

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan

SEA Scoping Report

Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

September 2021

Quality information

| Prepared by | Checked by | Verified by | Approved by |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Lauren Egan Graduate Consultant | Ryan Putt Environmental Consultant | Alastair Peattie Associate Director | Nick Chisholm- Batten Associate Director |
| George Hubbard Graduate Consultant | | | |

Revision History

| Revision | Revision date | Details | Authorized | Name | Position |
|----------|------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| V1.0 | 31 st August 2021 | Version for Neighbourhood Group comment | 2 nd September 2021 | Nick Chisholm- Batten | Associate Director |
| V2.0 | 27 th September 2021 | Consultation version | 27 th September 2021 | Nick Chisholm- Batten | Associate Director |

Prepared for:

Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Prepared by:

AECOM Limited
Portwall Place
Portwall Lane
Bristol BS1 6NA
United Kingdom
aecom.com

© 2021 AECOM Limited. All Rights Reserved.

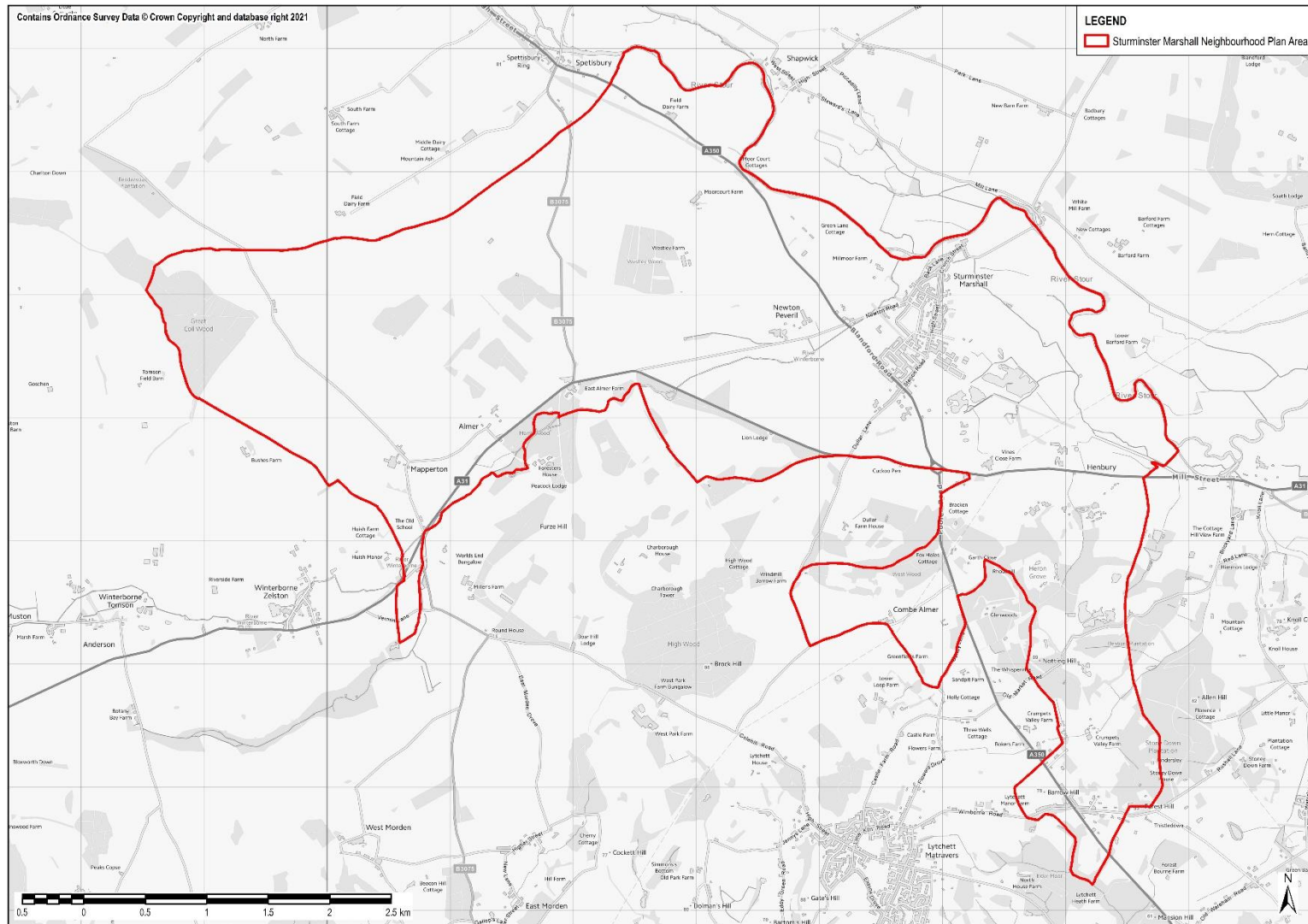
This document has been prepared by AECOM Limited (“AECOM”) for use of Locality (the “Client”) in accordance with generally accepted consultancy principles, the budget for fees and the terms of reference agreed between AECOM and the Client. Any information provided by third parties and referred to herein has not been checked or verified by AECOM, unless otherwise expressly stated in the document. No third party may rely upon this document without the prior and express written agreement of AECOM.

Front cover picture: White Mill Bridge (to the north east of the village), taken from the National Trust website (accessible [here](#))

Table of Contents

| | | |
|-----|---------------------------------------|----|
| 1. | Introduction | 1 |
| 2. | Air Quality | 5 |
| 3. | Biodiversity and Geodiversity | 8 |
| 4. | Climate Change | 15 |
| 5. | Landscape | 25 |
| 6. | Historic Environment | 33 |
| 7. | Land, Soil, and Water Resources | 40 |
| 8. | Population and community | 46 |
| 9. | Health and Wellbeing | 54 |
| 10. | Transportation | 59 |
| 11. | Next steps | 64 |

Figure 1.1 Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan Area



Document Path: I:\5004 - Information Systems\60571087_Neighbourhood_Plan_CRB_2016_2022\02_Maps\Sturminster Marshall NP Steering Group\Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan Area.mxd

1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan (SMNP).
- 1.2 The SMNP is being prepared under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, and in the context of the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan (DCLP). The SMNP area was designated in 2012 and is depicted in **Figure 1.1**. Key facts relating to the SMNP are presented below in **Table 1.1**.

Table 1.1 Key facts relating to the SMNP

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Name of Responsible Authority | Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group |
| Title of Plan | Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan |
| Subject | Neighbourhood planning |
| Purpose | <p>The Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The plan will be in general conformity with the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan (DCLP).</p> <p>The Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan will be used to guide and shape development within the Neighbourhood Plan area.</p> |
| Timescale | 2021- 2038 |
| Area covered by the plan | The Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan area covers the whole parish of Sturminster Marshall (Figure 1.1). |
| Summary of content | The Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan will set out a vision, strategy, and range of policies for the Neighbourhood Plan area. |
| Plan contact point | Alison Clothier, Parish Clerk Email: sturminstermarshall@dorset-aptc.gov.uk |

Planning policy context

- 1.3 The SMNP area lies within the Dorset Unitary Authority and is being prepared in the context of the adopted Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy (2014)¹ and the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan (DCLP), which is expected to be adopted in Spring 2023. Issues and options consultation for the emerging DCLP was undertaken in January 2021.
- 1.4 Sturminster Marshall is described as a ‘larger village’ in the emerging DCLP, which falls within the South Eastern Dorset Functional Area. As shown within Figure 7.3 in the emerging DCLP, the development strategy for Sturminster Marshall is detailed in policies STMR1, STMR2, STMR3 and STRM4, which highlight four key opportunities for development in the area:
- STMR1: Bailie Gate Industrial Estate and its extension (3.3 ha of employment land);
 - STMR2: Land at Station Road (225 new homes);
 - STMR3: Springfield Farm (60 new homes); and
 - STMR4: Sturminster Marshall Golf Course (140 new homes).
- 1.5 Collectively, these policies indicate a total of 425 homes and 3.3ha of employment land provision within Sturminster Marshall up to 2038. Additionally, the supporting text for these policies indicates the following vision for the village:
- *“act as a focal point for smaller settlements nearby and develop its role to provide facilities for everyday needs, including new employment opportunities;*
 - *have development, including housing, that will support its enhanced role; and*
 - *retain a clearly defined edge inset within the Green Belt.”*²
- 1.6 Neighbourhood plans will form part of the development plan for Dorset, alongside, but not as a replacement for the Local Plan. Neighbourhood plans are required to be in general conformity with the Local Plan and can develop policies and proposals to address local place-based issues. In this way it is intended for the Local Plan to provide a clear overall strategic direction for development in Dorset, whilst enabling finer detail to be determined through the neighbourhood planning process where appropriate.

SEA explained

- 1.7 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the potential impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key environmental issues. The aim of SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with

¹ Dorset Council (2014): ‘East Dorset and Christchurch adopted Local Plan’, [online] available to access via: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/adopted-local-plans/east-dorset-and-christchurch-adopted-local-plan>

² Dorset Council (2021): ‘Dorset Council Local Plan January 2021 consultation (Volume 2: South Eastern Dorset)’, [online] available to access via: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/dorset-council-local-plan/about-the-dorset-council-local-plan-january-2021-consultation>

a view to avoiding and mitigating potential negative impacts and maximising the potential for positive effects.

1.8 Through this approach, the SEA for the SMNP seeks to maximise the emerging plan's contribution to sustainable development.

1.9 The SMNP has been screened in as requiring SEA.³ A Neighbourhood Plan requires SEA where it is likely to have significant environmental effects. In this respect, the SMNP has been screened in as requiring an SEA process for the following reasons:

- locations with sensitivity for the historic environment, including nationally designated listed buildings, scheduled monuments, and three conservation areas;
- locations with sensitivity to landscape character, including within the setting of the Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Bournemouth Greenbelt; and
- locations with sensitivity for biodiversity, including nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and buffer zones associated with the Dorset Heathlands Ramsar (and SPA) and Dorset Heaths SAC.

1.10 In light of this screening outcome, an SEA process is being undertaken to meet the specific requirements prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations).

1.11 Two key procedural requirements of the SEA Regulations are that:

- i. When deciding on 'the scope and level of detail of the information' which must be included in the Environmental Report there is a consultation with nationally designated authorities concerned with environmental issues;
- ii. A report (the 'Environmental Report') is published for consultation alongside the Draft Plan (i.e. the draft SMNP) that presents outcomes from the environmental assessment (i.e. discusses 'likely significant effects' that would result from plan implementation) and reasonable alternatives.

1.12 This 'Scoping Report' is concerned with item 'i' above. It presents a suggested scope for the SEA so that the designated authorities (Historic England, Natural England, and the Environment Agency) can provide timely comment.

SEA scoping explained

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

- Exploring the policy context for the SMNP and SEA to summarise the key messages arising.
- Establishing the baseline for the SEA (i.e. the current and future situation in the area in the absence of the SMNP) to help identify the plan's likely significant effects.

³ SEA screening was undertaken in May 2021.

- Identifying particular problems or opportunities ('issues') that should be a particular focus of the SEA; and
- Considering this information to develop a SEA framework comprising SEA objectives and assessment questions, which can then be used as a guiding framework for the subsequent assessment.

1.14 The scope is explored and presented under a series of key environmental themes as follows:

- Air quality
- Biodiversity and geodiversity
- Climate change (including flood risk)
- Landscape
- Historic environment
- Land, soil, and water resources
- Population and community
- Health and wellbeing
- Transportation

1.15 The selected environmental themes incorporate the 'SEA topics' suggested by Annex I (f) of the SEA Directive.⁴ These were refined to reflect a broad understanding of the anticipated scope of plan effects. The discussion of the scoping information for each theme is presented in **Chapters 2 to 10**, and the proposed SEA framework is brought together as a whole in **Appendix A**. Each proposal within the emerging SMNP will be assessed consistently using this framework.

⁴ The SEA Directive (Directive 2001/42/EC) is 'of a procedural nature' (para 9 of the Directive preamble) and does not set out to prescribe particular issues that should and should not be a focus, beyond requiring a focus on 'the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors'

2. Air Quality

Focus of theme

- Air pollution sources
- Air quality hotspots
- Air quality management

Policy Context

2.1 **Table 2.1** below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan.

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

| Document title | Year of publication |
|--|---------------------|
| <u>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</u> | 2021 |
| <u>The Clean Air Strategy</u> | 2019 |
| <u>UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations</u> | 2017 |
| <u>A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment</u> | 2018 |
| <u>Dorset Council Local Plan</u> | 2021 |
| <u>East Dorset and Christchurch Local Plan Part 1- Core Strategy</u> | 2014 |
| <u>East Dorset and Christchurch Local Plan Review</u> | 2019 |

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

- The SMNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which predominantly seeks early planning to reduce/ mitigate air quality impacts in development and to take advantage of opportunities to improve air quality. Measures to improve air quality include traffic and travel management and green infrastructure provision. Strategic development is expected to be focused in locations that have or will be provided with high levels of accessibility; supporting both a reduced need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. Smaller-scale development should consider the potential for cumulative effects in relation to air quality.
- The SMNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the policies of adopted Core Strategy and the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan.
- Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) are declared in areas which exceed national objectives for levels of particulates, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone, benzene, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons,

butadiene, carbon monoxide, lead and/ or nitrogen oxides. Christchurch and East Dorset District Council currently does not have any AQMAs⁵.

- To improve air quality across the UK, national strategies have in the last few decades focused on regulatory frameworks, investment by industry in cleaner processes and a shift in the fuel mix towards cleaner forms of energy (largely at point sources). Whilst there are dedicated strategies to reducing roadside emissions (as a significant source of nitrogen dioxide emissions), recent objectives outlined in the Clean Air Strategy seek to recognise wider sources (including smaller contributors and diffuse sources) that contribute to poor air quality. This includes power generation, heating our homes, producing food, manufacturing consumer goods and powering transport.

Baseline Summary

Current baseline

- 2.3 In line with the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) as set out in Section 82 of the Environment Act (1995), Councils are required to assess Air Quality standards within the region on an annual basis. In this regard, there are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) within Christchurch and East Dorset. Although there are two AQMAs in Dorset - Chideock (along the A35) and High East Street (Dorchester) - neither of these are within close proximity to the Plan area.
- 2.4 Emissions from vehicles are the main source of nitrogen dioxide, and air quality hotspots can arise in areas prone to traffic congestion. The ASR notes that traffic emissions are the most significant source of air pollution within Christchurch and East Dorset District, with large traffic flows at peak times experienced at some points of the A31 trunk road, which runs through the south part of the Plan area. Other roads susceptible to traffic emissions noted by the Plan group are the A350 and Station Road.⁶

Future baseline

- 2.5 Future growth in the SMNP area will ultimately affect the levels of traffic and congestion experienced and in the absence of suitable planning and mitigation this could lead to a deterioration in air quality. However, given the absence of any AQMAs within Christchurch and East Dorset District it is unlikely that this will be significant (providing that suitable mitigation measures are incorporated into the design of new development areas).
- 2.6 Positive planning could also be beneficial for air quality through opportunities to improve accessibility, particularly in terms of active travel and encouraging more local walkable journeys and sustainable connections. This is important in the local context, given the proximity of Sturminster Marshall to the neighbouring towns of Poole and Bournemouth.

⁵ East Dorset District Council (2019): '2019 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR)' [online] available at: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/281348/East+Dorset+Air+Quality+Status+2019.pdf/63e91600-fcf0-9f8e-778d-07467bbdbf6a?version=1.0&t=1619397689949>

⁶ Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan Group (2020): 'Residents Survey 2020 - Summary of Responses' [online] available at: http://www.sturminstermarshall-pc.gov.uk/_UserFiles/Files/Household%20Questionnaire%20Summary.pdf

Key Issues

2.7 Following the consideration of the baseline information and policy context review, the following key issues within the Neighbourhood Plan area are identified in relation to air quality:

- The main pollutant of concern in the SMNP area is nitrogen dioxide and this largely relates to the effects of emissions from vehicles, particularly within areas prone to congestion. The effects of the SMNP in relation to traffic and congestion will be explored under the 'transportation' SEA theme.
- The internationally designated sites for biodiversity within proximity to the SMNP area are also sensitive to air pollution issues. The effects of the SMNP in relation to these concerns will be explored under the 'biodiversity and geodiversity' SEA theme.
- The SMNP presents opportunities to improve accessibility and support more local and sustainable journeys/ connections. These opportunities will be explored under the 'transportation' and 'population and communities' SEA themes.
- Therefore, in the absence of any specific air quality issues (i.e. AQMAs or areas known to exceed national objectives for air quality), the **air quality theme has been scoped out** for the purposes of the SEA process.

3. Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Focus of theme

- Nature conservation designations
- Geological sites
- Priority habitats and species

Policy Context

3.1 **Table 3.1** below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan.

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

| Document title | Year of publication |
|--|---------------------|
| <u>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</u> | 2019 |
| <u>A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment</u> | 2018 |
| <u>Dorset Council Local Plan (DCLP)</u> | 2021 |
| <u>East Dorset and Christchurch Local Plan Part 1- Core Strategy</u> | 2014 |
| <u>East Dorset and Christchurch Local Plan Review</u> | 2019 |

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

- The SMNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which highlights that opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity. This includes utilising a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure at the wider catchment or landscape scale.
- Support is given through the Framework to establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures. Trees notably make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, and that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards).
- Over the past decade policy (e.g. The Natural Environment White Paper and Biodiversity 2020) has demonstrated a move away from the traditional approach of protecting biodiversity, to a wider landscape approach to enhancing biodiversity, as part of the overall aims to halt biodiversity loss. The 25 Year Environment Plan places emphasis on improvements to the natural environment; identifying the need to “replenish depleted soil, plant trees, support wetlands and peatlands, rid seas and rivers of rubbish,

reduce greenhouse gas emissions, cleanse the air of pollutants, develop cleaner, sustainable energy and protect threatened species and habitats.” Working at a landscape scale transformation is expected to connect habitats into larger corridors for wildlife.

- The emerging Environment Bill will provide further provisions in relation to biodiversity when granted royal assent. The Bill will set parameters for biodiversity gain as a condition of planning permission, as well as biodiversity gain site registers and biodiversity credits. The Bill identifies a general duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity, including through biodiversity reports and local nature recovery strategies. Local nature recovery strategies will identify biodiversity priorities for the strategy area as well as a local habitat map. Furthermore, habitat maps are expected to include recovery and enhancement areas which are or could become of importance for biodiversity.
- The SMNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the policies of adopted Core Strategy and the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan.

