

Memorandum of understanding between:

- **Dorset Council;**
- **Charborough Estate**
- **Natural England**

The memorandum relates to a proposed Strategic Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace and holiday park at Morden Park corner, referred to in the Purbeck Local Plan (2018-2034).

June 2019

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Introduction

1. This document has been jointly prepared by Dorset Council (DC), Charborough Estate, Pro-Vision and Natural England (hereafter referred to as ‘the parties’).
2. The whole of the area covered by the Purbeck local plans is subject to Habitats Regulations requirements as set out in a range of development plan documents and supplementary planning documents. The Habitats Regulations Assessment’s for the area identifies the need for a strategic Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) in the north of the Purbeck Area. Morden Park has existing biodiversity features of importance but lies at the head of a complex of designated lowland dry and wet heaths/mires which drain south into Poole Harbour, which is also of European and international importance. The proposal is therefore set in a very sensitive and highly protected landscape and the parties are working to bring forward a package of measures to address a number of considerations.
3. The Council agrees that the SANG area outlined in the map below is in an appropriate location to provide an alternative recreational space to Morden Bog. This memorandum of understanding discusses some of the key considerations for a SANG allocation in this area and sets out a delivery mechanism.

Description of site

The SANG

4. The potential SANG is about 37 ha of arable land which is bounded by the proposed holiday park in the north and west, the Sherford river in the south and Chittern Hill (B3075) to the east. The development of a SANG on this site would meet the requirement identified originally in Purbeck Local Plan’s Part 1 Habitat Regulations Assessment for a Strategic SANG in the north of the district to provide an alternative destination to Morden Bog and Heath.
5. The landscape is identified as rolling wooded farmland characterised by a network of interconnected hedges and woodland blocks with open views from elevated points.
6. Currently, the fields are let under a secure agricultural tenancy, with provision for breaks in the tenancy for non-agricultural use.

Morden Park

7. Morden Park includes areas of established broad-leaved deciduous woodland, some of which may be derived from ancient woodland, and areas of recent tree planting. The site also includes disparate areas of heathland in its southern section, including areas designated as European Specially Protected Areas, Special areas of Conservation and listed RAMSAR sites.
8. The lake is designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation Interest but is in danger of silting up, particularly in the north of the site.

9. The site was managed as a historic garden in the past which is evidenced by dense thickets of rhododendron which preclude much in the way of access as well as suppressing much biodiversity. Currently the area undergoes minimal positive management, apart from necessary tree work as part of ongoing forestry activities and keeping main paths open. There is currently no public access to the Park
10. The Grade II Listed Morden Park cottages are in residential use.

The Proposal

SANG

11. A draft high level conceptual scheme with rough costings has been produced. These costing indicate that the holiday park could sustain a SANG, with a contribution from developers through the Council. The Council is not in a position currently to agree the amount of funding that would be available. The indicative SANG area is shown at Fig 1.
12. Key features to be included are:
 - Stock proof fencing to enable free running dogs
 - New woodland planting
 - Dog access to the stream
 - Footpath routes
 - Visitor management and monitoring
 - Hardening up of boundaries to divert the public from heathland
 - Possible grazing compartments
 - New car park to intercept users which may be up to 30 spaces over time

Morden Park, initial draft SANG layout

- Key**
- Local Wildlife Sites © Natural England / Local Record Centres
 - Special Areas of Conservation England © Natural England
 - Special Protection Areas England © Natural England
 - SSSI England Site Units © Natural England

