

Landscape and Visual Appraisal Volume 1

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Landscape and Visual Appraisal

This document sets out the broad landscape and visual issues relating to the potential/proposed allocation sites.

The landscape assessment work is based on a desk study of each site (including OS map data, aerial photography and designation data), and site visits to confirm the key landscape issues.

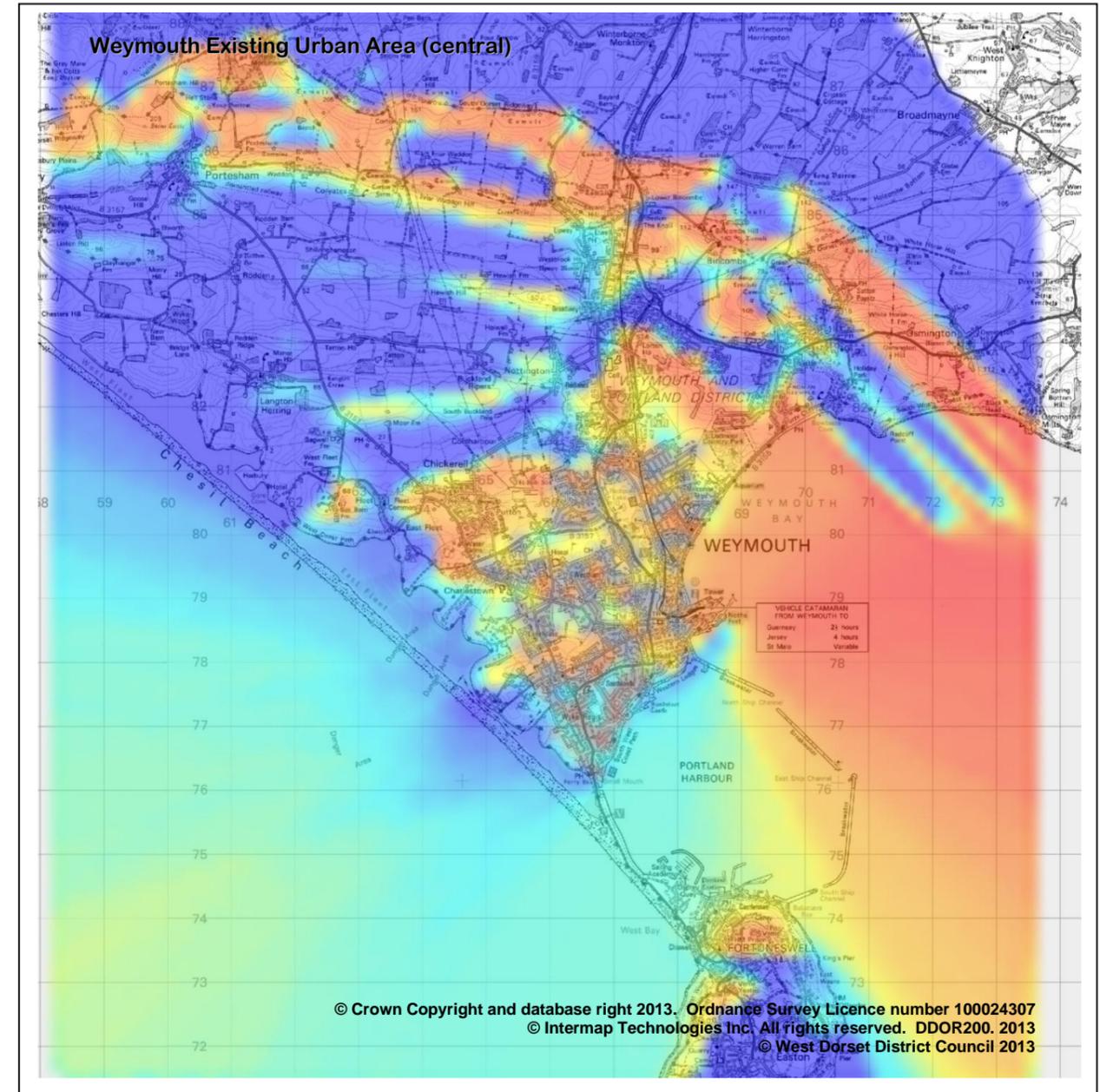
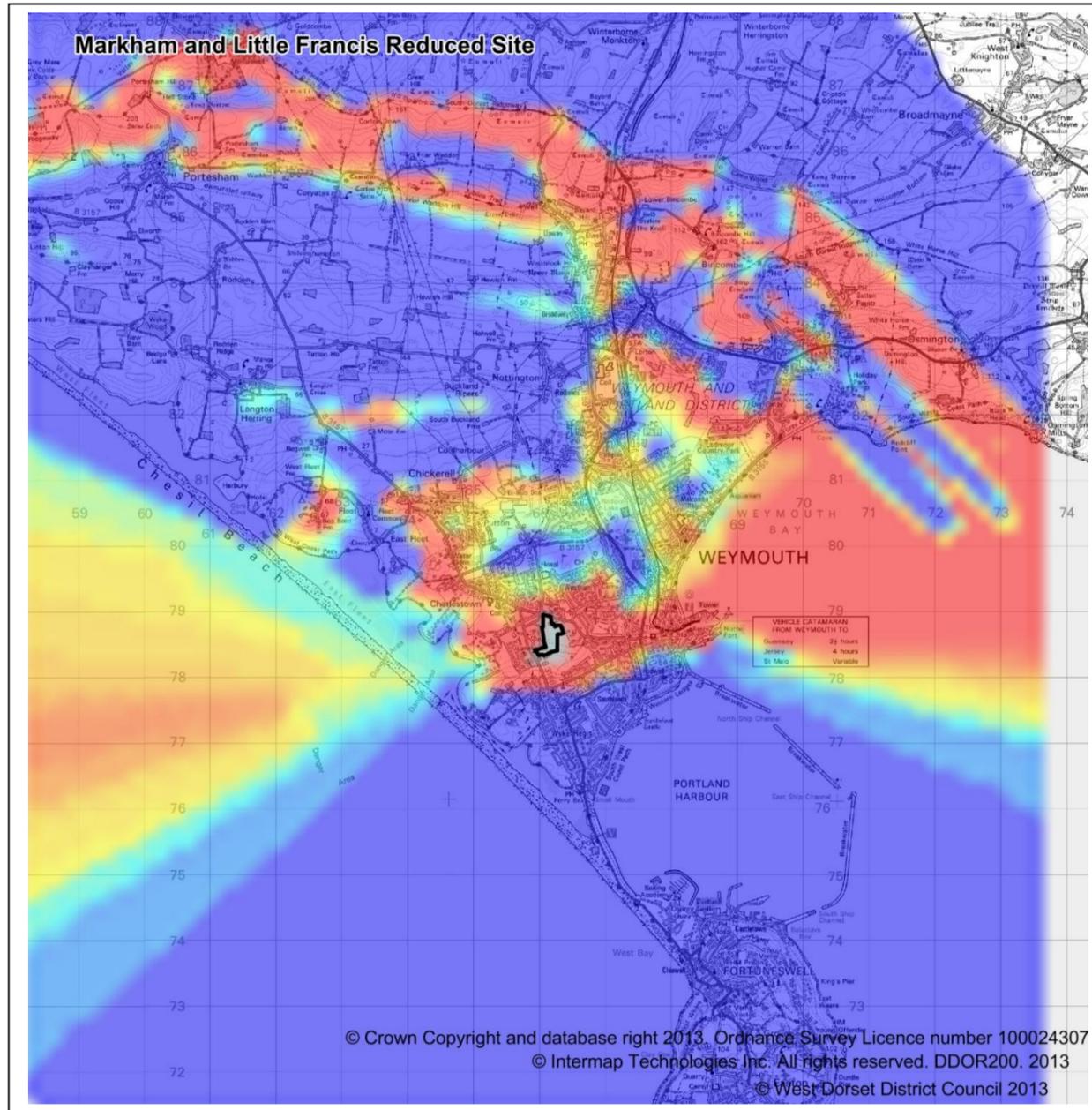
The visual assessment work for each site is based on a Theoretical Zone of Visual Influence (TZVI). The TZVI is calculated using a digital terrain model on a 5m grid with a 0.7m vertical accuracy. A proposed development height of 2 storeys (8m) has been used to determine the potential extent of visibility. It is based on topography alone, and does not take into account vegetation, built form, or other features present in the landscape. It is therefore a "first sieve" visual mapping exercise, which allows a simple check of the likely visibility of development at a site.

