2 The Council retains all rental income to meet the costs of managing and maintaining the housing stock, as well as meeting the interest payments and repayment of capital debt.
- 5.3 The current year end forecast outturn position for the Housing Revenue Account for 2021/22 is a net overspend of £610k.

Table 1: HRA Revenue Outturn Summary

	Current Budget £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Forecast Variance	
			£000	%
Gross Income	-27,668	-27,677	-9	0.0%
Service Expenditure	15,335	15,954	619	4.0%
Other Expenditure	12,333	12,333	0	0.0%
Total	0	610	610	2.21%

- 5.4 The variances to budget are shown in more detail in Table 2 and following explanations.

Table 2 - Summary of Forecast Variances for the Year

	Current Budget £000	Outturn Forecast £000	Variance £000
Gross Income:			
Dwelling Rents	-24,951	-24,921	29
Non-Dwelling Rents	-704	-698	6
Charges for Services / Facilities	-1,623	-1,665	-42
Other Income	-389	-392	-2
Sub-Total Gross Income	-27,668	-27,677	-9
Service Expenditure:			
Development & Regeneration	287	244	-43
Community Resilience	154	168	14
Tenancy Management	1,991	2,119	128
Maintenance	4,202	4,557	354
Assets	1,346	1,293	-53

	Current Budget £000	Outturn Forecast £000	Variance £000
Compliance	2,317	2,549	233
Performance	5,037	5,024	-13
Sub-Total Service Expenditure	15,335	15,954	620
Central Costs / Movement in Reserves:			
Revenue Contribution to Capital	0	0	0
Interest Payable	2,669	2,669	0
Interest Receivable	0	0	0
Change in Provision for Bad Debt	180	180	0
Depreciation	7,663	7,663	0
Capital Debt Repayment	1,821	1,821	0
Sub-Total Central Costs / Movement in Reserves:	12,333	12,333	0
Net Surplus(-) / Deficit for the Year	0	610	610

Income

- 5.5 **Dwelling Rent Income:** the budgeted income for 2021/22 is £24.951m, which reflects an assumption of 2% void losses and applying a 52-week year. The overall current projections suggest that less income will be recovered than predicted when setting the budget and providing an allowance for voids. However, it is early in the year and future level of voids could impact on the outturn.
- 5.6 **Charges for Services / Facilities:**
- 5.7 The budgeted income for 2021/22 for the **Service Charge Income for Dwellings** (after discounts have been applied to tenants such as Piper Charge to Sheltered Housing and Extra Care) less an average 2% void loss and applying a 52-week year, is £1.380m. The current projections suggest that c£30k more income will be recovered than predicted when setting the budget and providing an allowance for voids. However, it is early in the year and future level of voids could impact on the outturn.
- 5.8 The **Service Charge Income for Leaseholders** income for non-scheme lease holders is invoiced in arrears and therefore the actual income received relates to expenses incurred in the previous financial year. The budget was estimated at £233k. The current projections suggest that £24k more income will be collected compared to budget, reflecting the total of actual costs recharged.
- 5.9 The budgeted income for **Meeting Halls** for 2021/22 is £10k. The current projection is that no income will be received due to COVID restrictions preventing this service to be provided.

Expenditure

- 5.10 **Development & Regeneration:** The underspend relates to a few posts held vacant for the early part of the year. The delivery of new development projects has not required this

resource as the service has focused on establishing a development pipeline. The development pipeline of 342 units is now established and following procurement and planning this resource in the structure will be required as the service increasingly moves into delivery from 2021/22.

- 5.11 **Community Resilience:** A small overspend against budget for staffing costs due to a delayed reduction in hours.
- 5.12 **Tenancy Management:** this is a combination of additional staffing costs to backfill absences, vacant posts and additional workload, as well as additional cost of compliance works on meeting halls.
- 5.13 **Maintenance:** The variance shown results from works carried out outside of the core maintenance system. There is an ongoing project to investigate the output of the job costing system (including how reliably it classifies capital vs revenue works). In the meantime, forecasts relating to the core system are being shown at budget. In anticipation that the whole of the available budget will be required to cover jobs processed through the system, for prudence other costs including directly invoiced works (not processed through the system) and fleet costs which do not presently carry a specific budget are being forecast as an overspend. This amounts to £450k and is offset by savings against staff budgets circa £100k.
- 5.14 **Assets:** The variance shown is primarily due to the external decorations programme being reviewed to align with the capitalised Fascias and Soffits programme (see Major Works section below). This is currently being reviewed and consideration is being given to implementing an accelerated external decorations programme, thus reducing this potential underspend at year-end.
- 5.15 **Compliance:** The variance shown is primarily due to two key areas of compliance activity, namely the updated property asbestos survey programme and the property electrical inspection programme. In particular, the electrical safety checks being undertaken are identifying a higher level of required remedial actions – these cost pressures against the HRA revenue budget are being reviewed and will be mitigated as far as possible by capitalising where appropriate to do so.
- 5.16 **Performance:** Of the total budget of £5m, £3.972m relates to shared costs such as support services, pension deficit, governance leaving £1.065m on operating costs such as staffing, insurance, training, travel, stationery, printing and bank charges, as well as the Tenants Empowerment and Tenants Action Group.
- 5.17 The minor under spend is a combination of various minor over spends offset by part year vacancy savings in the performance team and forecast underspends in both Tenants Empowerment and Tenants Action Group.

6 HRA Capital Programme

- 6.1 The HRA approved Capital Programme is £118.3m. This consists of £13.8m of new schemes approved for 2021/22 plus £104.5m of previously approved schemes in prior

years (see **Appendix A**).

- 6.2 The Council plans to finance this investment through the Major Repairs Reserve, Capital Receipts, Revenue Funding and Borrowing (see **Appendix B**).
- 6.3 The HRA Capital Programme relates to in-year works and longer-term schemes that will be completed over the next ten years. The current planned profiled spend is summarised in **Appendix C**.
- 6.4 Further information on the three distinct areas of the HRA capital programme and its financial performance to date against this financial year can be found below and in **Appendix D**. This is currently forecast to underspend by £7.7m.
- 6.5 **Major Works:** The approved budget of £14.5m is funded by the Major Repairs Reserve and relates to spend on major works to existing dwellings. New schemes approved for 2021/22 total £8.9m with slippage from the prior year of £5.6m.
- 6.6 All internal capital programme works were placed on hold during the COVID lockdown periods, and some external works were also delayed, causing budget slippage to occur from the 2020/21 financial year. We have therefore put in place plans to increase the level of overall capital programmes to be delivered in 2021/22, although it should be noted that delivering this volume of works will be very challenging. We are recruiting additional capital programme staff resources to assist with delivery of these programmes and we are also undertaking further procurement for a range of new capital contracts.
- 6.7 The 2021/22 capital programme includes major programmes such as:
- Kitchens
 - Bathrooms
 - Air Source Heat Pumps
 - Heating improvements
 - Insulation and ventilation
 - Door entry systems
 - External doors
 - Fasciae and soffits
 - Roofing
 - Windows
 - Special Projects (e.g. major refurbishment, external improvement works, structural works, etc.)
- 6.8 The current forecast projection is an underspend against budget of £4.5m.
- 6.9 **Improvements:** The approved budget of £3.8m is funded by the Major Repairs Reserve and relates to spend on improvements to existing dwellings. New schemes approved for 2021/22 total £1.1m with slippage from the prior year of £2.7m.
- 6.10 As noted in Major Works above, all internal capital programme works were placed on hold during the COVID lockdown periods causing budget slippage to occur from the 2020/21 financial year and this also affected some improvement programmes. Fire

safety improvement works are being prioritised following recommendations from recently completed Fire Risk Assessments. We have therefore carried out further procurement on two significant areas (installation of replacement fire doors, and new emergency lighting to communal areas) and these contracts are to commence shortly. The spike in procurement activity is placing increased pressure on contract management and procurement capacity, with additional temporary resources recently recruited to help mitigate this.

- 6.11 The current forecast projection is an underspend against budget of £30k on meeting halls and garages.
- 6.12 **Social Housing Development Programme:** The approved budget of £100m is for the provision of new housing through schemes such as Phases A-E for North Taunton Regeneration (NTWP), Seaward Way, Oxford Inn, Zero Carbon Affordable Homes and other buybacks to increase the Council's housing stock.
- 6.13 The new build programme has entered into one contract (Phase A NTWP) and is due to enter into a second contract (Seaward Way) in 2021/2022. This will obligate SWT through contract £21m between 2021/2024 and SWT will gain 101 new low carbon council homes and a community facility. Both contracts are design and build and therefore provide the council with cost certainty and costs risk will primarily be held by the contractors. The service is also bringing forward a new planning application for NTWP phases B and C.
- 6.14 The Director of Housing will consider the decanting of Phase Ci (12 tenanted units) in late summer in anticipation of a start on site for Phase B and Ci early next financial year. Rent loss at NTWP will increase up to 2025/2026 at which time additional units, over those demolished, will generate greater income at the point of phase D delivery. Predicted void loss is reflected in the HRA Business Plan and this will continue to be updated with business plan reviews. The decant strategy will decant customers in smaller subphases and retain as many customers within the scheme area through a two-move approach in order to maximise rental income. Some NTWP dwellings will continue to be used for temporary accommodation providing an income to mitigate some rent loss.
- 6.15 The service will review the delivery timescales and budget for the 61 new build units in the zero carbon affordable homes pilot and Oxford Inn following planning permission which is subject to a requirement to mitigate against phosphates. The garage income from these sites will not be affected by the proposed development until contracts are let for the schemes. Refurbishment schemes at Oake and NTWP Phase E will commence 2022/2023 with rent loss being controlled by limiting the number of units under refurbishment to circa four per scheme at any one time.
- 6.16 Please note that there have been changes to the use of Right To Buy (RTB) receipts which are favourable to SWT and its new build programme. The new rules will increase the subsidy available for new build schemes by circa 10% and reduce the borrowing required for the schemes. All schemes are being future proofed to meet 2030 and 2050 low and zero carbon targets.

6.17 The current forecast projection is an underspend against budget of £2.9m as new build schemes are projected to meet RTB 1-4-1 spend requirements instead of purchases.

7 HRA Earmarked Reserves

7.1 The HRA Earmarked Reserves (EMR) at the beginning of 2021/22 were £1.107m (see **Table 3** below).

7.2 The Director is proposing to return the Social Housing Development Fund earmarked reserves and part of the One Teams earmarked reserves to general reserves to support the Revenue Budget in funding other priorities. The Social Housing Fund has been used in the past to fund development feasibility studies and other related asset costs. However now the service has a comprehensive development pipeline this budget is no longer required for this purpose. Each development scheme will now be funded by its approved specific project budget. The One Team budget reduction will leave £6K in this EMR to fund Christmas activities and complete the Create a Place projects currently underway in Halcon and North Taunton. Future projects will be considered on a case by case basis and resourced from other revenue budgets.

Table 3: Balance of Earmarked Reserves held at 1 April 2021

Description	Balance B/F £000	Proposed Return to General Reserves	Balance B/F £000
HRA One Teams	26	-20	6
HRA Social Housing Development Fund	849	-849	0
HRA Hinkley	57	0	57
HRA Contribution to Change	175	0	175
HRA Total	1,107	-869	237

8 HRA Unearmarked Reserves

8.1 The HRA general reserves at the start of the year were £2.686m. This is £686k above the minimum recommended reserve level of £2m. Remaining at or above these targets provides financial resilience to in year pressures through volatility and unforeseen cost increases and income reductions.

8.2 The proposal is to increase general reserves by returning £869k of earmarked reserve that are no longer required for their original purpose. However, there are several in-year commitments and pressures that are being proposed to be funded from general reserves if savings cannot be found during the year. The current outturn position is forecast to be a net overspend of £660k.

8.3 If the forecast outturn position does not improve the deficit will impact on reserve balances, decreasing them to £2.273m, which is £273k above the recommended minimum balance of £2m. There is a risk that reserves will fall below the adequate

minimum balance if further pressures emerge and / or the outturn position increases further.

- 8.4 **Table 4** below summarises the movement on the HRA unearmarked reserves during 2021/22.

Table 4: HRA Unearmarked Reserves Balance

	Approval	£'000
Balance Brought Forward 1 April 2021		2,686
Approved - OC & Supply Chain Project Lead	Director / S151	-19.5
Approved - Housing Policy Lead x1	SMT	-40
Approved - Housing Performance CM (Complaints) x1	SMT	-25
Approved - Housing Improvement Programme Manager	SMT	-80
Approved - Compliance Administrator	SMT	-23
Approved - Stock Condition Surveyors x2	SMT	-89
Approved - Landlord Compliance Specialist	SMT	-33
Approved - Building Safety CM	SMT	-25
Approved - Assets Admin Assistant	SMT	-18
Approved - Electrical Supervisor	SMT	-28
Approved - Tradesperson	SMT	-21
Provisional - Released EMRs	Full Council - tbc	869
Provisional - 1.75% Pay Award	Executive - tbc	-175
Provisional - Share of Additional H&S Costs	Director	-96
Forecast Balance after current commitments		2,883
Projected Outturn - Total variance		-610
Forecast Balance 31 March 2022		2,273
Recommended Minimum Balance		2,000
Projected Balance above recommended Minimum Balance		273

9 Risk and Uncertainty

- 9.1 Budgets and forecasts are based on known information and the best estimates of the housing service's future income and expenditure activity. Income and expenditure over the financial year is controlled by budget holders and then reported through the budget monitoring process. During this process any risks and uncertainties are identified which could impact financial projections, but for which the likelihood and/or amount are uncertain.
- 9.2 There are certain items that are not determined or finalised until the financial year-end. For example, the final assessment of provisions required for bad debts, and final allocations of support service recharges. These can result in potentially significant differences to current forecasts.
- 9.3 The current areas of risk and uncertainty being reported include:
- 9.4 **Dwelling Rent and Service Charge Income:** The dwelling rent and service charges income budget is set with an assumed level of voids at 20% for temporary

accommodation and 2% for general needs, extra care and sheltered accommodation. This is monitored during the year but may result in variances to budget in the final outturn position.

- 9.5 The Temporary Accommodation rental income budget included additional interim properties in the North Taunton area. These were based on estimated phasing of decant which will change as the decant progresses causing a variance in the income obtained.
- 9.6 **Garage Rental Income:** This is expected to be lower than budgeted due to a reduction in activity in advertising lettings and planned voids in certain areas pending change in use.
- 9.7 **Repairs & Maintenance:** Overall this is a very demand led and reactive service based on the needs of the tenants. There are also a number of uncontrollable variables associated with this service such as the weather (e.g. cold winters causing burst pipes, roof leaks, etc), condition of properties when returned (e.g. void refurbishments), consumer demand on minor internal / external repairs (e.g. broken door or fence) and the type of repair work required. Market pricing of materials etc can also be volatile with some unit costs increasing in recent months. As such the levels of demand do not always follow a recognisable trend. We therefore caveat the forecasts in these areas to account for fluctuations.
- 9.8 **Fleet Contract:** From the 1st October 2021, the Council is entering into a new contract for the maintenance and supply of its fleet. Actual vehicle requirements for each service area are being finalised. Once this work is complete then costs and budgets can be realigned and updated forecasts reported. Therefore, for Q1 the fleet maintenance costs have been forecast to budget until a more accurate forecast can be calculated.
- 9.9 **Landlord Compliance:** A review of all compliance areas against every property for which Somerset West and Taunton Council has landlord property compliance responsibility has largely been undertaken. The compliance works required following this review are currently being planned and procured. Whilst additional budget provision has been added for 2021/22 the full extent of the financial pressure remains uncertain as more information is gathered.
- 9.10 **Electrical Compliance:** As noted above, a high number of remedial works have been identified from the electrical inspection condition reports. The majority of this is expected to fall under 'major' works and capitalised. However, an unknown proportion of this will only be 'minor' works and will need to be funded from revenue presenting a potential overspend.
- 9.11 **Open Contractor:** A project lead is now in post to thoroughly review and improve the efficient and accurate operational use of OC. The underlying issues around timing of information and accuracy of coding still remains and the ability of services to accurately forecast their outturn position on charges coming from OC remains low though still largely affected by the demand led nature of the service.
- 9.12 **Staff Pay Award:** The budgets have been set based on 0% pay award for 2021/22 following the government's announcement in respect of public sector pay. However, pay

negotiations are still being undertaken. The current forecast estimates a 1.75% pay award increasing direct staffing costs by c£175k and there is a request to the Executive to agree in principle that the final pay award will be funded from General Reserves.

- 9.13 **COVID-19:** The impact of COVID during the last financial year included delays in responsive repairs works (Revenue) and planned major and improvement works (Capital) reducing spend in these areas. The repairs non-emergency backlog is being resolved by recruitment of additional resources for the in-house trade team and by use of external contractors. However, we continue to have difficulty in recruitment of in-house skilled tradespersons for a range of work areas. We continue to carefully monitor and manage progress in this area and keep residents informed in relation to their repair requests.
- 9.14 The ongoing impact of the pandemic presents a risk to the Housing Service, particularly in terms of revenue collection as well as impact on tenant mental health and wellbeing. We have already seen a drop in inflation rates impacting our future income and expenditure, however another significant risk relates to financial hardship that will result from the impact of COVID, particularly following the ending of government support such as furlough and the current uplift in Universal Credit. The net result is likely to be higher unemployment and much tighter finances for many households which will impact on their ability to pay rent. Furthermore, there may be an increasing need to invest more in support services for tenant households affected by the impact of COVID. This could present across a range of service demands including increased debt and benefits advice; unemployment support, mental health support; anti-social behaviour intervention, safeguarding and domestic abuse support.
- 9.15 In addition, there has been substantial increases on a range of construction materials (and this pattern is expected to continue). Also, difficulties in recruitment of construction professional and trades staff for both normal work levels and COVID backlog is leading to salary inflation. Both of these factors are putting further pressure on a number of revenue and capital budgets.
- 9.16 **Unitary Authority:** The Secretary of State has announced his decision on the future of local government in Somerset and has chosen the "One Somerset" option put forward by the County Council. This means there will be one new council for Somerset replacing the existing five councils in April 2023. The costs of implementation will be significant and will bring significant additional demand on officers to support the process with potential additional capacity required.
- 9.17 It is currently unknown what the future potential HRA costs will be because of this decision, and whether these costs will need to be funded using revenue or capital budgets. From a capital perspective the business plan does provide some headroom to allow non-right to buy receipts to be used as flexible capital receipts to fund transformation costs. However, this direction ends on the 31 March 2022 and whilst a statement of intent has been issued by the Government to extend this directive for a further three years, this has not yet been confirmed. Revenue costs of implementation are not currently budgeted and will place additional pressures on the HRA budget and reserves, thus we will need to review planned expenditure and reserves to make this affordable.

- 9.18 **Right To Buy (RTB) Receipts:** This is a government policy that enables tenants to purchase their homes at a discount, subject to meeting qualifying criteria. The receipts allowed to be retained by the Council can now fund up to 40% of new social housing costs and must be used within five years of receipt, following a temporary amendment to the scheme policy from the 1 April 2021. To date, the Council has successfully fully spent all of their retained 1-4-1 receipts resulting in no returns being made to the Treasury/MHCLG.
- 9.19 Whilst projected spend on new build developments is currently adequate to meet 1-4-1 spend requirements this is dependent on the successful delivery of these social development schemes. There is a risk that progress on new build schemes could be delayed and purchasing houses on the open market is also hindered, both as a direct result of COVID, and may result in funds being return to MHCLD / Treasury.
- 9.20 **Welfare Reform and Universal Credit (UC):** The impacts of Welfare Reform and UC are significant with the number and value of rent accounts in arrears expected to increase considerably. A number of mitigations are already in place to help support tenants affected by Welfare Reform and UC such as debt advice, access to discretionary housing payments and a new arrears management team with redesigned workflow processes. Welfare Reform and UC may require the Council to revise future income projections as our experience with Welfare Reform and UC develops.
- 9.21 **Responding to increased stock quality standards:** Changes to the Regulator of Social Housing's decent home standard as well as higher thermal efficiency standards which are unsupported by additional external grant funding would place an additional burden on HRA resources available for elemental investment in homes. Once the detail is known, we will need to adapt to ensure we continue to maintain stock at the Decent Homes Standard and prepare to meet all the evolving expectations, incorporating the financial impacts into the Business Plan.
- 9.22 **Building Regulation and Fire Safety:** The Grenfell Tower fire and subsequent Review of Building Regulation and Fire Safety bring several operational and financial risks. These have been mitigated with the increases in revenue and capital budgets approved for 2021/22 for compliance related work. However, the exact costs are currently unclear. There are likely to be other impacts, such as on the repairs budget due to additional work to communal areas, more intensive management of flat blocks and further resilience within teams to respond to the volume and breath of enquiries. We will need to ensure continued compliance with these statutory requirements.
- 9.23 **Housing White Paper:** In November 2020 the Government published the Housing White Paper which sets out the changes to how social landlords will operate. It will require several changes to home safety, tenant satisfaction measures, complaints handling, a new inspection regime for social landlords and a strengthened role for the Regulator of Social Housing. Many of the new changes in the white paper have already been mitigated in Housing by strengthening our compliance activities, setting up the new Housing Performance Team to be responsible for communications, performance data and engagement but this will need to be kept under review and self-assessment has begun.

10 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities

10.1 The financial performance of the Council underpins the delivery of corporate priorities and therefore all Corporate Aims.

11 Partnership Implications

11.1 A range of HRA services are provided through partnership arrangements such as MIND, citizen's advice, Inspire to Achieve, Taunton East Development Trust, North Taunton and Wiveliscombe Area Partnership. The cost of these services is reflected in the Council's financial outturn position for the year.

12 Scrutiny Comments / Recommendations

12.1 This report was considered, and the recommendations supported by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 1 September.

12.2 The main comments and questions were:

- a) The question was raised as to how the rent collections were going and if the Council had to assist tenants. The Director of Housing explained that there is an income team in place to deal with the rent collection and that they engage with the tenants as necessary to assist with rent payments. He referred to the Corporate Performance report, and that this provides monthly KPI's relating to rent collection.
- b) The question was raised relating to the determination of the cost budgets. The Director for Housing explained that the Housing team always look for cost efficiencies and that these are based on known or expected costs.
- c) The Director of Housing emphasised that the current environment is very challenging due to an increasing trend in the cost of building supplies, and that there is a shortage of qualified staff needed to service the maintenance and compliance needs.

Democratic Path:

- **Corporate Scrutiny - 1 September 2021**
- **Executive - 15 September 2021**
- **Full Council - No [But note that Recommendation 2.2 will be incorporated into the Financial Strategy report to Full Council 5 October 2021]**

Reporting Frequency: Quarterly

List of Appendices

Appendix A	Approved Capital Budget
Appendix B	Capital Financing of Total Approved Budget
Appendix C	Annual Profiling of Approved Capital Budget
Appendix D	Profiled Capital Budget for 2021/22 Vs Forecast Capital Outturn for 2021/22

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Appendix A: HRA Approved Capital Budget

SWT Capital Programme	Prior Year Slippage	Approved Supplements not yet loaded into e5	Current Year Approval Feb 2021 Budget Setting	Total Approved Budget	Current year Virements	Current year Supplements	Current year Returns	Revised Current year Approved Capital Budget
Major Works	5,646,075	-	8,883,710	14,529,785	-	-	-	14,529,785
Fire Safety	1,553,967	-	202,000	1,755,967	-	-	-	1,755,967
Related Assets	30,073	-	100,000	130,073	-	-	-	130,073
Exceptional & Extensive	-	-	293,500	293,500	-	-	-	293,500
Vehicles	347,800	-	121,000	468,800	-	-	-	468,800
ICT	745,598	-	-	745,598	-	-	-	745,598
Aids & Adaptations & DFGs	-	-	370,000	370,000	-	-	-	370,000
Sub-Total Majors & Improvements	8,323,513	-	9,970,210	18,293,723	-	-	-	18,293,723
Social Housing Development	96,203,047	-	3,830,000	100,033,047	-	-	-	100,033,047
Total HRA	104,526,560	-	13,800,210	118,326,770	-	-	-	118,326,770

Appendix B: HRA Capital Financing of Total Approved Budget

SWT Capital Programme	TOTAL CAPITAL FINANCING	Capital Grants	Right To Buy (RTB) Capital Receipts	Capital Receipts	HRA Revenue Contribution	Major Repairs Reserve	Other Earmarked Reserves	Borrowing
Major Works	14,529,785	-	-	-	-	14,529,785	-	-
Fire Safety	1,755,967	-	-	-	-	1,755,967	-	-
Related Assets	130,073	-	-	-	-	130,073	-	-
Exceptional & Extensive	293,500	-	-	-	-	293,500	-	-
Vehicles	468,800	-	-	-	-	468,800	-	-
ICT	745,598	-	-	-	-	745,598	-	-
Aids & Adaptations & DFGs	370,000	-	-	-	-	370,000	-	-
Sub-Total Majors & Improvements	18,293,723	-	-	-	-	18,293,723	-	-
Social Housing Development	100,033,047	470,000	18,789,868	-	-	-	-	80,773,179
Total HRA	118,326,770	470,000	18,789,868	-	-	18,293,723	-	80,773,179

Appendix C: HRA Annual Profiling of Approved Capital Budget

SWT Capital Programme	Total Approved Budget	Capital Spend 2021/22	Capital Spend 2022/23	Capital Spend 2023/24	Capital Spend 2024/25	Capital Spend 2025/26	Capital Spend 2026/27	Capital Spend 2027/28	Capital Spend 2028/29
Major Works	14,529,785	14,529,785	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fire Safety	1,755,967	1,755,967	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Related Assets	130,073	130,073	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Exceptional & Extensive	293,500	293,500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vehicles	468,800	468,800	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ICT	745,598	372,799	372,799	-	-	-	-	-	-
Aids & Adaptations & DFGs	370,000	370,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sub-Total Majors & Improvements	18,293,723	17,920,924	372,799	-	-	-	-	-	-
Social Housing Development	100,033,047	11,933,318	30,525,739	16,635,980	11,824,610	12,846,700	10,966,880	4,522,260	777,560
Total HRA	118,326,770	29,854,242	30,898,538	16,635,980	11,824,610	12,846,700	10,966,880	4,522,260	777,560

Appendix D: HRA Profiled Capital Budget for 2021/22 Vs Forecast Capital Outturn for 2021/22

SWT Capital Programme	Profiled Capex Budget 2021/22	Expenditure YTD	Forecast Outturn 2021/22	Variance; - underspend + overspend
Major Works	14,529,785	318,807	9,938,283	- 4,591,502
Fire Safety	1,755,967	- 399,769	1,755,967	-
Related Assets	130,073	16,389	99,615	- 30,458
Exceptional & Extensive	293,500	- 64,213	293,500	-
Vehicles	468,800	-	468,800	-
ICT	372,799	93,884	372,799	-
Aids & Adaptations & DFGs	370,000	11,083	370,000	-
Sub-Total Majors & Improvements	17,920,924	- 23,818	13,298,963	- 4,621,961
Social Housing Development	11,933,318	235,765	9,010,257	- 2,923,061
Total HRA	29,854,242	211,947	22,309,220	- 7,545,022

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Executive – 15 September 2021

Monkton Heathfield: SS1 Policy Area and MH2 Concept Plan and Design Principles

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Member Mike Rigby

Report Author: Simon Fox, Major Projects Officer (Planning)

1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update Members on the Monkton Heathfield draft Policy SS1 area Framework Plan, draft Phase 2 Concept Plan and draft Design Principles document.
- 1.2 At the Executive Meeting of 20 May 2020 Members recommended that:
 - 1) The draft SS1 Policy area Framework Plan, the draft MH2 Concept Plan and the draft MH2 Design Guidance be published for public consultation; and
 - 2) That the outcome of the public consultation, including any appropriate suggested amendments, be reported back to the Executive as soon as possible with a view to seek approval to adopt the Plans and Guidance for Development Management decision making purposes.
- 1.3 This report sets out what has happened since May 2020 and appraises the merits of progressing the adoption of the trio of documents.
- 1.4 Several considerations now challenge the merit of proceeding with adoption, these considerations include:
 - (a) the ongoing prospect of an outline application overtaking events;
 - (b) the length of time which has passed since May 2020 (the Exec decision) with no progression and the work now needed to assess, discuss and decide a way forward on the comments received during the consultation; and
 - (c) the plethora of new national and local policy/guidance in place which would need to be reflected in the guidance.
- 1.5 The planning application will raise the same issues made during the consultation period and more, and so it is considered a more suitable use of resources to concentrate on that submission now due late September 2021. Allied to this, current SWT officers are mindful that now moving to adopt documents that may not reflect current policy/guidance may prejudice negotiations through the Development Management decision making process.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that:
 - (a) Having taken into account the comments received to the consultation and in the light of national guidance, that the Council do not proceed to adopt the SS1 Policy area Framework Plan, the draft MH2 Concept Plan and the draft MH2 Design

Guidance as a material planning consideration in the determination of planning proposals.

3 Risk Assessment (if appropriate)

- 3.1 No specific risk but possibly delaying the negotiation upon and determination of an imminent planning application by Officers concentrating on parallel design guidance could result in a failure to bring forward housing, affordable housing and the school in the required timescales.

4 Background and Full details of the Report

- 4.1 This report seeks to update Members on the Monkton Heathfield draft Policy SS1 area Framework Plan, draft Phase 2 Concept Plan and draft Design Principles document.
- 4.2 At the Executive Meeting of 20 May 2020 Members recommended that:
- 1) The draft SS1 Policy area Framework Plan, the draft MH2 Concept Plan and the draft MH2 Design Guidance be published for public consultation; and
 - 2) That the outcome of the public consultation, including any appropriate suggested amendments, be reported back to the Executive as soon as possible with a view to seek approval to adopt the Plans and Guidance for Development Management decision making purposes.
- 4.3 The original report (and appendices) is appended (Appendices 1-5). This report set out the rationale for progressing specific documents to guide development at Monkton Heathfield, allocated under Policy SS1 of the Core Strategy. Policy SS1 allocates land in the Monkton Heathfield area for the development of 4500 new homes, employment areas, schools, community facilities open space and green infrastructure, a bus and ride facility, District Centre, together with new roads, cycleways and bus routes.
- 4.4 Members will be aware that the Monkton Heathfield Policy SS1 allocation extends over a number of sites such as the principal Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas, including Land South of Manor Farm, Langaller (known as the Redrow/Persimmon Consortium), plus Aginhills, West of Greenway, Hartnells, Prockters Farm, and the land promoted by Alder King at land north of the A38 and east of Doster's Lane.
- 4.5 These sites are at various stages in the planning process, from no application submitted to date, through to full occupation. The majority of the remaining houses from the Policy SS1 area will be delivered by means of another large planning application at Monkton Heathfield – Phase 2 or commonly referred to as MH2, expected to deliver circa 1750 homes.
- 4.6 Policy SS1 will however not deliver the 4500 homes envisaged for the whole Monkton Heathfield Policy SS1 area. This is largely as a result of lower density development than was anticipated when the policy was adopted, at a time when national minimum density standards were in place.
- 4.7 The former TDBC Scrutiny Committee considered the implications of this and other changes to SS1 brought about by changes in National policy and the development of the first phases of the MH development area in January 2019. The Councils previously published Employment Land Study (November 2018) identified that overall there was a surplus of identified employment land, but also highlighted that there is an ongoing demand for smaller scale employment sites aimed at the local market. The Council is about to publish an updated Employment Needs Assessment and so the implications of this also need be reflected.

- 4.8 In order to address this likely shortfall in housing delivery at Monkton Heathfield, and delivery issues around employment land, TDBC resolved to release some of the Employment land, south of Manor Farm, Langaller for residential use including affordable housing and the delivery of significant areas for green infrastructure. This area is subject to its own draft Masterplan and Development Guide which was consider by the Executive in January 2020 and recommended for public consultation. The progress on this document is subject to a separate update report on this agenda.
- 4.9 Referring back to the draft SS1 Policy area Framework Plan, the draft MH2 Concept Plan and the draft MH2 Design Guidance this report seeks to update Members on what has happened since the recommendation to undertake public consultation.
- 4.10 The documents were published for public consultation on 15 June 2020 until 10 July 2020. The consultation prompted responses from Persimmon Homes, Creech St Michael PC, West Monkton PC, Alder King, Greenslade Taylor Hunt, Monkton Elm Garden Centre, The Canal and River Trust, Railfuture and 20 Individuals. These comments are appended (Appendix 6).
- 4.11 It has been gleamed through that meeting and written notes that officers that the time felt the Redrow/Persimmon Consortium Masterplan was largely agreeable in terms of the general disposition of land uses and the alignment of the Eastern Relief Road Phase 2 (ERR2). He noted however that further work was required on the green necklace, the interface with Phase 1 and the treatment of what will be the old A38 once the ERR2 is built.
- 4.12 The original timescale for the submission of the Monkton Heathfield Phase 2 application has been delayed, it had been expected in February 2021, then August 2021 and now is due late September 2021. As a result of the initial delay officers have now reassessed the position and met with the Persimmon/Redrow Consortium in June 2021 to seek an update and to offer availability for further discussions. It was stated at that meeting that the Consortium were not seeking to engage further in terms of design and masterplanning work having spent many years working with officers and others to bring forward an application including referral to Design Review Panel several times.
- 4.13 Officers are therefore conscious that the Monkton Heathfield draft Policy SS1 area Framework Plan, draft Phase 2 Concept Plan and draft Design Principles document remain unresolved and therefore set out a further recommendation to Members.
- 4.14 There is clearly the option of assessing the consultations responses and updating the documents accordingly with a view to adopting as per the original recommendation. However that consultation now took place over 12 months ago and Members may wish to consider a new tact.
- 4.15 It is worth acknowledging that simply assessing the consultation responses and updating the documents only provides a narrow opportunity for generally updating the documents and neglects an opportunity or onus to reflect the plethora of policy and real world changes that have occurred since late 2019 when the documents were being produced to progress to public consultation. It is the view of current officers that the documents would require a significant overhaul to reflect the current policy aspirations and declarations of SWT.
- 4.16 In this regard is it noted:

- a. SWT declared a climate emergency in February 2019 and adopted the Somerset Climate Change Emergency Strategy and approved its own Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Action Plan in October 2020
- b. SWT adopted an Interim Guidance Statement on Planning for the Climate Emergency 'Climate Positive Planning' in February 2021
- c. SWT published the Taunton Design Charter and Checklist
- d. SWT is currently undertaking its final public consultation on its Districtwide Design Guide and its Public Realm Guide for Taunton, the former including a requirement for referral to a Quality Review Panel
- e. SWT set out its aspirations for Taunton Garden Town 2040
- f. The impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic on transport planning and placemaking
- g. Publication by Government of the 'Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission's report 'Living with Beauty' report, January 2020
- h. The introduction, by Government, of the National Model Design Code, June 2021
- i. Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework to reflect design aspirations
- j. SCC progressing a Bus Service Improvement Plan, due October 2021
- k. 'Decarbonising transport: A better greener Britain' plan publish by Government July 2021
- l. SCC progressing an update to their Estates Road guidance aka The Red Book

4.17 In so many words current officers are of the opinion that adopting the draft Phase 2 Concept Plan and draft Design Principles document now may actually hinder the development management planning application process and may prejudice the quality and outcomes the scheme may otherwise be held to deliver. Many of the newer pieces of policy/guidance above have usurped the SWT/Thrive Masterplan in terms of setting out a higher standard.

4.18 The third document of the trio, the draft Policy SS1 area Framework Plan provides an helpful overview of the Policy SS1 area and the interrelation of the component sites, however in isolation would not provide any significant steer the Council may still wish to be bound by.

4.19 Officers would wish to reassure Members that curtailing the progression of these documents does not leave a policy desert or undermine SWT's negotiation position as and when applications in the Monkton Heathfield area are submitted. Indeed the starting point in determining all future application within the Monkton Heathfield area is the Development Plan unless material considerations dictate otherwise. The policy initiatives and directives listed a-l above, inclusive of the Monkton Heathfield draft Policy SS1 area Framework Plan, draft Phase 2 Concept Plan and draft Design Principles document, are material considerations to which the decision-maker may apply weight. Officers may choose to give weight to more recent policy/guidance in light of the fact the Core Strategy Policy SS1 was examined some time ago and the policy reflects placemaking and transport theory of that time. The amount of weight to be given to any such initiative or

directive is for the decision-maker to assess and justify. It is against this backdrop that officers have considered their recommendation to Members.

- 4.20 Members should also be aware one of the substantive issues at Phase 1 has been related to the adoption of Public Open Space, Play Areas and the provision of Playing Pitches. Moving forward as a Garden Community one of the challenges with Phase 2 will be to ensure Stewardship arrangements are clear, robust and deliver the type of environment desirable within the Garden Town. To this end, as the issue is wider than just Monkton Heathfield, work is being undertaken to draw up Stewardship arrangements and a delivery plan for the Garden Communities. This work will feed into the Development Management process and section 106 negotiations.

5 Links to Corporate Strategy

- 5.1 The draft Plans and Design Guidance sought to deliver development which meets several objectives of the Corporate Strategy.
- 5.2 If Members agree to indefinitely curtail adoption then one can be mindful of the new and existing districtwide policy and guidance that addresses Climate Change and sustainability and the recent national and local drive to achieve high quality design and green travel.

6 Finance / Resource Implications

- 6.1 Any budget envisaged for the updating and progression these Plans and Guidance documents will now no longer be required.

7 Legal Implications (if any)

- 7.1 None.

8 Climate and Sustainability Implications (if any)

- 8.1 The climate emergency, and SWT's response to it, will not be hampered by not progressing the adoption process. The Monkton Heathfield allocation could not have been held to a higher standard than is now laid out for the whole of Taunton via the policy/guidance already discussed.
- 8.2 More generally, the SS1/MH2 sites lie within the Garden Town, in a generally sustainable location with access to existing and proposed public transport routes including a proposed new bus and ride facility. It will include new footpath/cycleway networks and new facilities like shops and schools and community buildings, all of which help to minimise the need to travel by private car. The location of land for new businesses, next to new homes offers the opportunity for people to live and work close by.

9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications (if any)

- 9.1 None.

10 Equality and Diversity Implications (if any)

- 10.1 The Core Strategy is underpinned by an Equalities Impact Assessment.

11 Social Value Implications (if any)

- 11.1 None

12 Partnership Implications (if any)

12.1 None.

13 Health and Wellbeing Implications (if any)

13.1 The site will deliver green open spaces and parks, enhanced public spaces, as well as additional opportunities to safely walk or cycle in order to encourage active and healthy lifestyles.

14 Asset Management Implications (if any)

14.1 The only implications may arise out of the Stewardship work in terms of the Council's approach to adoption.

15 Data Protection Implications (if any)

15.1 None.

16 Consultation Implications (if any)

16.1 The local community have been engaged in the preparation of the draft Plans, together with key stakeholders like County Council Highways and the developers.

16.2 The two Parish Councils, Creech St Michael and West Monkton have formed a Joint Working Panel to review the plans and documents for the SS1 and MH2 areas.

16.3 Officers will undertake to meet with the Joint Working Panel throughout the planning application process to update and inform.

17 Scrutiny Comments / Recommendation(s) (if any)

17.1 None

Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees –**
- **Cabinet/Executive –**
- **Full Council –**

Reporting Frequency: **Once only**

List of Appendices (delete if not applicable)

Appendix 1	Executive Report – May 2020
Appendix 2	DRAFT SS1 Policy Area Framework Plan, May 2020
Appendix 3	DRAFT MH2 Concept plan, May 2020
Appendix 4	DRAFT MH2 Design Guidance, May 2020, text version
Appendix 5	DRAFT MH2 Design Guidance, May 2020
Appendix 6	Summary of Consultation Responses

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APPENDIX 1-5 can be viewed via this link - [Decision - Monkton Heathfield: SS1 Policy Area and MH2 Concept Plan and Design Principles - Modern Council \(somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk\)](#)

APPENDIX 6 – The consultation comments have been dropped into a table or in the case of the reps from the PCs and Persimmon are attached in full.

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Executive – 20 May 2020

Monkton Heathfield: SS1 Policy Area and MH2 Concept Plan and Design Principles

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Member Mike Rigby

Report Author: Andrew Penna, Garden Town Coordinator

1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The Council are committed to preparing Plans and Design Guidance for key development sites in the Garden Town to ensure that new development is of a high design quality and is comprehensively delivered, in line with adopted Planning Policies and more recent Garden Town principles.
- 1.2 Core Strategy, Policy SS1 allocates land in the Monkton Heathfield area for the development of 4500 new homes, employment areas, schools, community facilities open space and green infrastructure, a bus and ride facility, District Centre, together with new roads, cycleways and bus routes.
- 1.3 To date around 1350 of the houses have been built, 900 of which were in the first phase of the Monkton Heathfield urban extension (MH1). The majority of the remaining houses from the SS1 policy are will be delivered by means of another large planning application at Monkton Heathfield - MH2.
- 1.4 The Report recommends publishing a Framework Plans for the SS1 area as a whole and a Concept Plan for the MH2 area for public consultation in order to provide developers, local residents and businesses the opportunity to comment on the draft proposals. The Framework Plan and Concept Plan closely follows Policy SS1 of the Core Strategy, showing indicatively, the disposition of the main land uses – land for new homes, new roads, employment areas, the bus and ride, a new through school, District Centre, open space and green infrastructure etc.
- 1.5 Together with the Plan, a draft Design Guidance document has also been prepared for the MH2 site, and is again recommended for publication for public consultation. The Design Guidance is based on the Core Strategy Policy for MH2 and the Councils Garden Town Vison, Design Charter and the recently published District Wide Design Guide. The Design Guidance embodies the Councils commitment to addressing Climate Change and the need to deliver sustainable new development in the new Monkton Heathfield Garden Community.
- 1.6 Early versions of the Plans were included in a January Report to the Executive. Following feedback and discussions with the local community and local businesses, changes have been made. The Plans remain drafts for further consultation.

- 1.7 Following public consultation the Plans and Design Guidance are proposed to be adopted for Development Management purposes to allow them to be used in considering planning applications in the SS1 Monkton Heathfield Policy area and specifically the MH2 site.

2 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that:

- (a) The draft SS1 Policy area Framework Plan, the draft MH2 Concept Plan and the draft MH2 Design Guidance be published for public consultation; and
- (b) That the outcome of the public consultation, including any appropriate suggested amendments, be reported back to the Executive as soon as possible with a view to seeking approval to adopt the Plans and Guidance for Development Management decision making purposes.

3 Risk Assessment (if appropriate)

- 3.1 No specific risk but failure to bring forward housing could put at risk housing and affordable housing delivery in Taunton.

4 Background and Full details of the Report

Introduction

- 4.1 The Council are committed to preparing Design Guides and Plans for key development sites in the Garden Town to ensure that new development is of a high design quality and is comprehensively delivered.
- 4.2 Members will recall that at the Executive in January a Report was presented seeking approval to publish for consultation a Masterplan and Development Guide for land South of Manor Farm, Langaller.
- 4.3 That land is part of the SS1 Monkton Heathfield Policy area allocated in the adopted Taunton Deane Core Strategy.
- 4.4 That Report also included, for context, emerging draft Framework and Concept Plans for the wider SS1 Policy area and the second phase of the Monkton Heathfield Garden Community (MH2). It was identified that these plans would be progressed, together with further Design work, in order to allow for the Plans and Guidance to be published for consultation.

The Need for Plans and Design work

- 4.5 The adopted Core Strategy, Policy SS1, sets out that the Council would prepare Development Guides for the Monkton Heathfield sites. A Development Guide was approved as part of the planning process for phase 1 of the Monkton Heathfield scheme. The Core Strategy was adopted in 2012.
- 4.6 It is expected that a planning application for the next phase of the Monkton scheme – MH2 - will be submitted in the next few months. There is pressing need to set out the Councils vision for the development and to set down key design principles to ensure the highest quality proposals are delivered.

- 4.7 There is considerable common ground with the developers of the MH2 site – Persimmon Homes and Redrow Homes and the local community and it is expected that the application, when submitted, will closely align with much of the Councils design aspirations for the area. Where there are differences it is important that the Council have in place a clear vision for the site to allow Officers to negotiate with the developers.

Concept Plan

- 4.8 The Framework Plan for the SS1 Policy area and the Concept Plan for the main MH2 site, are shown as Appendices 1 and 2 to this Report.
- 4.9 Both are clearly labelled DRAFT. These are not fixed plans, the recommendation is to publish them both for consultation with the Developers, the Parish Councils, local businesses consultees and other stakeholders and to continue engagement with these groups.
- 4.10 Both Plans follow the principles set out in the adopted Core Strategy and identify the location of key land uses and infrastructure, including green infrastructure that will be delivered in the next phase of the Monkton Heathfield scheme together with other housing sites in the SS1 policy area including those at West of Greenway, Prockters Farm and land at Dosters Lane. The site South of Manor Farm Langaller is the subject of a separate detailed Masterplan and Design Guidance.
- 4.11 The Plans show the indicative alignment of the Eastern Relief Road, housing areas, the location of a District Centre, a new through school, a site for bus and ride, reserve employment land and major new green infrastructure in the so-called ‘green necklace’ which surrounds the whole SS1 policy area.
- 4.12 These are all matters which are required to be delivered, as set out in the adopted Core Strategy, 2012.

Design guidance

- 4.13 Attached as Appendix 3 is the first (text) draft of a Design Guidance document for the SS1 Policy area as a whole, but focused in more detail on the main Monkton Heathfield 2 site.
- 4.14 The draft Design Guidance has been prepared by Thrive Architects, an urban design consultancy who have been working with the Council on the Monkton proposals for a number of years.
- 4.15 The draft design guidance follows the SS1 Policy of the Core Strategy but also embodies the Councils commitment to addressing Climate Change, and the need to deliver a high quality Garden Community following Taunton’s designation as a Garden Town in 2017. It is closely based on the adopted Garden Town Vision, whilst also referencing the Government’s National Design Guide and the Councils adopted Garden Town Design Charter/Checklist and District Wide Design Guide.
- 4.16 Again, the Design Guidance is a DRAFT for consultation.
- 4.17 Many of the principles set out are good design practice required by national guidance. Others are specific to the Garden Town and the Monkton 2 proposals as set out in the 2012 Core Strategy.

- 4.18 They identify clear design objectives and requirements for the new development in order to deliver the highest quality in design and to deliver the step change in design which is key to delivery of the Councils Corporate Strategy and the Vision for the Garden Town.
- 4.19 Key sections address climate change and sustainability.
- 4.20 Additional detail and graphics to illustrate key areas will be added to the document before public consultation commences. The form and layout of the document, in draft, is shown as Appendix 4.

Community comments

- 4.21 At the Executive in January a number of local residents and local businesses from the West Monkton and Creech St Michael areas spoke to Members and requested the opportunity to explain their concerns in more detail about the MH2 proposals.
- 4.22 In response to this the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation met with representatives from West Monkton and Creech St Michael Parishes, following a tour of the area in March shortly before the Government's lockdown measures were announced.
- 4.23 It was stressed to the community that the Framework and Concept Plans need to be published for consultation to put in place a more comprehensive framework for the consideration of future planning applications, and in order to avoid some of the outcomes from the first phase of the Monkton scheme.
- 4.24 It was also noted that the plans were DRAFTS, they are not fixed; and no options were being omitted at this stage nor, were any intended to be given any weight in terms of preference.
- 4.25 The communities were assured that all comments received on the draft Plans and draft Design Guidance will be carefully reviewed and discussions with the local community and the developers will continue before they are adopted for decision making purposes. This is confirmed in the recommendations to this Report.

Local road network

- 4.26 One of the key issues raised on the January Plans was the impact of the traffic arising from the SS1 / Monkton Heathfield proposals on existing local residents and businesses.
- 4.27 The Plans at Appendix 1 and 2 have been amended as a result of this feedback, to identify that all local roads will need to be included in consideration of the Monkton planning applications and that the traffic arising from the developments, and any measures to mitigate traffic impact, must seek to continue to allow access to local residents and business whilst also preventing rat-running on local roads.
- 4.28 Similarly the MH2 Concept Plan, Appendix 2 now identifies that the area between the built MH1 site and the proposed MH2 site must be subject to detailed design and technical work to ensure that the two communities can be properly integrated.
- 4.29 Again, the draft Concept Plan is not proposing or seeking to prefer any specific option for this area: feedback from public consultation will be carefully considered before the

Plan is adopted, and dialogue with the local community, businesses and the developers will continue.

- 4.30 Much of the assessment and potential solutions to roads and traffic issues, location of any bus gates etc, arising from the SS1/MH2 developments, can only be considered in detail once planning applications are received. In the meantime, rather than be prescriptive about the future, the plans have removed specific road proposals and potential bus gate locations in favour of more general notations and identification of areas needing to be addressed.
- 4.31 The only exception is the bus gate location shown in the Prockters Farm area which is to be put in place by the County Council following the completion of the Western Relief Road next year, in order to prevent through traffic using the A3259. This is required by legal agreements dating from the first phase of the Monkton scheme.
- 4.32 The same approach is followed in the draft Design Guidance, Appendix 3 and 4. The issue of integrating existing and new communities is highlighted as a key design challenge which must be addressed in any planning applications but is not prescriptive about how this be achieved.

5 Links to Corporate Strategy

- 5.1 The draft Plans and Design Guidance seek to deliver development which meets a number of objectives of the Corporate Strategy.
- 5.2 The Guidance addresses Climate Change and sustainability and the need to achieve high quality design. It provides a vision and design guidance for a key site in the Taunton Garden Town, the Monkton Heathfield Garden Community. The development of the SS1 Policy area and MH2 in particular will ensure the provision of adequate and affordable employment land, new shops and community facilities and a continuing supply of homes including affordable homes.
- 5.3 The site will deliver green open spaces and parks, enhanced public spaces, as well as additional opportunities to safely walk or cycle in order to encourage active and healthy lifestyles.

6 Finance / Resource Implications

- 6.1 The budget for the preparation of the Plans and Guidance for the next phase of the Monkton Heathfield development are in place. The project is overseen by the Garden Town Coordinator and the Head of Strategy.

7 Legal Implications (if any)

- 7.1 None.

8 Climate and Sustainability Implications (if any)

- 8.1 The climate emergency, and our response to it, is a strong theme running throughout the draft Design Guidance. The proposed development aims to mitigate the climate emergency and adapt to its effects. It covers issues including reducing carbon emissions through walking, cycling and public transport, the creation of new open spaces and recreation areas, opportunities for tree planting and new allotments, the

energy efficiency of buildings, opportunities for renewable energy and ensuring provision of electric charging points, biodiversity enhancements, tree planting and flood risk/sustainable drainage.

8.2 Detailed guidance is provided on the sustainability of proposed new homes through good design and best practice construction methods.

8.3 More generally, the SS1/MH2 sites lie within the Garden Town, in a sustainable location with access to existing and proposed public transport routes including a new bus and ride facility. It proposes new footpath/cycleway networks and new facilities like shops and schools and community buildings, all of which help to minimise the need to travel by private car. The location of land for new businesses, next to new homes offers the opportunity for people to live and work close by.

9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications (if any)

9.1 None.

10 Equality and Diversity Implications (if any)

10.1 The Core Strategy is underpinned by an Equalities Impact Assessment.

11 Social Value Implications (if any)

11.1 None

12 Partnership Implications (if any)

12.1 None.

13 Health and Wellbeing Implications (if any)

13.1 The site will deliver green open spaces and parks, enhanced public spaces, as well as additional opportunities to safely walk or cycle in order to encourage active and healthy lifestyles.

14 Asset Management Implications (if any)

14.1 None.

15 Data Protection Implications (if any)

15.1 None.

16 Consultation Implications (if any)

16.1 The local community have been engaged in the preparation of the draft Plans, together with key stakeholders like County Council Highways and the developers.

