

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan

Scoping Report

June 2022

Quality information

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Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Authorised	Name	Position
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1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan (hereafter referred to as the “WNP”).
- 1.2 The WNP is being prepared under the Localism Act 2011¹ and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012², and in the context of the Adopted West Dorset, Weymouth, and Portland Local Plan (2011-2031)³. Due regard is also given to the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan⁴. The neighbourhood area is depicted in **Figure 1.1** below and key information relating to the WNP is presented in **Table 1.1**.

Table 1.1 Key information relating to the WNP

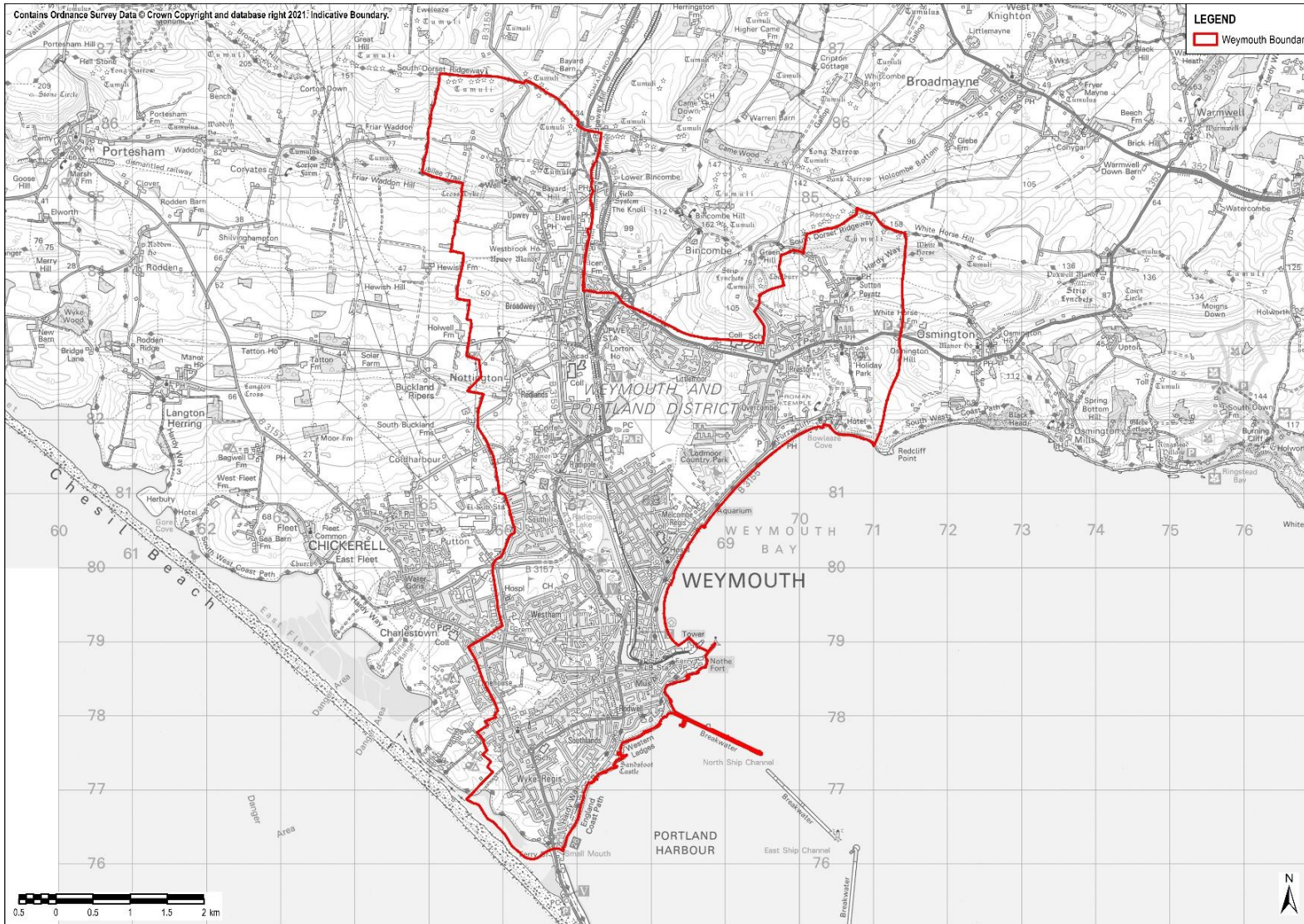
Name of Responsible Authority	Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (“the Neighbourhood Group”)
Title of Plan	Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan
Subject	Neighbourhood planning
Purpose	<p>The Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared as a neighbourhood plan under the Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The WNP is being prepared in the context of the Adopted West Dorset, Weymouth, and Portland Local Plan (2011-2031). Due regard is also given to the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan.</p> <p>The Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan will be used to guide and shape development within the neighbourhood area.</p>
Timescale	To 2038
Area covered by the plan	The neighbourhood area covers the non-civil parish boundary of Weymouth, located in Dorset (shown in Figure 1.1 below). Weymouth was formerly part of Weymouth and Portland District, prior to the amalgamation of the non-metropolitan districts into a single unitary authority (Dorset Council) in April 2019.
Summary of content	The Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan will set out a vision, strategy, and range of policies for the neighbourhood area.
Plan contact point	<p>Clive Tuck, Development Project Manager, Weymouth Town Council</p> <p>Email: clivetuck@weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk</p>

¹ UK Government (2011) ‘Localism Act 2011’ can be accessed [here](#).

² UK Government (2012) ‘The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012’ can be accessed [here](#).

³ Dorset Council (2015) ‘West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan 2011-2031’ can be accessed [here](#).

⁴ Dorset Council (2022) ‘The Dorset Council Local Plan’ can be accessed [here](#).



Document Path: 'na.aecomnet.com\fs\EMEA\Basingstoke-UKBAS1\Legacy\UKBAS1\PFILW001\4400 - Management Services\5004 - Information Systems\60571087 Neighbourhood Plan CRB 2018 2022\02 Maps\Weymouth NP\Neighbourhood Plan Area.mxd

Figure 1.1: The neighbourhood area

Planning policy review

- 1.3 The West Dorset, Weymouth, and Portland Local Plan 2011-2031⁵ was adopted in 2015 (hereafter referred to as “the Adopted Local Plan”) and provides the current strategic strategy and policies for the area. Core Policy SUS2 (Distribution of Development) identifies Weymouth as a “main town”, within the highest tier of the settlement hierarchy and a priority location for new development. Policy SUS2 also recognises that Chickerell (which has its own neighbourhood plan⁶), and parts of Littlemoor, form outlying parts of the urban area of Weymouth. Additionally, the settlement of Sutton Poyntz, which lies wholly within the neighbourhood area, also has its own neighbourhood plan⁷.
- 1.4 Until April 2019, West Dorset District Council and Weymouth and Portland Borough Council were in the process of undertaking a review of the Adopted Local Plan⁸. The evidence generated is now feeding into the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan (since Dorset was re-organised into a unitary authority). The emerging Dorset Council Local Plan⁹ (DCLP) is expected to be adopted in Spring 2026, and an issues and options consultation was completed between January and March 2021.
- 1.5 The ‘DCLP Options Consultation document – Volume 2 – Central Dorset’ document¹⁰, which formed part of the issues and options consultation, indicates that new homes could be brought forward through Policies WEY2 (Weymouth Town Centre), WEY10 (Bingleaves Cove), WEY11 (Littlemoor urban extension), WEY12 (Land off Louviers Road), WEY13 (Land at Wey Valley) and WEY16 (Land at Markham and Little Francis). Additionally, Policies WEY11 and WEY17 (Mount Pleasant Business Park) recognise land that has been identified for potential employment uses.
- 1.6 The emerging DCLP sets out a housing requirement of 3,225 homes for the neighbourhood area. Around 2,000 of these homes are likely to be on sites allocated in the Local Plan, with the remainder (1,225 homes) being met through neighbourhood plan allocations and windfall development. The neighbourhood plan may allocate sites for additional development due to the high affordable need identified in a local housing needs assessment (minimum of 1,775 homes). Due regard will also be given to the emerging DCLP for further housing guidance.
- 1.7 Neighbourhood plans will form part of the development plan for Dorset, alongside, but not as a replacement for the Local Plan. Neighbourhood plans are required to be in general conformity with the Local Plan and can develop policies and proposals to address local place-based issues. In this way it is intended for the Local Plan to provide a clear overall strategic direction for development in Dorset, whilst enabling finer detail to be determined through the neighbourhood planning process where appropriate.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Dorset Council (2021) ‘Chickerell Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2036’ can be accessed [here](#).

⁷ Dorset Council (2019) ‘Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2031’ can be accessed [here](#).

⁸ Dorset Council (2019) ‘West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan Review’ can be accessed [here](#).

⁹ Dorset Council (2021) ‘DCLP January 2021 Consultation’ can be accessed [here](#).

¹⁰ Dorset Council (2021) ‘Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation document – Volume 2 – Central Dorset’ can be accessed [here](#).

SEA screening for the WNP

- 1.8 A Neighbourhood Plan requires SEA where it is likely to have significant environmental effects. In this respect, the WNP has been screened in as requiring an SEA process for the following reasons:
- 1.9 The WNP supports allocations for new development. This includes in potentially environmentally sensitive locations, such as:
- Locations with sensitivity for the historic environment, including the Dorset & East Devon Coast World Heritage Site, nationally designated listed buildings, scheduled monuments, and eleven conservation areas.
 - Locations with sensitivity for biodiversity and geodiversity, including the Chesil Beach and The Fleet Ramsar (and Special Protection Area), Chesil and The Fleet Special Area of Conservation, and several Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
- 1.10 In light of this screening outcome, an SEA process is being undertaken to meet the specific requirements prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations)¹¹.

SEA explained

- 1.11 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the potential impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives, in terms of key environmental issues.
- 1.12 The aim of SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating potential negative impacts and maximising the potential for positive effects. Through this approach, the SEA for the WNP seeks to maximise the emerging plan's contribution to sustainable development.
- 1.13 Two key procedural requirements of the SEA Regulations are that:
- i. When deciding on "the scope and level of detail of the information" which must be included in the Environmental Report there is a consultation with nationally designated authorities concerned with environmental issues.
 - ii. A report (the 'Environmental Report') is published for consultation alongside the draft plan (i.e., the draft WNP) that presents outcomes from the environmental assessment (i.e., discusses 'likely significant effects' that would result from plan implementation), including an assessment of reasonable alternatives.
- 1.14 This 'Scoping Report' is concerned with item 'i' above. It presents a suggested scope for the SEA so that the designated authorities (Historic England, Natural England, and the Environment Agency) can provide timely comment.

¹¹ UK Government (2004) 'The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004' can be accessed [here](#).

SEA scoping explained

1.15 Developing the draft scope for the SEA as presented in this report has involved the following steps:

- Exploring the policy context for the WNP and SEA to summarise the key messages arising.
- Establishing the baseline for the SEA (i.e., the current and future situation in the area in the absence of the WNP) to help identify the plan's likely significant effects.
- Identifying particular problems or opportunities ('issues') that should be a particular focus of the SEA.

1.16 Considering this information, an SEA framework comprising SEA objectives and assessment questions can be developed, which can then be used as a guiding framework for the subsequent assessment.

1.17 The scope is explored and presented under a series of key environmental themes, which are:

- Air quality;
- Biodiversity and geodiversity;
- Climate change;
- Community wellbeing;
- Historic environment;
- Land, soil, and water resources;
- Landscape; and
- Transportation.

1.18 The selected environmental themes incorporate the 'SEA topics' suggested by Annex I (f) of the SEA Directive¹². These were refined to reflect a broad understanding of the anticipated scope of plan effects. The discussion of the scoping information for each theme is presented in Chapters 2 to 9, and the full proposed SEA framework of objectives and assessment questions is presented in Chapter 10. Each proposal within the emerging WNP will be assessed consistently using this framework.

¹² The SEA Directive (Directive 2001/42/EC) is 'of a procedural nature' (para 9 of the Directive preamble) and does not set out to prescribe particular issues that should and should not be a focus, beyond requiring a focus on 'the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors'.

2. Air Quality

Focus of theme

2.1 This chapter presents the policy context and baseline summary in relation to the air quality SEA theme. The theme focuses on air pollution sources, air quality hotspots, and air quality management within and surrounding the neighbourhood area. This information is used to identify key issues (both constraints and opportunities) before proposing a relevant SEA objective and supporting assessment questions.

Policy context

2.2 **Table 2.1** below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 2.1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to air quality

Document title	Year of publication
Environment Act	2021
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021
The Clean Air Strategy	2019
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018
UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations	2017
Environment Act	1995
Weymouth and Portland Borough Council 2019 Air Quality Annual Status Report	2019
Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Development Plan 2016-2031	2019
West Dorset, Weymouth, and Portland Local Plan (2011-2031)	2015
Dorset Council Local Plan	Emerging Local Plan

2.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The WNP will need to consider the principles outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which seek to reduce or mitigate air quality impacts during development whilst simultaneously taking advantage of opportunities to improve air quality. Measures include, but are not limited to; sustainable transport solutions, limiting the need to travel, compliance with pollutant limits or objectives, and the enhancement of green infrastructure. Smaller-scale development should consider the potential for cumulative effects in relation to air quality. The NPPF also states that planning policies should contribute towards compliance with pollutant limit levels or national objectives, acknowledging air quality management areas, clean air zones and the cumulative impacts from individual sites in local areas. Moreover, the NPPF indicates new and existing developments should be prevented from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of air pollution.

- The Clean Air Strategy outlines how the government will tackle all sources of air pollution. The strategy proposes goals to cut public exposure to particulate matter pollution and outlines required actions to meet these goals. Furthermore, it seeks to recognise wider sources that cause poor air quality, such as diffuse sources and smaller contributors. The proposed measures include new legislation and local powers to act in areas with air pollution issues.
- The 25 Year Environment Plan establishes how the government will expand net gain approaches to include air quality improvements, such as planting more trees in urban areas and changing fuel supplies. In particular, 'Goal 1 Clean air' and the policies contained within 'Chapter 4: Increasing resource efficiency and reducing pollution and waste' directly relate to the air quality SEA theme.
- The UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide is focused on lowering nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) emissions to statutory limits as quickly as possible. The plan acknowledges that an improvement in air quality and a reduction in emissions is important and aims to position the UK at the forefront of vehicle innovation by making motoring cleaner.
- Local authorities are required to monitor air quality, report regularly to Defra and act where nationally set levels and limits of pollutants are likely to be exceeded under Section 82 of the Environment Act (1995). Monitoring is undertaken to assess levels of nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone, benzene, and particulates. Where exceedances exist, areas are declared as air quality management areas (AQMAs) and local authorities are required to produce an air quality action plan (AQAP) to improve air quality in the area. Under Schedule 11 in the Environment Act (2021), a local authority must identify any parts of its area in which it appears air quality standards or objectives are not likely to be achieved within the relevant period. Additionally, local authorities must also identify relevant sources of emissions that are considered partly or wholly responsible for failing to achieve air quality standards or objectives in the area. The Weymouth and Portland Borough Council 2019 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) is the last available report for the neighbourhood area; fulfilling the requirements of the local air quality management (LAQM) as set out in Section 82 of the Environment Act (1995).
- The WNP will also need to consider the relevant policies outlined in the Adopted Local Plan (2011-2031), including ENV2 (Wildlife and Habitats), ENV9 (Pollution and Contaminated Land) and ENV16 (Amenity).
- Additionally, the WNP will need to consider the relevant policies that will be outlined in the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan. The 'Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation document – Volume 1 – Strategy and Topics' document¹³ includes the following policies that are related to air quality:
 - ENV1 (Green infrastructure: strategic approach);
 - ENV11 (Amenity);

¹³ Dorset Council (2021) 'Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation document – Volume 1 – Strategy and Topics' can be accessed [here](#).

- ENV12 (Pollution control);
 - COM7 (Creating a safe, efficient, and low carbon transport network);
and
 - COM10 (Low carbon and renewable energy development).
- The WNP will need to consider the baseline information and policies contained within the made Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Development Plan, as this plan covers part of the neighbourhood area.

Baseline summary

2.4 According to the Weymouth and Portland 2019 Air Quality ASR, there are no AQMAs or action plans in the neighbourhood area. Automatic (continuous) air quality monitoring and non-automatic (passive) air quality monitoring occurs within the neighbourhood area at the following locations¹⁴:

- King Street;
- Rodwell Road;
- 15 Rodwell Road;
- 31 Weymouth Rodwell Roundabout 1;
- Portmore Gardens;
- Rodwell Roundabout 2;
- Rodwell Roundabout 3;
- Rodwell Inn;
- 16 Rodwell Road;
- Upwey Street; and
- Dominoes.

2.5 There were no exceedances in NO₂ or particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) recorded in the report.

2.6 The Weymouth and Portland 2019 Air Quality ASR identifies vehicle traffic as the predominant source of emissions in the neighbourhood area and flags Boot Hill (Rodwell Road) as an area of concern.

Future baseline

2.7 Future development in the neighbourhood area has the potential to increase traffic, congestion, and their associated emissions. In the absence of suitable planning and mitigation this could lead to a deterioration in air quality. Therefore, mitigation measures should be incorporated into the design of new development areas to maintain and enhance air quality (where possible).

2.8 It is considered that the present shift towards the use of sustainable transportation, including active travel modes and electric vehicle use, has the

¹⁴ Dorset Council (2022) 'Weymouth and Portland air quality data 2021' can be accessed [here](#).

potential to support long term air quality improvements. Furthermore, as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic there has been a shift towards employees working from home, which also contributes to emissions reduction. Planning for these factors during development will have a positive impact on air quality.

Key issues

2.9 Considering the baseline information and policy context review, the following key issues are identified in relation to air quality:

- According to data from 2019, there are no AQMAs in the neighbourhood area. Although there is an area of concern around Boot Hill, it is anticipated that mitigation measures shall be incorporated into the design of new development areas to maintain and enhance air quality (where possible).
- Designated biodiversity and geodiversity sites within and in proximity to the neighbourhood area are potentially sensitive to air pollution issues. The effects of the WNP in relation to these concerns will be considered in the 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity' SEA theme in Chapter 3.
- The WNP could present opportunities to improve accessibility and support more local and sustainable journeys/connections. These opportunities will be explored in the 'Community Wellbeing' and 'Transportation' SEA themes in Chapters 5 and 9 respectively.
- The effects of traffic and congestion will be explored in the 'Transportation' SEA theme in Chapter 9.

2.10 Due to the absence of any significant air quality issues within the neighbourhood area, **the air quality theme has been scoped out for the purposes of the SEA process.**

3. Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Focus of theme

3.1 This chapter presents the policy context and baseline summary in relation to the biodiversity and geodiversity SEA theme. The theme focuses on nature conservation designations, geological sites, and habitats and species in the neighbourhood area. This information is used to identify key issues (both constraints and opportunities) before proposing a relevant SEA objective and supporting assessment questions.

