

INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF THE STINSFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

EXAMINER: Andrew Mead BSc (Hons) MRTPI MIQ

Questions to Stinsford Parish Council (SPC) and Dorset Council (DC)

1. Question for SPC

What was the date of submission of the Plan to Dorset Council?

SPC –15 September 2021

2. Question for SP

- a) Please could another Figure 2 be submitted which delineates the River Valley Landscape as identified on the Dorset Landscape Character Assessment map referred to in the DC Regulation 16 response?
- b) Please could the new Figure 2 also exclude the parts of the Important Gaps near Frome Whitfield and Dorchester which extend beyond the Plan area?

SPC –Please see separately attached Figure 2 (revised) at end

3. Question for SPC

- a) Please could another Figure 4 be submitted which corrects the anomaly of the number of Valued Views on the map (which the key shows as 8) and the Important Local Views in Table 4 (of which there are 7), and which would include numbering the views on the map?
- b) In addition, please could the numbered Valued Views on Figure 2 be rationalised so that viewpoints located outside the Plan area on the edge of Dorchester are removed?

SPC –The number on the key of Figure 4 related purely to the direction rather than the view ‘number’

However in response to (b) please see separately attached Figure 4 (revised) which relates more closely to the proposed rationalised set of views. A more detailed description in Table 4 of the views shown would be as follows:

View ref / Location	Current Description and Notable Landmarks	Suggest text is revised to:
1 Hollow Hill	Description: The farmland rising to the north through a shallow vale draws out the gradual transition from Kingston Maurward’s parkland, over the College’s sports fields, to	1A: To the north the view includes the Roman road (adjacent to the viewing point), the prominent tree clump within Kingston Maurward’s parkland, and the rise of the chalk above the quarry (close to the viewpoint). The

