

# **Melbury Abbas and Cann Neighbourhood Development Plan**

**Referendum Version  
October 2025**

**2022-2038**





## **Qualifying body: Melbury Abbas and Cann Parish Council**

In compliance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

This Plan has been developed with the commitment and contribution of the Melbury Abbas and Cann Neighbourhood Plan (MA&CNP38) Steering Group and the local community. With thanks to Locality<sup>1</sup> and the group parish of Melbury Abbas and Cann Parish Council for their financial support.

MA&CNP38 was produced by local residents for the benefit of Melbury Abbas and Cann, now and in the future.

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Advisory support: Development in Transition (DinT)

Financial support: Locality and Melbury Abbas and Cann Parishes Council

Stay up to date on the MA&CNP webpage: <https://express.adobe.com/page/WF6vHSG25DoIW/>

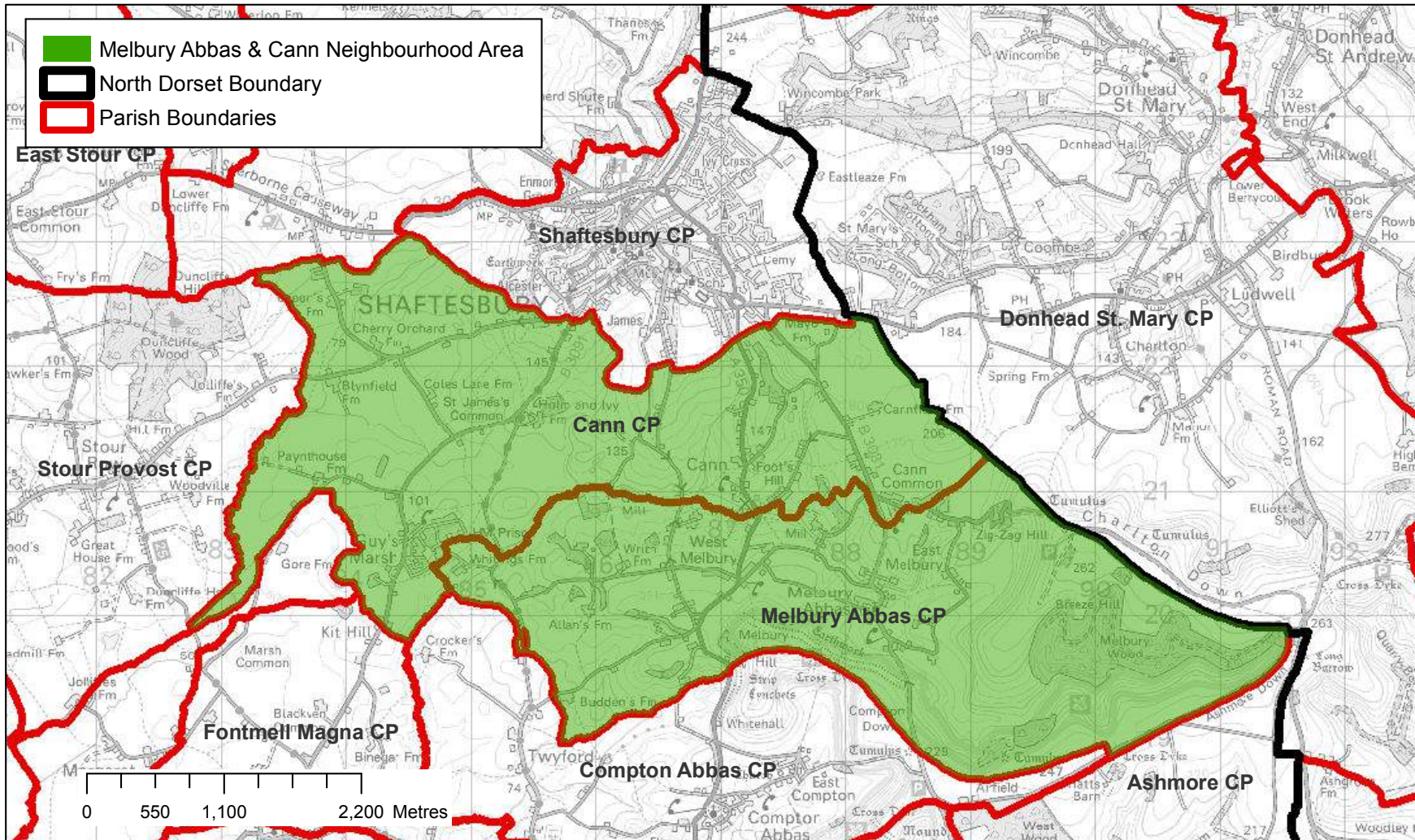
**Figure 1** Front cover – view of Melbury Beacon from Foots Hill

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# Melbury Abbas and Cann Neighbourhood Plan (MA&CNP38)



Name of the neighbourhood area	<b>Melbury Abbas &amp; Cann Neighbourhood Area</b>
Designation date	<b>29 November 2017</b>
Organisation who made the application	<b>Melbury Abbas &amp; Cann Group Parish Council</b>



**Figure 2** Map of the MA&CNP38 Neighbourhood Area of the parishes of Melbury Abbas and Cann, designated in November 2017 (Map: North Dorset District Council, 2017).

# 1. Foreword to the Melbury Abbas and Cann Neighbourhood Plan (MA&CNP38) – Referendum Version

This is the Referendum version of the Neighbourhood Plan (MA&CNP38).

This Plan is the product of many months, indeed years, of careful consideration of local issues, residents' priorities and liaison with Dorset Council and other stakeholders that have responsibilities for, or an interest in the development and future of Melbury Abbas and Cann. There are two consultation periods relating to this Plan where the community, statutory consultees (such as Historic England and the Cranborne Chase National Landscape Partnership), landowners and other interested parties will have the opportunity to provide formal feedback in two consultation phases:

- Regulation 14 – a local consultation on the Draft Plan (Spring 2022) – which ran between Monday, 14th March – Monday, 9th May 2022.
- Regulation 16 – a six-week consultation on the revised Plan (the 'Submission Version', i.e. amended after the comments arising from the Reg 14 consultation – ran between Monday, 11th April – Monday, 30th May 2025. Comments received under Reg 16 were sent together with the Submission version of the Plan for formal assessment by an Independent Examiner).

The Independent Examiner found that the Plan meets basic conditions and be put forward to a Referendum, subject to minor amendments that have been made based on the Examiner's report. Upon approval by Dorset Council, the community will be able to decide whether the Plan should be adopted as part of Dorset Council's development plan. Those eligible to vote in Melbury Abbas and Cann can vote in the Referendum. If a majority of more than 50% who vote support the Plan it will be adopted, i.e. 'made'.

**The Plan should be read in conjunction with the Basic Conditions Statement (which sets out compliance with national and local policy) and the Consultation Statement (which sets out how community consultation informed the vision, objectives, policies and revisions thereof at different stages) and the evidence base (available on the MA&CNP38 webpage and on the Dorset Council website).**

If you have any questions relating to MA&CNP38 process, please email [maandcnp@gmail.com](mailto:maandcnp@gmail.com).

## 2. Abbreviations Used in MA&CNP38

AECOM	Architecture, Engineering, Consulting, Operations and Maintenance Technology Corporation <sup>2</sup>	LPA	Local Planning Authority
AH	Affordable Housing (NPPF Definition)	LPR	Local Plan Review
BREEAM	Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method	LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
CCWWD AONB	Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (now referred to as 'National Landscapes')	MA&CNP38	Melbury Abbas and Cann Neighbourhood Plan 2028
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy	MHCLG	Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government
DERC	Dorset Environmental Records Centre	MMC	Modern Methods of Construction
DLNP	Dorset Local Nature Partnership	NA	Neighbourhood Area
DHLUC	Department of Housing, Levelling Up and Communities (now reverted to MHCLG)	NDCC	North Dorset District Council
HGVs	Heavy Goods Vehicles	NDP	Neighbourhood Development Plan
HMA	Housing Market Area	NPPG	National Planning Policy Guidance
HMP	His Majesty's Prison	NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
HNA	Housing Needs Assessment	ONS	Office for National Statistics
IPE	Intelligent Plans and Examinations	RCHME	Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England
LGS	Local Green Space	Reg 14	Regulation 14 (of the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations)
LIZ	Local Impact Zone (Vistas)	SAC	Special Area of Conservation
		SuDS	Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
		SSSI	Site of Specific Scientific Interest
		SHLAA	Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

## 3. How to Use MA&CNP38

Each section gives a broad overview of the key issues that affect the communities of Melbury Abbas and Cann, which also encompasses the areas of Cann Common and Guys Marsh. These issues have corresponding objectives (in bold) and policies (in blue) that support the overall vision of the Plan to deliver a positive and proactive response ensuring the overall sustainability of the area. The documentation that supports MA&CNP38's policies is listed in the Plan's Evidence Base as well as in various endnotes in the Plan itself. This Plan must be read alongside the content and policies of the adopted Local Plan, which at the time of writing it is the 2016 North Dorset Local Plan and saved policies from the 2003 North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan; there is an emerging Dorset Local Plan against which the policies in MA&CNP38 have been screened against. In order to encourage the Parish Council to continue to address the issues raised, MA&CNP38 Steering Group has identified a number of short and long-term Action Points which are listed separately (see Evidence Base). These do not form part of the land-use Neighbourhood Plan and the Parish Council will address and prioritise these actions. It may be that some actions are a 'quick fix'; others may depend on funds accruing from the forthcoming Infrastructure Levy (IL).

## 4. Introduction



**Figure 3** Fingerpost at White Pit Lane, Melbury Abbas (DinT)

1. Under the Localism Act 2011, parish and town councils can develop a Neighbourhood Plan to complement their local authorities' Local Plans and other national policies with community priorities.
2. Neighbourhood Plans can help foster a shared vision for a local area, identify where new development and facilities should take place, which green spaces should be protected, and influence the design of new buildings whilst conserving heritage and environmental assets.
3. An application by the Melbury Abbas and Cann Parish Council to North Dorset District Council requesting designation as a separate 'Neighbourhood Area' was approved in November

2017. The Neighbourhood Area is the geographic coverage of our two parishes.<sup>3</sup> Previously, Melbury Abbas and Cann was working with Shaftesbury to develop a joint Neighbourhood Plan. However, the Neighbourhood Plan steering group felt the rural concerns that are important to our community were overshadowed by the more urban issues of Shaftesbury, itself a medium-sized town, and a separate designation was sought.

4. The Melbury Abbas and Cann Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2038 (MA&CNP38) intends to take our communities forward whilst celebrating and protecting the most important aspects of that landscape and heritage. Based on a theme of sustainable development, our overall approach is to create a forward-looking vision for the parishes where people want to live, work, invest and visit.

5. If 'made', the Plan will create local planning guidelines that focus on economic, social and environmental aspects that underpin a viable and sustainable community and will become part of Dorset Council's statutory planning framework. This Plan will last to the end of March 2038, in line with the plan period of the emerging Dorset Local Plan. If necessary, the Parish Council can review and update the Plan earlier following a similar process of consultation, examination and referendum (depending on the extent of these changes). A statement on monitoring and suggested indicators are set out at the end of this plan.

6. This is the Referendum Version of the Plan that has been amended during two consultations known as 'Reg 14' and 'Reg 16'. The Draft Plan was also subject to a Health Check carried out by Intelligent Plans and Examinations (IPE) in Spring 2024. An independent Examiner also reviewed the Reg 16 Submission version of the Plan and comments included in their Examiner Report have been considered and acted upon, resulting in this final version of the Plan to be considered in a local referendum vote. If more than 50% of those who turn out support it, the Plan is 'made' (adopted).

## 5. Community Engagement for the preparation of MA&CNP38

7. MA&CNP38 belongs to the community that lives and works in the parishes of Melbury Abbas and Cann and their input is crucial to the Plan's validity and longevity.

8. MA&CNP38 has been developed to be relevant, forward-thinking and effective and is based on the needs identified through consultation with our community and other stakeholders (see accompanying Consultation Statement).

9. The Steering Group has extensively researched development priorities in the Neighbourhood Area (Figure 2), providing a robust evidence base, as well as considering the evidence already gathered for the former joint Shaftesbury, Melbury Abbas and Cann Neighbourhood Plan.

10. In January 2018, a Community Questionnaire was carried out in Melbury Abbas and Cann (with a response rate of 26%).<sup>4</sup> The questionnaire asked residents to indicate their development preferences on a range of issues, including the extent of and location of new development in the two parishes, the type of development that could be supported, areas that require conservation or enhancement, and perspectives to encourage enterprise and sustainable transport.

11. The questionnaire gained a preliminary understanding of the types of sites that may be supported by the local community.

12. A 'call for sites' process was undertaken in October 2018 to determine potentially available sites. Nine sites were taken forward for consideration within the MA&CNP38 site assessment process.<sup>5</sup>



Figure 4 MA&CNP38 April 2019 Community Feedback Day (DinT)

13. Earlier versions of this Plan were also shaped by participants of the Community Feedback Day in April 2019. This was held at the Melbury Abbas and Cann Village Hall to share the community questionnaire results, showcase working objectives and potential policy areas for further feedback. In total, 18 members of the public attended. The steering group was available to explain the work they had carried out to date and answer any questions people had about the process. The feedback was used to further refine the objectives and vision of the Plan and comment on draft policy ideas.

14. A further online survey was carried out in December 2019 – January 2020. In particular, this sought to ensure that local housing need data was updated since the 2018 Community Questionnaire, to understand community views on potential suitable sites, whether there is an appetite for seeking a more accessible site for the village hall, and community views on the Shaftesbury bypass.<sup>6</sup>

15. A total of 40 respondents answered the 2020 survey (35 online and 5 by paper copy), giving a response rate of 9%. While this is relatively low, the results help to complement

the existing evidence gathered on community views on development. It also reflects the fact that online surveys generally tend to have a lower response rate.

16. The steering group has also carried out engagement with local stakeholders, including the Cranborne Chase National Landscape Management Group (formerly AONB), The Abbey School on the Shaftesbury/Cann border (which covers the catchment area for the parishes), the Village Hall Committee, HMP Guys Marsh Prison (a significant employer in the Neighbourhood Area), a local walking group, the Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Plan group (to address matters of shared interest), Compton Abbas Airfield, Shaftesbury Town Council, local landowners and developers.

17. The steering group shared draft objectives and regular updates on the Melbury Abbas and Cann Parish Council website, a plan webpage, social media and the parish magazine (The Spreadeagle).

18. This Plan was assisted by Dorset Council Planning Officers who provided timely and helpful advice. Development in Transition (DinT) supported evidence-base gathering, plan writing and community engagement activities.

19. We hope this Plan responds to our community's development priorities for the future of our area.



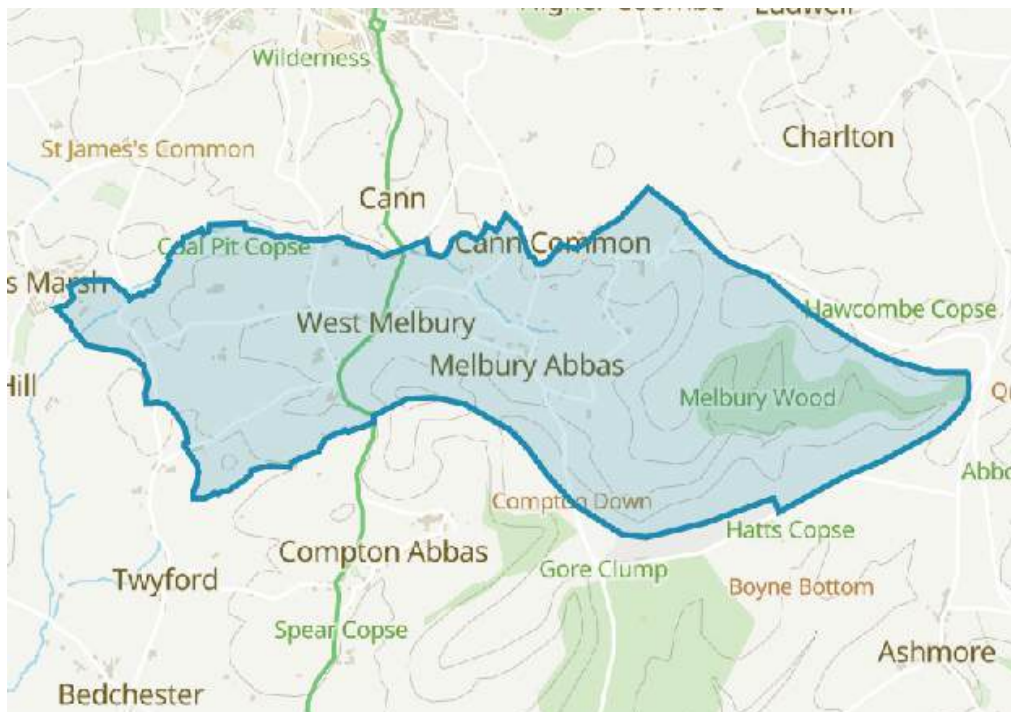
Figure 5 MA&CNP38 community newsletter in West Lane display board

## 6. Geography and Demographics of Melbury Abbas and Cann

20. The designated Neighbourhood Area, the group parish of Melbury Abbas and Cann borders the south of Shaftesbury and lies about 5 miles south east of Gillingham, 15.6 miles west of Salisbury, and about 18.6 miles north of Poole. The eastern side also borders the neighbouring county of Wiltshire.

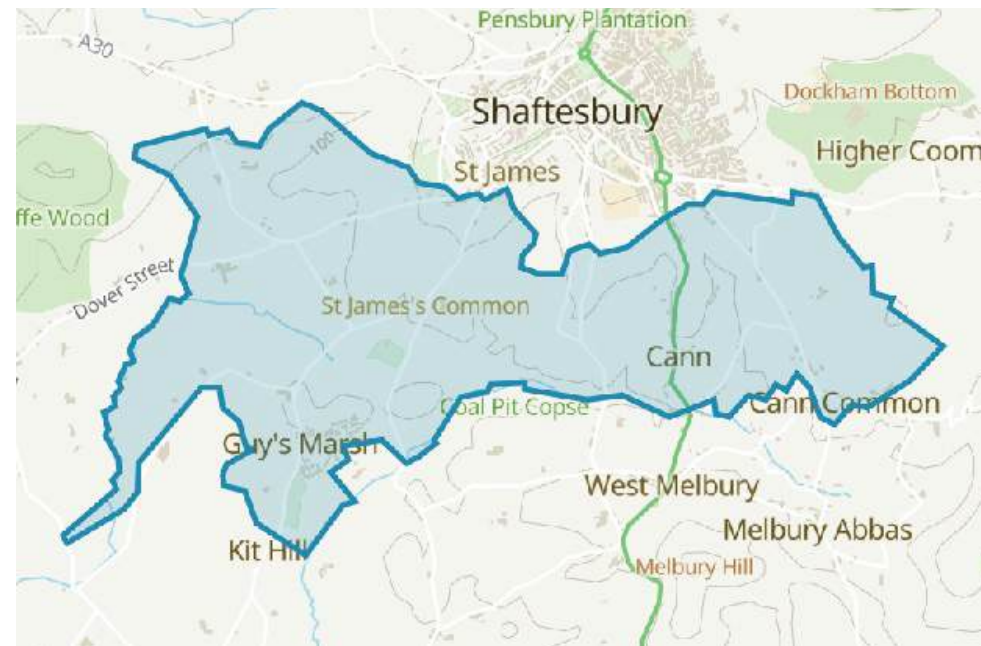
21. These two parishes cover the settlements of Melbury Abbas (West Melbury and East Melbury) and Cann (inc. Cann Common and Guys Marsh). The Historic Landscape Characterisation Project classifies Melbury Abbas and Cann as ancient parishes (CCWWD AONB, 2008, p.69).<sup>7</sup>

22. The geographic areas of Melbury Abbas and Cann are depicted in the figures below:



**Figure 6** Melbury Abbas Parish boundary (NOMIS area report, Cann OS/ONS, 2021<sup>8</sup>)

23. Melbury Abbas and Cann has a combined area of 1,888 ha (4,665 acres). The settlements consist almost exclusively of detached and semi-detached residential properties, surrounded by pasture, grassland and arable farmland. The eastern half of the study area is located within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape (see Figure 9).<sup>9</sup>



**Figure 7** Cann Parish Boundary (NOMIS area report, Cann OS/ONS, 2021<sup>10</sup>)

24. According to 2021 census statistics, the Neighbourhood Area had a population of 1,258 residents occupying 370 households.

25. Analysis of the 2021 and 2011 census data (both were used at various points in the evidence gathering process), MA&CNP38 community surveys and the MA&CNP38 Housing Need Assessment indicates the following important demographic trends and facts that have informed the development of this Plan:

- Overall, the population is stable with a slight decrease in Melbury Abbas over the inter-census period. Many respondents have lived in the Neighbourhood Area for more than 25 years, which indicates that most people have strong roots in Melbury Abbas and Cann.
- There has been and will continue to be an increase in

Cann due to the expansion of HMP Guys Marsh<sup>11</sup> – an increase in numbers of inmates will also increase the number of staff working and travelling to Cann.

- The population is relatively skewed towards older persons yet there are no units of specialist housing for older people within Melbury Abbas and Cann.<sup>12</sup>
- Compared to the national average, residents in Melbury Abbas are older and there are fewer school children and students than the national average. Melbury Abbas and Cann needs younger families to live in the area to balance the ageing population.
- Melbury Abbas and Cann have a higher than average number of 2-person households.
- Social rental properties are extremely low, indicating a need for more affordable dwellings in the area.
- Both parishes had a lower than average number of 1-, 3- and 4-bed properties compared to the national average.
- Data provided by Dorset Council on second home ownership reveals that this is very low in Cann, and moderately higher in Melbury Abbas. There has also been a recent rise in the provision of AirBnB and short-term rental properties<sup>13</sup>.

## 7. Expectations for development in Melbury Abbas and Cann

26. On 1 April 2019, the county's nine councils were replaced by two new organisations, Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. North Dorset District Council (NDDC) is now part of Dorset Council.

27. The 2016 North Dorset Local Plan states that a minimum of 825 dwellings should be provided in the countryside in 18 larger villages up to 2031. There are currently no strategic allocations for development in the Neighbourhood Area as the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1<sup>14</sup> does not anticipate development in rural areas outside of a settlement boundary. The settlement boundaries in smaller built-up settlements created in the 2003 North Dorset Local Plan, which included the built up area of Cann Common, were removed in the 2016 North Dorset Local Plan.

28. Dorset Council completed a consultation on an emerging Local Plan for the Dorset Council area, which is scheduled to run up to 2038. The emerging Dorset Local Plan had associated Housing Requirement figures for all of the designated neighbourhood areas (with a 1,793 net additional dwellings across Dorset per annum to 2038). These figures were intended to be the minimum number of dwellings that should be delivered over the plan period 2022-2038.

29. A new Local Development Scheme was agreed by the Dorset Council Cabinet in February 2025. The Council intends to run public consultations in August 2025 and August 2026 and submit it for Examination in December 2026 (with the goal of adopting the new Local Plan by the end of 2027). Until the new Local Plan is adopted by Dorset Council, the 2016 North Dorset



Local Plan still applies to the former NDDC council area.

30. In the emerging Dorset Local Plan, Melbury Abbas and Cann are classified as Tier 4 villages in the emerging Local Plan (villages without development boundaries or within the Green Belt). The identified housing need figure for Melbury Abbas and Cann is 45 dwellings.<sup>15</sup> The figures should be viewed as minimum requirement figures and therefore can be exceeded.

31. There is no need for neighbourhood plans to make allocations in order to meet this minimum requirement. However, to secure greater protection against the ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’, neighbourhood plans can allocate housing sites, as per the December 2023 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraphs 10-14.<sup>16</sup> MA&CNP38 has identified the need for development in the Neighbourhood Area through our consultation process that is partially met by sites set out in “13.5. Allocated sites” on page 18 or windfall sites that may arise over the plan period.

32. MA&CNP38 is developed with a view to be in general conformity with national policy, the current North Dorset Local Plan and in consideration of the Dorset emerging Local Plan.<sup>17</sup> The MA&C Parish Council will take every opportunity to ensure that the policies in MA&CNP38 influence the content of the new Dorset Council Local Plan to support the needs of local residents.

## 8. Development Challenges Identified and Addressed by MA&CNP38

33. Together Melbury Abbas and Cann make up an outstanding combination of landscape and history. However, as rural communities they also face the challenges of the 21st century.

34. MA&CNP38 supports the delicate balance of allowing for economic growth, providing opportunities for affordable living for all residents, and retaining the area’s distinctive rural character. The aim is for modest new growth in Melbury Abbas and Cann around existing settlement areas, and with brownfield sites as a priority. These should be sympathetically designed and located to blend with the existing settlement and the sensitive landscape and historic character of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape, which covers the eastern section of the Neighbourhood Area.<sup>18</sup>

35. With the local population projected to increase, so too will pressures to build more accommodation. Within the Neighbourhood Area there are several development pressures – particularly a lack of affordable housing. At the same time, development must be sensitive to our rural character and any benefits arising from development within the parish boundary, notably development on the land South of the A30 (which includes a significant portion of land in Cann), must accrue to our parishes to enhance our local infrastructure and services.

36. Working practices are generally moving towards a more knowledge-based economy and home-working practices, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic. There is potential

to encourage innovative businesses in the area, if facilities are created which support them (e.g. the installation of high-speed broadband and the upgrading of rural-based employment premises). This Plan also supports the protection of high-grade agricultural land and efforts to encourage biodiversity gain in new development.

37. Yet due to the nature of modern lifestyles and working practices, transportation in this rural area is unavoidably car-centric. The local topography, the constraints of the local road network, a lack of buses, pollution and carbon emissions all present challenges for sustainable transport. Full consideration of the constraints presented by the narrow access roads are a key issue to ensure sustainable travel patterns now and in the future.

38. Quality facilities enable interaction and the enjoyment of community places deemed important to an area and are essential to well-being. These can be for recreational, amenity or landscape benefits, or as part of the local cultural heritage. The Plan welcomes modernised community spaces through development on Southbank Farm and the current Village Hall site for affordable housing, while at the same time and promoting village character around Cann Common through two allocated sites (land South of Melbury Motors and Southbank Farm) which deliver much-needed affordable housing and community facilities. Key worker housing (e.g. for HMP Guys Marsh prison workers) is supported by the allocation of 7 St Anne's Close Guys Marsh.

39. The MA&CNP38 consultation process has given local people the opportunity to influence what aspects of investment in local infrastructure would be most important to them. The Parish Council will use the feedback in order to inform its decision-making when determining how best to use development monies arising from new development.

## 9. MA&CNP38 Overall Vision and Section Summaries

### 9.1. MA&CNP38 Vision

*By 2038, the Melbury Abbas and Cann Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2038 (MACNP38) has enhanced our rural community and landscapes through sustainable development and has made strong gains in enabling net-zero development whilst nature and biodiversity are enhanced and local heritage is protected.*

*Development in Melbury Abbas and Cann serves the needs of different age groups. More young families will have moved to the area, attracted by the increase in local employment and affordable housing, providing a stable population, served by The Abbey School. The housing requirements of older people have been provided for through accommodation appropriate to their needs.*

*The local community has become stronger by directing development towards existing settlement areas and brownfield sites and all development follows design guidelines appropriate to our community. There is an increased provision of community amenities and facilities, including children's play parks, and a modern Village Hall that has a reputation as a high-quality venue in an attractive and accessible location.*

*Enhanced employment opportunities have led to a more vibrant community with a positive and resilient approach to the future that respects the setting of some of the Neighbourhood Area being within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape on the Eastern side. Financial and infrastructure improvements from development within our parishes are fairly distributed to the Parish Council and support our flourishing community.*

*More people are travelling more actively, using improved footpaths,*

and experience positive well-being benefits from greater recreational use from accessible rights of way in the countryside and the Cranborne Chase National Landscape.

