

STRATEGIC LAND PARTNERSHIPS

OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT UP TO 320 DWELLINGS, GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE INCLUDING PUBLIC OPEN SPACE, ASSOCIATED WORKS AND DEMOLITION OF BUILDINGS WITH ALL MATTERS RESERVED ON LAND AT HARTNELLS FARM, MONKTON HEATHFIELD

Location: HARTNELLS FARM, MONKTON HEATHFIELD ROAD, MONKTON HEATHFIELD, TAUNTON, TA2 8NU

Grid Reference: 325615.127233 Outline Planning Permission

RECOMMENDATION AND REASON(S)

Recommended Decision: Conditional Approval subject to the applicants entering into a legal agreement to secure:

- 25% affordable housing to be split 60% social rent and 40% intermediate
- Drainage contributions to enable (i) the completion of a flood risk option study to identify an appropriate solution to overcome the drainage restrictions for this site (£50,000 max) (ii) the delivery of the agreed surface water drainage solution (£450,000 max)
- Various highway works as outlined in the application
- Travel plan to reduce vehicular traffic movements from the new dwellings
- Provision and maintenance of public open space and children's play areas
- Contributions based on 170 dwellings towards the provision of the western relief road (actual level to be determined following legal advice from QC)
- On site provision of Integrated Public Art

RECOMMENDED CONDITION(S) (if applicable)

1. (i) Before any phase of the development hereby permitted is commenced detailed drawings of the layout, scale, appearance, access and landscaping of the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority as required for each phase (hereinafter called "the reserved matters")The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the agreed drawings.
- (ii) Application for approval of the reserved matters under (i) above relating to the first phase of development shall be made to the Local Planning Authority within three years of this planning permission and application for approval of reserved matters under (1) above relating to the remaining phases shall be made to the local planning authority within 10 years of the date of this permission. Phases are

as shown on the submitted **phasing plan**

- (iii) The development hereby permitted shall be begun, not later than the expiration of three years from the date of this permission, or before the expiration of 2 years from the date of the approval of the final reserved matters whichever in the later.

Reason: In accordance with the provisions of S92 (2) Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by S51 (2) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. No development shall take place within the site until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, a design code for the site in its entirety (herein after called the "Design Code". The design code shall be submitted prior to the submission of any applications for reserved matters. The design code shall include detailed codings for :

- Architectural and sustainable construction principles;
- Character areas, street types and street materials;
- Block types and block principles;
- Internal highways, cycleways and footpaths;
- Cycle and car parking principles
- Building types, heights and materials
- Surface treatments for all areas and
- Boundary treatments.
- Landscaping principles
- Children's play areas, public open space and allotments

The Design Code shall be based upon the illustrated layout no STRA2004/4011

Reason : To ensure a comprehensive, co-ordinated and well planned development with a high standard of design reflecting the character of the local area.

3. Applications for reserved matters shall accord with the approved design code unless an alternative is first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority

Reason : To ensure a comprehensive, co-ordinated and well planned development with a high standard of design reflecting the character of the local area.

4. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in strict accordance with the details of the approved Flood risk assessment (FRA – prepared by WSP consulting and dated 20th December 2013).

Prior to any reserved matters approval, a detailed drainage scheme for that phase, plot or parcel of land shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing by the

local planning authority. The scheme shall include details of the phasing and maintenance of all drainage infrastructure. The development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved details and thereafter maintained in full working condition.

Reason : To ensure that flood risk is not exacerbated through the use of SuDs

5. No more than 149 dwellings and the roads to serve those dwellings shall be constructed on site until a surface water drainage solution, to cater for the surface water run off generated by the additional development of the land, has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority, delivered in accordance with the approved details and fully functional.

Reason: To ensure that flood risk is not exacerbated through the development of the 320 dwellings increasing the risk of flooding for third parties downstream of the development.

6. (i) Before any phase of the development hereby permitted is commenced details of the landscaping scheme for that phase, which shall include details of species, siting and numbers to be planted, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

(ii) Each phase of the landscaping scheme shall be completed before the following phase of the development commences unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

(iii) For a period of five years after the completion of the landscaping scheme, the trees and shrubs shall be protected and maintained in a healthy weed free condition and any trees or shrubs that cease to grow shall be replaced by trees or shrubs of similar size and species or other appropriate trees or shrubs as may be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason : To ensure that the development can be successfully assimilated into the surrounding landscape and create a high level amenity for the proposed development.

7. Prior to the commencement of each phase of development a landscape strategy and management plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The landscape strategy and management plan shall include details of the proposed structural and internal landscaping, the maintenance of all open spaces including flood attenuation features and the proposed timings for the provision of the landscaping works. The landscape management plan shall include details of the extent and timing of grass cutting, shrub pruning and tree maintenance. The landscape strategy and management plan shall thereafter be implemented on site in accordance with the approved plan unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason : To ensure that the development can be successfully assimilated into the surrounding landscape and create a high level amenity for the proposed development

8. Prior to the commencement of the first phase of development details of the Children's play areas and public open space shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Such details shall be in compliant with the requirements of Taunton Deane Local Plan saved policy C4 and include details for the timing of the provision of those facilities and their subsequent maintenance. Once approved the Children's play areas and public open space shall be provided in and maintained in strict accordance with the approved details

Reason : to ensure an appropriate level of Children's play equipment and public open space to serve the residents of the development.

9. Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 ("the 1995 Order") (or any order revoking and re-enacting the 1995 Order with or without modification), no development of the types described in Schedule 2 Part 2 Class A of the 1995 Order other than that expressly authorised by this permission shall be carried out without the further grant of planning permission.

Reason: To ensure that the public open space and children's play areas remain open and available for public use at all times and in the interests of the visual amenity of the area.

10. No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out at all times in accordance with the agreed scheme or some other scheme that may otherwise be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the preservation of archaeological remains in accordance with Local Policy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

11. Prior to the commencement of construction works on site a foul and surface water drainage strategy and timetable for its provision shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved drainage scheme shall be thereafter be completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that proper provision is made for the sewerage generated from the development and that the development does not increase the risk of sewer flooding to downstream properties.

12. Prior to the commencement of works on site detailed plans showing an open area adjacent to Hartnells Farm listed building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The plans shall be based on the details on the illustrative masterplan no 3201 and shall include the timing for its provision on site. Once agreed in writing the open area shall be laid out in accordance with the approved details and thereafter be maintained as such.

Reason: To protect and enhance the character and amenity of the listed building and its setting.

13. The layout and alignment, widths and levels of the proposed roads, road junctions, and points of access, visibility splays, footpaths and turning spaces shall be provided in accordance with details that shall first have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The roads shall be laid out prior to the occupation of any dwelling, or any dwelling in an agreed phase of the development that may have been agreed by the Local Planning Authority, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed estate is laid out in a proper manner with adequate provision for various modes of transport.

14. No more than 150 dwellings shall be constructed and occupied until the western relief road, as required by the Taunton Deane Core Strategy, has opened for use or an alternative which shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to ensure that the development does not result in an unacceptable overloading of the existing highway network.

15. Prior to the commencement of construction work on site details of a roundabout junction between the proposed service road and the A3259 highway, based on the submitted plan number 1492-PHL-107-A shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. None of the dwellings hereby approved shall be occupied until the approved junction has been constructed in accordance with those details and is open for use by traffic.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

16. No dwelling shall be occupied until that part of the service road or drive which gives access to it has been constructed in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

17. No dwelling shall be occupied until space has been laid out within the site for cars to be parked off road and where appropriate for vehicles to turn so that they may enter and leave the site in forward gear.

Reason: To ensure that cars generated by this permission can be parked safely.

18. Prior to the commencement of construction works on site full details of the proposed cycle parking for each dwelling shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall include covered and secure storage facilities for cycles. Prior to the occupation of any dwelling hereby permitted the approved covered and secure storage facilities for cycles shall be provided in accordance with the approved details and shall thereafter be maintained unless an alternative is first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that adequate facilities are included for the storage of cycles.

19. The proposed roads, footpaths and turning spaces where applicable, shall be constructed in such a manner as to ensure that each dwelling before it is occupied shall be served by a properly consolidated and surfaced carriageway and footpath.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed estate is laid out in a proper manner with adequate provision for various modes of transport.

