Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Lower Winterborne Neighbourhood Plan

Environmental Report to accompany the Regulation 14 version of the Neighbourhood Plan

Lower Winterborne Parish Council

March 2026

Delivering a better world

Quality Information

Prepared by	Checked by	Verified by	Approved by
A.V. Senior Environmental Consultant B.R. Graduate Environmental Planner	R.P. Principal Planner	C.B. Associate Director	C.B. Associate Director

Revision History

Revision	Revision Date	Details	Name	Position
V1.0	November 2025	Working draft version	R.P.	Principal Planner
V2.0	March 2026	Regulation 14 consultation version	C.B. A.C.	Associate Director Parish Clerk

Prepared for:

Lower Winterborne Parish Council

Prepared by:

3 Rivergate
Temple Quay
Bristol
BS1 6ER

aecom.com

© 2026 AECOM Limited. All Rights Reserved.

This document has been prepared by AECOM Limited (“AECOM”) in accordance with its contract with Locality (the “Client”) and in accordance with generally accepted consultancy principles, the budget for fees and the terms of reference agreed between AECOM and the Client. Any information provided by third parties and referred to herein has not been checked or verified by AECOM, unless otherwise expressly stated in the document. AECOM shall have no liability to any third party that makes use of or relies upon this document.

Table of Contents

Non-Technical Summary i

1. Introduction 1

2. What is the Scope of the SEA? 5

3. Planning Policy Context 10

4. Vision, Aims, and Objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan 11

5. Consideration of Reasonable Alternatives Through the SEA 12

6. Appraising the Regulation 14 version of the LWNP 32

7. Next steps 42

Non-Technical Summary

What is Strategic Environmental Assessment?

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been undertaken to inform the Lower Winterborne Neighbourhood Plan (hereafter referred to as "the LWNP"). This process is required by the SEA Regulations.

Neighbourhood Plan groups use SEA to assess Neighbourhood Plans against a set of sustainability objectives developed in consultation with interested parties. The purpose of the assessment is to help avoid adverse environmental and socio-economic effects through the Neighbourhood Plan and identify opportunities to improve the environmental quality of the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan and the quality of life of residents.

What is the Lower Winterborne Neighbourhood Plan?

The LWNP has been prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

Purpose of this Environmental Report

This Environmental Report, which accompanies the Regulation 14 version of the LWNP, is the latest document to be produced as part of the SEA process. The first document was the SEA Scoping Report (April 2025), which included information about the neighbourhood area's environment and community.

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to:

- Identify, describe, and evaluate the likely significant effects of the LWNP and alternatives.
- Provide an opportunity for consultees to offer views on any aspect of the SEA process which has been carried out to date.

The Environmental Report contains:

- An outline of the contents and main objectives of the LWNP and its relationship with other relevant policies, plans and programmes.
- Relevant aspects of the current and future state of the environment and key sustainability issues for the area.
- The SEA Framework of objectives against which the LWNP has been assessed.
- The appraisal of alternative approaches for the LWNP.
- The likely significant effects of the LWNP.
- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects as a result of the LWNP.
- The next steps for the LWNP and accompanying SEA process.

Consideration of reasonable alternatives

Introduction

In accordance with the SEA Regulations the Environmental Report must include…

- An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with; and
- The likely significant effects on the environment associated with alternatives / an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of alternatives appraised.

Housing context for the LWNP

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides an overarching framework for development in England. It sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It is supported by planning practice guidance, which is a suite of policy papers covering a broad range of topics, including SEA. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the NPPF. The revised NPPF[1] (2025) includes significant reforms aimed at boosting housing supply and supporting sustainable growth. One of the key changes is the reintroduction of mandatory housing targets, which result in an increased housing need figure for Dorset.

As discussed in Chapter 3 in the main body of the Environmental Report, emerging DCLP proposals focus on removing fixed settlement boundaries to enable housing growth within or adjacent to the built-up areas of Tier 1-3 settlements[2]. The policy will allow for development of up to 30 homes (per site) that are well designed, in keeping with local character, provide safe access, active travel links, and affordable housing. Winterborne Kingston is identified as a Tier 3 settlement, making it eligible for housing development under the proposed flexible settlements policy.

Consideration of potential site options

With a view to identifying sites for a potential allocation within the LWNP, the Neighbourhood Group were keen to consider where development could come forward. In this respect, an understanding of site availability within the neighbourhood area was established from reviewing Dorset Council's latest Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and via a local 'call for sites' exercise between September and October 2024.

Following the identification of available site options, the Neighbourhood Group engaged with the community via an options consultation. The focus of the consultation was to understand community preferences and to present the key constraints associated with the sites. Constraints primarily related to heritage sensitivities, flood risk concerns, and transport/access issues. Sites were scored based on the feedback from the community consultation, their constraints, and with

[1] MHCLG (2025): revised NPPF

[2] Dorset Council (2025): '*Local Plan Options Consultation'* can be accessed through this link

regard to their potential to meet LWNP objectives. Further information can be found within the consultation materials which form part of the evidence base for the LWNP.

The site considerations have formed the basis for establishing the outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with through the SEA.

Options to consider through the SEA

To support the choice of a development strategy for the LWNP, the SEA process has assessed a shortlist of potentially suitable sites as reasonable alternatives. This is with a view to identifying the relative sustainability merits of the site options for a potential allocation in the emerging LWNP. Specifically:

- **Option 1:** Site B2
- **Option 2:** Site C1+C2
- **Option 3:** Site D
- **Option 4:** Site H

The options are shown in **Figure 5.1** within the main body of the Report.

Appraising the options

The options identified have been appraised through the SEA. For each of the options, the assessment examines likely significant effects on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability themes and objectives identified through SEA scoping as a methodological framework. Where appropriate neutral effects, or uncertainty, will also be noted.

An initial discussion of the similarities across the five options has been established under each SEA theme. This is followed by a detailed summary of the key differences between the options, to enable the sustainability trade-offs to be identified.

To support the appraisal findings, the options have been ranked in terms of their sustainability performance against the relevant SEA theme, with conclusions reached on whether the options are likely to have significant effects on the baseline. It is anticipated that this will provide the reader with a likely indication of the relative performance of the options in relation to each theme considered. Likely significant effects are defined as positive, negative, or mixed (i.e., both positive and negative effects are anticipated). Where potential effects are uncertain, this is noted by a '?'.

Every effort is made to predict effects accurately, however, where there is a need to rely on assumptions to reach a conclusion on a 'significant effect' this is made explicit in the appraisal text. Where it is not possible to predict likely significant effects based on reasonable assumptions, efforts are made to comment on the relative merits of the alternatives in more general terms and to indicate a rank of preference. This is helpful, as it enables a distinction to be made between the alternatives even where it is not possible to distinguish between them in terms of 'significant effects'.

Summary of appraisal findings

Detailed assessment findings are presented in **Chapter 5** within the main body of the Environmental Report.

A summary of the assessment findings is presented in **Table NTS1**, below. For each of the topics that comprise the SEA Framework) the columns to the right-hand side rank the options in order of performance and conclude whether the options are likely to have likely significant effects on the baseline.

Table NTS1: Appraisal findings - rankings and likely significant effects

SEA Theme		**Option 1** (Site B2)	**Option 2** (C1 & C2)	**Option 3** (Site D)	**Option 4** (Site H)
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Option Rank	2	4	1	3
	Significant effects?	Yes - mixed	Yes - mixed	?	?
Climate Change (including Flood Risk)	Option Rank	=2	**1**	=2	4
	Significant effects?	Yes - Mixed	No	Yes - Mixed	Yes - negative
Community Wellbeing	Option Rank	**=1**	3	**=1**	4
	Significant effects?	Yes - positive	Yes - mixed	Yes - positive	Yes - mixed
Historic Environment	Option Rank	3	**=1**	2	4
	Significant effects?	Yes - mixed	No	Yes - mixed	Yes - negative
Land and Soil Resources	Option Rank	=4	=4	**1**	2
	Significant effects?	Yes – negative	Yes - negative	No	No
Water Resources	Option Rank	**=1**	**=1**	3	4
	Significant effects?	No	No	Yes – negative	Yes - negative
Landscape	Option Rank	**=1**	**=1**	2	4
	Significant effects?	Yes - mixed	Yes - mixed	Yes - mixed	Yes - mixed

SEA Theme		Option 1 (Site B2)	Option 2 (C1 & C2)	Option 3 (Site D)	Option 4 (Site H)
Transportation	Option Rank	2	**1**	3	4
	Significant effects?	Yes - mixed	No	Yes - negative	Yes - negative

Establishing the preferred approach

Following the completion of the reasonable alternatives appraisal (November 2025), the plan making context for the neighbourhood area has evolved, specifically with respect to the site options which have been considered to date. This is discussed below.

With respect to **Option 1** 'Land west of Bere Road' (Site B2), the landowner has withdrawn the site, and it is therefore no longer available for a potential allocation within the LWNP. Additionally, the landowner of one of the site options within **Option 2** 'Land north of the Recreation Ground' (Site C2) has confirmed that the site is no longer available at this time but have suggested that it might become available during the plan period.

With respect to the remaining sites considered through our reasonable alternatives work to date:

- **Option 3** 'Buildings at Abbots Court Dairy' (Site D) is allocated for an intensification of employment uses, as residential uses may not be compatible with the existing uses on the estate.
- **Option 1** 'Land west of the Recreation Ground' (Site C1) has been designated as a Publicly Accessible Greenspace as it is adjacent to Local Green Space (LGS1); and,
- **Option 4** has the potential to adversely impact Grade I and Grade II* Listed Buildings. Parts of the site are also within Flood Zones 2 and 3.

In light of the above, the Parish Council have considered how they might plan for any local housing needs over the short term (i.e., the first half of the plan period), in recognition that 'Land north of the Recreation Ground' is only likely to come forward during the second half of the plan period.

Upon reviewing the constraints associated with the available site options, along with community preferences and local engagement within the plan making process, three additional sites have been identified and allocated in the LWNP to support growth within the first half of the plan period:

- **Site A1:** Land East of Bush Park, off Marsh Lane (for up to 10 homes).
- **Site A2:** Land adjoining Thorpe Farm Bungalow (for up to 2 homes).
- **Site F:** Land at West Green Cottages (for up to 2 homes).

