

# DORSET LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION RESPONSE

## DORSET CPRE

October 2025

### INTRODUCTION BY DORSET CPRE PLANNING GROUP CHAIRMAN

#### Unsustainable and Unsuitable Housing Allocations in Dorset

Dorset CPRE's independent review by expert planning consultant **Jo Witherden** demonstrates that many of the proposed sites across the county are **clearly unsustainable and unsuitable for development**. These findings apply not only to proposed major growth areas such as **Dorchester, Crossways, Broadmayne and West Knighton, Lytchett Matravers, Lytchett Minster, and Sturminster Marshall**, but also extend to **Colehill, Longham and West Parley**.

Across all these settlements, **hard environmental and infrastructure constraints** mean that the Local Plan housing numbers must be **significantly reduced**. In every case, the cumulative level of development would far exceed the capacity of local roads, drainage systems, schools, and services, while damaging valued landscapes, heritage assets, and biodiversity.

Key concerns include:

- **Infrastructure Deficits:** Existing roads, junctions, and public transport networks are inadequate to support large-scale housing growth. Many sites are remote from employment centres, schools, and public transport, leading to increased car dependence and congestion.
- **Environmental and Landscape Harm:** The loss of high-quality agricultural land, damage to the setting of the **Dorset National Landscape**, and impacts on **Green Belt** and **conservation areas** are severe and irreversible, and could not be effectively mitigated.
- **Flood and Pollution Risks:** Groundwater vulnerability, poor drainage capacity, and flood risk affect numerous sites. Development would also heighten pollution risks in sensitive catchments such as the river systems which flow into **Poole Harbour** and are already polluted.
- **Unsound Settlement Expansion:** Proposals such as the **North Dorchester Garden Community** and the **Woodsford new settlement** would fundamentally alter the character of the countryside and existing towns, without credible evidence of deliverable infrastructure or sustainable transport options.

The evidence clearly shows that Dorset's ability to accommodate housing growth is constrained by its **environmental designations, rural infrastructure, and limited transport connectivity**. The Council's forthcoming **Regulation 19 Local Plan** must therefore **apply these hard constraints** and **plan for a realistic, deliverable, environmentally sustainable housing figure**, rather than pursuing unachievable and damaging targets derived from the standard method.

Dorset CPRE urges Dorset Council to ensure that the draft Local Plan fully reflects these findings, prioritising the protection of Dorset's landscapes, biodiversity, and community character over the pursuit of unrealistic and undeliverable numerical targets, and meeting the genuine housing needs of our communities, including for truly affordable and social homes.

*Andrew Procter*

Dorset CPRE Planning Group Chairman, October 2025

*Dorset CPRE commissioned expert local planning consultant, Jo Witherden, to review some of the Council's proposed development sites. Her report forms part of a suite of inputs to Dorset Council. It is complemented by and should be read alongside the responses, drawing on local knowledge and experience, submitted by Dorset CPRE members and area groups, as well as those by local councils, communities and individuals.*

# DORSET LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION, OCTOBER 2025

Report produced by Jo Witherden BSc(Hons) DipTP DipUD MRTPI, Director of Dorset Planning Consultant Limited. Jo is a chartered town planner and full member of the Royal Town Planning Institute, with more than 30 years' experience in the planning profession based in Dorset.

## INTRODUCTION

This response focuses on a selection of the settlements where there is a significant (cumulative) level of development proposed through the Dorset Local Plan options consultation (August – October 2025). It seeks to highlight areas of concern that would question whether the sites should be included in the next iteration of the Local Plan. It also seeks to identify those sites where there is likely to be less harm to the environment and which may provide opportunities to increase the sustainability of those settlements, and the outstanding issues that require further study.

It focuses on the housing site proposals for:

- Broadmayne / West Knighton;
- Crossways / Woodsford;
- Dorchester – North Dorchester Garden Community proposals;
- Lytchett Matravers, Lytchett Minster and South Lytchett new settlement proposals ;
- Sturminster Marshall.

The following summary provides an overview of the report's main findings for each area:

### BROADMAYNE AND WEST KNIGHTON

The two villages of Broadmayne and West Knighton were recorded as having about 720 households in the 2021 Census. There is one extant major permission for up to 80 homes<sup>1</sup>. Seven additional opportunity sites have been identified, which altogether are estimated to have capacity for a further 1,170 dwellings. This would result in a substantial increase of housing in this location, increasing the population in these two villages by more than 170% compared to 2021 levels.

All of the sites have the potential for significant adverse impacts.

Cumulatively, the main adverse impacts of development in this location relate to the loss of productive farmland (much of which is likely to be Grade 3a) and lack of sustainable transport opportunities, which cannot readily be mitigated. The impact on the character of the two settlements and their relationship with the Dorset National Landscape also has the potential for significant harm at this scale of growth.

The omission or substantial reduction of development of the site to the north side of West Knighton would be necessary to prevent harm to the Conservation Area, as this is not clearly substantiated by the provision of housing on this site. Care would also need to be taken in planning for drainage to ensure this is viable and prevents pollution risk to groundwater sources. Biodiversity harm should be avoidable subject to the provision of sufficient land for biodiversity net gain and heathland projects (SANG), together with careful consideration of the layout and green infrastructure / buffers in relation to the existing ecological networks.

The development of the site to the western end of the village is likely to have the most positive impacts due to its location and frontage onto the A352 and potential connection to Knighton Lane, but would require detailed consideration of the mix of uses in order to improve access to jobs and local services / facilities, and care taken with regard to the setting of some key heritage assets. However its development would diminish the separate character of the two villages, as well as result in the substantial loss of productive farmland. A better understanding of the capacity and safety issues on the A352 and related infrastructure improvements is needed, and the provision of improved bus

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<sup>1</sup> P/OUT/2021/05309 issued July 2024 – this is shown on the Local Plan consultation map but is not referenced in the Housing Numbers background paper.

services would also be critical in order to genuinely prioritise sustainable transport options, including linking to the Dorset Innovation Park.

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## CROSSWAYS / WOODSFORD

The village of Crossways and nearby hamlets of Moreton Station and Woodsford were recorded as having about 1,100 households in the 2021 Census. There are two extant major permissions totalling 152 homes, and two existing Local Plan allocations for a further 990 homes (one of which has a pending application), nearly doubling the size of the village. Five additional opportunity sites have been identified (one of which is currently subject to an outline planning application), within the region of a further 700 dwellings estimated on sites adjoining Crossways / Moreton Station. A new settlement of about 4000 homes is also proposed at Woodsford, which would add significantly to the local population. To the south-west, Silverlakes holiday village of up to 1,000 homes continue to be built out.

All of the sites have the potential for adverse impacts, with the two sites in Moreton Station having the potential for significant adverse effects due to biodiversity and, in the case of the site north of Moreton Station, being some distance from the services in the village.

The proposed new settlement in Woodsford has the potential for significant harm to biodiversity, landscape and heritage, as well as resulting in the loss of a large area of high grade agricultural land. Without further details there is little certainty that it can deliver an appropriate balance of jobs, facilities and infrastructure to create a reasonable degree of self-containment, and avoid creating high levels of car-borne traffic on the local highway network, which cannot readily be absorbed.

The potential development of the sites immediately adjoining the village (CROS/002 and CROS/004) provide the most sustainable option for growth in this location, and if these were to include a mix of uses could also enhance local services / facilities. However, in both cases connections to the railway station are poor, and further consideration of the cumulative impact of the additional traffic on the wider highways network will be required. In particular, there are a number of pinchpoints on the local highway network (which is not A-road standard) where highway safety issues are known to exist, and the current road safety records are insufficient to judge the safety of the highway network.

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## DORCHESTER – NORTH DORCHESTER GARDEN COMMUNITY PROPOSALS

The expansion of Dorchester to the north, as a ‘garden community’, was first raised as an option in the review of the West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland Local Plan in the 2018 Options Consultation. This concept was taken forward in the 2021 draft of the Local Plan, with Central Government funding awarded to progress its testing, and now features again as a potential opportunity site, despite strong levels of local objection.

Whilst development of a ‘garden community’ of this scale has the potential to deliver a significant number of new homes and associated jobs and services, it remains deeply concerning that there is little evidence regarding the deliverability of the community and how the relative adverse impacts can be successfully mitigated.

The development would be highly damaging to the town and its rural surrounds. There would be significant landscape and heritage impacts from the proposed development, as well as loss of valuable farmland. The scale and mass of the development will fundamentally change the character of the town and its setting.

There are inherent difficulties in providing good connections given the site’s relationship with the town and the intervening watermeadows. Without a clear plan to address this barrier to connectivity, it is likely that the development would lead to more car-borne traffic. Furthermore, the creation of new infrastructure across the watermeadows, in addition to the potential for increased run-off, could cause additional impacts in relation to localised flooding that are not clearly understood at this stage.

There is no published evidence on this matter despite Dorset Council and its predecessor having funding awarded to explore these critical issues. The previous Halcrow assessment made clear that the scale of development proposed would not fund the necessary infrastructure. Site viability has not been addressed in the latest masterplanning study.

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## LYTCHETT MATRAVERS, LYTCHETT MINSTER AND THE SOUTH LYTCHETT NEW SETTLEMENT PROPOSALS

The village of Lytchett Matravers was recorded as having about 1,500 households in the 2021 Census, with Lytchett Minster being substantially smaller (with about 80 households). Lytchett Matravers also has three sites already allocated through the Purbeck Local Plan, for a total of just under 150 dwellings. Eight additional opportunity sites have been identified around Lytchett Matravers, and eight at Lytchett Minster, as well as the potential for a new village/s on land to the south of Lytchett Matravers and west of Lytchett Minster. This would result in a substantial increase of housing in this location, increasing the population of Lytchett Matravers by about 40% compared to 2021 levels, Lytchett Minster by more than 1200%, and the combined population across this area by more than 380%.

For those sites around Lytchett Matravers, the main adverse impacts of development in this location relate to biodiversity, sustainable transport and landscape / character. The network of deciduous woodlands and chalk stream environments around the village would need to be avoided through the incorporation of suitable buffer zones within a number of the sites, and further mitigation provided in order to achieve net gain, which may substantially impact on the scale of development that can be accommodated. The lack of sustainable transport opportunities, which cannot readily be mitigated (whilst there is clearly scope to improve the bus service and cycle links, this is unlikely to achieve a meaningful shift away from car use) highlight the need for any development to contribute to a more sustainable mix of uses to promote greater self-containment, and also the need to undertake further investigation into the safety of the junction where collisions have been recorded. The impact on the character of the settlement and role of the Green Belt also has the potential for significant harm at this scale of growth.

The development of the site adjoining the school (LMAT/005/13) and the northern portion of the site on Wimborne Road (LMAT/007) provide the most sustainable and least harmful options, to some extent 'rounding off' the village. There may be some scope for development within land to the east off Huntick Road (LMAT/009) and extending further south along the Wareham Road opposite the current allocated site (LMAT/026/029) but these sites are much more sensitive and less well connected into the village. However, these could provide greater scope to achieve a better mix of uses and increase the sustainability of the village and help reverse its 'dormitory' nature. The remaining sites all have the potential to cause significant harm across a range of sustainability objectives and should not be progressed.

For those sites around Lytchett Minster, the main issues relate to the potential harm to the character of the Conservation Area and related Listed Buildings and non-designated heritage assets, harm to the functioning of the Green Belt in preventing urban sprawl, and flood risk. Cumulatively, these adverse impacts would be significant, and should clearly rule out some of the sites or parts of those where mitigation would not be possible.

The limited facilities in the village also highlight the need to consider the appropriate balance of uses should any sites be taken forward. The bus service and cycle links can be further improved, are unlikely to achieve a meaningful shift away from car use, and therefore further investigation of the highway safety issues at the Baker's Arms roundabout should be undertaken, linked to the flooding issues known to occur, and taking into account the cumulative growth from all of the sites where there will be added traffic through this junction.

The development of the site to the east (LMUP/012) and potentially the easternmost part of LMUP/013 – limiting development to the area outside of the flood risk zone - provide the most sustainable and least harmful options, to some extent 'rounding off' the village, and could provide greater scope to achieve a better mix of uses and increase the sustainability of the village. However issues relating to heritage, groundwater / drainage and wider highway safety (at the Bakers Arms) need further consideration.

In regard to the proposals for a new settlement in this area, there is substantial uncertainty at this stage regarding the likely level of harm that would arise, but the review has highlighted potentially significant impacts to biodiversity, heritage and landscape character (including the functioning of the Green Belt). These primarily relate to the westernmost parcel due to its wooded nature, and to the easternmost parcel and its relationship with the historic village of Lytchett Minster and the character of

the Conservation Area. The flood risk associated with the southern part of that parcel also suggests that connections to the A35 and relationship of development with the road network may be difficult, and that further flood risk modelling is necessary to inform any development in this area.

On this basis, if the inevitable harm to the Green Belt can be substantiated, the area of search for a new settlement would be better focused within the central two parcels where there is an opportunity to create a community that can connect to the main road network, and retain a significant buffer to the north to reinforce the new community's separation and distinction from the village of Lytchett Matravers, and to the east to avoid encroaching towards Lytchett Minster.

There are significant uncertainties regarding the extent to which the development would provide a reasonable degree of self-containment, and its viability to provide the necessary infrastructure. The 'pull factor' of the conurbation will inevitably lead to increased traffic in that direction, and the highway safety issues relating to access onto the A35 and also further east at the Bakers Arms roundabout will need further investigation and mitigation, and potential for wider active travel (cycle route) connections to the nearby settlements and connecting to the industrial estate and railway holt at Holton Heath.

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## STURMINSTER MARSHALL

The village of Sturminster Marshall was recorded as having about 580 households in the 2021 Census. The village is surrounded by Green Belt. Six opportunity sites have been identified, which altogether are estimated to have capacity for a further 1,860 dwellings. This would result in a substantial increase of housing in this location, increasing the population by more than 320% compared to 2021 levels.

All of the sites have the potential for significant adverse impacts.

Cumulatively, the main adverse impacts of development in this location relate to the loss of productive farmland (a substantial element of which is likely to be Grade 2) and lack of sustainable transport opportunities, which cannot readily be mitigated. There is considerable uncertainty with regard to flood risk and whether there are feasible drainage solutions that can ensure that development will not increase flood risk in the area. The impact on the character of the settlement (in effect whether it would remain a village) and role of the Green Belt also has the potential for significant harm at this scale of growth.

The omission of the site areas that are clearly intervisible with and impact on the setting of Charborough Park (relating to SMAR/014 and SMAR/005,006,007) would be necessary to prevent harm to this highly important heritage asset. Biodiversity harm should be avoidable subject to the provision of sufficient land for biodiversity net gain and heathland projects (SANG).

The development of the sites to the north side of the A350, and avoiding extending the village further east or encroaching into the flood risk area relating to the River Winterborne (the westernmost parts of SMAR/004 and SMAR/009), provide the most sustainable options, and the opportunity to both enhance local services / facilities and address some of the local highway / accessibility issues. However this would still require the flood risk issues linked to groundwater to be addressed. There may also be some potential to release land to the south side, but this would need to be limited in its extent, taking account of the settlement form and topography, and address the issues relating to providing good pedestrian / cycle links into the village crossing the busy A350.