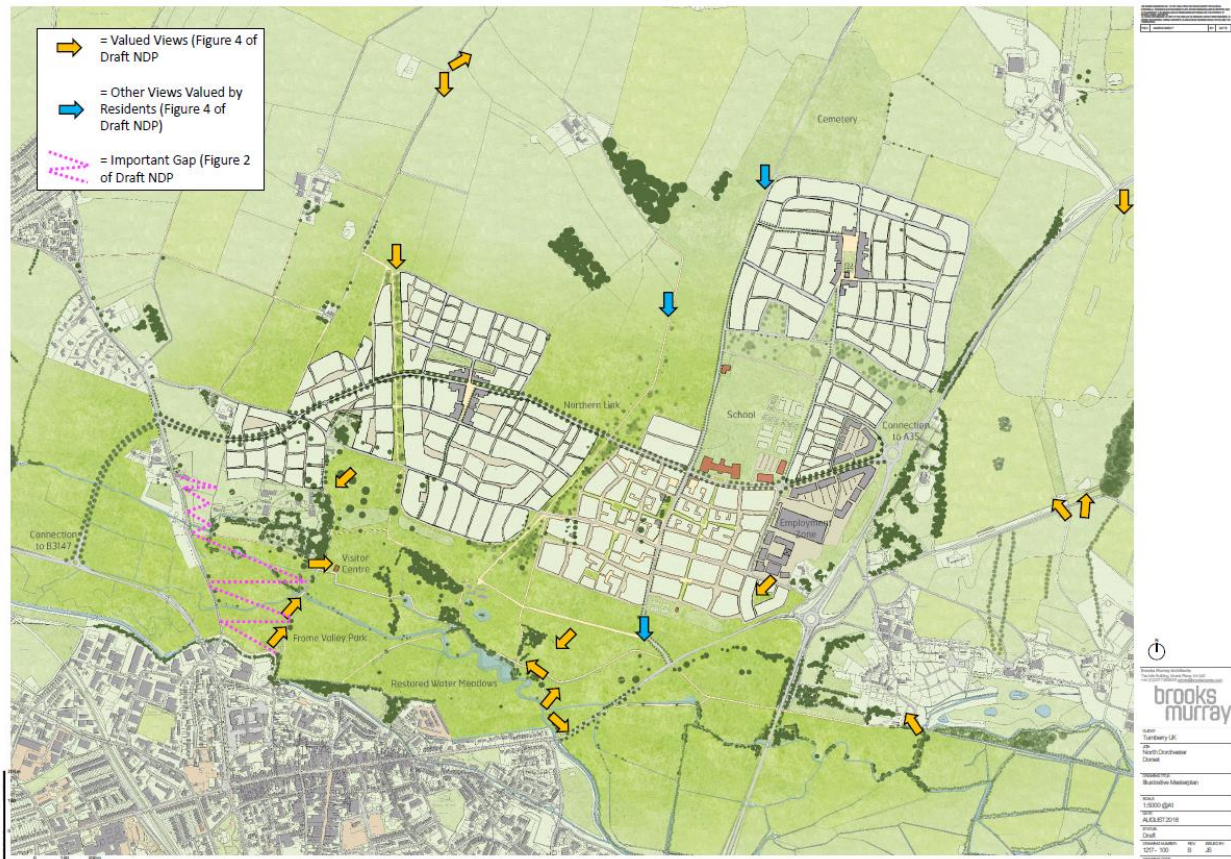
View ref / Location	Current Description and Notable Landmarks	Suggest text is revised to:
	<p>the open arable and grazing land, creating an uninterrupted vista into the far distance.</p> <p>Notable landmarks: Kingston Maurward House to the south ; Kingston Maurward Parkland, with iconic wooded clump, to the north.</p>	<p>footpath was frequented by Hardy on his walk from the Cottage to Dorchester.</p> <p>1B: To the south the focal feature is Kingston Maurward House, considered to be the Knapwater House in 'Desperate Remedies'; and it also features as the Manor in 'Under the Greenwood Tree'.</p>
2 Lovers Lane	<p>Description: Panoramic views from what was an old drove road that runs north past the historic settlement of Frome Whitfield, through fields and up onto the rolling chalk land linking to the Ridgeway. Parts of the route are full of bluebells and wildflowers in spring.</p> <p>Notable landmarks: Expansive views back towards Dorchester. Frome House. More panoramic views looking north to the ridge and across Cokers Farm.</p>	<p>2A: View south-east from the old drove road into secluded chalk valley, and expansive view south towards Dorchester's skyline.</p> <p>2B: View to south and east from Lovers Lane over Dorchester to the South Dorset Ridgeway beyond, with iconic landmarks of Dorchester including the Listed Buildings of Art Deco period County Hall with its copper roof, and St George's Church in Fordington.</p> <p>2C: Looking south down the former drove road, with the well-treed landscape of the historic parkland of Frome Whitfield in the middle distance, and the Dorchester skyline beyond, including St George's Church in Fordington.</p> <p>2D: View east from a ford with raised walkway beside, through a kissing gate (a feature often mentioned in Hardy literature) the footpath to the east follows the Frome Valley across relic historic parkland with ancient oaks. Looking south the towers of the church spires and tall chimneys of Dorchester's skyline can be seen.</p> <p>2E View from Blue Bridge looking northwards across an intimate view of the convergence of the Cerne and Frome rivers, beyond which lies Chapel Close field which is the site and remains of the medieval village and St Nicholas Church (the view of the site of the medieval village is also possible from the footbridge to the north).</p>
3 River Frome walk	<p>Description: Extensive, timeless, rural views across the water meadows and adjoining farmland, with associated bridges and water channels.</p>	<p>3A: From the river path near Bockhampton Bridge, looking north-easterly to Bridge Cottage House (considered the prototype of Farmer Shiner's cottage in 'Under the Greenwood Tree'). The area downstream is a</p>