A summary of the appraisals of the additional three site options is presented in **Table NTS2** below, with a discussion of the key findings for themes where likely significant effects are identified presented in **Section 5.6** within the main body of the Environmental Report

Table NTS2: Appraisal findings - likely significant effects of the additional site options

SEA Theme		Site A1	Site A2	Site F
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Significant effects?	No	No	No
Climate Change (including Flood Risk)	Significant effects?	Yes - mixed	Yes - mixed	Yes - mixed
Community Wellbeing	Significant effects?	Yes - positive	No	No
Historic Environment	Significant effects?	Yes - negative	Yes - mixed	No
Land and Soil Resources	Significant effects?	Yes - negative	?	?
Water Resources	Significant effects?	No	No	Yes - negative
Landscape	Significant effects?	No	No	No
Transportation	Significant effects?	Yes - mixed	Yes - mixed	Yes - negative

Proposed site allocations within the LWNP

In the context of the emerging DCLP policy direction on flexible settlements and recognising that Winterborne Kingston is identified as a Tier 3 settlement, the Regulation 14 version of the LWNP allocates four sites to deliver new homes during the plan period. Site A1, Site A2 and Site F (expected to come forward during the first half of the plan period) and Site C2 (during the latter half of the plan period).

Consultation with the community to date has identified support for limited growth within Winterborne Kingston, in the region of 25-30 homes. Recognising that this is a 15-year plan period (to 2040), and that the existing level of development within Lower Winterborne has averaged between 2-3 dwellings per annum (as stated within the Neighbourhood Plan), 30-45 homes is an estimate of growth based on historic patterns. Therefore, the four site allocations (which total up to 36 homes) would support community vitality and local businesses.

Given there is an acute need for affordable housing, the wider policy framework within the Neighbourhood Plan aims to ensure that an appropriate mix of homes is brought forward (in terms of types and tenures) to meet local requirements.

Appraising the Regulation 14 version of the LWNP

For each SEA theme scoped in to the assessment, 'significant' effects of the policy framework within the Regulation 14 version of the LWNP on the baseline are predicated and evaluated. Account is taken of the criteria presented within Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations. For example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of the effects as far as possible. These effect 'characteristics' have been described within the appraisal, as appropriate.

Detailed appraisal findings are presented in **Chapter 6** in the main body of this Environmental Report. A summary of the appraisal findings is presented below.

Overall, **no significant effects** are predicted in the implementation of the LWNP.

Moderate positive effects are predicted in relation to the proposed new housing and employment development targeted at meeting local needs and including an element of affordable housing delivery.

Minor positive effects are also predicted as likely with regards to biodiversity, climate change, the historic environment and landscapes. This reflects the relatively low sensitivities of the plan area, as well as the small-scale nature of the developments being proposed.

Minor negative effects are also predicted as likely with regards to climate change, the historic environment, landscapes, natural resources (soils and water), and transportation. This reflects the rural nature of the plan area, and the limited settlement offer in terms of local services, facilities, sustainable transport connections and employment opportunities. Most of the proposed development sites are greenfield, except for 'Abbots Court Dairy' where the repurposing of existing buildings is being proposed. Furthermore, the River Winterborne runs through Winterborne Kingston, particularly close to the 'Land at West Green Cottages'. As a result, there are flood risk and water quality considerations for the proposed growth areas.

No recommendations are made at this stage, reflecting the likely avoidance of significant effects in implementation and the natural constraints associated with rural development that would be difficult to avoid/ mitigate. The wider policy framework within the LWNP has a strong focus on delivering high-quality and sustainable design through new development areas. This will ensure that housing and employment growth respects the sense of place and character of the community, whilst also safeguarding the integrity of the built and natural environment.

Next steps

Plan finalisation

This Environmental Report accompanies the LWNP for Regulation 14 consultation.

Following Regulation 14 consultation, responses will be considered in finalising the LWNP and SEA for submission. Following submission, the LWNP and supporting evidence will be published for further consultation and then subjected to Independent Examination. At Independent Examination, the LWNP will be considered in terms of

whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with the Local Plan.

If the examination leads to a favourable outcome, the LWNP will then be subject to a referendum, organised by Dorset Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the LWNP, then it will be 'made'. Once 'made', the LWNP will become part of the Development Plan for Dorset, covering the defined neighbourhood area.

Monitoring

The SEA regulations require 'measures envisaged concerning monitoring' to be outlined in this report. This refers to the monitoring of likely significant effects of the Neighbourhood Plan to identify any unforeseen effects early and take remedial action as appropriate.

It is anticipated that monitoring of effects of the LWNP will be undertaken by Dorset Council as part of the process of preparing its Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). No significant negative effects are considered likely in the implementation of the LWNP that would warrant more stringent monitoring over and above that already undertaken by Dorset Council.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

1.1.1. AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Lower Winterborne Neighbourhood Plan (LWNP).

1.1.2. The LWNP is being prepared under the Localism Act 2011[3] and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012,[4] and in the context of the local development framework for Dorset Council. Key information for the LWNP is presented in **Table 1.1**.

1.1.3. The Lower Winterborne neighbourhood area was designated in July 2023 and is depicted in **Figure 1.1**.

Table 1.1: Key information relating to the LWNP

Name of Responsible Authority	Dorset Council
Title of Plan	Lower Winterborne Neighbourhood Plan (LWNP)
Subject	Neighbourhood planning
Purpose	The LWNP is being prepared as a neighbourhood plan under the Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, and in the context of the North Dorset Council Local Plan (2016). Due regard is also given to the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan. The LWNP will be used to guide and shape development within the neighbourhood area.
Timescale	2025 - 2040
Area covered by the plan	The neighbourhood area covers the civil parish of Lower Winterborne, located in Dorset.
Summary of content	The LWNP will set out a vision, strategy, and range of policies for the neighbourhood area.
Plan contact point	A.C, Parish Clerk; Email: clerk@lowerwinterborne-pc.gov.uk

[3] UK Government (2011) '*Localism Act 2011'* can be accessed through this link.
[4] UK Government (2012) '*The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012'* can be accessed through this link.

Figure 1.1: Lower Winterborne neighbourhood area



1.2. SEA Screening

1.2.1. A Neighbourhood Plan requires SEA where it is likely to have significant environmental effects. In this respect, neighbourhood plans are more likely to be screened in as requiring an SEA if both the following apply:

- the neighbourhood plan is being prepared within a neighbourhood area with significant environmental constraints, such as, for example, sites of international or national importance for biodiversity conservation, or large concentrations of heritage assets; and
- the neighbourhood plan is likely to allocate sites for development.[5]

[5] DLUHC (February 2022): Chief Planner's Newsletter, February 2022. '*Strategic Environmental Assessment for Neighbourhood Plans: Timely and effective screening*" is available through this link.

1.2.2. The LWNP was screened by Dorset Council in 2024. The screening process is based upon consideration of standard criteria to determine whether the LWNP is likely to have "significant environmental effects", and subsequently whether there is a need for SEA. The screening concluded that an SEA (and Habitats Regulation Assessment [HRA]) is required due to potential impacts on internationally important designated sites for biodiversity conservation.

1.3. SEA Explained

1.3.1. SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the potential impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key environmental issues. The aim of the SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating potential negative impacts and maximising the potential for positive effects. Through this approach, the SEA for the LWNP seeks to maximise the emerging plan's contribution to sustainable development.

1.3.2. SEA is undertaken to meet the specific requirements prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations).

1.4. Structure of this Environmental Report

1.4.1. This SEA Report incorporates the information required for Environmental Reports by the SEA Regulations. The information presented in this Environmental Report is outlined in **Table 1.2**.

Table 1.2: Questions that Must be Answered by the SEA Environmental Report to Meet the Regulatory[6] Requirements

Environmental Report question		In line with the SEA Regulations, the report must include…[7]
What is the scope of	What is the plan seeking to achieve?	An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan.

[6] Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

[7] NB this column does not quote directly from Schedule II of the Regulations. Rather, it reflects a degree of interpretation.

Environmental Report question		In line with the SEA Regulations, the report must include…[7]
the SEA?	What is the sustainability 'context'?	Relationship with other relevant plans and programmes. The relevant environmental protection **objectives**, established at international or national level. Any existing environmental **problems** which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance.
	What is the sustainability 'baseline'?	The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected. Any existing environmental **problems** which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance.
	What are the key issues and objectives?	Key **problems**/**issues** and **objectives** that should be a focus of (i.e., provide a 'framework' for) assessment.
What has plan-making/SEA involved up to this point?		Outline reasons for selecting the **alternatives** dealt with. The likely significant effects associated with **alternatives**. Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of **alternatives** appraisal/a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the current version of the plan.
What are the assessment findings at this stage?		The likely significant effects associated with **the Regulation 14 version of the plan**. The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing **the Regulation 14 version of the plan**.
What happens next?		The next steps for the plan making / SEA process.

2. What is the Scope of the SEA?

2.1. SEA Scoping Report

2.1.1. A Scoping Report was prepared for the SEA in April 2025. The purpose of this report was to outline the 'scope' of the SEA through setting out the following information:

- A context review of the key environmental and sustainability objectives of national, regional, and Local Plans and strategies relevant to the LWNP.
- Baseline data against which the Neighbourhood Plan can be assessed.
- The key sustainability issues for the Neighbourhood Plan; and
- An 'SEA Framework' of objectives against which the Neighbourhood Plan can be assessed.

2.1.2. The SEA Regulations require that: '*When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies*'. In England, the consultation bodies are Natural England, the Environment Agency, and Historic England.[8] These authorities were consulted on the scope of the SEA in April 2025.

2.1.3. Historic England and Natural England both responded with no specific comments for the scoping report. A reply was not received from the Environment Agency.

2.1.4. The final version of the Scoping Report forms part of the evidence base for the SEA and accompanies the Regulation 14 consultation on the LWNP.

2.2. SEA Framework

2.2.1. The key environmental issues relating to the proposals have been translated into an 'SEA Framework'. The SEA Framework (see **Table 2.1** below) provides a way in which the likely significant environmental effects of the LWNP and alternatives can be identified and subsequently analysed based on a structured and consistent approach.

[8] In-line with Article 6(3) of the SEA Directive, these consultation bodies were selected because '*by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, [they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programme*'.