20. No part of the access drive shall be laid out at a gradient steeper than 1 in 10.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

21. No work shall commence on the development hereby permitted until details of the proposed off-site highways works shown on drawings 1492-PHL-107-A & 1492-PHL-101 A have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

These works shall then be fully constructed in accordance with the approved plan, to an agreed specification before the development is first brought into use.

Reason: To ensure an appropriate junction with the A3259 in the interest of Highway Safety

22. No development shall commence unless a Construction Environmental Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local

Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved plan. The plan shall include:

- Construction vehicle movements;
- Construction operation hours;
- Construction vehicular routes to and from site;
- Construction delivery hours;
- Expected number of construction vehicles per day;
- Car parking for contractors;
- Specific measures to be adopted to mitigate construction impacts in pursuance of the Environmental Code of Construction Practice;
- A scheme to encourage the use of Public Transport amongst contractors; and
- Measures to avoid traffic congestion impacting upon the Strategic Road Network.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development is carried out in a well planned and safe manner in order to ensure highway safety throughout the construction phases.

23. Unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority, development other than that required to be carried out as part of an approved scheme of remediation must not commence until conditions (a) to (c) below have been complied with. If unexpected contamination is found after development has begun, development must be halted on that part of the site affected by the unexpected contamination to the extent specified by the Local Planning Authority in writing until condition (d) has been complied with in relation to that contamination.

a) Site Characterisation

An investigation and risk assessment, must be completed to assess the nature and extent of any contamination on the site, whether or not it originates on the site. The investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken by competent persons and a written report of the findings must be produced. The written report is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The report of the findings must include:

- The collection and interpretation of relevant information to form a conceptual model of the site, and a preliminary risk assessment of all the likely pollutant linkages.
- If the preliminary risk assessment identifies any potentially significant pollutant linkages a ground investigation shall be carried out, to provide further information on the location, type and concentration of contaminants in the soil and groundwater and other characteristics that can influence the behaviour of

the contaminants.

- An assessment of the potential risks to

- human health,
- property (existing or proposed) including buildings, crops, livestock, pets, woodland and service lines and pipes,
- adjoining land,
- groundwater and surface waters,
- ecological systems,
- archaeological sites and ancient monuments;

This must be conducted in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's "Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination, CLR 11" and other authoritative guidance.

b) Submission of Remediation Scheme

If any unacceptable risks are identified as a result of the investigation and assessment referred to in a) above, a detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use must be prepared. This should detail the works required to remove any unacceptable risks to human health, buildings and other property and the natural and historical environment, and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The scheme must include all works to be undertaken, proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria, timetable of works and site management procedures.

c) Implementation of Approved Remediation Scheme

The approved remediation scheme must be carried out in accordance with its terms prior to the commencement of development other than that required to carry out remediation, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Local Planning Authority must be given two weeks written notification of commencement of the remediation scheme works.

d) Reporting of Unexpected Contamination

In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of section a), and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared in accordance with the requirements of section b), which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

e) Verification of remedial works

Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a verification report (referred to in PPS23 as a validation report) must be produced. The report should demonstrate the effectiveness of the remedial

works.

A statement should also be provided by the developer which is signed by some one in a position to confirm that the works detailed in the approved scheme have been carried out (The Local Planning Authority can provide a draft Remediation Certificate when the details of the remediation scheme have been approved at stage b) above).

The verification report and signed statement are subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

f) Long Term Monitoring and Maintenance

If a monitoring and maintenance scheme is required as part of the approved remediation scheme, reports must be prepared and submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval until the remediation objectives have been achieved.

All works must be conducted in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's "Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination, CLR 11" and other authoritative guidance.

Reason: To ensure that land contamination can be dealt with adequately to prevent any harm to the health, safety or amenity of any users of the development, in accordance with Taunton Deane Core Strategy Policy DM1(f) and paragraphs 120-122 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

24. Prior to the commencement of works on site details of a wildlife mitigation scheme (Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP)) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Such plans shall be based on the Ecological Environmental Impact Statement and indicate the following:

- the creation or enhancement of a minimum of 1.88 Habitat Units of woodland planting using the methodology described in the Ecological Environmental Impact Statement based upon the current site boundary and habitat data provided in the submitted ecology reports (Thurley Associates, 2013a). It shall also include the locations, planting schedule and layout of the proposed habitat creation /enhancement will be agreed with Taunton Deane Borough Council prior to planting.
- The provision of a minimum of 20 metre buffer of woodland with an associated Somerset bank, as set out by Thurley Associates (2013a), around the northern and western boundaries of the site. Once the details are approved the Somerset bank shall be installed before commencement of the proposed built development.
- Retention of the existing hedgerows on the boundaries of the development facing open countryside. These can be incorporated into the buffer planting

Reason: To protect Lesser Horseshoe bats and their habitats from damage

bearing in mind this species and its habitat is protected by law.

25. Prior to the commencement of works on site a wildlife management plan for the whole development site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The wildlife management plan shall include the appropriate management of the woodland planting areas for lesser horseshoe bats and shall include measures to promote the establishment of the planting to a favourable structure for lesser horseshoe bats, such as future thinning and the replacement of 'nurse crop' species (such as poplar and Norway spruce) with oak and other native species to give a more diverse age range.

The wildlife mitigation planting areas shall thereafter be managed in accordance with the approved wildlife management plan.

Reason: To protect Lesser Horseshoe bats and their habitats from damage bearing in mind this species and its habitat is protected by law.

26. Prior to the commencement of works on site full details of the paths and cycleways into and through the woodland areas shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The details shall ensure that all paths and cycle ways from outside the habitat buffer / corridor shall be constructed diagonally rather than at right angles and are not be lit. Such paths / cycle ways will not exceed 3m in width and that the paths and cycleways within the woodland areas are unlit by artificial lighting at all times.

Reason: To protect Lesser Horseshoe bats and their habitats from damage bearing in mind this species and its habitat is protected by law.

27. Prior to the commencement of works on site full details of a lighting strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. This strategy shall follow the design suitable for lesser horseshoe bats produced by Somerset County Council (Bennett, 2012) and incorporate the following measures:

- There will be no routine night-time working during the construction stage of the development.
- Street lighting will be directed so as to avoid light spillage and pollution on habitats used by light sensitive bats. All bat corridors shall not exceed 0.1 Lux which is the recommended light level for horseshoe bats in corridors through development (Natural England, 2010)
- Lighting will be of the LED type which is highly directional.

Reason: To protect Lesser Horseshoe bats and their habitats from damage bearing in mind this species and its habitat is protected by law.

28. The gable ends of dwellings or other buildings facing woodland habitat creation will not have windows in order to reduce any artificial lighting affecting the behaviour of bats in new and existing habitat .

Reason: To protect Lesser Horseshoe bats and their habitats from damage bearing in mind this species and its habitat is protected by law.

29. There shall be no external artificial lighting on ends of dwellings or other buildings facing the woodland habitat creation areas or gardens adjacent to woodland habitat creation areas unless details have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority .

Reason: To protect Lesser Horseshoe bats and their habitats from damage bearing in mind this species and its habitat is protected by law.

Notes to Applicant

- . There is limited available capacity in the existing water supply network to accommodate development. Network modelling will be required to determine the nature and cost of off site network re-enforcement required to maintain levels of service
- . In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework the Council has worked in a positive and pro-active way with the applicant and has negotiated amendments to the application to enable the grant of planning permission.

PROPOSAL

This is an outline application for residential development of up to 320 dwellings on 16.1ha of agricultural land in the vicinity of Hartnells Farm.

The proposal includes the position of a new access for the development off the A3259. It would be located and just to the east of the current settlement limits. The details are reserved for subsequent approval. The new access is likely to take the form of a mini roundabout (to cater for the proposed new access to the south associated with the existing outline permission and reserved matters application 48/14/0016). The proposal also includes the provision of a new footway linking west to the existing footway along the A3259 and east to the boundary of the site.

An illustrative concept plan has been submitted with the application. This indicates the likely layout for future development of the site and includes the areas required to provide wildlife mitigation, (to the west and north of the site) and a central open space and play area. To the south of the site lies Hartnells Farmhouse and barns, Grade 2 listed buildings. Whilst these have been specifically excluded from the application site the impact of future development on the setting of those buildings has been considered and as a result an open area of land is indicated to the north, west and east of the listed complex.

The outline application is accompanied by an Ecological Environmental Impact Assessment in particular considering the impact of the development on the Lesser

Horseshoe Bats present at the site and likely to originate from the SAC at Hestercombe House.

