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# Landscape Sensitivity to Wind and Solar Energy Development in North Dorset District

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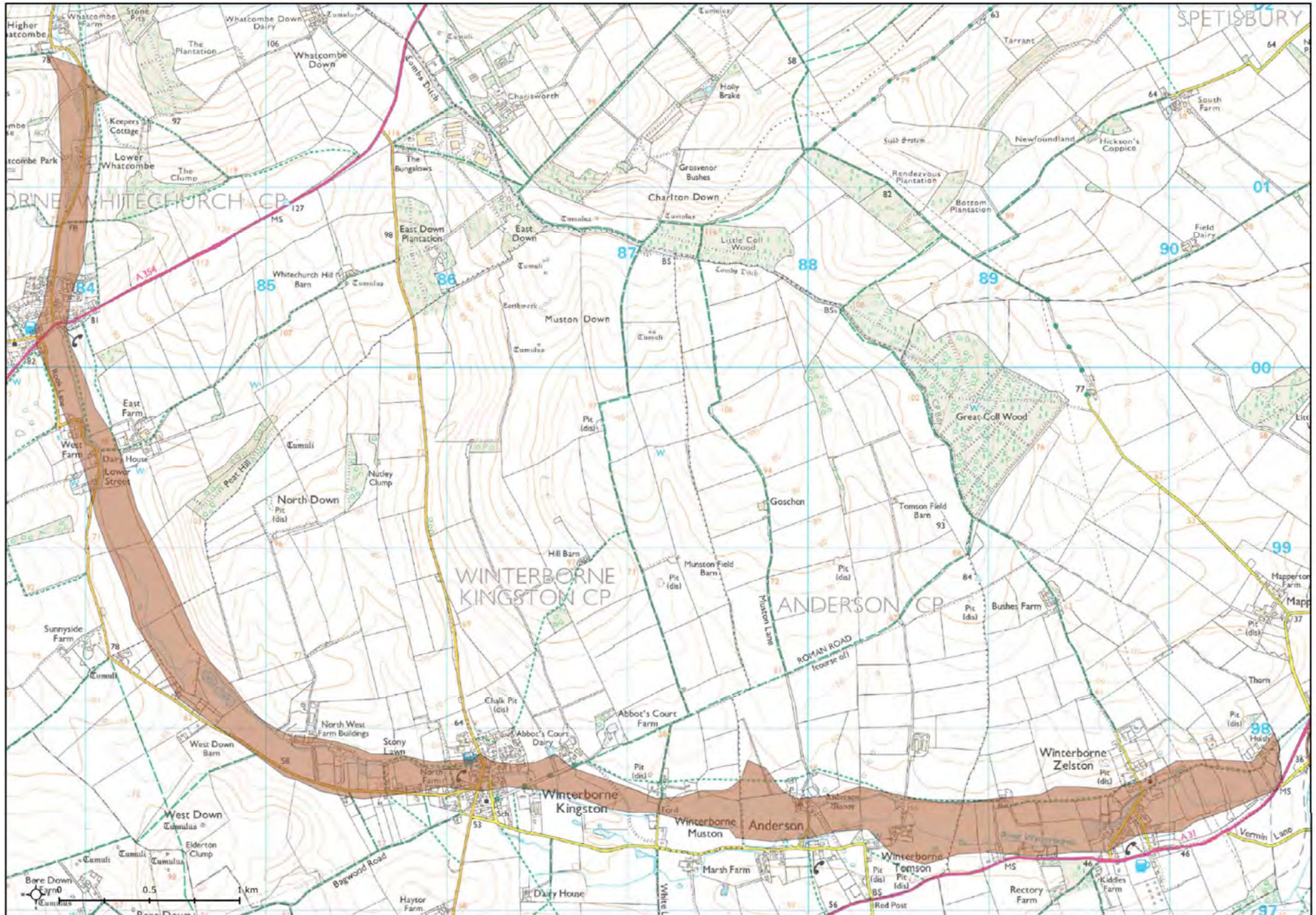
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# Landscape character area: Lower Winterborne Valley

Area: 224 hectares



**Lower Winterborne Valley LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria**

**Scale and complexity of landform:**

*"A narrow chalk stream corridor and valley sides defined in most places by a clear break in slope"*

The lower reaches of the Winterborne Valley, east of Winterborne Kingston, are much shallower with no clear distinction between the valley floor and the surrounding Chalk Valley & Downland LCT.

**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:**

*"The land is intensively farmed and the area is more pastoral than the adjoining arable chalk downland"*

*"There are occasional groups of planted poplars and willows which, together with the naturally occurring tree groups, form characteristic linear features along the streamside"*

**Visual exposure:**

East of Winterborne Kingston there are few locations with either residential or public views down to the valley floor from the surrounding area, but further north the steeper valley sides afford more views down into the valley from ridge top roads.

**Development and activity:**

*"The settlement pattern and road network follow the stream corridor to create a distinctive pattern... use of locally distinctive material such as brick and flint... presence of large country houses in big gardens with mature trees contributes to the character of the settlements on the valley floor"*

*"Winterborne Whitechurch is the main settlement and a key feature on the valley floor at the junction with the A354."*

**Lower Winterborne Valley LCA value characteristics**

Most of the LCA is undesignated but the northern tip, between Winterborne Whitechurch and Higher Whatcombe, lies within the Dorset AONB.

*"The parkland landscape of Whatcombe Park is an important local feature..."*

**Lower Winterborne Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy**

		Turbine height (m)			
		≤35	≤65	≤99	>99
Cluster size	1	H	H	H	H
	2-4	H	H	H	H
	>4		H	H	H

**Lower Winterborne Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy**

Development size (ha)	≤1	MH
	≤10	H
	≤30	H
	>30	H

### Lower Winterborne Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy

Sensitivity of the valley floor area to any scale of wind energy development is **high**.

The LCA is narrowly defined to exclude the downs that form the valley sides so any development within it would be located close to the river itself and would detract from the natural linear form. The small scale of the valleys, riverside fields and the presence of human-scale features (buildings, trees, bridges...) would also be sensitive to development of wind turbines.

Sensitivity could be particularly high where:

- Development affects the visual prominence of Charborough Park Tower or its distinctive walls, gates and woodland perimeter;
- Development affects the setting of Whatcombe Park (in the Dorset AONB).

### Lower Winterborne Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy

Any schemes other than those below 1 hectare in size are considered to have **high** sensitivity in the small-scale, secluded valley landscapes and sensitivity to schemes of less than 1 hectare is judged to be **moderate**.

The lack of physical breadth within the LCA, typically 200-300m, limits the scope for solar schemes of any scale, particularly because the presence of geometric rows of arrays in locations close to the river would detract from its meandering, linear character.

Sensitivity could be higher where:

- Field edges are irregular, bordering the river or associated streams;
- Development affects the visual prominence of Charborough Park Tower or its distinctive walls, gates and woodland perimeter;
- Development affects the setting of Whatcombe Park (in the Dorset AONB).

# Landscape character area: Lower Milborne Valley

Area: 54 hectares





**Lower Milborne Valley LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria**

**Scale and complexity of landform:**

*"...a narrowly defined chalk stream valley which creates a tightly confined character area" ... " bounded by chalk downland landscapes on both sides which rise up to the west and east of the area"*

**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:**

*"The narrow stream corridor is often lined with willows and alders which follow its course in places... There are some important groups of trees and copses along some of the steeper parts of the valley sides."*

The stream corridor is farmed up to its edges.

**Visual exposure:**

*"Parts of the Milborne St Andrew development have crept up the side slopes of the valley to create visually intrusive edges in places"*

**Development and activity:**

*"The settlement and road network pattern forms a distinctive chalk stream pattern of development following the flat valley floor."*

*"Milborne St Andrew is the main settlement at the crossing point on the stream and on the junction with the A354 which has some weak urban edges"*

**Lower Milborne Valley LCA value characteristics**

The LCA lies just to the south of the Dorset AONB.

**Lower Milborne Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy**

		Turbine height (m)			
		≤35	≤65	≤99	>99
Cluster size	1	H	H	H	H
	2-4	H	H	H	H
	>4		H	H	H

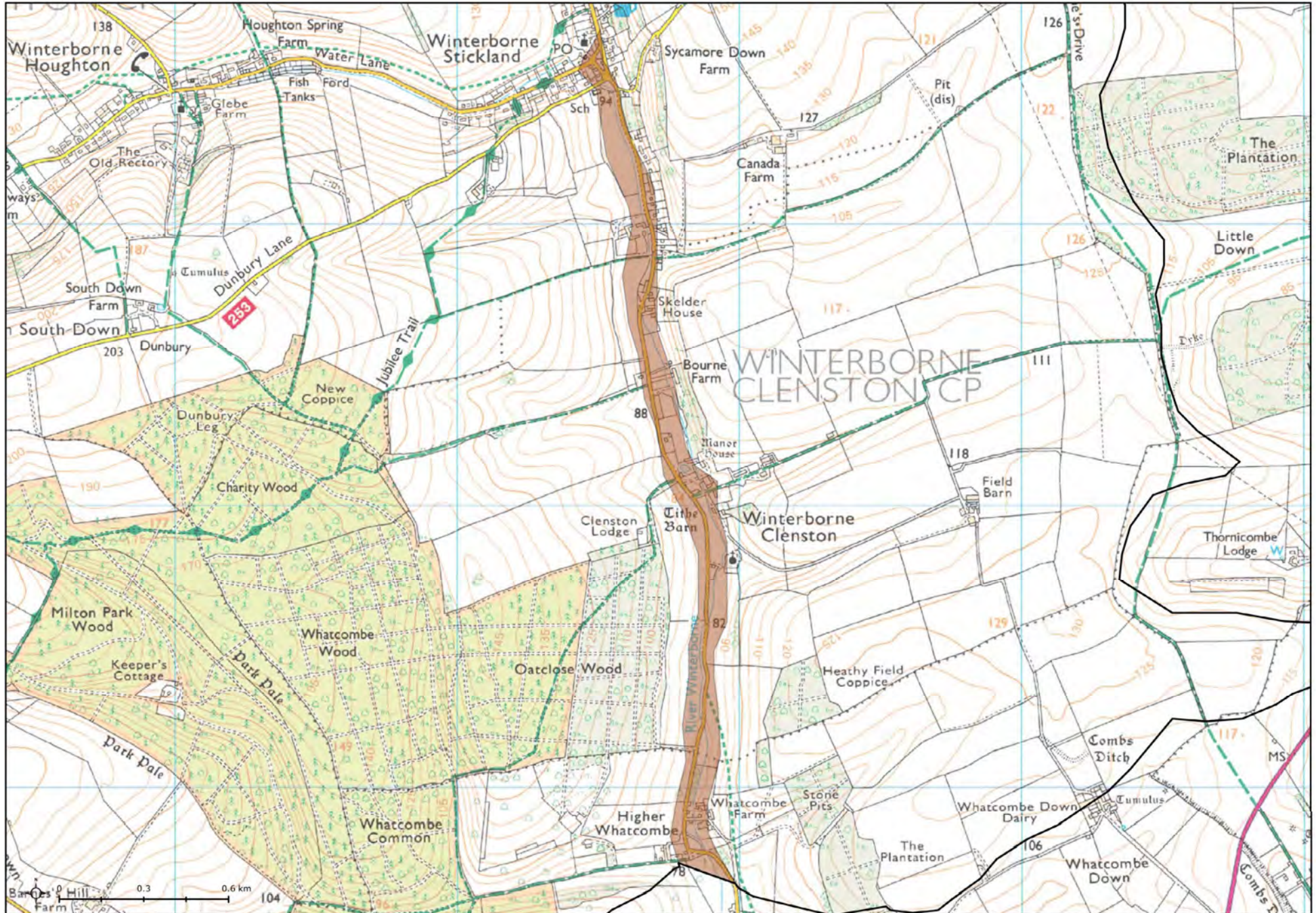
**Lower Milborne Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy**

Development size (ha)	≤1	H
	≤10	H
	≤30	H
	>30	H

Lower Milborne Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Lower Milborne Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
<p>Sensitivity of the valley floor area to any scale of wind energy development is <b>high</b>.</p> <p>The LCA is narrowly defined to exclude the downs that form the valley sides so any development within it would be located close to the river itself and would detract from the natural linear form. The small scale of riverside fields and the presence of human-scale features (buildings, trees, bridges...) would also be sensitive to development of wind turbines. Turbines tall enough to be visible from the adjoining downs beyond the valley ridge, appearing as 'disembodied' rotating blades, would have a confusing and conflicting influence on the open, uncluttered character of the downland, and could affect the setting of the Dorset AONB to the north.</p>	<p>The LCA is typically only around 100m wide, encompassing only the fields that immediately adjoin the river and which, as a consequence, have at least one irregular or curving edge. The presence of geometric rows of arrays in locations close to the river would detract from its meandering, linear character so all scales of solar development in this limited area are considered to have <b>high</b> sensitivity. Sensitivity would be particularly high where the valley floor turns around the base of Weatherby Castle, an Iron Age hill fort.</p>

## Landscape character area: Upper North Winterborne Valley (part)

Area: 32 hectares



**Upper North Winterborne Valley LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria**

**Scale and complexity of landform:**

*"Linear intimate v-shaped chalk valley with associated Winterborne and surrounding steep branching valleys and open chalk uplands."*

**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:**

*"Historical transport routes that connect villages along the valley floor are enclosed by small scale pastoral fields with dense hedgerows"... "old water meadows along the flood plain and the remnant parkland help to create an intimate and enclosed landscape of subtle colours with connections to the past"*

**Visual exposure:**

There is no visual relationship with LCAs beyond the immediate Chalk Valley & Downland area. There are no ridge-top roads or public rights of way with views into the valley but the Jubilee Way long distance route has views into the northern section of the LCA as it descends from Whatcombe Wood to Winterborne Stickland.

**Development and activity:**

*"...distinctive settlement pattern along the valley floor..."*  
 The area defined as Chalk River Valley Floor within this LCA extends from Higher Whatcombe through Winterborne Clenston to Winterborne Stickland. This stretch of the valley is well settled, with the road running very close to the river.

**Upper North Winterborne Valley LCA value characteristics**

Almost all of the LCA is designated as part of the Dorset AONB.

*"Secluded, intimate, unified and tranquil character"*

**Upper North Winterborne Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy**

		Turbine height (m)			
		≤35	≤65	≤99	>99
Cluster size	1	H	H	H	H
	2-4	H	H	H	H
	>4		H	H	H

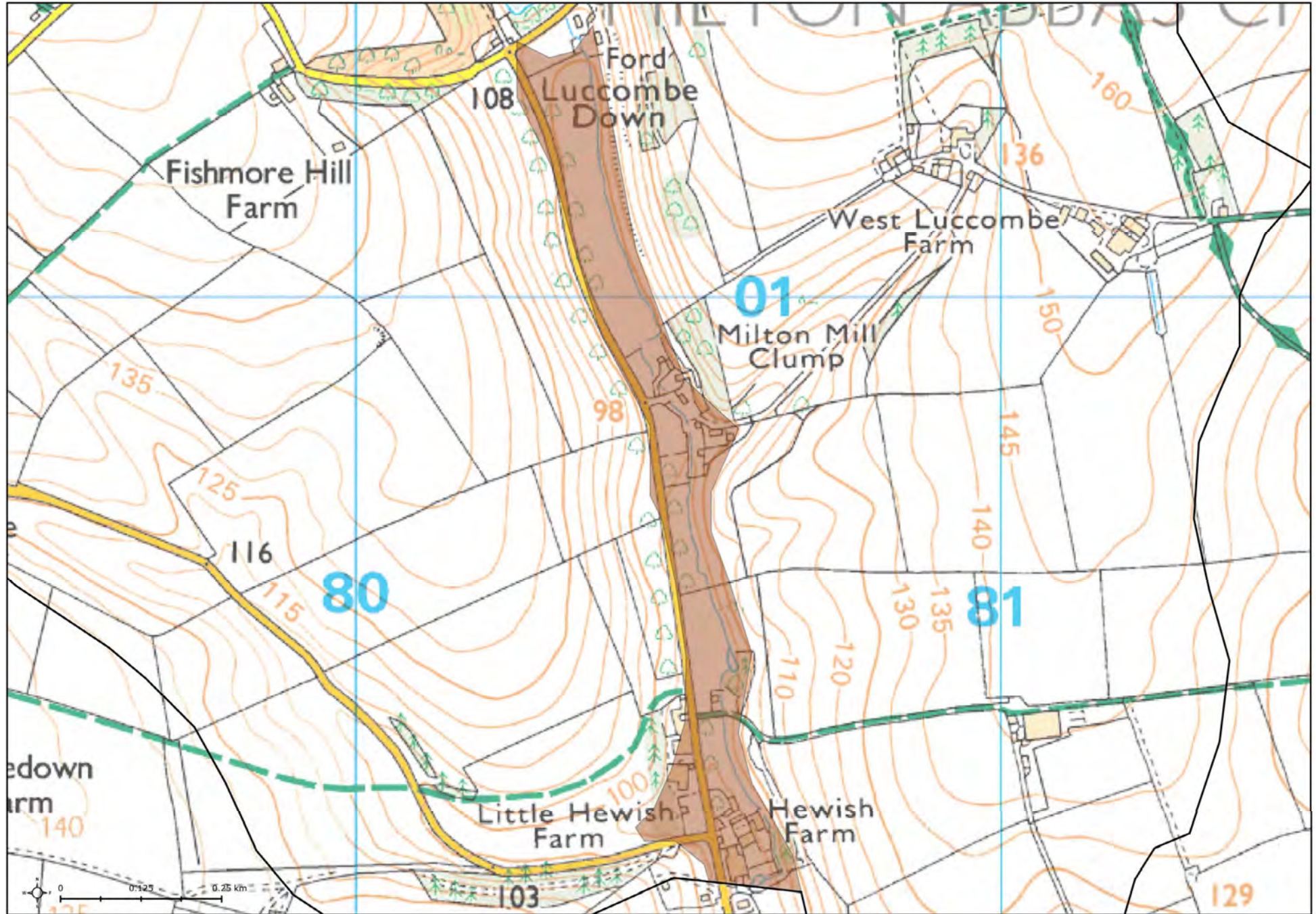
**Upper North Winterborne Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy**

Development size (ha)	≤1	H
	≤10	H
	≤30	H
	>30	H

Upper North Winterborne Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Upper North Winterborne Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
<p>Sensitivity of the valley floor area to any scale of wind energy development is <b>high</b>.</p> <p>The steep valley sides, framed by Whatcombe Wood and the coppices on the opposite side of the valley, provide a strong sense of containment, and the number of buildings and trees gives the landscape a strong human scale. The landform, pastoral land use, woodlands and trees and prevalence of older buildings give the valley high scenic value and a strong historic character and sense of tranquillity which are valued 'special qualities' of the Dorset AONB and would be very sensitive to wind energy development. There are few public viewpoints from the valley sides but any development would be visible in long lateral views from the valley road.</p>	<p>Sensitivity of the valley floor area to any scale of solar PV development is <b>high</b>.</p> <p>The steep valley sides, framed by Whatcombe Wood and the coppices on the opposite side of the valley, provide a strong sense of containment. The landform, pastoral land use, woodlands and trees and prevalence of older buildings give the valley high scenic value and a strong historic character and sense of tranquillity which are valued 'special qualities' of the Dorset AONB and would be very sensitive to any scale of solar energy development.</p>

Landscape character area: Upper Milborne Valley (part)

Area: 14 hectares



**Upper Milborne Valley LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria**

**Scale and complexity of landform:**

Between Hewish Farm and Milton Abbas the flat valley floor is framed by steep slopes and the distinctive form of a coombe.

