

Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan

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

Weymouth Town Council

October 2023

Quality information

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Non-Technical Summary

What is Strategic Environmental Assessment?

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been undertaken to inform the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan (hereafter referred to as “the WNP”). This process is required by the SEA Regulations.

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

What is the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan?

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

Purpose of this Environmental Report

This Environmental Report, which accompanies the Regulation 14 version of the WNP is the latest document to be produced as part of the SEA process. The first document was the SEA Scoping Report (July 2022), which included information about the neighbourhood area’s environment and community. The second document was the Interim SEA Environmental Report (September 2023) which appraised the relative sustainability merits and the likely significant environmental effects for different approaches that could be taken for the WNP.

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to:

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

The Environmental Report contains:

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

Consideration of reasonable alternatives for the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan

Introduction

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

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

Establishing reasonable alternatives

Top-down considerations (e.g., strategic factors)

The emerging DCLP sets out a housing requirement of 3,225 homes for the neighbourhood area. The housing requirement identifies that there are 1,460 homes with planning permission and 550 homes allocated within the emerging DCLP, with the residual 1,215 homes to be met through neighbourhood plan allocations and windfall development.

The neighbourhood plan may allocate sites for additional development due to the high affordable need identified in a local housing needs assessment (minimum of 1,775 homes). In this respect, a key focus of the emerging WNP is to encourage opportunities for affordable home delivery. Due regard has been given to the emerging DCLP for further housing guidance.

Bottom-up considerations (e.g., site availability)

Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (with support from an independent planning consultancy) has undertaken assessments of the various sites in Weymouth in terms of their suitability for a neighbourhood plan allocation. A total of 61 sites were considered through an initial site options and assessment process¹, with 31 sites considered as 'suitable' or 'potentially suitable' to take forward as a neighbourhood plan allocation.

A secondary assessment of the sites was also completed by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, with each site appraised against the following criteria, from which preferential sites came forward.

- **Criteria 1:** Do not consider sites assessed as 'unsuitable' in the Site Options and Assessment (SOA) Report.
- **Criteria 2:** Consider sites inside the defined development boundary (DDB) with potential for more than 20 homes.
- **Criteria 3:** Consider sites outside the DDB with potential for more than 10 homes.
- **Criteria 4:** Consider sites outside the DDB with potential for less than 10 homes where they are supporting very local housing needs.

¹ AECOM (2023) [Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan Site Options and Assessment Report](#). The Site Options Assessment (SOA) Report contributes to the evidence base for the emerging WNP and will accompany the emerging WNP at Regulation 14 consultation. The SOA Report provides further clarity on the site identification process and methodology and details the full assessment findings.

- **Criteria 5:** Consider sites near to urban areas which are suitable for B2 (general industrial) employment.
- **Criteria 6:** In-use sites will not be considered unless there is, or can be, adequate or alternative provision nearby; and
- **Criteria 7:** Sites providing employment will not be considered for residential unless affordable housing provision of 35% is enabled and some employment use is retained.

Reflecting the above, the shortlisted site options (which have been endorsed for further consideration by Weymouth Town Council) are presented in Weymouth Town Council's Site Assessment Process Report², which contributes to the evidence base for the emerging WNP. These sites have been the focus for the SEA and are discussed in further detail below.

Options for the focus of development within the DDB

Through the site assessment process and secondary assessment of the sites, several brownfield site options within the DDB were identified as 'suitable' or 'potentially' suitable for a Neighbourhood Plan allocation.

In the wider context, in September 2022 Dorset Council submitted a successful Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Bid for Weymouth's Waterside Regeneration. Whilst it has been confirmed that this funding will not directly facilitate redevelopment opportunities, it is likely to include infrastructure works to make brownfield site options within the DDB (particularly the Waterside area and areas within the town centre environment) more attractive to developers.

In this respect, the relative sustainability merits of considering alternative uses within the DDB has been explored. Informed by the aspirations within the existing Town Centre Masterplan/Strategy for Weymouth and with respect to the vision / objectives of the emerging WNP, the following options have been considered through the SEA:

- **Option A:** Provide an additional focus on residential development within the DDB (*with a view to encouraging opportunities for affordable home provision*).
- **Option B:** Provide an additional focus on the development of employment uses within the DDB.
- **Option C:** Focus on proposals which would support key areas of Weymouth's economy (*e.g., tourism, leisure, and recreation*).
- **Option D:** Focus on proposals which would encourage opportunities for protecting Weymouth's natural and built environment (*e.g., climate mitigation / adaption, biodiversity net-gain, enhancements to townscape*).
- **Option E:** Support a range of uses within the DDB, considering proposals on a case-by-case basis.

The options have been assessed against the SEA Framework developed during scoping and presented against the SEA themes.

For each SEA theme an assessment of the likely significant effects of the options is presented. This is accompanied by a ranking of the options, which provides an

² Weymouth Town Council (2023): [Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan - Site Assessment Process Report](#)

indication of the relative sustainability performance of the options relating to the SEA theme being considered.

Table 4.1 to **Table 4.8** within the main body of the Environmental Report present the full findings of the appraisal of the five options for each of the SEA themes. A summary of the findings is presented below in **Table NTS1** and supporting text.

Table NTS1 Summary of rankings by SEA theme

SEA Theme	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Option E
Air Quality	=1	4	5	3	=1
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	=2	4	5	1	=2
Climate Change	=1	4	5	3	=1
Community Wellbeing	2	=3	=3	=3	1
Historic Environment	=3	=3	=3	1	2
Land, Soil and Water Resources	1	3	5	4	2
Landscape and Townscape	=1	=4	=4	=1	=1
Transportation	1	3	5	4	2

The assessment findings conclude **that there is the potential for mixed effects (e.g., positive, and negative) associated with Option A – Option D against the SEA themes**. For example, Option A will deliver new housing provision within the most sustainable locations in the neighbourhood area with respect to proximity to services and facilities, accessibility to public transport options and walking / cycling networks. This is a significant positive for community wellbeing, and also with respect to facilitating affordable home delivery in appropriate locations (a key priority for the Neighbourhood Plan). However, it is recognised that there might be locations within the DDB which are perhaps less suitable for affordable homes (e.g., the size of a site reducing the viability of delivering an appropriate housing mix).

Option B, Option C, and Option D also have the potential to deliver positive effects, for example:

- Option B and Option C: Supporting the vibrancy of the town centre environment; supporting additional and emerging sectors of the local economy, more appropriately reflecting town centre uses in a post-pandemic context; and rejuvenating both the daytime and evening economies in the neighbourhood area.
- Option D: Encouraging greater opportunities for green infrastructure enhancements and net-gain opportunities; additional scope for implementing climate change resilience measures, positively tackling the climate crisis; delivering public realm enhancements to enhance the

character of the built-environment and the attractiveness of Weymouth as a place to live and work; and improving the understanding and enjoyment of Weymouth's natural and built-environmental assets.

However, **a focus on Option B, Option C and Option D may result in fewer homes being delivered within the DDB, with additional emphasis therefore placed on identifying sites outside of the DDB to meet emerging housing requirements. This is likely to lead to significant negative impacts** (e.g., delivering housing in less sustainable locations; maintaining a reliance on private vehicles to access locations within the DDB, given the relative distance of sites from services and facilities; delivering homes within closer proximity to internationally and nationally protected sites for biodiversity; and encroaching into the open countryside and reducing green gaps – with associated impacts to landscape and townscape character).

On balance, **Option E, through encouraging a range of uses within the DDB and considering proposals on a case-by-case basis, may help to enable the 'win-win' opportunities associated with the effective planning of key areas within the DDB to be realised.**

Consideration of sites outside of the DDB

A key objective of the emerging WNP is to positively contribute to the delivery of affordable homes, with a recognition that affordable housing needs cannot be met by sites within the DDB alone.

To support the consideration of the suitability of the shortlisted sites for a potential allocation of a type appropriate for the emerging WNP, the SEA process has appraised the key constraints and opportunities present at the six shortlisted sites outside of the DDB for a potential allocation through the emerging WNP.

In this context, the sites have been considered in relation to the SEA Framework of objectives and decision-making questions developed during SEA scoping and the baseline information. These assessments undertaken through the SEA have been undertaken separately to the initial site options and assessment process completed for the emerging WNP.

The sites are as follows, and are shown in Figure NTS1 below:

- **Site A:** Land off Budmouth Avenue
- **Site B:** Lodmoor Old Tip (Middle Section)
- **Site C:** Lodmoor Old Tip (Southern Section)
- **Site D:** Redlands Farm
- **Site E:** Land at Wyke Oliver Farm (North)
- **Site F:** Land South of Wessex Roundabout