Baseline Summary

Current baseline

International and nationally designated sites

3.3 There are no internationally designated sites within the Plan area. However, the Dorset Heathlands is located between 200m (two small parcels of land) and 500m (from the south eastern border) of the Plan area. The site was designated in 1998 and had extensive fragmented heathland areas which contain numerous wet heath and acid valley mire habitats which are usually restricted to the Atlantic fringe of Europe. There are also ‘transitions’ to coastal wetland and fen habitat types. The wetland flora and fauna support a number of nationally rare species, as listed below:

- Nationally important plants - Dorset heath, bog orchid, and inundated marsh clubmoss.
- Nationally important birds - Dartford warbler, nightjar, woodlark, hen harrier, merlin.
- Nationally important invertebrates - sundew moth, horse flies, and Blair's wainscot moth.

3.4 Regarding nationally designated sites for biodiversity, whilst there are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) within the Plan area the following sites are within an approximate 2km radius: Corfe Mullen Pastures SSSI (immediately to the south east, and the closest SSSI to the Plan area), Upton Heath SSSI and Poole Harbour SSSI. With further reference to Corfe Mullens Pastures SSSI, the site supports dwarf shrub heath (lowland) habitat, scrub and small copses, and a number of species including willow, downy birch, nightshade and wild strawberry and is in a ‘favourable’ condition.⁷

3.5 The main settlement of Sturminster Marshall is within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for *‘any residential development with a total net gain in residential*

⁷ Natural England (2021): ‘Corfe Mullens Pastures SSSI’ [online] available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=s1006519>

units'. In this respect, new development areas have the potential to adversely impact these sites in the absence of suitable mitigation measures.

- 3.6 In addition to the above sites, there are a number of Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) within the SMNP area. These are detailed in **Table 3.2** below.

Table 3.2 SNCIs in Sturminster Marshall⁸

| Name of SNCI | Area (ha) | Description |
|----------------------------|-----------|---|
| Dullar/West Woods | 4.17 | Mainly deciduous woodland on a sand and clay soil. |
| Elder Moor | 19.66 | A varied area of woodland habitats with a rich flora. |
| Great Coll Wood | 55.50 | Semi-natural deciduous woodland and conifer plantation. |
| Henbury Farm Wood | 1.84 | Semi-natural deciduous woodland. |
| Higher Sandy Coppice | 1.91 | A small acidic oak wood. |
| Rushall House | 1.84 | A small but varied site of acid grassland and heathland habitats. |
| Sturminster Marshall Ponds | 0.06 | A series of ponds with populations of great crested newts. |
| West Wood | 5.54 | Deciduous woodland on an acid soil. |
| Westley Wood | 9.04 | Semi-natural deciduous woodland. |

Locally important sites

- 3.7 Walnut Tree Field Local Nature Reserve (LNR) was designated by East Dorset District Council in 1996 and is situated in Back Lane at the edge of the village. The nature reserve has an unimproved grassland habitat present on site and provides views of the River Stour.⁹ The Walnut Tree is estimated to be almost 300 years old, and has been pollarded in order to encourage new growth and prolong the life of the tree. The LNR is also designated as a scheduled monument. During the construction of the trench and flood bank, many interesting archaeological finds were made, dating back to early Neolithic times. The site appears to have been of some importance throughout the course of history, with finds including Neolithic flint tools, late Saxon period pottery fragments, and a box of animal bones.

⁸ Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan Group (2021): 'Neighbourhood Plan Screening Report'.

⁹ Natural England (n.d.): 'Walnut Tree Field LNR' [online] available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteLNRDetail.aspx?SiteCode=L1009265>

Priority habitats and species

3.8 Additionally, there are a number of priority habitats in the Plan area shown in **Figure 3.2**, including:

- Deciduous woodland - small parcels of land at Almer, Lion Lodge and a large amount of land at Henbury Quarry and at Kindersley.
- Ancient woodland - including Great Coll Wood, Little Coll Wood, Little Almer Wood, Big Almer Wood, Westley Wood.
- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh - particularly at the east part of the Plan area.

Future baseline

3.9 Habitats and species will potentially face increasing pressures from future development within the Neighbourhood Plan area, with the potential for negative impacts on the wider ecological network. This may include a loss of habitats and impacts on biodiversity networks, which may be exacerbated by the effects of climate change. This has the potential to lead to changes in the distribution and abundance of species and changes to the composition of habitats.

3.10 Internationally and nationally designated sites are particularly sensitive to air quality issues and recreational pressures. Regarding air quality, exceeding critical values for air pollutants may result in changes to the chemical status of habitat substrate, accelerating or damaging plant growth, altering vegetation structure and composition and thereby affecting the quality and availability of nesting, feeding or roosting habitats. Additionally, the nature, scale, timing, and duration of some human activities can result in the disturbance of species at a level that may substantially affect their behaviour, and consequently affect the long-term viability of their populations.

3.11 The Neighbourhood Plan presents an opportunity to maximise benefits for biodiversity by including consideration of important habitats, species, and designated sites at an early stage of planning for future growth. To maintain and improve the condition of biodiversity in the future, it will be important to not only protect and enhance important habitats but the connections between them. It will be crucial to effectively coordinate the delivery of housing, employment, and infrastructure to ensure that opportunities to improve green infrastructure and ecological corridors are maximised within the Neighbourhood Plan area and in the surrounding areas.

Key Issues

3.12 Following the consideration of the baseline information and policy context review, the following key issues within the Neighbourhood Plan area are identified in relation to biodiversity and geodiversity:

- There are some parts of the Plan area which overlap with SSSI IRZs and it will therefore be important for planning to avoid impact to these areas wherever possible.
- Several sites within Sturminster Marshall are noted for their locally significant biodiversity offer through the presence of key habitats and species. These areas should be retained and enhanced in development.

- There are a few priority habitats within the SMNP area which should be preserved wherever possible during the development process.
- New development provides opportunities to enhance ecological connections in the Neighbourhood SMNP area and deliver demonstrable biodiversity net gains.

SEA Framework

3.13 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective(s) and assessment question(s).

| SEA Objective | Assessment questions to consider for the allocations / proposals within the SMNP |
|---|---|
| Biodiversity and Geodiversity | |
| Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity | <p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the integrity of the internationally, nationally and locally designated biodiversity sites located within proximity to the Neighbourhood Plan area? • Protect and enhance priority habitats and species? • Achieve biodiversity and environmental net gains and support the delivery of ecosystem services and multifunctional green infrastructure networks? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity? |

Figure 3.1 Designated biodiversity sites

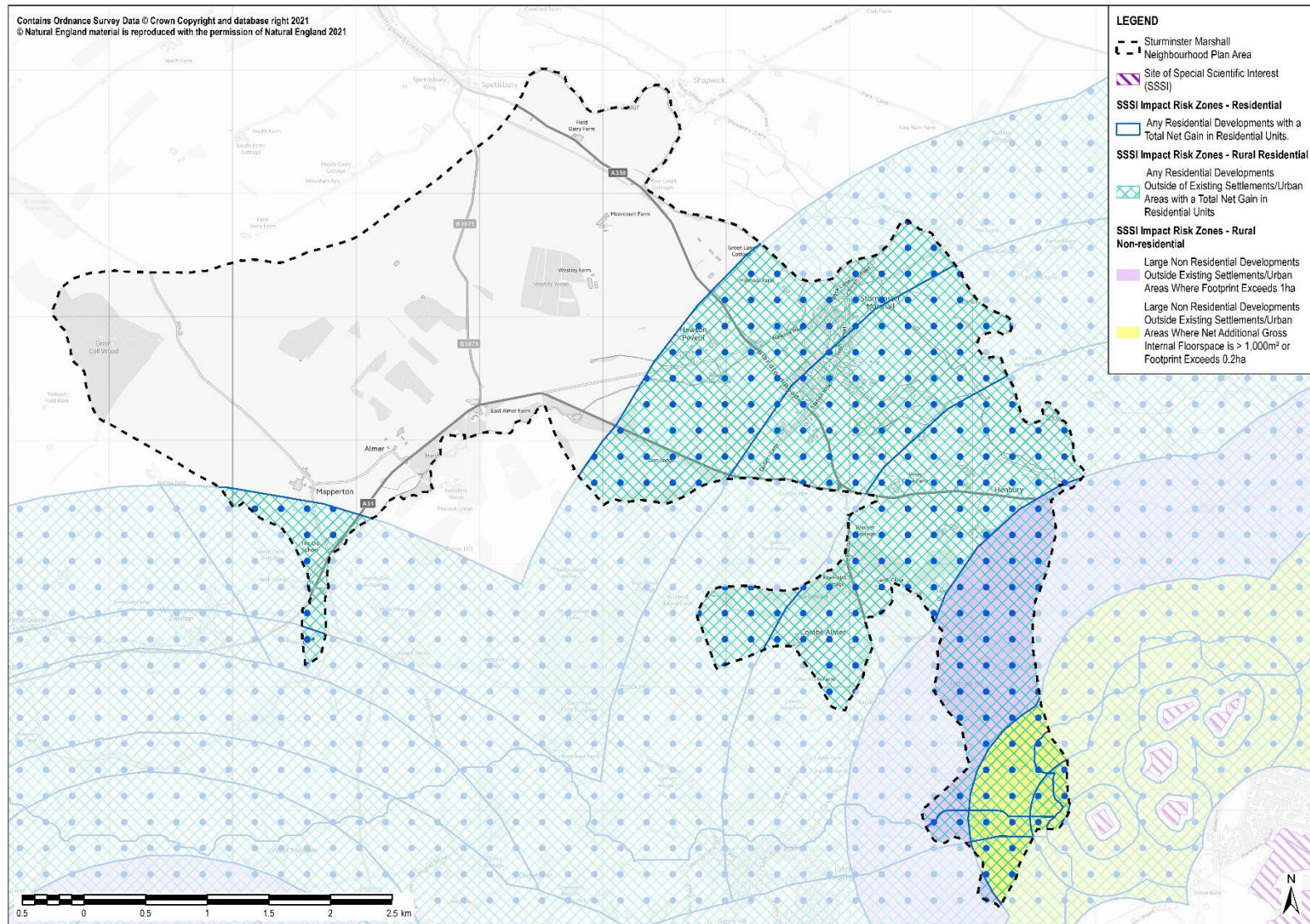
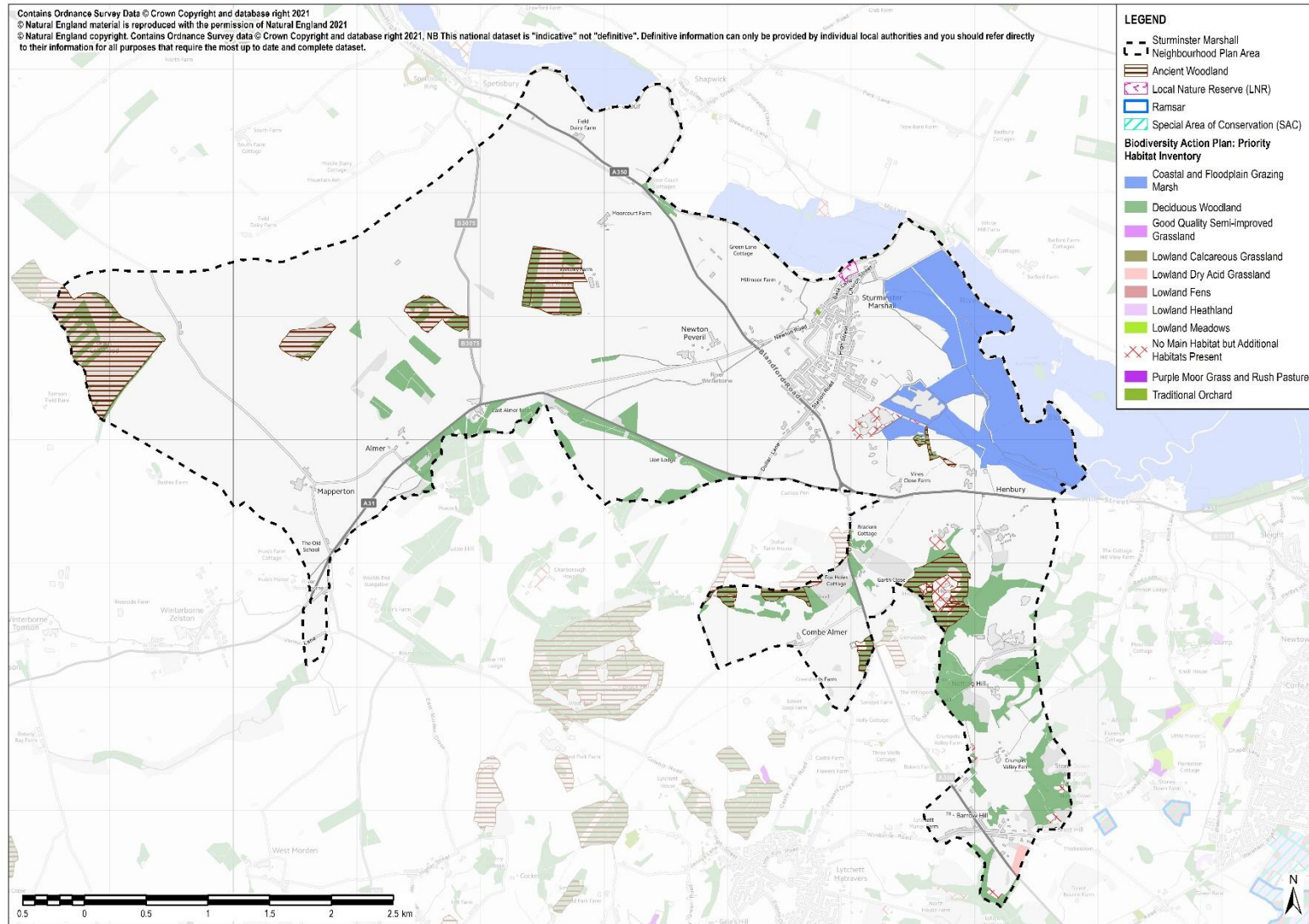


Figure 3.2 Locally designated sites and priority habitats



4. Climate Change

Focus of theme

- Contribution to climate change
- Effects of climate change
- Climate change adaptation
- Flood risks

Policy Context

4.1 **Table 4.1** below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan.

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

| Document title | Year of publication |
|--|---------------------|
| <u>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</u> | 2021 |
| <u>UK Climate Change Act</u> | 2008 |
| <u>UK (second) National Adaptation Programme 2018 to 2023</u> | 2018 |
| <u>The Clean Air Strategy</u> | 2019 |
| <u>Clean Growth Strategy</u> | 2019 |
| <u>UK Sixth Carbon Budget</u> | 2020 |
| <u>25-Year Environment Plan</u> | 2019 |
| <u>National Infrastructure Assessment</u> | 2018 |
| <u>UK Climate Change Risk Assessment</u> | 2017 |
| <u>Dorset Council Climate and Ecological Strategy</u> | 2020 |
| <u>Dorset Council Local Plan (DCLP)</u> | 2021 |
| <u>East Dorset and Christchurch Local Plan Part 1- Core Strategy</u> | 2014 |
| <u>East Dorset and Christchurch Local Plan Review</u> | 2019 |

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

- The Neighbourhood Plan will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which requires proactive planning to both mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies are expected to improve the resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, avoid inappropriate development in the flood plain, and support the move to a low carbon economy. The NPPF recognises the potential for planning to shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas

emissions, and deliver long-term resilience, including through reuse, regeneration, and conversion.

- Notably, access to a network of high-quality open spaces can deliver wider benefits for nature, supporting efforts to address climate change, while improvements in green and other infrastructure can reduce the causes and impacts of flooding.
- Planning Practice Guidance presents the following list of ‘examples’ of ways local planning can support adaptation:
 - *“Considering future climate risks when allocating development sites to ensure risks are understood over the development’s lifetime.*
 - *Considering the impact of and promoting design responses to flood risk for the lifetime of the development.*
 - *Considering availability of water and water infrastructure for the lifetime of the development and design responses to promote water efficiency and protect water quality.*
 - *Promoting adaptation approaches in design policies for developments and the public realm relevant.”*
- The UK Climate Change Act requires Government to present to Parliament an assessment of the climate change risks for the UK every five years. Following the publication of each Change Risk Assessment, the Government must lay out its objectives, policies, and proposals to address the climate change risks and opportunities. The second National Adaptation Programme (NAP2, 2018-2023), setting out these objectives, policies, and proposals, was published in 2018. The ASC is required by the Act to assess the NAP and present progress reports. The most recent report was published in 2019, concluding that climate change adaptation needs to be addressed at a national scale and the Government’s response to date has not been successful.¹⁰ The Sixth Carbon Budget, required under the Climate Change Act, provides ministers with advice on the volume of greenhouse gases that the UK can emit during the period 2033 to 2037.
- The Clean Growth Strategy, Clean Air Strategy and the 25-year Environment Plan are a suite of documents which seek to progress the government’s commitment under the UK Climate Change Act to becoming net zero by 2050. The documents set out detailed proposals on how the government will tackle all sources of air pollution, whilst maintaining an affordable energy supply and increasing economic growth. This parallels with the 25-year Environment Plan, which further seeks to manage land resources sustainably, recover and reinstate nature, protect soils and habitats, increase resource efficiency, improve water quality, and connect people with the environment. The documents also interlink with the government’s commitment to decarbonising transport, a recognised challenge that needs more work in a timely manner if government are to achieve net zero targets. Furthermore, the decarbonisation plan recognises

¹⁰ CCC (n.d.): ‘UK adaptation policy’ [online] available at: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/tackling-climate-change/preparing-for-climate-change/uk-adaptation-policy/>

the twinned need to undertake action to adapt the transport sector and increase resilience to climate change risks; and this challenge is more directly addressed through the UK's National Adaptation Programme.