**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:**

*"Dense Beech, Ash and Sycamore woodland along the slopes further enhance the sense of enclosure emphasising the dramatic topography as the woods follow a series of small deep coombes around the valley bottoms"*

The LCA includes just two long, narrow, pasture fields with a cluster of residential properties around Milton Mill. The valley road is lined on both sides by mature trees, and iron railings create a parkland character.

**Visual exposure:**

This section of the valley floor is very enclosed both by landform and trees. The hills which frame it are initially steep sided but round off more gently on their higher slopes, so only the steep lower slopes, which have no public access, offer visibility into the LCA.

**Development and activity:**

This is a peaceful location with a strong historic character.

**Upper Milborne Valley LCA value characteristics**

The LCA sits within the Dorset AONB. It is described as a *"tranquil and historic landscape"*.

**Upper Milborne Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy**

		Turbine height (m)			
		≤35	≤65	≤99	>99
Cluster size	1	H	H	H	H
	2-4	H	H	H	H
	>4		H	H	H

**Upper Milborne Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy**

Development size (ha)	≤1	H
	≤10	H
	≤30	H
	>30	H

Upper Milborne Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Upper Milborne Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
<p>Sensitivity of the valley floor area to any scale of wind energy development is <b>high</b>.</p> <p>The distinctive topography, land cover, historic character and sense of tranquillity in this narrow area are valued 'special qualities' of the Dorset AONB and would be very sensitive to any form of wind development.</p>	<p>Sensitivity of the valley floor area to any scale of solar PV development is <b>high</b>.</p> <p>The distinctive landform, pastoral land use and intimate, historic character and sense of tranquillity in this scenic valley are valued 'special qualities' of the Dorset AONB and would be very sensitive to solar PV development.</p>



# Landscape character area: Tarrant Valley (part)

Area: 181 hectares



## Tarrant Valley LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria

### Scale and complexity of landform:

*"...a distinctive chalk valley with a shallow stream running along the narrow valley floor"*

*" The sloping sides to the valley [in Chalk Valley & Downland LCT] are typical chalk downland with an undulating and indented landform with dry coombes and elevated open downland around the watershed. It is generally steeper with some distinctive steep scarp slopes along the eastern side, for example at Tarrant Rushton and more gentle and rolling shape to the west"*

### Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

*"...an intensively farmed area and often right up to the edge of the stream side with very few marginal areas. Generally the fields are geometric and large scale and bounded by thin weak hedges or replacement wire fencing. Trees and copses, and lines of willows and poplars are found all along the stream corridor, with larger wooded areas in places to form key features... These larger wooded areas on the valley floor are often associated with the designed landscapes of large country houses"*

*"...locally distinctive materials such as red brick, flint and thatch which, together with the smaller field size near the villages and the associated trees, help to create an intimate landscape along most of the valley floor"*

### Visual exposure:

There are some strong views into the valley from the ridge top in the adjoining Chettle/Abbeycroft Downs LCA to the east, from the public footpath along the western side of the valley between Tarrant Rushton and Tarrant Monkton and from the A354 to the north.

### Development and activity:

*"The valley has a very distinctive linear settlement pattern, with buildings dispersed up the valley. The picturesque Tarrant 'family of villages' are regularly spaced out and are often at stream crossings."*

## Tarrant Valley LCA value characteristics

The Tarrant Valley is situated within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB.

*"...a unique sense of identity"*

*"Tarrant Abbey is a scheduled ancient monument and a key feature in the lower part of the Valley"*

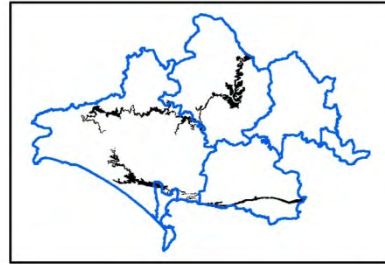
*"The estate wooded landscape around Tarrant Gunville is a key feature of interest."*





*" The river links these settlements together and is an integral part of the valley villages. It is often the central feature, as in Tarrant Monkton, Hinton and Gunville, or can be glimpsed in long and short views, as in Tarrant Rushton and Keyneston. These glimpsed views in the latter settlements are a strongly defining element in the character of these villages."<sup>15</sup>*

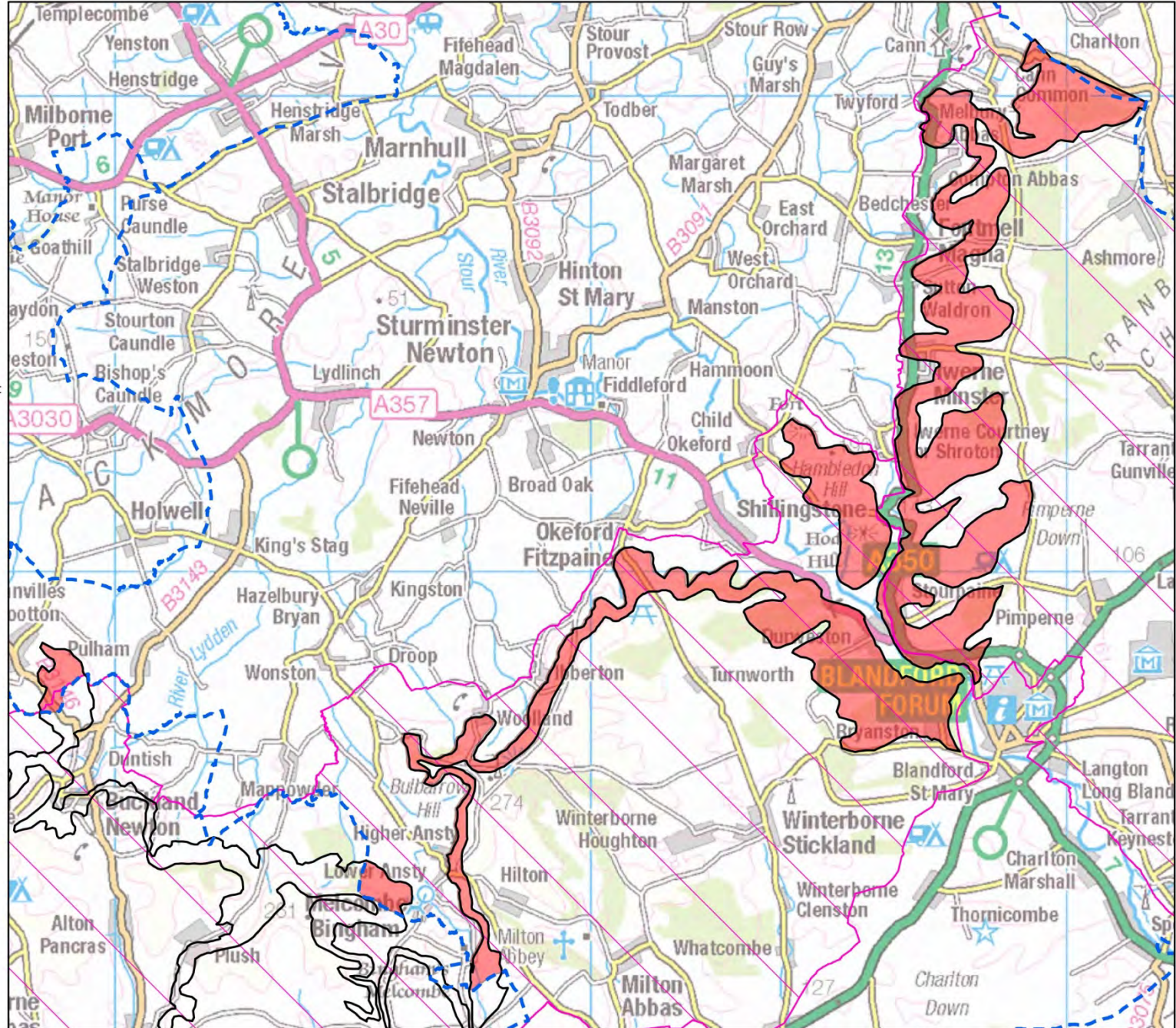
<sup>15</sup> The Tarrant Valley Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Guidance

Tarrant Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy					Tarrant Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy																																						
<p style="text-align: center;">Turbine height (m)</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td>≤35</td> <td>≤65</td> <td>≤99</td> <td>&gt;99</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cluster size</td> <td>1</td> <td>2-4</td> <td>&gt;4</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>H</td> <td>H</td> <td>H</td> <td>H</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>H</td> <td>H</td> <td>H</td> <td>H</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>H</td> <td>H</td> <td>H</td> </tr> </table>						≤35	≤65	≤99	>99	Cluster size	1	2-4	>4			H	H	H	H		H	H	H	H			H	H	H	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Development size (ha)</td> <td>≤1</td> <td>H</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>≤10</td> <td>H</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>≤30</td> <td>H</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>&gt;30</td> <td>H</td> </tr> </table>		Development size (ha)	≤1	H		≤10	H		≤30	H		>30	H
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Tarrant Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy					Tarrant Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy																																						
<p>Sensitivity of the valley floor area to any scale of wind energy development is <b>high</b>.</p> <p>The LCT is narrowly defined to exclude the downs that form the valley sides so any development within it would be located close to the river itself and would detract from the natural linear form. Although fields are larger than in most of the chalk valleys, with arable land coming up to the riverside in many places, the frequency of settlement along the valley floor and the extent of tree cover along the river keep the landscape intimate in scale. Turbines tall enough to be visible from the adjoining downs beyond the valley ridge, appearing as 'disembodied' rotating blades, would have a confusing and conflicting influence on the open, uncluttered character of the downland. The historic character of the valley floor villages and the simple, open character of the downs are special qualities of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB.</p>					<p>The narrowness of the LCT and the absence of smaller riverside fields, other than in the immediate vicinity of villages, mean that there is little scope for development without adverse impact on the character of the river or of the historic Tarrant settlements. The historic character of the valley floor villages and the 'unspoilt' agricultural character of the surrounding slopes are 'special qualities' of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB which could be affected by a 'modern' land use such as solar PV. The presence of geometric rows of arrays in locations close to the river would detract from its meandering, linear character so all scales of solar development in this limited area are considered to have <b>high</b> sensitivity.</p>																																						

# Landscape character type: Chalk Ridge/Escarpment



-  District boundary
-  AONB
- Dorset Landscape Character Type**
-  13. Chalk Ridge/Escarpment
- North Dorset Landscape Character Area**
-  13A - North Dorset Chalk Escarpment

