Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Lower Winterborne Neighbourhood Plan

Scoping Report

Lower Winterborne Parish Council

April 2025

Delivering a better world

Quality information

Prepared by	Checked by	Verified by	Approved by
A.V. Environmental Consultant	R.P. Principal Environmental Planner	N.C.B. Technical Director	N.C.B. Technical Director

Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Name	Position
V1.0	27.02.2025	Initial Version for Neighbourhood Group Review	A.V.	Environmental Consultant
V1.1	31.03.2025	Lower Winterborne Parish Council Review	A.C.	Parish Clerk
V2.0	08.04.2025	Updated Version for Consultation	R.P.	Principal Environmental Planner

Prepared for:

Lower Winterborne Parish Council

Prepared by:

AECOM Limited
Aldgate Tower
2 Leman Street
London E1 8FA
United Kingdom

T: [redacted]
aecom.com

© 2025 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

1. Introduction 1
2. Air Quality 6
3. Biodiversity 10
4. Climate Change (Including Flood Risk) 22
5. Community Wellbeing 34
6. Historic Environment 42
7. Landscape 51
8. Land, Soil and Water Resources 61
9. Transportation 69
10. Next steps 75
Appendix A Proposed SEA Framework 76

This page is intentionally blank

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[1] and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012,[2] and in the context of the local development framework for Dorset Council.

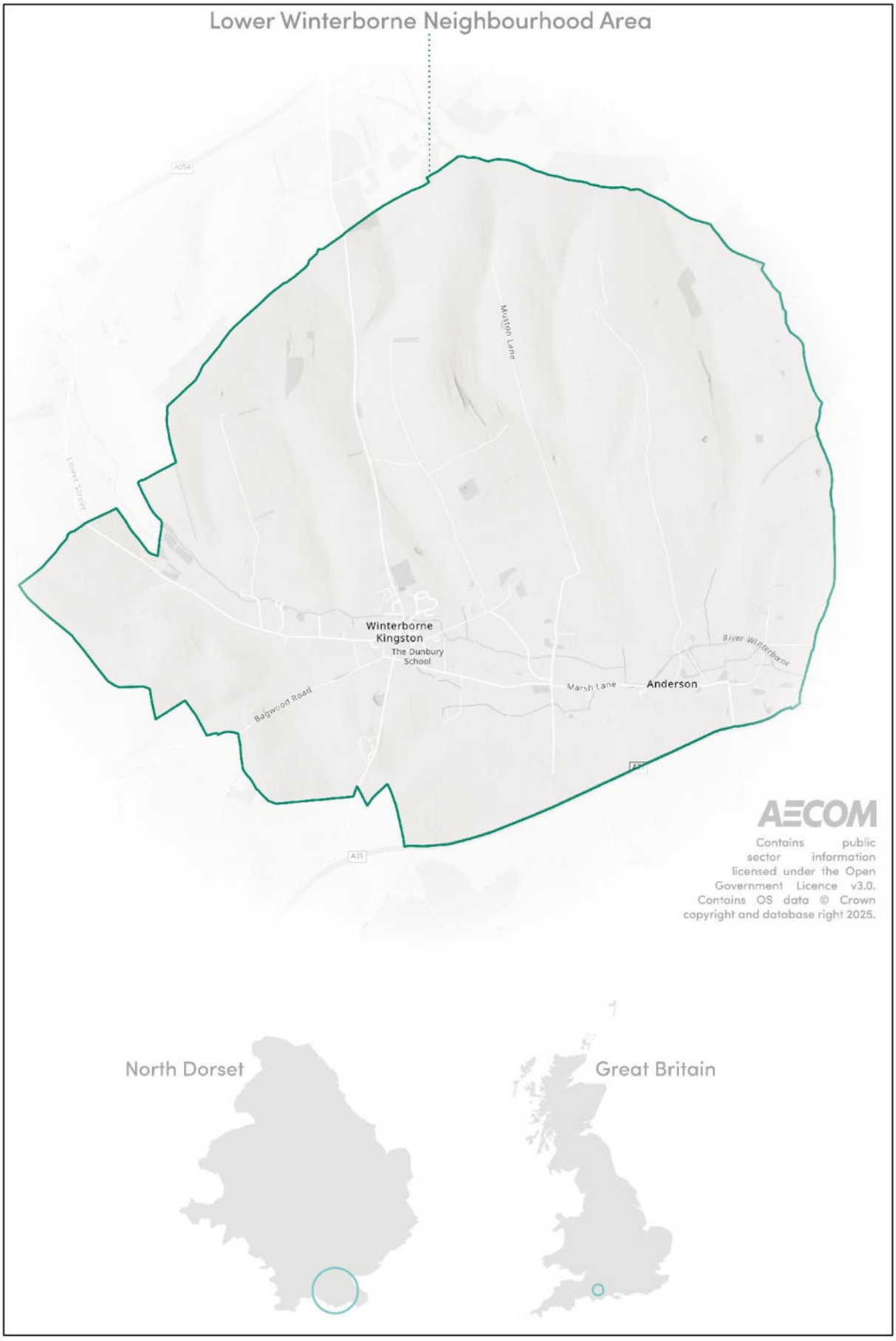
1.1.3. The Lower Winterborne neighbourhood area was designated in July 2023 and is depicted in **Figure 1-1**.

Table 1-1: Key information relating to the Lower Winterborne Neighbourhood Plan

Name of Responsible Authority	Dorset Council
Title of Plan	Lower Winterborne Neighbourhood Plan
Subject	Neighbourhood planning
Purpose	The Lower Winterborne Neighbourhood Plan 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 Lower Winterborne Neighbourhood Plan will be used to guide and shape development within the neighbourhood area.
Timescale	The plan period is expected to cover a period of at least 10 years (from adoption).
Area covered by the plan	The neighbourhood area covers the civil parish of Lower Winterborne, located in Dorset.
Summary of content	The Lower Winterborne Neighbourhood Plan 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

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

Figure 1-1: Lower Winterborne Neighbourhood Area



1.1.4. The development plan for the neighbourhood area[3] consists of the North Dorset Local Plan Part One (2016), as well as a selection of saved policies from the North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (2003), the Minerals Strategy (2014),[4] the Minerals Sites Plan (2019),[5] and the Waste Plan (2019).[6]

1.1.5. 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.

1.1.6. With respect to local housing need, Lower Winterborne has not be given a housing allocation in the adopted Local Plan. However, this does not prevent new housing coming forward, providing it is consistent with the policies in the adopted Local Plan. With this in mind, Lower Winterborne Parish Council are seeking to allocate for an identified local need of 25-30 dwellings in the emerging LWNP. Available sites will be identified through Dorset Council's call for sites form and a local call for sites process.

1.1.7. 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.

1.1.8. The revised NPPF has now been published following the consultation period that ended in September 2024. The new framework 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 now require an increased number of dwellings in Dorset. Whilst this matter will influence the Local Plan spatial strategy going forward, any substantial increase at the Neighbourhood Plan level will not be confirmed until the Local Plan is further advanced.

1.1.9. 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.

[3]Dorset Council (no date). '*North Dorset adopted Local Plan*' can be accessed through this link.
[4] Dorset Council (no date). '*Minerals Strategy'* can be accessed through this link.
[5] Dorset Council (no date). '*Minerals Sites Plan'* can be accessed through this link.
[6] Dorset Council (no date). '*Waste Plan'* can be accessed through this link.

1.2. SEA Explained

1.2.1. 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.

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

SEA Screening

1.2.3. 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.[7]

1.2.4. 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.

SEA Scoping Explained

1.2.5. This Scoping Report seeks to establish a suggested scope for the SEA. A key procedural requirement of the SEA Regulations is to present this scope for the SEA, so that the designated authorities (Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency) can provide timely comment.

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

1.2.6. Developing the draft scope for the SEA as presented in this report has involved the following steps:

- Exploring the policy context for the LWNP and SEA to summarise the key messages arising;
- Establishing the baseline for the SEA (i.e., the current and future situation in the area in the absence of the LWNP) to help identify the plan's likely significant effects;
- Identifying particular problems or opportunities ('issues') that should be a particular focus of the SEA; and
- Considering this information, developing an SEA framework comprising SEA Objectives and assessment questions, which can then be used as a guiding framework for the subsequent assessment.

1.2.7. The scope is explored and presented under a series of key environmental themes as follows:

- Air quality
- Biodiversity
- Climate Change (Including Flood Risk)
- Community Wellbeing
- Historic Environment
- Landscape
- Land, Soil and Water Resources
- Transportation

1.2.8. The selected environmental themes incorporate the 'SEA topics' suggested by Annex I (f) of the SEA Directive.[8] These were refined to reflect a broad understanding of the anticipated scope of plan effects. The discussion of the scoping information for each theme is presented in **Chapters 2 to 9**, and the proposed SEA framework is brought together as a whole at **Appendix A**. Each proposal within the LWNP will be assessed consistently using this Framework.

[8] The SEA Directive (Directive 200142//EC) is 'of a procedural nature' (para 9 of the Directive preamble) and does not set out to prescribe particular issues that should and should not be a focus, beyond requiring a focus on 'the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors'.

2. Air Quality

2.1. Focus of Theme

2.1.1. This theme focuses on air pollution, in particular: sources of air pollution, air quality hotspots, and areas known to exceed objectives for air quality.

2.2. Policy Context

2.2.1. **Table 2-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 2-1: Plans, Policies and Strategies Reviewed in Relation to Air Quality

Document Title	Year of Publication
National	
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (and guidance)	2024
The Environmental Targets (Fine Particular Matter) (England) Regulations 2023	2023
Environment Act	2021
The Clean Air Strategy	2019
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018
UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations	2017
Local	
Dorset Council 2024 Air Quality Annual Status Report	2024
North Dorset Local Plan	2016
Dorset Council Local Plan	emerging

2.2.2. The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The LWNP will be required to have regard to the NPPF, which predominantly seeks early planning to reduce/ mitigate air quality impacts in development and to take advantage of opportunities to improve air quality. Measures to improve air quality include traffic and travel management and green infrastructure provision. Strategic development is expected to be focused on locations that have or will be provided with high levels of accessibility; supporting both a reduced need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. Smaller-scale development should consider the potential for cumulative effects in relation to air quality;

- The LWNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Environment Act 2021, which introduces the need for the Secretary of State to set an annual mean particulate matter (PM2.5) level target. This links to the Environmental Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations 2023, which sets out to ensure annual PM2.5 concentrations are equal to or less than 10 micrograms per cubic metre by the 31 December 2040;

- The Clean Air Strategy outlines how the government will tackle all sources of air pollution. The strategy proposes goals to cut public exposure to particulate matter pollution and outlines required action to meet these goals. Furthermore, it seeks to recognise wider sources that cause poor air quality, such as diffuse sources and smaller contributors. The proposed measures include new legislation and local powers to act in areas with air pollution issues;

- The 25 Year Environment Plan establishes how the government will expand net gain approaches to include air quality improvements, such as planting more trees in urban areas and changing fuel supplies. In particular, 'Goal 1 Clean air' and the policies contained within 'Chapter 4: Increasing resource efficiency and reducing pollution and waste' directly relate to the air quality SEA theme;

- The UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide is an air quality plan focused on bringing nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) within statutory limits in the quickest time possible. The plan identifies that improving air quality and reducing carbon emissions is also important and wants to position the UK at the forefront of vehicle innovation by making motoring cleaner;

- Local authorities are required to monitor air quality across the district, report regularly to Defra and act where nationally set levels and limits of pollutants are likely to be exceeded under Section 82 of the Environment Act (1995). Monitoring is undertaken to assess levels of nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone, benzene, and particulates. Where exceedances exist, areas are declared as air quality management areas (AQMAs) and local authorities are required to produce an air quality action plan (AQAP) to improve air quality in the area. Under Schedule 11 in the Environment Act (2021), a local authority must identify any parts of its area in which it appears air quality standards or objectives are not likely to be achieved within the relevant period. Additionally, local authorities must also identify relevant sources of emissions that are considered partly or wholly responsible for failing to achieve air quality standards or objectives in the area. As such, the Dorset 2024 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) is the last available report for the neighbourhood area; fulfilling the requirements of the local air quality management (LAQM) as set out in Section 82 of the Environment Act (1995);

- The LWNP will also need to be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the North Dorset Local Plan (2016), and any relevant saved strategic policies in the North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (2003). Due regard should also be given to any relevant emerging policies in the DCLP.

2.3. Baseline Summary

Current Baseline

2.3.1. Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) are declared in areas which exceed national objectives for levels of particulates, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone, benzene, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, butadiene, carbon monoxide, lead and/ or nitrogen oxides.

2.3.2. There are no AQMAs declared within Lower Winterborne and the neighbourhood area does not include an air quality monitoring site.

2.3.3. Historically, the nearest AQMA to the neighbourhood area was in Dorchester, over 15 km south-west of Lower Winterborne. However the latest report indicated that Dorset Council would revoke the AQMA, as the air quality has remained at least 10% below the minimum objective, and the revocation order was confirmed in February 2025.[9]

2.3.4. The neighbourhood's road network primarily consists of lanes and country roads, with notable examples including Marsh Lane, North Street, West Street, and Bere Road. However, the A31, a major road that forms part of the national strategic road network managed by National Highways, runs along the southern boundary of the neighbourhood area.[10]

Future Baseline

2.3.5. The growth associated with future housing provision within the neighbourhood area has the potential for adverse effects on air quality in the short to medium term, due to increased levels of traffic and associated pollutants. However, given the existing air quality baseline as monitored is relatively good, this is perhaps less likely to lead to exceedances of local air quality objectives. Furthermore, in line with higher level planning policy, future development should contribute towards improving air quality, supporting opportunities to improve accessibility, particularly in terms of the use of sustainable modes of transport, including active travel modes, working from home and electric vehicle use.

[9] Dorset Council (2025). '*Air Quality Management Areas'* can be accessed through this link.
[10] National Highways (no date). '*Roads we manage'* can be accessed through this link.

2.4. Key Issues

2.4.1. Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified in relation to the Air Quality SEA theme:

- While air quality is not a significant constraint in the neighbourhood area, increased congestion and reduced air quality have the potential to negatively affect the health of residents. Such effects will be explored under the 'Community Wellbeing' SEA theme (**Chapter 5**);

- The effects of the LWNP in relation to traffic and congestion, especially on the neighbourhood area's road network, will be explored under the 'Transportation' SEA theme (**Chapter 9**); and

- The LWNP also presents opportunities to enhance accessibility and support more local and sustainable journeys / connections around the neighbourhood area. These opportunities will also be explored under the 'Transportation' theme (**Chapter 9**).

2.4.2. Considering the above, within the neighbourhood area there is an absence of any significant air quality issues (i.e., AQMAs) and there are no exceeded or expected exceedances of national air quality objectives. Therefore, **the Air Quality theme has been scoped out for the purposes of the SEA process.**

3. Biodiversity

3.1. Focus of Theme

3.1.1. This theme focuses on nature conservation designations, habitats, and species within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.

3.2. Policy Context

3.2.1. **Table 3-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 3-1: Plans, Policies and Strategies Reviewed in Relation to Biodiversity

Document Title	Year of Publication
National	
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (and guidance)	2024
Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework	2023
Environment Act 2021	2021
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018
UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework	2012
The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (Natural Environment White Paper)	2011
Biodiversity 2020 Strategy	2011
The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act	2006
UK Biodiversity Action Plan	1994
Local	
Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Strategy	2023
Dorset Council Pollinators Action Plan 2019 - 2024	2023
Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy 2023 to 25 Refresh	2023
Dorset Local Nature Partnership - Natural Value: The State of Dorset's Environment	2022
Dorset's Ecological Network Guidance Document	2020
North Dorset Council Local Plan	2016
Dorset Council Local Plan	emerging

3.2.2. The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The LWNP will need to consider the principles set out in the NPPF, which indicate that planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance sites of value for biodiversity. Plans should also identify, map, and safeguard components of wider ecological networks, promote positive action for priority habitats and species, and pursue opportunities to secure biodiversity net gains. The NPPF also states that if development causes substantial harm and cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or compensated, then planning permission should be refused;

- The Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework provides a structure to analyse where greenspace in urban environments is needed most. It aims to support equitable access to greenspace across the country, with an overarching target for everyone being able to reach good quality greenspace in their local area. The framework's ultimate goal aims to help increase the amount of green cover in England to 40% in urban residential areas;

- The Environment Act (Schedule 14) makes provision for biodiversity gain to be a condition of planning permission in England, in addition to creating biodiversity gain site registers and biodiversity credits. It recognises there is a duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity and encourages the identification of suitable areas through biodiversity reports and local nature recovery strategies. Furthermore, habitat maps are expected to include recovery and enhancement areas which are currently, or could become, important for biodiversity;

- The NPPF also supports the establishment and enhancement of habitat networks and green infrastructure to allow for more resilience to current and future pressures for biodiversity;

- Over the past decade, policy (for example, The Natural Environment White Paper and Biodiversity 2020) has demonstrated a move away from the traditional approach of protecting biodiversity, to a wider landscape approach to enhancing biodiversity, as part of the overall aims to halt biodiversity loss. The 25 Year Environment Plan places emphasis on improvements to the natural environment; identifying the need to "*replenish depleted soil, plant trees, support wetlands and peatlands, rid seas and rivers of rubbish, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, cleanse the air of pollutants, develop cleaner, sustainable energy and protect threatened species and habitats"*. Working at a landscape scale transformation is expected to connect habitats into larger corridors for wildlife;

- The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is a response to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which calls for the development and enforcement of national strategies and associated action plans to identify, conserve and protect existing biological diversity, and to enhance it wherever possible. In particular, the BAP identifies priority species and habitats that are most threatened and require conservation action. The UK BAP is succeeded

by the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework, which aims to ensure that biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored, and wisely used, and ecosystem services are maintained;

- Dorset Council have produced a series of strategies, action plans and guidance documents related to biodiversity within the county. These will protect and enhance the county's natural environment and should be considered by the LWNP. These documents include the Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Strategy (2023 to 2025 refresh) and Pollinators Action Plan 2019 to 2024. These are complimented by additional guidance and reports related to Biodiversity by Dorset Local Nature Partnership, including Dorset's Ecological Network Guidance Document (2020) and Dorset Local Nature Partnership - Natural Value: The State of Dorset's Environment (2022); and

- The LWNP will also need to be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the North Dorset Local Plan (2016), and any relevant saved strategic policies in the North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (2003). Due regard should also be given to any relevant emerging policies in the DCLP.

