

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan

Environmental Report to accompany the submission version of the
Neighbourhood Plan

May 2024

Quality information

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Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Name	Position
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Non-Technical Summary

What is a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)?

AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan.

The Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared under the Localism Act 2011¹ and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012², and in the context of the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan³.

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 a view to avoiding and mitigating potential negative impacts and maximising the potential for positive effects. Through this approach, the SEA for the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan seeks to maximise the emerging plan's contribution to sustainable development.

What is the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan?

The neighbourhood area lies within the area administered by the Local Planning Authority of Dorset Council and the neighbourhood plan is being prepared in the context of the adopted Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy (2014)⁴, the saved policies of the 2002 East Dorset Local Plan (saved policies)⁵, the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole, and Dorset Waste Plan (2019)⁶, and the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole, and Dorset Mineral Sites Plan (2019)⁷.

It is also being prepared in the context of the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan (DCLP)⁸, which is expected to be adopted in 2027.

Once made, the neighbourhood plan will have material weight in planning decisions made within the neighbourhood area, alongside the Local Plan.

¹ [Localism Act 2011](#)

² [The Neighbourhood Planning \(General\) Regulations 2012](#)

³ [Dorset Council Local Plan](#)

⁴ [Christchurch and East Dorset adopted local plan 2014](#)

⁵ [East Dorset Local Plan 2002](#)

⁶ [2019 Waste Plan](#)

⁷ [Minerals Sites Plan](#)

⁸ Ibid.

The vision for the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan is:



Wimborne St. Giles is and will continue to be a unique and unspoiled village set within the beautiful countryside of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape. Over the next 15 years there will be some limited new development - housing, business premises and infrastructure – to help sustain and support a thriving and inclusive community of all ages, designed, and located in a manner that is in keeping with the character of the village and surrounding countryside.

Vision for the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan



The vision for the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan is underpinned by five objectives as follows:

- To sustain local facilities and services, such as the pub, shop, school, and village hall.
- To allow some small-scale and sensitively located development.
- To have a mix of house types and tenures (renting and owner occupied) suitable for young families, Estate workers, and for the elderly as people's needs change.
- To make sure that any development is in keeping with the current style and 'feel' of the current village.
- To make sure that development is mainly on either previously built-on sites, some gaps in the current village footprint or on outlying sites.

Scope of the SEA

The scope of the SEA is summarised by a framework of themes and objectives (with supporting assessment questions) which provide a methodological framework for the assessment. The scope of the SEA was consulted on in March 2022, and a summary framework as agreed through consultation is provided below (with a more detailed framework provided in Table 3.2 in the main report).

SEA theme	SEA objective
Biodiversity and geodiversity	Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.
Climate change	Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the neighbourhood area. Support the resilience of the neighbourhood area to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding.
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape and villagescape.
Historic environment	Protect, conserve, and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.

SEA theme	SEA objective
Land, soil and water resources	Ensure the efficient and effective use of land. Protect and enhance water quality and use the manage water resources in a sustainable manner.
Community wellbeing	Ensure growth in the neighbourhood area is aligned with the needs of all residents, improving accessibility, anticipating future needs and specialist requirements, and supporting cohesive and inclusive communities
Transportation	Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.

Consideration of reasonable alternatives for the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan

In accordance with the SEA Regulations the Environmental Report must include:

- An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with; and
- The likely significant effects on the environment associated with alternatives and an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach considering the alternatives.

The main report summarises the strategic and spatial context for the neighbourhood plan which outlines the parameters for reasonable alternatives. Alternatives focus on addressing an issue which is of central importance to the Plan, namely the allocation of land for housing. This discussion has identified the following options for the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan:

- Option A: Deliver housing on small-scale sites only (sites delivering less than 5 homes). This option has the potential to deliver a total of 16 homes across ten different sites.
- Option B: Deliver housing on larger-scale sites only (sites delivering more than 20 homes). This option would allocate Site WSG006 (Garden Housing Development opposite Park Lane) alone to deliver up to 22 homes.
- Option C: Deliver housing through a combination of smaller and larger sites. This option has the potential to deliver a total of up to 38 homes across eleven different sites, it could maximise growth in Wimborne St Giles (potentially allocating all available options).

These three options form the alternatives for assessment, and summary findings are reported below.

In terms of methodology, for each of the options, the assessment examines likely significant effects on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability themes and objectives identified through scoping (see Table 3.2 in the main report) as a methodological framework. Where appropriate neutral effects, or uncertainty will also be noted. Red indicates significant negative effects, whilst green indicates significant positive effects. Grey marks uncertainty. Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, where there is a need to rely on assumptions to reach a conclusion on a significant effect, this is made explicit in the appraisal text.

Efforts are also made to comment on the relative merits of the alternatives in more general terms and to indicate **a rank of preference**. This is helpful, as it enables a distinction to be made between the alternatives even where it is not possible to distinguish between them in terms of 'significant effects'. Numbers are used to highlight the option or options that are preferred from an SEA perspective with 1 performing the best. An 'equals' sign ("=") indicates options are ranked on par with each other and occurs when no significant/ meaningful differences can be drawn between options. Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted considering the criteria presented within Regulations.⁹ So, for example, account is taken of the duration, frequency, and reversibility of effects.

Summary findings		Option A	Option B	Option C
Biodiversity and geodiversity	Significant effect?	No	No	No
	Rank	2	1	1
Climate change	Significant effect?	No	No	No
	Rank	2	1	2
Landscape	Significant effect?	No	Yes - negative	Yes - negative
	Rank	1	2	2
Historic environment	Significant effect?	Yes - negative	Yes - negative	Yes - negative
	Rank	=	=	=
Land, soil, and water resources	Significant effect?	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	3
Community wellbeing	Significant effect?	No	Yes - positive	Yes - positive
	Rank	3	2	1
Transportation	Significant effect?	No	No	No
	Rank	3	1	2

The Parish Council have identified that following this assessment their preferred approach to allocate all available and suitable sites, except Site WSG010 for the following reasons:

The mix of sites should help to meet local housing needs, sustain local facilities and services, and attract new / younger people and families to the village, together with opportunities to work in the local area.

The site locations have been broadly supported by residents through previous consultations. Site WSG010 has been removed as an allocation following detailed consideration of the strong objections received from Dorset Council through Regulation 14 consultation.

⁹ Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 20004.

Most of the site allocations are proposed as small sites for one or two dwellings, which can be brought forward as needed, with dwelling types / tenure likely to reflect the site conditions and anticipated needs of the Estate and wider community but would be unlikely to deliver the affordable housing needed. The single, larger site can deliver the affordable housing, as well as a cluster of homes suited for some of the more elderly residents looking to down-size from their current homes in the area, and potentially some Estate rented homes, which would more likely come forward in a single phase of development (rather than spread over the plan period).

Appraisal of the pre-submission version of the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan

Chapter 5 presents a detailed appraisal of the draft neighbourhood plan being consulted on and reaches the following conclusions:

Overall, the only significant effects predicted at this stage are considered likely to be positive in nature and relate to the 'community wellbeing' SEA theme. This reflects the efforts of the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan to identify land to deliver new housing of a range of types, tenures, and sizes over the plan period. These efforts however ultimately have negative implications for other SEA themes such as climate change, landscape, historic environment, land, soil, and water resources, and transportation. The policy framework seeks to ensure that the impacts of development are minimised, and significant impacts are likely to be avoided as a result. Residual minor negative effects are concluded in relation to these themes on this basis.

Minor positive effects are concluded as most likely in relation to biodiversity, reflecting measures at some of the site allocations to improve biodiversity features and connectivity.

Some uncertainty is still noted in relation to the historic environment SEA theme. It is recognised that development sites are proposed which are constrained by sensitive heritage settings and involve the conversion of historic barns. Whilst the policy framework seeks to ensure development avoids effects in relation to the significance of designated and non-designated assets and their settings, uncertainty remains in the absence of detailed site proposals and early archaeological investigations.

It is further recognised that the area is not supported by sustainable transport networks which is a key issue for growth in relation to both the climate change and transportation themes. For this reason, the growth required for the area will contribute to increases in greenhouse gas emissions, however, the Plan seeks to limit the extent of these impacts through policies which support climate change mitigation. In addition, the Plan policy provisions will help the neighbourhood area adapt to the effects of climate change.

No recommendations are made at this stage. The Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan has an intention to allocate land to meet local housing needs which will lead to largely unavoidable residual impacts reflecting the rural nature of the area and its lack of supporting infrastructure and sustainable transport connections.

Next steps

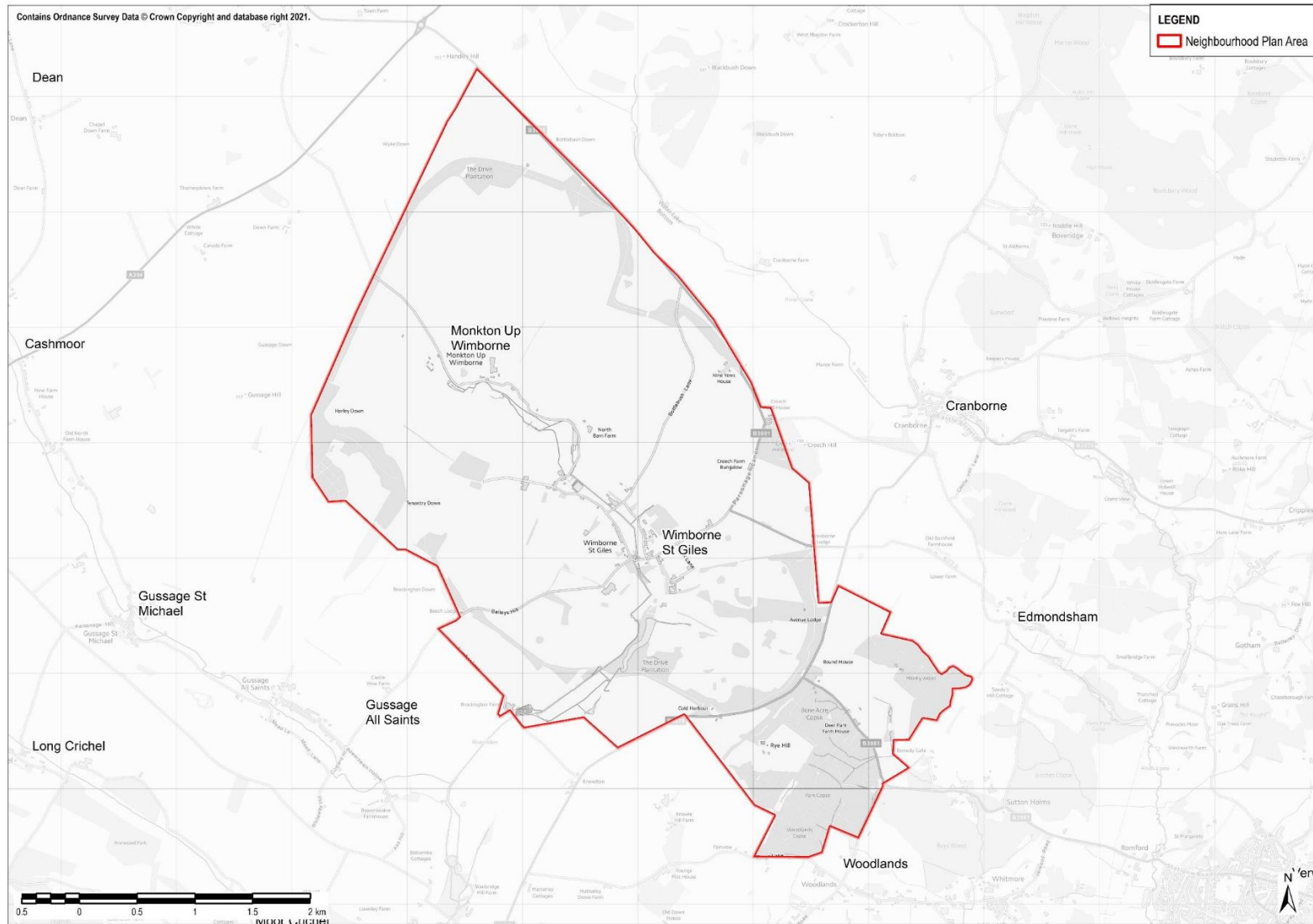
This SEA Environmental Report will accompany the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan for submission to the Local Planning Authority, Dorset Council, who will arrange further consultation (Regulation 16) and then Independent Examination.

At Independent Examination, the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with local planning policy.

If the Independent Examination is favourable, the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to a referendum, organised by Dorset Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan, then it will be 'made'. Once made, the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the Development Plan for the area.

The SEA regulations require 'measures envisaged concerning monitoring' to be outlined in this report. This refers to the monitoring of likely significant effects of Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan to identify any unforeseen effects early and take remedial action as appropriate.

It is anticipated that monitoring of effects of the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan will be undertaken by Dorset Council as part of the process of preparing its Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). No significant negative effects are considered likely in the implementation of the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan that would warrant more stringent monitoring over and above that already undertaken by Dorset Council.



Document Path: V:\na.aecomnet.com\ifs\EMEA\Basingstoke\UKBAS1\Legacy\UKBAS1\FILW0014400 - Management Services\5004 - Information Systems\60571087_Neighbourhood_Plan_CRB_2018_2022\02_Maps\Wimborne St Giles NP\Figure 1.1 Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan Area.mxd

Figure 1.1 Wimborne St Giles neighbourhood area

1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 The Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared under the Localism Act 2011¹⁰ and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012¹¹, and in the context of the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan¹². The neighbourhood area was designated in 2012 and is depicted in Figure 1.1.
- 1.3 The key information relating to the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan is presented below in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Key information relating to the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan

Name of Responsible Authority	Knowlton Parish Council
Title of Plan	Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan
Subject	Neighbourhood planning
Purpose	The Wimborne St Giles 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 adopted and emerging Dorset Council Local Plan. The Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan will be used to guide and shape development within the neighbourhood area.
Timescale	2021-2038
Area covered by the plan	The Wimborne St Giles neighbourhood area covers the area set out in Figure 1.1 above. The neighbourhood area focuses on landownership and community proximity as opposed to parish boundaries. As such, whilst the neighbourhood area is mostly covered by the area administered by Knowlton Parish Council, it also includes smaller areas of Cranborne & Edmondsham Parish and the Vale of Allen Parish.
Summary of content	The Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan will set out a vision, strategy, and a range of policies for the neighbourhood area.
Plan contact point	Jo Witherden, Neighbourhood Plan consultant jo@dorsetplanning.co.uk

¹⁰ [Localism Act 2011](#)

¹¹ [The Neighbourhood Planning \(General\) Regulations 2012](#)

¹² [Dorset Council Local Plan](#)

SEA explained

- 1.4 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 a view to avoiding and mitigating potential negative impacts and maximising the potential for positive effects. Through this approach, the SEA for the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan seeks to maximise the emerging plan's contribution to sustainable development.
- 1.5 Two key procedural requirements of the SEA Regulations are that:
1. 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.
 2. A report (the 'Environmental Report') is published for consultation alongside the draft plan (i.e., the draft Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan) that presents outcomes from the environmental assessment (i.e., discusses 'likely significant effects' that would result from plan implementation) and reasonable alternatives.
- 1.6 SEA scoping consultation is complete (more details are provided in Chapter 3), and this report is the SEA Environmental Report, it is published for consultation alongside the submission version of the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan.

Structure of this Environmental Report

- 1.7 This document is the SEA Environmental Report for the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan and hence needs to answer all the questions listed in Table 1.2, with a view to providing the information required by the SEA Regulations.

Table 1.2: Questions that must be answered by the SEA Environmental Report to meet the regulatory¹³ requirements

Environmental Report question	In line with the SEA Regulations, the report must include... ¹⁴
What is the plan seeking to achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan.
What is the sustainability 'context'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship with other relevant plans and programmes. • The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level. • Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance.
What's the scope of the SEA?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan. • The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected. • Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance.
What is the sustainability 'baseline'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan. • The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected. • Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance.
What are the key issues and objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key problems/ issues and objectives that should be a focus of (i.e., provide a 'framework' for) assessment.
What has plan-making/SEA involved up to this point?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with. • The likely significant effects associated with alternatives. • Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives appraisal/ a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the current version of the plan.
What are the assessment findings at this stage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The likely significant effects associated with the submission version of the plan. • The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the plan.
What happens next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The next steps for the plan making / SEA process.

¹³ Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

¹⁴ NB this column does not quote directly from Schedule II of the Regulations. Rather, it reflects a degree of interpretation.

2. Local Plan context and Neighbourhood Plan vision

Local Plan context

- 2.1 The neighbourhood area lies within the area administered by the Local Planning Authority of Dorset Council and is being prepared in the context of the adopted Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy (2014)¹⁵, the saved policies of the 2002 East Dorset Local Plan (saved policies)¹⁶, the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole, and Dorset Waste Plan (2019)¹⁷, and the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole, and Dorset Mineral Sites Plan (2019)¹⁸.
- 2.2 It is also being prepared in the context of the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan (DCLP)¹⁹, which is expected to be adopted in 2027. Issues and options consultation for the emerging DCLP was undertaken in January 2021²⁰. The information from this consultation will be used to inform a new-style Dorset Council Local Plan, for which scoping and early engagement is expected to commence later this year.
- 2.3 Wimborne St Giles is not explicitly listed within the 'Network and Hierarchy of Centres' in the emerging DCLP, and due to its size, is described as a 'Tier 4' settlement, which are *'typically smaller villages which have a population of less than 500 and few facilities'*.
- 2.4 In terms of the spatial strategy for the emerging DCLP, 'smaller villages' will not be the focus for growth in rural areas, and *'development within it should accord with the policies in the neighbourhood plan, which should have already taken account of 'local needs' and considered the scale of development that the village can accommodate'*. Although no indicative housing figure has been provided through the DCLP, Knowlton Parish Group are currently working with Dorset Council in terms of an indicative figure (30 dwellings).

¹⁵ [Christchurch and East Dorset adopted local plan 2014](#)

¹⁶ [East Dorset Local Plan 2002](#)

¹⁷ [2019 Waste Plan](#)

¹⁸ [Minerals Sites Plan](#)

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ [Dorset Council Local Plan January 2021](#)

Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan vision and objectives

2.5 The vision for the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan is:



Wimborne St. Giles is and will continue to be a unique and unspoiled village set within the beautiful countryside of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape. Over the next 15 years there will be some limited new development - housing, business premises and infrastructure – to help sustain and support a thriving and inclusive community of all ages, designed, and located in a manner that is in keeping with the character of the village and surrounding countryside.