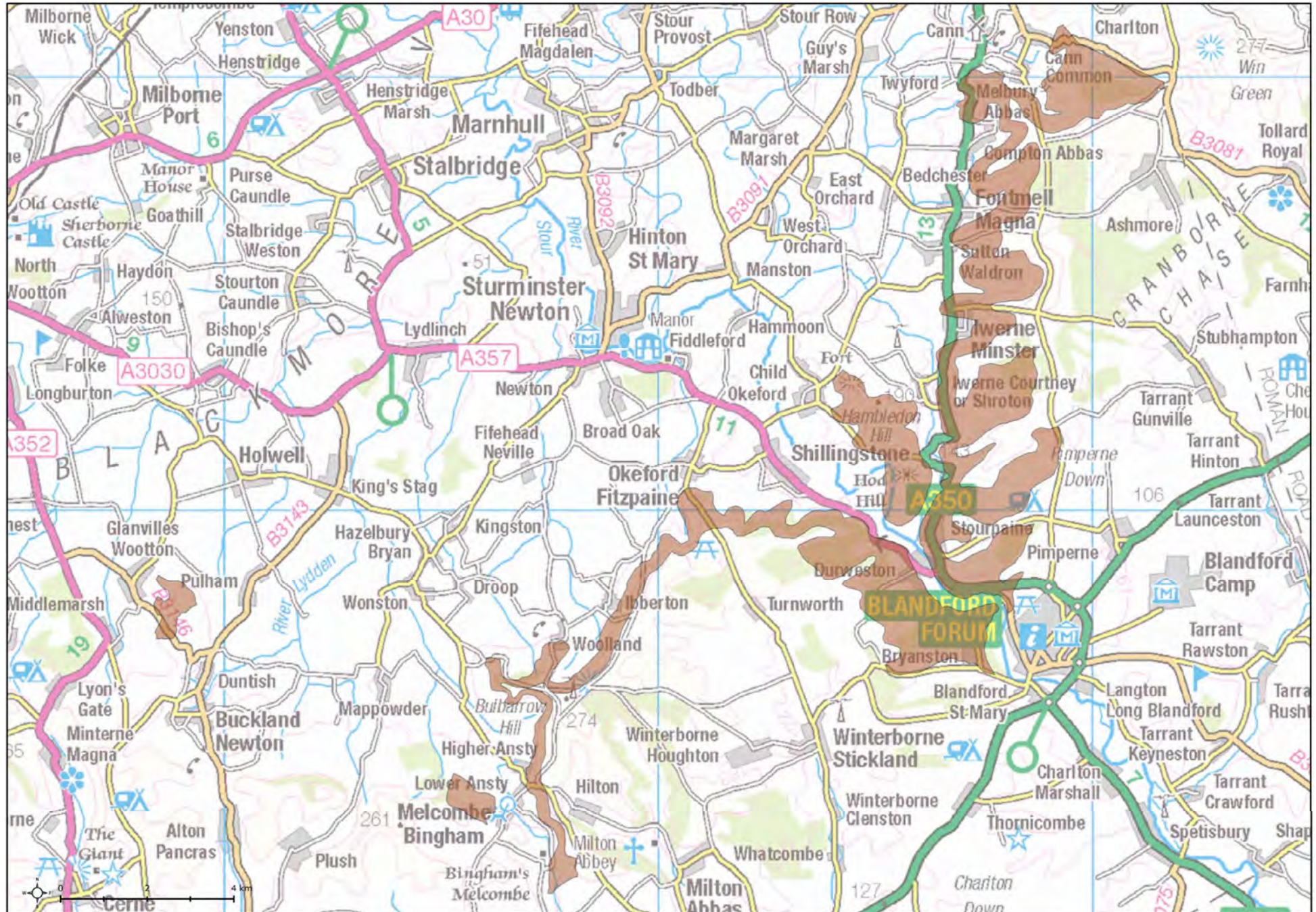


<b>Chalk Ridge/Escarpment LCT overview</b>	
Chalk escarpments form an almost unbroken band marking the northern, western and southern edges of the chalk hills of Dorset and also represent the slopes up to the highest areas in the county (the hill crests themselves are in some cases categorised as Chalk Valley & Downland LCT), rising dramatically above the surrounding lowlands. In North Dorset the escarpment runs north east to south west, marking the edge of the chalk landscape, broken only by the Stour Valley north west of Blandford.	
<b>Chalk Ridge/Escarpment LCT characteristics by susceptibility criteria</b>	
<p><b>Scale and complexity of landform:</b></p> <p><i>"Steep, distinctive and bold ridge and scarp slope on the edges of the chalk landscapes"</i></p> <p><i>"... variations in character and landform often based on geology and patterns of erosion"</i></p>	<p><b>Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:</b></p> <p><i>"With an undeveloped and open character and bold skyline, this landscape type supports important patches of chalk grassland and hanging mixed woodlands which together often form broad distinctive patterns and adds variety along the steep scarp slopes"</i></p> <p><i>"In many locations the small scale pattern of fields extends up the scarp slopes from the valleys below gradually giving way to larger fields or open downland"</i></p>
<p><b>Visual exposure:</b></p> <p><i>"... a bold, dominant and prominent visual edge which helps enclose the surrounding landscapes"</i></p> <p><i>"... woods are often very visible landmarks"</i></p> <p>The uncluttered character of the skyline formed by the chalk escarpment is a key element in views from within the AONB and beyond.</p>	<p><b>Development and activity:</b></p> <p>These strong, exposed slopes are unsettled other than by a few scattered farms, with settlement being focused along the foot of the scarp slope.</p> <p>A remote, isolated character persists.</p>
<b>Chalk Ridge/Escarpment LCT value characteristics</b>	
<p>The chalk escarpment offers the most dramatic scenery and viewpoints in the District, recognised by its inclusion within AONBs (the Cranborne Chase &amp; West Wiltshire Downs AONB to the north of Blandford and the Dorset AONB to the west). Public rights of way give recreational access to many of the high points, and the Wessex Ridgeway Long Distance Path follows the ridge between Hambledon Hill and Bulbarrow Hill. Some escarpment locations, such as Melbury Hill and Fontmell Down, are in the care of the National Trust and the ecological importance of unimproved chalk grassland slopes is recognised in a number of SSSI and SNCI designations. Strip lynchets add historic value and landscape character in some locations.</p> <p><i>"There are many ancient hillforts several of which are key landmarks, including Fontmell Down and Melbury, Hod, Hambledon ... and Bulbarrow Hills. These dramatic landscapes have been captured by the romantic paintings and writings of Wilsdon Steer, Moffat Linder, Daniel Defoe and Lamora Birch."</i></p> <p>The overall management objective for the Chalk Ridge/Escarpment is to <i>"conserve the uninterrupted landform, strong open skyline and the distinct mosaic patterning of woodland, scrub and chalk grassland"</i>. Guidance notes make reference to the need to <i>"Identify, protect and enhance important views to and from the ridge/escarpment e.g. via Parish Action Plans, Village Design Statements and other Settlement Appraisals"</i>, and to <i>"... enhance the sense of continuity and openness across the escarpment/ridge tops and associated monuments."</i></p>	

Chalk Ridge/Escarpment LCT sensitivity to wind energy	Chalk Ridge/Escarpment LCT sensitivity to solar PV energy
<p>The scarp is a dramatic landform and a significant feature, forming a strong, recognisable skyline and horizon. It retains a strong feeling of remoteness and tranquillity engendered by the absence of built development, and the elevated landform and long views contribute to a sense of isolation. The landscape is therefore highly sensitive to the introduction of built form and movement associated with turbines and infrastructure, which could dilute these special perceptual characteristics.</p> <p>Further sensitive attributes include the archaeological features and their setting, woodland, chalk grassland and parks/ designed landscapes. All of these elements are highly sensitive to the intrusion of a prominent vertical structure and associated infrastructure.</p> <p>The highly prominent and elevated scarp landform, predominantly open character and extensive views that can be obtained to and from the ridge are all highly sensitive.</p>	<p>The scarp is a dramatic landform and a significant feature, forming a strong, recognisable skyline and horizon. Steep, open, distinctive and highly visible slopes would be very susceptible to adverse effects on landscape character as a result of solar energy development.</p> <p>The scarp also retains a strong feeling of remoteness and tranquillity engendered by the absence of built development, and the elevated landform and long views contribute to a sense of isolation. The landscape is therefore highly sensitive to the introduction of built form which could dilute these special perceptual characteristics.</p> <p>Further sensitive attributes include the archaeological features and their setting, woodland, chalk grassland and parks/ designed landscapes. All of these elements are highly sensitive to distinctive, geometric, modern structures, and the predominantly open character and extensive views that can be obtained to and from the ridge add to the sensitivity of the LCT.</p>

## Landscape character area: North Dorset Chalk Escarpment

Area: 3859 hectares



### North Dorset Chalk Escarpment LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria

#### Scale and complexity of landform:

*"... a dramatic and imposing landscape which dominates and provides a backdrop to the Blackmore Vale below. It has a steep, twisting and incised landform"*

#### Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

*"A patchwork of small scale pastoral fields on the lower slopes, with scattered farmsteads at the ridge bottom spring line... Areas of unimproved chalk grassland on slopes and ridge tops... Large, straight-sided arable fields on escarpment top... Hanging ancient oak, ash and hazel woodlands on the lower slopes."*

#### Visual exposure:

*"Panoramic views of the surrounding landscape"*

#### Development and activity:

*"There are no settlements on the escarpment itself apart from a few isolated farms. Settlements are all found below the north and west scarp bases along the spring line at the foot of the slope. Telecom masts at Bulbarrow are prominent, detracting features."*

### North Dorset Chalk Escarpment LCA value characteristics

The chalk escarpment constitutes the most dramatic landform in the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB, and the 'special qualities' identified for the AONB make reference to their contribution to landscape in terms of scale, distinctiveness, character and panoramic views. South and west of Sturminster the escarpment is part of the Dorset AONB, where it forms a key part of the "striking sequence of beautiful landscapes" which are one of the AONB's "special qualities".

*"The area has many Bronze Age and Iron Age barrows and fortifications, prominent hill forts and Roman features, many of which are scheduled ancient monuments and all of which contribute to the areas historic and cultural importance - Hod and Hambleton Hills form an isolated, and therefore very prominent, hilltop landscape separated from the main escarpment by the Rivers Stour and Iwerne."*

### North Dorset Chalk Escarpment LCA sensitivity to wind energy

		Turbine height (m)			
		≤35	≤65	≤99	>99
Cluster size	1	H	H	H	H
	2-4	H	H	H	H
	>4		H	H	H

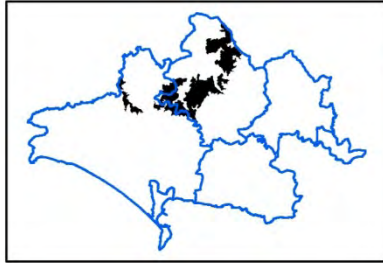
### North Dorset Chalk Escarpment LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy








		Development size (ha)
	≤1	H
	≤10	H
	≤30	H
	>30	H

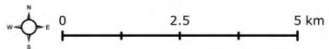
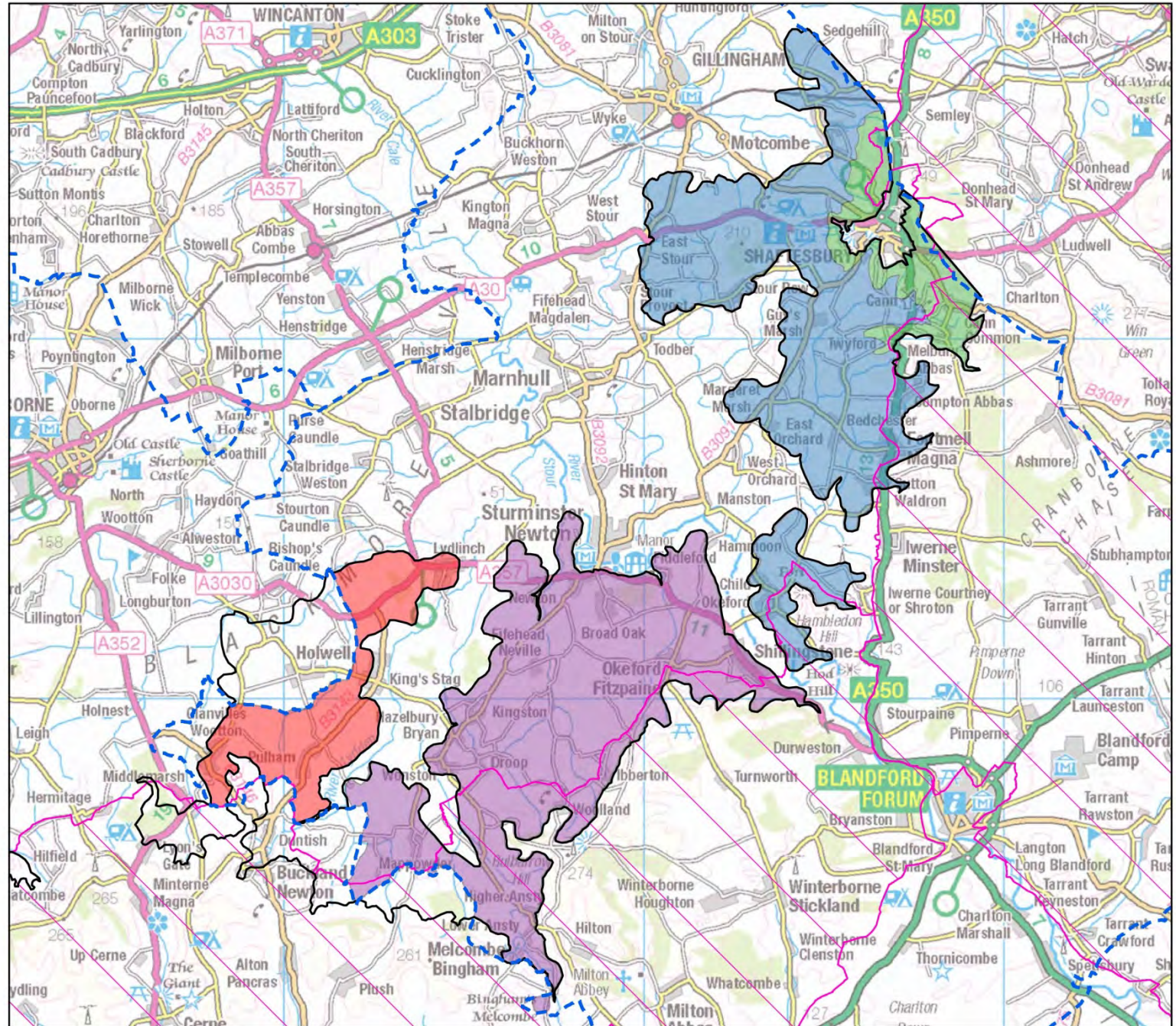


North Dorset Chalk Escarpment LCA sensitivity to wind energy	North Dorset Chalk Escarpment LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
<p>The chalk escarpment/ridge is highly valued in scenic, historic and recreational terms, reflected in its inclusion in designated AONBs, and so would be highly sensitive to wind energy development of any scale. The transmitter masts on Bulbarrow Hill (the largest of which is 60m) are considered to be detracting features, adding an intrusive element of modern technology into a landscape dominated by natural forms and elements, and the prominence of rotating turbine blades would undoubtedly have a greater impact in terms of cluttering the skyline and reducing the perceptual qualities of tranquillity and a sense of isolation.</p>	<p>The combination of strong natural landform, with steep, exposed slopes and ridge tops, presence of large areas of unimproved chalk grassland and high landscape value in terms of scenic, historic, perceptual and recreational interest (reflected in AONB designations) make this LCA of high sensitivity to solar energy development of any scale.</p>

# Landscape character type: Rolling Vales



-  District boundary
-  AONB
- Dorset Landscape Character Type**
-  7. Rolling Vales
- North Dorset Landscape Character Area**
-  7A - Blackmore Vale
-  7B - North Blackmore Rolling Vales
-  7C - Shaftesbury Greensand Ridges
-  7D - South Blackmore Rolling Vales



## Rolling Vales LCT overview

Blackmore Vale covers much of the north western part of the District, continues south westwards into West Dorset and also extends north into the fringes of Somerset and Wiltshire. Within the County landscape classification the Vale is subdivided into the Rolling Vales LCT and the Clay Vale LCT. The Rolling Vales LCT within North Dorset is subdivided into three character areas in the District Assessment: North Blackmore Rolling Vales and South Blackmore Rolling Vales, which form the transition zones between the Vale and the chalk escarpments to the east and south, and the strongly undulating Shaftesbury Greensand Ridges. At District-level the Blackmore Vale LCA equates to the Clay Vale LCT, but at County-level part of the LCA along the western edge of the district is categorised as Rolling Vale instead.

## Rolling Vales LCT characteristics by susceptibility criteria

### Scale and complexity of landform:

*"...an undulating transitional area between the low-lying vales and the high chalk, with the clay and greensand landform becoming gradually more enclosed, folded and twisted nearer the escarpment to form a series of rolling foothills. There is an abrupt level change between this area and the steep sides of the escarpment but towards the vales the land flattens out gradually."*

### Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

*"...a varied and irregular pattern of small pastures, woodland, individual trees and dense hedgerows"*

*"...mainly a pastoral landscape with a few arable fields on flatter land interspersed between improved pasture and meadows. There are many small brooks, streams and damp flushes with numerous scattered hamlets and farms"*

### Visual exposure:

*"The chalk escarpment forms a distinctive backdrop to the area"*

*"There are often open views across the vales to the north..."*

*"The twisting and hedge lined lanes have narrow verges often with high hedgebanks"*

### Development and activity:

*"The whole area has a tranquil, secluded and undeveloped character and feel to it. Parts of the settlement edges of both Motcombe and Hazelbury Bryan and the Young Offenders Institute at Guys Marsh all detract from local landscape character."*

## Rolling Vales LCT value characteristics

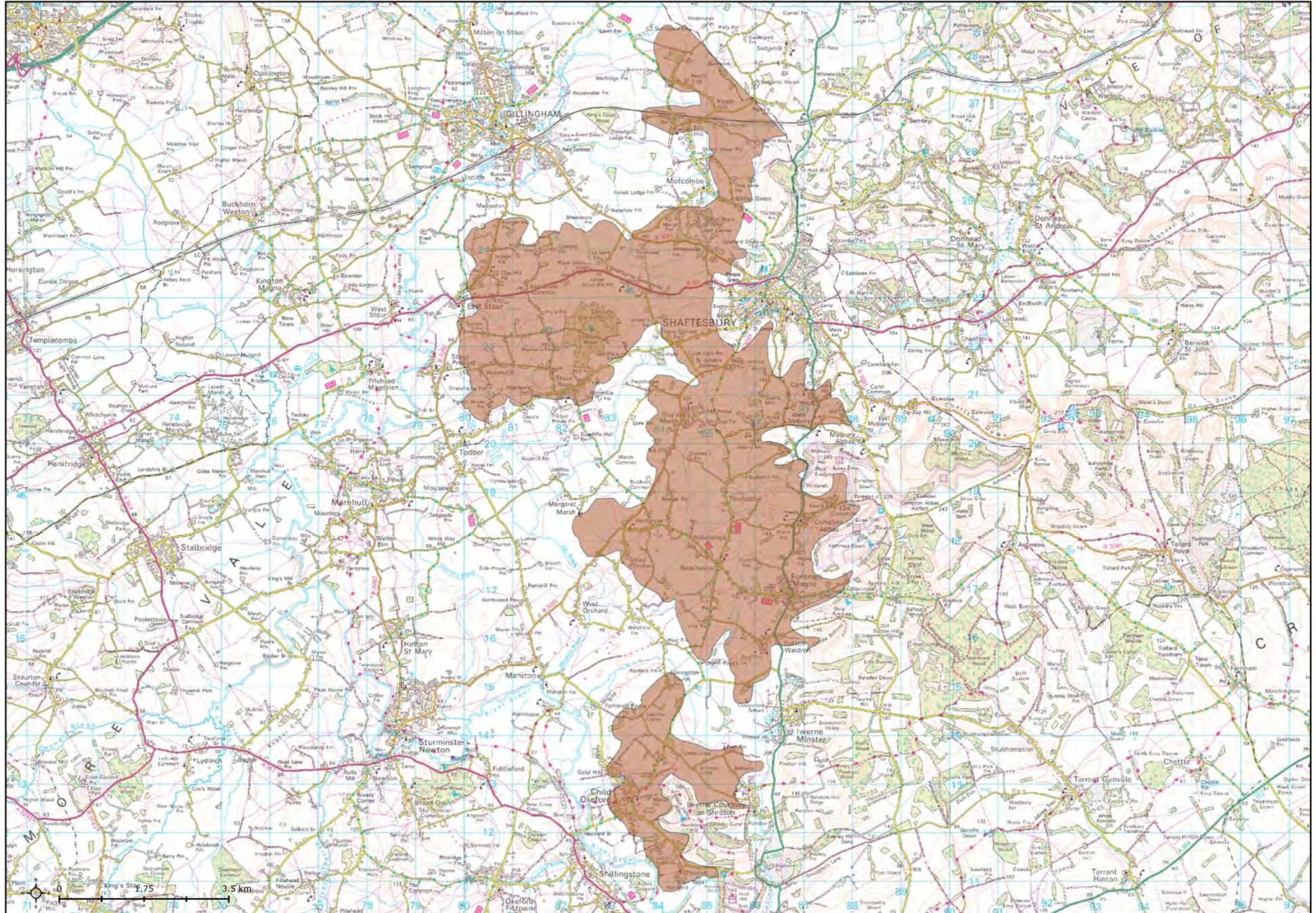
*"The overall management objective for the Rolling Vales Landscape Type should be to conserve and enhance the diverse pattern of trees, woodland, hedgerow and small-scale fields, watercourses and narrow lanes. The conservation of the rural and tranquil nature of the area is also a key objective"*

Small areas on the northern fringes of the LCT, north and south of Shaftesbury, on the western fringes at the foot of Hambleton Hill and east of Okeford Fitzpaine, and at the southern end near Ansty, fall within AONB designations.