16.2 The two Parish Councils, Creech St Michael and West Monkton have formed a Joint working Panel to review the plans and documents for the SS1 and MH2 areas.

17 Scrutiny Comments / Recommendation(s) (if any)

17.1 None

Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees – No**
- **Cabinet/Executive – Yes**
- **Full Council – No**

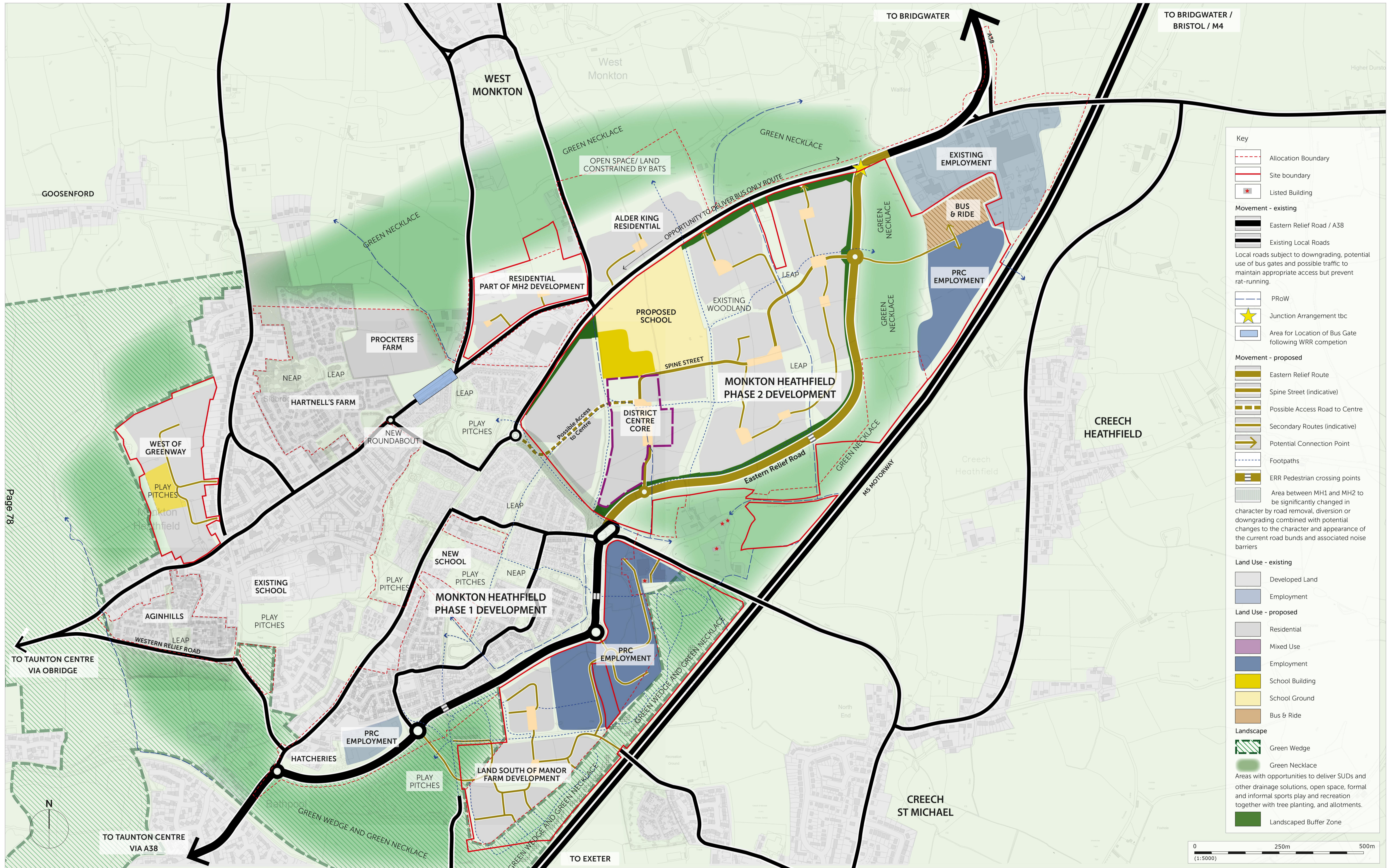
Reporting Frequency: **Once only**

List of Appendices (delete if not applicable)

Appendix 1	DRAFT SS1 Policy Area Framework Plan, May 2020
Appendix 2	DRAFT MH2 Concept plan, May 2020
Appendix 3	DRAFT MH2 Design Guidance, May 2020, text version
Appendix 4	DRAFT MH2 Design Guidance, May 2020

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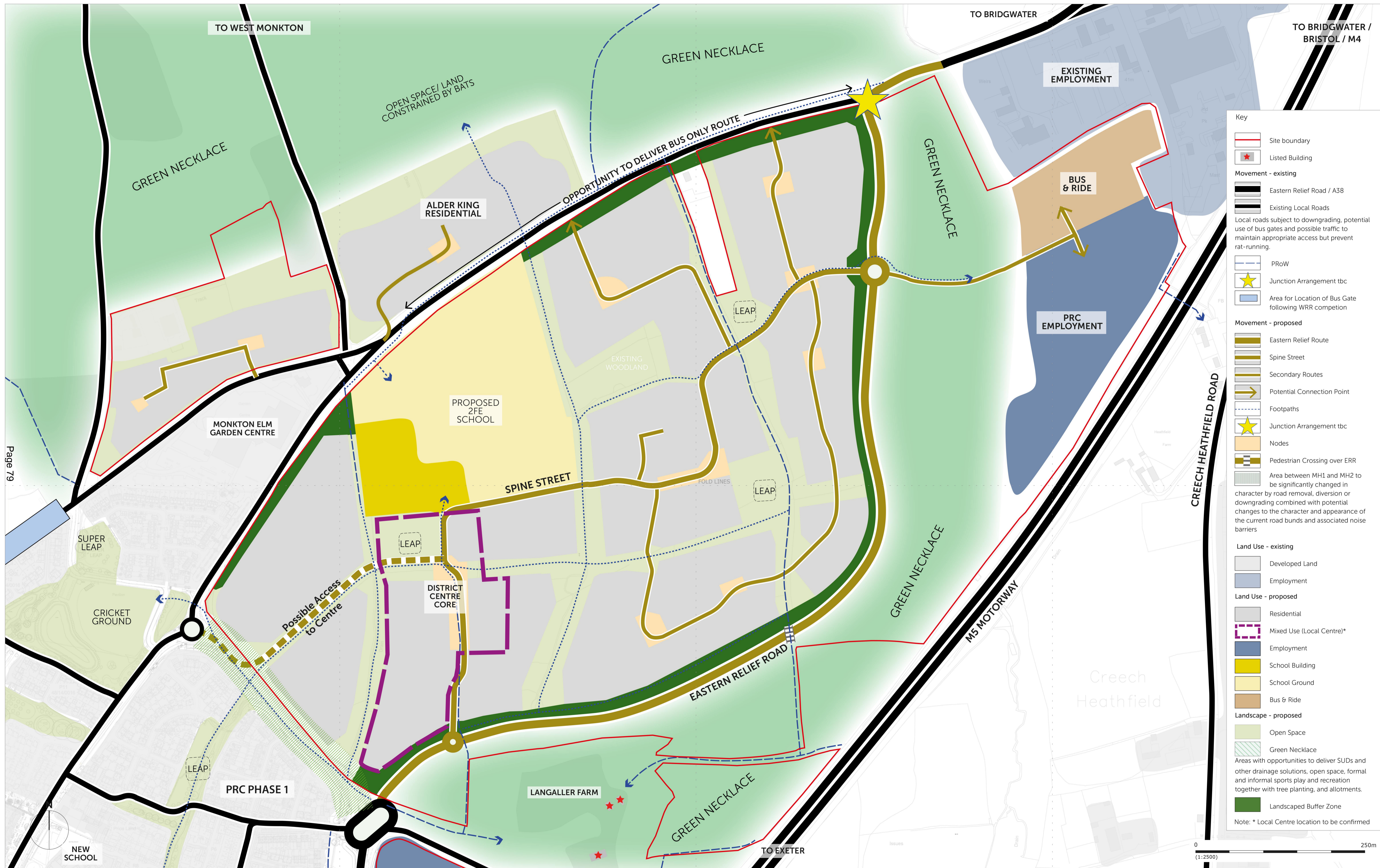
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Rev	Description	Date	Au	Ch
P1	Preliminary Issue	07.01.20	MD	GR
P2	Amendments to layout, highway strategy and key	06.03.20	MD	GR
P3	Minor amendments following comments received	09.03.20	MD	GR

Project Drawing	Monkton Heathfield Framework Plan	Office	Portishead
Client	Taunton Deane BC	Revision	P3
Scale	1:5000 @ A1	Dwg no.	FWP.01
Job no.	SOME190507	First Issue	07.01.20
Client ref.		Status	PRELIMINARY

A1
 thrive architects



Key

- Site boundary
- Listed Building

Movement - existing

- Eastern Relief Road / A38
- Existing Local Roads
- Local roads subject to downgrading, potential use of bus gates and possible traffic to maintain appropriate access but prevent rat-running.
- PRoW
- Junction Arrangement tbc
- Area for Location of Bus Gate following WRR competition

Movement - proposed

- Eastern Relief Route
- Spine Street
- Secondary Routes
- Potential Connection Point
- Footpaths
- Junction Arrangement tbc
- Nodes
- Pedestrian Crossing over ERR
- Area between MH1 and MH2 to be significantly changed in character by road removal, diversion or downgrading combined with potential changes to the character and appearance of the current road bunds and associated noise barriers

Land Use - existing

- Developed Land
- Employment

Land Use - proposed

- Residential
- Mixed Use (Local Centre)*
- Employment
- School Building
- School Ground
- Bus & Ride

Landscape - proposed

- Open Space
- Green Necklance
- Areas with opportunities to deliver SUDs and other drainage solutions, open space, formal and informal sports play and recreation together with tree planting, and allotments.
- Landscaped Buffer Zone

Note: * Local Centre location to be confirmed

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Rev	Description	Date	Au	Ch
P1	Preliminary Issue	06.03.20	MD	GR
P2	Minor amendments following comments received	09.03.20	MD	GR

Project **Monkton Heathfield II**
 Drawing **Concept Plan**

Client **Taunton Deane BC**

Scale **1:2500 @ A1**
 Job no. **TAUN160301**

Dwg no. **CP.03**
 First Issue **06.02.20**

Office **Portishead**
 Revision **P2**
 Au/Ch **MD/GR**

Status **PRELIMINARY**

A1

thrive.
 architects

DRAFT SS1 Policy area and Monkton Heathfield phase 2 Design Principles

Prepared by Thrive Architects and Somerset West and Taunton Council, April 2020

1 Overall Placemaking Strategy

Policy SS1

Policy SS1 sets out a series of provisions in terms of development form and layout as follows:

- A variety of character areas which reflect the existing landscape character and the opportunities and constraints provided by natural features to create a place that is distinctive and memorable;
- An accessible district centre with a mix of uses and facilities;
- A connected street network which accommodates pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles and promotes a viable public transport system;
- Well designed public open spaces which are enclosed and overlooked by new development;
- A positive relationship between new housing and existing communities; and
- A well-defined green edge to the urban area that protects views from Hestercombe House and the Quantock Hills.

2 Character Areas

Design Strategy and objectives

Create a distinctive place through the identification of specific elements that must meet certain design criteria. The criteria will be clearly set out with shared narrative themes that are contained in the following documents.

- National Planning Policy Framework:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf
- National Design Guide:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/843468/National_Design_Guide.pdf
- Taunton's Garden Town Vision:
<https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/media/1450/taunton-garden-town-vision.pdf> , and
- Taunton's Garden Town Charter and checklist:
<https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/media/2108/taunton-design-charter-and-checklist.pdf> .

The interpretation of the aforementioned criteria must have regard to this guidance.

The design of these elements will then form a framework for creating the placemaking narrative and resulting identity for the SS1 area generally and MH2 specifically.

3 Built Form principles

- Block Form – Generally perimeter block style. Smaller blocks of higher density must be located closer to district centre, along the Spine Street and central green corridor to create a finer grain of development. Generally the blocks forms will gradually get larger and less dense towards the edges of development.
- Townscape – A hierarchy of streets and spaces with a coherent and varied townscape must be created to reflect the many good design precedents that exist locally and within traditional garden towns. This will aid legibility and provide the opportunity to create a place with its own identity.
- Density – The density of the development will be determined by the application of the design criteria. Appropriate design responses will determine density rather than the other way around. Hence the requirement to have a greater populous close to the District Centre and along public transport routes will result in higher densities in these locations.
- Building Heights – The strategy for building heights should recognise that heights should be commensurate with their function. The development will be predominantly two storeys. Taller buildings however have an important role to play in creating interesting townscape that is legible and distinctive. There are many ways this can be achieved such as:
 - Creating an intensification of development near to District Centre and along transport routes and movement corridors such as the spine street and central green corridor;
 - Being an important component of set-piece designs enclosing spaces and creating nodal points;
 - To create key buildings and impart landmark status to buildings or groups of buildings;
 - To create focal points and visual markers;
 - To function as important corner buildings;
 - To add variety to the street-scene and create interesting townscape/roofscape.

4 Street hierarchy

Design Strategy and objectives

Streets must be designed to create a coherent and recognisable hierarchy that will reinforce legibility and connectedness within the development. The design of any street must have regard to its function in the wider development. Important principles include:

- Creating a permeable development with streets providing direct and convenient connections to the District Centre, transport nodes and amenity areas;
- Street design to prioritise safe pedestrian and cycle movement whilst still accommodating vehicles;
- Streets design to encompass a variety of uses; streets for play, social interaction, safe and overlooked environments; ‘green streets’ containing landscape corridors, SuDs, amenity space and wildlife/ecology corridors;
- The creation of a ‘Spine Street’ as a gateway to the development from the Eastern Relief Road (ERR) to the east and taking the form of a gently winding tree-lined street accessing the school and district centre before reconnecting with the ERR to the south-west;
- Any on-street parking must be designed in association with hard and soft landscaping to provide an attractive and practical street-scene;

- Any on-street parking must not dominate the street or have a detrimental effect on the overall composition of the street-scene;
- Consideration of how building form relates to the composition of the street;
- More continuous and unbroken street form closer to District Centre and along important routes;
- Common or staggered building line depending on street type and location;
- Placement of buildings either close to street to create high degree of enclosure or set back behind garden boundaries or landscape elements to create streets of differing character;
- Streets can be oriented to create vistas to form visual connections to important nodes;
- Thoughtful parking solutions must be explored including the use of parking courts such that the integrity of street frontage can be maintained and the over dominance of the highway be reduced;
- The integration of conveniently placed electric charging points into the street network must be considered and promoted.
- Where possible street design should promote rooflines running within 20 degrees of east-west in order to provide promote south facing roofs and facades thus promoting the benefits of solar gain.

5 Development Edges

Design strategy and objectives

The edges of the development will have development on one side only (with the exception of those adjacent MH1), nevertheless the same principles of good street design apply to these areas. Specific requirements include:

- Housing along the ERR must provide an active and attractive frontage to create a coherent and overlooked development edge avoiding poor relationships associated with rear and side garden fences/walls and indiscriminate parking;
- The noise levels generated by the ERR will have to be considered when considering appropriate design solutions, glazing specifications and acoustic ventilation must be considered along with other noise mitigations measures which avoid unsightly acoustic fencing and the like;
- Design promoting dwellings that face the ERR and provide an acoustic barrier protecting the private amenity spaces behind must be explored;
- Development along the northern boundary with the downgraded A38 will be designed as outward facing development, set back from the boundary and retaining existing trees and hedgerows within a landscaped setting.

6 Public Space Network

Design Strategy and objectives

A series of well-designed public spaces will be an essential ingredient of MH2. The spaces may take the form of squares, large open spaces, streets, green corridors, pocket parks or even small incidental areas with seating. They will fulfil a variety of functions and strategic aim such as:

- To serve as nodal points to aid orientation and wayfinding within the development;

- Providing destination points for people to meet, socialise and share experiences (the beginning of community) ;
- To be available to the whole range of user groups and be well overlooked by adjacent dwellings with active frontages;
- To be given identity and attractiveness through design, such that their function is clear and their form is fit for purpose;
- To recall examples of traditional garden town spaces but designed to 21st Century requirements and technology;
- To be given integrity through design (the intrusion of poorly designed parking and highways into important spaces should be resisted for example).

7 Open Space and Landscape

Design Strategy and objectives

The land within MH2 contains existing landscape features that will be retained and used to contribute to the overall character of the development. MH1 will be designed as a garden community with a network of green spaces and corridors linking into the green necklace, MH1 and the northern green edge. This network will consist of:

- A network of green routes focused around the retention of existing woodland, trees, hedgerows and public rights of way;
- The establishment of a central green corridor running from the eastern side of the development through the District Centre and onto MH1 that;
- Will be predominantly a car free zone to prioritise movement for pedestrians/cyclists and will be complemented with substantial tree planting to provide shaded areas and offset carbon emissions;
- Opportunities for the establishment of pocket parks with micro allotments, raingardens and orchard planting to promote community engagement through horticulture;
- Ecological mitigation through the establishment of wildlife corridors and wildflower meadows will be promoted within the green infrastructure,
- The introduction of swales and ditches into the green infrastructure should be as naturalistic as possible with measures to promote ecological mitigation and habitat creation;
- The planting of a substantial number of new trees to offset the effect of climate change and meet carbon reduction targets;
- A well-defined green edge to the Eastern Relief Road 2 including noise mitigation measures, drainage swales and opportunities pedestrian movement;
- An inclusive set of principles will be established for each green space or corridor addressing its form, function, connections, built form enclosure, landscape elements, surfacing, seating, lighting, boundaries and maintenance to inform its design and identity;

Design Aesthetics – Placemaking is about more than just assembling the various components that make up a place. Aesthetic considerations are also important if a place is to actually look attractive and fulfil its function to its fullest potential. These must not be neglected on the grounds of aesthetic considerations being subjective. There are immutable rules relating to scale, proportion and appearances of building forms that have stood the test of time, and these should be fully considered at the design stage.

Design Strategy and objectives

To create a well-designed and conveniently located mixed-use District Centre with a range of facilities to meet the needs of the community, along with the ability to draw in passing trade from the ERR. The District Centre will be a community hub and should blend the various uses into an environment that is safe, well-enclosed and a focus for social interaction.

The District Centre will:

- Provide a mix of uses including community hall, multi-functional space, health facilities, convenience store, retail businesses, café/hot food outlets, pub/restaurant, professional and financial services;
- Provide children's play facilities within a village green setting located between the District Centre and the school site;
- Integrate office space and residential uses in buildings at first floor and above;
- Residential provision included elderly persons housing should be seamlessly integrated within the District Centre to create a mixed use community and promote activity beyond core opening hours;
- Be designed within an overall transport and movement strategy to promotes the use of the ERR for HGV traffic local farm traffic, thus reducing such traffic within the internal road network in MH2.

The design of the District Centre should be aspirational, it will contain landmark buildings and be designed to create areas of enclosure such as the village green along with other intimately designed spaces with seating and well designed landscaping to encourage social interaction. Consideration should also be given to the provision of covered areas in order to create useable and sheltered space all year round. Special consideration must be given to provide for the needs of all user groups including the visually impaired and disabled, to ensure that no one is disenfranchised.

From a design point of view the District Centre should:

- Be populated by development forms that increase the local populous in the immediate context to encourage as many people as possible access the District Centre via non-car means and;
- Therefore buildings up to 4 storeys in height will be acceptable;
- Buildings must effectively enclose the spaces without being overbearing and should also function as focal points identifying the District Centre along vistas within the development;
- The overall design intention must be to create a high quality public realm that relates to a human scale similar to a high-street or traditional village/town core, however the design response may be;
- Traditional or more modern but still promoting the use of traditional and more locally identifiable materials;
- The example of 'out of town' retail consisting of low rise single use retail buildings within large car parking areas is not considered appropriate in creating a well-designed centre;
- Some parking provision will be required and this must be sensitively design such that it is safe and convenient to use, whilst not dominating the public realm;

- Servicing of the retail must be designed to avoid movements of delivery vehicles within the public realm areas such that a more sensitive design response is achievable, therefore;
- Servicing should be provided to the rear unless its small drop off type of deliveries;
- Hard and soft landscaping should be used imaginatively to create social spaces.

9 The positive integration of Monkton Heathfield 1 and 2.

Design Strategy and objectives

To explore potentials for creating a positive relationship between the existing community of MH1 and the final phase of MH along the boundary where the two developments will meet.

Existing boundary and challenges to integration

The recently development of MH1 shares a boundary with MH2 directly south of Monkton Elm garden centre and abutting the western side of the existing A38 (inc footway and cycleway), from the existing roundabout next to West Monkton Cricket Club down to the existing roundabout west of Langaller. The houses generally face this boundary at a distance of between 15 and 30 metres from the road and are separated by exiting hedges and a grassed noise reducing bund with a 300m noise reducing fence along the southern part of the boundary. An existing footway and green corridor through MH1 connects to the A38 just north of the noise fence.

Barriers to integration

- The existing A38 is a wide road with no speed constraints between the roundabouts;
- The existing A38 to be rerouted as part of MH2 proposal (although this road is to be retained for local traffic provision);
- The noise bund is physical and visual barrier between housing and the A38
- The noise reducing fence (set on at various points on top of a bund) is a particularly unattractive barrier to the A38 as existing

Potential positive interventions

- An acceptable interface between MH1 and MH2 must be delivered;
- Consideration should be given to potential for part/total pedestrianisation of current road subject to ensuring continued local road access to existing homes and businesses;
- Removal of noise bunds and fencing with regard to reduced use and traffic noise on the downgraded road must be considered;
- Realignment of road if necessary with regard to removal of existing noise reducing fence must be considered;
- Further speed constraint methods should be explored if required;
- Safe crossing points for pedestrians and cyclists from MH1 to MH2 across the road is essential given the need to ensure residents and school children have safe, convenient access to the District Centre, through school and green necklace beyond;
- This should be via an extension of the green link into MH2 and potentially from culs-de-sac 'opened up' by bund removal or breaks in the bunding;
- Creation of a more people friendly and landscape focused environment between MH1 and MH2 through design must be achieved;
- Housing within MH2 will be designed to face the boundary and MH1 to create a positive street frontage.

10 The downgrading of the existing A38 alignment

Design Strategy and objectives

To explore potentials for creating a positive relationship between the existing communities to the north of the site and the final phase of MH along the A38 boundary.

Existing boundary and challenges to integration

The proposed development will see an Eastern Relief Road (ERR) running along the eastern and southern edge and will form the new settlement edge of Monkton Heatfield as proposed in the Core Strategy and the SS1. This ERR will enable downgrading of the existing the A38 to the north of the new development and will provide the infrastructure route for the new bus rapid route proposed along this stretch of the A38.

The A38 changes along the development boundary form a dual carriageway to the east of the A3259 junction to a single carriageway westwards. The character however changes further west with the appearance of the new development at Heathfield Gardens and Monkton Elm Garden Centre behind the existing hedges along the road.

The junction with the A3259 also provides access to Doster's Lane which is a direct connection to West Monkton to the north. The A38 provides access to a limited number of dwellings along the eastern part of the road. There are currently very limited visual connections to the surrounding landscape and properties due to the existing major vegetation alongside the road with the exception of Springfield House which lies to the north of the road.

The PRoW's provided on site and to the north of the site currently terminate at the A38. No pedestrian crossings are provided and a pedestrian connection between the northern and southern footpath network is broken as a crossing and is quite dangerous.

Barriers to integration

- The existing A38 is a dual carriage way with no speed constraints;
- The existing A38 will be downgraded as part of the MH proposal set out in the Core Strategy and SS1 Policy;
- The road can be retained for local traffic provision;
- Current traffic volume will need to be guided along the new ERR to relief the current A38 route
- Appropriate traffic measures will need to be realised to disable easy traffic flow along this route towards the west and towards the town centre. Considerations should be given to bus only routes or bus gates along the existing roads and where best suited for the movement network, the new development and the existing settlements;
- Local traffic will still have to be allowed along this route to access the existing dwellings and to maintain the connection to West Monkton

Potential positive interventions

- A reduction of the carriageway width from dual (four lanes) to a single (two lanes) should be delivered;
- A traffic speed reduction along this route should be explored and adjusted to highlight the ERR as the preferred route to destinations to the west of Monkton;
- The route should be designed to accommodate the rapid bus service proposed along this road;

- The downgrading of the A38 will create the opportunity to deliver an attractive pedestrian and cycle route and will connect more safely with the existing network of PRoW and proposed footpath within the proposal site and the surrounding;
- Access from this route into the new development of MH2 can be delivered but should be restricted to a minimum of two and exclude an access south of Elm Monkton Garden Centre and Heathfield Gardens development.
- Furthermore there should be no public traffic access into the school site provided from the A38;
- Bus stops should be provided along this route to serve new development and in particular the school site;
- The existing hedges and hedge trees framing the A38 corridor should be maintained and enhanced with new planting where gaps are present;
- The corridor should also provide an attractively landscaped pedestrian and cycle route separated from the car traffic along the downgraded road to connect with the green network and footpaths/cycle paths within the new development;
- Due to the utilities easement corridor along the northern development boundary the housing proposed here will have limited direct connection to the downgraded A38. The easement will have to be landscaped to provide a green linear open space along the existing planting along the A38.

11 ERR corridor

Design Strategy and objectives

The new Eastern Relief Road (ERR) is defined as eastern spine road within Taunton's Core Strategy which runs south and parallel to the existing A38. The ERR will have to be designed as a road that balances traffic capacity with the needs of development access, walking, cycling and public transport.

The ERR will accommodate and divert the traffic from the existing A38 around the new development at MH2 to connect with the already constructed part of the ERR to the south and Western Relief Road (WRR) further west. The road will provide a corridor with access points into the new development as well as towards the new B&R and employment land to the west adjacent to the existing employment area at Walford Cross.

Barriers and opportunities to construction

- To the north west of the development site the majority of traffic will be diverted to follow the alignment of the ERR and relieve the existing A38, which will be downgraded;
- The point of diversion must be appropriately constructed to guide the traffic along the new ERR but equally provide convenient access for local traffic along the downgraded A38;
- Access to the ERR from the north east should be discussed and agreed with the Highway Authority and should preferably take the form of a roundabout;
- The proposed ERR adjacent to the new development will connect to the south with the existing ERR roundabout already providing access to Hardys Road and MH1;
- This roundabout will have to be upgraded and repositioned to accommodate the connection to the new ERR stretch proposed;
- The ERR will be a single carriage way with speed limit approved by the Highway Authority and which should seamlessly connect with the existing ERR further south;
- Access into the new MH2 development will be provided via roundabouts along the ERR;

- Buildings at these access points should use the opportunity to create key and gateway buildings supported by a sophisticated landscape design to appropriately announce the entrance into the new development;
- Generally housing along the ERR will provide an active and attractive frontage and façade;
- The noise levels generated by the ERR will have to be considered when designing the site for housing development
- Careful consideration should be given to the appropriate masterplan layout design, glazing specifications and acoustic ventilation design, and at a later detailed stage in the planning process, external building fabric acoustic performance along the ERR;
- An acoustic bund, acoustic fence or a combination of these must if at all possible be avoided in order to provide an attractive route, as this would create a physical and visual barrier between housing and the Green Necklace;
- House types will provide a natural acoustic barrier with a close frontage protecting the private amenity spaces behind;
- The building line along the ERR should vary to create an interesting frontage along the route;
- Consideration should be given to design and roof orientation to create corner turning buildings to emphasise access points into the development;
- The Development edge will be supported by a landscaped corridor along the ERR which will include avenue style tree planting, hedge and shrub planting as well as swales;
- The accessibility and usability of the Green Necklace along the eastern side of the ERR will need to be carefully considered with safe pedestrian/cycle crossing points at the roundabouts as well as at the existing PRoW's;
- The number of pedestrian crossings will be restricted due to the nature of the road and its function as a swift and convenient route around the new development;
- Further considerations should be given at future planning stages to the impact of the road on the air quality and vibration and appropriate design solutions should be implemented to prevent any negative impact of the road on new residents;

12 Green Necklace

Design Strategy and objectives

The adopted Core Strategy Policy SS1 states that the following will be provided: A multi-purpose 'Green Necklace' of landscape and open space surrounding the settlement provide allotments, outdoor recreation and wildlife habitat. In the Policy the Green Necklace was conceived as a belt of landscaping between the motorway and the development areas including the Monkton Heathfield development.

The Green Necklace is a linear landscape area located along the development edge to protect this important area of open landscape, woodland planting and recreational uses from development and as a contributor to the quality of life of the new residents and to promote landscape and wildlife corridors. This linear park should contain new tree and woodland areas which will provide a notable landscape context to the new development edge of MH2 and should be designed with a wooded country park character.

This will create a natural setting for the development, complimented by woodland interspersed by glades, some areas of open space and open swales. The Green Necklace should connect with the development and its integral green spaces / corridors via pedestrian crossing points over the proposed ERR2.

As an integral part of the overall landscape and open space framework for Monkton Heathfield, the Green Necklace:

- Will provide a buffer for the new development to the M5 motorway;
- Will provide a noise buffer along the M5 motorway incorporating appropriate noise mitigation measures and must be informed by a detailed noise report.
- Should provide well-designed edge to the development that protects views from Hestercombe House and the Quantock Hills;
- Should complement the existing landscape features on site with new hedge, trees, woodland planting and wildlife meadows;
- Should provide an increase in biodiversity through the creation of wildlife corridors and wetland habitats;
- Will include a sustainable drainage strategy in form of open swales which should be accompanied with the provision for surface water drainage storage and release e.g. open swales which can also create new habitats for wildlife. The swales should be scaled appropriately and should seamlessly integrate in the designed landscape of the area;
- Should incorporate provision for active and passive recreation in the open space strategy as part of a network of routes throughout the area in form of footpaths, informal paths, routes for walking and running and natural play;
- Should also include the potential to provide seating opportunities and outdoor exercise equipment to promote the usability of the area and healthy living. Gravel bound footpaths should be provided suitable for walking, running and cycling;
- Will create potential opportunities to provide areas for growing food, micro allotments and community orchards;
- Should minimise light pollution and any adverse effect on wildlife. Lighting provided in the area will need sensitive treatment to ensure a natural woodland character is achieved with no negative affect on the wildlife;
- Will provide improvements to the air quality due to the proposed uses and planting within the area which will absorb the majority of potential pollutions coming from the M5 motorway; and
- Must be thoroughly assessed in regards to the significant level changes across the site and especially the lower lying ground between the ERR / development and the M5 motorway.

13 Employment Land reserve

Design Strategy and objectives

This area should be seen as regional scale employment site with potential connection to the adjoining employment site at Walford Cross and other employment areas north and south of the A38. In addition to the employment land provision at The Hatcheries and at land south of Langaller, 10ha of land should be released for employment land as set out in the Core Strategy and SS1.

The layout form should indicate a series of plots or 'rooms' bounded by landscaping to

- divide parking areas and provide spaces for swales or other attenuation features within the area connecting to the adjacent Green Necklace;

- Within plots landscaping should be used to provide relief to large areas of parking and to guide pedestrian routes to building entrances;
- The buildings themselves will provide employment in the form of office space, storage and industrial usage.

The concept of dividing the employment site into rooms will enable the massing of the buildings to be controlled by limiting large runs of tall buildings. Along with appropriate landscaping this will effectively limit the scale of development and the visual impact on the surrounding landscape.

Layout opportunities:

Site access is taken from a roundabout off the new proposed ERR2 which also provides access to the new Bus & Ride area adjacent to the employment land. There is an opportunity to access the employment area from the north and directly from the existing Walford Cross. This option would need road and junction improvements beforehand to create an acceptable access point.

Generally, the site and its new buildings will be screened from views from the surrounding, including the M5 motorway, due to the existing levels and hedge and tree planting surrounding the site. The proposed tree planting within the adjacent Green Necklace site will provide additional screening. In addition:

- Pedestrian links will have to be provided to connect the employment site with the new and existing residential areas including settlements to the east of the M5 motorway
- The existing footpath/cycle link crossing the M5 motorway will need to be maintained and enhanced and should be considered a benefit for the overall pedestrian/cycle network within the area;
- Routes through the employment site will be reinforced by the inclusion of a structured landscape treatment alongside the roads which is intended to unify the individual plots and highlight the routes through the site;
- The sites layout should be structured along strong primary routes linking the entrance with all parts of the site;
- Car parking areas will have to be arranged to minimise visual connections with the surrounding context other than the existing employment area to the north and the Bus & Ride;
- A combination of internally structured landscape zones will provide a balanced environment shared by roads, parking bays, cycle parking sheds and hard / soft landscaped areas;
- Service yards should be located at the perimeter of the sites away from the public areas. The visual impact of service yards should be minimised through the use of appropriate landscape buffers where possible;
- Buildings addressing the access route to the Bus & Ride area to the north must be designed with a higher quality finish and with visual interest through combinations of height, scale and design.

14 Landscape and Green Infrastructure Opportunities:

Design Strategy and objectives

Every effort should be taken to integrate a purposeful landscape strategy and should focus on:

- Including street trees which enclose the main road corridors to emphasise the importance of these main roads and function as orientation within the area. Well-designed modern street signage should be used to mark the access road from the ERR and to enhance the overall appearance of the employment site.
- The use of native hedges, ornamental shrub planting and trees within the parking areas which provides visual seasonal interest. This should be provided through the use of flowering fruit trees in certain areas within the employment site.
- Clearly defined routes along the main routes will be landscaped to provide attractive landscape pedestrian links connecting the employment area with the Green Necklace and area to the east of the motorway.
- Attenuation measures will be an integrated SUDs network located within the green corridors and spaces included in the employment area. This network and any wetland areas and potential ponds should be planted with natural species suited to local environment and climate and the creation of wetland habitats should be promoted. The attenuation measure will furthermore enhance the ecological value of the site and the wider environment.

15 Bus and Ride Site

Design Strategy and objectives

An area for a new Bus and Ride (B&R) is set aside in the north eastern corner of the site and west of Walford Cross. This facility will provide opportunities to create a central point for a rapid bus service and local bus service. The vision is to provide appropriate sustainable transport opportunities, connect visitors efficiently with the centre of Taunton and potentially provide a sustainable connection to the north to Bridgwater.

Access is proposed to be provided from a roundabout along the new ERR which also serves the proposed employment site adjacent to the B&R.

Supporting infrastructure will include new bus stops within the MH2 area and along the A38 route. The alignment of the A38 is proposed to be downgraded as the ERR will take the majority of traffic currently passing along this road. Therefore, the original A38 route can provide bus stops as well as shared walking/cycling paths.

The B&R scheme is proposed in combination with other junction and crossing improvements proposed in the wider area with bus lanes and bus gates specifically designed to improve the reliability, frequency and journey times of public transport using the route.

Overall, the scheme aims:

- To support the employment and housing growth and economic vitality within the area;
- To reduce transport emissions and meet our obligations to the Garden town vision of Taunton;
- To protect and possibly enhance the environment and improve quality of life within the MH2 area as well as within Taunton; and
- To improve public health, air quality, safety and individual wellbeing for the existing and new residents as well as for visitors.

In particular for the design and layout of the site and any structures proposed will be:

- To communicate a strong environmental message and embracing the natural environment in the design of the scheme and gatehouse building;
- A simple permanent building set within a much greener landscape setting is considered appropriate;
- Potentially creatively incorporating recycled materials such as recycled materials in the boundary treatment and hard surface, such as incorporating walls built from plastic bottles or recycled tires as boundary treatment or planting support; and
- Sympathetically designed potentially with a green roof and or solar panels.

The siting and location of the gateway building on the B&R site should be sympathetically designed potentially with a green roof and or solar panels. The site boundaries should support the existing and retained hedges by providing pergolas with climbing plants as well as opportunities for artwork to soften the usual monotone and rather bleak area of car park normally proposed. Furthermore, a “green” building or build form element should be of appropriate size and massing and accompanied by a thoughtful landscape scheme which should improve the quality of the environment for the general public.

Design Criteria

- Retain and enhance the existing good level of boundary planting around the perimeter and expand where necessary
- Arrival at the B&R site presents the first impression to many visitors and therefore the appearance of the “green” building and site has relevance to the perceived quality of the town's public realm and should be appropriately landscape led designed
- The site should consider including new individual native tree planting, hedge and shrub planting, ground cover and wildflower meadow areas where possible
- A Landscape Maintenance and Management Plan should be considered to protect the trees on site and to ensure the landscape scheme is realised and maintained as proposed
- In addition to the car parking arrangements, the site should also provide for cycle parking facilities for the staff but also for potential visitors and commuters using the local or rapid bus transport opportunity to access the town centre.
- A significant number if not all car parking spaces should be equipped with electric charging points
- In the light of potential shortage of coach parking spaces within the town centre, coach parking spaces should be considered and accommodated within the B&R area
- Solar panels on the roof of the proposed buildings on site or within the parking spaces can be used to feed the electric car charging points
- Following the Core Strategy, the majority of the new homes should be located in appropriate walking distance and should be within 800m of a bus rapid stop and within 400m of other bus routes.

16 School site and grounds.

Design Strategy and objectives

The proposed 2-form-entry school will provide the places needed for the new and proposed strategic development areas and the appropriate guideline should be used for space calculation and allocations within the site. There is a potential to create appropriate spaces which will include: classrooms, dining/hall, sports hall, administration space, specialist teaching rooms, meeting rooms, storage, and staff room. The school could also include specialised areas such as sensory & therapy rooms, warm water pool and medical spaces if required. Outdoor spaces will include sensory gardens, habitat areas, MUGA and adventure playground.

The building should be designed using Government guidance designed to a specification to be agreed by SCC and meeting DFEE standards. The scale and aesthetics of the school building design is informed by the functionality of the spaces within the unit itself. Classrooms should benefit from being orientated north to south to avoid disruptive glare and solar gain during school hours. The building orientation will be an important factor in defining the siting, proportion and configuration of the proposed building. The external outdoor spaces will play a crucial part of the school ground design and should include:

- Grassed sports play pitches suitable for a variation of sports games such as football;
- Opportunities for dual use of school facilities. This will be considered, subject to security and safeguarding issues being overcome;
- Hard play areas for formal play such as PE lessons;
- Adventure play areas with play equipment for appropriate age groups;
- Specialised outdoor areas to accommodate sensory gardens to stimulate senses including sight, touch, taste, sight and hearing. This area can also be used for outdoor teaching;
- Quiet soft play areas and informal meadowland and ecological areas which potentially can contain small ponds for outdoor teaching, socialising and relaxing; and
- Retain and enhance any existing planting such as trees and boundary hedges to promote biodiversity.

The school building layout should be developed in cooperation with the Local Planning Authority as well as the Education Authority responsible and respond to the site constraints on and around the site. The entrance locations should be specifically considered to provide a drop-off and pick-up solutions benefiting from the location of the adjacent District Centre. Staff / visitor car parking and drop-off / pick-up area will be located at the front of the building with a range of landscaping proposals behind the secure line. The school building will be positioned in the south western corner of the school site and provide the northern edge of the green open space proposed adjacent to the school site.

17 **Energy and Climate change**

Design Strategy and objectives

In line with the objectives set out in the NPPF and within the Garden Town Vision for Taunton the main concern lies to deliver sustainable development which addresses economic, environmental and social factors.

The design should also follow the requirements of Policy SS1 and DM5 to allow for a development to be built with a focus on sustainability and climate change resilience. Whilst at very early stages, the new Local Plan seeks to deliver carbon neutrality for the district by 2030. The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and the emerging SWT Framework Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan identify the importance of planning to ensure new built environments respond appropriately. A

guideline on how a development should respond is described within the Design Charter and Checklist for Taunton. This document identifies opportunities to address the Climate Emergency under the most relevant subsections below:

Energy

The approach to energy demand and carbon emissions will be to ensure that the dwellings are as energy efficient through its fabric. This not only reduces energy demand (and therefore costs) but also ensures that the implemented measures last for the life of the building. This includes high performance glazing, well insulated building structure (walls, ground floor and roof) and a well-built envelope that minimises heat loss through draughts. It also addresses issues of passive solar design and gain, so that at least half of the dwellings will still have a southerly aspect. Thus the principles of energy conscious design for this site should follow Policy SS1 and are to minimise the use of energy in the first place.

The Councils recent motion to declare a climate emergency should encourage any development to comply with a sustainable energy hierarchy created for the site and should in general consider:

- Development location: Reduces transport need and gives access to sustainable transport;
- Site master planning: Solar master planning optimises use of natural light and heat;
- Building fabric: High performance fabric gives maximum thermal efficiency;
- Building services: Low carbon building services support fabric measures;
- Clean on-site energy: Low carbon / renewable energy reduces unavoidable emissions;
- Offsite measures: Developer contributions finance offsite carbon reduction where onsite measures are not practical/viable;
- In-use performance: To ensure actual performance aligns with design intent.

Developments should envisage achieving high levels of insulation and air tightness as well as MVHR (mechanical ventilation with heat recovery) on buildings near the motorway.

Developers must also prove that a development is provided with carbon reduced and CO2 reduced energy resources which follows the energy reduction aspirations of the Council. This need to include the options for a combined local energy source for developments in close proximity and includes local energy centres.

Potable Water

Water efficiency becomes increasingly important in a changing climate with diminishing water resources.

The use of Part G Building Regulations will be the means by which water demand will be measured and reduced. There will be a focus on reducing demand for water in the first place and using the water that is required as efficiently as possible. Such measures include dual flush toilets and water butts for external watering in gardens.

Surface Water

Inevitably there will be an increase in hardstanding and surfaces on the site once completed, which under normal circumstances would increase the amount of run off from the site and potentially cause flooding issues further downstream.

However, measures must be introduced to eliminate this risk, particularly in light of a worsening climate with more intense rainfall projected. Sustainable Urban Drainage and attenuation measures must be introduced as part of considered drainage strategy, and this can be complemented by the design and arrangement of green spaces with rain gardens to help cope with surface water run-off.

Ecology

Full ecological surveys must be undertaken and reports produced. Any measures required to mitigate the impact of development on native or endangered animal species must be set out within an Ecological Management Plan. The removal of any habitat must be mitigated by enhancement elsewhere. New landscape planting must be designed to enhance the biodiversity of the development area as part of the overarching landscape strategy.

Materials

Materials can have a significant impact on environmental performance, both in construction, but also ongoing use. Through construction, where those materials are sourced from, the means of extraction and manufacture and how far they travel all have varying effects on the environment. The materials issue will be addressed in the following ways:

Through the use of 'C' rated materials, as defined in the Green Guide to Specification;

By using materials in the main elements of construction (roof, walls, floors, etc.) that have been sourced responsibly;

By using materials in the finishing elements of construction (doors, staircases, fascias etc.) that have been sourced responsibly;

Maximise the re- use of recycled building waste material and spare soil generated by the site preparation and adopt sustainable soil management practices to guarantee this practise to be carried out.

Tree Planting

The Council recently committed to prioritise the planting of new trees and considers this an important aspect in the future for many reasons which include the sequestration of CO2 and the positive aspects of urban shading and cooling to the climate. The aim is to provide tree species in locations suitable for the development and the trees themselves. New woodlands should contain a variety of species to avoid the creation of areas of monoculture.

A Better Quality of Life

Well designed, environmentally friendly homes have an important role to play in maintaining a sense of well-being and a good quality of life.

Therefore, buildings should be Building for Life (BfL) compliant. For example, dwellings will be designed to enable good levels of natural daylighting to help create a feeling of space and to promote healthier environments.

Furthermore, all residents will have access to private external space in the form of gardens or communal space in the case of flats, a vital component of improved health.

Furthermore, developments within Taunton should follow the 'The Vision for our Garden Town' document and the 'Design Charter and Checklist' provided by the Council. These guides and charter/checklist provide the opportunity to create a higher quality natural and built environment which will support healthier and happier places.

Transport

Any development should be located in an area to promote the reduction of energy usage and CO2 emissions.

This development is conveniently located adjacent to the existing MH1 area along the proposed ERR which provides a vital transport route for the region as well as for Taunton and will relieve the existing A38 which is proposed to be downgraded once the ERR is provided.

The ERR will provide direct access with good connections for the new mixed used development of MH2 as well as for the employment site and B&R proposed near the existing employment area at Walfod Cross.

The site and its residential development encourage sustainable transport modes such as walking and cycling rather than car usage by providing the option to easily access:

- The green necklace to the east and south for recreational use,
- The proposed green corridors within the residential development, and
- The existing bus stops, educational facilities and local centre proposed within the proposed new development and the adjacent MH1 site, and
- The new development also proposes a rapid transport system that can be easily accessed from the site and creates a sustainable connection to the centre of Taunton and the Bus&Ride area.

The development should encourage compliance with a sustainable transport hierarchy created for the site and should in general motivate to:

- Reduce the need to travel;
- Inspire active travel, public transport, and shared transport modes; and
- Instigate a preference of Electric Vehicles over fossil fuel vehicle when buying a new vehicle.

Furthermore, the development is proposed to encourage local scale employment rather than a strategic employment location to reduce the use of cars within the area.

Waste

Throughout construction, there will be a number of measures in place that will facilitate high levels of reuse and recycling, including the development of a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) which will:

- Identify all waste streams and planning for their management,
- Set targets for waste reduction, and
- Identify a specific person responsible for its oversight and implementation.

Operationally, the dwellings will be provided with bins to split the different recycling streams prior to storage outside. Suitable provision will be made for the safe, convenient and sensitively located storage receptacles.

Following the Council's climate emergency declaration any development should foster sustainable waste management behaviour within the development and encourage waste prevention and lower waste lifestyle as well as promote a strong self-motivation through the development of personal responsibilities.

The location will afford the opportunity for residents to access a range of existing and new facilities within the site and in the surrounding. In turn, the provision of new homes and employment will support the activity and economy of the town. The location also maximises the opportunities to provide convenient public transport and cycle links to and from the town centre as well as pedestrian and cycle routes around the development site.

The scale of the development and the density at which the houses are built, are also important to enable a range of facilities such as the school, district centre and shops to be viable.

18 Achieving Sustainable development

The following paragraphs describe the aspects fundamental to this project which will result in achieving sustainable development. These integrate the mix of economic, social and environmental attributes that define sustainable development.

- Building a Strong Competitive Economy - Providing homes in MH2, in addition to the recent developments at MH1, Hartnell's Farm, Prockter's Farm and the proposed new development at Land South of Manor Farm, supports the local area and the continued development of its economy. Furthermore and vital for the development, the scheme will include buildings and facilities which will provide employment and thus create jobs locally.
- Providing Sustainable Transport - The site offers an opportunity to bring about a change in behaviour and encourage residents to use healthier and sustainable modes of transport. A Travel Plan should be drawn up and be developed to encourage travel by walking, cycling and public transport instead of using the private car. The development will have to be designed to encourage residents to reduce the need for car journeys by providing car sharing schemes, pedestrian and cycle opportunities and by delivering sustainable public transport, such as local and rapid bus services. The majority of the new homes should be located in appropriate (ideally no more than 5 min walk) distance to the nearest bus stop on the spine road or the downgraded A38.
- All houses should be equipped or provided with sufficient infrastructure to be upgraded in the near future, with electric car charging points. Additionally and where possible, electric car charging points should also be provided within the District Centre and overall street network.
- Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes - The dwellings proposed should include a variety of sizes and tenures including open market and affordable homes. The five overarching principles of Lifetime Homes should be considered and include:
 1. Inclusivity - An inclusive environment aims to assist use by everyone, regardless of age, gender or disability.
 2. Accessibility – Convenient and independent access into and around the built environment and to services to be provided for the widest range of people, including

hose with physical / sensory impairments, older people and children, convenient and independent.

3. Adaptability - A building can be adapted in the future to meet people's changing needs over time or to suit the needs of different users.
 4. Sustainability – The new sustainable communities should be underpinned by essential accessible elements aimed at meeting current and future needs, including homes, facilities, goods and services.
 5. Good Value – The main objective is to provide greater flexibility that allows homes to adapt to the changing circumstances of their occupants has the potential to build a more stable and diverse community. This will attract a wider range of occupants and create a thriving community.
- Requiring Good Design -A key element of good design is the efficient use of land, requiring densities that reduce the amount of land required to accommodate the houses and that can support the necessary social and green infrastructure to create high quality attractive places and spaces in which to live and work. The density of development set out in the masterplans will result in good accessibility and a high quality scheme and provide a living environment and amenity appropriate for the location. Higher densities around the District Centre encourage easy access while lower densities will provide and indicate the transition to the countryside.
 - To encourage the use of public transport, shared trips and sustainable transport options, the District Centre will have a concentration of community, retail and social facilities. This local provision of essential facilities should encourage local trips, with a high proportion of access by foot, bicycle or by public transport and function and enhance the opportunities for social interaction.
 - Promoting Healthy Communities - Walking and cycling will be encouraged by creating clear routes with good vision green corridors and well planned destinations throughout the development. The green landscape corridors serve as a framework for leisure and recreational walking and cycling. The layout of the perimeter blocks will create a permeable network of walkable routes usable for a variety of activities. Designated walking and cycling networks using both quiet roads and the attractive green corridors will also encourage sustainable transport to access the district centre.
 - Extensive areas of open space within the Green Necklace will include recreational facilities, informal natural play areas, community orchards and potentially allotments which are an integral part of the development and will provide opportunities for a healthy community to develop.
 - Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change - As a general principle, new development will incorporate high standards of sustainable design and construction. Any applications will have to be supported by information which demonstrates how the environmental design principles will be delivered and how the developments accords with Taunton's Garden Town Vision and Checklist. This will include the production of an Energy Assessment in order to demonstrate how energy and emissions have been minimised in accordance with an Energy Hierarchy, and a Sustainability Assessment, which explains how the environmental design principles will be accommodated by any new development.
 - The community facilities, including the school and community buildings should therefore be taken forward as a flagship and example of sustainable design and construction and should be constructed in that way.

- Energy and Climate Change Mitigation - The new development should be designed in accordance with an energy hierarchy, which promotes the reduction of energy, before using efficient systems and renewable energy. New development should also incorporate renewable energy produced on site. An analysis of feasible technologies will have to be provided in support of planning applications.
- Options for providing heating and hot water on site will need to be considered and could include a review of a local or district heating scheme in addition to more traditional alternatives. The lighting within the public realm areas should consider innovative low energy lighting and use renewable energy where possible.
- Provisions for electric car charging points within the street network and community car parking areas should be considered and introduced where possible and feasible.

DRAFT

Monkton Heathfield - Phase 2 Development

Design Guidance

June 2020



Somerset West
and Taunton

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Policy SS1 of the adopted Taunton Deane Core Strategy allocates land for a Strategic Development at Monkton Heathfield. The Policy seeks to deliver a new sustainable neighbourhood. Part of the area has already been developed. The first phase of the Monkton Heathfield main site (MH1) delivered around 900 new homes together with new education and community facilities and the first phase of the A38 Eastern Relief Road (ERR); a further 100 homes were built at Aginhills Farm. Development is underway at Hartnells Farm which will eventually deliver 320 new homes.

1.2 There remains land within the SS1 policy area that will deliver around 2500 further new homes and related infrastructure. By far the largest and most significant of these areas is the second main Monkton Heathfield site, known as MH2.

1.3 MH2 will deliver around 1600 new homes, a through school, employment land, a bus and ride, a new district centre with shops and community facilities, a green necklace of open space and a further section of the ERR.

1.4 The Council have prepared a draft Framework Plan for the SS1 Policy area which is published for consultation with this Design Guidance, and shows the various sites and allocations in the SS1 Policy area. The Council have also prepared a draft Concept Masterplan for the MH2 site showing the disposition of the main land uses at MH2 together with indicative information about roads and key infrastructure, together with the green necklace.