Interpretation of TZVIs

An area of red indicates the area of highest visibility of the assessed site (i.e. the majority of the site will theoretically be visible), reducing through orange, to yellow and light blue, where only a part of the site may be visible. Deep blue indicates areas from which views of the site are not possible. In practice, the areas shown to have views of the site will be significantly reduced by the presence of vegetation and built form in the landscape and townscape setting.

It is important to note that the smaller the site being assessed, the more red is likely to be apparent; based on the fact that it will be easier to see the whole of a small site, rather than seeing the whole of an existing urban area in one view. When considering larger sites therefore, the area shown as potentially having views (red to light blue) of a site is a more important consideration than the actual colour indicated.

As this is the first stage in assessing the principal impacts of development, detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment work would be required for the future masterplanning of the sites, including determining the provision of strategic planting and areas of open/green space.



Key landscape characteristics

The sweeping landscape within which the site sits provides an important open landscape within a dense townscape, apparent in many wider views, and providing opportunities for recreation. The area is crossed by a small stream to the north, and trees and hedgerows along historic footpath routes and old field boundaries, with a centrally placed copse. Trees define the top of the ridge to the south with glimpses of residential development perched at the top. The hedge along the northern boundary of the site provides an important green edge to Chickerell Road.

Key views of the site and interpretation of TZVIs

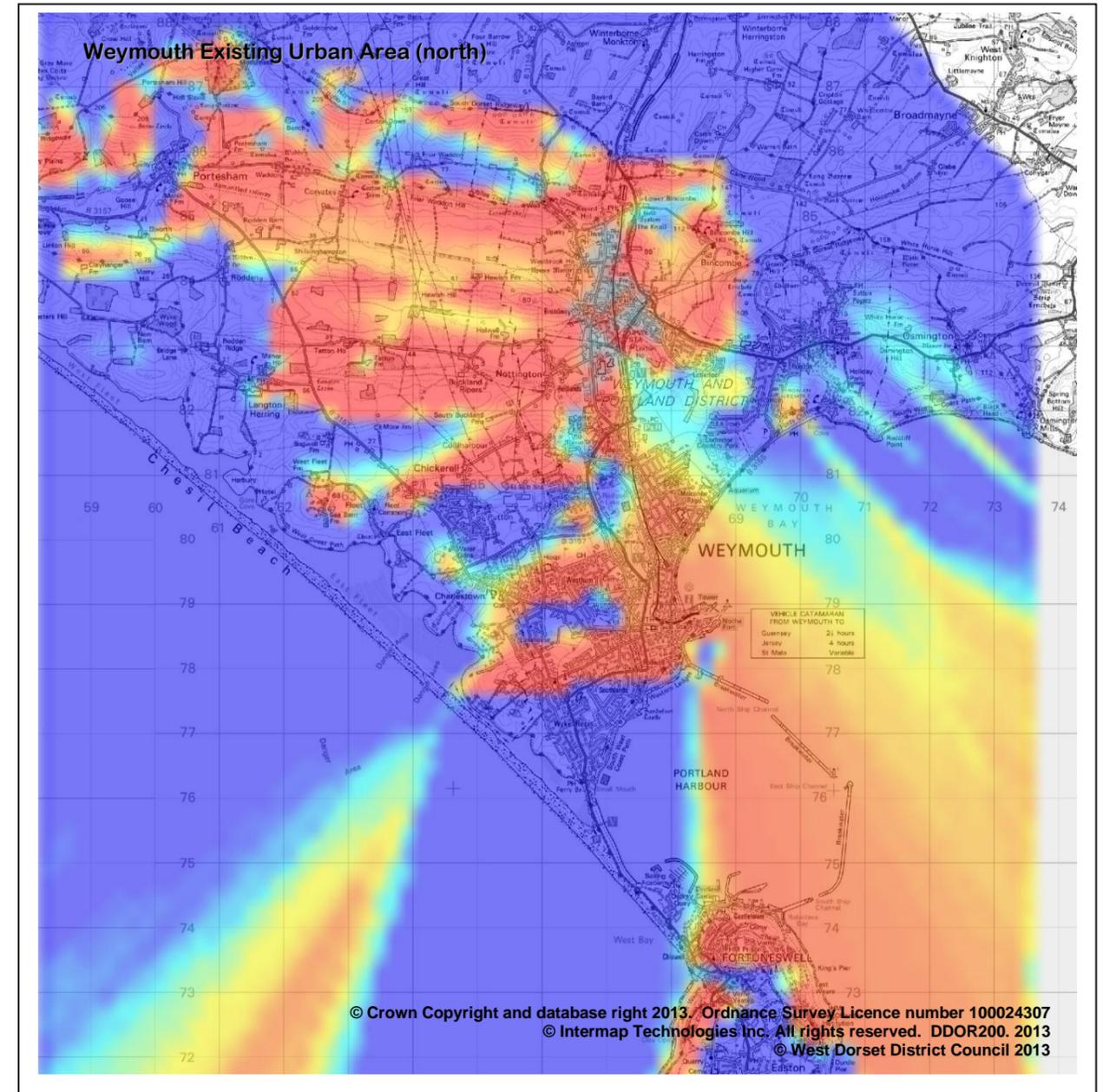
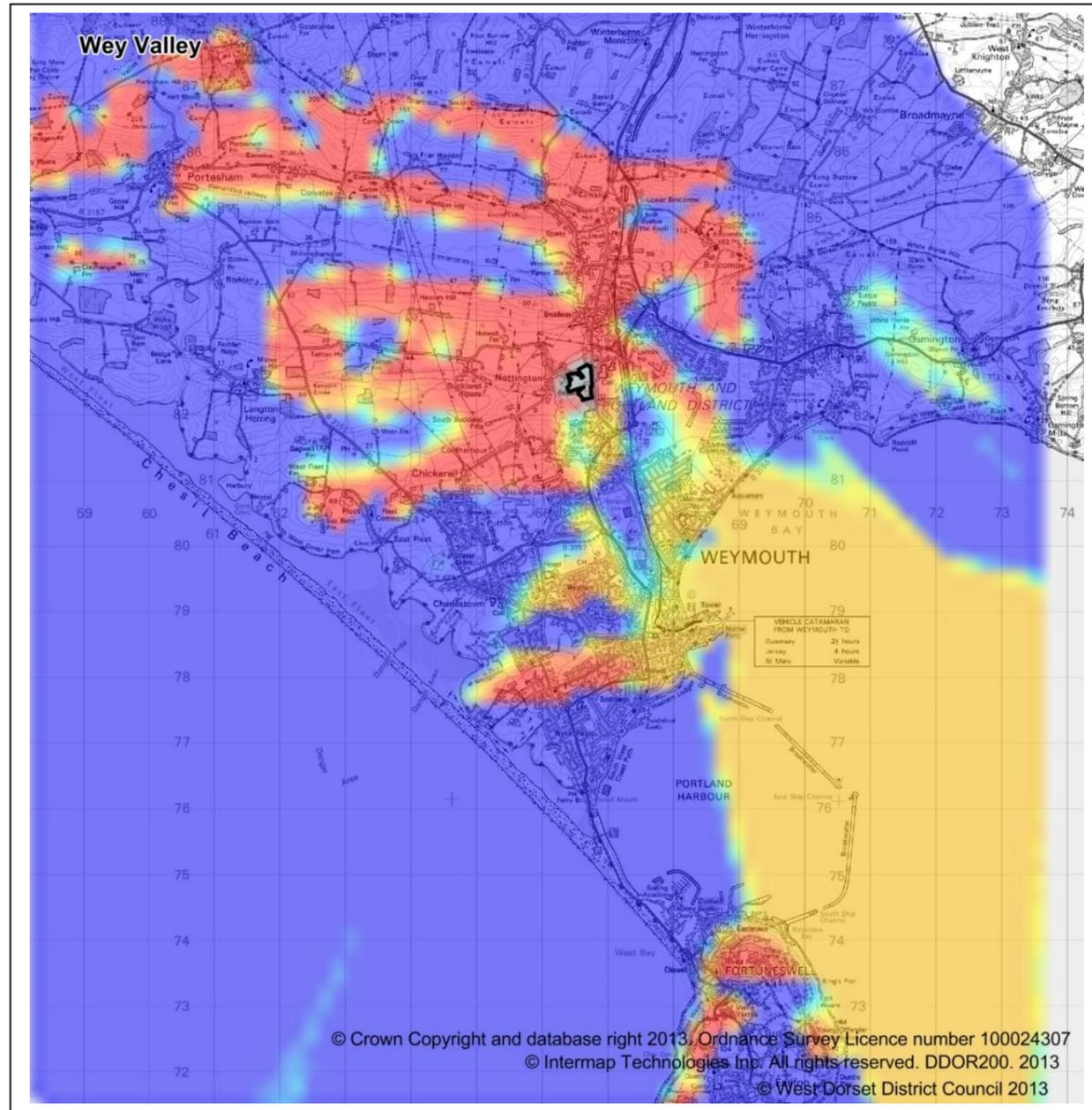
Locally significant views from the elevated open space to the south, and from adjacent near-by properties and roads. Wider views are likely to be available from the elevated landscape to the north, along the South Dorset Ridgeway, at Bincombe, above Lorton, and at Osmington, with the site seen in context with the urban surroundings.