The area’s rural identity is safeguarded through the protection, conservation and enhancement of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape, including respect for its Dark Sky Reserve Status. Dinah’s Hollow, Melbury Beacon and other important historic assets and local vistas are protected through the sensitive siting of development that respects the area’s rural and historic character.

40. This Plan is divided into sections that reflect how this vision will be achieved, with corresponding thematic strategic objectives and policy-specific objectives.

Housing
Environment, design and heritage
Employment
Leisure, Community and Well-being



Figure 8 Sheep on Quarry Lane, Melbury Abbas

## 10. Achieving Sustainable Development

42. In drafting the various policies, the MA&CNP38 Steering Group endeavoured to ensure that each policy is underpinned by a thorough evidence base,<sup>19</sup> whilst also complying with existing national policies, the Local Plan and other relevant legislation in how it contributes to sustainable development:

- Economic – contributing to building a strong economy: ensuring that sufficient land is available in the right place and at the right time.
- Social – providing homes that will meet the needs of future generations, and supporting the community’s health, social and cultural well-being.
- Environmental – protecting our environment: using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating climate change.
- The table on the following page includes an assessment of the contribution of each of the plan policies against these dimensions of sustainability (and a more detailed assessment can be found in the Basic Conditions Statement)

Theme and objective	Policy Number	Policy name	Objective	Page	Environment	Social	Economic
Section 1 – Housing  To ensure the housing needs of the local population are met	1a.	Promoting brownfield sites and infill development	To allow for limited development on brownfield or infill sites within existing settlement areas to encourage the future viability of Melbury Abbas and Cann	page 15	**	**	
	1b.	Encouraging a sustainable population	To promote a sustainable local population through modest development	page 15	**	***	**
	1c.	Promoting a broad mix of housing	To ensure a mix of housing stock that meets the needs of different ages of the population	page 16		***	**
	1d.	Affordable housing	To support the development of Affordable Housing, giving priority to those with a local connection to encourage younger families to remain in Melbury Abbas and Cann	page 16		***	**
	1e-h	To support residential development on allocated sites	Policy 1e. Policy St Anne’s Close, Guys Marsh Policy 1f. Land South of Melbury Motors Policy 1g. Southbank Farm Policy 1h. The Village Hall	page 19– page 28	*** ** *** ***	*** *** *** ***	*** ** ** **
Section 2 – Environment, design and heritage  To enhance and conserve the environment and local heritage for future generations	2a.	Design	To ensure development complies with a local Design Guide and new development is sensitive to local character and vernacular	page 40	***	***	**
	2b.	Protection of woodland and the role of trees	To ensure woodland and trees are retained and enhanced	page 41	***	***	**
	2c.	Landscape and protected views and vistas	To protect identified local views and vistas	page 41	***	***	**
	2d.	Biodiversity and ecosystems	To ensure development enhances local biodiversity and ecosystems	page 45	***	***	**
	2e.	Heritage assets	To ensure development protects and enhances local heritage assets	page 46	***	***	**

**Table 1** Summary of thematic and policy objectives. Each policy has been screened against its potential environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainability (as per para 8 of the NPPF. See Basic Conditions Statement for more information).

Theme and objective	Policy Number	Policy name	Objective	Page	Environment	Social	Economic
Section 3 – Employment  To support the development of local employment opportunities	3a.	Encouraging local enterprise	To encourage local enterprise in the Neighbourhood Area	page 50	**	**	***
	3b.	Land South of A30	To ensure that development south of the A30 is satisfactorily mitigated	page 52	**	***	***
Section 4 – Leisure, Community and Well-being  To maintain and improve the quality of life of parishioners	4a.	Sustainable transport	To encourage sustainable transport links through accessible and safe rights of way in the Neighbourhood Area	page 59	***	***	***
	4b.	Traffic impacts and road safety	To resolve problems caused by heavy through traffic and associated safety issues	page 61	**	**	***
	4c.	Infrastructure provision	To future-proof and modernise local infrastructure	page 61	**	***	***
	4d	Community facilities	To protect and enhance community facilities, recreational and amenity areas	page 62	**	***	***
	4e	Energy	To encourage measures that promote a net-zero future	page 63	***	***	***
	4f	Sustainable ground-mount PV	To support sustainable groundmount PV installations	page 63	***	***	***
	4g	Lighting and air pollution	To encourage measures to reduce light pollution and retain the Cranborne Chase National Landscape's Dark Sky Reserve status	page 64	***	**	***
	4h	Water and water efficiency	To maximise the potential of water efficiency and energy from water	page 64	***	**	**
	4i.	Local Green Spaces	To protect and promote valued green infrastructure through the allocation of Local Green Spaces	page 65	***	**	**

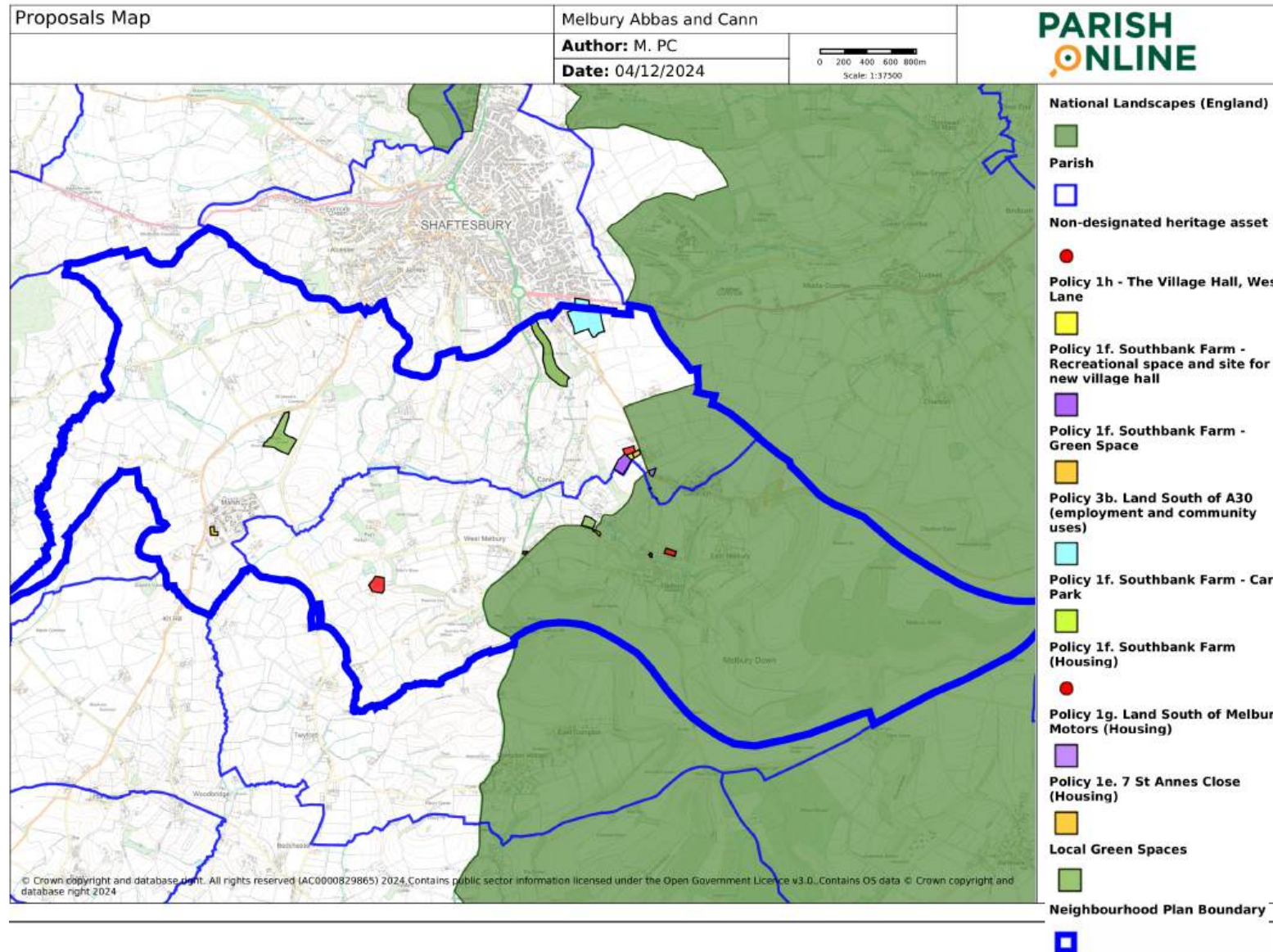


Figure 9 MA&CNP38 Proposals map of allocated sites (see “13.5. Allocated sites” on page 18, Policy 3b on page 52, and Policy 4i on page 65)

## 13. Housing

43. As illustrated by our Melbury Abbas and Cann Design Guide (AECOM, 2019), there are distinctive settlement characteristics within the parishes. These include:

- Cann Common: lies within the East of the Neighbourhood Plan area and includes one heavily clustered settlement area and a more dispersed settlement alongside the C13 road. This area typically has streets fronted with detached houses sited on narrower plots with a more compact and linear settlement pattern. It was mostly developed in the 20th century. (The settlement boundary in Cann Common was one of many smaller settlement boundaries in villages across North Dorset in the NDDC 2003 Local Plan, which was removed in the 2016 Local Plan, see Policy 2, Core Spatial Strategy<sup>20</sup>).
- The estate settlement pattern of Guys Marsh differs from the others due to its function as settlement that was built up around the HMP Guys Marsh.
- The northern edge of the Neighbourhood Plan Area located adjacent to the Shaftesbury settlement boundary presents ribbon development patterns similar to the built up area of Shaftesbury.
- After this there is a distinct separation between the urban and rural landscapes, looking towards Melbury Beacon to the east and Duncliffe Wood to the West.

44. The North Dorset Local Plan (2016 – which at the time of writing is the adopted Local Plan for the Neighbourhood Area) sets out the number of dwellings to be achieved over the plan period across the county (285 new homes for North Dorset for each year, from 2011 to 2031).<sup>21</sup>

45. The North Dorset Local Plan is very stringent as to where new development is allowed in rural areas. There is no set housing requirement for our parishes under the current Local Plan. Without a settlement boundary, much of the land in Melbury Abbas and Cann is considered by Dorset Council as within the ‘open countryside’.<sup>22</sup>

46. The Eastern part of Melbury Abbas and Cann are also set within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape, with various restrictions on development that might affect its setting and its rural and historic character. In an National Landscape (formerly called Areas of Outstanding National Beauty, AONBs), the ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ set out in the NPPF does not automatically apply (para 11 and footnote 7 of the NPPF, 2023).

47. MA&CNP38 seeks to protect and enhance the National Landscape and it is a treasured part of the area’s rural identity. To complement the (former) AONB’s current Management Plan (2019–2024), there are also several position statements that elaborate issues relating to planning, transportation and the environment that should be consulted by all prospective developers in the area (e.g. Position Statement Number 10 on Housing).<sup>23</sup>

48. Summarising MA&CNP38’s approach to housing delivery:

- MA&CNP38 wants to make sure that the local housing offer helps promote the long-term sustainability and viability of our community.
- MA&CNP38 seeks to create a vibrant community through the provision of housing which encourages families and young people to live in the area.
- It is important that development contributes towards a distinct sense of place, promotes community cohesion and

allows people to enjoy quality lifestyles.

49. The approach is informed by Community consultation on preferences for sites and types of development and the subsequent evidence base on potential sites.<sup>24</sup> To complement the findings of the Community Questionnaire, the MA&CNP38 Steering Group commissioned an independent Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) by AECOM through the Locality technical support programme.<sup>25</sup>

50. Most people with a housing need wanted to stay in Melbury Abbas and Cann (61.1%), rather than move outside of the area. In the 2019–20 Survey, of those with a housing need in the over 65 category, all respondents wanted to remain in Melbury Abbas and Cann.

51. Research carried out for MA&CNP38 indicates that: i) there is a demand for retirement accommodation in the Neighbourhood Area; ii) meeting the greater care needs of older persons will need to be more centrally located to local amenities in neighbouring Shaftesbury.

52. MA&CNP38 recognises that development on the perimeter of Shaftesbury caters to a specific market and does not necessarily meet the different needs of local people, such as those wishing to downsize and stay in the villages (as per the survey responses); as such adaptable dwellings are required to meet changing housing needs. Dwellings should therefore be designed with multi-generational uses in mind to account for fluctuations in the profile of occupants, including exploring the possibility of co-housing opportunities.<sup>26</sup>

53. This Plan seeks to protect our rural parishes from encroachment by development as much as possible while considering unmet housing needs in the Neighbourhood Area (see Policy 1a and allocated sites policies). MA&CNP38 aims to achieve this by prioritising available brownfield sites and,

if greenfield sites are to be developed, that these are in the most sustainable locations that address unmet housing or employment needs.

54. Development of the two sites on B3081 or the adjacent Persimmon site on the A30 (where this falls within the Cann parish boundary) will count towards the housing target of 45 for Melbury Abbas and Cann Neighbourhood Area. This means the housing target will be comfortably met – but this does not necessarily meet the needs of those wishing to live in the more rural area of Melbury Abbas or Cann. To meet these needs MA&CNP38 allocates four sites: two in Cann Common (Policy 1f. and Policy 1g.), one in Guys Marsh (Policy 1e.) and one on the current Village Hall site (Policy 1h.), helping to deliver much-needed affordable housing and community facilities in the area.

55. This figure applies across the whole Neighbourhood Area but within the Eastern part of Cann parish any development must be extremely sensitive to the character of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape to support the implementation of the AONB's Management Group guidance on development within its boundaries. The Plan identifies three sites that are either within the National Landscape or adjacent to it (Policies 1f–h) or could have potential visual and character impacts on the National Landscape, though care has been taken to address these in specific allocation policies.

56. This Plan welcomes infill development of vacant parcels within previously built areas – to help provide for an appropriate housing near existing rural settlements.

57. Dwellings in the Neighbourhood Area have an average of 3.4 bedrooms per household and 7 rooms per household, as demonstrated by the following table:

Parish/Settlement area	Average number of bedrooms per household	Average number of rooms per household
Melbury Abbas	3.3	6.8
Cann	3.4	7
Cann Common	3.4	7.2
Average	3.4	7

**Table 2** Average number of bedrooms and rooms in the Neighbourhood Area (Nomis parish data, ONS, 2018 -based on the 2011 census)

59. To meet the overall housing needs of the population there should be a broad mix of housing types, including sufficient provision of affordable dwellings and suitable accommodation to meet the needs of an ageing community. (NB: the North Dorset Local Plan already sets out a suggested split of bedrooms for new dwellings according to whether they are market or affordable properties).

60. There is a volume of high value housing in the Neighbourhood Area, which means, with an ageing population, there is a risk fewer families and younger people will live within the Neighbourhood Area due to housing affordability issues. The AECOM Housing Need Assessment reveals that the Neighbourhood Area has particularly low levels of affordable housing (5% compared to the Dorset average of 12%).

61. While affordable housing is expected to be delivered on the two sites along the A30/B3081 (see Table 5), this does not necessarily meet the needs of families looking to live a more rural lifestyle.

62. Housing providers can be a key partner in the delivery of Affordable Housing and unlocking sites for such development where there is an identified need. There is also a growing movement for community-led development in the area with a number of local Community Land Trusts (CLTs) emerging to

facilitate affordable housing that can be retained for that use in perpetuity. MA&CNP38 suggests that proposals put forward by community and non-profit groups, such as CLTs or other social housing providers, are encouraged to include provision in perpetuity for affordable housing.

63. Greater affordable housing in the Cranborne Chase National Landscape is endorsed by its management group.



Hambleton Hill to Melbury Beacon

### 13.1. Policy 1a. Promoting brownfield sites and infill development

**Objective:** To allow for limited development on brownfield or infill sites within existing settlement areas to encourage the future viability of Melbury Abbas and Cann

#### Policy 1a. Promoting brownfield sites and infill development

Limited development on brownfield or infill sites within existing settlement areas will be supported provided that the following conditions are met:

- i. The character of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape is not adversely affected and would not generate additional significant encroachment into the countryside;
- ii. With regards to infill, the site has a roadside frontage and there is existing development immediately adjacent on both sides of the plot;
- iii. The site should be located in areas that would not lead to new, or exacerbate existing, road safety and traffic congestion issues, or these can be mitigated with appropriate measures;
- iv. Development of the site does not lead to the destruction of existing trees and hedges; and
- v. Any applications which could potentially affect heritage assets are informed by an assessment of their significance, including any contribution made by their setting, in order to avoid or minimise harm (see “Policy 2e. Heritage Assets” on page 46).

### 13.2. Policy 1b. Encouraging a sustainable population

**Objective:** to promote a sustainable local population through modest development

#### Policy 1b. Encouraging a sustainable population

Development should provide a minimum of 45 dwellings over the Plan period, of which at least 17 should be affordable housing (see “Policy 1d. Affordable Housing”).

This figure is met in part by the allocations set out in Table 4 (see related policies in Section 13.5 on page 18).

Modest windfall sites (i.e. dwellings that come forward through the planning application process that have not been previously allocated by a Neighbourhood or Local Plan) will be supported providing that they respond to the conditions set out in “Policy 1a. Promoting brownfield sites and infill development”

### 13.3. Policy 1c. Promoting a Broad Mix of Housing

**Objective:** To ensure a mix of housing stock that meets the needs of different ages of the population

#### Policy 1c. Providing a Broad Mix of Housing

*All proposals for significant new housing development should demonstrate how they contribute to maintaining an appropriate mix of tenures, types and size of dwellings which address current housing need – e.g. demonstrating how they meet the needs for older people, opportunities for self-build and those of families and younger people (including considering opportunities for co-housing).*



**Figure 10** Terraced housing at the bottom of Spreadeagle Hill

### 13.4. Policy 1d. Affordable Housing

**Objective:** To support the development of Affordable Housing, giving priority to those with a local connection to encourage younger families to remain in Melbury Abbas and Cann

65. In May 2021, the government introduced a First Homes policy on affordable housing to help the ‘can’t buy, can rent’ group of households that allow for a greater ownership stake in the property than other affordable housing schemes. Buyers must meet specific criteria to ensure they are ‘first time’, and they must not have a combined annual income greater than £80,000. At least 25% of all affordable housing units secured through developer contributions (i.e. Section 106 agreements) should be First Homes, with the remaining 75% of affordable housing being split between affordable rent and shared ownership.

66. A Neighbourhood Plan can provide more than the minimum of 25% developer contributions for affordable housing as First Homes, or apply a minimum sales discount greater than 30% or additional criteria to prioritise First Homes for key workers. The MA&CNP38 Housing Needs Assessment (AECOM, 2021, para 9) suggested that due to a lack of affordable housing in the neighbourhood area and suggested up to a 50% discount. For reasons of viability, Policy 1d requires a minimum 40% discount.

Tenure type	%
Affordable for sale	30
First Homes	25
Shared ownership	0-5
Rent to buy	0-5
Affordable rented	70

Social rent	To be set by Registered Providers
Affordable rent	To be set by Registered Providers
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3** Suggested split of home ownership by tenure (AECOM, 2022)

67. Regarding specialist housing for older people the Housing Need Assessment commissioned for this Plan (AECOM, 2021, para 28) recommended that least one third of any new housing should be affordable.

68. NDDC Local Plan Policy 8 only requires on-site affordable housing from developments that are 11 dwellings or more (or in the AONB, financial contributions from sites that are 6-10 dwellings). In other words, smaller sites do not have to make an affordable housing contribution. The Local Plan also clearly states that the exact nature of this split is to be determined on a site-by-site basis. The emerging Dorset Local Plan (Policy 8, HOUS2) sets a range of between 25% to 45% of new dwellings as affordable housing and it applies to sites with 5+ or 10+ dwellings, depending on the location. Within the Melbury Abbas and Cann Neighbourhood Area this would generally fall within Zone 1 - rural (40%). (Though it is recognised the status of the emerging Local Plan is in question as another version is prepared).

69. The December 2023 NPPF states that affordable housing is required for major (10+) sites, with exceptions for community-led or 100% affordable housing sites. The MA&CNP38 policies that provide affordable housing are either community-led schemes, wholly affordable sites or, in the case of Policy 1f, pre-agreed schemes by the developer to meet the unmet need for affordable dwellings in the Neighbourhood Area and thus align to the emerging Local Plan HOUS2.

70. Due to the shortfall in affordable housing delivered through major development within the Cann boundary alongside the A30, MA&CNP38 seeks to address this with higher rates of affordable housing in its allocated sites. This has been agreed in principle with the respective landowners and/or the landowners have been informed about any proposals on their site before the submission of this plan.

### Policy 1d. Affordable Housing

*At least 17 of the Neighbourhood Area’s new dwellings target of 45 should be for affordable housing, according to the split outlined in Table 3, though the precise mix of affordable housing will be considered on the basis of site-by-site circumstances unless otherwise allocated in a policy in this Plan.*

*First Homes for sale in the neighbourhood plan area must be discounted by a minimum of 40% against the market value. First Homes and other affordable homes delivered through a Section 106 Agreement should be first offered to eligible people (in accordance with Dorset Council’s Allocations policy) who have a local connection and/or who qualify as key workers before being offered to households outside of these groups (i.e. other neighbouring parishes if properties remain unallocated after the first offers). At least one third of any new specialist housing for older people in the plan period should be affordable.*

*Affordable housing is also supported within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape, subject to there being no significantly adverse impact on the landscape.*

*Applications for community-led developments (which may involve Community Land Trusts or other social housing providers) will be looked upon favourably, where they provide for affordable housing in perpetuity, subject to other policies in this Plan.*

### 13.5. Allocated sites

**Objective: To support residential development on allocated sites**

#### 13.5.1. Background information

71. The Community Questionnaire and the Call for Sites identified several sites that were screened against criteria provided by AECOM. In total, ten sites in Melbury Abbas and Cann were assessed by AECOM in the MA&CNP38 Site Assessment Report (October, 2019), which found that several have the potential to be developed. One assessed site St Anne’s Close, Guys Marsh received a positive, ‘suitable’ categorisation while five other sites were deemed ‘potentially suitable’, subject to addressing minor constraints.

72. AECOM used a national density benchmark as a working guide, which is unlikely to be used as a benchmark in Melbury Abbas and Cann as it would not respect the area’s rural character. A comparison between the density of suggested sites in AECOM’s report and the recommended limit for development on residential sites proposed for allocation in the Plan is set out in Table 4 and Table 5. The selection of these sites includes consideration of the overall preferences from the Community Survey, together with analysis provided by AECOM and Dorset Council’s Senior Conservation Officer and the Cranborne Chase National Landscape’s Reg 14 responses and policy criteria have been designed to reflect these views and other relevant points raised in the Reg 14 consultation.

**Table 4** Suggested housing figures provided by allocated sites in MA&CNP38

Site	AECOM category	AECOM suggested no of dwellings (see AECOM, 2019)	Community Support - survey Dec '19- Jan '20	Net additional housing allocated in this Plan	No of affordable housing units (included in the net housing allocation)
St Anne’s Close (Policy 1e)	Suitable	3	Yes – affordable housing for housing and key worker accommodation	8 gross and 7 net (NB: site extended since site assessment to inc. redevelopment of the existing dwelling on 7 St Anne’s Close) since AECOM’s site assessment)	8
Land South of Melbury Motors (Policy 1f)	Potentially suitable	5	Employment and community facilities	4 (two affordable, two market dwellings)	2
Southbank Farm (Policy 1h)	Potentially suitable	22	Housing, employment and community facilities	10 (excluding the 2 existing properties)	5
The Village Hall (Policy 1h)	Potentially suitable	3	N/A	3	3
<b>TOTAL net housing delivery from allocated sites in MA&amp;CNP38</b>				Allocated net dwellings: 24	AH: 18
<b>% of allocated site dwellings as affordable housing</b>					75%
<b>No. extant completions for 2023-2024 period (DC data as of 1.4.24)</b>					5
<b>Expected windfall sites 2028 - 2038 (based on an average 0.5 per year/10 years and avoiding likelihood of double counting for extant windfall consent)</b>					5
<b>Total allocated and windfall sites (granted and expected)</b>					24+10 = 34 net (75% target met)
<b>Additional housing delivery provided in the NA (Cann) by sites along A30/B3081 (see Table 5, below) - NB: not considered to meet needs of more ‘rural’ parts of the NA</b>					

74. The boundary of Shaftesbury’s settlement boundary protrudes into Cann parish. There are two sites alongside the A30: the site South of the A30, owned by Persimmon, (8.74 ha) and Mayo Farm on the B3081 intersection (3 ha), which was recently purchased by Persimmon after the site was approved for 55 dwellings at appeal and the development of this site is nearing completion. Neither of these sites were considered suitable in the AECOM Site Assessment carried out for MA& CNP38.

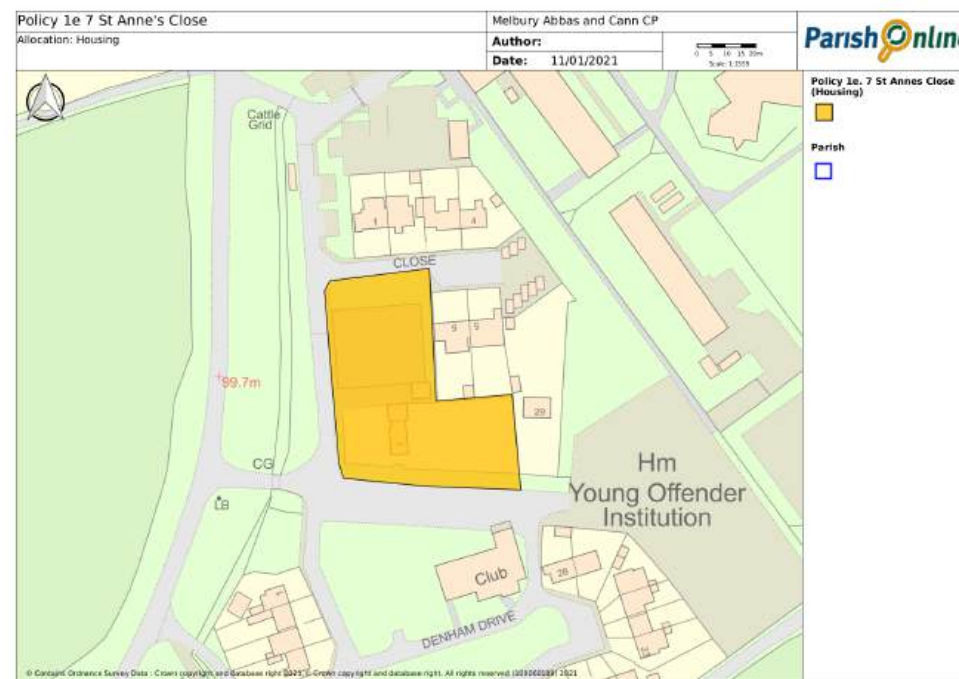
75. Both of these sites make a contribution to meeting development targets for parish. However, while in the northern part of Cann they more realistically serve the housing needs of those wanting to live nearer to Shafesbury than meeting the needs of distinctive rural settlements in other parts of the Neighbourhood Area.

