

Dorset Council Comments
Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 draft

Thank you for consulting Dorset Council on the submitted Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan dated December 2024, updated January 2025. This response has been prepared by the Planning Policy Team and seeks to provide comments relating to the drafted policies at this formal consultation stage. Draft policies have been assessed against the National and Local Planning Policy framework, principally the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2023 and West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (WDWPLP) 2015.

The comments provided are based upon the requirements to meet the 'basic condition' tests relating to the production of the neighbourhood plan.

This response contains specific advice from specialist teams within Dorset Council such as: Assets, CIL/S106, Conservation, Definitive Maps, Emergency Planning, Flood Risk Management Team, Highways Development, Landscape & Urban Design, Natural Environment Team (NET) and Transport Planning. All comments are from the Planning Policy Team unless attributed to a specific team or department.

For ease of reference, comments are set out according to the paragraph and policies, etc in the proposed plan and have been numbered.

Regulation 16 consultation

The Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to Dorset Council on 6 December 2024 and updated 15 January 2025. The regulation 16 consultation commenced on 24 January 2025 and was due to run until 7 March 2025. However, because of local concerns that not all late changes had been considered fully by Weymouth Town Council the submitted Neighbourhood Plan was reconfirmed by Weymouth Full Council on 26 February 2025. The Regulation 16 consultation was duly extended until 10 April 2025 to maintain a minimum six-week consultation period. For the avoidance of doubt, the reconfirmed Plan and all supporting documents remained unaltered.

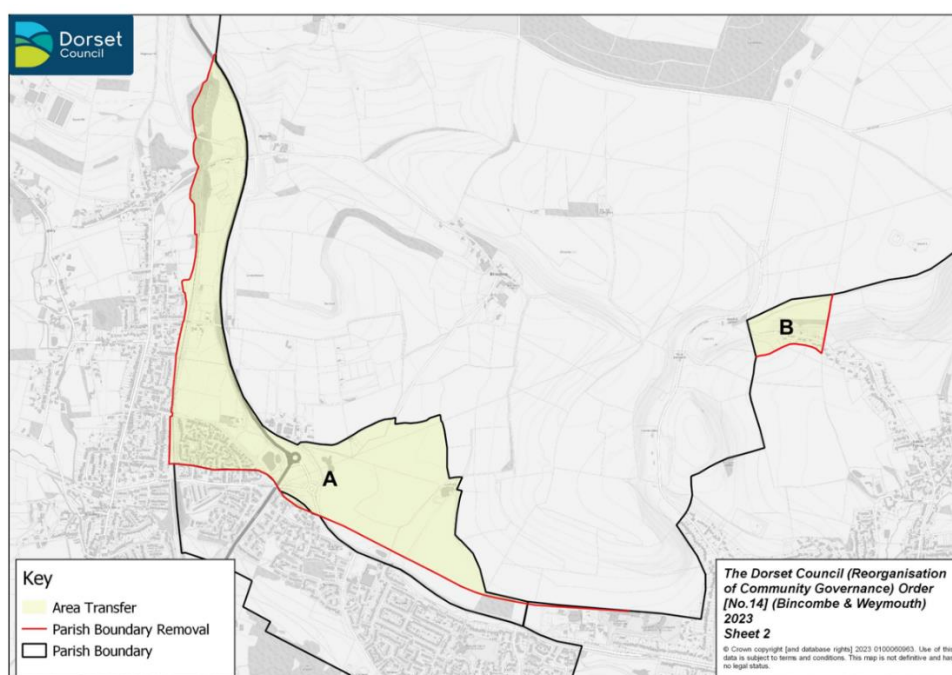
Revised NPPF (December 2024)

The National Planning Policy Framework was revised on 12 December 2024 to reflect the Governments proposed reforms to the Planning system. NPPF, Paragraph 239 explains that the revised framework will apply for purposes of preparing neighbourhood plans from 12 March 2025 unless the neighbourhood plan has been submitted to the local planning authority under Regulation 15 on or before this date. As this Plan was submitted on 6 December 2024, updated 15 January 2025 and reconfirmed on 26 February 2025 the Plan can be assessed against the December 2023 NPPF. Consequently all references in this response are to the December 2023 version of the NPPF. With the exception to a point raised regarding the latest definition of affordable housing (Policy W18) in the NPPF 2024.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 1 delineates the designated Weymouth Neighbourhood Area and explains the relationship with the Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Area.

1. Maps 1 & 2 are supported and a legal requirement for submission.
2. Paragraph 1.7 – The final sentence suggests “The Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan covers the whole of the area under the jurisdiction of Weymouth Town Council” however this is not the case.
3. The Weymouth Parish area was amended in April 2024 to include the Littlemoor Urban Extension and the top of Plaisters Lane, Sutton Poyntz. As the Neighbourhood Plan area has not been formally updated it would be misleading to suggest the whole of the Weymouth parish area is subject to the Neighbourhood Plan. The difference in areas will be important to note for any recommendation regarding the area to which the subsequent Referendum should take place and for the determination of planning applications within Weymouth Parish but outside the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan area. Further background information: [Community Governance Review - Weymouth and surrounding areas and Vale of Allen - Dorset Council](#)
4. To avoid future confusion it would be helpful for the supporting text to refer to this administrative difference, possibly including the map below.



Chapter 2: Weymouth Neighbourhood Area

Chapter 2 describes the Weymouth Area and identifies 5-character areas.

5. Chapter naming – Although the chapter is named the ‘Weymouth Neighbourhood Area’ it confusingly does not refer to the Neighbourhood Plan Area but to the sub character areas defined by the Weymouth Character Area Assessment. Given the distinction in terms it is requested the title of the chapter is renamed ‘Weymouth Character areas’.
6. Paragraph 2.10 - The final sentence is a generalised assertion and should be widened to read “Many of the settlements lack a range of community facilities.”

Chapter 3: The Strategic Context

Chapter 3 sets the strategic context and explains the Neighbourhood Plan should have regard to National Policy and be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. This chapter also highlights the Climate & Ecological Emergency and the new Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

7. Paragraph 3.6 – The text should read “Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan should ~~not conflict~~ be prepared in general conformity with the strategic policies in the prevailing Local Plan.
8. Paragraph 3.12 – The Neighbourhood Plan should be prepared in conformity with national planning policy relating to flood risk and coastal change, including where necessary applying the sequential and exceptions tests.

Chapter 4: Purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan

Chapter 4 sets out the Neighbourhood Planning process, community involvement and the Plan's status.

9. Plan period - The Plan period (2021-2038) is clearly stated on the front cover and paragraph 4.6, a requirement for submission.

Chapter 5: The Structure of the Plan

Chapter 5 introduces the structure of the Plan and four principal supporting documents: Consultation Statement, Basic Conditions Statement, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment.

Consultation Statement

10. The consultation statement and its supporting engagement documents provide a comprehensive summary of the group's efforts to engage the local community, the feedback received and the change that occurred to the Plan because of this engagement.
11. However a matter of concern that has been raised by residents is the perceived exclusion of 573 responses received during the 3rd Community Engagement in January 2023.
12. We are aware that at that time, the Neighbourhood Plan steering group felt a locally circulated leaflet had influenced responses received. In response the Town Council sought advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer in late February 2023 and subsequently 'Locality' in early June 2023.
13. This matter is then addressed at the top of page 15 of the overview Consultation Statement under the title 'Important Note' and again on page 3 of the 3rd Public Engagement Statement under the section entitled 'Undue influence'.
14. Although these notes refer to the decision to 'provisionally exclude the results for Q7 and Q8' we have sought clarification from the group who have confirmed that they followed the Locality advice. No responses were excluded, and the group subsequently chose to re-run a further 4th consultation in August 2023 to clear up any misunderstanding. Given this 4th Engagement exercise was then followed by a formal six-week Regulation 14 consultation in November 2023 and this Regulation 16 consultation (January-April 2025) we are content that there has been adequate opportunity for concerns to have been raised.

Basic Conditions Statement

We have no specific comments to make on the submitted Basic Conditions Statement.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

15. An SEA determination statement carried out in March 2022 concluded that an SEA of the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan is required as it is likely to propose housing growth and allocate sites. The Plan area is ecologically sensitive, includes many heritage assets, is partly within the Dorset National Landscape and significant parts are at risk of flooding.
16. In response, the Town Council commissioned a Scoping Report (July 2022), Site Options Report (July 2023), Interim Report (September 2023) and Environmental Report to accompany the Regulation 14 Plan (October 2023). The submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan is now accompanied by an updated Environmental Report (November 2024).
17. The Environmental Report (November 2024) concluded; Major positive significant effects under the community wellbeing SEA topic and Minor negative significant effects are concluded under the biodiversity and geodiversity, historic environment, land, soil and water resources, landscape, and transportation SEA topics. No significant effects are noted under the climate change SEA topic and uncertainty is noted under the air quality topic SEA topic.
18. The Council's Senior Environmental Assessment Officer has reviewed the Environmental Report (November 2024). The scope of the SEA review was to check whether it meets the statutory requirements of Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment ('SEA Directive'), which is transposed into UK law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 ('SEA Regulations'). The Basic Conditions require conformity with this legislation, since there is a requirement that the making of the plan "does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations".
19. Overall, in their opinion the SEA satisfies legal requirements of the SEA Directive and Regulations.

Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)

20. An HRA determination statement carried out in March 2022 concluded that the emerging Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan should be subject to a HRA given the areas of land subject to European designations within or in close proximity to the plan area, and the fact the plan is likely to propose housing growth (including allocating sites). Dorset Council consulted Natural England who concurred with the Council's initial assessment.
21. The Town Council responded by commissioning AECOM to prepare a report to inform Habitats Regulation Assessment (November 2024) which has been submitted alongside this Plan. This assessment undertook both screening and Appropriate Assessment of the policies and any allocations within the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan. The Habitats sites, considered within the Appropriate Assessment for impact pathways that could not be screened out at the screening stage were:
 - Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC

- Chesil and the Fleet SAC
 - Chesil Beach and the Fleet Ramsar and Marine SPA
 - Dorset Heath SAC, Ramsar and SPA
 - Lyme Bay and Torbay Marine SAC
22. Impact pathways considered were effects from water resources and quality, air quality, construction activities (surface runoff) and recreational pressure.
 23. With regards to **water resources and water quality**, an increase in water abstraction and increased effluent has been addressed at a higher tier level within the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Adopted Local Plan (2015) and is also addressed at a wider level within the Draft Final Water Resources Management Plan (2018) by Wessex Water who supply and treat water in the Weymouth area. Also, no allocated/proposed developments are within the Chesil and the Fleet catchment so they should not affect nutrient neutrality for that European site. It can therefore be concluded that the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan will have no significant adverse effects upon Habitats sites.
 24. **Air pollution** through increases in atmospheric nitrogen deposition has been screened out following Appropriate assessment as any increases in vehicular traffic resulting from the policies is not deemed to be within the zone of influence of the Habitats sites.
 25. In terms of **construction activities i.e., surface run off**, the Plan has the potential to cause a likely significant effect at the screening stage, however, it is not possible to undertake any further assessment as this would require the provision of detailed design and construction details. As such this will be deferred to the individual planning application level and is not appropriate to assess at the Neighbourhood Plan level. Allocations have therefore been screened out at the LSE stage as posing no likely significant effect because the development allocations do not provide details of design and the sites were over 1km away from any Habitats Sites.
 26. It was, however, recommended in the February 2024 version of this report that policies W20, W21, W22 and W24 are amended to ensure that the developments are carefully designed and planned to ensure that no adverse effects on the integrity of Habitats sites occur as a result of water pollution stemming from site runoff or dust emissions during construction or the operational stage of each of the developments. Rather than make amends to each policy, the Group indicated their intention to amend Policy W19 to state '**Developments are carefully designed and planned to ensure that no adverse effects on the integrity of Habitats sites occur as a result of water pollution stemming from site run-off or dust emissions during construction or the operational stage of each of the developments.**'
 27. It is noted that the recommended wording to Policy W19 to address the effects of dust and water quality (from runoff) has not been included in the submission version of the Plan. However, as the European sites in question aren't particularly susceptible to these effects and considering the distance of the allocations from the European Site, surface water runoff or dust would be unlikely to be an issue in any event.
 28. Policy W42 (Offshore Renewable Energy Projects) has been screened out at the LSE stage as posing no likely significant effect because a) the Neighbourhood Plan Group does not have the authority to permit renewable energy proposals and b) the

policy explicitly states that such development will only be supported if there are no significant adverse impacts on the natural undeveloped coastland and that geodiversity and biodiversity is protected.

29. It has been concluded that the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan will not affect the integrity of Habitats sites in relation to **recreational pressure** due to the overarching provisions in the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Adopted Local Plan (2015) and the emerging Dorset Local Plan with which all new housing in the Neighbourhood Plan will need to comply.
30. In the February 2024 version of this HRA it was recommended that a policy is included within the Neighbourhood Plan which supports the Local Plan policies for the protection of Habitats sites. The following text has been added to Policy W02 ***"Any development brought forward must ensure that it can be implemented without any adverse effect upon the integrity of the Habitats sites. Proposals that will adversely affect the integrity of Habitats sites will not be supported."***
31. The following text has also been inserted into Policy W16 in the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan: ***'To mitigate adverse effects on the integrity of the Chesil Beach & The Fleet SAC regarding in-combination recreational pressure, any development proposals that provide for a net increase in the population must make adequate financial payments in accordance with the interim mitigation strategy for the SAC. A financial tariff will be required for all such proposals within 5km of the Habitats site, in line with Natural England advice. This policy aligns with the aims of Policy ENV2 of the adopted Local Plan, which centres on the protection of Habitats sites.'***
32. The report to inform the HRA concludes "Having assessed the final version of the Neighbourhood Plan, it can be concluded that the Plan document will not result in an adverse effect on the integrity of any Habitats sites either alone or in combination."
33. The Council's Senior Environmental Assessment Officer previously reviewed the draft HRA (February 2024) in September 2024 and raised some concerns about the analysis in the report. However, a generic European Site protection policy was included, and they were satisfied that no specific issues need to be flagged for any allocations, and so we supported the findings of the HRA.

Chapter 6 Vision, Aims and Objectives

Chapter 6 sets out the Plan's Vision which is supported by 16 Aims and 84 Objectives.

Chapter 7 Environmental Sustainability

Chapter 7 introduces 31 Environmental Targets grouped under four objectives.

The Council's NET made the following comment:

34. Objective 3: Biodiversity Net Gain. This objective name is confusing and potentially misleading. BNG is a specific term referring to the legal requirement for mandatory minimum 10% BNG as set out in the Environment Act. Objective 3 appears to refer to wider biodiversity enhancements (including species specific measures which do not form part of mandatory BNG) as well as giving more general advice on urban tree canopy cover, provision of green and blue infrastructure, and grassland (and scrub and hedgerow) management. If all these issues are to be kept as part of one objective, perhaps consider renaming the objective to make it clear that it refers to more general biodiversity provisions.

Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEO) and Supporting Environmental Targets (SET)

35. Chapter 7 and Appendix A explain that "Weymouth Town Council declared a local climate and ecological emergency in 2019. It committed to making the Council's activities net zero carbon by 2030, which included ensuring all planning comments to Dorset Council are consistent with a shift to net-zero carbon by 2030."
36. Following public consultation the draft Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan identified five cross-cutting 'objectives' supported by 31 Environmental Targets. Many of the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan refer to applications needing to demonstrate alignment with the supporting environmental objectives and targets, conferring development plan weight.
37. It is unclear however why some policies make specific reference to the Strategic Environmental Objectives and their supporting targets and others don't? The use of this standard criterion across many policies also feels repetitive and could be easily replaced by a single overarching policy. Further detailed concerns with the presentation of the Supporting Environmental Targets are outlined under heading, Appendix A.

Chapter 8: Landscape and Greenspace

Chapter 8 introduces the Landscape and Greenspace theme.

38. A general Biodiversity Policy - The Council's NET have made the following general comment regarding policies W02, W03, W05. There is overlap in the wording of these policies and it is recommended that they are combined into one general biodiversity policy covering the hierarchy of protected sites, the mitigation hierarchy and policy requirements referring to protected species. This would then leave statutory BNG to be written into a separate policy stating the intent of the neighbourhood plan to require developers to achieve minimum 20% BNG where possible.

W01: Shoreline Protection

The relevant policy in the WDWPLP is policy ENV7 is as well as paragraphs 177-179 of the NPPF. Policy W01 supports development necessary to prevent coastal erosion in areas designated by the South Devon and Dorset Shoreline Management Plan. It is noted that this approach is similar to Policy PORT/ENV1 of the made Portland Neighbourhood Plan (June 2021).

39. NPPF, paragraph 177 explains *"Plans should reduce risk from coastal change by avoiding inappropriate development in vulnerable areas and not exacerbating the impacts of physical changes to the coast"* and that plans should identify Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMA) in locations that are likely to be affected by physical changes to the coast. Paragraphs 178 and 179 continue by explaining that development in CCMA's will only be appropriate in specific circumstances and that Local Planning Authorities should consider temporary permission and restoration conditions where necessary to reduce future risk. Further guidance: Flood risk and coastal change - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
40. Policy ENV7 of the adopted Local Plan explains that *"The councils will identify Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMA) through a policy document, based on the Shoreline Management Plan and supporting evidence."* This work continues through Policies ENV16 and ENV17 of the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan (2021). The Council has suggested that both emerging policies should be treated as strategic. As drafted the Council does not consider that emerging policy W01 is likely to create conflict with the approach to defining CCMA, the adopted West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan or emerging Dorset Council Local Plan policies.
41. We would also draw the group's attention to the Coastal Risk Planning Guidance, which is currently the most up to date evidence for the area in terms of coastal change, and as such, would inform, along with the SMP and other evidence, any designation of a CCMA in the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan. The document can be viewed by searching for reference CD/ENV8- Evidence base for adopted West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland local plan - Dorset Council.
42. Approach – The supporting text (paragraphs 8.13-8.17) includes an acknowledgement of the issues and risks to Weymouth, but the policy lacks any approach for addressing existing development that is at risk from coastal erosion (i.e. where there is an SMP policy of no active intervention/managed realignment in any of the time epochs) – i.e. through adaptation/relocation of properties.
43. Paragraph 8.16 - Duplicated sentence, "In February 2024 Dorset Council published the Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Report for Weymouth Town Centre".

44. Paragraph 8.17 helpfully clarifies the policy is consistent with the 'hold-the-line' approach within the Shoreline Management Plan or any Coastal Management Strategy.

W02: Conservation of the Natural Environment

The relevant WDWPLP policies are ENV2, WEY8 and WEY16. The policy seeks to protect existing country parks, nature parks and nature reserves and supports interpretation.

45. Criterion 1 – The NET has made the following comment. This policy combines country parks (designated for public access as well as wildlife and therefore more relevant to greenspace/public open space policy) with nature reserves (designed for wildlife) and is potentially confusing because of this. It would be better to include the country park element in policy W07 or W10 and incorporate the nature reserve element into a general biodiversity policy (see general comment above) or policy W03.
46. Criterion 2 – This wording is a recommendation from the Habitats Regulation Assessment and can be supported.
47. Criterion 3 – The criterion refers to the recognition of a new nature conservation area at Wey Valley Watermeadows shown on Map 7. It is assumed that this land will be transferred through the allocation of Redlands Farm (Policy W21). As this appears to be a linked site-specific proposal to a land allocation elsewhere in the Plan it is advised that this criterion is deleted and the issue discussed in Policy W21, Criterion 6. In addition, we would note that simply supporting such a proposal would be considered an action and not a policy, so should appear in the supporting text. We would also question why the proposed area depicted on Map 7 (referred to as map 6 in the policy) does not align with the blue outline in Map 20.
48. Paragraph 8.24 – This paragraph states “The policy is permissive of minor works compatible with habitat conservation and restoration to ensure its status is recognised, such as signage, and improvements and additions in the interests of accessibility and interpretation. Such measures could be secured as part of a broader maintenance and enhancement programme through developer contributions relative to site allocation W19, allocation of CIL funding and biodiversity net gain credits in the interest of increasing biodiversity.” The policy text however makes no mention of any of these requirements and would benefit from being more specific.
49. Map 6 – This map relates to a Network of Ecological Sites and Wildlife Corridors. It is however not clear whether all the sites (international, national, local, wildlife corridors & stepping stones, inland water and enclosed tidal water) referenced on the map receive protection through the policy?

W03: Wildlife Habitats and Areas

Relevant policies are the NPPF, paragraphs 180 – 188, and WDWPLP policies ENV1 and ENV2. The policy is well laid out, seeks to protect ecologically sensitive sites, and outlines the ways in which ecology can be protected.

50. Approach - The NET note the wording in this policy appears to refer to a mix of sources: Habitats Regulations wording ('significant adverse effect', 'integrity', 'exceptional circumstances') but mixes this with more general wording about flora and fauna and landscape features. It is recommended that the policy is reworded to reflect the hierarchy of international, national and local sites and their relevant protection.

51. Paragraph 8.30 - Query whether this approach is consistent with national planning policy and has been properly justified?
- NPPF, paragraph 186-a) refers to 'significant harm to biodiversity' and introduces a mitigation hierarchy involving: Avoidance (i.e. re-locating to an alternative site); Adequate mitigation; Compensation.
 - NPPF, paragraph 186 b) contains separate policy guidance around SSSI and states "development which is likely to have an adverse effect" should normally be refused other than where benefits clearly outweigh adverse effects and irreplaceable habitats.
 - NPPF paragraph 186 c) continues "development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats" should be refused other than where there are wholly exceptional reasons, and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

W04: Wildlife corridors

The relevant policy in the WDWPLP is ENV2 in addition to the Dorset AONB Landscape character assessment document. This policy seeks to enhance and protect the wildlife corridors.

52. Approach - The NET is generally supportive.

W05: Ecological impact of Development

The relevant policies in the WDWPLP are ENV2 and ENV8 and paragraph 186 of the NPPF. This policy seeks to ensure that biodiversity enhancements are considered from the initial phases of a planning application and refers to Biodiversity Net Gain improvements.