It is proposed to split the development of the site into two phases. Phase 1 will comprise the provision of 150 of the dwellings to the south of the site. It will include, highway access off the A3259 and internal access roads, surface water attenuation works, foul drainage works, A3259 highway works, ecological planting, children's play areas and public open space. Phase 2 would develop the northern section of the site when the current highway, surface water drainage and ecological objections have been overcome or adequately mitigated (detailed in the report).

The site is part of a larger Core Strategy allocation (SS1) but extends approximately 70m beyond the northern limit identified in the Core Strategy and as such has been advertised as a departure from the development plan.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

The application site is located to the north east of the settlement of Monkton Heathfield outside but adjacent to the current settlement limits. The site is approximately 5 km from Taunton town centre. The site comprises 16.10 ha of grassland used for arable or grazing and is approximately 372m west-east x 615m north-south (largest dimensions) and stretches northwards from the A3259. There are a number of hedges around and crossing the site. The site rises gently from the south to north. The limit of development to the north is marked by a steepening of the slope towards the Hills beyond.

To the south of the site is the A3259 with residential properties beyond and to the east of the site are existing residential properties. The A3259 runs west – east through Monkton Heathfield and is one of the main links between Bridgwater and Taunton with a frequent bus service.

There is no relevant planning history for this site.

CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATION RESPONSES

Consultees

WEST MONKTON PARISH COUNCIL -

Amended application Original application

This application is outline only and so it is understood that the site plan and a substantive part of the documents presented are indicative only. This response is presented in two sections, comments on the outline and a wish list for the detailed. Following the experience and involvement (CEP) of the first 1000 house application, the Parish Council now would seek and expect full involvement at every stage through the process towards and including the detailed application. The Parish Council consider that these major applications require considerable consultation. The Parish Council has repeatedly sought for greater consultation, and this request will continue to apply as the development of 4500 houses

progresses. TD Planners have been consistent in their promise to involve WMPC in regular minuted meetings. Two meetings have been convened, no minutes have been circulated subsequently, and the Parish Council is concerned that its involvement has been restricted. Under new legislation, collaboration and consultation is essential so that CIL is spent in the best possible way conforming to the 'Inclusive Community Objective' expressed by TDBC in the Core Strategy.

The Parish Council is aware that this application has come forward earlier than expected in order to satisfy the 5 year supply of deliverable building land and would argue that this strengthens the case being made by the Parish Council, that all the MH sites within the Core Strategy should be considered as phases within a development. As such, the applications that come forward are part of a whole, and the outcome will be a 'small town the size of Wellington' (quote from the Core Strategy). WMPC submits the argument that consideration of applications within the MH Core Strategy has to be done holistically, and that if there is no overall plan then this application could be considered as premature. The current practice of only considering the application on the table denies the opportunity of building a sustainable community, which contravenes the NPPF.

In broad principles the Parish Council endorses the provision of the following:

- Public Open Space:
- 25% Social and Affordable Housing giving preference to local families, not for just the first application, but that a percentage of the rented property should be considered for local applicants every time in perpetuity, conforming to the principles of the Communities legislation keeping families together:
- Allotments, although the indicative plan has placed them centrally rather than on the periphery of the development.
- Crime prevention principles in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

The quality of the Parish of West Monkton as a place to 'Live, work, travel and leisure' (quote from SLP application) applies to the existing population as well. The Parish Council notes that the quality of the environment currently is affected by the very major building works currently underway, site traffic, site noise, disruption of roads access and services. This is work associated with only the first 500 of the 4500 house settlement envisaged in the Core Strategy, the downside indicates that MH will be a major building site unremittingly for the years ahead to 2028 or the completion of the delivery of the Core Strategy.

Planning application

The application is outline and much of the additional supporting documentation is therefore indicative only apart from '...highway access at land at Hartnells Farm, Monkton Heathfield', which is for detailed.

The consideration of this application should be part of broader infrastructure considerations because other sites within the Parish are identified in the Core Strategy which will come forward, and some are already in the system. Unlike previous practice, an holistic approach is needed. Therefore an overall strategic plan for the whole area is required. Without such a clear infrastructure plan and an uncompleted Western Relief Road, this application is premature.

The Western Relief Road (WRR) is critical to serve the existing population and the

population that will come with the Persimmon/Redrow and Strongvox developments south of the A38. Outline permission has been granted for 900 (327 Persimmon/Redrow and 51 Strongvox have detailed permission and are under construction). The Peter Evans Transport Assessment Report (TAR) submitted for the Persimmon/Redrow 900 house application judged that the trigger by which the WRR would be required was at 651 dwellings. It would therefore be entirely inconsistent for a further 320 houses to be built before the WRR; i.e. it needs to be in place before the Hartnells development begins. Without the WRR, traffic movements on, off, and through the A3259 will be considerably in excess of the figures presented in the WSP Traffic Assessment Report for the Hartnells application.

In the WSP UK Ltd TRA p27 para 5.7.3 states ‘...SCC has advised that until such time as the ‘western relief road’ is built, and *for which there is currently no commitment from them or a developer* (WMPC Italics) to do so, traffic calming on the A3259 through Monkton Heathfield will be ‘low key’ and will not act as a deterrent to through traffic’. The Parish Council takes serious issue with this statement since there is a S106 requirement, further reinforced by a Memorandum of Agreement between TDBC and Persimmon/Redrow, signed March 2007. Hard copy of this will be provided to TDBC Planners. It is of note that section 7 of this MoA reads ‘the Consortium agrees to pre-fund the Highway cost and associated administration costs relating to the making of any CPO relating to the WRR’. The Peter Evans TAR shows clearly that there is a need for the WRR and SCC has produced various plans in preparation of the WRR.

Despite the figures produced by computer modelling by WSP and demonstrated at the public exhibition, the volume of traffic and data about waiting times described in the WSP TA is considered to be on the light side by residents who use the road on a daily basis. Traffic calming **DOES** need to be in place and an example should be taken from the requirements imposed just up the road at Monkton Elms Garden Centre where a huge visibility splay and road widening was needed with supporting road markings. The Hartnells proposal does not include a safe middle lane, which potentially puts drivers turning right into Hartnells in a hazardous position since WMPC does not believe that traffic calming can be achieved by the proposed traffic lights and two pedestrian crossings. WMPC’s position is based on real life real time experiences turning onto and off the A3259 at various times of the day. The Parish Council believes that the traffic modelling produced in support of the application has been based on either, out of date, or flawed statistics.

In the absence of an overall strategic plan detailing access points, the proposed location for traffic lights on the A3259 could cause vehicular conflict and problems for a potential access to the west of Greenway site. Furthermore, when the development at Prockters comes forward under the Core Strategy, the only access shown will be through the Hartnells development. Are the proposals for the junction on A3259 and the estate roads designed to accommodate the additional traffic?

The absence of a completed WRR agreed and required at 651 dwellings on the Persimmon/Redrow site, must call into question the traffic plans for the proposed layout in the Hartnells application.

In conclusion: For the proposed layout to work i.e. no safety reservation for the right turn into Hartnells, the WRR has to be in place first. Without the WRR, the

application is premature and could not be supported.

Comments on proposals

The PC endorses:

- The suggestion of an Energy Centre. However the indicative site plan does not show it.
- The Public Open space and Landscaping and the proposed green drainage schemes is endorsed. The acreage should be maintained – Landscaping 3.9Ha and POS 1.52Ha – despite any subsequent variations of housing in the detailed application. The Bat survey supports the acreage. The surface of the footpaths should be permeable and accessible for disabled.
- The indicative plans for 2 storey houses only and no flats, in keeping with other dwellings on the north side of the A3259 is endorsed. The Parish Council would have difficulty supporting the 'coach house' style of dwelling on the northern side of the A3259; and in any event these buildings have been a source of concern and fear of crime by neighbours.

