



Persimmon Homes (South Coast) Ltd

DRAFT

EAST CHICKERELL,
WEYMOUTH,
DORSET.

Ecological Assessment

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

- 1.1.1. Ecology Solutions were commissioned by Persimmon Homes (South Coast) Ltd to carry out an Ecological Assessment of land at East Chickerell, Weymouth (see plan ECO 1) in December 2010.

1.2. Site Characteristics

- 1.2.1. The site is located to the east of Chickerell Village to the northwest of Weymouth in the county of Dorset. The site is bordered to the north by Coldharbour Lane and an electricity Sub Station to the south and east. To the south east of the site there is an existing golf course and driving range. To the west of the site there is existing residential property and areas that have been allocated for both residential and community/commercial development.
- 1.2.2. The Site largely comprises arable and improved/semi-improved grassland fields bordered by hedgerows and fences. Small amounts of scrub and woodland are also present along with two ponds.

1.3. Ecological Assessment

- 1.3.1. This document assesses the ecological interest of the site as a whole. The importance of the habitats present is evaluated with regard to current guidance published by the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (IEEM)¹.
- 1.3.2. The report also sets out the existing baseline conditions for the site, setting these in the correct planning policy and legal framework and assessing the need for any further survey work. It also highlights any potential impacts from development at the site. Appropriate mitigation is identified that will offset any negative impacts and where possible provide suggestions for ecological enhancement of the site, in accordance with national, regional and local planning policy.

¹ Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2006) *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the United Kingdom* (version 7 July 2006). <http://www.ieem.org.uk/ecia/index.html>.

2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

2.1. The methodology utilised for the survey work can be split into three areas, namely desk study, habitat survey and faunal survey. These are discussed in more detail below.

2.2. Desk Study

2.2.1. In order to compile up to date background information on the site and its immediate surroundings Ecology Solutions contacted the Dorset Environmental Records Centre (DERC).

2.2.2. Information has been received from the DERC. The information received from the DERC is reproduced where appropriate on plan ECO1.

2.2.3. Further information on designated sites was obtained from the online Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) database, which utilises data provided by Natural England. In addition, information from Natural England's own online database (Nature On The Map) for designated sites was obtained. This information is reproduced, where appropriate, on Plan ECO1 and at Appendix 1.

2.3. Habitat Survey Methodology

2.3.1. A survey was carried out in January 2010 to ascertain the general ecological value of the land contained within the boundaries of the site and to identify the main habitats and associated plant species, with notes on fauna utilising the site.

2.3.2. The site was surveyed based around extended Phase 1 survey methodology, as recommended by Natural England, whereby the habitat types present are identified and mapped, together with an assessment of the species composition of each habitat. This technique provides an inventory of the basic habitat types present and allows identification of areas of greater potential which require further survey. Any such areas identified can then be examined in more detail.

2.3.3. Using the above method, the site was classified into areas of similar botanical community types, with a representative species list compiled for each habitat identified.

2.3.4. All of the species that occur in each habitat would not necessarily be detectable during survey work carried out at any given time of the year, since different species are apparent at different seasons. The survey undertaken for this site was outside the optimum period for Phase 1 surveys, however the habitats present were easily identifiable and a representative species list produced which is more than adequate for this assessment.

2.4. Faunal Survey

- 2.4.1. General faunal activity observed during the course of the survey was recorded, whether visually or by call. Specific attention was paid to the potential presence of any protected, rare, notable or Biodiversity Action Plan species. In addition, specific surveys were undertaken for Badgers *Meles meles* and the potential for bats.
- 2.4.2. **Bats.** All buildings were subject to an initial assessment in January 2010 to ascertain their potential to support bat roosts.
- 2.4.3. All trees within the site were assessed for their potential use by bats. Ladders and binoculars were used where necessary.
- 2.4.4. For a tree to be classed as having some potential for roosting bats it must usually have one or more of the following characteristics:
- obvious holes, e.g. rot holes and old woodpecker holes;
 - dark staining on the tree below a hole;
 - tiny scratch marks around a hole from bats' claws;
 - cavities, splits and / or loose bark from broken or fallen branches, lightning strikes etc; and / or
 - very dense covering of mature Ivy over trunk.
- 2.4.5. **Badgers.** Specific surveys were undertaken to search for evidence of Badgers in January 2010, and comprised two main elements. The first of these was a thorough search for evidence of Badger setts. For any setts that were encountered each sett entrance was noted and plotted even if the entrance appeared disused. The following information was recorded:
- i) The number and location of well used or very active entrances; these are clear from any debris or vegetation and are obviously in regular use and may, or may not, have been excavated recently.
 - ii) The number and location of inactive entrances; these are not in regular use and have debris such as leaves and twigs in the entrance or have plants growing in or around the edge of the entrance.
 - iii) The number of disused entrances; these have not been in use for some time, are partly or completely blocked and cannot be used without considerable clearance. If the entrance has been disused for some time all that may be visible is a depression in the ground where the hole used to be and the remains of the spoil heap.
- 2.4.6. Secondly, Badger activity such as well-worn paths and run-throughs, snagged hair, footprints, latrines and foraging signs was recorded so as to build up a picture of the use of the site, if any, by Badgers.

3. ECOLOGICAL FEATURES

3.1. The site was subject to an ecological survey in January 2010. The vegetation present enabled the habitat types to be satisfactorily identified and an accurate assessment of the ecological interest of the habitats to be undertaken.

3.2. The following main habitat / vegetation types were identified:

- Arable land;
- Semi-improved/improved grassland;
- Woodland;
- Hedgerows;
- Ponds;
- Buildings;
- Stream; and
- Fence Line.

3.3. The location of these habitats is shown on Plan ECO2.

3.4. Each habitat present is described below with an account of the representative plant species present.

3.5. Arable Land

3.5.1. There are five arable fields located in the north of the site. All the arable fields were planted with Wheat *Triticum aestivum*.

3.5.2. There were few arable weeds within the arable fields and it is likely that a herbicide weed control has been used.

3.6. Semi-improved/improved Grassland

3.6.1. The majority of the site is grassland. In the east of the site the grassland is divided up into horse paddocks with stabling and to the west of the site the fields are used for sheep and cattle grazing. The majority of the grassland is semi-improved while some fields show a more improved element.

3.6.2. The semi-improved grassland sward contains Cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, False Oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius* and Common Bent *Agrostis capillaris*. Herb species present include White Clover *Trifolium repens*, Common Mouse-ear *Cerastium fontanum*, Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg. Daisy *Bellis perennis*, Dove's-foot Cranesbill *Geranium molle*, Bristly Ox-tongue *Picris echioides* and Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*.

3.6.3. The more improved grassland was dominated by Perennial Rye *Lolium perenne*, with Cock's-foot, Common Bent and False Oat-grass. Herb species present here included Creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*, Common Nettle *Urtica dioica*, Broad-leaved Dock *Rumex obtusifolii*, White Clover, Common Chickweed *Stellaria media* and Creeping Buttercup.

3.7. Woodland

- 3.7.1. There are two areas of woodland within the site boundary. These are situated in the centre of the site just north of the Sub Station and in the east of the site. The woodland in the east of the site is known as Eweleaze Spinney.
- 3.7.2. The central woodland is mainly a broad leaved woodland. It included species such as Oak *Quercus robur*, Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, Horse Chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum*, Beech *Fagus sylvatica*, Elm *Ulmus procera*, Poplar Hybrid *Populus sp.* and occasional Scot's Pine *Pinus sylvestris*. A large numbers of the Elms had died or showed evidence of disease.
- 3.7.3. The ground cover consisted of mainly Ivy *Hedera helix* with Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., Stinking Iris *Iris foetidissima*, Hart's Tongue *Phyllitis scolopendrium*, Male Fern *Dryopteris filix-mas* and Garlic Mustard *Alliaria petiolata*.
- 3.7.4. Eweleaze Spinney mainly consisted of Ash, Elm and Sycamore with a dense understorey of Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, Privet *Ligustrum vulgare* and Goat Willow *Salix caprea*. The ground cover was very similar to that of the other woodland.

3.8. Hedgerows

- 3.8.1. There are a number of hedgerows that surround the fields within the Site. None of the hedgerows on initial inspection would meet the criteria under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 for ecologically important hedgerows. This was due to their lack of species diversity and qualifying features. There were also a number of newly planted hedgerows within the horse paddock area and around some of the other fields to the west of the site. These were more species diverse but as they are less than 30 years old would not qualify as an important hedgerow under the regulations.
- 3.8.2. The hedgerows mainly consisted of Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, Field Maple *Acer campestre*, Elm *Ulmus procera* and Dog Rose *Rosa canina*. Occasionally other species such as Gorse *Ulex europaeus*, Dog Wood *Cornus sanguinea*, Elder *Sambucus nigra* and Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* would be present. There were few standard trees within the hedgerows, with the occasional Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* or Field Maple. A lot of the Elm within the hedgerows had died or was diseased.

3.9. Ponds

- 3.9.1. There are two Ponds within the Site labelled **P1** to **P2** on plan ECO2. **P1** is situated to the north of the central woodland and **P2** is to the west of the central Woodland.

- 3.9.2. **P1** is a large, shallow pond, that was excavated to release ducks for shooting. It is surrounded by Goat Willow and Bramble with stands of Great Willowherb and Nettle. This has been described as Woodland Scrub on Plan ECO2. Emergent vegetation included Yellow Flag and Greater Pond Sedge *Carex riparia*. Information from the land owner stated that the pond regularly dried up in the summer months.
- 3.9.3. **P2** is a smaller deeper pond that runs along the edge of the central woodland. The pond is surrounded by Ash, Field Maple and Blackthorn. At one end there is an area of Common Reed while the rest of the pond is covered by Duckweed *Lemna* sp. No other vegetation was observed at the time of the survey.
- 3.9.4. There is a pond to the south of the Site outside of the boundary, but close to a potential access route. This pond is a fairly newly constructed pond, created as part of a bypass road scheme. The pond has established some emergent and aquatic vegetation.

3.10. **Buildings**

- 3.10.1. There is a large open fronted barn in the very south of the Site that is used to store caravans and machinery. It is a modern steel framed barn with a pitched corrugated asbestos sheet roof. There are no voids within the building and no cracks or splits within the structure.
- 3.10.2. There are a number of wooden stable blocks within the area of horse paddocks in the east of the Site.

3.11. **Stream**

- 3.11.1. There are two streams that flow through the Site. These are through the central woodland, and along the northern boundary of the southern most field.
- 3.11.2. The woodland stream is narrow and no more than a meter wide, with a depth of between 6cm and 15cm. There is little colour to the water and the streambed is loam. There is no vegetation within the stream due to the over shading from the woodland.
- 3.11.3. The other stream is also narrow and shallow with similar dimensions to the woodland stream. It runs along the northern side of a hedgerow, and has become quite over grown in places. The banks are dominated by bramble and Nettle, with the occasional Pendulous Sedge and Cow Parsley.

3.12. **Fence Line**

- 3.12.1. There are a number of post and rail fence lines that divide up the Horse paddocks in the east of the site. They also flank the newly planted hedgerows within this area to protect them from grazing.

4. WILDLIFE USE OF THE SITE

4.1. During the survey general observations were made of any faunal use of the site with specific attention paid to the potential presence of protected or notable species. Specific surveys were also undertaken with regard to bats and Badgers.

4.2. Bats

4.2.1. The buildings on site on initial inspection were unsuitable to support roosting populations of bats at any time of the year. There were no obvious voids that could be utilised as roosts and no tiled or cladded buildings that bats could make use of.

4.2.2. The majority of the trees within the site were semi-mature and had limited potential to support roosting bats. Some of the more mature trees within the woodlands had some features that could support roosting bats, such as splits cracks and Woodpecker holes. There were no obvious signs of use around these features in the form of staining or droppings, but a thorough search was not always possible due to dense intervening vegetation.

4.2.3. Some of the hedgerows on site offer the potential as commuting and foraging resources for bats. Other features such as the ponds and the woodland edge may act as a foraging resource for this group.

4.2.4. No bat records have been returned by the DERC from within the site. However records of both Noctule and Common Pipistrelle bats were recorded on the southern boundary of the site in 2007 using bat detectors, and a Soprano Pipistrelle 0.2km to the west of the site. There is a known Common Pipistrelle roost 0.1km north of the Site, a Serotine roost approximately a kilometre to the east of the Site and a Whiskered bat roost with Daubentons and Pipistrelle also present 0.85km to the east of the Site.

4.3. Badgers

4.3.1. There was one Badger Sett situated on the eastern boundary of the site just to the north of Eweleaze Spinney. This is labelled as **S1** on plan ECO2. It is a large main sett with many entrances. It was located within an area of dense scrub and at least 20 entrances were observed, however more could have been concealed. There was recent activity in the form of fresh excavation, piles of discarded bedding and a fresh latrine.

4.3.2. Another Badger sett was identified just off site to the southeast of the central woodland, labelled **S2** on Plan ECO2. There were eight entrances although only three or four appeared to be currently active. The sett was excavated around and under an old footprint of a derelict building. It is believed that the two setts probably belong to the same social group of Badgers and this sett acts as a subsidiary sett.

- 4.3.3. There were Badger foraging signs observed within the central woodland, and within some of the horse paddocks in the east of the site.
- 4.3.4. The DERC returned one record of a sett within the same grid square as sett **S2**. No specific grid reference was given but it is likely that this refers to the subsidiary sett identified.