**Table 5** Net additional housing met by the two developments on the Land South of A30 (much of which lies within Cann parish boundary)

Site	AECOM category	AECOM suggested no of dwellings (see AECOM, 2019)	Community Support - survey Dec '19- Jan '20	No of dwellings proposed falling within Cann parish boundary	No of affordable housing units delivered in Cann
Land South of A30 (Persimmon)  Status: planning approved (granted at appeal)	Not suitable	190	Not included	No falling in Cann: approx. 107, i.e. all dwellings	24 affordable, of which 10 discount market housing

B3081/A30 intersection, Higher Blandford Road  Status: construction near completion	Not suitable	77	Not included	Total dwellings: 55 No falling in Cann (approx): 35 out of 55 (64%)	10: 6 affordable rent and 4 shared ownership
Total sites delivered on the northern section of Cann				No of net dwellings: 107+35 = 142	AH provision in Cann: 24+10 = 34

### 13.5.2. Policy 1e. Housing Allocation: 7 St Anne’s Close, Guys Marsh



**Figure 11** Site outline – St Anne’s Close, Guys Marsh

76. The site assessment report suggested that the site (which assessed the former tennis court only) has the potential to accommodate up to three dwellings on 0.13ha on the former tennis courts. To increase the development potential of this site and to allow for more amenity space, the site area has since been increased to include the existing property and gardens; this brings the total size of the site to approximately 0.34 ha which could accommodate up to eight dwellings.

77. The site is currently an area of flat and underutilised brownfield land within an existing built-up area within Cann Parish. The site comprises an area of hardstanding, a disused tennis courts situated in an area of late 20th century housing associated with the adjacent HMP Guy's Marsh, which opened in 1960. The site has suitable and safe access into and from the existing road network, via a turning from St. Anne's Close. However, there are some minor access issues relating to an unadopted road which would need to be clarified prior to development.

78. Therefore, a residential allocation at this location presents an opportunity to re-use previously developed land within the Neighbourhood Plan area. The site is considered suitable for development because it is not within or adjacent to the Cranborne Chase National Landscape or will affect heritage assets in the immediate vicinity.

79. Allocation of this site can support key worker housing for the prison and its allocation meets the MA&CNP38 objective of delivering affordable housing. Engagement with the Governor of HMP Prison Guys Marsh indicates there is a need for key worker affordable housing for prison officers; many prison workers travel relatively long distances from across the South West, some of whom live in nearby Gillingham or as far as Bristol and Yeovil. Key worker housing for prison staff on this site was supported by 85% of respondents in the December '19

- January '20 survey. Dorset Council's Housing Delivery Officer has also indicated their support of the site as an allocation for key workers.



Figure 12 7 St Anne's Close brownfield site (former tennis courts)



Figure 13 Guys Marsh Prison and surrounding area (Google Maps)

80. The site would therefore be an ideal site for a community-led affordable housing scheme.

### Policy 1e. St Anne’s Close, Guys Marsh

*Development on the brownfield site of St Anne’s Close, depicted in Figure 11 is allocated for a maximum of eight dwellings of 100% affordable housing. A small number of market homes may be allowed at the local planning authority’s discretion if this is required to make the site viable.*

*The affordable housing at the site should be prioritised for key workers and their families at Guys Marsh Prison.*

*Potential constraints around access on the private road and any additional covenants would need to be managed as part of the development process.*

### 13.5.3. Policy 1f. Housing Allocation: Land South of Melbury Motors, Cann Common

81. This site (c. 0.21 ha) comprises a small area of agricultural land at the junction of the B3081 and Dinah’s Hollow at the west end of a row of 20th century housing, on the edge of the removed Cann Common settlement boundary.

82. The site is within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape. The National Landscape Management Group has concerns about the urbanisation of the locality owing to the creation of accesses close to a well-used road junction which will require additional signage and potentially intrusive visibilities splays.<sup>27</sup> Visually, there are some longer views to the east and south east of the site.

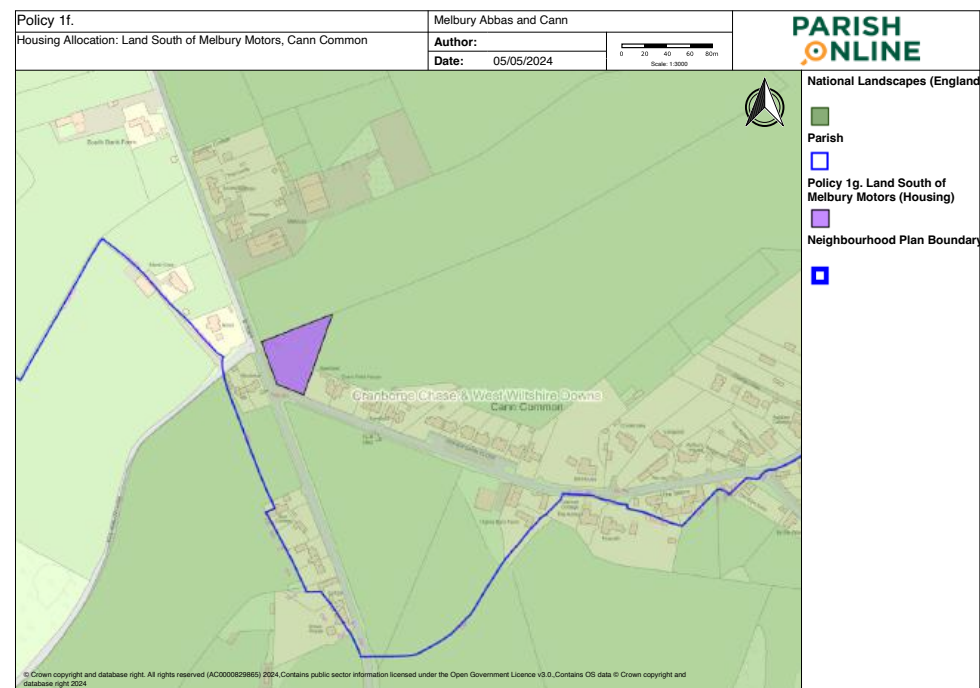


Figure 14 Site outline Land South of Melbury Motors, Cann Common

83. Nonetheless, while exposed along the B3081, this could be mitigated with sensitive landscaping and tree planting over time. The site benefits from screening from the B3081 from trees along its boundaries. There are some short and direct views into the site from neighbouring properties.

84. In the site assessment report, AECOM found the site was potentially suitable for development providing that the design appropriately considers its setting within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape, issues concerning highways safety can be resolved, and surface water flood risk issues are alleviated.

85. Therefore, while the Plan supports the conservation of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape the relative impact of a four-dwelling development set within an existing settlement and the social benefits derived from two affordable housing units are considered to be of sufficiently necessary to sustain

the overall vitality of the community in the years to come. Regarding locally important ecological assets, there is a semi-mature tree located at the south western corner of the site which should be retained through any development proposals.

86. The AECOM site assessment stated that access into the north western corner of the site is possible via a turning from the B3081. However, there are potential safety issues due to poor visibility / sight lines associated with the turning at this location, which would need to be addressed.

87. The whole of the site is within Flood Zone 1 and most of the site has a very low risk of surface water flooding. There is an area of land within the southern section of the site which has a medium surface water flood risk potential, although this is not a significant constraint to development.

88. AECOM has suggested that the site has the potential to accommodate up to five dwellings. It can also deliver on the Plan's objectives for additional affordable housing. The landowner has expressed a wish to provide for four dwellings, of which two (50%) to be affordable dwellings. The 2019-2020 Community Survey indicated a high level of support (75%) for this proposal. The land agent's Reg 14 comments support that this tenure split and that the two affordable dwellings should be "first homes" to be offered to first time buyers with a defined local connection or key workers. However, on this site shared equity housing would unlikely be suitable as it is too small for the involvement of a Housing Association or other registered provider.

## Policy 1f. Land South of Melbury Motors

*The area of land depicted in Figure 14 is allocated for the provision of up to four dwellings, providing all of the following conditions are met.*

- i) The proposal should seek to mitigate any significant harm which might be caused to the landscape by the development;*
- ii) 50% of the properties should be affordable housing for sale (see also "13.4. Policy 1d. Affordable Housing" on page 16);*
- iii) Design and landscaping must contribute to a sense of place within the existing settlement of Cann Common, in accordance with the MA&C Design Guide;*
- iv) Design should mitigate any potential for adverse surface water flooding resulting from development of the site;*
- v) Access issues onto the B3081 must be fully considered with appropriate visibility / sight lines associated with the turning at this location;*
- vi) Consideration of mitigating road safety measures on the adjacent highway must be taken and addressed;*
- vii) The development should seek to retain all trees worthy of retention. Any trees that need to be removed should be replaced with suitably located replacements; and*
- viii) The site should be subject to an appropriate archaeological assessment prior to the determination of the application.*



**Figure 15** - Land South of Melbury Motors site (as of 2019)

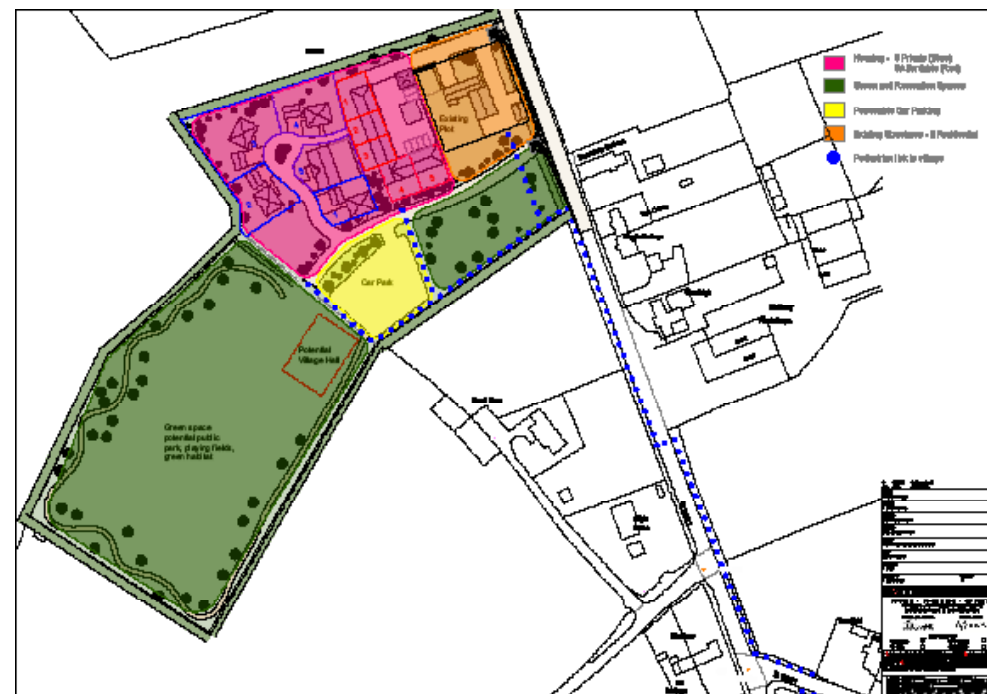


**Figure 16** Disused agricultural buildings, Southbank Farm, northern section of the site (2019)

### 13.5.4. Policy 1g. Housing Allocation: Southbank Farm, Cann Common

89. The site of Southbank Farm comprises a vacant late 20th-century farmhouse and outbuildings south of Ponsonby Farm. The site is mostly open in character and visible from the surrounding landscape. The Cranborne Chase National Landscape is located directly to the east. There are short views into the site from properties located alongside the B3081 and longer views to the west and south west of the site across to Melbury Beacon.

90. Southbank Farm benefits from good access and connectivity to Cann Common, with existing access via a turning from the B3081. The site comprises a mix of agricultural land with associated outbuildings, areas of hard-standing and a farmhouse. Some of the existing buildings are in a poor state of repair and the agricultural land has not been farmed in recent years.



**Figure 17** Site outline and proposed uses – Southbank Farm, Cann Common (indicating the design proposed by the developer following detailed discussions after the Reg 14 Consultation with the Parish Council). The Northern section is the orange and pink sections (current and future residential uses) and the south western green section is for a new, modernised village hall with associated recreational facilities. The middle yellow section is for permeable car parking to be used by the community. The south westerly section is for an accessible greenspace to encourage biodiversity net gains (in perpetuity).

91. The site has potential to support both additional housing and community facilities in the Neighbourhood Area, although not all of the site is suitable for permanent development (due to impacts that would result in the loss of greenfield features), notably on the southern section of the site. The southern part of the site is largely open in character and is likely to be underlain by Grade 2 agricultural land (i.e. the best and most versatile land for agricultural purposes), as indicated in Figure 26.<sup>28</sup>

92. The area assessed by AECOM in the site assessment report was 0.93 hectares (excluding most of the proposed sports pitch area in Figure 17). The AECOM site assessment report

indicated that the northern part of this site was suitable for development (i.e. where the existing buildings are located). Topographically, here it is predominantly flat and benefits from good access and connectivity to Cann Common. The existing residential building has recently been modernised.

93. Other vacant or underutilised buildings present an opportunity to incorporate high-quality design. This needs to be sensitive to the setting of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape and nearby heritage assets, and avoid the potential to result in harm to the significance of these by increasing the built density in the vicinity of these natural and historic assets.

94. In contrast, the southern section of the site gently slopes downwards to the south west. While Figure 17 includes the southern section of the site, MA&CNP38 does not seek to allocate it for permanent development but seeks to utilise this section of the site for community facilities, as well as including an additional amount of greenfield land to the south west of the site for these purposes (bringing the total area of the site covered in Policy 1g. to be 1.22 ha). This could be used for much-needed provision of community recreational and sports facilities, such as as a football field or a children's play area. Using permeable surfaces for a car park to access these facilities would also mean there is no contribution from surface water flooding from these uses and would not result in any permanent net loss of a large proportion of the site's greenfield area.



**Figure 18** Southbank Farm, Cann Common (AECOM, 2019)

95. The land was bought by a developer in 2019 who has engaged with the Parish Council to understand how they can meet the emerging intentions of the Neighbourhood Plan. There have been extensive discussions following the Reg 14 consultation process and after various proposals put forward by the developer of 30 dwellings on the site were seen by the Parish Council and many local residents as being too large in scale for the hamlet of Cann Common.

96. The policy that follows aims to support the intentions of the site to meet the need for modernised and inclusive community facilities for the neighbourhood area. It is expected that the delivery of community facilities is dependent on the development of housing on the site to make such provision viable. It may be other options to deliver a community hall might be possible (though Southfield Farm is preferred). It is noted that there will unlikely be extensive profit from the

development of the current village hall site to (partially) fund these new facilities (as Policy 1h. is for affordable units so unlikely to generate such a profit).

97. The allocation of the site for 10 net residential dwellings (4 of which are affordable for those with a local connection) will be a key site in helping to deliver local housing need for those wishing to live within Cann Common. The scheme has been purposeful designed to have low rooflines (no more than 2-storeys) and has extensive landscaping which will help to mitigate any visual impact from Melbury Beacon over time.

98. Local ecological features of value include the hedgerows that border the site, which should be retained and improved through any development proposals. Similarly, the existing buildings on the site could potentially support populations of protected species, but this would need to be confirmed with an ecological assessment.

99. The proposals outlined in the policy for this site were again shared in Autumn 2024 with the community in a consultation by the land agent in the village hall, which received broadly positive feedback.

### Policy 1g. Southbank Farm, Cann Common

*The area of land depicting the Northern section site as shown in Figure 17 (the pink section) is considered appropriate for residential development, providing that all the following criteria are met.*

*On the Northern section:*

- i) The total number of new net dwellings on the site should not exceed 10 (excluding the two existing properties, i.e. the dwellings in the orange section of Figure 17);*
- ii) At least 40% of the new dwellings should be delivered as affordable*

*housing (marked in red in the pink section in Figure 17);*

*iii) New properties should be offset from the road and ensure a safe route into the development;*

*iv) All properties should have access to private gardens.*

*On the Southern section of the site, development must be limited to community uses and the enhancement of biodiversity, whereby:*

*v) There is a modern village hall provided on the south western section of the site (larger green section in Figure 17) with associated recreational uses on the surrounding greenspace (e.g. football pitches etc);*

*vi) For the car park (the yellow section of Figure 17) this should be constructed using permeable materials that do not cause a permanent loss of greenspace or contribute to surface water flooding;*

*vii) These community facilities are provided in a location that does not compromise the privacy and amenity of residents and the Southern section of the site is reserved exclusively for community purposes;*

*viii) The development should include sensitive landscaping and tree planting to promote biodiversity and visual screening from the eastern boundary towards the B3081 and existing hedgerows should be retained;*

*ix) The section of the Southern site allocated for greenspace is retained in perpetuity for biodiversity net gain (which could include enhancements such as a pond etc) that is accessible to the community.*

*More generally:*

*x) The scheme should promote a village character and complement the local vernacular with respect to the MA&CNP38 design guide in accordance with "Policy 2a. Design", particularly in relation to its close setting to local heritage assets;*

*xi) The scheme should include safe and accessible routes into Cann Common and provide improvements to traffic and road safety from*

*the development to the intersection with the B3081 and the C13 and through extension of a footway on the B3081 (in accordance with “Policy 4a. Sustainable Transport” on page 57);*

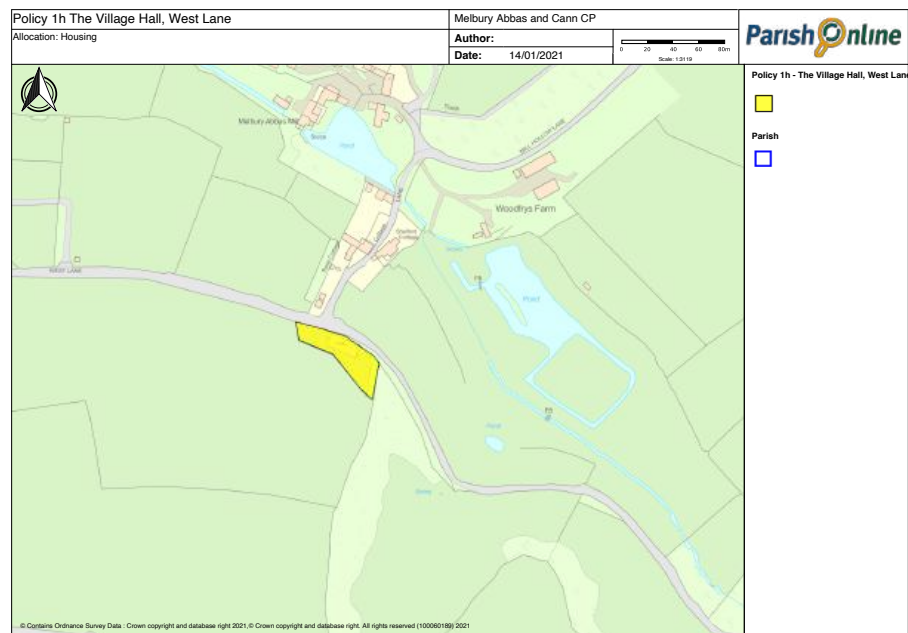
xii) Development must include an appropriately designed, constructed and maintained sustainable drainage system (to be determined in a detailed planning application);



**Figure 19** Farmhouse, Southbank Farm, mid-northern section of the site (2019)

## 13.5.5. Policy 1h. Housing Allocation: The Village Hall, West Melbury

100. The site (0.14 ha) comprises the current Village Hall for Melbury Abbas and Cann and associated car parking. Some of the hall’s facilities recently had a light-touch modernisation but, overall, the Village Hall is not located in an area that is easily accessible by local residents. It is situated on a narrow one-way road (West Lane) and is not widely used by the community. For some time there has been discussion in Melbury Abbas and Cann about relocating the Village Hall to a more central, accessible location.



**Figure 20** Site outline The Village Hall, West Lane

101. Topographically, the site is predominantly flat and benefits from suitable access into its northern section via an existing turning from West Lane. As the site is an area of brownfield land, a residential allocation at this location presents an opportunity to reuse previously developed land within the Neighbourhood Plan area. The site is not located within identified flood risk zones for fluvial flooding and is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 (low risk). It also has a very low risk from surface water flooding. As the site is currently hardstanding it is important to acknowledge that it has a relatively low biodiversity value.

102. The site is within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape. However, redevelopment at this location presents an opportunity to enhance the special qualities of the National Landscape through sensitive design and landscaping.

103. The site is located within a topographical dip and is

therefore relatively screened from view. In terms of the historic environment, there are no designated heritage assets on the site and it is not within a Conservation Area. There are no buildings within the vicinity of the site identified in the RCHME Inventory or any buildings which would likely be considered to be a non-designated heritage asset. However, the site is situated approximately 160m to the south of the Grade II-listed buildings at c. 180m SSE from Barfoot farm (Grade II, 1110279) and c. 160m SSE of Melbury Abbas Mill complex (Grade II, 1110280).

104. Given the topography, the site is visible from these neighbouring heritage assets and there is a possibility that development could result in harm to their significance through impacts on their setting. This it is unlikely to cause substantial harm and Dorset Council's Conservation Officer has indicated that this can be mitigated through ensuring a minimum quantum and careful design.

105. The Village Hall is owned by the Parish Council. Both the Parish Council and the Village Hall Committee are keen to ensure that there is scope for future-purposed community facilities but not at the cost of losing a necessary community asset. The Parish Council are also keen to explore how the site of the current Village Hall could be used to contribute to the provision of Affordable Housing in the parish (as housing for rent owned by the Parish Council).

106. The AECOM site assessment found that on the basis that a new village hall can be delivered within the Neighbourhood Plan area to mitigate the loss of the existing hall at this location, the site is considered suitable to take forward for a residential allocation. To ensure there is no overall loss of a valuable community asset, this policy stipulates that an alternative village hall must be built before the current one is decommissioned and development for residential uses commences.

107. The Southern side of Southbank Farm is proposed as an alternative site for the village hall, and as such the two sites (Policy 1g and Policy 1h) should be understood as complementary to one another to realise community facilities and deliver affordable housing in two communities of the Neighbourhood Area. As a site exclusively for affordable housing, it is recognised the Village Hall site's redevelopment is unlikely to generate any profit to contribute to the new community facilities and this is likely to be dependent on the residential development of Southbank Farm or any other monies accruing to the Parish as a result of development (such as CIL, should a charging scheme be in place).

108. There have been concerns that there may be potential subsidence issues on the site; the Parish Council has investigated these further and concluded there are no substantive immediate risks that prevent the site from being allocated for development. It may be necessary that further investigation accompany any future planning application.

109. There are also some ancillary uses for community events in the adjacent Community Field, which is allocated as a Local Green Space on page 65 (see "Policy 4i. Local Green Spaces" on page 65).



**Figure 21** Melbury Abbas and Cann Village Hall

## Policy 1h. The Village Hall

*Development of the site within that depicted in Figure 20 is allocated for the provision for up to three dwellings, all of which would be for affordable rented housing.*

*i) Development should not take place until a robust assessment to investigate potential subsidence issues on the site and remedial actions carried out, if necessary; and*

*ii) Any development should be informed by an assessment of significance of the designated heritage assets around Melbury Abbas Mill, including any contribution made by their setting, to demonstrate that potential harm has been avoided or minimised.*

## 14. Environment, design and heritage

### 14.1. Background and Rationale

110. Neighbourhood plans offer an ideal opportunity to identify and protect landscapes that contribute to local distinctiveness and ‘sense of place’. This section of the Plan aims to protect and enhance biodiversity and our natural landscapes. It gives an overview of the area’s rich historic and natural assets and considers how best MA&CNP38 can provide for their conservation. For more background information on our natural and historic assets see MA&CNP38 Environment, Landscape Character and Vistas Topic Paper and the MA&CNP38 Design Guide.<sup>29</sup>

### 14.1.6. Landscape Character

111. The eastern section of the Neighbourhood Area is set within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape – the sixth largest in England and one of thirteen in the South West. National Landscapes (formally called an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, AONB – see Figure 23) are areas of high scenic quality that have statutory protection in order to conserve the natural beauty of their landscape character. Together with national planning policy (the NPPF), the North Dorset Local Plan protects the AONB through Policy 4 (The Natural Environment) and the emerging Dorset Local Plan does so in Policy ENV4. The AONB also has its own management plan (currently 2019–2024) which sets out policies to protect and enhance its distinct features whilst recognising the need for rural communities to flourish.