Vision for the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan



2.6 The vision for the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan is underpinned by five objectives as follows:

- To sustain local facilities and services, such as the pub, shop, school, and village hall.
- To allow some small-scale and sensitively located development.
- To have a mix of house types and tenures (renting and owner occupied) suitable for young families, Estate workers, and for the elderly as people's needs change.
- To make sure that any development is in keeping with the current style and 'feel' of the current village.
- To make sure that development is mainly on either previously built-on sites, some gaps in the current village footprint or on outlying sites.

3. SEA scoping

Summary of SEA Scoping

- 3.1 The purpose of scoping was to outline the ‘scope’ of the SEA by setting out the following information:
- A context review of the key environmental and sustainability objectives of national, regional, and local plans and strategies relevant to the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan.
 - Baseline data against which the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan can be assessed.
 - The key sustainability issues for the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan; and
 - An ‘SEA framework’ of objectives against which the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan can be assessed.
- 3.2 The key sustainability issues and SEA framework (Table 3.1) for the Neighbourhood Plan are provided below, whilst the detailed context review and baseline data is provided in Appendix A.
- 3.3 The SEA Regulations require that: *“when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies”*. In England, the consultation bodies are Natural England, the Environment Agency, and Historic England²¹. An SEA Scoping Report was shared with these authorities in March 2022.
- 3.4 The comments provided by the consultees on the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan SEA Scoping Report, and how they have been addressed, can be read in Table 3.2.

Key sustainability issues

Air Quality

- The main pollutant of concern in the neighbourhood area is nitrogen dioxide and this largely relates to the effects of emissions from vehicles, particularly within areas prone to congestion.
- The designated sites for biodiversity in the wider vicinity of East Dorset are sensitive to air pollution issues,
- The Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan presents opportunities to improve accessibility and support more local and sustainable journeys/connections.
- In the absence of any specific air quality issues (i.e., Air Quality Management Areas 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.

²¹ These consultation bodies were selected *“by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, [they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effect of implementing plans and programmes”* (SEA Directive, Article 6(3)).

Biodiversity and geodiversity

- There are a number of nationally designated sites in Wimborne St Giles, and it will therefore be important for planning to avoid impacts to these areas wherever possible.
- Several sites within Wimborne St Giles are noted for their locally significant biodiversity offer through their presence of key habitats, species, and other vegetation. These areas should be retained and enhanced in development.
- There are priority habitats within the neighbourhood area which should be preserved wherever possible during the development process.
- New development provides opportunities to enhance ecological connections in the neighbourhood area and deliver demonstrable biodiversity net gains.

Climate change

- Although surface water flood risk in the Plan area is generally low, fluvial flood risk is high in areas adjacent to the River Allen, which passes through the village centre. The Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan 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 Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan provides opportunities to guide development towards the more accessible locations in the neighbourhood area and require local infrastructure (including walking and cycling infrastructure) improvements where appropriate.
- The Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan 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.

Landscape

- The entirety of the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan area falls within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The neighbourhood plan should seek to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the AONB.
- The Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan area is within the Stour and Avon Tributary Valleys and the Southern Downland Belt Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). The neighbourhood plan should seek to support the distinctive characteristics of these character areas.
- The south easternmost section of the neighbourhood area falls within the South East Dorset Green Belt.

Historic environment

- Wimborne St Giles contains a wealth of designated heritage assets, including six scheduled monuments, a Grade II* Registered Park and Garden and 22 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 Wimborne St Giles Conservation Area Appraisal highlights historic sensitivities in the neighbourhood area with regards to building style, structure, and form.
- There are numerous features listed on the Dorset HER. There are particular concentrations of features dating from the prehistoric and Bronze Age periods.
- Two scheduled monuments and one Grade II* listed building have been identified as 'at risk' by Historic England.
- Wimborne St Giles' character is closely linked to its setting within the AONB landscape.

Land, soil and water resources

- The neighbourhood area has the potential to be underlain by best and most versatile (BMV) land, though a full classification of the quality of the land has not been undertaken surrounding Wimborne St Giles 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 neighbourhood area intersects waterbodies and falls within the 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.

Community wellbeing

- The services, facilities, and amenities within the neighbourhood area supports community vitality and the quality of life of residents, with the availability of community assets essential for continued growth within the area.
- As the requirements of the working population continue to change, particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is likely to be a requirement for adaptable dwellings which can accommodate more flexible working practices.
- Housing affordability and the availability of appropriate dwellings for residents are key concerns.

- As is common with many other comparative areas, the population of the neighbourhood area is ageing.

Transportation

- The neighbourhood area is poorly linked by public transport services.
- There is no readily accessible railway service to the neighbourhood area, and bus services are limited.
- There is a high reliance on the private car to access key services and amenities.
- The recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to change travel patterns in the short, medium and (potentially) longer term.
- There is a need to promote an effective pedestrian, cycling, and movement strategy for the neighbourhood area.

SEA Framework

3.5 The SEA framework provides a way in which environmental effects can be defined and subsequently analysed based on standard ‘tests’. Each proposal within the current version of the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan will be assessed consistently using the framework.

Table 3.1: SEA framework

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment questions (will the proposal help to...)
Biodiversity and geodiversity	Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the integrity of the nationally and locally designated biodiversity sites located within proximity to the neighbourhood 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 services? • 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 neighbourhood 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?
	Support the resilience of the neighbourhood 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 neighbourhood area to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change? • Sustainably manage water runoff and drainage?

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment questions (will the proposal help to...)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are considered through new development in the neighbourhood 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 Cranborne Chase AONB and its special qualities? • Seek to prevent detriment to the openness of the South East Dorset 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?
Historic environment	Protect, conserve, and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the neighbourhood 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? • Conserve and enhance the significance of the Wimborne St Giles Conservation Area? • Protect the integrity of features listed on 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 Wimborne St Giles neighbourhood 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? • Affect the integrity of waste infrastructure within and surrounding the WNP area?
	Protect and enhance water quality and use the 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?
Community wellbeing	Ensure growth in the neighbourhood area is aligned with the needs of all residents, 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, 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, particularly the needs of an ageing population? • Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including specialist services for disabled and older people? • Encourage and promote social cohesion and active involvement of local people in community activities?

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment questions (will the proposal help to...)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate green infrastructure enhancements?
Transportation	Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote improved local connectivity and pedestrian and cyclist movement? Facilitate working from home and remote working? Improve road safety?

Table 3.2: Consultation responses relating to the SEA Scoping Report

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
<p>Historic England, Historic Places Adviser, South West (email response received on 4th May 2022)</p> <p>Thank you for your consultation email concerning the SEA scoping report for the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan (30 March 2022). This study seems to take a rigorous approach to heritage and the designated assets.</p> <p>I note that the scoping report now includes reference to the Grade II* Registered Park and Garden (listing ref: 1000723) that was previously highlighted as missing from the screening report (July 2021) by my colleague David Stuart (by email 24 August 2021).</p> <p>Aside from this observation, we have no further comments to make at this stage.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
<p>Cranborne Chase National Landscape (formerly AONB) Office, Chartered Landscape Architect (email response received on 4th May 2022)</p> <p>Before progressing to consider the eight main topic areas of the Scoping Report I should bring to your attention that a number of important features adjoin or lie just outside the Neighbourhood Plan boundary. In line with good practice, it would be appropriate for not just the SEA but also the Neighbourhood Plan to consider these features. In relation to the historic environment, I note that in the south west sector Knowlton Henge and Church are just outside of the boundary and currently have a considerable influence on environment and heritage issues. To the northwest there is a significant area adjoining the Neighbourhood Plan boundary of good semi-natural grassland and archaeological sites.</p>	<p>Comment noted – thank you for providing further context for the neighbourhood area.</p>
<p>It would appear, from the lack of reference to AONB documents, that your team are not well acquainted with the AONB's Management Plan. They should be aware that the AONB Management Plan comprises the adopted policies of the constituent local authorities for the AONB, as statutorily required by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Those policy should, of course, be a relevant consideration in the policy context for each of the SEA topic areas</p>	<p>The AONB Management Plan has been considered through the SEA.</p>

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
<p>It is noticeable that there is no mention in the Scoping Report that the Neighbourhood Plan area is within the world's 14th International Dark Sky Reserve. That is clearly an important feature, and the conservation and enhancement of dark night skies is important to both human and wildlife health. The SEA should, therefore, include a section on dark night skies and the control and reduction of light pollution. The Neighbourhood Plan Group have already been advised that they should take advantage of the opportunity within the Neighbourhood Plan to include policies for the control of light pollution and the conservation and enhancement of dark night skies. In view of the apparent lack of understanding of the statutory status of the AONB and its Management Plan I attach at Annex A the relevant information about the AONB and its national status.</p>	<p>Comment noted. The International Dark Sky Reserve and AONB Management Plan has been considered through the subsequent SEA.</p>
<p>I note that this has been scoped out and I find this a little surprising as the air quality of the AONB is generally good and of a standard that supports a wide range of lichens that are sensitive to air pollution. Changes in air quality might not breach statutorily dangerous levels but, nevertheless, could have adverse impacts on lichens which would be an adverse impact. The topic has not been covered in the next section, Biodiversity and Geodiversity, and does deserve to be addressed.</p>	<p>Noted with thanks. Potential effects for habitats, including lichen habitats, will be considered through the biodiversity and geodiversity theme.</p>
<p>The policy context documents seemed to omit some key elements, such as the AONB Management Plan, which is not mentioned. Neither is the Dorset Heathland SPD. It becomes clear later in the report that there is considerable history to the area, and it is, therefore, surprising that there is no specific mention of ancient or veteran trees, which are often characteristic of long established estates, parkland, and designed landscapes. Such ancient and veteran trees are frequently habitats for rare or scarce invertebrates and epiphytes.</p> <p>You may wish to check the plan on page 11 as the areas coloured green and indicated as 'deciduous woodland' in fact have a high proportion of coniferous species.</p>	<p>The AONB Management Plan and the Dorset Heathland SPD has been considered through the subsequent SEA. These key habitats and features are also considered through the subsequent SEA.</p>

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
<p>I note in paragraph 5.1 there is no reference to the AONB Management Plan as part of the policy context. This seems to be a significant omission as the AONB Management Plan comprises the policies of the local authority for the AONB.</p> <p>The plan on page 24 does not make it clear that the Green Belt designation overlaps the AONB designation, rather than replacing it, in the south east sector of the Neighbourhood Plan area.</p> <p>In paragraph 5.4, what is meant by the AONB being 'divided into two areas'?</p> <p>In paragraph 5.10 the AONB is a statutory designation and, therefore, 'should' ought to be changed to 'must'.</p> <p>Paragraph 5.11 the first and second bullet points should be amended to omit 'seek to'.</p> <p>A sixth bullet should be added, 'achieve the aims, objectives and policies of the AONB Management Plan?'</p>	<p>The AONB Management Plan has been included and fully considered in the subsequent SEA stages. The SEA scope has been updated.</p>
<p>I see that paragraph 6.1 does not make any reference to the AONB's Historic Landscape Characterisation nor the Historic Environment Action Plans. Those omissions miss a wide range of opportunities to focus on historic environment conservation and enhancement actions.</p> <p>As I have already mentioned, features such as Knowlton Henge and Church are adjoining and in the setting of the Neighbourhood Plan area and therefore all of those features should be taken into account.</p> <p>The plan on page 35 omits the Registered Historic Park and Garden; a significant omission.</p> <p>Paragraph 6.20 should have an additional 6th bullet point 'conserve and enhance the Registered Historic Park and Garden?'</p>	<p>The historic environment, including the named features, have been considered in the subsequent SEA stages and have been included in the assessment.</p>
<p>I note that in paragraph 7.6 that the whole of the Neighbourhood Plan area is within a nitrate vulnerable zone. It would probably be helpful to explain in a little more detail the implications of that, both for Land Management activities and topics that fall within the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
<p>Figure 8.2 does not justify the statement above it that 'most residents of the plan have at least one qualification (95.1%)'.</p> <p>The comments in paragraph 8.12 relating to village services seems open to interpretation. My understanding is that the post office and village shop only operates for short periods and that for significant periods in recent years the Bull Inn has not operated.</p>	<p>Comment noted. The community infrastructure of the neighbourhood area will be fully reviewed in the subsequent stages of the SEA.</p>

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
<p>As is the case for many small communities within this AONB, the locality is characterised by the need to have personal transport. That means the locality lacks fundamental sustainability.</p> <p>Paragraph 9.12 should have a fifth bullet point reading 'reduce the need for personal vehicle ownership?'</p>	<p>Comment noted – transportation options will be reviewed in the following SEA stages.</p>

4. Consideration of reasonable alternatives for the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan

4.1 In accordance with the SEA Regulations the Environmental Report must include:

- An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with; and
- The likely significant effects on the environment associated with alternatives and an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach considering the alternatives.

4.2 The aim here is to summarise the strategic and spatial context for the neighbourhood plan which outlines the parameters for reasonable alternatives. Alternatives focus on addressing an issue which is of central importance to the Plan, namely the allocation of land for housing. This is given the following considerations:

- Neighbourhood plan objectives, particularly the housing objectives to allow some small-scale and sensitively located development and provide a range of housing types and tenures.
- Housing growth is known to be a matter of key interest amongst residents and other stakeholders; and
- The delivery of new homes is most likely to lead to significant effects compared to other proposals within the plan. National Planning Practice Guidance is clear that SEA should focus on matters likely to give rise to significant effects.

Strategic context

4.3 In terms of the strategic context, the adopted East Dorset and Christchurch Local Plan Part 1 – Core Strategy (2014) classifies Wimborne St Giles as a ‘village’, where only very limited development will be allowed that supports the role of the settlement as a provider of services to its home community. Prior to the merger of the former local authorities in Dorset in 2019, East Dorset Council began preparing an emerging Local Plan and consulted on options for the plan in 2018. Early consultation identified a settlement boundary for the village (described as a village infill envelope) appropriate for a minimum of 30 additional dwellings over the plan period.

4.4 The recently formed Dorset Council is preparing a new Local Plan and the most recent consultation (2021) envisages that growth in smaller villages (such as Wimborne St Giles) will be delivered primarily through windfall and infill development defined by either local plan or neighbourhood plan development boundaries (Policy DEV2). Policy DEV9 links housing requirement figures for each neighbourhood area, however, it does not include an indicative figure for Wimborne St Giles as the area’s designation was agreed after the publication of that draft.

- 4.5 Knowlton Parish Council also undertook a housing needs survey back in 2017, which at that time identified 26 households with an anticipated housing need, 19 of which identified a need for affordable housing. Eight of these households were in Wimborne St Giles parish, five of which needed affordable housing. The Affordable Housing Need Register (managed by Dorset Council) identified a need for two affordable homes in the Wimborne St Giles parish in 2022. Further of note, the St Giles Estate Office identifies that as of October 2022, the Estate Office were receiving on average three enquiries a week, with a waiting list of nearly 70 families, primarily looking for 2- or 3-bedroom properties.
- 4.6 The Steering Group have also investigated likely strategic needs in the context of the emerging Dorset Local Plan and based on the first draft, it is considered likely that calculating housing needs will relate to the sum of any existing planning consents for new dwellings (standing at four as of April 2020) and an estimated windfall allowance (estimated at least 16 dwellings for the period to 2038).
- 4.7 In considering the evidence laid out, the Steering Group have agreed an appropriate aim to deliver a minimum of 30 new homes over the plan period, which should also deliver against identified affordable housing needs.

Spatial context

- 4.8 In relation to potential sites for development, a Site Options Assessment (SOA) was undertaken in 2022 assessing sites identified through the Dorset Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and sites identified locally in consultation with the community (whilst no formal call for sites exercise was undertaken). From a total of 14 sites, three were found to be unsuitable for allocation in the neighbourhood plan, due to significant site constraints (WSG011: Bottlebush Lane Bothy, WSG012: Cranborne Lodge, and WSG013: Brockington – see red sites in Figures 4.1 – 4.3). The remaining eleven sites (see amber/ green sites in Figures 4.1 – 4.3) were considered potentially suitable, subject to the mitigation of various constraints and/ or consultation with Dorset Council. The following sites are therefore considered to be in contention for allocation in the neighbourhood plan:
- WSG001: Road parallel to Coach Road near French's farmhouse (0.23ha/ 2 dwellings)
 - WSG002: Coach Road (0.21ha/ 2 dwellings)
 - WSG003: Road parallel to Coach Road (0.17ha/ 1 dwelling)
 - WSG004: Bailey's Hill (0.08ha/ 2 dwellings)
 - WSG005: Park Lane (0.08ha/ 1 dwelling)
 - WSG006: Garden Housing Development opposite Park Lane (2.43ha/ 10 - 22 dwellings)
 - WSG007: Barn to east of Wimborne St Giles (0.1ha/ 1 dwelling)
 - WSG008: North Barn (0.29ha/ 2 dwellings)
 - WSG009: Monkton Up Wimborne – East (0.23ha/ 2 dwellings)
 - WSG010: Monkton Up Wimborne – West (0.18ha/ 2 dwellings)

- WSG014: Barn in Monkton Up Wimborne (0.2ha/ 1 dwelling)

Figure 4-1: Sites assessed in the Site Options Assessment (1)



Figure 4-2: Sites assessed in the Site Options Assessment (2)

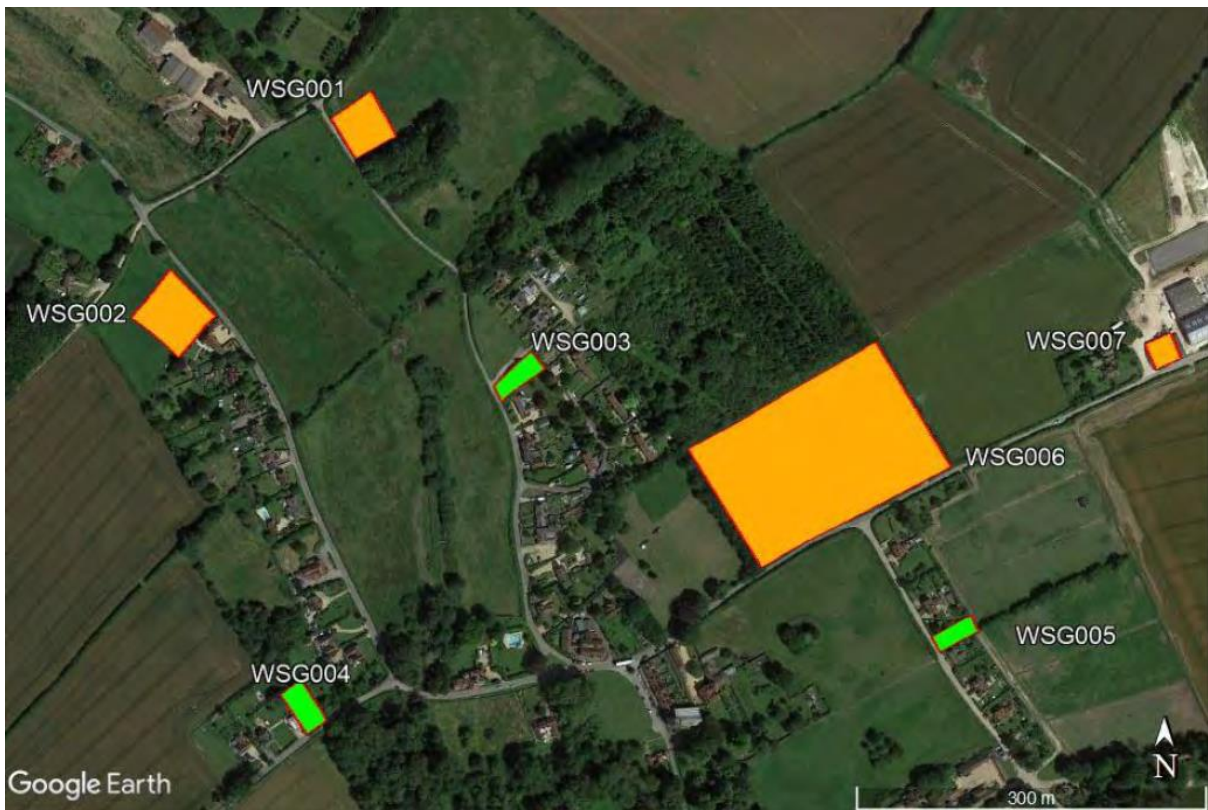


Figure 4-3: Sites assessed in the Site Options Assessment (3)

Regulation 14 consultation feedback

4.9 Feedback through consultation has not identified any new sites for consideration or any need to revise housing targets for the NP. Of note, the AONB Partnership highlight that Site WSG006 delivering 22 new homes would constitute major development within the National Landscape. Dorset Council also highlight significant concerns over this scale of development at this site given its potential impact on the settings of heritage assets.