4.4. **Birds**

- 4.4.1. The hedgerows, trees and woodland will offer nesting resources for bird species.
- 4.4.2. Those noted on Site during the habitat survey were Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*, Magpie *Pica pica*, Blackbird *Turdus merula*, Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus*, Great Tit *Parus major*, House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*, Pied Wagtail *Montacilla alba yarrellii*, Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*, Dunnock *Prunella modularis*, Robin *Erithacus rubecula*, Buzzard *Buteo buteo*, Sparrowhawk *Ancipiter nisus*, Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*, Redwing *Turdus iliacus* and Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*.
- 4.4.3. No records of any Schedule 1 birds as listed in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were returned from within the site by the DERC. Schedule 1 birds returned by the DERC as occurring from the wider study area included Barn Owl, Black Redstart, Whimbrel, Cetti's Wabler and Brambling.

4.5. **Reptiles**

- 4.5.1. There is no suitable habitat to support significant populations of reptiles within the site. The areas of grassland are all regularly grazed and there are very limited field margins around the agricultural fields.
- 4.5.2. No records of any reptiles from within the site were returned but a few records of Grass Snake *Natrix natrix* were returned for the wider study area. The nearest being located 0.5km to the southwest of the Site in 2003.

4.6. **Amphibians**

- 4.6.1. The ponds on site have the potential to support Amphibians. There are also several ponds within 500m of the site boundary. It is known that Great Crested Newts *Triturus cristatus* (GCN) can travel up to 500m from their breeding ponds during their terrestrial stage.
- 4.6.2. There are no records of GCN returned by the DERC from within the site. A number of GCN records have been returned from the wider study area. The nearest records are approximately 0.25km to the west of the site and 0.25km to the southwest, where some of the offsite ponds within 500m of the Site have been identified. Records of other amphibian species (Smooth Newt *Triturus*

vulgaris and Palmate Newt *Lissotriton helveticus* have been returned by the DERC, but these records were for sites approximately 1km to the south west of the Site.

4.7. **Water Voles and Otters**

- 4.7.1. The streams within the Site are not suitable to support Water Voles due to their lack of bank side vegetation and over shading. Water Voles like reeds, sedges and grasses along the banks of the waterways they inhabit to provide cover and a food source. Although searches were made for evidence of Water Voles, no signs of Water Voles were recorded during the Survey.
- 4.7.2. Otters are also unlikely to use the streams as they are not deep enough or have any likely food source to support a population of Otters.
- 4.7.3. There are no records of either Water Voles or Otters returned by the DERC from within the site. Records of both species were returned for the River Wey, which at its nearest point is 0.5km to the east of the Site.

4.8. **Invertebrates**

- 4.8.1. The habitats at the Site are likely to support a range of common invertebrate species, but there is no evidence to suggest that any protected or notable species would be present due to its fairly intense agricultural management.
- 4.9. It is considered that the Site is unlikely to support any other protected species.

5. ECOLOGICAL EVALUATION

5.1. The Principles of Site Evaluation

- 5.1.1. The latest guidelines for ecological evaluation produced by IEEM proposes an approach that involves professional judgement, but makes use of available guidance and information, such as the distribution and status of the species or features within the locality of the project.
- 5.1.2. The methods and standards for site evaluation within the British Isles have remained those defined by Ratcliffe². These are broadly used across the United Kingdom to rank sites, so priorities for nature conservation can be attained. For example, current Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designation maintains a system of data analysis that is roughly tested against Ratcliffe's criteria.
- 5.1.3. In general terms, these criteria are size, diversity, naturalness, rarity and fragility, while additional secondary criteria of typicalness, potential value, intrinsic appeal, recorded history and the position within the ecological / geographical units are also incorporated into the ranking procedure.
- 5.1.4. Any assessment should not judge sites in isolation from others, since several habitats may combine to make it worthy of importance to nature conservation.
- 5.1.5. Further, relying on the national criteria would undoubtedly distort the local variation in assessment and therefore additional factors need to be taken into account, e.g. a woodland type with a comparatively poor species diversity, common in the south of England may be of importance at its northern limits, say in the border country.
- 5.1.6. In addition, habitats of local importance are often highlighted within a local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). The Dorset Biodiversity Strategy highlights a number of habitats and species. These are referred to below where relevant.
- 5.1.7. Levels of importance can be determined within a defined geographical context from the immediate site or locality through to the International level.
- 5.1.8. The legislative and planning policy context are also important considerations and have been given due regard throughout this assessment.

² Ratcliffe, D A (1977). *A Nature Conservation Review: the Selection of sites of Biological National Importance to Nature Conservation in Britain*. Two Volumes. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

5.2. Habitat Evaluation

Designated sites

- 5.2.1. **Statutory sites.** There are no statutory designated sites of nature conservation interest within or adjacent to the site. There are a number of Statutory Sites within the wider study area (see plan ECO1). These include the Chisel Beach and the Fleet Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site, the Radipole Lake SSSI and the Crookhill Brick Pit SSSI and SAC. These are described below.
- 5.2.2. The Chisel Beach and the Fleet SSSI at its nearest point is approximately 1km to the southwest of the Site. It is designated for both its ecological and geological interest. It is a major shingle structure that encloses a large tidal lagoon and is designated for its geomorphology and the habitats and wildlife that it supports. It is also designated as an SPA for its overwintering population of Dark-bellied Brent Geese *Branta bernicla bernicla*, and it also supports a breeding population of Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*. At its closest point the SPA is approximately 1.4km from the Site. It is also designated as an SAC for its coastal habitats that it supports, and a Ramsar site for its habitats and species which these support. The SAC and Ramsar site are also approximately 1.4km from the Site. Citations for these designations are given at Appendix 2.
- 5.2.3. The nearest statutory designated site is Radipole Lake of which is situated approximately 0.5 km to the east of the Site, at its nearest point. Part of the SSSI is also designated as an RSPB reserve. The SSSI is designated for its wetland habitat, of great importance to birds as a breeding passage and wintering site (see Appendix 3).
- 5.2.4. The Crookhill Brick Pit SSSI is approximately 0.7km to the southwest of the Site. It is designated for its geological interest and as an important site for Great Crested Newts. It is also designated as an SAC for the population of Great Crested Newts that it supports (see Appendix 4).
- 5.2.5. Due to its proximity to International Designated Sites (SACs and SPAs) any development at the Site would have to be assessed against The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994.
- 5.2.6. The Conservation (Natural Habitats & c) Regulations 1994 (as amended), referred to as the "Habitats Regulations" implement in Great Britain the requirements of the EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna, referred to as the "Habitats Directive" (Council Directive 92/43/EEC). The Regulations aim to protect a network of sites in the UK that have rare or important habitats and species in order to safeguard biodiversity.

5.2.7. Under the EC Habitats Directive, Member States are required to take special measures to maintain the distribution and abundance of certain priority habitats and species (listed in Annexes I and II of the Directive). In particular each Member State is required to designate the most suitable sites as SACs or SPAs. All such SACs and SPAs will form part of the Natura 2000 network under article 3(1) of the Habitats Directive.

5.2.8. Under the Habitats Regulations, competent authorities have a duty to ensure that all the activities they regulate have no adverse effect on the integrity of any of the Natura 2000 sites. Regulation 48 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats & c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended) requires that:

“48(1) A competent authority before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for a plan or project, which: -

- is likely to have a significant effect on a European site in Great Britain (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects); and*
- is not directly connected with or necessary for the management of the site*

shall make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of that site’s conservation objectives.

48(5) In light of the conclusions of the assessment, and subject to regulation 49, the authority shall agree to a plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity (Ref 8.7) of the European site.

48(6) In considering whether a plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of the site, the authority shall have regard to the manner in which it is proposed to be carried out or to any conditions or restrictions subject to which they propose that the consent, permission or other authorisation should be given.”

5.2.9. The question of ascertaining whether a significant effect is likely at the screening stage, and in particular the issue of whether or not it is appropriate to consider avoidance and mitigation measures during the screening process (i.e. at Regulation 48(1) of the Habitats Regulations), has received considerable attention and been the subject of extensive debate, not least through a number of legal opinions offered by leading barristers.

5.2.10. In the High Court judgement passed in respect of Dilly Lane, Hartley Wintney, the judge, Mr Justice Sullivan, ruled that measures designed to avoid or mitigate adverse effects on the European site should be taken into account; if they are part of the plan or project they should be considered at the screening stage since avoiding adverse effects on the European site is precisely what they are designed to do.

- 5.2.11. By supporting the principle that avoidance and mitigation measures should be considered at the screening stage, the judgement avoids the need for an appropriate assessment of each and every planning application.
- 5.2.12. It is considered that potential effects, from a residential development of the site, upon the qualifying features of the SSSI/SPA/SAC/Ramsar sites could occur through the following pathways:
- Noise disturbance – construction and operational impacts;
 - Recreational / Visual disturbance – construction and operational impacts;
 - Air quality – construction and operational impacts;
 - Light pollution – construction and operational impacts; and
 - Hydrological Impacts.
- 5.2.13. Due to their distance from the Site and the separation by existing built form and roads, there is unlikely to be any effect to the integrity of the designated sites from noise disturbance, air quality, light pollution or Hydrological impacts. However, recreational pressure on the Chisel Beach and the Fleet lagoon SSSI, SAC and particularly the SPA and Ramsar Site could have an impact if no mitigation is put forward.
- 5.2.14. A recognised means of mitigating potential detrimental effects on an SPA through increased visitor pressure is through the provision of additional informal greenspace in close proximity to a new residential development. This has been the approach used in relation to the Thames Basin Heaths SPA and has been advocated by Natural England in the production of the Thames Basin Heaths Draft Delivery Plan (DDP) which provides a vehicle for mitigation in respect of new residential development in close proximity to the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. The paragraphs set out in this original document have subsequently been adopted and latterly endorsed by the Secretary of State, through the South East Plan.
- 5.2.15. Policy NRM6 whilst specifically relating to the Thames Basins Heaths SPA, provides some broad guidance with regard to dealing with and assessing potential recreational effects on nearby SPAs.
- 5.2.16. Consultations with NE on other coastal sites (Chichester Harbour) have resulted in the adoption of these underlying principals, so as to provide a suitable and objective way of considering the potential impacts resulting from this kind of residential proposal. We see no reason why an approach to mitigation based around the provision of additional informal greenspace should not be taken here.
- 5.2.17. Whilst it is accepted that the designating features and conservation objectives of the Thames Basis Heaths SPA, which are concerned with the populations of Woodlark Lullula arborea, Nightjar Caprimulgus europaeus and Dartford Warbler Sylvia undata (heathland birds) are different from those of the Chisel Beach and the Fleet SSSI/SPA/SAC/Ramsar site, it is considered that the principles in respect of visitor pressure and the resultant potential

disturbance to the birds, are fundamentally similar, although with some key differences.

- 5.2.18. The amount of additional informal greenspace provision required within a new residential development for the Thames Basin Heaths is calculated based upon the proximity of the development to the SPA and the number of predicted new residents. The sensitivity of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, to recreational pressure, would be regarded as higher, due to its designation for ground nesting birds, than costal sites designated for wintering bird assemblages as is the case here. Using guidance derived from the emerging policy model in relation to Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS), a provision of 8ha per 1000 new residents has been taken to represent a good measure.
- 5.2.19. The East Chickerell Site would be able to provide additional areas of Natural Green Space in the spirit of 'SANGS' within the area in the northeast of the site and other areas of open space within the development. The area in the northeast is a much greater area than that required to satisfy the requirements of 'SANGS', for a development of this size.
- 5.2.20. Very few other sites would be able to offer such a large area of land for this mitigation purpose.
- 5.2.21. A development of the Site, with the mitigation outlined above which is easily deliverable, will have no detrimental effect on the surrounding statutory designated sites.
- 5.2.22. **Non-statutory sites.** There are no non-statutory designated sites within the Site itself. There are a few Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) within the wider study area. The nearest SNCI is Westend Meadows, approximately 0.2km to the east of the Site. It is designated for its grassland of varying quality. The next nearest is Chickerell Water Lily Farm SNCI, a series of ponds with a rich aquatic flora, approximately 0.25km to the southwest of the Site.
- 5.2.23. It is thought that there would be no detrimental effect upon these sites, from a development within the East Chickerell Site.

Habitats within the site

- 5.2.24. The Habitats within the site on the whole hold low ecological value being species poor and intensively managed for agricultural and grazing purposes.
- 5.2.25. The features that hold relatively higher value within the Site are the woodlands, the ponds and the hedgerows.
- 5.2.26. The woodlands within the site can be retained and enhanced with further structural planting to increase the area and provide connectivity between the other habitats.

- 5.2.27. The Ponds can also be retained where possible within a proposed development, and where this may not be possible new ponds can be created to act as attenuation ponds or as wildlife ponds within the open space provision.
- 5.2.28. The hedgerows are unlikely to qualify as ecologically important under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. However, the hedgerows will act as wildlife corridors and where possible should be incorporated within development proposals for the Site. Some hedgerows will be lost to the development to facilitate construction and for access. The planting of additional hedgerows or structure planting within a landscaping proposal can mitigate the loss of these hedgerows. Retained hedgerows can also be enhanced through bolster planting and managed to promote biodiversity.
- 5.2.29. It is considered that with the adoption of the above recommendations there would be no significant adverse impacts on habitats within the Site.
- 5.2.30. Creation of new habitats, of conservation importance, will enhance the ecological value and biodiversity of the site in accordance with guidance set out by PPS9 (see policy section 6). It is recommended that new planting utilise native species of local provenance to maximise benefits to wildlife. The creation of wildflower grassland within areas of open space or the creation of wetland habitats would increase the biodiversity of the site and will contribute to the aims of the local BAP.