1.5 This document contains Design Guidance which is relevant to the whole SS1 policy development area, but is focused on MH2. It sets out the context for the development of MH2 and sets the site in the context of the designation of Taunton as a Garden Town in 2017, together with key material considerations which post-date the Core Strategy such including the Climate Emergency and the National Design Guide.

1.6 In 2017 Taunton was designated as a 'Garden Town' following a submission to the Government. The submission was reflective of the then Council's commitment to deliver new housing growth focused on a number of new garden communities and town centre regeneration supported by essential infrastructure and an enhanced network of green spaces. Monkton Heathfield 2 is one of the Garden Communities.

1.7 The Council recently declared a climate emergency and has set out targets to resolve the emergency which should form the base of determining a development proposal within the Council's area. Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT) is proposed to be carbon neutral by the year 2030 and every effort should be taken to guarantee that this will be achieved especially in new developments. New development should address the climate emergency through sustainable development, low carbon design, prioritising active travel and promotion sustainable activities and fostering waste management behaviours. Additionally, tree planting within the Council's area should be promoted and prioritised and should include a mix of species with the aim to sequester CO2 from the air and provide urban shadowing and natural cooling in and around urban areas.

1.8 Under the new structure of the merged (SWT) this commitment has been reinforced with the publication in 2019 of 'Taunton: The Vision for our Garden Town' which articulates this vision. Monkton Heathfield - Phase 2 (MH2) is part of the proposed Monkton Heathfield garden community and wider strategic development land allocation as set out in Core Strategy Policy SS1.

1.9 The Council's recently provided Corporate Strategy 2020 – 2024 seeks to increase the number of affordable and social homes and, ensure the provision of adequate and affordable employment land to meet different business needs.

1.10 The Monkton Heathfield land was identified for a mixed use urban extension development through the former Taunton Deane Local Plan and the Development Guide for Monkton Heathfield (phase 1). The employment land provision is part of the preparation of the Core Strategy, adopted 2014, and reflected in the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP) adopted in 2016.

2.0 About this document

2.1 The Core Strategy identifies that Development Guides will be prepared for key sites. A Guide was prepared for the first phase of the MH1 site, setting out an indicative Masterplan and key planning policies and design aspirations.

2.2 The Council recognise that since the adoption of the Core Strategy there have been changes in National Planning Policies and the adoption of additional and supplementary policy guidance locally, including the Sites Allocation and Development Management Plan in 2016. Further, there have been changes 'on the ground' at Monkton Heathfield such as changes in schooling requirements.

<p>Stage 1 Background research into the sites current condition and physical strengths, weaknesses and opportunities.</p>	<p>Stage 2 Engagement with other stakeholders such as Parish Councils, Environment Agency and County Highways Authority, and prospective developers and land owners.</p>
<p>Stage 3 A period for the development of the Framework and Concept Plans and design guidance working alongside the Garden Town Design document, including feedback meetings with the local authority and key stakeholders on the emerging proposals.</p>	<p>Stage 4 Council approval of draft; and further targeted stakeholder consultation. Adoption for planning decision making.</p>

2.3 Whilst Policy SS1 is the starting point for the consideration of any development proposals on the SS1 sites, there are material considerations which also need to be considered. In January 2019 the former TDBC Council's Scrutiny Committee approved a report summarising these matters. The Council approved 'in principle' that part of the employment land for MH1 could come forward as housing and, that plans and a Design Guide should be brought forward for SS1 and MH2 in particular.

2.4 This Design Guidance and the accompanying Framework and Concept Plan will, following consultation, be adopted for the purposes of determining applications within the SS1 Policy area. It is a material consideration reflecting policies and guidance which post-dates the adoption of the Core Strategy.

2.5 Unlike the recently published Masterplan and Design Guidance for the employment land South of Manor Farm, Langaller, this document identifies key features of the MH2 site and the design challenges faced in delivering a sustainable new garden community.

2.6 The Council is committed to achieving the highest possible design quality in the new Monkton Heathfield Garden Community, in line with the National Design Guide and the Garden Town Vision, Charter and Checklist. This document sets out the Council's design aspirations and vision for MH2.

2.7 The Council have worked closely with the developer consortium bringing forward the MH2 site and there is much common ground. The Council are committed to continuing engagement with developers, consultees, stakeholders, local businesses and the local community through the planning process to ensure the Vision for the Garden Town and the Garden Communities is delivered.

2.8 This Design Guidance addresses key policies from the Policy SS1 of the Core Strategy:



A development delivering an area of employment land to the north east focused on meeting business needs.



Green key areas in strategic locations making use of existing green links and providing green connections with the surrounding open space network and delivering the 'Green Necklace'* servicing the Green Wedge** further south.



Create a new community whilst delivering high quality new homes including affordable and social homes.



Addressing climate change through sustainable development and new woodland and tree planting.



A new Eastern Relief Road along the eastern development edge to guide the traffic more efficient around the development and into the town centre.



Providing a Bus&Ride area to the north east of the site in close proximity to the existing and proposed employment site at Walford Cross.



Downgrade the existing A38 to a more pedestrian / cycle friendly route with local traffic retained.



Providing guidance on associated physical, social and green infrastructure potentials within the site.

Notes:

* The 'Green Necklace' is a multi-purpose belt of landscaping around the Monkton Heathfield development which provides a buffer to, and follows the M5 Motorway corridor.

** The Green Wedges are protected green areas to prevent coalescence of settlements and maintain a sense of place and identity for neighbourhoods whilst contribute to health and wellbeing of residents, provide accessible formal and informal open spaces, provide valuable wildlife habitats and protect the landscape and visual amenity of the areas.

3.0 Planning Policy

Core Strategy

3.1 The Core Strategy was adopted in 2012 and covers a plan period up until 2028. It contains a spatial portrait and vision along with core policies to be applied borough-wide. The Core Strategy also includes spatial policies to guide and support its strategic allocations, and specific development management policies that should be applied to all planning applications during their determination.

3.2 Core Strategy policies that are relevant to the MH2 area are listed below:

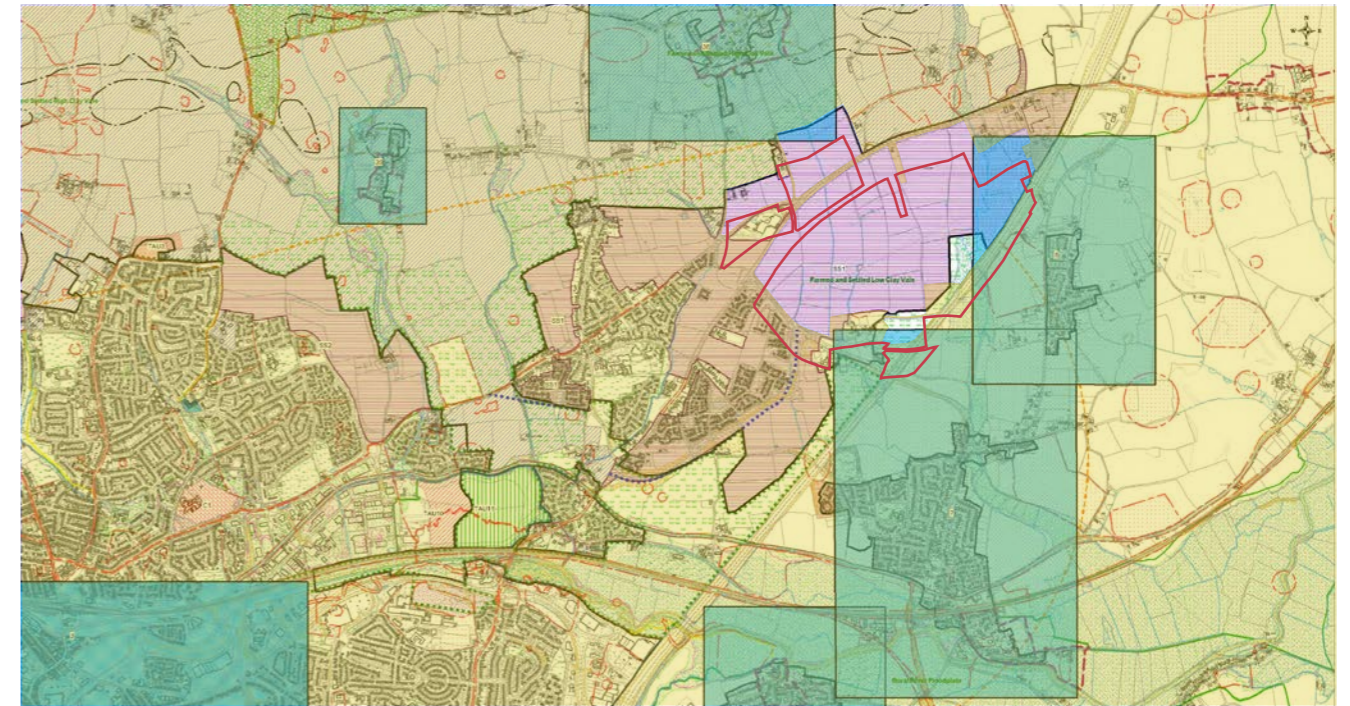


Fig 2:
Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan Extract

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Policy SD1	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development - planning applications that accord with the Core Strategy policies (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise, reflecting the principles of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraphs 14 and 49.
Policy CP1	Climate Change - development proposals should result in a sustainable environment, and will be required to demonstrate that the issue of climate change has been addressed through reducing the need to travel and appropriate design measures.
Policy CP2	Economy - 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.
Policy CP4	Housing - seeks to maintain a flexible supply of housing by making provision for the delivery of at least 17,000 new homes over the period 2008 – 2028, including 4000 affordable homes.
Policy CP5	Inclusive Communities - development proposals will promote sustainable development that creates social cohesive and inclusive communities; reduce inequalities, promote personal well-being and address accessibility to health, inclusive housing, training, education, places of worship, leisure and other community facilities ensuring a better quality of life for everyone both now and for future generations.
Policy CP6	Transport - development should contribute to reducing the need to travel, improve accessibility to jobs, services and community facilities, and mitigate and adapt to climate change by managing strategic corridors and networks, improving accessibility of public transport, walking and cycling from rural centres to key destinations and robustly managing the effects of new development in terms of transport impacts and parking provision.

Policy CP7	Infrastructure - ensure that infrastructure is in place at the right time to meet the needs of Taunton Deane and to support the growth set out in the Core Strategy. It will also secure developer contributions towards the provision of physical, social and green infrastructure.
Policy CP8	Environment - conserve and enhance the natural and historic environment, retain and enhance green infrastructure assets, improve green infrastructure, public access, visual amenity and the overall quality of the natural environment, direct new development away from land at risk of flooding, encourage the use of sustainable drainage systems.
Policy SP2	Realising the vision for Taunton establishes the scale of employment and housing growth, including 4,500 dwellings at Monkton Heathfield. It also confirms the protection and extension of the existing network of green wedges to prevent coalescence of settlements and maintain a green lung between town and country and supports sustainable transport choices.
Policy SS1	Monkton Heathfield – discussed in more detail at Section 4 of this Neighbourhood Development Plan.
Policy DM1	General Requirements – planning applications should make the most efficient use of land, taking into account transport impacts, protect wildlife, consider impacts on character and appearance of landscapes and settlements, pollution, amenity and utilities.
Policy DM2	Development in the Countryside – will only support defined uses in specified circumstances.
Policy DM5	Use of Resources and Sustainable Design – New developments will be required a range of measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change and to reduce CO2. Urban developments should exceed the CO2 reduction requirements of general development.

Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (SADMP) DPD 6.2.4

3.3 The SADMP is a Development Plan Document (DPD) that includes policies in respect of specific development management considerations and allocates smaller sites. The following policies are relevant to the South of Langaller area:

Policy C2	Provision of recreational open space	Policy ENV4	Archaeology
Policy C3	Protection of recreational open space	Policy ENV5	Development in the vicinity of rivers and canals
Policy C4	Protection of community facilities	Policy D2	Approach routes to Taunton and Wellington
Policy C5	Provision of Community Facilities	Policy D7	Design Quality
Policy A1	Parking	Policy D8	Safety
Policy A2	Travel Planning	Policy D9	A co-ordinated approach to development and highway planning
Policy A3	Cycle network	Policy D10	Dwelling Sizes
Policy A4	Protection of disused transport corridors	Policy D12	Amenity Space
Policy A5	Accessibility of Development	Policy D13	Public Art
Policy I4	Water Infrastructure		
Policy ENV1	Protection of trees, woodland, orchards and hedgerows		
Policy ENV2	Tree planting within new developments		

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Policy SS1

3.4 This policy deals specifically with the Monkton Heathfield area.

3.5 The development is proposed to deliver 4,500 new homes, of which 25% will be affordable. Policy SS1 requires new development to deliver:

- A mixed-use district centre containing shops, restaurants, cafés and offices
 - Community facilities including community hall, places of worship and health and care facilities
 - A village green
 - 22.5 hectares of new employment land
 - 3 new primary schools
 - A country park
 - An energy centre to provide locally generated electricity to the new development
 - A park and ride site
 - Improvements to the A38 to transform it into an urban street
 - A new 'western development spine' to connect the A38 and the A3259
 - A new 'eastern development spine' to the south, parallel to the A38
 - Infrastructure for rapid bus transit
 - Sustainable Urban Drainage infrastructure
 - A multi-purpose 'green necklace' of landscape and public open space surrounding the settlement providing allotments, outdoor recreation and wildlife habitat
 - Landscaping between the M5 and areas of new development.
- Policy SS1 also advises that the site should provide:
- Connected street network which accommodates pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles and promotes a viable public transport system
 - Well-designed public open spaces
 - A positive relationship between new housing and existing communities.

3.6 Since the adoption of the Core Strategy there have been significant material changes in government planning policy and guidance, together with changes in local policy and circumstances which has resulted in some aspects of the adopted SS1 Policy appearing to be out of date or overtaken by events on the ground. The report provided information to inform Masterplanning of the next phases of the project and information for developers in particular.

3.7 An update on the key 'heads' of the policy, where these have changed since the policy was adopted was provided:

Site Capacity

3.8 Policy SS1 identified the need for the delivery of around 4500 new homes within the Monkton Heathfield policy area. Latest monitoring indicates that the overall Monkton Heathfield policy area will not deliver this number of new homes. This is largely as a result of lower density development than was anticipated when the policy was adopted, at a time when national minimum density standards were in place.

3.9 In addition, it is now proposed to deliver a through school 'within' the second phase of the main Monkton Heathfield development site, east of the current A38, rather than north of the A38.

3.10 In order to address this likely shortfall in housing delivery at Monkton Heathfield the Council resolved to release some of the Employment land, south of Langaller Lane for residential use. Such an approach is in accordance with the resolution of the former TDBC Executive Committee following publication of the Employment Land Report commissioned by the Council.

Affordable Housing

3.11 To date the policy has successfully delivered around 25% affordable housing across the Monkton Heathfield policy area, and this remains a central commitment of future development, subject to viability considerations.

3.12 To date there has been little accommodation provided specifically for elderly persons within the policy area. There is an increased national focus on the needs of an ageing population and there remains an opportunity to deliver specialist accommodation for the elderly within the policy area.



3.0 Planning Policy (continued)

Employment Land

3.13 As noted above the Council endorsed the findings of the Peter Brett Associates Employment Land Report that there is a surplus of employment land identified within the Borough as a whole.

3.14 At Monkton Heathfield nearly 20ha of land is committed or reserved south of Langaller Lane, east of the phase 1 completed development area. There is an opportunity to address the shortfall in housing numbers in Policy SS1 through the release of some of the land south of Langaller Lane for housing.

3.15 There remains a commitment to identify the strategic reserve of employment land, of up to 10ha, south of Walford Cross, as part of the second phase of the Monkton Heathfield development site.

West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Plan, 2017

3.16 The West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Plan was made in 2017. Its vision is 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.

3.17 A series of objectives are set out for housing, transport, employment, recreation and the environment.

3.18 A number of the plans policies are relevant to the SS1 policy area generally and MH2 in particular:

H1	Housing Suitable for Older People
H2 and H3	External Materials and Refuse Bin Storage
H4	Affordable Housing
T1	Developing A Comprehensive and High Quality Cycle and Footpath Network
E1	Starter Workshop Units
E2	Sustainable Diversification of Rural Buildings for Other Employment Uses
E3	Retain Existing Employment Land/ Buildings for Employment Usage
E4	Social Care Employment Opportunities

E5	Wider Roll out of Broadband Connectivity
R1	Dark Skies
R2	Green Space and Wildlife
R3	Flood Attenuation
R4	Recreation & Community Facilities
R5	Local Green Spaces (LGS)
CA1	Developing high quality bus infrastructure

Creech St Michael Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018-2028

3.19 The Creech St Michael Neighbourhood development Plan was made in September 2019. The Vision for the Plan for Creech St Michael Parish is that in 10 years should aim for a safe and friendly environment while remaining rural, peaceful and green. The vision reflects what has been learned about community's priorities for the Parish through the community consultation carried out for the NDP. It has been developed following consultation with the community and the word cloud below reflects the key themes and priorities most frequently referred to within the consultation by the community during the preparation of the NDP.

3.20 It continues, noting that it is important that the vision does not conflict with the wider strategic growth priorities established for the west of the NDP area at the Monkton Heathfield Urban Extension and delivery of the spatial strategy set out in the adopted Development Plan. It is the aim of this NDP to promote integration and cohesion between existing and new settlements and to shape development proposals outside of the strategic growth and spatial strategy to reflect local priorities.

3.21 Key objectives are identified:

- To deliver housing growth that is tailored to the needs of the Parish as a whole;
- To ensure sensitive and sustainable development which protects, enhances and enriches the landscape of the Parish;
- To sustain and improve local facilities for existing and new residents in the Parish;
- To strengthen and support existing and new business activity;
- To improve and enhance transport facilities and digital connectivity;
- To improve and enhance leisure and cycle routes, including leisure trails and associated facilities;
- To prioritise local village and settlement distinctiveness in every element of change and growth;
- To protect our valued green spaces and landscapes, waterways and the natural environment generally;
- To involve all Parishioners in the monitoring and delivery of the vision.

3.22 A number of the Plans policies are relevant to the SS1 Policy area generally and MH2 in particular:

- CSM 1 – Cycle and footpath network
- CSM 2 – Parish Traffic Management
- CSM 3 – Housing to meet local needs
- CSM 4 – Quality of design
- CSM5 - Employment
- CSM 6 – Community cohesion
- CSM7 – Public realm improvement
- CSM 8 – Sports, leisure and recreational facilities

3.23 Copies of both Neighbourhood Plans can be located on the SWT website, Planning Policy pages.

4.0 Taunton - Garden Town

- 4.1 Taunton is the South West's first Garden Town. Garden Town status represents a fantastic opportunity to improve the lives of the community, but what exactly is a Garden Town?
- 4.2 The notion of a Garden Town is derived from the garden city movement and the pioneering ideas initiated by Ebenezer Howard in Victorian England of 1898. The utopian ideal of marrying town and country together with pursuing land value capture for the sharing benefit of the community, created a legacy that influenced not only town planning in the UK but around the world.
- 4.3 The Garden City ethos can be viewed as a direct response to the movement of people from the town to the countryside together with increases in the birth rate that were spurred on by changes in society following the industrial revolution. The unregulated growth of towns and cities generated an accumulation of problems associated with poor sanitation and pollution that in turn caused poverty and inequality within the urban populations. The intellectual response to these and other societal ills was an idealistic vision based on romantic pre-industrial utopian ideals where art and nature provided a more rewarding life.
- 4.4 Howard's solution was to proffer a self-sufficient model of development where rises in land values over time would be reinvested in order to provide community benefits.
- 4.5 This altruistic conception reflected the growth in social reform in the Victorian era. This approach was intrinsic to the design of garden cities themselves, which were to consist of a series of planned compact towns that combined urban amenities with access to green spaces and natural land (ring fenced by wide rural belts of land). Land was provided for industry and agriculture and at the heart of the city would be a garden ringed with a civic and cultural complex of facilities. This cultural centre was to be connected to the wider neighbourhoods via avenues and a series of concentric boulevards.
- 4.6 The design of garden cities were much influenced by model villages and the aesthetic sensibilities of the 'Arts and Craft' movement. Sensitive architect designed houses set within boulevards and verdant leafy lanes are the hallmarks of garden cities. This vision was realised most fully in the town of Letchworth and Welwyn Garden City but there are many other examples in the UK and across the world, particularly in North America. The movement influenced the design of new towns that were initiated after the end of the Second World War. Over time the original tenets of the movement were distilled and facsimile estates of housing were constructed without appropriate facilities or quality spaces.
- 4.7 In the era of climate change and the need to promote sustainable growth and carbon neutral development, garden cities are very much back on the agenda. There are many new and emerging developments based on the tried and tested garden town principles, providing proof that garden town principles can be applied to modern developments. These principles are aligned with good urban design practice and the new National Design Guide October 2019.



'Arts and Craft' housing set within generous landscaping at Letchworth



Houses facing green space at Welwyn Garden City

- 4.8 In August 2018 the government published a Garden Communities Prospectus to support the delivery of new garden communities. Taunton was one of the towns chosen as a new Garden Town with the principle of building new garden communities applied to new and emerging strategic developments in and around the town.
- 4.9 Land South of Manor Farm, Langaller is the first development to be designed as a garden community from the outset. It will be designed in accordance with the Taunton Garden Town Design Charter and Checklist. Therefore, any new development needs to demonstrate an appropriate approach on the basis of the Building for Life standards as well as the Design Charter and Checklist.
- 4.10 The Council have recently completed public consultation on a District Wide Design Guide and targeted consultation on a Public Realm Guide for the Garden Town. Both are available on the Councils website and should be referenced as part of any planning applications on the land South of Manor Farm site.
- 4.11 What makes Garden Towns so successful is the synergy between architecture, landscaping, usable open space and walkability. The Garden Town precedents examples opposite and below illustrate how these elements work together in creating successful place.



Within Taunton itself the Edwardian period housing east and north of Staplegrove Road exhibits the characteristics of Garden Town design and architecture.



Enclosed garden courtyard with focal point entrance at Hamstead Garden Suburb



The architecture framing garden communities need not be traditional, a contemporary approach can deliver the same

5.0 Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience

5.1 Whilst at very early stages, the new Local Plan seeks to deliver carbon neutrality for the district by 2030. The Council has declared a climate emergency. This guide identifies opportunities to address the climate emergency.

5.2 The information used within this section is a summary of a 30 page draft 'ideas' plan produced for the district, called the 'Somerset West and Taunton Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan'.

5.3 A similar draft document is currently being produced for the County of Somerset, called the 'Somerset Climate Emergency Framework'.

5.4 Both documents will evolve at the same time and are designed to start conversations with our residents, businesses and communities. Action also continues to be taken whilst these plans are developed.

5.5 Somerset West and Taunton Council is committed to creating a more sustainable future for our families and the places we enjoy. The Council is therefore working with partners to produce plans for tackling climate change within our district and across the wider county. Action will be outlined soon to reduce the contribution to global heating and to prepare for local impacts. All powers will be used to action, enable and support everyone to work towards achieving carbon neutrality and climate resilience by 2030.

5.6 The proposed actions are:

Transport

44% of carbon emissions in our district come from transport. Actions should grow a green transport system, increase active lifestyles and reduce business travel, by:

- Electrifying transport options and meeting that demand through renewable energy;
- Supporting Taunton Park & Ride, reopening Wellington Train Station and exploring innovative urban and rural transport options;
- Developing new routes and pedestrian zones that make walking and cycling the preferred choice;
- Enabling people to reduce the amount they need to travel (e.g. through better digital connectivity).

Energy

Our lives are energy intensive and we can't continue to meet that demand through fossil fuels. 37% of carbon emissions in the UK derive from heating homes and businesses. Activity is required to help generate, store and consume energy in smarter ways:

- Building new cases for renewable energy like wind, solar and biomass;
- Enabling and raising awareness of local community energy projects;
- Providing advice for reducing and shifting energy demand;
- Developing a Somerset Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy.

Waste

Although ranked in the top 10% areas in England for recycling household waste, Somerset must continue to reduce its environmental impact. Our ideas include:

- Creating campaigns to help us all reduce plastic use;
- Diverting remaining waste away from landfill to energy generation projects;
- Working with businesses to develop joint waste schemes;
- Reducing supply chain waste in key areas, like the public sector.

Farming & Food

Many existing practices for producing, distributing and consuming food generates significant carbon and methane emissions. We want to work with partners to explore:

- Land management techniques that reduce emissions and protect wildlife;
- Supporting farmers in adapting to the impacts of climate change;
- Improving understanding about the importance of buying local produce;
- How we reduce reliance on the use of plastics in food packaging.

The Built Environment

There are about 80,000 homes and businesses in our district and plans for more, all of which must be fit for the future. Ideas to enable this include:

- Retrofitting homes and advising homeowners on changes they can make;
- Locating new developments sustainably, close to transport and services;
- Ensuring new buildings achieve zero carbon emissions as soon as possible;
- Planting trees and re-wilding urban spaces to increase well-being.

Natural Environment

Somerset's many special landscapes are under threat. We need plans to radically improve the chances for wildlife and carbon capture through better land management. We plan on:

- Planting more trees and sowing more wildflower meadows;
- Working with landowners to enhance vulnerable habitats;
- Introducing less intensive practices in managing Council owned spaces;
- Empowering residents and communities to deliver local wildlife projects.

Water

Climate projections predict more intense and variable rainfall patterns, leading to more flooding, drought and water quality issues. Ideas to mitigate these risks include:

- Delivering flood alleviation improvements and coastal erosion management;
- Harnessing the energy generating potential of water treatment processes;
- Working with businesses with significant water usage to reduce their consumption;
- Increasing use of sustainable urban drainage systems in developments.

Industry, Business and Supply Chain

Our economy accounts for 29.5% of carbon emissions in Somerset. Actions are required to help businesses and employees improve operations and influence supply chains, such as:

- A business toolkit to help reduce emissions from supply chains;
- Sharing best practice and championing businesses that make positive changes;
- Increasing the resilience of small businesses affected by changes;
- Changing Council procurement processes to engage sustainable suppliers.



6.0 Garden Town Vision for Taunton



Theme 1: Growing Our Town Greener

Transforming our open spaces and streets

Objectives

- Link up our watersides
- Connect our key destinations
- Grow a garden grid
- Seeding 'Country Parks'
- Sow active landscapes
- Germinate a rich network of green spaces
- Cultivate productive landscape
- Locate 'pocket parks' on your doorstep
- Make more of managing our water
- Punctuating routes with green features

Design Charter: Key Characteristic

1. Green infrastructure to be fully integrated into the design of new residential developments, whilst re-establishing connections to our landscape, and connecting up our green corridors and watersides.
2. Improve water and air management and habitat creation.
3. Significantly reduce energy consumption and harness individual and site-wide renewable or low-carbon energy solutions, whilst promoting the use of recycled and locally sourced materials.



Theme 3: Growing Quality Places to Live

Town Centre, new and existing neighbourhoods

Objectives

- Diversifying and intensifying our Town Centre
- Improving quality and greening public spaces
- Putting the river at the heart of the town
- Our future Town Centre
- New Garden Neighbourhoods
- Rejuvenated Neighbourhoods

Design Charter: Key Characteristic

1. The Town Centre will be made more attractive and accessible.
2. Vitality and Diversification of the Town Centre will be encouraged.
3. New Garden Neighbourhoods will be created that are well-designed places with a clear identity.
4. New Garden Neighbourhoods should be designed to promote community cohesion and resilience.
5. Rejuvenated Neighbourhoods should be carefully planned with the close cooperation of existing residents to improve the efficiency, amenity and character of their place.



Theme 2: Branching Out

Moving Cleaner, Moving Smarter

Objectives

- Make more of our strategic connections
- Make our streets work harder for us
- Orient development with transit hubs and corridors
- Our green walking and cycling branches
- Upgrading accessibility & mobility for all
- Moving Taunton ahead

Design Charter: Key Characteristic

1. The design and layout of the neighbourhoods of the Garden Town will promote sustainable and active modes of travel over all others.
2. Provision to facilitate the use of cycles and electric vehicles will be exemplary.
3. Town 'Gateways' will be upgraded with greenery.



Theme 4: New Shoots and Blossom

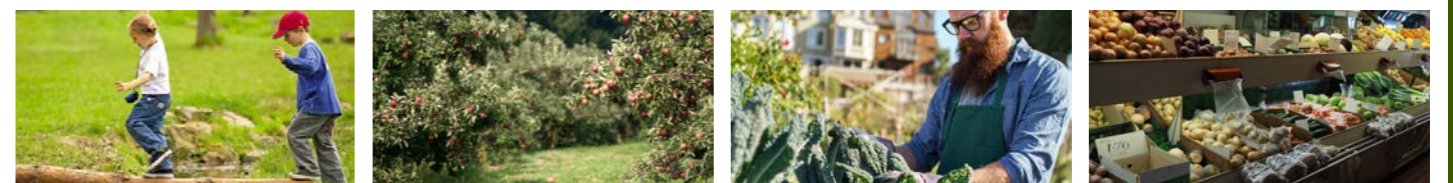
A dynamic and prosperous community founded on knowledge, culture and business

Objectives

- A differentiated, sustainable future
- Town Centre vitality
- A connected and networked community
- A knowledge sharing environment
- Business and innovation support
- Engage artists and other creative practitioners
- Arts and culture

Design Charter: Key Characteristic

1. Development should help to facilitate a new dynamism and prosperity that draws on and supports the knowledge, culture and business communities of Taunton.



7.0 Sustainability Principles

7.1 The design should follow the requirements of Policy SS1 and DM5 to allow for a development to be built with a focus on sustainability and climate change resilience. Whilst at very early stages, the new Local Plan seeks to deliver carbon neutrality for the district by 2030. The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and the emerging SWT Framework Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan identify the importance of planning to ensure new built environments respond appropriately. A guideline on how a development should respond is described within the Design Charter and Checklist for Taunton. This document identifies opportunities to address the Climate Emergency under the most relevant subsections below:



Energy

7.2 The approach to energy demand and carbon emissions will be to ensure that the dwellings are as energy efficient through its fabric.

This not only reduces energy demand (and therefore costs) but also ensures that the implemented measures last for the life of the building. This includes high performance glazing, well insulated building structure (walls, ground floor and roof) and a well built envelope that minimises heat loss through draughts. It also addresses issues of passive solar design and gain, so that despite the north-south orientation of the site, at least half of the dwellings will still have a southerly aspect. Thus the principles of energy conscious design for this site should follow Policy SS1 and are to minimise the use of energy in the first place.

7.3 The Councils recent motion to declare a climate emergency should encourage any development to comply with a sustainable energy hierarchy created for the site and should in general consider:

- Development location: Reduces transport need and gives access to sustainable transport;
- Site master planning: Solar master planning optimises use of natural light and heat;
- Building fabric: High performance fabric gives maximum thermal efficiency;
- Building services: Low carbon building services support fabric measures;
- Clean on-site energy: Low carbon / renewable energy reduces unavoidable emissions;
- Offsite measures: Developer contributions finance offsite carbon reduction where onsite measure are not practical/viable;
- In-use performance: To ensure actual performance aligns with design intent.

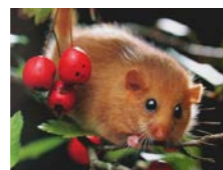
7.4 Developments should envisage to achieve high levels of insulation and air tightness as well as MVHR (mechanical ventilation with heat recovery) on buildings near the motorway.

7.5 Developers should also prove that a development is provided with carbon reduced and CO2 reduced energy resources which follows the energy reduction aspirations of the Council. This needs to include the options for a combined local energy source for developments in close proximity and includes local energy centres.



Potable Water

7.6 Water efficiency becomes increasingly important in a changing climate with diminishing water resources. The use of Part G Building Regulations will be the means by which water demand will be measured and reduced. There will be a focus on reducing demand for water in the first place and using the water that is required as efficiently as possible. Such measures include dual flush toilets and water butts for external watering in gardens.



Ecology

7.7 Details regarding the proposed landscape proposals have been provided earlier within this document and are an important part of making this development an attractive place to live. The new landscape planting will enhance the biodiversity of the development area. Full details are submitted separately.



Surface Water

7.8 Inevitably there will be an increase in hardstanding and surfaces on the site once completed, which under normal circumstances would increase

the amount of run off from the site and potentially cause flooding issues further downstream.

7.9 However, measures have been introduced to eliminate this risk, particularly in light of a worsening climate with more intense rainfall projected. Further details are provided in this document or other reports accompanying this application.



Materials

7.10 Materials can have a significant impact on environmental performance, both in construction, but also ongoing use. Through

construction, where those materials are sourced from, the means of extraction and manufacture and how far they travel all have varying effects on the environment. The materials issue will be addressed in the following ways:

- Through the use of 'C' rated materials, as defined in the Green Guide to Specification;
- By using materials in the main elements of construction (roof, walls, floors, etc.) that have been sourced responsibly;
- By using materials in the finishing elements of construction (doors, staircases, fascias etc.) that have been sourced responsibly;

7.11 Maximise the re-use of recycled building waste material and spare soil generated by the site preparation and adopt sustainable soil management practices to guarantee this practise to be carried out.



Tree Planting

7.12 The Council recently committed to prioritise the planting of new trees and considers this an important aspect in the future for many reasons which include the

sequestration of CO2 and the positive aspects of urban shading and cooling to the climate. The aim is to provide tree species in locations suitable for the development and the trees themselves. New woodlands should contain a variety of species to avoid the creation of areas of monoculture.



A Better Quality of Life

7.13 Well designed, environmentally friendly homes have an important role to play in maintaining a sense of well-being and a good quality of life. Therefore,

buildings should be Building for Life (BfL) compliant. For example, dwellings will be designed to enable good levels of natural daylighting to help create a feeling of space and to promote healthier environments. Furthermore, all residents will have access to private external space in the form of gardens or communal space in the case of flats, a vital component of improved health.

7.14 Furthermore, developments within Taunton should follow the 'The Vision for our Garden Town' document and the 'Design Charter and Checklist' provided by the Council. These guides and charter/checklist provides the opportunity to create a higher quality natural and built environment which will support healthier and happier places.



Transport

7.1 Any development should be located in an area to promote the reduction of energy usage and CO2 emissions.

7.2 This development is conveniently located along the A38 which provides a vital transport route for the region as well as Taunton, and accesses other recent or existing residential areas nearby. Furthermore, the A38 provides direct access for the employment site and a good connection to other potential employment sites in the area.

7.3 The site and its residential development encourage sustainable transport modes such as walking and cycling rather than car usage by providing the option to easily access:

- The green wedge/green necklace to the east and south for recreational use;
- The proposed playing fields to the west;
- The existing bus stops, educational facilities and local centre within MH1; and
- The future facilities within the proposed MH2 site.

7.4 The proposed MH2 development to the north of the site will enable a rapid transport system that can be accessed from the site and creates a sustainable connection to the centre of Taunton and the Bus&Ride area further north-west.

7.5 The development should encourage compliance with a sustainable transport hierarchy created for the site and should in general motivate to:

- Reduce the need to travel;
- Inspire active travel, public transport, and shared transport modes; and
- Instigate a preference of electric vehicles over fossil fuel vehicle when buying a new personal car.

7.6 Furthermore, the development is proposed to encourage local scale employment rather than a strategic employment location to reduce the use of cars within the area.



Waste

7.7 Throughout construction, there will be a number of measures in place that will facilitate high levels of reuse and recycling, including the

development of a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) which will:

- Identify all waste streams and planning for their management;
- Set targets for waste reduction; and
- Identify a specific person responsible for its oversight and implementation

7.8 Operationally, the dwellings will be provided with bins to split the different recycling streams prior to storage outside. Suitable provision will be made for the safe, convenient and sensitively located storage receptacles.

7.9 Following the Council's climate emergency declaration any development should foster a sustainable waste management behaviour within the development and encourage waste prevention and lower waste lifestyle as well as promote a strong self-motivation through the development of personal responsibilities.

8.0 Overall Placemaking Strategy

Policy SS1

8.1 Policy SS1 sets out a series of provisions in terms of development form and layout as follows:

- A variety of character areas which reflect the existing landscape character and the opportunities and constraints provided by natural features to create a place that is distinctive and memorable;
- An accessible district centre with a mix of uses and facilities;
- A connected street network which accommodates pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles and promotes a viable public transport system;
- Well designed public open spaces which are enclosed and overlooked by new development;
- A positive relationship between new housing and existing communities; and
- A well-defined green edge to the urban area that protects views from Hestercombe House and the Quantock Hills.

Identity Areas - Design Strategy and objectives

8.2 Create a distinctive place through the identification of specific elements that must meet certain design criteria. The criteria will be clearly set out with shared narrative themes that are contained in the following documents.

National Planning Policy Framework: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf

National Design Guide: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/843468/National_Design_Guide.pdf

- Taunton's Garden Town Vision: <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/media/1450/taunton-garden-town-vision.pdf> , and
- Taunton's Garden Town Charter and checklist: <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/media/2108/taunton-design-charter-and-checklist.pdf> .

8.3 The interpretation of these aforementioned criteria must have regard to this guidance.

8.4 The design of these elements will then form a framework for creating the placemaking narrative and resulting identity for the SS1 area generally and MH2 specifically.

Built Form principles

Block Form

8.5 Generally perimeter block style. Smaller blocks of higher density must be located closer to district centre, along the Spine Street and central green corridor to create a finer grain of development. Generally the blocks forms will gradually get larger and less dense towards the edges of development.

Townscape

8.6 A hierarchy of streets and spaces with a coherent and varied townscape must be created to reflect the many good design precedents that exist locally within traditional garden towns. This will aid legibility and provide the opportunity to create a place with its own identity.

Density

8.7 The density of the development will be determined by the application of the design criteria. Appropriate design responses will determine density rather than the other way around. Hence the requirement to have a greater populous close to the District Centre and along public transport routes will result in higher densities in these locations.

Building Heights

8.8 The strategy for building heights should recognise that heights should be commensurate with their function. The development will be predominantly two storeys. Taller buildings however have an important role to play in creating interesting townscape that is legible and distinctive. There are many ways this can be achieved such as:

- Creating an intensification of development near to District Centre and along transport routes and movement corridors such as the spine street and central green corridor;
- Being an important component of set-piece designs enclosing spaces and creating nodal points;
- To create key buildings and impart landmark status to buildings or groups of buildings;
- To create focal points and visual markers;
- To function as important corner buildings;
- To add variety to the street-scene and create interesting townscape/roofscape.

Street hierarchy - Design Strategy and objectives

8.9 Streets must be designed to create a coherent and recognisable hierarchy that will reinforce legibility and connectedness within the development. The design of any street must have regard to its function in the wider development. Important principles include:

- Creating a permeable development with streets providing direct and convenient connections to the District Centre, transport nodes and amenity areas;
 - Street design to prioritise safe pedestrian and cycle movement whilst still accommodating vehicles;
 - Streets design to encompass a variety of uses; streets for play, social interaction, safe and overlooked environments; 'green streets' containing landscape corridors, SUDs, amenity space and wildlife/ecology corridors;
 - The creation of a 'Spine Street' as a gateway to the development from the Eastern Relief Road (ERR) to the east and taking the form of a gently winding tree-lined street accessing the school and district centre before reconnecting with the ERR to the south-west;
 - Any on-street parking must be designed in association with hard and soft landscaping to provide an attractive and practical street-scene;
 - Any on-street parking must not dominate the street or have a detrimental effect on the overall composition of the street-scene;
- Consideration of how building form relates to the composition of the street;
- More continuous and unbroken street form closer to District Centre and along important routes;
- Common or staggered building line depending on street type and location;
- Placement of buildings either close to street to create high degree of enclosure or set back behind garden boundaries or landscape elements to create streets of differing character;
 - Streets can be oriented to create vistas to form visual connections to important nodes;
 - Thoughtful parking solutions must be explored including the use of parking courts such that the integrity of street frontage can be maintained and the over dominance of the highway be reduced;
 - The integration of conveniently placed electric charging points into the street network must be considered and promoted; and
 - Where possible street design should promote rooflines running within 20 degrees of east-west in order to provide promote south facing roofs and façades thus promoting the benefits of solar gain.

Development Edges

Design strategy and objectives

8.10 A series of well-designed public spaces will be an essential ingredient of MH2. The spaces may take the form of squares, large open spaces, streets, green corridors, pocket parks or even small incidental areas with seating. They will fulfil a variety of functions and strategic aim such as:

- To serve as nodal points to aid orientation and wayfinding within the development;
- Providing destination points for people to meet, socialise and share experiences (the beginning of community);
- To be available to the whole range of user groups and be well overlooked by adjacent dwellings with active frontages;
- To be given identity and attractiveness through design, such that their function is clear and their form is fit for purpose;
- To recall examples of traditional garden town spaces but designed to 21st Century requirements and technology; and
- To be given integrity through design (the intrusion of poorly designed parking and highways into important spaces should be resisted for example).

Open Space and Landscape

Design Strategy and objectives

8.11 The land within MH2 contains existing landscape features that will be retained and used to contribute to the overall character of the development. MH1 will be designed as a garden community with a network of green spaces and corridors linking into the green necklace, MH1 and the northern green edge. This network will consist of:

- A network of green routes focused around the retention of existing woodland, trees, hedgerows and public rights of way;
 - The establishment of a central green corridor running from the eastern side of the development through the District Centre and onto MH1 that;
 - Will be predominantly a car free zone to prioritise movement for pedestrians/cyclists and will be complemented with substantial tree planting to provide shaded areas and offset carbon emissions;
 - Opportunities for the establishment of pocket parks with micro allotments, raingardens and orchard planting to promote community engagement through horticulture;
 - Ecological mitigation through the establishment of wildlife corridors and wildflower meadows will be promoted within the green infrastructure,
 - The introduction of swales and ditches into the green infrastructure should be as naturalistic as possible with measures to promote ecological mitigation and habitat creation;
- The planting of a substantial number of new trees to offset the effect of climate change and meet carbon reduction targets;
- A well-defined green edge to the Eastern Relief Road 2 including noise mitigation measures, drainage swales and opportunities pedestrian movement;
- An inclusive set of principles will be established for each green space or corridor addressing its form, function, connections, built form enclosure, landscape elements, surfacing, seating, lighting, boundaries and maintenance to inform its design and identity.

8.12 Design Aesthetics – Placemaking is about more than just assembling the various components that make up a place. Aesthetic considerations are also important if a place is to actually look attractive and fulfil its function to its fullest potential. These must not be neglected on the grounds of aesthetic considerations being subjective. There are immutable rules relating to scale, proportion and appearances of building forms that have stood the test of time, and these should be fully considered at the design stage.

9.0 Green Necklace

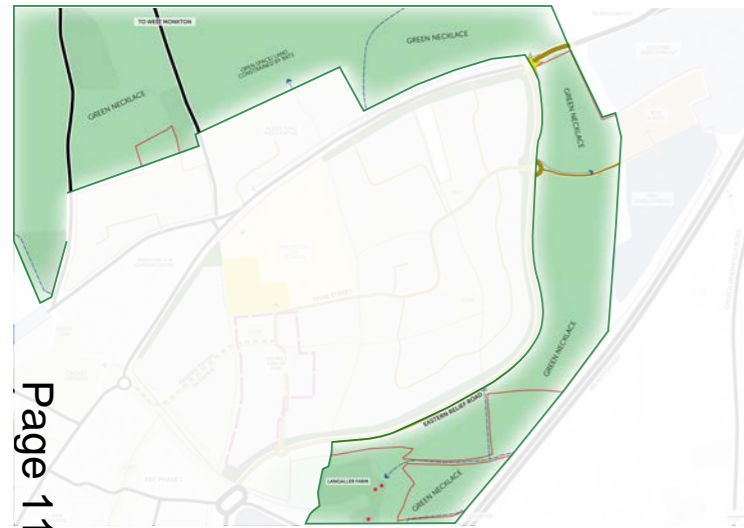
Identity Area 1

9.1 The adopted Core Strategy Policy SS1 states that the following will be provided: A multi-purpose 'Green Necklace' of landscape and open space surrounding the settlement providing allotments, outdoor recreation and wildlife habitat. In the Policy the Green Necklace was conceived as a belt of landscaping between the motorway and the development areas including the Monkton Heathfield development.

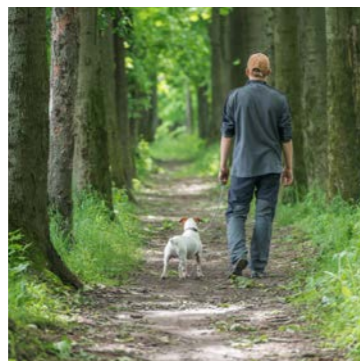
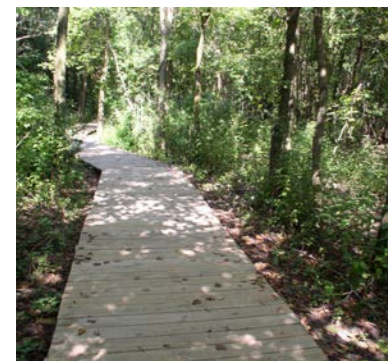
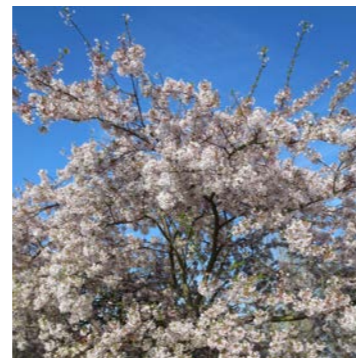
9.2 The Green Necklace is a linear landscape area located along the development edge to protect this important area of open landscape, woodland planting and recreational uses from development and as a contributor to the quality of life of the new residents and to promote landscape and wildlife corridors. This linear park should contain new

tree and woodland areas which will provide a notable landscape context to the new development edge of MH2; and should be designed with a wooded country park character. This will create a natural setting for the development, complimented by woodland interspersed by glades, some areas of open space and open swales. The Green Necklace should connect with the development and its integral green spaces / corridors via pedestrian crossing points over the proposed ERR2.

9.3 As an integral part of the overall landscape and open space framework for Monkton Heathfield, the Green Necklace will provide the following below:



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Location Plan



The Green Necklace will:

- Will provide a buffer for the new development to the M5 motorway;
- Will provide a noise buffer along the M5 motorway incorporating appropriate noise mitigation measures and must be informed by a detailed noise report;
- Will provide well-designed edge to the development that protects views from Hestercombe House and the Quantock Hills;
- Will complement the existing landscape features on site with new hedge, trees, woodland planting and wildlife meadows;
- Will provide an increase in biodiversity through the creation of wildlife corridors and wetland habitats;
- Will include a sustainable drainage strategy in form of open swales which will be accompanied with the provision for surface water drainage storage and release e.g. open swales which creates new habitats for wildlife. The swales will be scaled appropriately and integrate seamless in the designed landscape of the area;
- Will incorporate provision for active and passive recreation in the open space strategy as part of a network of routes throughout the area in form of footpaths, informal paths, routes for walking and running and natural play;
- Creation of a more people friendly and landscape focused environment between MH1 and MH2 through design must be achieved;
- Safe crossing points for pedestrians and cyclists from MH1 to MH2 across the road is essential given the need to ensure residents and school children have safe, convenient access to the District Centre, through school and green necklace beyond;
- Housing within MH2 will be designed to face the boundary and MH1 to create a positive street frontage.

The Green Necklace should:

- Further speed constraint methods should be explored if required;
- This should be via an extension of the green link into MH2 and potentially from cul-de-sac 'opened up' by bund removal or breaks in the bunding.

10.0 Integration of MH 1 and 2 Identity Area 2

The positive integration of Monkton Heathfield 1 and 2

10.1 To explore potentials for creating a positive relationship between the existing community of MH1 and the final phase of MH along the boundary where the two developments will meet.

Barriers to Integration:

- The existing A38 is a wide road with no speed constraints between the roundabouts;
- The existing A38 to be rerouted as part of MH2 proposal (although this road is to be retained for local traffic provision);
- The existing noise bund is physical and visual barrier between housing and the A38. The noise reducing fence (set at various points on top of a bund) is a particularly unattractive barrier to the A38.

Potential Positive Interventions:

- An acceptable interface between MH1 and MH2 must be delivered;
- Consideration should be given to potential for part/total pedestrianisation of current road subject to ensuring continued local road access to existing homes and businesses;
- Removal of noise bunds and fencing with regard to reduced use and traffic noise on the downgraded road must be considered;
- Realignment of road if necessary with regard to removal of existing noise reducing fence must be considered;
- Further speed constraint methods should be explored if required;
- Safe crossing points for pedestrians and cyclists from MH1 to MH2 across the road is essential given the need to ensure residents and school children have safe, convenient access to the District Centre, through school and green necklace beyond;
- This should be via an extension of the green link into MH2 and potentially from cul-de-sac 'opened up' by bund removal or breaks in the bunding;
- Creation of a more people friendly and landscape focused environment between MH1 and MH2 through design must be achieved;
- Housing within MH2 will be designed to face the boundary and MH1 to create a positive street frontage.

Existing boundary and challenges to integration

10.2 The recent development of MH1 shares a boundary with MH2 directly south of Monkton Elm Garden Centre and abutting the western side of the existing A38 (including footway and cycleway), from the existing roundabout next to West Monkton Cricket Club down to the existing roundabout west of Langaller. The houses generally face this boundary at a distance of between 15 and 30 metres from the road and are separated by existing hedges and a grassed noise reducing bund with a 300m noise reducing fence along the southern part of the boundary. An existing footway and green corridor through MH1 connects to the A38 just north of the noise fence.