3.3. Baseline Summary

Current Baseline

Internationally Important Sites

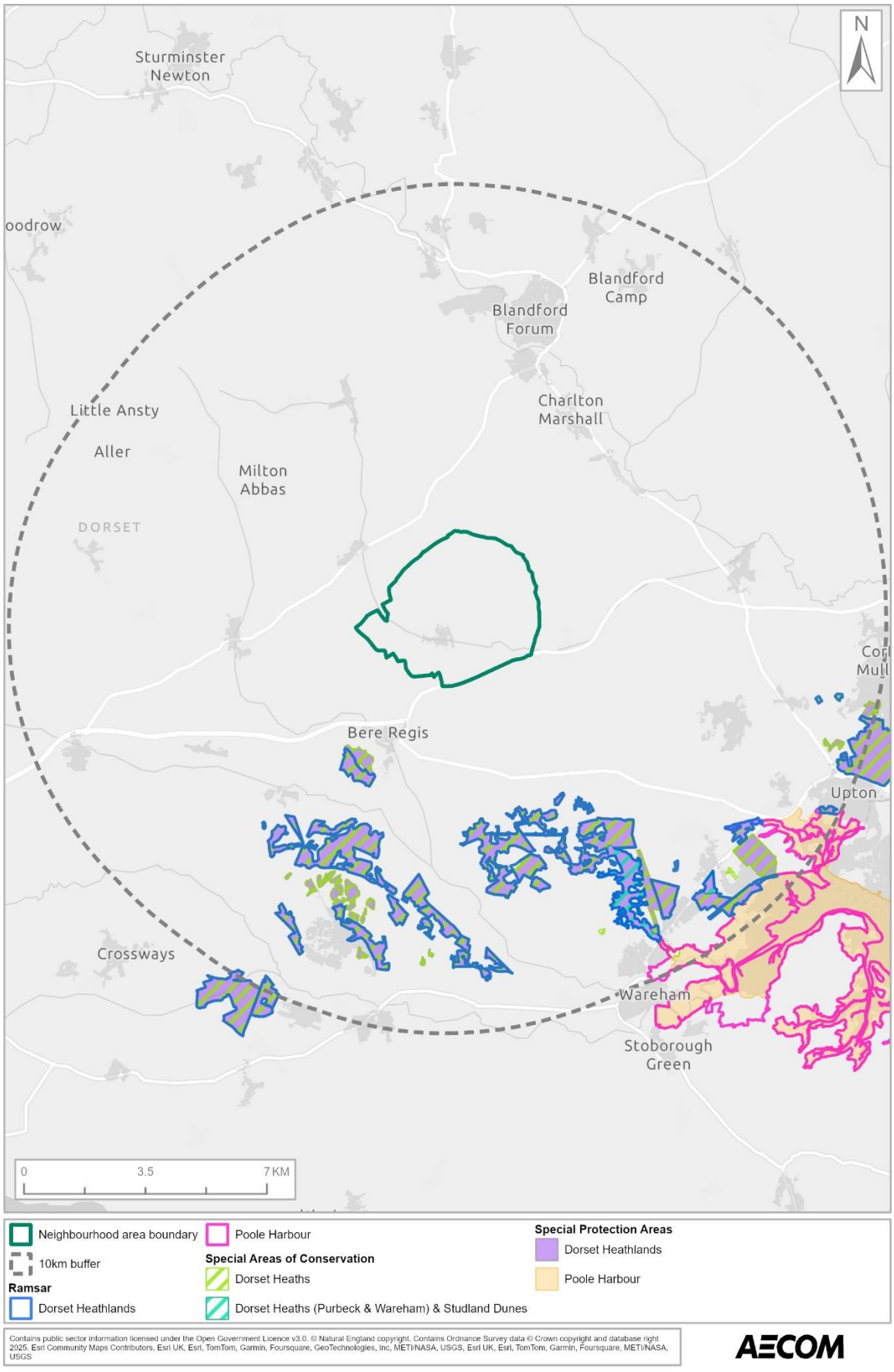
3.3.1. There are no internationally designated biodiversity sites within or adjacent to the neighbourhood area. However, there are six internationally designated biodiversity sites within 10 km of the neighbourhood area boundary. These are:

- Dorset Heaths Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Dorset Heaths (Purbeck & Wareham) & Studland Dunes SAC, Dorset Heathlands Special Protection Area (SPA), and Dorset Heathlands Ramsar (overlapping designations), located 2.5 km south-west. Designated for its lowland heathland habitats and coastal dune systems, supporting protected bird species such as the Dartford warbler and nightjar; and

- Poole Harbour SPA and Poole Harbour Ramsar (overlapping designations), located 9.8 km south-east. Designated for its wetland habitats, which support a diverse range of protected species, including avocets and black-tailed godwits.

3.3.2. The international designations are presented in **Figure 3-1**.

Figure 3-1: International Designations for Biodiversity Conservation in Lower Winterborne



Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0. © Natural England copyright. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2025. Esri Community Maps Contributors, Esri UK, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, Foursquare, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, Esri UK, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, Foursquare, METI/NASA, USGS

AECOM

Internationally Important Sites

3.3.3. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are nationally important sites for wildlife and / or geological conservation.

3.3.4. National Nature Reserves (NNRs) were established to protect some of our most important habitats, species and geology, and to provide 'outdoor laboratories' for research.

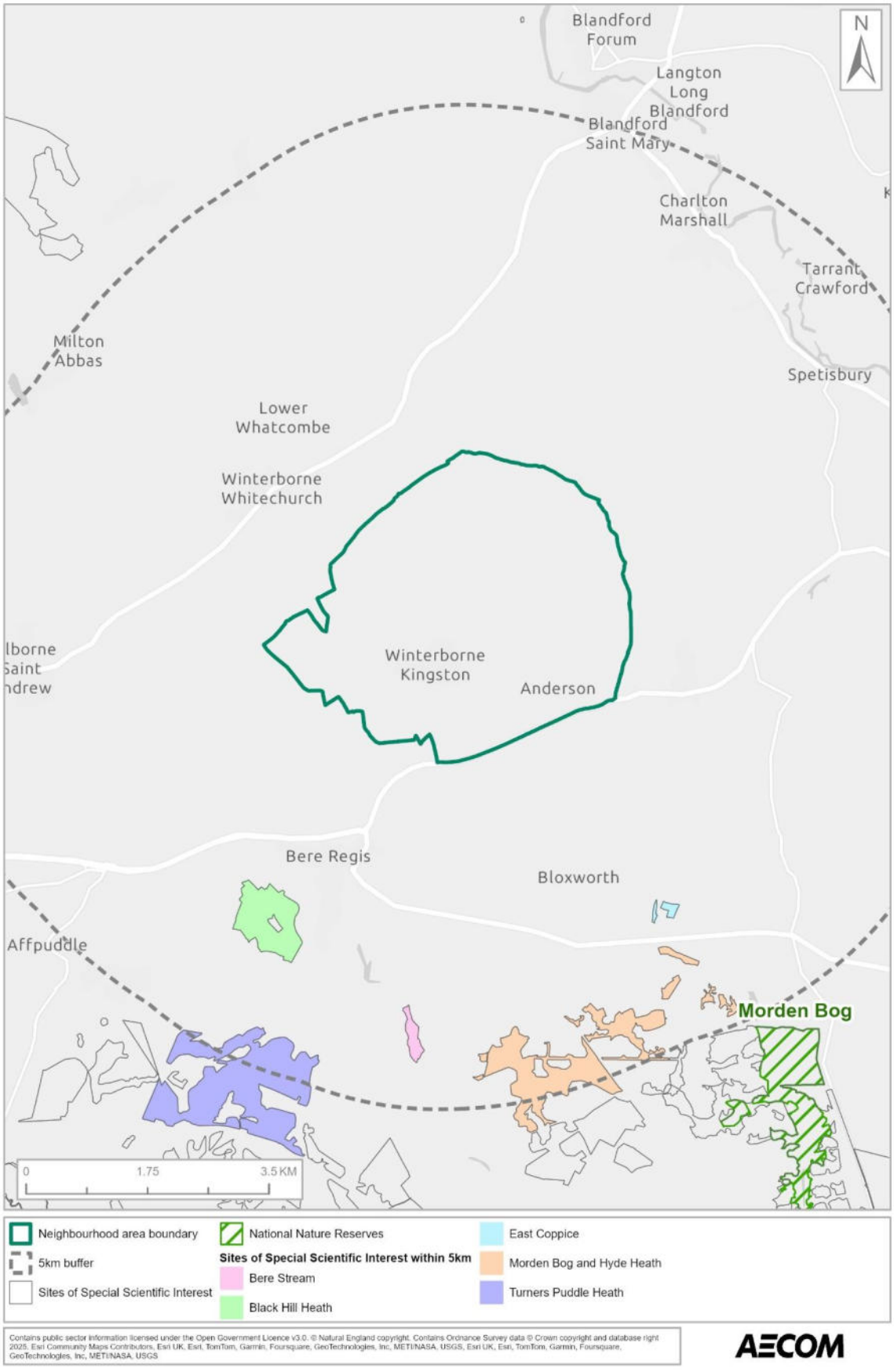
3.3.5. There are no SSSI or NNRs within Lower Winterborne. However, there are five other SSSI within 5 km of the neighbourhood area boundary. These are:

- Black Hill Heath SSSI, located 2.5 km south-west. Designated for high-quality dry and wet heathland habitats;
- East Coppice SSSI, located 3.0 km south-east. Designated for its ancient semi-natural woodland;
- Bere Stream SSSI, located 3.5 km south. Designated for its chalk stream habitat;
- Morden Bog and Hyde Heath SSSI, located 3.6 km south-west. One of the largest remaining valley mire and heathland complexes in Dorset; and
- Turners Puddle Heath SSSI, located 4.5 km south-west. Designated for its extensive lowland heath habitats.

3.3.6. SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) are a GIS tool/dataset that map zones around each SSSI according to their sensitivities. They specify the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts at a given location, and thresholds of development which indicate a need to consult Natural England. In this respect, the entirety of the neighbourhood area overlaps with IRZs for all development types; therefore, consultation with Natural England may be required for any applications that come forward in these locations.

3.3.7. The international and national designations are presented in **Figure 3-2**.

Figure 3-2: International and National Designations for Biodiversity Conservation in Lower Winterborne



Locally Important Sites

3.3.8. Dorset is home to around 1,300 sites recognised as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs). These are sites that are considered to be of at least county level importance for nature.

3.3.9. North Dorset's Local Plan Inset Maps (specifically, Sheet 24) indicated that there is one SNCI in Lower Winterborne: Den Wood, located in the north-eastern extents of the neighbourhood area (this overlaps with an ancient & semi-natural woodland designation, see **Figure 3-3**).[11]

3.3.10. There are no Local Nature Reserves within 2 km of the neighbourhood area.

Priority Habitats and Species

3.3.11. The neighbourhood area is interspersed with a range of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats, as shown in **Figure 3-3**.

3.3.12. BAP Priority Habitats within the neighbourhood area include: coastal and floodplain grazing marsh (found in one location, east of Winterborne Kingston); deciduous woodland (found in central and northern parts of the neighbourhood area); one site of traditional orchard (found in the centre of Lower Winterborne); and woodpasture and parkland (found in Winterborne Tomson, in the south-east of the neighbourhood area).

3.3.13. The Dorset Environmental Records Centre (DERC)[12] contains archives of protected and notable species within Dorset, including those species protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981[13] and under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. The BAP Priority Habitats and ecological designations within and surrounding the neighbourhood area are likely to support populations of protected species.

Ancient Woodland

3.3.14. Ancient woodland takes hundreds of years to establish. It is considered important for its wildlife (often including rare and threatened species), and soils. Ancient woodland includes land that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. This means the following is included under its designation:

- Ancient semi-natural woodland mainly made up of trees and shrubs native to the site, usually arising from natural regeneration; and
- Plantations on ancient woodland sites - replanted with conifer and broadleaved trees that retain ancient woodland features, such as undisturbed soil, ground flora and fungi.[14]

[11] Dorset Council (2003). 'Sheet 24' can be accessed through this link.
[12] The Dorset Environmental Records Centre website can be accessed here.
[13] UK Government (1981) 'The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981' can be accessed here.
[14] GOV.UK (2022). '*Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions*' can be accessed through this link.

3.3.15. Within the neighbourhood area, there is one site of ancient & semi-natural woodland: Den Wood, found in the north-east. Straddling the north-eastern boundary are two other ancient woodland sites, including Little Coll Wood and Great Coll Wood (see **Figure 3-3**).

National Habitat Network

3.3.16. The National Habitat Network (NHN) is a set of maps that work to help identify areas for future habitat creation and restoration at a landscape scale.[15]

3.3.17. As shown in **Figure 3-4**, Network Enhancement Zone 2 (most suitable for new habitats and green infrastructure) and Restorable Habitat can be found by the neighbourhood area's north-eastern border. There is also a very small area of Zone 2 that is found at the neighbourhood area's southern border.

[15] Natural England (2020). '*National Habitat Network Maps*' can be accessed through this link.

Figure 3-3: Habitats and Ancient Woodland in Lower Winterborne

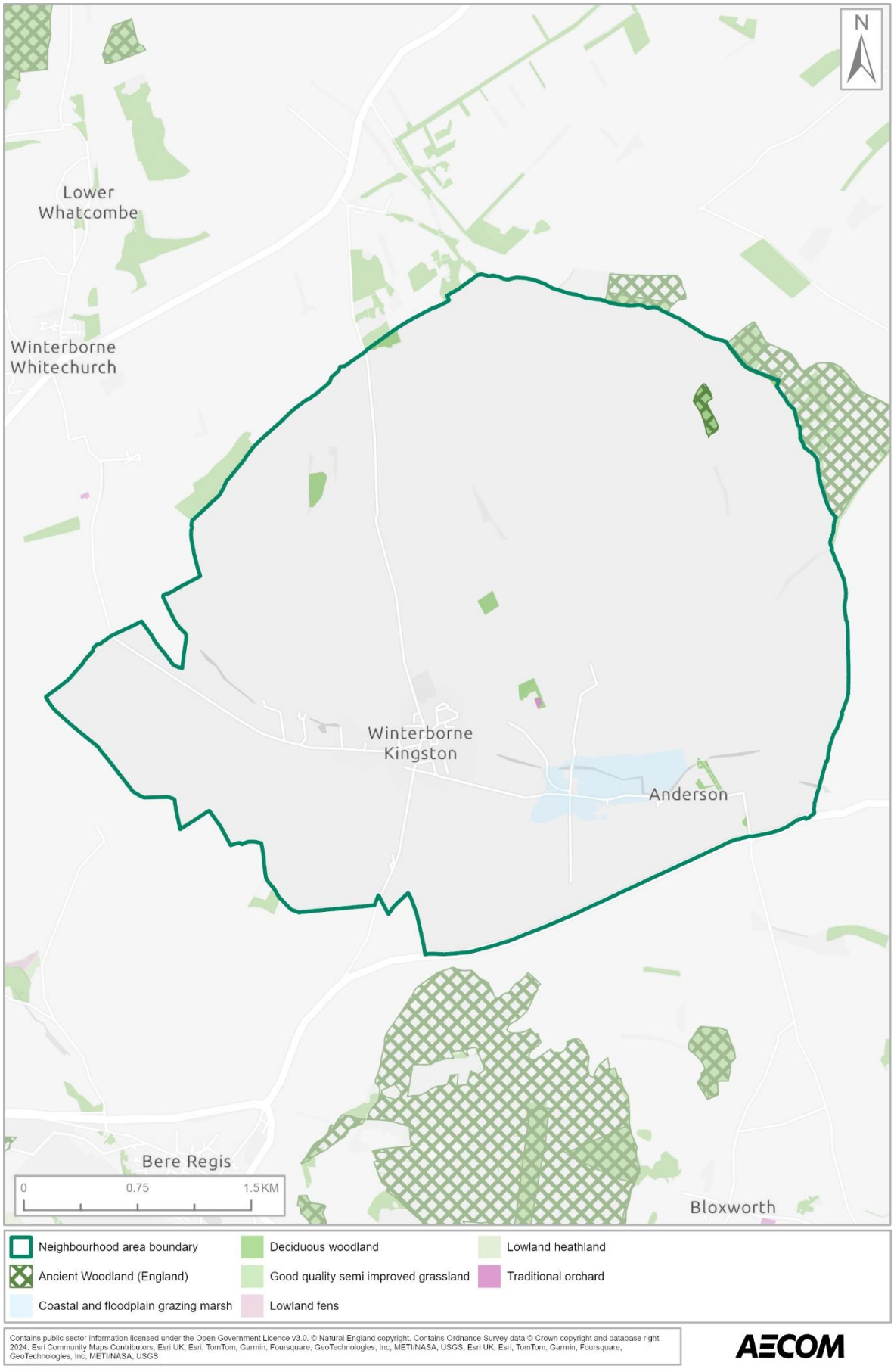
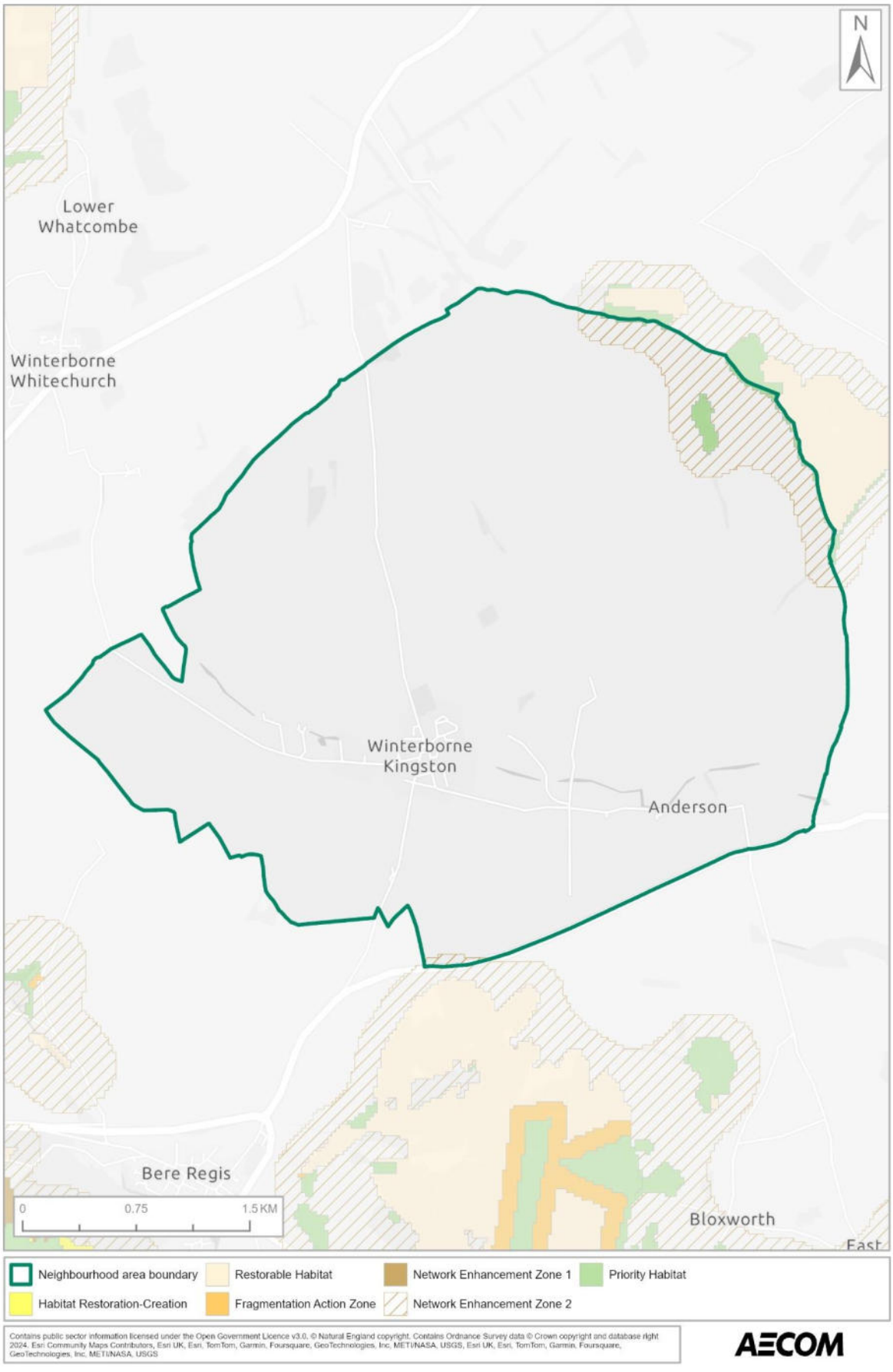


Figure 3-4: National Habitat Network in Lower Winterborne



Future Baseline

3.3.18. Habitats and species will potentially face increasing pressures from future development within the neighbourhood area, with the potential for negative impacts on the wider ecological network. This may include a loss of habitats and impacts on biodiversity networks, which may be exacerbated by the effects of climate change. This has the potential to lead to changes in the distribution and abundance of species and changes to the composition of habitats.