5.3. Faunal Evaluation

Bats

- 5.3.1. All bats are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and are also included in Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended). These include provisions making it an offence to:
- Intentionally kill, injure or take (capture) bats;
 - Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats in a roost or any other structure or place it uses for shelter or protection;
 - Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to bat roosts even if bats are not in residence.
- 5.3.2. If proposed work is likely to destroy or disturb bats or their roosts Natural England should be consulted, and if necessary any works carried out under a licence.
- 5.3.3. The buildings within the Site have very low potential to support roosting bats. No records of any Bat roosts were returned from within the Site. It is recommended that a further internal survey of all the buildings be undertaken before an Application is made, in order to establish whether any further surveys are required to establish the presence or absence of any roosts.

- 5.3.4. There are a number of trees within the Site that have potential to support roosting bats. If any of these trees were to be lost to a development then these trees would need to be surveyed further to establish the presence or absence of a roost. Should a roost be recorded appropriate mitigation would need to be put forward and could be accommodated within the areas of open space proposed at the site.
- 5.3.5. The stream corridors, hedgerows and woodland offer potential commuting and foraging opportunities for bats and it is recommended that activity surveys be carried out across the site to establish the important area within the Site for bats (effective from May to September). With appropriate design and management of existing features, it is thought that a development on this Site would have negligible effects on any bat populations within the local area.
- 5.3.6. The provision of new planting of hedgerows, trees and grassland, within any proposals and the provision of additional roosting opportunities, such as bat boxes, would provide an enhancement over the current situation. These measures may contribute to the National BAPs for Bat species and the Local BAP for Bats.
- 5.3.7. It is recommended that any development proposed, use a lighting scheme designed and engineered to produce low light spillage, in order to avoid disturbance to bats while foraging or commuting around the Site.
- 5.3.8. It is considered that with the adoption of the above recommendations, which would be easily deliverable within a development, there would be no significant adverse impacts on Bats within the Site.

Badgers

- 5.3.9. The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 consolidates the previous Badgers Acts of 1973 and 1991. The legislation aims to protect the species from persecution, rather than being a response to an unfavourable conservation status, as the species is in fact common over most of Britain, with particularly high populations in the south.
- 5.3.10. As well as protecting the animal itself, the 1992 Act also makes the intentional or reckless destruction, damage or obstruction of a Badger sett an offence. A sett is defined as “any structure or place which displays signs indicating current use by a Badger”. ‘Current use’ is defined by Natural England as any use within the preceding 12 months.
- 5.3.11. In addition, the intentional elimination of sufficient foraging area to support a known social group of Badgers may, in certain circumstances, be construed as an offence by constituting ‘cruel ill treatment’ of a Badger.

- 5.3.12. Previous guidelines were issued by Natural England on the types of activity that it considers should be licensed within certain distances of sett entrances. They stated that works that may require a licence include using heavy machinery within 30m of any entrance to an active sett, using lighter machinery within 20m, and light work such as hand digging within 10m. However new guidance published in September 2007 states that:
- “It is not illegal, and therefore a licence is not required, to carry out disturbing activities in the vicinity of a sett if no Badger is disturbed and the sett is not damaged or obstructed.”*
- 5.3.13. Thus this revised guidance allows a professional judgement to be made on individual cases as to whether a sett will be damaged or obstructed or a Badger will be disturbed, and therefore whether a licence will be required.
- 5.3.14. The Badger sett **S1** is situated to the east of the Site. This is away from the proposed development area. Therefore there is going to be little impact upon this Badger sett and there is an opportunity to provide enhanced foraging opportunities within the areas of open space proposed.
- 5.3.15. Sett **S2** is situated outside of the Site boundary and is buffered from the proposed areas of development, by the existing woodland. There is unlikely to be any effect on this sett from a proposed development within the Site.
- 5.3.16. Foraging areas, albeit of low quality, will be lost to development; however, the creation and management of the open space proposed will more than compensate for this by improving the quality of the foraging resource for Badgers. .
- 5.3.17. It is considered that with the adoption of the above recommendations, which would be easily deliverable within a development, there would be no significant adverse impacts on Badgers within the Site.

Birds

- 5.3.18. Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act is concerned with the protection of wild birds, whilst Schedule 1 lists species that are protected by special penalties. No Schedule 1 species were recorded within the site itself during the survey.
- 5.3.19. There are opportunities for nesting birds, in terms of the woodland, trees, scrub and hedgerows, within the Site. As all species of birds receive general protection whilst nesting, to avoid a possible offence, it is recommended that any clearance of suitable nesting vegetation (including tree felling) be undertaken outside of the breeding season (March to July inclusive) or that checks be made for nesting birds by an ecologist immediately prior to removal.

- 5.3.20. One Red-list species was observed during the Phase 1 survey, which was House Sparrow. These were detected around the existing properties to the west of the Site and there is no reason to believe that a development within the Site would affect the local population within the area.
- 5.3.21. New planting within the development proposals may provide additional nesting and foraging habitats. Nest boxes could be erected as part of any development proposals to increase the nesting opportunity within the Site. All nest boxes should be situated out of direct sunlight and out of the reach of predators, particularly cats.
- 5.3.22. Specific boxes could be erected in the vicinity of the proposed openspace for Barn Owls, which have been recorded within the wider study area-
- 5.3.23. It is considered that with the adoption of the above recommendations, which would be easily deliverable within a development, there would be no significant adverse impacts on Birds within the Site.

Reptiles

- 5.3.24. All six British reptile species receive a degree of legislative protection that varies depending on their conservation importance. Smooth Snake *Coronella austriaca* and Sand Lizard *Lacerta agilis* are highly localised in their distribution and receive full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994. Due to their specialised habitat requirements, there is no likelihood these species would be present within the site.
- 5.3.25. Common Lizard, Slow Worm, Grass Snake and Adder are much more common and widespread and are only partially protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) from:
- Intentional or reckless killing or injury; and
 - Sale or other forms of trading.
- 5.3.26. The habitat of common reptiles receives no legal protection.
- 5.3.27. There are currently no suitable habitats to support reptile populations within the Site and therefore no mitigation would be required for these species. However, if the management regime of the Site is to change (i.e. grasslands) and a more suitable reptile habitat develops prior to development, then a survey may be required to establish the presence or absence of reptiles.
- 5.3.28. If reptiles are found to be present within the Site then a simple translocation exercise could be undertaken from areas within the development footprint to suitable habitats within the Site. .
- 5.3.29. Overall the site has poor potential for reptiles at present .

Amphibians

- 5.3.30. All British amphibian species receive a degree of protection under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended). The level of protection varies from protection from sale or trade only, as is the case with species such as Smooth Newt and Common Toad, to the more rigorous protection afforded to Great Crested Newts, which are protected at the European level.
- 5.3.31. Although Great Crested Newts are regularly encountered locally and throughout much of England, the UK holds a large percentage of the world population of the species. As such the UK has an international obligation to conserve the species and they receive full protection under domestic and European legislation and are a material consideration under PPS9.
- 5.3.32. Great Crested Newts are also listed in Annex IV(a) of the European Community Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, more commonly known as the Habitats Directive. The Habitats Directive was transposed into UK law by the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994, which lists Great Crested Newts under Schedule 2.
- 5.3.33. Great Crested Newts are thus protected from deliberate or reckless killing, injury or capture with their habitat, including a breeding site, resting place or any structure or place used for 'shelter or protection' also protected against damage or destruction. It is also illegal to deliberately or recklessly disturb Great Crested Newts and their eggs are protected from taking or destroying.
- 5.3.34. Licences can be granted that would permit otherwise unlawful activities. In every case, a licence cannot be granted unless:
- (i) There is no satisfactory alternative; and
 - (ii) The action authorised would not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.
- 5.3.35. It should be noted that a licence could only be granted following the receipt of a full valid planning permission.
- 5.3.36. Ponds P1 and P2 are potential suitable breeding pond for Great Crested Newts, and there is suitable terrestrial habitat surrounding these ponds in the form of scrub, woodland and hedgerows.
- 5.3.37. The pond to the south of the Site in close proximity to the potential access is also suitable to support breeding Great Crested Newts. This Pond is outside the Site but where possible permission should be sort to carry out surveys of this pond as well.
- 5.3.38. To confirm the presence of this species, and the size of the population, and thus the level of mitigation that would be required,

further survey work would be required. Such survey work is seasonally constrained and can only be undertaken between mid-March and mid-June with a proportion of these visits necessary between mid-April and mid-May to accord with current survey guidelines issued by Natural England.

- 5.3.39. If Great Crested Newts were recorded then mitigation measures would likely require the retention of breeding ponds (and others if appropriate), and suitable terrestrial habitat associated with the ponds, including areas of scrub, grassland and hedgerows. In addition, an area of open space linked to the above habitats may need to be set aside in order to provide additional aquatic and terrestrial habitats for this species and to offset any losses of suitable habitat that are unavoidable.
- 5.3.40. Two populations of breeding Great Crested Newts have been recorded in off site ponds close to the Site. These are 250m to the west and 250m to the southwest of the Site.
- 5.3.41. Great Crested Newts may travel up to 500m from their breeding pond and utilise suitable habitat up to this distance, however it is widely accepted that in general they utilise suitable terrestrial habitat within a much closer distance. Research Report 576 produced by English Nature (now Natural England) concludes that "Captures on fences (and by other methods) at distances between 100m and 200-250m from breeding ponds tended to be so low as to raise serious doubts about the efficacy of this as an approach."
- 5.3.42. There is ample terrestrial habitat for Great Crested Newts around the off site ponds and there are roads that separate the breeding ponds from the Site in both instances. It is therefore highly unlikely that any Great Crested Newts from these breeding ponds would utilise terrestrial habitat within the Site. However if it was deemed appropriate then a simple fencing and trapping exercise could be undertaken in areas to be developed, and appropriate mitigation put forward where necessary.
- 5.3.43. It is considered that with the adoption of the above recommendations, which would be easily deliverable within a development, there would be no significant adverse impacts on Great Crested Newts within the Site.

6. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

6.1. The planning policy framework that relates to nature conservation in Dorset, is issued at four main administrative levels: nationally through Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9); at the regional through the Draft South West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS); at the county level through the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan; and locally through the West Dorset District Council Local Plan. Any proposed development will be judged in relation to the policies contained within these documents.

6.2. National planning policy

Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9)

- 6.2.1. Guidance on national policy for biodiversity and geological conservation is provided by PPS9, published in August 2005. PPS9 confirms the Government's commitment to the protection of biodiversity and geological conservation through the planning system.
- 6.2.2. PPS9 requires local authorities to fully consider the effect of planning decisions on biodiversity and geological conservation, and ensure that appropriate weight is attached to statutory nature conservation designations, protected species and biodiversity and geological interests within the wider environment.
- 6.2.3. It also considers the potential biodiversity and geological conservation gains which can be secured within developments, including the use of planning obligations.
- 6.2.4. National policy therefore implicitly recognises the importance of biodiversity and that with sensitive planning and design, development and conservation of the natural heritage can co-exist and benefits can, in certain circumstances, be obtained.

6.3. Regional policy

The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the South West

- 6.3.1. Policies providing guidance on the relationship between development and nature conservation in the southwest are currently provided within the draft RSS, which is to be replaced by the South West Plan when it is formally adopted.
- 6.3.2. There are four policies within the RSS that refer to nature conservation (SD3, ENV1, ENV4 and RE8) within the site. Policy SD3 is concerned with the protection of the region's biodiversity, through the creation, protection and management of important habitats. Policies ENV1 and ENV4 are concerned with nature conservation and protection of the region's natural environment, while Policy RE8 is concerned with the protection of the region's trees and woodland.

6.4. **County planning policy**

Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan (adopted 2001)

- 6.4.1. The Dorset County Structure Plan contains seven policies relevant to ecology (environment policies A-E, J and P) within the site. Policies A, B and C refer to the protection of internationally and nationally important designated sites, and policy D is concerned with the conservation of specially protected species and habitats. Policy E is concerned with the protection and maintenance of biodiversity, while policy J is concerned with the conservation of biodiversity specifically within the heritage coast. Policy P refers to the expansion and replanting of woodlands and forests within the county.
- 6.4.2. The structure plan is in the process of being replaced by a Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). Following a direction issued by the Secretary of State, the policies within the Dorset County Structure Plan have been saved until the RSS has been adopted.

6.5. **Local planning policy**

West Dorset District Council Local Plan (adopted July 2006)

- 6.5.1. The adopted West Dorset District Council Local Plan contains five policies that relate in whole or part to nature conservation (policies SA8-SA12). Policies SA8, SA9 and SA10 are concerned with the protection of internationally and locally important designated sites. Policy SA12 refers to the protections of European Protected Species, as well as BAP species, while policy SA11 refers to the protection of land of nature conservation interest, including ponds, hedgerows, woodland and BAP habitats.
- 6.5.2. Following a direction by the Secretary of State, only three of these policies have been saved (SA10-SA12) as policies SA8 and SA9 are already referred to within PPS9. The remaining policies have been saved until the adoption of the Local Development Framework (LDF).

