

Dorset Council Local Plan: Regulation 18 Local Plan

Sustainability Appraisal Report

Appendices

Final report

Prepared by LUC

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Appendix A

Site assessment criteria

Residential site assessment criteria and assumptions

SA objective 1: Provide for net gains for biodiversity

A.1 Development sites that are within close proximity of an international, national or local designated nature conservation site have the potential to affect the biodiversity or geodiversity of those sites/features, e.g. through habitat damage/loss, fragmentation, disturbance to species, air pollution, increased recreation pressure etc. Conversely, there may be opportunities to promote habitat connectivity if new developments include green infrastructure. Therefore, proximity to designated sites using the distances specified below provides an indication of the potential for an adverse effect, however, it is acknowledged that appropriate mitigation may avoid adverse effects and may even result in beneficial effects. In addition, the Habitats Regulations Assessment will consider in more detail the potential for likely significant effects on SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites using a variety of different buffer distances, and the HRA findings will be referred to in the SA report as relevant. The potential impacts on undesignated habitats and species adjacent to the potential development sites cannot be determined at this strategic level of assessment. This would be determined once more specific proposals are developed and submitted as part of a planning application.

A.2 The potential impacts of site options on water quality are assessed in SA objective 3: Maintain or Improve Water Quality.

Significance scoring

Criteria 1a and 1b are scored:

- If either of the criteria receive a major negative score then the effect recorded is significant negative.
- If both criteria receive a minor negative score then the effect recorded is significant negative.
- If only one of criteria receive a minor negative score then the effect recorded is minor negative.
- For all other sites the score is negligible.

Table A.1: Assessment criteria for SA objective 1: Provide for net gains for biodiversity

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
1a International and national biodiversity and geodiversity assets	N/A	N/A	All other sites	400m-1,000m from Dorset Heaths SAC. 250m-1,000m from all other internationally or nationally designated sites	<=400m from Dorset Heaths SAC. <=250m from all other internationally or nationally designated sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Natural England SSSI, Ramsar, SAC, SPA, NNR ■
1b Locally designated wildlife sites, Priority Habitat Inventory and Ancient Woodland	N/A	N/A	All other sites	<=400m from a LWS, LNR, Priority Habitat or Ancient Woodland	>=1% of site intersects with a LWS, LNR, Priority Habitat or Ancient Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ WTS data (from Dorset Renewable Energy Development Study) ■ Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) ■ Local Nature Reserves (LNR)

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Natural England Priority Habitat Inventory ■ Natural England Ancient Woodland

SA objective 2: Protect soil quality and conserve geological conservation interests

A.3 Appraisal of site options in relation to this SA objective considered whether the site is greenfield or brownfield and also what quality of agricultural land it contains. Development on brownfield land represents a more efficient use of land in comparison to the development of greenfield sites. Although open spaces may contain a small number of buildings to maintain recreational use, they are largely undeveloped and are considered greenfield land.

A.4 The consideration of geological conservation interests relates to Locally and Regionally Important Geological Sites (LIGS and RIGS) and the Dorset and East Devon Coast UNESCO World Heritage Site (nominated for its outstanding combination of globally significant geological and geomorphological features). Note that some SSSIs are designated for their geology, but these have been addressed in SA objective 1.

Significance scoring

If criterion 2a is a major positive then site scores significant positive, irrespective of criterion 2b.

If criterion 2a is not major positive, then criteria 2a to 2c are scored:

- Major positive +3
- Minor positive +1
- Negligible 0
- Minor negative -1
- Major negative -3

Scores totalled, and then averaged (i.e. total score divided by 3). Overall significance is scored as follows:

Significant positive $\geq +2$

- Minor positive >0 to <2
- Minor negative <0 to >-2
- Significant negative ≤ -2

Table A.2: Assessment criteria for SA objective 2: Protect soil quality and conserve geological conservation interests

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
2a Brownfield /greenfield land	Majority of site brownfield land (i.e. >50%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	Majority of site greenfield land (i.e. >50%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Contained within the shapefile for each site

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
2b Agricultural land classification	N/A	N/A	All other sites.	Greenfield site with $\geq 25\%$ area classed as Grade 3 agricultural land	Greenfield site with $\geq 25\%$ area classed as Grade 1 or 2 agricultural land where $\geq 25\%$ area classed as Grade 1 or 2 agricultural land and $\geq 25\%$ area classed as Grade 3 agricultural land major negative effect will apply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Natural England Agricultural Land Classification
2c Geological conservation interest	N/A	N/A	All other sites	Site is $\leq 100\text{m}$ from a LIGS, RIGS and/or UNESCO	$\geq 1\%$ of site contains or within a LIGS, RIGS and/or UNESCO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Regionally Important Geological Sites

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
				World Heritage Site	World Heritage Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Locally Important Geological Sites ■ Historic England UNESCO World Heritage Site – the Dorset and East Devon Coast

SA objective 3: Maintain or improve water quality

A.5 Levels of water consumption within new development will be determined by its design and onsite practices, rather than the location of the site, and therefore effects on water resource availability are not considered in the assessment of site options. However, the location of development could affect water quality during construction depending on its proximity to watercourses, water bodies and Groundwater Source Protection Zones. The extent to which water quality is actually affected would depend on construction techniques and the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems. These practices will be promoted and secured through the detailed design proposals for each site at the planning application stage and through other Local Plan policies, which have been appraised separately. In addition, there is a particular issue in Dorset of nutrient enrichment from agricultural discharges and treated wastewater effluent from new residential development occurring within the hydrological catchments of Poole Harbour, Hampshire Avon and Somerset Levels designated sites, which is increasing algal growth in these protected estuaries and freshwater habitats leading to a loss of biodiversity. In line with Natural England's advice, Dorset Council has adopted an approach of Nutrient Neutrality where applicants for residential developments use mitigation to offset the increase in nutrient load that would arise from their development. Despite this, the site assessment criteria below for the residential site options considers the potential for impacts if sites are allocated within these catchments.

Significance scoring

If either criterion 3a or 3b receives a major negative, the SA objective automatically receives a significant negative effect.

If both of these criteria are minor negative, then a significant negative is given.

If only one criterion of these two scores minor negative and the other scores negligible, then a minor negative is given.

If only one of the criteria receive a minor negative score then the effect recorded is minor negative.

For all other sites the score is negligible.

Table A.2: Assessment criteria for SA objective 3: Maintain or improve water quality

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
3a Source Protection Zones	N/A	N/A	All other sites.	>=25% site falls within Source Protection Zone 2 or 3	>=25% site falls within Source Protection Zone 1 <i>where >=25% site falls within Source Protection Zone 1 and</i>	<div> <div></div> <div>Environnment Agency Source Protection Zone</div> </div>

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
					<i>>=25% site falls within Source Protection Zone 2 or 3 major negative effect will apply</i>	
3b Water quality	N/A	N/A	All other sites	Any part of the site contains or is within 100m of a watercourse or water body with 'moderate' or 'good' ecological or chemical status (where the ecological or chemical status differs, the lower score is taken).	Any part of the site contains or is within 100m of a watercourse or water body with 'poor' or 'bad' ecological or chemical status (where the ecological or chemical status differs, the lower score is taken); and/or	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ordnance Survey Open Rivers watercourses data ■ Ordnance Survey water bodies ■ Environment Agency waterbody quality status ■ Environment Agency catchment boundaries

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
					Site is within either the Poole Harbour, Hampshire Avon, River Axe, Chesil and the Fleet or Somerset Levels hydrological catchment.	

SA objective 4: Maintain or improve air quality

A.6 The site assessment criteria focus on the potential to the potential for development to contribute to traffic within AQMAs, to contribute to air pollution in areas where there are already issues of poor air quality, or to result in new residents being exposed to air pollution.

A.7 The assessment of site options does not take into account planned measures that will improve future air quality (such as the ban on sale of new petrol and diesel cars in the UK from 2035), or site-specific mitigation. The effect of the plan as a whole on air quality will be assessed elsewhere, within the cumulative effects section of the SA.

A.8 In 2021, the WHO updated its recommended guidelines for air pollutants (“WHO global air quality guidelines: particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10), ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide” -

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240034228>). The new air quality guidelines reflect the best available health evidence and WHO's recommendations continue to be recognised globally as the targets that should be met to protect public health. Minor negative effects are assumed to occur when residential development would occur in a location where the current baseline annual mean concentration of a pollutant exceeds these 2021 WHO guidelines. Major negative effects are assumed to occur in locations where current annual mean pollution exceeds both the 2021 WHO air quality guidelines and the higher pollution levels allowed under the UK's national air quality objectives (see https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/assets/documents/Air_Quality_Objectives_Update_20230403.pdf).

Significance scoring

Each criterion 4a to 4d is scored:

- Major positive +3
- Minor positive +1
- Negligible 0
- Minor negative -1
- Major negative -3

Scores totalled, and then averaged (i.e. total score divided by 4). Overall significance is scored as follows:

- Significant positive $\geq +2$
- Minor positive >0 to <2
- Negligible 0
- Minor negative <0 to >-2
- Significant negative ≤ -2

Table A.3: Assessment criteria for SA objective 4: Maintain or improve air quality

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
4a Air quality	N/A	N/A	All other sites	N/A	Site located within or connected to an AQMA	■ Defra AQMA mapping
4b NO ₂ pollution	N/A	N/A	All other sites	>=25% of site has pollutant concentration of 10-40 µg/m ³	>=25% of site has pollutant concentration of >40 µg/m ³ <i>where >=25% of site has pollutant concentration of 10-40 µg/m³ and >=25% of site has contaminant concentration of >40 µg/m³ major negative effect will apply</i>	■ Defra NO ₂ pollution data

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
4c PM ₁₀ pollution	N/A	N/A	All other sites	>=25% of site has pollutant concentration of 15-40 µg/m ³	>=25% of site has pollutant concentration of >40 µg/m ³ <i>where >=25% of site has pollutant concentration of 10-40 µg/m³ and >=25% of site has pollutant concentration of >40 µg/m³ major negative effect will apply</i>	■ Defra PM ₁₀ pollution data
4d PM _{2.5} pollution	N/A	N/A	All other sites	>=25% of site has pollutant concentration of 5-20 µg/m ³	>=25% of site has pollutant concentration of >20 µg/m ³ <i>Where >=25% of site has</i>	Defra PM _{2.5} pollution data

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
					<p><i>pollutant concentration of 10-40 µg/m³ and ≥25% of site has pollutant concentration of >40 µg/m³ major negative effect will apply</i></p>	

SA objective 5: Limit climate change and improve resilience to future climate change

A.9 This is a cross-cutting SA objective. To avoid duplication, site assessment criteria that are determinants of carbon emissions but which are tested under other SA objectives are not duplicated here (e.g. criteria for access to services, facilities and open space under SA objective 9 and 10). The location of housing will not have an effect on levels of domestic energy consumption and the potential for renewable energy use. These factors are influenced more by the specific design and construction methods used, and whether renewable energy infrastructure is incorporated into development. Therefore, the effects of the potential sites on this SA objective will be assumed to be negligible. Consideration of site-specific factors that allow for the incorporation of viable district heating networks or combined heat and power is beyond the scope of the SA site options assessment.

A.10 Additionally, the effect of site options on flood risk is considered separately under SA objective 6. The location of development will not otherwise affect the achievement of this objective as effects will depend largely on the detailed proposals

for sites and their design, which would be influenced by policies in the Dorset Council Local Plan and details submitted at the planning application stage for development sites which includes essential infrastructure such as foul drainage.

Significance scoring

Criteria 5a to 5c are scored:

- Major positive +3
- Minor positive +1
- Negligible 0
- Minor negative -1
- Major negative -3

Scores totalled, and then averaged (i.e. total score divided by 3). Overall significance is scored as follows:

- Significant positive $\geq +2$
- Minor positive >0 to <2
- Minor negative <0 to >-2 Significant negative ≤ -2

Table A.4: Assessment criteria for SA objective 5: Limit climate change and improve resilience to future climate change

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
5a Rail	<= 500m from a railway station	501-1,000m from a railway station	N/A	1,001-2,000m from a railway station	>2,000m from a railway station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ordnance Survey railway station data
5b Bus	<= 300m from a bus stop	301-600m from a bus stop	N/A	601-1,000m from a bus stop	>1,000m from a bus stop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Public Transport Access Nodes bus stop data
5c Cycling	<= 200m from a cycle route	201-400m from a cycle route	N/A	401-800m from a cycle route	>800m from a cycle route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local cycle routes National and Regional Cycle Routes

SA objective 6: Limit the effects of flooding and coastal change

A.11 The UK is more likely to experience warmer and wetter winters as a result of climate change. This will result in an increased risk of flooding from rivers and the sea, in addition to flash flooding. The extent to which flood risk can be managed and reduced is therefor considered within the assessment of this SA objective, with effects determined by whichever Flood Zone the greatest proportion of each site falls within.

A.12 Water demand will be heightened during hotter, drier summers, as a result of climate change. However, levels of water consumption within new development are considered under SA Objective 3: Maintain or Improve Water Quality.

Significance scoring

If either criterion 6a or 6b receives a major negative, the SA objective automatically receives a significant negative effect.

If both of these criteria are minor negative, then a significant negative is given.

If only one criterion of these two scores minor negative and the other scores negligible, then a minor negative is given.

Table A.5: Assessment criteria for SA objective 6: Limit the effects of flooding and coastal change

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
6a Flood zones	N/A	N/A	All other sites	>=25% site within Flood Zone 2	>=25% site within Flood Zone 3 where >=25% site within Flood Zone 2 and >=25% site within Flood Zone 3 major negative effect will apply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Environment Agency Flood Zone 3 ■ Environment Agency Flood Zone 2

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
6b Surface water flood risk	N/A	N/A	All other sites	>=25% on land with a 1 in 100 year risk of surface water flooding	>=25% on land with a 1 in 30 year risk of surface water flooding where >=25% on land with a 1 in 100 year risk of surface water flooding and >=25% on land with a 1 in 30 year risk of surface water flooding major negative effect will apply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Environment Agency 1:30 surface water flooding data ■ Environment Agency 1:100 surface water flooding data

SA objective 7: Protect and enhance valued landscapes

A.13 All development could have some effect on the landscape depending on the character and sensitivity of the surrounding area. Site options adjacent to the existing urban edge could be more easily integrated into existing built development, compared to more rural and isolated sites. However, the actual effect on landscapes will also depend on the design, scale and

layout of development, which may help mitigate any adverse effects but will not be known until the planning application stage. Therefore, all negative effects are recorded as uncertain.

A.14 In addition, proximity to the Dorset and Cranborne Chase National Landscapes can provide an indication of the potential for development to have adverse impacts on those nationally designated landscapes.

Significance scoring

If either or both of the criteria receive a major negative score, then the effect recorded is significant negative.

If 7a receives a minor negative score, and 7b is negligible, then the effect recorded is minor negative.

For all other sites the score is negligible.

However, all effects to acknowledge uncertainty (?) in the absence of a landscape impact assessment that can be translated into SA effects:

- Major negative --?
- Minor negative -?
- All other 0?

Table A.6: Assessment criteria for SA objective 7: Protect and enhance valued landscapes

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
7a Landscape Sensitivity	N/A	N/A	Site is within a settlement	Site is on the edge of a settlement (i.e. <=100m)	Site is outside of a settlement (i.e. >100m)	■ Dorset Council settlement boundary data
7b National Landscapes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	<=500m from National Landscape/s	■ National Landscape boundary data

SA objective 8: Conserve and enhance heritage assets and the historic environment

A.15 The NPPF states that the “significance [of a heritage asset] can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting”. However, development could also enhance the significance of the asset, provided that the development preserves those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset. In all cases, effects from a site option will be subject to a degree of uncertainty as the actual effects on heritage assets will depend on the particular scale, design and layout of the new development and opportunities which may exist to enhance the setting of heritage features, for example where sympathetic development replaces a derelict brownfield site which is currently having an adverse effect.

A.16 The proximity tests outlined below are intended to provide a basis for screening for the potential for adverse effects on heritage assets but in the absence of a historic environment sensitivity study or similar for all site options, effects identified by

the SA are subject to a high degree of uncertainty. Distances used are based on professional judgement. Longer screening distances are used for site options outside of existing settlements to reflect typically longer sightlines in rural vs. urban areas.

Significance scoring

If either of the criteria receive a major negative score, then the effect recorded is significant negative.

If both criteria receive a minor negative score, then the effect recorded is significant negative.

If only one of criteria receive a minor negative score, then the effect recorded is minor negative.

For all other sites the score is negligible

Table A.7: Assessment criteria for SA objective 8: Conserve and enhance heritage assets and the historic environment

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
8a Proximity to historic assets: sites within existing settlements	N/A	N/A	All other sites	101-250m	<=100m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Dorset Council settlement boundaries ■ Dorset Council Conservation Areas ■ Historic England Listed Buildings

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Historic England Scheduled Monuments
8b Proximity to historic assets: sites outside of existing settlements	N/A	N/A	All other sites	501-1,000m	<=500m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Dorset Council settlement boundaries ■ Dorset Council Conservation Areas ■ Historic England Listed Buildings ■ Historic England Scheduled Monuments

SA objective 9: Promote wellbeing and healthy communities for all

A.17 Residential sites that are close to existing healthcare facilities (i.e. GP surgeries) will help to ensure that residents have good access to healthcare services. Factors not captured by the assessment of site options include there being capacity at those healthcare facilities to accommodate new residents and whether new residential development supports the provision of additional healthcare capacity.

A.18 Public health will also be influenced by the proximity of sites to open spaces, sports and recreation facilities, in addition to walking and cycling routes, as this can encourage participation in active outdoor recreation.

A.19 Noise pollution can have adverse effects on people's wellbeing and wildlife. Ensuring sites are not close to these pollution sources will help reduce noise exposure.

A.20 Consideration is given to the proximity of sites to odour producing sources, which can have adverse effects on wellbeing and ensuring sites are not close to these pollution sources will help protect people's wellbeing.

A.21 The proximity of development sites to the largest centres in Dorset will affect the extent to which people are able to access services and facilities. It is possible that new services and facilities will be provided as part of new developments, particularly at larger sites, but this was not assumed in assessing site options.

Significance scoring

Criteria 9a to 9g are scored:

- Major positive +3
- Minor positive +1
- Minor negative -1
- Major negative -3

Scores totalled, and then averaged (i.e. total score divided by 7). Overall significance is scored as follows

- Significant positive $\geq +2$
- Minor positive >0 to <2
- Minor negative <0 to >-2

- Significant negative ≤ -2

For criteria 9f and 9g, scoring of significance will match the major, minor and negligible effects:

- Minor positive +?
- Major positive ++?
- All other 0?


Table A.8: Assessment criteria for SA objective 9: Promote wellbeing and healthy communities for all

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
9a Open space, sport and recreation	$\leq 300\text{m}$ from open space, sport, recreation facility, open country and registered common land	301-800m from open space, sport, recreation facility, open country and registered common land	N/A	801-1,200m from open space, sport and recreation facility	9a Open space, sport and recreation	Dorset Council green space, open space, play space, sport and recreation facility data National Trust Open Country data Natural England Registered Common Land data OS Greenspace Access Points

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
9b Loss of open space	N/A	N/A	All other sites	1-24.9% of site is open space, sport, recreation facility, open country and registered common land	>=25% of site is open space, sport, recreation facility, open country and registered common land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Dorset Council green space, open space, play space, sport and recreation facility data ■ National Trust Open Country data ■ Natural England Registered Common Land data ■ OS Greenspace Access Points
9c Public Rights of Way (PRoW)	<=200m from PRoW	201-400m from PRoW	N/A	401-800m from PRoW	>800m from PRoW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Dorset Council PRoW data
9d Noise pollution from roads and railways	N/A	N/A	All other sites.	>=25% site within: Lnight 50.0-54.9 dB, or	>=25% site within:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Defra road and rail noise data

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
				Laeq,16 55.0-59.9 dB	<p>Lnight >=55.0 dB, or Laeq,16 >= 60.0 dB</p> <p>where >=25% site within Lnight >=55.0 dB, or Laeq,16 >= 60.0 dB major and >=25% site within Lnight 50.0-54.9 dB, or Laeq,16 55.0-59.9 dB major negative effect will apply</p>	
9e Odour	N/A	N/A	All other sites.	N/A	Site is <=400m from a wastewater treatment works OR <=500m from an anaerobic	<p>■ Environment Agency wastewater treatment plant data</p>

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
					digestion facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment Agency anaerobic digestion facilities data
9f Levels of deprivation	>=25% of site located within one of the 20% most deprived areas nationally <i>where >=25% of site located within one of the 20% most deprived areas nationally and >=25% of site located within one of the 30% most deprived areas nationally</i>	>=25% of site located within one of the 30% most deprived areas nationally	All other sites	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Index of Multiple Deprivation

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
	<i>major positive effect will apply</i>					
9g Town centres	<=400m from Tier 1 settlement OR <=200m from Tier 2 settlement	401-800m from Tier 1 settlement OR 201-400m from Tier 2 settlement	N/A	801-1,200m from Tier 1 settlement OR 401-800m from Tier 2 settlement OR <=400m from Tier 3 settlement	>1,200m from Tier 1 settlement AND >800m from Tier 2 settlement AND >400m from Tier 3 settlement	 Dorset Council town centre data

SA objective 10: Deliver a wide choice of high quality homes and infrastructure

A.22 All of the residential site options are expected to have positive effects on this objective in terms of delivering homes, due to the nature of the proposed development. However, the location of site options will not influence the mix and quality of housing that is provided onsite – this will instead be determined by the Local Plan. Nonetheless, it is expected that sites of a larger size may be able to offer a wider mix of housing, including affordable housing, as well as making a greater contribution towards local housing needs. A significant positive (++) effect is therefore recorded for residential sites of 100 dwellings or more. A minor positive (+) effect is recorded for site options that would provide fewer than 100 dwellings.

A.23 The effects of sites on this objective in terms of providing community facilities will be appraised through associated site allocation policies once sites have been allocated, as part of the Regulation 19 SA stage. However, the effect of site options in terms of the potential to improve access to education and health will depend on how accessible existing educational and GP

facilities are to the sites, although there are uncertainties as the effects will depend on there being capacity at those schools and GP surgeries to accommodate new pupils/patients. New residential development could stimulate the provision of new schools/school places and or new GP surgery/patient places, particularly larger sites, but this cannot be assumed at this stage.

Significance scoring

Each criterion 10a to 10c is scored:

- Major positive +3
- Minor positive +1
- Minor negative -1
- Major negative -3

Scores totalled, and then averaged (i.e. total score divided by 3).

Then criterion 10d is scored:

- Major positive +2
- Minor positive +1

The scores from the assessments of 10a-10c and 10d are added together.

Overall significance is scored as follows:

- Significant positive $\geq +2$
- Minor positive >0 to <2
- Minor negative <0 to >-2

■ Significant negative ≤ -2

Table A.9: Assessment criteria for SA objective 10: Deliver a wide choice of high quality homes and infrastructure

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
10a Primary schools	$\leq 400\text{m}$ from primary school	401-800m from primary school	N/A	801-1,200m from primary school	$> 1,200\text{m}$ from primary school	■ Dorset Council primary school data
10b Secondary schools	$\leq 500\text{m}$ from secondary school	501-1,000m from secondary school	N/A	1,001-2,000m from secondary school	$> 2,000\text{m}$ from secondary school	■ Dorset Council primary school data
10c GP surgeries	$\leq 400\text{m}$ from nearest NHS GP surgery	401-800m from nearest NHS GP surgery	N/A	801-1,200m from nearest NHS GP surgery	$> 1,200\text{m}$ from nearest NHS GP surgery	■ Dorset Council GP surgery data
10d Housing provision	Significant-ly contributes to the delivery of housing: ≥ 100 dwellings	Contributes to the delivery of housing: < 100 dwellings	N/A	N/A	N/A	■ Contained within the shapefile for each site

SA objective 11: Build a strong, responsive, and competitive economy

A.24 The location of residential sites will not directly influence sustainable economic growth or the delivery of employment opportunities. Therefore a negligible (0) effect is expected for these site options. However, if part of a site contains existing employment land that could be lost as a result of residential development, a minor negative (-) effect is expected. If it contains a larger proportion then a major negative (--) effect is expected.

Significance scoring

Criteria 11a, 11c and 11d are scored:

- Major positive +3
- Minor positive +1
- Negligible 0
- Minor negative -1
- Major negative -3

Scores totalled, and then averaged (i.e. total score divided by 3).

Overall significance is scored as follows:

- Significant positive $\geq +2$
- Minor positive >0 to <2
- Minor negative <0 to >-2
- Significant negative ≤ -2

Table A.10: Assessment criteria for SA objective 11: Build a strong, responsive, and competitive economy

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
11a Loss of employment land	N/A	N/A	All other sites	1.0-24.9% of site is an existing employment area	>=25% of site is an existing employment area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Dorset Council's employment area data ■ Dorset Renewable Energy Development Study
11b Provision of employment sites	N/A for residential site options	N/A for residential site options	N/A for residential site options	N/A for residential site options	N/A for residential site options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ N/A
11c Employment deprivation	N/A	N/A	All other sites	>=25% of site located within one of the 20-40% most deprived areas nationally ('Employment' domain of the Index of	>=25% of site located within one of the 20% most deprived areas nationally ('Employment' domain of the Index of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 'Employment' domain of the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
				Multiple Deprivation).	Multiple Deprivation). <i>where >=25% of site located within one of the 20% most deprived areas nationally and >=25% of site located within one of the 20-40% most deprived areas nationally major negative effect will apply</i>	
11d Access to jobs N.B. Jobs density = number of employees / population	Site located in LSOA that is in top 20% of LSOAs in plan area for jobs density	Site located in LSOA that is in 20-40 percentile of LSOAs in plan area for jobs density	Site located in LSOA that is in 40-60 percentile of LSOAs in plan area for jobs density	Site located in LSOA that is in 60-80 percentile of LSOAs in plan area for jobs density	Site located in LSOA that is in 80-100 percentile of LSOAs in plan area for jobs density	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Nomis Business Register and Employment Survey ■ Office for National Statistics Lower

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
						layer Super Output Area population estimates

Employment site assessment criteria and assumptions

SA objective 1: Provide for net gains for biodiversity

A.25 Development sites that are within close proximity of an international, national or local designated nature conservation site have the potential to affect the biodiversity or geodiversity of those sites/features, e.g. through habitat damage/loss, fragmentation, disturbance to species, air pollution, increased recreation pressure etc. Conversely, there may be opportunities to promote habitat connectivity if new developments include green infrastructure. Therefore, proximity to designated sites using the distances specified below provides an indication of the potential for an adverse effect, however, it is acknowledged that appropriate mitigation may avoid adverse effects and may even result in beneficial effects. In addition, the Habitats Regulations Assessment will consider in more detail the potential for likely significant effects on SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites using a variety of different buffer distances, and the HRA findings will be referred to in the SA report as relevant. The potential impacts on undesignated habitats and species adjacent to the potential development sites cannot be determined at this strategic level of assessment. This would be determined once more specific proposals are developed and submitted as part of a planning application.

A.26 The potential impacts of sites on water quality (which is an issue for Poole Harbour, Hampshire Avon and Somerset Levels designated sites) are assessed in Objective 3: Maintain or Improve Water Quality.

Significance scoring

If either of the criteria receive a major negative score, then the effect recorded is significant negative.

If both criteria receive a minor negative score, then the effect recorded is significant negative.

If only one of criteria receive a minor negative score, then the effect recorded is minor negative.

For all other sites the score is negligible.

Table A.11: Assessment criteria for SA objective 1: Provide for net gains for biodiversity

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
1a International and national biodiversity and geodiversity assets	N/A	N/A	All other sites	400m-1,000m from Dorset Heaths SAC. 250m-1,000m from all other internationally or nationally designated sites	<=400m from Dorset Heaths SAC. <=250m from all other internationally or nationally designated sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Natural England SSSI, Ramsar, SAC, SPA, NNR ■
1b Locally designated	N/A	N/A	All other sites	<=400m from a LWS, LNR,	>=1% of site intersects with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ WTS data (from Dorset

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
wildlife sites, Priority Habitat Inventory and Ancient Woodland				Priority Habitat or Ancient Woodland	a LWS, LNR, Priority Habitat or Ancient Woodland	<p>Renewable Energy Development Study)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) ■ Local Nature Reserves (LNR) ■ Natural England Priority Habitat Inventory ■ Natural England Ancient Woodland

SA objective 2: Protect soil quality and conserve geological conservation interests

A.27 Appraisal of site options in relation to this SA objective considered whether the site is greenfield or brownfield and also what quality of agricultural land it contains. Development on brownfield land represents a more efficient use of land in comparison to the development of greenfield sites. Although open spaces may contain a small number of buildings to maintain recreational use, they are largely undeveloped and are considered greenfield land.

A.28 The consideration of geological conservation interests relates to Locally and Regionally Important Geological Sites (LIGS and RIGS) and the Dorset and East Devon Coast UNESCO World Heritage Site (nominated for its outstanding combination of globally significant geological and geomorphological features). Note that some SSSIs are designated for their geology, but these have been addressed in SA objective 1.

Significance scoring

If criterion 2a is a major positive then site scores significant positive, irrespective of criterion 2b.

If criterion 2a is not major positive, then criteria 2a to 2c are scored:

- Major positive +3
- Minor positive +1
- Negligible 0
- Minor negative -1
- Major negative -3

Scores totalled, and then averaged (i.e. total score divided by 3). Overall significance is scored as follows:

- Significant positive $\geq +2$
- Minor positive >0 to <2
- Minor negative <0 to >-2
- Significant negative ≤ -2

Table A.12: Assessment criteria for SA objective 2: Protect soil quality and conserve geological conservation interests

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
2a Brownfield /greenfield land	Majority of site brownfield land (i.e. >50%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	Majority of site greenfield land (i.e. >50%)	■ Contained within the shapefile for each site
2b Agricultural land classification	N/A	N/A	All other sites.	Greenfield site with >=25% area classed as Grade 3 agricultural land	Greenfield site with >=25% area classed as Grade 1 or 2 agricultural land <i>where >=25% area classed as Grade 1 or 2 agricultural land and >=25% area classed as Grade 3 agricultural land major</i>	■ Natural England Agricultural Land Classification

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
					<i>negative effect will apply</i>	
2c Geological conser-vation interest	N/A	N/A	All other sites	Site is <=100m from a LIGS, RIGS and/or UNESCO World Heritage Site	>=1% of site contains or within a LIGS, RIGS and/or UNESCO World Heritage Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Regionally Important Geological Sites ■ Locally Important Geological Sites ■ Historic England UNESCO World Heritage Site – the Dorset and East Devon Coast

SA objective 3: Maintain or improve water quality

A.29 Levels of water consumption within new development will be determined by its design and onsite practices, rather than the location of the site, and therefore effects on water resource availability are not considered in the assessment of site options. However, the location of development could affect water quality during construction depending on its proximity to watercourses, water bodies and Groundwater Source Protection Zones. The extent to which water quality is actually affected would depend on construction techniques and the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems. These practices will be promoted and secured through the detailed design proposals for each site at the planning application stage and through other Local Plan policies, which have been appraised separately. In addition, there is a particular issue in Dorset of nutrient enrichment from

agricultural discharges and treated wastewater effluent from new residential development and some commercial development occurring within the hydrological catchments of Poole Harbour, Hampshire Avon and Somerset Levels designated sites, which is increasing algal growth in these protected estuaries and freshwater habitats leading to a loss of biodiversity. In line with Natural England's advice, Dorset Council has adopted an approach of Nutrient Neutrality where applicants for some commercial developments (that either attract large numbers of people into the catchment (such as a tourist attraction) or where there is a significant discharge into the catchment e.g. from an industrial process) use mitigation to offset the increase in nutrient load that would arise from their development. Despite this, the site assessment criteria below for the employment site options considers the potential for impacts if sites are allocated within these catchments.

Significance scoring

If either criterion 3a or 3b receives a major negative, the SA objective automatically receives a significant negative effect.

If both of these criteria are minor negative, then a significant negative is given.

If only one criterion of these two scores minor negative and the other scores negligible, then a minor negative is given.

Table A.13: Assessment criteria for SA objective 3: Maintain or improve water quality

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
3a Source Protection Zones	N/A	N/A	All other sites.	>=25% site falls within Source Protection Zone 2 or 3	>=25% site falls within Source Protection Zone 1 <i>where >=25% site falls within Source Protection Zone 1 and >=25% site falls within Source Protection</i>	<div> <div></div> <div>Environnment Agency Source Protection Zone</div> </div>

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
					<i>Zone 2 or 3 major negative effect will apply</i>	
3b Water quality	N/A	N/A	All other sites	Site contains or is within 100m of a watercourse or water body with 'moderate' or 'good' status (where the ecological or chemical status differs, the lower score is taken).	Site contains or is within 100m of a watercourse or water body with 'poor' or 'bad' ecological or chemical status (where the ecological or chemical status differs, the lower score is taken); and/or Site is within either the Poole Harbour, Hampshire Avon, River Axe, Chesil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ordnance Survey Open Rivers water-courses data ■ Ordnance Survey water bodies ■ Environment Agency waterbody quality status ■ Environment Agency catchment boundaries

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
					and the Fleet or Somerset Levels hydro- logical catchment.	

SA objective 4: Maintain or improve air quality

A.30 The site assessment criteria focus on the potential to the potential for development to contribute to traffic within AQMAs, to contribute to air pollution in areas where there are already issues of poor air quality, or to result in new residents being exposed to air pollution.

A.31 The assessment of site options does not take into account planned measures that will improve future air quality (such as the ban on sale of new petrol and diesel cars in the UK from 2035), or site-specific mitigation. The effect of the Plan as a whole on air quality will be assessed elsewhere, within the cumulative effects section of the SA.

A.32 In 2021, the WHO updated its recommended guidelines for air pollutants (“WHO global air quality guidelines: particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10), ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide” - <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240034228>). The new air quality guidelines reflect the best available health evidence and WHO’s recommendations continue to be recognised globally as the targets that should be met to protect public health. Minor negative effects are assumed to occur when residential development would occur in a location where the current baseline annual mean concentration of a pollutant exceeds these 2021 WHO guidelines. Major negative effects are assumed to occur in locations where current annual mean pollution exceeds both the 2021 WHO air quality guidelines and the higher pollution levels allowed under the UK’s national air quality objectives (see https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/assets/documents/Air_Quality_Objectives_Update_20230403.pdf).

Significance scoring

Each criterion 4a to 4d is scored:

- Major positive +3
- Minor positive +1
- Negligible 0
- Minor negative -1
- Major negative -3

Scores totalled, and then averaged (i.e. total score divided by 4). Overall significance is scored as follows:

- Significant positive $\geq +2$
- Minor positive >0 to <2
- Negligible 0
- Minor negative <0 to >-2
- Significant negative ≤ -2

Table A.14: Assessment criteria for SA objective 4: Maintain or improve air quality

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
4a Air quality	N/A	N/A	All other sites	N/A	Site located within or connected to an AQMA	■ Defra AQMA mapping
4b NO ₂ pollution	N/A	N/A	All other sites	>=25% of site has pollutant concentration of 10-40 µg/m ³	>=25% of site has pollutant concentration of >40 µg/m ³ <i>where >=25% of site has pollutant concentration of 10-40 µg/m³ and >=25% of site has pollutant concentration of >40 µg/m³ major negative effect will apply</i>	■ Defra NO ₂ pollution data

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
4c PM ₁₀ pollution	N/A	N/A	All other sites	>=25% of site has pollutant concentration of 15-40 µg/m ³	>=25% of site has pollutant concentration of >40 µg/m ³ <i>where >=25% of site has pollutant concentration of 10-40 µg/m³ and >=25% of site has pollutant concentration of >40 µg/m³ major negative effect will apply</i>	■ Defra PM ₁₀ pollution data
4d PM _{2.5} pollution	N/A	N/A	All other sites	>=25% of site has pollutant concentration of 5-20 µg/m ³	>=25% of site has pollutant concentration of >20 µg/m ³ <i>Where >=25% of site has</i>	■ Defra PM _{2.5} pollution data

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
					<p><i>pollutant concentration of 10-40 µg/m³ and ≥25% of site has pollutant concentration of >40 µg/m³ major negative effect will apply</i></p>	

SA objective 5: Limit climate change and improve resilience to future climate change

A.33 This is a cross-cutting SA objective. To avoid duplication, site assessment criteria that are determinants of carbon emissions but which are tested under other SA objectives are not duplicated here (e.g. criteria for access to services, facilities and open space under SA objective 9 and 10). The location of housing will not have an effect on levels of domestic energy consumption and the potential for renewable energy use. These factors are influenced more by the specific design and construction methods used, and whether renewable energy infrastructure is incorporated into development. Therefore, the effects of the potential sites on this SA objective will be assumed to be negligible. Consideration of site-specific factors that allow for the incorporation of viable district heating networks or combined heat and power is beyond the scope of the SA site options assessment.

A.34 Additionally, the effects of site options on flood risk is considered separately under SA objective 6. The location of development will not otherwise affect the achievement of this objective as effects will depend largely on the detailed proposals

for sites and their design, which would be influenced by policies in the Dorset Council Local Plan and details submitted at the planning application stage for development sites which includes essential infrastructure such as foul drainage.

Significance scoring

Criteria 5a to 5c are scored:

- Major positive +3
- Minor positive +1
- Negligible 0
- Minor negative -1
- Major negative -3

Scores totalled, and then averaged (i.e. total score divided by 3). Overall significance is scored as follows:

- Significant positive $\geq +2$
- Minor positive >0 to <2
- Minor negative <0 to >-2
- Significant negative ≤ -2

Table A.15: Assessment criteria for SA objective 5: Limit climate change and improve resilience to future climate change

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
5a Rail	<= 500m from a railway station	501-1,000m from a railway station	N/A	1,001-2,000m from a railway station	>2,000m from a railway station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ordnance Survey railway station data
5b Bus	<= 300m from a bus stop	301-600m from a bus stop	N/A	601-1,000m from a bus stop	>1,000m from a bus stop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Public Transport Access Nodes bus stop data
5c Cycling	<= 200m from a cycle route	201-400m from a cycle route	N/A	401-800m from a cycle route	>800m from a cycle route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local cycle routes National and Regional Cycle Routes

SA objective 6: Limit the effects of flooding and coastal change

A.35 The UK is more likely to experience warmer and wetter winters as a result of climate change. This will result in an increased risk of flooding from rivers and the sea, in addition to flash flooding. The extent to which flood risk can be managed and reduced is therefor considered within the assessment of this SA objective, with effects determined by whichever Flood Zone the greatest proportion of each site falls within.

A.36 Water demand will be heightened during hotter, drier summers, as a result of climate change. However, levels of water consumption within new development are considered under SA Objective 3: Maintain or Improve Water Quality.

Significance scoring

If either criterion 6a or 6b receives a major negative, the SA objective automatically receives a significant negative effect.

If both of these criteria are minor negative, then a significant negative is given.

If only one criterion of these two scores minor negative and the other scores negligible, then a minor negative is given.

Table A.16: Assessment criteria for SA objective 6: Limit the effects of flooding and coastal change

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
6a Flood zones	N/A	N/A	All other sites	>=25% site within Flood Zone 2	>=25% site within Flood Zone 3 <i>where >=25% site within Flood Zone 2 and >=25% site within Flood Zone 3 major negative effect will apply</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Environment Agency Flood Zone 3 ■ Environment Agency Flood Zone 2

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
6b Surface water flood risk	N/A	N/A	All other sites	>=25% on land with a 1 in 100 year risk of surface water flooding	>=25% on land with a 1 in 30 year risk of surface water flooding <i>where >=25% on land with a 1 in 100 year risk of surface water flooding and >=25% on land with a 1 in 30 year risk of surface water flooding major negative effect will apply</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Environment Agency 1:30 surface water flooding data ■ Environment Agency 1:100 surface water flooding data

SA objective 7: Protect and enhance valued landscapes

A.37 All development could have some effect on the landscape depending on the character and sensitivity of the surrounding area. Site options adjacent to the existing urban edge could be more easily integrated into existing built development, compared to more rural and isolated sites. However, the actual effect on landscapes will also depend on the design, scale and

layout of development, which may help mitigate any adverse effects but will not be known until the planning application stage. Therefore, all negative effects are recorded as uncertain.

A.38 In addition, proximity to the Dorset and Cranborne Chase National Landscapes can provide an indication of the potential for development to have adverse impacts on those nationally designated landscapes.

Significance scoring

If either or both of the criteria receive a major negative score, then the effect recorded is significant negative.

If 7a receives a minor negative score, and 7b is negligible, then the effect recorded is minor negative.

For all other sites the score is negligible.

However, all effects to acknowledge uncertainty (?) in the absence of a landscape impact assessment that can be translated into SA effects:

- Major negative --?
- Minor negative -?
- All other 0?

Table A.17: Assessment criteria for SA objective 7: Protect and enhance valued landscapes

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
7a Landscape Sensitivity	N/A	N/A	Site is within a settlement	Site is on the edge of a settlement (i.e. <=100m)	Site is outside of a settlement (i.e. >100m)	■ Dorset Council settlement boundary data
7b National Landscapes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	<=500m from National Landscape/s	■ National Landscape boundary data

SA objective 8: Conserve and enhance heritage assets and the historic environment

A.39 The NPPF states that the “significance [of a heritage asset] can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting”. However, development could also enhance the significance of the asset, provided that the development preserves those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset. In all cases, effects from a site option will be subject to a degree of uncertainty as the actual effects on heritage assets will depend on the particular scale, design and layout of the new development and opportunities which may exist to enhance the setting of heritage features, for example where sympathetic development replaces a derelict brownfield site which is currently having an adverse effect.

A.40 The proximity tests outlined below are intended to provide a basis for screening for the potential for adverse effects on heritage assets but in the absence of a historic environment sensitivity study or similar for all site options, effects identified by

the SA are subject to a high degree of uncertainty. Distances used are based on professional judgement. Longer screening distances are used for site options outside of existing settlements to reflect typically longer sightlines in rural vs. urban areas.

Significance scoring

If any of the criteria receive a major negative score, then the effect recorded is significant negative.

If all criteria receive a minor negative score, then the effect recorded is significant negative.

If only one of criteria receive a minor negative score, then the effect recorded is minor negative.

For all other sites the score is negligible.

Table A.18: Assessment criteria for SA objective 8: Conserve and enhance heritage assets and the historic environment

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
8a Proximity to historic assets: sites within existing settlements, or	N/A	N/A	All other sites	101-250m	<=100m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Dorset Council settlement boundaries ■ Dorset Council Conservation Areas ■ Historic England Listed Buildings

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic England Scheduled Monuments
8b Proximity to historic assets: sites outside of existing settlements	N/A	N/A	All other sites	501-1,000m	<=500m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dorset Council settlement boundaries Dorset Council Conservation Areas Historic England Listed Buildings Historic England Scheduled Monuments

SA objective 9: Promote wellbeing and healthy communities for all

A.41 It is assumed that people would make use of healthcare facilities near to their homes rather than their workplaces, so proximity to healthcare facilities is only considered for residential site options, not employment site options. However, proximity to open spaces, walking and cycle paths, recreation and sports facilities will provide employees access to these types of features around their working hours and access to walking and cycle routes may present opportunities to travel to work using active travel.

A.42 If sites come forward within an area of open space or a site which currently accommodates an outdoor sports facility, it is recognised that that this use may be lost as a result of development.

A.43 The location of employment sites to community facilities and services is relevant as people may make use of the facilities and services near to their workplaces around working hours.

A.44 The effects of all new employment development on safety, including levels of crime and fear of crime, will depend on factors such as the incorporation of green space within development sites which, depending on design and the use of appropriate lighting, could have an effect on perceptions of personal safety, particularly at night. However, such issues will not be influenced by the location of development sites (rather they will be determined through the policies in the Dorset Council Local Plan and detailed proposals for each site).

A.45 Noise pollution can have adverse effects on people's wellbeing and wildlife. Ensuring sites are not close to these pollution sources will help reduce noise exposure.

A.46 Lastly, consideration is given to the proximity of sites to odour producing sources, which can have adverse effects on wellbeing and ensuring sites are not close to these pollution sources will help protect people's wellbeing.

Significance scoring

Criteria 9a to 9f are scored:

- Major positive +3
- Minor positive +1
- Minor negative -1
- Major negative -3

Scores totalled, and then averaged (i.e. total score divided by 7). Overall significance is scored as follows:


- Significant positive $\geq +2$
- Minor positive >0 to <2
- Minor negative <0 to >-2
- Significant negative ≤ -2

Table A.19: Assessment criteria for SA objective 9: Conserve and enhance heritage assets and the historic environment

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
9a Open space, sport and recreation	N/A	$\leq 800\text{m}$ from open space, sport, recreation facility, open country and registered common land	N/A	$> 800\text{m}$ from open space, sport, recreation facility, open country and registered common land	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Dorset Council green space, open space, play space, sport and recreation facility data ■ National Trust Open Country data
9b Loss of open space	N/A	N/A	All other sites	1-24.9% of site is open space, sport, recreation	$\geq 25\%$ of site is open space, sport, recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Natural England Registered Common Land data

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
				facility, open country and registered common land	facility, open country and registered common land	■ OS Greenspace Access Points
9c Public Rights of Way (PRoW)	N/A	<= 800m from PRoW	N/A	>800m from PRoW	N/A	■ Dorset Council PRoW data
9d Noise pollution from roads and railways	N/A	N/A	All other sites.	>=25% site within: Lnight 50.0-54.9 dB, or Laeq,16 55.0-59.9 dB	>=25% site within: Lnight >=55.0 dB, or Laeq,16 >= 60.0 dB <i>where >=25% site within Lnight >=55.0 dB, or Laeq,16 >= 60.0 dB major and >=25% site within Lnight 50.0-54.9 dB, or Laeq,16</i>	■ Defra road and rail noise data

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
					55.0-59.9 dB <i>major negative effect will apply</i>	
9e Odour	N/A	N/A	All other sites.	N/A	Site is <=400m from a wastewater treatment works OR <=500m from an anaerobic digestion facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Environment Agency wastewater treatment plant data ■ Environment Agency anaerobic digestion facilities data
9f Levels of deprivation	>=25% of site located within one of the 20% most deprived areas nationally <i>where >=25% of site located within one of</i>	>=25% of site located within one of the 30% most deprived areas nationally	All other sites	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Index of Multiple Deprivation

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
	<i>the 20% most deprived areas nationally and >=25% of site located within one of the 30% most deprived areas nationally major positive effect will apply</i>					
9g Town centres	<=400m from Tier 1 settlement OR <=200m from Tier 2 settlement	401-800m from Tier 1 settlement OR 201-400m from Tier 2 settlement	N/A	801-1,200m from Tier 1 settlement OR 401-800m from Tier 2 settlement OR <=400m from Tier 3 settlement	>1,200m from Tier 1 settlement AND >800m from Tier 2 settlement AND >400m from Tier 3 settlement	 Dorset Council town centre data

SA objective10: Deliver a wide choice of high quality homes and infrastructure

A.47 The location of employment sites will not directly influence the delivery of houses and associated infrastructure and community facilities. Therefore, a negligible (0) effect is expected for these site options.

Table A.20: Assessment criteria for SA objective 10: Deliver a wide choice of high quality homes and infrastructure

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
10a Primary schools provision	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
10b Secondary schools	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
10c GP surgeries	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
10d Housing provision	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

SA objective11: Build a strong, responsive, and competitive economy

A.48 All of the employment site options are expected to have positive effects on this objective, due to the nature of the proposed development. Larger sites will provide opportunities for the creation of more new jobs and so would have significant positive effects. Where employment sites are within more deprived areas there is the potential for the new employment generated to be of benefit to those residents and positive effects are assumed.

Significance scoring

Criteria 11b and 11c are scored:

- Major positive +3
- Minor positive +1
- Negligible 0
- Minor negative -1
- Major negative -3

Scores totalled, and then averaged (i.e. total score divided by 2). Overall significance is scored as follows:

- Significant positive $\geq +2$
- Minor positive >0 to <2
- Minor negative <0 to >-2
- Significant negative ≤ -2

Table A.21: Assessment criteria for SA objective 11: Build a strong, responsive, and competitive economy

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
11a Loss of employment land	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
11b Provision of employment sites	Sites that are >=3ha	Sites that are <3ha	N/A	N/A	N/A	■ Within the shapefile for the site
11c Employment deprivation	<p>>=25% of site located within one of the 20-40% most deprived areas nationally ('Employment' domain of the Index of Multiple Deprivation).</p> <p>where >=25% of site located within one of the 20-40% most deprived areas nationally and >=25% of site located within</p>	<p>>=25% of site located within one of the 20% most deprived areas nationally ('Employment' domain of the Index of Multiple Deprivation).</p>	All other sites	N/A	N/A	■ 'Employment' domain of the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019

Criterion	Major positive (++)	Minor positive (+)	Negligible (0)	Minor negative (-)	Major negative (--)	Data
	one of the 20% most deprived areas nationally major negative effect will apply					
11d Access to jobs N.B. Jobs density = number of employees / population	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Appendix B

Scoping Report

Introduction

B.1 The purpose of the Sustainability Appraisal process is to ensure that the Dorset Council Local Plan achieves sustainable development by ensuring that the key environmental, social and economic issues are considered throughout the making of the Dorset Council Local Plan.

B.2 The first stage in the Sustainability Appraisal process is the scoping stage. During the scoping stage, the key environmental, social and economic issues for the Dorset Council Local Plan are identified and used to develop a series of sustainability objectives, which are later used as criteria to assess the emerging Local Plan. This Scoping Report represents an update of the existing scoping report prepared in 2019, reflecting updated evidence, policy changes and any new sustainability challenges that have emerged since 2019.

B.3 This Scoping Report firstly introduces the topic of sustainable development, explains the legal basis for the sustainability appraisal and provides details of the scope of the Dorset Council Local Plan (Chapter 1). Each of the key environmental, social and economic topics are then considered in turn, with the key messages from other plans, baseline data and environmental problems presented for each topic (Chapters 2 to 11). This information is brought together to establish the Sustainability Objectives upon which the Dorset Council Local Plan and its alternatives will be tested against through the plan making process (Chapter 12).

What is sustainable development?

B.4 In 1987, the World Commission provided the following definition of sustainable development:

"Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

B.5 This definition is used in the European Union's European Sustainable Development Strategy (2006), which introduces the European wide policy framework to deliver sustainable development.

