

Sustainability Appraisal for the Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan 2

Scoping Report

Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan 2 Steering Group

June 2018

Quality information

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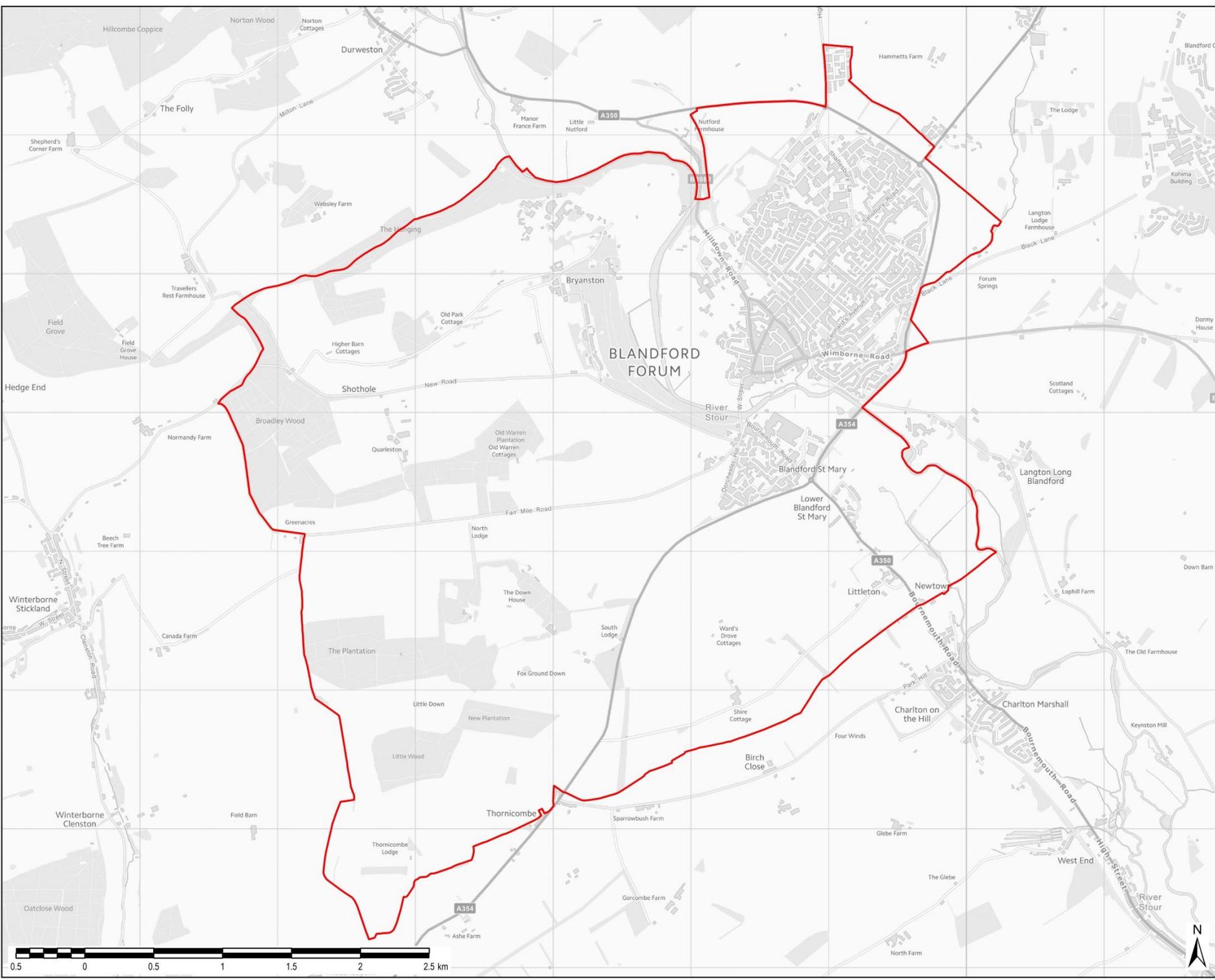
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LEGEND
 Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan Area

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Purpose of Issue
DRAFT

Client
BLANDFORD+ NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP

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SA FOR THE BLANDFORD+ NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2

Drawing Title
BLANDFORD+ NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

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Drawing Number
FIGURE 1.1

Rev
01

1. Introduction

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Sustainability Appraisal in support of the emerging Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan 2.
- 1.2 The Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan 2 is currently being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in the context of the emerging North Dorset Local Plan Review. It is currently anticipated that the Neighbourhood Plan will be submitted to North Dorset Council early in 2019.
- 1.3 Key information relating to the Neighbourhood Plan is presented in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Key facts relating to the Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan 2

Name of Responsible Authority	Blandford Forum Town Council, Blandford St Mary Parish Council and Bryanston Parish Council
Title of Plan	Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan 2
Subject	Neighbourhood Plan
Purpose	<p>The Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan 2 is being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The plan will be in general conformity with the emerging North Dorset Local Plan Review Part 1.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan will be used to guide and shape development within the Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan area.</p>
Timescale	To 2033
Area covered by the plan	The Neighbourhood Plan area covers the area administrated by Blandford Forum Town Council, Blandford St Mary Parish Council and Bryanston Parish Councils in North Dorset (Figure 1.1).
Summary of content	The Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan 2 will set out a vision, strategy and range of policies for the Neighbourhood Plan area.
Plan contact point	<p>Sally Gardner, Blandford Forum Town Council</p> <p>Email: Sally@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk</p>

Relationship of the Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan 2 with the North Dorset Local Plan

- 1.4 The Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan 2 is being prepared in the context of the current Local Plan for North Dorset and emerging Local Plan Review.
- 1.5 The local plan for North Dorset consists of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (NDLPP1) (adopted 2016), as well as policies retained from the District-Wide Local Plan (adopted 2003).
- 1.6 The NDLPP1 identifies Blandford Forum as one of the four main towns in North Dorset, alongside Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton. These four service centres each have their own distinctive characteristics, providing a range of shops, jobs and community facilities to their respective rural hinterlands.
- 1.7 Policy 6 (Housing Distribution) presents the strategy for housing distribution throughout the District, apportioning 1,200 homes (21% of the total for the District) to be delivered in Blandford Forum during the Plan period. The level of proposed housing growth reflects the town's importance as the main service center in the south of the District.
- 1.8 Policy 11 (The Economy) highlights that approximately 3,630 new jobs will be needed in North Dorset by 2031. In this context, 49.6 hectares of land will be developed primarily for employment uses in North Dorset between 2011 and 2031. This will include the development of key strategic sites primarily for employment uses. The following allocated sites are located within Blandford:
- part of the Brewery site, Blandford St. Mary (about 3.0 hectares); and
 - Land off Shaftesbury Lane, Blandford Forum (about 4.8 hectares).
- 1.9 NDLPP1 Policy 16 (Blandford) states that the housing target for the area will be met through, in addition to infilling and redevelopment within the settlement boundary, the following:
- mixed-use regeneration of the Brewery site;
 - the development of land to the south east of Blandford St Mary; and
 - The development of land to the west of Blandford St Mary (at Lower Bryanston Farm and Dorchester Hill).
- 1.10 NDLPP1 Policy 16 (Blandford) states that employment will be delivered through:
- the mixed-use regeneration of the Brewery site; and
 - the development of land off Shaftesbury Lane; and
 - the development of vacant sites on existing industrial estates; and
 - The retention of existing employment sites.
- 1.11 NDLPP1 Policy 16 (Blandford) states that additional retail floor space will be provided through:
- the extension of the existing Tesco supermarket at Stour Park; and
 - The provision of a new supermarket off Shaftesbury Lane.
- 1.12 North Dorset District Council (NDDC) is embarking on producing a Local Plan Review for the District, to ensure the Local Plan remains relevant in the face of rapidly changing circumstances. This includes relating to the publication of the Eastern Dorset Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (2015)¹, and the Government consultation document "Planning for the Right Homes in the Right Places: consultation proposals (2017)" which set out the standardized methodology to assess housing need.² These two documents have significant implications for the delivery of housing in the District, identifying

¹ GL Hearn (2015) Eastern Dorset Strategic Housing Market Assessment [online] available at: <<https://www.bournemouth.gov.uk/planningbuilding/PlanningPolicy/Local-Plan-Documents/Local-Plan-Documents.aspx>> last accessed 01/05/18

² Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2017) Planning for the right homes in the right places: consultation proposals [online] available at: <<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-right-homes-in-the-right-places-consultation-proposals>> last accessed 01/05/18

the Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN) for the District as 330 and 336 per annum respectively. This is a considerable increase from the 285 stated within the NDLP1. As such the Local Plan Review (LPR) will consider whether the updated figure of 366 per annum can be met within the District, and whether the proposed spatial strategy (current target of 1,200 homes for Blandford) is still the most appropriate.

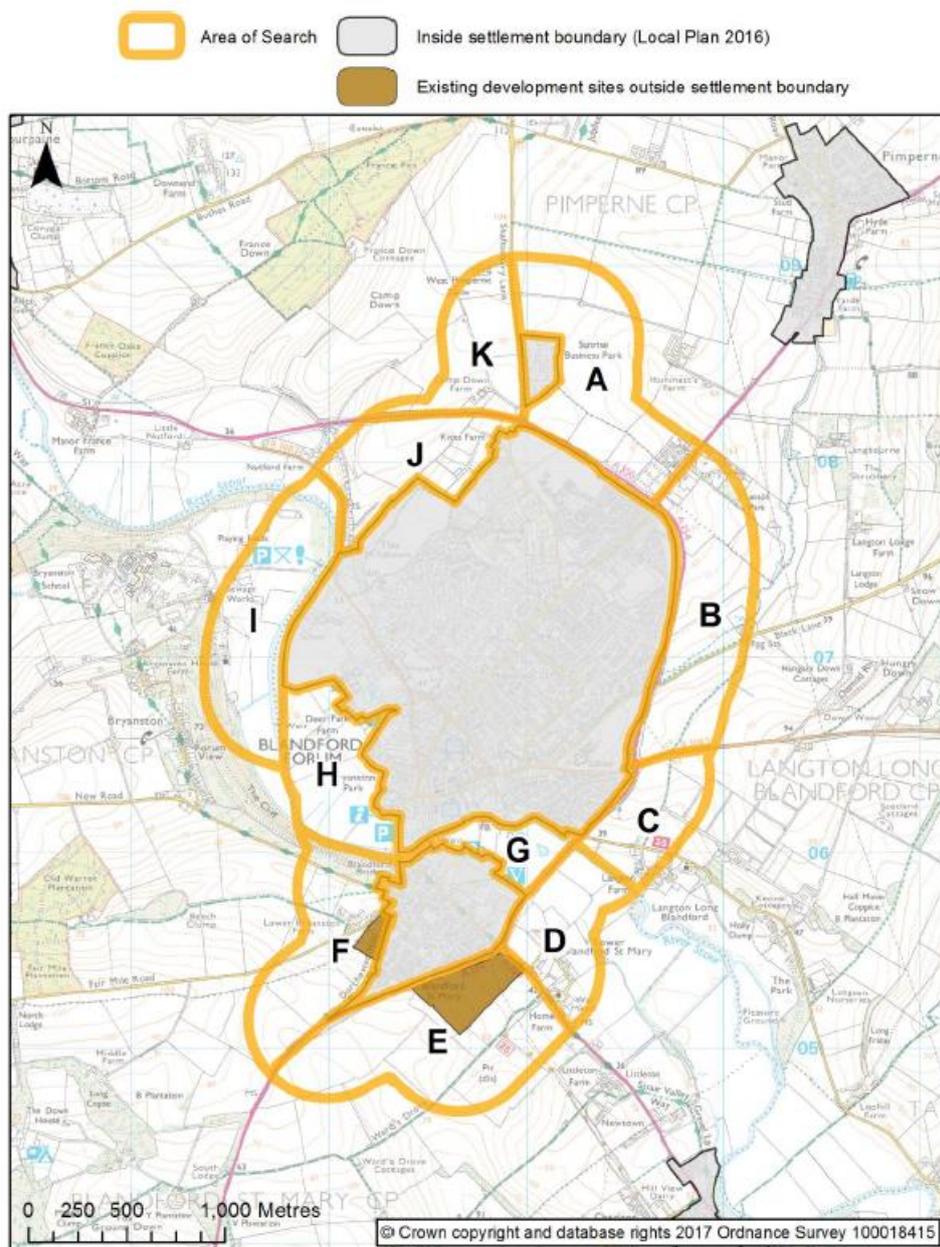
- 1.13 As part of this process the Council consulted on an Issues and Options Document from 27th November 2017 to 22nd January 2018.³
- 1.14 The Issues & Options document states that *"consideration needs to be given to whether there is potential for additional growth at Blandford which could contribute towards meeting the additional housing need figure for the whole of the District. Part of the Council's deliberations will relate to infrastructure demands that would result from development. New development, however, provides possibilities in terms of improving the existing infrastructure provision in the town. The Council is updating the existing Infrastructure Delivery Plan as part of the LPR to ensure that required infrastructure needs are identified."*
- 1.15 In considering potential future development options at Blandford, the Council has undertaken a 360 degree search around the existing settlement boundary that is defined for the town. The search resulted in the identification of 11 areas (A to K) (Figure 1.2). Unsuitable areas have been discounted through an assessment exercise which has drawn on, amongst other things, the appraisal work in the LPR Sustainability Appraisal.⁴
- 1.16 Following this process, Areas A, B, E, F and J have been identified as possibly having some development potential, even if that potential is limited, and so will be subject to further detailed consideration through the LPR and the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.17 With regard to economic development, the Council is currently of the view that *"there is likely to be a need to allocate additional employment land at Blandford as part of the LPR."*⁵
- 1.18 The District Council is now processing the responses that were received during this period and are due to issue a consultation report later in 2018. The next stage in the LPR process will be to progress the plan towards the publication of a Preferred Options Document, which will also be subject to consultation.

³ North Dorset District Council (2017) North Dorset Local Plan Review Issues and Options [online] available at: <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/423247> last accessed 01/05/18

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Figure 1.2 Blandford Areas of Search⁶



SA explained

- 1.19 SA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key sustainability issues. The aim of SA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative impacts. Through this approach, the SA for the Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan 2 seeks to maximise the developing plan's contribution to sustainable development.
- 1.20 SA is undertaken to address the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations) which transpose into national law the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive⁷. It also widens the scope of the assessment from focusing on environmental issues to further consider social and economic issues. SA is a legal requirement for Local Plans; however a Neighbourhood Plan is not a Local Plan and SA is not therefore legally required.

⁶ North Dorset District Council (2017) North Dorset Local Plan Review Issues and Options [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/423247>> last accessed 01/05/18

⁷ Directive 2001/42/EC

- 1.21 However, the Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan 2 has been screened in by NDDC as requiring a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). To meet this requirement, the Neighbourhood Plan is undergoing an SA process which incorporates the requirements of the SEA Directive. This reflects the socio-economic issues which the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to address.
- 1.22 The SA has been undertaken to meet specific requirements prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations).
- 1.23 Two key procedural requirements of the SEA Regulations are that:
1. When deciding on 'the scope and level of detail of the information' which must be included in the SA Report there is a consultation with nationally designated authorities concerned with environmental issues; and
 2. A report (the 'SA Report') is published for consultation alongside the Draft Plan (i.e. the draft Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan 2) that presents outcomes from the SA (i.e. discusses 'likely significant effects' that would result from plan implementation) and reasonable alternatives.

This scoping report

- 1.24 This 'Scoping Report' is concerned with item 1 above. It presents a suggested scope for the SA so that the designated authorities (the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England) can provide timely comment.

SA 'scoping' explained

- 1.25 Developing the draft scope for the SA as presented in this report has involved the following steps:
1. Defining the broader context for the Neighbourhood Plan and associated SA (i.e. EU, UK Government and local policy and commitments), to summarise the regulatory and legislative landscape;
 2. Establishing the baseline for the SA, (i.e. the current and future situation in the area in the absence of the Neighbourhood Plan)
 3. Identifying particular problems or opportunities ('issues') that should be a particular focus of the SA; and
 4. Developing a SA Framework comprising objectives and appraisal questions on the basis of these issues which can then be used to appraise the draft plan.

Structure of this report

Key sustainability issues

- 1.26 The outcomes of the scoping elements introduced through steps 1–4 above have been presented under a series of key SA themes, as follows:
- Air quality
 - Biodiversity and geodiversity
 - Climate change
 - Landscape and historic environment
 - Land, soil and water resources
 - Population and equalities
 - Health and wellbeing
 - Economy and enterprise
 - Transportation
- 1.27 The selected SA themes incorporate the 'SEA topics' suggested by Annex I (f) of the SEA Directive⁸. These were refined to reflect a broad understanding of the anticipated scope of plan effects.

⁸ The SEA Directive is 'of a procedural nature' (para 9 of the Directive preamble) and does not set out to prescribe particular issues that should and should not be a focus, beyond requiring a focus on 'the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors' [our emphasis]

- 1.28 It is intended that presenting the scoping information under these themes will help enable the reader to easily locate the information of greatest interest to them. Once agreed (i.e. subsequent to consultation on this Scoping Report), the suggested scope presented under nine themes will provide a methodological 'framework' for SA of the draft plan and reasonable alternatives. The discussion of the scoping information each theme is presented in Sections 2 to 10.

SA Framework to assess policy proposals

- 1.29 The SA Framework provides a way in which environmental effects can be defined and subsequently analysed based on standard 'tests'. Each proposal within the emerging Neighbourhood Plan will be assessed consistently using the framework.
- 1.30 The SA objectives and appraisal questions proposed for the Neighbourhood Plan SA are presented under each of the themes in Sections 2 to 10.

2. Air quality

Focus of theme

- Air pollution sources
- Air quality hotspots
- Air quality management

Headline sustainability issues

2.1 The following headline messages have emerged from the baseline review:

- There are no AQMAs within the District.
- Air quality in the Neighbourhood Plan area is good, with no significant issues identified.
- Traffic and congestion have the potential to increase emissions and reduce air quality in the area; however air pollution is at a very low baseline so likely effects are unlikely to be significant.

2.2 Due to the absence of significant and tangible air quality issues in the Neighbourhood Plan area, air quality has been scoped out for the purposes of the SA process.

Policy context

2.3 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- 'Planning policies should sustain compliance with and contribute towards EU limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local areas. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas is consistent with the local air quality action plan'.
- New and existing developments should be prevented from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of air pollution.

2.4 In terms of the local context, NDDC is required to monitor air quality across the District under Section 82 of the Environment Act (1995), report regularly to Defra and take action where nationally set levels are likely to be exceeded. Monitoring is undertaken to assess levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), sulphur dioxide, ozone, benzene and particulates.

2.5 In 2015 NDDC undertook a Local Air Quality Management Updating and Screening Assessment in fulfilment of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995.⁹ This Updating and Screening Assessment updates all monitoring data since the last Updating and Screening Assessment (undertaken in 2012) and screens for various potential sources of pollution within the District's administrative area in accordance with the Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance 2009.

2.6 A number of North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (2003) saved policies and adopted NDLP1 (2016) policies set out a range of measures which directly and indirectly relate to air quality. These include saved policies 5.1-5.18 and NDLP1 policies 3 (Climate Change), 13 (Grey Infrastructure) and 15 (Green Infrastructure).

⁹ North Dorset District Council (2015) Air Quality Updating and Screening Assessment for North Dorset District Council [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/airquality/north>> last accessed 01/05/18

Baseline summary

Summary of current baseline

- 2.7 Air quality is generally good in the wider District due to low levels of industry and low traffic flows. As such, North Dorset District does not include any Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs).
- 2.8 Outside of the District, the closest AQMAs to the Neighbourhood Plan area are in Dorchester to the south west, Poole to the south east, and Salisbury to the north east. These are all of considerable distance from the Neighbourhood Plan area (>20km).¹⁰
- 2.9 In terms of potential sources of pollution within the District, the most recent Air Quality Updating and Screening for North Dorset (2015) concluded:¹¹
- There are no Road Transport Sources of concern in North Dorset, and therefore a Detailed Assessment is not required for this source.
 - There are no Other Transport Sources of concern in North Dorset, and therefore a Detailed Assessment is not required for this source.
 - There are no Industrial Sources of concern in North Dorset, and therefore a Detailed Assessment is not required for this source.
 - There are no other Commercial and Domestic Sources of concern in North Dorset, and therefore a Detailed Assessment is not required for this source.
 - There are Fugitive or Uncontrolled Sources of concern in North Dorset, and therefore a Detailed Assessment will be required for this source if, following enclosure of the facility, there is still a requirement to do so.
- 2.10 A Detailed Assessment will be required for PM₁₀ at the HGV wash facility near Gillingham Station where there were previously complaints about dust / overspray if, following the enclosure of the facility, the requirement to do so remains. There are no other sources of concern within North Dorset.

Summary of future baseline

- 2.11 Whilst no significant air quality issues currently exist within the Neighbourhood Plan area, new employment, and / or housing provision and an increase in visitor numbers within the Neighbourhood Plan area have the potential for some limited adverse effects on air quality through increasing traffic flows and associated levels of pollutants such as NO₂.
- 2.12 Areas of particular sensitivity to increased traffic flows are likely to be the town centre and the routes with the largest congestion issues. However these effects may be offset in part by factors such as measures implemented through the emerging Local Plan Review, and the transport infrastructure provided through the associated NDDC Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2014)¹². Additionally, there are no existing road transport sources of concern in the District; and as such any increase in traffic flow at the local level is not likely to lead to significant air quality issues in the town.

¹⁰ Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (2018) AQMAs interactive map [online] available at: <<https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/maps>> last accessed 01/05/18

¹¹ North Dorset District Council (2015) Air Quality Updating and Screening Assessment for North Dorset District Council [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/airquality/north>> last accessed 01/05/18

¹² North Dorset District Council (2014) North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 Infrastructure Delivery Plan [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/media/215827/The-North-Dorset-Infrastructure-Delivery-Plan-2014/pdf/The-North-Dorset-Infrastructure-Delivery-Plan-2014.pdf>> last accessed 01/05/18

3. Biodiversity and geodiversity

Focus of theme

- Nature conservation designations
- Habitats
- Species
- Geodiversity

Headline sustainability issues

3.1 The following key issues have emerged from the baseline review:

- Fontmell and Melbury Downs SAC lies approximately 10 km north of Blandford, consisting of approximately 260 hectares of species rich chalk grasslands on the scarp slope of the Dorset Downs.
- There is an abundance of Ancient Woodland within the Neighbourhood Plan area, amounting to over 100ha.
- Bryanston SSSI is located in Bryanston, central to the Neighbourhood Plan area and to the west of Blandford Forum town. The SSSI consists of large roof space in the derelict 18th Century kitchens at Bryanston and is a breeding site for the greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrum-equinum*;
- There are three SNCIs located within the Neighbourhood Plan area, and an abundance of BAP priority habitats.
- Ecological networks extend throughout the Neighbourhood Plan area, providing invaluable connectivity for habitats and species with the District's wider network.

Policy context

3.2 At the European level, the EU Biodiversity Strategy¹³ was adopted in May 2011 in order to deliver an established new Europe-wide target to '*halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020*'.

3.3 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- Contribute to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity by minimising impacts and achieving net gains in biodiversity wherever possible.
- Promote the 'preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks' and the 'protection and recovery of priority species'. Plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across Local Authority boundaries.
- Set criteria based policies for the protection of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites, giving weight to their importance not just individually but as a part of a wider ecological network.
- Take account of the effects of climate change in the long term. Adopt proactive strategies to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including green infrastructure (i.e. 'A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities').
- Plan positively for 'green infrastructure' as part of planning for 'ecological networks'.
- High quality open spaces should be protected or their loss mitigated, unless a lack of need is established.

3.4 Goal 3 'Thriving plants and wildlife' and the policies contained within Chapter 2 'Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes' and Chapter 5 'Securing clean, productive and biologically diverse

¹³ European Commission (2011) Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 [online] available at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/pdf/EP_resolution_april2012.pdf > last accessed 01/05/18

seas and oceans' within the Government's 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' directly relates to the Biodiversity SA theme.

- 3.5 The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP)¹⁴ sets out the importance of a healthy, functioning natural environment to sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal well-being. It was in part a response to the UK's failure to halt and reverse the decline in biodiversity by 2010 and it signaled a move away from the traditional approach of protecting biodiversity in nature reserves to adopting a landscape approach to protecting and enhancing biodiversity. The NEWP also aims to create a green economy in which economic growth and the health of our natural resources sustain each other and markets, business and Government better reflect the value of nature. It includes commitments to:
- Halt biodiversity loss, support functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks by 2020;
 - Establish a new voluntary approach to biodiversity offsetting to be tested in pilot areas;
 - Enable partnerships of Local Authorities, local communities and landowners, the private sector and conservation organisations to establish new Nature Improvement Areas; and
 - Address barriers to using green infrastructure to promote sustainable growth.
- 3.6 Reflecting the commitments within the Natural Environment White Paper and the EU Biodiversity Strategy, 'Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services' aims to *'halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people'*¹⁵.
- 3.7 The recently published 25 Year Environment Plan sets out the Government's environmental plan of action over the next quarter century, in the context of Brexit. The Plan aims to tackle the growing problems of waste and soil degradation, improving social justice through tackling pollution and promoting the mental and physical health benefits of the natural world. It also sets out how the Government will address the effects of climate change. These aims are supported by a range of policies which are focused on the following six key areas:
- Using and managing land sustainably
 - Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes
 - Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing
 - Increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste
 - Securing clean, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans
 - Protecting and improving the global environment
- 3.8 At the regional level, the South West Nature Map (2018) identifies the best areas in the region (and therefore the District) to conserve, create and connect wildlife habitats at landscape scale.¹⁶ The Map should be used at the local level to move from a site-based to a wider landscape scale approach to wildlife protection and enhancement, with spatial planning policies designed to manage future development in a way which links, buffers and re-creates wildlife habitats, rather than further fragmenting them.
- 3.9 The Dorset Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2003) and subsequent Mid-Term Review Strategy (2010) seeks to ensure that the national targets for species and habitats are met at the local level.^{17,18} It states that although Dorset is one of the richest Counties for wildlife in England, nevertheless it has seen widespread declines in semi natural habitats and populations of rare and common species. The need to

¹⁴ Defra (2012) The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (Natural Environment White Paper) [online] available at: <<http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8082/8082.pdf>> last accessed 01/05/17

¹⁵ DEFRA (2011): 'Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services', [online] available at: <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-a-strategy-for-england-s-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services>> last accessed 01/05/18

¹⁶ North Dorset District Council (2018) South West Nature Map [online] available at: <http://www.biodiversitysouthwest.org.uk/nm_map3dk.html> last accessed 01/05/18

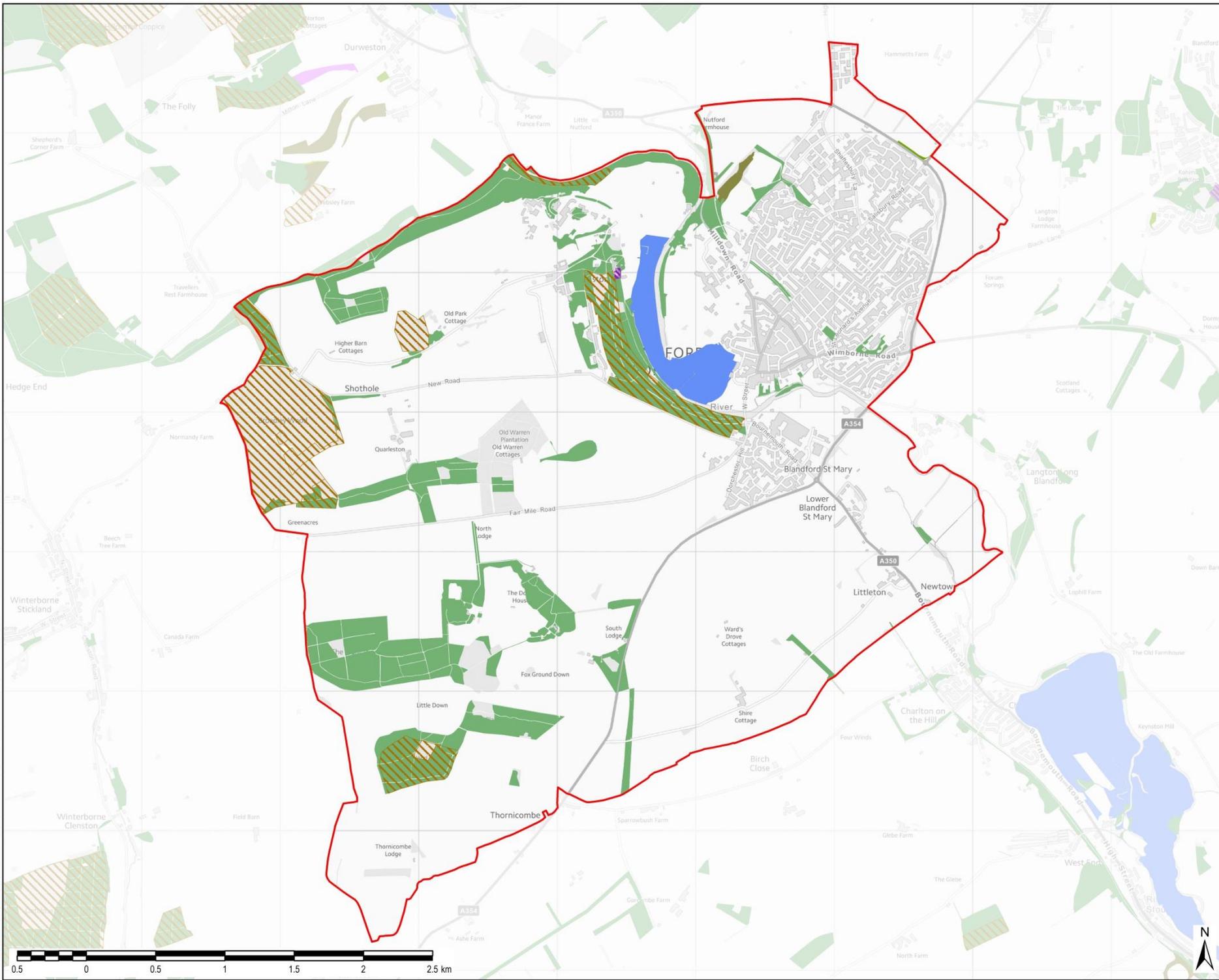
¹⁷ Dorset Biodiversity Partnership (2003) Dorset Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan [online] available at: <https://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/the_dorset_biodiversity_strategy.html> last accessed 01/05/18

¹⁸ Dorset Biodiversity Partnership (2010) Dorset Biodiversity Strategy Mid-Term Review [online] available at: <https://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/the_dorset_biodiversity_strategy.html> last accessed 01/05/18

reverse this fragmentation is made more urgent by predicted climate change. The UK Biodiversity Strategy lists 45 priority habitats for action; of these 32 occur in Dorset and six in North Dorset.

