

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

MILTON ABBAS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Prepared by Dorset Planning Consultant Limited on behalf of Milton Abbas Council

JUNE 2019

including November 2019 submission stage addendum

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This is the non-technical summary of the environmental report (the Strategic Environmental Assessment) for the Milton Abbas Neighbourhood Plan. The report was prepared by Jo Witherden BSc(Hons) DipTP DipUD MRTPI of Dorset Planning Consultant Ltd, based on the pre-submission version of the plan. It may be updated if significant amendments to the plan are proposed or in response to comments received as part of the pre-submission consultation.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment is required to accompany Neighbourhood Plans where it is considered that the plan could give rise to a significant environmental effect, taking into account the content of the plan, its relation to other plans and projects, and the environmental sensitivity of the area. Amongst other things, it must set out the likely significant effects of the Plan on the environment, the measures envisaged to prevent / reduce / offset any significant adverse environmental effects, and how any reasonable alternatives were assessed and compare to the Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan covers the Milton Abbas Neighbourhood Plan area, which follows the parish boundary. There are environmental issues identified for the area, including:

- Higher Houghton SSSI to the north-east of the plan area when last assessed was largely in an unfavourable but recovering condition.
- There are elevated levels of phosphates in the Bere Stream resulting from agricultural and waste water which are adversely impacting on its condition and also nutrient enrichment of the intertidal and saltmarsh areas within Holes Bay is also causing significant adverse impacts to the Poole Harbour SSSI (also SPA and Ramsar site).
- Most of the plan area lies within a nationally important landscape (the Dorset AONB). A number of detrimental features are noted, primarily related to unsympathetic leylandii and conifer planting, signage along the rural lanes and urban fringe land use and horse pastures around settlements.
- There are two heritage assets currently on the 'at risk' register: The Stable Barrow 230m NNE of Frogmore Farm due to cultivation (arable ploughing), and the Grade I Abbey Church of St Mary (although this is noted as being repaired work). Incremental harmful development within the Conservation Area of the Street lead to an Article 4 direction being imposed in 2014.
- Although there are limited flood risk areas within the Neighbourhood Plan area, there is the risk of sewer flooding (potentially impacting on properties outside of the Neighbourhood Plan area).
- any such development will inevitably give rise to further trips by car (given that public transport is poor).

The Plan's vision is to meet the local housing needs of Milton Abbas in a positive way that is appreciative of our unique landscape, heritage, distinctive rural features and residents. It allocates land across 4 sites around the village that in total should provide for about 20-22 dwellings plus a visitor centre, and acknowledges there may well be further homes developed through rural building conversions. It also contains policies to ensure locally important features are protected and that design of new building is appropriate to the character of the area and the needs identified.

Having understood the likely scope of the Plan, and reviewed the environmental characteristics and issues relating to the area and the objectives contained in overarching plans and programmes for the area (including international, national and more locally focussed documents), the following objectives were identified to inform the Plan's assessment:

Objective	Assessment basis
Biodiversity, fauna & flora - Ensure no ecological interests would be harmed, and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	Will development impact on nature conservation designations and is there likely to be protected species / habitats on site, or potential for enhancement?
Landscape - Ensure development respects and reinforces the area's rural landscapes and character	Is development likely to be visible in public views and to what extent, does it contain local landscape features that could be harmed, or provide potential enhancements through the removal or screening of detrimental features?
Cultural heritage - Protect the area's heritage assets, and where opportunities arise, enhance the historic character of the area	Is development likely to harm existing heritage designations (including their setting) and what impact would this have on their significance? Are there opportunities to better improve our understanding and appreciation of the area's heritage?
Climate change (flood risk) - Reduce flood risk	Is development proposed in proximity to existing flood risk zones, and would it give rise to increased flood risk off-site?
Soil, water & air pollution - Ensure development does not result in an unacceptable risk of pollution	Is there any local knowledge of contamination where development is planned, and could the development give rise to groundwater pollution?
Meeting local needs - Provide housing, employment and community facilities to help meet local needs	How much housing could be provided (or might be lost) through the sites; development, including affordable homes, and would the development provide or support new jobs or community facilities?
Safe and accessible - Ensure safe access and a pedestrian-friendly environment	Is development safe and accessible, and what potential is there for future occupiers to access community facilities and employment areas by sustainable modes of transport?

The Plan's objectives (vision and goals) were first tested against the strategic environmental assessment objectives, which highlighted that further testing would be required as the impacts were very much dependent on where development was proposed and whether the plan might also stop development where it may be needed.

Potential site options were identified from a call for sites undertaken in October 2018. The sites put forward by landowners were assessed independently by AECOM (an independent planning consultancy), which highlighted those sites which were largely free from constraints, those sites where there were some constraints which may be possible to overcome, and those sites with significant constraints which should preclude development. As the indicative number of dwellings that could be potentially accommodated by all sites (regardless of their merits) was in excess of 150 dwellings, and the housing need identified (and agreed by the Local Planning Authority as appropriate) was in the region of 20 dwellings, it was considered reasonable to focus on those sites which did not have significant constraints.

The sites identified for more detail assessment (ie those without significant constraints) were then subject to further ecological, heritage, highway access and contaminated land checks, with information supplied by independent technical experts in these subject areas. Where large sites had been submitted for assessment, more limited site areas were also considered to see if this would overcome potential harm identified, and the scores in this assessment reflect the reduced site areas that would result (which was considered appropriate given the limited number of homes needed).

The cumulative and other effects of the Plan's policies were also considered. The following table helps identify the impacts of the Plan's policies, including combined impacts, alongside the reasonable alternatives.

Environmental assessment objective	Biodiversity, fauna & flora	Landscape	Cultural heritage	Climate change (flood risk)	Soil, water & air pollution	Meeting local needs	Safe and accessible
Policies							
MA1: Spatial Strategy (allocations plus conversions ⇒ at least 20 new homes)	x/-	-	x/-	x/-	-	✓✓	-
MA2: Low Housing Density (net building densities should not exceed 15 dph)	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	*	x/-
MA3: The Pattern of Development and Streetscape (respect local character)	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	-
MA4: Building Design (a rural village character with sufficient living space)	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-
MA5: Important Views	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	-
MA6: Local Green Spaces	✓	-	✓	-	-	-	-
MA7: Dark Skies	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-
MA8: Parking (a minimum of 2 car parking spaces plus provision for visitors)	-	-	-	✓	-	-	✓
MA9: Affordable and Local Housing (⇒ affordable and age-accessible homes)	-	-	-	-	-	✓✓	-
MA10: Site 5: Land at Langham Farm (eastern section adjoining the road)	x/-	-	-	x/-	-	✓/✓✓	x/-
MA11: Site 6: Land at Catherine's Well (west of the allotments)	x/-	x/-	x/-	x/-	-	✓✓	✓
MA12: Site 8: Land at Catherine's Well (east of Hill House Bungalows)	x/-	-	x/-	-	-	✓	x/-
MA13: Site 10: Land at Windmill Clump (north of the telephone exchange)	x/-	x/-	x/-	-	-	✓✓	x/-
Reasonable alternatives considered	<i>NB scores based on reduced site size</i>						
ALT1: Site 7: Land at Catherine's Well (east of the Blandford Road (C31))	x/-	x/-	x/-	-	-	✓✓	x/-
ALT2: Site 12: Land at Catherine's Well (west of Athelstan Way)	x/-	x/-	xx/x	-	-	✓/✓✓	x/-

The site allocations included in the Plan (Sites 5, 6, 8 and 10) can be compared to the rejected reasonable alternatives (Sites 7 and 12). The rejection of Site 12 is considered appropriate given the greater heritage impacts. The rejection of Site 7 is considered reasonable at this stage given the level of housing need identified and that the main alternative (Site 6) has additional benefits in that it would result in a higher proportion of affordable homes and additional parking for the surgery and recreation area, and Site 10 provides long-term economic benefits with the provision of a visitor centre as part of the site's development, and the other alternative sites (Site 5 and 8) included in the

Plan are not markedly different to site 7 in sustainability terms. So, in short, the alternative options would have a similar or potentially greater level of harm and there is no obvious reason why these should be used instead.

This assessment also indicates that, overall, the adverse impacts of the Plan are likely to be balanced or outweighed by positive impacts, with the most positive impacts likely to be related to meeting local needs. Although the sites that are allocated may result in some minor adverse impacts on the environment, these impacts can largely be mitigated through criteria contained in the policy wording which ensures that the issues are addressed in the detailed planning stage.

In conclusion, there are no likely significant adverse impacts identified as a result of the assessment of plan's objectives and proposed policies. The main significant impact identified is in terms of the positive impact of meeting local housing needs, which is proposed to be monitored.

November 2019 Addendum:

This report was consulted on at the same time as the pre-submission draft of the Neighbourhood Plan. There were no specific comments on the report itself from Historic England, Natural England or the Environment Agency. However although not commenting on the SEA, the Dorset AONB team did raise landscape impact concerns in respect of Sites 5 and 10. In addition, Terence O'Rourke queried the justification for rejecting site 7 on behalf of Gleeson Strategic Land.

These comments were considered and Jo Witherden of Dorset Planning Consultant Limited met with Sarah Barber (representing the Dorset AONB team) at Milton Abbas.

With respect to Site 5 (Policy MA10), the AONB response raised concerns about the northward extension and that this would fail to conserve the tight knit pattern of the village and breach the existing settlement boundary. As a result, changes have been made to the policy and the defined development area to address these concerns as far as possible. The capacity on site 6 (Policy MA11) has been increased to 15 in response to the AONB suggestion in this regard.

With respect to Site 7, the AONB representative confirmed that they had raised a strong objection to the development of the site (in relation to Gleeson's outline application for the erection of up to 58 dwellings ref: 2019/0824/OUT). Natural England's comments on that application (dated 22/11/19) confirmed that "Natural England are unable to support the application as submitted subject to reviewing evidence that the development passes the sequential test for a major development within a protected landscape identified in the National Planning Policy Framework" in addition to identifying the need to mitigate for a reduction in a Greater Horseshoe Bats foraging area and biodiversity loss. An objection had also been raised by the Conservation Officer (dated 11/10/19) on the basis that it would "erode the natural character of the Conservation Area gateway and edge of village character [and] dilute the existing separation given to the Grade II Milton Manor from the village setting." The AONB representative indicated that they would be unlikely to support a reduced scheme in this location.

The decision was taken to remove Site 10 (Policy MA13), given the lack of evidence with regard to the visitor centre project's feasibility, and increase the number of homes on site 6 (Policy MA6) to up to 15 dwellings (as advised as likely to be acceptable by the AONB team).

The above changes to Policies MA10, MA11 and deletion of MA13, together with the other minor changes made in response to consultee comments on the plan, are not considered to change the overall conclusions in this report.

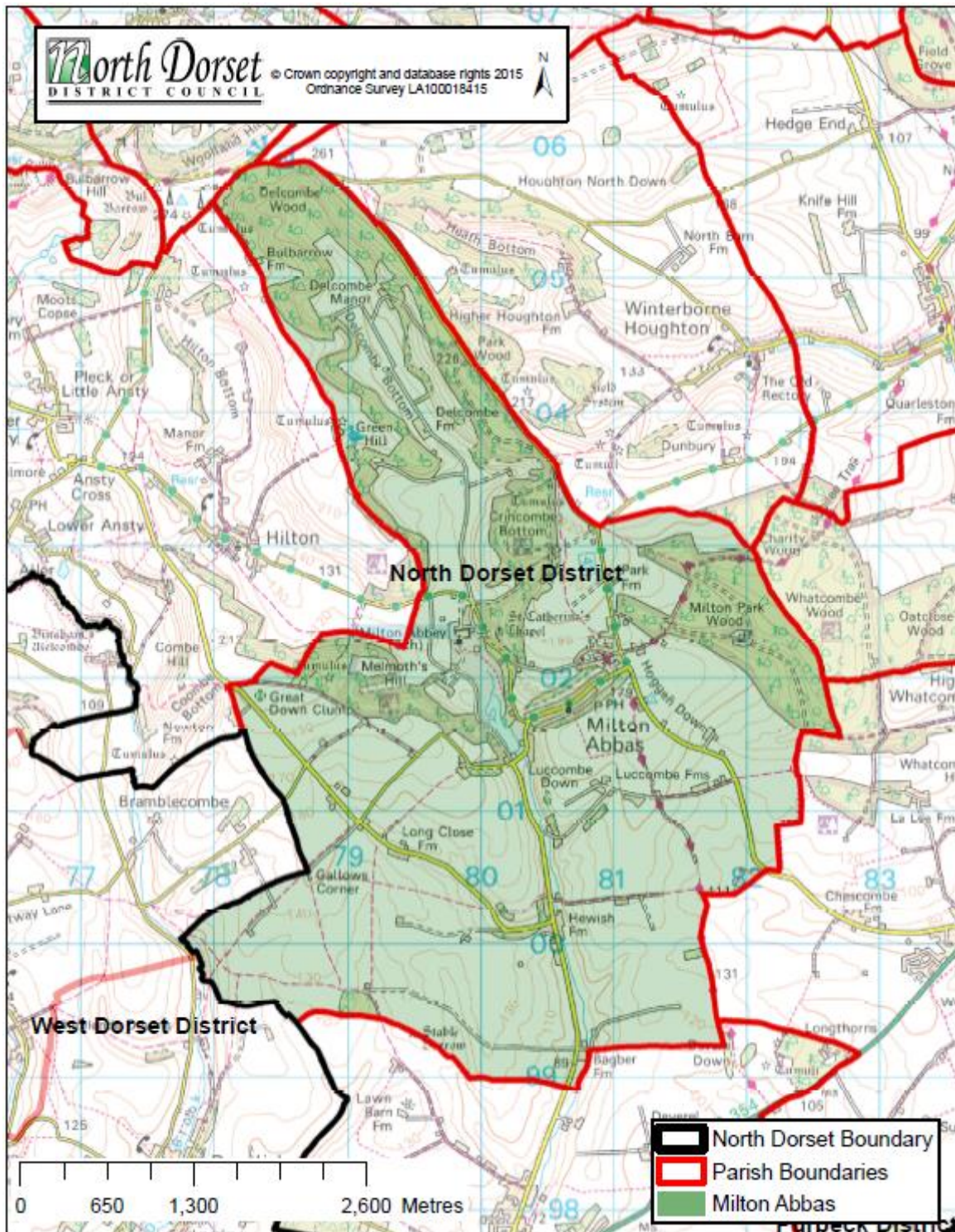
Consideration should be given to the findings of this report in deciding on the contents of the final Neighbourhood Plan.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This environmental report has been prepared by Jo Witherden BSc(Hons) DipTP DipUD MRTPI of Dorset Planning Consultant Ltd, on behalf of Milton Abbas Parish Council. The Parish Council is the qualifying body authorised to act in preparing a neighbourhood development plan for the Milton Abbas Neighbourhood Plan area.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

1.2 The Milton Abbas Neighbourhood Plan area was designated by North Dorset District Council on 19 September 2015. It follows the parish boundary, as shown in the following map.



LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

1.3 Government guidance¹ recognises that where a neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, it may require a strategic environmental assessment in accordance with the SEA Directive².

1.4 There are other European directives that may also be of relevance to neighbourhood plans, such as **Directive 92/43/EEC** on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora and **Directive 2009/147/EC** on the conservation of wild birds (often referred to as the Habitats and Wild Birds Directives respectively) which aim to protect and improve Europe's most important habitats and species. The Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC), Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC) or the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) may apply in particular circumstances.

1.5 Draft neighbourhood plan proposals should therefore be assessed at a reasonably early stage to determine whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. A "screening" assessment is the process for doing this, and the process for this is outlined in **Appendix 1**. If likely significant environmental effects are identified, an environmental report must be prepared³.

1.6 Once a decision has been taken that an SEA is required, it is necessary to consult on its scope with Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency. The legislation makes clear that they should respond within 5 weeks. Their responses have to be considered and should shape the scope of the final environmental report.

1.7 The next steps are the testing of any reasonable alternative options and the preparation of the environmental report. The significance of environmental effects that are likely to arise from the pre-submission draft neighbourhood plan are evaluated against objectives based on the issues raised through screening and scoping, and compared to the likely effects of any reasonable alternatives that have been identified. Suggestions for mitigation and techniques for monitoring policies are also made.

1.8 The environmental report is then published for consultation alongside the pre-submission draft Neighbourhood Plan if this is possible. Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency have to be consulted.

1.9 The process as described above is outlined in **Appendix 2**.

MEETING THE SEA DIRECTIVE REQUIREMENTS

1.10 The table below identifies how the various parts of this environmental report address the requirements of the Directive.

Directive Requirements	Where covered
A non-technical summary	Front
An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	Sections 4 and 6
The environmental characteristics of the area (particularly those areas that could be significantly affected by the plan)	Section 2
Existing environmental problems and how these are likely to change over time if the plan was not implemented	Section 2
Relevant established environmental protection objectives and how these have been taken into account	Section 3
A description of how the assessment was undertaken including	Section 5

¹ www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal

² Directive 2001/42/EC

³ Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004

any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how)	
An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives evaluated	Section 6
The likely significant effects of the plan on the environment (including secondary, cumulative, permanent and temporary effects)	Section 6 and 7
The measures envisaged to prevent / reduce / offset any significant adverse environmental effects of the plan or programme	Section 6 and 7
A description of monitoring measures	Section 7

2 POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

2.1 The significance of the effect of a Neighbourhood Plan on the environment does depend on the proposals within the plan, and the environmental sensitivity of the area.

BIODIVERSITY, GEOLOGY, FLORA AND FAUNA

2.2 There are no nationally designated wildlife or geological sites (SSSI) within the neighbourhood plan area. The closest European site is the Dorset Heaths SAC / SPA just over 5km distance to the south-east.

2.3 Higher Houghton SSSI lies immediately north-east of the plan area. This is an area of chalk grassland and broadleaved woodland of great diversity reflecting variation in its soils, extending to about 145 hectares. The extent and diversity of habitat supports strong populations of woodland and grassland animals and the sheltered chalk slopes are favoured by the typical down-land butterflies including the local Chalkhill Blue *Lysandra corridon*.⁴ Much of it is recorded as in unfavourable but recovering condition – the main issues relating to on-site management (for example in relation to non-native planting of conifers, undergrazing and lack of scrub control). One of the units was considered to be declining (2013) and in need of appropriate grazing management.

2.4 A section of the Bere Stream approximately 10km downstream of the parish is designated as a SSSI (Bere Stream SSSI), which in 2007 was recorded as having elevated levels of phosphates resulting from agricultural and waste water that were adversely impacting on its condition. The river ultimately discharges into Poole Harbour SSSI, SPA and Ramsar which is known to have issues with high nutrient levels (the 2017 assessment notes there are both water quality and biological indicators of a eutrophication (nutrient enrichment) problem that is affecting the ecology and monitoring shows no evidence that the problem is reducing). Any indirect impacts on water quality that will impact on the Bere Stream (ie within the Bere Stream catchment⁵) also need to be considered.

2.5 There are sites of local nature conservation importance that form part of the existing ecological network including many of the broadleaved woodlands in the parish. These area are shown on Dorset Explorer⁶ and details of these sites can be obtained from the Dorset Environmental Records Centre.

⁴<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=S1003717&SiteName=oughton&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=>

⁵<https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody/GB108044009630>

⁶<https://explorer.geowessex.com/?layers=14745,4310,51&basemap=26&x=380327.49&y=102985.34&epsg=27700&zoom=13>

LANDSCAPE

2.6 There is an extensive network of public rights of way criss-crossing the area, and areas of open / dedicated access land on the Milton Abbey estate (Forestry Commission) and on Green Hill. These can be seen on the Dorset Explorer website⁷. The area enjoys dark skies and a general lack of light pollution⁸.

2.7 The Plan area sits almost entirely within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) with the exception of the southernmost part around Bagber and Hewish Farms. It lies in the Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase National Character Area and is described as a chalk valley and downland landscape associated with Upper Milborne and Upper North Winterborne Valleys⁹. The 2018 Landscape Character Assessment considers these areas to be in a moderate and stable condition. Key characteristics of these locally defined landscape character areas include:

- > Heart shaped valley enclosed with dry tributary valleys and deep coombes associated with the Upper Winterborne Valley, and a more linear and intimate 'V' shaped chalk valley with associated winterbourne and surrounding steep branching valleys and open chalk downlands in the Upper Milborne Valley to the west
- > Thin calcareous soils with underlying geology of chalk
- > Incised valley slopes with patches of semi-natural chalk grassland and broadleaved woodlands
- > Clear chalk winterbourne stream with floodplain supporting occasional water meadows, wet woodlands, water cress beds and rough damp meadows
- > Winding rural lanes along the valley floor with a series of small linear and nucleated villages of brick, flint, stone, thatch and cob
- > Smaller scale pastures and fields patterns on valley floor with species rich dense hedgerows, small broadleaved woodlands and occasional hedgerow trees
- > Designed parkland landscapes with veteran trees, railings, flint walls and country houses along the valley floor
- > Secluded, intimate and tranquil character

2.8 These landscapes have a strong character. Occasional unsympathetic leylandii and conifer planting, signage along the rural lanes and urban fringe land use and horse pastures around settlements are noted as issues that are detrimental to this character.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

2.9 There are 76 Listed buildings or structures within the neighbourhood plan area, which include 4 Grade I and 6 Grade II* as listed below¹⁰.

Grade I:

- Milton Abbey School
- Abbey Church of St Mary, St Sansom and St Branwalader, Milton Abbey
- The Abbot's Hall And Kitchen, Milton Abbey
- Chapel Of Saint Catherine (plantation opposite Milton Abbey)

⁷<https://explorer.geowessex.com/common/prints/ExplorerJF6y2zGRLEWFFX59U3gEDQ.pdf>

⁸<https://www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk/maps/print.html?0|5082,5175.704064074506,5627.71,5702.979003484033,0|thBl=1,th0=0,th1=0,th2=0,th3=0,th4=0,th5=0,th6=1,th7=0,th8=1||thBl=OpenStreetMap>

⁹http://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/assets/downloads/Landscape_Character/LCA_Chalk_Valley_and_Downland.pdf

¹⁰https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/results/?advsearch=1&Lpa=North_Dorset&parish=Milton_Abbas&searchtype=harsearch

Grade II*

- Parish Church Of St James, central to The Street, Milton Abbas
- 1 To 4, Tregonwell Cottages And The Reading Room, central to The Street, Milton Abbas
- The Old Rectory, western end of The Street, Milton Abbas
- The Stone Lodge, and the Gatehouse (approx. 700m north of Milton Abbas)
- Delcombe Manor (in the northern part of the parish)
- Garden House, Delcombe Manor (in the northern part of the parish)

2.10 There are 8 scheduled monuments in the plan area, including a range of barrows and earthworks, as listed below

- Deserted town of Milton Abbas (an extensive area south of the Abbey extended to and surrounding the lake)
- Cultivation remains on Thomas's Hill and E of Hilton (close to Milton Abbey but mainly extending in Hilton Parish)
- Field system on Green Down (northern part of the parish)
- Bowl barrow on Green Hill 350m NW of Keepers Cottage (northern part of the parish)
- Bowl barrow 650m NW of Long Ash Farm (western part of the parish)
- Bowl barrow in Ruins Plantation 200m E of The Retreat (western part of the parish)
- Stable Barrow 230m NNE of Frogmore Farm (on the boundary with Milborne St Andrew parish)
- Milton Park boundary bank (east of Milton Abbas village)

2.11 The Stable Barrow 230m NNE of Frogmore Farm is on the at risk register due to cultivation (arable ploughing)¹¹, as is the Grade I Abbey Church of St Mary, although the register indicates that some repair work has been undertaken and funding for further works has been made available¹².

2.12 The Milton Abbas Conservation Area was originally designated in 1970 – with a conservation area appraisal last published in 2014¹³. The appraisal recognises two significant areas. The first is the school building, Abbey, Chapel and their landscaped setting; the second is the Street, a unique collection of mainly 18th and 19th century houses and parish church with the uniformity and simplicity of the predominant Georgian vernacular houses, the open aspect of the greens to the front and the wooded horizons flowing into the valley. An Article 4 Direction was confirmed in 2014 for The Street removing permitted development rights in respect of development within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse, including new structures, enlargements, hard surfacing and minor operations such as the erection of fences and other means of enclosures and exterior painting.

2.13 The grounds of Milton Abbey area a Grade II* registered historic park and garden the majority of which lies in the northern part of the parish with some overspill into Ibberton and Woolland parishes. It is an extensive c18 landscape designed by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown for Lord Milton to surround Milton Abbey (listed Grade I and a scheduled monument), and has been little altered since¹⁴.

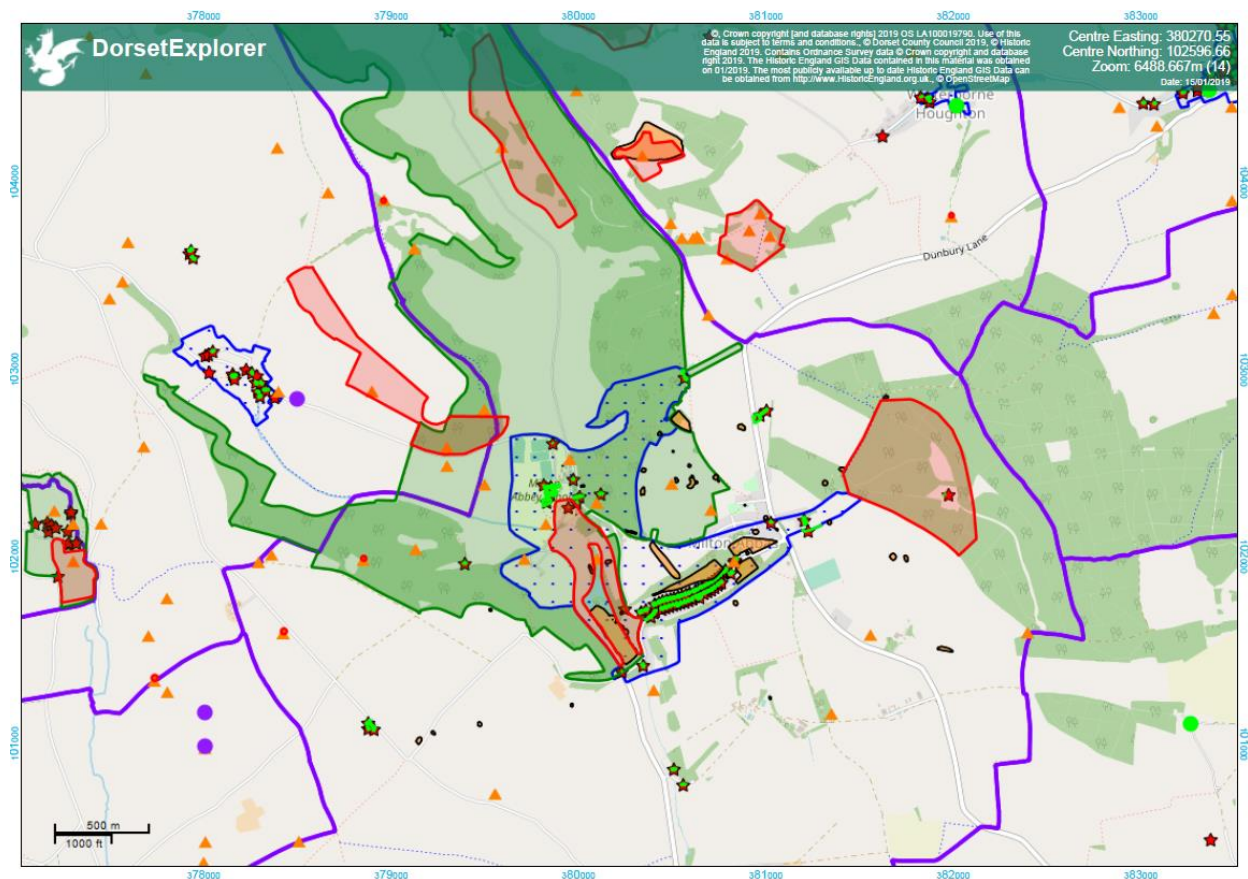
2.14 There are also numerous unregistered heritage assets records on the Dorset Historic Environment Record.