Rolling Vales LCT sensitivity to wind energy	Rolling Vales LCT sensitivity to solar PV energy
<p>The Rolling Vales can typically be considered to have a high sensitivity to wind energy development, due to the complexity of the landform and land use and the tranquil, secluded character. The varied landscape within the LCT has a strong human scale, making it sensitive to wind energy.</p> <p>In visual terms there are some strong views into the LCT from the adjoining AONB chalk escarpment, and these areas form a setting to the AONB and contribute to its special qualities; the tranquillity, sense of remoteness and the dramatic scale of the escarpment could be reduced by the introduction of tall structures in the adjoining vale.</p>	<p>The undulating, irregular, small scale pastoral terrain of the Rolling Vales is typically of high sensitivity to solar PV development, although there are some flatter, arable fields which would be less sensitive in terms of landform and land use. The extent of screening from trees and hedgerows to an extent offsets sensitivity, particularly for smaller developments, but there are some strong views into the LCT from adjoining AONB chalk escarpments.</p>

# Landscape character area: North Blackmore Rolling Vales

Area: 4983 hectares



### North Blackmore Rolling Vales LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria

#### Scale and complexity of landform:

*"A varied undulating series of clay and greensand farmland hills which forms a transition zone between the Blackmore Vale proper and the main chalk escarpment to the east"*

*"In the east part of the area there are rolling, twisting and folded foothills adjacent to the main chalk escarpment which form a distinctive landform"*

*"...gradually flattens out to the west nearer the Vale where in places there are some steep and distinctive folds and high points such as Pen Hill and Duncliffe Wood..."*

#### Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

*"...a mainly pastoral landscape..."*

*"The field pattern across the whole area is more irregular than the Vale and the fields are bounded by reasonably thick, tall hedgerows and some mature hedgerow trees. These, together with the isolated trees, hedgerow copses and woodlands, create a patchwork landscape pattern"*

Land use scale is small.

#### Visual exposure:

*"Open views across the undulating to flat pastoral landscape to the chalk escarpment backdrop"*

#### Development and activity:

*"...the picturesque settlements, such as Melbury Abbas, Compton Abbas, Waldron, Cann and Child Okeford, are typically found at the very foot of the escarpment along the spring line. The A350 is a busy north-south road through the area but, because of the landform, has a reduced impact on the overall character of the area"*

### North Blackmore Rolling Vales LCA value characteristics

Aside from small areas at the foot of Hambledon Hill and east of Okeford Fitzpaine, which lie just within the Dorset AONB, and small areas around Fontmell Magna which lie just within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB, the LCA is not designated for its landscape value.

*"Duncliffe Hill and its wood are distinctive landmarks"... " Kingswood in the north and Handford Park Estate in the south are both key features, as is the manor house and grounds at Child Okeford at the foot of Hod and Hambledon Hills."*

### North Blackmore Rolling Vales LCA sensitivity to wind energy

		Turbine height (m)			
		≤35	≤65	≤99	>99
Cluster size	1	MH	H	H	H
	2-4	H	H	H	H
	>4		H	H	H

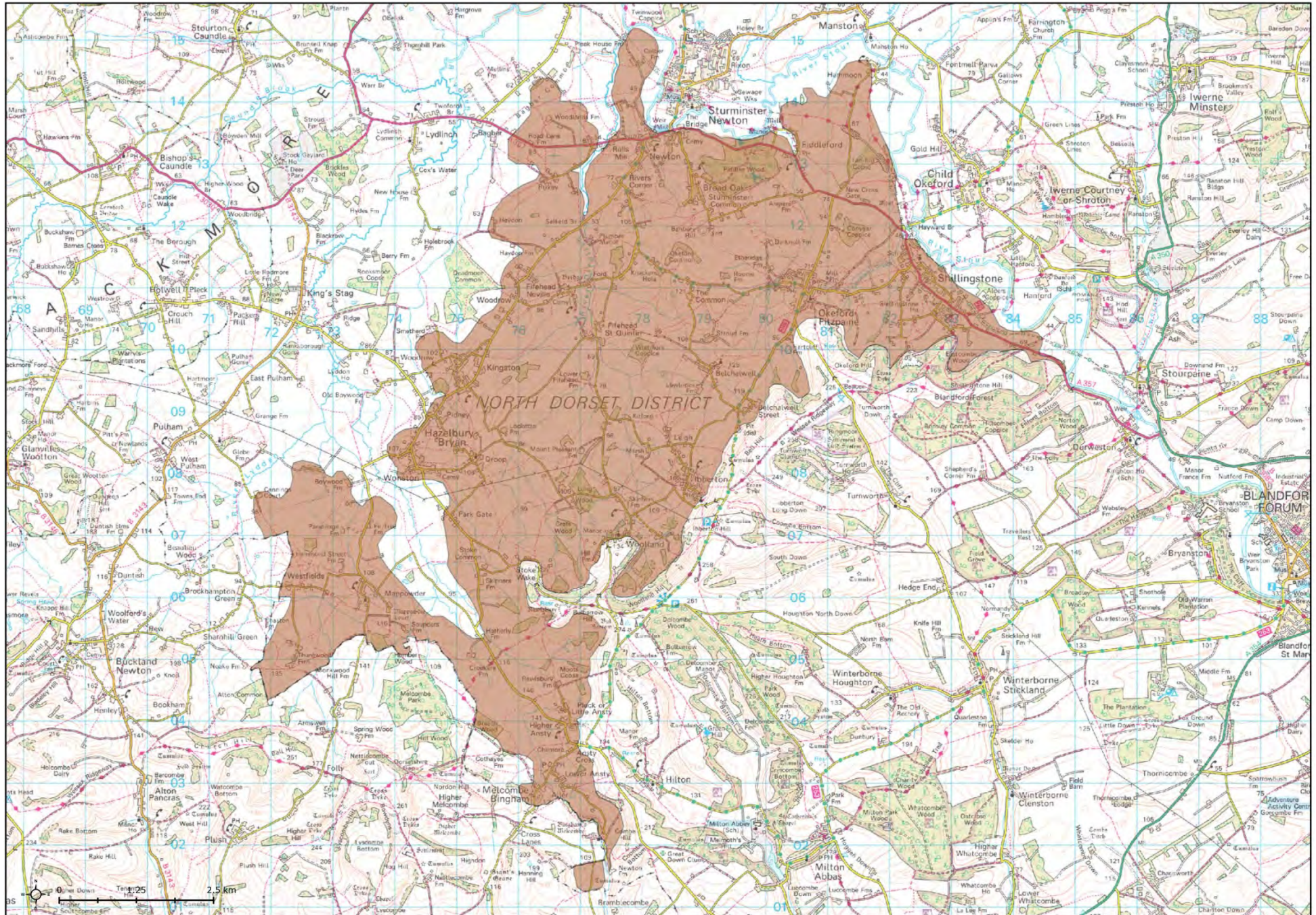
### North Blackmore Rolling Vales LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy

		Development size (ha)
	≤1	M
	≤10	MH
	≤30	H
	>30	H

North Blackmore Rolling Vales LCA sensitivity to wind energy	North Blackmore Rolling Vales LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
<p>Sensitivity to the introduction of single turbines less than 35m high is <b>moderate-high</b> and sensitivity to all other scales of wind energy development is <b>high</b>.</p> <p>The small scale, undulating and largely undeveloped landscape would be sensitive to out-of-scale development that could introduce new focal points &amp; reduce the characteristic sense of tranquillity within the LCT. Whilst the LCA itself is for the most part not designated for its landscape value it forms part of the setting for the chalk escarpment which marks the western side of the Cranborne Chase &amp; West Wiltshire Downs AONB and the northern edge of the Dorset AONB. The distinctive rounded and wooded Duncliffe Hill is prominent in many views from a number of LCTs within Blackmore Vale and on the chalk escarpment.</p> <p>Sensitivity could be higher where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location affects the prominence or character of Duncliffe Hill</li> <li>• Location affects the settings of Kingswood, Handford Park Estate or Child Okeford Manor;</li> <li>• Location has skyline impact on long views, in particular towards Shaftesbury or the chalk escarpment;</li> <li>• Location detracts from the patchwork character of the landscape, as observed from elevated viewpoints (particularly those in AONB settings), or from the rural backdrop to notable view down Gold Hill in Shaftesbury.</li> </ul>	<p>Sensitivity to solar PV developments of less than 1 hectare is <b>moderate</b>; sensitivity to developments of 1-10 hectares is <b>moderate-high</b>; sensitivity to larger developments is <b>high</b>.</p> <p>Sensitivity to larger solar PV developments will be high in this undulating landscape with irregular field boundaries. Smaller developments could potentially be effectively screened but sensitivity could be higher where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location is on an exposed or significantly undulating slope;</li> <li>• Location affects the prominence or character of Duncliffe Hill;</li> <li>• Location affects the settings of Kingswood, Handford Park Estate or Child Okeford Manor;</li> <li>• Location detracts from the green, patchwork character of the landscape, as observed from elevated viewpoints (particularly those in AONB settings), or from the rural backdrop to notable view down Gold Hill in Shaftesbury.</li> </ul>

# Landscape character area: South Blackmore Rolling Vales

Area: 5703 hectares





### South Blackmore Rolling Vales LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria

#### Scale and complexity of landform:

*"...acts as a transition zone between the flatter Blackmore Vale and the chalk escarpment. In this area, the foothills though are less distinctive than they are around Shaftesbury but the area does gradually become more hilly, folded and more wooded near the escarpment"... "... rolling farmland hills continue into the deeply indented valleys created by the chalk escarpment"*

#### Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

*"...medium sized irregularly shaped fields sub-divided by thick but often trimmed hedgerows. There are mature hedgerows similar to the Blackmore Vale in the area but they are not as distinctive in this rolling landscape."*

*"Twisting hedge lined lanes with narrow verges"... "Small bridged stream crossings are key features often with low parapets."*

Land use scale is small.

#### Visual exposure:

*"The escarpment still provides a backdrop and skyline to the south and east and helps to visually enclose the area."*

#### Development and activity:

*The Rolling Vales are more populated than the Clay Vale: "...villages and hamlets are either at the foot of the escarpment on the spring line such as Okeford Fitzpaine, Belchalwall Street, Ibberton, Shillingstone, Woolland and Ansty or on the elevated parts of the area such as at Hazelbury Bryan and Mappowder. Some of the newer urban edges to Hazelbury Bryan in particular are prominent in the landscape. There are numerous isolated farmsteads and buildings across the area and several new large agricultural buildings."*

### South Blackmore Rolling Vales LCA value characteristics

There are no landscape designations relating to this LCA, except along its southern fringe south of Okeford Fitzpaine and a small area at the southern end of the area near Ansty which are both within the Dorset AONB, but it is described as a *"tranquil and unified landscape"*. Its proximity to both the Dorset AONB and the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB mean that it contributes to the setting of both, adding to the tranquillity and rural character that are valued qualities of the designated areas,

*"The 'tongue' of rolling hills at Shillingstone, where the River Stour breaks through the chalk escarpment, is a key feature."*

South Blackmore Rolling Vales LCA sensitivity to wind energy

		Turbine height (m)			
		≤35	≤65	≤99	>99
Cluster size	1	<b>MH</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>H</b>
	2-4	<b>H</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>H</b>
	>4		<b>H</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>H</b>

South Blackmore Rolling Vales LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy

		Development size (ha)
	≤1	<b>LM</b>
	≤10	<b>MH</b>
	≤30	<b>H</b>
	>30	<b>H</b>

South Blackmore Rolling Vales LCA sensitivity to wind energy

Sensitivity to the introduction of single turbines less than 35m high is **moderate-high** and sensitivity to all other scales of wind energy development is **high**.

Irregular, mostly pastoral fields, numerous hedgerow trees, small woodland blocks and frequent farmsteads create a human scale which is sensitive to the introduction of wind turbines. The tranquil, rural character also elevates sensitivity with respect to development which is perceived as being industrial in scale rather than farm scale.

Topographical sensitivity varies across the LCA but there are many small hills providing long views, with the chalk escarpment as a distinctive backdrop to the south and east, but also many locations where nearby hills form a closer horizon. The hills would provide locations that would appear natural for a wind turbine, but the extent of visibility that this would entail, including many partial views over high points and trees, and potentially skyline impact against the chalk escarpment, serve to raise sensitivity.

Sensitivity could be higher where:

- Development is not located on or close to a hill top or ridge;
- Smaller turbine is not associated with a farm complex;
- Location is strongly visible from the chalk escarpment, intruding on the rural setting of an AONB, or is actually within an AONB;
- A turbine detracts from views of the chalk escarpment, particularly where the escarpment landform is very distinctive, such as near Shillingstone (Hod Hill) and Stoke Wake (White Hill and Bulbarrow Hill), and where the turbine breaks the skyline.

South Blackmore Rolling Vales LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy

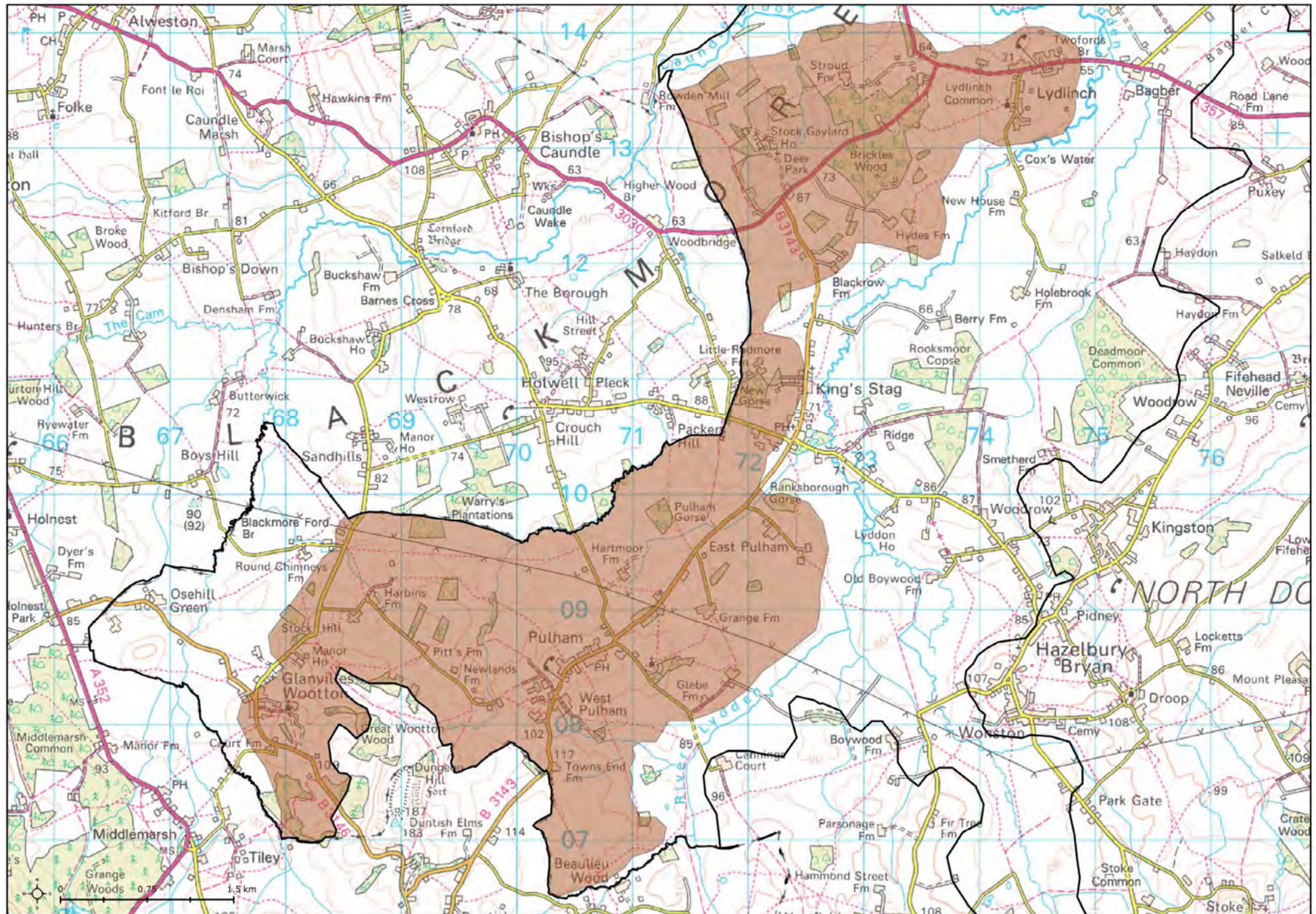
Sensitivity to solar PV developments of less than 1 hectare is **low-moderate**; sensitivity to developments of 1-10 hectares is **moderate-high**; sensitivity to larger developments is **high**.