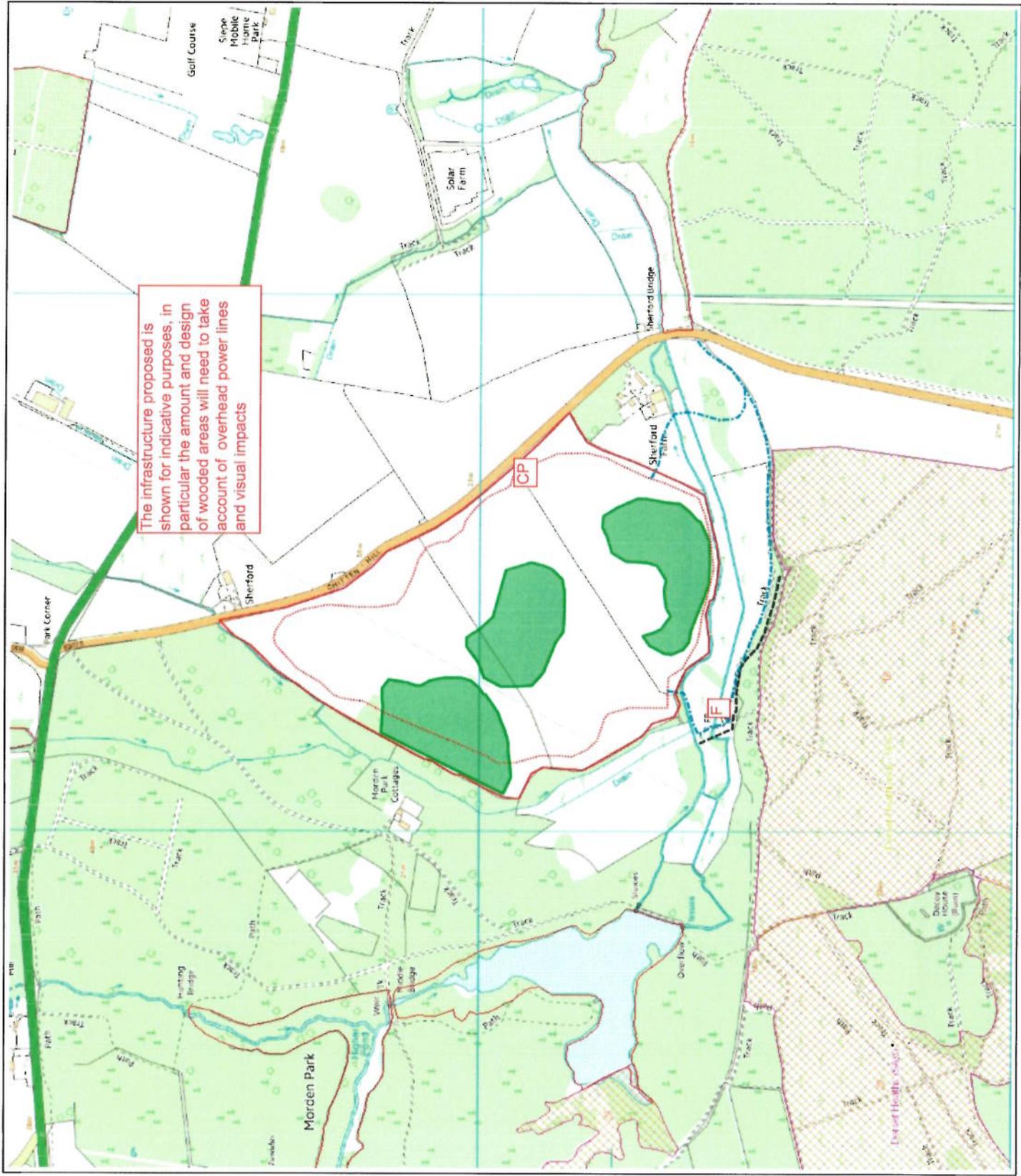
Red dotted line potential walk in SANG
Green areas potential scrub/woodland
Red area extent of SANG - approx

Black dashed line, hared up fence line to divert public from heathland

Blue dash - new access routes to intercept walkers from FC car park

F = enable splash through/ford as attraction from lake
CP = Car park

The infrastructure proposed is shown for indicative purposes, in particular the amount and design of wooded areas will need to take account of overhead power lines and visual impacts



Map Produced from WebMap on 05/02/16
 Map Projection: British National Grid
 Map Scale: 1:6,905

