

Joint Local Plan Review for West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland

BEAMINSTER BACKGROUND PAPER
PREFERRED OPTIONS CONSULTATION VERSION

AUGUST 2018

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1. Introduction

PURPOSE OF BACKGROUND PAPER

- 1.1 This document is one of a number of background papers produced to support the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan Review.
- 1.2 This paper provides information about:
 - the approach taken to the future development in the town of Beaminster,
 - details of current and previous development,
 - rates of growth and how this might change in the future.
- 1.3 The paper also gives details of the site selection process including detailed considerations of environmental constraints in the area.

LOCAL PLAN AND THE REVIEW

- 1.4 In October 2015, West Dorset District Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council adopted their Joint Local Plan¹. The adopted Local Plan sets out a long term planning strategy for the area and includes detailed policies and site proposals for housing, employment, leisure and infrastructure. The adopted Local Plan is the main basis for making decisions on planning applications.
- 1.5 In his report on the examination of the Joint Local Plan², the Inspector indicated that he considered it to be *"imperative that an early review is undertaken"* and that the review should be in place by 2021. The objective of the review is to identify additional housing land capable of meeting housing need to 2036, identify a long-term strategy for development in the Dorchester area; and reappraise housing provision in Sherborne.
- 1.6 The Local Plan review will also be considering available land to meet housing needs to 2036. There is therefore a need to ensure growth at other settlements including Beaminster, is sufficient to meet needs over this longer-term period.
- 1.7 If a review is absent, or the Local Plan becomes silent or out of date because of a lack of progress, the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies and the councils would have less control in determining where development goes. Failure to undertake a review or even start it promptly would be likely to increase the risk of developers submitting planning applications at an early stage.
- 1.8 At the same time as the review is underway there are opportunities to clarify the interpretation of existing policies.

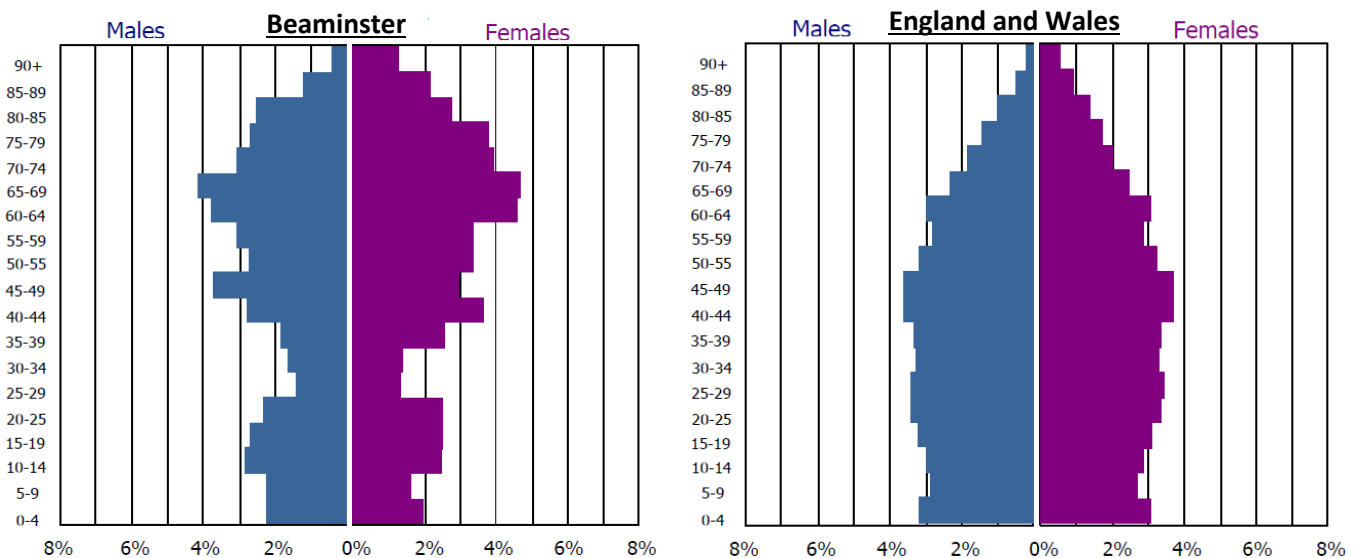
¹ <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/jointlocalplan/west/weymouth>

² <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/421782/West-Dorset-Weymouth--Portland-Adopted-Local-Plan-Inspectors-Report>

2. Beaminster in Context

- 2.1 Beaminster is a small rural market town, located wholly within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It has a population of just over 3,000 and provides services and facilities to the surrounding rural area. It has a secondary school, a range of local shops and community facilities in its centre, and some significant local businesses.
- 2.2 The town lies about 6 miles north of Bridport, on the A3066, at the source of the River Brit. Crewkerne lies about 6 miles north-west of the town and provides rail links to London Waterloo, Sherborne and Exeter. Beaminster has an impressive landscape setting, set within a bowl of hills that provide a dramatic backdrop to the north of the town.
- 2.3 There is a net out-flow of workers (by about 400 each day), as there are more economically active residents than people working in the town. The major employers in the town are Clipper Teas, Danisco and Dorset County Council.

Figure 2.1: Population profile - Beaminster



- 2.4 The population profile of Beaminster is heavily weighted towards those in the older age groups. This is reflected in a stronger proportion of older residents (aged 65+) than the average of England & Wales. This ageing population places demands on health, housing and support services.

3. Background to growth of the town

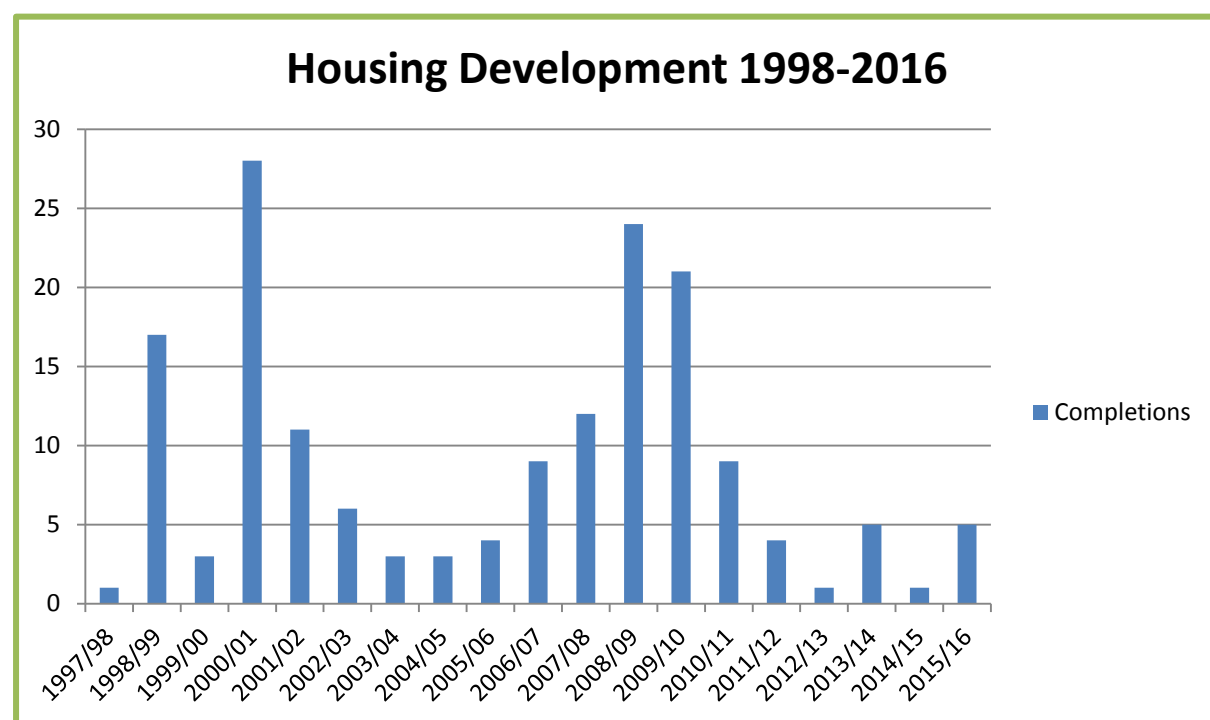
- 3.1 Between 1991 and 2011, the population of the parish of Beaminster has grown by around 13% from a population base of 2,770 persons in 1991. The most recent population estimates put the population of the town at 3,097 persons (2014 mid-year estimates).
- 3.2 Over the past 18 years, approximately 167 dwellings have been built in the town. Figures 3.1 and 3.2 show how these dwellings have been delivered over time. Figures in brackets are completed affordable units. With the local plan allocation north of Broadwindsor Road supplying a further 120 homes and the additional sites that have been granted permission in the parish, it is anticipated that around 216 new dwellings will be built over the coming five-year period.

Figure 3.1: Housing Completions – Beaminster

97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07
1	17	3	28	11	6	3	3	4	9
07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	TOTAL
12	24	21	9	4 (0)	1 (0)	5 (0)	1 (0)	5 (0)	167

Source: WDDC and WPBC

Figure 3.2: Development at Beaminster



For info, see: <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/statistics/town-factsheets>

- 3.3 At the 1st April 2016, planning permission existed for a total of 64 dwellings around the town, all of which are expected to be delivered by 2021. Since April 2016, planning permission has been granted for 45 units at Clipper Teas. The other main sites with planning permission are:
- Land north of Flaxfield Rise – 28 dwellings
 - 7-13, Hogshill Street – 9 dwellings
- 3.4 In combination with the 120 homes allocation at Land north of Broadwindsor Road there is an estimated supply of 229 dwellings around the town.
- 3.5 There has been no affordable housing delivered over the last 6 years, however, this is likely to change as a planning application is anticipated for a scheme of 30 units as an affordable housing exception at Flaxfield Road.

4. Current Local Plan for Beaminster

- 4.1 The adopted local plan identifies Beaminster as a focus for growth outside of the main towns of Dorchester and Weymouth. The approach in Policy SUS2 of the local plan indicates that a larger proportion of growth is to be directed towards the larger more sustainable settlements within the settlement hierarchy.
- 4.2 In preparation of the adopted local plan, a number of sites around the town were considered including:
- Land to the north of Broadwindsor Road;
 - Land off Hollymoor Lane; and
 - Land at Lane End Farm.
- 4.3 In Beaminster, land to the north of the Broadwindsor Road (on the western edge of the town) was allocated in the 2006 local plan for employment uses. A larger, more viable site was then included in the adopted local plan which is intended to accommodate space for strategic landscape planting. The allocation is for predominantly housing but with a small amount of B1 employment on the eastern side of the site adjacent to the existing commercial uses.
- 4.4 Figure 4.1 below provides further information about the existing development site allocations in Beaminster.

Figure 4.1: Current allocated sites in Beaminster

ALLOCATION	USE/UNITS	STATUS	DELIVERY
Land north of Broadwindsor Road (BEAM1)	120 Residential Units	No progress	Complete by 2021.
Land at Lane End Farm (BEAM2)	0.7ha Employment	No progress	Unknown

- 4.5 Land at Hollymoor Lane was previously considered by the local plan inspector as part on the 2006 local plan examination. The previous Inspector concluded that the area that lies within a flood risk zone would be unsuitable, and that a hard settlement edge should be avoided, but that overall the site should be considered further to meet the development needs of the town. The need for traffic management was subsequently raised as an issue by Dorset County Council, through their involvement in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and the site was ultimately removed from the Plan.
- 4.6 Although not considered suitable for housing, land at Lane End Farm was allocated for employment uses.

5. Constraints

- 5.1 Beaminster is constrained by:
- the Dorset AONB;
 - the River Brit floodplain;
 - Scheduled monuments and listed buildings;
 - Beaminster Conservation Area; and
 - Beaminster Manor & Parnham House Registered Park and Gardens.