53. Approach – NET recommend that this policy could be incorporated into a wider biodiversity policy, with reference to BNG in a standalone BNG policy. This policy appears to restate some of the intent of policy W03 (compliance with national legislation and the requirements of the LPA), but also mentions BNG and other ecological enhancements. It is recommended that the section on national legislation is incorporated into policy W03, along with species specific ecological enhancements which do not form part of statutory BNG. It is recommended that the policy is re-written as a BNG policy, to ensure that it reflects the intention of the Neighbourhood Plan to require development to achieve minimum 20% BNG if possible (Target 23).
54. Viability – The policy refers to a substantial Biodiversity Net Gain clarified in the paragraph 8.41 as a figure of at least 20% wherever possible to align with the Supporting Environmental Targets (Objective 3, Target 22) in Appendix A. The policy wording is considered unclear as there is a national requirement for 10% Biodiversity Net Gain and any requirement above this figure should be justified by supporting viability evidence. As discussed under the Viability section in this response, a minimum 20% Biodiversity Net Gain has not been justified and therefore policy wording should be clear that 20% can only be sought where "subject to viability".

W06: Trees, woodlands and hedgerows

The relevant policy in the WDWPLP is ENV10. This policy seeks to ensure the protection of trees as well as enhancing the number of trees in Weymouth.

- 55. Approach – NET support the intent of this policy, but the policy wording may be overly detailed. Developers will be required to follow the guidance set out in the Dorset Biodiversity Appraisal Protocol (2024), and Dorset Council local validation checklist (2022), which sets out such things as submission of tree surveys, method statements and replacement planting in detail.
- 56. Criterion 2- This criterion does not appear to add any additional protection to ancient, protected, or veteran trees above national policy and legislation and can be deleted.

W07: Rights of Way and Access to the Countryside

The relevant policies in the WDWPLP are COM7 and COM8 as well as paragraph 104 of the NPPF. The policy seeks to protect and enhance Footpaths, Rights of Way and Bridleways.

- 57. Approach - The Transport Planning Team have requested that alongside new developments retaining rights of way and ensuring the layout connects to footpaths, the policy could be made stronger by stating that new developments should enhance PRoW where appropriate to increase their inclusivity and accessibility for residents.
- 58. Map 9 – The Definitive Maps Team have requested a disclaimer is added to Map 9 Public Rights of Way to say, “This map is not definitive and has no legal status”.

W08: Coastal Green Recreation Areas

The relevant policies in the WDWPLP are COM4 and COM5. The policy seeks to stop development within the designated zones unless for coastal defence, extending an existing facility or for public use.

- 59. Approach - This policy seeks the right to safe and responsible recreational public access to coastal areas and the inter-connecting rights of way which is not provided for by Local Green Space Designation (Paragraph 8.57) and can be supported.
- 60. Suggest insertion of punctuation in the first sentence as it reads that the area is protected from public recreational access. Suggest ‘*Coastal recreation areas shown on map 10 are protected from development and restricted to ~~for~~ purposes of recreational access and enjoyment, unless it is for:*’
- 61. Sites 2 or 3 may include LA/WEYM/026 Former QinetiQ Site. Part of sites 2 or 3 are allocated for employment or mix-use re-development through Policy WEY9 Bingleaves Cove. Any land allocated for development should be excluded from the Coastal Green Recreation Areas as it would be contrary to the strategic policy.

W09: Green Gaps

This policy is similar to WDWPLP Policy ENV3 and before that, the Weymouth & Portland Local Plan 2005 Policy D2 Important open gaps. The policy seeks to maintain the open gaps that have historically been defined in Weymouth.

62. The policy refers to the restriction of coalescence and protection of special character. The supporting text identifies why the open gaps are significant and important to the community. This is namely for their value and openness in terms of landscape, and their link between the town and the countryside or nature reserves. The policy text should require that any proposals within the green gap should demonstrate through a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) that the proposal would not diminish the gap between settlements.
63. Mapping - preference would be to simply map the areas that are seeking to be retained as open gaps.

W10: Local Green Spaces

The policy seeks to designate Local Green Space in Weymouth. The relevant policy in the WDWPLP is ENV3. National Policy on Local Green Spaces can be found in NPPF paragraphs 105-107 which set out how local communities, through neighbourhood plans, can identify for protection, green spaces that are important to the community. Planning practice guidance on Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) expands on National Policy. The policy wording is consistent with green belt policy.

64. NPPG Paragraph: 011 Reference ID: 37-011-20140306 states “*Different types of designations are intended to achieve different purposes. If land is already protected by designation, then consideration should be given to whether any additional local benefit would be gained by designation as Local Green Space.*” A number of sites have other designations, namely the following:
 - Map ref 7 - WTC LGS009/010/015 - Elm Close, Preston Weymouth - The site is protected under other legislation as a Public Park and no justification is provided that warrants the additional protection.
 - Map ref 11 - WTC LGS016 - Remembrance / Memory Garden, Littlemoor - The site is designated as highways land and should not be designated under other designations, the site may be required for highways purposes in the future
 - Map ref 12 - WTC LGS017 - Community Orchard and Pond area adjacent to Littlemoor Road - The site is highways land and should not be designated under other designations, the site may be required for highways purposes in the future.
 - Map ref 16 - WTC LGS021 - Green Strip between The Finches & A354 - The site is highways land and should not be designated under other designations, the site may be required for highways purposes in the future.
 - Map ref 39 - WTCLGS015 - Springfield Copse (Junction of Springfield Road & Dorchester Road) - The site is protected under the Broadway Conservation Area and no details have been provided outlining why the site requires further protection.

- Map ref 9 - WTC LGS013 - Field adjacent to Southill Garden Drive – The site is allocated under WEY15 Tumbledown and a LGS designation would be contrary to this non-strategic policy. The town council do not intend to bring this site forward however it is technically contrary to the adopted local plan and should be removed.

Greenhill Gardens

65. A large number of representations have cited Greenhill Gardens as being important to the community and worthy of adding to the LGS list. With the Friends of Greenhill Garden submitting an assessment form.

LGS Policy background:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2023 - Para 105 to 107
- West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (WDWPLP) 2015
- Planning practice guidance on Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space.

Site Assessment:

- Longevity - The NPPF paragraph 105 requires that a LGS should only be designated if the site can endure beyond the end of the plan period. Any designation should not preclude Weymouth's ability to provide development but should instead be part of the strategy for a sustainable town including complementing investment in sufficient homes, jobs, and other essential services. Greenhill Gardens could comply with this criterion.
- Consistent with sustainable development - NPPG Paragraph: 007 Reference ID: 37-007-20140306 states *“Designating any Local Green Space will need to be consistent with local planning for sustainable development in the area. Plans must identify sufficient land in suitable locations to meet identified development needs and the Local Green Space designation should not be used in a way that undermines this aim of plan making.”* Allocating Greenhill Gardens would not preclude sustainable development plans and could comply with this criterion.
- Reasonably close proximity - Paragraph 106a) of the NPPF discusses proximity and outlines that this dependant on local circumstances and why the site is special. Ideally the location of the development should be within easy walking distance of the community that it serves and not be isolated from the community. Greenhill Gardens could comply with this criterion as it is within the town.
- Demonstrably special and local Significance - Paragraph 106 b) requires details of why the space is demonstrably special to the community and holds local importance, (for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife) is required to be designated. The community have provided additional details on this point and Greenhill Gardens could comply with this criterion.
- Local in character and not an extensive tract of land - Part c) of paragraph 106 requires that the site is not an extensive tract of land. There is no definition of what can be considered local in size, it is not defined specifically and there is no

maximum size. On average LGS that have been designated are 1.8 Hectares¹, but this could vary depending on the settlement size. As Weymouth is a larger settlement the provision of a larger area of land could still be considered local in character. Greenhill Gardens could comply with this criterion as it is 1.4 Hectares in size.

- Existing consents - In accordance with paragraph 008 of the NPPG, any sites or land with an existing planning consent should not be included unless there are exceptional reasons to include the land. LBC was granted in 2023 for part of the site, but this application would not preclude the site coming forward as LGS. Greenhill Gardens could comply with this criterion.
- Other designations - NPPG Paragraph: 011 Reference ID: 37-011-20140306 states *“Different types of designations are intended to achieve different purposes. If land is already protected by designation, then consideration should be given to whether any additional local benefit would be gained by designation as Local Green Space.”*
 - If the land has other designations, such as AONB or conservation area status, this does not necessarily preclude or support designation as local green space. However, the additional designation as a Local Green Space may require its retention in situ or perpetuity, not afforded by the existing designation. Any sites with existing designations should therefore justify why the additional designation as Local Green Space is required. If this cannot be provided then the spaces that are protected under other legislation should not be included, e.g. public parks, public rights of way or highways land.
 - The site is within a Conservation Area which provides a level of protection to the park. The status would not however preclude the site coming forward as a development opportunity at a later date but instead would only provide a level of protection in terms of the design of any development within the conservation area. Unless it was found that the park had historic significance. Therefore, it may be worthwhile designating this park as the community are in favour of it. An assessment of the significance of the asset may be required to ensure that designation was not already afforded by its Conservation Area status.
- Consistent with Green belt policy - Greenhill Gardens could comply with this criterion. Provided that the policy is appropriately worded.
- Summary Greenhill Gardens – In summary provided justification could be given as to why the site requires additional designation on top of the Conservation Area status the proposal could be accepted as LGS.

¹ [Feb-2022 CPRE Local-Green-Spaces-full-report-1.pdf](#)

W11: Incidental Open Spaces

The relevant policy in the WDWPLP is COM5. The policy is similar to Policy Port/CR4 of the made Portland NP as it seeks to protect small areas that provide residential amenity.

- 66. Approach - The policy restricts infill development in inherently sustainable locations. Whilst the policy is not specifically related to Local Green Spaces, it is similar. NPPF, Paragraph 105 requires that any designation should not preclude Weymouth's ability to provide development but should instead be part of the strategy for a sustainable town including complementing investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. This policy does not provide additional protection over and above a Local Green Spaces. No justification is provided outlining why these areas cannot simply be designated as LGS, where they meet the criteria.
- 67. Map 13 & Appendix C - The detailed mapping of estates is welcomed.

W12: Riversides

The relevant policies in the local plan are COM4, COM5, SUS2, and ECON5 and NPPF paragraph 165 and policy BNE1.3 of the Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Plan. Policy W12 seeks to recognise the recreation and educational potential of the riverside areas and supports appropriate recreation and tourism schemes. It furthers the green corridor plan as per the Sutton Poyntz NP.

- 68. Approach - It should be considered as to whether this policy is necessary having regard to national planning policy relating to water compatible development and planning practice guidance relating to flood risk and coastal change (including the categorisations of different types of development and Table 2: Flood risk vulnerability and flood zone 'incompatibility'). What additional benefit does this policy bring or is it simply duplication.
- 69. Paragraph 8.80 - The supporting text notes that areas in flood zone 3B can only include water compatible development types, including water-based recreation and open space. The policy, should outline that mitigation can be considered for such sites, unlocking other uses by the riverside. The policy wording could be amended to state '*...unless other suitable mitigation measures can be put in place.*'

W13: Panoramas, Vistas and Views

The relevant policies in the WDWPLP are ENV1 and ENV3. The supporting text refers to Policy H&P 3.2 - Key views of the Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Plan. The policy seeks to protect certain views and vistas, across Weymouth including those identified by the Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Plan.

- 70. Criterion 1 – The wording in the first and second sentence seems repetitive and could be combined.
- 71. Evidence around landscape sensitivity of the historic and built environment has been based on 'walkabouts' and one community consultation. The evidence should ideally include a LVIA. Alternatively, the wording of part 2 should place the onus on the developer to provide a LVIA to identify if there would be a potential impact on identified views and identify ways of mitigating impact. Requiring a reference to the local design guidance simply requires the building to be of a quality design but still is able to disrupt the view. It therefore does not achieve what is set out in the supporting text that '*development should not impair or compromise significant panoramas, views and vistas...*'. An LVIA could address this.

Chapter 9: Development and Homes

Chapter 9 sets out the housing context in Weymouth including a significant shortage of affordable housing as evidenced by a housing needs assessment (HNA). An assessment of the known supply of future housing concludes future commitments are unlikely to address this in-balance in the housing market.

Housing Requirement

National policy requires local plans to set out a housing requirement figure for designated neighbourhood areas. No methodology is prescribed but figures should take account of factors such as the latest evidence of local housing need, the population of the area, and most recent planning strategy.

Section 2.10 of the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan (2021) proposed that the housing requirement figures for neighbourhood areas are the sum of:

- completions since the beginning of the plan period;
- extant planning permissions;
- housing allocations;
- capacity on major sites (of 10 or more dwellings) within development boundaries as evidenced through the SHLAA; and
- a windfall allowance on minor sites (of less than 10 dwellings)

Under this methodology, paragraph 9.8 of the Neighbourhood Plan explains the housing requirement for Weymouth, was originally calculated as 3,225 dwellings. This methodology assumed a Plan period until 2038 and a base date 1 April 2021.

Now that more than two years have elapsed, since these figures were originally calculated they can be updated using more recent monitoring data, which is dated 1 April 2023. These updated figures are set out in the table below and continue to assume a Plan period April 2021 to April 2038. Consequently two years of completions data has now been recorded.

Source of supply	Number of Dwellings
Completions (1 April 2021-31 March 2023)	314
Sites with Planning Permission at April 2023	1396
Site Allocations without Planning Permission (both current & proposed)	550
Large Site Windfall Allowance (based on sites identified in the SHLAA)	150
Small Site Windfall Allowance (based on past completion rates)	708
Total	3118

72. Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan, paragraph 9.8 and the proceeding table acknowledges this supply of housing and can be supported. Policy W19 and the supporting Table B Site Allocations Summary lists a series of new allocations beyond this existing supply that would help deliver 425 homes including an estimated 212 affordable units. Although Land at Redlands Farm (Policy W21) is included in the table above as a proposed site allocation (Policy WEY14 South of Wey Valley) in the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan 2021. An allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan is considered to significantly increase the likelihood of delivery. For the avoidance of doubt, the remaining 400 homes in this category are anticipated to come forward in Weymouth Town Centre. A Weymouth Town Centre Master Plan refresh is currently

underway and may provide more certainty in this supply. Land at Wyke Oliver Farm North (Policy W20) for 250 homes and Off Beverly Road (Policy W22) for 25 homes would directly add to the Weymouth housing supply.

Viability evidence, timeline and policy implications

Paragraph 9.13, footnote 65 introduces the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan Viability Report dated November 2024 and discusses several of its implications for policy drafting.

73. Dorset Council has sought to work actively and on an on-going basis with Weymouth Town Council through regular meetings and commentary on early drafts of their emerging Neighbourhood Plan and supporting studies. This on-going engagement has shaped the Plan's requirement for Plan wide viability work, however, it is important to understand this timeline when interpreting remaining policy implications, which was as follows.

- **April 2023 - Initial draft/ evidence gathering** - Initial allocations shown as a list corresponding with the AECOM Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan Site Options and Assessment Report (13 January 2023)
- **June 2023 - Dorset Council respond to draft** – The Planning Policy Team considered the 'suitability' of sites in the context of the National and Local Planning Policy framework but noted that the initial draft work did not include an assessment of 'achievability'. It was recommended that viability work was undertaken as close to the end of the process as practical to maximise policy certainty and minimise abortive work and cost.
- Commentary was provided on the draft policy text including Policy WNP21 Affordable Housing. Notably, Criteria i) required proposals to meet the minimum target of 35% affordable housing, and at least 50% in the town centre. These expectations were higher than both the adopted Local Plan (2015) position and the Dorset Council area viability assessment testing in support of the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan, published in December 2022. At this stage, it was advised that to justify a higher percentage of affordable housing, further viability work should be commissioned to test all the assumptions in the emerging Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan.
- **Sept 2023 - Start viability assessment work.** - Bailey Venning appointed.
- **Nov 2023 - Reg 14 Consultation** - Viability work not completed during consultation.
- **Jan 2024 - Interim results for Brownfield sites and a group of Greenfield sites** - While this initial work was welcomed, it was clear the report focused on specific site viability work but was missing any implications of topic policies.
- **May 2024 - Draft Viability Report** - DC response dated 28 June 2024 provided commentary on the assumptions within the Viability Report, highlighted a requirement to assess all new policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, recommended two additional disclaimers were added and reflected on some implications for the emerging Neighbourhood Plan policies.
- **Sept 2024 - A near final draft Viability Report circulated to Dorset Council** - This had largely addressed earlier concerns. However, a review of

the report identified an outstanding issue which the final Viability Report should address.

- Policy 18 Affordable Housing, Criterion 2i) - We were concerned that the general policy of 50% affordable housing being sought on Greenfield sites when only four allocated sites were tested in the viability study. In the Council's view, this justifies that 50% of affordable housing should be sought on those four specific sites tested in the viability study only and the policy should be amended accordingly. However, the consultant is of the view that due to three schemes being significant in size and one being a small major site, justifies this policy being applied generally across all greenfield sites that are not yet identified. In the Council's view, for a general greenfield policy, the consultant should have included hypothetical typologies from small to larger and significant across the Weymouth area. If this testing, in addition to the four specific sites, demonstrated that 50% affordable housing was viable, only then does the neighbourhood group have adequate evidence to justify this policy being applied so generally.
- No formal response was received to these remaining concerns
- **Nov 2024 - Viability Report** - Uploaded onto the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan website ahead of Weymouth Town Council meeting.
- **Dec 2024 - The Plan and supporting documents were submitted to Dorset Council** - This submission was followed by several late additions up until mid-January 2025, before the start of the formal Regulation 16 consultation.

74. One unintended consequence of this protracted process to viability assessment is that we are now unsure what version of the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan was assessed. The finalised report refers to the Regulation 14 policy numbering (Appendix 9 Policy schedule) and does not specify any later version of the emerging Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan. In addition, the viability report was published in November 2024 meaning any late changes to policy text could not have been assessed.
75. Dorset Council are content that all policy text within the Regulation 14 draft Plan have been assessed (Viability Report, Annex 9 Policy schedule) subject to our remaining concern, however, we are unable to verify the assessment of any later changes to the Plan, post December 2023, which may have viability implications.
76. The final version of the Plan has been reviewed and consequently there are concerns that the following late additions have unknown viability implications.
- Policy W05 Ecological Impact of Development requires a substantial Biodiversity Net Gain and paragraph 8.41 calls for a figure of at least 20% where possible to align with Supporting Environmental Targets (Objective 3, Target 22).
 - Policy W15 Extensions and Alterations refers to highest sustainability standards and paragraph 9.25 suggests that considerations should be given to Passive Haus design standards.
 - Policy W18 Affordable Housing introduces a 35% affordable housing requirement on sites of between 2 and 9 units.

- Policy W23B Land at Lodmoor Old Tip – Mid section. It is noted that this policy is no longer proposing residential development. Draft Policy WNP24 Budmouth Avenue and Draft Policy WNP28 St Nicholas have been removed from the Plan.
77. In response, it is suggested that the viability evidence is updated, or the new requirements are deleted. A further option could be to retain some of the new requirements, where appropriate, but set out that they don't have to be met if it is evidenced, as part of the planning application process, that they would result in development being unviable.

W14: Development boundaries

The relevant policy in the local plan is Policy SUS2 Distribution of Development. As drafted, Policy W14 seeks to focus development within the defined development boundary (DDB).

78. Approach - In general, Dorset Council is supportive of communities who wish to update and amend their DDB. Paragraph 3.5.4 of the WDWPLP, explains that *“Neighbourhood development plans have the potential to deliver a step-change in the level of growth in the plan area. They can make significant changes to the policies in this plan, so long as they do not undermine its strategic objectives and approach. Examples of changes could include: Extending existing defined development boundaries, or adding them to settlements that do not currently have a boundary”* Therefore the principle of this policy is accepted.
79. Paragraph 9.19 & Map 16 – It is noted that the Defined Development Boundary for Weymouth has been updated to include the proposed residential allocations W20 Land at Wyke Oliver Farm North and W21 Redlands Farm. Subject to these sites being allocated, we have no concerns with this approach. We agree the extent of built development at Land at Markham and Little Francis (Policy WEY10) is currently unclear and would require a future review.

W15: Extensions and alterations

The relevant policy in the local plan is ENV1. This policy discusses extensions and retrofitting energy efficient measures.

80. Approach - *‘Extensions and alterations to a building that require planning consent, should be designed to the highest sustainability standards’* puts a significant amount of pressure on householders that require planning permission. Specifically what standards should the development be highest in. If it is relating to building regulation standards then this is already a requirement under other legislation and this part of the policy could be considered duplication.
81. Viability – Criterion 1, refers to extensions and alterations reaching the “highest sustainability standards”. Paragraph 9.25 then suggests consideration should be given to Passive Haus principles, materials with low embodied energy, and/or a high thermal mass; green roofs or walls, photovoltaics or solar thermal water heating; water efficiency. These requirements were omitted from the draft neighbourhood plan and viability report. Attaining these standards is expensive for developers, never mind householders, and there is no viability evidence to support this. This requirement should either be deleted or if the requirement is retained, the wording ‘subject to viability’ should be added.

82. Alterations – We are concerned that the policy is seeking to cover too much by including alterations. For example, solar panels could not comply with this policy. The policy could instead be broken up into two separate sections such as extensions, as a point and alterations as a separate point.

W16: Major Housing sites

A relevant policy in the local plan is ENV13 Achieving high levels of environmental performance. The twelve sub criteria under the first sentence set out in draft policy W16 are aimed at ensuring the development of major housing sites are of a consistent standard to provide a high-quality living environment. These criteria have been established in response to community consultation including a critique of recent housing developments. The second sentence introduces the concept of 'Walkable Neighbourhoods'. The third sentences requests site specific evidence documents where appropriate. The fourth sentence seeks a drainage impact assessment for all new development with potentially significant surface run off implications. The fifth sentence seeks a financial tariff for all proposals within 5km of the Chesil Beach & The Fleet European site in-line with the interim mitigation strategy.