- 3.10 The Dorset Local Geodiversity Action Plan (2005) is concerned with the geology, geomorphology, soils and landscapes of Dorset.¹⁹ Geodiversity is important to biodiversity but also the local character and the landscape of the area. The strategy aims to conserve and enhance the geological resource and increase appreciation and understanding of the geological heritage of the area.
- 3.11 The NDDC Natural Environment and Climate Change Background Paper (2013) provides a general overview of issues relevant to the District's Natural Environment and Climate Change. It sets out the international, national and more local policy framework, relevant pieces of evidence gathered and the results of consultation in relation to the Natural Environment and Climate Change.
- 3.12 The following North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (2003) saved policies and adopted NDLP1 (2016) policies are relevant to the Biodiversity SA theme:
- Policy 4 (The Natural Environment)
 - Policy 15 (Green Infrastructure)
 - Policy 24 (Design)
 - Policy 25 (Amenity)
 - Policy 27 (Retention of Community Facilities)
 - Saved policy 1.34 (International Wildlife Sites)
 - Saved policy 1.35 (National Wildlife Sites)
 - Saved policy 1.36 (SNCIs)
 - Saved policy 1.38 (Protected Species and Habitats)
 - Saved policy 1.41 (Amenity Tree Planting)
 - Saved policy 4.5 (The Use of Redundant Railway Lines)

¹⁹The Dorset Local Geodiversity Action Plan (2005) [online] available at: <<https://jurassiccoast.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Dorset-Local-Geodiversity-Action-Plan.pdf>> last accessed 03/05/18



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LEGEND

- Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan Area
- Ancient Woodland
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats**
 - Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh
 - Deciduous Woodland
 - Good Quality Semi-improved Grassland
 - Lowland Calcareous Grassland
 - Lowland meadows
 - Traditional Orchard

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Purpose of Issue: **DRAFT**

Client: **BLANDFORD+ NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP**

Project Title: **SA FOR THE BLANDFORD+ NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2**

Drawing Title: **BIODIVERSITY DESIGNATIONS AND HABITATS**

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Drawing Number: **FIGURE 3.1**

Rev: **01**

Baseline summary

Summary of current baseline

Biodiversity

European designated sites

Fontmell and Melbury Downs Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

- 3.13 SACs are protected sites that are designated under the EC Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and by the UK government²⁰. Fontmell and Melbury Downs (263.09 ha) lies approximately 10 km north of Blandford consisting of semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates.²¹
- 3.14 This inland site supports consistently large populations of early gentian *Gentianella anglica*, numbering many thousands of plants. The site also includes large areas of species-rich chalk grassland and is one of three sites selected in the centre of the main range of the species.²²

Nationally designated sites

Ancient woodland

- 3.15 Ancient woodland takes hundreds of years to establish and is important for its:
- wildlife (which include rare and threatened species)
 - soils
 - recreational value
 - cultural, historical and landscape value
- 3.16 It is any area that's been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. It includes:
- ancient semi-natural woodland mainly made up of trees and shrubs native to the site, usually arising from natural regeneration; and
 - plantations on ancient woodland sites - replanted with conifer and broadleaved trees that retain ancient woodland features, such as undisturbed soil, ground flora and fungi.
- 3.17 Ancient Woodland present within the Neighbourhood Plan area includes:
- Old Park Wood (5.58ha) to the north west of the Neighbourhood Plan area – Ancient Replanted Woodland
 - Broadley Wood (51.8ha) to the north west of the Neighbourhood Plan area – Ancient Replanted Woodland
 - Little Wood (13.9ha) to the south west – Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland
 - 3.4ha of Ancient & Semi Natural Woodland along the northern boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area.
 - 28.7ha of Ancient & Semi Natural Woodland through the centre of the Neighbourhood Plan area, directly east of Bryanston. This coincides with the Cliff SNCI, later discussed.

Bryanston Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

- 3.18 Bryanston SSSI is a 0.3 ha site in Bryanston, relatively central to the Neighbourhood Plan area. The site was designated in 1986 under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 for its use as breeding site for the greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrum-equinum*.

²⁰ Joint Nature Conservation Committee (no date): Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) [online] available at: <<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-23>> last accessed [09/06/17]

²¹ Joint Nature Conservation Committee (no date): Fontmell and Melbury Downs [online] available at: <<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/ProtectedSites/SACselection/sac.asp?EUCCode=UK0012550>>

²² Ibid.

- 3.19 The large roof space in the derelict 18th century kitchens at Bryanston is the only known breeding site in Dorset and one of only 7 remaining in Britain. In addition to the building being used for breeding in summer, juveniles use the old chimneys and a tunnel during the autumn and winter. The estimated national population of this species is some 2-3,000 animals, confined to south-west England and west Wales.²³

Locally designated sites

Sites of Nature Conservation Interest

- 3.20 Sites of Nature Conservation (SNCIs) are locally important wildlife sites designated by the Dorset Wildlife Trust in partnership with local authorities for the conservation of locally and nationally threatened species.
- 3.21 The Milldown, Stour Meadows and The Cliff SNCI are located within the Neighbourhood Plan area. The former is an SNCI designated for its area of woodland and species rich grassland; Stour Meadows for its mixture of riverside vegetation, grassland, mature trees and a wildlife pond with numerous dragonflies; and, the latter Ancient Woodland and habitat for protected Greater Horseshoe Bats.

BAP Priority Habitats

- 3.22 There are a number of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Habitats located within the Neighbourhood Plan area. These are predominantly located to the north and west, and there are many habitats focused around Bryanston. BAP habitats found here include Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh, Deciduous Woodland and Traditional Orchard. These, and the other sites designated for biodiversity importance are shown in figure 3.1.

The River Stour

- 3.23 The River Stour, whilst not designated, notably supports valuable riparian flora and invertebrate fauna, migratory fish species and otters.

Green areas

- 3.24 The Green Space Audit²⁴ identified 19 green areas around Blandford Forum, 5 in Blandford St Mary and 3 in Bryanston that are either designated as Local Green Space and/or could form a 'green ring' throughout the town.

Ecological networks

- 3.25 Dorset Local Nature Partnership (LNP) and its partners (including Dorset Environmental Record Centre) have published a suite of maps setting out Dorset's Ecological Networks. The Dorset Ecological Network is made up from a series of layers, each incorporating the national sites, local sites, wildlife corridors, stepping stones and buffer areas to create a functioning ecological network.²⁵
- 3.26 It is important to note that some areas of valuable habitat such as species-rich hedgerows and road verges, ponds and veteran trees are often too small in area to be shown on the maps. Nevertheless, these are part of the fabric of the ecological network as corridors and stepping stones or in their own right, and where they occur they should be considered part of the network even if they are not recorded on the map.
- 3.27 The Ecological Network can be used to assist in planning the best locations for habitat enhancement, restoration and creation, to meet the objectives for biodiversity conservation and enhancement in national strategies and planning guidance and through Dorset's Natural Capital Investment Strategy²⁶.
- 3.28 Figure 3.2 identifies the existing ecological networks in and around the Neighbourhood Plan area.

²³ Natural England (no date) Designated Sites Citation [online] available at:

<<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1002561.pdf>> last accessed 02/05/18

²⁴ (Blandford Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group) (2015) Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan Community Facilities and Local Green Space Audit

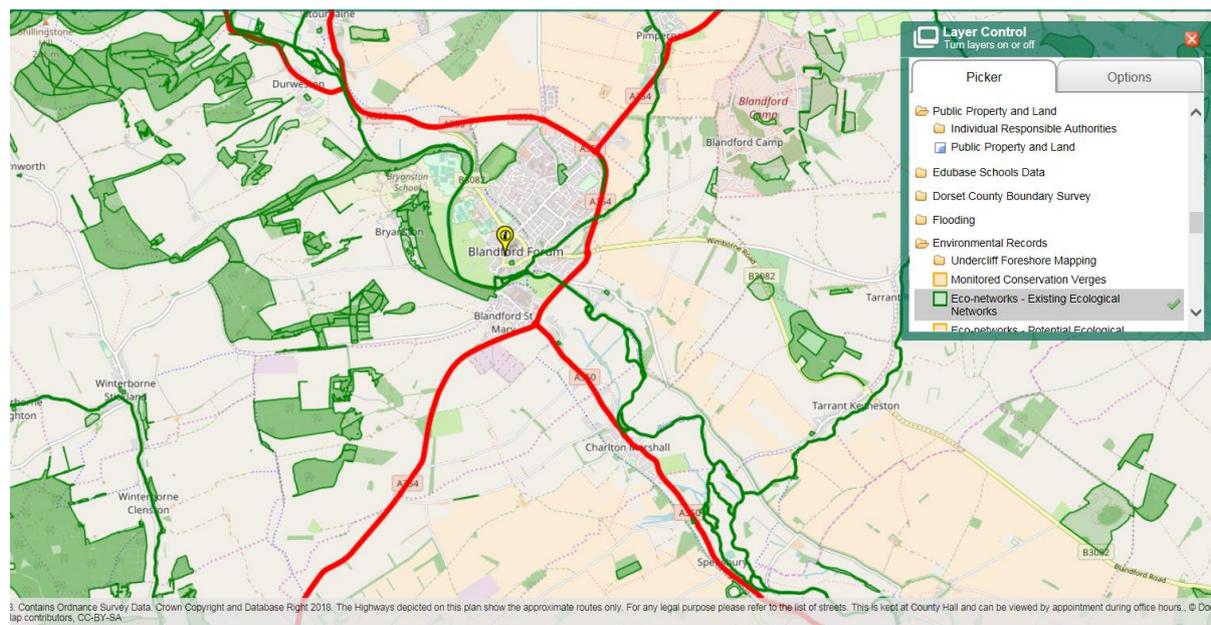
²⁵ Dorset Local Nature Partnership (2017) Dorset's Ecological Networks [online] available at:

<<https://www.dorsetlnp.org.uk/hres/Ecological-Networks-Guidance-October-2017.pdf>> last accessed 02/05/18

²⁶ Dorset Local Nature Partnership (2016) A Natural Capital Investment Strategy for Dorset [online] available at:

<https://www.dorsetlnp.org.uk/Natural_Capital_Investment_Strategy.html> last accessed 02/05/18

Figure 3.2 Ecological networks of the Neighbourhood Plan area ²⁷



Geodiversity

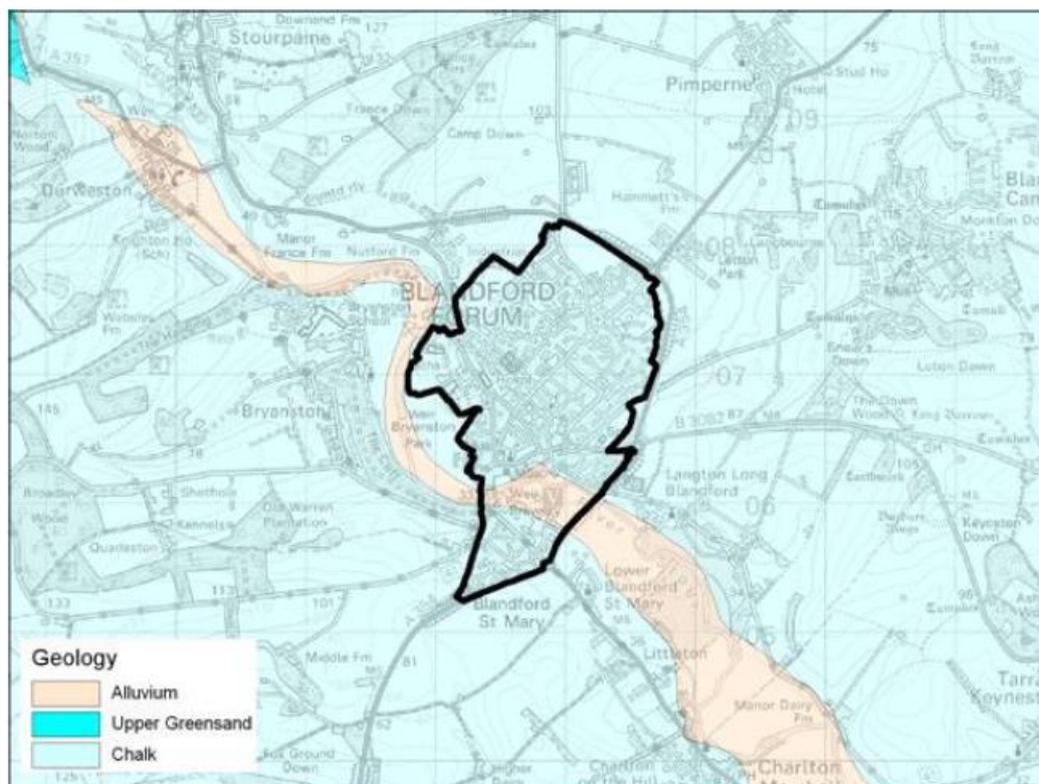
3.29 The Dorset Historic Towns Survey (2011) identifies the geology of the Blandford study area (Figure 3.3).²⁸ Blandford's geology is predominantly chalk with a band of alluvium along the floodplain of the River Stour. Figure 3.3 shows that the wider Neighbourhood Plan area also holds these characteristics. Chalk is a poor building material, but traditionally used in cob walling. Flint found within the chalk can be used as walling material, either as rough nodules or knapped.²⁹

²⁷ Dorset County Council (2018) Dorset Explorer [online] available at: <<http://explorer.geowessex.com/>> last accessed 02/05/18

²⁸ Dorset County Council, North Dorset District Council, & English Heritage (2011) Dorset Historic Towns Survey: Blandford Forum [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/400851/Blandford-Forum---historic-towns-survey>> last accessed 02/05/18

²⁹ Ibid.

Figure 3.3 Geology of the Blandford area³⁰



Summary of future baseline

- 3.30 The Neighbourhood Plan area is rich in biodiversity. As such, habitats and species will potentially face increasing pressures from future development within the Neighbourhood Plan area, with the potential for negative impacts on nationally, and locally designated sites, in addition to the wider ecological network. This may be exacerbated by the effects of climate change, which has the potential to lead to changes in the distribution and abundance of species, changes to the composition and character of habitats, and damage to valuable ecological corridors and/or the wider network.
- 3.31 When considered together, all sites and areas of wildlife value form a network, some parts of which will be closely interlinked, others less so, which has a value for the natural environment greater than the sum of its parts. To maintain and improve the condition of biodiversity in the future, it will therefore be important to not only protect and enhance important habitats but the connections between them.

³⁰ Dorset County Council, North Dorset District Council, & English Heritage (2011) Dorset Historic Towns Survey: Blandford Forum [online] available at; <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/400851/Blandford-Forum---historic-towns-survey>

What are the SA objectives and appraisal questions for the Biodiversity SA theme?

SA objective	Assessment questions
Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protect and enhance the status of the nationally designated Bryanston SSSI.• Increase the resilience of biodiversity to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks?• Avoid, or if not minimise impacts on biodiversity, including internationally, nationally, and locally designated sites, and provide net gains where possible?• Protect and enhance Ancient Woodland?• Protect and enhance ecological networks, including multifunctional green infrastructure?• Protect and enhance semi-natural habitats?• Protect and enhance priority habitats, and the habitat of priority species?• Achieve a net gain in biodiversity?• Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity?

4. Climate change

Focus of theme

- Contribution to climate change
- Effects of climate change
- Climate change adaptation
- Flood risk

Headline sustainability issues

- 4.1 The following key issues have emerged from the baseline review:
- North Dorset emitted 6.2 tonnes of CO₂ per capita in 2012, which is lower than the regional and national comparators. The rate of emissions has been steadily falling since 2005.
 - The domestic sector is responsible for the highest CO₂ emissions in the District. This is in contrast to that of the South West and England, where in both instances the Industrial and Commercial sector is responsible for the highest CO₂ emissions. Emissions of CO₂ from domestic sources in the District primarily originate from electricity consumption.
 - An increase in the built footprint of the Neighbourhood Plan area (associated with the delivery of new housing and employment) has the potential to increase overall greenhouse gas emissions.
 - The Neighbourhood Plan area has a functional floodplain which is principally Flood Zone 3, separating Blandford Forum from Blandford St Mary.
 - The Neighbourhood Plan should seek to increase the Neighbourhood Plan area's resilience to the effects of climate change by supporting and encouraging adaptation strategies.

Policy context

- 4.2 The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment is published on a 5-yearly cycle in accordance with the requirements of the Climate Change Act 2008. It required the Government to compile an assessment of the risks for the UK arising from climate change, and then to develop an adaptation programme to address those risks and deliver resilience to climate change on the ground. For both the 2012 and the 2017 UK Climate Change Risk Assessment, the Adaptation Sub-Committee commissioned an evidence report aiming to understand the current and future climate risks and opportunities. The evidence report contains six priority risk areas requiring additional action in the next five years, see below³¹ :
- Flooding and coastal change risks to communities, businesses and infrastructure;
 - Risks to health, well-being and productivity from high temperatures;
 - Risk of shortages in the public water supply, and for agriculture, energy generation and industry;
 - Risks to natural capital, including terrestrial, coastal, marine and freshwater ecosystems, soils and biodiversity;
 - Risks to domestic and international food production and trade; and
 - New and emerging pests and diseases, and invasive non-native species, affecting people, plants and animals
- 4.3 Along with policies contained in Chapter 1 'Using and managing land sustainably' and Chapter 6 'Protecting and improving the global environment', Goal 4 'A reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards such as flooding and drought' and Goal 7 'Mitigating and adapting to climate change' of the

³¹ GOV.UK: 'UK Climate Change Risk Assessment Report January 2017', [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-climate-change-risk-assessment-2017> last accessed 13/02/2018

Government's 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' directly relates to the Climate Change SA theme.

4.4 The UK Climate Change Act³² was passed in 2008 and established a framework to develop an economically credible emissions reduction path. It also highlighted the role it would take in contributing to collective action to tackle climate change under the Kyoto Protocol, and more recently as part of the UN-led Paris Agreement.

4.5 The Climate Change Act includes the following:

- The Act commits the UK to reducing emissions by at least 80% in 2050 from 1990 levels.
- Carbon Budgets. The Act requires the Government to set legally binding 'carbon budgets'. A carbon budget is a cap on the amount of greenhouse gases emitted in the UK over a five-year period. The carbon budgets are designed to reflect the cost-effective path to achieving the UK's long-term objectives. The first five carbon budgets have been put into legislation and run up to 2032.
- The Committee on Climate Change was set up to advise the Government on emissions targets, and report to Parliament on progress made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The National Adaptation Programme requires the Government to assess the risks to the UK from climate change, prepare a strategy to address them, and encourage key organisations to do the same. For more detail, visit the UK adaptation policy page³³.

4.6 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- Support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate as a 'core planning principle'.
- There is a key role for planning in securing radical reductions in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, including in terms of meeting the targets set out in the Climate Change Act 2008³⁴. Specifically, planning policy should support the move to a low carbon future through:
 - Planning for new development in locations and ways which reduce GHG emissions;
 - Actively supporting energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings;
 - Setting local requirements for building's sustainability in a way that is consistent with the Government's zero carbon buildings policy;
 - Positively promoting renewable energy technologies and considering identifying suitable areas for their construction; and
 - Encouraging those transport solutions that support reductions in GHG emissions and reduce congestion.
 - Direct development away from areas highest at risk of flooding, with development 'not to be allocated if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower probability of flooding'. Where development is necessary, it should be made safe without increasing levels of flood risk elsewhere.
 - Take account of the effects of climate change in the long term, taking into account a range of factors including flooding. Adopt proactive strategies to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including well planned green infrastructure.

4.7 The Flood and Water Management Act³⁵ highlights that alternatives to traditional engineering approaches to flood risk management include:

- Incorporating greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings, and retro-fitting properties at risk (including historic buildings);

³² GOV.UK (2008): 'Climate Change Act 2008', [online] available at: <<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents>> last accessed 02/03/2018

³³ Committee on Climate Change (2017): 'UK Adaptation Policy' [online] available at: <<https://www.theccc.org.uk/tackling-climate-change/preparing-for-climate-change/uk-adaptation-policy/>> last accessed 02/05/2018

³⁴ The Climate Change Act 2008 sets targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions through action in the UK of at least 80% by 2050, and reductions in CO₂ emissions of at least 26% by 2020, against a 1990 baseline.

³⁵ Flood and Water Management Act (2010) [online] available at: <<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents>> last accessed 02/05/18

- Utilising the environment in order to reduce flooding, for example through the management of land to reduce runoff and through harnessing the ability of wetlands to store water;
 - Identifying areas suitable for inundation and water storage to reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere;
 - Planning to roll back development in coastal areas to avoid damage from flooding or coastal erosion; and
 - Creating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)³⁶
- 4.8 Further guidance is provided in the document 'Planning for SuDS'.³⁷ This report calls for greater recognition of the multiple benefits that water management can present. It suggests that successful SuDS are capable of 'contributing to local quality of life and green infrastructure'.
- 4.9 At a local scale, Policy 3 (Climate Change) of the NDLP1 (2016) sets out the role of the Local Plan in tackling both the causes (mitigation) and effects (adaptation) of climate change. Additionally, numerous LPP1 and saved Local Plan (2003) policies set out a range of measures relevant to climate change. These include Policy 15 (Green Infrastructure) and Policy 22 (Renewable and Low Carbon Energy) within the LPP1, and saved policies 2.2 (Sustainable Development Strategy) and 3.12 (Renewable Energy).

Baseline summary

Summary of current baseline

Potential effects of climate change

- 4.10 The outcome of research on the probable effects of climate change in the UK was released in 2009 by the UK Climate Projections (UKCP09) team³⁸. UKCP09 gives climate information for the UK up to the end of this century and projections of future changes to the climate are provided, based on simulations from climate models. Projections are broken down to a regional level across the UK and are shown in probabilistic form, which illustrate the potential range of changes and the level of confidence in each prediction.
- 4.11 As highlighted by the research, the effects of climate change for the south west by 2050 for a medium emissions scenario³⁹ are likely to be as follows:
- The central estimate of increase in winter mean temperature is 2.1°C and an increase in summer mean temperature of 2.7°C; and
 - The central estimate of change in winter mean precipitation is 17% and summer mean precipitation is -20%.
- 4.12 Resulting from these changes, a range of risks may exist for the Neighbourhood Plan area. These include:
- Increased incidence of heat related illnesses and deaths during the summer;
 - Increased incidence of illnesses and deaths related to exposure to sunlight (e.g. skin cancer, cataracts);
 - Increased incidence of pathogen related diseases (e.g. legionella and salmonella);
 - Increase in health problems related to rise in local ozone levels during summer;
 - Increased risk of injuries and deaths due to increased number of storm events;
 - Effects on water resources from climate change;
 - Reduction in availability of groundwater for abstraction;
 - Adverse effect on water quality from low stream levels and turbulent stream flow after heavy rain;

³⁶ N.B. The provision of Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 came into force on the 1st of October 2012 and makes it mandatory for any development in England or Wales to incorporate SuDS.

³⁷ CIRIA (2010) 'Planning for SuDS – making it happen' [online] available at: http://www.ciria.org/Resources/Free_publications/Planning_for_SuDS_ma.aspx last accessed 02/05/18

³⁸ The data was released on 18th June 2009: See: <http://ukclimateprojections.metoffice.gov.uk/> last accessed 02/05/18

³⁹ UK Climate Projections (2009) South West 2050s Medium Emissions Scenario [online] available at: <http://ukclimateprojections.metoffice.gov.uk/23687?emission=medium> last accessed 02/05/18

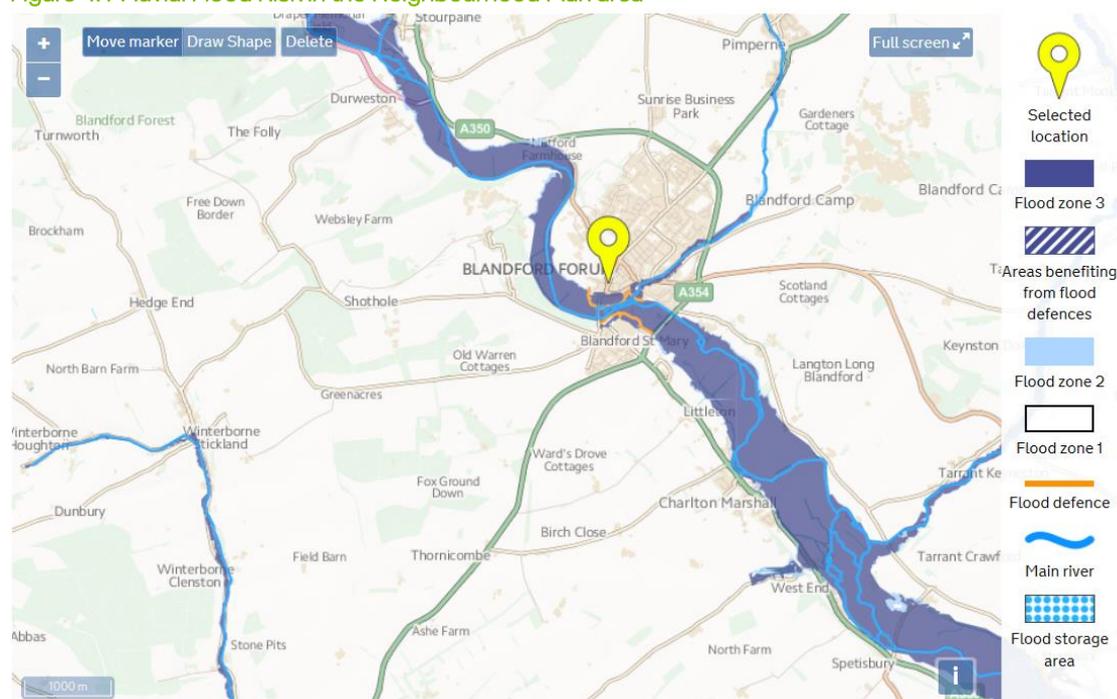
- Increased risk of flooding, including increased vulnerability to 1:100 year floods;
- Changes in insurance provisions for flood damage;
- A need to increase the capacity of wastewater treatment plants and sewers;
- A need to upgrade flood defences;
- Soil erosion due to flash flooding;
- Loss of species that are at the edge of their southerly distribution;
- Spread of species at the northern edge of their distribution;
- Deterioration in working conditions due to increased temperatures;
- Changes to global supply chain;
- Increased difficulty of food preparation, handling and storage due to higher temperatures;
- An increased move by the insurance industry towards a more risk-based approach to insurance underwriting, leading to higher cost premiums for business;
- Increased demand for air-conditioning;
- Increased drought and flood related problems such as soil shrinkages and subsidence;
- Risk of road surfaces melting more frequently due to increased temperature; and
- Flooding of roads.

Flood risk

4.13 The town lies in the 'Blandford Gap' where the River Stour cuts through the chalk downland characterised by Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Cranbourne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB. The Stour Valley has a wide flood plain which creates a parkland setting between Blandford Forum to the north of the Stour and Blandford St Mary and Bryanston to the south.

4.14 The Neighbourhood Plan area has a functional floodplain which is principally Flood Zone 3, separating Blandford Forum from Blandford St Mary (Figure 4.1). Flood Zone 3 is of high risk of flooding, representing that there is a 1% (1 in 100) or greater chance of happening each year. Flood Zone 3 is also seen to the north east of the Neighbourhood Plan area, associated with the presence of Pimperne Brook.

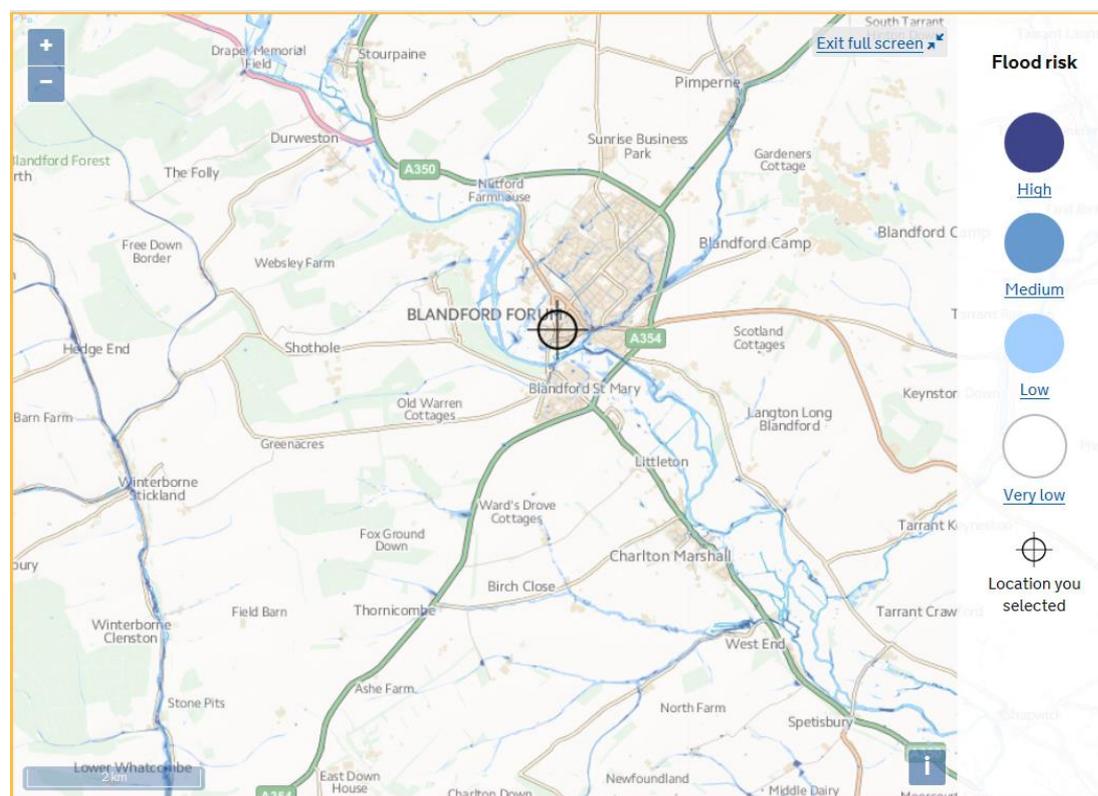
Figure 4.1 Fluvial Flood Risk in the Neighbourhood Plan area⁴⁰



⁴⁰ GOV.UK (2018): 'Long term flood risk assessment for locations in England', [online] available at: < <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/long-term-flood-risk/map?easting=388471&northing=106399> > last accessed 02/05/18

4.15 Figure 4.2 shows that there are areas at of surface water flood risk principally in areas adjacent to the River Stour, Milldown, Angus Wood and Pimperne Brook.