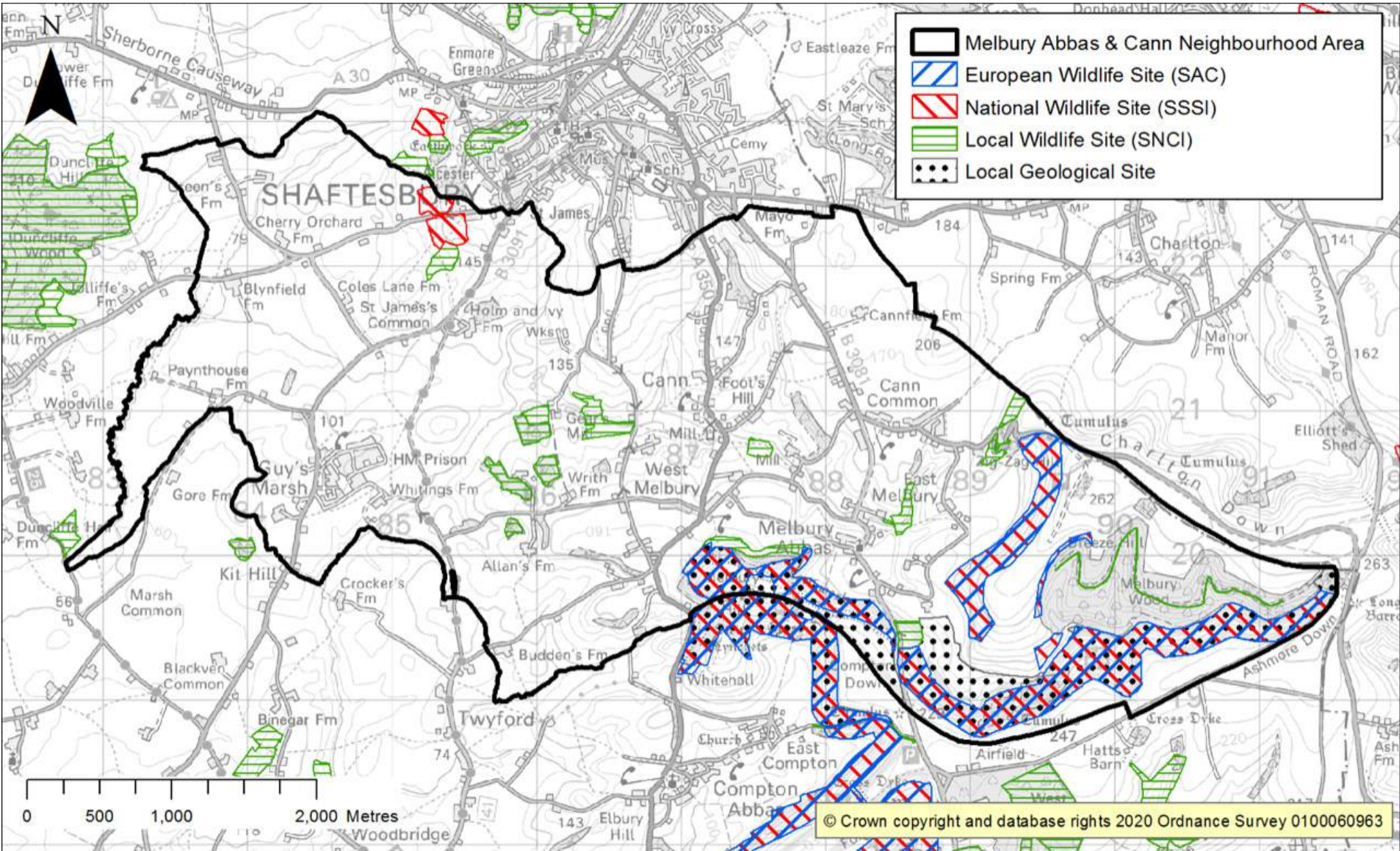
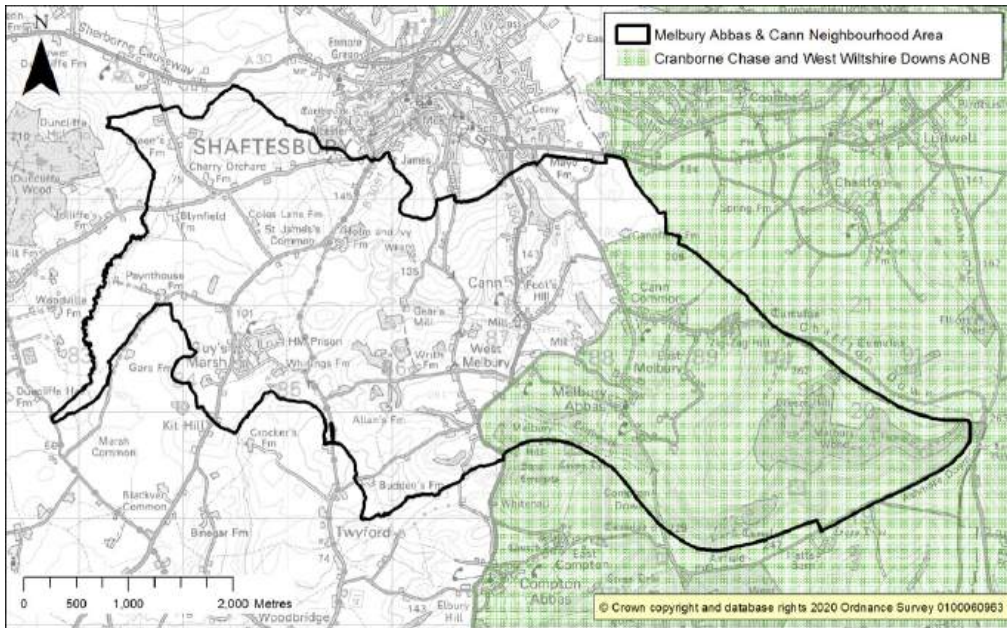


Figure 22 – Map of list of environment protected sites (Dorset Council)



**Figure 23** The Neighbourhood Area and the Cranborne Chase National Landscape (formerly the AONB)

112. The whole of the Neighbourhood Area is set within the Blackmore Vale and the Vale of Wardour joint character area. Melbury Abbas and Cann also straddle both the Natural England National Character Area (NAC) 133 ‘Blackmore Vale and Vale of Wardour’<sup>30</sup> and NAC 134 ‘Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase’<sup>31</sup>. The Fontmell Down and Melbury Downs are both internationally important chalk downland sites<sup>32</sup> which are species and fauna-rich – a once much more widespread historic landscape type; archaeological earthworks often have survived with them.

113. This is a landscape with high natural and cultural value, which needs to be safeguarded. Development must respect the landscape of the local area and not compromise important vistas. However, the Historic Environment Action Plan *Area 8: Chalk Escarpments* states that “The area is judged to have high

sensitivity as it is unlikely to accommodate change without extensive degradation of character and value” (AONB, 2011 p14).<sup>33</sup>

114. Where landscapes have a particular local value, it is important for policies to identify and protect their special characteristics. Neighbourhood plans can include policies to avoid adverse impacts on landscapes and to set out necessary mitigation measures, such as appropriate design principles and visual screening, where necessary. Key landscape features in Melbury Abbas and Cann include:

- The Neighbourhood Area is set in an undulating landscape.
- Due to the dispersed settlement pattern, most properties adjoin open fields with long views towards the countryside.
- The topography, vegetation, and low building density enable the settlements to blend into the landscape with little obtrusion
- Streets feature tall hedges and a large number of mature trees screen some elements of the built environment.
- There are some notable and valued landscape features, such as such as Melbury Beacon and views from Melbury Wood
- Development in neighbouring Shaftesbury may well exert some pressures on our natural environment by affecting key local vistas, including those from Melbury Beacon facing north-east. It is unrealistic to expect that the current landscape will remain entirely unaffected.

115. The North Dorset Landscape Character Assessment,<sup>34</sup> including the addendum, and the Cranborne Chase AONB Landscape Character Assessment give detail on potential local

landscape impacts. To complement the character assessments carried out by the AONB and NDDC, the MA&CNP Steering Group reviewed National Trust fixed point views from Melbury Beacon (see Figure 48) and Win Green as well as other important landscape vistas to indicate areas at risk from adverse landscape impacts.<sup>35</sup> These are detailed below and should be sensitively planned for in planning applications where these could be impacted.



**Figure 24** View of Cann Common looking East from Melbury Hill (DinT). This depicts the linear settlement of Cann Common, whereby a varied housing style complements the undulating nature of the surrounding landscape.

#### 14.1.7. Biodiversity and ecosystems

116. Green infrastructure can embrace a range of spaces and assets that provide environmental and wider benefits. It can, for example, include parks, playing fields, other areas of open space, woodland, allotments, private gardens, sustainable drainage features, green roofs and walls, street trees and ‘blue infrastructure’ such as streams, ponds, canals and other water bodies.

117. However, England has of the lowest tree cover rates in the UK (10%, second to Northern Ireland, 9%).<sup>36</sup> Increasing pressure from the provision of housing and commercial land

has the potential to damage habitats and to put species at risk, including at designated conservation and heritage sites. Climate change may affect the range of crops or water flows in rivers and streams, causing habitats to expand, contract or migrate. Development of sites which could host bat species may lead to the loss or modification of buildings that bats may use for roosting and disrupt flight routes through removal of vegetation or the installation of new lighting (see “Policy 4e. Energy” on page 63). In all cases where species are likely to be present, preventing loss or harm to bat roosts is a priority.<sup>37</sup>

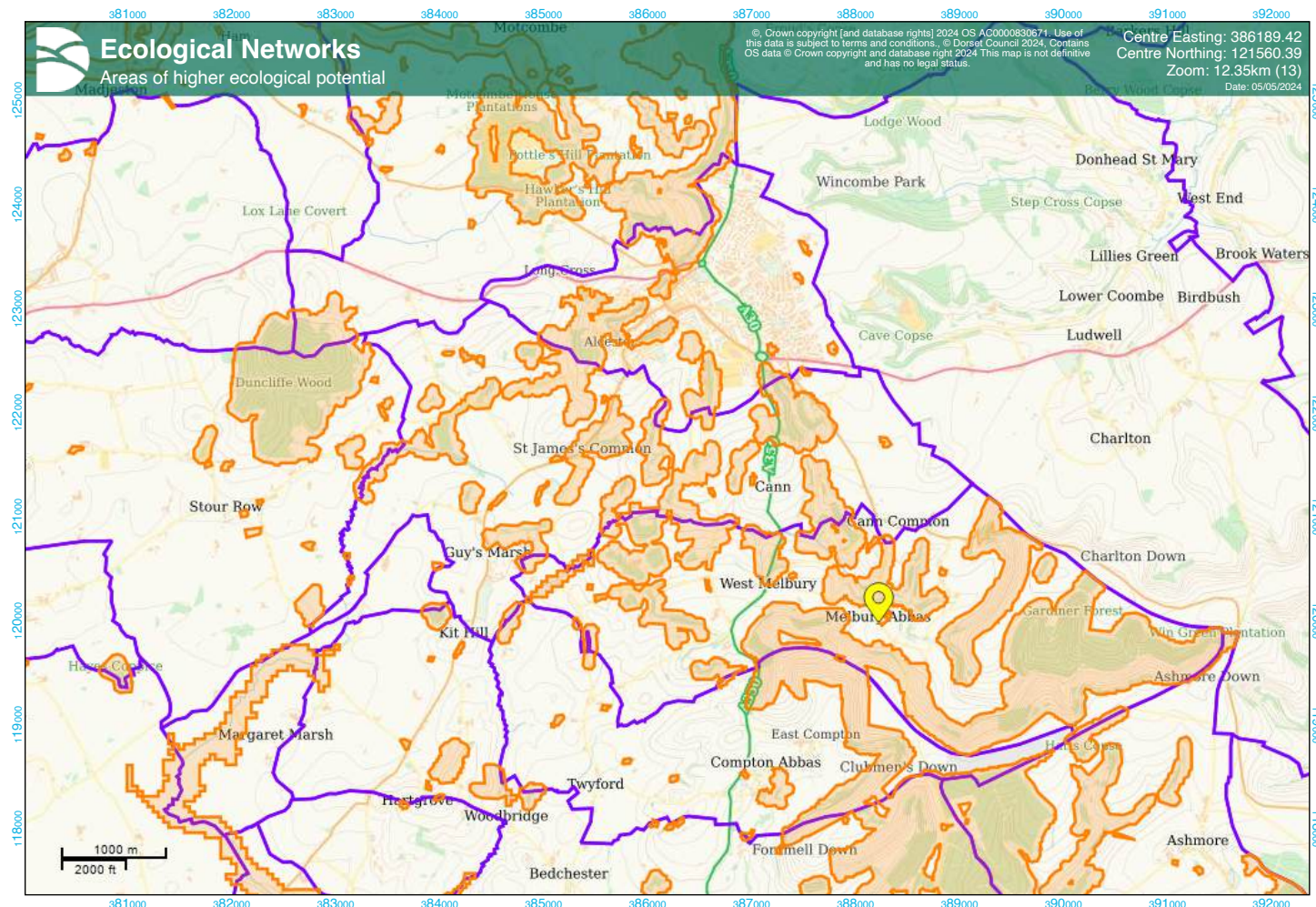
118. The enhancement of habitats and green infrastructure networks through the planning process is key to creating the conditions for local biodiversity to flourish. Features of biodiversity value such as trees, hedgerows, waterways and meadows should be protected from the impact of development. Important environmental designations in the Neighbourhood Area or ecological and habitat features include:

- The National Landscape designation in the eastern part of the Neighbourhood Area.
- Two nationally designated nature conservation Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI) Breach Fields and Fontmell and Melbury Downs which is also a Special Area of Conservation (SAC, managed by the National Trust), which has a higher protection status than SSSIs.<sup>38</sup>
- Cann is within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone for larger scale residential development due to its proximity to Breach Fields impact zone and the southern edge of Melbury Abbas is within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the Fontmell and Melbury Downs SSSI.

119. In addition to the European and National wildlife designations at the site, there are 12 Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) and two Local Geological Sites

within the Melbury Abbas & Cann Neighbourhood Plan area (Figure 22).<sup>39</sup>

- There are several designated areas of ancient woodland in Melbury Abbas and Cann. There is also a significant area of registered Common Land at Melbury Wood providing open public access; the wood forms an important element of the Neighbourhood Area's green infrastructure and is the largest within the Cranborne Chase & Chalke Valley Landscape Character Area. Sadly, ash die-back may be having a significant effect on existing woodland in the area and some sites are in need of improved management to retain their habitats and biodiversity.
- This area attracts rich biodiversity, including common downland butterfly species. Fontmell and Melbury Down includes the presence of a particular breed of orchid and the plant species early gentian (which is only found in the UK).<sup>40</sup>



**Figure 25** Dorset's Eco Networks in the Neighbourhood Plan Area (Dorset Council)

120. As stated in national planning guidance, local ecological networks can make a significant contribution to developing a Nature Recovery Network. Planning can contribute to net gains to biodiversity – the ‘mitigation hierarchy’ prioritises on-site enhancements to nature, and also considers off-setting as a last resort.<sup>41</sup> Enhancements might include creating new habitats, improve connectivity between them, or enhancing existing habitats, providing green roofs, green walls, street trees or sustainable drainage systems. Relatively small features can often achieve important benefits for wildlife, such as incorporating ‘swift bricks’ and bat boxes in developments and providing safe routes for hedgehogs between different areas of habitat. The Parish Council can also support designated woodland areas to support naturally regenerative tree planting.

121. The Dorset Local Nature Partnership (DLNP) and Dorset Environmental Records Centre (DERC) have identified current and Higher Potential Ecological Network, which covers a large swathe of the plan area (see Figure 25). Biodiversity quality will need to be clarified through a proportionate ecological assessment on given sites, in line with the requirement for development to deliver at least a 10% biodiversity net gain from 2024 onwards.

### 14.1.8. Agriculture

122. Much of the Neighbourhood Area is set within quality agricultural land, indicated in Figure 26 which indicates estimated soil quality.<sup>42</sup> (NB: Agricultural Land Classification provides information about the quality of the soil for growing crops. It therefore does not confer any information about biodiversity quality. However, ecosystems depend on healthy soils to support insects and invertebrates which support birds and smaller mammals).

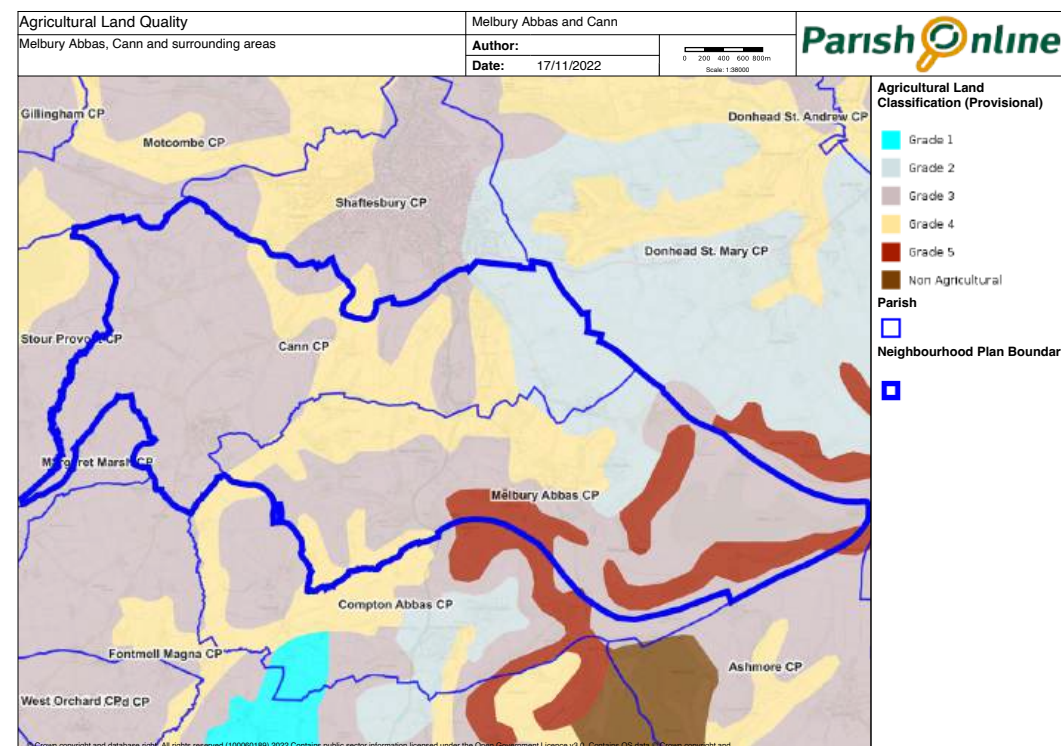


Figure 26 Agricultural Land Classification (1 is the highest grade, 5 the lowest)

123. While this map is not of a scale that can be used to inform planning decisions and does not indicate biodiversity value it can give a general sense of areas that may need to be subject to further detailed assessment on their inherent biodiversity so that the loss of agricultural land is mitigated and ecological net gains within ecological networks are enhanced within the Neighbourhood Area. Therefore, biodiversity quality will need to be clarified through a suitably detailed ecological assessment on given sites, in line with the requirement for development to deliver at least a 10% biodiversity net gain from 2024.

14.1.9. Water

124. The waters that flow through the valley of Melbury Abbas have their origins within the parishes: one tributary is within 300 yards of Zig Zag Hill, and after a few hundred yards it is joined by three main riser streams to gather momentum flowing west into the River Sturkel. Most properties in Melbury Abbas and Cann are not on mains water drainage systems and rely on septic tanks and other on-site treatments, there is therefore potential for new properties to contribute towards sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDs), which is required through the emerging Dorset Local Plan policy ENV14. These natural water assets also may pose opportunities for future hydro-electricity schemes (such as those being explored by Stoates Mill, Cann).

125. River flood risk maps indicate that the Neighbourhood Area is not in a high-risk flood risk zone, although there is a small amount of high risk from river flooding (Figure 28, compared to surface water flood risk in Figure 27). These are associated with small watercourses that tend to flow in a westerly and southerly direction across Melbury Abbas and Cann.

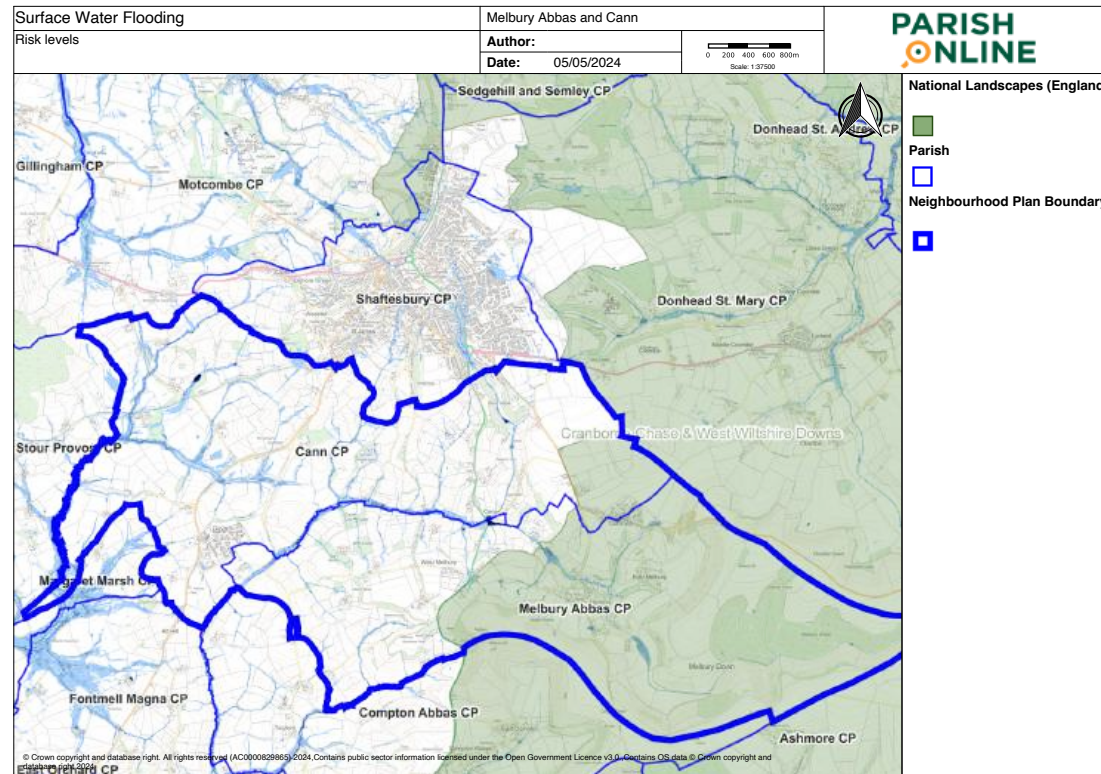


Figure 27 Surface water flood risk (risk areas in shaded blue)

126. Some parts of the Neighbourhood Area are subject to surface water flooding (see Figure 27) – particularly around Cann Common, Breech Hill, St James’ Common and Shaston Barn. There is a mediaeval natural drainage area in Melbury Abbas, providing groundwater flood relief during times of heavy rainfall which takes pressure off the drainage system on the B3081. Water flows from fields in Cann Common, down through the watercress beds and into the Stirchel in Melbury Abbas, just South of Dinah’s Hollow. NB: water efficiency and energy from water issues are addressed in “Policy 4h. Energy from water and water efficiency” on page 64 or site-specific surface water issues are addressed in allocations policies in Section 1 (policies 1 e-h).

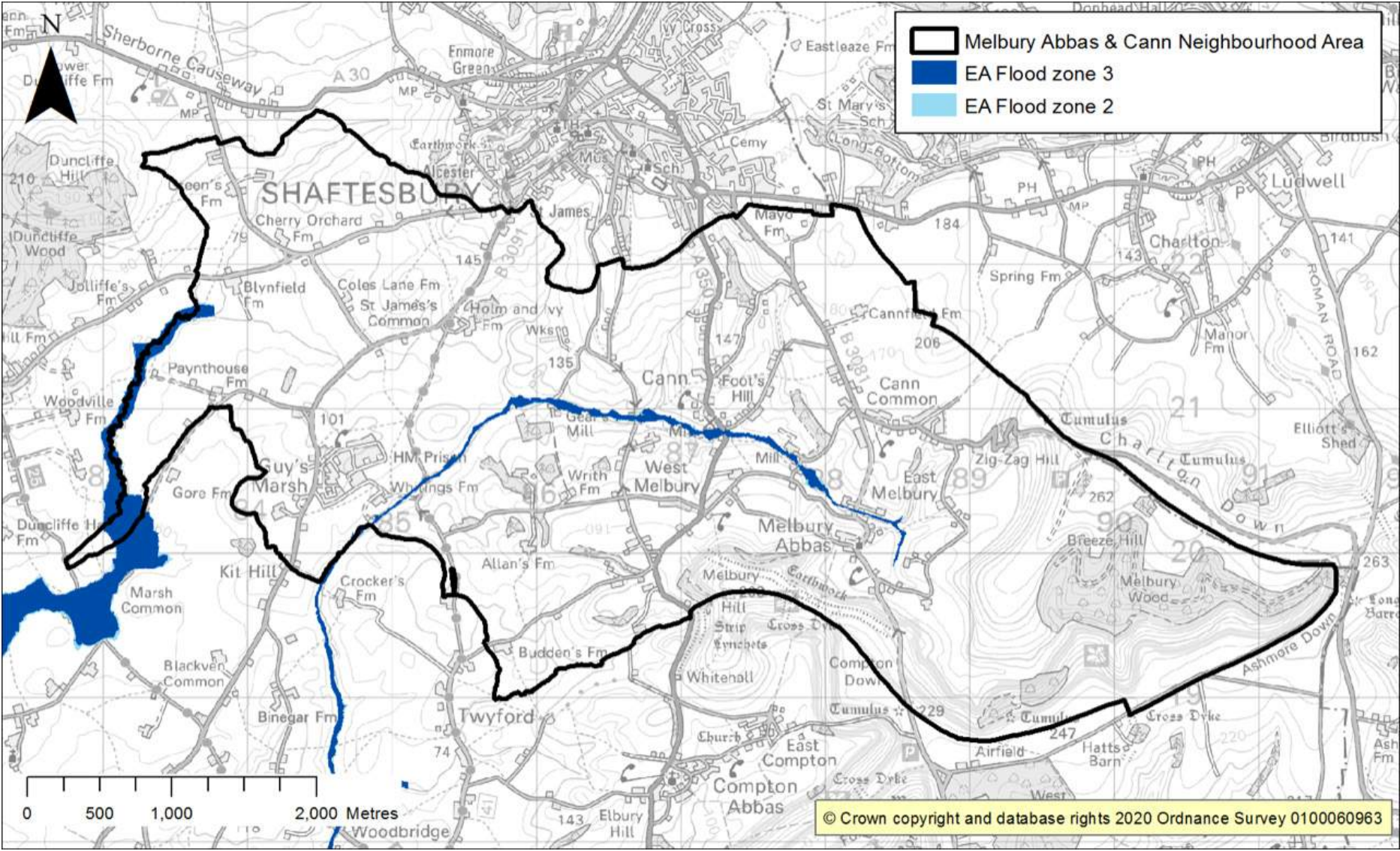


Figure 28 Flood zones within the Neighbourhood Area (Dorset Council)

14.1.10. Design

127. The gradual evolution of Melbury Abbas and Cann parish over the centuries has resulted in an organic character to development.

128. Buildings have their own individuality - resulting in variations in construction materials, height, the pattern of openings and detailing. The materials (typically include sandstone, brick and local Melbury stone) and architectural detailing used throughout Melbury Abbas and Cann contribute to the historic character of the area and the local vernacular. It is therefore important that the materials used in proposed development are of a high quality and reinforce local distinctiveness.



**Figure 29** School Lane, a narrow lane with a high sense of openness. Edges are defined by low stone walls, landscaping and mature trees rather than building edges (© AECOM)

129. Settlements in the Neighbourhood Area mainly consist of small clusters of houses dispersed across the countryside. There remains a high degree of openness to the open countryside and green spaces; most properties back onto or face open land.

Most buildings are detached houses sited on wide plots, with a minority of semi-detached houses. Recesses of varying depths in the building line enable the formation of large front gardens or yards. In a few locations the buildings directly abut narrow streets. There remain pockets of post-war settlements across the Neighbourhood Area.



**Figure 30** 1945 settlement dispersal in the parishes and surrounding area (© AECOM)

130. Changes in roof heights and the presence of chimneys contribute to the visual interest of the historic settlements. Buildings are predominantly 1 or 2 storeys, including farming and agricultural buildings. There is a high diversity of roof and gable orientation, height and materials - the most common being slate, tile and thatch. Subtle variation in building height adds visual interest.

131. The design guide identifies that the main streets are organic in nature and evolved from historic routes, natural features and topography. Streets are typically bordered with hedges, mature trees, and low stone walls. Most have no pavements. There is no street lighting except along the sections of the A350 and B3083, contrasting with neighbouring Shaftesbury's urban areas.



**Figure 31** Traditional buildings, Kit Hill

132. A clear understanding of local and non-local styles and materials is required to promote and enhance local character. As part of the evidence base gathering, the steering group commissioned AECOM to undertake a Design Guide to inform strong design principles so that development of the built environment helps to create distinctive places that are integrated with existing settlements.<sup>43</sup> The 2018 Community Questionnaire also indicated that the community's design priorities for new development should be in keeping with the local vernacular, blend with the landscape and use local materials wherever possible. Parking spaces and gardens were valued by residents as a design principle for new development.