View ref / Location	Current Description and Notable Landmarks	Suggest text is revised to:
	<p>Glimpsed views into the nearby historic settlements.</p> <p>Notable landmarks:</p> <p>Stinsford Church</p> <p>Grey's Bridge</p> <p>Lower Bockhampton Bridge</p> <p>The Dorchester skyline</p>	<p>view into Tess of the d'Urbervilles "Valley of the Great Dairies" and to the right is where Angel Clare carried the milk maids across the water on their way to church.</p> <p>3B: From Stinsford Ford looking east along the embowered path featured in Hardy's The Dead Quire and in Under the Greenwood Tree (and you can also see the leat taking the water to Kingston Maurward Lake)</p> <p>3C: looking west giving views of Three Bears Cottage (the gardener's cottage for the Stinsford Estate) and across the water meadows, with its ditches, remains of sluices and low bridges. Further along the path there are views north to Stinsford House.</p> <p>3D: From Grey's Bridge looking eastwards, across the water meadows, and Hardy's 'Durnover Moor' in the Wessex novels.</p> <p>3E From Grey's Bridge looking northwards, features being the old natural swimming pool, the hatches, and Hatch Cottage – remnants of the historic management of the water meadows and a pool historically used for recreation. This is an area associated with many characters in Hardy's novels and poems – Michael Henchard in 'The Mayor of Casterbridge', Fanny Robin pausing on her way to the Union or Farmer Boldwood going to the prison in "Far From the Madding Crowd".</p>
4 Top of Exhibition Field	<p>Description:</p> <p>Wide reaching views to Cokers Frome and across the water meadows, River Frome towards Hardy's monument in the distance.</p> <p>Notable landmarks:</p> <p>The Dorchester skyline Vice-Admiral Hardy's monument landmark (The Trumpet Major)</p>	<p>4: The view south-west over the Exhibition Field which was used for the Bath and West and Southern Counties Show in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Beyond is "Mellstock" Lodge and the Stinsford Park and water meadows with historic Horse Chestnut and Sycamore trees and the footpath often taken by the young Hardy on his daily walk to and from Dorchester. The poem "the Third Kissing Gate" refers to this. Along the road and up 'Mellstock' Hill is the recreated avenue of Limes, and beyond this Dorchester with Admiral Hardy's Monument in the distance.</p>