83. Criterion i) Following the Government's 2015 'housing standards review' Lifetime Homes standards were replaced by the optional building regulations standard M4(2) entitled 'accessible and adaptable dwellings'. The [Written Ministerial Statement \(25 March 2015\)](#) advises that *"Neighbourhood plans should not be used to apply the new national technical standards."*
84. Criteria ii & iii) reflect Policy ENV11 Criterion i) bullet point 4. The policy or supporting text should define what is 'adequate', as this is open to interpretation and could vary dependant on the person assessing. The policy text can also remove 'where appropriate'. The Transport Planning Team notes that Paragraph ii states that applications should provide adequate storage for cycles. The paragraph should also add "in accordance with the latest national standards adopted by the local authority". This is to ensure cycle parking provided is of good quality. The Highways Development Team add criteria ii & iii could include the word 'accessible'.
85. Criterion iv) reflects Policy ENV11 Criterion i) bullet point 4 although it would be helpful if the supporting text could define what 'sufficient' open space and private garden standards may be. Reference to 'community orchard or allotment space' may be too onerous on an application of 10 units but could be suitable for a larger scale site.
86. Criterion vi) reflects NPPF, paragraphs 111 e) and 116 e). The adopted Local Plan does not contain a position on 'electric vehicle charging points' however Dorset Council published [December 2023 - Dorset Council Sustainability statement and checklist for planning applications](#) in December 2023 which notes *"The inclusion of electric vehicle charging points in new development is an important issue and it should be noted that in June 2022 this requirement was incorporated into the Building Regulations²."* The criteria also appear to duplicate Policy W49. The Highways Development Team add criterion vi could include "make a provision for accessible spaces".
87. Criterion ix) The Transport Planning Team explain that it is important that new housing sites are well connected by safe walking and cycling routes to key amenities

² [Requirement S1 of Schedule 1 and Regulation 44D of the Building Regulations 2010](#)

within the local area to encourage active travel. The policy should include a paragraph that major housing sites should assess walking and cycling routes to key local amenities, such as schools and employment areas. Travel Plans should be submitted as part of planning applications where the development generates a significant amount of transport movement.

88. Criterion xi) reflects Policy ENV16 Criterion iii). What makes it satisfactory i.e. brightness, number, positioning, etc. It may be helpful to provide a link to national planning guidance [Light pollution - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/light-pollution)
89. Criterion xii) The criterion seeks to explore opportunities for a district heating system where practical and viable. This criterion can be supported.
90. Second sentence – This criterion introduces the concept of ‘Walkable Neighbourhoods’ which is a similar concept to ‘15-minute cities’ and ‘20-minute Neighbourhoods’. The key principle is that a neighbourhood is a place where active and sustainable ways of transportation, such as walking and cycling are increased and motor vehicle traffic reduced. The objective is to design neighbourhoods where all key facilities are within a 15-20-minute walk. The concept in the UK has been drawn from international experiences in Portland, USA; Melbourne, Australia; and Paris, France. UK based organisation such as Sustrans and TCPA are seeking to widen the concept in National and Local planning policy.
91. The NPPF does not refer to this concept however the National Model Design Code highlights that a compact and walkable neighbourhood with a mix of uses and facilities reduces demand for energy and supports health and wellbeing, with the definition of ‘walkable’ described as local facilities being within no more than a 10-minute walk (800 metre radius). In the wider sense, this new concept reflects the more well-known principle of sustainable development that runs throughout the NPPF as well as through national design and transport policy and can, therefore, be supported.
92. Third & fourth sentence - The requirement for supporting studies repeats the Council’s validation checklist.(October 2022) [new-validation-checklist-v17-final-updated-19-09-2024](#)
93. Fifth sentence – This wording is a recommendation from the Habitats Regulation Assessment and can be supported.
94. Highways - The Highways Development Team advise all developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should provide a travel plan, and the application should be supported by a vision-led transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed and monitored. Accesses and estate road layouts should accord with latest guidance. Safe and suitable access to the site for all users. (For example, appropriate access point, gradient, junction radii, road widths etc)

W17: Housing mix

The relevant policies in the local plan are HOUS1 and HOUS3 as well as paragraph 63 of the NPPF. The policy cross references to the latest housing needs assessment which is desirable. This policy seeks a mix of housing types to support a mixed and balanced community.

W18: Affordable Housing

Policy W18 seeks to maximise the provision of dwellings that are affordable and accessible to local people over the plan period.

95. Affordable Housing Threshold – Criterion 2 helpfully repeats the national threshold of ten or more units and would be a welcome addition to the Development Plan. National Policy would apply outside the Development Boundary so specifying ‘within the defined development boundaries’ is considered misleading. Confusingly the fifth sentence lowers the affordable housing threshold further by seeking a commuted sum equivalent to 35% affordable housing on schemes of 2-9 dwellings or less than 0.5ha in size. This sentence is a late addition to the Plan that was not consulted upon at the pre-submission stage (Regulation 14), nor has this change been subject to viability testing like the rest of the Neighbourhood Plan. For these two reasons this criterion should be removed.
96. Designated rural areas - In Weymouth, parts of Upwey and Sutton Poyntz are located in the Dorset National Landscape, a ‘designated rural area’, where a lower threshold could be supported in principle, subject to viability justification. A lower threshold is ‘normally applied’ in the part of the Weymouth NP area that is located in the Dorset National Landscape but the threshold is not currently set out within the Development Plan.
97. Viability - Criterion 2 i) requires proposals to meet the minimum target of at least 35% affordable housing, and at least 50% on greenfield sites. As explained above, the Plan has been submitted alongside a Viability Report prepared by viability experts Bailey Venning Associates. Although the accompanying Viability Report has tested the site-specific proposals within the emerging Neighbourhood Plan, this report has not tested a wider range of typologies. Consequently, the sample size used to support the higher affordable housing contributions of at least 35% affordable housing on brownfield sites and 50% affordable housing on greenfield sites is insufficiently supported and should not be applied more generally. This criterion should be deleted.
98. Criterion 2 ii) This clause repeats NPPF, paragraph 64 and can be deleted.
99. Criterion 2 iii) & Paragraph 9.42 – Reference to the Dorset Council Housing Allocation Policy is supported. We note that this approach replaces the earlier Weymouth Local Connection Policy in the Regulation 14 version of the Plan. Paragraph 9.42 helpfully clarifies local concerns will be considered through a review of the Dorset Council wide Local Connection Policy.
100. Criterion 2 iv) – This clause repeats NPPF, paragraph 64 and can be deleted. It does not make sense to seek an equivalent financial contribution in lieu of on-site provision on viability grounds. Off-site provision is normally only accepted where there are exceptional planning reasons to justify not providing affordable housing on site. i.e. if they can’t afford to provide it on site, they aren’t going to be able to afford the same amount of money as a financial contribution. Consider whether the policy should include a requirement to deliver homes off-site before accepting an equivalent financial contribution. It may not be possible or practical to ensure all contributions are committed to schemes within the Neighbourhood Plan area.
101. Criterion 3 i) - Seeks 70% affordable and social rented homes and 30% intermediate housing for sale, including 25% First Homes. The Weymouth Housing Needs Assessment (2024), paragraph 4.7.8 suggests a mix of 70% affordable rented and

30% affordable home ownership dwellings. The proposed policy mix therefore reflects local evidence and the greater need for affordable housing for rent.

102. The Weymouth Housing Needs Assessment (2024), paragraph 4.7.9 anticipated upcoming changes to the national affordable housing definition. “It is recommended that First Homes are delivered as 25% of the Affordable Housing mix, in line with current national policy. However, this requirement is planned to be abandoned in the ongoing 2024 NPPF consultation. It is recommended that the remaining 5% of affordable home ownership products are delivered as shared ownership in the interests of diversity and maximising choice, although this could be increased if the 25% First Homes requirement is removed. Rent to Buy does not feature in the mix as the least affordable tenure locally.”
103. The NPPF (2024) was published on 12 December 2024, six days after the Plan was first submitted. NPPF (2024), Paragraph 66, Footnote 31 advises “The requirement to deliver a minimum of 25% of affordable housing as First Homes, as set out in 'Affordable Homes Update' Written Ministerial Statement dated 24 May 2021, no longer applies. Delivery of First Homes can, however, continue where local planning authorities judge that they meet local need.”
104. The timings of Plan submission on 6 December 2024 against the most recent NPPF changes on 12 December 2024 mean it is unclear whether the Neighbourhood Plan group wish to continue with the proposed 25% First Homes requirement or for the remainder (25%) to be reallocated to the intermediate percentage, as suggested by AECOM.
105. Criterion 3 ii) refers to local evidence and can be supported.
106. Criterion 3 iii) reflects Policy HOUS1 criterion v) that schemes should be tenure blind and can be supported.
107. Criterion 4 refers to retaining schemes in perpetuity. This approach is supported.

W19: Site Allocations

Policy W19 lists the sites allocated in the plan.

- 108. Criterion 2- This criterion acts as a cross reference to other policies in the Plan and adds little value as the Plan must be read as a whole.
- 109. Paragraph 9.45 – We would clarify that the council has been aware of the site selection process applied by the town council but has not formally overseen this process.
- 110. Paragraph 9.51 - The SEA report “recommends that a Principal Residency policy would offer support to the local transport network to improve sustainable transport and maintaining the viability of public transport options and would avoid by not limiting non-principal residency, increases in traffic particularly in summer months.” New build housing is however a very small proportion of the total available and would be unlikely to alleviate tourist traffic. For example, the existing stock could still be converted to Air BnB’s.
- 111. Table B: Site allocation summary – A helpful summary of the site details, residential commitments and green space.
- 112. Habitat Sites – It is noted that the recommended HRA wording to Policy W19 to address the effects of dust and water quality (from runoff) has not been included in the submission version of the Plan.

Common site allocation issues

There are several issues that are common across many of the site allocations and these more general points are discussed first, for brevity reasons.

- 113. For - Many of the site allocations propose an ‘for’ number of residential dwellings. Dorset Council, however, prefers the phrase ‘around’ as this phrase has been agreed by inspectors in the past. Most recently through the Purbeck Local Plan examination.
- 114. Masterplanning & Site Capacity – The Landscape & Urban Design team would question many of the site capacity estimates. Without a thorough understanding of the site constraints (landscape, flood risk, biodiversity, infrastructure etc..) an accurate understanding of site layout would not be possible. As no masterplanning work has been provided in support of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Landscape & Urban Design Team would recommend the supporting text refers to the benefits of early engagement with Dorset Council through the Council’s pre-application advice service. Early engagement could consider site specific requirements such as; the retention of hedgerows, boundary treatment, legible street networks, safe footpaths and cycle paths, street lighting and play and amenity space.
- 115. Infrastructure - CIL/S106 Team questions if site allocation policies could be more explicit about infrastructure needs? Although a lot of residential development will be covered by CIL there will be some sites that may need site-specific mitigation alongside CIL.
- 116. Strategic environmental objectives and targets - See comments on Chapter 7 and Appendix A.
- 117. Highways - The Highways Development Team advise any development proposal is assessed on its own merits, and subject to the Highway Authority’s scrutiny. Any

access and estate road layout should accord with latest guidance. Mitigation works should be justified and delivered to accord with latest legislation, policy, guidance. Due regard should be given to Inclusive Mobility. Our primary role is acting on behalf of the Highway Authority as a consultee in the planning system. We have a statutory duty to provide a substantive highway safety recommendation on planning applications. There should be consistency for all site allocations when considering development proposals in accordance with (NPPF) National Planning Policy Framework, Paragraphs 14 and 15 (or future revisions).

118. Transport Assessment / Transport Statement and Travel Plan - The Transport Planning Team have stated that there should be consistency for all site allocations regarding determining the need for a Transport Assessment/Transport Statement and Travel Plan. Paragraph 117 of the NPPF states that “all developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan, and the application should be supported by a transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed.”
119. Cycle and mobility scooter parking - The Transport Planning Team have requested that all site allocations should provide secure and ideally covered cycle and mobility scooter parking.
120. Active travel network - The Transport Planning Team have also encouraged that the Neighbourhood Plan should give guidance on how site allocations are connected to the active travel network. It should promote improvements to ensure new developments are properly connected to the wider network. Financial contributions will be required for off-site connections.
121. Surface Water Management - The Flood Risk Management Team have reviewed the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan as the LLFA. Our comments offer a high-level review of the policy sites based on available flood risk mapping and some site visits. Our advice includes discussion surrounding the prevailing flood risk to the sites and we also highlight the constraints that should be considered when developing a surface water management strategy for each of these locations. **The full response has been appended to this response (Dorset Council Appendix 3).**
122. ONR Consultation Response – The Emergency Planning Team have reviewed the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan – in particular Policy 19: Site Allocations, Table B: Site Allocations Summary, Map 18: Allocated sites, and Policies W20 to W25. The developments proposed do not pose a significant threat to the MoD Operational Berth at Portland Port, and do not include any hazardous sites or developments that would pose long or very long-range impacts. **The full response has been appended to this response (Dorset Council Appendix 1).**

Site assessment

Planning practice guidance explains that “plan-makers will need to assess the suitability, availability and achievability of sites, including whether the site is economically viable.” The following three tests form the basis of our comments for each of the proceeding site allocations.

123. Availability - A site can be considered available for development, when, on the best information available (confirmed by the call for sites and information from landowners and legal searches where appropriate), there is confidence that there are no legal or ownership impediments to development. For example, land controlled by a developer

or landowner who has expressed an intention to develop may be considered available.

- 124. **Achievability** - A site is considered achievable for development where there is a reasonable prospect that the particular type of development will be developed on the site at a particular point in time. This is essentially a judgement about the economic viability of a site, and the capacity of the developer to complete and let or sell the development over a certain period.
- 125. **Suitability** - A site or broad location can be considered suitable if it would provide an appropriate location for development when considered against relevant constraints and their potential to be mitigated.

W20 Land at Wyke Oliver Farm North

Land at Wyke Oliver Farm North is allocated for approximately 250 new homes. The proposal also includes the transfer of 23ha of land to Dorset Wildlife Trust to form an extension to the Lorton Valley Nature Park.

- 126. **Availability** – A ‘call for sites’ process was carried out between September and October 2021 to identify land which would be suitable for allocation. Land at Wyke Oliver Farm North was submitted to Weymouth Town Council through this process and is therefore considered available.
- 127. **Achievability** – This site has been subject to viability testing prepared by Bailey Venning Associates (November 2024). Paragraphs 6.26 – 6.37 and Annex 3 discuss Land at Wyke Oliver Farm North and concludes that the site is viable when Residual Land Value is compared against Benchmark Land Value. The assessment also considers the impact of a reduction in overall values of 5% (annex 3b) and concludes the site would not be viable unless “the output of affordable housing is once again reduced, this time to 43.6% of total units i.e. well above the current and proposed targets in the wider Local Plans.”

Policy Criteria

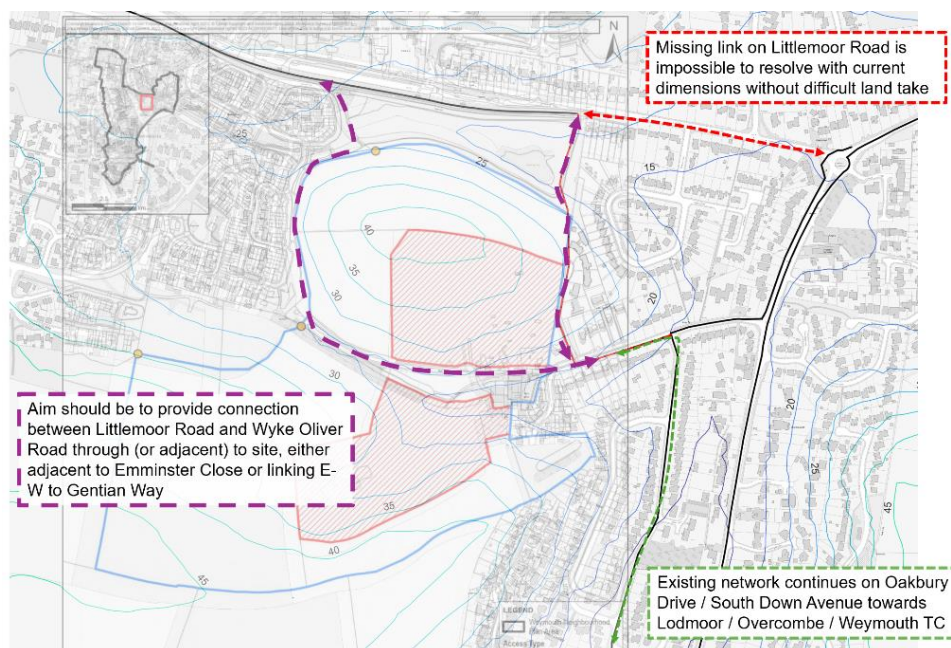
- 128. **Criterion 3 / Site Capacity** – We would question the estimated site capacity for 250 new homes without a thorough understanding of the site constraints.
- 129. **Criterion 4 (iv)** – Reference to a drainage scheme is welcomed.
- 130. **Criterion 4 (v) / Site Access** – The provision of appropriate safe vehicular and pedestrian access via Wyke Oliver Road should be confirmed with the Highways Development Team.
- 131. **Criterion 4 (vi)** – Unclear what a community focus is?
- 132. **Criterion 4 (vii)** – Improved access to Lorton Valley Nature Park is welcomed.
- 133. **Criterion 4 (ix)** - The Transport Planning Team has suggested that Criterion 4 (ix) should be re-worded. The Transport Assessment will include an impact assessment on junctions/roads agreed by the Local Highway Authority. A Travel Plan (assumed what is meant by this sentence) is a strategy to reduce the number of single occupancy vehicles trips associated with the development. A Travel Plan would be required for a development of 250 dwellings. It is suggested that the above sentence is rephrased to align with criteria in the National Planning Policy Framework. For example, “Proposals should demonstrate through the Transport Assessment that the

cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would not be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios". The Highways Development Team suggest including the word 'Travel'... Plan.

134. Criterion 5 – Dorset Council note the opportunity this site allocation offers to secure an extension to Lorton Valley Nature Park.

Suitability (Other constraints)

135. Cycle network - The Transport Planning Team add. If this site is to be developed it should assist with ensuring connectivity of the cycle network between Littlemoor Road and Oakbury Drive. This could solve the need for the link between Littlemoor Road and Chalbury Corner, which has many constraints. At the moment the cycle route ends abruptly on Littlemoor Road, and cycles have to use the road, which has no cycle segregation, creating conflict between cycles and vehicles. The ideal alternative route for cycles would be to cut down to Wyke Oliver Road through the development site. The long-term aim to ensure more cycle traffic is using this route rather than Preston Road. The policy should ensure that development at Wyke Oliver Farm should enable this active travel connection.
136. See the map below indicating the desired cycle connection.



137. Green Infrastructure Network - Policy ENV3 applies to Important Open Gaps and land of local landscape importance and explains "Development that would cause harm to the green infrastructure network or undermine the reasons for an area's inclusion within the network will not be permitted unless clearly outweighed by other considerations."
138. Landscape and Visual Impact – In order to support the Local Plan Review, the council commissioned a landscape and heritage study, which is online here - [Landscape and Heritage Studies - Dorset Council](#) In particular we draw your attention to the Stage 2 Assessment for Weymouth - [Weymouth Landscape Sensitivity Assessment \(dorsetcouncil.gov.uk\)](#) The Stage 2 report includes an assessment of the wider Wyke Oliver / Southdown Farm area (shown as Assessment Area: Weymouth 5) and concluded that this wider area is of 'moderate-high' landscape sensitivity. The Stage 2 assessment highlights some key characteristics,

such as: the separation the landscape provides between Littlemoor and Overcombe / Preston; the locally prominent hill slopes; and views in and out of this area. Although much of the site is concealed by existing development in views across Lodmoor from Preston Road, parts of the site are visible west of Overcombe Court and from more elevated positions along Bowleaze Cove Way. The Landscape & Urban Design Team also note that there is a high point to the north of the site.

139. Lorton Valley Wildlife corridor - The Council's NET note the allocations at Wyke Oliver Farm North is within the Lorton Valley wildlife corridor, as defined by the '*Urban Wildlife Corridors and Stepping Stones: Weymouth & Portland Borough – Addendum (September 2020)*'. There is, therefore, significant conflict between this policy and policy W05 whose primary purpose is to protect these wildlife corridors.
140. Design – We note that the build element of the scheme is divided into two parcels separated by a dry valley. Is the intention to link the sites through this dip or for the two communities to be physically separated?
141. Heritage - The Conservation Team advise. The site is approximately 280m west of a grade II listed building. In addition, the site is approximately 760m northwest of the Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site. However, it is noted that there is existing development between the site and the listed building / World Heritage Site. Policy W20 states that the site will be adequately screened, including through the retention of hedgerows, in a manner consistent with the character of the area. On heritage grounds, no objection, in principle, subject to a future development scheme's adoption of appropriately designed mitigative measures.

W21 Land at Redlands Farm

Land at Redlands Farm is allocated for residential development of approximately 150 dwellings. The proposal also includes the transfer of 9.1ha of land to an appropriate body for public open space.

142. Availability – A 'call for sites' process was carried out between September and October 2021 to identify land which would be suitable for allocation. Land at Redlands Farm was submitted to Weymouth Town Council through this process and is therefore considered available.
143. Achievability —This site has been subject to viability testing prepared by Bailey Venning Associates (November 2024). Paragraphs 6.38 – 6.345 and Annex 4 discuss Land at Redlands Farm and conclude that the site is viable when Residual Land Value is compared against Benchmark Land Value. The assessment also conducted sensitivity testing (annex 4b) with a 5% reduction, requiring the "reduced the level of affordable housing until viability was regained and found that the tipping point was at 41%.