Policy context

3.2 **Table 3.1** below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 3.1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to biodiversity and geodiversity

Document title	Year of publication
Jurassic Coast Partnership Plan 2020-2025	2020
Environment Act 2021	2021
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018
Site Improvement Plan: Chesil Beach and the Fleet	2018
UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework	2012
The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (Natural Environment White Paper)	2011
Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services	2011
Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act	2006
UK Biodiversity Action Plan	1994
Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Development Plan 2016-2031	2019
West Dorset, Weymouth, and Portland Local Plan (2011-2031)	2015
Dorset Council Local Plan	Emerging Local Plan

3.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The Jurassic Coast Partnership Plan 2020-2025 is a formal requirement for the management of the Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site and outlines the management framework for this designation. The document highlights strategic aims to help residents, developers, and tourists alike to understand, celebrate and safeguard this designation for future generations, as well as issues and opportunities. The four themes incorporated into the plan are: protecting Outstanding Universal Value, conserving natural heritage, presenting the WHS and involving

communities. This information should be considered during the development of the WNP.

- The Environment Act 2021 makes provision for biodiversity gain to be a condition of planning permission in England, in addition to creating biodiversity gain site registers and biodiversity credits. It recognises there is a duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity and encourages the identification of suitable areas through biodiversity reports and local nature recovery strategies. Furthermore, habitat maps are expected to include recovery and enhancement areas which are currently, or could become, important for biodiversity.
- The WNP will need to consider the principles set out in the NPPF, which indicate that planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance soils and sites of biodiversity and/or geological value. Plans should also identify, map, and safeguard components of wider ecological networks, promote positive action for priority habitats and species, and pursue opportunities to secure biodiversity net gains. The NPPF also states that if development causes substantial harm and cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or compensated, then planning permission should be refused.
- The NPPF also supports the establishment and enhancement of habitat networks and green infrastructure to allow for more resilience to current and future pressures for biodiversity.
- The 25 Year Environment Plan places importance on improvements to the natural environment, such as achieving clean air and water, reducing environmental hazard risk, and encouraging sustainable resource use. This will be accomplished through a variety of actions including implementing sustainable land management, engaging in nature recovery, and connecting people to the environment.
- The Chesil Beach and The Fleet Site Improvement Plan (SIP) provides a high-level overview of current and predicted issues affecting the condition of the internationally designated sites and outlines the priority measures required to improve the condition of the designations. The WNP will need to regard the actions discussed in the plan when considering development and its potential impacts.
- The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is a response to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which calls for the development and enforcement of national strategies and associated action plans to identify, conserve and protect existing biological diversity, and to enhance it wherever possible. In particular, the BAP identifies priority species and habitats that are most threatened and require conservation action. The UK BAP is succeeded by the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework, which aims to ensure that biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored, and wisely used, and ecosystem services are maintained. This helps to sustain a healthy planet that delivers essential benefits for everyone.
- The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP) sets out the importance of a healthy, functioning natural environment to sustaining economic growth, prospering communities, and personal wellbeing. It adopts a landscape approach to protect and enhance biodiversity and aims to create a green

economy, whereby the economic growth and the health of natural resources sustain each other.

- Reflecting the commitments within the NEWP, Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services aims to stop overall biodiversity loss, support healthy and well-functioning ecosystems, and establish coherent ecological networks.
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act details nature protection in the UK, which includes wildlife, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), and National Parks. It extends the UK Government's duty to biodiversity and establishes the role of Natural England, which is responsible for safeguarding England's natural environment, making sure it is protected and improved whilst ensuring people enjoy, understand, and access it.
- The WNP will also need to consider the relevant policies outlined in the Adopted Local Plan (2011-2031), including ENV1 (Landscape, Seascape and Sites of Geological Interest), ENV2 (Wildlife and Habitats), ENV3 (Green Infrastructure Network) and ENV9 (Pollution and Contaminated Land).
- Additionally, the WNP will need to consider the relevant policies that will be outlined in the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan. The 'Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation document – Volume 1 – Strategy and Topics' document¹⁵ includes the following policies that are related to the biodiversity and geodiversity SEA theme:
 - ENV1 (Green Infrastructure strategic approach);
 - ENV2 (Habitats and species);
 - ENV3 (Biodiversity and net gain);
 - ENV6 (Geodiversity); and
 - ENV12 (Pollution control).
- The WNP will need to consider the baseline information and policies contained within the made Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Development Plan, as this plan covers part of the neighbourhood area.

Baseline summary

World Heritage Site

- 3.4 The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage Sites (WHS) are places, monuments or buildings which have been recognised as of "Outstanding Universal Value" (OUV) to humanity.
- 3.5 First inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2001, sections of the Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site ("the Jurassic Coast") overlap with the

¹⁵ Ibid.

neighbourhood area. The OUV of the WHS reflects both the integrity and authenticity of the area¹⁶.

3.6 As stated within the Jurassic Coast Partnership Plan 2020-2025 for the WHS, the designation is significant to this SEA theme through the following:

- Geological values: The coastal exposures within the site provide a near-continuous, accessible sequence of rocks that documents almost 190 million years of the history of the Earth, spanning the Mesozoic Era.
- Palaeontological values: The site includes a remarkable range of internationally important fossil localities, which have produced superbly preserved and diverse evidence of life during Mesozoic times.
- Geomorphological values: The site represents an exceptional range of text-book exemplars of coastal geomorphological features, landforms, and processes.

Internationally designated sites

3.7 The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (known as the Ramsar Convention) is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for the conservation and appropriate use of wetlands and their resources¹⁷. The convention was adopted in 1971 and came into force in 1975. In the UK, the initial emphasis was on selecting sites of importance to waterbirds¹⁸. Consequently, many Ramsar sites were also designated as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under the European Birds Directive (79/409/EEC)¹⁹.

3.8 To ensure European Directives were operable in the UK after the EU transition period, changes were made through the implementation of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019²⁰. In doing so, SPAs and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) in the UK no longer form part of the EU Natura 2000 ecological network. Instead, the 2019 Regulations propose the creation of a national site network within the UK²¹, comprising of sites already designated under the Nature Directives (i.e., 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC) and any additional sites designated under the 2019 Regulations. The national site network operates in parallel with other designations and contributes towards the UK's international commitments for protected areas.

3.9 The Ramsar Sites, SPAs, and SACs within and in proximity to the neighbourhood area are shown in **Figure 3.1**.

3.10 In relation to the WNP, part of the Chesil Beach and The Fleet Ramsar Site is located towards the southern extent of the neighbourhood area, sharing an overlapping designation with the Chesil Beach and The Fleet SPA and the Chesil and The Fleet SAC. Additionally, part of the Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC is located within the eastern part of the neighbourhood area, and the Crookhill Brick Pit SAC is located approximately 1.5 km to the west.

¹⁶ Historic England (2021) 'Dorset and East Devon Coast' can be accessed [here](#).

¹⁷ Ramsar Convention (2014) 'Introducing the Convention on Wetlands' can be accessed [here](#).

¹⁸ JNCC (2019) 'Ramsar Convention' can be accessed [here](#).

¹⁹ EU (1979) 'The European Birds Directive (79/209/EEC)' can be accessed [here](#).

²⁰ UK Government (2019) 'The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019' can be accessed [here](#).

²¹ Defra (2021) 'Policy Paper: Changes to the Habitats Regulations 2017' can be accessed [here](#).

3.11 The Chesil Beach and The Fleet Ramsar site (and SPA) is approximately 1634.91 ha in size and was first designated on 17th July 1985. A linear shingle storm beach, with the shallow lagoon known as The Fleet, is located on the landward side. This designation supports a variety of habitats, including saltmarsh and reedbeds. The Chesil Beach and The Fleet Ramsar site (and SPA) is internationally important for wintering water birds including the Dark-bellied Brent goose (*Branta bernicla bernicla*), Mute swan (*Cygnus olor*), Eurasian wigeon (*Anas penelope*) and Red-breasted merganser (*Mergus serrator*). This site is also important for nationally important species like Little tern (*Sterna albifrons*) and invertebrate communities and rare fish²². The Site Improvement Plan for the SPA designation states the site is extraordinarily rich in wildlife, including these bird species and important shingle plant communities. Sharing an overlapping designation with the Ramsar site and SPA, the designation²³ for the Chesil and The Fleet SAC states that the site is characterised by:

- Marine areas, Sea inlets (35.5%);
- Tidal rivers, Estuaries, Mud flats, Sand flats, Lagoons (Including saltwork basins) (30.5%);
- Salt marshes, Salt pastures, Salt steppes (2%); and
- Shingle, Sea cliffs, Islets (32%).

3.12 The Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC is also within the neighbourhood area. Covering approximately 1441.75 ha in size²⁴, it is characterised by:

- Shingle, Sea cliffs, Islets (40%);
- Heath, Scrub, Maquis and Garrigue, Phygrana (5%); and
- Dry grassland, Steppes (55%).

3.13 The Crookhill Brick Pit SAC is located approximately 1.5 km west of the western boundary. Covering approximately 4.64 ha²⁵, it is characterised by:

- Inland water bodies (Standing water, Running water) (5%);
- Dry grassland, Steppes (50%);
- Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (35%); and
- Other land (including Towns, Villages, Roads, Waste places, Mines, Industrial sites) (10%).

Nationally designated sites

3.14 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are protected to conserve their wildlife and/or geology values. Within and in proximity to the neighbourhood area there are multiple SSSIs, ten of which intersect or lie within 1 km of the neighbourhood area, as shown in **Figure 3.2** below.

²² RSIS (1985) 'Chesil Beach and The Fleet' can be accessed [here](#).

²³ JNCC (2015) 'Chesil and the Fleet Designated Special Area of Conservation' can be accessed [here](#).

²⁴ JNCC (2015) 'Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs Designated Special Area of Conservation' can be accessed [here](#).

²⁵ JNCC (2015) 'Crookhill Brick Pit Designated Special Area of Conservation' can be accessed [here](#).

- Lorton (completely within the neighbourhood area) – 28.52% in favourable condition, 71.48% in unfavourable-recovering condition²⁶;
- Lodmoor (completely within the neighbourhood area) – 48.26% in favourable condition, 51.74% in unfavourable-recovering condition²⁷;
- Radipole Lake (completely within the neighbourhood area) – 82.42% in unfavourable-recovering condition, 17.58% in unfavourable-no change condition²⁸;
- Portland Harbour Shore (completely within the neighbourhood area) – 82.99% in favourable condition, 17.01% in unfavourable-no change condition²⁹;
- Upwey Quarries and Bincombe Down (partly within the northern section of the neighbourhood area) – 78.5% in favourable condition, 21.5% in unfavourable-no change condition³⁰;
- White Horse Hill (partly within the north eastern section of the neighbourhood area) – 12.61% in favourable condition, 56.61% in unfavourable-recovering condition and 30.77% in unfavourable-no change condition³¹;
- Chesil and The Fleet (partly within the southern section of the neighbourhood area) – 66.21% in favourable condition, 11.58% in unfavourable-recovering condition and 22.21% in unfavourable-declining condition³²;
- South Dorset Coast (partly within the south eastern section of the neighbourhood area) – 60.45% in favourable condition, 31.47% in unfavourable-recovering condition, 7.8% in unfavourable-no change condition and 0.27% in unfavourable-declining condition³³;
- Chalbury Hill and Quarry (in neighbouring parish of Bincombe) – 12.98% in favourable condition, 87.02% in unfavourable-declining condition³⁴; and
- Poxwell (in the neighbouring parish of Poxwell) – 100% in favourable condition³⁵.

3.15 SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) are a Geographical Information Systems (GIS) tool/dataset that map zones around each SSSI according to their sensitivities. They specify the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts at a given location, and thresholds which indicate a need to consult Natural England in development. In this respect, it is likely any rural non-residential, residential, and rural residential development carried out in the neighbourhood area will overlap with an IRZ and will likely require consultation with Natural England. This will be considered in further detail within the following stages of the SEA process.

²⁶ Natural England (unknown date) 'Lorton SSSI' can be accessed [here](#).

²⁷ Natural England (unknown date) 'Lodmoor SSSI' can be accessed [here](#).

²⁸ Natural England (unknown date) 'Radipole Lake SSSI' can be accessed [here](#).

²⁹ Natural England (unknown date) 'Portland Harbour Shore SSSI' can be accessed [here](#).

³⁰ Natural England (unknown date) 'Upwey Quarries and Bincombe Down SSSI' can be accessed [here](#).

³¹ Natural England (unknown date) 'White Horse Hill SSSI' can be accessed [here](#).

³² Natural England (unknown date) 'Chesil and The Fleet SSSI' can be accessed [here](#).

³³ Natural England (unknown date) 'South Dorset Coast SSSI' can be accessed [here](#).

³⁴ Natural England (unknown date) 'Chalbury Hill and Quarry SSSI' can be accessed [here](#).

³⁵ Natural England (unknown date) 'Poxwell SSSI' can be accessed [here](#).

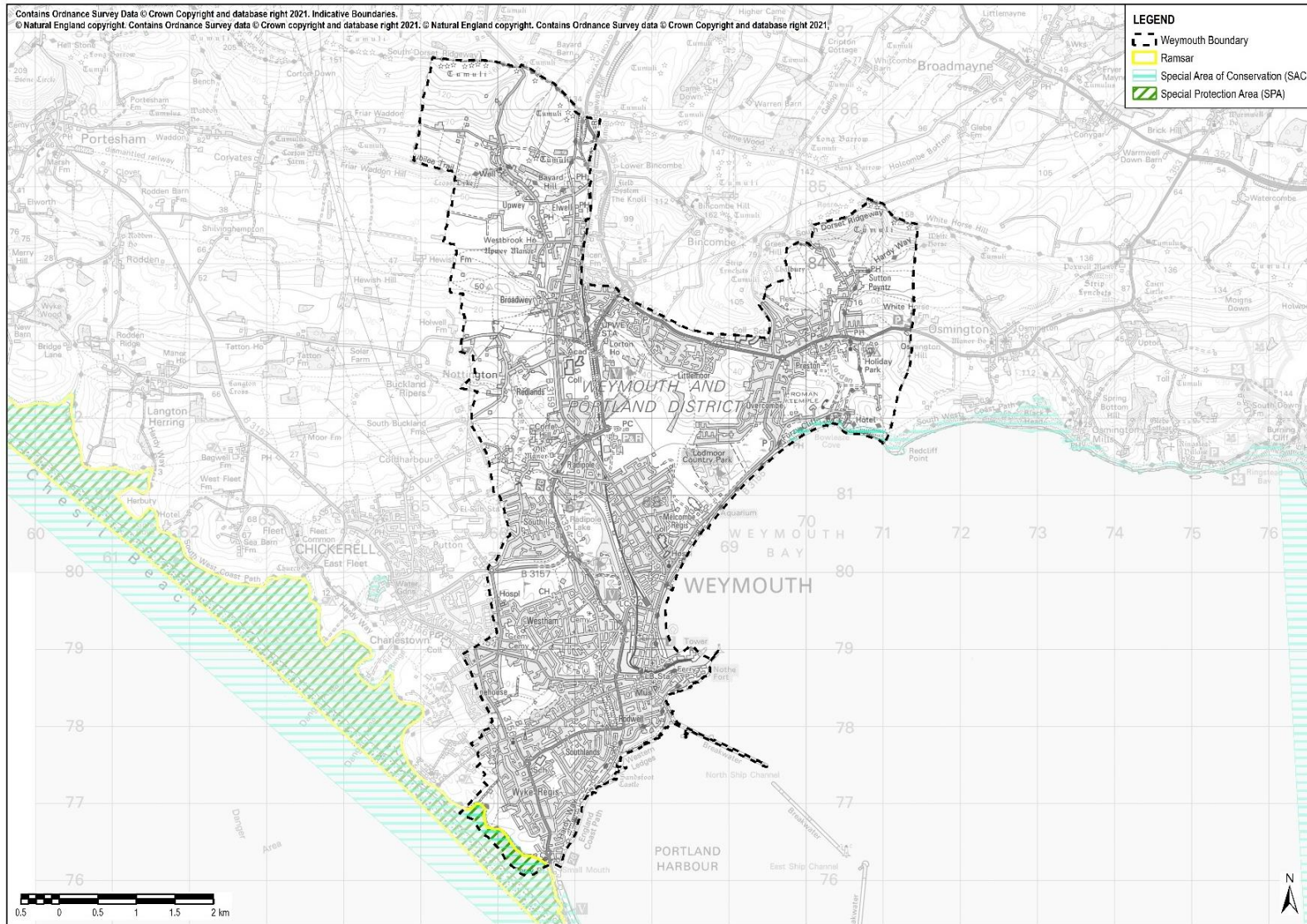
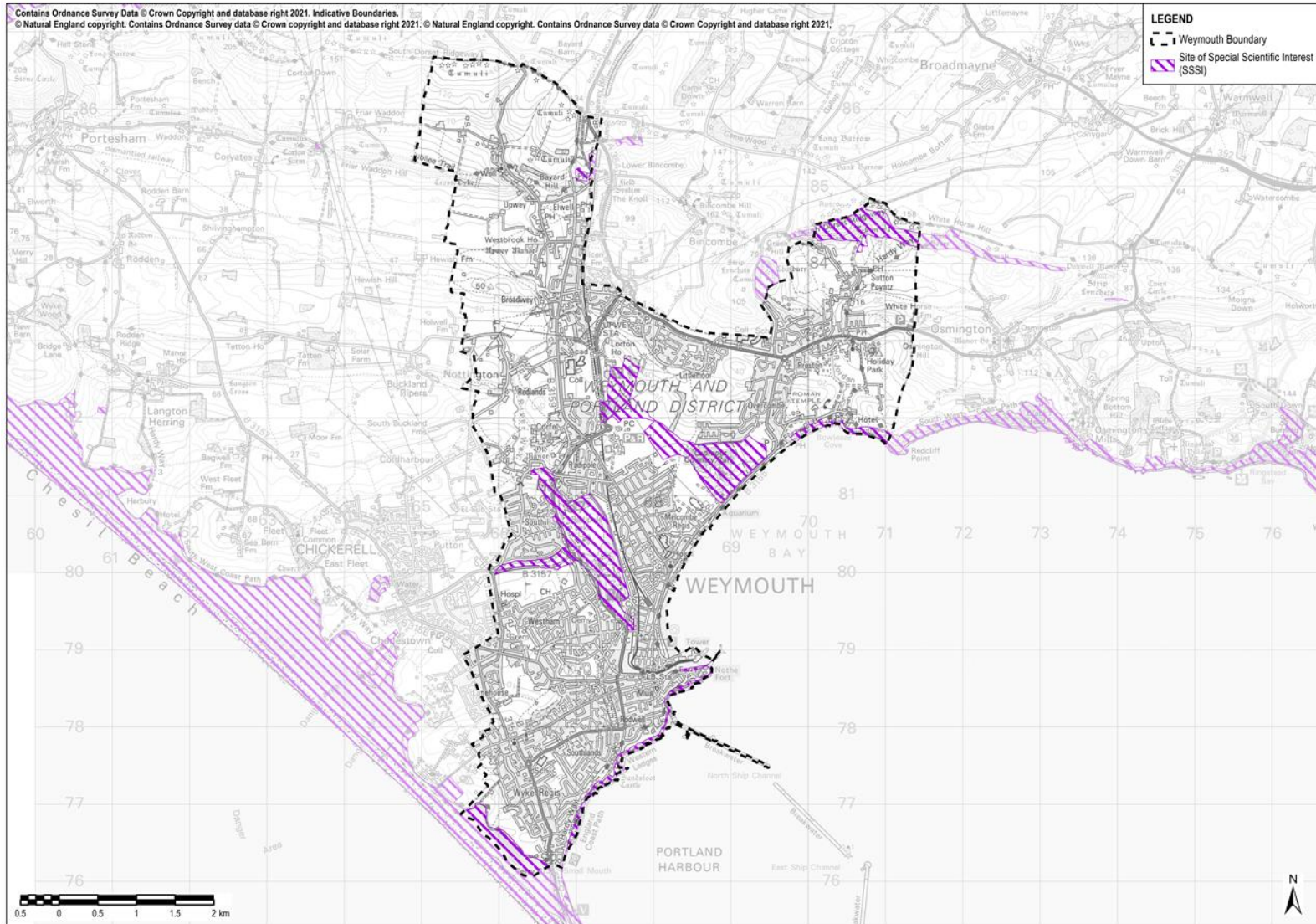


Figure 3.1: Ramsar sites, SPAs, and SACs within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.