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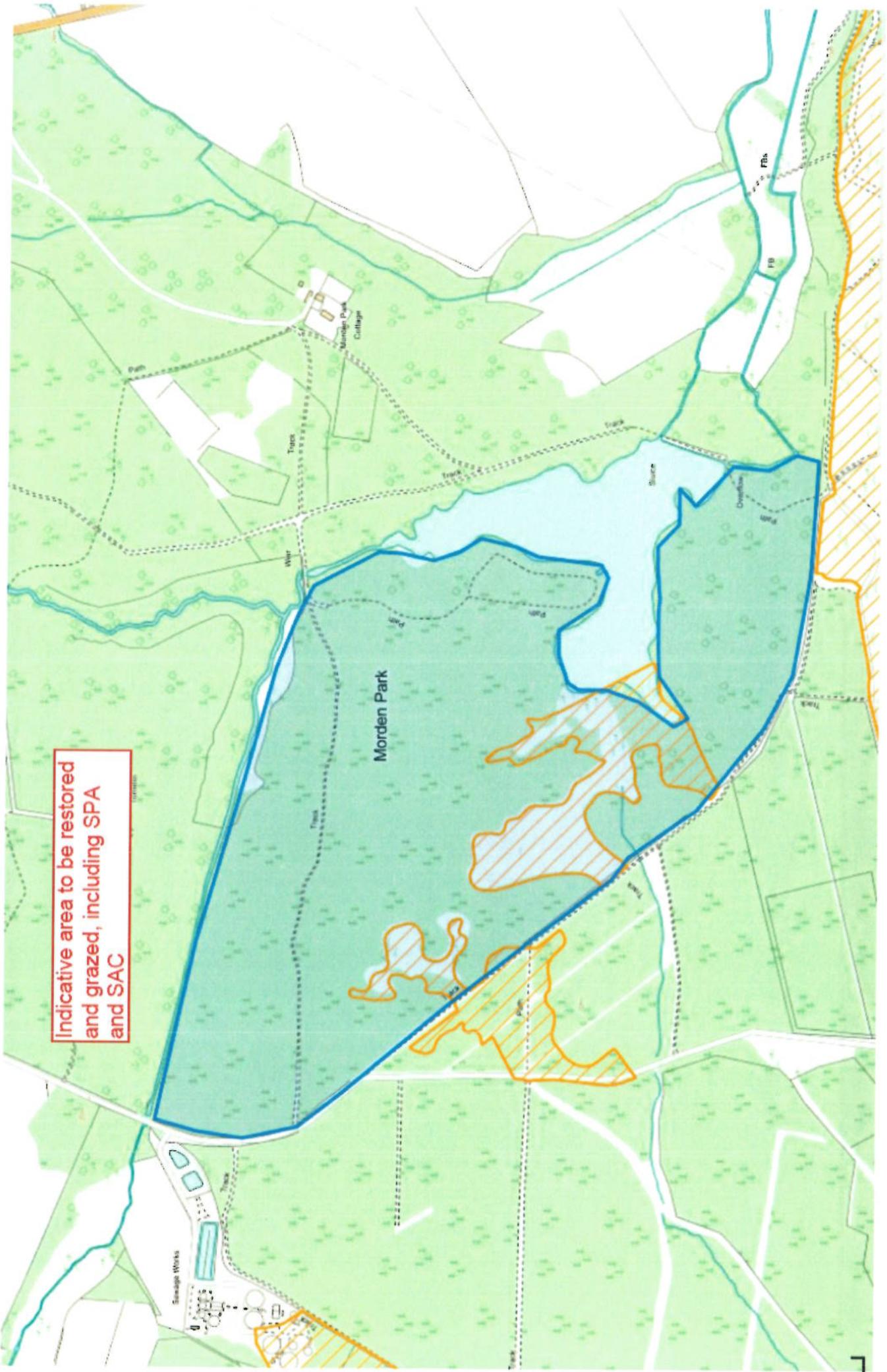
13. A detailed establishment and management plan will need to be agreed with Natural England and the Council prior to a planning application.
14. Highways colleagues have indicated that a new car park for up to 30 spaces would not prompt the requirement for a Transport Statement.
15. The SANG will need to be available prior to the first sale or occupancy of a holiday home.
16. Land to the west of the lake and stream (Fig 2) includes European heathland area which are under the control of the owner. To reduce the risk of public egress into this area and facilitate recovery of the designated site a phased restoration plan involving rhododendron and tree clearance followed up by establishing a grazing unit will be brought forward as part of the permission.

Matters agreed:

- An appropriately designed SANG is achievable on site.
- The holiday park is capable of financing the SANG with a contribution from the Council.

Matters to be agreed:

- Detailed design.
- Detailed costings.
- Financial contribution from the Council.



Indicative area to be restored and grazed, including SPA and SAC

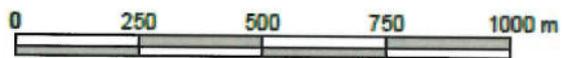
Possible Holiday Park

17. The proposal is for up to 100 holiday units on a 194 ha site, including an approximately 37ha SANG. The map below indicates the areas of opportunities for holiday lodges. The lodges are anticipated to be provided on a mix of longer term licences and short term rentals. The final mix is to be determined.
18. The map below indicates potential areas of opportunities for holiday lodges. The final location of lodges will be determined at planning application stage avoiding areas of biodiversity interest including ancient woodland, development outside the green belt or where it will have a landscape impact.
19. Some holiday park activities will be permitted within the green belt such as outdoor sport and recreation, as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of Green Belt designation.