The above TZVIs demonstrate that although views of the site would be available from the surrounding landscape, the site would be seen within the existing urban fabric of Weymouth. This visual impact is considered to be less significant than if the site were to be seen in isolation.

Conclusion & Suggested Mitigation

Development could be sensitively accommodated at this site without significant landscape and visual impacts, subject to the following mitigation measures:

- To preserve the green core in this area, development should not creep up onto highest ground towards the south of the site.
- Mitigation in the form of substantial buffer planting to locally significant viewpoints, and from the retained open space to the south would be necessary to reduce the local visual impacts of the development. The early implementation of a strategic landscape masterplan would be encouraged.
- The form and character, including appearance and scale of development should take cues from the adjacent urban areas, and any necessary infrastructure should be appropriate in scale and character to the residential scale of the surroundings.
- Maintenance of the retained open spaces would be key to securing the use and vitality of the open spaces into the future.



Key landscape characteristics

An undulating agricultural landscape broadly sloping from the east to the surrounding Wey River valley. Dense native hedgerows and woodland/copse vegetation break up the site, and efforts should be made in the design process to incorporate these landscape features. The site provides an important buffer between development on Dorchester Road, and the rural settlement at Nottingham; the character of the area as perceived from Nottingham and the rural landscape to the west should therefore be a key consideration.

Key views of the site and interpretation of TZVIs

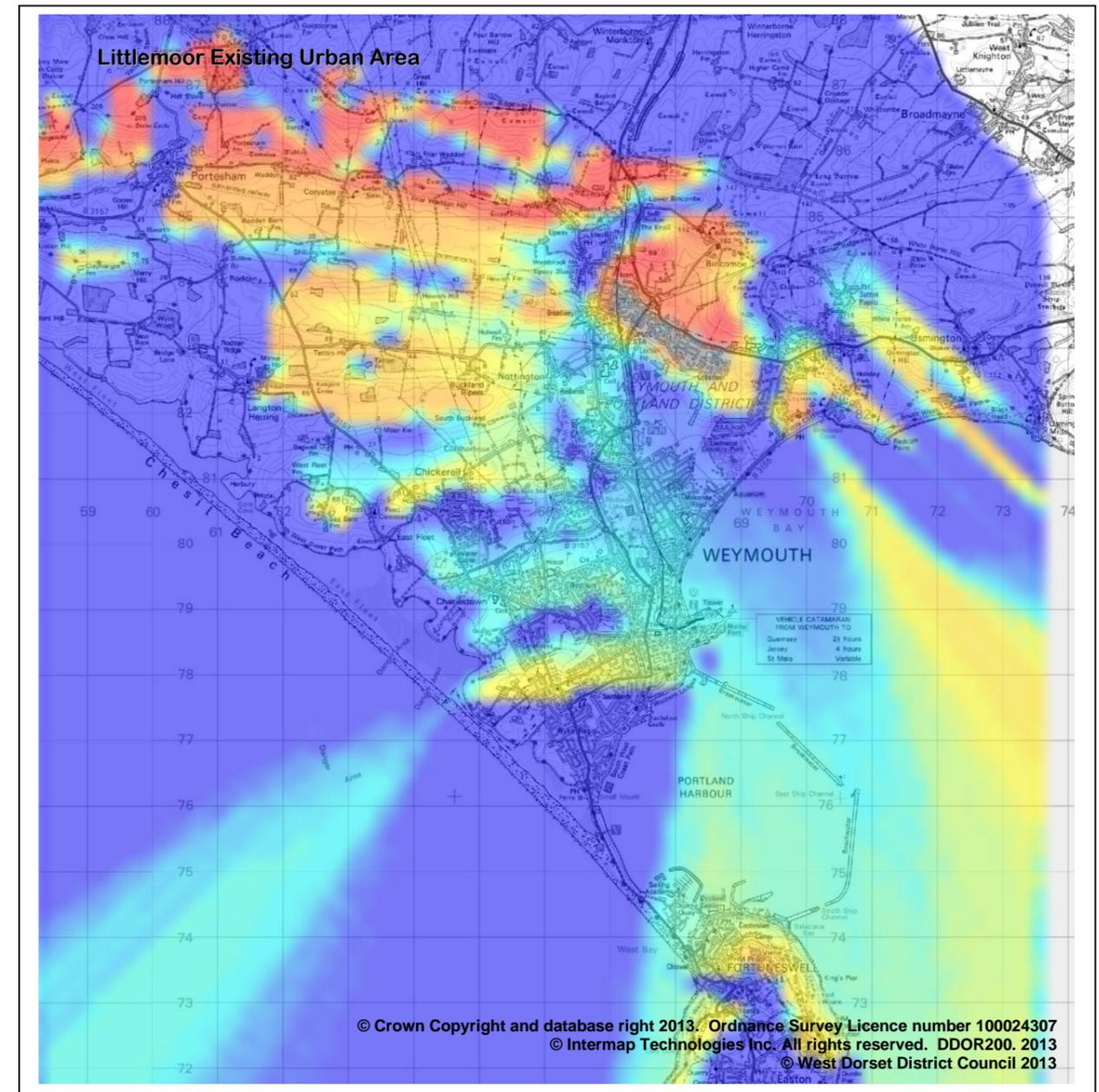
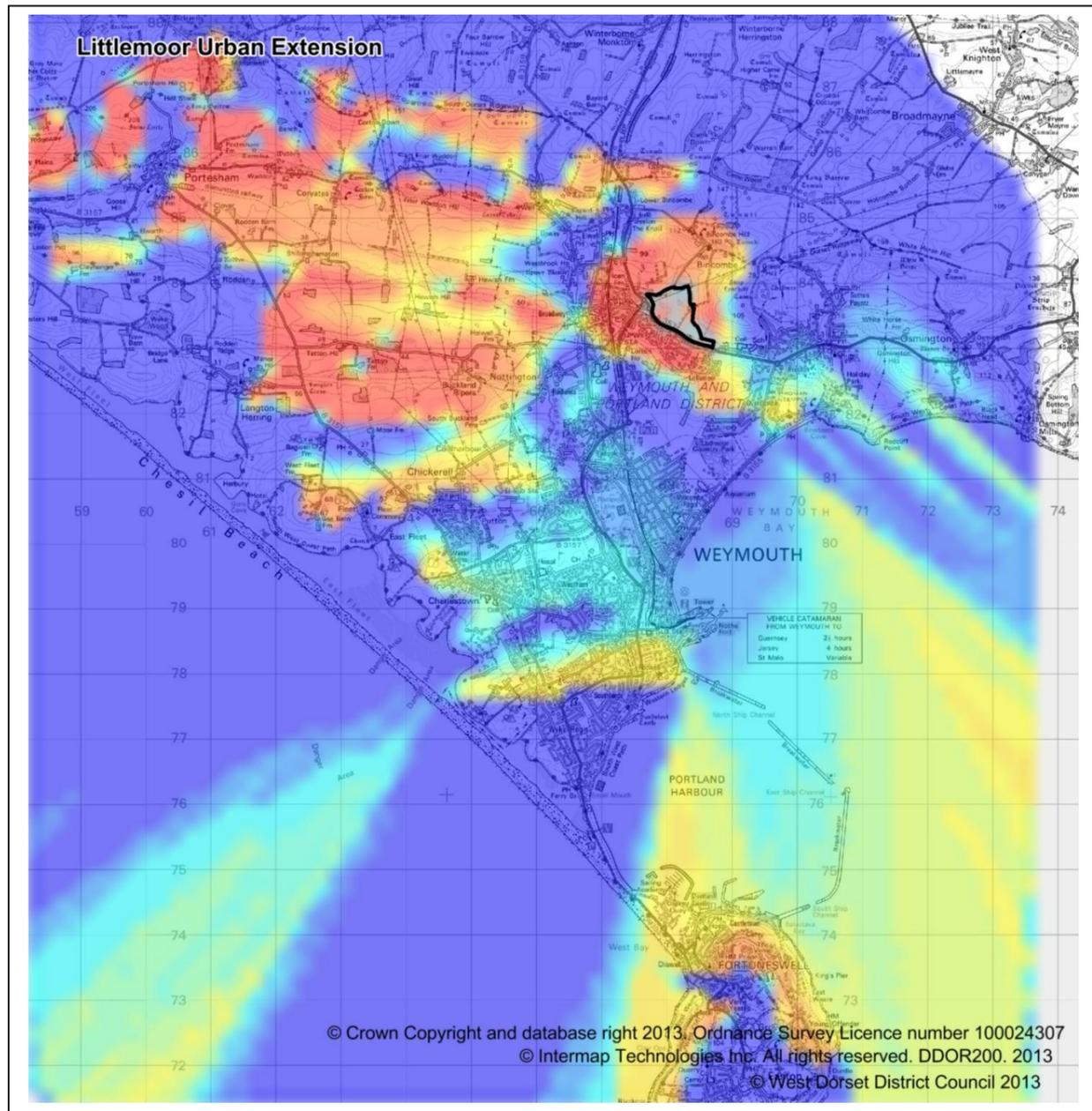
Overlooked by properties on Dorchester Road and at Nottingham Court, otherwise this site is locally well enclosed by existing vegetation. The ridge and vale landscape to the west will likely view a roofscape from higher ground, for example from footpaths at Higher Barn Farm, and Hewish Farm. Existing and new vegetation within the site will be important in breaking up the urban mass of development, and relating development to that on Dorchester Road. Wider views from the south Dorset Ridgeway would view the site alongside the urban form of Weymouth.