LANDSCAPE

- 5.2 National policy puts an emphasis on the protection and enhancement of designated landscapes. In particular, the 2018 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that "*Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.*"
- 5.3 Beaminster is located within the heart of the Dorset AONB which covers the entire town and the surrounding countryside. The Dorset AONB designation and accompanying management plan should be important considerations for any future development within the settlement.
- 5.4 The town is situated within the Brit Valley landscape character area. The diverse settled river valley of the Brit runs from the bowl shaped vale around Beaminster, southwards towards Bridport and finishes at West Bay on the coast. The key characteristics of the area include:
- Meandering flat river floodplain with water meadows, damp neutral pastures and linear wet woodlands;
 - Undulating hills with shallow, branching clay valleys;
 - Patchwork of small, open fields on valley bottom with trimmed hedgerows, trees and occasional stone walls;
 - Small oak, ash and hazel woodlands on valley sides with large arable and pastoral fields with strip lynchets;
 - Long open views along the valley floors.

HERITAGE ASSETS

- 5.5 In relation to the historic environment, the 2018 NPPF recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

- 5.6 Beaminster Manor is situated immediately north-east of the centre of Beaminster, to the north-west of North Street, a minor road leading north-east from Beaminster to Maiden Newton. Beaminster Manor (listed Grade II* as The Manor House and Stable Block) stands towards the south-western end of the site beneath the south-west-facing slope of the park. The informal pleasure grounds are situated to the north and north-west of the house. Lawns extend to the north and north-west to a crescent-shaped lake approximately 100m north of the house. The park is situated on the steep, south-west facing slope above and to the north east of the house and pleasure grounds. The park remains predominantly pasture with scattered specimen trees, and is divided by fences into several grazing enclosures.
- 5.7 Parnham is situated approximately 0.5km south of Beaminster, to the west of the A3066, Bridport Road, which leads south from Beaminster to Bridport. Parnham (listed Grade I) stands on a level terrace towards the southern end of the site. The formal gardens are situated principally to the south of the house, with further formal gardens to the north-east, and areas of informal pleasure ground to the north and west of the house. The park is situated principally to the north and south-east of the house, and is divided into two unequal areas by the avenue and former east drive. There is a further area of park on the east-facing slope to the west of the River Brit and The Grove.
- 5.8 The town centre has a high concentration of listed buildings and has a designated conservation area. Waddon Hill Roman Fort, a scheduled ancient monument, is located 2km to the west of the town on a prominent position.

BIODIVERSITY

- 5.9 National policy highlights the importance of safeguarding local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity. It also indicates that plans should identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains in biodiversity.
- 5.10 The nearest environmental designations are Horn Park Quarry SSSI, approximately 1km to the west of the town, and Mapperton and Poorton Vales SSSI, approximately 3km to the south-east.
- 5.11 Horn Park quarry represents a key reference section for rocks of the Aalenian Stage of geological time, laid down approximately 170 million years ago during the Jurassic Period.
- 5.12 Comprising a series of remote West Dorset valleys of striking landscape, Mapperton and Poorton Vales has diverse nature conservation interest. Streams have cut steep-sided valleys, the floors of which are occupied by wet woodland, fen or marshy grassland. These wet valley bottoms provide outstanding habitat for

invertebrates and support a rich fauna including many rare and nationally scarce species.

5.13 In addition to international and national designations there are Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI), a local designation.

- Higher Meerhay Farm - A large and varied area of semi-natural habitats;
- Sutton Ham / Woods Coppice - Deciduous woodland and a strip of wet grassland;
- Clay Coppice - Species-rich deciduous woodland;
- Horn Coppice - Deciduous woodland with streams and a deciduous flora;
- Whitcombe Farm - A varied site of semi-natural habitats;
- Stonecombe - A small meadow of unimproved neutral grassland;
- The Grove & Parnham Park - A varied site of woodland and parkland habitats by the River Brit;
- Edmund Coombe Coppice - A small hilltop woodland;
- Shatcombe Farm - Semi-improved calcareous grassland with an area of rush pasture;
- Chartknolle/Waddon Hill - An area of small, unimproved fields and earthworks with a calcareous influence in places;
- Chantry Farm - Fields of neutral grassland, scrub and woodland on a S-facing slope;
- White Sheet Farm, Stonecombe - Unimproved calcareous & marshy grassland, semi-improved neutral grassland, & small semi-natural broadleaved woodland;
- Meerhay Manor - A series of neutral grassland fields and an area of woodland;
- Horn Park - A good hay meadow on south-facing slopes;
- Scite/Great Westwood Coppices - An area of deciduous woodland with numerous streams and gullies.

FLOOD RISK

5.14 National policy states that "...inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk..." through the application of the Sequential Test.

5.15 Beaminster is located at the source of the River Brit which is fed by several streams (Flood zones 2 & 3) that run through the town.

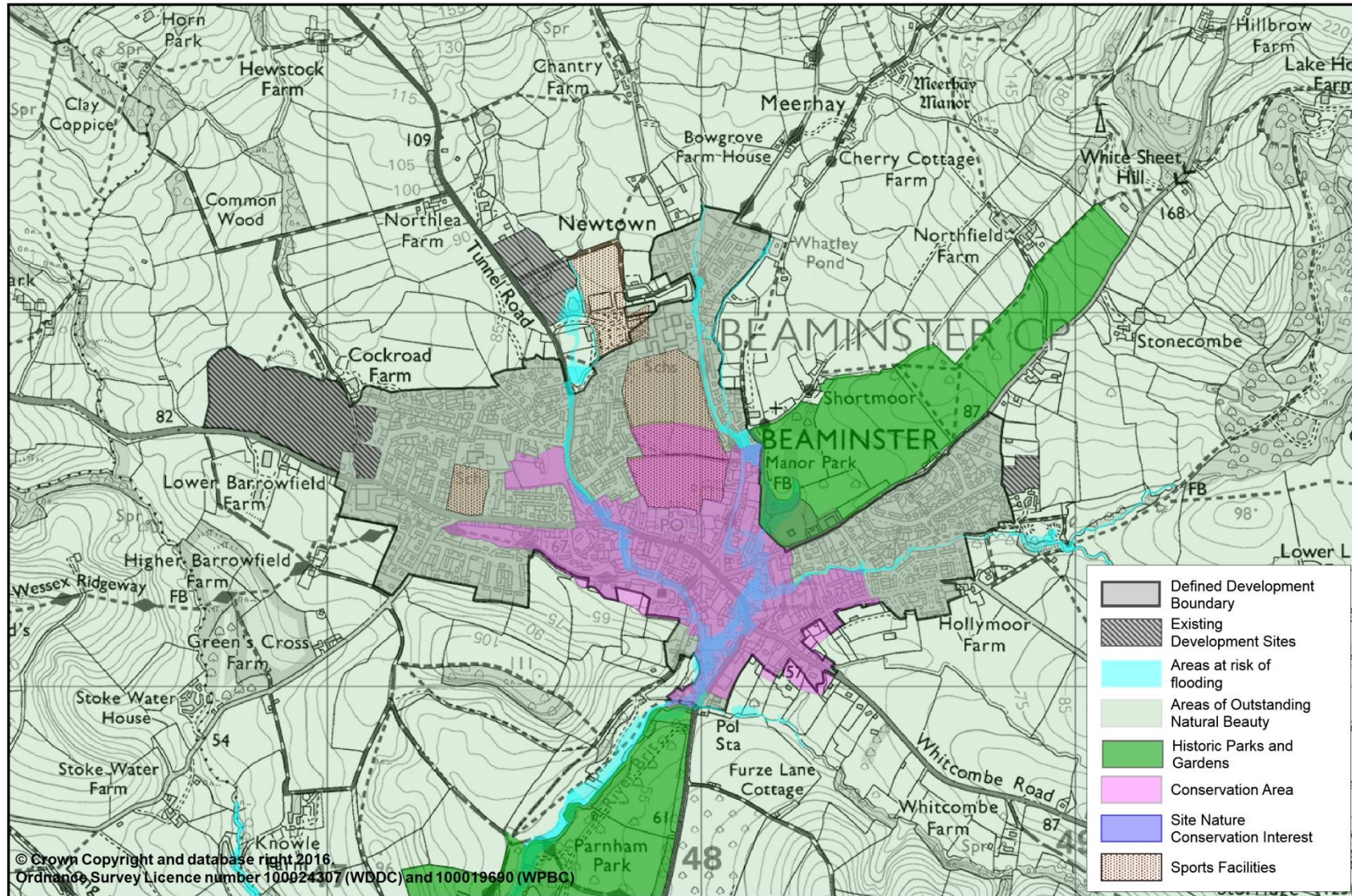
AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

- 5.16 Agricultural land is an important resource that needs to be managed in an appropriate way to underpin sustainable development. The agricultural land is important for the production of food, biomass, water storage and biodiversity.
- 5.17 National policy as set out in the NPPF and the Planning Policy Guidance indicates that agricultural land classification is a material consideration when making planning decisions and that development should be steered away from the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3).
- 5.18 The Planning Policy Guidance expands on the text within the NPPF stating that national policy "...expects local planning authorities to take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. This is particularly important in plan making when decisions are made on which land should be allocated for development. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality."
- 5.19 Agricultural land is classified as grades 1 to 5. Best and most versatile agricultural land is considered to be land classified as grade 1, grade 2 and grade 3. Beaminster and its surrounding environs' have been classified as Grade 3 agricultural land. There is a large linear band of Grade 4 agricultural land on the steep slopes to the north and east. There are two pockets of Grade 2 agricultural land in the vicinity of Parnham Park.

TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- 5.20 The access to everyday facilities by sustainable modes of transport is an important factor in considering the location of new development.
- 5.21 The A3066 links Beaminster with Crewkerne to the north and Bridport to the south. The town has a close association with Broadwindor to the west which can be reached by the B3163. Beaminster does not have a train station.

MAP 1: ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS AROUND BEAMINSTER



6. Opportunities

6.1 The 2018 NPPF states that there are three overarching sustainable development objectives: economic, social and environmental. Future growth at Beaminster will help:

Economic

- Support further jobs provision in the town;
- Continue its role as a local service centre to surrounding villages;

Social

- Meet local needs for housing including affordable housing;
- Improve accessibility to community facilities including schools;

Environmental

- Retain its attractive historic character;
- Respect the beauty of the surrounding countryside;
- Help resolve transport issues.

6.2 Across Dorset the proportion of the population that are of working age is projected to decline significantly over coming years with the proportion for West Dorset expected to be around 49% by 2036.

6.3 The main implication of this change is the decline in the available workforce reducing the sustainability of the local economy overall. In addition the per-capita productivity is less than Dorset as a whole and less than nationally resulting in relatively low wages and low levels of investment in innovation.

7. Issues and Options Consultation

- 7.1 This section explains how the initial options at Beaminster were developed for the issues and options consultation in February 2017. The local plan review needed to consider development opportunities around the eight main settlements in the plan area as identified in the adopted policy SUS2. This includes the town of Beaminster.

INSPECTOR'S COMMENTS ON GROWTH AT BEAMINSTER

- 7.2 The planning inspector's report into the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan noted that "three sites were identified in the Pre-Submission Plan as suitable locations for housing provision in Beaminster but were later reduced to one following public consultation on the draft proposals". Local residents cited road safety concerns along a narrow section of East Street in relation to the proposal at Hollymoor Lane.
- 7.3 The inspector noted that the *"Highway Authority has been unable to resolve complaints about this problem"*. It was suggested that a 'shared surface' could provide a workable solution and the Inspector was of the view that such a surface *"could help offset safety issues although further work should be undertaken to determine what level of additional development could be accommodated"*.
- 7.4 In relation to the Land off Broadwindsor Road allocation (BEAM1) for 120 dwellings, the Inspector concluded that the site does not represent *"major development in the AONB"* however he did accept that the site would represent *"a significant scheme for Beaminster"*.
- 7.5 The inspector went on to state that he "had regard to its potential impact on the landscape while recognising that some development is required to maintain the vitality of the settlement" and concluded that "there are exceptional circumstances to support the allocation because of the need for new homes and jobs".