3.3.19. The LWNP presents an opportunity to maximise benefits for biodiversity by including consideration of important habitats, species, and designated sites at an early stage of planning for future growth. To maintain and improve the condition of biodiversity in the future, it will be important to not only protect and enhance important habitats, but also the connections between them. It will be crucial to effectively coordinate the delivery of new development to ensure that opportunities to improve green infrastructure and ecological corridors are maximised within the neighbourhood area.

3.4. Key Issues

3.4.1. Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified in relation to Biodiversity:

- New 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;

- The neighbourhood area contains various BAP Priority Habitats, such as coastal and floodplain grazing marsh and deciduous woodland. These habitats support protected species, requiring careful planning to avoid habitat loss and fragmentation;

- The entire neighbourhood area overlaps with IRZs for all development types, indicating a potential need for consultation with Natural England for any proposed developments; and

- The LWNP presents an opportunity to improve biodiversity in the neighbourhood area by encouraging development to incorporate biodiversity net-gain techniques and features. Furthermore, the emerging LWNP could encourage the creation, better connectivity and / or recovery of habitats, which will bring biodiversity ecological benefits to the neighbourhood area and the surrounding environment.

3.5. SEA Objective

3.5.1. Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective and assessment questions in relation to Biodiversity:

Table 3-2: Proposed SEA Objective for Biodiversity

SEA Objective	Assessment Questions (Will the Option / Proposal Help to...)
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? • Deliver net gains for nature? • 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?

4. Climate Change (Including Flood Risk)

4.1. Focus of Theme

4.1.1. This theme focuses on activities in the neighbourhood area that contribute to climate change and climate change mitigation, as well as the effects of climate change, including flood risk, and climate change adaptation.

4.2. Policy Context

4.2.1. **Table 4-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 4-1: Plans, Policies and Strategies Reviewed in Relation to Climate Change and Flood Risk

Document Title	Year of Publication
National	
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (and guidance)	2024
Third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3)	2023
UK Climate Change Risk Assessment	2022
The National Design Guide	2021
National Model Design Code	2021
National Infrastructure Assessment	2021
Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener	2021
UK Sixth Carbon Budget	2020
National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy	2020
Heat Networks: Building a Market Framework	2020
The Clean Air Strategy	2019
Clean Growth Strategy	2019
25-Year Environment Plan	2019
How Local Authorities Can Reduce Emissions and Manage Climate Change Risk	2012
Flood and Water Management Act	2010
UK Climate Change Act	2008

Document Title	Year of Publication
Local	
Dorset Council Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	2024
Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy 2023 to 25 Refresh	2023
Dorset Water Action Plan	2021
North Dorset Local Plan	2016
Dorset Council Local Plan	emerging

4.2.2. The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The LWNP will be required to have regard to the NPPF, which requires proactive planning to both mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies are expected to improve the resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, avoid inappropriate development in the flood plain, and support the move to a low carbon economy. The NPPF recognises the potential for planning to shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, and deliver long-term resilience, including through reuse, regeneration, and conversion;

- The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment is published on a 5-yearly cycle in accordance with the requirements of the Climate Change Act 2008. It required the Government to compile an assessment of the risks for the UK arising from climate change, and then to develop an adaptation programme to address those risks and deliver resilience to climate change on the ground. For both the 2012 and the 2017 UK Climate Change Risk Assessment, the Adaptation Sub-Committee commissioned an evidence report aiming to understand the current and future climate risks and opportunities.

- Following the publication of each Change Risk Assessment, the Government must lay out its objectives, policies, and proposals to address the climate change risks and opportunities. The third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3), sets out these objectives, policies, and proposals, was published in 2023.

- The Sixth Carbon Budget, required under the Climate Change Act, is the legal limit of UK net greenhouse gas emissions and requires the country to reduce emissions by 78% by 2035 relative to 1990 levels. This puts the country on track to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 at the latest;

- The National Design Guide (NDG) and the National Design Code address how the Government recognises “well-designed places” including opportunities for climate change measures. Notably the NDG defines what constitutes a well-designed place using ten characteristics under three themes of climate, character, and community. Under the climate theme, homes and buildings should be functional, healthy, and sustainable, resources should be efficient and resilient, and buildings should be made to last;

- The National Infrastructure Assessment is published every five years and analyses the UK’s long-term economic infrastructure needs to create a strategic vision and recommendations. The baseline report states that climate change will increase pressures on all sectors, including economic infrastructure;

- The Clean Growth Strategy, Clean Air Strategy, Net Zero Strategy, and the 25-year Environment Plan are a suite of documents which seek to progress the government’s commitment under the UK Climate Change Act to becoming net zero by 2050. The documents set out detailed proposals on how the government will tackle all sources of air pollution, whilst maintaining an affordable energy supply and increasing economic growth. This parallels with the 25-year Environment Plan, which further seeks to manage land resources sustainably, recover and reinstate nature, protect soils and habitats, increase resource efficiency, improve water quality, and connect people with the environment. The documents also interlink with the government’s commitment to decarbonising transport, a recognised challenge that needs more work in a timely manner if government are to achieve net zero targets. Furthermore, the decarbonisation plan recognises the twinned need to undertake action to adapt the transport sector and increase resilience to climate change risks; and this challenge is more directly addressed through the UK’s National Adaptation Programme;

- The Flood and Water Management Act was introduced in 2010 as a response to the need to develop better resilience to climate change. The Act requires better management of flood risk, creating safeguards against rises in surface water drainage charges, and protecting water supplies for consumers. Good flood and coastal risk management is further outlined through the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy (2020). At a local scale, the Dorset Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 (2024) provides understanding of flood risk within the Council area to inform planning decisions and ensure sustainable development;

- The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy released a framework for heat networks which includes proposals to increase access to renewable heat sources and achieve a net zero target by 2050;

- The Committee of Climate Change's 2012 report entitled 'How Local Authorities Can Reduce Emissions and Manage Climate Change Risk' emphasises the crucial role councils have in helping the UK meet its carbon targets and preparing for the impacts of climate change. It outlines specific opportunities for reducing emissions and highlights good practice examples from Local Authorities;

- Dorset Council's Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy (2023 to 25 Refresh) summarises the Council's approach to tackling the climate emergency by setting a clear direction with realistic and achievable ambitions to become a carbon neutral council by 2040 and a carbon neutral county by 2050;

- The Dorset Council Water Action Plan (2021) outlines actions for reducing water demand, wastage, and managing water resources sustainably in Dorset, while also focusing on flood risk management, alleviation, and mitigation; and

- The LWNP will also need to be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the North Dorset Local Plan (2016), and any relevant saved strategic policies in the North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (2003). Due regard should also be given to any relevant emerging policies in the DCLP.

4.3. Baseline Summary

Current Baseline

Climate Emergency

4.3.1. Dorset Council declared a climate emergency in 2019, with the aspiration of becoming a carbon-neutral council by 2040 and a carbon neutral county by 2050. Since the climate emergency declaration, Dorset Council have produced their first Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy and a refreshed Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Strategy.

Contribution to Climate Change

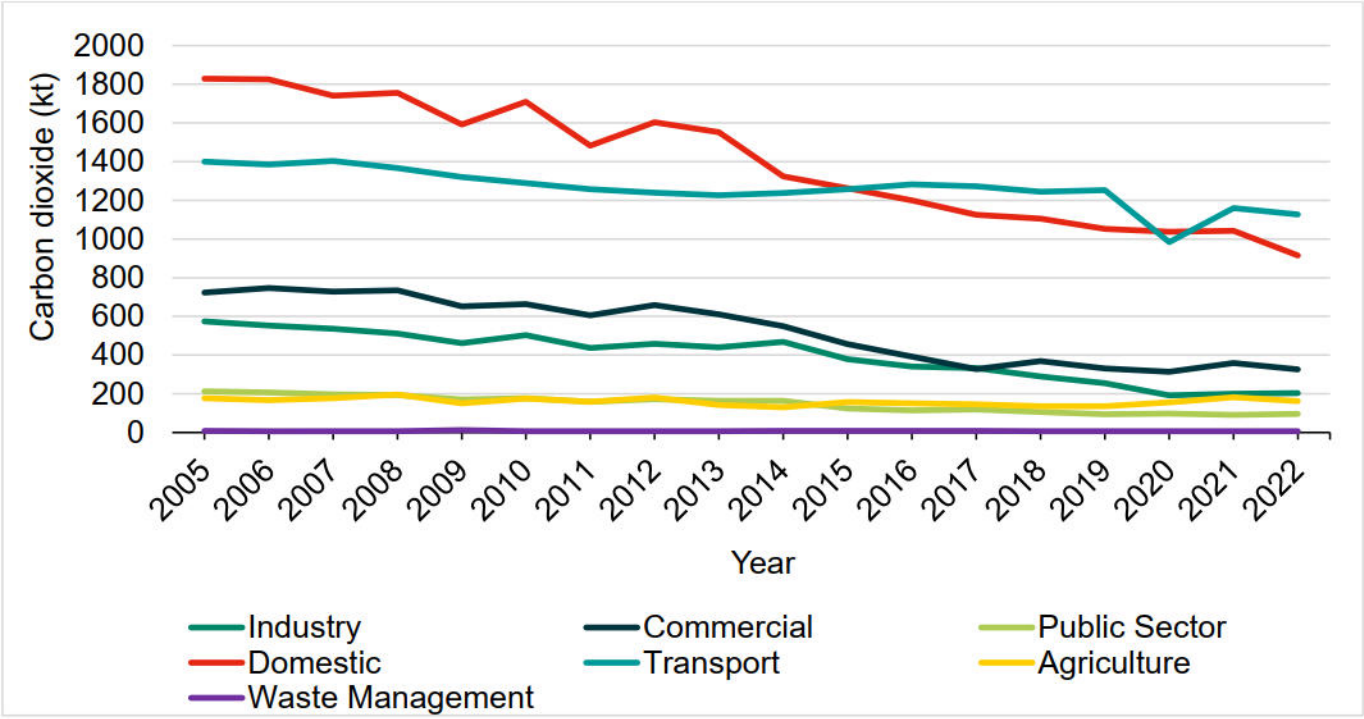
4.3.2. The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order of 2019 requires carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions from the built environment to be monitored and recorded at the local authority level. The CO_2 emissions shown in **Figure 4-1** and **Figure 4-2** are derived from data supplied by the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy.[16]

4.3.3. Beginning with **Figure 4-1**, it shows that throughout the entirety of the period observed, the majority of Dorset's CO_2 emissions arose from two sectors: transport and domestic.

[16] Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (2024). '*UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005-2022'* can be accessed through this link. Table 1.2.

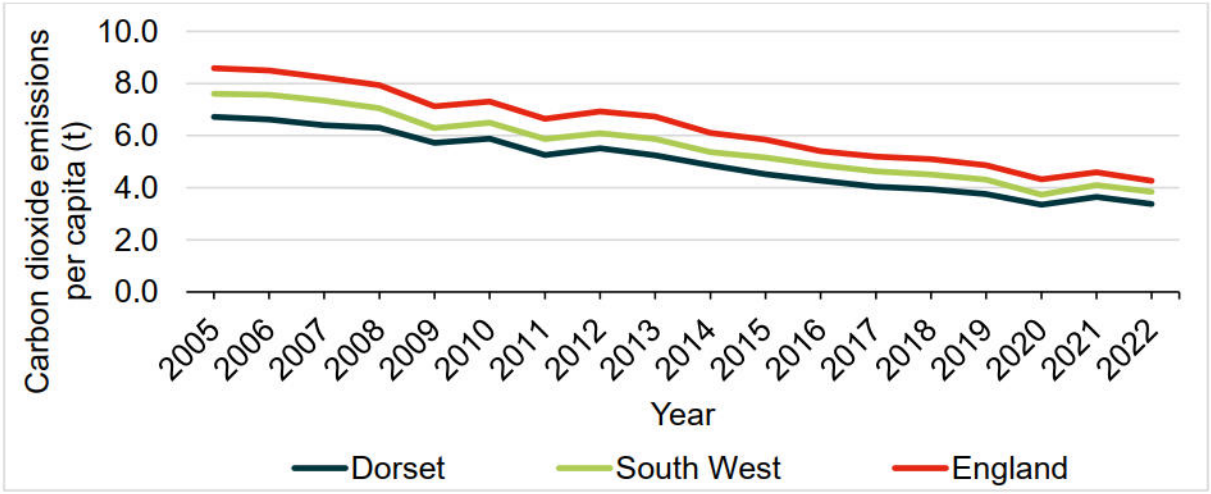
4.3.4. While the transport sector has reduced its CO_2 emissions since 2005, the decline has been slower than in many other industries, including the domestic sector, which it surpassed as the highest-emitting industry in 2015. Although transport emissions dropped significantly between 2019 and 2020 - likely due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic - by 2021, they had risen again, though they remained below their 2007 peak.

Figure 4-1: Local Authority territorial carbon dioxide emissions estimates within the scope of influence of Dorset 2005-2022 (kt CO_2e)



4.3.5. **Figure 4-2** indicates that CO_2 emissions per capita have been lower in Dorset than the average for South West England and the whole of England between 2005-2018. All three geographies have broadly followed the same rate of reduction in CO_2 emissions over the observed period.

Figure 4-2: Territorial carbon dioxide emissions CO_2 emissions per capita (in tons) for Dorset, and the whole of England (2005-2021)



Renewable Energy

4.3.6. Electric Vehicles (EVs) do not burn fuel and create almost no noise. They are battery powered and have the potential to be 'zero-emission vehicles' (ZEVs) if powered by renewable electricity. As of July 2024, there were 184 public electric charging devices in Dorset.[17] There are no public electric charging points within the neighbourhood area; however it is noted that there is one under construction in proximity to the neighbourhood area on the A354.[18] The closest charging points currently in operation are found in Blandford Forum (to the north) and Lytchett Matravers (to the south-east).[19]

4.3.7. In terms of renewable energy, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy publishes annual statistics on renewable energy generation, disaggregated by Local Authority.[20] The most recent data (to 2022) shows that Dorset has a total of 14,261 renewable energy (electricity) installations (the majority of which are photovoltaics), amounting to a total renewable electricity capacity of 358.0 MW.

Flood Risk

4.3.8. Fluvial flood risk in the neighbourhood area is associated with the River Winterborne, which passes through the southern part of the neighbourhood area, including the settlements of Winterborne Kingston, Winterborne Muston, and Anderson. Consequently, many areas close to this watercourse are within Flood Zone 3 (see **Figure 4-3**).

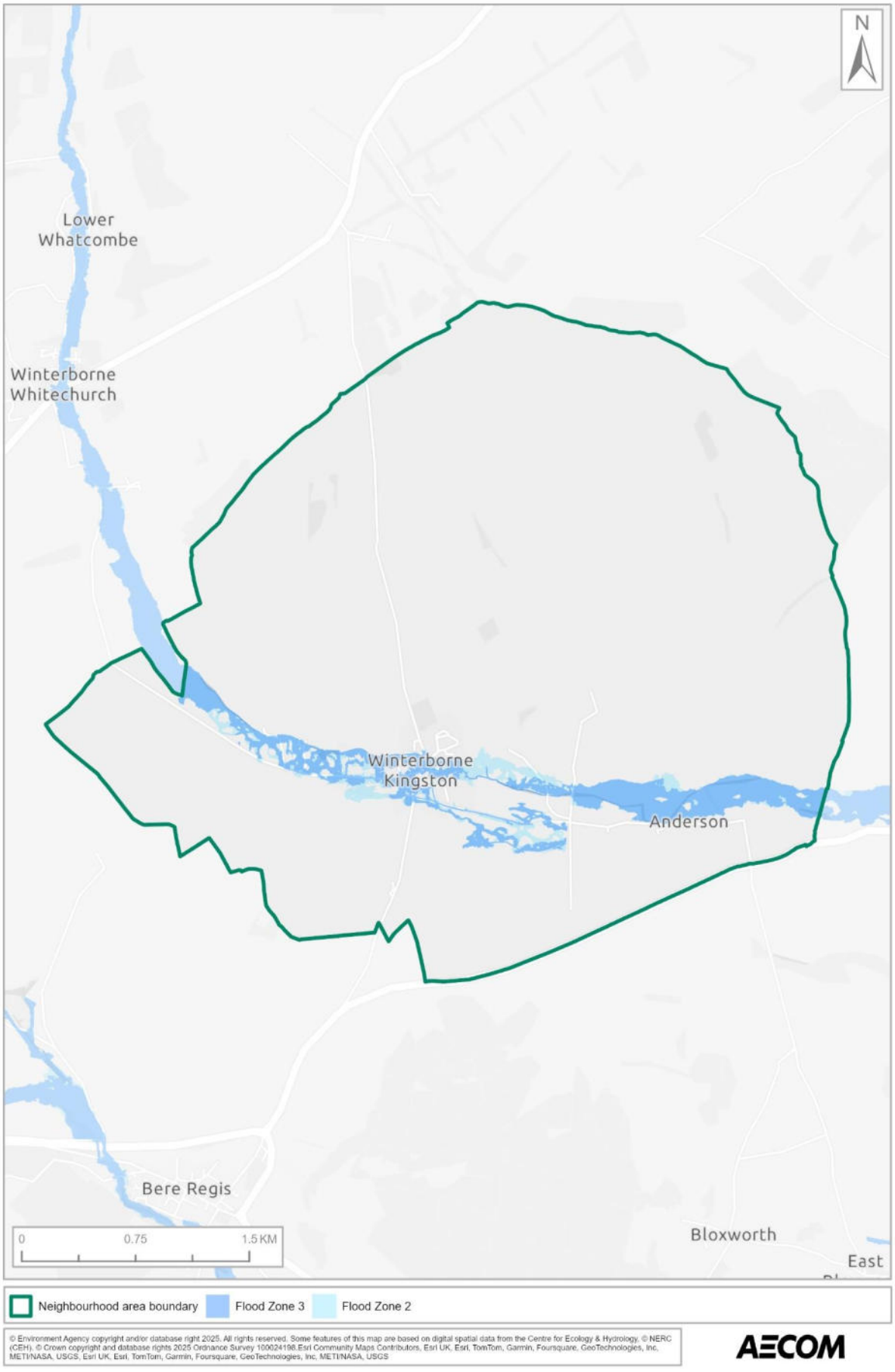
4.3.9. Areas of High and Medium risk of surface water flooding also broadly follow the River Winterborne. However, they also extend to other parts of the neighbourhood area, such as the central region (see **Figure 4-4**).