The PC also consider that

- There must be provision of adequate space for parked cars
- There must be provision of access for refuse and emergency vehicle access
- A holistic highway solution within which details of traffic lights along the A3259, access to Hartnells farm and buildings and access to the Prockters Farm site are included and future proofed
- There must be provision of 11 – 17 year old leisure with consideration of litter, behaviour, demographics in line with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- The underground water retention tanks would be an ideal site for tennis courts or MUGA type provision. Bearing in mind the Elderly demographic, the Parish Council would like to see some ground floor single storey accommodation. Drainage on the site is proposed to relieve the flooding in (adjacent) Greenway and Prockters Farm and the PC would like this to be a firm requirement for the development of this

SCC - TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT GROUP - no objection subject to conditions (as shown within the recommendation above). The applicant is still intending to deliver 320 residential units in this location. However they have now proposed to amend this to a phased approach. So that the first phase will only consist of 150 units but provide all the mitigation measures, which would include the off-site highway works. The remaining 170 units will not be delivered until the appropriate highway infrastructure has been completed i.e. the Eastern Relief Road (ERR) and Western Relief Road (WRR).

The Highway Authority is satisfied that based on the modelling provided and the incorporation of the proposed mitigation measures the provision of 150 residential units will not have a detrimental impact on the highway network. Therefore the Highway Authority can no longer hold their objection to this proposal on traffic impact grounds.

Notwithstanding the above a robust Travel Plan will need to be secured through the appropriate legal agreement to generate a modal shift away from the use of the private car.

In terms of the internal layout it is appreciated that this only an outline application

with full internal details to follow as part of the reserved matters scheme. However the applicant will need adhere to the Highway Authority's design guidance for estate roads. In regards to the point of access onto A3259 it has become apparent as part of the wider discussions relating to the delivery of residential development in Monkton Heathfield that the access to Hartnells Farm site would be opposite a link road that will be delivered as part of the Monkton Heathfield extension. The Highway Authority would have concerns over two junctions being located in close proximity to each other and has been in discussion with both parties to find a solution. These discussions have culminated in the provision of a mini-roundabout in this location. The Highway Authority is currently auditing a drawing based on this scheme and any highway works in this location would need to be secured as part of the legal agreement.

Therefore to conclude the applicant's proposal of limiting the level of development to 150 units and the provision of all the mitigation measures means the Highway Authority are unable to uphold our objection to this proposal.

LANDSCAPE - No objection subject to relevant conditions including the need to maintain and manage all open spaces, swales and flood attenuation areas.

The proposed impact meets with the landscape requirements of the Local Plan allocation and subject to detailed landscape proposals is considered to be acceptable.

HERITAGE - I have no objection to the above application proposals provided that the open areas to the NW and SW of the farm complex, as shown on the Illustrative Masterplan Dr No 3201 are secured.

POLICE ARCHITECTURAL LIAISON OFFICER - none received

DEVON AND SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE - none received

HOUSING ENABLING - supports this application based on need . 25% of the new housing should be in the form of affordable homes. The required tenure split is 60% social rent and 40% shared ownership. As a broad indication the units should comprise of 10% 1b2p units, 40% 2b4p houses, 40% 3b5p and 3b6p and 10% 4 b6p.

The shared ownership units should be located within their own block / terrace and should primarily be 2b4p houses with a few 3 bed 5p houses.

10% of the total affordable housing provision should be in the form of disabled units for social rent.

The affordable housing should meet the Homes and Communities Agency Design and Quality Standards 2007, including at least Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 or such Standards which may supersede at the date of approval of the full

application or reserved matters application.

The affordable housing scheme must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Housing Enabling Lead at Taunton Deane Borough Council.

The developer should seek to provide the Housing Association tied units from Taunton Deane's preferred affordable housing development partners list.

DRAINAGE ENGINEER - Agrees to the initial comments of the Environment Agency.

WESSEX WATER - No objection subject to conditions - Sewers will need to be constructed to the proposed new Mandatory Build Standard and Sewers for Adoption 7th Edition. There is limited capacity within the downstream sewerage system to accommodate additional flows from this development.

The drainage proposals illustrated in Appendix E of the Flood Risk Assessment appear to be in accordance with pre-application discussions between Wessex Water and the applicant's consultants. We have yet to fully appraise and agree, however, measures to reduce the risk of downstream flooding and pollution and suggest a planning condition to ensure agreement is made prior to connection to the sewerage system:

There is limited available capacity in the existing water supply network to accommodate development. Network modelling will be required to determine the nature and cost of off-site network re-enforcement required to maintain levels of service

LEISURE DEVELOPMENT –

On site Children's play - Policy C4 requires 20 sq m of equipped and casual play space per family sized dwelling. In the event that all dwellings are family sized then an area of 6,400 sq m would be required. The CPA should be centrally located as indicated on the illustrative masterplan, with natural surveillance. The dwellings surrounding the play area should front onto and overlook it. No dwelling shall be in excess of 400m walking distance from the play area. The illustrative plan indicates two play areas either side of the access road and I have concerns about children crossing the road between the two areas.

Outdoor Recreation - On site provision of 45sqm of public open space per dwelling is required. The proposed Arboretum and woodland would appear to be sufficient on site provision.

Allotments - The illustrative plan shows land to be provided for allotments. This will need to comply to the relevant standard (15.4sqm per dwelling).

Community Halls - The development will not trigger the need for a new hall but contributions are required towards community hall provision for future residents.

Public Art - Either a contribution 1% of development costs shall be provided in the

public realm or the integration of public art into the scheme shall be provided.

SCC - CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER - As you will be aware, there is a severe shortage of places at all education levels in Monkton Heathfield, so contributions should be sought please through Section 106 of the Act.

The contributions required would be calculated for 30 primary school places per 150 dwellings; 30 secondary places per 210 dwellings; 3 pre-school places per 100 dwellings.

320 dwellings / 150 x 30 = 64 primary school places; @ £12,257 per place = £748,448

320 / 210 x 30 = 46 secondary school places; @ £18,469 per place = £849,574

320 / 100 x 3 = 10 pre-school places; @ £12,257 per place = £122,570

BIODIVERSITY - No objection subject to conditions.

The proposal is an outline but the development will involve the loss of 350 m of hedgerow and some trees. Proposed landscaping seeks to retain wildlife habitats and includes off sett habitat creation for Lesser Horseshoe bats.

The Ecological Environmental statement findings were as follows:

Bats- The site supports an extensive assemblage of bat species -a minimum of 11 species, but probably 12 or 13, with high levels of commuting and foraging by common and soprano pipistrelles; a reduced, but still common level of commuting and foraging activity by Myotis and long-eared bats, as well as noctule and serotines, and additional but lower levels of use by greater horseshoe, lesser horseshoe, barbastelle and Leisler's bats.

There was no evidence of roosting within the farm buildings within the development site, however evidence indicates that locally breeding populations of both common and soprano pipistrelles are present in areas of residential housing around the site. Noctule bats probably breed in trees on site particularly woodland trees in the north east corner of the site. The hedgerows within the site are important at a local level providing corridors and feeding habitat for bat populations.

The northern boundary of the Assessment Site is c.1.7km from Hestercombe House SAC. Hestercombe House SAC "constitutes a summer maternity roost and winter hibernacula for a colony of lesser horseshoe bats. In the '*Hestercombe House SAC Appropriate Assessment Final Report*', prepared by Larry Burrows, Ecology Officer at Somerset County Council parts of the site were shown to lie within either the 'Combined Area' (CA) or 'Inferred Area' (IA) for this important bat roost. Site mitigation and off sett compensation planting for Lesser horseshoe bats was identified for proposals in these areas. This proposal includes new woodland/scrub planting to be concentrated around the western and northern boundaries of the proposed development. This has been designed to provide long-term foraging habitat for a range of bat species (including the lesser

horseshoe bats which use nearby Hestercombe House SSSI/SAC), and to limit the potential for illumination of land outside the proposed Development area and within the bat mitigation areas.

The Appropriate assessment calculates that 6.26 hectares of off sett planting is required. The amount of proposed planting for this proposal appears to be less than this figure and Larry Burrows views on the proposal are awaited (see SCC Ecologist comments below).

Monitoring - A strategy for assessing the success of the mitigation measures and enhancements will be essential as part of the proposed development of the site.

The monitoring proposed should focus on bats as a key 'indicator' species.

I support the following recommendations

- Bat activity surveys in summer to monitor the use of the offset habitat creation areas by commuting and foraging bats. This will be especially important for lesser horseshoe bats, as it has to clearly be demonstrated (by means of observations or static recordings) that these planted areas are 'functional' for this species. Without functional lesser horseshoe bat habitat being present within the Assessment Site, no development of land in the Combined or Inferred Areas can take place.
- These activity surveys to commence in the first summer following planting, and to continue on an annual basis for another five years – or until such time that lesser horseshoe bat activity has been confirmed

Badgers - Whilst the site includes or is adjacent to good foraging habitat for badgers, including herb rich unimproved grassland, cereal crops, orchards, gardens etc. there was only limited evidence of badger activity in this study area. From the limited signs of badger activity, it appears this site is not a significant foraging area.