B.6 In 2005, the UK Government produced a Sustainable Development Strategy which developed the definition of sustainable development slightly further by aiming to:

“Enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the quality of life of future generations.”

B.7 The UK Sustainable Development Strategy also establishes the five guiding principles which form the basis for sustainable development in the UK, which are:

- **Living within environmental limits:** Respecting the limits of the planet’s environment, resources and biodiversity - to improve our environment and ensure that the natural resources needed for life are unimpaired and remain so for future generations;
- **Ensuring a strong healthy and just society:** Meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities, promoting personal well-being, social cohesion and inclusion, and creating equal opportunity for all;
- **Achieving a sustainable economy:** Building a strong, stable and sustainable economy which provides prosperity and opportunities for all, and in which environmental and social costs fall on those who impose them (polluter pays) and efficient resource use is incentivised;
- **Using sound science responsibly:** Ensuring policy is developed and implemented on the basis of strong scientific evidence, whilst taking into account scientific uncertainty (through the precautionary principle) as well as public attitudes and values; and
- **Promoting good governance:** Actively promoting effective, participative systems of governance in all levels of society – engaging people’s creativity, energy and diversity.

B.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is the overarching planning framework which provides national planning policy and principles for the planning system in England. The NPPF was originally published in March 2012 and has since been updated and revised several times. An updated version of the NPPF was published in December 2024.

B.9 The three overarching objectives of the planning system are set out in paragraph 8 of the NPPF, which should be pursued in mutually supportive ways so that net gains are achieved across each of the different objectives:

- **“an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and
- **an environmental objective** – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”

B.10 In 2017, the United Nations General Assembly provided a series of sustainable development goals and targets which also intend to balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental.

Legislative background to sustainability appraisal

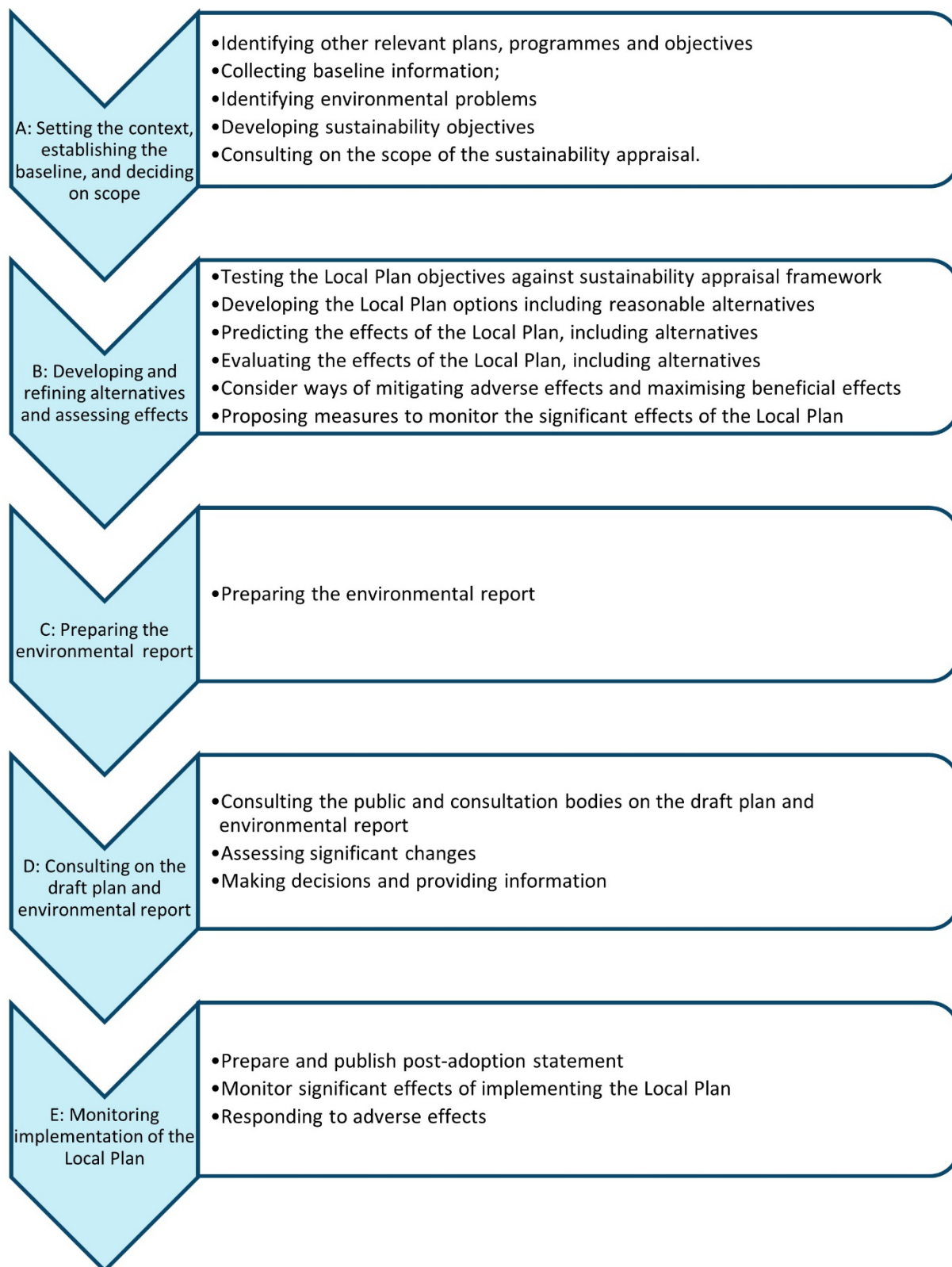
B.11 Under the amended Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, SA is mandatory for Development Plan Documents. For these documents, it is also necessary to conduct an environmental assessment in accordance with the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (European Directive 2001/42/EC), as transposed into law in England by the SEA Regulations and which remains in force despite the UK exiting the European Union in January 2020. Therefore, it is a legal requirement for the Dorset Council Local Plan to be subject to SA and SEA throughout its preparation.

B.12 In October 2023, the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill received royal assent. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 outlines a number of reforms to the planning system, including the replacement of the current SEA regime with a new requirement for an Environmental Outcomes Report (EOR). The specific requirements will be set out in forthcoming regulations, along with information about transition arrangements; however, at present the requirement for SEA remains as set out in existing legislation. Any changes to the legal framework for carrying out SA/SEA will be addressed as appropriate as the Local Plan is prepared.

B.13 The requirements to carry out SA and SEA are distinct, although it is possible to satisfy both using a single appraisal process (as advocated in the national Planning Practice Guidance), whereby users can comply with the requirements of the SEA Regulations through a single integrated SA process – this is the process that is being undertaken in the Dorset Council Local Plan area. From here on, the term ‘SA’ should therefore be taken to mean ‘SA incorporating the requirements of the SEA Regulations’.

The sustainability appraisal process

B.14 [The Government’s guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal](#) sets out five key stages in the preparation of Sustainability Appraisal for Local Plans, which are shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure B.1: The key stages of sustainability appraisal

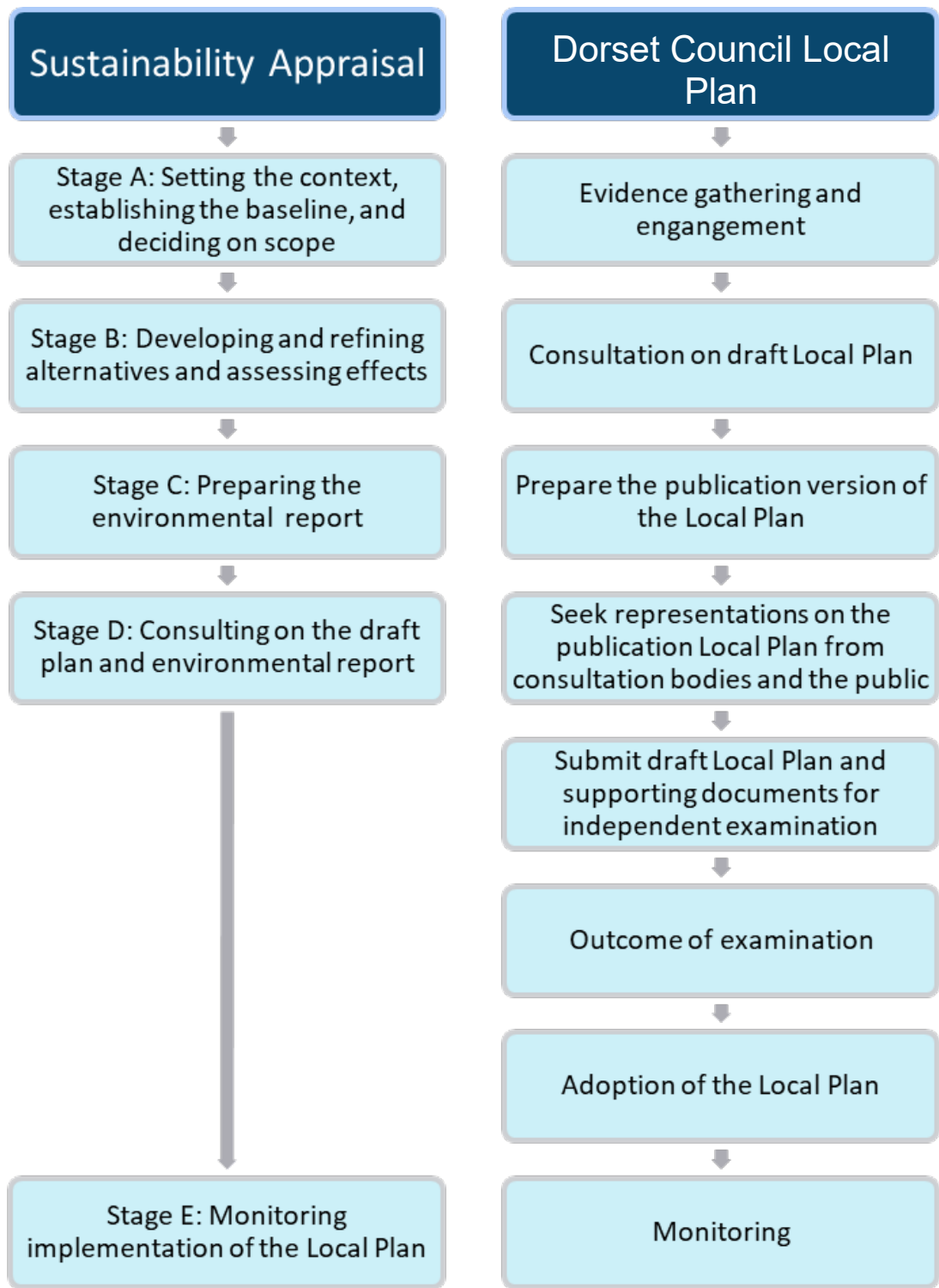
B.15 The scoping stage of the sustainability appraisal process, which is presented in this report, represents stage A in Figure B.1 above and involves the following steps:

- Identifying **other relevant plans**, programmes and objectives: Reviewing the plans and programmes which are relevant to the Dorset Council Local Plan helps to identify the objectives and targets from across a wide range of disciplines so they can be reflected in the sustainability objectives of the Sustainability Appraisal. This ensures that the Dorset Council Local Plan incorporates the common objectives between the local plan and other plans, so that these plans work together to achieve a mutual goal rather than acting in conflict.
- The key messages from the review of other plans, programmes and objectives are presented for each environmental topic in this report.
- **Collecting baseline** information: Characterising the state of the environment within the plan area helps to identify the key issues that the Sustainability Appraisal should focus on, and provides a benchmark for the appraisal and post-adoption monitoring.
- Identifying **environmental problems**: The main environmental, social and economic problems are identified from the review of other plans and the baseline information. This helps to streamline the information gathered at the previous stages of the scoping process and focus the sustainability objectives on the key problems.
- Developing **sustainability objectives**: The sustainability objectives are informed by the findings of the review of plans and programmes, the characteristics of the plan area, and the key issues within the plan area. This ensures that the sustainability objectives are relevant and specific to the Local Plan and address the key sustainability concerns.
- **Consulting on the scope** of the sustainability appraisal: The statutory consultation bodies and key stakeholders will be consulted on the scope of the sustainability appraisal. It should be noted that these bodies were consulted on the 2019 Scoping Report. Their comments and the way they have been reflected in this update are shown in Appendix C of the full 2025 SA Report.

B.16 The Sustainability Appraisal process is iterative, in that the stages of the Sustainability Appraisal occur alongside the development of the Dorset Council Local Plan, feeding into the plan through each stage in its development. This is shown in Figure 1.2, which is taken from the [Government guidance on Sustainability Appraisal for Local Plans](#), and shows the key stages of the sustainability appraisal and how they fit with the Local Plan process.

B.17 The scoping stage of the sustainability appraisal will occur alongside the evidence gathering and engagement stage of the Dorset Council Local Plan.

Figure B.2: The key stages of sustainability appraisal and the Dorset Council Local Plan process



B.18 Annex I of the SEA Directive and Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) lists a series of environmental issues which the sustainability appraisal should consider, which include:

- Biodiversity;
- Population;
- Human health;
- Fauna;
- Flora;
- Soil;
- Water;
- Air;
- Climatic factors;
- Material assets;
- Cultural heritage (including architectural and archaeological heritage); and
- Landscape

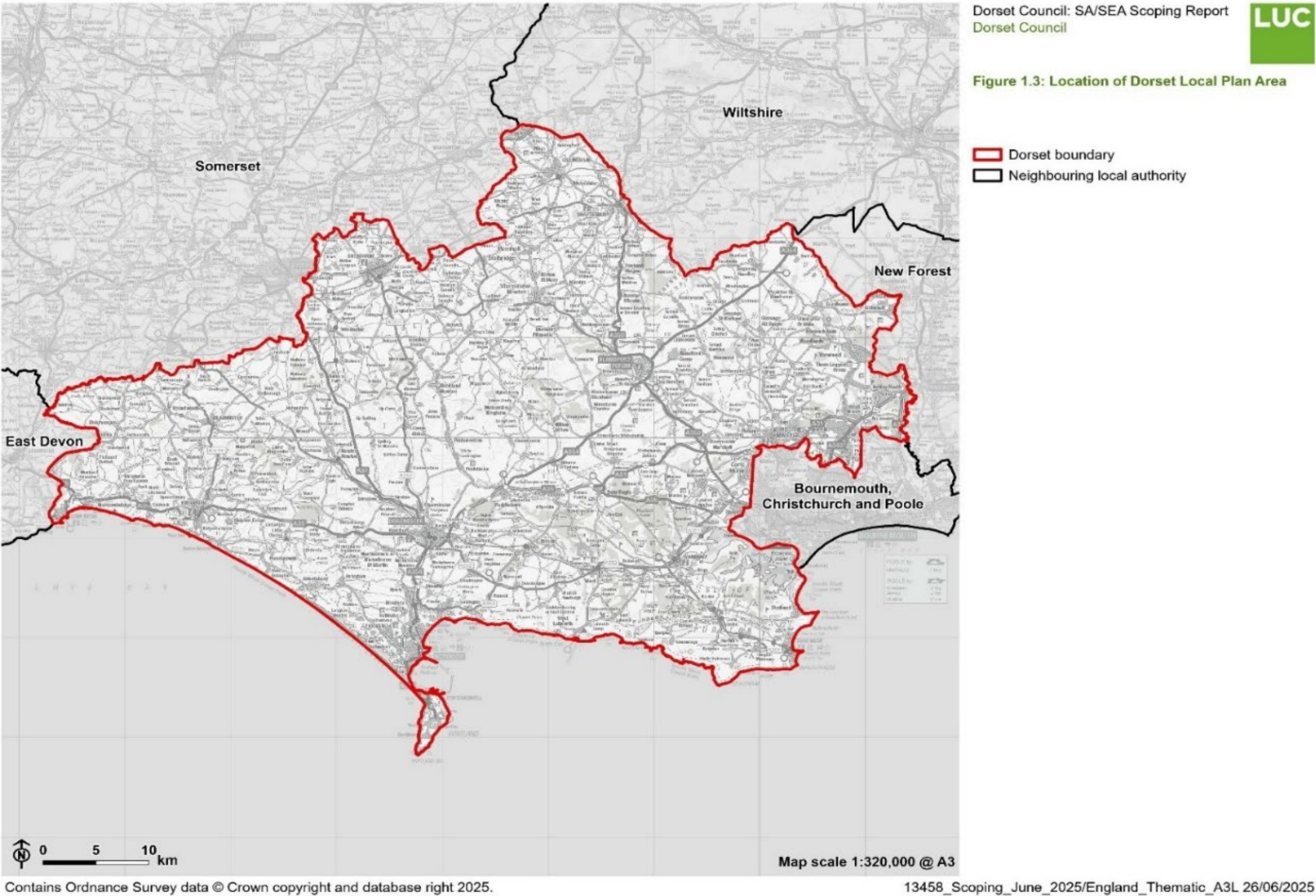
The Dorset Council Local Plan

B.19 The Dorset Council Local Plan will provide the planning policies that will be used to guide decisions on planning applications and set out the locations for future development across the Dorset Council area.

B.20 The Dorset Council Local Plan aims to achieve sustainable development in the Dorset Council area by meeting the housing and employment needs whilst avoiding unacceptable environmental impacts.

B.21 The Dorset CouncilThe Dorset Local Plan will cover the entire administrative area of Dorset Council, a unitary council formed on 1st April 2019, bringing together five former districts and boroughs and the majority of the area previously controlled by Dorset County Council (Figure 1.3).

Figure B.3: A map showing the Dorset Council Local Plan area, shown within the red line



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B.22 The Dorset Council Local Plan will look ahead until at least 2042 in order to ensure provision for growth for 15 years on adoption.

B.23 The Dorset Council Local Plan reached Regulation 18 stage in early 2021, with a public consultation held between January and March 2021. As part of this stage, a Sustainability Appraisal was prepared and consulted on in 2021 (with the associated Scoping Report prepared and consulted on in 2019). The Sustainability Appraisal identified key sustainability issues and objectives that informed the appraisal of the emerging Local Plan options. The Plan was delayed as a result of changes in the plan-making system, including the introduction of Gateway Assessments, and other changes brought in through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act. These include the replacement of the Duty to Cooperate with an 'alignment policy' and the introduction of measures to address nutrient neutrality through upgrades to wastewater treatment works within a nutrient sensitive catchments. Revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) have also clarified the role of local housing need calculations, amended the five-year land supply requirement and reinforced the protection of the green belt, whilst maintaining a strong emphasis on up-to-date local plans. Under the new system, submission of the Local Plan for examination is expected in November 2026, with adoption anticipated in May 2027.

Likely evolution of the plan area without the Dorset Council Local Plan

B.24 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to achieving sustainable development and the local plan sets out what that means for the local area. Local Plans set out the locations where development will take place and the policies that will be used to guide decisions on planning applications. They form part of the statutory development plan, meaning that decisions on applications must be made in accordance with them unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

B.25 The Local Plans adopted by the predecessor councils have been carried forward as policies of the new Dorset Council, and will remain the statutory development plans for their respective areas until they are replaced by a new plan. Therefore, they continue to be the policy framework against which the council will make decisions on planning applications.

B.26 Local Plan policies carry less weight where the plans are more than five years old and where the council is no longer able to provide sufficient land for housing, by being unable to demonstrate that it has the required five-year supply of deliverable sites for housing.

B.27 Considering the current adopted Local Plans in the Dorset Council Local Plan area, the Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan more than five years old and consequently the same weight cannot be attached to its policies. The West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan and the North Dorset Council Local Plan were five years old in October 2020 and January 2021 respectively. As such, both are nearing being five years old, with the associated reduction in weight being attached to their policies. The Purbeck Local Plan was adopted in 2024 and therefore carries full weight as a recently adopted plan.

B.28 Therefore, if a Local Plan for the Dorset Council area was not taken forward and adopted, the local plans for the entire Dorset Council area would be out of date. Less weight would be given to Local Plan policies in decisions on planning applications, with the national 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' applying instead. The council would have a lack of control over development decisions in the Dorset Council area, potentially resulting in unplanned, speculative development coming forward in less sustainable locations. This is likely to result in un-sustainable development, with significant detrimental environmental, social and economic effects in the Dorset Council area.

B.29 A new Local plan also provides an opportunity to evaluate the focus of the Local Plan and the nature of future development across Dorset, in light of new evidence and changing priorities both nationally and locally. For example, a climate emergency has been declared both by the UK Parliament and by Dorset Council since the adoption of the previous Local Plans. The new Dorset CouncilThe new Dorset Local Plan provides an opportunity to address the climate change issue, and the other issues which have emerged since the adoption of the existing Local Plans. Additionally, the implementation of a new Standard Method for calculating housing need, introduced in the revised NPPF, increased the housing needs for Dorset significantly from 1,793 new homes per annum under the old approach, to 3,246 new homes per annum under the new Standard Method. The new Dorset Local Plan provides an opportunity to consider new opportunities for meeting the growth needs of Dorset.

2. Biodiversity, flora and fauna

B.30 Biodiversity is a measure of the 'diversity of species'. It is therefore a term which refers to the variation of life, including both plants ('flora') and animals ('fauna').

B.31 Each species, irrespective of how small and seemingly insignificant, plays a role in maintaining a well-balanced, healthy and functioning ecosystem. This is because species are dependent on one another for survival. The absence of a species, perhaps through extinction or the loss of a local population, can throw an ecosystem

out of balance with far reaching consequences upon the habitat and remaining species and the wider environment due to degrading air, soil and water quality and the cycling of nutrients.

B.32 A biologically diverse ecosystem also has widespread social and economic benefits by providing the biological resources for trade (such as wood), agriculture and fisheries, ecotourism and recreation, medicine production and scientific research. These multiple, interlinked benefits are known as Ecosystem Services. Plants and species also have a great cultural and spiritual importance amongst many communities.

B.33 There has been an alarming trend towards a loss in biodiversity in recent history. This decline in biodiversity is largely attributed to human actions, resulting in overexploitation, pollution and land use change. Given the reliance of environmental, social and economic systems upon biodiversity, it is imperative that biodiversity is safeguarded to prevent widespread catastrophic problems.

Key messages from other plans, programmes and objectives

International

B.34 The [United Nations Declaration on Forests and Land Use \(COP26 Declaration\) \(2021\)](#) is an international commitment to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 while delivering sustainable development and promoting an inclusive rural transformation.

B.35 The United Nations developed a series of global development goals which aim to deliver sustainable development in the document titled [Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development \(2015\)](#). One such goal is:

“Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.”

B.36 The [European Bird Directive \(2009\)](#) requires the maintenance of all species of naturally occurring birds in the wild state in the European territory at a level which corresponds in particular to ecological, scientific and cultural requirements, while taking account of economic and recreational requirements.

B.37 The International Convention on Biological Diversity (1992) is an international commitment to biodiversity conservation through national strategies and action plans.

B.38 The European Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) (1979) seeks to ensure conservation and protection of wild plant and animal species and their natural habitats, to increase cooperation between contracting parties, and to regulate the exploitation of those species (including migratory species).

B.39 The International Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention) (1976) is an international agreement with the aim of conserving and managing the use of wetlands and their resources.

National

B.40 [The UK National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan \(2025\)](#) sets out how the four countries of the UK will work together to address biodiversity. The document reflects shared ambition to protect and restore nature and confirms the UK's pledge to meet all 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework within its own borders. The document outlines four long-term global goals:

- Protect and restore;
- Prosper with nature;
- Share benefits fairly; and
- Invest and collaborate.

B.41 The National Planning Policy Framework (2024) (NPPF) sets out the approach Local Plans should have in relation to biodiversity and states that plans should “identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation”. Plans should also promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity. A strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure is to be supported through planning policies.

B.42 The Local Plan, through its review of the spatial strategy, should seek to maximise any opportunities arising for local economies, communities and health as well as biodiversity. This should be inclusive of approaches which are supportive of enhancing the connectivity of green infrastructure and promoting the achievement of biodiversity net gain. The SA process should support the identification and maximisation of potential benefits through the consideration of alternatives and assessment of both negative and positive significant effects.

B.43 The [Environment Improvement Plan 2023](#) for England is the first revision of the 25YEP: It builds on the 25YEP vision with a new plan setting out how we will work with landowners, communities and businesses to deliver each of our goals for improving the environment, matched with interim targets to measure progress. Taking these actions will help us restore nature, reduce environmental pollution, and increase the prosperity of our country. To achieve its vision, the 25YEP set out 10 goals. We have used those 10 goals set out in the 25YEP as the basis for this document: setting out the progress made against all 10, the specific targets and commitments made in relation to each goal, and our plan to continue to deliver these targets and the overarching goals. The environmental goals are:

- Goal 1: Thriving plants and wildlife
- Goal 2: Clean air
- Goal 3: Clean and plentiful water
- Goal 4: Managing exposure to chemicals and pesticides
- Goal 5: Maximise our resources, minimise our waste
- Goal 6: Using resources from nature sustainably
- Goal 7: Mitigating and adapting to climate change
- Goal 8: Reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards
- Goal 9: Enhancing biosecurity
- Goal 10: Enhanced beauty, heritage, and engagement with the natural environment

B.44 [The 25 Year Environment Plan: progress reports \(2023\)](#) sets out the progress made in improving the environment through the 25 Year Plan and the indicator framework, which contains 66 indicators arranged into 10 broad themes.

B.45 [Working with nature \(2022\)](#) discusses the importance of nature in providing ecosystem services and presents recent and historical trends in biodiversity. It outlines some of the main pressures affecting England's habitats, wildlife and

ecosystems: land use; climate change; pollution; invasive non-native species; and hydrological change.

B.46 [Defra, Establishing the Best Available Techniques for the UK \(UK BAT\) \(2022\)](#)

sets out a new framework that aims to improve industrial emissions and protect the environment through the introduction of a UK BAT regime. It aims to set up a new structure of governance with a new independent body in the form of Standards Council and the Regulators Group, consisting of government officials and expert regulators from all UK nations. It aims to also establish a new UK Air Quality Governance Group to oversee the work of the Standards Council and the delivery of the requirements under this new framework. It is anticipated that the BATC for the first four industry sectors will be published in the second half of 2023.

B.47 [The Environment Act 2021](#) sets statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world in four priority areas: air quality, biodiversity, water, and resource efficiency and waste reduction. Biodiversity elements in the Act include:

- Strengthened biodiversity duty. Both onsite and offsite enhancements must be maintained for at least 30 years after completion of a development.
- Biodiversity net gain to ensure developments deliver at least 10% increase in biodiversity
- Local Nature Recovery Strategies to support a Nature Recovery Network.
- Duty upon Local Authorities to consult on street tree felling.
- Strengthen woodland protection enforcement measures.
- Conservation Covenants.
- Protected Site Strategies and Species Conservation Strategies to support the design and delivery of strategic approaches to deliver better outcomes for nature.
- Prohibit larger UK businesses from using commodities associated with wide-scale deforestation.
- Requires regulated businesses to establish a system of due diligence for each regulated commodity used in their supply chain, requires regulated businesses to report on their due diligence, introduces a due diligence enforcement system.

B.48 [The National Chalk Streams Strategy \(2021\)](#) was built around the “trinity of ecological health”: water quantity, water quality and habitat quality and included 30+ recommendations to Defra, the Environment Agency, Natural England, the water companies, NGOs and stakeholders.

B.49 [The Climate Change Adaptation Manual \(2020\)](#) supports practical and pragmatic decision-making relating to climate change adaptation. The manual brings together recent science, experience and case studies to be used by managers of nature reserves and other protected sites, conservation and land management advisors, and environmental consultants.

B.50 [The Landscapes Review \(2019\)](#) explores the fragmented and often marginalised system of managing National Parks and AONBs recommends actions to achieve structural reform. The review looks at:

- The existing statutory purposes for National Parks and AONBs and how effectively they are being met.
- The alignment of these purposes with the goals set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan.
- The case for extension or creation of new designated areas.
- How to improve individual and collective governance of National Parks and AONBs, and how that governance interacts with other national assets.
- The financing of National Parks and AONBs.
- How to enhance the environment and biodiversity in existing designations.
- How to build on the existing eight point plan for National Parks and connect more people with the natural environment from all sections of society and improve health and wellbeing.
- How well National Parks and AONBs support communities.
- The process of designating National Parks and AONBs and extending boundary areas, with a view to improving and expediting the process.

B.51 [The Conservation of Habitats and Species \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2019](#) protects biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora, including birds. The Regulations lay down rules for the protection, management and exploitation of such habitats and species, including how adverse effects on such habitats and species should be avoided, minimised and reported.

B.52 [A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment \(2018\)](#), also known as the 25 Year Environment Plan, sets out the UK government action to help the natural world regain and retain good health. The plan sets a series of goals for improving the environment within a generation and leaving it in a better state than we found it, and includes the following objectives and actions relating to biodiversity, flora and fauna:

“We will achieve a growing and resilient network of land, water and sea that is richer in plants and wildlife”.

- At sea, we will do this by:
 - reversing the loss of marine biodiversity and, where practicable, restoring it;
 - increasing the proportion of protected and well-managed seas, and better managing existing protected sites;
 - making sure populations of key species are sustainable with appropriate age structures;
 - ensuring seafloor habitats are productive and sufficiently extensive to support healthy, sustainable ecosystems.
- On land and in freshwaters, we will do this by:
 - restoring 75% of our one million hectares of terrestrial and freshwater protected sites to favourable condition, securing their wildlife value for the long term;
 - creating or restoring 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat outside the protected site network, focusing on priority habitats as part of a wider set of land management changes providing extensive benefits;
 - taking action to recover threatened, iconic or economically important species of animals, plants and fungi, and where possible to prevent human induced extinction or loss of known threatened species in England and the Overseas Territories; and
 - increasing woodland in England in line with our aspiration of 12% cover by 2060: this would involve planting 180,000 hectares by end of 2042.

“We will enhance biosecurity to protect our wildlife and livestock, and boost the resilience of plants and trees”.

- We will do this by:
 - managing and reducing the impact of existing plant and animal diseases; lowering the risk of new ones and tackling invasive non-native species;
 - reaching the detailed goals to be set out in the Tree Health Resilience Plan of 2018;
 - ensuring strong biosecurity protection at our borders, drawing on the opportunities leaving the EU provides; and

- working with industry to reduce the impact of endemic disease.

B.53 The Government's strategic direction for biodiversity policy is presented in [Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services \(2011\)](#), which includes the following aims:

"to halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people."

B.54 In terms of the planning system, this strategy intends to:

"Through reforms of the planning system, take a strategic approach to planning for nature within and across local areas. This approach will guide development to the best locations, encourage greener design and enable development to enhance natural networks. We will retain the protection and improvement of the natural environment as core objectives of the planning system."

B.55 [The Environmental Damage \(Prevention and Remediation\) Regulations 2015](#) oblige those who create environmental damage, whether by water pollution, adversely affecting protected species or sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs), or by land pollution that causes risks to human health, to not only cease the damage, but also to implement a wide variety of remedial measures to restore affected areas.

B.56 [The Biodiversity offsetting in England Green Paper \(2013\)](#) sets out a framework for offsetting. Biodiversity offsets are conservation activities designed to compensate for residual losses.

B.57 [The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act \(2006\)](#) places a duty on public bodies to conserve biodiversity.

B.58 The **UK Government's Sustainable Development Strategy (2005)** has the objective of:

"Respecting the limits of the planet's environment, resources and biodiversity – to improve our environment and ensure that the natural resources needed for life are unimpaired and remain so for future generations."

B.59 [The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 \(as amended\)](#) was enacted primarily to implement the Birds Directive and Bern Convention in Great Britain. The Act received

royal assent on 30 October 1981 and was brought into force in incremental steps. It is supplemented by the Wildlife and Countryside (Service of Notices) Act 1985, which relates to notices served under the 1981 Act. The act contains four parts and 17 schedules, which cover:

- Part 1: Wildlife (includes protection of birds, animals and plants; and measures to prevent the establishment of non-native species which may be detrimental to native wildlife).
- Part 2: Nature conservation, the countryside and National Parks (including the designation of protected areas).
- Part 3: Public rights of way.
- Part 4: Miscellaneous provisions of the act.

Local

B.60 Dorset Council's [Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy 2023 to 25 \(refresh\) \(2025\)](#) aims to create a carbon neutral, nature positive, and resilient Dorset through a clean, green, and fair transition that supports prosperous, stronger, and healthier communities. It focuses on three main challenges: reducing greenhouse gas emissions to address climate change, protecting and enhancing ecosystems to reverse biodiversity loss, and adapting to unavoidable environmental impacts to build resilience. The strategy has four broad outcomes it aims to achieve:

- Net Zero Council 2040 and Net Zero Dorset 2050: Net zero emissions from power, heat, transport, construction, food, consumables and waste;
- Nature Positive Dorset 2030: At least 30% of our land, rivers and seas and nature-positive by 2030;
- prosperity through green growth: Green jobs, skills and investment for low carbon and nature sectors; and
- stronger, healthier communities: Healthier, cheaper to run homes and safer more resilient communities.

B.61 [The Dorset Local Nature Partnership's Vision and Strategy \(2023\)](#) sets out the following strategic priorities for the partnership, which include the following strategic pillars relating to biodiversity:

- Natural capital – increasing investment: Dorset has some exceptional natural assets which already underpin the economic and social wellbeing of the county, yet it is still declining in quality and quantity and needs greater investment. We will facilitate funding and lobby for more;

- **Natural economy– adding value:** A healthy environment is a pre-requisite for a healthy economy globally and locally, it offers opportunities for sustainable economic resilience which does not erode our natural capital. We will support the development of nature-based economic schemes and maximise green finance opportunities;
- **Naturally healthy – developing Dorset’s ‘natural health service’:** Working with the healthcare system, providers, and land managers, we will aid collaboration to improve access to and connection with nature, build green infrastructure and support better information on how to use the natural world to live better and reduce inequalities.
- **Natural resilience – improving environmental and community resilience:** In the light of a challenging future, and the impact on health, we will work collaboratively to improve both resilience against and adaption to climate change to enable a sustainable future. We will support local schemes to improve diets and reduce food waste, sensitive farming practices and facilitate greater engagement with the soil that sustains us all.
- **Natural understanding – improving engagement in Dorset’s environment:** Dorset residents and visitors already value their environment. We will support and develop greater understanding of the impacts we have on the terrestrial and marine environment to ensure good stewardship now and in the future.
- **Naturally influence – embedding natural value in policy and decision-making:** A founding principle of all LNPs is that we will promote the value of the natural environment in decisions and inform local and national policy making.

B.62 [The Poole Harbour and Dorset Stour Catchment Strategy 2022 – 2027 \(2022\)](#)

sets out the high level priorities and ambition of the Dorset Stour Catchment Partnerships for the next five years to 2027. The vision for the partnerships is that:

“Dorset’s river catchments are sustainably healthy, resilient and safe for people and wildlife.”

B.63 The Strategy cites the following strategic priorities for Dorset’s catchments:

- **Upper catchments:** Focus on reducing nutrient and sediment runoff from agriculture to improve water quality, enhance hydrological connectivity, and reduce flood risk.
- **Middle catchments:** Prioritise restoring natural river processes and protecting river corridors, which also helps reduce pollution and improve habitats.

- **Lower catchments:** Engage local communities to understand their connection with rivers and estuaries, promote awareness of healthy river systems, and build support for ongoing efforts.
- **Across all catchments:** Make habitat restoration a central theme, especially to boost habitat connectivity and combat invasive species.
- **Partnership efforts:** Strengthen the evidence base through monitoring, data sharing, and exploration of new techniques like natural capital approaches.

B.64 [The Interim Strategy for Mitigating the Effects of Recreational Pressure on the Chesil Beach and the Fleet SAC, SPA and Ramsar](#), adopted in 2020, seeks to mitigate the impact of new development from recreational activities by taking financial contributions from development and using this to provide mitigation measures, including:

- Little Tern wardening, fencing, monitoring, volunteer co-ordination
- Visitor Centre presence for dissuading inappropriate activities and source of information for users
- Chesil Beach car park spaces and charges review
- expansion of Dorset Dogs
- interpretation - leaflets, signage (land and water), smartphone app
- infrastructure projects
- seasonal by-laws to reinforce encouragement of positive behaviour
- provision of alternative strategic green space
- policy based major development (10 dwellings or equivalent) within 400m of the designated site to provide bespoke infrastructure mitigation measures
- review of water access points
- use of existing watercraft permit system
- provision of bins for litter and dog waste
- engagement with user groups and agree codes of conduct where appropriate.

B.65 [The Poole Harbour Recreation Supplementary Planning Document \(2020\)](#), adopted in 2020, seeks to mitigate the impact of new development from recreational activities by taking financial contributions from development and using this to provide mitigation measures, including:

- Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMMS): further surveys and monitoring, wardens/rangers, awareness raising projects, and developing an Access Management Plan; and
- Poole Harbour Infrastructure Projects (PHIP): Projects to manage visitor access and minimise disturbance, including for example the provision of alternative access around the Poole Harbour shoreline. Could potentially include Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG).

B.66 The [Dorset Heathlands Interim Air Quality Strategy \(2020\)](#) seeks to address the adverse effect of airborne nitrogen upon the Dorset Heathlands designated sites by contributing to the achievement of the conservation objectives for air quality and in doing so, facilitate the delivery of planned development. The strategy stipulates that it be will developed and formalised as policy in the BCP Council Local Plan and Dorset Council Local Plan to ensure that new development does not have an adverse effect upon heathland. It states that the Local Plans could include policies to address:

- The siting of new development by focussing growth in the urban area where there is better access to facilities and services and thereby minimising the need for additional car trips past heathland sites;
- The siting and design of new agricultural buildings that create pollutants, e.g. stocking sheds, slurry pits, etc.;
- The change of use of agricultural land near heathland to lower nitrogen inputs;
- Ensuring that any major development proposals in the countryside near heathland include measures to reduce impacts elsewhere in the wider land ownership;
- Look to identify multiple use benefits in the siting of Heathland Infrastructure Projects (HIPs), Poole Harbour Infrastructure Projects (PHIPs) and nitrogen offsetting projects on sites adjacent to heathland; and
- Help implement the outcomes of the government's Nitrogen Futures project.

B.67 [The Dorset National Landscape Management Plan 2019 – 2024 \(2019\)](#) has the following objectives relating to biodiversity:

- Safeguard existing priority habitats and the species they support;
- Restore lost or declining habitats and their associated species
- Develop and support measures and activities which conserve and enhance the National Landscape's natural assets including priority habitats and species, ecosystem flows and the services they provide;

- Develop and support measures and activities which connect and expand ecological networks;
- Support woodland planting and management proposals that are appropriate to landscape character and deliver clear enhancements for biodiversity, habitat connectivity and public amenity; and
- Avoid and reduce the impacts of development on biodiversity, recognising the vulnerability of sensitive sites such as the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar, which support species such as Nightjar and are particularly vulnerable to habitat loss and increased recreational pressure. Require development to follow the hierarchy of avoid, mitigate and compensate and to achieve a net gain for biodiversity;
- Developments will be required to make a positive contribution to the overall green infrastructure and ecological networks. All aspects of green infrastructure, e.g. sustainable drainage, also require good design that respects local character and must also make an appropriate contribution to landscape ecology. The net result of these contributions should be landscape gain.

B.68 [The Cranborne Chase Partnership Plan 2019 – 2024 \(2019\)](#) also contains objectives relating to biodiversity:

- All pests, pathogens, and invasive non-native species causing harm in the AONB are being effectively addressed; and
- Coherent and resilient ecological networks are established and maintained across the AONB.

B.69 [The River Avon Special Area of Conservation Nutrient Management Plan for Phosphorus \(2015\)](#) intends to help reduce and manage phosphorus levels in the River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) by ensuring that new development in the River Avon catchment does not add to the phosphorus load in the river. This nutrient management plan has two primary objectives:

- To achieve compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive (see paragraph 2.1.5), in particular:
- To establish the necessary conservation measures and implement appropriate steps to avoid deterioration within the River Avon SAC which might result from nutrient loading;
- To achieve the ambition reduction targets in the short term and the conservation objectives targets for phosphorus in the longer term to support the achievement of Favourable Conservation Status; and

- To facilitate development within the catchment in a manner which is compliant with the requirements of the Habitats Regulations, whilst securing that existing consented activities do not adversely affect the integrity of the River Avon SAC.
- To achieve compliance with the Water Framework Directive through delivery of the 'protected area' standards. To achieve compliance with the Water Framework Directive through delivery of the 'protected area' standards. This includes addressing nutrient enrichment issues such as phosphates which affect sensitive habitats, notably the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar. This aligns with the [Somerset Levels Phosphate Strategy](#), which sets out measures to mitigate and reduce phosphorus inputs to support the ecological integrity of these internationally and nationally protected wetland sites.

B.70 [The Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework 2015-2020 \(2015\)](#) supplementary planning document retains as its guiding principle that there is no net increase in urban pressures on internationally important heathland as a result of additional development, and intends to protect the integrity of the Dorset Heaths by:

- Improving the quality of habitat;
- Reducing the effects of fragmentation and isolation by linking and securing sympathetic land use; and
- Implementing heathland avoidance elements of the green infrastructure.

B.71 [The Poole Harbour Catchment Initiative Catchment Plan \(update\) \(2014\)](#) aims to protect and restore the groundwater, rivers and Poole Harbour by delivering the following vision relating to biodiversity:

“Improvements to biodiversity habitats both in the form of naturally functioning rivers, floodplains and wetlands and appropriately located woodland and low-input grassland”

B.72 [The South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy \(2011\)](#) provides a non-statutory framework for green infrastructure across South East Dorset. It sets out a vision for the area which seeks to co-ordinate the planning for, and investment in, parks, open spaces, wildlife corridors, street trees, and other green spaces.

B.73 [The Dorset Biodiversity Strategy \(Mid Term review\) \(2010\)](#) sets the priorities for Dorset's major biodiversity issues up until 2015, and includes the following guiding principles:

- Conserve existing biodiversity;

- Conserve Protected Areas and other high quality habitats;
- Conserve range and ecological variability of habitats and species;
- Conserve and enhance local variation within sites and habitats;
- Make space for the natural development of rivers and coasts;
- Establish ecological networks through habitat protection, restoration and creation;
- Respond to changing conservation priorities.

Baseline information

B.74 Dorset is home to an incredibly diverse range of wildlife habitats and species, some of which are of exceptional ecological importance.

B.75 The Dorset CouncilThe Dorset Local Plan area includes large areas of important heathland, mixed deciduous woodland and calcareous grassland habitats which are listed as ‘priority habitats’ in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and provide the focus of wildlife conservation in the Government’s 25 year Environment Plan (Table B.1).

Table B.1: A table showing the extent of priority habitats within the Dorset Council Local Plan area

Priority Habitat	Area (ha)
Lowland heathland	4,673
Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	4,283
Lowland calcareous grassland	3,286
Lowland fens	689
Lowland meadows	668
Maritime cliff and slope	670
Wood-pasture and parkland	590
Lowland dry acid grassland	565
Wet woodland	553
Saline Lagoons	511
Purple moor grass and rush pastures	499
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	460
Coastal saltmarsh	376

Priority Habitat	Area (ha)
Reedbeds	272
Coastal vegetated shingle	100
Coastal sand dunes	90

Table B.1 Source: Dorset Environmental Records Centre, July 2019

B.76 The ecological designations within the plan area include:

- European sites: European sites are strictly protected sites and include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA), which are designated under the habitats directive (Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora) and birds directive (Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds), respectively. Ramsar sites, which are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (especially as Waterfowl Habitat), have similar status to European sites.
- National sites: Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserves and Local Nature Reserves are all designated on a national level.
- Local sites: Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI).

B.77 The plan area occupies approximately 252,100ha, of which approximately 6.1% is occupied by international sites, approximately 8.5% by national sites, and approximately 5.3% by local sites (Table 2.2). However, there is some overlap between the wildlife designations, for example all European sites also have Sites of Special Scientific Interest status.

Table B.2: A table showing the coverage of wildlife designations within the Dorset Council Local Plan area

Designation	Designation	Area (ha)
European sites	Special Area of Conservation	11,681
European sites	Special Conservation Area	11,022
European sites	Ramsar	9,121
European sites	Total (Excluding overlap between the International designations)	15,488

Designation	Designation	Area (ha)
National sites	Site of Special Scientific Interest	19,048
National sites	National Nature Reserve	5,557
National sites	Local Nature Reserve	174
National sites	Total	24,779
Local sites	Site of Nature Conservation Interest	11,809
Local sites	Total	13,258

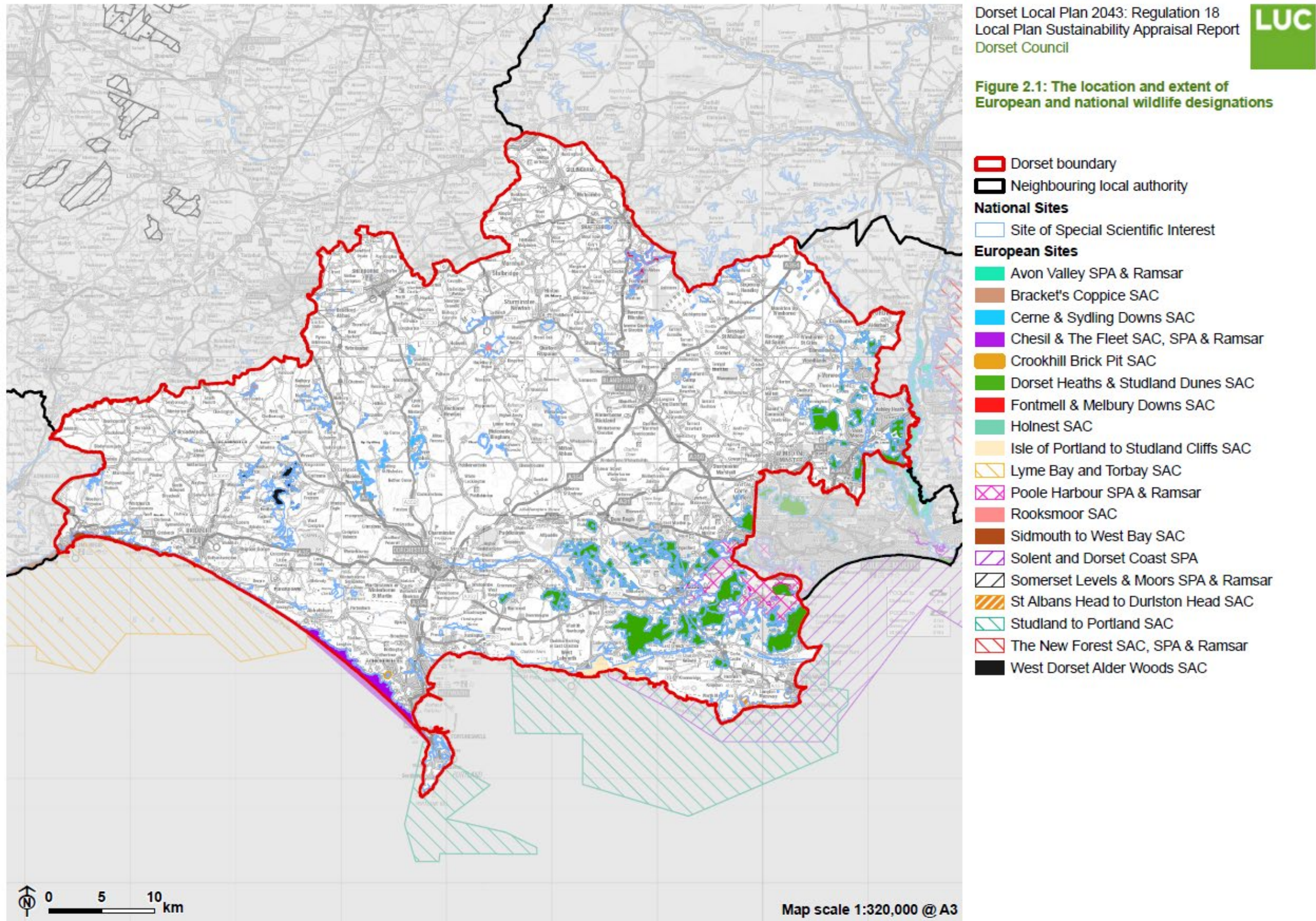
Table B.2 Source: Dorset Environmental Records Centre, July 2019

B.78 At the end of 2024, the [Dorset Wildlife Trust acquired three new nature reserves totalling 370 hectares](#) of land . These nature reserves comprise of:

- **Lyscombe Nature Reserve** – A 335-hectare site located north-east of Dorchester. Lyscombe already holds a number of prestigious designations, including a 50-hectare Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) and several Scheduled Monuments, including the unique Lyscombe Chapel. The management plan is to continue with traditional management techniques to ensure wildlife continues to thrive in the SSSI, to restore natural processes across the reserve and to open up more access for people to enjoy this stunning landscape.
- **West Holme** – A 22-hectare site near West Holme, which is planned to be heal intensively managed land, and bring back wetland, wood pasture and woodland through natural regeneration. The land lies within a nature recovery network close to the River Frome.
- **New land at Kingcombe Meadows** – 13 hectares of land adjacent to Kingcombe National Nature Reserve, comprising of lowland meadows.

B.79 The International sites within the plan area occupy large areas of the coast, particularly at Chesil beach and the Fleet, and the southeastern part of the plan area due to the Dorset Heathlands designation.

Figure B.4: 1The location and extent of European and national wildlife designations in the Dorset Council Local Plan area



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B.80 Monitoring of the condition of the wildlife designations within the Dorset Council Local Plan area has indicated that the majority (55%) of land occupied by the Site of Special Scientific Interest designation in the plan area is in unfavourable condition (Dorset Environmental Records Centre, July 2019).

B.81 However, records indicate an improvement in the management of local wildlife designations, with approximately 67.5% of designations in the Dorset Council Local Plan area under positive conservation management in 2019, marking a 20% increase from 2009, when 47.2% of sites were managed positively (single data List 160-00- Nature Conservation: Local sites in positive conservation management', Dorset Environmental Records Centre, 1st July 2019).

Sustainability issues

Environmental issues relating to designated sites

B.82 The SEA Directive requires particular consideration be given to the environmental problems affecting sites which have been designated under the Birds and Habitats Directives. Below is a summary of the sustainability issues of relevance. However, the Habitats Regulations Assessment will consider the impacts on European sites in more detail.