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Figure 3.2: SSSIs within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.

Locally important sites

- 3.16 Within the neighbourhood area there are two local nature reserves (LNRs) – Radipole Community Woodland and Radipole School. Additionally, there is a Local Geological Site within the neighbourhood area known as the Rodwell Cutting.
- 3.17 The Radipole Community Woodland LNR is a 1.29 ha area designated for being urban fringe. It was designated in 2004 and comprises of a variety of tree and shrub species situated on Oxford Clay³⁶.
- 3.18 The Radipole School LNR is a 0.87 ha area designated for being urban fringe. It was designated in 2000 and comprises protected woodland and meadow³⁷.
- 3.19 The Rodwell Cutting Local Geological Site is designated due to exposing part of the Corralian Group succession from the Bencliff Grit Member of the Redcliff Formation through to the Osmington Oolite Formation and up to the Clavellata Formation³⁸.

Priority habitats and species

- 3.20 There are a variety of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority habitats within and in proximity to the neighbourhood area, as indicated by **Figure 3.3** overleaf. This includes maritime cliffs and slopes, mudflats, saline lagoons, lowland calcareous grassland, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, lowland meadows, good quality semi-improved grassland, reedbeds, deciduous woodland and traditional orchards.
- 3.21 In terms of the national habitat network, the area north of Stottingway Street and much of the neighbourhood area south of Upwey train station is covered by areas of Network Enhancement Zones 1 and 2³⁹, surrounding existing areas of primary habitat. Network Enhancement Zone 1 is deemed most suitable for habitat re-creation supporting the primary habitat, whilst Zone 2 is most suitable for new habitats and green infrastructure. Additionally, land north of Stottingway Street, east along Preston Road and west around Nottingham, falls within a Network Expansion Zone. These areas are identified as suitable locations for connecting and linking up habitats across a landscape with new habitat creation.
- 3.22 The Dorset Environmental Records Centre⁴⁰ contains archives of protected and/or notable species within Dorset, including those species protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981⁴¹ and under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. The BAP Priority habitats and ecological designations within and surrounding the neighbourhood area are likely to support populations of protected species.
- 3.23 Ancient woodland takes hundreds of years to establish. These habitats are important for their wildlife (often including rare and threatened species), and

³⁶ Natural England (2022) 'Radipole Community Woodland LNR' can be accessed [here](#).

³⁷ Natural England (2022) 'Radipole School LNR' can be accessed [here](#).

³⁸ Dorset's Important Geological Sites (unknown date) 'Rodwell Cutting' can be accessed [here](#).

³⁹ Natural England (2020) 'National Habitat Network Maps' can be accessed [here](#).

⁴⁰ The Dorset Environment Records Centre website can be accessed [here](#).

⁴¹ UK Government (1981) 'The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981' can be accessed [here](#).

soils, amongst other values. Ancient woodland includes land that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. This means the following is included under its designation:

- Ancient semi-natural woodland mainly made up of trees and shrubs native to the site, usually arising from natural regeneration; and
- Plantations on ancient woodland sites - replanted with conifer and broadleaved trees that retain ancient woodland features, such as undisturbed soil, ground flora and fungi⁴².

3.24 Within the neighbourhood area there is one area of ancient woodland – Two Mile Coppice, off the A354.

⁴² GOV.UK (2022) 'Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions' can be accessed [here](#).

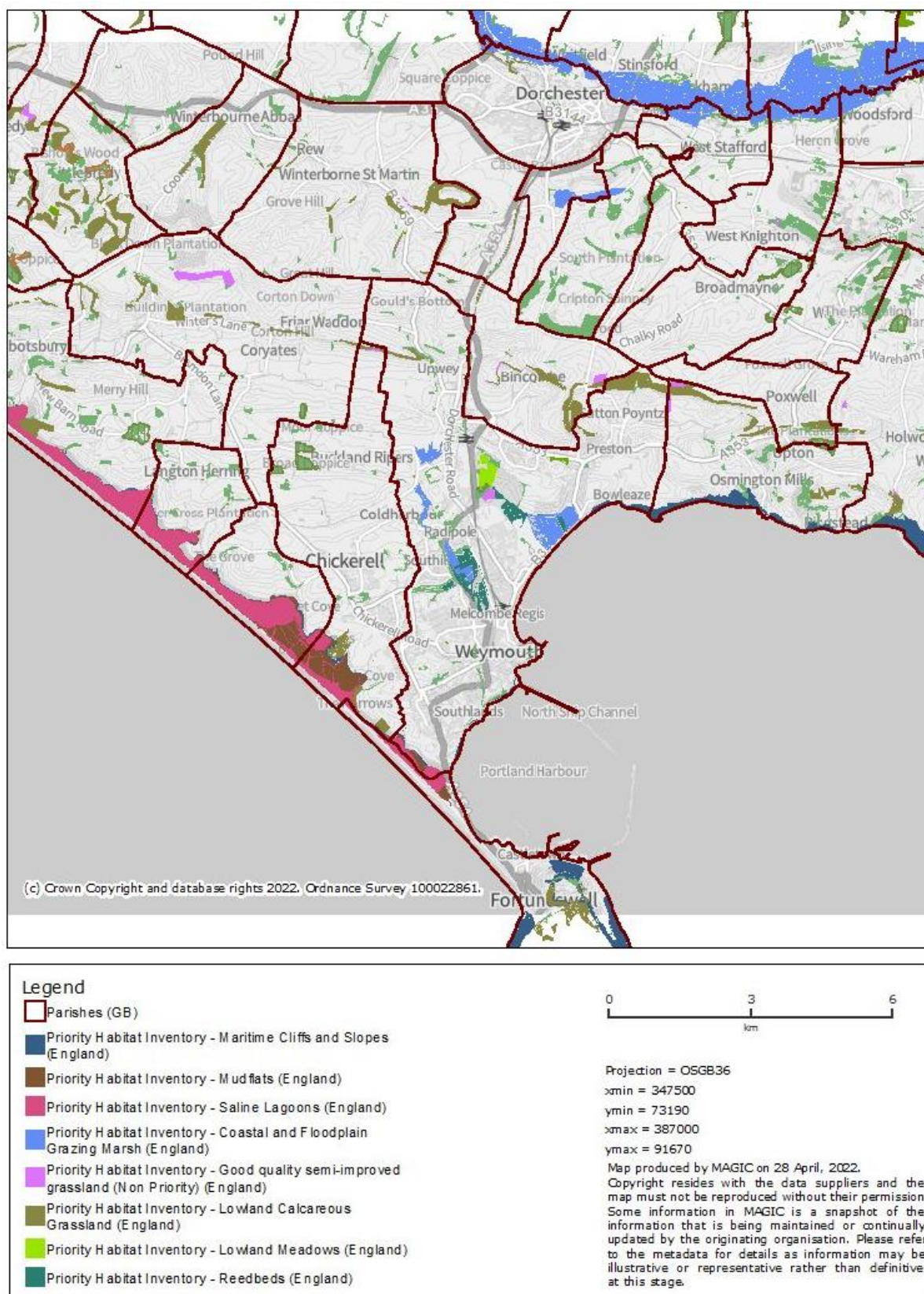


Figure 3.3: Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority habitats in the neighbourhood area⁴³.

⁴³ Dorset Council (2022) 'Dorset Explorer' can be accessed [here](#).

Future baseline

- 3.25 Habitats and species will potentially face increasing pressures from future development within the neighbourhood area, with the potential for negative impacts on the wider ecological network. This may include a loss of habitats and impacts on biodiversity networks, which may be exacerbated by the effects of climate change. This has the potential to lead to changes in the distribution and abundance of species and changes to the composition of habitats.
- 3.26 The WNP presents an opportunity to maximise benefits for biodiversity by including consideration of important habitats, species, and designated sites at an early stage of planning for future growth. To maintain and improve the condition of biodiversity in the future, it will be important to not only protect and enhance important habitats but the connections between them. It will be crucial to effectively coordinate the delivery of new development to ensure that opportunities to improve green infrastructure and ecological corridors are maximised within the neighbourhood area.

Key issues

3.27 Considering the baseline information and policy context review, the following key issues are identified in relation to biodiversity and geodiversity:

- HRA screening will be undertaken to understand the potential effects arising at internationally designated biodiversity sites and any mitigation that may be required to avoid significant effects. The findings of the HRA will inform both plan-making and the SEA.
- Designated sites within the neighbourhood area include Chesil Beach and the Fleet Ramsar (and SPA), Chesil and the Fleet SAC, The Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC, SSSIs, Radipole Community Woodland LNR, Radipole School LNR, and Rodwell Cutting Local Geological Site.
- Planning for development should seek to avoid direct impacts for habitats, such as habitat loss or fragmentation. Additionally, the landscape surrounding the existing built-up areas is recognised for its potential to support primary habitats through habitat re-creation, new habitats and enhanced green infrastructure. Therefore, planning for development can seek to maximise opportunities arising in this respect.
- Development in the neighbourhood area will likely be required to consult with Natural England regarding impacts arising for nearby SSSIs.

Proposed SEA objective

3.28 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective:

SEA theme	SEA objective
Biodiversity and geodiversity	Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.

3.29 Supporting assessment questions include (will the option/proposal...):

- Support the Outstanding Universal Value of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site?
- Avoid or, if not possible, minimise impacts on biodiversity, including internationally and nationally designated sites?
- Support the integrity of the designated sites for biodiversity and geodiversity located within proximity to the neighbourhood area?
- Protect and enhance priority habitats, semi-natural habitats, species, and the ecological network connecting them?
- Support the national habitat network, particularly Network Enhancement Zone 1 and identified restorable habitat?
- Achieve biodiversity net gains and support the delivery of ecosystem services and multifunctional green infrastructure services?
- Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks?
- Support and promote access to and interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity?

4. Climate Change

Focus of theme

4.1 This chapter presents the policy context and baseline summary in relation to the climate change SEA theme. The theme focuses on contributions to climate change, the effects of climate change, climate change adaptation, and flood risk in the neighbourhood area. This information is used to identify key issues (both constraints and opportunities) before proposing a relevant SEA objective and supporting assessment questions.

Policy context

4.2 **Table 4.1** below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 4.1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to climate change.

Document title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021
Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener	2021
National Infrastructure Assessment	2021
The UK Sixth Carbon Budget	2020
The Clean Air Strategy 2019	2019
The National Adaptation Programme and the Third Strategy for Climate Adaptation Reporting	2018
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018
The Clean Growth Strategy	2017
UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017	2017
Flood and Water Management Act 2010	2010
Climate Change Act 2008	2008
Dorset Council Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy	2021
Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Development Plan 2016-2031	2019
West Dorset, Weymouth, and Portland Local Plan (2011-2031)	2015
Dorset Council Local Plan	Emerging Local Plan

4.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The WNP will need to consider the principles set out in the NPPF, including adopting a proactive planning approach to both mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies are expected to improve the resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, avoid inappropriate development in the flood plain, and support the move to a low carbon economy. The NPPF recognises the potential for planning to shape places to better contribute to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and deliver long-term resilience.

- The Clean Growth Strategy, Clean Air Strategy and the Net Zero Strategy are a collection of documents seeking to progress the government's commitment to becoming net zero by 2050 under the UK Climate Change Act 2008. The documents outline how the government will tackle air pollution sources whilst maintaining an affordable energy supply and increasing economic growth. This parallels with the 25 Year Environment Plan, which seeks to manage land resources sustainably, recover and reinstate nature, protect soils and habitats, increase resource efficiency, improve water quality, and connect people with the environment. Of note in the 25 Year Environment Plan is the following: 'Chapter 1: Using and managing land sustainably', 'Chapter 6: Protecting and improving the global environment', 'Goal 4: A reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards such as flooding and drought' and 'Goal 7: Mitigating and adapting to climate change'.
- The National Infrastructure Assessment is published every five years and analyses the UK's long-term economic infrastructure needs to create a strategic vision and recommendations. The baseline report states that climate change will increase pressures on all sectors, including economic infrastructure.
- The National Adaptation Programme outlines the government's response to the second Climate Change Risk Assessment, demonstrating the actions the government is currently taking and actions it will be taking in the future. It outlines risks that fit within the priority areas identified by the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017:
 - Flooding and coastal change risks to communities, businesses, and infrastructure.
 - Risks to health, well-being, and productivity from high temperatures.
 - Risk of shortages in the public water supply, and for agriculture, energy generation, and industry.
 - Risks to natural capital, including terrestrial, coastal, marine and freshwater ecosystems, soils, and biodiversity.
 - Risks to domestic and international food production and trade; and
 - New and emerging pests and diseases, and invasive non-native species, affecting people, plants, and animals.
- The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 provides for better and more comprehensive management of flood risk for people, homes, and businesses, in addition to aiding in safeguarding community groups from unaffordable rises in surface water drainage charges and protecting consumer water supplies. It also highlights alternatives to traditional engineering to flood risk management.
- The UK Climate Change Act 2008 establishes a framework to develop an economically viable emissions reduction path. The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order of 2019 put in place the legally binding target of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. The Climate Change Act includes the following:

- The UK Government must reduce greenhouse gas emissions by a minimum of 100% of 1990 levels by 2050.
- The document requires the government to produce legally binding carbon budgets – a cap on the amount of greenhouse gases emitted in the UK over a five-year period.
- The Act requires the government to assess and prepare for the risks and opportunities linked to climate change for the UK.
- The Sixth Carbon Budget is the legal limit of UK net greenhouse gas emissions and requires the country to reduce emissions by 78% by 2035 relative to 1990 levels. This puts the country on track to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 at the latest.
- Dorset Council declared a climate emergency in May 2019, acknowledging the need to act on the causes and impacts of climate change. In November 2019, this was updated to a climate and ecological emergency in order to allow for the protection and enhancement of the county's natural environment and wildlife biodiversity when considering climate emergency mitigation work.
- The WNP will also need to consider the relevant policies outlined in the Adopted West Dorset, Weymouth, and Portland Local Plan (2011-2031), including INT1 (Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development), ENV5 (Flood Risk), ENV6 (Local Flood Alleviation Schemes), ENV7 (Coastal Erosion and Land Instability), ENV10 (The Landscape and Townscape Setting) and COM11 (Renewable Energy Development).
- Additionally, the WNP will need to consider the relevant policies that will be outlined in the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan. The 'Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation document – Volume 1 – Strategy and Topics' document⁴⁴ includes the following provisional policies that are related to the climate change SEA theme:
 - ENV3 (Biodiversity and net gain);
 - ENV12 (Pollution control);
 - ENV13 (Flood risk);
 - ENV14 (Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS));
 - ENV15 (land instability);
 - ENV16 (New built development in Coastal Change Management Areas);
 - ENV17 (Replacement or relocation of existing development in Coastal Change Management Areas);
 - COM10 (Low carbon and renewable energy development); and
 - COM11 (Small scale wind energy development).

⁴⁴ Ibid.

- The WNP will need to consider the baseline information and policies contained within the made Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Development Plan, as this plan covers part of the neighbourhood area.

Baseline summary

Contribution to climate change

- 4.4 The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order of 2019 requires carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the built environment to be monitored and recorded at the local authority level. The CO₂ emissions shown in **Figures 4.1** and **4.2** below are derived from data supplied by the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy⁴⁵.
- 4.5 As demonstrated in **Figure 4.1**, the largest contributing sector with regards to CO₂ emissions in Dorset was the domestic sector until 2016. Since 2016, the transport sector has contributed the highest levels of CO₂ across the three sectors in the region.

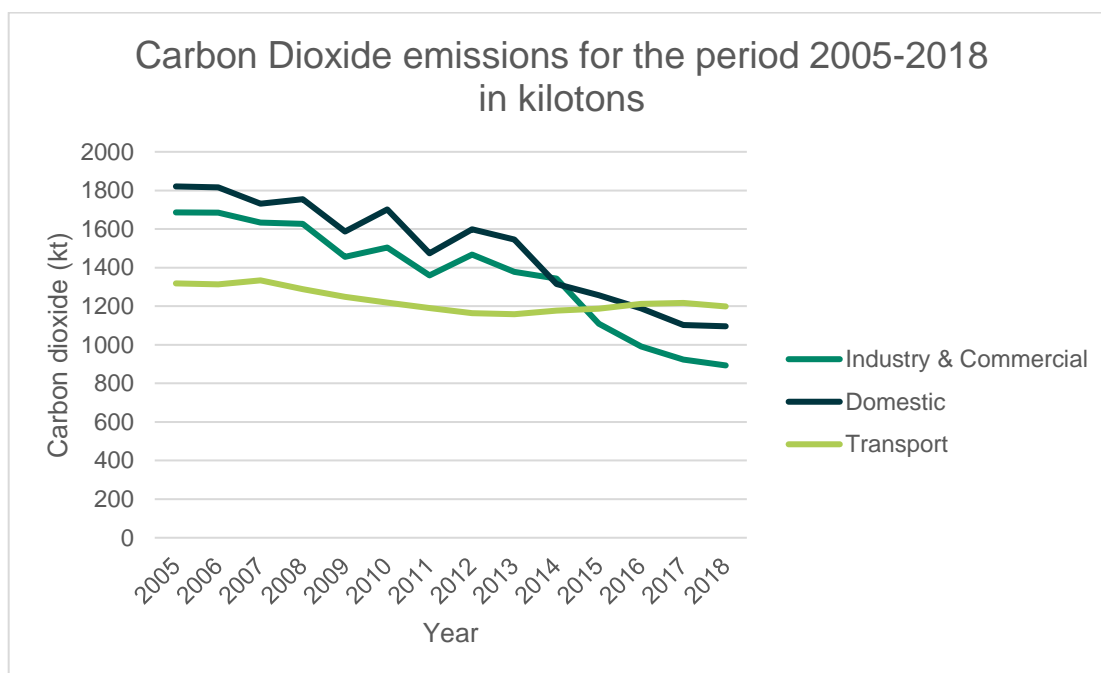


Figure 4.1: CO₂ emissions in kilotons per year for each sector in Dorset (2005-2018).

- 4.6 The introduction and uptake of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) will contribute positively towards the reduction of road transport related emissions. In line with assumptions made by the Department for Transport’s ‘Road to Zero’ report (2018)⁴⁶, it is assumed that ULEV uptake will increase rapidly in the coming decade. Therefore, all vehicles could be ultra-low emission (powered either by hydrogen or electricity) by 2030, thus the CO₂ emissions from the transport sector have the potential to decrease.

⁴⁵ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (2020) ‘UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005-2008’ can be accessed [here](#). The data tables used to generate Figures 4.1 and 4.2 can be downloaded from this page.

⁴⁶ Department for Transport (2018) ‘The Road to Zero’ can be accessed [here](#).