Figure 4.2 Surface Water Flood Risk in the Neighbourhood Plan area⁴¹



Greenhouse gas emissions

4.16 In relation to GhG emissions, source data from the Department of Energy and Climate Change suggests that North Dorset emitted 6.2 tonnes of CO₂ per capita in 2012, which is lower than the regional and national comparators. The rate of emissions has been steadily falling since 2005 when emissions were at 7.2 tonnes of CO₂ per capita. Table 4.1 shows CO₂ emissions from the three main sectors and indicates that the domestic sector is responsible for the highest emissions. This is in contrast to that of the South West and England, where in both instances the Industrial and Commercial sector is responsible for the highest CO₂ emissions.

4.17 Figure 4.3 highlights that for North Dorset; emissions of CO₂ from domestic sources primarily originate from electricity consumption.

Table 4.1 Carbon dioxide emissions and sources, plus emissions per capita, 2005-2012⁴²

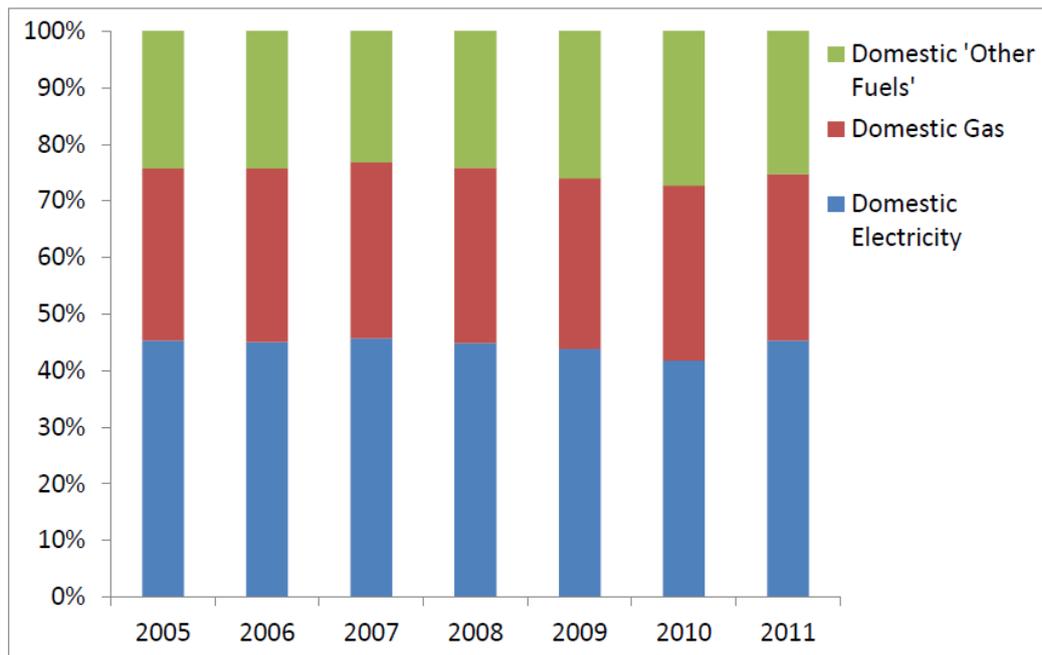
	Industrial and Commercial (t CO ₂)	Domestic (t CO ₂)	Transport (t CO ₂)	Total (t CO ₂)
North Dorset				
2005	2.3	2.6	2.1	7.2
2006	2.3	2.6	2.0	7.1
2007	2.1	2.4	2.1	6.8

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Department of Energy and Climate Change (2011) Official statistics: Local Authority carbon dioxide emissions, UK local and regional CO₂ emissions: subset dataset (emissions within the scope of influence of local authorities) available at: <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-emissions-estimates>> 2005 to 2012 accessed on 02/05/18

	Industrial and Commercial (t CO₂)	Domestic (t CO₂)	Transport (t CO₂)	Total (t CO₂)
2008	2.1	2.5	2.0	6.8
2009	2.0	2.3	1.9	6.4
2010	2.1	2.4	1.9	6.6
2011	1.9	2.1	1.8	6.0
2012	2.1	2.3	1.8	6.3
South West				
2005	3.1	2.5	2.5	8.2
2006	3.0	2.5	2.4	8.1
2007	2.9	2.4	2.5	7.9
2008	2.7	2.3	2.4	7.6
2009	2.3	2.1	2.3	6.8
2010	2.4	2.3	2.2	7.0
2011	2.1	2.0	2.2	6.4
2012	2.3	2.2	2.1	6.7
England				
2005	3.8	2.5	2.3	8.5
2006	3.7	2.5	2.2	8.5
2007	3.6	2.4	2.3	8.2
2008	3.4	2.4	2.1	7.9
2009	2.9	2.2	2.0	7.1
2010	3.0	2.3	2.0	7.3
2011	2.7	2.0	1.9	6.7
2012	2.9	2.2	1.9	7.0

Figure 4.3 North Dorset domestic CO₂ emissions by use⁴³



Summary of future baseline

- 4.18 Climate change has the potential to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events in the Neighbourhood Plan area, with increases in mean summer and winter temperatures, increases in mean precipitation in winter and decreases in mean precipitation in summer. This is likely to increase the risks associated with climate change (including fluvial flooding) with an increased need for resilience and adaptation.
- 4.19 In terms of climate change contribution, GhG emissions generated in the Neighbourhood Plan area may continue to decrease with wider adoption of energy efficiency measures, renewable energy production and new technologies, including electric cars. In this context, while the domestic sector is responsible for the highest CO₂ emissions in North Dorset, both gas and 'other fuels' are mainly used for space heating and cooking and therefore it can be seen that improving energy efficiency of buildings may reduce emissions from this source.⁴⁴
- 4.20 However, overall increases in the built footprint of the Neighbourhood Plan area may contribute to increases in the absolute levels of GhG emissions.

What are the SA objectives and appraisal questions for the climate change SA theme?

SA objective	Assessment questions
Reduce the level of contribution to climate change made by activities within the Neighbourhood Plan area	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of journeys made and reduce the need to travel? • Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport? • Increase the number of new developments meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria? • Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources?

⁴³ North Dorset District Council (2013) North Dorset Local Plan 2011-2016 Part 1 Natural Environment and Climate Change Background Paper [online] available at: <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/media/190342/North-Dorset-Local-Plan-2011-2026-Part-1---Natural-Environment-Background-Paper/pdf/20131129_-_Local_Plan_Part_1_-_Background_Paper_-_Natural_Environment_and_Climate_Change_Web_Version.pdf> last accessed 02/05/18

⁴⁴ Ibid.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources?
Support the resilience of the Neighbourhood Plan area to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that inappropriate development does not take place in areas at higher risk of flooding, taking into account the likely future effects of climate change?• Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the Neighbourhood Plan area to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change?• Sustainably manage water run-off, reducing surface water runoff (either within the plan area or downstream)?• Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are considered through new development in the Neighbourhood Plan area?• Increase the resilience of biodiversity to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks?

5. Landscape and historic environment

Focus of theme

- Landscape and townscape character and quality
- Designated and non-designated sites and areas
- Setting of heritage assets
- Archaeological assets

Headline sustainability issues

5.1 The following key issues have emerged from the baseline review:

- The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs (CCWWD) AONB lies to the north and east of Blandford Forum and the Dorset AONB to the west and southwest. Small parts of the existing built up area lie within the CCWWD AONB.
- The Neighbourhood Plan area falls predominately within the South Blandford Downs landscape character area, the Mid Stour Valley landscape character area, and the North Dorset Chalk Escarpment landscape character area
- Six Historic Urban Character Areas have been defined for Blandford which align with a significant proportion of the town's Conservation Areas.
- The Neighbourhood Plan area has a rich historic environment, with two Conservation Areas, over 200 listed buildings (10 of which are Grade I listed and 9 are Grade II* listed), and two Scheduled Monuments in the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- The Neighbourhood Plan area is rich in archaeology. Twenty archaeological events have been recorded for Blandford.
- Future management within the Neighbourhood Plan area should seek to protect the setting of heritage assets and landscape/townscape quality.

Policy context

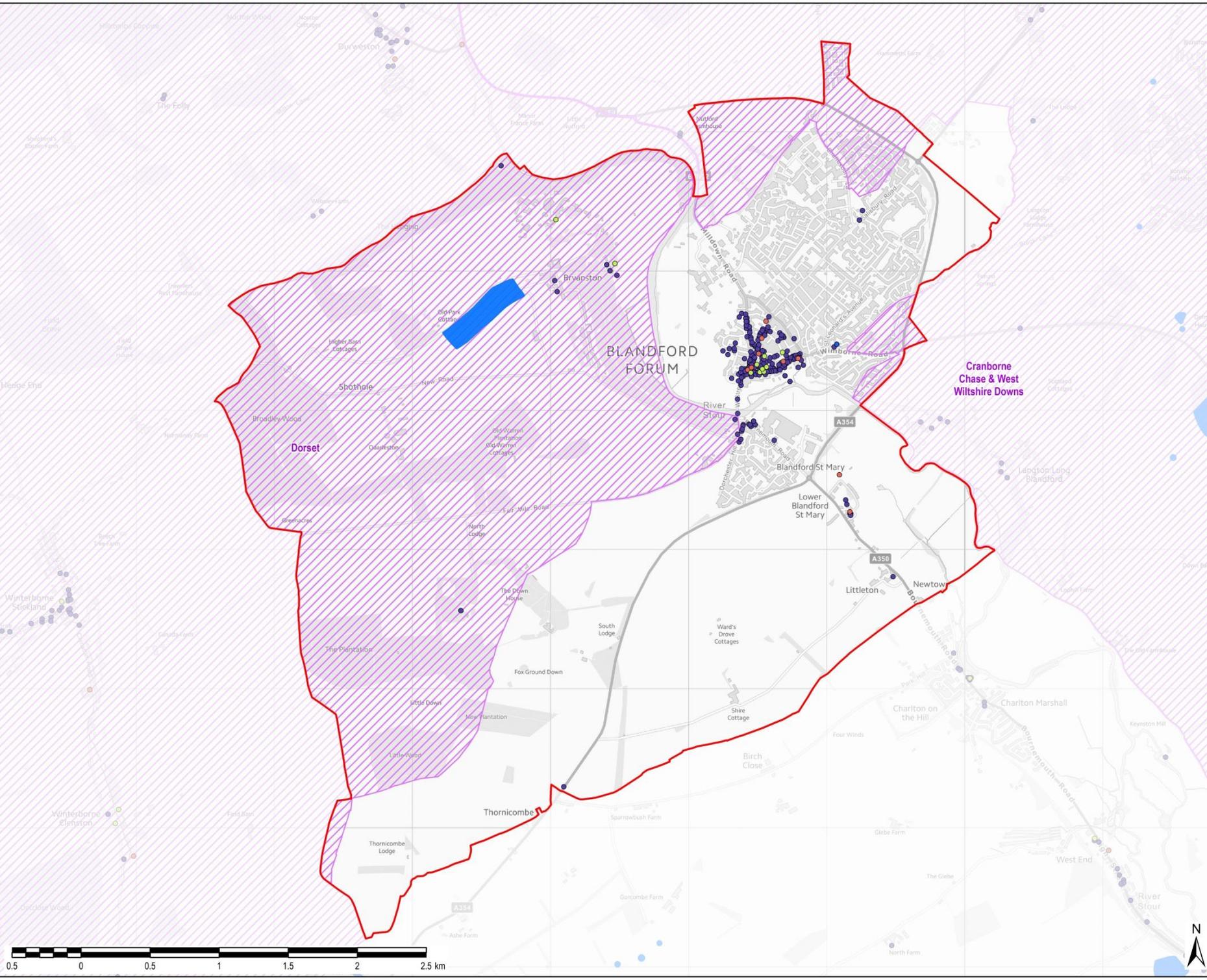
5.2 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- Protect and enhance valued landscapes, giving particular weight to those identified as being of national importance.
- Heritage assets should be recognised as an 'irreplaceable resource' that should be conserved in a 'manner appropriate to their significance', taking account of 'the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits' of conservation, whilst also recognising the positive contribution new development can make to local character and distinctiveness.
- Set out a 'positive strategy' for the 'conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment', including those heritage assets that are most at risk.
- Develop 'robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics'.
- Consider the effects of climate change in the long term, including in terms of landscape. Adopt 'proactive strategies' to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including well planned green infrastructure.

5.3 Additionally, the National Planning Policy Guidance states that Neighbourhood Plans should include enough information, where relevant, "about local heritage to guide decisions and put broader strategic heritage policies from the local plan into action at a neighbourhood scale" and "about local non-designated heritage assets including sites of archaeological interest to guide decisions".

- 5.4 Along with the policies contained within Chapter 2 'Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes', Goal 6 'Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment' of the Government's "A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment" directly relates to the Landscape and Historic Environment SEA theme.
- 5.5 The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England sets out its vision for the historic environment. It calls for those who have the power to shape the historic environment to recognise its value and to manage it in an intelligent manner in light of the contribution that it can make to social, economic and cultural life.
- 5.6 A number of North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (2003) saved policies and adopted NDLP1 (2016) policies set out a range of measures which directly and indirectly relate to landscape and historic environment. These include:
- Policy 4 (The Natural Environment)
 - Policy 5 (The Historic Environment)
 - Policy 15 (Green Infrastructure)
 - Policy 25 (Design)
 - Policy 28 (Existing Dwellings in the Countryside)
 - Policy 29 (The Re-Use of Existing Buildings in the Countryside)
 - Policy 30 (Existing Employment Sites in the Countryside)
 - Policy 31 (Tourist Accommodation in the Countryside)
 - Policy 32 (Equine-Related Developments in the Countryside)
 - Policy 33 (Occupational Dwellings in the Countryside)
 - Saved policies 1.21 – 1.33

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LEGEND

- Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan Area
- Record of Scheduled Monument
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Listed Building

- Grade I
- Grade II*
- Grade II

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Purpose of Issue **DRAFT**

Client **BLANDFORD+ NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP**

Project Title **SA FOR THE BLANDFORD+ NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2**

Drawing Title **HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS**

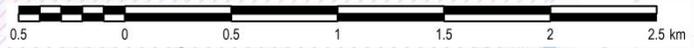
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Baseline summary

Summary of current baseline

Landscape

- 5.7 The landscape of North Dorset is highly valued with almost 40% of the District being covered by AONB designations.
- 5.8 The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs (CCWWD) AONB covers an area to the east of the A350 with the boundary running from the District boundary near Spetisbury via Blandford and on to Shaftesbury. The Dorset AONB covers an area of chalk downland to the west of Blandford and north of the A354. The Dorset AONB also includes the Hambledon Hill National Nature Reserve to the north west of Blandford.
- 5.9 In terms of the Neighbourhood Plan area, Blandford Forum lies just beyond the limits of both AONBs. The CCWWD AONB lies to the north and east of Blandford Forum, adjoining the built up area of the town, while the Dorset AONB lies to the west and south west. Small parts of the existing built up area lie within both AONBs (see Figure 5.1).
- 5.10 The Dark Skies and Light Pollution Study undertaken for the CCWWD AONB (2007) identifies the negative impact of light pollution from towns (including Blandford and Blandford Camp) on the edge of the AONB.⁴⁵ The study highlights that the settlements light the night sky, thus causing a measure of skyglow, and can also be viewed from vantage points and main routes within the AONB. It is expected that the scenic intrusion of their lights at night is as much a pollution problem as their effect on dark skies.
- 5.11 Problem areas of light pollution within or at the edge of towns that have been identified by representatives of the Local Authorities as affecting the AONB include⁴⁶:
- Housing development within bypass on edge of Blandford Forum;
 - Sunrise Business Park, north of Blandford Forum; and
 - Blandford Camp, north-east of Blandford Forum.

National Character Areas

- 5.12 National Character Areas (NCAs) are landscape areas which share similar characteristics, following natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries. Developed by Natural England, NCA profiles describe the natural and cultural features that shape each of these landscapes, providing a broad context to its character. The Neighbourhood Plan area falls within NCA Profile 134: Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase.⁴⁷
- 5.13 Forming the south-western limb of England's Cretaceous Chalk outcrop, the Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase National Character Area (NCA) lies across the counties of Dorset, Wiltshire and Hampshire, from east of Bridport to the outskirts of Salisbury. Dorchester and Blandford Forum are the largest settlements in what is a sparsely settled area of lowland England.
- 5.14 This strongly rural and agricultural NCA is characterised by large, open fields of pasture and arable, punctuated by blocks of woodland all draped over the undulating chalk topography. The NCA features one of the densest assemblages of prehistoric sites and monuments in Europe, with areas such as the South Dorset Ridgeway revealing some 8,000 years of human activity. The evolution of the chalk plateau of Cranborne Chase was fundamental to the development of the character of the northern part of the NCA.
- 5.15 A 15 km stretch of the inland section of the South West Coast Path National Trail runs through the south-west corner of the NCA, along the South Dorset Ridgeway.

⁴⁵ Entec UK Limited (2007) Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty: Dark Skies and Light Pollution Study [online] available at: <<http://www.cwwdaonb.org.uk/publications/planning-related-publications/>> last accessed 03/05/18

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Natural England (2013) NCA Profile: 134 Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase [online] available at: <<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5846213517639680?category=587130>> last accessed 03/05/18

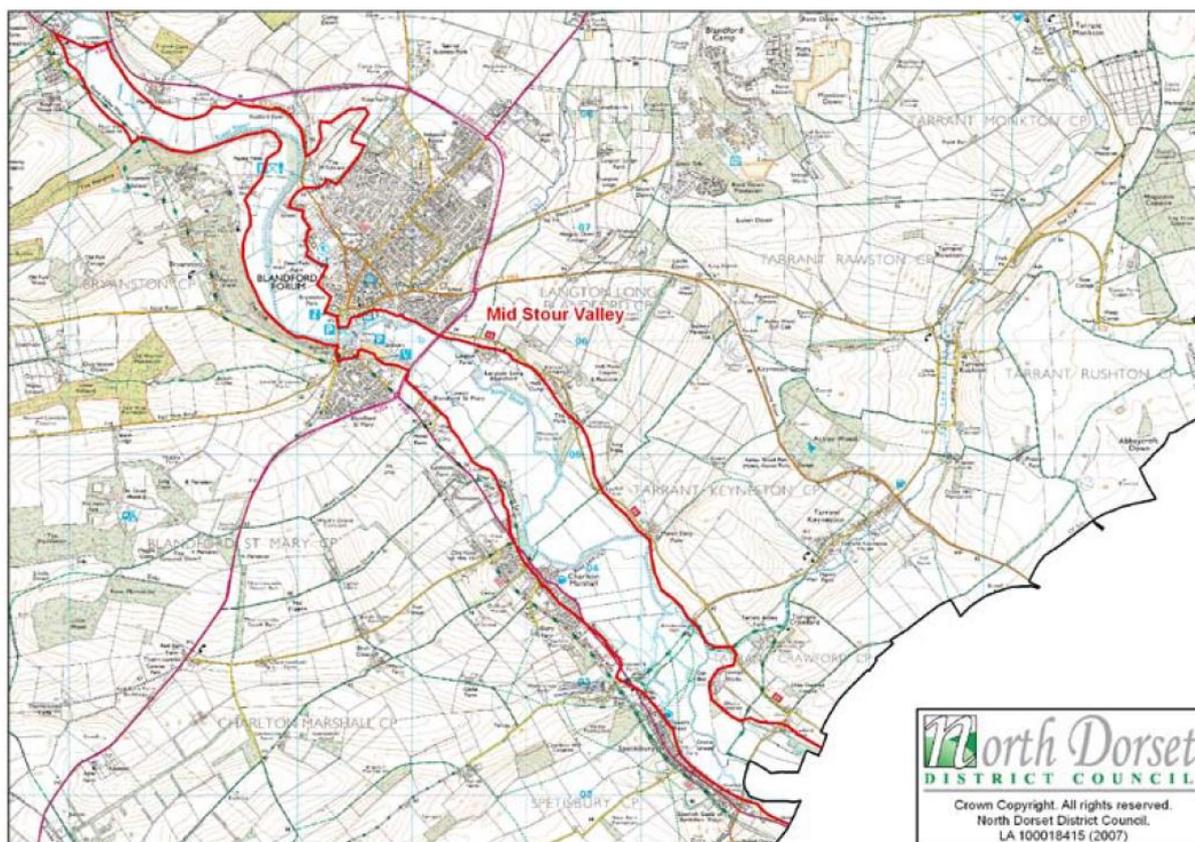
North Dorset Landscape Character Assessment

- 5.16 The District-wide Landscape Character Assessment and associated addendum (2008) was commissioned by the Council to provide a structured framework for describing the landscapes of North Dorset.^{48,49} There are eight landscape character types in the district, which are divided further into 18 landscape character areas. The assessment describes their key characteristics.
- 5.17 The Neighbourhood Plan area falls predominately within the South Blandford Downs landscape character area, the Mid Stour Valley landscape character area, and the North Dorset Chalk Escarpment landscape character area (Figures 5.2 – 5.4).
- 5.18 The South Blandford Downs landscape character area includes the settlement of Blandford St Mary, and most of the southern and eastern extent of the Neighbourhood Plan area. This area is characterised by:
- An undulating open chalk downland landscape distinctively subdivided by four chalk river valleys
 - These river valleys create distinctive sub divisions within the area
 - Medium to large scale fields bounded by low, straight and clipped hedgerows
 - Intensively farmed and arable landscape.
 - Regular-shaped small plantation woodlands dot the landscape.
 - Narrow, widely spaced out straight lanes are bounded by continuous clipped hedgerows with the occasional hedgerow trees.
 - The urban settlement edges to Milborne St Andrew and Winterborne Whitechurch at the junction of the chalk stream valley and upland landscape form detracting features in places.
 - A distinctive linear settlement edge along the eastern side of the area as it dips steeply down to the Stour Valley.
 - Blandford St Mary creates a hard urban edge to the north of the area on the outskirts of Blandford and forms a detracting feature.
 - Weatherbury Castle, which is an SNCI and SAM, is a key feature.
 - The Spetisbury Rings are both an SAM and a SNCI and a feature of interest.
 - The Jubilee Trail, which crosses the area, is a key feature.
 - Long Falls Wood, which is partly an SNCI and its surrounding tumuli which is a SAM, is also a key feature.
 - Some important SNCI woodland copses and plantations.
 - Milborne Wood is a key feature and an SNCI
 - A distinctive network of straight bridleways and paths, some of historic importance.

⁴⁸ North Dorset District Council (2008) Local Development Framework Evidence Base: Landscape Character Area Assessment [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/396493/North-Dorset-Local-Plan---Evidence-Base>> last accessed 03/05/18

⁴⁹ North Dorset District Council (2008) Local Development Framework Evidence Base: Landscape Character Area Assessment – Addendum [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/396493/North-Dorset-Local-Plan---Evidence-Base>> last accessed 03/05/18

Figure 5.3 Mid Stour Valley landscape character area⁵¹

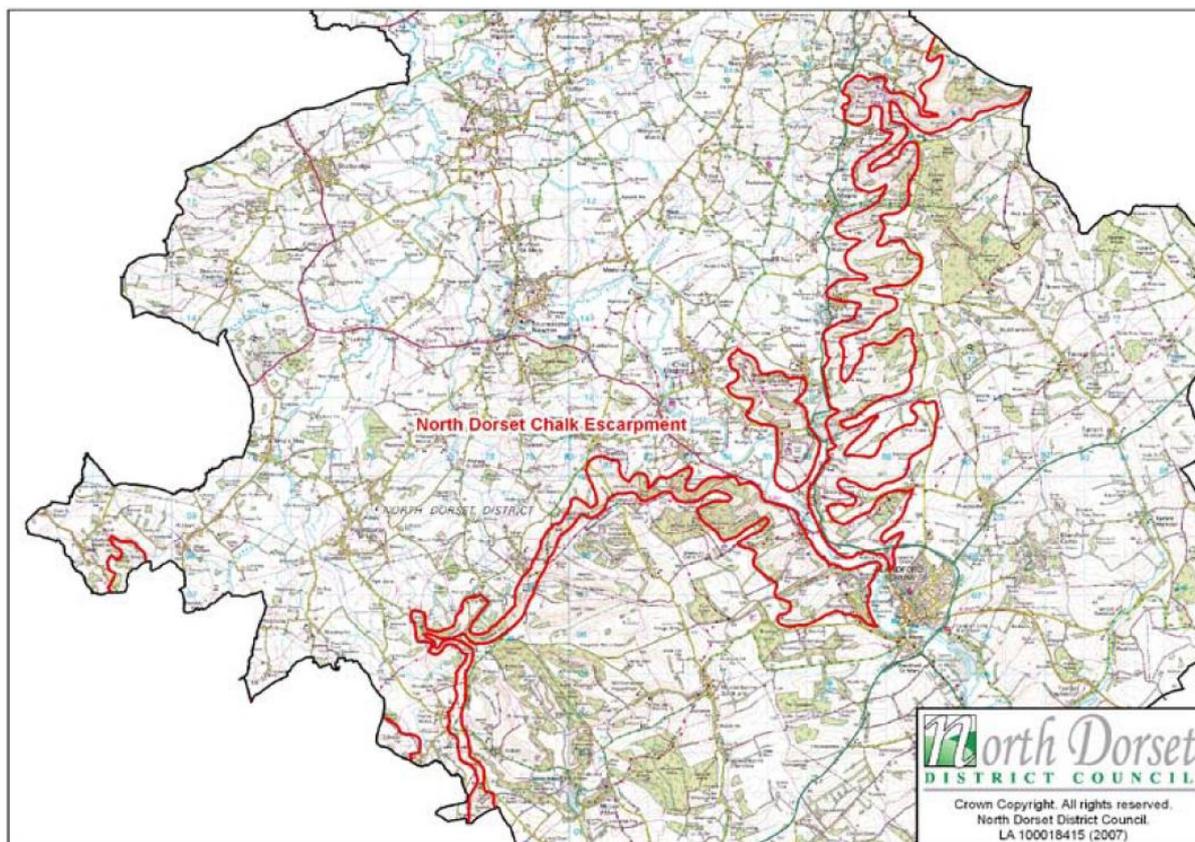


5.20 The Neighbourhood Plan area is also covered by the North Dorset Chalk Escarpment landscape character area, including Bryanston to the north east of the Neighbourhood Plan area (Figure 5.4). This area is characterised by:

- A dramatic, exposed, steep and narrow escarpment with rounded spurs and deep coombes.
- A patchwork of small scale pastoral fields on the lower slopes, with scattered farmsteads at the ridge bottom spring line.
- Areas of unimproved chalk grassland on slopes and ridge tops.
- Large, straight-sided arable fields on escarpment top.
- Hanging ancient oak, ash and hazel woodlands on the lower slopes.
- Dense gorse scrub on the steep ridge sides.
- Thin calcareous soils with the underlying geology of lower, middle and upper chalk.
- Panoramic views of the surrounding landscape.
- Bronze Age barrows and prominent hill top forts.
- Ancient, sunken winding lanes with an open character towards the top.
- Ponds on the hill top at Bonsley Common.

⁵¹ North Dorset District Council (2008) Local Development Framework Evidence Base: Landscape Character Area Assessment [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/396493/North-Dorset-Local-Plan---Evidence-Base>> last accessed 03/05/18

Figure 5.4 North Dorset Chalk Escarpment landscape character area⁵²



5.21 The Neighbourhood Plan area also falls, to a lesser extent, within a number of other landscape character areas:

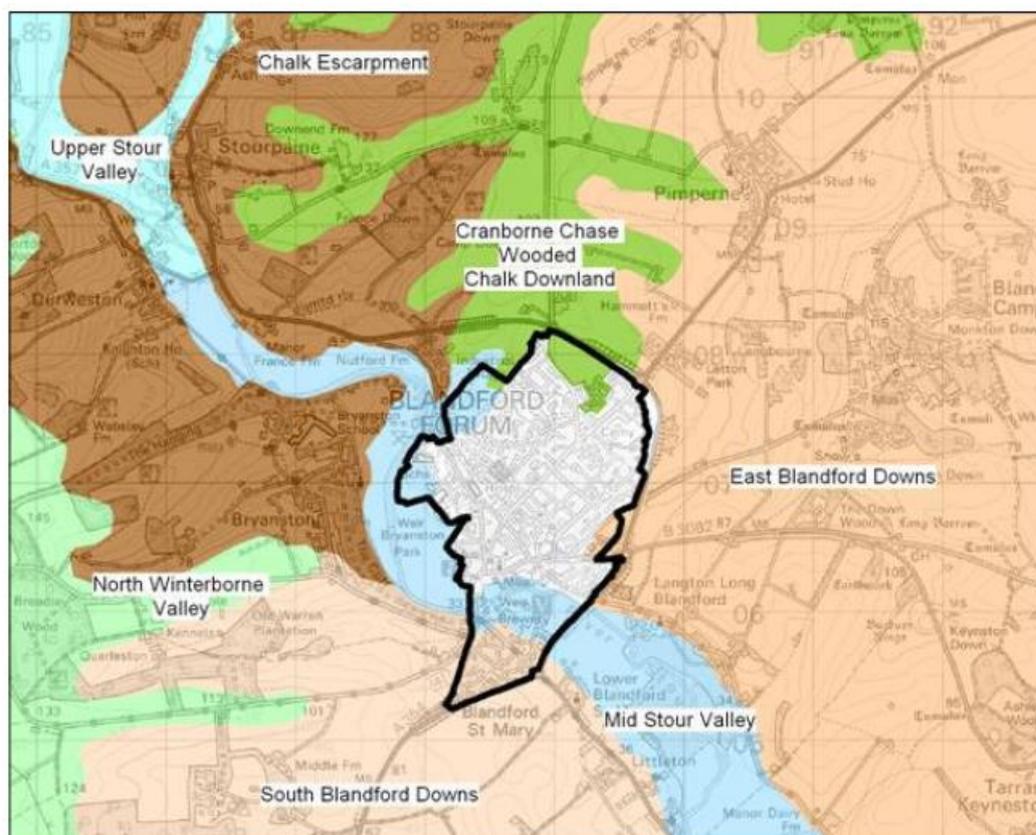
- East Blandford Downs
- North Winterborne Valley
- Cranborne Chase Wooded Chalk Downland

5.22 How these landscape character areas intercept with the Neighbourhood Plan areas can be seen in Figure 5.4, which has been extracted from the Dorset Historic Towns Survey for Blandford Forum.⁵³

⁵² North Dorset District Council (2008) Local Development Framework Evidence Base: Landscape Character Area Assessment [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/396493/North-Dorset-Local-Plan---Evidence-Base>> last accessed 03/05/18

⁵³ Dorset County Council, North Dorset District Council, & English Heritage (2011) Dorset Historic Towns Survey: Blandford Forum [online] available at: <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/400851/Blandford-Forum---historic-towns-survey> last accessed 03/05/18

Figure 5.4 Blandford Forum in its landscape character setting⁵⁴



5.23 The draft Dorset Historic Landscape Character mapping⁵⁵ shows Blandford Forum sitting within a landscape dominated by enclosed fields and comprising primarily planned enclosures. Piecemeal and other enclosures also contribute, as well as a patchwork of coppice, deciduous and mixed woodland. A variety of settlements including historic villages, housing estates and country houses pepper the rural landscape.