B.83 These sites of exceptional ecological importance, known as European Sites, include the following designations:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated under the Habitats Directive; and
- Special Protection Areas (SPA) designated under the Birds Directive.

B.84 Wetlands of international importance, designated following the Ramsar Convention of 1971, are given similar status to European sites according to the NPPF.

B.85 Approximately 15,488ha of the Dorset Council Local Plan area, which represents 6.1% of the plan area, is designated as SPA, SAC or Ramsar.

B.86 The key environmental problems affecting European sites which are relevant to the Dorset Council Local Plan include:

- Elevated concentrations of phosphates affecting the River Avon SAC, Avon Valley SPA and Ramsar; Elevated concentrations of phosphates affecting the River Avon SAC, River Axe SAC, Avon Valley SPA and Ramsar;
- Elevated concentrations of nitrogen and recreational pressure affecting the Poole Harbour SPA and Ramsar;
- Recreational pressure affecting the Dorset Heaths SAC, Dorset Heathlands SPA and Ramsar; Recreational pressure and associated air quality issues affecting the Dorset Heaths SAC, Dorset Heathlands SPA and Ramsar;
- Recreational pressure affecting the Chesil and the Fleet SAC, SPA and Ramsar; and Recreational pressure and water quality (nitrogen and phosphorus) issues affecting the Chesil and the Fleet SAC, SPA and Ramsar; and
- Elevated concentrations of phosphates affecting the Somerset Levels and Moors SPA and Ramsar.

B.87 These impacts are considered in the following paragraphs.

River Avon SAC, Avon Valley SPA and Ramsar

B.88 The Avon Valley has a greater range of habitats and a more diverse range of flora and fauna than any other chalk river in Britain (According to the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), a public body that advises the UK Government and devolved administrations on UK-wide and international nature conservation).

B.89 The River Avon is a large, lowland river system that includes sections running through chalk and clay. It supports important populations plant, fish and invertebrate species, and is a designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the Habitats Directive. The lower reaches of the River Avon SAC lie within the Avon Valley Special Protection Area (SPA) which is classified due to the population of over wintering bird species of European importance which inhabit the site. In addition the areas of the Avon Valley downstream of Fordingbridge include the Avon Valley Ramsar site, a wetland area of international importance.

B.90 Studies have shown that elevated concentrations of phosphates in freshwater systems results in increased plant growth, algal blooms and an accumulation in organic matter all of which contribute to a decrease in oxygen availability and a degradation in water quality. This effect, known as eutrophication, can result in catastrophic ecological impacts.

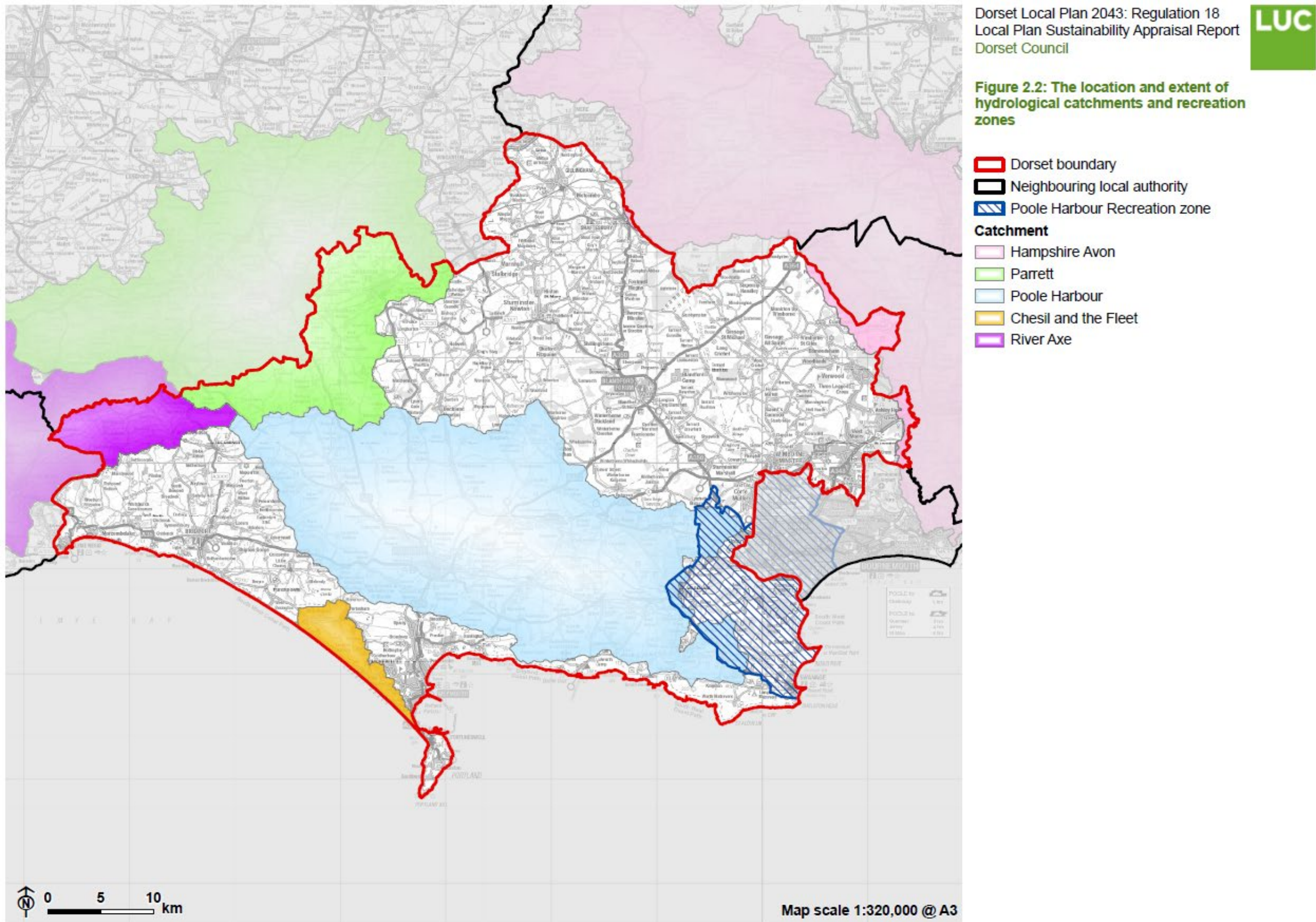
B.91 Only 10% of [Dorset's rivers are in favourable ecological condition](#). The Hampshire Avon failed to achieve Good Ecological or Groundwater Chemical Status

under the [Water Framework Directive in 2014 and 2015, and 2019](#). This may be at least partly attributed to elevated levels of phosphates, the main sources of which are fertiliser from farming activities, fish farms and cress beds, wastewater effluent from residential properties and industrial development, and a natural contribution from the Upper Greensand underlying geology.

B.92 Wessex Water strips the vast majority of phosphate from sewage at Sewage Treatment Works in accordance with Environment Agency permit conditions before it is discharged to the river. However, despite this, elevated concentrations of phosphate are making a significant contribution to overall phosphate concentrations in the River Avon, resulting in impacts upon the River Avon and Avon Valley European sites. Wessex Water has pledged to spend approximately £900 million between 2025 and 2030 to reduce nutrient levels (including phosphorus) in their treated wastewater before it is released into [waterways](#).

B.93 Sections of the eastern boundary of the Dorset Council Local Plan area are within the hydrological catchment of the Hampshire Avon (Figure B.5 below). New development within the part of Hampshire Avon's hydrological catchment which lies within the Dorset Council Local Plan area may result in additional inputs of phosphate into the Hampshire Avon European site, affecting the integrity of the River Avon and Avon Catchment European sites.

Figure B.5: 2A map showing the extent of the River Avon, River Parrett (Somerset Levels) and Poole Harbour catchments



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Poole Harbour SPA and Ramsar

B.94 Poole Harbour is a natural harbour and an outstanding natural feature on the south coast of England. Poole Harbour is of great nature conservation importance, as a wetland habitat and for birds and as a wetland habitat.

B.95 Poole Harbour is being affected by both elevated concentrations of nutrients (nitrogen) entering the harbour and by recreational pressure.

B.96 Scientific evidence suggests that high concentrations of nitrogen in the harbour are encouraging the growth of wide spread algal mats through the process of eutrophication. These mats restrict the availability of invertebrates, which are an important food source for wading birds and affect other important features and processes within the harbour. The extent of the algal mats has increased since the 1960s, expanding from Holes Bay to become widespread across the harbour.

B.97 The majority (~85%) of nitrogen entering Poole Harbour from land sources is generated by agriculture within the Poole Harbour catchment which occupies an area of 820km² and comprise the rivers and streams which drain into Poole Harbour. However, a proportion (~15%) of the nitrogen entering Poole Harbour is from human sewage discharged within the Poole Harbour catchment, since the Sewage Treatment Works remove only part of the nitrogen from human waste.

B.98 In response to this problem, the local authorities which occupy the Poole Harbour Catchment developed a supplementary planning document titled 'Nitrogen Reduction in Poole Harbour (2017)'. However, following the publication of Natural England's advice concerning the need for nutrient neutrality within the Poole Harbour catchment in 2022, and the subsequent stricter wastewater standards enacted by the Levelling Up Act 2023, the supplementary planning document was revoked in September 2024. While there is no longer a need for development to demonstrate phosphorous neutrality as nutrient pollution standards will bring levels of this nutrient below a threshold level, nitrogen mitigation remains mandatory for planning applications approved after 31st July 2024. Dorset Council secured £4.63m from the government's £57m Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund to support mitigation in the Poole Harbour Catchment, which can include on-site measures, third-party schemes, or council-led projects.

B.99 Some recreational activities (including dog walking, cycling and water sports) around Poole Harbour are creating disturbance to wading birds and adversely affecting the estuarine habitat.

B.100 Survey studies show that local people visiting the harbour for recreational purposes tend to derive from a wide catchment of areas around Poole. It is thought that the draw is due to the uniqueness of the harbour which cannot be replaced, nor is there any comparable area in the rest of Poole for certain recreational activities such as watersports.

B.101 There is however, clearly a link between proximity to the harbour and frequency of visits. In the plan area, proximity to the harbour is shown to be more significant as the visitor survey studies show that most of the local people who visit the harbour tend to live in the towns and villages which are close to the A35 and A351, such as Swanage, Corfe Castle, Stoborough, Wareham, Lytchett Matravers and Upton.

B.102 Further residential development in those areas surrounding the harbour would result in an increase in population around the harbour, and would be likely to result in an adverse effect on the Poole Harbour European site.

B.103 The Poole Harbour Recreation Supplementary Planning Document (2020), sets out the Poole Harbour Recreation Zone within which the adverse effects of new residential development must be avoided or mitigated (Figure B.6). The Poole Harbour Recreation Zone occupies an area in the southeast of the plan area, within the former district of Purbeck.

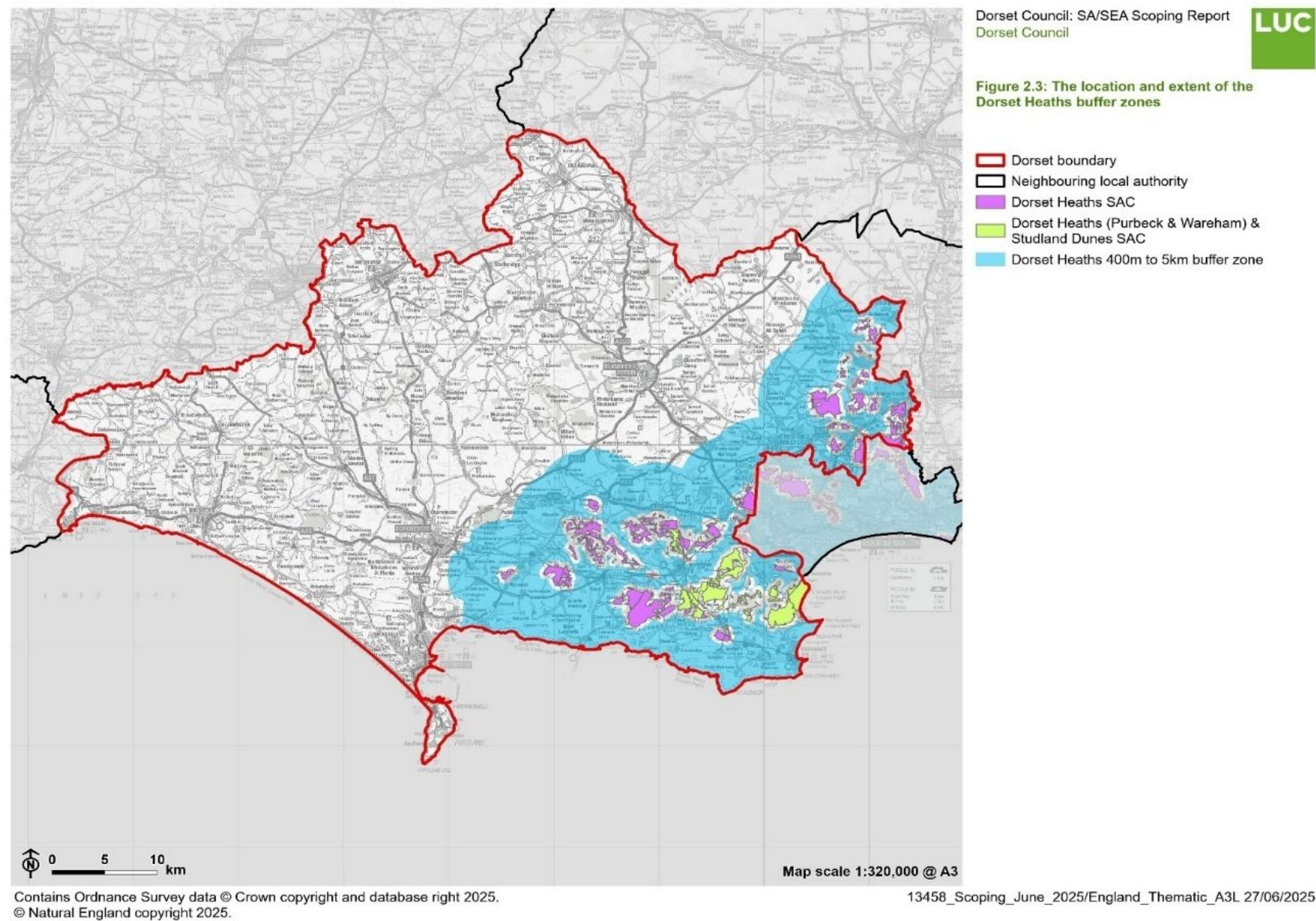
Dorset Heaths SAC and Dorset Heathlands SPA and Ramsar

B.104 The Dorset Heaths SAC and Dorset Heathlands SPA and Ramsar are sensitive to additional recreational pressure and so any development involving a net increase in local residents or staying visitors could be detrimental if not mitigated. The potential impacts include increased cat predation of wildlife, higher instances of wildfire, disturbances to ground nesting birds, increased nutrients from dog fouling and damage from increased footfall (trampling) on the heaths.

B.105 These impacts are most marked for developments within 400m of heathland sites, where it is considered that a negative effect upon the Dorset designated site would result. Residential development in these areas is therefore not permitted

B.106 In the area between 400m and up to 5km from a heathland site ("5km buffer zone"), the effect of residential development is less marked but still likely to be significant. However, mitigation in these areas is more likely to be successful and therefore residential developments within this area may go ahead.

Figure B.6: 3The location and extent of the Dorset Heaths buffer zones

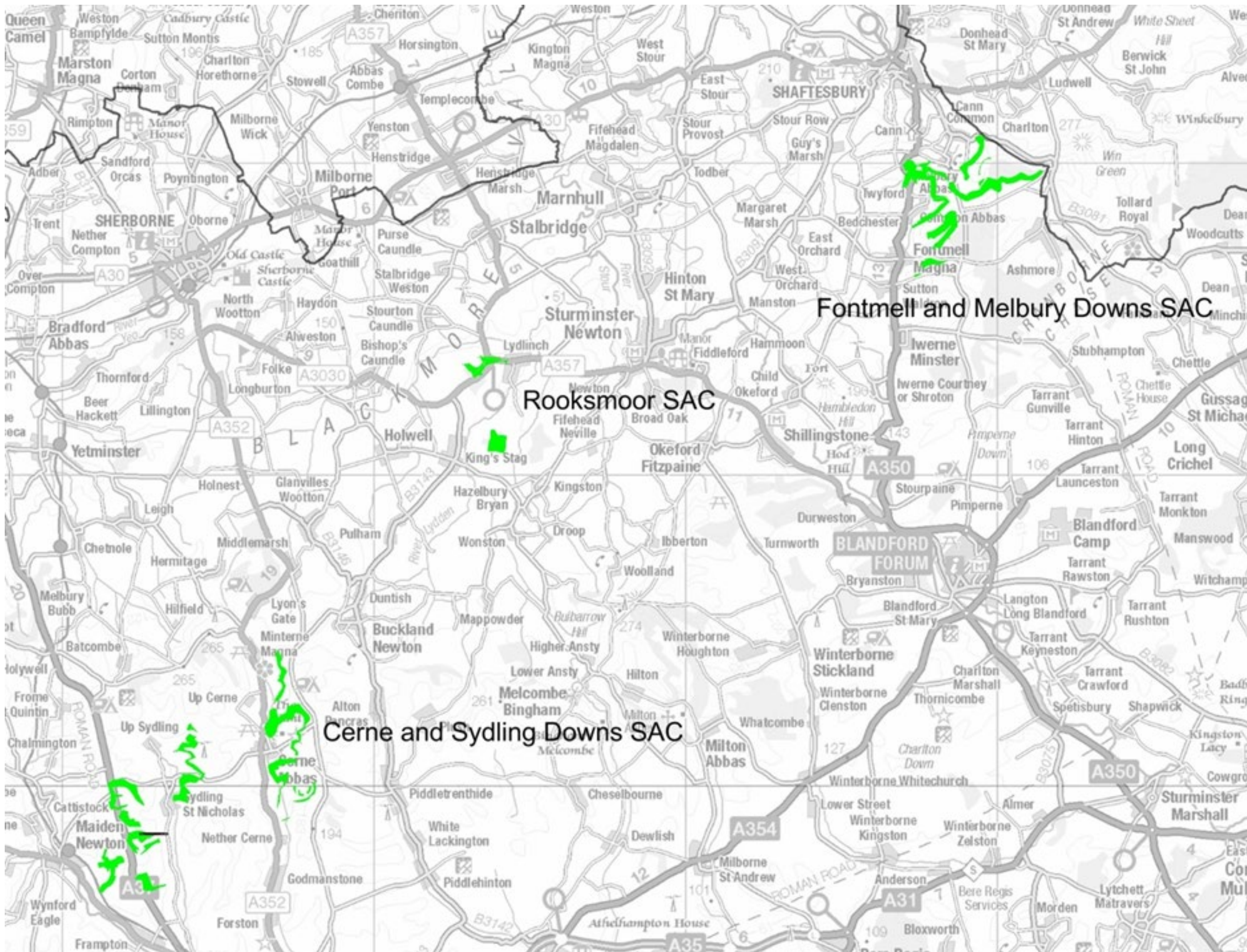


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Fontmell & Melbury Downs SAC and Cerne and Sydling Downs SAC

B.107 The Fontmell and Melbury Downs SAC and Cerne and Sydling Downs SAC are characterised predominantly by semi-natural dry grassland with some scrub and heathland on the chalk valley slopes of north Dorset (Figure B.7).

Figure B.7: The location and extent of the Fontmell & Melbury Downs SAC, Cerne and Sydling Downs SAC, and Rooksmoor SAC



B.108 These chalk grassland habitats are sensitive to recreational pressure as a result of trampling and erosion by walking or cycling. Those parts that are steep and with thin soils, especially near access points where pressures are more concentrated, are particularly vulnerable. The addition of nutrients from dog faeces is also an threat, as this results in an input of nutrients into the soil and chalk grassland habitats are necessarily naturally low in nutrients.

B.109 New development in the areas surrounding these European Sites may increase the local population and the number of visits to these sites, increasing the recreational pressure. Surveys have indicated that the core recreational catchment, defined by the zone within which 75% of visitors derive, is typically 4-6km from a European Site and rarely larger.

B.110 These European Sites are also sensitive to the deposition of atmospheric nitrogen from vehicle exhaust emissions as this results in the enrichment of soils within a habitat which naturally requires low nutrient levels.

B.111 Within a 'typical' housing development, by far the largest contribution to the emission of nitrogen (approximately 92%) is from the associated road traffic. Therefore, the impact of atmospheric deposition of nitrogen from new development is a particular issue close to roads. According to the Department of Transport's Transport Analysis Guidance, "Beyond 200m, the contribution of vehicle emissions from the roadside to local pollution levels is not significant". This is due to the mix of the exhaust gases, the small dimension of the exhausts and the velocity of the exhaust gases. Also, as traffic exhausts are situated only a few inches above the ground and are horizontal to it, the vast majority of emitted pollutants are never dispersed far and are very quickly deposited.

B.112 The deposition of atmospheric nitrogen is also an issue at the Rooksmoor SAC, which is characterised by species-rich meadows, copses, and Common Land on neutral to acidic soils. These majority of the site is necessarily naturally low in nutrients, and therefore the enrichment of soils through the deposition of atmospheric nitrogen represents a threat to the integrity of this European site. Once again, this is a particular issue in those areas within 200m of the road, since vehicle emissions represent the greatest source of atmospheric nitrogen.

Somerset Levels and Moors SPA and Ramsar

B.113 The Somerset Levels and Moors SPA and Ramsar is located approximately 12km to the north of the Dorset Plan Area (Figure 2.3).

B.114 The Somerset Levels and Moors contain the largest area of lowland wet grassland in England, contributing 21% of the resource. The Somerset Levels and Moors are characterised by extensive flatness and frequent floods. The open expanse of grasslands broken up by isolated hills and ridges is some of the lowest land in the UK, with large areas lying below the level of the highest tides. Water dominates the landscape and a complex network of watercourses is evidence of a long history of drainage to reclaim productive farmland from marshland.

B.115 The Somerset Levels and Moors European Site occupies an area of approximately 6,400ha, representing approximately 12% of the total floodplain area. Much of the area outside the European site is a farmed grassland monoculture and is likely to be too dry at critical times of the year to support wetland wildlife.

B.116 Huge flocks of migratory waterfowl arrive at the Somerset Levels and Moors in winter and its importance for bird species is year round as it is one of the UK's most important breeding areas for Lapwing, Curlew, Redshank and Snipe. Meadows with more than 60 species of plant in a single field and ditches supporting a unique assemblage of rare invertebrates add to its diversity.

B.117 The uppermost areas of the Somerset Levels hydrological catchment occupy a section of the northern extent of the Dorset Council Local Plan area. The rivers within the Somerset Levels drain into the Bristol Channel, which has the second highest tidal range in the world

B.118 Monitoring of the condition of the European site undertaken by Natural England has shown that elevated concentrations of phosphates within the water bodies at the European site are resulting in algal dominance and a decrease in plant diversity, resulting partly from a decline in vascular plants. This has resulted in some areas within the European site being classified as 'unfavourable declining'.

Chesil and the Fleet SAC, SPA and Ramsar

B.119 The Chesil and the Fleet European site is characterised by a 29km long shingle bar and a coastal lagoon called the Fleet (Figure 2.3). The SPA element of the European site, designated under the Birds Directive, occupies the Fleet and immediate surroundings. The SAC and Ramsar designation occupies the Fleet and surroundings and occupies the shingle bar up to West Bay in the west.

B.120 The Chesil and the Fleet SAC element of the European site is primarily designated for the following habitats:

- Coastal lagoon;

- Annual vegetation of drift lines;
- Perennial vegetation of stony banks; and
- Mediterranean and thermos-Atlantic halophilous scrubs (*Sarcocornetea fruticosa*).

B.121 The coastal lagoon, known as the Fleet, is the largest lagoon in England and supports the greatest diversity of habitats and species of any lagoon in the UK. The marine invertebrate communities and flora of the Fleet are exceptionally diverse with a number of nationally rare, scarce and protected species.

B.122 The Mediterranean and thermos-Atlantic halophilous scrubs habitat is largely associated with this lagoon habitat, since it is found predominantly on the seaward margin of the Fleet.

B.123 Chesil Beach represents an extensive area of 'perennial vegetation of stony banks', with most of it is relatively undisturbed by human activities. Chesil Beach supports the most extensive occurrences of the rare sea-kale (*Crambe maritima*) and sea pea (*Lathyrus japonicas*) in the UK, together with other grassland and lichen-rich shingle plant communities typical of more stable conditions.

B.124 In addition, Chesil beach is also one of two representatives of Annual vegetation of drift lines on the south coast of England. The inner shore of the beach supports extensive drift-line vegetation dominated by sea beet (*Beta vulgaris maritima*) and orache (*Atriplex*).

B.125 The Chesil and the Fleet SPA provides a nesting site for the Little Tern (*Sterna albibrons*), Common tern (*Sterna hirundo*) and Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) between February and August.

B.126 Natural England, in their consultation response, have raised concerns about the threat to the Chesil and the Fleet European site posed by recreational pressure.

B.127 The recreational pressure at the Chesil and the Fleet European site is typically as a result of walking, bird watching, fishing and boating. This may have a direct impact upon the SAC and Ramsar habitats.

B.128 In terms of the Chesil and the Fleet SPA, recreational pressure is likely to cause disturbance to bird species during breeding season may result in the birds expending energy unnecessarily, not feeding properly, and or tending to eggs or nestlings if the disturbance is close to the nesting site. This is likely to affect the condition of the birds and reduce the survival rate of the eggs and nestlings,

ultimately compromising the survival of the birds. Disturbance to over wintering species is also a concern.

B.129 Whilst disturbance is generally less during the winter months, bird populations are particularly vulnerable during this time of year due to food shortages. Disturbance can result in the abandonment of suitable feeding areas can have severe consequences for those birds involved.

B.130 In July 2020, Dorset Council Cabinet agreed that developer contribution funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) would help to deliver an interim strategy from mitigating recreational pressure on the Chesil Beach and the Fleet SAC, SPA and Ramsar. The strategy provides an approach to addressing the recreational impacts upon Chesil Beach and the Fleet, which will ensure that new development contributes to the mitigation in a fair and proportionate manner. The cost of mitigation is estimated at £191,673,00 per year, which will largely be met through [CIL](#) receipts.

Key environmental issues relating to biodiversity, flora and fauna

B.131 The key environmental issues relating to biodiversity, flora and fauna are:

- The potential loss of biodiversity and irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and veteran trees) and degradation of ecosystems through the effects of development;
- The potential loss of wildlife corridors which provide important links between habitats. This results in a loss of connectivity between habitats, preventing species from freely migrating and causing populations to become isolated. This is likely to be a greater issue in future as the effects of climate change are realised, as wildlife sites connected by corridors allow species to freely migrate to a more suitable climates;
- Maintaining or restoring the favourable conservation status of European sites, designated under the Bird and Habitats Directives, and Ramsar sites. Minimising the impacts upon the Dorset Heaths, Fontmell and Melbury Downs and Cerne and Sydling Downs as a result of additional recreational pressure from development, Poole Harbour due to the input of nitrates and recreational pressure from development, the River Avon valley from the input of phosphates.
- Atmospheric nitrogen deposition from vehicle emissions, particularly within 200m of road, contributes to the enrichment of soils, which threatens the low-nutrient habitats of several European Sites, particularly the Fontmell & Melbury Downs, Cerne & Sydling Downs, and Rooksmoor sites; and

- The recreational pressure at the Chesil and the Fleet European site is typically as a result of walking, bird watching, fishing and boating.
- Maintaining or restoring the favourable conservation status of Sites of Special Scientific Interest, many of which are in unfavourable condition within the Dorset Council Local Plan area; area;
- The protection and enhancement of local wildlife designations, such as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI); and
- Maintaining and restoring the favourable conservation status of priority (S41) habitats and species, which are species and habitats of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England, published as a requirement of the NERC Act Section 41 (S41).

3. Soil

B.132 Soil is the uppermost layer of the earth's crust, containing the organic and mineral matter which enable plants to grow.

B.133 Soil is an invaluable component of the natural environment, for example playing a key role in nutrient cycling by storing carbon, filtering water of contaminants as it leaches through the soil profile, and aiding drainage and flood management.

B.134 Soil is also an important natural resource both for the community and the economy, providing food, clean drinking water, and building materials.

B.135 Given the importance of soil, the global trend of soil degradation has been recognised as a serious and widespread problem. Soil degradation may occur:

- Physically: for example through accelerated soil erosion or the decline of structural condition which aids drainage;
- Chemically: for example through the loss of nutrients or elevated concentrations of contaminants; and/or
- Biologically: for example through the depletion of soil organic matter and the imbalance of populations of organisms which enable the healthy functioning of the soil.

B.136 The cause of soil degradation is often due to improper use or land management practices, such as deforestation and changes of land use, agricultural practices such as overgrazing, overexploitation and fertiliser use, and industrial activities.

B.137 Soil contamination is a form of soil degradation caused by elevated concentrations of chemicals in the soil, often as a legacy of previous land use, industrialisation, and inappropriate waste disposal.

B.138 Soil provides the medium for growing crops, and supplies the essential nutrients required to support healthy crop yields. Conserving soil quality is therefore key in maintaining agricultural productivity, ensuring food security and achieving a sustainable agricultural system.

B.139 Soil is largely a product of the underlying geology, since it is formed by the weathering of bedrock. This Chapter will also consider geodiversity, defined as range of rocks, minerals, fossils, soils and landforms (Annex 2: Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019)), and conservation of the geological resource within the plan area.

Key messages from other plans, programmes and objectives

International

B.140 The United Nations developed a series of global development goals which aim to deliver sustainable development in the document titled [Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development \(2015\)](#). One such goal is:

- End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

B.141 [The United Nations Declaration on Sustainable Development \(Johannesburg Declaration\) \(2002\)](#) sets a broad framework for international sustainable development, including building a humane, equitable and caring global society aware of the need for human dignity for all, renewable energy and energy efficiency, sustainable consumption and production and resource efficiency.

National

B.142 [The UK National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan \(2025\)](#) sets out how the four countries of the UK will work together to address biodiversity. The document reflects shared ambition to protect and restore nature and confirms the UK's pledge to meet all 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework within its own borders. The document outlines four long-term global goals:

- Protect and restore;

- Prosper with nature;
- Share benefits fairly; and
- Invest and collaborate.

B.143 [The National Planning Policy Framework \(2024\)](#) (NPPF) states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued soil and the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Policies should also prevent new and existing development from "contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution."

B.144 The document also requires that strategic policies should seek to make the most effective use of land in meeting local requirements making as much use as possible of previously developed or 'brownfield' land. Furthermore, policies should "support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land".

B.145 [The Environment Improvement Plan 2023](#) for England is the first revision of the 25YEP: It builds on the 25YEP vision with a new plan setting out how we will work with landowners, communities and businesses to deliver each of our goals for improving the environment, matched with interim targets to measure progress. Taking these actions will help us restore nature, reduce environmental pollution, and increase the prosperity of our country. To achieve its vision, the 25YEP set out 10 goals. We have used those 10 goals set out in the 25YEP as the basis for this document: setting out the progress made against all 10, the specific targets and commitments made in relation to each goal, and our plan to continue to deliver these targets and the overarching goals. The environmental goals are:

- Goal 1: Thriving plants and wildlife
- Goal 2: Clean air
- Goal 3: Clean and plentiful water
- Goal 4: Managing exposure to chemicals and pesticides
- Goal 5: Maximise our resources, minimise our waste
- Goal 6: Using resources from nature sustainably
- Goal 7: Mitigating and adapting to climate change
- Goal 8: Reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards
- Goal 9: Enhancing biosecurity

- Goal 10: Enhanced beauty, heritage, and engagement with the natural environment

B.146 [The 25 Year Environment Plan: progress reports \(2023\)](#) sets out the progress made in improving the environment through the 25 Year Plan and the indicator framework, which contains 66 indicators arranged into 10 broad themes.

B.147 [The waste prevention programme for England: Maximising Resources, Minimising Waste \(2023\)](#) sets out government's priorities for managing resources and waste, in line with the resources and waste strategy for England.

B.148 [The Environment Act 2021](#) sets statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world in four priority areas: air quality, biodiversity, water, and resource efficiency and waste reduction. It also establishes the Office for Environmental Protection which will act as an impartial and objective body for the protection and improvement of the environment. The Act sets out legislation which covers:

- Resource efficiency, producer responsibility, and the management, enforcement and regulation of waste;
- Local air quality management frameworks and the recall of motor vehicles etc; and
- Plans and proposals for water resources, drainage and sewerage management, storm overflows, water quality and land drainage.

B.149 A Green Future: [Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment \(2018\)](#), also known as the 25 Year Environment Plan, sets out the UK government action to help the natural world regain and retain good health. The plan sets a series of goals for improving the environment within a generation and leaving it in a better state than we found it, and includes the following objectives and actions relating to soil and pollution:

- We will ensure that resources from nature are used more sustainably and efficiently. We will do this by:
 - improving our approach to soil management: by 2030 we want all of England's soils to be managed sustainably, and we will use natural capital thinking to develop appropriate soil metrics and management approaches
- We will make sure that chemicals are safely used and managed, and that the levels of harmful chemicals entering the environment (including through agriculture) are significantly reduced. We will do this by:
 - seeking in particular to eliminate the use of Polychlorinated Biphenyls by 2025, in line with our commitments under the Stockholm Convention

substantially increasing the amount of Persistent Organic Pollutants material being destroyed or irreversibly transformed by 2030, to make sure there are negligible emissions to the environment

fulfilling our commitments under the Stockholm Convention as outlined in the UK's most recent National Implementation Plan

B.150 The strategy for the future of soils in England is presented in the [Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England \(2009\)](#), which sets out the following vision:

"By 2030, all of England's soils will be managed sustainably and degradation threats tackled successfully. This will improve the quality of England's soils and safeguard their ability to provide essential services for future generations".

B.151 The Government's strategic direction for biodiversity is presented in [Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services \(2011\)](#), which includes the following aims with respect to agriculture:

- Priority action 3.1: Improve the delivery of environmental outcomes from agricultural land management practices, whilst increasing food production; and
- Priority action 3.2: Reform the Common Agricultural Policy to achieve greater environmental benefits.

B.152 [The Environmental Protection Act 1990 makes](#) provision for the improved control of pollution to the air, water and land by regulating the management of waste and the control of emissions. Seeks to ensure that decisions pertaining to the environment are made in an integrated manner, in collaboration with appropriate authorities, non-governmental organisations and other persons.

Local

B.153 Dorset Council's [Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy 2023 to 25 \(refresh\) \(2025\)](#) aims to create a carbon neutral, nature positive, and resilient Dorset through a clean, green, and fair transition that supports prosperous, stronger, and healthier communities. It focuses on three main challenges: reducing greenhouse gas emissions to address climate change, protecting and enhancing ecosystems to reverse biodiversity loss, and adapting to unavoidable environmental impacts to build resilience. The strategy has four broad outcomes it aims to achieve:

- Net Zero Council 2040 and Net Zero Dorset 2050: Net zero emissions from power, heat, transport, construction, food, consumables and waste;

- Nature Positive Dorset 2030: At least 30% of our land, rivers and seas and nature-positive by 2030;
- prosperity through green growth: Green jobs, skills and investment for low carbon and nature sectors; and
- stronger, healthier communities: Healthier, cheaper to run homes and safer more resilient communities.

B.154 [Dorset Council's Contaminated Land Strategy 2024-2029 \(2024\)](#) aims to prevent contamination of land from causing unacceptable risks to human health or the wider environment. The following objectives for managing contaminated land in Dorset are:

- To follow effective procedures in the identification and prioritisation of potentially contaminated land;
- To protect human health and the environment by identifying and securing remediation of sites meeting the definition of 'contaminated land';
- To pursue the management of potentially contaminated land through the planning system as required by relevant statutory guidance;
- To ensure effective management of all information about contaminated land, including the storage, accessibility/provision of, and responses to such information.
- To comply with and implement all relevant statute and guidance.

B.155 [The Dorset Local Nature Partnership's Vision and Strategy \(2023\)](#) sets out the following strategic priorities for the partnership, which include the following strategic pillars relating to biodiversity:

- Natural capital - increasing investment: Dorset has some exceptional natural assets which already underpin the economic and social wellbeing of the county, yet it is still declining in quality and quantity and needs greater investment. We will facilitate funding and lobby for more;
- Natural economy- adding value: A healthy environment is a pre-requisite for a healthy economy globally and locally, it offers opportunities for sustainable economic resilience which does not erode our natural capital. We will support the development of nature-based economic schemes and maximise green finance opportunities;
- Naturally healthy - developing Dorset's 'natural health service': Working with the healthcare system, providers, and land managers, we will aid collaboration to improve access to and connection with nature, build green infrastructure and

support better information on how to use the natural world to live better and reduce inequalities.

- Natural resilience - improving environmental and community resilience: In the light of a challenging future, and the impact on health, we will work collaboratively to improve both resilience against and adaption to climate change to enable a sustainable future. We will support local schemes to improve diets and reduce food waste, sensitive farming practices and facilitate greater engagement with the soil that sustains us all.
- Natural understanding - improving engagement in Dorset's environment: Dorset residents and visitors already value their environment. We will support and develop greater understanding of the impacts we have on the terrestrial and marine environment to ensure good stewardship now and in the future.
- Naturally influence - embedding natural value in policy and decision-making: A founding principle of all LNPs is that we will promote the value of the natural environment in decisions and inform local and national policy making.

B.156 [The Dorset National Landscape Management Plan 2019 - 2024 \(2019\)](#) has the following objectives relating to geodiversity:

- Full consideration of geodiversity conservation is required in plans and strategies affecting the National Landscape, e.g. local plans, mineral plans and shoreline management plans. The close links between geodiversity, conservation, extraction industries, landscape and built environment conservation should be recognised.

B.157 [The Dorset Local Geodiversity Action Plan \(2005\)](#) aims to:

- draw together existing information and ongoing projects concerned with the geology, geomorphology, soils and landscapes of Dorset and the East Devon Coastal Corridor, and to initiate further actions that will lead to the conservation and enhancement of the geological resource; and
- Increasing appreciation and understanding of the geological heritage of the area.

Baseline information

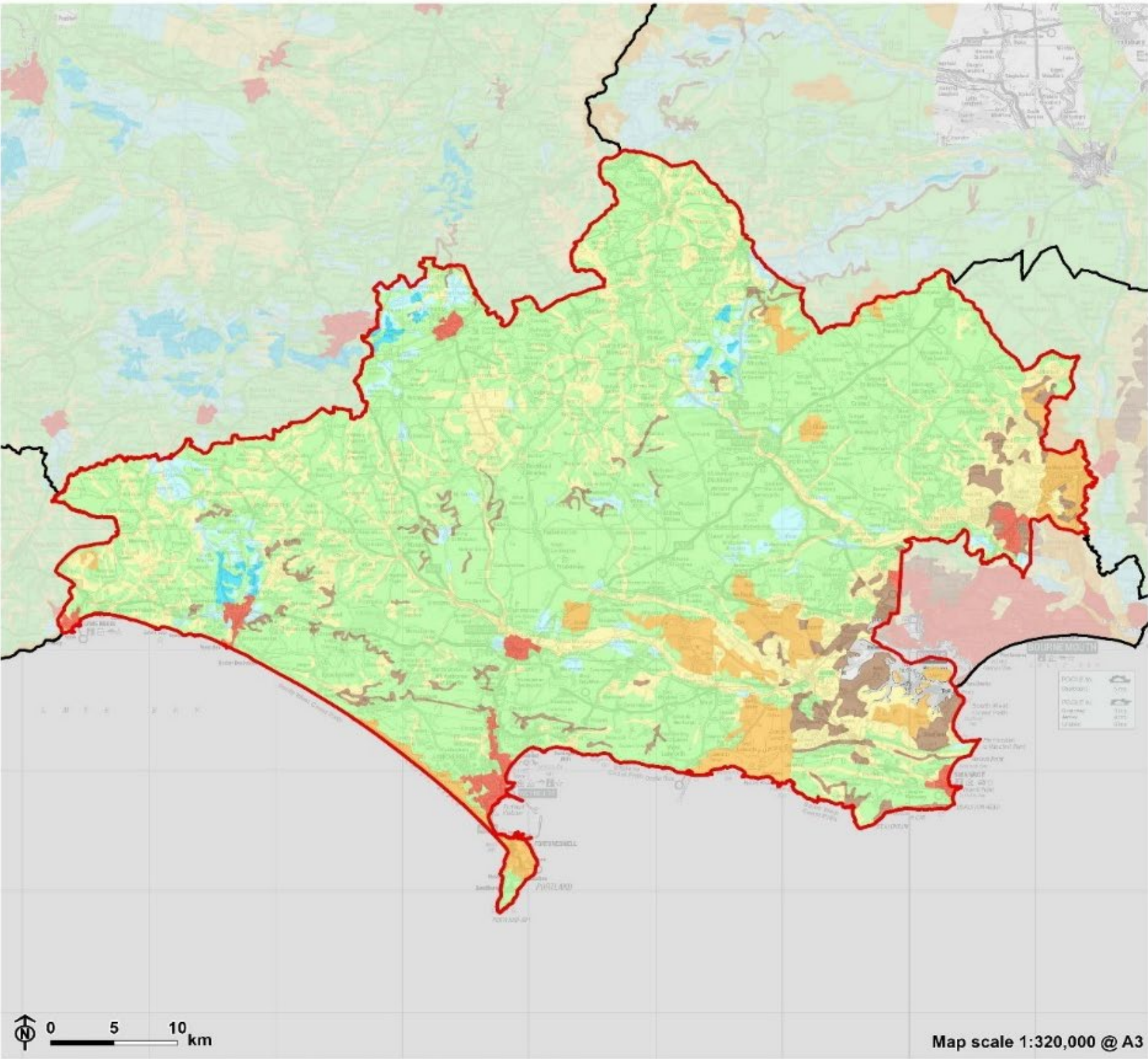
B.158 The Agricultural Land Classification system classifies land into five grades. The best and most versatile agricultural land, according to National Planning Policy Guidance, is defined as grades 1 (Excellent) and 2 (Very Good). This land which is most flexible, productive and efficient in response to inputs and which can best

deliver future crops for food and non-food uses such as biomass, fibres and pharmaceuticals.

B.159 Grade 3 is classified as 'moderate', grade 4 is 'poor', and grade 5 is 'very poor' agricultural land.

B.160 The highest grade agricultural land within the plan area is situated to the north of Bridport, to the west of Sherborne, and to the north of Blandford Forum (Figure B.8).

Figure B.8: The location and extent of agricultural land grades within the Dorset Council Local Plan Area



Dorset Council: SA/SEA Scoping Report
Dorset Council



Figure 3.1: The location and extent of agricultural land grades

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B.161 Local Authorities have duties and responsibilities under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to investigate land which is defined as contaminated under the terms of the Act.

B.162 Prior to the establishment of Dorset Council in April 2019, the individual councils held separate public register of part [IIA sites](#). These individual registers have been consolidated into a single register under Dorset Council. There are currently two entries identified as contaminated land under the definition provided in the Environmental Protection Act (1990) on the [Dorset Council Contaminated Land Register](#):

- Cogdean Elms Industrial Estate, Higher Merley Lane, Corfe Mullen, Wimborne: Companies that use chemicals have been present on the industrial estate since 1954. Uncontrolled practices resulted in small amounts of chemicals spilled into the ground or disposed to soakaway. Once the contamination is in the ground it enters groundwater and then enters the Ashington Stream. The site has been determined as contaminated and a “special site” as the contamination affects groundwater and surface water. As a special site, the Environment Agency took on responsibility for inspection, enforcement, and ensuring the site is remediated.
- Former Sherborne Landfill Site at West Mill Lane, Sherborne, Dorset: The site occupies an area of approximately 5.5 ha. The site was a stream valley owned by Sherborne Castle Estates. It was leased by Sherborne Urban District Council, who culverted the stream and used the site to tip domestic refuse from 1970 onwards. The lease passed to Dorset County Council in 1974. Tipping at the site ceased in 1993. The site was formally designated by West Dorset District Council as contaminated land on 29th July 2003, and Dorset County Council obtained government funding to repair the collapsing culvert and remediate the site to current standards.

B.163 Additionally, there are 3,099 other sites across Dorset that have been assessed and categorised based on potential environmental risk, though they do not meet the legal definition of contaminated land under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. These sites were identified through a risk-rating process and vary in significance, with some requiring further investigation and others suitable for ongoing monitoring or record-keeping. There are [14 Category 1 sites, which are deemed the highest risk](#).

Sustainability issues

B.164 The key environmental issues relating to soil are:

- The potential loss of the most productive soils to development, mainly situated north of Bridport, to the west of Sherborne, and to the north of Blandford Forum. The loss of productive soils would compromise the ability to produce crops locally, affecting food security and sustainable agriculture;
- New development causing contamination and contributing to unacceptable concentrations of pollutants in soil;
- The remediation of soils on contaminated sites, to prevent impacts to human health, controlled waters, property and ecological systems; and
- The protection of geodiversity and conservation of geological interests from the impacts of new development.

4. Water

B.165 Water covers 70% of the earth's surface and is one of the world's most important resources. Water cycles around the planet, evaporating from the earth's surface and the oceans into the atmosphere and condensing to form clouds, before precipitating back onto the land to replenish groundwater and the oceans.

B.166 Water is essential for life and without it there would be no life on earth. It supports all ecosystems, providing aquatic and marine habitats and supplying the nutrients and minerals that plants and animals need to survive. Water is also critical for human health and wellbeing, making up two thirds of the human body and playing a role in every bodily function.

B.167 The social and economic value of water is immeasurable. Access to clean drinking water is a fundamental human right, and water is essential for agriculture, many industrial processes and a host of recreational and tourism based activities.

B.168 Given the widespread importance of water, the consequences of the decline in water quality are severe. Human activity is largely attributed as the cause of the decline in water quality, for example through pollution due to discharge of chemicals and other materials such as micro-plastics into watercourses, global temperature rise and overexploitation of water resources.

B.169 This section considers a broad range of issues relating to the topic of water and the aquatic environment including:

- coastal waters, defined as water up to one mile from the coast;

- transitional waters, which are surface waters in the vicinity of river mouths which are partly saline as a result of their proximity to coastal waters but which are substantially influenced by freshwater flows; and
- freshwater and related features such as wetlands and floodplains. This includes groundwater.

Key messages from other plans, programmes and objectives

International

B.170 [The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development \(2015\)](#), adopted by all United Nations Member States, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet and includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), designed to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. Relevant to this topic are:

- SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation
- SDG 14: Life Below Water.
- SDG 15: Life on Land.

National

B.171 [The UK National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan \(2025\)](#) sets out how the four countries of the UK will work together to address biodiversity. The document reflects shared ambition to protect and restore nature and confirms the UK's pledge to meet all 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework within its own borders. The document outlines four long-term global goals:

- Protect and restore;
- Prosper with nature;
- Share benefits fairly; and
- Invest and collaborate.

B.172 [The National Planning Policy Framework \(2024\)](#) (NPPF) states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever

possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans. The revised NPPF amends the Water Industry Act 1991 to apply nutrient pollution standards to wastewater treatment works (WwTWs). The standards apply in England only and relate to discharges of treated effluent into areas which are nitrogen and phosphorus sensitive areas.

B.173 The [Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Levelling Up and Regeneration Act \(2023\)](#) sets out the direction for planning and makes provisions to support the levelling-up agenda. It seeks to streamline the planning process whilst attaching greater weight to development plans. It also aims to improve infrastructure delivery with a new levy system, improve alignment between plans to address cross-boundary issues, and will introduce added protection for heritage assets. The Act also states that existing EU-generated systems of SEA, HRA and EIA will eventually be replaced by a simpler process known as ‘Environmental Outcomes Reports’.

B.174 The document also requires that strategic policies should seek to make the most effective use of land in meeting local requirements making as much use as possible of previously developed or ‘brownfield’ land. Furthermore, policies should “support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land”.

B.175 [The Plan for Water: Our Integrated Plan for Delivering Clean and Plentiful Water \(2023\)](#) sets out actions to transform the management of the water system, deliver cleaner water for nature and people, and secure a plentiful water supply. The plan also sets out measures to address sources of pollution, and boost water supplies through more investment, tighter regulation, and more effective enforcement.

B.176 [The Environment Act 2021](#) sets statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world in four priority areas: air quality, biodiversity, water, and resource efficiency and waste reduction. It also establishes the Office for Environmental Protection which will act as an impartial and objective body for the protection and improvement of the environment. The Act sets out legislation which covers:

- Resource efficiency, producer responsibility, and the management, enforcement and regulation of waste;
- Local air quality management frameworks and the recall of motor vehicles etc; and
- Plans and proposals for water resources, drainage and sewerage management, storm overflows, water quality and land drainage.

B.177 [Managing Water Abstraction \(2021\)](#) comprises the overarching document for managing water resources in England and Wales and links together the abstraction licensing strategies.

B.178 [The National Chalk Streams Strategy \(2021\)](#) is built around the “trinity of ecological health”: water quantity, water quality and habitat quality and included 30+ recommendations to Defra, the Environment Agency, Natural England, the water companies, NGOs and stakeholders.

B.179 The Environment Agency’s [Meeting our future water needs: a national framework for water resources \(2020\)](#) sets the strategic direction for long term regional water resources planning. The framework is built on a shared vision to:

- leave the environment in a better state than we found it
- improve the nation’s resilience to drought and minimise interruptions to all water users

B.180 [Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment \(2018\)](#) sets out the UK government action to help the natural world regain and retain good health. The plan sets a series of goals for improving the environment within a generation and leaving it in a better state than we found it, and includes the following objectives and actions relating to water:

“We will achieve clean and plentiful water by improving at least three quarters of our waters to be close to their natural state as soon as is practicable by:

- reducing the damaging abstraction of water from rivers and groundwater, ensuring that by 2021 the proportion of water bodies with enough water to support environmental standards increases from 82% to 90% for surface water bodies and from 72% to 77% for groundwater bodies;
- reaching or exceeding objectives for rivers, lakes, coastal and ground waters that are specially protected, whether for biodiversity or drinking water as per our River Basin Management Plans;
- supporting OFWAT’s ambitions on leakage, minimising the amount of water lost through leakage year on year, with water companies expected to reduce leakage by at least an average of 15% by 2025; and
- minimising by 2030 the harmful bacteria in our designated bathing waters and continuing to improve the cleanliness of our waters; we will make sure that potential bathers are warned of any short-term pollution risks.