- The National Infrastructure Assessment identified the key national challenges, and the government is developing a National Infrastructure Strategy. The NIC also published two key reports in 2019:
- Strategic Investment and Public Confidence – this report is clear that *“the regulatory system has not adequately addressed societal interests: it needs to work more effectively to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, transition to full-fibre digital networks, and manage the increasing risks of floods and drought.”* It calls for a much more coordinated approach, explaining that:¹¹ *“The current system leaves strategy primarily to infrastructure owners and providers. But they may not be best placed to assess the coming challenges, and they do not have the right incentives to build the right infrastructure to address them... There are some good examples of the system delivering strategic, long-term investment, however in general the system is not designed to deliver this... [R]egulators should demonstrate how they have taken consideration of the strategic vision of... local government...”*
- Resilience Study Scoping Report - includes a section on ‘Resilience in the planning system’, although the focus is on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) more so than local infrastructure.¹²
- The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment is published on a 5-yearly cycle in accordance with the requirements of the Climate Change Act 2008. It required the Government to compile an assessment of the risks for the UK arising from climate change, and then to develop an adaptation programme to address those risks and deliver resilience to climate change on the ground. For both the 2012 and the 2017 UK Climate Change Risk Assessment, the Adaptation Sub-Committee commissioned an evidence report aiming to understand the current and future climate risks and opportunities. The evidence report contains six priority risk areas requiring additional action between 2017 and 2022, see below:
 - Flooding and coastal change risks to communities, businesses, and infrastructure.
 - Risks to health, well-being, and productivity from high temperatures.
 - Risk of shortages in the public water supply, and for agriculture, energy generation and industry.
 - Risks to natural capital, including terrestrial, coastal, marine, and freshwater ecosystems, soils, and biodiversity.
 - Risks to domestic and international food production and trade; and

¹¹ NIC (n.d.): ‘Strategic Investment and public confidence’ [online] nic.org.uk/publications/strategic-investment-and-public-confidence/

¹² NIC (n.d.): ‘Strategic Investment and public confidence’ [online] nic.org.uk/publications/resilience-study-scoping-report/

- New and emerging pests and diseases, and invasive non-native species, affecting people, plants, and animals.
- The Flood and Water Management Act was introduced in 2010 as a response to the need to develop better resilience to climate change. The Act requires better management of flood risk, creating safeguards against rises in surface water drainage charges, and protecting water supplies for consumers. Good flood and coastal risk management is further outlined through the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy (2020).
- The Committee of Climate Change's 2012 report entitled 'How Local Authorities Can Reduce Emissions and Manage Climate Change Risk' emphasises the crucial role councils have in helping the UK meet its carbon targets and preparing for the impacts of climate change. It outlines specific opportunities for reducing emissions and highlights good practice examples from Local Authorities.
- The National Design Guide (NDG) and the National Design Code address how the Government recognises "well-designed places" including opportunities for climate change measures. Notably the NDG defines what constitutes a well-designed place using ten characteristics under three themes of climate, character, and community. Under the climate theme, homes and buildings should be functional, healthy, and sustainable, resources should be efficient and resilient, and buildings should be made to last.
- The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy released a framework for heat networks which includes proposals to increase access to renewable heat sources and achieve a net zero target by 2050.
- The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (2017) sets several priorities for the next five years in line with the Climate Change Act, in order to mitigate and adapt to rising temperatures from greenhouse gas emissions.
- The SMNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the policies of adopted Core Strategy and the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan.

Baseline Summary

Current baseline

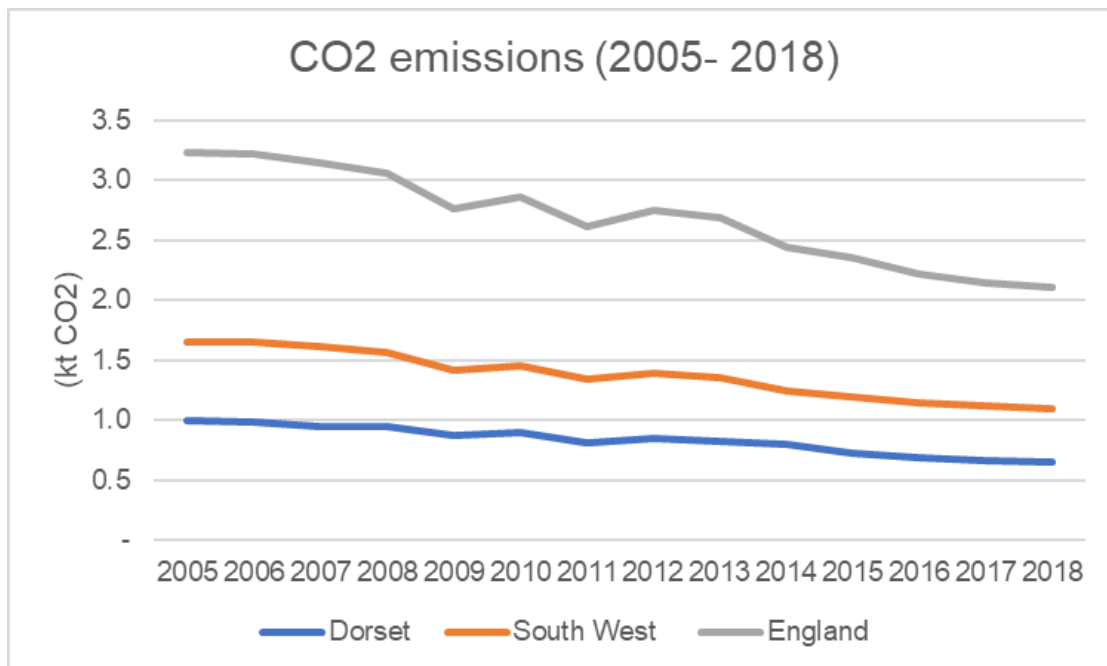
Contribution to climate change

- 4.3 Dorset Council declared a climate emergency in May 2019, which was updated to a climate and ecological emergency in November 2019. Subsequently, Dorset Council released a climate and ecological strategy.¹³
- 4.4 Carbon dioxide emissions shown in **Figure 4.1** indicate that carbon dioxide emissions in Dorset are lower per km² in comparison to figures for the South West and England as a whole. Additionally, over the period of 2014- 2018,

¹³ Dorset Council (2020): 'Climate & ecological emergency' [online] available at: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/281288/Climate+and+ecological+emergency+strategy.pdf/ceaa97d4-ae8-e8a3-6dd0-c30ca64a0f36>

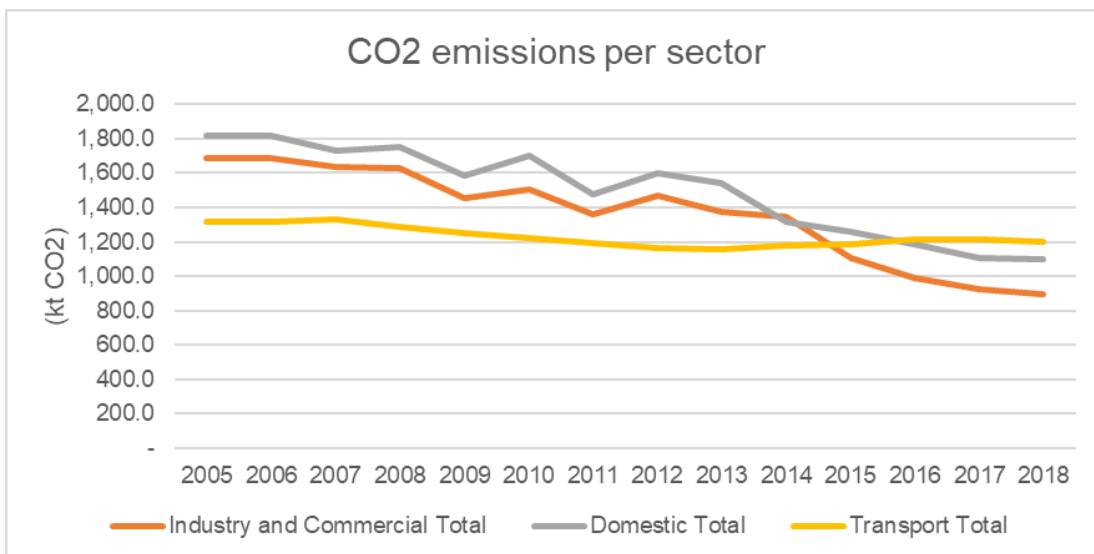
carbon dioxide emissions decreased by 19.3% in Dorset, higher than emissions decreases for the South West (11.8%) and England as a whole (12.3%).¹⁴

Figure 4.1 CO2 emissions (2005- 2018)



4.5 As shown in **Figure 4.2**, the largest contributing sector with regards to CO₂ emissions was the domestic sector, up until 2013. After this period, emissions from the transportation sector increased, now contribute the highest amount out of all three sectors.

Figure 4.2 CO2 emissions by sector



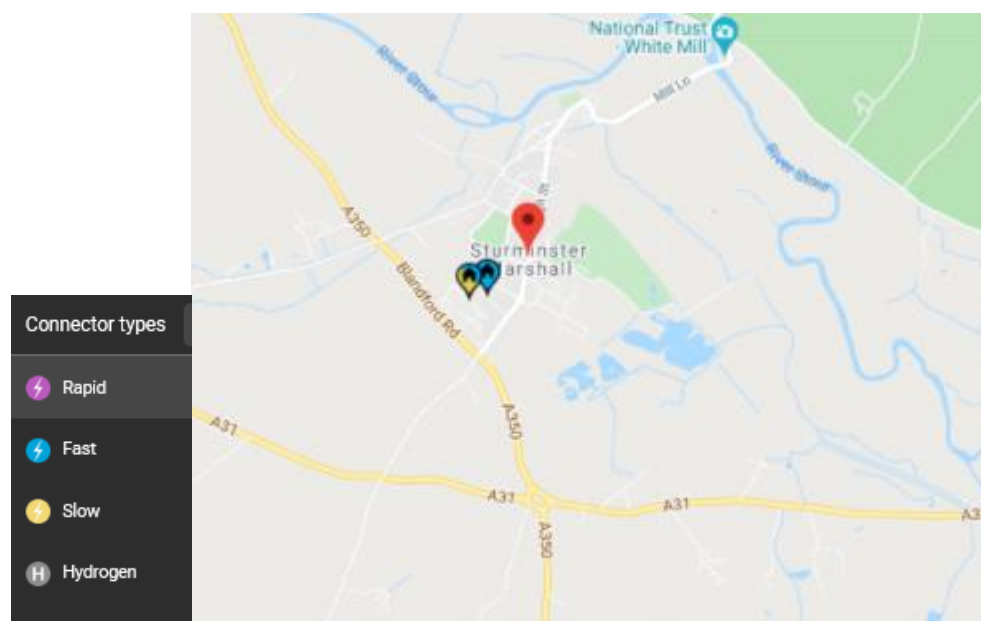
4.6 The uptake of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) will contribute positively towards the reduction of road transport related emissions. In line with assumptions made by the Department for Transport’s ‘Road to Zero’ report

¹⁴ Department of Energy and Climate Change (2011) 2005 to 2018 UK local and regional CO2 emissions: Per capital local CO2 emissions estimates; industry, domestic, and transport sectors [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2018>

(2018), it is assumed that ULEV uptake will increase rapidly in the coming decade and therefore aside from HGVs, all vehicles could be ultra-low emission (powered either by hydrogen or electricity) by 2030.

- 4.7 Electric vehicles (EVs) do not burn fuel and create almost no noise. They are battery powered and have the potential to be ‘zero-emission vehicles’ (ZEVs) if powered by renewable electricity. As of August 2021, there are two EV charging points in the main settlement, shown in **Figure 4.3** below, at Railway Drive and Townsend Road. However, it is understood that these are privately owned charging points.

Figure 4.3 EVs in Sturminster Marshall¹⁵



- 4.8 The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy publishes annual statistics on renewable energy generation, disaggregated by Local Authority. In 2019, photo-voltaic (solar panel generation) had the highest renewable energy installed capacity in Dorset: 95.6% of total installed capacity.

Climate change adaptation

- 4.9 Research on the probable effects of climate change in the UK was released in 2018 by the UK Climate Projections (UKCP18) team. UKCP18 gives climate information for the UK up to the end of this century and projections of future changes to the climate are provided, based on simulations from climate models. Projections are broken down to a regional level across the UK and are shown in probabilistic form, which illustrate the potential range of changes and level of confidence in each prediction.
- 4.10 As highlighted by the research, the effects of climate change (under medium emissions scenarios 50th percentile and RCP6) for the South West during the period 2020-2039 compared to the period 1981-2000 are likely to be as follows:
- A central estimate of increase in annual mean temperatures of between 0°C and 1°C; and

¹⁵ Zapmap (2020) Zap Map [online] available at: <https://www.zap-map.com/live/>

- A central estimate of change in mean precipitation of 0 to +10% in winter and 0 to -10% in summer.

4.11 During the period 2040-2059 this is estimated further as:

- A central estimate of increase in annual mean temperatures of between 1°C and 2°C; and
- A central estimate of change in annual mean precipitation of 0 to +20% in winter and -10% to -20% in summer.

4.12 Due to these changes, a range of risks may exist for the Neighbourhood Plan area, including:

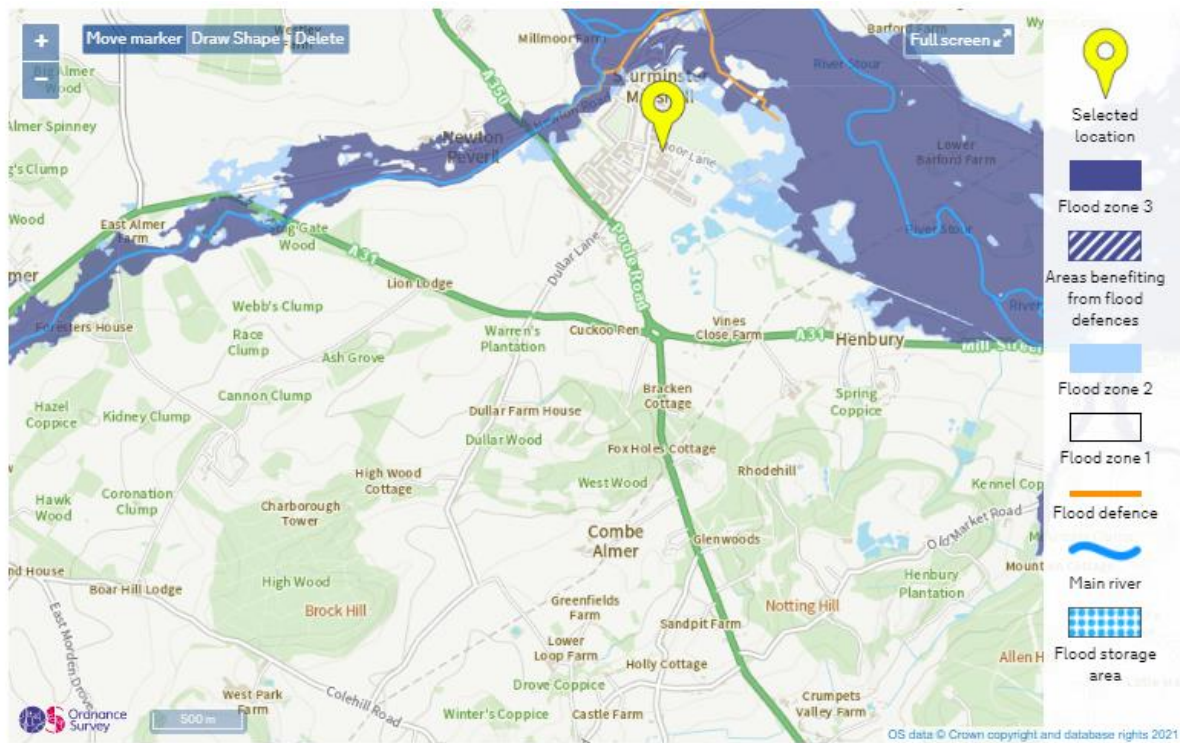
- Increased incidence of heat related illnesses and deaths during the summer;
- Increased incidence of illnesses and deaths related to exposure to sunlight (e.g. skin cancer, cataracts);
- Increased risk of injuries and deaths due to increased number of storm events;
- Effects on water resources from climate change;
- Reduction in availability of groundwater for abstraction;
- Adverse effect on water quality from low stream levels and turbulent stream flow after heavy rain;
- Increased risk of flooding, including increased vulnerability to 1:100-year floods;
- A need to increase the capacity of wastewater treatment plants and sewers;
- A need to upgrade flood defences;
- Soil erosion due to flash flooding;
- Loss of species that are at the edge of their southerly distribution;
- Spread of species at the northern edge of their distribution;
- Increased drought and flood related problems such as soil shrinkages and subsidence;
- Risk of road surfaces melting more frequently due to increased temperature; and
- Flooding of roads.¹⁶

Flood risks

4.13 As shown in **Figure 4.4** overleaf, fluvial flood risk in the Plan area is highest at the land adjacent to the River Winterborne and River Stour, in the west and north east part of the Plan area. This includes a significant area of land to the north and north east of Sturminster Marshall village. However, the settlement of Sturminster Marshall itself generally experiences low fluvial flood risk.

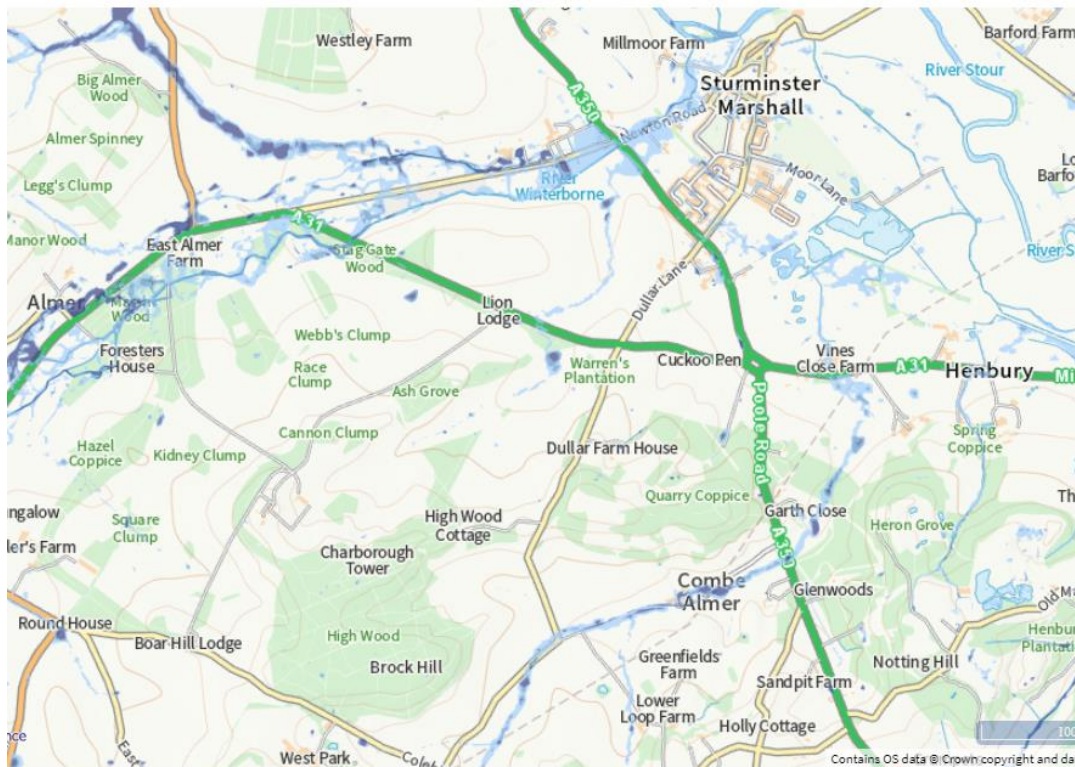
¹⁶ Gov UK (2020): 'Flood Map for Planning' [online] available at: <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

Figure 4.4 Fluvial flood risk¹⁷



4.14 With regards to surface water flood risk, there are areas of high risk situated outside the main settlement, at Newton Road. However, there are some smaller areas at Railway Drive which have higher surface water risk (greater than 3.3%). This is shown below in **Figure 4.5**.