Table 2.1: SEA Framework for the LWNP

SEA Theme	SEA Objective	Supporting Questions (Will the Option/ Proposal Help to...)
Biodiversity	Maintain and enhance the extent and quality of biodiversity habitats and networks within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.	• Protect and enhance nationally, and locally designated sites, including supporting habitats and mobile species that are important to the integrity of these sites? • Protect and enhance priority habitats and the links between them? • Achieve a net gain in biodiversity? • Support habitat restoration or new habitat creation within the identified Network Enhancement or Expansion Zones? • Support enhancements to multifunctional green infrastructure networks and the network of open spaces?
Climate Change (including Flood Risk)	Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities in the neighbourhood area.	• Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport? • Improve or extend local footpaths, cycle paths or strategic green infrastructure routes? • Increase the number of new development meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria? • Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources? • Support the transition to electric vehicles?

SEA Theme	SEA Objective	Supporting Questions (Will the Option/ Proposal Help to...)
	Support the resilience of the neighbourhood area to the potential effects of climate change, including flood risk.	• Avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, considering the likely future effects of climate change? • Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the neighbourhood area? • Sustainably manage water runoff? • Increase the resilience of the local built and natural environment? • Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are duly considered in the design of new development in the neighbourhood area?
Community Wellbeing	Ensure growth in the neighbourhood area is aligned with the needs of all residents and in suitably connected places, supported by the appropriate and timely provision of infrastructure to enable cohesive and inclusive communities.	• Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality and affordable housing? • Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes targeted at aligning the housing stock with local needs? • Provide flexible and adaptable homes that meet people's changing needs? • Improve the availability and/ or accessibility of local services and facilities? • Encourage and promote social cohesion and active involvement of local people in community activities? • Contribute to improving aspects of deprivation in the neighbourhood area? • Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing and future residents?
Historic Environment	Protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment within	• Conserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their settings? • Conserve and enhance the special interest, character and appearance of locally important features and their settings?

SEA Theme	SEA Objective	Supporting Questions (Will the Option/ Proposal Help to...)
	and surrounding the neighbourhood area.	• Protect the integrity and setting of designated assets on the Dorset Heritage at Risk register? • Protect the integrity of the historic setting of key monuments of cultural heritage interest as listed in the Dorset HER? • Support the undertaking of early archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the special qualities and significance of the neighbourhood area?
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape, including green infrastructure corridors.	• Protect and/ or enhance the integrity and setting of the Dorset NL? • Protect and/or enhance the integrity of the Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase NCA, and the three DCAs that overlap with the neighbourhood area? • Protect and/ or enhance local landscape and villagescape character and quality of place? • Conserve and enhance local identity, diversity, and settlement character? • Identify and protect locally important viewpoints which contribute to character and sense of place? • Protect and extend/ enhance green infrastructure corridors? • Protect visual amenity? • Retain and enhance landscape and villagescape features that contribute to the rural setting, including trees and hedgerows?

SEA Theme	SEA Objective	Supporting Questions (Will the Option/ Proposal Help to...)
Land, Soil, and Water Resources	Ensure the efficient and effective use of land, and protect and enhance water quality, using water resources in a sustainable manner.	• Avoid the loss of high-quality agricultural land resources? • Promote any opportunities for the use of previously developed land, or vacant / underutilised land? • Avoid impacts on water quality? • Support sustainable resource consumption and waste management? • Support improvements to water quality? • Ensure appropriate drainage and mitigation is delivered alongside development? • Protect the neighbourhood area's waterbodies? • Protect the integrity of mineral resources? • Maximise water efficiency and opportunities for water harvesting and/ or water recycling?
Transportation	Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.	• Support the objectives within the Dorset Local Transport Plan to encourage the use of more sustainable transport modes? • Encourage opportunities to enhance connectivity and accessibility within the neighbourhood area, including through the uptake of active travel opportunities? • Extend or improve active travel networks? • Facilitate working from home to reduce the use of private vehicles to access workplaces outside of the neighbourhood area? • Reduce the impact of the transport sector on climate change? • Improve road safety?

3. Planning Policy Context

3.1.1. The local development framework relevant for the neighbourhood area consists of the North Dorset Local Plan Part One (2016),[9] as well as a selection of saved policies from the North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (2003), the Minerals Strategy (2014),[10] the Minerals Sites Plan (2019),[11] and the Waste Plan (2019).[12]

3.1.2. As Dorset Council was re-organised into a Unitary Authority in April 2019, the Council are in the process of preparing a new Local Plan (hereafter referred to as the DCLP). The DCLP has reached Regulation 18 consultation, which was completed between January and March 2021. The latest LDS (March 2025) anticipates consultation on the Regulation 19 submission draft in August 2026, and adoption Winter 2027.

3.1.3. Dorset Council's most recent consultation on the emerging DCLP between August and October 2025 (under Regulation 18 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations) proposes a new flexible settlements policy. The proposals focus on removing fixed settlement boundaries to enable housing growth within or adjacent to the built-up areas of Tier 1-3 settlements[13]. The policy will allow for development of up to 30 homes (per site) that are well designed, in keeping with local character, provide safe access, active travel links, and affordable housing. Winterborne Kingston is identified as a Tier 3 settlement, making it eligible for housing development under the proposed flexible settlements policy.

3.1.4. Neighbourhood plans will form part of the development plan for Dorset, alongside, but not as a replacement for, the adopted Local Plan. Neighbourhood plans are required to be in general conformity with the Local Plan and can develop policies and proposals to address local place-based issues. In this way it is intended for the Local Plan to provide a clear overall strategic direction for development in Dorset, whilst enabling finer detail to be determined through the neighbourhood planning process where appropriate.

[9]Dorset Council (no date). '*North Dorset adopted Local Plan*' can be accessed through this link.

[10] Dorset Council (no date). '*Minerals Strategy'* can be accessed through this link.

[11] Dorset Council (no date). '*Minerals Sites Plan'* can be accessed through this link.

[12] Dorset Council (no date). '*Waste Plan'* can be accessed through this link.

[13] Dorset Council (2025): '*Local Plan Options Consultation'* can be accessed through this link

4. Vision, Aims, and Objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan

4.1.1. The vision for the LWNP captures the community's views and aspirations for the neighbourhood area as expressed through the neighbourhood planning process. It forms the basis on which the neighbourhood objectives and proposed policies have been formulated.

4.1.2. The vision is as follows:

"To ensure the Lower Winterborne Parish is a thriving rural village community that continues to be a friendly and safe location in which all generations can flourish, live and work."

4.1.3. The vision is accompanied by the following five objectives …:

- Protect the area's distinctive character by ensuring that any new development is sympathetic to the local environment and is of a scale and design appropriate to its location.
- Seek to ensure that the rural setting of the parish is maintained and that the natural beauty of the area and its wildlife are conserved or enhanced.
- Enhance highways safety and improve routes around the parish for the benefit of all residents, whether they travel on foot, by cycle, or in a vehicle.
- Protect and where practical, enhance community facilities and services for the benefit of residents; and,
- Identify sites for new development which will meet local needs for housing, employment or improved community facilities and takes opportunities to reduce flood risk.

5. Consideration of Reasonable Alternatives Through the SEA

5.1. Introduction

5.1.1. A key aim of any Environmental Report is to present an assessment not only of the draft plan but also reasonable alternatives. Furthermore, there is a requirement to present "*an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with*".

5.1.2. In developing reasonable alternatives for the SEA, a central consideration has been with respect to the key choices being made relating to the LWNP. These assessments are designed to inform plan makers and stakeholders on the relative sustainability merits of alternative approaches the proposals could take on various elements associated with the proposals.

5.1.3. The SEA process has therefore considered reasonable alternatives through the approach set out above.

5.2. Housing context for the LWNP

5.2.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides an overarching framework for development in England. It sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It is supported by planning practice guidance, which is a suite of policy papers covering a broad range of topics, including SEA. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the NPPF. The revised NPPF[14] (2025) includes significant reforms aimed at boosting housing supply and supporting sustainable growth. One of the key changes is the reintroduction of mandatory housing targets, which result in an increased housing need figure for Dorset.

5.2.2. As discussed in Chapter 3, emerging DCLP proposals focus on removing fixed settlement boundaries to enable housing growth within or adjacent to the built-up areas of Tier 1-3 settlements[15]. The policy will allow for development of up to 30 homes (per site) that are well designed, in keeping with local character, provide safe access, active travel links, and affordable housing. Winterborne Kingston is identified as a Tier 3 settlement, making

[14] MHCLG (2025): revised NPPF

[15] Dorset Council (2025): '*Local Plan Options Consultation'* can be accessed through this link

it eligible for housing development under the proposed flexible settlements policy.

5.3. Consideration of Potential Site Options

5.3.1. With a view to identifying sites for a potential allocation within the LWNP, the Neighbourhood Group were keen to consider where development could come forward. In this respect, an understanding of site availability within the neighbourhood area was established from reviewing Dorset Council's latest Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and via a local 'call for sites' exercise between September and October 2024.

5.3.2. Following the identification of available site options, the Neighbourhood Group engaged with the community via an options consultation. The focus of the consultation was to understand community preferences and to present the key constraints associated with the sites. Constraints primarily related to heritage sensitivities, flood risk concerns, and transport/access issues. Sites were scored based on the feedback from the community consultation, their constraints, and with regard to their potential to meet LWNP objectives. Further information can be found within the consultation materials which form part of the evidence base for the LWNP.

5.3.3. The site considerations have formed the basis for establishing the outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with through the SEA.