B.181 The 25 year plan states that the Government will make sure that chemicals are safely used and managed, and that the levels of harmful chemicals entering the environment (including through agriculture) are significantly reduced by reducing land-based emissions of mercury to water by 50% by 2030.

B.182 [Our Waste, Our Resources: A strategy for England \(2018\)](#) aims to increase resource productivity and eliminate avoidable waste by 2050. The Strategy sets out key targets which include: a 50% recycling rate for household waste by 2020, a 75% recycling rate for packaging by 2030, 65% recycling rate for municipal solid waste by 2035 and municipal waste to landfill 10% or less by 2035.

B.183 [The Environment Agency's Approach for Groundwater Protection \(2018\)](#) contains position statements which provide information about the Environment Agency's approach to managing and protecting groundwater. They detail how the Environment Agency delivers government policy for groundwater and adopts a risk-based approach where legislation allows. Many of the approaches set out in the position statements are not statutory but may be included in, or referenced by, statutory guidance and legislation.

B.184 [The Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations \(2017\)](#) seeks to protect inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater, and outlines the associated river basin management process. These Regulations establish the need to prevent deterioration of waterbodies and to protect, enhance and restore waterbodies with the aim of achieving good ecological and chemical status.

B.185 [The Environment Agency's Drought response: our framework for England \(2017\)](#) discusses how drought affects England and how the Environment Agency works with government, water companies and others to manage the effects on people, business and the environment. It aims to ensure consistency in the way we co-ordinate drought management across England. It sets out:

- how drought affects different parts of England;
- who is involved in managing drought and how we work together;
- how we and others take action to manage drought;
- how we monitor and measure the impacts of drought to advise senior management and government on the prospects and possible action; and
- how we report on drought and communicate with others.

B.186 [The Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations \(2016\)](#) provides for the designation of land as nitrate vulnerable zones and imposes annual limits on the

amount of nitrogen from organic manure that may be applied or spread in a holding in a nitrate vulnerable zone. The Regulations also specify the amount of nitrogen to be spread on a crop and how, where and when to spread nitrogen fertiliser, and how it should be stored. It also establishes closed periods during which the spreading of nitrogen fertiliser is prohibited.

B.187 [The Water Supply \(Water Quality\) Regulations \(2016\)](#) focus on the quality of water for drinking, washing, cooking and food preparation, and for food production. Their purpose is to protect human health from the adverse effects of any contamination of water intended for human consumption by ensuring it is wholesome and clean.

B.188 [The Environmental Permitting Regulations \(2016\)](#) streamlines the legislative system for industrial and waste installations into a single permitting structure for those activities which have the potential to cause harm to human health or the environment. They set out how to prevent or, where that is not practicable, to reduce emissions into air, water and land and to prevent the generation of waste, in order to achieve a high level of protection of the environment and human health.

B.189 [The Water White Paper \(2012\)](#) sets out the Government's vision for the water sector including proposals on protecting water resources and reforming the water supply industry. It states outlines the measures that will be taken to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystem, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources.

B.190 [The National Policy Statement for Waste Water \(2012\)](#) sets out Government policy for the provision of major waste water infrastructure. The policy set out in this NPS is, for the most part, intended to make existing policy and practice in consenting nationally significant waste water infrastructure clearer and more transparent.

B.191 [The Flood and Water Management Act 2010](#) and [The Flood and Water Regulations \(2019\)](#) sets out measures to ensure that risk from all sources of flooding is managed more effectively. This includes incorporating greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings; utilising the environment in order to reduce flooding; identifying areas suitable for inundation and water storage to reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere; rolling back development in coastal areas to avoid damage from flooding or coastal erosion; and creating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

B.192 [The Groundwater \(England and Wales\) Regulations \(2009\)](#) implements in England and Wales Community legislation on pollution of groundwater. They provide rules for the granting by the Environment Agency of a permit under these Regulations, consent under section 91(8) of the Water Resources Act 1991 and (with exceptions) an environmental permit under the Environmental Permitting (England

and Wales) Regulations. In addition, the Regulations create an offence of discharge of a hazardous substance or non-hazardous pollutant without a permit, provide for powers of enforcement of the Environment Agency and prescribe penalties for offences committed under these Regulations.

B.193 [The Flood Risk Regulations \(2009\)](#) outline a set of tasks, which the county council is required to follow between now and approximately 2015. The regulations also implement the 2007 EU Floods Directive. In accordance with the regulations the council has a series of new responsibilities, these are:

- The preparation of a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) Report, including the identification of flood risk areas
- The preparation of Flood Hazard Maps and Flood Risk Maps
- The preparation of Flood Risk Management Plans
- Cooperating with the Environment Agency and other Lead Local Flood Authorities.

B.194 [The Future Water: The Government's Water Strategy for England \(2008\)](#) sets out how the Government wants the water sector to look by 2030, providing an outline of steps which need to be taken to get there. These steps include improving the supply of water; agreeing on important new infrastructure such as reservoirs; proposals to time limit abstraction licences; and reducing leakage. The document also states that pollution to rivers will be tackled, whilst discharge from sewers will be reduced.

B.195 The Government's strategic direction for biodiversity presented in [Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services \(2011\)](#) includes the following priority actions with respect to water management:

- Priority action 3.6: Align measures to protect the water environment with action for biodiversity, including through the river basin planning approach under the EU Water Framework Directive
- Priority action 3.7: Continue to promote approaches to flood and erosion management which conserve the natural environment and improve biodiversity
- Priority action 3.8: Reform the water abstraction regime. The new regime will provide clearer signals to abstractors to make the necessary investments to meet water needs and protect ecosystem functioning. We will also take steps to tackle the legacy of unsustainable abstraction more efficiently

B.196 [The Environmental Protection Act 1990](#) makes provision for the improved control of pollution to the air, water and land by regulating the management of waste

and the control of emissions. Seeks to ensure that decisions pertaining to the environment are made in an integrated manner, in collaboration with appropriate authorities, non-governmental organisations and other persons.

Local

B.197 [The Poole Harbour and Dorset Stour Catchment Strategy 2022 – 2027 \(2022\)](#) sets out the high level priorities and ambition of the Dorset Stour Catchment Partnerships for the next five years to 2027. The vision for the partnerships is that:

“Dorset’s river catchments are sustainably healthy, resilient and safe for people and wildlife.”

B.198 The Strategy cites the following strategic priorities for Dorset’s catchments:

- **Upper catchments:** Focus on reducing nutrient and sediment runoff from agriculture to improve water quality, enhance hydrological connectivity, and reduce flood risk.
- **Middle catchments:** Prioritise restoring natural river processes and protecting river corridors, which also helps reduce pollution and improve habitats.
- **Lower catchments:** Engage local communities to understand their connection with rivers and estuaries, promote awareness of healthy river systems, and build support for ongoing efforts.
- **Across all catchments:** Make habitat restoration a central theme, especially to boost habitat connectivity and combat invasive species.
- **Partnership efforts:** Strengthen the evidence base through monitoring, data sharing, and exploration of new techniques like natural capital approaches.

B.199 [The South West river basin management plan: updated 2022 \(2022\)](#) describes the challenges that threaten the water environment and how these challenges can be managed. The plan identifies key challenges affecting the region's water bodies, including pollution from agriculture and wastewater, physical modifications to watercourses, over-abstraction of water, and the impacts of climate change. It sets environmental objectives for rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal waters, and groundwater, aiming to achieve or maintain good ecological and chemical status.

B.200 The [Poole Harbour Consent Order Technical Investigation and Recommendations \(2022\)](#) updates the Poole Harbour Nutrient Management Plan to deliver the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and Protected Area objectives. The

report acknowledges the ‘moderate’ overall WFD status of Poole Harbour, outlining updated evidence and future targets to reduce the nutrient load entering the Harbour, including land reversion and reduced stocking.

B.201 [The Water Action Plan \(2021\)](#) outlines the need to significantly reduce water demand and waste in the authority area and manage water resources in a way that eliminates emissions and ensures long-term sustainability by 2050. The Plan recommends 16 specific actions, with initial targets set for 2023 to ensure that progress stays on track.

B.202 The [Poole Harbour Recreation Supplementary Planning Document \(2020\)](#), adopted in 2020, seeks to mitigate the impact of new development from recreational activities by taking financial contributions from development and using this to provide mitigation measures, including:

- Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMMS): further surveys and monitoring, wardens/rangers, awareness raising projects, and developing an Access Management Plan; and
- Poole Harbour Infrastructure Projects (PHIP): Projects to manage visitor access and minimise disturbance, including for example the provision of alternative access around the Poole Harbour shoreline. Could potentially include Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG).

B.203 [The River Basin Management Plan Part 1: South West River Basin District \(2015\)](#) aims to provide a framework for protecting and enhancing the benefits provided by the water environment, partly by informing decisions on land-use planning. The plan aims to meet the objectives of the **Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)**, including the following:

- to prevent deterioration of the status of surface waters and groundwater;
- to achieve objectives and standards for protected areas;
- to aim to achieve good status for all water bodies or, for heavily modified water bodies and artificial water bodies, good ecological potential and good surface water chemical status;
- to reverse any significant and sustained upward trends in pollutant concentrations in groundwater;
- the cessation of discharges, emissions and losses of priority hazardous substances into surface waters; and
- progressively reduce the pollution of groundwater and prevent or limit the entry of pollutants.

B.204 [The Poole Harbour Catchment Initiative Catchment Plan \(update\) \(2014\) aims](#) to protect and restore the groundwater, rivers and Poole Harbour, and contains the following visions:

- Sustainable farming, development, water use and sewage treatment that supports healthy rivers and groundwater in the Poole Harbour catchment;
- Recognition of the ecosystem services that the catchment can provide and adequate payment to those that manage the land to provide these services;
- Improvements to biodiversity habitats both in the form of naturally functioning rivers, floodplains and wetlands and appropriately located woodland and low-input grassland; and
- Achievement of national environmental standards for the benefit of wildlife and users of these waters and Poole Harbour.

Baseline information

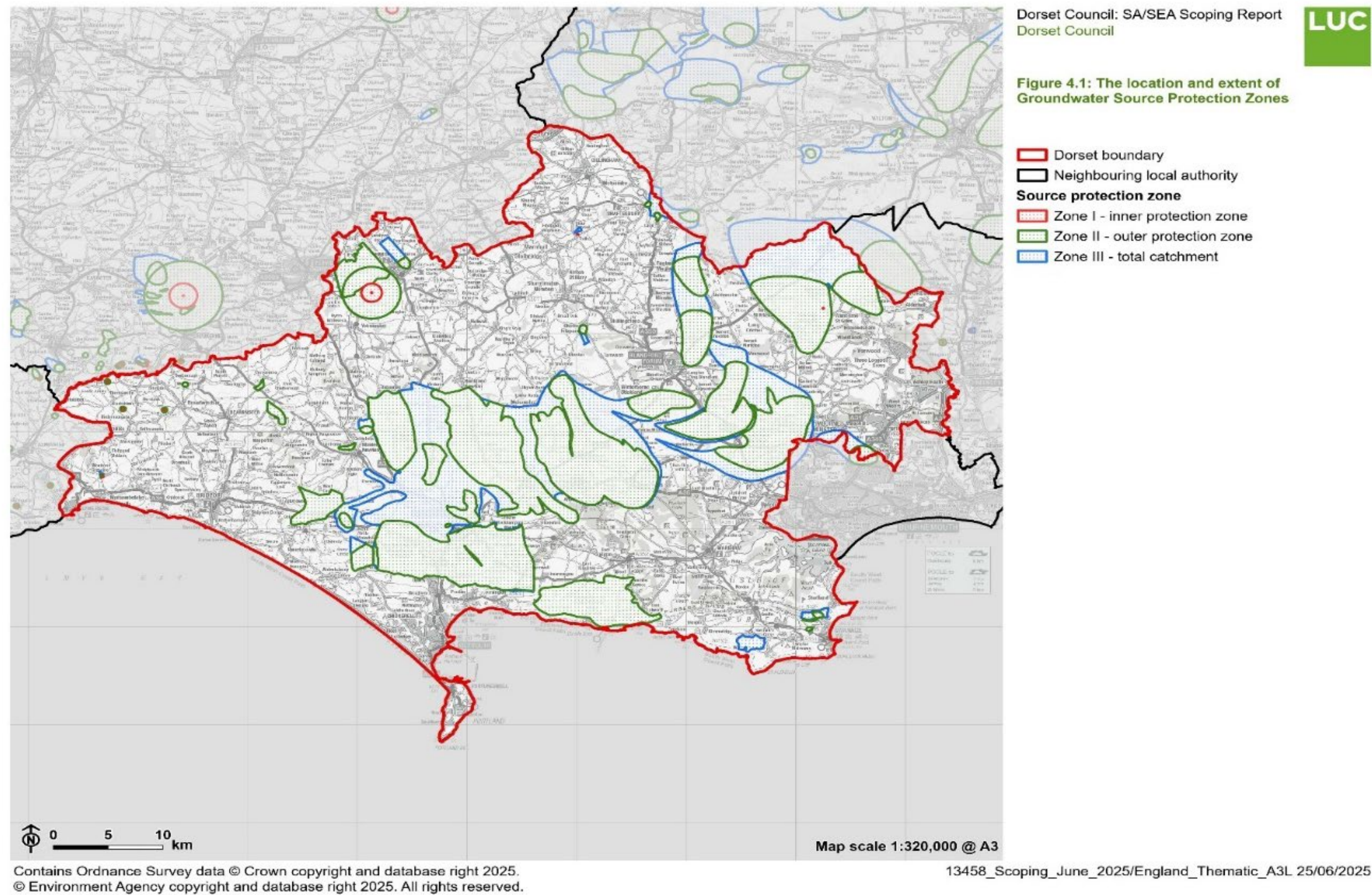
B.205 The most vulnerable groundwater sources to pollution within the plan area have been defined by the Environment Agency as Groundwater Source Protection Zones.

B.206 Groundwater Source Protection Zones show the risk of contamination from any activities that might cause pollution. The extent of Groundwater Source Protection Areas depend on ground conditions, groundwater abstraction techniques and other environmental factors.

B.207 Zone 1 denotes the most vulnerable areas, where there is just a 50 day travel time from any point below the water table to the source. Within a Zone 2 area, the travel time is 400 days from a point below the water table to the source. A Zone 3 area is defined as the area around a source within which all the groundwater recharge is discharged at the source.

B.208 The Groundwater Source Protection Areas are largely located across the central section of the Dorset Council Local Plan area. This reflects the geology of the area, as a vast swath of chalk runs from northeast to southwest across the central parts of the plan area (Figure B.9).

Figure B.9: The location and extent of Groundwater Source Protection Zones within the Dorset Council Local Plan area



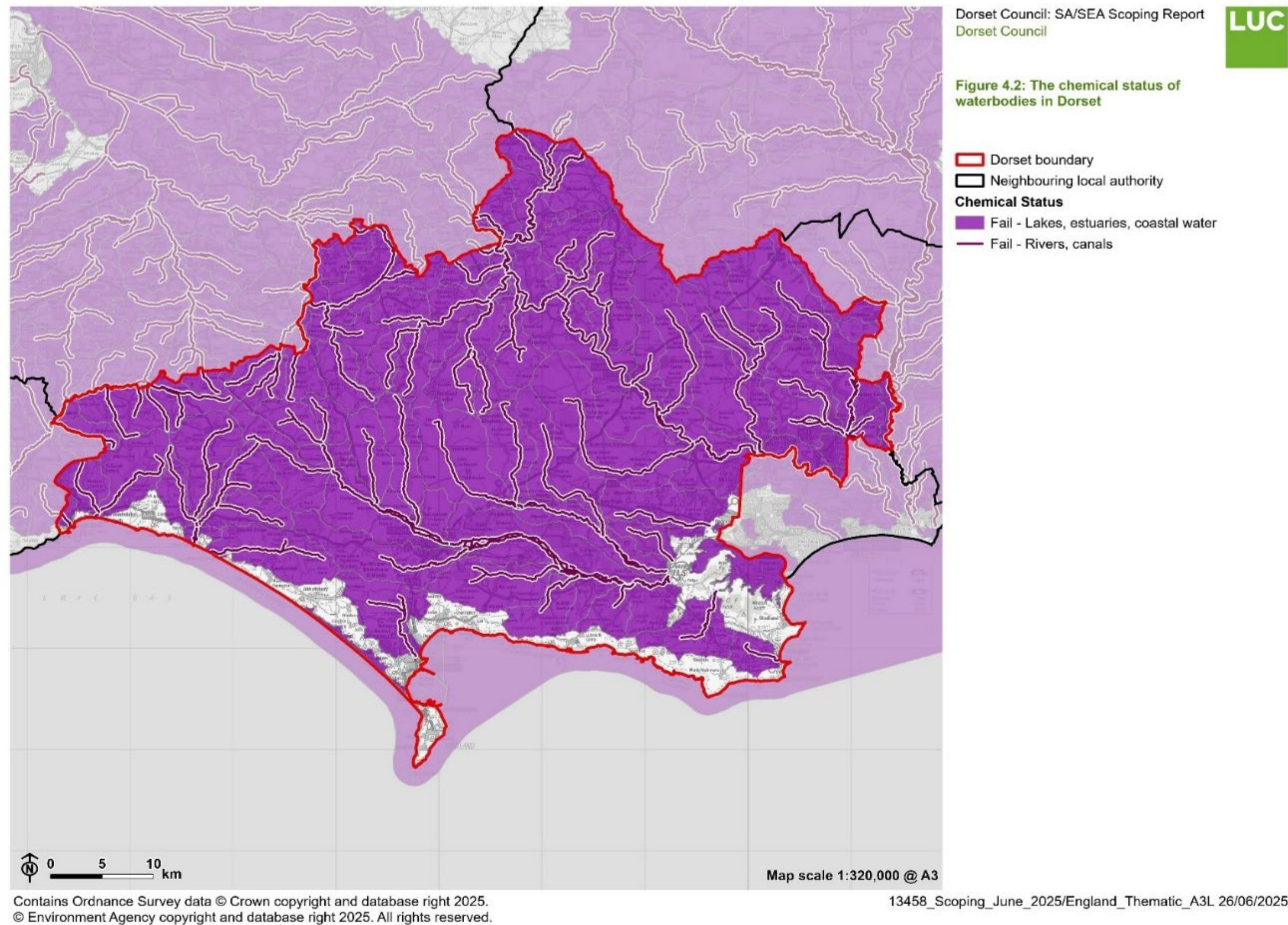
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B.209 The River Basin Management Plan Part 1: South West river basin district (2015) provides information on the chemical, quantitative and ecological status of water bodies within Dorset. This has subsequently been updated by the Environment Agency's 2019 water cycle study , which demonstrates that all 68 waterbodies in the Dorset management Catchment failed to meet [chemical status standards](#). The 2019 water cycle study introduces a revised methodology for evaluating chemical conditions in England's rivers. Prior to this, Dorset's catchments were classified as being in 'Good Chemical Condition'. However, the updated approach incorporates biota sampling alongside water quality analysis, targeting persistent and environmentally harmful substances—many of which are legacy industrial pollutants now banned. While these chemicals are not thought to be present in significant quantities within [Dorset's catchments](#), the expanded testing criteria led to the reclassification .

B.210 All water bodies in the Stour and Poole Harbour catchments are now rated as 'moderate' (a fail status) for chemical condition, primarily due to exceedances of:

- **Mercury and its compounds** (likely from atmospheric deposition from sources in Europe); and
- **Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs)** (formerly used in flame-retardant foams, entering catchments via atmospheric deposition and wastewater treatment).

Figure B.10: The chemical status of water bodies in Dorset

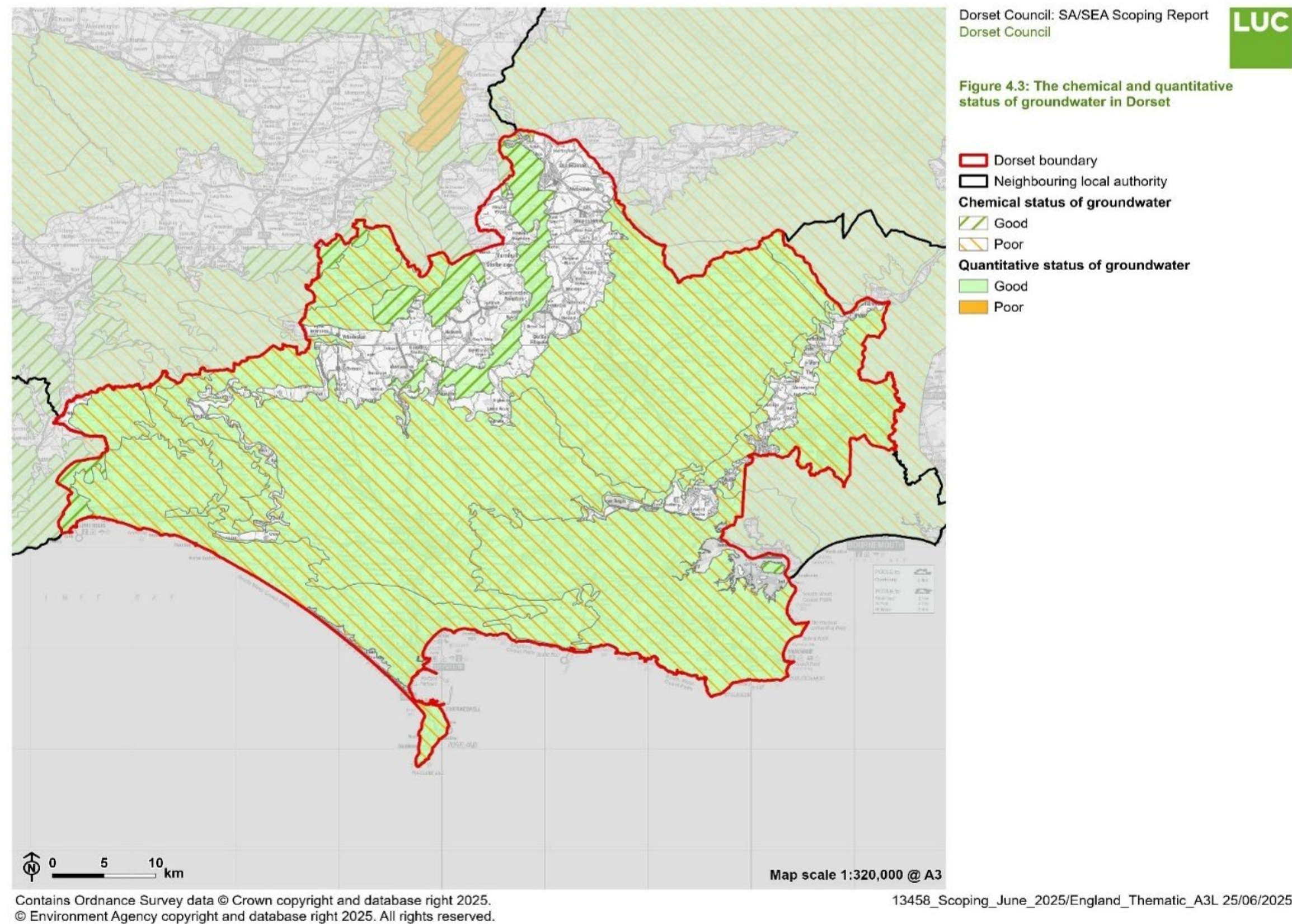


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B.211 The quantitative and chemical status of the groundwater in Dorset is presented in Figure B.11 below. The chemical status of the groundwater within the plan area is mainly classified as 'poor', with some areas classified as 'good' in the west of the plan area. The quantitative status of the groundwater in the plan area, defined as the amount of groundwater available, is classified as 'good' except for some northern and central parts of the plan area.

B.212 Nitrate and phosphorus from agriculture is too high across the catchments, leading to eutrophic waters, rising nitrate levels in groundwater used for public supply, and algal mats, particularly in Poole Harbour, where nitrate levels are a primary concern. [Phosphorus levels are a driver for action in the Stour, as well as levels of nitrate in groundwater used for public supply.](#)

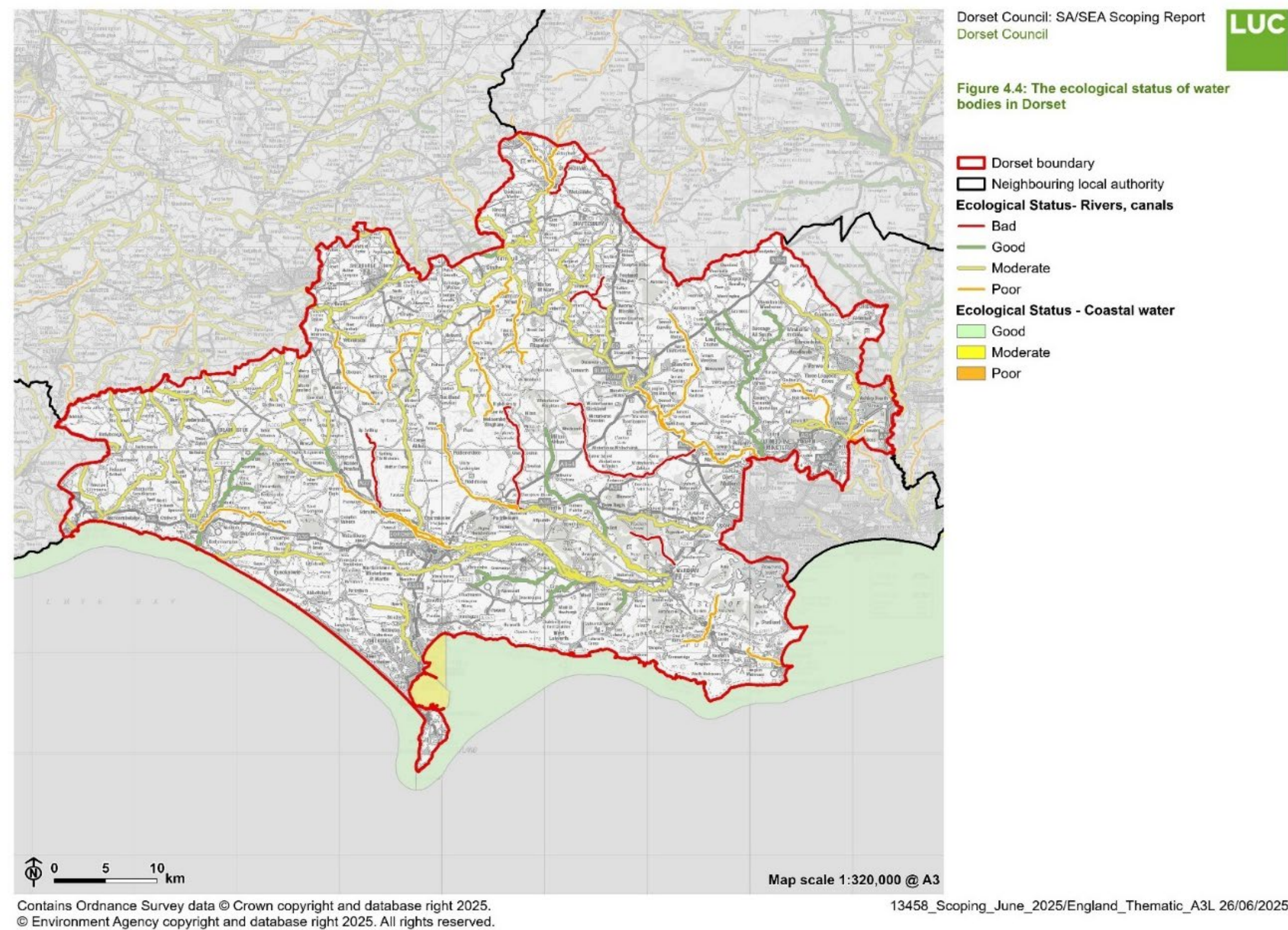
Figure B.11: The chemical and quantitative status of groundwater in Dorset



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B.213 Of the 68 waterbodies assessed in Dorset, only 12 achieved 'good' ecological status, with [33 classified as 'moderate', 17 as 'poor', and 6 failing](#) . The primary pressure preventing many waterbodies from reaching good status is agricultural activity, particularly inadequate nutrient management. This is most evident in the Poole Harbour and Stour catchments, where [28 waterbodies are adversely affected by nutrient pollution from farming practices](#) .

Figure B.12: The ecological status of water bodies in Dorset



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B.214 The Environment Agency and Wessex Water have highlighted the issue of groundwater inundation into the sewerage network within the Dorset Council Local Plan area.

B.215 The infiltration of groundwater into the foul drainage network can cause them to become inundated with water. If left unmanaged, this can cause the drains to fail leading to pollution and a deterioration in groundwater quality or can cause foul drainage sewers to flood in downstream properties.

B.216 Groundwater inundation within the Dorset Plan Area is a particular issue to the south of Blandford Forum, to the southwest and north of Dorchester, Yetminster, and within the Piddle Valley.

Sustainability issues

B.217 The key environmental issues relating to water include:

- The ecological and chemical status of most of the water bodies in Dorset are classified as 'poor' or 'bad'. Further deterioration of the chemical, quantitative, and ecological status of the water environment could potentially occur as a result of development, for example through the input of nutrients, pollution and a change in land use; and
- Large areas across the central section of the Dorset Council Local Plan area are classified as groundwater source protection zones. These areas are important for supplying drinking water and therefore the consequences of pollution in these areas are more significant. New development could result in pollution and land use change, compromising the drinking water quality in these areas;
- The infiltration of groundwater into the sewer network, particularly following a rainfall event, may cause it to become inundated with flood water. This can lead to flows of sewerage from the foul drain leading to pollution and a deterioration in water quality generally. This is an issue in some areas of the Dorset Council Local Plan, including those areas to the south of Blandford Forum, to the southwest and north of Dorchester, Yetminster, and within the Piddle Valley.
- The quantitative status of the central parts of the plan area is classified as 'poor'. New development could affect the quantity of groundwater, for example through changes in the drainage characteristics of the area and abstraction from rivers and lakes

5. Air

B.218 Air quality is a measure of the degree of how polluted the air is. Air pollution comprises a mix of particles and gases. The major components of urban air pollution are particulate matter (PM) which are a complex mixture of solid and liquid particles of varying size and composition, and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) a gas produced by combustion processes from vehicle emissions, power generation and industrial processes.

B.219 There are many sources of air pollution, both natural and man-made. These sources of air pollution include industrial processes, agriculture, vehicle exhaust emissions, energy generation and household heating systems involving gas and wood burners.

B.220 According to Clean Air Strategy 2019', Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2019, poor air quality poses the greatest environmental risk to public health in the UK. Exposure to air pollution increases the risk of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases and may exacerbate existing conditions such as asthma. It is estimated that long term exposure to air pollution in the UK has the effect of 28,000 to 36,000 deaths a year (according to Health Matters: Air Pollution', Public Health England, 14th November 2018). Evidence suggests that areas of poor air quality are also more prevalent in less affluent areas (Environmental equity, air quality, socioeconomic status and respiratory health', undertaken by AEA Technology on behalf of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2010).

B.221 Air pollution also has widespread environmental impacts, affecting the health of plants and animals and compromising biodiversity. Since many air pollutants are also greenhouse gases, poor air quality contributes to climate change and the associated far-reaching impacts which are explored in Chapter 6.

B.222 From a financial perspective, it is estimated that nationally, the total cost for the NHS and social care system will be £1.6 billion between 2017 and 2025 for air pollutants ([fine particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide](#)). In addition, air pollution may result in a decrease in agricultural productivity, leading to reduced crop yields and an adverse economic effect.

Key messages from other plans, programmes and objectives

International

B.223 [The Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace \(COP28 Declaration\) \(2023\)](#) is an international agreement which seeks to address the complex challenges posed by climate change, particularly in the most vulnerable regions. Although non-binding and outside the formal UNFCCC negotiations, this declaration unites the concerns and proposed solutions of countries and institutions across humanitarian, development, climate, and peace sectors. It aims to urgently enhance climate resilience in vulnerable communities that are most affected by climate-related conflicts and crises.

B.224 [The Convention on Biological Diversity \(2022\)](#) COP15 Kunming-Montreal adopted the “Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework” (GBF), including four goals and 23 targets for achievement by 2030.

B.225 [The Glasgow Pact \(UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2021\)](#) The package of decisions consists of a range of agreed items, including strengthened efforts to build resilience to climate change, to curb greenhouse gas emissions and to provide the necessary finance for both. Nations reaffirmed their duty to fulfil the pledge of providing \$100 billion annually from developed to developing countries. And they collectively agreed to work to reduce the gap between existing emission reduction plans and what is required to reduce emissions. They also agreed to phase down unabated coal power and inefficient subsidies for fossil fuels.

B.226 [United Nations Declaration on Forests and Land Use \(COP26 Declaration\) \(2021\)](#) is an international commitment to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 while delivering sustainable development and promoting an inclusive rural transformation.

B.227 [The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development \(2015\)](#) adopted by all United Nations Member States, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet and includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), designed to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.

B.228 [The United Nations Paris Climate Change Agreement \(2015\)](#) is an international agreement to keep global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

National

B.229 [The National Planning Policy Framework \(2024\)](#) (NPPF) states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued soil and the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Policies should also prevent new and existing development from “contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution.”

B.230 The document also requires that strategic policies should seek to make the most effective use of land in meeting local requirements making as much use as possible of previously developed or ‘brownfield’ land. Furthermore, policies should “support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land”.

B.231 The [Air quality strategy for England \(2023\)](#) sets out local authorities powers and responsibilities as well as the actions that Defra expects local authorities to take in support of the governments long-term air quality goals, including new PM2.5 targets.

B.232 [Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain \(2021\)](#) ([Decarbonising Transport Plan \(DTP\)](#)) sets out the Government’s commitments and the actions needed to decarbonise the entire transport system in the UK. It follows on from the Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge report published in 2020. The DTP commits the UK to phasing out the sale of new diesel and petrol heavy goods vehicles by 2040, subject to consultation, in addition to phasing out the sale of polluting cars and vans by 2035. The DPT also sets out how the government will improve public transport and increase support for active travel, as well as creating a net zero rail network by 2050, ensuring net zero domestic aviation emissions by 2040, and a transition to green shipping.

B.233 [The Environment Act](#) 2021 sets statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world in four priority areas: air quality, biodiversity, water, and resource efficiency and waste reduction. It also establishes the Office for Environmental Protection which will act as an impartial and objective body for the protection and improvement of the environment. The Act sets out legislation which covers local air quality management frameworks and the recall of motor vehicles.

B.234 [Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge \(2020\)](#) sets out the strategic priorities for the new Transport Decarbonisation Plan (TDP), published in July 2021. It sets out in detail what government, business and society will need to do to deliver the significant emissions reduction needed across all modes of transport, putting us

on a pathway to achieving carbon budgets and net zero emissions across every single mode of transport by 2050. This document acknowledges that while there have been recently published strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in individual transport modes, transport as a whole sector needs to go further and more quickly, therefore the TDP takes a coordinated, cross-modal approach to deliver the transport sector's contribution to both carbon budgets and net zero.

B.235 [Jet Zero Strategy Delivering net zero aviation by 2050 \(2020\)](#) aims to reduce in-sector emissions from aviation by around 50% by 2050. The strategy is underpinned by three principles:

- International leadership: Leading coordinated global efforts to tackle international aviation emissions, including through ongoing work in the International Civil Aviation Organization.
- Delivered in partnership: Working with all parts of the sector and different partners to develop, test, implement and invest in the solutions needed.
- Maximising opportunities: Using the opportunity of the Jet Zero transition to boost the economy, create new jobs, develop new industries, and become a more energy secure nation.

B.236 The Government's [Clean Air Strategy 2019 \(2019\)](#) sets out the Government's intention to tackle all sources of air pollution, making our air healthier to breathe, protecting nature and boosting the economy. The strategy aims achieve this by driving down the national emissions of pollutants, reducing background pollution, and minimising human exposure to harmful concentrations of pollution. The strategy sets the following targets for reducing emissions against a 2005 baseline:

- particulate matter by 30% by 2020 and 46% by 2030;
- ammonia by 8% by 2020 and 16% by 2030;
- nitrogen oxides by 55% by 2020 and by 73% by 2030; and
- sulphur dioxide by 59% by 2020, and by 88% by 2030.

B.237 [The Road to Zero \(2018\)](#) sets out new measures towards cleaner road transport, aiming to put the UK at the forefront of the design and manufacturing of zero emission vehicles. It explains how cleaner air, a better environment, zero emission vehicles and a strong, clean economy will be achieved. One of the main aims of the document is for all new cars and vans to be effectively zero emission by 2040.

B.238 [The Transport Investment Strategy 2017](#) sets out four objectives that the strategy aims to achieve:

- Create a more reliable, less congested, and better connected transport network that works for the users who rely on it;
- Build a stronger, more balanced economy by enhancing productivity and responding to local growth priorities;
- Enhance our global competitiveness by making Britain a more attractive place to trade and invest; and
- Support the creation of new housing.

B.239 [UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations \(2017\)](#) sets out the Government's ambition and actions for delivering a better environment and cleaner air, including £1 billion investment in ultra-low emission vehicles, a £290 million National Productivity Investment Fund, a £11 million Air Quality Grant Fund and £255 million Implementation Fund to help Local Authorities to prepare Air Quality Action Plans and improve air quality, an £89 million Green Bus Fund, £1.2 billion Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy and £100 million to help improve air quality on the National road network.

B.240 [A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment \(2018\)](#), also known as the 25 Year Environment Plan, sets out the UK government action to help the natural world regain and retain good health. The plan sets a series of goals for improving the environment within a generation and leaving it in a better state than we found it, and includes the following actions relating to achieving clean air:

- meeting legally binding targets to reduce emissions of five damaging air pollutants; this should halve the effects of air pollution on health by 2030
- ending the sale of new conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2040
- maintaining the continuous improvement in industrial emissions by building on existing good practice and the successful regulatory framework

B.241 The 25 year plan states that the Government will make sure that chemicals are safely used and managed, and that the levels of harmful chemicals entering the environment (including through agriculture) are significantly reduced by reducing land-based emissions of mercury to air by 50% by 2030.

B.242 [The Environmental Permitting Regulations \(2016\)](#) streamline the legislative system for industrial and waste installations into a single permitting structure for those activities which have the potential to cause harm to human health or the environment. They set out how to prevent or, where that is not practicable, to reduce emissions into air, water and land and to prevent the generation of waste, in order to achieve a high level of protection of the environment and human health.

B.243 [The Air Quality Standards Regulations \(2016\)](#) set out limits on concentrations of outdoor air pollutants that impact public health, most notably particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) and nitrogen dioxide (NO2). It also sets out the procedure and requirements for the designation of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs).

B.244 The Government's strategic direction for biodiversity, titled [Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services \(2011\)](#), includes the following priority actions with respect to air quality and its effects on biodiversity:

- Reduce air pollution impacts on biodiversity through approaches at national, UK, EU and international levels targeted at the sectors which are the source of the relevant pollutants (nitrogen oxides, ozone, sulphur dioxide, ammonia).

B.245 [The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland \(2007\)](#) sets out a way forward for work and planning on air quality issues by setting out the air quality standards and objectives to be achieved. It introduces a new policy framework for tackling fine particles and identifies potential new national policy measures which modelling indicates could give further health benefits and move closer towards meeting the Strategy's objectives. The objectives of the strategy are to:

- Further improve air quality in the UK from today and long term; and
- Provide benefits to health quality of life and the environment.

B.246 [The Environmental Noise Regulations 2006](#) require regular noise mapping and action planning for road, rail and aviation noise and noise in large urban areas. They also require Noise Action Plans based on the maps for road and rail noise and noise in large urban areas. The Action Plans identify Important Areas (areas exposed to the highest levels of noise) and suggest ways the relevant authorities can reduce these. Major airports and those which affect large urban areas are also required to produce and publish their own Noise Action Plans separately. The Regulations do not apply to noise from domestic activities such as noise created by neighbours; at workplaces; inside means of transport; or military activities in military areas.

B.247 [The Environmental Protection Act 1990](#) makes provision for the improved control of pollution to the air, water and land by regulating the management of waste and the control of emissions. Seeks to ensure that decisions pertaining to the environment are made in an integrated manner, in collaboration with appropriate authorities, non-governmental organisations and other persons.

Baseline information

B.248 According to 'Clean Air Strategy 2019' (by Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2019), the only statutory target for air pollution which the UK are currently failing to meet is with respect to roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations. This is reflected in local air quality monitoring for Dorset, which indicates that nitrogen dioxide targets in some parts of the plan area are not being met.

B.249 Prior to the establishment of Dorset Council in April 2019, the individual councils published separate local air quality reports to fulfil their statutory duty to review and assess air quality under Part IV of the Environment Act 1985. In 2020, the former local authority areas were amalgamated into one report.

B.250 [The Dorset Council Air Quality Annual Status Report](#) indicates that the main source of air pollution in the authority area is NO₂, generated as a result of road traffic. Consequently, two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) were declared, relating to emissions from motorised vehicles.

B.251 The AQMAs are outlined below and illustrated in Figure B.13.

- Chideock AQMA; and
- Dorchester AQMA (revoked in March 2025).

B.252 The main pollutant of concern in the authority area is NO₂. Air quality monitoring over 2023 demonstrates a decrease in pollutant concentrations compared to 2022, and remaining below pre-pandemic 2019 levels. However, some exceedances of NO₂ were recorded within the Chideok AQMA, occurring at two sites within Chideok Hill, although are displaying a decrease compared within 2022 concentrations.

B.253 Dorchester AQMA was revoked in March 2025, due to sites remaining at least 10% below the minimum objective.

B.254 Additionally, air quality in both the former East Dorset and Purbeck districts remains very good, with no identified AQMAs areas for concern, exceedances, or sites within 10% of the air quality objective. Further to this, across four sites in Dorset, there were no recorded exceedances of the PM₁₀ annual mean objective, and all sites remain below the future 2040 target of 10µg/m³.

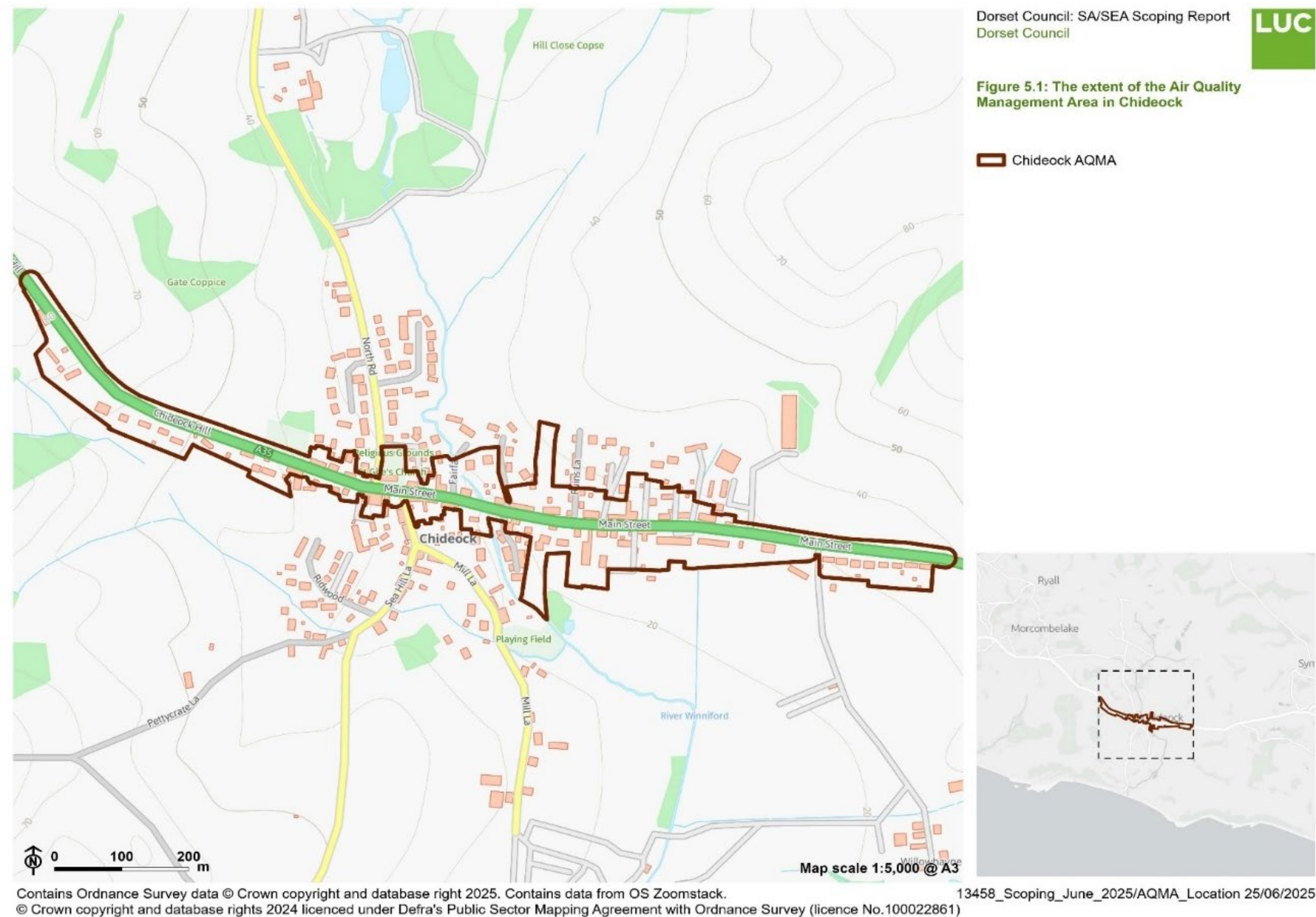
Neighbouring AQMAs

B.255 The Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) urban area lies at the heart of the South East Dorset functional area, and although sits largely outside the Dorset

Council area, its proximity to Dorset Council's administrative boundary means that air pollution from the conurbation may still affect parts of Dorset.

B.256 BCP Council previously had three AQMAs due to NO₂ concerns. However, these have all been revoked following significant [reductions in traffic-related emissions](#). This improvement in the adjacent urban area contributes positively to Dorset's overall air quality profile.

Figure B.13: A map showing the extent of the Air Quality Management Area in Chideock



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Sustainability issues

B.257 The key environmental issues relating to air are:

- Air pollution as a result of industrial processes, agriculture, vehicle exhaust emissions, energy generation and household heating systems involving gas and wood burners are causing widespread environmental and health problems; and
- Vehicle emissions resulting in elevated concentrations of nitrogen dioxide both nationally, as the UK are failing to meet their statutory target, and locally in Chideock.

6. Climatic Factors

B.258 Climate change is the long term variation in expected weather patterns as a result of the growing concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

B.259 Human activities since the start of the industrial revolution are largely attributed to causing the spike in the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and the corresponding change in global climate. The majority of global greenhouse emissions are from the combustion of fossil fuels such as oil, coal and natural gas for energy and heat production (25%). Other significant human activities include deforestation, changes in land use and agriculture which contributes to 24% of global emissions (Source: Boden, T.A., Marland, G., and Andres, R.J. (2017). Global Fossil-Fuel CO₂ Emissions. U.S. Department of Energy).

B.260 Greenhouse gases absorb energy and emit it as thermal energy, causing a warming effect known as the greenhouse effect. Water vapour makes the highest contribution to the greenhouse gas effect, followed by carbon dioxide, then methane.

B.261 Climate projections suggest an increased chance of milder, wetter winters and hot, drier summers along with an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme events in the UK. (Source: 2 UK Climate Projections 2018 (UKCP18). Met Office Hadley Centre Climate Programme, Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).)

B.262 The possible environment, social and economic impacts of climate change are complex, far reaching and potentially catastrophic. It has been reported that climate change may cause the widespread extinction of species, global famine and the collapse of the global economy. Immediate and ambitious action may be needed to

reduce the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and address the climate change issue, which has been acknowledged by the declaration of a climate emergency nationally by the UK Parliament and locally by Dorset Council.

B.263 Since there is approximately a 40 year lag in the atmosphere between the cause and effect, a degree of future climate change is inevitable, irrespective of what action is taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions now. Carefully planning is needed to adapt and avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from future climate change.

Key messages from other plans, programmes and objectives

International

B.264 [The Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace \(COP28 Declaration\) \(2023\)](#) is an international agreement which seeks to address the complex challenges posed by climate change, particularly in the most vulnerable regions. Although non-binding and outside the formal UNFCCC negotiations, this declaration unites the concerns and proposed solutions of countries and institutions across humanitarian, development, climate, and peace sectors. It aims to urgently enhance climate resilience in vulnerable communities that are most affected by climate-related conflicts and crises.

B.265 [The Convention on Biological Diversity \(2022\)](#). COP15 Kunming-Montreal adopted the “Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework” (GBF), including four goals and 23 targets for achievement by 2030.

B.266 [The Glasgow Pact \(UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2021\)](#). The package of decisions consists of a range of agreed items, including strengthened efforts to build resilience to climate change, to curb greenhouse gas emissions and to provide the necessary finance for both. Nations reaffirmed their duty to fulfil the pledge of providing \$100 billion annually from developed to developing countries. And they collectively agreed to work to reduce the gap between existing emission reduction plans and what is required to reduce emissions. They also agreed to phase down unabated coal power and inefficient subsidies for fossil fuels.

B.267 [United Nations Declaration on Forests and Land Use \(COP26 Declaration\) \(2021\)](#) is an international commitment to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 while delivering sustainable development and promoting an inclusive rural transformation.

B.268 [The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development \(2015\)](#), adopted by all United Nations Member States, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet and includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), designed to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.

B.269 [The United Nations Paris Climate Change Agreement \(2015\)](#) is an international agreement to keep global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

National

B.270 [The National Planning Policy Framework \(2024\)](#) (NPPF) contains as part of its environmental objective a requirement to mitigate and adapt to climate change, “including moving to a low carbon economy”. The document also states that the “planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change.” To achieve these aims new development should be planned to ensure appropriate adaptation measures are included (including green infrastructure) and should be designed, located and orientated as to help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

B.271 The revised framework also requires that development is directed away from areas which are at highest existing or future risk of flooding. Where development is required in such areas, the “development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.”