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## OVERALL FINDINGS

The high level approach to the sustainability appraisal of options adopted at this stage is insufficient to reasonably understand the nature of any potential impacts, and makes no attempt to quantify the possible cumulative impacts.

The Dorset area is particularly rich in biodiversity, and great care will need to be taken to ensure sites can both avoid harm and provide the necessary mitigation and net gain required. The presence of deciduous and ancient woodland within and close to many of the sites, and the ecological corridors created from the networks of streams and rivers, are common features and will all require suitable buffers and consideration over the extent to which indirect impacts such as light pollution, recreational disturbance and drainage can impact on local wildlife including protected species. The larger sites



provide more scope for on-site mitigation, but also tend to include larger elements of the existing ecological networks.

The proposals include areas within or forming the setting of Dorset's National Landscape, as well as extensive areas of Green Belt land, whose function would be eroded if the level of development proposed goes ahead. Even outside of these areas, at a local level, development of this scale has the potential to significantly alter the distinct character of these settlements. Light pollution is a concern in relation to the dark night skies in the more remote areas – land at Woodsford being a prime example.

There is also many cases where there is potential for significant harm to the setting of heritage assets, and a much more detailed understanding of the significance and setting of these assets is needed. In some cases it may not be possible to avoid harm to their significance, and it is questionable whether such options should be progressed when weighed against the wider public benefits.

The extent of potential loss of productive and high quality farmland is a key concern, particularly when the cumulative impact is considered.

Whilst most sites do avoid or have the potential to avoid development in Floods Zones 2 and 3, many of the areas are susceptible to groundwater flood risk. In both Sturminster Marshall and around the Lytchett Minster / Matravers area, flooding is complex and requires further detailed investigation, to demonstrate that all sources of flood risk (including their interrelationship and the current and future impacts of climate change) have been taken into account. In relation to the proposals for Dorchester, it remains unclear the extent to which flood risk will inhibit the creation of links into the town. Care will also need to be taken in planning for drainage to ensure this prevents pollution risk to groundwater sources and local watercourses.

Opportunities to promote public transport as a viable alternative, and encourage active travel (walking and cycling) are limited, and likely to require significant investment to ensure that sustainable transport modes are prioritised, for which there are no clear plans or costings at this stage. The projects currently outlined for implementation in the draft Local Transport Plan fall considerably short of achieving this aim. There are highway safety concerns in relation to a number of the roads where traffic levels would be expected to increase significantly as a result. Robust trip modelling based on the cumulative impacts, looking at both junctions and the links in between (particularly where there are recognised pinchpoints and collision sites) is imperative to inform the Local Plan going forward, prior to determining which sites are suitable for allocation and to manage growth in areas where cumulative impacts could lead to severe highway issues.

There is little obvious consideration of the degree to which jobs, services and facilities would be available in the vicinity of the sites, relying on the settlement status (as Tier 1 – 3) to justify each settlement's sustainability. Many of the existing services are lacking in the Tier 3 settlements, or would be beyond reasonable walking / cycling distance of the proposed sites, and there are no proposals at this stage to address this. If the Local Plan is to genuinely consider how to create better, more self-contained places, the whole package of housing, employment, local facilities, services and infrastructure needs to be considered together, at a settlement level, rather than relying on a 'one size fits all' approach. This is critical to ensure our towns and village function well, support people's prosperity and well-being, and reduce our carbon footprint. Much greater focus is therefore needed on planning for the accompanying employment, local facilities, services and infrastructure going forward.

## METHOD

The site options have been tested against eight topics, which broadly align with the sustainability appraisal (SA) objectives as set out in the table below. However the sustainability appraisal assessment undertaken for Dorset Council at this stage is very 'high level' and failed to provide a robust analysis of the options, or potential cumulative impacts, at this stage.

In determining the relative impacts, this review has sought to focus on the objectives contained in national planning policy relevant to plan making and the environment, and broadly reflected in Dorset Council's sustainability appraisal, but noting that the latter does not constitute a detailed assessment at this stage and is relatively 'high level' and 'broad brush':

Topic	DCLP SA Objective	Notes on DCLP assessment criteria
Impact on biodiversity	SA1: Biodiversity	SA1 reflects the NPPF requirements
Loss of productive farmland	SA2: Soil quality / geology	SA2 does not at this stage consider the scale of loss, and does not attribute significant impact to the loss of Grade 3a farmland. It also includes an assessment of proximity to geological conservation sites <sup>2</sup>
Potential for pollution	SA3: Water quality	SA3 relates to proximity to local rivers (and their ecological status) and to groundwater source protection zones
	SA4: Air quality	SA4 relates to proximity to known existing air quality issues, however there is little localised monitoring
Sustainable transport opportunities <sup>3</sup>	SA5: Climate change	SA5 focuses on access to active travel and public transport networks
Flood risk	SA6: Flooding / coastal change	SA6 does not consider groundwater flood risk
Landscape and character	SA7: Landscape	SA7 does not include the assessment of local character, but instead considers distance from an existing settlement as potentially negative
Heritage impacts	SA8: Historic environment	SA8 only considers distance to historic assets, and only Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments.
Access to local facilities and job opportunities	SA9: Health and well-being	SA9 is a mix of many different factors relating to existing local facilities, noise / odours, and levels of deprivation
	SA10: Homes / infrastructure	SA10 relates to the site size (with larger sites considered more positively), and distance to schools and surgeries <sup>4</sup> .
	SA11: Economy	SA11 relates primarily to 'Employment' domain of the Index of multiple deprivation, and existing job density in the area, at LSOA level.

The factors will need to be weighed against the public benefits of delivering housing and (in some cases) employment land, to meet both local and wider strategic needs.

<sup>2</sup> Given such geological sites are generally small in scale / on the coastline, this element has not been included in the CPRE assessment.

<sup>3</sup> In considering whether bus services are acceptable, Inclusive Mobility references the expectation that in residential areas, bus stops should ideally be located so that nobody in the neighbourhood is required to walk more than 400 metres from their home.

<sup>4</sup> The sustainability appraisal does not specify, but distances appear to be measured from the site perimeter rather than the centre of the site.

### **Impact on biodiversity**

The NPPF requires planning policies to: minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity (paragraph 187); and promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats and ecological networks (paragraph 192).

*Analysis has taken into account the available published data on nationally designated sites and priority habitats (Magic map <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>) and the Dorset Environmental Records Centre information on the existing ecological network (<https://gi.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorsetexplorer/#>), as well as the Environment Agency river catchment data (<https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/ManagementCatchment/3030>), and is supplemented by local knowledge where available.*

### **Loss of productive farmland**

The NPPF requires planning policies to recognise the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile land (paragraph 187).

*Analysis has taken into account the available published data on agricultural land value (1:250,000 scale regional ALC map and post 1988 assessments (Magic map <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>), and the DEFRA data on Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Agricultural Land - Strategic scale maps (<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/5208993007403008>), supplemented by local knowledge where available.*

### **Potential for pollution**

The NPPF requires planning policies to prevent new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability (paragraph 187).

*Analysis has taken into account the available published data on Source Protection Zones (Magic map <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>), noise and air quality (<http://www.extrium.co.uk/noiseviewer.html>), supplemented by local knowledge where available.*

### **Sustainable transport opportunities**

The NPPF requires planning policies to:

- actively manage patterns of growth based on an understanding of the potential impacts of the development on the transport networks, including opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use, and to address the potential impacts of development on transport networks, avoiding and mitigating any adverse environmental impacts (paragraph 109-110); and
- ensure that sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the type of development and its location, and that any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree (paragraph 115).

*Analysis has taken into account the transport infrastructure and PRow networks as published by Dorset Council (<https://gi.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorsetexplorer/#>), accident / collision data provided by Dorset Council for the most recent 5 years and using CrashMap for older data (<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/roads-highways-maintenance/road-safety/road-traffic-collision-map> <http://www.crashmap.co.uk/Search>), supplemented by local knowledge where available.*

### **Flood risk**

The NPPF requires planning policies to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding by directing development away from areas at highest risk (paragraph 171), and to apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development, taking into account all sources of flood risk and the current and future impacts of climate change (paragraph 172).

*Analysis has taken into account the available published data from the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (<https://gi.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorsetexplorer/sfra>), supplemented by local knowledge where available.*



## Landscape and character

The NPPF requires planning policies to:

- guide development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area (paragraph 9);
- ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting (paragraph 135);
- give great weight to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes - the scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas (paragraph 189);
- limit the impact of light pollution on intrinsically dark landscapes (paragraph 198);
- consider whether the proposals would fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the plan area of the plan (paragraph 155).

*Analysis has taken into account the Landscape Character and Landscape and Heritage Studies published by Dorset Council (<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/countryside-coast-parks/the-dorset-landscape/landscape-character-assessment-map> and <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/landscape-and-heritage-studies>), and the Light Pollution map (<https://www.cpre.org.uk/light-pollution-dark-skies-map/>), supplemented by local knowledge where available.*

## Heritage impacts

The NPPF requires planning policies to: identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) (paragraph 208); give great weight to any designated heritage asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be) (paragraph 212); and take into account the effect of development on the significance of a non-designated heritage assets, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of that asset (paragraph 216).

*Analysis has taken into account the Conservation Area and Landscape and Heritage Studies published by Dorset Council (<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning/planning-constraints/conservation-areas> and <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/landscape-and-heritage-studies>), and the Dorset Heritage Explorer interactive map (<https://heritage.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/map>), supplemented by local knowledge where available.*

## Access to local facilities and job opportunities

The NPPF requires planning policies to: ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services (paragraph 98); and minimise the number and length of journeys needed for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities by supporting an appropriate mix of uses across an area (paragraph 111).

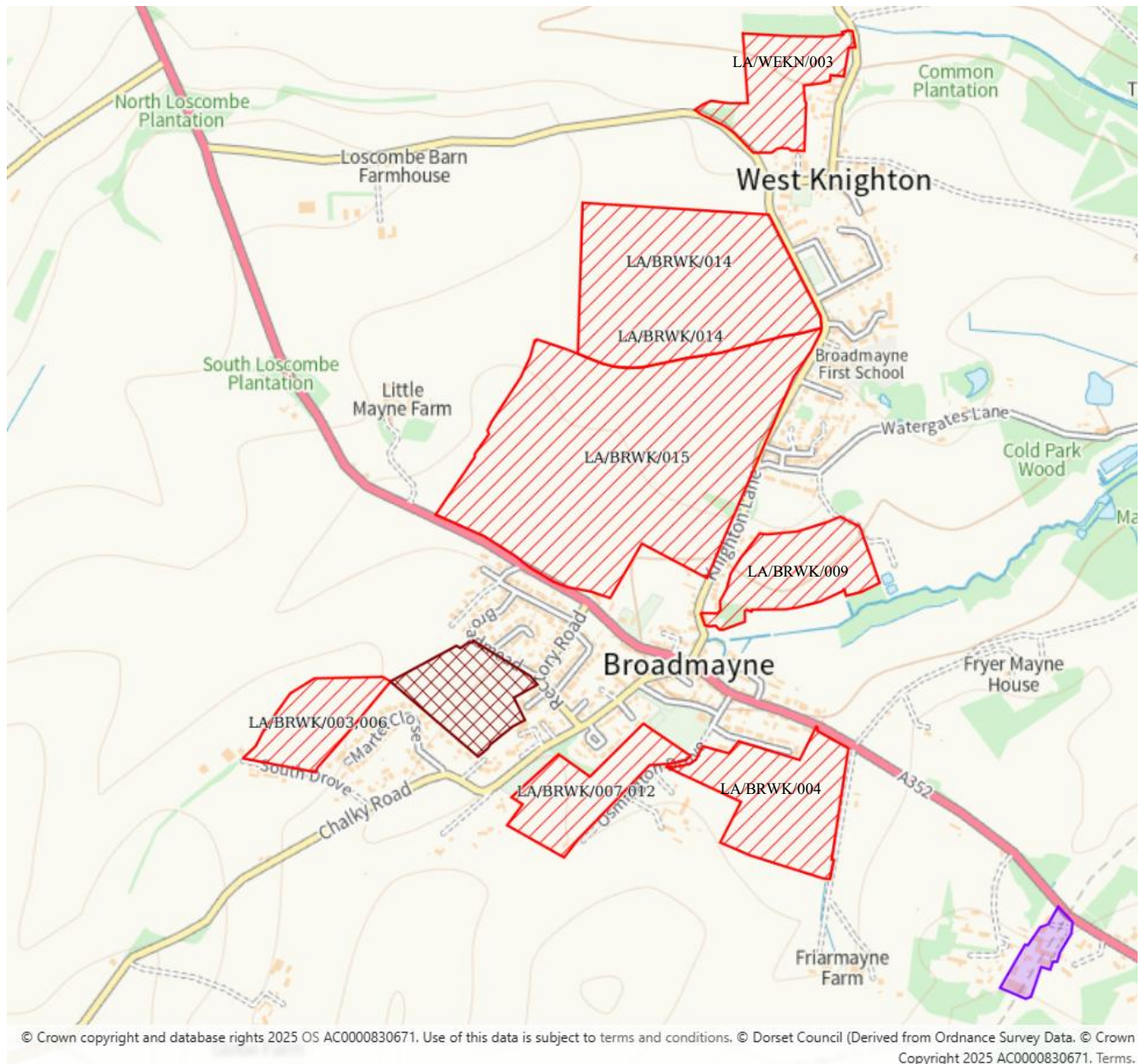
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## SCORING

In order to provide a comparable overview, each of the sites is graded as follows:

++	Significant positive impact likely
++ ?	Significant positive impact likely, but less certain
+	Positive impact likely, but not considered to be significant
+ ?	Positive impact likely, but less certain and not considered to be significant
0	Neutral impact likely
- ?	Negative impact likely, but less certain and not considered to be significant
-	Negative impact likely, but not considered to be significant
-- ?	Significant negative impact likely, but less certain
--	Significant negative impact likely
? ?	Insufficient information available to assess

## BROADMAYNE AND WEST KNIGHTON



### Impact on biodiversity

There are a number of deciduous woodlands, including ancient woodland, in the vicinity of the two villages, but not within any of the sites. BRWK/007,012 directly adjoins a woodland (on its eastern edge) and its western edge is recorded as part of the existing ecological network, as does BRWK/009 (with PRow connecting onto other woodlands), and as such these two sites have the greater potential for indirect impacts from light pollution and disturbance that would be more difficult to mitigate and would limit the site capacity and developable area. The Tadnoll Brook and related water bodies are of good ecological status.

The area lies within the catchment of Poole Harbour, and Warmwell Heath lies approximately 1.7km east of the built up area. As such there are also indirect impacts on these internationally important sites that will require mitigation, particularly given the network of PRow connecting to the heaths. For this reason all sites score negatively.

Given the scale of BRWK/014 and BRWK/015 and their current arable use, there is likely to be greater scope to achieve on-site biodiversity net gain in these locations.

### ***Loss of productive farmland***

The strategic ALC map indicates all of the sites are likely to be Grade 3 agricultural value. The predictive BMV map indicates that land to the south and west is of high likelihood (>60%) to be BMV, with land to the east of moderate likelihood (20 – 60%) to be BMV. Such loss would be particularly significant when considered in relation to the larger sites or cumulative impact.