Developing reasonable alternatives

4.10 Whilst there is no set requirement for the neighbourhood plan in terms of the number of homes to deliver, there is a clear intention to allocate land for housing and deliver an element of affordable housing. There are eleven potential sites to choose from, though notably, ten of the eleven sites are small-scale delivering no more than two homes. One site option is slightly larger with the potential to deliver up to 22 homes.

4.11 There is a need to recognise that a 'no allocations' scenario does not form part of the alternatives assessment, as there is an agreed housing target and allocating land for this forms a primary objective of the plan.

4.13 The SEA therefore seeks to consider the relative sustainability merits of the following options for the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan:

- **Option A:** Deliver housing on small-scale sites only (sites delivering less than 5 homes). This option has the potential to deliver a total of 16 homes across ten different sites.
- **Option B:** Deliver housing on larger-scale sites only (sites delivering more than 20 homes). This option would allocate Site WSG006 (Garden Housing Development opposite Park Lane) alone to deliver up to 22 homes.
- **Option C:** Deliver housing through a combination of smaller and larger sites. This option has the potential to deliver up to a total of 38 homes across eleven different sites, it could maximise growth in Wimborne St Giles (potentially allocating all available options).

4.14 These three options form the alternatives for assessment, and summary findings are reported below. It is noted that Site WSG006 could deliver a reduced number of homes that would constitute smaller scale development, but it is still felt prudent to test larger scale development options to inform plan and policy making.

Assessing reasonable alternatives

4.15 Summary findings for the assessment of the three identified options are provided below.

Methodology

4.16 For each of the options, the assessment examines likely significant effects on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability themes and objectives identified through scoping (see Table 3.2) as a methodological framework. Where appropriate neutral effects, or uncertainty will also be noted. Red indicates significant negative effects, whilst green indicates significant positive effects. Grey marks uncertainty.

4.17 Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, where there is a need to rely on assumptions to reach a conclusion on a significant effect, this is made explicit in the appraisal text.

4.18 Efforts are also made to comment on the relative merits of the alternatives in more general terms and to indicate **a rank of preference**. This is helpful, as it enables a distinction to be made between the alternatives even where it is not possible to distinguish between them in terms of 'significant effects'. Numbers are used to highlight the option or options that are preferred from an SEA perspective with 1 performing the best. An 'equals' sign ("=") indicates options are ranked on par with each other and occurs when no significant/ meaningful differences can be drawn between options.

4.19 Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted considering the criteria presented within Regulations.²² So, for example, account is taken of the duration, frequency, and reversibility of effects.

²² Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 20004.

Summary findings		Option A	Option B	Option C
Biodiversity and geodiversity	Significant effect?	No	No	No
	Rank	2	1	1
Climate change	Significant effect?	No	No	No
	Rank	2	1	2
Landscape	Significant effect?	No	Yes - negative	Yes - negative
	Rank	1	2	2
Historic environment	Significant effect?	Yes - negative	Yes - negative	Yes - negative
	Rank	=	=	=
Land, soil, and water resources	Significant effect?	No	No	No
	Rank	1	2	3
Community wellbeing	Significant effect?	No	Yes - positive	Yes - positive
	Rank	3	2	1
Transportation	Significant effect?	No	No	No
	Rank	3	1	2

Biodiversity and geodiversity

- 4.20 None of the sites intersect or are immediately constrained by designated biodiversity sites and are not expected to lead to impacts in relation to Sites of Special Scientific Interest outside of the neighbourhood area. A separate Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) process will determine likely significant effects in relation to internationally designated sites, though the overall scale and location of development under any of the options is not deemed likely to lead to significant impacts at this stage. There is a widespread network of habitats through the neighbourhood area but none of the sites under the options being considered would lead to direct habitat loss. On the contrary, biodiversity net gains at development sites have the potential to contribute to expanding and enhancing this network. Notably, the larger development site being considered under Options B and C provide an opportunity to expand habitat links to the south and southeast.
- 4.21 Overall, no significant effects are considered likely under any option, and no significant differences are drawn between the options. Options B and C are considered to rank marginally better than Option A, given the identified opportunity to target biodiversity net gains towards expanding habitat links.

Climate change

- 4.22 In relation to flood risk, only two of the small sites are somewhat constrained, with Site WSG014 lying adjacent to an area of medium fluvial flood risk (where

future flood risk should be considered), and Site WSG002 intersecting an area of surface water flood risk along its south-eastern boundary. These sites are included under Options A and C and mitigation would be required in development proposals.

- 4.23 As a small village with limited service and facility provisions, it will be important to locate development in the most accessible areas, which promote local active transport options in daily journeys such as the school run. In this respect allocating the single large site under Option B performs notably well. Despite this, it is recognised that future residents are likely to continue trends which favour the private vehicle to access a wider range of goods and services beyond the neighbourhood area.
- 4.24 Overall, whilst no significant effects are considered likely under any of the options, Option B is considered to rank marginally more favourably than the remaining options overall, given that it avoids development near areas of flood risk and is conveniently located to provide good access to the local service offer.

Landscape

- 4.25 Recognising the sensitive landscape setting of Wimborne St Giles located within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape (Formerly AONB - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) the options differ in two key ways. Firstly, by the distribution of growth, and secondly, by scale of growth. Whilst Option A distributes growth more widely through the neighbourhood area, no single site would deliver more than two homes. It is likely that such low growth at sites could be more readily integrated with the existing landscape whilst retaining key landscape features that contribute to overall character (including key views). Option B proposes a single larger site, minimising the dispersal of growth through the neighbourhood area, but delivering up to 22 homes on a single site at the eastern settlement edge. Consultation feedback from the AONB Partnership identify this site would constitute major development within the National Landscape. Development would provide a continued urban link between West View and Park Lane and has much greater potential to impact upon views to and from the east, though these impacts could likely be avoided with mitigation.
- 4.26 In recognition of the above, significant impacts cannot be ruled out at this stage (pre-mitigation) in relation to Option B (and thus inherently Option C also, though recognising this relates to the larger site allocation included). However, it is likely that mitigation considerations could reduce the significance of the likely effects under Option B (and Option C). Significant effects are considered far less likely under Option A which limits growth at any given location to no more than two dwellings. For this reason, Option A is ranked more favourably than Options B and C.

Historic environment

- 4.27 Designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings are constraints to development under all options. Notably, Option A includes sites within the conservation area, and Option B proposes a single slightly larger growth site adjacent to the conservation area. Option C, by maximising growth across all sites will cumulatively lead to greater potential impacts. All options

will need to consider mitigation measures to reduce the impact of development in relation to sensitive heritage settings, and residual effects remain uncertain in the absence of detailed proposals. At this stage (pre-mitigation) a potential for negative effects of significance is identified under all options, and no clear distinctions are drawn between the options that would rank one more favourably than another.

Land, soil, and water resources

- 4.28 Provisional mapping indicates most of the Wimborne St Giles neighbourhood area is underlain with Grade 3 'Good to Moderate' agricultural land, though a detailed assessment would be needed to determine whether this is Grade 3a or Grade 3b. Predictive national datasets also indicate that the neighbourhood area also has a moderate to high likelihood of being underlain with best and most versatile land (higher quality - Grade 3a and above). Development under any option would lead to the loss of greenfield land and predicted Grade 3 agricultural land, with Option C leading to a predicted greater cumulative loss (given it's a maximum growth scenario).
- 4.29 The Wimborne St Giles neighbourhood area is within the Stour Dorset Operational Catchment; the main waterbody running through the area is the Allen Trib (Critchel Stream) which was awarded a good ecological status but a failed chemical status in 2019. Additionally, the neighbourhood area is within the South Wessex Groundwater Nitrate Vulnerability Zone (NVZ). None of the options involve development that intersects a waterbody, or propose uses that predominantly affect nitrate pollution.
- 4.30 Overall, whilst negative effects are considered likely from a loss of greenfield and agricultural land resources, these effects are not considered likely to be significant under any option given the relatively low scale of growth proposed. Option A, followed by Option B, is considered to perform marginally more favourably than Option C, relating to the overall scale of growth proposed.

Community wellbeing

- 4.31 All options have the potential to deliver new homes to support locally identified housing needs, however, there are notable differences to be drawn between the options in terms of their potential to contribute towards the delivery of affordable housing. Most notably, only the larger site being considered under Options B and C is likely to be captured by existing policy in terms of requirements to contribute to the delivery of affordable housing, and the site is of a large enough scale to expect these homes to be delivered onsite. In the absence of dedicated site allocation policies and further viability considerations, it is not readily assumed that Option A would contribute in any meaningful way to meeting locally identified needs for affordable housing (with all sites delivering no more than 2 homes).
- 4.32 The sites under consideration under all options are relatively well located in terms of settlement access and provide good access to the surrounding countryside. Such benefits are likely to support positive health outcomes in this respect.
- 4.33 Positive effects are anticipated under all options, though these are more likely to be of significance under Options B and C given these options provide greater

opportunity to deliver affordable housing locally. For these reasons, these options are also ranked more favourably than Option A. Option C is marginally preferred to Option B as well given the greater housing contribution it would provide. It is noted that dedicated site allocation policies for the small sites under consideration could ensure affordable housing contributions and improve the likely performance of Option A.

Transportation

- 4.34 None of the options are considered likely to lead to significant impacts in relation to local traffic and congestion constraints, with relatively low growth proposed under all options. However, minor negative effects are considered likely under all options, given the lack of sustainable transport connections available in Wimborne St Giles (with no rail or bus access). It is likely that future residents will continue trends which favour the private vehicle to access a wider range of goods and services beyond the neighbourhood area.
- 4.35 In terms of local access, Option B performs notably well by focusing development at a single location that provides good access to the local nursery/school and post office (providing pedestrian and cycle opportunities). This is compared to Options A and C which disperse development more widely across the neighbourhood area.
- 4.36 Whilst no significant effects are considered likely overall under any option, Option B (followed by Option C) is marginally preferred given the active travel opportunities available in accessing the local school and post office.

Developing the preferred approach

- 4.37 The Parish Council have identified that following this assessment their preferred approach to allocate all available and suitable sites, except Site WSG010 for the following reasons:

The mix of sites should help to meet local housing needs, sustain local facilities and services, and attract new / younger people and families to the village, together with opportunities to work in the local area.

The site locations have been broadly supported by residents through previous consultations. Site WSG010 has been removed as an allocation following detailed consideration of the strong objections received from Dorset Council through Regulation 14 consultation.

Most of the site allocations are proposed as small sites for one or two dwellings, which can be brought forward as needed, with dwelling types / tenure likely to reflect the site conditions and anticipated needs of the Estate and wider community but would be unlikely to deliver the affordable housing needed. The single, larger site can deliver the affordable housing, as well as a cluster of homes suited for some of the more elderly residents looking to down-size from their current homes in the area, and potentially some Estate rented homes, which would more likely come forward in a single phase of development (rather than spread over the plan period).

5. Appraisal of the Neighbourhood Plan

Introduction

5.1 The aim of this chapter is to present appraisal findings and recommendations in relation to the submission version of the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan. This chapter presents:

- An appraisal of the current version (i.e., the submission version) of the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan under the seven SEA theme headings.
- The overall conclusions at this current stage.

Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan policies

5.2 To support the implementation of the vision statement for the Neighbourhood Plan, the submission version of the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan puts forward 24 policies to guide new development within the neighbourhood area.

5.3 The policies are listed below in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Wimborne St Giles NP policy list

Policy reference	Policy name
Policy 1	Physical and visual connections
Policy 2	Aspect and orientation, building and roof lines
Policy 3	Boundary treatments
Policy 4	Scale and massing
Policy 5	Architectural composition and detailing, materials, and colour palette
Policy 6	Incorporating low carbon energy solutions
Policy 7	Accommodating the motor vehicle
Policy 8	Storage for waste, recycling etc
Policy 9	Incorporating landscape features, wildlife, and sustainable drainage
Policy 10	The Watermeadows and other important Green Spaces
Policy 11	Dark skies and external lighting
Policy 11b	Features of local historic importance
Policy 12	Location and types of new housing
Policy 13	Employment opportunities

Policy 14	Valued Community Facilities
Policy 15	Land east of Bottlebush Lane (White Cottages)
Policy 16	Plot in front of the Terrace, adjoining No. 13
Policy 17	Land adjoining the Playing Fields, opposite Park Lane
Policy 18	Barn at Glebe Farm
Policy 19	Infill plot on Park Lane
Policy 20	Infill plot on Baileys Hill
Policy 21	Land off Coach Road
Policy 22	Land at North Barn
Policy 23	Framptons
Policy 24	Former chicken sheds, Monkton Up Wimborne

Approach for this appraisal

- 5.4 The assessment identifies and evaluates 'likely significant effects' on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability objectives identified through scoping (see Table 3.2) as a methodological framework.
- 5.5 Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the strategic nature of the policies under consideration and understanding of the baseline (now and in the future under a 'no plan' scenario) that is inevitably limited. Given uncertainties there is a need to make assumptions, e.g., in relation to plan implementation and aspects of the baseline that might be impacted. Assumptions are made cautiously and explained within the text (with the aim of striking a balance between comprehensiveness and conciseness). In many instances, given reasonable assumptions, it is not possible to predict 'significant effects', but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) of the draft plan in more general terms.
- 5.6 Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted taking account of the criteria presented within Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of effects as far as possible. Cumulative effects are also considered, i.e., the potential for the Neighbourhood Plan to impact an aspect of the baseline when implemented alongside other plans, programmes, and projects. These effect 'characteristics' are described within the assessment as appropriate.

Biodiversity and geodiversity

- 5.7 There are no Ramsar, Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) within the neighbourhood area. However, within 5 km east and south of the neighbourhood area are sections of the Dorset Heaths Ramsar, SPA and SAC designations. As such, development in the neighbourhood area could lead to an increase in pressure on this designation through increased levels of linked recreation. The Wimborne St Giles

Neighbourhood Plan is accompanied by a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) which has considered in detail the potential impact pathways between the proposed site allocations and internationally designated sites. Following Appropriate Assessment, the HRA concludes no likely adverse effects in relation to European designated sites, alone or in-combination, and makes no policy mitigation recommendations.

- 5.8 Whilst the neighbourhood area does not overlap with any Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), there are three within proximity; Pentridge Downs SSSI on the north-western neighbourhood area boundary, Sutton Meadows SSSI on the south-eastern neighbourhood area boundary, and the Moors River System SSSI within 1 km to the east. However, none of the sites allocated under the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan overlap with SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) for the types of development likely to be brought forward – as such, consultation with Natural England is unlikely to be necessary. There are Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats within the neighbourhood area, including deciduous woodland (some of which is ancient woodland), traditional orchard, woodpasture and parkland, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, and lowland calcareous grassland. Again, none of the sites allocated under the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan overlap with these priority habitats. It is noted some of the sites have hedgerows and trees on their perimeters that will contribute to the local biodiversity network.
- 5.9 Some of the site allocation policies include provisions for biodiversity and geodiversity. The site allocated under Policy 17 indicates development should retain the roadside hedge as far as practical – this will ensure the hedge can continue to contribute to the biodiversity connectivity in the neighbourhood area and allow for species movement. Retaining the existing hedge is also a focus for the site allocated under Policy 15, whilst also incorporating hedgerow planting on the north and east site boundaries and maintaining a gap/ buffer between development and the woodland to the south-east. These provisions will help maintain and boost biodiversity connectivity from this site to other parts of the neighbourhood area and maintain the integrity of the woodland for the benefit of the species within it. The site allocated under Policy 21 also seeks the retention of the roadside hedge and the planting of new hedgerows along the north and west site boundaries, which will help these sites maintain and enhance connectivity and biodiversity value.
- 5.10 The wider Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan policies work to enhance biodiversity in the plan area. Policy 3 indicates new boundaries should be in keeping with existing boundary treatments, including hedging. Additionally, it indicates development on the edge of the settlement must avoid creating abrupt edges with little vegetation. This will help to ensure biodiversity connectivity is enhanced through new hedgerows and features on site. Policy 4 stipulates development must be sympathetic to the tree canopy – this will ensure disturbances to trees and their associated biodiversity value are reduced. Biodiversity and geodiversity are further protected and enhanced through Policy 9, which states development should retain trees and hedgerows within the layout as much as possible, include further planting, replace any removed features, and demonstrate how the development will enhance biodiversity on the site without harming the character of the area. Additionally, the loss of ancient or veteran trees and native hedgerows that form part of a wider wildlife corridor will be resisted.

Again, this should ensure biodiversity connectivity is maintained and enhanced, and the suitability of biodiversity enhancements are fully considered before changes are implemented. Policy 10 works to protect local green spaces in the neighbourhood area, including the watermeadows - by protecting green spaces the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan is also protecting and providing spaces for biodiversity and geodiversity. Furthermore, Policy 13 protects biodiversity from significant adverse impacts linked to employment development in the neighbourhood area.