APPROACH TO INITIAL OPTIONS

- 7.6 In considering the initial future growth options at Beaminster, the councils undertook a 360 degree search of all possible development site options around the town. Unsuitable options were discounted at an early stage through an initial site sieving exercise and sustainability appraisal.

MAP 2: BROAD AREAS OF SEARCH – BEAMINSTER

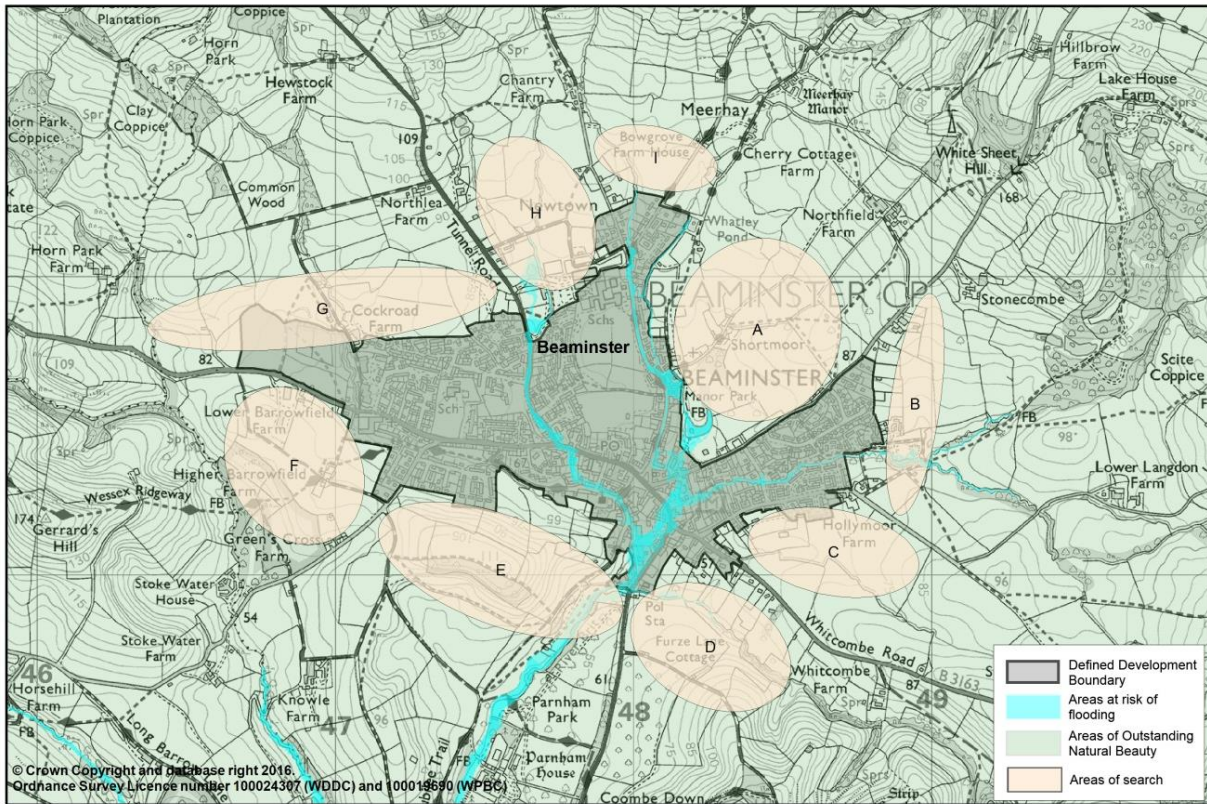


Figure 7.1: Details of each broad search area

AREA A - NORTH-EAST OF BEAMINSTER	
Landscape	The area of search is within the Dorset AONB and on land that slopes gently up in a northeast direction towards White Sheet Hill.
Heritage	Beaminster Manor a Grade II* listed manor and Registered Historic Park and Garden is located in this area of search. Development may impact on the setting on Beaminster Conservation Area. There is a large concentration of listed buildings within Beaminster.
Biodiversity	Meerhay Manor SNCI - A series of neutral grassland fields and an area of woodland
Flooding	There is a small network of surface water channels. The area of search is largely within EA Flood Zone 1.
Agricultural Land	Grade 3 agricultural land.
Transport	Development layout will need to consider the interconnection with the existing town centre services. The development option can be accessed

	from North Street to the south and Fleet Street from the west.	
Infrastructure	The area of search is on the edge of the existing settlement. There would be access to local services including schools, health facilities and retail.	
Other	None	
Conclusion	Impacts on AONB, landscape, Historic Park and Garden and setting of Beaminster Conservation Area	Little or no potential in this area – not taken forward

AREA B - EAST OF BEAMINSTER

Landscape	The area of search is within the Dorset AONB and on land that slopes up in a gentle northern direction towards White Sheet Hill.	
Heritage	Development within this option may impact on the setting of Beaminster Manor a Registered Historic Park and Garden. Development may impact on the setting on Beaminster Conservation Area. There is a large concentration of listed buildings within Beaminster.	
Biodiversity	White Sheet Farm, Stonecombe SNCI - Unimproved calcareous & marshy grassland, semi-improved neutral grassland, & small semi-natural broadleaved woodland	
Flooding	There is a small network of surface water channels. The area of search is largely within EA Flood Zone 1 with some land adjacent the river Brit and its tributary within Flood Zones 2 & 3.	
Agricultural Land	Grade 3 agricultural land with some grade 4.	
Transport	The site option is located some distance from town centre services. The northern half of the site option can be accessed from North Street and the southern half from Holymoor Common Lane. There is a known pinch point at the western end of East Street which restricts the scale of built development.	
Infrastructure	The area of search is on the edge of the existing settlement. There would be access to local services including schools, health facilities and retail.	
Other	None	
Conclusion	Impacts on AONB, landscape, Historic	Little or no potential in this

	Park and Garden and SNCI. Potential for development in the south of this area.	area – not taken forward
AREA C - LAND BETWEEN WHITCOMBE ROAD & HOLLYMOOR COMMON LANE		
Landscape	The area of search is within the Dorset AONB and on land that slopes gently east towards Storridge Farm.	
Heritage	Development may impact on the setting on Beaminster Conservation Area. There is a large concentration of listed buildings within Beaminster.	
Biodiversity	None	
Flooding	There is a small network of surface water channels. The area of search is largely within EA Flood Zone 1.	
Agricultural Land	Grade 3 agricultural land.	
Transport	The development option is located some distance from town centre services. The site option has multiple points of access to Hollymoor Lane. There is a known pinch point at the western end of East Street which restricts the scale of built development. Access directly onto Whitcombe Road (B3163) would by-pass the East Street Pinch point.	
Infrastructure	The area of search is on the edge of the existing settlement. There would be access to local services including schools, health facilities and retail.	
Other	None	
Conclusion	Impacts on AONB, landscape, Beaminster conservation area. Potential for development in the north of this area.	Some potential in this area (BE5 East of Whitcombe Road & BE6 North of Hollymoor Common Lane)

AREA D - LAND BETWEEN BRIDPORT ROAD & WHITCOMBE ROAD		
Landscape	The area of search is within the Dorset AONB and is on land that is low lying north and south of the stream before rising steeply towards Coombe Down Hill.	
Heritage	Development may impact on the setting on Beaminster Conservation Area and Parnham Park a Registered Park & Garden. There is a large concentration of listed buildings within Beaminster.	

Biodiversity	Whitcombe Farm SNCI - A varied site of semi-natural habitats.	
Flooding	There is a small network of surface water channels. The area of search is largely within EA Flood Zone 1.	
Agricultural Land	Largely Grade 3 agricultural land with some grade 2.	
Transport	The site option is located within easy walking distance to the town centre. The site option can be directly accessed from the Bridport Road. The north eastern portion of the site can be accessed from Whitcombe Road.	
Infrastructure	The area of search is on the edge of the existing settlement. There would be access to local services including schools, health facilities and retail.	
Other	None	
Conclusion	Impacts on AONB, landscape, Historic Park and Garden, Beaminster conservation area and SNCI. Part of the area is at risk of flooding.	Little or no potential in this area – not taken forward

AREA E - SOUTH OF BEAMINSTER

Landscape	The site is within the Dorset AONB and on land that slopes steeply up to Edmund Coombe Coppice and is generally a highly visible development option.	
Heritage	Parnham Park a Registered Park & Garden is located within this area of search. Development may impact on the setting on Beaminster Conservation Area. There is a large concentration of listed buildings within Beaminster.	
Biodiversity	Edmund Coombe Coppice SNCI - A small hilltop woodland	
Flooding	There is a small network of surface water channels. The area of search is largely within EA Flood Zone 1 with some land adjacent the river Brit located within Flood Zones 2 & 3.	
Agricultural Land	Largely Grade 2 agricultural land with some grade 3.	
Transport	The site option is located within easy walk of town centre services. Pedestrian access can be achieved via St Mary Well Street. Vehicular	

	access can be achieved directly onto Stoke Road.	
Infrastructure	The area of search is on the edge of existing settlement. There would be access to local services including schools, health facilities and retail.	
Other	None.	
Conclusion	Impacts on AONB, landscape, SNCI, Historic Park and Garden and Beaminster conservation area. Part of area is at risk of flooding.	Little or no potential in this area – not taken forward

AREA F - SOUTH OF BROADWINDSOR ROAD		
Landscape	The site option is within the Dorset AONB. The eastern half of the site option close to the urban edge is low lying and could contain some build development. Further west the land slopes steeply up towards Gerrard's Hill.	
Heritage	Development may impact on the setting on Beaminster Conservation Area. There is a large concentration of listed buildings within Beaminster.	
Biodiversity	Horn Park Quarry SSSI, approximately 1km to the west of the town. Sutton Ham/Woods Coppice SNCI - Deciduous woodland and a strip of wet grassland.	
Flooding	None.	
Agricultural Land	Grade 3 agricultural land.	
Transport	The site option is located some distance from town centre services but easy walking distance from St Mary's Primary School. The site option can be accessed from Broadwindsor Road to the north. The southern half of the site can be accessed from Stoke Road.	
Infrastructure	The area of search is on the edge of the existing settlement. There would be access to local services including schools, health facilities and retail.	
Other	None	
Conclusion	Impacts on AONB, landscape and heritage assets.	Some potential in this area (BE1 South of Broadwindsor Road)

AREA G - WEST OF TUNNEL ROAD		
Landscape	The site option is located within the Dorset AONB. Land rises to the north and northwest and development would be prominent on the higher slopes.	
Heritage	Development may impact on the setting on Beaminster Conservation Area. There is a large concentration of listed buildings within Beaminster.	
Biodiversity	Horn Park Quarry SSSI approximately 1km to the west of the town. Clay Coppice SNCI - Species-rich deciduous woodland. Horn Coppice SNCI - Deciduous woodland with streams and a deciduous flora. Horn Park SNCI - A good hay meadow on south-facing slopes.	
Flooding	There is a small network of surface water channels. The area of search is largely within EA Flood Zone 1.	
Agricultural Land	Grade 3 agricultural land.	
Transport	The site option is located some distance from the town centre. A road access can be achieved either from Broadwindsor Road to the south or Tunnel Road to the east. This site option presents an opportunity to connect the two routes (Broadwindsor Road & Tunnel Road) and bypass the town centre.	
Infrastructure	The area of search is on the edge of the existing settlement. There would be access to local services including schools, health facilities and retail.	
Other	None	
Conclusion	Impacts on AONB, landscape and heritage assets.	Some potential in this area (BE2 West of Tunnel Road)

AREA H - EAST OF TUNNEL ROAD	
Landscape	The site option is located within the Dorset AONB. Land adjacent the urban edge is largely flat before rising steeply north towards the ridge.
Heritage	Development may impact on the setting on Beaminster Conservation Area. There is a large concentration of listed buildings within Beaminster.