Figure 4.5 Surface water flood risk¹⁸



¹⁷ Gov UK (2021): 'Flood Map for planning' [online] available at: <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

¹⁸ Gov UK (2021): 'Long term flood map for planning' [online] available at: <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/long-term-flood-risk/map>

4.15 Surface water flooding is also relatively extensive within Sturminster Marshall village. It occurs along the “Straight Mile” between Newton Peveril and Stag Gate, in Church Street, Back Lane, King Street and Mill Lane. In the last of these, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group note that it has led to closure of the road, cutting off access from across White Mill Bridge. After periods of heavy rain, flooding also occurs in High Street near the school and at the entrance to Jubilee Way. There was an occurrence of flooding in Railway Drive some years ago, as a result of a blocked drain.

Future baseline

- 4.16 In line with UK trends and national commitments, emissions are likely to continue to fall as energy efficiency measures, renewable energy take-up and new technologies, such as EVs and solar PV, become more widely adopted. Notably, the Government has consulted on changes to England’s Building Regulations introducing a ‘Future Homes Standard’ and the Department for Transport recently published ‘Decarbonising Transport; setting the challenge’ a first step towards publishing a full transport decarbonisation plan.
- 4.17 In the future, new development could have the potential to increase flood risk through factors such as changing surface and ground water flows, overloading existing inputs to the drainage and wastewater networks or increasing the number of residents exposed to areas of existing and future flood risk. It is further recognised that climate change has the potential to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events. This has the potential to put existing properties and new development areas at increased risk of flood exposure. However, in line with the NPPF (2019) sequential testing is likely to ensure that development within areas at highest risk of flooding is largely avoided, and development is likely to deliver mitigation such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

Key Issues

- 4.18 Following the consideration of the baseline information and policy context review, the following key issues within the Neighbourhood Plan area are identified in relation to climate change:
- Although the Sturminster Marshall settlement area generally experiences low fluvial flood risk, the area is partially affected by areas of medium surface water flood risk in some residential parts of the settlement. The SMNP provides the opportunity to direct growth away from areas of current, or potentially future flood risk. Furthermore, it will be important for any development in the vicinity of the floodplain to ensure that suitable drainage is provided which ensures that development will not lead to adverse effects on water quality.
 - The transport sector continues to be a key challenge in terms of reducing emissions. The SMNP provides opportunities to guide development towards the most accessible locations in the SMNP area and require local infrastructure (including walking and cycling infrastructure) improvements where appropriate.
 - The SMNP should seek to maximise opportunities for local renewable energy and electric vehicle infrastructure development, as well as new

green infrastructure and improved ecological links, to complement the existing district climate change strategies.

SEA Framework

4.19 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective(s) and assessment question(s).

| SEA Objective | Assessment questions to consider for the allocations / proposals within the SMNP |
|---|--|
| Climate Change | |
| Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the SMNP area. | <p>Will the option/proposal help to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of journeys made? • Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling and public transport? • Increase the number of new developments meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria? • Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources? • Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources? • Support proposals for EV charging infrastructure? |
| Support the resilience of the SMNP area to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding. | <p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that inappropriate development does not take place in areas at higher risk of flooding, considering the likely future effects of climate change? • Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the SMNP area to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change? • Sustainably manage water runoff and drainage? • Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are considered through new development in the SMNP area? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks? |

5. Landscape

Focus of theme

- Nationally protected landscapes
- Landscape and villagescape character and quality
- Visual amenity

Policy Context

5.1 **Table 5.1** below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan.

Figure 5.1 Plans, policies, and strategies reviewed in relation to landscape

| Document title | Year of publication |
|--|---------------------|
| <u>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</u> | 2021 |
| <u>The 25 Year Environment Plan</u> | 2018 |
| <u>The National Design Guide</u> | 2019 |
| <u>National Model Design Code</u> | 2021 |
| <u>Dorset Council Local Plan (DCLP)</u> | 2021 |
| <u>East Dorset and Christchurch Local Plan Part 1- Core Strategy</u> | 2014 |
| <u>East Dorset and Christchurch Local Plan Review</u> | 2019 |

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

- The SMNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF which gives great weight to conserving and enhancing protected landscapes, as well as landscape character and scenic beauty. The scale and extent of development within 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.
- The NPPF recognises the role of green infrastructure in landscape settings, as well as the importance of designated biodiversity sites, habitats, woodland, historic features, agricultural land, and cultural landscapes. The positive contribution that land remediation can make in terms of addressing despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land is also recognised.
- The 25-year Environment Plan and National Design Guide complement each other with their aims for a cleaner, greener country which puts the environment first and celebrates the variety of natural landscapes and habitats. Design is focused on beautiful, enduring, and successful places, which respond to local character and provide a network of high quality green open spaces.

- The SMNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the policies of adopted Core Strategy and the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan.

Baseline Summary

Current baseline

Nationally protected landscapes

- 5.3 The Cranbourne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located 80m from the Plan area (to the north east).
- 5.4 The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB is part of the extensive belt of chalkland which stretches across southern England and is divided into two areas.
- 5.5 To the south, Cranborne Chase with its smooth rounded downs, steeply cut combes and dry valleys shows a typical chalk landscape. To the north, the topography of the Wiltshire Downs is more varied and broken, with shapely knolls and whaleback ridges.
- 5.6 The AONB is known for its ecological importance with protected ancient downland sites, herb-rich fen and river meadow to scattered deciduous woodland, which includes remnants of the ancient Cranborne Chase hunting forest. See **Figure 5.1** below for a key view over the AONB from within the SMNP area, provided by a member of the Steering Group.

Figure 5.1 Looking across the Stour Valley towards the AONB



5.7 A large proportion of the eastern part of Sturminster Marshall also falls within the Bournemouth Green Belt. An assessment of potential development sites conducted in 2020 indicated that some parts of the SMNP area were subsequently more susceptible to disrupting the unique features of the Green Belt, namely open, expansive agricultural landscapes in the north of the settlement.¹⁹

National Character Areas

5.8 The Plan area falls within the Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase NCA. This NCA has a '*strongly rural and agricultural feel, characterised by large, open fields of pasture and arable, punctuated by blocks of woodland draped over the undulating chalk topography*'.²⁰

5.9 Natural England have identified Statements of Opportunity (SEOs) for the NCAs which provide guidance for future development. The SEOs for the Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase NCA are:

- **SEO 1:** Plan for and manage changes in the agricultural landscape by encouraging and supporting business choices that balance food production with protecting soils and water, enhancing ecosystems (particularly those associated with semi-natural grasslands) and restoring ecosystem services.
- **SEO 2:** Manage and enhance the historic character of the NCA, including the rich assemblage of settlement and field patterns, heritage features (including prehistoric assets), and the patterns of woodland, vegetation and geodiversity that give the NCA its sense of place.
- **SEO 3:** Manage and enhance the recreational and educational potential of the NCA in a way that clearly shows the links between people and the landscape, and between geodiversity, ecosystems and the services they provide. Aim to heighten people's enjoyment, appreciation and understanding of the NCA, as well as their ability to take positive, informed action to enjoy and conserve their surroundings.

Landscape sensitivity assessment

5.10 The landscape sensitivity assessment for East Dorset and Purbeck assessed several areas in Sturminster Marshall, shown in **Figure 5.2** overleaf. Results are detailed below.

- **STURM 1:** Overall, this area has moderate landscape sensitivity due to semi-natural habitats and features associated with the golf course, intervisibility with the wooded skylines of Kingston Lacy and the Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs AONB, alongside a general rural character.
- **STURM 2:** Overall, this area has low-to-medium sensitivity due to the flat and low-lying landform, uniform arable land cover, high level of visual enclosure provided by boundary vegetation, and proximity to existing development.

¹⁹ LUC Consulting (2020): 'Sturminster Marshall Stage 1 site assessment [online] available at: <https://www.bcpouncil.gov.uk/Planning-and-building-control/Planning-policy/BCP-Local-Plan/Evidence-base-studies/Green-belt/Docs/Stage-1-Appendix-B-Sturminster-Marshall.pdf>

²⁰ Natural England (2013): 'NCA Profile: 134 Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase' [online] available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5846213517639680?category=587130>

- **STURM 3:** Overall, this area has moderate sensitivity due to the gently sloping landform, semi-natural features including hedgerows and woodland, the undeveloped character of the area, and the rural setting and skyline.
- **STURM 4:** Overall, the assessment area has moderate sensitivity, with sensitivities presented by its role as an immediate rural setting to the village (overlooked by existing housing), its intervisibility with Charborough Park and the sense of separation it provides between Sturminster Marshall and Newton Peveril.

Figure 5.2 Landscape sensitivity areas²¹



Local landscape

5.11 Sturminster Marshall is a village in east Dorset, eight miles north-west of Poole on the A350 and A31. The River Stour runs along the northern edge of the village. Land surrounding the settlement is gently rolling, and land use is predominantly agricultural, under both pasture and arable cultivation. The southern parts of the village are on gently rising ground above the flood plain.²²

5.12 During the process of making the Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy, the Council produced the East Dorset District Council Areas of Great Landscape Value Report (AGLV) in 1997²³, which identified four areas of great landscape value in order to protect them from the potential adverse visual effects of new development. Although Sturminster Marshall is excluded from the AGLV, it was noted in the report that the Stour Valley/Mapperton AGLV area is nonetheless influenced by the settlement, particularly on the western side.

²¹ LUC Consulting (2021): 'East Dorset & Purbeck Areas Landscape & Heritage Study' [online] available at: https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/337048/East+Dorset+%26+Purbeck+Stage+2_Tier+3.pdf/e3320a6d-52e8-4f1d-feef-67deffc99e15

²² Christchurch and East Dorset District Council (2002): 'Policies and Proposals for Sturminster Marshall' [online] available at: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/282265/Chapter-16+Sturminster+Marshall.pdf/cccf163-17bd-5ca0-3c32-cd7822d5da87>

²³ Dorset Council (2021): 'Protected landscapes in Dorset' [online] available at: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/-/protected-landscapes-in-east-dorset>

Whilst the village centres are compact, buildings both ancient and modern, stretch outwards along the rural lanes, creating a more open character.

Tree preservation orders

5.13 Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) have been applied to two woodlands in this Sturminster Marshall, at Herons Grove and Forest Hill. A small group of trees beside Newton Road in Sturminster Marshall village and a number of individual trees in the former parkland of Henbury Hall and Henbury House also have TPOs, together with a few other isolated trees within the parish.²⁴

Visual amenity

5.14 Key views in the Plan area are detailed in the East Dorset & Purbeck landscape assessment and shown in **Figures 5.3 – 5.6** below.

Figure 5.3 View north-east from Wareham Forest Way footpath on the eastern edge of the area



Figure 5.4 View north west from the public footpath across arable field to houses on Station Road



²⁴ Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan Group (2021): 'SEA Screening Post Consultation Report'.

Figure 5.5 View south from the footpath at the field boundary to the enclosed pasture field with wooded skyline



Figure 5.6 View north east from Dullar Lane to the settlement edge of Sturminster Marshall



Future baseline

- 5.15 New development, including infrastructure development, has the potential to lead to incremental changes in landscape quality in and around the Neighbourhood Plan area. In the absence of the Neighbourhood Plan more speculative development may come forward within the open countryside or countryside setting, which could place increased pressure on local settings. This may negatively impact upon the landscape features which contribute to the distinctive character, in particular the unique qualities of the AONB and Green Belt.
- 5.16 However, locally distinctive landscape features, characteristics and special qualities can be protected, managed, and enhanced through the Neighbourhood Plan. New development that is appropriately designed and landscape-led has the potential to support the area's inherent landscape character and quality. This may, for example, include regeneration and brownfield development that improves the village setting, delivering green infrastructure improvements and/ or new recreational opportunities and enhanced framing of key views.

Key Issues

5.17 Following the consideration of the baseline information and policy context review, the following key issues within the Neighbourhood Plan area are identified in relation to landscape:

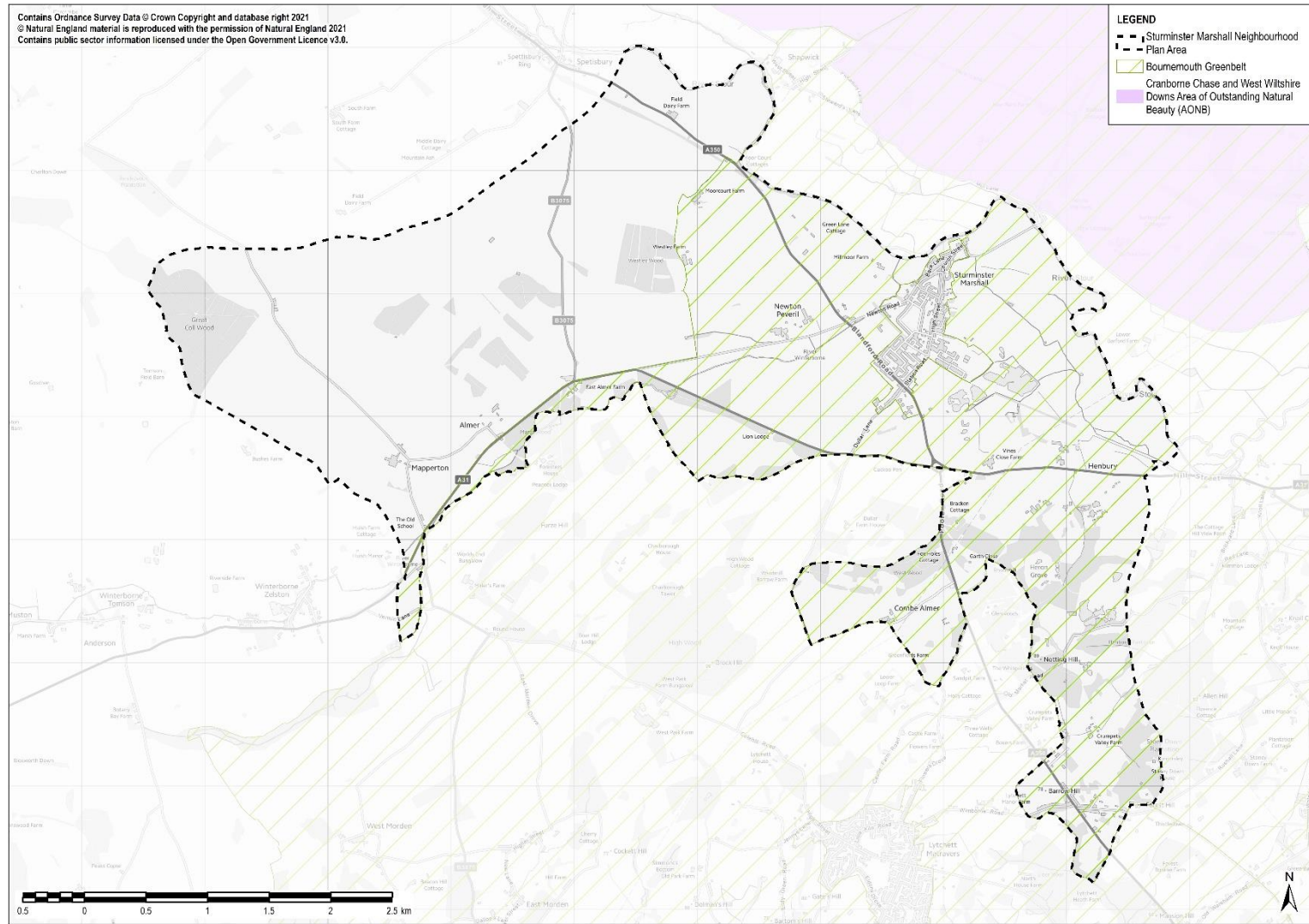
- The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is designated 80m from the east border of the Plan area. Additionally, the eastern section of the SMNP area falls within the Bournemouth Green Belt. These designations protect unique landscape features and the impact of development should seek to prevent harm to these features in the short to long term.
- The SMNP area is within the Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase NCA. The East Dorset and Purbeck Landscape Sensitivity Assessment also highlights key sensitivities in the area. The Neighbourhood Plan could seek to protect and enhance Sturminster Marshall within these unique settings and their important features.
- Important viewpoints and local landscape and villagescape features have been identified in Sturminster Marshall, which reflect the special qualities of the Neighbourhood Plan area and are highly valued by residents. Development should seek to conserve and enhance these assets.

SEA Framework

5.18 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective(s) and assessment question(s).

| SEA Objective | Assessment questions to consider for the allocations / proposals within the SMNP |
|--|---|
| <p>Landscape</p> <p>To protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape and villagescape.</p> | <p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to protect and enhance the integrity of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB? • Seek to prevent detriment to the openness of the Bournemouth Green Belt? • Protect and/ or enhance local landscape and villagescape character, key sensitivities and quality of place? • Conserve and enhance local identity, diversity and settlement character? • Protect visual amenity and locally important views in the Plan area? • Seek to retain and protect TPOs? • Retain and enhance landscape and villagescape features that contribute to the rural setting of Sturminster Marshall? |

Figure 5.7 National landscape designations



6. Historic Environment

Focus of theme

- Designated and non-designated heritage assets
- Setting, special qualities, and significance of heritage assets
- Locally important heritage features
- Historic character of the Neighbourhood Plan area

Policy Context

6.1 **Table 6.1** below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan.