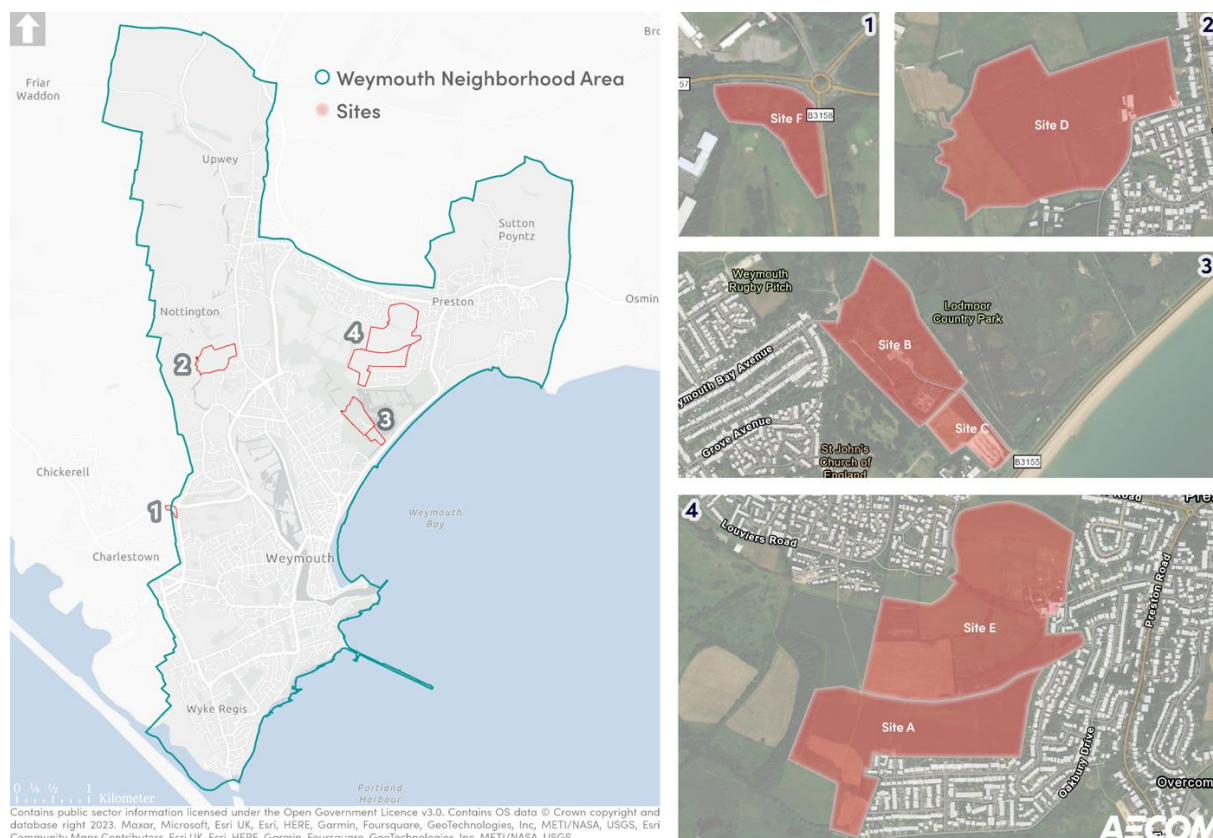


Figure NTS1: Shortlisted sites outside of the DDB considered for a potential allocation through the WNP

To support the consideration of the suitability of the shortlisted sites for a potential allocation of a type appropriate for the WNP, the SEA process has appraised the key constraints and opportunities present at each of the relevant sites (see **Table 4.9** to **Table 4.14** within the main body of the Environmental Report).

A summary of the findings is presented below in **Table NTS2**. This provides an indication of how the sites have performed in relation to each of the SEA themes, with the colouring as follows:

- **Green:** likely positive effects resulting from an allocation at this location.
- **Yellow:** likely to be limited or no effects resulting from an allocation at this location.
- **Blue:** likely to be uncertain effects resulting from an allocation at this location (i.e., there are constraints, but the effects are perhaps dependent or influenced on the design and mitigation measures which could be brought forward as part of a proposal).
- **Red:** likely negative effects resulting from an allocation at this location.

Table NTS2: Summary of SEA site assessment findings

Site	Air Quality	Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Climate Change	Community Wellbeing	Historic Environment	Land, Soil, and Water Resources	Landscape	Transportation
A								
B								
C								
D								
E								
F								
Key								
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)						Likely positive effect		
Neutral/no effect						Uncertain effect		

The appraisal findings highlight that ‘uncertain effects’ and ‘likely negative effects’ are likely for all site options under one or more SEA themes. If the emerging WNP takes forward any of these site options, it will be important for new development areas to appropriately address any concerns or constraints associated with the sites.

In the context of the above, the draft plan appraisal findings (i.e., the next stage of the SEA), will consider the extent to which the emerging WNP policies and proposals address any constraints to the sites, including with respect to mitigation and enhancement measures. The draft plan appraisal findings are presented in **Chapter 5** in the main body of this Environmental Report.

Options for non-principal residences

The location and environmental quality of the neighbourhood area has resulted in a demand for second homes and holiday lets, and this is part of the tourism-related aspects of the local economy. The emerging WNP recognises the benefits of the visitor economy, but also acknowledges the key challenges associated with this key sector of the local economy. This includes with respect to reducing the supply of available housing which affects the ability of local people to buy or rent in the neighbourhood area.

In the context of the above, the relative sustainability merits of establishing a ‘principal residency policy’ within the Neighbourhood Plan has been explored. The following options have been considered through the SEA:

- **Option A:** Take a policy approach to limit non-principal residences and holiday homes within the neighbourhood area.
- **Option B:** Do not take a policy approach to limit non-principal residences and holiday homes within the neighbourhood area.

The options have been considered against the SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions developed at SEA scoping. The following information is presented in **Chapter 4** within the main body of the Environmental Report:

- A ranking of the sustainability performance of each option relating to each SEA theme to highlight their relative sustainability merits, with '1' the most favourable ranking; and
- An overview of the likely significant effects (both positive, and negative) of each option.

A summary of the appraisal findings is provided below.

The appraisal concludes that **Option A is likely to perform more favourably than Option B with respect to the Transportation and Air Quality SEA themes.**

Option B, by taking an approach which would not limit non-principal residences in the neighbourhood area, will likely result in longer-term increases in traffic at peak times of the year. Issues will be more pronounced during these times, e.g., during the summer months. Although Option A would bring an increase to year-round traffic flows, it could also offer support to the local transport network to improve sustainable transport and maintaining the viability of public transport options.

The Community Wellbeing SEA theme also performs more favourably under Option A. By taking a policy approach which seeks to limit non-principal residences in the neighbourhood area, this is likely to increase the availability of housing stock for local people and ensure that fewer properties are left unoccupied throughout the year. However, it is recognised this could cause more pronounced issues for neighbouring areas as the interest in second homes and holiday lets could shift to other locations along the Dorset coastline.

Additionally, by having a higher 'human capital' (number of year-round residents) across the year, local infrastructure, facilities, and services can be maintained and improved – such as health and education. **This will also bring benefits under the Community Wellbeing SEA theme.** Furthermore, a higher human capital can also improve the maintenance of existing properties and enable a more effective response and increased resilience to extreme weather events. **This is a significant positive under the Climate Change SEA theme.**

It is recognised that establishing a principal residency policy will only apply to new housing developments within the neighbourhood area. In this respect, Option A could lead to a shift in focus of second home ownership from new builds to the existing housing stock, including buildings that may be significant from a heritage perspective (i.e., nationally designated and / or locally recognised). This could lead to inappropriate development occurring on buildings with heritage importance, or buildings with heritage importance deteriorating as they become second homes or holiday lets, as the property might not be occupied or maintained throughout the year. **Therefore, there could be negative impacts on the Historic Environment SEA theme under Option A.**

With respect to Option B, during peak times of the year heritage assets and resources may experience increased stresses associated with an influx of visitors (and associated recreational and tourism activities). This is also a consideration when thinking about the resilience of ecological assets within and within proximity to the neighbourhood area, and with respect to landscape and townscape character (e.g., impacts to noise and disturbances). **However, it is difficult to conclude whether these impacts would be significantly different to what is currently experienced within the neighbourhood area.**

Developing the preferred approach for the WNP

Choice of sites taken forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan

The preferred approach has been informed by the various surveys and evidence base documents prepared to support the Neighbourhood Plan (to date), responses from community consultation events, and the findings of the SOA and SEA.

Within the DDB, the WNP seeks to encourage a range of uses to support additional housing growth and opportunities for town centre regeneration (**Option E**). It is anticipated that this will help to enable the ‘win-win’ opportunities associated with the effective planning of key areas within the DDB to be realised.

The following sites within the DDB are allocated within the WNP:

- Policy WNP27 allocates **Land at Beverley Road, Littlemoor** for residential development of approximately 25 homes.
- Policy WNP28 allocates **Land at St Nicholas Street** (formerly Lakeside Superbowl) for residential development of high density (up to six storeys).
- Policy WNP41 allocates **Land at Jubilee Sidings** for a mixed-use development comprising residential and employment / training uses.
- Policy WNP54 supports the regeneration of **Mount Pleasant Old Tip**³ to provide a transport interchange ‘hub’, including a revitalised Park and Ride service to encourage out-of-town parking. Leisure uses and power generation uses are also supported in principle at this location.

A key objective of the emerging WNP is to positively contribute to the delivery of affordable homes, with a recognition that affordable housing needs cannot be met by sites within the DDB alone. In light of this, the following sites outside of the DDB are also allocated within the WNP:

- Policy WNP24 allocates **Land off Budmouth Avenue** for residential development of approximately 230 homes.
- Policy WNP25 allocates **Land at Wyke Oliver Farm North** for residential development of approximately 250 homes.
- Policy WNP26 allocates **Land at Redlands Farm** for residential development of approximately 150 homes.
- Policy WNP29 identifies **Land at Lodmoor Old Tip** as a major development area. The site comprises three zones which will deliver 3.35ha of land for employment uses (Zone 1); up to 90 homes and a café (Zone 2); and 2.17ha of land for leisure and / or tourism uses together with some permanent residential development (Zone 3).

The site-specific policies for the proposed site allocations within the WNP contain further detail with respect to design and mitigation considerations which aim to address potential constraints to (and opportunities for) development. These aspects are further discussed within the plan appraisal section of the Environmental Report (presented in **Chapter 5** in the main body of the report).

³ Whilst the site is identified within the West Dorset, Weymouth, and Portland Local Plan as being located outside of the DDB, the site primarily comprises areas of brownfield land which adjoin the DDB. The SOA findings conclude that the site is not suitable for residential, or employment uses.

With respect to the options for non-principal residences, the preferred approach for the WNP is to proceed with **Option A** and establish a principal residency policy for new dwellings within the neighbourhood area. Further details are presented within Policy WNP35 in the WNP (and supporting paragraphs).

Appraisal of the Regulation 14 version of the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan

The Regulation 14 version of the WNP presents 62 planning policies for guiding development in the neighbourhood area. These were developed following extensive community consultation and evidence gathering.

Chapter 5 within the main body of the Environmental Report presents the findings of the appraisal of the Regulation 14 version of the WNP. Utilising the SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions developed during the earlier scoping stage of the SEA, the Environmental Report presents the findings of the assessment as a commentary of effects under the SEA themes.

A summary of the appraisal findings is presented below.