6.6. **Discussion**

- 6.6.1. There are no statutory designated sites of nature conservation importance within the site boundary. The nearest statutory site is Radipole Lake SSSI, which lies approximately 0.5km to the east of the site boundary.
- 6.6.2. There are no non-statutory designated sites of nature conservation importance within the site boundary. The nearest is Westend Meadows SNCI, which lies approximately 0.2km to the west.
- 6.6.3. With the implementation of the mitigation outlined in the previous section there are predicted to be no significant impacts on statutory or non-statutory designated sites as a result of the any Development Proposals within the Site. Hence the Development

Proposals will accord with environmental policies A, B and C of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan and the saved policy SA10 of the West Dorset District Council Local Plan.

- 6.6.4. The majority of habitats within the site are currently of low ecological value. Those of higher ecological importance are to be retained where possible and mitigation and enhancements measures have been proposed, which will increase the quality and diversity of habitats present. As such, the proposals will accord with environmental policies D, E, J and P of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, and policy SA11 of the West Dorset District Council Local Plan.
- 6.6.5. Appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures have been put forward for protected and other species, such that there will be no adverse impacts to these species as a result of development at the site and biodiversity gains are likely to be achieved for the Site. As such, the proposals will accord with policy SA12 of the West Dorset District Council Local Plan.
- 6.6.6. Adoption of the above measures will also ensure that the Development Proposals are in line with regional planning policy as set out in the Draft RSS.
- 6.6.7. On the basis of the above information, it is considered that the development proposals conform to those policies relating to nature conservation at the national, regional, county and local levels.

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1. Ecology Solutions were commissioned by Persimmon Homes (South Coast) Ltd to carry out an Ecological Assessment of land at East Chickerell, Weymouth in December 2010.

Statutory Sites

- 7.2. There are no statutory designated sites of nature conservation interest within or adjacent to the site. There are a number of Statutory Sites within the wider study area. These include the Chisel Beach and the Fleet Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site, the Radipole Lake SSSI and the Crookhill Brick Pit SSSI and SAC.
- 7.3. Due to their distance from the Site and the separation by existing built form and roads, there is unlikely to be any effect to the integrity of the designated sites from noise disturbance, air quality, light pollution or Hydrological impacts. However, recreational pressure on the Chisel Beach and the Fleet lagoon SSSI, SAC and particularly the SPA and Ramsar Site could have an impact if no mitigation is put forward.
- 7.4. A recognised means of mitigating potential detrimental effects on an SPA through increased visitor pressure is through the provision of additional informal greenspace in close proximity to a new residential development.
- 7.5. The East Chickerell Site would be able to provide additional areas of Natural Green Space, within the areas in the northeast of the site and other areas of open space within the development.

Non-statutory sites

- 7.6. There are no non-statutory designated sites within the Site itself. There are a few Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) within the wider study area. The nearest SNCI is Westend Meadows, approximately 0.2km to the east of the Site. It is designated for its grassland of varying quality. The next nearest is Chickerell Water Lily Farm SNCI, a series of ponds with a rich aquatic flora, approximately 0.25km to the southwest of the Site.
- 7.7. It is thought that there would be no detrimental effect upon these sites, from a development within the East Chickerell Site.

Habitats

- 7.8. The Habitats within the site on the whole hold low ecological value being species poor and intensively managed for agricultural and grazing purposes.
- 7.9. The features that hold relatively higher value within the Site are the woodlands, the ponds and the hedgerows.

- 7.10. The woodlands within the site can be retained and enhanced with further structural planting to increase the area and provide connectivity between the other habitats.
- 7.11. The Ponds can also be retained where possible within a proposed development, and where this may not be possible new ponds can be created to act as attenuation ponds or as wildlife ponds within the open space provision.
- 7.12. The hedgerows are unlikely to qualify as ecologically important under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. However, the hedgerows will act as wildlife corridors and where possible should be incorporated within development proposals for the Site. Some hedgerows will be lost to the development to facilitate construction and for access. The planting of additional hedgerows or structure planting within a landscaping proposal can mitigate the loss of these hedgerows. Retained hedgerows can also be enhanced through bolster planting and managed to promote biodiversity.
- 7.13. It is considered that with the adoption of the above recommendations there would be no significant adverse impacts on habitats within the Site.
- 7.14. Creation of new habitats, of conservation importance, will enhance the ecological value and biodiversity of the site in accordance with guidance set out by PPS9. It is recommended that new planting utilise native species of local provenance to maximise benefits to wildlife. The creation of wildflower grassland within areas of open space or the creation of wetland habitats would increase the biodiversity of the site and will contribute to the aims of the local BAP.

Protected Species

- 7.15. Bats. The buildings within the Site have very low potential to support roosting bats. No records of any Bat roosts were returned from within the Site. It is recommended that a further internal survey of all the buildings be undertaken before an Application is made, in order to establish whether any further surveys are required to establish the presence or absence of any roosts.
- 7.16. There are a number of trees within the Site that have potential to support roosting bats. If any of these trees were to be lost to a development then these trees would need to be surveyed further to establish the presence or absence of a roost. Should a roost be recorded appropriate mitigation would need to be put forward.
- 7.17. The stream corridor, hedgerows and woodland offer potential commuting and foraging opportunities for bats and it is recommended that activity surveys be carried out across the site to establish the important area within the Site for bats (effective from May to September).

- 7.18. It is considered that with the adoption of the recommendations within this report there would be no significant adverse impacts on Bats within the Site.
- 7.19. Badgers The Badger sett **S1** is situated to the east of the Site away from the proposed development area. Therefore there is going to be little impact upon this Badger sett and there is an opportunity to provide enhanced foraging opportunities within the areas of open space.
- 7.20. Sett **S2** is situated outside of the Site boundary and is buffered from the proposed areas of development, by the existing woodland There is unlikely to be any effect on this sett from proposed development within the Site.
- 7.21. It is considered that with provision of species rich grassland within areas of public open space and through the maintenance of connectivity through the site along existing hedgerows and stream corridor then a development of the site may enhance it for Badgers.
- 7.22. It is considered that with the adoption of the above recommendations, which would be easily deliverable within a development, there would be no significant adverse impacts on Badgers within the Site and a net benefit for the group could be achieved.
- 7.23. Birds No Schedule 1 species were recorded within the site itself during the survey.
- 7.24. One Red-list species was observed during the Phase 1 survey, which was House Sparrow. These were detected around the existing properties to the west of the Site and there is no reason to believe that a development within the Site would effect the local population within the area.
- 7.25. It is considered that with the adoption of the recommendations within this report there would be no significant adverse impacts on Birds within the Site and a net benefit for the group could be achieved
- 7.26. Reptiles There are currently no suitable habitats to support reptile populations within the Site and therefore no mitigation would be required for these species.
- 7.27. Great Crested Newts Ponds P1 and P2 are potential suitable breeding ponds for Great Crested Newts, and there is suitable terrestrial habitat surrounding these ponds in the form of scrub, woodland and hedgerows.
- 7.28. The pond to the south of the Site in close proximity to the potential access is also suitable to support breeding Great Crested Newts. This Pond is outside the Site but where possible permission should be sort to carry out surveys of this pond as well.
- 7.29. To confirm the presence of this species, and the size of the population, and thus the level of mitigation that would be required, further survey work would be required. Such survey work is seasonally constrained

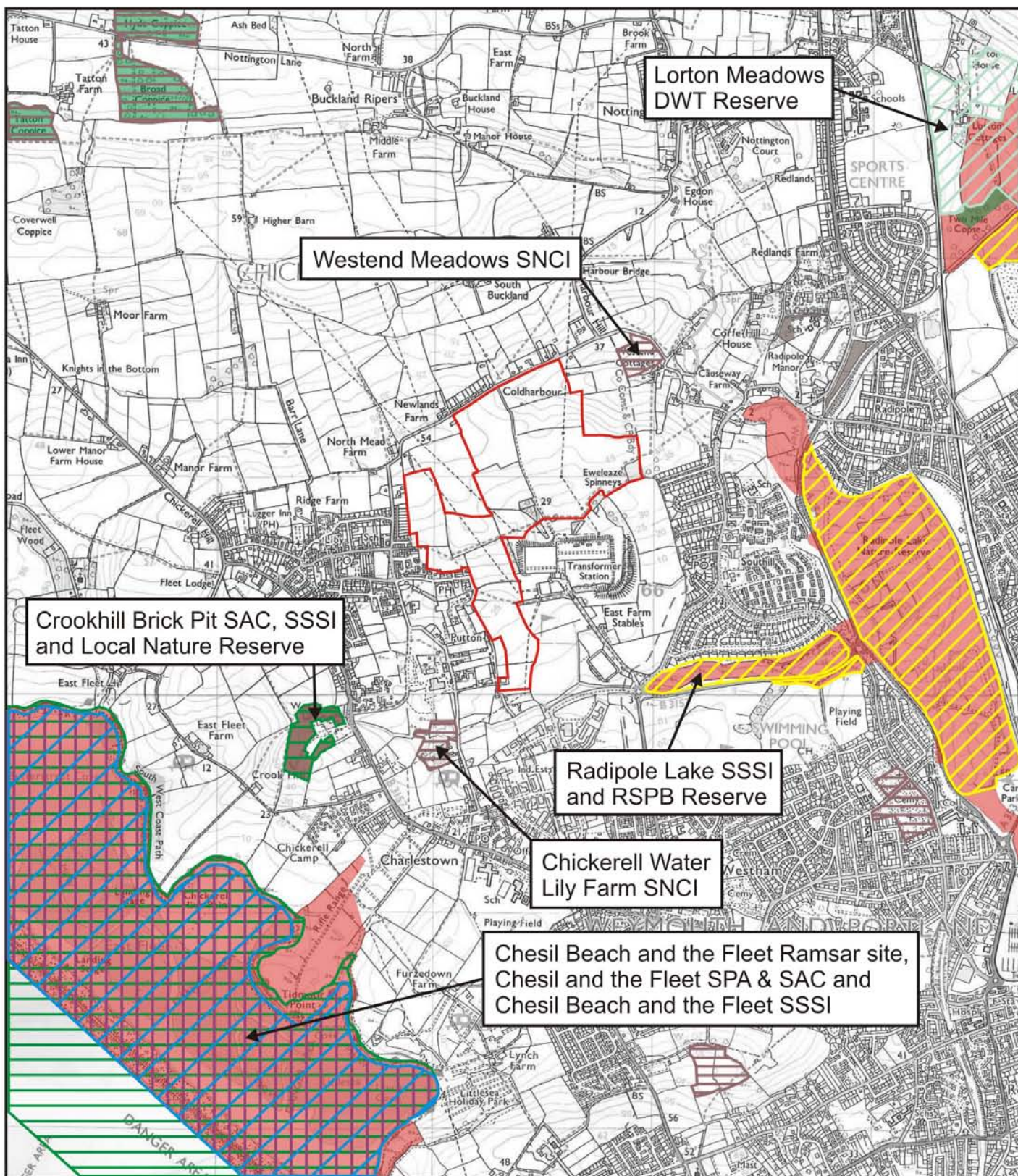
and can only be undertaken between mid-March and mid-June with a proportion of these visits necessary between mid-April and mid-May to accord with current survey guidelines issued by Natural England.

- 7.30. Two populations of breeding Great Crested Newts have been recorded in off site ponds close to the Site. These are 250m to the west and 250m to the southwest of the Site.
- 7.31. There is ample terrestrial habitat for Great Crested Newts around the off site ponds and there are roads that separate the breeding ponds from the Site in both instances. It is therefore highly unlikely that any Great Crested Newts from these breeding ponds would utilise terrestrial habitat within the Site. However if it was deemed appropriate then a simple fencing and trapping exercise could be undertaken in areas to be developed, and appropriate mitigation put forward where necessary.
- 7.32. It is considered that with the adoption of the above recommendations, which would be easily deliverable within a development, there would be no significant adverse impacts on Great Crested Newts within the Site.
- 7.33. It is considered that with the adoption of the recommendations within this report, which would be easily deliverable within a development, there would be no significant adverse impacts on Great Crested Newts within the Site.
- 7.34. In conclusion, all relevant ecological issues have been addressed and any further survey work required has been identified. It is also concluded that, even if the protected species surveys confirm the presence of such species, with the implementation of the mitigation and recommendations set out in this report, there is no evidence to suggest that there would be any overriding ecological constraints in relation to development of the site.