4.3.10. Additionally, Dorset Council's 2024 SFRA mapping indicates that the area surrounding the River Winterborne, including most of the land in the neighbourhood area's villages, is included in Dorset's groundwater consultation area, and is, therefore, considered to be susceptible to groundwater flooding (see **Figure 4-5**).

4.3.11. The two figures show that the settlements within Lower Winterborne and the land surrounding them, where the focus of future development is most likely to occur, has a relatively high fluvial, surface, and groundwater water flood risk.

[17] HM Gov (2025) '*Electric vehicle charging infrastructure statistics: July 2025'* can be accessed through this link Table 1a.
[18] Dorset Council (2022). '*Planning application: P/FUL/2021/02622'* can be accessed through this link.
[19] Zap Map (2025) can be accessed through this link.
[20] DBEIS (2024) '*Renewable electricity by local authority, 2014 to 2023'* can be accessed through this link. LA-Sites 2023. LA-Capacity 2023.

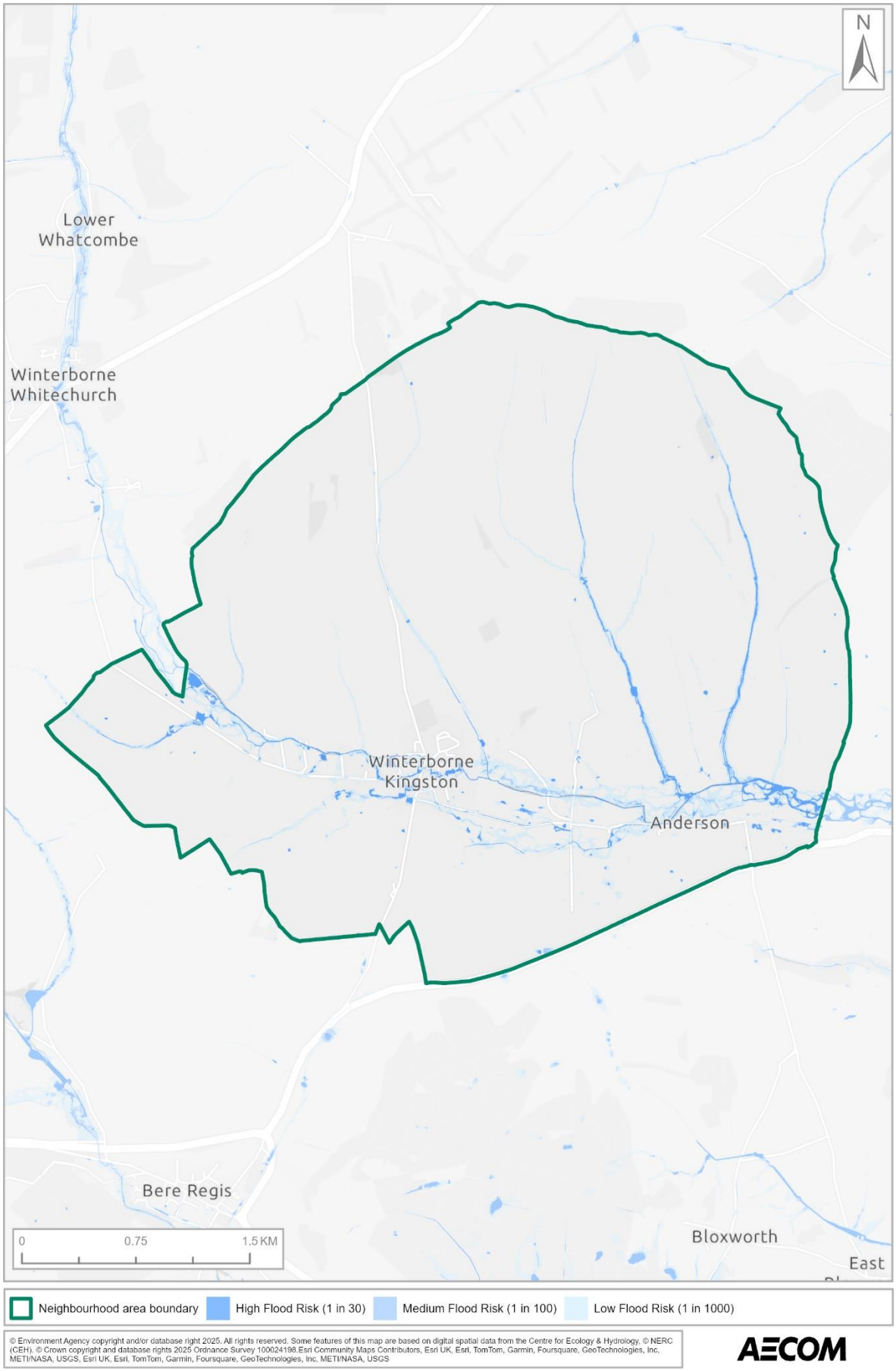
Figure 4-3: Fluvial / coastal flood risk in Lower Winterborne



© Environment Agency copyright and/or database right 2025. All rights reserved. Some features of this map are based on digital spatial data from the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology. © NERC (CEH). © Crown copyright and database rights 2025 Ordnance Survey 100024198.Esri Community Maps Contributors, Esri UK, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, Foursquare, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, Esri UK, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, Foursquare, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS

AECOM

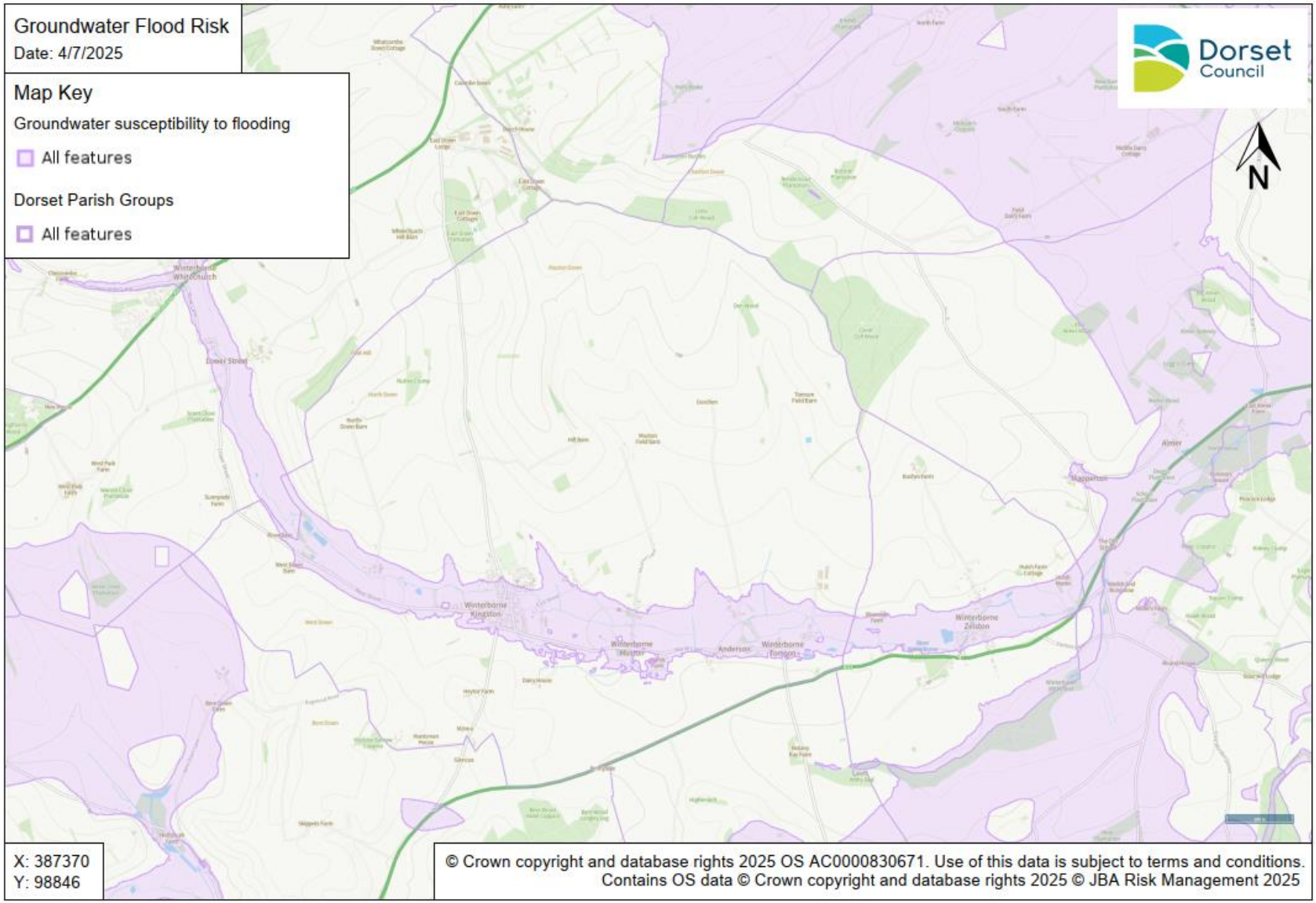
Figure 4-4: Surface water flood risk in Lower Winterborne



© Environment Agency copyright and/or database right 2025. All rights reserved. Some features of this map are based on digital spatial data from the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, © NERC (CEH). © Crown copyright and database rights 2025 Ordnance Survey 100024198.Esri Community Maps Contributors, Esri UK, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, Foursquare, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, Esri UK, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, Foursquare, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS

AECOM

Figure 4-5: Groundwater Susceptibility to Flooding in Lower Winterborne[21]



[21] Dorset Council (2024). '*Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Mapping)*' can be accessed through this link.

Future Baseline

Impacts of Climate Change

4.3.12. Research on the probable effects of climate change in the UK was released in 2018 by the UK Climate Projections (UKCP18) team. UKCP18 gives climate information for the UK up to the end of this century and projections of future changes to the climate are provided, based on simulations from climate models. Projections are broken down to a regional level across the UK and are shown in probabilistic form, which illustrate the potential range of changes and level of confidence in each prediction.

4.3.13. As highlighted by the research, the effects of climate change for the South West of England by 2040 in a 'medium emissions' (RCP4.5) scenario are likely to be as follows:[22]

- An increase in winter mean temperature of 1^{o}C and an increase in summer mean temperature of 2^{o}C; and
- A change in winter mean precipitation up to +10% and summer mean precipitation up to -10%.

4.3.14. Resulting from these changes, a range of risks exist for the neighbourhood area, including:

- Effects on water resources, such as a reduction in availability of groundwater for extraction and a need to increase capacity of wastewater treatment plants and sewers;
- Adverse effect on water quality from low stream levels and turbulent stream flow after heavy rain;
- Increased risk of flooding and a need to upgrade flood defences;
- Soil erosion due to flash flooding;
- Loss of species that are at the edge of their southerly distribution and spread of species at the northern edge of their distribution;
- Increased demand for air-conditioning; and
- Heat stress related issues with infrastructure due to increased temperature.

[22] Met Office (2019) '*Climate change projections over land'* can be accessed through this link.

Renewable Energy Uptake

4.3.15. In line with UK trends and national commitments, emissions are likely to to fall as energy efficiency measures, renewable energy take-up and new technologies, such as EVs and solar PV, become more widely adopted.

4.3.16. With regard specifically to transport emissions, the uptake of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) will contribute positively towards the reduction of road transport related emissions. In line with assumptions made by the Department for Transport's 'Road to Zero' Report (2018)[23], it is assumed that ULEV uptake will increase rapidly in the coming decade and aside from Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), the majority of vehicles could be ultra-low emission (powered either by hydrogen or electricity) by 2030.

4.4. Key Issues

4.4.1. Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues are identified in relation to Climate Change (Including Flood Risk):

- Dorset Council declared a climate emergency in 2019, with the aspiration of becoming a carbon neutral council by 2040 and a carbon neutral county by 2050. This commitment underscores the importance of integrating climate action into the LWNP;

- The majority of Dorset's CO_2 emissions arise from the transport and domestic sectors. While transport emissions have decreased since 2005, they remain significant. Reducing these emissions will depend on improving local access to employment, services, and facilities, and supporting more sustainable travel options such as walking and cycling within the neighbourhood area;

- Flood risk is likely to be a significant constraint for development in Lower Winterbourne, with high risk found in its settlements and the land surrounding them, where the focus of future development is most likely to occur. Development must therefore consider these risks and incorporate flood mitigation measures;

- Increases in the built footprint of the neighbourhood area has the potential to exacerbate flood risk issues (i.e., from surface water run-off and potential proximity to flood risk areas); and

- Opportunities to enhance the resilience of the neighbourhood area and its residents to the effects of climate change should be sought out in the LWNP. This can include adaptation strategies, green infrastructure enhancement, flood betterment measures (such as sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS)), infrastructure development, and increased renewable energy sources.

[23] HM Gov (2018) 'The Road to Zero – Next steps towards cleaner road transport and delivering our Industrial Strategy' can be accessed through this link.

4.5. SEA Objectives

4.5.1. Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objectives and assessment questions in relation to Climate Change (Including Flood Risk):

Table 4-2: Proposed SEA Objectives for Climate Change (Including Flood Risk)

SEA Objective	Assessment Questions (Will the Option / Proposal Help to...)
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?
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?

5. Community Wellbeing

5.1. Focus of Theme

5.1.1. This theme focuses on health indicators and deprivation, healthcare provision in the neighbourhood area and influences on resident health and wellbeing, including access to open space and the countryside.

5.2. Policy Context

5.2.1. **Table 5-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 5-1: Plans, Policies and Strategies Reviewed in Relation to Community Wellbeing

Document Title	Year of Publication
National	
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (and guidance)	2024
Planning for Sport Guidance	2024
Levelling-up and Regeneration Act	2023
Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On	2020
The 25 Year Environment Plan	2018
Local	
Dorset Belonging Strategy and Plan	2024
Dorset Children, Young People And Families' Plan 2023-33	2023
Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021 - 2026	2021
Dorset Health and Wellbeing strategy 2020 to 2023	2020
North Dorset Local Plan	2016
Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan 3	2011
Dorset Council Local Plan	emerging

5.2.2. The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The Government's Levelling Up and Regeneration Act seeks to reduce regional inequalities and promote economic growth and opportunities in less prosperous areas. It has been designed to address regional disparities, stimulate economic development, and enhance infrastructure and community well-being in order to create a more balanced and inclusive nation;

- The LWNP will need to have regard for the principles set out in the NPPF, which seek to retain and enhance access to community services and facilities such as educational facilities and open spaces. The NPPF recognises the benefits of having a range of local provision to support community needs, in addition to the benefits of creating cohesive communities in safe environments where the fear of crime (and crime itself) does not undermine resident quality of life. This contributes to ensuring settlement and community identities are protected;

- As set out in the NPPF, it should be ensured that the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. The Design Guide and Model code illustrate how well-designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring, and successful can be achieved in practice;

- The NPPF highlights the role of development plans in helping to deliver access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity, therefore contributing to the health and wellbeing of communities. The health benefits of access to nature, green spaces and green infrastructure are further reiterated in the 25-year Environment Plan;

- The 2020 Health Equity in England Report identifies that the health gap between less and more deprived areas has grown in the last decade, where more people can expect to spend more of their lives in poor health, and where improvements to life expectancy have stalled, or even declined for the poorest 10% of women. The Dorset Health and Wellbeing strategy (2020 to 2023) compliments the Report, by setting priorities and direction for improving health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities across Dorset, focusing on empowering communities, promoting healthy lives, and providing support to those in need;

- The Planning for Sport Guidance seeks to help the planning system provide formal and informal opportunities for everyone to take part in sport and be physically active. The Guidance outlines 12 'planning-for-sport' principles;

- The Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan (2011 to 2026) aims to improve accessibility, reduce congestion, and enhance the quality of life in the three areas. This will be achieved by promoting sustainable travel options, improving public transport, and supporting safer and healthier travel choices, thereby contributing to community wellbeing and overall health; and

- The LWNP will also need to be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the North Dorset Local Plan (2016), and any relevant saved strategic policies in the North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (2003). Due regard should also be given to any relevant emerging policies in the DCLP.

5.3. Baseline Summary

Current Baseline

2021 Census

5.3.1. For Census purposes, the neighbourhood area is made up, like the rest of England, of statistical units called Output Areas (OAs). Three OAs that overlap with Lower Winterborne include E00103536, E00103535, and E00103539. Unfortunately, the OAs do not allow for an exact recreation of the neighbourhood area boundary, with E00103539 also including Winterborne Zelston alongside Lower Winterborne's settlements of Anderson and Winterborne Tomson.

5.3.2. While E00103539 extends beyond the Lower Winterborne boundary to include Winterborne Zelston, it has been retained in this chapter's analysis to ensure representation of the settlements of Anderson and Winterborne Tomson. However, any findings based on this OA should be interpreted with caution, given the inclusion of areas outside the neighbourhood boundary.

Population

5.3.3. As of the 2021 Census, the population of Lower Winterborne (including Winterborne Zelston) was 909 – an increase from 846 in 2011.[24] This represents a growth rate of 7%; it is recognised that an increasing population has the potential to impact upon the vitality of the local community and community infrastructure.

5.3.4. The 2021 Census also suggests that 17% of the population of Lower Winterborne (including Winterborne Zelston) were between the ages of 0-19, 53% were between the ages of 20-64, and 30% were ages 65 and over.

Index of Multiple Deprivation

5.3.5. The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD) is an overall relative measure of deprivation and is the combination of seven different domains as described below:

[24] Nomis (2021) '*Query Data'* can be accessed through this link.

- **Income:** the proportion of the population experiencing a deprivation relating to low income. There are a further two subsets of this measure:
  - **Income deprivation affecting children:** the proposition of children aged 0-15 living in income deprived families; and
  - **Income deprivation affecting older people:** the proportion of all adults aged 60 and above that experience income deprivation.
- **Employment:** the proportion of the working-age population involuntarily excluded from the labour market, including those who want to work but cannot;
- **Education, skills, and training:** the lack of attainment and skills in the population;
- **Health deprivation and disability:** the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health;
- **Crime:** the risk of personal and material victimisation at the local level.
- **Barriers to housing and services:** the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services, split into 'geographical barriers' linked to physical proximity and 'wider barriers' linked to access to housing; and
- **Living environment:** the quality of the local environment, categorised into 'indoors living environment' to measure the quality of housing and 'outdoors living environment' to measure indicators like air quality and road traffic accidents.