B.272 In relation to coastal change in England planning policies and decisions should take account of the UK Marine Policy Statement and marine plans. Furthermore, plans should “reduce risk from coastal change by avoiding inappropriate development in vulnerable areas and not exacerbating the impacts of physical changes to the coast”.

B.273 [The Clean Power 2030 Action Plan \(2024\)](#) aims to secure a fully clean electricity system by 2030, enhancing energy security, reducing fossil fuel reliance, and cutting emissions. It focuses on expanding renewables, improving grid infrastructure, accelerating planning, and fostering investment through Great British Energy. Flexible energy solutions like battery storage and hydrogen aim to support stability, while regulatory reforms aim to lower consumer bills. With £40 billion in annual investment, the plan aims to drive economic growth, job creation, and long-term sustainability, as well as position the UK as a leader in renewable energy and advancing the net-zero transition.

B.274 [The Policy Statement on Onshore Wind \(2024\)](#) outlines a commitment to double onshore wind energy capacity by 2030. To achieve this, the policy removes previous planning restrictions specific to onshore wind projects in England, placing them on equal footing with other energy developments within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This change aims to boost Britain's energy independence, reduce energy bills, support high-skilled jobs, and address the climate crisis. The government also plans to consult on incorporating large onshore wind proposals into the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project regime to expedite their approval process.

B.275 [The State of the UK Climate \(2024\)](#) is the tenth in the annual series of reports that provide a summary of the UK weather and climate through the calendar year 2023, alongside the historical context for a number of essential climate variables. It provides an accessible, authoritative and up-to-date assessment of UK climate trends, variations and extremes based on the most up to date observational datasets of climate quality.

B.276 [The Carbon Budget Delivery Plan \(2023\)](#) explains how the Government intends to meet its legally-binding climate goals, setting out a package of quantified and unquantified proposals and policies, and associated timescales and delivery risks this also includes:

- wider matters in connection with carbon budgets
- the contribution of these proposals and policies to sustainable development
- the impact the package has on sectors of the economy

B.277 [Powering up Britain \(2023\)](#) sets out the department's approach to energy security and net zero, and acts as an introduction to Powering Up Britain: Energy Security Plan and Powering Up Britain: Net Zero Growth Plan.

B.278 [The Net Zero Growth Plan \(2023\)](#) outlines the Government's plans to reach net zero and unlock the financial benefits that this can bring.

B.279 [The Environment Improvement Plan 2023](#) for England is the first revision of the 25YEP – it builds on the 25YEP vision with a new plan setting out how they will work with landowners, communities and businesses to deliver each of our goals for improving the environment, matched with interim targets to measure progress. Taking these actions will help us restore nature, reduce environmental pollution, and increase the prosperity of our country.

B.280 [The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022](#) outlines the UK government and devolved administrations' position on the key climate change risks and

opportunities that the UK faces today. The risk assessment considers sixty-one UK-wide climate risks and opportunities cutting across multiple sectors of the economy and prioritises the following eight risk areas for action in the next two years:

- risks to the viability and diversity of terrestrial and freshwater habitats and species from multiple hazards
- risks to soil health from increased flooding and drought
- risks to natural carbon stores and sequestration from multiple hazards
- risks to crops, livestock and commercial trees from multiple climate hazards
- risks to supply of food, goods and vital services due to climate-related collapse of supply chains and distribution networks
- risks to people and the economy from climate-related failure of the power system
- risks to human health, wellbeing and productivity from increased exposure to heat in homes and other buildings
- multiple risks to the UK from climate change impacts overseas

B.281 [The British Energy Security Strategy \(2022\)](#) sets out how the UK will enhance its energy security, setting out plans for future deployment of wind, new nuclear, solar and hydrogen, and for supporting the production of domestic oil and gas in the nearer term. The strategy builds on the Prime Minister's 'Ten point plan for a green industrial revolution', and the 'Net zero strategy'. Key aims and commitments include:

- New commitments to supercharge clean energy and accelerate deployment, which could see 95% of Great Britain's electricity set to be low carbon by 2030.
- Supporting over 40,000 more jobs in clean industries, totalling 480,000 jobs by 2030.
- Accelerated expansion of nuclear, wind, solar, hydrogen, oil and gas, including delivering the equivalent to one nuclear reactor a year instead of one a decade.
- Offshore wind – Aim of providing up to 50GW by 2030, of which 5GW is planned to be from floating offshore wind in deeper seas. This is aimed to be underpinned by new planning reforms to cut the approval times for new offshore wind farms from 4 years to 1 year and an overall streamlining which will aims to reduce the time it takes for new projects to reach construction stages while improving the environment.

- Oil and gas – A licensing round for new North Sea oil and gas projects is planned to launch in Autumn, with a new taskforce providing bespoke support to new developments.
- Onshore wind – The Government plans to consult on developing partnerships with a limited number of supportive communities who wish to host new onshore wind infrastructure in return for guaranteed lower energy bills.
- Heat pump manufacturing – The Government aim to run a Heat Pump Investment Accelerator Competition in 2022 worth up to £30 million to make British heat pumps, with hopes to reduce demand for gas.

B.282 [The Environment Act 2021](#) sets statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world in four priority areas: air quality, biodiversity, water, and resource efficiency and waste reduction. The Environment Act will deliver:

- Long-term targets to improve air quality biodiversity, water, and waste reduction and resource efficiency.
- A target on ambient PM2.5 concentrations.
- A target to halt the decline of nature by 2030.
- Environmental Improvement Plans, including interim targets.
- A cycle of environmental monitoring and reporting.
- Environmental Principles embedded in domestic policy making.
- Office for Environmental Protection to uphold environmental law.

B.283 [The Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener \(2021\)](#) sets out policies and proposals for decarbonising all sectors of the UK economy to meet net zero targets by 2050. It sets out strategies to keep the UK on track with carbon budgets, outlines the National Determined Contribution (NDC) and sets out the vision for a decarbonised economy in 2050. Its focus includes:

- Policies and proposals for reducing emissions across the economy in key sectors (power, fuel supply and hydrogen, industry, heat and buildings, transport, natural gas and waste).
- Policies and proposals for supporting transition across the economy through innovation, green investment, green jobs, embedding net-zero in government, local climate action, empowering people and businesses, and international leadership and collaboration.

B.284 [The Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy \(2021\)](#) aims to support existing industry to decarbonise and encourage the growth of new, low carbon industries to

protect and create skilled jobs and businesses in the UK encouraging long-term investment in home-grown decarbonisation technology. The strategy builds in the Prime Minister's 10 Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution and sets out the government's vision for building a competitive, greener future for the manufacturing and construction sector and is part of the government's path to net zero by 2050. The strategy aims to reduce emissions by two-thirds in just 15 years and support up to 80,000 jobs over the next thirty years and includes measures to produce 20 terawatt hours of the UK industry's energy supply from low carbon alternatives by 2030. It also aims to introduce new rules on measuring the energy and carbon performance of the UK's largest commercial and industrial buildings, providing potential savings to businesses of around £2 billion per year in energy costs in 2030 and aiming to reduce annual carbon emissions by over 2 million tonnes – approximately 10% of their current emissions. Other key commitments within the Strategy include:

- The use of carbon pricing to drive changes in industry to focus on emissions in business and investment decisions.
- To establish a policy framework to accelerate the switch from fossil fuels to low carbon alternatives such as hydrogen, electricity, or biomass.
- New product standards, enabling manufacturers to clearly distinguish their products from high carbon competitors.
- To ensure the land planning regime is fit for building low carbon infrastructure.
- Support the skills transition so that the UK workforce benefits from the creation of new green jobs.
- An expectation that at least 3 megatons of CO₂ is captured within industry per year by 2030.
- That by 2050, there will be zero avoidable waste of materials across heavy industries.

B.285 [The Heat and Buildings Strategy \(2021\)](#) sets out the Government's plan to significantly cut carbon emissions from the UK's 30 million homes and workplaces. This strategy aims to provide a clear direction of travel for the 2020s, set out the strategic decisions that need to be taken this decade, and demonstrate how the UK plans to meet its carbon targets and remain on track for net zero by 2050. Key aims of the strategy include:

- Reduce direct emissions from public sector buildings by 75% against a 2017 baseline by the end of carbon budget 6.
- Significantly reduce energy consumption of commercial, and industrial buildings by 2030.

- Phase out the installation of new natural gas boilers beyond 2035.
- Significantly grow the supply chain for heat pumps to 2028: from installing around 35,000 hydronic heat pumps a year to a minimum market capacity of 600,000 per year by 2028.
- Reduce the costs of installing a heat pump by at least 25-50% by 2025 and to ensure heat pumps are no more expensive to buy and run than gas boilers by 2030.
- Achieve 30-fold increase in heat pumps manufactured and sold within the UK by the end of the decade.
- Grow the market for heat pumps notably via a £450 million Boiler Upgrade Scheme to support households who want to switch with £5,000 grants.
- Improve heat pump appeal by continuing to invest in research and innovation, with the £60 million Net Zero Innovation Portfolio 'Heat Pump Ready' Programme supporting the development of innovation across the sector.
- Ensure all new buildings in England are ready for Net Zero from 2025. To enable this, new standards will be introduced through legislation to ensure new homes and buildings will be fitted with low-carbon heating and high levels of energy efficiency.
- Establish large-scale trials of hydrogen for heating, including a neighbourhood trial by 2023.
- Ensure as many fuel poor homes in England, as reasonably practicable, achieve a minimum energy efficiency rating of band C by the end of 2030.
- Support social housing, low income and fuel poor households via boosting funding for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and Home Upgrade Grant, which aim to improve the energy performance of low income households' homes, support low carbon heat installations and build the green retrofitting sector to benefit all homeowners.
- Scale up low-carbon heat network deployment and to enable local areas to deploy heat network zoning – Heat Network Transformation Programme of £338 million (over 2022/23 to 2024/25).

B.286 [The UK Hydrogen Strategy \(2021\)](#) sets out the approach to developing a substantial low carbon hydrogen sector in the UK and to meet the ambition for 5GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030. The Strategy outlines the role of hydrogen in meeting net zero targets, the existing opportunity within the UK, a strategic framework, a roadmap for the economy, and the UK Government's commitments for a hydrogen economy.

B.287 [The Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations \(2021\)](#) seek to improve the energy efficiency of buildings, reducing their carbon emissions and lessening the impact of climate change. The Regulations require the adoption of a standard methodology for calculating energy performance and minimum requirements for energy performance, reported through Energy Performance Certificates and Display Energy Certificates.

B.288 [The Waste Management Plan for England \(2021\)](#) sets out the measures for England to work towards a zero waste economy.

B.289 [The Energy white paper: Powering our net zero future \(2020\)](#) builds on the Prime Minister's Ten point plan for a green industrial revolution. The white paper addresses the transformation of the UK's energy system, promoting high-skilled jobs and clean, resilient economic growth during its transition to net-zero emissions by 2050. Key aims of the paper include:

- Supporting green jobs – The government aims to support up to 220,000 jobs in the next 10 years.
- Transforming the energy system – To transform its electricity grid for net-zero, the white paper highlights how this will involve changing the way the country heats its homes, how people travel, doubling the electricity use, and harnessing renewable energy supplies.
- Keeping bills affordable – The government aims to do this by making the energy retail market “truly competitive”. This will include offering people a method of switching to a cheaper energy tariff and testing automatically switching consumers to fairer deals to tackle “loyalty penalties”.
- Generating emission-free electricity by 2050 – The government aims to have “overwhelmingly decarbonised power” in the 2030s in order to generate emission-free electricity by 2050.
- Establishing UK Emissions Trading Scheme – The government aims to establish a UK Emissions Trading Scheme (UK ETS) from 1 January 2021 to replace the current EU ETS at the end of the Brexit Transition Period.
- Exploring new nuclear financing options – The government is continuing to explore a range of financing options for new nuclear with developers including the Regulated Asset Base (RAB) funding model.
- Further commitments to offshore wind – The white paper lays out plans to scale up its offshore wind fleet to 40 gigawatts (GW) by 2030, including 1GW of floating wind, enough to power every home in the country.

- Carbon capture and storage investments – Including £1bn worth of investments in state-of-the-art CCS in four industrial clusters by 2030. With four low-carbon clusters set up by 2030, and at least one fully net-zero cluster by 2040.
- Kick-starting the hydrogen economy – The government plans to work with industry to aim for 5GW of production by 2030, backed up by a new £240m net-zero Hydrogen Fund for low-carbon hydrogen production.
- Investing in electric vehicle charge points – The government plans to invest £1.3bn to accelerate the rollout of charge points for electric vehicles as well as up to £1bn to support the electrification of cars.
- Supporting the lowest paid with their bills – The government aims to support those with lower incomes through a £6.7bn package of measures that could save families in old inefficient homes up to £400.
- Moving away from fossil fuel boilers – The government aims, by the mid-2030s, for all newly installed heating systems to be low-carbon or to be appliances that it is confident can be converted to a clean fuel supply.
- Supporting North Sea oil and gas transition – The white paper notes the importance of supporting the North Sea oil and gas transition for the people and communities most affected by the move away from fossil fuels. The government aims to achieve this by ensuring that the expertise of the oil and gas sector be drawn on in developing CCS and hydrogen production to provide new green jobs for the future.

B.290 [The National Infrastructure Strategy: Fairer, faster greener \(2020\)](#) sets out plans to transform UK infrastructure in order to level up the country, strengthen the Union and achieve net zero emissions by 2050. This will be enabled by clear support for private investment and through a comprehensive set of reforms to the way infrastructure is delivered.

B.291 [The Sixth Carbon Budget report \(2020\)](#) is based on an extensive programme of analysis, consultation and consideration by the Committee and its staff, the report builds on the evidence published last year for their Net Zero advice. Their recommended pathway requires a 78% reduction in UK territorial emissions between 1990 and 2035. In effect, bringing forward the UK's previous 80% target by nearly 15 years.

B.292 [Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge \(2020\)](#) sets out the strategic priorities for the new Transport Decarbonisation Plan (TDP), published in July 2021. It sets out in detail what government, business and society will need to do to deliver the significant emissions reduction needed across all modes of transport, putting us on a pathway to achieving carbon budgets and net zero emissions across every

single mode of transport by 2050. This document acknowledges that while there have been recently published strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in individual transport modes, transport as a whole sector needs to go further and more quickly, therefore the TDP takes a coordinated, cross-modal approach to deliver the transport sector's contribution to both carbon budgets and net zero.

B.293 [Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management: Policy Statement \(2020\)](#) sets out the Government's long-term ambition to create a nation more resilient to future flood and coastal erosion risk, and in doing so, reduce the risk of harm to people, the environment and the economy. The Policy Statement sets out five policy areas which will drive this ambition. These are:

- Upgrading and expanding our national flood defences and infrastructure;
- Managing the flow of water more effectively;
- Harnessing the power of nature to reduce flood and coastal erosion risk and achieve multiple benefits;
- Better preparing our communities; and
- Enabling more resilient places through a catchment-based approach.

B.294 [The Waste \(Circular Economy\) \(Amendment\) Regulations \(2020\)](#) seek to prevent waste generation and to monitor and assess the implementation of measures included in waste prevention programmes. They set out requirements to justify not separating waste streams close to source for re-use, recycling or other recovery operations, prohibit incineration and landfilling of waste unless such treatment process represent the best environmental outcome in accordance with the waste hierarchy. The Regulations set out when waste management plans and in waste prevention programmes are required. The Regulations focus on the circular economy as a means for businesses to maximise the value of waste and waste treatment.

B.295 [Net Zero – The UK's contribution to stopping global warming \(2019\)](#) responds to a request from the Governments of the UK, Wales and Scotland, asking the Committee to reassess the UK's long-term emissions targets. Our new emissions scenarios draw on ten new research projects, three expert advisory groups, and reviews of the work of the IPCC and others. The report's key findings are that:

- The Committee on Climate Change recommends a new emissions target for the UK: net-zero greenhouse gases by 2050.
- In Scotland, we recommend a net-zero date of 2045, reflecting Scotland's greater relative capacity to remove emissions than the UK as a whole.
- In Wales, we recommend a 95% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2050.

B.296 [The National Adaptation Programme and the Third Strategy for Climate Adaptation Reporting: Making the country resilient to a change climate \(2018\)](#) sets out visions for the following sectors:

- People and the Built Environment – “to promote the development of a healthy, equitable and resilient population, well placed to reduce the harmful health impacts of climate change...buildings and places (including built heritage) and the people who live and work in them are resilient and organisations in the built environment sector have an increased capacity to address the risks and make the most of the opportunities of a changing climate.”
- Infrastructure – “an infrastructure network that is resilient to today’s natural hazards and prepared for the future changing climate.”
- Natural Environment – “the natural environment, with diverse and healthy ecosystems, is resilient to climate change, able to accommodate change and valued for the adaptation services it provides.”
- Business and Industry – “UK businesses are resilient to extreme weather and prepared for future risks and opportunities from climate change.”
- Local Government – “Local Government plays a central role in leading and supporting local places to become more resilient to a range of future risks and to be prepared for the opportunities from a changing climate.”

B.297 [Our Waste, Our Resources: A strategy for England \(2018\)](#) aims to increase resource productivity and eliminate avoidable waste by 2050. The Strategy sets out key targets which include: a 50% recycling rate for household waste by 2020, a 75% recycling rate for packaging by 2030, 65% recycling rate for municipal solid waste by 2035 and municipal waste to landfill 10% or less by 2035.

B.298 [The Clean Growth Strategy \(2017\)](#) sets out the approach of the Government to secure growth of the national income while cutting greenhouse gas emissions. The key policies and proposals of the Strategy sit below a number of overarching principles: acceleration of clean growth including through recommendations for private and public investment to meet carbon budgets; providing support to improve business and industry energy efficiency; improving energy efficiency in the housing stock including through low carbon heating; accelerating the shift to low carbon transport; delivering clean, smart, flexible power; enhancing the benefits and value of our natural resources; leading in the public sector to meet emissions targets; and ensure Government leadership to drive clean growth.

B.299 [The National Planning Policy for Waste \(NPPW\) \(2014\)](#) identifies key planning objectives, requiring planning Authorities to:

- Help deliver sustainable development through driving waste management up the waste hierarchy;
- Ensure waste management is considered alongside other spatial planning concerns;
- Provide a framework in which communities take more responsibility for their own waste;
- Help secure the recovery or disposal of waste without endangering human health and without harming the environment; and
- Ensure the design and layout of new development supports sustainable waste management.

B.300 [The Energy Efficiency Strategy: The Energy Efficiency Opportunity in the UK \(2012\)](#) aims to realise the wider energy efficiency potential that is available in the UK economy by maximising the potential of existing dwellings by implementing 21st century energy management initiatives on 19th century homes.

B.301 [The Promotion of the Use of Energy from Renewables Sources Regulations \(2011\)](#) required the Government to ensure that renewable energy comprised 15% of the UK's total energy mix by 2020. The Renewable Energy Directive has now been superseded by Directive (EU) 2018/2001 (RED II). Although the UK has now been released from the renewable energy targets under RED II following Brexit, the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement includes a commitment to promote energy efficiency and the use of energy from renewable sources and reaffirmation of the EU's 2030 "targets" and the UK's 2030 "ambitions" for renewable energy and energy efficiency.

B.302 [The UK Low Carbon Transition Plan: National Strategy for Climate and Energy \(2009\)](#) sets out a five-point plan to tackle climate change. The points are as follows: protecting the public from immediate risk, preparing for the future, limiting the severity of future climate change through a new international climate agreement, building a low carbon UK and supporting individuals, communities and businesses to play their part.

B.303 [The UK Renewable Energy Strategy \(2009\)](#) sets out the ways in which we will tackle climate change by reducing our CO2 emissions through the generation of a renewable electricity, heat and transport technologies.

B.304 [The Climate Change Act 2008 sets](#) targets for UK greenhouse gas emission reductions of at least 100% by 2050, against a 1990 baseline (this was previously 80% but was updated to a net zero target in June 2019).

B.305 [The Planning and Energy Act \(2008\)](#) enables local planning authorities to set requirements for carbon reduction and renewable energy provision. It should be noted that while the Housing Standards Review proposed to repeal some of these provisions, at the time of writing there have been no amendments to the Planning and Energy Act.

B.306 [The Environmental Noise Regulations \(2006\)](#) require regular noise mapping and action planning for road, rail and aviation noise and noise in large urban areas. They also require Noise Action Plans based on the maps for road and rail noise and noise in large urban areas. The Action Plans identify Important Areas (areas exposed to the highest levels of noise) and suggest ways the relevant authorities can reduce these. Major airports and those which affect large urban areas are also required to produce and publish their own Noise Action Plans separately. The Regulations do not apply to noise from domestic activities such as noise created by neighbours; at workplaces; inside means of transport; or military activities in military areas.

Local

B.307 [Dorset Council's Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy 2023 to 25 \(2025\)](#) (refresh) aims to create a carbon neutral, nature positive, and resilient Dorset through a clean, green, and fair transition that supports prosperous, stronger, and healthier communities. It focuses on three main challenges: reducing greenhouse gas emissions to address climate change, protecting and enhancing ecosystems to reverse biodiversity loss, and adapting to unavoidable environmental impacts to build resilience. The strategy has four broad outcomes it aims to achieve:

- Net Zero Council 2040 and Net Zero Dorset 2050: Net zero emissions from power, heat, transport, construction, food, consumables and waste;
- Nature Positive Dorset 2030: At least 30% of our land, rivers and seas and nature-positive by 2030;
- prosperity through green growth: Green jobs, skills and investment for low carbon and nature sectors; and
- stronger, healthier communities: Healthier, cheaper to run homes and safer more resilient communities.

B.308 [The Dorset Local Nature Partnership's Vision and Strategy \(2023\)](#) sets out the following strategic priorities for the partnership, which include the following strategic pillars relating to biodiversity:

- Natural capital – increasing investment: Dorset has some exceptional natural assets which already underpin the economic and social wellbeing of the county,

yet it is still declining in quality and quantity and needs greater investment. We will facilitate funding and lobby for more;

- Natural economy– adding value: A healthy environment is a pre-requisite for a healthy economy globally and locally, it offers opportunities for sustainable economic resilience which does not erode our natural capital. We will support the development of nature-based economic schemes and maximise green finance opportunities;
- Naturally healthy – developing Dorset’s ‘natural health service’: Working with the healthcare system, providers, and land managers, we will aid collaboration to improve access to and connection with nature, build green infrastructure and support better information on how to use the natural world to live better and reduce inequalities.
- Natural resilience – improving environmental and community resilience: In the light of a challenging future, and the impact on health, we will work collaboratively to improve both resilience against and adaption to climate change to enable a sustainable future. We will support local schemes to improve diets and reduce food waste, sensitive farming practices and facilitate greater engagement with the soil that sustains us all.
- Natural understanding – improving engagement in Dorset’s environment: Dorset residents and visitors already value their environment. We will support and develop greater understanding of the impacts we have on the terrestrial and marine environment to ensure good stewardship now and in the future.
- Naturally influence – embedding natural value in policy and decision-making: A founding principle of all LNPs is that we will promote the value of the natural environment in decisions and inform local and national policy making.

B.309 [The Dorset National Landscape Management Plan 2019 – 2024 \(2019\) has](#) the following objectives relating to climate change:

- Support measures to increase energy efficiency;
- Develop understanding of a dynamic landscape and changing climate.
- Support renewable energy production where compatible with the objectives of National Landscape designation;
- Ensure environmental resilience and adaptation to change at a landscape scale.
- Discourage practices that do not support natural processes or allow evolution with environmental change.

B.310 [The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Renewable Energy Strategy \(2013\)](#)

includes an aspirational target for renewable energy generation which is for 7.5% of energy used in Dorset to be generated from renewable sources by 2020.

B.311 [The West Dorset Community Plan 2010-26 \(2010\)](#) aims to improve the quality of life for residents and workers in the district, and contains the following theme on climate change and peak oil:

“One of the biggest threats to us is that of climate change which has major economic, social and health consequences. It is anticipated that in the future as oil reserves dwindle and new sources of oil become expensive to extract, fuel prices will rise and we will need to find alternatives to relying on fossil fuels. To tackle climate change and peak oil we need to become more resilient within local communities where possible and rethink the way we live and work.”

B.312 [The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Energy Efficiency Strategy \(2009\)](#) seeks to improve energy efficiency and reduce energy demand across Dorset in order to reduce carbon emissions in line with national targets of 30% reduction by 2020 (and also eliminate fuel poverty and save energy costs).

B.313 [The West Dorset Climate Change Strategy \(2009\) was](#) produced by the West Dorset Partnership, and aims to help residents, businesses and other organisations reduce their carbon emissions by 30% by 2020 from 2005 levels by a wide range of measures.

Baseline information

B.314 Climate change presents a global risk, with a range of different environmental, social and economic impacts that are likely to be felt within Dorset across numerous receptors. A key challenge in protecting the environment will be to tackle the causes and consequences of climate change. The consequences include predictions of warmer, drier summers and wetter winters with more severe weather events all year, as well as higher sea levels and increased river flooding. A strong reaction is required from planning to ensure appropriate action can be taken to help species and habitats adapt and to enable the agricultural sector to continue to deliver diverse, affordable and good quality produce.

B.315 There has been a general trend towards warmer average temperatures in recent years. 2024 was provisionally the fourth warmest year on record for the UK, with a mean temperature of 9.78°C, which is 0.64°C above the 1991-2020 average. Only 2022, 2023 and 2014 recorded higher average temperatures. [All the top ten](#)

[warmest years for the UK in the series from 1884 have occurred since 2000, with five of them in the most recent decade.](#)

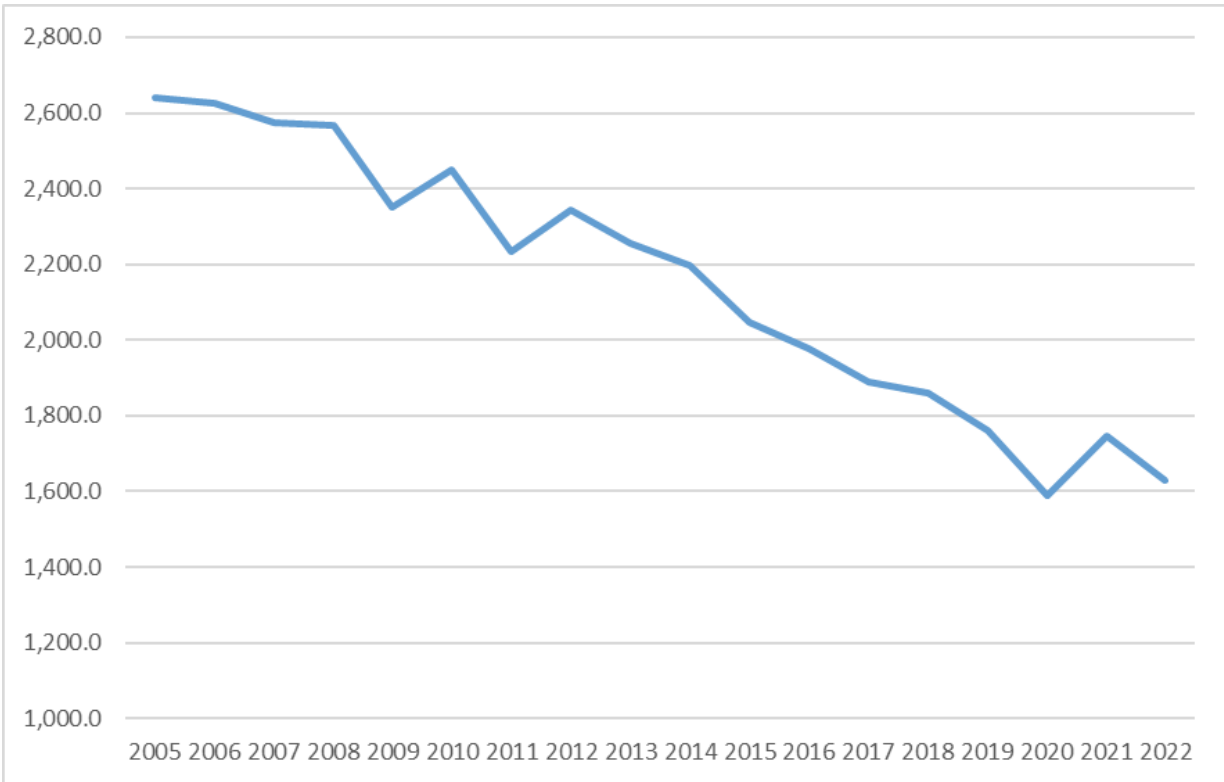
B.316 [The Government’s most recent climate projections](#) suggest that there is an increased chance of milder, wetter winters and hot, drier summers in the southwest of England. It also predicts an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme events in the UK.

B.317 The carbon footprint of an individual, event or a product is a measure of the amount of gases that cause climate change (known as greenhouse gases) which it releases into the atmosphere.

B.318 A carbon footprint may be calculated in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, which is a measure of the release of greenhouse gases, or carbon emissions, which is a measure of the equivalent amount of carbon dioxide.

B.319 [Within the Dorset Council Local Plan area, territorial carbon dioxide emissions within the scope of influence of Dorset Council, have decreased by 38.3% between 2005 and 2022, declining from 2,640.5kT CO2e to 1,628.2 kT CO2e](#) (see Figure B.14 below).

Figure B.14: A graph showing the trend in total carbon emissions (kT CO2 e) within the Dorset Council Local Plan area between 2005-22



B.320 The total carbon emissions may be split into industrial and commercial, domestic and transport sources.

B.321 The highest contribution of greenhouse gas emissions within the Dorset Plan Area is from transport sources which provides 42.6% of emissions. Domestic sources provide 29.2% and industry & commercial 16.8% of the total carbon emissions within the Dorset Plan Area.

B.322 The carbon emissions from industrial & commercial and domestic sources have reduced by 54.3% and 49% respectively between 2005 and 2022 (Tables 6.1 and 6.2). This represents a significant decrease in greenhouse gas emissions from these sources.

B.323 Carbon emissions from transport sources have only reduced by 19% during the period between 2005 and 2022, representing a smaller decrease in carbon emissions during this period.

Table B.3: A table showing the carbon emissions according to industrial and commercial, domestic and transport sources within the Dorset Council Local Plan area (2005-2013)

Sector	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Industry & Commercial	599.5	590.2	568.3	559.9	504.1	529.0	470.0	509.2	483.6
Domestic	934.5	941.5	894.8	902.7	823.6	887.9	766.6	826.4	800.2
Transport	855.1	859.2	869.0	846.9	815.6	800.1	785.0	770.8	771.2
Total*	2,389	2,391	2,332	2,309	2,143	2,217	2,022	2,106	2,055

Table B.4: A table showing the carbon emissions according to industrial and commercial, domestic and transport sources within the Dorset Council Local Plan area (2014-2022)

Sector	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Industry & Commercial	527.2	395.3	348.1	308.5	322.4	289.3	257.7	284.0	274.5
Domestic	685.2	652.8	618.5	580.0	570.0	543.6	534.2	536.5	475.2
Transport	783.7	802.6	825.9	822.4	805.4	777.5	615.0	728.7	693.7
Total*	1,996	1,850	1,792	1,710	1,697	1,610	1,406	1,549	1,443

B.324 It should be noted the figures in Tables 6.1 and 6.2 above do not account for large industrial sites, railways, motorways, land-use, livestock and soils.

- B.325** Carbon emissions from industrial & commercial and domestic sources have decreased every year between 2012 and 2016, displaying a downward trend in carbon emissions from these sources.
- B.326** Furthermore, carbon emissions from transport sources have declined significantly in the long-term, although there was an 18.5% increase in emissions between 2020 and 2021, reflecting post COVID-19 travel and freight demand. Carbon emissions from transport sources dipped again in 2022.
- B.327** Renewable energy is recognised as an important contributor to reducing reliance on fossil fuels and adapting to climate change. Within the South East of England, there was a total of 201,361 sites that were capable of generating renewable energy across wind, solar, wave, hydro and biomass renewable sources in 2023. This represents 13.4% of all the sites within the UK that generate renewable energy. In 2023, the South East of England generated a total of 5,589.4GWh of renewable energy.
- B.328** The use of renewable sources to generate electricity and heat reduces the consumption of fossil fuels, which leads to lower emissions of greenhouse gases.
- B.329** In 2023, a total of 14,207 photovoltaic panels were installed in Dorset. This is an increase on 2014 when [5,001 photovoltaic panels were installed](#).
- B.330** The total capacity of renewable energy in the plan area was 358MW in 2023 (Table 6.3).
- B.331** The vast majority of renewable electricity is derived from solar photovoltaics in the Dorset Council Local Plan area (96%), with contributions also from landfill gas (2%) and anaerobic digestion (1.4%).

Table B.5: Installed capacity of renewable energy (MW) within the Dorset Council Local Plan area in 2023 area in 2023

Capacity	Photovoltaics	Onshore Wind	Hydro	Anaerobic Digestion	Landfill Gas	Total
Installed capacity (MW)	344.7	0.9	0.2	5.1	7.2	358
% of total installed capacity	96%	0.25%	0.06%	1.4%	2%	No total

B.332 [In 2022, three solar farms were given approval.](#) Additionally, Alaska Wind Farm LLP acquired refurbished four wind turbines for installation, near Wareham. Now fully operational, the wind farm is set to generate [17GWh annually—powering homes with clean energy until 2045](#) .

B.333 As of 2025, the Dorset Green Hydrogen project is fully operational. The project represents the first commercially operational green hydrogen production facility in the [South West of England, producing green hydrogen from renewable electricity inputs.](#)

Sustainability issues

B.334 The key environmental issues relating to energy and climate change include:

- Elevated concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere causing climate change.
- Development may result in an increase in carbon emissions from industrial and commercial, domestic and transport sources, both in terms of total emissions and emissions per capita, contributing to future climate change.
- Whilst total carbon emissions across the Dorset Council Local Plan area are decreasing consistently, transport emissions exhibited short-term fluctuations between 2013-2016, and 2020-2021.
- Immediate and ambitious action, both locally and nationally, is needed to meet the national target of 'net zero' carbon emissions by 2050 and address the climate change issue.
- Development must be carefully planned to avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change, ensuring that the area is resilient to the effects of future climate change.

7. Flooding and Coastal Change

B.335 Flooding is a natural phenomenon which involves the temporary covering by water of land not normally covered by water.

B.336 Flooding can devastate natural habitats, force people to leave their homes and businesses, destroy livelihoods, and take lives.

B.337 According to the Long-Term Investment Scenarios (2019) by Environment Agency, in the UK, there are currently 5.2 million homes and businesses at risk of flooding. In future, the risk of flooding in the UK is likely to increase due to climate change.

B.338 [Climate projections](#) indicate an increased chance of wetter winters, with up to 35% more precipitation in winter by 2070, and an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme events.

B.339 In addition, as the UK population grows, it is predicted that the number of properties built on the flood plain will almost double by 2065, exposing more homes and businesses to flooding.

B.340 Climate change is also likely to influence the complex natural processes which result in coastal change, such as erosion and coastal landslip. Climate change is likely to cause sea level to rise by between 0.4m and 1m and the annual maximum significant wave height to increase by up to 1m (or 20%) off the coast of southwest England by 2100.

B.341 It is predicted that approximately 700 properties in England are likely to be vulnerable to coastal erosion over the next 20 years (Draft National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England (2019), Environment Agency).

B.342 Development must be carefully planned to avoid increased vulnerability to flooding and coastal change.

Key messages from other plans, programmes and objectives

International

B.343 The [Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace \(COP28 Declaration\) \(2023\)](#) is an international agreement which seeks to address the complex challenges posed by climate change, particularly in the most vulnerable regions. Although non-binding and outside the formal UNFCCC negotiations, this declaration unites the concerns and proposed solutions of countries and institutions across humanitarian, development, climate, and peace sectors. It aims to urgently enhance climate resilience in vulnerable communities that are most affected by climate-related conflicts and crises.

B.344 [The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development \(2015\)](#) adopted by all United Nations Member States, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet and includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), designed to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. Relevant to this topic are:

- SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

- SDG 14: Life Below Water.
- SDG 15: Life on Land.

B.345 [The United Nations Paris Climate Change Agreement \(2015\)](#) is an international agreement to keep global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

National

B.346 [The National Planning Policy Framework \(2024\)](#) (NPPF) prevents new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided. Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account implications for water supply. Furthermore, strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision infrastructure for water supply and wastewater.

B.347 [The Plan for Water: Our Integrated Plan for Delivering Clean and Plentiful Water \(2023\)](#) sets out actions to transform the management of the water system, deliver cleaner water for nature and people, and secure a plentiful water supply. The plan also sets out measures to address sources of pollution, and boost water supplies through more investment, tighter regulation, and more effective enforcement.

B.348 The [Environment Act 2021](#) sets statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world in four priority areas: air quality, biodiversity, water, and resource efficiency and waste reduction. It also establishes the Office for Environmental Protection which will act as an impartial and objective body for the protection and improvement of the environment. The Act sets out legislation which covers:

- Resource efficiency, producer responsibility, and the management, enforcement and regulation of waste.
- Local air quality management frameworks and the recall of motor vehicles etc; and
- Plans and proposals for water resources, drainage and sewerage management, storm overflows, water quality and land drainage.

B.349 [Managing Water Abstraction \(2021\)](#) comprises the overarching document for managing water resources in England and Wales and links together the abstraction licensing strategies.

B.350 The [National Chalk Streams Strategy \(2021\)](#) is built around the “trinity of ecological health”: water quantity, water quality and habitat quality and included 30+ recommendations to Defra, the Environment Agency, Natural England, the water companies, NGOs and stakeholders.

B.351 The Environment Agency’s [Meeting our future water needs: a national framework for water resources \(2020\)](#) sets the strategic direction for long term regional water resources planning. The framework is built on a shared vision to:

- leave the environment in a better state than we found it
- improve the nation’s resilience to drought and minimise interruptions to all water users

B.352 [The Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management: Policy Statement \(2020\)](#) sets out the Government’s long-term ambition to create a nation more resilient to future flood and coastal erosion risk, and in doing so, reduce the risk of harm to people, the environment and the economy. The Policy Statement sets out five policy areas which will drive this ambition. These are:

- Upgrading and expanding our national flood defences and infrastructure;
- Managing the flow of water more effectively;
- Harnessing the power of nature to reduce flood and coastal erosion risk and achieve multiple benefits;
- Better preparing our communities; and
- Enabling more resilient places through a catchment-based approach.

B.353 [Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment \(2018\)](#) sets out the UK government action to help the natural world regain and retain good health. The plan sets a series of goals for improving the environment within a generation and leaving it in a better state than we found it, and includes the following objectives and actions relating to water:

“We will achieve clean and plentiful water by improving at least three quarters of our waters to be close to their natural state as soon as is practicable by:

- reducing the damaging abstraction of water from rivers and groundwater, ensuring that by 2021 the proportion of water bodies with enough water to support environmental standards increases from 82% to 90% for surface water bodies and from 72% to 77% for groundwater bodies;
- reaching or exceeding objectives for rivers, lakes, coastal and ground waters that are specially protected, whether for biodiversity or drinking water as per our River Basin Management Plans;
- supporting OFWAT's ambitions on leakage, minimising the amount of water lost through leakage year on year, with water companies expected to reduce leakage by at least an average of 15% by 2025; and
- minimising by 2030 the harmful bacteria in our designated bathing waters and continuing to improve the cleanliness of our waters; we will make sure that potential bathers are warned of any short-term pollution risks.

B.354 The 25-year plan states that the Government will make sure that chemicals are safely used and managed, and that the levels of harmful chemicals entering the environment (including through agriculture) are significantly reduced by reducing land-based emissions of mercury to water by 50% by 2030.

B.355 [Our Waste, Our Resources: A strategy for England \(2018\)](#) aims to increase resource productivity and eliminate avoidable waste by 2050. The Strategy sets out key targets which include: a 50% recycling rate for household waste by 2020, a 75% recycling rate for packaging by 2030, 65% recycling rate for municipal solid waste by 2035 and municipal waste to landfill 10% or less by 2035.

B.356 [The Environment Agency's Approach for Groundwater Protection \(2018\)](#) contains position statements which provide information about the Environment Agency's approach to managing and protecting groundwater. They detail how the Environment Agency delivers government policy for groundwater and adopts a risk-based approach where legislation allows. Many of the approaches set out in the position statements are not statutory but may be included in, or referenced by, statutory guidance and legislation.

B.357 [The Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations \(2017\)](#) seeks to protect inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater, and outlines the associated river basin management process. These Regulations establish the need to prevent deterioration of waterbodies and to protect, enhance and restore waterbodies with the aim of achieving good ecological and chemical status.

B.358 [The Environment Agency's Drought response: our framework for England \(2017\)](#) discusses how drought affects England and how the Environment Agency works with government, water companies and others to manage the effects on people, business and the environment. It aims to ensure consistency in the way we co-ordinate drought management across England. It sets out:

- how drought affects different parts of England;
- who is involved in managing drought and how we work together;
- how we and others take action to manage drought;
- how we monitor and measure the impacts of drought to advise senior management and government on the prospects and possible action; and
- how we report on drought and communicate with others.

B.359 [The Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations \(2016\)](#) provides for the designation of land as nitrate vulnerable zones and imposes annual limits on the amount of nitrogen from organic manure that may be applied or spread in a holding in a nitrate vulnerable zone. The Regulations also specify the amount of nitrogen to be spread on a crop and how, where and when to spread nitrogen fertiliser, and how it should be stored. It also establishes closed periods during which the spreading of nitrogen fertiliser is prohibited.

B.360 [The Water Supply \(Water Quality\) Regulations \(2016\)](#) focus on the quality of water for drinking, washing, cooking and food preparation, and for food production. Their purpose is to protect human health from the adverse effects of any contamination of water intended for human consumption by ensuring it is wholesome and clean.

B.361 [The Environmental Permitting Regulations \(2016\)](#) streamlines the legislative system for industrial and waste installations into a single permitting structure for those activities which have the potential to cause harm to human health or the environment. They set out how to prevent or, where that is not practicable, to reduce emissions into air, water and land and to prevent the generation of waste, in order to achieve a high level of protection of the environment and human health.

B.362 [The Water White Paper \(2012\)](#) sets out the Government's vision for the water sector including proposals on protecting water resources and reforming the water supply industry. It states outlines the measures that will be taken to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystem, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources.

B.363 [The National Policy Statement for Waste Water \(2012\)](#) out Government policy for the provision of major waste water infrastructure. The policy set out in this NPS is, for the most part, intended to make existing policy and practice in consenting nationally significant waste water infrastructure clearer and more transparent.

B.364 [The Flood and Water Management Act 2010](#) and [The Flood and Water Regulations \(2019\)](#) sets out measures to ensure that risk from all sources of flooding is managed more effectively. This includes incorporating greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings; utilising the environment in order to reduce flooding; identifying areas suitable for inundation and water storage to reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere; rolling back development in coastal areas to avoid damage from flooding or coastal erosion; and creating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

B.365 [The Groundwater \(England and Wales\) Regulations \(2009\)](#) implements in England and Wales Community legislation on pollution of groundwater. They provide rules for the granting by the Environment Agency of a permit under these Regulations, consent under section 91(8) of the Water Resources Act 1991 and (with exceptions) an environmental permit under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations. In addition, the Regulations create an offence of discharge of a hazardous substance or non-hazardous pollutant without a permit, provide for powers of enforcement of the Environment Agency and prescribe penalties for offences committed under these Regulations.

B.366 [The Flood Risk Regulations \(2009\)](#) outline a set of tasks, which the county council is required to follow between now and approximately 2015. The regulations also implement the 2007 EU Floods Directive. In accordance with the regulations the council has a series of new responsibilities, these are:

- The preparation of a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) Report, including the identification of flood risk areas
- The preparation of Flood Hazard Maps and Flood Risk Maps
- The preparation of Flood Risk Management Plans
- Cooperating with the Environment Agency and other Lead Local Flood Authorities.

B.367 [The Future Water: The Government's Water Strategy for England \(2008\)](#) sets out how the Government wants the water sector to look by 2030, providing an outline of steps which need to be taken to get there. These steps include improving the supply of water; agreeing on important new infrastructure such as reservoirs; proposals to time limit abstraction licences; and reducing leakage. The document

also states that pollution to rivers will be tackled, whilst discharge from sewers will be reduced.

B.368 The Government's strategic direction for biodiversity presented in [Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services \(2011\)](#) includes the following priority actions with respect to water management:

- Priority action 3.6: Align measures to protect the water environment with action for biodiversity, including through the river basin planning approach under the EU Water Framework Directive
- Priority action 3.7: Continue to promote approaches to flood and erosion management which conserve the natural environment and improve biodiversity
- Priority action 3.8: Reform the water abstraction regime. The new regime will provide clearer signals to abstractors to make the necessary investments to meet water needs and protect ecosystem functioning. We will also take steps to tackle the legacy of unsustainable abstraction more efficiently

B.369 [The Environmental Protection Act 1990](#) makes provision for the improved control of pollution to the air, water and land by regulating the management of waste and the control of emissions. Seeks to ensure that decisions pertaining to the environment are made in an integrated manner, in collaboration with appropriate authorities, non-governmental organisations and other persons.

Local

B.370 [Dorset Council's Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy 2023 to 25 \(refresh\) \(2025\)](#) aims to create a carbon neutral, nature positive, and resilient Dorset through a clean, green, and fair transition that supports prosperous, stronger, and healthier communities. It focuses on three main challenges: reducing greenhouse gas emissions to address climate change, protecting and enhancing ecosystems to reverse biodiversity loss, and adapting to unavoidable environmental impacts to build resilience. The strategy has four broad outcomes it aims to achieve:

- Net Zero Council 2040 and Net Zero Dorset 2050: Net zero emissions from power, heat, transport, construction, food, consumables and waste;
- Nature Positive Dorset 2030: At least 30% of our land, rivers and seas and nature-positive by 2030;
- prosperity through green growth: Green jobs, skills and investment for low carbon and nature sectors; and

- stronger, healthier communities: Healthier, cheaper to run homes and safer more resilient communities.

B.371 [The Dorset Coast Strategy 2023-2026 \(2023\)](#) which sets out how the members of the Dorset Coast Forum will work to improve the planning and management of the Dorset Coast, contains the following objectives:

- **Enjoy the coast** – Increase inclusive access to promote the coast as a place for everyone to enjoy;
- **Respect the coast** – Safe, considerate behaviour will be encouraged when visiting the coast, minimising the impact while maximising access and enjoyment. Information on code of conduct will be shared through a variety of mediums, allowing people to enjoy the coast responsibly;
- **Coastal Innovation** – The Dorset Coast will lead the way in innovative solutions to the challenges we face. These solutions will be implemented in every aspect of the coast through socioeconomic, technological, and environmental approaches.
- **Coastal Connection** – Opportunities will be taken to connect communities with the coastline, increasing access, awareness and understanding.
- **Coastal Recovery** – Dorset’s coastal landscapes and seascapes, with its wide range of species and habitats, will be prioritised. Members, residents, and visitors will not only protect and enhance Dorset’s natural environment, but also repair and restore damaged and degraded ecological processes.

B.372 [The Poole Harbour and Dorset Stour Catchment Strategy 2022 – 2027 \(2022\)](#) sets out the high level priorities and ambition of the Dorset Stour Catchment Partnerships for the next five years to 2027. The vision for the partnerships is that:

“Dorset’s river catchments are sustainably healthy, resilient and safe for people and wildlife.”

B.373 The Strategy cites the following strategic priorities for Dorset’s catchments:

- **Upper catchments:** Focus on reducing nutrient and sediment runoff from agriculture to improve water quality, enhance hydrological connectivity, and reduce flood risk.
- **Middle catchments:** Prioritise restoring natural river processes and protecting river corridors, which also helps reduce pollution and improve habitats.

- **Lower catchments:** Engage local communities to understand their connection with rivers and estuaries, promote awareness of healthy river systems, and build support for ongoing efforts.
- **Across all catchments:** Make habitat restoration a central theme, especially to boost habitat connectivity and combat invasive species.
- **Partnership efforts:** Strengthen the evidence base through monitoring, data sharing, and exploration of new techniques like natural capital approaches.

B.374 [The South West river basin management plan: updated 2022 \(2022\)](#) describes the challenges that threaten the water environment and how these challenges can be managed. The plan identifies key challenges affecting the region's water bodies, including pollution from agriculture and wastewater, physical modifications to watercourses, over-abstraction of water, and the impacts of climate change. It sets environmental objectives for rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal waters, and groundwater, aiming to achieve or maintain good ecological and chemical status.

B.375 [The Water Action Plan \(2021\)](#) outlines the need to significantly reduce water demand and waste in the authority area and manage water resources in a way that eliminates emissions and ensures long-term sustainability by 2050. The Plan recommends 16 specific actions, with initial targets set for 2023 to ensure that progress stays on track.

B.376 [The Poole Harbour Recreation Supplementary Planning Document \(2019\)](#) adopted in 2020, seeks to mitigate the impact of new development from recreational activities by taking financial contributions from development and using this to provide mitigation measures, including:

- Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMMS): further surveys and monitoring, wardens/rangers, awareness raising projects, and developing an Access Management Plan; and
- Poole Harbour Infrastructure Projects (PHIP): Projects to manage visitor access and minimise disturbance, including for example the provision of alternative access around the Poole Harbour shoreline. Could potentially include Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG).

B.377 [The Dorset National Landscape Management Plan 2019 – 2024 \(2019\)](#) has the following objectives relating to coastal change:

- Approaches to coastal management that promote natural processes will be adopted wherever possible and the objectives of coastal change management areas will be implemented; and

- Ensure coastal and flood defences, as well as aquaculture and fishery development, are compatible with the National Landscape's exceptional undeveloped coastline.

B.378 [The River Basin Management Plan Part 1: South West River Basin District \(2015\)](#) aims to provide a framework for protecting and enhancing the benefits provided by the water environment, partly by informing decisions on land-use planning. The plan aims to meet the objectives of the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), including the following:

- to prevent deterioration of the status of surface waters and groundwater;
- to achieve objectives and standards for protected areas (Figures 4.1 to 4.3);
- to aim to achieve good status for all water bodies or, for heavily modified water bodies and artificial water bodies, good ecological potential and good surface water chemical status;
- to reverse any significant and sustained upward trends in pollutant concentrations in groundwater;
- the cessation of discharges, emissions and losses of priority hazardous substances into surface waters; and
- progressively reduce the pollution of groundwater and prevent or limit the entry of pollutants.