¹¹<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/list-entry/44237>

¹²<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/list-entry/254621>

¹³<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning/planning-constraints/conservation-areas/north-dorset/pdfs/milton-abbas-conservation-area-appraisal.pdf>

¹⁴<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000721>



2.15 Undesignated heritage assets and the designated sites noted above can be viewed on Dorset Explorer¹⁵, an extract of which is shown. Further guidance is also available in the Dorset Historic Towns Project report on Milton Abbas¹⁶.

CLIMATE CHANGE - FLOOD RISK

2.16 The main area at risk from flooding relates to fluvial (river) flooding from the Bere Stream that runs south of Milton Abbey and along (to the east side) of the road connecting to Milborne St Andrew and ultimate flows into the River Piddle and Poole Harbour.

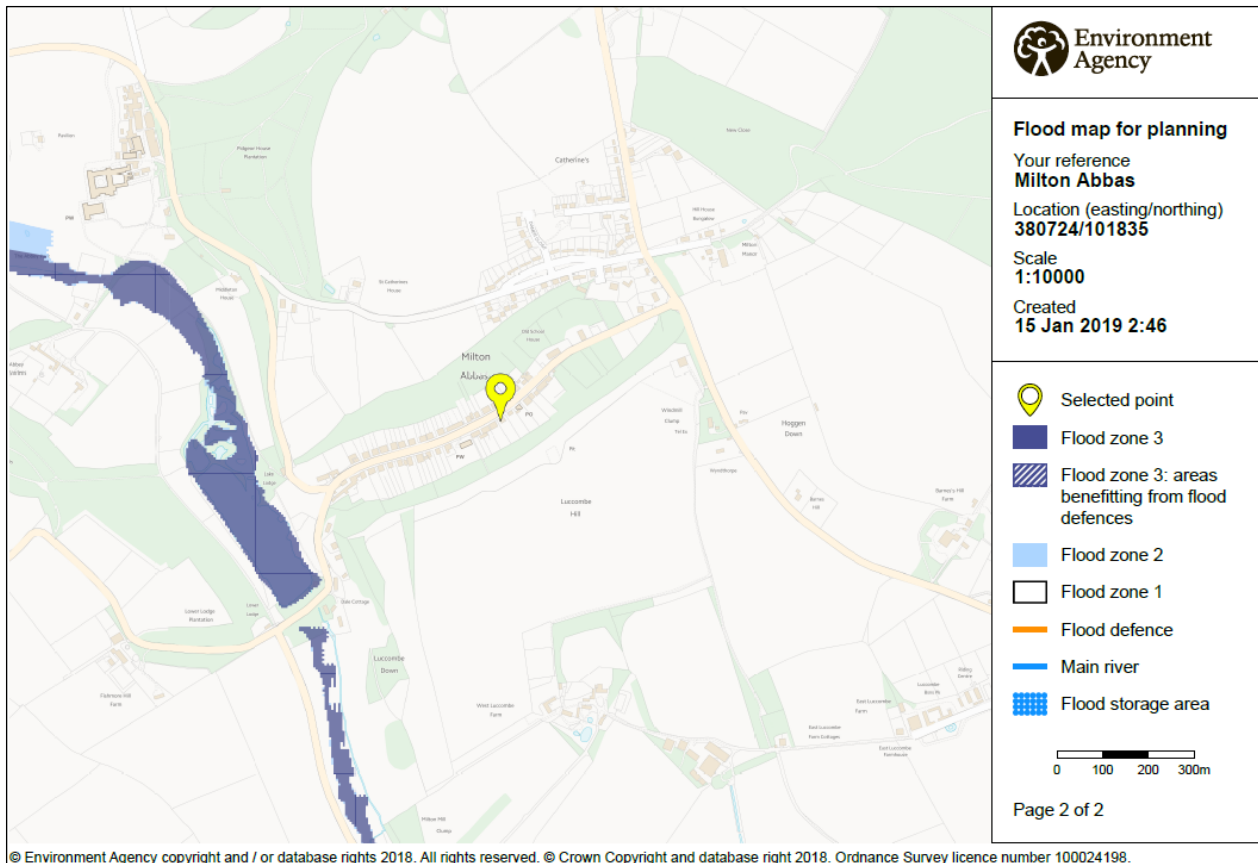
2.17 There is potential surface water flood risk draining along the valley from Delcombe Farm south and connecting to the Bere Stream just south-west of Milton Abbey School. The main area of settlement is on higher ground and at low flood risk, although this does not rule out the possibility of flash flooding, and a flood warning area includes The Street.

2.18 The extent of these flood risk areas and the flood warning area are shown on Dorset Explorer¹⁷. The extract from the EA flood risk map for planning is shown below.

¹⁵<https://explorer.geowessex.com/?layers=2795,4205,2787,1408,2786,51&basemap=26&x=380327.49&y=102985.34&epsg=27700&zoom=13>

¹⁶<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/libraries-history-culture/local-history-heritage/historic-towns/milton-abbas-historic-towns-survey.aspx>

¹⁷<https://explorer.geowessex.com/?layers=13865,13847,13846,13845,9866,9865,51&basemap=26&x=380073.63&y=101682.84&epsg=27700&zoom=14>



2.19 Problems associated with sewer flooding are covered in the section on pollution.

SOIL AND WATER RESOURCES

2.20 The farmland is mainly Grade 3 (moderate) quality across the parish according to the South West Region 1:250 000 Series Agricultural Land Classification map¹⁸. To the north-west of the village near Milton Abbey and extending towards Hilton is some Grade 2 (higher quality) land, and there is also an area of poorer quality (Grade 4) around Delcombe Bottom.

2.21 There are no significant minerals or waste safeguarding areas in the parish. A thin sliver of land running from Bagber Farm (on the parish boundary with Milborne St Andrew) north, parallel to (and east of) the Milton Road as far as the lake, and covering broadly the same area as the flood extent associated with the Bere Stream is identified as a minerals safeguarding consultation area due to the potential for sand and gravel extraction.

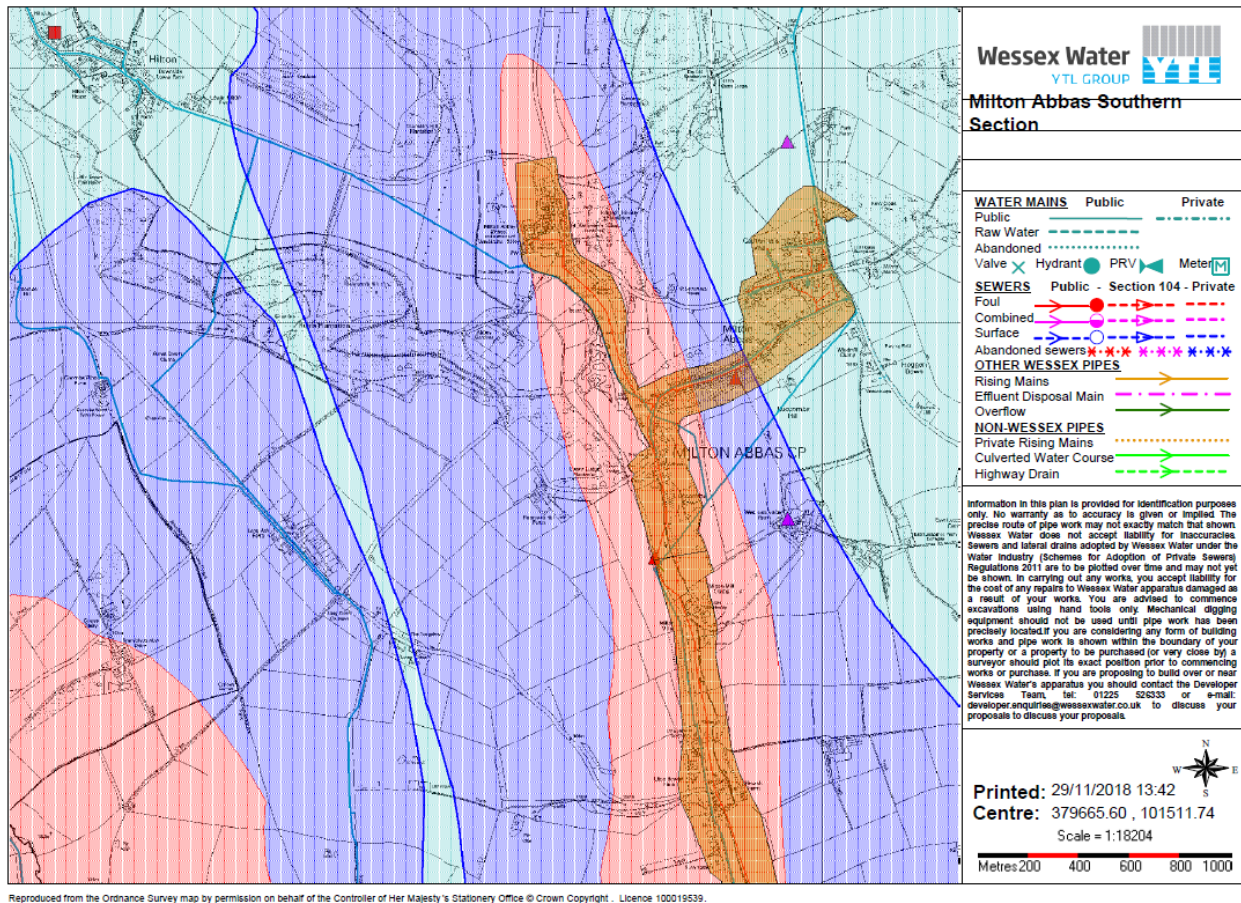
POLLUTION – AIR, SOIL AND WATER

2.22 There are no historic landfill sites recorded for the area. The District Council does hold records of contaminated land, and should be contacted to check whether there are any records of potential contamination associated with potential development sites.

2.23 The area lies within the groundwater source protection zone, which highlights the need to consider potential risk of contamination from any activities that might cause groundwater pollution. There is also a drinking water safeguard zone relating to surface water drinking covering the eastern portion of the parish from High Lodge to Hill Dairy House. The parish is also within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone, with the western area (which drains into the Bere Stream) having a further ecological issue linked to the

¹⁸<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/144017>

potential harm to the ecological interests of Poole Harbour Special Protection Area and Ramsar site from increases in nitrates within the catchment of the Piddle. The catchment area is shown on the Catchment Data Explorer¹⁹.



2.24 Wessex Water have also identified that development in parts of the parish may give rise to sewage inundation due to the infiltration of sewer systems at times when there are high groundwater levels. The orange areas indicate medium risk of development leading to foul sewer inundation (and Wessex Water would normally request to be consulted on all development equivalent to 10 dwellings (1 ha of commercial)). The red, royal blue and pale blue areas indicate the groundwater source protection zones (red being the inner catchment).

2.25 Wessex Water have confirmed that sewage from the village is treated at Milborne St Andrew, and that there are no Sewage Treatment Works within the Neighbourhood Plan Area. There is a Wessex Water reservoir which lies just outside the Neighbourhood Plan Area (Houghton Clump Distribution Site 380964, 103333).

2.26 There are no Air Quality Management Areas in the area.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

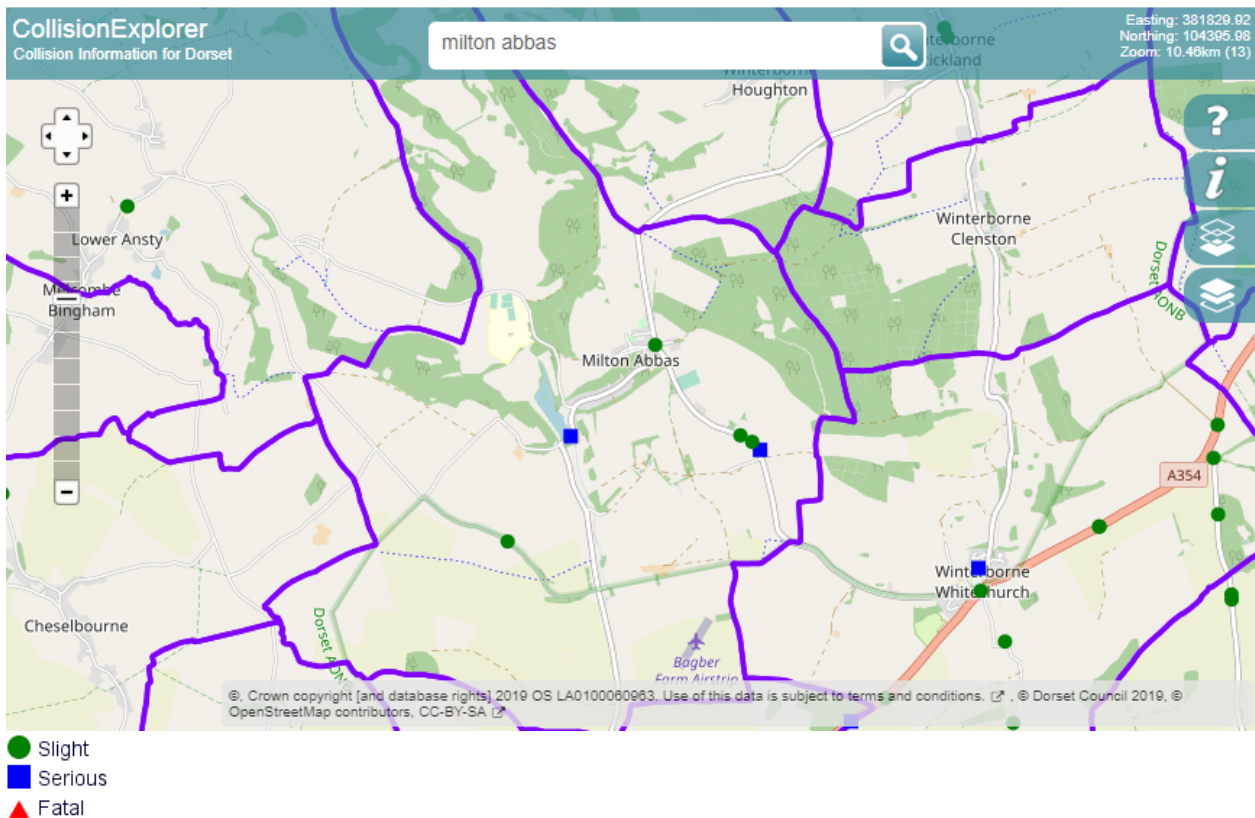
2.27 At the time of the 2011 Census there were 755 people living in Milton Abbas parish, a significant proportion (190) of which would have been based at Milton Abbas School. At that time there were forming 232 households in a parish of 263 dwellings. A further 8 dwellings were built in the period from 2011 to 2018. About 13% of households were made up of older residents (65 years or more) which is less than average for North Dorset, and a slightly higher than average proportion of households had dependent children (48% compared to the North Dorset average of 42%).