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

| Document title | Year of publication |
|---|---------------------|
| <u>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</u> | 2021 |
| <u>The 25 Year Environment Plan</u> | 2018 |
| <u>The National Design Guide</u> | 2019 |
| <u>National Model Design Code</u> | 2021 |
| <u>Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management</u> | 2019 |
| <u>Historic England Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets</u> | 2017 |
| <u>Historic England Advice Note 8: Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)</u> | 2016 |
| <u>Dorset Council Local Plan (DCLP)</u> | 2021 |
| <u>East Dorset and Christchurch Local Plan Part 1- Core Strategy</u> | 2014 |
| <u>East Dorset and Christchurch Local Plan Review</u> | 2019 |

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

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

- Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent, and consistent
- Documenting and learning from decisions is essential.²⁵
- The significance of places is the key element which underpins the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Significance is a collective term for the sum of all the heritage values attached to a place, be it a building, an archaeological site, or a larger historic area such as a whole village or landscape.
- The SMNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which ultimately seeks to conserve and enhance historic environment assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. The NPPF seeks planning policies and decisions which are sympathetic to local character and history without preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation of change. The NPPF supports the use of area-based character assessments, design guides and codes and masterplans to help ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating beautiful and sustainable places.
- As set out in the NPPF, it should be ensured that the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. Design Codes can set out a necessary level of detail in sensitive locations, for example, with heritage considerations, and they can set out specific ways to maintain local character.
- Planning Practice Guidance expands on the NPPF recognising the proactive rather than passive nature of conservation.
- The role of the historic environment, as part of healthy and thriving ecosystems, landscapes, and cultural values, including settlement identity, is reiterated through the key messages of the 25 Year Environment Plan and National Design Guide.
- Historic England's Advice Notes provide further guidance in relation to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Of relevance for the SMNP is the emphasis on the importance of:
 - Understanding the different types of special architectural and historic interest which underpin designations, as well as how settings and/ or views contribute to the significance of heritage assets.
 - Recognising the value of implementing controls through neighbourhood plans, conservation area appraisals and management plans; and
 - Appropriate evidence gathering, including clearly identifying those issues that threaten an area or assets character or appearance and that merit the introduction of management measures.

²⁵ Historic England: Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance

- The SMNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the policies of adopted Core Strategy and the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan.
- In addition to conserving the historic environment, the Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan should seek to identify opportunities to enhance the fabric and setting of the historic environment. It should also seek to rejuvenate features and areas which are at risk of neglect and decay.

Baseline Summary

Current baseline

Historic character of Sturminster Marshall

- 6.3 The village of Sturminster Marshall has many marks of an ancient village, including thatched cottages, but also contains more modern buildings such as an industrial estate. The name 'Sturminster' refers to minster (i.e. church) on the River Stour.
- 6.4 One of the most notable buildings in the area is the Church of St Mary, which stands on the site of earlier Saxon buildings. The village itself used to include the villages of Hamworthy, Lytchett Minster and Corfe Mullen. The 'Marshall' of the village name was William Marshall (1146-1219), the first Earl of Pembroke, who was one of the witnesses to Magna Carta. In present times, land surrounding the settlement is gently rolling, and land use is predominantly agricultural, under both pasture and arable cultivation.²⁶

Designated heritage assets and areas

- 6.5 There are 28 listed buildings in the Plan area, including two Grade I listed buildings, three Grade II* listed buildings and twenty-three Grade II listed buildings. Grade I and Grade II* buildings are listed below:

Grade I

- **White Mill Bridge** – 16th century bridge situated across the River Stour, composed of Ironstone and Limestone.²⁷
- **Church of St Mary Almer** – The Church of St Mary, with 12th century features such as a nave and north arcade, and 14th century rebuilding of the north aisle.²⁸

Grade II*

- **Henbury House** – a Country mansion, linked to a stable block which will be converted into residential units. The mansion is dated from the early 18th and mid-19th centuries.²⁹
- **Almer Manor** – a Farmhouse dated back to the 16th century, with early 17th century extensions and 20th century alterations. The Manor contains walls of flint and limestone bands, with some ironstone rubble.³⁰

²⁶ DorsetLife (n.d.): 'Sturminster Marshall' [online] available at: <https://www.dorsetlife.co.uk/2009/04/sturminster-marshall/>

²⁷ Historic England (n.d.): 'White Mill Bridge' [online] available at: <https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1120035>

²⁸ Historic England (n.d.): 'Church of St Almer' [online] available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1154550>

²⁹ Historic England (n.d.): 'Henbury House' [online] available at: <https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1120055>

³⁰ Historic England (n.d.): 'Almer Manor' [online] available at: <https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1120056>

- **The Church of St Mary** – A 12th century church, with 13th century features from an extension, and 14th and 15th century changes. The tower was rebuilt in the 17th century.³¹
- **Charborough Park** – An early 19th century park, gardens, and pleasure grounds developed from an 18th century deer park and mid-17th century formal gardens, elements of which survive today. The area is a designated Registered Park and Garden, partly overlapping with the southern section of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

6.6 There are two scheduled monuments within the Plan area, detailed below.

- ‘A shrunken medieval village and earlier prehistoric settlement remains at Walnut Tree Field’ is situated next to the River Stour in the north east of the Plan area. The monument includes the remains of a shrunken medieval village surviving as a complex of extant earthworks, with prehistoric settlement remains surviving as buried features, set in a field adjacent to the River Stour.³²
- ‘Medieval standing cross 15m south west of St Mary's Church’ includes the remains of a stone cross of probable 14th century date situated 15m south west of St Mary's Church, situated in the north east of the Plan area.³³

6.7 There are three Conservation Areas in Sturminster Marshall, which have each been appraised, shown in **Figure 6.1** and detailed below:

- **Sturminster Marshall Conservation Area** - designated in 1987 by East Dorset Council, identifies the parts of Sturminster Marshall which are considered to have particular historic character. The area contains a high proportion of older buildings, including the northern part of the village which includes the village greens and the Church, together with parts of Kings Street as far south as Stour Lodge and Cottmans. Much of the boundary of the Conservation Area adjoins the open countryside of the Stour valley. There are three phases of building which can be identified within the Sturminster Conservation Area: 17th century cottages (mostly thatched), Victorian brick and slate villas and post war housing, mostly built since the 1960s.³⁴
- **Almer Conservation Area** - located in the west of the parish, the area was designated in 1990 due to the architectural importance of the Church of St Mary and Manor. The hamlet is situated on flat land, surrounded by low hills and woods. There are long distance views to the south towards West Morden and to the north-east, resting on Westley Wood.³⁵
- **Mapperton Conservation Area** - located in the west of the parish, the area was designated in 1992. The area is approached either directly from the A31 from the south, or indirectly via Almer, from the north-east. The southern approach climbs a low hill before descending to the village. The

³¹ Historic England (n.d.): ‘Church of St Mary’ [online] available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1154649>

³² Historic England (n.d.): ‘Shrunken medieval village’ [online] available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1008750>

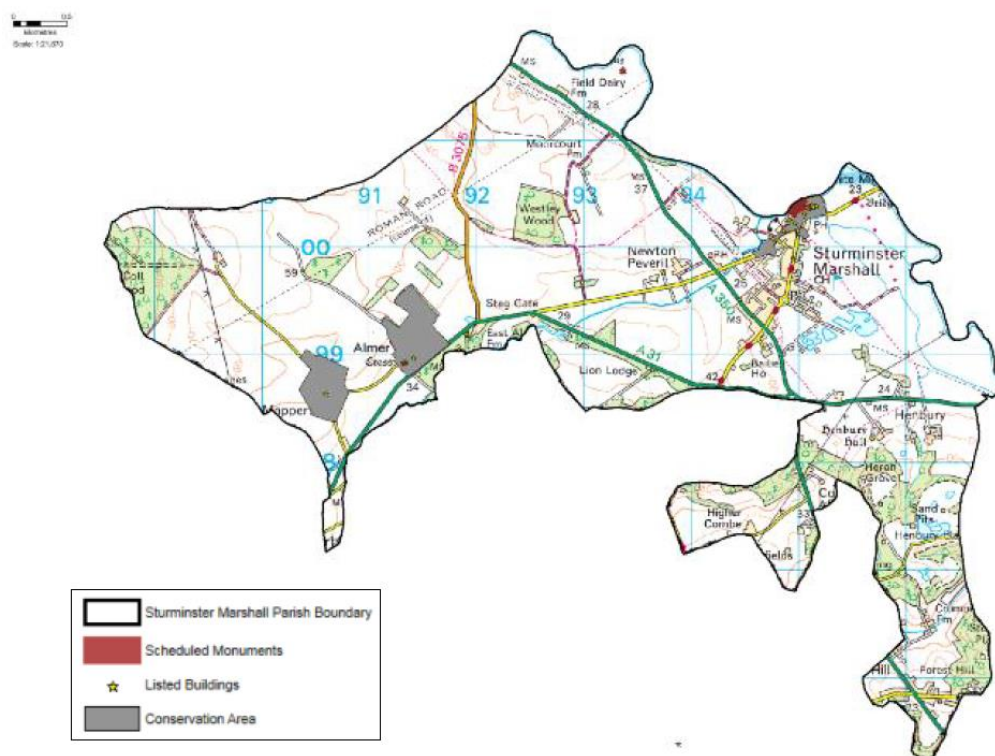
³³ Historic England (n.d.): ‘Medieval standing’ [online] available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1014755>

³⁴ Dorset Council (n.d.): ‘Sturminster Marshall Conservation Area’ [online] available at: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/287469/SPG13+Sturminster+Marshall+Conservation+Area.pdf/737b606c-7664-39eb-c825-054cdf2ab90b>

³⁵ Dorset Council (n.d.): ‘Almer Conservation Area’ [online] available at: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/287469/SPG01+Almer+Conservation+Area.pdf/bbef902e-1364-31e7-d2a1-63c237e38b52>

Conservation Area includes the important trees which lie on the two approaches to the village and those on the hillside to the south-west, which form part of the backdrop to the village.³⁶

Figure 6.1 Conservation areas in Sturminster Marshall



6.8 The Dorset Historic Environment Record (HER) lists 28 records within the village, including historic field boundaries, churches, undated ditched and mediaeval archaeology such as flint. These assets provide an important element to the historic interest of a SMNP area and should be preserved where possible.³⁷

Heritage at risk

6.9 Since 2008, Historic England has released an annual Heritage at Risk Register. The Heritage at Risk Register highlights the Grade I and Grade II* listed buildings, scheduled monuments, historic parks and gardens, registered battlefields, wreck sites and conservation areas deemed to be 'at risk'.³⁸ As of August 2021, the Heritage at Risk Register does not identify any designated heritage assets in the Plan area.

Future baseline

6.10 New development areas in the Neighbourhood Plan area have the potential to impact on the fabric and setting of heritage assets; for example, through inappropriate design and layout, and increasing the impacts of traffic within conservation areas. It should be noted, however, that existing historic

³⁶ Dorset Council (n.d.): 'Mapperton Conservation Area' [online] available at: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/287469/SPG08+Mapperton+Conservation+Area.pdf/88c7d279-69ab-1933-a313-11fc84d659e7>

³⁷ Historic England (2020): 'Dorset HER search results' [online] available at: https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Application.aspx?resourceID=1012&index=16

³⁸ Historic England (2018): 'Heritage at Risk Register' [online] available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/>

environment designations offer a degree of protection to heritage assets and their settings.

6.11 Alongside, new development need not be harmful to the significance of a heritage asset, and in the context of the Neighbourhood Plan area there may be opportunity for new development to enhance the historic setting of the parish's settlements, support historic landscape character and better reveal assets' heritage significance.

Key Issues

6.12 Following the consideration of the baseline information and policy context review, the following key issues within the Neighbourhood Plan area are identified in relation to the historic environment:

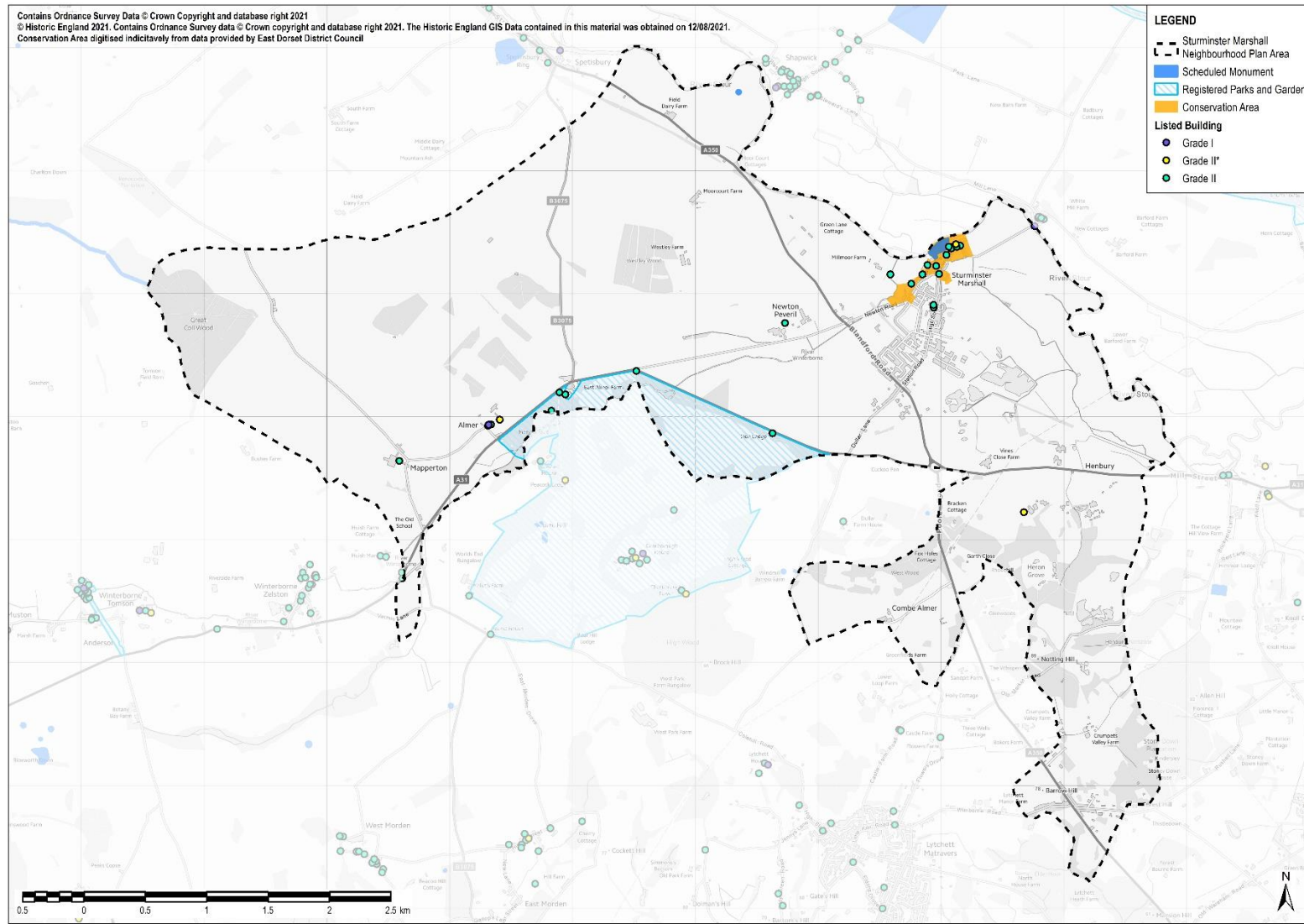
- Sturminster Marshall contains a wealth of designated heritage assets, including two scheduled monuments and 28 listed buildings. It will be important to ensure that future development avoids/ minimises impacts upon the historic environment and maximises opportunities to improve the public realm and green infrastructure, to the indirect benefit of heritage settings.
- The Sturminster Marshall Conservation Area Appraisals highlight historic sensitivities in the SMNP area with regards to building style, structure, and form.
- As well as this, the Dorset HER highlights several assets, including archaeological finds which provide local historic value to Dorset. These sensitivities should be considered in future growth strategies.

SEA Framework

6.13 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective(s) and assessment question(s).

| SEA Objective | Assessment questions to consider for the allocations / proposals within the SMNP |
|---|---|
| Historic Environment | |
| Protect, conserve, and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the SMNP area. | <p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their settings? • Protect the integrity and the historic setting of key finds of cultural heritage interest as listed in the Dorset HER? • Support the undertaking of early archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the SMNP area? |

Figure 6.2 Designated heritage assets



7. Land, Soil, and Water Resources

Focus of theme

- Quality of agricultural land
- Water resources and water quality
- Mineral safeguarding areas

Policy Context

7.1 **Table 7.1** below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan.

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

| Document title | Year of publication |
|--|---------------------|
| <u>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</u> | 2021 |
| <u>The 25 Year Environment Plan</u> | 2018 |
| <u>Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England</u> | 2009 |
| <u>Future Water: The government's water strategy for England</u> | 2011 |
| <u>Water for Life</u> | 2011 |
| <u>The National Waste Management Plan</u> | 2013 |
| <u>Wessex Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP)</u> | 2019 |
| <u>Dorset Council Minerals Strategy</u> | 2014 |
| <u>Dorset Council Waste Plan</u> | 2019 |
| <u>Dorset Council Local Plan (DCLP)</u> | 2021 |
| <u>East Dorset and Christchurch Local Plan Part 1- Core Strategy</u> | 2014 |
| <u>East Dorset and Christchurch Local Plan Review</u> | 2019 |

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

- The SMNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which seeks to protect high quality soil resources, and improve the water environment; recognising the wider benefits of natural capital and derived from ecosystem services. Furthermore, the NPPF recognises the need to take account of the long-term implications of climate change and build resilience in this respect. The NPPF encourages efficient land use, utilising brownfield land opportunities and land remediation schemes where appropriate and delivering environmental gains.
- The 25-year Environment Plan presents a focus for environmental improvement in the next couple decades, with aims to achieve clean air,

clean and plentiful water, and reduced risk from environmental hazards. This includes measures to improve soil quality, restore and protect peatlands, use water more sustainably, reduce pollution, maximise resource efficiency and minimise environmental impacts. This leads on from and supports the soil strategy for England (Safeguarding our soils) which seeks to ensure that all England's soils will be managed sustainably and degradation threats tackled successfully by 2030, as well as the national water strategies which seek to secure sustainable and resilient water resources and improve the quality of waterbodies, and the national waste plan which seeks to identify measures being taken to move towards a zero waste economy.

- Wessex Water's WRMP further highlights the acute stresses that the catchment faces in the coming years and the challenges faced by the WRZ for Sturminster Marshall, in terms of securing water resources into the future in one of the driest regions in England. The Plan outlines how Wessex Water aim to confront and manage these issues to ensure the timely provision of clean water to all residents in the period up to 2045.
- The SMNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Dorset Minerals Strategy and Waste Plan, form part of the Local Development Frameworks for the County. These plans identify and safeguard sites and resources important to the continued sustainable management of mineral extractions and waste arisings.
- Furthermore, the SMNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the policies of adopted Core Strategy and the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan.