A walk over badger survey should be carried out prior to any development to confirm that badgers have not moved into the area and built any setts in the period between 2011 when the survey was carried out and the start of development

Dormice - There was no evidence of Dormice and they are unlikely to be present due to lack of significant hedges and poor connectivity.

Amphibians - Although there are no watercourses or ponds on this site there are several ponds in the area where small numbers of common toads within the field margins and smaller fields on the far western side of the Assessment Site

(Common toad is listed as a 'Species of Principal Importance' under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006) were identified.

Reptiles - There was evidence of adult male/female as well as juvenile slow worms using the site as well as some common lizards and a grass snake.

Birds - There is no indication of the presence of Schedule 1 species within the Assessment Site. No detail breeding surveys were undertaken as the majority of the site comprises of habitat that is likely to be used by relatively common birds.

Given the generally poor habitat types present within the site, it is reasonable to assume that it will not be used by more than 25 breeding bird species. The farm buildings to the south of the site are used by swallows

The findings and recommendations for mitigation in the Ecological Environmental statement appear sound.

The surveys are already over a year old so I would expect new up to date surveys to be undertaken at detail planning stage.

SCC - DEVELOPMENT CONTROL ARCHAEOLOGIST - This site was archaeologically evaluated in 2007 as part of a pre-planning proposal. The evaluation showed that there are remains relating to Bronze Age settlement on the site. Therefore, following NPPF and saved Local Plan policies the site will require archaeological excavation in advance of any development taking place.

For this reason I recommend that the developer be required to archaeologically excavate the heritage asset and provide a report on any discoveries made as indicated in the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 141). This should be secured by the use of model condition 55 attached to any permission granted.

SCC - ECOLOGY - A test of likely significance has been undertaken on behalf of TDBC by the County Ecologist. This identified that the likely impacts of the development affecting lesser horseshoe bats are:

- Loss of hedgerows which act as flight lines, providing access to foraging areas
- Fragmentation of hedgerows preventing access to feeding areas or causing increased energy consumption through taking alternative routes and thereby reducing fitness
- Loss of prey producing habitat, particularly for those insects which breed on grasses or in open fields
- Street or other uncontrolled lighting causing fragmentation of flight lines or resulting in increased energy consumption through taking alternative routes and thereby reducing fitness
- Street or other uncontrolled lighting causing migration of prey away from areas accessible to lesser horseshoe bats and thereby reducing prey availability

These changes could result in a decline in numbers of a breeding colony, and potentially its eventual loss.

The applicant has proposed mitigation for these likely impacts including the provision of on site mitigation and Offset off site habitat creation. Subject to these mitigation works and other safeguards being achieved with planning conditions the proposed mitigation is unlikely to result in a significant effect on the population of the Lesser Horseshoe bats at Hestercombe House SAC. (A copy of the full report is available to read on the Taunton Deane Borough Council web site).

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY - no objection based on the Flood Risk Assessment (prepared by WSP and dated 20 December 2013) and its accompanying

appendices.

The developer has undertaken significant investigation and we are really pleased to see that the FRA provides a comprehensive overview of the issues and design measures in respect of surface water drainage that we have discussed over the past few months. We are satisfied that the principles set out in the revised FRA (discussed in “determining issues” below) will be sufficient to ensure that any risks of increased flood risk as a result of the development will be minimal. These principles are more stringent than the national planning policy because of the specific existing and potential flood risks posed by the development along the Allens Brook and Dyers Brook catchments. It is therefore important that in the unlikely event of any changes to the principles of the FRA are carefully considered under a variation of condition application – hence the suggested wording in the condition.

We will need to see the detailed design proposals for each phase / parcel of development prior to each coming forward, and we would envisage these details, along with phasing and maintenance, to be submitted when seeking to discharge the condition recommended in this letter.

S106 Obligations

It has been recognised within our previous consultation letter for this application, during discussions with the applicant and their agent, and subsequently in the approved FRA that there is a need to provide off-site strategic flood alleviation infrastructure to improve the existing situation at Bathpool and to mitigate for increased volumes of surface water discharging from the developed site. To this end, the Hyder Flood Risk Study (Appendix G of the approved FRA) was commissioned by the applicant. This Study demonstrates that there are a number of solutions of varying cost and magnitude.

The Section 106 Agreement attached to this permission will need to provide for further studies to determine which off-site strategic flood risk option within the Study should be progressed (or indeed whether there are further options which have not yet been considered, or a mixture of several options). The cost of these studies must be borne by the developer and capped at a maximum figure of £50,000. We would want the trigger for this contribution to be within 1 year of the signing of the Agreement to allow a solution to be identified as soon as possible, and for such a solution to be able to be delivered alongside the wider development of the Monkton Heathfield allocation.

The Section 106 Agreement will also need to provide for further financial funds for the delivery of the identified solution; however, the trigger for these funds to be paid can be later within the implementation of the development, as risks of increased flooding rise due to the number of houses on the ground. We recommend that no more than 149 dwellings should be constructed until a sum of £450,000 has been paid by the developer.

The Environment Agency will need to be a signatory to the Agreement because it is likely that we will physically deliver any strategic solution paid for by the developer. The nature and location of the solution selected will determine the appropriate maintenance regime which we would anticipate being taken on by one of the flood

risk management authorities under their own powers

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH - NOISE & POLLUTION - No objection subject to conditions.

A preliminary risk assessment based on a desk top survey did not identify any significant geo-environmental issues. The report recommends that as no significant issues were identified it should not be necessary to carry out an intrusive site investigation prior to planning approval, however, it would be prudent to undertake a limited assessment when a geotechnical investigation is carried out and I recommend that such a condition is attached to any planning permission and that the investigation should include an assessment of the farm yard and buildings lying to the south of the site. .

The developer should be aware that under the National Planning Policy Framework, where a site is affected by contamination responsibility for securing a safe development rest with the developer and/or landowner. Compliance with the planning condition does not rule out future action under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, for example, if additional information is found concerning the condition or history of the site.

PLANNING POLICY -

The site forms part of the Core Strategy allocation SS1 for around 4,500 new homes, 22 ha employment, district centre, community facilities, green necklace, relief roads, contributions towards country park, etc.

As such, the principle is acceptable although it is disappointing that the consortium and other parties have not progressed the masterplan as to how the individual elements will all fit together in an integrated and coordinated fashion.

In this regard, the timing of this development and any contribution towards infrastructure could have been progressed as a whole rather than through an incremental approach. From a planning policy perspective I would thus have to rely on other parties (including our legal advice) as to the extent, if any, Hartnells would contribute towards the relief road or the flood prevention measures required for example.

I would however wish to reiterate earlier comments that design and community involvement in the process of form, scale, massing etc remains of vital importance (to a masterplan and/or application) as was the case with the 2004 Development Guide. I am not aware of the extent, if any, that the community have been involved in the emergence of an integrated site solution, including for example, the orchard fronting the A road towards Prockters Farm which should still be retained as a community asset.

SOMERSET WILDLIFE TRUST - We have noted the above mentioned Planning Application and also Ecological Environmental Statement submitted by Turley Associates. We would fully support the comments and recommendations which have already been made by the District Council's Biodiversity Officer and we would

request that those recommendations are incorporated into the Planning Conditions if it should be decided to grant Planning Permission. We also understand that the County Council's own Wildlife Officer is preparing a response to the proposals and we fully support this.