Historic environment

5.24 Blandford Forum has a strong historic and architectural character, resulting from a combination of the significant historical background and time depth, the positive contribution made by a very high number of historic buildings, the intact medieval town plan and its topographic location within a bend in the River Stour, enabling a resultant visual connectivity with the surrounding landscape.⁵⁶

5.25 Blandford Forum is best known as one of the finest examples of a Georgian country town in Britain, recognised nationally as an extremely important example of Georgian brick architecture.⁵⁷ Around three quarters of the buildings within the town centre date from the 18th century or earlier. This represents one of the highest concentrations of historic buildings in any of the Dorset towns.⁵⁸

5.26 Immediately adjacent to the historic core of the town centre, approximately 78% of the buildings within the remaining part of the appraisal area date from the late 19th century or earlier. This represents one of the highest concentrations of historic buildings outside of the medieval town centre for any of the Dorset towns. In general, evidence of more recent development is set behind the more historic street frontages or located from significant vantage points within the public realm.

⁵⁴ Dorset County Council, North Dorset District Council, & English Heritage (2011) Dorset Historic Towns Survey: Blandford Forum [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/400851/Blandford-Forum---historic-towns-survey>> last accessed 03/05/18

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Dorset Councils Partnership (2018) Blandford Conservation Area Appraisal Management Plan

⁵⁷ Dorset County Council, North Dorset District Council, & English Heritage (2011) Dorset Historic Towns Survey: Blandford Forum [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/400851/Blandford-Forum---historic-towns-survey>> last accessed 03/05/18

⁵⁸ Dorset Councils Partnership (2018) Blandford Conservation Area Appraisal Management Plan

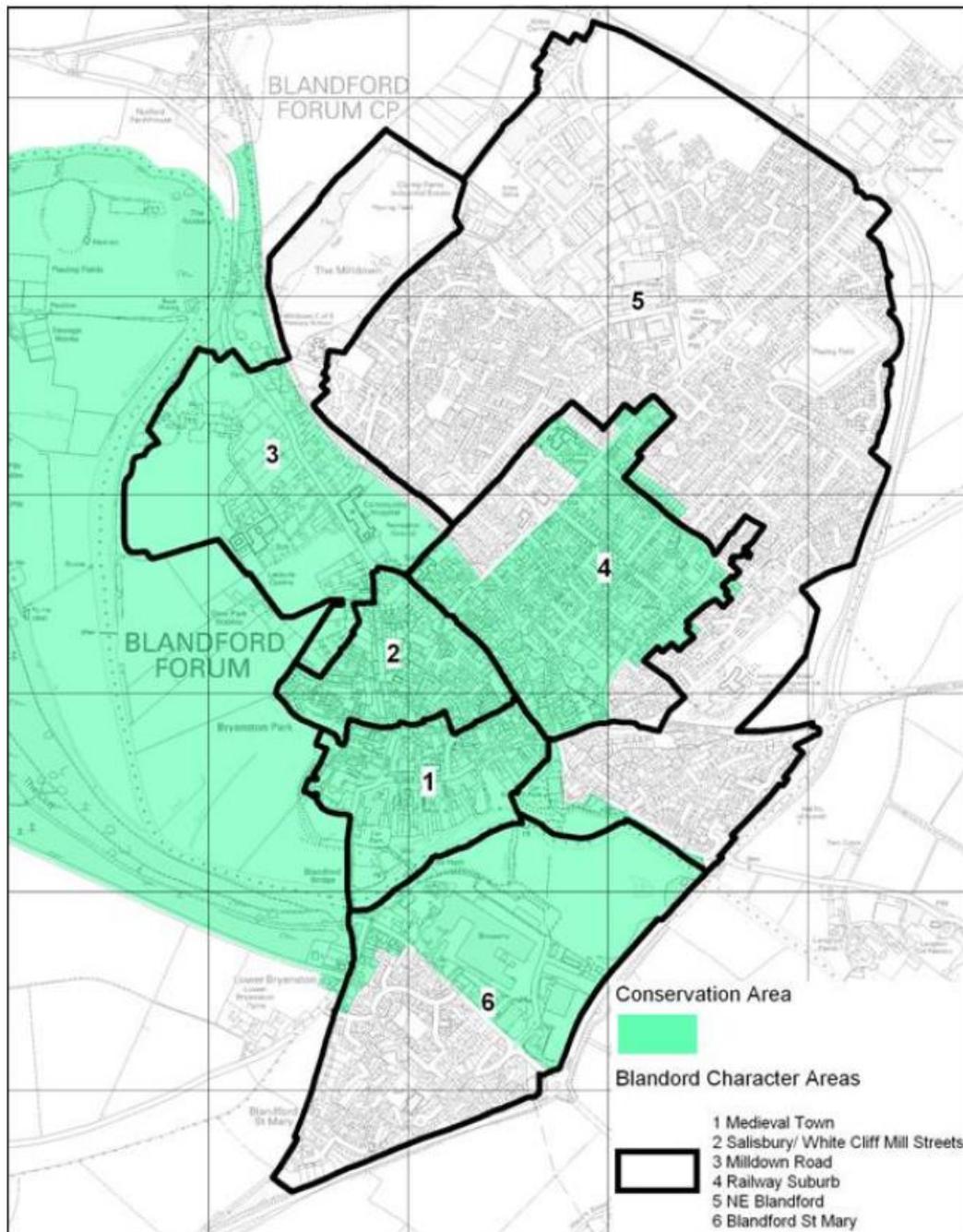
- 5.27 The historic core of the town is arranged around a singular main street running parallel to the River Stour with regular burgage plots on both side and back lanes behind. The market place lies at the junction with the road running across the river from Blandford Bridge. To the north, east and west of the town centre, is some ribbon development along a series of radiating roads. The areas between these routes are infilled with suburban housing estates arranged on a linear grid system, or more commonly on looped networks of roads and curvilinear cul-de-sac.⁵⁹
- 5.28 Blandford Forum is divided from Blandford St Mary to the south by the River Stour and its wide floodplain. The suburb of Blandford St Mary is aligned along a route running parallel to the river, with modern suburban housing estates beyond. There are areas of industrial and commercial estates along the south side of the river and at the northwest part of the town.
- 5.29 The Neighbourhood Plan area as a whole is home to numerous designated historic assets, including over 200 listed buildings. The majority of the settlement falls within two Conservation Areas – The Blandford, Blandford St Mary and Bryanston Conservation Area and The Blandford Forum Conservation Area (figures 5.5 and 5.6). Further details on the historic character of the Neighbourhood Plan area and the featured heritage assets are presented below.

Historic Urban Character Areas

- 5.30 A total of six Historic Urban Character Areas have been defined for Blandford depending on the age of the development (Figure 5.5). Each area has their own design requirements. They comprise the area of the medieval and post-medieval town (Character Areas 1 and 2); Victorian and early 20th century suburbs on the north and north east sides of the town (Areas 3 and 4) a modern suburb (Area 5) and the historic suburb, together with its modern housing estates, of Blandford St Mary (Area 6). Figure 5.5 shows the location of the Historic Urban Character Areas in relation to the town's Conservation Areas (further discussed below).

⁵⁹ Dorset County Council, North Dorset District Council, & English Heritage (2011) Dorset Historic Towns Survey: Blandford Forum [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/400851/Blandford-Forum---historic-towns-survey>>last accessed 03/05/18

Figure 5.5 Blandford Historic Urban Character Areas in relationship to the Conservation area⁶⁰



5.31 An overview of each character area, key characteristics, and sensitivity to development is shown in table 5.1 below.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Table 5.1 Blandford Historic Urban Character Areas⁶¹

Charac- ter area	Overview	Key characteristics	Strength of historic character	Sensitivity to development
1 Medieval Town	This area represents the area of the medieval town and modern commercial centre of Blandford. It is defined primarily by its historic dimension, particularly the survival of a large number of burgage plot boundaries. The southern boundary is, for the most part, taken as the River Stour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned medieval market town Intact medieval burgage plots Nationally important Georgian country town Very high density of historic buildings 	The strength of character of this area is judged to be strong , being a combination of the significant historical background and time depth, the positive contribution made by a very high number of historic buildings, the intact medieval town plan and its topographic location within a bend in the River Stour.	The area has a high sensitivity to major change.
2 Salisbury/White Cliff Mill Streets	This area lies immediately north of the medieval historic core and represents one of late 17th to early 19th century expansion. It is defined primarily by its historic dimension.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post-medieval suburb Rare surviving 17th century buildings Occasional large houses and grounds, now largely infilled with modern housing Mid-19th century suburban villas Early 19th century terraced housing estate at Dorset/ Orchard Streets 	The strength of character of this area is judged to be strong , being a combination of the significant historical background, time depth, and the positive contribution made by a very high number of historic buildings, approximately 78% of the buildings within the character area date from the late 19th century or earlier.	The area has a high sensitivity to major change.
3 Milldown Road	This area comprises suburban expansion to the north of the historic town of Blandford, between the river Stour and the former railway line. The area west of Milldown Road was historically part of Bryanston Park and the area to the northeast was formerly an area of unenclosed pasture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edge of River Stour floodplain location Formerly partly in the late 18th century Bryanston Park Possible late prehistoric field pattern Disused railway line Late 19th century hospital and recreation ground 20th century suburban expansion Extensive public open green spaces 	The strength of character of this area is judged to be medium . This is supported by well-preserved earlier 20th century street frontages along Milldown Road and the track bed of the former railway, now preserved as a green corridor (North Dorset Trailway).	The area has a medium sensitivity to large scale development.
4 Railway suburb	This is essentially a suburb to the north of the historic core which developed after the opening of the railway in 1863. The area is bounded by Damory Street to the west, Salisbury Road to the north, King's Road to the east and St Leonard's Avenue to the south.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medieval chapel and Manor House Former railway and station Victorian and Edwardian suburb Late 19th and 20th century industry Late 19th and 20th century public buildings 	The strength of character of this area is judged to be medium . The former station has been entirely given over to modern development, thus removing the original historic focus of the character area.	The area has a medium sensitivity to major change.
5 North East Bland-	This area comprises the extensive modern housing and industrial estates to the north and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive modern suburban housing estates Post-war council house estate 	The strength of character of this area is judged to be low . It is essentially an area of large scale late 20th century	The area has a low sensitivity to major change.

⁶¹ Dorset County Council, North Dorset District Council, & English Heritage (2011) Dorset Historic Towns Survey: Blandford Forum [online] available at: < <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/400851/Blandford-Forum---historic-towns-survey> > last accessed 03/05/18

	<p>ford east of the town centre, bounded by the Blandford by-pass.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modern industrial estate • Dispersed 19th century or earlier small farms and cottages • Possible prehistoric and later field system and communication pattern 	<p>housing development, coupled with industrial development at Blandford Heights.</p>	
<p>6 Blandford St Mary</p>	<p>This area comprises the built up area to the south of the River Stour in Blandford St Mary, which has its origins in a small medieval or post-medieval settlement. The area is bounded by the River Stour on the north, the Blandford By-pass on the south and east sides and Dorchester Hill on the west.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medieval and post-medieval suburb • Hall and Woodhouse Brewery • Modern suburban and retail estates • Situated south of River Stour 	<p>The strength of character of this area is judged to be medium. The historic plots on Dorchester Hill and Poole Road make a strong positive contribution, as does the Victorian brewery buildings and the extensive riverside meadows. However, the southern part of the area is now characterised by modern housing estates within modern curvilinear cul-de sac bearing little or no relation to the historic landscape.</p>	<p>The area has a medium sensitivity to major change.</p>

Heritage assets

- 5.32 Conservation Areas are designated because of their special architectural and historic interest⁶². Figure 5.6 distinguishes between the Neighbourhood Plan area's Conservation Areas: The Blandford Forum Conservation Area, and the Blandford, Blandford St Mary and Bryanston Conservation Area. The Blandford Forum Conservation Area was first designated in 1972 to conserve and enhance Blandford's historic character, and was expanded in 1990 with character areas subsequently identified.⁶³
- 5.33 Conservation Area Appraisals are a tool to demonstrate the area's special interest, explaining the reasons for designation and providing a greater understanding and articulation of its character - mentioned within the 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' advice note by Historic England.⁶⁴ Ideally, appraisals should be regularly reviewed as part of the management of the conservation area, and can be developed into a management plan.
- 5.34 NDDC is undertaking an on-going review of North Dorset's conservation areas. The quality and interest of each area will be assessed by examining the following matters:
- historic layout of boundaries and routes;
 - characteristic materials and forms;
 - mix of uses;
 - contribution of recent developments; and
 - hard and soft landscaping.
- 5.35 A Conservation Area Appraisal Management Plan (CAAMP) (2018) has been produced for the Blandford Forum Conservation Area.⁶⁵ The CAAMP identifies the following key characteristics for the Blandford Form Conservation Area:
- Planned medieval market town;
 - Strong landscaped Setting;
 - Significant proportion of nationally listed buildings;

⁶² Historic England (2017): 'Conservation Areas', [online] available to access via: <<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/local/conservation-areas/>> last accessed 03/05/2018

⁶³ Dorset Councils Partnership (2018) Blandford Conservation Area Appraisal Management Plan

⁶⁴ Historic England (2016): 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management Advice Note 1', [online] available to download from: <<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-designation-appraisal-management-advice-note-1/>> last accessed 03/05/2018

⁶⁵ Dorset Councils Partnership (2018) Blandford Conservation Area Appraisal Management Plan

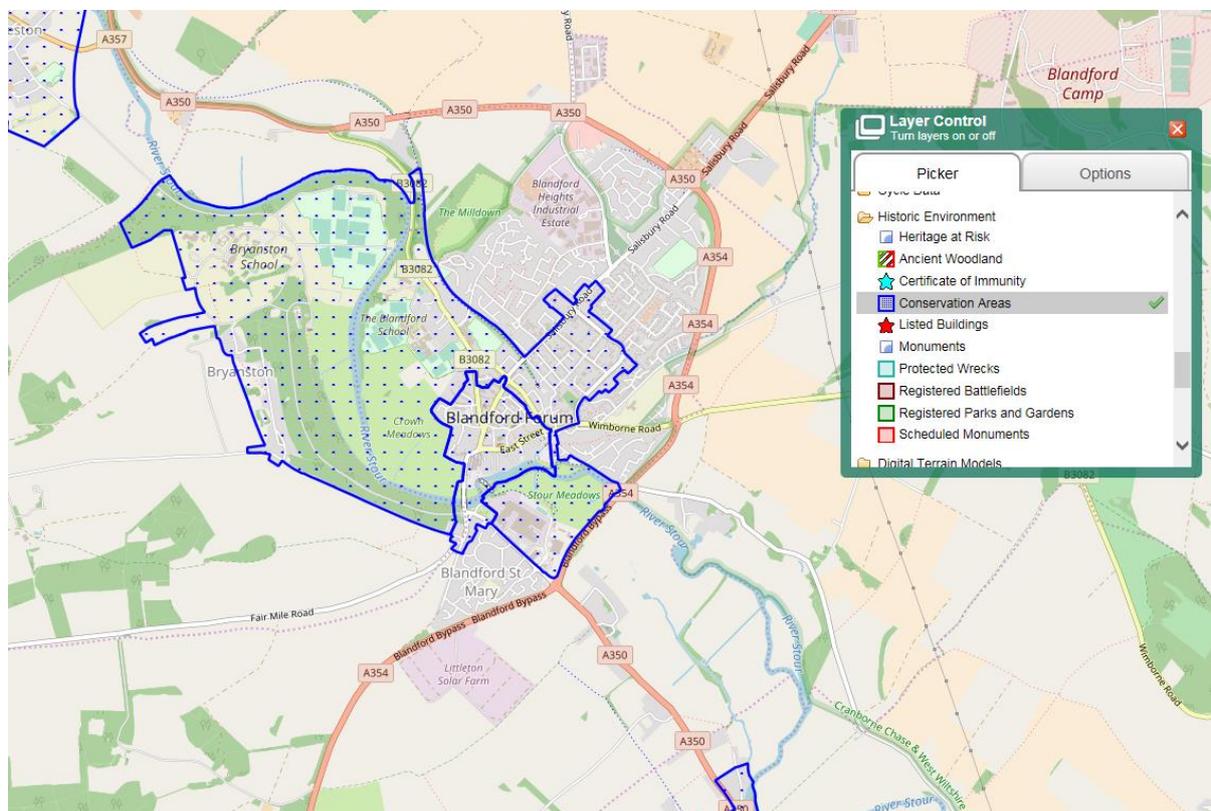
- Intact medieval burgage plots;
- Nationally important Georgian country town;
- Very high density of historic buildings;
- Post-medieval suburb;
- Rare surviving 17th century buildings;
- Occasional large houses and grounds, partly infilled with later development;
- Mid-19th century suburban villas; and
- Early 19th century terraced housing estate at Dorset/ Orchard Streets.

5.36 The CAAMP further identifies the sensitivity of the Conservation Area and the existing threats to the asset, stating that:⁶⁶

5.37 *“Given the cohesive 18th and 19th century character of the appraisal area the area is sensitive to change on all levels. The medieval town layout and burgage plots provide a worthy backdrop upon which the Georgian town sits adjacent to the river. The layout essentially dates from the original foundation of the town during the early 12th century and as such is a rare example of an intact planned medieval market town. The burgage plots are extremely vulnerable to large scale development and several have been lost to development and modern housing which has eroded the special interest of the town centre.*

5.38 *Large scale development has the potential to disrupt and overshadow this definitive element of the town’s historic character. Large scale modern development also has the potential to disrupt the harmonious Georgian facades and roof lines and intervisibility which extend beyond the confines of the medieval town. Smaller scale development including those forms of development permitted under existing planning legislation have the potential to erode both the character and appearance of the conservation area through loss of historic features and important spaces. Unauthorised development particularly within the town centre also has the potential to undermine the value, quality and significance of the retails centre.”*

Figure 5.6 Conservation areas within the Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan area⁶⁷



⁶⁶ Dorset Councils Partnership (2018) Blandford Conservation Area Appraisal Management Plan

⁶⁷ Dorset County Council (2018) Dorset Explorer [online] available at: <<http://explorer.geowessex.com/>> last accessed 03/05/18

5.39 Historic England is the statutory consultee for certain categories of listed building consent. The Neighbourhood Plan area contains 226 listed buildings, of which 10 are Grade I listed.⁶⁸

- Pump house
- Town Hall and Corn Exchange
- Bryanston School
- Church of St Peter and St Paul
- Greyhound House
- Coupar House
- The Portman Chapel
- The Old House
- 26, Market Place
- 18 and 20 Market Place

5.40 Additionally, the following 9 listed buildings are Grade II* listed:

- 9, Market Place
- The Manor House
- Dale House
- The Church of St Mary
- Eastway House
- 1, Market Place
- Lyston House
- Lime Tree House
- Ryves Almshouse

5.41 Scheduled monuments are sites of national importance and protected by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. According to the National Heritage List for England, Field system in Old Park Scheduled Monument is located within the Neighbourhood Plan area, in Bryanston Parish.⁶⁹ This is identified within Figure 5.7.

5.42 Since 2008, Historic England has released an annual Heritage at Risk Register. The Heritage at Risk Register highlights the Grade I, Grade II and Grade II* listed buildings, scheduled monuments, historic parks and gardens, registered battlefields, wreck sites and conservation areas deemed to be 'at risk'. According to the 2017 Heritage at Risk Register⁷⁰ and Figure 5.7, there is one heritage asset in the Neighbourhood Plan area at risk. This is Field System in Old Park Scheduled Monument.

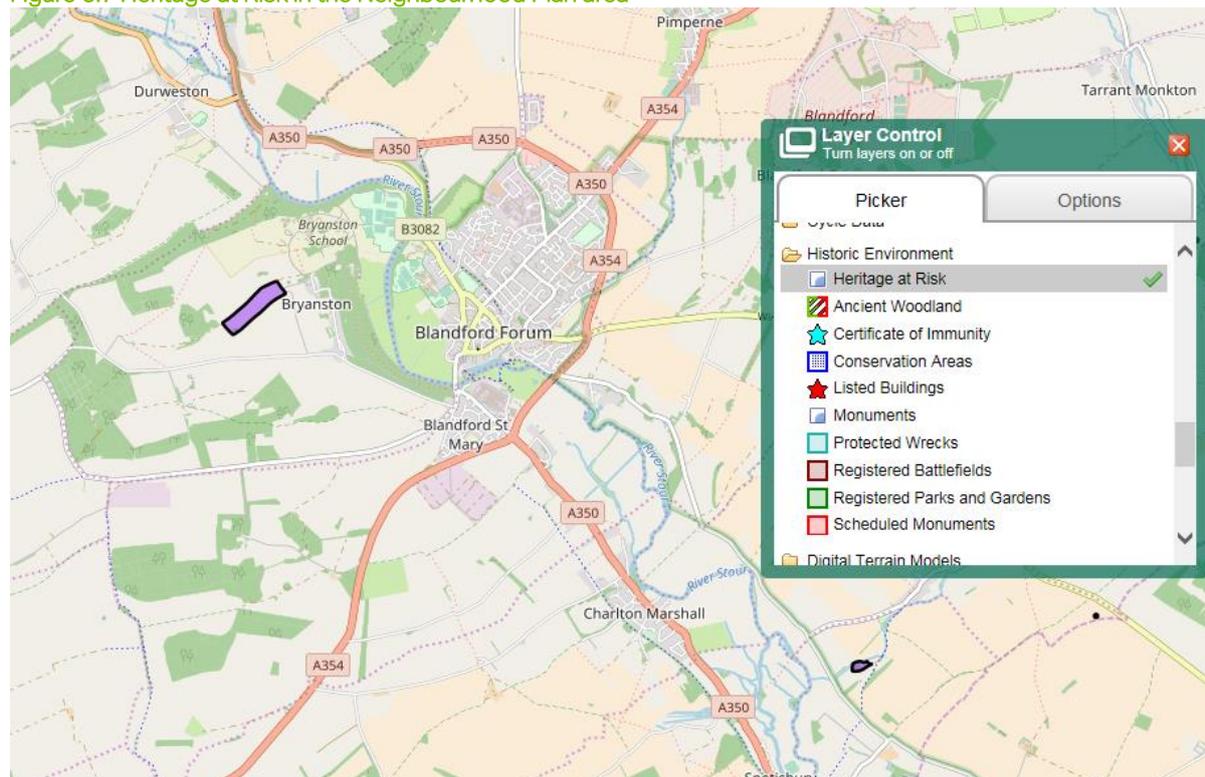
5.43 However, it is important to recognise that the Heritage at Risk Registers for areas outside of London do not contain information about the status of Grade II listed buildings. Due to this gap in the baseline, it is currently not possible to determine whether any Grade II listed buildings within the Neighbourhood Plan area are at risk.

⁶⁸ Historic England (2018) Search the list [online] available at: <<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/results?searchtype=nhleadvanced>> last accessed 03/05/18

⁶⁹ Defra (2018) Magic Map Application [online] available at: <<http://magic.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>> last accessed 03/05/18

⁷⁰ Historic England (2017): Search the list [online] available at: <<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1002427>> last accessed 08/05/18

Figure 5.7 Heritage at Risk in the Neighbourhood Plan area⁷¹



5.44 It should be noted that not all of the area’s historic environment features are subject to statutory designations, and non-designated features comprise a large part of what people have contact with as part of daily life – whether at home, work or leisure. Although not designated, many buildings and areas are of historic interest and are seen as important by local communities.

Archaeological evidence

- 5.45 The Blandford CAAMP (2018) identifies that in archaeological terms, Blandford Forum is of great significance. Within the town centre, the relatively low level of modern development within the medieval core means that there is very high potential for important and informative remains of the medieval town and its economy to remain intact.
- 5.46 Although the current layout of the town reflects its Medieval origins, very little secure dating evidence has been recovered to confirm this assumption. The investigations conducted to date suggest that the highest potential for intact remains of Medieval Blandford lie within the rear of burgage plots fronting on to East Street, Market Place and West Street (discussed below). The later largely late 18th or 19th century suburbs appear to have not been incorporated into the urban area of the town until the late 17th century. There is however potential for post-medieval archaeological deposits surviving in the vicinity of Salisbury, Bryanston and White Cliff Mill Streets. Evidence has the potential to reveal detailed information on the economy of the town during the 17th and 18th centuries, as well as confirm the date at which Blandford expanded in to this area.
- 5.47 Furthermore, Blandford lies on well drained gently sloping land with a south westerly aspect. The area is well placed to exploit a variety of resources and likely to have been a preferred site for at least a small settlement during the late prehistoric and Romano-British periods. The potential for remains dating to this period can be demonstrated through the high level of Iron Age and Roman activity in the surrounding area.
- 5.48 The Dorset Historic Towns Survey for Blandford (2011) provides the following details relating to specific archeological recordings /evidence in the area: ⁷²

⁷¹ Historic England (2018) Dorset Explorer Heritage at Risk [online] available at: <<http://explorer.geowesssex.com/>> last accessed 08/05/18

⁷² Dorset County Council, North Dorset District Council, & English Heritage (2011) Dorset Historic Towns Survey: Blandford Forum [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/400851/Blandford-Forum---historic-towns-survey>> last accessed 03/05/18

- Twenty archaeological events have been recorded for Blandford. Seven of these have been undertaken within the narrow confines of the medieval and early post-medieval town, with a further six in Blandford St Mary. There were no early antiquarian investigations into Blandford Forum, though evidence for a Roman cemetery was recorded within Blandford during the 19th century, approximately a quarter of a mile due south of Blandford Bridge.
- Archaeological evidence for prehistoric activity within Blandford is forthcoming from three sites. A Bronze Age urned cremation was recovered during an evaluation in advance of the development of the Stour Park retail complex in 1993. This cremation was associated with fragmentary remains of a possible ring ditch. It is possible that further evidence for a more extensive cemetery awaits discovery at Stour Park. A second significant prehistoric site has recently been excavated in advance of the construction of new buildings at Milldown School during 2009 where substantial late Neolithic and early Bronze Age settlement activity was found. A third site, evaluated in 1994 at Blandford St Mary in advance of housing development, revealed evidence for a rectilinear field system. No dating evidence was found in association with the field ditches, although
- Bronze Age flints were recovered from the spoil heap. There is strong landscape evidence for a rectilinear field system across this part of the Stour valley comprising field, parish boundary and road alignments fossilised in the modern landscape, running perpendicular to the strike of the valley. During the medieval period this landscape pattern was associated with dispersed settlements strung out along both sides of the river, just above the flood plains. The scant dating evidence from Blandford St Mary may suggest that these alignments originated during the Bronze Age. To date no evidence has been found for Iron Age or Romano-British dispersed settlement within the area.
- There have been a number of small archaeological investigations in the area of the medieval town of Blandford Forum, but the only major excavation of medieval archaeology has taken place in Blandford St Mary in advance of the development of the Stour Park retail site. This revealed evidence for a medieval settlement along a hollow way running perpendicular to the river Stour, with some slight evidence that this settlement may have originated during the late Saxon period.

Summary of future baseline

- 5.49 Baseline information highlights the sensitivity of the landscape and historic environment within and around the Neighbourhood Plan area. New development in the Neighbourhood Plan area therefore has the potential to impact on the fabric and setting of heritage assets; for example through inappropriate design and layout. New development could also have the potential to lead to small, incremental but cumulative changes in landscape and townscape character and quality in and around the Neighbourhood Plan area. This includes from the loss of or damage to features and areas with an important visual amenity value; notably the two AONBs surrounding the Neighbourhood Plan area, and the Conservation Areas present.
- 5.50 It should be noted, however, that existing historic environment designations offer a degree of protection to heritage assets and their settings. The planning system already has in place tools to offer a degree of protection to landscape and heritage assets and their settings and therefore new development will not necessarily result in harm to the significance of these assets. Further to this, there is an opportunity for development to facilitate the enhancement to the fabric and setting of historic environment assets.

What are the SA objectives and appraisal questions for the Landscape and Historic environment SA theme?