PLANS

PLAN ECO1

Site Location & Ecological Designations



KEY:

-  SITE LOCATION
-  RAMSAR SITE
-  SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA (SPA)
-  SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION (SAC)
-  SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (SSSI)
-  SITE OF NATURE CONSERVATION INTEREST (SNCI)
-  LOCAL NATURE RESERVE
-  DORSET WILDLIFE TRUST RESERVE
-  RSPB RESERVE
-  ANCIENT SEMI-NATURAL WOODLAND



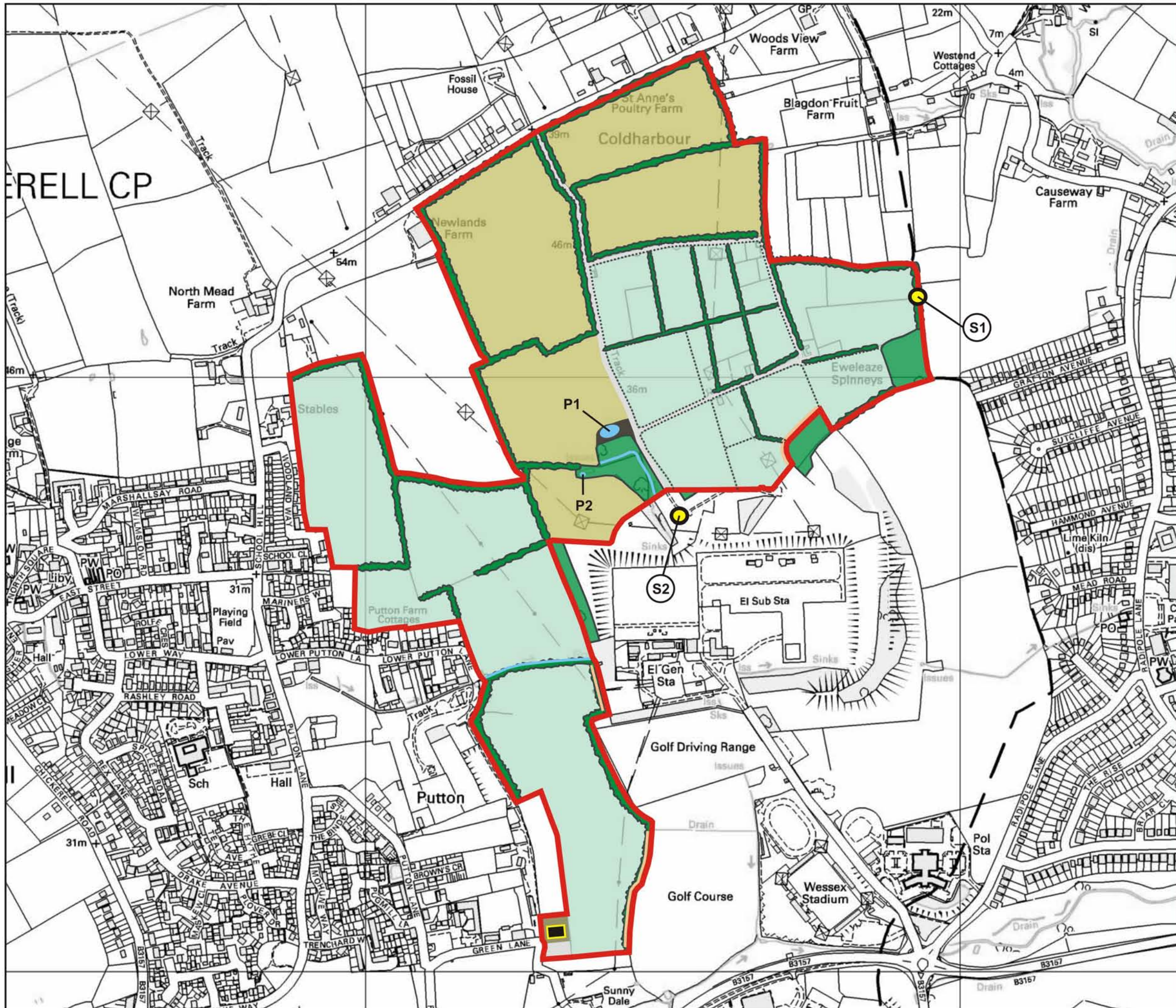
ecology solutions ltd

4856: EAST CHICKERELL,
WEYMOUTH

PLAN ECO1: SITE LOCATION AND
ECOLOGICAL DESIGNATIONS

PLAN ECO2

Ecological Features



- KEY:**
- SITE BOUNDARY
 - HEDGEROWS
 - WOODLAND
 - SEMI-IMPROVED/IMPROVED GRASSLAND
 - ARABLE
 - WOODLAND SCRUB
 - SCRUB
 - HARDSTANDING
 - FENCE LINE
 - DITCH
 - STREAM
 - POND
 - BUILDING
 - BADGER SETT



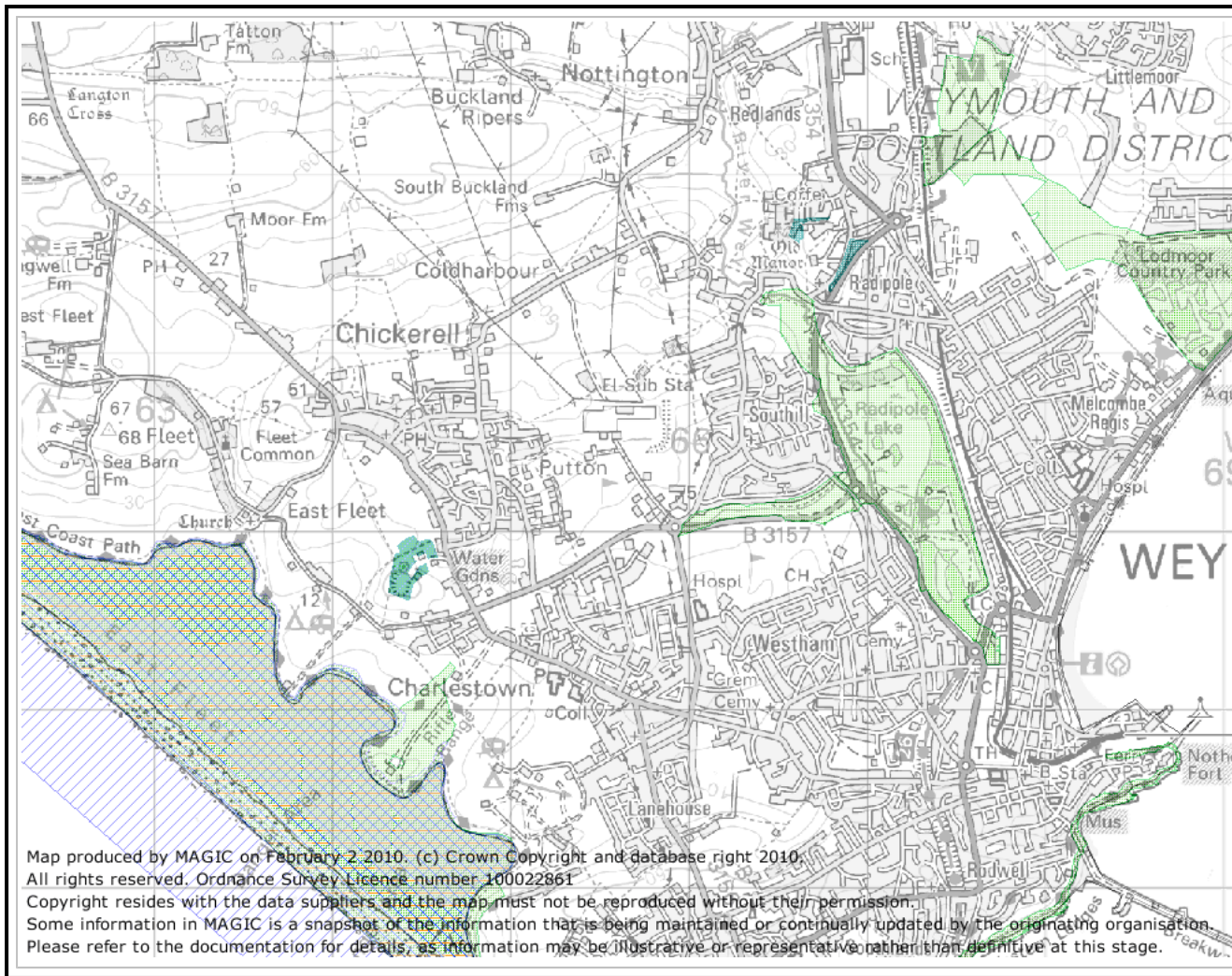
4856: EAST CHICKERELL,
WEYMOUTH

PLAN ECO2: ECOLOGICAL
FEATURES

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Information obtained from MAGIC and Nature on the Map



MAGIC

Overview Map

-  Local Nature Reserves (England)
-  Ramsar Sites (England)
-  Special Protection Areas (England)
-  Special Areas of Conservation (England)
-  Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England)

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 Please refer to the documentation for details, as information may be illustrative or representative rather than definitive at this stage.



Nature on the Map

HOME MAPS HELP

Search map for English postcodes, places, sites and more... **Go** **Tips**

Natural England Home

- Nature Reserves and Country Parks
- Agri-environment Schemes
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- International Sites**
- Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats
- Geological Sites Map
- Targeting and Planning Map
- Agri-environment Delivery on SSSIs



Click on the map to get information about map features, or click and drag to pan map



Overview map



Key

- ★ Natural England Offices
- Special Areas of Conservation
- SAC Water Framework Unit Condition
 - Favourable Condition
 - Unfavourable Condition
- Special Protection Areas
- SPA Water Framework Unit Condition
 - Favourable Condition
 - Unfavourable Condition
- Ramsar Sites



Vixen Tor, North Dorset, SSSI, near Wincley

APPENDIX 2

Citations for the Chisel Beach and the Fleet SSSI, SAC, SPA and Ramsar Site

SITE NOTIFIED TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE ON 22 AUGUST 1986

COUNTY: DORSET SITE NAME: CHESIL AND THE FLEET

DISTRICT: WEST DORSET, WEYMOUTH AND PORTLAND BOROUGH

Status: Site of Special Scientific interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended

Local Planning Authority: WEST DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL, Weymouth & Portland Borough Council, Dorset County Council

National Grid Reference: SY 496885–683734 Area: 990.4 (ha.) 2447.3 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 194 1:10,000/10,560: SY 48 NE,
SY 58 NW, SY 68 SW,
SY 67 NW, NE, SE, SY 77 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1952 Date of Last Revision: 1977

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986 Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Nature and Geological Conservation Review site. Fleet designated a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention and a Special Protection Area under EEC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409). Part of the SSSI lies within the West Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and it lies wholly within the West Dorset Heritage Coast. The SSSI includes the Fleet Sanctuary Nature Reserve, the Dorset Trust for Nature Conservation West Bexington Reserve, and part of the National Trust's Limekiln and Labour-in-Vain Farm. It is contiguous with the West Dorset Coast SSSI, the Portland Coast SSSI and the proposed Portland Harbour SSSI. Site boundary amended by extension and deletion. Part of the site previously and separately notified as Cogden Farm and Beach.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Chesil Beach is one of the three major shingle structures in Britain and is of international importance for coastal geomorphology. Along about half its length it encloses the Fleet, the largest tidal lagoon in Britain. This, together with the Beach and associated habitats, incorporates a site that is of international importance to wildlife. The fossil-rich and stratigraphically important sequence of Jurassic strata exposed along the landward side of the Fleet adds further value to the site.

Chesil Beach

Chesil Beach with associated features is of the highest importance to the study of coastal geomorphology, both as a classic landform and as a full-scale natural laboratory for the study of beach processes. The Beach, essentially a linear storm beach linking the Isle of Portland to the mainland, is exceptional firstly for

its size (150–200 m in width and approximately 28 km in length); secondly for the systematic coarsening of pebbles eastwards; thirdly for the variation in the composition of the pebbles; and fourthly for the extensive historical records of beach changes.

On the stable landward side of the Beach, large and nationally important populations of Sea Kale *Crambe maritima*, Yellow-horned Poppy *Glaucium flavum*, Sea Pea *Lathyrus japonicus* and Shrubby Sea-blite *Suaeda fruticosa* occur. Sea Holly *Eryngium maritimum*, Portland Spurge *Euphorbia portlandica* and Little-robin *Geranium purpureum* – a Red Data Book species – are also present. Furthermore, the Beach is the breeding site for about 50 pairs of Little Tern *Sterna albifrons* and 30 pairs of Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*, the only sizeable populations of these species in South West Britain.

The Fleet

The Fleet, 13km in length, 75–900 m wide and with a surface area of 4.9 km² at high tide, is exceptional for several reasons. The water is mostly very shallow, averaging only 1.5 m or less in depth, although it is up to 5 m deep in the Narrows. A passage opens into Portland Harbour at the eastern end of the lagoon, giving rise to a tidal flow which decreases in height from approximately 2 m to almost nil midway along the lagoon and to a salinity gradient which varies from marine at the eastern end to close to freshwater at the other. The bed of the lagoon is mostly composed of sand and silt, although in the vicinity of the Narrows it is very unusual, consisting of transitional patches of pebble, hard coralline rock and soft mud.

The salinity gradient, peculiar hydrographic regime and varied substrates, together with the relative lack of pollution in comparison to most other lagoons, have resulted in the Fleet becoming extraordinarily rich in wildlife. Outstanding communities of aquatic plants and animals are present, supporting large numbers of wildfowl and waders. The plant-life includes no less than 150 species of algae, in communities unlike those found anywhere else. Rarities include the filamentous green algae *Cladophora battersia* and *C. retroflexa* and the stonewort *Lamprothamnion papillosum*. The lagoon is, however, better known for its underwater meadows of Eel-grasses *Zostera noltii* and *Z. angustifolia* and Spiral and Beaked Tassel-weeds *Ruppia cirrhosa* and *R. maritima*, holding the most extensive mixed population of these species in Britain.