¹⁹<http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody/GB108044009630>

2.28 The village has a good range of facilities for a village of its size, including a post office, farm shop, pub, tea rooms, doctor's surgery, church, playing field and parish meeting room.

2.29 Milton Abbey School (an independent school for boys and girls between 13 and 18, catering for over 240 students, mainly boarders, a high proportion of which have special educational needs and/or disabilities) is thought to be the main employer in the area. Other key employers include the surgery and pub, and there are a range of business premises at Barnes Hill, Luccombe Farm and Milton Mills.

2.30 Of those working, a good proportion (38%) work at or within 5km of home, although about 10% regularly commute more than 30km (well past the local towns of Dorchester and Blandford Forum) to work. The road collision data shows 3 slight and 2 serious collisions reported within the last 5 years.



2.31 The parish is in Abbey ward (in North Dorset 008A LSOA) and is amongst the 40% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country.

CONCLUSIONS ON EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

2.32 From the above assessment, the following existing environmental problems have been identified and consideration given to how these may change over time:

BIODIVERSITY, GEOLOGY, FLORA AND FAUNA

2.33 Higher Houghton SSSI to the north-east of the plan area when last assessed was largely in an unfavourable but recovering condition, with appropriate management measures in place this should continue to improve.

2.34 There are elevated levels of phosphates in the Bere Stream resulting from agricultural and waste water which are adversely impacting on its condition and also nutrient enrichment of the intertidal and saltmarsh areas within Holes Bay is also causing significant adverse impacts to the Poole Harbour SSSI (also SPA and Ramsar site). Although the main cause is linked to agricultural practices, human sewage is also

partly responsible for this decline, which will increase with population growth unless mitigated.

LANDSCAPE

2.35 Most of the plan area lies within a nationally important landscape (the Dorset AONB). A number of detrimental features are noted, primarily related to unsympathetic leylandii and conifer planting, signage along the rural lanes and urban fringe land use and horse pastures around settlements. However the overall condition is considered to be moderate and stable, and unlikely to change unless major development is planned.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

2.36 There are two heritage assets currently on the 'at risk' register: The Stable Barrow 230m NNE of Frogmore Farm due to cultivation (arable ploughing), and the Grade I Abbey Church of St Mary (although this is noted as being repaired work).

2.37 Incremental development within the Conservation Area of the Street lead to an Article 4 direction being imposed in 2014. This highlights how development can harm the setting of heritage assets, both designated and undesignated, if not carefully planned.

SOIL, WATER, AIR AND CLIMATIC FACTORS

2.38 There are limited flood risk areas within the Neighbourhood Plan area, however there is the risk of sewer flooding (potentially impacting on properties outside of the Neighbourhood Plan area) which will need to be taken into account. The potential for groundwater pollution will also need to be assessed for development proposals that could give rise to such pollution risks.

MATERIAL ASSETS, POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH

2.39 The local plan context identifies Milton Abbas as a suitable village where development should be focused to meet local (rather than strategic) needs. There are no significant accident levels, but any such development will inevitably give rise to further trips by car (given that public transport is poor).

3 RELEVANT PLANS, PROGRAMMES AND OBJECTIVES

RELEVANT PLANS AND PROGRAMMES – KEY OBJECTIVES

3.1 Based on the above appraisal, the following plans and programmes have been identified as potentially relevant, and the issues they highlight identified for consideration. In drawing up this list reference has been made to the North Dorset Local Plan Review Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (February 2017) and also to the SEA scoping for the adjoining Milborne St Andrew Neighbourhood Plan.

Topic	Plans and Programmes	Key Objectives
Biodiversity, geology, flora and fauna	EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 (2011), EU Habitats Directive and Birds Directive (92/43/EEC and 79/409/EEC as amended) EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) The National Planning Policy	Seek to protect and conserve habitats and wild flora and fauna and avoid adverse effects upon nature conservation sites, including terrestrial and water environments Take into account legal protection of species in developing policies relating to biodiversity and habitat protection.

Topic	Plans and Programmes	Key Objectives
	<p>Framework (NPPF) 2019 and Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services (2011)</p> <p>Dorset Biodiversity Strategy (Mid Term review) (2010)</p> <p>Dorset Biodiversity Protocol</p> <p>North Dorset Local Plan 2016</p>	<p>Identify and map components of the local ecological networks</p> <p>Where development takes place, buffers should be provided to environmental assets to improve their biodiversity value and facilitate adaptation to climate change, mitigation achieved and biodiversity enhancements secured.</p>
Landscape	<p>European Landscape Convention (2000)</p> <p>The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019</p> <p>North Dorset Local Plan 2016</p> <p>Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty: a Framework for the Future: AONB Management Plan 2014 – 2019</p>	<p>Recognise landscapes as an essential component of people's surroundings, their cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity.</p> <p>Protect and enhance valued landscapes - including the statutory duty on all 'relevant authorities' to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty when discharging any function affecting land in AONBs, which includes their setting, dark night skies, tranquillity and undeveloped rural character.</p> <p>The landscape character of the District will be protected through retention of the features that characterise the area.</p>
Cultural heritage	<p>The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019</p> <p>North Dorset Local Plan 2016</p>	<p>Conserve and enhance heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance</p> <p>Any development proposal affecting a heritage asset (including its setting) should sustain and enhance its significance and secure a viable use consistent with its conservation.</p>
Soil, Water, Air and Climatic Factors	<p>Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC), EU Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC), Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)</p> <p>U.K Climate Change Act (2008)</p> <p>The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012</p> <p>South West River Basin Management Plan</p> <p>Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England (2009)</p> <p>Dorset County Council Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (2014)</p> <p>North Dorset Local Plan 2016</p> <p>North Dorset Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) (2018)</p> <p>Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Energy Efficiency Strategy (2009) and Renewable Energy Strategy</p>	<p>Reduce water pollution caused by nitrogen from agricultural sources and prevent such pollution in the future</p> <p>Promote the sustainable use of water and prevent further deterioration of surface and groundwaters.</p> <p>Tackle the environmental and health problems relating to air quality</p> <p>Steer development away from areas of highest flood risk, apply sequential & exceptions test, seek opportunities to relocate development to more sustainable locations.</p> <p>Improve the quality of soils and safeguard their ability to provide essential services for future generations</p> <p>Prevent harm to geological conservation interests</p> <p>Reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change.</p> <p>Reduce carbon emissions to meet the UK target and move towards a low carbon economy</p>

Topic	Plans and Programmes	Key Objectives
Material assets, population and human health	(2013)	
	European Sustainable Development Strategy (2006) The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 Transforming Dorset - Strategic Economic Plan 2014-21 Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Workspace Strategy (2016) Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan (2011-2026) Dorset Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2011-2021 (2007) Dorset Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-2020 (2010) Bournemouth, Dorset & Poole Minerals Strategy (2014) North Dorset Local Plan 2016	Promote a prosperous local economy and reduce poverty Meet identified local and essential rural needs Boost the supply of housing and ensure everyone can live in a good quality home Contribute towards the creation of mixed and balanced communities that are socially inclusive Promote safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion Promote good public health, access to healthcare and opportunities for healthy, active and independent lifestyles Ensure that the necessary infrastructure is put in place to support growth Ensure that PRoW / sites are protected and enhanced as essential green infrastructure, and seek opportunities to develop networks of paths and public outdoor space consisting of attractive, safe off-road routes enabling people of all ages, needs and abilities to walk/ride safely in and around their village/town, out to neighbouring settlements and into and about the wider countryside Prevent the unnecessary sterilisation of valuable mineral resources and negative impacts of incompatible development on existing minerals operations or facilities. Provide an integrated transport system and better accessibility to services for everyday needs.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PLANS AND PROGRAMMES

3.2 Any Neighbourhood Plan has to be in general conformity with the adopted Local Plan for that area, in order to meet the basic conditions and be made²⁰. Once a Neighbourhood Plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains may take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a Local Plan that would otherwise conflict, until superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted later.

3.3 The North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 was adopted in January 2016. Of particular relevance was the modification that retained settlement boundaries and set a rural housing target for Stalbridge and the larger villages²¹ of 41dpa (dwellings per annum). Milton Abbas was one of the settlements who retained a settlement boundary, and is

²⁰ As required under Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 section 8(2)e

²¹ The 18 'larger villages' range in population from just over 500 (Winterborne Stickland) to just under 2,000 (Marnhull), with Stalbridge having a population of about 2,750.

therefore anticipated to support some level of growth to meet local needs, appropriate to its status as a larger village. The need for an early review of the Local Plan was also stipulated, given that the need for housing in the wider housing market area (including the Poole / Bournemouth conurbation) was not based on the most recent population projections and guidance. The latest housing projections for North Dorset suggest that further increase in the rate of development is likely to be needed, although the exact distribution between the towns and villages will not be decided until the plan is reviewed.

3.4 The Local Plan recognises that through Neighbourhood Plans, local communities can decide whether they want to lead on defining sites for development and reviewing detailed policies. A number of areas are specifically highlighted as issues that could be usefully considered through the Neighbourhood Plan process. The overall message being that the Neighbourhood Plan can help a community explain its “vision” and objectives for the area, identify local needs that should be met and consider options to meet these needs. Changes to policies could include:

- Reviewing the settlement boundary or establishing a new settlement boundary
- Allocating sites for development
- Developing more detailed policies relating to infilling
- Considering proposals for heritage-led regeneration
- Including proposals for the reuse of buildings in the countryside
- Addressing the provision and retention of community facilities
- Reviewing the Important Open and Wooded Area (IOWA) designations
- Designating areas as a Local Green Space
- Identifying non-designated heritage assets
- Influencing what new buildings should look like, through local guidelines on character

3.5 The Neighbourhood Plan cannot deal with county matters (mineral extraction and waste development), nationally significant infrastructure or development that falls within Annex 1 to Council Directive 85/337/EEC as these are specifically excluded by the legislation.

4 SCREENING

4.1 North Dorset District Council was requested to provide an SEA Screening Opinion on the Milton Abbas Neighbourhood Plan. The criteria for assessing the likely significance of effects are set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive, Schedule 1 of the Regulations and including in the follow Table, alongside the assessment for the Neighbourhood Plan.

Schedule 1 of the Regulations	Assessment
1. The characteristics of the plan, having regard to:	
- the degree to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	The Milton Abbas Neighbourhood Plan will be part of the development plan for the local area. It will include policies or site specific allocations to enable further housing (in the region of 20 dwellings) for the period 2018-31 (on sites which are not currently proposed in the adopted Local Plan).
- the degree to which the plan influences other plans and programmes including	The Neighbourhood Plan will need to be taken into account in future development

those in a hierarchy;	plans for the area, but does not limit future strategic policy direction
– the relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	Neighbourhood Plans are required to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
– environmental problems relevant to the plan;	The landscape character is diminished in areas due to occasional unsympathetic leylandii and conifer planting, unsympathetic signage along the rural lanes and urban fringe land use and horse pastures around settlements. Two heritage assets are on the 'at risk' register. There is also the potential for development to give rise to pollution and health issues arising from sewer inundation at times of high groundwater.
– the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection).	Neighbourhood Plans are land use plans and cannot contain policies or proposals in respect of development that is a county matter (mineral extraction and waste development). The potential impact on groundwater will need to be considered.
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:	
– the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,	<p>It is noted that Neighbourhood Plans cannot contain policies or proposals in respect of development that falls within Annex 1 to Council Directive 85/337/EEC.</p> <p>It is also noted that the adjoining parish of Milborne St Andrew has submitted its plan for examination, which proposes to allocate land for at least 32 new homes, plus some small-scale workshops, a new Pre-School and Branch Surgery.</p> <p>At this stage, although the quantum of development is relatively limited (and unlikely to include industrial or similar developments) it is not possible to rule out the potential of this plan to have an impact on either the nationally important landscape of the Dorset AONB, or on the many locally and nationally important heritage assets. There is also the possibility (albeit limited) that development could give rise for sewer inundation and related flood risks within and beyond the plan area.</p>
– the cumulative nature of the effects,	
– the transboundary nature of the effects,	
– the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),	
– the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),	
– the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > special natural characteristics or cultural heritage, > exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values, > intensive land-use, > the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status. 	

4.2 The Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England were consulted on the draft screening opinion (that the SEA Directive would require that a Strategic Environmental Assessment should be undertaken for the Milton Abbas Neighbourhood

Plan) and the potential scope of the assessment if carried out. The consultation ran from 17 January to 22 February 2019.

4.3 Responses were received from Historic England (dated 19 February 2019) and Natural England (dated 18 February 2019). No response was received from the Environment Agency.

- Historic England responded that, as there was an intention to allocate sites for development there may be some potential for the Plan to have significant environmental effects, and they supported the conclusion that an SEA would be required.
- Natural England responded that, in so far as their strategic environmental interests are concerned (including but not limited to statutory designated sites, landscapes and protected species, geology and soils), there was unlikely to be significant environmental effects from the proposed plan. Natural England are not aware of significant populations of protected species which are likely to be affected by the policies / proposals within the plan, and advised that the local record centre should be consulted.