Location Plan

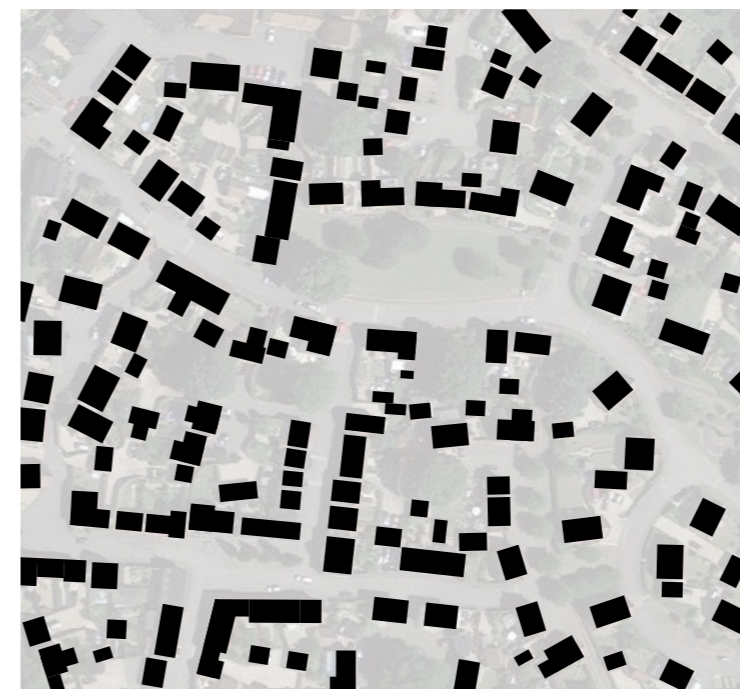
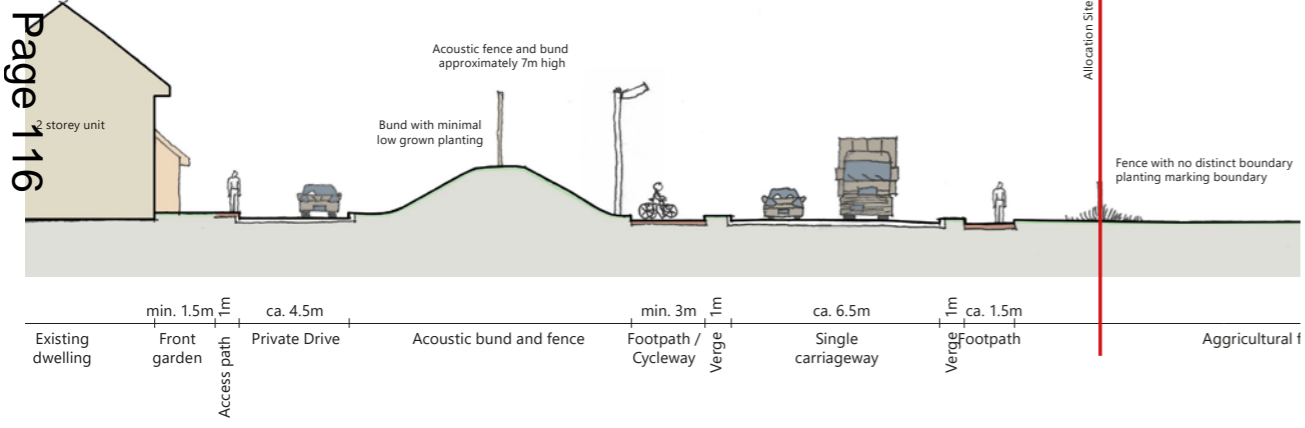
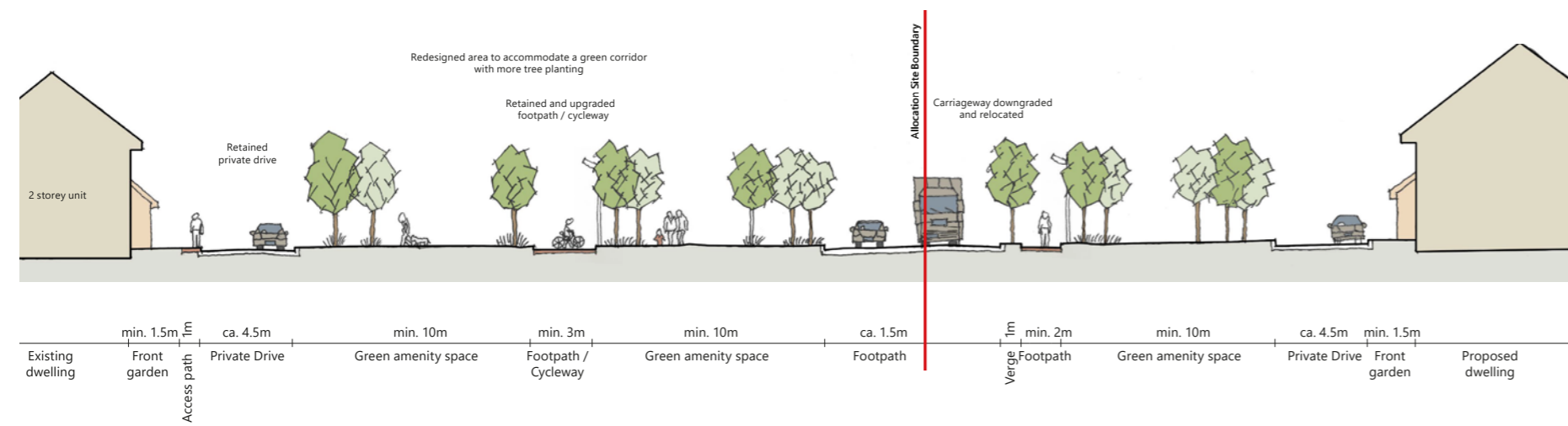


Figure ground plan illustrating the majority of development: Medium density organic village form of layout.



Existing section A-A



Section A-A indicating how the realignment of the road and removal of the existing acoustic bund and fence could offer a solution to integrating the MH1 and MH2 communities



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11.0 District Centre

Identity Area 3.

11.1 To create a well-designed and conveniently located mixed-use District Centre with a range of facilities to meet the needs of the community, along with the ability to draw in passing trade from the ERR. The District Centre will be a community hub and should blend the various uses into an environment that is safe, well-enclosed and a focus for social interaction.

11.2 The design of the District Centre should be aspirational, it will contain landmark buildings and be designed to create areas of enclosure, such as the village green along with other intimately designed spaces with seating and well designed landscaping to encourage social interaction. Consideration should also be given to the provision of covered areas in order to create useable and sheltered space all year round. Special consideration must be given to provide for the needs of all user groups including the visually impaired and disabled, to ensure that no one is disenfranchised.

The District Centre will:

- Provide a mix of uses including community hall, multi-functional space, health facilities, convenience store, retail businesses, café/hot food outlets, pub/restaurant, professional and financial services;
- Provide children’s play facilities within a village green setting located between the District Centre and the school site;
- Integrate office space and residential uses in buildings at first floor and above;

Residential provision included elderly persons housing should be seamlessly integrated within the District Centre to create a mixed use community and promote activity beyond core opening hours;

Be designed within an overall transport and movement strategy to promotes the use of the ERR for HGV traffic, local farm traffic, thus reducing such traffic within the internal road network in MH2.

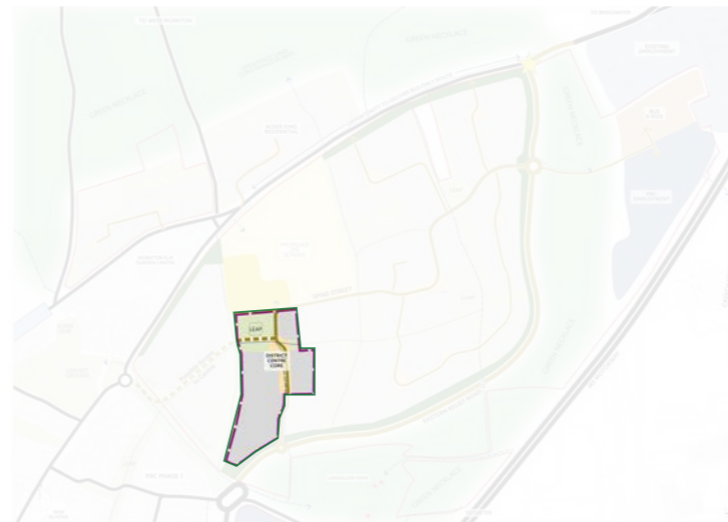
The District Centre will:

- Be populated be development forms that increase the local populous in the immediate context to encourage as many people as possible access the District Centre via non-car means and;
- Therefore buildings up to 4 storeys in height will be acceptable;
- Buildings must effectively enclose the spaces without being overbearing and should also function as focal points identifying the District Centre along vistas within the development;
- The overall design intention must be to create a high quality public realm that relates to a human scale similar to a high-street or traditional village/town core, however the design response may be;
- Traditional or more modern but still promoting the use of traditional and more locally identifiable materials;
- The example of ‘out of town’ retail consisting of low rise single use retail buildings within large car parking areas is not considered appropriate in creating a well-designed centre;
- Some parking provision will be required and this must be sensitively design such that it is safe and convenient to use, whilst not dominating the public realm;
- Servicing of the retail must be designed to avoid movements of delivery vehicles within the public realm areas such that a more sensitive design response is achievable, therefore;
- Servicing should be provided to the rear unless its small drop off type of deliveries;
- Hard and soft landscaping should be used imaginatively to create social spaces.

11.3 From a design point of view the District Centre should focus on the following:

11.4 The starting point to determine the uses provided within the District Centre is those listed in the policy SS1 and does not take into account the existing settlement (phase 1) requirements but has to given the current lack of local centre and discussions thereon. Whilst it may be expected that the existing community have existing provision for convenience goods, they need to be factored into the provision for comparison uses. These figures have been shared and agreed with the PRC (Persimmon-Redrow-Consortium) in 2018.

11.5 The figures put forward are minimum provision for the District Centre and are displayed in the table below:



Location Plan

Use Class	Mix	Size
Class A uses	Convenience	770 sqm
	Comparison	1480 sqm
	Non-retail A2 – A5 uses	1120 sqm
Class B uses	Offices	1000 sqm
Community uses	Community hall	to be determined
	Health Care	to be determined
	Place of worship	to be determined
	Elderly accommodation	to be determined

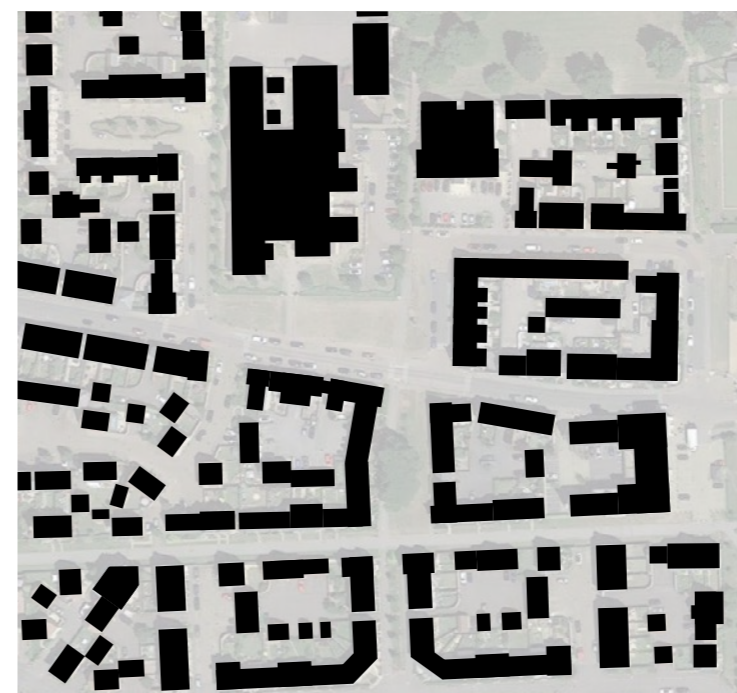


Figure ground plan illustrating the District Centre Character: Higher density core with retail, school, community building and urban park/play areas

Potential for a mix of hard and soft landscape including art installations to soften the space

Building design should have a modern approach whilst respecting traditional forms and materials

Potential to create some parking in front of commercial complex with main parking and deliveries to the rear

Larger structures framing the edges of the green open space

School site and building complex



Large green open space area with recreational function to accommodate formal and informal play areas

School building to front and frame the green open space adjacent to District Centre



12.0 Eastern Relief Road (ERR) Identity Area 4.

12.1 The new Eastern Relief Road (ERR) is defined as eastern spine road within Taunton's Core Strategy which runs south and parallel to the existing A38. The ERR will have to be designed as a road that balances traffic capacity with the needs of development access, walking, cycling and public transport.

Barriers and Potential Positive Interventions:

- To the north west of the development site the majority of traffic will be diverted to follow the alignment of the ERR and relieve the existing A38, which will be downgraded;
- The point of diversion must be appropriately constructed to guide the traffic along the new ERR but equally provide convenient access for local traffic along the downgraded A38;
- Access to the ERR from the north east should be discussed and agreed with the Highway Authority and should preferably take the form of a roundabout;
- The proposed ERR adjacent to the new development will connect to the south with the existing ERR roundabout already providing access to Hardys Road and MH1. This roundabout will have to be upgraded and repositioned to accommodate the connection to the new ERR stretch proposed;

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The ERR will be a single carriage way with speed limit approved by the Highway Authority and which should seamlessly connect with the existing ERR further south;

Access into the new MH2 development will be provided via roundabouts along the ERR;

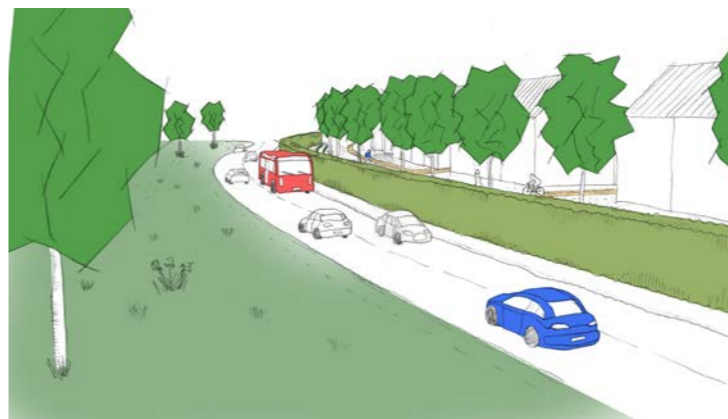
Buildings at these access points should use the opportunity to create key and gateway buildings supported by a sophisticated landscape design to appropriately announce the entrance into the new development;

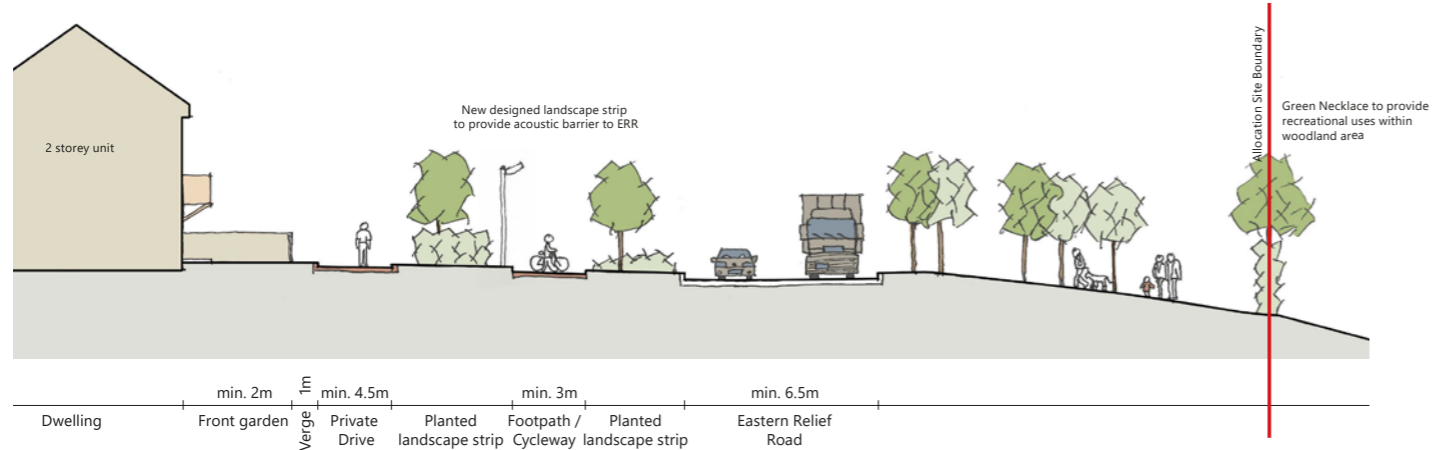
- Generally housing along the ERR will provide an active and attractive frontage and façade;
- The noise levels generated by the ERR will have to be considered when designing the site for housing development;
- Careful consideration should be given to the appropriate Masterplan layout design, glazing specifications and acoustic ventilation design, and at a later detailed stage in the planning process, external building fabric acoustic performance along the ERR;
- An acoustic bund, acoustic fence or a combination of these must if at all possible be avoided in order to provide an attractive route, as this would create a physical and visual barrier between housing and the Green Necklace;
- House types will provide a natural acoustic barrier with a close frontage protecting the private amenity spaces behind;
- The building line along the ERR should vary to create an interesting frontage along the route;
- Consideration should be given to design and roof orientation to create corner turning buildings to emphasise access points into the development;
- The development edge will be supported by a landscaped corridor along the ERR which will include avenue style tree planting, hedge and shrub planting as well as swales;
- The accessibility and usability of the Green Necklace along the eastern side of the ERR will need to be carefully considered with safe pedestrian/cycle crossing points at the roundabouts as well as the existing PRoWs;
- The number of pedestrian crossings will be restricted due to the nature of the road and its function as a swift and convenient route around the new development;
- Further considerations should be given at future planning stages to the impact of the road on the air quality and vibration, appropriate design solutions should be implemented to prevent any negative impact of the road on new residents.

12.2 The ERR will accommodate and divert the traffic from the existing A38 around the new development at MH2 to connect with the already constructed part of the ERR to the south and Western Relief Road (WRR) further west. The road will provide a corridor with access points into the new development as well as towards the new B&R and employment land to the west adjacent to the existing employment area at Walford Cross.

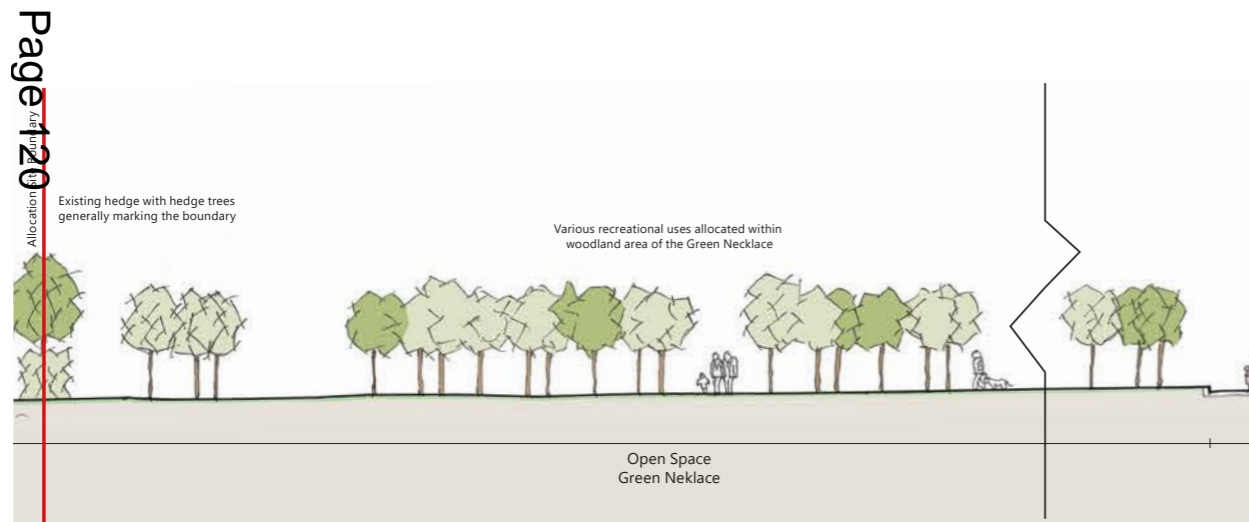


Location Plan

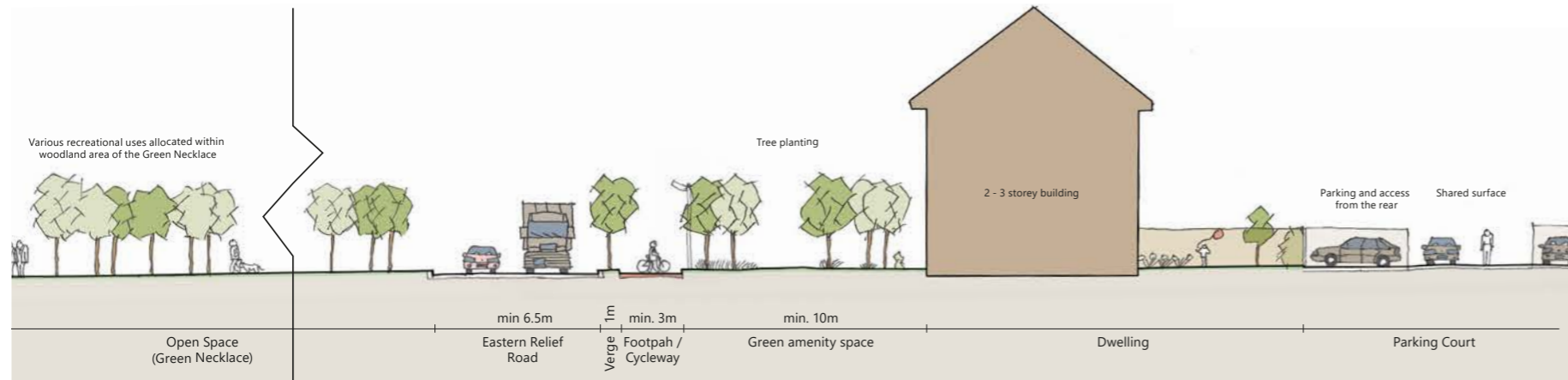




Proposed section B-B indicating a potential approach to design the ERR and residential development along the eastern development edge



Proposed section A-A indicating a potential approach to design the ERR and residential development near the southern access into MH2



Proposed section A-A continued



Regular bus service is proposed to run along the ERR

13.0 Downgrading of the A38 Identity Area 5.

13.1 The proposed development will see an Eastern Relief Road (ERR) running along the eastern and southern edge and will form the new settlement edge of Monkton Heathfield as proposed in the Core Strategy and the SS1. This ERR will enable downgrading of the existing the A38 to the north of the new development and will provide the infrastructure route for the new bus rapid route proposed along this stretch of the A38.

13.2 The A38 changes along the development boundary form a dual carriageway to the east of the A3259 junction to a single carriageway westwards. The character however changes further west with the appearance of the new development at Heathfield Gardens and Monkton Elm Garden Centre behind the existing hedges along the road.

Barriers to Integration:

- The existing A38 is a dual carriage way with no speed constraints;
- The existing A38 will be downgraded as part of the MH proposal set out in the Core Strategy and SS1 Policy;
- The road can be retained for local traffic provision;
- Current traffic volume will need to be guided along the new ERR to relief the current A38 route;
- Appropriate traffic measures will need to be realised to disable easy traffic flow along this route towards the west and towards the town centre. Considerations should be given to bus only routes or bus gates along the existing roads and where best suited for the movement network, the new development and the existing settlements;

Local traffic will still have to be allowed along this route to access the existing dwellings and to maintain the connection to West Monkton.

Potential Positive Interventions:

- A reduction of the carriageway width from dual (four lanes) to a single (two lanes) should be delivered;
- A traffic speed reduction along this route should be explored and adjusted to highlight the ERR as the preferred route to destinations to the west of Monkton;
- The route should be designed to accommodate the rapid bus service proposed along this road;
- The downgrading of the A38 will create the opportunity to deliver an attractive pedestrian and cycle route and will connect more safely with the existing network of PRow and proposed footpath within the proposal site and the surrounding;
- Access from this route into the new development of MH2 can be delivered but should be restricted to a minimum of two and exclude an access off south of Elm Monkton Garden Centre and Heathfield Gardens development.
- Furthermore there should be no public traffic access into the school site provided from the A38;
- Bus stops should be provided along this route to serve new development and in particular the school site;
- The existing hedges and hedge trees framing the A38 corridor should be maintained and enhanced with new planting where gaps are present;
- The corridor should also provide an attractively landscaped pedestrian and cycle route separated from the car traffic along the downgraded road to connect with the green network and footpaths/cycle paths within the new development;
- Due to the utilities easement corridor along the northern development boundary the housing proposed here will have limited direct connection to the downgraded A38. The easement will have to be landscaped to provide a green linear open space along the existing planting along the A38.

13.3 The junction with the A3259 also provides access to Doster's Lane which is a direct connection to West Monkton to the north. The A38 provides access to a limited number of dwellings along the eastern part of the road. There are currently very limited visual connections to the surrounding landscape and properties due to the existing major vegetation alongside the road with the exception of Springfield House which lies to the north of the road.

13.4 The PRow's provided on site and to the north of the site currently terminate at the A38. No pedestrian crossings are provided and a pedestrian connection between the northern and southern footpath network is broken as a crossing and is quite dangerous.



Location Plan

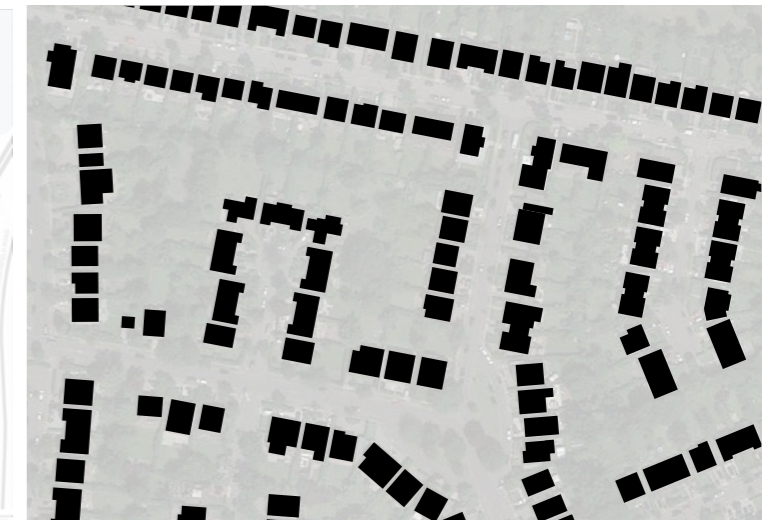
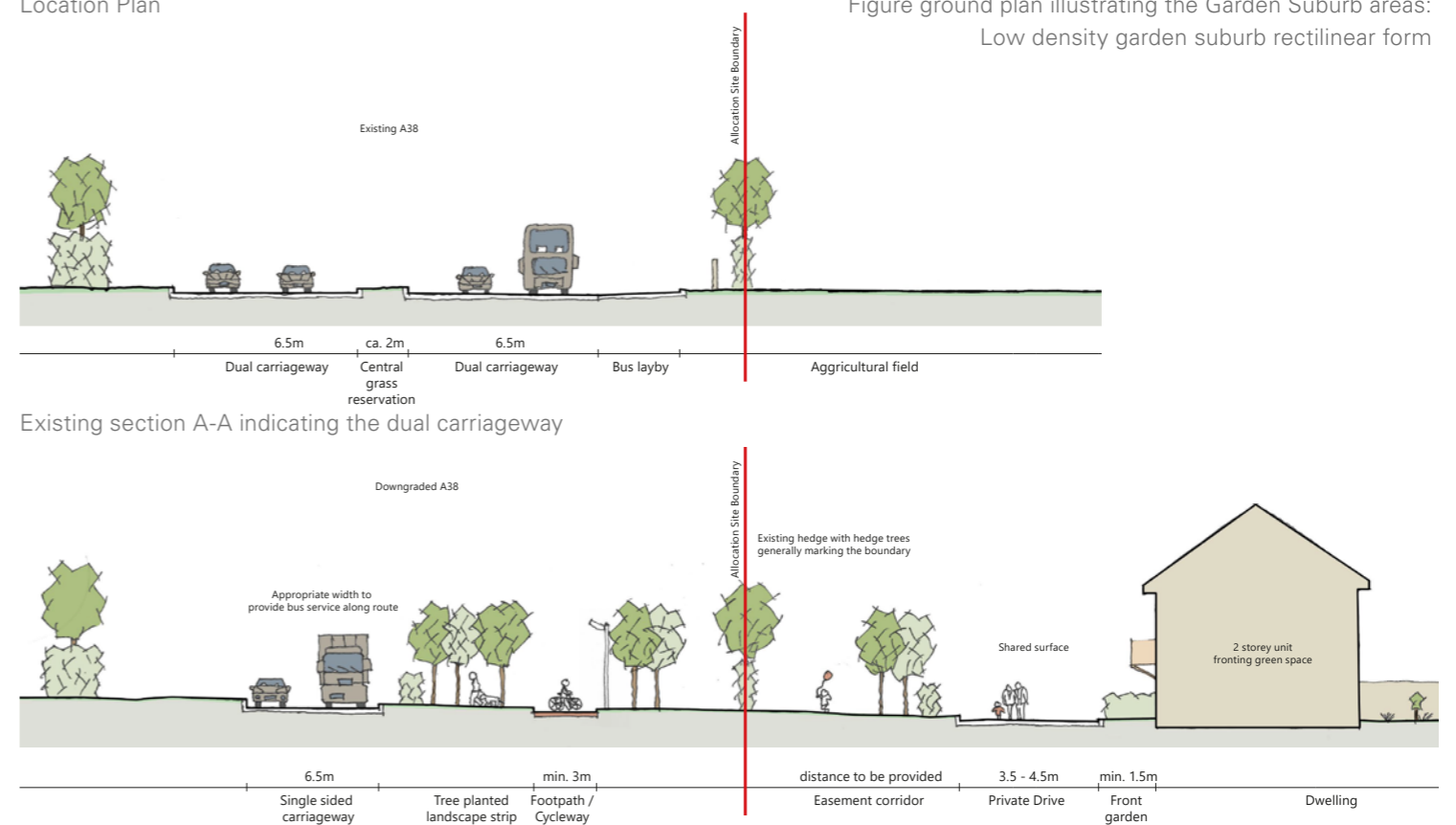


Figure ground plan illustrating the Garden Suburb areas: Low density garden suburb rectilinear form



Existing section A-A indicating the dual carriageway

Proposed section A-A indicating a potential approach to design a downgraded the A38

14.1 An area for a new Bus and Ride (B&R) is set aside in the north eastern corner of the site and west of Walford Cross. This facility will provide opportunities to create a central point for a rapid bus service and local bus service. The vision is to provide appropriate sustainable transport opportunities, connect visitors efficiently with the centre of Taunton and potentially provide a sustainable connection to the north to Bridgwater.

14.2 Access is proposed to be provided from a roundabout along the new ERR which also serves the proposed employment site adjacent to the B&R.

14.3 Supporting infrastructure will include new bus stops within the MH2 area and along the A38 route. The alignment of the A38 is proposed to be downgraded as the ERR will take the majority of traffic currently passing along this road. Therefore, the original A38 route can provide bus stops as well as shared walking/cycling paths.

14.4 The B&R scheme is proposed in combination with other junction and crossing improvements proposed in the wider area with bus lanes and bus gates specifically designed to improve the reliability, frequency and journey times of public transport using the route.

14.5 The siting and location of the gateway building on the B&R site should be sympathetically designed potentially with a green roof and / or solar panels. The site boundaries should support the existing and retained hedges by providing pergolas with climbing plants as well as opportunities for artwork to softening the usual monotone and rather bleak area of car park normally proposed. Furthermore, a “green” building or build form element should be of appropriate size and massing and accompanied by a thoughtful landscape scheme which should improve the quality of the environment for the general public.

Overall, the scheme aims:

- To support the employment, housing growth and economic vitality within the area;
- To reduce transport emissions and meet our obligations to the Garden Town Vision of Taunton;
- To protect and possibly enhance the environment and improve quality of life within the MH2 area as well as within Taunton; and
- To improve public health, air quality, safety and individual wellbeing for the existing and new residents as well as for visitors.

The Layout and Detail Design will:

- To communicate a strong environmental message and embrace the natural environment in the design of the scheme and gatehouse building;
- A simple permanent building set within a much greener landscape setting is considered appropriate;
- Potentially incorporating recycled materials such as recycled materials in the boundary treatment and hard surface, such as incorporating walls built from plastic bottles or recycled tyres as boundary treatment or planting support; and
- Sympathetically designed potentially with a green roof and or solar panels.



Location Plan



Design Criteria:

- Retain and enhance the existing good level of boundary planting around the perimeter and expand where necessary;
- Arrival at the B&R site presents the first impression to many visitors and therefore the appearance of the ‘green’ building and site has relevance to the perceived quality of the towns public real and should be appropriately landscape led designed;
- The site should consider including new individual native tree planting, hedge and shrub planting, ground cover and wildflower meadow areas where possible;
- A Landscape Maintenance and Management Plan should be considered to protect the trees on site and to ensure the landscape scheme is realised and maintained as proposed;
- In addition to the car parking arrangements, the site should also provide for cycle parking facilities for the staff but also for potential visitors and commuters using the local or rapid bus transport opportunity to access the town centre;
- A significant number if not all car parking spaces should be equipped with electric charging points;
- In the light of potential shortage of coach parking spaces within the town centre, coach parking spaces should be considered and accommodated within the B&R area;
- Solar panels on the roof of the proposed buildings on site or within the parking spaces can be used to feed the electric car charging points;
- Following the Core Strategy, the majority of the new homes should be located in appropriate walking distance and should be within 800m of a bus rapid stop and within 400m of other bus routes.

15.0 Employment Land Reserve Identity Area 7.

15.1 This area should be seen as regional scale employment site with potential connection to the adjoining employment site at Walford Cross and other employment areas north and south of the A38. In addition to the employment land provision at The Hatcheries and at land south of Langaller, 10ha of land should be released for employment land as set out in the Core Strategy and SS1.

15.2 The layout form should indicate a series of plots or 'rooms' bounded by landscaping to:

- Divide parking areas and provide spaces for swales or other attenuation features within the area connecting to the adjacent Green Necklace;
- Within plots landscaping should be used to provide relief to large areas of parking and to guide pedestrian routes to building entrances;
- The buildings themselves will provide employment in the form of office space, storage and industrial usage.

Overall, the scheme aims:

- Pedestrian links will have to be provided to connect the employment site with the new and existing residential areas including settlements to the east of the M5 motorway;

Page 123 The existing footpath/cycle link crossing the M5 motorway will need to be maintained and enhanced and should be considered a benefit for the overall pedestrian/cycle network within the area;

Routes through the employment site will be reinforced by the inclusion of a structured landscape treatment alongside the roads which is intended to unify the individual plots and highlight the routes through the site;

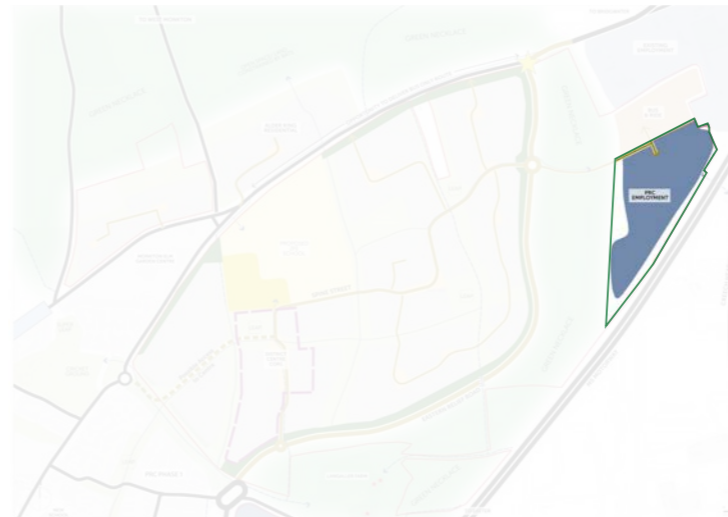
- The sites layout should be structured along strong primary routes linking the entrance with all parts of the site;
- Car parking areas will have to be arranged to minimise visual connections with the surrounding context other than the existing employment area to the north and the Bus & Ride;
- A combination of internally structured landscape zones will provide a balanced environment shared by roads, parking bays, cycle parking sheds and hard / soft landscaped areas;
- Service yards should be located at the perimeter of the sites away from the public areas. The visual impact of service yards should be minimised through the use of appropriate landscape buffers where possible;
- Buildings addressing the access route to the Bus & Ride area to the north must be designed with a higher quality finish and with visual interest through combinations of height, scale and design.

15.3 The concept of dividing the employment site into rooms will enable the massing of the buildings to be controlled by limiting large runs of tall buildings. Along with appropriate landscaping this will effectively limit the scale of development and the visual impact on the surrounding landscape.

Layout Opportunities:

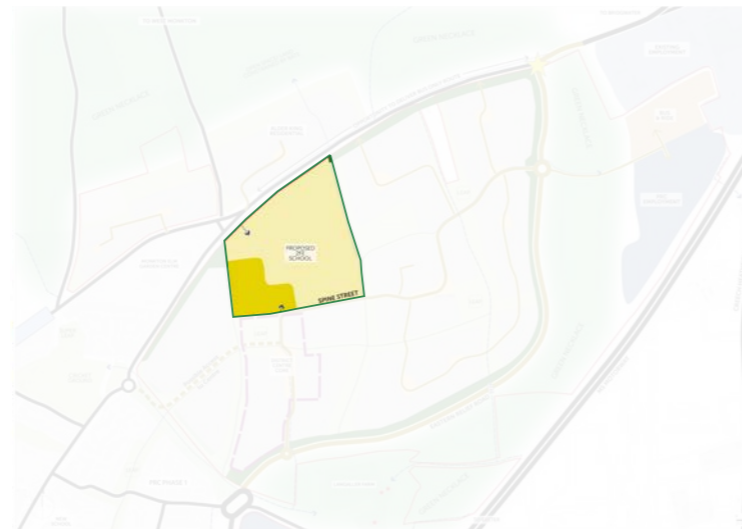
15.4 Site access is taken from a roundabout off the new proposed ERR2 which also provides access to the new B&R area adjacent to the employment land. There is an opportunity to access the employment area from the north and directly from the existing Walford Cross. This option would need road and junction improvements beforehand to create an acceptable access point here.

15.5 Generally, the site and its new buildings will be screened from views from the surrounding, including the M5 motorway, due to the existing levels and hedge and tree planting surrounding the site. The proposed tree planting within the adjacent Green Necklace site will provide additional screening.



Location Plan





Location Plan

16.1 The proposed two form entry school will provide the places needed for the new and proposed strategic development areas and the appropriate guideline should be used for space calculation and allocations within the site. There is a potential to create appropriate spaces which will include: classrooms, dining/hall, sports hall, administration space, specialist teaching rooms, meeting rooms, storage, and staff room. The school could also include specialised areas such as sensory and therapy rooms, warm water pool and medical spaces if required. Outdoor spaces will include sensory gardens, habitat areas, MUGA and adventure playground.

16.2 The building should be designed using government guidance designed to a specification to be agreed by Somerset County Council (SCC) and meeting DFEE standards. The scale and aesthetics of the school building design is informed by the functionality of the spaces within the unit itself. Classrooms should benefit from being orientated north to south to avoid disruptive glare and solar gain during school hours. The building orientation will be an important factor in defining the siting, proportion and configuration of the proposed building. The external outdoor spaces will play a crucial part of the school ground design and should include the following aspects listed below.

16.3 The school building layout should be developed in cooperation with the Local Planning Authority as well as the Education Authority responsible and respond to the site constraints on and around the site. The entrance locations should be specifically considered to provide a drop-off and pick-up solutions benefiting from the location of the adjacent District Centre. Staff / visitor car parking and drop-off / pick-up area will be located at the front of the building with a range of landscaping proposals behind the secure line. The school building will be positioned in the south western corner of the school site and provide the northern edge of the green open space proposed adjacent to the school site.

The School Site should include:

- Grassed sports play pitches suitable for a variation of sports games such as football;
- Opportunities for dual use of school facilities. This will be considered, subject to security and safeguarding issues being overcome;
- Hard play areas for formal play such as PE lessons;
- Adventure play areas with play equipment for appropriate age groups;
- Specialised outdoor areas to accommodate sensory gardens to stimulate senses including sight, touch, taste, and hearing. This area can also be used for outdoor teaching;
- Quiet soft play areas and informal meadowland and ecological areas which potentially can contain small ponds for outdoor teaching, socialising and relaxing; and
- Retain and enhance any existing planting such as trees and boundary hedges to promote biodiversity.



Example of new modern school design

17.0 Landscape and Green Infrastructure Opportunities

17.1 Every effort should be taken to integrate a purposeful landscape strategy and should focus on:

Landscape and Green Infrastructure Opportunities

- Including street trees which enclose the main road corridors to emphasise the importance of these main roads and function as orientation within the area. Well-designed modern street signage should be used to mark the access road from the ERR and to enhance the overall appearance of the employment site;
- The use of native hedges, ornamental shrub planting and trees within the parking areas which provides visual seasonal interest. This should be provided through the use of flowering fruit trees in certain areas within the employment site
- Clearly defined routes along the main routes will be landscaped to provide attractive landscape pedestrian links connecting the employment area with the Green Necklace and area to the east of the motorway;
- Attenuation measures will be an integrated SUDs network located within the green corridors and spaces included in the employment area. This network and any wetland areas and potential ponds should be planted with natural species suited to local environment and climate and the creation of wetland habitats should be promoted. The attenuation measure will furthermore enhance the ecological value of the site and the wider environment.

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18.0 Sustainability / Energy / Climate change

18.1 In line with the objectives set out the NPPF and within the Garden Town Vision for Taunton the main concern lies to deliver sustainable development which addresses economic, environmental and social factors.

18.2 The design should also follow the requirements of Policy SS1 and DM5 to allow for a development to be built with a focus on sustainability and climate change resilience. Whilst at very early stages, the new Local Plan seeks to deliver carbon neutrality for the district by 2030. The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and the emerging SWT Framework Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan identify the importance of planning to ensure new built environments respond appropriately. A guideline on how a development should respond is described within the Design Charter and Checklist for Taunton. This document identifies opportunities to address the Climate Emergency under the most relevant subsections below:



1. Energy

7.3 The approach to energy demand and carbon emissions will be to ensure that the dwellings are as energy efficient through its fabric. This not only reduces energy demand (and therefore costs) but also ensures that the implemented measures last for the life of the building. This includes high performance glazing, well insulated building structure (walls, ground floor and roof) and a well-built envelope that minimises heat loss through draughts. It also addresses issues of passive solar design and gain, so that at least half of the dwellings will still have a southerly aspect. Thus the principles of energy conscious design for this site should follow Policy SS1 and are to minimise the use of energy in the first place.

7.4 The Councils recent motion to declare a climate emergency should encourage any development to comply with a sustainable energy hierarchy created for the site and should in general consider:

- Development location: Reduces transport need and gives access to sustainable transport;
- Site master planning: Solar master planning optimises use of natural light and heat;
- Building fabric: High performance fabric gives maximum thermal efficiency;
- Building services: Low carbon building services support fabric measures;
- Clean on-site energy: Low carbon / renewable energy reduces unavoidable emissions;
- Offsite measures: Developer contributions finance offsite carbon reduction where onsite measures are not practical/viable;
- In-use performance: To ensure actual performance aligns with design intent.

7.5 Developments should envisage achieving high levels of insulation and air tightness as well as MVHR (mechanical ventilation with heat recovery) on buildings near the motorway.

7.6 Developers must also prove that a development is provided with carbon reduced and CO2 reduced energy resources which follows the energy reduction aspirations of the Council. This needs to include the options for a combined local energy source for developments in close proximity and includes local energy centres.



2. Potable Water

7.7 Water efficiency becomes increasingly important in a changing climate with diminishing water resources.

7.8 The use of Part G Building Regulations will be the means by which water demand will be measured and reduced. There will be a focus on reducing demand for water in the first place and using the water that is required as efficiently as possible. Such measures include dual flush toilets and water butts for external watering in gardens.



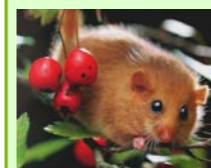
3. A Better Quality of Life

7.9 Well designed, environmentally friendly homes have an important role to play in maintaining a sense of well-being and a good quality of life.

7.10 Therefore, buildings should be Building for Life (BfL) compliant. For example, dwellings will be designed to enable good levels of natural daylighting to help create a feeling of space and to promote healthier environments.

7.11 Furthermore, all residents will have access to private external space in the form of gardens or communal space in the case of flats, a vital component of improved health.

7.12 Furthermore, developments within Taunton should follow the 'The Vision for our Garden Town' document and the 'Design Charter and Checklist' provided by the Council. These guides and charter/ checklist provide the opportunity to create a higher quality natural and built environment which will support healthier and happier places.



4. Ecology

7.13 Full ecological surveys must be undertaken and reports produced. Any measures required to mitigate the impact of development on native or endangered animal species must be set out within an Ecological Management Plan. The removal of any habitat must be mitigated by enhancement elsewhere. New landscape planting must be designed to enhance the biodiversity of the development area as part of the overarching landscape strategy.



5. Tree Planting

7.14 The Council recently committed to prioritise the planting of new trees and considers this an important aspect in the future for many reasons which include the sequestration of CO2 and the positive aspects of urban shading and cooling to the climate. The aim is to provide tree species in locations suitable for the development and the trees themselves. New woodlands should contain a variety of species to avoid the creation of areas of monoculture.



6. Surface Water

7.15 Inevitably there will be an increase in hardstanding and surfaces on the site once completed, which under normal circumstances would increase the amount of run off from the site and potentially cause flooding issues further downstream.

7.16 However, measures must be introduced to eliminate this risk, particularly in light of a worsening climate with more intense rainfall projected. Sustainable Urban Drainage and attenuation measures must be introduced as part of considered drainage strategy, and this can be complemented by the design and arrangement of green spaces with rain gardens to help cope with surface water run-off.



7. Materials

7.17 Materials can have a significant impact on environmental performance, both in construction, but also ongoing use. Through construction, where those materials are sourced from, the means of extraction and manufacture and how far they travel all have varying effects on the environment. The materials issue will be addressed in the following ways:

- Through the use of 'C' rated materials, as defined in the Green Guide to Specification;
- By using materials in the main elements of construction (roof, walls, floors, etc.) that have been sourced responsibly;
- By using materials in the finishing elements of construction (doors, staircases, fascias etc.) that have been sourced responsibly;

7.18 Maximise the re-use of recycled building waste material and spare soil generated by the site preparation and adopt sustainable soil management practices to guarantee this practise to be carried out.



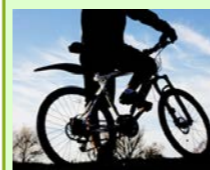
8. Waste

7.19 Throughout construction, there will be a number of measures in place that will facilitate high levels of reuse and recycling, including the development of a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) which will:

- Identify all waste streams and planning for their management,
- Set targets for waste reduction, and
- Identify a specific person responsible for its oversight and implementation.

7.20 Operationally, the dwellings will be provided with bins to split the different recycling streams prior to storage outside. Suitable provision will be made for the safe, convenient and sensitively located storage receptacles.

7.21 Following the Council's climate emergency declaration any development should foster sustainable waste management behaviour within the development and encourage waste prevention and lower waste lifestyle as well as promote a strong self-motivation through the development of personal responsibilities.



9. Transport

7.22 Any development should be located in an area to promote the reduction of energy usage and CO2 emissions.

7.23 This development is conveniently located adjacent to the existing MH1 area along the proposed ERR which provides a vital transport route for the region as well as for Taunton and will relief the existing A38 which is proposed to be downgraded once the ERR is provided.

7.24 The ERR will provide direct access with good connections for the new mixed used development of MH2 as well as for the employment site and B&R proposed near the existing employment area at Walford Cross.

7.25 The site and its residential development encourage sustainable transport modes such as walking and cycling rather than car usage by providing the option to easily access:

- The green necklace to the east and south for recreational use,
- The proposed green corridors within the residential development, and
- The existing bus stops, educational facilities and local centre proposed within the proposed new development and the adjacent MH1 site, and
- The new development also proposes a rapid transport system that can be easily accessed from the site and creates a sustainable connection to the centre of Taunton and the Bus&Ride area.

7.26 The development should encourage compliance with a sustainable transport hierarchy created for the site and should in general motivate to:

- Reduce the need to travel;
- Inspire active travel, public transport, and shared transport modes; and
- Instigate a preference of Electric Vehicles over fossil fuel vehicle when buying a new vehicle.

7.27 Furthermore, the development is proposed to encourage local scale employment rather than a strategic employment location to reduce the use of cars within the area.

18.0 Sustainability / Energy / Climate change (continued)

The proposal

19.1 The location will afford the opportunity for residents to access a range of existing and new facilities within the site and in the surrounding. In turn, the provision of new homes and employment will support the activity and economy of the town. The location also maximises the opportunities to provide convenient public transport and cycle links to and from the town centre as well as pedestrian and cycle routes around the development site.

19.2 The scale of the development and the density at which the houses are built, are also important to enable a range of facilities such as the school, district centre and shops to be viable.

19.3 The following paragraphs describe the seven aspects fundamental to this project which will result in achieving sustainable development. These integrate the mix of economic, social and environmental attributes that define sustainable development.



1. Building a Strong Competitive Economy

7.4 Providing homes in MH2, in addition to the recent developments at MH1, Hartnell's Farm, Prockter's Farm and the proposed new development at Land South of Manor Farm, supports the local area and the continued development of its economy. Furthermore and vital for the development, the scheme will include buildings and facilities which will provide employment and thus create jobs locally.



2. 3. Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

7.5 The dwellings proposed should include a variety of sizes and tenures including open market and affordable homes. The five overarching principles of Lifetime Homes should be considered and include:

1. Inclusivity - An inclusive environment aims to assist use by everyone, regardless of age, gender or disability.
2. Accessibility – Convenient and independent access into and around the built environment and to services to be provided for the widest range of people, including those with physical / sensory impairments, older people and children, convenient and independent.
3. Adaptability - A building can be adapted in the future to meet people's changing needs over time or to suit the needs of different users.
4. Sustainability – The new sustainable communities should be underpinned by essential accessible elements aimed at meeting current and future needs, including homes, facilities, goods and services.
5. Good Value – The main objective is to provide greater flexibility that allows homes to adapt to the changing circumstances of their occupants has the potential to build a more stable and diverse community. This will attract a wider range of occupants and create a thriving community.



4. Requiring Good Design

7.6 A key element of good design is the efficient use of land, requiring densities that reduce the amount of land required to accommodate the houses and that can support the necessary social and green infrastructure to create high quality attractive places and spaces in which to live and work. The density of development set out in the masterplans will result in good accessibility and a high quality scheme and provide a living environment and amenity appropriate for the location. Higher densities around the District Centre encourage easy access while lower densities will provide and indicate the transition to the countryside.

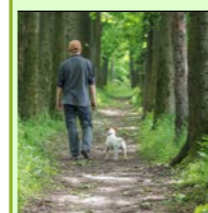


7.7 To encourage the use of public transport, shared trips and sustainable transport options, the District Centre will have a concentration of community, retail and social facilities. This local provision of essential facilities should encourage local trips, with a high proportion of access by foot, bicycle or by public transport and function and enhance the opportunities for social interaction.



5. Promoting Healthy Communities

7.8 Walking and cycling will be encouraged by creating clear routes with good vision green corridors and well planned destinations throughout the development. The green landscape corridors serve as a framework for leisure and recreational walking and cycling. The layout of the perimeter blocks will create a permeable network of walkable routes usable for a variety of activities. Designated walking and cycling networks using both quiet roads and the attractive green corridors will also encourage sustainable transport to access the district centre.



7.9 Extensive areas of open space within the Green Necklace will include recreational facilities, informal natural play areas, community orchards and potentially allotments which are an integral part of the development and will provide opportunities for a healthy community to develop.



6. Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change

7.10 As a general principle, new development will incorporate high standards of sustainable design and construction. Any applications will have to be supported by information which demonstrates how the environmental design principles will be delivered and how the developments accords with Taunton's Garden Town Vision and Checklist. This will include the production of an Energy Assessment in order to demonstrate how energy and emissions have been minimised in accordance with an Energy Hierarchy, and a Sustainability Assessment, which explains how the environmental design principles will be accommodated by any new development.



7.11 The community facilities, including the school and community buildings should therefore be taken forward as a flagship and example of sustainable design and construction and should be constructed in that way.



7. Energy and Climate Change Mitigation

7.12 The new development should be designed in accordance with an energy hierarchy, which promotes the reduction of energy, before using efficient systems and renewable energy. New development should also incorporate renewable energy produced on site. An analysis of feasible technologies will have to be provided in support of planning applications.



7.13 Options for providing heating and hot water on site will need to be considered and could include a review of a local or district heating scheme in addition to more traditional alternatives. The lighting within the public realm areas should consider innovative low energy lighting and use renewable energy where possible.

7.14 Provisions for electric car charging points within the street network and community car parking areas should be considered and introduced where possible and feasible..



8. Providing Sustainable Transport

7.15 The site offers an opportunity to bring about a change in behaviour and encourage residents to use healthier and sustainable modes of transport. A Travel Plan should be drawn up and be developed to encourage travel by walking, cycling and public transport instead of using the private car. The development will have to be designed to encourage residents to reduce the need for car journeys by providing car sharing schemes, pedestrian and cycle opportunities and by delivering sustainable public transport, such as local and rapid bus services. The majority of the new homes should be located in appropriate (ideally no more than 5 min walk) distance to the nearest bus stop on the spine road or the downgraded A38.



7.16 All houses should be equipped or provided with sufficient infrastructure to be upgraded in the near future, with electric car charging points. Additionally and where possible, electric car charging points should also be provided within the District Centre and overall street network.