5.4. Options to consider through the SEA

5.4.1. To support the choice of a development strategy for the LWNP, the SEA process has assessed a shortlist of potentially suitable sites as reasonable alternatives. This is with a view to identifying the relative sustainability merits of the site options for a potential allocation in the emerging LWNP. Specifically:

- **Option 1:** Site B2
- **Option 2:** Site C1+C2
- **Option 3:** Site D
- **Option 4:** Site H

5.4.2. The options are shown in **Figure 5.1** below.

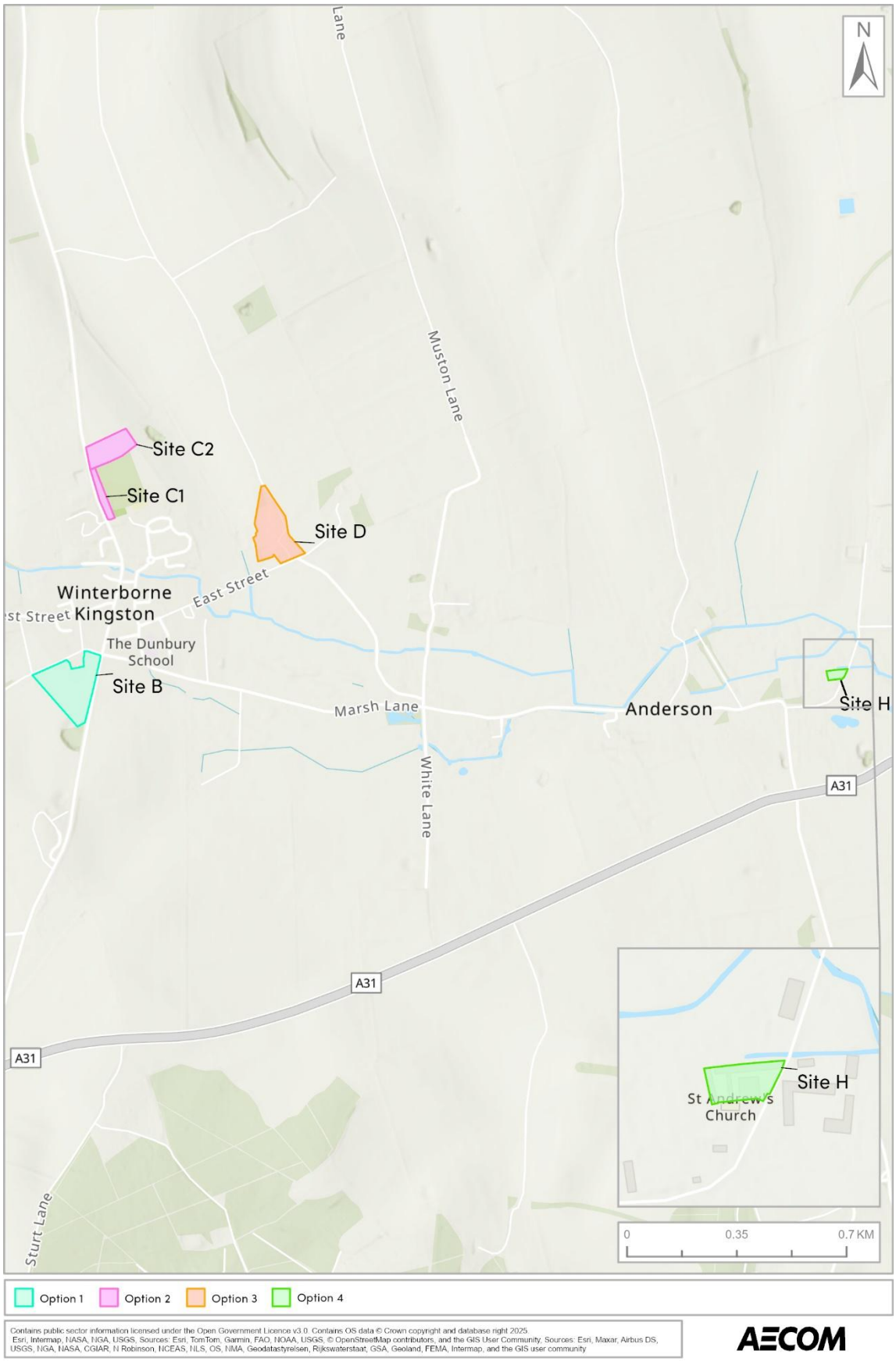


Figure 5.1: Options assessed as reasonable alternatives

5.5. Appraising the options

5.5.1. The options identified have been appraised through the SEA. For each of the options, the assessment examines likely significant effects on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability themes and objectives identified through SEA scoping as a methodological framework. Where appropriate neutral effects, or uncertainty, will also be noted.

5.5.2. An initial discussion of the similarities across the five options has been established under each SEA theme. This is followed by a detailed summary of the key differences between the options, to enable the sustainability trade-offs to be identified.

5.5.3. To support the appraisal findings, the options have been ranked in terms of their sustainability performance against the relevant SEA theme, with conclusions reached on whether the options are likely to have significant effects on the baseline (see **Table 5.1** below). It is anticipated that this will provide the reader with a likely indication of the relative performance of the options in relation to each theme considered. Likely significant effects are defined as positive, negative, or mixed (i.e., both positive and negative effects are anticipated). Where potential effects are uncertain, this is noted by a '?'.

5.5.4. Every effort is made to predict effects accurately, however, where there is a need to rely on assumptions to reach a conclusion on a 'significant effect' this is made explicit in the appraisal text. Where it is not possible to predict likely significant effects based on reasonable assumptions, efforts are made to comment on the relative merits of the alternatives in more general terms and to indicate a rank of preference. This is helpful, as it enables a distinction to be made between the alternatives even where it is not possible to distinguish between them in terms of 'significant effects'.

Table 5.1: Rankings and likely significant effects of the options

SEA Theme		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Option Rank	2	4	1	3
	Significant effects?	Yes - mixed	Yes - mixed	?	?
Climate Change (including Flood Risk)	Option Rank	=2	**1**	=2	4
	Significant effects?	Yes - Mixed	No	Yes - Mixed	Yes - negative
Community Wellbeing	Option Rank	**=1**	3	**=1**	4
	Significant effects?	Yes - positive	Yes - mixed	Yes - positive	Yes - mixed
Historic Environment	Option Rank	3	**=1**	2	4
	Significant effects?	Yes - mixed	No	Yes - mixed	Yes - negative
Land and Soil Resources	Option Rank	=4	=4	**1**	2
	Significant effects?	Yes – negative	Yes - negative	No	No
Water Resources	Option Rank	**=1**	**=1**	3	4
	Significant effects?	No	No	Yes – negative	Yes - negative
Landscape	Option Rank	**=1**	**=1**	2	4
	Significant effects?	Yes - mixed	Yes - mixed	Yes - mixed	Yes - mixed
Transportation	Option Rank	2	**1**	3	4
	Significant effects?	Yes - mixed	No	Yes - negative	Yes - negative

Similarities Across the Options

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

5.5.5. There are no European or nationally designated sites for biodiversity within proximity to any of the four options. However, development through the LWNP may result in indirect impacts to the integrity of SPAs, SACs, Ramsar sites, and SSSIs in the area surrounding Lower Winterborne. Development proposals should assess and mitigate potential impacts on these designations. Furthermore, all the options sit within SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) for all development types, indicating a potential need for consultation with Natural England for any proposed developments.

5.5.6. There are no priority habitats or ancient woodland within proximity to any of the options. As such, none of the options are anticipated to significantly impact the integrity of any of these sites in the region.

5.5.7. Site allocations within the neighbourhood area will need to deliver a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in line with national policy. None of the options are located within National Habitat Network Enhancement, expansion, restorable habitat, or fragmentation action zones. The absence of these zones in proximity to the options means that there could be limited strategic potential for habitat restoration and enhancement. This has the potential to impact the delivery of biodiversity net gain (BNG) in the absence of sensitive design for all options.

Climate change (including Flood Risk)

5.5.8. In terms of climate change mitigation, all four options are anticipated to lead to an increase in absolute carbon and greenhouse gas emissions – related to an increase in activity (for example, an increase in domestic or commercial activities).

5.5.9. **Options 1-3** would deliver housing growth adjacent to Winterborne Kingstone, which is the most sustainable settlement in the area and as such is likely to provide more opportunities to engage with sustainable and active travel into the village centre. This will help to reduce emissions linked to transport. However, it is recognised that public transport networks within the neighbourhood area are limited. Additionally, all options are likely to require enhancements to pedestrian infrastructure, particularly where safe crossing points or footways are currently lacking, to support more sustainable and inclusive access to the population centres in the plan area.

5.5.10. In terms of climate change adaptation, all four options are likely to lead to an increase in the built environment. An increase in the built footprint of the neighbourhood area has the potential to exacerbate flood risk issues.

Options 1 and 4 would bring forward development within Flood Zone 2 and 3. Development at these sites has the potential to exacerbate flood risk in the local area. Furthermore, both **Options 3 and 4** are subject to surface water flooding, although the annual likelihood of occurrence is low. While these sites face risks associated with flooding, development at these sites could present an opportunity to incorporate flood risk mitigation measures within or near the site, helping to reduce flooding issues in the wider area.

Community Wellbeing

5.5.11. **Options 1-3** are located in proximity to the centre of Winterborne Kingstone village, which contains local services including a post office, community facilities such as the village hall, and public transport links via bus stops along Bere Road and North Street. The location of these sites offers the potential to support community wellbeing by enabling residents to live within safe and reasonable walking distance of local amenities, reducing reliance on private vehicles and encouraging social inclusion.

5.5.12. All four options are likely to lead to a growing population in Lower Winterborne. A growing population has the potential to impact upon the vitality and capacity of the local community and community infrastructure, necessitating careful planning to support the expanding population.

5.5.13. All options are considered to lead to likely positive effects with relation to community wellbeing by providing additional land for employment or affordable housing, two key issues within the neighbourhood area. Effects are likely to be more pronounced on larger site options which could accommodate a greater mix of employment types or housing types, tenures and affordability.

Historic Environment

5.5.14. None of the options overlap with Listed Buildings, designated battlefields, Scheduled Monuments or registered parks and gardens. Furthermore, none of the options are within a Conservation Area. This may limit the existing understanding of the special qualities and significance of the historic environment across all options.

5.5.15. Although the sensitivities of individual sites differ, heritage impacts can be addressed through appropriate measures. These might include reduced development footprints, setbacks from key heritage features, use of native planting to screen views, and architectural styles that reflect local

vernacular. Additionally, none of the options would deliver growth in areas with local historic environment records within the site boundaries[16].

5.5.16. Lower Winterborne is archaeologically significant, highlighted by the presence of the Duropolis site[17]. The site is believed to be one of the earliest planned towns in Britain, dating back to around 100 BCE. Therefore, development across all options must consider the potential impacts on the archaeological resources located in the plan area.

Land, Soil and Water Resources

5.5.17. In terms of land, soil, and water resources, all four options are located within the North Winterborne waterbody, part of the Stour Dorset operational catchment. The waterbody has a good ecological status quality according to the latest condition statements from 2022. All sites are located within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) and a drinking water safeguarding zone. Additionally, **Options 1-3** are situated within a Ground Water Source Protection Zone (SPZ). This ensures that development must incorporate appropriate measures to prevent water pollution and protect water quality, particularly given the proximity of the River Winterborne to all proposed development options. Furthermore, the area is classified as being under serious water stress. As such, new development should prioritise reducing water consumption and enhancing water efficiency to promote sustainable water management.