Major positive significant effects are concluded under the community wellbeing SEA topic. This is because the draft WNP takes a pro-active approach to identifying sites for a range of uses and has a strong focus on town centre regeneration. Whilst some of the residential site allocations are better located than others, in terms of access to services, facilities and amenities, it is recognised that local housing needs (particularly, affordable housing needs) are unlikely to be fully met through just allocating brownfield sites within the DDB. As such, the allocation of greenfield sites outside of the DDB for residential uses is largely unavoidable. The policy framework seeks to deliver an appropriate housing mix, including affordable housing, and protects community buildings, public open / green space, cycle routes and recreational facilities. It also supports the local economy by protecting existing employment sites; delivering new employment sites; and supporting higher education provision and skills training.

No significant effects are noted under the climate change SEA topic. The draft WNP performs relatively well by allocating sites primarily in areas within Flood Zone 1 / at very low risk of surface water flooding. Where flood risk exists, this is mitigated through the use of SuDS and green infrastructure. More broadly, the policy framework recognises the neighbourhood area's sensitive location in terms of flood risk, by the coast and intersecting with several waterbodies, including the River Wey. In terms of climate change mitigation, the policy framework seeks to minimise both embodied and operational emissions by supporting the use of sustainable construction methods and renewable energy schemes. Whilst an increase in GHG emissions is inevitable as a result of the site allocations, development is necessary to support local housing needs, and on a global scale this is not significant.

Uncertainty is noted under the air quality SEA topic. Whilst some of the draft WNP's site allocations perform more favourably than others from an air quality perspective, none of them are considered likely to lead to significant negative effects on air quality. In addition, the draft WNP's policy framework performs well by prohibiting development which would give rise to air pollution; deterring non-local traffic through traffic calming measures; and providing EV charging infrastructure both within new developments and across the wider area. Nevertheless,

development will ultimately result in an increase in road traffic, and as a result, it is likely to have some impact on air quality.

Minor negative significant effects are concluded under the biodiversity and geodiversity, historic environment, land, soil and water resources, landscape, and transportation SEA topics. The reasoning behind this is summarised under each of these SEA topics below:

- **Biodiversity and geodiversity** – The draft WNP performs well given the neighbourhood area is heavily constrained by designated sites for biodiversity. Whilst some of the site allocations set out within the draft WNP are located adjacent to / near designated sites, the site-specific policy mitigates the potential for adverse impacts on these sites where possible. In addition, the policy framework as a whole addresses the need to protect and enhance designated sites; deliver BNG; and retain wildlife corridors and trees, woodlands and hedgerows. Nevertheless, development still has the potential to lead to increased recreational pressure on designated sites, and the disturbance of habitats and species.
- **Historic environment** – The draft WNP performs well by ensuring that the site allocations are appropriately designed to minimise potential adverse impacts on the setting and significance of nearby heritage assets and / or conservation areas. This is largely achieved through appropriate siting and building height, as well as screening around the perimeter of sites. The policy framework supports the site-specific policies by highlighting the importance of protecting and enhancing both designated and non-designated heritage assets, as well as archaeological remains. It also considers heritage through other policies which have the potential to impact the historic environment. Nevertheless, there is still potential for the site allocations to impact the setting of heritage assets to some degree.
- **Land, soil, and water resources** – The draft WNP performs well by retaining significant areas of open green space on the largest of its site allocations. Whilst only one of the site allocations is fully brownfield, it is recognised that brownfield sites are limited within the neighbourhood area, and therefore development on greenfield land is largely unavoidable. The neighbourhood area does not contain much BMV agricultural land, and therefore the loss of productive agricultural land is largely avoided. In terms of water resources, the policy framework performs well by supporting water conserving measures, as well as measures to protect water quality. Nevertheless, the site allocations still result in the loss of a significant area of greenfield land.
- **Landscape** – The draft WNP performs well by seeking to ensure that the site allocations on greenfield land, outside of the DDB, are designed to reduced adverse impacts on the surrounding landscape. The policy framework supports the site-specific policies by designating green gaps and local green spaces to protect the most important areas of the countryside surrounding the settlements in the neighbourhood area. This is in addition to protecting trees, woodlands and hedgerows and important panoramas, vistas, and views. Moreover, the policy framework states explicitly how the Dorset AONB, including its setting, will be protected from new development. Combined with more broad considerations of landscape, the policy framework performs very well. Nevertheless, some of

the site allocations are still located adjacent / near the Dorset AONB, on greenfield land and with the potential to impact key views.

- **Transportation** – The draft WNP performs well by supporting the delivery of a transport interchange hub, including a park and ride scheme; enabling improvements to public transport; and making active travel safer and more attractive. This should help to encourage modal shift. Whilst some of the site allocations are located at a distance from Weymouth town centre, it is noted that this is largely unavoidable due to the limited availability of land within the DDB to deliver all of Weymouth's housing requirements. However, it is recognised that development will ultimately lead to an increase in private vehicles on roads within the neighbourhood area and wider area.

Next steps

Plan Finalisation

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

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

Monitoring

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

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



1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan (hereafter referred to as “the WNP”). The neighbourhood area is shown in the figure above.
- 1.2 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the potential impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key environmental issues. The aim of SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating potential negative impacts and maximising the potential for positive effects. Through this approach, the SEA for the WNP seeks to maximise the emerging plan’s contribution to sustainable development.

SEA screening for the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.3 A Neighbourhood Plan requires SEA where it is likely to have significant environmental effects. In this respect, Neighbourhood Plans are more likely to be screened in as requiring an SEA if both the following apply:
 - 1) the Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared within a neighbourhood area with significant environmental constraints, such as, for example, Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, or large concentrations of heritage assets; and
 - 2) the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to allocate sites for development⁴.
- 1.4 The WNP supports allocations for new development. This includes in potentially environmentally sensitive locations, such as:
 - Locations with sensitivity for the historic environment, including the Dorset & East Devon Coast World Heritage Site, nationally designated listed buildings, scheduled monuments, and eleven conservation areas.
 - Locations with sensitivity for biodiversity and geodiversity, including the Chesil Beach and The Fleet Ramsar (and Special Protection Area), Chesil and The Fleet Special Area of Conservation, and several Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
- 1.5 In light of this outcome, an SEA process is being undertaken to meet the specific requirements prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations)⁵.

SEA explained

- 1.6 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the potential impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key environmental issues. The aim of SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating potential negative impacts and maximising the

⁴ DLUHC (February 2022): Chief Planner’s Newsletter, February 2022 “Strategic Environmental Assessment for Neighbourhood Plans: Timely and effective screening” accessible [here](#)

⁵ UK Government (2004) ‘The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004’ can be accessed [here](#).

potential for positive effects. Through this approach, the SEA for the WNP seeks to maximise the emerging plan's contribution to sustainable development.

1.7 Two key procedural requirements of the SEA Regulations are that:

- i. When deciding on 'the scope and level of detail of the information' which must be included in the Environmental Report there is a consultation with nationally designated authorities concerned with environmental issues;
- ii. A report (the 'Environmental Report') is published for consultation alongside the draft plan (i.e., the draft WNP) that presents outcomes from the environmental assessment (i.e., discusses 'likely significant effects' that would result from plan implementation) and reasonable alternatives.

1.8 This 'Environmental Report' is concerned with item 'ii' above.

Structure of this Environmental Report

1.9 This document is the SEA Environmental Report for the WNP and hence needs to answer all four of the questions listed overleaf with a view to providing the information required by the SEA Regulations. Each of the four questions is answered in turn within this report, as follows:

Table 1.1: Questions that must be answered by the SEA Environmental Report to meet the regulatory⁶ requirements

Environmental Report question	In line with the SEA Regulations, the report must include... ⁷
What is the plan seeking to achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan.
What is the sustainability 'context'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship with other relevant plans and programmes. The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance.
What is the sustainability 'baseline'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance.
What are the key issues and objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key problems/issues and objectives that should be a focus of (i.e., provide a 'framework' for) assessment.

⁶ Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

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

Environmental Report question	In line with the SEA Regulations, the report must include... ⁷
What has plan-making/SEA involved up to this point?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with.• The likely significant effects associated with alternatives.• Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives appraisal/a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the current version of the plan.
What are the assessment findings at this stage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The likely significant effects associated with the Regulation 14 version of the plan.• The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the Regulation 14 version of the plan.
What happens next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The next steps for the plan making / SEA process.

2. Local Plan context and vision for the Neighbourhood Plan

Local Plan context for the Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.1 Until April 2019, West Dorset District Council and Weymouth and Portland Borough Council were in the process of undertaking a review of the West Dorset, Weymouth, and Portland Adopted Local Plan. The evidence generated is now feeding into the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan (as Dorset has been re-organised into a unitary authority).
- 2.2 The emerging Dorset Council Local Plan has reached Regulation 18 consultation. Regulation 18 consultation on the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan was completed between January and March 2021. Dorset Council are considering the representations received from the consultation process, which will inform the development of the draft plan. According to the latest available Local Development Scheme for Dorset, which was released in October 2022, it is anticipated that the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan will be adopted in spring 2026. The Local Development Scheme outlines the timetable for the Dorset Local Plan progress.⁸
- 2.3 Neighbourhood plans will form part of the development plan for Dorset, alongside, but not as a replacement for the Local Plan. Neighbourhood plans are required to be in general conformity with the Local Plan and can develop policies and proposals to address local place-based issues. In this way it is intended for the Local Plan to provide a clear overall strategic direction for development in Dorset, whilst enabling finer detail to be determined through the neighbourhood planning process where appropriate.

Vision, aims, and objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.4 The vision of the WNP is as follows:

“By 2038, Weymouth will be a resilient coastal community with a diverse range of jobs and homes which meet the needs of residents for present generations without compromising the needs of future generations. The unique identities of our local neighbourhoods will be attractive to all age groups and will foster healthy and happy lifestyles.”