133. While the benefits of (often) lower-cost and more energy efficient modular housing are welcome, the use of this construction method must be sensitive to local design character as set out in the design guide developed to support this plan. Modern Methods of Construction (MMC), such as those used in modular housing, can be more airtight and better insulated than achieved through traditional construction techniques. It may become increasingly necessary to use MMC as energy performance of new buildings is improved through building regulations and as such it is important that modular housing contributes to existing local character.

134. Various national and industry schemes also exist which complement the national design code<sup>44</sup>, which can be enhanced through local design guidelines and policies.



**Figure 32** Residential lane off Ash Tree Lane reflecting the more enclosed character of Cann Common (© AECOM)

## 14.1.11. Heritage Assets

135. The Neighbourhood Area is steeped in history, with archaeological findings suggesting that the area surrounding Shaftesbury was populated in the Iron Age, possibly as a Celtic settlement. The array of listed buildings reflects the architectural diversity and historic quality of Melbury Abbas and Cann which should be protected from any adverse development or enhanced where opportunities allow. Key important heritage assets of note include:

- **Melbury Abbas:** The affix Abbas refers to the fact that the manor was in the ownership of Shaftesbury Abbey following a grant recorded in a Saxon charter in 956, which also lists farms at Meleburge imare and on Meleberig dune. The evidence of Bronze Age round barrows and tumuli are seen in the tops of downs in the Parishes, and Romano-British burials were found near Melbury Hill in 1846. In the Domesday Survey of 1086 Meleberie was described as a moderately large place, with a recorded population of 47. Key historic trades that influence local character include milling grain and quarrying of the local Melbury stone.
- **Cann:** Cann or Canna was known as Shaston-St. Rumbold in the 18th Century; it is first mentioned in documents as early in the 12th century, but it almost certainly older (the name Canna is recorded from the reign of Henry I (reg. 1100-1135)). It likely derives from Old English canne, 'a can, a cup'. This term is often used to refer to hollows in local topography, specifically in steep-sided hills or valleys.
- Five bronze age sites, consisting of cross dykes used as territorial boundary markers, most likely for allotments as well as trackways, cattle droveways or defensive earthworks and a

linear boundary on Melbury Hill.

- Four bowl barrels – a hemispherical mound covering one or more burials or cremations.
- There are six Scheduled Monuments, including Melbury Beacon, Cross Dyke (which forms a linear boundary to Melbury Hill).
- Melbury Beacon was one of a series of fire beacons in use at the time of the Armada and commands wide views in every direction.
- The Neighbourhood Area includes a chalk stream (the River Sturkel), a rare ecological feature created as the ice sheets retreated from England 10,000 years ago. There are only 200 chalk streams in the world, with most of them being in Southern England and some areas of France.
- The Neighbourhood Area contains 32 Listed Buildings and structures,<sup>45</sup> including the Church of St Thomas in Melbury Abbas which is Grade II\* and East Melbury Farm (est. in 1575).
- There are several mills alongside the River Sturkel river corridor which are part of the area's heritage. Some of these hold the potential for providing hydroelectricity (and is being explored in Stotes Mill, Cann and there is also potential for hydroelectric power capacity at other local mills which could be explored further.)
- No heritage assets are believed to be on Historic England's Heritage at Risk list at present.



**Figure 33** Left, Mediaeval waterway, River Sturkel, Dinah's Hollow/Melbury Abbas (DinT)

**Figure 34** Middle, The Old School House (DinT)

**Figure 35** Right, St. Thomas' Church which stands on the brow of a hill along with the school and former rectory, known as Little Church Hill (DinT)

136. Neighbourhood Plans can bolster the objective to protect local historic assets, as outlined by Historic England's Guidance on Neighbourhood Planning.<sup>46</sup>

137. There are a number of noteworthy (unlisted) buildings that reflect the variety of the North Dorset vernacular. A non-designated heritage asset (see NPPF December 2023, Chapter 16) is a building, structure or designed space that is deemed to be of local architectural or historic interest but does not have the same legal protection as a listed building.

138. As such, the MA&CNP38 Steering Group has created a list of such buildings to support the protection of local heritage (see "Policy 2e. Heritage Assets" on page 46). It is important to note that this list is not an attempt to seek formal listing for these properties, only to recognise they have a contribution to local character or history which ought to be sensitively preserved where possible.<sup>47</sup> It is up to the Parish Council to decide whether it wishes to approach Dorset Council to include

these non-designated heritage assets in a local heritage list (which will be managed by Dorset Council). As such, the steering group assessed each of the sites listed in Policy 2e according to whether they reflect different types of heritage value.<sup>48</sup>

139. The group has also worked closely with Dorset Council and their Conservation team to ensure that potential heritage impacts are sufficiently documented as part of an historic risk assessment for potentially allocated sites. Historic England's Reg 14 response indicated that they are satisfied that this Plan addresses issues of adverse impacts relating to local heritage assets and has worked with the Conservation Officer to highlight potential historic impacts and/or mitigation in site allocation policies.



**Figure 36** Stoates Mill, Cann which has installed rooftop solar panels and is exploring hydroelectricity derived from the River Sturkel

## 14.2. Policies: Environment, design and heritage

### Policy 2a. Design

**Objective: To ensure development complies with a local Design Guide and new development is sensitive to local character and vernacular**

*Development should contribute to a sense of place and respect the local vernacular (as defined in the MA&CNP38 Design Guide), wherever possible enhancing the area's rural character and the Cranborne Chase National Landscape. All development must:*

*i) Plan positively for the achievement of high-quality design, for example the use of local and traditional building materials (the use of local stone is preferred) to ensure respect for the local vernacular and historic character;*

*ii) Demonstrate that the palette of materials has been selected based on an understanding of the surrounding built environment. Examples of these materials is set out in the MA&CNP38 Design Guide (p.30);*

*iii) Materials used should consider how best to promote a circular economy so that they can be easily recycled or reused (see "Policy 4e. Energy" on page 63);*

*iv) When referencing traditional architecture, new buildings should avoid combining elements from too many different architectural styles or employing low-quality imitations of traditional materials. Development using modular housing outfits (MMC) must be in a style consistent with that set out in the Design Guide and be of a sufficient sustainable, durable and quality design and comply with other policies in the Plan;*

*v) New development and extensions should be low-rise and not exceed two storeys high to prevent an urbanising effect on the landscape (see "2c. Protected Views and Vistas" on page 41). Subtle variation*

*in building height is encouraged in new development to add visual interest;*

*vi) Development should be in keeping with its rural character. Development within the settlements of Cann Common, Guys Marsh and Melbury Abbas should promote a village character where possible; and*

*vii) Development is encouraged to state quality design through Building for Life accreditation<sup>49</sup>, or any other appropriate standard.*



**Figure 37** Example of a successful historic building conversion

### 14.3. Policy 2b. The contribution of woodland and trees to local character

**Objective:** To ensure woodland and trees are retained and enhanced

#### Policy 2b. The contribution of woodland and trees to local character

*Development should enhance opportunities for native tree planting and woodland regeneration wherever possible. This means:*

- i) Setting development within plantings of native trees and hedgerows to mitigate noise pollution and to reinforce the more rural character of the parishes; this may include ensuring that new streets are tree-lined, where feasible;*
- ii) There will be a presumption against removing healthy trees. Any trees or woodland lost to new development – where this is proven to be essential – must be replaced in line with the recommended ratio of the Bristol Tree Standard<sup>50</sup>.*
- iii) Incorporating existing trees and hedgerows through sensitive landscaping of new development;*
- iv) Where development adjoins open spaces and gaps in the settlement there should be a natural surveillance or a soft landscaped edge. The use of green roofs and undulating roof lines is encouraged to maintain the landscape and skyline form.*
- v) Proposals should be accompanied by a tree survey that establishes the health and longevity of any affected trees and indicates replanting plans, where appropriate.*

### 14.4. Policy 2c. Protected Views and Vistas

**Objective:** To protect identified local views and vistas

#### Policy 2c. Protected Views and Vistas

*Great weight will be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in the consideration of any planning application within the Neighbourhood Area (as defined in Figure 2). All development must:*

- i) Appropriately demonstrate regard for the defining characteristics of the Neighbourhood Area as set out in the relevant Landscape Character Assessment or successor document and ensure development is sensitive to maintaining and enhancing its unique features;*
- ii) Landscape schemes should be designed and integrated with the open fields in and around the parishes and reflect the rural character of the parishes in the spacing of developments and allow for long distance views of the countryside from the public realm;*
- iii) Development should preserve and where possible enhance the views across the Plan area from public vantage points, especially from Melbury Beacon. All development with a visual impact on the Cranborne Chase National Landscape should show the scale of those impacts and how they have been mitigated in a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA).*

*These are illustrative photos of views and vistas, among several, of the neighbourhood area's notable landscapes. For enlarged maps of these vistas, please refer to the Environment, Landscape Character and Vistas Topic Paper.*

## West Melbury to Cann from Community Field

The view from looks west along the fields adjoining the Sturkel Chalk Stream, characterised by small fields, mostly set down to pasture with established hedges, with views across the valley to the hamlet of Foots Hill, with its scattered housing in various styles.



**Figure 39** View towards Cann from the Community Field adjacent to the Village Hall

## Melbury Beacon to Shaftesbury

From this view, Shaftesbury town is hardly visible on the hill line at the top of the image due to the extent of tree coverage which blends the town into the hillside. Closer are the distinctive settlements of West Lane and Pitts Lane, enclosed by green fields with scattered properties helping to identify the location of the A350. The scenery is dominated by agricultural fields mostly set to pasture with

established hedges. Both of the site along the A30/B3081 are visible from two key fixed points in the area, Win Green and Melbury Beacon.

## Melbury Beacon towards Shaftesbury



**Figure 40** View from Melbury Beacon towards Shaftesbury on the ridgeline with Pitts Lane on the left and the settlement of West Melbury along West Lane on the right, with Cann settlement along the A350 to the North East (credits: WK)

## Melbury Beacon towards Cann Common

Looking East from the top of Melbury Beacon to the left you can see the extremity of Shaftesbury and the larger housing estates 'The Maltings'. Since this picture was taken two further sites along the A30/B3018 intersection (the 'Tizzard Land' and Persimmon Land) have been given planning approval which means the amount of urban housing visible from the Beacon will increase further.

As you move away from Shaftesbury, the view is dominated by the amount of agricultural land providing a natural buffer between the parish and the town. The scattered housing of the linear settlement of Cann Common can be seen showing the location of

the C13 Higher Blandford Road, with the biggest and most visible development being the Melbury Motors commercial site.



**Figure 41** Melbury Beacon looking East towards Cann Common

### Cann Common towards Melbury Beacon

This view taken from Cann Common on the C13 shows the wide expanse of pastureland leading up to Melbury Beacon, with some visible signs of agricultural development. In the other images below, you can see the very scattered housing of the area in a variety of styles which make up the housing stock, with green natural habitat being the dominating feature.



### Melbury Beacon towards Melbury Abbas and Cann Common

The settlement of Cann Common can be seen clearly from the flank of Melbury Beacon with South Bank Farm to the left, Melbury Motors and the small industrial estate in the centre. The woodland of Melbury Vale Farm sits below.



**Figure 42** Melbury Abbas from the Beacon looking East towards Melbury Abbas in the middle and Cann Common to the left. NB: visible site: Southbank Farm.

### Spreadeagle Hill to Cann Common

From Spreadeagle Hill, the linear settlement of housing in Cann Common is visible with a variety of building size and styles evident.



**Figure 43** View of Cann Common looking East from Spreadeagle Hill

## Melbury Beacon to Duncliffe Wood

The Woodland Trust's Duncliffe Wood draws the eye to the East from Melbury Beacon. In this view, dominated by fields and mature hedging, the presence of Guys Marsh Prison is very noticeable. This increases again at night due to the extensive external lighting of the prison (referred to as the "Guys Marsh Glow").



**Figure 44** Flank of Melbury Beacon looking North-West towards Duncliffe Hill, overlooking Guys Marsh

## Entrance to Cann (proposed LGS3) towards Melbury Beacon

Even along the busy A350 road which dissects the parish the skyline is dominated by the rise of Melbury Beacon and the feeling overall is green and agricultural.



**Figure 45** Views into Entrance to Cann towards Shaftesbury



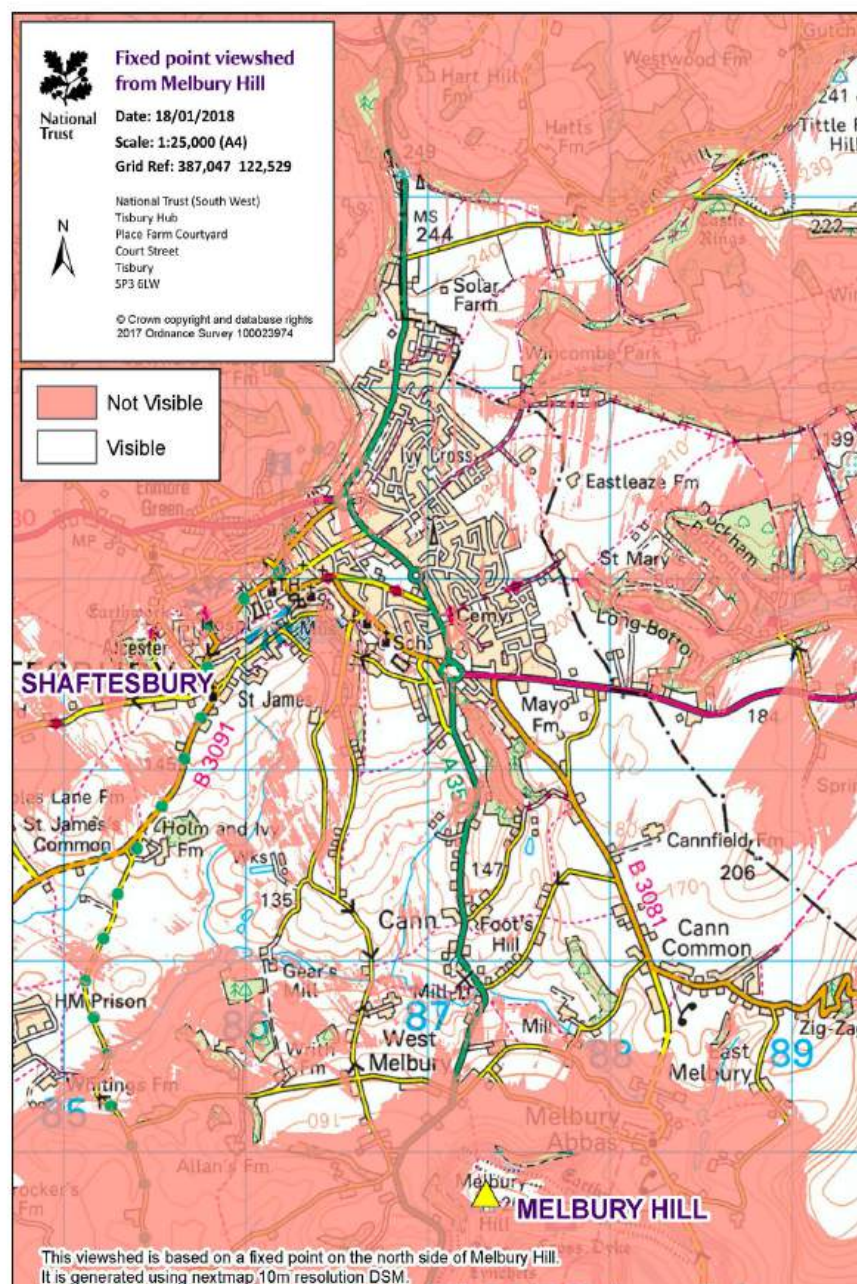
**Figure 46** Views from Entrance to Cann towards Melbury Beacon (credits: CH)

## Landcape View: Foots Hill to Melbury Beacon

The view from Foots Hill is dominated by the view of Melbury Beacon and pasture with an occasional view of a house. Melbury Meadows (chalk track) and Houses Farm are visible below the Beacon, with West Melbury and the row of houses on West Lane just visible to the right.



**Figure 47** Foots Hill to Melbury Beacon



**Figure 48** Fixed Point Viewshed from Melbury Hill (reproduced with the kind permission of the National Trust)

## 14.5. Policy 2d. Biodiversity and ecosystems

**Objective: To ensure development enhances local biodiversity and ecosystems**

### Policy 2d. Biodiversity and ecosystems

*New development should not harm the network of local ecological features and habitats and will be expected to maintain and enhance existing ecological corridors and landscape features (such as watercourses, hedgerows and tree lines) to promote biodiversity. In particular:*

- i) There is an expectation that measures to enhance ecological networks will contribute to at least a proven 10% net gain in biodiversity (subject to stated exceptions in planning practice guidance<sup>51</sup>);*
- ii) Proposals must demonstrate how they contribute to existing and potential ecological networks as set out in the DERC ecological network maps (accessible on Dorset Explorer);*
- iii) Tree and woodland management must be sensitive to other ecological considerations, such as protecting chalk downland;*
- iv) Development must not result in any temporary or permanent significantly adverse effect on the biodiversity or ecosystems of watercourses;*
- v) Ecological impacts must be captured in a baseline assessment and include provision to regularly assess mitigation measures;*
- vi) All developments should demonstrate how they ensure biodiversity gain consistent with the British Standard for Biodiversity.*

*Proposals for development must not adversely affect the integrity of any protected site, especially Fontmell and Melbury Downs SAC, either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects.*

## 14.6. Policy 2e. Heritage Assets

**Objective: To ensure development protects and enhances local heritage assets**

### Policy 2e. Heritage Assets

*Any historic asset should be conserved and/or enhanced by development wherever possible, which must be sensitive to the significance of the heritage asset and its ecological setting.*

#### Non-designated Heritage Listings:

*i) The potential features that should be preserved or enhanced are either described or linked in the MA&CNP38 Heritage Topic Paper (February 2025).*

Non-DHA 1 – Spinney Cottage, Dinah’s Hollow

Non-DHA 2 – The Coppers, West Melbury

Non-DHA 3 – Allen’s Farm, West Melbury

Non-DHA 4 – Medieval water works, Melbury Abbas

#### The need for additional investigation of the setting of heritage assets:

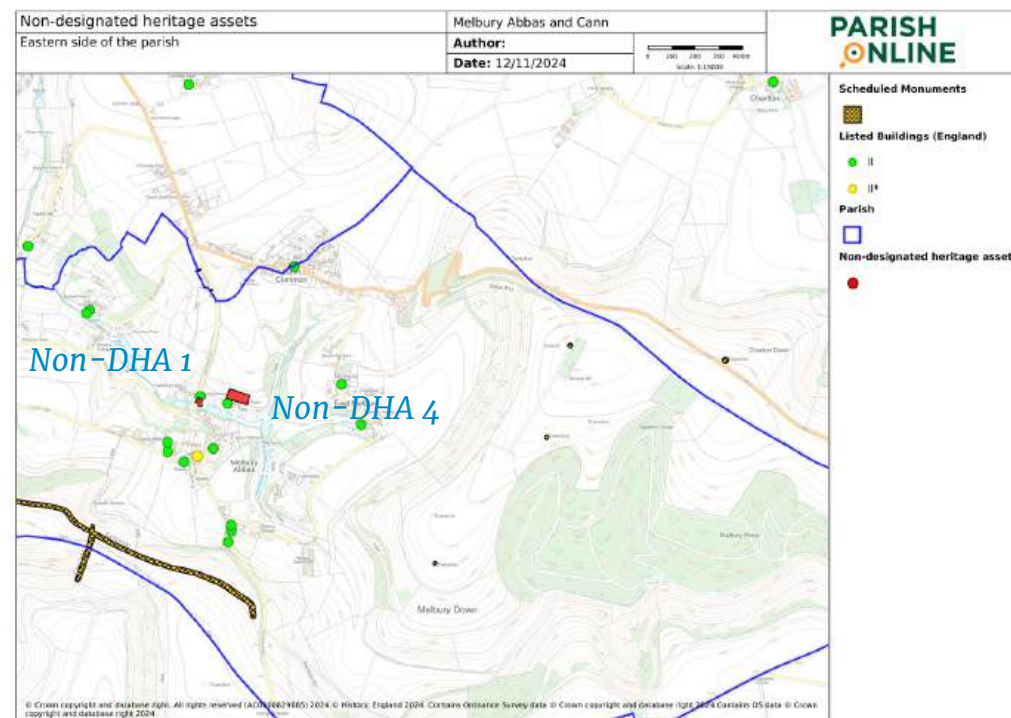
*ii) In the event that a site is located within the vicinity of an identified heritage asset, there should be a further investigation on the potential for additional heritage assets to be uncovered and/or identified through assessment appropriate to the scale and likely impact on the heritage asset. If additional historic features are identified, appropriate mitigation measures must be taken for their protection.*

#### Reuse of historic buildings:

*iii) Proposals to bring redundant and/or vacant historic buildings into re-use will be supported subject to the conditions above being met in conjunction with other policies in this plan.*

#### Chalk Stream and milling heritage:

*iv) In particular, proposals for development must not adversely affect the area’s chalk stream and milling heritage which should be conserved and enhanced wherever possible.*



**Figure 49** Non-designated heritage asset (Eastern side)

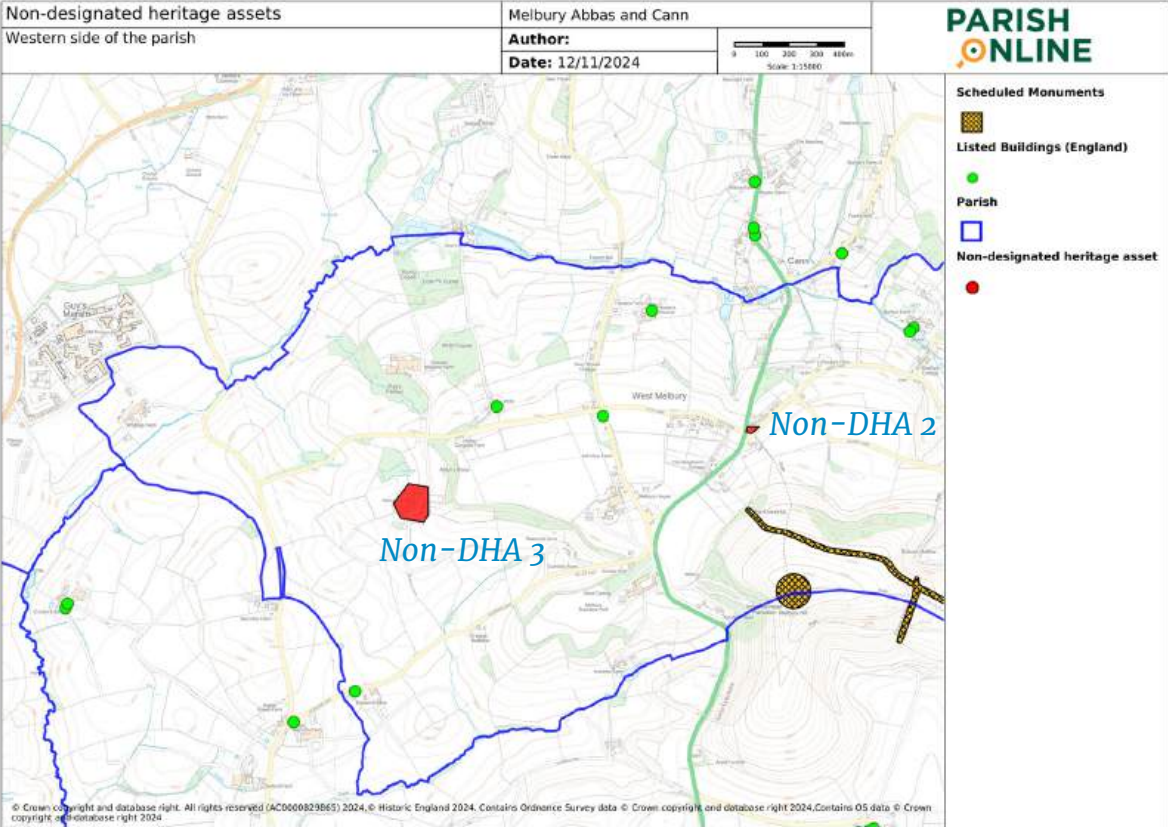


Figure 50 Non-designated heritage asset (Western side) (above)  
Figure 51 Stoates Mill (right)

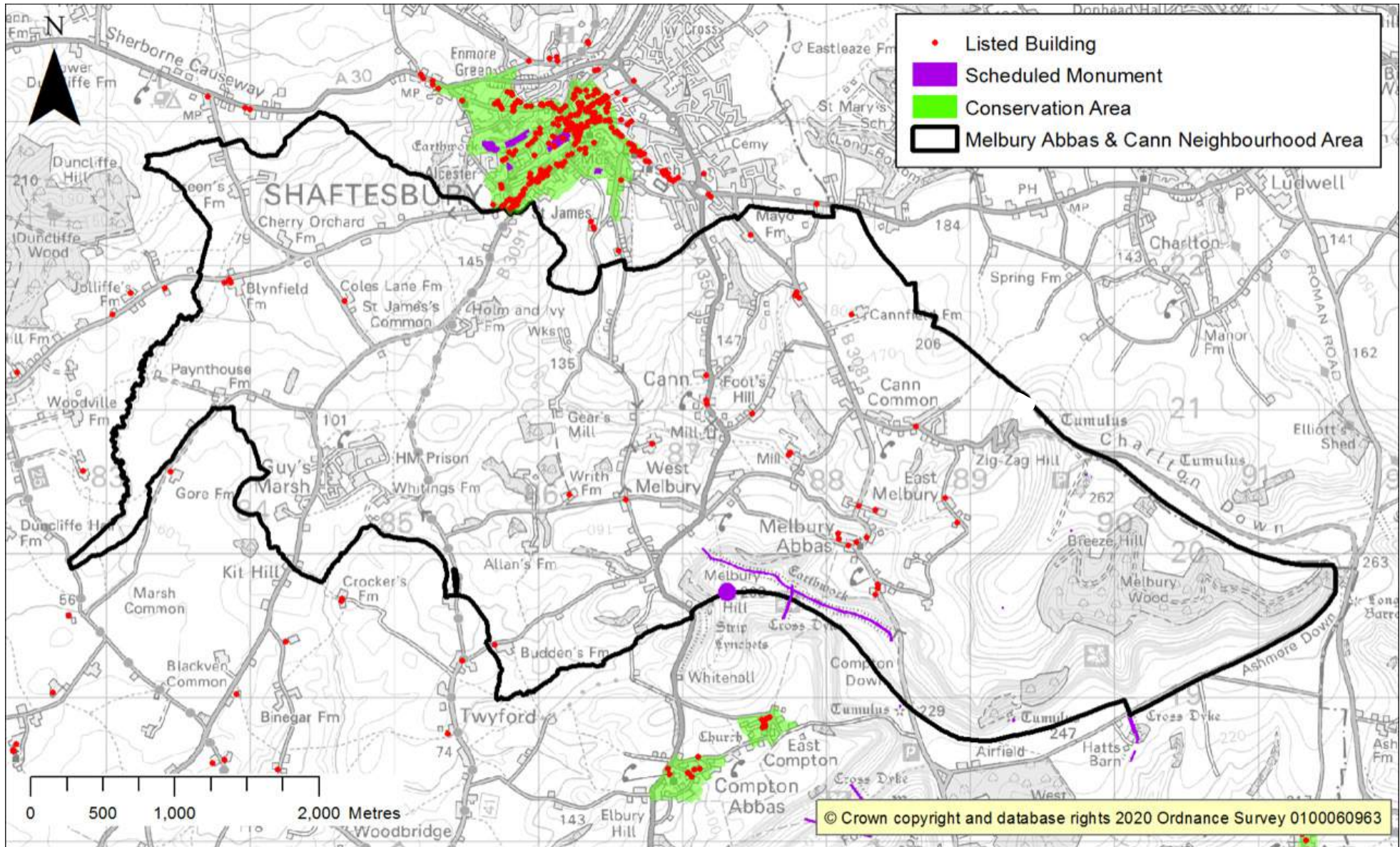


Figure 52 Designated heritage assets within the Melbury Abbas and Cann

## 15. Employment

### 15.1. Background and Rationale

140. As in many rural communities across the country, there is a need to balance housing provision with local business and employment possibilities. Enhancing local employment opportunities can help to encourage the long-term sustainability of the Melbury Abbas and Cann community.