The above TZVIs demonstrate that although views of the site would be available from the surrounding landscape, the site would be seen within the existing urban fabric of Weymouth. This visual impact is considered to be less significant than if the site were to be seen in isolation.

Conclusion & Suggested Mitigation

Development could be sensitively accommodated at this site without significant landscape and visual impacts, subject to the following mitigation measures:

- Avoid development on the locally prominent higher undulations (e.g. to the south west of the site), and utilise existing screening provided by vegetation within and surrounding parts of the site.
- Careful consideration of the western extents of development would be necessary to ensure development doesn't creep onto the skyline when viewed from the low lying landscape in and around the Wey Valley.
- Landscape screening would be important to enclose the site to the north and west, where the approach to, and properties within Nottingham would experience close views of the site. The early implementation of a strategic landscape masterplan would be necessary.
- The form and character, including appearance and scale of development should take cues from the adjacent settlement edge to the east and the rural context, resulting in a well-associated urban extension.



Key landscape characteristics (site is within the AONB)

Large agricultural fields bounded by hedgerows gradually slope up to the north east, before rising steeply to form a ridge to the east. Ridgelines to the north and east are important features forming the landscape setting of this area. Urban influences include the adjacent hard settlement edge at Littlemoor, and pylons which pass the northern edge of the site. The Icen Lane approach is rural in character, with a distinctly different character to the urban-fringe character apparent towards the south west of the site.

Key views of the site and interpretation of TZVIs

Dwellings south of the site look directly onto the site area, and the road approaches from the south east and Icen Lane would form key gateways to the site. Wider views would be available from the South Dorset Ridgeway to the north west and north east, along with higher ground within the ridge and vale landscape to the west. The existing urban area at Littlemoor would provide a substantial built context in these wider views, provided that development did not encroach onto the more steeply sloping ground to the north east.

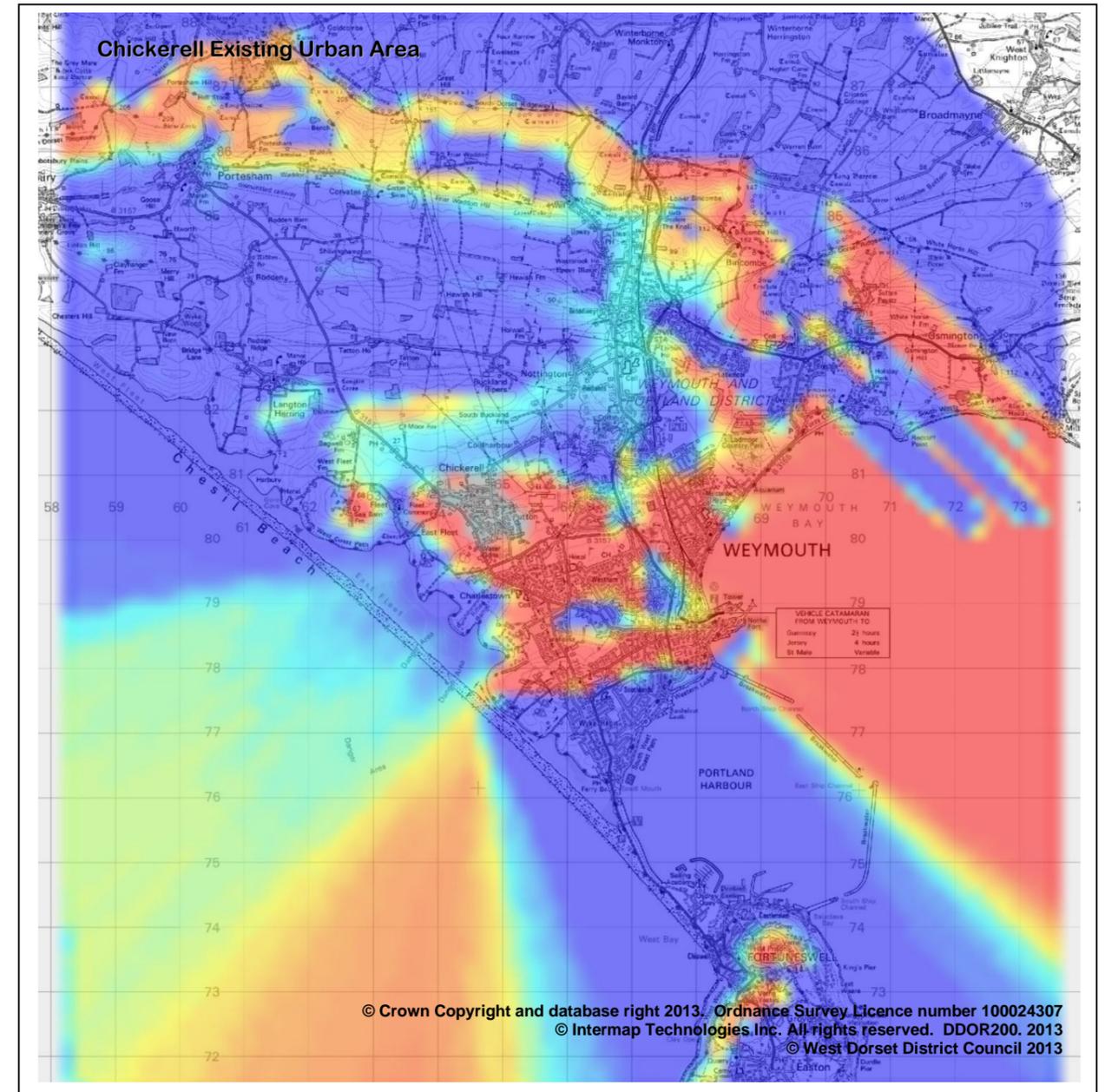
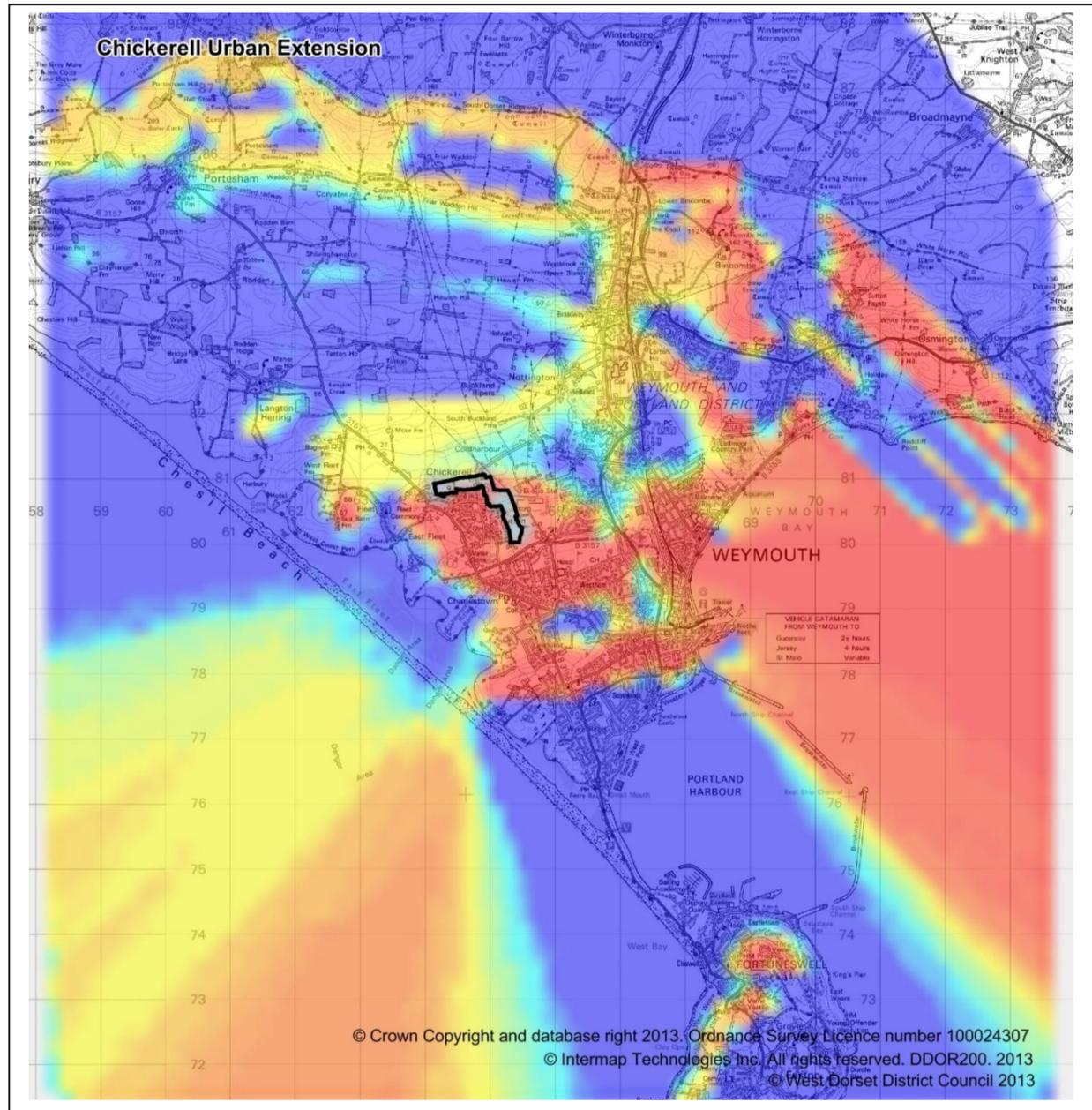
The above TZVIs demonstrate the potential for views of the site from the west (notably the ridgeline west of Hewish Hill and around Shilvinghampton) which would view the site without seeing it alongside the existing urban form at Littlemoor. This is as a result of the elevated nature of the north eastern portions of the site. The remainder of the site would be seen alongside the existing urban area at Littlemoor.