B.379 [The Poole Harbour Catchment Initiative Catchment Plan \(update\) \(2014\)](#) aims to protect and restore the groundwater, rivers and Poole Harbour, and contains the following visions:

- Sustainable farming, development, water use and sewage treatment that supports healthy rivers and groundwater in the Poole Harbour catchment;
- Recognition of the ecosystem services that the catchment can provide and adequate payment to those that manage the land to provide these services;
- Improvements to biodiversity habitats both in the form of naturally functioning rivers, floodplains and wetlands and appropriately located woodland and low-input grassland; and
- Achievement of national environmental standards for the benefit of wildlife and users of these waters and Poole Harbour.

B.380 [The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy \(2014\)](#) sets out the following vision for managing local flood risk across the Dorset Council Local Plan area: area:

"working together to manage local flood risk in Dorset so communities are resilient and prepared for flooding".

B.381 The strategy aims to deliver this vision by achieving the following objectives:

- understand flood risk across Dorset;
- manage the likelihood and impacts of flooding;
- help Dorset's communities to manage their own flood risk;
- ensure flood risk is considered in local land development proposals; and
- improve flood prediction, warning, response and flood recovery.

B.382 The role of Catchment Flood Management Plans (CFMPs) is to establish flood risk management policies which will deliver sustainable flood risk management for the long term within 77 hydrological catchments across England and Wales.

B.383 CFMPs consider all types of inland flooding, from rivers, ground water, surface water and tidal flooding, but not flooding directly from the sea (coastal flooding), which is covered by Shoreline Management Plans which are considered later in this section.

B.384 The Dorset Council Local Plan area is largely within three catchment areas:

- Dorset Stour;
- Frome and Piddle; and
- West Dorset

B.385 [The Poole Harbour and Dorset Stour Catchment Strategy 2022 – 2027 \(2022\)](#)

sets out the high level priorities and ambition of the Dorset Stour Catchment Partnerships for the next five years to 2027. The strategy relates to the Stour catchment, which occupies the majority of the eastern section of the Dorset Council Local Plan Area, including the important market towns of Blandford Forum, Shaftesbury and Gillingham. The strategy also relates the Poole Harbour catchment, which occupies part of the southern section of the Dorset Council Local Plan Area, including the county town of Dorchester. In relation to flood risk, the strategy highlights targeted measures to reduce nutrient and sediment inputs, particularly by addressing agricultural soil and water runoff in upper catchments and headwaters. This focus will also help to improve hydrological connectivity and provide secondary benefits by reducing downstream flood risk.

B.386 Additionally, a number of strategic programmes are highlighted in the strategy, designed to deliver improvements to the catchments. These actions include:

- Reducing inputs from agriculture in relation to the Upper Stour and Stour Headwaters. This would help to improve water quality and soil health, as well as reduce flood risk;
- Restoring habitats and hydrology of chalk streams in the Frome and Piddle Headwaters;
- Improving morphology to increase hydrological connectivity, restore natural processes and improve migratory passage in relation to Middle Stour;
- Improving access for sustainable recreation on/around rivers, improving resilience to climate change, and reducing flood risk in relation to the Lower catchment – Poole Harbour.

B.387 The West Dorset catchment occupies most of coastal areas along the Western coast of the Dorset Council Local Plan area, including Swanage, Beaminster, and Bridport. The [Dorset Wild Rivers' West Dorset Rivers and Coastal Streams Issues Appraisal \(2022\)](#) presents the findings of work on the waterbodies of the catchment. The main issues identified affecting the water environment in the West Dorset Rivers and Coastal Streams Catchment are:

- Pollution from rural areas caused by agriculture;
- Physical modifications to the channel;
- Pollution from sewage treatment works and other water industry infrastructure;
- Invasive species; and
- Flows

B.388 Several potential opportunities have been highlighted for the sub-catchments of the West Dorset and Rivers and Coastal Streams area. Of particular relevance:

- Wessex Water are developing Drainage and Waste Water Management Plans that set out how Wessex Water will enhance their assets and networks to ensure they continue to deliver for their customers and the environment in a sustainable and affordable way and in the face of future challenges such as population growth and climate change; and
- Woodland planting areas have been prioritised by Bridport Town Council for several reasons, including reducing flood risk.

B.389 Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) are large scale assessments of the risks associated with coastal processes and help to reduce the risks to people and the

developed, historic and natural environment. SMPs also identify the most sustainable approach to managing the flood and coastal erosion risks to the coastline in the short-term (0 to 20 years), medium term (20 to 50 years), and long term (50 to 100 years) and cover the entire shoreline of England and Wales.

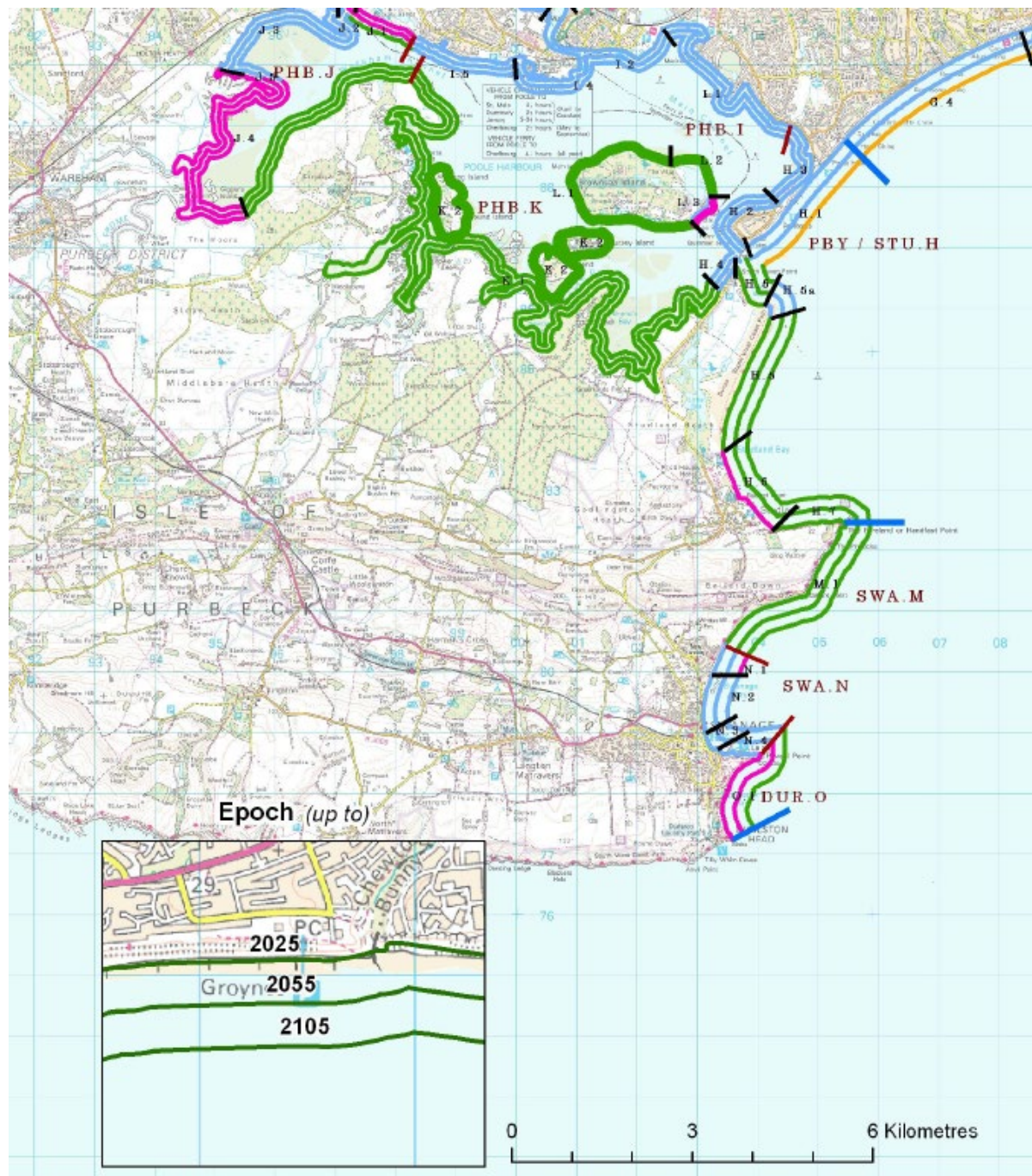
B.390 The Dorset Plan Area is covered by two SMPs, both of which have been reviewed since the original SMPs were published:

- Poole & Christchurch Bays Shoreline Management Plan Review (2010) considers the coastline between Hurst Spit in the east, which is outside the Dorset Council Local Plan area, and Durlston Head in the west, within the Dorset Council Local Plan area and on Isle of Purbeck; and
- Durlston Head to Rame Head Shoreline Management Plan Review (2011) covers the section of coastline from Durlston Head, which is on Isle of Purbeck, to White Nothe in the west, which is beyond the western boundary of the Dorset Council Local Plan area.

B.391 The Poole & Christchurch Bays Shoreline Management Plan Review (2010) includes the following policy approaches towards shoreline management within the Dorset Council Local Plan Area, as summarised in Figure B.15:

- Managed realignment of coastal defences at Wareham, allowing coastal processes to realign the 'natural' coastline configuration;
- Maintain or upgrade the level of protection provided by defences or the natural coastline in the long term at the chain ferry at Shell Bay, to maintain access to the ferry;
- No active intervention within the western section of Poole Harbour (including the islands within Poole Harbour) and Studland Dunes, largely allowing natural processes to take place;
- Managed realignment of coastal defences at Studland Village in the short term (up to 2025), with no active intervention in the medium and long term;
- Maintain or upgrade the level of protection provided by defences or the natural coastline at Swanage; and
- Managed realignment at Durlston Bay, from Peveril Point to Durlleston, with no active intervention in the medium and long term.

Figure B.15: A map summarising the policy approach towards coastal management in the Poole & Christchurch Bays Shoreline Management Plan Review (2010)



Key:

- Policy Development Zones
- Management Units
- Policy Units

Policy

- Hold the Line
- Managed Realignment
- No Active Intervention
- Hold the Line/Advance the Line

Map reproduced from Ordinance Survey Maps with permission of the controller of HM Stationary Office. Crown Copyright reserve licence AL100026380 - Source: Poole & Christchurch Bays Shoreline Management Plan Review (2010).

B.392 The Durlston Head to Rame Head Shoreline Management Plan Review (2011) includes the following policy approaches towards shoreline management within the Dorset Council Local Plan Area:

- Durlston Head: The preferred policy along this rocky cliffed shoreline is to continue to allow natural development along this coast;
- White Nothe (east of Ringstead Bay) to Redcliff Point (to the east of Weymouth, between Bowleaze Cove and Osmington Mills): may experience episodic landslide events that can cause tens of metres of retreat as a result of a single event. In places there is a risk of relict landslide complexes becoming reactivated, which makes management of this coastline more difficult. The continuation of the natural erosion process is integral to the World Heritage and SSSI status of the cliffs. Therefore, the long-term plan is to allow this coastline to remain in its natural state, ceasing to intervene where this presently occurs;
- Redcliff Point to Portland Bill: the coastline here is more developed, incorporating Weymouth and Portland. The protection of commercial and social assets is key in this area, and the shoreline management plan is to continue to protect built assets but seek more sustainable means of achieving this. That includes some local realignment and possible beach enhancement;
- North-west shore of Portland Harbour: unlikely to be appropriate to intervene along the entire stretch of coast, at least in the short to medium term. The Isle of Portland and Portland Harbour breakwaters are key controls on future evolution as they provide shelter and influence the movement of sediment. The preferred plan includes the assumption that the breakwaters will remain and be maintained.
- Portland Bill to Thorncombe Beacon: coastline is dominated by Chesil Beach, which acts as a natural sea defence in addition to a European wildlife site. A key driver of policy is to maintain the natural status of Chesil Beach and take measures to ensure its future sustainability. Therefore, for most of this stretch no intervention is planned.
- Freshwater Beach and Burton Bradstock: Some minimal intervention to manage the realignment of the coast in line with the retreat of adjacent undefended cliffs. This approach, supported by construction of a secondary defence further inland, will reduce local flood risk to properties at Burton Bradstock without compromising natural functioning of the beach.

- West Bay: continued defence of West Bay will also require a secondary defence behind East Beach to enable sustainable long term management of flood risk to be achieved whilst also allowing more natural functioning of the beach.
- Chiswell: The long term plan is to continue to maintain existing defences.

Baseline Information

B.393 The Dorset Council Local Plan area is largely occupied by three hydrological catchments:

- Dorset Stour;
- Frome and Piddle; and
- West Dorset

B.394 This section considers the current flood risk at each of these catchments in turn.

B.395 According to [the Poole Harbour and Dorset Stour Catchment Strategy 2022 – 2027 \(2022\)](#), the Stour catchment includes much of Bournemouth and the Christchurch, as well as smaller, locally important towns such as Blandford, Shaftesbury and Gillingham. The catchment includes 12 chalk streams which cover 141km, as well as 38 waterbodies, including the rivers Crane, Allen, Tarrant, Winterbourne and Lodden. The catchment drains into Christchurch Harbour, where it meets the mouth of the Hampshire Avon and flows out to Christchurch Bay.

B.396 The upper catchment consists of impermeable clays of the Blackmore Vale resulting in shallow valleys with wide floodplains. The central band of permeable chalk on Cranborne Chase results in steeper valleys and narrow floodplains. The lower catchment has the semi-permeable sands, clays and gravels of the Dorset Heaths.

B.397 The [Environment Agency's River Stour Catchment Flood Management Plan \(2009\)](#) identifies the main sources of flood risk in the Dorset Stour catchment within the Dorset Council Local Plan Area include: Area include:

- River flooding from the River Stour particularly in Blandford Forum and Sturminster Newton;
- Rural areas have the potential to be at risk from surface water flooding; and

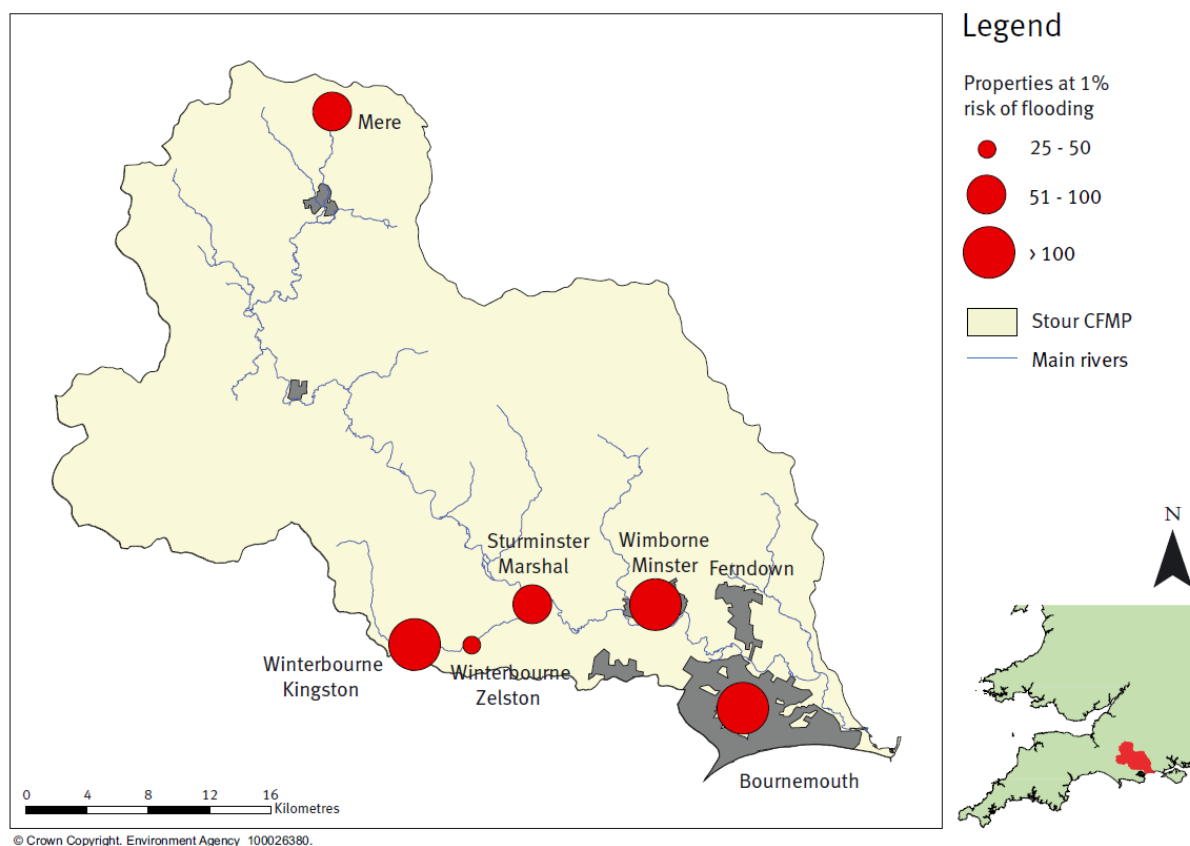
- Groundwater flooding which has recently occurred in Wimborne Minster and Sixpenny Handley and on other watercourses such as those draining Cranborne Chase and the Winterborne.

B.398 In 2012, there were around 1,500 people and 800 commercial and residential properties at risk in the whole catchment from a 1% annual probability river flood taking into account current flood defences. This represented 1% of the total population living in the catchment.

B.399 There were more than 100 properties at risk of flooding in a 1% annual probability river flood at Wimborne Minster and Winterbourne Kingston, 51-100 properties of risk in Sturminster Marshall, and 25-50 in Winterbourne Zelston, Motcombe and Gillingham (Figure B.16).

B.400 The critical infrastructure at risk includes 1 electricity sub-station, 1 water treatment works, 1 km of main roads, and 0.8km of mainline railway.

Figure B.16: A map showing the flood risk to property in a 1% annual probability river flood in the Dorset Stour Catchment



Map source Dorset Stour Catchment Flood Management Plan (2012)

B.401 According to the [Frome and Piddle Catchment Flood Management Plan \(2012\)](#) the Frome and Piddle hydrological catchment occupies around 900km² and is largely rural with the exception of Poole at the southern end of the catchment.

B.402 The Frome and Piddle catchment is characterised in the upper reaches of the North Dorset Downs by open chalk downland with clay and alluvial deposits at the lower end. The rivers Frome and Piddle discharge into Poole Harbour at sea level just downstream of Wareham.

B.403 The main sources of flood risk in the Frome and Piddle catchment within the Dorset Council Local Plan Area include:

- River flooding from the River Frome in Dorchester and Maiden Newton, the River Piddle in Wareham, the River Cerne in Cerne Abbas, and the River Swan in Swanage;
- Tidal flooding in Wareham and Swanage;
- Surface water flooding, which has occurred in Frampton, Swanage and Wareham. Other towns have the potential to be at risk from surface water flooding; and
- Groundwater flooding which has occurred in Milborne St Andrew, Cerne Abbas, Dorchester and other isolated locations throughout the catchment.

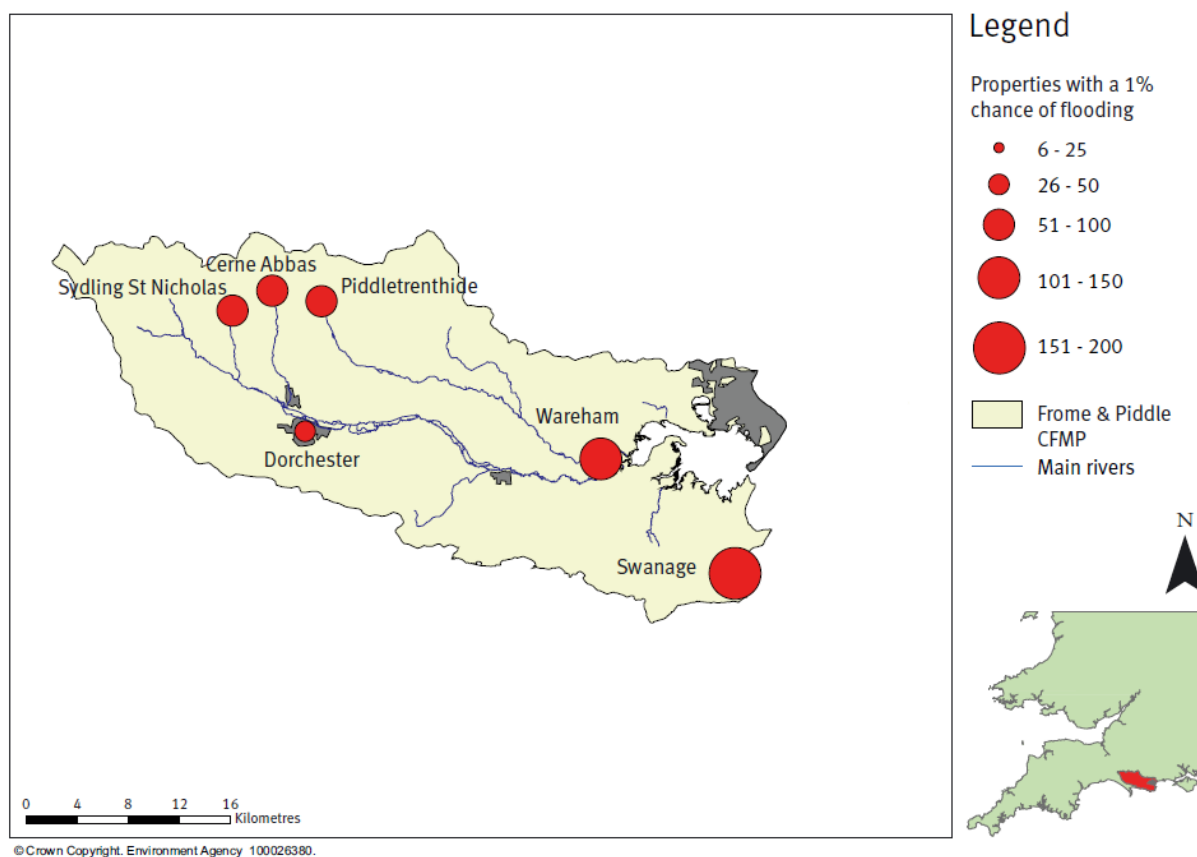
B.404 In 2012, there were around 1,900 people and 1,160 commercial and residential properties at risk in the whole catchment from a 1% annual probability river flood taking into account current flood defences. This represented 1% of the total population living in the catchment.

B.405 More than 10% of people and property at risk were located in Swanage, and a further 6% in Wareham.

B.406 There were more than 100 properties at risk of flooding in a 1% annual probability river flood at Swanage and Wareham, 51-100 properties of risk in Dorchester, Cerne Abbas, Piddletrentide and Sydling St Nicholas, and 25-50 in Maiden Newton and Milborne St Andrew (Figure B.17).

B.407 The critical infrastructure at risk includes 4 water treatment works, 1 healthcare centre, 9km main roads, 7.5km mainline railways, 1 school.

Figure B.17: A map showing the flood risk to property in a 1% annual probability river flood in the Frome and Piddle catchment



Map source: Frome and Piddle Catchment Flood Management Plan (2012)

B.409 According to the [West Dorset Catchment Flood Management Plan \(2012\)](#), the West Dorset hydrological catchment occupies around 370km² and comprises a series of smaller catchments from the Rivers Char, Brit, Bride and Wey, which each flow directly into the sea on the south coast.

B.410 The West Dorset catchment is predominantly rural in character, and characterised by broad, bowl shaped vales incised by steep sided river valleys.

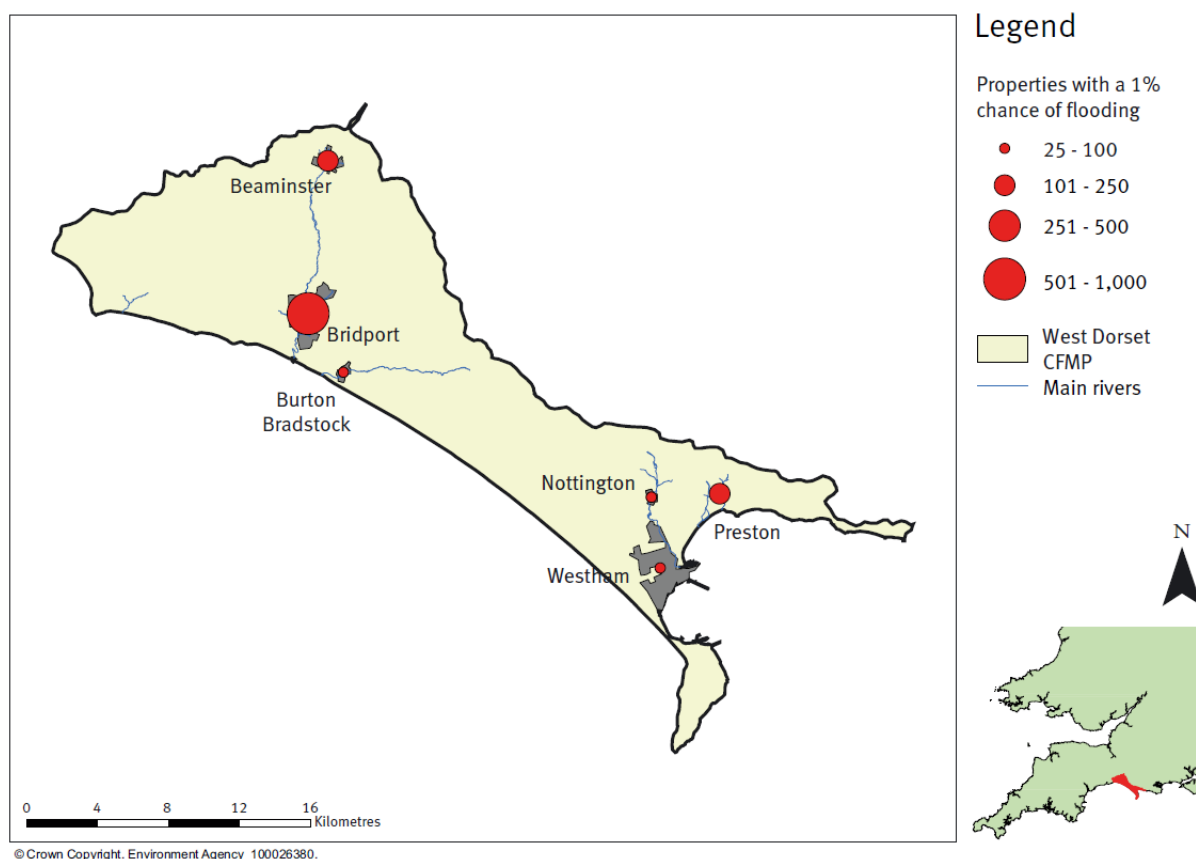
B.411 The main sources of flood risk in the West Dorset catchment within the Dorset Council Local Plan Area are fluvial, surface water and tidal flooding.

B.412 In 2012, there were around 700 properties at risk in the whole catchment from a 1% annual probability river flood event or 0.5% annual probability tidal event.

B.413 There were more than 100 properties at risk of flooding in a 1% annual probability river flood event at Beaminster, Bridport and Preston, 51-100 properties at risk in Nottingham and Broadway, and 25-50 in Burton Bradstock (Figure B.18).

B.414 The critical infrastructure at risk includes 1 electricity substation, 3 emergency services, 1 A road and 2 water treatment works.

Figure B.18: A map showing the flood risk to property in a 1% annual probability river flood in the West Dorset catchment



B.415 The Dorset Council Local Plan area includes approximately 144km of coastline, extending from the southern end of Poole Harbour in the east to Lyme Regis in the west.

B.416 The coastline within the Dorset Council Local Plan area includes a great variety of coastal landforms and associated coastal processes.

Sustainability Issues

B.417 The key environmental issues relating to flooding and coastal change include:

- The frequency and severity of flood events which is predicted to increase as a result of climate change. The challenge is to deliver housing and development whilst not increasing and where possible reducing the risk of flooding to people and properties.

- Implementing the appropriate management of coastal areas to ensure that wildlife designations and areas of geological interest are protected along with the communities which live in these areas. The environmental designations in coastal areas often rely on natural processes being allowed to take place, which may conflict with the management of these areas for the protection of local communities; and
- Lack of financial resources available to implement coastal protection schemes.

8. Landscape

B.418 The landscapes of the 21st century have been shaped by a combination of natural processes and human activity.

B.419 Geological activity and environmental processes through time have created the hugely diverse range of landforms. The diversity of these landforms across the world reflects the range of geology, climate and natural systems, all of which interact in a complex manner.

B.420 The onset of civilisation has made a physical impression on these natural landscapes through the ages. Human activity, particularly land management through farming and forestry, and urban development, largely for residential and industrial processes and the growth of urban settlements, have altered the character and quality of the landscape.

B.421 The pace of social, economic and environmental change is increasing. Without careful planning and management, the quality and condition of the landscape will be irreversibly changed.

Key messages from other plans, programmes and objectives

International

B.422 The United Nations developed a series of global development goals which aim to deliver sustainable development in the document titled [Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development \(2015\)](#) One such goal is:

- End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

B.423 [The European Landscape Convention \(2002\) promotes](#) landscape protection, management and planning. The Convention is aimed at the protection, management and planning of all landscapes and raising awareness of the value of a living landscape.

B.424 [The United Nations Declaration on Sustainable Development \(Johannesburg Declaration\) \(2002\)](#) sets a broad framework for international sustainable development, including building a humane, equitable and caring global society aware of the need for human dignity for all, renewable energy and energy efficiency, sustainable consumption and production and resource efficiency.

National

B.425 In relation to landscape, the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) (NPPF) sets the planning principles of recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside as well as protecting and enhancing valued landscapes. Reference is included with regards to this purpose at National Parks, The Broads and National Landscapes (formerly referred to as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or AONBs).

B.426 [The Environment Improvement Plan 2023](#) for England is the first revision of the 25YEP: It builds on the 25YEP vision with a new plan setting out how we will work with landowners, communities and businesses to deliver each of our goals for improving the environment, matched with interim targets to measure progress. Taking these actions will help us restore nature, reduce environmental pollution, and increase the prosperity of our country. To achieve its vision, the 25YEP set out 10 goals. We have used those 10 goals set out in the 25YEP as the basis for this document: setting out the progress made against all 10, the specific targets and commitments made in relation to each goal, and our plan to continue to deliver these targets and the overarching goals. The environmental goals are:

- Goal 1: Thriving plants and wildlife
- Goal 2: Clean air
- Goal 3: Clean and plentiful water
- Goal 4: Managing exposure to chemicals and pesticides
- Goal 5: Maximise our resources, minimise our waste
- Goal 6: Using resources from nature sustainably
- Goal 7: Mitigating and adapting to climate change
- Goal 8: Reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards
- Goal 9: Enhancing biosecurity
- Goal 10: Enhanced beauty, heritage, and engagement with the natural environment

B.427 [The 25 Year Environment Plan: progress reports \(2023\)](#) sets out the progress made in improving the environment through the 25 Year Plan and the indicator framework, which contains 66 indicators arranged into 10 broad themes.

B.428 [Working with nature \(2022\)](#) discusses the importance of nature in providing ecosystem services and presents recent and historical trends in biodiversity. It

outlines some of the main pressures affecting England's habitats, wildlife and ecosystems: land use; climate change; pollution; invasive non-native species; and hydrological change.

B.429 [The Environment Act 2021](#) sets statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world in four priority areas: air quality, biodiversity, water, and resource efficiency and waste reduction. Biodiversity elements in the Act include:

- Strengthened biodiversity duty. Both onsite and offsite enhancements must be maintained for at least 30 years after completion of a development.
- Biodiversity net gain to ensure developments deliver at least 10% increase in biodiversity
- Local Nature Recovery Strategies to support a Nature Recovery Network.
- Duty upon Local Authorities to consult on street tree felling.
- Strengthen woodland protection enforcement measures.
- Conservation Covenants.
- Protected Site Strategies and Species Conservation Strategies to support the design and delivery of strategic approaches to deliver better outcomes for nature.
- Prohibit larger UK businesses from using commodities associated with wide-scale deforestation.
- Requires regulated businesses to establish a system of due diligence for each regulated commodity used in their supply chain, requires regulated businesses to report on their due diligence, introduces a due diligence enforcement system.

B.430 [The Landscapes Review \(2019\)](#) explores the fragmented and often marginalised system of managing National Parks and AONBs recommends actions to achieve structural reform. The review looks at:

- The existing statutory purposes for National Parks and AONBs and how effectively they are being met.
- The alignment of these purposes with the goals set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan.
- The case for extension or creation of new designated areas.
- How to improve individual and collective governance of National Parks and AONBs, and how that governance interacts with other national assets.
- The financing of National Parks and AONBs.

- How to enhance the environment and biodiversity in existing designations.
- How to build on the existing eight point plan for National Parks and connect more people with the natural environment from all sections of society and improve health and wellbeing.
- How well National Parks and AONBs support communities.
- The process of designating National Parks and AONBs and extending boundary areas, with a view to improving and expediting the process.

B.431 [The Conservation of Habitats and Species \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\)](#)

[Regulations 2019](#) protects biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora, including birds. The Regulations lay down rules for the protection, management and exploitation of such habitats and species, including how adverse effects on such habitats and species should be avoided, minimised and reported.

B.432 [A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment \(2018\)](#) also known as the 25 Year Environment Plan, sets out the UK government action to help the natural world regain and retain good health. The plan sets a series of goals for improving the environment within a generation and leaving it in a better state than we found it, and includes the following objectives and actions relating to biodiversity, flora and fauna:

“We will achieve a growing and resilient network of land, water and sea that is richer in plants and wildlife”.

- At sea, we will do this by:
 - reversing the loss of marine biodiversity and, where practicable, restoring it;
 - increasing the proportion of protected and well-managed seas, and better managing existing protected sites;
 - making sure populations of key species are sustainable with appropriate age structures;
 - ensuring seafloor habitats are productive and sufficiently extensive to support healthy, sustainable ecosystems.
- On land and in freshwaters, we will do this by:
 - restoring 75% of our one million hectares of terrestrial and freshwater protected sites to favourable condition, securing their wildlife value for the long term;

- creating or restoring 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat outside the protected site network, focusing on priority habitats as part of a wider set of land management changes providing extensive benefits;
- taking action to recover threatened, iconic or economically important species of animals, plants and fungi, and where possible to prevent human induced extinction or loss of known threatened species in England and the Overseas Territories; and
- increasing woodland in England in line with our aspiration of 12% cover by 2060: this would involve planting 180,000 hectares by end of 2042.

“We will enhance biosecurity to protect our wildlife and livestock, and boost the resilience of plants and trees”.

- We will do this by:
 - managing and reducing the impact of existing plant and animal diseases; lowering the risk of new ones and tackling invasive non-native species;
 - reaching the detailed goals to be set out in the Tree Health Resilience Plan of 2018;
 - ensuring strong biosecurity protection at our borders, drawing on the opportunities leaving the EU provides; and
 - working with industry to reduce the impact of endemic disease.

B.433 The Government’s strategic direction for biodiversity policy is presented in [Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England’s wildlife and ecosystem services \(2011\)](#), which includes the following aims:

“to halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people.”

B.434 In terms of the planning system, this strategy intends to:

“Through reforms of the planning system, take a strategic approach to planning for nature within and across local areas. This approach will guide development to the best locations, encourage greener design and enable development to enhance natural networks. We will retain the protection and improvement of the natural environment as core objectives of the planning system.”

B.435 [The Environmental Damage \(Prevention and Remediation\) Regulations 2015](#) oblige those who create environmental damage, whether by water pollution, adversely affecting protected species or sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs), or by land pollution that causes risks to human health, to not only cease the damage, but also to implement a wide variety of remedial measures to restore affected areas.

B.436 [Safeguarding our Soils – A Strategy for England \(2009\)](#) sets out how England’s soils will be managed sustainably. It highlights those areas which Defra will prioritise and focus attention on tackling degradation threats, including better protection for agricultural soils; protecting and enhancing stores of soil carbon; building the resilience of soils to a changing climate; preventing soil pollution; effective soil protection during construction and dealing with contaminated land.

B.437 [The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006](#) places a duty on public bodies to conserve biodiversity.

B.438 [The Countryside and Rights of Way Act \(2000\)](#) confirmed the significance of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and created improved arrangements for their management. Section 85 places a statutory duty on all ‘relevant authorities’ to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty when discharging any function affecting land in AONBs.

B.439 [The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 \(as amended\) was](#) enacted primarily to implement the Birds Directive and Bern Convention in Great Britain. The Act received royal assent on 30 October 1981 and was brought into force in incremental steps. It is supplemented by the Wildlife and Countryside (Service of Notices) Act 1985, which relates to notices served under the 1981 Act. The act contains four parts and 17 schedules, which cover:

- Part 1: Wildlife (includes protection of birds, animals and plants; and measures to prevent the establishment of non-native species which may be detrimental to native wildlife).
- Part 2: Nature conservation, the countryside and National Parks (including the designation of protected areas).

- Part 3: Public rights of way.
- Part 4: Miscellaneous provisions of the act.

B.440 [The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949](#) is an Act of Parliament to make provision for National Parks and the establishment of a National Parks Commission; to confer on the Nature Conservancy and local authorities' powers for the establishment and maintenance of nature reserves; to make further provision for the recording, creation, maintenance and improvement of public paths and for securing access to open country.

Local

B.441 [The Dorset Local Nature Partnership's Vision and Strategy \(2023\)](#) sets out the following strategic priorities for the partnership, which include the following strategic pillars relating to biodiversity:

- Natural capital – increasing investment: Dorset has some exceptional natural assets which already underpin the economic and social wellbeing of the county, yet it is still declining in quality and quantity and needs greater investment. We will facilitate funding and lobby for more;
- Natural economy– adding value: A healthy environment is a pre-requisite for a healthy economy globally and locally, it offers opportunities for sustainable economic resilience which does not erode our natural capital. We will support the development of nature-based economic schemes and maximise green finance opportunities;
- Naturally healthy – developing Dorset's 'natural health service': Working with the healthcare system, providers, and land managers, we will aid collaboration to improve access to and connection with nature, build green infrastructure and support better information on how to use the natural world to live better and reduce inequalities.
- Natural resilience – improving environmental and community resilience: In the light of a challenging future, and the impact on health, we will work collaboratively to improve both resilience against and adaption to climate change to enable a sustainable future. We will support local schemes to improve diets and reduce food waste, sensitive farming practices and facilitate greater engagement with the soil that sustains us all.
- Natural understanding – improving engagement in Dorset's environment: Dorset residents and visitors already value their environment. We will support and

develop greater understanding of the impacts we have on the terrestrial and marine environment to ensure good stewardship now and in the future.

- Naturally influence – embedding natural value in policy and decision-making: A founding principle of all LNPs is that we will promote the value of the natural environment in decisions and inform local and national policy making.

B.442 [The Jurassic Coast Partnership Plan 2020-2025 \(Management Framework for the Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage site\) \(2020\)](#) seeks to protect the World Heritage Site, with the following strategic aims:

- Protect the Site's Outstanding Universal Value and World Heritage Status;
- Conserve and enhance the Site, its attributes, presentation and setting;
- Inspire and engage people with the Site and deepen their understanding of its values;
- Maintain and improve access to and experience of the Site; and
- Enable the Site's World Heritage Status to be of benefit to people and communities.

B.443 [The Dorset National Landscape Management Plan 2019 – 2024 \(2019\)](#) has the following objectives relating to landscape:

- Remove existing and avoid creating new features which are detrimental to landscape character, tranquillity, and the National Landscape's special qualities;
- Require the use of previously developed land where this will limit the expansion of built development into sensitive undeveloped countryside;
- Protect and where possible enhance the quality of views into, within and out of the AONB;
- Protect the pattern of landscape features, including settlements, that underpin local identity;
- Avoid and reduce cumulative effects that erode landscape character and quality;
- The landward and seaward setting of the AONB will be planned and managed in a manner that conserves and enhances the character and appearance of the AONB;
- The conservation, enhancement and creation/restoration of appropriate landscape features such as landmarks, artworks, boundary features, tree

clumps etc, will be regarded favourably. There should be a net gain in terms of the landscape and its constituent elements; and

- Support development that conserves and enhances the AONB, ensuring sensitive siting and design respects local character. Development that does not conserve and enhance the AONB will only be supported if it is necessary and in the public interest. Major development decisions need to include detailed consideration of relevant exceptional circumstances.

B.444 [The Cranborne Chase National Landscape Management Plan 2019-2024 \(2019\)](#) sets out the following objectives for those responsible for looking after the Cranborne Chase National Landscape:

- The landscape character, tranquillity and special qualities of the National Landscape are fully understood by policy makers and land managers;
- The landscape character, tranquillity and special qualities of the National Landscape and its settings are conserved and enhanced;
- Understand the rate and degree of landscape change within the National Landscape;
- Dark Night Sky status is secured for the National Landscape ;
- Farmers, foresters, fishery managers and gamekeepers are aware of how their activities can strengthen landscape character and enhance the natural environment of the National Landscape; and
- Strategic and local decisions are formulated taking full account of the purposes of designation and are implemented in a comprehensive, coherent and consistent way with regard to the character and quality of the area and its setting, together with views into and out of the AONB such that these decisions result in no net detriment to the special qualities of the National Landscape.

B.445 [The Dorset Biodiversity Strategy \(Mid Term review\) \(2010\)](#) contains the following guiding principle:

- Develop ecologically resilient and varied landscapes.

B.446 [The Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan 3 \(2011\)](#) includes the following objective:

- Creating attractive public realm and streetscapes.

Baseline Information

B.447 The Dorset landscape is unique in its landscape character, variety and quality. This diversity is a product of the range of natural, physical factors such as geology, soils and climate.

B.448 Geology dominates the landscape and local character of Dorset as the great diversity of rock types, erosional processes and structures have created the unique, variable and distinctive countryside. (For more information go to the [Landscape Character Assessment](#) page on Dorset Council website.)

B.449 The ongoing Dorset Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) Study identifies the different landscape character areas in Dorset.

B.450 The central parts of Dorset are dominated by the vast swathe of chalk which runs across Dorset from the southeast to the northeast, and beyond the Dorset Council Local Plan area to Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire. It is an elevated, spacious landscape with a prominent escarpment with a series of ridge tops which offer uninterrupted panoramic views of the surrounding landscape, with undulating farmlands which define large areas of Dorset.

B.451 The shallow dip slope of the southern extent of the chalk transitions to the heathland landscapes of the Poole Basin towards the southeast of the Dorset Plan Area. The Poole Basin is defined by an undulating lowland with remnants of a once extensive area of heathland which has been largely lost due to land use change.

B.452 A high chalk ridge, which once linked Purbeck to the Isle of Wight, separates the heathlands of the Poole Basin from the secluded clay valley to the south.

B.453 The sequence of cliff and bays along the Purbeck coastline, and the remaining coastline of the Dorset Council Local Plan area, have been carved by the powerful forces of coastal erosion and deposition, leaving a legacy unique landscape features like Lulworth Cove, Durdle Door, Chesil Beach, and the beaches of Studland Bay.

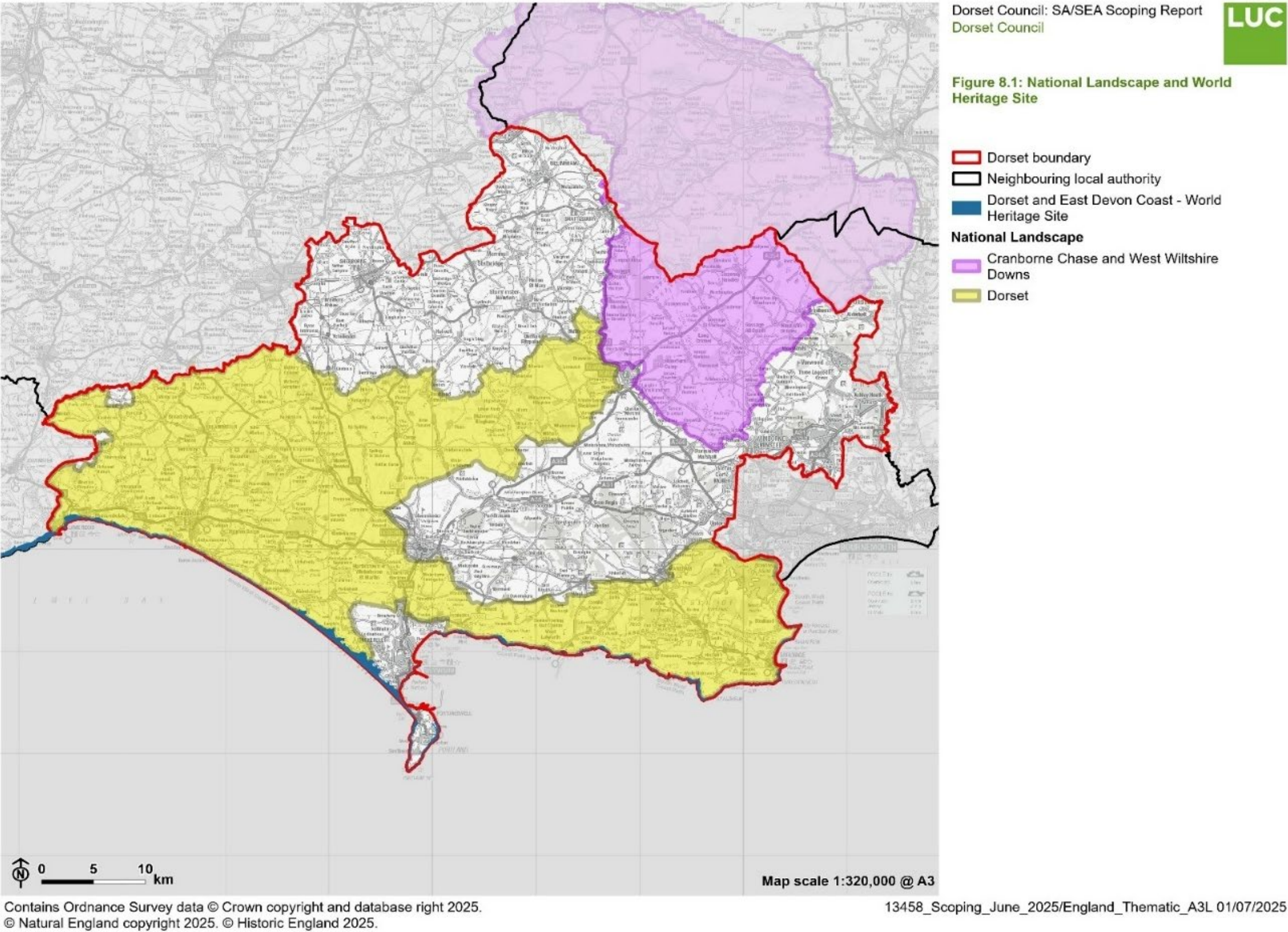
B.454 To the north of the chalk escarpment and towards the northern site boundary lies the Blackmore Vale, an extensive, flat clay vale bordered by limestone ridges to the North West and deeply undulating foothills beside the escarpment to the south and east of the vale.

B.455 The landscape of the west of the county is more varied, reflecting the complex geology, with steep distinctive greensand ridges separating clusters of deeply incised valleys and broad rolling farmland.

B.456 The Dorset Council Local Plan area contains the following National Landscapes, which have been designated for conservation in recognition of outstanding scenic quality and significant landscape value of these areas (Figure B.19 below):

- Dorset National Landscape: occupies approximately 1,128km² or 44.7% of the plan area and is characterised by chalk downland with agriculture being the major land use including mixed arable and livestock grazing; and
- Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire National Landscape: Occupies approximately 278km² or 11.0% of the plan area and is characterised by rolling downland fringed to the west by a steep scarp slope. The agricultural and forestry sectors are the main employers in the area and these have a significant influence over the landscape.

Figure B.19: A map showing the extent of the Dorset National Landscape and Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire National Landscape and UNESCO World Heritage Site within the Dorset Council Local Plan area



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B.457 In addition, the vast majority of the 144km coastline within the Dorset Council Local Plan area is part of the Dorset and East Devon Coast UNESCO World Heritage Site (Figure 8.2). The designation stretches 155km of coastline from Exmouth in Devon which lies beyond the plan area to the west to Studland Bay towards the eastern end of the Dorset Council Local Plan area. The designation only includes the undeveloped areas of the coast, and therefore omits the sections of the urbanised coastline such as Weymouth, Portland, Bridport, Lyme Regis and Swanage.