SA objective	Assessment questions
Protect, maintain and enhance the heritage resource, including the historic environment and archaeological assets located within and within the setting of the Neighbourhood Plan area.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB and the Dorset AONB? • Conserve and enhance the significance of buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their setting? • Conserve and enhance the special interest, character and appearance of the Blandford Forum, Blandford St Mary & Bryanston Conservation Area and its setting? • Support the integrity of the historic setting of key buildings of heritage interest? • Conserve and enhance local diversity and character? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic environment? • Conserve and enhance archaeological remains, including historic landscapes? • Support the undertaking of archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies.
Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and townscapes.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the integrity of the landscape in the Neighbourhood Plan area, in accordance with the North Dorset Landscape Character Assessment? • Conserve and enhance landscape and townscape features, in accordance with the Blandford Conservation Area Appraisal Management Plan?

6. Land, soil and water resources

Focus of theme

- Soils resource
- Waste management
- Watercourses
- Water availability
- Water quality

Headline sustainability issues

6.1 The following key issues have emerged from the baseline review:

- Agricultural land in the vicinity of the Neighbourhood Plan area comprises areas of land classified as the best and most versatile agricultural land.
- Blandford Household Waste and Recycling Centre (HWRC) is located on Shaftesbury Lane, within the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- The River Stour cuts through the Neighbourhood Plan area, separating Blandford Forum from Blandford St Mary.
- Blandford lies between two SPZs, an inner zone (Zone 1) to the northeast of town and an outer zone (Zone 2) to the northeast and south.
- The Neighbourhood Plan area is situated with two Nitrate Vulnerable Zones: Surface Waters – North Winterbourne NVZ (S688), and Ground Waters – South Wessex NVZ (G151)
- The Neighbourhood Plan area is situated within a Drinking Water Safeguard Zone for Surface Water.

Policy context

6.2 The EU's Soil Thematic Strategy⁷³ presents a strategy for protecting soils resources in Europe. The main aim of the strategy is to minimise soil degradation and limit associated detrimental effects linked to water quality and quantity, human health, climate change, biodiversity, and food safety.

6.3 The EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) drives a catchment-based approach to water management. In England and Wales there are 100 water catchments and it is Defra's intention is to establish a 'framework for integrated catchment management' across England. The Environment Agency is establishing 'Significant Water Management Issues' and recently presented second River Basin Management Plans to ministers. The plans seek to deliver the objectives of the WFD namely:

- Enhance the status and prevent the further deterioration of aquatic ecosystems and associated wetlands which depend on aquatic ecosystems;
- Promote the sustainable use of water;
- Reduce the pollution of water, especially by 'priority' and 'priority hazardous' substances; and
- Ensure the progressive reduction of groundwater pollution.

6.4 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- Protect and enhance soils. The value of best and most versatile agricultural land should also be taken into account.

⁷³ European Commission (2006) Soil Thematic Policy [online] available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/index_en.htm> last accessed 04/05/2018

- Prevent new or existing development from being 'adversely affected' by the presence of 'unacceptable levels' of soil pollution or land instability and be willing to remediate and mitigate 'despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate'.
 - Encourage the effective use of land' through the reuse of land which has been previously developed, 'provided that this is not of high environmental value'. Whilst there is no longer a national requirement to build at a minimum density, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to 'set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances'.
 - Produce strategic policies to deliver the provision of a variety of infrastructure, including that necessary for water supply.
 - With regards to waste, the NPPF does not contain any specific waste policies as waste planning policy will be published as part of the National Waste Management Plan.
- 6.5 Along with the policies contained within Chapter 1 'Using and managing land sustainably' and Chapter 4 'Increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste', Goal 2 'Clean and plentiful water', Goal 5 'Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently' and Goal 8 'Minimising waste' of the Government's 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' directly relates to the land, soil and water resources SA theme.
- 6.6 Other key documents at the national level include Safeguarding our Soils: A Strategy for England⁷⁴, which sets out a vision for soil use in England, and the Water White Paper⁷⁵, which sets out the Government's vision for a more resilient water sector. It states the measures that will be taken to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystems, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources. In terms of waste management, the Government Review of Waste Policy in England⁷⁶ recognises that environmental benefits and economic growth can be the result of a more sustainable approach to the use of materials.
- 6.7 A new Waste Plan is being prepared to provide for Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole's waste management needs.⁷⁷ The new Waste Plan identifies sites for new waste management facilities to meet the county's needs. Once adopted, it will provide the policy framework for determining planning applications for waste management facilities up to 2033.
- 6.8 The Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Dorset (2009) sets out the approach to managing waste in Dorset.⁷⁸ The objectives of the strategy follow the waste hierarchy and include: reduction of all waste; high recycling and composting rates; residual waste treatment and recovery and; minimal landfill especially of untreated waste.
- 6.9 At a local scale, Policy 3 (Climate Change), Policy 13 (Grey Infrastructure) and Policy 20 (The Countryside) of the NDLP1 (2016) are relevant to the Land, Soil and Water Objective. Additionally, numerous saved Local Plan (2003) policies set out a range of measures important to the Land, Soil and Water Objective. These include saved policies 1.15 (Foul Drainage), 1.16 (Groundwater Source Protection), 1.17 (Sewage Treatment Works Protection), 1.18 (Waste Recycling Centres), and 1.20 (Contaminated Land).

⁷⁴ Defra (2009) Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England [online] available at: <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-our-soils-a-strategy-for-england>> last accessed 04/05/2018

⁷⁵ Defra (2011) Water for life (The Water White Paper) [online] available at <<http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm82/8230/8230.pdf>> last accessed 04/05/2018

⁷⁶ Defra (2011) Government Review of Waste Policy in England [online] available at: <<http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13540-waste-policy-review110614.pdf>> last accessed 04/05/2018

⁷⁷ Dorset County Council, Bournemouth Borough Council, and Poole Borough Council (2017) Waste Plan Pre-submission draft [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/406513>> last accessed 04/05/18

⁷⁸ Dorset Councils (2009) Joint Municipal Waste Strategy for Dorset [online] available at: <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/media/138125/Municipal-Waste-Strategy/pdf/Municipal_Waste_Strategy.pdf> last accessed 04/05/18

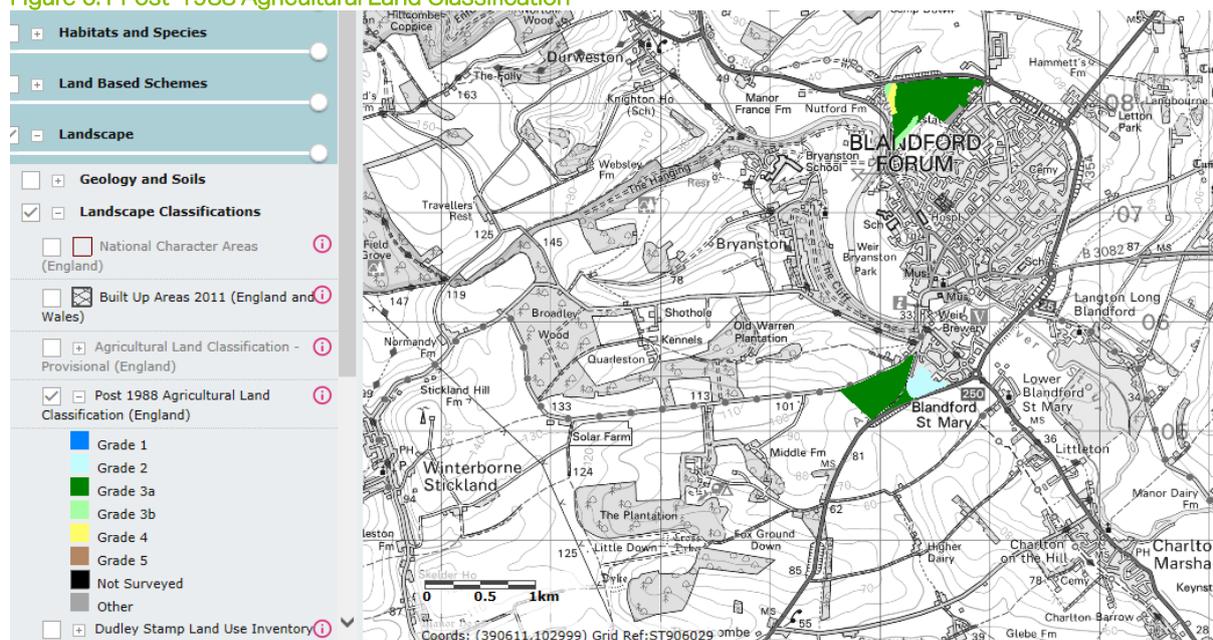
Baseline summary

Summary of current baseline

Quality of agricultural land

- 6.10 The Agricultural Land Classification classifies land into six grades (plus 'non-agricultural' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are recognised as being the 'best and most versatile' land, and Grades 3b to 5 are of poorer quality. In this context there is a need to avoid loss of higher quality ('best and most versatile') agricultural land.
- 6.11 In terms of the location of the best and most versatile agricultural land, a detailed classification has not been undertaken for the entirety of the Neighbourhood Plan area. Post-1988 Agricultural Land Classification is available for small sections of the Neighbourhood Plan area, to the north of Blandford Forum and to the east of Blandford St Mary (Figure 6.1). This identifies areas of Grade 2 and 3 (uncertain if this is 3a or b), within the Neighbourhood Plan area, which is best and most versatile (if found to be Grade 3a).
- 6.12 For the remainder of the Neighbourhood Plan area, there is a need to rely on the Pre-1988 Agricultural Land Classification to provide an indication of the land classification for Blandford. The Pre-1988 classification identifies that the Neighbourhood Plan area is covered by Grade 4, Grade 3 and some Grade 2 agricultural land along the north eastern boundary. It is unknown at this stage if the Grade 3 land present is grade 3a or 3b. In this context Grade 2 and Grade 3a land is classified as best and most versatile.

Figure 6.1 Post-1988 Agricultural Land Classification⁷⁹



Recycling centres

- 6.13 Blandford Household Waste and Recycling Centre (HWRC) is located on Shaftesbury Lane, within the Neighbourhood Plan area. Commercial waste (rubbish and garden waste only) is accepted at this recycling centre, on Saturday mornings only.

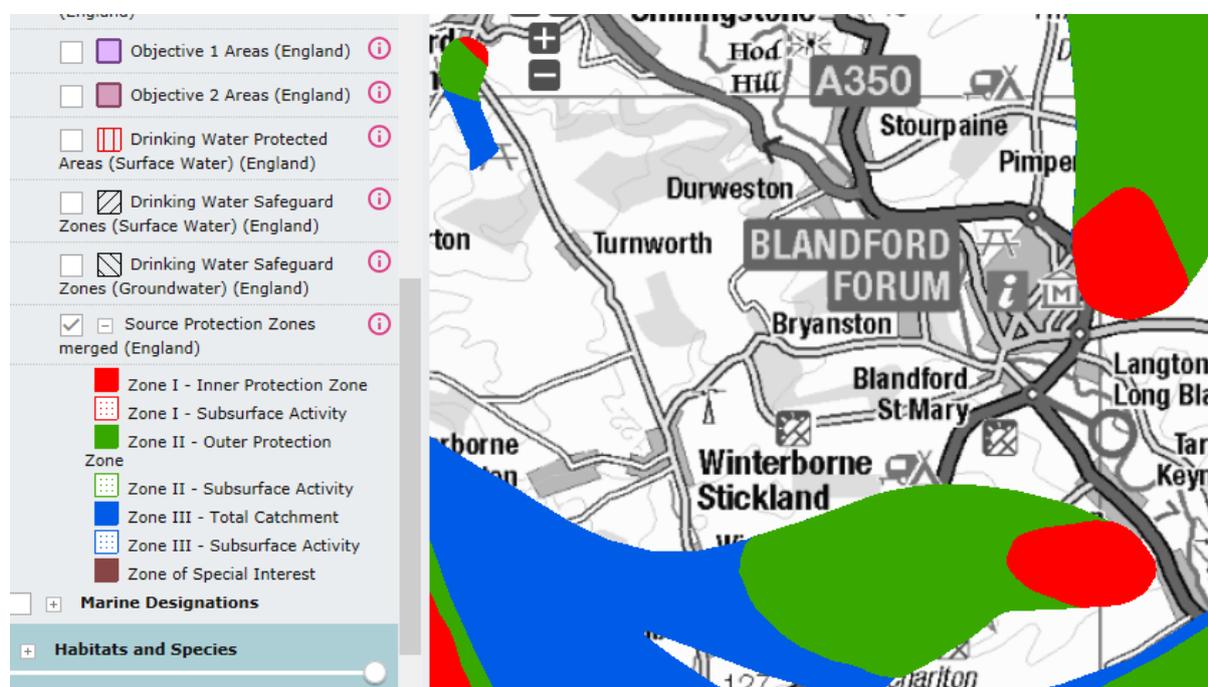
Watercourses

- 6.14 The main watercourse flowing through the Neighbourhood Plan area is the River Stour. The town lies in the 'Blandford Gap' where the River Stour cuts through the chalk downland, separating Blandford Forum from Blandford St Mary. There are a number of other small waterways present within the Neighbourhood Plan area; notably Pimperne Brook tributary feeds into the River Stour, extending from the south of Blandford Forum to the north through Pimperne.

⁷⁹ Defra (2018) Magic Map Application [online] available at: <<http://magic.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>> last accessed 08/05/18

- 6.15 Water supply and drainage in the area is provided by Wessex Water. This water supply network consists of a number of major transmission systems allowing fluid movement from areas of surplus to meet demand in the wider supply area. The Wessex Water Draft Water Resources Management Plan (2017) describes how the integrated network provides customers with a very resilient water supply service. Most recently (2010-2018) the integrated GRID project has added new pipelines to connect sources in the south of our region (Corfe Mullen area) to Salisbury in Wiltshire via Blandford and Shaftesbury.⁸⁰ This scheme, first proposed in the 2009 Water Resources Management Plan, allows for reduced abstraction at environmentally sensitive sources in the upper Hampshire Avon Catchment, improving resilience for customers without the need to develop new sources.⁸¹
- 6.16 Groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs) have been defined by the Environment Agency in England and Wales to protect groundwater sources such as wells, boreholes and springs that are used for public drinking water supply. The zones show the risk of contamination from activities that might cause groundwater pollution in the area. Blandford lies between two SPZs, an inner zone (Zone 1 – red) to the northeast of town and an outer zone (Zone 2 – Green) to the north east and south.

Figure 6.2 Ground Water Source Protection Zones⁸²



- 6.17 The EU Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) requires member states to identify areas where groundwater has nitrate concentrations of more than 50 mg/l nitrate or is thought to be at risk of nitrate contamination. These areas are designated as Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) and as such are recognised as being at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution. Member states are required to establish Action Programmes in order to reduce and prevent further nitrate contamination. Figure 6.3 shows that the Neighbourhood Plan area is situated, to some extent, within the following NVZs:

- Nitrate Vulnerable Zones Surface Waters – North Winterbourne NVZ (S688)
- Nitrate Vulnerable Zones Ground Waters – South Wessex NVZ (G151)

- 6.18 Surface Waters are areas of land that drain into a freshwater water body which has or could have is action is not taken, a nitrate concentration greater than 50mg/l. Ground Water is water held underground in the soil or in pores and crevices in rock, which has or could have if action is not taken, a nitrate concentration greater than 50mg/l.⁸³

⁸⁰ Wessex Water (2017) Draft water resources management plan [online] available at: <<https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/waterplan/>> last accessed 08/05/18

⁸¹ Ibid.

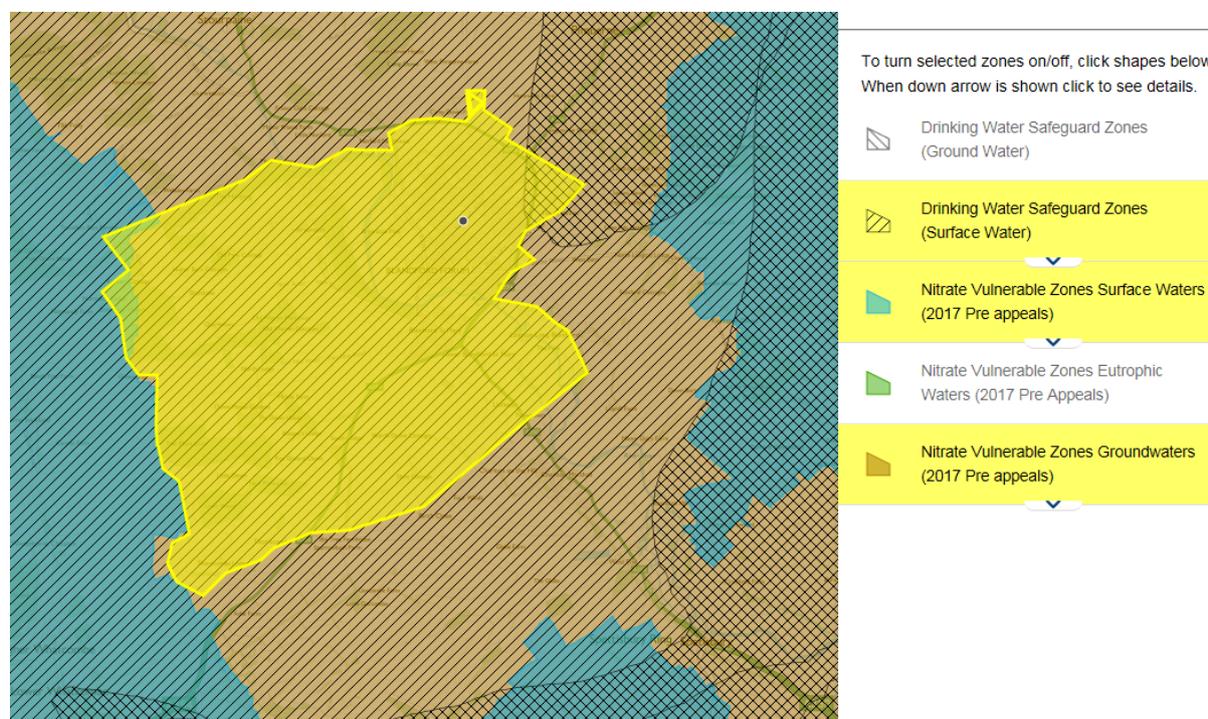
⁸² Defra (2018) Magic Map Application [online] available at: <<http://magic.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>> last accessed 08/05/18

⁸³ The Environment Agency (2018) Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZ) [online] available at: <<http://apps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/141443.aspx>> last accessed 08/05/18

6.19 Figure 6.3 also shows the Neighbourhood Plan area in relation to Drinking Water Safeguard Zones. Drinking Water Safeguard Zones are designated areas in which the use of certain substances must be carefully managed to prevent the pollution of raw water sources that are used to provide drinking water.

6.20 The Neighbourhood Plan area is situated within a Drinking Water Safeguard Zone for Surface Water. This area is at risk from Metaldehyde.⁸⁴

Figure 6.3 Drinking Water Safeguard Zones and Nitrate Vulnerable Zones⁸⁵



Summary of future baseline

- 6.21 Due to increasing legislative and regulatory requirements, there are increasing pressures to improving recycling and composting rates.
- 6.22 In terms of water quality, the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (and replacement) are likely to lead to continued improvements to water quality in watercourses in the wider area. Water quality has the potential to be affected by pollution incidents in the area, the presence of non-native species and future physical modifications to water bodies.
- 6.23 New development in the Neighbourhood Plan area has the potential to impact on areas of the best and most versatile agricultural land. In this context there could potentially be opportunities to avoid developing Grade 2 and Grade 3a agricultural land by directing development toward areas of Grade 3 (b) and 4 agricultural land where this is present.
- 6.24 It is considered unlikely that limited development in the Neighbourhood Plan area will have a significant impact on the wider area's NVZ status unless significant land were lost to agricultural use through development.

⁸⁴ The Environment Agency (2018) Check for Drinking Water Safeguard Zones and NVZs [online] available at: <<https://environment-agency.cloud.esri.uk.com/farmers/>> last accessed 08/05/18

⁸⁵ The Environment Agency (2018) Check for Drinking Water Safeguard Zones and NVZs [online] available at: <<https://environment-agency.cloud.esri.uk.com/farmers/>> last accessed 08/05/18

What are the SA objectives and appraisal questions for the Land, soil and water resources SA theme?

SA objective	Assessment questions
Ensure the efficient and effective use of land.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the use of previously developed land? • Avoid the development of the best and most versatile agricultural land, which may comprise Grade 2 and 3a agricultural land?
Promote sustainable waste management solutions that encourage the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the amount of waste produced? • Support the minimisation, reuse and recycling of waste? • Encourage recycling of materials and minimise consumption of resources during construction?
Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support improvements to water quality? • Minimise water consumption? • Protect groundwater resources?

7. Population and community

Focus of theme

- Population size
- Population density
- Age structure
- Deprivation
- House prices and affordability
- Homelessness
- Education and skills

Headline sustainability issues

7.1 The following key issues have emerged from the baseline review:

- According to the most recently available census data the Neighbourhood Plan area has seen an increase in population between 2011 and 2016. This rate is greater than that identified for the District (+3.5%), and marginally greater than the regional and national figures.
- Blandford has seen a significant expansion in recent years; expanding by 182% between 1971 and 2011. This is the largest growth of any town in rural Dorset.
- The Neighbourhood Plan area is supporting a younger population than North Dorset and the South West. The largest percentage of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area is those aged 25-44.
- There are seven LSOAs covering the Neighbourhood Plan area. With the exception of North Dorset 007A, all LSOAs which cover the Neighbourhood Plan area fall within the 40% most deprived, 50% most deprived, and 40% least deprived neighbourhoods.
- There is an acknowledged pupil place deficiency in the Neighbourhood Plan area, and therefore a need to deliver an increase in school place capacity.
- A lower percentage of residents either own their home outright or with a mortgage, compared to North Dorset, the South West and England. A higher percentage of residents are in social rented accommodation than all other comparators.
- Within the Neighbourhood Plan area over 1/3 of residents live in households married with/without dependants.

Policy context

7.2 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- To 'boost significantly the supply of housing', local planning authorities should meet the 'full, objectively assessed need for market and affordable housing' in their area. Affordable housing is defined within Annex 2 of the NPPF as '*Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.*'
- Local planning authorities should prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment to assess their full housing needs, working with neighbouring authorities where housing market areas cross administrative boundaries. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment should identify the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that the local population is likely to need over the plan period.
- With a view to creating 'sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities' authorities should ensure provision of affordable housing onsite or externally where robustly justified.

- In rural areas, when exercising the duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities, local planning authorities should be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate. Authorities should consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of affordable housing to meet local needs.
 - The NPPF attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. It explains how good design is a key aspect in sustainable development, and how development should improve the quality of the area over its lifetime, not just in the short term. Good architecture and landscaping are important, with the use of design codes contributing to the delivery of high quality outcomes. Design should reinforce local distinctiveness, raise the standard more generally in the area and address the connections between people and places.
 - The social role of the planning system involves 'supporting vibrant and healthy communities'.
 - The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities
 - Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.
 - Ensure that developments create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. Places should contain clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public spaces, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.
 - Ensuring that there is a 'sufficient choice of school places' is of 'great importance' and there is a need to take a 'proactive, positive and collaborative approach' to bringing forward 'development that will widen choice in education'.
- 7.3 The 'Ready for Ageing?' report, published by the Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change warns that society is underprepared for an ageing population. The report states that 'longer lives can be a great benefit, but there has been a collective failure to address the implications and without urgent action this great boon could turn into a series of miserable crises'. The report recognises that the supply of specialist housing for the older generation is insufficient for the demand. There is a need for central and local Government, housing associations, and house builders to ensure that these housing needs are better addressed, giving as much priority to promoting an adequate market of social housing for the older generation as is given to the younger generation.
- 7.4 Policies contained in Chapter 1 'Using and managing land sustainably' and Chapter 4 'Increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste' of the Government's 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' directly relates to the population and community SEA theme.
- 7.5 The North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) (2014)⁸⁶ sets out what infrastructure is needed to enable the development proposed in the North Dorset Local Plan 2011 - 2026 Part 1. The IDP will play a key role in co-ordinating the level of local infrastructure and services so that they meet existing and future demands.
- 7.6 A number of North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (2003) saved policies and adopted NDLP1 (2016) policies set out a range of measures which directly and indirectly relate to the population and community theme. These include:
- Policy 6 – Housing Distribution
 - Policy 7 – Delivering Homes
 - Policy 8 – Affordable Housing
 - Policy 9 – Rural Exception Affordable Housing
 - Policy 10 – Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
 - Policy 12 – Retail, Leisure and Other Commercial Developments

⁸⁶ North Dorset District Council (2014) North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 Infrastructure Delivery Plan [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/media/215827/The-North-Dorset-Infrastructure-Delivery-Plan-2014/pdf/The-North-Dorset-Infrastructure-Delivery-Plan-2014.pdf>> last accessed 09/05/18

- Policy 14 – Social Infrastructure
- Policy 15 – Green Infrastructure
- Saved policies 2.1-2.21
- Saved policies 4.1-4.11

Baseline summary

Summary of current baseline

7.7 For the purposes of this Scoping Report, the economic and social baseline for the Neighbourhood Plan area has been presented using the combined data for Blandford Forum Parish, Blandford St. Mary Parish, and Bryanston Parish.

Population

7.8 According to the most recently available census data (Table 7.1) the Neighbourhood Plan area has seen an increase in population (+4.48%) between 2011 and 2016. This rate is greater than that identified for the District (+3.5%), and marginally greater than the regional (+4.31%) and national (+4.25%) figures. This reflects Blandford's significant expansion in recent years; expanding by 182% between 1971 and 2011. This is the largest growth of any town in rural Dorset.⁸⁷

7.9 The majority of the population within the Neighbourhood Plan area is situated within Blandford Forum Parish, with Blandford St. Mary Parish and Bryanston Parish making up the smaller and more rural areas to the south and west of Blandford Forum. The 2016 data shows that the population for Blandford Forum Parish is 10,927, accounting for 81.9% of the Neighbourhood Plan area's population.

7.10 Whilst effectively the three councils (Blandford Forum, Blandford St. Mary, and Bryanston) function as a single area, it is recognised that they each have quite distinct characteristics. In this context, a Blandford St Mary residents' survey in 2009 illustrated the importance of the Parish's distinct identity, with over 2/3rd expressing how important this separate identity was to them.⁸⁸

7.11 It is noted that due to low numbers the data for Langton Long Blandford Parish have been combined for this dataset, which may lead to a slightly greater population figure for the Parish.⁸⁹ However, this is not expected to be significant.

Table 7.1 Population growth 2011-2016^{90,91}

Date	Blandford+	North Dorset	South West	England
2011	12,761	68,583	5,288,935	53,012,456
2016	13,332	70,915	5,516,973	55,268,067
Population Change 2011-2016	+4.48%	+3.4%	+4.31%	+4.25%

⁸⁷ North Dorset District Council (2013) North Dorset Local Plan 2011-2026 Part 1 Market Towns Site Selection Background Paper [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/evidence/north>> last accessed 08/05/18

⁸⁸ Blandford St Mary Steering Group (2009) Blandford St Mary Parish Plan [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/evidence/north>> last accessed 08/05/18

⁸⁹ Dorset County Council (2018) Area Profile for Blandford Forum & Langton Long Blandford [online] available at: <<https://apps.geowessex.com/stats/AreaProfiles/Parish/blandford-forum-and-langton-long-blandford>> last accessed 08/05/18

⁹⁰ Nomis (2016) Population estimates – local authority based by single year of age [online] available at: <<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?mode=construct&version=0&dataset=2002>> last accessed 08/05/18

⁹¹ Dorset County Council (2018) Dorset statistics and census information [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/statistics>> last accessed 08/05/18

Age structure

7.12 The percentage of residents living within the Neighbourhood Plan area aged between 16-24 is 12.26%, which is higher than that of North Dorset, the South West, and England. The largest percentage of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area are those aged between 25-44, which aligns with the data for England, however for all other comparators residents aged 60+ make up the largest proportion of the population. The Neighbourhood Plan area's residents aged 60+ equates to 24.32%, which is significantly lower than the percentage for North Dorset, where 29.08% of the population is aged 60+.

7.13 Based on this data (Table 7.2) it is apparent that the Neighbourhood Plan area is supporting a younger population than North Dorset and the South West. However this is slightly older than the age structure for England.

Table 7.2: Age Structure (2011)⁹²

	Blandford+	North Dorset	South West	England
0-15	18.51%	18.01%	17.5%	18.9%
16-24	12.26%	10.18%	11.3%	11.9%
25-44	24.81%	22.32%	24.6%	27.5%
45-59	20.09%	20.41%	20.1%	19.4%
60+	24.32%	29.08%	26.4%	22.3%
Total Population	12,761	68,583	5,288,935	53,012,456

Household deprivation

7.14 Census statistics measure deprivation across four 'dimensions' of deprivation, summarized below:

- **Employment:** Any person in the household (not a full-time student) that is either unemployed or long-term sick.
- **Education:** No person in the household has at least a level 2 qualification and no person aged 16-18 is a full-time student.
- **Health and Disability:** Any person in the household that has generally 'bad' or 'very bad' health, or has a long term health problem.
- **Housing:** The household accommodation is either overcrowded (with an occupancy rating of -1 or less), in a shared dwelling or has no central heating.

7.15 Based on the most recently available census data (see Table 7.3) a greater proportion of households are deprived in 2 or more dimensions within the Neighbourhood Plan area (22.21%) in comparison with North Dorset (18.2%). Compared to regional averages, the Neighbourhood Plan area has very similar percentages for all categories. Compared to the national figures, the Neighbourhood Plan area has a higher percentage of households not deprived, and a lower proportion of households deprived in 2 and 3 dimensions.