### ***Potential for pollution***

Most of the built-up area and surrounding land lies within the Inner source protection zone and is vulnerable to groundwater pollution. This is likely to be more restrictive in relation to the inclusion of industrial or other polluting types of development (which would apply to BRWK/015 as proposed). Land to the south-west (including BRWK/003,006) lies within the outer source protection area. BRWK/009 adjoins a sewage treatment works on its eastern boundary, from which odours are likely to emanate.

### ***Sustainable transport opportunities***

Broadmayne is bisected by the A352, connecting to the nearest town centre in Dorchester some 4 miles distant.

There is no local rail station / service, the nearest being Dorchester and Moreton Station.

There is a regular bus service that runs to and from Dorchester to Broadmayne, connecting through West Knighton to Crossways and on to Weymouth (Damory Morebus 5). The service is currently limited to 5 buses a day weekdays, has a limited service on Saturdays, and no service on Sundays or into the evenings. Taking the centre point of each site, and assumption that the existing bus route would not be altered (although new stops may be added), sites BRWK/003,006 is well beyond the 400m walking distance, and BRWK/007,012 and BRWK/004 on the limits of a reasonable walking distance.

There are no dedicated cycle routes in the area connecting to other settlements.

The footways in and around the two villages are sporadic, with parts of the A352 having no footway, and no footway connecting to West Knighton beyond the junction with Lewell Way. This would significantly limit occupants of WEKN/003 in terms of active travel options to local facilities.

The sites to the south side of the village (BRWK/003,006, BRWK/007,012 and BRWK/004) would lie on the limit or just beyond the acceptable walking distance for journeys to school (1km) and those to the north (BRWK/014 and WEKN/003) would be beyond the maximum suggested walking distance for shopping (800m).

Site BRWK/007 may be difficult to access for motor vehicles, given the narrowness of the track between two houses that link onto Knighton lane, and alternative track down that currently links to the sewage works.

Given the above, it is unlikely that development in this location could result in a significant shift away from the use of the private car for the majority of trips, and that due to safety concerns some localised trips are also likely to be car-based.

This is likely to primarily result in additional traffic on the A352 west to Dorchester and east to the Dorset Innovation Park and its related job opportunities, as well as the local road network around the two villages. The latest crash report data indicates a cluster of accidents (4) at Whitcombe Hill on the A352 in the last 5 years.

There may be opportunities to improve the local cycle / footway network for those sites that provide the potential for connections between the different parts of the two villages – most notably BRWK/014 and BRWK/015, and WEKN/003 (although this would not resolve issues related to walking / cycling into Broadmayne).

There are aspirations in the Neighbourhood Plan covering West Knighton parish to improve the network of cycle routes in this area, and designate a network of Quiet Lanes recognising their recreational use by more vulnerable road users.

### ***Flood risk***

None of the sites include significant areas shown to flood. Sites BRWK/003,006, BRWK/014 are indicated as having significant areas that are susceptible to groundwater flood risk, which will require further investigation and may limit the ability to use infiltration techniques to deal with surface water run-off. This applies to a lesser degree to BRWK/009, BRWK/015, and WEKN/003.

### ***Landscape and character***

All of the sites are rural in nature and contribute to the area's rural character.

The Dorset National Landscape skirts around the southern edge of Broadmayne, with BRWK/003,006 lying within the National Landscape, BRWK/007,012 partially within, and BRWK/004 abutting the boundary, and clearly within the National Landscape's setting. As such, all of these sites are likely to result in a degree of harm, albeit that they are unlikely to fundamentally impact on the reasons for the National Landscape's designation.

The development of sites BRWK/009 and BRWK/015 have the potential to undermine the distinct character and separation of the two villages.

### ***Heritage impacts***

West Knighton has a designated Conservation Areas, recognising the historic importance and character of this area. The development of the adjoining land WEKN/003 would have a significant impact on its rural setting and character (and associated Listed Buildings) which would be difficult to mitigate.

The Parish Church of St Martin in Broadmayne is Grade II\* Listed, and its setting would be harmed through the development of the open land to the north (BRWK/015), although the immediate area is not included within the potential site. Earthworks in this area also indicate the presence of a medieval settlement in this location. Mayne stone circle (at Little Mayne Farm, to the west) is a scheduled monument, whose setting would also need to be respected through further consideration of the extent of development within this site.

Most of the sites have potential for archaeological interest as part of medieval field systems, although this is unlikely to be of a significance to prevent their development.

### ***Access to local facilities and job opportunities***

There are limited local services in the two villages, but this does include a first school in Broadmayne parish (but linked more to West Knighton village), a range of local meeting venues / recreation areas. There is a local convenience store with Post Office services on the A352 in Broadmayne, although this is very limited in size (with a retail area of less than 60sqm), with no off-street parking, and is therefore unlikely to cater for typical grocery needs. There is no GP surgery, local pharmacy, local library, middle / upper school or employment area (industrial estate).

The bus service would enable journeys to work into Dorchester (although connections on to the industrial estates are limited), but not to Weymouth or to the Dorset Innovation Park, and not outside of normal weekday working hours. The area falls within the Puddletown catchment for middle school, which is a significant distance from the two villages.

The only realistic option site which could provide some employment and/or enhanced community facilities to improve access to local facilities and job opportunities is BRWK/015, which is both of sufficient size and with frontage onto and potential access from the A352. Development in this location could therefore make a significant improvement to access to local facilities and job opportunities. Whilst BRWK/004 also contained some frontage onto the A352 the site is more limited in scale, and less accessible to the village (with no footway), as well as requiring the removal of the substantial belt of mature trees, and therefore has not been scored positively.



DCLP Options Stage Site Assessment Overview	BRWK 3 & 6	BRWK 4	BRWK 7 & 12	BRWK 9	BRWK 14	BRWK 15	WEKN 3	ALL
Site size (ha)	3.8	7.5	4.7	5.5	16.3	30.7	5.1	73.6
Quantum (homes)	70	105	85	90	260	490	70	1,170
Employment likely (>300 units)						✓		✓
Impact on biodiversity	–	–	– – ?	– – ?	– ?	– ?	–	– – ?
Loss of productive farmland	–	–	–	– ?	– –	– –	–	– –
Potential for pollution	– ?	–	–	– – ?	–	– – ?	–	– – ?
Sustainable transport	– –	– –	– –	– – ?	– ?	– ?	– – ?	– –
Flood risk	– ?	0	0	– ?	– ?	– ?	– ?	– ?
Landscape and character	– – ?	–	–	–	– ?	–	– ?	– – ?
Heritage impacts	– ?	– ?	– ?	– ?	– ?	– – ?	– –	– – ?
Access to facilities and jobs	–	– ?	–	–	–	++	–	+

### Overview

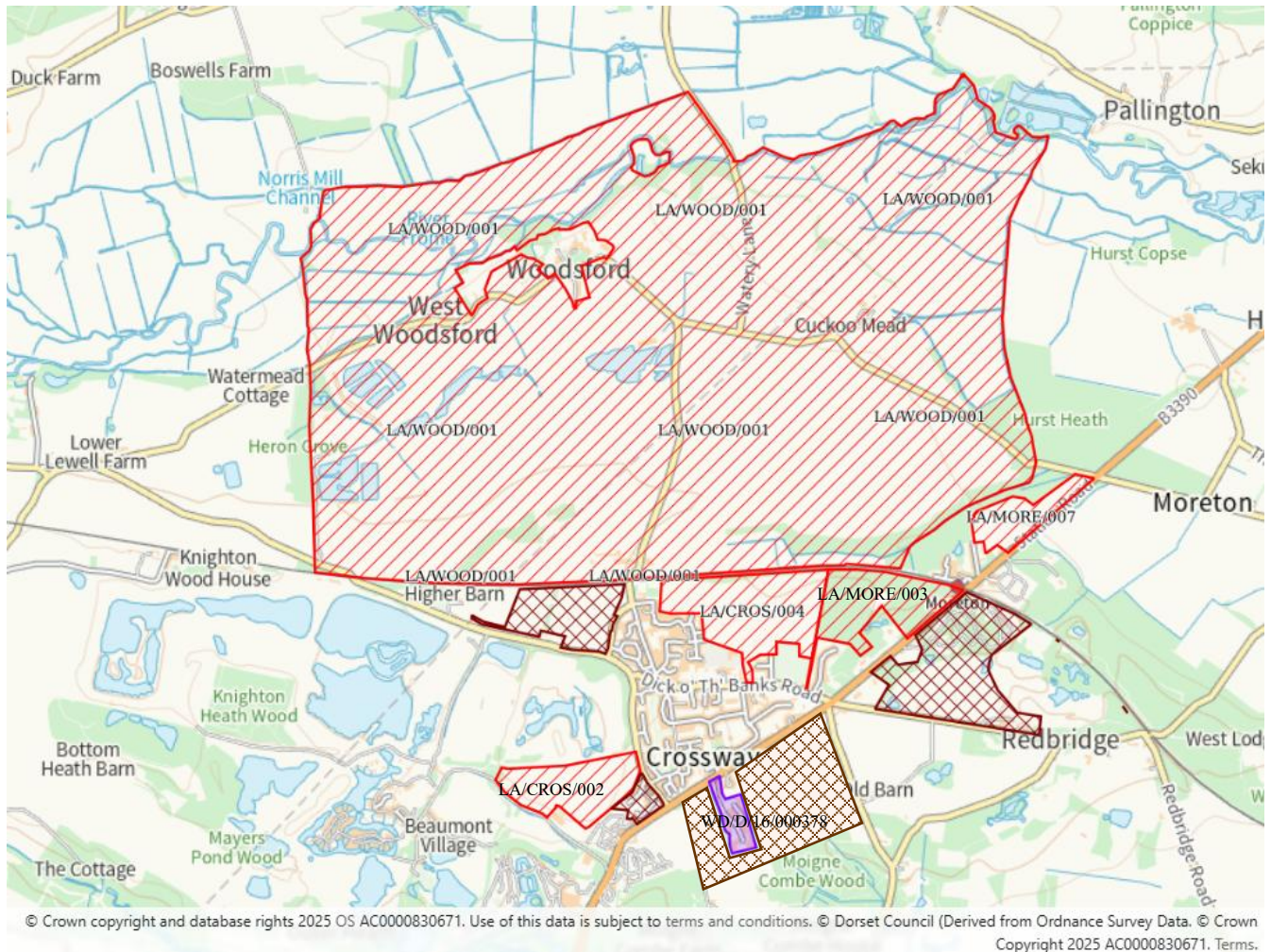
All of the sites have the potential for significant adverse impacts.

Cumulatively, the main adverse impacts of development in this location relate to the loss of productive farmland (much of which is likely to be Grade 3a) and lack of sustainable transport opportunities, which cannot readily be mitigated. The impact on the character of the two settlements and their relationship with the Dorset National Landscape also has the potential for significant harm at this scale of growth.

The omission or substantial reduction of development of the site to the north side of West Knighton would be necessary to prevent harm to the Conservation Area, as this is not clearly substantiated by the provision of housing on this site. Care would also need to be taken in planning for drainage to ensure this is viable and prevents pollution risk to groundwater sources. Biodiversity harm should be avoidable subject to the provision of sufficient land for biodiversity net gain and heathland projects (SANG), together with careful consideration of the layout and green infrastructure / buffers in relation to the existing ecological networks.

The development of the site to the western end of the village is likely to have the most positive impacts due to its location and frontage onto the A352 and potential connection to Knighton Lane, but would require detailed consideration of the mix of uses in order to improve access to jobs and local services / facilities, and care taken with regard to the setting of some key heritage assets. However its development would diminish the separate character of the two villages, as well as result in the substantial loss of productive farmland. A better understanding of the capacity and safety issues on the A352 and related infrastructure improvements is needed, and the provision of improved bus services would also be critical in order to genuinely prioritise sustainable transport options, including linking to the Dorset Innovation Park.





Site CROS/002 is subject to a live outline planning application for up to 145 dwellings and SANG (P/OUT/2025/01234). There is also an existing local plan allocation on land to the south that is not shown on the Dorset Explorer map, but which is also subject to a live planning application (WD/D/16/000378) for 500 dwellings, 2.5ha of employment land and community infrastructure (a new doctors surgery, new village hall; village green and SANG).

### **Impact on biodiversity**

There is considerable nature conservation interest in the local area, with a number of deciduous woodlands, including a significant element of MORE/003. MORE/007 directly adjoins woodland (on its western edge) and there is further woodland to the north and east sides across the highway, and would have significant potential for indirect impacts from light pollution and disturbance that would be more difficult to mitigate and would severely limit the site capacity and developable area. WOOD/001 also includes areas of woodland, largely limited to its eastern edge, and the historic watermeadows of the River Frome along its northern edge are also priority habitat as grazing marsh. The River Frome SSSI is of national importance and as a chalk stream, and would be sensitive to changes in groundwater and potential pollutants. Hurst Heath SNCI (in close proximity to both MORE/007 and WOOD/001) supports the only original population of heath lobelia remaining in Dorset, dependent on its wet condition.

The Tadnoll Brook and related water bodies to the south are of good ecological status, and the lower reaches of the River Frome to the north are of moderate ecological status.

The area lies within the catchment of Poole Harbour, and Warmwell Heath lies approximately 700m to the south-west of the built up area, and Winfrith Heath just over 2km to the east. As such there are also indirect impacts on these internationally important sites that will require mitigation, particularly given the proximity to the heaths. This may also be a consideration in relation to air pollution on the

heaths as a result of increased commuting to the Dorset Innovation Park through the Winfrith / Tadnoll heathland reserve. For this reason all sites score negatively.

Given the scale of WOOD/001, there is greater scope to achieve on-site biodiversity net, however this needs to be compared with the favourable condition that would be achieved through the site's restoration following the cessation of quarrying activity.

### *Loss of productive farmland*

The strategic ALC map indicates most of the sites are likely to be Grade 3 agricultural value, with the exception of WOOD/001 which contains a significant element of Grade 2 farmland. The predictive BMV map indicates that land for the north and south-east is of high likelihood (>60%) to be BMV, with land to the west recognised as being quarried. The restoration scheme for the quarry is intended to restore the farmland to BMV quality. MORE/003 is woodland and has not been productively farmed.

### *Potential for pollution*

The built-up area and surrounding land does not lie within a source protection zone. The area does contain active quarries, in particular with regard to WOOD/001 where a planning application for its extension (P/FUL/2023/04753) has been refused (based on biodiversity concerns) but adjoining Moreton quarry application has been permitted. Such activities would give rise to potential noise, dust and disturbance during their lifetime. The delivery of this site would therefore need to be phased in order to avoid adverse impacts to the new occupants.

### *Sustainable transport opportunities*

Crossways does not have direct access onto an A road. The B3390 connects north to the A35 over a distance of approximately 5 miles, and south to the A352 over a distance of just under 3 miles, and connects to the nearest town centre in Dorchester some 5 miles distant via an unclassified road, which includes an at-grade crossing of the railway line and a signalised underpass before reaching the West Stafford bypass.