Sensitivity to larger solar PV developments will be high in this undulating landscape with irregular field boundaries. Smaller developments could potentially be effectively screened but sensitivity could be higher where:

- Location is on an exposed or significantly undulating slope, particularly if it is visible in the same context as more distinctive parts of the chalk escarpment, such as near Shillingstone (Hod Hill) and Stoke Wake (White Hill and Bulbarrow Hill);
- Location detracts from the green, patchwork character of the landscape, as observed from elevated viewpoints (particularly those in AONB settings).

## Landscape character area: Blackmore Vale (part)

Area: 1599 hectares



### Blackmore Vale LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria

#### Scale and complexity of landform:

The area of Blackmore Vale between the River Lydden to the east and tributaries of Caundle Brook to the west is a little higher and more undulating than the surrounding vale, though less so than the North and South Blackmore Rolling Vales LCAs to the north. It has no distinct hills. Landform scale is large.

#### Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

Fields are medium sized and mostly pasture. Those in the central and northern part of this area are more geometric than is typical in Blackmore Vale, but elsewhere they are less regular in form. Hedgerows are generally clipped low but with many trees, and there are a number of woodland plantation blocks. Land use scale is small.

#### Visual exposure:

The extent of tree cover means that views into the area from the Vale are typically relatively short, and looking out from the area horizons are also often low and wooded, but there are some longer views out over the lower-lying Clay Vale, with the distant chalk escarpment forming a backdrop in places. A spur of the chalk escarpment forms a distinct, wooded landscape feature at Dungeon Hill, just south of Glanvilles Wootton and Pulham, but it is some distance to the higher escarpment.

#### Development and activity:

*"...tranquil and unified"*

Aside from the villages of Pulham, Glanvilles Wootton and Lydlinch there are only scattered, isolated farmsteads.

### Blackmore Vale LCA value characteristics

There are no landscape designations relating to the Rolling Vales part of the LCA, but the sense of tranquillity deriving from the generally peaceful and unified nature of the landscape is a valued characteristic.

### Blackmore Vale LCA sensitivity to wind energy

		Turbine height (m)			
		≤35	≤65	≤99	>99
Cluster size	1	<b>M</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>H</b>
	2-4	<b>MH</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>H</b>
	>4		<b>H</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>H</b>

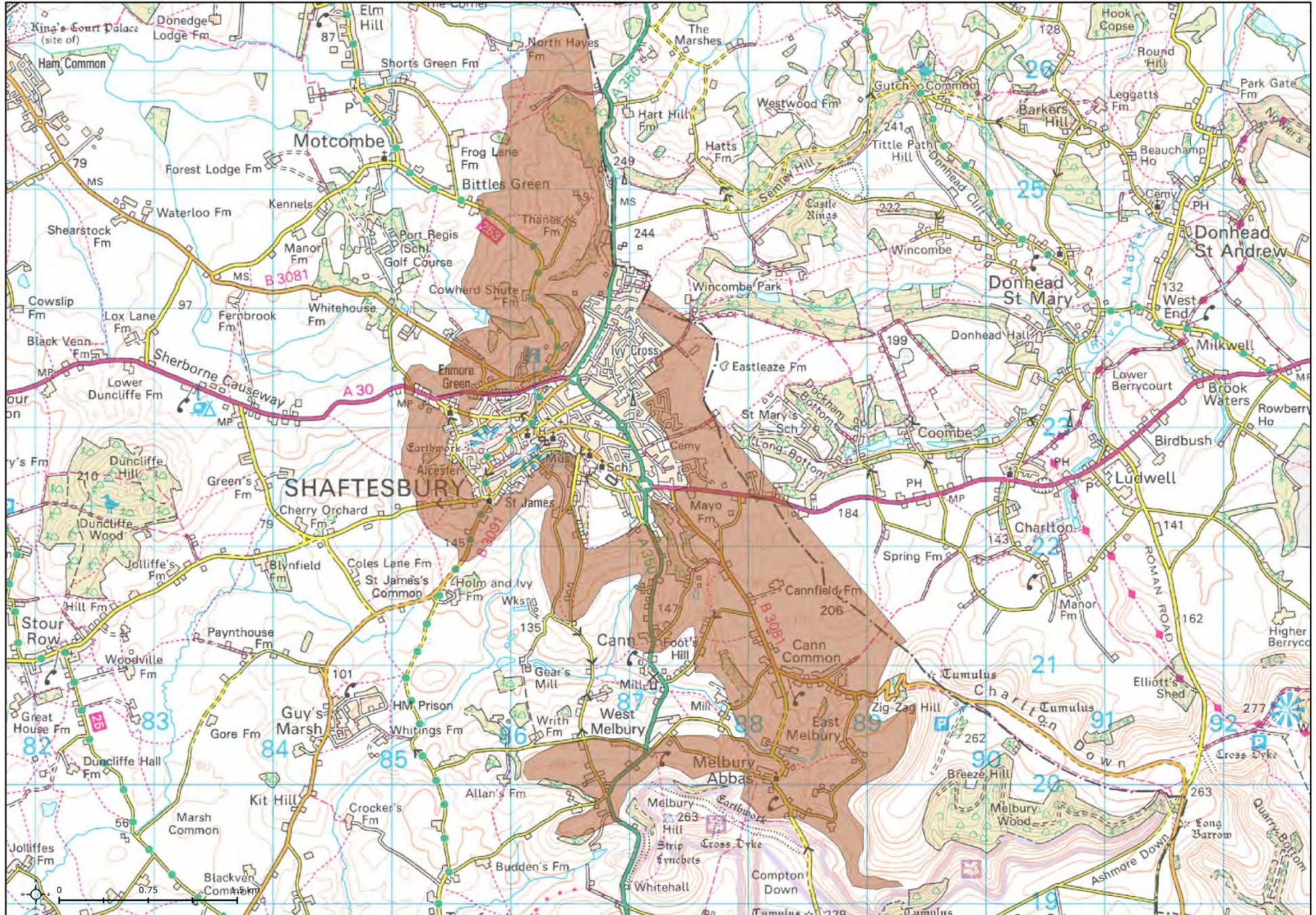
### Blackmore Vale LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy

Development size (ha)	≤1	<b>L</b>
	≤10	<b>LM</b>
	≤30	<b>MH</b>
	>30	<b>H</b>

Blackmore Vale LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Blackmore Vale LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
<p>Sensitivity to the introduction of single turbines less than 35m high is <b>moderate</b> and sensitivity to 2-4 turbines of this height, or to single turbines 36-65m high, is <b>moderate-high</b>. Sensitivity to all other scales of wind energy development is <b>high</b>.</p> <p>The landform does not have a high sensitivity to wind development, but the combination of small scale, visual unity, openness &amp; lack of development would be sensitive to out-of-scale development that could introduce new focal points &amp; reduce the characteristic sense of tranquillity within the LCT.</p> <p>Sensitivity could be higher where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location detracts from the green, patchwork character of the landscape, as observed from elevated viewpoints (particularly those in AONB settings).</li> </ul>	<p>Sensitivity to solar PV developments of less than 1 hectare is <b>low</b>; sensitivity to developments of 1-10 hectares is <b>low-moderate</b>; sensitivity to developments of 10-30 hectares is <b>moderate-high</b> and to larger developments it is <b>high</b>.</p> <p>The less undulating parts of this area, where well-screened by trees (particularly if in denser block or belts) and with geometric field shapes, are generally less sensitive to solar PV development than other Rolling Vale landscapes. However, there is still a distinct human scale which would elevate sensitivity to larger schemes, or to developments in more exposed locations.</p> <p>Sensitivity could be higher where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location detracts from the green, patchwork character of the landscape, as observed from elevated viewpoints (particularly those in AONB settings);</li> <li>• Hedges are low-clipped and there are few hedgerow trees or woodland blocks to screen views.</li> </ul>

# Landscape character area: Shaftesbury Greensand Ridges

Area: 972 hectares



### Shaftesbury Greensand Ridges LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria

#### Scale and complexity of landform:

*"A tight folded landform with tight small valleys "*

*"Distinctive upstanding greensand hills and ridges..."*

*"The landscape opens up and becomes less intimate to the east as the land rises up to the plateau of the Greensand terrace."*

Landform scale is small.

#### Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

*"Small scale pattern created by irregularly shaped hedgeline fields"*

*"Land cover is typically permanent pasture with mixed woodland and meadows on the valley floors. There is an increase in arable farming on the flatter plateau landscape to the east. The small woodlands and copses follow the tight folds in the landscape"*

#### Visual exposure:

*"... open and wide views "*

*"Shaftesbury dominates the area without creating significant visual intrusion particularly when viewed from the south. In fact its distinctive hilltop location is a positive feature in the wider landscape from the south and west."*

#### Development and activity:

*"Dominated by the historic hilltop setting of Shaftesbury"*

*"... a well settled landscape with hamlets hidden in the shelter of deep valleys and cottages and farms scattered along the dense network of sunken lanes. Both are therefore well concealed and integrated into the pattern of the landscape. Many of the buildings are made from the locally distinctive stone which contributes to local character. The A350 is a dominant feature running through the area and detracts from overall intimacy."*

*"A tranquil and intimate perception despite the presence of the A350."*

*"There are many footpaths and bridleways across the area making it relatively accessible"*

### Shaftesbury Greensand Ridges LCA value characteristics

Much of the LCA lies within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB, in particular: land west of the A350 north of Shaftesbury including Kingsettle Wood and land south of Shaftesbury including Cann Common, Melbury Abbas and East Melbury. Those parts of the LCA outside the AONB also form part of a distinctive, scenic and historic landscape. The town of Shaftesbury is a popular tourist destination and the landscape to the south and east, with both the expansive Blackmore Vale and the chalk escarpment, are important as a setting, visible from key viewpoints in the town such as Gold Hill and Park Walk.

*"... an intimate landscape with a strong character"*

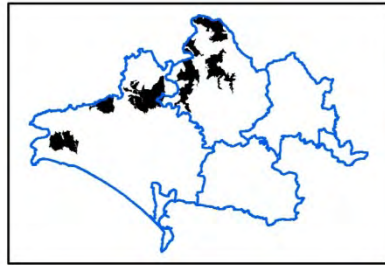
*"The small scale pattern of fields with irregular boundaries subdivided by hedgebanks indicate early, pre inclosure, of open fields."*





*"Key features include the picturesque setting of Melbury Abbas at the foot of the escarpment and the ancient woodland of Kingsettle Wood SNCI to the north of Shaftesbury"*

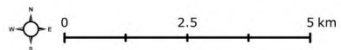
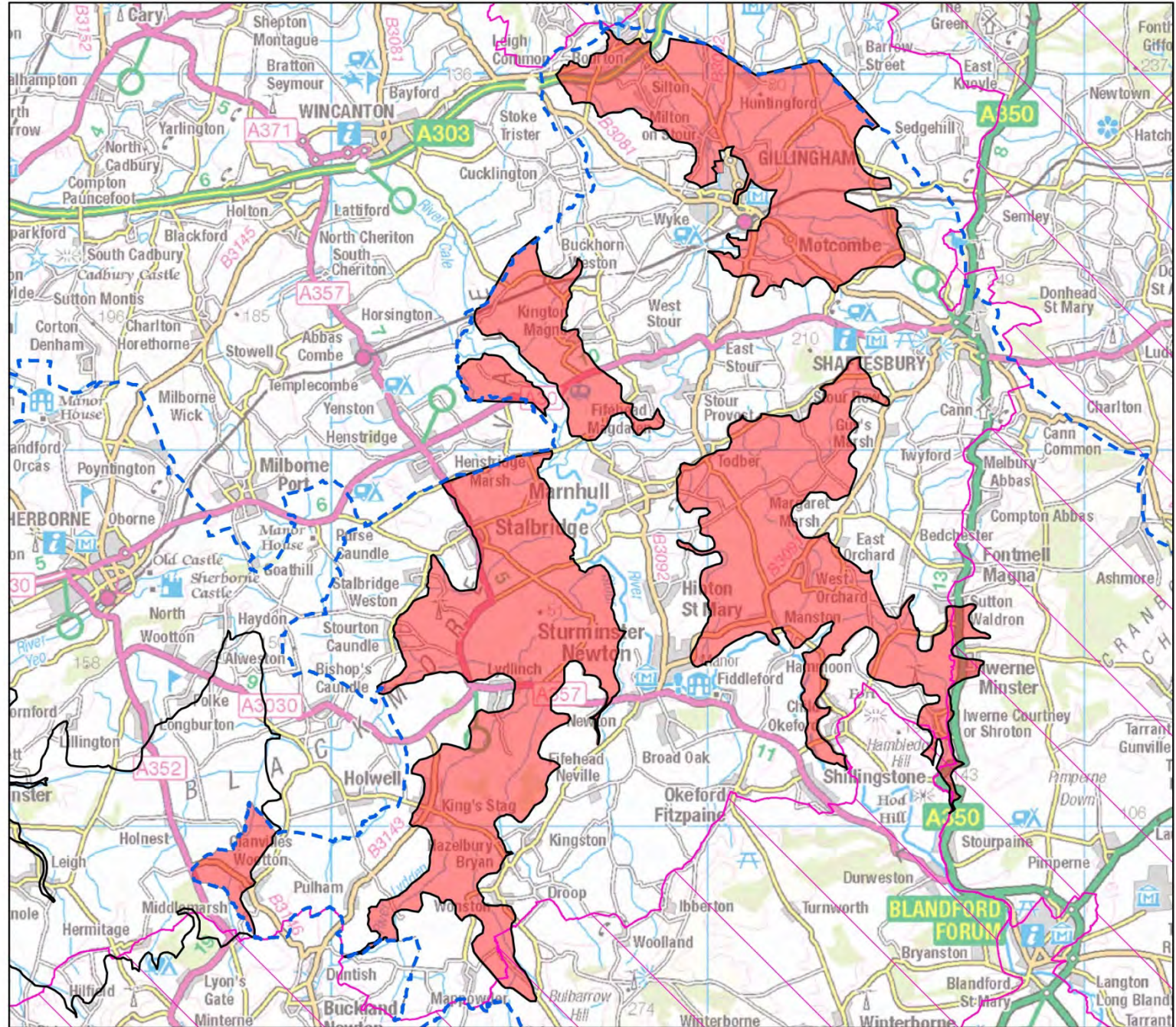
Shaftesbury Greensand Ridges LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Shaftesbury Greensand Ridges LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy																																					
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<p>Sensitivity to all scales of wind energy development is <b>high</b>.</p> <p>The distinctive, small scale undulating landform, small scale land use, irregular field shapes, settlement pattern, visual exposure and landscape value all contribute to making this a very sensitive LCA.</p> <p>The scenic value of the LCA and its small scale form a contrast with the nearby chalk escarpment which contributes to the sense of scale of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB landscape (one of its 'special qualities').</p>	<p>Sensitivity to solar PV developments of less than 1 hectare is <b>moderate-high</b> and to larger developments it is <b>high</b>.</p> <p>The distinctive, small scale undulating landform would be sensitive to solar PV development. The degree of enclosure and intimacy resulting from dense hedgerows and woodland blocks suggests that well-screened locations could be found, but the irregular, historic field shapes and homogeneous pastoral use serve to elevate sensitivity. The slopes to the south and east of the town are more sensitive in terms of topography, visual exposure and field shape than the plateau fields to the east of the town.</p> <p>Sensitivity could be higher where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location is prominent in views towards Shaftesbury or the chalk escarpment.</li> </ul>																																					



# Landscape character type: Clay Vale



-  District boundary
-  AONB
- Dorset Landscape Character Type**
-  8. Clay Vale
- North Dorset Landscape Character Area**
-  8A - Blackmore Vale



## Clay Vale LCT overview

Blackmore Vale covers much of the north western part of the District, continues south westwards into West Dorset and also extends north into the fringes of Somerset and Wiltshire. Within the County landscape classification the Vale is subdivided into the Clay Vale LCT and the Rolling Vales LCT. The Clay Vale within North Dorset is in turn subdivided into four blocks by the North Dorset Limestone Ridges and Upper Stour Valley LCAs, and is fringed by chalk downlands to the south and east and by the watershed of the Stour and Yeo valleys to the north west. These four blocks are all characterised within the District LCA as Blackmore Vale, and whilst most of this area is defined as Clay Vale at County-level part of the southernmost block is classified within the Rolling Vales LCT.

## Clay Vale LCT characteristics by susceptibility criteria

### Scale and complexity of landform:

*"Flat to gently undulating or bowl shaped clay landform"*

This is a large scale landscape.

### Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

*"A homogenous grassland landscape with a patchwork of small to medium sized fields, woods or ribbons of trees and dense trimmed hedgerows"... "Distinctive mature hedgerow oaks dot the landscape in a distinctive pattern"*

*"Evenly scattered hamlets, small villages and farmsteads often associated with groups of trees"... "Many small streams and watercourses often lined with ribbons of trees"*

Land use scale is small.