- 2.5 The aims of the WNP are assembled into five themes, each with their own set of objectives. They are as follows:

Environmental Sustainability

- **To ensure development achieves or surpasses national and local agreed targets relating to the sustainable use of land and buildings, net-zero carbon emissions, improving biodiversity, and ensuring future resilience to climate change impacts.**

⁸ [Dorset Council - The Local Development Scheme for Dorset Council \(2022\)](#)

- **Carbon Neutrality** - All new developments are expected to minimise the emissions of greenhouse gases and be as near to carbon neutral as is reasonably possible.
- **Resource Efficiency** - All new developments are expected to maximise the sustainable use of natural resources and the re-use and recycling of resources and minimise energy consumption and waste.
- **Biodiversity Net Gain** - All new developments are expected to include measures to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the area.
- **Climate Change Management** - All new developments are expected to result in no increase in the risk of flooding and provide adequate resilience to extreme weather events.

Landscape and Greenspace

- **To preserve and enhance our unique environments and sustain the distinctive landscapes and coastline.**
 - Identify and protect key locations and special habitats.
 - Promote development that complements and enhances the landscape and seascape character.
 - Support required flood resilience measures.
 - Facilitate responsible public access to the countryside and coastline.
- **Encourage engagement with nature, enhance biodiversity and habitat conservation, and invest in our natural environment and ecosystems.**
 - Conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the area.
 - Protect wildlife habitats and key landscape features and characteristics.
 - Protect existing and promote the provision of native tree/hedge species in new developments.
 - Support sustainable local food production.
 - Protect existing allotments and support new allotments that meet a local demand.
 - Improve and extend green infrastructure.
- **Create an integrated network of green and blue infrastructure, habitats, parks, water, and nature trails.**
 - Protect important green gaps between settlement areas.
 - Identify and protect local green spaces.
 - Create and enhance green linkages between neighbourhoods and developed areas.
 - Provide a network of accessible interconnected and accessible pedestrian and cycle routes.

Development and Homes

- **Provide a broad mix of homes, which align with housing need.**
 - Establish an appropriate mix of dwellings on new developments.

- Ensure housing development is suitable to its locality.
- Prioritise local housing needs.
- Maximise the provision of affordable housing.
- Meet the identified need for special housing.
- **Support and encourage the reuse of brownfield sites.**
 - Prioritise and facilitate brownfield site development.
 - Support community housing initiatives.
 - Encourage innovation in the provision of more homes.
- **Remain responsive to local housing issues and opportunities.**
 - Support appropriate modifications and extensions to existing homes.
 - Control housing conversions and houses in multiple occupation (HMOs).
 - Restrict second homes and holiday lets.
 - Ensure new homes are as energy efficient as possible.
 - Identify opportunities for affordable housing schemes.
- **Achieve the highest sustainability standards for all new development.**
 - Use sustainable building techniques and sustainable materials.
 - Achieve the highest possible standards of energy efficiency.
 - Create a safe and inclusive environment.

Jobs and the Local Economy

- **Protect and enhance employment provision.**
 - Safeguard existing employment spaces.
 - Support improvements and enhancements to existing business and industrial areas.
 - Support new employment uses in suitable locations.
- **Preserve and enhance Weymouth's unique built and maritime heritage, leisure, and entertainment offering to provide a thriving local economy.**
 - Control town centre uses and development in the interest of its character and vitality.
 - Support development and uses that contribute positively to the local economy.
 - Encourage tourism, arts, and culture across Weymouth.
 - Promote the full use of properties in the town centre.
- **Encourage the creation a wide range of jobs and training opportunities.**
 - Promote mixed use development such as live/work units.
 - Support the provision of new education and training facilities.
- **Promote and facilitate the production and use of renewable energy.**
 - Promote community-scale renewable energy schemes and initiatives.

- Identify suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources and supporting infrastructure.

Communities

- **Celebrate the unique character and culture of each local neighbourhood.**
 - Reinforce the unique character of each local neighbourhood.
 - Promote sustainable neighbourhoods.
 - Protect existing community facilities.
 - Support the provision of community hubs.
 - Support community-based initiatives and enterprise.
 - Encourage the provision of new cultural and leisure facilities.
 - Maximise the reuse of buildings.
 - Create more interesting and appealing public spaces.
 - Protect green spaces.
 - Improve the value and appeal of the town centre and neighbourhood centres.
- **Allocate sustainable sites for new homes and jobs which are within walking distance to town or a neighbourhood centre.**
 - Set out the community's preferred development strategy.
 - Identify suitable development sites.
 - Ensure new development is well connected.
 - Ensure the necessary infrastructure is in place in good time.
 - Promote safe and sustainable travel routes and modes.
- **Protect and enhance the distinctive historic character of the conservation areas and other heritage locations.**
 - Protect historic buildings, sites, and structures from harm.
 - Respect the scale, style and setting of the site, with special reference to historic townscapes.
 - Identify and safeguard non-designated heritage buildings, structures, and sites.
 - Ensure development is sympathetic to and enhances the character of the surrounding area.
 - Promote high quality public realm enhancements.
- **Increase the provision and use of Weymouth's open spaces and community facilities.**
 - Ensure recreational spaces are sufficient to meet local demands.
 - Provide sufficient areas of green space within new developments.
 - Meet or exceed national standards for play spaces and sports pitches.
 - Support improvements and enhancements to existing recreation and sports facilities that help ensure all needs are met.

- **Reduce car movements and encourage sustainable transport modes.**
 - Support public and community transport initiatives.
 - Support measures to reduce traffic congestion and improve road safety.
 - Support traffic management measures for the town centre.
- **Plan for a greater use of sustainable transport.**
 - Improve and extend the footpath and cycle network.
 - Facilitate electric vehicle charging facilities.
 - Support the provision of additional facilities for bikes, scooters and electric cars and boats.

3. What is the scope of the SEA?

Summary of SEA scoping

- 3.1 The SEA Regulations require that: *“When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies”*.
- 3.2 In England, the consultation bodies are Natural England, the Environment Agency, and Historic England⁹. These authorities were consulted on the scope of the SEA in between July and August 2022. The Scoping Report was also shared with Dorset Council, for comment.
- 3.3 The purpose of scoping was to outline the ‘scope’ of the SEA through setting out the following information:
- A context review of the key environmental and sustainability objectives of national, regional, and local plans and strategies relevant to the WNP.
 - Baseline data against which the WNP can be assessed.
 - The key sustainability issues for the WNP; and
 - An ‘SEA Framework’ of objectives against which the WNP can be assessed.
- 3.4 The full SEA Scoping Report is available on the Neighbourhood Plan website¹⁰.
- 3.5 Responses received on the Scoping Report, and how they have been considered and addressed (where appropriate), have been summarised below. No response was received from Natural England.

Table 3.1: Consultation responses received on the SEA Scoping Report

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
<i>Historic England</i> <i>Historic Places Adviser (email response received 16th August 2022)</i>	
We are pleased to see reference to our guidance on relevant themes at the beginning of this section, especially given the aspirations of the Plan in proposing site allocations. These are likely to be very important to ensuring that the related evidence base has appropriately accommodated necessary heritage considerations.	Comment noted.
Otherwise, we would correct the Heritage At Risk section of the Report as the Weymouth Town Centre Conservation Area is currently also on the national Heritage At Risk Register.	Comment Noted. Potential impacts to the Conservation Area associated with WNP policies and proposals has been explored through the SEA.

⁹ These consultation bodies were selected *“by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, [they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effect of implementing plans and programmes”* (SEA Directive, Article 6(3)).

¹⁰ Including the context review and baseline data for the neighbourhood area, for each SEA theme.

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
<p>Dorset Council may also have its own Heritage At Risk database which includes assets not included on the national Register. We would therefore recommend that you liaise with the Council's heritage team.</p>	<p>Comment noted. Potential impacts to non-designated heritage assets associated with WNP policies and proposals has been explored through the SEA.</p>
<p><i>Dorset Council</i> <i>Senior Environmental Assessment Officer (email response received 19th August 2022)</i></p>	
<p>The Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan area includes the Chesil Beach and the Fleet SAC, SPA and Ramsar. The SEA Scoping Report should take into account the "Interim strategy for mitigating the effects of recreational pressure on the Chesil Beach and the Fleet SAC, SPA and Ramsar", which provides an interim approach to addressing the recreational impacts of new development upon Chesil Beach and the Fleet. For further information, and to view the interim strategy, please visit the following webpage: Chesil and the Fleet Mitigation - Dorset Council</p>	<p>Comment noted. The interim strategy has been a useful source of evidence during the SEA process.</p> <p>A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is being undertaken for the WNP, with any recommendations anticipated to be reflected within the submission version of the WNP.</p> <p>Potential impacts to ecological assets associated with WNP policies and proposals has been explored through the SEA.</p>
<p>The SEA Scoping should include The Corridors and Stepping Stones Report which provides maps showing the Existing Ecological Network and the Potential Ecological Network, indicating where important wildlife corridors should be retained. The report identifies several sites in Weymouth, including the Lorton Valley Nature Park. The most recent ecological network maps are from 2020 and can be viewed here Microsoft Word - Weymouth & Portland Addendum DRAFT (4) (dorsetlnp.org.uk)</p>	<p>Comment noted. The report has been a useful source of evidence during the SEA process.</p> <p>Potential impacts to ecological and wildlife corridors associated with WNP policies and proposals has been explored through the SEA.</p>
<p><i>Environment Agency</i> <i>Planning Adviser (email response received 23rd August 2022)</i></p>	
<p>Flood Risk</p>	<p>Comment noted. The SEA has considered the potential flood risk impacts associated with the WNP policies and proposals.</p> <p>Baseline information, key sustainability issues, and an SEA objective within the SEA Framework has been included and has informed the assessment.</p>
<p>The Neighbourhood Plan area includes significant areas of flood zone 2 and 3, from both fluvial and tidal sources. The Local Authority's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Management Plans forms the evidence base to determine the level of flood risk in this area. We expect the SEA to include flood risk in the baseline information, as a key sustainability issue and as an objective.</p>	

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
<p>Main River water quality</p> <p>The River Wey (Water Body ID GB108044010210) runs adjacent through the neighbourhood plan area. This watercourse is currently failing to reach good ecological status under the Water Framework Directive (WFD). It is currently classified as having moderate status. Developments within or adjacent to this watercourse should not cause further deterioration. An assessment of the potential impacts of the neighbourhood plan on this watercourse under WFD should be included within the SEA appraisal. Further information on the current status of this watercourse can be found on Catchment Data Explorer</p>	<p>Comment noted. Potential impacts to water resources associated with WNP policies and proposals has been explored through the SEA.</p>
<p>Wastewater infrastructure</p> <p>If your plan proposes development or promotes growth, we recommend early consultation with South West Water to determine whether there is (or will be prior to occupation) sufficient infrastructure capacity existing for the connection, conveyance, treatment and disposal of quantity and quality of water associated with any proposed development within environmental limits of the receiving watercourse. This may impact on the housing figures and the phasing of development. Please note that if there is not sufficient capacity in the infrastructure then we must be consulted again with alternative methods of disposal.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
<p>We encourage you to seek ways in which your neighbourhood plan can improve the local environment. For your information, together with Natural England, English Heritage, and Forestry Commission we have published joint guidance on neighbourhood planning, which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans.</p>	<p>Comment noted. The joint guidance has been a useful source of evidence during the SEA process.</p>

3.6 The key sustainability issues and SEA Framework are presented below.

Key sustainability issues

Air Quality

- According to data from 2019, there are no AQMAs in the neighbourhood area. However, there is a particular area of concern around Boot Hill.
- Designated biodiversity and geodiversity sites within and in proximity to the neighbourhood area are potentially sensitive to air pollution issues.