5.3.6. Lower super output areas (LSOAs)[25] are designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. They are standardised geographies intended to be as consistent as possible, with each LSOA containing approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people. In relation to the IMD 2019, LSOAs are ranked out of the 32,844 in England and Wales, with 1 being the most deprived. In this respect, the neighbourhood area overlaps with two LSOAs.

5.3.7. **Table 5-2** outlines which of Lower Winterborne's LSOA IMD domain scores are within the 50% most deprived, or worse, LSOA scores in England and Wales.

5.3.8. Reflecting on this information reveals that while the neighbourhood area is not considered to be deprived overall, it does suffer from deprivation issues related to employment, the condition of the living environment and housing availability. The latter issue records the worst score, ranking among the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in England and Wales for this domain.

[25] The Indices of Deprivation Explorer can be accessed through this link.

Table 5-2: IMD Rankings for the Neighbourhood Area

LSOA	Most Deprived Indices
North Dorset 008C	• Education, Skills and Training Domain – 15,236 (amongst 50% most deprived neighbourhoods) • Barriers to Housing and Services – 1,144 (amongst 10% most deprived neighbourhoods) • Living Environment Deprivation Domain – 9,752 (amongst 30% most deprived neighbourhoods)

Housing

5.3.9. As reported by Zoopla,[26] the average house price over the past 12 months in Dorset is £386,633 – with detached houses selling for an average of £540,865, semi-detached houses selling for an average of £349,092, terraced houses selling for an average of £307,379, and flats selling for an average of £237,848.

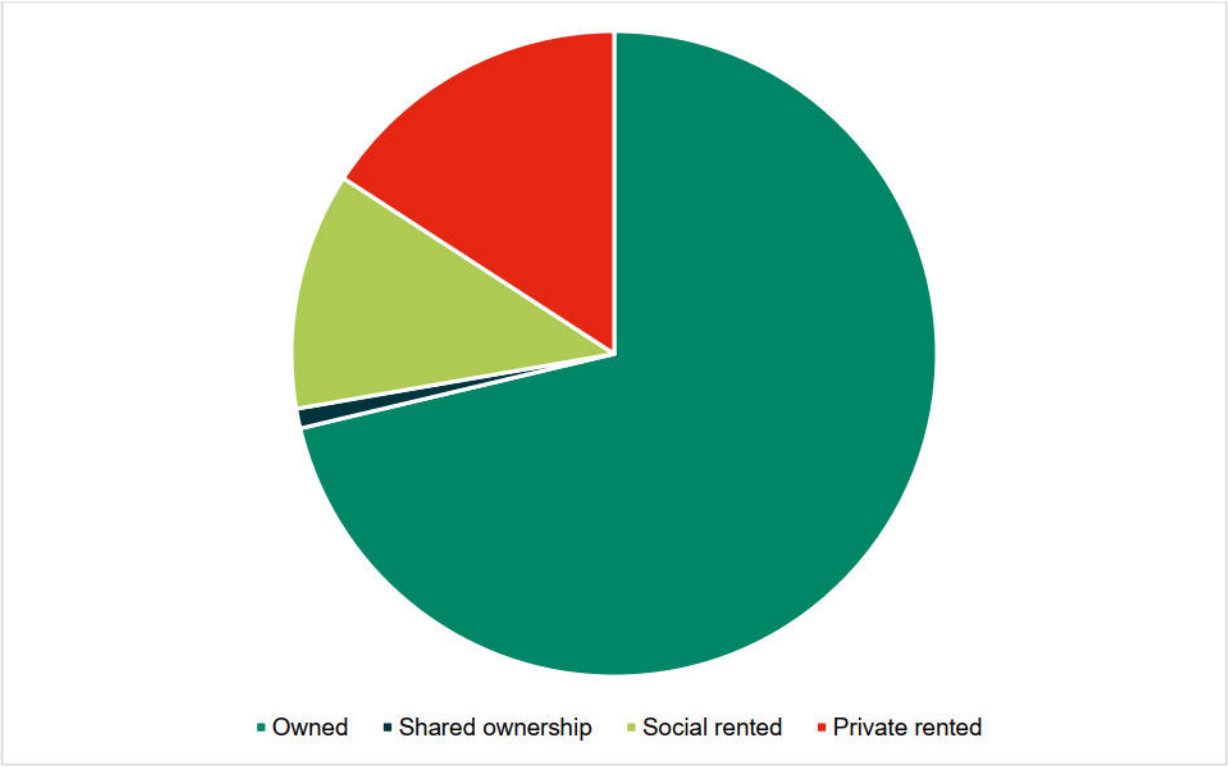
5.3.10. According to Rightmove,[27] the average house price in Winterborne Kingston over the past 12 months was £341,200. This figure is based on the sale of five properties: three detached homes (averaging £400,000), one terraced property (£330,000), and one flat (£176,000).

5.3.11. While this suggests that average house prices in the neighbourhood area are slightly above regional averages for certain property types, particularly terraced houses, it should be noted that the sample size for recent sales in Lower Winterborne is very limited. As such, conclusions should be treated with caution.

5.3.12. **Figure 5-1** indicates housing tenure in the neighbourhood area. In the 2021 Census,[28] 72% of the neighbourhood area's households owned their property outright or with a mortgage/loan, with an additional 1% under shared ownership. Private rent and social rent accounted for 16% and 12% of the area's tenure mix, respectively.

[26] Zoopla (2025) '*House prices in Dorset*' can be accessed through this link.
[27] Rightmove (2025) '*House Prices in Winterborne Kingston*' can be accessed through this link.
[28] ONS (2021) '*TS054 – Tenure*' can be accessed through this link.

Figure 5-1: Tenure by Household Composition for the Neighbourhood Area (Based on 2021 Census Data)



Community Assets and Infrastructure

5.3.13. There are a number of services and facilities within the neighbourhood area, including:

- Three churches;
- The Community Hub (three room community building with a large kitchen and toilets that include disabled facilities and baby changing);
- Winterborne Kingstone Village Hall;
- An outreach post office (serving two mornings a week at the Village Hall);
- Recreational/sports facilities (including a recreation ground, one park, and playing fields at The Dunbury School);
- A recreation ground; and
- One public house, 'The Greyhound'.

5.3.14. Residents of Lower Winterborne are likely to travel to larger nearby settlements such as Bere Regis and Blandford Forum to access a greater variety of services, facilities, and amenities.

Green Infrastructure

5.3.15. Access to gardens, parks, woodlands, and rivers is important, especially considering recent events such as the pandemic, the shift to working from home, and the focus on work/life balance.

5.3.16. Almost nine in ten adults surveyed by Natural England reported that being in nature makes them feel happy, and nearly three quarters of adults were concerned about biodiversity loss in England.[29]

5.3.17. As the neighbourhood area is predominantly rural, there is a good supply of local woodland and rivers, many of which can be accessed by the extensive local public footpath network.

Future Baseline

5.3.18. As the population of the neighbourhood area increases through development brought forward by the LWNP, it is likely this could lead to increased pressure on the services within the neighbourhood area, and those outside of it. This highlights the need to support the retention of existing community facilities in the area and seek new (or upgrades to) services/ infrastructure where possible. This is more likely to be appropriately considered and addressed through planned development rather than unplanned development.

5.3.19. The suitability and affordability of housing for local requirements depends on the implementation of appropriate housing policies through the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. Unplanned development may have wider implications in terms of transport and access to infrastructure, or the natural environment, while planned development can be sustainably located and supported by infrastructure to meet local needs.

5.4. Key Issues

5.4.1. Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified in relation to Community Wellbeing:

- A growing population in Lower Winterborne 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;

- While the neighbourhood area is not considered deprived overall, it faces issues related to employment, living environment conditions, and housing availability. Addressing these issues will be important for improving community wellbeing;

[29] Natural England (2020) People and Nature survey can be accessed through this link.

- House prices in the neighbourhood area appear slightly higher than regional trends for certain property types. However, given the limited number of recent sales, this should be interpreted with caution. Ensuring a mix of housing types and tenures to meet local needs remains important to help address barriers to housing and access to services;

- Lower Winterborne has a limited offering of local services, facilities, and amenities. Efforts should be made to retain and enhance existing assets, and to seek additions whenever possible; and

- Access to green spaces (such as gardens, parks, woodlands, and rivers) provides valuable ecosystem services that support physical and mental well-being. Enhancing and maintaining these spaces is important for promoting healthy lifestyles, reducing stress, and improving overall quality of life; and

- The LWNP provides the opportunities to plan for development which accommodates for changing working patterns and lifestyles, and places greater emphasis on high levels of accessibility.

5.5. SEA Objective

5.5.1. Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective and assessment questions in relation to Community Wellbeing:

Table 5-3: Proposed SEA Objective for Community Wellbeing

SEA Objective	Assessment Questions (Will the Option / Proposal Help to...)
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?

6. Historic Environment

6.1. Focus of Theme

6.1.1. This theme focuses on designated and non-designated heritage assets and features (including archaeology) and their setting.

6.2. Policy Context

6.2.1. **Table 6-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 6-1: Plans, Policies and Strategies Reviewed in Relation to Historic Environment

Document Title	Year of Publication
National	
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (and guidance)	2024
Historic England Advice Note 18: Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency	2024
Historic England: Heritage and Climate Change	2022
Historic England Advice Note 11: Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment	2022
The National Design Guide	2019
Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management	2019
The 25 Year Environment Plan	2018
Historic England Good Practice Advice: The Setting of Heritage Assets	2017
Historic England Advice Note 8: Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	2016
Historic England Advice Note 3: The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans	2015
Local	
Dorset Council Cultural Strategy (2021 to 2026)	2021
North Dorset Local Plan	2016
Dorset Council Local Plan	emerging

6.2.2. The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The key high-level principles for the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment are as follows:
  - The historic environment is a shared resource;
  - Everyone should be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment;
  - Understanding the significance of places is vital;
  - Significant places should be managed to sustain their values;
  - Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent, and consistent; and
  - Documenting and learning from decisions is essential.[30]
- The significance of places is the key element which underpins the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Significance is a collective term for the sum of all the heritage values attached to a place, be it a building an archaeological site or a larger historic area such as a whole village or landscape;
- The LWNP will be required to have regard to the NPPF, which ultimately encourages the conservation and enhancement of historic environment assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. The NPPF seeks planning policies and decisions which are sympathetic to local character and history without preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation of change. The NPPF supports the use of area-based character assessments, design guides and codes and masterplans to help ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating beautiful and sustainable places;
- As set out in the NPPF, it should be ensured that the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. Design Codes can set out a necessary level of detail in sensitive locations, for example, with heritage considerations, and they can set out specific ways to maintain local character;
- Planning Practice Guidance expands on the NPPF recognising the proactive rather than passive nature of conservation;
- The role of the historic environment, as part of healthy and thriving ecosystems, landscapes and cultural values, including settlement identity, is reiterated through the key messages of the 25 Year Environment Plan and National Design Guide;

[30] Historic England (2008). *'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance'* can be accessed through this link.

- Historic England's Advice Notes, Good Practice Advise, and Climate Change strategy provide further guidance in relation to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Of particular relevance for the LWNP is the emphasis on the importance of:
  - Understanding the different types of special architectural and historic interest which underpin designations, as well as how settings and/ or views contribute to the significance of heritage assets;
  - Advising on mitigating, managing risks, and adapting to challenges posed by climate change;
  - Recognising the value of implementing controls through neighbourhood plans, conservation area appraisals and management plans; and
  - Appropriate evidence gathering, including clearly identifying those issues that threaten an area or assets character or appearance and that merit the introduction of management measures.
- The primary aim of the Dorset Cultural Strategy (2021–2026) is to promote cultural inclusivity and improve access to arts and heritage across the county. The strategy also seeks to harness arts, culture, and heritage to celebrate the natural environment, inspire action on the climate and ecological emergency, and contribute to sustainable economic growth;
- The LWNP will also need to be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the North Dorset Local Plan (2016), and any relevant saved strategic policies in the North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (2003). Due regard should also be given to any relevant emerging policies in the DCLP.

6.3. Baseline Summary

Current Baseline

Designated Heritage Assets

6.3.1. Listed buildings are designated heritage assets, of national importance, that are protected through the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.[31] To assess the historic environment, the National Heritage List for England, provided by Historic England,[32] has been utilised. There are a total of 26 listed buildings in the neighbourhood area: 21 Grade II, three Grade II* (Muston Manor; Tomson Farm House; and Church of St Nicholas), and two Grade I (Church of St Andrew; and Anderson Manor) (see **Figure 6-1**).

[31] UK Government (1990) '*Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act'* can be accessed through this link.
[32] Historic England (no date) '*National Heritage List for England – Search the List – Advanced Search'* can be accessed through this link.

6.3.2. In England, scheduled monuments are nationally important archaeological sites or historical building designated and protected by Historic England under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.[33] There are eight scheduled monuments in the neighbourhood area (see **Figure 6-1**):

- Combe Ditch, linear dyke;
- Section of Roman road north of Bagwood Coppice;
- Two bowl barrows 360m south east of East Down House;
- Two bowl barrows 320m south east of East Down House;
- Two bell barrows 630m north west of West Down Barn;
- Bowl barrow 550m north of North Down Barn;
- Bowl barrow 560m NNE of North Down Barn; and
- Bowl barrow 500m south of West Down Barn.

6.3.3. Three of the scheduled monuments (Bowl barrow 500m south of West Down Barn; Bowl barrow 550m north of North Down Barn; and Bowl barrow 560m NNE of North Down Barn) have been identified as 'at risk'[34] of being lost due to neglect, decay, or inappropriate development.

6.3.4. It is important to recognise that Heritage at Risk registers for areas outside of London do not contain information about the status of Grade II listed buildings. As such, it is currently not possible to determine whether any of the Grade II listed buildings within the neighbourhood area are at risk.

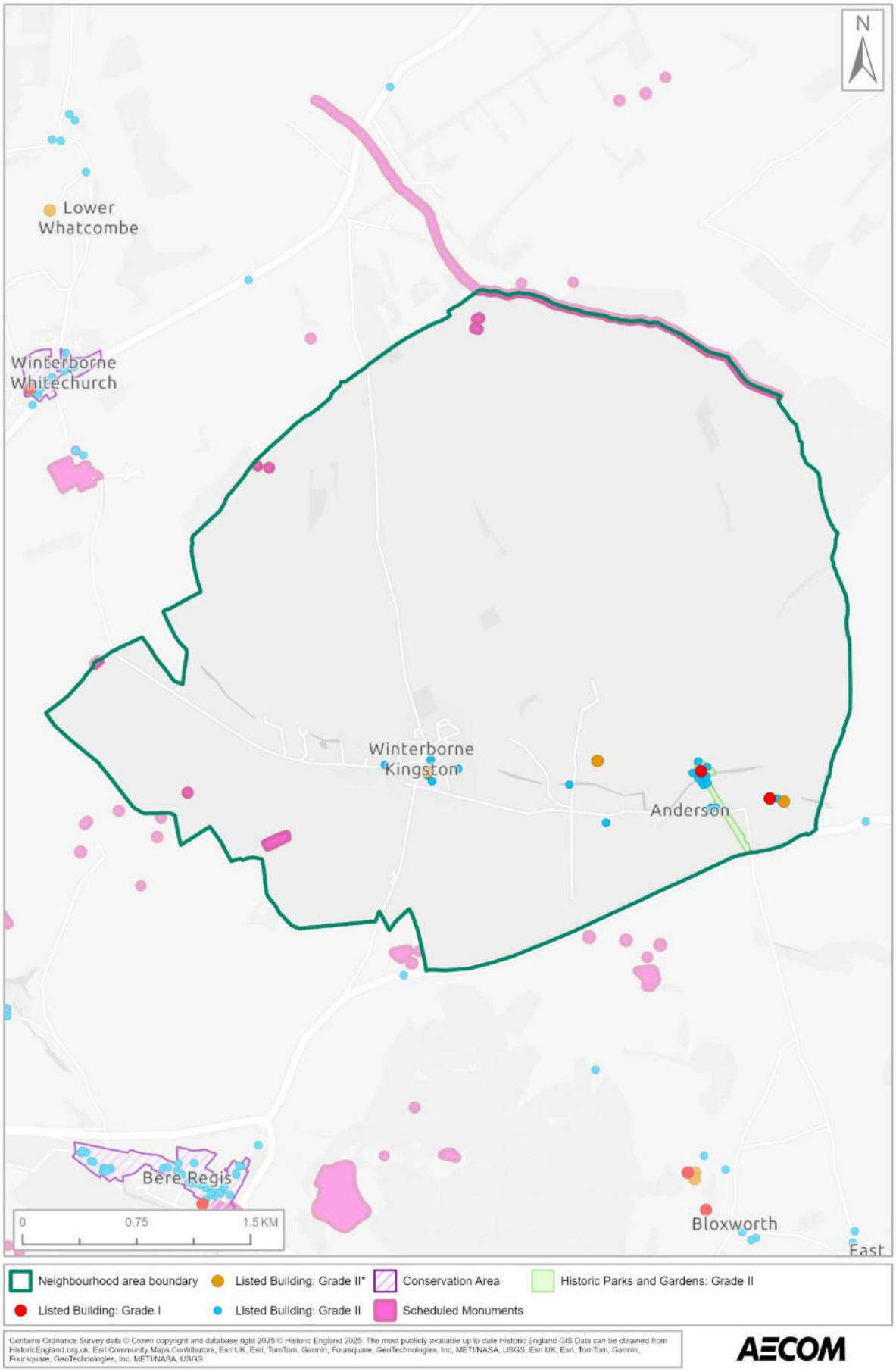
Registered Parks and Gardens

6.3.5. Registered parks and gardens are designated areas of special historic interest in the UK, recognised for their significant landscape design, historical associations, or horticultural value. These sites are listed on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens, maintained by Historic England, to ensure their preservation and protection for future generations.

6.3.6. The neighbourhood area has one Grade II registered park and garden: Anderson Manor, an early 20th century formal garden partly laid out within the framework of a 17th century garden.

[33] Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979) can be accessed through this link.
[34] Historic England (2024) '*Heritage at Risk 2023 Registers*' can be accessed through this link.

Figure 6-1: Historic Environment Assets in the Neighbourhood Area



Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2025 © Historic England 2025. The most publicly available up to date Historic England GIS Data can be obtained from HistoricEngland.org.uk. Esri Community Maps Contributors, Esri UK, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, Foursquare, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, Esri UK, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, Foursquare, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS

AECOM

Locally Important Heritage Features

6.3.7. It is noted that not all of the neighbourhood area's historic environment features are subject to statutory designations and non-designated features contribute a large part of what people interact with on a day-to-day basis. Although not designated, many buildings and areas are of historic interest and are important to local communities.