5.5.18. **Options 1-3** are located within a Ground Water Source Protection Zone (SPZ). These areas are designated by the Environment Agency to safeguard groundwater resources from pollution. **Options 1-3** are located within a total catchment – SPZ3.

Landscape

5.5.19. There are no nationally protected landscapes within proximity to any of the four options. As such, none of the options are anticipated to impact the integrity of any of the designated sites in the region. However, the proximity of the plan area to the Dorset National Landscape (NL) means that development should have regard to the most recent NL Management Plan to preserve landscape quality[18].

[16] Dorset Council (2024): '*Nominated heritage assets that meet criteria for inclusion on the Dorsett Council Local Heritage List'* Can be accessed through this link

[17] BBC (2022): 'Duropolis: Dorset Iron Age settlement skeletons unearthed', can be accessed through this link

[18] Dorset Council (2024): '*Dorset National Landscape (AONB) interim Management Plan'* Can be accessed through this link

5.5.20. All four options sit within the Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase National Character Area (NCA), a predominantly rural landscape with significant ecological and cultural value, new development at all sites must be sensitive to its location and setting within a rural landscape.

5.5.21. One of the key sensitivities within the area is the need to preserve its visual character and landscape setting. In terms of nationally protected landscapes, none of the identified options are expected to result in development that would significantly affect the overall landscape quality or visual integrity of the plan area as long as development aligns with the NL management plan to preserve landscape quality and character. Furthermore, development should be sensitive to its location and setting within the Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase NCAs, focussing on maintaining or enhancing key characteristics of these areas such as chalk streams, woodlands, and grasslands where suitable.

Transport

5.5.22. In terms of sustainable transport, all sites are located within 500m of a bus stop, although the variety and frequency of services is limited. None of the sites benefit from immediate access to train services or designated cycle routes. The nearest train station is located outside the neighbourhood area in Holton Heath, requiring travel by car or bus. This limited transport connectivity increases reliance on private vehicles across all options, with implications for local road congestion, parking demand, and air quality. As such, the delivery of any site is likely to require enhancements to pedestrian infrastructure, particularly where safe crossing points or footways are currently lacking, to support more sustainable and inclusive access to village services.

Differences Across the Options

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

SEA Theme		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Option Rank	2	4	1	3
	Significant effects?	Yes - mixed	Yes - mixed	?	?

5.5.23. In terms of biodiversity and geodiversity, **Option 1 and 2** are located on undeveloped land. As such, any development on these sites would need to demonstrate that it minimises environmental harm and integrates appropriate mitigation measures. However, both these options do not overlap with any designated sites, priority habitats or Network Enhancement Zones. The absence of these designations reduces the potential for significant adverse effects on biodiversity at these sites in the

event that development occurs. Conversely, **Options 3 and 4** are located on brownfield land, specifically old farm buildings which can be ecologically important given their potential to support populations of protected species. Further ecological evidence may be required to determine the significance of development on these sites in the context of biodiversity and geodiversity.

5.5.24. In terms of BNG, larger sites such as **Options 1 and 3** have greater scope for on-site BNG, for example through the provision of connected green infrastructure, habitat corridors, or strategic planning, which could deliver measurable enhancements when integrated through sensitive design.

5.5.25. Considering the above, **Option 3** is considered the most favourable from a biodiversity perspective, as it is a large site that could present more opportunities for delivering BNG and it sits within previously developed land. However, further ecological investigation may be required to determine the significance of development on biodiversity and geodiversity at this site. **Option 1** is also a large site that offers potential for BNG delivery, although the land is currently undeveloped. As such, there is potential to negatively impact biodiversity in the plan area during development despite the absence of any designated sites. **Option 2** is considered to be the least favourable in the context of biodiversity and geodiversity. Similarly to **Option 1** the site is on undeveloped land, meaning development would carry the greatest potential for direct habitat loss when compared to **Options 3 and 4**. However, compared to **Option 1, Option 2** is smaller. Smaller sites have less potential to deliver net gains for nature at a scale which could enhance ecological networks and habitat connectivity across the neighbourhood area.

Climate Change (including Flood Risk)

SEA Theme		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Climate Change (including Flood Risk)	Option Rank	=2	1	=2	4
	Significant effects?	Yes - Mixed	No	Yes - Mixed	Yes - negative

5.5.26. In terms of climate change adaptation, **Options 1 and 4** are subject to both fluvial and surface water flood risks. These sites are partially located within Flood Zones 2 and 3, associated with the River Winterborne, and fall within areas with a 0.1% and 1% annual probability of surface water flooding. **Option 3** is also exposed to a minor risk of surface water flooding. Consequently, development on these sites has the potential to exacerbate existing flood risks if not appropriately managed. Flood risk mitigation is considered feasible for **Options 1 and 3**. Owing to their larger size, these sites offer opportunities to incorporate natural drainage

solutions and design and locate development strategically around identified flood risk zones, thereby reducing the potential impacts of flooding at these sites.

5.5.27. Within Dorset, the majority of carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions result from the transport and domestic sectors. **Options 1-3** are expected to see a larger increase in absolute carbon and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the domestic and transport sectors. **Option 4** is reserved for employment land. As such, there is likely to be an increase in absolute carbon and GHG emissions from the transport sector, as people commute in private vehicles in the absence of an established active travel route to the site.

5.5.28. Overall, **Option 2** is the most favourable in terms of climate resilience, with no parts of the site located in areas at risk of fluvial or surface water flooding. However, **Option 2** is situated on higher ground compared to Winterborne Kingston. It is therefore essential to ensure that replacing greenfield land with built development does not exacerbate surface water flood risk within the village. **Option 4** is the least favourable, as part of the site lies within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and is also subject to surface water flood risk, indicating a potential for flood impacts that could be exacerbated by development. Furthermore, the smaller size of the site limits the scope for on-site natural drainage solutions, and in the event of an extreme flood, access to the site would likely be constrained.

Community Wellbeing

SEA Theme		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Community Wellbeing	Option Rank	**=1**	3	**=1**	4
	Significant effects?	Yes - positive	Yes - mixed	Yes - positive	Yes - mixed

5.5.29. **Options 1 to 3** are proposed for housing development and are within / adjacent to the most sustainable settlement in the neighbourhood area with regards to access to local services and facilities. Although in a less sustainable location, bringing forward **Option 4** for employment uses would enhance the existing use of the site and support the local economy. However, it is acknowledged that the significance of impacts at **Option 4** will be dependent on the types of employment uses proposed, which is uncertain at this stage.

5.5.30. **Option 1 and 3** are larger sites, giving them a better opportunity to deliver a suitable mix of housing in terms of types, tenures, and affordability. A key benefit to the larger **Options 1 and 3** is that the design of new development areas could also facilitate infrastructure improvements, such as formalised pedestrian links or on-site parking, potentially enhancing

local connectivity and reducing pressure on the village core despite a growing population. **Option 2** presents a smaller developable area and may limit opportunities to meet affordable housing needs. However, the ability to deliver a dispersed pattern of development across smaller sites might help to better reflect the scale and form of the existing village and maintain community identity and distinctiveness.

5.5.31. In terms of access to open greenspace, none of the proposed sites would result in the loss of designated greenspace. **Options 2 and 4** are located adjacent to existing greenspaces, offering opportunities to enhance accessibility and encourage physical and mental well-being. Protecting and improving these areas will be important for supporting healthy lifestyles, reducing stress, and enhancing overall quality of life. Additionally, population growth resulting from new development could create opportunities to designate further greenspaces, improving access for residents across the plan area.

5.5.32. **Option 1** is considered the most favourable in terms of community well-being. As the largest site, it provides the greatest potential to deliver infrastructure improvements alongside a varied mix of housing types, tenures, and affordability. Its location adjacent to the most sustainable settlement in the parish and in close proximity to existing greenspaces further enhances opportunities to promote active lifestyles, support social interaction, and strengthen overall community well-being across the neighbourhood area.

5.5.33. **Option 4** is considered the least favourable, as it is the smallest site and is located furthest from the main rural centre of Winterborne Kingston. The site is also being promoted for employment use, and its distance from surrounding population centres would likely increase reliance on private vehicles, particularly given the limited provision of active travel routes connected to the site. Furthermore, the potential impacts of development at this site will be largely dependent on the nature of the employment uses proposed, which are not yet defined.

Historic Environment

SEA Theme		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Historic Environment	Option Rank	3	**=1**	2	4
	Significant effects?	Yes - mixed	No	Yes - mixed	Yes - negative

5.5.34. **Option 4** is in a particularly sensitive location, positioned directly adjacent to the Grade I listed Church of St Andrew and lies in proximity to the Grade II* listed Tomson Farm House and the Grade II listed Barn at Tomson

Farm. Development of the site has the potential to impact the historic setting of designated heritage assets.

5.5.35. **Option 1** is located close to several Listed Buildings along Church Street, but the site benefits from separation by Bere Road and a number of houses. This buffer provides greater opportunity to mitigate heritage impacts through sensitive layout and landscaping. However, development here could still have an impact on the setting and visual context of the Listed Buildings if sensitive design is not carefully implemented.

5.5.36. **Options 2 and 3** are considered the most favourable from a heritage perspective, as they are located further from the concentration of Listed Buildings within Winterborne Kingston village centre.. This separation reduces the potential for adverse effects on the historic setting and character of the area. Development at these sites is therefore less likely to impact key views or detract from the overall historic integrity of the village core. However, due to the limited natural screening and the site's similar topography to nearby heritage assets, **Option 3** may require a more carefully considered design and layout to ensure that development does not negatively affect the historic setting or character of the neighbourhood area.

Land, Soil and Water Resources

SEA Theme		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Land and Soil Resources	Option Rank	=4	=4	**1**	2
	Significant effects?	Yes – negative	Yes - negative	No	No
Water Resources	Option Rank	**=1**	**=1**	3	4
	Significant effects?	No	No	Yes – negative	Yes - negative

5.5.37. According to the provisional Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) provided by Natural England, **Options 3 and 4** are identified as Grade 3, but it is unclear whether this falls within subgrade 3a (best and most versatile land [BMV]) or 3b (moderate quality), as the provisional mapping does not differentiate between them. In contrast, **Options 1 and 2** are classified as Grade 2. This land is highly productive with only minor limitations, supporting a wide range of crops. In this respect, growth through all options have the potential to result in the permanent loss of BMV land for agricultural purposes, which cannot be mitigated. However, impacts are likely to be more pronounced through **Options 1 and 2** given the classification of Grade 2 agricultural land, whereas **Options 3 and 4** are previously developed sites and are not in agricultural use.