141. Historically, trades in Melbury Abbas included a bakehouse, a general store, a Post Office (first mentioned in the British Postal Guide in 1871), a washhouse, a carpenters and a malthouse, which was later a blacksmith's shop. The Glyn Arms was a public house first recorded in 1838 until it closed in 1967. Several mill houses formed part of the area's historic employment activity.

142. Today there are few employers in the Neighbourhood Area, excluding sole trader businesses. In Melbury Abbas there is no village shop or a public house. There is a local garage, Melbury Motors, a small-scale employer, with a haulage centre to the rear of the site with other light employment uses.

143. In Cann there are two vineyards, an interior design studio and Stoats – a mill of organic flours, and a village hall which serves the two parishes. A bakery company, The Vale Bakery, has recently set up a shop within the Melbury Vale Winery on Foothill. In Cann HMP Guys Marsh employs approximately 300 people, with staff travelling from across the South West to travel to work (see “Policy 1e. St Anne's Close, Guys Marsh” on page 21 which seeks to deliver key worker housing for prison staff as a priority).<sup>52</sup>

144. According to the 2011 census in Melbury Abbas, 69%

of residents were in employment (inc. full-time students) and 23% were retired; in Cann, 40% of residents were in employment and 6.4% were retired. This dropped to 57% in employment over the age of 16 in both parishes in the 2021 census.



**Figure 53** The Glyn Arms today (Grade II listed residential, AECOM)

145. The 2018 Community Questionnaire stated that predominately 25% (n24, Question 19) of those who responded worked from home, and had a strong preference for facilities that would enable home-working. 19 businesses said they will keep the same office location and haven't looked for new premises and eight businesses will be looking to recruit additional staff. Though, these results were pre-pandemic and needs may well have changed since then but it does suggest a relatively stable rural working environment.

146. However, there is a high percentage of out-commuting amongst young people who live in the area, reflecting the necessity to access education, training and employment elsewhere. The growth of out-commuting is clearly evidenced in the 2018 Community Survey by the distances that people travel out of the Neighbourhood Area to work: 54% of respondents travelled six or more miles to work and 23% travelled more than 20 miles (Question 14). However, it is

recognised that due to the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic that the number of people who work from home may have increased since 2018.

147. This section aims to promote business provision and encourage new employment opportunities appropriate to the needs and skills base of our rural community. Some small-scale agricultural businesses operate in the Neighbourhood Area – nine people in Melbury Abbas (5% of the population) and 26 in Cann (9%) work in agriculture (according to the 2011 census). However, the sector has been under pressure in recent years and the longer-term impact of Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic on labour and food supplies remains to be seen. This may cause unknown impacts on agricultural land values and the demand for agricultural and employment facilities in the Plan period. There is also potential for under-utilised agricultural buildings to be redeveloped for alternative uses which could provide employment or wider economic benefit.

148. There are some good examples of the conversion of farm buildings within the Neighbourhood Area and surrounding parishes, where these have been subject to a change of use to provide employment opportunities, or wider farm diversification; for example to support tourism (B&Bs), as live/work units as well as housing. Engagement with the Compton Abbas Airfield suggests that tourism accommodation may be required to encourage business and leisure travel to the area (though this is in part met by the trend towards short-term let models, such as AirBnB).

149. Such redevelopment is supported by the Cranborne Chase AONB Management Plan 2019–2024, subject to design, scale and type of operation.<sup>53</sup> Re-development must recognise access restrictions for larger commercial vehicles due to narrow country lanes (outlined in “16. Leisure, Community and Well-being” on page 53), and therefore commercial use must be planned sensitively.

150. This Plan therefore supports an increase in local enterprise and the expansion of employment uses, where possible recognising the need to be sensitive to the Cranborne Chase National Landscape and surrounding rural character. Whilst not a land use issue, broadband was seen as a core means to promote expansion of small businesses in the Melbury Abbas and Cann, and the Parish Council is actively encouraging fibre to house provision<sup>54</sup>.

## 15.2. Policy 3a. Encouraging local enterprise

**Objective: To encourage local enterprise in the Neighbourhood Area**

### Policy 3a. Encouraging local enterprise

*This Plan welcomes development that enhances local employment opportunities in Melbury Abbas and Cann, providing that it does not detract from the overall rural character of the area and the Cranborne Chase National Landscape.*

*Proposals for employment and mixed development must consider existing transport constraints that impact on the neighbourhood area and seek to enhance opportunities for sustainable transport where possible (see “Policy 4a. Sustainable Transport” on page 59).*

*Proposals in sustainable locations that reuse previously developed (brownfield) sites and buildings for a mix of employment-related uses, including derelict agricultural buildings will be supported in principle.*

*The conversion or re-use of buildings in the countryside (both demolition and the (partial) re-development of existing buildings) will be supported for any of the following uses or designs subject to the above conditions being met:*

i) The diversification of agricultural or other land-based rural business to promote resilience through farm diversification; or

ii) The provision or expansion of tourist and visitor facilities, including live-work units. This could include the conversion of residential uses to hotels and/or tourist accommodation.

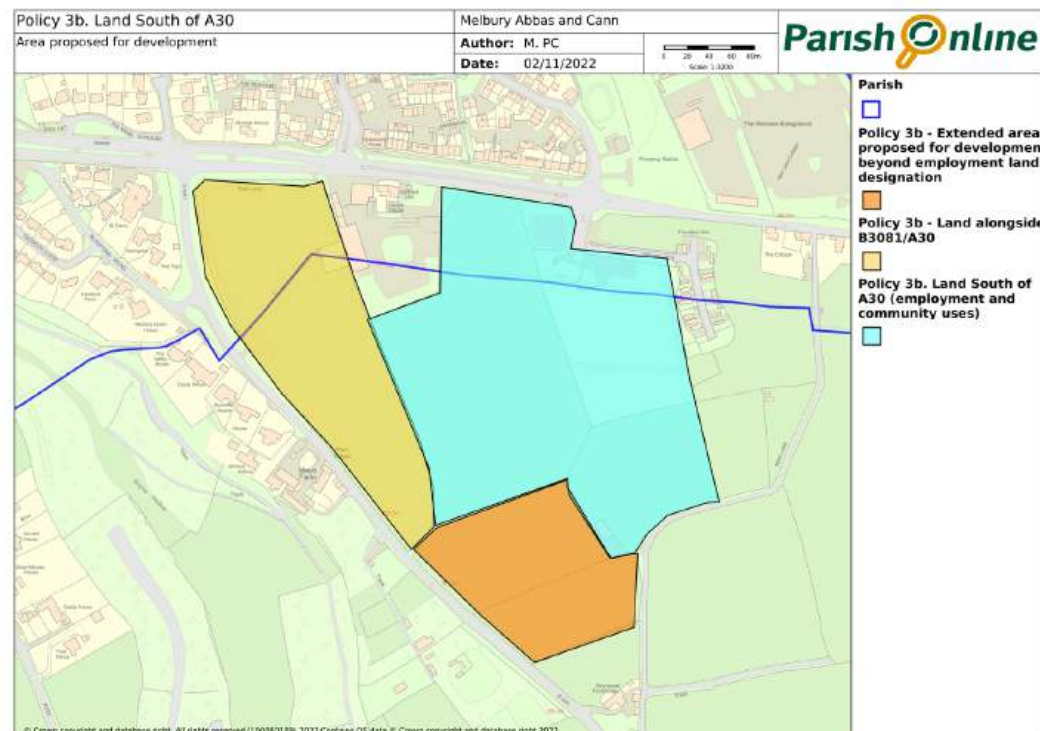
Any heritage features should be retained and restored (see “Policy 2e. Heritage Assets” on page 46).

Proposals for mixed development (e.g. both housing, community facilities and business on the same site) must ensure that neither development has any adverse impact on the other in terms of noise, light, design, smell and parking.

Proposals that would result in the loss of an employment use should provide evidence that appropriate steps have been taken to genuinely re-market the premises for alternative employment uses for a period of at least six months. As part of this, opportunities for community-led development and management of the site must be actively sought and allow sufficient time for a relevant delivery body to be established.

### 15.3. Policy 3b. Land South of A30

**Objective: To ensure that development south of the A30 is satisfactorily mitigated**



**Figure 54** The upper section of the site marked in blue indicates the boundary of the site designated as employment land in the NDDC Local Plan. The lower section beneath in orange is the extent of the site in Persimmon’s application (approved at appeal). The yellow site outline is the land for 55 dwellings on Mayo Farm (purchased by Persimmon following planning approval), which is nearing completions.

151. A 8 ha site alongside the southern side of the A30 on the border with Shaftesbury, earmarked exclusively for employment in both the NDDC Local Plan and the emerging Dorset Local Plan, was approved for mixed uses at appeal.<sup>55</sup> Persimmon (the

current landowner) sought permission for the erection of up to 135 dwellings, industrial starter units, a primary school, flexible commercial uses – including a combination of a hotel and non-food retail or residential care home, modified vehicular access, car parking, sports pitches, public open space and associated works. An application P/RES/2023/05407 for 107 dwellings was approved on 7 Nov 2024. (see Table 5).

152. While MA&CNP38 cannot overturn any planning decision on this site, this Plan nonetheless seeks to support a sustainable solution to the land South of the A30 which protects Melbury Abbas and Cann’s rural character through sensitive design with a minimal impact on landscape and adverse traffic impacts.

153. In particular, owing to the fact that national guidance indicates that Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) should be distributed according to the split of development within the relevant administrative boundaries,<sup>56</sup> MA&CNP38 is keen to ensure a fair split of any development monies arising from development if it falls within Cann’s parish boundary; e.g. that Cann receives its fair share of any benefits arising from development within its parish boundaries in the form of financial contributions towards local infrastructure and new community assets. However, the Inspector ruled at the appeal on the land A30/B3081 there was no justification for the provision of S106 contributions on this site and the land South A30 is making its community contribution on-site (in the form of a school and a doctor’s surgery). This decision also reflects the vital need for development to cater to the community infrastructure needs of Melbury Abbas and Cann, e.g. recreational facilities, through specific allocations in this plan.

154. It is also noted that the site is adjacent to the potential bypass corridor which, if it were to go ahead, would have implications for potential sustainable transport links between Shaftesbury and Melbury Abbas and Cann. Sensitive

development on the A30/Cann boundary can offer potential for footpath improvement and expansion of the rights of way network linking Melbury Abbas and Cann to Shaftesbury.<sup>57</sup>

## Policy 3b. Development of Land South of A30

*Development proposals for mixed development on the Land South of A30 are encouraged to set down proposals in a masterplan that expresses consistency in design, phasing and infrastructure requirement sensitive to the rural character of Cann parish.*

*This should include appropriate landscaping and natural screening to help reduce visual impact in areas of high landscape sensitivity to protect views affecting the setting of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape (see Figure 23).*

*Development of this site should seek to expand and enhance footpath routes that extend into Cann parish, which should be included in any S106 agreement or similar.*



Figure 55 Woodfrys Farm Shop, Mill Hollow Lane, Melbury Abbas



## 16. Leisure, Community and Well-being

### 16.1. Background and Rationale

155. The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interactions and creating healthy, inclusive communities. MA&CNP38 seeks to protect and improve the buildings, infrastructure, facilities and green spaces that encourage community activity, quality of life or provide or enhance amenity spaces that are accessible to all.

#### 16.1.12. Green Infrastructure and LGS

156. Accessible outside space, whether in the form of a recreational area or other outside space, is essential for the well-being of residents and can encourage visitors to the area. In this way, the built environment is balanced by the natural

environment. Trees, plants and open spaces have been proven to provide significant health and well-being benefits<sup>58</sup>, as well as supporting interaction between neighbours and the wider community.

157. Local Green Spaces (LGS) are defined in the NPPF as spaces important to a community, which should be protected from development. They include areas with recreational purposes and spaces of natural beauty and tranquillity.

158. It is acknowledged that there are, however, stringent conditions on the types and extent of land that can qualify for LGS designation; they cannot be extensive tracts of land nor part of the open countryside, they must be close to the community they serve and demonstrate special characteristics for the local community, such as recreational, tranquillity, wildlife, beauty or historic functions).<sup>59</sup>

159. There are three identified spaces that are eligible to be designated as LGS within the Plan area against defined NPPF criteria, which would enable or enhance their enjoyment by present and future generations.

160. The designation of these sites as LGS may also facilitate long-term management of biodiversity and/or recreational



assets, potentially affording improvements to wildlife corridors and investment in community recreational facilities. Other areas identified as suitable for development can also enhance local green infrastructure and protect landscape features and connectivity within the Plan area.

## 16.1.13. Infrastructure and Community Facilities

161. Infrastructure is the fundamental services necessary for development to take place, for example, roads, electricity, sewage, water, education and health facilities.

162. The issue of climate change is a key issue of our times. The Melbury Abbas and Cann area is heavily dependent upon electricity and oil for heating.<sup>60</sup> Along with several other local authorities, a Climate and Ecological Emergency was declared by Dorset Council in 2019<sup>61</sup> and at a national level the UK government set a UK net-zero carbon target by 2050 in June 2019.

163. The planning system can help address these ambitions by encouraging a number of low-carbon development opportunities. Starting from the design stage, there are strategies that can be incorporated towards solar heating and cooling (e.g. ground or air source heat pumps) as well as energy-efficient landscaping (determined by local climate and site conditions). More recently there are attractive roof-top Solar PV options, such as solar shingles and photovoltaic slates. There are also several voluntary low-carbon building initiatives, such as BREEAM and BREEAM Communities (masterplanning of large-scale development plans) that can support low-energy lighting and development.<sup>62</sup>

164. The Parish Council supports renewable energy schemes. However, infrastructure – whether energy, communications or otherwise – can have an adverse impacts on historic and natural

characteristics, such as the National Landscape. Inappropriate siting of infrastructure such as masts, dishes, reflectors and transmitters may adversely affect local character. Provision of infrastructure in new developments should thus seek to avoid such adverse impacts. Moreover, development is more effective and efficient when infrastructure is in place prior to completion.

165. For any modern development, this also includes provision of communications infrastructure. To ensure that local businesses can maximise technological advances and that development takes into account increasing trends for home-working and flexible working patterns, high-speed broadband infrastructure is encouraged by local planning policy and MA&CNP38, which should ideally be operational before the occupation of new developments.

166. The Neighbourhood Area include a primary school, The Abbey School, which straddles Shaftesbury and Cann, which has known parking constraints. Five other schools serve the catchment area. A secondary school, Shaftesbury School, is based in Shaftesbury.

167. There are no recreational facilities for children in the Neighbourhood Area, something MA&CNP38 seeks to promote. There are few registered community groups, which include the Millennium Group, the Skittles Club, the Village Produce Association and the St. Thomas' Preservation Society. A larger number of community groups existed in the past 20 years but over time the number of groups has dwindled.

168. As a community resource, the Village Hall has been recently modernised, though it has been underutilised in part because of its relatively inaccessible location which exacerbates the issue of a lack of an overall 'village centre' to the parish. The 2019-2020 Community Survey revealed that there was an overwhelming level of support from those who responded

to relocate it to a more accessible site (79.9%).<sup>63</sup> As such, alternative premises are sought in a more suitable central and accessible location. The allocated site Southbank Farm includes provision to build a new village hall on the Southern section of the site. It is also possible that some of the funds might be raised through the release of the existing Village Hall site for housing (“Policy 1h. The Village Hall” on page 28), though this is expected to be minimal as the site is allocated for affordable housing for those with a local connection (with the land expected to be retained in stewardship by the community).

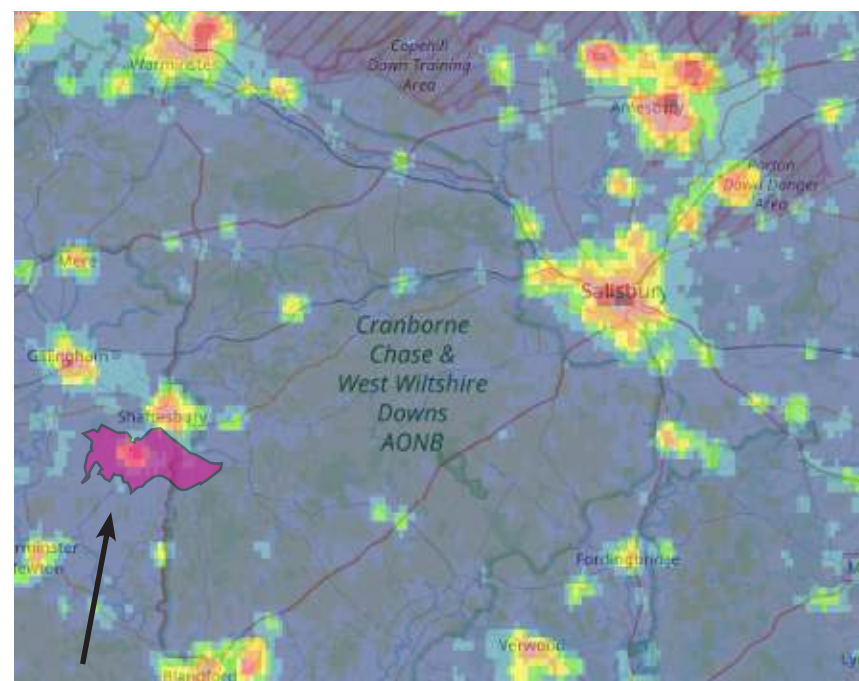
169. This Plan encourages further community activity to support a vibrant future for Melbury Abbas and Cann. Improvements to local infrastructure have typically been enabled either through direct investment from Local Authorities and other utility providers, or through site-specific agreements associated with new developments, such as the Section 106 Agreement (S106) negotiated during the planning approval process. For example, provision of additional passing places, improvements to verges or traffic calming and road safety measures, protection and expansion of the sustainable transport network, provision of dropped kerbs, pavements and amenity space.<sup>64</sup>

**Figure 56** Light pollution in the AONB with the Neighbourhood Area indicated in pink (Source: Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB). The “Guys Marsh Glow” is indicated with the arrow.

### 16.1.14. Preserving our Dark Skies

170. Research has also shown that the Cranborne Chase National Landscape has one of the lowest levels of light pollution in the country. It is important it stays this way. Measures to minimise the impact of new development on the night sky are proposed in the AONB Management Plan, supported by Dorset Council. In October 2019, the AONB was successful in its bid to be awarded the prestigious Dark Skies Award. This will create a core area and a buffer area, involve community participation and the commitment of local enterprises and authorities, as well encourage possible ‘astro-tourism’ to the area.

171. However, while Melbury Abbas and Cann are predominately rural in nature, there are some localised constraints on the Dark Skies initiative being complied with, in particular at Guys Marsh HMP, referred to as “the Guys Marsh glow” (shown lit up in Figure 56). It is essential excessive light pollution is reduced and that future development respects this prestigious award.



## 16.1.15. Transport and Road Safety

172. Nationally and locally, modern transport has transformed both society and the economy. As is the norm in many rural areas, and despite the government’s encouragement of alternatives, the car remains the main mode of transport. At the same time, reliance on cars, vans and lorries has led to more congested roads, fewer people walking and cycling, and reduced use of local buses – resulting in a loss of these services and air pollution. The narrow access roads in the Melbury Abbas and Cann area are particularly unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists.



173. The road network in North Dorset is dominated by smaller roads. Around 8% are classified as A roads, 8% are of B classification, 37% are class C and about 45% are unclassified. The major roads running through the North Dorset area are the A30 and A350 which feed into towns of Blandford Forum to the south and Shaftesbury to the north. The northern section of the Cann boundary borders the town of Shaftesbury. The A350

is a main north–south route that cuts through Cann, while the B3081 runs through Cann Common up towards Zig Zag Hill onto the Cranborne Chase.

174. The C13 follows Melbury Abbas (through Dinah’s Hollow, an ancient single trackway) towards Blandford. The Neighbourhood Area has modest amounts of air pollution for a rural parish,<sup>65</sup> owing to Cann’s proximity to the A350. Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) traffic is directed down from the B3081 to the C13 at Dinah’s Hollow; this has caused erosion of its banks and there were regular jams that impeded road safety.



**Figure 57** A regular sight in Melbury Abbas before the construction of signal works at Dinah’s Hollow



**Figure 58** Dinah’s Hollow in the 19th, 20th and 21st Century

175. The Parish Council recorded data from 2016 on the number of jams per week in Melbury Abbas (indicated in Figure

59, below). The peak was 53 a week in the 1st month data was recorded, and spiked to 47 when the road was re-opened after the Dinah’s Hollow upgrade.

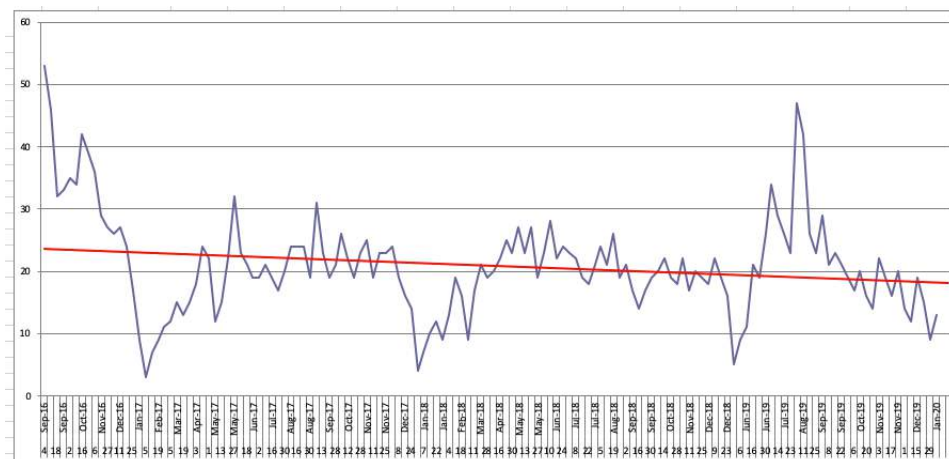


Figure 59 Traffic Jam data in Melbury Abbas/Dinah’s Hollow 2016 – 2020 (WK)

176. Works by Dorset Highways to address this were completed in July 2019, together with an installation of a traffic system to detect HGVs and to regulate traffic flow, with a lay-by for HGVs as a waiting area. However, this has been met with modest success so far (at a cost of nearly £3 million) since the road network still has narrow pinch points (notably along Church Bank and at the bottom of Spreadeagle Hill) where cars and lorries cannot pass each other.<sup>66</sup>

177. Due to the rural nature of the Neighbourhood Area there is little formal parking provision, other than at the Village Hall. Streets are usually too narrow to accommodate on-street parking.

178. The nearest railway station is at Gillingham (Dorset) seven miles to the west or Tisbury in neighbouring Wiltshire, some 10 miles to the east.

179. While not a typical form of transport, Compton Abbas

Airfield straddles the southern boundary of the Neighbourhood Area which serves primarily leisure-based air travel. At present, aircraft noise and air pollution remain an issue for some local residents. Engagement with the Compton Abbas Airfield has indicated that there is an increasing move towards electric airplanes that emit less carbon emissions. (However, exact data on the extent of this transition were not provided).

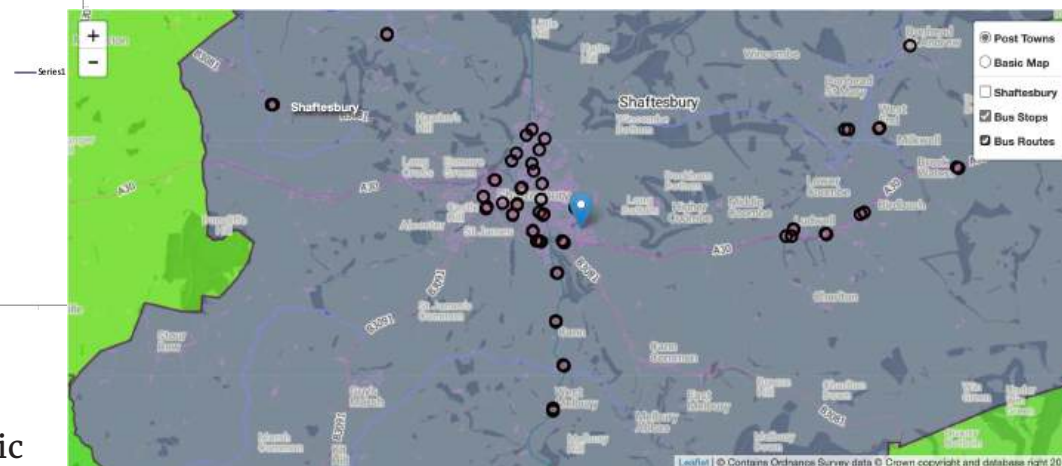


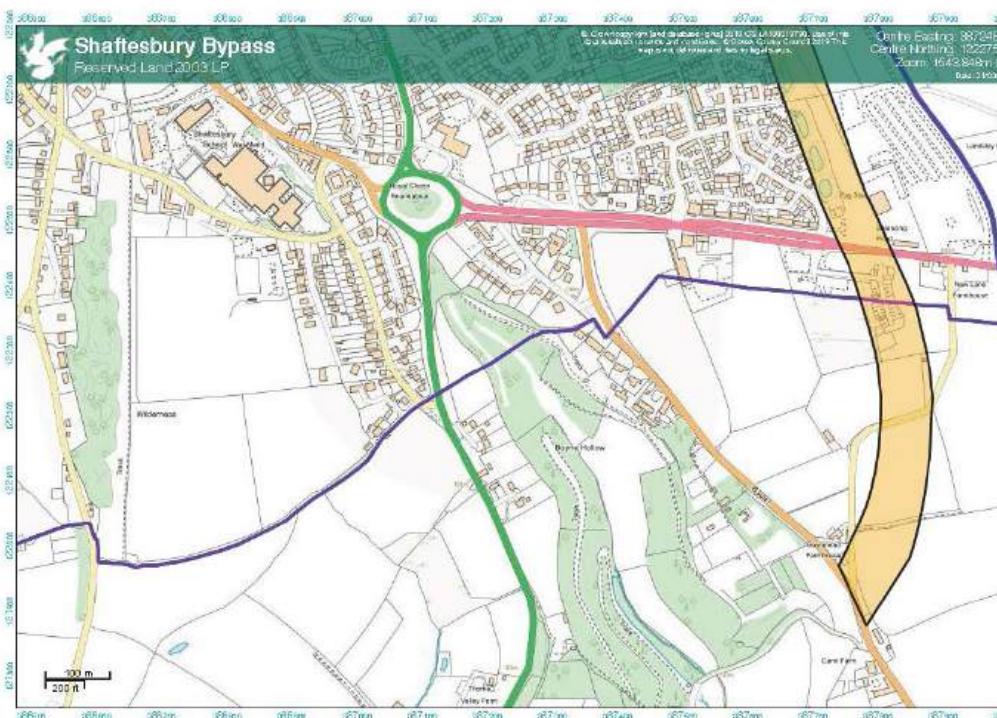
Figure 60 Location of (now removed) bus services (source: GeoPunk<sup>67</sup>)

180. Bus stops are located along the A350 with infrequent services to Shaftesbury and Blandford. Bus services to/from Shaftesbury to Blandford through Cann are every two hours (X3); there are no buses passing through Melbury Abbas and Cann Common. Anyone requiring public transport in these areas would need to walk to a stop on the A350 to catch the X3 – a serious challenge for those with mobility issues. There are also no buses serving the Guys Marsh/Cherry Orchard part of Cann.