6.3.8. The Dorset Historic Environment Record (HER) identifies important and distinctive structures or features that positively contribute to the local sense of place and distinctiveness of the county. Following a high-level review of via the Heritage Gateway,[35] the Dorset HER returns 112 results for Winterborne Kingston and 51 results for Anderson (although it should be noted that these include listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments).

6.3.9. During the subsequent stages of the SEA process, the Dorset HER shall be explored in further detail to consider the potential impacts associated with the LWNP proposals on these assets.

6.3.10. it is noted that a local heritage list was compiled for some North Dorset villages under the former North Dorset District Council. This included Winterborne Kingston and identified five potential entries:

- The Smithy and Cosy Nook (immediately north-west of the church);
- Lantern Cottage (Duck Street);
- South View (Duck Street);
- Arnold's Cottage (West Street); and
- Brookly Cottage (Stoney Lawn, West Street).

6.3.11. Finally, Dorset Council are in the process of compiling a Local Heritage List, which will list locally important heritage assets within the county.[36] This may also serve as a source of additional detail for consideration in relation to the LWNP proposals.

Archaeological Significance

6.3.12. Lower Winterborne is an area of considerable archaeological significance, particularly highlighted by the presence of Duropolis. This site is believed to be one of the earliest planned towns in Britain, dating back to around 100 BCE. Excavations at the site have uncovered the remains of numerous

[35] Heritage Gateway (2025) '*More Detailed Search'* can be accessed through this link. Open the link, change the tab from 'map' to 'admin location', type 'Dorset' into the administrative location search bar, and 'Winterborne Kingston' OR 'Anderson' in the 'Place/Site Name/Street Name' search bar. Then press the search button at the bottom of the page.

[36] Dorset Council (no date) '*The Dorset Local Heritage List'* can be accessed here.

roundhouses and other structures, indicating a well-organised settlement.[37] It is worth noting that excavations at this site do not appear to be recorded on the online version of the Dorset HER.

6.3.13. Dorset Council provide a description of the historic landscape for each of the Dorset Landscape Character Areas (DLCA).[38] Three DLCAs cover Lower Winterborne (see **Figure 7-2** in the **Landscape** chapter): Chalk River Valley Floor, Open Chalk Downland, and Chalk Valley and Downland. Known archaeology within theses DLCAs is as follows:

- Open Chalk Downland: '*Prehistoric features, such as round barrows. Extensive areas of prehistoric field systems, surviving as earthworks or visible as crop/soil marks in arable. Associated prehistoric and Romano-British enclosures and larger-scale settlements. Iron Age hillforts are a notable feature*'.

- Chalk Valley and Downland and Chalk River Valley Floor: '*Extensive prehistoric field systems with associated enclosures and settlements, and large-scale boundaries such as Bokerley Dyke. In the eastern areas there is a concentration of prehistoric ritual and ceremonial features, for example the Dorset Cursus. Roman roads – no more here than any other type, but very visible here. For example, Ackling Dyke. There tends to be a concentration of known archaeology in these areas. This is partly because of the nature of successive agricultural activity in these areas tending to leave (until very recently) extensive areas of earthwork features undisturbed, and partly because the nature of the geology makes recognition of below-ground archaeology from aerial photographs very easy'*.

Local Heritage Studies

6.3.14. The Strategic Landscape and Heritage Study for North Dorset Area (2019)[39] appraises the key landscape and heritage sensitivities of land surrounding the 18 larger villages (including Winterborne Kingston) within the North Dorset area to the effects of development.

6.3.15. Planning for future growth through the LWNP will support the minimisation of impacts on local heritage assets and their setting. It can also seek opportunities for public realm improvements, and accessibility improvements which can indirectly benefit access to and enjoyment of the historic environment. A summary is provided below of the key heritage sensitivities in Winterborne Kingston, and guidance and opportunities for mitigation. For greater detail, see the Study.

6.3.16. The Study notes that the area surrounding Winterborne Kingston is mainly agricultural with heritage elements susceptible to change. Two grade II listed

[37] Bournemouth University (2016). '*Duropolis: exploring an Iron Age settlement in Dorset*'. Available to access through this link.
[38] Dorset Council (no date). '*The Historic Landscape'* can be accessed here.
[39] LUC (2019). '*Strategic Landscape and Heritage Study for North Dorset Area'* can be accessed through this link.

buildings and various heritage assets in Winterborne Kingston and Anderson may be impacted by development. Numerous scheduled monuments and a Roman road section could also be affected by changes in their landscape setting.

6.3.17. The Study encourages the preservation and enhancement of the settings of heritage assets, maintaining their visual and spatial relationships. It also proposes that heritage statements are needed for proposals affecting heritage assets, with consultation from Historic England for significant buildings or monuments. Assessment of archaeological potential (to develop a mitigation strategy) will also be important for future development to implement.

Future Baseline

6.3.18. Whilst designated and non-designated assets will continue to be afforded protection under the provisions of the NPPF and the Local Plan, it is recognised that future development has the potential to negative affect historic character and settings, detract from historic settlement qualities and disrupt valued viewpoints; being susceptible to insensitive design and layout in new development;

6.4. Key Issues

6.4.1. Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified in relation to the historic environment:

- New development within the neighbourhood area has the potential to impact the historic setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets and areas. The emerging LWNP can help overcome this by ensuring any development that comes forward within the neighbourhood area is sensitive to the character of local assets and their setting, particularly in terms of design and layout. This is especially important for the neighbourhood area's 'at risk' designated assets;

- Lower Winterborne is archaeologically significant, highlighted by the presence of the Duropolis site. The area also includes extensive prehistoric and Romano-British features. Development must consider the potential impacts on these archaeological resources; and

- There are no conservation area designations for the villages within the neighbourhood area, which may limit the existing understanding of the special qualities and significance of the historic environment.

6.5. SEA Objective

6.5.1. Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective and assessment questions in relation to the Historic Environment:

Table 6-2: Proposed SEA Objective for Heritage

SEA Objective	Assessment Questions (Will the Option/ Proposal Help to...)
Protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.	• 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? • Protect the integrity and setting of designated assets on the 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?

7. Landscape

7.1. Focus of Theme

7.1.1. This theme focuses on designated and protected landscapes within or near to the neighbourhood area, as well as landscape and villagescape character, landscape quality and visual amenity.

7.2. Policy Context

7.2.1. **Table 7-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 7-1: Plans, Policies and Strategies Reviewed in Relation to Landscape

Document Title	Year of Publication
National	
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (and guidance)	2024
National Model Design Code	2021
The National Design Guide	2019
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018
Local	
Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Interim Management Plan	2024
Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan	2019
North Dorset Local Plan	2016
Dorset Council Local Plan	emerging

7.2.2. The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The LWNP will be required to have regard to the NPPF which gives great weight to conserving and enhancing protected landscapes, as well as landscape character and scenic beauty. The NPPF recognises the role of green infrastructure in landscape settings, as well as the importance of designated biodiversity sites, habitats, woodland, historic features, agricultural land and cultural landscapes. The positive contribution that land remediation can make in terms of addressing despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land is also recognised;

- The 25-year Environment Plan and National Design Guide complement each other with their aims for a cleaner, greener country which puts the environment first and celebrates the variety of natural landscapes and habitats. Design is focused on beautiful, enduring and successful places, which respond to local character and provide a network of high quality green open spaces;

- The National Model Design Code states that all design codes should include a landscape and open space strategy that incorporates the existing natural features and new structural elements. It recognises that landscapes can be major drivers in the design process;

- A management plan have been published for Dorset National Landscape, which is within 2 km of the neighbourhood area. The LWNP should give due regard to these management plans (and their emerging updates) to ensure local development aligns with broader conservation objectives and preserves the character of the landscape. This alignment helps protect biodiversity, cultural heritage, and the visual integrity of the area, contributing to sustainable and responsible land use; and

- The LWNP will also need to be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the North Dorset Local Plan (2016), and any relevant saved strategic policies in the North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (2003). Due regard should also be given to any relevant emerging policies in the DCLP.

7.3. Baseline Summary

Current Baseline

Nationally Protected Landscapes

7.3.1. There are no nationally protected landscapes within the neighbourhood area. However, there are two National Landscapes (NL) within 10 km:

- Dorset NL, approximately 1.5 km north of Lower Winterborne. It is designated due to its unique natural beauty and diverse landscapes. The NL is also recognised for its distinctive geological formations, including the Jurassic Coast, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site; and

- Cranborne Chase & West Dorset Downs NL, approximately 9.1 km south-east of Lower Winterborne. The NL is characterised by smooth, rounded downs, steeply cut combes, and dry valleys typical of chalk terrain. The area contains large areas of ancient woodlands, and several historic sites, including Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments.

7.3.2. Development near NLs is subject to stricter scrutiny to preserve the landscape's quality and character. Development plans must align with the relevant NL Management Plan and adhere to specific guidelines to ensure responsible land use and protect the area's unique features.

National Character Areas

7.3.3. Lower Winterborne sits entirely within the 'Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase' National Character Area (NCA).

7.3.4. The NCA covers the south-western stretch of England's Cretaceous Chalk outcrop, spanning Dorset, Wiltshire, and Hampshire. It is a predominantly rural landscape of open pasture, arable fields, and scattered woodlands, with a rich prehistoric heritage, particularly along the South Dorset Ridgeway. The area supports food production, chalk river recharge, and drinking water supply, while its outstanding landscape is largely protected within the Dorset and Cranborne Chase NL. Internationally significant chalk downland and woodland habitats are designated as SACs and SSSIs. The NCA is also culturally significant, inspiring writers like Thomas Hardy and artists such as Elisabeth Frink and Lucian Freud. [40]

7.3.5. Environmental opportunities for this NCA include:

- Plan for and manage changes in the agricultural landscape by encouraging and supporting business choices that balance food production with protecting soils and water, enhancing ecosystems (particularly those associated with semi-natural grasslands) and restoring ecosystem services;

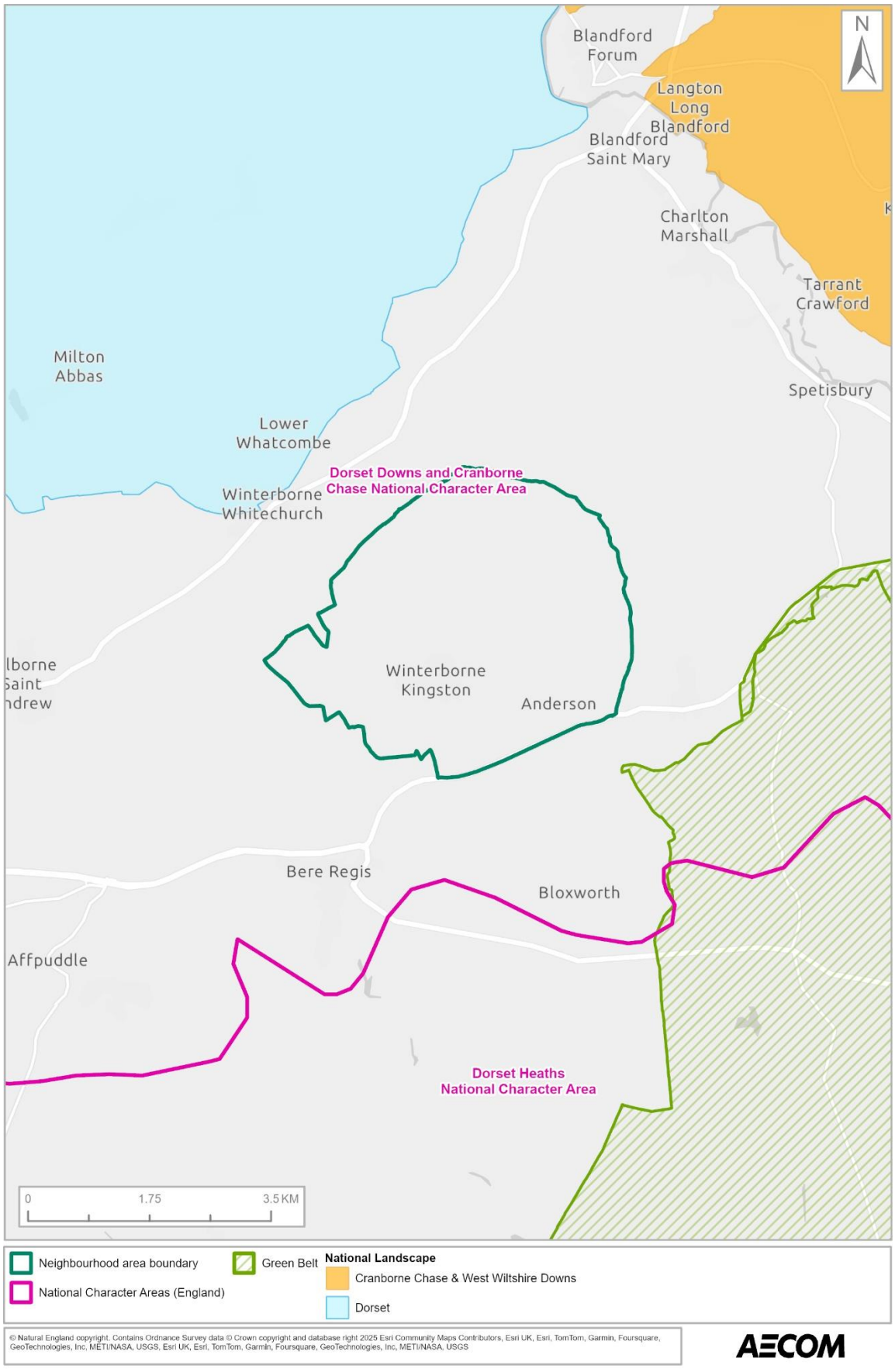
- Manage and enhance the historic character of the NCA, including the rich assemblage of settlement and field patterns, heritage features (including prehistoric assets), and the patterns of woodland, vegetation and geodiversity that give the NCA its sense of place; and

- Manage and enhance the recreational and educational potential of the NCA in a way that clearly shows the links between people and the landscape, and between geodiversity, ecosystems and the services they provide. Aim to heighten people's enjoyment, appreciation and understanding of the NCA, as well as their ability to take positive, informed action to enjoy and conserve their surroundings.

7.3.6. The ecosystem services provided by the NCA should be protected, including food provision, water availability, regulating soil erosion, regulating soil quality, regulating water quality, sense of place / inspiration, sense of history, recreation, biodiversity, and geodiversity.

[40] Natural England (no date) '*Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase - Summary and Headline Statements of Environmental Opportunity*' can be accessed through this link.

Figure 7-1: National Landscapes and National Character Areas in Lower Winterborne



Local Landscape and Villagescape Character Types

7.3.7. The Dorset Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and distinctive features (characteristics) of Dorset's landscape.

7.3.8. The LCA mapping[41] (shown in **Figure 7-3**) identifies that Lower Winterborne lies within three Dorset Landscape Character Types (DLCT):

- Chalk Valley & Downland, covering the south-eastern half of the neighbourhood area. The DLCT is described as an '*extensive and uniform area of chalk…with open views from expansive elevated areas…*''. Opportunities for development within this DLCT include:
  - *'Conserve and/or restore all chalk streams, and not just the winterbournes, and their associated habitats and features of cultural interest. Ensure over abstraction does not impact on river flows.*
  - *encourage opportunities for enhanced woodland management on the valley sides, especially coppice management.*
  - *where important grasslands and views will not be affected, promote the planting of small oak, ash and hazel broadleaved woodlands on gentle slopes and around settlements and farmsteads to increase landscape diversity.*
  - *new coniferous planting and shelterbelts should not be encouraged.*
  - *enhance management of existing chalk grasslands and, where important woodland edges will not be affected (along the valley floor and settlements), encourage reversion back to chalk grassland where remaining areas could be linked up.*
  - *plant new parkland trees (and retain veteran trees for wildlife purposes) and replant new areas of wet woodland along the river valleys.*
  - *conserve and restore remnant water meadow systems that are an important historic landscape feature and provide opportunities for supporting traditional land management practices.*
  - *encourage the maintenance and replacement of important boundaries, particularly parkland railings and flint walls, along the valley floors.*
  - *conserve and enhance the pattern and character of valley floor 'ribbon development' villages.*
  - *identify, protect and conserve views of key landmarks e.g. via Parish Action Plans, Village Design Statements and other Settlement Appraisals.'*

[41] Dorset Council (no date). '*Landscape Character Assessment Map'* can be accessed here.

- Chalk River Valley Floor DLCT, overlapping with the River Winterborne, which runs through the south of the neighbourhood area. The DLCT is considered to overlap with the Chalk Valley & Downland DLCT.

- Open Chalk Downland DLCT, covering the north-western half of the neighbourhood area. The DCA is described as an '*elevated area of open chalk upland with a broad rolling landform*…'. Opportunities for development within this DLCT include:

  – '*restore and extend native habitats of chalk grassland, ancient broad leaved oak woodland, and calcareous meadows. for grasslands, encourage opportunities for reversion from arable cropping back to chalk grassland on the valley sides, linking up areas in good condition and enhance management of existing chalk grasslands*

  – *restore and conserve chalk streams and other watercourses along with associated habitats and features of cultural interest*

  – *conserve and enhance the integrity and setting of archaeological features through low impact grassland management and promote wider understanding through selective and sensitive interpretation for visitors*

  – *restore important boundary features of cultural interest where the open character of the downs will not be affected*

  – *promote the natural regeneration and planting of small oak, ash and hazel broadleaved woodlands on gentle slopes to increase landscape diversity. new coniferous planting and shelterbelts should not be encouraged*

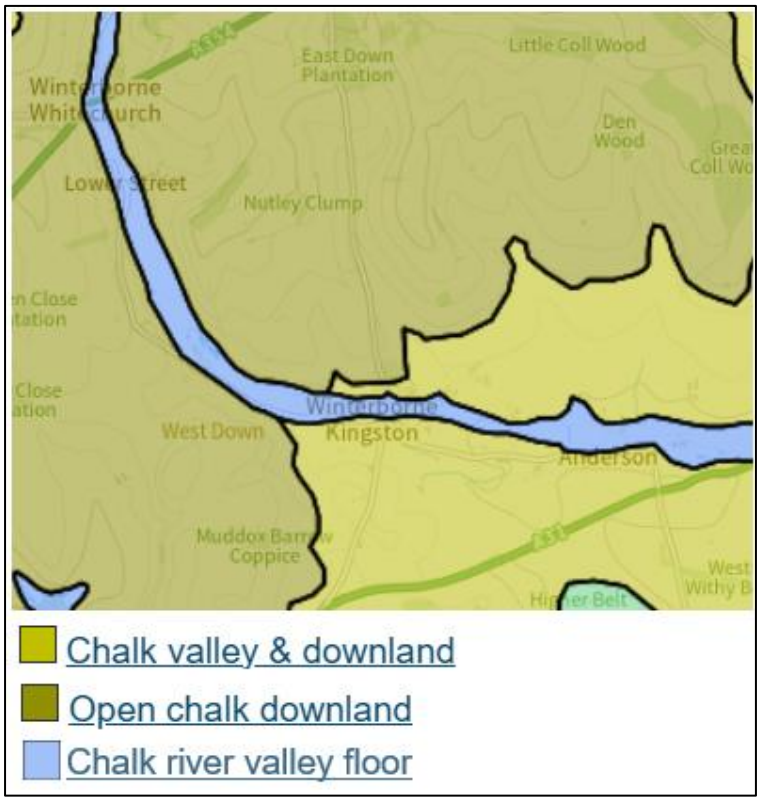
  – *restore and enhance old hazel coppice stands*

  – *conserve the distinctive open character of the landscape e.g. by keeping built development off the ridge tops and exposed downland summits*

  – *identify, protect and conserve the long ranging views especially from roads, rights of way and key viewpoints e.g. via Parish Action Plans, Village Design Statements and other Settlement Appraisals*

  – *improve recreational links into the countryside to tie in with the provision of functional 'greenspace' where possible around settlements'.*

Figure 7-2: Dorset Landscape Character Assessment



Local Landscape Studies

7.3.9. The Strategic Landscape and Heritage Study for North Dorset Area (2019)[42] appraises the key landscape and heritage sensitivities of land surrounding the 18 larger villages (including Winterborne Kingston) within the North Dorset area to the effects of development.