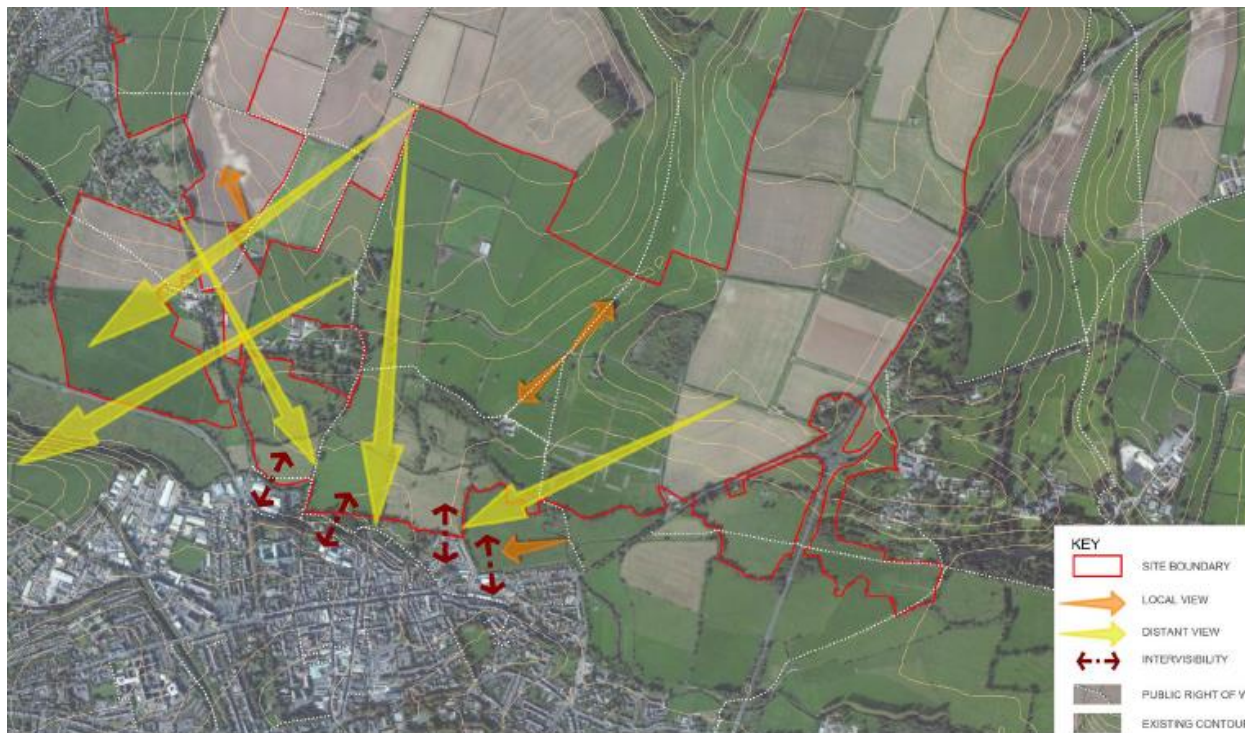
View ref / Location	Current Description and Notable Landmarks	Suggest text is revised to:
5 Thorncombe Wood, Roman Road	<p>Description: Elevated viewpoint on the very eastern edge of the parish boundary, giving distant views towards the southern ridgeway, which are unspoilt and particularly picturesque.</p> <p>Notable landmarks: Rushy Pond Roman Road crossing Duddle Heath Lower Bockhampton</p>	5: Looking south-west, with Rushy Pond and its associated poem “by Rushy Pond” close by, are views down the Roman Road and across rare heathland habitat, part of Hardy’s Egdon Heath, which features in ‘The Return of the Native’ <i>“Ever since the beginning of vegetation its soil had worn the same antique brown dress”</i> .
6 Waterston Ridge	<p>Description: Panoramic views looking from the elevated vantage of the Ridge Way in a southerly direction across rolling chalk farmland and ancient woodland, unspoilt as far as the eye can see.</p> <p>Notable landmarks: Grey’s Wood</p>	<p>6A: From a point beside Fiddlers Green (the remains of Shepherd Fennel’s home in the story Three Strangers) and close to one of the many tumuli along the ridge, looking south towards Cokers Frome Road (the view mentioned in the poem The Revisitation, with to the East the Piddle Valley Road (the grey, gaunt, lonely Lane of Slyre’)).</p> <p>6B: A view from west of Slyers Lane (the Piddle Valley road), looking south over Dorchester towards the South Dorset Ridgeway, with further west the now distinctive profile of Poundbury. Maiden Castle, Britain’s (and Europe’s) largest Iron Age Hill Fort occupies the middle distance. The skyline is punctuated by the numerous Bronze Age burial tumuli clearly visible along the crest of the South Dorset Ridgeway leading the eye west to Hardy’s Monument at the top of Black Down.</p> <p>6C: A view east of Slyers Lane, looking south-east towards the ancient woodlands of Grey’s Wood and beyond to Yellowham Wood, an area which features in Hardy’s novel Far from the Madding Crowd.</p>
7 Kingston layby on A35	<p>Description: Iconic view of Kingston Maurward College across its parkland, as seen from the A35 by many visitors approaching Dorchester</p> <p>Notable landmarks: Kingston Maurward College</p>	7: Looking south from the A35 adjacent to Higher Kingston, a sweeping view into Kingston Maurward parkland, with Kingston Maurward House as the focal point.

Local views were discussed with a representative of the North Dorchester Consortium (Turnberry) during the Reg 14 consultation via Zoom on Wednesday 24th March 2021. The notes of that meeting recorded that Turnberry had prepared a plan showing SNP's protected views overlaid on the draft North Dorchester layout, and that all but one of SNP's protected views would align with open or landscaped areas in the North Dorchester outline plan, and so the developers hoped that their value would remain, although the nature of the views would be changed as there would be glimpses of development.

The following overlay of the views and potential masterplan was shared at that meeting:



Their appraisal of views (as submitted for the Local Plan) is shown as follows, recognising the importance of views from Lovers Lane (2) and also the view across the Exhibition Field (4) as well as the connection between the town and watermeadows (NB this appraisal only focuses on the area proposed for the strategic allocation and therefore does not pick up on views to the east).