There is a local rail station at Moreton Station/ service, with an hourly service running between Weymouth and London Waterloo. Both MORE/003 and MORE/007 are within 400m walking distance of the station, with CROS/004 and the southern part of WOOD/001 also being within 800m, although access from CROS/007 would be dependent on a link through MORE/003. CROS/002 is around 2km from the station and therefore less accessible. The track from Moreton to Dorchester is a single line which is likely to place restrictions on increasing rail frequency unless there is substantial investment.

There is a regular bus service that runs to and from Dorchester to Broadmayne, connecting through West Knighton to Crossways and on to Weymouth (Damory Morebus 5). The service is currently limited to 5 buses a day weekdays, has a limited service on Saturdays, and no service on Sundays or into the evenings. Taking the centre point of each site, and assumption that the existing bus route would not be altered (although new stops may be added), sites WOOD/001 and MORE/007 are well beyond the 400m walking distance, and MORE/003 on the limits of a reasonable walking distance.

There are no dedicated cycle routes in the area connecting to other settlements. The national cycle network (NCN2) runs east-west through WOOD/001 using the network of local roads.

The footways in and around the village provide a good network of routes, which extend north of Moreton Station and include Woodsford Lane, which may provide a connection to MORE/007 and on to WOOD/001 (subject to suitable upgrading of the footpath). However given the distance from MORE/007 into the village, it is unlikely that many residents would choose to walk (the school is beyond the accepted walking distance of 1km, and the shops more than 800m away), and there is no off-road cycle link. There are no footways on Woodsford Road connecting over the railway to WOOD/001.

Given the above, whilst there would be opportunities to use active travel around the village and to the station, and to use public transport to travel to Weymouth, Dorchester and into the conurbation, a significant number of journeys are still likely to be made by car, increasing the amount of traffic on the B3390 and the unclassified road connecting east to Dorchester. Trips to the Dorset Innovation Park at Winfrith and its related job opportunities would also be car-dependent and use the network of rural lanes to the east of the village.

The latest crash report data for the last 5 years does not indicate any notable cluster of accidents, but may not be a good indicator of risk given the levels of growth in this location, including the associated quarrying. Looking further back over a 10 year period, the junction at Waddock Cross on the B3390 has had a significant cluster of accidents, as has the signalised junction at the eastern end of the West Stafford bypass. Given the limited width and alignment of these link roads, including the pinch points created by the Listed Hurst bridge and section through Affpuddle (which is a designated Conservation Area), as well as through Warmwell, further assessment of the ability of the road links as well as the junctions will be needed to ensure the highway network can safely accommodate any significant increase in traffic.

The 2021 movement concept plans produced by Nexus Planning for WOOD/001 include proposals for new link road through the site to join with the unclassified road north of the at-grade crossing of the railway line, and at its eastern end link through to the B3390 (potentially along the route of the C33 on which the national cycle network runs, to the south of Hurst Heath SNCI). They also suggest relocating the railway station further to the west. The only proposals currently included in the draft LTP relate to a "Priority Active Travel Infrastructure Plan (ATIP) route" between Crossways and Dorchester – which implies that this may be in the form of a cycle route.

There are aspirations in the Neighbourhood Plan covering Woodsford parish to improve the network of cycle routes in this area, and signate a network of Quiet Lanes recognising their recreational use by more vulnerable road users.

### ***Flood risk***

Crossways lies between the Rivers Frome and Piddle, with much of the area in between indicated as susceptible to groundwater flood risk, which is relevant to all the potential opportunity sites.

### ***Landscape and character***

All of the sites are rural in nature and contribute to the area's rural character. The area to the north of Crossways (WOOD/001) is particularly notable for its dark night skies.

The area is outside of any National Landscapes and Green Belt designations.

Whilst some sites could be considered natural rounding-off in keeping with the village, its further extension to the north (across the railway corridor) would not. The proposal for a new settlement at WOOD/001 has the potential to harm the distinctive character of Woodsford, set within its wider rural landscape.

### ***Heritage impacts***

Crossways is a relatively recent (c20) settlement and as such does not contain many features of high heritage value. In relation to the sites, the main interest is around Woodsford, which includes the Grade I Listed Woodsford Castle in addition to other Grade II buildings including the Church of St John the Baptist. The development of the land in WOOD/001 has the potential to have a significant impact on the setting of these heritage assets, and Historic England have previously advised that the open and rural landscape has contributed to the significance of the Castle (including land south to the railway), recognising how it would have been experienced in late medieval times when it was built with defensive capabilities. The impact would not only be in the form of potential intervisibility, but would include indirect impacts arising from increase traffic and impacts on tranquility and the dark night skies currently experience in this location.

Whilst there is potential for archaeological interest, as highlighted by the various finds discovered as part of the previous quarrying of the area, including bowl barrows and prehistoric field boundaries on land north of the railway, and the potential later pre-historic to Roman settlement east of Woodsford, these are unlikely to be of a significance to prevent development.

### ***Access to local facilities and job opportunities***

There is a reasonable range of local services in the village, which includes a first school, a village hall and other local meeting venues / recreation areas, local library, and two local convenience stores (although the Post Office services have been closed since 2024), and some employment areas (industrial estate). A GP surgery is planned as part of the existing site allocation to the south, which could include pharmacy dispensary services, as well as further employment land. There is no middle / upper school - the area falls within the Puddletown catchment for middle school provision.



The village lacks an identifiable local centre, with its facilities spread across the area, making linked trips more difficult, and meaning that it is less likely that such a centre will develop and grow should the village look to change its status to a town, without masterplanning and possibly the need for land assembly.

The bus and train services would enable journeys to work into Dorchester (although connections on to the industrial estates are limited), but not to Weymouth or to the Dorset Innovation Park.

Whilst CROS/004 is of a size that is proposed to make provision for employment, it is not well connected to the highway network and as such would be less attractive to businesses. The site adjoining the existing first school, which may need to expand to cater for the population growth – no information on this is available from Dorset Council.

Those sites with good road access (albeit that the wider highway network may require improvements) have the potential to accommodate some employment and/or enhanced community facilities to improve access to local facilities and job opportunities, but fall under the threshold of 300 dwellings currently suggested by Dorset Council.

Similarly WOOD/001 would also be expected to provide employment and a local centre with appropriate range of community facilities to serve a development of this scale. No information has been provided on the proposals for this scale of development have been provided by Dorset Council. The submission by Nexus Planning in 2021 on behalf of Hallam Land Management proposed two neighbourhoods, each with a first school, linked to a mixed use hub including a secondary school, retail space, health and community facilities as well as employment space to the north side of the railway, with significant infrastructure improvements including a new link road and relocation of the railway station. However this is expressed as a vision with no detailed analysis of viability or deliverability. As such this makes the proposals extremely difficult to assess, and a negative score has been given to reflect the uncertainty and potential to have a greater adverse impact on the economy as currently planned should the site be unable to deliver a suitably balanced mix of homes, jobs, services and infrastructure.

DCLP Options Stage Site Assessment Overview	CROS 2	CROS 4	MORE 3	MORE 7	ALL	WOOD 1
Site size (ha)	12.4	20.8	13.9	7.2	64.3	569.3
Quantum (homes)	150	400	40	107	697	4,000
Employment likely (>300 units)		✓			✓	✓
Impact on biodiversity	–	–	– –	– – ?	– –	– – ?
Loss of productive farmland	– ?	–	0	–	–	– –
Potential for pollution	0	0	0	0	0	– ?
Sustainable transport	–	– ?	– ?	– –	–	– – ?
Flood risk	– ?	– ?	– ?	– ?	– ?	– ?
Landscape and character	– ?	– ?	–	–	–	– – ?
Heritage impacts	0	0	0	0	0	– – ?
Access to facilities and jobs	+ ?	+ ?	+ ?	+ ?	+ ?	– ?

### Overview

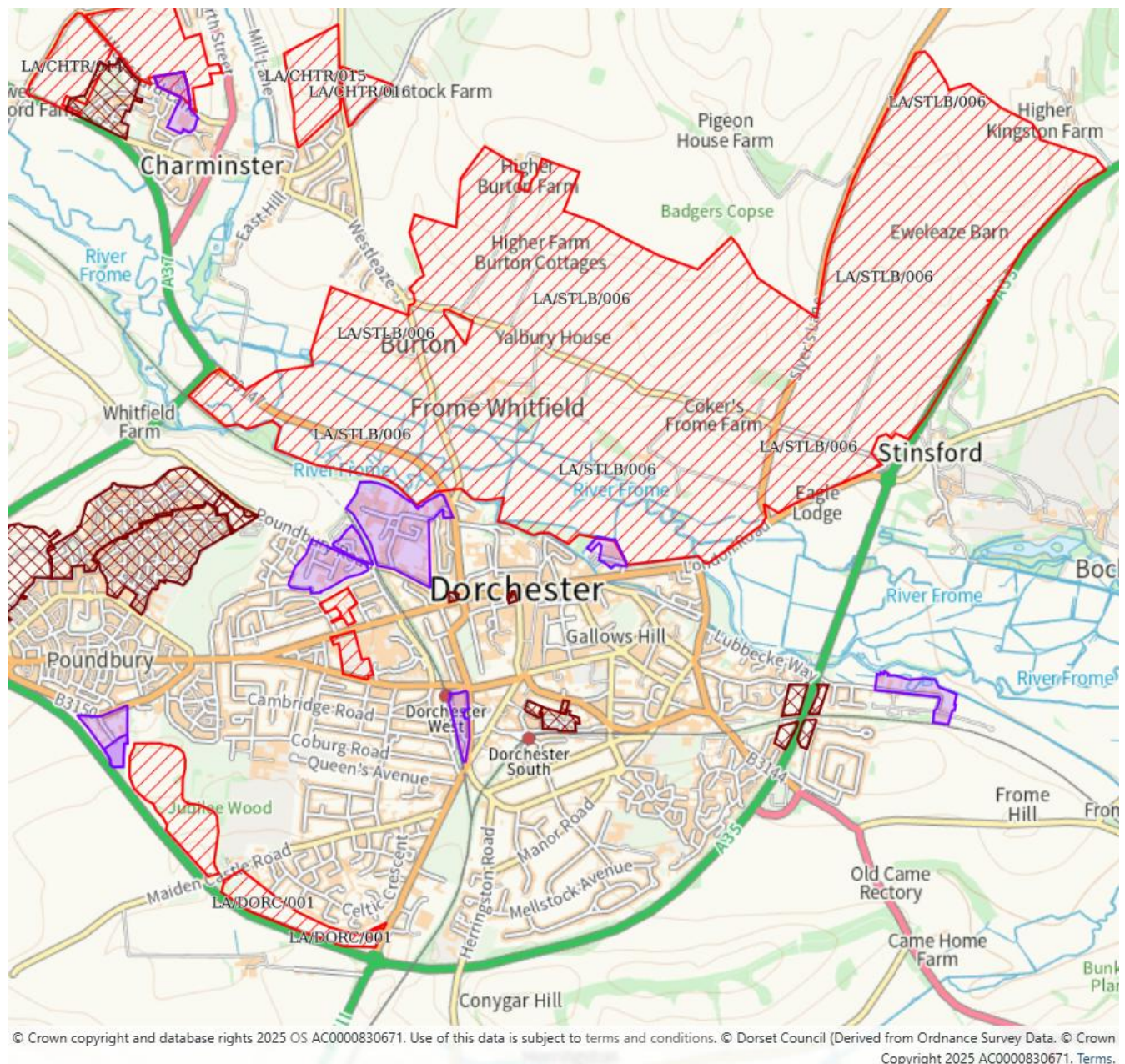
All of the sites have the potential for adverse impacts, with the two sites in Moreton Station having the potential for significant adverse effects due to biodiversity and, in the case of the site north of Moreton Station, being some distance from the services in the village.

The proposed new settlement in Woodsford has the potential for significant harm to biodiversity, landscape and heritage, as well as resulting in the loss of a large area of high grade agricultural land. Without further details there is little certainty that it can deliver an appropriate balance of jobs, facilities and infrastructure to create a reasonable degree of self-containment, and avoid creating high levels of car-borne traffic on the local highway network, which cannot readily be absorbed.

The potential development of the sites immediately adjoining the village (CROS/002 and CROS/004) provide the most sustainable option for growth in this location, and if these were to include a mix of

uses could also enhance local services / facilities. However, in both cases connections to the railway station are poor, and further consideration of the cumulative impact of the additional traffic on the wider highways network will be required. In particular, there are a number of pinchpoints on the local highway network (which is not A-road standard) where highway safety issues are known to exist, and the current road safety records are insufficient to judge the safety of the highway network.

## DORCHESTER – NORTH DORCHESTER GARDEN COMMUNITY PROPOSALS



### **Impact on biodiversity**

The site includes the watermeadows of the River Frome (which becomes a designated SSSI to the east of Greys's bridge). There are pockets of deciduous woodland across the area. The Lower reaches of the From in this area are of poor ecological status. Whilst development can be planned to avoid directly impacting on these habitats, there will inevitable be indirect impacts from human disturbance, waste and light pollution.

The area lies within the catchment of Poole Harbour. As such there are also indirect impacts on this internationally important site that will require mitigation.

Given the scale of the site, and predominant agricultural use, there is likely to be reasonable scope to achieve on-site biodiversity net gain in this location.



### *Loss of productive farmland*

The area north of Dorchester falls within the highest classification – i.e. that there is a high likelihood that more than 60% of the land is considered amongst the best and most versatile farmland. The regional ALC map suggests this would be both Grade 2 (on land to the east) and Grade 3(a).

### *Potential for pollution*

The site lies within an area of groundwater vulnerability, either categorised as medium-high or high vulnerability. A significant part of the site stretching from the A35 Stinsford roundabout to Cokers Frome Farm is the highest risk area for Groundwater Source protection, with land further north and to the west falling within the outer protection area. The River Frome is also classified as being of poor ecological quality with regard to the section of the waterbody to the north side of the town. As a result any additional pollution into the groundwater or discharging into the stream will be likely to have a significant adverse impact.

Whilst Dorchester High Street no longer meets the threshold for an AQMA designation, this was only lifted as recently as 2025, and the failure to deliver adequate transport infrastructure could give rise to significant impacts within this area. There is no monitoring site close to the Stinsford roundabout.

### *Sustainable transport opportunities*

The site is some distance from the railway station in central Dorchester, and is not currently served by public transport (the nearest serviced stop would be on the A35 at Stinsford), or cycle routes (the NCN26 being the nearest such route, which runs along the C12 through to Charminster).

There are two key issues regarding connectivity – the provision of a highway connecting around the north side of the town, to ensure that trips arising from the development do not overload the existing Dorchester bypass (which is already experiencing significant delays at local peak times as well as during the summer period, including significant queuing along the London Road / Stinsford Hill backing up to Greys Bridge), and the need for good connections into the town for pedestrian cyclists and public transport in order that these local trips do not result in high levels of increased traffic.