APPENDIX 6

Monkton Heathfield: SS1 Policy Area and MH2 Concept Plan and Design Principles

Responses to Public Consultation

Name of Contributor	1. If you wish to make general comments on any aspect of the Framework Plan, the Concept Plan or the Design Guidance please set out your comments below specifying which plan and/or page/section your comment relates to.	2. Please set out the changes you consider necessary to resolve the issues you have identified above. Please explain why these changes will make Plans or Design Guide more effective in shaping the development of the Monkton Heathfield area.
Creech St Michael PC	Due to the size of this representation it has been attached in full at the end of this table.	
West Monkton PC	Due to the size of this representation it has been attached in full at the end of this table.	
Persimmon Homes SW	Due to the size of this representation it has been attached in full at the end of this table.	
Paire Searle	<p>MH2. What is the need for this? We had a lovely village, the roads were quiet, the wildlife was thriving. The crime rates were low.</p> <p>Now because of money grabbing councillors and Housing developers our once beautiful village and surrounding countryside has been destroyed. Enough is enough.</p> <p>The main road through the village has become a rat run for lorries and commuters, even with the bus lane this will continue as a rat run, the roads are no longer safe and very few stick to the speed limit. With the current Nerrols farm site the traffic control has been awful. None of these builds were wanted by the people.</p> <p>With yet another new development you are allowing wildlife to be killed off and taking away our ever decreasing countryside.</p> <p>This survey only asks for answers to which you can control in your favour.</p> <p>You have merged bathpool with Monkton Heathfield and with it destroyed the heart of the village. No one here wanted that. Yet again you did not listen to what the people really want and you manage to manipulate people's responses to suit.</p> <p>We are no longer a village. You have destroyed that way of life.</p> <p>For once listen to the people who live here. If it's isn't broke, why try to fix it!</p>	My suggested changes are to take the plans and destroy them for good. Use the money to help those already living here that are in need.
Eddie Eatwell	My comment relates to the Framework Plan, and specifically to the location of the new bus gate.	If the new bus gate could be moved slightly to the north east, adjacent to Alder King, this could be avoided.

	By locating this bus gate adjacent to Procters Farm all traffic from West Monkton, Monkton Elm Garden Centre, the residential part of the MH2 development and Alder King Residential will have to travel through the Monkton Heathfield phase 2 local roads.	
Mark Essex	Addressing the Draft SS1 Policy Area Framework Plan (specific comments in answer 2.)	<p>In short - I do not understand why land has been allocated to industry / employment at the current Langaller Manor Farm site (just slightly west of the green wedge and necklace).</p> <p>There is a currently a massive under supply of housing and a more recent huge downturn in office leases (given upward trends in people working from home). Surely this site would be perfect to rejuvenate a listed building whilst offering more suitable housing to meet the local demands?</p>
Michelle Baxter	<p>I'd like to know what plans there are for traffic joining the M5 Taunton junction from these new houses, as the majority of homeowners from the new houses will be commuting out of these villages and developments, either into Taunton town centre or further afield for work.</p> <p>Am I correct in assuming that all Monkton Heathfield traffic will be sent through Bathpool, past Aldi to join the Creech Castle crossroads? The congestion is already terrible on that road, combined with a lack of speed signage and permanent speed control. The Hyde Lane junction at the New Mill pub is dangerous due to lack of visibility or care from other drivers, as is the junction to Acacia Gardens.</p> <p>Children use this main road to get to Heathfield school and it's not safe for them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Create a new exit point for vehicles to access the new M5 roundabout and dual carriageway to avoid causing congestion on A38 by diverting traffic away from Bathpool/ Bridgwater Road * Creation of junction 25B to cope with the thousands of new visitors/residents of Taunton & avoid peak time standstill on existing routes * Reroute the A38 away from this residential area/school route to keep children safe * Put up more 30 mph speed signs, speed humps, and other traffic calming measures through Bathpool, starting at St Quintin Park and ending just past the Aldi exit * Put up a permanent speed camera to cover the Hyde Lane/Acacia Gardens junctions to improve safety - similar to the successful ones installed on Greenway Road by the Texaco garage. * Use mobile speed vans to monitor speeds/traffic flow at peak times if permanent speed cameras are unviable. * DO NOT MAKE MONKTON HEATHFIELD AND BATHPOOL A RAT RUN TO CUT OUT THE DUAL CARRIAGEWAY CONGESTION! <p>People pay a lot to live in this area, both in house prices and council tax - more attention should be given to these long-standing loyal Taunton residents and their rights should not be overlooked in favour of expansion.</p>	
David Fowle	<p>I am strongly in favour of diverting all traffic around the outskirts of the village by way of the planned Eastern and Western Relief Roads.</p> <p>However I am concerned by routes that still cut through the heart of the extended village. These routes will inevitably be used as "rat runs" as they are clearly more direct than the new relief routes and it is well known that drivers will utilise such routes even when they are not suitable or have traffic calming measures in place.</p>	

I am also concerned that traffic to and from Monkton Elm garden centre and Procters farm will be diverted through Bawler Road. This will lead to a large volume of traffic, especially during the weekend when there is a large car boot sale. Bawler Road is not large enough to handle that volume of traffic or the associated larger commercial vehicles. It will become a very unsafe area for children, where currently the road is quiet enough for children to cross and play on the surrounding green areas without being concerned.

Overall I would like to see more done to stop traffic on the current A38, A358 and Bawler Road (or any other roads through the village). The current plan is not clear about whether there will be a bus only route on the existing A38 section - I would be in favour of this but it would need further work to reduce traffic through the village. The current plan splits the village and that leads to poor safety (especially for the young and elderly), increased air and noise pollution and a less integrated community.

Separately I would also like stricter rules to be put in place about the area immediately surrounding the new relief roads. The current section of the relief road has some banks and trees but the planting and maintenance is very poor to non-existent. Given the proximity of the relief roads to the village a priority must be given to better banking and screening with trees. I would like to see more details around this area of the plan.

I would also like to see more detail around how Monkton Heathfield, Taunton and the surrounding area will be linked up with foot and cycle paths. The current routes to Taunton are less than ideal in terms of safety.

The relief roads are a good start, but the plan for the village needs to go further. The roads going to the interior of the village should not be usable as through roads for general traffic - buses should be the only exception to this so bus gates should be deployed for this purpose. We must plan for safe pedestrian and cycle access and residents must be able to access their homes by car and customers must be able to reach Monkton Elm Garden Centre and Procters Farm sites.

Looking at the current planned road network, the only way to achieve the goal of reducing traffic through the village would be to alter the bus gates so that there was an additional bus gate at the south of Bawler Road (where it joins Bridgwater Road) then, if the section that is marked "opportunity to deliver bus only route" actually allowed traffic this would allow vehicle access to all locations in the village whilst removing the option to use the village as a "rat run".

Alternatively, since the entire existing network around the existing A38/A358 junction is being changed, it would be sensible to revisit the location of the bus gate on the A358 (south west of Monkton Elm Garden Centre). The A38/A358 junction will no longer be hazardous so that bus gate is not actually required to stop traffic at that point. If a bus gate could be placed on the A358 at the Aginhills end, or just moved slightly south west to the other side of the "New Roundabout" then this would allow free flow of internal village traffic whilst increasing safety of the A38/A358 junction. This would seem to be the best option to meet the aims set out above.

To go further, the planned road network would need to be revisited. I would suggest that the road between the Alder King residential plot and the new school could be removed (or changed to bus only) and a new route could run around the north of the Alder King plot to allow access to the aforementioned commercial sites. This would further increase the cohesiveness of the community by not splitting the Alder King plot away from the rest of the village.

	<p>If these suggestions were put in place, the interior of the village would form a single community with easy and safe access to all areas by pedestrians, on bicycle or potentially using public transport. Air and noise pollution through the village would also be reduced.</p>	
Philip Bisatt - Railfuture	<p>A former Somerset County Council transport officer said to me that the scale of development proposed on green fields around Taunton simply cannot work without a major switch in travel behaviour from car to public transport. Having lived in Taunton for 40 years, I feel sure that this is correct. Unfortunately, what is now being proposed on the urban fringes seems unlikely to adequately address this.</p> <p>The proposed district centre for Monkton Heathfield is fundamentally in the wrong place. Urban centres develop at junctions of established routes, as can be seen by settlements such as Wellington, Wiveliscombe, and indeed, Taunton itself. They do not arise (as this one does) in the middle of what were previously fields!</p> <p>This is important not just in functional terms, but also to make sure that a place evolves which has the sense (as established places do) of having grown organically, rather than being a 'thing' that could have been dropped into the area from outer space. Travelling around (and after allowing for any 'bypass' roads) one should arrive 'naturally' at the centre of the community.</p> <p>The district centre should therefore be located more or less where the A3259, the A38, the lane from West Monkton village, and the road from Creech St Michael meet, and as far as possible, should front directly onto these roads. These are the historic routes - albeit re-shaped to a degree, to meet the demands of motor traffic - around which development should be structured. Interestingly, the established commercial use at Monkton Elm already occupies such a location: why develop a new district centre remote from this, instead of consolidating around it?</p> <p>As drawn, the proposals are more akin to what might be termed 'the Milton Keynes model', whereby the main routes pass around the centre, rather than through it. Milton Keynes may have virtues, but as an exemplar of how to design an area to support public transport, it most definitely is not. Applied to the design for Monkton Heathfield, such an approach will mean (amongst other things) that buses will not be able to serve the district centre without having to depart from their direct route, thereby slowing down the service and making it less attractive to users.</p> <p>This should be a major concern. Around the UK, there has been a widespread failure to design new Garden communities adequately for the needs of public transport (as identified by the organisation 'Transport for New Homes' - whose criticisms include the</p>	<p>The proposed school next to the A38 and the district centre should exchange places, or else the district centre should be located on the land to the west of the school.</p> <p>The existing roundabout on the A38, which destroys any place character, should be replaced with a smaller priority junction.</p>

	<p>development to date in Taunton). The result has been - and will continue to be, unless current plans are revised - high car dependency. There are key public policy imperatives (which should now be well-known) why this needs to change.</p> <p>Monkton Heathfield is actually quite a long way from the centre of Taunton, meaning that relatively more emphasis needs to be placed on bus travel rather than cycling as a sustainable means of getting to the town centre. (Cycling should, of course, be given a high priority for more local journeys).</p> <p>Given that the existing Relief Road is proposed to be extended to join the A38 further east, there is no reason why a district centre cannot front onto (a downgraded) A38 opposite Monkton Elm. The Upton urban extension in Northampton, often seen as an exemplar, has just such a centre, facing the dual carriageway A4500 - it is not located 'somewhere in the middle' of the new development.</p> <p>I do not believe that the development as proposed will work properly in sustainable transport terms. There should be a connected hierarchy of transport provision, whereby people can walk, or cycle, from their homes to the district centre, where they will then find the bus stops located if they wish to make a journey further afield, such as to the town centre or the railway station, and indeed (let's not forget) towards Bridgwater. The existing bus routes are primarily along the A38 and the A3259; the latter is especially important as it takes buses into the town centre from the north past the railway station (although bus deregulation, found in the UK for 34 years, but which exists virtually nowhere else, has left bus operators free not to serve railway stations).</p> <p>Instead, as designed, people in Monkton Heathfield will walk to the district centre only to find either that (a) there are no bus stops there, and they will have to walk further on, or (b) to pick them up, the bus service will need to meander through the development, often obstructed by parked or turning vehicles, providing a quality of journey that will not entice anyone with a car to leave it at home. Service 22 is one of the few commercially viable bus routes in the Taunton area; it would be bizarre if it were to be made slower and less direct for its existing users by having to trundle through Monkton Heathfield on new estate roads, instead of sticking to its current route on the A38.</p>	
Edwin Hughes	<p>Living within the existing development for four years now.</p> <p>Seems that landscaping is very low priority and has still not been completed.</p> <p>The pitches due to go by the A38 have still not been put in.</p> <p>Shops have been built opposite the school but still not occupied.</p>	<p>There should be penalties built into any contracts with builders to ensure that ancillary landscaping etc. is completed during and not after completion.</p>

	<p>Bus services have now been drastically reduced with the 2 and 2A Half hourly service being replaced by 12 hourly service Starting and finishing later than previous service.</p> <p>This is currently just a residential community with no service provision whatsoever other than the school. Leading high reliance on vehicle movements in and out. I hope these things will be rectified before any expansion is authorised and that the same mistakes will not be allowed to happen in any future development.</p>	<p>Transport needs and retail provision need to be the prime focus of any further development to ensure vehicle movements are minimised.</p> <p>There needs to be more focus on engendering community activity particular for older people.</p>
<p>Sue Wheatley</p>	<p>Why does Taunton need another bus and ride area? We currently have 2 park and ride schemes, where one is situated close by at J25 (M5). How financially viable is this 3rd scheme? The 2 current park and ride schemes have been under threat of closure and bailed out by the district council! What makes this one more viable? What evidence do you have that this scheme will be successful, cost effective, well utilised at all times and not at just peak times of the day. Are the existing schemes at full capacity at all times that we require a 3rd bus and ride facility to just connect north Bridgwater?! (14.1 in the design guide). How confident are you that local residents and those visiting the town will use the service. Bearing in mind that a number of shops are closing in the town centre. Living locally a lot of the buses that travel through the village are often empty and under utilised. It has also been reported that double decker buses are unable to follow the current bus route via Milton Hill due to the overgrown trees!</p> <p>Why is another bus gate required? The current bus services does not function 24hrs a day and are not fully utilised and the buses don't run much past 8pm. Once again a decent A road into Taunton is being closed off. The word rapid is mentioned in the design guide. Please tell me how this bus service is rapid. Once through the bus gate the bus will eventually meet the usual commuter traffic going in to Taunton! Perhaps these bus lanes would only be functional during certain hours of the day when the actual bus service runs! We don't operate a 24hr bus service why take perfectly good roads out of action 24/7?! Looking at the state of the current bus lane and the old A38 road in Monkton heathfield it doesn't take long for it to look untidy (weeds along the road and pavements).</p> <p>You mention green space and planting trees etc. What have will you put in place to ensure the area is maintained. Looking at the state of phase 1, very poor grass cutting, verges not maintained weeds grow between the roads and pavements and overgrown hedges and walk ways. How are you expected to maintain this when you can't maintain what we already have?!</p> <p>The plans do not yet state what traffic system will be in use at the walford junction cross. Will these proposals be put forward for consultation?</p> <p>The district area being built which will include shops etc. How confident are you that they will be fully utilised? In light of COVID 19 are the current plans fit for purpose?</p>	<p>Don't build another unsuccessful park ride schemes.</p> <p>Review the usage of the bus lanes. Think how this will effect local businesses bearing in mind recent COVID 19, how are these businesses coping, what effect this will have on their future. As stated above we don't operate a 24/7 bus service so we take a perfectly good road out of use?</p> <p>Ensure local council services are in place to maintain the green spaces because they are certainly not at present.</p> <p>Ensure the builders developing the land actually finish the sites.</p>

Paul Tuff	<p>Framework Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Relating to West of Greenway area. There already exists major delays from Mead Way onto the A3250, more cars resulting from any development would greatly exaggerate this issue. -Regarding access to Greenway from Mead Way, the sharp left, that one would have to take to enter the new proposed development, that corner is an accident waiting to happen. Lorries currently are unable to turn into Greenway without passing the turning and then reversing back. Any building related transport would have huge issues. Any cars from people living in the new development again would experience issues. Currently turning left, the car has to cross into the other lane to gain access to Greenway, with traffic there this junction is unusable. The footpath is narrow. Too narrow for a pushchair or wheelchair, dangerous. Crossing over to get round the corner? This is peoples lives. - Your Design Guidance waxes lyrical about walking and cycling around, no provision has been made for this. Clearly no one who contributed to the document has ever walked or cycled down Greenway and that's with current volumes. - The Design Guidance talks of 'sowing and generating green areas' , why then are you taking away green fields west of Greenway to build houses on them? - Everything is based around the car on all phases. In addition to basing your planning around cars, you have designed them such that electric cars are untenable. Your Design Guidance talks of green forward thinking. However there is no evidence for this on existing estates. 'Electrification' when my car is no where near my property? Where are the opportunities for renewable energy? It appears that homes are crammed in. Not designed to maximise their solar gain. Renewable heating? This needs to be included in the buildings now. Water collection to flush toilets? All great words in the Design Guidance but no evidence to back up the claims that will be provided. - Your phases are not joined up. Walking or cycling between is dangerous. Regarding West Greenway, families walking and cycling to school have a very dangerous journey to school, safer by car. There appears to be planning for play pitches, how will people safely access these? -You talk of the garden town status in the Design Guidance, why then destroy all the hedgerow in the Hartnell Farm development? The hedging that provided a pollution filter, offered noise reduction, removed wildlife. Garden design in existing estates, tiny, maximising houses rather than offering gardens seem the priority. - West of Greenway site is high land. Building on this land will increase flooding into the exiting homes along Greenway. It will have a detrimental impact on the look and feel of the area visually. It will hugely impact the vista of Hestercombe House given the height of the land. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build a ring road away from Monkton Heathfield. Better more efficient motoring. - Build homes with good renewable energy sources. Climate change, green incentives, better for the people and the planet. - Allow for larger gardens. As above. - Allow for bats. Keep a strip for them. Protect the bats home. - Keep existing hedgerows. An air detoxify-er, reduces noise and protect wildlife. - Access the West Greenfield site from the A3259. Protect the air and movement around existing homes and new homes. - Flatten the land on the West of Greenway site, install drainage and anti flooding devises. - Build bungalows to protect the feel and current heights of Greenway properties. Also to protect Hestacombe Houses views. - Ensure homes have large gardens. For the planet and their mental health. To protect the Taunton Garden Town status. - Think about widening footpaths around Mead Rd and Greenway, creating cycle paths to prevent accidents. and improve the health of the community. - Connect Monkton Heathfield's many estates with safe footpaths and cycle paths suitable for all the family. Increase fitness and mental health of residents. Create a green mentality. - Widen the road at the Mead Way Greenway junction. - Only build where the living conditions for the existing residents will be greatly enhanced and increased.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - West of Greenway is also a bat area. This requires darkness no street lighting, has this been considered? - The Design Guidance talks of retail opportunities. These were promised in front of the new school. Nothing. The community needs facilities and employment. Will the proposed facilities in phase 2 materialise? - Roads. Rat runs will appear through Monkton Heathfield. From East of Taunton into town was a straight road. Drivers will not use the proposed wiggly winding road, full of roundabouts. They will find a better way, creating rat runs. 	
Darren Scott-Dowsett	Can't see any suggestion of making areas for retail or entertainment/hospitality. And if there are can they be implanted sooner rather than later. Already with the amount of housing now in the area one small village store is not enough. Can a larger supermarket chain be persuaded to uptake a plot for A more suitable size store for development ? Will electric car charging be free to encourage the both uptake of EVs and to use the B&R? Has this been costed ? Why downgrade a perfectly useable road -A38- just for the sake of it? With the lack of a second motorway junction for Taunton the link to the Bridgwater junction and beyond from this side of Taunton with more and more houses, is of more importance.	
Stuart Parks Page 138	<p>I have read the consultation and I can see very little about the actual design of the houses. I appreciate that is a matter for the detailed planning consent but some overarching design principles could be useful. The recent developments at Monkton Heathfield are generally very poor, generic design.</p> <p>My other point is around transport, and specifically walking and cycling provision. The design plan includes a spine street and mentions that cycling and pedestrian facilities will be encouraged, but does not go into design standards</p>	<p>Why not encourage more contemporary design like the recent development at Firepool?</p> <p>I would suggest having a spine pedestrian and cycle route with clear separation of cycling and pedestrians, similar to the existing subway between Victoria Park and Leycroft Road. This should be the most direct access for residents between the school/local centre and homes, so that non-motorised transport is the most obvious option. There should be the highest standard of walking and cycling provision in any new development, not just shared paths with a bit of paint</p>
Martine Gough	MH2. I would just like to point out that my house and that of neighbours does exist. On the plans we are not shown!!! The shutting of the A38 is ridiculous, if there is an accident or road works now the traffic backs up through Thurloxtton/ North Pertherton or backs up in Bathpool/ Monkton Heathfield/ Taunton. The A38 is a busy main road at all times of the day but especially mornings and evenings. Who is going to pay to park up in a park and ride car park?? [author-final comment removed]	Leave the A38 where is. Then the roads and roundabout for the houses will be free moving .
Katie Inglis – Monkton Elm Garden Centre	Monkton Elm Garden Centre are concerned that the operational necessities of the Garden Centre have been ignored by the Monkton Heathfield Garden Community Concept Plan and Design Guide, which results in a proposal that will create serious negative transport and highways effects for customers and deliveries to and from their site. It is considered that this constitutes poor spatial planning and results in a strategy that serves to potentially decimate the business and turn its back on the most	The Garden Centre request that their access concerns are taken into consideration and reflected in amendments to the Framework Plans. Whilst the Garden Centre acknowledge that some change is required to the local road network, the combination of the removal/pedestrianisation of the section of the

	<p>important existing economic asset that the Garden Town area possesses. Further information and maps identifying the impact on the Garden Centre has been submitted via separate email.</p>	<p>A38 between Hardy’s Road Roundabout and the Bridgewater Road Roundabout and the “bus only” route on the A38 to the east of the site is extremely damaging to the business and should be removed. The reinstatement of the section of the A38 between Hardy’s Road and the Bridgewater Road, as a minimum, would enable the Garden Centre visitors and deliveries to the A38, without too much diversion from existing access arrangements. Therefore, it is requested that the Framework Plans are updated accordingly before being adopted.</p>
<p>Nigel and Annette Finch</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 139</p>	<p>We are concerned about:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The lack of a Noise Attenuation bund on the Western (Langaller) side of the realigned A38 Our house, and two other houses in Langaller, are Listed Buildings and cannot have double glazing. A noise attenuation bund is proposed on the Eastern side of the realigned A38 to protect residents in the new development from noise and they will benefit from double glazing. We argue strongly that the lack of a Noise Attenuation bund on the Western side is discriminatory. 2. The SUDS drainage area next to Langaller Manor Farm has been removed. Why has this been removed? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noise Attenuation bund A bund must be also built on the Western (Langaller) side of the realigned A38 Existing residents in Langaller, and especially those in Listed Buildings, should not be impacted by additional noise. 2. Removal of the SUDS area next to Langaller Manor Farm This SUDS area needs to be re-instated. With all the major new development and the increased risk of flooding, this important SUDS area was proposed after extensive planning in Monkton Heathfield Phase 1. It must not now be arbitrarily removed.
<p>Simon King – Alder King</p>	<p>I write on behalf of my clients Mr Nowell and Mr Meade-King who control land within the Policy SS1 allocation and is identified as the ‘Alder King Residential’ land north of the A38 and east of Doster’s Lane.</p> <p>We are generally very supportive of the proposals and acknowledge the need for a document of this nature to guide future planning applications and act as a material consideration in their determination. We are pleased to see the relocation of the secondary school south of the A38 onto the principal development area and the identification of residential land north of the A38; we do however have comments on the extent of the development area, which are described below. The comments below relate entirely to the ‘Alder King Residential’ parcel. The comments are provided in the order presented in the masterplan document:</p> <p>Section 2 About this Document. The first asterisk under paragraph 2.8 appears misleading as it only refers to the green necklace following the M5 corridor. From reading the rest of the document and concept plans it appears that the green necklace is intended to encompass the development area.</p>	

Section 9 Green Necklace. Under the banner 'the Green Necklace should' the two bullet points are not clearly expressed and should be re-worded.

The concept of the green necklace is understood and supported. We do however have concerns with the manner in which it is presented on both the framework and concept plans. In the first instance we recommend the deletion of the graphic notation 'open space/land constrained by bats'. It is not clear whether the notation is specific to that particular location; it is assumed not but it adds very little to the known intent of the green necklace. The document makes clear that the necklace can serve an open space function and the entirety of the northern edge of Taunton is to some degree constrained by bat activity from Hestercombe House. The ecology constraints plan attached demonstrates that the site is not subject to any heightened level of bat activity that justifies this notation.

We are concerned that the concept plan fails to maximise the potential of the 'Alder King Residential Land' and could place an unnecessary constraint on the efficiency of the land. The extent of the original allocation is shown on the framework diagram and envisaged development extending much further north. It is acknowledged that the green necklace north of the development could meet most of the green infrastructure needs arising from the development (public open space, allotments, SUDS etc). It is also acknowledged that the 'white haze' around the northern edge of the development parcel might afford a flexibility as to where the development boundary should be. However, there is no need or rationale to restrict development unnecessarily at this early stage.

In 2017 a pre-application enquiry submission was made that included a constraints plan and masterplan, which are enclosed with this consultation response for convenience. The masterplan shows a larger development area on the eastern field parcel that will still protect the integrity of the green necklace concept.

If the LPA is not willing to adjust the concept plan then it is strongly recommended that text is inserted into the document that affords flexibility to test the robustness of development boundaries at detailed design stage.

Section 13 Downgrading of the A38. We strongly support the intention to 'downgrade' the A38 which will undoubtedly help integrate the development parcels to the north with the principal MH2 area to the south. The section does read as somewhat focused on development to the south of the A38 rather than encompassing development to the north also. There are various minor changes that could be made to remedy this:

"13.4 The PRowS provided on site and to the north and south of the A38 site currently terminate at the A38 road. No pedestrian crossings are provided and a pedestrian connection between the northern and southern footpath network is broken as a crossing and is quite dangerous."

The fourth bullet point under positive interventions states that accesses should be restricted to a maximum (presumably not minimum as expressed) of two:

- "Access south from this route into the new development of MH2 can be delivered but should be restricted to a minimum maximum of two and exclude an access off south of Elm Monkton Garden Centre and Heathfield Gardens development."

- “The downgrading of the A38 will create the opportunity to deliver an attractive pedestrian and cycle route and will connect more safely with the existing network of PRoW and proposed footpath within the proposal site south of the road and the surrounding;”

There is then reference to the utilities easement along the ‘northern development boundary’. The easement runs along the southern edge of the A38 and not the northern development boundary of MH2.

- “Due to the utilities easement corridor along the northern development boundary southern edge of the A38 the housing proposed here will have limited direct connection to the downgraded A38 road. The easement will have to be landscaped to provide a green linear open space along the existing planting along the southern edge of the A38.”

The section drawings are also incorrect as these show the allocation site boundary on the south side of the A38 and there are no dwellings shown to the north. This is misleading to the public and appears to have been drafted by the promoters of the land to the south. In that sense it is not entirely clear by what is meant by:

- “The existing hedges and hedge trees framing the A38 corridor should be maintained and enhanced with new planting where gaps are present;”

Whilst there is no objection to this in principle, it is not clear what the design intention is for the development north of the A38; if the intention is that it should be shielded from view altogether it would be a limitation to providing an attractive and vibrant street scene to the downgraded route. Whilst we would not advocate the loss of any mature hedgerow, if there are gaps that present glimpses of development to the north then perhaps these should be celebrated?

We look forward to seeing the next iteration of the plans and documentation; please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries or require further information.

<p>Mark Besley</p>	<p>Why am I asked to provide reasons for my answers here ? this contradicts the comment above which asks for general comments and not answers???? Could you please reply with specific responses to my comments and not with a generic response - thank you. Why is the proposed bus gate on the 3259 not included in the consultation? - can you tell me when local businesses and residents were consulted on the bus gate ? - can you tell me what modelling on the effects of the bus gate were made at the time of the decision to install the bus gate? We have repeatedly been told that the bus gate is a legal requirement - can you show me exactly what documents make it a legal requirement? Why is the bus and ride located far from the heart of the development? Why are there no employment opportunities within the main development - all that will happen (as we have seen with MH1) is that the developers wont deliver the infrastructure and if they do it will be at the end of the build. Why is the road between the Langaller roundabout and Cricket Club roundabout not shown on the design map? Why is there consideration being given to forcing all through traffic through the centre</p>	<p>A bus gate should not be put on the 3259 - this will force traffic along unsuitable roads - the 3259 should be heavily traffic calmed with a weight restriction (not for local businesses) with the bus gate being located either on the junction of the A 38 or at Walford Cross at the start of the ERR. If the decision to put the bus gate on the 3259 goes ahead it will open SCC up to legal challenge as due process around the decision is unlikely to have been followed - no consultation was made with local businesses and residents and no analysis of the effects of the bus gate was made. The bus and ride should be integral to the proposal to get people using it - out of town bus and ride systems don't work as well - this will tie in with the declaration</p>
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	<p>of the development? Why are there not more small parks and squares throughout the development to fulfil the garden town ethos? Finally why are the roads in the area outside of the red development line?</p>	<p>of a climate emergency. People should be able to walk to work - putting the employment are in one block will result in it being delivered last if at all - the developers are in the business of building houses and not employment infrastructure. The road between the Langaller and Cricket Club roundabouts should be made a boulevard, heavily traffic calmed and access between MH1 and MH2 opened up - forcing traffic through the local centre will not create a pleasant environment for pedestrians. Putting most of the green area to the east of the ERR will make it less likely that it will be used and potentially make it dangerous - far better to put more small parks and squares throughout the development to create a pleasant living environment, re design the route of the ERR and reduce the green area between the ERR and the M5. The developers in MH 1 have increased the density of houses, not delivered the sports fields, not delivered any employment opportunities, not delivered the WRR, not delivered the shops and reduced the social housing allocation. What we have in MH2 is unattractive urban sprawl. There should be clear legally binding trigger points when non housing infrastructure has to be delivered.</p>
Jonathan Conibere	<p>Disturbed to see that provision is made for 'opportunity to deliver bus only route' on current but to be down-graded A38 to the 'east' of Monkton Elm area (ie in the direction of Bridgwater). It is important that this route is maintained for those who live in the Walford Cross area and beyond who need to drive to get access to residents on this part of the A38, to West Monkton in general (church/pub/village for example) , Monkton Elm etc. It is not appropriate or environmentally friendly to send such people on a large detour around the new relief road and then back on themselves to get to these areas.</p>	<p>Given the current A38 is a wide dual carriageway it would be relatively simple a low cost to use this current road to deliver a safe cycling route, car route (even if only narrow 30mph roads), and a bus lane (similar to plan being considered). This will ensure that local residents east of Walford Cross are not regularly travelling excessive distances to move around in their local area but will also allow for important commitments to public transport and cyclists to be reached.</p>
Emily Reilly	<p>My concern is for the ever decreasing space for the local wildlife. There is a proposed 'green necklace' which is great but it crosses many roads, including the Main A38.</p>	<p>I would propose a green belt through the middle if the development for wildlife and humans to enjoy. This would encourage people to take an interest in their environment and a space for animals to connect</p>

	<p>The local countryside is disappearing fast and forcing wildlife to move out, have less habitat to live and feed from and creating danger on the roads as animals are being forced to cross paths with human activity more often.</p> <p>You have a huge responsibility for implementing an environmentally supportive housing development. Uk wildlife has been proven to have decreased dramatically so please help support its growth.</p>	<p>across the necklace. Also as I have seen in other countries and other parts of the uk, an animal access bridge/tunnel that goes across the A38.</p>
<p>Jane Hennell – The Canal and River Trust</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 143</p>	<p>Thank you for consulting the Canal & River Trust (the Trust) in respect of the above document. We are the charity who look after and bring to life 2000 miles of canals & rivers. Within Somerset West and Taunton District we own and maintain the Bridgwater & Taunton Canal. Which runs to the south of this site.</p> <p>Our waterways contribute to the health and wellbeing of local communities and economies, creating attractive and connected places to live, work, volunteer and spend leisure time. These historic, natural and cultural assets form part of the strategic and local green-blue infrastructure network, linking urban and rural communities as well as habitats. By caring for our waterways and promoting their use we believe we can improve the wellbeing of our nation.</p> <p>The Bridgwater & Taunton Canal is as valued multi- functional green infrastructure asset within Taunton Garden Town. its towpath can play an increasingly important role as a sustainable, active travel route from Monkton Heathfield towards the town centre and to Creech St Michael. Improvements to the towpath to facilitate improved connectivity is mentioned within the Garden Town Design Guide and the Garden Town vision highlights the need to Green infrastructure corridors and improved sustainable transport along with increasing carbon neutrality.</p> <p>Theme 1 of the Garden Town Vision, ‘Growing our town greener’ includes linking up our watersides and requires the re-establishment of connections to green corridors and waterspaces.</p> <p>We are therefore very disappointed that this masterplan does not seize an obvious opportunity to comply with the Garden Town Vision and look to improve opportunities beyond the site and through the existing and proposed new development to improve sustainable linkages from the site to the town centre and to Creech St Michael by using the canal towpath.</p> <p>The lack of interaction with the canal and towpath within phase 1 of the Monkton Heathfield development has been noted as a missed opportunity by the County Council, Monkton Heathfield and Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council and by the Canal & River Trust. It is imperative that the Garden Town policies seek to ensure that this is remedied and that alter phases of the wider Monkton Heathfield development include linkages which can continue through earlier phases and improve their connectivity at the same time.</p> <p>Both Monkton Heathfield & Cheddon Fitzpaine and Creech St Michael Neighbourhood Plans identify the need for a high-quality comprehensive cycle network within the Neighbourhood Plan areas. The canal towpath is an existing traffic free, direct route to achieve this and so linkages should be created to it.</p>	
<p>Brendan Brighton</p>	<p>Design Guidance</p> <p>In order to be a Garden Town there need to be front gardens, thus retaining a green area to each property. No rear courtyard parking or parking areas, which will lead to "parking wars with neighbours". Sufficient parking for each dwelling should be provided at each property for number of</p>	

bedrooms, with on street parking being for "visitors" only, preferably on a grassed grid system. People want to be able to load/unload their children/shopping immediately outside their own property, they don't want to have to walk around the back or down the road, and, unfortunately, in the world we now live in it is vitally important that you have sight of your vehicle due to the amount of thefts/break ins! MH1 suffers a lot with potential thefts/break ins to vehicles. CCTV is easier to install to cover your driveway, whereas it goes out of focus/close detail if a car is parked down the road etc. It's important that MH2 is a Garden Town not Parking Town.

Good sized rear gardens to all dwellings should be provided for wellbeing.

Dwellings should not be characterless, as well as chimneys there should be many different stone finishes, as well as brick and render. Important that roads should have many different individually designed dwellings within them, not a run of same style as can be seen on MH1, as this will create a very different feel to the area.

It is very important that buildings, roads, district centre, footpaths/cycle paths are designed for ease use of visually impaired, disabled and elderly residents and well signposted.

I think that a 4 storey district centre would be too high, to sit comfortably within the surrounding country area, it should be a maximum of 3 stories, in order not to be more fitting to a town setting.

Retention of the existing A38 between the Langaller and Cricket roundabouts is vital. It needs to be downgraded, well traffic calmed, made visually attractive with extensive planting, have safe crossing points, cycle/footpaths on both sides of the road, 20mph, maybe reduce the width as this will be a road link for local traffic. Removal of the bunds would certainly improve the visual look to that area.

Rapid bus service will be good but will need to be affordable otherwise people will not use it. The existing park and ride at Henlade used to be very affordable between the hours of 10 and 4, so it paid to catch the park and ride bus rather than drive into town and pay for parking, but sadly since the price was increased it is cheaper to drive into town and park, which is not what should happen! For the cost reason, personally we never use the park and ride now whereas we always used to use it.

The area is at risk of becoming "bus gate MH" - no one wants to live somewhere where all commuting roads, apart from one, all have bus gates on them. As there is already a bus gate on Bridgwater Road, and one proposed for the A3259 close to Bawler Road, no further bus gates should be included until the completion of the build out of MH2 and proper traffic modelling can be done once the new ERR is taking the majority of the commuter/holiday/through traffic.

Existing roundabout will have to be upgraded and repositioned for the addition of the new ERR - suggest approaching local businesses such as Monkton Elm and Proctor Farm to sponsor this roundabout so that it is an attractive feature with colourful planting.

Flats should not be gateway buildings into the new development, they are never an attractive feature, as can be seen on MH1, they look out of place, and create real problems with parking on the road as residents do not use the rear parking areas but choose to park on the road backing up to the roundabout etc. All flats on MH2 should have Juliet balconies as well as a communal garden space in order to promote wellbeing.

Neither West Monkton or CSM have modern developments specifically for the elderly and it is very important that a sheltered housing scheme is part of MH2, as well as 10% of all properties should be bungalows, with a range of terraced, semi and detached.

All new dwellings should have an electric car charging power points, in view of the Governments plans for the UK to have electric cars only by 2030 I believe is the year. It is so much easier to install something like this at the time of the build, than at a later date and new purchasers would expect this to be a feature of their new Garden Town home. Additionally there should be charging points at the district centre, school, B&R and employment land.

Micro allotments sound a good idea but potentially could end up as very scruffy overgrown/unattended areas.

Are there going to be cycle paths connecting to the town centre, Nexus and railway station which is part of the Government's Garden Town ethos?

The B&R site should be softened with lots of trees planted in between parking bays, whereas hedges should be used around the perimeter (hedges should not be used within the car parking bays as this would give cover for thieves/damage to cars etc. Are there going to be toilet facilities at the B&R? Toilets are a very important, especially when travelling with children, or having travelled a distance in order to use the B&R. There should also be a closed in shelter with seating, for people waiting for the rapid bus.

School - I was very pleased to see the proposal for sensory & therapy rooms, warm water pool and medical space, as well as sensory gardens. It is so very important that less fortunate children are well catered for within the school and play areas, especially as there will be a percentage of affected children due to the build numbers for MH1, MH2 and surrounding areas, parents need local special facilities where their children can integrate more easily.

I am concerned about what could be the lack of drop-off points at the school, as realistically this is the way the majority of the children will arrive and depart from the school. Unfortunately, the reality of children walking to and from is a distant dream, although scooters (so appropriate safe keeping would be required) do appear to be one of the latest ways to get to school! Personally I still would like to see the main entrance/staff parking into the school from what will be the downgraded A38, which will presumably have a 30 mph, rather than from inside the development. School times are chaotic with parking on all nearby roads as can be witnessed at West Monkton and CSM schools and this is one time when it would be possible to site the entrance to the school away from new estate roads.

Energy - solar panels on every property are really beneficial, but it's important that the energy gained is firstly extracted for that dwelling's use, not as is the case on MH1 where it all goes to the national grid with a very low financial rate/return for the owners.

Trees - good size trees, not the usual whips, need to be planted in order to soften the area quicker, and a watering programme by the builder needs to be instigated in order for the trees to survive. Woodlands should have large percentage of native British trees, and it would be nice to see some strategically sited specimen trees such as oak, which will make a real focal point in years to come. Willow trees near the stream/in the flood plain areas would make lovely features as well.

Specific comments on West Of Greenway

<p>Jayne Whaley</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 146</p>	<p>SS1 Policy area. West of Greenway.</p> <p>I do not agree with the residential development to the west of Greenway.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is an emphasis on blending new development with old. I do not see that this has been achieved particularly well in this area so far and fail to see how this would be any different. 2. The plans do not take into account the gardens that currently extend out into this area..indeed 2 houses are already being built in one of these areas. 3. Most importantly the access is not adequate. I have witnessed several delivery lorries recently being unable to make the sharp left turn from Mead Way onto Greenway. In order to deliver they have had to drive part way up Greenway and then reverse back down into Greenway. With the increased traffic that such a development would result in, I think that this situation would not be sustainable and indeed at times potentially dangerous, especially considering the speed that some people travel up Greenway and around that bend. 4. The designated residential area is also some distance from the services that are going to support it in terms of shops and new school etc. 	<p>I would suggest that the new housing area should be to the east of the new A38 relief road.</p>
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Specific comments on Land South of Manor Farm, Langaller

<p>Stephanie Essex</p>	<p>Regarding Langallor Manor Farm site (nb: not Langallor Farm):</p> <p>Plans with industry are not a good fit with the farm</p> <p>Industry not suited to the site</p> <p>Restoring of the farmhouse, outbuildings and barns would be far more suitable</p> <p>Addition of Residential housing on earmarked industry site would be better fit and greatly needed</p> <p>Industry totally unsuitable to be so close to the farmhouse</p>	<p>Major changes to plan needed:</p> <p>Restoration of once beautiful Langallor manor farmhouse</p> <p>Conversion of outbuildings and barns to make the listed farmhouse the focal point of the site</p> <p>This area desperately needs residential housing so conversion of outbuildings and barns would be far more suitable</p> <p>Current plans - ridiculous to have green necklace so close to industry, who will want to walk there?</p> <p>Plans need to coordinate with the listed farmhouse and reflect its restoration</p>
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GTH	<p>Please refer to correspondence sent for the attention of Mr A Penna on 5th June 2020 on behalf of our client, for a full response to be considered as part of this consultation relating to Manor Farm and the land to the south.</p> <p>Key comments relating to the Framework Plan include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The proposed employment area is likely to generate longer journeys, higher traffic flows and make sustainable modes of travel less desirable. -The proposed siting of the employment uses would become out of reach of the rest of Taunton, with phase 1 of Monkton Heathfield only just within 800m which is considered to be the benchmark for a walkable neighbourhood. -The employment uses also have particular activities associated with them, and the relationship between these and the adjacent green wedge and green necklace will be stark with a lack of natural surveillance outside working hours. - Other than the immediate land of Manor Farm indicated as employment use, the remainder of our client's land is indicated as a substantial part of the 'Green Necklace' buffer to the M5 motorway to provide 'significant' recreational opportunities. Noting the significance of its delivery, there has been no direct engagement with our client to ensure the proposals are realistic and deliverable, especially as there is a concern that other areas will benefit from building at higher densities due to the extent of greenspace proposed. -Overall we admire the ambitions set out within the recently consulted Design Guidance and Masterplan Framework (DGMF), and the Framework Plan to support the delivery of a garden community to complement the development carried out to date and we hope that our points in our correspondence relating to transport, design, sustainable development and mixed use potential are constructive to help towards achieving this. -We can confirm that our client is willing to consider the provision of strategic green space, however, the land in their ownership is also suitable for some residential development. In particular, a well designed residential development would offer an enhanced setting for the Listed farmhouse than a commercial business park as currently proposed. -It is noted that our client's involvement is critical to the successful delivery of this key strategic allocation to ensure sufficient public open space provision is secured. If these 	<p>Please refer to submitted correspondence as detailed above.</p> <p>We suggest that residential development on our client's land be considered further in order to create a truly mixed use community for the future to complement the more sensitive landscape setting of the site in contrast to the larger office blocks.</p> <p>In light of the points raised in the correspondence to Mr A Penna on 5th June 2020, we would be happy to discuss these points in greater detail to help ensure the aspirations set out in the DGMF and Framework Plan are fulfilled.</p>
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	<p>significant areas of public open space cannot be secured, it would undermine the delivery of the wider strategic allocation as well as the Council's Garden Town Vision. This highlights the importance of joint working with our client to help ensure a comprehensive and deliverable masterplan is developed.</p>	
<p>William Thorpe</p>	<p>It there are some valuable character buildings, that reflect the true historic character of the area in and around the "langaller farm area". And these would be eclipsed by the proposed industrial (employment) areas proposed in that area.</p>	<p>It would be far better to continue residential areas northwards from "land south of the manor farm" up towards the monkton phase 2 development. Creating a familiar link for commuters and school children to access the proposed facilities there.</p> <p>This would result in residential use of land around listed buildings, which will uplift the character of the area immeasurably.</p> <p>As planned residents of "land south of the manor farm" will be forced either through convoluted streets of Phase 1, along A38 or through proposed industrial. They will no doubt drive instead, faced with these poor active transport choices.</p> <p>A traffic free central boulevard could be created that links areas of residential development running through entire length of Phase 1 and Phase 2, enjoying character of listed buildings, and green areas, and culminate in green necklace around school.</p> <p>Case studies have shown that if an off road route is provided for active transport that is pleasant, and uninterrupted it will be used beyond modelled expectations. For example Bristol > Bath cycle way.</p>

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Executive – 15 September 2021

Monkton Heathfield: Land South of Manor Farm, Langaller – Masterplan and Development Guide

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Member Mike Rigby

Report Author: Simon Fox, Major Projects Officer (Planning)

1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update and seek direction from Members on the Masterplan and Development Guide draft for the area known as Land South of Manor Farm, Langaller.
- 1.2 At the Executive Meeting of 20 January 2020 Members recommended that:
 - 1) The draft Masterplan and Development Guide be published for stakeholder and statutory consultation; and
 - 2) That, subject to there being no issues raised requiring substantive changes during the consultation, the Head of Strategy and the Portfolio Holder for Planning be authorised to approve the document for Development Management decision making and to inform the guide pre-application discussions with prospective developers and landowners.
- 1.3 This report sets out what has happened since January 2020 and appraises the merits of progressing the adoption of the documents.
- 1.1 Several considerations now challenge the merit of proceeding with approval, these considerations include:
 - (a) the status of the documents can only be Guidance not Supplementary Planning Guidance;
 - (b) the length of time which has passed since January 2020 (the Exec decision) with no progression and the work now needed to assess, discuss and decide a way forward on the comments received during the consultation is significant;
 - (c) the consultation was only conducted informally with limited stakeholders and so may not have wider public buy-in;
 - (d) the site is in multiple ownerships which presents further difficulties and there is no prospect of an application until Monkton Heathfield Phase 2 is substantially progressed (application expected late September 2021); and
 - (e) the plethora of new national and local policy/guidance in place which would need to be reflected in the guidance.
- 1.2 Allied to this, current SWT officers are mindful that now moving to approve documents that may not reflect current policy/guidance may prejudice negotiations through the Development Management decision making process.

2 Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that:

- (a) Having reassessed the situation and taken into account the comments received to the consultation and in the light of national guidance, that the Council do not proceed to formally approve the Masterplan and Development Guide to inform pre-application discussions.

3 Risk Assessment (if appropriate)

3.1 No specific risk but utilising staff resource on the progression of a Masterplan to help inform future development on this parcel of land may result in less resource being available to progress the Monkton Heathfield Phase 2 application which would in itself prejudice the bringing forward housing, affordable housing and the school in the required timescales.

4 Background and Full details of the Report

4.1 This report seeks to update Members on the Land South of Manor Farm, Langaller Masterplan and Development Guide, the site forming part of the wider Monkton Heathfield allocation under Policy SS1 of the Core Strategy.

4.2 At the Executive Meeting of 20 January 2020 Members recommended that:

- 1) The draft Masterplan and Development Guide be published for stakeholder and statutory consultation; and
- 2) That, subject to there being no issues raised requiring substantive changes during the consultation, the Head of Strategy and the Portfolio Holder for Planning be authorised to approve the document for Development Management decision making and to inform the guide pre-application discussions with prospective developers and landowners.

4.3 The original report (and appendices) is appended (Appendices 1-5). This report set out the rationale for progressing specific documents to guide development at the Land South of Manor Farm, Langaller part of the wider Monkton Heathfield allocation. Policy SS1 allocates land in the Monkton Heathfield area for the development of 4500 new homes, employment areas, schools, community facilities open space and green infrastructure, a bus and ride facility, District Centre, together with new roads, cycleways and bus routes.

4.4 The majority of the area covered by this Masterplan was part of the original outline application approved for Phase 1, although there are other parcels included without any consent and under the control of third parties. Indeed Members will be aware that the Monkton Heathfield Policy SS1 allocation extends over a number of sites such as the principal Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas, plus Aginhills, West of Greenway, Hartnells, Prockters Farm, and the land promoted by Alder King at land north of the A38 and east of Doster's Lane.

4.5 These sites are at various stages in the planning process, from no application submitted to date, through to full occupation. Policy SS1 will however not deliver the 4500 homes envisaged for the whole Monkton Heathfield Policy SS1 area. This is largely as a result of lower density development than was anticipated when the policy was adopted, at a time when national minimum density standards were in place.

4.6 The former TDBC Scrutiny Committee considered the implications of this and other changes to SS1 brought about by changes in National policy and the development of the first phases of the MH development area in January 2019. The Councils previously

published Employment Land Study (November 2018) identified that overall there was a surplus of identified employment land, but also highlighted that there is an ongoing demand for smaller scale employment sites aimed at the local market. The Council is about to publish an updated Employment Needs Assessment and so the implications of this also need be reflected.

- 4.7 In order to address this likely shortfall in housing delivery at Monkton Heathfield, and delivery issues around employment land, TDBC resolved to release some of the Employment land, South of Manor Farm, Langaller for residential use including affordable housing and the delivery of significant areas for green infrastructure.
- 4.8 It was this decision that prompted the production of the Masterplan and Development Guide subject to the January 2020 Executive Report.
- 4.9 This report therefore seeks to update Members on what has happened since the recommendation to undertake stakeholder and statutory consultation.
- 4.10 The documents were published for stakeholder and statutory consultation circa 11 May 2020 until 5 June 2020. The consultation was hosted on the website of the appointed Architectural Practice, Thrive Architects, whom had worked with SWT to produce the documents. Whilst not a particular problem, it was also the case that a password was required to access the material. This means it was not accessible to the general public. The resolution did not state public consultation was expressly to be undertaken, merely stating stakeholder and statutory consultation but this is questioned as to why you would wish to purposely inhabit public consultation at that stage?
- 4.11 The website also advised interested parties could email the Case Officer direct. As that Officer has now left the authority one cannot be certain that all comments are currently available for review and assessment.
- 4.12 A number of representations were received from those forwarded the password and these comments have been recently sourced from Thrive Architects. There were also some crossover comments made with regard this site as part of the consultation held later in June and into July on the Phase 2 Masterplan and Design Guidance, this was subject to its own Executive report and consultation process through Citizen Space. These comments are appended (Appendix 6).
- 4.13 It is understood progress with the Development Guide and Masterplan was delayed as the development Consortium of Persimmon and Redrow suggested they would not be bringing forward this parcel until their Monkton Heathfield Phase 2 application had been submitted and substantially progressed to determination. This was to avoid complications regarding the cumulative impacts of traffic, a resolution over the quantum and distribution of employment land and the fact no survey work had commenced to initiate the submission of an application. At that time, the latter end of 2020, officers were being informed that the Monkton Heathfield Phase 2 application was just a few months away and likely to be submitted in February 2021.
- 4.14 Officers are conscious that the approved document cannot be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document and therefore its status and the weight attributable to it would always be questionable, however the process that has been undertaken is still valuable to officers. Indeed the master planning work and consultation has identified a number of key issues that would help officers advise any prospective applicant through a future pre-application process.

- 4.15 There is clearly still the option of assessing the consultations responses and updating the documents accordingly with a view to approving as per the original recommendation but increasingly that looks to be less attractive as an option.
- 4.16 It is worth acknowledging that simply assessing the consultation responses and updating the documents only provides a narrow opportunity for generally updating the documents and neglects an opportunity or onus to reflect the plethora of policy and real world changes that have occurred since late 2019 when the documents were being produced to progress to stakeholder and statutory consultation. It is the view of officers that the documents would require a significant overhaul to reflect the current policy aspirations and declarations of SWT.
- 4.17 In this regard it is noted:
- a. SWT declared a climate emergency in February 2019 and adopted the Somerset Climate Change Emergency Strategy and approved its own Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Action Plan in October 2020
 - b. SWT adopted an Interim Guidance Statement on Planning for the Climate Emergency 'Climate Positive Planning' in February 2021
 - c. SWT published the Taunton Design Charter and Checklist
 - d. SWT is currently undertaking its final public consultation on its Districtwide Design Guide and its Public Realm Guide for Taunton, the former including a requirement for referral to a Quality Review Panel
 - e. SWT set out its aspirations for Taunton Garden Town 2040
 - f. The impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic on transport planning and placemaking
 - g. Publication by Government of the 'Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission's report 'Living with Beauty' report, January 2020
 - h. The introduction, by Government, of the National Model Design Code, June 2021
 - i. Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework to reflect design aspirations
 - j. SCC progressing a Bus Service Improvement Plan, due October 2021
 - k. 'Decarbonising transport: A better greener Britain' plan published by Government July 2021
 - l. SCC progressing an update to their Estates Road guidance aka The Red Book
- 4.18 In so many words officers are of the opinion that approving the Development Guide and Masterplan now may actually hinder the development management planning application process and may prejudice the quality and outcomes the scheme may otherwise be held to deliver. Many of the newer pieces of policy/guidance above have usurped the SWT/Thrive Masterplan in terms of setting out a higher standard.
- 4.19 Officers would wish to reassure Members that curtailing the progression of these documents does not leave a policy vacuum that undermines SWT's negotiation position as and when applications in the Monkton Heathfield area are submitted. Indeed the

starting point in determining all future application within the Monkton Heathfield area is the Development Plan unless material considerations dictate otherwise. The policy initiatives and directives listed a-l above, inclusive of the work done so far with the Development Guide and Masterplan, plus the outline consent for Phase 1 are material considerations to which the decision-maker may apply weight. Officers may choose to give weight to more recent policy/guidance in light of the fact the Core Strategy Policy SS1 was examined some 10 years ago and the policy reflects placemaking and transport theory of that time. The amount of weight to be given to any such initiative or directive is for the decision-maker to assess and justify. It is against this backdrop that officers have considered their recommendation to Members.