Biodiversity	Chantry Farm SNCI - Fields of neutral grassland, scrub and woodland on an S-facing slope.	
Flooding	There is a small network of surface water channels. The area of search is largely within EA Flood Zone 1. There is a small area of Flood Zone 2 & 3 below Lane End Farm.	
Agricultural Land	Grade 3 agricultural land.	
Transport	The site option is located some distance from town centre services. The site option is located a short walk from Beaminster School. The site can be accessed from Tunnel Road to the west and Chantry Lane to the east. A stream course runs through the middle of the site which would require bridging.	
Infrastructure	The area of search is on the edge of existing settlement. There would be access to local services including schools, health facilities and retail.	
Other	None.	
Conclusion	Impacts on AONB and landscape. Part of area is at risk of flooding.	Some potential in this area (BE3 West of Chantry Lane)

AREA I - NORTH OF BEAMINSTER

Landscape	The site option is located within the Dorset AONB. Land adjacent the urban edge is largely flat before rising steeply north towards the ridge.	
Heritage	Development within this option may impact on the setting of Beaminster Conservation Area and Beaminster Manor a Registered Historic Park and Garden. There is a large concentration of listed buildings within Beaminster.	
Biodiversity	Chantry Farm SNCI - Fields of neutral grassland, scrub and woodland on an S-facing slope.	
Flooding	There is a small network of surface water channels. The area of search is largely within EA Flood Zone 1.	
Agricultural Land	Grade 3 agricultural land with some grade 4.	
Transport	The site option is located some distance from town centre services. It is located a short walk from Beaminster School. The site can be accessed from Chantry Lane to the west and Bowgrove Road to the east.	

Infrastructure	The area of search is on the edge of existing settlement. There would be access to local services including schools, health facilities and retail.	
Other	None.	
Conclusion	Impact on AONB and landscape impacts	Some potential in this area (BE4 Off Bowgrove Road)

REFINED OPTIONS

- 7.7 Having considered the constraints associated with each broad area, a refined set of development options have been identified. These areas formed the basis for the Issues and Options consultation for the future growth of Beaminster.
- 7.8 The refined options shown in Map3 were identified as possible options for growth at Beaminster that merited further consideration. For each option an indicative level of development was calculated and initial considerations on the delivery of each site were identified. This detail is included in Figure 7.5.

MAP 3: REFINED OPTIONS FOR GROWTH AT BEAMINSTER

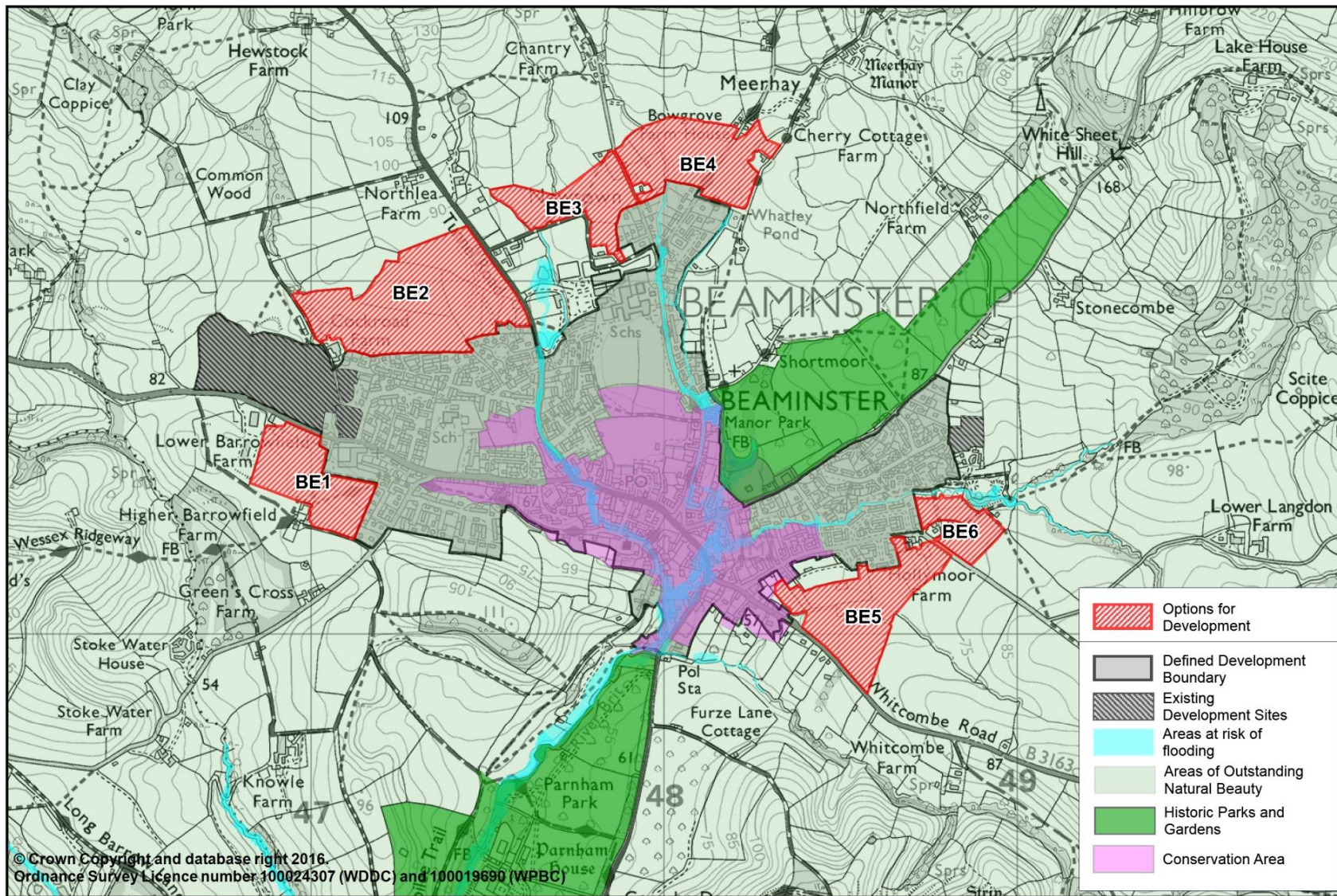


Figure 7.2: Details of refined options for growth at Beaminster

REFINED OPTION	INDICATIVE CAPACITY / MAIN USE	DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS
BE1: South of Broadwindsor Road	115 homes Residential	<p>The site option is located to the south of Broadwindsor Road and within the Dorset AONB.</p> <p>This site is enclosed between the existing built up area of the town and the valley slopes and as such is relatively well contained within the landscape.</p> <p>The site option has an acceptable access, but would need pedestrian and cycle links to schools and the town centre. The site would require bus stops on the B3162.</p> <p>An assessment of the impact of development on the listed Barrowfield Farmhouse and other buildings is required.</p> <p>The area is not subject to fluvial flooding, however there may be a risk of offsite flooding downstream at Broadwindsor Road & Clay Lane.</p> <p>The majority of the site area is currently designated as safeguarded mineral within the Minerals Strategy (adopted 2014). The MPA would wish to be consulted further should this site progress.</p>
BE2: West of Tunnel Road	278 homes Residential	<p>The site option is located on the northwest edge of Beaminster and to the west of Tunnel Road within the Dorset AONB.</p> <p>An assessment would be required of any potential heritage impact with particular consideration to the Beaminster Conservation Area.</p> <p>This site option presents an opportunity to connect the two routes (Broadwindsor Road & Tunnel Road) and bypass the town centre.</p> <p>The site option would need to provide pedestrian and cycle links to the town centre. The site would require bus stops on the B3162.</p> <p>The area is not subject to fluvial flooding however there may be a risk of on and offsite surface water flood risk.</p> <p>There is no conflict with safeguarded mineral areas.</p>

<p>BE3: West of Chantry Lane</p>	<p>95 homes Residential</p>	<p>The site option is located between Tunnel Road and Chantry Lane and is within the Dorset AONB. The site option is located higher up the valley slopes and may have a landscape impact.</p> <p>In highway terms the site option is not acceptable as the highway capacity is a limiting factor. Traffic directed through Fleet Street may be possible if access can be achieved from Tunnel Road in association with Local Plan site Beam 2. There is no direct frontage onto highway.</p> <p>The area is not subject to fluvial flooding however there may be a risk of on site surface water flooding and off site flooding downstream at Monmouth Gardens, Beaminster School & Newtown.</p> <p>There is no conflict with safeguarded mineral areas.</p>
<p>BE4: Off Bowgrove Road</p>	<p>149 homes Residential</p>	<p>The site option is located on the northern edge of Beaminster between Chantry Lane and Bromsgrove Road within the Dorset AONB. The site option is located higher up the valley slopes and may have a landscape impact.</p> <p>An assessment would be required of any potential heritage impact on the listed Bowgrove Farmhouse.</p> <p>The site option is not acceptable in highways terms as there are - highway capacity issue. Fleet Street is a limiting factor which can't be improved.</p> <p>The area is not subject to fluvial flooding however there may be a risk of on site surface water flooding and off site flooding at Beaminster School & Newtown.</p> <p>There is no conflict with safeguarded mineral areas.</p>
<p>BE5: East of Whitcombe Road</p>	<p>161 homes Residential</p>	<p>The site option is located on the southern edge of Beaminster between Whitcombe Road and Hollymoor Common Lane within the Dorset AONB.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to the impact on listed Edgely Cottage and listed buildings in East Street.</p> <p>The site option is not acceptable unless access can be achieved via Whitcombe Road as access off Hollymoor Lane is unsuitable. There is a lack of pedestrian facilities to town.</p> <p>The area is not subject to fluvial flooding however there</p>

		<p>may be a risk of on site surface water flooding and off site flooding downstream at Whitcombe Rd, Southgate & Bridport Road.</p> <p>There is no conflict with safeguarded mineral areas.</p>
BE6: North of Hollymoor Common Lane	51 homes Residential	<p>The site option is located on the southern edge of Beaminster to the north of Hollymoor Common Lane within the Dorset AONB.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to the impact on listed buildings in East Street.</p> <p>The site option is not acceptable. A previous appeal decision concluded the site was an unsustainable location and that there are access limitations of Hollymoor Lane.</p> <p>The area is not subject to fluvial flooding however there may be a risk of on site surface water flooding.</p> <p>There is no conflict with safeguarded mineral areas.</p>

- 7.9 Although the table and map presents six options that could be developed individually there is no reason why they could not come forward in combination or as smaller parcels.
- 7.10 Further information about the potential initial development options was sought through the Issues and Options consultation, which started in February 2017. At that time it was recognised that additional work would need to be undertaken to refine site suitability and fully establish infrastructure requirements as well as constraints to development such as landscape or heritage impacts.

8. Issues and Options Consultation

- 8.1 The Issues and Options consultation provided an opportunity for stakeholders and the public to give their views on the initial development options. Ten public consultation events were held between 20th February and 9th March 2017. It is estimated that 1,172 people attended these events.

Location	Date	Estimated attendance
Sherborne	20 February 2017	92
Weymouth	21 February 2017	72
Portland	23 February 2017	48
Charminster	24 February 2017	244
Dorchester	27 February 2017	86
Beaminster	28 February 2017	105
Lyme Regis	1 March 2017	54
Bridport	2 March 2017	127
Crossways	7 March 2017	230
Chickerell	9 March 2017	114
Total		1,172

- 8.2 As part of the consultation, 76 responses were received that related to Beaminster. A summary of the responses received for each of the questions asked are set out below. It should be noted that these are a summary of the responses received and do not necessarily reflect the Council's position.
- 8.3 The questions asked at the issues and options stage relating to Beaminster are set out below. A summary of issues raised by the public and stakeholders has been added under each question.

