

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

2017-2028

Supporting Document

Sustainability Audit

West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Councils

April 2017

Contents

Introduction.....	3
1. Context and Local Sustainability Issues.....	5
• <u>National & Local Planning Policy Context</u>	
• <u>NP Area Profile and Baseline Information</u>	
• <u>Demographics and Social Issues</u>	
2. Environmental Baseline Data.....	8
• <u>Local Nature Reserves</u>	
• <u>Biodiversity</u>	
• <u>Landscape and Geology</u>	
• <u>Flooding, Landfill and Air Pollution</u>	
• <u>Heritage and Archaeology</u>	
3. Key Sustainability Issues & Opportunities.....	12
• <u>Economic</u>	
• <u>Social</u>	
• <u>Environmental</u>	
• <u>Sustainable Transport</u>	
• <u>Key Sustainability Opportunities</u>	
4. SA Sustainability Aims.....	16
• <u>Economic</u>	
• <u>Social</u>	
• <u>Environmental</u>	
• <u>Sustainable Transport</u>	
5. Sustainability Audit.....	17
6. Conclusion.....	21
Appendices.....	22
Census 2011 information & SCC Demographics	

Introduction

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

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

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

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Taunton - Garden Town Status

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

Process and Consultation

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

The Sustainability Audit has been prepared by Mark Pollock Planning Ltd in close consultation with the Steering and sub-groups.

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

1) Context and Local Sustainability Issues

National & Local Planning Policy Context

National planning policy is set out by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was published by the Government in March 2012. The NPPF makes a number of references in support of neighbourhood planning including that it '*gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need*' (para. 183).

As the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) is responsible for producing the Core Strategy (CS) for the Borough which was adopted in September 2012 and covers the period up to 2028, (or until such time as it is refreshed). The CS sets out a vision for Taunton Deane and strategic objectives, spatial strategy and policies for meeting that vision. The CS specifies the locations and quantity of growth to be accommodated within the Borough and identifies strategic site allocations, including mixed use urban extensions.

West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine are defined as 'villages' by CS Policy SP1 and as such will retain defined settlement boundaries and will have no further allocations made through the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP).

Outside the settlement limits development proposals will be treated as being within the Open Countryside and will be limited to certain types of development which comply with the criteria listed by CS Policy DM2.

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

The UE when complete will include in the region of 5,400 new homes (of which 25% will be affordable in line with CS Policy C4), additional employment land (22.5 Ha), new primary and secondary schools, local shops and other community facilities and green space including a Green Park between Monkton Heathfield and Priorswood. Urban Initiatives produced a draft Master-plan and related Design Code in 2011 for the allocated Urban Extension.

A new Master-plan is currently being produced through a fully inclusive approach between TDBC, the developers, local Parish Councils and local people. The development of the NP will be an integral part of this process to ensure that the NP works positively with the Master-plan to help deliver the best outcomes possible for the local community.

The SADMP adopted by TDBC covers the period to 2028. This planning document sets out detailed policies for the allocation of land for housing, employment and other development proposals across Taunton Deane and which are not already covered by the Core Strategy. It also includes detailed development management policies against which planning applications will be considered. The SADMP proposes two new allocations within the NP area; Policy TAU10 allocates 5.5 ha of land east of the Crown Industrial Estate for employment purposes and Policy TAU11 allocates 16 ha of land at the former Priorswood Landfill site for community woodland or other recreational uses. These allocations are defined by the SADMP Proposals Map; http://tauntondeane.objective.co.uk/portal/sadmpp/d_sadmpp/draft_sadmpp_consultation?pointId=s1419340548149#section-s1419340548149

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

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

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

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

It is important to note that WM&CF NP makes no new site allocations in addition to those already made by the CS and SADMP.

NP Area Profile and Baseline Information

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

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

This information provides detailed data on population, identity, health and care, economic activity, housing and housing type. As such this information provides good socio-economic baseline data for the NP area and which will be up-dated at the next census in 2021.

Demographics and Social Issues

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

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

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

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

Information on the level of deprivation across Taunton, and including within the NP area, is provided by Lower Layer Super Output Areas, or neighbourhood, indices of multiple deprivation data as summarized by Somerset Intelligence (October 2015). This does not show any areas of significant deprivation within the NP area, however, some adjoining urban areas are within the most deprived 20% in England. It is striking to note the contrast between some of the least deprived areas in England within parts of the NP area with some of the most deprived areas in England just outside the NP area.

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

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

Baseline ONS 2011 census data shows the West Monkton (WM) population to be 2,787 and the Cheddon Fitzpaine (CF) population to be 1,929. TDBC (16th February 2017 TDBC Comments) estimate that by the end of March 2016 based on housing completions data since 2011 there were an additional 1,462 persons in WM and 76 additional persons in CF. By 2028 (based on TDBC allocations only, no windfall estimates are included) from the 2011 baseline: it is estimated that there will be an additional c.1,510 persons in CF and an additional c.7,997 persons in WM. This will result in a significant additional population from 2011 within the designated NP area estimated to be c.9,507 persons, largely due to the Urban Extension.