Policy criteria

144. Criterion 1 / Site Capacity – We would question the estimated site capacity for 150 new homes without a thorough understanding of the site constraints.
145. Site Access / Criterion 4 (iv) – The provision of appropriate safe vehicular and pedestrian access via Wyke Oliver Road should be confirmed with the Highways Development Team. We note that there is potential to access the site from

Dorchester Road as well as from the Wey Valley development site to the north including through the provision of safe and convenient cycle and footpath routes.

146. Criterion 4 (iv) - The Transport Planning Team have indicated that Paragraph iv. should also refer to safe cycle access in addition to vehicular and pedestrian access. The Highways Development Team suggested to include 'a Transport Assessment/Travel Plan'
147. Criterion 4 (xii) – A small part of the site is susceptible to surface water flooding. A drainage strategy will be required to manage flooding in this area and ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere.
148. Criterion 6 – This criterion proposes to allocate the remaining land not identified for housing as open space (9.1 ha) and for this land to be transferred to an appropriate body for the purpose of public use and nature conservation along with a commuted sum to cover future maintenance. It is noted that Policy W02 criterion 3 proposes to support this land as a nature conservation area, referred to as Wey Valley Meadows.
149. To avoid any contradictions between the two policies our advice at W02 was to delete criterion 3 and instead discuss this matter at W21, Criterion 6. The phrase 'wildlife site' was also preferred over area of nature conservation which sounds like existing designations. In this context, it is suggested the allocation should refer to both open space and / or wildlife area in the first sentence. We also queried the extent of the proposed wildlife area which does not align with the land proposed for transfer?
150. The second sentence of the of criterion 6 refer to actions that would be better located in the supporting text. Further details regarding the future land transfer would be helpful, for example is the land to be managed by the Town Council or a community group? Paragraph 9.76 refers to agreement with the Local Planning Authority however we are not aware of any such discussions having taken place. Details of these discussion should be tabled, or the reference deleted.
151. Paragraph 9.73 - Definitive Map Team request "network of cycleways and footpaths" is replaced with "network of cycleways and public rights of way" or ""network of cycleways and public footpaths & bridleways"

Suitability (other site constraints)

152. Green Infrastructure Network - Policy ENV3 applies to Important Open Gaps and land of local landscape importance and explains "Development that would cause harm to the green infrastructure network or undermine the reasons for an area's inclusion within the network will not be permitted unless clearly outweighed by other considerations."
153. Heritage – The Conservation Team advise. The site is within 250m of three grade II listed buildings to the south, and within 400m of eight grade II listed buildings to the north. It is also approximately 240m from scheduled monument 'Humpty Dumpty Field, Radipole' to the south. In addition, the site is adjacent to Radipole Conservation Area to the south, and approximately 75m from Nottingham Conservation Area to the north. Policy W21 states that the site will be adequately screened, including through the retention of hedgerows, in a manner consistent with the character of the area. Additionally, the policy indicates that the height of dwellings will mostly be no more than 2 storeys in height (rising to 3 storeys occasionally) and should protect and enhance the setting of the nearby conservation area. N.B. The extent is situated within an Article 4 Direction extent. On heritage grounds, no

objection, in principle, subject to a future development scheme's adoption of appropriately designed mitigative measures.

W22 Land at Beverley Road, Littlemoor

Land at Beverley Road is allocated for residential development of approximately 25 dwellings.

154. Availability – A 'call for sites' process was carried out between September and October 2021 to identify land which would be suitable for allocation. Land at Beverley Road was submitted to Weymouth Town Council through this process and is therefore considered available.
155. Achievability – This site has been subject to viability testing prepared by Bailey Venning Associates (November 2024). Land at Beverley Road is discussed between paragraphs 6.46 – 6.59 and Annex 5. Under the methodology suggested, viability was not met without further assumptions. The 5% sensitivity testing (Annex 5b) once again considered the implications of affordable housing provision, reaching viability "At that point the site would provide 15 open market homes and 9 affordable homes (36%)".

Policy criteria

156. Criterion 2 (ii) – We note that this is a steeply sloping site, and the design of any scheme will need to reflect this constraint. The AECOM report also noted that "The ground rises quite steeply to the south of the site, and residential development may require earthworks, potentially increasing the costs of development."
157. Criterion 2 (viii) – Does the town council have confidence that a suitable access can be formed into the site from the car parking serving homes on Beverley Road? Paragraph 9.78 states that 'it is likely' that an access could be achieved.
158. Criterion 4 / Heritage – The Conservation Team advise. No relevant, identified heritage constraints, no objection on heritage grounds.

Suitability (Other constraints)

159. Flooding – The land to the north of the site is susceptible to surface water flooding. A drainage strategy will be required to manage flooding in this area and ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Paragraph 9.80 refers to a requirement for a Sustainable Urban Drainage System however this is not specific in the policy text.
160. Loss of incidental open space – The AECOM site assessment noted "Development of the site would lead to the loss of undesignated green space, the majority of which falls within an area identified as a Higher Potential Ecological --Network in the Local Plan. It may also result in the loss of mature trees within this green space. On the site visit it was observed that the green space is well-used by local residents and dog walkers to access the PRow network to the south."
161. Footpath link - The Transport Planning Team recommend that the policy should be clearer about enhancing the link to Upwey Station and NCN26. The proposed layout suggests building right over the existing path which cuts diagonally across the site. The reason this is diagonal is that the site is on a significant gradient: moving the alignment of this path to be perpendicular would make it even steeper and unusable, plus its status is unclear with a tight chicane arrangement under the buildings which needs to be revised as it is currently inaccessible.

W23A, B and C Lodmoor Old Tip

162. Land at Lodmoor Old Tip has been divided into three parcels of land. The middle section 23B and southern area 23C are allocated for leisure development. The northern parcel 23A is proposed for an employment use comprising small industrial units or workshops.
163. The relevant Local Plan policy is WEY8.
164. Availability - The three sites are owned by Dorset Council. The Assets Team have written to object to employment allocation W23A. These sites could be considered for leisure or recreational use, but the household / waste recycling centre would need to be retained. Site W23A is therefore not available for the proposed use. The Assets Team have however confirmed that Dorset Council could support site W23B & W23C coming forward for leisure, recreation, or transport use.
165. Achievability – The middle section of the sites (W23B) has been subject to viability testing prepared by Bailey Venning Associates (November 2024) on the basis of 90 residential units. The Plan has since been amended to remove the residential use.
- Policy criteria
- Policy W23A: Lodmoor Old Tip – North Section
166. Criterion 2 iv) & v) – Both criteria refer to limiting the height of development to a single storey and could be combined.
- Policy W23B Lodmoor Old Tip – Mid-section
167. Approach – The policy cross references to Local Plan Policy WEY8 and consequently can be deleted, as unnecessary.
- Policy W23C: Lodmoor Old Tip South Section
168. Criterion 2 iii) & iv) - As residential use has been removed from policy W23C the reference to housing should be removed from criteria 2 iv and viii. We do not consider that this is a suitable site for homes.
169. Criterion 2 vi): The Highways Development Team suggest to include: “any proposed improvements to access will be subject to robust analysis to ensure, if necessary, it is justified and delivered in accordance with latest guidance”
170. Paragraph 9.87 - The Highways Development Team note: Weymouth Bay Avenue is considered to have an appropriate road width. (approx. 7.3 metres wide).
- Suitability (other constraints)
171. Proposed uses - Sites W23B & W23C are located within the WDW&P Local Plan, WEY8 Lodmoor Gateway. Site W32A is located outside this policy area.
172. This policy states that “*Land at Lodmoor will be permitted for tourism, low key recreation and ancillary uses, appropriate to its gateway location and its proximity to sensitive sites. Any development will be expected to be of a high quality design and relate positively to the adjoining public areas. A comprehensive approach may be required to ensure that development complies with the aims of the Weymouth Town Centre Strategy.*”
173. This policy permits tourism, low key recreation and ancillary uses.
174. Heritage – The Conservation Team advises. No relevant, identified heritage constraints, no objection on heritage grounds.
175. Minerals and Waste - Weymouth Household Recycling Centre and Lodmoor Composting are both identified as ‘Safeguarded Waste Sites’ within the Waste Plan (2019).

176. Policy 24 of the Waste Plan states *“The loss of or impact on Safeguarded Waste Facilities, through redevelopment or change of use, either on the site or within the Waste Consultation Area, for any purposes other than waste management will generally be considered unacceptable and will be resisted by the Waste Planning Authority, unless there would be no adverse impact on the current or future operation of the safeguarded waste facility or one of the circumstances set out in criteria (b) to (d) are met.*
- *a. The proposal incorporates careful design, layout, and mitigation to ensure that there are no unacceptable impacts from the waste site on the non-waste development; or*
 - *b. redevelopment of the site or loss of the infrastructure would form part of a strategy or scheme that has wider social and/or economic benefits that outweigh the retention of the site or the infrastructure for waste use;*
 - *or the Waste Planning Authority should be satisfied that:*
 - *c. a suitable replacement waste management site or infrastructure has been identified and permitted; or*
 - *d. there is no longer an identified need for the facility or site across any form of waste arising in the Plan area”.*
177. As Neighbourhood Plan policies cannot include ‘excluded development’ (Localism Act 2011, Sections 61J & 61K) such as county matters (mineral extraction and waste development), nationally significant infrastructure or any other matters set out in Section 61K of the Town and County Planning Act 1990 the Neighbourhood Plan is severely limited on what can be changed in this location even if one of the circumstances (b) to (d) could be met.
178. The Commercial Waste and Strategy team have provided specific comments on each of the three sections (North, Mid and South).

W23A Lodmoor Old Tip – North Section

179. This proposed area is located on the closed former Lodmoor Landfill Site. The December 2024 Plan has identified the presence of the pumping station to this location and the need for its retention. There are also site-specific drainage channels and associated monitoring points (from the HRC, and Eco sites also) – these would have been originally engineered using the closed landfill site’s proposed end use – that of an open space. Any development, including the introduction of areas of hard standing, may cause the water and leachate from the filled area to act in a differing way. Consequently, a full study of the existing system and proposed improvements would be required to be identified within the Policy. (This comment would apply to both W23B and W23C).

In addition, further consultation is required with the Regulator (Wessex Water) to ensure proposed developments can continue to comply with the current Discharge Consent.

W23B – Lodmoor Old Tip – Mid Section

180. This proposed area is located on the closed former Lodmoor Landfill Site. It includes the Household Recycling Centre (HRC) and the waste transfer station leased to Eco Sustainable Solutions. The HRC is popular and well used by residents, and Dorset Reclaim making drop offs from the Bulky Item collection service they operate on behalf of Dorset Council. There are no plans to relocate the HRC and no alternative site has been identified. The waste transfer station is an essential piece of

infrastructure that allows Dorset Council to direct deliver green waste from the kerbside collections and street sweepings, again, there are no intentions to revoke that lease or to relocate operations. Indeed, should these activities be moved from the location, it may result in contractual matters being breached, and Dorset Council being affected by significant additional costs and resources to retain the service at its current level.

It is important to highlight that within the December 2024 Plan, on page 105, the Waste Transfer Station leased to Eco Sustainable Solutions is referred to as a temporary grass cutting storage. This is incorrect.

W23C Lodmoor Old Tip – South Section

181. This proposed area is located on the closed former Lodmoor Landfill Site. As mentioned above, there are no intentions to relocate both the HRC and the waste transfer site. Continued access shall be available for vehicular access to these sites (for residents, contractors and Dorset Council Operations vehicles). Presently, these sites are constrained within Planning Permission and Environmental Permits with regards to hours of operation and amounts / types of wastes received on site. Legislation on the disposal of waste is continually changing, resulting in local authorities being required to accept and separate differing waste streams, or collection in differing ways to manage wastes. Therefore, the way in which the sites operate will alter. Whilst Dorset council will endeavour not to cause annoyance to nearby noise / odour and dust sensitive locations, the operations of these site may intensify.
182. SSSI impact - The NET does not consider the Lodmoor Old Tip site to be a suitable location for employment use. This area of land provides supporting habitat for the Lodmoor Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), provides an important buffer between Radipole SSSI and has intrinsic value for the habitats and species it supports. It is our view that these policies should not be extended to allow for uses other than those already permitted by the WDW&P Local Plan, due to the potential for significant impacts on a nationally designated wildlife site.
183. Lodmoor Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located to the northern and eastern sides of the site. Natural England have previously suggested that homes positioned directly adjacent to the SSSI are likely to give rise to adverse impacts. It may be difficult to mitigate or avoid these adverse effects. Policy ENV2 iii) advises *“Development that is likely to have an adverse effect upon nationally designated wildlife sites will not be permitted unless the benefits, in terms of other objectives, clearly outweigh the impacts on the special features of the site and broader nature conservation interests and there is no alternative acceptable solution.”* Any proposal would potentially and unavoidably, be contrary to this policy. At present it is unclear if housing is proposed as it has been removed from one part of the policy but not the other part.
184. It should also be noted that development of the Mid and North sections of the Lodmoor Old Tip site is likely to result in the loss of much of the mosaic semi-natural habitats present which will require compensation, and a minimum 10% net gain under the Environment Act. It is unlikely that any development would be able to achieve this on-site and therefore off-site compensation would need to be found. Given the nature of that habitats present, and the fact that the site lies within an existing Ecological Network, this is likely to incur a significant cost which should be considered when choosing whether to allocate the site for development. The South Section, that primarily covers a permanent and temporary car park, does not support the same mosaic of habitats as the Mid and North sections and could be considered.

185. Climate change / coastal change - The site is not subject to flood risk, but the land around the site is affected by surface water and river flooding. The council's drainage engineer (Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)) has also explained that there is a complex interaction between the freshwater drainage catchment and the coastline. They have suggested that high tides (which are in part regulated by valves under Preston Beach Road) can 'lock' flood water arising from rivers/surface water in this area behind Preston Beach Road. They have also advised that there are surface water flooding issues in proximity to a number of drainage channels which run around the site and in neighbouring streets to the west.
186. The Shoreline Management Plan (Durlston Head to Rame Head: Shoreline management plans - Dorset Council) indicates that the long-term management objective for this section of coastline (referred to as 'Policy Unit 5g15') is for 'managed re-alignment'. This means that the site's defences will allow the shoreline position to move backwards (or forwards) with management to control or limit movement.
187. While not directly subject to flood risk, we have reservations that it may be very difficult to manage surface water run-off from the site without increasing flood risk elsewhere and that in the future the site itself may be subject to flooding (taking account of climate change) or be affected by coastal change through managed re-alignment of the coastline.
188. The town council should consider the findings from the Level 2 SFRA which will include assessments of forecast future flood extents that make allowances for climate change. As the existing modelling already suggests that surface water and river flooding extents surround the site it may be difficult to demonstrate that safe access into and from the site can be achieved in the event of a flood (particularly when climate change allowances are applied to current assessments of risk).
189. Contamination – The Commercial Waste and Strategy team state that this proposed area is located on the closed former Lodmoor Landfill Site. There are also site-specific drainage channels and associated monitoring points (from the HRC, and Eco sites also), these would have been originally engineered using the closed landfill site's proposed end use, that of an open space. Any development, including the introduction of areas of hard standing, may cause the water and leachate from the filled area to act in a differing way. Consequently, a full study of the existing system and proposed improvements would be required to be identified within the Draft Policy.
190. Investigations would be required to determine whether the land is contaminated. If contamination is revealed, remediation would be needed to address this issue. Remediation measures can be costly and often effect development viability.
191. Consultation - The Commercial Waste and Strategy team have advised. Due to the potential impact on public health and the environment any development to the closed Lodmoor Landfill Site would have, the Environmental Protection Team should also be consulted as Regulators, as will the Property and Assets team due to the leases associated with the land and Countryside Services for the impact on the amenity.

W24: Land at Jubilee Sidings

Land at Jubilee Sidings is allocated for mixed use development. The proposal will provide residential (particularly social housing) and employment or training use. The relevant WDWPLP policies are WEY1 and WEY3 Station Area and Swannery Car Park.

192. Availability – A ‘call for sites’ process was carried out between September and October 2021 to identify land which would be suitable for allocation. Land at Jubilee Sidings was submitted to Weymouth Town Council through this process and is therefore considered available.
193. Achievability – This site has been subject to viability testing prepared by Bailey Venning Associates (November 2024). Paragraphs 8.3-8.20 discuss a proposed mixed-use allocation at Jubilee sidings. Although the initial assessment (annex 8) set out a low but positive value with further working assumptions concluded a modest but positive land value. Alternatively a scheme for 100% affordable housing maybe more successful as a result of receiving grant funding.

Basic conditions

194. Policy WEY3 states *“The station area will be developed as a transport hub, including a mix of retail, commercial businesses and residential to help improve the first impressions of the area through the introduction of positive and active frontage development and creation of a high quality public realm.”* Policy W24 broadly reflects this aspiration and can be supported.

Policy Criteria

195. Criterion 2 (i) – Reference to ‘particularly social housing’ is considered imprecise. A policy test should be clear and precise.
196. Criterion 3 – A cross reference to other policies in the Plan is considered unnecessary.
197. Criterion 4 – There are no specific references to future flood risks, i.e. flood extents with allowances for climate change, or the sequential or exceptions tests. It is not clear whether:
- the sequential and exceptions tests have been applied to the current allocation
 - whether the TC has explored the opportunities to reduce the causes and impacts of flood risk as part preparing their plan
 - there is confidence that development will be safe over its lifetime (in particular the opportunities to form safe access to and from the site, and to evacuate during a flood)

Suitability (Other constraints)

198. Heritage – The Conservation Team advise. The proposed site allocation is situated between, but outside of, two conservation area extents, *Weymouth Town Centre* and *Lodmoor Hill*. However, based on the extant industrialised nature of the localised area, we confirm that there are no relevant, identified heritage constraints, no objection on heritage grounds.

W25: Mount Pleasant Old Tip

Land at Mount Pleasant is allocated for a transport interchange facility, leisure use and renewable energy generation. The site is owned by Dorset Council.

199. Park & Ride - Mount Pleasant is identified as a proposed strategic bus-based Park and Ride location. Local Transport Plan 3, policy LTP H-4 explains that “Strategic Park & Ride capacity will be developed at appropriate locations, where adequate demand exists, to assist sustainable transport movement to and from town centres. The implementation of individual sites will take into account impacts on the environment and the surrounding road and bus networks, in addition to financial sustainability. Implementation of new sites will be phased in conjunction with reviews of town centre car parking and measures to influence travel behaviour, particularly for commuter trips.”
200. The Transport team add “The Park and Ride is inadequate and requires improved facilities – the Dorset BSIP (Bus Service Improvement Plan) includes plans for a dedicated site which would include toilets and EV charging, served by a fleet of electric buses. This would have the effect of reducing the number of vehicles circulating in the town centre while looking for parking – particularly in the tourist season which stretches now from Easter through to the end of October. Although Dorset did not receive BSIP funding, the upgrade of the site is still an aim and will be progressed when funding is available.”
201. Availability – The Assets Team have confirmed that “Dorset Council supports this site coming forward for employment, leisure or transport as part of the enhancement to the Park & Ride to create a multi-modal mobility hub and the encouragement of mass transport.”
202. On the 14 March 2025 a Planning Application (P/FUL/2025/01132) was validated for the southern part of the site for “Use of land as highways depot, including vehicle parking, training area, materials and highways waste storage, erection of industrial storage building and electric vehicle charging.”

Policy criteria

203. Criterion 4 – The Transport Planning Team request that policy should clarify the abbreviation of “PEV”.
204. Criterion 5 - The Renewable and low carbon energy PPG includes useful guidance relating to renewable energy developments, including guidance specific to solar farm developments, their normally temporary nature, and the potential to mitigate visual impacts.
205. Criterion 6 ii) The site is adjacent to Lodmoor SSSI & SNCI, requiring consultation with the Council’s Natural Environment Team and Natural England.
206. Criterion 6 iv) - Leisure is a town centre use that is subject to both the impact (proposals greater than 1000sqm) and sequential test, except for small-scale rural development.
207. Criterion 6 vi) This criterion seeks to retain the running track in the overflow car park or ensure that equivalent capability is provided nearby. This was a matter of local concern at the previous Regulation 14 stage.

Suitability (Other constraints)

208. Heritage – The Conservation Team confirm. No relevant, identified heritage constraints, no objection on heritage grounds.

209. The potential for contamination - Investigations would be required to determine whether the site is contaminated. If this reveals contamination, remediation would be needed to address this issue. Remediation measures can be costly and often affect development viability.
210. Highways - The Highways Development Team suggest to include a requirement in the policy for "A Transport Statement/Travel Plan".
211. Minerals and Waste – The Minerals and Waste Team confirm this proposed area is located on the closed former Landfill Site. Any change of use or increase in intensity may cause adverse effects upon the gases and or leachate activity within the closed landfill site or potentially impact upon the integrity of the filled area's cap – where it is present. There may be a requirement to review the site-specific drainage system and monitoring programme also.

W26: Self-Build and Custom-Build-Housing

This policy seeks to encourage self-build and custom build housing in Weymouth. The Policy has regards to NPPF, Paragraph 63 and the requirement to meet the needs of people wishing to commission or build their own homes, is in general conformity with the Adopted Local Plan spatial strategy set out in Policy SUS2 and can be supported.

W27: Community Housing Schemes

212. NPPF paragraph 73 states "Local planning authorities should support the development of exception sites for community-led development (as defined in Annex 2) on sites that would not otherwise be suitable as rural exception sites."
213. Paragraph 73 continues "These sites should be on land which is not already allocated for housing and should:
 - a) comprise community-led development that includes one or more types of affordable housing as defined in Annex 2 of this Framework. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local planning authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding; and
 - b) be adjacent to existing settlements, proportionate in size to them, not compromise the protection given to areas or assets of particular importance in this Framework, and comply with any local design policies and standards."
214. Approach - Although the general objective of policy W27 is supported it is apparent that this draft policy has not been updated to reflect the National Policy requirements set out in NPPF, paragraph 73 and Annex 2. The concern is that the phrasing of Policy W27 is not in general conformity with National Policy and is likely to lead to confusion. For example, Policy W27 does not:
 - a) refer to 'community-led housing' or the national definition in Annex 2 or cross reference to the definition of affordable housing, also in Annex 2.
 - b) refer to a proportion of market housing where essential to enable delivery of affordable housing.
 - c) refer to sites being located adjacent to existing settlements, proportionate in size to them, the protection given to areas an asset of particular importance or local design policies and standards.