This includes the following photographs for the Lovers Lane northern end (2B and 2C) in addition to many photos relating to the river valley landscape area:



4. Question for SPC and DC

A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework was published by the government on 20 July 2021, alongside a final version of the National Model Design Code. I would be grateful if you could please advise me whether you consider any modifications in

relation to the non-strategic matters covered by the draft Plan are necessary as a result of the publications and, if so, what these are?

SPC – in terms of the revised NPPF, this is not considered to introduce any fundamental changes that would raise a conflict. The NPPF revisions place much emphasis on ‘beautiful’ places and whilst this is arguably a subjective term, Policy SNP12 picks up many of the concepts included within the NMDC at a neighbourhood level – such as:

- Context - Local character and built heritage
- Built Form - Density, built form and urban design
- Identity - character of buildings
- Resources - Environmental design, renewable energy provision and low energy networks

Whilst the NPPF para 131 specifically references street trees, these have not been included within the plan as a general requirement, although they do feature notably as a characteristic along Stinsford Hill (as referenced on page 56) and going north towards Bockhampton Cross (as referenced on page 25). As such although this characteristic is not widespread, it may be appropriate to add specific reference to avenue tree planting in SNP2 (and this would also complement reference to tree planting in SNP1).

The Parish Council would have no objection to clarifying the role of the recently published National Design Guide and National Model Design Code to be read alongside Policy SNP12 – this could either be through reference in the supporting text or the following addition to the policy: “Regard should also be had to the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code.”

DC response: The revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) places greater emphasis on beauty, place-making, the environment, sustainable development and underlines the importance of local design codes. The changes make beauty and place-making a strategic theme in the NPPF, set out the expectation that Local Authorities produce their own design codes and guides, ask for new streets to be tree-lined, improve biodiversity and access to nature through design and put an emphasis on approving good design as well as refusing poor quality schemes. There are additional changes to flood Risk Vulnerability Classification in a new Annex 3. Larger scale developments set within a vision beyond 30 years are encouraged through a change to the Plan making section and the use of article 4 directions should be limited.

Most of the changes are directed towards Local Planning Authorities and not Neighbourhood Plan policies, however the Neighbourhood Plan group may wish to make reference to some of the design revisions such as the emphasis on beautiful places and tree lined avenues, for example. In this respect, we note Stinsford Parish Council have suggested adding specific reference to avenue tree planting in Policy SNP2 and Dorset Council would be supportive of this proposal.

5. Question for SPC

I would be pleased to receive any further comments about issues raised in the Regulation 16 representations should SPC wish to make any.

SPC – we hope the following is of use in terms of the various issues raised by respondents:

Whether the NP has taken into account the emerging evidence and discussed the relationship between the Stinsford neighbourhood plan and the emerging Dorset local plan with the local planning authority, particularly the proposed strategic site north of Dorchester

SPC would like to re-assure the Examiner that there has been ongoing dialogue between SPC and Dorset Council throughout the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan and with regard to the emerging local plan, as reflected in Dorset Council's Reg 16 response

Whether the Neighbourhood Plan Group have allowed for sufficient consultation with the North Dorchester Consortium as a key group

The Consultation Statement clearly sets out the extent of publicity and consultation undertaken, and this has not in any way excluded local landowners and developers. Involvement of landowners relevant to the North Dorchester included:

- May 2019 - SNP contacted 63 businesses, business premises and landowners in the parish, including 10 farms, with a survey seeking their input to the NP. Turnberry were not included in the survey, as the NP group was in direct contact with the landowners whom Turnberry were advising.
- May 2019 – March 2020: John Mayo (JM), one of the main owners of land included in the North Dorchester proposal, attended SNP monthly steering meetings, except for Nov, Dec 2019 due to illness. After March 2020, due to Covid, meetings took place on Zoom and JM did not attend.
- August 2020 onwards - e-newsletters announcing the main steps in consultation to its 120+ subscribers. 17 Oct 2020: Turnberry (Chris Pattison) subscribed to SNP's e-newsletter.
- March 2021- all landowners and businesses on its database, including Turnberry, emailed with an invitation to take part in a Zoom meeting on 18th March as part of the Reg 14 consultation on the NP. (Covid lockdown was in place). Turnberry (CP) replied, unable to make meeting on 18th March. A separate Zoom meeting was arranged between SNP steering group and Turnberry which took place on 24th March. Keith Bamlet replied to an email invitation to participate with the following request: "my views as resident and landowner will be transmitted through Grainger PLC as part of the North Dorchester Consortium".