2) Environmental Baseline Data

Local Nature Reserves

There are two Local Nature Reserves within the NP area which are the Childrens' Wood & Hankridge Riverside and Gadds Valley. Further details can be found on the TDBC website;

<https://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/irj/public/services/directory/service?rid=/guid/20cdb57-5536-2c10-fea8-f29ab6b42ccd>

Biodiversity

The Taunton Deane Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)(2008) includes conservation strategies for both habitat types and for specific species across the Borough. The Somerset BAP (2008) is also of some relevance.

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

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

Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC) (hosted by Somerset Wildlife Trust) has comprehensive natural history records for the County and including for the NP area.

Landscape and Geology

Landscape Character Assessments have been completed for Taunton's Rural-Urban Fringe (2005) which assesses the potential capacity to accommodate growth around the town and the Taunton Deane Landscape Character Assessment (2011) has also been completed. The former document divides the Borough into a number of Landscape Character Types of which three are wholly or partly within the NP area. These Landscape Character Types are:

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

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

Taunton Deane Green Infrastructure Strategy (2009) assesses the need and demand for green infrastructure in relation to open space, access links, landscape, ecology and biodiversity, cultural heritage, flood risk management and socio-economic issues. The Strategy is referenced and described by CS Policy CP8 (*Environment*).

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

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

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

Other stones of about the same period and appearance, the Morte Slates, were quarried on the Quantocks and used as the building material in Cheddon

Fitzpaine and West Monkton. The use of these stones as a major construction material petered out as supplies diminished, but some buildings show evidence of salvaged stone being used in front garden walls or quoins on houses. Taken from www.devon.gov.uk and SCC Minerals and Waste Development Framework Dec 2012 which identifies the Hangman Sandstones as 'needed building stones formerly quarried in Somerset. This stone is one of three key Devonian building stones used within the Quantock Hills and surrounding area, and makes a major contribution to the built heritage in this part of Somerset. Formerly much quarried from the area although there are no current active workings'.

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

Flooding, Landfill and Air Pollution

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

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

SCC is the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and as such works closely with other key stakeholders including the Environment Agency (EA), TDBC, Internal Drainage Boards and relevant land owners.

The Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) was launched in January 2015 as a response to the Somerset floods during winter 2013/14 as a key part of the Somerset Levels and Moors Flood Action Plan which was agreed in March 2014.

The SRA's purpose is to deliver higher standards of flood protection than would be funded nationally, and to create better flood protection and resilience against further flooding by joint planning and delivery (where possible).

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

The EA flood risk maps indicate flood risk zones associated with the brooks which flow down from the Quantocks, through the NP area, and into the River Tone which also generates its own flood risk zone.

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

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

With respect to the wider Taunton area TDBC has declared two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's) at Henlade and East Reach for exceedance of the annual mean nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) objective.

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

Heritage and Archaeology

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

There are 74 listed buildings within the NP area and these are listed on the TDBC website for each Parish Council;

<http://www2.tauntondeane.gov.uk/webpages/listedbuildings/>

West Monkton Parish has 41 listed buildings and Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish has 33 listed buildings including Hestercombe House and various other buildings and structures within the estate. Historic England has also listed the park and gardens as Grade 1.

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

The Historic Environment Record throughout Somerset has been digitised and is available on the South West Historic Trust website;

<http://www.somersetheritage.org.uk/>

This lists 158 sites of historic interest within Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish and 137 historic sites within West Monkton Parish.

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

3) Key Sustainability Issues

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

Economic Issues

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

Social Issues

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

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

Environmental Issues

- Support for preserving and enhancing local areas which are considered to have heritage, ecological and landscape value
- a strong feeling that there has been enough development and that the local villages and surrounding open countryside should be protected from further development
- the three most important (which emerged from the resident's Questionnaire) sustainable residential construction issues in urban areas are considered to be energy use, water use and drainage impact
- the three most important (which emerged from the resident's Questionnaire) sustainable residential construction issues in rural areas are considered to be protection of ecology, impact of materials and drainage impact
- local red sandstone and other traditional building materials and construction techniques are considered to be locally distinctive to the NP area
- there is a preference for higher density dwelling types within urban areas and lower density dwelling types in rural areas
- strong support to encourage wildlife such as "nature buffer zones" around developments and protecting/enhancing wildlife within development proposals
- support to preserve and create traditional Somerset orchards
- concerns about loss of open space and wildlife habitats due to development
- strong demand for litter and dog waste bins and for seats within public open space areas
- strong support for protecting locally "important trees", ancient trees and hedgerows as well as for the use of native species in new landscaping schemes

- a number of small locally significant green spaces were identified which should be protected
- various locations liable to flooding were listed and possible measures to improve drainage were described.