4.7 **Figure 4.2** below indicates that CO₂ emissions per capita in tons for Dorset were lower than the levels for the South West region and England during 2005-2018. However, Dorset has experienced the lowest decrease in per capita emissions during this period; a decrease of an average 2.7 tons per capita in comparison to an average of 3.2 tons per capita in the South West region and 3.5 tons per capita for England.

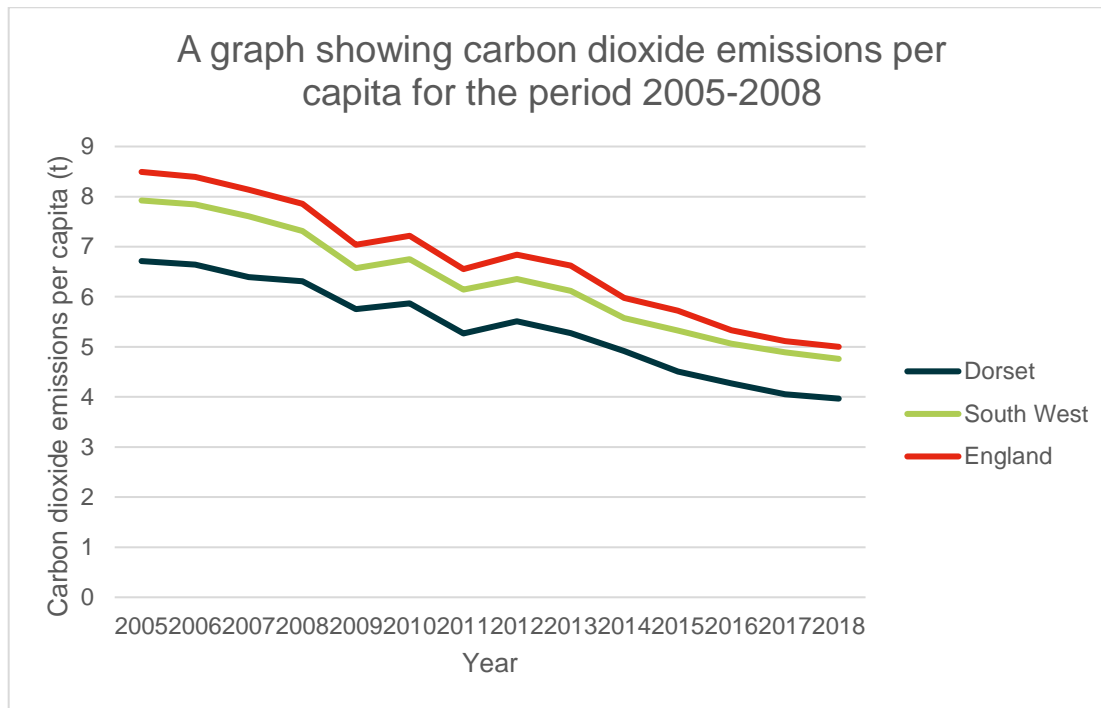


Figure 4.2: CO₂ emissions per capita (in tons) for Dorset, the South West region and England (2005-2018).

Potential effects of climate change

4.8 The UK Climate Projections (UKCP18) programme is a climate analysis tool that provides the most up-to-date assessment on potential future climatic changes in the UK based on climate model simulations⁴⁷. Projections can be downscaled to a regional level across the UK, allowing for specific evaluations of a selected area.

4.9 The UKCP18 projections conclude the effects of climate change for the South West, under the medium emissions scenario, are likely to be as follows (as compared to 1981 - 2000):

- 2020 - 2039:
 - An average 0-1°C increase in annual mean temperature.
 - An average 0-10% increase in mean winter precipitation; and
 - An average 0-10% decrease in mean summer precipitation.
- 2049 - 2059:
 - An average 1-2 °C increase in annual mean temperature.

⁴⁷ Met Office (no date) 'UK Climate Projections (UKCP)' can be accessed [here](#).

- An average 0-20% increase in mean winter precipitation; and
- An average 10-20% decrease in mean summer precipitation.

4.10 If these changes occur, the neighbourhood area may face a range of risks, including:

- Increases in cases of heat related illnesses and deaths during the summer period as well as illnesses and deaths related to exposure to sunlight.
- An increase in the risk of injuries and deaths caused by storm events, due to both the increases in quantity and magnitude.
- Changes to water resources, in terms of quality and quantity.
- An increased risk of flooding, including changes in vulnerability to 1 in 100-year floods, and a need to upgrade flood defences.
- Soil erosion due to flash flooding.
- Loss of species that are at the edge of their distribution, particularly their southern edge, and a spread of species at the northern edge of their distribution.
- Increased drought events, both in quantity and magnitude; and
- Heat related impacts to local infrastructure, e.g., road surfaces melting.

Flood risk

4.11 **Figure 4.3** overleaf indicates the areas within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and highlights where existing flood defences are within the neighbourhood area. A summary is provided below:

- The land adjacent to the coastline on the south and south-eastern neighbourhood area boundaries are within Flood Risk Zone 3;
- The land bordering the River Wey is within Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 as well as land along Coombe Valley Road and Preston Road;
- The Lodmoor Country Park and Two Mile Coppice are within Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3;
- There are flood defences along Overcome Beach between the Lodmoor Country Park and the English Channel, and in and around Weymouth Harbour; and
- Land between Preston and Bowleaze is in Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 due to the proximity to the waterbody.

4.12 **Figure 4.4** demonstrates that similar areas are at risk of surface water flooding. The land along the River Wey is at high and medium level risk; Lodmoor Country Estate and Two Mile Coppice ranges from low to high risk, the Nottingham, Broadway and Upwey area is mostly at high risk, and the land between Bowleaze and Sutton Poyntz is mostly at high risk.

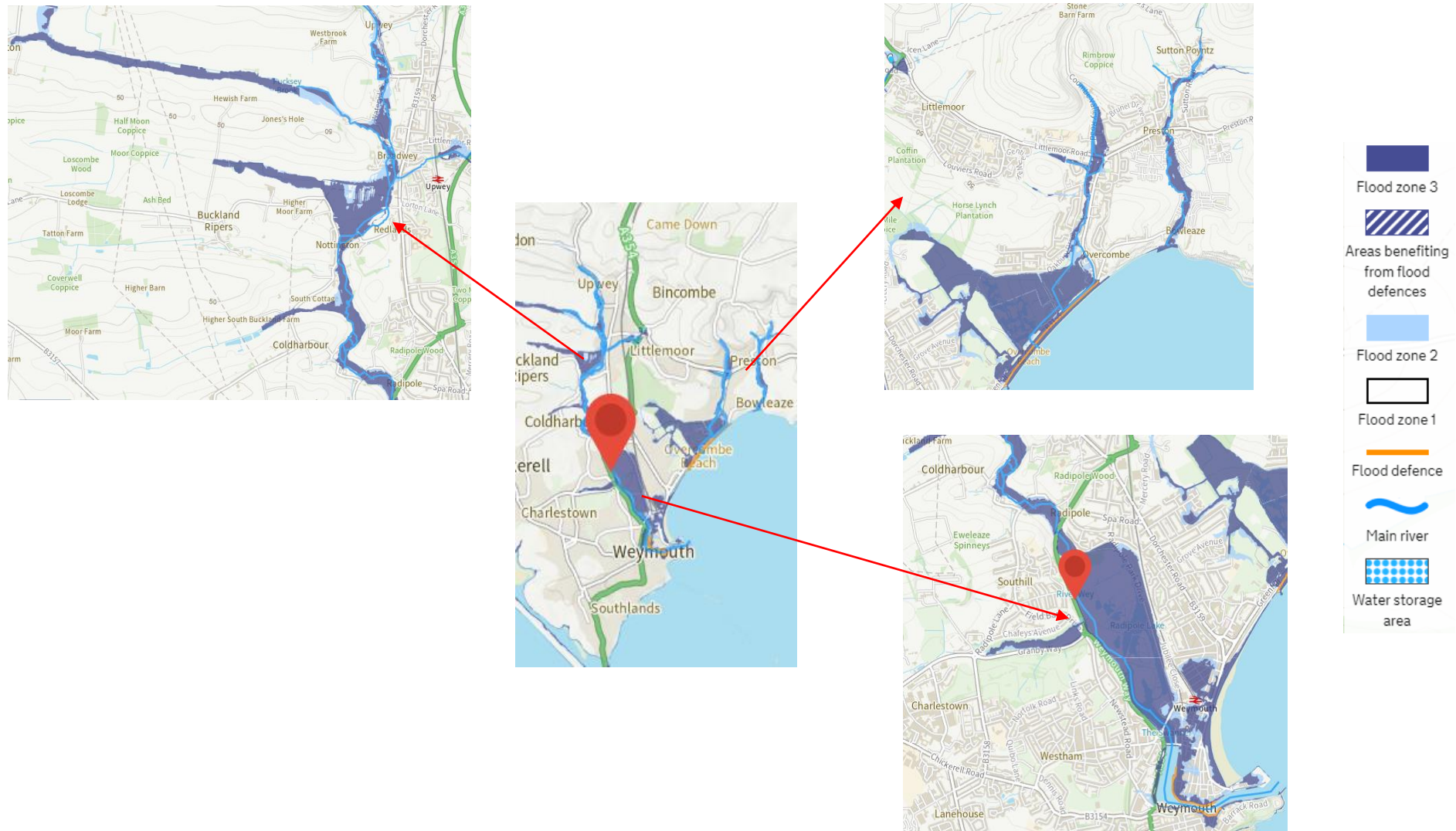


Figure 4.3: Flood zone risks within the neighbourhood area.



Figure 4.4: Surface water flood risk within the neighbourhood area.

Future baseline

- 4.13 Climate change has the potential to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events in the neighbourhood area. In turn it is likely the neighbourhood area will experience an amplified level of risk associated with climate change and a subsequent increase in need for resilience and adaptation measures. New development has the potential to increase flood risk through changing surface and ground water flows, overloading existing inputs to the drainage and wastewater networks, and/ or increasing the number of residents exposed to areas of existing flood risk.
- 4.14 In terms of climate change contribution, greenhouse gas emissions generated in the neighbourhood area may continue to decrease with the wider adoption of energy efficiency measures, renewable energy production, and new technologies. However, increases in the built footprint of the neighbourhood area would contribute to increases in the absolute levels of greenhouse gas emissions, and these increases are considered likely with or without the WNP.

Key issues

- 4.15 Considering the baseline information and policy context review, the following key issues are identified in relation to climate change and flood risk:
- Dorset Council declared a climate and ecological emergency in 2019 and has resolved to support local authorities (and, by extension, Neighbourhood groups) to help tackle climate change through plan-making where possible.
 - The transport sector continues to be a key challenge in terms of reducing emissions. The WNP provides opportunities to guide development towards the most accessible locations in the neighbourhood area and require local infrastructure (including walking and cycling infrastructure) improvements where appropriate.
 - The neighbourhood area is at risk of varying levels of fluvial flooding and has large amounts of land in Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3. Surface water run-off from development can exacerbate the risk of flooding by increasing the run-off from land to water courses.
 - The WNP should seek to maximise opportunities to support actions in tackling climate change. This may include through encouraging sustainable transport technologies, such as the use of EVs, green infrastructure enhancements, and using sustainable drainage systems.

Proposed SEA objective

- 4.16 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective:

SEA theme	SEA objective
Climate change	Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the neighbourhood area and increase resilience to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding.

4.17 Supporting assessment questions include (will the option/proposal...):

- Reduce the number of journeys made and reduce the need to travel?
- Promote the use of more sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling, public transport, and EV infrastructure?
- Increase the number of new developments meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria?
- Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources, or reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources?
- Ensure that inappropriate development does not take place in areas at higher risk of flooding, considering the likely future effects of climate change?
- Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the plan area?
- Sustainably manage water run-off, reducing runoff where possible?
- Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks?

5. Community Wellbeing

Focus of theme

5.1 This chapter presents the policy context and baseline summary in relation to the community wellbeing SEA theme. The theme focuses on population and age structure, deprivation levels, housing mix and affordability, community assets and infrastructure, and influences on health and wellbeing for residents in the neighbourhood area. This information is used to identify key issues (both constraints and opportunities) before proposing a relevant SEA objective and supporting assessment questions.

Policy context

5.2 **Table 5.1** below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 5.1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to community wellbeing

Document title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021
Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On	2020
Healthy and Safe Communities Planning practice guidance	2019
Planning for Sport Guidance	2019
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018
Dorset Enabling Communities Strategy	2021
Dorset Homelessness Strategy 2021-2026	2021
Active Dorset: Sport & Leisure Facilities Needs Assessment	2017
Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Development Plan 2016-2031	2019
West Dorset, Weymouth, and Portland Local Plan (2011-2031)	2015
Dorset Council Local Plan	Emerging Local Plan

5.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The WNP will need to consider the principles outlined in the NPPF, which seek to retain and enhance access to community services and facilities. The NPPF recognises the benefits of having a range of local provision to support community needs. In addition, the NPPF recognises the benefits of creating cohesive communities in safe environments where the fear of crime (and crime itself) does not undermine resident quality of life.
- The NPPF recognises the role of development plans in helping to deliver access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity, therefore contributing to the health and wellbeing of communities. The health benefits of access to nature, green spaces and green infrastructure are further reiterated in the 25 Year Environment Plan.

Additional guidance is available through the Healthy and Safe Communities Planning practice guidance.

- The 2020 Health Equity in England Report identifies a health gap between less and more deprived areas, which has grown in the last decade. This means an increased amount of people can expect to spend more of their lives in poor health with a stalled, or even declining, life expectancy.
- The Planning for Sport Guidance seeks to help the planning system provide formal and informal opportunities for everyone to take part in sport and be physically active, setting out twelve principles.
- Dorset's homelessness and community strategies (Enabling Communities, Active Dorset, and the homelessness strategy) each seek to support the appropriate delivery of housing and community infrastructure. The strategies recognise the importance of targeting resources at those most at risk / most vulnerable and supporting all residents needs for affordable, safe, and good quality housing in the right places. Furthermore, the strategies recognise the need to create choice in terms of securing a long-term stable home and create adaptable homes supported by high levels of accessibility.
- The WNP will also need to consider the relevant policies outlined in the Adopted West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan (2011-2031), including COM1 (Making sure New Development Makes Suitable Provision for Community Infrastructure), COM2 (New or Improved Local Community Buildings and Structures), COM3 (The Retention of Local Community Buildings and Structures), COM4 (New or Improved Local Recreational Facilities), COM5 (the Retention of Open Space and Recreational Facilities) and COM6 (The Provision of Education and Training Facilities)
- Additionally, the WNP will need to consider the relevant policies that will be outlined in the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan. The 'Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation document – Volume 1 – Strategy and Topics' document⁴⁸ includes the following provisional policies that are related to the community wellbeing SEA theme:
 - COM1 (Making sure new development makes suitable provision for community infrastructure);
 - COM2 (New or improved local community buildings and structures);
 - COM3 (Retention of local community buildings and structures);
 - COM4 (Recreation, sports facilities, and open space); and
 - COM6 (The provision of education and training facilities).
- The WNP will need to consider the baseline information and policies contained within the made Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Development Plan, as this plan covers part of the neighbourhood area.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Baseline summary

Population and age structure

- 5.4 According to the City Population website⁴⁹, which uses the 2011 Census data, the neighbourhood area had a total 52,323 residents. This is estimated to have increased to 53,046 in 2020, an increase of approximately 1.4%.
- 5.5 In 2020 it was estimated that approximately 17.5% of the population of the neighbourhood area was between the ages of 0-17, with 55.1% between the working ages of 18-64, and 27.5% within the over 65 age band.
- 5.6 **Figure 5.1** below, sourced from the City Population website⁵⁰, shows the estimated gender and age group split for 2020 (E 2020).

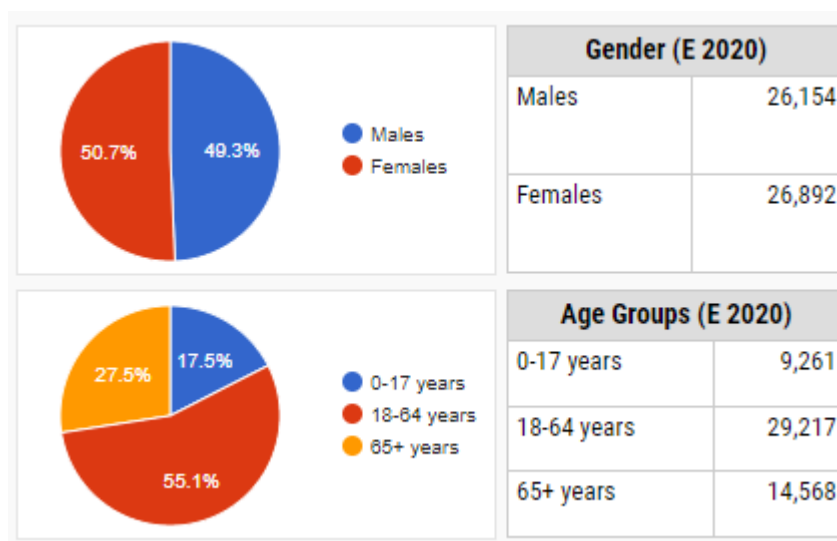


Figure 5.1: Estimated gender and age group split for the neighbourhood area according to the City Population website.

Index of Multiple Deprivation

- 5.7 The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD) is an overall relative measure of deprivation and is the combination of seven different domains as described below. The seven deprivation domains are as follows:
- **Income:** the proportion of the population experiencing a deprivation relating to low income. There are a further two subsets of this measure:
 - **Income deprivation affecting children:** the proposition of children aged 0-15 living in income deprived families; and
 - **Income deprivation affecting older people:** the proportion of all adults aged 60 and above that experience income deprivation.
 - **Employment:** the proportion of the working-age population involuntarily excluded from the labour market, including those who want to work but cannot.

⁴⁹ City Population (2021) 'Dorset (Weymouth and Portland)' can be accessed [here](#).

⁵⁰ Ibid.

- **Education, skills, and training:** the lack of attainment and skills in the population.
- **Health deprivation and disability:** this risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health.
- **Crime:** the risk of personal and material victimisation at the local level.
- **Barriers to housing and services:** the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services, split into 'geographical barriers' linked to the physical proximity and 'wider barriers' linked to access to housing.
- **Living environment:** the quality of the local environment, categorised into 'indoors living environment' to measure the quality of housing and 'outdoors living environment' to measure indicators like air quality and road traffic accidents.

5.8 Lower super output areas (LSOAs)⁵¹ are designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. They are standardized geographies intended to be as consistent as possible, with each LSOA containing approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people. In relation to the IMD 2019, LSOAs are ranked out of the 32,844 in England and Wales, with 1 being the most deprived.

5.9 In this respect, the neighbourhood area overlaps with 30 LSOAs. These LSOAs are all within the Dorset local authority area, which was ranked 197 out of 317 local authorities in 2019, with the first being the most deprived.

5.10 **Figure 5.2** below shows the overall Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data for each LSOA in the neighbourhood area. The data indicates that the more deprived LSOAs are around Weymouth town centre and Littlemoor on the northern neighbourhood boundary. More broadly with relation to some of the IMD sub-domains, the area around Upwey, Broadwey, Littlemore and Redlands and the area around Rodwell are more deprived in terms of barriers to housing and services. Again, the Weymouth town centre area is more deprived for the living environment deprivation domain than other LSOAs in the neighbourhood area. These indices demonstrate the area around the town centre of Weymouth is the most deprived in the neighbourhood area.