RESPONSES ON SITE:

OPTION BE1 - SOUTH OF BROADWINDSOR ROAD

- 8.4 Members of the general public noted that the site has the potential to flood, the site is prominent and that there may be a landscape impact. There were also concerns in respect of the loss of wildlife interest and agricultural land. The Woodland Trust notes the proximity of the site to their sites Pucketts Wood and Workhouse Wood site and sought maintenance contributions. The general public

responses however, suggest the site is the most accessible of the sites proposed and would have good connectivity to town centre services.

- 8.5 Natural England and the Dorset AONB both express concerns that the site is prominent in nature and may negatively impact on wider views within the AONB. The two organisations conclude that further landscape work is necessary to assess the visual impact. Part of the site is within a minerals safeguarding area. Dorset County Council Transport concludes that the site is accessible but that pedestrian / cycle / bus links are necessary.
- 8.6 The site has few constraints but further assessment work is required to determine the visual landscape impact of development.

HOW THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED

- 8.7 Within any development proposal, there would be a need to avoid areas at risk of fluvial flooding and incorporate measures to manage surface water flows.
- 8.8 The site is allocated for employment uses and is therefore not expected to generate additional visitors to the nearby Pucketts Wood.
- 8.9 Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The Councils are mindful that planning permission should be refused for major development in designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest.
- 8.10 The Plan's development strategy identifies Beaminster as a market town and a focus for future development. Past housing delivery rates however, show a low level of housing completions and no affordable housing delivered in the last six years. This slow rate of development has contributed towards a decline in the Beaminster population. Further development at Beaminster is needed to meet identified local need and support the local economy.
- 8.11 The Spatial Strategy of the Plan identifies Weymouth and Dorchester as the highest priority locations for new development and the market and coastal towns as a focus for growth. The Local Plan Review continues this strategy and directs the highest levels of new growth towards Dorchester and Sherborne, both settlements outside the Dorset AONB designation. Much of West Dorset is covered by the Dorset AONB including the larger towns of Bridport, Lyme Regis and Beaminster which are being expected to meet their local needs.
- 8.12 To inform the selection of preferred options, evidence has been gathered to identify the sensitivity to development of the historic environment and the landscape. More detail on the results of this evidence assessment, and the need for further detailed assessments, are included in Section 9 of this paper.

- 8.13 Development should secure net gains for biodiversity, especially where opportunities exist to incorporate and enhance biodiversity in and around developments, and to connect into and improve wider ecological networks.
- 8.14 For development options within the Minerals Safeguarding Area for building stone, the Mineral Planning Authority is unlikely to object on mineral safeguarding grounds but would request that consideration is given to re-using onsite some or all of any stone extracted as part of site development.

RESPONSES ON SITE:

OPTION BE2 - WEST OF TUNNEL ROAD

- 8.15 Comments received note that there is surface water run-off from the north and that the site would need to provide pedestrian / cycle / bus transport links to the town. The Dorset AONB and Natural England both recognise that this site (BE2) along with BE3/ BE4 represent significant urban encroachment and are likely to be prominent from views from the surrounding hills. From a landscape perspective these options are the least preferred. Further detailed landscape assessment work would be required alongside an ecological assessment of wildlife interest.
- 8.16 The landowner of site BE2 notes that the site is deliverable and would deliver high quality residential development and provide significant infrastructure improvements. A new distributor road, accessed off the land adjoining the Tunnel Road (A3066) could extend in a westerly direction and link with Broadwindsor Road (B3163), via a number of different options. There are no heritage assets (either statutory or non-statutory) within the immediate vicinity. The site is within walking distance of the Town Centre.

HOW THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED

- 8.17 Within any development proposal, there would be a need to avoid areas at risk of fluvial flooding and incorporate measures to manage surface water flows.
- 8.18 There will be a need to ensure that good cycle and pedestrian links are created between development sites and the existing town.
- 8.19 Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The Councils are mindful that planning permission should be refused for major development in designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest.
- 8.20 The Plan's development strategy identifies Beaminster as a market town and a focus for future development. Past housing delivery rates however show a low level of housing completions and no affordable housing delivered in the last six years. This slow rate of development has contributed towards a decline in the Beaminster

population. Further development at Beaminster is needed to meet identified local need and support the local economy.

- 8.21 The Spatial Strategy of the Plan identifies Weymouth and Dorchester as the highest priority locations for new development and the market and coastal towns as a focus for growth. The Local Plan Review continues this strategy and directs the highest levels of new growth towards Dorchester and Sherborne, both settlements outside the Dorset AONB designation. Much of West Dorset is covered by the Dorset AONB including the larger towns of Bridport, Lyme Regis and Beaminster which are being expected to meet their local needs.
- 8.22 To inform the selection of preferred options, evidence has been gathered to identify the sensitivity to development of the historic environment and the landscape. More detail on the results of this evidence assessment, and the need for further detailed assessments, are included in Section 9 of this paper.
- 8.23 Development should secure net gains for biodiversity, especially where opportunities exist to incorporate and enhance biodiversity in and around developments, and to connect into and improve wider ecological networks.
- 8.24 The need for improvements to the highway network is acknowledged. Development would be required to provide suitable access onto Tunnel Road and to explore opportunities to link with new development north of Broadwindsor Road.

RESPONSES ON SITE:

OPTION BE3 – WEST OF CHANTRY LANE

- 8.25 The general public note that there would be a loss of agricultural land, there would be traffic congestion along Fleet Street and that the site would need to provide pedestrian / cycle / bus transport links to the town. The Dorset AONB and Natural England both recognise that this site BE3 along with BE2/ BE4 represent significant urban encroachment and are likely to be prominent from views from the surrounding hills. From a landscape perspective these options are the least preferred. Further detailed landscape assessment work would be required alongside an ecological assessment of wildlife interest.

HOW THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED

- 8.26 The development option has been excluded on the basis of landscape impact upon the Dorset AONB and the limited highway capacity off Fleet Street.

RESPONSES ON SITE:

OPTION BE4 – OFF BOWGROVE ROAD

- 8.27 Comments recognised that the land is currently used for agriculture and exceeds natural boundaries. There are landscape issues and concerns about pedestrian safety as Newton has no pavement. The Town Council raised traffic concerns along Fleet Street. The Dorset AONB and Natural England both recognise that this site BE4 along with BE2/ BE3 represent significant urban encroachment and are likely to be prominent from views from the surrounding hills. From a landscape perspective these options are the least preferred. Further detailed landscape assessment work would be required alongside an ecological assessment of wildlife interest.

HOW THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED

- 8.28 The development option has been excluded on the basis of landscape impact upon the Dorset AONB and the limited highway capacity of Fleet Street. Consideration has also been given to the impact on listed Bowgrove Farmhouse and surface water flood risk.

RESPONSES ON SITE:

OPTION BE5 – EAST OF WHITCOMBE ROAD

- 8.29 The general public had concerns relating to flood risk, street lighting and road safety. Distance from schools and employment opportunities were cited. Beaminster Town Council added that East Street is particularly narrow and unsuitable for increased transport movements. The Town Council also highlight a recent appeal on the site which was dismissed on access and heritage reasons. The landowner for a small portion of the development option BE5 has expressed the intention to resist development on their land.
- 8.30 Natural England advises that this option represents a significant urban encroachment within the Dorset AONB. In their view the option should not be taken further without a detailed landscape assessment completed in consultation with the Dorset AONB Team. The Dorset AONB believe that there maybe some capacity for housing within these sites without a significant impact on the character and appearance of the AONB. In particular the western portion of BE6 was considered potentially suitable in landscape and visual terms.

HOW THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED

- 8.31 The development option has been excluded on the basis of landscape impact upon the Dorset AONB and the limited highway capacity of East Street. Consideration is

also given to the listed Edgely Cottage, Beaminster conservation area and listed buildings in East Street.

RESPONSES ON SITE:

OPTION BE6 – NORTH OF HOLLYMOOR COMMON LANE

- 8.32 The general public had concerns relating to surface water flood risk. Distance from schools and employment opportunities were cited. Beaminster Town Council added that East Street / Whitcombe Road is particularly narrow and unsuitable for increased transport movements.
- 8.33 Natural England advises that this option represents a significant urban encroachment within the Dorset AONB. In their view the options should not be taken further without a detailed landscape assessment completed in consultation with the Dorset AONB Team. The Dorset AONB believes that there may be some capacity for housing within this site without a significant impact on the character and appearance of the AONB. BE5 is a large site, the majority of which is considered to be unsuitable, due to its outlying location and prominent appearance. Within the eastern extent of the site there may be some limited opportunities for small scale growth in the fields to the south of Hollymoor Farm.

HOW THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED

- 8.34 The development option has been excluded on the basis of landscape impact upon the Dorset AONB and the limited highway capacity of Fleet Street. Consideration is given to the impact on listed buildings in East Street and surface water flood risk.

11-i Beaminster has grown at an average rate of just 3 dwellings a year over the last 5 years. Should we maintain that level of growth, or take a strategic longer term view for the growth of the town?

RESPONSES ON QUESTION 11-I:

- 8.35 Beaminster Town Council considered the existing planned growth of nearly 200 units is sufficient to satisfy the Plan requirements until 2031.
- 8.36 A member of the public argued past delivery rates should not be used as the basis for determining the level of future growth. They suggested a comprehensive SHMA, resulting in a revised OAN figure, is the only way to understand the full needs of the area. Others suggested the level of growth should be no less than the average rate of new dwellings per year over the last 5 years preferably taking a longer term view. Beaminster should grow at no more than 8 -10 dwellings per annum or maintain existing rate of growth (3 dwellings over the last 5 years).

- 8.37 Other issues raised related to; the loss of major employers, lack of interest in existing employment allocations, the need for a modest level of housing to maintain local services and support its role in the wider rural community. There were some comments referring to the decline in population, slow growth rate and large number of holiday homes. Other local constraints to development included the loss of historic identity and impact on the town's Conservation Area.
- 8.38 Natural England notes Beaminster lies within the Dorset AONB and recommend none of the development options are carried forward unless the Councils are satisfied there is a clear local need that cannot be met through the existing allocations within the town or in the development options considered outside the AONB. The strategy should include options for providing appropriate off site landscape mitigation measures that would help mitigate any adverse impacts to the Dorset AONB.
- 8.39 Some residents suggested the current development pace is about right for a small town with poor transport links and cramped internal road infrastructure. Other constraints include; the AONB designation, private parkland and strung out street pattern. As well as a lack of infrastructure; shopping, schools, medical facilities, work and employment.

HOW THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED

- 8.40 As the Local Plan review progresses, consideration will be given to the level of growth appropriate for the town. Generally, strategic infrastructure is easier to deliver through larger coordinated developments however, there is also a need to have a range of smaller sites to maintain the supply of housing and to provide a range of different housing products for the local market.
- 8.41 Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The Councils are mindful that planning permission should be refused for major development in designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest.
- 8.42 The Plan's development strategy identifies Beaminster as a market town and a focus for future development. Past housing delivery rates however show a low level of housing completions and no affordable housing delivered in the last six years. This slow rate of development has contributed towards a decline in the Beaminster population. Further development at Beaminster is needed to meet identified local need and support the local economy.
- 8.43 The Spatial Strategy of the Plan identifies Weymouth and Dorchester as the highest priority locations for new development and the market and coastal towns as a focus for growth. The Local Plan Review continues this strategy and directs the

highest levels of new growth towards Dorchester and Sherborne, both settlements outside the Dorset AONB designation. Much of West Dorset is covered by the Dorset AONB including the larger towns of Bridport, Lyme Regis and Beaminster which are being expected to meet their local needs.