The abundant aquatic vegetation supports up to 1,200 wintering Mute Swans *Cygnus olor*, and also the unique breeding colony of 20–100 pairs of this species at the Abbotsbury Swannery. Up to 7,500 Wigeon *Anas penelope* winter on the lagoon, over 1% of the north-west European population. Several other species of wintering wildfowl are also abundant. The duck decoy at the Swannery, built in 1655, is the oldest still in use in Britain. The inter-tidal mud flats support numerous wintering and passage waders, with up to 1,000 Dunlin *Calidris alpina* and 1,500 Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*.

The Fleet supports at least three distinct and highly unusual mollusc associations. The looping snail *Truncatella subcylindrica* and a sea slug *Tenellia*

adpersa are both only known from one other British site. Other notable invertebrates present include the sponge *Suberites massa* and the burrowing anemone *Scolanthes callimorphus*, both of which have been found at only two other localities in Britain. Another rare anemone, *Nematostella vectensis*, is known from only a few other British localities and nowhere else in Europe. The only known British population of the Scaly Cricket *Mogoplistes squamiger* occurs just above high water mark. Additionally, the Fleet is the only significant estuarine breeding area for fish between Swanage and Seaton and is one of the few nurseries of Bass *Dicentrarchus labrax* in Britain. In all, 23 species of fish have been recorded, including the goby *Gobius couchii*, known otherwise only from Portland Harbour and the river Helford.

Associated habitats

Among other habitats occurring within the SSSI are saltmarsh, reed bed, grassland, scrub and woodland, all important and integral components of the site. For example, the stands of Common Reed *Phragmites australis* support large populations of Sedge and Reed warblers *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* and *A. schoenobaenus* and a few pairs of the rare Cettis Warbler *Cettia cetti*. The marshy and calcareous grassland communities present are among the best examples of their types in the county, being remarkably herb-rich and containing such rarities as Bulbous Foxtail *Alopecurus bulbosus*, Marsh mallow *Althaea officinalis* and Yellow Vetchling *Lathyrus aphaca*, all with extensive populations. The scrub and woodland are of importance to many species of bird and insect for shelter, breeding and food.

Geology

The bank and low cliffs along the landward edge of the Fleet provide nationally important exposures of Middle and Upper Jurassic rocks. Bathonian rocks (Middle Jurassic) are exposed between Shipmoor Point and Butterstreet Cove and in a small quarry at Langton Herring. The very fossiliferous *vatonensis* Beds are the oldest Bathonian rocks seen and have yielded a diverse fossil fauna, including important fish otoliths and a number of ammonites, significant in dating these beds as *hodsoni* Zone. The slightly younger Upper Fullers Earth Clay includes a spectacular bed composed almost entirely of the fossil oyster *Pracexogyra hebridica*. The overlying Forest Marble contains the *boueti* and *digona* beds which have yielded the most diverse fully-marine fossil faunas known in the British Bathonian, including ammonites, generally very rare in the Forest Marble and significant for dating and comparison with other sequences. Important exposures of the overlying Cornbrash are also present. Tidmoor Point, where part of the Middle Oxford Clay (of Callovian age) occurs, is famous for its fossils, particularly for pyritised ammonites, and is the definitive locality for some of the species present. Nationally important exposures of Oxfordian (Upper Jurassic) rocks occur at Lynch Cove, the definitive locality for the 'Red Nodule Bed'. This contains an assemblage of ammonites and bivalves important for accurately dating the beds and similar assemblages from strata of this age in other parts of Britain and Normandy. Kimmeridgian rocks are well exposed between East Fleet and Small Mouth with the thickest section of the *baylei* and *cymodoce* Zones in Dorset. Important as the source of ammonites of the genus *Rasenia* and in the sub-division of the *cymodoce* Zone.

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Site details



Location of Chesil and the Fleet SAC/SCI/cSAC

Country	England
Unitary Authority	Dorset
Centroid*	SY630795
Latitude	50 36 47 N
Longitude	02 31 22 W
SAC EU code	UK0017076
Status	Designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Area (ha)	1631.63

* This is the approximate central point of the SAC. In the case of large, linear or composite sites, this may not represent the location where a feature occurs within the SAC.

General site character

Marine areas. Sea inlets (35.5%)
 Tidal rivers. Estuaries. Mud flats. Sand flats. Lagoons (including saltwork basins) (30.5%)
 Salt marshes. Salt pastures. Salt steppes (2%)
 Shingle. Sea cliffs. Islets (32%)

[Boundary map](#) and associated biodiversity information on the NBN Gateway.

[Natura 2000 data form](#) for this site as submitted to Europe (PDF format, size 30kb).

[Interactive map](#) from MAGIC (Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside).

Note:

When undertaking an appropriate assessment of impacts at a site, **all** features of European importance (both primary and non-primary) need to be considered.

Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site

1150 Coastal lagoons * Priority feature

The Fleet, on the south coast of England, is the largest example of a lagoonal habitat in England and has features of both lagoonal inlets and percolation **lagoons**. It is bordered by the fossil shingle barrier beach structure of Chesil Beach, through which sea water percolates into the lagoon, but most of its water exchange occurs through the narrow channel that links it to Portland Harbour. A low freshwater input produces fully saline conditions throughout most of the Fleet, with reduced salinity occurring only in the west. The lagoon is extremely sheltered from wave action and has weak tidal streams, except in the eastern narrows and entrance channel. The tidal range is much smaller and temperature range far greater than on the open coast. The lagoon supports extensive populations of two species of eelgrass *Zostera* and three species of tasselweed *Ruppia*, including the rare spiral tasselweed *R. cirrhosa*, and a diverse fauna that includes a number of nationally rare and scarce species.

1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines

Chesil Beach is a large (28 km-long), relatively undisturbed shingle bar, and is one of two representatives of **Annual vegetation of drift lines** on the south coast of England. The inner shore of the beach supports extensive drift-line vegetation dominated by sea beet *Beta vulgaris* ssp. *maritima* and orache *Atriplex* spp. This community exists in a dynamic equilibrium with the perennial shrubby sea-blite *Suaeda vera* community typical of **1420 Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrubs (Sarcocornetea fruticosi)**, for which this site has also been selected.

1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks

The 28 km-long shingle bar of Chesil Beach, with the contiguous Portland Harbour shore, is an extensive representative of **Perennial vegetation of stony banks** on the south coast of England, and most of it is relatively undisturbed by human activities. Much of the shingle bar is subject to wash-over and percolation in storm conditions and is therefore sparsely vegetated. It supports the most extensive occurrences of the rare sea-kale *Crambe maritima* and sea pea *Lathyrus japonicus* in the UK, together with other grassland and lichen-rich shingle plant communities typical of more stable conditions, especially towards the eastern end of the site.

1420 Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrubs (*Sarcocornetea fruticosi*)

Chesil and the Fleet on the south coast of England contains a major concentration of **Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrubs** in the UK. A band of shrubby sea-blite *Suaeda vera* and sea-purslane *Atriplex portulacoides* lines much of the 13 km length of the seaward margin of the Fleet. The community forms a clear zone between the Fleet and the shingle vegetation of Chesil Bank. It appears to exist in a dynamic equilibrium with Annex I type **1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines** dominated by sea beet *Beta vulgaris* ssp. *maritima*, for which the site is also selected. This replaces the scrub in areas subject to disturbance, and is in turn displaced by the scrub after disturbance ceases.

Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site

1330 Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*)

Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site

Not applicable.

Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection

Not applicable.

Many designated sites are on private land: the listing of a site in these pages does not imply any right of public access.

NATURA 2000

STANDARD DATA FORM

FOR SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS (SPA)
FOR SITES ELIGIBLE FOR IDENTIFICATION AS SITES OF COMMUNITY IMPORTANCE (SCI)
AND
FOR SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION (SAC)

1. Site identification:

1.1 Type 1.2 Site code

1.3 Compilation date 1.4 Update

1.5 Relationship with other Natura 2000 sites

U	K	0	0	1	7	0	7	6
U	K	0	0	1	9	8	6	1

1.6 Respondent(s)

1.7 Site name

1.8 Site indication and designation classification dates

date site proposed as eligible as SCI	
date confirmed as SCI	
date site classified as SPA	198507
date site designated as SAC	

2. Site location:

2.1 Site centre location

longitude	latitude
02 31 10 W	50 36 40 N

2.2 Site area (ha) 2.3 Site length (km)

2.5 Administrative region

NUTS code	Region name	% cover
UK631	Dorset	100.00%

2.6 Biogeographic region

Alpine

Atlantic

Boreal

Continental

Macaronesia

Mediterranean

3. Ecological information:

3.1 Annex I habitats

Habitat types present on the site and the site assessment for them:

Annex I habitat	% cover	Representativity	Relative surface	Conservation status	Global assessment

3.2 Annex I birds and regularly occurring migratory birds not listed on Annex I

Code	Species name	Population			Site assessment			
		Resident	Migratory		Population	Conservation	Isolation	Global
Breed	Winter	Stage						
A046a	<i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>		3182	I	B		C	

4. Site description:

4.1 General site character

Habitat classes	% cover
Marine areas. Sea inlets	
Tidal rivers. Estuaries. Mud flats. Sand flats. Lagoons (including saltwork basins)	48.0
Salt marshes. Salt pastures. Salt steppes	4.0
Coastal sand dunes. Sand beaches. Machair	
Shingle. Sea cliffs. Islets	46.0
Inland water bodies (standing water, running water)	
Bogs. Marshes. Water fringed vegetation. Fens	2.0
Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana	
Dry grassland. Steppes	
Humid grassland. Mesophile grassland	
Alpine and sub-alpine grassland	
Improved grassland	
Other arable land	
Broad-leaved deciduous woodland	
Coniferous woodland	
Evergreen woodland	
Mixed woodland	
Non-forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including orchards, groves, vineyards, dehesas)	
Inland rocks. Screes. Sands. Permanent snow and ice	
Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites)	
Total habitat cover	100%

4.1 Other site characteristics

Soil & geology:

Chert/flint, Clay, Gravel, Mud, Nutrient-rich, Peat, Pebble, Sand, Sedimentary, Shingle

Geomorphology & landscape:

Barrier beach, Coastal, Enclosed coast (including embayment), Intertidal sediments (including sandflat/mudflat), Lagoon, Lowland, Open coast (including bay), Shingle bar, Subtidal sediments (including sandbank/mudbank)

4.2 Quality and importance

ARTICLE 4.2 QUALIFICATION (79/409/EEC)

Over winter the area regularly supports:

Branta bernicla bernicla
(Western Siberia/Western Europe)

1.1% of the population
5 year peak mean 1991/92-1995/96

4.3 Vulnerability

The Fleet and much of Chesil bank are privately owned and managed as a nature reserve. Part of Chesil is Crown Common land. Whilst the majority of the site is largely inaccessible to casual visitors, the south western part of the site known as Ferrybridge is subject to considerable visitor recreational pressure. An MOD firing range is also located within the site. The adjacent Portland Harbour through which much of the water exchange for the Fleet takes place is the site of a new commercial port and is also subject to increasing recreational pressures - waterborne sports in particular. Routine or accidental discharges arising from activities within the Harbour could affect water quality in the Fleet and there is potential for recreational use to 'spill over' into the Fleet. The Harbour Authority are represented on the SAC Management group and the scheme of management for the marine SAC will address these issues. The land use of the Fleet hinterland is largely intensive agriculture and agricultural run-off is a potential source of eutrophication within the Fleet itself. There are also small domestic sewage discharges into the Fleet. The Environment Agency carry out water quality sampling throughout the year with a view to identifying and controlling problem discharges. There is a shellfish farm within the Fleet which cultivates oysters and cleanses mussels and other species. This does not present serious concerns provided it remains at the present scale. However introduction of non-native species remains a potential concern. Japanese seaweed is cut on an annual basis. The site is close to one of the world's busiest shipping lanes and consequently there is a risk of accidental oil pollution. Contingency plans exist for dealing with oil spills.

5. Site protection status and relation with CORINE biotopes:

5.1 Designation types at national and regional level

Code	% cover
UK04 (SSSI/ASSI)	100.0

SPA description

(information as published 2001)

Chesil Beach and The Fleet

Country	England
Unitary Authority	Dorset
SPA status	Classified 17/07/1985
Latitude	50 36 40 N
Longitude	02 31 10 W
SPA EU code	UK9010091
Area (ha)	748.11
Component SSSI/ASSIs	Chesil and The Fleet



Chesil Beach and The Fleet SPA is located on the south coast of England in Dorset. It is a long linear shingle beach (Chesil Bank) enclosing a brackish lagoon (the Fleet). The Fleet is the largest and best example of a barrier-built saline lagoon in the UK and Chesil is one of the three major shingle structures in the UK. The salinity gradient, peculiar hydrographic regime and varied substrates, together with associated reedbed and intertidal habitats and the relative lack of pollution in comparison to most other lagoons, have resulted in the Fleet being extraordinarily rich in wildlife. Outstanding communities of aquatic plants and animals are present, supporting large numbers of wintering waterbirds, including Dark-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla bernicla*. In spring and summer, Chesil Bank is an important breeding site for Little Terns *Sterna albifrons* which feed in the shallow waters of the lagoon, as well as adjacent waters outside the SPA.

Qualifying species

For individual species accounts visit the [Species Accounts section](#)

This site qualifies under **Article 4.1** of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive:

During the breeding season;

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*, 55 pairs representing up to 2.3% of the breeding population in Great Britain (Count as at 1997)
This site also qualifies under **Article 4.2** of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following migratory species:

Over winter;

Dark-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla bernicla*, 3,182 individuals representing up to 1.1% of the wintering Western Siberia/Western Europe population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)

Note:

Many designated sites are on private land: the listing of a site in these pages does not imply any right of public access.