Conclusion & Suggested Mitigation

Development could be sensitively accommodated at this site without significant landscape and visual impacts, subject to the following mitigation measures:

- Avoiding development on the highest ground towards the north east of the site would limit wider visibility, particularly from the wider landscape to the west including the South Dorset Ridgeway.
- Pulling development back from the Icen Lane boundary would also help to retain the rural character of the lane.
- The design should carefully consider the visual impacts of development on medium-distance views to the north east, where extensive tree screen planting would be uncharacteristic of the open higher ground.
- The form and character, including appearance and scale of development should take positive cues from the adjacent settlement edge at Littlemoor to best associate the development across the new road.

Littlemoor Urban Extension, Littlemoor, Weymouth



Key landscape characteristics

Primarily agricultural land, the site forms part of the important open space separating the urban forms of Chickerell, Granby Industrial Estate, and Southill. Urban fringe land uses, large pylons, and a hard settlement edge at Chickerell degrade the landscape quality of the area, however a number of strong hedgerows border and cross the site. A number of footpaths cross the eastern site, with one in the northern area connecting to the wider landscape to the north.

Key views of the site and interpretation of TZVIs

The northern boundary has the most potential for significant visual impacts, where development may encroach onto the skyline in lower level views from the valley to the north. The northern extents of the site should be subject to detailed visual impact work to avoid this situation. Local views would be available from the B3157, adjacent dwellings, and footpaths passing through and adjacent to the site. Wider views of the site are likely to be available from the South Dorset Ridgeway to the north, Bincombe, and Osmington, however in each of these, new development would be viewed in close association with the existing urban form of Chickerell.