### Visual exposure:

*"Flanked and defined by surrounding limestone, chalk and/or greensand hills and ridges"*

*"Dense network of twisting narrow lanes lined by thick hedgerows"*

### Development and activity:

*"A peaceful, undeveloped and secluded rural atmosphere"*

## Clay Vale LCT value characteristics

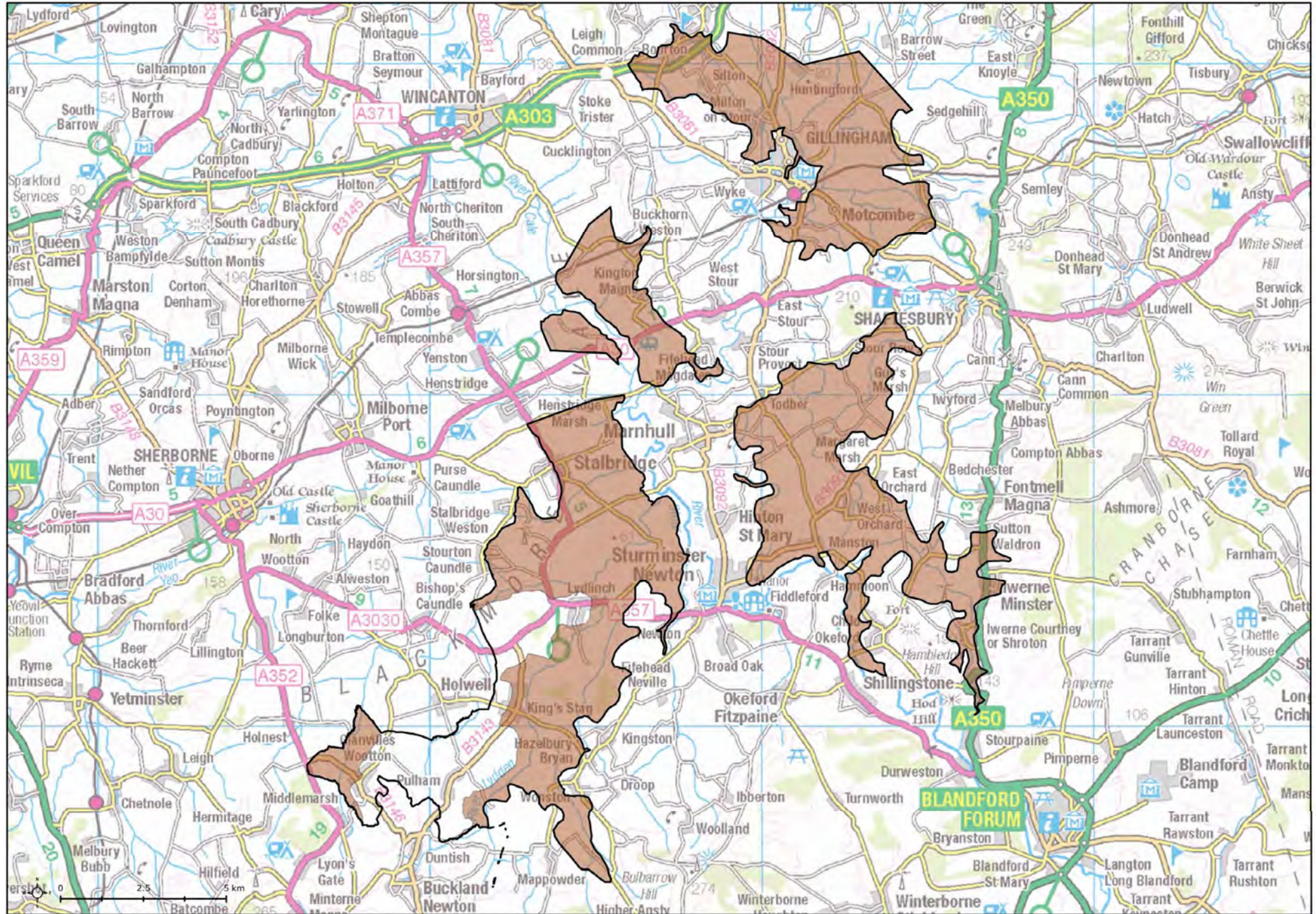
The overall management objective for the LCT is to *"conserve its diverse intimate wooded pastoral character"* and one of the key guidance notes is to *"conserve the ancient pattern of small irregular fields and narrow lanes interspersed with irregular patches of woodland"*.

There are no landscape designations relating to the bulk of the LCT but the western fringe in the vicinity of Iwerne Minster is in the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB and the southern tip near Mappowder is in the Dorset AONB.

Clay Vale LCT sensitivity to wind energy	Clay Vale LCT sensitivity to solar PV energy
<p>A flat or gently undulating landform is not inherently sensitive to wind development but the chalk and limestone topography that surrounds and subdivides Blackmore Vale elevates sensitivity by providing high ground from which there are extensive open views across the vale. This is particularly the case for the southern and eastern clay vale areas, which are closer to the AONB-designated chalk escarpments: the introduction of turbines to this flat but small scale landscape could reduce the contrast in scale with the high chalk ridge which is one of the special qualities of the designated area, and could detract from the sense of rural tranquillity which is also an important AONB characteristic.</p> <p>Although the vale covers a large area its field patterns and land use give it a human scale, and it retains an undeveloped, unified rural character which would be sensitive to large scale development that could introduce new focal points &amp; reduce the characteristic sense of tranquillity.</p>	<p>A flat or gently undulating landform is not inherently sensitive to solar PV development, and from within the character area the even topography means that solar PV development would be unlikely to be perceptible beyond its immediate surrounds. The chalk and limestone topography that surrounds and subdivides Blackmore Vale elevates sensitivity by providing high ground from which there are more open views across the vale – the presence of a distinctive, modern land use which contrasts with the pastoral character of most of the LCA could detract from the sense of rural tranquillity which is also an important characteristic of both of the AONBs – but ground-level views are limited by the well-treed field boundaries and woodland blocks.</p> <p>The homogeneous rural character of the Clay Vale would be sensitive to development that introduced a distinctive, uncharacteristic land use which did not fit into the small scale of the landscape.</p>

## Landscape character area: Blackmore Vale

Area: 11507 hectares



## Blackmore Vale LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria

### Scale and complexity of landform:

*"A broad expansive clay vale"*

*"There are a few more elevated and prominent areas within the Vale itself for example at Manston"*

### Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

*"...a predominantly pastoral and intensively farmed landscape with medium sized to small irregularly shaped fields divided by straight, broad and often flat topped trimmed hedgerows"... "A key feature of the Vale are the distinct mature hedgerow Oak trees which are regularly spaced out and together with the hedgerows and flat landform provide a distinct mosaic and pattern to the landscape"*

*"Many very small villages and hamlets built with locally distinctive materials, such as stone, redbrick, tile and thatch"... "Dense network of twisting lanes often with grass verges and sharp double 90° bends"*

### Visual exposure:

*"Open views across the undulating to flat pastoral landscape to the chalk escarpment backdrop"*

### Development and activity:

*"...tranquil and unified"*

*"Gillingham dominates a large part of the north eastern part of the Vale with some visually prominent and detracting urban edges"*

## Blackmore Vale LCA value characteristics

There are no landscape designations relating to most of the LCA but the sense of tranquillity deriving from the generally peaceful and unified nature of the landscape is a valued characteristic. Lydlinch Common and Stock Gayland Deer Park are noted as being "key locally important features".

## Blackmore Vale LCA sensitivity to wind energy

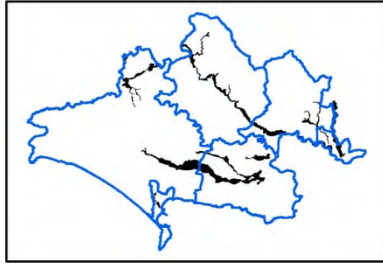
		Turbine height (m)			
		≤35	≤65	≤99	>99
Cluster size	1	M	H	H	H
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## Blackmore Vale LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy

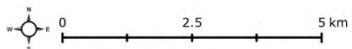
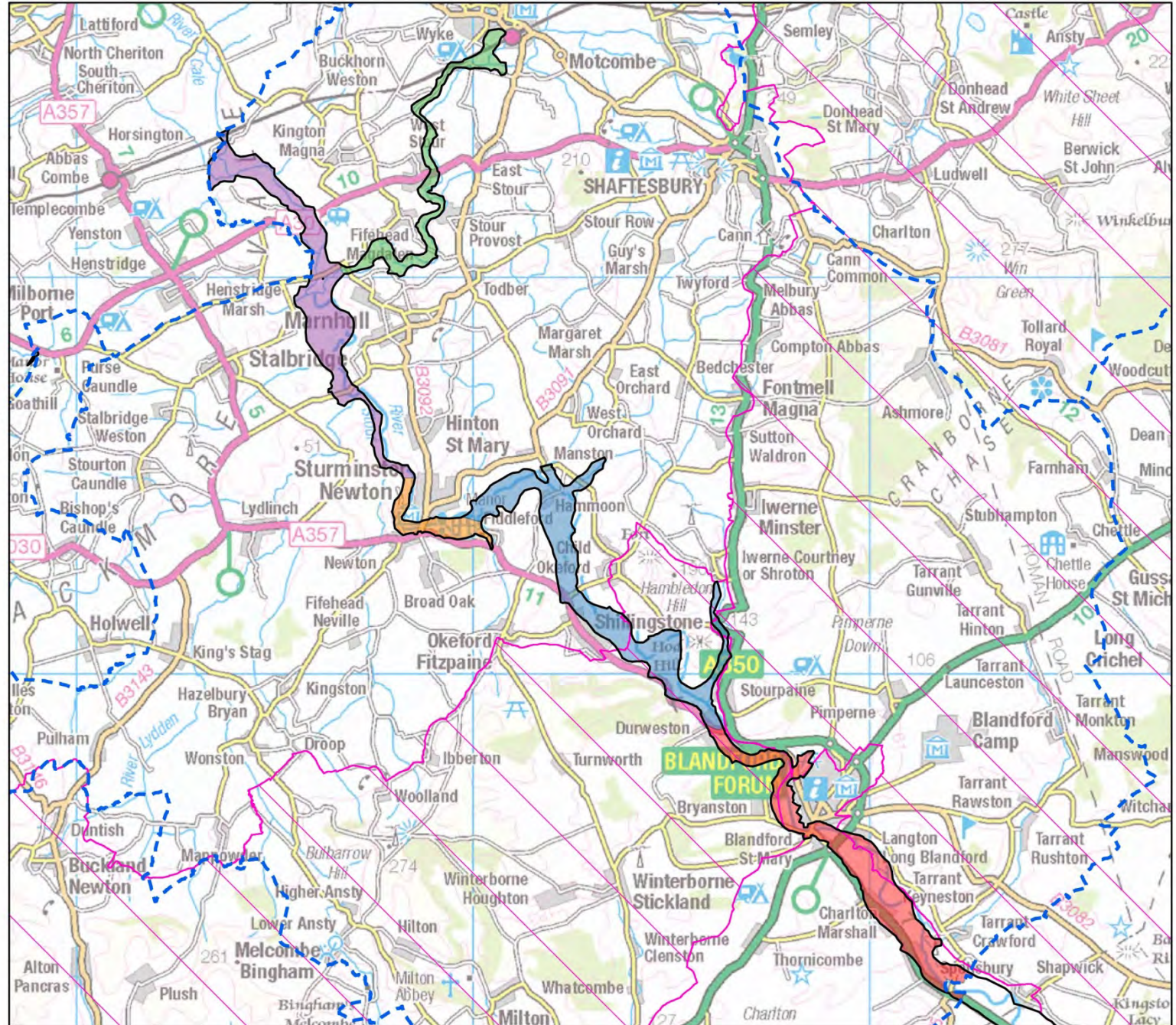
Development size (ha)	≤1	LM
	≤10	M
	≤30	H
	>30	H

Blackmore Vale LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Blackmore Vale LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
<p>Sensitivity to the introduction of single turbines less than 35m high is <b>moderate</b> and sensitivity to 2-4 turbines of this height is <b>moderate-high</b>. Sensitivity to all other scales of wind energy development is <b>high</b>.</p> <p>The combination of small scale, unity, openness and lack of development would be sensitive to out-of-scale development that could introduce new focal points and reduce the characteristic sense of tranquillity within the LCT. Whilst the LCA itself is for the most part not designated for its landscape value it forms part of the setting for the chalk escarpment which marks the western side of the Cranborne Chase &amp; West Wiltshire Downs AONB and the northern edge of the Dorset AONB.</p> <p>Sensitivity could be higher where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location is prominent in long views within the LCA (which may be identified in Parish Action Plans, Village Design Statements or other Settlement Appraisals) or views into the LCA from prominent AONB viewpoints (e.g. Hambledon Hill).</li> </ul>	<p>Sensitivity to solar PV developments of less than 1 hectare is <b>low-moderate</b>; sensitivity to developments of 1-10 hectares is <b>moderate</b>; sensitivity to larger developments is <b>high</b>.</p> <p>The Clay Vale has a largely homogeneous rural character with a very human scale which would be sensitive to large scale modern development, but there are locations where screening by trees and woodland blocks will prevent solar PV development from being highly intrusive. The size of the area is such that its character can be considered fairly robust, but there are visual sensitivities relating to elevated viewpoints in AONBs.</p> <p>Sensitivity could be higher where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location is prominent within long views either within the LCA (which may be identified in Parish Action Plans, Village Design Statements or other Settlement Appraisals) or into it from prominent AONB viewpoints (e.g. Hambledon Hill);</li> <li>• Fields shapes are irregular and/or small;</li> <li>• Land use in the vicinity is uniformly pastoral;</li> <li>• There are no woodland blocks or well treed field boundaries to screen views.</li> </ul>

# Landscape character type: Valley Pasture



-  District boundary
-  AONB
- Dorset Landscape Character Type**
-  5. Valley Pasture
- North Dorset Landscape Character Area**
-  5A - Mid Stour Valley
-  5B - Upper Stour Valley: Sturminster Newton to Durweston
-  5C - Upper Stour Valley: South of Gillingham
-  5D - Upper Stour Valley: North of Sturminster Newton
-  5E - Upper Stour Valley: Sturminster Newton



Valley Pasture LCT overview	
<p>The Valley Pasture LCT is associated with the floodplains of two major rivers that discharge to the Channel at Christchurch, the Avon and the Stour. In North Dorset the Stour is subdivided into two LCAs, the Upper Stour Valley and the Mid Stour Valley, with the A357 at Durweston marking the transition between them. Across the District Boundary into East Dorset it becomes the Lower Stour Valley.</p> <p>The narrow definition of the Valley Pasture LCT means that the character of the landscape is largely defined by characteristics of the LCTs that adjoin it. The Upper Stour Valley passes through a number of different LCAs over its course, and as a consequence its characteristics vary, so four different subdivisions are identified in the District LCA. These are considered separately in this study.</p>	
Valley Pasture LCT characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
<p><b>Scale and complexity of landform:</b></p> <p><i>"Flat and open valley floor landscape with distinctively meandering river channels which often floods"</i></p>	<p><b>Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:</b></p> <p><i>"Typically a grazed pastoral landscape"</i></p> <p><i>"Generally large fields with a mosaic of smaller fields abutting the river edges"</i></p> <p><i>"Groups of riverside trees follow the watercourses creating key features along the valleys"</i></p> <p><i>"Old water meadow systems and features are common."</i></p>
<p><b>Visual exposure:</b></p> <p>As flat, low-lying areas there will typically be exposure to views from surrounding higher ground, although areas that are not significantly higher will have views restricted by the trees and small copses which are commonplace in the LCT. In North Dorset the Valley Pastures are bordered by a variety of landscape types, from flat, clay vales to dramatic chalk escarpments, with the level of visual exposure varying accordingly.</p>	<p><b>Development and activity:</b></p> <p><i>"The valley floors are the focus for settlements, transport and infrastructure corridors and historic river crossings"</i></p> <p><i>"Settlements ... are often on the slightly elevated low terraces to the side of the valleys"</i></p> <p><i>"...sand and gravel extraction has and still is taking place, creating its own set of impacts"</i></p>
Valley Pasture LCT value characteristics	
<p><i>"The valleys provide the historic and cultural setting to many county towns"</i></p> <p><i>"Historic river crossings points are often over old bridges"</i></p> <p>The overall management objective for the LCT is <i>"to conserve the strong visual unity of the valley, the diversity of semi-natural habitats and to restore features such as wet woodlands pastures, water meadows, boundary features and historical lanes and bridges"</i></p> <p>The extent of degradation of the landscape in places is recognised by the statement that <i>"Opportunities for large-scale multi-functional landscape restoration and creation should be promoted and explored particularly in the Stour Valley"; however this can be considered to apply principally to the LCT in its lower more urbanised reaches rather</i></p>	



than in North Dorset.

The southern end of the LCT within North Dorset, between Shillingstone and Blandford in the vicinity of the chalk escarpment, is designated as part of the Dorset AONB.

#### Valley Pasture LCT sensitivity to wind energy

The Valley Pasture LCT is narrowly defined to encompass only the area spanned by the meanders of the present-day course of the Stour, so its character is first and foremost dictated by the presence of the river. Any development in the immediate proximity of the river would be likely to detract from its meandering landscape form. The character and sensitivity of the LCT is also subject to a variety of influences depending on the character of the landscape through which it passes. Valley Pastures are always topographically level, and so are not in themselves unsuitable for wind energy development in this respect, but where the surrounding landform rises to create a narrow valley sensitivity will be higher than is the case where the landform is a more open plain.