215. The policy text should either be updated to reflect National Policy or the policy deleted.

W28: Specialist Housing Provision

The most relevant paragraph in the NPPF is paragraph 63 which requires the housing needs of different groups to be assessed and reflected in planning policies.

216. Approach - Planning practice guidance (PPG) Housing for older and disabled people - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk), Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 63-006-20190626 suggests Plans could “provide indicative figures or a range for the number of units of specialist housing for older people needed across the plan area throughout the plan period.”
217. The Weymouth Housing Needs Assessment (November 2024) paragraph 6.5.1 notes “There are currently 1,055 units of specialist accommodation for older people in Weymouth, suggesting that current provision is in the region of 154 units per 1,000 of the 75+ population (a common measure of specialist housing supply).”
218. PPG, paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 63-010-20190626 explains that there are different types of specialist housing designed to meet the diverse needs of older people, which can include: age-restricted general market housing, retirement living or sheltered housing, extra care housing or housing-with-care and residential care homes and nursing homes, however this list is not definitive.
219. Specialist housing provision - The Weymouth Housing Needs Assessment (November 2024) section 6.2 seeks to estimate the need for specialist housing with some form of additional care for older people by bringing together data on population projections, rates of disability, and what tenure of housing the current 55-75 cohort occupy. This was sense-checked using a toolkit based on national research and assumptions. Paragraph 6.5.4 concludes “These two methods of estimating the future need in Weymouth produce a range of 891 to 1,270 specialist accommodation units that might be required during the Neighbourhood Plan period.”
220. Care Homes – The Weymouth Housing Needs Assessment (November 2024) has also estimated the likely need for care home accommodation over the plan period using the HLIN SHOP toolkit. Based on these rates, applied to the projected growth in the older population, it is estimated that in 2038 an additional 231 residential care beds and 160 nursing care beds may be required in Weymouth to meet the needs of this increase in older population.
221. In summary, Policy W28 Specialist Housing Provision, its supporting evidence in the form of the Housing Needs Assessment (2024) and targets for specialist housing provision, care bed and nursing care beds can be supported.

W29: Houses in Multiple Occupation

222. The relevant WDWPLP policy is HOUS4. The policy seeks to restrict Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) within Weymouth. The Weymouth Housing Needs Assessment (November 2024) discusses HMOs within Chapter 8.

What are HMOs

223. Government defines HMOs as “a property rented out by at least 3 people who are not from 1 household but share facilities like the bathroom and kitchen”³. The planning meaning of the C4 Use Class was aligned with the definition of an HMO in the Housing Act 2004. The full legal definition of an HMO under the Housing Act 2004, states a building, or part of a building, is an HMO if it meets one of the three tests (the standard build test, the self-contained flat test and the converted building test). [Housing Act 2004 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) [Shelter Legal England - House in multiple occupation \(HMO\) definition - Shelter England](#)
224. There are two use classes for HMOs, small HMOs up to 6 occupants is use class C4 and large HMOs over 6 occupants, which is sui generis. Planning permission is needed for a large HMO, over 6 occupants, which would be the subject of this policy. Any smaller HMO falls within use class C4.
225. Part 3 Class L of the GPDO allows for changes of use from use Class C3 to C4 (3 to 6 residents). The policy sets criteria on change of use applications, such as Class E, to C3 residential or C4 HMO or all uses to Large HMO that is sui generis use (7+ occupants).
226. Some properties require a license to be rented as an HMO. A licensed HMO constitutes 5 or more occupants sharing facilities and of which at least 1 occupant pays rent, which does not neatly align with the planning legislation.

Stock of HMOs in Weymouth

227. Census data for Dorset shows that in 2021 there were 169 HMOs. Of these, 119 were small HMOs (defined as 3 to 4 occupants) and 50 were large HMOs (defined as 5+ occupants). The Dorset HMO Register showed 93 licensed HMOs across Dorset in April 2024, considerably more than the 50 ‘large HMOs’ noted by the Census potentially due to the different dates or definitions. Of the 93 licensed HMOs in Dorset, 57 had addresses in Weymouth.
228. Paragraph 8.1.12 notes that “Without significant additional work outside the scope of a neighbourhood Housing Needs Assessment it is not possible to estimate the number of smaller HMOs that are unlicensed in Weymouth.”
229. As of April 2025, there are 87 licenced HMOs of which 57 are in Weymouth. In addition to this information, it is known that 26 licensed HMOs are occupied by 5 or 6 persons meaning that they did not require planning permission to change from a C3 use class but would have needed planning permission from any other use class. A total of 21 HMOs meet the planning definition of large HMOs in a Sui generis use class meaning that they would have needed planning permission and therefore would have been subject to this policy. This data also means that there has been no change in the number of HMOs since the HNA study was undertaken last year.

Potential impacts of HMOs

³ [House in multiple occupation licence - GOV.UK](#)

230. An important distinction to make when discussing HMOs is the difference between HMOs that students and young professionals occupy, and HMOs used to house those in need of urgent accommodation or due to constrained housing choices. It is assumed that the majority of HMOs in Weymouth fall into the latter category due to the town not being close enough to a university or large residential student population to experience significant demand for student accommodation.
231. Paragraph 8.1.27 explains “There are a variety of potential impacts associated with high concentrations of HMOs and their prevalence in some coastal areas especially. These may include noise and anti-social behaviour, issues with the general streetscape (e.g. vandalism, litter, parking issues), pressure on services (e.g. social care), and reduced community cohesion due to higher population churn than in the mainstream private rented sector.”

HMO Mitigation and Management

232. The Housing Needs Assessment report notes the options available to the Steering Group for managing HMOs in Weymouth via the Neighbourhood Plan are likely to be limited. The full chapter outlines the management options available to local authorities with the following two most relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Planning Policy – local authorities can implement policies in their Local Plan that restrict the granting of planning permission for HMOs in certain areas.
 - Article 4 – currently a change of use from Class C3 (dwelling house) to Class C4 (HMO) falls under Permitted Development and therefore does not require planning permission. For large HMOs (containing more than 6 unrelated individuals) that fall within ‘sui generis’, planning permission is required. Article 4 Directions can be implemented by local planning authorities to remove existing Permitted Development rights that allow the change of use from Class C3 to Class C4, meaning planning permission would be required for houses to become HMOs (occupied by between 3 and 6 unrelated individuals).
233. The report however warns that “Increased planning controls must be balanced to ensure not too strict a control approach is taken which could further limit the housing options for people that already have very few choices in the market. Any management options for HMOs must take into consideration the overall strategy to tackle homelessness, empty properties, and residents with potential multiple complex needs (e.g. addiction, mental health problems, care leavers, referrals from the probation service).

Approach

234. Paragraph 8.1.18 in the housing needs report advises “It is also important to note that HMOs provide an essential role in the private rented sector for households with limited housing options. They tend to provide a cheaper alternative to traditional private renting, especially for households unable to access social or affordable rented housing through the local authority or a Registered Provider.”
235. Paragraph 8.1.19 continues “Challenges tend to arise when HMOs are poorly managed or where there are high concentrations of HMOs in particular geographic areas. Determining the condition or management conditions of HMOs would require further research to be undertaken by the Steering Group or Dorset Council as it is outside the scope of a Housing Needs Assessment.”

236. The Weymouth Housing Needs Assessment has set out issues to consider regarding the possible inclusion of a specific Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMO) policy, however, further research is required.
237. Further evidence should be gathered to justify this policy as there could be immediate implications for the local housing market if introduced without this knowledge. Any management options must also reflect the overall Dorset Council strategies to tackle homelessness, empty properties, and residents with potential multiple complex needs. Potentially looking at small HMOs or the level of planning applications received. Specifically, no evidence of harm has been presented to justify restricting the number of HMOs in this way. The supporting text notes that there is a higher concentration in parts of Weymouth, however, not that this concentration is harmful.

Policy criteria

238. Criterion 1 (i) This criterion seeks to prevent an over concentration of HMOs in any one area. Paragraph 9.142 clarifies “A high level is defined as already having more than one HMO within 100m of the application site.” This approach is considered to be very restrictive and maybe better phrased as a maximum percentage of HMOs. This could also be restricted to be within a given area, such as the LSOA's where the highest concentration occurs, as opposed to being the whole of the Weymouth NP area.
239. Criterion 1 (iv) - The Highways Development Team suggested to include the word ‘accessible’.
240. Criterion 1 (v) - The Highways Development Team suggest this could be replaced with “the proposal does not present a material harm to the transport network or to highway safety”
241. Criterion 2 - Permitted development rights allow a dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to change to a small HMO C4 (3-6 residents) without the need for planning permission. Many Class C4 HMOs would not be required to comply with this policy without an article 4 in place.

W30: Exception Site Development

Policy W30 introduces Community-led development, First Home and Rural Exception sites as acceptable forms of development outside Defined Development Boundaries (DDBs), subject to set criteria. NPPF, paragraph 82 supports rural exception sites that meet identified local needs. First Home Exception sites were introduced by the Written Ministerial Statement publish on 24 May 2021.

242. It is not clear which parts of the Policy apply solely to First Home Exception sites and which parts only apply to Rural Exception sites? Criterion 1 applies to Community-led development and First Home Exception sites⁴ and Criterion 2 to Rural Exception sites. Criterion 3-5 appear to apply to both types of exception site however criterion 3 refers to First Home schemes only and may be better added to the list in Criterion 1. It may be clearer to simply split the policy into two, with each policy dealing with the specific policy requirements.

⁴ NPPF (2024), Paragraph 76, Footnote 35. This exception site policy does not replace the First Homes exception site policy set out in the Affordable Homes Update Written Ministerial Statement, dated 24 May 2021, which remains extant policy.

W31: Principal Residence Requirements

The policy seeks to ensure that new builds are restricted to be the principal residence of the occupier in order to avoid second homes.

243. Approach - The policy has been reworded to cover only areas of Weymouth that have a significant number of second homes within the Melcombe Regis and Rodwell Medium Super Output Area (MSOA) as defined by the Office of National Statistics (ONS). However, the evidence to justify this is lacking in the supporting text and further information is needed to justify this policy.
244. The Weymouth Housing Needs Assessment (November 2024) considers the extent of second home ownership in Weymouth and related trends. In 2021 Weymouth contained 24,640 households and 26,828 dwellings, implying that there were 2,188 dwellings with no resident household. This means that 8.2% of dwellings had no usual residents.
245. For the policy to be acceptable the data or background information needs to back up the policy requirement. To justify the policy, there would have to be a significant percentage of second homes and vacant homes in an area. To understand what constitutes a significant number, previous case studies can be used.
246. The Chesil Bank Neighbourhood Plan adopted Policy CBNP3 holiday / second home restrictions. The area can be split into 3 areas, Portesham, Abbotsbury, Fleet and Langton Herring. The data indicated that 1 in 4 homes are in use as second homes or holiday lets in the area. Abbotsbury has 14.5% vacant homes and 28.6% second homes and Fleet and Langton Herring has 24.2% vacant homes and 18.9% second homes. In Portesham however the data only showed 8.3% vacant homes and 8.8% second homes. This figure was not considered significantly different to the rest of Dorset by the examiner to justify special measures. As a result, Portesham was excluded from the policy which only covers Abbotsbury, Fleet and Langton Herring, not the whole of Chesil Bank.
247. The evidence provided in the St Ives and Carbis Bay Neighbourhood Plan found that in 2011, 25% dwellings in the NDP area were not occupied by a resident household. Over this same period, housing stock in the NDP grew by 684 or 16%, but the resident population grew by only 270 or 2.4% and the number of resident households grew by less than 6%. The approach of restricting second homes was supported by the examiner but has come under scrutiny by developers in the area at appeal.
248. The Northumberland Local Plan (Policy HOU10) requires at least 20% of household spaces to have no usual resident in order for the policy to apply. Weymouth Neighbourhood Area is not close to meeting the criteria Northumberland Council sets, with MSOA E02004284 (18.0% empty dwellings) also falling below the threshold. The Housing Needs Assessment concludes it is not clear whether the Neighbourhood Plan could set a sub-area level principal residence policy and this is something that should be discussed in further detail with Dorset Council.
249. Based on the data, the areas of Weymouth with the largest number of second homes and vacant homes are in the centre of Weymouth. Weymouth Town, Melcombe Regis and Rodwell MSOA 044 (E022004284) has 5,063 households with 920 vacant (18%) and 190 second homes (3.75%). Weymouth Town, Melcombe Regis & Rodwell - E02004284 . The second homes figure is not significant, but when combined with vacant homes, the cumulative impact of these figures at 21.75% may be considered relevant at examination.

250. Table C on page 140 clearly outlines that there isn't an issue in the Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) of 044A, 044D and 044F to which the policy would apply, and consideration should be given to restricting this policy to the areas that are over 20% only.
251. The significant difference between Weymouth's figures and that of the other examples is the vacant and second homes percentages. In Weymouth's case the second homes figure is not significant, rather it is the vacant homes figure that is unusually high. The issue between the vacant and second homes needs to be investigated further to determine which occupation types need to be restricted. At present there is limited evidence to suggest that second homes is the main issue, rather the data suggests that it is vacant homes.
252. Although ONS state that vacant homes refer to unoccupied dwellings and are units of accommodation that have no usual residents. Some may be used by short-term residents or visitors as second homes, while some are truly vacant, that is, have no indication of being used as a second home and are not inhabited by short-term residents. As such it is difficult to discern and lacking in evidence as to whether it is truly vacant homes or that they are a form of holiday home that is causing the occupancy issues.
253. The issue of Second Homes was discussed in the Dorset Council Background Paper in support of the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan. The report found that Weymouth has one of the lowest percentages of second home ownership in Dorset with between 0.6% (Council Tax) to 1.5% (Electoral Roll) depending on the source of evidence. Of note is that the report recommends addressing the issue through council tax measures rather than through planning policy. From the 1st April 2025 Dorset Council has implemented a 100% premium on second homes in Dorset. This should be sufficient to mitigate any impacts of second homes although would not specifically deter them in the MSOA 044.
254. Viability – The accompanying Viability Report (Nov 2024) discusses this policy through paragraphs 3.16-3.26. Noting some of the potentially unintended consequences this policy could have on some forms of housing, for example attractive waterside properties that might be best suited as holiday apartments. In this context, Dorset Council as a major landowner in the area would have concerns should this policy apply to the waterfront development opportunities and the impact on the viability of the sites.

W32 Town Centre Car Parks

Policy W32 is supportive of the redevelopment of Town Centre Car Parks where adequate alternative off-road provision is shown to be available, peak demand can be catered for by a 'park and ride' scheme and the provision of sufficient parking for the operational requirements of the new development. Any proposals should meet identified needs and not increase traffic flow in the area.

255. Approach - The Transport Planning Team & Highways Development Team advise that this policy should be worded to enable the outcomes of the Weymouth Town Centre Masterplan, which is currently in the process of being updated, and Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan Policy W39. The redevelopment of town centre car parks will be a fundamental part of the plan for economic regeneration. Redevelopment of town centre car parks should be supported if there is a robust

analysis which demonstrates there is still sufficient car parking capacity to meet the needs of locals, visitors and businesses.

- 256. Viability – The supporting Viability Report discusses Policy W32 Town Centre Car Park at paragraphs 8.21 – 8.26. The consultant has considered that should the car parks be found to be surplus to requirements, that they will not have a benchmark land value. This is an interesting concept and should be explored further. In our view, the valuation of the site would be based on its existing use. Therefore, should the site be operational as a car park, although it may be identified as surplus to requirements, it is still a car park and would be valued as such.
- 257. Criterion i – This criterion considers alternative off-road provision should be available in appropriate locations. NPPF, paragraph 112 advises “In town centres, local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking so that it is convenient, safe and secure, alongside measures to promote accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.”
- 258. Criterion ii – This criterion is considered insufficiently flexible as there may be solutions other than other car parks and out of town park & ride scheme that address peak demand. The Transport Planning Team suggest the definition of the term “peak parking demand” in point ii. could be further defined.
- 259. Sustainable modes of travel - The Transport Planning Team suggest a further criteria point could be added to make the proposal demonstrate that it is prioritising sustainable modes of travel and provide genuine opportunities for people to travel without needing a car. This can help reduce the impact of motor vehicle traffic.

W33: Timings of Infrastructure

The relevant WDWPLP policies are COM1 and COM10 as well as paragraph 20 of the NPPF. The policy seeks to ensure that infrastructure is implemented appropriately in order to avoid strain on local services, etc.

- 260. Approach - The draft Policy reads as an objective rather than a decision-making tool and consequently maybe better located in the list of objectives. The delivery and phasing of infrastructure is usually negotiated on a site-by-site basis with the agreement of infrastructure providers. There are a wide range of factors that can influence what infrastructure is required and when. The CIL/S106 Team also questions how the policy differs from the adopted Local Plan position?
- 261. Community Infrastructure Levy - Policy COM1 states that “*Community infrastructure will be phased to come forward in advance of, or at the same time as the development when negotiated through planning obligations. When delivered through the Community Infrastructure Levy, such provision will be expected to take place as soon as reasonably practicable after the funds are collected.*” Policy W33, however, does not reference the levy but instead the infrastructure itself.
- 262. Terms - CIL/S106 Team note the policy introduces terms which make the requirements quite vague, e.g. ‘logically’, ‘unacceptable’. These terms will make it harder to enforce and measure performance.
- 263. Para 9.1.70 – CIL/S106 Team advise that it is not the purpose of development to address previous under-delivery of infrastructure. Additional infrastructure can only be secured to mitigate the impact of the new development not to solve existing problems. There is also contradiction in wording in this paragraph, saying more than adequate then inadequate in the next sentence.

264. Para 9.173 – CIL/S106 Team ask if the requirement in this paragraph is achievable? ‘Development proposals should include a realistic assessment of their impact on the existing local infrastructure, services and facilities and demonstrate how any such impacts will be addressed so as not to disbenefit existing residents and businesses or harm the natural or physical environment’. This requirement is however not referenced in the policy.
265. Para 9.174 – CIL/S106 Team confirm this is an incorrect date. DC became the charging authority in April 2019 (taking on the responsibility of charging schedules developed by predecessor councils). The CIL doesn’t always increase every year– it would be better to say ‘it is adjusted each year to take account of changes in indexation and may increase or decrease’. Not all qualifying development will have to pay the levy – due to the ability to secure relief/exemptions there will be a proportion that do not pay.
266. Para 9.175 - CIL/S106 Team queries if the neighbourhood plan covers infrastructure priorities? What are the objectives in relation to spending the CIL Neighbourhood Proportion money. This is even more important given that there will be an increase in the CIL Neighbourhood Proportion money. It is important that the Neighbourhood Plan sets out what it aims to achieve with this increase in CIL funds and provide a list of projects it intends to spend its CIL receipts on.

W34: Sustainable Development

Policies COM9 i), COM10 iii), ENV12 and ENV13 of the WDWPLP are relevant. Policy W34 encourages development to achieve high standards of environmental performance and design.

267. Criteria 2 i) and ii) - ‘integrated’ sustainable construction methods, and ‘energy conservation measures and renewable energy technology’ requirements are potentially onerous without evidence in terms of viability testing. Alternatively, the policy should add a final bullet point under Point 2, reading ‘where the above methods and materials create viability concerns, these should be demonstrated through a suitable appraisal.’
268. Criteria 2 i) and ii) are not clear, allow for ambiguity and, therefore, would not be effective. There is no further clarification around requirements relating to: Sustainable construction methods; Water conservation; SuDs; Permeable surfaces.
269. Criterion 2 ii) The policy stipulates that planning applications will be supported where ‘energy conservation measures and renewable energy technology predominate’. It is not clear what this might mean and how compliance or otherwise might be assessed through decision taking.
270. Criterion 2 iv) Building regulations currently require appropriate broadband connection [New build connectivity: information for developers - GOV.UK](#). Therefore, there is no need for this policy requirement.
271. Criterion 2 v) Highways Development Team suggest the word ‘accessible’ is included.
272. Criterion 3 and paragraph 9.182 - Links to Historic England guidance/publications are included, however, there remains little additional information in the supporting text around relevant measures for retrofitting and improving energy conservation.

273. Sustainable forms of travel - The Transport Planning Team suggest a further point could be added to the policy which states that proposals should demonstrate how they are promoting sustainable forms of travel to lower the number of carbon emissions from trips generated by the development.

Chapter 10: Jobs and the Local Economy

Chapter 10 explains that Weymouth is a seaside resort and one of the largest towns in the Dorset Unitary Area. The economy is, however, dominated by lower-paid employment and there is significant out commuting to Dorchester and other areas.

- 274. Paragraph 10.5 – While the information included at the end of the paragraph in relation to the Mount Pleasant Business Park is correct, I would note that this position has now been superseded by the grant of planning permission on the site for retail development (see P/FUL/2023/06930).
- 275. Paragraph 10.8 - No source/ref for data at para 10.8 (presume it's the census).

W35: Loss of Business Premises

The relevant WDWPLP policies are ECON1 and ECON3. Policy W35 seeks to resist the loss of business premises outside key employment sites.