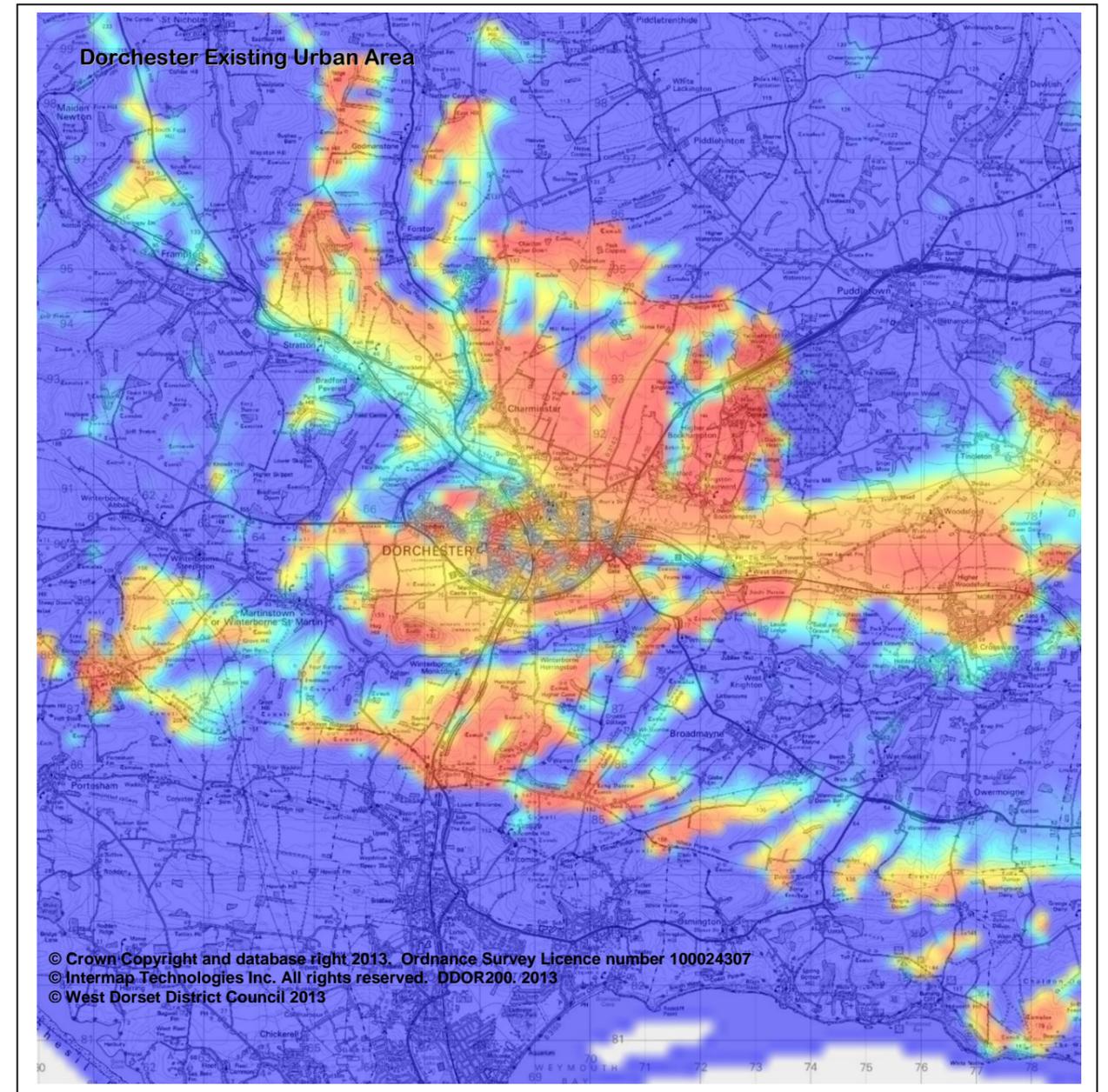
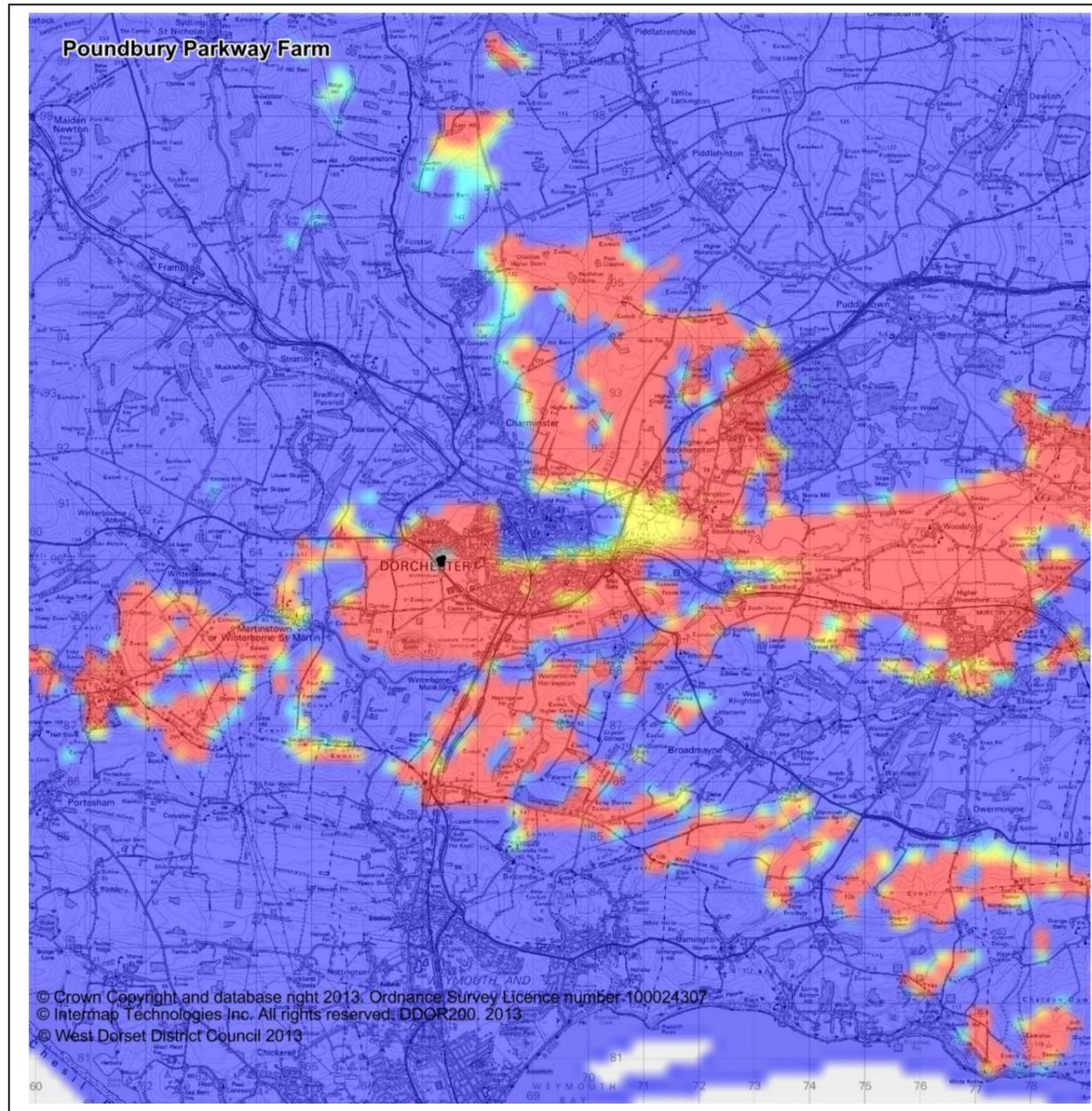
The TZVIs above demonstrate the potential for localised views of the northern edge of the site, in which development would appear isolated from existing development at Chickerell. The remainder of the site would be seen in close association with the existing urban area at Chickerell.

Conclusion & Suggested Mitigation

Development could be sensitively accommodated at this site without significant landscape and visual impacts, subject to the following mitigation measures:

- Careful consideration of the northern extents of development would be necessary to avoid the introduction of skyline development in local-medium distance views from the north.
- Strategic planting to the northern and eastern boundaries would be required to form strong visual containment of the site, and improve the landscape character of the open space separating Chickerell and Southill, with early implementation of a strategic landscape masterplan.
- Linked green spaces within the site, including substantial areas to the south of the site should be created preserve the key public footpath links to the surrounding countryside and preserve the separation between Chickerell and the Granby Industrial Estate.
- The form and character, including appearance and scale of development should take cues from the adjacent settlement edge of Chickerell.

Chickerell Urban Extension, Chickerell



Key landscape characteristics

An enclosed site at a lower level than the existing development to the north, and currently used as a community farm. The site is bordered by existing employment uses to the north, and a small copse off the A35 to the south. The eastern boundary is formed by the A35 bund and planting, and the western by a hedgerow. Being a small site enclosed by the A35, the site is read as part of the Poundbury development area.

Key views of the site and interpretation of TZVIs

Local visibility would be limited by existing uses to the north, and by the bund, copse, and screening planting around the A35 to the south and east. Adjacent views would be available from the series of new countryside links in this area, provided in accordance in conditions attached to the outline permission for Poundbury Ph. 3 & 4. Wider views from the upper ramparts of Maiden Castle are likely to be the most significant views, along with wider panoramas from the South Dorset Ridgeway. Within the A35 and in close association with existing employment uses and the urban area of Poundbury, development here could have minimal landscape and visual impacts.