Note that sites selected for waterbird species on the basis of their occurrence in the breeding, passage or winter periods also provide legal protection for these species when they occur at other times of the year.

Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS)

Categories approved by Recommendation 4.7 (1990), as amended by Resolution VIII.13 of the 8th Conference of the Contracting Parties (2002) and Resolutions IX.1 Annex B, IX.6, IX.21 and IX. 22 of the 9th Conference of the Contracting Parties (2005).

Notes for compilers:

1. The RIS should be completed in accordance with the attached *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines for completing the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands*. Compilers are strongly advised to read this guidance before filling in the RIS.
2. Further information and guidance in support of Ramsar site designations are provided in the *Strategic Framework for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (Ramsar Wise Use Handbook 7, 2nd edition, as amended by COP9 Resolution IX.1 Annex B). A 3rd edition of the Handbook, incorporating these amendments, is in preparation and will be available in 2006.
3. Once completed, the RIS (and accompanying map(s)) should be submitted to the Ramsar Secretariat. Compilers should provide an electronic (MS Word) copy of the RIS and, where possible, digital copies of all maps.

1. Name and address of the compiler of this form:

Joint Nature Conservation Committee

Monkstone House

City Road

Peterborough

Cambridgeshire PE1 1JY

UK

Telephone/Fax: +44 (0)1733 – 562 626 / +44 (0)1733 – 555 948

Email: RIS@JNCC.gov.uk

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY.

DD MM YY

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

Designated: 17 July 1985

3. Country:

UK (England)

4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Chesil Beach and The Fleet

5. Designation of new Ramsar site or update of existing site:

This RIS is for: Updated information on an existing Ramsar site

6. For RIS updates only, changes to the site since its designation or earlier update:

a) Site boundary and area:

** Important note: If the boundary and/or area of the designated site is being restricted/reduced, the Contracting Party should have followed the procedures established by the Conference of the Parties in the Annex to COP9 Resolution IX.6 and provided a report in line with paragraph 28 of that Annex, prior to the submission of an updated RIS.

b) Describe briefly any major changes to the ecological character of the Ramsar site, including in the application of the Criteria, since the previous RIS for the site:

7. Map of site included:

Refer to Annex III of the *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines*, for detailed guidance on provision of suitable maps, including digital maps.

a) A map of the site, with clearly delineated boundaries, is included as:

- i) **hard copy** (required for inclusion of site in the Ramsar List): *yes* ✓ -or- *no* ;
- ii) **an electronic format** (e.g. a JPEG or ArcView image) *Yes*
- iii) **a GIS file providing geo-referenced site boundary vectors and attribute tables** *yes* ✓ -or- *no* ;

b) Describe briefly the type of boundary delineation applied:

e.g. the boundary is the same as an existing protected area (nature reserve, national park etc.), or follows a catchment boundary, or follows a geopolitical boundary such as a local government jurisdiction, follows physical boundaries such as roads, follows the shoreline of a waterbody, etc.

The site boundary is the same as, or falls within, an existing protected area.

For precise boundary details, please refer to paper map provided at designation

8. Geographical coordinates (latitude/longitude):

50 36 40 N 02 31 10 W

9. General location:

Include in which part of the country and which large administrative region(s), and the location of the nearest large town.

Nearest town/city: Weymouth

Chesil Beach and the Fleet Ramsar site lies on the coast of Dorset, situated mid-way along the English Channel coast.

Administrative region: Dorset

10. Elevation (average and/or max. & min.) (metres): 11. Area (hectares): 748.11

Min.	-1
Max.	10
Mean	1

12. General overview of the site:

Provide a short paragraph giving a summary description of the principal ecological characteristics and importance of the wetland.

The site includes the whole of the Fleet lagoon and the adjacent Chesil Bank. The Fleet is the largest and best example of a barrier-built saline lagoon in the UK and Chesil is one of the three major shingle structures in the UK. The salinity gradient, peculiar hydrographic regime and varied substrates, together with associated reedbed and intertidal habitats and the relative lack of pollution in comparison to most other lagoons, have resulted in the Fleet becoming extraordinarily rich in wildlife. Outstanding communities of aquatic plants and animals are present, supporting large numbers of wildfowl and waders. Chesil Bank is of great significance to the study of coastal geomorphology and supports nationally important populations of shingle plants and invertebrates. It is also an important breeding site for seabirds.

13. Ramsar Criteria:

Circle or underline each Criterion applied to the designation of the Ramsar site. See Annex II of the *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines* for the Criteria and guidelines for their application (adopted by Resolution VII.11).

1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8

14. Justification for the application of each Criterion listed in 13 above:

Provide justification for each Criterion in turn, clearly identifying to which Criterion the justification applies (see Annex II for guidance on acceptable forms of justification).

Ramsar criterion 1

The Fleet is an outstanding example of rare lagoon habitat and is the largest of its kind in the UK. In Europe lagoons are classified as a priority habitat by the EC Habitats and Species Directive. The site also supports rare saltmarsh habitats.

Ramsar criterion 2

The Fleet supports 15 specialist lagoonal species – more than any other UK site – and five nationally scarce wetland plants as well as ten nationally scarce wetland animals. Chesil Bank is one of the most important UK sites for shingle habitats and species.

Ramsar criterion 3

The site is the largest barrier-built saline lagoon in the UK, and has the greatest diversity of habitats and of biota.

Ramsar criterion 4

The site is important for a number of species at a critical stage in their life cycle including post-larval and juvenile bass *Dicentrarchus labrax*.

Ramsar criterion 8

The site is important as a nursery for bass *Dicentrarchus labrax*.

Ramsar criterion 6 – species/populations occurring at levels of international importance.

Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):

Species with peak counts in winter:

Dark-bellied brent goose, <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i> ,	1460 individuals, representing an average of 1.4% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
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Species/populations identified subsequent to designation for possible future consideration under criterion 6.

Species with peak counts in winter:

Mute swan , <i>Cygnus olor</i> , Britain	1169 individuals, representing an average of 3.1% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
--	--

Contemporary data and information on waterbird trends at this site and their regional (sub-national) and national contexts can be found in the Wetland Bird Survey report, which is updated annually. See www.bto.org/survey/webs/webs-alerts-index.htm.

See Sections 21/22 for details of noteworthy species

15. Biogeography (required when Criteria 1 and/or 3 and /or certain applications of Criterion 2 are applied to the designation):

Name the relevant biogeographic region that includes the Ramsar site, and identify the biogeographic regionalisation system that has been applied.

a) biogeographic region:

Atlantic

b) biogeographic regionalisation scheme (include reference citation):
Council Directive 92/43/EEC

16. Physical features of the site:

Describe, as appropriate, the geology, geomorphology; origins - natural or artificial; hydrology; soil type; water quality; water depth, water permanence; fluctuations in water level; tidal variations; downstream area; general climate, etc.

Soil & geology	shingle, peat, nutrient-rich, sedimentary, clay, mud, sand, gravel, pebble, chert/flint
Geomorphology and landscape	lowland, coastal, subtidal rock (including rocky reefs), shingle bar, barrier beach, subtidal sediments (including sandbank/mudbank), intertidal sediments (including sandflat/mudflat), open coast (including bay), enclosed coast (including embayment), lagoon
Nutrient status	no information
pH	alkaline, circumneutral
Salinity	brackish / mixosaline, fresh, saline / euhaline
Soil	mainly organic
Water permanence	usually permanent
Summary of main climatic features	Annual averages (Teignmouth, 1971–2000) (www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/averages/19712000/sites/teignmouth.html) Max. daily temperature: 14.2° C Min. daily temperature: 8.0° C Days of air frost: 15.2 Rainfall: 850.0 mm Hrs. of sunshine: 1710.0

General description of the Physical Features:

The site is a long linear shingle beach (Chesil Bank) enclosing a brackish lagoon (the Fleet). The Fleet is the largest and best example of a barrier-built saline lagoon in the UK, and Chesil is one of the three major shingle structures in the UK. The salinity gradient, peculiar hydrographic regime and varied substrates, together with associated reedbed and intertidal habitats and the relative lack of pollution in comparison to most other lagoons, have resulted in the Fleet being extraordinarily rich in wildlife.

17. Physical features of the catchment area:

Describe the surface area, general geology and geomorphological features, general soil types, general land use, and climate (including climate type).

The site is a long linear shingle beach (Chesil Bank) enclosing a brackish lagoon (the Fleet). The Fleet is the largest and best example of a barrier-built saline lagoon in the UK, and Chesil is one of the three major shingle structures in the UK.

18. Hydrological values:

Describe the functions and values of the wetland in groundwater recharge, flood control, sediment trapping, shoreline stabilization, etc.

Shoreline stabilisation and dissipation of erosive forces, Maintenance of water quality (removal of nutrients)

19. Wetland types:

Marine/coastal wetland

Code	Name	% Area
J	Coastal brackish / saline lagoons	65

E	Sand / shingle shores (including dune systems)	29.3
Sp	Saline / brackish marshes: permanent	2.3
G	Tidal flats	1.9
H	Salt marshes	1.5

20. General ecological features:

Provide further description, as appropriate, of the main habitats, vegetation types, plant and animal communities present in the Ramsar site, and the ecosystem services of the site and the benefits derived from them.

On the landward, more stable side of Chesil Bank, large, internationally and nationally important populations of shingle plants occur including an almost continuous belt of shrubby seablite alongside the Fleet lagoon. The Bank is also the breeding site for the largest populations of little tern and ringed plover in south-west Britain. The Fleet lagoon contains outstanding communities of aquatic plants and invertebrates, and supports large numbers of wildfowl and waders. The plant life includes no fewer than 150 species of algae and the lagoon is best known for the most extensive mixed populations of eelgrass and tasselweeds in Britain. The Fleet also supports distinct and highly unusual mollusc associations and other notable invertebrates. It is an important breeding area for fish and is a bass nursery. In all, 23 species of fish have been recorded. Other habitats which are integral components of the site include saltmarsh, reedbeds, grassland and scrub.

Ecosystem services

21. Noteworthy flora:

Provide additional information on particular species and why they are noteworthy (expanding as necessary on information provided in 12. Justification for the application of the Criteria) indicating, e.g. which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered or biogeographically important, etc. *Do not include here taxonomic lists of species present – these may be supplied as supplementary information to the RIS.*

Nationally important species occurring on the site.

Lamprothamnium papulosum (Nationally Rare)

Ruppia spiralis (Nationally Scarce)

Zostera spp. (Nationally Scarce)

22. Noteworthy fauna:

Provide additional information on particular species and why they are noteworthy (expanding as necessary on information provided in 12. Justification for the application of the Criteria) indicating, e.g. which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered or biogeographically important, etc., including count data. *Do not include here taxonomic lists of species present – these may be supplied as supplementary information to the RIS.*

Birds

Species currently occurring at levels of national importance:

Species regularly supported during the breeding season:

Little tern , *Sterna albifrons albifrons*, W Europe 81 apparently occupied nests, representing an average of 4.1% of the GB population (Seabird 2000 Census)

Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:

Common greenshank , *Tringa nebularia*, Europe/W Africa 6 individuals, representing an average of 1% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Species with peak counts in winter:

Little egret , *Egretta garzetta*, West Mediterranean 24 individuals, representing an average of 1.4% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Common pochard , *Aythya ferina*, NE & NW Europe 659 individuals, representing an average of 1.1% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Red-breasted merganser , <i>Mergus serrator</i> , NW & C Europe	270 individuals, representing an average of 2.7% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
Common coot , <i>Fulica atra atra</i> , NW Europe	2139 individuals, representing an average of 1.2% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Species Information

Nationally important species occurring on the site.

Fish.

Dicentrarchus labrax

Invertebrates.

Armandia cirrhosa (RDS insufficient info.)

Gammarus insensibilis (RDS Rare)

Nematostella vectensis (RDS Rare)

Paludinella littorina (RDS Rare)

Pseudomogoplistes squamiger (RDS endangered)

Tenellia adpersa (RDS insufficient info.)

23. Social and cultural values:

Describe if the site has any general social and/or cultural values e.g. fisheries production, forestry, religious importance, archaeological sites, social relations with the wetland, etc. Distinguish between historical/archaeological/religious significance and current socio-economic values.