- 4.20 Members should also be aware one of the substantive issues at Phase 1 has been related to the adoption of Public Open Space, Play Areas and the provision of Playing Pitches. Moving forward as a Garden Community one of the challenges with this parcel, inclusive of residential and employment and recreational uses will be to ensure Stewardship arrangements are clear, robust and deliver the type of environment desirable within the Garden Town. To this end, as the issue is wider than just Monkton Heathfield, work is being undertaken to draw up Stewardship arrangements and a delivery plan for the Garden Communities. This work will feed into the Development Management and section 106 negotiations.

5 Links to Corporate Strategy

- 5.1 The draft Masterplan and Development Guide sought to deliver development which meets several objectives of the Corporate Strategy.
- 5.2 If Members agree to not proceed with approval, then one can be mindful of the new and existing districtwide policy and guidance that addresses Climate Change and sustainability and the recent national and local drive to achieve high quality design and green travel.

6 Finance / Resource Implications

- 6.1 Any budget envisaged for the updating and progression these Plans and Guidance documents will now no longer be required.

7 Legal Implications (if any)

- 7.1 None.

8 Climate and Sustainability Implications (if any)

- 8.1 The climate emergency, and SWT's response to it, will not be hampered by not progressing the approval process. The Monkton Heathfield allocation could not have been held to a higher standard than is now laid out for the whole of Taunton via the policy/guidance already discussed.
- 8.2 More generally, the SS1/MH1/Land South of Manor Farm sites lie within the Garden Town, in a generally sustainable location with access to existing and proposed public transport routes including a proposed new bus and ride facility. It will include new footpath/cycleway networks and new facilities like shops and schools and community buildings, all of which help to minimise the need to travel by private car. The location of land for new businesses, next to new homes offers the opportunity for people to live and work close by.

9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications (if any)

9.1 None.

10 Equality and Diversity Implications (if any)

10.1 The Core Strategy is underpinned by an Equalities Impact Assessment.

11 Social Value Implications (if any)

11.1 None

12 Partnership Implications (if any)

12.1 None.

13 Health and Wellbeing Implications (if any)

13.1 The site will deliver green open spaces and parks, enhanced public spaces, as well as additional opportunities to safely walk or cycle in order to encourage active and healthy lifestyles.

14 Asset Management Implications (if any)

1.4 The only implications may arise out of the Stewardship work in terms of the Council's approach to adoption.

15 Data Protection Implications (if any)

15.1 None.

16 Consultation Implications (if any)

16.1 The Parish Councils and other stakeholders and statutory consultees have been engaged in the preparation of the draft Plans.

16.2 The two Parish Councils, Creech St Michael and West Monkton have formed a Joint Working Panel to review the plans and documents for the SS1 and MH2 areas.

16.3 Officers will undertake to meet with the Joint Working Panel throughout the planning application process to update and inform.

17 Scrutiny Comments / Recommendation(s) (if any)

17.1 None

Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees –**
- **Cabinet/Executive –**
- **Full Council –**

Reporting Frequency: **Once only**

List of Appendices (delete if not applicable)

Appendix 1	Executive Report – January 2020
Appendix 2	Land South of Manor Farm, Langaller - Site Location Plan
Appendix 3	Draft Masterplan and Development Guide – Part 2
Appendix 4	Draft SS1 Policy Area Masterplan
Appendix 5	Draft MH2 Concept Plan
Appendix 5	Summary of Consultation Responses

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APPENDIX 1-5 can be viewed via this link - [Decision - Monkton Heathfield: Land south of Manor Farm, Langaller, Masterplan Framework and emerging SS1 Concept Masterplan - Modern Council \(somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk\)](#)

APPENDIX 6 – The consultation comments have been dropped into a table or in the case of the reps from WMPC and Greenslade Taylor Hunt are attached in full.

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Executive – 28 January 2020

Land South of Manor Farm, Langaller, Masterplan and Development Guide

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Member Mike Rigby

Report Author: Andrew Penna, Garden Town Coordinator

1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The Council are committed to preparing Development Guides and Masterplans for key development sites in the Garden Town to ensure that new development is of a high design quality and is comprehensively delivered.
- 1.2 The Land South of Manor Farm, Langaller is part of the Monkton Heathfield development area, allocated in the Core Strategy, Policy SS1. The former TDBC resolved that the area, which was identified wholly for employment development in the Core Strategy, could be part developed for housing to address the likely shortfall in housing numbers in the Monkton Heathfield policy area and, guarantee delivery of the employment area.
- 1.3 The planned development will deliver new housing including affordable housing contributing to the trajectory and supply in the town. New local employment areas will be brought forward, together with open space. Significant areas for tree planting are also identified.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that:
 - (a) The draft Masterplan and Development Guide be published for stakeholder and statutory consultation; and
 - (b) That, subject to there being no issues raised requiring substantive changes during the consultation, the Head Strategy and the Portfolio Holder for Planning be authorised to approve the document for Development Management decision making and to inform and guide pre-application discussions with prospective developers and landowners.

3 Risk Assessment (if appropriate)

- 3.1 No specific risk but failure to bring forward housing could put at risk housing and affordable housing.

4 Background and Full details of the Report

- 4.1 The Council are committed to preparing Development Guides and Masterplans for key development sites in the Garden Town to ensure that new development is of a high design quality and is comprehensively delivered.
- 4.2 The South of Manor Farm Langaller Land was identified for employment development through the former Taunton Deane Local Plan, the Core Strategy and a Development Guide for the Monkton Heathfield (phase 1) prepared in 2004. The employment land is identified in the Core Strategy, Policy SS1 and reflected in the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP) adopted in 2016.
- 4.3 The site is shown on the Plan at Appendix A.
- 4.4 The northern fields (10ha) were granted planning permission in 2006 for B1, B2 and B8 development as part of the Outline Planning permission for MH1. The main access roundabouts were constructed as part of the Eastern Relief Road (A38). Despite this the land has not come forward for commercial development.
- 4.5 The remaining southern fields, 10 ha, remain allocated, but undeveloped for employment development.
- 4.6 Policy SS1 will not deliver 4500 homes envisaged for the whole Monkton Heathfield policy area. This is largely as a result of lower density development than was anticipated when the policy was adopted, at a time when national minimum density standards were in place.
- 4.7 The former TDBC Scrutiny Committee considered the implications of this and other changes to SS1 brought about by changes in National policy and the development of the first phases of the MH development area in January 2019. The Councils previously published Employment Land Study (November 2018) identified that overall there is a surplus of identified employment land, but also highlighted that there is an ongoing demand for smaller scale employment sites aimed at the local market.
- 4.8 In order to address this likely shortfall in housing delivery at Monkton Heathfield, and delivery issues around employment land, TDBC resolved to release some of the Employment land, south of Manor Farm Langaller for residential use including affordable housing and the delivery of significant areas for green infrastructure.
- 4.9 The South of Manor Farm land at Langaller offers the opportunity to deliver additional housing within the SS1 Policy area, whilst securing the delivery of the employment land. The TDBC Scrutiny Committee resolved in January 2019 to support these principles, including preparation of a Masterplan and Development/Design Guide.
- 4.10 The draft document has been prepared by Thrive Urban Design consultants on behalf of the Council.
- 4.11 The draft document sets out a comprehensive development and design guide based on the Council's adopted Development Plan policies, the Garden Town Vision and the recently approved Garden Town Design Charter and Checklist.

- 4.12 The development of the land fits closely with a number of key themes from the Corporate Strategy (see below)
- 4.13 The land is almost wholly owned and/or controlled by housebuilders and an employment land specialist developer, allowing for the area to be delivered comprehensively. The developers are committed to delivering the employment land, with a focus on smaller business units for the local market, in tandem with phased delivery of the housing area. This will be secured through a S106 Agreement to be secured at planning application stage.
- 4.14 The development will deliver 250-300 new homes, with 25% of those affordable, in line with adopted policies.
- 4.15 Significant areas of green infrastructure will be delivered including tree planting as part of the 'Green Necklace' envisaged for the MH area in the Core Strategy. The Green Wedge, put in place to keep the open corridor along the M5 and the perception of openness between Monkton Heathfield and Creech St Michael will be maintained.
- 4.16 A future application will be subject to Design Review to provide assurance that the scheme delivers high quality development in line with our Garden Town aspirations.
- 4.17 The local community have been engaged in the preparation of the Guide, together with key stakeholders like County Council Highways and the developers.
- 4.18 The document is formed of three Sections in order to be easily accessible online and to make it more user-friendly.
- 4.19 Part one sets out the background, planning policies, information on the Garden Town and sustainability, including Climate change, together the requirements for a future application.
- 4.20 Part 2, set out as Appendix B, sets out site context appraisal, context and the Draft Masterplan.
- 4.21 Part 3 sets out Masterplan detail and Design Guidance. Parts 1 and 3 can be accessed from the link below:
- [Part One](#) and [Part Three](#)
- 4.22 A draft Concept Masterplan for the remainder of the SS1 policy area, including the second phase of Monkton Heathfield – 1500 homes and related infrastructure is under preparation. First drafts of both are set out as appendices C and D.
- 4.23 The accompanying Design Guidance and detailed Masterplans for SS1/MH2 will follow in February/March 2020. Both will be subject to ongoing consultation with local communities and the Developer Consortium during preparation.
- 4.24 Following Executive it is proposed to carry out further stakeholder and statutory consultation on the South of Manor Farm document, in particular with the two Parish Councils, before the Masterplan and Development Guide is approved for Development Management decision making.

5 Links to Corporate Strategy

- 5.1 The Guide seeks to deliver development which meets a number of objectives of the Corporate Strategy.
- 5.2 Tree planting and measures like grey water recycling and provision of electric charging points in new homes will help to address climate change. The Guide provides a clear vision and delivery plan for a key site in the Taunton Garden Town. The development of the site will ensure the provision of adequate and affordable employment land to meet different business needs, with a focus on the local market.
- 5.3 The site will deliver green open spaces and parks, enhanced public spaces, as well as additional opportunities to safely walk or cycle in order to encourage active and healthy lifestyles. The development of the site will increase the number of affordable and social homes in Taunton.

6 Finance / Resource Implications

- 6.1 The budget for the preparation of the Masterplan and Guide for Manor Farm and the preparation of the Masterplan and Guide for the next phase of the Monkton Heathfield development are in place. The project is overseen by the Garden Town coordinator and the Head of Strategy.

7 Legal Implications (if any)

- 7.1 None.

8 Climate and Sustainability Implications (if any)

- 8.1 The climate emergency, and our response to it, is a strong theme running throughout the document. The proposed development aims to mitigate the climate emergency and adapt to its effects. It covers issues including reducing carbon emissions through walking, cycling and public transport, the creation of new open spaces and recreation areas, opportunities for tree planting and new allotments, the energy efficiency of buildings, opportunities for renewable energy and ensuring provision of electric charging points, biodiversity enhancements, tree planting and flood risk/sustainable drainage.
- 8.2 Detailed guidance is provided on the sustainability of proposed new homes through good design and best practice construction methods.
- 8.3 More generally, the site lies within the Garden Town, in a sustainable location with access to public transport and footpath/cycleway networks and nearby local facilities like shops and schools, all of which help to minimise the need to travel by private car. The location of new businesses, focused on the local employment market, next to new homes offers the opportunity for people to live and work close by.

9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications (if any)

- 9.1 None.

10 Equality and Diversity Implications (if any)

10.1 The Core Strategy is underpinned by an Equalities Impact Assessment.

11 Social Value Implications (if any)

11.1 None

12 Partnership Implications (if any)

12.1 None.

13 Health and Wellbeing Implications (if any)

13.1 The site will deliver green open spaces and parks, enhanced public spaces, as well as additional opportunities to safely walk or cycle in order to encourage active and healthy lifestyles.

14 Asset Management Implications (if any)

14.1 None.

15 Data Protection Implications (if any)

15.1 None.

16 Consultation Implications (if any)

16.1 The local community have been engaged in the preparation of the Guide, together with key stakeholders like County Council Highways and the developers.

16.2 The two Parish Councils, Creech St Michael and West Monkton have formed a Joint working Panel to review the document and participate in the preparation of the SS1 and MH2 Masterplans.

17 Scrutiny Comments / Recommendation(s) (if any)

17.1 None

Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees – No**
- **Cabinet/Executive – Yes**
- **Full Council – No**

Reporting Frequency: **Once only**

List of Appendices (delete if not applicable)

Appendix A	Land South of Manor Farm, Langaller: Site Location Plan
Appendix B	Draft Masterplan and Development Guide, Part 2
Appendix C	Draft SS1 Policy area Masterplan
Appendix D	Draft MH2 Concept Plan

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APPENDIX A: SITE LOCATION PLAN





Land South of Manor Farm Langaller

DESIGN GUIDANCE
and
MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

Part 2:

Context Appraisal, Concept and Masterplan

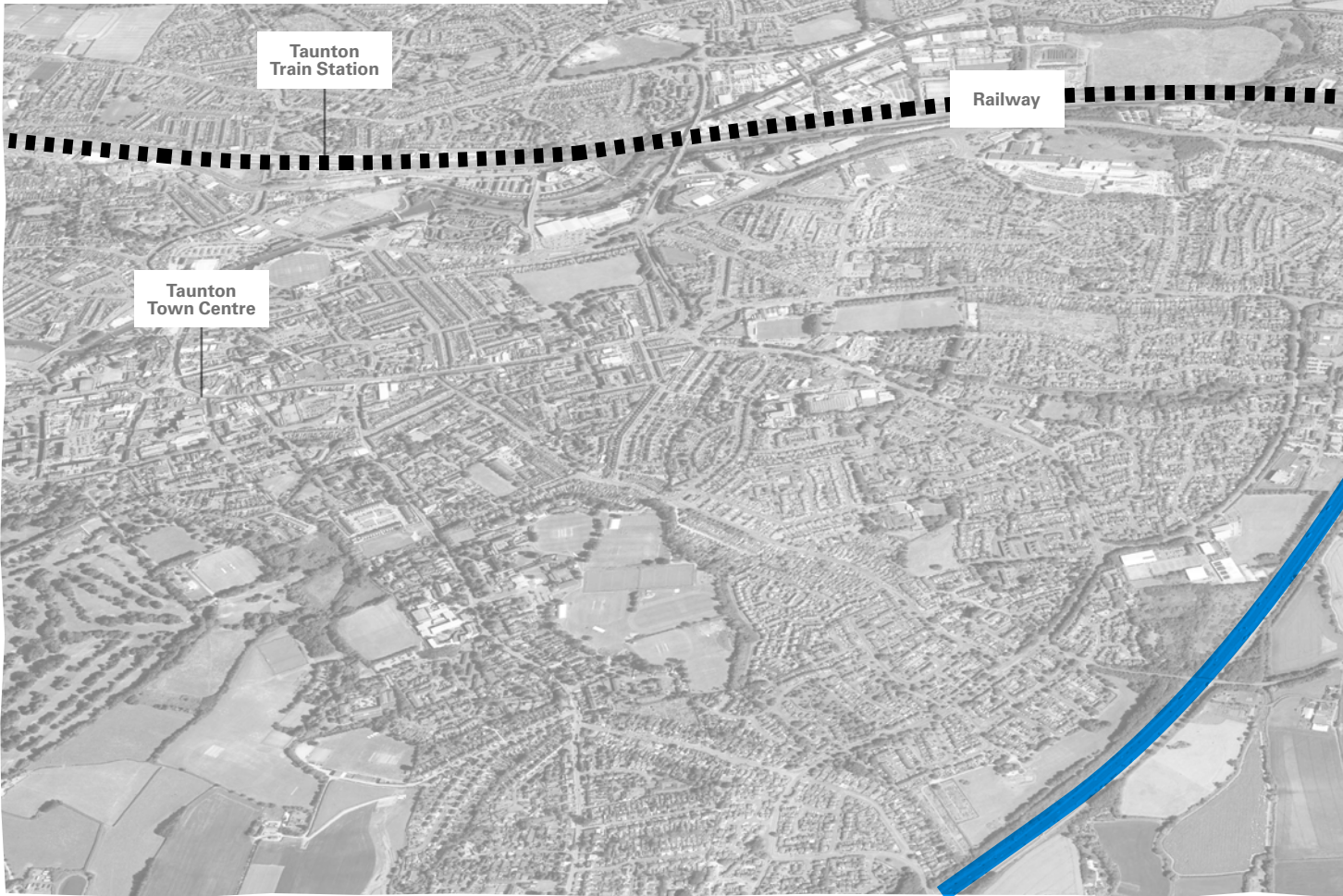
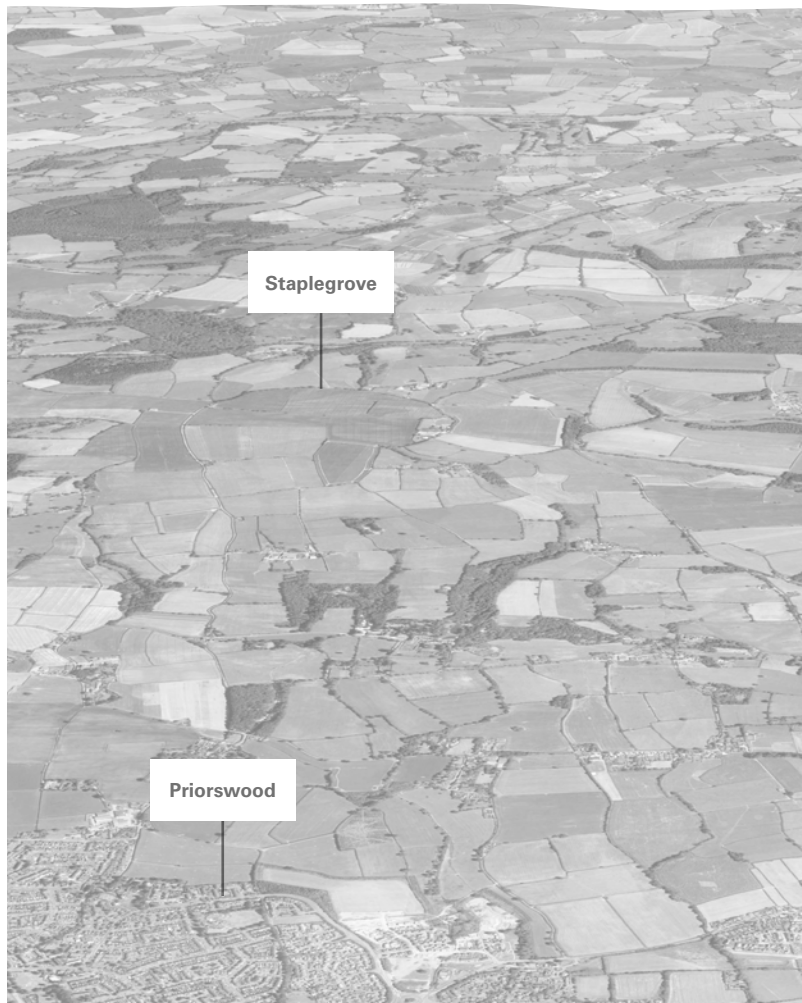
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December 2019

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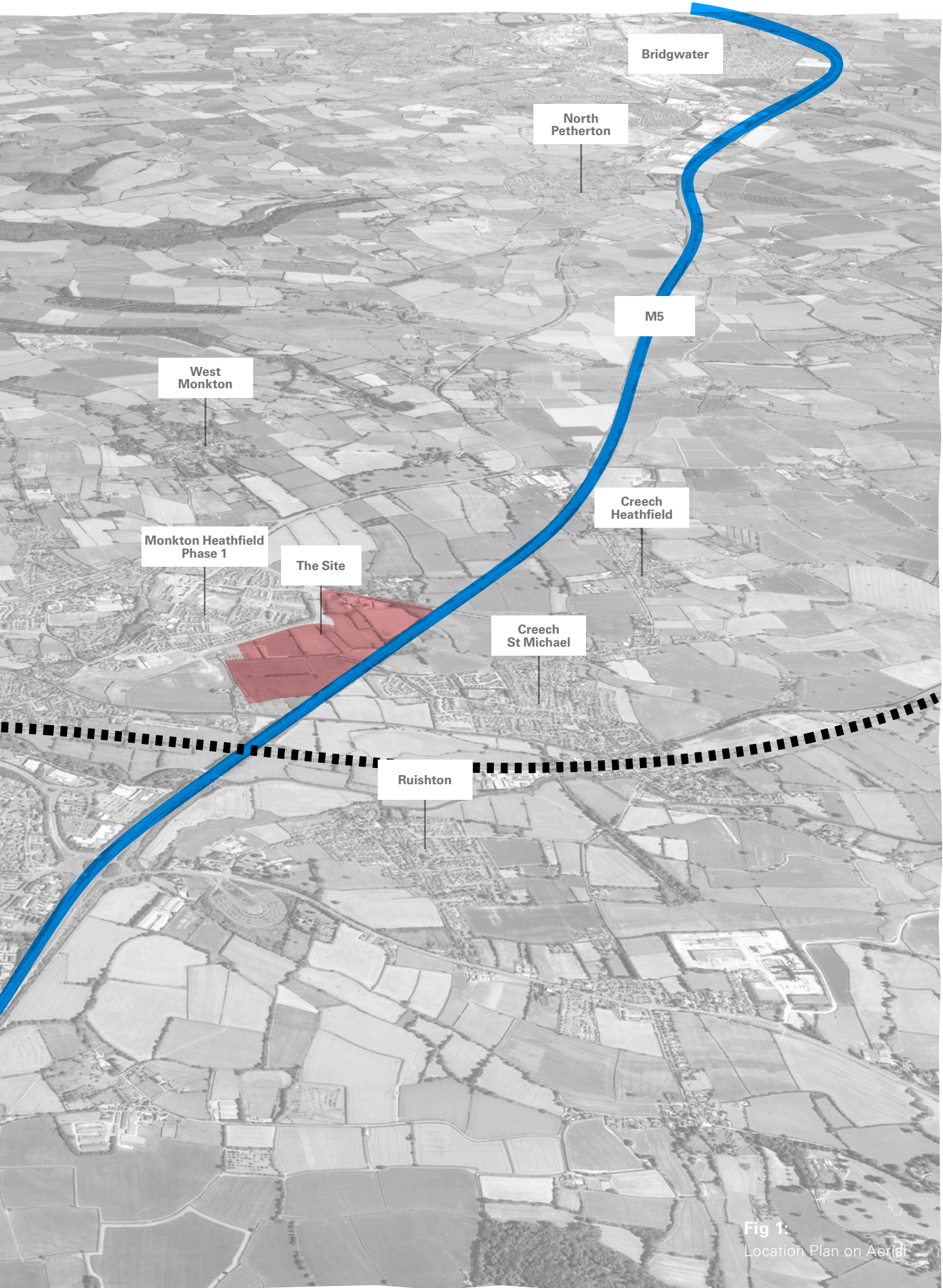


Fig 1:
Location Plan on Aerial

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Taunton Garden Town Design Charter and Checklist requires developers to frame any proposals around a contextual appraisal of the wider setting of any particular site as outlined in the Charter. Part of this process will be to appraise existing and adjacent townscape; including urban grain, building scale, building heights, spaces and places, built form, typologies etc.

1.2 The following examples of the built form and landscape context are found in settlements close to the site and the wider context of Taunton. These examples have been chosen to illustrate a cross section of settlement types some of which focus on better quality townscape.

1.3 A short analysis of each is presented in a form which relates to the toolkit approach for key spaces presented later in the document.

1.4 The examples are by no means exhaustive. Further contextual analysis should be undertaken in order to inform any design proposals that are put forward.

1.5 Taunton as a county market town has an interesting and valuable townscape and character which should be protected. Many smaller settlements close to the town also exhibit interesting townscape characteristics albeit the predominant architecture is more vernacular in its nature.

1.6 There are some modern interventions within these settlements that have to varying degrees been successful in marrying traditional design approaches with modern highways requirements. There are also recent and proposed strategic developments within the town, some of which employ a more modern architectural language.

2.0 Context Appraisal

2.1 The Taunton Garden Town Design Charter and Checklist requires developers to frame any proposals around a contextual appraisal of the wider setting of any particular site as outlined in the Charter. Part of this process will be to appraise existing and adjacent townscape; including urban grain, building scale, building heights, spaces and places, built form, typologies etc.

2.2 The following examples of the built form and landscape context are found in settlements close to the site and the wider context of Taunton. These examples have been chosen to illustrate a cross section of settlement types some of which focus on better quality townscape.

2.3 A short analysis of each is presented in a form which relates to the toolkit approach for key spaces presented later in the document.

2.4 The examples are by no means exhaustive. Further contextual analysis should be undertaken in order to inform any design proposals that are put forward.

2.5 Taunton as a county market town has an interesting and valuable townscape and character which should be protected. Many smaller settlements close to the town also exhibit interesting townscape characteristics albeit the predominant architecture is more vernacular in its nature.

2.6 There are some modern interventions within these settlements that have to varying degrees been successful in marrying traditional design approaches with modern highways requirements. There are also recent and proposed strategic developments within the town, some of which employ a more modern architectural language.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 Staplegrove Road, Taunton | 4 Maunsel Road, North Newton |
| 2 St Michael Road, Creech St Michael | 5 Dene Road, Cotford St Luke |
| 3 Queen Square, North Curry | 6 Monkton Heathfield Phase 1, Taunton |

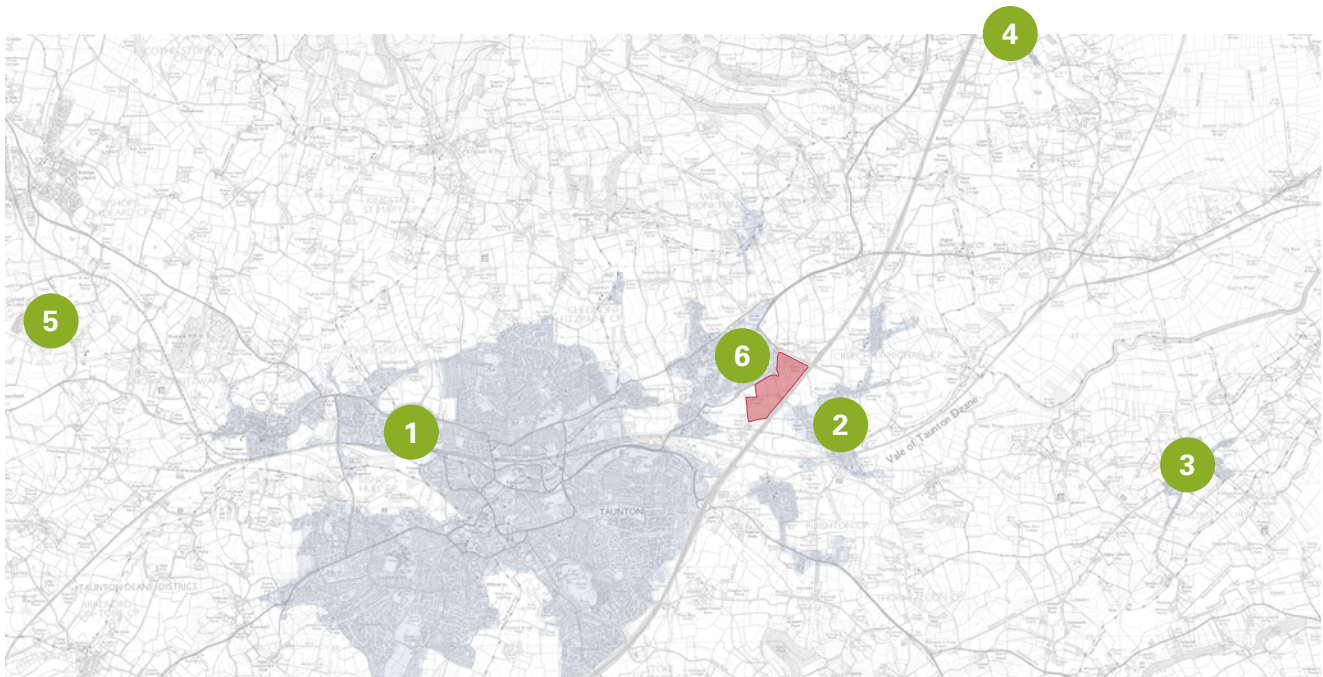


Fig 2:
Local Character Analysis Areas

2.1 Staplegrove Road, Taunton



1. Gently curving road within the north-west sector of the town that terminates in the town centre
2. Looser urban grain of detached and semi-detached houses set back from the road to the west
3. Tighter more urban grain nearer to the town centre including curving Edwardian terraces and straight Regency terraces set behind formal front gardens
4. On-plot or on-street parking with some courtyards



Toolkit

Public Realm

- Public footpath both sides of the road with some limited areas of verge separating road and footpath
- Much evidence of greenery in the form of mature trees within deep front gardens and hedges marking plot boundaries (although these are interspersed with other boundary treatments such as low brick walls with some fences)
- Some areas with larger groups of mature trees and grassed areas on the corner of road intersections
- Footways connecting to footpaths on secondary streets and also to narrow lanes to rear parking areas

Urban Form

- A medium to high density form consisting principally of semi-detached houses and clusters of terraces addressing the street
- Where terraces with small front gardens dominate, the urban grain is generally quite tight providing good definition to the street
- Small pockets of Edwardian villas set back from the road behind gardens or boundary trees and vegetation create an elegant character to parts of the street
- Area of semi-detached houses with larger front gardens provide a looser grain but still with a degree of formality through repetition of forms
- Area of low rise modern infill are looser still and frontages are more hidden behind walls and hedges
- High levels of surveillance due to orientation of dwellings and close proximity to the street
- Built form is predominantly two storey although some period townhouses are three storey, small pockets of post-war low rise in the form of bungalows are also evident

Detail and Material

- Combinations of red and buff brick with stone and brick dentil detail on period properties (with some render)
- Localised Regency terraces faced with white render. Render is also in evidence on many post war houses and bungalows
- High proportion of single and double height bay windows to period properties
- Most period properties have back to front gable roofs although period villas have hipped roofs of varying heights, gables facing the street are not common
- Chimneys centred on roof gables are a common feature
- Low fully hipped roofs are more common on modern properties
- Low brick walls or wall and hedge combinations are common front garden boundaries to period houses and terraces
- Natural stone walls are common for both front and rear gardens to period properties and modern houses alike, however fences are not a common feature

Parking

- Generally, on-street parking for terraced properties with some on-plot parking off lanes or within courtyards
- On plot parking for more modern properties

2.2 St Michael Road, Creech St Michael



1. Gently curving road through the village centre
2. Loose grain of mainly semi-detached houses and terraces clustered around the street backing onto lanes to the rear
3. Much separation of buildings with garden and courtyard areas
4. On-plot or within courtyards



Toolkit

Public Realm

- Footway both sides of the road although this is quite narrow in places
- Much evidence of greenery in the form of small trees within small to medium front gardens and hedges marking plot boundaries (although these are interspersed with low stone walls)
- Some tree and shrub planting within verge on the corner of road intersections
- Footways connecting to footpaths on secondary streets and also to narrow lanes to rear of parking areas

Urban Form

- A low to medium density form consisting principally of semi-detached houses and clusters of cottage terraces either facing the street or perpendicular to it
- Larger buildings in the form of church, public house and shop with accommodation over are part of the street-scene
- The urban grain is quite broken up with buildings to the front and side-on to the street and in some cases rear garden form the street boundary
- Cottages interspersed with inter-war and post-war housing are the most common forms
- Some frontages are hidden behind existing trees, hedges and shrubs whilst period properties tend to be located directly on the back edge of the footway
- High levels of surveillance due to orientation of dwellings and close proximity to the street
- Built form is predominantly two storey, small pockets of post-war low rise in the form of two storey houses and bungalows are also evident

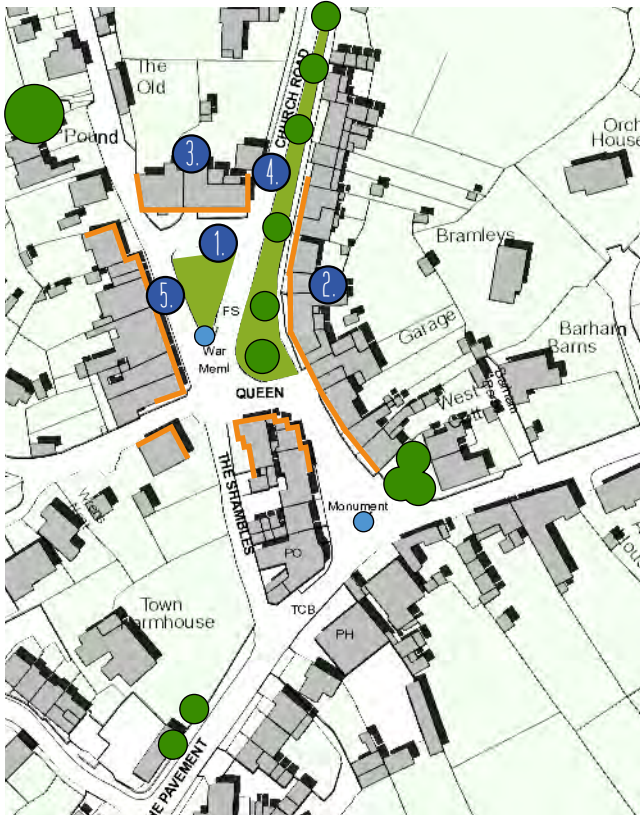
Detail and Material

- Combinations of facing materials including natural stone, smooth and rough cast white render and smooth faced multi-bricks are all in evidence
- Roofs are mostly concrete pantiles with some traditional slates surviving on older properties
- Most period properties have side to side gable roofs although some gables facing the street are in evidence
- Mostly simple vernacular forms without architectural detail or decoration
- Chimneys centred on roof gables are a common feature
- Low natural stone walls or wall and hedge combinations are common front garden boundaries (some screen walls forming rear garden boundaries are evident due to the orientation of plots)

Parking

- Generally on-plot parking or within courtyards

2.3. Queen Square, North Curry



- 1. Central green open space surrounded by roads on all four sides
- 2. Terrace of cottages facing strip of open space which includes mature trees
- 3. On street parking for cottages
- 4. Focal buildings frame square
- 5. Narrow streets defined by planting in front gardens



Toolkit

Public Realm

- The public open spaces of Queen Square are enclosed by terraces and joined buildings on all sides
- The bisected northern square contains a war memorial and landscaped garden and is framed by polite groups of terraces with planted front gardens
- The square is connected to small intimate triangular space with a stone memorial in the centre
- There are no kerbs and footways so pedestrians and cars share the space
- Mature trees within the square sit within the formal garden and grassed verge areas
- Shrubs and flower beds sit behind low brick front garden walls, estate railings and picket fences and compliment the landscaped spaces

Urban Form

- A medium to high density form consisting principally of a continuous frontage of terraced houses and joined buildings
- Buildings are clustered organically around the spaces and some terraces are curved to follow the shape of the street
- A mix of detached and semi-detached houses are located beyond Queen Square with some terraced houses along the main route into the centre of the village
- High levels of surveillance due to orientation of dwellings and close proximity to the street
- Dwellings in the area are predominantly two storey with a few single storey dwellings (some of which have rooms in the roof)
- The village core comprises of historic plots which are long and narrow with roofs parallel to the street

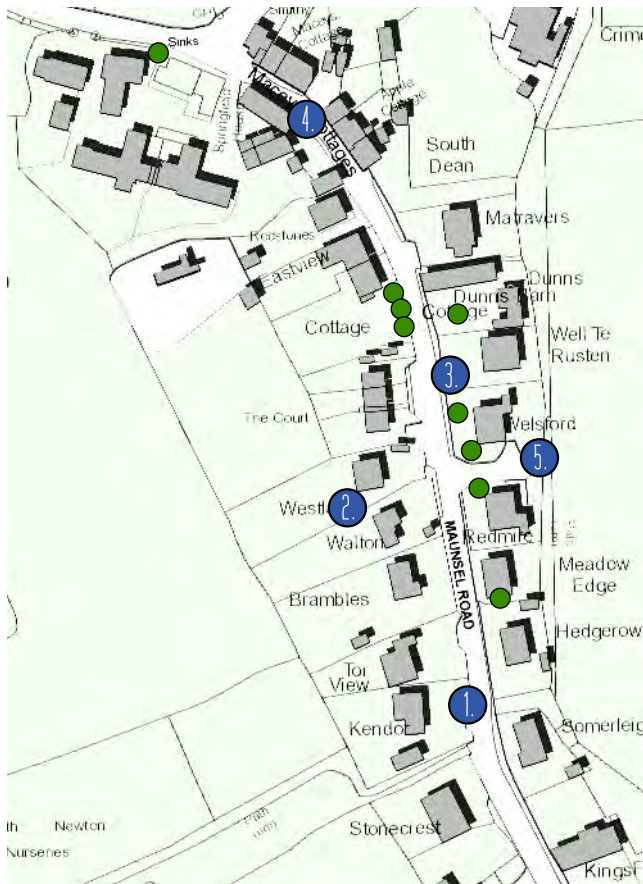
Detail and Material

- Generally a mixture of brick and render with some painted brick for building façades
- Particular building groups are finished in a single material such as brick or render which create a sense of unity
- Properties predominately have side to side gable roofs
- Front gardens are defined by a mix of low stone or brick walls or railings with planting behind, the public garden is enclosed with a low natural stone wall
- Architectural character exemplified by cottage terraces and Georgian houses forming a 'polite' character

Parking

- Generally, on-street parking for terraced properties with some on-plot parking and courtyard parking for a selected number of units
- On plot parking for more modern properties away from the square

2.4 Maunsel Road, North Newton



1. Similar to ribbon-developments, houses are arranged along the main roads leading to the centre of the village
2. Buildings arranged in a loose grain with some semi-detached and terraced housing
3. Generous front gardens with substantial planting provided
4. Denser grain provided within the village centre with buildings along footpath edge
5. Usually on-plot parking with some courtyard parking for some units



Toolkit

Public Realm

- Footways limited and where they are evident they are very narrow
- Much evidence of greenery in the form of small trees and ornamental shrubs and hedges within generous front gardens
- Sporadic verges, some of which sit above low wall at a level higher than the road
- Limited connections to narrow lanes to rear of parking areas

Urban Form

- A low density form consisting principally of detached houses clustered along lanes with short cottage terraces defining the area adjacent the village core
- Larger buildings in the form of the school, public house and village hall are set within a very open area dominated by playgrounds and car parking
- The urban grain is predominantly loose with houses set back from the road without a common build line
- Traditional cottages help define areas around the village core but elsewhere a mixture of inter-war and post-war housing with no common features in evidence
- Many of the cottages are located directly on the back edge of the footway whereas the later properties are set back from the road above retaining walls and lawns dotted with ornamental planting and access steps
- High levels of surveillance due to orientation of dwellings and close proximity to the street
- Built form is predominantly two storey, with much post-war low rise in the form of bungalows (some of which have rooms in the roof)

Detail and Material

- Combinations of facing materials including natural stone, smooth and rough cast white render, traditional red stock bricks contrast with more modern smooth faced red and brown bricks
- Roofs are mostly concrete pantiles
- Most properties have side to side gable roofs although some gables facing the street are in evidence
- Simple vernacular cottages or system built post-war housing with little design consistency
- Chimneys are evident but not common
- Low natural stone walls or wall and hedge combinations are common front garden boundaries (often used as retaining features)

Parking

- Generally on-plot parking on drives to the frontage, to the side or to the rear

2.5 Dene Road, Cotford St. Luke



1. Tree lined main road with green verge separating footpath from carriageway
2. Density and character of housing blocks differs either side of the road
3. Allocated parking provided within the development blocks
4. Key buildings located to frame roundabouts and to indicate pedestrian connections
5. Viewline towards church tower further to the south retained



Toolkit

Public Realm

- Public footpath both sides of the road often set behind wide verges with formal tree planting
- The green verge is complimented by areas of frontage boundary planting either within front garden or planted to disguise screen walling
- Some areas with larger groups of mature trees and grassed areas on the corner of road intersections
- Footways connecting to pedestrian only footpaths and cycleways between buildings, together with connecting roads at roundabout

Urban Form

- A medium to high density form consisting principally of groups of terraces, semi-detached and linked detached houses
- The urban grain is moderately tight in places providing definition to the street, although breaks in the urban form allow space leakage
- Some terraces are cranked to follow the street and existing topography is a little steep requiring steps in the houses which creates interesting roofscape
- Houses frame pedestrian routes that connect to Dene Road, either in the form of two metre footpaths with houses and boundary planting or with houses set back to create a more open environment
- In some instances blank gables face the street whereas these could have been provided with windows to articulate the façade and provide surveillance
- High levels of surveillance due to orientation of dwellings and close proximity to the street
- Built form is predominantly two storey with some single storey with room in the roof

Detail and Material

- Combinations of red brick, white and pink render some with red brick quoining, some material groupings are successful whereas others are haphazard and do not convey unity
- House forms are based on developer standard types dressed to look vaguely like cottages
- Most properties have side to side gable roofs although there are some gable fronted properties and side gables facing the street
- False chimneys centred on roof gables are fairly common
- Metal railings to front garden are evident on some properties, the remainder have various types of ornamental shrub planting which can be jumbled in places
- A combination of brick screen walls and fences enclosing rear gardens to the street provides enclosure but does not convey unity

Parking

- On plot parking and courtyards accessed from secondary streets to the rear of properties

2.6 Monkton Heathfield Phase 1, Taunton



Toolkit

Public Realm

- MH1 is characterised by a sequence of streets and spaces designed to reflect the aspirations of the approved masterplan
- The MH1 incorporates several green open spaces generally enclosed and framed by buildings
- A larger formal square-shaped open space to the south of the site functions as arrival and green open space which is bordered by an estate railing
- A triangular shaped green space in the centre of the site incorporates a large attenuation area and has a more informal character with existing buildings framing the north eastern edge of the space.
- The larger green open spaces are generally bounded by roads and private drives.
- Retained mature trees and hedge planting is incorporated by providing footpath connections along these green corridors.
- A Primary School is located in the centre of the development with a footpath along its northern boundary connecting to a children's play area and further green space to the east.
- There are some new trees planted within verges and open spaces but overall the impression is of sparseness in terms of new planting with most of the greenery provided by existing trees and hedges.
- The main roads have footpaths provided either side with some side streets having only one footpath.

Toolkit - continued

Public Realm (continued)

- Generally, cul-de-sacs are designed without kerbs with pedestrian and cars sharing the same space
- Front gardens are predominantly planted with shrubs and flower beds with no other boundary treatment. Some properties along and adjacent to Hardys Road have estate railings as a boundary treatment
- The highways design dominating and homogeneous in its execution with little variation in road widths. Large areas of block paved surfaces seemingly without purpose are common and provide little in the way of variation to the highway

Urban Form

- Generally a medium density development consisting of a mix of predominantly terraced and semi-detached houses along the main routes and apartment blocks in key locations
- A mixture of detached and semi-detached houses are located along secondary routes and along development edges to the south
- Properties back onto the A38 corridor to the south east with some located behind a vegetation belt formed by mature trees
- The northern boundary towards MH2 is characterised by an acoustic bund with a pedestrian connection provided through the bund towards MH2
- The residential blocks are arranged around a number of green open spaces and children's play areas which are located along footpath connections
- High levels of surveillance due to orientation of dwellings and close connection to the open spaces and green connections
- Dwellings in the area are predominantly two storey with some 1.5 and 2.5 storey dwellings to create interest in the roof-scape. This is only partially successful due to only modest changes in building height and the lack of chimneys
- Generally, the roofs are parallel to the street with gables and dormers predominantly reserved for gateway / key buildings and dwellings framing the open spaces
- Generally the urban form adequately encloses streets and spaces but there is no readily identifiable character and the public realm is functional rather than attractive

Detail and Material

- Generally a mixture of brick and render with some stone used for key building façades along with the very limited use of tile hanging
- Some dwellings display detailing such as stone window cills and headers or splayed brick header and plinths in a contrasting brick
- Front gardens are predominantly defined by shrubs and flower beds with no particular boundary treatment. The exception is the northern part of Hardys Road where estate railings have been introduced along the main road
- Architectural character and forms are based on developers standard house types and there is little to convey differences in character through architectural detail and materials

Parking

- A mix of parking arrangements are provided within the site. This includes predominantly on-plot and in front-parking with some courtyard parking

3.0 Site Appraisal

Context

3.1 The site lies within the allocation of Monkton Heathfield and was originally earmarked for employment land. The recently completed section of the A38 Relief Road made it an ideal location for employment. Since the Core Strategy 2011-2028 was approved, the need for employment land in the region and within the allocations has declined. The Core Strategy (Chapter 5.13) therefore stipulates retention of only 10ha of employment land, allowing the rest for residential development.

3.2 The site is located south of the MH1 and south east of the "The Hatcheries". MH1 is the first phase of the wider Monkton Heathfield development.

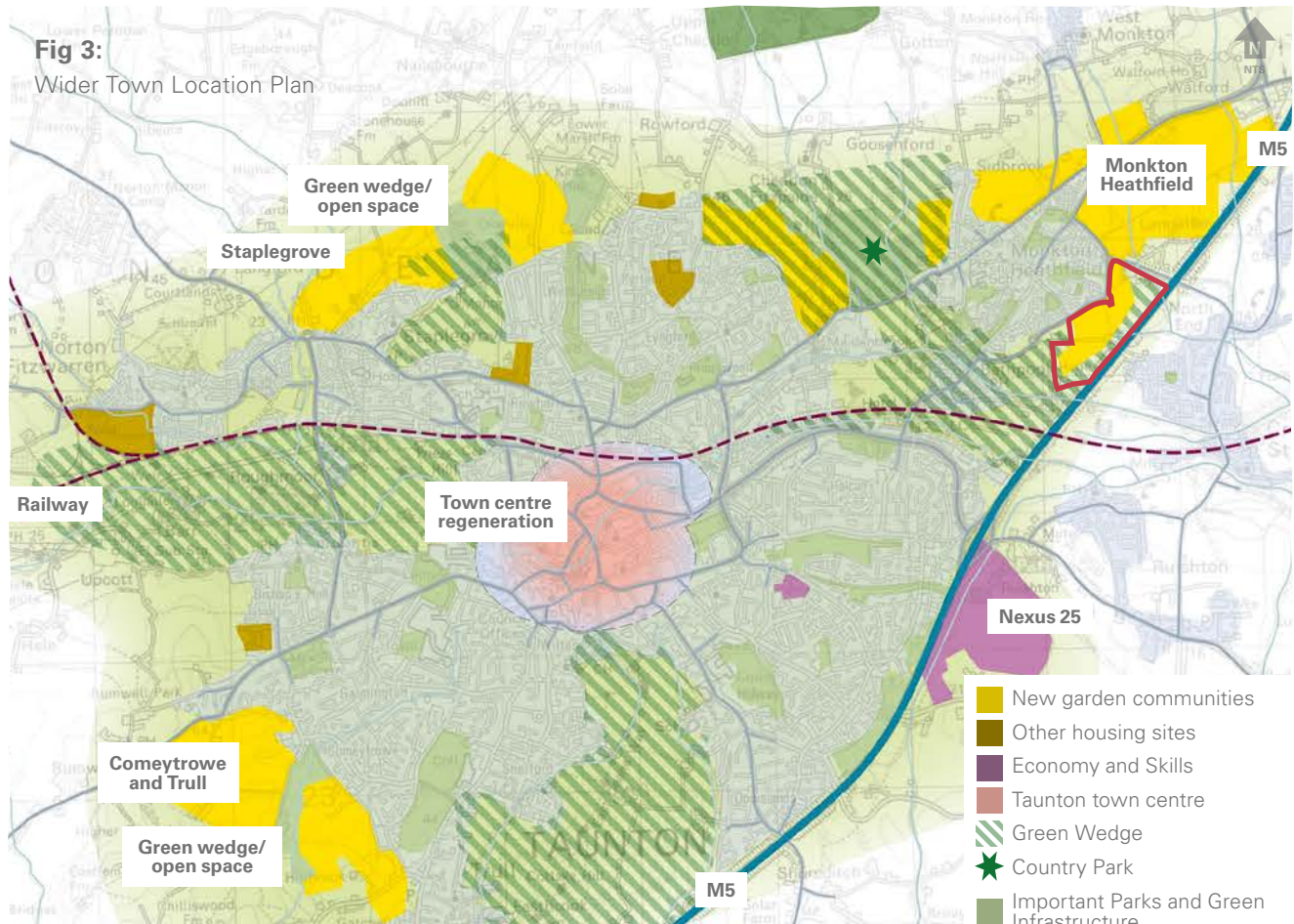
3.3 The future second phase site (MH2) lies to the north east of the site.

3.4 Access can be provided off roundabouts 1 and 2 of the A38 with roundabout 3 proposed to accommodate the Eastern Relief Road for MH2.

3.5 The site is crossed by Hyde Lane, which provides a connection through Creech St Michael to Bridgwater Road and Bathpool. Hyde Lane is in parts a narrow country lane with no footpath provided, especially the areas around the Hyde Lane Cottages, and in close proximity to Rexhill House and Hyde Farm.

3.6 A new footpath/ cycleway has been recently created crossing the motorway bridge from Creech St Michael and connecting to the bridleway crossing the A38 into MH1 in close proximity to roundabout 1. Another pedestrian/cycle linkage between MH2 and the site is provided between roundabout 2 and 3 of the A38 via a Toucan crossing point. This provides the opportunity to connect the site with existing residential neighbourhoods and local facilities.

3.7 A small hamlet of unlisted houses called Hyde Lane Cottages is located adjacent to the site. Although not listed, they should be considered as valuable elements of local history and character.



3.8 There is a variety of building typologies surrounding the site from the low density of Hyde Lane Cottages to the larger urban extension at MH1 and “The Hatcheries” to the west, and the new developments on the western edge of Creech St Michael.

3.9 To the north east of the site and within the sites boundary is Manor Farm, which consists of the listed Manor Farmhouse, other farm buildings and sheds as well as on-site infrastructure, including hard and soft surface vehicular roads and hardstandings. The farm buildings and sheds are currently used for agriculture. They are arranged in a way that is suitably accessible for the function of the farm. The structures are of considerable height, equivalent to 2 - 2 1/2 storey buildings and consists mainly of simple structure for storage use. Manor Farmhouse itself is a Grade II listed building and its setting and status will have to be carefully considered with regards to any newly proposed development.

The Site

3.10 The natural gentle fall of the land from the A38 towards the M5 motorway and Hyde Farm to the south, creates glimpsed views from the site towards Stoke Hill near Stoke St Mary.

3.11 The site consists of a number of agricultural fields with hedges marking the field boundaries. The site also contains hedgerow trees and small copses of mature trees.

3.12 Hyde Lane crosses the site east to west. The lane is bordered by hedges either side and a tree belt along the northern edge.