4.4 On this basis, it was concluded that the SEA Directive would require that a Strategic Environmental Assessment should be undertaken for the Milton Abbas Neighbourhood Plan.

5 ASSESSMENT PROCESS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

5.1 From the assessment of environmental characteristics and problems, and the established objectives identified through the appraisal of relevant plans and programmes, the following were considered to be the important issues that should be included in the assessment of options and alternatives:

BIODIVERSITY, GEOLOGY, FLORA AND FAUNA –

5.2 There is the potential for development to harm significant ecological interests through raised nutrient levels in relation to Poole Harbour (which applies to that part of the parish that drains into the Bere Stream) and impacting on sites that may be of local wildlife interest or host protected species.

An ecological appraisal of any proposed site allocations should be undertaken prior to pre-submission draft stage. Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement (eg enhancing or creating new wildlife areas) should also be considered.

LANDSCAPE –

5.3 There is the potential for development to harm a nationally important landscape (the Dorset AONB).

Development that could have a significant adverse impact on this landscape should therefore be avoided, taking into account the local landscape features and views likely to be affected. Opportunities for enhancement (eg the removal of detrimental features) should also be considered.

CULTURAL HERITAGE –

5.4 There is potential for development to harm a wide number of heritage assets, both designated and undesignated.

The setting and significance of designated assets should be considered in the appraisal

process and the Conservation Team at the District Council and the Historic Environment team at the County Council involved in the site selection process.

SOIL, WATER, AIR AND CLIMATIC FACTORS –

5.5 There is a risk of sewer flooding (potentially impacting on properties outside of the Neighbourhood Plan area such as in Milborne St Andrew, which is where the sewage network flows continues onto). The likelihood of groundwater pollution is not considered significant unless the scope of the plan changes to include industrial or other forms of development likely to discharge contaminants into the groundwater. *Flood risk areas (mainly associated with the Bere Stream) should be avoided. The potential for sewer inundation resulting from development in the medium risk zone identified by Wessex Water will need to be considered with advice sought from the relevant bodies responsible for drainage matters. The contaminated land register should also be checked in the site selection process.*

MATERIAL ASSETS, POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH –

5.6 Development will inevitably give rise to an increase in trips, even though in the local plan context, Milton Abbas as a suitable village where development should be focused to meet local (rather than strategic) needs. *The degree to which a site may be able to accommodate local needs (as identified) and the potential for future occupiers to access community facilities and employment areas by sustainable modes of transport should be taken into account in the site selection process.*

SCOPING CONSULTATION

5.7 Advice was sought on the scope of the Strategic Environmental Assessment, and whether any issues had been missed from the above list. The Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England were consulted from 17 January to 22 February 2019.

5.8 No response was received from the Environment Agency. No specific advice was provided on the scope of the plan by Historic England other than to highlight general guidance they provide. Natural England concurred with the overarching objectives of relevant plans to the Milton Abbas area, including the Dorset Biodiversity Protocol, and pointed out the following issues:

- Presence of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat both within and around the boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan. These areas should be considered when locating any new development, and opportunities taken to enhance the ecological value of these areas, including through planning gain, to contribute to preserving and protecting their integrity
- The highest status of protection for the 'landscape and scenic beauty' of AONBs and importance of consulting the relevant AONB Partnership
- The inclusion in the plan of water quality issues and the Bere Stream which downstream (10km) is designated as SSSI and that the effective policy position is that new developments need to be Nitrogen neutral
- Potential benefits from the delivery of key green infrastructure and the designation of local green space.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

5.9 On this basis the following objectives have been identified to inform the assessment of the plan:

Objective	Assessment basis for site allocations
Biodiversity, fauna & flora - Ensure no ecological interests would be harmed, and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	Will development impact on nature conservation designations and is there likely to be protected species / habitats on site, or potential for enhancement?
Landscape - Ensure development respects and reinforces the area's rural landscapes and character	Is the development likely to be visible in public views and to what extent, does it contain local landscape features that could be harmed, or provide potential enhancements through the removal or screening of detrimental features?
Cultural heritage - Protect the area's heritage assets, and where opportunities arise, enhance the historic character of the area	Is the development likely to harm existing heritage designations (including their setting) and what impact would this have on their significance? Are there opportunities to better improve our understanding and appreciation of the area's heritage?
Climate change (flood risk) - Reduce flood risk	Is development proposed in proximity to existing flood risk zones, and would it give rise to increased flood risk off-site?
Soil, water & air pollution - Ensure development does not result in an unacceptable risk of pollution	Is there any local knowledge of contamination where development is planned, and could the development give rise to groundwater pollution?
Meeting local needs - Provide housing, employment and community facilities to help meet local needs	How much housing could be provided (or might be lost) through the sites; development, including affordable homes, and would the development provide or support new jobs or community facilities?
Safe and accessible - Ensure safe access and a pedestrian-friendly environment	Is the development safe and accessible, and what potential is there for future occupiers to access community facilities and employment areas by sustainable modes of transport?

DIFFICULTIES WITH THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

5.10 Evidence is constantly updated which can make elements of the assessment out of date (such as the appraisal of relevant policies and programmes), although this is unlikely to materially affect the objectives and scoring.

5.11 The sites were independently assessed by AECOM, supplemented by additional work on heritage and ecology by qualified experts, but have not been subject to a detailed assessment on all matters (for example a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has not been undertaken).

5.12 National planning guidance on plan-making advises that this should be based on proportionate evidence. Given the scale of development proposed and likely environmental impacts the above difficulties are not considered to be of significant concern.







6 TESTING

TESTING OF THE PLAN'S OBJECTIVES




























6.1 The plan's objectives (vision and goals) as worded in the pre-submission draft plan are:

Objectives
Objective 1: Integrated Housing Location & Density → To ensure that any new development is integrated with existing development, whilst minimising the impact on existing residents and the landscape and mirrors the low density of housing that is a defining feature throughout the parish.
Objective 2: Meet Local Housing Needs → To ensure housing meets the needs of local people and supports the aim of maintaining a sustainable community for the long term.
Objective 3: In Keeping Design Style → To ensure that new development within the village is aesthetically sympathetic to the parish's heritage assets and complements the environment.
Objective 4: Supporting Service and Infrastructure → To minimise the negative impact of new development on the existing local infrastructure and where possible seek opportunities to make enhancements.
Objective 5: Protects and Enhances Locally Important Features → Local features that are important to the community are protected in policy and that any development helps to enhance sustainability in the local community.

6.2 These have been assessed in terms of their likely environmental impact (in the absence of any more detailed policies) against each of the sustainability objectives in Section 5, and graded as follows:

Key:	 significant positive impact likely	 adverse impact likely
	 positive impact likely	 significant adverse impact likely
	 neutral impact likely	 impact uncertain

NB where the scoring lies in the range spanning two levels, this is indicated in the scoring as 2 symbols (eg x/- or ✓/✓✓) where appropriate

Environmental assessment objective	Biodiversity, fauna & flora	Landscape	Cultural heritage	Climate change (flood risk)	Soil, water & air pollution	Meeting local needs	Safe and accessible
Neighbourhood Plan Objective							
1: Integrated housing location & density							
2: Meet Local Housing Needs							
3: In Keeping Design Style				-	-	-	-
4: Supporting service and infrastructure							
5: Protects locally important features				-	-	-	-

6.3 Objectives 1, 2 and 4 focus on meeting local needs so have scored positively against that objective, but uncertain against some of the other objectives as the impact will depend on the location and nature of the development proposed. Objectives 3 and 5 focus more on design and protecting specific local features of value, which is considered likely to have largely positive impacts, but care will need to be taken that

this does not prohibit development where this is really needed. Given the uncertainties further checks through an assessment of all of the Neighbourhood Plan policies is advisable.

TESTING OF THE PLAN'S POLICIES AND REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES

6.4 This section provides a summary of the sustainability impacts associated with each policy.

WHAT DEVELOPMENT WHERE: POLICIES MA1, MA9 AND SITE ALLOCATIONS THROUGH POLICIES MA10-13

6.5 Policy MA1 (Spatial Strategy) deals with the overall distribution of development planned for the area. This states that development should take place on the allocated four allocated sites (sites 5, 6, 8 and 10) and through the re-use of existing buildings in the countryside. Policy MA9 seeks to ensure that the housing that is developed reflects the local need as identified through the Housing Needs Assessment. Policies MA10-13 then deal with each of the site allocations in turn.

6.6 The potential site options were identified from a call for sites undertaken in October 2018. 17 sites were put forward by landowners during the Call for Sites process, for a variety of potential uses, and 16 were assessed independently by AECOM (an independent planning consultancy), the other site being excluded as it was put forward for parking purposes only. The following table lists the sites assessed and the initial conclusions on their suitability, which was based on an assessment of:

- the existing and surrounding land uses;
- site characteristics (including whether it has been previously developed and could be contaminated)
- planning history and whether the site is already allocated for a particular use;
- site proximity to a settlement and suitability of access;
- access to community facilities and services, public rights of way impacted and any existing social or community value;
- flood risk;
- landscape sensitivity and Green Belt / AONB / National Park status;
- nature conservation designations and biodiversity habitats;
- Tree Preservation Orders;
- agricultural land use classification;
- heritage considerations;
- existing infrastructure;
- land ownership and site availability.

A number of these were identified as possible windfall conversions which could come forward under the existing Local Plan policies, and therefore not necessary to allocate. Site 11 (land North of the Street) was granted planning consent in January 2019 (ref 2/2018/1365/FUL) to erect two dwellings (demolish existing).

	Site	Size	Reasonable Alternative?
1	Delcombe Farm 1	0.03ha	n/a windfall potential (possible through Local Plan)
2	Delcombe Farm 2	0.01ha	n/a windfall potential (possible through Local Plan)
3	Greenhill Down	0.02ha	n/a windfall potential (possible through Local Plan)
4	Langham Farm 1	0.85ha	No Due to the presence of significant local constraints at this location, including heritage considerations, access issues, landscape setting and visual sensitivities.
5	Langham Farm 2	1.14ha	Yes The eastern section of the site is considered

			suitable due to its proximity to the road network and to residential properties within the settlement.
6	Catherines Well 1	1.00ha	Potentially Suitable for an allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan for small scale residential development providing it retains and enhances the public bridleway and existing green infrastructure on site, with due regard given to its sensitive setting within the Dorset AONB and proximity to the Milton Abbey Registered Park and Garden.
7	Catherines Well 2	3.45ha	Potentially (part only) Providing the existing constraints can be overcome, the western section of the site is considered potentially suitable due to its proximity to the road network and to residential properties within the settlement
8	Catherines Well 3	0.08ha	Yes Suitable for small scale development with high quality design which respects the site's setting within the AONB and its proximity to neighbouring residential properties and heritage assets.
9	Hoggen Down	0.01ha	n/a windfall potential (possible through Local Plan)
10	Windmill Clump	1.06ha	Yes (part only) Potentially Ecological and heritage concerns provide constraints to development at this location. However, given the presence of the existing dwelling, limited scale development of sensitivity to existing constraints may be appropriate with high quality design and layout. The northern half of the site is considered suitable for residential development providing the development respects its rural setting, retains and enhances the footpath into the village centre. Alternative uses might also be suitable at this location, providing it helps to deliver a locally identified need.
12	Catherines Well 4	3.57ha	Potentially (part only) Providing the existing constraints can be overcome, the eastern section of the site is considered potentially suitable due to its proximity to the road network and to residential properties within the settlement.
13	Steeptonbill Farm	1.00ha	No Landscape and visual impacts, heritage considerations and highway and pedestrian safety concerns provide significant constraints to development at this location
14	Fishmore Hill Farm	0.43ha	No Given the site's location outside of the existing settlement area of the Neighbourhood Plan area, potential safety concerns associated with the existing access to the site, and biodiversity constraints. Alternative uses might be suitable at this location, providing the development respects its rural setting and helps to deliver a locally identified need.
15	Long Close Farm	0.05ha	n/a windfall potential (possible through Local Plan)
16	Milton Mills	0.11ha	n/a windfall potential (possible through Local Plan)

6.7 The full report is available as part of the supporting evidence to the plan, and the sites are shown in **Appendix 3**. The indicative number of dwellings that could be potentially accommodated by all sites (regardless of their merits) was in excess of 150 dwellings. Given the housing need identified was for in the region of 20 dwellings, it

was considered reasonable to focus on those sites which did not have significant constraints. The reasonable alternatives for site allocations were therefore those sites which were considered to have potential according to the site assessment report.

6.8 The sites identified for more detail assessment were subject to further ecological checks (site surveys undertaken by Bryan Edwards of Dorset Environmental Records Centre), heritage impact assessment (Kevin Morris Heritage Planning Ltd), both reports are published separately, and highways checks (discussed with Steve Savage of Dorset Council).

6.9 Dorset Council also supplied the results of a search of their records of land with possible contaminative past uses in the Council's administrative area. This confirmed that none of the sites and reasonable alternatives were likely to be contaminated, and although there were records of potential sites in the wider area these were largely sand and clay quarrying and gravel pits (risk assessment: low). A record of the checks is reproduced in Appendix 4.