The masterplan is suggesting a new primary vehicular route connecting from the A35 through the site and crossing the C12 to link with the A37 via the B3147, along with a package of mitigation measures at junctions in and around the town to minimise the impact on the strategic road network and local roads. This is important to ensure that trips arising from the development do not overload the existing Dorchester bypass (which is already experiencing significant delays at local peak times as well as during the summer period, including significant queuing along the London Road / Stinsford Hill backing up to Greys Bridge), and associated movements through the historic town centre. There is no clarity on the volume of traffic that this new route is expected to accommodate (despite modelling work commissioned by the Dorset LEP that was expected to be available February / March 2021), and what other measures may be needed. The draft LTP provides no additional clarification on or costings for these points. It is also unclear whether such a route planned through the centre would end up blighting the centre of the garden community, and undermining its credentials. The link would also cross the C12 (indicated just north of Burton) but its connection on to the B3147 is particularly difficult given the flood plain (approximately 350m wide at this point) and proximity to the Grade 1 Listed Wolfeston House to the west. Access onto the A35 near Stinsford may also be problematic given the single carriageway status of this section, and relationship with Kingston Maurward and the Grade II\* parkland.

There is no detail on the public transport plans for the site, and whether these would need to be subsidised. Given that the routes are likely to be dependent on the existing highway network, there will be no obvious advantage for many residents to switch to this mode of transport.

Likewise any active travel route into Dorchester will need to cross the floodplain, and is unlikely to provide a safe and attractive option outside of daylight hours. The masterplan indicates only one such route being provided, and given the distance is unlikely to encourage a significant shift to walking and cycling for residents wishing to travel into Dorchester to visit the town centre or employment areas.

### *Flood risk*

A significant proportion of the site (in the region of 25%) is within a flood risk area. Whilst it should be possible to avoid development in this flood risk zone, and include measures within the site to effective

deal with surface water run-off, there are still issues relating to how the infrastructure elements that will need to cross the flood plain can be accommodated without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

### *Landscape and character*

The Dorset National Landscape wraps around the town, and the site would be visible as an extension to the town when viewed from the ridgeway to the south, including from Maiden Castle, the South Winterbourne Valley and the Frome floodplain. Previous studies have concluded that the site is of moderate-high landscape sensitivity, given its sloping landform, sense of openness and unsettled character, strong intervisibility with Dorchester and role in the rural setting of the town. Whilst it may be possible to reduce such impacts through using landscaping, design and the topography, the extent of additional lighting, noise / disturbance and infrastructure requirements are clearly going to have a significant adverse impact.

### *Heritage impacts*

The area has significant historic interest. Of particular note is its cultural association with Hardy's works, including the River Frome water meadows, Grey's Bridge (now listed) and Ten Hatch Weir, amongst others; as well as the potential pre-historic significance of the area, and the potential for high adverse impacts on a number of the Listed bridges, and medium to high adverse impacts on the setting of Poundbury Camp and the Conservation Area, as well as intervisibility with Maiden Castle.

The link road proposals also have the potential for adverse impacts on the setting of the Grade 1 Listed Wolfeston House to the west, and Kingston Maurward and the Grade II\* parkland to the east.

### *Access to local facilities and job opportunities*

The masterplan suggests that ~ 8ha of land could be provided as new employment area. This equates to an approximate ratio of just under 7sqm/dwelling, which is below the current ratio for the town (9sqm/dwelling) and well below the recommended density of 15sqm/dwelling.

There has been no attempt to quantify the loss of the County Showground in terms of its wider economic impact, nor the extent to which the failure to deliver adequate transport infrastructure as a result of the environmental sensitivity of the area and associated costs may impact on the wider economy.

Whilst some community facilities are proposed to be provided within the development (a new school campus is proposed as part of the masterplan to cater for first, middle and upper levels, additional sports pitches and green infrastructure, local convenience retail space; additional healthcare provision in a form that meets the needs of the Dorset CCG and Dorset Council Adult Social Care; flexible community meeting space, a cemetery and a household waste recycling site), the level of provision has not been clarified through the masterplanning process.

The suggested score therefore seeks to reflect the uncertainty and potential to have a greater adverse impact on the economy as currently planned.

DCLP Options Stage Site Assessment Overview	STLB 6
Site size (ha)	433.9
Quantum (homes)	3,500
Employment likely (>300 units)	✓
Impact on biodiversity	--
Loss of productive farmland	--
Potential for pollution	- ?
Sustainable transport	-- ?
Flood risk	- ?
Landscape and character	--
Heritage impacts	--
Access to facilities and jobs	- ?

## Overview

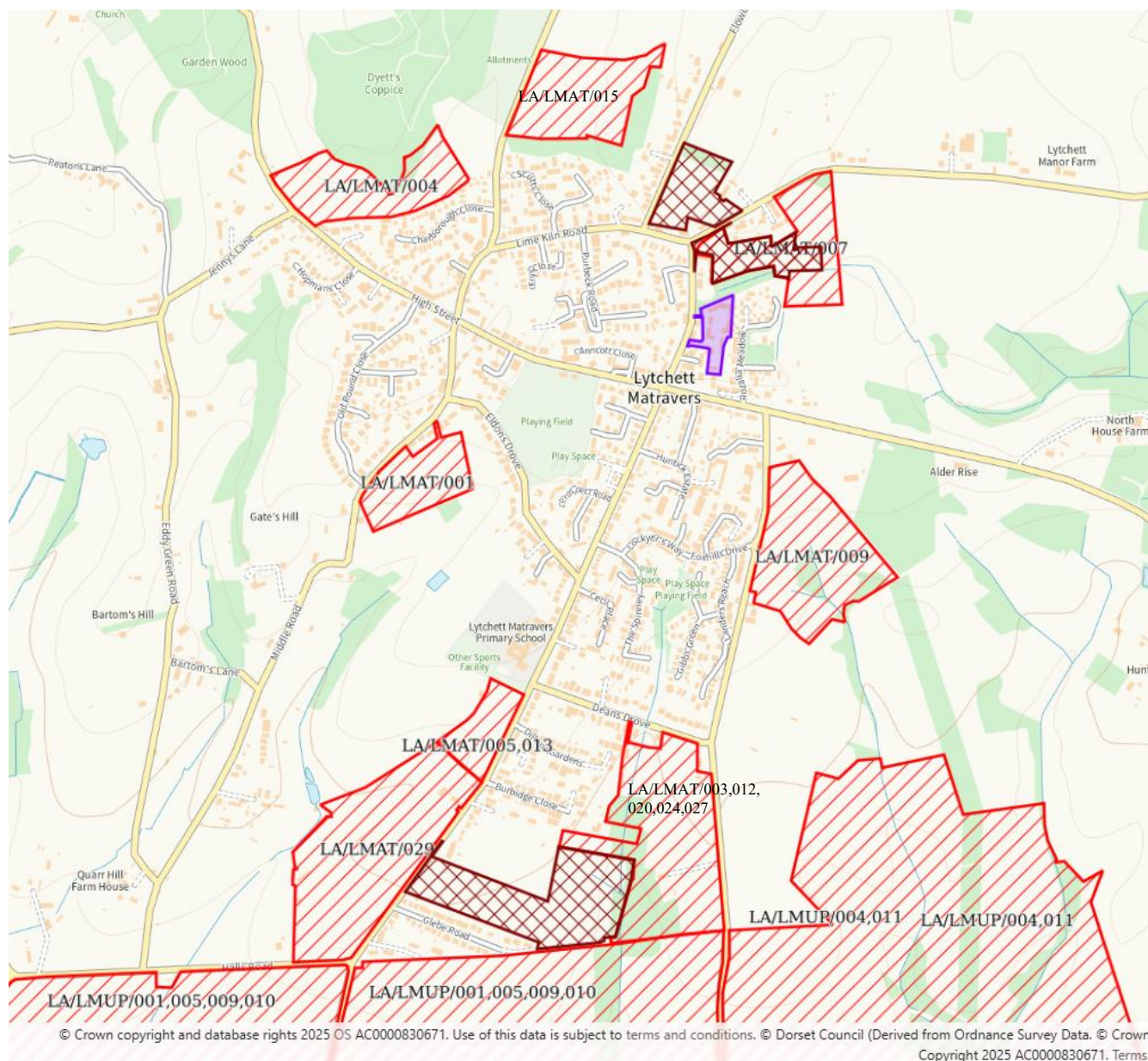
Whilst development of a 'garden community' of this scale has the potential to deliver a significant number of new homes and associated jobs and services, it remains deeply concerning that there is little evidence regarding the deliverability of the community and how the relative adverse impacts can be successfully mitigated.

The development would be highly damaging to the town and its rural surrounds. There would be significant landscape and heritage impacts from the proposed development, as well as loss of valuable farmland. The scale and mass of the development will fundamentally change the character of the town and its setting.

There are inherent difficulties in providing good transport connections given the site's relationship with the town and the intervening watermeadows. Without a clear plan to address this barrier to connectivity, it is likely that the development would lead to more car-borne traffic. Furthermore, the creation of new infrastructure across the watermeadows, in addition to the potential for increased run-off, could cause additional impacts in relation to localised flooding that are not clearly understood at this stage.

There is no published evidence on this matter despite Dorset Council and its predecessor having funding awarded to explore these critical issues. The previous Halcrow assessment made clear that the scale of development proposed would not fund the necessary infrastructure. Site viability has not been addressed in the latest masterplanning study.

## LYTCHETT MATRAVERS VILLAGE



### **Impact on biodiversity**

The area lies within the buffer zone relating to protected heathlands that can be found between 2½ - 3km to the south and east of the village, as well as within the catchment of Poole Harbour. As such there is potential for development in this location to have indirect impacts on these internationally important sites that will require mitigation. For this reason all sites score negatively.

There are deciduous woodlands in the area, including parts of LMAT/009 and LMAT/003/012+. Both LMAT/004 and LMAT/015 abut these priority habitats, and Dyetts Coppice (adjoining LMAT/004) is classified as an ancient woodland. Although a buffer area could be included, development in these locations would still be likely to result in a degree of disturbance and associated harm. LMAT/007 is bisected by a chalk stream, which is part of the existing ecological network and its ecological quality is vulnerable to pollution risks. The Sherford River and related water bodies are of moderate ecological status.

### **Loss of productive farmland**

The strategic ALC map indicates the land around the village is Grade 3 farmland, with the easternmost edge of LMAT/009 potentially Grade 4. The predictive BMV map identifies land to the north side of the village (including LMAT004 and LMAT/015) as having the highest probability of containing the best and most versatile farmland (>60%), with land to the south and east having moderate likelihood of



containing such sites. The scale of loss is relatively small given the site sizes, although much more significant when assessing the cumulative impact.

### **Potential for pollution**

The north side of the village falls within the catchment of a source protection zone, albeit outside of the inner and outer protection areas.

### **Sustainable transport opportunities**

Lytchett Matravers does not lie on the main road network. The A350 is just under 1 mile to the north-east via the C26 Wimborne Road, the A35 about 1 mile to the south via the C26 Wareham Road, and the A31(T) can be reached via the C63 Colehill Road over a distance of about 3 miles. There are also other more minor rural lanes connecting out of the village in many directions, creating the possibility of rat-running to avoid known congestion spots. The nearest town centre is Poole, a journey of about 7 miles. The latest collision data indicates a slight clustering of accidents at both of the key junctions (Wimborne Road and A350, and Wareham Road and A35 staggered junction), which is likely to increase with additional traffic, queuing and driver frustration.

There is no local rail station / service, the nearest being Holton Heath and Poole.

There is a regular bus service that runs to and from Poole (Morebus 10), with a frequency ranging from between 1 – 2 hours. Whilst this would be able to cater for some journeys to work into Poole (via Upton and Wessex Gate and on to Poole Bus Station), there is currently no service on Sundays or into the evenings. There are also no direct connections to the trading estate and rail holt at Holton Heath or to other towns in the area. Taking the centre point of each site, and assumption that the existing bus route would not be altered (although new stops may be added), most of the sites are within reasonable walking distance with the exception of LMAT/003/012+ which would require a more direct route to Wareham Road through third party land to make the walking distance reasonable.

There are no dedicated off-road cycle routes in the area connecting to other settlements. There is a short section of shared cycleway on the C26 leading to Huntick Green, but not extending beyond Foxhills Road.

The footways in and around the village are sporadic, with the main routes within the village having a pavement (albeit only on one side) and many of the more minor, historic routes having no footway. Due to the haphazard nature of on-street parking, some areas such as on the High Street near the shops, and at the school, and also in older parts of the village where homes were built without parking and limited pavements, can also give rise to highway safety concerns. LMAT/001 would be accessed off Middle Road, which has few pavements. There are no obvious opportunities to link directly to Eldon's Drove and the recreation ground, which would provide a safer route through to the village centre. LMAT/003/012+ would be likely to be accessed from Foxhills Road, although access onto Deans Drove may be possible. The former is narrow with no pavements, and the latter also has no pavements. LMAT/004 could be accessed off either Colehill Road or Castle Farm Road, but in both cases the road is relatively narrow with no footway, and there appear to be little scope for such provision to be made. LMAT/015 would also access onto Castle Farm Road.

The sites to the north-west of the village (LMAT/004 and LMAT/015) would lie beyond the acceptable walking distance for journeys to school (1km) and those to the south (LMAT/003/012+ and LMAT/026/029) would be beyond the maximum suggested walking distance for shopping (800m).

Given the above, it is unlikely that development of these sites could result in a significant shift away from the use of the private car for the majority of trips, and that due to safety concerns some localised trips are also likely to be car-based. There are no specific proposals for improvements to transport infrastructure for this area currently included in the draft LTP implementation plan.

There are aspirations in the Neighbourhood Plan to designate a network of Quiet Lanes around the village, recognising their recreational use by more vulnerable road users, and to provide a dedicated cycle lane linking from the village to the secondary school in Lytchett Minster. LMAT/009 could provide an opportunity to develop the first section of a suitable off-road link via the bridleway network, although this would require further investigation of its feasibility and costs.



### ***Flood risk***

Lytchett Matravers lies on a ridge, with many incised chalk valleys emanating from intermittent springs in and around the village. The flood risk maps indicate the complexity of groundwater flows in the area, which are not well understood and have in places been ignored by past developments. This includes the potential for overland flows through a number of the sites: LMAT/001, LMAT/007, LMAT/009 and LMAT/026/029, that would limit their potential development capacity, as well as impacting on the use of infiltration for dealing with rainfall. In most cases there is no development directly downstream of any overland flows from these sites, and therefore subject to the adoption of a suitable drainage strategy, significant harm should be avoidable. However close attention will need to be paid to the downstream impacts where the watercourses converge around the Baker's Arms roundabout, where the flooding issues become much more complex (please refer to Flood Risk in South Lytchett new settlement proposals).

### ***Landscape and character***

All of the sites are rural in nature and contribute to the area's rural character.

Key local characteristics of Lytchett Matravers, as noted in the adopted Townscape Appraisal, are the wooded valleys that reach into the village and provide views and connections out to the surrounding countryside, and rural character of many of the lanes. The following sites would impact on these key characteristics: LMAT/001; LMAT/003/012+, LMAT/004, LMAT/007 (to a lesser degree, with reference to the valley in the southern section of the site), LMAT/009 (to a slight degree, although this valley is less marked).

The village lies within the South East Dorset Green Belt. Those sites extending further away from the village within open countryside would result in a higher degree of harm to the openness of the Green Belt – this would apply to LMAT/015 to the north, and those sites extending to furthest to the south (LMAT/003/012+ and LMAT/026/29). Further consideration of harm to the function of the Green Belt would be needed in relation to the cumulative impact should the proposals for a new settlement to the south and south-east be taken forward.