- The WNP could present opportunities to improve accessibility and support more local and sustainable journeys/connections.

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- HRA screening will be undertaken to understand the potential effects arising at internationally designated biodiversity sites and any mitigation that may be required to avoid significant effects. The findings of the HRA will inform both plan-making and the SEA.
- Designated sites within the neighbourhood area include Chesil Beach and the Fleet Ramsar (and SPA), Chesil and the Fleet SAC, The Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC, SSSIs, Radipole Community Woodland LNR, Radipole School LNR, and Rodwell Cutting Local Geological Site.
- Planning for development should seek to avoid direct impacts for habitats, such as habitat loss or fragmentation. Additionally, the landscape surrounding the existing built-up areas is recognised for its potential to support primary habitats through habitat re-creation, new habitats and enhanced green infrastructure. Therefore, planning for development can seek to maximise opportunities arising in this respect.
- Development in the neighbourhood area will likely be required to consult with Natural England regarding impacts arising for nearby SSSIs.

Climate Change and Flood Risk

- Dorset Council declared a climate and ecological emergency in 2019 and has resolved to support local authorities (and, by extension, Neighbourhood groups) to help tackle climate change through plan-making where possible.
- The transport sector continues to be a key challenge in terms of reducing emissions. The WNP provides opportunities to guide development towards the most accessible locations in the neighbourhood area and require local infrastructure (including walking and cycling infrastructure) improvements where appropriate.
- The neighbourhood area is at risk of varying levels of fluvial flooding and has large amounts of land in Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3. Surface water run-off from development can exacerbate the risk of flooding by increasing the run-off from land to water courses.
- The WNP should seek to maximise opportunities to support actions in tackling climate change. This may include through encouraging sustainable transport technologies, such as the use of renewables, EVs, green infrastructure enhancements, and using sustainable drainage.

Community Wellbeing

- The population is increasing, and there is a need to identify a land supply for future housing growth as part of planned and coordinated development. Planning policies can also support development that delivers a range of housing types, tenures, and sizes, to meet the varying needs of residents.
- Reflecting the IMD 2019 data, the WNP should seek an approach that does not exacerbate deprivation issues, particularly within the town centre environment.

- With a range of existing services and facilities within the neighbourhood area, there should be good opportunity to deliver connected development which reduces the need to travel.
- As the requirements of the working population continue to change, there is likely to be a greater need for adaptable dwellings that can accommodate flexible working practices which might include co-working facilities or hubs.

Historic Environment

- With a wealth of both designated and non-designated heritage assets within and surrounding the neighbourhood area, development of the WNP provides an opportunity to consider growth strategies that avoids or minimises impacts for the historic environment.
- Potential challenges associated with retrofitting existing heritage assets to meet competing objectives of conservation and energy efficiency.
- Development of the WNP provides an opportunity to develop the existing evidence base in relation to the historic environment, especially in terms of considering new evidence emerging or changes that have occurred since the designation of the multiple conservation areas.
- During the subsequent stages of the SEA process, the Dorset HER will need to be reviewed in greater detail to determine the potential impacts of the WNP on non-designated features.
- There are identified heritage assets 'at risk' within the neighbourhood area. Any opportunity to restore or support appropriate management plans for the conservation of this asset should be explored. Further opportunities to improve the public realm and green infrastructure, to the indirect benefit of heritage settings, should also be recognised and promoted.
- It is currently not possible to determine whether any of the Grade II listed buildings within the neighbourhood area are at risk.

Land, Soil, and Water Resources

- The provisional ALC data indicates the neighbourhood area is underlain with areas of Grade 3 and Grade 4 agricultural land as well as urban land. However, the data does not differentiate between Grade 3a and Grade 3b land. As a finite resource, Grade 3a (best and most versatile) should be protected where possible.
- As much of the neighbourhood area is relatively urbanised, there is likely to be opportunities to explore the regeneration of underutilised brownfield land through the WNP.
- There are locations within the neighbourhood area which are potentially within a Mineral Safeguarding Area and Mineral Consultation Area.
- The Wey waterbody is the only watercourse in the neighbourhood area, running through the town of Weymouth. Development should avoid impacts to water quality for both the River Wey and within the identified groundwater source protection zones.
- Plan making should consider how local decisions affect water supply, such as water accessibility issues, and ensure that appropriate drainage infrastructure is in place to accommodate new development areas.

Landscape

- The northern section of the neighbourhood area is within the Dorset AONB, and the relationship between the settlement and the open countryside is an important part of its character and special qualities.
- There are four landscape types and five townscape character areas within and surrounding the neighbourhood area and which share a strong relationship and connection with the AONB, WHS, and Heritage Coast.
- There are a range of landscape and townscape features which contribute to the character and quality of the neighbourhood area. These features should be protected and enhanced where possible.
- New development has the potential to lead to incremental change in landscape and townscape character, and visual amenity.

Transportation and Movement

- There are numerous PRoW in the neighbourhood area, and two Visit Dorset walking trails. Development should seek to connect with and where possible extend PRoW and maximise opportunities for active travel.
- The recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to change travel patterns in the short, medium, and longer term. Development should seek to enhance local connections in response to changing local demands.

SEA Framework

3.7 The SEA Framework provides a way in which environmental effects can be defined and subsequently analysed based on standard ‘tests’. Each proposal within the current version of the WNP has been assessed consistently using the Framework.

Table 3.2: WNP SEA Framework

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment questions (will the proposal help to):
Air quality	Encourage opportunities to deliver air quality improvements within the neighbourhood area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce emissions of pollutants from transport? • Promote the use of low emissions vehicles? • Promote enhancements in sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport? • Promote enhancements to green infrastructure networks to facilitate increased absorption and dissipation of pollutants?
Biodiversity and geodiversity	Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Outstanding Universal Value of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site? • Avoid or, if not possible, minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, including internationally and nationally designated sites, following the mitigation hierarchy? • Achieve biodiversity net gains and support the delivery of ecosystem services and multifunctional green infrastructure services? • Support the integrity of the designated sites for biodiversity and geodiversity located within proximity to the neighbourhood area?

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment questions (will the proposal help to):
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance priority habitats, semi-natural habitats, species, and the ecological network connecting them? • Support the national habitat network, particularly Network Enhancement Zones and identified restorable habitat? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks? • Support and promote access to and interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity?
Climate change and flood risk	Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the neighbourhood area and increase resilience to the potential effects of climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the need to travel and the number of journeys made? • Promote the use of more sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling, public transport, and EV infrastructure? • Increase the number of new developments meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria? • Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources, or reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources? • Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the neighbourhood area? • Ensure that inappropriate development does not take place in areas at higher risk of flooding, considering the likely future effects of climate change? • Sustainably manage water run-off, reducing it where possible? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks?
Community wellbeing	Ensure growth in the neighbourhood area is aligned with the needs of all residents, improving accessibility, anticipating future needs and specialist requirements, and supporting cohesive and inclusive communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable homes? • Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes? • Meet the needs of all sectors of the community? • Provide flexible and adaptable homes that meet people's needs, particularly the needs of an ageing population? • Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including specialist services for disabled and older people? • Encourage and promote social cohesion and active involvement of local people in community activities? • Facilitate green infrastructure enhancements, including improved access to open space and improved connectivity and links between open spaces? • Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing residents?

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment questions (will the proposal help to):
Historic environment	Protect, conserve, and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Outstanding Universal Value of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site? • Conserve and enhance buildings, structures, and areas of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their settings? • Protect the integrity and the historic setting of key finds of cultural heritage interest as listed in the Dorset HER? • Support the undertaking of early archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the WNP area? • Conserve and enhance the special interest, character, and appearance of the conservation areas and their setting?
Land, soil, and water resources	Ensure the efficient and effective use of land, protect and enhance water quality, and use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the use of previously developed land wherever possible, including the regeneration of underutilised brownfield land where it is available? • Identify and avoid the development of the best and most versatile agricultural land? • Support the minimisation, reuse, and recycling of waste? • Avoid any negative impacts on water quality and support improvements to water quality? • Ensure appropriate drainage and mitigation is delivered alongside proposed development? • Maximise water efficiency and opportunities for water harvesting and / or water recycling?
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to protect and enhance the integrity of the Dorset AONB? • Protect and enhance the local landscape and townscape character, key sensitivities and features, and quality of place? • Conserve and enhance local identity, diversity, and settlement character? • Protect visual amenity and locally important views in the neighbourhood area?
Transportation	Promote sustainable transport use and active travel opportunities and reduce the need to travel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the objectives within the Bournemouth, Poole, and Dorset Local Transport Plan to encourage the use of more sustainable transport modes? • Encourage a shift to more sustainable forms of travel and enable sustainable transport infrastructure enhancements? • Improve local connectivity and pedestrian and cyclist movement? • Facilitate working from home to reduce the use of private vehicles? • Reduce the impact of the transport sector on climate change? • Improve road safety?