Whether there is sufficient evidence to underpin Policy SNP2 and SNP3

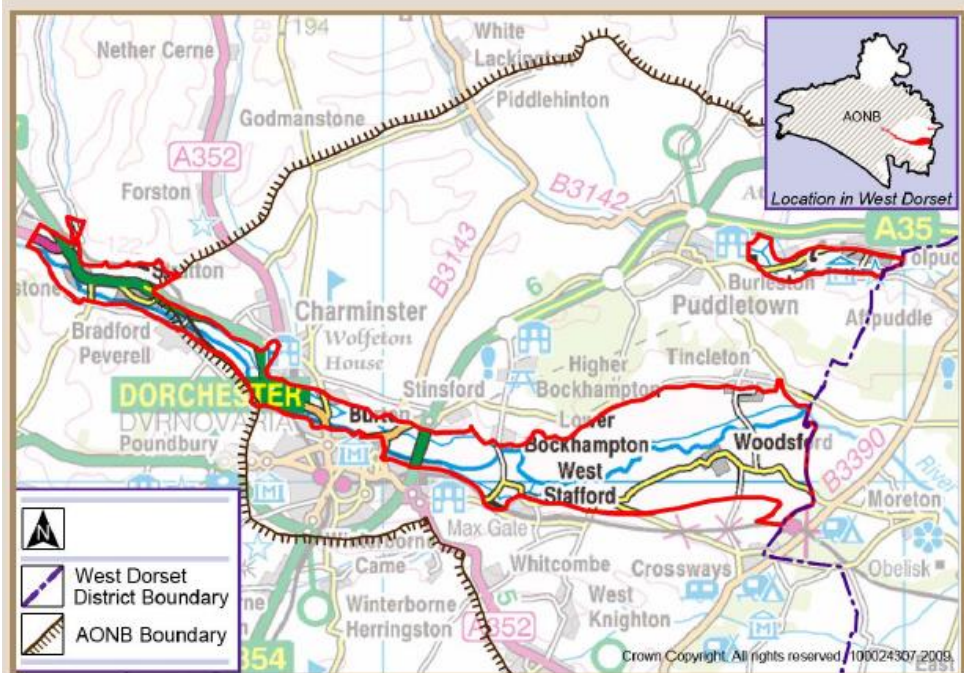
This comment was considered following Reg 14 (see Consultation Statement page 19). Dorset Council have not raised any issues in respect of Policy SNP2 and also support SNP3 in principle, although they do not consider it sufficient to define the River Valley Landscape' area as a 'valued landscape'. The suggested change to the wording of the final sentence of SNP3 by Dorset Council is acceptable, but SPC would also seek to make the case that it is a valued landscape in light of the following attributes:

- Scenic quality – the character assessments produced by Dorset Council and the former WDDC note that the river is the key context for this landscape type, which have flat, wide meandering floodplains that historically support transport

routes and major development around the fringes of the area. There are large open fields with a mosaic of smaller fields and copses along the river edges which are all prone to flooding. Groups of riverside trees and woodland form key landscape features. The area is a predominantly pastoral grazed landscape with some arable towards the river terraces. A series of wet ditches and small channels, wet woodlands, small pastures and old water meadows are typical of this landscape type as are the presence of old bridges and causeways.

- Condition – the landscape in terms of field patterns and use within the valley is largely unchanged from the historic OS maps
- Rarity – the total area is limited in its geographic extent as shown on the following extract from the 2009 Landscape Character Assessment (see inset area).