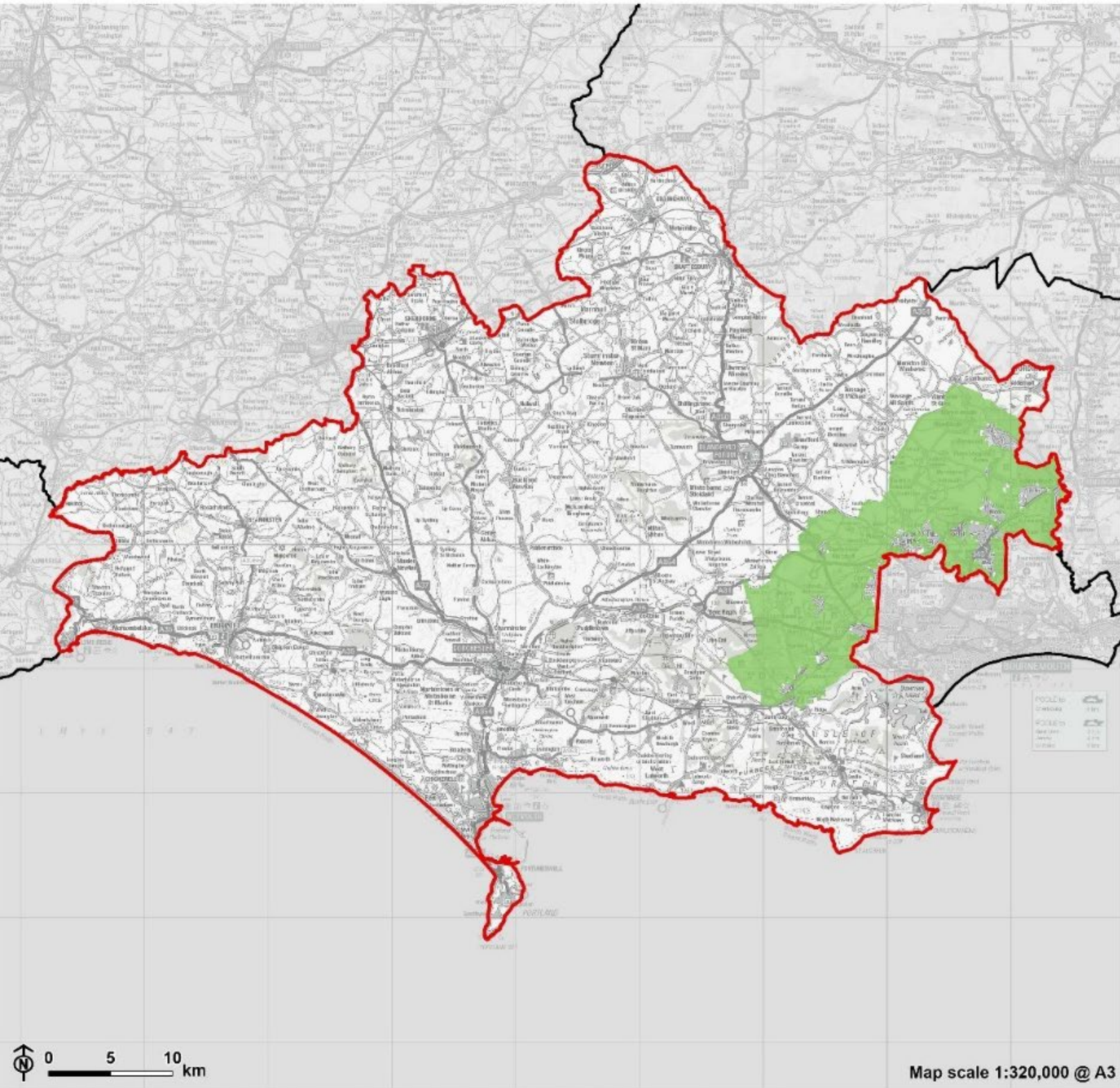
B.458 The Dorset and East Devon Coast UNESCO World Heritage Site recognises the worldwide importance of this section of coastline for the outstanding combination of geological, paleontological and geomorphological features.

B.459 The site displays approximately 185 million years of the Earth's history, including a number of internationally important fossil localities and a range of outstanding examples of coastal geomorphological features, landforms and processes.

B.460 The South East Dorset Green Belt occupies approximately 168km² of open land in and around Upton, Wimborne, Ferndown, Poole, Bournemouth and Christchurch and stretching south-west as far as Wareham (See Figure B.20).

B.461 The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

Figure B.20: A map showing the extent of the Green Belt within the Dorset Council Local Plan area



Dorset Council: SA/SEA Scoping Report
Dorset Council



Figure 8.2: Green Belt extent

- Dorset boundary
- Neighbouring local authority
- Green Belt

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Sustainability Issues

B.462 The key environmental issues relating to landscape are:

- To conserve and enhance the landscape character and special qualities of the Dorset National Landscape and Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire National Landscape, which together cover approximately 1,407km² or 55.7% of the Dorset Council Local Plan area, whilst also providing for development.
- Protecting the Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site's outstanding universal value and setting whilst also providing for development.
- Controlling urban sprawl in southeast Dorset by restricting harmful development within the Green Belt.

9. Cultural Heritage

B.463 Cultural Heritage is defined by UNESCO as:

“the legacy of physical artefacts of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations.”

B.464 Cultural Heritage comprises of tangible cultural heritage, which refers to physical things like buildings and monuments, and intangible cultural heritage, which refers to things that are not physical but exist spiritually or socially, such as customs and ways of life.

B.465 Cultural heritage makes a positive contribution to the economy, the character and identity of a place, and general wellbeing in the community.

B.466 Heritage helps to drive the economy largely through tourism and by providing an attractive environment to work, study and undertake business. England's heritage sector is estimated to have contributed £44.9 billion in Gross Value Added (GVA) to the UK economy in 2022 and supported the employment of over 523,000 workers. This includes providing approximately 201,000 direct jobs, constituting 0.72% of England's workforce (Data quoted from The Economic Value of the Heritage Sector | Heritage Counts | Historic England article (November 2024) on Historic England website).

B.467 Historic buildings play a key role in defining local character and distinctiveness, providing a sense of place and a visual link to the history of an area.

B.468 Whilst the wider social value of culture on the wellbeing of the community is more difficult to measure, it is clear that it influences views, values and relationships across the community, controls social behaviour and increases mutual understanding and social cohesion. In terms of the built environment, studies have shown the positive influence upon quality of life and place, indicating that:

- 81% of people said that 'looking after historic buildings, monuments and archaeology to safeguard the places people love' was personally important to them;
- 20% of people said that historic buildings were an important source of local pride—ranking third after local parks/green spaces (36%) and people (35%);
- 69% of people said that community heritage was important or very important for instilling local pride and bringing communities together.

B.469 For these reasons, maintaining cultural heritage is a key element of ensuring that sustainable development is achieved.

Key messages from other plans, programmes and objectives

International

B.470 [Valletta Treaty \(1992\) formerly the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage \(Revisited\)](#) aims to protect the European archaeological heritage “as a source of European collective memory and as an instrument for historical and scientific study”.

B.471 [European Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe \(1985\)](#) defines ‘architectural heritage’ and requires that the signatories maintain an inventory of it and take statutory measures to ensure its protection. Conservation policies are also required to be integrated into planning systems and other spheres of Government influence as per the text of the convention.

B.472 The [UNESCO World Heritage Convention \(1972\)](#), the key objective of which was to protect cultural and natural heritage, considers ‘that parts of the cultural or natural heritage are of outstanding interest and therefore need to be preserved as part of the world heritage of mankind as a whole’.

National

B.473 Of relevance to the approach of the planning system to the historic environment National Planning Policy Framework (2024) (NPPF) contains an environmental objective to contribute to the protection and enhancement of the built and historic environment. The document also sets out a strategy to seek “the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay and other threats.” Such a strategy is required to take into consideration the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and bringing them into viable use.

B.474 It should also be considerate of the wider benefits of conserving the historic environment, the contribution new development can make in terms of character and distinctiveness and the opportunity for the historic environment to contribute to this character and distinctiveness. Local authorities should also maintain or have access to a historic environment record which is to be supported by up-to-date evidence.

B.475 [Historic England's Corporate Plan 2023-2026 \(2023\)](#) contains the action plan which sets out how the aims of the corporate plan will be delivered. The plan includes priorities to demonstrate how Historic England will continue to work towards delivering the heritage sector's priorities for the historic environment.

B.476 [The Environment Act 2021](#) sets out the UK's new framework for environmental protection. It includes the creation of Conservation Covenant agreements between a landowner and a responsible body for the purposes of conservation. This can include to preserve land as a place of 'archaeological, architectural artistic, cultural or historic interest.'

B.477 [The Heritage Statement 2017](#) sets out how the Government will support the heritage sector and help it to protect and care for our heritage and historic environment, in order to maximise the economic and social impact of heritage and to ensure that everyone can enjoy and benefit from it.

B.478 [Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment, Historic England Advice Note 8 \(2016\)](#) sets out requirements for the consideration and appraisal of effects on the historic environment as part of the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment process.

B.479 [The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England \(2010\)](#) sets out the Government's vision for the historic environment. It calls for those who have the power to shape the historic environment to recognise its value and to manage it in an intelligent manner in light of the contribution that it can make to social, economic and cultural life. Includes reference to promoting the role of the historic environment within the Government's response to climate change and the wider sustainable development agenda.

B.480 [The Town and Country Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act \(1990\)](#) requires local authorities to "have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses" when considering applications for listed building consent. With respect to any buildings or other land in a Conservation Area, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

B.481 [Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act 1979](#) is a law passed by the UK government to protect the archaeological heritage of England & Wales and Scotland. Under this Act, the Secretary of State has a duty to compile and maintain a schedule of ancient monuments of national importance, in order to help preserve them. It also creates criminal offences for unauthorised works to, or damage of, these monuments.

B.482 [Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953](#) is an Act of Parliament that makes provision for the compilation of a register of gardens and other land (parks and gardens, and battlefields).

Local

B.483 [The Dorset Local Nature Partnership's Vision and Strategy \(2023\)](#) sets out the following strategic priorities for the partnership, which include the following strategic pillars relating to biodiversity:

- Natural capital – increasing investment: Dorset has some exceptional natural assets which already underpin the economic and social wellbeing of the county, yet it is still declining in quality and quantity and needs greater investment. We will facilitate funding and lobby for more;
- Natural economy– adding value: A healthy environment is a pre-requisite for a healthy economy globally and locally, it offers opportunities for sustainable economic resilience which does not erode our natural capital. We will support the development of nature-based economic schemes and maximise green finance opportunities;
- Naturally healthy – developing Dorset's 'natural health service': Working with the healthcare system, providers, and land managers, we will aid collaboration to improve access to and connection with nature, build green infrastructure and support better information on how to use the natural world to live better and reduce inequalities.
- Natural resilience – improving environmental and community resilience: In the light of a challenging future, and the impact on health, we will work collaboratively to improve both resilience against and adaption to climate change to enable a sustainable future. We will support local schemes to improve diets and reduce food waste, sensitive farming practices and facilitate greater engagement with the soil that sustains us all.
- Natural understanding – improving engagement in Dorset's environment: Dorset residents and visitors already value their environment. We will support and develop greater understanding of the impacts we have on the terrestrial and marine environment to ensure good stewardship now and in the future.
- Naturally influence – embedding natural value in policy and decision-making: A founding principle of all LNPs is that we will promote the value of the natural environment in decisions and inform local and national policy making.

B.484 [Dorset Historic Environment Record Forward Plan 2021-25 \(2021\)](#) sets out the operating framework for Dorset's Historic Environment Record (HER). The Plan provides comprehensive information on the historic environment as an evidence base for management strategies. It also outlines how the HER supports sustainable development by ensuring that heritage considerations are integrated into the decision-making process.

B.485 [The Dorset National Landscape Management Plan 2019 – 2024 \(2019\)](#) has the following objectives relating to the historic environment:

B.486 Promote and support the celebration and conservation of local distinctiveness.

B.487 [The Cranborne Chase National Landscape Management Plan 2019-2024 \(2019\)](#) sets out the following objectives for those responsible for looking after the Cranborne Chase National Landscape:

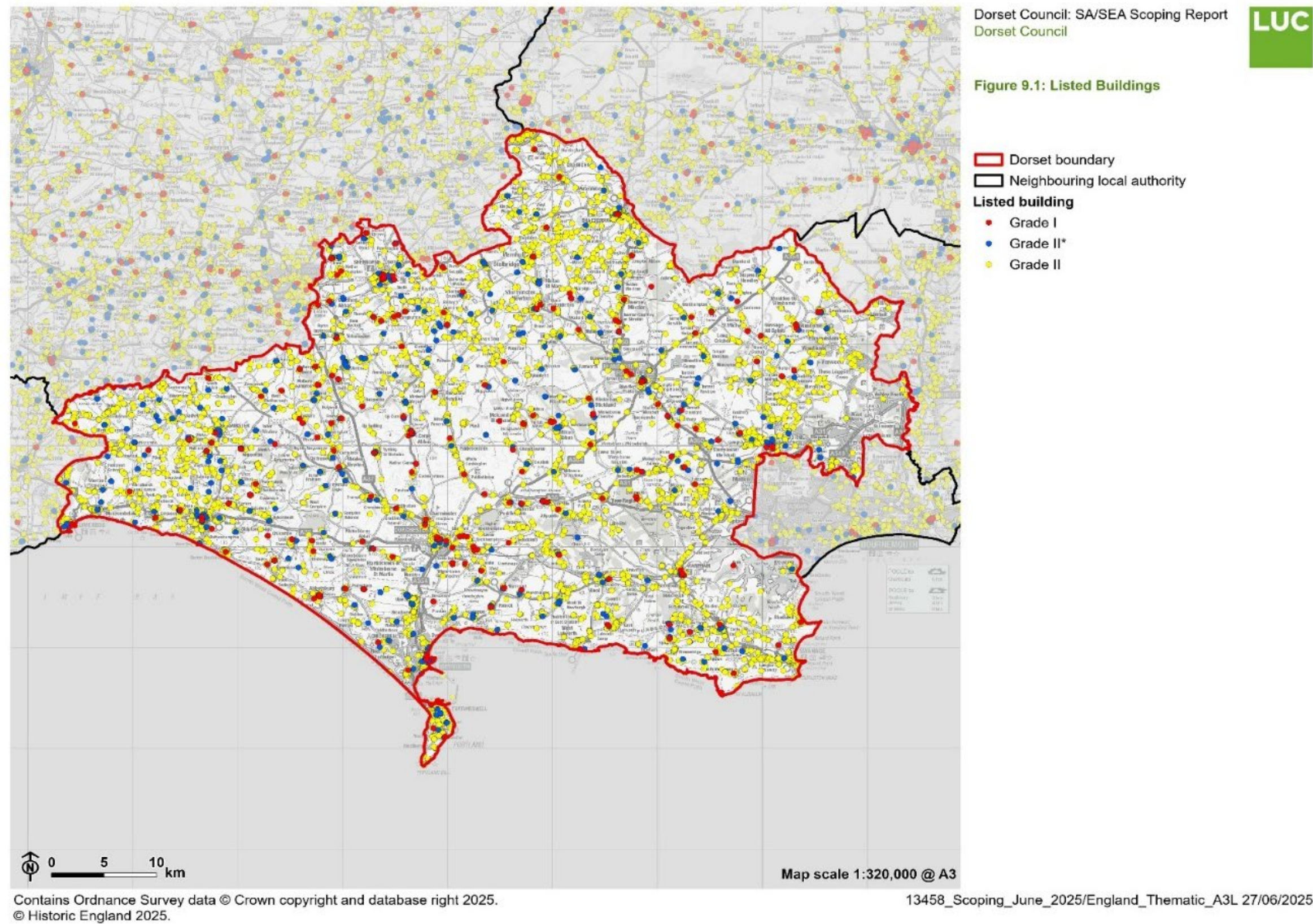
- The historic environment and cultural heritage of the National Landscape is conserved and enhanced
- The historic environment, cultural heritage and traditions of the National Landscape are understood, valued and celebrated

Baseline Information

B.488 The Dorset Council Local Plan area includes a rich historic and built heritage which include the following designations:

- Scheduled Monuments: Nationally important archaeological sites;
- Conservation Areas: Areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance;
- Historic Parks and Gardens: Gardens which are of special historic interest.
- Listed Buildings: Buildings of special architectural and historic interest. Includes Grade I (Building of exceptional interest); Grade II* (particularly important and more than special interest); and Grade II (special interest) Listed Buildings (Figure B.21).

Figure B.21: A map showing the location of listed buildings within the Dorset Council Local Plan Area



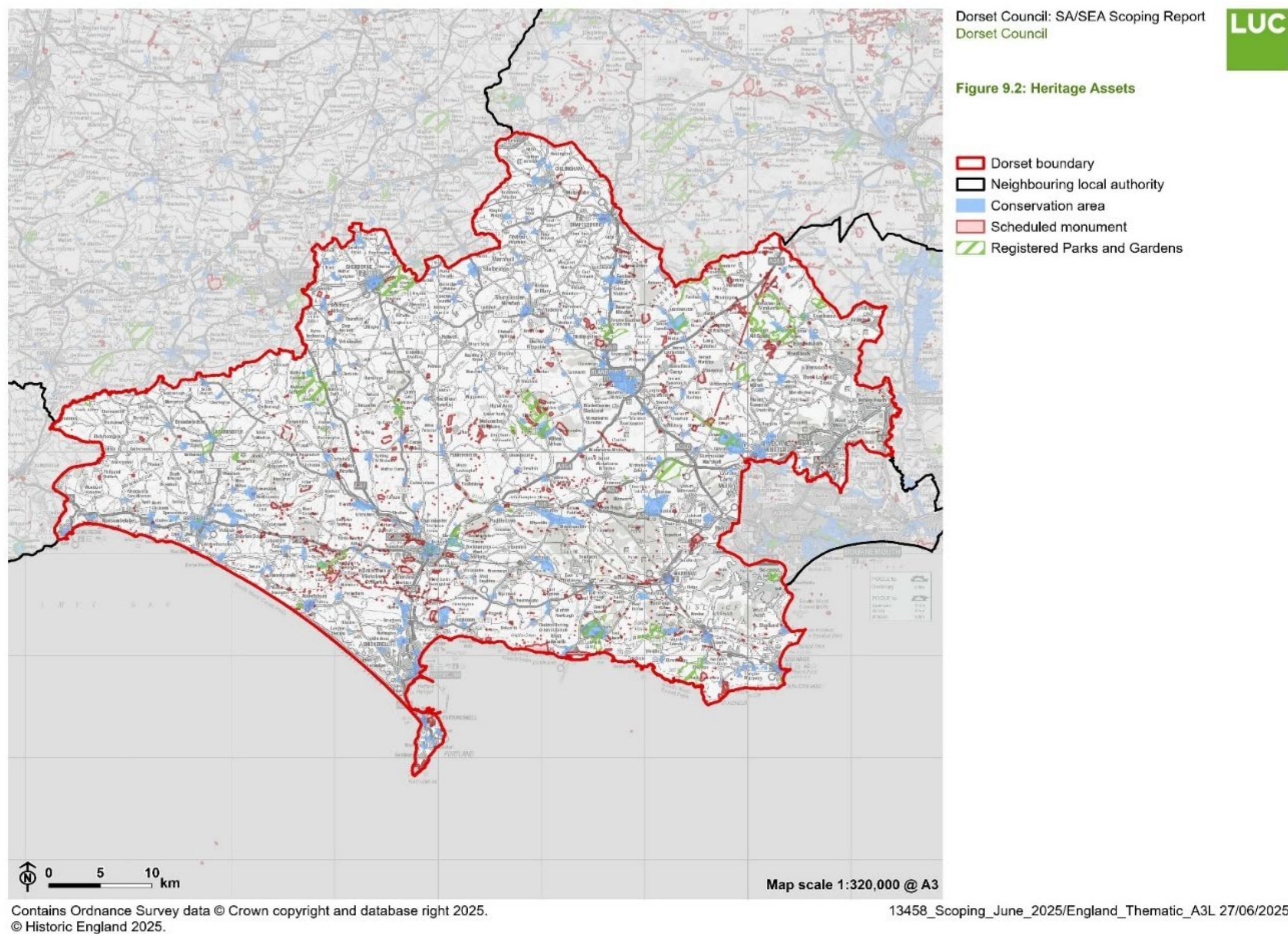
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B.489 There are 1,016 Scheduled Monuments of national archaeological importance in Dorset, representing approximately 5% of England's Scheduled Monuments. These areas of archaeological importance on a national level are widely distributed across the Dorset Council Local Plan Area. Area. There are also over 100 Conservation Areas in Dorset, as well as numerous Registered Parks and Gardens (Figure B.22).

Figure B.22: A map showing the extent of heritage assets within the Dorset Council Local Plan Area



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B.490 The Heritage at Risk Register is published annually by Historic England and provides a list of heritage assets, such as listed buildings, or scheduled monuments that are at risk as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development, or are vulnerable to becoming so. [Approximately a quarter of the scheduled monuments in Dorset are 'at risk'](#)

B.491 There are currently 208 items on the Heritage At Risk Register in the Dorset Plan Area, comprising:

- Scheduled Monuments: 196
- Listed Buildings: 11
- Registered Park and Garden: 1

Sustainability Issues

B.492 The key environmental issues relating to cultural heritage include:

- The rich historic and built heritage of the plan area is an irreplaceable resource, and important features of historic, cultural and archaeological interest must be conserved and enhanced to prevent their loss;
- Sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets by putting them to viable uses which are consistent with their conservation; and
- Ensuring that new development makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness, and take opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

10. Human Health and Population

B.493 The term ‘health’ is defined by the World Health Organisation as a:

“State of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”.

B.494 The health of a person is often determined by a person's individual characteristics and behaviours, their social and economic environment, and the physical environment (Source: ‘The Determinants of Health’, World Health Organisation, May 2011).

B.495 It follows therefore that health is closely related to social conditions. A strong, inclusive society, with equal opportunities for all and where crime and fear of crime do not undermine community cohesion, promotes personal wellbeing and encourages a higher quality of life, improving health overall.

B.496 Whilst the link between public health and the economic environment is complex, it is generally true that wealthier countries have healthier populations and poverty adversely affects life expectancy. In the UK, the increase in lifestyle related and chronic diseases has been experienced particularly among socio-economically disadvantaged groups and areas. (Source: ‘The UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy’, HM Government, March 2005)

B.497 Since the health of an individual is also closely linked to the physical environment in which they exist, the environmental problems considered in the preceding chapters, such as air pollution and flooding, also influence human health.

B.498 This chapter also explores the issues relating to the population and demographic structure, and social issues such as crime, healthcare and education.

Key messages from other plans, programmes and objectives

International

B.499 The United Nations developed a series of global development goals which aim to deliver sustainable development in the document titled [Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development \(2015\)](#) which include:

- End poverty in all its forms everywhere;

- End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture;
- Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages;
- Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;
- Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all;
- Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all;
- Reduce inequality within and among countries;
- Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; and
- Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

B.500 The [United Nations Declaration on Sustainable Development \(Johannesburg Declaration\) \(2002\)](#) sets a broad framework for international sustainable development, including building a humane, equitable and caring global society aware of the need for human dignity for all, renewable energy and energy efficiency, sustainable consumption and production and resource efficiency.

B.501 [United Nations Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters \(the 'Aarhus Convention'\) \(1998\)](#) establishes a number of rights of the public (individuals and their associations) with regard to the environment. The Parties to the Convention are required to make the necessary provisions so that public authorities (at national, regional, or local level) will contribute to these rights to become effective.

National

B.502 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) includes as part of its social objective the promotion of “strong, vibrant and healthy communities” by:

“ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural wellbeing.”

Ultimately planning policies and planning decision making should “aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places”.

B.503 In relation to health and well-being, healthy, inclusive and safe places which promote social interaction and integration, are safe and accessible, and enable and support healthy lifestyles are supported through the framework. [The Building for a Healthy Life design toolkit](#) can be used by local authorities to assist in the creation of places that are better for people and nature.

B.504 One of the core planning principles is to “take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community”. It is identified in the document that “a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities”. Furthermore, the retention and enhancement of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship is supported. Importantly, Local Plans should also “contain policies to optimise the use of land in their area and meet as much of the identified need for housing as possible”. Additionally, larger scale developments such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns are required by the NPPF to be guided by policies set within a vision that looks at least 30 years ahead.

B.505 The updated PPG clarifies that this requirement of the NPPF is to be applied “where most of the development arising from larger scale developments proposed in the plan will be delivered well beyond the plan period, and where delivery of those developments extends 30 years or longer from the start of the plan period”. Furthermore, where this requirement applies “the authority will need to ensure that their vision reflects the long-term nature of their strategy for the plan or those larger scale developments. It is not anticipated that such visions would require evidence in addition to that already produced to support the plan”.

B.506 The need for policies to be reflective of this longer time period is to take account of the likely timescale for delivery.

B.507 Plan making through the guidance of the NPPF recognises the important role of access to open spaces and other facilities which provide opportunities for sport and physical activity has in terms of health and wellbeing of communities. The importance of delivering a sufficient choice of school places to meet the needs of existing and new communities is also recognised in the document and local planning authorities should take a “proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement”.

B.508 The [Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Levelling Up and Regeneration Act \(2023\)](#) sets out the direction for planning and makes provisions to support the levelling-up agenda. It seeks to streamline the planning process whilst attaching greater weight to development plans. It also aims to improve infrastructure delivery with a new levy system, improve alignment between plans to address cross-boundary issues, and will introduce added protection for heritage assets. The Act also states that existing EU-generated systems of SEA, HRA and EIA will eventually be replaced by a simpler process known as 'Environmental Outcomes Reports'.

B.509 The [Green Infrastructure Framework \(2023\)](#) will help increase the amount of green cover to 40% in urban residential areas. The Green Infrastructure Framework provides a structure to analyse where greenspace in urban environments is needed most. It aims to support equitable access to greenspace across the country, with an overarching target for everyone being able to reach good quality greenspace in their local area. From parks to green roofs, and increased tree cover, the Green Infrastructure Framework will make a significant contribution to nature recovery by embedding nature into new developments. Increasing the extent and connectivity of nature-rich habitats will also help increase wildlife populations, build resilience to the impacts of climate change, and ensure our cities are habitable for the future

B.510 The [Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan \(2023\)](#) sets out a comprehensive strategy to combat anti-social behaviour (ASB) and restore public confidence in community safety. The plan emphasises a zero-tolerance approach and introduces several key measures, including increasing the use of hotspot policing and enforcement, and changing laws and systems to take a zero-tolerance approach to anti-social behaviour.

B.511 The [Homes England Strategic Plan 2023 to 2028 \(2023\)](#) sets out a vision to drive regeneration and housing delivery, to ensure that more homes are built in areas of greatest need, to improve affordability, and make a more resilient and diverse housing market.

B.512 [The State of the Environment: Health, People and the Environment \(2023\)](#) focuses on the relationship between human health and people's access to and connection with a clean, high quality natural environment. It presents information on England's environment, and people's exposure to environmental pollutants, flooding and climate change in relation to human health. It highlights environmental inequalities that contribute to differences in health outcomes for people in England.

B.513 The [White Paper Levelling Up the United Kingdom \(2022\)](#) sets out how the UK Government will spread opportunity more equally across the UK. It comprises 12 UK-wide missions to achieve by 2030. Missions which relate to population, health and wellbeing state that by 2030:

- The gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by five years.
- Well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.
- Homicide, serious violence, and neighbourhood crime will have fallen, focused on the worst-affected areas.
- Pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.
- The number of primary school children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths will have significantly increased. In England, this will mean 90% of children will achieve the expected standard, and the percentage of children meeting the expected standard in the worst performing areas will have increased by over a third.
- Renters will have a secure path to ownership with the number of first-time buyers increasing in all areas; and the Government's ambition is for the number of non-decent rented homes to have fallen by 50%, with the biggest improvements in the lowest performing areas.

B.514 [A fairer private rented sector White Paper \(2022\)](#) aims to build upon the vision of the Levelling Up White Paper and reform the Private Rented Sector and improve housing quality. It outlines that everyone deserves a secure and decent home and outlines measures to improve the experience of renters in the Private Rented Sector.

B.515 The [National Design Guide \(2021\)](#) sets out the Government's priorities for well-designed places in the form of ten characteristics: context, identity, built form, movement, nature, public spaces, uses, homes and buildings, resources and lifespan.

B.516 [Build Back Better: Our Plan for Health and Social Care \(2021\)](#) sets out the government's new plan for health and social care. It provides an overview of how this plan will tackle the elective backlog in the NHS and put the NHS on a sustainable footing. It sets out details of the plan for adult social care in England, including a cap on social care costs and how financial assistance will work for those without substantial assets. It covers wider support that the government will provide for the social care system, and how the government will improve the integration of health and social care. It explains the government's plan to introduce a new Health and Social Care Levy.

B.517 [COVID-19 Mental Health and Wellbeing Recovery Action Plan \(2021\)](#) sets out the Government's plan to prevent, mitigate and respond to the mental health impacts of the pandemic during 2021 and 2022. Its main objectives are to support the general population to take action and look after their own mental wellbeing; to take action to address factors which play a crucial role in shaping mental health and wellbeing outcomes; and, to support services to meet the need for specialist support.

B.518 [The Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper \(2020\)](#) sets out the Government's actions to ensure residents in social housing are safe, listened to, live in good quality homes and have access to redress when things go wrong.

B.519 [Using the planning system to promote healthy weight environments \(2020\), Addendum \(2021\)](#) provides a framework and starting point for local authorities to clearly set out in local planning guidance how best to achieve healthy weight environments based on local evidence and needs, by focusing on environments that enable healthier eating and help promote more physical activity as the default. The Addendum provides updates on the implications for planning for a healthier food environment, specifically on the hot food takeaways retail uses, and sets out recommended actions in light of changes to the Use Class Order (UCO) in England from 1st September 2020.

B.520 [Public Health England, PHE Strategy 2020-25 \(2019\)](#) identifies PHE's priorities upon which to focus over this five-year period to protect people and help people to live longer in good health.

B.521 [A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment \(2018\)](#) sets out goals for improving the environment within the next 25 years. It details how the Government will work with communities and businesses to leave the environment in a better state than it is presently. Identifies six key areas around which action will be focused. Those of relevance to the topics of population growth, health and wellbeing are 'using and managing land sustainably' and 'connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing'. Actions that will be taken as part of these two key areas are as follows:

- Using and managing land sustainably:
- Embed an 'environmental net gain' principle for development, including housing and infrastructure.
- Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing:
- Help people improve their health and wellbeing by using green spaces including through mental health services.

- Encourage children to be close to nature, in and out of school, with particular focus on disadvantaged areas.
- ‘Green’ our towns and cities by creating green infrastructure and planting one million urban trees.

B.522 [The Environmental Noise Regulations \(2018\)](#) apply to environmental noise, mainly from transport. The regulations require regular noise mapping and action planning for road, rail and aviation noise and noise in large urban areas. They also require Noise Action Plans based on the maps for road and rail noise and noise in large urban areas. The Action Plans identify Important Areas (areas exposed to the highest levels of noise) and suggest ways the relevant authorities can reduce these. Major airports and those which affect large urban areas are also required to produce and publish their own Noise Action Plans separately. The Regulations do not apply to noise from domestic activities such as noise created by neighbours; at workplaces; inside means of transport; or military activities in military areas.

B.523 [The Housing White Paper 2017 \(Fixing our broken housing market\)](#) sets out ways to address the shortfall in affordable homes and boost housing supply. The White Paper focuses on the following:

- Planning for the right homes in the right places – Higher densities in appropriate areas, protecting the Green Belt while making more land available for housing by maximising the contribution from brownfield and surplus public land, regenerating estates, releasing more small and medium-sized sites, allowing rural communities to grow and making it easier to build new settlements.
- Building homes faster – Improved speed of planning cases, ensuring infrastructure is provided and supporting developers to build out more quickly.
- Diversifying the Market – Backing small and medium-sized house builders, custom-build, institutional investors, new contractors, housing associations.
- Helping people now – supporting home ownership and providing affordable housing for all types of people, including the most vulnerable.

B.524 [Planning Policy for Traveller Sites \(2015\)](#) sets out the Government’s planning policy for traveller sites, replacing the older version published in March 2012. The Government’s overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.

B.525 [Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard \(2015\)](#) sets out the Government’s new nationally described space standard. The standard deals with internal space within new dwellings and sets out requirements for the

Gross Internal (floor) Area of new dwellings at a defined level of occupancy, as well as floor areas and dimensions for key parts of the home.

B.526 [Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change Report Ready for Ageing? \(2013\)](#) warns that society is underprepared for the ageing population.

The report states “longer lives can be a great benefit, but there has been a collective failure to address the implications and without urgent action this great boon could turn into a series of miserable crises”. The report highlights the under provision of specialist housing for older people and the need to plan for the housing needs of the older population as well as younger people.

B.527 [Fair Society, Healthy Lives \(2011\)](#) investigated health inequalities in England and the actions needed in order to tackle them. Subsequently, a supplementary report was prepared providing additional evidence relating to spatial planning and health on the basis that there is “overwhelming evidence that health and environmental inequalities are inexorably linked and that poor environments contribute significantly to poor health and health inequalities”. [Marmot Review 10 Years On \(2020\)](#) revisits Fair Society, Healthy Lives. It found that, since 2010, life expectancy in England has stalled, which suggests society has stopped improving. In addition, there are marked regional differences in life expectancy – the more deprived the area, the shorter the life expectancy. Mortality rates are increasing in those aged 45-49, child poverty has increased and there is a housing crisis and rise in homelessness.

B.528 [Laying the foundations: A housing strategy for England \(2011\)](#) aims to provide support to deliver new homes and improve social mobility.

B.529 [Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Our strategy for public health in England \(2010\)](#) sets out how the Government's approach to public health challenges will:

- Protect the population from health threats – led by central Government, with a strong system to the frontline.
- Empower local leadership and encourage wide responsibility across society to improve everyone's health and wellbeing and tackle the wider factors that influence it.
- Focus on key outcomes, doing what works to deliver them, with transparency of outcomes to enable accountability through a proposed new public health outcomes framework.
- Reflect the Government's core values of freedom, fairness and responsibility by strengthening self-esteem, confidence and personal responsibility; positively

promoting healthy behaviours and lifestyles; and adapting the environment to make healthy choices easier.

- Balance the freedoms of individuals and organisations with the need to avoid harm to others, use a 'ladder' of interventions to determine the least intrusive approach necessary to achieve the desired effect and aim to make voluntary approaches work before resorting to regulation.

B.530 [The Environmental Noise Regulations 2006](#) require regular noise mapping and action planning for road, rail and aviation noise and noise in large urban areas. They also require Noise Action Plans based on the maps for road and rail noise and noise in large urban areas. The Action Plans identify Important Areas (areas exposed to the highest levels of noise) and suggest ways the relevant authorities can reduce these. Major airports and those which affect large urban areas are also required to produce and publish their own Noise Action Plans separately. The Regulations do not apply to noise from domestic activities such as noise created by neighbours; at workplaces; inside means of transport; or military activities in military areas.

Local

B.531 [The Pan-Dorset Reducing Reoffending Strategy 2024 to 2027 \(2024\)](#) seeks to reduce reoffending rates among adult and young offenders in the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) and Dorset Council areas. The Reducing Reoffending Strategy demonstrates direct alignment with two of the main priorities set by the BCP CSP of tackling violent crime in all its forms, and tackling issues related to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), including domestic abuse (DA).

B.532 [The Community Safety Plan 2023 - 2026 \(2025-2026 Refresh\) \(2023\)](#) aims to:

- reduce crime and the fear of crime;
- address risk, threat and harm to victims and local communities; and
- facilitate the strengthening of Dorset's communities in the delivery of local initiatives

B.533 [The Dorset Local Nature Partnership's Vision and Strategy \(2023\)](#) sets out the following strategic priorities for the partnership, which include the following strategic pillars relating to biodiversity:

- Natural capital – increasing investment: Dorset has some exceptional natural assets which already underpin the economic and social wellbeing of the county, yet it is still declining in quality and quantity and needs greater investment. We will facilitate funding and lobby for more;

- Natural economy– adding value: A healthy environment is a pre-requisite for a healthy economy globally and locally, it offers opportunities for sustainable economic resilience which does not erode our natural capital. We will support the development of nature-based economic schemes and maximise green finance opportunities;
- Naturally healthy – developing Dorset’s ‘natural health service’: Working with the healthcare system, providers, and land managers, we will aid collaboration to improve access to and connection with nature, build green infrastructure and support better information on how to use the natural world to live better and reduce inequalities.
- Natural resilience – improving environmental and community resilience: In the light of a challenging future, and the impact on health, we will work collaboratively to improve both resilience against and adaption to climate change to enable a sustainable future. We will support local schemes to improve diets and reduce food waste, sensitive farming practices and facilitate greater engagement with the soil that sustains us all.
- Natural understanding – improving engagement in Dorset’s environment: Dorset residents and visitors already value their environment. We will support and develop greater understanding of the impacts we have on the terrestrial and marine environment to ensure good stewardship now and in the future.
- Naturally influence – embedding natural value in policy and decision-making: A founding principle of all LNPs is that we will promote the value of the natural environment in decisions and inform local and national policy making.

B.534 [Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020 to 2023 \(2020\)](#) seeks to improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities. The health and wellbeing strategy focuses on three priorities:

- empowering communities;
- promoting healthy lives; and
- support and challenge

B.535 [The Dorset National Landscape Management Plan 2019 – 2024 \(2019\)](#) has the following objectives relating to human health and population:

- Promote sustainable living among communities in the National Landscape to reduce impacts on the local environment and increase access to environmental benefits;

- Support and develop activities that increase health and wellbeing by establishing and strengthening connections to the landscape and nature;
- Develop and support measures to improve accessibility to the coast & countryside for all, where compatible with the purposes of AONB designation;
- Rationalise and improve interpretation to enhance visitor experience, reduce clutter in the landscape and inform the public about the landscape and safety;
- Support initiatives for children and young people to understand more about the Dorset AONB and its special qualities through learning outside the classroom, curricular and extra-curricular activities;
- Support lifelong learning opportunities in the Dorset AONB;
- Support measures to improve connectivity and functionality of the public rights of way network, including long distance routes, to meet local and visitor needs;
- Develop, support and promote integrated sustainable access and travel options in the AONB;
- Develop and support inland visitor experiences compatible with the purposes of AONB designation to spread economic benefits and reduce pressure on the coast; and
- Develop and support measures to engage communities, cultural organisations and tourism businesses to create and promote sustainable visitor experiences, including use of assets such as local food and drink.

B.536 [The Cranborne Chase National Landscape Management Plan 2019-2024 \(2019\)](#) out the following objectives for those responsible for looking after the Cranborne Chase National Landscape:

- The landscape character, tranquillity and special qualities of the National Landscape are fully understood by policy makers and land managers;
- The landscape character, tranquillity and special qualities of the National Landscape and its settings are conserved and enhanced;
- Understand the rate and degree of landscape change within the National Landscape;
- Dark Night Sky status is secured for the National Landscape ;
- Farmers, foresters, fishery managers and gamekeepers are aware of how their activities can strengthen landscape character and enhance the natural environment of the National Landscape; and

- Strategic and local decisions are formulated taking full account of the purposes of designation and are implemented in a comprehensive, coherent and consistent way with regard to the character and quality of the area and its setting, together with views into and out of the National Landscape such that these decisions result in no net detriment to the special qualities of the National Landscape.

B.537 The Dorset Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-2020 (2010) , written by the Dorset Strategic Partnership, has the following vision:

‘a living thriving Dorset where everyone has a part to play in creating a better quality of life.’

B.538 This strategy includes the following aims:

- Narrowing the inequality gap so that people across Dorset have fairer access to opportunities which can improve their quality of life;
- Everyone can live in a good quality home and neighbourhood that meets their needs;
- Dorset people can access work, education and training, healthcare, essential shopping and leisure opportunities;
- People are safe and feel safe in their communities;
- Communities thrive: everyone feels they belong, can take an active part in community life and can influence decision making;
- Everyone has the opportunity to live a long and healthy life...and to receive high quality care that meets their needs;
- Children and young people realise their potential; and
- Older people are healthy, active and independent in their communities.

Baseline Information

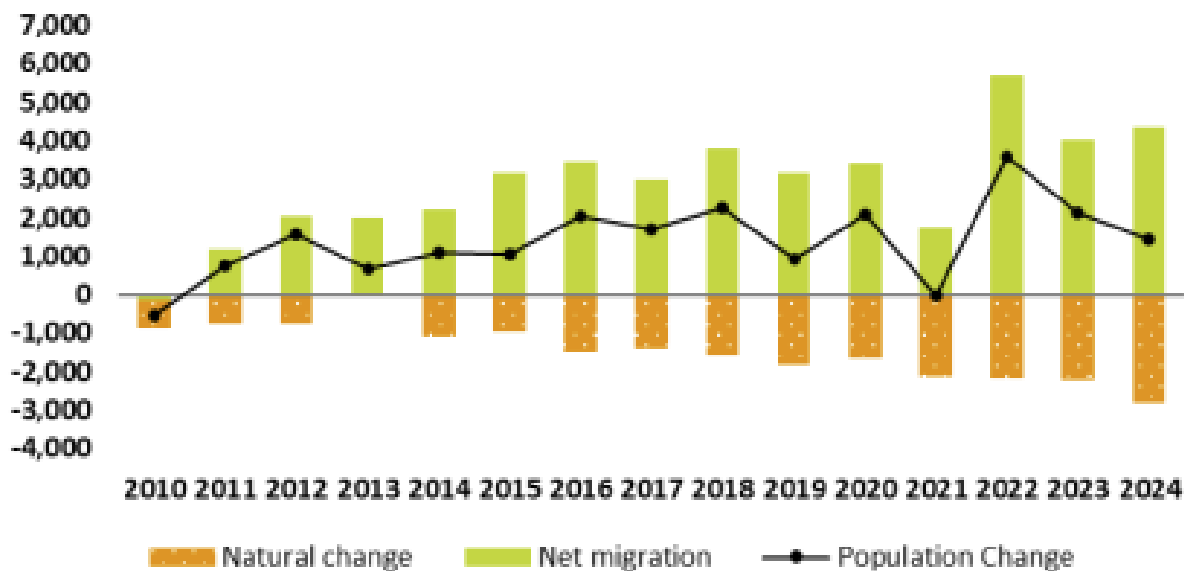
B.539 The population of the Dorset Council Local Plan Area was 384,809 in 2023 .

B.540 The population of the plan area grew by 17,200 between 2013-2023, which represents about a 4% growth compared with 7% nationally. Over the period 2023 to 2033, the population is projected to grow by another 3% (12,654) compared to 4% nationally.

B.541 The number of deaths within the plan area outnumbered the number of births between 2018-2023. This resulted in a decrease in the natural population (shown in the orange bar in Figure B.23). The growth in population experienced within the plan area is attributed to the positive net in-migration into the area.

B.542 The population of those aged over 65 grew by 21,000 between 2013 and 2023, an increase of 22%. The working age population decreased by 4,500 and the number of children stayed the same.

Figure B.23: Annual population change (shown by the black line), net migration (shown by the green bar) and natural population change (shown by the orange bar) between 2010-24 within the Dorset Council Local Plan Area

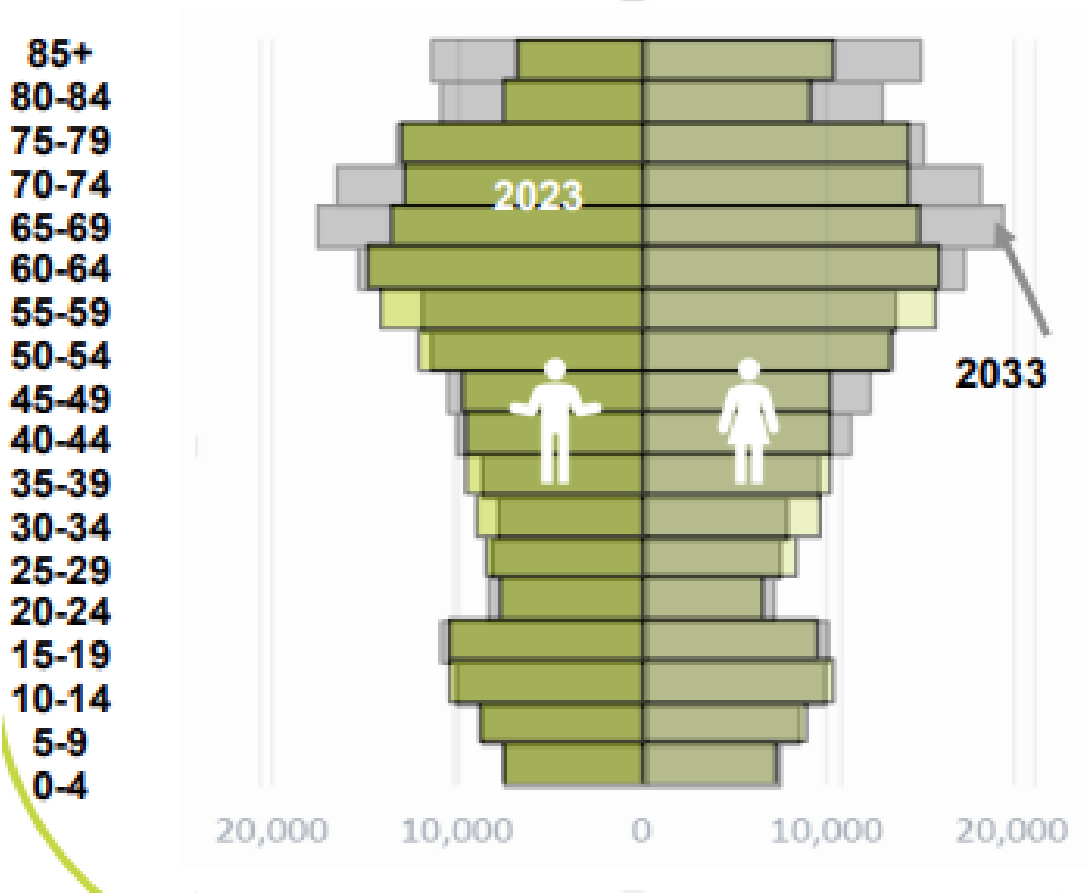


B.543 In terms of future population trends, it is projected that the population of the Dorset Council Local Plan area will increase at a slower rate than the national average between 2023 and 2033, at about 3% compared to 4% nationally.

B.544 As life expectancy continues to rise, the projected increase in population of those aged over 65 years old will increase from 30% of the total population to 36% in 2033 (Figure B.24).

B.545 The population of those within working age is expected to marginally decline between 2013 and 2033 compared to a marginal growth nationally, and the number of children is expected to fall, continuing the trend experienced in the Dorset Council Local Plan area since 2007.

Figure B.24: Population demographics in the Dorset Council Local Plan area in 2023 and 2033.



Source: ‘State of Dorset: Population’, published by Dorset Council in November 2024

B.546 These projected future trends in population indicate an ageing population within the Dorset Council Local Plan area. The growing number of older people is likely to increase demand for health and social care services.

B.547 Dorset residents are generally healthy, have a high life satisfaction rating and feel that the things they do in their lives are worthwhile. However, 15.3% of Dorset residents described their health as ‘fair’ or ‘bad’, and 65% of adults in Dorset are classified as obese, which is similar to the national average (64%).

B.548 Of the 219 areas within the Dorset Council Local Plan area, 11 are among the top 20% most deprived nationally for multiple deprivation; 10 of these 11 areas are within Weymouth.

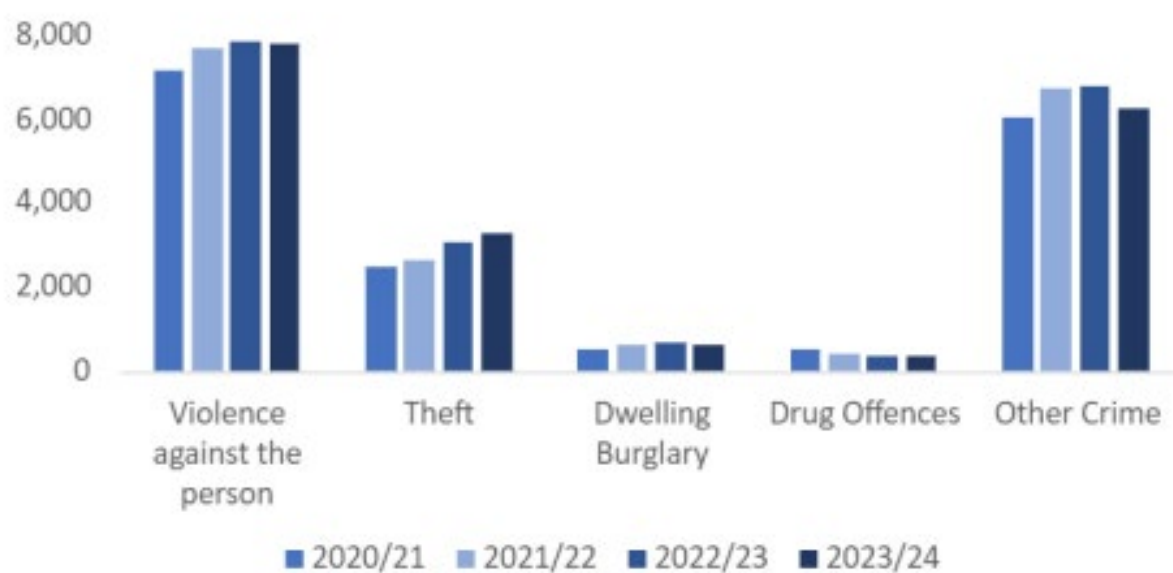
B.549 Deprivation has a significant effect on health and wellbeing. The life expectancy in the former Dorset County Council area is 6.3 years greater for males

and 5.3 years greater for females in the least socially deprived area in comparison to the most socially deprived area.

B.550 In terms of economic deprivation, nine neighbourhoods in Dorset fall within the top 20% nationally for income deprivation, seven of which are in the former district of Weymouth & Portland.

B.551 Crime in the Dorset Council Local Plan area is well below the national average for England. Total recorded crime has fallen by 2% in the 2023/24 fiscal year compared to the previous year, and antisocial behaviour incidents have decreased by 14% from last year. The number of domestic abuse incidents have increased by 2% since the last financial year.

Figure B.25: Crime in the Dorset Council Local Plan area according to the type of offence between 2020/21 and 2023/24



B.552 In 2023/24, there were 5,436 anti-social behaviour incidents in the Dorset Council Local Plan area. Weymouth has the highest rate of anti-social behaviour in the Dorset Council Local Plan area, with 1 in 7 of the anti-social behaviour incidents in the Dorset Council Local Plan area occurring in Melcombe Regis in Weymouth. The former district of Purbeck had the lowest crime rate in Dorset.

B.553 The performance of students in Dorset is generally in line with national figures. 63% of pupils achieved ‘basic measures’ which is defined as a standard pass or higher in English and Maths GCSE, which is below the national figure of 65%.

Sustainability Issues

B.554 The key environmental issues for the plan area are:

- The growing number of older people in Dorset is likely to increase demand for health and social care services.
- The lack of social inclusion is affecting the quality of life. New development should encourage greater social interaction through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages.
- Social isolation may be an issue, particularly amongst older residents in the more remote and inaccessible areas which are not served by public transport.
- Inequality in Dorset is affecting human health and quality of life.
- Although the incidence of crime decreased by 2% in Dorset between 2023/24 and 2022/23, domestic violence incidents have increase by 2% within this same time frame, and crime generally is a particular issue in areas of Weymouth. New development should be designed with community safety in mind, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion;
- Health issues, such as obesity, are affecting human health nationally and in the Dorset Council Local Plan Area. Area. New development may encourage healthier living through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.