5.5.38. Based on Defra's predictive Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land assessment, **Options 1–3** are identified as having a high likelihood of containing BMV land, whereas **Option 4** has a moderate likelihood. In the context of agricultural land quality, and in the absence of more detailed data, **Option 4** is therefore considered the most favourable for development, as it presents the lowest risk of impacting BMV land and it is previously developed land.

5.5.39. **Options 1 and 2** are located on greenfield land, meaning they have not been previously developed. This presents a shared constraint for these sites, as development would result in the permanent loss of open, undeveloped land.

5.5.40. **Options 3 and 4** are located on previously developed or brownfield land. Development on brownfield land is more favourable in comparison to greenfield land due to its potential to limit impacts on landscape character, biodiversity, and soil health.

5.5.41. Furthermore, it is noted that **Option 3 and 4** are located within close proximity of the River Winterborne, with **Option 3** situated approximately 70 metres away and **Option 4** approximately 10 metres away. The close proximity of these options to the River Winterborne increases the likelihood that development in these locations could have direct or indirect impacts on the water environment, including the riparian corridor, local biodiversity, and downstream water quality. Furthermore, construction near the river may result in increased surface water runoff, disturbance of habitats, or recreational impacts unless appropriately mitigated. In contrast, **Options 1 and 2**, by virtue of their greater distance from the river, present lower risk to water resources and are less likely to require site-specific watercourse mitigation measures.

5.5.42. In terms of minerals, **Options 1, 3 and 4** overlap with a Superficial Sand and Gravel Resource Block (SSGRB) and Aggregates Resource Blocks designation in the Dorset Minerals Strategy[19]. The same area is also designated as an Aggregates Resource Block in the 2019 Mineral Sites Plan[20]. These areas are deemed suitable to provide an adequate and steady supply of locally extracted sand and gravel. As such, development on these sites must ensure that they do not obstruct the availability of these mineral resources for future extraction.

5.5.43. Overall, in terms of land and soil resources, **Options 3 and 4** are considered the most favourable, as they are located on lower-quality,

[19] Dorset Council (2014)'*Minerals strategy'* can be accessed through this link
[20] Dorset Council (2019)'*Mineral Sites Plan'* can be accessed through this link

previously developed land. Although they are in proximity to the River Winterborne, this represents a constraint that can be mitigated through sensitive design. However, in the context of water resources, **Options 1 and 2** are considered to be more favourable, as their greater distance from the River Winterborne reduces the potential for adverse impacts on the water environment, downstream water quality, and the riparian corridor when compared to **Options 3 and 4**.

Landscape

SEA Theme		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Landscape	Option Rank	**=1**	**=1**	2	4
	Significant effects?	Yes - mixed	Yes - mixed	Yes - mixed	Yes - mixed

5.5.44. While landscape sensitivity plays an important role in assessing the potential for adverse impacts, it is also important to consider each site's visual containment, relationship to settlement form, and capacity for mitigation through design. **Option 2** benefits from a combination of strong natural screening, visual enclosure, and proximity to existing development, offering the potential for integrating housing without prominent visual intrusion. However, **Option 2** lies within an area of rising topography, and therefore, development here could still affect key views and the overall landscape character despite these mitigating features.

5.5.45. **Option 1, 3 and 4**, although more exposed in the wider landscape, are topographically aligned with the area and could be designed to preserve long distance views through appropriate building height, layout, and landscaping. **Option 4** will require careful planning and design, as its relative isolation from existing settlements and proximity to farming infrastructure and heritage assets increase the potential for adverse impacts on the surrounding landscape character.

5.5.46. Overall, considering both landscape sensitivity and the capacity of each site to visually integrate with the surrounding settlement and landscape context, **Options 1 and 2** are considered the most favourable. **Option 1** benefits from proximity to existing development and similar topography to the existing village and can likely be integrated with appropriate mitigation. **Option 2** benefits from strong visual containment, natural screening, offering clear potential for sensitively designed housing with limited impact on local or long-range views despite the rising topography of the site. **Options 3 and 4** sit in a more open location with fewer opportunities for visual containment and integration with existing development, increasing the likelihood of adverse effects on landscape character.

Transport

SEA Theme		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Transportation	Option Rank	2	**1**	3	4
	Significant effects?	Yes - mixed	No	Yes - negative	Yes - negative

5.5.47. In terms of pedestrian accessibility, **Option 4** currently has limited pedestrian access, with access provided via a shared road used by both vehicles and pedestrians and no public rights of way offering direct connections. Developing **Option 4** as an employment site without addressing these access limitations would likely increase dependence on private vehicles for commuting, resulting in higher GHG emissions and fewer opportunities for active travel within the local area. Furthermore, increased vehicle use could exacerbate existing safety concerns and collision risks along the A31, which is already a known issue within the neighbourhood area.

5.5.48. **Options 1-3** benefit from direct access to public rights of way enhancing opportunities for active travel within the area. However, all sites within the plan area are constrained by poor pedestrian infrastructure, roads adjacent to each site lack pavements and safe crossing points, limiting pedestrian safety and accessibility.

5.5.49. In terms of vehicle access, **Options 1 and 2** are considered the most favourable due to their proximity to the main routes through Winterborne Kingston and the availability of access via established dual-lane roads. However, **Option 1** may face access constraints related to Bagwood Road, which is a narrow route currently serving a limited number of homes. In the event that development comes forward at **Option 1**, infrastructure upgrades may be required to enhance road safety and ensure suitable access to the site. However, given the size of the site, new development areas could facilitate opportunities to enhance public rights of way and strengthen pedestrian connectivity between key parts of the village. **Option 2** benefits from its location on North Road, which provides direct connections to Winterborne Kingston to the south and the A354 to the north, offering sufficient capacity to accommodate an increasing population.

5.5.50. With further reference to vehicle access, **Options 3 and 4** are considered less favourable due to their relative isolation from population centres and reliance on narrow rural roads for access. Development at these locations could help to facilitate improvements to infrastructure to ensure that future growth is accommodated without increasing congestion or compromising traffic safety.

5.5.51. **Options 1-3** present an opportunity to increase the uptake in working from home in the neighbourhood area, facilitated through supporting infrastructure in new homes. This could reduce commuting and help to support improvements in the transport network. **Option 4** could place increased pressure on the neighbourhood area in the context of transport by increased commuter frequency. However, this will depend on the type of employment proposed at the site, which is unknown at this time.

5.5.52. Overall, **Option 2** performs most favourably in the context of transport. The site has good access to public rights of way and access to suitable road infrastructure that can support a growing population. **Option 4** performs least favourably. The intention to use the site for employment purposes is likely to increase reliance on private vehicles due to limited public transport and poor connectivity to active travel routes. Without suitable on-site parking, this could contribute to increased street parking within Anerson as commuters travel to the site, adding to local traffic pressures and those along the A31.

5.6. Establishing the preferred approach

5.6.1. Following the completion of the reasonable alternatives appraisal (November 2025), the plan making context for the neighbourhood area has evolved, specifically with respect to the site options which have been considered to date. This is discussed below.

5.6.2. With respect to **Option 1** ‘Land west of Bere Road’ (Site B2), the landowner has withdrawn the site, and it is therefore no longer available for a potential allocation within the LWNP. Additionally, the landowner of one of the site options within **Option 2** ‘Land north of the Recreation Ground’ (Site C2) has confirmed that the site is no longer available at this time but have suggested that it might become available during the plan period.

5.6.3. With respect to the remaining sites considered through our reasonable alternatives work to date:

- **Option 3** ‘Buildings at Abbots Court Dairy’ (Site D) is allocated for an intensification of employment uses, as residential uses may not be compatible with the existing uses on the estate.

- **Option 1** ‘Land west of the Recreation Ground’ (Site C1) has been designated as a Publicly Accessible Greenspace as it is adjacent to Local Green Space (LGS1); and,

- **Option 4** has the potential to adversely impact Grade I and Grade II* Listed Buildings. Parts of the site are also within Flood Zones 2 and 3.

5.6.4. In light of the above, the Parish Council have considered how they might plan for any local housing needs over the short term (i.e., the first half of the plan period), in recognition that 'Land north of the Recreation Ground' is only likely to come forward during the second half of the plan period.

Appraisal of additional site options

5.6.5. Upon reviewing the constraints associated with the available site options, along with community preferences and local engagement within the plan making process, three additional sites have been identified and allocated in the LWNP to support growth within the first half of the plan period:

- **Site A1:** Land East of Bush Park, off Marsh Lane (for up to 10 homes).
- **Site A2:** Land adjoining Thorpe Farm Bungalow (for up to 2 homes).
- **Site F:** Land at West Green Cottages (for up to 2 homes).

5.6.6. A summary of the appraisals of the additional three site options is presented in **Table 5.2** below, followed by a discussion of the key findings for themes where likely significant effects are identified:

Table 5.2: Likely significant effects of the additional site options

SEA Theme		Site A1	Site A2	Site F
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Significant effects?	No	No	No
Climate Change (including Flood Risk)	Significant effects?	Yes - mixed	Yes - mixed	Yes - mixed
Community Wellbeing	Significant effects?	Yes - positive	No	No
Historic Environment	Significant effects?	Yes - negative	Yes - mixed	No
Land and Soil Resources	Significant effects?	Yes - negative	?	?
Water Resources	Significant effects?	No	No	Yes - negative
Landscape	Significant effects?	No	No	No
Transportation	Significant effects?	Yes - mixed	Yes - mixed	Yes - negative

5.6.7. Regarding climate resilience, **Site A1** and **Site A2** benefit from a village location which the potential to establish pedestrian connectivity and encourage active travel. This may reduce the reliance on private vehicles (and associated emissions), although it is noted that public transport options within the village are limited. In terms of flood risk, the River Winterborne passes to the north of **Site A1** and **Site A2**, and to the south of **Site F**. Growth at these locations has the potential to exacerbate fluvial flood risk issues in the absence of sensitive design.