- 5.11 In conclusion, three of the site allocation policies under the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan include stipulations relating to biodiversity and geodiversity that development proposals will need to consider. This will maintain and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity value on these sites and add to the wider ecological networks in the neighbourhood area. Whilst the other housing policies do not necessarily contain specific requirements for biodiversity and geodiversity, it is expected the wider Wimborne St Giles neighbourhood plan policies will ensure that high-quality design is delivered which appropriately considers and respects the natural environment. This includes through protecting designated green spaces, respecting existing features and resisting development that could be harmful. On this basis, **minor positive effects** are considered most likely.

Climate change

- 5.12 Dorset Council have declared a climate emergency²³ and as such, the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan should encourage design features that help the area to mitigate and adapt to climate change and increase the resilience of the neighbourhood area and its community. The transportation sector was the biggest contributor to carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in Dorset between 2005-2018. Opportunities to explore mitigation and adaptation techniques for transport, including electric vehicle charging provision and the enhancement of public transport, would contribute to cutting emissions in the neighbourhood area. In terms of flood risk, most of the neighbourhood area is within Flood Zone 1, with areas of Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 following the course of the river Allen that flows through the centre of Wimborne St Giles. Additionally, there are areas at risk of surface water flooding adjacent to the river Allen which could benefit from drainage and flood mitigation measures.
- 5.13 Seven of the proposed sites are located within proximity to Wimborne St Giles and are not at risk of fluvial flood risk, and only one is at risk of surface water flooding on its south-eastern boundary (the site allocated under Policy 21). The remaining three sites are located around Monkton Up Wimborne and whilst not directly affected by fluvial flood risk, the site allocated under Policy 23 is adjacent to an area at medium risk of fluvial flooding (where suitable mitigation will still be required which considers future flood risk). None of the sites in Monkton Up Wimborne are at risk of surface water flooding.
- 5.14 None of the sites have access to pavement that would provide safe pedestrian and cycling opportunities in and around the neighbourhood area. Additionally, there are no bus stops in proximity to any of the sites to provide sustainable transport opportunities. By limiting opportunities for sustainable transport use,

²³ [Dorset Council - Climate and Ecological Emergency](#)

including active travel, it is likely CO₂ emissions resulting from travel will increase in the neighbourhood area.

- 5.15 Whilst none of the site allocation policies make specific provisions for climate change adaptation and mitigation, the wider plan policies include provisions for this theme. Policy 1 indicates development should create a network of routes that facilitate safe pedestrian and cyclist access and link to the wider public rights of way (PRoW) network. This will encourage the use of active travel modes. Policy 6 includes provision for the incorporation of low carbon energy solutions in new development; setting out the need for new buildings and alterations to existing buildings to minimise the carbon footprint of the development and address inefficiencies, as well as encourage the integration of sustainable technology like solar panels into design (where appropriate). This will help limit the amount of carbon emissions linked to the neighbourhood area. Sustainable technology is also referred to in Policy 7, which indicates car charging points will be integrated into the design of new developments – this could encourage a shift towards electric vehicle usage, which would reduce carbon emissions linked to transportation in the Wimborne St Giles neighbourhood area. By protecting green spaces in the neighbourhood area and incorporating existing features and encouraging further planting through Policy 9 and Policy 10, the neighbourhood plan is helping to mitigate the effects of climate change by preserving natural features and spaces that work to sequester carbon. Additionally, Policy 9 indicates development proposals will need to demonstrate how sustainable drainage measures to reduce flood risk are considerate of the area's character – ensuring climate change infrastructure is appropriate and does not damage the landscape of Wimborne St Giles.
- 5.16 Overall, the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan has policies in place to help mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. The plan recognises the importance of natural features, like green spaces, hedgerows, and trees, as well as built infrastructure in adapting to a changing climate. By focusing a greater level of growth closer to the built-up area of the Wimborne St Giles settlement, the Neighbourhood Plan allows for greater access to the services and facilities within the area – this will, to an extent, help limit greenhouse gas emissions linked to transportation by encouraging active transportation methods. However, given the lack of sustainable transport connections, it is considered that the proposals of the neighbourhood plan conflict to some degree with Dorset Council's climate emergency declaration and carbon neutrality goals, and on this basis, **minor long-term negative effects** are considered most likely.

Landscape

- 5.17 The Wimborne St Giles neighbourhood area lies within with the Cranborne Chase National Landscape (formerly AONB – Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). As such, the neighbourhood plan should reinforce the provisions of the AONB management plan²⁴ for this designation and promote its integration into development proposals to avoid adverse impacts on this landscape. The neighbourhood area falls within one National Character Area (NCA); NCA 134: Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase. It will be important for development to take the distinct features of this landscape character area into consideration

²⁴ [Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - Management Plan](#)

during the design and construction phases. Additional consideration should be given to the built character of Wimborne St Giles and the open countryside and greenbelt, which all contribute to the visual amenity of the neighbourhood area.

5.18 Only small-scale development sites are proposed through the NP (sites of 10 dwellings or less), avoiding major development within the National Landscape. An overview of the landscape and villagescape considerations²⁵ for the proposed site allocations is provided below:

- The site allocated under Policy 15 is adjacent to and connected to the built up area of the existing Wimborne St Giles settlement, and is within the Lower Allen Valley local character area, which is characterised by houses overlooking the green space of the River Allen and its watermeadows. Given the size and the proposed growth level, development of the site is unlikely to lead to major changes in the size and character of the existing settlement; especially given the site is relatively level and is at the same elevation. However, it will extend the settlement slightly northwards. Policy 15 indicates development will need to reflect the linear development pattern of this part of the village, and the dwellings should have a design that reflects the design of the existing dwellings. This will ensure the development fits in with the surrounding villagescape and is considerate of the surrounding landscape.
- Allocated under Policy 16, the 'Plot in front of the Terrace' site is within the existing built-up area of Wimborne St Giles and is within the Lower Allen Valley local character area. Given the size and growth level of the allocation, it is unlikely development here will lead to any significant changes in the size and character of the existing settlement. Furthermore, the site is relatively flat and is at the same elevation as surrounding development – as such, it will only be viewed by neighbouring dwellings. This will help ensure development fits seamlessly with neighbouring houses. Policy 16 does not make any stipulations for maintaining and enhancing the landscape, but does indicate the scale, design and layout will need to conserve and enhance this part of the Wimborne St Giles Conservation Area.
- The site allocated under Policy 17 is the largest site included within the Plan (delivering ten new homes). It is adjacent to and connected to the existing built-up area of the Wimborne St Giles village and is within the Village Gateway local character area, which is characterised by scattered barns, farmhouses, and open spaces. It is likely the development site will be seen by multiple dwellings to the west, north-west and south of the site and impact on their view. Policy 17 indicates a design-led approach should be taken on site to ensure development respects the landscape and village character. This includes the pattern of development.
- Allocated under Policy 18, the 'Barn at Glebe Farm' site is considered to be adjacent to and connected to the existing built-up area of Wimborne St Giles, and is within the Agricultural Hinterland landscape character area, which is characterised by a range of habitats and land uses, isolated farms and buildings, and the former deer park. Given this development involves converting the existing structures on site, it is unlikely development at this

²⁵ Utilising the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan Design Codes

location will lead to significant changes in the size and character of the existing settlement and the surrounding landscape. Whilst landscape factors do not explicitly feature in the policy provisions, Policy 18 stipulates development will need to conserve and enhance the character of the structures on site. This could extend to include landscaping provision to improve the setting of these barns.

- The site allocated under Policy 19 is within the existing built-up area of Wimborne St Giles village and is considered to be in the Village Gateway landscape character area. As development here would involve an infill site suitable for one dwelling, it is considered unlikely that this allocation would lead to significant changes in the size and character of the existing settlement, especially given the site is relatively flat and is at the same elevation as neighbouring houses. As such, development impacts mainly relate to the views from adjacent dwellings to the north and south. The policy indicates development will need to conserve and enhance the character of this part of the Wimborne St Giles Conservation Area and protect key views.
- Allocated under Policy 20, the 'Infill plot on Baileys Hill' site is within the built-up area of the existing Wimborne St Giles settlement and is within the Lower Allen Valley landscape character area. Given this site allocation involves infill development, it is considered unlikely that development here would lead to significant changes in the size and character of the existing settlement. However, the site does slope slightly to the east and as such development here could be seen by existing structures further afield and not only those adjacent to the site to the east and west. Policy 20 indicates development will need to reflect the linear dwelling pattern and mix of development that is already present in this part of the settlement and incorporate brick and tiled roofs to be in keeping with the character of the area. Buildings need to be set back from the road with soft boundary treatment to the front. This will help to ensure that development is in-keeping with landscape character.
- The site allocated under Policy 21 is considered to be adjacent to and connected to the built-up area of Wimborne St Giles settlement and is concluded to be in the Lower Allen Valley landscape character area. The scale of the development (up to two dwellings) is unlikely to lead to major changes to the size and character of Wimborne St Giles but will extend the settlement northwards. The site gently slopes to the north-east, however this would not impact views from any structures other than the houses directly to the south of the site. Policy 21 indicates development will need to ensure it appropriately reflects the linear dwelling pattern and mix of development that is a key component of the village character in this part of Wimborne St Giles. Additionally, development should incorporate brick and tiled roofs, in order to be in-keeping with the character of the area and deliver soft landscaping that retains the rural character. This will help to ensure that development is in-keeping with landscape character. Furthermore, hedgerow planting on the north and west sides will provide a level of screening for the site, reducing the visual impact and incorporating landscape features and key views should be protected.
- Allocated under Policy 22, the 'Land at North Barn' site is outside and not connected to the existing built-up area and is located within the Upper Allen

Valley landscape character area, which is characterised by arable farmland and pockets of development. Additionally, the site is steeply sloping to the south and may be seen by buildings further south. Policy 22 indicates this site is allocated for up to two dwellings achieved through sensitive barn conversion that retains rural character. In this sense, development here will need to consider appropriate design proposals which work to reduce landscape impacts.

- The site allocated under Policy 23 is outside and not connected to the existing built up area and is located within the Upper Allen Valley landscape character area. Given its location, development of this site would be expected to bring forward changes to the landscape of the Wimborne St Giles neighbourhood area; however, this allocation is for a barn conversion into one dwelling or two business units. As the allocation is focused on redeveloping an existing structure, development at this location is unlikely to have a major impact on the landscape. The site is relatively flat and is unlikely to obstruct any views.
- Allocated under Policy 24, the Former chicken sheds, Monkton Up Wimborne site is outside and not connected to the existing built-up area and is located within the Upper Allen Valley landscape character area. Allocated for two dwellings, development at this site would be expected to bring forward changes to the landscape of the neighbourhood area – as it involves removing existing farm related structures and building new dwellings on the site. This has the potential to impact on the neighbouring listed building by effecting the landscape that contributes to its setting. As the site is relatively flat, the visual impact of the site will be limited to the farm structures associated with Manor Farm, which is directly adjacent to the site to the north, east, and west. Policy 24 indicates a design-led approach should be adopted when developing this site – this will help to ensure the landscape is considered from the outset to ensure high quality dwellings and living space.

5.19 The wider Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan policies also work to maintain and enhance the landscape of the area. Policy 2 indicates the existing rooflines, building orientations, and aspects should be taken into consideration and reflected in new development to ensure new dwellings are in-keeping with the settlement character. Policy 3 indicates development should incorporate landscape buffering to avoid abrupt development edges, which will help soften development and help it fit with the existing landscape and structures. Housing design is discussed in Policies 4 and 5, which includes details on scale, composition and details, materials, and colour palettes. These policies work with Policies 2 and 3 to help ensure new development reflects the existing built environment. By designing development to fit with existing structures, the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan is reducing the visual effect of development on the landscape. This is echoed in Policy 7, which sets out stipulations for vehicle development, including driveway design components and electric car charging integration; again, with the aim of softening the visual impact on the landscape. Policies 9 and 10 are concerned with maintaining and enhancing landscape components like trees, hedgerows, and green spaces like the watermeadows. This will help retain important landscape features in the Wimborne St Giles neighbourhood area, and the policies seek to add features that enhance views. Given its location in the Cranborne Chase

AONB, the Wimborne St Giles neighbourhood area is included in the Dark Sky status of the designation. Policy 11 indicates development needs to conserve and enhance the dark night skies to ensure the Dark Sky status is not negatively affected.

- 5.20 Overall, the Neighbourhood Plan policies seek to protect and enhance the landscape of the neighbourhood area. By safeguarding the relationship between the natural and built environment (by incorporating specific design provisions), inappropriate development is avoided and new development blends seamlessly with existing structures. This will reduce the visual impact on the surrounding landscape and protect and enhance the existing landscape context. The policy mitigation is likely to be sufficient to avoid significant negative effects arising, and **residual minor negative effects** are concluded as most likely (through the introduction of new development in the landscape).

Historic environment

- 5.21 Within the Wimborne St Giles neighbourhood area there are a variety of designated historic environment features, which future development will need to be considerate of through design and construction processes. It is important to ensure development avoids, or minimises, impacts upon the historic environment, and pursues opportunities to enhance it and any specific historic environment assets, especially for the features that contribute to the Wimborne St Giles Conservation Area, which does have an appraisal in place²⁶. This includes the historic assets themselves, as well as features that contribute to their setting – such as elements of the public realm and green infrastructure. Designated historic environment features within the neighbourhood area include listed buildings, a registered park and garden, and scheduled monuments.
- 5.22 The larger site allocated under Policy 17 stipulates a design-led approach should be adopted for development here in order to respect the Wimborne St Giles Conservation Area and historic buildings, most notably the Grade 1 listed Church of St Giles and the row of estate cottages on Park Lane. The scale of development at this site has been reduced following feedback from consultation to the development of ten new homes. This seeks to reduce impacts on nearby heritage assets. The policy also indicates the site should include a pattern of development that fits in with the village character. This ensures development will not negatively impact the historic environment features and does not compromise the setting of them, but rather enhances it.
- 5.23 Some of the smaller site allocation policies also make provisions for the historic environment. Policies 15, 16, 19, and 20 indicate the scale, design and layout of the development will need to conserve and enhance heritage assets, key views, and the character of the Wimborne St Giles Conservation Area. This will help to ensure the Conservation Area and its setting are protected and improved through development, which will support the interpretation of historic features. Additionally, Policy 24 indicates development on the site allocated under this policy will need to respect the setting and significance of the Grade II listed Manor Farmhouse – again this helps to ensure the historic feature and its surroundings are appropriately protected. Policy 23 stipulates development will

²⁶ [Wimborne St Giles Conservation Area Appraisal](#)

involve the sensitive conversion of the historic barns on site. By making sure development is careful and respectful of these historic features, the neighbourhood plan is maintaining the integrity of the structures whilst still allowing for a new use.

- 5.24 The wider Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan policies also include provisions for the historic environment. Of note, Policy 11b provides protections for non-designated heritage assets. Policy 4 indicates new buildings will need to consider the setting and importance of heritage assets. Policy 6 demonstrates new buildings and modifications to existing buildings should seek to minimise the carbon footprint of the development whilst ensuring there is no unacceptable detrimental impact on the historic character of the area. These policies work to reduce negative impacts on the historic environment through changes in structures, setting, and character.
- 5.25 Overall, the Plan seeks to implement site allocation policies that are considerate of the historic environment. Policies work to maintain and enhance the historic context and improve the setting of historic designations and non-designated assets. Taken as a whole, the policy framework should ensure that significant impacts to sensitive heritage settings are avoided in development. **Residual effects are considered likely to be minor and both positive and negative**, some **uncertainty** is also recognised in the absence of detailed development proposals and early archaeological investigations.

Land, soil, and water resources

- 5.26 Provisional mapping indicates the majority of the Wimborne St Giles neighbourhood area is underlain with Grade 3 'Good to Moderate' agricultural land, though a detailed assessment would be needed to determine whether this is Grade 3a or Grade 3b. Predictive national datasets indicate that the neighbourhood area also has a moderate to high likelihood of being underlain with best and most versatile land (Grade 3a and above). As such, it is likely the sites allocated under the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan are in areas of good quality agricultural land. The Wimborne St Giles neighbourhood area is within the Stour Dorset Operational Catchment; the main waterbody running through the area is the Allen Trib (Critchel Stream) which was awarded a good ecological status but a failed chemical status in 2019. Additionally, the neighbourhood area is within the South Wessex Groundwater Nitrate Vulnerability Zone (NVZ). Development will need to be considerate of the natural resources in the neighbourhood area and how it could impact land, soil, and water resources and quality.
- 5.27 The sites allocated under the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan are greenfield and underlain with Grade 3 agricultural land (except the sites allocated under Policies 17, 19 and 20, which are Grade 4 'Poor' agricultural land). As such, development at these locations will result in the permanent loss of agricultural land which cannot be mitigated. Whilst none of the site allocation policies make specific provisions for land, soil, and water resources, the wider Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan policies do. Policy 8 stipulates waste storage and recycling infrastructure should be fully integrated into the design of properties – this will reduce the amount of waste entering the land and soil system and reduce pollution and/ or contamination. The incorporation of sustainable drainage systems under Policy 9 will help reduce water

contamination through surface water runoff during flooding, which will help to stop further degradation of the Allen Trib (Critchel Stream) waterbody. Furthermore, the safeguarding of green spaces and biodiversity features under Policies 9 and 10 will promote and protect land, soil, and water resources by protecting existing features that contribute to the quality of these resources. This will help support the capacity of the landscape to regulate soil and water quality.

- 5.28 Whilst the development of greenfield and good grade agricultural land sites does not promote the most efficient use of land, it is recognised that opportunities to develop brownfield sites are limited given the rural nature of the neighbourhood area. However, given the majority of the sites are located within proximity to the existing built-up area of Wimborne St Giles, and a few sites are infill, the Neighbourhood Plan will help to minimise impacts to land, soil and water resources. Additionally, the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan includes policies that will further safeguard land, soil, and water resources, through protecting green spaces, incorporating additional planting of trees and hedgerows, and integrating sustainable drainage systems into development. **Residual minor negative effects** are concluded as most likely.

Community wellbeing

- 5.29 The Wimborne St Giles neighbourhood area has a large proportion of working age residents; but has limited services, facilities and amenities to serve this population, as well as older and younger populations. As such, it is necessary for residents to travel outside of the neighbourhood area to access facilities like shops and medical services. The area does not experience the same level of deprivation as comparative figures for East Dorset, the South West, and England as a whole – it is less deprived than the averages for these areas. It will though be important for new development to encourage new facilities and amenities to be built in the neighbourhood area, as well as encourage flexible working practices as working from home becomes more popular.
- 5.30 To meet the informal indicative housing figure of 30 homes as set by Dorset Council, the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan allocates ten sites for development through Policies 15 to 24. These sites were selected through detailed assessments and consultations. The sites allocated under Policies 15 to 21 are located within or adjacent to the built-up area of Wimborne St Giles and would be able to facilitate active travel into the centre. The three sites allocated under Policies 22 to 24 are removed from the built-up area and are unlikely to allow for safe active transportation into the centre of Wimborne St Giles.
- 5.31 Policy 14 sets out to retain community facilities within the Wimborne St Giles neighbourhood area, as well as provide new facilities. This will maintain the current community infrastructure network, which includes features like the village convenience store and post office, and the church, and extend it to include facilities that diversity the network. This could include retail, restaurant or café provision, parking provision and the refurbishment of the Village Hall. Maintaining and enhancing the community infrastructure network helps to ensure the facilities in the Wimborne St Giles neighbourhood area continue to serve the existing residents of the neighbourhood area and future residents.