### ***Heritage impacts***

The village does not contain a Conservation Area, although there are a number of Listed Buildings scattered across the village. The Grade I Listed Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin lies outside of and separate from the village by an extensive area of woodland. Its location here links to the nearby Manor House - the current Manor House is a non-designated heritage asset, dating from c19 and thought to be built on and possibly to incorporate part of a medieval manor house. The scheduled hillfort at Bulbury Camp (visible as earthworks and cropmarks on aerial photographs, and described as "much less prominent than most other hillforts" in Dorset) lies some distance to the south-west and is not clearly intervisible with the village due to its condition, situation and the intervening landscape. These heritage assets are not likely to be harmed by the development of the proposed opportunity sites.

The Grade II Listed Rat's Castle adjoins LMAT/004, which would form part of its rural setting, although the extent to which development would impact on its significance may be limited given its approach from Hopkins Lane.

Most of the sites have potential for archaeological interest as part of medieval field systems etc, although this is unlikely to be of a significance to prevent their development.

### ***Access to local facilities and job opportunities***

There is a reasonable range of local services in the village, including a primary school, a range of local meeting venues / recreation areas, a local library, a local convenience store, GP surgery and pharmacy. There is a small business estate off the Wareham Road (Freeland Park), albeit that this does not accommodate general industry. There is no secondary school.

The bus service would enable journeys to work into Poole.

A number of the sites have the potential to accommodate some employment and/or enhanced community facilities to improve access to local facilities and job opportunities, but fall below the suggested threshold of 300 homes. These are most likely to be successful located where there would be good road access and connection to the A35 or A350, avoiding the need to pass through the

village centre or via the network of narrow rural lanes (i.e. LMAT/005/013, LMAT/007, LMAT/009, and LMAT/026/029). Consideration will also need to be given to the scale of growth and capacity at the school (and whether it can expand on site) and active travel links to the secondary school in Lytchett Minster.

SA Objective	LMAT 1	LMAT 3,12+ <sup>5</sup>	LMAT 4	LMAT 5, 13	LMAT 7	LMAT 9	LMAT 15	LMAT 26, 29	ALL
Site size (ha)	2.6	7.8	3.8	1.6	3.9	6.1	4.0	8.9	38.7
Quantum (homes)	41	69	36	39	35	48	54	150	472
Employment likely (>300 units)									
Impact on biodiversity	–	– –	– – ?	–	– – ?	– –	– – ?	–	– –
Loss of productive farmland	– ?	– ?	–	– ?	– ?	– ?	–	– ?	–
Potential for pollution	0	0	– ?	0	– ?	0	– ?	0	
Sustainable transport	– – ?	– –	– –	– – ?	–	–	– –	– – ?	– –
Flood risk	–	– ?	– ?	– ?	–	–	– ?	–	–
Landscape and character	– – ?	– – ?	– – ?	– ?	– ?	– ?	– – ?	– – ?	– – ?
Heritage impacts	– – ?	– ?	– ?	– ?	– ?	– ?	– ?	– ?	– ?
Access to facilities and jobs	0	0	0	+ ?	+ ?	+ ?	0	+ ?	+ ?

### Overview

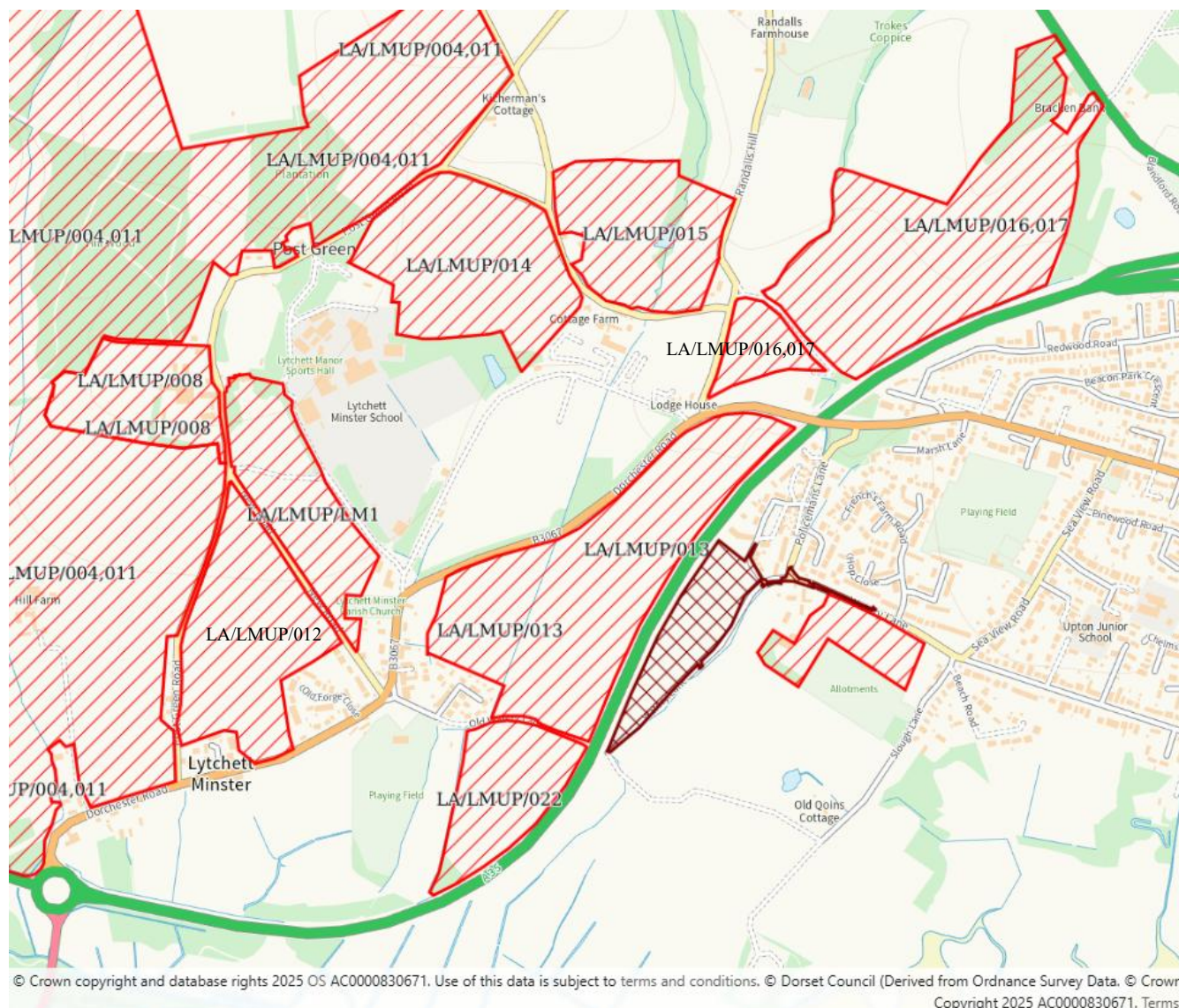
All of the sites have the potential for significant adverse impacts.

Cumulatively, the main adverse impacts of development in this location relate to biodiversity, sustainable transport and landscape / character. The network of deciduous woodlands and chalk stream environments around the village would need to be avoided through the incorporation of suitable buffer zones within a number of the sites, and further mitigation provided in order to achieve net gain, which may substantially impact on the scale of development that can be accommodated. The lack of sustainable transport opportunities, which cannot readily be mitigated (whilst there is clearly scope to improve the bus service and cycle links, this is unlikely to achieve a meaningful shift away from car use), highlight the need for any development to contribute to a more sustainable mix of uses to promote greater self-containment, and also the need to further investigate the junction safety where collisions have been recorded. The impact on the character of the settlement and role of the Green Belt also has the potential for significant harm at this scale of growth.

The development of the site adjoining the school (LMAT/005/13) and the northern portion of the site on Wimborne Road (LMAT/007) provide the most sustainable and least harmful options, to some extent 'rounding off' the village. There may be some scope for development within land to the east off Huntick Road (LMAT/009) and extending further south along the Wareham Road opposite the current allocated site (LMAT/026/029) but these sites are much more sensitive and less well connected into the village. However, these could provide greater scope to achieve a better mix of uses and increase the sustainability of the village and help reverse its 'dormitory' nature. The remaining sites all have the potential to cause significant harm across a range of sustainability objectives and should not be progressed.

<sup>5</sup> LA/LMAT/003,012,020,024,027

## LYTCHETT MINSTER VILLAGE



### **Impact on biodiversity**

The village of Lytchett Minster lies between protected heathlands at Holton Heath and Upton Heath, as well as within the catchment of Poole Harbour (with the SSSI bordering the A350 to the south). As such there is potential for development in this location to have indirect impacts on these internationally important sites that will require mitigation. For this reason all sites score negatively. The eastern portion of LMUP/016/017 lies within the 400m buffer zone of Upton Heath, with direct access via the PRow network (footpath SE18/3), which would reduce the ability to have certainty in regard to the success of potential mitigation.

There are a number of deciduous woodlands in the area, particularly around the school, north of Post Green (and Hill Wood is classed as ancient woodland), and north along the watercourse that runs through Pit Bottom. This includes small sections of LMUP/015 and LMUP/016/017, and the eastern edge of LMUP/LM1. The watercourse through LMUP/015 is also part of the wider ecological network, and the pond to the south side of LMUP/014 is of ecological value. The Sherford River and related water bodies are of moderate ecological status.

### **Loss of productive farmland**

The strategic ALC map indicates the land around the village is Grade 3 farmland, with the exception of LMUP/016/017 which is indicated as Grade 4. The predictive BMV map identifies land to the south-east side of the village as having the highest probability of containing the best and most versatile farmland (>60%), with the remaining land having moderate likelihood of containing such sites. The



scale of loss is relatively small given the site sizes, although much more significant when assessing the cumulative impact.

### ***Potential for pollution***

The area does not fall within any source protection zone.

The A35 and, to a less degree, the A350, are significant sources of noise pollution, which without mitigation in the form of noise barriers is likely to penetrate up to 200m from the carriageway, where average noise levels may be expected to exceed 55dB<sup>6</sup>, although this will vary depending on local topography and other factors. This would require mitigation, particularly in relation to the sites adjoining the Upton bypass, and create poorer quality living conditions where it is not possible to sit outside or open windows without an undue level of disturbance.

### ***Sustainable transport opportunities***

The village of Lytchett Minster is accessed via the B3067 Dorchester Road, which connects from the A35 at the Bakers Arms roundabout, and continues onwards to Upton. Randall's Hill (C5) provides an option to connect onto the A350 and from there travel on to the A31(T). The latest collision data indicates a clustering of accidents on the Bakers Arms roundabout, and also just north of the Randalls' Hill junction with the A350 at the signalised junction with Beacon Hill, both of which could increase with additional traffic, queuing and driver frustration.

There is no local rail station / service, the nearest being Holton Heath and Poole.

There is a regular hourly bus service that runs to and from Swanage through Wareham, Lytchett Minster and Upton and then on to Poole (Purbeck Breezer 40) seven days a week. Most of the sites are within reasonable walking distance with the exception of LMUP/016/017 whose centre lies just beyond the 400m catchment.

There are no dedicated off-road cycle routes in the area connecting to other settlements, but the road through the village includes a cycle lane within the carriageway (this becomes a segregated cycleway at the centre of Upton, heading into Poole).

The main route through the village has a pavement (albeit only on one side) but other routes do not have separate footways. The local highway network around the secondary school can become very busy at drop off and collection times.

LMUP/008 and LMUP/014 are some distance from the Dorchester Road (>400m) requiring pedestrians to walk in the road to connect to the local bus service, and consideration should be given to the feasibility of including a separate footway. LMUP/022 would need to be accessed from Old Watery Lane (unless brought forward in conjunction with the site to the north), which is single track at its eastern end and unsuited to any significant increase in vehicle movements, and there is no clear solution as to how this could be mitigated.

All of the sites in the village would lie beyond the acceptable walking distance for journeys to school (1km) for primary-school aged children, and maximum suggested walking distance for shopping (800m).

Given the above, despite the relevantly good bus service and cycle infrastructure, it is unlikely that development in this location would result in a significant shift away from the use of the private car for the majority of trips. There are no specific proposals for improvements to the highway network for this area currently included in the draft LTP implementation plan, although reference is made to the "delivery of a sustainable travel network between South East Dorset and BCP Council area including active travel routes and bus corridor improvements. Programme to include provision of bus priority, segregated active travel infrastructure and traffic management measures. The enhancements seek to reduce road congestion and promote safe, and healthy alternatives to car use, especially for shorter journeys."

### ***Flood risk***

Lytchett Minster lies on the edge of the Poole Harbour flood risk zone, which is known to cause flood risk issues to the Bakers Arms roundabout, and extends north of the Upton bypass to include much of

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.extrium.co.uk/noiseviewer.html>

the land within LMUP/022, the central portion of LMUP/013. These two parcels area also indicated to be susceptible to groundwater flooding, which will further limit the ability to provide sustainable drainage systems. Groundwater flood risk also impacts on most of LMUP/008 and LMUP/LM1, and parts of LMUP/015 and LMUP/016/017.

However close attention will need to be paid to the downstream impacts where the watercourses converge around the Baker's Arms roundabout, where the flooding issues become much more complex (please refer to Flood Risk in South Lytchett new settlement proposals).

### *Landscape and character*

All of the sites are rural in nature and contribute to the area's rural character.

The village lies within the South East Dorset Green Belt. Those sites adjoining the Upton bypass (LMUP/013, LMUP/016/017 and LMUP/022) would be an extension of the existing conurbation, breaching what is a clear boundary preventing urban sprawl. On this ground, their development individually or cumulative would have a significant impact on the function of the Green Belt. Further consideration of harm to the function of the Green Belt would be needed in relation to the cumulative impact should the proposals for a new settlement to the south and south-east be taken forward.

A key local characteristic of the area is its areas of woodland, and parkland character associated with the South Lytchett Manor. The Conservation Area Appraisal<sup>7</sup> notes "The historic parkland remains attractive viewed from various angles both from within and outside its boundaries, with varied compositions of woodland, trees and open spaces the best of which are found within the eighteenth century landscape core. Some key views/vistas are noted on Map 4." Map 4 also indicates the notable open green spaces, including the whole of LMUP/LM1 and LMUP/14.

### *Heritage impacts*

The village includes an extensive Conservation Area, relating to both the historic village (characterised by spaced residential development along main road frontages) and Post Green House and South Lytchett Manor with associated parkland and structures including estate and other buildings. This is described in the Conservation Area Appraisal as "Characterised by a dispersed pattern of development within the context of a designed landscape containing open spaces, drives, woodland, views, vistas and a framework of historic routes". The whole of LMUP/LM1 and LMUP/14 lie within the Conservation Area and their open space contributes significantly to its historic interest. The frontage of LMUP/008 also lies within the Conservation Area and four of the estate buildings within the site make a positive contribution. This site lies opposite the Grade II\* Listed Post Green House. Development of land to the rear would impact on the setting and relative rural isolation of the estate cottages / farm buildings, and as such is also likely to harm their significance, although there may be scope to redevelop some of the existing farm buildings within and outside of the Conservation Area that do not contribute positively to its character. Similarly the development of LMUP/15 has the potential to harm the setting of the Conservation Area and the two Grade II listed buildings (a farmhouse and estate cottage) that adjoin the site. The remaining sites, with the exception of LMUP/22, all adjoin the Conservation Area and have the potential for harm, but it is possible that such harm could be mitigated through careful layout and design. The northern section of LMUP/012 is indicated as within an important view / vista in the Conservation Area appraisal, which suggests that this section of the site should remain free of development. LMUP/22 does not directly adjoin the Conservation Area or any Listed Buildings.