- 8.44 To inform the selection of preferred options, evidence has been gathered to identify the sensitivity to development of the historic environment and the landscape. More detail on the results of this evidence assessment, and the need for further detailed assessments, are included in Section 9 of this paper.
- 8.45 The development sites taken forward are located outside the town's Conservation Area. In order to minimise landscape impact and views to and from heritage assets principally Waddon Hill a Scheduled Ancient Monument, Horn Park a registered park and garden and the town's conservation area, built development will be restricted to the lower slopes.
- 8.46 Beaminster has a vital and viable town centre and is classified as a local centre in the retail hierarchy. The centre has a very good convenience provision, which is anchored by a Co-op store and is supported by a number of independent businesses.
- 8.47 The Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) advises that the scale of growth proposed would require contributions towards small-scale enhancements of the Beaminster surgeries.
- 8.48 The County Council's preferred approach for the delivery of new school places is through contributions towards the extension of Beaminster Secondary School.
- 8.49 Beaminster benefits from a range of existing employment opportunities which will be strengthened by further development at Lane End Farm and Land South of Broadwindsor Road.

11-ii Are there any additional issues related to the development of the site options?

RESPONSES ON QUESTION 11-II:

- 8.50 Comments suggest existing development sites far exceed the town's needs. House building in Beaminster has outstripped the increase in population, from this it can be concluded that new properties here increase the number of either empty, second or holiday homes. The development industry advise that when allocating sites the Councils should be mindful that to maximise housing supply the widest possible range of sites, by size and market location are required so that house builders of all types and sizes have access to suitable land in order to offer the widest range of products.

- 8.51 The general public identified the importance of the local wildlife, hedgerows and the likelihood of Great Crested Newts in the area.
- 8.52 Other comments noted Beaminster attracts retirees not people of working age. Given concerns that there are plans to reduce GP surgeries in this part of Dorset, there is limited public transport and there are difficulties in funding social care, it was felt that an increase in this demographic group would not be sustainable. There are also few opportunities for employment so any residents of working age are very likely to be travelling out of the town.
- 8.53 The Dorset AONB team advise that in terms of landscape and visual sensitivity, land surrounding Beaminster is considered to be highly constrained. Landscape quality surrounding the town is generally high. Furthermore, the extent to which the town is overlooked from the surrounding hills increases the probability of significant visual effects arising from further development. Although it is recognised that the rate of housing growth at Beaminster has been relatively low over the last 5 years, the area already has a substantial site allocated for housing and employment growth. Given this position and the sensitivity of the options provided, it is considered unlikely that further substantial allocations would be supported. Dorset Local Nature Partnership added that development should respect the beauty of the surrounding countryside.
- 8.54 The lack of town centre facilities is a concern. It was noted that there are only 2 small convenience stores both expensive with no parking, 1 butcher & 1 greengrocer. There is no bank and 2 poorly supported pubs both unsuitable for families due to the lack of gardens. There is little room to increase retail outlets for an enlarged population. A by-pass from Broadwindsor Road to Tunnel Road would have a negative effect on town retailing.
- 8.55 Beaminster is not strategically placed and connected with good road or rail transport links. Current traffic flow in this street is already a hazard for the mainly elderly residents with several dangerous “pinch points” for traffic.

HOW THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED

- 8.56 In order to maximise housing supply a range of sites are being taken forward including Land North of Broadwindsor Road and Land to the West of Tunnel Road.
- 8.57 Development should secure net gains for biodiversity, especially where opportunities exist to incorporate and enhance biodiversity in and around developments, and to connect into and improve wider ecological networks.
- 8.58 The CCG advises that the scale of growth proposed would require contributions towards small scale enhancements of the Beaminster surgeries.
- 8.59 Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONB’s which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic

beauty. The Councils are mindful that planning permission should be refused for major development in designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest.

- 8.60 The Plan's development strategy identifies Beaminster as a market town and a focus for future development. Past housing delivery rates however show a low level of housing completions and no affordable housing delivered in the last six years. This slow rate of development has contributed towards a decline in the Beaminster population. Further development at Beaminster is needed to meet identified local need and support the local economy.
- 8.61 The Spatial Strategy of the Plan identifies Weymouth and Dorchester as the highest priority locations for new development and the market and coastal towns as a focus for growth. The Local Plan Review continues this strategy and directs the highest levels of new growth towards Dorchester and Sherborne, both settlements outside the Dorset AONB designation. Much of West Dorset is covered by the Dorset AONB including the larger towns of Bridport, Lyme Regis and Beaminster which are being expected to meet their local needs.
- 8.62 To inform the selection of preferred options, evidence has been gathered to identify the sensitivity to development of the historic environment and the landscape. More detail on the results of this evidence assessment, and the need for further detailed assessments, are included in Section 9 of this paper.
- 8.63 Beaminster has a vital and viable town centre and is classified as a local centre in the retail hierarchy. The centre has a very good convenience provision, which is anchored by a Co-op store and is supported by a number of independent businesses.
- 8.64 Development options with the greatest transport constraints have been discounted but the need for improvements to the highway network is acknowledged. New sites will also be expected to contribute towards walking and public transport improvements.

11-iii What are the infrastructure requirements for the development of the site options, individually or in combination with others?

RESPONSES ON QUESTION 11-III:

- 8.65 Dorset Local Nature Partnership believes that more opportunities for enhancing biodiversity should be incorporated within the area-based sections. Beaminster Town Council highlighted sewage capacity, rain run-off, health care facilities, lack of public transport and that Beaminster functions as a village rather than a market town. Highways England believes it unlikely that there will be a requirement for mitigation on the Strategic Road Network. Adverse impacts on the existing road

infrastructure including, East Street, Fleet Street and Whitcombe Road were raised.

HOW THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED

- 8.66 Development should secure net gains for biodiversity, especially where opportunities exist to incorporate and enhance biodiversity in and around developments, and to connect into and improve wider ecological networks.
- 8.67 Wessex Water recommends that the scale of development proposed will require water and sewage network reinforcement. Within any development proposal, there would be a need to avoid areas at risk of fluvial flooding and incorporate measures to manage surface water flows.
- 8.68 The CCG advises that the scale of growth proposed would require contributions towards small scale enhancements of the Beaminster surgeries.
- 8.69 Development options with the greatest transport constraints have been discounted but the need for improvements to the highway network is acknowledged. New sites will also be expected to contribute towards walking and public transport improvements.

9. Developing Preferred Options

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

9.1 To support the Local Plan Review the Councils have commissioned a series of studies and consulted statutory infrastructure providers to gather evidence to help underpin policy formation. The following sections draw out these studies main findings and infrastructure provider expectations in respect of future Development at Beaminster by topic.

RETAIL STUDY

9.2 This study provides a robust evidence base to inform plan-making and decision taking. It provides an assessment of the need for new retail floorspace at the strategic level to help inform the likely scale, type, location and phasing of new retail development over the next 15 years.

Retail Hierarchy

9.3 Beaminster is classified as a 'Local Centre' as defined in the NPPF. Given the relatively small number of shops and services serving the local population, it is considered that its classification is appropriate and it is fulfilling its role and function in the retail hierarchy.

Health Check

9.4 The study also includes a health check for each of the main towns in the plan area. The health check is used to assess and monitor the overall health and performance of centres. This health check identifies that Beaminster is a vital and viable town centre. The centre's key strengths and weaknesses include the following:

- The centre is a traditional market town (although it does not have a street market), which benefits from a distinctive character and well-kept buildings.
- The centre has a very good convenience provision, which is anchored by a Co-op store and is supported by a number of independent businesses.
- Beaminster's comparison provision caters well for its local population.
- Whilst the town has an adequate retail service offer, improvements to its leisure offer are recommended in order to attract more visitors to the centre.
- Although the financial service offer of the town is in line with national averages, Beaminster does not have a high street bank.
- Beaminster has a low vacancy rate of 2.6% indicating that the town centre is performing well and is a viable shopping location.
- The town is characterised by a large number of independent businesses, which help to create a diverse and distinctive shopping environment.

- Improvements to public transport and pedestrian accessibility are suggested to increase road safety.

Needs Assessment

- 9.5 The main shopping streets cover Hogshill Street, Church Street and Prout Hill. The centre is anchored by a Co-op store and this is supported by a number of local retailers selling food and convenience goods which together serve the 'top-up' shopping needs of residents. There is a relatively strong comparison goods representation for a centre of its size and its offer comprises predominately independent retailers
- 9.6 The retail assessment has identified limited (economic) capacity for new retail floorspace over the plan period, up to 2036; 28 sqm net of new convenience goods floorspace and 98 sqm net of new comparison goods retail.
- 9.7 Beaminster has an adequate provision of services. However the consultants consider that there is scope, in qualitative terms, to improve leisure services provision in the town. There are also no banks in the town centre.

Meeting Needs in Full – Development Opportunities

- 9.8 The forecast need for limited new retail floorspace over the plan period could easily be met through the potential take-up of vacant units, the extension of existing stores (if viable), infill development (such as, for example, 7-13 Hogshill Street), and / or potential change of use applications. In any case, the historic nature of Beaminster and its very tightly configured centre, means that there are limited major development site opportunities.
- 9.9 Notwithstanding this, the development potential of the Council-owned Yarn Barton Car Park site was assessed. However, from a high level review of its location, layout and configuration the consultants consider that its suitability and viability for a new retail-led scheme is limited. Retention of parking would also be an issue.
- 9.10 The (0.28 ha) site to the rear of 7-13 Hogshill Street was also identified as having development potential. The site had consent for the conversion of existing premises and construction of new buildings to provide 2 shops, 2 flats and 12 houses (reference: 1/W/03/001539), however, only part of this scheme has been implemented. The site at 7-13 Hogshill Street does by itself provide the potential to meet the limited forecast need for new retail and leisure uses in Beaminster over the plan period.

Definition of Frontages and Primary Shopping Area

- 9.11 Beaminster's Primary Shopping Area is centred on 'The Square' and extends to 18-26 Hogshill Street. The Town Centre Boundary contains 'The Square' and extends

the length of Hogshill Street also encompassing the Council Offices on Fleet Street. Primary Shopping Frontages are defined around 'The Square' and secondary shopping frontages are defined on the northern side of Hogshill Street and 7-9 Hogshill Street on the southern side. Boundaries are outlined in the town centre policies map.

LANDSCAPE AND HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

- 9.12 A joint landscape and heritage assessment has been prepared which appraises the sensitivity of the land at the main centres of growth to the effects of development. The assessment is formed of two stages, stage one is an independent review of the landscape/heritage constraints considered at Issues and Options stage. This stage also recommends which broad areas of search should be scoped in or out of a further detailed level two assessment, the findings of which are summarised below.
- 9.13 Stage one recommended the following areas of search be scoped out on landscape and heritage grounds:
- E: South of Beaminster - The whole of this area is excluded on heritage grounds.
- 9.14 The broad areas taken forward to stage two included:
- **Beaminster 1: North-East of Beaminster** – The Stage two assessment notes that the landscape sensitivity and heritage sensitivity are both moderate to high. Beaminster Manor Park is susceptible to setting change through the loss of its wider rural setting. Development is likely be quite visible from across much of the northern section of the park, changing the immediate setting of the parkland, potentially erasing the relationship with the hamlet of Shortmoor and, depending on building heights and disposition, interfering with longer views to the downs to the north.
 - **Beaminster 2: East of Beaminster** - The Stage two assessment notes that the landscape sensitivity is moderate to high, and the heritage sensitivity is low to moderate. Development would result in a small degree of setting change to the eastern extremity of Manor Park RPG. Topography suggests that this would not be highly visible, and will not affect the core of the designed landscape.
 - **Beaminster 3: Land between Whitcombe Road & Hollymoor Common Lane** - The Stage two assessment notes that both the landscape sensitivity and the heritage sensitivity are moderate. The Conservation Area is partly buffered from the assessment area by an area of allotments, but development has the potential to give rise to setting change.
 - **Beaminster 4: Land between Bridport Road & Whitcombe Road** - The Stage assessment two notes that the landscape sensitivity is moderate to high, and

the heritage sensitivity is moderate. The assessment area would result in the loss of paddocks that, although not functionally connected to more recent properties east of Hitts House, represent a relatively intact area of historic landscape.