⁵¹ The Indices of Deprivation Explorer can be accessed [here](#).

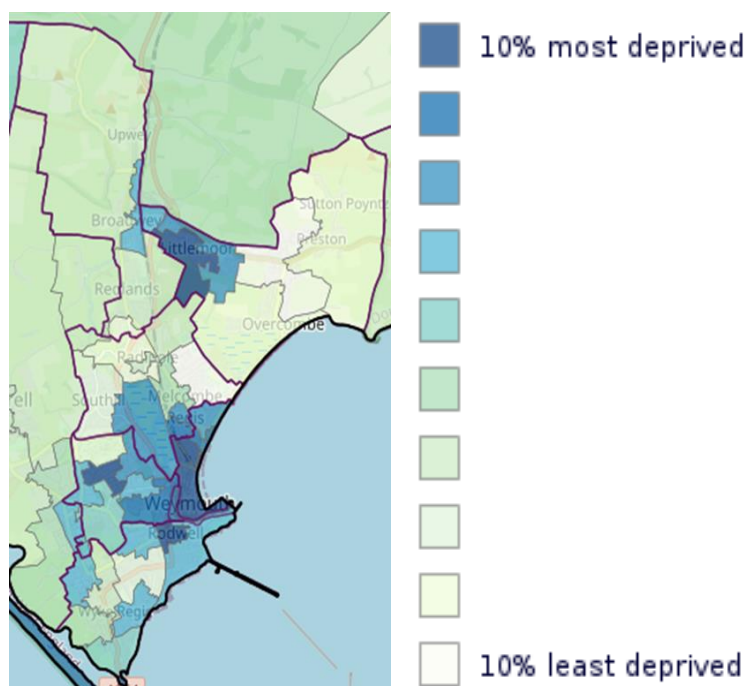


Figure 5.2: Index of Multiple Deprivation across the neighbourhood area.

Housing tenure

5.11 **Figure 5.3** overleaf indicates housing tenure in the neighbourhood area. According to 2011 Census data, 66.5% of the neighbourhood area population own their house; of this, 55.5% own their house outright and 44.5% own their house with a mortgage or loan. Additionally, 0.6% of the population have shared ownership of their house – be it part-owned or part rented. In terms of renting, 13.7% of the population socially rent and 18% rent privately. A further 1.2% of the population live rent free.

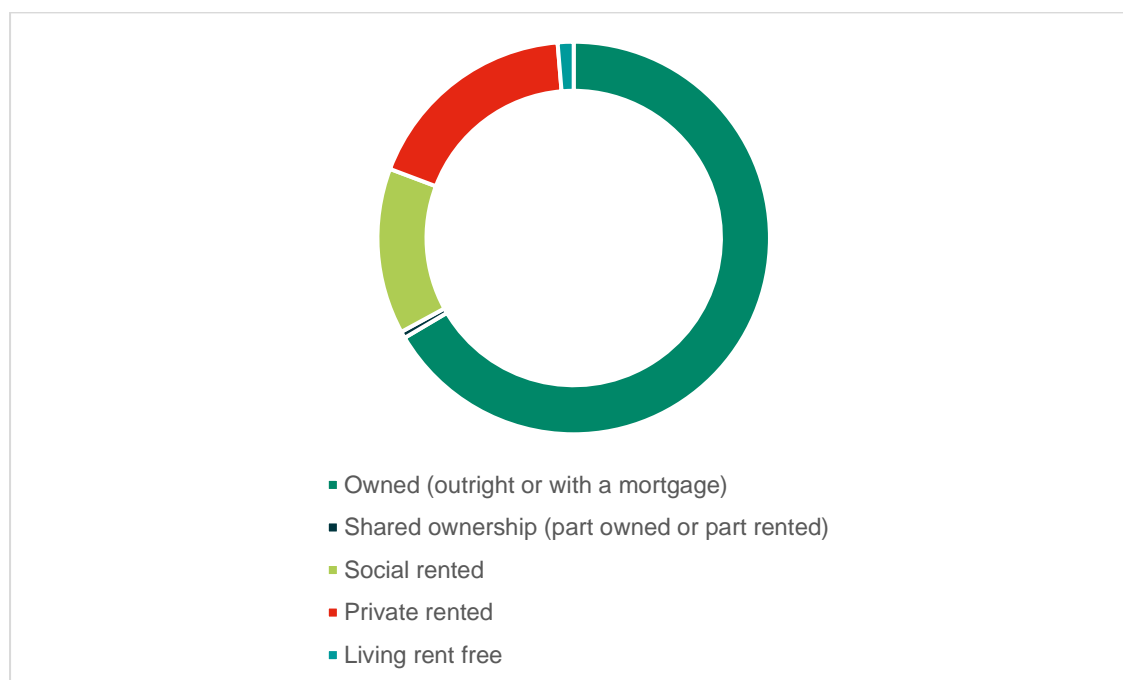


Figure 5.3: Tenure by household composition in 2011.

Community assets and infrastructure

5.12 An overview of the services and facilities within the neighbourhood area is provided below⁵²:

- Many restaurants, including chains such as Subway and Prezzo but also individual businesses like Pascal's Brasserie and Sea Beats;
- Health services such as doctor surgeries, pharmacies, dental surgeries and Weymouth Hospital;
- Multiple places of worship;
- Sport facilities including sports grounds, Weymouth Football Club, sports hubs, swimming pools and leisure centres;
- Retail offer including supermarkets and homeware stores.
- Hotels and B&Bs which support the tourist economy;
- Multiple small businesses; and
- Multiple preschools (such as Preston Pre-school and Rodwell Pre School), primary schools (for example, St John's Primary School and Radipole Primary School), secondary schools (including Wey Valley Academy and Westfield Arts College) and Westfield Arts College and Weymouth College.

Green infrastructure networks

5.13 Access to gardens, parks, woodlands, and rivers have played a huge part in helping people through the COVID-19 pandemic. Almost nine in ten adults surveyed by Natural England reported that being in nature makes them feel

⁵² The examination of the services, facilities and amenities was conducted via a high-level Google maps search – focusing on each area in turn and making a note of the different features.

happy and nearly three quarters of adults were concerned about biodiversity loss in England⁵³.

5.14 Within the neighbourhood area, green spaces include (but is not limited to)⁵⁴:

- Eleven allotments sites;
- Nine parks and gardens;
- 18 play areas;
- Several playing fields;
- The beach; and
- Three cemeteries.

Future baseline

5.15 As the population of the neighbourhood area increases and ages, there is likely to be increasing pressure on services. This highlights the need to support the retention of existing services in the area, including open green space, which has been increasingly used and valued through the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. These factors are more likely to be appropriately considered and addressed through planned development rather than unplanned development.

5.16 The suitability and affordability of housing for local requirements depends on the implementation of appropriate housing policies throughout the neighbourhood area. Unplanned development may have wider implications in terms of transport and access to infrastructure, or the natural environment.

5.17 The COVID-19 pandemic has also changed the way people work and shop. For many people, working from home is likely to continue to form part of a more flexible approach.

Key issues

5.18 Considering the baseline information and policy context review, the following key issues are identified in relation to community wellbeing:

- The population is increasing, and there is a need to identify a land supply for future housing growth as part of planned and coordinated development. Planning policies can also support development that delivers a range of housing types, tenures, and sizes, to meet the varying needs of residents.
- Reflecting the IMD 2019 data, the WNP should seek an approach that does not exacerbate deprivation issues, particularly within the town centre environment.
- With a range of existing services and facilities within the neighbourhood area, there should be good opportunity to deliver connected development which reduces the need to travel.

⁵³ Natural England (2020) People and Nature survey can be accessed [here](#).

⁵⁴ Weymouth Town Council (2022) 'Services' can be accessed [here](#).

- As the requirements of the working population continue to change, there is likely to be a greater need for adaptable dwellings that can accommodate flexible working practices which might include co-working facilities or hubs.

Proposed SEA objective

5.19 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective:

SEA theme	SEA objective
Community wellbeing	Ensure growth in the neighbourhood area is aligned with the needs of all residents, improving accessibility, anticipating future needs and specialist requirements, reducing deprivation, and supporting cohesive and inclusive communities.

5.20 Supporting assessment questions include (will the option/proposal...):

- Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality and affordable housing?
- Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes?
- Meet the needs of all sectors of the community?
- Provide flexible and adaptable homes that meet people's needs?
- Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including specialist services for disabled and older people?
- Encourage and promote social cohesion and active involvement of local people in community activities?
- Facilitate green infrastructure enhancements?
- Promote the use of sustainable building techniques, including use of sustainable building materials in construction?
- Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing residents?

6. Historic Environment

Focus of theme

6.1 This chapter presents the policy context and baseline summary in relation to the historic environment SEA theme. The theme focuses on designated and non-designated assets, the setting, special qualities, and significance of heritage assets, locally important heritage features, and the historic character of the neighbourhood area. This information is used to identify key issues (both constraints and opportunities) before proposing a relevant SEA objective and supporting assessment questions.

Policy context

6.2 **Table 6.1** below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 6.1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to the historic environment

Document title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021
National Model Design Code	2021
The National Design Guide	2019
Historic England: Heritage and Climate Change	2022
Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal Designation and Management	2019
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018
Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning: The Setting of Heritage Assets	2017
Historic England Advice Note 8: Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	2016
Historic England Advice Note 3: The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans	2015
Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Development Plan 2016-2031	2019
West Dorset, Weymouth, and Portland Local Plan (2011-2031)	2015
Dorset Council Local Plan	Emerging Local Plan

6.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The key principles for the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment are as follows:
 - The historic environment is a shared resource.
 - Everyone should be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment.
 - Understanding the significance of places is vital.

- Important places should be managed to sustain their values.
- Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent, and consistent; and
- Documenting and learning from decisions is essential⁵⁵.
- The significance of a place is the crucial element that supports the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Significance is the collective term for the sum of all the heritage values attached to a place, no matter what form the place takes. This means a singular building, an archaeological site, or a larger historic area, such as a whole village or landscape, can be important.
- The WNP will need to consider the principles set out in the NPPF, which seek to conserve and enhance historic environment assets in a way that compliments and works with their significance. The NPPF pursues planning policies and decisions that are understanding to local character and history without preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation and change. The NPPF supports the use of area-based character assessments, design guides and codes, and masterplans to help ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating beautiful and sustainable places.
- The NPPF indicates that proposed plans should ensure the design of streets, parking areas and other transport elements reflect current national guidance including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. Design codes can set out a necessary level of detail in sensitive locations. In the case of the historic environment, they can indicate specific ways to maintain local character.
- The 25 Year Environment Plan and the National Design Guide recognise and reiterate the role of the historic environment in supporting healthy and thriving ecosystems, landscapes, and cultural values. Of note in the 25 Year Environment Plan is ‘Goal 6: Enhanced beauty, heritage, and engagement with the natural environment’.
- Historic England’s Heritage and Climate Change strategy document details the impacts climate change could have on heritage in the future and highlights the role of heritage in climate action. The vision of the document is to ensure the role of heritage in the global fight to limit climate change and its impact on people and places by 2040 – working to mitigate, manage risk and adapt.
- Historic England’s Advice Notes provide further guidance on the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Of relevance for the WNP is the emphasis on the importance of:
 - Understanding the different types of special architectural and historic interest that underpin designations and the consideration of how settings and/ or views contribute to the significance of heritage assets.

⁵⁵ Historic England (2008) ‘Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment’ can be accessed [here](#).

- Recognising the value of implementing controls through neighbourhood development plans, conservation area appraisals and management plans; and
- Appropriate evidence gathering, including the clear identification of any issues that threaten an area, asset character, or appearance that merit the introduction of management measures.
- The WNP will also need to consider the relevant policies outlined in the Adopted West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan (2011-2031), in particular ENV4 (Heritage Assets) and WEY1 (Weymouth Town Centre Strategy).
- Additionally, the WNP will need to consider the relevant policies that will be outlined in the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan. The 'Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation document – Volume 1 – Strategy and Topics' document⁵⁶ includes the following provisional policies that are related to the historic environment SEA theme:
 - ENV4 (Landscape);
 - ENV5 (Heritage Assets); and
 - ENV8 (The landscape and townscape context).
- The WNP will need to consider the baseline information and policies contained within the made Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Development Plan, as this plan covers part of the neighbourhood area.

Baseline summary

6.4 **Figure 6.1** overleaf indicates the location and distribution of historic environment assets within the neighbourhood area.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

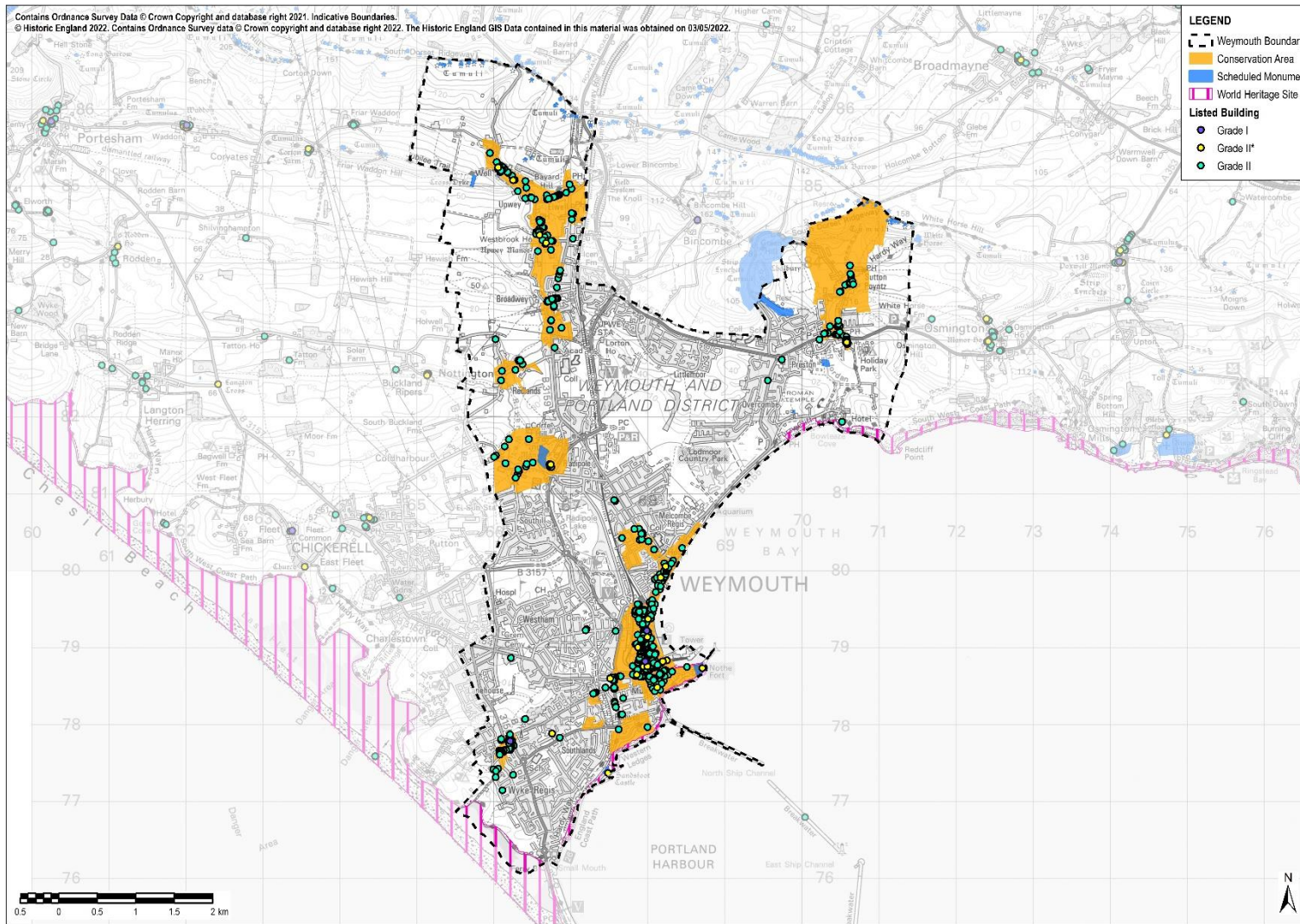


Figure 6.1: Historic environment assets within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.

World Heritage Site

6.5 As previously discussed within the 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity' chapter, the neighbourhood area overlaps with the Dorset and East Devon Coast WHS⁵⁷. As stated within the Jurassic Coast Partnership Plan 2020-2025 for the WHS, the designation is significant to this SEA theme through the following:

- Geological values: The coastal exposures within the site provide a near-continuous, accessible sequence of rocks that documents almost 190 million years of the history of the Earth, spanning the Mesozoic Era.
- Palaeontological values: The site includes a remarkable range of internationally important fossil localities, which have produced superbly preserved and diverse evidence of life during Mesozoic times.
- History of Science values: The site has been a crucible of earth science investigations for over 300 years. It has helped foster major contributions to many aspects of geology and geomorphology.
- Research and educational values: The Site is exceptionally well studied and documented, with a continuing importance for many aspects of earth science research and is a teaching and training resource for the earth sciences of the highest quality.

Listed buildings

6.6 Listed buildings are nationally designated buildings that are protected through the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990⁵⁸. According to the National Heritage List for England provided by Historic England⁵⁹, there are 617 listed buildings in the neighbourhood area: three Grade I, 23 Grade II* and 591 Grade II.

6.7 The Grade I listed buildings are as follows:

- Church of All Saints (HE List Number: [1096743](#));
- Church of St Mary (HE List Number: [1147947](#)); and
- Kings Statue (HE List Number: [1365879](#)).

6.8 The Grade II* listed buildings are as follows:

- Statue House, Johnstone Row (Terrace) (HE List Number: [1038260](#));
- Gloucester Lodge with the Cork and Bottle Public House (HE List Number: [1038271](#));
- Church of St Ann (HE List Number: [1096727](#));
- Sandsfoot Castle Remains (HE List Number: [1096763](#));
- Netherton Nursing Home (HE List Number: [1132601](#));
- Guildhall with Attached Rear Boundary Wall (HE List Number: [1132630](#));

⁵⁷ Jurassic Coast Partnership (2020) 'Jurassic Coast Partnership Plan 2020-2025' can be accessed [here](#).

⁵⁸ UK Government (1990) 'Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act' can be accessed [here](#).

⁵⁹ Historic England (no date) 'National Heritage List for England – Search the List – Advanced Search' can be accessed [here](#). Select which heritage categories you'd like to view and enter 'Dorset' into the 'District/Unitary Authority/Borough' box and then 'Weymouth' into the 'Place/Site/Street Name' box and press the search button at the bottom of the page.

- Black Dog Public House (HE List Number: [1132631](#));
- Church of St Andrew (HE List Number: [1135140](#));
- Maiden Street Methodist Church (HE List Number: [1142294](#));
- Devonshire Buildings (Terrace) (HE List Number: [1145964](#));
- Numbers 7-12 Pulteney Buildings (Terrace) (HE List Number: [1145965](#));
- The White Hart Public House (HE List Number: [1147950](#));
- Numbers 1-12 with Railings (HE List Number [1147976](#));
- Malthouse Number 4 (HE List Number: [1148063](#));
- Upwey Manor (HE List Number: [1148066](#));
- Church of the Holy Trinity (HE List Number: [1148099](#));
- Radipole Old Manor (HE List Number: [1271639](#));
- Church of St Laurence (HE List Number: [1272096](#));
- Church of St John the Evangelist (HE List Number: [1272142](#));
- Upwey Mill (HE List Number: [1272205](#));
- Westbrook House (HE List Number: [1272208](#));
- Nothe Fort and Outer Gateway (HE List Number: [1313430](#)); and
- Belfield House (HE List Number: [1313440](#)).