Environmental assessment objective	Biodiversity, fauna & flora	Landscape	Cultural heritage	Climate change (flood risk)	Soil, water & air pollution	Meeting local needs	Safe and accessible
Policies and reasonable alternatives							
MA1: Spatial Strategy (allocations plus conversions ⇒ at least 20 new homes)	x/-	-	x/-	x/-	-	✓✓	-
MA9: Affordable and Local Housing (⇒ affordable and age-accessible homes)	-	-	-	-	-	✓✓	-
MA10: Site 5: Land at Langham Farm (eastern section adjoining the road)	x/-	-	-	x/-	-	✓/✓✓	x/-
MA11: Site 6: Land at Catherine's Well (west of the allotments)	x/-	x/-	x/-	x/-	-	✓✓	✓
MA12: Site 8: Land at Catherine's Well (east of Hill House Bungalows)	x/-	-	x/-	-	-	✓	x/-
MA13: Site 10: Land at Windmill Clump (north of the telephone exchange)	x/-	x/-	x/-	-	-	✓✓	x/-
ALT1: Site 7: Land at Catherine's Well (east of the Blandford Road (C31))	x/-	x/-	x/-	-	-	✓✓	x/-
ALT2: Site 12: Land at Catherine's Well (west of Athelstan Way)	x/-	x/-	xx/x	-	-	✓/✓✓	x/-

6.10 The following table sets out the basis for the above scores. Policy MA1 has been assessed based on the cumulative impact of the sites proposed for allocation. Policy MA9 should ensure that the housing built better meets the needs of local residents, and is not considered likely to have an adverse impact against the remaining environmental objectives (the main potential issue being the requirement for bungalows or similar property types designed specifically with older people's needs in mind).

Objective	Assessment basis
Biodiversity, fauna & flora	No significant ecological concerns were raised for any of the sites through the AECOM study. It notes that sites 7 and 8 border an area of ancient and semi-natural woodland and site 10 is adjacent to an area of deciduous woodland (a BAP Priority Habitat) and therefore development in these locations could lead to indirect impacts through noise / light / disturbance. All of the sites fall within or on the very edge of the Bere Stream (and

	<p>therefore Poole Harbour) catchment. It is important that development in this catchment achieves nitrogen neutrality in line with the guidance set out in the Nitrogen Reduction in Poole Harbour Supplementary Planning Document (2017). This requirement is reflected in policy MA1.</p> <p>The more detailed ecological survey concludes that the grasslands are of little ecological interest but that the hedgerows on sites 5, 6, 7 and 12 are of ecological importance and may qualify as Important Hedgerows under the Hedgerow Regulations Act (1997).</p> <p>Consideration should also be given to the potential presence of bats, reptiles and nesting birds along hedgerows and lines of trees in sites 5, 6 and 8 and the woodland edges in sites 7, 10 and 12. Given the comments on highway site lines, some compensatory planting may be necessary as part of a biodiversity and mitigation plan. On this basis, all of the sites have scored as having a potentially slight adverse to neutral impact, and the retention of hedgerows / trees as far as practical, together with mitigation and enhancement should be required as part of any site allocation.</p>
Landscape	<p>All of the sites are within the Dorset AONB. No landscape concerns were raised for sites 5 and 8 through the AECOM study. A locally important view does look across sites 5 and 7 towards the Isle of Wight, Poole Harbour and the Purbeck Hills, but the viewpoint is much higher and should not be adversely impacted provided the location and elevation of the properties are carefully considered. There are long views to the south of site 6 across the village which are particularly prominent from the northern half of the site, due to its elevation and aspect, and although significant harm can be avoided, the layout and design would need to take these views and visibility into account and some minor harm is considered likely. The development of the entire area of site 7 would constitute major development in the AONB and could also significantly change the character of the existing village, and therefore only part of the site fronting onto the road should be considered for development in order to avoid significant harm (and has been assessed on this basis), although some minor harm is still considered likely. The southern half of Site 10 is also considered less suitable to take forward as an allocation, due to its elevated topography and prominent setting within the Dorset AONB, and although significant harm can be avoided some minor harm is still likely. Similarly due to its topography and elevation, the northern half of Site 12 is highly visible from the surrounding landscape and has long views to the south over the AONB, and would cause significant harm. On this basis, sites 6, 7, 10 and 12 have scored as having a potentially slight adverse to neutral impact, with mitigation requiring a reduction in site area and consideration of views / landscaping as part of any site allocation.</p>
Cultural heritage -	<p>No heritage concerns were raised for sites 7 and 10 through the AECOM study – although points are noted in respect of both these sites in the more detailed heritage impact assessment. Sites 5, 6 and 12 lie adjacent to the Milton Abbey Registered Park and Garden, and the study notes that development could impact upon the setting of this locally significant heritage asset. The western half of Site 12 also contains monument MDO4459 (Cross dyke, Milton Abbas), which is listed on the Dorset HER as dating back to the Bronze Age to late Iron Age (and the whole of Site 12 falls within the Milton Abbas Conservation Area). Site 8 adjoins the Conservation Area and the grounds of Milton Manor (a Grade II listed building) – the more</p>

	<p>detailed assessment notes that Site 7 is similarly positioned in respect of the Conservation Area and Hill Lodge (a Grade II listed building), and that Site 10 could impact on the setting of the Conservation Area to its northern edge.</p> <p>The more detailed heritage impact assessment concludes that for those sites adjoining the Milton Abbey Registered Park and Garden, development should include a generous physical and visual buffer between built development and the parkland boundary through appropriate landscaping to enable the asset to be seen and appreciated and minimise any harm. Site 5 has been significantly reduced in scale with only the westernmost part proposed for buildings, and no adverse impact is considered likely. For Site 6, as well as landscaping the removal of permitted development rights may be necessary to prevent ancillary outbuildings being sited close to the boundary. In relation to Site 10, the report advises that development should be limited to the north-eastern corner of the site in lieu of the existing farm buildings in order to avoid potential harm to the rural setting of the conservation area, although some minor harm is still considered possible. In relation to Site 7 the report advises that an appropriate landscaped area with trees would help safeguard the setting of the listed Hill Lodge building and help reinforce the rural location of the Conservation Area, although some minor harm is still considered possible depending on the scale of development proposed. Site 12 is considered to be the most sensitive site in heritage terms, and some harm is likely if any development is proposed in this location, even if limited to its eastern edge.</p>
<p>Climate change (flood risk)</p>	<p>No flood risk concerns were raised for any of the sites through the AECOM study. There is local knowledge of surface water runoff that drains from the rural fields through Site 5 and onto the road, which is not currently identified on the national flood risk maps. Sites 5 and 6 lie within the groundwater infiltration consultation zones delineated by Wessex Water (indicating areas where there is a medium risk of foul sewer inundation). Within these areas Wessex Water have indicated that they are likely to object to major development unless a groundwater management strategy is in place and they have agreed any flood risk mitigation measures. Provided these issues are properly addressed at planning application stage, and therefore this requirement is reflected in the site allocations, any significant harm should be avoided.</p>
<p>Soil, water & air pollution</p>	<p>No contamination concerns were raised for the majority of sites through the AECOM study given their greenfield status (with the exception of Site 8), and confirmed by the Dorset Council record checks. The only non-residential use proposed is in relation to the visitor centre and coach parking on Site 10, which although within a groundwater source protection area (Zone III) is unlikely to give rise to pollution concerns.</p>
<p>Meeting local needs</p>	<p>Site 5 falls below the threshold for requiring on-site affordable housing although a financial contributions will be sought as 6 dwellings are proposed. Site 8 only has capacity for 1 dwelling (open market). Site 6 is owned by the Parish Council who have offered to develop the site for a higher proportion of affordable housing (65%) than would otherwise be required. Site 8 includes 3 dwellings in conjunction with a visitor centre which would provide local job opportunities. Sites 7 and 12 have the potential capacity for 10 or more dwellings (although these is likely to impact on some of the other environment impacts that this assessment seeks to avoid) and</p>

	therefore could also provide affordable housing as on-site provision, although not to the same extent as offered through Site 6, and they may fall under the threshold for on-site provision due to the other site limitations (this is considered more likely in the case of Site 12).
Safe and accessible	<p>There is very little difference between the site options and access to key facilities as assessed in the AECOM report. Sites 5, 6 and 12 are marginally better, and Site 8 marginally worse, but not significantly different to justify a variation in score. There is no local school or regular bus service (but the education authority schedules a diversion to the X12 bus service to cater for the school run to and from Blandford) and limited local employment opportunities. The Parish Council have also agreed to provide additional parking on Site 6 to help reduce the current parking problems associated with increased levels of use of the surgery and recreation area.</p> <p>Advice from the Transport Development Manager did not raise significant concerns but highlighted the need to consider pedestrian connectivity from Site 5 back into the village (to avoid pedestrians using the Blandford Road (C31), and the need for a new 2m wide footway be provided along the entire Blandford Road (C31) frontage for Site 7. Site 10 would require suitable visibility splays to be provided (particularly given the national speed limit) with sufficient radii for coaches, and further consideration would be needed in terms of pedestrian connectivity to the village centre given the steepness of the public footpath connection to the main street.</p> <p>On this basis, all of the sites have scored as having a potentially slight adverse to neutral impact, with the exception of Site 6 where a slight positive score reflects the benefits of improved parking for the community facilities.</p>

6.11 The site allocations included in the Plan (Sites 5, 6, 8 and 10) can be compared to the rejected reasonable alternatives (Sites 7 and 12). The rejection of Site 12 is considered appropriate given the greater heritage impacts. The rejection of Site 7 is considered reasonable at this stage given the level of housing need identified and that the main alternative (Site 6) has additional benefits in that it would result in a higher proportion of affordable homes and additional parking for the surgery and recreation area, and Site 10 provides long-term economic benefits with the provision of a visitor centre as part of the site's development, and the other alternative sites (Site 5 and 8) included in the Plan are not markedly different to site 7 in sustainability terms. So, in short, the alternative options would have a similar or potentially greater level of harm and there is no obvious reason why these should be used instead.

6.12 Although the short-term impacts of the development during and immediately after construction may be greater these are not considered likely to be significant and can be appropriately mitigated through the planning application process.

DESIGN-BASED POLICIES: POLICIES MA2-4 AND POLICY MA8

6.13 Policy MA2 deals with the density of future development, with Policies MA3 and MA4 adding more detail on suitable designs (including reference to scale, form and materials) and Policy MA8 providing guidance on parking standards. No reasonable alternatives were identified for further assessment – the only other option being the omission of the policies and reliance on the Local Plan (ie the baseline).

Environmental assessment objective	Biodiversity, fauna & flora	Landscape	Cultural heritage	Climate change (flood risk)	Soil, water & air pollution	Meeting local needs	Safe and accessible
Policies and reasonable alternatives							
MA2: Low Housing Density (net building densities should not exceed 15 dph)	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	x	x/-
MA3: The Pattern of Development and Streetscape (respect local character)	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	-
MA4: Building Design (a rural village character with sufficient living space)	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-
MA8: Parking (a minimum of 2 car parking spaces plus provision for visitors)	-	-	-	✓	-	-	✓

6.14 The following table sets out the basis for the above scores.

Objective	Assessment basis
Biodiversity, fauna & flora	Policy MA2 should enable more space for the retention of trees / hedgerows and incorporation of wildlife areas within the development, and MA3 reinforces the need to retain native trees and other natural features within the site where practical.
Landscape	Policy MA2 will allow spacing between buildings to provide views connecting out to the countryside, and MA3 reinforces the gently curved and generally set-back nature of building lines as well as the incorporation of native trees and other natural features within the site.
Cultural heritage -	Policies MA2-4 are drafted based on retaining and reinforcing the historic character of the village.
Climate change (flood risk)	The low density of development under Policy MA2 should provide more opportunity for sustainable drainage systems to be incorporated within the designs. The use of permeable surface materials is highlighted in respect of the parking requirements under Policy MA8.
Soil, water & air pollution	There are no policy issues identified that are relevant to this objective.
Meeting local needs	The low density required under Policy MA2 will potentially result in less affordable housing and a less efficient use of land.
Safe and accessible	The low density required under Policy MA2 will potentially result in development that is less readily served by public transport (however it is noted that there are no commercial services running). Policy MA8 highlights the importance of adequate turning to allow forward entry onto any C classified road, which should provide for safer access and egress.

LOCALLY IMPORTANT FEATURES POLICIES: POLICIES MA5-7

6.15 Policy MA5-7 highlight three key features that the plan seeks to safeguard. These are the important views, local green spaces and dark skies. No reasonable alternatives were identified for further assessment – the only other option being the omission of the policies and reliance on the Local Plan (ie the baseline).

Environmental assessment objective	Biodiversity, fauna & flora	Landscape	Cultural heritage	Climate change (flood risk)	Soil, water & air pollution	Meeting local needs	Safe and accessible
Policies and reasonable alternatives							
MA5: Important Views	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	-
MA6: Local Green Spaces	✓	-	✓	-	-	-	-
MA7: Dark Skies	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-

6.16 The following table sets out the basis for the above scores.

Objective	Assessment basis
Biodiversity, fauna & flora	Policy MA6 identifies a number of spaces that provide or have the potential to include local wildlife habitats, most notably St James's Churchyard which includes a wildlife area. Policy MA7 will be potentially beneficial to nocturnal protected species (such as bats and barn owls).
Landscape	Although none of the local green spaces identified in MA6 are selected for their landscape value, policy MA5 identifies a number of key views that are important for the enjoyment of the local landscape, and MA7 highlights the dark night skies as an important local feature to be safeguarded.
Cultural heritage -	A number of key views and local spaces relate specifically to the appreciation of key heritage assets (St James's Church the Milton Abbey etc).
Climate change (flood risk)	There are no policy issues identified that are relevant to this objective.
Soil, water & air pollution	There are no policy issues identified that are relevant to this objective.
Meeting local needs	There are no policy issues identified that are relevant to this objective. The areas safeguarded do not preclude sufficient sites from being identified that are able to meet the assessed housing need.
Safe and accessible	There are no policy issues identified that are relevant to this objective. The restriction on lighting does not preclude lighting that is necessary for health and safety reasons.

CUMULATIVE AND OTHER EFFECTS OF THE PLAN'S POLICIES

6.17 While some of the policies may individually have a relatively minor impact on the environmental, social and economic characteristics of the Neighbourhood Plan area, collectively this impact could be much more significant. So, as part of this assessment, the combined impacts of the policy proposals have been considered, by reviewing the potential impacts in one table, and considering the potential for synergies that may make this impact more significant than the sum of these impacts alone.