4. Consideration of reasonable alternatives through the SEA

Introduction

- 4.1 In accordance with the SEA Regulations the Environmental Report must include:
- An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with; and
 - The likely significant effects on the environment associated with alternatives / an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of alternatives appraised.
- 4.2 The 'narrative' of plan-making / SEA up to this point is told within this part of the Environmental Report. Specifically, how the SEA process to date has informed the consideration of different approaches for key elements of the WNP.

Establishing reasonable alternatives

- 4.3 Whilst work on the WNP has been underway for some time, the aim here is not to provide a comprehensive explanation of work to date, but rather to explain work undertaken to develop and appraise reasonable alternatives.
- 4.4 In the context of the above, this chapter of the Environmental Report presents information on reasonable alternative approaches to addressing key issues that are of central importance to the WNP.

Top-down considerations (e.g., strategic factors)

- 4.5 The emerging DCLP sets out a housing requirement of 3,225 homes for the neighbourhood area. The housing requirement identifies that there are 1,460 homes with planning permission and 550 homes allocated within the emerging DCLP, with the residual 1,215 homes to be met through neighbourhood plan allocations and windfall development.
- 4.6 The neighbourhood plan may allocate sites for additional development due to the high affordable need identified in a local housing needs assessment (minimum of 1,775 homes). In this respect, a key focus of the emerging WNP is to encourage opportunities for affordable home delivery. Due regard will also be given to the emerging DCLP for further housing guidance.

Bottom-up considerations (e.g., site availability)

- 4.7 Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (with support from an independent planning consultancy) has undertaken assessments of the various sites in Weymouth in terms of their suitability for a neighbourhood plan allocation. A total of 61 sites were considered through an initial site options and assessment process¹¹, with 31 sites considered as 'suitable' or 'potentially suitable' to take forward as a neighbourhood plan allocation.

¹¹ AECOM (2023) [Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan Site Options and Assessment Report](#). The Site Options Assessment (SOA) Report contributes to the evidence base for the emerging WNP and will accompany the emerging WNP at Regulation 14 consultation. The SOA Report provides further clarity on the site identification process and methodology and details the full assessment findings.

4.8 A secondary assessment of the sites was also completed by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, with each site appraised against the following criteria, from which preferential sites came forward.

- **Criteria 1:** Do not consider sites assessed as ‘unsuitable’ in the Site Options and Assessment Report.
- **Criteria 2:** Consider sites inside the defined development boundary (DDB) with potential for more than 20 homes.
- **Criteria 3:** Consider sites outside the DDB with potential for more than 10 homes.
- **Criteria 4:** Consider sites outside the DDB with potential for less than 10 homes where they are supporting very local housing needs.
- **Criteria 5:** Consider sites near to urban areas which are suitable for B2 (general industrial) employment.
- **Criteria 6:** In-use sites will not be considered unless there is, or can be, adequate or alternative provision nearby; and
- **Criteria 7:** Sites providing employment will not be considered for residential unless affordable housing provision of 35% is enabled and some employment use is retained.

4.9 Reflecting the above, the shortlisted site options (which have been endorsed for further consideration by Weymouth Town Council) are presented in Weymouth Town Council’s Site Assessment Process Report¹², which contributes to the evidence base for the emerging WNP. These sites have been the focus for the SEA and are discussed in further detail below.

Options for the focus of development within the DDB

4.10 Through the site assessment process and secondary assessment of the sites, several brownfield site options within the DDB were identified as ‘suitable’ or ‘potentially’ suitable for a Neighbourhood Plan allocation.

4.11 In the wider context, in September 2022 Dorset Council submitted a successful Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Bid for Weymouth’s Waterside Regeneration. Whilst it has been confirmed that this funding will not directly facilitate redevelopment opportunities, it is likely to include infrastructure works to make brownfield site options within the DDB (particularly the Waterside area and areas within the town centre environment) more attractive to developers.

4.12 In this respect, the relative sustainability merits of considering alternative uses within the DDB has been explored. Informed by the aspirations within the existing Town Centre Masterplan/Strategy for Weymouth and with respect to the vision / objectives of the emerging WNP, the following options have been considered through the SEA:

- **Option A:** Provide an additional focus on residential development within the DDB (with a view to encouraging opportunities for affordable home provision).

¹² Weymouth Town Council (2023): [Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan - Site Assessment Process Report](#)

- **Option B:** Provide an additional focus on the development of employment uses within the DDB.
- **Option C:** Focus on proposals which would support key areas of Weymouth's economy (e.g., tourism, leisure, and recreation).
- **Option D:** Focus on proposals which would encourage opportunities for protecting Weymouth's natural and built environment (e.g., climate mitigation / adaption, biodiversity net-gain, enhancements to townscape).
- **Option E:** Support a range of uses within the DDB, considering proposals on a case-by-case basis.

Approach to the options appraisal

4.13 Utilising the SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions development during the earlier scoping stage of the SEA, the options appraisal has been presented through eight SEA themes, as follows:

- Air Quality.
- Biodiversity and Geodiversity.
- Climate Change.
- Community Wellbeing.
- Historic Environment.
- Land, Soil, and Water Resources.
- Landscape and Townscape; and
- Transportation.

4.14 The appraisal considers the relative sustainability merits of each option. Findings are presented as a commentary on effects. To support the appraisal findings, the options have been ranked in terms of their sustainability performance against the relevant SEA Theme (e.g., '1' is the most favourable option). It is anticipated that this will provide the reader with a likely indication of the relative performance of the five options in relation to each theme considered. Options which perform similarly are given an equal ranking within the appraisal findings.

Appraisal findings

4.15 Sources of information to support the appraisal includes (but is not limited to): Ordnance Survey maps; MAGIC Interactive Map¹³; the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Maps for England¹⁴; Google Earth¹⁵; interactive maps and documents available to access on Dorset Council's webpages; national and local planning policy documents; and baseline studies available to access on Weymouth Town Council's webpages.

4.16 **Table 4.1** to **Table 4.8** below present the findings of the options appraisal for each SEA Theme.

¹³ MAGIC (2021): 'Interactive Map', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

¹⁴ Environment Agency (2021): 'Flood Map for Planning', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

¹⁵ Google (2021): 'Google Earth', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

Table 4.1: Appraisal findings: Air Quality

Option A: Provide an additional focus on residential development within the DDB.

Option B: Provide an additional focus on the development of employment uses within the DDB.

Option C: Focus on proposals which would support key areas of Weymouth's economy.

Option D: Focus on proposals which would encourage opportunities for protecting Weymouth's natural and built environment.

Option E: Support a range of uses within the DDB, considering proposals on a case-by-case basis.

Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference				
	A	B	C	D	E
It is recognised that transport emissions are a key contributor to air quality concerns within Dorset. In this respect, Option A and Option E will help to support the delivery of new homes within the most sustainable locations within the neighbourhood area with respect to services and facilities and public transport networks. This has the potential to reduce the reliance on private vehicles for undertaking day-to-day activities within the neighbourhood area (and associated emissions), whilst also encouraging opportunities to connect new development areas with local walking and cycling networks which will help to facilitate active travel opportunities. Option B and Option C perform least favourably in this respect and would likely increase the need for housing to be located outside of the DDB.					
A focus on protecting and enhancing the natural environment within the DDB through Option D has the potential to encourage urban greening on sites which are otherwise predominantly covered by areas of hardstanding. Opportunities to encourage urban greening will increase the percentage cover of trees and vegetation at these locations (e.g., natural absorbers of pollutants), with associated air quality benefits, although it is recognised that this is dependent on the design of new development areas. In this respect, Option E, by encouraging a range of uses within the DDB and considering proposals on a case-by-case basis, may help to enable the 'win-win' opportunities associated with the effective planning of key areas within the DDB to be realised. For example, by supporting proposals which support sustainable and high-quality design, and which deliver appropriate green and open spaces within new development areas.	=1	4	5	3	=1

Table 4.2: Appraisal findings: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Option A: Provide an additional focus on residential development within the DDB.

Option B: Provide an additional focus on the development of employment uses within the DDB.

Option C: Focus on proposals which would support key areas of Weymouth's economy.

Option D: Focus on proposals which would encourage opportunities for protecting Weymouth's natural and built environment.

Option E: Support a range of uses within the DDB, considering proposals on a case-by-case basis.

Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference				
	A	B	C	D	E
<p>It is important to recognise that potential impacts to ecological and geological resources are influenced by a number of factors. For example, incorporating green infrastructure enhancements (including amenity and open spaces) through new development areas can deliver net-gains for nature, tackle local air quality concerns by widening tree and vegetation cover, and increase the number of alternative spaces for recreational uses. In this respect, Option D and Option E have the potential to ensure that these considerations are appropriately incorporated into new development areas within the DDB, whilst also encouraging the remediation of potentially contaminated sites to benefit the natural environment. Nonetheless, smaller sites within the DDB may have limited scope to deliver enhancements given the lack of available space.</p> <p>Most of the sensitive ecological sites within the neighbourhood area are located outside of the DDB. Therefore, options which would facilitate opportunities for housing growth within the DDB (e.g., Option A and Option E) are likely to perform more positively in this respect by delivering housing at relative distance from designated sites which will help to safeguard their integrity.</p>	=2	4	5	1	=2

Table 4.3: Appraisal findings: Climate Change

Option A: Provide an additional focus on residential development within the DDB.

Option B: Provide an additional focus on the development of employment uses within the DDB.

Option C: Focus on proposals which would support key areas of Weymouth's economy.

Option D: Focus on proposals which would encourage opportunities for protecting Weymouth's natural and built environment.

Option E: Support a range of uses within the DDB, considering proposals on a case-by-case basis.

Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference				
	A	B	C	D	E
<p>The extent to which the options support climate change mitigation efforts is dependent (in part) on a strategy which promotes new development at locations in closer proximity to local services and facilities, public transport networks, and walking and cycling networks. Therefore, prioritising housing and employment growth within the DDB (as proposed through Option A, Option B and Option E) has the potential to limit the need to travel to local facilities for some day-to-day activities (and associated greenhouse gas emissions). This is likely to limit potential increases in CO₂ emissions by encouraging opportunities to engage with sustainable and active travel.</p> <p>Another key influence on climate change mitigation efforts is the extent to which new development areas incorporate energy efficient materials and technologies through design. With respect to the climate crisis and Dorset Council's declaration of a climate and ecological emergency in 2019, it is anticipated that new development areas will encourage efficiency through design. However, Option D is likely to provide additional assurance that these considerations are taken forward through new development areas.</p> <p>The extent to which the options have the potential to support climate change adaptation efforts depends on the specific location, design, layout and scale of development, and the incorporation of features which support climate resilience. Many areas within the DDB are within Flood Zone 3, signalling areas which have a high fluvial or coastal flood risk potential. Option E, which encourages a range of uses within the DDB considering proposals on a case-by-case basis, has the potential to ensure that new development areas come forward in appropriate locations. However, the significance of potential effects is dependent on what uses are brought forward, and the design of new development areas. It is also considered that the provisions of the NPPF and national policy (including relating to the sequential / exception test) will help guide development away from potential flood risk areas and ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are implemented.</p> <p>Regarding surface water flood risks, it is anticipated that any surface water run-off issues could largely be addressed through appropriate drainage management through the design of new development proposals. Therefore, all options perform similarly in this respect.</p>	=1	4	5	3	=1

Table 4.4: Appraisal findings: Community Wellbeing

Option A: Provide an additional focus on residential development within the DDB.

Option B: Provide an additional focus on the development of employment uses within the DDB.

Option C: Focus on proposals which would support key areas of Weymouth's economy.

Option D: Focus on proposals which would encourage opportunities for protecting Weymouth's natural and built environment.

Option E: Support a range of uses within the DDB, considering proposals on a case-by-case basis.

Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference				
	A	B	C	D	E
<p>With regards to housing numbers, a local housing needs assessment for the neighbourhood area identifies a minimum affordable housing need of 1,775 homes. In this respect, Option A, through providing an additional focus on residential development within the DDB, has the potential to positively contribute to the delivery of affordable dwellings.</p> <p>However, it is recognised that opportunities for the emerging WNP to deliver housing of an appropriate type and tenure is dependent in part on the distribution of new development (i.e., recognising that larger site allocations have an increased scope to deliver community benefits and affordable housing provision). In this respect, Option E, which would consider proposals on a case-by-case basis, perhaps offers greater potential for appropriate development to come forward in the right locations.</p> <p>While Option B and Option C has the potential to support the vibrancy of the town centre environment, supporting additional sectors of the local economy and more appropriately reflecting town centre uses in a post-pandemic context, these options are less likely to facilitate additional housing growth within the DDB (e.g., within the most sustainable locations in the neighbourhood area with respect to access and connectivity to public transport networks and services / facilities, and opportunities to engage in active travel).</p> <p>The benefits to physical and mental health and wellbeing resulting from close contact to the natural environment are well documented. There are a number of open and green spaces within the neighbourhood area, and a key ambition for the emerging WNP is to expand and improve connections between green infrastructure networks. In this context, an additional focus on residential and employment uses within the DDB (which is likely through Option A, Option B, and Option C) is likely to densify the town centre environment and potentially reduce opportunities to incorporate additional public realm enhancements in these locations. Option D offers more potential to deliver these benefits, with Option E having the potential to ensure a more coordinated approach to the delivery of green infrastructure enhancements by weighing up the pros and cons of proposals with respect to wider WNP objectives and aspirations.</p>	2	=3	=3	=3	1

Table 4.5: Appraisal findings: Historic Environment

Option A: Provide an additional focus on residential development within the DDB.

Option B: Provide an additional focus on the development of employment uses within the DDB.

Option C: Focus on proposals which would support key areas of Weymouth's economy.

Option D: Focus on proposals which would encourage opportunities for protecting Weymouth's natural and built environment.

Option E: Support a range of uses within the DDB, considering proposals on a case-by-case basis.

Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference				
	A	B	C	D	E
<p>It is recognised that many heritage assets and areas are present within the DDB, positively contributing to the special qualities of the neighbourhood area. In this respect, all options (which focus growth within the DDB) will likely facilitate new development within proximity to designated and non-designated heritage assets and areas (and their settings).</p> <p>There are sites within the DDB which are areas of underutilised land which likely detract from the character of the neighbourhood area in their current form – indirectly and adversely impacting the setting of nearby heritage assets and areas. In this respect, high quality and sensitive redevelopment of these sites has the potential to rejuvenate features and areas of historic environment interest and sensitivity, which will positively restore and safeguard Weymouth's significant heritage interest. For example, by supporting proposals which enhance the visual interpretation of important features and their wider historic setting. Option D and Option E perform more favourably in this respect.</p> <p>With respect to Option A, Option B, and Option C, opportunities to enhance the setting of nearby heritage designations may be possible through the application of sensitive design and mitigation measures within new development areas. However, it will be essential for new development areas to be accompanied by a proportionate heritage assessment which provides further details about the heritage significance and sensitivities of the site(s), alongside outlining any proposed mitigation measures to ensure that the historic environment is safeguarded and enhanced wherever possible.</p>	=3	=3	=3	1	2

Table 4.6: Appraisal findings: Land, Soil and Water Resources

Option A: Provide an additional focus on residential development within the DDB.

Option B: Provide an additional focus on the development of employment uses within the DDB.

Option C: Focus on proposals which would support key areas of Weymouth's economy.

Option D: Focus on proposals which would encourage opportunities for protecting Weymouth's natural and built environment.

Option E: Support a range of uses within the DDB, considering proposals on a case-by-case basis.

Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference				
	A	B	C	D	E
<p>Providing an additional focus on residential and employment uses within the DDB (through Option A, Option B, and Option E) will reduce pressures to find sites outside of the DDB for these purposes. In this respect, these options will help to support the most efficient use of land within the neighbourhood area, potentially enabling the remediation of areas of contaminated land, and also help to safeguard areas of productive agricultural land outside of the DDB.</p> <p>Whilst it is recognised that Option D would likely facilitate additional opportunities to deliver public realm improvements and green infrastructure enhancements, this may reduce the available land within the DDB which could accommodate new homes. Therefore, on balance, Option D and Option C are the least favourable options with respect to the land, soil, and water resources SEA theme as this may result in additional land-take outside of the DDB for residential uses.</p>	1	3	5	4	2

Table 4.7: Appraisal findings: Landscape and Townscape

Option A: Provide an additional focus on residential development within the DDB.

Option B: Provide an additional focus on the development of employment uses within the DDB.

Option C: Focus on proposals which would support key areas of Weymouth's economy.

Option D: Focus on proposals which would encourage opportunities for protecting Weymouth's natural and built environment.

Option E: Support a range of uses within the DDB, considering proposals on a case-by-case basis.

Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference				
	A	B	C	D	E
<p>In terms of nationally protected landscapes, the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is within proximity to the neighbourhood area. In this respect, opportunities to facilitate new homes at distance from the AONB is preferable from a landscape perspective. This is more readily achievable through Option A and Option E.</p> <p>At the local level, the relationship between the natural and built environment within the neighbourhood area is an important contributor to its character. The redevelopment of underutilised brownfield sites within the DDB is likely to support townscape enhancements and improve the quality of the public realm, encouraging development which incorporates materials and design features which complement the surrounding areas. However, it is noted this is dependent on the design of the schemes which are brought forward at these locations. Option D and Option E perform most favourably in this respect.</p> <p>Option B and Option C would likely increase pressures to find sites outside of the DDB for residential uses. However, potential impacts to landscape and townscape character are dependent (in part) on the design of new development areas and the extent to which proposals address any sensitivities (e.g., through appropriate landscaping schemes or preparing design masterplans).</p>	=1	=4	=4	=1	=1

Table 4.8: Appraisal findings: Transportation

Option A: Provide an additional focus on residential development within the DDB.

Option B: Provide an additional focus on the development of employment uses within the DDB.

Option C: Focus on proposals which would support key areas of Weymouth's economy.

Option D: Focus on proposals which would encourage opportunities for protecting Weymouth's natural and built environment.

Option E: Support a range of uses within the DDB, considering proposals on a case-by-case basis.

Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference				
	A	B	C	D	E
Option A, Option B, and Option E will help to support the delivery of new homes and employment land within the most sustainable locations within the neighbourhood area with respect to services and facilities and public transport networks. This has the potential to reduce the reliance on private vehicles for undertaking day-to-day activities within the neighbourhood area, and also encourage opportunities to connect new development areas with local walking and cycling networks which will help to facilitate active travel opportunities.					
Whilst it is recognised that Option D would likely facilitate additional opportunities to deliver public realm enhancements (e.g., by improving connectivity and accessibility within the DDB), this may reduce the available land within the DDB which could accommodate new homes.	1	3	5	4	2
Option C has the potential to attract additional visitors to the neighbourhood area (e.g., through encouraging opportunities to revitalise Weymouth's economic offer), which may increase the number of vehicles accessing areas within the DDB. Nonetheless, potential impacts may be mitigated by Weymouth's public transport offer, which includes rail and bus links to surrounding locations.					

Consideration of sites outside of the DDB

4.17 A key objective of the emerging WNP is to positively contribute to the delivery of affordable homes, with a recognition that affordable housing needs cannot be met by sites within the DDB alone.

4.18 To support the consideration of the suitability of the shortlisted sites for a potential allocation of a type appropriate for the emerging WNP, the SEA process has appraised the key constraints and opportunities present at the six shortlisted sites outside of the DDB for a potential allocation through the emerging WNP.

4.19 In this context, the sites have been considered in relation to the SEA Framework of objectives and decision-making questions developed during SEA scoping and the baseline information. These assessments undertaken through the SEA have been undertaken separately to the initial site options and assessment process completed for the emerging WNP.