- 5.32 Policy 1 seeks to ensure the layout of new development creates an easily accessible network of routes that connects to the existing walking and cycling network. This allows for the residents of the Wimborne St Giles neighbourhood area to engage in active transport methods safely, allowing for movement into the centre of the neighbourhood area and into the countryside. By providing the opportunity to engage in active transportation methods, the Wimborne St Giles neighbourhood plan seeks to encourage better mental and physical health in the community.
- 5.33 The housing policies in combination work to improve community wellbeing by providing more houses for the local population. Policies 4 and 5 set out stipulations for housing design, scale, and massing, which includes information on materials, suitable colours, and details to incorporate. This helps to ensure the development fits in with existing character, which will help new residents to feel more integrated into the community. Policy 12 indicates a mix of dwelling types should be brought forward, including affordable houses for rent, starter and shared-ownership affordable houses, and open market homes. By providing a mix of housing types, the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan enhances community wellbeing by bringing forward housing that meets the identified local need in the area.
- 5.34 The economic vitality of the neighbourhood area is considered through Policy 13. This policy acknowledges the importance of employment in creating a more vibrant community and as such indicates new employment proposals for a range of business types (including offices, workshops, tourism and leisure, retail, and equestrian) will be supported where they do not negatively impact on the vitality and viability of the existing local community. This demonstrates the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan is open to new employment development but is dedicated to conserving the existing economic infrastructure. This helps to maintain and enhance community wellbeing by providing additional employment opportunities and diversifying business types.
- 5.35 The Wimborne St Giles neighbourhood area is not well served by existing services and facilities; there is a lack of medical and retail infrastructure which leads to residents travelling outside the neighbourhood area to access these facilities. Allocating land for development could encourage new community facilities, or improvements to existing amenities, to the benefit of the residents. Additionally, by encouraging a mix of housing types and tenures, the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan is seeking a balanced community. The Neighbourhood Plan further maintains and enhances the wellbeing of the community through seeking active transportation links, improvements to the public realm and new employment options.
- 5.36 The provisions set out to meet local housing need, maximise the benefits of small-scale development, and minimise its impact on settlement character and are considered likely to lead to **significant positive effects**.

Transportation

- 5.37 With reference to local public transport networks, there are no rail stations within proximity to the neighbourhood area – the nearest being in Salisbury approximately 25 km to the north-east which provides access to locations including London and Bristol. Additionally, there are no bus stops within the Wimborne St Giles neighbourhood area. As such, development through the

site allocations will lead to an increase in private vehicles on the local road network. To accommodate the existing and future vehicle provision, Policy 7 stipulates on-plot and layby parking and garages should be designed to avoid a car-dominated character in the neighbourhood area. Additionally, the policy indicates car charging points should be integrated into new development to encourage electric vehicle usage. Furthermore, under Policy 13 new employment proposals will be supported provided the site has safe access and the potential increase in vehicular traffic would not have a significant adverse impact on the local road network. Both these policies help to ensure the rural character of Wimborne St Giles is not impacted by an increase in vehicle usage.

- 5.38 Throughout the neighbourhood area there are a number of public rights of way (PRoW), including bridleways, footpaths, a restricted byway and a byway open to all traffic. Policy 1 indicates the layout of new development should create a network of cycling and walking routes that connect to the existing PRoW network – this will allow for safe, active transportation opportunities to services and facilities within the neighbourhood area and in proximity to it. Furthermore, Policy 10 indicates the improvement and expansion of existing PRoW through green spaces will be supported to allow for the continued enjoyment of the countryside for all users. This will further encourage the use of active transportation methods in and around the neighbourhood area.
- 5.39 Some of the site allocation policies also make provisions for site access. Policy 15 indicates access to the site will come from a lane to the south-west, Policy 16 indicates access will be provided through existing access at the rear of the site and Policy 21 stipulates access will be provided by Coach Road. Additionally, Policy 17 indicates vehicular entrance points will need to be created, and pedestrian access should be achieved through the site to allow for connection to the village. This would ensure safe active transport is an option through development of this site.
- 5.40 As there are no sustainable transportation options within the Wimborne St Giles neighbourhood area, development will lead to an increase in the use of private vehicles. The policies in the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan work to improve the existing infrastructure to manage car use, and also make provision for a shift towards electric vehicles. The Neighbourhood Plan also makes provision for active transport networks; encouraging safe walking and cycling methods around the neighbourhood area will reduce the stress on the road network. Despite this, **residual minor long-term negative effects** are considered most likely.

Conclusions at this current stage

- 5.41 Overall, the only significant effects predicted at this stage are considered likely to be positive in nature and relate to the 'community wellbeing' SEA theme. This reflects the efforts of the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan to identify land to deliver new housing of a range of types, tenures, and sizes over the plan period. These efforts however ultimately have negative implications for other SEA themes such as climate change, landscape, historic environment, land, soil, and water resources, and transportation. The policy framework seeks to ensure that the impacts of development are minimised, and significant impacts are likely to be avoided as a result. Residual minor negative effects are concluded in relation to these themes on this basis.
- 5.42 Minor positive effects are concluded as most likely in relation to biodiversity, reflecting measures at some of the site allocations to improve biodiversity features and connectivity.
- 5.43 Some uncertainty is still noted in relation to the historic environment SEA theme. It is recognised that development sites are proposed which are constrained by sensitive heritage settings and involve the conversion of historic barns. Whilst the policy framework seeks to ensure development avoids effects in relation to the significance of designated and non-designated assets and their settings, uncertainty remains in the absence of detailed site proposals and early archaeological investigations.
- 5.44 It is further recognised that the area is not supported by sustainable transport networks which is a key issue for growth in relation to both the climate change and transportation themes. For this reason, the growth required for the area will contribute to increases in greenhouse gas emissions, however, the Plan seeks to limit the extent of these impacts through policies which support climate change mitigation. In addition, the Plan policy provisions will help the neighbourhood area adapt to the effects of climate change.
- 5.45 No recommendations are made at this stage. The Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan has an intention to allocate land to meet local housing needs which will lead to largely unavoidable residual impacts reflecting the rural nature of the area and its lack of supporting infrastructure and sustainable transport connections.

6. Next steps

Submission

- 6.1 This SEA Environmental Report will accompany the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan for submission to the Local Planning Authority, Dorset Council, who will arrange further consultation (Regulation 16) and then Independent Examination.
- 6.2 At Independent Examination, the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with local planning policy.
- 6.3 If the Independent Examination is favourable, the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to a referendum, organised by Dorset Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan, then it will be 'made'. Once made, the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the Development Plan for the area.

Monitoring

- 6.4 The SEA regulations require 'measures envisaged concerning monitoring' to be outlined in this report. This refers to the monitoring of likely significant effects of Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan to identify any unforeseen effects early and take remedial action as appropriate.
- 6.5 It is anticipated that monitoring of effects of the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan will be undertaken by Dorset Council as part of the process of preparing its Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). No significant negative effects are considered likely in the implementation of the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan that would warrant more stringent monitoring over and above that already undertaken by Dorset Council.

Appendix A - SEA Scoping: Context Review and Baseline Information

A.1 Air quality

Policy context

Table A1.1 below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table A1.1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to the air quality SEA theme

Document title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021
The Clean Air Strategy	2018
UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide	2017
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the	2018
Dorset Council Local Plan	2021
East Dorset and Christchurch Adopted Local Plan	2014

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The Neighbourhood Plan will need to have regard to 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 Neighbourhood Plan 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. No AQMAs are present in the area previously administered by Christchurch and East Dorset District Council²⁷.
- 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

²⁷ [East Dorset District Council \(2019\) 2019 Air Quality Annual Status Report \(ASR\)](#)

(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.

Summary of current baseline

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 (AQMA) within the area previously administered by 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 neighbourhood area.

There are no potential exceedances of air quality objectives in the vicinity of the neighbourhood area.

Summary of future baseline

Future growth in the Plan 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 existing air quality issues in the neighbourhood area it is unlikely that this will have significant impacts on the meeting of air quality objectives.

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.

A.2 Biodiversity and geodiversity

Policy context

Table A2.1 below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table A2.1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to the biodiversity and geodiversity SEA theme

Document title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the	2018
Dorset Council Local Plan	2021
East Dorset and Christchurch Adopted Local Plan	2014

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The Neighbourhood Plan should have regard to the provisions of the NPPF, which highlights 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 NPPF to establish 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 provisions of the Environment Act will provide further provisions in relation to biodiversity. The Act will set parameters for biodiversity gain as a condition of planning permission, as well as biodiversity gain site registers and biodiversity credits. The Act 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 Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan will also be required to be in general conformity with the policies of adopted Local Plan and the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan.

Summary of current baseline

There are no European designated sites within the Plan area. The closest site is Dorset Heathlands Ramsar site, located approximately 4km to the east 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 heather, bog orchard, bunchgrass, and inundated club moss.
- Nationally important birds - Dartford warbler, nightjars, woodlark, hen harrier, merlin.

- Internationally important invertebrates - southern damselfly.
- Nationally important invertebrates - grooved diving beetle, sundew moth, horse flies, and Blair's wainscot moth.

The Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan will be accompanied by an HRA process. This will provide more detail on potential effects relating to European designated sites in the vicinity of the neighbourhood area.

Regarding nationally designated sites, Pentridge Down SSSI is located in the northwest of the Plan area, at Wyke Down. Wyke Down is the largest surviving area of unimproved chalk downland in eastern Dorset lying midway between Blandford and Salisbury, close to Martin Down NNR. The chalk flora is of a high quality and is distinguished by the abundance of the nationally scarce dwarf sedge *Carex humilis*, present in one of its largest populations in Dorset²⁸. Only 1.90% of the site is currently in a 'favourable' condition.

Additionally, Sutton Meadows SSSI borders the Plan area at Maldry Wood in the southeast. The meadows have been subject to many years of traditional management for hay. In consequence, they support a rich community of plants typical of damp neutral to mildly acid hay meadows. The fauna of the site has not been exhaustively studied but the meadows are bounded by hedges or woodland which provide shelter and add diversity of structure valuable to a wide range of insects and nesting birds²⁹.

There are also a number of locally designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance in the neighbourhood area. Alongside these designated features, there are a number of priority habitats in the Plan area, including:

- Deciduous woodland - such as Maldry Wood, Hobbys Copse and Great Rough Copse.
- Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland- such as Bone Acre, and Park Copse.
- Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh- particularly located adjacent to the River Allen.

Summary of future baseline

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

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

²⁸ [Natural England \(1996\) 'Pentridge Down'](#)

²⁹ [Natural England \(1985\) 'Sutton Meadows'](#)

affect their behaviour, and consequently affect the long-term viability of their populations.

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 area and in the surrounding areas.

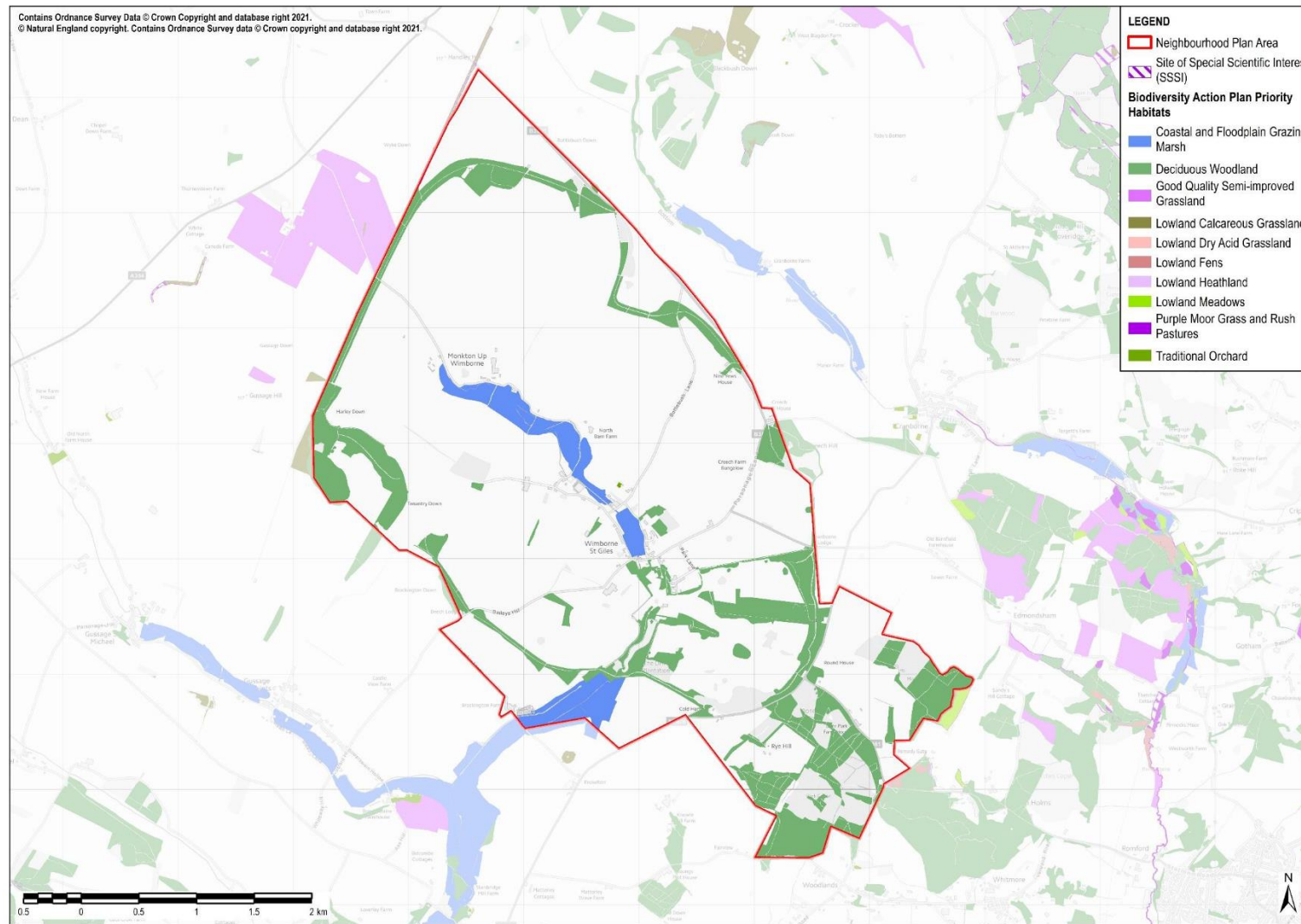


Figure A2.1: Key sites and features of biodiversity and geodiversity value in the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Area

A.3 Climate change

Policy context

Table A3.1 below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table A3.1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to the climate change SEA theme

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

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan should have regard to the provisions of 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.
- 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 successful³⁰. 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 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: *“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*

³⁰ [CCC \(n.d.\) UK adaptation policy](#)

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... ”³¹

- 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 infrastructure³².
- 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 requires 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
 - 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,

³¹ [NIC \(n.d.\) Strategic Investment and public confidence](#)

³² [NIC \(n.d.\) Resilience Study scoping report](#)

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

Summary of current baseline

Climate change mitigation

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.

Carbon dioxide emissions shown in Figure A3.1, overleaf 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, 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%).

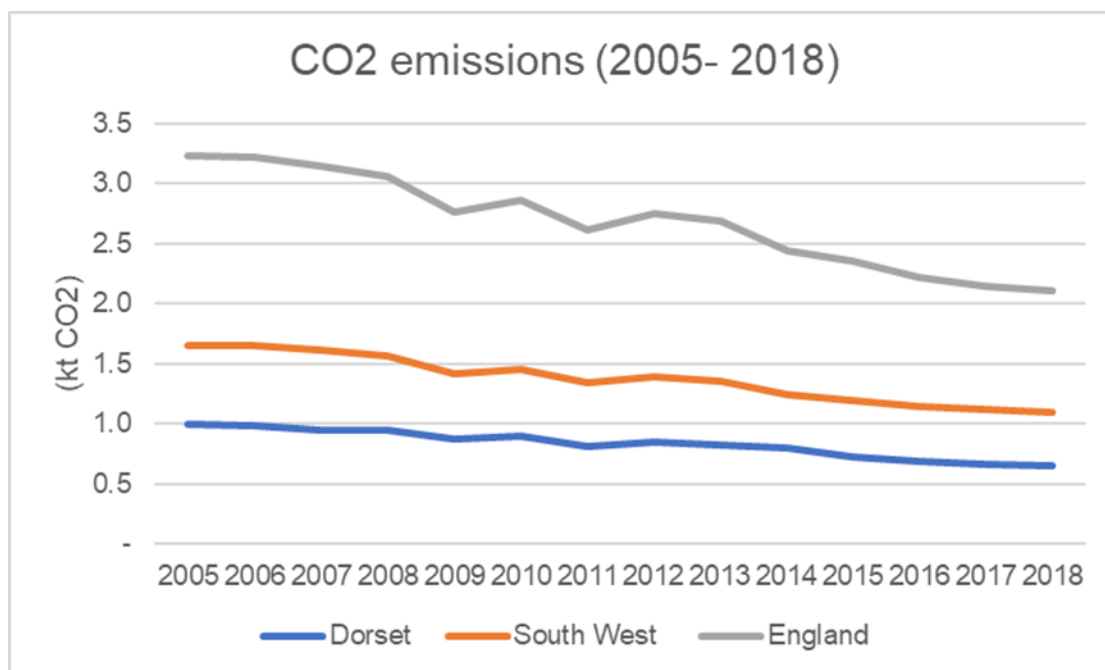


Figure A3.1: CO₂ emissions (2005-2018)

As shown in Figure A3.2 overleaf, 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.