- 276. Approach - Policy ECON3 of the local plan lists a number of circumstances in which the redevelopment of other employment sites can be considered but no such exceptions are applied by the neighbourhood plan policy. For example, Policy ECON3 would permit in principle the change of use of a non-key employment site where it would offer important community benefits (and subject to it not prejudicing the efficient and effective use of the remainder of the employment area). No such exception is made by W35. It is suggested that the Policy could go further by outlining these additional measures to bring it in line with ECON3.
- 277. Definition of Employment land - Draft Policy W35 does not define the 'employment land and premises' it applies to. Would any use that generated a job be considered acceptable?
- 278. 18 months marketing - The policy requires 'all reasonable steps', including appropriate and sustainable marketing to have been taken to let/sell the site for employment purposes for a period of 18 months. The supporting text clarifies that Weymouth is in a period of transition and 18 months is necessary to allow maximum retention of employment sites'. However, there is little other information provided on the evidence that will be sought to demonstrate that the applicant has made 'every effort' or the evidence that had helped define the length of the period prescribed by the policy. A shorter time frame such as 12 months is preferred. Detail should be given in the supporting text as to what might be considered 'appropriate' marketing. This should include details on the period it will be expected to be 'sustained' for i.e. if for the whole 12 months.
- 279. Thought should also be given to whether it is reasonable to require the demonstration that steps have been taken to let/sell the property where it can be otherwise adequately demonstrated that the employment use is not viable. Some flexibility should also be introduced into the marketing period of the policy. The addition of 'or other agreed period' at the end of the sentence would be helpful.
- 280. The CIL/S106 Team agree that the 18-month restriction on change of use of employment land and premises is too long a period. Businesses, owner/tenants will presumably be expected to keep paying business rates and other costs during this 18-month period, which could be seen as being unfair. Is there also a risk of premises being left empty for prolonged periods, with the added danger of damage and anti-social behaviour. We would recommend a 12-month marketing period.

281. The CIL/S106 Team also note that this approach could also impact the ability for applicants who apply for change of use, to qualify for and in-use credit for the building floor area for CIL purposes. Buildings must be in use for at least 6 months of the 3-year period up to planning permission being granted. If the employment use must cease for 18-months before they can even submit an application, then that automatically reduces the time down.
282. Paragraph 10.15 refers to Map 27 on page 98, however this map appears on page 140. This paragraph refers to there being 5ha of employment land approved at Mount Pleasant, but we are not sure this is correct? It also seems to contradict para 9.58 which states that "The key employment site allocated in the Local Plan has been eroded by retail development leaving only 0.7ha remaining undeveloped".

W36: New Business Development

The relevant WDWPLP Policy is ECON1 and paragraph 4.2.3 which discuss the expansion of employment sites. Policy ECON1 ii supports proposals for live/work development in locations suitable for open market residential development. NPPF Chapter 6 Building a strong, competitive economy is also relevant. Policy W36 seeks to encourage business uses on brownfield sites, opportunities on greenfield land and live/work units in residential areas.

283. Criterion 1 (iii) only supports development where it does not have 'cumulative negative impacts on highway safety and the local transport network'. However, this would seem to go further than the requirements of Local Plan Policy COM7.
284. Criterion 1 (iv) specifically refers to the provision of retail uses and seeks to limit such development where it would result in an over-provision in the locality. While there is a general requirement for proposals to be in conformity with other relevant policies of the development plan, it would be prudent to specifically highlight somewhere that many commercial uses, such as retail, are also considered town centre development and that there may be additional considerations in this regard. For example, 'over-provision' would not be a planning matter in a town centre location. The policy and text as drafted makes no reference to the requirement for retail and other town centre uses to follow a sequential approach in terms of location.
285. Criterion 2 – The proposed criteria reflect Local Plan Policy ECON1 (i) and can be supported.
286. Criterion 3 - The neighbourhood plan supports 'proposals to facilitate homeworking'. The explanatory text indicates that this support is limited to an extension of an existing dwelling or small-scale development in its curtilage, however, the policy text itself does not impose any such limitations (it currently reads though it might support the development of a new live-work unit). Would a proposal for a significant residential extension or outbuilding be supported if it were to facilitate office space? Is 'homeworking' taken to mean potentially any business that is operated by an individual who also resides at the same premises? What about a B&B or a shop?
287. Criterion 4 – It is not clear on why these specific assessments have been highlighted. There may also be others that could be of potential relevance; other heritage impacts, traffic, landscape, biodiversity etc?
288. Paragraph 10.21 - The explanatory text talks about 'supporting new business development that can increase the range of local job opportunities' but there is no

clarity on the uses which might be supported under this policy. For example, would tourist accommodation be considered acceptable?

W37: Mixed-Use Employment Schemes

Policy W37 is supportive of mixed-use schemes comprised of residential and business uses. The relevant WDWPLP Policies are ECON1 & ECON2.

- 289. Approach – It is unclear how this policy would interact with draft Policy WNP35 concerning the ‘loss of business premises’.
- 290. Criterion i – This criterion requires a mix and balance of uses that is consistent with the needs and character of the locality. Paragraph 10.31 explains that 30% of the previous number of jobs on the site is considered to be a reasonable target for employment and 50% affordable homes for residential development. This is significantly less than the adopted local plan policy ECON2 paragraph 4.3.4 position, where on non-key sites mixed-use development is considered through an intensification of uses and redevelopment is expected to retain an equivalent number of jobs.
- 291. Criterion iii - The policy refers to retail uses and should, therefore, refer to the need for compliance with national policy on town centre uses and sequential/impact tests etc.
- 292. Criterion v - The policy’s approach to replacement and reconstruction is not clear. The first sentence talks about the ‘redevelopment of buildings and sites’ but this criterion states ‘where appropriate conversion opportunities are taken to eliminate the need for complete reconstruction’. If there are no appropriate opportunities other than complete reconstruction is this permitted? As the policy applies to development within the DDB you would expect a replacement/reconstruction to generally be acceptable in principle subject to the usual planning considerations?
- 293. Paragraph 10.29 - We are not clear what document (‘The Dorset Strategic Economic Strategy’) is being referred to? Dorset Council has produced an Economic Growth Strategy. The LEP has produced a Strategic Economic Plan as well as an Investment Prospectus. It could very well be referring to another document – maybe a reference as a footnote might provide clarity?
- 294. Paragraph 10.29 refers to a number of mixed-use town centre redevelopment sites with ‘major employment opportunities’. However, in keeping with the other neighbourhood plan policies, ‘employment’ is not defined. Consequently, it’s difficult to see how these aspirations relate to the expectations for these sites in the adopted local plan and the Weymouth Town Centre Masterplan SPD (which tend to be focused on the provision of retail and other town centre commercial uses rather than conventional employment).
- 295. Paragraph 10.31 - How will previous job numbers be assessed in the case of vacant or underused sites? A requirement for 50% affordable housing should be justified by viability evidence.

W38: Higher & Further Education & Skills Provision

NPPF paragraphs 20 and 99 are of relevance as is Policy COM6 of the WDWPLP. The policy seeks in principle support for higher and further education and to encourage Higher Education provision and skills, particularly within green industries.

296. Criterion 1 (i-iv) – These criteria are considered appropriate.

W39: Weymouth Town Centre

The relevant WDWPLP policy is WEY1 Weymouth Town Centre Strategy and NPPF chapter 7 Ensuring the vitality of town centres. The policy seeks to support Weymouth Town Centre and its changing role.

297. Approach - The drafted policy references local plan policy and the masterplan (adopted as supplementary planning document) and appears to be in general conformity with both local plan policies and the masterplan.

298. Criterion 1 – Should refer to Map 28 rather than Map 27.

299. Criterion 2 iv) Dorset Council is supportive of residential development in town centre locations, however, as drafted the policy requires residential development to be considered in all instances “and provide housing”. As residential development may not be appropriate in all circumstances (such as a major retail scheme) it is suggested this criterion is deleted or redrafted. The phrase ‘significant proportion of affordable homes’ is also considered imprecise. Policy W18 Affordable Housing already sets out a more precise target of 35% affordable homes for brownfield sites.

300. Criterion 4 - In which circumstances would the underused floor space be considered for alternative use? Is it certain locations, after a certain timeframe? Do they need to have a marketing strategy that meets certain criteria?

301. Criterion 6 – Reference to the need to assess impacts on the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets is welcomed.

Weymouth Town Centre Masterplan Refresh

302. Dorset Council has committed to refreshing the Weymouth Town Centre Masterplan (2015) Weymouth Town Centre Masterplan - Dorset Council. Although initial work had commenced at the time of Plan submission in December 2024 / January 2025 no work had been made publicly available and, therefore, the Town Council has not yet benefited from this source of new evidence. At the time of writing, there is an intention to consult more widely on this work in Summer 2025.

W40: Temporary Activities and Uses

The policy seeks to allow temporary permissions for events or activities. It should be noted that most uses are allowed for a period of 28 days or less throughout the year.

303. Several uses would only require a license from the relevant authority for certain events in parks etc. It may therefore mean that this policy is covered under other legislation and a planning policy is not required.

304. Temporary consents - Under section 72 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the local planning authority may grant planning permission for a specified temporary

period. This can include where a trial run is needed or use of vacant land or buildings prior to any longer-term proposals coming forward. The legislation identifies that it will rarely be justifiable to grant a second temporary permission. Further permissions can normally be granted permanently or refused if there is clear justification for doing so.

305. Any subsequent condition for a temporary consent would need to pass the test of reasonableness. Conditions requiring a temporary use need to determine why it would not be reasonable to allow permanent permission for the use. What is not clear is why the use for 6 months would not be considered a nuisance or harm the environment as stated in paragraph 10.49 but it would be a nuisance after this period. The uses would either have a detrimental impact due to noise, parking, etc or they could be overcome through mitigation techniques which can be detailed as part of a planning application. The time frame of 6 months would not alter that impact.
306. It may be that the intention is to allow seasonal uses in which case the wording of the policy should be changed to seasonal activities and uses to avoid confusion with temporary consents.

W41: Sustainable Tourism Development

The relevant WDWPLP policies are ECON5 and ECON6. The policy seeks to encourage sustainable tourism.

307. Criterion 1 - Could the 'hierarchy of preference in the local plan' referred to in the text include a relevant paragraph or table? Is this in relation to ECON6?

W42: Facilitating Offshore Renewable Energy Projects

Of relevance are paragraphs 157 and 160 of the NPPF. The policy seeks to support onshore development that supports offshore renewable energy projects.

W43: Community Energy Schemes

The relevant WDWPLP policies are SUS2 and COM11 and paragraph 161 of the NPPF. The policy seeks to encourage renewable energy initiatives.

308. Planning practice guidance on Renewable and low carbon energy - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) outlines the role criteria-based policies can have on planning for renewable energy. In shaping criteria it is important that the need for renewable or low carbon energy does not automatically override environmental protections. Policies should also consider the cumulative impact (especially for wind and solar), local topography and the effect on the landscape, heritage assets, proposals in any AONB designation and the protection of local amenity.
309. There are also technical considerations for each type of technology, for example, for biomass, appropriate transport links, hydro-electric power a source of water and wind turbines a predicted wind source, air safeguarding, electromagnetic interference, and access for large vehicles. Planning practice guidance goes into greater detail on the planning considerations for hydropower, active solar technology, solar farms and wind turbines.
310. Criterion ii) - Will all proposals providing energy schemes be required to provide data on electromagnetic interference? Planning practice guidance, Paragraph: 017 Reference ID: 5-017-20140306 implies this issue only relates to wind energy. "*Wind*

turbines can potentially affect electromagnetic transmissions (eg radio, television and phone signals). Specialist organisations responsible for the operation of electromagnetic links typically require 100m clearance either side of a line of sight link from the swept area of turbine blades. Ofcom acts as a central point of contact for identifying specific consultees relevant to a site.”

311. Criterion iii) – For information, The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, Part 14 Renewable Energy, Class G Air Source Heat Pumps on domestic premises and Class H Wind Turbines on domestic premises both require Microgeneration Certification (MCS) Planning Standards or equivalent to be met.
312. Paragraph 10.67 – The supporting text suggests community investment opportunities should be offered first to those residing within the area and at least 33% of the project must be owned by residents in the area. Both co-operatives and community benefit societies are recognised by the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, however, it is unclear whether a 33% community share is recognised in law or can be justified?

Chapter 11 Communities

Chapter 11 explains that Weymouth is comprised of many settlements each with their own character.

W44: Design

The relevant policies in the local plan are Policies ENV10 The Landscape and Townscape Setting, ENV11 The Pattern of Streets and Spaces and ENV12 Design and Positioning of Buildings. NPPF, Chapter 12 Achieving well-designed places explains “Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.” The Landscape & Urban Design team welcome the inclusion of a Design policy.

313. Criterion 1 – Concerns with the phrase “harmonise with the recognised local character”, because in a scenario where the local character was poor, it would be inappropriate to repeat this poor design. The following extract from the North Dorset Local Plan – Part 1, Policy 24 resolves this scenario and could inform the wording of a revised policy. *“In places that already have a positive image or character, the design of new development should respond to and reinforce locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture. In places where positive elements are lacking, proposals should seek to create a distinctive and coherent sense of place through the use of intelligent and imaginative design solutions.”* In this context it is important to understand the baseline you are measuring against.
314. Criterion 2 – The drafting of criterion 2 is inconsistent with the statutory obligation on the planning authority that arises from Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. When exercising their planning functions councils should ensure that ‘special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.’ The phrase conserve should be removed and replaced with preserve.

W45: Heritage Assets

The relevant policy in the local plan is Policy ENV14 Heritage Assets and chapter 16 of the NPPF is also relevant. The following general comments have been received from the Conservation Team.

315. Approach - Overall, the intention of statements should more closely reflect those established under ENV4 of the Local Plan. Statements should be more concise and pertinent in emphasising an informed commitment toward protecting designated and non-designated heritage assets. **More detailed comments from the Conservation Team are appended to this response (Dorset Council Appendix 2).**
316. The policy team would add that the draft policy is not consistent with statutory legislation and the policy requirements in the NPPF which create conflict and uncertainty to apply.
317. Criterion 3 – This statement reflects the made Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Plan Policy HE1 Protecting Archaeology where there were known areas of ‘archaeological potential’. Such an approach, however, may not be appropriate Weymouth wide. It is suggested that an approach that reflects Dorset Council’s validation checklist (1 October 2022) would be more flexible. The checklist advises “For all applications

involving the disturbance of ground within an Area of Archaeological Potential as defined in the development plan or in other areas in the case of a major development proposal or significant infrastructure works, an applicant may need to commission an Archaeological Desk-based Assessment, geophysical survey and/or trench evaluation and submit relevant conclusions as part of the heritage statement.”

318. Paragraph 11.14 - To reiterate, the principal objective, in heritage conservation terms, is that all proposed development should be aligned to causing no harm to heritage assets and their setting. The narrative set out in paragraph 11.14, should clearly reflect this understanding. In its current format the statement would benefit from restructuring. Essentially, proposed development should aim to cause no harm to an asset. The scheme should only serve to enhance an asset in presentation. A proposed scheme must not impact on the ability to appreciate all attributes associated with an asset’s significance and any identified contributions made by its setting.

W46: Transport and Travel

The relevant WDWPLP policy is COM7 and section 9 of the NPPF. The policy seeks to ensure traffic generated by a proposal is accounted for.

319. Criterion 2 - The Transport Planning Team suggest that this point could mention development proposals where the cumulative impact on the highways network is severe will also not be supported.

W47: Public Transport

The relevant paragraph in the NPPF is paragraph 116. The policy seeks to support public transport.

320. Rail – The Transport Planning Team note that there are few references to rail in the Neighbourhood Plan. The paragraphs associated with this policy should refer to rail, in addition to buses. There are currently 2 trains per hour(tph) from Weymouth town centre to London Waterloo, with 1 of these trains stopping at Upwey. Work is on-going with South West Railway to run these trains on a more clockface pattern. There is also 1 train every 2 hours serving Weymouth and Upwey which goes north to Bristol/Gloucester. Work is ongoing with Great Western Railway to make this an hourly service. These services enable local connections to health services (hospitals in Dorchester, Poole, Bournemouth and Southampton) as well as education (Bournemouth and Southampton universities, and specialist colleges in Poole, Bournemouth, Brockenhurst and Yeovil amongst others). They are also well used by tourists which not only helps the local economy, but the environment and air quality by significantly reducing the need to visit Weymouth by car.

W48: Off-Street Parking

The relevant WDWPLP policy is COM9 and paragraphs 111 and 112 of the NPPF. The policy seeks to address concerns associated with increased on street parking.

321. Approach - The wording is largely the same as Sutton Poyntz Policy GA2 On street Traffic congestion and can be supported.

322. Criterion 2 - Transport Planning Team - The word “minimum” should be discouraged, and the policy should support forms of lower car development where appropriate, especially in town centres. We should be using car parking standards as a starting point for assessing development proposals, rather than having a minimum acceptance point.

W49: Vehicle Charging Facilities

The relevant paragraph is 111 e) of the NPPF. The policy seeks to encourage vehicle charging in new development and public charging in suitable locations.

323. Criterion 1 –Transport Planning Team note this criterion is unnecessary as any planning application will have to comply with Building Regulations Document S which covers electric vehicle charging standards. [Infrastructure for charging electric vehicles: Approved Document S - GOV.UK](#)

W50: Cycle Routes

The relevant WDWPLP policy is COM7 and NPPF paragraph 96. The policy seeks to improve and extend cycle routes.

324. Approach - The Policy is in line with COM7 criterion V) which states “*The delivery of a strategic cycle network and improvements to the public rights of way network will be supported.*” The policy is largely in line with Local Plan policy.
325. Approach - The Transport Planning Team add. The wording of this policy is broadly supported. Dorset Council is developing its Active Travel Infrastructure Plan (ATIP) which is a long-term strategy for improving the network for walking, cycling and wheeling. The plan includes a network of prioritised routes based on which parts of the network would be most useful to improve.
326. Para 11.30 - Transport Planning Team suggest the statistics provided in paragraph 11.30 should be sourced.

W51: Traffic Impact

The relevant WDWPLP policies are COM7 and ENV11 and paragraph 108 of the NPPF. The policy seeks to support proposals that reduce traffic volume and the impact of motor vehicles.

327. Approach - The policy reads as a list of ‘projects’ rather than policy criteria. It is suggested that projects are moved to a monitoring and implementation section.
328. Approach – The Transport Planning Team are supportive of proposals outlined in this policy. Placing development in areas where there are genuine alternative modes of travel to the motor car is another fundamental method to reduce the volume and impact of motor vehicles.
329. Criterion 1 (iii) A Park and Ride facility is supported but no delivery mechanism is listed. This detail could be provided in a monitoring and implementation section.
330. Criterion 1 (iv) We support the inclusion of this project.

W52: Existing Community Buildings

The relevant WDWPLP policy is COM3 and paragraph 97 of the NPPF. The policy seeks to retain existing community buildings and uses.

- 331. Approach - At present, the policy wording does not add much value to the existing Local Plan policy COM3. If there is concern that the WDWPLP does not go far enough, consideration should be given to strengthening the policy. For example, consideration could be given to criteria that demonstrates local engagement has taken place or that an assessment of the suitable scale of the proposed infrastructure is proportionate to the local area and needs.
- 332. Criteria 1 iv. is covered under assets of community value legislation, is outside the remit of planning law and does not aid decision making. This criterion should, therefore, be deleted.

W53: Public Houses

The relevant WDWPLP policy is COM3 and paragraphs 88.d and 97 of the NPPF. The policy aims to retain Public Houses in semi-rural areas and out of town districts wherever it is possible to do so. Proposals that involve the loss of a public house with heritage, cultural, economic, or social value must demonstrate that its use as a public housing is unviable, and its retention has been fully explored.

- 333. Marketing –The policy requires *“A period of at least 12 months vacancy should precede any change of use application, which should be accompanied by authoritative evidence of continued marketing over at least a 18-month period and no market interest in the building as a public house forthcoming, nor interest from local communities for the space to be used for alternative community uses.”* A marketing period of 18 months is considered excessive and likely to result in unmaintained properties for extensive periods of time to the detriment of the street scene. It is recommended that the marketing time is reduced to 12 months and the requirement for the public house to be vacant should be removed.

W54: Sports and Recreation

The relevant WDWPLP policies are COM4 and COM5 and paragraph 102 and 103 of the NPPF. The policy seeks to protect sport and recreation facilities and sets out criteria for providing new sites.

- 334. Approach – The Policy has regards to National Policy and is in general conformity with Local Plan policies COM4 and COM5 and can be supported.

W55: Public Spaces

The relevant WDWPLP policies are COM8, WEY1 & ENV16 iii) and paragraph 135 of the NPPF. The policy seeks to encourage public realm enhancements. Public realm improvements are specified in several of the Weymouth specific policies in the WDWPLP.

- 335. This policy is in line with the Local Plan.

W56: Allotment and Community Gardening Provision

The relevant WDWPLP policies are COM4 and COM5 and paragraph 96 of the NPPF. The policy is identical to Portland NP Policy No. Port/CR3 Allotments. The policy seeks to retain and provide further allotments in the Weymouth NP area.

336. This policy is supported.

W57: New Burial Grounds

The relevant WDWPLP policy is WEY15. The policy seeks to provide additional burial grounds in Weymouth. Although land at Tumbledown Farm (WEY15) is allocated for additional burial space, it is understood that this future use no longer forms part of Weymouth Town Council's current plans on this site. Cemeteries are allowed in the countryside provided they meet need and accord to other policies in the Plan, such as landscape, residential amenity, and access.

337. Consideration should be given to local need, landscape and suitable access as part of the policy criteria.

Chapter 12: Monitoring and Reviewing the Neighbourhood Plan

Chapter 12 sets out an intention to monitor and review the Neighbourhood Plan and the triggers for a partial review. This chapter is welcomed and reflects the principles of plan, monitor and manage (Review).

Chapter 13: Weymouth Community Aspirations

Chapter 13 lists a set of community aspirations captured during early rounds of consultation.

- 338. Paragraph 13.5 – The CIL/S106 Team are unclear on how the CIL neighbourhood proportion will be spent. Will projects be wholly funded by the Neighbourhood proportion of CIL or will it be used to part fund the projects; will other funding sources be considered?
- 339. The CIL/S106 Team ask if the neighbourhood plan could identify specific items of infrastructure and projects that could be funded by the developer contributions both the CIL neighbourhood proportion and S106.