Representations

38 Letters of OBJECTION have been received raising the following points:

- The development in this area should be considered holistically and not on a piecemeal basis to minimise developer costs
- The site is not suitable for additional development without the adequate infrastructure improvements if the finances and opportunities are not available to achieve this development should not proceed
- The development already underway is threatening village identity where is local democracy and why is the community voice not being heard?
- The area has significant development proposed already and does not need any more this should stop now.
- The Core strategy allocation includes the provision of significant key elements which are required in advance of any more development
- The proposal represents a significant overdevelopment of the area without the necessary infrastructure in place
- There is enough new development already in the area and additional development will be detrimental to the balance between countryside and development which characterises the area at present
- There is no point starting another site when there is already development taking place nearby
- Rather than developing here development should take place to the south of the motorway where a new self contained community could be created
- Monkton Heathfield should have been nominated as a pilot for a neighbourhood plan
- Housing should not be allowed on good quality farmland such as this
- The proposal does not include any contributions for the provision of the Western Development Spine Road (WRR) identified in the Taunton Core Strategy policy SS1 as an integral element for the delivery of a new sustainable neighbourhood
- The western relief road should be in place prior to any additional development in the area
- The allocated site requires a co-ordinated approach to development. The necessary infrastructure and its delivery need to be determined before additional development takes place rather than afterwards, as a result of problems
- If the new roundabout is provided before the Western Relief Road the development will result in mayhem along the A3259 and with a blind corner at Richards Crescent and Suningdale cottages there will be a further increase in the risk of accidents
- It is difficult to exit Mead Way at peak times already and traffic from an additional 320 houses will exacerbate this
- There should be a pedestrian crossing (or 1/2) at the south of Mead Way for use by children going to school

- The A3259 is a very busy road and road improvements are essential to avoid significant road safety issues
- The existing road needs to be traffic calmed to safely accommodate additional levels of vehicular traffic and pedestrian movements
- There are currently limited employment opportunities and future residents will need to commute to work placing increased pressure public transport leading to an increase in car trips
- Traffic volumes seem to have increased with recent development at Stockmoor Village at North Petherton/Bridgwater has account been taken of this?
- The existing cycleway network at Yallands Hill is in poor condition and dangerous and needs upgrading if it is to encourage use by future residents
- The effect of the pedestrian crossings on the flow of traffic will be dependent on people pressing the buttons and stopping the traffic which is unlikely at peak hours (5pm – 6pm)
- The additional traffic will exacerbate current capacity issues at Priorswood, Creech Castle and the M5 junctions and early road infrastructure improvements are necessary
- The design and access statement states that new residents will be encouraged to walk and cycle but where to if necessary infrastructure is not in place locally?
- The footpath/cycle link through Meads Way will change a quiet cul-de-sac into a thoroughfare to the detriment of the amenity and safety of existing residents/pedestrians. The link should be for a locked emergency access only.
- The proposal indicates a link from the application site into Mead Way. This is a cul de sac and there was no suggestion that this quiet backwater would change into a thoroughfare and potential playground for children for over 300 homes causing unacceptable amounts of noise and nuisance
- We welcome the puffin crossings but this will not overcome the congestion which will get worse with additional dwellings. (puffin crossings will only work if people want to cross the road but on a winters evening, 5.30 there is no sign of pedestrians and the traffic will neither be slowed or stopped and it will be extremely difficult to take a right turn from Mead Way to Taunton.
- Additional traffic will worsen the bottlenecks at Creech Castle and Priorswood roundabouts and junctions 24 and 25 of the M5 motorway
- Cycle and pedestrian links are no solution if they have no where to link to for local services and jobs
- There is inadequate information regarding traffic flow or transport in the transport assessment for the proposed development nor do the figures appear to include additional traffic generation from committed development
- There is no contingency plan for the closure of the M5 motorway and its re-route through Monkton Heathfield/Bathpool
- The figures do not take account of the effects of bottlenecks on the A3259 Obridge viaduct during peak times and their effect on the A3259 and the data appears flawed
- It is not clear what mitigation proposals are suggested to help facilitate the increased use of public transport across the Borough(important as 25% of new homes will be affordable houses where residents may not be able to own a car
- All estate roads need to be wide enough to cater for both cars and pedestrians to avoid any conflicts between users as well as emergency vehicles
- Adequate provision of visitor parking should be included
- There should be reference to crime and order statistics (traffic offences,

antisocial behaviour crime etc)

- Full consideration should be given to the safe routes to primary schools at Cheddon Fitzpaine, via Greenway and Pritchards Hill and to Creech St Michael via the A38 and Langaller Bridge
- The proposed link from the development site onto Greenway is too narrow with little street lighting
- There is inadequate street lighting on the A3259 between Yallands Hill and the Crown Industrial Estate
- The problems of congestion will get worse with three additional traffic lights along the A3259
- The emergency access via Mead Way will go past an existing play area and would be unsuitable and should be relocated elsewhere.
- the emergency access/ pedestrian and cycle link through the existing play area onto Mead way should be re-thought
- Gardens backing onto the site are under water for most of the winter and further development at a height level will exacerbate this
- The proposed development will be at a higher level (3 – 4m) to existing properties and surface water is likely to make the existing ground conditions worse is not adequately dealt with
- Drainage from this site must be dealt with properly to avoid additional flooding of land and or properties downstream
- The surface water storage pond and Mead Way has been at capacity in the recent months and has no capacity for additional water from the adjacent site
- The Blundells Lane ditch should be re-instated as a result of these proposals – a community benefit
- The A3259 floods between Greenway and Monkton Elm and between Yallands Hill and the Crown Industrial Estate roundabout and this should be addressed as additional traffic will have problems using the roads, which access the railway station and Taunton town centre
- Prior to construction an assessment of the existing drainage must be submitted with a proposed drainage scheme that will have the capacity to cater for existing and proposed surface water demands to reduce the risk of flooding
- A drainage ditch must be created between Hartnell Farm and Mead Way
- Where will new residents work? Which doctors and schools will they use? What will be the social impact of the development?
- The dwellings should take account of the level differences with Mead Way and avoid undue overlooking
- The development should be in keeping with the Mead Way estate
- Three storey houses would be out of keeping with and detrimental to the area
- The proposed levels of development in the area will change the village forever and it will lose its identity
- The development will result in the loss of the rural setting and wildlife experienced by existing residents to the detriment of the village
- Monkton Heathfield will become an urban area rather than rural
- the development will result in the loss of views and reduction in the peace and quiet currently enjoyed by existing residents
- Care should be taken in the relationship between the type and proximity of market and social housing to Mead Way
- The proposed tree planting is shown close to the boundary with existing properties and this would reduce the amount of light entering those properties
- The development is high density and will result in noise and air pollution for existing residents

- Development at the north of the site will tower above the skyline due to their elevated position
- The percentage of affordable housing is too high and should be reduced
- There should be a wedge of undeveloped land between the new development and the existing community
- Primary and secondary schools are already at capacity and new schools are required
- The existing medical services are 15 minute walk away is there really spare capacity when it is already difficult to get an appointment?
- In order to cater for the additional development the area needs extra services such as a post office, dentist, food store, modern recreation facilities, open spaces and a sports centre
- Insufficient consideration has been given to wildlife in general (other than the Lesser Horseshoe)
- A green area should be included adjacent to the boundary of the site with Greenway and the hedges and trees protected
- Who will maintain the footpaths to the rear of the existing properties
- The hedge running to the back of Mead Way should be protected in the future as it is approx 3m in width and has a healthy wildlife - nesting birds, toads, frogs etc. New properties should not be allowed to remove this feature.
- The planting to the rear of Greenway will reduce light into existing houses and gardens
- A high density of housing in such close proximity to existing housing will result in noise and air pollution
- What is the proposed border with the existing houses backing onto the green areas?
- The increased development in the area will result in a change of Monkton Heathfield from a village to an urban area where increased rates of crime/graffiti etc are likely but there are no plans of how to deal with this in the future
- There are concerns from residents in properties adjacent to the area of woodland planting that there may be problems of security and access as a result of the unlit area adjoining their boundary
- The proposed footpath running to the rear of the existing dwellings will be a serious security risk for residents

PLANNING POLICIES

SS1 - TD CORE STRATEGY MONKTON HEATHFIELD,
 CP1 - TD CORE STRAT. CLIMATE CHANGE,
 CP8 - CP 8 ENVIRONMENT,
 DM1 - TD CORE STRATEGY - GENERAL REQUIREMENTS,
 DM2 - TD CORE STRATEGY - DEV,
 DM4 - TD CORE STRATEGY - DESIGN,
 NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework,

LOCAL FINANCE CONSIDERATIONS

The development of this site would result in payment to the Council of the New Homes Bonus.