29. FROME AND PIDDLE VALLEY PASTURE



Landscape Type: Valley pasture

- Conservation interests and associations – high given the degree of heritage assets and association with Thomas Hardy as shown in Figure 5 on page 25 of the SNP.
- Recreation value – includes many well-used public rights of way given the proximity to Dorchester and links between the town and Kingston Maurward College and many views created.

The river valley area has been adjusted to follow field boundaries, taking into account that this makes more sense 'on the ground' and in terms of policy interpretation, particularly as the delineation does not follow any other recognisable factor such as a contour line or geological / soil changes.

Whether Policy SNP4 on Dark Skies is practical or realistic

This comment was considered following Reg 14 (see Consultation Statement page 20) and clarification made within the supporting text, the focus of the policy being in areas of open countryside and on the edge of settlements (and this is reflected in 3.19 as recognised by Dorset Council's response).

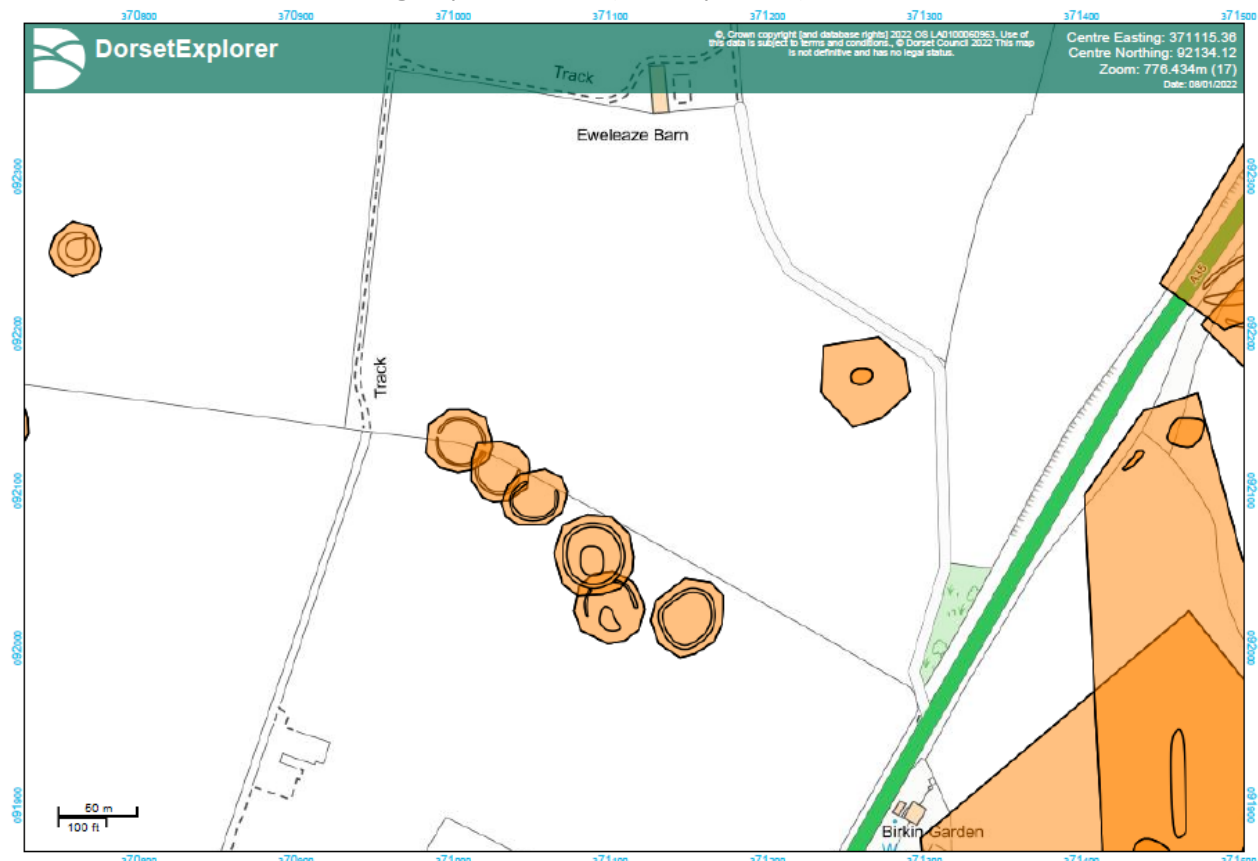
Whether valued views in Policy SNP5 could / should be rationalised further

See earlier response under Q3 ref rationalisation.