Table 7.3: Relative household deprivation dimensions⁹³

	Blandford+	North Dorset	South West	England
Household not deprived	44.6%	47.3%	44.8%	42.5%
Deprived in 1 dimension	33.2%	33.8%	33.2%	32.7%

⁹² ONS (no date): Census 2011: Age Structure 2011 (Table KS102EW)

⁹³ ONS (no date): Census 2011: 'Households by Deprivation Dimensions 2011 (Table QS119EW)

	Blandford+	North Dorset	South West	England
Deprived in 2 dimensions	17.9%	15.8%	17.6%	19.1%
Deprived in 3 dimensions	3.81%	2.9%	4.0%	5.1%
Deprived in 4 dimensions	0.5%	0.3%	0.4%	0.5%

Index of Multiple Deprivation

7.16 The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 (IMD) is an overall relative measure of deprivation constructed by combining seven domains of deprivation according to their respective weights, as described below. The seven deprivation domains are as follows:

- **Income:** The proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income, including those individuals that are out-of-work and those that are in work but who have low earnings (satisfying the respective means tests).
- **Employment:** The proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market, including those individuals who would like to work but are unable to do so due to unemployment, sickness or disability, or caring responsibilities.
- **Education, Skills and Training:** The lack of attainment and skills in the local population.
- **Health Deprivation and Disability:** The risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. Morbidity, disability and premature mortality are also considered, excluding the aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of future health deprivation.
- **Crime:** The risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.
- **Barriers to Housing and Services:** The physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services, with indicators categorised in two sub-domains.
 1. 'Geographical Barriers': relating to the physical proximity of local services
 2. 'Wider Barriers': relating to access to housing, such as affordability.
- **Living Environment:** The quality of the local environment, with indicators falling categorised in two sub-domains.
 3. 'Indoors Living Environment' measures the quality of housing.
 4. 'Outdoors Living Environment' measures air quality and road traffic accidents.

7.17 Two supplementary indices (subsets of the Income deprivation domains), are also included:

- **Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index:** The proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families.
- **Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index:** The proportion of all those aged 60 or over who experience income deprivation.

7.18 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are a geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. They are standardised geographies designed to be as consistent in population as possible, with each LSOA containing approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people. In relation to the IMD 2015, LSOAs are ranked out of the 32,844 in England and Wales, with 1 being the most deprived. Ranks are normalised into deciles, with a value of 1 reflecting the top 10% most deprived LSOAs in England and Wales (see Table 7.4).

7.19 The Neighbourhood Planning area lies within the following seven LSOAs:⁹⁴

- North Dorset 006A

⁹⁴ DCLG (2015): 'English Indices of Deprivation Explorer', [online] available at <http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/idmap.html> last accessed 09/05/2018

- North Dorset 006B
- North Dorset 007A
- North Dorset 007B
- North Dorset 007C
- North Dorset 007D
- North Dorset 007E

7.20 Analysis of the data presented in Table 7.4 below reveals the following inferences:

General trends

- 7.21 North Dorset 006A covers a small portion of the Neighbourhood Plan area to the north of Blandford Forum. This LSOA is ranked 19,213 out of 32,844 LSOAs in England; where 1 is the most deprived LSOA. This is amongst the 50% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country. This LSOA is particularly deprived in terms of Barriers to Housing and Services, being within the 10% most deprived for this domain. However for the majority of other domains, this LSOA is ranked in the 30% least deprived; notably Income Deprivation Affecting Older People, Health Deprivation and Disability, Education, Skills and Training, Employment Deprivation and Income Deprivation.
- 7.22 North Dorset 006B covers a large proportion of the Neighbourhood Plan area, the rural extent to the southeast of Blandford Forum, including Blandford St. Mary. This LSOA is ranked 18,959 out of 32,844 LSOAs in England; where 1 is the most deprived LSOA. This is amongst the 50% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country. This LSOA is particularly deprived in relation to Housing and Services, being within the 10% most deprived for this domain. The LSOA is also deprived in terms of Education, Skills and Training, being within the 30% most deprived for this domain. However for other domains this LSOA is ranked in the 30% least deprived; notably Living Environment Deprivation, Crime, and Health Deprivation and Disability.
- 7.23 North Dorset 007A covers a small area of Blandford Forum, to the north of the Neighbourhood Plan area. This LSOA is ranked 26,747 out of 32,844 LSOAs in England; where 1 is the most deprived LSOA. This is amongst the 20% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country. This LSOA is deprived in relation to Barriers to Housing and Services, falling within the 30% most deprived in the country. However, for all other domains (with the exception of Education, Skills and Training) this LSOA is among the 30% least deprived in the country.
- 7.24 North Dorset 007B covers the northern extent of Blandford Forum, up to the A350. This LSOA is ranked 20,982 out of 32,844 LSOAs in England; where 1 is the most deprived LSOA. This is amongst the 40% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country. This LSOA is particularly deprived in terms of Barriers to Housing and Services, being within the 10% most deprived for this domain. However in contrast, for Income Deprivation Affecting Older People and Living Environment domain, this LSOA is ranked in the 10% least deprived in the country.
- 7.25 North Dorset 007C covers the east of Blandford Forum, aligning with the eastern boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area. This LSOA is ranked 20,022 out of 32,844 LSOAs in England; where 1 is the most deprived LSOA. This is amongst the 40% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country. This LSOA is particularly deprived in relation to Education, Skills and Training, being within the 30% most deprived for this domain. However the LSOA is in the 20% least deprived in terms of Income Deprivation Affecting Older People, Living Environment and Crime.
- 7.26 North Dorset 007D covers the southern extent of Blandford Forum, including the Blandford School and the northern half of Crown Meadows. This LSOA is ranked 12,597 out of 32,844 LSOAs in England; where 1 is the most deprived LSOA. This is amongst the 40% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. The LSOA is within the 50% or above most deprived neighbourhoods for all domains (not including sub-domains).
- 7.27 North Dorset 007E covers a small area central to Blandford Forum, extending along Salisbury Road. This LSOA is ranked 13,110 out of 32,844 LSOAs in England; where 1 is the most deprived LSOA. This is amongst the 40% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. This LSOA is particularly deprived in relation to Income Deprivation Affecting Older People and the Wider Barriers sub-domain, falling within the 30% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country.

Similarities/contrasts between the LSOAs

- With the exception of North Dorset 007A, all LSOAs which cover the Neighbourhood Plan area are within the 40% most deprived, 50% most deprived, and 40% least deprived neighbourhoods.
- With the exception of North Dorset 007A and North Dorset 006A, all LSOAs which cover the Neighbourhood Plan area are within the 30-50% most deprived neighbourhoods in relation to Education, Skills and Training.
- All LSOAs which cover the Neighbourhood Plan area are deprived in terms of Barriers to Housing and Services, being within the 50% most deprived for this domain.
- With the exception of North Dorset 007D, all LSOAs which cover the Neighbourhood Plan area are within the 40% least deprived neighbourhoods in relation to crime.
- North Dorset 007D and North Dorset 006A are among the 40% most deprived neighbourhoods in relation to Living Environment Domain. In contrast, North Dorset 007A, 007B and 007C are in the 20% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country.
- In terms of Income Deprivation Affecting Older People, North Dorset 007E is among the 30% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country, North Dorset 007D is among the 40% most deprived, and North Dorset 006B is among the 50% most deprived. In contrast, all other LSOAs within the Neighbourhood Plan area are within the 20% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country.
- All LSOAs which cover the Neighbourhood Plan area are within the 30% most deprived in relation to the Outdoors sub-domain. Further to this, with the exception of North Dorset 007D; all LSOAs are within the top 10% most deprived for this sub-domain.

LSOA	Overall IMD	Income	Employment	Education, Skills and Training	Health Deprivation and Disability	Crime	Barriers to Housing and Services	Living Environment	Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index	Income Deprivation Affecting Older People	Children and Young People Sub-domain	Adult Skills Sub-domain	Geographical Barriers Sub-domain	Wider Barriers Sub-domain	Indoors Sub-domain	Outdoors Sub-domain
E01020442																
North Dorset 006A																
<i>Rank</i>	19,213	26,184	26,077	23,476	27,425	22,532	588	11,158	22,259	28,544	21,982	23,253	438	19,845	6,016	31,941
<i>Decile</i>	(6)	(8)	(8)	(8)	(9)	(7)	(1)	(4)	(7)	(9)	(7)	(8)	(1)	(7)	(2)	(10)
E01020452																
North Dorset 006B																
<i>Rank</i>	16,711	18,959	19,085	6,893	26,549	31,258	2,148	25,049	22,022	15,979	2,702	16,593	3,415	8,518	18,470	32,827
<i>Decile</i>	(6)	(6)	(6)	(3)	(9)	(10)	(1)	(8)	(7)	(5)	(1)	(6)	(2)	(3)	(6)	(10)
E01020435																
North Dorset 007A																
<i>Rank</i>	26,747	28,525	25,998	17,523	25,697	30,593	7,618	29,460	29,243	24,848	19,512	14,730	7,062	11,542	23,925	32,715
<i>Decile</i>	(9)	(9)	(8)	(6)	(8)	(10)	(3)	(9)	(9)	(8)	(6)	(5)	(3)	(4)	(8)	(10)
E01020436																
North Dorset 007B																
<i>Rank</i>	20,982	19,400	23,801	14,664	26,956	28,867	2,674	32,807	15,021	29,802	11,710	17,461	1,881	16,820	31,825	32,643

LSOA	Overall IMD	Income	Employment	Education, Skills and Training	Health Deprivation and Disability	Crime	Barriers to Housing and Services	Living Environment	Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index	Income Deprivation Affecting Older People	Children and Young People Sub-domain	Adult Skills Sub-domain	Geographical Barriers Sub-domain	Wider Barriers Sub-domain	Indoors Sub-domain	Outdoors Sub-domain
Decile	(7)	(6)	(8)	(5)	(9)	(9)	(1)	(10)	(5)	(10)	(4)	(5)	(1)	(6)	(10)	(10)
E01020437																
North Dorset 007C																
Rank	20,022	19,234	18,081	8,171	24,677	26,824	12,009	29,101	13,560	29,045	5,966	11,203	7,892	16,007	23,377	32,687
Decile	(7)	(6)	(6)	(3)	(8)	(9)	(4)	(9)	(5)	(9)	(2)	(4)	(3)	(5)	(8)	(10)
E01020438																
North Dorset 007D																
Rank	12,597	12,263	11,196	12,240	15,569	13,922	12,703	8,874	15,663	12,516	8,112	17,999	19,663	6,753	4,987	26,059
Decile	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(5)	(5)	(4)	(3)	(5)	(4)	(3)	(6)	(6)	(5)	(2)	(8)
E01020439																
North Dorset 007E																
Rank	16,660	11,701	16,559	15,719	14,663	21,343	14,266	19,967	13,110	9,268	12,763	18,394	16,000	9,454	13,454	32,672
Decile	(6)	(4)	(6)	(5)	(5)	(7)	(5)	(7)	(4)	(3)	(4)	(6)	(5)	(3)	(5)	(10)

Crime

7.28 As discussed above, Table 7.1 shows that with the exception of North Dorset 007D, all LSOAs which cover the Neighbourhood Plan area are within the 40% least deprived neighbourhoods in relation to crime. This low rate of serious crime is seen throughout North Dorset. However, there is a widely held view that crime levels are much higher than the statistics suggest and the “danger” of becoming a victim of crime is prevalent, particularly among older people. Vandalism and anti-social behaviour is seen as a particular problem in the town centre, although there are some issues in the outlying villages. Problems include drunkenness and under-age drinking and acts of vandalism.⁹⁵

School place provision

7.29 The following schools are present in the Neighbourhood Plan area:

- Archbishop Wake Church of England Primary School
- Blandford St Mary Church of England Primary School
- Milldown Church of England Primary School
- The Blandford School
- Bryanston School

7.30 The Blandford Town Pupil Place Planning Statement (2016) highlights that the Blandford Town is divided into two catchments.⁹⁶ One combined catchment that services Milldown and Archbishop Wake, and the other is Blandford St. Mary. The Blandford Town Pupil Place Planning area has been subject to a significant increase in numbers of children at the 4+ point of entry. In 2010 this was 112 children looking for a reception place against a then capacity of 75. This number has since increased over the years, with 152 children looking for places for September 2017.

7.31 The Government set out within Policy statement – planning for schools development (2011) that *“the creation and development of state-funded schools is strongly in the national interest and that planning decision-makers can and should support that objective, in a manner consistent with their statutory obligations.”* It is expected that *“all parties to work together proactively from an early stage to help plan for state-school development and to shape strong planning applications.”*⁹⁷ In this context, DCC are concerned that the Local Authority’s statutory duty to provide sufficient school places could be at risk, recognising that the growth of Blandford (i.e. the proposed housing identified within the North Dorset District Local Plan) will require improvements to school provision.⁹⁸

7.32 Until now, DCC has been managing the additional pressures through an absolute increase in numbers in the two town schools, Milldown (30/ 1FE) and Archbishop Wake (60/ 2FE), as well as a modest increase in the 4+ transfer rate into mainstream schools. The temporary expansion of Milldown Primary currently seen is not a long term solution; DCC identifies that there is a limit for this unplanned expansion of the school using modular temporary buildings, and that this has reached its optimum given the site constraints.

7.33 Considering the difficulties that at present cannot be overcome to increase the town capacity by 1FE, and the forthcoming pressure building again in September 2018/2019, it has become apparent that an additional further 1FE of capacity can only be accommodated by a new school.

7.34 The options for a school site have been investigated and are set out in the Blandford Town Pupil Place Planning Statement.⁹⁹ This concludes that DCC is committed to securing a minimum 2FE school site in Blandford and based on existing analysis, the site north of the bypass is the most appropriate. This site can provide the necessary minimum 2.1ha that are required for 2FE. It can also provide sufficient site for a 3FE should DCC want to secure some additional school provision for developments beyond the end of the

⁹⁵ DT11 Forum Community Partnership (2008) Shaping the Future Community Strategic Plan consultation document [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/evidence/north>> last accessed 09/05/18

⁹⁶ Dorset County Council (2016) Blandford Town Pupil Planning Statement [online] available at:

<<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/423350/Blandford-Neighbourhood-Plan-2015-2031>> last accessed 30/05/18

⁹⁷ Department for Communities and Local Government (2011) Policy Statement – planning for schools development [online] available at: <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-for-schools-development-statement>> last accessed 30/05/18

⁹⁸ Dorset County Council (2016) Blandford Town Pupil Planning Statement [online] available at:

<<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/423350/Blandford-Neighbourhood-Plan-2015-2031>> last accessed 30/05/18

⁹⁹ Ibid.

current local plan. The site is to the North of Blandford and thus is sited close to where the children are currently coming from. There are already good pedestrian links into the housing provision in the northern part of the town.

- 7.35 The delivery of the new school site is critical to the ability of DCC to fulfil its statutory obligation of providing school places in the town. The Pupil Place Update (June 2017) recognises this, stating that *“in the review of Primary provision in the Blandford Town area a site of a minimum of 2.2ha was required to provide for a 2 FE Primary School. The Local Authority was also mindful of the need to secure ongoing capacity and flexibility within the town and looked to secure the additional approximate 1 ha to allow the school to expand to 3FE.”*¹⁰⁰
- 7.36 In this context, it is highlighted that there are approximately 18 -20 children in catchment for the Blandford St. Mary’s Primary School. At present the school does fill to Pupil Admission Number (PAN) at 30, but in the main these are children from within the combined catchment area of Archbishop Wake and Milldown Primary Schools.
- 7.37 Currently the combined catchment for Milldown and Archbishop Wake has upwards of 160 children in catchment. Along with the 20 for Blandford St. Mary’s and 19 at Pimperne, there is a total demand for 199 places prior to any new housing. There is capacity for 150 children per year group across the 4 schools (Milldown, Archbishop Wake, Blandford St. Mary’s, Pimperne). There is further overflow capacity to Spetisbury and Durweston though these are not preference places at this stage.
- 7.38 In terms of travel – children currently travel from the combined catchment in the centre of town to Blandford St. Mary, approximately 10-15 per year group, or to Pimperne (10- 12 per year group). Should additional spaces (up to 60 per year group – 7 year groups overall) be provided in or around Blandford St. Mary’s, there is a potential that all of those children would be transported by DCC funded transport or by individual private journeys from the combined catchment area into the school in the south.
- 7.39 However, as discussed above, the site on the northern edge of the combined catchment area provides ready and easy access, much of it within walking distance for the families who would otherwise have to look to the south for school provision.
- 7.40 The Pupil Place Update further considers all potential options for the expansion of an existing school, or a new primary school itself within the bypass. Of all options considered the Update concludes none are suitable.¹⁰¹ This indicates the only viable option remaining is the site to the north east of Blandford.
- 7.41 It is noted that an updated pupil planning statement and response to the proposed spatial growth options (including an additional 660 homes for the whole of Blandford) has been requested from DCC to update their 2017 evidence (which was based on NDLPP1 growth). Additionally, the Local Education Authority is updating their pupil yield data which they will apply to the new assessment for Blandford.

Health services

- 7.42 There are two medical surgeries within the Neighbourhood Plan area; Whitecliff Mill Street Practice and Eagle House. These are both sited in Blandford Forum. Blandford Community Hospital is also located within Blandford Forum, which together with the two medical centres supplies almost all the Neighbourhood Plan area’s medical needs.
- 7.43 However, following direct consultation with all surgeries in 2012, the Whitecliff Surgery in Blandford responded that healthcare provision is already under pressure and that a new or improved/extended surgery is required.¹⁰² This may be due to the extended catchment to Blandford, extending to smaller rural settlements outside of the town. It is also noted that the two medical centres are located within 400m of each other, to the south of Blandford Forum town centre, limiting accessibility for residents in the wider Neighbourhood Plan area.

¹⁰⁰ Dorset County Council (2017) Pupil Place Update

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

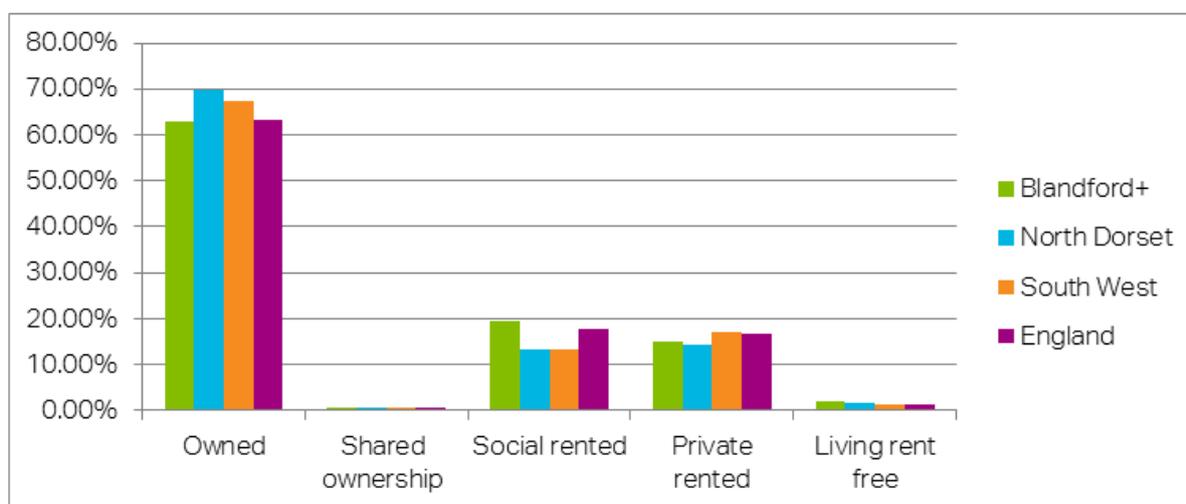
¹⁰² North Dorset District Council (2016) North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 [online] available at: <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/northdorsetsubmittedlocalplan> > last accessed 10/05/18

7.44 Large general hospitals with specialist support services and clinics are located in Dorchester, Bournemouth and Poole. The Foundation Trust Hospital at Salisbury also provides specialist support for some Dorset residents including those from the Neighbourhood Plan area.¹⁰³

Housing tenure

7.45 Within the Neighbourhood Plan area, the 2011 Census data shows that 63% of residents either own their home outright or with a mortgage, compared to 69.8% for North Dorset, 67.4% for the South West and 63.3% for England (Figure 7.1). There are also fewer residents within privately rented accommodation in the Neighbourhood Plan area (14.9%) in comparison to the regional (17.09%) and national totals (16.8%). However, the percentage of Neighbourhood Plan residents in socially rented accommodation (19.42%) is considerably greater than the North Dorset (13.48%) and South West (13.31%) percentages, and also greater than that of England (17.7%).

Figure 7.1 Tenure by household¹⁰⁴



Living arrangements

7.46 Combining data from the Blandford Forum & Langton Long, Blandford St. Mary, and Bryanston Area Profiles (produced by Dorset County Council (2018)) provides a strong indication of the living arrangements for the Neighbourhood Plan area (Figure 7.2). It is noted that Langton Long has been included within the Blandford Forum Area Profile due to low numbers. This is not expected to impact significantly upon the data.¹⁰⁵

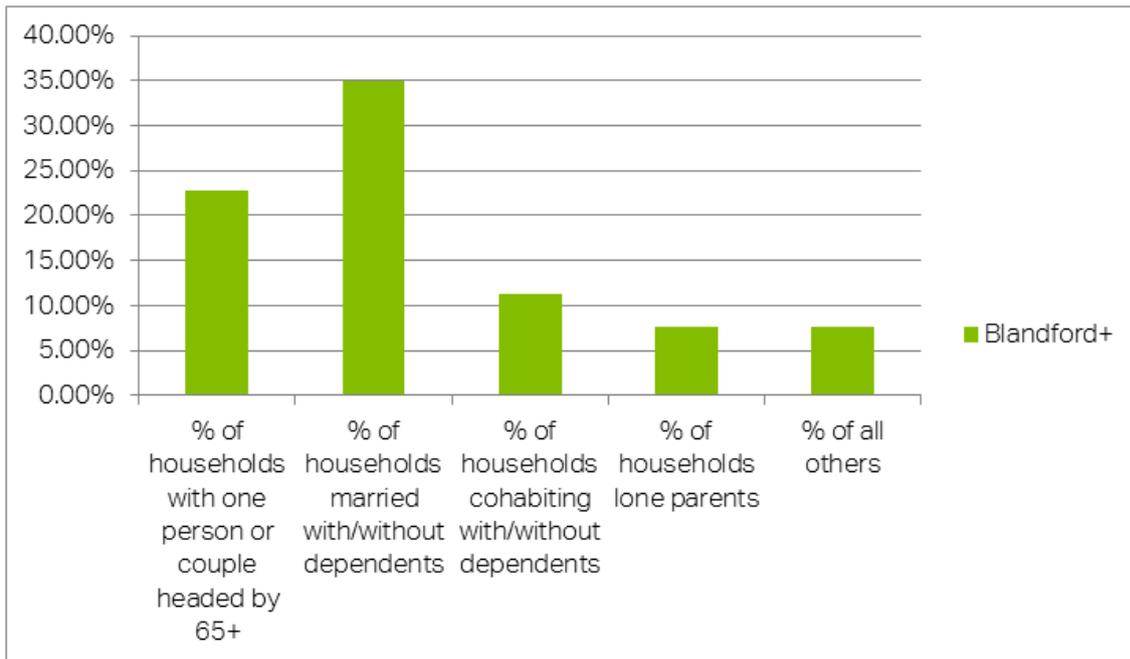
7.47 Figure 7.2 shows that within the Neighbourhood Plan area over 1/3 of residents (35.01%) live in households married with/without dependents. There are also a high percentage of households with one person or couple headed by 65+ (22.85%). Additionally, only 8.2% of households are occupied by lone parents. Whilst house prices are generally lower than neighbouring areas, this may nonetheless reflect the issue of housing affordability. Within the Neighbourhood Plan area salaries are relatively low and a rising population locally is placing a strain on housing, increasing overall demand.

¹⁰³ Blandford St Mary Steering Group (2009) Blandford St Mary Parish Plan [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/evidence/north>> last accessed 10/05/18

¹⁰⁴ ONS (no date): Census 2011: Tenure-Households 2011 (Table QS405EW)

¹⁰⁵ Dorset County Council (2018) Dorset Statistics [online] available at: <<https://apps.geowessex.com/stats/>> last accessed 09/05/18

Figure 7.2 Living arrangements ¹⁰⁶



Future baseline

- 7.48 The population of the Neighbourhood Plan area saw an increase between the years 2011-2016, greater than that of the District, and the regional and national averages. This trend of growth is likely to continue, and may place strains on local resources and infrastructure. Additionally, the future growth of the town could encroach upon the less populace areas of Blandford St Mary and Bryanston; both of which highly value their distinct rural identity.
- 7.49 The Neighbourhood Plan area is supporting a younger population than North Dorset and the South West. However, levels of deprivation in the area, combined with local issues of housing affordability and lack of school place capacity, suggest that younger people and families may find it difficult to live in the Neighbourhood Plan area in the future. For example, the majority of LSOAs which cover the Neighbourhood Plan area are within the 30-50% most deprived neighbourhoods in relation to Education, Skills and Training, and all LSOAs which cover the Neighbourhood Plan area are deprived in terms of Barriers to Housing and Services, being within the 50% most deprived for this domain.
- 7.50 It is recognised that the suitability of housing for local requirements depends in part on the successful implementation of policies outlined in North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016) and the emerging North Dorset Local Plan Review.

¹⁰⁶ Dorset County Council (2018) Dorset Statistics [online] available at: <<https://apps.geowessex.com/stats/>> last accessed 09/05/18

What are the SA objectives and appraisal questions for the population and community SA theme?

SA objective	Assessment questions
<p>Cater for existing and future residents' needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community, and improve access to local, high-quality schools, community services and facilities.</p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase school place capacity in areas of acknowledged pupil place deficiency? • Promote the development of a range of high quality, accessible community facilities? • Encourage and promote social cohesion and encourage active involvement of local people in community activities? • Minimise fuel poverty? • Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing local residents?
<p>Reduce deprivation and promote a more inclusive and self-contained community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including specialist services for disabled and older people? • Support the provision of land for allotments and cemeteries?
<p>Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures.</p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes? • Support enhancements to the current housing stock? • Meet the needs of all sectors of the community? • Provide quality and flexible homes that meet people's needs? • Promote the use of sustainable building techniques, including use of sustainable building materials in construction? • Provide housing in sustainable locations that allow easy access to a range of local services and facilities?

8. Health and wellbeing

Focus of theme

- Health indicators and deprivation
- Influences on health and well-being

Headline sustainability issues

8.1 The following key issues have emerged from the baseline review:

- The majority of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area consider themselves to have 'very good health' or 'good health'. While this percentage is higher than District trends, it is lower than the totals for the South West of England, and England.
- A larger number of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area consider themselves to have 'bad health' or 'very bad health' in comparison to the totals for the South West of England, and England.
- Between 7-11% of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area provide unpaid care.
- The Neighbourhood Plan area is characterised by extensive green spaces.

Policy context

8.2 Key messages from the NPPF include:

- The social role of the planning system involves 'supporting vibrant and healthy communities'.
- A core planning principle is to 'take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all'.
- The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities'
- Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.
- Set out the strategic policies to deliver the provision of health facilities.
- Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.

8.3 The policies contained in Chapter 3 'Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing' of the Government's 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' directly relates to the health and wellbeing SA theme.

8.4 In relation to other key national messages in relation to health, Fair Society, Healthy Lives¹⁰⁷ ('The Marmot Review') investigated health inequalities in England and the actions needed in order to tackle them. Subsequently, a supplementary report was prepared providing additional evidence relating to spatial planning and health on the basis that there is: "overwhelming evidence that health and environmental inequalities are inexorably linked and that poor environments contribute significantly to poor health and health inequalities".

8.5 The increasing role that local level authorities are expected to play in providing health outcomes is demonstrated by recent government legislation. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 transferred responsibility for public health from the NHS to local government, giving local authorities a duty to improve the health of the people who live in their areas. This will require a more holistic approach to health across all local government functions.

¹⁰⁷ The Marmot Review (2011) The Marmot Review: Implications for Spatial Planning [online] available to download from: <http://www.apho.org.uk/resource/item.aspx?RID=106106> last accessed 02/03/2018

- 8.6 An OpenSpace Audit and Assessment of Local Need was produced for the North Dorset area in 2006. It provides a qualitative assessment of the level of provision of open space for recreational purposes and will act as a starting point for developing the proposed Green Infrastructure Strategy.¹⁰⁸
- 8.7 A number of North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (2003) saved policies and adopted NDLP1 (2016) policies set out a range of measures which directly and indirectly relate to the health and wellbeing theme. These include:
- Policy 4 (The Natural Environment)
 - Policy 12 (Retail, Leisure and Other Commercial Developments)
 - Policy 14 (Social Infrastructure)
 - Policy 15 (Green Infrastructure)
 - Policy 25 (Amenity)
 - Policy 27 (Retention of Community Facilities)
 - Saved policies 4.1-4.11
 - Saved policies 5.7-5.12

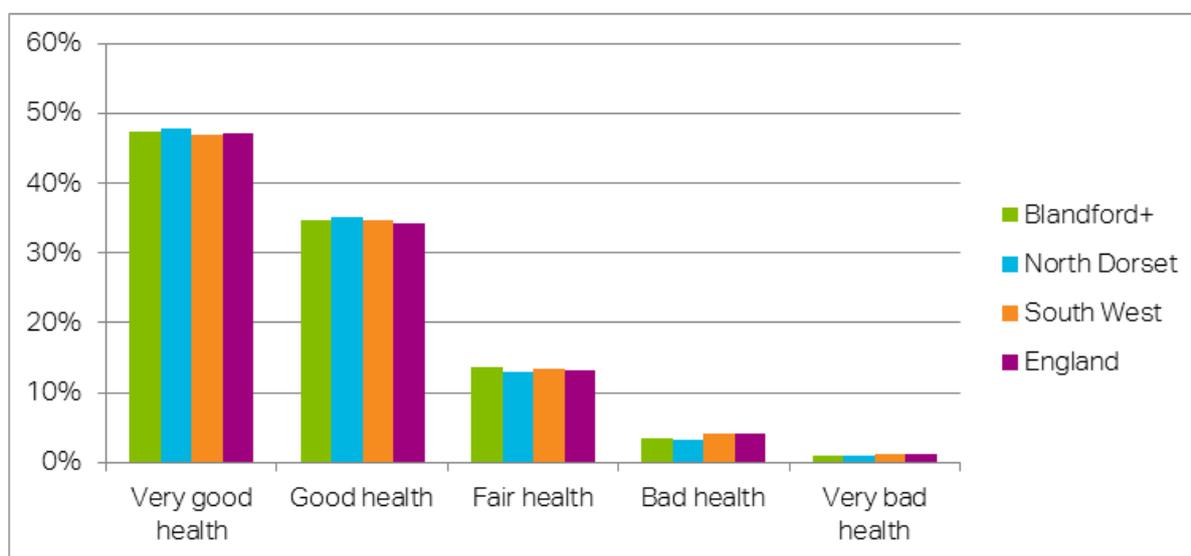
Baseline summary

Summary of current baseline

Health indicators and deprivation

8.8 Deprivation is a significant contributor to poor health and can have adverse effects on wellbeing, with elements related to poor housing quality, living environment, income and employment (discussed in Chapters 7 and 9). As highlighted in Figure 8.1 below, 81.9% of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area consider themselves as having 'very good health' or 'good health', higher than the totals for the South West of England (81.4%) and England (81.4%), however higher than the total for North Dorset (83%). The number of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area considering themselves to have 'bad health' or 'very bad health' is 4.4%, which is slightly higher than North Dorset (4.2%), but lower than the South West (5.2%) and England (5.4%).