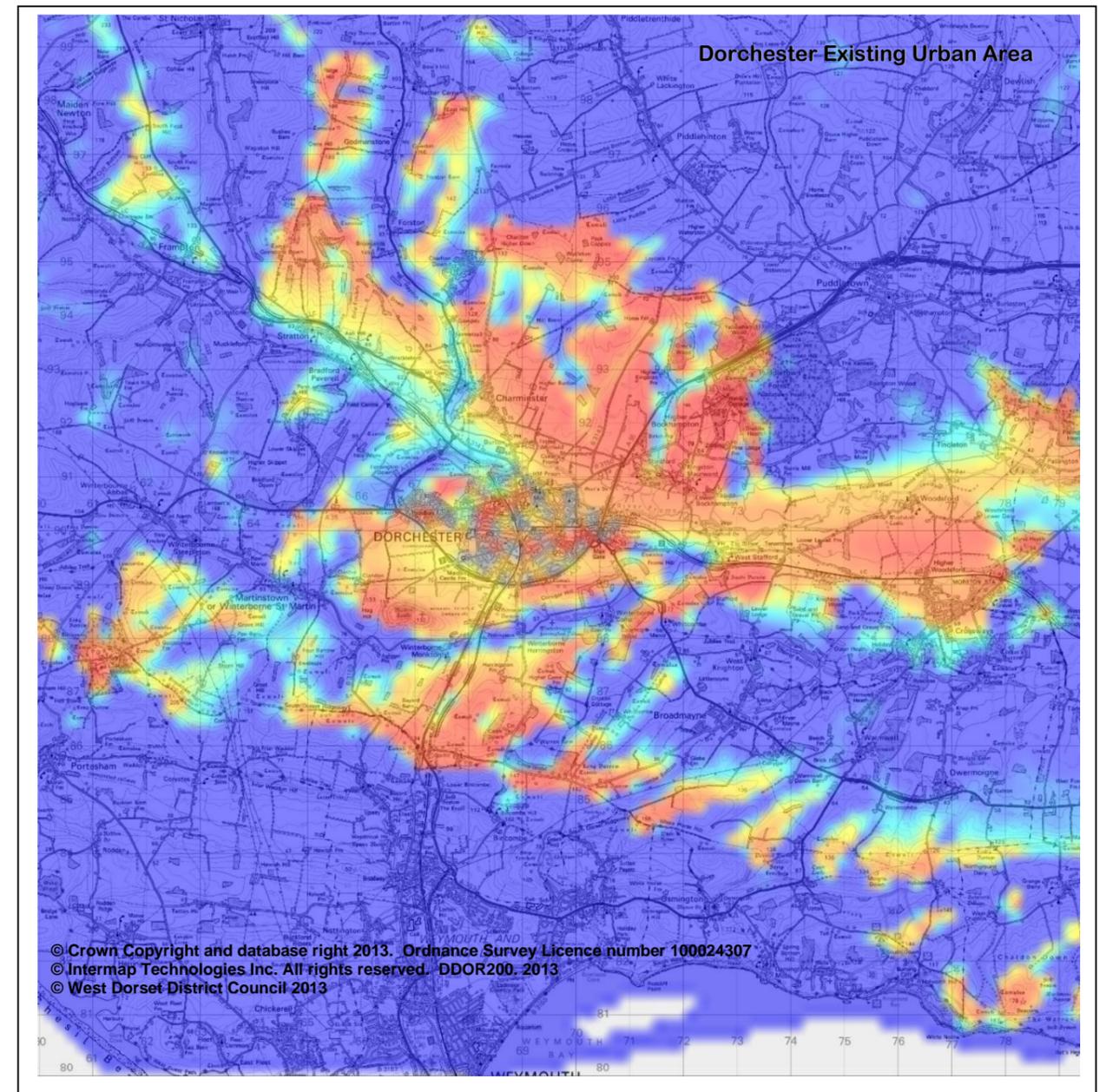
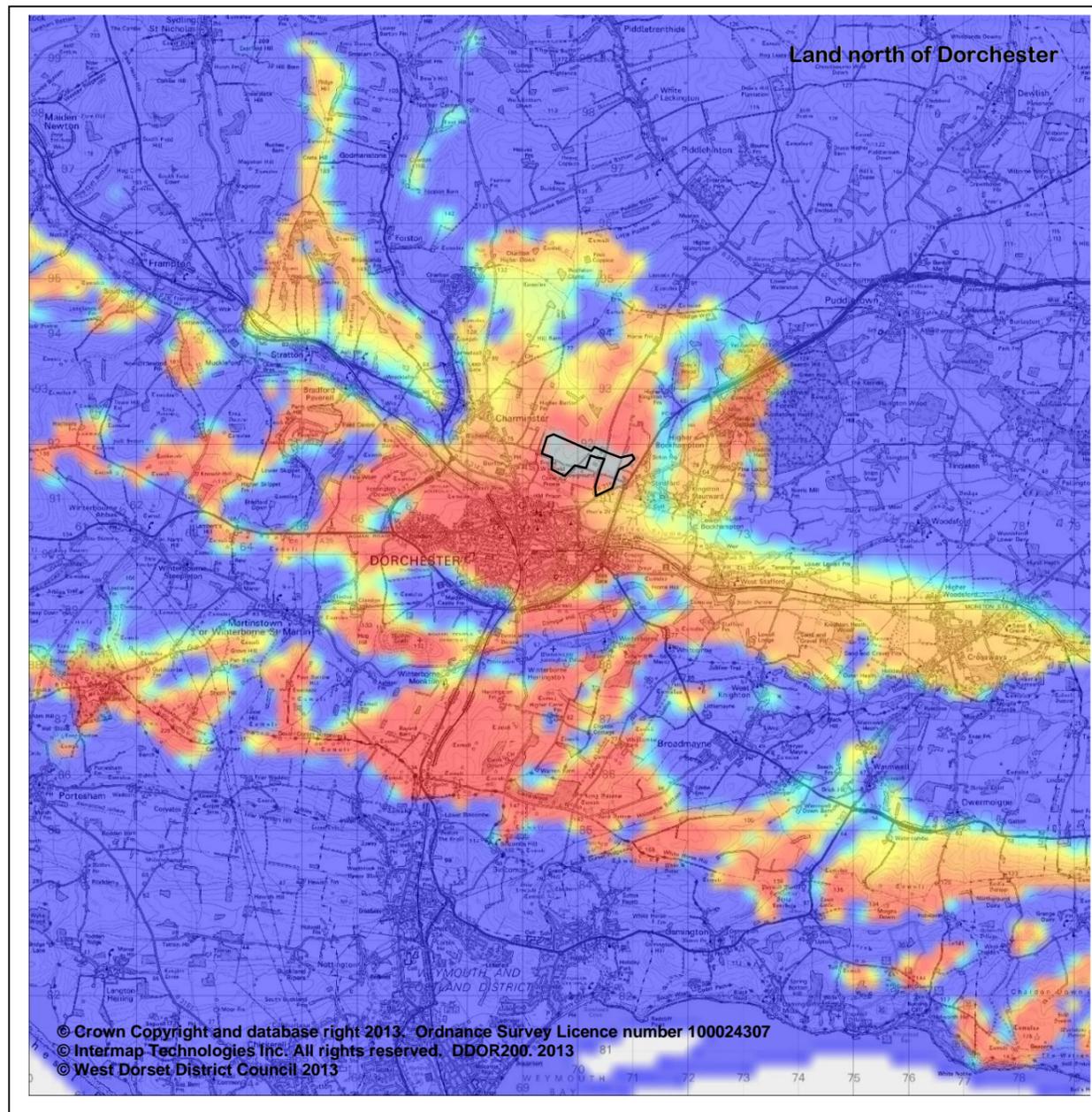
As this is a small site, the TZVI appears predominantly red in comparison to the adjacent mapping for the urban area of Dorchester (the whole of the smaller site is more likely to be visible in a view than the whole of Dorchester). However, site would be seen within the existing urban fabric of Dorchester, and is therefore not considered to have significant visual impacts.

Conclusion & Suggested Mitigation

Development could be sensitively accommodated at this site without significant landscape and visual impacts, subject to the following mitigation measures:

- Ongoing management and strengthening of the western boundary, and strengthening the southern boundary planting where there is currently a dip in the bund would provide effective screening from the A35 and low-level views to the south and west.
- The scale and appearance of new development here would be key to its successful integration into the existing development pattern. Low-lying employment uses should be used, to retain the low profile of the land and development in this corner. Design cues should be taken from the adjacent employment uses.
- A high quality public realm should be provided, with particular attention to the countryside links routes through and around the site.

Poundbury Parkway Farm Business Park extension, Dorchester



Key landscape characteristics

The site is comprised of medium-large agricultural fields sloping gently towards the south and centre of the site. The fields are bounded by hedgerows with occasional hedgerow and parkland trees, and often form an undeveloped skyline in local views. The site is consistently open and rural in character with limited urban influence, with Dorchester’s urban area visible c. 0.5km to south.

Key views of the site and interpretation of TZVIs

Immediately adjacent public footpaths and the local rural lane network pass through and adjacent to the site, with close proximity views of the site in isolation from other development. Middle distance views from Maiden Castle and the A35 would view the site in context with the urban form of Dorchester, but from wider elevated views from the South Dorset Ridgeway notably at Osmington, the site is likely to form a large and isolated new area of development.