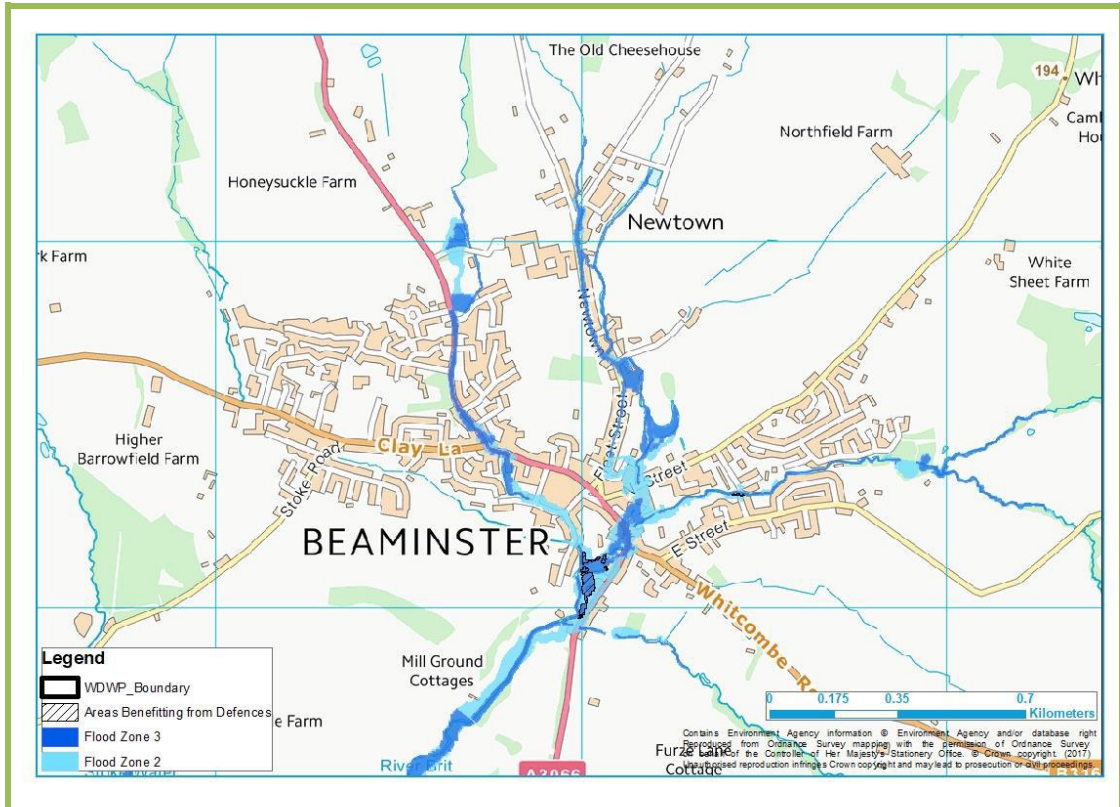
- Beaminster 5: South of Broadwindsor Road - The Stage two assessment notes that the landscape sensitivity is moderate, and the heritage sensitivity is moderate to high. Development would result in loss of Barrowfield Farmhouse's rural setting and of functionally connected land, resulting in harm to its significance.
- Beaminster 6: West of Tunnel Road - The Stage two assessment notes that the landscape sensitivity is moderate with no likely significant heritage sensitivities. Heritage sensitivity is low to moderate.
- Beaminster 7: East of Tunnel Road - The Stage two notes that landscape sensitivity is moderate and the heritage sensitivity is moderate high. Development would result in setting change to Bowgrove farmhouse by partially surrounding the asset with modern development.

STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

- 9.15 A Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared which replaces the previous Level 1 assessments for West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland. The updated SFRA provides up to date guidance on flood risk taking into account the latest flood risk information, it identifies the requirements for site-specific flood risk assessments and the application of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS). It provides a basis for applying the flood risk Sequential and Exception Tests. A comprehensive set of maps accompanies the Level 1 assessment.
- 9.16 There are a number of documented flood events in Beaminster. The main sources of flooding are recorded as fluvial and surface water. Beaminster is shown to be at risk of fluvial flooding.
- 9.17 Some properties have greater than a 1% AEP risk of flooding in the vicinity of the River Brit, including Bridport Road and Prout Hill. Beaminster is also at risk from several smaller watercourses, with flooding along the road network including Tunnel Road, Newtown, Fleet Street, where properties have greater than a 1% AEP risk of flooding.
- 9.18 There is a high risk of surface water flooding in Beaminster, notably along watercourses and the road network with some properties at risk in the 3.3% AEP event. The majority of Beaminster is shown not to be considered prone to groundwater flooding.
- 9.19 The study recommends that development should preferably be located outside of areas shown to be at current or future risk of flooding where possible.

Development in areas where surface water flooding occurs could provide an opportunity to reduce risk through reduction in impermeable surfaces and the use of SuDS. Further investigation into groundwater issues may be required to assist in locating development away from areas at risk.

Figure 9.1 Flood risk at Beaminster



SPORT & LEISURE FACILITIES NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 9.20 This study provides a detailed assessment of the current provision of indoor and built sports facilities for West Dorset identifying needs and gaps in provision. It also provides detail as to what exists in the district, its condition, location, availability and overall quality and considers demand for facilities based on population distribution, planned growth etc.
- 9.21 The evidence underpinning the assessment will be used to both identify and justify the provision of developer contributions.
- 9.22 Key strategic recommendations from the assessment include:
 - For Town Councils to actively work with key partners, including leisure providers, to ensure the sports offer addresses the needs of the whole community, particularly around an aging population.

- To encourage all state schools in the District to develop a joint use agreement which will ensure additional funding to individual schools from the Department of Education. This funding will assist with the upgrade of sports facilities.
- To identify ongoing investment, maintenance and refurbishment requirements to protect and improve existing sports facilities.
- Work with key partners to support workforce development and volunteer recruitment across the club network within the District.
- Work with management on education sites and local Sports Trust to encourage more community use for local clubs, which could increase local participation rates across certain sports.

9.23 Where appropriate, this evidence has and will be used to help identify possible planning obligations or on-site provision on development options.

10. Preferred Options Consultation

- 10.1 The responses to the Issues and Options consultation along with the evidence gathered have helped to establish two new development options for the Local Plan Review which are subject to consultation at Preferred Options stage.

SITE OPTIONS

- 10.2 The Issues and Options consultation considered six possible development options for future development. As an outcome of public consultation an additional seventh option was put forward by the owners of Lane End Farm, a current employment allocation for residential development.
- 10.3 This section sets out both the Preferred Options and excluded options. Alongside each option is an explanation why the option has or has not been taken forward.

Table 10.1: Preferred Options

REFINED OPTIONS	REASONS
Be1: South of Broadwindsor Road	Land south of Broadwindsor Road (including land south of clipper teas) is the Council's Preferred Option. There may be some landscape impact upon the Dorset AONB. Consideration has also been given to the impact on listed Barrowfield Farmhouse as well as other buildings, the Minerals Safeguarding Zone and views to Waddon Hill a heritage asset.
Be2: West of Tunnel Road	West of Tunnel Road is the Council's Preferred Option. Although there may be some landscape and heritage impact on far assets and surface water flood risk. This development option is accessible and has few other constraints.

Table 10.2: Excluded Options

REFINED OPTIONS	REASONS
Be3: West of Chantry Lane	The development option has been excluded on the basis of landscape impact upon the Dorset AONB and the limited highway capacity of Fleet Street.
Be4: Off Bowgrove Road	The development option has been excluded on the basis of landscape impact upon the Dorset AONB and the limited highway capacity of Fleet Street. Consideration has also been given to the impact on listed Bowgrove Farmhouse and surface water flood risk.
Be5: East of	The development option has been excluded on the basis of landscape

REFINED OPTIONS	REASONS
Whitcombe Road	impact upon the Dorset AONB and the limited highway capacity of East Street. Consideration is also given to the listed Edgely Cottage, Beaminster conservation area and listed buildings in East Street.
Be6: North of Hollymoor Common Lane	The development option has been excluded on the basis of landscape impact upon the Dorset AONB and the limited highway capacity of Fleet Street. Consideration is given to the impact on listed buildings in East Street and surface water flood risk.
Be7: Lane End Farm, Tunnel Road (Omission site)	The development option has been excluded on the basis of landscape impact upon the Dorset AONB and loss of allocated employment land.

PREFERRED OPTIONS

- 10.4 The Preferred Options consultation document takes forward the existing allocations from the current plan and identifies a number of new sites for housing and employment development. As detailed in Table 10.1 there are two Preferred Options for Beaminster. A full list of site-specific development policies for Beaminster is provided in Table 10.3.

Table 10.3: Full list of site specific development policies at Beaminster

POLICY	SITE
BEAM1	Land to the north of Broadwindsor Road
BEAM2	Land at Lane End Farm
BEAM3	Land West of Tunnel Road (PO)
BEAM4	Land South of Broadwindsor Road (PO)

KEY CHANGES SINCE THE ADOPTED PLAN

- 10.5 The existing site-specific policies and supporting text have been updated where necessary as part of the Preferred Options consultation.
- 10.6 The land to the West of Tunnel Road and Land south of Broadwindsor Road have been identified as a future allocations for development for Beaminster. In addition

Land to the North of Broadwindsor road is proposed to be reallocated for residential development.

- 10.7 Land to the north of Broadwindsor Road was previously a mixed use allocation in the 2015 local plan having previously been an employment allocation in the 2006 local plan. A planning application has been submitted on the south and western end of the site for up to 100 new homes and associated infrastructure. The remaining north eastern corner of the site is no longer considered suitable for employment uses as originally planned due to the recent consolidation of the Clipper Teas site and the new employment allocation proposed to the South of Broadwindsor Road.
- 10.8 Land to the south of Clipper Teas has been identified as an employment site for the future expansion of local businesses.
- 10.9 The allocated employment land at Lane End Farm has been taken forward largely unaltered.
- 10.10 The remainder of this background paper will look more closely at the two additional Preferred Options for Beaminster setting out in detail the proposed approach to development.

SITE ANALYSIS - LAND TO THE WEST OF TUNNEL ROAD

- 10.11 Land to the west of Tunnel Road is located on Beaminster's north-western edge. The site is located opposite Beaminster School and a short walk from town centre facilities. The site has the capacity to provide for about 120 new homes.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY - LAND TO THE WEST OF TUNNEL ROAD

- 10.12 Policy BEAM3 of the Preferred Options consultation document provides criteria for consideration should this site be adopted. The policy as drafted (below) and the accompanying supporting text are subject to consultation.
- 10.13 The site's strategic position on the edge of the town offers several opportunities to improve connectivity and traffic flows. Road access can be achieved onto Tunnel Road but must be designed to complement the existing school access. A bus stop should be provided on the B3162 alongside a footpath / cycleway to the town centre to offer a safe route for cyclists and pedestrians. Opportunities also exist to improve connectivity to new development planned on land north of Broadwindsor Road. The development sites are currently separated by a small tributary stream of the River Brit which will need to be crossed.
- 10.14 The site is on gentle rising land to the north of the town. In order to minimise landscape impact and views to and from heritage assets, principally Waddon Hill (a Scheduled Ancient Monument) and Horn Park (a registered park and garden), built development will be kept to the southern end of the site. Proposals should seek

the retention of existing hedgerows to reflect existing boundaries and maximise biodiversity opportunities. To meet leisure standards, development will be expected to provide for on-site accessible public open space.

- 10.15 An assessment of surface water flows concludes that water at the western end of the site flows into the tributary stream that runs parallel with Cockroad Lane and the eastern end of the site runs into the culvert at Tunnel Road. Due to existing flooding issues alongside Tunnel Road, on-site attenuation is required before water enters the water course.