In terms of land use, there is a traditional relationship between Valley Pastures and grazing, so sensitivity to development which is perceived as industrial rather than agricultural would be high in areas where modern development has a limited influence. Although development within floodplains is very limited, adjacent slightly elevated landscapes have historically attracted settlement and communications links, but in some locations the character of the landscape is still strongly influenced by historic features such as mills and bridges. Where there has been modern development that is large scale or commercial in character, such as business parks and power lines, sensitivity in terms of naturalness is more limited, but smaller scale residential or recreational land use, particularly where it includes historic features, can give a human scale to the landscape that would be sensitive to the introduction of wind turbines.

Visually the degree of exposure varies depending on surrounding landscapes, with less intervisibility where the clay vale or low limestone hills frame the LCT, and where the landscape is well treed, but more in the vicinity of higher hills and in particular the chalk escarpment.

#### Valley Pasture LCT sensitivity to solar PV energy

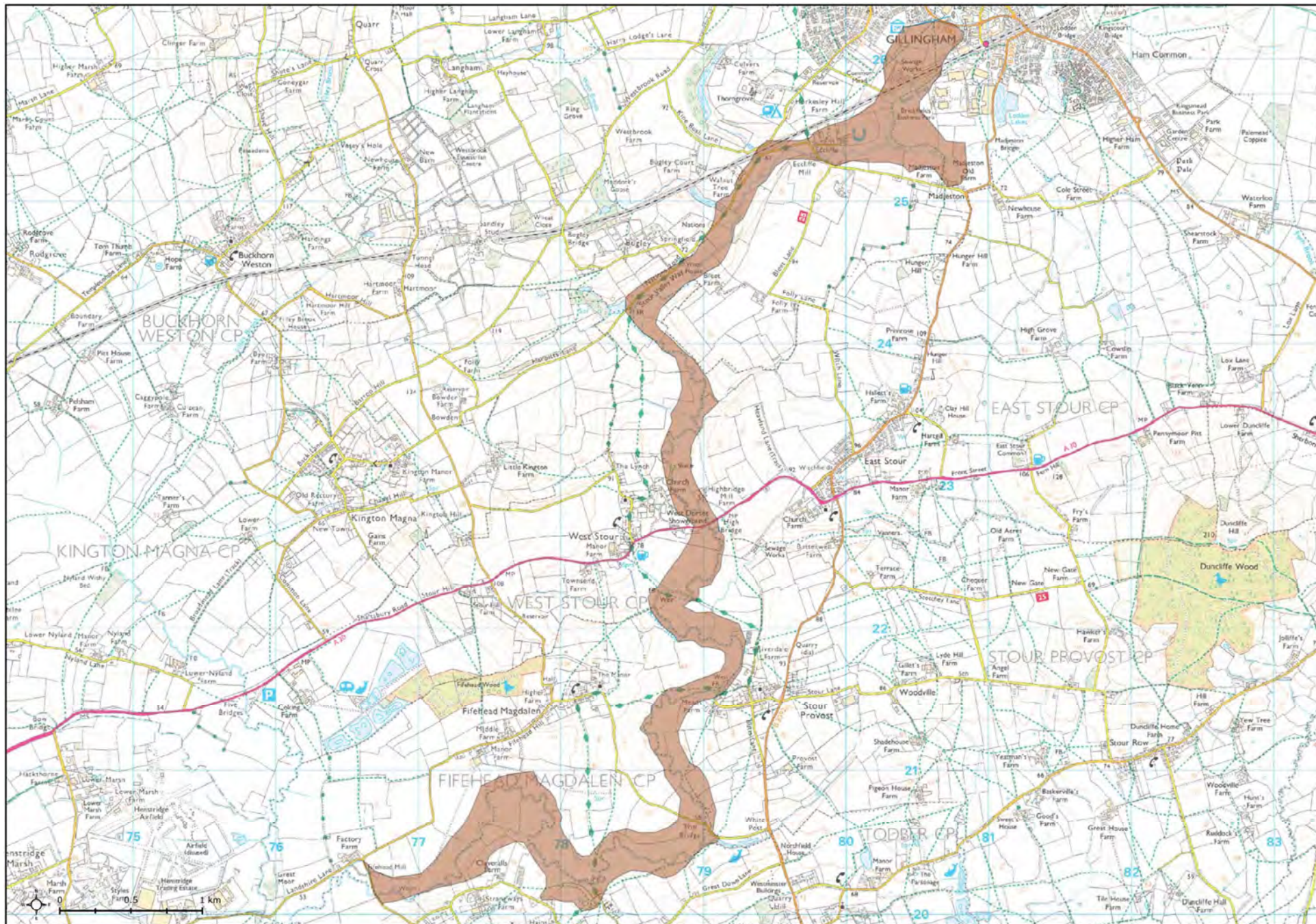
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In terms of land use, there is a traditional relationship between Valley Pastures and grazing, so sensitivity to development which is perceived as industrial rather than agricultural would be high in areas where modern development has a limited influence. Water meadows and rough grazing land would be particularly sensitive, but arable land which has intruded on the pastoral character would be less sensitive. Although development within floodplains is very limited, adjacent slightly elevated landscapes have historically attracted settlement and communications links, but in some locations the character of the landscape is still strongly influenced by historic features such as mills and bridges. Where there has been modern development that is large scale or commercial in character, such as business parks and power lines, sensitivity in terms of naturalness is more limited, but smaller scale residential or recreational land use, particularly where it includes historic features, can give a human scale to the landscape that would be sensitive to the introduction of solar PV development.

Visually the degree of exposure varies depending on surrounding landscapes, with less intervisibility where the clay vale or low limestone hills frame the LCT, and where the landscape is well treed, but more in the vicinity of higher hills and in particular the chalk escarpment.

# Landscape character area: Upper Stour Valley: South of Gillingham

Area: 264 hectares



**Upper Stour Valley LCA South of Gillingham characteristics by susceptibility criteria**

**Scale and complexity of landform:**

The river valley is essentially flat, but its topographical character is defined with references to the valley sides in adjacent LCAs which define it:  
*"The intimate valley landscape here becomes quite distinctive and contained by the rising valley sides which are steep in places".*

**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:**

*"The meandering channel of the river itself is a key feature".*  
*"...areas of trees and thick hedgerows. The small scale grazed fields run up to the river side and contrast with the arable fields on the higher grounds around this twisting part of the area. The meandering channels often have groups or ribbons of Alder or Willow following its course"*

**Visual exposure:**

Although there is higher ground on the surrounding Limestone Hills, the slope angle means that the LCA is typically only visible as a meandering line of riverside trees. The surrounding fields, which typically span both the Valley Pasture and Limestone Hills LCTs, often dip away out of sight close to the river.

**Development and activity:**

Other than in the area immediately to the south of the town, where the valley pasture area is wider than normal and accommodates a sewage works and several farmsteads, this part of the LCA is narrowly defined to include only the river, associated trees and pastures.

**Upper Stour Valley LCA South of Gillingham value characteristics**

No specific reference is made in the District assessment to value associated with this section of the LCA, but its intimate, pastoral, rural character represents historic continuity of land use associated with the presence of the river. The LCA does not have any landscape designation.

**Upper Stour Valley LCA South of Gillingham sensitivity to wind energy**

		Turbine height (m)			
		≤35	≤65	≤99	>99
Cluster size	1	H	H	H	H
	2-4	H	H	H	H
	>4		H	H	H

**Upper Stour Valley LCA South of Gillingham sensitivity to solar PV energy**

Development size (ha)	≤1	H
	≤10	H
	≤30	H
	>30	H

Upper Stour Valley LCA South of Gillingham sensitivity to wind energy	Upper Stour Valley LCA South of Gillingham sensitivity to solar PV energy
<p>Sensitivity all scales of wind energy development is <b>high</b>.</p> <p>The narrow definition of the LCT in this area offers little scope for wind energy development. Any turbines would be located close to the river and would introduce an uncharacteristic vertical element which would detract from its distinctive meandering form. Visually they would appear out of place in a narrow, small-scale valley, and consequently more intrusive.</p>	<p>Sensitivity all scales of solar PV development is <b>high</b>.</p> <p>The narrow definition of the LCT in this area offers little scope for solar energy development. Solar panels would typically be located close to the river in fields shaped by its course, and because only parts of fields lie within the LCA they would either have to use only part of a field or continue upslope. As a result they would detract from the distinctive meandering form of the river and associated vegetation and detract from the consistent pattern of pastoral land use.</p>

# Landscape character area: Upper Stour Valley: North of Sturminster Newton

Area: 552 hectares



### Upper Stour Valley LCA North of Sturminster characteristics by susceptibility criteria

#### Scale and complexity of landform:

*"The river is in a narrow channel and the flood plain spills out into the surrounding Blackmore Vale landscape making the distinction between the two areas less apparent".*

The river valley is essentially flat. Its topographical character is defined with references to the valley sides in adjacent LCAs which define it, which in places provides some containment but often gives the landform a larger scale.

#### Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

*"The meandering channel of the river itself is a key feature".*

*"This area drains the Blackmore Vale to the west and has a similar character to the Vale but is often less treed with fewer and weaker hedgerows" ... "There are occasional marginal areas of pasture and reed with occasional mature Willows and Alders still following the channel in places. There are numerous side channels and islands and it is still farmed intensively up to the river edge. There are small woods on the occasional steep side slopes to the area" ... "in places ... there are few features of interest and it is a bland flat landscape of large fields"*

#### Visual exposure:

To the north of Marnhull the River Cale is bordered by the Clay Vale LCT with little change in elevation, so despite being more open in character there is no strong interaction with surrounding character areas and skylines are typically formed by lower limestone hills rather than the more dramatic but distant chalk escarpment and greensand ridges. To the south the river follows the foot of the well-populated limestone ridge on which Marnhull, Hinton St Mary and Sturminster Newton are located, so there are views into the LCA from higher ground to the east, but to the west the landscape is flatter with limited visual exposure.

#### Development and activity:

A number of farmsteads are located within the LCA to the south of the confluence between the Stour and the Cale, but larger settlements are on the higher Limestone Hills, or fringes of the Clay Vale. Activity is principally agricultural, but there is some larger scale commercial development around the County boundary to the south of Henstridge Airfield. Major routes follow the higher ground or cross the Vale, rather than running along the base of the valley.

### Upper Stour Valley LCA North of Sturminster value characteristics

There are no landscape designations applying to this LCA.

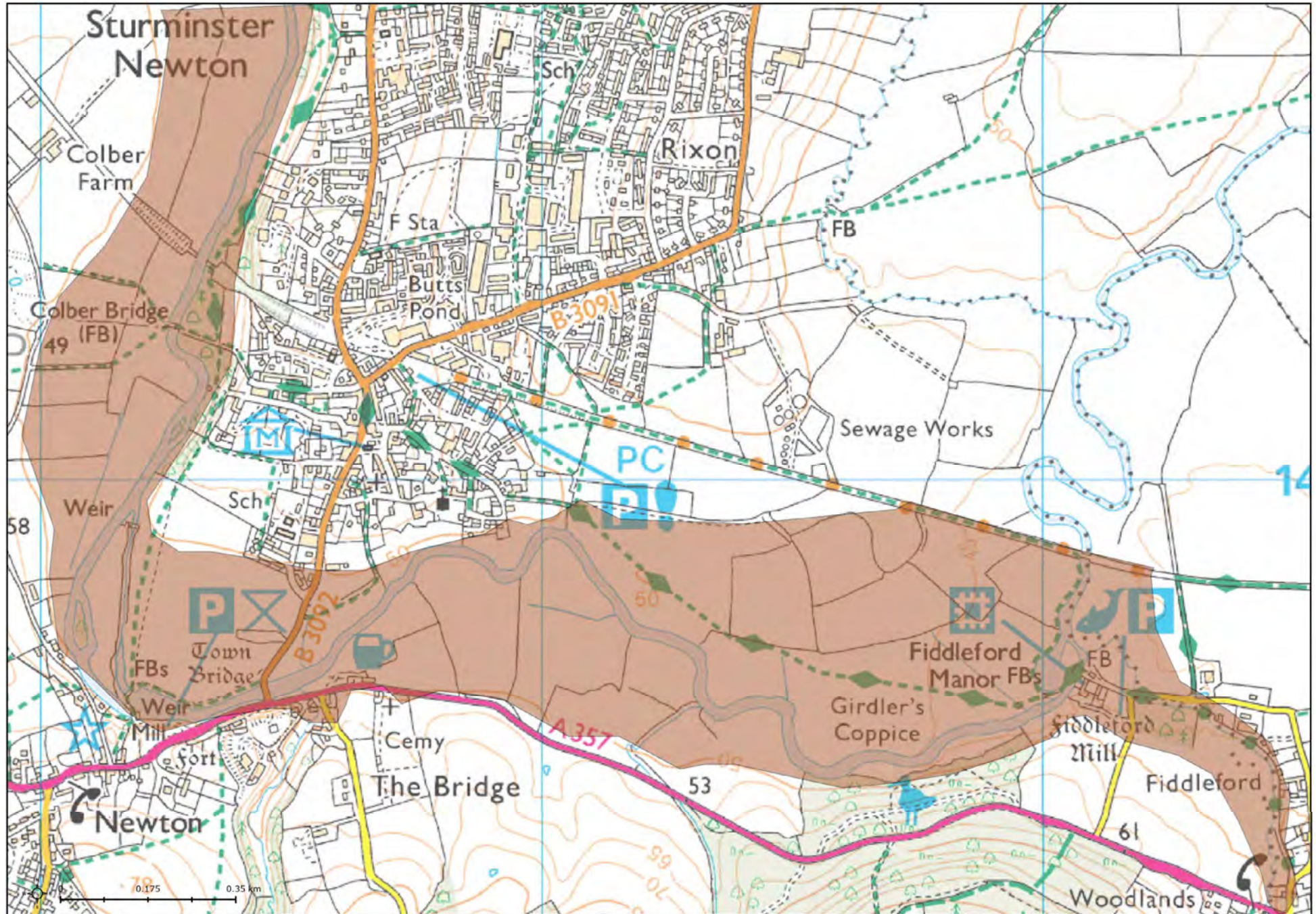
North of Sturminster Newton: there are *"some important and distinctive old features such as stone pedestrian bridges, derelict old mills and ponds"*

The Stour Valley Way long distance route typically runs across the Clay Vale or Limestone Hills in the Upper Stour area, but between Hinton St Mary and Sturminster Newton it follows the river bank, giving it a greater recreational value.

Upper Stour Valley LCA North of Sturminster sensitivity to wind energy	Upper Stour Valley LCA North of Sturminster sensitivity to solar PV energy																																
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<p>Sensitivity to single turbines less than 35m high is judged to be <b>low-moderate</b> and sensitivity to groups of 2-4 turbines is <b>moderate</b>. Sensitivity to single turbines 35-65m high is <b>moderate</b> and sensitivity to 2-4 turbines of this size is <b>moderate-high</b>. Sensitivity to all other scales of development is <b>high</b>.</p> <p>The Valley Pasture LCA is defined as a wider belt of land in this area than alongside the higher reaches of the river, and is generally more open in character, with fewer riverside trees than banks to the north and fewer hedgerow trees than the wider vale landscape. There are some locations which do not immediately border the river which would be less sensitive in terms of landscape pattern. Larger turbines would appear out of scale with the landscape but smaller turbines could be associated with farmsteads in the LCA, or industrial/business development on the fringes.</p> <p>Sensitivity could be higher where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land use is rough pasture/water meadow;</li> <li>• Fields front onto the river;</li> <li>• Field boundaries are well treed, making the landscape smaller in scale;</li> <li>• Location has adverse impact on setting of historic features such as old mills, bridges or ponds;</li> <li>• There are prolonged views from long distance recreational routes.</li> </ul>	<p>Sensitivity to solar farms less than 1 hectares in area is <b>low-moderate</b>, sensitivity to developments of 1-10 hectares is <b>moderate</b>, sensitivity to 10-30 hectare developments is <b>moderate-high</b> and to larger developments it is <b>high</b>.</p> <p>The Valley Pasture LCA is defined as a wider belt of land in this area, so there are some more regularly shaped fields which do not immediately border the river which would be less sensitive in terms of field pattern, and occasionally these are in arable use or close to industrial/business development, which also reduces sensitivity.</p> <p>Sensitivity could be higher where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fields have little screening;</li> <li>• Fields front onto the river;</li> <li>• Land use is rough pasture/water meadow;</li> <li>• Location has adverse impact on setting of historic features such as old mills, bridges or ponds.</li> <li>• There are prolonged views from long distance recreational routes.</li> </ul>																																

Landscape character area: Upper Stour Valley: Sturminster Newton

Area: 123 hectares





**Upper Stour Valley LCA Sturminster Newton characteristics by susceptibility criteria**

**Scale and complexity of landform:**

The river valley is essentially flat, but its topographical character is defined with references to the valley sides in adjacent LCAs which define it:  
*"Immediately adjacent to the town the river widens and flows into a confined valley which slopes up to the limestone ridge areas to the north".*

**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:**

*"The meandering channel of the river itself is a key feature".*  
*"In places these valley slopes are well wooded and create a distinctive contained landscape. The riverside meadows are a very distinctive and an important recreational resource for Sturminster Newton and have many mature trees lining the river"*

**Visual exposure:**

The rivers, meadows and historic mills around the town are well served by public rights of way, and the medieval town bridge and nearby mill are close to the A357. There are panoramic views across the LCA to the wider vale from high ground around Broad Oak to the south.