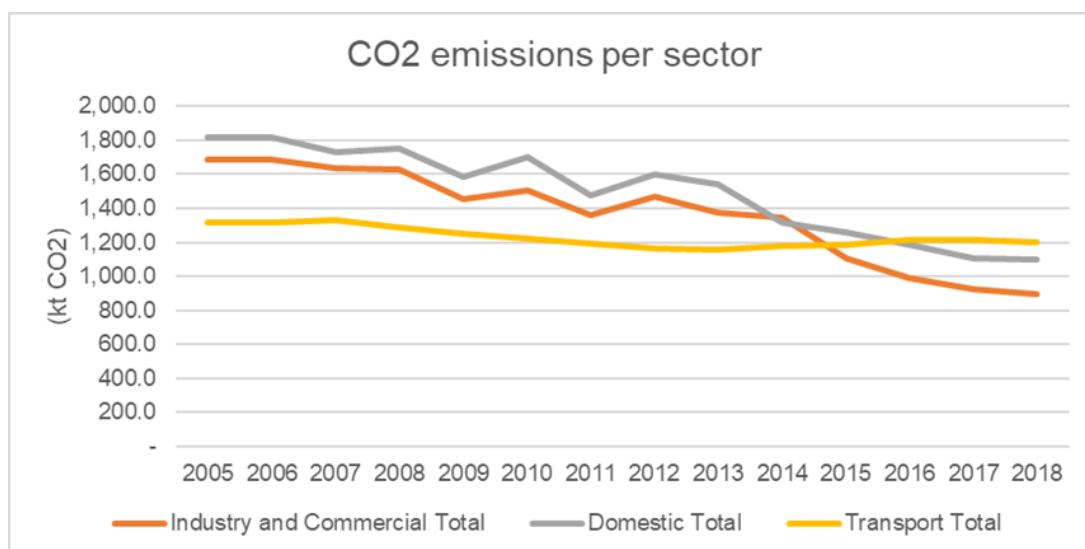


Figure A3.2: CO₂ emissions by sector

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

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 December 2021, there are no EV charging points in the Plan area. The closest EV points are located in Cranborne (10 Castle Street and Grugs Lane fast charging points).

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

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.

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

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.

Due to these changes, a range of risks may exist for the neighbourhood 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;
- Seasonal 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 reduce infiltration from surface water runoff;
- 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 roads³³.

Flood risk (both fluvial and surface water) is generally highest in areas adjacent to the River Allen, which flows through the centre of Wimborne St Giles.

³³ [GOV UK \(2020\) Get flood risk information for planning in England](#)

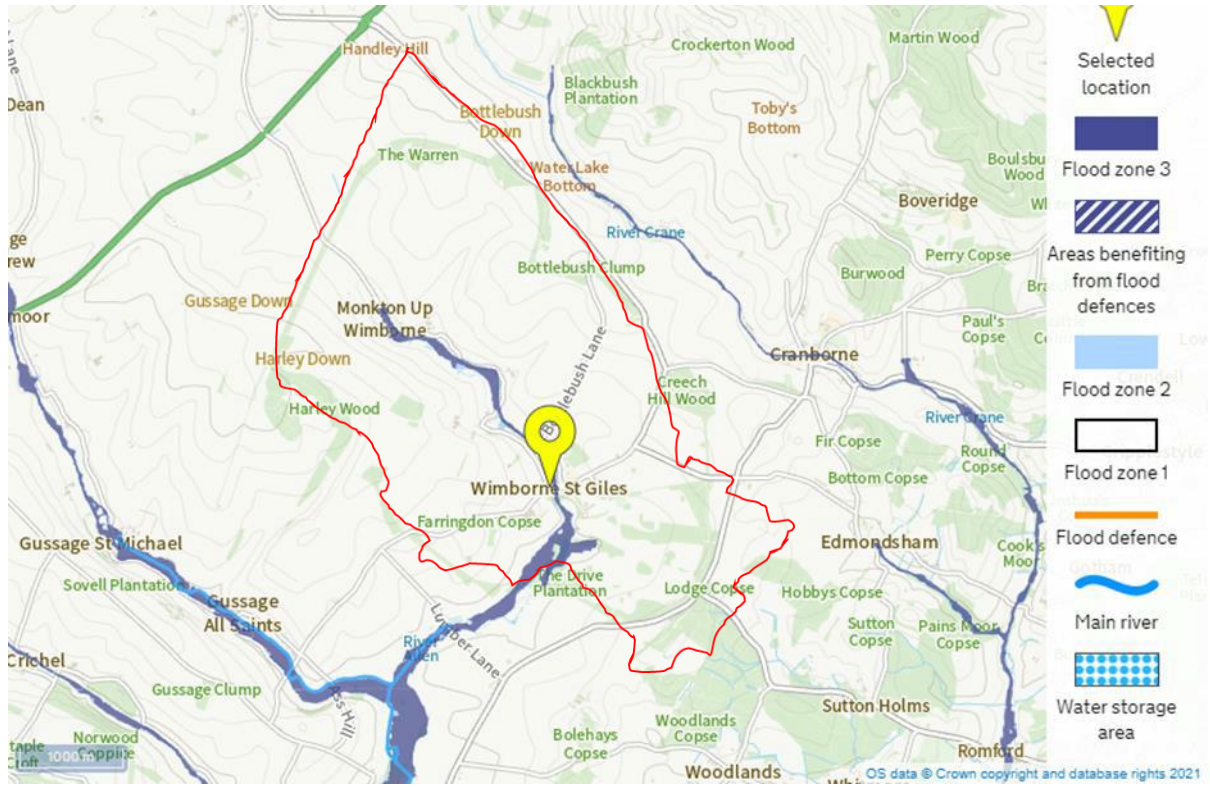
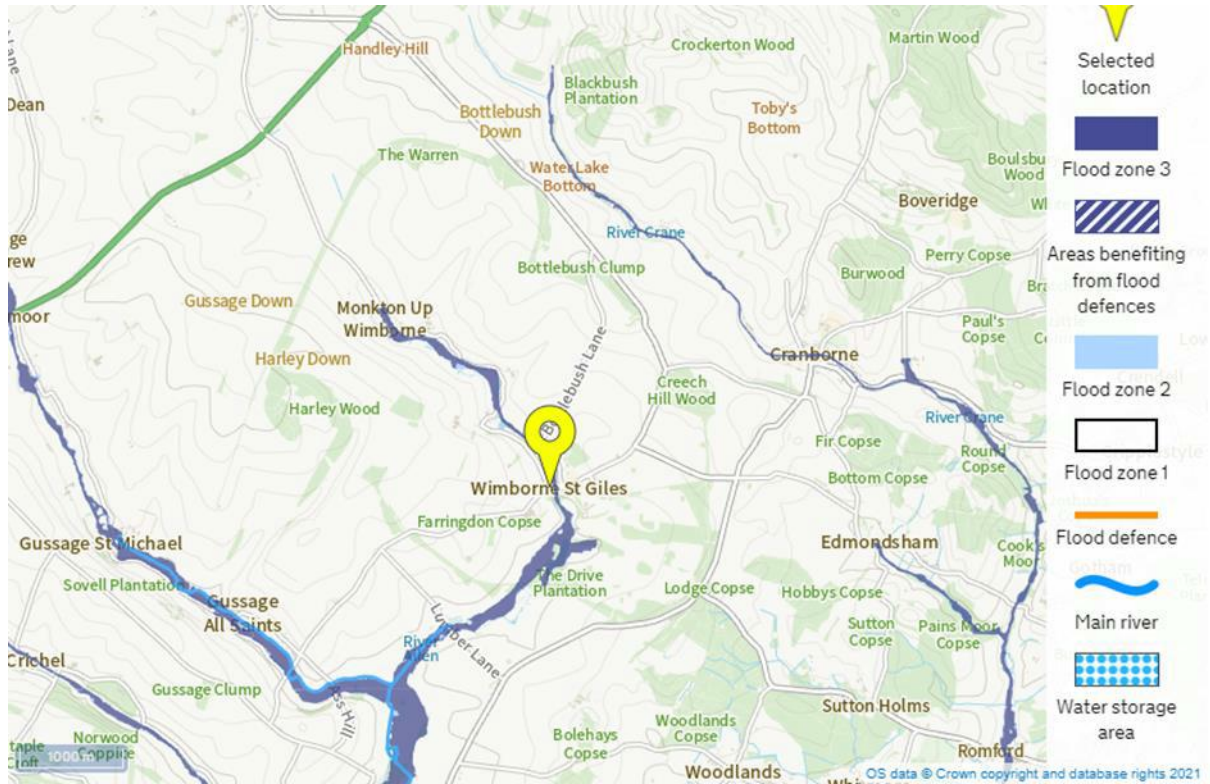
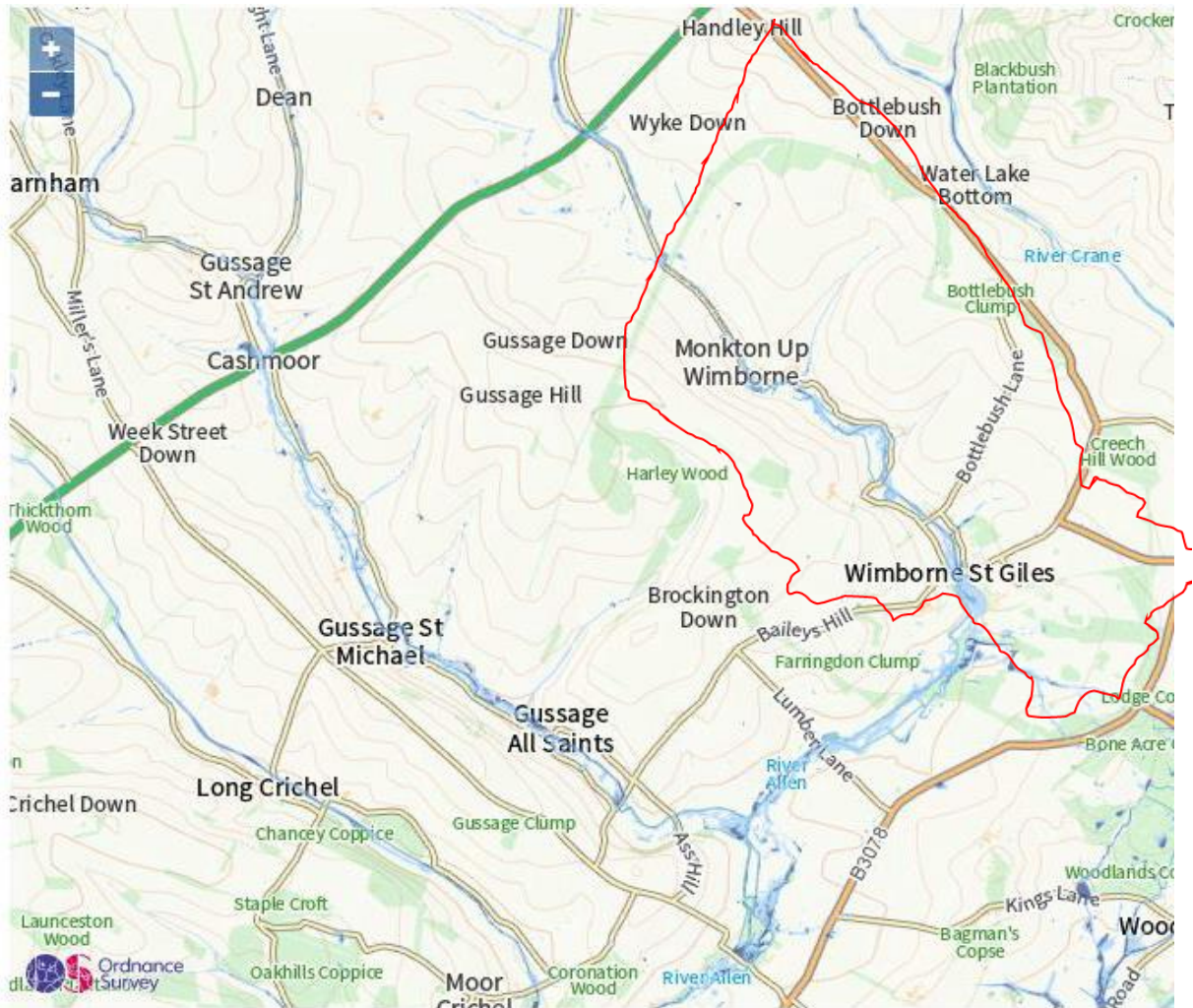


Figure A3.3: Fluvial flood risk with the approximate Wimborne St Giles neighbourhood area mapped in red³⁴



³⁴ Ibid.



Extent of flooding from surface water
● High ● Medium ● Low ○ Very low

Figure A3.4: Surface water flood risk with the approximate Wimborne St Giles neighbourhood area mapped in red³⁵

Summary of future baseline

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.

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 (2021) 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).

A.4 Landscape

Policy context

Table A4.1 below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan.

Table A4.1 Plans, policies, and strategies reviewed in relation to landscape

Document title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021
25-Year Environment Plan	2018
The National Design Guide	2019
National Model Design Code	2021
Dorset Council Local Plan	2021
East Dorset and Christchurch Adopted Local Plan	2014
Cranborne Chase AONB Management Plan	2019

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The Neighbourhood Plan should have regard to the provisions of 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

³⁵ [GOV UK \(n.d.\) Learn more about flood risk](#)

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 adopted Local Plan and Cranborne Chase AONB Management Plan will be a key consideration in the development of the NP and SEA, with the policies and provisions of these plans providing the strategic context for the NP and a framework of existing mitigation to be considered through the SEA.

Summary of current baseline

The entirety of the Plan area is within the Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The Cranborne Chase AONB is part of the extensive belt of chalkland which stretches across southern England and is divided into two areas. To the south, Cranborne Chase with its smooth rounded downs, steeply cut combes and dry valleys shows a typical chalk landscape. The AONB is known for its ecological importance with protected ancient woodland sites, herb-rich fen and river meadow to scattered deciduous woodland, which includes remnants of the ancient Cranborne Chase hunting forest.

In terms of the Landscape Character Assessment undertaken for the AONB³⁶, the neighbourhood area is within two Landscape Character Areas (LCAs), the Stour and Avon Tributary Valleys and the Southern Downland Belt.

The key characteristics of the Stour and Avon Tributary Valleys are as follows:

- Dipslope streams have eroded shallow valleys into the upper chalk – the upper parts of most of these valleys are dry.
- The shallow nature of the valleys means that they have been exploited either as improved pasture or, more commonly, large arable fields.
- Smaller, narrow fields, in places fossilising old strip patterns, predominate around the villages.

³⁶ [LUC on behalf of the Countryside Agency \(2003\) Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Integrated Landscape Character Assessment](#)

- Mature willows and poplars form a dense ribbon of trees, tracing the course of the river. Withered beds were once characteristic of the valleys, and some survive today as features.
- Country houses and their designed parkland contribute features such as avenues, shelter belts and brick walls.
- Picturesque villages inhabit the valley bottoms, following the course of the river in a linear form - the stream typically runs through the village with cottages reached via small bridges.
- Deserted Medieval villages are marked only by farmsteads or individual houses.
- Red brick, flint and thatch are locally distinctive materials.
- Roads occupy each valley floor.
- The Dorset Cursus, and numerous Bronze Age round barrows and channels of postmedieval water meadows contribute to the visible archaeology.
- This rural area is lush farming country that provides a peaceful and unified environment.

The key characteristics of the Southern Downland Belt are as follows:

- A large-scale landscape of broad rolling hills and gentle slopes cut to the south by a series of distinct river valleys.
- Dominated by an Upper Chalk geology with drift clay with flints capping on higher ground.
- A predominantly arable landscape divided into large, regular field units with straight-sided fields representing late 18th/early 19th century Parliamentary enclosure.
- Mixed woodland is a significant feature to the west where the land is more undulating.
- Settlement is scarce (predominantly dispersed farms to the east and south) emphasising the remoteness of the landscape.
- The A354 runs in a north east direction from Blandford Forum to Salisbury and is a prominent feature creating a corridor of movement.
- Numerous Neolithic burial and ritual monuments, such as the Wor Barrow, the Knowlton henge complex and the Dorset Cursus, and large groupings of Bronze Age round barrows, as on Wyke Down and Oakley Down.
- Later prehistoric and Romano-British earthworks including Badbury Rings and Buzbury Rings hillforts, linear ditches and defensive earthworks, such as Grim's Ditch and Bokerley Dyke.
- Roman road from Old Sarum to Badbury Rings forms a straight line in the landscape.
- A large skyscape and panoramic, distant views to the west.

Summary of future baseline

New development, including infrastructure development, has the potential to lead to incremental changes in landscape quality in and around the neighbourhood 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 undermine the purposes of the Green Belt.

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.

A.5 Historic environment

Policy context

Table A5.1 overleaf presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan.

Table A5.1 Plans, policies, and strategies reviewed in relation to historic environment

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

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 essential³⁷.
- 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 Neighbourhood Plan should have regard to the provisions of 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.

³⁷ [Historic England: Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance](#)

- 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 Neighbourhood Plan 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.
- The Neighbourhood Plan 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 Wimborne St Giles 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.

Summary of current baseline

Historic character of Wimborne St Giles

Wimborne St Giles is situated in the well-wooded valley of the River Allen near the old royal hunting ground of Cranborne Chase. The neighbourhood area contains the village itself and the tithing of All Hallows. Formerly, All Hallows was the more important of the two villages. It was recorded as having a church in 1086, while at that time St Giles was merely a chapelry. In 1733 the two parishes were combined, and All Hallows church was demolished in 1742, leaving only the lych gate and churchyard.

Wimborne St Giles, which is a chalk stream settlement, takes its name from the Old English words 'winn' and 'burna', for a stream running through a meadow. As a result of the terrain of the landscape, the settlement extends along the valley where it

was assured a supply of water. In this respect the village spreads along parallel lanes separated by the open water meadows and river.

The nucleus of Wimborne St. Giles is enclosed by the close knit treescape of St Giles' Park, whilst the majority of dwellings are sited in the open valley. The Terrig (otherwise known as the Gussage Stream) flows between two parallel lanes; cottages extend along the lanes and face towards the river. Another feature includes C19th estate houses, normally constructed of mellow brickwork with tiled roofs, but are particularly noticeable on account of their ornate detailing³⁸.

Listed buildings

There are two Grade I listed buildings, three Grade II* listed buildings and seventeen Grade II listed buildings. Grade I and II* listed buildings are detailed below.

Grade I

- St Giles House – a country house, possibly incorporating late medieval work in the basements.
- Church of St Giles House – a parish church, possibly containing some medieval work in north wall of tower.

Grade II*

- Home Farm Buildings Approximately 150 Metres North East of St Giles House - a group of farm buildings with 16th and 17th century features.
- Grotto 250 Metres South East of St Giles House – a Grotto built in the 1750s by Castles of Marylebone.
- Almshouses Including Front Wall – a range of ten almshouses with central common room, dated to 1624.

Registered Park and Garden

The grounds of St Giles' House have been designated as a Grade II* Registered Park and Garden.