181. Speeding has been an issue in Melbury Abbas and Cann and the Parish Council has installed three traffic monitoring units. Since their installation, rates of speeding have reduced.

182. The future of the routes of the A350 south of Shaftesbury

and its crossover with the A30 through Melbury Abbas and Cann is unclear and is the subject of a debate that has been continuing since the 1980s.<sup>68</sup> The North Dorset Local Plan Policy 2003 saved policy SB18 stressed that development shouldn't compromise the potential for the creation of an eastern bypass reserved corridor (which runs alongside the Land on the A30 owned by Persimmon). This position has shifted more recently and a 2018 NDDC consultation on the Local Plan as part of its Local Plan review found that there were mixed views as to whether the bypass should be retained.



**Figure 61** Shaftesbury Bypass – reserved land 2003 Local Plan

183. While Dorset Council continues to investigate opportunities to improve north-south routes in Dorset, there are currently no funded schemes to deliver a Shaftesbury eastern

bypass. For Melbury Abbas and Cann, any expansion could be counterproductive to the area's character and encourage even greater use by all vehicles, further compromising the safety of other road users, especially cyclists and pedestrians by significantly increasing traffic flow into Cann.<sup>69</sup>

184. MA&CNP38 community consultation has shown support for new parking facilities to encourage sustainable forms of transport, such as the provision of electric charging points for electric vehicles (EVs, including bicycles) and improved coordination of buses and trains.

185. New laws came into effect in 2022 which will massively increase the delivery of EV infrastructure in new buildings, renovations and non-residential buildings subject to renovation and planning consent as part of an overhaul to England's Building Regulations.<sup>70</sup>

186. Development should include careful plans on how best to manage road safety issues, ensuring that well-meaning 'improvements' do not lead to unintended, adverse consequences.

### 16.1.16. Sustainable Transport (rights of way and active travel)

187. Existing footpath routes do not provide sufficient connectivity for safe travel. The Steering Group reviewed the potential to create, extend and enhance footpaths and cycleways from the four main settlement hubs – Guys Marsh, Cann Common, Melbury Abbas and Foothill. The group has worked with the Shaftesbury Walking Group to identify possible footpath expansion routes.<sup>71</sup> Dorset Council's Transport Planning and Policy Team and Dorset Council's Senior Ranger are also broadly supportive of the sustainable transport aspirations and

the consideration given to active travel.



**Figure 62** Aerial photo showing the road network (solid lines) and the network of public rights of way (dotted lines) (source: Google Earth/AECOM)

188. The Parish Council will continue to liaise with Dorset Council to consider potential traffic calming measures along the B3081, as well as pedestrian crossing points or measures such as a roundabout at Cann Common/ C13 intersection. Some of the priorities identified through the Community Questionnaire could guide future decision-making regarding infrastructure levy monies. For example, promoting existing community transport initiatives, such as the Link Scheme, or supporting the implementation of MA&CN38's integrated transport objectives (see "Policy 4a. Sustainable Transport").

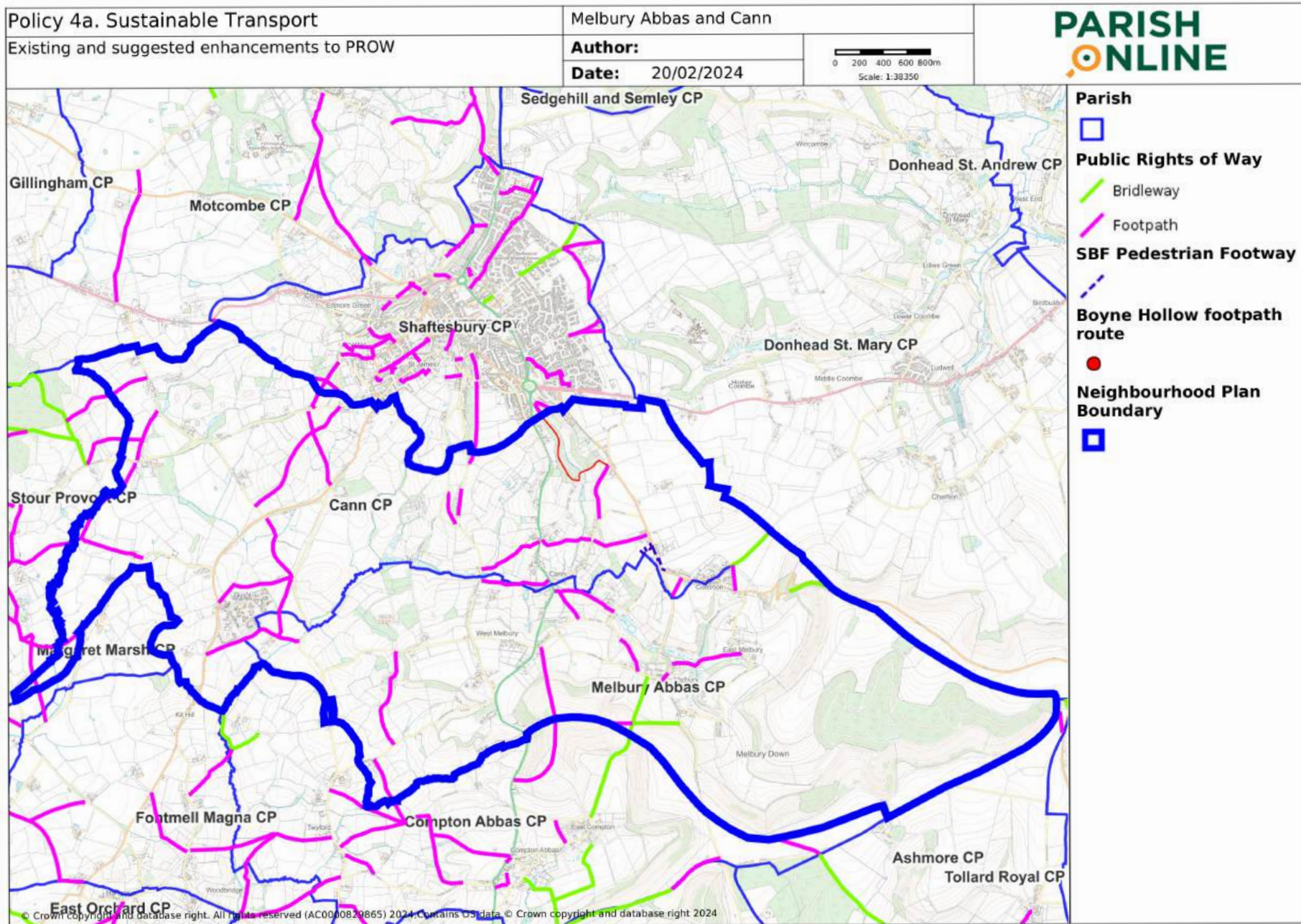
## 16.2. Policy 4a. Sustainable Transport

**Objective: To encourage sustainable transport links through accessible and safe rights of way in the Neighbourhood Area**

### Policy 4a. Sustainable Transport

*New development should aspire to be built around the concept of a walkable parish with integrated pathways and cyclepaths safe and suitable for all people. This may be achieved by:*

- i. Circular walking routes;*
- ii. The protection and expansion of rights of way for footpaths, bridle and cycle paths to encourage sustainable transport patterns within the Neighbourhood Area and its surrounding communities, particularly those that improve pedestrian access to and from Shaftesbury; this may include bringing back into use historic footpaths where possible.*
- iii. Roadside footpaths should be sensitive to the design features in keeping with the MA&CNP Design Guide (AECOM, 2019) and the area's rural character and should be accessible to all, where feasible;*
- iv. The provision of infrastructure to support sustainable transport will be encouraged (such as secure and weather-proof cycle racks/shelters, electric charge points for cars, bikes and mobility scooters) and should be incorporated into any new development. This should include provision for enabling disabled access;*
- v. Development should encourage low-emission transport alternatives, in line with "Policy 4c. Infrastructure Provision" on page 61; or*
- vi) Where relevant, development should support new footpath and cycle routes identified in Figure 63 and consult the Parish Council should any additional routes be identified.*



**Figure 63** Existing rights of way and suggested expansion of footpath and cycleways. **Note that this map is not definitive and has no legal status.**

### 16.3. Policy 4b. Traffic impacts and road safety

**Objective: To resolve problems caused by heavy through traffic**

#### Policy 4b. Traffic Impacts and road safety

*Development that will generate significant levels of additional traffic should include within their Transport Statement consideration of how traffic impacts will be mitigated to ensure that the rural character of the Neighbourhood Area and the Cranborne Chase National Landscape will be conserved and, where feasible, enhanced.*

*Developer contributions should support improvements to the local road network and road safety measures, as appropriate. Through engagement with landowners and Dorset Highways all development should seek to address, where feasible:*

- i. Enhancement to existing and/or provision of additional passing places to avoid damage to the roadside edges;*
- ii. Improvement to verges;*
- iii. Provision of appropriate traffic calming measures;*
- iv. Addressing road safety issues to prevent accidents;*
- v. Complementing existing road infrastructure upgrades and enhancements at Dinah's Hollow while maintaining its historic value;*
- vi. Integrating with any potential bypass or other road improvements where these do not undermine the rural character of the Neighbourhood Area and the Cranborne Chase National Landscape;*
- vii) Mitigating exacerbating traffic pressures on the A350, B3081 or C13.*
- viii) Seek enhancements to address any known local parking issues.*

### 16.4. Policy 4c. Infrastructure Provision

**Objective: To future-proof and modernise local infrastructure**

#### Policy 4c. Infrastructure Provision

*The siting of any infrastructure should identify and address any adverse impact on local character and the Cranborne National Landscape and ensure that:*

- i) Provision is made for cabling to be located underground, where feasible, and communication masts should be disguised, camouflaged or clad in complementary materials that reflects local character (see "Policy 2a. Design" on page 40);*
- ii) Provision is made for high-speed communications infrastructure (e.g. broadband or equivalent). Ideally, this should be operational before a development is occupied.*



Figure 64 Melbury Abbas and Cann Village Hall



Figure 65 Signpost of the Melbury Abbas and Cann Village Hall and noticeboard

## 16.5. Policy 4d. Community Facilities

**Objective: To protect and enhance community facilities, recreational and amenity areas**

### Policy 4d. Community facilities

*The creation of additional community facilities is welcome, in particular: modernised event spaces, community hubs, small-scale retail (shops and/or Post Office) outdoor recreational facilities for children and allotments. Proposals for community-led development of community facilities would be looked upon favourably.*

*The loss of a community building will only be acceptable where:*

- i. An equivalent or better replacement building is provided at another suitable location and that development will be completed or near completion prior to any closure of the existing community facility; or*
- ii. It can be robustly demonstrated that all or part of a community building is no longer valued or sufficiently utilised by the community either in its present use or for potential alternative community uses.*

*New community facilities must be accessible for those with additional mobility requirements and consider the needs of those without the use of a car.*

*New, or any upgrades to existing, community facilities should promote natural features within the development to promote environmental gains and provide spaces for outside interaction whilst providing for wildlife habitats (including gardens, shared open spaces and trees), sensitive to the rural setting of the area and/or within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape.*

## 16.6. Policy 4e. Energy

**Objective: To encourage measures that promote a net-zero future**

### Policy 4e. Energy

*Proposals are encouraged to undertake an appropriate certification of the development that demonstrates a positive net benefit in energy efficiency, such as the Home Quality Mark or BREEAM Excellent standards (for non-residential developments).*

*Low-carbon energy provision should not compromise the character of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape or heritage assets and must be compatible with the MA&CNP38 Design Guide (AECOM, 2019). Any retrofitting of historic assets should always seek to safeguard their historic characteristics.*

*Where there are no listed building issues, all new build projects and extensions requiring planning consent are encouraged to include technologies for the capture and utilisation of renewable energy, heating and energy storage.*

*Roof designs should consider the incorporation of solar PV, either for immediate or future installations if it is not proven viable at the point of development.*

## 16.7. Policy 4f. Sustainable ground-mount PV

**Objective: To support sustainable ground-mount PV installations**

### Policy 4f. Sustainable ground-mount PV

*Small-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installations (PV) that generate renewable energy capacity for residential and/or commercial schemes in the neighbourhood area will be supported outside the Cranborne Chase National Landscape where the benefits of creating renewable energy are balanced against the environmental impacts and where:*

- i) They contribute to microgrid capacity to support reliable and localised energy production and distribution, where appropriate;*
- ii) They are on previously developed non-agricultural land, private gardens or former agricultural land that is of proven poor quality (i.e. less than grade 3);*
- iii) They do not cause a significantly adverse effect on heritage assets or their setting;*
- iv) They do not cause any significantly adverse effects on the landscape; and*
- v) These installations are removed when no longer in use.*

### 16.8. Policy 4g. Light and air pollution

**Objective:** To encourage measures to reduce light pollution and retain the Cranborne Chase National Landscape’s Dark Sky Reserve status

#### Policy 4g. Lighting and air pollution

Any domestic external lighting provided within new build projects (e.g. all fittings, such as front door and back door welcome lights) should have regard to the current (and revisions therefore) of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape guidance, rather than being left to householders to retrofit.

Lighting must be limited and appropriate throughout the Neighbourhood Area to mitigate light pollution into the National Landscapes Dark Skies area. Those subject to a planning consent should adhere to the lighting installation guidelines produced by the National Landscapes to respect the Dark Skies/Chasing Stars\* status (or successor document) and consider the Dorset Biodiversity Appraisal Protocol (DBAP) on potential impacts biodiversity (notably bats).

Proposals for development should aim to limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity and nature conservation.

\* Details of the CCWWD AONB Chasing Stars Initiative are available from <http://chasingstars.org.uk/>

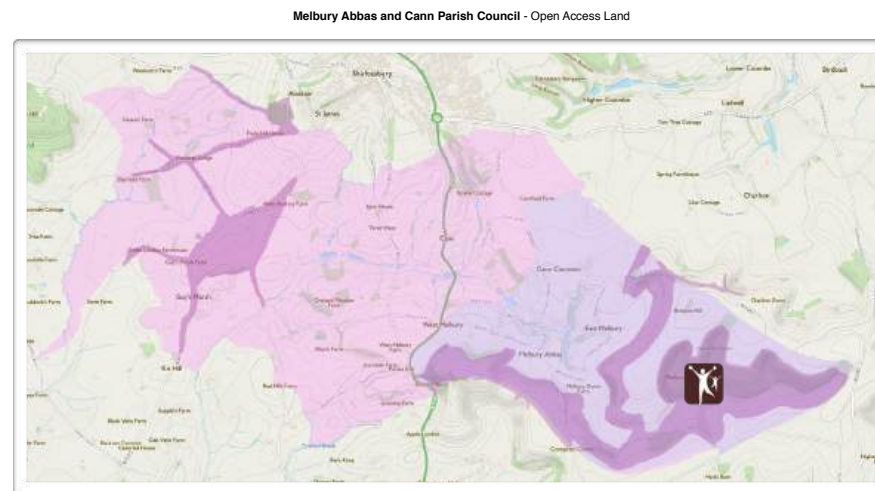
### 16.9. Policy 4h. Energy from water and water efficiency

**Objective:** To maximise the potential of water efficiency and energy from water

#### Policy 4h. Energy from water and water efficiency

Small scale hydro-electric proposals will be supported subject to there being no significantly adverse environmental effects from the scheme.

The use of Sustainable Urban Drainage is required where feasible particularly where this enhances the biodiversity features of any development and mitigates any issues identified where a Surface Water Drainage Strategy is required in surface water risk areas (see Figure 27).



Open Access Land: much of the National Trust owned land and a portion of land in the west of our Parish is designated open access land. This is land one can access without having to use paths. The right to access this land is called the 'right to roam', or 'freedom to roam'.

**Figure 66** Open Access Land (Ordnance Survey/WK) – open access land indicated in dark purple

## 16.10. Policy 4i. Local Green Spaces

**Objective: To protect and promote valued green infrastructure through the allocation of Local Green Spaces**

### Policy 4i. Local Green Spaces

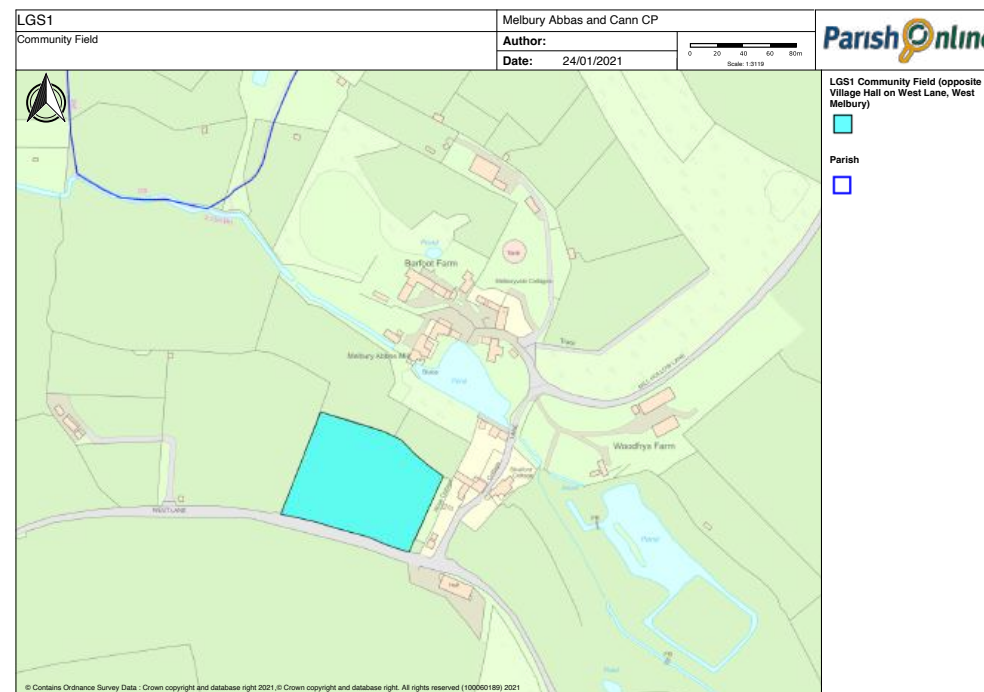
The outdoor recreation and amenity areas on the LGS proposals map (Figure 73 on page 67) are designated as Local Green Spaces due to their particular local significance for the community and their recreational, historic and/or environmental value.

i) Decisions on managing development within the Local Green Spaces should be consistent with national policy for Green Belts. Support will be given to proposals that would enhance the value or significance of the Local Green Space.

ii) Development adjoining these open spaces should enhance their character by either providing a positive interface (i.e. properties facing onto them to improve natural surveillance) or a soft landscaped edge to complement their character. Areas adjacent to an LGS should also seek to encourage suitable access spaces to the LGS, where appropriate.

iii) In the case of Boyne Hollow, the designation of the site as an LGS must not affect the capacity of Wessex Water to provide essential maintenance and services to the local area. Nor must designation compromise operational, environmental or public liability issues. The mitigation of any such issues must be duly agreed as appropriate with Wessex Water.

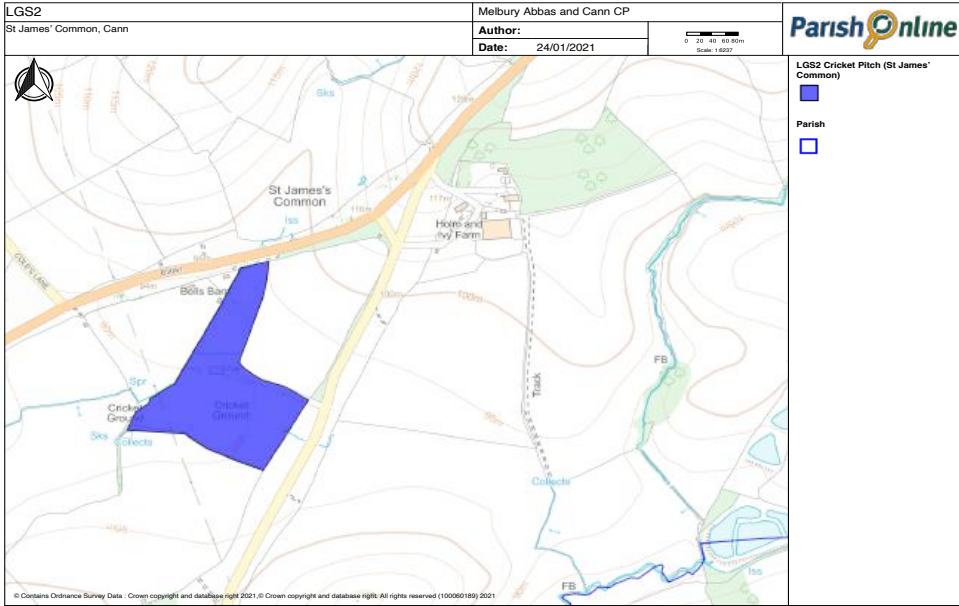
Inappropriate development will not be permitted unless justified by very special circumstances. If development were to happen at one of these sites, an independent assessment of the loss of biodiversity must be fully considered and any development should seek to retain its essential green character without urbanising the setting of the site.



**Figure 67** Site outline LGS1 Community Field (next to Village Hall on West Lane, West Melbury)



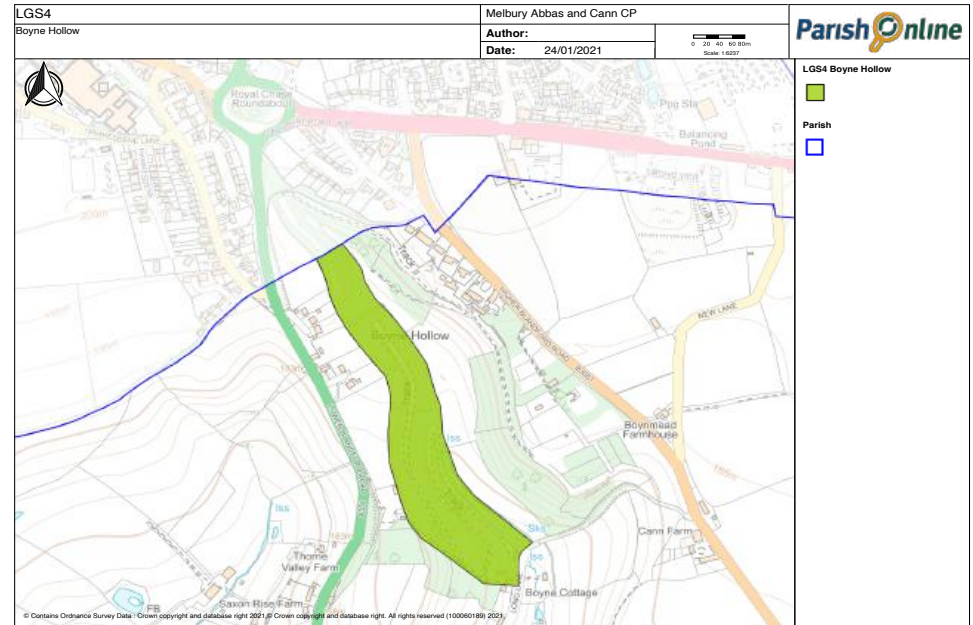
**Figure 68** Sheep grazing on the Community Field



**Figure 69** LGS2 (St James' Common Cricket Pitch, Cann)



**Figure 70** St James Common/cricket pitch



**Figure 71** Site outline LGS3 Boyne Hollow



**Figure 72** The extent of the wooded area in Boyne Hollow (Google Maps)

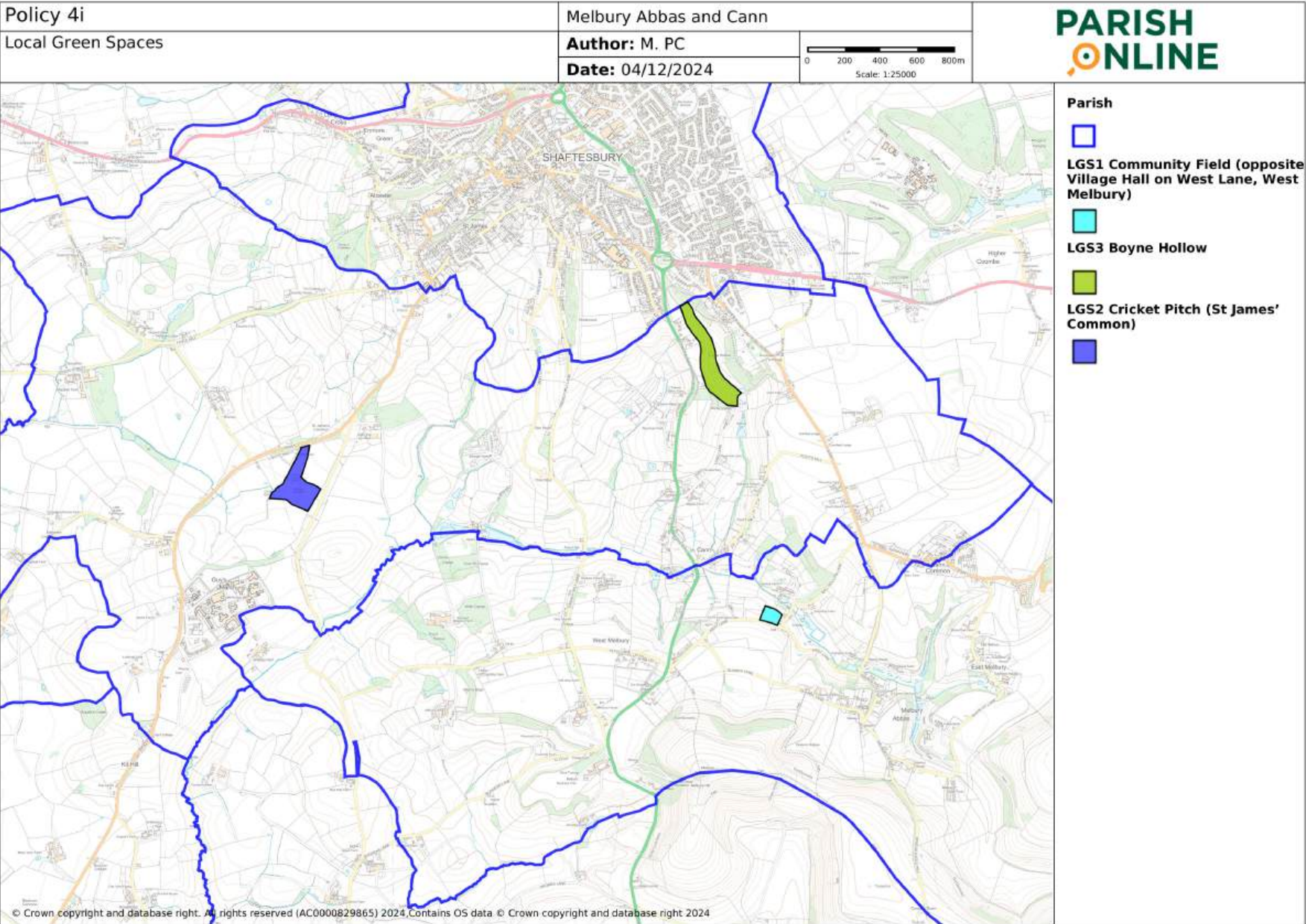


Figure 73 Local Green Space proposals map

**Table 6** Local Green Space – Rationale for Designation and landowner engagement

LGS No	Size of area (ha)	General description	Purpose for designation	1	2	3
<b>LGS1</b> Community Field (below Village Hall on West Lane, West Melbury)	0.76	Small agricultural field used for community purposes	Currently used for community uses as overflow for the Village Hall for events and as an ad hoc community area, with facilities for BBQ.  Although this is not part of the rationale for designation, there is also potential for future use as a community orchard, memorial garden, other recreational uses or allotments.  NB: LGS allocation is supported by the landowner (The Village Hall Committee).	Y	Y	Y
<b>LGS2</b> Cricket Pitch (St James' Common)	3.2	Cricket pitch	Used as a cricket pitch by the Shaftesbury Cricket Club. NB: unable to designate the wider common area due to it being an extensive tract of land which has existing protections.  NB: LGS allocation is supported by the landowner (Shaftesbury Town Council).	Y	Y	Y
<b>LGS3</b> Boyne Hollow (Cann)	5.83*	Wooded area	Wooded area with high biodiversity. The Steering Group has engaged with Wessex Water on their support for allocation and footpath extensions as identified in Figure 63 on page 60.  NB: Wessex Water support LGS allocation in principle so long as the allocation does not compromise their ability to conduct essential maintenance on the site, which has been addressed in the LGS Policy 4i.	Y	Y	Y

Legend	NPPF Criteria
1	Close to the community it serves
2	Demonstrably special to the local community (beauty, historic value, recreation, tranquillity, wildlife etc.)
3	Local in character, not part of the open countryside



**Figure 74**  
St James Common, Guys Marsh

# 17. Implementation

## 17.1. Approach

189. The plan will be monitored regularly to assess the effectiveness of its policies in delivering the community's vision and objectives. This will involve tracking progress against a set of indicators that measure the plan's impact.