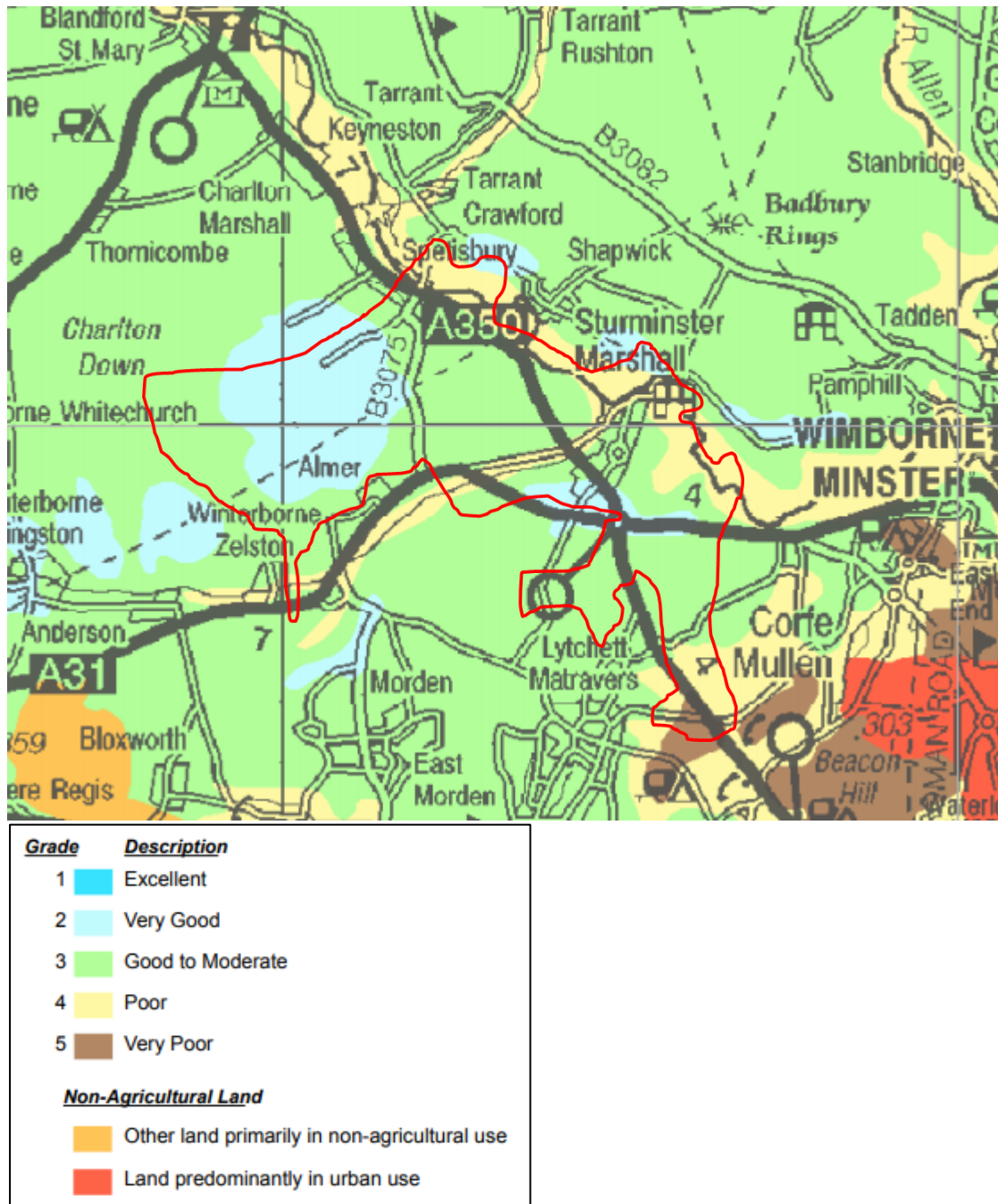
Baseline Summary

Current baseline

Soil resources

7.3 As shown in **Figure 7.1** overleaf, there are some isolated areas of the SMNP area which are underlain by 'very good' agricultural land (Grade 2), however these are outside of the village boundary. Most of the land surrounding Sturminster Marshall village is underlain by Grade 3 (Good to Moderate) agricultural land, though an assessment has not been undertaken to identify whether these are 3a (i.e. best and most versatile land) or 3b quality (not best and most versatile).

Figure 7.1 Agricultural Land Classification (ALC)³⁹



Water resources and quality

7.4 In terms of water quality, the SMNP area falls within the Dorset Management Catchment and Stour Dorset Operational Catchment. The two main water bodies in the Plan area are the Middle downstream Pimpere Brook, a section of the River Stour, which forms the eastern boundary of the SMNP area, and the North Winterbourne, which runs through the north west part of the Plan area.

7.5 The ecological quality of the Pimpere Brook is poor, and the chemical quality of the Brook failed to meet the required standards of the Environment Agency's

³⁹ Natural England (2011): 'ALC – South West' [online] available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/144017?category=5954148537204736>

2019 classification cycle.⁴⁰ Reasons for not achieving good status and deterioration include poor nutrient management and sewage discharge (continuous).

7.6 The ecological quality of the North Winterbourne is poor, and the chemical quality of the river failed to meet the required standards of the Environment Agency's 2019 classification cycle. Reasons for not achieving good status and deterioration include flood protection management, drought, and groundwater abstraction.⁴¹

7.7 As mentioned within the latest available Water Resource Management Plans (WRMPs), Water Resource Zones (WRZs) are the largest possible zone in which all resources, including external transfers, can be shared and hence the zone in which all customers experience the same risk of supply failure from a resource failure. Wessex Water has a single WRZ, serving a population of 1.3 million customers in the South West of England. The main centres of demand are in Poole, Bath, Yeovil, Taunton, Bridgwater, Salisbury, Dorchester, Chippenham and Salisbury.⁴² The Wessex WRMP notes the following key strategic risks in the WRZ:

- Moderate impact on the water system from more severe droughts in the Wessex Water region.
- Concerns regarding forthcoming potential sustainability reductions and capping of license limits.

7.8 Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) denote areas at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution and the whole of the SMNP area is identified as an NVZ.⁴³ NVZs identify rules in relation to the use of fertilisers and manures as well as a requirement to prevent water pollution from farm areas. The entirety of the Plan area falls within the North Winterbourne surface water NVZ.⁴⁴

7.9 Furthermore, the entirety of the Plan area lies within a Drinking Water (Surface Water) Safeguard Zone (Lower River Stour), which contains Pesticide Metaldehyde. These are areas identified as at risk of failing national drinking water protection objectives. Whilst non-statutory designations, action is taken within these areas to address water contamination; with the aim of avoiding extra treatment by water companies.

Mineral resources

7.10 With regards to mineral resources, the eastern part of the Plan area falls within an aggregates mineral resource block for sand and gravel, shown in **Figure 7.2** overleaf. This includes land surrounding Sturminster Marshall village (i.e. the most likely location for new development areas within the SMNP area). In this respect, consultation with Dorset Council is likely to be required to determine

⁴⁰ Environment Agency (2019): 'Stour (Middle d/s Pimperne Brook' [online] available at: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody/GB108043016052>

⁴¹ Environment Agency (2019): 'North Winterbourne' [online] available at: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody/GB108043015990>

⁴² Wessex Water (2019): 'Wessex water supply area' [online] available at: <https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/environment/water-resources/management-plan>

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Environment Agency (2017): 'NVZ designation- North Winterbourne NVZ' [online] available at: http://apps.environment-agency.gov.uk/static/documents/nvz/NVZ2017_S688_Datasheet.pdf

whether there are likely to be any significant impacts to mineral resources within the SMNP associated with new development proposals.

Figure 7.2 Sand and gravel resource zones⁴⁵



Future baseline

7.11 Future development has the potential to affect water resources and quality through increased consumption, diffuse pollution, waste-water discharges, water run-off, and modification. It is considered that Wessex Water will seek to address any water supply and wastewater management issues over the plan period in line with the WRMP 2019; and the requirements of the Water Framework Directive are likely to lead to continued improvements to water quality within the SMNP area and wider area. However, it will be important for new development to avoid impacts on water quality and to contribute to reducing consumption and improving efficiency.

7.12 Given the presence of best and most versatile land within parts of the Neighbourhood Plan area, new development areas have the potential to result in the permanent loss of productive agricultural land. In this respect, the Neighbourhood Plan should (where possible) seek to retain greenfield land and make best use of brownfield sites for development.

7.13 It is considered unlikely that the small-scale development likely to come through the Neighbourhood Plan will have a significant impact on the wider area's Nitrate Vulnerable Zone designation given the strategic scale of the overall NVZs. Additionally, a large source of detriment to NVZ comes from agricultural use, which is not anticipated to be brought forward through the SMNP.

⁴⁵ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole County Council (2014): 'Minerals Strategy' [online] available at: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/283152/minerals-strategy-2014-chapters-1-8-compressed.pdf/9022e767-ff8a-d94b-14de-9c3a5279f961>

Key Issues

7.14 Following the consideration of the baseline information and policy context review, the following key issues within the Neighbourhood Plan area are identified in relation to land, soil, and water resources:

- The SMNP area has the potential to be underlain by best and most versatile (BMV) land, though a full classification of the quality of this land has not been undertaken surrounding Sturminster Marshall village.
- In terms of water resources, the 2019 WRMP indicates that the Wessex Water WRZ is susceptible to some key risks including a moderate impact on the water system from more severe droughts and the effects of forthcoming potential sustainability reductions and capping of license limits. Though the WRMP has recommended strategies which will moderate these risks, plan making will still need to consider how local decisions affect water supply, such as water accessibility.
- In addition, the SMNP area intersects waterbodies and falls within a Drinking Water (Surface Water) Safeguard Zone and an NVZ. In this regard, it will be important to ensure that development avoids impacts in relation to water quality, and where possible, contributes to ecological and chemical quality improvements.

SEA Framework

7.15 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective(s) and assessment question(s).

| SEA Objective | Assessment questions to consider for the allocations / proposals within the SMNP |
|---|--|
| Land, Soil, and Water Resources | |
| Ensure the efficient and effective use of land. | <p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid the loss of high-quality agricultural land resources? • Affect the integrity of waste infrastructure within and surrounding the SMNP area? • Promote any opportunities for the use of previously developed land, or vacant/ underutilised land? • Protect the integrity of mineral resources? |
| Protect and enhance water quality and use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid impacts on water quality? • Support improvements to water quality? • Ensure appropriate drainage and mitigation is delivered alongside development? • Protect waterbodies from pollution, including NVZs and drinking water safeguard zones? • Maximise water efficiency and opportunities for water harvesting and/ or water recycling? |

8. Population and community

Focus of theme

- Population demographics
- Age structure
- Deprivation issues
- Housing mix and affordability
- Education and skills
- Employment and economy
- Community assets and infrastructure

Policy Context

8.1 **Table 8.1** below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan.

Table 8.1 Plans, policies, and strategies reviewed in relation to population and community

| Document title | Year of publication |
|---|---------------------|
| <u>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</u> | 2021 |
| <u>Dorset Homelessness Strategy (annual update)</u> | 2019 |
| <u>Dorset Enabling Communities Strategy</u> | 2021 |
| <u>Active Dorset: Sport & Leisure Facilities Needs Assessment</u> | 2017 |
| <u>Dorset Council Local Plan (DCLP)</u> | 2021 |
| <u>East Dorset and Christchurch Local Plan Part 1- Core Strategy</u> | 2014 |
| <u>East Dorset and Christchurch Local Plan Review</u> | 2019 |

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

- The SMNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which on the whole seeks to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being.
- The framework seeks to protect settlement and community identities, ensuring that appropriate tools such as masterplans and design guides or codes are used to secure a variety of well-designed and beautiful homes to meet the needs of different groups in the community. Furthermore, the NPPF recognises the benefits of creating cohesive communities, in safe

environments where crime and the fear of crime do not undermine the quality of life of residents.

- As set out in the NPPF, it should be ensured that the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. The Design Guide and Model code illustrate how well-designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice.
- The district homelessness and community strategies each seek to support the appropriate delivery of housing and community infrastructure. The strategies recognise the importance of targeting resources at those most at risk/ most vulnerable and supporting all residents needs for affordable, safe and good quality housing in the right places. Furthermore, the strategies recognise the need to create choice in terms of securing a long-term stable home and create adaptable homes supported by high levels of accessibility.
- Furthermore, the SMNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the policies of the adopted Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy and the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan.

Baseline Summary

Current baseline

Population

8.3 **Table 8.2**, as shown below, demonstrates how the population of Sturminster Marshall has increased by 8.4% over the period of 2011- 2019, higher than comparative figures for the South West and England as a whole.

Table 8.2 Population change (2011- 2019)⁴⁶

| Population | Sturminster Marshall | East Dorset | South West | England |
|------------------------|----------------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| 2011 | 1,969 | 87,166 | 5,288,935 | 53,012,456 |
| 2019 mid-year estimate | 2,134 | n/a | 5,624,696 | 56,286,961 |
| % change | +8.4% | n/a | +6.3% | +6.2% |

Age structure

8.4 With regards to the age structure of the Plan area, there are a lower proportion of residents in the 60+ age category in comparison to average figures for East Dorset, though not for the South West and England as a whole. Comparatively, there is a higher proportion of 0-15 year olds in the Plan area (18.7%) in comparison to East Dorset and the South West. This is shown in **Table 8.3**.

⁴⁶ Gov UK (2011): 'Census 2011' [online] available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census>

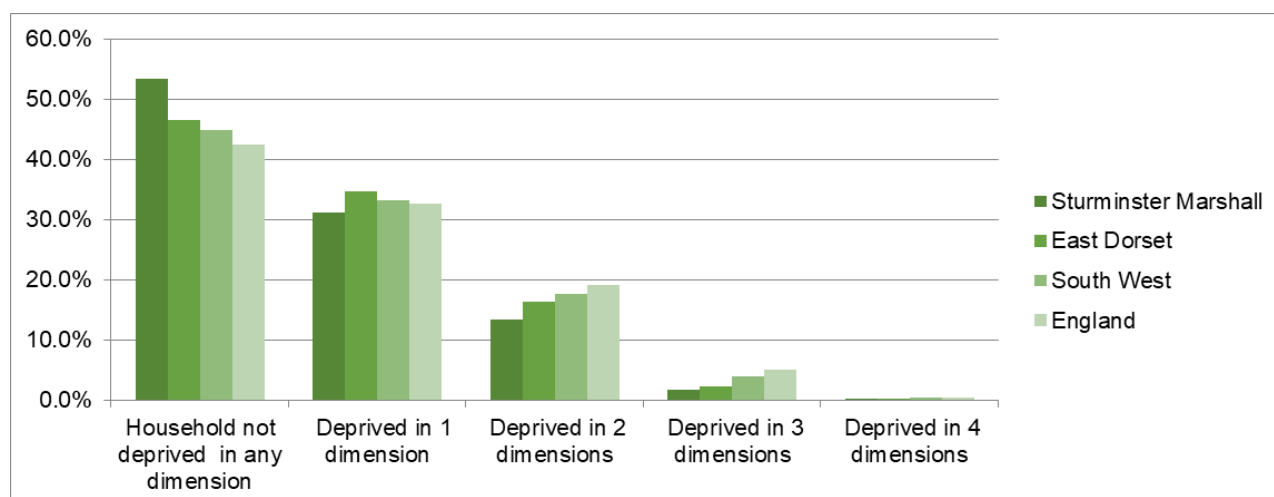
Table 8.3. Age structure⁴⁷

| Age structure | Sturminster Marshall | East Dorset | South West | England |
|---------------|----------------------|-------------|------------|---------|
| 0-15 | 18.7% | 15.6% | 17.6% | 18.9% |
| 16-24 | 10.6% | 8.4% | 11.3% | 11.9% |
| 25-44 | 18.9% | 18.5% | 24.6% | 27.5% |
| 45-59 | 25.4% | 21.1% | 20.1% | 19.4% |
| 60+ | 26.4% | 36.3% | 26.4% | 22.3% |

Household deprivation

8.5 Overall, levels of deprivation in the Plan area are low (53.4%), when compared to East Dorset (46.5%), the South West (44.8%) and England (42.5%), presented in **Figure 8.1** below.

Figure 8.1 Household deprivation⁴⁸



Index of Multiple Deprivation

8.6 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are a geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. They are standardized geographies designed to be as consistent in population as possible. The SMNP falls within the East Dorset 005C LSOA and the East Dorset 005D LSOA .

8.7 The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD)⁴⁹ is an overall relative measure of deprivation constructed by combining seven domains of deprivation according to their respective weights. The deprivation levels for the two LSOAs within East Dorset are presented in **Table 8.4** overleaf. The East Dorset 005D LSOA is within the 50% most deprived areas in the UK. In particular, the LSOA is deprived in the following key areas:

⁴⁷ Gov UK (2011): 'Census 2011' [online] available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census>

⁴⁸ Gov UK (2011): 'Census 2011' [online] available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census>

⁴⁹ IMD (2019): 'Interactive viewer' [online] available at: https://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/iod_index.html#

- Education, Skills and Training- lack of attainment and skills in the local population.
- Crime- risk of personal and material victimisation at the local level.
- Living Environment deprivation- the quality of the local environment.

8.8 Further, the East Dorset 005C LSOA is within the 50% most deprived areas for barriers to housing and services.

Table 8.4 Deprivation levels⁵⁰

| Domain | East Dorset 005C | East Dorset 005D |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Income deprivation | 20% least deprived | 40% least deprived |
| Employment deprivation | 20% least deprived | 30% least deprived |
| Education, Skills and Training | 40% least deprived | 40% most deprived |
| Health Deprivation and Disability | 10% least deprived | 10% least deprived |
| Crime | 20% least deprived | 40% most deprived |
| Barriers to Housing and Services | 50% most deprived | 10% least deprived |
| Living Environment deprivation | 50% least deprived | 10% most deprived |
| Income deprivation affecting children | 30% least deprived | 30% least deprived |
| Income deprivation affecting older people | 10% least deprived | 50% least deprived |
| Overall | 20% least deprived | 50% most deprived |

Housing tenure

8.9 73.6% of residents in Sturminster Marshall own their own homes, lower than comparative figures for East Dorset (80.9%), but higher than figures for the South West (67.4%) and England as a whole (63.3%). Additionally, a higher proportion of residents in Sturminster Marshall live rent free (3.2%) than figures for East Dorset (1.3%), the South West (1.4%) and England (1.3%), indicative of the higher proportion of younger residents in the Plan area, shown in **Figure 8.2**, overleaf.