Scheduled monuments

6.9 The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979)⁶⁰ allows for the investigation, presentation, and recording of matters of archaeological or historical interest, making provision for the regulation of operations or activities that could affect ancient monuments and archaeological areas. Scheduled monuments are nationally designated sites which are protected under this legislation. According to the National Heritage List for England, there are eleven scheduled monuments in the neighbourhood area:

- Group of round barrows on Ridgeway (HE List entry: [1002760](#));
- Group of round barrows W of Ridgeway Hill (HE List entry: [1002763](#));
- Round barrow on Ridgeway Hill (HE List entry: [1003218](#));
- Two bowl barrows immediately south of Bayard Dairy (HE List entry: [1002754](#));
- Cross-ridge dyke on Windsbatch (HE List entry: [1002753](#));
- Sandsfoot Castle (HE List entry: [1020062](#));
- Nothe Fort, tramway and searchlight battery at The Nothe (HE List entry: [1020063](#));
- Humpty Dumpty Field, Radipole (HE List entry: [1002395](#));

⁶⁰ UK Government (1979) 'Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act' can be accessed [here](#).

- Romano-Celtic temple and associated remains at Jordan Hill (HE List entry: [1013371](#));
- Preston Roman villa (HE List entry: [1002704](#)); and
- Group of barrows E of Northdown Barn (HE List entry: [1002770](#)).

Conservation areas

6.10 Conservation areas are designated due to their special architectural and historic interest⁶¹. Conservation area appraisals are a tool to demonstrate an area's special interest, detailing the reasons for the designation and providing a greater understanding and articulation of the area's character. Ideally, appraisals should be regularly reviewed as part of the management of the conservation area and can form a management plan.

6.11 Within the neighbourhood area there are eleven conservation areas⁶²: Belle Vue Road, Broadwey, Connaught Road, Landsdowne Square, Lodmoor Hill, Nottingham, Radipole, Sutton Poyntz, Upwey, Weymouth Town and Wyke Regis. Additionally, Sutton Poyntz conservation area and the Upwey conservation area have associated extensions – Plaisters' Lane at Sutton Poyntz and Ridgeway at Upwey. The conservation areas will be explored in further detail during the subsequent SEA stages, which will include a review of the relevant area appraisals and management plans where appropriate. **Figure 6.2** overleaf indicates the location of these conservation areas.

Locally important heritage features

6.12 It is noted that not all of neighbourhood area's historic environment features are subject to statutory designations and non-designated features contribute a large part of what people come into contact with on a day-to-day basis. Although not designated, many buildings and areas are of historic interest and are important to local communities.

6.13 The Dorset Historic Environmental Record (HER) identifies important and distinctive structures or features that positively contribute to the local sense of place and distinctiveness of the county. Following a high-level review of the HER via the Heritage Gateway⁶³, it is concluded that there are 2,733 local records within the neighbourhood area covering a range of built and archaeological assets spanning a range of periods.

Heritage at risk

6.14 Since 2008, Historic England has produced an annual Heritage at Risk Register, which highlights historic environment assets that are seen to be 'at risk'. According to the 2021 Heritage at Risk Register for South West England⁶⁴, there are two heritage assets within the neighbourhood area that are

⁶¹ Historic England (2017) 'Conservation Areas' can be accessed [here](#).

⁶² Dorset Council (2015) 'West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan Policies Maps – Background Document' [online] can be accessed [here](#).

⁶³ Heritage Gateway (2021) 'More Detailed Search' can be accessed [here](#). Open the link, change the tab from 'map' to 'admin location', type Dorset into the administrative location search bar and Weymouth into the place search bar and press the search button at the bottom of the page.

⁶⁴ Historic England (2021) 'Heritage at Risk Register: South West' can be accessed [here](#).

Future baseline

6.17 New development in the neighbourhood area has the potential to impact on the fabric and setting of heritage assets, for example, through inappropriate design and layout. It should be noted, however, that existing historic environment designations offer a degree of protection to heritage assets and their settings. Additionally, the planning system has in place tools to offer a degree of protection to heritage assets and their settings, reducing the potential impacts of development to some degree.

6.18 It is recognised that planning for development could provide opportunities for positive effects for the historic environment. This may include new management plans for assets ‘at risk’, an updated evidence base to complement information and data associated with conservation areas, public realm and access improvements, or opportunities to better reveal the significance of an asset or increase enjoyment of the historic environment.

Key issues

6.19 Considering the baseline information and policy context review, the following key issues are identified in relation to historic environment:

- With a wealth of both designated and non-designated heritage assets within and surrounding the neighbourhood area, development of the WNP provides an opportunity to consider growth strategies that avoids or minimises impacts for the historic environment.
- Development of the WNP provides an opportunity to develop the existing evidence base in relation to the historic environment, especially in terms of considering new evidence emerging or changes that have occurred since the designation of the multiple conservation areas.
- During the subsequent stages of the SEA process, the Dorset HER will need to be reviewed in greater detail to determine the potential impacts of the WNP on non-designated features.
- There are identified heritage assets ‘at risk’ within the neighbourhood area. Any opportunity to restore or support appropriate management plans for the conservation of this asset should be explored. Further opportunities to improve the public realm and green infrastructure, to the indirect benefit of heritage settings, should also be recognised and promoted.
- It is currently not possible to determine whether any of the Grade II listed buildings within the neighbourhood area are at risk.

Proposed SEA objective

6.20 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective:

SEA theme	SEA objective
Historic environment	Protect, conserve, and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.

6.21 Supporting assessment questions include (will the option/proposal...):

- Support the Outstanding Universal Value of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site?
- Conserve and enhance buildings, structures, and areas of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their settings?
- Protect the integrity and the historic setting of key finds of cultural heritage interest as listed in the Dorset HER?
- Support the undertaking of early archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies?
- Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the WNP area?
- Conserve and enhance the special interest, character, and appearance of the conservation areas and their setting?

7. Land, Soil, and Water Resources

Focus of theme

7.1 This chapter presents the policy context and baseline summary in relation to the land, soil, and water resources SEA theme. The theme focuses on quality of agricultural land, extent of mineral resources, and water resources and water quality. This information is used to identify key issues (both constraints and opportunities) before proposing a relevant SEA objective and supporting assessment questions.

Policy context

7.2 **Table 7.1** below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 7.1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to land, soil, and water resources.

Document title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018
Waste Management Plan for England	2013
Future Water: The Government's water strategy for England	2011
Water for Life	2011
Safeguarding our Soils: A Strategy for England	2009
Wessex Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP)	2019
Dorset Council Minerals Strategy	2014
Dorset Council Waste Plan	2019
Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Development Plan 2016-2031	2019
West Dorset, Weymouth, and Portland Local Plan (2011-2031)	2015
Dorset Council Local Plan	Emerging Local Plan

7.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The WNP will need to consider the principles outlined in the NPPF which pursue the protection of high-quality soil resources and the improvement of the water environment. It recognises the wider benefits of natural capital and the need to consider the long-term implications of climate change and ways in which to build resilience in this respect. The NPPF encourages efficient land use, utilising brownfield land opportunities and land remediation schemes where appropriate and delivering environmental gains.
- The 25 Year Environment Plan discusses measures to improve soil quality, restore and protect peatlands, use water more sustainably, reduce pollution, maximise resource efficiency and minimise environmental impacts. Of note is 'Chapter 1: Using and managing land sustainably',

‘Chapter 4: Increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste’, ‘Goal 2: Clean and plentiful water’, ‘Goal 5: Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently’ and ‘Goal 8: Minimising waste’.

- Future Water: The Government’s water strategy for England sets out how the water sector will look by 2030 for both people and wildlife. The vision also includes valuing and protecting water resources and delivering water to customers in a fair, affordable, and cost-reflective manner. Water for Life highlights the Government’s vision for a more resilient water sector. It details the measures that will be deployed to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystems, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources.
- The Safeguarding our Soils: A Strategy for England policy paper seeks to ensure that all soils in England will be managed sustainably, and degradation threats minimised successfully by 2030. This policy paper also seeks to secure sustainable and resilient water resources in addition to the improvement in waterbody quality. The Waste Management Plan for England identifies measures being taken to move towards a zero-waste economy, which includes national waste plan which seeks to identify measures being taken to move towards a circular economy in which resources are kept in use for longer. To do this, there needs to be a maximisation in the value of resources used and a minimisation in the waste created.
- Wessex Water’s WRMP further highlights the acute stresses that the catchment faces in the coming years and the challenges faced in terms of securing water resources into the future in one of the driest regions in England. The Plan outlines how Wessex Water aim to confront and manage these issues to ensure the timely provision of clean water to all residents in the period up to 2045.
- The WNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Dorset Minerals Strategy and Waste Plan, which contribute to the Local Development Frameworks for the Dorset. These plans identify and safeguard sites and resources important to the continued sustainable management of mineral extractions and waste arisings.
- The WNP will also need to consider the relevant policies outlined in the Adopted West Dorset, Weymouth, and Portland Local Plan (2011-2031), in particular ENV8 (Agricultural Land and Farming Resilience), ENV9 (Pollution and Contaminated Land), ENV10 (The Landscape and Townscape Setting), ENV15 (Efficient and Appropriate Use of Land) and ENV16 (Amenity).
- Additionally, the WNP will need to consider the relevant policies that will be outlined in the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan. The ‘Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation document – Volume 1 – Strategy and Topics’ document⁶⁶ include the following provisional policies that are related to the land, soil, and water resources theme:
 - ENV8 (The landscape and townscape context);

⁶⁶ Ibid.

- ENV11 (Amenity); and
- ENV12 (Pollution control).
- The WNP will need to consider the baseline information and policies contained within the made Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Development Plan, as this plan covers part of the neighbourhood area.

Baseline summary

Soil resources

- 7.4 The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) classifies land into six grades (plus 'non-agricultural land' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are recognised as being the 'best and most versatile' (BMV) land and Grades 3b to 5 of poorer quality. In this context, there is a need to avoid loss of higher quality BMV agricultural land.
- 7.5 As shown in the left hand image in **Figure 7.1** overleaf, the undeveloped areas of the neighbourhood area are underlain by mostly non-agricultural land and Grade 3 'Good to Moderate' agricultural land, with small pockets of Grade 4 'Poor' agricultural land⁶⁷. In the absence of a detailed assessment, it is not possible to determine whether the Grade 3 land is Grade 3a (BMV land) or Grade 3b (not BMV land).
- 7.6 **Figure 7.1** overleaf also shows the results of Natural England's 'Predictive Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Land Assessment' for the South West region in the right hand image⁶⁸. This indicates that the neighbourhood area is underlain with areas of low, moderate, and high likelihood of BMV land, in addition to urban/industrial areas.
- 7.7 As much of the neighbourhood area is relatively urbanised, there is likely to be opportunities to explore the regeneration of underutilised brownfield land through the WNP.

⁶⁷ Natural England (2010) 'Agricultural Land Classification Map South West Region' can be accessed [here](#).

⁶⁸ Natural England (2017) 'Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Agricultural Land – Strategic scale map South West Region' can be accessed [here](#).

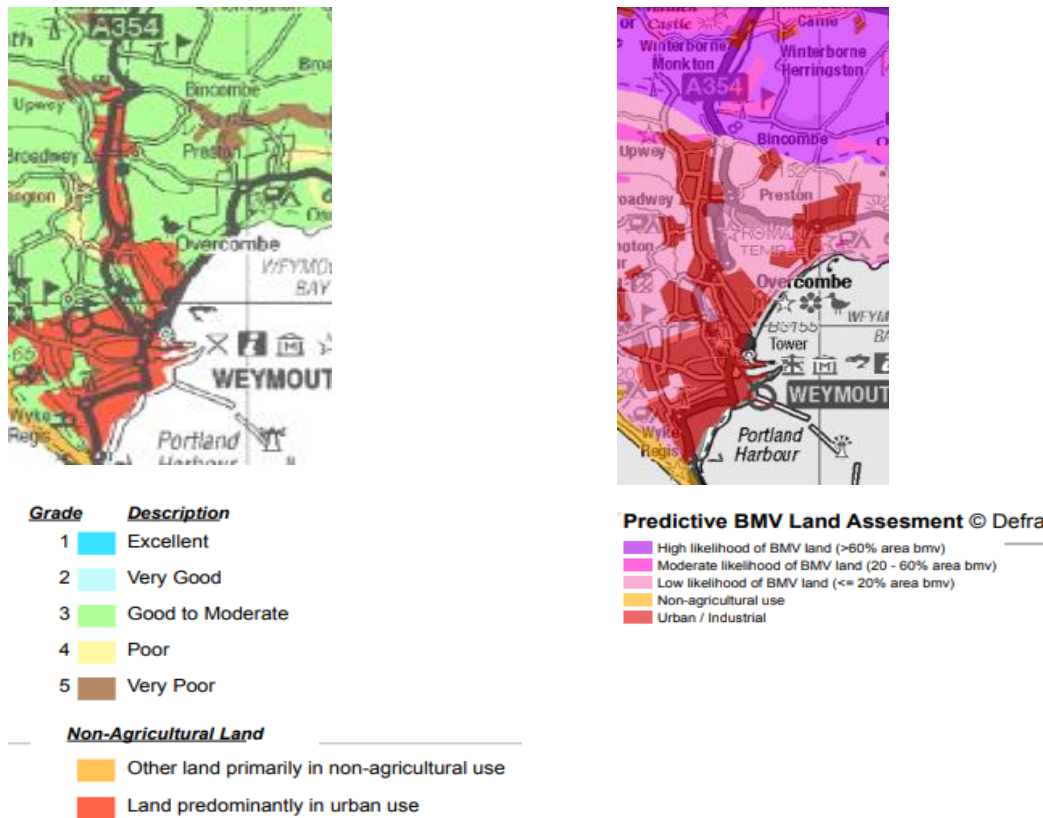


Figure 7.1: ALC and likelihood of BMV within the neighbourhood area.

Mineral resources

7.8 Mineral resources are defined as natural concentrations of minerals or bodies of rock that have the potential to be of economic interest in the present or the future due to their inherent properties. As minerals are a non-renewable resource, mineral safeguarding is deployed as the process through which it is ensured that non-minerals development does not needlessly prevent the future extraction of mineral resources⁶⁹.

7.9 With regards to mineral resources, the majority of the neighbourhood area appears to be within an Onshore License Block. Additionally, it looks likely that there are areas of the neighbourhood area that fall within Mineral Safeguarding Areas and Mineral Consultation Areas⁷⁰. However, the Dorset Minerals Strategy Policies Map does not have the clearest resolution; as such, Dorset Council should be consulted for development in the neighbourhood area to ensure mineral safeguarding areas are not affected.

Water quality

7.10 The neighbourhood area is located within the South West River Basin District. The area lies within the Dorset Management Catchment, and within the West Dorset Rivers Operational Catchment⁷¹.

⁶⁹ UK Government (2014) 'Guidance: Minerals' can be accessed [here](#).

⁷⁰ Dorset Council (2014) 'Minerals Strategy Policies Map' can be accessed [here](#).

⁷¹ Environment Agency (2022) 'West Dorset Rivers Operational Catchment' can be accessed [here](#).

- 7.11 The Wey is the main waterbody in the neighbourhood area⁷². This water body was awarded a moderate ecological classification in 2019 but failed the chemical classification for the same year due to the presence of the priority hazardous chemicals Mercury (and its compounds) and Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs).
- 7.12 Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) represent areas at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution, identifying rules in relation to the use of fertilisers and manures as well as the requirement to prevent water pollution from farming areas⁷³. According to the interactive map⁷⁴ the neighbourhood area is within the Surface Water S710 – Coastal Streams to Fleet Lagoon NVZ and the Eutrophic Water E10 – Fleet Lagoon Eutrophic NVZ to the south and within the Groundwater G151 – South Wessex NVZ and Safeguard Zone (Groundwater) GWSGZ0085 to the north.
- 7.13 Groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs) have been defined by the Environment Agency in England and Wales to protect groundwater sources such as wells, boreholes, and springs that are used for public drinking water supply⁷⁵. The northern areas are within the Zone 1 – Inner Protection Zone.
- 7.14 It is important to acknowledge that new legal advice from Natural England recommends that new developments should only be permitted if they are nutrient neutral. This is due to nutrient pollution becoming a greater issue for freshwater habitats and estuaries – they help to speed up certain plant growth which disrupts natural processes and impacts wildlife⁷⁶. However, this is a regional issue that is beyond the scope of the neighbourhood plan to address.

Future baseline

- 7.15 New development in the neighbourhood area has the potential to impact areas of BMV agricultural land. In this respect, the Neighbourhood Plan should (where possible) seek to retain greenfield land and make best use of brownfield sites for development. It is important to note that this is dependent on the availability of such sites.
- 7.16 Future development has the potential to affect water quality and availability through increased consumption and pollution, wastewater discharges, water runoff and modification. Wessex Water is likely to maintain adequate water services over the plan period; therefore, it will be important for new development to avoid negative impacts on water quality, and instead contribute to reducing consumption and improving efficiency.

Key issues

- 7.17 Considering the baseline information and policy context review, the following key issues are identified in relation to land, soil, and water resources:
- The provisional ALC data indicates the neighbourhood area is underlain with areas of Grade 3 and Grade 4 agricultural land as well as urban land.

⁷² Environment Agency (2022) 'Wey Water Body' can be accessed [here](#).

⁷³ UK Government (2018) Nitrate vulnerable zones can be accessed [here](#).

⁷⁴ UK Government (2021) Nitrate vulnerable zone designations and appeals 2021 to 2024 can be accessed [here](#).

⁷⁵ UK Government (2017) 'Groundwater Protection' can be accessed [here](#).

⁷⁶ UK Government (2022) 'Nutrient pollution: reducing the impact on protected sites' can be accessed [here](#).

However, the data does not differentiate between Grade 3a and Grade 3b land. As a finite resource, Grade 3a (best and most versatile) should be protected where possible.

- As much of the neighbourhood area is relatively urbanised, there is likely to be opportunities to explore the regeneration of underutilised brownfield land through the WNP.
- There are locations within the neighbourhood area which are potentially within a Mineral Safeguarding Area and Mineral Consultation Area.
- The Wey waterbody is the only watercourse in the neighbourhood area, running through the town of Weymouth. Development should avoid impacts to water quality for both the River Wey and within the identified groundwater source protection zones.
- Plan making should consider how local decisions affect water supply, such as water accessibility issues, and ensure that appropriate drainage infrastructure is in place to accommodate new development areas.

Proposed SEA objective

7.18 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objectives:

SEA theme	SEA objective
Land, soil, and water resources	Ensure the efficient and effective use of land, and protect and enhance water quality, using water resources in a sustainable manner.