11. Material Assets

B.555 A key element of achieving sustainable development is to deliver the housing, create the jobs, and provide the infrastructure required to meet current needs whilst not compromising the ability of future generations to do so.

B.556 As the population of England and indeed Dorset continues to grow, so does the need for housing, jobs and infrastructure, such as roads, schools and healthcare facilities. Estimates have put the number of new homes needed in England at [340,000 per year, of which 145,000 should be affordable](#). New housing supply increased year-on-year from a low point of 125,000 in 2012/13, reaching a high point of 243,000 new homes in 2019/20. Supply declined in 2020/21, in part because of disruption to housebuilding [caused by Covid-19 but rose again in 2021/22](#), but fell 9% in 2023 to 231,100 homes—marking the [fifth consecutive quarterly decline](#). Meanwhile ONS figures for construction output for housebuilding were at 82% of 2019 levels in November 2023, [suggesting an increase in delivery in the near-term is unlikely](#).

B.557 This chapter considers the issues surrounding the delivery of ‘material assets’, which for the purposes of the Sustainability Appraisal of the Dorset Council Local Plan refers to the following built and natural assets:

- Built assets: including housing, commercial and industrial premises, transport infrastructure such as rail, roads, cycleways and footpaths, telecommunications, services infrastructure such as water supply/waste water facilities and electricity substations, community, healthcare and educational facilities; and
- Natural assets: including mineral assets such as sand, gravel, rock, and slate.

Key messages from other plans programmes and objectives

International

B.558 The United Nations developed a series of global development goals which aim to deliver sustainable development in the document titled [Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development \(2015\)](#) which include:

- SDG 1: No Poverty
- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation
- SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

- SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities
- SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production
- SDG 13: Climate Action
- SDG 15: Life on Land

B.559 Sustainable Cities and Communities [The United Nations Declaration on Sustainable Development \(Johannesburg Declaration\) \(2002\)](#) sets a broad framework for international sustainable development, including building a humane, equitable and caring global society aware of the need for human dignity for all, renewable energy and energy efficiency, sustainable consumption and production and resource efficiency.

B.560 [United Nations Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters \(the 'Aarhus Convention'\) \(1998\)](#) establishes a number of rights of the public (individuals and their associations) with regard to the environment. The Parties to the Convention are required to make the necessary provisions so that public authorities (at national, regional, or local level) will contribute to these rights to become effective.

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B.561 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) states that one of the core planning principles is to “take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community”. It is identified in the document that “a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities”. Furthermore, the retention and enhancement of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship is supported. Importantly, Local Plans should also “contain policies to optimise the use of land in their area and meet as much of the identified need for housing as possible”. Additionally, larger scale developments such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns are required by the NPPF to be guided by policies set within a vision that looks at least 30 years ahead.

B.562 The updated PPG clarifies that this requirement of the NPPF is to be applied “where most of the development arising from larger scale developments proposed in

the plan will be delivered well beyond the plan period, and where delivery of those developments extends 30 years or longer from the start of the plan period”.

Furthermore, where this requirement applies “the authority will need to ensure that their vision reflects the long-term nature of their strategy for the plan or those larger scale developments. It is not anticipated that such visions would require evidence in addition to that already produced to support the plan”. The need for policies to be reflective of this longer time period is to take account of the likely timescale for delivery.

B.563 Plan making through the guidance of the NPPF recognises the important role of access to open spaces and other facilities which provide opportunities for sport and physical activity has in terms of health and wellbeing of communities. The importance of delivering a sufficient choice of school places to meet the needs of existing and new communities is also recognised in the document and local planning authorities should take a “proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement”.

B.564 The Framework sets out that in terms of economic growth the role of the planning system is to contribute towards building a “strong, responsive and competitive economy” by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation. There is also a requirement for the planning system to identify and coordinate the provision of infrastructure. Furthermore, planning policies should address the specific locational requirements of different sectors.

B.565 Local planning authorities should incorporate planning policies which “support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation”. Local Plans are required to “set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration”.

B.566 [The Plan for Change \(2024\)](#) outlines the UK Government’s framework for long-term policy delivery across five priority areas: economic growth, healthcare, public safety, opportunity, and clean energy. It sets out specific targets within this Parliament, underpinned by aims to ensure economic stability, reform public services, and implement a more mission-focused approach to governance.

B.567 The [Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Levelling Up and Regeneration Act \(2023\)](#) sets out the direction for planning and makes provisions to support the levelling-up agenda. It seeks to streamline the planning process whilst attaching greater weight to development plans. It also aims to improve infrastructure delivery with a new levy system, improve alignment between plans to address cross-

boundary issues, and will introduce added protection for heritage assets. The Act also states that existing EU-generated systems of SEA, HRA and EIA will eventually be replaced by a simpler process known as 'Environmental Outcomes Reports'.

B.568 [The Green Infrastructure Framework \(2023\)](#) will help increase the amount of green cover to 40% in urban residential areas. The Green Infrastructure Framework provides a structure to analyse where greenspace in urban environments is needed most. It aims to support equitable access to greenspace across the country, with an overarching target for everyone being able to reach good quality greenspace in their local area. From parks to green roofs, and increased tree cover, the Green Infrastructure Framework will make a significant contribution to nature recovery by embedding nature into new developments. Increasing the extent and connectivity of nature-rich habitats will also help increase wildlife populations, build resilience to the impacts of climate change, and ensure our cities are habitable for the future

B.569 The [waste prevention programme for England: Maximising Resources, Minimising Waste \(2023\)](#) sets out government's priorities for managing resources and waste, in line with the resources and waste strategy for England.

B.570 The [Homes England Strategic Plan 2023 to 2028 \(2023\)](#) sets out a vision to drive regeneration and housing delivery, to ensure that more homes are built in areas of greatest need, to improve affordability, and make a more resilient and diverse housing market.

B.571 [The State of the Environment: Health, People and the Environment \(2023\)](#) focuses on the relationship between human health and people's access to and connection with a clean, high quality natural environment. It presents information on England's environment, and people's exposure to environmental pollutants, flooding and climate change in relation to human health. It highlights environmental inequalities that contribute to differences in health outcomes for people in England.

B.572 [Future of Transport: supporting rural transport innovation \(2023\)](#) shows how innovative and emerging transport technologies could address some of the major challenges in rural communities. It highlights the importance of transport to everyday life rural life and provides guiding carbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge principles for the introduction of new technologies and services.

B.573 [The Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy Report to Parliament \(2022\)](#) sets out the objectives and financial resources for cycling and walking infrastructure. It states the Government's long-term ambition is to make walking and cycling the natural choices for shorter journeys. It aims to double cycling by 2025, increase walking activity, increase the percentage of children that usually walk to school and reduce the number of cyclists killed or seriously injured on England's roads.

B.574 A [fairer private rented sector White Paper \(2022\)](#) aims to build upon the vision of the Levelling Up White Paper and reform the Private Rented Sector and improve housing quality. It outlines that everyone deserves a secure and decent home and outlines measures to improve the experience of renters in the Private Rented Sector.

B.575 The [White Paper Levelling Up the United Kingdom \(2022\)](#) sets out how the UK Government will spread opportunity more equally across the UK. It comprises 12 UK-wide missions to achieve by 2030. Missions which relate to population, health and wellbeing state that by 2030:

- The gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by five years.
- Well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.
- Homicide, serious violence, and neighbourhood crime will have fallen, focused on the worst-affected areas.
- Pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.
- The number of primary school children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths will have significantly increased. In England, this will mean 90% of children will achieve the expected standard, and the percentage of children meeting the expected standard in the worst performing areas will have increased by over a third.
- Renters will have a secure path to ownership with the number of first-time buyers increasing in all areas; and the Government's ambition is for the number of non-decent rented homes to have fallen by 50%, with the biggest improvements in the lowest performing areas.

B.576 [The Growth Plan 2022](#) makes growth the government's central economic mission, setting a target of reaching a 2.5% trend rate. Sustainable growth will lead to higher wages, greater opportunities and provide sustainable funding for public services. The Chancellor of the Exchequer's "growth plan" contained a raft of significant tax measures, with major changes being announced for both individuals and businesses.

B.577 The vision of the [Future of freight plan \(2022\)](#) vision is to create a freight and logistics sector that is cost-efficient, reliable resilient, environmentally sustainable and valued by society. It identifies the main challenges, objectives and actions that need to be taken in the following 5 priority areas:

1. National Freight Network (NFN)
2. Enabling the transition to net zero
3. Planning
4. People and skills
5. Data and technology

B.578 [Build Back Better: Our Plan for Growth \(2021\)](#) sets out a plan to ‘build back better’ tackling long-term problems to deliver growth that delivers high-quality jobs across the UK while supporting the transition to net zero. This will build on three core pillars of growth: infrastructure, skills and innovation.

B.579 [Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain \(2021\)](#) sets out the Government's commitments and the actions needed to decarbonise the entire transport system in the UK. It follows on from the Deregulation published in 2020. The DTP commits the UK to phasing out the sale of new diesel and petrol heavy goods vehicles by 2040, subject to consultation, in addition to phasing out the sale of polluting cars and vans by 2035. The DPT also sets out how the government will improve public transport and increase support for active travel, as well as creating a net zero rail network by 2050, ensuring net zero domestic aviation emissions by 2040, and a transition to green shipping.

B.580 The [Environment Act 2021](#) sets statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world in four priority areas: air quality, biodiversity, water, and resource efficiency and waste reduction. It also establishes the Office for Environmental Protection which will act as an impartial and objective body for the protection and improvement of the environment. The Act sets out legislation which covers local air quality management frameworks and the recall of motor vehicles.

B.581 [Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge \(2020\)](#) sets out the strategic priorities for the new Transport Decarbonisation Plan (TDP), published in July 2021. It sets out in detail what government, business and society will need to do to deliver the significant emissions reduction needed across all modes of transport, putting us on a pathway to achieving carbon budgets and net zero emissions across every single mode of transport by 2050. This document acknowledges that while there have been recently published strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in individual transport modes, transport as a whole sector needs to go further and more quickly, therefore the TDP takes a coordinated, cross-modal approach to deliver the transport sector's contribution to both carbon budgets and net zero.

B.582 The Government's strategic direction for biodiversity is presented in [Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services \(2011\)](#), which includes the following aims with respect to agriculture:

- Priority action 3.1: Improve the delivery of environmental outcomes from agricultural land management practices, whilst increasing food production; and
- Priority action 3.2: Reform the Common Agricultural Policy to achieve greater environmental benefits.

B.583 [The Road to Zero \(2018\)](#) sets out new measures towards cleaner road transport, aiming to put the UK at the forefront of the design and manufacturing of zero emission vehicles. It explains how cleaner air, a better environment, zero emission vehicles and a strong, clean economy will be achieved. One of the main aims of the document is for all new cars and vans to be effectively zero emission by 2040.

B.584 [A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment \(2018\)](#) sets out goals for improving the environment within the next 25 years. It details how the Government will work with communities and businesses to leave the environment in a better state than it is presently. Identifies six key areas around which action will be focused. Those of relevance to the topics of population growth, health and wellbeing are 'using and managing land sustainably' and 'connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing'. Actions that will be taken as part of these two key areas are as follows:

- Using and managing land sustainably:
- Embed an 'environmental net gain' principle for development, including housing and infrastructure.
- Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing:
- Help people improve their health and wellbeing by using green spaces including through mental health services.
- Encourage children to be close to nature, in and out of school, with particular focus on disadvantaged areas.
- 'Green' our towns and cities by creating green infrastructure and planting one million urban trees.

B.585 [The Environmental Noise Regulations \(2018\)](#) apply to environmental noise, mainly from transport. The regulations require regular noise mapping and action planning for road, rail and aviation noise and noise in large urban areas. They also require Noise Action Plans based on the maps for road and rail noise and noise in

large urban areas. The Action Plans identify Important Areas (areas exposed to the highest levels of noise) and suggest ways the relevant authorities can reduce these. Major airports and those which affect large urban areas are also required to produce and publish their own Noise Action Plans separately. The Regulations do not apply to noise from domestic activities such as noise created by neighbours; at workplaces; inside means of transport; or military activities in military areas.

B.586 [UK Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future \(2018\)](#) lays down a vision and foundations for a transformed economy. Areas including artificial intelligence and big data; clean growth; the future of mobility; and meeting the needs of an ageing society are identified as the four ‘Grand Challenges’ of the future.

B.587 [The Housing White Paper 2017 \(Fixing our broken housing market\)](#) sets out ways to address the shortfall in affordable homes and boost housing supply. The White Paper focuses on the following:

- Planning for the right homes in the right places – Higher densities in appropriate areas, protecting the Green Belt while making more land available for housing by maximising the contribution from brownfield and surplus public land, regenerating estates, releasing more small and medium-sized sites, allowing rural communities to grow and making it easier to build new settlements.
- Building homes faster – Improved speed of planning cases, ensuring infrastructure is provided and supporting developers to build out more quickly.
- Diversifying the Market – Backing small and medium-sized house builders, custom-build, institutional investors, new contractors, housing associations.
- Helping people now – supporting home ownership and providing affordable housing for all types of people, including the most vulnerable.

B.588 The [LEP Network Response to the Industrial Strategy Green Paper Consultation \(2017\)](#) seeks to ensure that all relevant local action and investment is used in a way that maximises the impact it has across the Government’s strategy. Consultation responses set out how the 38 Local Enterprise Partnerships will work with Government using existing and additional resources to develop and implement a long-term Industrial Strategy.

B.589 [Transport Investment Strategy \(2017\)](#) sets out four objectives that the strategy aims to achieve:

- Create a more reliable, less congested, and better connected transport network that works for the users who rely on it;

- Build a stronger, more balanced economy by enhancing productivity and responding to local growth priorities;
- Enhance our global competitiveness by making Britain a more attractive place to trade and invest; and
- Support the creation of new housing.

B.590 [Highways England Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan \(2017\)](#)

is designed to communicate the company's approach and priorities for sustainable development to its key stakeholders. Highways England aims to ensure its action in the future will further reduce the impact of its activities seeking a long-term and sustainable benefit to the environment and the communities it serves. The action plan describes how Highways England will progress the aspirations of their Sustainable Development and Environment Strategies. It describes actions that will enable the company to deliver sustainable development and to help protect and improve the environment.

B.591 The [National Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2016-2021 \(2016\)](#) brings together the Government's plans for economic infrastructure over this five year period with those to support delivery of housing and social infrastructure.

B.592 [Planning Policy for Traveller Sites \(2015\)](#) sets out the Government's planning policy for traveller sites, replacing the older version published in March 2012. The Government's overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.

B.593 [Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard \(2015\)](#) sets out the Government's new nationally described space standard. The standard deals with internal space within new dwellings and sets out requirements for the Gross Internal (floor) Area of new dwellings at a defined level of occupancy, as well as floor areas and dimensions for key parts of the home.

B.594 [Door to Door: A strategy for improving sustainable transport integration \(2013\)](#)

focuses on four core areas which need to be addressed so that people can be confident in choosing greener modes of transport. There are as follows:

- Accurate, accessible and reliable information about different transport options.
- Convenient and affordable tickets.
- Regular and straightforward connections at all stages of the journey and between different modes of transport.
- Safe and comfortable transport facilities.

- The strategy also includes details on how the Government is using behavioural change methods to reduce or remove barriers to the use of sustainable transport and working closely with stakeholders to deliver a better-connected transport system.

B.595 The strategy for the future of soils in England is presented in the [Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England \(2009\)](#), which sets out the following vision:

“By 2030, all of England’s soils will be managed sustainably and degradation threats tackled successfully. This will improve the quality of England’s soils and safeguard their ability to provide essential services for future generations”.

B.596 The [UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy \(2005\)](#) sets out the five principles for a policy to be sustainable, one of which is:

- Building a strong, stable and sustainable economy which provides prosperity and opportunities for all, and in which environmental and social costs fall on those who impose them (polluter pays), and efficient resource use is incentivised.

B.597 [The Environmental Protection Act 1990](#) makes provision for the improved control of pollution to the air, water and land by regulating the management of waste and the control of emissions. Seeks to ensure that decisions pertaining to the environment are made in an integrated manner, in collaboration with appropriate authorities, non-governmental organisations and other persons.

Local

B.598 Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council’s jointly commissioned [Employment Land Study \(2024\)](#) looks at the Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) and provides an assessment of employment needs to 2039 using growth forecast data. The Study estimated, in 2020, that employment land demand by 2038 would range from 63.5 to 80.9 hectares in the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) local authority area, and from 87.9 to 131.1 hectares across the Dorset LEP area.

B.599 The [Housing Strategy January 2024 to January 2029 \(2023\)](#) sets out the Council’s priorities for housing over the next five years to 2029. The Strategy seeks to ensure that residents have access to affordable, suitable, secure homes where they can live well as part of sustainable and thriving communities. The strategy is comprised of four key objectives:

- Housing Need - Enabling residents to live safe, healthy, independent lives in homes that meet their needs.
- Housing Supply - Driving the delivery of homes people need and can afford to live in.
- Housing Standards - Improving the quality, standard, and safety of homes.
- Prevention of Homelessness - Support, at the right time, to people in crisis to prevent homelessness.

B.600 The [Dorset Retail and Leisure Study – 2022 update \(2023\)](#) assesses the future need ('capacity') for new retail (convenience and comparison goods) floorspace over the period to 2040 to take account of latest forecasts. It also assesses the quantitative need for new commercial leisure facilities. The Study states that there is no identified need for retail floorspace.

B.601 The [Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Update \(2022\)](#) relates to the need for pitches and plots between 2022 to 2038 for those people who meet the planning definition for Travellers as set out in the [Planning Policy for Traveller Sites \(2015\)](#). The report also provides an assessment of need for those people who do not meet the planning definition for Travellers but associate themselves as Travellers, and who actively choose to live in a caravan rather than a house. In Dorset specifically, the Study identifies a need for 113 pitches for households that met the planning definition. This is made up of 48 unauthorised pitches; 11 concealed or doubled-up households or single adults; 3 movement from bricks and mortar; 25 from teenagers who will need a pitch of their own in the next 5 years; 5 from in-migration or roadside encampments; and for 29 from new household formation. There is also supply from 3 vacant pitches on the public sites, and from 6 new pitches with planning permission at the Piddlehinton public site.

B.602 The [Dorset Investment Prospectus 2021-30 \(2021\)](#) presents a 10-year investment portfolio for the both the BCP and Dorset areas. Some projects have a significant potential to deliver employment land at scale:

- Southern Growth Corridor: 30 ha employment space;
- Dorset Innovation Park – Defence Cluster: 35 ha development area;
- North-South Transport Connectivity: supporting over 30,000 jobs;
- Coastal Regeneration: 13 ha employment land;
- Medtech Science Park: facilities supporting 500 new jobs;
- Accelerated Economic Zone: £1.7m growth and 5,600 jobs in 20 years

B.603 The [Dorset and BCP Local Housing Needs Assessment \(2021\)](#) examines the future need for housing as well as the affordable housing need and makes recommendations on the mix of housing and the need for specific groups for BCP and Dorset.

B.604 The [Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Workspace Strategy Evidence Update: Employment Projections \(2020\)](#) provides an update to the 2016 Workspace Strategy employment projections, looking at the projected requirement for employment land over the revised time scale of 2018-2038. Two scenarios were developed to test potential land requirements. The trend scenario indicates over 2018-2038:

- Growth in the number of FTEs of 30,900 (all industries – up from 333,100 to 364,000 over 20 years);
- This is 0.4% per annum growth in FTE employment;
- GVA growth of 2.3% per annum – compared with about 2.1% pa nationally.

B.605 The strategy scenario indicates over 2018-2038:

- Growth in the number of FTEs of 37,900 (all industries – up from 335,800 to 373,800 over 20 years);
- This is 0.5% per annum growth in FTE employment;
- GVA growth of 0.5% pe annum.

B.606 Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council's [Economic Development Strategy \(2020\)](#) aims to “balance the many economic opportunities within the BCP city region – whilst addressing impacts of global, national and local challenges. This strategy will help deliver the government’s levelling up ambitions to strengthen local leadership to drive real change and raise living standards.” Priority area of action include:

- “Supercharging our business community: Focusing on supporting increased productivity across our small and medium sized business community;
- Supporting the BCP exemplar industries: Encouraging growth in BCP priority sectors and clusters as the catalysts to success;
- Opening doors to prosperity: Creating the best local economic conditions to achieve a world-class, sustainable city region and one of the best coastal places in the world in which to live, work, invest and play; and
- Business matters @ BCP: Achieving an outstanding economic development service, acting as the concierge for all Council business-facing functions.”

B.607 The [Dorset Local Economic Assessment \(2019\)](#) provides a profile of the local economy which gives a detailed understanding of economic strengths, opportunities and challenges in Dorset, and identifies the following future challenges:

- The cost of housing relative to incomes, which is currently a barrier to recruitment, particularly for younger people, including graduates. It will be critical to provide sufficient housing at affordable prices for younger people and graduates if the workforce is to avoid skills depletion as people retire;
- Dorset's workforce holds lower qualifications on average than nationally, and at the current rate of increase in skills levels, it could be 10 years before the population meets the skills requirements of employers;
- As more skilled and experienced workers reach retirement age and with the drivers of in-migration still favouring those at or nearing retirement age, the pressure will be on to address the loss of skills and maintain a balanced workforce in terms of age and skills;
- need to increase the supply of housing in sustainable locations with good access to services and facilities, including good schools;
- the range of housing in terms of type, size and tenure should reflect housing needs in the area, including those required to support a prosperous economy;
- High levels of multiple deprivation, combined with poor economic performance mark Weymouth and Portland out as a special case in the Dorset sub-region.

B.608 The [Dorset National Landscape Management Plan 2019 – 2024 \(2019\)](#) the following objectives relating to material assets:

- Support appropriate farm diversification schemes, particularly where these contribute to the conservation, enhancement and sustainable development of the National Landscape;
- Support affordable housing within appropriate rural exception sites that meet proven local need. Good, locally-sensitive design should be pursued;
- Support restoration of traditional barns, buildings and other structures that maintains or enhances landscape character quality, ensuring diversification benefits are not outweighed by adverse effects on the environment;
- Protect the Landscape from an overprovision of visitor accommodation including camping, caravanning and glamping sites particularly where existing development weakens the character and appearance of the countryside. Changes in landscape condition will be monitored and assessed to inform appropriate action;

- Avoid large scale and/or high density housing and employment development at settlement edges when such development weakens the character and appearance of the countryside;
- Discourage growth in the number of second homes within the Landscape;
- Resist proliferation of masts and other vertical structures, requiring the sharing of infrastructure by service providers;
- Promote production, distribution and use of products that deliver positive economic, environmental and social outcomes for the Landscape;
- Promote the use of local woodland products, including wood fuel and timber for construction, that are economically, socially and environmentally sensitive for the Landscape;
- Promote production, distribution and use of products that deliver positive economic, environmental and social outcomes for the Landscape; and
- Maintain and develop appropriate skills required for the Landscape green economy.

B.609 [The Cranborne Chase National Landscape Management Plan 2019-2024 \(2019\)](#) sets out the following objectives for those responsible for looking after the Cranborne Chase National Landscape:

- The landscape character, tranquillity and special qualities of the National Landscape are fully understood by policy makers and land managers;
- The landscape character, tranquillity and special qualities of the National Landscape and its settings are conserved and enhanced;
- Understand the rate and degree of landscape change within the National Landscape;
- Dark Night Sky status is secured for the National Landscape ;
- Farmers, foresters, fishery managers and gamekeepers are aware of how their activities can strengthen landscape character and enhance the natural environment of the National Landscape; and
- Strategic and local decisions are formulated taking full account of the purposes of designation and are implemented in a comprehensive, coherent and consistent way with regard to the character and quality of the area and its setting, together with views into and out of the National Landscape such that these decisions result in no net detriment to the special qualities of the National Landscape.

B.610 The [Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Workspace Strategy \(2016\)](#) provides employment land projections to 2033 and business sector forecasts, and recommends to take forward the ‘Step Change growth scenario at 20% Flexibility’ which identified the following projections for employment land:

- Eastern Dorset: 222.7ha (20% Flexibility).
- Western Dorset: 56.4ha (20% Flexibility).
- Total (Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole): 279.1ha (20% Flexibility).

B.611 The [Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan 3 \(2011\)](#) sets the following objectives:

- Widening opportunities for healthy lifestyles through integrating active travel into people’s everyday lives and providing supporting infrastructure
- Developing a fully integrated public transport system which is easier to use for everyone
- Improving local accessibility and local connectivity for the most vulnerable groups and rural areas of Dorset
- Applying engineering, education and enforcement solutions to create safer travelling environments
- Working with partners to improve community safety and security
- Building upon current public transport provision to improve the availability, quality, reliability and punctuality of services

B.612 The [Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs AONB Management Plan 2014-19 \(2014\)](#) sets out the following objective

- Local communities benefit from a sustainable rural economy, based on the resources of the AONB, that also conserves and enhances its landscape character and special qualities.

B.613 The [Dorset Local Nature Partnership’s Vision and Strategy \(2016\)](#) sets out the following strategic priorities for the partnership, which include the following objectives relating to material assets:

- A transition to a low carbon, sustainable economy in which every business is a greener business;
- Development of low impact business opportunities with reduced transport related impacts which contribute to a healthy environment; and

- Job creation in, for example, green technologies and rural communities where natural resources are concentrated.

B.614 The Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site Management Plan 2014–2019 (2014) contains the following aim:

- To support communities in realising the economic social and cultural opportunities and benefits that World Heritage Status can bring.

B.615 The [Dorset Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-2020 \(2010\)](#) has the following aims:

- A strong economy offers better job opportunities for people in Dorset.

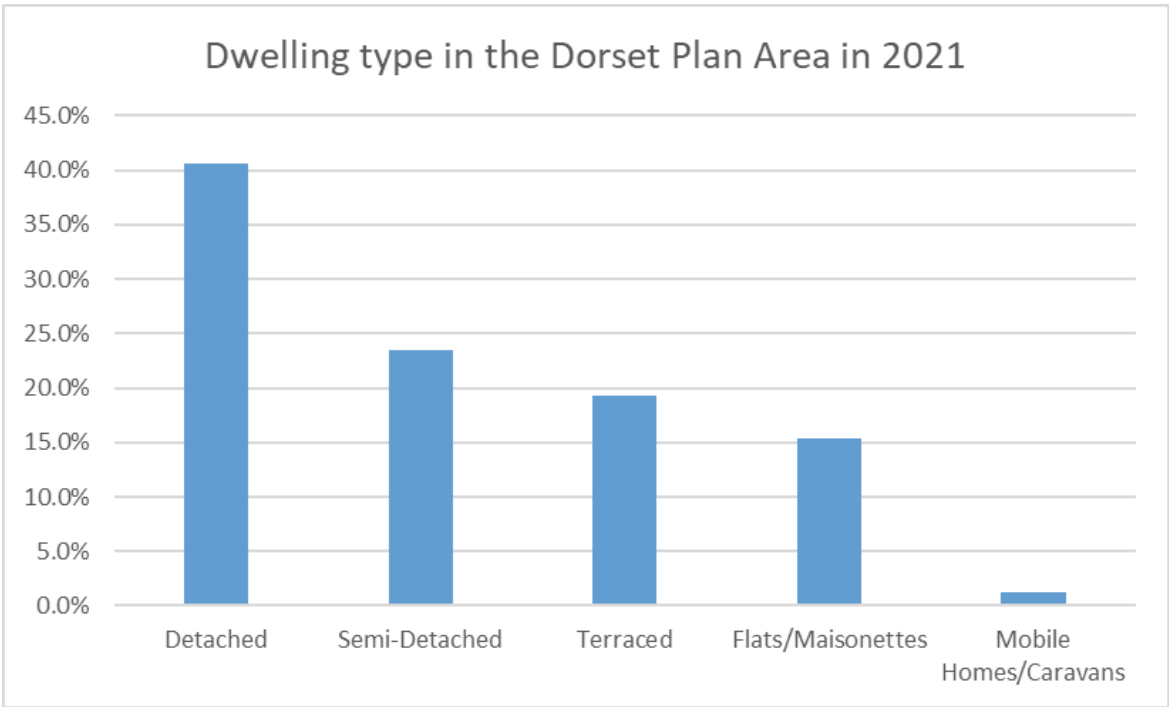
Baseline Information

B.616 There were 169,261 households within the Dorset Council Local Plan area as of the latest census data from 2021. This is a 7% increase from the 2011 Census where the total number of households were 158,738 (Data taken from [Area profile for Dorset Council](#) site.).

B.617 There are 180,349 properties in the Dorset Council Local Plan area, of which 3.2% are second homes, and 0.2% are long-term empty homes (Data taken from [Area profile for Dorset Council](#) site.).

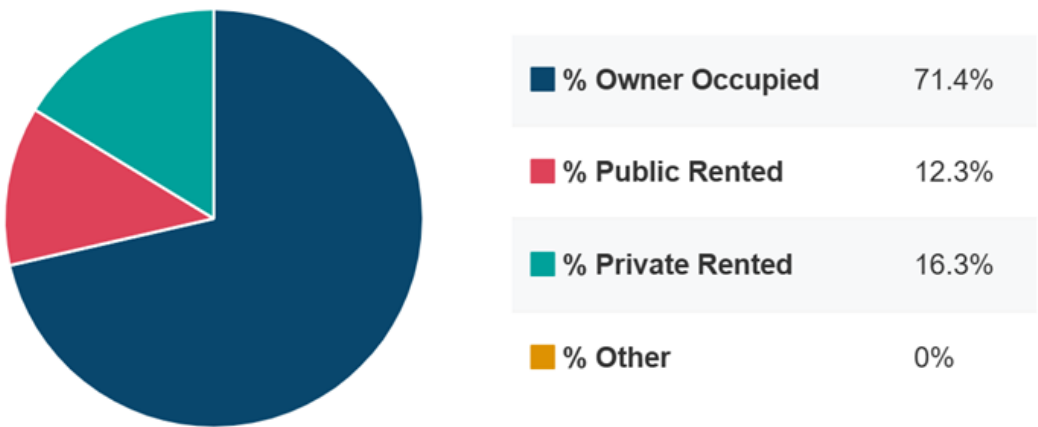
B.618 The majority of dwellings within the Dorset Council Local Plan area are detached (40.6%), with 23.4% semi-detached, 19.3% terraced, 15.4% flats or maisonettes, and 1.2% mobile homes/caravans (Data taken from [Area profile for Dorset Council](#) site.). See Figure B.26 below.

Figure B.26: Dwelling type in the Dorset Plan Area in 2021



B.620 In terms of tenure, the majority of dwellings are owner occupied (71.4%). The rental sector represents 28.3% of the market, with 12.3% public rented and 16.3% private rented (Figure B.27 below) (Data taken from [Area profile for Dorset Council site.](#))

Figure B.27: Tenure type in the Dorset Plan Area in 2021



B.621 House prices across the UK have been rising faster than wages, reducing the affordability of housing.

B.622 Dorset is one of the most desirable places to live in the UK, and consequently has some of the least affordable housing. Home ownership among 25-34 year olds in the former Dorset County Council area is the lowest in the UK at only 16%, according to an [article on home ownership on Resolution Foundation website](#).

B.623 The average house price in Dorset was £339,000 in March 2025 (provisional), up 3.9% from March 2024. This was lower than the rise in the South West (5.3%) over the same period. However, private rents rose to an average of £1,004 in April 2025, an annual increase of 4.7% from £959 in April 2024. This was lower than the rise in the South West (5.1%) over the year, according to [ONS statistics](#).

B.624 The 2024 housing affordability (see [ONS page on house affordability for 2024](#)) ratio is calculated by dividing house prices by gross annual workplace-based earnings (based on the median and lower quartiles of both house prices and earnings) to give a ratio which serves as an indicator of relative affordability. A higher ratio indicates that on average, it is less affordable for a resident to purchase a house in their local authority district. In the 318 local authorities in England and Wales, housing affordability improved in 289 (91%) local authorities since 2023. Average house prices increased in 20% of local authority districts in England and Wales, while average earnings increased in 87% of local authorities in 2024.

B.625 [The 2024 housing affordability ratio](#) shows that Dorset has a ratio of 9.77, exceeding both the South West regional average of 9.23 and the national average of 8.27. This highlights that housing in Dorset is significantly less affordable than in many other parts of the region and country.

B.626 The former district of East Dorset has the least affordable housing in East Dorset, [with average house prices at nearly 14 times the average annual salary](#). The most affordable housing is in the former district of Weymouth & Portland, with average house prices at 8.6 times the average annual salary.

B.627 According to [Dorset Council Population Reports](#), as at 31st October 2024, 6,536 households were registered for housing through Homechoice Dorset, the register for those people seeking a move to social housing.

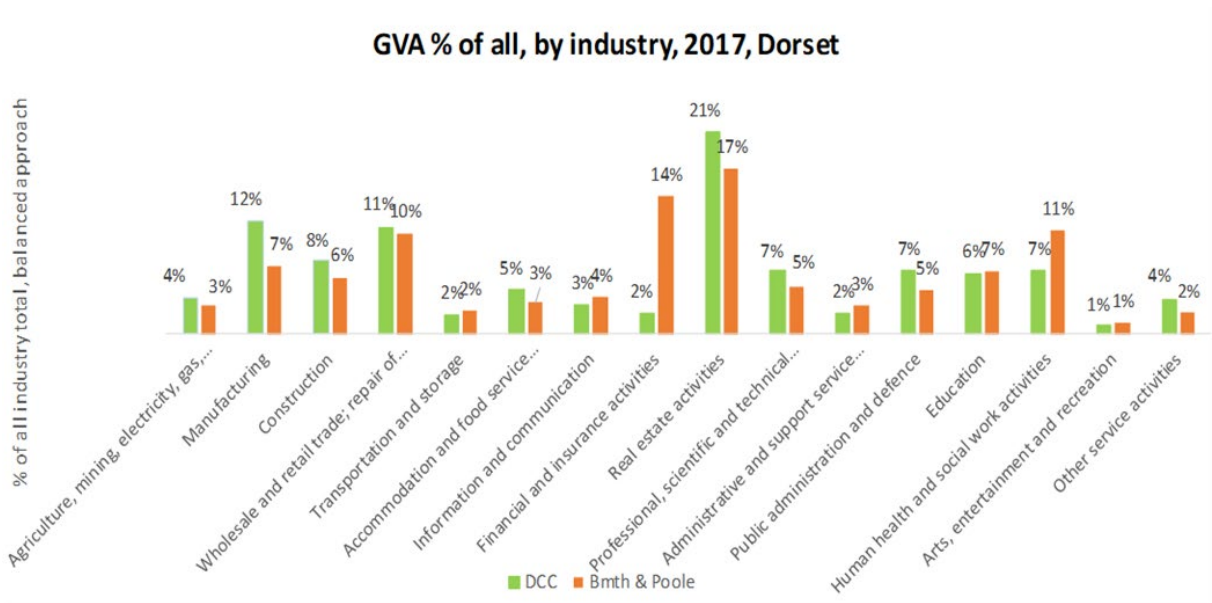
B.628 Global growth has weakened, particularly in Europe, after looking stronger in 2017. The UK economy has also performed below expectation since the Brexit referendum in 2016 with uncertainty having a significant impact on investment growth and private consumption.

B.629 In the South West region, both employment and real GVA saw growth over the year to 2023, according to [TBE Bath and Somerset](#). However, GVA per head in the Dorset Council area remains below that of neighbouring areas.

B.630 In 2022, the economic output of the pan Dorset area was £19,502m (2019 prices). 57% of this was generated in the BCP area and 43% in the DC area. Between 1998 and 2022, economic output increased by 29% in real terms (2019 prices) (see [Dorset LEP Socio-Economic Evidence Base](#)).

B.631 The GVA by industrial sector indicates that Real Estate is the most significant contributor, followed by Manufacturing and the Wholesale & Retail Trade in the former Dorset County Council area (Figure B.28).

Figure B.28: GVA by industrial sector in Dorset in 2017



Source: Data taken from Area profile for Dorset Council site.

B.632 While Dorset boasts above-average representation in advanced engineering and manufacturing, it lags behind in businesses associated with high productivity and high R&D spending sectors, according to [Economy Topic Data for Dorset](#).

B.633 In the Dorset Council Local Plan area, unemployment and employment is lower than in Great Britain. The unemployment rate of economically active people is 2.7% in the Dorset Council Local Plan area and 3.8% in Great Britain. The employment rate is 77.4% in the Dorset Council Local Plan area and 78.6% in Great Britain (see [ONS Labour Market Profile for Dorset](#)).

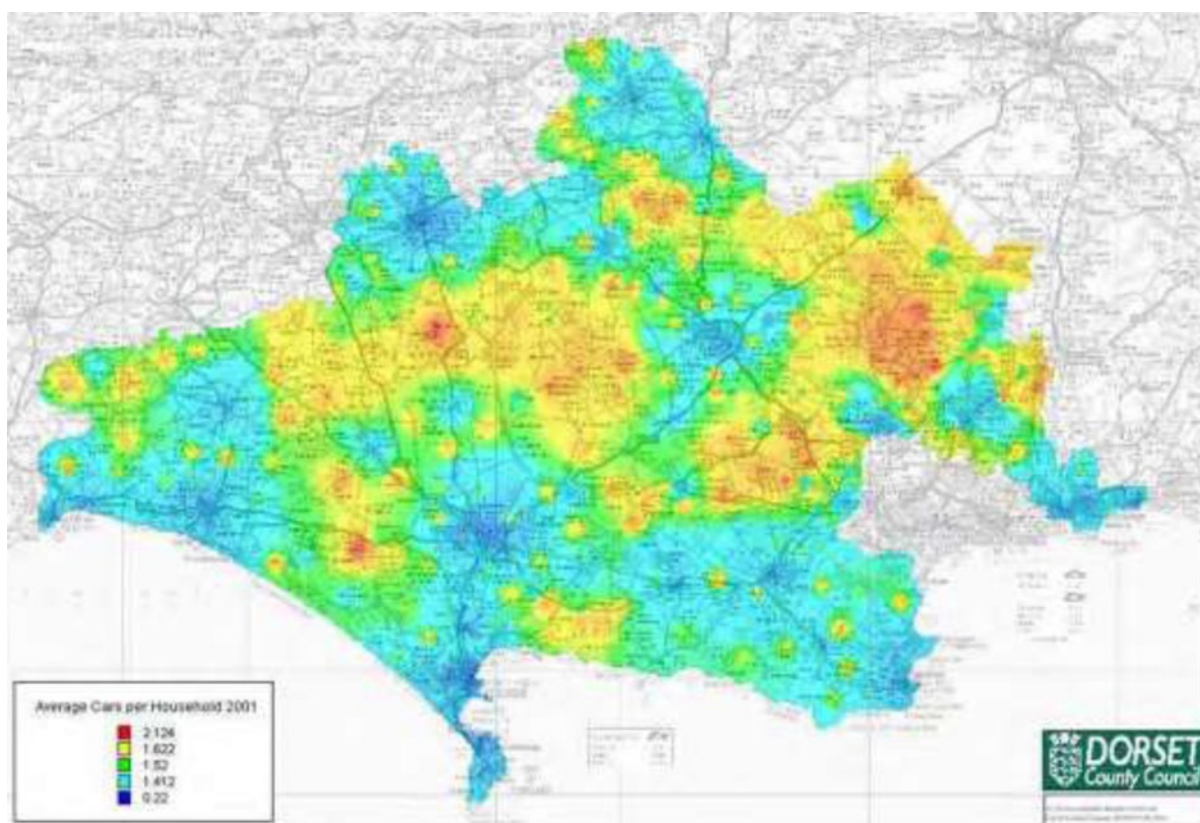
B.634 In terms of the working age population, there were 167,777 usual residents aged between 16 and 64 in the Dorset Council Local Plan area in 2021. The highest proportion of residents within the Dorset Council Local Plan area were within the wholesale, retail and repair sector (15.2%), followed by human health and social

work activities sector (13.1%) and accommodation and food services sector (11.7%). Data taken from [Area profile for Dorset Council](#) site.

B.635 Dorset's transport system is facing pressures from increased car ownership, reduced funding, and pressures to reduce carbon emissions in a bid to tackle climate change.

B.636 Car ownership and usage in Dorset is relatively high in the more remote areas of the district, away from the main towns (Figure B.29). This reflects the dispersed population and the poor provision, or complete lack, of public transport in many parts of the District which results in residents without a car not being able to travel to work, access services or facilities easily or at all.

Figure B.29: Average number of cars per household in Dorset in 2001



B.637 In 2021, the percentage of households in the Dorset Council Local Plan area with no cars or vans was 13.7%, with 45.5% of households with 2 or more cars or vans. Data taken from [Area profile for Dorset Council](#) site.

B.638 There are three main railway lines that travel through the plan area:

- Weymouth to London Waterloo line: provides an important commuter link to London, and also stops at Southampton Airport Parkway in Hampshire, providing access to the airport;
- Weymouth to Bristol line: includes several stations in the plan area including Dorchester West, Maiden Newton, Chetnole, Yetminster and Thornford; and
- Exeter to London Paddington line: important commuter link to London from the South West of England which runs through the north of the Dorset Council Local Plan area.
- There is also a heritage railway line connecting Swanage to the main line at Wareham.

Sustainability Issues

B.639 The key environmental issues within the plan area are:

- Providing the appropriate size, type, tenure and range of housing to meet the needs of the community without introducing significant environmental impacts.
- Providing sufficient affordable housing to meet the accommodation needs of local communities and reduce the number of people on the housing registers.
- Providing sufficient employment land of the right type, in the right place and at the right time to support growth and innovation, and build a strong, responsive and competitive economy.
- The loss of skills and maintaining a balanced workforce in terms of age and skills, as more workers reach retirement age and in-migration favours those at or nearing retirement age;
- The cost of housing relative to incomes which is a barrier to recruitment, particularly for younger people, including graduates. The challenge is to provide sufficient housing at affordable prices for younger people and graduates to avoid skills depletion as people retire.
- Support for the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, promoting the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses, and support for sustainable rural tourism and leisure development.
- Improving the infrastructure to enable economic growth. This includes providing faster and more extensive broadband and ICT infrastructure to ensure that knowledge-intensive sectors, such as creative industries, are able to prosper.

- Parts of Dorset are not served well by public transport, which is reflected by the fact that car ownership is higher in the more isolated, rural parts of Dorset than the national average. Residents in these more remote areas are unlikely to be able to access services and facilities by more sustainable transport modes.

12. Sustainability Objectives

B.640 The sustainability appraisal process involves assessing the performance of Local Plan policy against a series of sustainability objectives which are aimed at promoting sustainable development.

B.641 The sustainability framework consists of eleven sustainability objectives, each with decision-making criteria which provide a basis of assessing sustainability effects, which are set out in Table 12.1.

B.642 The sustainability objectives for the Dorset Council Local Plan were informed by the findings of the review of plans and programmes, the characteristics of the plan area, and the key issues within the plan area, all of which are presented in the preceding Chapters of this Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. This ensures that the sustainability framework is relevant and specific to the Local Plan and addresses the key sustainability concerns.

Table B.6: The sustainability framework, including the sustainability objectives, decision-making criteria, and sustainability themes

Sustainability objective	Decision making criteria	Main Sustainability Themes
1. Provide net gains for biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Conserve, restore or enhance priority habitats and irreplaceable habitats and promote the protection and recovery of priority species. ■ Maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of European and national sites, and avoid significant adverse effects upon local wildlife designations. ■ Establish coherent ecological networks where possible, with wildlife corridors which connect designated sites of importance for wildlife to prevent habitat fragmentation. ■ Pursue opportunities for securing net gains for biodiversity. 	Biodiversity, flora, fauna
2. Protect soil quality and conserve geological conservation interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Protect the most productive agricultural land (grades 1 and 2) to provide food security and achieve sustainable agriculture. ■ Remediate or mitigate the potential impacts of degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land where possible, to protect human health, property and the environment. ■ Minimise harm to geological conservation interests, and where 	Soil, Human Health

Sustainability objective	Decision making criteria	Main Sustainability Themes
	possible achieve the enhancement of the geological resource.	
3. Maintain or improve water quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Protect and improve the ecological and chemical status of freshwater, transitional waters and coastal waters, particularly those with 'poor' or 'bad' status. ■ Ensure that development does not contribute to groundwater quality issues particularly within Groundwater Source Protection Zones. ■ Ensure that development does not contribute to the groundwater inundation of the foul drainage network. 	Water
4. Maintain or improve air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Maintain or improve air quality. ■ Ensure that development does not contribute to air quality issues particularly within Air Quality Management Areas and where exceedances in the concentration of airborne contaminants have been recorded. 	Air, Human Health
5. Limit climate change and improve resilience to future climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mitigate climate change by contributing to cutting the emission of greenhouse gases. ■ Adapt to future climate change by ensuring that new development is resilient to future climatic conditions. ■ Increase the use of renewable energy. 	Climatic Factors, Air

Sustainability objective	Decision making criteria	Main Sustainability Themes
6. Limit the effects of flooding and coastal change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure that development does not expose people and property to risk of flooding. ■ Manage coastal change to ensure that environmental designations and local communities are protected. 	Climatic Factors, Water, Population
7. Protect and enhance valued landscapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Protect and where possible enhance valued landscapes. ■ Conserve and where possible enhance the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Cranborne Chase AONB and the character and quality of its distinctive landscapes and associated features. ■ Conserve and enhance the Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site's outstanding universal value and its setting. ■ Ensure that development is not harmful to the purposes of the Green Belt. 	Landscape
8. Conserve and enhance heritage assets and the historic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Safeguard, protect, and where appropriate enhance the significance of heritage assets and their setting. ■ Ensure that new development is sympathetic to local character and history. 	Cultural Heritage
9. Promote wellbeing and healthy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Enable healthy lifestyles and promote wellbeing through the provision of high quality accessible 	Human Health, population

Sustainability objective	Decision making criteria	Main Sustainability Themes
communities for all	<p>natural spaces, green infrastructure, allotments and sports facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Encourage social interaction by providing mixed use development, strong neighbourhood centres and improved local accessibility and connectivity, to encourage a more inclusive society and prevent rural isolation. ■ Provide safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. 	
10. Deliver a wide choice of high-quality homes and infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Supply the housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations, including affordable housing, in sustainable locations. ■ Provide community facilities such as health, education and cultural infrastructure in sustainable locations. 	Material Assets, Population
11. Build a strong, responsive, and competitive economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide sufficient land to support growth, innovation and productivity for all businesses, including those in rural areas. ■ Provide the transport and telecommunications infrastructure to meet business needs. 	Material Assets, Population

Appendix C

Comments from statutory consultees on 2021 SA Scoping Report and Dorset Council response

Historic England

Table C.1: Historic England

Comment	Dorset Council Response
Could I please refer you to the Historic England Advice Note no.8 on the preparation of SEA/SA. With regard to the Scoping stage, the guidance provides advice in relation to relevant plans, programs and policies; baseline information; identifying sustainability issues and problems; developing the SA/SEA framework; decision making criteria; indicators and monitoring. I hope you find this of use.	Thank you for providing Historic England Advice Note no.8, which gives useful guidance for the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Stage. In accordance with this advice note, the key messages from the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979) have been included in the Scoping Report (see Paragraph 9.19).
Section 9: You may also wish to revisit your section 9.2 and mention Historic Parks and Gardens, and Battlefields.	Historic Parks and Gardens have been included in the list of heritage designations (see Paragraph 9.25). There are no registered battlefields in the plan area.
<p>Section 12</p> <p>Could I respectfully suggest the following alternative Objective and Criteria is considered to align with UK national policy and legislation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sustainability objective <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – [To remove the word ‘Preserve’ and add ‘Conserve’.] – Conserve and enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their settings ■ Decision making criteria <p>Is development likely to safeguard, protect, and where appropriate enhance the</p>	<p>Thank you for your suggested changes to the sustainability objective on historic assets. This sustainability objective has been amended taking into account your comments, with some minor changes to ensure compliance with the NPPF and the sustainability appraisal methodology. The following sustainability objective on cultural heritage will be applied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sustainability objective: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Conserve and enhance the historic environment and heritage assets. ■ Decision making criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Safeguard, protect, and where appropriate enhance the

Comment	Dorset Council Response
significance of any affected heritage asset, historic townscape or landscape.	significance of heritage assets and their setting; and Ensure that new development is sympathetic to local character and history.

Natural England

Table C.2: Natural England

Comment	Response
<p>Natural England broadly agree with the contents of the SA/SEA scoping report with the following comments to the Sustainability Objective number 1;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The decision making criteria does not reflect national policy on providing gains for the environment and biodiversity, nor are the criteria representative of the title of the objective. ■ The report accurately lays out the policy requirements for biodiversity and environmental net gain that is ingrained within the National Planning Policy Framework although the criteria for assessing the policies of the new plan within the SA are under ambitious, very specific in nature and are unlikely to assess accurately if the plan policies are compliant with policy and legislation. <p>Following the existing policy requirements, the Biodiversity Net Gain consultation and the impending mandatory net gain requirement, Natural England advise that a criteria is set to assess if the policies will result in a net gain for the environment and biodiversity. This should include the specifics such as the protection and enhancement of ecological corridors and networks amongst many other considerations.</p>	<p>The decision making criteria reflect national policy as they are taken directly from Paragraphs 174 and 175 of the NPPF. However, in order to strengthen the requirement for a net gain in biodiversity, the following decision making criteria has been added:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pursue opportunities for securing net gains for biodiversity. <p>The existing decision making criteria already includes the consideration of whether the policy establishes ecological networks and wildlife corridors to prevent habitat fragmentation.</p>
Section 2.2.4 excludes reference to the Marine Conservation Zone designations	Paragraph 2.47 provides details of the area of coverage of European and

Comment	Response
under Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009) within the plan area.	National wildlife designations within the Dorset Council Local Plan area. Since Marine Conservation Zones occupy marine areas only and the Dorset Council Local Plan area occupies land areas only, the coverage of Marine Conservation Zones is 0ha. However, it is appreciated that the Dorset Council Local Plan has the potential to impact upon marine areas, and the locations of offshore European Wildlife Sites are shown in Figure 2.2 accordingly.
<p>Section 2.3.5 should include the following likely pressures that are likely to arise upon assessing the Local Plan;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ recreational impacts to Chesil and the Fleet designated sites. <p>nutrient additions from northern former West Dorset to Somerset levels designated sites.</p>	A discussion of these issues has been added to section 2.56 of the report.

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