Chapter 14 Glossary

Chapter 14 sets out a glossary of terms.

- 340. Affordable housing - NPPF (2023) definition of Affordable housing is 'Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers);' Including, starter homes, discounted market housing, and affordable routes to home ownership.
- 341. Community Infrastructure Levy – The CIL/S106 Team explains CIL is not a tax. It is a developer contribution sought from new development to help fund the infrastructure, facilities, and services, needed to support new homes and businesses.
- 342. Curtilage - Permitted development Rights for Householders defines Curtilage as 'land which forms part and parcel with the house. Usually it is the area of land within which the house sits, or to which it is attached, such as the garden, but for some houses, especially in the case of properties with large grounds, it may be a smaller area.'
- 343. Infill Development – More consideration should be given to this definition. There does not appear to be any national definition of infill. Dorset Council defines it as 'subdivision of existing garden land in established residential areas to form building plots. These can range from single plots to larger developments if a number of gardens are assembled'. The Greater London Authority in their briefing paper 2015 defines infill as 'the development of vacant or underutilised sites at all scales, within existing communities and so with some supporting infrastructure already in place'.
- 344. Infrastructure - is generally considered to include energy, transport, utilities and communication. The Planning Advisory Service in the report 'A steps approach to infrastructure and delivery' outlines that Infrastructure can take many forms. It can be defined in physical, green and community terms and is essential to support objectives of increased housing provision, economic growth and mitigating climate change, and of creating thriving and sustainable communities. In addition to housing and job opportunities, supporting infrastructure including green energy, utility services, transport, schools, open space, community, health and leisure services, are all needed.

345. PPG, Planning Practice Guidance – title should read Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
346. Ramsar sites –title should read as RAMSAR site
347. Section 106 - The section of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) that provided for the creation of planning obligations. Section 106 agreements allow local authorities to ensure that developers provide the infrastructure needed to support new developments.
348. Supplementary planning documents (SPDs) - build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in an adopted local plan. They do not form part of the development plan, they cannot introduce new planning policies into the development plan.
349. Sustainability Appraisals – The NPPF defined that an appraisal's role is to promote sustainable development by assessing the extent to which the emerging plan, when judged against reasonable alternatives, will help to achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives (including opportunities for net gains).
350. Use classes – the legislation should be written as follows: Town and country Planning (use classes) order 1987 (as amended)

Appendix A: Weymouth Supporting Environmental Targets

Appendix A has been written in response to Weymouth Town Council declaring a local climate and ecological emergency in 2019. This committed Weymouth Town Council to making the Council's activities net zero carbon by 2030, which included ensuring all planning comments to Dorset Council are consistent with a shift to net-zero carbon by 2030. Following extensive public consultation, the initial draft Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan established a series of 'environmental objectives' as defined and explained within section 7. Environmental Sustainability.

The targets are largely based upon information provided in the LETI Net Zero Carbon Toolkit from which quantitative reference values are abstracted with some reference for purposes of alignment to the Dorset Council Sustainability Statement and checklist for planning applications interim guidance note.

Dorset Council also declared a climate and ecological emergency in 2019 and adopted its Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy in 2020 which recognised the importance of planning to achieve its ambition. The Council has published (December 2023) an Interim Guidance and Position Statement in relation to planning for climate change. The interim guidance is supported by a sustainability statement and checklist for planning applications with an implementation date of 15 January 2024. Planning for climate change - Dorset Council

351. Approach - Dorset Council is concerned that this appendix will result in 2 checklists being created, leading to confusion, Dorset Council's Sustainability Checklist, and this document. The requirements and suggestions for the developer, whilst in many instances are suggestions, lead to more administration and report writing. These are likely to either dissuade development through additional costs of commissioning reports and implementing the requirements or hinder development completely as the developer would be unable to comply.
352. Target 23: The wording of this target is confusing: the title states that *minimum 20% BNG is required*, but the supporting text recognises that the statutory minimum is 10%. Wording should reflect the aspirational nature of this target, perhaps: 'minimum 20% BNG is encouraged'.

353. Target 24: It would be helpful to cross reference the Dorset Biodiversity Appraisal Protocol Guidance Section B: Mitigation, which has detailed guidance on tree mitigation and management.
354. Target 25: Grassland Management and Restoration – The target title refers to grassland, but the target also includes scrub and hedgerow management. Consider renaming the target to reflect the content. It would also be helpful to cross reference the Dorset Biodiversity Appraisal Protocol Guidance Section B: Mitigation, which has detailed guidance on hedgerows and scrub.

Appendix B: Local Green Space Maps

355. Maps are appropriate and comments provided within the Local Green Space policy.

Appendix C: Incidental Open Space Maps

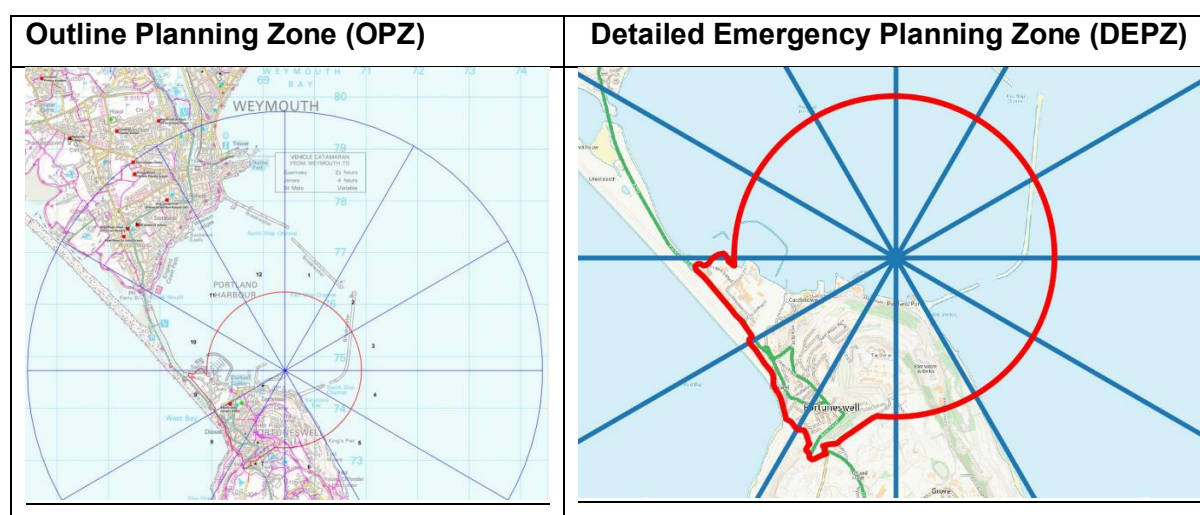
356. Maps are appropriate and comments provided within the incidental open space policy.

Appendix D: Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Plan Policies

357. We welcome the cross-mapping of the Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Plan Policies against the Proposed Policies in the Pre-Submission Version of the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan.

Dorset Council Appendix 1: ONR Consultation Zone

358. Thank you for contacting Emergency Planning. As per the mentioned guidance *“Under the Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations (REPPiR) 2019, local authorities are responsible for setting Detailed Emergency Planning Zones (DEPZ) for nuclear sites where there could be a radiation emergency with off-site consequences and preparing detailed plans for responding to such an emergency, within the DEPZ area. The off-site plans are put in place to minimise and mitigate the health consequences of any significant radiological release that might occur as a result of radiation emergencies at nuclear sites.”*
359. The only REPPiR site within the boundaries of Dorset Council, for which the Local Authority has to set a DEPZ and prepare an off-site plan, is the [MoD Operational Berth at Portland Port](#).
360. While the DEPZ set (by the Local Authority) around this REPPiR site does not impact the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan, the OPZ (Outline Planning Zone), proposed by the MoD and approved by the Secretary of State for Defence to 5km, partially overlaps this plan. (see maps below)



361. ONR seeks to be consulted in regard to proposed developments within specified consultation zones (OCZ's – Outline Consultation Zones), and focuses on the potential impact of new development on the viability, operability and extendibility of the (REPPiR) off-site plan, and the potential introduction of industrial activities that may pose an external hazard to the nuclear site.
362. Having reviewed the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan – in particular Policy 19: Site Allocations, Table B: Site Allocations Summary, Map 18: Allocated sites, and Policies W20 to W25, the developments proposed do not pose a significant threat to the MoD Operational Berth at Portland Port, and do not include any hazardous sites or developments that would pose long or very long range impacts.
363. Furthermore, the proposed developments – when implemented - can be incorporated into OPZ planning alongside arrangements detailed in the [Portland Port Off-site Reactor Emergency Plan](#).
364. The request from Emergency Planning is to be made aware when proposed developments in the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan both start, and are being finalised, so that these can be incorporated into the aforementioned planning arrangements.

Dorset Council Appendix 2: Detailed Conservation Team comments on Policy W45 Heritage Assets

Please find our comments below regarding a review of W45: Heritage Assets.

Overall, Policy W45 sets out an acceptable reflection of commitment toward the historic environment. However, we would like to recommend minor changes, where highlighted below, to promote a more explicit narrative.

- 365. Criterion 1 - Development proposals ~~should~~ must demonstrate, where relevant, that they respect schemes are heritage-led...
- 366. Criterion 2 - Development proposals affecting designated and/ or non-designated heritage assets and/ or the 11 designated Conservation Areas shown on Map 28 ~~should~~ must be accompanied by proportionate historic environment heritage impact assessments, which clearly demonstrating demonstrate how any potential for impact, resulting in harm, would be avoided, ~~minimised, or as a result of mitigation.~~
- 367. Criterion 3 - Development proposals on previously undeveloped land ~~should~~ must be accompanied by the results of an archaeological assessment...
- 368. Criterion 4 - Where appropriate, development ~~should~~ must take identify and secure opportunities within the setting of any designated and/ or non-designated heritage...
- 369. Paragraph 11.10 We are encouraged by the NPPF (para.196) to support a positive strategy for the conservation, appreciation, and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay, or other threats. This strategy ~~should~~ must reflect the significance of the heritage asset and its potential contribution to the physical and social character and appearance of the area. *Note: NPPF (para.203) as of 12/2024*
- 370. Paragraph 11.13 The community has made clear in consultations that it expects the Neighbourhood Plan to appreciate the value of these assets and help ensure they are safeguarded for future generations and...
- 371. Paragraph 11.14 Policy W45 requires development proposals to recognise the significance ~~of that~~ any identified heritage site or building may have to the nation and the local community and ensure that any development proposal avoids unjustified impact, resulting in harm, ~~and, if possible, helps~~ actively seeks to secure opportunities to enhance community appreciation of the asset.
- 372. Paragraph 11.15 Historic England and Dorset Council offer information and guidance on how listed buildings ~~should~~ must be treated and what is and is not acceptable in conservation areas. More detailed guidance on individual locations is also available by way of a pre-application advice service offered ~~from~~ by the local planning authority.
- 373. Paragraph 11.16 To broaden the impact of the development plan and aid developers, Dorset Council has committed to establishing a Local Heritage List to recognise those assets in the county that ~~fail do not to achieve~~ qualify for national listing status. The Local Heritage List is an ongoing project to create a record of other historic/heritage locations and features of local or regional significance the heritage assets and provides ~~the~~ an opportunity for the community to nominate assets for inclusion on the list. The list *"highlights assets that need consideration, celebration and protection within the planning system"*. Members of the public are encouraged to nominate what they consider to be suitable candidates for local heritage listing by way of a formal nomination assessment process.

Dorset Council Appendix 3: Internal LLFA Consultation – Surface Water (SW)
Management

Date: 28 January 2025**Internal LLFA Consultation – Surface Water (SW) Management****To: Nick Cardnell**

Please see below our updated LLFA consultation response for the requested Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan allocated sites. Our comments offer a high level review of the policy sites based on available flood risk mapping and some site visits. Our advice includes discussion surrounding the prevailing flood risk to the sites and we also highlight the constraints that should be considered when developing a surface water management strategy for each of these locations.

Our Ref: PPE23-011/2**Proposal:** Residential development of approximately 250 dwellings.**Your Ref:** Policy W20**Location:** Land at Wyke Oliver Farm North**Description:** Greenfield site split into two sloping sections either side of a valley.

PREVAILING FLOOD RISK	
Pluvial (Surface Water)	EA Risk of Flooding from Surface Water (RoFfSW) mapping indicates a surface water flow path along the route of the ordinary watercourse that runs from west to east along the north boundary of the southern section of the allocated site. This flow path indicates surface water flood risk from the 1-in-30 year rainfall event and upwards up to the 1-in-1000 year rainfall event. A small area of SW ponding is shown in the southern section of the allocation at the 1-in-30 year event and this turns into a more distinct flowpath at the more extreme 1-in-1000 year rainfall event.
Fluvial (River)	The majority of the site is situated in Flood Zone 1 – (low risk of fluvial flooding). However flood zones 2 and 3 are shown to skirt the edge of the north boundary of the southern section of the allocation. There is a mapped ordinary watercourse located at the bottom of the valley running from west to east along the north boundary of the southern section of the allocation.
Historic	Dorset Council hold records of nearby flooding on Wyke Oliver Close. The ordinary watercourse next to the site is a tributary of a main river that flows south towards the sea adjacent to Preston Road. Flooding of property along this stretch of river has been reported in the past.

GEOLOGY / GROUNDWATER	
Bedrock	Varying bedrock types: Nothe Clay Member – Mudstone. Benclyff Grit Member – Sandstone, Osmington Oolite Formation – Limestone, Clavellata Formation – Limestone
Superficial deposits	None indicated.
Groundwater	Groundwater levels are expected to be between 0.025m and 0.5m below the ground surface at the lower elevation parts of the site. Groundwater monitoring with readings taken throughout the year will be required as evidence to back up a proposed infiltration-based surface water management scheme.
Source Protection Zone	The site is not located within a source protection zone.
ENGINEERING ISSUES	
Peak Flow	As per DEFRA non-statutory technical standards, any drainage strategy proposed should not result in an increase in peak flow.
Volume Control	As per DEFRA non-statutory technical standards, any drainage strategy proposed, must control volumetric runoff such that volumes of runoff are not exceeded beyond greenfield conditions for the 1-in-100 year 6hr duration storm.
Critical Structures	The adjacent watercourse is thought to be culverted downstream of the site for a long section of approximately 300m between the edge of the Wyke Oliver farm buildings and the back garden of no 1 Orchard Drive.
Discharge Route / levels	If infiltration is shown not to be viable for the management of 100% of surface water then a direct and restricted discharge of surface water to the nearby watercourse should be investigated. However, it should be noted that this ordinary watercourse is constrained downstream by a long stretch of culvert.
Downstream Capacity	If site cannot be fully drained through infiltration, then further investigation and consideration of the downstream system will be required. A consideration of the downstream capacity of the receiving system will be required and there may need to be an offer of mitigation via proposed SW discharge rates that exceed standard Greenfield criteria.
Potential Mitigation Measures	Sufficient land should be allocated to open SuDS features and conveyance routes, the design of which should be based on site investigations carried out to ascertain infiltration rates and an estimation of groundwater levels. Assessment of receiving systems may necessitate off-site improvement or mitigation works. Any open SuDS features should be designed in such a way as to minimise cut and fill and to be sympathetic to the existing topography.

MULTIFUNCTIONALITY	
Ecology	Site is likely to be able to support some open SuDS features and must do so in accordance with SuDS hierarchy. Such features may contribute to biodiversity net gain requirements. The level and type of features required should be informed through consultation with DC's NET team.
Rainwater Harvesting	The site should prioritise the inclusion of rainwater harvesting. Rainwater harvesting is likely to have the following benefits: - Reduced potable water use and therefore energy use. - Reduced surface water volume entering surface water drainage system.
Water Quality / Pollution Concerns	Drainage systems should be designed to offer as much water treatment as possible and certainly enough so as to ensure no reduction in water quality from any site. Where water quality issues exist downstream, then increased use of treatment and open SuDS features maybe needed. The amount of treatment offered should be informed in consultation with NE, NET and the EA.
H&S, Layout & Amenity	All drainage schemes will need to give consideration of H&S matters during construction to ensure their safe delivery. Final designs will need to accord with the latest version of the CIRIA SuDS manual and the H&S guidance included therein. If mitigation measures are to be used to exceed H&S standards, i.e. through fencing etc. then further consultation with DC's landscape architects will be needed.
GENERAL COMMENTS	
<p>Due to existing downstream flooding issues and constraints in the form of a long stretch of culvert, rainwater harvesting and water re-use should be the first priority for inclusion within the proposed surface water management strategy. This could help to reduce the volumes of surface water making its way downstream and therefore reduce the risk of flooding.</p> <p>Applicant must demonstrate that the SuDS hierarchy has been followed and infiltration must be prioritised as the proposed means of surface water management. A developer will need to demonstrate that they have carried out site specific ground investigations. Infiltration rates are likely to vary across the site due to the varying geology and careful consideration will be required in order to locate SuDS features appropriately. Care should be taken to carry out infiltration testing to the standards set in BRE Digest 365 at the depth and location of any proposed infiltration-based SuDS.</p> <p>Groundwater monitoring across the course of the year will be required in order to demonstrate that groundwater will not impact the functioning and reduce the attenuation volume of any proposed soakaway/attenuation features.</p> <p>Attenuation of surface water and a restricted discharge to the adjacent watercourse may be considered in the event that infiltration is proven not to be viable but as there is a significant constraint in the form of a long stretch of downstream culvert the LLFA may require additional restrictions on surface water discharge above and beyond greenfield rate in order to minimise risk to downstream areas.</p> <p>Open SuDS should be prioritised where possible as they can deliver multifunctional benefits including improvements to amenity, biodiversity and water quality.</p>	

Our Ref: PPE23-012/2

Proposal: Residential development of approximately 150 dwellings.

Your Ref: Policy W21

Location: Land at Redlands Farm

Description: Greenfield site, sloping site with highest part of site is 34 mAOD and lowest section is 18 mAOD.

PREVAILING FLOOD RISK	
Pluvial (Surface Water)	EA Risk of Flooding from Surface Water (RoFfSW) mapping indicates that the majority of the site has a very low risk of surface water flooding. There is however a single area of SW flood risk indicated at a low spot opposite No 5 Willerby Close from the 1-in-30 year rainfall event and upwards. This predicted area of ponding joins a more significant flow path at the 1-in-100 year rainfall event that flows through parts of Willerby Close, Studland Way and Kimmeridge Close and then in a west direction towards the River Wey. At the 1-in-1000 year rainfall event the on-site ponding becomes a more significant flowpath that runs from north to south adjacent to the old farm buildings. The proposed development should be set back from this modelled flood risk.
Fluvial (River)	Flood Zone 1 – (Low risk of fluvial flooding) Nearest watercourse is approximately 150m away at nearest point downstream of site.
Historic	Dorset Council hold no records of nearby flooding. Some flooding has been reported downstream near to the River Wey.

GEOLOGY / GROUNDWATER	
Bedrock	East part of site is shown by BGS mapping to be Kellaways Formation-Mudstone and Sandstone. West and south part of site is shown to be Cornbrash Formation – Limestone.
Superficial deposits	Very east of site may have some River Terrace deposits – Clay/Silt
Groundwater	Groundwater levels are expected to be between 0.5m and 5m below the ground surface across most of the site. Groundwater monitoring with readings taken throughout the year will be required as evidence to back up a proposed infiltration-based surface water management scheme.
Source Protection Zone	The site is not located within a source protection zone.
ENGINEERING ISSUES	
Peak Flow	As per DEFRA non-statutory technical standards, any drainage strategy proposed should not result in an increase in peak flow.
Volume Control	As per DEFRA non-statutory technical standards, any drainage strategy proposed, must control volumetric runoff such that volumes of runoff are not exceeded beyond greenfield conditions for the 1-in-100 year 6hr duration storm.
Critical Structures	Unknown
Discharge Route / levels	The nearest known watercourse is approximately 150m away at the nearest point. According to Wessex Water mapping the nearest surface water sewer is located on Willerby Close and Westmacott Road but agreement with Wessex Water would be needed for any proposed surface water connection into their system.
Downstream Capacity	If site cannot be fully drained through the means of infiltration, then further investigation and consideration of the downstream system will be required. A consideration of the downstream capacity of the receiving system (watercourse or SW sewer) will be required and there may need to be an offer of mitigation via proposed SW discharge rates that exceed standard Greenfield criteria.
Potential Mitigation Measures	Sufficient land should be allocated to open SuDS features and conveyance routes, the design of which should be based on site investigations carried out in order to ascertain infiltration rates and an estimation of groundwater levels. Assessment of receiving systems may necessitate off-site improvement or mitigation works.