1 Year Payment

Taunton Deane Borough Council (Lower Tier Authority)	£367,702
Somerset County Council (Upper Tier Authority)	£91,925

6 Year Payment

Taunton Deane Borough Council (Lower Tier Authority)	£2,206,211
Somerset County Council (Upper Tier Authority)	£551,553

The Community Infrastructure Levy is applicable to this application. The current rate for this would be £70 per sq. m residential floorspace. Based on average density and housing mix, the CIL receipt for this development is approximately £1,113,000

DETERMINING ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Policy

The development plan comprises the newly approved “Taunton Deane Core Strategy”. The Core Strategy allocates land at Monkton Heathfield for a mixed use urban extension for approximately 4,500 dwellings, district centre etc. (see full policy above). Urban Initiatives formulated a draft masterplan to guide the development of the site but this remains in draft form with the need for further alterations, in particular regarding the transport solution on the A38. The Core Strategy policy requires a masterplan to guide new development in a co-ordinated and comprehensive manner. Whilst the draft masterplan has not been agreed in its entirety, there are some principles for this site that I would not expect to change moving into the future namely

- The use of the Hartnells Farm site for residential development ;
- The need for buffer planting and off site planting to the north in order to mitigate for the impact of the development on the Lesser Horseshoe bats based at Hestercombe House, a European Special Area of Conservation
- The need to contribute site specific infrastructure i.e. contributions towards affordable housing (25%), playing fields and open space, children’s play areas, surface water drainage
- The need to contribute towards wider strategic infrastructure for the whole allocated site including education, bus rapid transport etc via CIL contributions.

The application site lies within the northern area of the allocated site. A small section would project beyond the northern limit shown on the Core Strategy and draft masterplan plans, into unallocated land beyond the northern limit. For this reason the application has been advertised as a departure from the Core Strategy allocation.

This planning application is for a residential development of the site and proposes acceptable mitigation measures for the Lesser horseshoe bats and other ecology effected by the development and therefore conforms to the first two points above. S106 Head of terms have been suggested which, in principle would cover the affordable housing; surface water drainage and leisure.

The division of the site into 2 separate phases is consistent with the need to establish the wildlife buffer before the northern part of the site can be developed; the need to undertake additional surface water drainage investigation and works and the need to provide a highway solution to cater for the traffic from the additional 170 dwellings.

Highways

Principle - This proposal forms part of the Monkton Heathfield urban extension site. It has been included within the Taunton Deane Core Strategy and subject to providing acceptable highway and drainage solutions was regarded as an interim site in order to provide additional housing development prior to the development of the larger Core Strategy site.

The previous local plan allocation at Monkton Heathfield required the provision of a new southern relief road which was made up of a new eastern relief road (east of the A38) and new western relief road (west of the A38 and linking the A38 to the A3259). These new relief roads were required in order to overcome the highway junction capacity issues associated with additional traffic along the A38 and A3259 as a result of the development and also to remove the through traffic from the centre of the development area to aid community cohesion. An outline application was submitted by the Consortium for the land to the east of the A38 and this included the provision of an eastern relief road. A Section 106 agreement, between Somerset County Council and the developer consortium, requires the eastern relief road to be completed prior to the occupation of the 301st dwelling. The application did not include proposals for a new western relief road but a memorandum of understanding was agreed with the consortium whereby the consortium undertook to provide the WRR. During discussions with SCC highways it was agreed that approx 650 occupations would be acceptable before the impact of the traffic from the new development was unacceptable and the S106 agreement included a limit of 650 dwellings before the ERR and WRR were provided and operational traffic generation would limit of 650 occupations before the completion of the western relief road.

One of the junctions where serious over capacity issues were identified was the junction of Milton Hill and the A3259 and the expected traffic from this proposal is likely to have an impact on the functioning of that junction. In order to mitigate against that impact the submitted transport assessment proposes a series of signalized crossings along the A3259 in order to provide gaps in the traffic flow along the road thereby enabling the traffic to cross the A3259 to gain access into the School Road/Milton Hill and reduce the queues along the A3259 as a result. After detailed scrutiny by the County Highway officers it was agreed that these measures would be insufficient to cater for the traffic associated with an additional 320 dwellings. The applicant has therefore reconsidered the effect of the signalized crossing proposals on the junction capacity and now proposes a limit of 150

dwellings with the mitigation measures in place before the provision of the western relief road. Subject to the mitigation measures being installed prior to any occupation of the site and a maximum of 150 dwellings the County Highway Authority have withdrawn their objection to the proposal.

The Core Strategy also proposed a new rapid bus transport link along the A3259 to enable a faster and more sustainable link to be provided from North Petherton to Taunton town centre. This would improve sustainable transport options for the Monkton Heathfield area and encourage the use of buses thereby reducing the use of the car. The proposal does not include any specific measures to cater for this requirement. However since the application has been submitted Taunton Deane has introduced CIL payments for the provision of strategic infrastructure such as this and as a result the provision will be funded either by CIL monies, Central Government grant or similar and will be provided by SCC.

Detail - The proposed development lies to the north of the A3259 and would be accessed via a new highway junction. The location of the proposed junction is directly opposite to the new road associated with the masterplan attached to the outline planning permission for the land to the east of this site (Local Plan allocation) and as indicated in the planning application 48/14/0016. This was considered to create an unacceptable junction arrangement and as a result, the junction has been redesigned as a mini-roundabout. The final detail of the junction will depend on whether or not the A3259 has been traffic calmed and closed to through traffic as a result whilst the applicant has submitted details for the worse case scenario. A reduced junction arrangement might be possible if the traffic calming has already taken place. The application has now been amended to a full reserved matters application

The developer of the land to the east of the A38 and subject to the limited occupation agreement has objected to the proposal on the basis that the additional capacity ought to be used to remove the limit currently applied to their development. Unfortunately that developer has not proposed traffic works along the A3259 which would mitigate for the concerns associated with the junction of the A3259 and School Road/Milton Hill and therefore they have not proposed such an acceptable alternative solution. In any event the need for the completion of the southern relief road is also linked to the need to remove traffic from the centre of Monkton Heathfield for improved community cohesion and must be linked to the development in this area which creates the problem.

The proposed recommendation requires the additional 170 dwellings permitted by this permission to make an equitable contribution to the cost associated with the provision of the WRR and this will be determined following legal guidance from Queens Counsel.

Drainage

The development site drains into the Dyers Brook/ Maidenbrook and Allensbrook catchment which runs through Bathpool and into the River Tone. Currently there are flooding problems at Bathpool which would be exacerbated by the development of the Hartnells Farm site, in particular in respect of volumes of surface water from the site as well as flow rates. Initially the applicants designed attenuation ponds to cater

in excess of the greenfield runoff rates for development of the whole site but as this does not reduce the volumes of water this is not acceptable for this development even though it is usually acceptable in principle. In this case, the surface water drainage of this catchment is complex with discharge from the catchment being locked whilst the River Tone is in flood conditions (remaining up to 17 hours after the rainfall). Water cannot discharge and therefore backs up into the Bathpool area and an additional volume of water is likely to exacerbate this leading to increased flooding. An investigation into the potential solutions to this has identified a number of possible solutions including: 1) pump the surface water from the catchment at Bathpool into the River Tone, above the flood level. 2) divert the surface water downstream to a point where the levels of the River Tone are sufficiently low to enable discharge.

In view of the above the applicant proposes to phase the development so that phase 1 (150 dwellings) would be developed with the provision of improved on site surface water attenuation thereby reducing the amount of water running off the site to below greenfield rates and volumes which should result in a reduction to the existing flooding at Bathpool.

In addition the applicant has had to undertake surveys of the existing drainage route from the site to the receiving watercourse to ensure that there is a complete and adequate route for the surface water.

In regards to foul sewage from the site there are known capacity issues in the current foul pipe system. Whilst it is hoped that an upgrade in the capacity can be provided in the future this development is proposing a tank at the south of the site (to the north of the listed farmhouse) to store the sewage at times of peak flow and allow for their discharge when there is spare capacity in the pipe work. Provided the tank is operational prior to first occupation the foul drainage proposals are considered to be acceptable.

Landscape

The National Planning Policy Framework requires development to protect and enhance valued landscapes. This site does not lie within any national or local landscape designations and there would therefore be no impact on any designated landscapes. However, the site does include gently sloping land rising up to the hill behind and the development has the potential to have an impact on the landscape, amenity and character of the surrounding area.