Environmental assessment objective	Biodiversity, fauna & flora	Landscape	Cultural heritage	Climate change (flood risk)	Soil, water & air pollution	Meeting local needs	Safe and accessible
Policies contained in the Plan							
MA1: Spatial Strategy (allocations plus conversions ⇒ at least 20 new homes)	x/-	-	x/-	x/-	-	✓✓	-
MA2: Low Housing Density (net building densities should not exceed 15 dph)	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	x	x/-
MA3: The Pattern of Development and Streetscape (respect local character)	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	-
MA4: Building Design (a rural village character with sufficient living space)	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-
MA5: Important Views	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	-
MA6: Local Green Spaces	✓	-	✓	-	-	-	-
MA7: Dark Skies	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-
MA8: Parking (a minimum of 2 car parking spaces plus provision for visitors)	-	-	-	✓	-	-	✓
MA9: Affordable and Local Housing (⇒ affordable and age-accessible homes)	-	-	-	-	-	✓✓	-
MA10: Site 5: Land at Langham Farm (eastern section adjoining the road)	x/-	-	-	x/-	-	✓/✓✓	x/-
MA11: Site 6: Land at Catherine's Well (west of the allotments)	x/-	x/-	x/-	x/-	-	✓✓	✓
MA12: Site 8: Land at Catherine's Well (east of Hill House Bungalows)	x/-	-	x/-	-	-	✓	x/-
MA13: Site 10: Land at Windmill Clump (north of the telephone exchange)	x/-	x/-	x/-	-	-	✓✓	x/-

6.18 This analysis indicates that, overall, the adverse impacts are likely to be balanced or outweighed by positive impacts, with the most positive impacts scored against the objective of meeting local needs. Although there are some potentially adverse impacts identified these are generally mitigated through the detailed policy wording that highlights how specific issues are to be addressed.

6.19 The potential for secondary (indirect) impacts – such as the impacts of increased sewerage and groundwater on flood risks and biodiversity downstream - have been considered but no specific issues identified that would suggest significant adverse impacts are likely, particularly given the mitigation measures incorporated into the Plan.

7 CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSED MONITORING

LIKELY SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

7.1 There are no likely significant adverse impacts identified as a result of the assessment of plan's objectives and proposed policies. The main significant impact identified is in terms of the positive impact of meeting local housing needs.

MONITORING

7.2 In regard to the above, the existing monitoring arrangements set out in the adopted Local Plan include:

- Overall provision of new dwellings
- Number of affordable homes approved per annum

7.3 The above monitoring, if made available in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan area, should enable most of the significant effects of the plan to be monitored.

8 NOVEMBER 2019 ADDENDUM:

8.1 This report was consulted on at the same time as the pre-submission draft of the Neighbourhood Plan. There were no specific comments on the report itself from Historic England, Natural England or the Environment Agency. However although not commenting on the SEA, the Dorset AONB team did raise landscape impact concerns in respect of Sites 5 and 10. In addition, Terence O'Rourke queried the justification for rejecting site 7 on behalf of Gleeson Strategic Land.

8.2 These comments were considered and Jo Witherden of Dorset Planning Consultant Limited met with Sarah Barber (representing the Dorset AONB team) at Milton Abbas on 14 October 2019.

8.3 With respect to Site 5, the AONB response to the pre-submission draft had raised concerns that the northward extension and that this would fail to conserve the tight knit pattern of the village and breach the existing settlement boundary, and suggested that increasing the number of homes within site 6 (Land at Catherine's Well, west of the allotments) may result in lower impacts on the AONB. Reference was made to the LCA Planning Guidelines for the type of landscape in which the village is based, that state we should:

- Conserve the pattern of tight knit villages and views of key landmarks.
- Ensure new housing development is complimentary to settlement scale, form and density and secure appropriate mitigation measures. Promote the use of previously developed land before greenfield sites, where this is well connected to settlement form. Require appropriate materials and architectural detailing, recognising the variable viability issues affecting market and affordable homes. Reduce the impact of associated features, including lighting, parking and access.

8.4 As a result, changes have been made to the policy and the defined development area to address these concerns as far as possible. These include:

- Reorienting the site to run away from the main road (reflecting the settlement pattern at Catherine's Well and minimising the northward extension to the settlement)
- Retaining the hedgeline along the road as far as practical (with replacement hedgerow planting set back from the created verge to provide the necessary visibility splay)
- Making clear that the ridge height of the properties (as measured AOD) should not significantly exceed that of Nos 1 and 2 New Close Cottages and Stonecroft

8.5 With respect to Site 7, the AONB representative confirmed that they had raised a strong objection to the development of the site (in relation to Gleeson's outline application for the erection of up to 58 dwellings ref: 2019/0824/OUT).

From: Richard I Brown
Sent: 24 Jul 2019 13:50:42 +0000
To: Process Team
Subject: RE: Planning Consultation - 2/2019/0824/OUT - Land At E 381115 N 102318
Catherines Well Milton Abbas Dorset

[key extracts]

I note that the applicant contends that the application would not be considered as 'major' due to its containment and setting. However, I do not agree with this opinion and recommend that the Council regards the proposal as a form of major development within the AONB. Case law has demonstrated that

there are no strict thresholds for classifying a development as 'major' and that the planning authority should have regard to specific factors, such as the scale, character and location of a proposal, as suggested by *Aston v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* (2013). Having regard to the large scale of the proposal and the relatively undeveloped nature of the site and its wider context, I suggest that the proposal can readily be defined as 'major development'.

When conducting a major development test, an application should only be considered to pass if it can satisfy all three components. Concerning the 'need' test, I am aware that the authority does not have a five-year land supply and, clearly, there is a generic need for housing across the Plan area. I note that the applicant estimates that the 'fair share' of homes for Milton Abbas should be regarded as 41. As the application acknowledges, even by its own calculations, the development is larger than might be expected and contains homes that address wider housing need. I also note that there is a significant difference between the 'fair share' estimate made by the applicant and the number of new homes being targeted through the recently published draft Neighbourhood Development Plan, which identifies a need for between 20-22 homes between 2019-31. Because the application is suggesting a large number of homes, beyond what might be considered a 'fair share' for the village, I consider that there are clear grounds to consider that the application would fail the first two aspects of the major development test outlined in NPPF 172, relating to the need for the development and the scope for developing outside of the designated area.

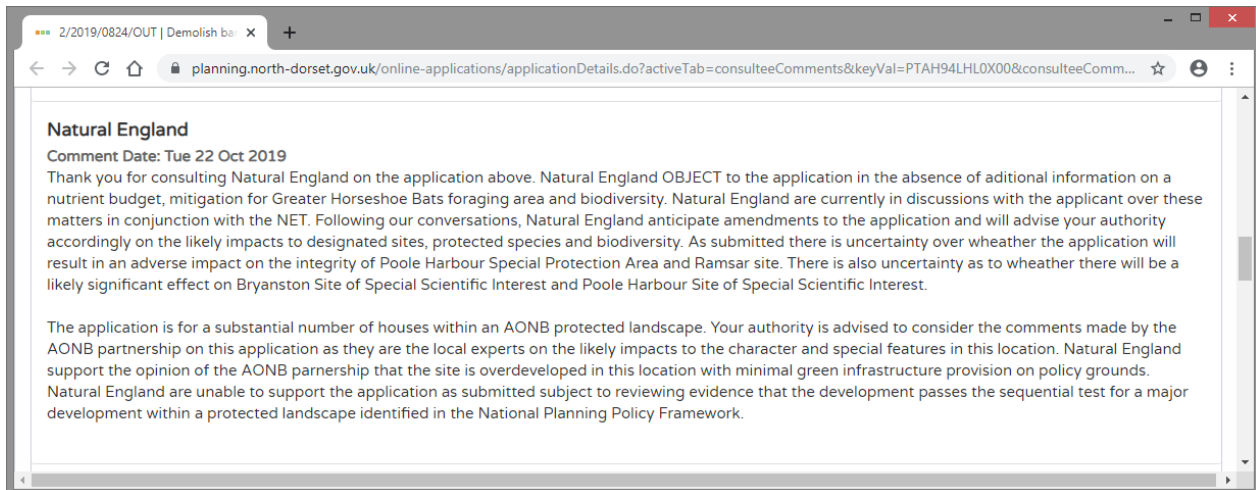
Concerning the third aspect of the test, particularly concerning detrimental impacts on the landscape and the extent to which these can be moderated, I consider that the development, whilst relatively well contained, would nonetheless generate some adverse effects that would not conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB. These effects can be summarised as follows:

- Effects on landscape character of the site, which themselves are recognised to be substantial adverse by the submitted LVIA. This assessment appears to recognise that there will be a substantial change to the character of the site. As I have stated earlier, with reference to the AONB's Special Qualities, I am concerned that this change would significantly adversely erode the physical and perceptual qualities that underpin the area's undeveloped rural character, tranquility and remoteness. Notwithstanding the proximity of the site to the edge of the village and the inclusion of some development within the site area, the scale of the proposed growth would clearly conflict with these qualities, in my opinion.
- The creation of a new access into the site will require the removal and realignment of a mature hedgerow and the creation of a new junction. This will have a direct impact on a valued and protected landscape feature. This will have adverse landscape and visual effects effect on the rural road to the West of the site. I note that the LVIA considers that the development proposals would only have a negligible effect on users of the road. However, I consider that this is an underestimation when considering both the impact of the new access and of the introduction of a relatively large housing estate to the east of the road.
- There will be some effects on public footpaths in the wider area, such as from bridleway E15/1, which runs north of doctor's surgery at St Catherine's Well. The LVIA predicts a negligible adverse visual effect, which I consider to be an underestimation.

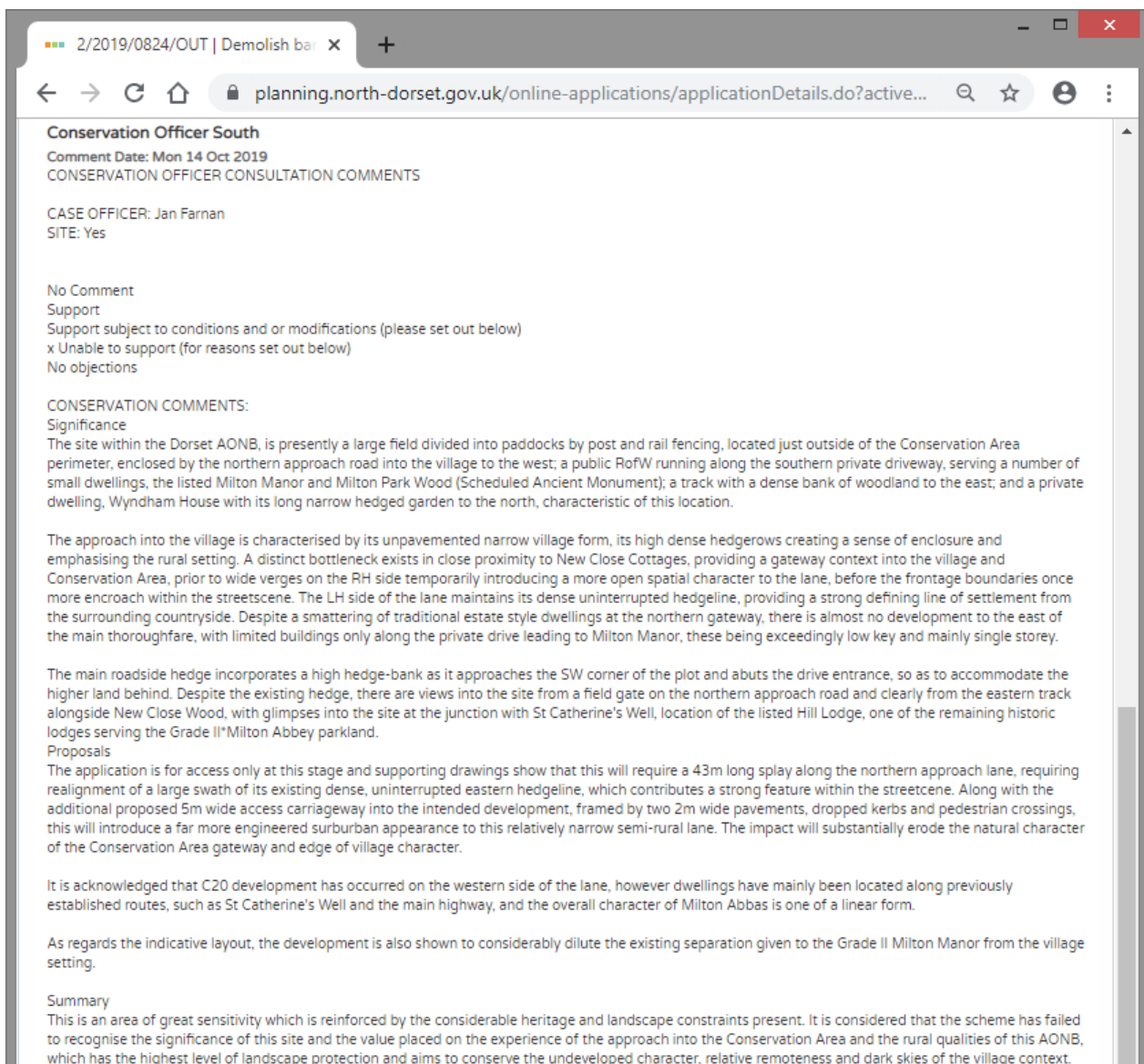
8.6 The AONB representative indicated at the site meeting that they would be unlikely to support a reduced scheme in this location.

8.7 Natural England's comments on that application (dated 22/11/19) confirmed that they were unable to support the application as submitted as it did not pass the necessary tests for a major development within a protected landscape identified in the

National Planning Policy Framework, and in addition highlighted the need to mitigate for a reduction in a Greater Horseshoe Bats foraging area and biodiversity loss.



8.8 An objection had also been raised by the Conservation Officer (dated 11/10/19) on the basis that it would “erode the natural character of the Conservation Area gateway and edge of village character [and] dilute the existing separation given to the Grade II Milton Manor from the village setting.”



Despite the presence of some modern infill, this should not set a precedent for further expansion that requires an infrastructure that is overly suburban which fails to preserve or enhance the designated Conservation Area setting. As such officer support cannot be forthcoming.