Post Green Lane is noted as a hollow way, and therefore any widening or urbanisation of its character that may be required for highway safety measures would harm this non-designated heritage asset.

Most of the sites have potential for archaeological interest, including as part of medieval field systems etc, although this is unlikely to be of a significance to prevent their development.

### *Access to local facilities and job opportunities*

There are very limited local services in the village, although there is a secondary school and pre-school, and a range of local meeting venues / recreation areas. There is no primary school, no local

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/purbeck-district-council-adopted-conservation-area-appraisals> Lytchett Minster Conservation Area Appraisal Document, September 2008



library, post office, local convenience store, GP surgery or pharmacy. There is a small business estate off Huntick Road (the Courtyard Craft Centre), albeit that this does not accommodate general industry, and could potentially change to residential under permitted development rights.

The bus service would enable journeys to work into Poole and the industrial estate at Holton Heath.

Whilst a number of the sites could potentially accommodate some employment and/or enhanced community facilities to improve access to local facilities and job opportunities, they all fall below the suggested threshold of 300 homes. Those sites most likely to be suitable would be those located with the potential for good access onto Dorchester Road (i.e. LMUP/012 and LMUP/013).

SA Objective	LMUP 8	LMUP 12	LMUP 13	LMUP 14	LMUP 15	LMUP 16,17	LMUP 22	LMUP LM1	ALL
Site size (ha)	5.3	8.9	16.4	10.0	7.4	19.2	5.0	6.3	78.5
Quantum (homes)	96	144	250	140	79	192	77	30	1,008
Employment likely (>300)									
Impact on biodiversity	–	–	–	–	– ?	–	–	– ?	– ?
Loss of productive farmland	– ?	– ?	– ?	– ?	– ?	0	– ?	– ?	– ?
Potential for pollution	0	0	–	0	0	–	–	0	–
Sustainable transport	– ?	–	–	– ?	–	–	– ?	–	– ?
Flood risk	– ?	0	– ?	0	– ?	– ?	–	– ?	– ?
Landscape and character	–	–	–	–	– ?	–	–	–	–
Heritage impacts	– ?	–	–	–	– ?	–	– ?	–	–
Access to facilities and jobs	–	+ ?	+ ?	–	–	–	–	–	– ?

### Overview

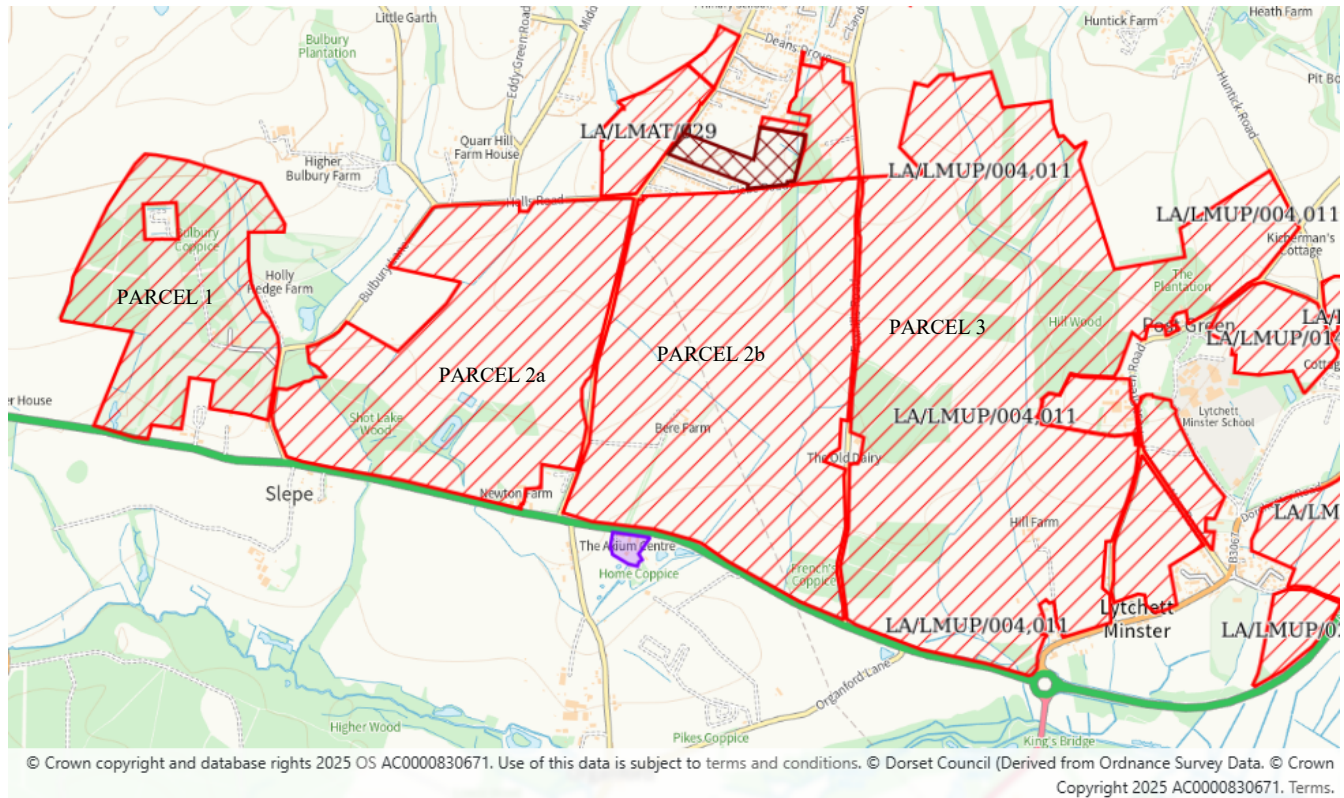
All of the sites have the potential for significant adverse impacts.

The main issues relate to the potential harm to the character of the Conservation Area and related Listed Buildings and non-designated heritage assets, harm to the functioning of the Green Belt in preventing urban sprawl, and flood risk. Cumulatively, these adverse impacts would be significant, and should clearly rule out some of the sites or parts of those where mitigation would not be possible.

The limited facilities also highlight the need to consider the appropriate balance of uses should any sites be taken forward. The bus service and cycle links can be further improved, are unlikely to achieve a meaningful shift away from car use, and therefore further investigation of the highway safety issues at the Baker's Arms roundabout should be undertaken, linked to the flooding issues known to occur, and taking into account the cumulative growth from all of the sites where there will be added traffic through this junction.

The development of the site to the east (LMUP/012) and potentially the easternmost part of LMUP/013 outside of the flood risk zone provide the most sustainable and least harmful options, to some extent 'rounding off' the village, and could provide greater scope to achieve a better mix of uses and increase the sustainability of the village. However issues relating to heritage, groundwater / drainage and wider highway safety (at the Bakers Arms) need further consideration.

## SOUTH LYTCHETT NEW SETTLEMENT PROPOSAL



### **Impact on biodiversity**

The entire area is within easy reach of part of the Dorset heathlands (Holton and Sandford Heaths) that lies to the south side of the A350, as well as within the catchment of Poole Harbour (which also borders the A350 to the south-east). As such there is potential for development in this location to have indirect impacts on these internationally important sites that will require mitigation. The southern portion of parcel 3 lies within the 400m buffer zone of the protected heathland, and whilst there is no public access at this point, there may still be the potential for harm through cat predation unless suitable mitigation can be found or this element of the site excluded.

There are deciduous woodlands in the area. Parcel 1 includes two substantial areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland. The southern portion of parcel 2a includes a significant area of priority woodland habitat, including Short Lake Wood, which will limit the developable area in its vicinity. Hill Wood and Cuzenage Coppice are classed as ancient woodland and likely to place moderate limitations on the developable area within parcel 3. The wetter areas linked to the watercourses and ponds also have potential wildlife interest. The Sherford River and related water bodies are of moderate ecological status.

Given the scale of the land parcels and predominant agricultural use, there is likely to be reasonable scope to achieve on-site biodiversity net gain in these locations.

### **Loss of productive farmland**

The strategic ALC map indicates the land to the south side of Lytchett Matravers is Grade 3 farmland, with the exception of parts of parcel 3 which are indicated as Grade 4. The predictive BMV map identifies most of the area as having moderate likelihood of containing such sites.

### **Potential for pollution**

The area does not fall within any source protection zone.

The A35 trunk road is a significant source of noise pollution, which without mitigation in the form of noise barriers is likely to penetrate up to 200m from the carriageway, where average noise levels may be expected to exceed 55dB<sup>8</sup>, although this will vary depending on local topography and other factors.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.extrium.co.uk/noiseviewer.html>

This may limit the potential for residential or other noise-sensitive development along the southern limit of the area.

### **Sustainable transport opportunities**

The site lies on the A35, providing the potential for good access into Poole and the side area. The latest collision data indicates a slight clustering of accidents the Wareham Road and A35 staggered junction, which is likely to increase with additional traffic, queuing and driver frustration.

There is no local rail station / service, the nearest being Holton Heath and Poole.

There is a regular bus service that runs to and from Poole (Morebus 10) via Lytchett Matravers (using the Wareham Road), with a frequency ranging from between 1 – 2 hours. The eastern half of Parcel 2a and eastern portion of Parcel 2b would be within reasonable walking distance, unless the service was re-routed through the development. Whilst this would be able to cater for journeys to work, there is no service on Sundays or into the evenings. This route does not currently connect to the trading estate and rail holt at Holton Heath or to other towns in the area.

There is also a regular hourly bus service that runs to and from Swanage through Wareham, Lytchett Minster and Upton and then on to Poole (Purbeck Breezer 40) seven days a week. Only the southernmost extent of Parcel 3 would be within reasonable walking distance, unless the service was re-routed.

Parcel 1 does not relate to any existing bus routes, and the draft LTP does not propose to introduce a route connecting from Bere Regis to Poole.

There are no dedicated off-road cycle routes in the area connecting to other settlements.

At this stage there is little detail regarding the potential proposals for improving transport infrastructure to serve the new village/s.

### **Flood risk**

The flood risk maps indicate the complexity of groundwater flows in the area. An area related to Short Lake Wood in Parcel 1, and southern extent and central section (relating to the river valley that runs through Hill Farm) are within a flood risk zone relating to those local watercourses. There is also a minor watercourse running north-south within Parcel 2a which is linked to the risk from surface water flooding in this location. Whilst it should be possible to avoid these flood risk areas, their location and extent are likely to influence the layout and use of sustainable drainage systems.

Parcel 3 includes a larger area within the Flood Risk zones 2 and 3 related to the Hill Farm stream (running north – south) and along the A35 (running west – east) converging on the Baker's Arms roundabout. This would suggest that the area closest to the A35 and an area of land through the centre will be unsuitable for built development, and may impact on connections through the site and on to the existing highway network, as well as influencing the layout and use of sustainable drainage systems.

However, the above findings are caveated on the need for further modelling work, particularly in relation to Parcel 3. The Environment Agency commissioned a report in 2016, known as the Lytchett Minster Flood Risk Study, to review the sources of flooding in this area<sup>9</sup>. The study concluded that:

*“The information available indicates that there is a direct flood risk from extreme tidal water levels in Poole Harbour/Lytchett Bay that effects lower lying areas to the south of the village and which frequently affects the Baker's Arms Roundabout. Furthermore, the assessment has highlighted that high water levels have an impact upstream of King's Bridge on Sherford River and a substantial way upstream on Hill Farm Stream, as well as other Ordinary Watercourses nearby. This impact is compounded by a lack of flow capacity in a number of structures, particularly those beneath the A35,*

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<sup>9</sup> JACOBS Poole Harbour Habitat Creation - Environment Agency - Lytchett Minster Flood Risk Study, IMSW002 130, October 2016. The report does not appear to have been published online but was shared with the former Purbeck District Council and referenced in the Purbeck Local Plan examination papers  
<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/286451/council-response-matter-f-final-web.pdf/19fd69af-8dd8-9cfe-3e80-9a7cad9f1a2d>

*and that, in combination, this contributes towards an increase in flood risk when there is heavy rain and a greater response from the catchments north and west of the village.”*

*“It has also been identified that there are capacity restrictions at structures on Lytchett Minster Stream and Lytchett Minster Drain that contribute towards flooding in the village and which are exacerbated by high tides. It is difficult to distinguish the source of risk from these Ordinary Watercourses, as the surface water flood risk is indistinguishable from the fluvial flood risk because the mechanisms and drivers are essentially the same.”*

*“The assessment has identified that groundwater is a local source of flooding where there is emergence of water at the boundary of the Lytchett Matravers Sand Member and the underlying London Clay. This is known to have affected at least two properties on Dorchester Road and it is possible that it is a local influence on flood risk from other sources in places from shallow groundwater.”*

*“Analysis of historical flooding events and of the hydrometric records suggests that the principal risks come from a combination of sources.”*

*“Whilst there is an existing risk from Ordinary Watercourses and tidal flooding, the impact of climate change is expected to change the balance, such that tidal flooding becomes the principal source of flood risk. This process will have gathered significant momentum such that the risk from tidal sources starts to increase significantly post 2030 and within the next 100 years, there will be significant numbers of properties that are at tidal flood risk from events as frequent as the 1 in 1 year flood.”*

It goes on to recommend considering the need for more accurate modelling, in particular to provide a fuller understanding of the impacts of future climate change, estuary evolution and potentially new development on flood risk to existing properties and infrastructure, given that the existing modelling “is not suitable in its current form to assess the complex effects of climate change and other factors affecting flood risk.”

It is therefore somewhat surprising to note that there is no reference to this in the latest Dorset Council SFRA, and that the additional modelling undertaken in relation to climate change and the main river / coastal network does not include the Sherford River and Poole Harbour area.

### **Landscape and character**

The area lies within the South East Dorset Green Belt. Given the scale of development proposed and its relationships with the nearby settlements of Lytchett Matravers and Lytchett Minster, development in this area of this scale would result in a high degree of harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

Most of this area falls within the rolling wooded pasture landscape character area. This is notable for:

- mainly a pastoral landscape with some arable on flatter land;
- many small villages linked by winding hedge lined lanes;
- undulating, low and rolling hills with an irregular patchwork of pasture, woods and hedgerows;
- small scale, intimate and enclosed mosaic landscape;
- views limited by dense hedgerows and many small woods and copses;
- small patches of heath and/or unimproved grassland;
- dense small woods of oak, ash and birch and hazel coppice.

Whilst it may be possible to mitigate harm to this character through using landscaping, design and the topography, the extent of additional lighting, noise / disturbance and infrastructure requirements are clearly going to have an adverse impact.