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

Sustainable Transport

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

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

Opportunities to Contribute to Sustainable Development

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

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

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

There will be opportunities to retain and create local jobs to improve economic well-being and to reduce the need to travel by car. Home working should also be encouraged through the provision of live/work units and by improving

broadband connections and speeds. Starter workshop units will allow small businesses to expand from home or live/work units.

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

Significant green space is proposed as part of the urban extension and this provides recreation, wildlife and flood attenuation opportunities through the careful design of multi-use open spaces, although the net gain needs to be assessed against the loss of open countryside.

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

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

4) Sustainability Audit Aims

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

Economic

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

Social

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

Environmental

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

Sustainable Transport

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

5) Sustainability Audit (table 1)

NP Policies	Do the NP policies contribute to the SA sustainability aims?	Negative sustainability impacts - mitigation/policy amendments, and, or alternatives needed?
Transport Policy T1: Developing high quality bus infrastructure	The proposed policy will encourage the use of public transport thereby reducing the need to travel by car with related traffic congestion and air pollution benefits.	Cleaner bus engines will be required but this is outside the scope of the NP. Bus stops/shelters will need to be carefully sited to minimize potential disturbance to any nearby residents & highway safety issues. The Steering Group noted this issue but considered it would be better addressed separately from the NP by the Parishes.
Transport Policy T2: Developing a comprehensive & high quality cycle & foot path network	The proposed policy will encourage active modes of transport with health, safety, air pollution & traffic reduction benefits. The policy will help to bring communities together with improved access to community facilities & local schools.	Need to consider potential impact of light pollution from foot and cycle paths, particularly in the more rural parts of the NP area and also the impact of such lighting on wildlife, particularly bats. See Policy R1
Rec/Env Policy R1: Dark Skies	The proposed policy will reduce energy use, help to maintain biodiversity and will be beneficial to human health and well-being.	Need to be mindful of potentially negative impacts on health and safety which might result from reduced lighting in terms of both highway and crime issues. Policy amended accordingly
Rec/Env Policy R2: Green Space & Wildlife	The proposed policy will maintain and enhance biodiversity and will be beneficial to human health and well-being. It will also assist with flood attenuation measures.	Insignificant. The reference to bat boxes has been omitted as recommended by the HRA.

Rec/Env Policy R3: Flood Attenuation	The proposed policy will help to alleviate flooding impacts both within the NP area and downstream	Unintended consequences from piecemeal flood attenuation works. Need to ensure that any works resulting from this policy are properly integrated with wider flood attenuation schemes co-ordinated by the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA). Policy amended accordingly
Rec/Env Policy R4: Recreation & Community Facilities	The proposed policy will encourage more people to become active and engaged with their local community improving their health and community cohesion/integration	Need to ensure that the siting of play areas and other recreation features are sensitive to adjoining residential areas to reduce the potential for any future conflict/anti-social behaviour. Noted by the Steering Group.
Housing Policy H1: Housing Suitable for Older People	The proposed policy will contribute to sustainable development by ensuring that there is the right mix of housing to meet local needs thereby contributing to inclusive and cohesive communities and it will also reduce the need to travel by car	Need to avoid too many older person dwellings in one place to ensure a mixed and vibrant community. The Steering Group did not feel that this will result in any significant issues and that in any event the proposed policy is for housing suitable for older people and not exclusively for older people.
Housing Policy H2: Housing Suitable for Young People & First Time Buyers	The proposed policy will contribute to sustainable development by ensuring that there is the right mix of housing to meet local needs thereby contributing to inclusive and cohesive communities and it will also reduce the need to travel by car	The unavoidable impact of new housing on landscape and wildlife. Mitigation through the creation of new open space and wildlife areas - see Recreation & Environment Policies (and also CS & SADMP Policies)
Housing Policy H3: External Materials	The proposed policy will contribute to sustainable development by helping to ensure a high quality of building design with the use of traditional local building materials on prominent new	Insignificant

	buildings. This will contribute to a positive “sense of place” and community well-being.	
Housing Policy H4: Refuse Bin Storage	The proposed policy will contribute to sustainable development by helping to ensure a high quality of building design This will contribute to a positive “sense of place” and community well-being.	Insignificant
Housing Policy H5: Affordable Housing	This policy will help more local people to remain within the NP area and to live closer to where they work thereby reducing the need to travel by car	The unavoidable impact of new housing on landscape and wildlife. Mitigation through the creation of new open space and wildlife areas - see Recreation & Environment Policies (and also CS & SADMP Policies)
Employment Policy E1: Starter Workshop Units	The proposed policy will assist start-ups and those wishing to move from live/work units or working from home to expand their businesses locally thereby reducing the need to travel by car and supporting economic well-being	The unavoidable impact of new employment units on landscape and wildlife, unless on brownfield sites. Mitigation through landscaping and creation of green space - see Recreation & Environment Policies (and also CS & SADMP Policies)
Employment Policy E2: Sustainable Diversification of Farm Buildings for other Employment Uses	The proposed policy will contribute to sustainable development by re-using existing buildings and by helping to support rural communities	Insignificant
Employment Policy E3: Retain Existing Employment Land/Buildings for Employment Usage	The proposed policy will contribute to sustainable development by helping to support the local economy and retain associated jobs and services retained	Insignificant