Figure 8.1 General health¹⁰⁹



¹⁰⁸ North Dorset District Council (2006) Open Space Audit and Assessment of Local Need [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/evidence/north>> last accessed 09/05/18

¹⁰⁹ ONS (no date): Census 2011: 'General Health 2011' (Table QS302EW)

- 8.9 Figure 8.1 showed that the percentages of those in 'very good health' and 'good health' in the Neighbourhood Plan area are lower than the District level but higher than regional and national levels. This finding also aligns with the disability data presented in Table 8.1. 7.7% of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area report that their daily activities are limited 'a lot', compared to 7.1% for North Dorset, 8.3% for the South West of England, and 8.3% for England.

Table 8.1 Disability¹¹⁰

	Blandford+	North Dorset	South West	England
Activities limited 'a lot'	7.7%	7.1%	8.3%	8.3%
Activities limited 'a little'	9.8%	10.4%	10.2%	9.3%
Activities 'not limited'	82.4%	82.5%	81.6%	82.4%

- 8.10 The Dorset Area Profiles (Dorset County Council (2018)) include data relating to unpaid care.¹¹¹ Table 8.2 shows that of the three Parishes within the Neighbourhood Plan area, residents within Blandford Forum & Langton Long provide the greatest level of unpaid care. Throughout the Neighbourhood Plan area between 7% and 11% of residents provide unpaid care, of which between 7% and 8% is up to 50 hours per week.

Table 8.2 Unpaid care¹¹²

	Blandford Forum & Langton Long	Blandford St. Mary	Bryanston
Total residents providing unpaid care	10.2%	9.3%	7.5%
Residents providing up to 50 hours of unpaid care per week	8%	7%	7.1%
Residents providing more than 50 hours of unpaid care per week	2.2%	2.3%	0.4%

Open space

- 8.11 As discussed in Chapter 2, the Neighbourhood Plan area is characterised by extensive green spaces. The Hams between the town centre and Blandford St Mary is an important public recreational site, in addition to the North Dorset Trailway which runs through the town.¹¹³ The Stour flood plain to the west of town forms part of Bryanston Park and has the wooded slopes of Bryanston estate as a backdrop. However it is noted that the northern part of this former deer park is now taken up by Blandford School. Milldown comprises a further an important public space and chalk downland nature reserve on the northern edge of the town.¹¹⁴

Summary of future baseline

- 8.12 Health and wellbeing levels within the Neighbourhood Plan area are generally good, with a high percentage of residents reporting 'good' or 'very good' health, and a low percentage of residents reporting that their activities are limited in some way. While the percentages for the Neighbourhood Plan area are higher than the regional and national trends, they are less favourable than the local trend in North Dorset.
- 8.13 A growing population within the Neighbourhood Plan area may place future pressures on health services and valued local green space in the area.

¹¹⁰ ONS (no date): Census 2011: 'Long-term Health Problem or Disability 2011' (Table QS303EW)

¹¹¹ Dorset County Council (2018) Dorset Statistics [online] available at: <<https://apps.geowessex.com/stats/>> last accessed 09/05/18

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ North Dorset District Council (2016) North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/localplan/north>> last accessed 10/05/18

¹¹⁴ Dorset County Council, North Dorset District Council, & English Heritage (2011) Dorset Historic Towns Survey: Blandford Forum [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/400851/Blandford-Forum---historic-towns-survey>> last accessed 10/05/18

What are the SA objectives and appraisal questions for the health and wellbeing SA theme?

SA objective	Appraisal questions
Improve the health and wellbeing residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area.	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="533 434 1374 488">• Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health and community facilities, for all age groups?<li data-bbox="533 495 1374 548">• Provide and enhance the provision of community access to green infrastructure, in accordance with Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards?<li data-bbox="533 555 794 584">• Reduce noise pollution?<li data-bbox="533 591 1007 620">• Promote the use of healthier modes of travel?<li data-bbox="533 627 1102 656">• Improve access to the countryside for recreational use?

9. Economy and enterprise

Focus of theme

- Local economy
- Employment
- Education and skills
- Access to services and facilities
- Tourism

Headline sustainability issues

9.1 The following key issues have emerged from the baseline review:

- The Local Plan Part 1 identifies Blandford as the main service centre for the south of the District.
- Blandford Forum is a market town, providing a range of services and facilities to the Neighbourhood Plan area, and the rural hinterland with fewer, more widely scattered villages.
- The shopping catchment for Blandford (major food shopping) extends about 8 miles in a northeast and southwest direction, but only 5 miles northwest and southeast.
- Based on the 2011 census data the Neighbourhood Plan area is generally less qualified than the District and region on average.
- Generally, there are fewer residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area employed within the managers, directors and senior officials, and associate professional & technical support occupation categories compared to the local, regional and national comparators. Blandford Camp is a significant employer of local people and supports a variety of local businesses.
- About 3,900 people are in employment of which 55% are full time and 45% part-time. Approximately 70% of commuter traffic travels towards the South East Dorset conurbation.
- Access to schools and GP surgeries is an issue for the Neighbourhood Plan area, being located predominately in the south of the town. Dorset County Council has indicated that there is a need for a further 2 forms of entry (2FE) for primary education in Blandford, and a new or improved/extended GP surgery is required.

Policy context

9.2 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- The planning system plays an important economic role to contributing to sustainable development – building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure.
- Planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period.
- Have a clear understanding of business needs within the economic markets operating in and across the local areas – work closely with the business community to understand their changing needs and identify and address barriers to investment, including a lack of housing, infrastructure or viability.
- Plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century.
- Support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development.

- Support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centre.
 - Ensure that there is a 'sufficient choice of school places' is of 'great importance' and there is a need to take a 'proactive, positive and collaborative approach' to bringing forward 'development that will widen choice in education'.
- 9.3 The Bournemouth, Dorset, Poole Employment Land Projections Update (2012) applies a standard methodology to provide estimates that can be used alongside other tools for determining future employment land requirements.¹¹⁵ The projections assume a return to stable, positive employment and economic growth. Linked to this, North Dorset District Council recently estimated that there is a requirement of 5ha of employment land to be found within the Neighbourhood Plan area during the current Neighbourhood Plan period.
- 9.4 A Joint Retail and Leisure Study (2018) has been carried out for North Dorset District Council, West Dorset District Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council, to help inform both plan-making and development management decisions across the three local authority areas.¹¹⁶ The study:
- provides an assessment of the main centres within the local authority areas, highlighting key trends that are driving the dynamic changes in the retail and leisure sectors at the national and local level
 - sets out the results of the market share analysis for convenience and comparison goods shopping and leisure use across the study area,
 - sets out the health check methodology and key findings of the health checks for the main centres
 - sets out key assumptions and forecasts underpinning the quantitative need ('retail capacity') assessment and the outputs of CJ's in-house CREATE (excel-based) capacity model
 - sets out the findings of the commercial leisure and other town centre uses 'gap' assessment,
 - provides advice on how the forecast retail and leisure need identified for each local authority area and the main centres over the plan period can be met "in full" in compliance with the NPPF.
- 9.5 North Dorset Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) sets out to summarise what infrastructure is required, when the necessary infrastructure will be put in place, what likely costs are involved, how those costs will be met and who will deliver that infrastructure.¹¹⁷ The IDP lists the following transport infrastructure needed to support new development in Blandford:
- Bus Interchange and bus stop and cycling improvements in the town and wider area.
 - Completion of North Dorset Trailway to Sturminster.
- 9.6 A number of North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (2003) saved policies and adopted NDLP1 (2016) policies set out a range of measures which directly and indirectly relate to the economy and enterprise theme. These include:
- Policy 11 (The Economy)
 - Policy 12 (Retail, Leisure and Other Commercial Developments)
 - Policy 13 (Grey Infrastructure)
 - Policy 30 (Existing Employment Sites in the Countryside)
 - Policy 31 (Tourist Accommodation in the Countryside)
 - Saved policies 3.1 – 3.30

¹¹⁵ Dorset County Council (2012) Bournemouth, Dorset, Poole Employment Land Projections Update (DCC 2012) [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/evidence/north>> last accessed 09/05/18

¹¹⁶ Carter Jonas (2018) Joint Retail and Commercial Leisure Study for North Dorset District Council, West Dorset District Council, and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/planning/north-dorset/planning-policy>> last accessed 05/06/18

¹¹⁷ North Dorset District Council (2012) North Dorset Infrastructure Delivery Plan Background Paper [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/evidence/north>> last accessed 10/05/18

Baseline summary

Summary of current baseline

9.7 The Western Dorset Economic Growth Strategy (201) – the joint Economic Growth Strategy of North Dorset District, West Dorset District, Weymouth and Portland Borough and Dorset County Councils – the Western Dorset Economic Growth Partnership – identifies that the principal towns are set within two functional economic areas; Weymouth, Dorchester and Portland in the West; Blandford, Gillingham and Shaftesbury in the North.¹¹⁸ The economic growth aspiration for these two distinct economic growth areas is to achieve a better balance and more sustainable future for the towns whilst releasing the major housing, employment and investment potential of these two economic areas.

Local economy

9.8 The North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016) designates Blandford Forum as a 'town centre'. It is therefore a sequentially preferred location for main town centre uses including: retail development, leisure, entertainment facilities, certain intensive sport and recreation uses, offices, and arts, cultural and tourism uses.¹¹⁹

9.9 Blandford town centre provides a range of shops and other services. As defined within the Annual Monitoring Report 2005 for North Dorset, the town centre extends just south of Whitecliff Gardens to the north, along Salisbury Street and Langton Road to the east, to the River Stour in the south, and along River Mews and White Cliff Mill Street to the west. The North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (Saved Policies) (2003) Proposals Map sets out the following frontages:

- Primary Shopping Frontages form an 'L' shape and are concentrated along Salisbury Street and Market Place. PSF also extends along East Street from Sheep Market Hill to Common Lane.
- Secondary Shopping Frontages are located along East Street, West Street, White Cliff Mill Street and Salisbury Street.

9.10 In addition, there are a number of side streets, including Greyhound Square, Barnack Walk, Tabernacle Walk and The Plocks, within which retail units are located.¹²⁰

9.11 Tables 9.1 and 9.2 below summarise the retail and service composition of the centre in terms of total units and floorspace, based on the latest Experian Goad Category Report (March 2017).

Table 9.1 Current retail and service offer – units¹²¹

Category	Number of outlets	% of total outlets	UK (%)	Index*
Comparison	65	35.0%	31.1%	112
Convenience	14	7.5%	8.8%	86
Retail service	28	15.1%	14.4%	104
Leisure service	42	22.5%	23.9%	94
Financial & business service	25	13.4%	10.3%	130

¹¹⁸ North Dorset District Council, West Dorset District Council, Weymouth and Portland Borough and Dorset County Councils – the Western Dorset Economic Growth (2017) Western Dorset Economic Growth Strategy [online] available at: <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/media/198291/Western-Dorset-Economic-Growth-Strategy/pdf/Western_Dorset_Economic_Growth_Strategy_v2.pdf> last accessed 30/05/18

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Carter Jonas (2018) Joint Retail and Commercial Leisure Study for North Dorset District Council, West Dorset District Council, and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/planning/north-dorset/planning-policy>> last accessed 30/05/18

¹²¹ Ibid.

Vacant retail & service outlets	12	6.5%	11.2%	58
TOTAL	186	100.0%	100.0%	-

Notes: *The index is a comparison with the national average for all circa 2,000+ centres audited by Experian. A score of 100+ indicates an above average provision in that particularly category, whereas a score of under 100 shows a relative under-provision.

Table 9.2 Current retail and service offer - floorspace¹²²

Category	Floorspace (sqm)	% of total outlets	UK (%)	Index
Comparison	7,051	25.2%	35.0%	72
Convenience	5,026	18.0%	15.2%	119
Retail service	2,165	7.7%	6.8%	114
Leisure service	7,906	28.2%	25.0%	113
Financial & business service	2,834	10.1%	7.7%	131
Vacant retail & service outlets	3,010	10.8%	9.7%	111
TOTAL	27,992	100.0%	100.0%	-

Convenience offer

9.12 There are 14 convenience units in the area according to the latest 2017 Experian Goad Category Report, trading from a total floorspace of 5,026 sqm. Although provision as a proportion of total outlets (7.5%) is below the national average (8.8%), floorspace provision (18.0%) is higher than the national average (15.2%).

9.13 The centre's food provision is anchored by Morrisons and Marks & Spencer (M&S) which are located on West Street and Langton Road respectively. The M&S offer is predominantly convenience goods (i.e. food and drink). Blandford Forum's convenience offer is also supported 1 baker & confectioners, 2 butchers, 1 CTN (confectionary, tobacco and news), 2 smaller convenience stores, a frozen food store, a greengrocer and 2 health food shops. There is also an out of centre Tesco store situated at Stour Park to the southeast of the town centre, a Co-op store on Salisbury Road to the north east of the town centre, and a Lidl store, which has recently opened on Shaftesbury Lane also to the north east of the town centre.¹²³ It is noted that several new shops and stores have recently come to Blandford, which highlights the continuous growth of the area (this includes M&S, Screwfix, SpecSavers, and Dominos).

Comparison offer

9.14 There are 65 comparison goods retailers located within Blandford Forum Town Centre trading from a total floorspace of 7,051 sqm). The number of outlets represents 35.0% of total units in the centre, which is above the national average of 31.1%. The current floorspace provision represents 25.2% of total floorspace in the centre, which is below the national average of 35.0% and is a decrease from the 2015 figure (29.6%).¹²⁴

¹²² Carter Jonas (2018) Joint Retail and Commercial Leisure Study for North Dorset District Council, West Dorset District Council, and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/planning/north-dorset/planning-policy>> last accessed 30/05/18

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

- 9.15 Across the different comparison sub-categories, the centre has a high representation of many categories including charity shops, chemists, craft shops, electrical stores, antique shops, art shops, children's wear, DIY and home improvement stores, sports and leisure goods, jewellery and watches, and textiles and soft furnishing stores. Whilst the centre is largely characterised by independent comparison retailers, a number of multiple retailers are also present including WHSmith and Clarks.
- 9.16 There is an overprovision of charity shops. There are currently 10 within the centre which is equivalent to 5.4% compared to a national average of 2.7%. It is also noted that the markets in the town sell a variety of comparison goods.¹²⁵
- 9.17 Blandford Forum has the highest market share within the North Dorset Council area (15.2%) although this figure is still considered to be relatively low. This is most likely a reflection on the limited provision of non-food goods in comparison to other centres outside of the district, such as Poole and Salisbury. However it is considered that the centre has an adequate comparison offer given its size, role and function in North Dorset's network and hierarchy of centres.¹²⁶

Service offer

- 9.18 In terms of the local service offer, there are 95 retail, financial and leisure service outlets in Blandford Forum Town Centre, with a total floorspace of 12,905 sqm. Services account for 51.0% of all units and 46.0% of total floorspace, which is above the respective national averages of 48.6% and 39.5%. In summary:¹²⁷
- There are 28 retail services, which represent 15.1% of total outlets and is above the national average of 14.4%. This category is mostly made up of 19 health and beauty outlets; which is equivalent to 10.2% of units and is above the national average of 8.9%. Provision also includes 2 dry cleaners and launderettes, 3 opticians, a post office and a travel agent.
 - There are 25 financial services outlets, which represents 13.4% of total units and is marginally above the national average of 10.3%. The Goad report shows that financial services include 12 property services, 4 retail banks, as well as 2 building societies and 2 building supply services.
 - There are 42 leisure service outlets, equivalent to 22.5% of total units, which is just below the national average. Leisure provision includes 10 cafes, 10 fast food takeaways, 7 restaurants, 5 clubs, and 4 public houses. According to the consultation with key stakeholders, the centre has a reasonable night time economy, with the main restaurants and public houses attracting people on Friday and Saturday evenings.
- 9.19 Given the size and role of the town centre, it is considered through the Retail Study (2018) that the overall representation of services is appropriate.¹²⁸
- 9.20 However, despite its role as a main service centre, access to basic services and facilities (schools, employment and GPs discussed below and within Chapter 7) is patchy, with good access in some parts of the area and poor access in others. The shopping catchment for Blandford (major food shopping) extends about 8 miles in a northeast and southwest direction, but only 5 miles northwest and southeast.¹²⁹

Qualifications

- 9.21 Based on the 2011 census data (Figure 9.3), 21.5% of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area have no qualifications, higher than the percentages for North Dorset (20%) and the South West (20.7%), and slightly lower than that for England (22.5%). Comparatively, there are a lower percentage of residents with Level 3 qualifications and above within the Neighbourhood Plan area (33.84%), compared with the totals for the District, (39.47%), the South West (40.6%) and England (40.6%). This shows that the Neighbourhood Plan area is generally less qualified than the District and region on average, which broadly supports the occupational trend of the Neighbourhood Plan area (Figure 9.4).

Figure 9.3 Highest level of qualification¹³⁰

¹²⁵ Ibid.

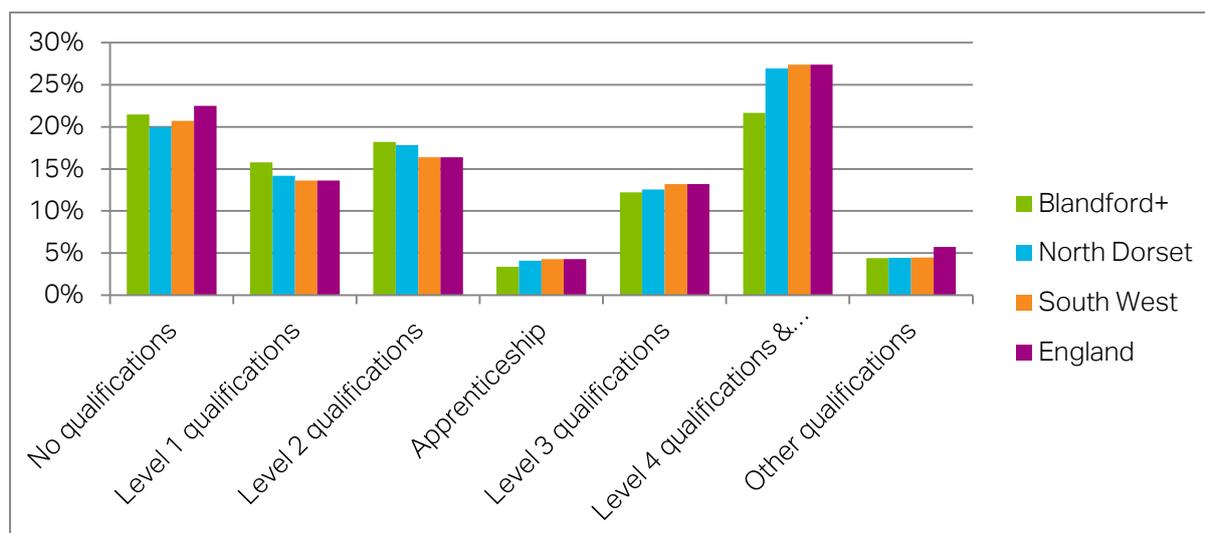
¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ North Dorset District Council (2016) North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/localplan/north>> last accessed 10/05/18

¹³⁰ ONS (no date): Census 2011: Highest Level of Qualification 2011 (Table QS501EW)

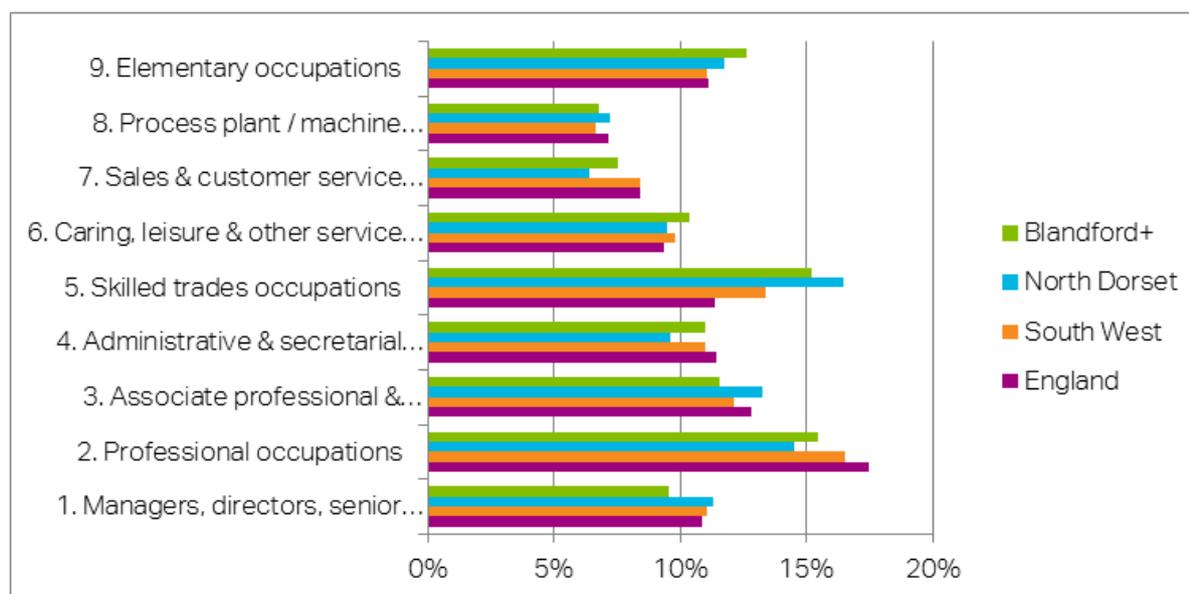


Employment

- 9.22 With regards to employment in the Neighbourhood Plan area, professional occupations (15.5%), and skilled trades occupations (15.2%) support the most residents (Figure 9.1). This is also seen for North Dorset and the South West. However, the Neighbourhood Plan area has fewer residents residing in the professional occupations than the England total (17.5%).
- 9.23 Generally, there are fewer residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area employed within the managers, directors and senior officials, and associate professional & technical support occupation categories compared to all other comparators. There are also a higher percentage of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area employed within the elementary occupations and the caring, leisure and other service occupations categories compared to the local, regional and national percentages shown in Figure 9.2. This suggests that the Neighbourhood Plan area may have a less-skilled workforce, in comparison to the District, region and England.
- 9.24 This is reiterated through the Western Dorset Economic Growth Strategy which states that *“in the area currently, the workforce is less skilled than the national average, a relatively high proportion of the workforce is in lower skilled occupations and wages are consequently below regional average.”*¹³¹
- 9.25 Investment in skills and training is a major factor in creating a highly employable, higher skilled local population that can be retained locally, and which can generate economic growth, improved productivity and a sustainable local economy.

¹³¹ North Dorset District Council, West Dorset District Council, Weymouth and Portland Borough and Dorset County Councils – the Western Dorset Economic Growth (2017) Western Dorset Economic Growth Strategy [online] available at: https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/media/198291/Western-Dorset-Economic-Growth-Strategy/pdf/Western_Dorset_Economic_Growth_Strategy_v2.pdf last accessed 30/05/18

Figure 9.4 Occupation of usual residents aged 16 to 74 in employment¹³²



9.26 It is noted that although Blandford has a fairly diverse economic base (Figure 9.2), Blandford Camp (a large military site located to the north-east of the town) is a significant employer of local people and supports a variety of local businesses. It is anticipated that the Camp will remain a military establishment for the foreseeable future but changes to its role during the plan period could have implications for the local economy.

Access to employment

9.27 The Western Dorset Economic Growth Strategy identifies the following strategic outcomes required to ensure sustainable economic growth of the Western Dorset Partnership area:¹³³

- Increased proportion of new & surviving businesses;
- more local people in local employment with reduced daily workforce commute out of area;
- improved business sector productivity overall to give an attractive competitive economy;
- increase in total GVA of the economy; and
- sustained low unemployment levels (sector change)

9.28 In this context, the North East Transport Study (2010) highlights that that Sturminster Newton has the highest degree of self-containment of the four main towns in North Dorset.¹³⁴ Gillingham, Blandford Forum and Shaftesbury are slightly less self-contained but all four towns in North Dorset are significantly more self-contained than the market towns identified in East Dorset, including Corfe Mullen, Wimborne Minster and Three Legged Cross.

9.29 However, as discussed in Chapter 7, the Neighbourhood Plan area has expanded significantly in recent years, with more than 1,400 new homes being built between 1994 and 2012, and over 100 being completed in 2017.¹³⁵ This rate of growth has given rise to concerns for the local economy. About 3,900 people are in employment of which 55% are full time and 45% part-time. Approximately 70% of commuter

¹³² ONS (no date): Census 2011: 'Occupation 2011' (Table KS608EW)

¹³³ North Dorset District Council, West Dorset District Council, Weymouth and Portland Borough and Dorset County Councils – the Western Dorset Economic Growth (2017) Western Dorset Economic Growth Strategy [online] available at:

<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/media/198291/Western-Dorset-Economic-Growth-Strategy/pdf/Western_Dorset_Economic_Growth_Strategy_v2.pdf> last accessed 30/05/18

¹³⁴ Buro Happold (2010) North and East Dorset Transport Study [online] available at:

<<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/evidence/north>> last accessed 10/05/18

¹³⁵ North Dorset District Council (2016) North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 [online] available at:

<<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/northdorsetsubmittedlocalplan>> last accessed 10/05/18

traffic travels towards the South East Dorset conurbation, signifying that self-containment in the area is reducing.¹³⁶

- 9.30 Much of the recent development in the area has taken place on land between the existing built-up area and the bypass. However, this has not always been in the case in places that are accessible to key locations, such as the town centre. As such, the need to encourage self-containment in order to limit levels of commuting to the South East Dorset conurbation is important for the sustainability of the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- 9.31 Key stakeholders acknowledge public transport to be one of the town's key weaknesses and as such there is an interest from the local community to improve such services, which would in turn positively impact upon self-containment though improving access throughout the town. Accessibility is further discussed in Chapter 10.¹³⁷

Tourism

- 9.32 There is a growing recognition of the importance of tourism to North Dorset's economy and in Blandford specifically. This is suggested by the mix of shops and services in the town.¹³⁸

Telecommunications

- 9.33 Modern telecommunications play a significant role in the life of local communities, especially in rural areas. They also have a particular role to play in promoting sustainable communities by reducing the need to travel for work, education/ learning, shopping and leisure.
- 9.34 Broadband availability across North Dorset is not widespread; indeed, a few areas have no access to broadband at all while others have slow or very slow connection speeds. The Council is working with Dorset County Council and others¹³⁹ in efforts to remedy the situation but there will still be blackspots to be addressed.
- 9.35 Trailway Broadband is a project supported by the Community Partnerships Executive for North Dorset (CPEND) and DT11 Forum, the Blandford area community partnership. The project seeks to use the Trailway between Blandford and Sturminster Newton as the route for a fibre optic cable which will support superfast broadband links to the villages along the way as well as the married quarters at Blandford Camp and the Business Park at Sturminster Newton.¹⁴⁰
- 9.36 Further to this, the Western Dorset Economic Growth Strategy highlights how vital digital infrastructure is to local economic growth.¹⁴¹ However, as discussed above, the predominantly rural Western Dorset area is behind the curve compared to competing economic areas. To address this, the 2015 Dorset Digital Infrastructure Strategy which informs the Western Dorset Economic Growth Strategy, aims to stimulate significant economic growth by providing Dorset businesses and learners with access to high speed digital connectivity whilst supporting sustainable rural growth.¹⁴²

Future baseline

- 9.37 Blandford's role as the main service centre in the southern part of the District is expected to be maintained. However, access to basic services (schools, shops, GPs, employment) is relatively inconsistent throughout the Neighbourhood Plan area, with good access in some parts of the area and poor access in others.

¹³⁶ Blandford Forum Town Council (2015) Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan: Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Letter

¹³⁷ Carter Jonas (2018) Joint Retail and Commercial Leisure Study for North Dorset District Council, West Dorset District Council, and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/planning/north-dorset/planning-policy>> last accessed 30/05/18

¹³⁸ Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (2008) Joint Retail Assessment Volume 2: North Dorset [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/evidence/north>> last accessed 10/05/18

¹³⁹ Superfast Dorset' is supported by the Council and the County Council and 'Trailway Broadband' is a community-led project.

¹⁴⁰ North Dorset District Council (2012) North Dorset Infrastructure Delivery Plan Background Paper [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/evidence/north>> last accessed 10/05/18

¹⁴¹ North Dorset District Council, West Dorset District Council, Weymouth and Portland Borough and Dorset County Councils – the Western Dorset Economic Growth (2017) Western Dorset Economic Growth Strategy [online] available at: <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/media/198291/Western-Dorset-Economic-Growth-Strategy/pdf/Western_Dorset_Economic_Growth_Strategy_v2.pdf> last accessed 30/05/18

¹⁴² Ibid.

- 9.38 There is a need for housing growth in the area to be matched by employment growth and the provision of supporting infrastructure. Without this, self-containment in the area will likely decrease, resulting increased levels of commuting, particularly to the South East Dorset conurbation.
- 9.39 Blandford Camp provides a significant level of employment to residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area. It is anticipated that the Camp will remain a military establishment for the foreseeable future but changes to its role during the local plan period could have implications for the local economy.¹⁴³

¹⁴³ North Dorset District Council (2016) North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 [online] available at:
<<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/northdorsetsubmittedlocalplan>> last accessed 10/05/18

What are the SA objectives and appraisal questions for the economy and enterprise SA theme?