7.3.10. Planning for future growth through the LWNP will support the minimisation of impacts on the local landscape. A summary is provided below of the key landscape sensitivities in Winterborne Kingston, and guidance and opportunities for mitigation. For greater detail, see the Study.

7.3.11. The Study notes that Winterborne Kingston is on sloping land with semi-natural habitats contributing to its character. It has a nucleated settlement pattern with low-density buildings softened by trees. Public access routes and undeveloped skylines marked by woodland maintain the areas rural qualities and tranquillity.

7.3.12. The Study encourages avoiding development on visually prominent slopes. It also recommends protecting and conserving semi-natural habitats and landscape features. New development should align with the village's existing form and character. Additionally, it is important to maintain the rural and tranquil nature of the area, preserving views and historical landscape features.

[42] LUC (2019). '*Strategic Landscape and Heritage Study for North Dorset Area'* can be accessed through this link.

Local Views

7.3.13. It is useful to note that views of and across the neighbourhood area are also an important factor to consider in the planning process, as the scale, height, and mass of development can ultimately impact on important views. Changes like development and landscape change can see these important views and vistas degraded overtime. The emerging LWNP may designate locally important viewpoints to provide additional protection to these assets.

Tree Preservation Orders

7.3.14. Dorset is home to numerous Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs); however, the exact locations of the TPOs is not currently available online.

7.3.15. TPOs provide significant protection by prohibiting the cutting down, topping, lopping, uprooting, wilful damage, or wilful destruction of trees without the consent of the local planning authority.

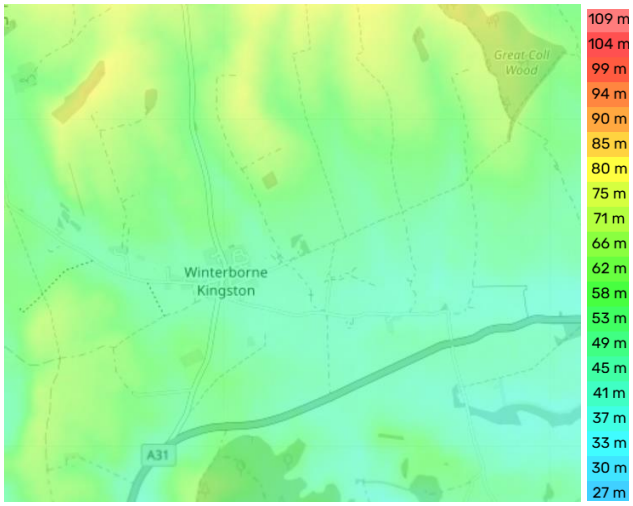
Topography

7.3.16. The topography of the neighbourhood area reveals that existing settlements are situated on the lowest land. Additionally, there is a noticeable incline towards the north (see **Figure 7-3**).

7.3.17. Consequently, any future development in the northern part of the neighbourhood area is likely to be relatively elevated compared to the surrounding regions. However, this is unlikely to be an issue in Lower Winterborne, as most new development is anticipated to occur near existing settlements in the south.

7.3.18. Given the elevation of the surrounding areas, the neighbourhood area's settlements may be visible from vantage points from public rights of way (including from within the boundaries of the nearby NLs). However, the scale of development likely to come forward during the plan period is unlikely to significantly change the character of any viewpoints from these locations.

Figure 7-3: Topography of Lower Winterborne[43]



[43] Topographic-map.com (2025). '*Home'*, available through this link.

Future Baseline

7.3.19. New development has the potential to lead to incremental changes in landscape quality within and surrounding the neighbourhood area, particularly give its topography and rural nature. This could place increased pressure on the surrounding countryside and local settings, including the Dorset NL and Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase NCA. Development also has the potential to disrupt views to and within the neighbourhood area.

7.3.20. The 2014 '*Landscape Sensitivity to Wind and Solar Energy Development in North Dorset District*' notes that the southern half of the neighbourhood area (encompassing the Bloxworth / Charborough Downs Local Character Area [LCA] and South Blandford Downs LCA) exhibit mostly 'high' sensitivity to wind energy developments, meaning wind turbines are unlikely to come forward in this area in the future. However, the study did identify that parts of the neighbourhood area are low-moderate sensitivity to smaller solar farm developments. Therefore, it is possible that this type of development could come forward in future.

7.4. Key Issues

7.4.1. Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified in relation to the Landscape SEA theme:

- The neighbourhood area is near Dorset NL. Development near this area must align with the NL Management Plan to preserve landscape quality and character;

- Lower Winterborne is within the Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase NCA, a predominantly rural landscape with significant ecological and cultural value. New development should be sensitive to its location and setting within a rural landscape;

- The neighbourhood area includes three Dorset Landscape Character Types (DLCTs): Chalk Valley & Downland, Chalk River Valley Floor, and Open Chalk Downland. Development should conserve and enhance these landscapes, focusing on features like chalk streams, woodlands, and grasslands;

- The northern region of Lower Winterborne is set in an area of rising topography. As such, new development in these areas could impact views and landscape character. Sensitive design and layout are essential to protect important views and the interplay between built and natural environments. It is also recognised that the policy directions of the LWNP (in addition to the higher-level policy framework) will seek to ensure any adverse effects in this respect are avoided/ mitigated where possible;

- New development within the neighbourhood area has the potential to impact landscape and villagescape character and locally important landscape features in the absence of sensitive design; and

- The interplay between the existing built environment and open countryside is an important consideration for plan making within Lower Winterborne.

7.5. SEA Objective

7.5.1. Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective and assessment questions in relation to Landscape:

Table 7-2: Proposed SEA Objective for Landscape

SEA Objective	Assessment Questions (Will the Option / Proposal Help to...)
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?

8. Land, Soil and Water Resources

8.1. Focus of Theme

8.1.1. This theme focuses on the quality of soil resources, the extent of mineral resources, water supply resources and water quality in the neighbourhood area.

8.2. Policy Context

8.2.1. **Table 8-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 8-1: Plans, Policies and Strategies Reviewed in Relation to Land, Soil, and Water Resources

Document Title	Year of Publication
National	
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (and guidance)	2024
Environment Act	2021
The 25 Year Environment Plan	2018
Future Water: The government's water strategy for England	2011
Water for Life	2011
Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England	2009
Local	
Wessex Water: Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP)	2019
Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Mineral Sites Plan	2019
Dorset Council 2019 Waste Plan	2019
Dorset Council Minerals Strategy	2014
Joint Municipal Waste Strategy for Dorset 2008-2033	2017
North Dorset Local Plan	2016
Dorset Council Local Plan	emerging

8.2.2. The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The LWNP will be required to have regard to the NPPF, which seeks to protect high quality soil resources, and improve the water environment; recognising the wider benefits of natural capital and derived from ecosystem services. Furthermore, the NPPF recognises the need to take account of the long-term implications of climate change and build resilience in this respect. The NPPF encourages efficient land use, utilising brownfield land opportunities and land remediation schemes where appropriate and delivering environmental gains;

- The NPPF places a requirement on mineral planning authorities to prepare an annual Local Aggregate Assessment (LAA), which reports on the demand for and supply of aggregates in their area. The relevant LAA for Lower Winterborne is the 2024 Local Aggregates Assessment;[44]

- The 25-year Environment Plan presents a focus for environmental improvement in the next couple decades, with aims to achieve clean air, clean and plentiful water, and reduced risk from environmental hazards. This includes measures to improve soil quality, restore and protect peatlands, use water more sustainably, reduce pollution, maximise resource efficiency and minimise environmental impacts. This leads on from and supports the soil strategy for England (Safeguarding our soils) which seeks to ensure that all England's soils will be managed sustainably, and degradation threats tackled successfully by 2030, as well as the national water strategies which seek to secure sustainable and resilient water resources and improve the quality of waterbodies, and the national waste plan which seeks to identify measures being taken to move towards a zero-waste economy. At the county scale, Dorset Council have published their Municipal Waste Strategy (2008-2033) and 2019 Waste Plan, which aim to manage waste sustainably across Dorset by reducing waste generation, increasing recycling, and promoting resource efficiency;

- The Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Mineral Sites Plan (2019) identifies sites for mineral development to meet Dorset county's needs. Along with the Minerals Strategy 2014, it provides the policy framework for determining planning applications for minerals development;

- The Wessex Water: Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) (2019) outlines strategies to ensure a reliable and sustainable water supply for the Wessex region, balancing supply and demand through efficient water use, conservation, and infrastructure development. It focuses on protecting water resources while meeting the needs of current and future populations; and

[44] Dorset Council (2024). '*Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset 13th Local Aggregate Assessment 2014 – 2023*' can be accessed through this link.

- The LWNP will also need to be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the North Dorset Local Plan (2016), and any relevant saved strategic policies in the North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (2003). Due regard should also be given to any relevant emerging policies in the DCLP.

8.3. Baseline Summary

Current Baseline

Agricultural Land

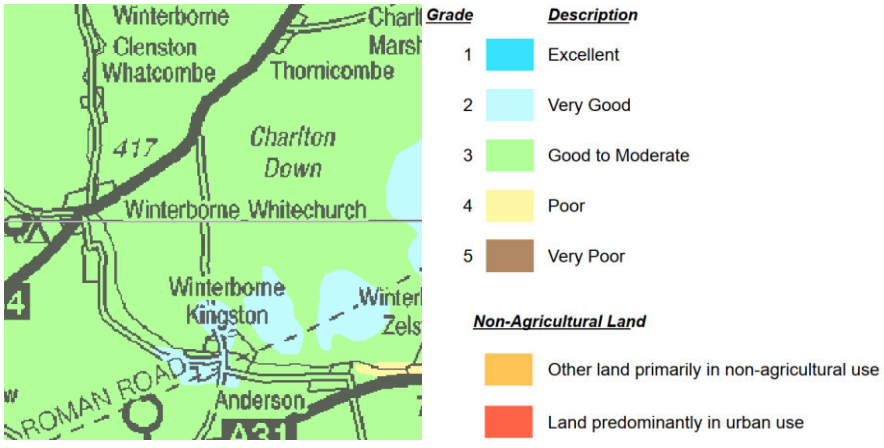
8.3.1. The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) classifies land into six grades (plus 'non-agricultural land' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are recognised as being the 'best and most versatile' (BMV) land and Grades 3b to 5 are of poorer quality.

8.3.2. As shown in **Figure 8-1**, the neighbourhood area is mostly underlain by Grade 3 'Good to Moderate' agricultural land (it is not possible to determine whether this is Grade 3a or Grade 3b land given the map resolution). The neighbourhood area also has pockets of Grade 2 'Very Good' agricultural land (in the south and eastern regions, including around Winterborne Kingston) and a small strip of Grade 4 'Poor' agricultural land (found by its south-eastern border).

8.3.3. In the absence of a detailed agricultural land classification it is not possible to distinguish between areas of sub-grade 3a land (BMV) and sub-grade 3b land (not BMV).

8.3.4. Overall, development across the neighbourhood area could result in the loss of high-quality agricultural land, with an element of uncertainty at this stage. It will be important to protect the higher quality agricultural land from future development and promote the use of previously developed land where possible.

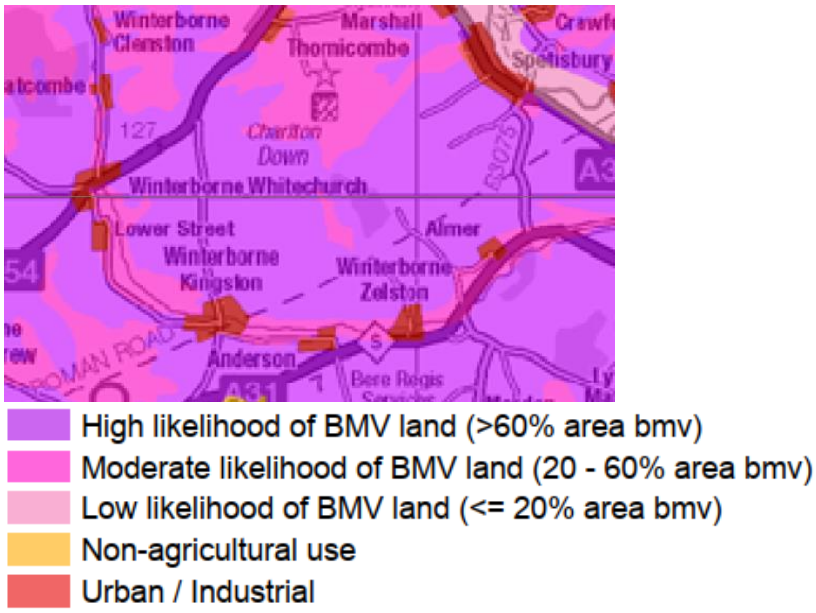
Figure 8-1: Agricultural Land Classification for the Neighbourhood Area[45]



[45] Natural England (2010) '*Agricultural Land Classification map South West Region (ALC006)*' can be accessed through this link.

8.3.5. **Figure 8-2** also shows the results of Natural England's 'Predictive Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Land Assessment' for the South West region. It indicates the majority of the undeveloped land within the neighbourhood area has a high likelihood of being BMV land, especially in the neighbourhood areas central belt. In the southern and northern extents of the neighbourhood area, there are also areas with a moderate likelihood of being BMV land.

Figure 8-2: Likelihood of BMV Land Within the Neighbourhood Area[46]



Mineral Resources

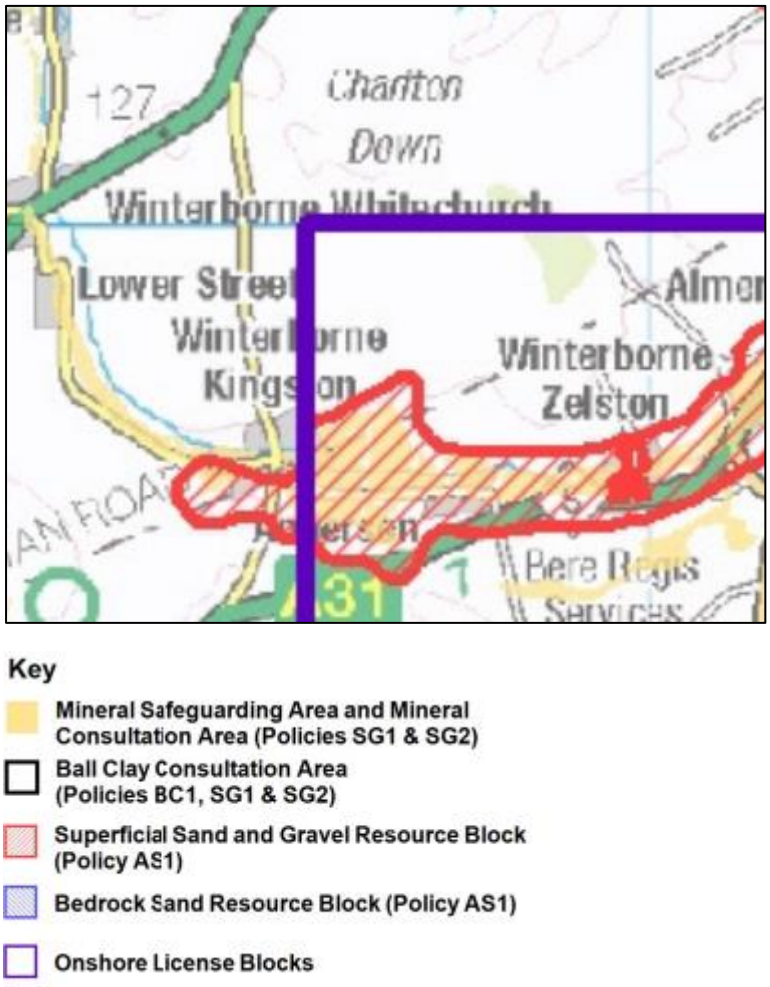
8.3.6. Mineral resources are defined as natural concentrations of minerals or bodies of rock that have the potential to be of economic interest in the present or the future due to their inherent properties. As minerals are a non-renewable resource, minerals safeguarding is deployed as the process through which it is ensured that non-minerals development does not needlessly prevent the future extraction of mineral resources.[47]

8.3.7. A large area in the south of the neighbourhood area overlaps with a Superficial Sand and Gravel Resource Block (SSGRB) designation in the Dorset Minerals Strategy.[48] These are areas deemed suitable to provide an adequate and steady supply of locally extracted sand and gravel.

8.3.8. The same area is also designated as an Aggregates Resource Block in the 2019 Mineral Sites Plan.[49]

[46] Natural England (2017) '*Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Agricultural Land – Strategic scale map South West Region'* can be accessed through this link.
[47] UK Government (2014) '*Guidance: Minerals'* can be accessed through this link..
[48] Dorset Council (2014). '*Minerals strategy'* can be accessed here.
[49] Dorset Council (2019). '*Mineral Sites Plan'* can be accessed here.

Figure 8-3: Dorset Minerals Strategy Policies Map



Water Quality

8.3.9. The neighbourhood area is located within the South West River Basin District. Specifically, within the Dorset management catchment and the Stour Dorset operational catchment. [50]

8.3.10. At the local scale, the neighbourhood area falls within the North Winterbourne Water Body area.[51] This water body area had a good ecological status in the latest monitoring data in 2022.

8.3.11. Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) represent areas at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution, identifying rules in relation to the use of fertilisers and manures as well as a requirement to prevent water pollution from farming areas.[52] In this regard, the entirety of the neighbourhood area is covered by

[50] Environment Agency (2024) '*Stour Dorset Operational Catchment'* can be accessed here.
[51] Environment Agency (2024) '*North Winterbourne Water Body'* can be accessed here.
[52] UK Government (2018) '*Nitrate vulnerable zones'* can be accessed here.

the North Winterborne NVZ for surface water, and the South Wessex NVZ for groundwater.