7.19 Supporting assessment questions include (will the option/proposal...):

- Promote the use of previously developed land, including the regeneration of underutilised brownfield land?
- Identify and avoid the development of the best and most versatile agricultural land?
- Protect the integrity of mineral resources?
- Support the minimisation, reuse, and recycling of waste?
- Avoid any negative impacts on water quality and support improvements to water quality?
- Ensure appropriate drainage and mitigation is delivered alongside proposed development?
- Protect waterbodies from pollution?
- Maximise water efficiency and opportunities for water harvesting and/or water recycling?
- Protect SPZs and NVZs in the neighbourhood area?

8. Landscape

Focus of theme

8.1 This chapter presents the policy context and baseline summary in relation to the landscape SEA theme. The theme focuses on nationally protected landscapes, landscape character and quality, and visual amenity in the neighbourhood area. This information is used to identify key issues (both constraints and opportunities) before proposing a relevant SEA objective and supporting assessment questions.

Policy context

8.2 **Table 8.1** below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 8.1: Plans, policies, and strategies reviewed in relation to landscape.

Document title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021
National Model Design Code	2021
The National Design Guide	2019
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018
Dorset AONB Management Plan 2019-2024	2019
Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Development Plan 2016-2031	2019
West Dorset, Weymouth, and Portland Local Plan (2011-2031)	2015
Dorset Council Local Plan	Emerging Local Plan

8.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The WNP should consider the principles outlined in the NPPF, which gives great weight to conserving and enhancing protected landscapes, landscape character, and scenic beauty. The scale and extent of development within these areas should be limited and development within their setting should be mindfully located and designed to avoid/minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.
- The NPPF also recognises the role of green infrastructure in landscape settings, as well as the positive contribution that land remediation can have on despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated, and unstable land.
- The 25 Year Environment Plan and National Design Guide outline the same aims as one another, focusing on creating a cleaner, greener country that puts the environment first and celebrates the variety of natural landscapes and habitats present in the UK. Design is focused on creating beautiful, enduring, and successful places, which respond to local character and provide a network of high quality and green open spaces. Of note is 'Chapter 2: Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes' and 'Goal 6: Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment'.

- The National Model Design Code states that all design codes should include a landscape and open space strategy that incorporates the existing natural features and new structural elements. It recognises that landscapes can be major drivers in the design process.
- The Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan 2019-2024 outlines how the management of the landscape and the designation will be sustainably maintained in the future, highlighting key opportunities and issues in addition to key concepts and a statement of significance.
- The WNP will also need to consider the relevant policies outlined in the Adopted West Dorset, Weymouth, and Portland Local Plan (2011-2031), in particular ENV1 (Landscape, Seascape and Sites of Geological Interest) and ENV10 (The Landscape and Townscape Setting).
- Additionally, the WNP will need to consider the relevant policies that will be outlined in the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan. The 'Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation document – Volume 1 – Strategy and Topics' document⁷⁷ includes the following key policy which is relevant to this SEA theme: Policy ENV4 (Landscape).
- The WNP will need to consider the baseline information and policies contained within the made Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Development Plan, as this plan covers part of the neighbourhood area.

Baseline summary

Nationally protected landscapes

- 8.4 The northern part of the neighbourhood area (north of Upwey and Preston Road) is within the boundaries of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). This is shown in **Figure 8.3** at the end of this chapter. The natural beauty of the AONB is described through special qualities that together make it unique and outstanding, underpinning its designation as a nationally important protected landscape. The special qualities are grouped into four themes: landscape, wildlife, cultural connections, and reading the past⁷⁸.
- 8.5 The Dorset AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 indicates the sections of the AONB that overlap with the neighbourhood area are in moderate landscape condition but with a stable-declining direction of change.

National character areas

- 8.6 National Character Areas (NCAs) are areas that share similar landscape characteristics, and which follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries. This makes them valuable in creating decision-making frameworks for the natural environment.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Dorset AONB Partnership (2021): 'Our Special Qualities' can be accessed [here](#).

- 8.7 The neighbourhood area overlaps with two NCAs: Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase (134) to the north of Upwey, and Weymouth Lowlands (138) covering the rest of the neighbourhood area.
- 8.8 The Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase NCA⁷⁹ lies across the counties of Dorset, Wiltshire, and Hampshire. It is a strongly rural and agricultural NCA characterised by large, open fields of pasture and arable, with pockets of woodland across chalk topography. It features one of the densest assemblages of prehistoric sites and monuments in Europe, with areas like the South Dorset Ridgeway revealing some 8,000 years of human activity. It is also an important area for food production. Much of the NCA is covered by the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB.
- 8.9 The Weymouth Lowlands NCA⁸⁰ is defined by broad ridge-and-valley geology – a mix of chalk, limestone, and clay adjacent to a dynamic coastline, which is part of the Dorset and East Devon World Heritage Site. The landscape is largely treeless with pockets of woodland to the west and east and is home to many species of flora and fauna. It also presents a multitude of geomorphological and geological features. Agriculture is mixed; mainly arable, cattle and sheep.

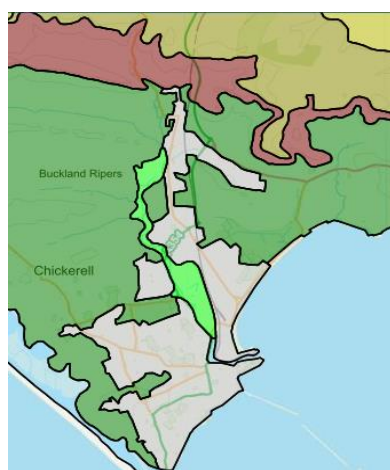
Local landscape and townscape character

- 8.10 Landscape and townscape character play an important role in understanding the relationship between people and place and identifying recognisable and distinct patterns in the landscape which make one area different from another. Landscape and townscape character assessments can both help identify the value of landscapes and townscapes, in terms of visual and amenity value.
- 8.11 In the context of the above, several landscape types have been defined across Dorset: Valley pasture, ridge and vale, chalk ridge/escarpment and open chalk downland. An overview of these landscape types is provided below⁸¹. **Figure 8.1** demonstrates where these landscape types are located.

⁷⁹ Natural England (2013) 'NE494: NCA Profile: 134 Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase' can be accessed [here](#).

⁸⁰ Natural England (2015) 'NE470: NCA Profile: 138 Weymouth Lowlands' can be accessed [here](#).

⁸¹ Dorset Council (2022) 'Landscape Character Assessment Map' can be accessed [here](#).



- Chalk ridge / escarpment
- Open chalk downland
- Ridge & vale
- Valley pasture

Figure 8.1: Landscape types within the neighbourhood area⁸².

8.12 Valley pasture⁸³ is characterised by:

- flat and open valley floor landscape with distinctively meandering river channels which often floods;
- typically a grazed pastoral landscape based on deep alluvial and gravel soils;
- generally large fields with a mosaic of smaller fields abutting the river edges;
- groups of riverside trees follow the watercourses creating key features along the valleys;
- old water meadow systems and features are common;
- settlements and transport corridors follow the valley floor;
- historic river crossings points are often over old bridges; and
- the valleys provide the historic and cultural setting to many county towns.

8.13 The overall management objective for this landscape type is to conserve the strong visual unity of the valley, the diversity of semi-natural habitats and to restore features such as wet woodlands pastures, water meadows, boundary features and historical lanes and bridges.

8.14 Ridge and vale⁸⁴ is characterised by:

- broad evenly spaced ridges and valleys which follow a west-east alignment;
- enclosed and defined by the dramatic chalk escarpment to the north;
- mixed farmed area with a patchwork of geometric fields divided by straight hedges;

⁸² Dorset Council (2022) 'Dorset Explorer' can be accessed [here](#).

⁸³ Dorset Council (2022) 'Valley pasture' can be accessed [here](#).

⁸⁴ Dorset Council (2022) 'Ridge and vale' can be accessed [here](#).

- larger fields in the valleys and on the open ridges;
- open views along the coast from the smooth, broad and hog-back shaped ridges;
- distinctive settlement pattern along the valley floor and at the foot of the escarpment; and
- the edges of the Weymouth conurbation create a negative impact on landscape character.

8.15 The overall management objective for this landscape type is to restore the characteristic features of grasslands and field boundaries along the coast, re-create and improve the urban fringe landscapes with new woodland planting, greenspace provision and reduce the impact of urban fringe.

8.16 Chalk ridge/escarpment⁸⁵ is characterised by:

- steep, distinctive and bold ridge and scarp slope on the edges of the chalk landscapes;
- dramatic visual edge enclosing and providing a backdrop to the surrounding countryside;
- marked variation in character and landform along the scarp;
- undeveloped and open character with panoramic views;
- distinctive and bold pattern of land cover including hanging mixed woods and patches of chalk grassland;
- woodlands are often visually prominent landmarks;
- settlements concentrated along the foot of the scarp;
- narrow twisting lanes often with high hedgebanks; and
- many ancient and distinctive hillforts on escarpment highpoints.

8.17 The overall management objective for this landscape type is to conserve the distinct downland landscape of broad rolling hills and gentle slopes whilst restoring the condition of many of its characteristic features to increase visual unity and make the combination and pattern of elements more distinct.

8.18 Open chalk downland⁸⁶ is characterised by:

- elevated areas of open chalk upland with a broad rolling landform;
- gentle curving convex profiles to the landform;
- an expansive open scale with panoramic views to distant landmarks;
- uniform and homogenous landscape character;
- patchwork of large-scale arable fields subdivided by low, straight and weak hedges;
- isolated small blocks of geometrically shaped woods;

⁸⁵ Dorset Council (2022) 'Open chalk downland' can be accessed [here](#).

⁸⁶ Dorset Council (2022) 'Open chalk downland' can be accessed [here](#).

- sparsely populated with few settlements and scattered isolated farmsteads;
- a network of widely spaced roads, footpaths and bridleways;
- many important archaeological sites such as long barrows and burial mounds; and
- literacy associations with Thomas Hardy.

8.19 The overall management objective for this landscape is to conserve the distinct downland landscape of broad rolling hills and gentle slopes whilst restoring the condition of many of its characteristic features to increase visual unity and make the combination and pattern of elements more distinct.

8.20 However, most of the urbanised areas of the neighbourhood area do not necessarily overlap with any of these landscape types. In this respect, Weymouth Town Council undertook a townscape character area assessment in 2021 and have published a draft report⁸⁷. **Figure 8.2** below indicates the different local townscape character areas.

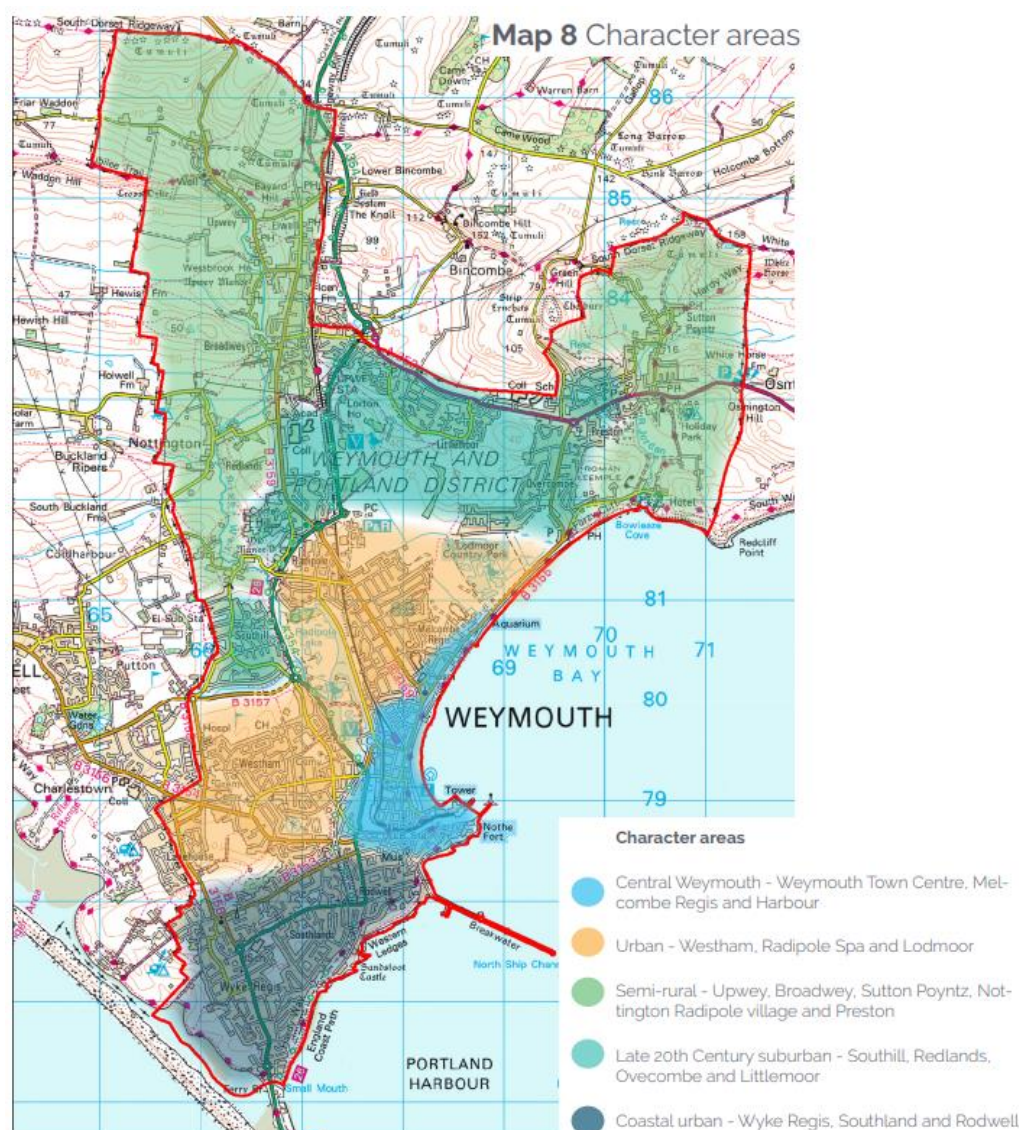


Figure 8.2: townscape character areas within the neighbourhood area

⁸⁷ Weymouth Town Council (2021) 'Character Area Assessment draft' can be accessed [here](#).

- 8.21 An overview of the five local townscape character areas is provided below, as summarised from the draft report. The report will be an essential source of reference during the next stages of the SEA process.
- 8.22 The **Central Weymouth** area has multiple important features, including Weymouth Beach, harbour and seafront (and associated buildings and structures), multiple listed buildings and the conservation area, the shopping centre and the walkability of the area. However, it is at risk of flood and drainage issues in addition to the threat of shops and restaurants closing, more buildings becoming dilapidated and leisure provision from development. Harmful features include large expanses of open car parking, fear of crime, empty buildings and seasonal uses and jobs. Opportunities for change include improved pedestrian access, reuse of existing building, tree provision and identity improvements.
- 8.23 The **Urban** area has important features, like the Mount Pleasant Business Park, the leisure centre, listed buildings and conservation area and walkable neighbourhoods. However, it is at risk due to flooding and surface drainage issues and the redevelopment of the hospital. Harmful features includes the lack of access to dentists and the lack of employment provision of the area. Opportunities for change includes the protection of open gaps and spaces, encouraging improved walkability and accesses, employment retention and the retention of the community hospital.
- 8.24 The **Semi-rural** area includes listed buildings and conservation areas and open gaps and woodland. The rural character is at risk of further erosion through development infill and open gaps are at risk of encroachment. Harmful features include infill development, unsustainable ribbon development (as it is not easily accessible), lack of facilities and hubs and flooding and surface water drainage issues. Opportunities for change includes the protection of heritage assets and open spaces, the encouragement of good design that reflects the historic character, the improved accessibility and employment provision.
- 8.25 The **Late 20th Century suburban** area includes important features like central squares, community buildings and open spaces and gaps that all provide facilities that encourage improved health and wellbeing. These features are at risk due to development, and the area is at risk of flooding and surface water drainage issues. Harmful features include the lack of surveillance of open spaces, lack of access to healthcare, a lack in sustainable transport and a lower rate of employment and access to employment. Opportunities for change include better utilisation and improvement of open spaces, the protection of rural character and open spaces, the appropriate and attractive integration of flooding and drainage engineering and sustainable employment opportunities.
- 8.26 The **Coastal urban** area includes important features like listed buildings and conservation areas, additional heritage assets like the scheduled ancient monument Sandsfoot Castle and the access to facilities. Open spaces are at risk of development and the area is at risk of flooding and surface water drainage issues. Harmful features include the limited facilities and the lack of employment provision in the area and nearby. Opportunities for change include employment provision, the protection of heritage and open spaces, good design that reflects the character and the attractive integrated flooding and drainage engineering.

Heritage Coast

8.27 Heritage Coasts are the finest stretches of undeveloped coastline in England and Wales, with their natural beauty and enjoyment by the public giving them special claim for both protection and sensitive management⁸⁸.

8.28 Covering the length of the coastline of the neighbourhood area, the West Dorset Heritage Coast shares an overlapping designation with the Dorset AONB and the Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site (“the Jurassic Coast”). A summary of the special qualities and significance of the AONB is provided above, and further detail on the WHS is covered within the Biodiversity & Geodiversity and Historic Environment chapters of this SEA Scoping Report.

Visual amenity

8.29 It is useful to note that views of and across the neighbourhood area are also an important factor to consider in the planning process, as the scale, height, and mass of development can ultimately impact on important views without appropriate assessment. Changes like development and landscape change can see these important views and vistas degraded overtime.

Future baseline

8.30 New development has the potential to lead to small, incremental, but cumulative changes in landscape and townscape character and quality within the neighbourhood area. This includes the loss or damage of features and areas with an important visual amenity value. The WNP will help guide development so that it does not negatively impact upon the landscape and townscape features which contribute to the distinctive character of the area.

8.31 It should be noted that the planning system has tools in place to offer a degree of protection to the landscape; therefore, new development will not necessarily result in harm. Furthermore, locally distinctive landscape and townscape features, characteristics and special qualities can be protected, managed, and enhanced through appropriate planning policies. It is further recognised that new development that is appropriately designed and landscape led could support the area’s intrinsic landscape character and quality. This could include regeneration that improves the townscape setting (and its relationship to the surrounding countryside), delivering green infrastructure improvements and/ or new recreational opportunities and the identification and/ or enhanced framing of key views.

Key issues

8.32 Considering the baseline information and policy context review, the following key issues are identified in relation to landscape:

⁸⁸ Natural England (2015): ‘Heritage coasts: definition, purpose and Natural England’s role’, [online] available to access via: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heritage-coasts-protecting-undeveloped-coast/heritage-coasts-definition-purpose-and-natural-englands-role>

- The northern section of the neighbourhood area is within the Dorset AONB, and the relationship between the settlement and the open countryside is an important part of its character and special qualities.
- There are four landscape types and five townscape character areas within and surrounding the neighbourhood area and which share a strong relationship and connection with the AONB, WHS, and Heritage Coast.
- There are a range of landscape and townscape features which contribute to the character and quality of the neighbourhood area. These features should be protected and enhanced where possible.
- New development has the potential to lead to incremental change in landscape and townscape character, and visual amenity.

Proposed SEA objective

8.33 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective:

SEA theme	SEA objective
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape and townscape.

8.34 Supporting assessment questions include (will the option/proposal...):

- Seek to protect and enhance the integrity of the Dorset AONB?
- Protect and enhance the local landscape and townscape character, key sensitivities and features, and quality of place?
- Conserve and enhance local identity, diversity, and settlement character?
- Protect visual amenity and locally important views in the neighbourhood area?