5.6.8. **Site A1** performs most favourably in relation to the community wellbeing SEA theme due to its proximity to Winterborne Kingston and its ability to deliver a mix of housing in terms of types, tenures, and affordability. Along with **Site A2**, the location of the site will support growth in locations within safe and reasonable walking distance of local amenities, reducing reliance on private vehicles and encouraging social inclusion.

5.6.9. Regarding the historic environment SEA theme, **Site A1** and **A2** are located in proximity to the Grade II listed The Old Parsonage (20 and 145 metres respectively). **Site A2** benefits from screening from the natural and built environment. However, **Site A1** has more limited screening from the asset. As such, these sites may require a more carefully considered design and layout to ensure that development does not negatively affect the historic setting or character of the neighbourhood area.

5.6.10. With reference to the land, soil and water resources SEA theme, **Site A1** is classified as predominantly Grade 2 land, which a small section of Grade 3 to the east and north east of the site. In this respect, growth through **Site A1** has the potential to result in the permanent loss of BMV land for agricultural purposes, which cannot be mitigated. **Sites F** and **A2** are identified as Grade 3, but it is unclear whether this falls within subgrade 3a (best and most versatile land [BMV]) or 3b (moderate quality), as the provisional mapping does not differentiate between them. Furthermore, it is noted that **Site F** is located within close proximity of the River Winterborne. The close proximity of this site to the River Winterborne increases the likelihood that development in this location could have direct or indirect impacts on the water environment, including the riparian corridor, local biodiversity, and downstream water quality.

5.6.11. For the transportation SEA theme, with **Site A1** and **Site A2** are within 250m of a bus stop, and **Site F** is approximately 700m from a bus stop, public transport options within the village are limited. Therefore, development in the village may increase reliance on private vehicles, with implications for local road congestion, parking demand, and air quality. However, it is recognised that **Site A1** and **Site A2** benefit from proximity

to existing public rights of way, which may support opportunities to deliver facilitate pedestrian access to from the sites to the village.

Proposed site allocations within the LWNP

5.6.12. In the context of the emerging DCLP policy direction on flexible settlements and recognising that Winterborne Kingston is identified as a Tier 3 settlement, the Regulation 14 version of the LWNP allocates four sites to deliver new homes during the plan period. Site A1, Site A2 and Site F (expected to come forward during the first half of the plan period) and Site C2 (expected to come forward during the latter half of the plan period).

5.6.13. Consultation with the community to date has identified support for limited growth within Winterborne Kingston, in the region of 25-30 homes. Recognising that this is a 15-year plan period (to 2040), and that the existing level of development within Lower Winterborne has averaged between 2-3 dwellings per annum (as stated within the Neighbourhood Plan), 30-45 homes is an estimate of growth based on historic patterns. Therefore, the four site allocations (which total up to 36 homes) would support community vitality and local businesses.

5.6.14. Given there is an acute need for affordable housing, the wider policy framework within the Neighbourhood Plan aims to ensure that an appropriate mix of homes is brought forward (in terms of types and tenures) to meet local requirements.

6. Appraising the Regulation 14 version of the LWNP

6.1. Introduction

6.1.1. The aim of this chapter is to present appraisal findings and recommendations in relation to the Regulation 14 version of the LWNP. This chapter presents:

- An appraisal of the current version (i.e., the Regulation 14 version) of the LWNP under the seven SEA topic headings; and
- The overall conclusions at this current stage.

6.2. LWNP policies

6.2.1. The table below sets out the policies within the Regulation 14 version of the LWNP.

Policy Reference	Policy Name
Policy 1	Preserving Our Historic Legacy
Policy 2	Landscape Character and Locally Important Views
Policy 3	Retaining Our Dark Skies and Rural Tranquillity
Policy 4	Protecting And Incorporating Green Spaces and Wildlife
Policy 5	Built Character Design Guidance and Codes
Policy 6	Promoting Eco-Friendly Development
Policy 7	Promoting Active Travel Routes
Policy 8	Car Parking Arrangements
Policy 9	Mitigating Flood Risk
Policy 10	Meeting Local Needs - Housing
Policy 11	Meeting Local Needs – Employment
Policy 12	Community facilities and local services

Policy Reference	Policy Name
Policy 13	Community-led Renewable Energy Scheme
Policy 14	Land Adjoining and North of the Recreation Ground off North Street
Policy 15	Land East of Bush Park
Policy 16	Land at Thorpe Farm Bungalow
Policy 17	Land at West Green Cottages
Policy 18	Abbots Court Diary

6.3. Methodology

6.3.1. The assessment identifies and evaluates 'likely significant effects' on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability objectives identified through scoping (see **Table 2.1**) as a methodological framework.

6.3.2. Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the strategic nature of the policies under consideration and understanding of the baseline (now and in the future under a 'no plan' scenario) that is inevitably limited. Given uncertainties there is a need to make assumptions, e.g., in relation to plan implementation and aspects of the baseline that might be impacted. Assumptions are made cautiously and explained within the text (with the aim of striking a balance between comprehensiveness and conciseness). In many instances, given reasonable assumptions, it is not possible to predict 'significant effects', but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) of the draft plan in more general terms.

6.3.3. Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted taking account of the criteria presented within Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects as far as possible. These effect 'characteristics' are described within the assessment as appropriate.

6.4. Biodiversity and Geodiversity

6.4.1. With regards to internationally designated sites, none lie within the plan area, but development has the potential to affect sites located at a greater distance. The proposed allocation sites in the plan do fall within the Impact Risk Zones of nearby nationally designated Sites of Special

Scientific Interest (SSSIs) that underpin the internationally designated sites. The statutory advice links to the plan area falling within the zone of influence (ZoI) where residential development is likely to have recreational impacts at internationally designated sites. Notably, the Local Planning Authority has measures in place to manage these potential impacts through a strategic solution which Natural England considers effective. On this basis, significant effects are considered likely to be avoided or appropriately mitigated, notwithstanding that Regulation 14 consultation will still seek to capture the views and advice of Natural England relevant to the specific proposals of the plan. Notably in this respect, Policy 4 proposes a stipulation relating directly to Dorset Heathlands.

6.4.2. The Regulation 14 version of the LWNP is accompanied by a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)[21] which considers the potential impact pathways of the policies and proposals within the LWNP to internationally designated sites. The HRA Appropriate Assessment (AA) identifies recreational pressures and changes to air quality as impact pathways which could significantly impact internationally designated sites (including Dorset Heaths SAC, Dorset Heathlands SPA and Ramsar, and Dorset Heaths & Studland Dunes SAC). The HRA AA notes that Dorset Council has already undertaken work to provide mitigation strategies for both pathways, and the LWNP specifically refers to these strategies within Policy 4 and thereby providing a protective policy framework for any site allocations which come forward. On this basis, the HRA AA concludes that the LWNP would not adversely impact the integrity of international sites either alone or in combination with any other plan or project. Further detail can be found within the HRA Report accompanying the LWNP at Regulation 14 consultation.

6.4.3. At a more local scale none of the proposed allocations (housing or employment) intersect any Priority Habitats or Ancient Woodland, or any enhancement or expansion zones associated with the National Habitat Network. The national requirement for biodiversity net gain that will be captured within development proposals could therefore lead to beneficial effects for biodiversity locally.

6.4.4. There are proposed plan policies that are considered to further support the aims and objectives for biodiversity. Notably, the protection of dark skies and rural tranquillity (Policy 3) will support species, and Policy 4 is dedicated to protecting and incorporating green spaces and wildlife in development proposals (including features within built structures and native planting that enhances climate resilience). Further of note, Policy 4

[21] AECOM (2026): Habitats Regulations Assessment for the LWNP

identifies local biodiversity enhancement opportunities, such as hedgerow corridors that link areas of deciduous woodland, natural drainage solutions, and replacement of Ash trees lost to disease.

6.4.5. With these considerations in mind, no significant effects are considered likely. **Minor positive effects** are associated with the proposed policy directions, particularly given the attention bought to localised opportunities for biodiversity improvements.

6.5. Climate Change (including Flood Risk)

6.5.1. With regards to climate mitigation, it is recognised that Winterborne Kingston, whilst the most accessible location within the plan area, has a relatively limited offer to support self-containment. There are a few local services and facilities including a local primary school and most of the proposed allocations are at the settlement edge in relatively accessible locations. The exceptions to this would be the 'Land at West Green Cottages' and 'Abbots Court Dairy' noting that these sites are further removed from the settlement edge. Whilst this is less favourable from the view of supporting accessible development, the 'Land at West Green Cottages' adjoins existing development, and the site allocation policy (Policy 17) only expects 2 new homes to be delivered in this location. On this basis, no significant effects are expected. At 'Abbots Court Dairy' the policy (Policy 18) seeks conversion/ re-purposing of existing farm buildings to deliver new employment space or community uses. This has slightly greater implications for climate mitigation given the lack of pavement along East Street and safe active travel access, meaning a reliance on vehicular access would be likely.

6.5.2. The plan identifies clear expectations for new development to link to the existing active travel network and allow for future onward connections in appropriate locations (Policy 7). Policy 7 further requires development contributions towards highways improvements that support pedestrian and cycle movement where reasonable. Supported by Policy 8 which favours on-plot parking, the plan places a healthy emphasis on supporting local connections and active travel opportunities.

6.5.3. With regards to fluvial flood risk, the site most notably at risk is the 'Land at West Green Cottages', naturally, given its proximity to the River Winterborne. The site allocation policy (Policy 17) identifies the expectations for development to avoid areas of the site at risk of flooding (both fluvial and surface water) and develop a site-specific flood risk assessment, paying attention to the specific issues at access points to the site. Avoidance measures are likely to be effective given the whole site is only allocated for 2 new homes. Marsh Lane is also affected by high

fluvial flood risk which has the potential to affect access to both the 'Land east of Bush Park' (Policy 15) and the 'Land at Thorpe Farm Bungalow' (Policy 16). The site allocation policies both identify the need to address this risk in development. These sites, along with the 'Abbots Court Dairy' site (Policy 18) also intersect or lie adjacent to areas of medium or low surface water flood risk where sustainable drainage solutions will be necessary to mitigate the potential negative effects. Policy 9 is also proposed to deal specifically with the issue of mitigating flood risk, highlighting the importance of early consideration of potential drainage schemes and prioritising nature-based solutions.