Water Resources

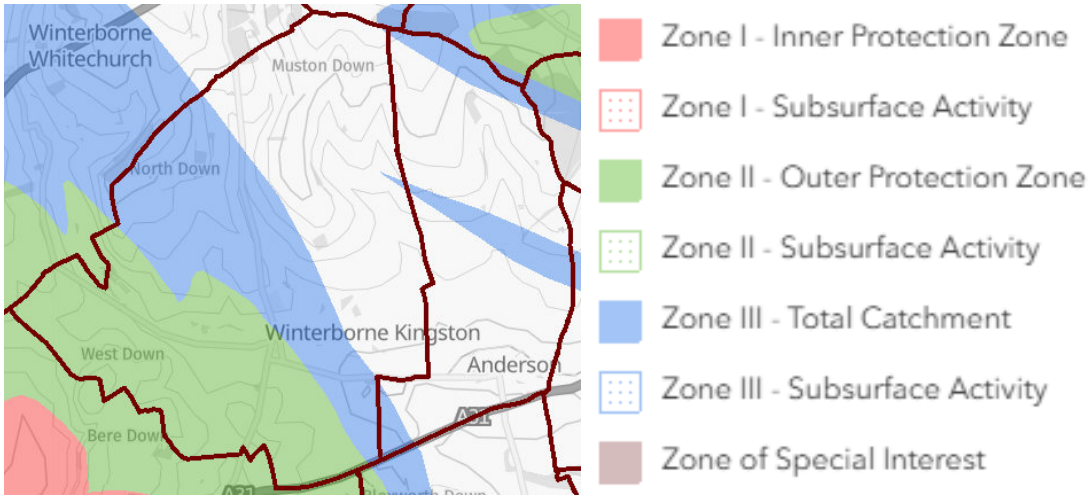
8.3.12. In England, watercourses can be designated as 'main rivers'. These are usually larger rivers and streams, and are managed by The Environment Agency. There is one designated 'main river' in the neighbourhood area: the River Winterborne, which runs through the south of the neighbourhood area.

8.3.13. The neighbourhood area is served by Wessex Water. The Environment Agency have published a document entitled 'Water Stressed Areas – 2021 classification' which included a map of England, identifying areas of relative water stress. In this regard, the whole of Wessex Water's supply area is shown as an area of 'Serious' water stress, based upon the amount of water available per person both now and in the future.[53]

8.3.14. Within their Water Resource Management Plans (WRMPs) water companies refer to their Water Resource Zones (WRZs). WRZs are the largest possible zone in which all resources, including external transfers, can be shared and hence the zone in which all customers experience the same risk of supply failure from a resource failure. In this respect, the neighbourhood area falls within the Wessex Water WRZ, which experiences pressures due to climate change and population growth.

8.3.15. Groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs) have been defined by the Environment Agency in England and Wales to protect groundwater sources such as wells, boreholes, and springs that are used for public drinking water supply.[54] The majority of the south-west of the neighbourhood area is covered by a SPZ designation (including Zone II and Zone III), along with a small area in the central-east (Zone III) (see **Figure 8-4**).

Figure 8-4: Groundwater Source Protection Zones in Lower Winterborne



[53] Environment Agency and DEFRA (2021) '*Water stressed areas – 2021 classification'* can be accessed through this link.
[54] UK Government (2017) '*Groundwater Protection'* can be accessed through this link.

Source: Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside

Future Baseline

8.3.16. Future development has the potential to affect soil resources in the neighbourhood area through the loss of potential BMV quality agricultural land. Due to the prevalence of potential BMV land across the neighbourhood area, it is likely that development outside of the urban settlement could lead to the permanent loss of this resource. However, it is recognised that detailed land classification has not been carried out and therefore uncertainty remains in this respect.

8.3.17. Future development also has the potential to affect water quality through increased consumption, diffuse pollution, waste-water discharges, water run-off, and modification. Wessex Water are likely to maintain adequate water services over the LWNP period; therefore, it will be important for new development to avoid negative impacts on water quality, and instead contribute to reducing consumption and improving efficiency.

8.3.18. It is also noted that the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, as transposed into national legislation, are likely to lead to continued improvements to water quality within the LWNP and wider area. However, it will nonetheless be important for new development to avoid impacts on water quality, and support demand management measures by contributing to reduced consumption and improved efficiency.

8.4. Key Issues

8.4.1. Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified in relation to Land, Soil, and Water resources:

- Allocating land for development could influence changes to land, soil and water resources, particularly given the extent of ‘good’ agricultural land around the settlements in Lower Winterborne. It will therefore be important for development to be focused away from higher quality BMV land within the neighbourhood area where possible, to help prevent the loss of productive agricultural land. It is however recognised that brownfield land is limited in the area;

- The southern part of the neighbourhood area overlaps with designated Superficial Sand and Gravel Resource Blocks and Aggregates Resource Blocks. Development must consider the safeguarding of these mineral resources to ensure their availability for future extraction;

- The neighbourhood area is within the North Winterbourne Water Body area, which has a good ecological status. It is also covered by NVZs for surface and groundwater. Development must implement measures to prevent water pollution and protect water quality, particularly as the River Winterborne passes through the villages (i.e., the locations within the neighbourhood area which are likely to be the focus areas for growth during the plan period); and

- The neighbourhood area is served by Wessex Water and is classified as experiencing serious water stress. The River Winterborne, a designated main river, runs through the area. Development should focus on reducing water consumption and improving efficiency to address water stress and ensure sustainable water management.

8.5. SEA Objectives

8.5.1. Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objectives and assessment questions in relation to Land, Soil, and Water resources:

Table 8-2: Proposed SEA Objectives for Land, Soil, and Water Resources

SEA Objective	Assessment Questions (Will the Option / Proposal Help to...)
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?

9. Transportation

9.1. Focus of Theme

9.1.1. This theme focuses on transport infrastructure, transport usage, traffic flows and congestion, and accessibility levels in the neighbourhood area.

9.2. Policy Context

9.2.1. **Table 9-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 9-1: Plans, Policies and Strategies Reviewed in Relation to Transportation

Document Title	Year of Publication
National	
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (and guidance)	2024
M4 to Dorset Coast: Strategic Connectivity Study	2023
Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain	2021
Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge	2020
The National Design Guide	2019
The Transport Investment Strategy – Moving Britain Ahead	2017
The Department for Transport's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy	2016
Local	
North Dorset Local Plan	2016
Dorset Council Local Transport Plan 3	2011
Dorset Council Local Plan	emerging

9.2.2. The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The LWNP will be required to have regard to the NPPF, which seeks a vision-led approach to identifying transport solutions that deliver well-designed, sustainable and popular places. Larger developments are expected to be delivered in areas which are or can be made sustainable by limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. However, it is recognised that sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural environments;

- National transport strategies set out investment priorities which ultimately all seek to improve the connectivity, effectiveness and reliably of transport networks, whilst reducing impacts on the natural environment (including through decarbonisation). Furthermore, they place great emphasis on making cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journeys. This includes investment in new and upgraded infrastructure, changing perceptions, and increasing safety;

- The M4 to Dorset Coast Strategic Study includes the A31 as part of its preferred route (although it does not appear to highlight the section by Lower Winterborne for any necessary works). The Department for Transport are now considering the findings of the Study and recommendations and will set out how to reflect these in future Road Investment Strategies;

- The Dorset Council Local Transport Plan 3 outlines a strategic framework for improving transport infrastructure and services across Dorset, aiming to support economic growth, reduce carbon emissions, and enhance accessibility. It focuses on sustainable transport solutions, safety improvements, and maintaining the transport network efficiently; and

- The LWNP will also need to be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the North Dorset Local Plan (2016), and any relevant saved strategic policies in the North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (2003). Due regard should also be given to any relevant emerging policies in the DCLP.

9.3. Baseline Summary

Current Baseline

Rail Network

9.3.1. There are no train stations in the neighbourhood area. The nearest train stations are Wool and Wareham, serviced by South Western Railway, and located approximately 10 km to the south and south-east of the neighbourhood area, respectively.[55,56] The train station offers half hourly services to Weymouth (to the south-west) and hourly services to London Waterloo (to the east).

Bus Network

9.3.2. According to Bustimes,[57] the neighbourhood area is only served by one bus route: the CR9, running from Blandford through to Dorchester, passing through Winterborne Kingston. This is a limited service, stopping four times a day (weekdays only).

[55] South Western Railway (no date) '*Wool'* can be accessed through this link.
[56] South Western Railway (no date) '*Wareham'* can be accessed through this link.
[57] Bustimes (no date) '*Winterborne Kingston'* can be accessed through this link.

Road Network and Congestion

9.3.3. The road network within the neighbourhood area is predominantly made up of rural roads and lanes that link Lower Winterborne with surrounding areas. The roads experiencing the highest traffic flows include Marsh Lane, which connects the settlements within the neighbourhood area, and Bere Road, which provides access to the A354 and A31. The A31 runs along the southern boundary of the neighbourhood area.

Road Safety

9.3.4. According to Dorset Council's online mapping, over the past five years, Lower Winterborne has experienced a number of road traffic incidents.[58] The updated map shows most of these occurring along or near the A31, in the southern part of the neighbourhood area. This busier route appears to carry a higher risk, with two serious collisions and two slight incidents recorded.

9.3.5. While Lower Winterborne's villages see fewer incidents than the A31, one slight collision was recorded in Winterborne Kingston on Duck Street. Conditions were dry and sunny, with little wind, suggesting that traffic volume and speed may have been contributing factors. Older data from CrashMap also shows that one fatal incident occurred in 2019, north of Winterborne Kingston on North Street.[59]

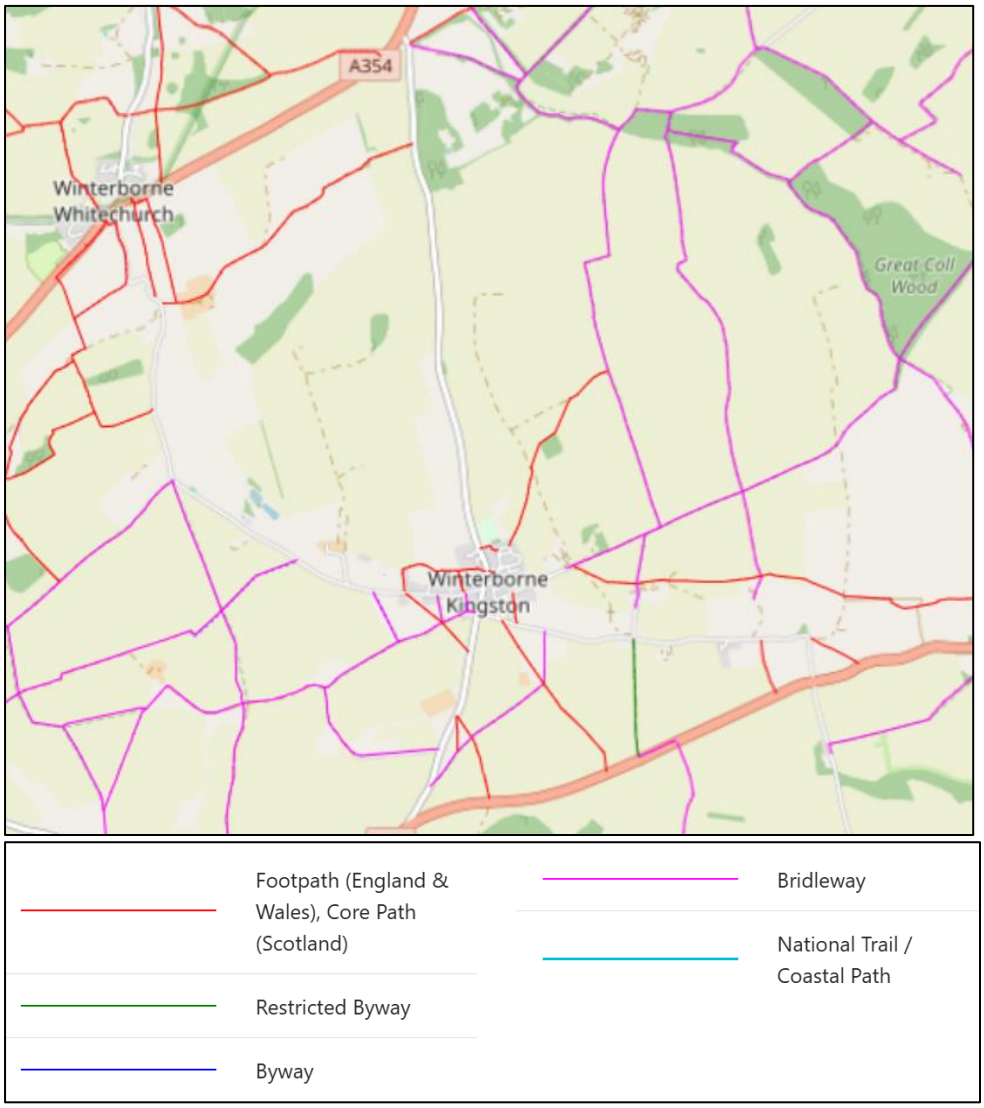
9.3.6. The emerging LWNP offers an opportunity to support and promote road safety improvements (such as clearer signage, reduced speed zones, and improved visibility at junctions), particularly in areas of known concern like the A31 and around Winterborne Kingston.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

9.3.7. With the exception of the north-western corner of the neighbourhood area, there is an extensive PRoW network throughout Lower Winterborne, connecting the area's settlements and providing links out into the wider countryside.

[58] Dorset Council (no date). '*Collisions Public (Map)*' can be accessed through this link.
[59] Crashmap.co.uk (2025). '*Crashmap Data: Great Britain 1999-2023 (verified)*' can be accessed through this link.

Figure 9-1: Public Rights of Way in Lower Winterborne[60]



Cycle Network

9.3.8. There are currently no designated cycle routes in Lower Winterborne, including those forming part of the National Cycle Network or local cycle lanes and tracks.[61] This represents a potential opportunity for improvement that could be addressed through the LWNP.

9.3.9. It is worth noting, however, that even with improved cycle infrastructure, travel time by bike to the nearest town, Blandford, would likely exceed 30 minutes. As such, cycling may not be a practical option for wider connectivity. However, the development of local cycle routes within the neighbourhood area could offer more realistic and beneficial improvements.

[60] Footpathmap.co.uk (no date) '*FPM'* can be accessed through this link.
[61] Opencyclemap.org (no date). '*OpenStreetMap Cycle Map'* can be accessed through this link.

Future Baseline

9.3.10. Given the limited public transport offer within the neighbourhood area, and the broadly rural nature of the parish, it is likely private vehicle usage will continue as the primary mode of transport for residents. In this respect, opportunities to improve public transport networks, connectivity and accessibility within the neighbourhood area should be encouraged (wherever possible) to reduce potential adverse impacts to local roads and support healthier lifestyles.

9.3.11. As discussed in previous chapters, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and subsequent changing working habits, the provision of infrastructure to facilitate working from home is likely to positively contribute towards transport management.

9.4. Key Issues

9.4.1. Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified in relation to Transportation:

- Public transport in Lower Winterborne is limited, with the area being served by only one bus route that operates on a limited schedule. As such, there is a high reliance on the private vehicle for residents. Improving public transport networks, and locating development close to existing transport links and community facilities, will be important to reduce this dependency;

- There is a need to address road safety concerns in Lower Winterborne, particularly along the A31 and in Winterborne Kingston, where there is a history of collisions;

- The neighbourhood area has an extensive PRoW network, connecting settlements to the countryside. The LWNP should seek to extend and enhance this network to support active travel and connectivity by foot;

- The neighbourhood area currently lacks dedicated cycling infrastructure. The LWNP may seek to explore opportunities to introduce and enhance local cycle routes to support active travel and improve connectivity between settlements and the surrounding countryside;

- The neighbourhood area's primary roads (Marsh Lane, North Street, West Street and Bere Road) are sensitive to increased traffic flow and parking demands. Development must consider the impact on these roads and implement measures to manage congestion; and

- An increase in working from home, and subsequent reduced commuting, will support improvements in the transport network, and should be facilitated through supporting infrastructure for example in new homes.

9.5. SEA Objective

9.5.1. Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective and assessment questions in relation to Transportation:

Table 9-2: Proposed SEA Objective for Transportation

SEA Objective	Assessment Questions (Will the Option / Proposal Help to...)
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?

10. Next steps

10.1. SEA Stages

10.1.1. Scoping (the current stage) is the second stage of the SEA process:

- Screening;
- Scoping;
- Assess reasonable alternatives (to inform preparation of the draft plan); and
- Prepare the Environmental Report (to inform consultation and plan finalisation).

10.1.2. The next stage will involve appraising reasonable alternatives for the LWNP. The findings of the appraisal of these alternatives will be fed back to the Parish Council so that they might be considered when preparing the draft plan.

10.1.3. Once the draft ('pre-submission version') plan has been prepared by the Parish Council, it will be subjected to SEA and the Environmental Report prepared for consultation alongside it.

10.1.4. Following consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Plan and the Environmental Report, the Neighbourhood Plan will be finalised and submitted to Dorset Council for Independent Examination.

10.2. Consultation on the Scoping Report

10.2.1. Public involvement through consultation is a key element of the SEA process. At this scoping stage, the SEA Regulations require consultation with statutory consultation bodies but not full consultation with the public.

10.2.2. The statutory consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England. This scoping report has been released to these three statutory consultees.

10.2.3. Consultees are invited to comment on the content of this scoping report, particularly the evidence base for the SEA, the identified key issues, and the proposed SEA Framework.

10.2.4. The consultation period runs from 08.04.2025 to 13.05.2025 (five weeks). Comments on the scoping report should be sent to:

Antonio Vinti, AECOM

Email address: antonio.vinti@aecom.com

10.2.5. All comments received on the scoping report will be reviewed and will influence the development of the SEA where appropriate.

Appendix A Proposed SEA Framework

A.1 The SEA framework has been established through the identification of key issues and environmental objectives as part of the scoping exercise. This draws upon the baseline position and policy context that has been prepared for a range of SEA themes (as set out in **Chapters 2-9**).

A.2 The framework consists of a set of headline objectives and supporting assessment questions, which will be used to appraise the environmental effects of the draft Plan (and reasonable alternatives).

A.3 **Table A.1** below outlines the proposed SEA framework, bringing together the objectives and assessment questions that have been set out at the end of each SEA theme.

Table A.1: Proposed SEA Framework

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?

SEA Theme	SEA Objective	Supporting Questions (Will the Option/ Proposal Help to...)
		• Support the transition to electric vehicles?
	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 and surrounding the neighbourhood area.	• 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

SEA Theme	SEA Objective	Supporting Questions (Will the Option/ Proposal Help to...)
		locally important features and their settings? • 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?
Land, Soil, and Water Resources	Ensure the efficient and effective use of land, and protect and enhance water quality, using water	• Avoid the loss of high-quality agricultural land resources? • Promote any opportunities for the use of previously developed land, or vacant / underutilised land?

SEA Theme	SEA Objective	Supporting Questions (Will the Option/ Proposal Help to...)
	resources in a sustainable manner.	• 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?