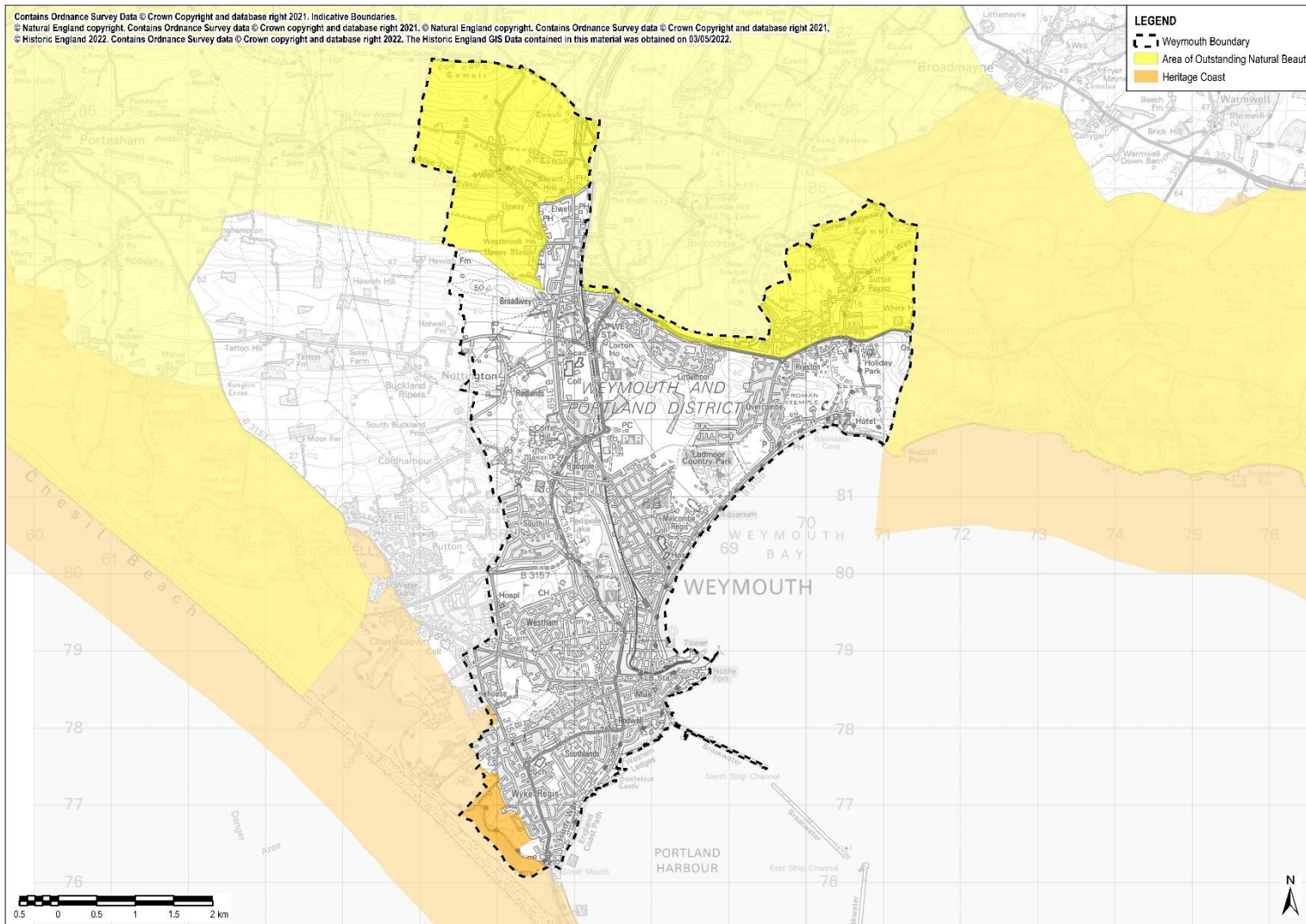


Figure 8.3: Landscape designations within and surrounding the neighbourhood area

9. Transportation

Focus of theme

9.1 This chapter presents the policy context and baseline summary in relation to the transportation SEA theme. The theme focuses on transport infrastructure, transport use, traffic flows and congestion, accessibility, and active travel opportunities within and surrounding the neighbourhood area. This information is used to identify key issues (both constraints and opportunities) before proposing a relevant SEA objective and supporting assessment questions.

Policy context

9.2 **Table 9.1** below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 9.1: Plans, policies, and strategies reviewed in relation to transportation

Document title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021
Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain	2021
Transport Investment Strategy	2017
Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Development Plan 2016-2031	2019
West Dorset, Weymouth, and Portland Local Plan (2011-2031)	2015
Dorset Council Local Plan	Emerging Local Plan
Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan (2011- 2026)	2012

9.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The WNP will need to consider the principles outlined in the NPPF, which influence plans and development proposals to ensure they consider transport issues from the earliest stages, address any known issues, and maximise opportunities to increase accessibility to sustainable transport. Larger developments are expected to limit the need to travel and offer a genuine choice of transport modes. However, it is recognised that sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural environments.
- Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain sets out how the UK government will deliver emission reductions and associated benefits in the country; presenting the path to net-zero transport in the UK and the commitments and actions necessary to make progress on this path.
- The Transport Investment Strategy sets out investment priorities to improve the connectivity, effectiveness and reliability of transport network whilst simultaneously reducing impacts on the natural environment. Furthermore, the document places great emphasis on making cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of longer journeys.

- The Bournemouth, Poole, and Dorset Local Transport Plan 2011-2026, published by Dorset Council, sets out proposed transport solutions for the county up to 2026 with a focus on enabling sustainable economic growth. In this respect, the WNP will be required to be in general conformity with the strategic policy aims of the Local Transport Plan.
- The WNP will also need to consider the relevant policies outlined in the Adopted West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan (2011-2031), in particular ENV11 (The Pattern of Streets and Spaces), COM7 (Creating a Safe and Efficient Transport Network), COM8 (Transport Interchanges and Community Travel Exchanges) and COM9 (Parking Standards in New Development).
- Additionally, the WNP will need to consider the relevant policies that will be outlined in the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan. The 'Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation document – Volume 1 – Strategy and Topics' document⁸⁹ includes policies COM7 (Creating a safe, efficient and low carbon transport network), COM8 (Parking standards in new development) and COM9 (Provision of infrastructure for electric and other low emission vehicles) which are important considerations for this theme.
- The WNP will need to consider the baseline information and policies contained within the made Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Development Plan, as this plan covers part of the neighbourhood area.

Baseline summary

Rail network

- 9.4 There are two rail stations within the neighbourhood area: Weymouth and Upwey. Both are managed by South Western Railway.
- 9.5 Weymouth station offers hourly services to London Waterloo, via Dorchester, Poole, Bournemouth, Christchurch, Southampton, Winchester, and Basingstoke⁹⁰. Upwey station is located outside of the main Weymouth settlement but is on the same line as the Weymouth station.
- 9.6 There are less frequent direct services to locations in the north, with services once every two hours to Bristol Parkway (via Castle Cary and Westbury). There are no direct services to locations in the south west.

Bus network

- 9.7 Bus networks play an important role in terms of the public transport provision across the neighbourhood area, and there are several that operate in the neighbourhood area.
- 9.8 First Wessex, Dorset and South Somerset runs regular services in the neighbourhood area. This includes: 1 (Weymouth to Portland), 2 (Weymouth to Littlemoor), 4 (Weymouth to Preston), 8 (Weymouth to Chickerell), 10 (Weymouth to Poundbury), 10A (Weymouth to Thomas Hardy School), X53 Jurassic Coaster (Weymouth to Axminster), X54 (Weymouth to Poole), 502

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ South Western Railway (2022) 'Trains to Weymouth station' can be accessed [here](#).

(Weymouth Kings Statue to Littlesea Holiday Park) and 503 (Weymouth to Waterside Holiday Park and Spa)⁹¹. Additionally, First Wessex, Dorset and South Somerset runs the C1 service Monday-Friday during the school period to transport students to Colfox School.

- 9.9 South West Coaches also operates two services in the neighbourhood area – service 200 (Weymouth to Preston) and service 206 (Weymouth to Wyke back to Weymouth)⁹².

Road network and congestion

9.10 **Figure 9.1** below demonstrates the mix of A, B and C roads within the neighbourhood area.

9.11 The main route through the neighbourhood area is the A354. This route runs through the centre of the neighbourhood area. Additionally, the A353 Littlemoor Road connects the A354 with the A352 and B3390 to the east (outside of the neighbourhood area).

9.12 The B3154 connects Weymouth to the B3157 Chickerell Road, which runs westwards through Chickerell, Portesham, Abbotsbury and Bridport. Additionally, the B3156 connects the B3157 to the A354 to the south. The B3155 runs from the centre of Weymouth along the eastern coast to Overcombe and north towards Preston. The B3159 offers an alternate route into Weymouth centre to the A354, connecting to the A35 to the north at Winterbourne Abbas (outside of the neighbourhood area).

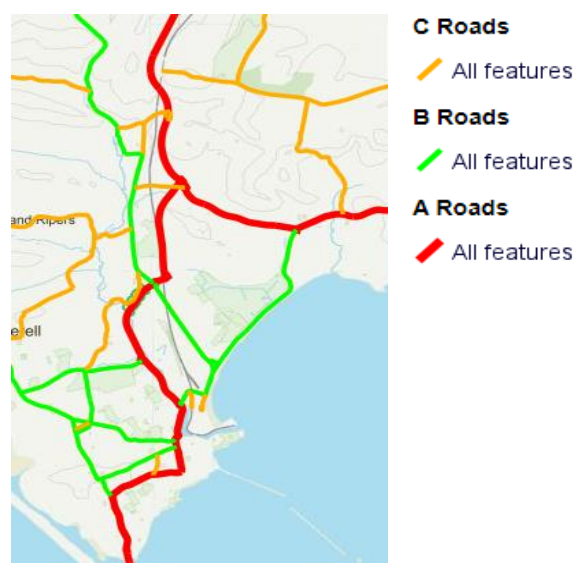


Figure 9.1: The strategic road network within the neighbourhood area⁹³.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

9.13 According to Dorset Council, there are nearly 4,828 km of PRoW in Dorset – 4,700 footpaths, 1,700 bridleways and 37 byways⁹⁴. This makes for a varied

⁹¹ First Wessex, Dorset and South Somerset (2022) 'Timetables – Bus times: Wessex Dorset and South Somerset' can be accessed [here](#).

⁹² South West Coaches (2022) 'Bus Timetables' can be accessed [here](#).

⁹³ Dorset Council (2022) 'Dorset Explorer' can be accessed [here](#).

⁹⁴ Dorset Council (2022) 'Public rights of way maintenance' can be accessed [here](#).

and dense network of access routes. According to the definitive map and statement of public rights of way⁹⁵, the neighbourhood area is covered by footpaths, bridleways and one restricted byway. **Figure 9.2** shows the location of the PRow network.

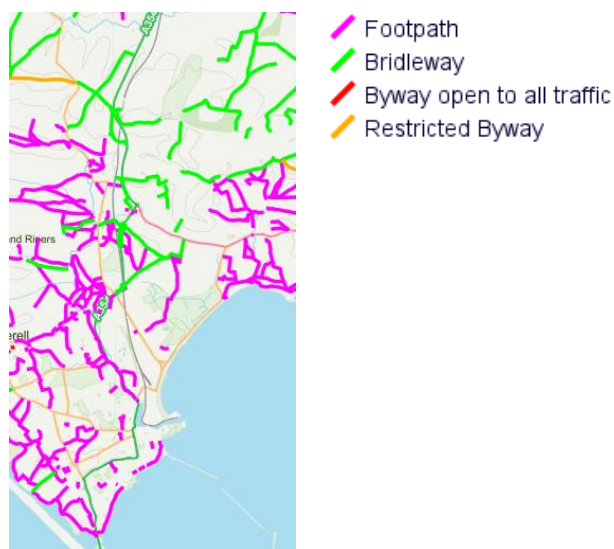


Figure 9.2: The PRow network in the neighbourhood area⁹⁶.

- 9.14 Additionally, the neighbourhood area has two Visit Dorset walking trails within it; the Rodwell Trail and the Weymouth Walk (Ferrybridge-Sandsfoot-Rodwell)⁹⁷. The Rodwell Trail is suitable for walkers, scooters, bicycles, and mobility scooters and provides users with views of old station platforms, Sandsfoot Castle and Portland Harbour. The Weymouth Walk (Ferrybridge-Sandsfoot-Rodwell) allows views of old railway infrastructure as well as extensive views across Weymouth to the ridgeway and the Dorset coastline.
- 9.15 The neighbourhood area also contains sections of the South West Coast Path and the Jubilee Trail. The South West Coast Path is England’s longest waymarked footpath, running over 1,000 km from Minehead to the shores of Poole Harbour. Described as “one of the world’s greatest walks”, it offers an insight into the unique coastal landscapes, including heritage, geological features, wildlife, and natural scenery⁹⁸. **Figure 9.3** overleaf indicates where this path is located within the neighbourhood area.
- 9.16 The Jubilee Trail was created to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee. The route crosses Dorset from border to border, offering extensive views of rolling downs, secret valleys, old churches, historic sites, quiet villages, and stately homes. It links to the South West Coast Path and several localised walking routes that are outside of the neighbourhood area⁹⁹. **Figure 9.3** overleaf indicates where this path is located within the neighbourhood area.

⁹⁵ Dorset Council (2022) ‘Definitive Map’ can be accessed [here](#).

⁹⁶ Dorset Council (2022) ‘Dorset Explorer’ can be accessed [here](#).

⁹⁷ Visit Dorset (2022) ‘Walking in Dorset’ can be accessed [here](#).

⁹⁸ South West Coast Path (2022) ‘About the National Trail’ can be accessed [here](#).

⁹⁹ LDWA (2022) ‘Jubilee Trail (Dorset)’ can be accessed [here](#).

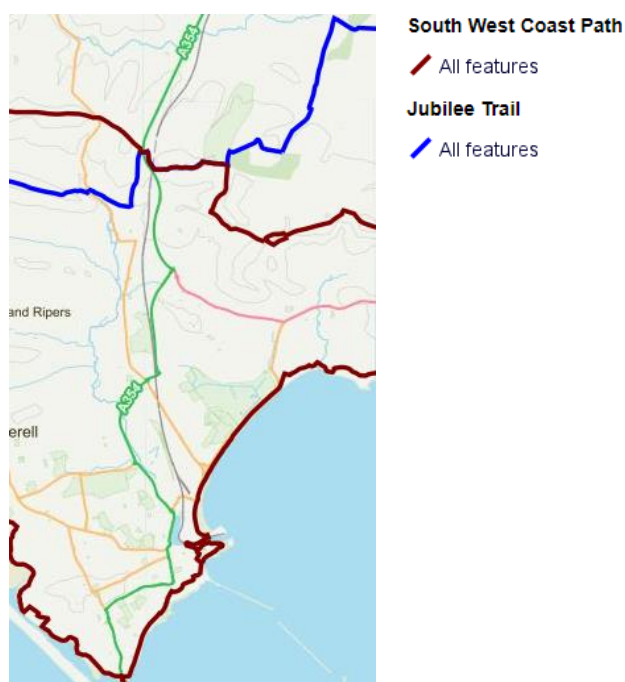


Figure 9.3: The South West Coast Path and the Jubilee Trail in the neighbourhood area¹⁰⁰.

Future baseline

- 9.17 Given the levels of growth proposed during the plan period, new development has the potential to increase traffic and cause congestion within the neighbourhood area, principally at junctions on key routes. This is likely to continue to be more pronounced during peak times (i.e., rush hours, and holiday seasons).
- 9.18 There may be opportunities to improve public transport networks within the neighbourhood area, which would encourage an increased use in sustainable modes of transport. Similarly, the provision of infrastructure to promote at home (i.e., remote) working is likely to positively contribute towards these aims.
- 9.19 Whilst negative effects of new development on the transport network are likely to be mitigated in part by new infrastructure, there will be a continuing need for development to be situated in accessible locations.

Key issues

- 9.20 Considering the baseline information and policy context review, the following key issues are identified in relation to transportation:
- There are numerous PRow in the neighbourhood area, and two Visit Dorset walking trails. Development should seek to connect with and where possible extend PRow and maximise opportunities for active travel.
 - The recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to change travel patterns in the short, medium, and longer term. Development should seek to enhance local connections in response to changing local demands.

¹⁰⁰ Dorset Council (2022) 'Dorset Explorer' can be accessed [here](#).

Proposed SEA objective

9.21 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective:

SEA theme	SEA objective
Transportation	Promote sustainable transport use and active travel opportunities and reduce the need to travel.

9.22 Supporting assessment questions include (will the option/proposal...):

- Support the objectives within the Bournemouth, Poole, and Dorset Local Transport Plan to encourage more sustainable transport?
- Encourage a shift to more sustainable forms of travel and enable sustainable transport infrastructure enhancements?
- Increase and improve accessibility and support local connectivity and movement?
- Reduce the impact of the transport sector on climate change?
- Improve road safety?
- Reduce the impact on residents from the road network?

10. Proposed SEA framework and methodology

10.1 The proposed SEA objectives, established through the identification of key issues and environmental objectives as part of the scoping exercise, are brought together to create one framework, the SEA framework, and are presented in **Table 10.1**.

Table 10.1: Proposed SEA framework

SEA theme	SEA objective
Air Quality	Scoped out.
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.
Climate Change	Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the neighbourhood area and increase resilience to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding.
Community Wellbeing	Ensure growth in the neighbourhood area is aligned with the needs of all residents, improving accessibility, anticipating future needs and specialist requirements, reducing deprivation, and supporting cohesive and inclusive communities.
Historic Environment	Protect, conserve, and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.
Land, Soil, and Water Resources	Ensure the efficient and effective use of land, and protect and enhance water quality, using water resources in a sustainable manner.
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape and townscape.
Transportation	Promote sustainable transport use and active travel opportunities and reduce the need to travel.

10.2 The SEA framework provides a methodology and consistent approach for the appraisal of the emerging WNP. The proposed SEA framework will be used to appraise the options and proposals emerging for the draft plan, and findings will be fed back to the steering group to inform plan development.

11. Next Steps

Subsequent stages for the SEA process

11.1 The next stage will involve exploring reasonable alternatives for the WNP. The findings of this work will be fed back to the steering group so that they might be taken into consideration when finalising the draft WNP. The draft WNP will then be subject to appraisal, and the SEA Environmental Report will be prepared for consultation alongside the draft WNP.

Consultation on the Scoping Report

11.2 Public involvement through consultation is a key element of the SEA process. At this scoping stage, the SEA Regulations require consultation with statutory consultation bodies but not full consultation with the public.

11.3 The statutory consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England. This Scoping Report has been released to these three statutory consultees, Dorset Council, and the Dorset AONB Team.

11.4 Consultees are invited to comment on the content of this Scoping Report, particularly the evidence base for the SEA, the identified key issues, and the proposed SEA framework.

11.5 The consultation period runs from **to include**. Comments on the Scoping Report should be sent to:

Emily Baker, AECOM

Email address: Emily.baker@aecom.com

11.6 All comments received on the Scoping Report will be reviewed and will influence the development of the SEA where appropriate.