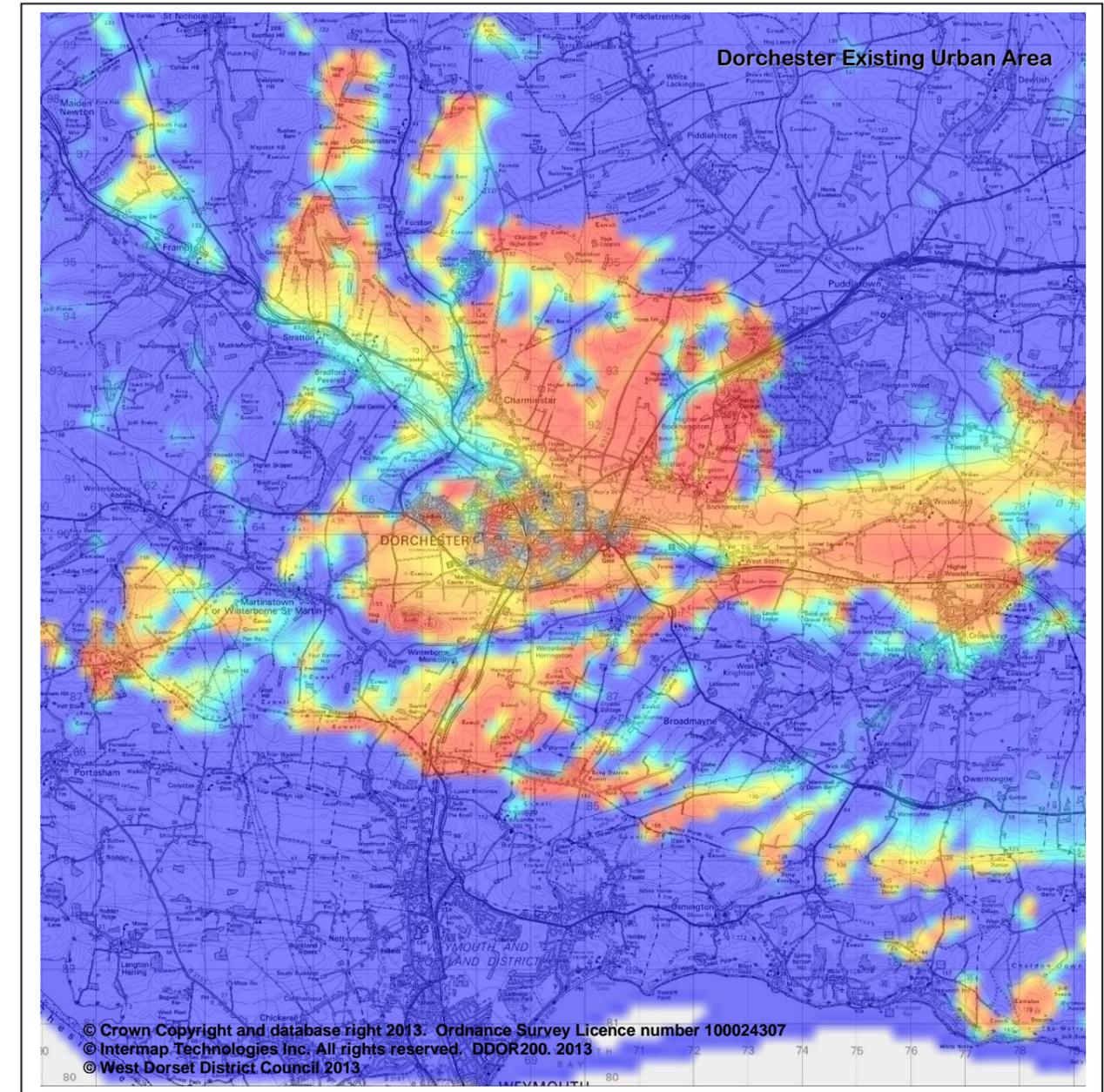
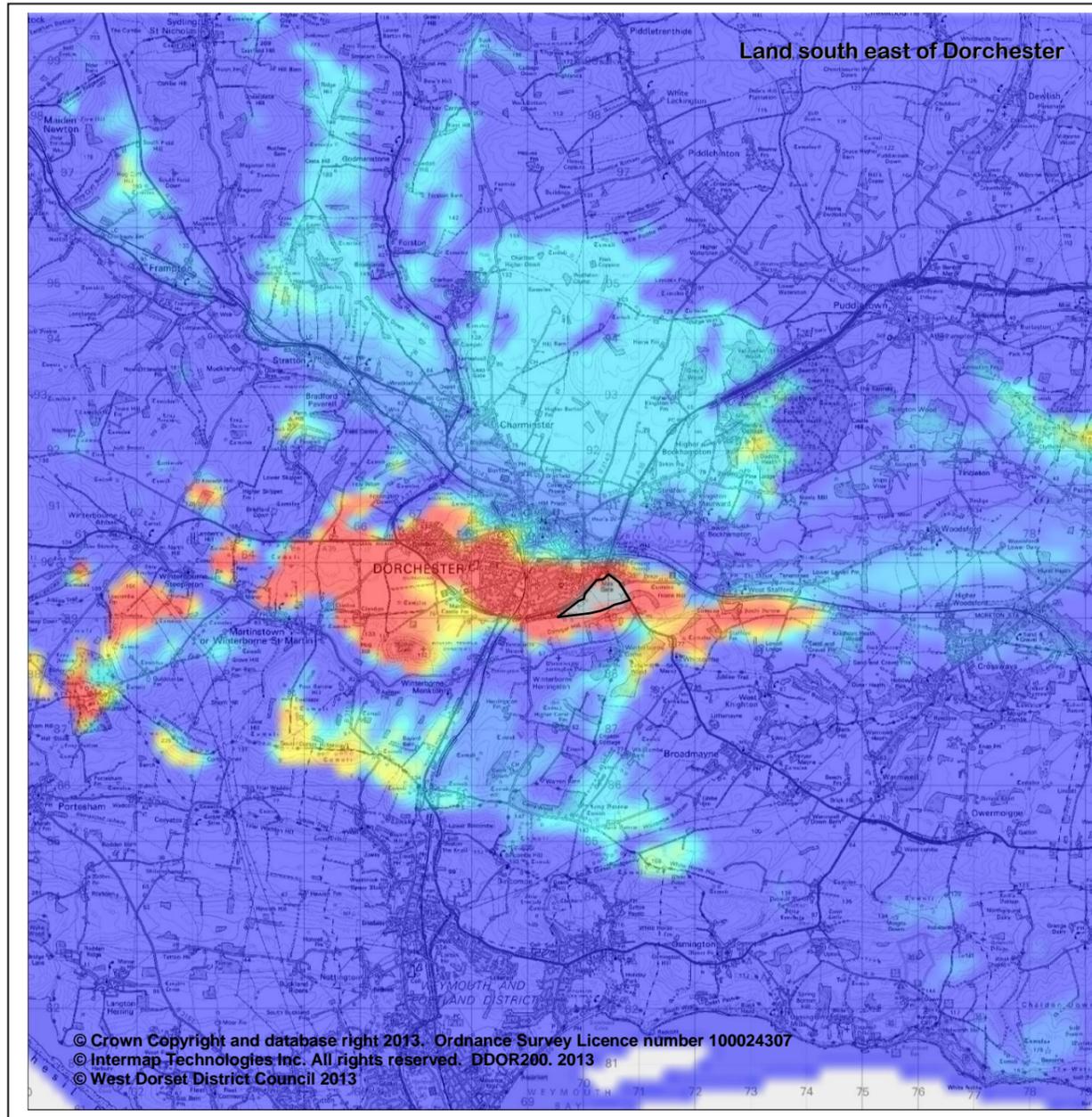
The TZVIs above demonstrate the high potential for views of the site with little or no visibility of development in Dorchester. This is notable in nearby pockets of the landscape to the north of the site, and the elevated ground to the west of Dorchester. This would result in a visually isolated development with significant visual impacts.

Conclusion & Suggested Mitigation

The isolation of the site from the urban form of Dorchester is considered to result in potentially significant landscape and visual impacts. The following measures would reduce, but not mitigate these impacts:

- Avoid development on the highest and more open areas of the landscape to reduce the degree to which the local skyline would be dominated by development (this would significantly limit the developable area).
- Strategic planting around and within the site would be required, to form the character of a settlement amongst trees as present at Charlton Down and Charminster, with early implementation of a strategic landscape masterplan. A naturalistic form of landscaping avoiding "shelterbelt" planting would be most appropriate.
- Linked green spaces within the site, including substantial areas to the south of the site should be created preserve the key public footpath links to the surrounding countryside.

Land north of Dorchester, Dorchester



Key landscape characteristics

The site is comprised of gently sloping arable fields forming a bowl to the north, and rising to an elevated ridgeline to the south east. The A35 and the urban edge of Dorchester lie to the north west, with development at Came View overlooking the site to the north. Hedgerows border and pass through the site, with a small copse to the north east. An extensive and open character is apparent at the south eastern ridge, with an enclosed character to the centre of the site due to topography and vegetation surrounding the A35. The A35 is an urban influence, and results in a feeling of separation of the site from the main urban form of Dorchester.

Key views of the site and interpretation of TZVIs

Local open views would be available from the adjacent road network and public rights of way passing through and close to the site, along with dwellings at Came View. Medium distance views would be largely limited by topography and vegetation on the ridgeline to the south. Wider views of the northern edge of the site would likely be available from the elevated landscape to the south and south west, including Maiden Castle and the Hardy Monument, however the site would be read in context with the large urban form of Dorchester.

The TZVIs above demonstrate that although views of the site would be available from the surrounding landscape, the site would be seen alongside the existing urban fabric of Dorchester. A small area to the north east of the site would view the site in isolation, and would need to be subject to mitigation.

Conclusion & Suggested Mitigation

Development could be sensitively accommodated at this site without significant landscape and visual impacts, subject to the following mitigation measures:

- Avoiding development on the highest ground towards the south east of the site would be necessary to limit wider visibility and preserve the landscape setting of Dorchester.
- Strategic planting around and within the site would be required to create a character of built form set amongst a tree canopy as currently present on the southern edge of Dorchester, and mitigate views from the adjacent road network. The north eastern edge and western corner are the weakest areas in terms of enclosure, and should be well supplemented with new landscape planting, with early implementation of a strategic landscape masterplan.
- Linked green spaces within the site should be created preserve the key public footpath links to the surrounding countryside.
- Development should secure character and appearance improvements to the local highway network, notably to the northern corner.

Land south east of Dorchester, Dorchester