The c.230ha site comprises some 30ha of gardens and pleasure grounds, and c.200ha of parkland, plantations and ornamental drives. The site is bounded to the east and south-east by the B3078 road which leads north from Wimborne Minster to Cranborne, while to the north the boundary is formed by a minor road leading west from the B3078 road to the village of Wirnborne St Giles, which adjoins the site to the north-west. To the west and south-west the site adjoins agricultural land.

A circuit of carriage drives to the north-west of the house and park extends c.2.5km north-west to Ackling Dyke, a Roman road leading north-east from Badbury Rings to Old Sarum; the area of agricultural land enclosed within the circuit of drives is not included in the registered site. The registered site contains a number of scheduled and unscheduled barrows and a camp that abuts the east boundary. The Round House or Philosopher's Tower to the east of the B3078 road is included in the registered site as an outlying structure.

³⁸ [Dorset Council \(1999\) Identifying Local Distinctiveness](#)

St Giles' House is included on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest at Grade II* for the following principal reasons:

- Early and representative example: it is a particularly important multi-phased designed landscape, incorporating pleasure grounds and parkland first developed in the late C17 and throughout the C18 and C19, for a very important country house of exceptional interest.
- Historic association: it has strong and long-standing historic associations with one of the most important and influential aristocratic families in England.
- Group value: it forms the essential setting to a Grade I listed mansion and has additional strong group value with significant mid C18 landscape structures situated within it³⁹.

Scheduled monuments

There are six scheduled monuments within the Plan area, detailed below:

- Barrows in and near The Drive Plantation – Cranborne Chase is an area of chalkland well known for its high number, density and diversity of archaeological remains. These include a rare combination of Neolithic and Early Bronze Age sites comprising one of the largest concentrations of burial monuments in England, the largest known cursus (a linear ritual monument) and a significant number and range of henge monuments (Late Neolithic ceremonial centres).
- Camp at Nine Yews.
- Barrows N of St Giles Park – Six bowl barrows 560m east of Glebe Farm, situated in Cranborne Chase, an area of chalkland well known for its high number, density and diversity of archaeological remains.
- Barrows in and near St Giles Park – Bell barrow and four bowl barrows 285m north west of Avenue Lodge, situated in Cranborne Chase, an area of chalkland well known for its high number, density and diversity of archaeological remains.
- Boundary banks on Rye Hill and in Maldry Wood.
- Round barrow cemetery and two associated enclosures, 550m west of Wimborne Lodge, associated with the Knowlton Circles – situated in Cranborne Chase, an area of chalkland well known for its high number, density and diversity of archaeological remains.

Wimborne St Giles Conservation Area

The Wimborne St Giles Conservation Area covers the area shown in the figure at the end of this section. Most of the land within the conservation area falls within the ownership of the Shaftesbury Estate. The present great house, built by the Cooper family in Renaissance style in 1650-9, replaced the Ashley family's modest manor house of a century earlier. The character of the village today is a product of the tight control and skilled husbandry by the Estate over many years.

³⁹ [St Giles' House - Historic England List Entry Number 1000723](#)

The boundaries of the conservation area were drawn to include the entire village, including the water-meadows adjacent to the Allen which extend through the centre. There are three distinctive parts of the settlement: Home Farm and Park Lane; the village green area; and linear development along the valley roads on each side of the water-meadows extending to All Hallows Farm. A significant proportion of the conservation area therefore comprises open space, including farmland. These open areas were included on account of their importance to the setting of village buildings, including a number of individual cottages sited along within the valley.

A conservation area appraisal for the Wimborne St Giles Conservation Area was prepared in 2006 by East Dorset District Council and will be used to inform the appraisals undertaken through the SEA⁴⁰.

Historic Environment Record

There are numerous features listed on the Dorset Historic Environment Record, which can be accessed via the Dorset Explorer⁴¹. These features, which incorporate range of features, including barrows, field boundaries, prehistoric ring ditches, historic trackways, prehistoric settlements and field systems, will be considered during the forthcoming assessments for the SEA.

Heritage at risk

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'. As of December 2021, the Heritage at Risk Register identifies two scheduled monuments and one Grade II* listed building 'at risk' in the Plan area:

- Barrows in and near The Drive Plantation: Scheduled monument is deemed to be at risk due to arable ploughing.
- Barrows in and near St Giles Park: Scheduled monument is deemed to at risk due to animal burrowing.
- Grotto 250 Metres South East of St Giles House: Grade II* listed structure is deemed to be at risk given it is "under repair or in fair to good repair, but no user identified; or under threat of vacancy with no obvious new user"⁴².

Summary of future baseline

New development areas in the neighbourhood 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 environment designations offer a degree of protection to heritage assets and their settings.

Alongside, new development need not be harmful to the significance of a heritage asset, and in the context of the neighbourhood 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.

⁴⁰ [Wimborne St Giles Conservation Area Appraisal](#)

⁴¹ [Dorset Explorer](#)

⁴² [Historic England Heritage at risk registers](#)

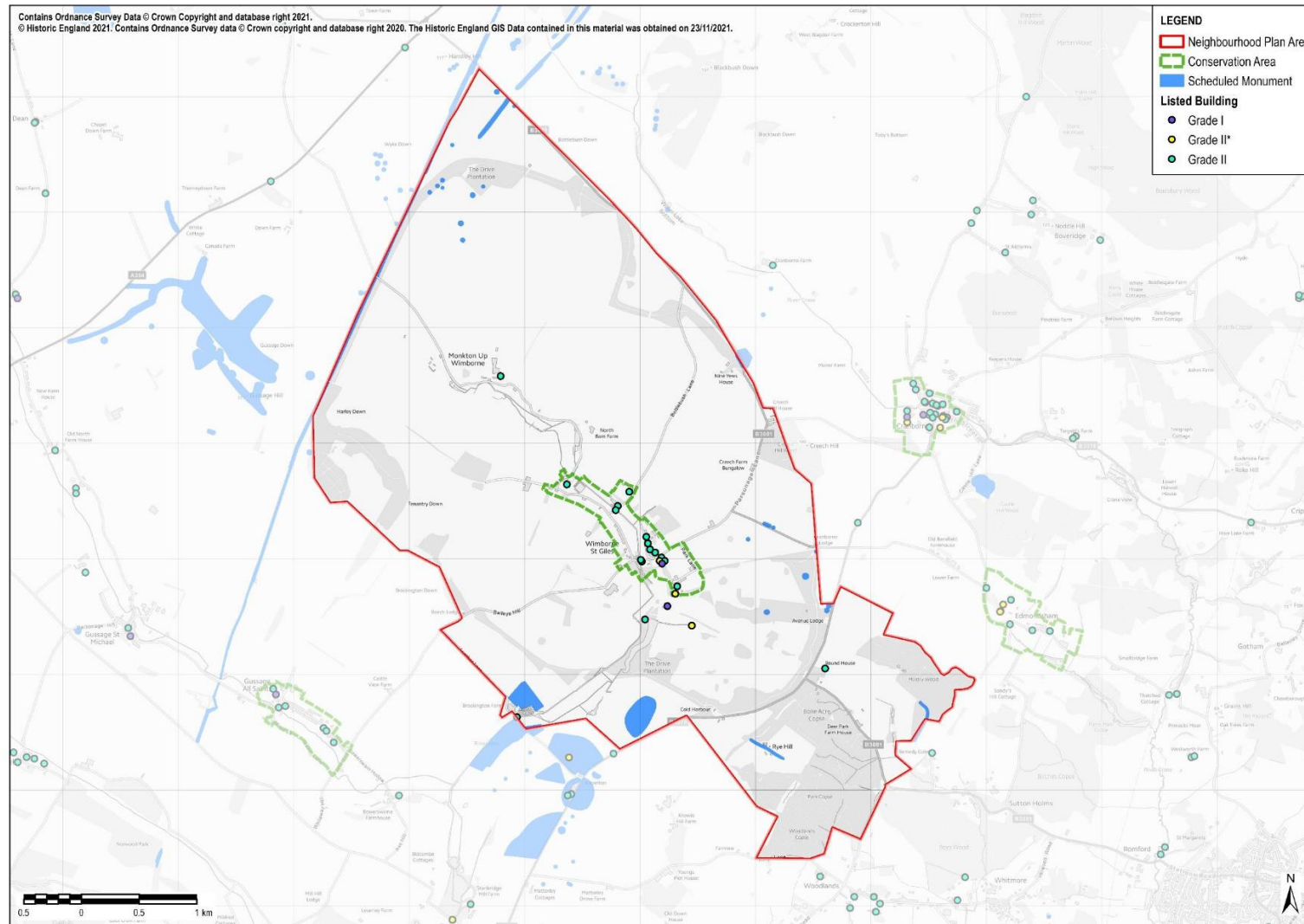


Figure A5.1: Historic environment features in the Wimborne St Giles neighbourhood area

A.6 Land, soil and water resources

Policy context

Table A6.1 overleaf presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan.

Table A6.1 Plans, policies, and strategies reviewed in relation to land, soil and water resources

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

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The Neighbourhood Plan should have regard to the provisions of 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 Wimborne St Giles, 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 Neighbourhood Plan 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 Neighbourhood Plan will also be required to be in general conformity with the policies of adopted Core Strategy and the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan.

Summary of current baseline

Soil resources

As indicated in **Figure A6.1** below, the majority of the Plan area is underlain by Grade 3 agricultural land. A detailed assessment into the quality of this land has not yet been undertaken to determine whether the underlying land is grade 3a or 3b quality. However, the predictive likelihood of high agricultural land quality in the Plan area has been determined to be between 40- 60% in the centre of the settlement.

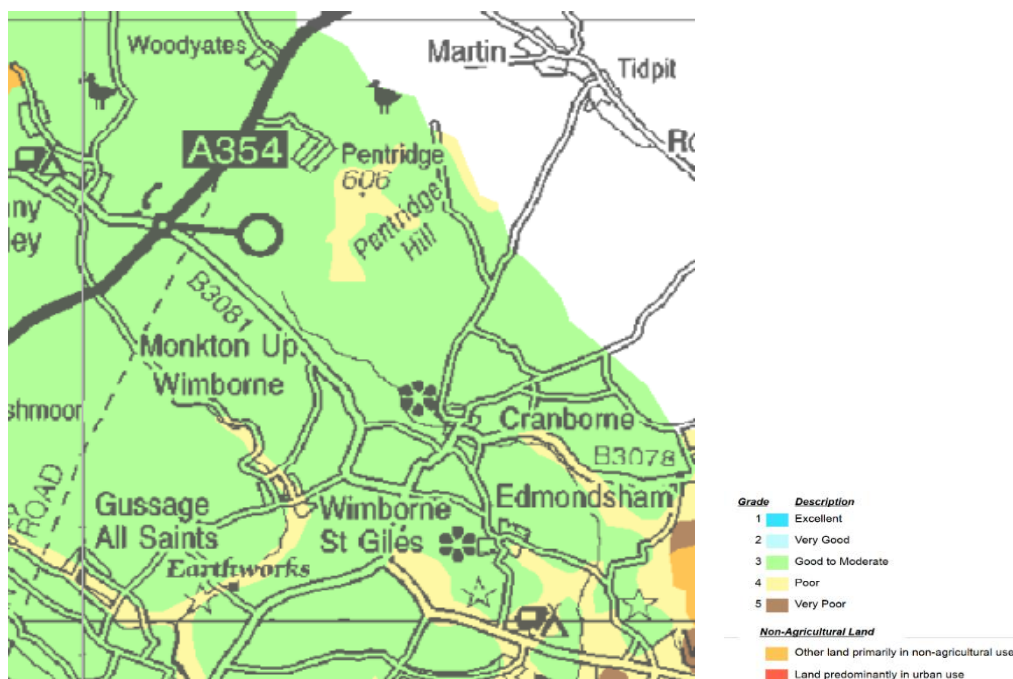


Figure A6.1 Agricultural land classification⁴³

⁴³ [Regional Agricultural Land Classification Maps](#)

Water resources and quality

With regards to water quality, the Plan area falls within the South West River Basin District, Dorset Management Catchment and Stour Dorset Operational Catchment. The main waterbody running through the Plan area is the Allen Trib (Crichel Stream), which in 2019 had 'good' ecological status. The Trib failed to meet the minimum requirements for chemical status over the same time period, however, primarily due to the presence of mercury and its compounds and Polybrominated diphenyl ethers⁴⁴.

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. 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.

Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) denote areas at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution and the whole of the neighbourhood area is identified as an NVZ. 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 is underlain by the South Wessex Groundwater NVZ.

Summary of future baseline

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 WNP 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.

Given the presence of best and most versatile land within parts of the neighbourhood 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.

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 WNP.

⁴⁴ [Environment Agency Catchment Data Explorer](#)

A.7 Community wellbeing

Policy context

Table A7.1 below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan.

Table A7.1 Plans, policies, and strategies reviewed in relation to community wellbeing

Document title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021
Dorset Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy	2021
Dorset Enabling Communities Strategy	2021
Active Dorset: Sport & Leisure Facilities Needs	2017
Dorset Council Local Plan	2021
East Dorset and Christchurch Adopted Local Plan	2014

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The Neighbourhood Plan should have regard to the provisions of 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 Neighbourhood Plan 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.

Summary of current baseline

Given the availability of information, the information presented below has in many cases been presented for Wimborne St Giles parish, which covers the majority of the neighbourhood area.

Population

Population estimates presented in **Table A7.2** below indicate that the population of Wimborne St Giles parish has decreased over the past decade (by 0.5%, according to population estimates for 2019), in comparison to increases for the South West and England as a whole over the same time period.

Table A7.2 Population change (2011-2019)

Population	Wimborne St Giles	East Dorset	South West	England
2011	377	87,166	5,288,935	53,012,456
2019 mid-year estimate	375	N / A	5,624,696	56,286,961
% change	-0.5%	N / A	+6.3%	+6.2%

Age structure

As shown in **Table A7.3** below, a large proportion of residents in Wimborne St Giles parish are aged over 45 (52%), though this is lower for comparative figures for East Dorset (57.4%), it is higher than figures for the South West (46.5%) and England as a whole (41.7%).

A7.3 Age structure

Age structure	Wimborne St Giles	East Dorset	South West	England
0-15	19.4%	15.6%	17.6%	18.9%
16-24	9.0%	8.4%	11.3%	11.9%
25-44	19.6%	18.5%	24.6%	27.5%
45-59	28.4%	21.1%	20.1%	19.4%
60+	23.6%	36.3%	26.4%	22.3%

Education and employment

As shown in **Figure A7.1** below, 50.5% of occupations in Wimborne St Giles are described by the following three occupational categories ('skilled roles'):

- Professional occupations (20.3%)
- Associate professional and technical occupations (15.5%)
- Managers, directors, senior officials (14.8%)

Alongside this, a higher proportion of residents in Wimborne St Giles are in skilled roles (50.5%) in comparison to the South West (39.7%) and England as a whole (41.2%), though similar to proportions for East Dorset (50.5%).

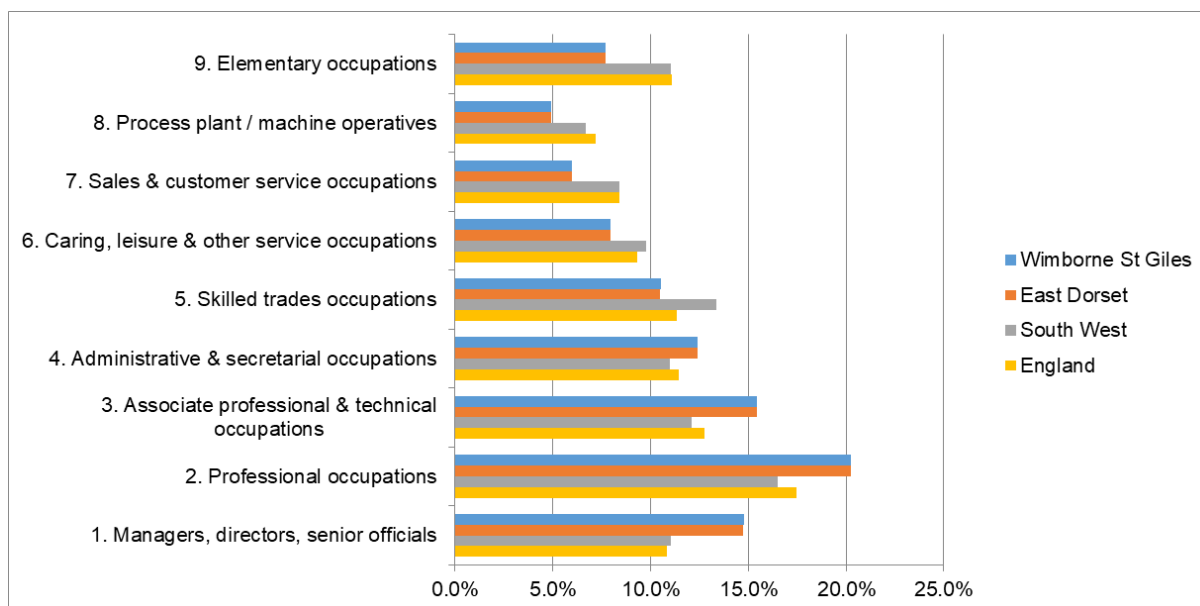


Figure A7.1 Occupational bands

Wimborne St Giles has a high proportion of residents with level 4 qualifications and above (30.6%) in comparison to East Dorset (27.7%), the South West (27.4%) and England as a whole (27.4%). Most residents in the Plan area have at least one qualification (95.1%).

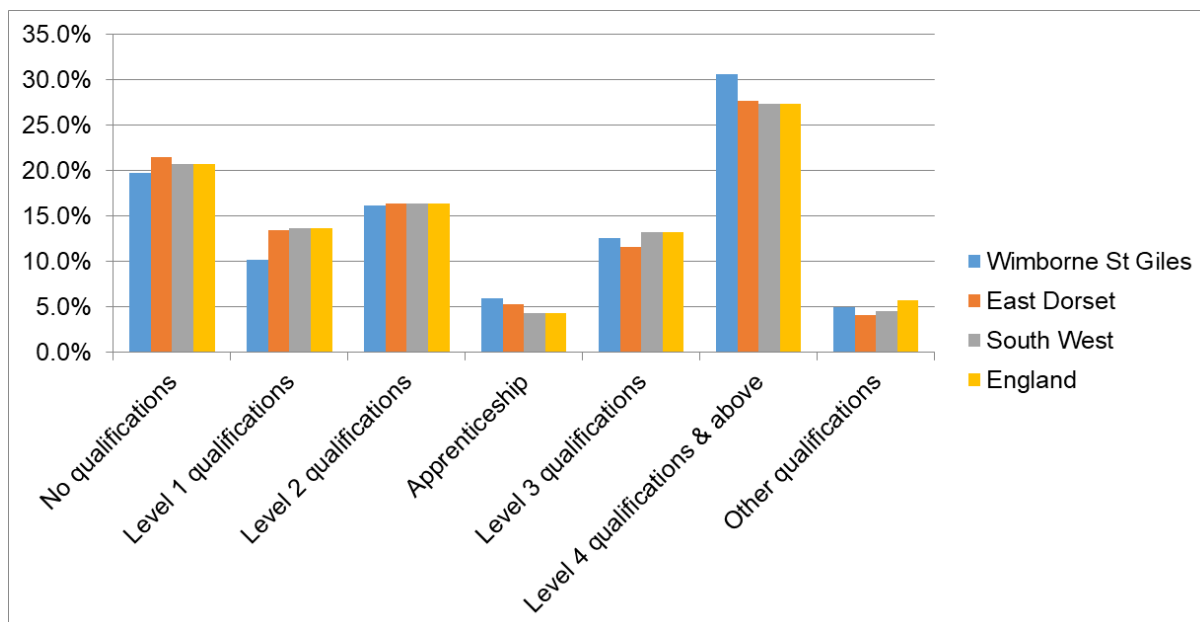


Figure A7.2 Highest level of qualification

With regards to educational provision, Wimborne St Giles Church of England Voluntary Aided First School and Nursery offers education for pupils aged between 2 and 9 years old. The area also falls within the catchment of the Cranborne Middle School, and Queen Elizabeth (Wimborne) Upper School.