SA objective	Appraisal questions
Promote a thriving and sustainable local economy	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote business creation and a diverse and resilient local economy?• Promote Blandford's role at the main service centre in the south of the District?• Support a wide range of jobs and training opportunities?• Create an attractive economically viable town centre?• Provide opportunities for all employers to access: different types and sizes of accommodation; flexible employment space; and high quality communications infrastructure?• Support self-containment in the Neighbourhood Plan area?• Promote and support the rural economy?• Promote the development of tourism in a sustainable manner?

10. Transportation

Focus of Theme:

- Transportation infrastructure
- Traffic flows and congestion
- Accessibility
- Car ownership
- Travel to work

Headline sustainability issues

10.1 The following key issues have emerged from the baseline review:

- In terms of access to Blandford Forum, it is easily accessed via 'A' roads. The A350 runs along the north east of the Neighbourhood Plan area, connecting to the A354.
- There is no railway station within the town centre with the nearest railway station is 20km away in Gillingham.
- While there are three bus services which run through the Neighbourhood Plan area, these run infrequently, limiting potential usability for commuters.
- National Route 25 of the National Cycle Network runs through the north and south east of the Neighbourhood Plan area. National Routes 253 and 250 extend into the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- Blandford Forum town centre suffers from vehicular congestion at rush hour.
- A higher proportion of residents have access to at least one car or van, compared to regional and national percentages.
- A higher proportion of residents use a car or van to get to work, compared to local, regional, and national percentages.

Policy context

10.2 European and UK transport policies and plans place emphasis on the modernisation and sustainability of the transport network. Specific objectives include reducing pollution and road congestion through improvements to public transport, walking and cycling networks and reducing the need to travel. National policy also focuses on the need for the transport network to support sustainable economic growth.

10.3 At the local level, each Local Transport Authority in England and Wales has a statutory duty to produce and adopt a Local Transport Plan through the Local Transport Act 2000, as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008.

10.4 Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) (2011) sets out the long term goals, strategy and policies for improving transport in the area over the fifteen year period from 2011 to 2026.¹⁴⁴ The LTP3 covers all modes of transport (including walking, cycling, public transport, car based travel and freight), the management and maintenance of the highway network, and the relationships between transport and wider policy issues such as the economy, environment, air quality, climate change, health and social inclusion.

10.5 The Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset LTP3 Implementation Plan (2017) covers a 15 year period, and has therefore been broken down into five Implementation Plans, each covering a three year period. The third of

¹⁴⁴ Bournemouth Borough Council, Poole Borough, and Dorset County Council (2011) Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan 3 [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/417819/View-the-Local-Transport-Plan>> last accessed 11/05/18

those five Implementation Plans was published in 2017, running from 2017 to 2020.¹⁴⁵ The plan sets out how available funding and resources will be used to deliver the LTP3 strategy and policies during the Implementation Plan 3 (IP3) period. It has been prepared in parallel with the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), prepared by the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (DLEP), and as such is closely aligned with other investment planning for housing, growth and other wider strategic priorities. The plan also recognises the important role of delivery partners such as the Department for Transport, Highways England, Network Rail, Public Transport Operators and Public Health England in bringing forward proposals.

- 10.6 North Dorset Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) (2012) sets out to summarise what infrastructure is required, when the necessary infrastructure will be put in place, what likely costs are involved, how those costs will be met and who will deliver that infrastructure.¹⁴⁶ The IDP lists the following transport infrastructure needed to support new development in Blandford:
- Bus Interchange and bus stop and cycling improvements in the town and wider area.
 - Completion of North Dorset Trailway to Sturminster.
- 10.7 The North and North East Dorset Transport Study (2010) is one of three transport studies carried out for Dorset County Council.¹⁴⁷ The studies provide “frontloading evidence” into the Local Development Framework (LDF) process being undertaken by Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) across Dorset. It considers the existing transport networks and travel patterns within North and north East Dorset in the context of the proposed development targets.
- 10.8 North Dorset Local Plan (2011-2026) Transportation Background Paper (2013) has been produced to support the pre-submission publication of Part 1 of the North Dorset Local Plan that sets out the strategic policies for the District for the period 2011 to 2026.¹⁴⁸ The background paper provides a specific focus on transportation in North Dorset. It also refers to those parts of the evidence base which informed the spatial policies and also sets out the policy background – at national, regional and local levels – against which the plan was prepared.
- 10.9 A number of North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (2003) saved policies and adopted NDLP1 (2016) policies set out a range of measures which directly and indirectly relate to the transportation theme. These include:
- Policy 6 (Housing Distribution)
 - Policy 11 (The Economy)
 - Policy 13 (Grey Infrastructure)
 - Saved policies 5.1 – 5.33

Baseline summary

Summary of current baseline

Rail network

- 10.10 There are no local railway stations within the Neighbourhood Plan area. The nearest railway station is Gillingham, which is approximately 20km to the north west of Blandford. Gillingham train station provides hourly services to Exeter St Davids, Salisbury and London Waterloo. It is noted that this is the District's only railway station.

¹⁴⁵ Bournemouth Borough Council, Poole Borough, and Dorset County Council (2017) Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan 3: Implementation Plan 3 2017 to 2020 [online] available at:

<<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/417819/View-the-Local-Transport-Plan>> last accessed 11/05/18

¹⁴⁶ North Dorset District Council (2012) North Dorset Infrastructure Delivery Plan Background Paper [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/evidence/north>> last accessed 10/05/18

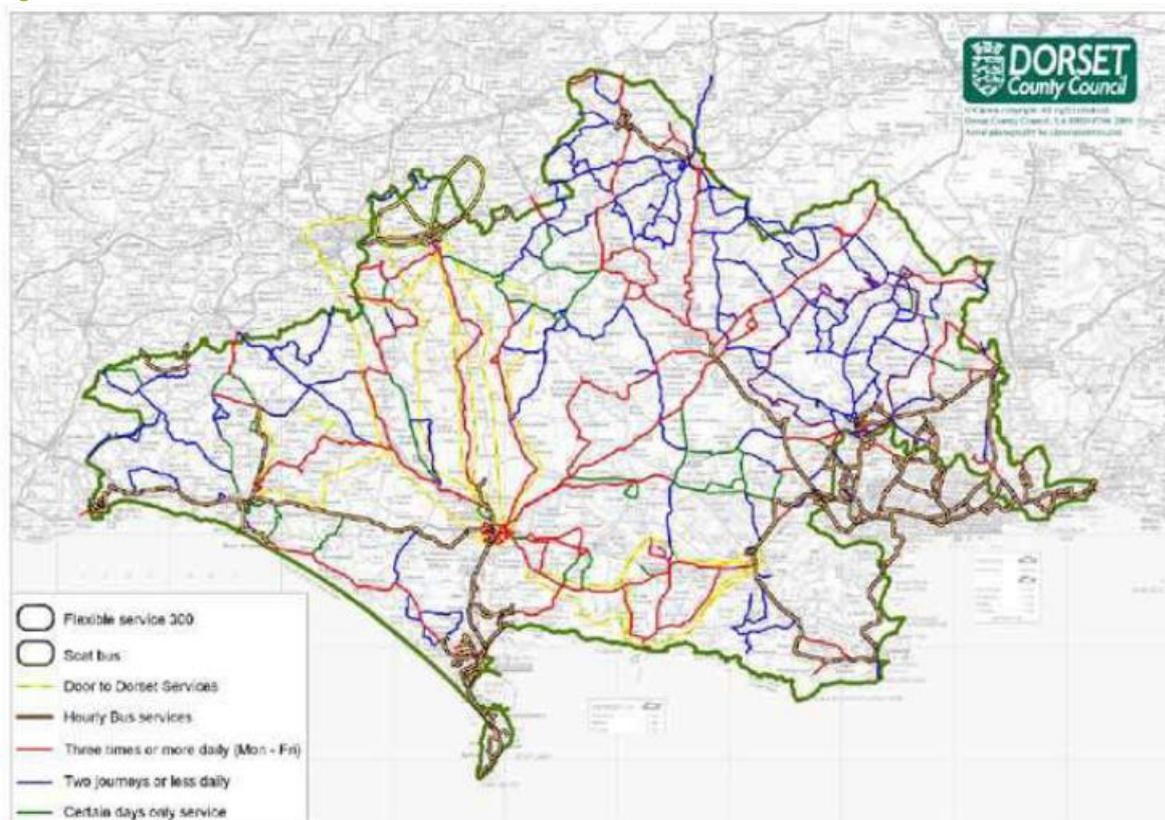
¹⁴⁷ Buro Happold (2010) North and North East Dorset Transport Study [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/evidence/north>> last accessed 10/05/18

¹⁴⁸ North Dorset District Council (2013) North Dorset Local Plan (2011-2026) Transportation Background Paper [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/evidence/north>> last accessed 10/05/18

Bus network

10.11 Much of Dorset is poorly served by bus routes, apart from services within Dorset's main towns and on key inter-urban routes. Figure 10.1 shows the limited bus network in North Dorset, and in Blandford in particular. Key stakeholders acknowledge public transport to be one of the town's key weaknesses and as such there is an interest from the local community to improve such services.¹⁴⁹

Figure 10.1 Bus services in rural Dorset¹⁵⁰



10.12 'Travel Dorset' identifies a number of services which connect Blandford within neighbouring centres. These are listed in Table 10.1 below.

10.13 There is no intra Blandford bus service. The X8 bus service connects the town to Lidl in the north of the town along Wendal Road, but the local perspective suggests this is not sufficient to serve the area. Additionally, whilst there are services connecting Blandford with surrounding settlements, these do not run frequently and are therefore not likely to be depended on by local residents, particularly commuters. It is also noted that services do not run on the weekend.

10.14 In relation to the Neighbourhood Plan area, the North and North East Dorset Transport Study (2010) concludes that:

- Bus improvements are required to encourage commuter trips between Sturminster, Newton, Wimborne Minster, Blandford Forum and Poole;
- Insufficient early morning and late evening bus services between Blandford Forum and Dorchester and between Blandford Forum and Bournemouth; and
- Number 184 service inconvenient for commuters in villages such as Sixpenny Handley to use for commuting to Blandford Forum and Salisbury

¹⁴⁹ Carter Jonas (2018) Joint Retail and Commercial Leisure Study for North Dorset District Council, West Dorset District Council, and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/planning/north-dorset/planning-policy>> last accessed 30/05/18

¹⁵⁰ North Dorset District Council (2013) North Dorset Local Plan (2011-2026) Transportation Background Paper [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/evidence/north>> last accessed 10/05/18

Table 10.1 Blandford bus services¹⁵¹

Service	Location	Provider	Frequency
20	Blandford forum – Salisbury	Damory Coaches	Mon-Fri, 5 times per day
X12	Blandford forum – Weymouth	Damory Coaches	Mon- Fri, 7 times per day
X8A	Blandford Town Service	Damory Coaches	Mon-Fri, approx. every 30 mins
X3	Blandford forum - Shaftesbury	South West Coaches	Mon-Fri, 8 times per day
X10	Blandford – Sturminster Newton – Yeovil	South West Coaches	Mon- Fri, approx. hourly
X8	Poole – Blandford Forum	More Bus	Mon- Fri, approx. hourly

Road network and congestion

A350 corridor

10.15 The Neighbourhood Plan area is easily accessed via 'A' roads. The A350 is the major A class road of the region connecting to the south east with the Poole/Bournemouth conurbation and to the north passing through the rural heartland of Dorset and Wiltshire to the A303. The A350 runs along the north east of the Neighbourhood Plan area connecting to the A354 which extends to the north east through Pimperne, and to the south west connecting with the A35 to Dorchester. The A354 is a key route between Dorchester, Blandford Forum and Salisbury.

10.16 In terms of volumes of traffic, the Local Plan (2011-2026) Transportation Background Paper (2013) found that Blandford experienced a traffic increase of around 3% on the by-pass section of A354, and an increase of 5% was recorded on A357 between Blandford and Sturminster Newton.¹⁵² However, over the ten year period a decrease of 2% on A354 north east of Blandford was recorded. Use of the rural road C13 as an alternative to the A350 route between Blandford and Shaftesbury has become more noticeable in recent years. Traffic on the former route increased by 3% between 2002 and 2012 while traffic decreased on the Blandford-Shaftesbury section of A350 by 13%.

10.17 The North and North East Dorset Transportation Study (2010) was undertaken between 2008 and 2012.¹⁵³ It was based on draft regional spatial strategy growth figures that proposed 7,000 new homes in North Dorset by 2026, of which 1,500 were in Blandford. The Transport Study (2010) carried out modelling which identified that the A350 between Blandford Forum and Poole, and the A357 and A3030 between Blandford Forum and Sherborne are closest to their design capacity at pinch points by 2026. In particular, localised congestion is expected to become a problem at pinch points on those routes with a ratio of flow to capacity nearing 80%. This occurs particularly during the AM peak hour.

Town centre

10.18 Blandford Forum town centre suffers considerably from vehicular congestion at rush hour. The main road that runs through the centre has additional roads joining it at several points within the town which also contribute to congestion at peak times. The North and North East Dorset Transportation Study (2010) highlights that some of the congestion could be avoided if drivers entered the town by the access road nearest to their destination and thus reduced their movements through the town centre.

10.19 The majority of vehicular trips generated by the Neighbourhood Plan area are short distance local trips.¹⁵⁴ This is likely due to residents in the north of the town having to travel by car to the south for access to services and facilities, as there is no adequate sustainable transport network available. Within Blandford, the Local Plan Part 1 (2016) states that the emphasis in terms of grey infrastructure will be on providing

¹⁵¹ Dorset County Council (2018) Bus and rail in Dorset [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/travel-dorset/public-transport-bus-and-rail>> last accessed 11/05/18

¹⁵² North Dorset District Council (2013) North Dorset Local Plan (2011-2026) Transportation Background Paper [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/evidence/north>> last accessed 11/05/18

¹⁵³ Buro Happold (2010) North and North East Dorset Transport Study [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/evidence/north>> last accessed 10/05/18

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

better facilities for walking and cycling between residential areas and key destinations, such as the town centre, employment sites, schools and other community facilities.¹⁵⁵

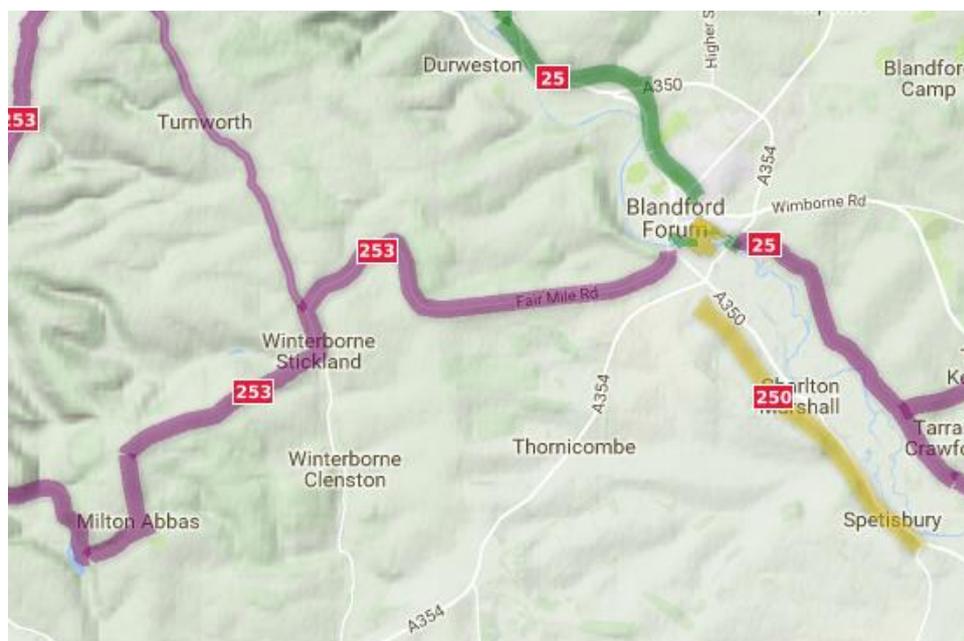
Cycle and footpath network

10.20 As discussed above, sustainable transport use in the Neighbourhood Plan area is limited by a number of factors. There is a concern over the lack of alternative transport for those who do not have a car, principally young people. Short-distance local trips offer the biggest opportunity for people to make sustainable and healthy travel choices. Nationally, around two out of every three trips made are less than 5 miles in length, many of which could be easily cycled, walked or undertaken by public transport where it exists.¹⁵⁶

10.21 National Route 25 of the National Cycle Network runs through the north and south east of the Neighbourhood Plan area (Figure 10.2). Route 25 links with Frome and National Route 24 at Longleat and runs south through Gillingham and Poole to Bournemouth on the Dorset coast.

10.22 Figure 10.2 also shows where National Routes 253 and 250 extend into the Neighbourhood Plan area. National Route 253 - formerly Regional Route 41 - runs in a loop off National Route 25, taking in Blandford Forum, Shaftesbury, Gillingham (Dorset), Sturminster Newton and Okeford Fitzpaine. Information on Route 250 is not currently available; however Figure 10.2 shows this route connecting Spetisbury with Charlton Marshall and Sturminster Newton with Child Okeford and Shillingstone.

Figure 10.2 National Cycle Network¹⁵⁷



10.23 Numerous Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and footpaths extend through the Neighbourhood Plan area. Figure 10.3 shows PRoW, footpaths and bridleways in and around Blandford Forum, and it can be seen that connectivity between the north and the south is lacking. It is recognised through the LPP1 that cycling and walking links with the surrounding villages (and Blandford Camp) need to be improved in order for Blandford to maintain its function as a service centre for the surrounding area.¹⁵⁸

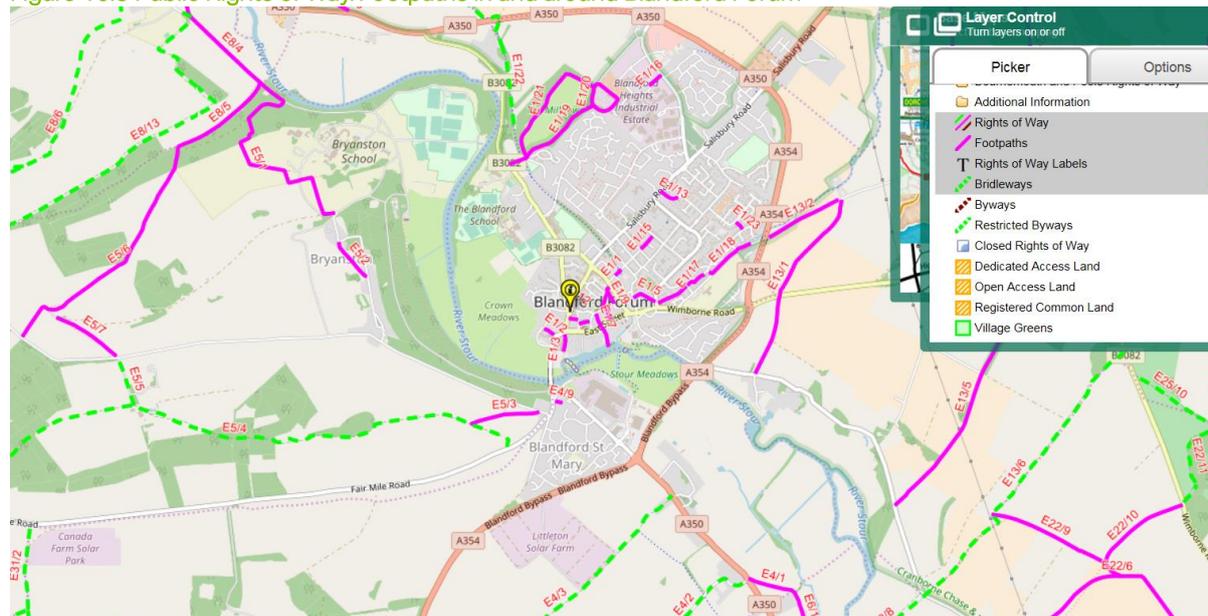
¹⁵⁵ North Dorset District Council (2016) North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/northdorsetsubmittedlocalplan>> last accessed 10/05/18

¹⁵⁶ Blandford Forum Town Council (2016) Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan: Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Letter last accessed 11/05/18

¹⁵⁷ Sustrans (2018) National Cycle Network [online] available at: <<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/ncn/map/route/route-250>> last accessed 10/05/18

¹⁵⁸ North Dorset District Council (2016) North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 [online] available at: <<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/northdorsetsubmittedlocalplan>> last accessed 10/05/18

Figure 10.3 Public Rights of Way/Footpaths in and around Blandford Forum¹⁵⁹



Car parking

10.24 Car parks in the town include:

- Church Lane (23 spaces);
- Eagle House Gardens (32 spaces);
- Langton Road (124 spaces);
- Marsh and Ham (188 spaces);
- Station Road (37 spaces); and
- Stour Meadows (92 spaces);

10.25 Car parks are located mainly to the edges of the town, predominantly located to the rear of East Street and West Street. Furthermore, there is some provision for on street parking on both sides of the road in some areas of the town centre. Whilst car parking provision in the centre is good, it has been recognised by key stakeholders that there is a lack of free parking in the town (aside from Stour Meadows). However, we consider it to be relatively low cost.¹⁶⁰

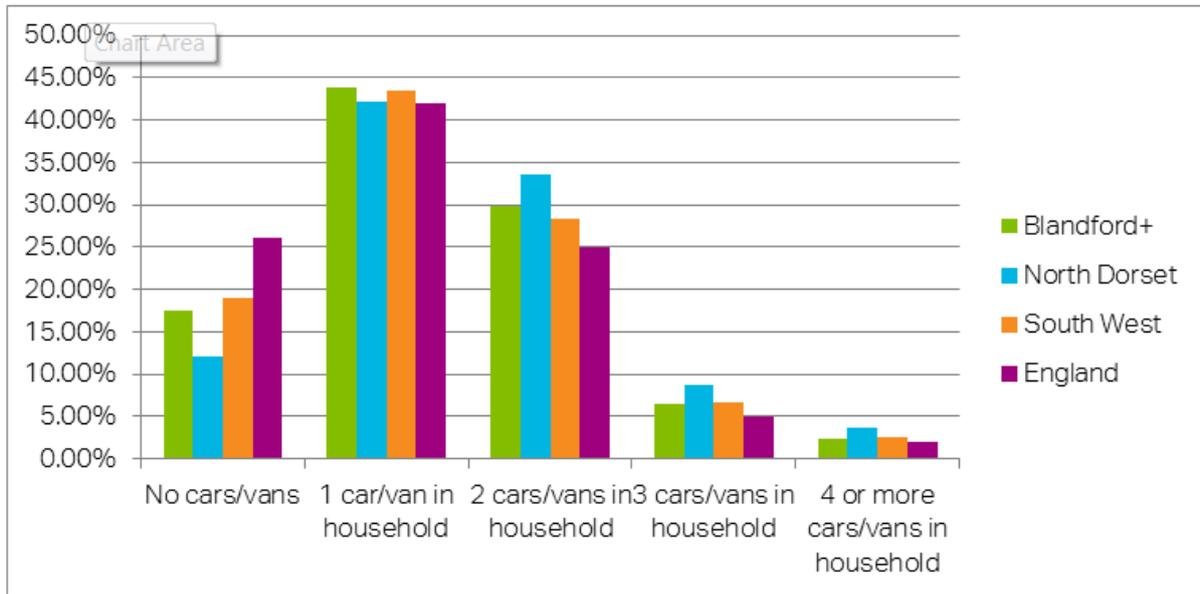
Availability of cars and vans

10.26 Based on the 2011 census data (Figure 10.4), 82.5% of households in the Neighbourhood Plan area have access to at least one car or van, which is in line with the percentage for North Dorset (82%), but higher than the percentages for the South West (81.1%) and England (74.0%).

¹⁵⁹ Dorset County Council (2018) Dorset Explorer [online] available at: <http://explorer.geowessex.com/> last accessed 11/05/18

¹⁶⁰ Carter Jonas (2018) Joint Retail and Commercial Leisure Study for North Dorset District Council, West Dorset District Council, and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council [online] available at: <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/planning/north-dorset/planning-policy> last accessed 30/05/18

Figure 10.4 Car and van ownership¹⁶¹

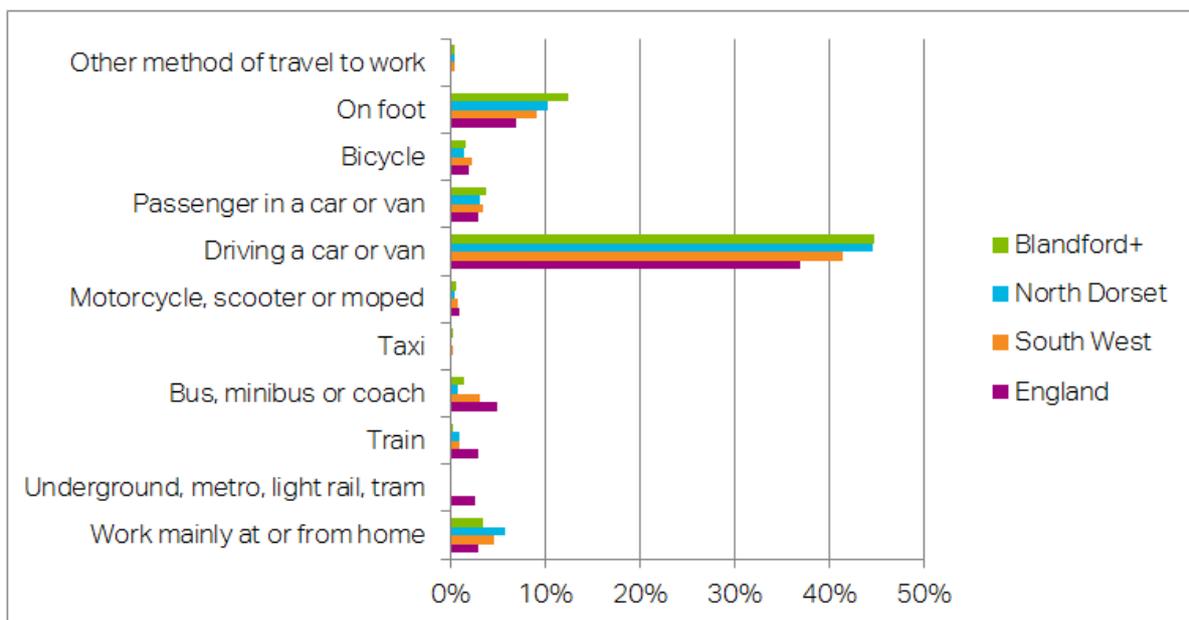


Travel to work

10.27 As shown in Figure 10.5, the most popular method of travelling to work in the Neighbourhood Plan area is via driving a car or van (44.8%), which is higher than the totals for North Dorset (44.6%), the South West of England (41.4), and England (37.0%). This may be attributed to the increasing level of residents out-commuting for employment, and the lacking sustainable transport network in and around the Neighbourhood Plan area. Additionally, the percentages of residents that travel to work by taxi and as a passenger in a car or van are greater than all other comparators. This reiterates the absence of accessible public transport.

10.28 12.40% of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area chose to walk to work. This is higher than the local (10.27%), regional (9%), and national average (7.0%) which suggests there remains a reasonable level of self-containment in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Figure 10.5 Method of travel to work¹⁶²



¹⁶¹ ONS (no date): 'Car or Van Availability 2011', (Table QS416EW)

¹⁶² ONS (no date): Census 2011: 'Method of Travel to Work 2011' (Table QS701EW)

Summary of future baseline

- 10.29 New development has the potential to increase traffic and cause congestion within the Neighbourhood Plan area, particularly within the town centre and along the A350 corridor.
- 10.30 Additionally, public transport use has the potential to remain low compared with private car use; likely to due to the infrequent nature of local bus services, the lack of railway stations and the rural setting of much of the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- 10.31 Negative effects of new development on the transport network are likely to be mitigated in part by the LPP1, the emerging Local Plan Review and also the LTP3. However, there will be a continuing need for development to be situated in accessible locations (preferably limiting further development to the north of the town) which reduces the need to travel by private car.

What are the SA objectives and appraisal questions for the transportation SA theme?

SA objective	Appraisal questions
Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage modal shift to more sustainable forms of travel? • Enable sustainable transport infrastructure enhancements? • Facilitate working from home and remote working? • Improve road safety? • Reduce the impact on residents from the road network?

11. Next steps

Subsequent Stages for the SA Process

- 11.1 Scoping (the current stage) is the second stage of the SA/SEA process:¹⁶³
1. Screening;
 2. Scoping;
 3. Assess reasonable alternatives, with a view to informing preparation of the draft plan;
 4. Assess the draft plan and prepare the SA Report with a view to informing consultation and plan finalisation;
 5. Publish a 'statement' at the time of plan adoption in order to 'tell the story' of plan-making / SA (and present 'measures decided concerning monitoring')
- 11.2 The next stage will involve appraising reasonable alternatives for the Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan 2. This will consider alternative policy approaches for the Neighbourhood Plan. The findings of the appraisal of these alternatives will be fed back to the Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan 2 Steering Group (the Neighbourhood Plan group) so that they might be taken into account when preparing the draft plan.
- 11.3 Once the next draft of the plan has been prepared by the Neighbourhood Plan group, it will be subjected to appraisal and the SA Report prepared for consultation alongside it.
- 11.4 The Neighbourhood Plan will be finalised and submitted to NDDC for subsequent Independent Examination. As part of this process, the Neighbourhood Plan and the SA Report will be publicised for consultation for a period of six weeks.

Consultation on the Scoping Report

- 11.5 Public involvement through consultation is a key element of the SA process. At this scoping stage, the SEA Regulations require consultation with statutory consultation bodies but not full consultation with the public.
- 11.6 The statutory consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England. The Scoping Report has been released to these three statutory consultees.
- 11.7 Consultees are invited to comment on the content of this Scoping Report, in particular the evidence base for the SA, the identified key issues and the proposed SA Framework.

Downloading and Viewing Details

- 11.8 The Scoping Report can be downloaded at: <http://blandfordplus.org.uk/>
- 11.9 This consultation period runs from Friday 08th June 2018 to Friday 13th July 2018. Comments on the Scoping Report should be sent to:
- Sally Gardner, Blandford Forum Town Council
- Email: Sally@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk
- 11.10 All comments received on the Scoping Report will be reviewed and will influence the development of the SA where appropriate.

¹⁶³ In accordance with the stages set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance

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