**Development and activity:**

There are no modern buildings in the Valley Pasture around Sturminster Newton, just the historic Fiddleford Mill. Activity is limited to recreational and grazing use of the meadows. The A357 runs along the southern edge of the LCA, passing through Newton, but the well treed river corridor and field boundaries minimise its influence.

**Upper Stour Valley LCA Sturminster Newton value characteristics**

*"The old bridge, mill and meandering river and its meadows create an important and intimate historic and culturally significant landscape."*  
 The Stour Valley Way long distance route typically runs across the Clay Vale or Limestone Hills in the Upper Stour area, but between Hinton St Mary and Sturminster Newton it follows the river bank, giving it a greater recreational value.

**Upper Stour Valley LCA Sturminster Newton sensitivity to wind energy**

		Turbine height (m)			
		≤35	≤65	≤99	>99
Cluster size	1	H	H	H	H
	2-4	H	H	H	H
	>4		H	H	H

**Upper Stour Valley LCA Sturminster Newton sensitivity to solar PV energy**

Development size (ha)	≤1	H
	≤10	H
	≤30	H
	>30	H

Upper Stour Valley LCA Sturminster Newton sensitivity to wind energy	Upper Stour Valley LCA Sturminster Newton sensitivity to solar PV energy
<p>This is a small area which has strong historic, scenic and recreational character, together with a human scale associated with the proximity of Sturminster Newton and the well treed landscape. As such, sensitivity all scales of wind energy development is <b>high</b>.</p>	<p>Sensitivity all scales of solar PV development is <b>high</b>.</p> <p>This is a small area which has strong historic, scenic and recreational character associated with the river and adjoining meadows.</p>

Landscape character area: Upper Stour Valley: between Sturminster Newton and Durweston

Area: 705 hectares



### Upper Stour Valley LCA Sturminster-Durweston characteristics by susceptibility criteria

#### Scale and complexity of landform:

The river valley is essentially flat, but its topographical character is defined with references to the valley sides in adjacent LCAs which define it:

*"The valley gradually opens up again past Sturminster Newton to resemble the eastern part of the Blackmore Vale landscape which it drains as the River Stour flows northeast and then southeast".*

In the northern part of the LCA the terrain is open and fairly large in scale but where the Stour Valley and also the River Iwerne pass through the chalk escarpment the landform is more contained.

#### Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

*"The meandering channel of the river itself is a key feature".*

*"An intensively farmed landscape where the hedgerows are tightly clipped in places and in others left to grow tall and straggly. There is little marginal vegetation on the edges of the river channel, it being farmed and grazed up to the edges. There are the occasional groups of trees or small copses of Willows and Alders"*

Fields are moderate in scale and often irregular in form, following the meandering course of the river.

#### Visual exposure:

This section of the Upper Stour Valley has a high level of visual exposure as a result of its proximity to the Chalk Escarpment. There are strong views from high points such as Hambledon Hill and Okeford Hill. Within the vale, views are generally much more limited because of the well treed landscape, but there are some higher points in the South Blackmore Rolling Vales LCA to the south which provide long vistas towards Duncliffe Hill and Shaftesbury.

#### Development and activity:

There is little built development along this stretch of the LCA but the villages of Child Okeford and Shillingstone are close to the area edge, and Stourpaine straddles the Valley Pasture and Chalk Escarpment foot.

### Upper Stour Valley LCA Sturminster-Durweston value characteristics

*"...use of locally distinctive materials together with the small lane bridges and parapets, country houses in mature grounds and the trees associated with them are all key features in this part of the valley"*

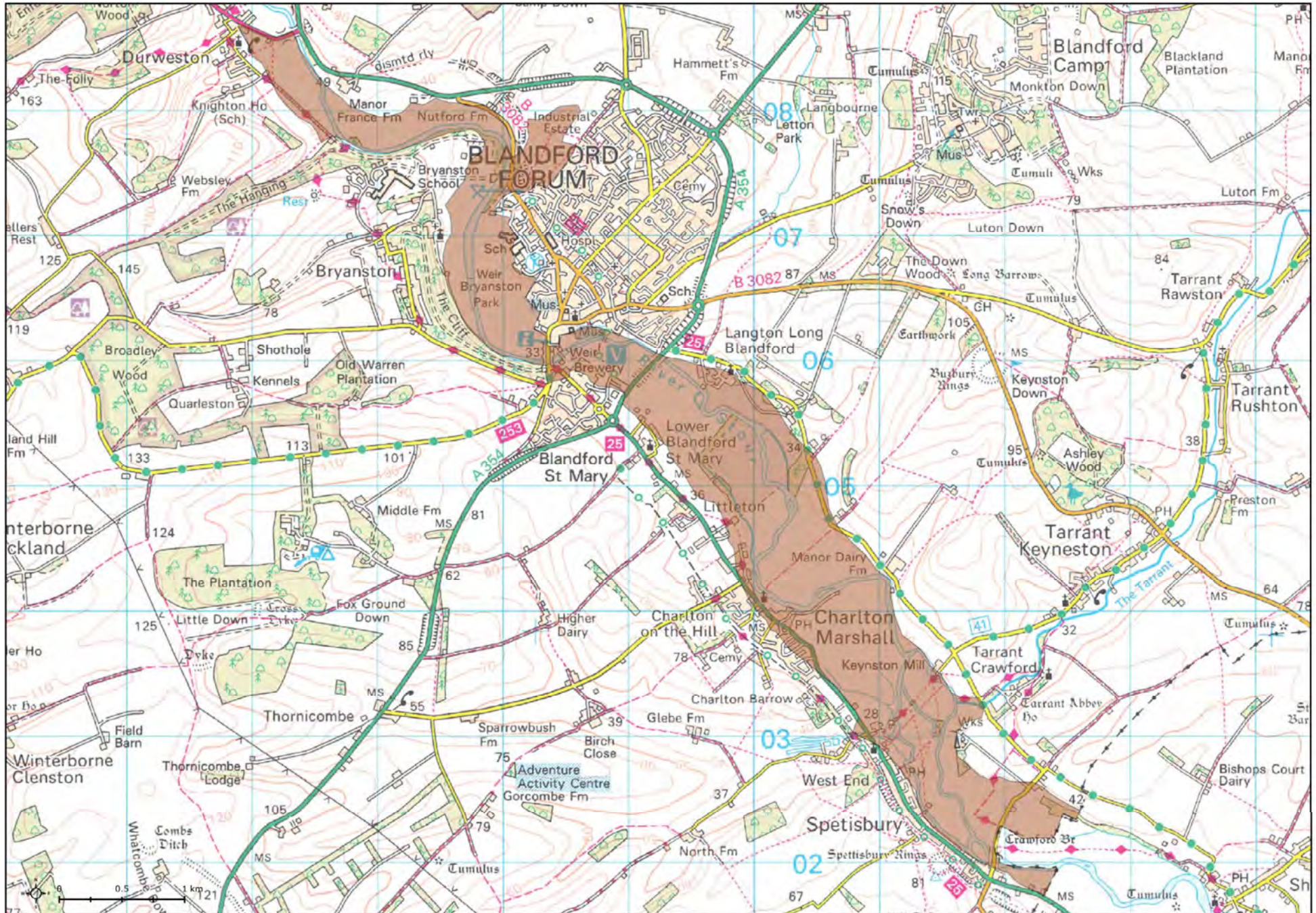
Three long distance routes cross the Stour Valley in the vicinity of Shillingstone - the Wessex Ridgeway, the Stour Valley Way and the Jubilee Trail – and the area forms an important part of the setting for views from the AONB on Hambledon Hill and other locations.

The southern end of the LCA, in the vicinity of the chalk escarpment, is designated as part of the Dorset AONB, reflecting its contribution to the distinctive and scenic landscape where the Stour and Iwerne rivers cut through the chalk downs.

Upper Stour Valley LCA Sturminster-Durweston sensitivity to wind energy	Upper Stour Valley LCA Sturminster-Durweston sensitivity to solar PV energy																																			
<p style="text-align: center;">Turbine height (m)</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td></td> <td>≤35</td> <td>≤65</td> <td>≤99</td> <td>&gt;99</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Cluster size</td> <td>1</td> <td style="background-color: red; color: white;"><b>MH</b></td> <td style="background-color: red; color: white;"><b>H</b></td> <td style="background-color: red; color: white;"><b>H</b></td> <td style="background-color: red; color: white;"><b>H</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>2-4</td> <td style="background-color: red; color: white;"><b>H</b></td> <td style="background-color: red; color: white;"><b>H</b></td> <td style="background-color: red; color: white;"><b>H</b></td> <td style="background-color: red; color: white;"><b>H</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>&gt;4</td> <td></td> <td style="background-color: red; color: white;"><b>H</b></td> <td style="background-color: red; color: white;"><b>H</b></td> <td style="background-color: red; color: white;"><b>H</b></td> </tr> </table>		≤35	≤65	≤99	>99	Cluster size	1	<b>MH</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>H</b>		2-4	<b>H</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>H</b>		>4		<b>H</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>H</b>	<table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Development size (ha)</td> <td>≤1</td> <td style="background-color: yellow;"><b>LM</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>≤10</td> <td style="background-color: orange;"><b>M</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>≤30</td> <td style="background-color: red; color: white;"><b>H</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>&gt;30</td> <td style="background-color: red; color: white;"><b>H</b></td> </tr> </table>	Development size (ha)	≤1	<b>LM</b>		≤10	<b>M</b>		≤30	<b>H</b>		>30	<b>H</b>
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Upper Stour Valley LCA Sturminster-Durweston sensitivity to wind energy	Upper Stour Valley LCA Sturminster-Durweston sensitivity to solar PV energy																																			
<p>Sensitivity to single turbines less than 35m high is judged to be <b>moderate-high</b> but sensitivity to all other scales of development is <b>high</b>.</p> <p>Locations close to the riverside, where development could detract from the meandering form of the river, will be very sensitive, and anywhere in the LCA there will be high visual sensitivity associated with developments which would appear intrusive, particularly from elevated viewpoints on chalk escarpment. The elevation of viewpoints on the top of the escarpment would have the effect of reducing the apparent scale of a nearby turbine, but a turbine that does not appear to be part of a farm-scale development is still likely to be sensitive with regard to the character of the pastoral landscape, and its recreational value.</p> <p>Sensitivity could be higher where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land use is rough pasture/water meadow;</li> <li>• Fields front onto the river;</li> <li>• Field boundaries are well treed, making the landscape smaller in scale;</li> <li>• Location has adverse impact on setting of historic features such as old mills, bridges or ponds;</li> <li>• There are prolonged views from long distance recreational routes;</li> <li>• Location is prominent in views from or towards Hambledon Hill, Hod Hill and the 'gap' in the chalk escarpment, or in views towards Duncliffe Hill.</li> </ul>	<p>Sensitivity to solar farms less than 1 hectares in area is <b>moderate</b>, sensitivity to developments of 1-10 hectares is <b>moderate-high</b> and sensitivity to larger developments it is <b>high</b>.</p> <p>Locations close to the riverside, where development could detract from the meandering form of the river, will be very sensitive . Although there is some scope to locate development within this LCA away from the immediate riverside there is high visual sensitivity associated with developments which would appear intrusive, particularly from elevated viewpoints on chalk escarpment. In places there are sufficiently strong field boundaries to reduce visual impact, but change of use from pasture to solar on a significant scale would be sensitive in terms of historic character.</p> <p>Sensitivity could be higher where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land use is rough pasture/water meadow;</li> <li>• Fields front onto the river;</li> <li>• Fields lack screening from trees, high hedges or woodland blocks;</li> <li>• Location has adverse impact on setting of historic features such as old mills, bridges or ponds;</li> <li>• There are prolonged views from long distance recreational routes;</li> <li>• Location is prominent in views from or towards Hambledon Hill, Hod Hill and the 'gap' in the chalk escarpment, or in views towards Duncliffe Hill.</li> </ul>																																			

# Landscape character area: Mid Stour Valley

Area: 590 hectares



## Mid Stour Valley LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria

### Scale and complexity of landform:

*"A wide and flat river flood plain landscape bounded and enclosed by the rising chalk downland landscape to the northeast and southwest."*

*"The Tarrant Valley runs north from the Stour Valley near Spetisbury and there are a number of smaller side channels, streams and ditches which characterise the area. At the northern end of the character area it becomes more tightly confined by the surrounding steep chalk escarpment."*

### Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

*"The River Stour meanders through this mainly pastoral landscape and there are many trees and small copses following its course, as well as several individual, important mature trees standing in isolation within the flood plain. These trees around the settlement edges help integrate the ribbon development along the valley sides. The trees also add diversity to the otherwise flat landform."*

### Visual exposure:

*"The valley is crossed by several footpaths from where there are some open views of the flood plain landscape."*

There are strong views into the LCA from the surrounding chalk downs, including from the settlements along the A350 and the Spetisbury Rings hill fort.

### Development and activity:

*"The roads follow the edges of this landscape on both sides of the flood plain, as does the settlement pattern, which particularly follows the southern side. Here it forms an almost continuous linear or ribbon pattern of development along the A350 through Spetisbury and Charlton Marshall. This development forms a distinctive sloping edge to the character area".*

Development is typically small scale and residential, rather than large scale and commercial in character.

*"The A350 which runs down the Valley side creates a busy feel to the valley and its impact is noticed across whole area."*

A number of settlements adjoin the Valley Pasture LCA, most notably Blandford, but other than a few farms on the fringes of the LCA the only significant development within the area is modern expansion of the brewery at Blandford.

## Mid Stour Valley LCA value characteristics

*"The Mid Stour Valley forms part of the setting of the southern edge of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB and small parts of the character area include, along its north eastern edge, parts of the AONB."*

*"There are several key historic and important crossing points at 90° to the river. The area forms an important open, undeveloped setting to the southern side and entrance to Blandford, and the steep wooded slopes [in the adjoining Chalk Escarpment LCT] and the parkland landscape at Bryanston are key features."*

*"The remnants of traditional river valley features, such as old withy beds, oxbow lakes, mills, weirs and the water meadows are all important features across the area"*

*"...the Stour Valley Way follows the course of the river in this area"*

Mid Stour Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy

		Turbine height (m)			
		≤35	≤65	≤99	>99
Cluster size	1	M	MH	H	H
	2-4	M	H	H	H
	>4		H	H	H

Mid Stour Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy

		Development size (ha)
	≤1	M
	≤10	MH
	≤30	H
	>30	H

Mid Stour Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy

Sensitivity to turbines less than 35m high is judged to be **moderate** and sensitivity to single turbines 35-65m high is **moderate-high**. Sensitivity to all other scales of development is **high**.

The extent of modern development and activity adjacent to this LCA reduce landscape sensitivity in comparison to most of the upper reaches of the Stour, and there is some scope to locate development within this LCA away from the immediate riverside, but there is high visual sensitivity associated with developments which would appear intrusive, particularly from elevated viewpoints on chalk escarpment or downs within the AONB. Although there is modern development within this landscape it is masked by trees from most viewpoints within the AONB, so tall structures could affect the rural character of the AONB's setting and reduce the sense of tranquillity which is an important quality of the designated area. A turbine that does not appear to be part of a farm-scale development is likely to be sensitive with regard to the character of the pastoral landscape.

Sensitivity could be higher where:

- Land use is rough pasture/water meadow, or fields front onto the river;
- Field boundaries are well treed, making the landscape smaller in scale;
- Location has adverse impact on setting of historic features such as old mills, bridges or ponds;
- There are prolonged views from long distance recreational routes;
- Location is prominent in views from or towards Hambledon Hill and the 'gap' in the chalk escarpment;

Mid Stour Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy

Sensitivity to solar farms less than 1 hectares in area is **moderate**, sensitivity to developments of 1-10 hectares is **moderate-high** and sensitivity to larger developments it is **high**.

The extent of modern development and activity adjacent to this LCA reduce landscape sensitivity in this respect in comparison to most of the upper reaches of the Stour, but although there is some scope to locate development within this LCA away from the immediate riverside the pastoral land use which is historically linked to the riverside location is sensitive to change. There is high visual sensitivity associated with developments which would appear intrusive, particularly from elevated viewpoints on the AONB chalk escarpment or downs, but the amount of tree cover in the landscape offers some screening potential.

Sensitivity could be higher where:

- Land use is rough pasture/water meadow;
- Fields front onto the river;
- Field boundaries do not offer much screening;
- Location has adverse impact on setting of historic features such as old mills, bridges or ponds;
- There are prolonged views from long distance recreational routes;
- Location is prominent in views from or towards Hambledon Hill and the 'gap' in the chalk escarpment;
- Development affects the setting the parkland landscapes on the fringes of Blandford.



- Development affects the setting the parkland landscapes on the fringes of Blandford.