BEAM3. LAND TO THE WEST OF TUNNEL ROAD (PREFERRED OPTION)

- i) Land to the West of Tunnel Road, as shown on the policies map, is allocated for housing and public open space.
- ii) The development will need to secure the delivery of an access onto Tunnel Road, a bus stop on the B3162 and a pedestrian / cycle link to the town. A road or pedestrian access to new development at Land North of Broadwindsor Road should be explored.
- iii) Built development should be focused on the southern part of the site and designed to minimise any impact of views to and from heritage assets, principally Waddon Hill and Horn Park.
- iv) The development should retain and enhance the existing hedgerows.
- v) Measures to mitigate surface water flooding are required.

MITIGATION MEASURES - LAND TO THE WEST OF TUNNEL ROAD

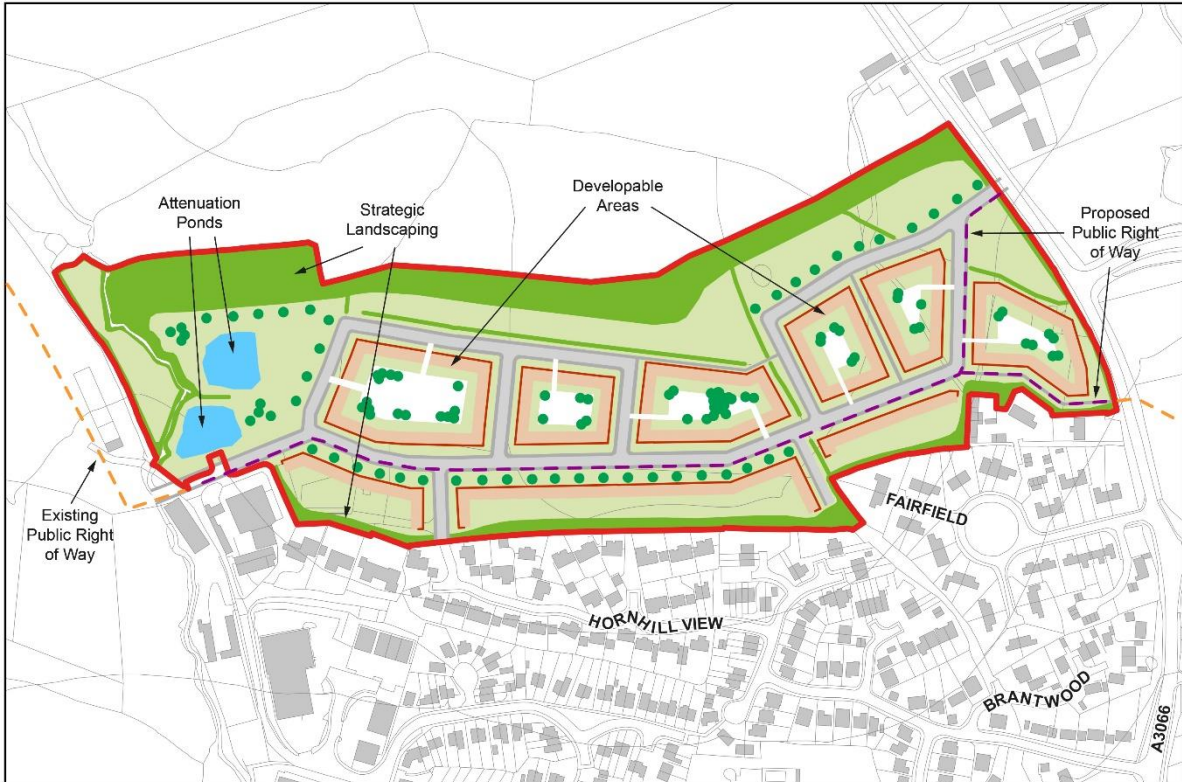
- 10.16 Mitigation measures have been identified and are set out below. These measures would be necessary to support the grant of planning permission.
- 10.17 This Preferred Option shown will also be subject to the Community Infrastructure Levy. The levy will be used to support community infrastructure including education, healthcare and community facilities. In addition to the levy, there may be a need for additional site-specific infrastructure necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms. These will be delivered using a S106 legal agreement.

	BEAM3: LAND TO THE WEST OF TUNNEL ROAD
Landscape	To focus development on the southern part of the site.
Heritage	Minimise any impact of views to and from heritage assets, principally Waddon Hill scheduled monument and Horn Park a registered park and

BEAM₃: LAND TO THE WEST OF TUNNEL ROAD	
	garden.
Flooding	To incorporate surface water mitigation measures within the development.
Transport	Access onto Tunnel Road with improved pedestrian and cycle links to the existing network. Explore opportunities for a road or pedestrian access to new development at Land North of Broadwindsor Road. Secure public transport improvements.
Biodiversity	To retain and enhance hedgerows.
Health	Possible contributions towards small scale enhancements at the Beaminster surgeries maybe sought
Education	Contributions towards the extension of Beaminster Secondary School
Water	Network reinforcement required

INDICATIVE LAYOUT: BEAM₃ PREFERRED OPTION SITE

10.18 An indicative layout has been produced for each of the proposed new site allocations to give a visual representation of how development could take place. The layouts have been produced to help guide future site design work and show where the main policy requirements for each site could be located. The layouts will however act as a guide only and may be subject to change through the planning process.



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SITE ANALYSIS - LAND TO THE SOUTH OF BROADWINDSOR ROAD

- 10.19 Land to the south of Broadwindsor Road is located on Beaminster’s western side, to the south of the B3163, between Clipper Teas and Lower Barrow Farm. To support the expansion of local businesses in the area, this land is allocated for employment uses. The site has the potential to deliver up to 3.8 ha of employment land. As an expansion to local businesses, access can be achieved through the existing Clipper Teas site.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY - LAND TO THE SOUTH OF BROADWINDSOR ROAD

- 10.20 To minimise landscape impact on a sloping site, development should be kept to the northern portion of the site. In order to soften development into the landscape and provide a buffer to nearby listed farm buildings, development should include structural planting along boundaries.
- 10.21 To support sustainable transport opportunities, a bus stop should be provided on the B3163. The development should also provide a footpath / cycleway to offer a safe link to the town centre. Two public footpaths cross the site and their connectivity should be maintained.
- 10.22 To prevent off-site flooding downstream at Broadwindsor Road and Clay Lane, flood mitigation measures should be provided.

BEAM4. LAND TO THE SOUTH OF BROADWINDSOR ROAD (PREFERRED OPTION)

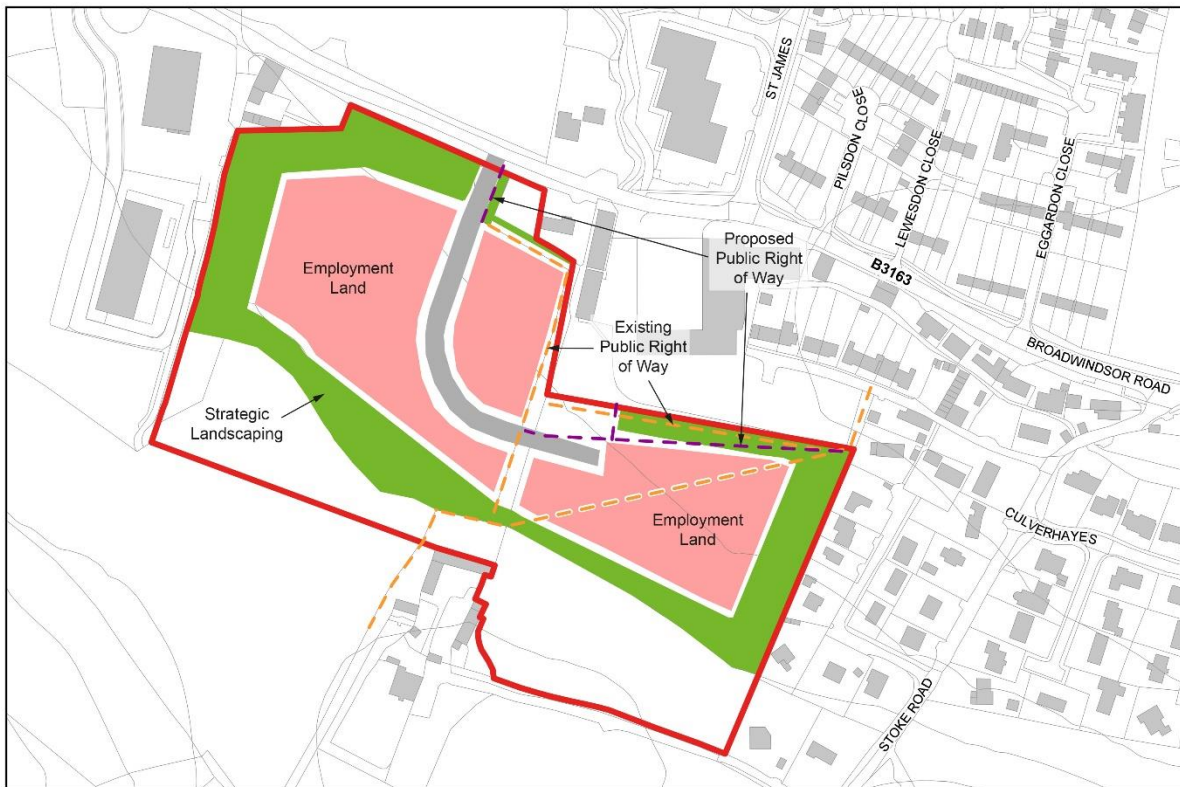
- i) Land to the South of Broadwindsor Road, as shown on the policies map, is allocated for employment.**
- ii) Access should be provided from Broadwindsor Road. Development should also secure the delivery of a bus stop on the B3163 and a pedestrian / cycle link to the town centre.**
- iii) Built development should be focused on the northern part of the site and provide structural planting along boundaries.**
- iv) Measures to mitigate surface water flooding are required.**

MITIGATION MEASURES - LAND TO THE SOUTH OF BROADWINDSOR ROAD

- 10.23 Mitigation measures have been identified and are set out below. These measures would be necessary to support the grant of planning permission and would be secured through a S106 legal agreement.

INDICATIVE LAYOUT - BEAM₄: PREFERRED OPTION SITE

10.24 An indicative layout has been produced for each of the proposed new site allocations to give a visual representation of how development could take place. The layouts have been produced to help guide future site design work and show where the main policy requirements for each site could be located. The layouts will however act as a guide only and may be subject to change through the planning process.



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	BEAM₄: LAND TO THE SOUTH OF BROADWINDSOR ROAD
Landscape	To focus development on the northern part of the site.
Flooding	To incorporate surface water mitigation measures within the development.
Transport	Access onto Broadwindsor Road with improved pedestrian and cycle links to the existing network. Secure public transport improvements.
Biodiversity	To provide structural planting along boundaries.
Minerals	Parts of the site is within the Mineral Safeguarding Area – building stone.
Water	Network reinforcement required.

CONSULTATION

- 10.25 The Preferred Options consultation provides an opportunity for stakeholders and the public to give their views on the preferred development options. The questions relating to Beaminster are set out below. After the consultation process has ended, this background paper will be updated with a summary of the responses.
- 10.26 Policy BEAM₄ (previous policy BEAM₁) now seeks just housing reflecting the proposed new employment allocation. The question seeks comments on this change.

14-i. Land north of Broadwindsor Road is now proposed just for housing, although new employment development is proposed to the south of the road under new Policy BEAM₄. Do you have any comments on the changes to Policy BEAM₁?

- 10.27 The next question relates to Preferred Option BEAM₃ – Land to the West of Tunnel Road. The question asks for comments on the principles for development as set out in the draft policy.

14-ii Do you agree with the proposed allocation of land for housing development to the west of Tunnel Road, as set out in new Policy BEAM₃?

- 10.28 The final question relates to Preferred Option BEAM₄ – Land south of Broadwindsor Road. This question asks for comments on the principles for development as set out in the draft policy

14-iii Do you agree with the proposed allocation of land for employment development south of Broadwindsor Road, as set out in new Policy BEAM₄?