3.13 The northern site boundary is formed by Langaller Road and is characterised by a corridor of mature trees.

3.14 To the north the site is relatively exposed to the A38 and its roundabout with limited amount of vegetation. An acoustic fence is located in the north western boundary of the site, north of the Hyde Lane Cottages, which provides a visual and acoustic barrier for the cottages and might need to continue along the remaining site boundary in the future.



4.0 Constraints & Opportunities

4.1 MH1 is located immediately to the north of the site and is a large mixed use development with residential units, a new school, a local centre (under construction) and numerous green spaces and play areas scattered throughout the development.

4.2 A recently created pond is located in the northern tip of the site next to the A38 and in close proximity with the MH2 site. This attenuation basin is essential for the drainage strategy of MH1 and will have to be retained in this location, although amending its shape and location may be considered.

4.3 Manor Farm is located in the north eastern corner of the site and consists of farm structures. The Farmhouse is listed Grade II.

4.4 Hyde Lane Cottages along the western site boundary is a hamlet of six semi-detached cottages.

4.5 A line of mature trees runs along the south side of Hyde Lane, acting both as a constraint and an opportunity.

4.6 A wide swathe of green space runs along the south-western boundary of the site alongside the M5 Motorway corridor, referred to as 'the Green Necklace'.

4.7 The existing field boundary vegetation, trees and tree groups can be utilised to provide separation between the employment area and the residential land and can create the basis for green corridors with the development areas.

4.8 Access for the residential area is proposed off

A38 Roundabout 1, whereas access for the employment part of the site is proposed off A38 Roundabout 2, ensuring separation of residential and employment traffic.

4.9 Hyde Lane, which crosses the site and connects to Creech St Michael, is an important link and must be retained, albeit there is the opportunity for partial downgrading and / or realignment, which might reduce the problem of rat-running between Creech St Michael and Bathpool, and might create a better pedestrian / cycle link.

- Site Boundary
- Flood Zone 2
- Flood Zone 2
- Surface water run-off (medium and high risk)
- Significant hedgerow (based on aerial photo and survey data)
- Existing trees and woodland (based on aerial photo and survey data)
- Tree Protection Order
- Watercourse and ponds
- Acoustic influence from motorway
- Topography
- Listed building
- Existing neighbouring buildings
- Buildings proposed to be removed
- Motorway
- A38 (Eastern Relief Road)
- Other main route
- Potential to downgrade Hyde Lane
- Pedestrian crossing point
- Public Right of Way
- Informal footpath
- Green Wedge as identified in Policy SS1
- Green Necklace
- Green Wedge and Green Necklace
- Potential area for additional residential land
- Potential site access points
- Parish boundary



Fig 5: Constraints & Opportunities Plan

DRAFT



5.0 Landscape and Visual Impact

5.1 The site contains a number of significant landscape and visual constraints which have to be considered and incorporated within the new development.

Green Wedge

5.2 Most notable, but not physically visible, is the area reserved for the Green Wedge along the western and eastern boundary of the site and around the cottages. The Green Wedge is a policy designation described as sustainable areas to:

- act as air conduits by flushing pollutants from the urban system of settlements.
- support trees and other vegetation which trap airborne pollutants.
- provide actual or potential routes for cyclists and walkers.
- provide valuable wildlife corridors which can help to retain and increase the range of species
- provide predominantly open character landscapes.
- provide recreational use, including football field, orchards and allotments within a sustainable location.
- avoid the risk that over time, small and individual developments, will gradually reduce the area for the Green Wedge, and therefore undermine the integrity of this area.

5.3 There is limited existing planting located within the Green Wedge which provides opportunities for open views towards the south west and south to the surrounding landscape and in particular to the Blackdown Hills AONB. In parts these views are blocked by existing trees and hedges but are of significance to the Hyde Lane Cottages which currently benefit from an undisturbed view towards the AONB.

5.4 The landscape design within the Green Wedge areas will need to include large scale tree planting whilst respecting some views towards the AONB and surrounding such as those from Hyde Lane cottages. This tree planting and green linkages provided will provide a carbon reduction, air quality improvement and appropriate resilience to climate change whilst also create a visual and acoustic screening towards the motorway.

Existing Vegetation

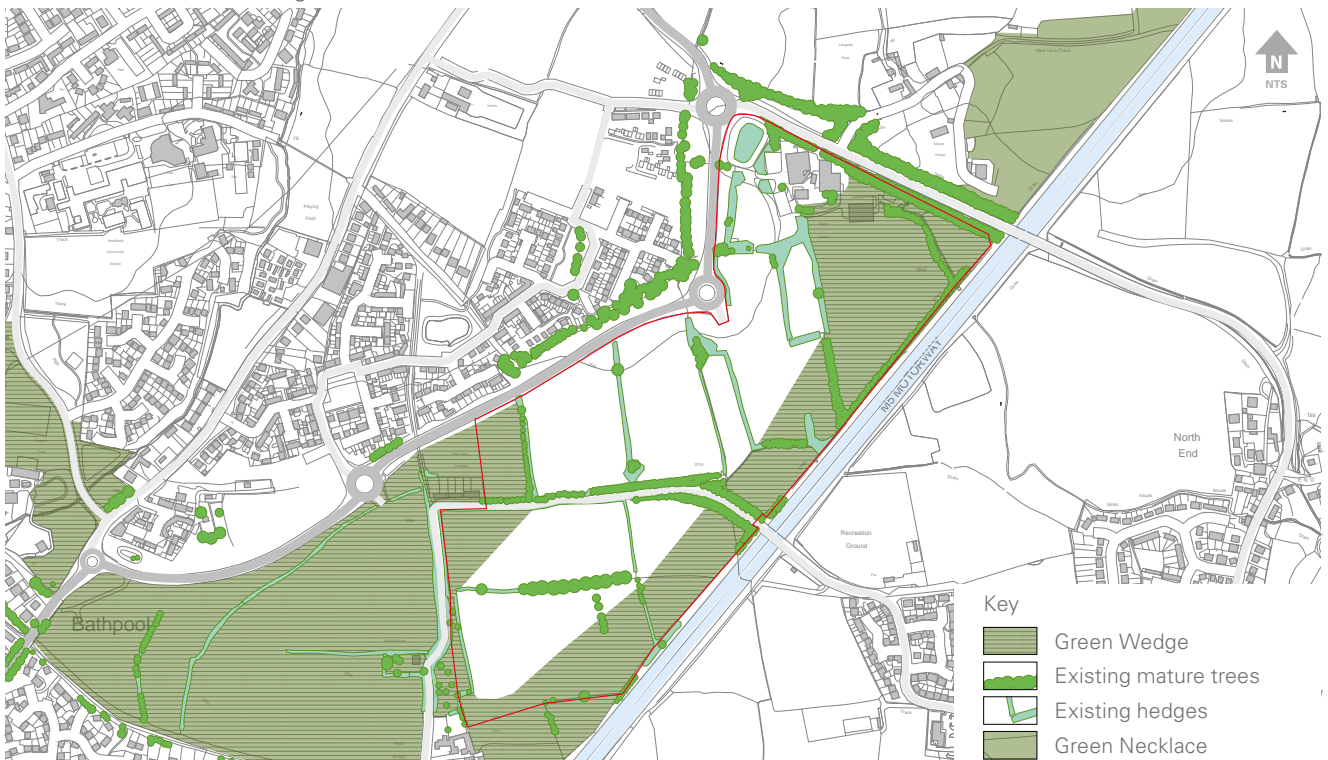
5.5 The site contains a number of important and high quality trees and hedges. Hyde Lane is framed by valuable hedges with other hedges currently forming the field boundaries. A group of mainly oak trees are located approximately in the centre of the site and are a landscape feature, which currently function as ecological habitat as well as orientation feature within the otherwise open landscape of the area.

5.6 The M5 motorway as a physical barrier also influences with its mature planting the otherwise undisturbed views southwards and creates a visual constraint for the south western part of the site.





Fig 7:
Location Plan: Green Wedge and Green Necklace



6.0 Concept Masterplan

6.1 The concept masterplan demonstrates the conceptual response to the foregoing analysis in diagrammatic form and identifies key considerations that have informed the design process.

6.3 The key elements of this exercise are:

- 1 Primary site access is from the A38 with separate access points for the residential and employment areas.
- 2 Hyde Lane is proposed to be diverted through the development from the east to minimise the amount of traffic approaching from or accessing Creech St Michael via this lane. Hyde Lane is also proposed to be disconnected north of Rexhill House and will only provide pedestrian and cycle access to the new development and Monkton Heathfield Phase 1 and the playing fields.
- 3 An alternative access into the employment part of the site could be offered from the east from Creech St. Michael. This access point would restrict HGV and larger vehicle traffic to be able to access but not exit the employment site.
- 4 A small part of the employment area is proposed to be accessed via Langaller Road to minimise the amount of traffic created along this road. This area is suitable for employment generating uses beyond traditional B1 uses.
- 5 The primary road network allows to access all parts of the site and seeks to minimise potential rat-run traffic from and to Creech St Michael.
- 6 Creating attractive footpath connections between the residential blocks, employment area and on the residential development of MH1 (including the school, local centre and open spaces) and to Creech St. Michael.
- 7 Key spaces are created throughout the development, appropriately providing destination and focal points for the existing and new residents.

6.2 This approach ensures early identification of issues and sets out general design principles in terms of disposition of uses such as open space, basic highway structure, connections, residential parcels and employment area.

- 8 Green corridors and links are the backbone of the scheme and integrate the most prominent existing hedges, trees and groups of trees into the layout. These green links will connect the Green Necklace with the proposed key spaces, the newly created open spaces along the edge of the development and the existing green open spaces within Monkton Heathfield Phase 1.
- 9 The entrance green located south of Hyde Lane Cottages will create an appropriate setting for the residential area, and retain the existing views to the south that the cottages currently enjoy.
- 10 Key buildings to provide focal points and landmark buildings and can be pronounced by either increased height, recognisable façade materials or distinct detailing used.
- 11 The Green Wedge and Green Necklace is a landscape corridor with significant areas of native woodland, suited to informal recreation and to biodiversity value around the site. This area will be landscaped to provide significant recreational opportunities for the new residents.
- 12 Just north of Hyde Lane Cottages and part of the Green Wedge and Green Necklace, this green space is primarily intended to retain the 'green' setting of the cottages. It will provide significant areas of native woodland and footpath links between the new development, the MH1 site and the new recreation ground.
- 13 A green area surrounding the new recreation ground has the potential to provide significant areas of woodland which support the informal character of the Green Wedge and Green Necklace as well as enhancing the biodiversity surrounding the site.





Fig 8:
Concept Masterplan

- Existing road network
- Proposed principal routes
- Existing footpaths
- Proposed footpaths
- Proposed footpath along downgraded Hyde Lane

7.0 Proposed Illustrative Masterplan

7.1 The proposed Illustrative Masterplan seeks to create an attractive, high quality mixed use development, a desirable place to live and work, and that articulates the vision of a new garden community.

7.2 The Masterplan demonstrates the integration of landscape, public realm and movement routes to create a masterplan that is permeable and legible.

7.3 A style of architecture needs to be adopted which gives clear identity to the development, one which uses materials and elements drawn from precedents in and around Taunton. Homes should be designed to high construction and sustainability standards, and future-proofed to stand the test of time. Dwellings and buildings should be oriented to maximise potential solar panel use to reduce energy demand and to enable the use of renewable energy.

7.4 The sites location on one of Taunton's key entry points calls for landscape treatment which exemplifies the garden community theme.

7.5 The site is bound to the east, south and west by the Green Wedge / Green Necklace which should be designed with substantial wood planting create a natural setting and environment which reacts to the Council's climate emergency announcement as well as to provide noise attenuation and biodiversity in the area. It should also contain informal open spaces for recreational use, attenuation measures such as swale as allotments.

7.6 The Green Wedge / Green Necklace area is proposed to be ecological areas which enhance the wildlife and biodiversity and are designed for largely daytime use. This will limit the need for lighting within the area during night-time.





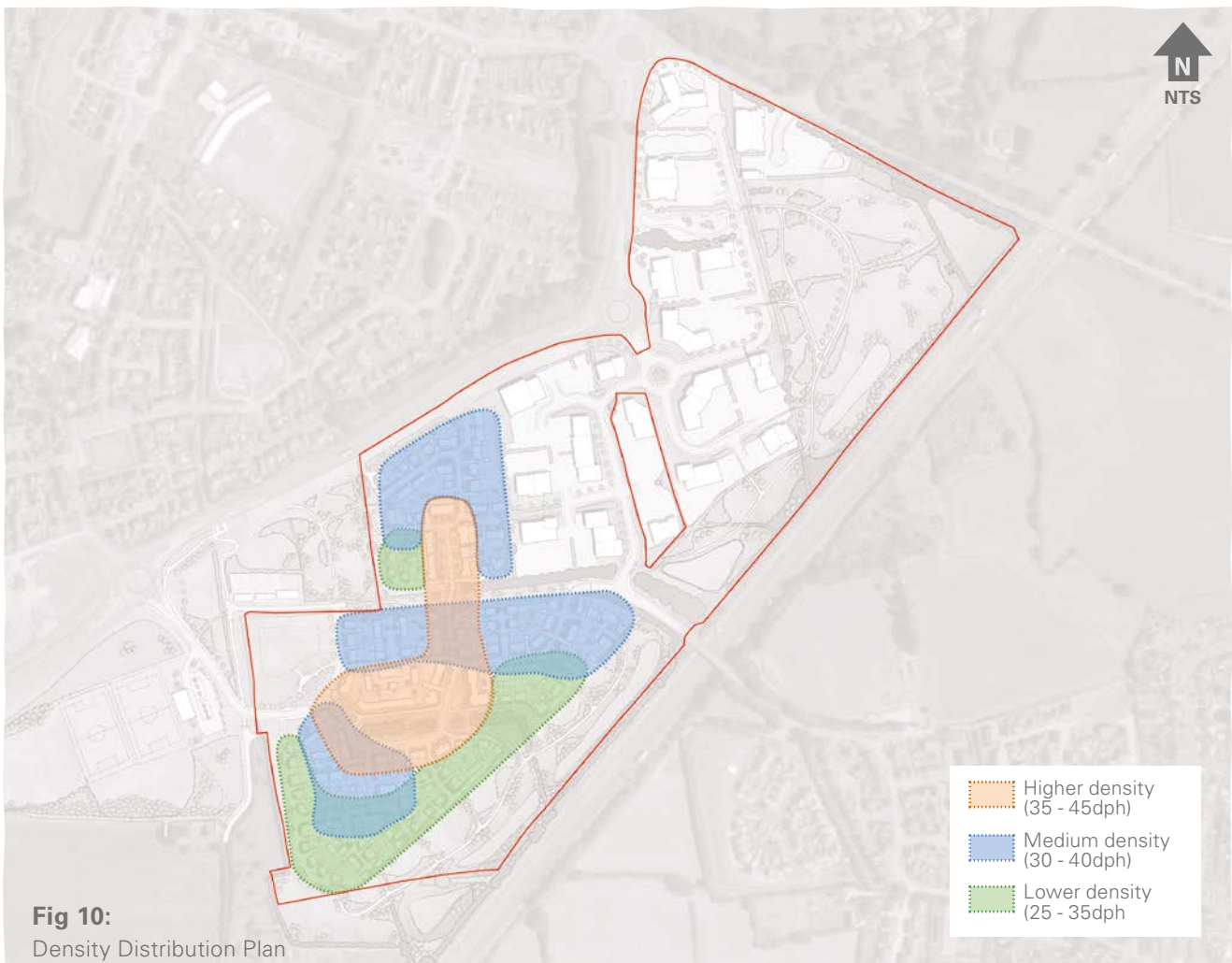
Fig 9:
Illustrative Masterplan

8.0 Density and Scale

8.1 The relationship between density and scale will be crucial in creating a development with a legible environment that responds to the character of Taunton and the surrounding context. Density itself will not be a determinant of character, rather it should be utilised along with building scale to create forms that reinforce a recognisable hierarchy of streets and spaces.

8.2 With this in mind the proposed development should:

- Utilise a range of densities and building forms with generally higher densities focused around key nodes, intersections and along principal routes.
- Propose a graduation of density with higher density along the main street running through the centre reducing to lower densities at the edges.
- Variation in density to be reinforced with building forms and appropriate scale to create character and legibility.
- Where development abuts open space edges, density and scale should be used to create a transition from built environment to the landscape.
- Building heights of up to three storey (12m to ridge height) will be acceptable, however these forms will be used to enclose key nodes and to provide focal points and variety in the street-scene with the majority of building being two storey.



9.0 Landscape Strategy

9.1 The landscape strategy should be structured with a strong landscape framework and follow the design requirements of theme 3 'Growing our Town Greener' of the Taunton Garden Town Vision. Furthermore, the strategy should utilise the existing green corridors and landscape features around and within the site. The landscape design will add new green buffers to create an outer frame and an inner network of green spaces.

9.2 The strategy should provide features punctuating the routes through the site, in the form of pocket parks, substantial areas of open space and landscape elements which enhance building frontages. The new network of green spaces should ensure allotments, orchards and rain gardens and wetlands are sufficiently integrated in the landscape strategy. Additionally, the strategy has to incorporate measures to promote the management of water and create diverse habitats for local wildlife.



Fig 11:
Landscape Strategy Plan

Green Wedge

9.3 As part of the Taunton Deane Borough Council Local Plan a Green Wedge of open space was proposed around Taunton and should link existing and new proposed development edges.

9.4 This multi-purpose green corridor is planned as a linear parkland to the south and east around the new development. It will:

- include allotments, recreation areas and footpaths, attenuation areas and wildlife habitats
- preserve and enhance the existing ecological habitats
- connect with existing pedestrian and cycle routes
- be characterised by significant areas of woodland planting



Fig 12:
Green Wedge area

Main Greens

9.5 A number of larger open space areas are created to provide appropriate and easy access to and from the surrounding green spaces to the Green Wedge / Green Necklace.

9.6 The new main spaces will function as the green soul of the development and could contain recreational and social facilities such as sports pitches, children's play facilities for a range of ages.

9.7 These spaces are:

- 1 Expanding and pronouncing the sequence of open spaces from the north westerly located phase 1 towards the Green Necklace area via footpath connections
- 2 The Hyde Common (see page 68: Key Area 'Hyde Common') which functions as entrance feature when approaching from the west and to retain views towards Blackdown Hills from the existing Hyde Lane cottages
- 3 Retaining the mature trees within the larger open spaces in the centre of the development
- 4 Providing the potential to create additional sport facilities to the west of the site in tandem with playing fields /pavilion
- 5 Providing a wooded landscape setting within the Green Necklace which will include considerable tree planting. Key views towards the Blackdown Hills AONB will be protected.

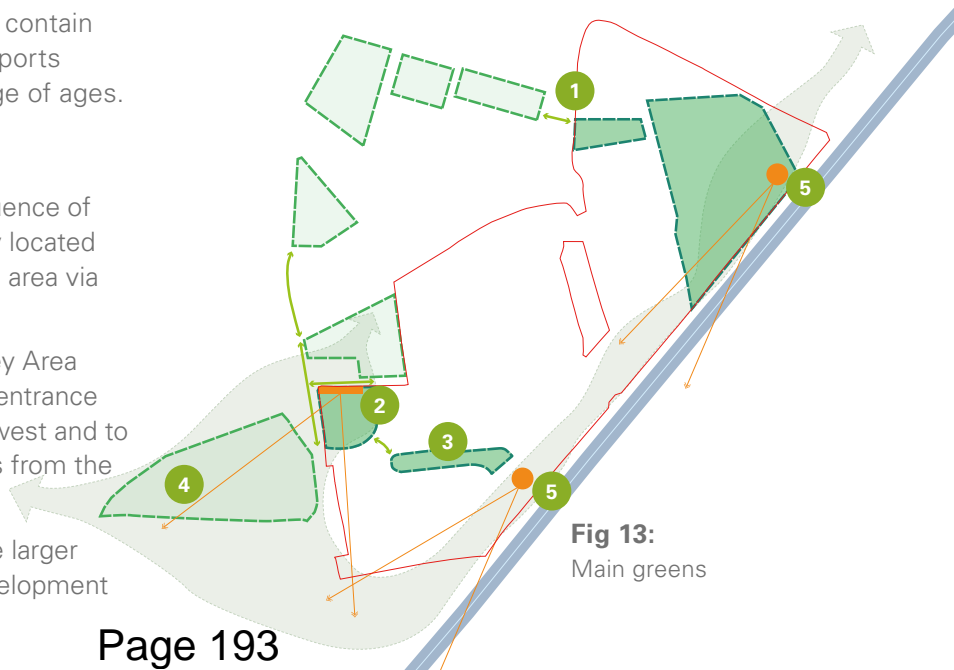


Fig 13:
Main greens

Pocket Parks / Greens

9.8 The layout provides a number and variety of smaller scale, doorstep spaces, pocket parks, and green connections throughout the development. These parks are intended to provide additional green open spaces throughout the site alongside the main green spaces. A variety of uses can be accommodated within these spaces such as community allotments, community orchards, fruit trees, smaller areas of play and ecological landscape or wildlife areas.

9.9 The spaces should be designed to benefit the new community by creating 'gathering hubs' for socialising, relaxing and reflecting. This provides an important aspect of the wellbeing of the people and will have a positive impact on the health of the residents.

9.10 Introducing intelligent strategies to manage surface water and storm water run-off which could include rain gardens and withy-beds.

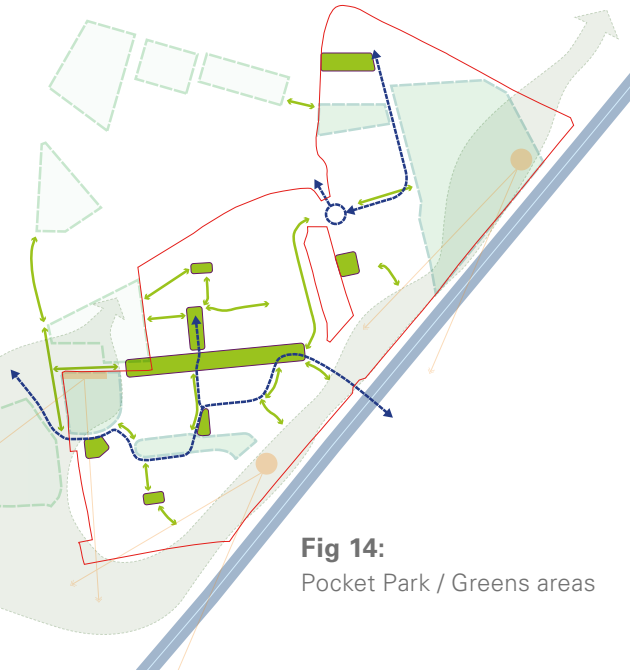


Fig 14:
Pocket Park / Greens areas

Sequence and Composition

9.11 Besides providing access to the proposed dwellings and connecting the site with the surrounding road network, the main routes forms a movement corridor. The proposed series of green spaces, pocket parks and green connections will create a sequence of spaces provide relief to the road corridor and create a sense of place throughout the development.

9.12 A purposeful landscape network is proposed which will benefit the new and existing residents, the existing local ecology and neighbouring settlements. A hierarchy of green spaces should be created offering doorstep recreational spaces and pocket parks within the core of the development connecting to the larger recreational areas and ecological corridors along the periphery of the development.

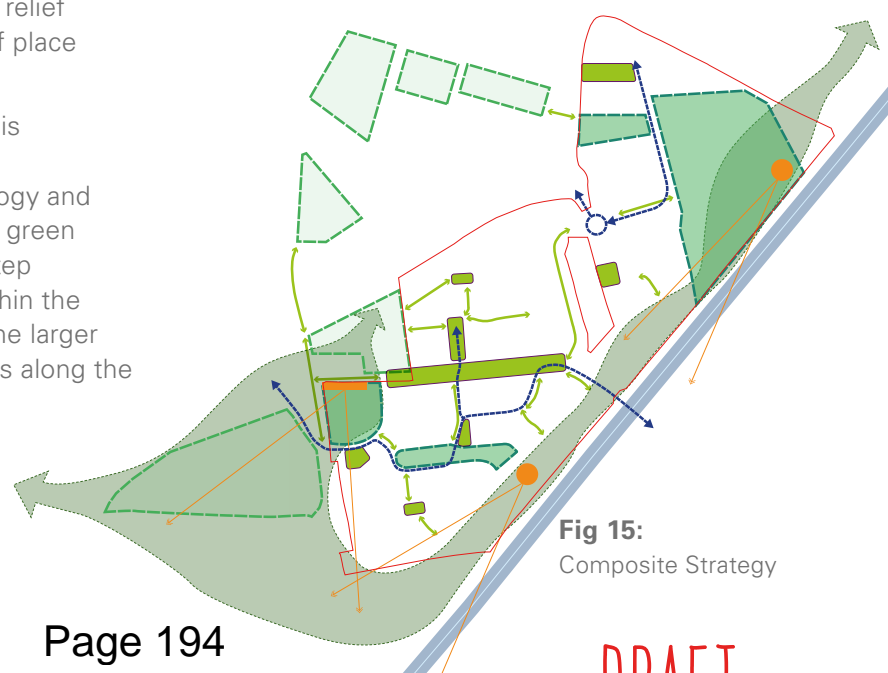


Fig 15:
Composite Strategy

10.0 Sustainable Transport Modes

Public Transport

10.1 The development is located adjacent to the MH1 development which is served sufficiently by bus routes connecting the area with the surrounding including Taunton and Bridgwater. Additionally, the future Bus&Ride provisions proposed in connection with the MH2 development will create an alternative rapid bus service in walkable distance from the site.

10.2 The residential area of MH1 to the north of the site incorporates a bus route connecting to the centre of Taunton to the west and Bridgwater to the east.

10.3 With the exception of a limited number of units along the Green Necklace edge, the majority of new dwellings within this site will have access to a bus stop located no more than 400m away.

10.4 The stops are conveniently accessed via the existing and proposed footpaths in the area and the safe crossing points over the A38. The bus stops incorporate safe waiting environments, with a clear lit zone.

Footpaths

10.5 Three types of footpath routes are proposed within the development:

- Formal footpaths alongside streets.
- Formal footpaths along the open space.
- Informal leisure paths through the open spaces.

10.6 Key strategic foot and cycle path links through the site are proposed to be emphasised by existing and new tree planting to create visual connections and associations, such as along the Green Lung and the downgraded part of Hyde Lane.

Pedestrians and Cyclists

10.7 The network of footpaths and cycle paths will afford the most efficient and direct routes to Creech St Michael, the MH1 area, Bathpool and the future MH2 development to the north.

10.8 Existing footpaths and the bridleway are integrated into the layout and new footpaths will connect those with the new residential area and existing settlements.

10.9 The design of new pedestrian and cycle routes as well as the retention of existing routes is

vital to guarantee safe and secure usage throughout the year. The emerging Public Realm Design Guide prepared by the Council should be used to create an acceptable layout for routes within the development

10.10 Cycle routes are important features of the masterplan which help reduce reliance on travel by car. To support the integration of cycling into daily life, secure (communal and/or private) provision will also be made for cycle parking at key destinations, such as at the key spaces and the formal and informal play areas.

10.11 Additionally, the development should provide for easily accessible and secure cycle storage for all dwellings as well within the employment area.

Safe routes to schools on and off site

10.12 The internal network of footpaths and cycle paths will be designed as safe routes from the residential areas to the schools. The proposed pedestrian, cycle and equestrian crossing over the A38 will provide a key linkage to the north allowing connections to the West Monkton CoE Primary School and Heathfield Community School.

10.13 The proposed pedestrian/cycle routes will also enable for safe routes from the surrounding communities east of the M5 motorway such as Creech St Michael and Creech Heathfield.

Cycle Paths

10.14 Within low speed or traffic calmed 'safe routes', cyclists would be able to mix with vehicles with minimal hazard. Also, there will be a dedicated cycle route along the downgraded part of Hyde Lane connecting to the east with Creech St Michael and to the west with the proposed new sport facilities and the equestrian crossing. This is to promote sustainable travel to key destinations within the scheme and in the surrounding areas.

10.15 Cycle paths will require:

- Clear entry/exit points with good surveillance.
- The adoption and maintenance by the Local Authority (where required).
- To be lit to highway standards subject to considering specific areas relative to woodlands.
- Good natural surveillance.



- Existing Bridleway
- PRow
- Existing footpaths
- Proposed footpath / cycleway
- Proposed footpaths
- Bus route / stop
- 400m distance from bus stop
- ★ Existing key open spaces
- ★ Proposed key open spaces
- ★ Schools



Fig 16:
Pedestrian / Cycle Routes and
Public Transport Routes

11.0 Road Hierarchy and Connectivity

11.1 The movement strategy should provide for a variety of modes of transport. An important aim from the outset has been the incorporation of routes for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. All the key routes will be overlooked for the greater part and would be supported by a range of equally safe alternative routes within the block structure. This would cover the needs of all people, including the elderly and disabled.

'Making our public realm & transport work harder for us'

11.2 The layout of routes addresses strategic vehicular and pedestrian/cycle connections to the town centre, to existing and future residential neighbourhoods nearby and to local facilities. Careful consideration has also been paid to the treatment of Hyde Lane to maintain it as a through-route, whilst treating it so as to discourage rat-running.

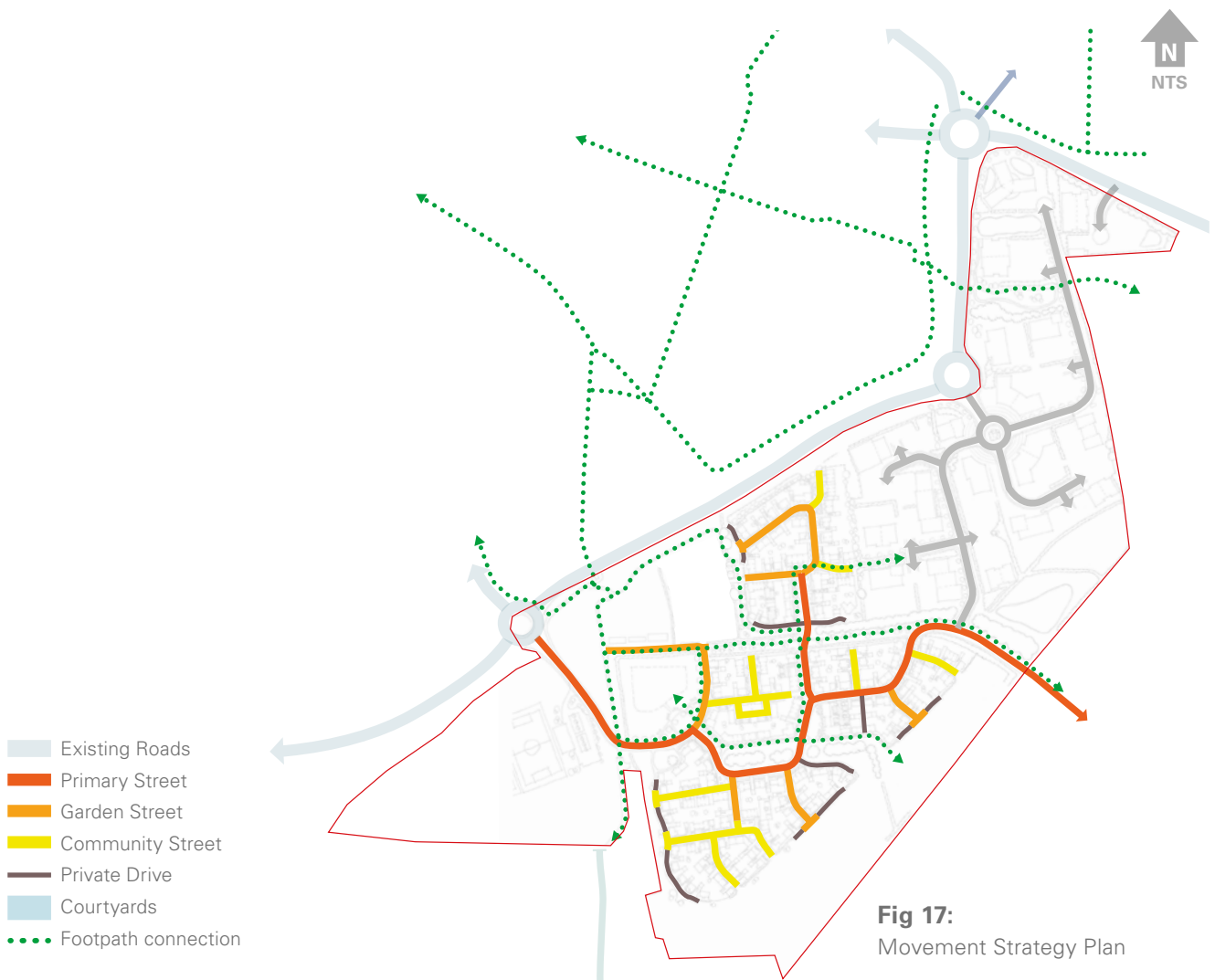


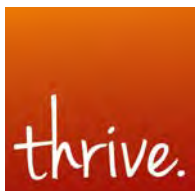
Fig 17: Movement Strategy Plan

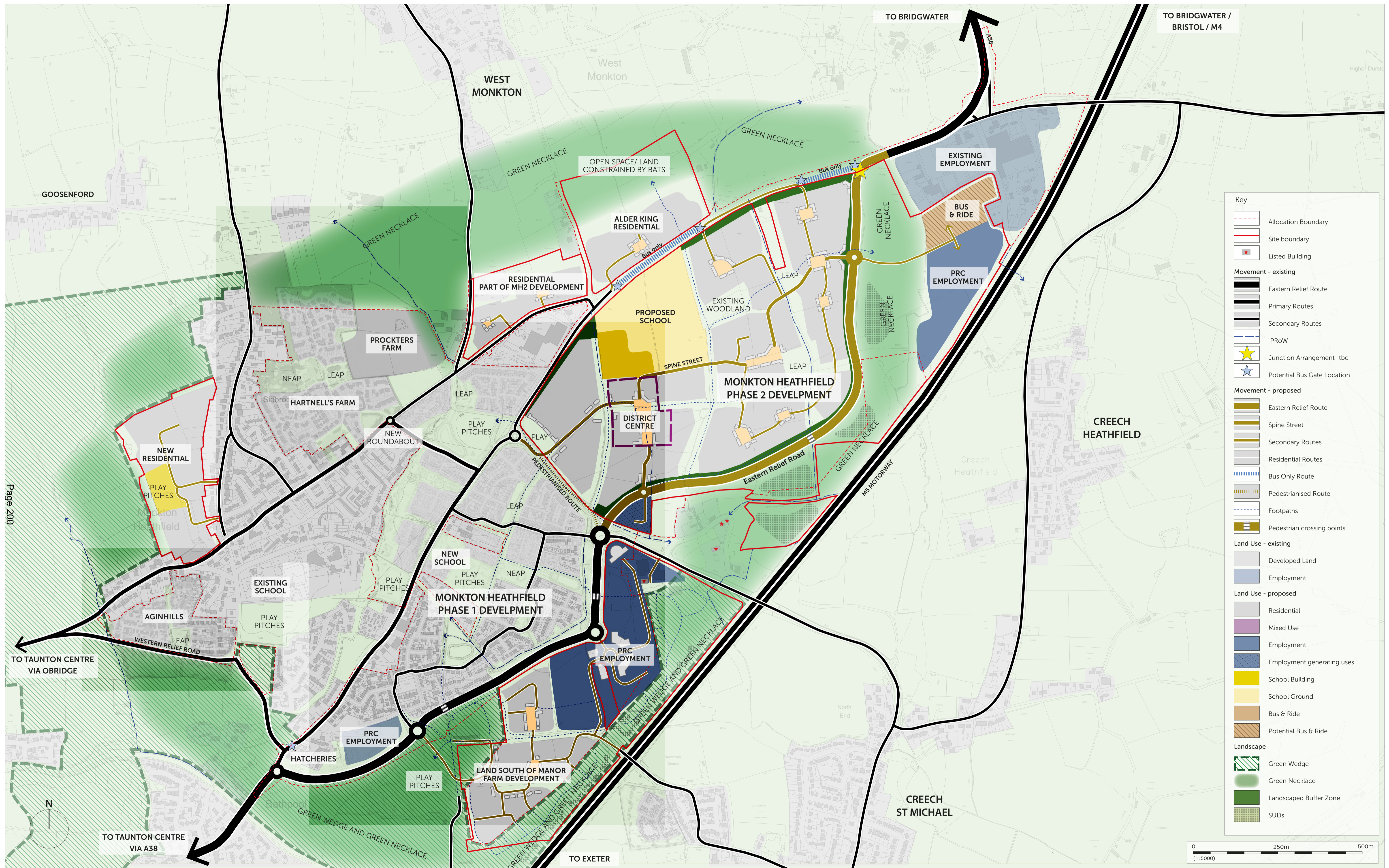


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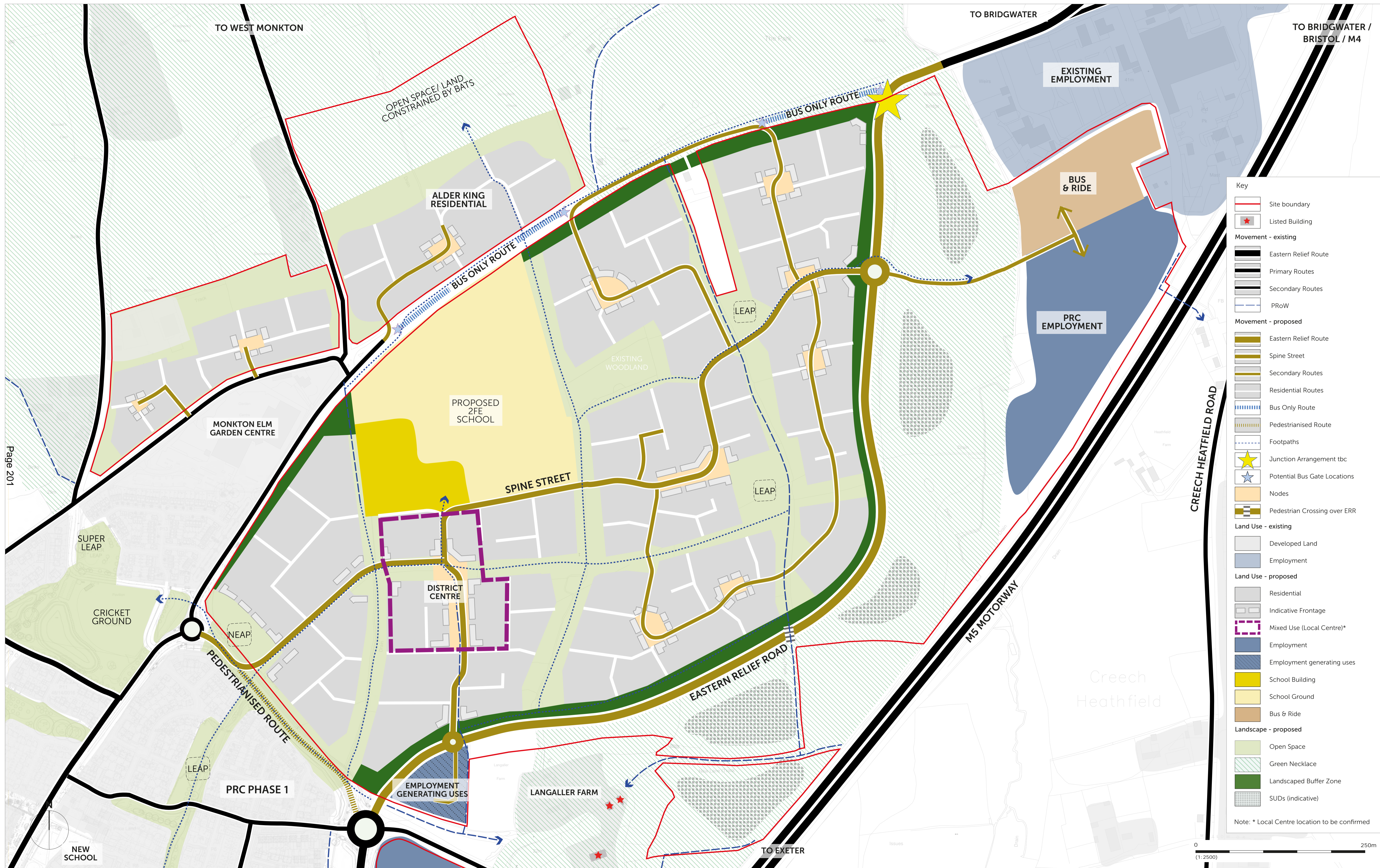
Rev	Description	Date	Au	Ch
P1	Preliminary Issue	07.01.20	MD	GR

Project **Monkton Heathfield Framework Plan**

Client	Taunton Deane BC	Office	Portishead
Scale	1:5000 @ A1	Dwg no.	FWP.01
Job no.	SOME190507	First Issue	12.03.19
Client ref.		Revision	AU/CH
		Status	PRELIMINARY

A1

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Rev	Description	Date	Au	Ch
P1	Preliminary Issue	13.12.19	MD	GR
P2	Minor amendments and preparing a preferred plan	17.12.19	MD	GR
P3	Minor changes	07.12.19	MD	-

Project **Monkton Heathfield II**
 Drawing **Concept Plan**

Client	Taunton Deane BC	Office	Portishead
Scale	1:2500 @ A1	Dwg no.	CPO.01
Job no.	TAUN160301	Revision	P3
		Au/Ch	MD/GR
Client ref.		Status	PRELIMINARY

A1

APPENDIX 6

Monkton Heathfield: Land South of Manor Farm, Langaller – Design Guidance and Masterplan Framework

Responses to Public Consultation

Name of Contributor	1. If you wish to make general comments on any aspect of the Design Guidance and Masterplan Framework document please set out your comments below:
Creech St Michael PC	Officers are in the process of sourcing a copy of this representation.
West Monkton PC	Due to the size of this representation it has been attached in full at the end of this table.
Greenslade Taylor Hunt	<p>Please refer to correspondence sent for the attention of Mr A Penna on 5th June 2020 on behalf of our client, for a full response to be considered as part of this consultation relating to Manor Farm and the land to the south.</p> <p>Key comments relating to the Framework Plan include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The proposed employment area is likely to generate longer journeys, higher traffic flows and make sustainable modes of travel less desirable. -The proposed siting of the employment uses would become out of reach of the rest of Taunton, with phase 1 of Monkton Heathfield only just within 800m which is considered to be the benchmark for a walkable neighbourhood. -The employment uses also have particular activities associated with them, and the relationship between these and the adjacent green wedge and green necklace will be stark with a lack of natural surveillance outside working hours. - Other than the immediate land of Manor Farm indicated as employment use, the remainder of our client's land is indicated as a substantial part of the 'Green Necklace' buffer to the M5 motorway to provide 'significant' recreational opportunities. Noting the significance of its delivery, there has been no direct engagement with our client to ensure the proposals are realistic and deliverable, especially as there is a concern that other areas will benefit from building at higher densities due to the extent of greenspace proposed. -Overall we admire the ambitions set out within the recently consulted Design Guidance and Masterplan Framework (DGMF), and the Framework Plan to support the delivery of a garden community to complement the development carried out to date and we hope that our points in our correspondence relating to transport, design, sustainable development and mixed use potential are constructive to help towards achieving this. -We can confirm that our client is willing to consider the provision of strategic green space, however, the land in their ownership is also suitable for some residential development. In particular, a well designed residential development would offer an enhanced setting for the Listed farmhouse than a commercial business park as currently proposed. -It is noted that our client's involvement is critical to the successful delivery of this key strategic allocation to ensure sufficient public open space provision is secured. If these significant areas of public open space cannot be secured, it would undermine the delivery of the wider strategic allocation as well as the Council's Garden Town Vision. This highlights the importance of joint working with our client to help ensure a comprehensive and deliverable masterplan is developed. <p>The full representation has been attached in full at the end of this table.</p>

Jo Pengelley	<p>I have 2 major concerns regarding the proposals.</p> <p>Firstly, the proposed access from the Industrial Estate to Hyde Lane. Hyde Lane is already a dangerous rat run down a road wholly unsuitable for the volume of traffic using it, even with road improvements it is unsuitable for industrial traffic which would be using it if this junction is included. Furthermore, the traffic would then travel through CSM to the A358. Most worryingly this will push more traffic past the school putting the children in yet more danger and add to the traffic problem in CSM caused by MH1.</p> <p>Secondly, I do not think that it is appropriate to have industrial use so close to residential. Post Covid 19 many many more people will work from home so the need to be able to walk/cycle to work is reduced - in any case it is unlikely that the residents will have jobs on the industrial estate near to their homes. It has been noted that the council recognises that there is now a reduced need for industrial units, perhaps it would be better to push any required additional industrial units up to Walford Cross (where there is existing industry) and develop this entire site as residential? It would be much more pleasant for the residents and makes sense that all industrial should be at Walford Cross which has good access in various directions.</p> <p>It is encouraging to read the importance has been placed on plentiful and diverse planting. I would like to see that this is a priority so we can ensure that our wildlife, environment and wellbeing are all supported.</p>
Julie Dines	<p>Page 27 of Part 2 shows a 'key building subject to relocating existing SUDS area'. Langaller is in danger of surface water flooding, as is apparent from Environment Agency maps of the area. Having almost been flooded in the winters of 2013/13 and 2013/14 (sandbags required at my property, Langaller Cottage) I am concerned about any changes to flood mitigation measures.</p> <p>There is passing reference to Manor Farmhouse as it is a listed building, but no proposals as to what will become of it. When will be informed about this?</p>
Suzanne Russell	<p>I don't agree to the development as the impact on the safe route that has been built will no longer be safe. This will be due to the extra traffic due to the development and the impact it will have on our village Creech st Michael as it is currently used as a rat run and the extra traffic past the village school will make that area more congested as it is. This is also not in the Creech st Michael neighbourhood plan.</p> <p>It will also put more strain on the now oversubscribed schools and GPs surgery to take on more patients and pupils in all the nearby schools as everywhere is getting overdeveloped and taking away our green countryside and affecting the wildlife so therefore I am against this development.</p>
Amanda Davies	<p>These plans make a mockery of the 'safe route' which has been created for the protection of our children who have to travel through this area to access Heathfield Community School. I have an older child who attended Heathfield before this route was built and one of his school friends was knocked off of his bike by a Range Rover, thankfully the child was saved by their cycling helmet and a very full rucksack.</p> <p>For once please consider the safety of our children rather than just profits and revenue for the council.</p>
Sam Horder	<p>Enough already!!! How many houses do we need? We have no real police station, Musgrove can't cope with what it has, we have a massive nationwide teacher shortage, the road infrastructure in Taunton is terrible and the J25 project won't help with all these extra vehicles (for every 1 house, there will be at least 2 cars). And where is the wild life going to go, extinct probably? For example, I used to see many dozens of Swallows and Sky Larks over the fields, now within just a year or 2, I only see a small handful. Sorry for the rant, but I am totally against any further development. It is not needed. [A final comment has been removed as it is considered inappropriate for the context].</p> <p>Your Carbon neutral is also a load of bull! The tiny little trees you plant won't come anywhere near to how good the current tree's are, they'll take decades of growing to get even close. And again, regarding the hedgerows.. same thing regarding the wildlife.</p> <p>Please reconsider and stop lining your pockets.</p>
Charlie Cudlip	<p>I still have to finish my analysis of these documents, and will no doubt comment further, but at first past you have totally ignored all comments made by the parish councils. Consultation is pointless if you do-not take note of what is said. We have obviously wasted many hours putting together Neighbourhood Plans and having joint Parish meetings for you to disregard our views. If this is meant to be the guidance framework for</p>

	<p>the developers to follow, that we do not agree with, then we are doomed to have another estate with NO local input that is not in keeping with the RURAL area it is built in.</p> <p>I have now prepared a report based on the three Design Guide documents for the CSM PC. Although most of the content is well presented and has some merit. I am worried that the aspirations for a mainly rural area as it stands is being completely urbanised far beyond the need. You are designing something that people will buy into, a way of life a new vision from the norm. Mostly this is achieved, but with some glaring exceptions. Three story buildings have no place in a community like this, and most certainly not as so called "statement buildings", whose only purpose appears to be to "add some interest" to what could be a pleasant layout of buildings if multiple materials usage was applied rather than height. The employment land that will be accessed from the roundabout on the A38, disturbingly has an exit onto Hyde Lane. This is a traffic disaster for Hyde Lane, the safe route to school and Creech St Michael Village as a whole. Lorries ,vans and cars will be using this entrance if they come from the A358 or the M5 Junction and will "Rat Run" through the village adding to the already unbearable volume of traffic using the road currently. This entrance MUST be removed from the plan forthwith.</p> <p>The document also states that local consultation will be part of the process. I argue that consultation has been at best POOR. I am on the CSM Parish Council, Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Committee and sit on a Joint Panel for the MHUE2 development. Meetings with SWaT have been sparse and difficult to arrange. In honesty it feels that we are only given lip service, as any documents we produce for you or meeting that we actually do get, our recommendations or local knowledge etc are seemingly completely ignored.</p> <p>The issue of local traffic is fast becoming a dangerous nightmare for the local community. It was the number one concern on our NP survey, yet it is being ignored totally in the MHUE2 development planning, and only gets a mention in this Design Guide. We have had many village walk through's, with Highways, SwaT and TDBC over the last couple of years, so our concerns are nothing new, yet they get given very limited weight in this DG.</p> <p>Thank you for reading, please take notice of local opinion!</p>
Neil Tittley	<p>This consultation seems to be very subtle and by stealth, with the added complexity of a password required to access the feedback form. This is inadequate and does not constitute proper consultation that is easily available to the public.</p> <p>Bathpool and Creech St Michael have traditionally been closely linked via Hyde Lane; the proposals appear to cut off this important road network, which is a disgrace and will isolate the two communities. Specifically, children who school in Creech St Michael via be cut off and will need to divert a substantial distance around the site.</p> <p>One of the fields proposed for housing is used by the traveller community and the consultation needs to reach these less accessible individuals and consider their needs.</p> <p>There are important hedges and ecosystems in these fields; any development should deliver net biodiversity gain within the site.</p> <p>The school children and local people currently access the fields daily for walking - there are well worn paths across the fields north of Hyde Lane. These will have been accessed for >7 years and should be declared open access.</p> <p>These fields are a small belt of remaining open space between Monkton Heathfield / Bathpool and Creech St Michael; to build on it would be a travesty.</p> <p>The spine road through the existing new development already cannot cope with the traffic flows during peak hours (before the pandemic), with tail backs from the Creech Castle lights all the way to Manor Farm between 0800 and 0930. These additional homes will worsen the situation and will effectively be locked into their own estate in peak hour.</p>
Lynn Gates	<p>Have you actually read the Creech St Michael Neighbourhood Plan? Can I suggest that you do. Then go back to the drawing board because your current plans totally ignore most of it!</p>

Tina Kerley	The children need a safe area to walk along hyde lane without walking on the road, and without extra traffic being attracted without the road being extended from a lane to two lanes, the children need pavement off the road
Lorna Clark	Hyde Lane Cottages will benefit by becoming a cul de sac. Important that the green buffers and walks and cycleways on the plan are implemented. I think that there should be no vehicular access along Hyde Lane from the development (motorway bridge) into Creech st Micheal in order to enhance pedestrian/cyclists safety and to prevent potential rat run from/to main road into village. It reduces traffic over vulnerable canal bridge. House construction should make for a desirable place to live, such as Lindon Homes - Sweeting Close development off Hyde Lane.
Danni Richards-Loveridge	Please don't take anymore green space away. There already has been so much removed from what was a village surrounded with greenSpaces and wildlife to a village surrounded with houses, meaning more cars, more pollution and noise. My kids felt save here but bringing more cars and people means it's wont be that safe place. So much development has happened in and around Bathpool/ Monkton And creech. There is no need for anymore. If I wanted to live in a town I would have moved to the town centre! It effects house prices and much more. Leave the green space alone!
Yamina Guest	I have big concerns around the relief road feeding into hyde lane, this will cause more traffic feeding into the village which will have no option but to pass the primary school. This will potentially cause a rat run and at keytime it will also affect the safe walking route for the secondary school. Why do you never seem to consider these issues?
Steve Pushen	Very concerned about the road entrance onto Hyde Lane. This a narrow road through residential housing and past a school already used as a rat run by many. The fact that this would now connect to additional housing and industrial units is a big concern as this will increase traffic along Hyde Lane.
Joseph Curry	The proposed development shows an entrance from the industrial land onto Hyde Lane cutting across the new and long fought for 'safe route to Heathfield School'. This needs addressing urgently and the development modified to ensure pedestrian and walker safety. The development will also bring more vehicles onto Hyde Lane and into Creech - a village already busy with traffic using it as a cut through to avoid other busy roads.
Steve Greenhalgh	Having read the proposed layout and entry/exit to the industrial park, I find it hard to believe that you are considering an entry from Hyde Lane. This road if you travel from the A38 at Bathpool it is a single track road with few passing spaces and a narrow canal bridge to pass over, also there are no footpaths in place. If entry was from the village of Creech all traffic would have to pass through a busy residential street with a pre school nursery and primary school holding a total of nearly 300 young children. As a road safety officer for Somerset County Council I feel that access to the site for motorised vehicles should not be permitted, there is also a 2m width restriction in place throughout Creech and an 18T weight limit on the railway bridge.
William Thorpe	It there are some valuable character buildings, that reflect the true historic character of the area in and around the "langaller farm area". And these would be eclipsed by the proposed industrial (employment) areas proposed in that area. It would be far better to continue residential areas northwards from "land south of the manor farm" up towards the monkton phase 2 development. Creating a familiar link for commuters and school children to access the proposed facilities there. This would result in residential use of land around listed buildings, which will uplift the character of the area immeasurably. As planned residents of "land south of the manor farm" will be forced either through convoluted streets of Phase 1, along A38 or through proposed industrial. They will no doubt drive instead, faced with these poor active transport choices.