MULTIFUNCTIONALITY	
Ecology	Site is likely to be able to support some open SuDS features and must do so in accordance with SuDS hierarchy. Such features may contribute to biodiversity net gain requirements. The level and type of features required should be informed through consultation with DC's NET team.
Rainwater Harvesting	The site should prioritise the inclusion of rainwater harvesting. Rainwater harvesting is likely to have the following benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduced potable water use and therefore energy use. - Reduced surface water volume entering surface water drainage system.
Water Quality / Pollution Concerns	Drainage systems should be designed to offer as much water treatment as possible and certainly enough so as to ensure no reduction in water quality from any site. Where water quality issues exist downstream, then increased use of treatment and open SuDS features maybe needed. The amount of treatment offered should be informed in consultation with NE, NET and the EA.
H&S, Layout & Amenity	All drainage schemes will need to give consideration of H&S matters during construction to ensure their safe delivery. Final designs will need to accord with the latest version of the CIRIA SuDS manual and the H&S guidance included therein. If mitigation measures are to be used to exceed H&S standards, i.e. through fencing etc. then further consultation with DC's landscape architects will be needed.
GENERAL COMMENTS	
<p>Applicant is to demonstrate that the SuDS hierarchy has been followed and infiltration must be prioritised as the proposed means of surface water management. A developer will need to demonstrate that they have carried out site specific ground investigations. Infiltration rates are likely to vary across the site, due to varying Geology, and careful consideration will be required in order to locate SuDS features appropriately. Care should be taken to carry out infiltration testing to the standards set in BRE Digest 365 at the depth and location of any proposed infiltration-based SuDS.</p> <p>Groundwater monitoring across the course of the year will also be required in order to demonstrate that groundwater will not impact the functioning and reduce the attenuation volume of any proposed soakaway/attenuation features.</p> <p>The site is approximately 150m from a river but discharge to watercourse should be considered in the event that infiltration to ground is dismissed partially or fully. Applicant would need to demonstrate how they would access a watercourse through third party land. Additional restrictions on surface water discharge above and beyond greenfield rate may be necessary in order to minimise risk to downstream areas.</p> <p>Wessex Water mapping shows nearby surface water sewers but a suitable connection point would need to be agreed with Wessex Water. This would likely be based on the size and available capacity within the nearby surface water sewers. Once again additional restrictions on surface water discharge</p>	

above and beyond greenfield rate may be necessary in order to minimise risk to downstream areas. Wessex Water will only agree a connection to their system once an applicant has shown that they have exhausted all options higher up the SuDS hierarchy.

Open SuDS must be prioritised which would provide multifunctional benefits including improvements to amenity, biodiversity and water quality.

The proposed development should be located outside of any areas of modelled surface water flood risk.

Our Ref: PPE23-013/2

Proposal: Residential development of approximately 25 dwellings.

Your Ref: Policy W22

Location: Land off Beverley Road, Littlemoor

Description: Sloping greenfield site

Prevailing Flood Risk	
Pluvial (Surface Water)	EA Risk of Flooding from Surface Water (RoFfSW) mapping indicates no modelled surface water flood risk up to the 1-in-1000 year rainfall event for the majority of the site. There is however significant surface water flood risk predicted from the 1-in-30 year rainfall event depicted at the northern edge of the site which sits alongside the ordinary watercourse. This surface water flood risk aligns with the outline of an existing flood management attenuation feature.
Fluvial (River)	Flood Zone 1 – (Low risk of fluvial flooding) There is an ordinary watercourse that runs along the northern edge of the site from east to west which will not have been modelled as part of the EA Flood Zone mapping exercise. Therefore fluvial flood risk is currently unknown however it is likely to follow the predicted flood outlines shown in the EA surface water mapping.
Historic	Dorset Council hold records of actual nearby flooding to some properties on Kestrel Way.

GEOLOGY / GROUNDWATER	
Bedrock	North part of site - Sandsfoot formation Mudstone, South part of site - Sandstone and Limestone Clavellata formation - Limestone
Superficial deposits	N/A
Groundwater	Groundwater levels are expected to be between 0.025m and 0.5m below the ground surface across some of the site. Groundwater monitoring with readings taken throughout the year will be required as evidence to back up a proposed infiltration-based surface water management scheme.
Source Protection Zone	The site is not located within a Source Protection Zone.
ENGINEERING ISSUES	
Peak Flow	As per DEFRA non-statutory technical standards, any drainage strategy proposed should not result in an increase in peak flow.
Volume Control	As per DEFRA non-statutory technical standards, any drainage strategy proposed, must control volumetric runoff such that volumes of runoff are not exceeded beyond greenfield conditions for the 1 in 100 year 6hr duration storm.
Critical Structures	Part of the area of land adjacent to the site appears to have been designed as a flood mitigation scheme. The ordinary watercourse has been culverted and an attenuation basin introduced into the watercourse. It is also noted that downstream flooding has previously occurred near to this site. Any discharge into the ordinary watercourse should be restricted to at least greenfield rates and volumes so as not to increase any flood risk downstream.
Discharge Route / levels	If infiltration is shown not to be viable then a connection to the nearby watercourse should be considered. There is also a surface water sewer in the nearby Kestrel Way which could be considered but this would need to be agreed with Wessex Water and not before the SuDS hierarchy is shown to have been followed.
Downstream Capacity	If site cannot be fully drained through infiltration then further investigation and consideration of the downstream system will be required. A consideration of the downstream capacity of the receiving system (OW or SW sewer) will be required and there may need to be an offer of mitigation via proposed SW discharge rates that exceed standard Greenfield criteria.
Potential Mitigation Measures	Sufficient land should be allocated to open SuDS features and conveyance routes, the design of which should be based on a site investigations carried out in order to ascertain infiltration rates and an estimation of groundwater levels.

MULTIFUNCTIONALITY	
Ecology	Site is likely to be able to support some open SuDS features and must do so in accordance with SuDS hierarchy. Such features may contribute to biodiversity net gain requirements. The level and type of features required should be informed through consultation with DC's NET team.
Rainwater Harvesting	The site should prioritise the inclusion of rainwater harvesting. Rainwater harvesting is likely to have the following benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduced potable water use and therefore energy use. - Reduced surface water volume entering surface water drainage system.
Water Quality / Pollution Concerns	Drainage systems should be designed to offer as much water treatment as possible and certainly enough so as to ensure no reduction in water quality from any site. Where water quality issues exist downstream, then increased use of treatment and open SuDS features maybe needed. The amount of treatment offered should be informed in consultation with NE, NET and the EA.
H&S, Layout & Amenity	<p>All drainage schemes will need to give consideration of H&S matters during construction to ensure their safe delivery. Final designs will need to accord with the latest version of the CIRIA SuDS manual and the H&S guidance included therein.</p> <p>If mitigation measures are to be used to exceed H&S standards, i.e. through fencing etc. then further consultation with DC's landscape architects will be needed.</p>
GENERAL COMMENTS	
<p>Due to the existing flood mitigation attenuation area at the lowest part of the site any proposed development must be located well away from the modelled areas of flood risk. Developers of this site must not fill in, interfere with or build within the existing attenuation feature. Any development must not encroach on the attenuation area and adequate space must be left around it for maintenance purposes.</p> <p>Due to downstream flooding issues rainwater harvesting and water re-use should be the first priority for inclusion within the proposed surface water management strategy. This could help to reduce the volumes of surface water making its way downstream and therefore reduce the risk of downstream flooding.</p> <p>Applicant must demonstrate that the SuDS hierarchy has been followed and infiltration must be prioritised as the proposed means of surface water management. A developer will need to demonstrate that they have carried out site specific ground investigations. Infiltration rates are likely to vary across the site and careful consideration will be required in order to locate SuDS features appropriately. Care should be taken to carry out infiltration testing to the standards set in BRE Digest 365 at the depth and location of any proposed infiltration-based SuDS.</p> <p>Groundwater monitoring across the course of the year will be required in order to demonstrate that groundwater will not impact the functioning and reduce the attenuation volume of any proposed soakaway/attenuation features.</p>	

Discharge to watercourse may be considered in the event that infiltration is proven not to be viable. At a minimum it will be expected that surface water discharge rates and volumes will be restricted to greenfield in order not to increase downstream flood risk.

Wessex Water mapping shows a surface water sewer on Kestrel Way so this could also be considered as means of connection but agreement with Wessex Water will be required.

Open SuDS must be prioritised that allow for multifunctional benefits including improvements to amenity, biodiversity and water quality.

Our Ref: PPE23-015B/2

Proposal: Allocated for employment use comprising small industrial units or workshops

Your Ref: Policy W23A

Location: Land at Lodmoor Old Tip – North section

Description: Redevelopment of old landfill site.

Prevailing Flood Risk	
Pluvial (Surface Water)	EA Risk of Flooding from Surface Water (RoFfSW) mapping indicates no modelled surface water flood risk at the 1-in-30 year rainfall event. At the 1-in-100 year rainfall event surface water flood risk is shown along the adjacent ordinary watercourses and a significant area is also indicated in the north-east corner of the site. This flood risk increases again at the 1-in-1000 year rainfall event. Any proposed development should aim to avoid these areas of the site.
Fluvial (River)	Flood zones 2 and 3 are modelled to impact a significant proportion of the site. The Environment Agency should be consulted for their comments.
Historic	Some nearby flooding has been reported to Dorset Council in the past.
Geology / Groundwater	
Bedrock	Weymouth member - Mudstone
Superficial deposits	Alluvium – Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel
Groundwater	Groundwater levels unknown.
Source Protection Zone	The site is not located within a Source Protection Zone.

ENGINEERING ISSUES	
Peak Flow	As per DEFRA non-statutory technical standards, any drainage strategy proposed should not result in an increase in peak flow.
Volume Control	As per DEFRA non-statutory technical standards, any drainage strategy proposed, must control volumetric runoff such that volumes of runoff are not exceeded beyond greenfield conditions for the 1 in 100 year 6hr duration storm.
Critical Structures	Unknown
Discharge Route / levels	The site has ordinary watercourses along the north and west boundaries and crossing the lower part of the site from east to west. A restricted discharge of surface water into one of these watercourses would be the most likely means of surface water management.
Downstream Capacity	It is unlikely that the site could be drained through infiltration and therefore further investigation and consideration of the downstream system will be required.
Potential Mitigation Measures	Sufficient land should be allocated to open SuDS features and conveyance routes.
MULTIFUNCTIONALITY	
Ecology	The site should to be able to support open SuDS features and should do so in accordance with SuDS hierarchy. Such features may contribute to biodiversity net gain requirements. The level and type of features required should be informed through consultation with DC's NET team.
Rainwater Harvesting	The site should prioritise the inclusion of rainwater harvesting. Rainwater harvesting is likely to have the following benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduced potable water use and therefore energy use. - Reduced surface water volume entering surface water drainage system.
Water Quality / Pollution Concerns	Drainage systems should be designed to offer as much water treatment as possible and certainly enough so as to ensure no reduction in water quality from any site. Where water quality issues exist downstream, then increased use of treatment and open SuDS features maybe needed. The amount of treatment offered should be informed in consultation with NE, NET and the EA.
H&S, Layout & Amenity	All drainage schemes will need to give consideration of H&S matters during construction to ensure their safe delivery. Final designs will need to accord with the latest version of the CIRIA SuDS manual and the H&S guidance included therein. If mitigation measures are to be used to exceed H&S standards, i.e. through fencing etc. then further consultation with DC's landscape architects will be needed.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Applicant must demonstrate that the SuDS hierarchy has been followed. It is likely that due to parts of this site once being landfill, infiltration may not be an appropriate means of surface water management at this location. Infiltration through made ground could pose a pollution risk. Therefore an applicant will need to consult with the Environment Agency to discuss the viability of infiltration based SuDS on this site. If their advice is not to use infiltration then the applicant will need to move down the SuDS hierarchy.

Also groundwater at this location may be too high so groundwater monitoring across the course of the year could be required in order to demonstrate that groundwater will not impact the functioning and reduce the attenuation volume of any proposed underground SuDS assets.

Attenuation of surface water with a restricted discharge to an adjacent watercourse may be the most likely means of surface water management for any development of this site.

Open SuDS should be prioritised with could provide multifunctional benefits including improvements to amenity, biodiversity and water quality.

Due to the fact that significant parts of the site are at Fluvial / Tidal flood risk as indicated by Flood Zones 2/3 the Environment Agency should be consulted on any applications to develop this site. The applicant would likely need to demonstrate that access to the site would be flood free (or at least trafficable) during the 1-in-100 year plus climate change fluvial flooding event and the 1-in-200 year tidal flooding event. A flood emergency plan would need to be submitted alongside any planning application.

As this site is at significant surface water, fluvial and tidal flood risk any development would need to be shown to be compatible with the existing flood risk and flood resilient construction would need to be demonstrated with any planning application proposals.

Our Ref: PPE23-015A/2

Proposal: Identified for leisure development site – Café or RSPB Viewing Centre.

Your Ref: Policy W23B

Location: Land at Lodmoor Old Tip – Mid section

Description: Redevelopment of old landfill site.

Prevailing Flood Risk	
Pluvial (Surface Water)	EA Risk of Flooding from Surface Water (RoFfSW) mapping indicates no modelled surface water flood risk up to the 1-in-100 year rainfall event. During the modelled 1-in-1000 year rainfall event (infrequent) some minor areas of sw flood risk are predicted.
Fluvial (River)	The site is 3-4 metres raised above neighbouring ground levels and as such is located within Flood Zone 1 (very low risk of tidal/fluvial flooding). However, the site is surrounded on all sides by Flood zones 2 and 3. A emergency flood plan is a likely requirement for any planning application on this site. The Environment Agency should be consulted for their comments.
Historic	No relevant flood reports have been recorded by Dorset Council near or on this site.

Geology / Groundwater	
Bedrock	Peterborough Member – Mudstone Kellaways formation – mudstone and sandstone
Superficial deposits	Alluvium – Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel Important note: Because the site was a land-fill tip for Weymouth and as such it is made ground.
Groundwater	Groundwater levels unknown.
Source Protection Zone	The site is not located within a Source Protection Zone.
ENGINEERING ISSUES	
Peak Flow	As per DEFRA non-statutory technical standards, any drainage strategy proposed should not result in an increase in peak flow.
Volume Control	As per DEFRA non-statutory technical standards, any drainage strategy proposed, must control volumetric runoff such that volumes of runoff are not exceeded beyond greenfield conditions for the 1-in-100 year 6hr duration storm.
Critical Structures	Unknown
Discharge Route / levels	There are two mapped ordinary watercourses either side of the site (north-east and south-west boundaries) which drain towards the sea. Either of these could provide a possible outfall location for a surface water management scheme.
Downstream Capacity	Use of infiltration may not be viable at this location due to pollution risk of infiltrating through made ground. Therefore further investigation and consideration of the downstream capacity of the receiving system may be required.
Potential Mitigation Measures	Sufficient land should be allocated to open SuDS features and conveyance routes.
MULTIFUNCTIONALITY	
Ecology	Site is likely to be able to support open SuDS features and must do so in accordance with SuDS hierarchy. Such features may contribute to biodiversity net gain requirements. The level and type of features required should be informed through consultation with DC's NET team.
Rainwater Harvesting	The site should prioritise the inclusion of rainwater harvesting. Rainwater harvesting is likely to have the following benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduced potable water use and therefore energy use. - Reduced surface water volume entering surface water drainage system.

Water Quality / Pollution Concerns	Drainage systems should be designed to offer as much water treatment as possible and certainly enough so as to ensure no reduction in water quality from any site. Where water quality issues exist downstream, then increased use of treatment and open SuDS features maybe needed. The amount of treatment offered should be informed in consultation with NE, NET and the EA.
H&S, Layout & Amenity	<p>All drainage schemes will need to give consideration of H&S matters during construction to ensure their safe delivery. Final designs will need to accord with the latest version of the CIRIA SuDS manual and the H&S guidance included therein.</p> <p>If mitigation measures are to be used to exceed H&S standards, i.e. through fencing etc. then further consultation with DC's landscape architects will be needed.</p>
GENERAL COMMENTS	
<p>Applicant must demonstrate that the SuDS hierarchy has been followed. It is likely that due to the fact that this site was once landfill, infiltration may not be an appropriate means of surface water management at this location. Infiltration through the made ground may pose a pollution risk. Therefore an applicant will need to consult with the Environment Agency to discuss the viability of infiltration based SuDS on this site. If their advice is not to use infiltration then the applicant will need to move down the SuDS hierarchy to restricted discharge to watercourse.</p> <p>Groundwater monitoring across the course of the year may be required in order to demonstrate that groundwater will not impact the functioning and reduce the attenuation volume of any proposed underground SuDS assets.</p> <p>Attenuation of surface water with a restricted discharge to an adjacent watercourse may be the most likely means of surface water management for any development of this site.</p> <p>Open SuDS must be prioritised with multifunctional benefits that could include improvements to amenity, biodiversity and water quality.</p> <p>Due to the fact that the site is surrounded by Flood Zones 2/3 the Environment Agency should be consulted on any applications to develop this site. The applicant would need to demonstrate that access to the site would be flood free (or at least trafficable) during the 1 in 100 year plus climate change fluvial flooding event and the 1-in-200 year tidal flooding event.</p> <p>A flood emergency plan would need to be submitted alongside any planning application.</p>	

Our Ref: PPE23-015C/2

Proposal: Allocated for leisure with some residential use

Your Ref: Policy W23C

Location: Land at Lodmoor Old Tip – South section

Description: Redevelopment of old landfill site.

Prevailing Flood Risk	
Pluvial (Surface Water)	EA Risk of Flooding from Surface Water (RoFfSW) mapping indicates no modelled surface water flood risk up to the 1-in-100 year rainfall event. During the modelled 1-in-1000 year rainfall event (infrequent) some minor areas of sw flood risk are predicted.
Fluvial (River)	The site is 3-4 metres raised above neighbouring ground levels and as such is located within Flood Zone 1 (very low risk of tidal/fluvial flooding). However, the site is surrounded on all sides by Flood zones 2 and 3. A emergency flood plan is a likely requirement for any planning application on this site. The Environment Agency should be consulted for their comments.
Historic	No relevant flood reports have been recorded by Dorset Council near or on this site.
Geology / Groundwater	
Bedrock	Peterborough Member – Mudstone Kellaways formation – mudstone and sandstone
Superficial deposits	Alluvium – Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel Important note: Because the site was a land-fill tip for Weymouth and as such it is made ground.
Groundwater	Groundwater levels unknown.
Source Protection Zone	The site is not located within a Source Protection Zone.

ENGINEERING ISSUES	
Peak Flow	As per DEFRA non-statutory technical standards, any drainage strategy proposed should not result in an increase in peak flow.
Volume Control	As per DEFRA non-statutory technical standards, any drainage strategy proposed, must control volumetric runoff such that volumes of runoff are not exceeded beyond greenfield conditions for the 1 in 100 year 6hr duration storm.
Critical Structures	Unknown
Discharge Route / levels	There are two mapped ordinary watercourses either side of the site (north-east and south west boundaries) which drain towards the sea. Either of these could provide a possible outfall location for a surface water management scheme.
Downstream Capacity	Use of infiltration may not be viable at this location due to pollution risk of infiltrating through made ground. Therefore further investigation and consideration of the downstream capacity of the receiving system may be required and there may need to be an offer of mitigation via proposed SW discharge rates that exceed standard greenfield criteria.
Potential Mitigation Measures	Sufficient land should be allocated to open SuDS features and conveyance routes.
MULTIFUNCTIONALITY	
Ecology	Site is likely to be able to support open SuDS features and must do so in accordance with SuDS hierarchy. Such features may contribute to biodiversity net gain requirements. The level and type of features required should be informed through consultation with DC's NET team.
Rainwater Harvesting	The site should prioritise the inclusion of rainwater harvesting. Rainwater harvesting is likely to have the following benefits: - Reduced potable water use and therefore energy use. - Reduced surface water volume entering surface water drainage system.
Water Quality / Pollution Concerns	Drainage systems should be designed to offer as much water treatment as possible and certainly enough so as to ensure no reduction in water quality from any site. Where water quality issues exist downstream, then increased use of treatment and open SuDS features maybe needed. The amount of treatment offered should be informed in consultation with NE, NET and the EA.
H&S, Layout & Amenity	All drainage schemes will need to give consideration of H&S matters during construction to ensure their safe delivery. Final designs will need to accord with the latest version of the CIRIA SuDS manual and the H&S guidance included therein. If mitigation measures are to be used to exceed H&S standards, i.e. through fencing etc. then further consultation with DC's landscape architects will be needed.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Applicant must demonstrate that the SuDS hierarchy has been followed. It is likely that due to the fact that this site was once landfill, infiltration may not be an appropriate means of surface water management at this location. Infiltration through the made ground may post a pollution risk. Therefore an applicant will need to consult with the Environment Agency to discuss the viability of infiltration based SuDS on this site. If their advice is not to use infiltration then the applicant will need to move down the SuDS hierarchy.

Groundwater monitoring across the course of the year may be required in order to demonstrate that groundwater will not impact the functioning and reduce the attenuation volume of any proposed underground SuDS assets.

Attenuation of surface water with a restricted discharge to an adjacent watercourse may be the most likely means of surface water management for any development of this site.

Open SuDS must be prioritised with multifunctional benefits including improvements to amenity, biodiversity and water quality.

Due to the fact that the site is surrounded by Flood Zones 2/3 the Environment Agency must be consulted on any applications to develop this site. The applicant would need to demonstrate that access to the site would be flood free or at least trafficable during the 1 in 100 year plus climate change fluvial flooding event and the 1-in-200 year tidal flooding event.

A flood emergency plan would need to be submitted alongside any planning application.

INFORMATIVES

- If the applicant wishes to offer for adoption any highways drainage to DC, they should contact DC Highway's Development team at DLI@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk as soon as possible to ensure that any highways drainage proposals meet DC's design requirements.
- Prior Land Drainage Consent (LDC) may be required from DC's FRM team, as relevant LLFA, for all works that offer an obstruction to flow to a channel or stream with the status of Ordinary Watercourse (OWC) – in accordance with s23 of the Land Drainage Act 1991. The modification, amendment or realignment of any OWC associated with the proposal under consideration, is likely to require such permission. We would encourage the applicant to submit, at an early stage, preliminary details concerning in-channel works to the FRM team. LDC enquires can be sent to floodriskmanagement@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk.
- An Environmental Permit may be required from the EA, as relevant regulator for all works to a designated Main River that take place in, under or over, or as prescribed under relevant byelaws in accordance with section 109 of the Water Resources Act 1991. To clarify the Environment Agency's requirements, the applicant should contact the relevant department by emailing floodriskpermit@environment-agency.gov.uk.
- An applicant is advised to have early discussions with Wessex Water in relation to the possible adoption of SuDS features in order to ensure that the final designs are in line with their requirements.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require further clarification with regards to our comments. Further information with regards to Dorset Council's surface water management requirements for planning applications can be found at the following link: [Surface Water Management Schemes](#)

Yours Sincerely,

**Rob Hanson,
Flood Risk Engineer.**