RECOMMENDATION: Unable to Support

In determining the proposals due consideration has been given to Section 16 (Paragraphs 190,192,193,194,195,196,200) of the NPPF, Section(s) 66/72 of the 1990 Act and Policy 5 of the Local Plan

Conditions:

Informatives:

OFFICER: Jen Nixon

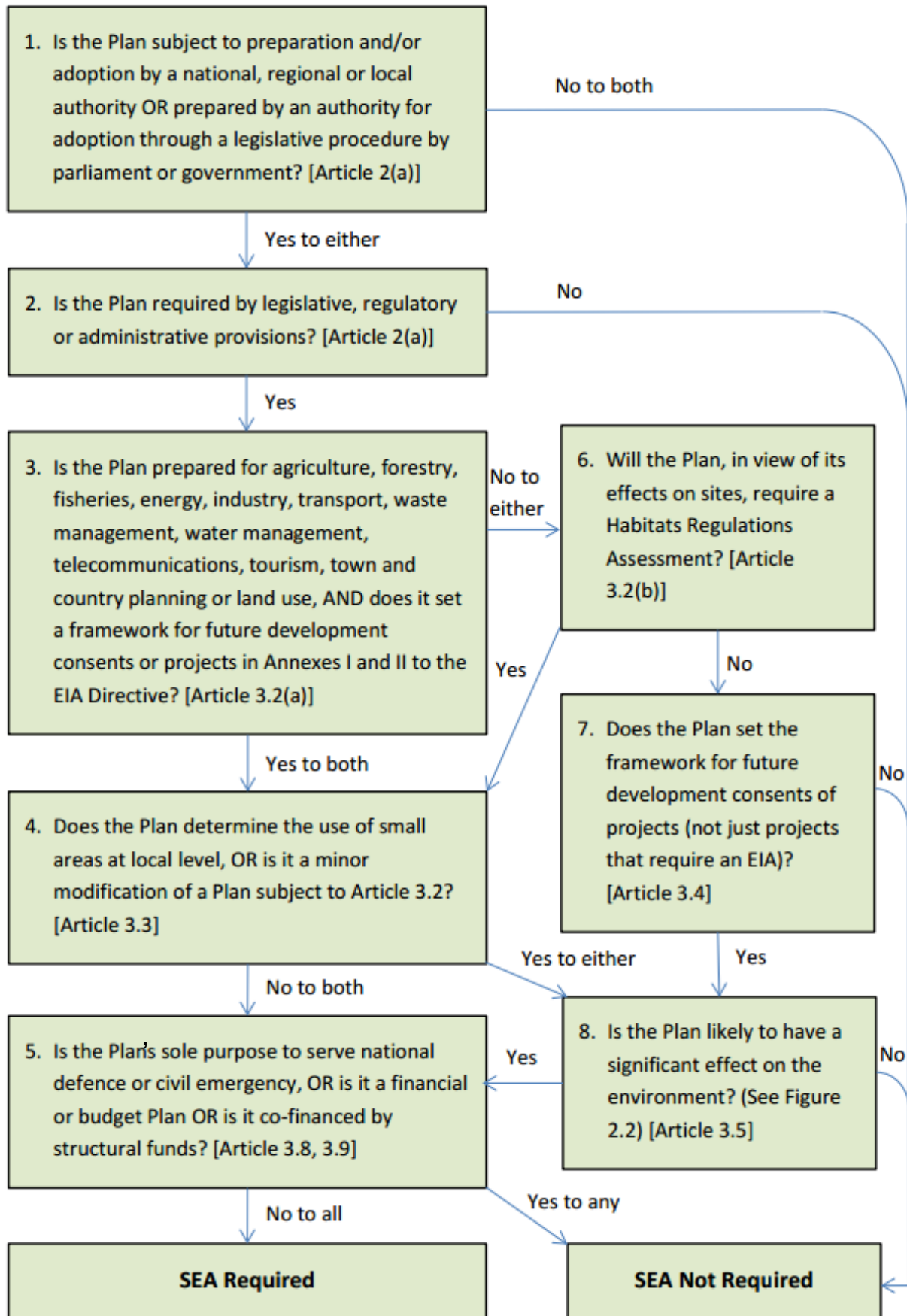
TITLE: Conservation Officer

DATE: 11.10.19

8.9 The decision was taken to remove Site 10 (Policy MA13), given the lack of evidence with regard to the visitor centre project's feasibility, and increase the number of homes on site 6 (Policy MA6) to up to 15 dwellings (as advised as likely to be acceptable by the AONB team).

8.10 The changes to Policy MA10 (increased capacity to 15 dwellings) and MA11 (as outlined above), the deletion of policy MA13, and other minor changes to the various policies in response to the consultation, are not considered to change the overall conclusions in this report.

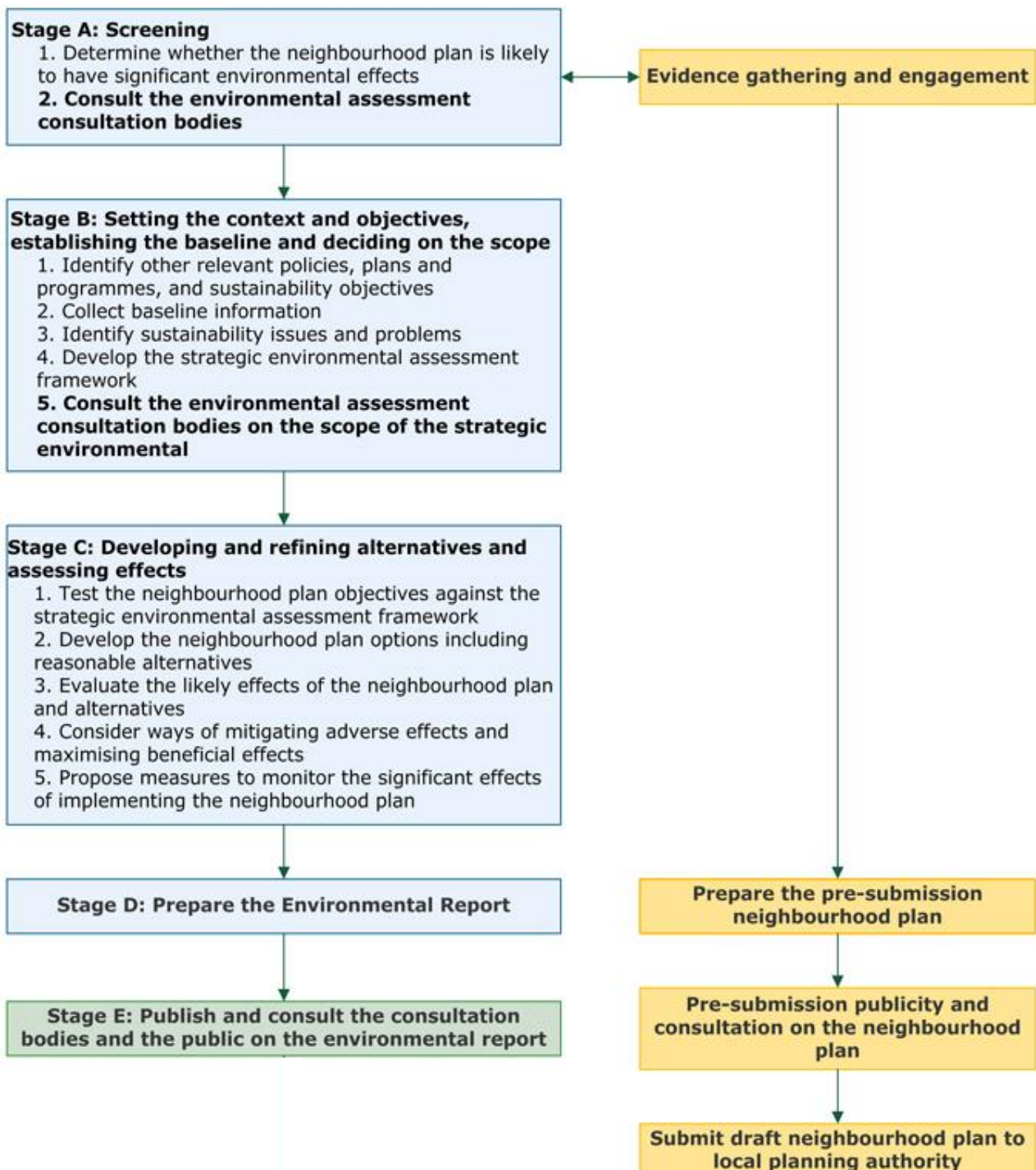
APPENDIX 1: A DIAGRAM SUMMARISING THE SEA SCREENING PROCESS.



APPENDIX 2: SEA STAGES

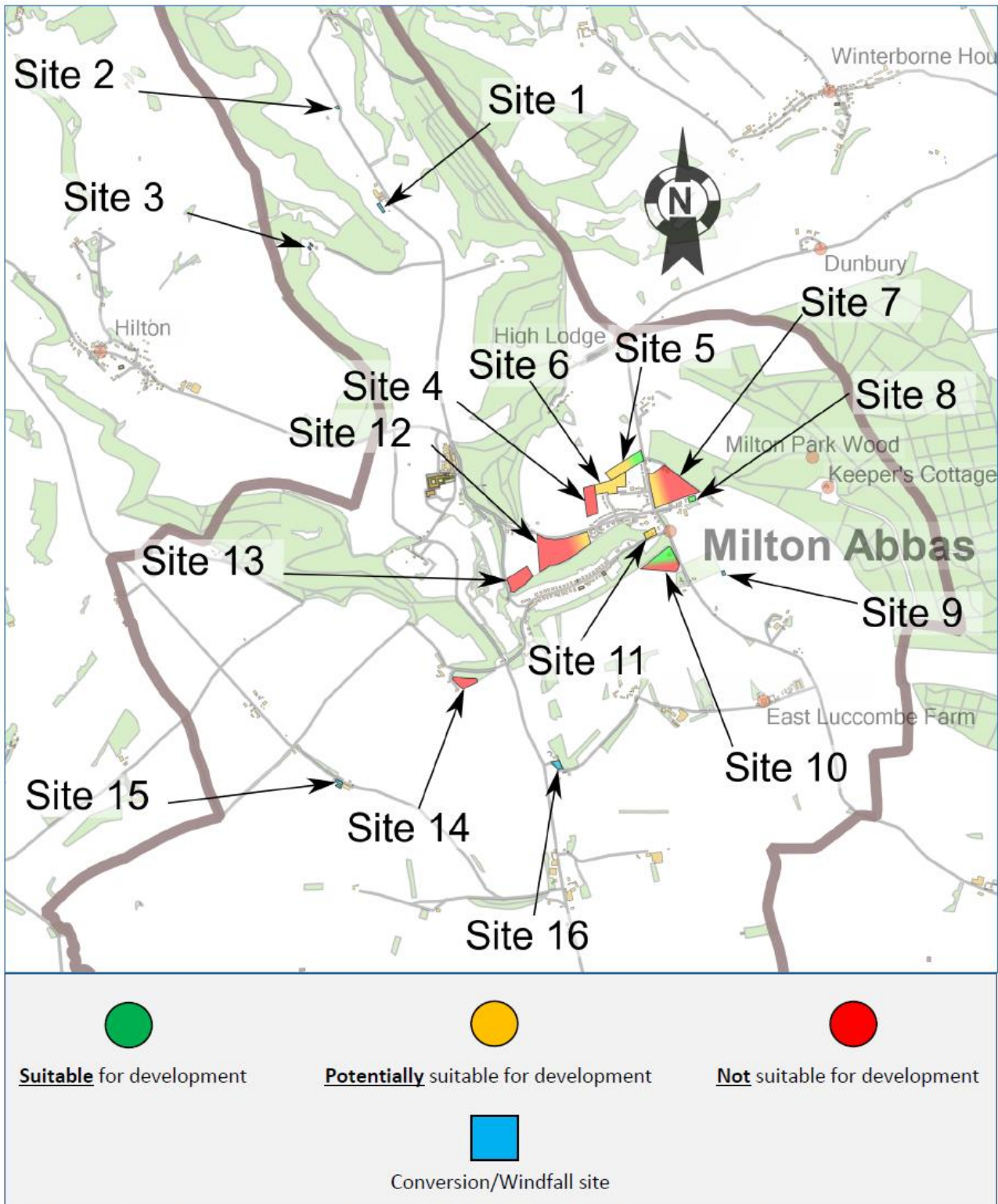
Strategic environmental assessment process

Neighbourhood plan preparation



APPENDIX 3: SITES FOR INITIAL ASSESSMENT

Site reference map



APPENDIX 4: CONTAMINATED LAND CHECKS

I enclose a map extracted from our records, which shows points of potential interest within an approximate 250 metre radius of the sites you have identified. The table below gives the associated descriptive information about these sites.

Map Location	Previous Land Use	Risk Assessment	Map Location	Previous Land Use	Risk Assessment
1	Disused Fuel Tank 1x250l		9	Quarrying of Sand & Clay & Operation of gravel pits	LOW
2	Quarrying of Sand & Clay & Operation of gravel pits	LOW	10	Quarrying of Sand & Clay & Operation of gravel pits	LOW
3	Quarrying of Sand & Clay & Operation of gravel pits	LOW	11	Quarrying of Sand & Clay & Operation of gravel pits	LOW
4	Hospitals	MEDIUM	12	Quarrying of Sand & Clay & Operation of gravel pits	LOW
5	Quarrying of Sand & Clay & Operation of gravel pits	LOW	13	Quarrying of Sand & Clay & Operation of gravel pits	LOW
6	Brewing and malting	LOW	14	Quarrying of Sand & Clay & Operation of gravel pits	LOW
7	Quarrying of Sand & Clay & Operation of gravel pits	LOW	15	Quarrying of Sand & Clay & Operation of gravel pits	LOW
8	Quarrying of Sand & Clay & Operation of gravel pits	LOW			

The Council is still in the process of compiling information on land contamination within its area, therefore any answers given represent only the information the Council currently has available. The Council's information about land with past or current possibly contaminating uses is not comprehensive.