190. The qualifying body (Melbury Abbas and Cann Parish Council) will work with the local planning authority (Dorset Council) to collect the necessary data and publish an annual monitoring report. This will assess how the policies are being implemented and whether any changes are needed to keep the plan up-to-date and effective.

## 17.2. Potential indicators

191. In order to support the Parish Council to monitor the implementation of the plan and to help formalise links between community-led and local authority metrics on effective development, a template for the Parish Council to review planning applications together with suggested indicators are set out in the working document *Measuring the Implementation of MA&CNP38*<sup>72</sup>. These can be used at the Parish Council's discretion and the Council may wish to include important local stakeholders (such as Dorset Council, the National Landscape, community groups, developers, employers and residents) to determine the most effective and appropriate measures given local capacity, resources and policy context that influences the extent of monitoring measures.

## 17.3. Updating MA&CNP38

192. The plan will be reviewed and updated periodically to ensure it remains in general conformity with higher-level planning policies and continues to address the community's priorities.

# 18. Endnotes

- 1 Locality is a national network that supports community organisations and oversees the award of grant funding for neighbourhood plans.
- 2 AECOM is an organisation that provides technical support within the Locality neighbourhood planning grant programme.
- 3 See: Figure 2 on page iv.
- 4 The survey was distributed to every household in Melbury Abbas and Cann (c.350 households). 92 questionnaires were submitted, representing 195 individuals with a 26% response rate (excl. Guys Marsh inmates who are not counted in the ordinary population for the purposes of community engagement). The results are available on the parish website <https://express.adobe.com/page/WF6vHSG25DoIW>
- 5 See: “13.5. Allocated sites” on page 18.
- 6 The response rate was calculated using 2011 ONS census data. The survey was produced using Google Forms and printed copies were also available from Melbury Motors. Survey results are available from <https://express.adobe.com/page/WF6vHSG25DoIW>
- 7 Available from: [https://www.cranbornechase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Historic\\_Landscape\\_Characterisation\\_ReportLoRes.pdf](https://www.cranbornechase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Historic_Landscape_Characterisation_ReportLoRes.pdf)
- 8 Available from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/customprofiles/build/>
- 9 See: <https://cranbornechase.org.uk/> See: Section “14. Environment, design and heritage” on page 4. Environment, design and heritage”.
- 10 Available from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/customprofiles/build/>
- 11 See: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guys-marsh-prison>
- 12 See <https://www.airbnb.co.uk/>
- 13 The proportion of the population aged 65+ in Dorset has increased from 25% in 2011 to 30% in 2021, and is projected to reach 35% by 2031. This is a faster rate

of aging compared to the South West region, which grew by 7.8% overall between 2011 and 2021. See: <https://gi.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/insights/Topics/Topic/Population>

14 Available from: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/adopted-local-plans/north-dorset-adopted-local-plan.aspx>

15 This has been calculated by Dorset Council by totalling extant consents as of April 2024 and a windfall allowance based on a calculation of an average of 0.5 dwellings built each year in Melbury Abbas and Cann between 2028-2038. See Table 4 and 5.

16 See: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/2-achieving-sustainable-development>

17 As set out in the Basic Conditions Statement, available from: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mucQNf3VZB6G6-qTag1HINICy875lsvPXNEgpQMV97o/edit?pli=1>

18 In conformity with the Cranborne Chase AONB Management Plan 2019-2024, available from <https://cranbornechase.org.uk/publications/aonb-management-plan/>

19 See Basic Conditions Statement.

20 Settlement boundaries direct development within the defined limits of specific settlements. Current settlement boundaries in the former North Dorset district area are around the four main towns (Blandford, Gillingham, Shaftesbury, Stalbridge, Sturminster Newton and 18 larger villages. These larger villages are: Bourton, Charlton Marshall, Child Okeford, East Stour, Fontmell Magna, Hazelbury Bryan, Iwerne Minster, Marnhull, Milborne St Andrew, Milton Abbas, Motcombe, Okeford Fitzpaine, Pimperne, Shillingstone, Stourpaine, Winterborne Kingston, Winterborne Stickland and Winterborne Whitechurch.

21 The North Dorset Local Plan Policy 6 – Housing Distribution states that North Dorset plans to provide at least 5,700 net additional homes between the 2011-2031 period (with an average of around 285 dwellings per annum). Neighbouring town Shaftesbury has been given at least 20% of this target (i.e. 57 homes a year under the current projections or 73 a year under potential revised projections). A [draft of this report in 2019](#) drew extensively on data from the 2015 Eastern Dorset Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). It was recently updated to reflect the recently published [Dorset and BCP Local HNA \(LHNA, November 2021\)](#) See Melbury Abbas and Cann Housing Needs Assessment (AECOM, January, 2022) available on under the MA&CNP38 evidence base webpage.

22 Policy 20 of the North Dorset Local Plan only allows development in the open countryside in certain circumstances, which includes: redevelopment and enhancement of heritage assets, small-scale expansion for employment provision, caravan and camping, rural worker's dwellings, affordable housing of no more than 10 dwellings, community facilities or renewable energy; or alternatively if an overriding need can be demonstrated. Within the North Dorset Local Plan, permitted development for agricultural or redundant farm buildings outside the National Landscape (formerly the 'AONB') does enable some provision for expansion of development potential within the constraints of the existing Local Plan.

While the NPPF does not explicitly state that the need to protect National Landscapes may override a local authority's housing target, it does provide a framework that could allow for such a situation in designated area. The 2023 Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 further strengthened the protection of National Landscapes by enhancing their management plans, increasing collaboration between key organisations, and extending financial support for sustainable farming practices within these protected areas.

23 See: [https://cranbornechase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Pos10\\_Housing.pdf](https://cranbornechase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Pos10_Housing.pdf) and <https://cranbornechase.org.uk/publications/landscapes-and-planning-publications/>

24 See Site Assessment Report carried out by AECOM, available from: <https://express.adobe.com/page/WF6vHSG25DoIW>

25 See Housing Needs Assessment (2022) carried out by AECOM, available from: <https://express.adobe.com/page/WF6vHSG25DoIW>

26

27 Cohousing is an alternative form of communal living that encourages independence. In such schemes facilities are shared. Find out more at <https://cohousing.org.uk/about/about-cohousing/>

It should be noted that the AONB Management Group previously did not support an application on this site, which may not have been considered in the site assessment report carried out by AECOM.

28

29 However, a detailed land classification assessment has not been carried out by AECOM for the site assessment so the actual quality of the land is not yet verified.

Available from: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kmbGVTLZtvbDZT9Ls9p4OHD-L1P16FH\\_JarS8okOd1i/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kmbGVTLZtvbDZT9Ls9p4OHD-L1P16FH_JarS8okOd1i/edit?usp=sharing)  
Additional comments by Dorset Council's Senior Conservation Officer on the heritage impacts of proposed allocated sites is also available from: [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1to5\\_Wm3yiKF8tCNXVmy35PVY7VY74Ie3aMebc\\_fR8Pk/edit#gid=1686545064](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1to5_Wm3yiKF8tCNXVmy35PVY7VY74Ie3aMebc_fR8Pk/edit#gid=1686545064). The Design Guide is available on the MA&CNP38 webpage.

30 See: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5858996464386048?category=587130>

31 See: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5846213517639680>

32 The Dorset Wildlife Trust describes Fontmell Down as a "chalk downland site" (see <https://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves/fontmell-down>). The National Trust states that the "south-facing slopes of Melbury Beacon are ideal habitat for a variety of chalk downland butterflies" (see <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/dorset/fontmell-and-melbury-downs/melbury-beacon-walk>). Dorset Council's Landscape Character Assessment identifies the "Chalk Escarpment/Ridge landscape" as a key feature of the area (see [https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/countryside-coast-parks/the-dorset-landscape/landscape-character-assessment-map/-/ddl\\_display/ddl/277254/274671/maximized](https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/countryside-coast-parks/the-dorset-landscape/landscape-character-assessment-map/-/ddl_display/ddl/277254/274671/maximized)).

33 Available from: <http://historiclandscape.co.uk/pdf/Area/A8%20CCWWD%20AONB%20HEAP%20Feb%202011.pdf>. More information is provided in the AONB 2007 landscape sensitivity study.

34 See: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/395759/north-dorset-landscape-character-assessment.pdf/552b9f84-187d-1075-209d-8bdb2d434ce5>. An addendum to the 2008 Landscape Character Area was an additional landscape area within the plan area, Shaftesbury Greensand Ridges. See <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/281417/North+Dorset+Landscape+Character+Assessment+Addendum.pdf/5b6dc92b-2455-1c65-56a4-f9d454e73300>

35 See the MA&CNP38 Environment, Landscape Character and Vistas Topic Paper.

36 See: <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/statistics-by-topic/woodland-statistics/>

37 See: Dorset Biodiversity Appraisal Protocol (DBAP) <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/countryside-coast-parks/countryside-management/biodiversity/the-dorset-biodiversity-appraisal-protocol> which states: "Lighting schemes will not

impact on the behaviour of light sensitive bat species and will be required to be in accordance with Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK”.

38 SSSIs are a UK designation scheme, while SACs are based on the EU Habitats Directive (part of the Natura 2000 network of protected areas). In practice, SSSIs and SACs are distinct but overlapping designation schemes.

39 The data for SNCIs is managed by the Dorset Environmental Records Centre (<http://www.derc.org.uk>) and data for Local Geological Sites is managed by Dorset’s Regionally Important Geological Sites Group (<https://dorsetrigs.org/>). See the Environmental Screening carried out by Dorset Council for a summary of these areas.

41 See: <https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0012550>

42 See: <https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/952421ec-da63-4569-817d-4d6399df40a1/provisional-agricultural-land-classification-alc>

43 This sets out detailed design criteria in the following areas: i) building line and boundary treatment, ii) building scale and massing, iii) building heights and rooflines, iv) gateway and access feature, v) fenestration, vi) household extensions, vii) parking. See: <https://express.adobe.com/page/WF6vHSG25DoIW>

44 Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-model-design-code>

45 See: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/results/?searchType=NHLE+Simple&search=melbury+abbas> and <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/results/?searchType=NHLE+Simple&search=Cann%2C+dorset>

46 See: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/neighbourhood-planning-and-the-historic-environment/>

47 The Group assessed the non-designated heritage assets against the following criteria (according to the Dorset Council local listing categories): *Archaeological - Does it provide evidence about past human activity? Is it of particular archaeological interest?; Historic Illustrative - Does it illustrate an aspect of the area’s history or development?; Historic Associative - Is it associated with an important person, event, or movement?; Architectural - Does it exemplify a particular architectural style, building type, or construction technique?; Aesthetic - Does it have visual appeal or make a positive contribution to the local scene?; Communal - Does it have social or communal value to local people?* See MA&CNP38 Heritage Topic Guide.

48 NB: Listed buildings are designated by the national government and have

statutory protection, meaning they are protected by law. Any alterations or demolition require special listed building consent. In contrast, heritage assets on a local list do not have the same legal protections. Listed buildings are considered to have national historical or architectural significance, while heritage assets on a local list are recognised as having local significance and contributing to the character of the area. Listed buildings are designated by Historic England, while local lists are compiled by the local planning authority in consultation with the local community; local listings are not graded e.g. Grade I, Grade 2\* and Grade II.

49 Buildings for Life (<https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/our-resources/archive/reports-resources/building-life-12-third-edition/>) has been a standard applied by developers to support healthier lifestyles in new development. More recently there are suggestions this could be replaced with a Healthy Housing Toolkit, see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/homes-england-backs-a-new-healthy-housing-toolkit-by-design-for-homes>

50 The Bristol Tree Standard is a flagship tree substitution policy informed by a replacement ratio in line with the diameter of trees. It is endorsed by the Woodland Trust as a standard that neighbourhood plans can apply. See <https://bristoltreeforum.org/2019/10/02/changes-agreed-to-bristol-tree-replacement-standard/>

51 See: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain#para3> Opportunities for biodiversity offsetting (compensation for biodiversity impacts associated with development both on- and off-site) should be explored only when on-site measures have proven not to be possible or viable (following the mitigation hierarchy to prioritise 1. avoidance, then 2. minimise, 3. restore, and as a last resort, 4. offset potential impacts). (Off-site measures can sometimes be secured from ‘habitat banks’, which comprise areas of enhanced or created habitats which generate biodiversity unit ‘credits’. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment>

52 Guys Marsh is a category C training and resettlement prison located in rural Dorset, holding a mixed population of approximately 550 convicted adult male prisoners. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guys-marsh-prison>

53 See: AONB Management Plan, available from <http://www.ccwwdaonb.org.uk/publications/aonb-management-plan/>

54 This is also reflected in the NDCC Local Plan Policy 13: Grey Infrastructure and the emerging Dorset Local Plan and COM12 The provision of utilities service infrastructure.

55 Persimmon prepared two options for the site on the Land South of the A30 and submitted an outline planning application 2/2018/1773/OUT in December 2018 for outline planning permission for 135 dwellings plus a school and other commercial

uses on the land allocated for employment purposes. The application documents can be found at: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning/planning-application-search-and-comment.aspx>. Persimmon took this application to appeal through the Planning Inspector. Dorset Council opposed the application at the hearing, but the appeal was allowed because the Inspector believed that the benefits of the scheme outweighed the potential harm.

Planning Inspector Appeal reference: APP/D1265/W/20/3259308 See: <https://planning.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=56603>; <https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/ViewDocument.aspx?fileid=4617526>; <https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/ViewDocument.aspx?fileid=46175267>. A reserved matters application was submitted in Sept 2023 for a reduced number (115 dwellings). As of August 2024 this was still under consideration (ref: P/RES/2023/05407). The layout granted permission at outline identified the northern part of the site fronting the A30 as being for commercial uses, and the houses to the south. The reserved matters application confirms that arrangement, and all dwellings will fall within Cann parish.

56 The need to protect green areas along the adjoining border with Shaftesbury is something echoed in the Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Plan. However, development of these two sites may contribute to ribbon development unless a clear demarcated boundary is created to separate it from its adjacent rural setting. Permitted Development is restricted on Article 2(3) land, which includes a National Park, the Broads, National Landscapes, a World Heritage Site or a Conservation Area. See also permitted development guidance: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/830643/190910\\_Tech\\_Guide\\_for\\_publishing.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/830643/190910_Tech_Guide_for_publishing.pdf)

57 For more information, see the government's planning practice guidance website. It states: "Where development straddles the boundaries of parish, town or community councils' administrative areas, each council receives a share of the levy which is proportionate to the gross internal area of the development within their administrative area." See: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/community-infrastructure-levy>. The roll out of the replacement 'Infrastructure Levy' is being considered by the government. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/technical-consultation-on-the-infrastructure-levy>. While the agreed vehicular access for the land South of the A30 is on to the B3081, the application includes an indicative layout which shows a pedestrian access going north and linking to the pedestrian network (pavement) on Salisbury Road (A30).

58 People living closer to green spaces tend to be more physically active, and less likely to be overweight or obese, and people who lived furthest from public parks were 27% more likely to be overweight or obese. Coombes, E., et al. (2010). "The relationship of physical activity and overweight to objectively measured green space accessibility and use." *Social Science & Medicine* 70(6): 816-822. There is also ample research since the COVID-19 pandemic that state the benefits of green spaces to mental health and well-being.

59 Some potential sites that were screened out as they did not meet NPPF LGS designation. Some sites may already have existing statutory protections. For instance, the AONB is already protected through its AONB Management Plan 2019-2024. Available from: <https://cranbornechase.org.uk/publications/aonb-management-plan/>. The National Trust land is a protected as an SAC and an SSSI. NB: an LGS designation supersedes 'Important Open and Wooded Areas', a saved policy from the 2003 North Dorset Local Plan.

60 There is very limited connection to mains gas in Melbury Abbas, and parts of Cann and Guys Marsh (apart from HMP Guys Marsh and a small number of surrounding houses); in Cann, 93% of properties are not connected to mains gas, other than houses on the A30 border. See: <https://www.nongasmap.org.uk/search?q=sp7+odf> Additional infrastructure needs identified during the drafting of MA&CNP38 are also detailed in the Action Points as an Appendix to the Plan, which complement the policies set out in this Plan, available from: [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1hwRsKNlHxL\\_zYvL6c1zA8UFEPmRUgySURxXTiJO7cM/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1hwRsKNlHxL_zYvL6c1zA8UFEPmRUgySURxXTiJO7cM/edit?usp=sharing)

61 See: <https://news.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/2019/11/27/dorset-council-amends-climate-emergency-declaration-panel-hears-progress-reports-and-views-from-schoolchildren/>

62 BREEAM is the world's leading sustainability assessment method for masterplanning projects, infrastructure and buildings. It recognises and reflects the value in higher performing assets across the built environment lifecycle, from new construction to in-use and refurbishment. See: <https://www.breem.com>

63 The remainder either equally disagreed or were unsure. This compares to an earlier consultation whereby the community were less certain over the future of the Village Hall (see Shaftesbury joint plan community questionnaire analysis and the 2019 Community feedback day results). This was available from <http://archive.shaftesburyplan.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ShaftesburyNPGQuestionnaire-Analysis-first-cut-June-2015.pdf> (link now broken). See Evidence Base.

64 These will be assessed in line with identified community actions and priorities. See Evidence Base.

65 Three local monitoring stations recorded the following Nitrogen Dioxide mean values in 2018 (through diffusion tubes, µg/m<sup>3</sup>) when the Dinah's Hollow jam issue was at its height: Spredaeagles, Melbury Abbas (N5, 23.05), Melbury Abbas (N6, 26.46) and Spinney Cottage, Melbury Abbas (N7, 28.00) (NDDC, 2019, p.i) – all of which are at safe levels An Exceedance of the NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean objective is considered to be 40µg/m<sup>3</sup>. See: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/environmental-health/documents/>

[air-quality-annual-status-report-2019-north-dorset.pdf](#)

66 Indeed, this issue attracted local and national media attention to support a community crowdfunding campaign where a local group sought to take Dorset County Council to court over the issue, although due to a lack of additional funds to pay for court costs the case was dropped.

67 See: <https://www.geopunk.co.uk/timetables/town/shaftesbury>

68 Respondents to the MA&CNP38 2019–2020 Community Survey overwhelmingly (87.5%) shared the Steering Group’s view that a proposed bypass should only be supported if there are significant upgrades to the local road infrastructure.

69 Details of all the Melbury Abbas and Cann footpaths and bridleways can be found on the Dorset Council Dorset Explorer website <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/countryside-coast-parks/rights-of-way/rights-of-way-map-where-to-walk-ride-or-cycle.aspx>

70 Building Regulations Part S provides a requirement for new homes and existing homes undergoing large renovations (of 10 more or dwellings) to have facilities for charging electric vehicles at home that may be parked on associated parking spaces at that home. The installation of each charge point is capped at £3,600 per charge point. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/infrastructure-for-charging-electric-vehicles-approved-document-s>

71 See Consultation Statement.

72 See Evidence Base.

# 19. Evidence Base – list of key documents produced or underpinning the preparation of MA&CNP38

## Primary Evidence Base

*Produced by the steering group in the preparation of this Plan*

### General

- MA&CNP webpage – A dedicated webpage that includes information on the plan and links to evidence base
- Basic Conditions Statement – Demonstrates how the plan meets legal requirements. Indicates compliance ‘general conformity’ with extant national and Dorset Council planning policy in the attainment of sustainable development over the plan period 2022–2038
- Steering Group Constitution – Outlines the scope and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and protocol in decision-making

### Community Consultation

- Community Engagement Strategy – Sets out the principles and approach to community engagement
- Analysis of the Winter 19–20 Survey (2020) – Summarises responses from the Winter 2019–2020 survey
- MA&CNP Analysis of Community Feedback Day–(2019) Summarises feedback on the vision and plan objectives and ideas for policy
- MA&CNP Community Questionnaire 2018 – Initial questionnaire to determine community need and preferences on a range of issues
- MA&CNP Community Questionnaire 2018 – Analysis: Summarises responses from the 2018 community questionnaire
- Evidence of Consultation Carried Out – Summarised in Consultation

Statement but specific engagement with key stakeholders included as pdf of email correspondence in a compiled folder

- Consultation Statement – Summarises community engagement and feedback. States how various inputs from stakeholders informed the development of the Plan and how comments from the Reg 14 consultation (2022) were specifically addressed.

### Thematic

- Environment, Landscape Character and Vistas Topic Paper – Discusses key issues and reference to key data sources to inform the evidence base on environmental and landscape issues.
- Heritage Topic Paper – Outlines key heritage considerations and assets in the Neighbourhood Area and measures proposed in the plan to enhance and protect heritage assets (including non-designated heritage asset proposals)
- MA&CNP38 Detailed Heritage Asset Mapping – Heritage assets and rationale for non-designated heritage assets
- Transport Topic Paper – Outlines transportation needs and strategies
- Local Green Space Evidence Base – Identifies and justifies proposed local green spaces; See the Submission version of MA&CNP (Local Green Space policy) which tabulates the criteria for inclusion and additional information

### Implementation

- Action Points arising from MA&CNP38 – To outline actions arising related to policies in the plan (non-land use or related to review and/or implementation of the plan). NB: this is a live document so the Parish Council and steering group can keep it continually under review.
- Proposed Indicators and Checklist to measure plan implementation
- Schedule of community preferences for Community Infrastructure Levy – Sets out preferences for infrastructure levy monies as and when CIL charging schedule is in place

### *Produced by AECOM*

- Melbury and Cann Design Guide – Sets out detailed design principles for the Neighbourhood Area
- Site Assessment Report – Commissioned technical support to

evaluate sites put forward from the call for sites – evaluates potential development sites

- Melbury Abbas and Cann Site Assessment Appendix – Commissioned technical support to evaluate sites put forward from call for sites (detailed appendix)
- Housing Needs Assessment – Analyses local housing requirements

#### ***Produced by Dorset Council***

- Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report Consultation Draft (May 2021) – Determines if a full SEA is required (SEA Screening – Melbury Abbas and Cann NP – 260502021)

#### **Secondary Evidence Base**

#### ***Produced other organisations but considered as part of the wide evidence base in the preparation of this Plan***

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Current national planning policy – NB: because the Plan was submitted prior to March 2025 the December 2023 version applies
- North Dorset Local Plan – Current planning policy (pre-adoption of emerging Dorset Local Plan)
- Local Plan (Extracts, Local Development Scheme) – Relevant sections of the Local Plan for context

#### **Evidence Themes**

#### **Demographics, employment and transport**

- NOMIS area report, Cann and Melbury Abbas – Demographic and census information (2021 census and previously 2011 census data and interim estimates)

#### **Housing**

- Dorset, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Local Housing Needs Assessment (2021) – Examines the future need for housing as well as the affordable housing need and makes recommendations on the mix of

housing and the need for specific groups for BCP and Dorset

#### **Environment**

- Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan 2019–2024 – National Landscape management plan and policies at the time of the preparation of MA&CNP38
- Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Landscape Sensitivity Study (May 2007) – Summarises key landscape sensitivity in the National Landscape (formerly AONB)
- National Character Area 133 ‘Blackmore Vale and Vale of Wardour’ – More specific analysis of landscape character relating to National Character Area 133
- NCA Profile:134 Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase (NE494) – More specific analysis of landscape character relating to National Character Area 134
- North Dorset Landscape Character Assessment – More specific analysis of landscape character relating to North Dorset (with addendum)

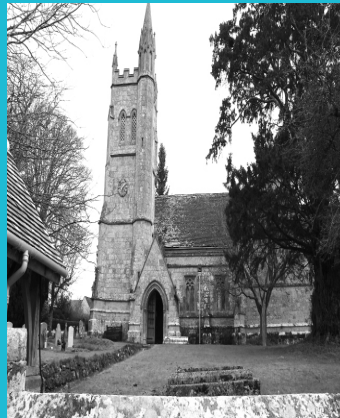
#### **Historic Assets**

- Historic Landscape Characterisation Report – Sets out historic characteristics in the National Landscape
- The Historic Environment Action Plan Area 8: Chalk Escarpments – More specific analysis of landscape character relating to Historic Action Plan Area 8

#### **Utilities**

- Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan – Wessex Water plan for management of water infrastructure

*NB: this list does not contain every single reference used in the preparation of the plan but highlights some of the most influential sources of evidence. Please refer to the above documents for additional references.*



*Enhancing our rural community and landscapes through sustainable development*



[http://www.melburyandcann.co.uk/council/  
neighbourhood - plan](http://www.melburyandcann.co.uk/council/ neighbourhood - plan)  
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