	<p>A traffic free central boulevard could be created that links areas of residential development running through entire length of Phase 1 and Phase 2, enjoying character of listed buildings, and green areas, and culminate in green necklace around school.</p> <p>Case studies have shown that if an off road route is provided for active transport that is pleasant, and uninterrupted it will be used beyond modelled expectations. For example Bristol > Bath cycle way.</p>
Stephanie Essex	<p>Regarding Langallor Manor Farm site (nb: not Langallor Farm):</p> <p>Plans with industry are not a good fit with the farm</p> <p>Industry not suited to the site</p> <p>Restoring of the farmhouse, outbuildings and barns would be far more suitable</p> <p>Addition of Residential housing on earmarked industry site would be better fit and greatly needed</p> <p>Industry totally unsuitable to be so close to the farmhouse</p> <p>Major changes to plan needed:</p> <p>Restoration of once beautiful Langallor manor farmhouse</p> <p>Conversion of outbuildings and barns to make the listed farmhouse the focal point of the site</p> <p>This area desperately needs residential housing so conversion of outbuildings and barns would be far more suitable</p> <p>Current plans - ridiculous to have green necklace so close to industry, who will want to walk there?</p> <p>Plans need to coordinate with the listed farmhouse and reflect its restoration</p>



Land South of Manor Farm, Langaller Consultation Response

West Monkton Parish Council welcomes this consultation and the opportunity to put forward its comments in relation to the proposals.

This response is made up in five sections, as follows:

1. A statement from Cllr Haskins, Chair of West Monkton Parish Council
2. Structured comments on the proposals
3. Comments in relation to Part 1: Background, Policies and Requirements for Future Applications
4. Comments in relation to Part 2: Context Appraisal Concept and Masterplan
5. Comments in relation to Part 3: Masterplan Detailing and Detail Design
6. Copies of the statements made at the Somerset West and Taunton Council Executive Meeting on 28th January 2020.

Section 1: A statement from Cllr Stuart Haskins, Chair of West Monkton Parish Council

Having been a Councillor of West Monkton Parish for 10 years and the Chairman for the last 3 years I have seen MH1 progress from the planning Stages to the near completion of the build.

During that time, as a Parish Council we have endured numerous frustrations and considerable stress as the development was changed, plans were amended, key deliverables and trigger points were not met, and important dates were missed.

The failure to ensure the development progressed and delivered basic amenities to the new residents is a lesson learnt and one that must not be repeated on this or future developments, for example the provision of public transport from first occupation, recreation spaces or shops. The new residents of this development should not have to wait for years to have the basic qualities of life at the expense of developer financial games and pressure.

The approving bodies must ensure that suitable clauses, trigger points and controls are correctly put in place and not compromised or sold away to deliver other unplanned requirements.

This development and others that follow must exercise “a get it right first time” culture so that the Garden Town vision is truly delivered.

Section 2: Structured comments on the proposals:

Overall

The Parish Council seeks written assurance on agreeing realistic trigger points and implementation plan and to be consulted on these. If any renegotiation is subsequently required, the Parish Council should be involved in the decisions being taken. A series of trigger point should also be agreed to ensure that the industrial units are built in line with the number of houses.

Employment Land

Units on the Industrial site should be limited to category B1 and B2 (not B8) given the lorry and van traffic B8 generates and the look of the site adjacent to housing.

Vehicle access as proposed from the industrial estate onto Hyde Lane should be removed and only pedestrian and cycle access should be provided. Pupils would have to cross this access to get to School on their safe route to School. If vehicular access is not removed it would encourage vehicles to use Hyde Lane; a narrow road on which SCC are about to rollout a calming scheme in view of the parking difficulties and danger to school pupils and health centre users alike.

Connectivity

In addition to the traffic calming, it is proposed that Hyde Lane will become a cycle/footpath but there is a need to upgrade the surfacing over the motorway bridge as this is currently unwalkable (they were not designed to be pavements), neither do they meet the requirements to be a cycleway and the bridge parapets need heightening by Highways England.

The access from the Hardys Road roundabout on the ERR into the site should reflect the road layout already consented in the planning permission for the sports pitches. If the access road takes the route proposed the car park provision for the sports pitches will be removed.

Part of the planned cycleway along the side of the Hyde Lane Cottages (i.e. over the bund) should be removed to avoid overlooking.

Bus Services should be available from day one of the build in order to ensure / embed bus use. Both "rapid" buses direct into Town and "Hopper" buses that run through the estates. The Parish Council would welcome more discussion on the plans for buses.

Design

Sufficient parking spaces should be provided with each house and grass cretes used to enable better on street parking. Where there are grass verges which are not suitable for parking, bollards should be included to prevent parking on grass verges. Knowledge and experience from MH1 should be considered and taken into account in these proposals. Estate roads in MH1 have become impassable to emergency vehicles, refuse wagons, and domestic delivery vehicles when cars are parked on both sides of the street. This has been documented and reported in Roys Place.

Experience of MH1 also demonstrates that courtyard parking is largely not used with the result that on road parking occurs with the subsequent problems of access that creates.

Buildings in the proposal are typically 1 or 2 floors with only some 2 ½ and 3. It is accepted that three-storey buildings will need to be included in the proposals, but these should be within the development rather than an iconic fringe building.

Bungalows should be included in the proposals at 10% of the build at open market value.

The Parish Council is keen to have houses with good design with chimneys, bay windows, balconies etc.

Boundaries should be stone or brick walls and not panel fencing to support the Garden Town feel.

Houses should be orientated to get solar gain.

Houses should have solar panels. To be supplied with invertors and batteries so residents' benefits and only surplus is fed into the grid. Homes should also have accessible charging points for cars. Any boilers installed in new houses must be capable of conversion to an alternative fuel, such as hydrogen to achieve zero emissions, in combination with solar power and other local power source initiatives.

Lighting (LED) should be suitably positioned to avoid solar glare.

Homes should have highspeed internet available from day one.

Community Facilities and Open Space

The proposed provision of allotment plots should be increased to 50 plots.

The proposal should include playgrounds with quality and challenging equipment (LEAP and NEAP).

Further consideration of actions that will enable a sense of community to be established in the development should be included in the proposals beyond green open spaces. Further community infrastructure could be included for example a community building for scouts or guides which there is a need for within the local community. This could be located next to the sports pitches.

The recreational park in Hyde Lane is the closest main Park/Recreational Ground. Good access to it should be ensured with good footpaths/ cycleways.

Proposed tree planting should include heavy standards not whips.

A scheme should be implemented for tree planting along both sides of the motorway in order to screen and reduce noise.

Clarity is sought over management arrangements for the open spaces and these need to be set out within sale contracts. The option to transfer the open space to the Parish Council should be included within the S106 agreement.

Education Provision

It is not clear from the proposals what school provision is being made. There should be sufficient s106 money made available to provide additional classrooms at current local schools already full. As all local schools are full there this will create management issues for the schools and adversely impact on pupils.

Section 3: Comments in relation to Part 1: Background, Policies and Requirements for Future Applications

Page 5 Suggest expand definition of green necklace as per italics

The 'Green Necklace' is a multi-purpose belt of landscaping around the Monkton Heathfield development which provides a buffer to and follows the M5 Motorway corridor *to the south, and to the north provides links to the Quantocks, Hestercombe, Somerset Wood and Maidenbrook Country Park.*

Page 14 between 5.3 and 5.4 may wish to add, West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Parishes both declared Climate and Ecological Emergency in December 2019 and are seeking to include appropriate revisions to reflect this statement in the review of the joint NP review currently underway. The revisions to the NP will sit within the policy documents produced by SWTC and SCC.

Page 14 5.6 Listed actions, see below. Is anything further needed to ensure delivery of the listed actions?

- Transport

Suggest that the only way for public transport to be adopted as a genuine better alternative to the car is to have subsidised 'hopper' buses running round the estate every 10 minutes or so as soon as possible after the occupation of, say, the first 10 houses – to set the pattern, so that car use becomes a poor second. See also 7.15 -7.20.

- Energy

Suggest the area is compact enough to consider a district heating scheme. Orientate houses to maximise solar gain, so may have to adjust road layout. In addition any boilers installed in new houses must be capable of conversion to an alternative fuel, such as hydrogen to achieve zero emissions, in combination with solar power and other local power source initiatives.

- Built environment

May wish to include reference to SCC Somerset Pollinator Policy

- Natural Environment

Suggest addition of text in italics

- Empowering residents and communities to deliver local wildlife projects. *This could be achieved by a determination to hand over ownership and management of public open spaces to the Parish Council at the earliest opportunity, for PC to be involved during construction and delivery of POS, design in areas for future use as community gardens (allow community to grow and assume initiative, rather than delivering 'ready-made').*

- Water

Water butts in all gardens (part of WM & CF NP policies). Grey water schemes for recycling (and not to accept argument put forward by developer that grey water scheme not required because they fit smaller toilet cisterns).

Page 21 Tree Planting

'7.12 The Council recently committed to prioritise the planting of new trees and considers this an important aspect in the future for many reasons which include the sequestration of CO2 and the positive aspects of urban shading and cooling to the climate. The aim is to provide tree species in locations suitable for the development and the trees themselves. New woodlands should contain a variety of species to avoid the creation of areas of monoculture'

Suggest that very sadly also need to define preparation of ground, watering, mulching, feeding, staking, and details of a regular maintenance regime (e.g. weekly watering) and any other factors necessary to ensure the establishment of the trees – witness MH1 tree losses.

Page 21 7.13 A better quality of life

Suggest include communal gardens for apartment blocks to ensure residents have some private open space to sit outside and enjoy nature. Also need to include balconies, or if not whole balconies then as a minimum a Juliet balcony for health and well-being of residents.

Page 22 7.17 Transport

Reference made to 'existing bus stops'. Suggest may need to cross reference with J Perrett SCC who is administering the s106 subsidised bus service in MH1. Suggest it might be preferable to aim for an improvement on the current offering. In particular, include a requirement that any bus stops included in this site should be built as bus shelters with a perch rail, and supplied with suitable electrics to run an electronic information board inside the shelter informing when the next bus is due. This may seem expensive but use of the bus must become a more attractive offering than a car, and this may go some way to address this. See public transport systems in Cardiff and on the Wirral.

7.18 Rapid Transport system

Suggest the need to travel would be reduce if the Local Centre and the District centre for MH1 and MH2 respectively are delivered – otherwise residents will use a car to go to Aldi's or Sainsburys.

'7.20 Furthermore, the development is proposed to encourage local scale employment rather than a strategic employment location to reduce the use of cars within the area'

Suggest only deliverable if the units are marketed in a meaningful way that gets results.

Observation: defining delivery of the site should also be followed up by Enforcement actions in the event of non-delivery, therefore could planning conditions be drafted to reflect this? S106 agreements should be index linked to ensure they can be delivered.

Suggest – District Rangers to support local policing, place making, community initiatives, delivery of Travel Plans, supervise community gardens/public opens space.

Page 27 Observation

'The development will incorporate the Secured by Design Principles. These principles encourage the adoption of crime prevention measures in the design of development. The local Police Architectural Liaison Officer (ALO) will be consulted to ensure that principles are properly adhered to'.

Suggest comments from Police ALO need to be given more weight. During consultation on MH1, the Police were consulted on a number of parcels and received either 'no report' or a document that developers ignored.

Page 29 11.2

'The Councils preferred approach is the submission of a single Outline or Full Planning application for the whole site, which includes a Masterplan, and is granted subject to a planning legal agreement ensuring the phased delivery of the housing and employment areas, together with the green infrastructure identified in this document'.

Suggest – *and Highways Infrastructure with implementation schedule.*

Page 29 11.3

‘Standalone proposals for housing which do not deliver employment development will be regarded as piecemeal and will not be approved. The Council would favourably consider standalone employment development provided proposals could demonstrate that they were in conformity with the design guidance set out in this document and would not prejudice the implementation of the of this Masterplan and Development Guide’.

Suggest Design Review Panel reports may be available on request, so PCs can see where developers are up to (long shot!)

Page 31 11.27

‘The likely ‘Heads’ of a S106 will relate to affordable housing, open space including children’s play, and provision of a Travel Plan and transport mitigation measures as required. Other heads may relate to flood risk and SUDS, public art, and such other matters as required to ensure the comprehensive delivery of the site’.

Suggest include *delivery of employment areas and District/Local Centres*.

Section 4: Comments in relation to Part 2: Context Appraisal Concept and Masterplan

Pages 5-18 Disappointing that a photo shot and analysis of The Street, West Monkton was not included (or any other parts of the 'old' village). Was there a Design reason for excluding it?

Page 18 2.2

'The site is located south of the MH1 and south east of the "The Hatcheries"'

Observation: the term 'The Hatcheries' (also used elsewhere in this document) is no longer correct. The name applied to the chicken rearing unit that was based on the site where Canal View is now built. For ease of reference and clarity it is suggested that the term 'Canal View' is used.

Page 20 3.1

Suggest removal of reference to the '...Local Centre under construction' as it is a part of MH1 that the developers have apparently failed to deliver.

Page 24 5.3

Bullet 4

'A small part of the employment area is proposed to be accessed via Langaller Road to minimise the amount of traffic created along this road. This area is suitable for employment generating uses beyond traditional B1 uses'

Suggest the 'uses beyond B1' should be spelled out at the earliest opportunity to the community and all consultees. The delivery of a large B8 'shed' type unit off Hardys Road came as a total surprise to local residents, (they were expecting B1) including particularly those who had purchased houses now overlooked by the B8 shed.

Bullet 6 delete reference to the 'Local Centre' for reasons given on para: Page 20 3.1

Bullet 12

'Just north of Hyde Lane Cottages and part of the Green Wedge and Green Necklace, this green space is primarily intended to retain the 'green' setting of the cottages. It will provide significant areas of native woodland and footpath links between the new development, the MH1 site and the new recreation ground'.

This area is outside the red line of the site, so who will deliver it and maintain it as part of Land south of Langaller Manor Farm development?

Page 26 6.3

'6.3 A style of architecture needs to be adopted which gives clear identity to the development, one which uses materials and elements drawn from precedents in and around Taunton'.

Observation: The start of this document uses a number of different architectural styles found in Taunton and the parishes beyond as exemplars. Regrettably, there are no examples shown for either of the Conservation Villages of Cheddon Fitzpaine or West Monkton (see note: para1 at beginning of this document). Was there a design reason not to reference typical Quantock villages close by?

This para 6.3 is played out in Document 3 where a number of different architectural styles are used to identify separate areas within the site.

Page 26 6.6

'The Green Wedge / Green Necklace area are proposed to be ecological areas which enhance the wildlife and biodiversity and are designed for largely daytime use. This will limit the need for lighting within the area during night-time'.

Suggest this statement may need to be reviewed when the routes through the green necklace have been finalised. In winter it can remain dark until 8.00am and daylight can end close to 4.00pm in the late afternoon. If the routes through the green necklace are determined to be useful through routes for pedestrians then it might be in the interests of pedestrian safety to install low/ground level, suitable LED warm white light, possibly motion sensitive lighting just so that users can see where the path is going.

Page 27

Suggestion that the Illustrative Masterplan includes how a District Heating scheme would be included and delivered within this site.

Page 27 Indicative plan for Land south of Langaller

'Key building (subject to relocating existing SUDs area)'

More detail is required to explain what underlies this small label on the indicative masterplan. The attenuation pond has been built, has it been connected to a drainage system already in place, where will the infill come from and what settlement issues are likely, where will the replacement SUDs engineering and attenuation pond be located?

Is there a function in mind for the 'key building'? generally speaking, the buildings identified as 'iconic' buildings in MH1 are not regarded at the least bit iconic, and some more imaginative design would be required for the 'key' building suggested .

Page 30 Bullet 4

'Providing the potential to create additional sport facilities to the west of the site in tandem with playing fields /pavilion'

It is noted that that this is related to undelivered S106 relating to provision of sports pitches for MH1. The indicative plans show that some of the area designated as sports pitches will be removed to make way for the road: how will this be compensated, as it will mean that the quota of open green space for MH1 will not have been delivered?

Page 30 Bullet 5

'Providing a wooded landscape setting within the Green Necklace which will include considerable tree planting. Key views towards the Blackdown Hills AONB will be protected'.

Suggestion: maybe include a reference to requirements for ground preparation, planting, mulching, staking, top dressing, watering, and any other measures to ensure successful establishment, ongoing maintenance and management of the plants so that eventually there will be a 'wooded landscape setting'.

Page 31 Pocket Parks

'8.9 The spaces should be designed to benefit the new community by creating 'gathering hubs' for socialising, relaxing and reflecting'.

Suggest therefore that developers are required to install suitable *high quality* street furniture, whether it be benches of wood or stone, or seats of recycled materials, beside which are located litter bins, and intermittently dog bins, complemented by imaginative planting.

Page 32 Public Transport

‘9.1 The development is located adjacent to the MH1 development which is served sufficiently by bus routes connecting the area with the surrounding including Taunton and Bridgwater. Additionally, the future Bus&Ride provisions proposed in connection with the MH2 development will create an alternative rapid bus service in walkable distance from the site.

9.2 The residential area of MH1 to the north of the site incorporates a bus route connecting to the centre of Taunton to the west and Bridgwater to the east.

9.3 With the exception of a limited number of units along the Green Necklace edge, the majority of new dwellings within this site will have access to a bus stop located no more than 400m away.’

Observation: many local users of routes in Monkton Heathfield will disagree with this halcyon picture of public transport. Suggest that serious negotiation with commercial provider and/or provision made privately or with SCC is paramount to successfully deliver a system that results in the car being the poor alternative. Hopper buses every ten minutes. Take the example from cities where public transport is a successful alternative to the car. Experience suggests that MH1 public transport/Travel Plan is lip service only. Suggest do not build bus stops (Flag type) but bus shelters so people can wait for a bus without getting wet, and have somewhere to perch whilst waiting, with wiring to the shelter to allow electronic information boards to be installed.

Page 33 Cycle paths

‘Within low speed or traffic calmed ‘safe routes’, cyclists would be able to mix with vehicles with minimal hazard. Also, there will be a dedicated cycle route along the downgraded part of Hyde Lane connecting to the east with Creech St Michael and to the west with the proposed new sport facilities’.

Suggest delete or rephrase ‘proposed new sports facilities’ because it is misleading. Suggest that cycle routes should be planned to link with existing routes to allow easy access to Nexus, and other employment sites, e.g.at Walford Cross (WM & CF NP policy T1).

Page 33 Cycle paths

‘Cycle paths will require:

- Clear entry/exit points with good surveillance.
- The adoption and maintenance by the Local Authority (where required)’.

Responsibility for maintenance should be defined, will it rest with SCC or SWTC?

Section 5: Comments in relation to Part 3: Masterplan Detailing and Detail Design

Page 4 Garden gateways

“Garden Town Gateways’ 1.4 The site’s location on one of Taunton’s key entry points calls for landscape treatment which exemplifies the garden community theme’.

The Parish Council has a strongly held preference that the ‘Gateways’ are not white picket fence as per the approach into Somerton (from the Langport direction) but something reflective of the local area history, for example an agriculturally based piece of architecture/stone troughs/ rocks.

Page 7 2.2 Making our public realm & transport work harder for us

“The layout of routes addresses strategic vehicular and pedestrian/cycle connections to the town centre, to existing and future residential neighbourhoods nearby and to local facilities. Careful consideration has also been paid to the treatment of Hyde Lane to maintain it as a through-route, whilst treating it so as to discourage rat-running’.

Suggest layout of routes should include bus routes, with bus shelters, cycle routes delineated from pavements (take the example of the Netherlands and Northern Germany).

Page 8 Primary Street

‘• Street trees within verge on one side of the street, where there are no street trees front garden boundaries must be provided in the form of tall native hedges’;

Observation: great idea but how tall is tall? How close to house front windows/ how much light excluded from front rooms of houses?

Page 9 Primary Street – Landscape/public realm

‘• Street art and furniture are generally provided within the key spaces. They should be located along desire lines but should avoid obstructing opening or footpaths. Seating facilities should also be regularly spaced along pedestrian routes to allow elderly and disabled people to rest’;

Suggest litter bins beside all seats and intermittently spaced dog bins.

Page 9 Primary Street- Built form

‘• 3 storey tall buildings to function as key or focal building’

Understand the need for ‘iconic buildings’ as reference points for successful place making, but a serious review of the architectural design is needed as the current offerings in MH1 do little to inspire, and do not live up to the title ‘iconic buildings’.

Page 9 Primary Street – Parking

• Parking courts to the rear of apartment buildings provided;

Suggestion, there needs to be an assurance that provision of parking courts will not interfere with freedom to orientate apartment blocks so that private communal gardens are provided for apartment dwellers that are sensitively placed and not in deep shade all the time.

Generally speaking, courtyard parking is not favoured by residents of MH1 who have them as their parking provision, which results in on street parking. The Police Architectural Liaison Officer may also have a view on them.

Page 11 Garden streets – Landscape/public realm

‘• Where green verge widths allows for it, verge zones can be provided and paved for on-street parallel parking ‘

Suggestion to use grasscrete paving materials rather than regular paving – will look green and be better for the environment.

2.5 Traffic calming

Observation from MH1 that where traffic calming is attempted by use of different surfacing and pinch points, all good design ideas, the reality is that absence of road markings causes driver uncertainty as to who has right of way, and speeding through unmarked streets. ‘Removal of clutter’ and ‘reliance on eye contact’, in the experience of those living in the area around Community Square in MH1, doesn’t work in these circumstances.

It is appreciated that design of street types and their hierarchy is subject to government guidelines (Manual for Streets), but the practical experience of MH1 is relevant. Some roads in MH1 are at times virtually impassable because courtyard parking is not used in the way anticipated, turning circles and visibility splays can be jeopardised by parked cars, meaning that the actual road width is insufficient for delivery vehicles, buses and emergency services to get through.

Page 16 Car Parking

‘3.3 Preferably, all allocated parking spaces should be provided with electric charging points’.

Suggest remove the word ‘preferably’, because if its preferable i.e. involves an element of choice, a developer is less likely to install it.

For the same reason

‘3.6 A significant proportion of parking should be on permeable surfacing’

‘significant proportion’ needs to be more closely defined.

For the same reason

‘3.7 Following the Council’s climate emergency declaration developments should offer opportunities to provide allocated parking spaces and/or garages with electric charging points, communal charging stations or serve dwellings with the necessary wiring to accommodate charging infrastructure in the future’

Because as it is written as an option, it is likely that only wiring to the dwelling will be installed.

The three comments above based on experience in MH1, where streetlights were installed, but without any wiring to provide power.

Page 21 Figure 20 Spaces Location Plan.

Suggest block 1 is redrawn to reduce its size, currently it is showing areas not within the red line and it gives an incorrect impression.

Page 22 6.6 Hyde Common

‘Hyde Common to be designed and landscaped at later stage’

Another small label on an indicative plan. Suggest that if Hyde Common is to serve the function described on page 22 it needs to be designed and landscaped right alongside the houses being built. Otherwise there is a strong possibility it will be used as a site for storage of builders materials and waste, leading to land compaction and contamination, and as seen in MH1, effective removal for a long period of significant open space for health and wellbeing of residents of surrounding properties who will have been sold their house with the promise of Hyde Common being in front of them. See illustration on page 22.

The design guidance states that it 'fosters community' but provision of green open spaces isn't quite the same as fostering community. There is no school provided, and no building for community use. The area of Hyde Common should be kept as open space, so there would seem little opportunity on the site to include a community building or other place where people may gather, although provision of allotments within the green necklace will go some way to address this.

Page 23 Hyde Common area 6.10

'Architecturally the more formal buildings should reflect the Edwardian period evident in many parts of Taunton including Staplegrove Road and Richmond Road.'

It should be noted that WM&CF Neighbourhood Plan Policy H2 supports the use of local styles and materials.

Housing Policy H2: External Materials for Residential Development Residential developments must incorporate the use of appropriate local and traditional external building materials, such as red sandstone* (or suitable equivalent) and natural slate/natural clay roof tiles (or suitable equivalent), particularly with respect to the use of traditional materials on prominent entrance and corner buildings).

Page 30 Northern Avenue 6.3

It is noted that in the Proposed Illustrative Masterplan, there are a number of houses shown at the top end of Northern Avenue which are parallel with the A38 Eastern Relief Road and separated from it by hedges. Acoustic fencing is used further down the ERR to protect houses of MH1 - on the left-hand side travelling towards Bridgwater between Hardys Road roundabout and the Cricket Club roundabout. What plans are in place to protect the residents of those houses from noise pollution from the ERR?

Section 6: Copies of the statements made at the Somerset West and Taunton Council Executive Meeting on 28th January 2020.

Three relevant statements were made at the SWT Executive Meeting on 29th January in relation to these proposals. The Parish Council would like these statements considered as part of this consultation. The statements were made by Cllr Alan Hall, Cllr Mark Besley and Michael Lind from Monkton Elm Garden Centre. The statements made are included below.

Cllr Alan Hall

As Vice Chairman to West Monkton Parish Council and to the Joint Committee and a resident of MH1 for last 5 years, there are major lessons to be learnt which cannot be ignored moving forward with the 2 planning presentation before you this evening.

The spine road through MH1 has caused controversy from day one, firstly it is not wide enough to have street parking and also a bus route. Although parking for some residents is in courtyard parking this is ignored. If emergency vehicles need to get through there will be problems at certain times of the day. Additional radius zones on some of the bends to allow buses through are being used as parking. Parking recesses along the pavement would solve some of the problems as has been done on other developments around Taunton.

The road network needs to be phased and adopted by SCC as soon as a phase is completed so that road signage, speed reduction signs and road markings can be put into place. For 5 years we have been lucky that no serious accidents have happened. Thus, highlighting the need for tighter contracts with developers on phased completion. Road designs around a square in MH1, which is a children's play area, although conforming to radius guidelines when assembled together as a chicane to reduce speed, drivers cut across the junctions forcing other drivers to brake. Look at Google earth to show the problem it highlights the track of tyre marks.

Rear parking courtyards are a "throwback to the 1960's and, significantly under the POLICE "Secured by Design Guidelines" are discouraged for the following reasons – "They introduce access to the vulnerable rear elevations of dwellings where the majority of burglary is perpetrated. In private developments they are often unlit and therefore increase the risk of crime. Ungated courtyards provide areas of concealment which can encourage anti-social behaviour." Resident's vehicles from the flats are parked on the road all the way up to the A38 Langaller roundabout. As a whole, planning only deals with what is in front of them, here we have a different situation and I highlight this with this overall plan of the area which needs understanding by the planning/executive committee.

Design of the total road structure needs the local experts to be involved at early design stage and not end up with a predesigned plan with no input early enough to safeguard the community i.e. Parish Councils. The Parish Councils, representing the residents, have the local knowledge and expertise to work hand in glove with planning/developer and enable a concise thought out plan to move forward to scrutiny. I do not see what the reluctance is to have meetings very early on and not end up with a presented plan a week before it is presented to the executive.

The situation is that we have reached an agreement with Planning at the presentation on 20th January. and wish it to be duly recorded that Creech St Michael and West Monkton joint panel are to draw an overlay plan to the local road network that will work for all concerned, local current employers included, and still maintain the link for walking/cycling between developments and eliminate the rat running that is now occurring and safeguard Monkton Elm garden centre, Proctors farm and other local businesses. This is will take into account MH2 proposals and future planned developments.

Employment land development for Langaller site needs to be for start-up business only and not end up as the development allowed on MH1 where properties alongside this are fighting to keep the value of their properties. The size of buildings was well over the perception of the local community and should never have been allowed. The road access is designed incorrectly, and vehicles have to go across to the wrong side of the

road to be able to turn in to the site. The building size was not controlled and were allowed to be 1m higher than specified.

I urge you to take note of all the written submission sent into this assemble, as we have to deal with the consequences of your decisions.

Cllr Mark Besley

Good evening members of the Executive my name is Mark Besley, I am the highways officer for West Monkton Parish Council. I live at Prockters Farm and would like to represent local businesses (including the Monkton Inn pub, local farms, and businesses at Prockters) who would be affected by the proposed highways design for Monkton Heathfield phase 2 development.

Mike Lind a director of Monkton Elm garden centre will speak separately regarding his concerns. I would like to implore you, the Executive Committee to require that the Highways Authority and the Council reconsider the closure of the main road between the Cricket Club and Langaller roundabouts. It's very disappointing that the concerns already identified by the parish council regarding the road closure and communicated to the town council on the 25th of April 2019 have not been addressed by this Concept Plan (I have a copy of that communication here if any-one would like to see it).

At Prockters we have 15 independent businesses on site including which rely on access to their businesses by an adequate road system. The farm has 220 acres of land to the east that as the plan stands could only be accessed using unsuitable 'estate type' roads – we regularly transport hay, silage, manure, cattle and sheep using 30 foot tractor and trailers and articulated commercial 55 foot long lorries.

We also operate a car boot sale at Prockters (which has full planning permission) and regularly generates over 4,500 car movements between 7am and 2pm on a Sunday. The fields which hold the car boot sales are not in our ownership, but we have an agreement that they will not be developed for at least the next four years. The combined businesses at Prockters employ 55 people and contribute between £10–15,000 in business rates per year.

The effects of forcing Coaches, Milk Tankers, Agricultural Vehicles and Articulated Lorries accessing local farms and businesses and the thousands of visitors to Monkton Elms and Prockters has not been thought through by this plan. The District Centre has 90-degree bend and is marked as a 'node' or joining point and is likely to have a high pedestrian use.

My understanding is that there has been no traffic modelling carried out to see the effects of this highway design on car flows it seems incredible that no real analysis of traffic flows was made prior to the Plan being published – now is the time to get the Plan redesigned.

The aim of the pedestrianisation of the road is (as we have been told) to link the two phases of the development together – there is sufficient space as it stands for the existing road between the roundabouts to be made much more attractive and achieve this objective – traffic can be calmed considerably – the road made into a tree-lined open boulevard with pedestrian crossings and bus stops. Forcing all traffic through the District Centre will detract from the 'Garden Town' ethos of the development.

I think it's fair to say that the community feel very let down by both developers and the authorities regarding MH phase 1 – assurances, indeed legal agreements have been reneged upon or diluted so that what has been delivered in MH1 bares little relationship to what the community was promised. Without going into detail now on MH1 the density of housing has increased significantly, employment land has not been delivered, retain units are likely to become residential, the social housing element has been significantly reduced, relief roads have not been built and Phase One local centre has been greatly reduced in size.

Members of the Executive Committee I would like to request that you insist that the highways design shown is changed and not just make a commitment to 'look at the design' – we are asking for your help as the Executive of this Council- the road should be kept open albeit changed in design and the wishes of the parish councils, local residents and local businesses respected.

Thank you.

Michael Lind, Monkton Elm Garden Centre

Good Evening. Thank you for the opportunity to address you. My name is Michael Lind. I am a solicitor and the Managing Director of Monkton Elm Garden Centre, a family run business approaching its fourth decade serving residents of Taunton and neighbouring local communities.

I briefly wanted to address three points:

1. Our business and its role in the community
2. The impact of the proposed highways design for Monkton Heathfield phase
3. Confirm our intention to work with SWT Executive Committee to address these challenges

Our site has been part of the local community for more than 100 years. Currently, we are a 'bricks and mortar' business where customers choose to visit in their quest to find specific products or services. As a green, environmentally conscious business, we help keep Taunton's gardens, schools, and green spaces full of healthy flourishing trees and plants. We are helping Taunton to reduce its carbon emissions. Hands-on educational activities and events are run throughout the year and we also act a meeting space for local residents, care homes and individuals with special needs. Our restaurant provides a range of food and drinks all day – many of whom do so by bus or pedestrian routes from MH1.

We are (possibly) the largest employer in the area with over 120 loyal and long-serving members of staff. In some cases, third generation family members work with us. Importantly, we also employ a number of older members of staff who normally find it challenging to travel great distances and hold down jobs. We also support and work with a number of local businesses and growers – we are proud to be part of a thriving Somerset business community.

Central to our ability to continue to serve our community and remain a sustainable and viable business is the essential requirement of appropriate access to the national road infrastructure. This impacts staff, customers, and delivery access to the property.

Madam Chair and members of the Executive Committee: The proposed highways design plan for MH2, if implemented as is, will have a significant and detrimental effect on our business, the staff we employ, the customers who visit us as well as numerous local businesses and south west regional suppliers who are dependent on our viability. The effects are numerous but for the purposes of this evening, I will only focus on three:

Pollution. The proposed plans will increase journey time for staff, customer and delivery vehicle movements arriving from north of the garden centre, who will be required to go into Taunton and back up the A3259 to the garden centre. This will result in an increase of carbon emissions and resultant air pollution.

Congestion. Delivery vehicles, whether arriving from the south or the north, will be required to travel into Taunton and back up the A3259 to the garden centre. These vehicle movements will impact traffic volumes in and around Creech Castle, the Toneway Roundabout and Obridge, in addition to the residential zones created in MH1.

Employment. Monkton Elm will be more difficult to visit as a result of these plans. This will directly impact the viability of the business to continue to trade and employ staff.

Whether it's once in a generation, once a year or every day, it is not enough to just build houses to meet government targets, we have to plan for and create sustainable, vibrant environments. Households generate demand for goods of all types from cars to coffee to plants to clothes, the design needs to accommodate

these and also focus on how an established community centric business can contribute to your climate change policies.

The South West has just under 2.5 vehicle movements per household per day. For the projected 1,500 homes in Monkton Heathfield Phase 2, that amounts to 3,750 vehicle movements per day, not taking into account existing daily commuter movements from north of Taunton, deliveries/failed deliveries and return logistics which are set to increase significantly with the growth of online retailing.

We therefore request the Committee reviews the plan to pedestrianize the A38, particularly the section between the roundabout adjacent to the cricket ground and the Langaller roundabout at the base of the new Eastern Relief Road. It cannot be sustainable to funnel all the traffic through the new District Centre. We also seek the Council's assurance that they will commission a comprehensive transport study to understand the wider infrastructure requirements to meet the needs of the proposed Monkton Heathfield Phase 2 developments taking into account the changes in consumer behaviour.

Monkton Elm has the capacity to continue to be part of a wider, environmentally sustainable solution, which can also help address some of the wider climate change needs of the local community:

- As a community meeting place
- Through the sale of relevant local products (reducing the need to unnecessary car journeys and encouraging carbon off-setting)
- As a local employer supporting over 120 families

Monkton Elm welcome the opportunity to engage with the Somerset West and Taunton Council together with other authorities, and the Monkton Heathfield Parish Council, to address the above and find a workable solution to the wider the challenges faced by the development of MH2.

Thank you.

Your Ref:
Our Ref: AM/Langaller
Date: 2nd June 2020

Mr A Penna
Garden Town Co-ordinator
Somerset West and Taunton
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Belvedere Road Taunton
TA1 1HE

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Dear Mr Penna

DESIGN GUIDANCE AND MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK CONSULTATION RESPONSE

We act on behalf of our client Mr B Jeffery, who is the owner of Land at Langaller Manor Farm, Langaller, Taunton TA2 8DA. The purpose of this letter is to comment on the draft Design Guidance and Masterplan Framework (DGMF). We understand that the deadline for the submission of consultation responses is 5pm on Friday 5th June, and we therefore trust that the following comments will be taken into consideration to inform any necessary revisions in light of the comments made.

The Site

The Land in our client's ownership is outlined indicatively below white (referred to as 'The Land' hereafter). The Land comprises of 13.8 acres of agricultural land that is split by the M5 motorway. The majority of the site is accessed from the west side in close proximity to the relief road constructed as part of the Monkton Heathfield development.



Figure 1- Aerial image of The Land in client's ownership (indicatively outlined in white for reference).

Policy and planning history background

Critical to understanding the possible implications of the DGMF on The Land, is understanding the relevant planning policy and application background. The Taunton Deane Core Strategy (adopted September 2012) sets out the spatial planning concepts of the land south of Langaller and the policy requirements for development proposals. The concept plan below indicates the suggested employment area which was later consolidated as part of the strategic site allocation SS1 as mixed use in the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (adopted December 2016). The Land forms part of this allocation.

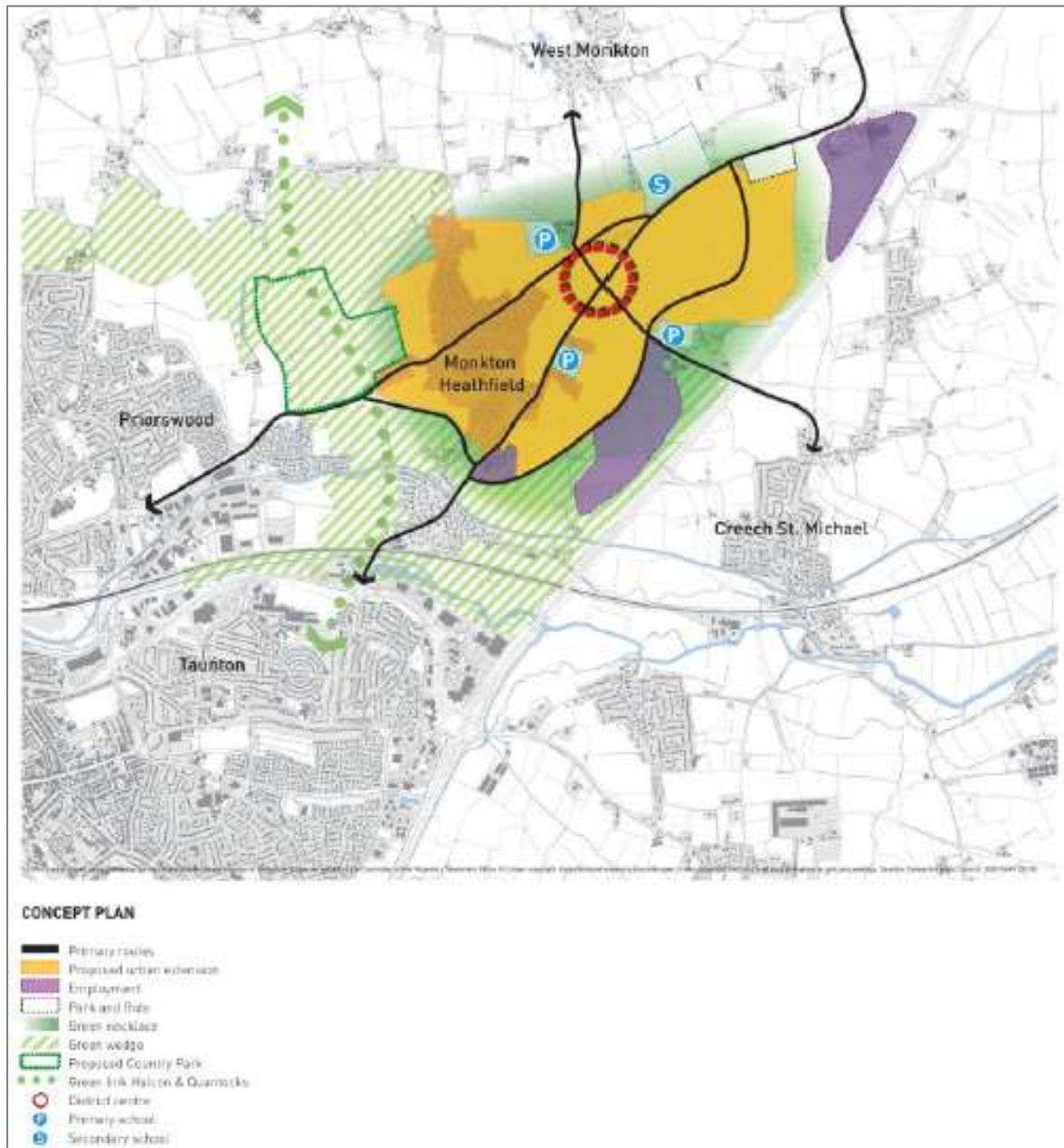


Figure 2- Concept Plan from Taunton Deane Core Strategy 2011-2028. Shows our client's site as employment use in purple.

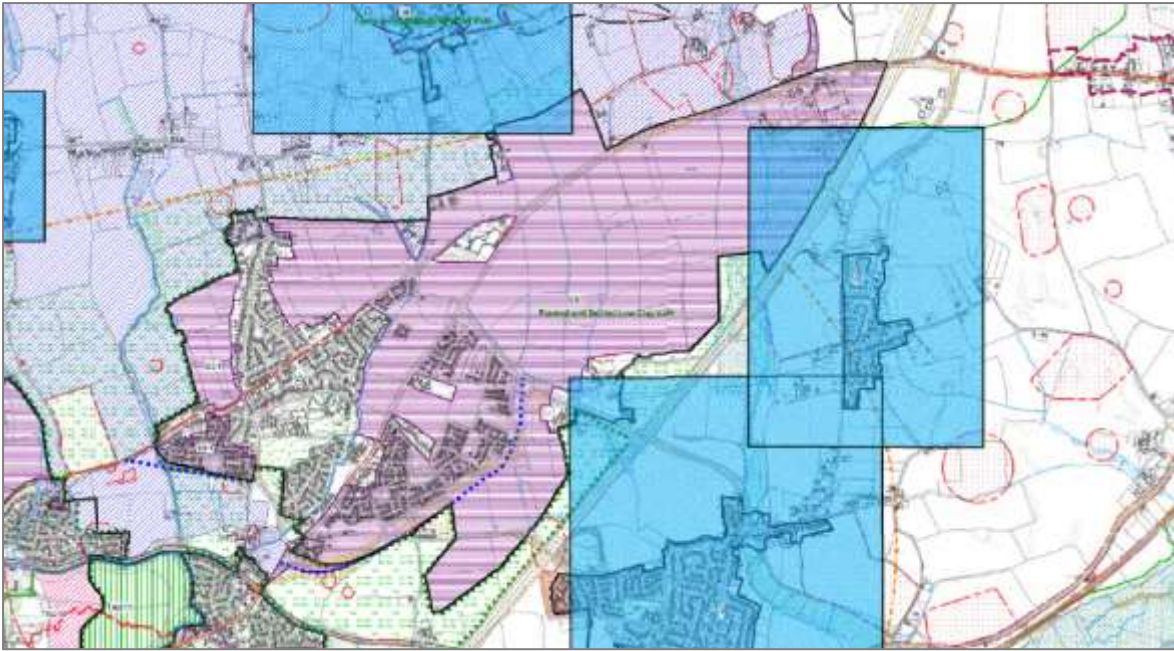


Figure 3- Extract from Site Allocations and Development Management Policies 2016.

Policy SS1 within the Core Strategy sets out the policy requirements for the land to deliver “**a new sustainable neighbourhood** [...] **through a coordinated and comprehensive approach**”. The following requirements are noted for reference:

- “22.5 hectares of additional employment land for research and development (B1 (b)), light industrial (B1 (c)), general industrial (B2) and storage and distribution (B8) **to be provided in the first phase of development**, of which, 3 ha to be at and adjacent to The Hatcheries and **19.5 hectares south of Langaller**. A further 10 ha shall be reserved for longer term release around Walford Cross;
- A multi-purpose ‘green necklace’ of landscape and public open space surrounding the settlement providing allotments, outdoor recreation and wildlife habitat. This will also include:
 - A 20m wide buffer of woodland planting around the boundaries facing bat activity from Hestercombe House SAC;
 - Off-site offset woodland habitat in accordance with the recommendations of Hestercombe House SAC Appropriate Assessment to compensate for the loss of habitat of lesser horseshoe bats. The off-site offset habitat should be functional prior to the commencement of any development north of the A3259; and
 - **A belt of landscaping between the motorway and the development areas**” [text underlined by author for emphasis].

This was with the intention to utilise the employment land “to provide local employment opportunities in line with housing growth, reducing the need to travel and assisting self-containment”, as per paragraph 5.13 of the Core Strategy.

This was originally accommodated within the Outline planning application 48/05/0072 that was allowed at appeal on 22nd October 2008 (ref: APP/D3315/A/07/2055995). The appeal decision states masterplan drawing No. ACD5294/001 Revision A within the additional documents that supported the allowed appeal. The below extract from the masterplan details the envisaged uses associated with

phase 1 of the Monkton Heathfield Development that includes employment use along the east side of the relief road.



Figure 4- Extract from masterplan for application ref: 48/05/0072.

Draft Design Guidance and Masterplan Framework

Taking the above into consideration a clear shift can be seen that has moved the employment need from the original site that obtained Outline planning permission (ref: 48/05/0072) to the north of the site, as indicated on the illustrative masterplan in Part 3 of the DGMF shown below.



Figure 5- Illustrative masterplan from Part 3 of the DGMF.

Transport impacts

The DGMF acknowledges that the original housing targets for the area allocated under Policy SS1 are no longer achievable, hence the release of previously allocated employment land to residential. A new approach should not, in our view, sterilise the ability of our client to deliver residential development on The Land.

Revisiting paragraph 5.13 of the Core Strategy and the justification of the site to provide much need employment uses to reduce the need to travel and support self-containment, raises the following points:

- Moves the proposed employment site further away from the centre of Taunton which is a key source of prospective employees.
- Is further away from key highway infrastructure links such as the M5 and Creech Castle Junction on Toneway.

This is likely to generate longer journeys, higher traffic flows and make sustainable modes of travel less desirable. This is even if the proposed Park and Ride site comes to fruition given the difficulties encountered with maintaining existing sites. Bearing in mind the ongoing developments of Nexus 26 and Bridgwater Gateway as well, emphasises the importance of striking the right balance in sustainable development terms.

The above is also at odds with the rationale set out in the Constraints and Opportunities Plan in Part 2 of the DGMF, as shown below, that highlights the potential for Manor Farm to provide a point of access into the phase, with the Concept Masterplan in chapter 5 stating that a small part of the employment area will be accessed at this point to minimise traffic created along this road, yet is further away from key strategic traffic routes.



Figure 5- Extract from Constraints and Opportunities Plan.



Figure 6- Extract of Concept Masterplan.

Well-designed sustainable neighbourhoods

These points contradict the promotion of mixed-use neighbourhoods with interconnected street patterns to help ensure daily needs are within walking distance of most residents, as promoted in *Manual for Streets*. The proposed siting of the employment uses would become out of reach of the rest of Taunton, with phase 1 of Monkton Heathfield only just within 800m which is considered to be the benchmark for a walkable neighbourhood.

The employment uses also have particular activities associated with them, and the relationship between these and the adjacent greenspace will be stark with a lack of natural surveillance outside working hours. This may create unattractive spaces prone to vandalism to undermine the vision of the Council. This could be better addressed with mixed uses promoted throughout the site.

We suggest that residential development on The Land be considered further in order to create a truly mixed use community for the future. This would complement the more sensitive landscape setting of the site in contrast to the larger office blocks such a site would likely attract, to help create a finer grain of built development along the fringes.

The siting of these large office blocks will undoubtedly have an effect on the setting of the farmhouse, which is Grade II Listed.

We also question what benefit the strategic green space will have for future residents when it is so distant from the proposed residential development. Greenspace should be better related to residential development such that future residents utilise the space as best as possible. Residential development on The Land, particularly to the north, would assist.

This may provide an opportunity to re-evaluate the role of The Land as an opportunity to contribute positively towards the Council's housing supply to mitigate the under delivery of phase 1.



Figure 7- Extract of masterplan for employment area from Section 7 of The Guidance.

Strategic greenspace

Other than the immediate land of Manor Farm indicated as employment use, the remainder of The Land is indicated as a substantial part of the 'Green Necklace' buffer to the M5 motorway to provide 'significant' recreational opportunities. This includes a wooded landscape setting to provide one of a number of large open spaces as set out in paragraphs 8.5 to 8.7 of the DGMF.

In comparison to the phase as a whole, The Land is a substantial portion of this strategic greenspace. Given Policy SS1 of the Core Strategy states that the development should be co-ordinated with a comprehensive approach, and that chapter 6.6 in Part 3 of the DGMF re-iterates this stating that it should "*be designed as an integral part of the overall landscape and open space framework*". It is acknowledged that several of the masterplan diagrams have a redline that excludes the majority of The Land despite the above.

It is our understanding that our client's land is critical to the delivery of this green infrastructure but has not had any engagement prior to this. This raises a concern regarding the overall deliverability of the development based on the proposals as they stand with other landowners likely to benefit from the ability to develop at higher densities for employment and housing needs. This would be at the expense of our client's land that is aspired to provide important open space provision that is critical to offsetting these developments and providing a sustainable neighbourhood.

A minor point we wish to raise relates to the publicity of the consultation especially as the guidance will become a material consideration in the assessment of future planning applications for 'Land South of Manor Farm, Langaller', yet is not available on the Council's consultation portal for what will be a critical supplementary planning document to the District. On behalf of our client, we will be happy to engage to overcome the concerns raised.

Conclusion

Overall we admire the ambitions set out within the DGMF to support the delivery of a garden community to complement the development carried out to date and we hope that our points relating to transport, design, sustainable development and mixed use potential are constructive to help towards achieving this.

We can confirm that our client is willing to consider the provision of strategic green space on part of The Land, however, The Land is also suitable for some residential development. In particular, a well-designed residential development would offer an enhanced setting for the Listed farmhouse than a commercial business park as currently proposed.

In its current form, the masterplan fails to achieve a reasonable value for our client.

It is noted that our client's involvement is critical to the successful delivery of this key strategic allocation to ensure sufficient public open space provision is secured. If these significant areas of public open space cannot be secured, it would undermine the delivery of the wider strategic allocation as well as the Council's Garden Town Vision. This highlights the importance of joint working with our client to help ensure a comprehensive and deliverable masterplan is developed.

We would therefore be happy to discuss these points in greater detail to help ensure The Land fulfils the aspirations set out in the DGMF. In the meantime, if you have any queries or would like to discuss the proposals in more detail, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A Muir

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