⁵⁰ GOV UK (2019): 'Indices of Deprivation' [online] available at: https://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/iod_index.html#

Figure 8.2 Tenure⁵¹

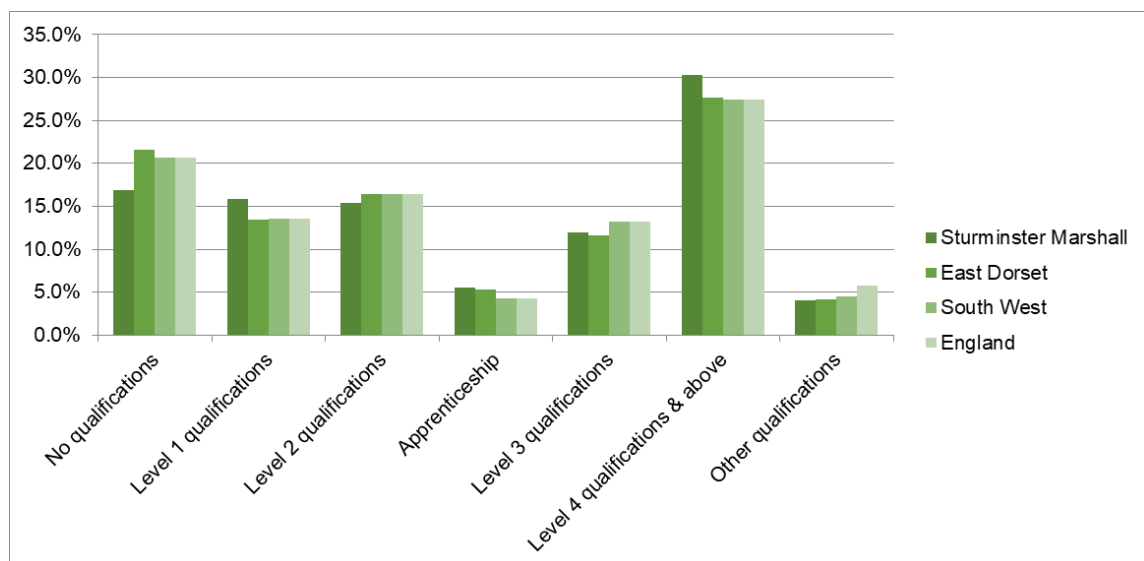


Education and skills

8.10 As shown in **Figure 8.3** below, the proportion of residents with Level 4 qualifications & above is higher than comparative figures for East Dorset, the South West and England as a whole. Only 16.9% of residents have no qualifications, in comparison to 21.5% of residents in East Dorset, 20.7% in the South West and 20.7% in England as a whole.

8.11 The Plan area has a three-tier system of education. In this respect, the First School feeds one of two Middle Schools which, themselves feed into Upper Schools, either Lockyers in Corfe Mullen and thence Corfe Hills in Broadstone (the main route) or Allenbourne in Wimborne and then Queen Elizabeth's. Some also go to St Michael's in Colehill. Children use buses to access Middle and Upper schools.

Figure 8.3 Highest level of qualification⁵²



⁵¹ Gov UK (2011): 'Census 2011' [online] available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census>

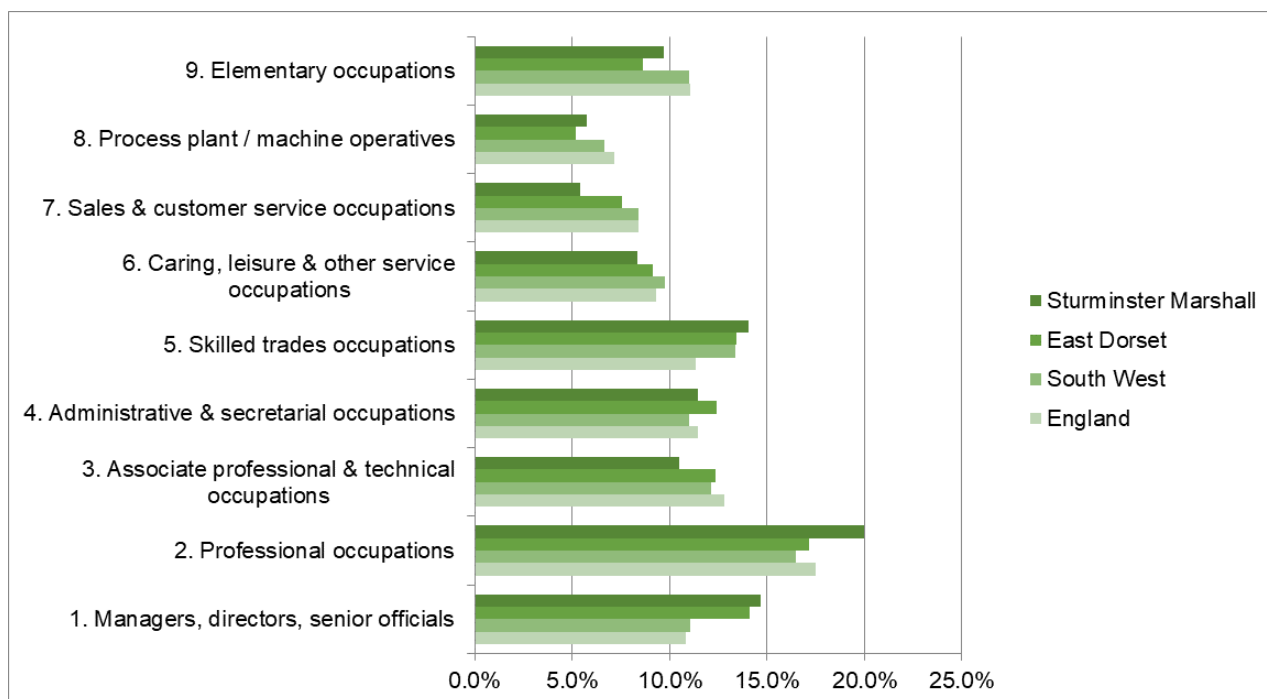
⁵² Gov UK (2011): 'Census 2011' [online] available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census>

Employment and economy

8.12 With regards to occupation, and as shown in **Figure 8.4**, below, the following occupations describe 48.8% of working residents in the Plan area:

- Professional occupations (20.0%)
- Managers, directors and senior officials (14.7%)
- Skilled trades occupations (14.1%).

Figure 8.4 Occupational bands⁵³



Community assets and infrastructure

8.13 Sturminster Marshall Golf Course is located in the north east part of the Plan area, which is a valuable asset to the community and local economy.

8.14 Additionally, there are three retail outlets: Co-op on Station Road, Nisa store and pharmacy in High Street, and Vines Close farm shop complex on the A31. There are also 3 pubs: The Red Lion in Church Street, The Golden Fox on the A350 and The World's End at Mapperton. The two “venues for public events,” are The Memorial Hall in Churchill Close and The Old School in Church Street.

Future baseline

8.15 The Plan area has a higher proportion of younger residents in comparison to East Dorset and the South West, and therefore a higher number of residents are currently living at home. Unplanned development may have wider implications in terms of delivering the right mix of housing types, tenures and sizes in suitably connected places to meet this unique market. Continued development of housing types and tenures of market preference may also increase housing imbalance and increase deprivation in relation to the living

⁵³ Gov UK (2011): 'Census 2011' [online] available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census>

standards domain. Conversely, opportunities to better connect the younger community to education and employment will be beneficial.

8.16 Considering the ongoing pandemic, homeworking is likely to become a more prevalent trend, and this is likely to alter the commuting patterns and access trends of residents into the future. Whilst uncertainty remains, the SMNP provides opportunities to guide development which accommodates for changing working patterns and lifestyles, and places greater emphasis on access to local services, facilities and employment options and strategic connectivity.

Key Issues

8.17 Following the consideration of the baseline information and policy context review, the following key issues within the Neighbourhood Plan area are identified in relation to population and community:

- Population growth has implications for housing needs, accessibility, local service and facility needs, and economic vitality. Development should consider both existing and future residents' needs, including any necessary supporting infrastructure, when planning for growth.
- There are key employment opportunities within and surrounding the SMNP area, which considered alongside a relatively comprehensive service and facility provision in the village and existing educational capacity provides good opportunities to support growth with good access. Future growth also provides opportunities to improve access through new provisions or new/improved links to existing employment areas.
- As the population of Sturminster Marshall continues to grow, it is important that development continues to support low levels of deprivation throughout the town. The Neighbourhood Plan also provides the opportunity to address certain aspects of deprivation in development, in particular the domains of 'Education, Skills and Training', 'Crime', 'Barriers to Housing and Services' and 'Living Environment Deprivation'.

SEA Framework

8.18 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective(s) and assessment question(s).

| SEA Objective | Assessment questions to consider for the allocations / proposals within the SMNP |
|---|---|
| Population and Community | |
| <p>Ensure growth in the village is aligned with the needs of all residents and capacity of the settlement and social infrastructure, improving accessibility, anticipating future needs and specialist requirements, and supporting cohesive and inclusive communities.</p> | <p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, and affordable housing? • Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes? • Meet the needs of all sectors of the community? • Provide flexible and adaptable homes that meet people's needs? • Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including community infrastructure which meets the needs of the local population? • Encourage and promote social cohesion and active involvement of local people in community activities? • Promote the use of sustainable building techniques, including use of sustainable building materials in construction? • Minimise fuel poverty, and encourage developments which maximise energy efficiency? |

9. Health and Wellbeing

Focus of theme

- Health indicators and deprivation
- Influences on health and wellbeing

Policy Context

9.1 **Table 9.1** below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan.

Table 9.1 Plans, policies, and strategies reviewed in relation to health and wellbeing

| Document title | Year of publication |
|---|---------------------|
| <u>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</u> | 2021 |
| <u>National Planning Practice Guidance – Healthy and Safe Communities</u> | 2019 |
| <u>The 25 Year Environment Plan</u> | 2018 |
| <u>Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On</u> | 2020 |
| <u>Planning for Sport Guidance</u> | 2019 |
| <u>Active Dorset: Sport & Leisure Facilities Needs Assessment</u> | 2017 |
| <u>Dorset Council Local Plan (DCLP)</u> | 2021 |
| <u>East Dorset and Christchurch Local Plan Part 1- Core Strategy</u> | 2014 |
| <u>East Dorset and Christchurch Local Plan Review</u> | 2019 |

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

- The SMNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which seeks to enable and support healthy lifestyles through provision of appropriate infrastructure, services and facilities, including; green infrastructure, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling. The NPPF recognises the role of development plans in helping to deliver access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity which contribute to the health and wellbeing of communities. The health benefits of access to nature, green spaces and green infrastructure is further reiterated through the 25-year Environment Plan.
- The 2020 Health Equity in England report identifies that the health gap between less and more deprived areas has grown in the last decade, where more people can expect to spend more of their lives in poor health, and where improvements to life expectancy have stalled or declined.

- The SMNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the policies of adopted Core Strategy and the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan.
- District Leisure and Open Space Strategies plan for a network of high-quality, accessible, and affordable community sporting and recreation facilities to meet resident needs. It recognises the role that leisure opportunities play in contributing to a wider range of health determinants.

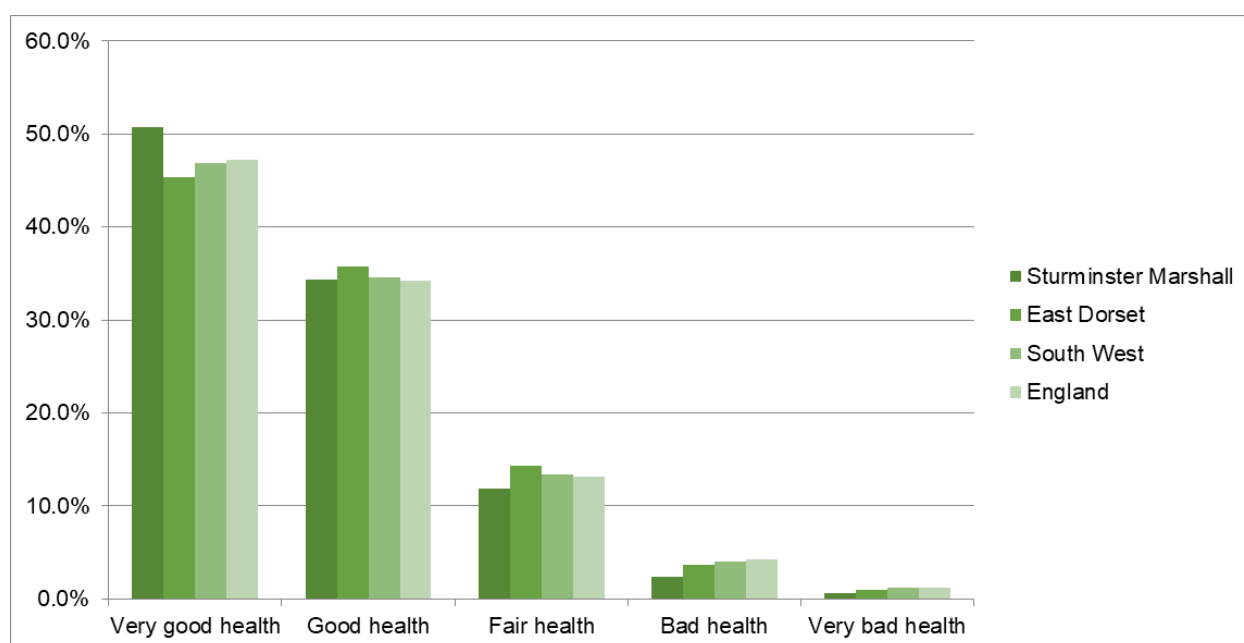
Baseline Summary

Current baseline

General health

9.3 As shown in **Figure 9.1**, the majority of residents in the Plan area have very good or good health (48.8%), higher in comparison to East Dorset (31.3%), the South West (27.6%) and England as a whole (28.4%).

Figure 9.1 General health



Green infrastructure networks

9.4 The South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Report indicated that there is a deficit of local green spaces in Sturminster Marshall village.⁵⁴ Further, the Local Green Spaces Report for Sturminster Marshall⁵⁵ identifies a number of green spaces, listed below:

- Bartons Ground
- Charborough Green
- Churchill Close

⁵⁴ South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Steering Group (2010): 'South East Dorset Green Infrastructure' [online] available at: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/306647/Evidence+and+Opportunities+Study.pdf/907bbb78-9e15-bec5-c0cf-1e6b9f30dcd7>

⁵⁵ East Dorset District Council (2007): 'Open Space Study' [online] available at: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/285921/EDDC+Sturminster+Marshall+LNA.pdf/5de5c840-9aec-2e93-0cdf-50c7f1fdd72b>

- Market Place (Maypole Green)
- Stocks Green
- Timber Green
- Trafalgar Green
- The Old Railway Lane
- Walnut Tree Field

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

9.5 The Dorset JSNA⁵⁶ details how East Dorset performs against specific health indicators, in comparison to other 'localities' in Dorset (defined as groupings of middle super output areas (MSOAs)), during childhood and adolescence, adulthood and senior years, presented below:

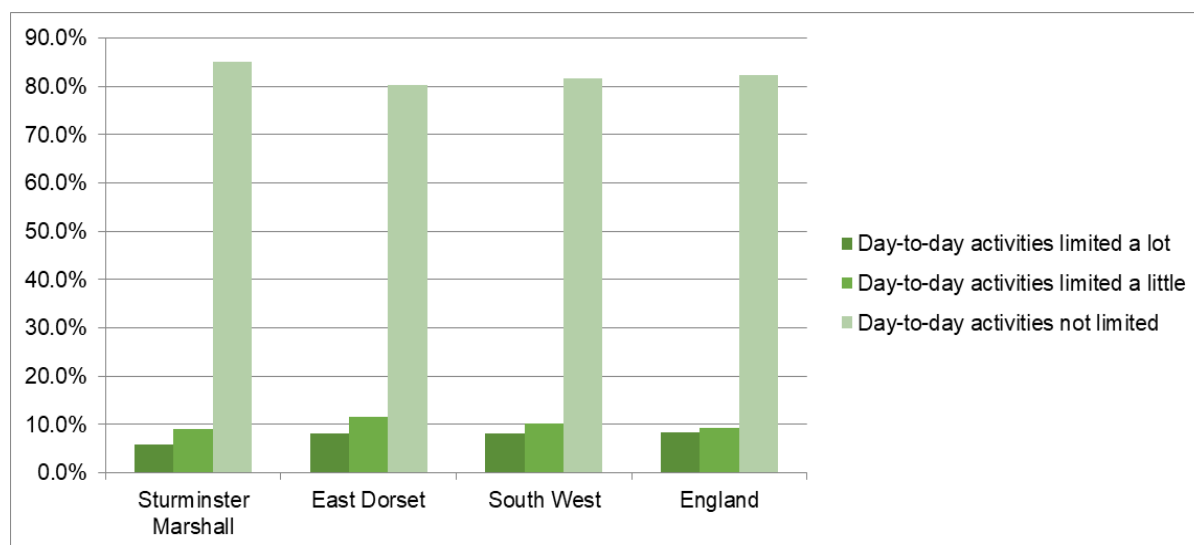
- East Dorset has the 4th highest percentage of births that are of low weight across the 13 Dorset localities.
- The rate of admissions for injuries in under 5s varies considerably across the 11 areas within East Dorset.
- East Dorset has the 3rd lowest rate of hospital admissions for under 15s in the Dorset localities.
- Modelled estimates of obese adults, healthy eating and binge drinking in adults all suggest that the areas within East Dorset are all similar to England as a whole.
- East Dorset has a significantly better (lower) score for older people in deprivation than England.
- East Dorset has (significantly) similar to England levels of expected new cancer cases and the joint 2nd lowest of the 13 Dorset Localities.
- In the East Dorset locality the prevalence of diabetes has increased in line with national trends.

Indicators of health and wellbeing

9.6 As shown in **Figure 9.2** overleaf, the majority of residents in the Plan area with long term health conditions are not limited in their day-to-day activities (85.1%), higher than comparative figures for East Dorset (80.3%) and England as a whole (82.4%).

⁵⁶ Public Health Dorset (2020): 'East Dorset locality profile 2020 template' [online] available at: <https://www.publichealthdorset.org.uk/intelligence/localities/2020-locality-profiles/2020-01-20-draft-east-dorset-narrative-based-on-template-v9.pdf>

Table 9.2 Long-term health category



Health services

9.7 Medical provision within the village is poor. There are no GPs within Sturminster Marshall, with the closest GP surgeries located in Corfe Mullen and Wimborne Minster, though some residents do use Blandford GPs or those in Bere Regis. Those on Wimborne Road (Jubilee Cross) use Lytchett Matravers.