Depending on the extent of development in Parcel 3, the separate nature and character of Lytchett Matravers village could be significantly harmed.

### **Heritage impacts**

The scheduled hillfort at Bulbury Camp (visible as earthworks and cropmarks on aerial photographs, lies partly within and to the north-east of Parcel 1. It is described as “much less prominent than most other hillforts” in Dorset. There are several Grade II Listed buildings on the periphery of Parcel 2a, but depending on the location of development it should be possible to avoid harm to these. Parcel 3 lies on the edge of the Lytchett Minster Conservation area, and the site of several Grade II Listed



buildings, but again depending on the location of development it should be possible to avoid harm to these. The HERS records various historic trackways, drainage ditches and field boundaries, although these are unlikely to be of a significance to prevent their development.

### **Access to local facilities and job opportunities**

At this stage there is little detail regarding the potential proposals for community infrastructure to serve the new village/s, or the expected balance between jobs and homes. On this basis, at this stage, this has been scored as

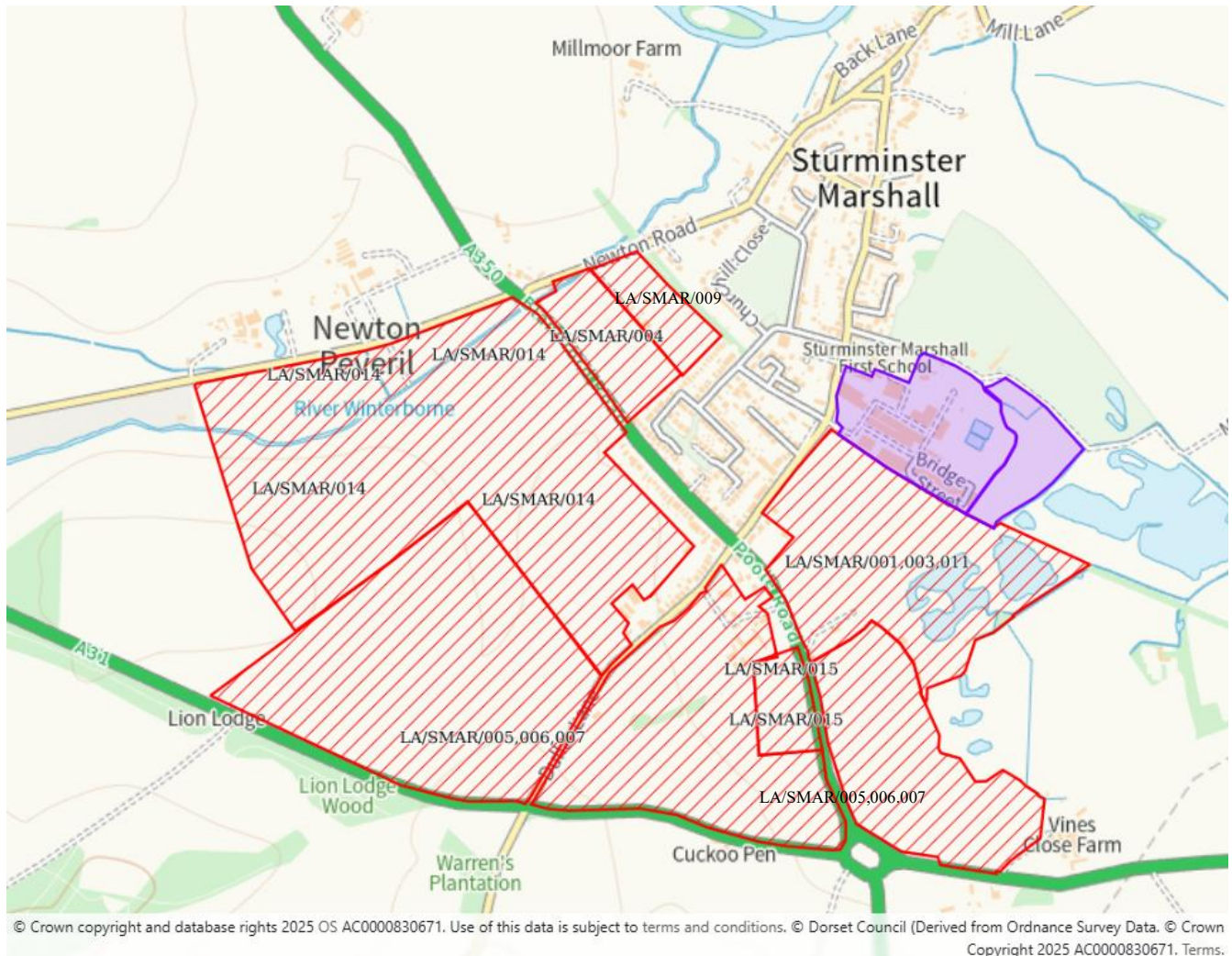
SA Objective	Parcel 1	Parcel 2a	Parcel 2b	Parcel 3	ALL
Site size (ha)		231.4		169.4	400.8
Quantum (homes)		2,718		1,720	4,438
Employment likely		✓		✓	✓
Impact on biodiversity	-- ?	-	-	-- ?	-- ?
Loss of productive farmland	-	-	-	- ?	-- ?
Potential for pollution	- ?	- ?	- ?	- ?	- ?
Sustainable transport	-- ?	-- ?	-- ?	-- ?	-- ?
Flood risk	- ?	- ?	- ?	-- ?	-- ?
Landscape and character	-- ?	-	-	-- ?	-- ?
Heritage impacts	-- ?	- ?	- ?	-- ?	-- ?
Access to facilities and jobs	? ?	? ?	? ?	? ?	? ?

### **Overview**

There is substantial uncertainty at this stage regarding the likely level of harm that would arise, but the review has highlighted potentially significant impacts to biodiversity, heritage and landscape character (including the functioning of the Green Belt). These primarily relate to the westernmost parcel due to its wooded nature, and to the easternmost parcel and its relationship with the historic village of Lytchett Minster and the character of the Conservation Area. The flood risk associated with the southern part of that parcel also suggests that connections to the A35 and relationship of development with the road network may be difficult, and that further flood risk modelling is necessary to inform any development in this area.

On this basis, if the inevitable harm to the Green Belt can be substantiated, the area of search for a new settlement would be better focused within the central two parcels where there is an opportunity to create a community that can connect to the main road network, and retain a significant buffer to the north to reinforce the new community's separation and distinction from the village of Lytchett Matravers, and to the east to avoid encroaching towards Lytchett Minster.

There are significant uncertainties regarding the extent to which the development would provide a reasonable degree of self-containment, and its viability to provide the necessary infrastructure. The 'pull factor' of the conurbation will inevitably lead to increased traffic in that direction, and the highway safety issues relating to access onto the A35 and also further east at the Bakers Arms roundabout will need further investigation and mitigation, and potential for wider active travel (cycle route) connections to the nearby settlements and connecting to the industrial estate and railway holt at Holton Heath.



### ***Impact on biodiversity***

There are a number of deciduous woodlands in the area, but not within any of the sites. The wetter areas have potential wildlife interest, such as the ponds at SMAR/001,003,011 and floodplain grazing marsh adjoining to the east, which would need to be protected and would limit the site capacity and developable area, and the railway corridor to the northern edge is recognised as part of the areas' existing ecological network. Site SMAR/014 contains the River Winterborne, which also forms part of the existing ecological network. The North Winterborne and related water bodies are of good ecological status, but the River Stour is of poor ecological status.

The area lies on the outer edge of the 5km buffer zone relating to protected heathlands around Corfe Mullen. As such there are also indirect impacts on these internationally important sites that will require mitigation. For this reason all sites score negatively.

There is likely to be greater scope to achieve on-site biodiversity net gain on the larger sites which are predominantly farmland.

### ***Loss of productive farmland***

The strategic ALC map indicates the sites either side of Dullar Lane and in the area around Dorset Springs is likely to be Grade 2 farmland. The remaining areas are Grade 3, with the exception of land along the River Winterborne which is Grade 4. This is reflected in the predictive BMV map. Such loss would be particularly significant when considered in relation to the larger sites or cumulative impact.

### ***Potential for pollution***

Land to the north-west (including part of SMAR/014) lies within the outer source protection area. SMAR/001,003,011 adjoins an industrial estate on its northern boundary, from which noise and odours could potentially emanate, although this is unlikely to impact across the whole of the site.

### ***Sustainable transport opportunities***

Sturminster Marshall is bisected by the A350, connecting to the nearest town centre in Wimborne some 5½ miles distant and to Poole town centre approximately 8 miles away.

There is no local rail station / service, the nearest being Holton Heath and Poole.

There is a regular hourly bus service that runs to and from Blandford Forum to Poole, connecting through the village on the north side of the A352. There is a reduced service on Sundays. Taking the centre point of each site, and assumption that the existing bus route would not be altered (although new stops may be added), sites SMAR/014 and the eastern parcel of SMAR/005,006,007 are both on the limits of a reasonable walking distance.

There are no dedicated off-road cycle routes in the area connecting to other settlements. There is potential to provide a route along the former railway line, but there is little certainty at this stage that it is deliverable and would require land acquisition.

The footways in and around the village are sporadic, with parts of the A350 having no footway, and problems arising from “rat running” during peak traffic periods due to drivers trying to avoid delays on the A350 and A31. Traffic on the A350 also makes it difficult for pedestrian and cyclists to cross, and causes driver frustration for those turning out and/or crossing the stream of traffic. Due to the haphazard nature of on-street parking, some areas such as near the shops and school and in older parts of the village where homes were built without parking and limited pavements, can also be problematic.

Some elements of SMAR/014 and SMAR/005/006/007 would lie beyond the acceptable walking distance for journeys to school (1km) and maximum suggested walking distance for shopping (800m):

Given the above, it is unlikely that development in this location could result in a significant shift away from the use of the private car for the majority of trips, and that due to safety concerns some localized trips are also likely to be car-based.

There may be opportunities to provide an alternative road access from the A350 to the Industrial Estate if SMAR/001,003,011 was developed, that would reduce congestion in Station Road and create a more pleasant environment for pedestrians and other non-motorised traffic using that route. The railway corridor also runs along the northern edge and a section of this could be delivered as part of any development package, with the potential to link on to Corfe Mullen. SMAR/004 and 005 (together) could also provide potential benefits through linking onto the railway and facilitating a pavement along this stretch of the A350 to link to the existing pavement further to the south.

### ***Flood risk***

Sturminster Marshall is built on natural springs and large parts of the village are in the flood plain. Groundwater flood risk is widespread in and around Sturminster Marshall. There is little published data on groundwater levels and the intermittent springs, and this complicates the understanding of flood risk. Sections of the local highway network are also prone to flooding, which impacts on emergency access and the local economy. SMAR/014 includes a significant area that is subject to river flooding linked to the River Winterbourne, as does the western portions of SMAR/004 and SMAR/009, significantly limiting development their potential capacity.

Almost every site is in an area considered to be potentially susceptible to groundwater flood risk. This limits the ability to provide workable natural solutions relying on infiltration for dealing with rainfall.

### ***Landscape and character***

All of the sites are rural in nature and contribute to the area’s rural character.

Whilst some sites could be considered natural rounding-off in keeping with the village, the village character would be lost if the village were to grow to the equivalent of a small town.

The village lies within the South East Dorset Green Belt. Those sites extending away from the village to the south would result in a higher degree of harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

## Heritage impacts

Sturminster Marshall has a designated Conservation Areas, recognising the historic importance and character of its historic core, but given this is on the northern side of the village none of the proposed sites are likely to impact on its significance.

The Grade II\* Listed Charborough Park lies to the south side of the A31, west of Dullar Lane, and includes the Grade II Listed Lion and Stag Gates. The walled perimeter of the park abuts the A31, and the Lion and Stag Gates are local landmarks, and clearly visible in views. Given the topography and open character of the landscape, it is difficult to envisage how this impact could be mitigated, and significant harm to the setting of these heritage assets avoided, should SMAR/014 and the eastern parcel of SMAR/005,006,007 be developed.

Six Roman ritual pits were found in 1842 containing pottery and animal remains on land to the south-west of SMAR/014. Most of the sites have potential for archaeological interest as part of medieval field systems etc, although this is unlikely to be of a significance to prevent their development.

## Access to local facilities and job opportunities

There is a reasonable range of local services in the village, including a primary school, a range of local meeting venues / recreation areas, two local convenience stores (one with Post Office and pharmacy services). There is a local industrial estate, albeit that evidence shows that the businesses on the estate do not employ a significant number of local residents. There is no GP surgery, local library, or secondary school.

The bus service would enable journeys to work into Poole.

A number of the sites have the potential to accommodate some employment and/or enhanced community facilities to improve access to local facilities and job opportunities. These are most likely to be successful located on or with good connection from the A350. This need not be limited to those sites indicated as having capacity for more than 300 homes, and consideration will need to be given to the scale of growth and capacity at the school (and whether it can expand on site).

SA Objective	SMAR 1,3,11	SMAR 4	SMAR 5,6,7	SMAR 9	SMAR 14	SMAR 15	ALL
Site size (ha)	18.5	4.3	59.7	2.8	43.0	2.4	130.7
Quantum (homes)	225	35	1,000	36	522	43	1,861
Employment likely (>300 units)			✓		✓		✓
Impact on biodiversity	-- ?	-	-	-	-- ?	-	-- ?
Loss of productive farmland	-- ?	-	--	-	-- ?	--	--
Potential for pollution	-	0	0	0	- ?	0	- ?
Sustainable transport	- ?	- ?	-- ?	- ?	-- ?	-	-- ?
Flood risk	-- ?	--	- ?	--	--	- ?	-- ?
Landscape and character	- ?	- ?	-- ?	- ?	-- ?	-- ?	-- ?
Heritage impacts	0	0	-- ?	0	--	0	-- ?
Access to facilities and jobs	+ ?	+ ?	+ ?	0	+ ?	-	+ ?

## Overview

All of the sites have the potential for significant adverse impacts.

Cumulatively, the main adverse impacts of development in this location relate to the loss of productive farmland (a substantial element of which is likely to be Grade 2) and lack of sustainable transport opportunities, which cannot readily be mitigated. There is considerable uncertainty with regard to flood risk and whether there are feasible drainage solutions that can ensure that development will not increase flood risk in the area. The impact on the character of the settlement (in effect whether it would remain a village) and role of the Green Belt also has the potential for significant harm at this scale of growth.

The omission of the site areas that are clearly intervisible with and impact on the setting of Charborough Park (relating to SMAR/014 and SMAR/005,006,007) would be necessary to prevent



harm to this highly important heritage asset. Biodiversity harm should be avoidable subject to the provision of sufficient land for biodiversity net gain and heathland projects (SANG).

The development of the sites to north side of the A350 and avoiding extending the village further east or encroaching into the flood risk area relating to the River Winterborne (the westernmost parts of SMAR/004 and SMAR/009) provide the most sustainable options, and opportunity to both enhance local services / facilities and address some of the local highway / accessibility issues. However this would still require the flood risk issues linked to groundwater to be addressed. There may also be some potential to release land to the south side, but this would need to be limited in its extent, taking account of the settlement form and topography, and address the issues relating to providing good pedestrian / cycle links into the village crossing the busy A350.

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