<p>Employment Policy E4: Social Care Employment Opportunities</p>	<p>The proposed policy will contribute to sustainable development by helping to create local jobs which service the needs of a growing elderly local population</p>	<p>Minimal subject to the use of best practice sustainable construction techniques</p>
<p>Employment Policy E5: Broadband</p>	<p>The proposed policy will contribute to sustainable development by reducing the need to travel for employment, recreation & shopping. Improved broadband speeds will help to support the local economy</p>	<p>Insignificant</p>

6) Conclusion

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

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

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

Appendices

Age structure:

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

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

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

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

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

Age group 0-4 years for WM is similar to TD and Somerset at approx. 5%

Age group 65-74 years is 12.2% compared with TD at 9.8% and Somerset 10.8%.

Comment:

There is a housing estate in the south-western part of the NP area in the Parish of Cheddon Fitzpaine, including social and affordable housing. West Monkton data is based on 2011 Census and building on the Urban Extension at Monkton Heathfield (West Monkton) has now started and has added 1,000 houses to the parish to date – thus the census figures do not reflect the current situation in Monkton Heathfield.

Qualifications & Students:

Highest Level of Qualification (Level 4 and above)

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

No Qualifications:

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

Housing:

One Family Household:

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

One Family Married or Same Sex Civil Partnership Couple:

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

One Family all age 65 Years & over:

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

One Family only with a lone parent:

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

Tenure:

Owned property:

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

Owned outright:

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

Owned with a mortgage or loan:

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

Private rental:

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

Social rented from Council: (Local Authority)

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

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

Occupation:**Professional:**

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

Elementary Occupations:

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

Economic Activity:**Economically Active:**

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

Unemployed:

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

Economically Inactive: Retired

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

Car or Van Availability:**No Car or van:**

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

Two car or van in household:

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

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

Accommodation type:

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

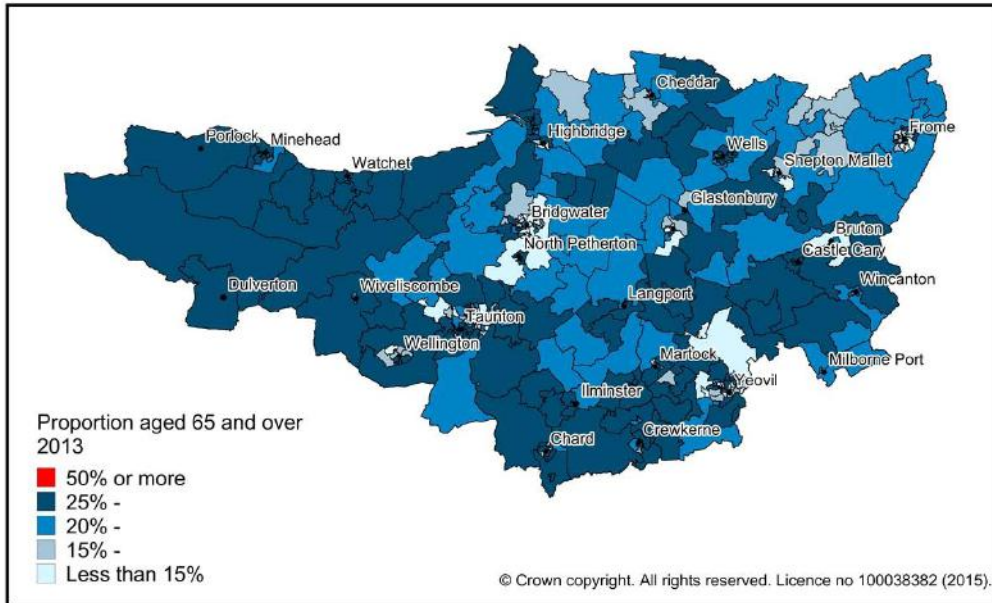
Detached houses and Bungalows (Unshared) are significantly higher in CF and WM than TDBC - CF 40.1%, WM 57.3%, TDBC 29.7%.

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

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

Somerset County Council Demographics

Proportion of population aged 65 and over, 2013



Proportion of population aged 65 and over, 2033