43.0% of residents in Wimborne St Giles own their own homes, notably lower than comparative figures for East Dorset (80.9%), the South West (67.4%) and England

as a whole (63.3%). In comparison, a much larger proportion of residents in Wimborne St Giles privately rent accommodation (37.4%).

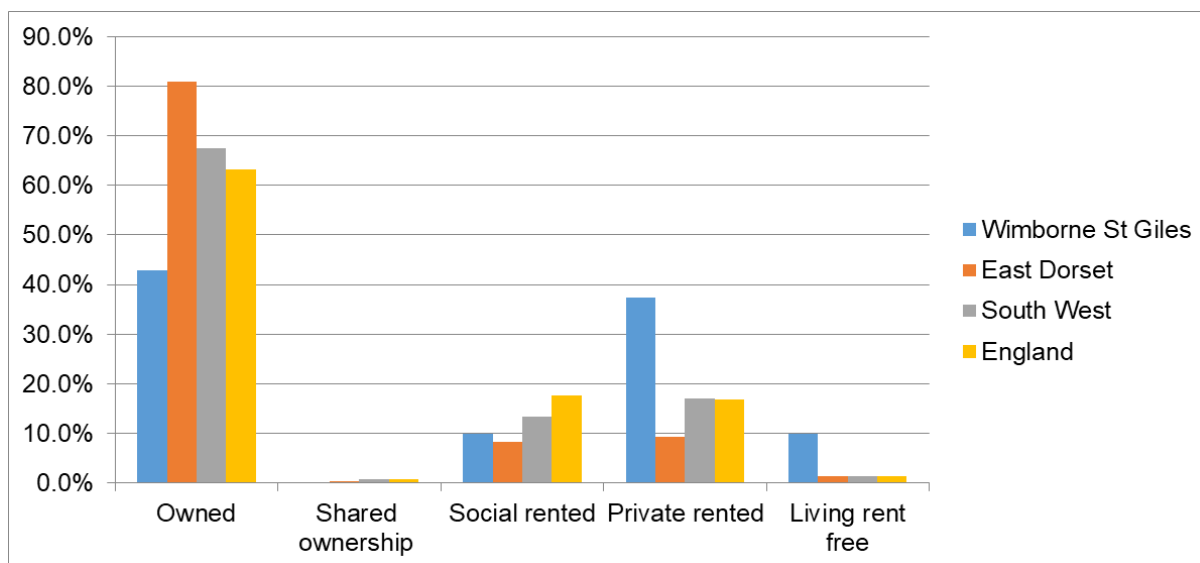


Figure A7.3 Housing tenure

Deprivation

47.9% of households in Wimborne St Giles are not deprived in any dimension, higher than comparative figures for East Dorset (46.5%), the South West (44.8%) and England (42.5%).

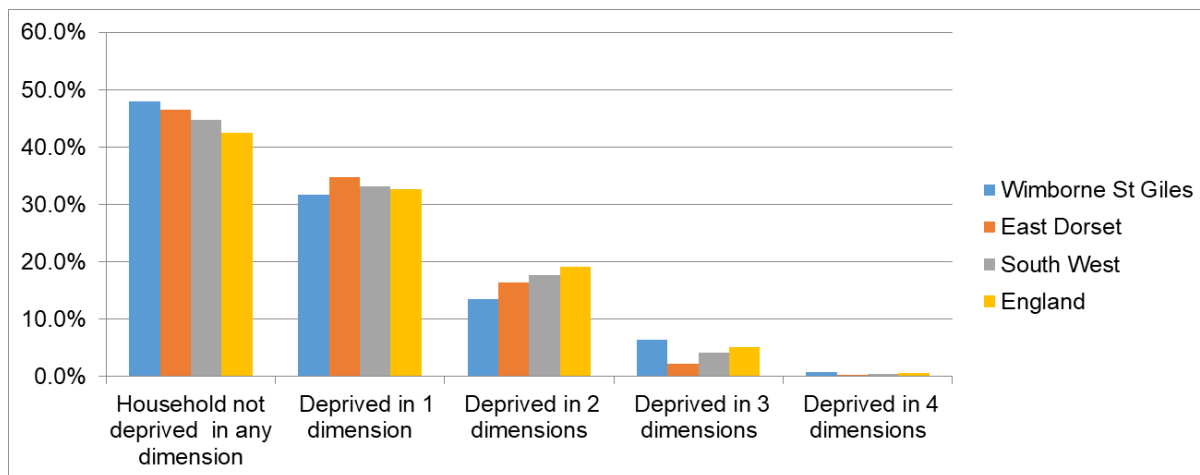


Figure A7.4 Household deprivation

Village services

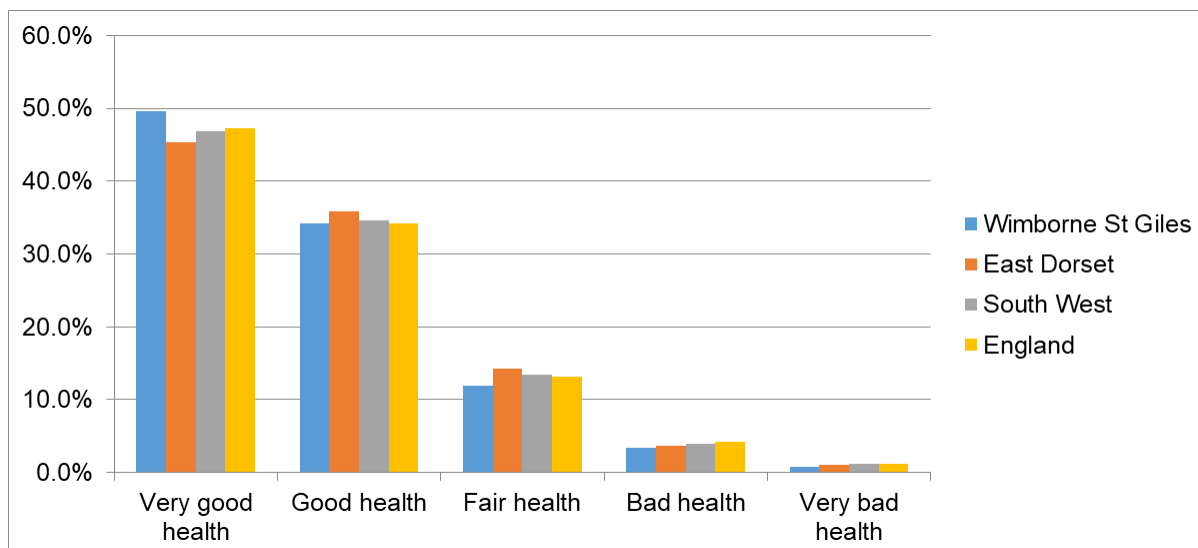
Wimborne St Giles offers a number of services for local residents, including⁴⁵:

- Village hall – a venue for parties, festivals, music nights, craft classes and exercises.
- Post office and shop.
- St Giles Church – offering regular services.
- The Bull Inn.

⁴⁵ [Wimborne St. Giles](#)

General health

Overall health in Wimborne St Giles is generally excellent. 83.8% of residents have 'very good' or 'good' health in comparison to 81.1% of residents in East Dorset, 81.4% in the South West and 81.4% in England as a whole. This is shown in **Figure A7.5**, below.



A7.5 General health

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

The Dorset JSNA⁴⁶ 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.

⁴⁶ [East Dorset locality profile](#)

The majority of disabled residents in Wimborne St Giles are not limited in their day-to-day activities (83.3%), higher than figures for East Dorset (80.3%), the South West (81.6%) and England as a whole (82.4%).

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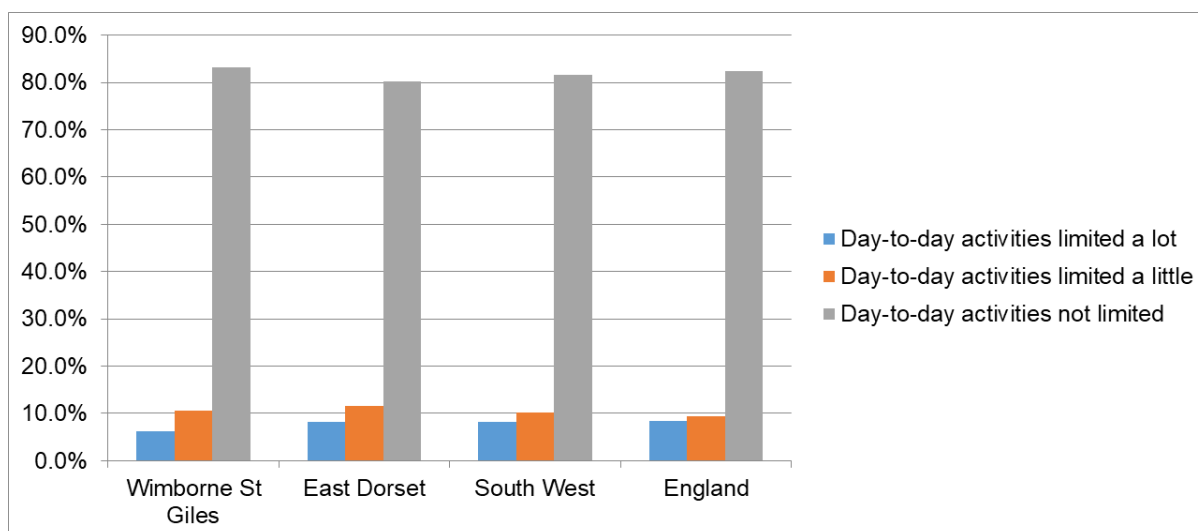


Figure A7.6 Disability

Medical facilities

There are no doctors/GP practices within the Plan area. The nearest GP services are located in Cranbrook, 2.2km from the village centre. St Leonard's Hospital is the closest hospital to the Plan area, located 10km from the village centre.

A.8 Transportation

Table A8.1 below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Wimborne St Giles Neighbourhood Plan.

Table A8.1 Plans, policies, and strategies reviewed in relation to transportation

Document title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021
The Transport Investment Strategy – Moving Britain Ahead	2017
Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan	2012
Dorset Council Local Plan	2021
East Dorset and Christchurch Adopted Local Plan	2014

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The Neighbourhood Plan should have regard to the provisions of 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 Neighbourhood Plan will be required to be in general conformity with the strategic policy aims of the Transport Plan.
- The Neighbourhood Plan will also be required to be in general conformity with the policies of adopted Core Strategy and the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan.

Summary of current baseline

Rail network

There are no railway stations located in the vicinity of the Plan area. Salisbury railway station, operated by South Western Railway is located approximately 25km from Wimborne St Giles, and provides services to destinations such as London, Basingstoke, Exeter, Bristol and Southampton.

Bus network

Bus services in the Plan area are poor, and there are currently no bus stops in Wimborne St Giles. The closest service (the 97 bus services) is accessible via bus stops located in Cranborne.

Road network and congestion

The village is served by a network of country lanes, with smaller 'B' roads (B3081, B3078) connecting the Plan area to the primary road network.

The A354 borders the west of the Plan area and links with Blandford Forum, the A350 and Salisbury.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network

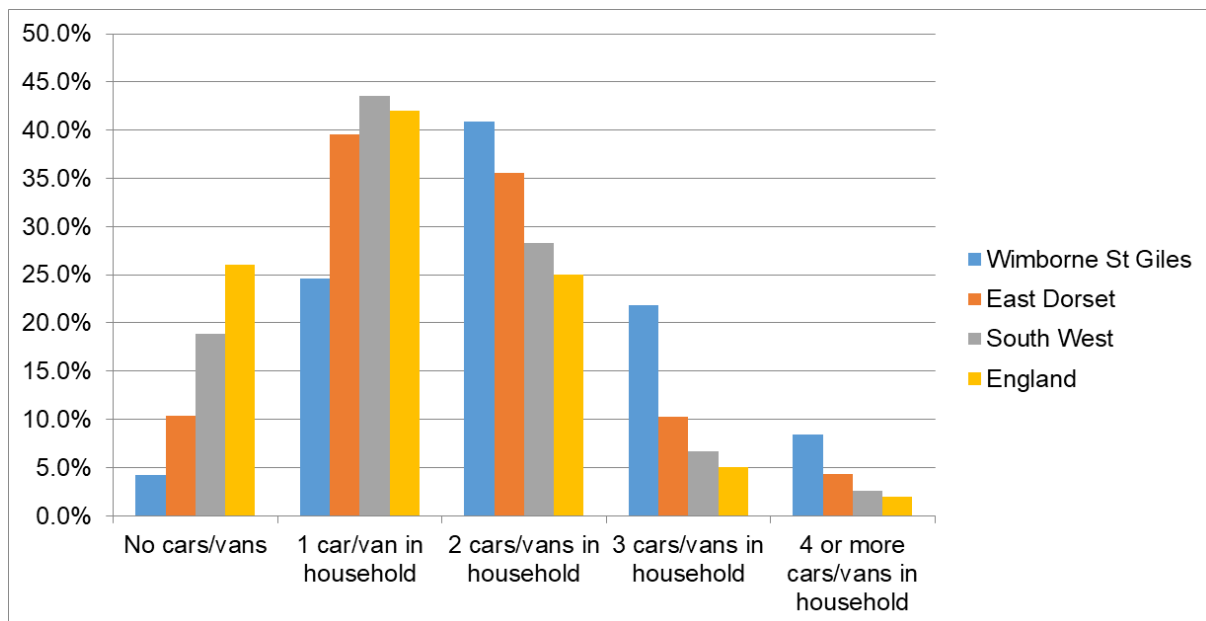
As highlighted in **Figure A8.1** overleaf, there is an extensive network of footpaths and bridleways in the vicinity of Wimborne St Giles, linking the village centre to other parts of the neighbourhood area and beyond.



The following colours have been used for the coloured lines:
 solid red line: footpath;
 solid fuchsia line: bridleway;
 solid green line: restricted byway;
 solid blue line: byway open to all traffic.

Figure A8.1 PRowS⁴⁷

As shown in **Figure A8.2** overleaf, car ownership in Wimborne St Giles is high. 95.8% of residents own at least one car, and over half own 2 cars or more. A significantly higher number of households own two cars or more than East Dorset, regional and national averages.



⁴⁷ [The rights of way using an Ordnance Survey map delivered by Bing](#)

Figure A8.2 Car ownership

52.3% of residents in Wimborne St Giles parish travel to work via car and / or van, higher than figures for East Dorset (49.1%), the South West (41.4%) and England as a whole (37.0%). A comparatively higher proportion of residents also choose to work from home (6.1%) or cycle to work (3.2%).

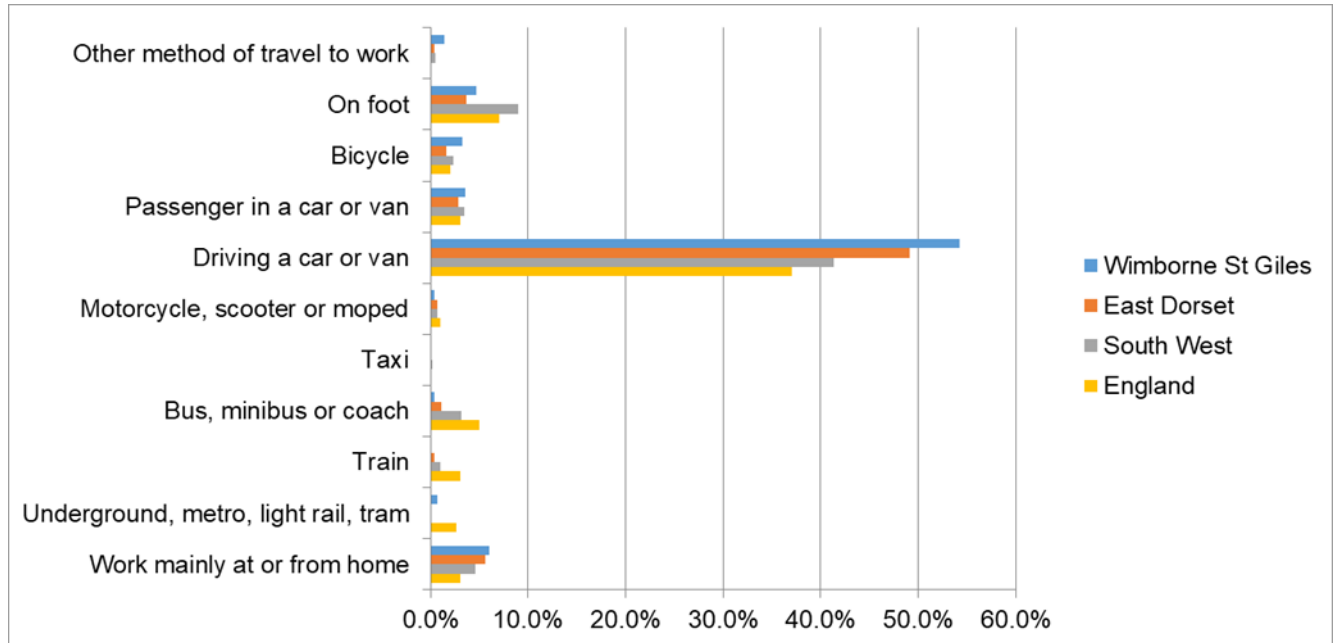


Figure A8.3 Method of travel to work

Summary of future baseline

Given the rural nature of the neighbourhood area and relative lack of sustainable transport options, growth in Wimborne St Giles will likely continue the reliance on the private vehicle for travel.