Matters agreed:

20. The final layout and number of holiday units to be delivered will be developed through consultation with Natural England and the Council.
21. The proposed modifications to paragraphs 256, 257 and Policy I5 (MM18, MM19 and MM20) are no longer required.

No.	Date	Description	Drawn	Checked
1	2015.05	Initial design and site plan	MS	MS



- Dorset Coast and Heaths SPA 400m buffer
- Area to be surveyed for ancient semi-natural woodland
- Lake and Rivers
- Existing Forest Tracks
- Areas of Opportunity
- Options for central building location

CLIENT:
Morden Park Estates Co Ltd

PROJECT:
Morden Park

DRAWING:
Areas of Opportunity Plan

SCALE: **1:10,000 @ A3** DWG NO: **1273/SK04**

DATE: **May '15** REV: **A**



Habitats Regulations requirements

22. The holiday units are subject to Habitats Regulations requirements. Managing the parks impact on heathland can be achieved through works within the boundary of the site. Mitigation for nitrogen may be fully met through change of land use from arable to SANG which is confirmed by Natural England.

Matters agreed:

- Subject to the detail of restoration and management of the park and SANG, heathland and nitrogen mitigation can be met within the park and SANG.

Biodiversity

23. In addition to a management plan for the SANG a management plan will be required for the holiday park including woodland management/restoration and measures to manage visitor access to sensitive areas.

24. An initial ecological survey has been undertaken which highlights the potential for existing biodiversity and impacts but due to the timing of the survey, further investigations will be needed at the appropriate time of year to identify existing biodiversity and inform management and restoration plans, a biodiversity mitigation plan and the development in general.

Matters agreed:

- Further survey work is required to inform the restoration and management plan, a biodiversity mitigation plan and the development in general. There is currently no evidence that any protected species issues that would prevent the development from going ahead in principle.
- The site will benefit greatly from a restoration and management plan, including the demonstration of biodiversity gains.
- The eradication of *Rhododengron ponticum* will secure substantial gains in terms of access, visual appreciation of the park landscape and biodiversity.

Traffic Movements

25. Highways colleagues have advised that holiday homes normally have a low trip generation and with trips tending to avoid peak travel times, the Council would expect a simple Transport Statement for such a development. However, many of the new trips on the network would go through Morden Park Corner junction on the A35, a collision cluster. The Highways Department of the Council has a medium-to long-term plan to provide an improved junction. The preferred option is to use a sliver of land from the south of the junction but would consider land to the north of the junction, subject to design and costs. Provision of land from the Morden Estate at the junction of the A35 and B3075 as a contribution towards a highways improvement scheme would mitigate this impact.

26. Highways colleagues have highlighted concerns over the direct attractive link between the park and Wareham railway station on a straight road with hidden dips where the national speed limit applies. The estate is looking at the possibility of linking in with a bridleway through Wareham Forest from where the railway and Wareham town could be accessed.

Matters agreed:

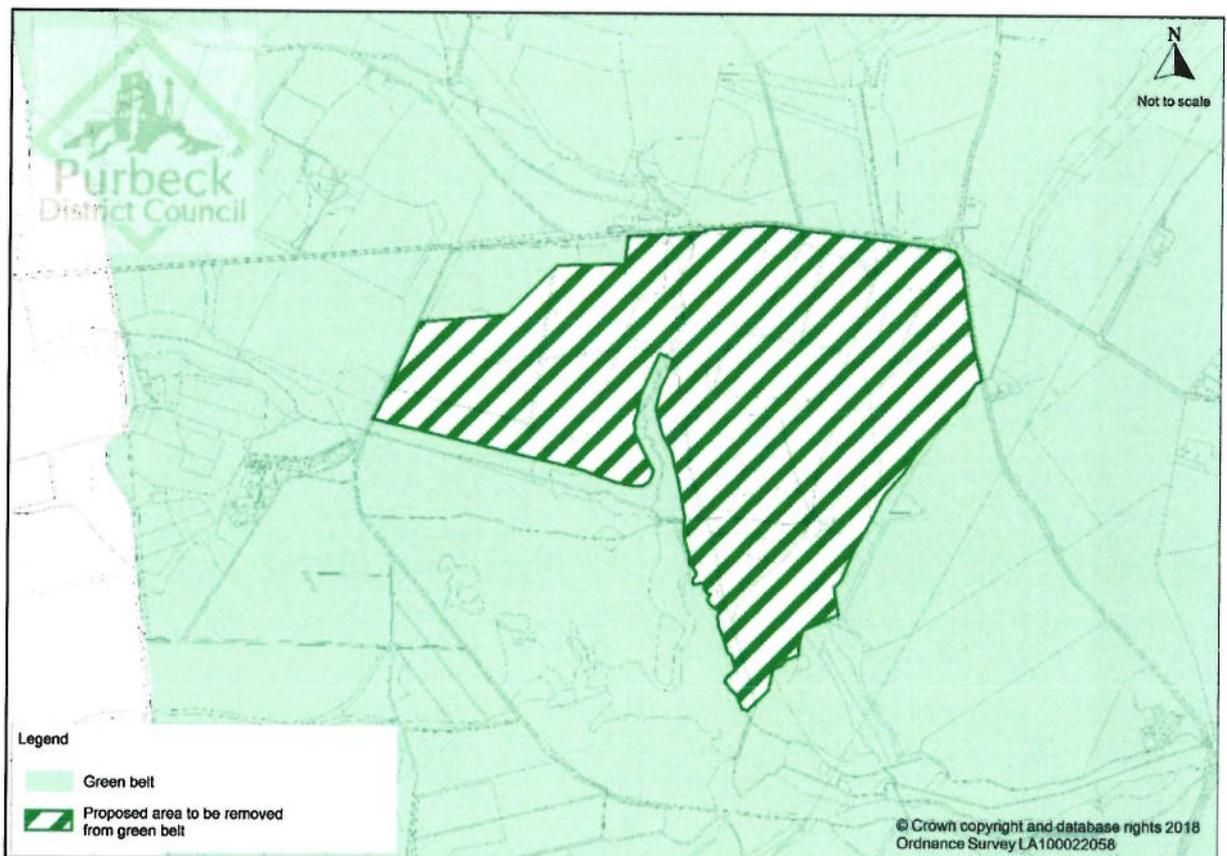
- The estate will provide a Transport Statement alongside the planning application.
- The estate will work with the Highways Department to provide land to assist with future improvements to the junction.

Heritage Assessment

27. A Heritage Assessment is required for the site, as with all planning applications.

Green belt

28. Both the proposed holiday park and strategic SANG are in green belt.
29. The Green Belt Study 2018 – Pre-submission sets out the exceptional circumstances offered by the holiday park through the provision of a SANG which support changes to the green belt to enable the holiday park development and outlines how the effects of the holiday park can be partially offset through compensatory improvements. .
30. The creation of a SANG in this location would service a significant strategic function in supporting the delivery of existing and future windfall development. Supporting development in existing towns and villages, and on previously developed land in these locations, is consistent with the effective use of land and limiting new development on land which is environmentally sensitive (for example Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and green belt).
31. A strategic SANG would serve to underpin sustainable housing delivery in this part of the District.
32. Below is a map showing proposed green belt release.

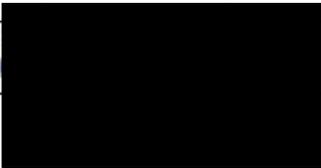


Matters agreed:

- Provision of a strategic SANG provides exceptional circumstances to justify changes in the green belt boundary to enable the development of a holiday park, subject to all other planning requirements.
- The green belt release should be as set out in the proposals map consulted on at Pre-Submission stage.

Declaration

Signed on behalf of Charborough Estate

CHRISTOPHER JOWETT	AGREED TO THE ORDER.		6 JUNE 2018
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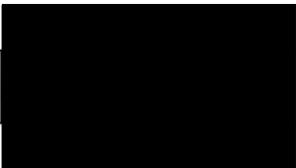
Name, Position, Signature, Date

Signed on behalf of Natural England

Nick Squirrell	Conservation and Planning Lead Advisor		6 June 2019
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Name, Position, Signature, Date

Signed on behalf of Dorset Council

Anna Lee	Planning Policy Manager		7 June 2019
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