6.5.4. Climate resilience will also be supported by the wider plan policies that encourage sustainable (and eco-friendly) design (Policies 5 and 6) and nature-based solutions (Policy 4). Of note, is also Policy 13 which provides the parameters to garner support for the development of renewable energy generation infrastructure.

6.5.5. Considering the points above, a mix of both **minor positive and minor negative effects** are predicted as most likely, and it is thought likely that significant effects would be avoided.

6.6. Community Wellbeing

6.6.1. Positive effects for the local community are associated with the development of new homes, particularly at larger sites that would be expected to deliver a proportion of new affordable homes. The relative connectivity of the sites to the existing settlement area has been discussed above under climate mitigation considerations, but to reiterate, all sites are in Winterborne Kingston which is the most accessible settlement in the plan area and most of the housing sites are settlement edge development. The exception to this is the 'Land at West Green Cottages' (Policy 17) noting that this site is slightly further removed from the settlement edge but only allocated for 2 new homes.

6.6.2. None of the sites are of a scale that could be reasonably expected to contribute to new community facilities, and in this respect the growth is considered likely to impact upon existing service provisions either positively (by boosting viability) or negatively (by reducing capacity).

6.6.3. The plan further proposes the repurposing of buildings at 'Abbots Court Dairy' (Policy 18) for new employment or community uses. Positive effects are associated with the potential for new local employment opportunities, but it is noted that this site is removed from the settlement edge and not connected by footpaths that could support active travel journeys to and from the site. Policy 7 does seek developer contributions to such

highways improvements, but it is questionable whether the scale of development at this site could facilitate the necessary interventions.

6.6.4. Also of note, the plan proposes Policy 12 which seeks to protect and enhance local community facilities and services, highlighting the targeted need for new community venues, outdoor spaces, a convenience store, and education, health and social care provisions.

6.6.5. Wider plan policies will also support wider health and community objectives, such as delivering high-quality design and development that bolsters climate resilience (Policies 4, 5, 6, 9, and 13), promoting active travel opportunities (Policy 7), and protecting key heritage and landscape features of local value (Policies 1, 2, and 3).

6.6.6. Considering these points, **moderate positive effects** are predicted as most likely overall.

6.7. Historic Environment

6.7.1. The growth strategy for the plan (for both housing and employment development) is not considered likely to significantly affect designated heritage assets in the plan area. Of greatest note is the proximity of the 'land east of Bush Park' (Policy 15) to the Grade II listed 'Old Parsonage' building on East Street. Development may affect the setting of the parsonage, but it is likely that these effects could be mitigated through good design, recognising the asset is now a private dwelling.

6.7.2. Despite this, it is important to recognise the archaeological significance of Lower Winterborne, particular at Winterborne Kingston as highlighted by the Durotriges Project.[22] It will be important for development to undertake early archaeological investigations, however, given the direction for growth at these sites, it is recognised that any archaeological finds would likely be preserved by record rather than in-situ. Policy 1 has captured this risk and identified the need for desk-based assessments and field evaluations (where there is reasonable prospect of remains) that inform the potential to preserve remains in-situ.

6.7.3. Policy 1 further seeks to give weight to non-designated assets in development management decisions, applying more widely to the whole plan area. This will ultimately be a consideration for redevelopment at 'Abbots Court Dairy' with the plan identifying that the site contains locally historic farm buildings.

[22] The Durotriges Project | Bournemouth University

6.7.4. Indirect benefits are also expected as a result of the policy emphasis on high-quality design, and natural environment and landscape character protection and enhancement.

6.7.5. Overall, no significant effects are predicted as likely. It is considered most likely that a range of **minor positive and minor negative effects** would arise.

6.8. Landscape

6.8.1. There are no nationally protected landscapes within the plan area that could be affected by future development. However, the nearby Dorset National Landscape means that development should have regard to the most recent Dorset National Landscape Management Plan to preserve landscape quality. The plan area lies within a rural landscape setting, characterised in the Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase National Character Area profile.

6.8.2. With regards to the site allocations, the four housing sites will develop greenfield land at the settlement edge/ outside of the existing settlement area. Only small-scale housing development is proposed though, which provides good potential to minimise negative landscape impacts. Wider policy provisions seek to guide high quality design (Policies 4, 5 and 6) and protect key landscape features and qualities (Policies 2 and 3) which will also assist in minimising negative effects.

6.8.3. The allocation at ‘Abbots Court Dairy’ proposes the re-purposing of existing buildings on site for new employment or community uses. Redevelopment of the site is likely to avoid negative effects arising, and improvements to the immediate landscape setting could even lead to minor positive effects. The site allocation policy (Policy 18) identifies the need to respect the contribution the buildings make in wider views in the plan area.

6.8.4. Considering these points, no significant effects are predicted, and a mix of **minor negative and minor positive effects** are predicted as most likely overall.

6.9. Land, Soil, and Water Resources

6.9.1. With regards to efficient land use, it is recognised that there is a lack of brownfield land development opportunities in the plan area, meaning most allocations would develop greenfield land. The exception to this is ‘Abbots Court Dairy’ site which contains existing farm buildings for conversion/ re-purposing.

6.9.2. The growth strategy therefore has implications for soil resources, and the remaining housing development site allocations are all thought to be underlain by relatively high quality (Grade 2 or 3) agricultural land (according to provisional national datasets). However, it is recognised that all allocations are relatively small-scale development opportunities, limiting the extent and significance of the likely impacts. No significant effects are therefore considered likely.

6.9.3. With regards to water quality, the River Winterborne runs through the plan area, and the growth strategy proposes development at the 'land at West Green Cottages' lying adjacent to the river in the west of Winterborne Kingston. The site allocation policy identifies the constraints relating to flooding, but highlighting the potential for nature-based drainage solutions in this area could also assist in reducing effects on water quality associated with run-off – this is indirectly elicited through Policy 4.

6.9.4. With regards to water resources, it is noted that the plan area is classified as an area under serious water stress. A priority for development is therefore reducing water consumption and enhancing water efficiency, but it is recognised that this is largely influenced by the directions and interventions of water companies as well.

6.9.5. Considering the varying points above, no significant effects are thought likely overall. There will inevitably be **minor negative effects** resulting from a loss of soil resources but otherwise effective mitigation, such as sustainable drainage systems and water efficiency measures in line with national requirements should largely manage the predicted effects.

6.10. Transportation

6.10.1. Consideration of the accessibility of sites is a large focus of the climate mitigation section, but to reiterate here, the sites allocated under Policies 14, 15, and 16 are settlement edge locations with good potential to connect with the network of paths in the existing settlement area. The 'Land at West Green Cottages' and 'Abbots Court Dairy' (allocated under Policies 17 and 18) are sites which are slightly further removed from the settlement edge, making them slightly less accessible, particularly by means of active travel. Most notably, both West Street and East Street do not have dedicated pavements, and the proposed developments are not of a scale that is considered likely to be able to viably address these issues.

6.10.2. The settlement is served by buses, though the variety and frequency of services are limited. Most sites are within reasonable distance of a bus stop. With no local train station, residents must travel outside of the settlement to access train services. On this basis, car dependency is likely

to remain relatively high in future growth. This is potentially a more notable issue for redevelopment at 'Abbots Court Dairy' where employment or community uses will draw more people to the site. Car dependency would likely place increasing pressures on local road congestions, parking demand and air quality.

6.10.3. Policies 7 and 8 seek to address these likely impacts, particularly by seeking developer contributions to highways/ active travel route improvements and by looking to avoid congestion issues that could arise from additional on-street parking.

6.10.4. Overall, whilst the plan supports targeted improvements that bolster active travel opportunities for local journeys, the settlement has limited connectivity to support sustainable transport access in future growth. Relatively high levels of car dependency are therefore expected to continue, and **minor negative effects** are concluded as most likely.

6.11. Conclusions and recommendations

6.11.1. Overall, **no significant effects** are predicted in the implementation of the LWNP.

6.11.2. **Moderate positive effects** are predicted in relation to the proposed new housing and employment development targeted at meeting local needs and including an element of affordable housing delivery.

6.11.3. **Minor positive effects** are also predicted as likely with regards to biodiversity, climate change, the historic environment and landscapes. This reflects the relatively low sensitivities of the plan area, as well as the small-scale nature of the developments being proposed.

6.11.4. **Minor negative effects** are also predicted as likely with regards to climate change, the historic environment, landscapes, natural resources (soils and water), and transportation. This reflects the rural nature of the plan area, and the limited settlement offer in terms of local services, facilities, sustainable transport connections and employment opportunities. Most of the proposed development sites are greenfield, except for 'Abbots Court Dairy' where the repurposing of existing buildings is being proposed. Furthermore, the River Winterborne runs through Winterborne Kingston, particularly close to the 'Land at West Green Cottages'. As a result, there are flood risk and water quality considerations for the proposed growth areas.

6.11.5. **No recommendations are made at this stage**, reflecting the likely avoidance of significant effects in implementation and the natural constraints associated with rural development that would be difficult to avoid/ mitigate. The wider policy framework within the LWNP has a strong focus on delivering high-quality and sustainable design through new development areas. This will ensure that housing and employment growth respects the sense of place and character of the community, whilst also safeguarding the integrity of the built and natural environment.

7. Next steps

7.1. Plan finalisation

7.1.1. This Environmental Report accompanies the LWNP for Regulation 14 consultation.

7.1.2. Following Regulation 14 consultation, responses will be considered in finalising the LWNP and SEA for submission. Following submission, the LWNP and supporting evidence will be published for further consultation and then subjected to Independent Examination. At Independent Examination, the LWNP will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with the Local Plan.

7.1.3. If the examination leads to a favourable outcome, the LWNP will then be subject to a referendum, organised by Dorset Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the LWNP, then it will be 'made'. Once 'made', the LWNP will become part of the Development Plan for Dorset, covering the defined neighbourhood area.

7.2. Monitoring

7.2.1. The SEA regulations require 'measures envisaged concerning monitoring' to be outlined in this report. This refers to the monitoring of likely significant effects of the Neighbourhood Plan to identify any unforeseen effects early and take remedial action as appropriate.

7.2.2. It is anticipated that monitoring of effects of the LWNP will be undertaken by Dorset Council as part of the process of preparing its Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). No significant negative effects are considered likely in the implementation of the LWNP that would warrant more stringent monitoring over and above that already undertaken by Dorset Council.