Future baseline

9.8 In light of the low medical provision within the Plan area, the accessibility of development to suitable services will be particularly important in terms of supporting resident health and wellbeing. The importance of local services and facilities, and access to open green spaces and recreational areas has been further highlighted through the ongoing pandemic. These factors are more likely to be appropriately considered and addressed through planned development rather than unplanned development.

Key Issues

9.9 Following the consideration of the baseline information and policy context review, the following key issues within the Neighbourhood Plan area are identified in relation to health and wellbeing:

- Health indicators through the 2011 Census suggest that general health in the Plan area is very good, and that disabled residents are mostly not limited in terms of their activities.
- The SMNP could also seek improvements to the public realm which maximise social inclusion and address any existing infrastructure/ mobility issues for more vulnerable residents.

SEA Framework

9.10 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective(s) and assessment question(s).

| SEA Objective | Assessment questions to consider for the allocations / proposals within the SMNP |
|--|--|
| Health and Wellbeing | |
| <p>Improve the health and wellbeing of residents within the SMNP area.</p> | <p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health, and community facilities, for all age groups? • Provide and enhance community access to open green spaces? • Promote the use of healthier modes of travel, including active travel networks? • Improve access to neighbouring centres and their healthcare services? • Improve access to the countryside for recreational use? • Avoiding any negative impacts to the quality and extent of existing recreational assets, such as formal or informal footpaths? |

10. Transportation

Focus of theme

- Transport infrastructure
- Traffic flows and congestion
- Accessibility
- Car ownership
- Travel to work

Policy Context

10.1 **Table 10.1** below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan.

Table 10.1 Plans, policies, and strategies reviewed in relation to transportation

| Document title | Year of publication |
|--|---------------------|
| <u>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</u> | 2021 |
| <u>The Transport Investment Strategy – Moving Britain Ahead</u> | 2017 |
| <u>Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan (2011- 2026)</u> | 2012 |
| <u>Dorset Council Local Plan (DCLP)</u> | 2021 |
| <u>East Dorset and Christchurch Local Plan Part 1- Core Strategy</u> | 2014 |
| <u>East Dorset and Christchurch Local Plan Review</u> | 2019 |

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

- The SMNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which seeks the consideration of transport issues from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals to address any known issues and maximise opportunities to increase accessibility, particularly by walking, cycling and public transport. Larger developments are expected to be delivered in areas which are or can be made sustainable by limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. However, it is recognised that sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural environments.
- National transport strategies set out investment priorities which ultimately all seek to improve the connectivity, effectiveness and reliability of transport networks, whilst reducing impacts on the natural environment (including through decarbonisation). Furthermore, they place great emphasis on making cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journeys. This includes investment in new and upgraded infrastructure, changing perceptions, and increasing safety.

- The Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan 2011-2026, published by Dorset Council sets out proposed transport solutions for the County up to 2026, with a focus on enabling sustainable economic growth. Alongside the Local Plan and Core Strategy, the SMNP will be required to be in general conformity with the strategic policy aims of the Transport Plan.
- The SMNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the policies of adopted Core Strategy and the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan.

Baseline Summary

Current baseline

Rail network

10.3 There are no train stations within the Plan area. The closest available station is Hamworthy Station, located 8km from Sturminster Marshall (in the neighbouring town of Poole), where trains operated by South Western Railway provide services to London, Wareham and Weymouth.

10.4 Most residents would go to Poole for services eastwards to London via Southampton or westwards to Weymouth via Dorchester.

Bus network

10.5 There are two regular bus services which serve Sturminster Marshall⁵⁷:

- The 88 service, operated by Dorset Community Transport, which runs a circular route through Wimborne and Colehill, operating on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays until the mid-afternoon.
- The X8 service, operated by Damory Coaches, which runs through Poole to Blandford, operating on weekdays and weekends (hourly).

Road network and congestion

10.6 The main settlement of Sturminster Marshall is predominantly served by the main High Street and some smaller residential roads. At the local level, the results of the residents' survey for the SMNP Consultation⁵⁸ indicated that there was a need to improve traffic management and road safety by reducing speeding and the volume of traffic, particularly on the High Street.

10.7 With regards to the strategic road network, the A350 (north-south, and the route to the M4) and A31 (east-west) run through the Plan area, and connect Sturminster Marshall to larger service areas such as Bournemouth, Southampton and Winchester in the east, Bath in the north, and Dorchester to the west. The South East Dorset Multi-Modal Transport Study (2012)⁵⁹ highlighted a number of challenges in the wider area with regards to the strategic road network. These key findings directly relating to the Plan area are detailed below.

⁵⁷ Bustimes (n.d.): 'Sturminster Marshall' [online] available at: <https://bustimes.org/localities/sturminster-marshall>

⁵⁸ Sturminster Neighbourhood Plan Group (2020): 'Sturminster Marshall Residents' Survey' [online] available at: <http://www.sturminstermarshall-pc.gov.uk/UserFiles/Files/Household%20Questionnaire%20Summary.pdf>

⁵⁹ Atkins (2012): 'South East Dorset Multi-Modal Transport Study' [online] available at: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/288596/South+East+Dorset+Multi-Modal+Transport+Study.pdf/1c40d941-ae9c-66a2-578c-b0efc93e67f5>

- There are persistent congestion problems on the A31.
- Inadequate north-south transport routes were raised by the wider reference group with journey time reliability problems on the A350.
- The A350 provide important links to cross-channel ports but don't provide good access for a number of villages.
- Freight was identified in the consultation as being problematic throughout the whole South East Dorset region, with HGVs using local roads.

Public rights of way network (PRoW)

10.8 With regards to the PRoW network, the Sturminster Marshall Plan area is relatively well served by footpaths in the village centre, but less so in the western part of the Plan area. There are regularly-used paths (mostly by people from neighbouring parishes) close to Great Coll Wood in the western part of the parish.

Figure 10.1 PRoWs in Sturminster Marshall⁶⁰

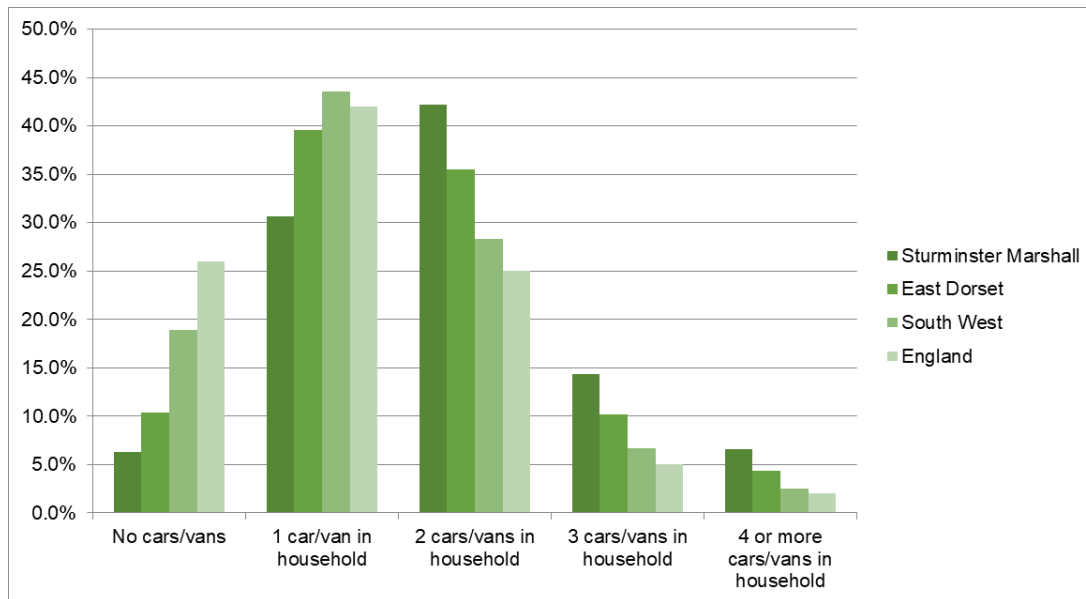


Access to cars and vans

10.9 As shown in **Figure 10.2** overleaf, car ownership in the Plan area is high. 93.7% of residents have at least one car/van, higher than comparative figures for East Dorset (89.7%), the South West (81.1%) and England as a whole (74.0%). Of those who have cars, the majority have 2 cars/vans (35.5%).

⁶⁰ Rowmpas (2021): 'Public rights of way' [online] available at: <https://www.rowmaps.com/showmap.php?place=Thame&map=BingOS&lat=51.7482&lon=0.979488&lonew=W>

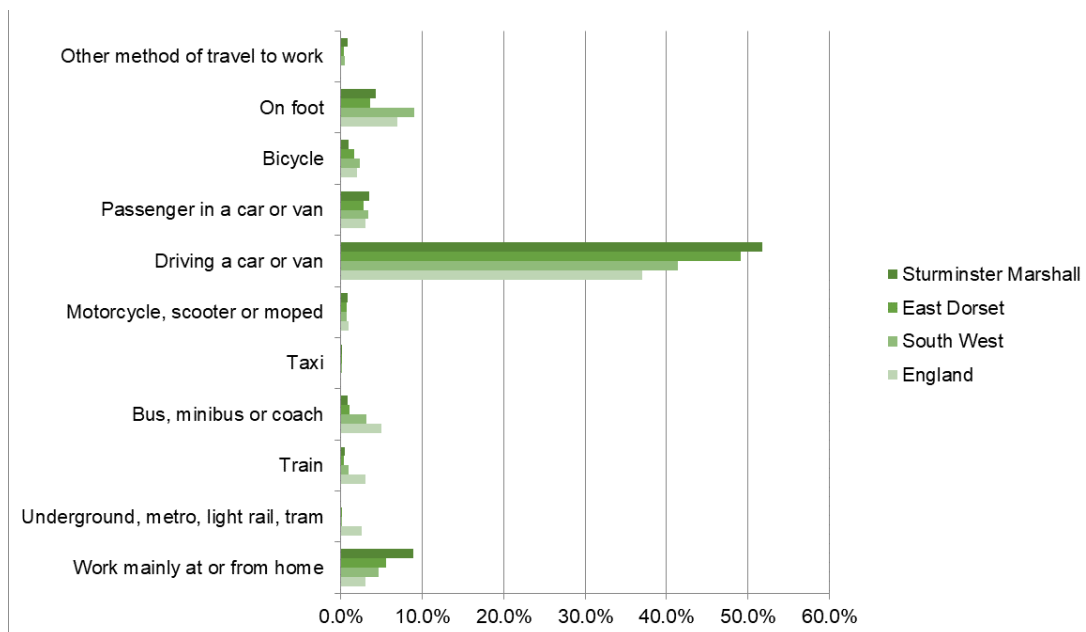
Figure 10.2 Car/van ownership



Method of travel to work

10.10 With regards to travel to work, over half of residents travel to work by car (51.8%), higher than comparative figures for East Dorset (49.1%), the South West (41.4%) and England as a whole (37.0%). Beyond this, residents choose to work mainly at or from home (8.9%), or travel on foot (4.3%).

Figure 10.3 Method of travel to work



Future baseline

10.11 Given the rural nature of the village and lack of sustainable transport options, in the absence of strategic transport interventions, growth in the SMNP area will likely increase the reliance on the private vehicle for travel. This has the potential to increase traffic and lead to additional localised issues, as detailed in the Transport Study for South East Dorset, which in turn may reduce road safety. A key concern in this respect is the High Street.

10.12 The Neighbourhood Plan can however support small-scale infrastructure improvements and active travel opportunities that seeks to maximise opportunities for pedestrian and cyclist movements. Additionally, given increasing levels of working from home seen in Sturminster Marshall in light of the recent pandemic, new development should seek to provide space and services to enable working remotely.

Key Issues

10.13 Following the consideration of the baseline information and policy context review, the following key issues within the Neighbourhood Plan area are identified in relation to transportation:

- Some parts of the Plan area, including the High Street and Station Road, are recognised locally for causing traffic and safety issues. Considering trends which favour cars/vans as the primary mode of transport and low levels of public transport use, planning should seek to maximise opportunities to reduce the need to travel, enable home working, and access a choice of sustainable transport modes where possible.
- Opportunities to improve and/ or extend active travel connections, alongside public realm improvements and urban greening within the plan area should also be sought.

SEA Framework

10.14 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective(s) and assessment question(s).

| SEA Objective | Assessment questions to consider for the allocations / proposals within the SMNP |
|--|---|
| Transportation | |
| Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel. | <p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the key objectives within the Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan to encourage more sustainable transport? • Enable sustainable transport infrastructure enhancements? • Ensure sufficient road capacity to accommodate new development? • Promote improved local connectivity and pedestrian and cyclist movement? • Facilitate on-going high levels of home and remote working? • Improve road safety? • Reduce the impact on residents from the road network? • Improve parking facilities? |

11. Next steps

Subsequent stages for the SEA process

11.1 The five stages of the SEA process⁶¹ are identified below. Scoping (the current stage) is the second stage of the SEA process.

- i. Screening;
- ii. Scoping;
- iii. Assess reasonable alternatives, with a view to informing preparation of the draft plan;
- iv. Assess the draft plan and prepare the Environmental Report with a view to informing consultation and plan finalisation;
- v. Publish a 'statement' at the time of plan adoption in order to 'tell the story' of plan-making / SEA (and present 'measures concerning monitoring').

11.2 The next stage will involve appraising reasonable alternatives for the Sturminster Marshall Neighbourhood Plan. This will consider alternative policy approaches for the plan, including, if appropriate, alternative spatial strategies. The findings of the appraisal of these alternatives will be fed back to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group so that they might be taken into account when preparing the draft plan.

11.3 Once the draft 'pre-submission' plan has been prepared by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, it will be subjected to SEA and the Environmental Report prepared for Regulation 14 consultation alongside it.

11.4 Following subsequent submission to Dorset Council, and consultation, the Neighbourhood Plan will be put forward for Independent Examination.

Consultation on the Scoping Report

11.5 At this scoping stage, the SEA Regulations require consultation with statutory consultation bodies. The statutory consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England. The Scoping Report has been released to these three statutory consultees.

11.6 Consultees are invited to comment on the content of this Scoping Report; in particular, the evidence base for the SEA, the identified key issues, and the proposed SEA Framework.

11.7 The consultation period runs from 27th September 2021 to 1st November 2021. Comments on the Scoping Report should be sent to:

Ryan Putt, Environmental Consultant, AECOM

Email address: ryan.putt@aecom.com

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

⁶¹ In accordance with the stages set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance

Appendix A Proposed SEA framework

The proposed SEA objectives and assessment questions for each of the themes explored through **Chapters 2 to 10** are pulled together into one table below, presenting the proposed SEA framework.

For the purposes of this SEA, it is proposed that the air quality theme is **scoped out** of the proposed framework.

| SEA theme | SEA objective | Assessment questions (will the option/ proposal help to...) |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| Biodiversity and geodiversity | Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the integrity of the internationally, nationally and locally designated biodiversity sites located within proximity to the Neighbourhood Plan area? • Protect and enhance priority habitats and species? • Achieve biodiversity and environmental net gains and support the delivery of ecosystem services and multifunctional green infrastructure networks? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity? |
| Climate change | Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the SMNP area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of journeys made? • Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling and public transport? • Increase the number of new developments meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria? • Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources? • Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources? • Support proposals for EV charging infrastructure? |
| | Support the resilience of the SMNP area to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that inappropriate development does not take place in areas at higher risk of flooding, considering the likely future effects of climate change? • Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the SMNP area to support |

| SEA theme | SEA objective | Assessment questions (will the option/ proposal help to...) |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| | | <p>adaptation to the potential effects of climate change?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainably manage water runoff and drainage? • Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are considered through new development in the SMNP area? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks? |
| Landscape | Protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape and villagescape. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to protect and enhance the integrity of the Cranbourne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB? • Seek to prevent detriment to the openness of the Bournemouth Green Belt? • Protect and/ or enhance local landscape and villagescape character, key sensitivities and quality of place? • Conserve and enhance local identity, diversity and settlement character? • Protect visual amenity and locally important views in the Plan area? • Retain and enhance landscape and villagescape features that contribute to the rural setting of Sturminster Marshall? |
| Historic environment | Protect, conserve, and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the SMNP area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their settings? • Protect the integrity and the historic setting of key finds of cultural heritage interest as listed in the Dorset HER? • Support the undertaking of early archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the SMNP area? |
| Land, soil and water resources | Ensure the efficient and effective use of land. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid the loss of high-quality agricultural land resources? • Affect the integrity of waste infrastructure within and surrounding the SMNP area? |

| SEA theme | SEA objective | Assessment questions (will the option/ proposal help to...) |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote any opportunities for the use of previously developed land, or vacant/ underutilised land? Protect the integrity of mineral resources? |
| | Protect and enhance water quality and use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid impacts on water quality? Support improvements to water quality? Ensure appropriate drainage and mitigation is delivered alongside development? Protect waterbodies from pollution, including NVZs and drinking water safeguard zones? Maximise water efficiency and opportunities for water harvesting and/ or water recycling? |
| Population and communities | Ensure growth in the village is aligned with the needs of all residents and capacity of the settlement and social infrastructure, improving accessibility, anticipating future needs and specialist requirements, and supporting cohesive and inclusive communities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, and affordable housing? Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes? Meet the needs of all sectors of the community? Provide flexible and adaptable homes that meet people's needs? Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including community infrastructure which meets the needs of the local population? Encourage and promote social cohesion and active involvement of local people in community activities? Promote the use of sustainable building techniques, including use of sustainable building materials in construction? Minimise fuel poverty and encourage developments which maximise energy efficiency? |
| Health and Wellbeing | Improve the health and wellbeing of residents within the SMNP area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health, and community facilities, for all age groups? Provide and enhance community access to open green spaces? Promote the use of healthier modes of travel, including active travel networks? Improve access to neighbouring centres and their healthcare services? |

| SEA theme | SEA objective | Assessment questions (will the option/ proposal help to...) |
|----------------|--|---|
| Transportation | Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to the countryside for recreational use? • Avoiding any negative impacts to the quality and extent of existing recreational assets, such as formal or informal footpaths? • Support the key objectives within the Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan to encourage more sustainable transport? • Enable sustainable transport infrastructure enhancements? • Ensure sufficient road capacity to accommodate new development? • Promote improved local connectivity and pedestrian and cyclist movement? • Facilitate on-going high levels of home and remote working? • Improve road safety? • Reduce the impact on residents from the road network? • Improve parking facilities? |

aecom.com