Aesthetic

Aquatic vegetation (e.g. reeds, willows, seaweed)

Archaeological/historical site

Environmental education/ interpretation

Fisheries production

Non-consumptive recreation

Scientific research

Sport fishing

Sport hunting

Tourism

Traditional cultural

b) Is the site considered of international importance for holding, in addition to relevant ecological values, examples of significant cultural values, whether material or non-material, linked to its origin, conservation and/or ecological functioning? No

If Yes, describe this importance under one or more of the following categories:

- i) sites which provide a model of wetland wise use, demonstrating the application of traditional knowledge and methods of management and use that maintain the ecological character of the wetland:
- ii) sites which have exceptional cultural traditions or records of former civilizations that have influenced the ecological character of the wetland:
- iii) sites where the ecological character of the wetland depends on the interaction with local communities or indigenous peoples:
- iv) sites where relevant non-material values such as sacred sites are present and their existence is strongly linked with the maintenance of the ecological character of the wetland:

24. Land tenure/ownership:

Ownership category	On-site	Off-site
Local authority, municipality etc.	+	+
National/Crown Estate	+	+
Private	+	+

25. Current land (including water) use:

Activity	On-site	Off-site
Nature conservation	+	
Tourism	+	+
Recreation	+	+
Current scientific research	+	+
Fishing: (unspecified)	+	+
Fishing: commercial	+	+
Fishing: recreational/sport	+	+
Marine/saltwater aquaculture	+	+
Gathering of shellfish	+	+
Bait collection	+	
Arable agriculture (unspecified)		+
Permanent arable agriculture		+
Grazing (unspecified)		+
Permanent pastoral agriculture		+
Hay meadows		+
Hunting: recreational/sport	+	+
Industry		+
Sewage treatment/disposal	+	+
Harbour/port		+
Flood control	+	+
Transport route		+
Urban development		+
Non-urbanised settlements		+
Military activities	+	+

26. Factors (past, present or potential) adversely affecting the site's ecological character, including changes in land (including water) use and development projects:

Explanation of reporting category:

1. Those factors that are still operating, but it is unclear if they are under control, as there is a lag in showing the management or regulatory regime to be successful.
2. Those factors that are not currently being managed, or where the regulatory regime appears to have been ineffective so far.

NA = Not Applicable because no factors have been reported.

Adverse Factor Category	Reporting Category	Description of the problem (Newly reported Factors only)	On-Site	Off-Site	Major Impact?

No factors reported	NA				

For category 2 factors only.

What measures have been taken / are planned / regulatory processes invoked, to mitigate the effect of these factors?

Is the site subject to adverse ecological change? NO

27. Conservation measures taken:

List national category and legal status of protected areas, including boundary relationships with the Ramsar site; management practices; whether an officially approved management plan exists and whether it is being implemented.

Conservation measure	On-site	Off-site
Site/ Area of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI/ASSI)	+	+
Special Protection Area (SPA)	+	
Land owned by a non-governmental organisation for nature conservation		+
Management agreement	+	+
Site management statement/plan implemented	+	
Other	+	
Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA)		+
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	+	
Management plan in preparation		+

b) Describe any other current management practices:

The management of Ramsar sites in the UK is determined by either a formal management plan or through other management planning processes, and is overseen by the relevant statutory conservation agency. Details of the precise management practises are given in these documents.

28. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:

e.g. management plan in preparation; official proposal as a legally protected area, etc.

No information available

29. Current scientific research and facilities:

e.g. details of current research projects, including biodiversity monitoring; existence of a field research station, etc.

Contemporary.

Fauna.

Numbers of migratory and wintering wildfowl and waders are monitored annually as part of the national Wetland Birds Survey (WeBS), organised by the British Trust for Ornithology, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

Breeding seabird surveys carried out annually.

Chesil and the Fleet cSAC sublittoral monitoring for English Nature.

Environment.

Fleet Study Group: academics and others involved in a variety of specialist research projects.

Water quality (ECUS 2003; Johnston & Gilliland 2000); monitoring by the Environment Agency.

European Marine Site monitoring – site characterisation report by the Plymouth Marine Partnership

Completed.

Flora and Fauna.

Various baseline surveys conducted in 1993/4 by oil company exploring in Lyme Bay, includes plant and invertebrate surveys of Chesil Bank and marine surveys within the Fleet and offshore. Seasonal monitoring of the Fleet carried out from 1995-96 by Swansea University

Flora.

Zostera and *Ruppia* monitoring carried out in 1983 and 1991 by EN.

30. Current communications, education and public awareness (CEPA) activities related to or benefiting the site:

e.g. visitor centre, observation hides and nature trails, information booklets, facilities for school visits, etc.

The Chesil Bank and Fleet Nature Reserve Warden gives talks, leads guided walks and provides a range of educational material in the form of leaflets and newsletters. The Heritage Coast Service is also involved in guided walks and other events, also in practical conservation tasks. The Chesil Beach Centre is an excellent information/interpretation centre of modest size and there are information panels provided throughout the site.

31. Current recreation and tourism:

State if the wetland is used for recreation/tourism; indicate type(s) and their frequency/intensity.

Activities, Facilities provided and Seasonality.

Two caravan parks are adjacent to the site from which it is possible to gain access into the site. Use is mainly April to October. Heritage Coast Path - runs alongside the inland boundary of part of the site - bird watching, walking - all year. There are moorings within part of the site and windsurfing, kite surfing and sailing occur adjacent to the site - all year. Diving occurs both within and adjacent to the site - all year but mainly April to October. Bait-digging and angling occurs within the site - all year. Swimming and sunbathing during the summer.

32. Jurisdiction:

Include territorial, e.g. state/region, and functional/sectoral, e.g. Dept. of Agriculture/Dept. of Environment, etc. Head, Natura 2000 and Ramsar Team, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, European Wildlife Division, Zone 1/07, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6EB

33. Management authority:

Provide the name and address of the local office(s) of the agency(ies) or organisation(s) directly responsible for managing the wetland. Wherever possible provide also the title and/or name of the person or persons in this office with responsibility for the wetland.

Site Designations Manager, English Nature, Sites and Surveillance Team, Northminster House, Northminster Road, Peterborough, PE1 1UA, UK

34. Bibliographical references:

Scientific/technical references only. If biogeographic regionalisation scheme applied (see 15 above), list full reference citation for the scheme.

Site-relevant references

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- Downie, AJ (1996) The lagoon sandworm *Armandia cirrhosa*: Part 1: results of the 1995 survey of Portland Harbour and the entrance to the Fleet; Part 2: a species action plan. *English Nature Research Reports*, No. 202
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Please return to: **Ramsar Secretariat, Rue Mauverney 28, CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland**
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APPENDIX 3

Citation for the Radipole Lake SSSI

COUNTY: DORSET SITE NAME: RADIPOLE LAKE

DISTRICT: WEYMOUTH AND PORTLAND

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended

Local Planning Authority: WEYMOUTH AND PORTLAND BOROUGH COUNCIL,
Dorset County Council

National Grid Reference: SY 672805 Area: 96.4 (ha.) 238.2 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 194 1:10,000: SY 67 NE, 68 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1952 Date of Last Revision: 1977

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1985 Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Most of the site is leased to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and managed as a nature reserve.

Site area increased.

Reasons for Notification:

The former estuary of the River Wey, this site comprises a variety of wetland habitats of great importance for birds as a breeding, wintering and passage site. The lake and reed beds have formed since the exclusion of tidal water in the 1920's, though areas of relict saltmarsh remain. Scrub is an important additional habitat and wet grassland on alluvium over Oxford Clay is also present.

Extensive beds of Reed *Phragmites australis* have developed both as young and vigorous pure stands and, on slightly higher land, in a mixture with other marsh species including Reed Canary Grass *Phalaris arundinacea*, Pond Sedge *Carex riparia* and rushes *Juncus* spp. Patches of saltmarsh – probably originally islands in the estuary – are an interesting feature and present greater botanical diversity. There is a coarse turf dominated by Creeping Bent *Agrostis stolonifera* and Red Fescue *Festuca rubra*, in which the rushes *Juncus maritimus* and *J. gerardii* are frequent. Sea Club Rush *Scirpus maritimus*, Sea Aster *Aster tripolium* and Sea Milkwort *Glaux maritima* are also typical of this saltmarsh element.

The northern and western fringes of the site have most scrub, with Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and Sallow *Salix caprea* being the principal species. The river edge and flood meadows support various wetland-marsh plants.

More than 50 bird species breed at this site, including a very large population of Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* and rare species such as Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*, Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus* and Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*. The reedbeds support important pre-migration roosts of Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*, House Martin *Delichon urbica*, Swallow *Hirundo rustica* and Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*. There is also a very large passage of Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* in early autumn. The site is

important for wintering wildfowl with the regular flock of Shoveler *Anas clypeata* of particular note. Radipole Lake is also rich in invertebrates. Butterflies and dragonflies are well represented, and more than 450 species of moths have been recorded. The spider *Argiope bruennichi* is locally frequent.

APPENDIX 4

Citations for The Crookhill Brick Pit SSSI and SAC

Site name: Crookhill Brick Pit

County: Dorset

District: West Dorset

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under section 28C of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as inserted by Schedule 9 to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

Local Planning Authority: Dorset County Council, West Dorset District Council

National Grid reference: SY 644 798

Area: 4.77 (ha)

Ordnance Survey sheet: 1:50,000: 194

1:10,000: SY 67 NW

Date notified: 25 November 2003

Reasons for notification:

The site is a disused brickpit, which provides the best exposure of Lower and Middle Oxford Clay in southern England, showing a sequence through the *jason*, *coronatum* and *athleta* zones, of Middle Jurassic age.

It is also a nationally important site because it supports an exceptional population of great crested newts *Triturus cristatus*. The SSSI includes the breeding ponds and the terrestrial habitat that is used by the newts for resting, foraging and hibernation.

General description:

Crookhill Brick Pit is located three kilometres to the west of Weymouth. The site is situated on Oxford Clay.

Geology

This disused brickpit provides the best exposure of Lower and Middle Oxford Clay in southern England, showing a sequence through the *jason*, *coronatum* and *athleta* zones, of Middle Jurassic age. There are considerable differences in zonal thickness and lithology between this section and the sections in the Midlands, with the *grossouvrei* subzone being greatly expanded at Crookhill. The clays and shales seen here contain a rich fauna of ammonites, belemnites and bivalves, with the *athleta* zone fauna being particularly prolific and important. Reineckeid ammonites, usually rare in the British Callovian, occur fairly commonly in the *athleta* zone here. Crookhill is a key locality for British Callovian biostratigraphy.

Great crested newts

The particular combination and juxtaposition of aquatic and terrestrial habitats provides ideal breeding, foraging and hibernation conditions for the great crested newt. Numbers of newts recorded on the site are exceptionally high for Dorset. The

newts depend on water for breeding and particularly favour moderately deep, well-vegetated ponds without fish. The variety of water bodies on the site, which are largely rain-fed and hence of high water quality, provide extremely good conditions for newts. Reeds *Phragmites australis* dominate the aquatic vegetation of the pond margins and floating vegetation is mainly broad-leaved pondweed *Potamogeton natans*.

During the first two or three years of life before breeding starts, and outside the spring breeding season, great crested newts are dependent on terrestrial habitats to provide foraging areas and places to hibernate. The terrestrial habitat consists of rough grassland, scrub and the remains of the former brickworks that provide valuable refugia for amphibians. The open grassland of the southern slopes is a mixture of false oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, red fescue *Festuca rubra* and Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, with herbs characteristic of calcareous clay soils such as colt's-foot *Tussilago farfara* and bristly ox-tongue *Picris echoides*. Other herbs scattered in this grassland include yellowwort *Blackstonia perfoliata*, creeping cinquefoil *Potentilla reptans*, birds-foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, common knapweed *Centaureum erythraea* and grass vetchling *Lathyrus nissolia*. To the south of the clay pit a small remnant of old grassland has the local plants strawberry clover *Trifolium fragiferum* and pepper-saxifrage *Silaum silaus*. The scrub includes bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, elder *Sambucus niger*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, willow *Salix spp.* and common gorse *Ulex europaeus*. The habitats that occur around the ponds on this site are as important as the presence of suitable ponds.

In addition to the reasons for notification, the site also supports populations of smooth newt *Triturus vulgaris*, palmate newt *T. helveticus*, grass snake *Natrix natrix*, slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, common lizard *Lacerta vivipara* and adder *Vipera berus*. Southern hawker *Aeshna cyanea* and scarce hawker dragonflies *Aeshna mixta* are also found on the site.

Other Information:

The great crested newt is listed in:

- Annexes II and IVa of the European Communities Directive 92/43/EEC, on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora – the Habitats Directive
- Appendix II of the Bern Convention
- Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species list

This is a Geological Conservation Review (GCR) site.

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Crookhill Brick Pit

Site details



Location of Crookhill Brick Pit SAC/SCI/cSAC

Country	England
Unitary Authority	Dorset
Centroid*	SY643797
Latitude	50 36 59 N
Longitude	02 30 16 W
SAC EU code	UK0030349
Status	Designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Area (ha)	4.71

* This is the approximate central point of the SAC. In the case of large, linear or composite sites, this may not represent the location where a feature occurs within the SAC.

General site character

Inland water bodies (standing water, running water) (5%)
 Dry grassland. Steppes (50%)
 Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (35%)
 Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (10%)

[Boundary map](#) and associated biodiversity information on the NBN Gateway.

[Natura 2000 data form](#) for this site as submitted to Europe (PDF format, size 30kb).

[Interactive map](#) from MAGIC (Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside).

Note:

When undertaking an appropriate assessment of impacts at a site, **all** features of European importance (both primary and non-primary) need to be considered.

Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site

Not applicable

Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site

Not applicable.

Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site

1166 Great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*

Crookhill Brickpit is a disused brickpit which has important geological features (exposure of Lower and Middle Oxford Clay). The site contains several ponds that support **S1166 Great crested newts *Triturus cristatus***, including one pond which has been recorded to have one of the highest counts of the species in Dorset. The site also contains a variety of habitats used by the great crested newt in the terrestrial phase, including grassland, scrub and quarry spoil. The newer ponds were created as part of a mitigation project for the construction of a waste transfer station.

Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection

Not applicable.

Many designated sites are on private land: the listing of a site in these pages does not imply any right of public access.