Whether SNP7 complies with the NPPF

This policy is fully supported by Dorset Council, and makes specific reference to the balanced judgement required in the NPPF.

Linda Poulsen's response refers to a putative Bronze Age cemetery which could be of at least regional significance south of the hedge field boundary south of Eweleaze Barn which we agree should be added to our list of Non designated Heritage Assets – this is indicated on the Dorset HERS later as a group of 6 tumuli (see map below).



Whether there should be specific reference to the Studio School's future aspirations

Whilst supportive of the Studio School, SPC is conscious that detailed plans have not been subject to consultation and therefore cannot readily be included in the Neighbourhood Plan at this stage, but would be more appropriately considered through a review. The PC would therefore support the proposed changes to para 5.12 and Project 4, but instead of the change to para 5.19 would prefer to include some of the context of the emerging need (as set out on page 4 of the DoE Reg 16 response) rather than the change proposed for 5.19.

Whether SNP10's reference to achieving high standards of environmental performance (significantly above that required by Building Regulations) is appropriate given the improvements in the regulations.

This comment was considered following Reg 14 (see Consultation Statement page 25). As explained in that statement, the wording was chosen to encourage developers to consider whether they can go further than the minimum requirement at that time, and encourage them to do so, but without setting a specific standard above Building Regulations that new business units must meet. Targets such as BREEAM "pass" for UK new non-domestic

buildings is the equivalent of 'standard good practice', with a "good" rating indicating that the building would be in the top 50% and a "very good" or higher rating indicating that the building is achieving 'advanced good practice'. These ratings could be referenced in the text to provide further context.

Whether SNP13 should be broadened to include other sources of groundwater pollution

The policy is not intended to imply that pollution from other forms of development would be acceptable, but was drafted to highlight a potentially under-recognised risk in view of the increased uptake of ground source heating systems. The consultation responses to the Local Plan have now been published and it is noted that Wessex Water strongly objects to the proposed strategic allocation of DOR13 north of Dorchester on the basis that residential development in this area that could result in harm to the drinking water source (and lack of a robust Hydrogeological Risk Assessment)

Comment details	
Policy	
DOR13 - Land north of Dorchester	
Question 1: Do you agree with the allocation of this site?	
Disagree	
Question 2: Is there anything not covered within the policy that should be considered in relation to the site?	
Wessex Water strongly objects to the allocation of this site. The allocation is within a Drinking Water Source Protection Zone. Residential development in this area could result in harm to the drinking water source. We had understood that the Authority had agreed to undertake a Hydrogeological Risk Assessment prior to the allocation of this site in the Local Plan. The issue should be identified as an "Environmental Constraint". Deferring such an assessment to development management is not acceptable and could result in uncertainty in the cost and effectiveness of any mitigation measures. Initial desktop appraisal indicates (if development is permitted to occur) the total development would need to be served direct from one of our service reservoirs. This would involve the laying of a new water main of approximate 3km in length. Furthermore if the development required connection to the existing public sewer network improvements will be required at Dorchester sewage treatment works. Development must not be permitted close to Dorchester sewage treatment works restricting it's capacity to expand to support approved development in the catchment (this also includes Crossways). There are existing apparatus crossing the site which will require protection. Any damage to our apparatus by third parties will result in compensation claim.	
Question 3: Are there any community infrastructure needs within the area that should be considered?	
(No answer recorded)	
Additional information	
Representor name:	Ruth Hall
Organisation:	Wessex Water
Comment date:	15 March 2021

It may therefore be appropriate to broaden the policy and supporting text to include all sources of groundwater pollution and highlight these wider issues.