The application site is currently composed of agricultural and grazing fields surrounded and divided by hedgerows with trees within them. Development of the land will completely alter the landscape character of the site and it is considered important to assess that impact and ensure that the landscaping of the proposed development will limit those impacts and help to assimilate the development into its surroundings. A full landscape assessment was undertaken and the results submitted in support of this application. The assessment of the landscape was undertaken in accordance with the accepted guidelines for Landscape and visual assessment and visual receptors were agreed with the Landscape Officer prior to the assessment works taking place.

The landscape approach for the development of this site is to retain as much of the existing hedgerow and trees on site and complement this with a landscape structure that promotes additional planting throughout the site. This would begin at the entrance to the site which would create a well landscaped area of land adjacent to drainage ponds either side of the highway going northwards into the site. Using street trees it is proposed to create north – south lines of street trees breaking up and softening the blocks of housing. These street trees would link to a landscaped central open space which would combine landscaping with children’s play area, public open space, wildlife mitigation and drainage ponds. The site rises up from the south to the hills further to the north. Areas of woodland planting are proposed on the higher northern boundary and this should serve to frame the housing development and provide a wooded backdrop when viewed from the A3259. It is considered that the proposed landscape structure would be acceptable subject to the agreement of the final details at the reserved matters stage.

Ecology

An Ecological Environmental Statement was submitted (under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2011) in support of the planning application. To inform this document a suite of detailed ecological surveys were undertaken, including phase 1 habitat surveys, and detailed surveys for bats, Dormice, reptiles, amphibians and hedgerows. The results of the surveys were used to assess the impact of the development on the ecology (fauna and flora) of the site and to devise a mitigation scheme which would ensure that the proposal does not have a long term negative impact on the ecology. The Ecological Environmental Statement identifies that the site is of local value to breeding birds and common bat species and of site value for reptiles, amphibians and badgers. Of particular importance is the presence of Lesser Horseshoe bats, which in the absence of evidence to the contrary, are presumed to come from the Hestercombe House SAC site which lies approximately 1.7 km to the north-west. The colony at Hestercombe House is considered to be of national significance.

Ecological mitigation and compensation measures are identified as an integral part of the development scheme design and include off site offset woodland planting to replace the lost habitat for the wildlife and in particular for the Lesser Horseshoe bats. In addition the outline proposals are to retain and enhance existing wildlife habitats, particularly to the west and north of the site and link them within green infrastructure areas and street design. The detailed design of these areas is a reserved matter but is likely to include a design and lighting strategy that will enable the hedgerow and woodland areas to remain unlit and suitable for all wildlife.

In accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 the County Ecologist (on behalf of TDBC) has undertaken a Test of likely Significance of the development on the population and habitat of the Lesser Horseshoe bats (Hestercombe House SAC) for the proposed development. Based on the submitted details, the SCC Ecologist identifies the mitigation measures that are considered necessary to ensure that the development is unlikely to have a significant effect and requires conditions to ensure the measures are agreed in detail and in place at the appropriate time and appropriately maintained in the future. Subject to the imposition of those conditions Natural England raise no objection to the proposal.

Heritage

The National Planning Policy Framework, Section 12 requires “Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.”

The development site is known to contain Archaeological Heritage Assets as well as the Grade 2 listed building complex at Hartnells Farm. A Heritage Statement and Archaeological Assessment were submitted in support of the planning application.

The Archaeological Assessment includes details of desk top investigations into the potential for archaeology at the site and this is supported by a limited amount of on-site trial trenches. Following this the site was archaeologically evaluated in 2007 as part of a pre-planning proposal. The evaluation showed that there are remains relating to Bronze Age settlement on the site. The evidence suggests that these are likely to be of local value and in those circumstances an archaeological excavation is required prior to the commencement of development. The application is in outline and I suggest a condition to ensure that a programme of archaeological excavation is submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority and implemented in accordance with the approved programme.

The Heritage Statement considers the impact that the development will have on Hartnells Farm listed building complex and its setting. The statement identifies that the listed complex is a good example domestic vernacular architecture "a substantially intact late-C17 through-passage farmhouse with C18 and C19 extensions". The listed building also forms part of a wider complex of historic farm buildings and structures; located to the north west of the farmhouse and attached barn. The presence and appearance of these older buildings, in particular the stone built barn immediately to the north west of the farmhouse within the yard, contribute to the significance of the listed building and an understanding of the historical development of the farm over time. The barn may be contemporary with the house although with later additions and alterations of the 18th/19th century.

A development of this size will completely transform the agricultural landscape which surrounds the listed complex. The site has been included within the Core Strategy for development. It is therefore important to ensure that the impact on the setting of the listed building is balanced against the development potential of the site. As a result the submitted masterplan suggests that the built development can be kept away from the listed complex with the use of open grassed areas of public open space (above a submerged foul drainage tank) and open land surrounding a highway access. It is considered that the proposal, as outlined in the masterplan will retain a limited open setting for the listed complex which is considered to be sufficient given the Core Strategy allocation.

Leisure

The Taunton Deane Local Plan saved policy C4 and Taunton Deane Core Strategy Policy SS1 set the requirements for open space for development. This is separated into general public open space, children's play areas (Local Equipped Area for Play - LEAP and Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play - NEAP), allotments, and playing fields. A development of this size is required to contribute towards the provision of all types of open space. For a development of this size children's play and general public open space should be provided on site. The proposed number of dwellings does not justify the provision of a playing field on the site but contributions are required in order to provide new playing field facilities or improve existing playing field facilities in the vicinity of the site. This would be secured via CIL as sport and recreation is contained within the Regulation 123 list.

Whilst this application is in outline and details of open space are reserved matters, the submitted masterplan indicates the provision of open space located throughout the site. In the southern area, to the north of Hartnells Farm and the southern surface water drainage pond, areas of general open space are suggested (the area of the open space provision does not include attenuation ponds as they are not suitable).

Running west – east, across the “middle” of the site is a belt of open space, which would include some of the bat mitigation and surface water attenuation ponds as well as the LEAP and NEAP requirements. To the north of the site significant areas of tree planting are proposed as part of the mitigation measures for the Lesser Horseshoe bats. These areas would also have informal footpath links running through them.

Policy SS1 envisages the provision of a multi purpose green necklace around the allocated site to provide for public open space including allotments, outdoor recreation and wildlife habitat. Crucially it is suggested that the types of use within the green necklace would vary around the necklace depending on circumstances. In particular sites to the north have to provide a belt of planting in order to protect the Lesser Horseshoe Bats from Hestercombe House SAC.

Allotments - In accordance with Taunton Deane Borough Council policy this development will generate a requirement for the provision of allotments. The illustrative masterplan for the site indicates the provision of land for allotment purposes within the central open space area.

As mentioned above the leisure proposals are reserved matters and I therefore propose conditions to ensure that adequate on site children's open space and public open space are provided in accordance with the requirements of policy C4. I also propose that contributions towards the maintenance of these areas are secured via a S106 agreement unless alternative private maintenance is agreed.

Education

The proposed residential development would introduce additional numbers of pupils for pre-school, primary and secondary schools. Taking into account the committed development in the area, Somerset County consider that there is no spare capacity and new school places need to be provided. The developer is required to contribute towards the cost of the provision of those new places. Education contributions are

now covered within the CIL payments along with provisions for Community Hall facilities.

Sustainability _

The Taunton Urban Extension study and Taunton Sub Area Study, which informed the Regional Spatial Strategy (now revoked) and the Taunton Deane Core Strategy, identified Monkton Heathfield as the most sustainable location for a strategic urban extension for Taunton hence the site's allocation in the Taunton Deane Core Strategy as a strategic site covered by Policy SS1.

It is envisaged that, when complete, the allocated site will be developed into a sustainable urban extension providing key services, leisure facilities and employment within walking and cycling distances of new residents. These improvements would be provided in a phased manner as the development of the Strategic Site progresses and either funds become available for key infrastructure improvements or works on key infrastructure improvements are undertaken. All development, including the current application, will be expected to fund their share of those costs via CIL and/or Section 106 contributions. The provision of over £1m in CIL payments and over £2m from New Homes Bonus as a result of this development carries significant weight in favour of the application.

The application site has a range of wildlife that will be affected by the development including Lesser Horseshoe Bats from the Hestercombe House SAC. In order to ensure that the site is sustainable and does not have a detrimental impact, ecological mitigation is proposed as detailed above.

This application is only for a residential development and, in order to provide sustainable development of the whole strategic allocation, it would be required to make proportional contributions to the provision of all other necessary transport improvements, services and facilities required to ensure that the site is sustainable.

In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

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