4.20 The sites are as follows, and are shown in the figure below:

- **Site A:** Land off Budmouth Avenue
- **Site B:** Lodmoor Old Tip (Middle Section)
- **Site C:** Lodmoor Old Tip (Southern Section)
- **Site D:** Redlands Farm
- **Site E:** Land at Wyke Oliver Farm (North)
- **Site F:** Land South of Wessex Roundabout

4.21 The assessment findings are presented below in **Table 4.9** to **Table 4.14**.

Shortlisted Sites outside of the DDB for a potential allocation through the WNP



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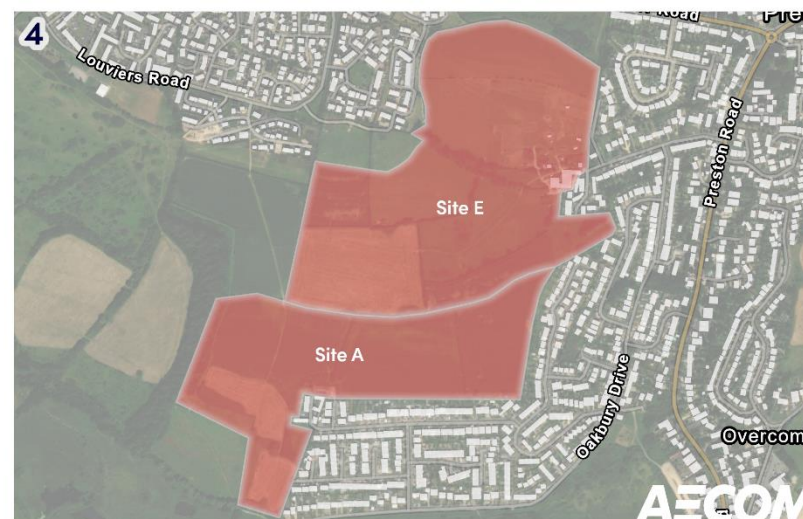


Table 4.9 Assessment findings – Site A

SEA Theme Site A: Land off Budmouth Avenue



Air quality

There are no air quality management areas (AQMA) within Weymouth; as such, allocating any site for development would not contribute to air quality concerns in the neighbourhood area. It is noted that the Rodwell Road / Boot Hill area of Weymouth is of concern with regards to air quality in Weymouth – however, this site is a distance from this part of the neighbourhood area and is unlikely to impact it.

The nearest air quality monitoring stations are located approximately 2.2km south of the site on King Street, towards the town centre. The latest air quality annual status report (ASR) indicates the monitoring stations within Weymouth were all under the annual mean concentration target for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). Nonetheless, allocating this site for housing development would result in more traffic on the roads, and a subsequent increase in NO₂.

Although the site is removed from AQMA, and the current air quality status of the neighbourhood area is stable, the development of this site for 56 homes will lead to increased vehicles on the local road network. This level of growth is therefore likely to have a negative effect on the local air quality. However, given the size of the site, new development areas could support opportunities for on-site green infrastructure enhancements which would help to absorb pollutants and improve air quality at the local level. As such, **uncertain effects** are concluded to be the most likely if this site was taken forward.

SEA Theme Site A: Land off Budmouth Avenue

Biodiversity and geodiversity This site is adjacent to the nationally designated Lodmoor Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which is located to the south. It is also approximately 700m north-west of the internationally designated Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the South Dorset Coast SSSI. The site falls within SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) for the types of development that are likely to be taken forward through the neighbourhood plan (i.e., residential, rural residential, and rural non-residential). Development in the area adjacent to the SSSI could lead to negative effects on biodiversity, for example through the loss or fragmentation of habitats, which reduces connectivity. Additionally, pressure on the SAC includes recreational uses (e.g., walking and climbing) and livestock grazing. As allocating this site for development could result in increased pressure, consultation with Natural England will be required if this site is allocated for development.

This site is also seen to be suitable for habitat creation and expansion by Natural England, as it overlaps with a Network Enhancement Zone 1 and Network Enhancement Zone 2 in its southern half, as well as areas of Network Expansion Zone to the east and west. According to guidance provided by Natural England, Network Enhancement Zones are land that connects existing patches of primary and associated habitats that is likely to be suitable for habitat creation, and Network Expansion Zones include land outside of the Network Enhancement Zones that are potentially suitable for expanding, linking and / or joining networks across the landscape. As such, development on this site should focus on expanding and joining up existing habitat patches and improving biodiversity connectivity¹⁶.

In terms of features present within the site, there is a small area of traditional orchard Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat in the south-west, and is adjacent to an extensive area of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh associated with the Lodmoor SSSI to the south, as well as reedbeds to the south and deciduous woodland to the west. These habitats could be disturbed by development on this site through increased noise and light pollution. There is vegetation on the site boundaries in this location that should be retained and enhanced as far as possible to avoid biodiversity impacts and to help deliver biodiversity connectivity and net gains.

Overall, **negative effects** are considered likely if development comes forward on this site. This reflects the proximity of the site to the SSSI and SAC designations, and the additional BAP Priority Habitats within the site boundaries as well as in proximity. It is noted, however, that this site is suitable for habitat connection and expansion – and biodiversity improvements / net gain would be more readily achievable through allocating this site.

¹⁶ https://magic.defra.gov.uk/Metadata_for_magic/Habitat%20Network%20Mapping%20Guidance.pdf

SEA Theme Site A: Land off Budmouth Avenue

Climate change	<p>Development of this site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions, linked to the construction phase of development, the increase in the built footprint of Weymouth, as well as an intensification of use at this site. As this site is of a relatively large scale for neighbourhood plan considerations, and has a relatively large housing capacity, the potential increase in greenhouse gas emissions is likely to be significant and could contribute to local climate change impacts through increasing carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. This could further impact other themes included under the SEA framework, such as community wellbeing (through potential impacts on health linked to emissions) and biodiversity and geodiversity (through potential impacts on habitats, species, and designated sites).</p> <p>Regarding flood risk, the site is wholly within Flood Zone 1 and as such is at low risk of flooding. Additionally, the site is mostly at very low risk of surface water flooding, with the south-western area of the site at low risk on the boundary with existing development off Moordown Avenue and Southdown Avenue. There is further low surface water flood risk in the north-eastern area on the boundary with development off Budmouth Avenue and Bodkin Lane. However, there is an area of high surface water flood risk outside the site to the south and south-west, linked to the Lodmoor SSSI.</p> <p>Overall, given any level of growth in Weymouth will lead to an increase in CO₂ emissions, uncertain effects are concluded most likely for this SEA theme if this site was taken forward for development. The extent to which the options have the potential to support climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts depends on the specific location, design, layout and scale of development, and the inclusion of features to support climate resilience.</p>
Community wellbeing	<p>Weymouth has identified a need for additional housing, especially affordable housing. As the site is relatively large in size, there is likely to be potential to deliver a level of affordable housing, to help meet local needs. It is recognised that as the size of the site increases, so does the potential to deliver affordable homes – with the potential for long term positive effects.</p> <p>Weymouth is well served by services, facilities and amenities – offering a number of green spaces, health services including Weymouth hospital; as well as GP practices and dental surgeries, sports facilities, retail opportunities, grocery stores, educational infrastructure and a number of independent businesses. However, this site is outside of the existing development boundary of Weymouth town. Access to these services and facilities would therefore be relatively limited, with development extending the urban built form to the north and east. This is unlikely to support a cohesive, connected community, with new development distant from the town centre. It is noted that a public right of way (PRoW) crosses the site, which would likely allows for safe active travel and exercise – if retained.</p> <p>The site sits within an open area of land. Allocating it for development would contribute to the closing of the gap between Overcombe to the south-east and Littlemoor to the north. This could lead to coalescence effects if further development were to come forward to the north and west of this site.</p> <p>Given the above, negative effects are considered likely if this site is allocated for development. This site is located outside the developed area, and whilst it has the potential to bring forward a good level of housing (especially affordable housing), it would be difficult to access the services and facilities in Weymouth. As such allocating it would not promote a cohesive community. Additionally, developing this site could contribute to closing the gap between two individual settlements and communities.</p>

SEA Theme Site A: Land off Budmouth Avenue

Historic environment	<p>This site is not located in proximity to any international, national or local historic environment designations, nor does it sit within the setting of any historical conservation areas associated with Weymouth. However, it is approximately 700m north-west of the Dorset and East Devon World Heritage Site (WHS). Existing development screens the site from the WHS, and though housing has the potential to lead to increased recreational use of the WHS, this is not considered an issue. Additionally, it is likely the management plan for the WHS works to ensure adverse negative effects do not come forward. Given this, neutral / no effects are concluded likely for this SEA theme.</p>	
Land, soil, and water resources	<p>The indicative Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) for the south west region provided by Natural England identifies the site as falling within Grade 3 'Good to Moderate' agricultural land (ALC), with a low likelihood (<20%) of being Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land. However, there is an area in the eastern extent of the site that has a moderate likelihood (20%-60%) of being BMV land. However, it is noted that this area of the site is very small, and development could be avoided in this specific location.</p> <p>There are no watercourses on the site, nor does the site sit within an operational catchment. However, it is adjacent to the Lodmoor SSSI and its associated water sources, so it will be important for development to ensure water runoff does not enter the system.</p> <p>Overall, given the absence of constraints, neutral / no effects are considered.</p>	
Landscape	<p>The Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located approximately 750m north of the site. Effects are likely to be limited due to the existing built form to the north and east of this site, as well as areas of higher elevation outside of the site to the north. The site adjoins existing development to the south and east, comprising agricultural fields along Weymouth's development boundary. Development at this site will act as an urban extension, and could set precedent for future growth into the open countryside to the north and west. There is potential for this growth to lead to the merging of settlements if this continued – specifically Overcombe and Littlemoor.</p> <p>The gradient of this site slopes noticeably downwards from the north, but is more level adjacent to the Brackendown Avenue development on the southern boundary, and is relatively level in an east-west direction until the most eastern field - where it slopes down to the east. It is likely development of this site will impact on views out of the residential development along Brackendown Avenue and Budmouth Avenue. Additionally, development of the fields in the western part of the site would result in significant negative effects on the landscape character and visual amenity, as they are exposed to long range views including from the Lodmoor SSSI to the south and the public right of way that crosses the site.</p> <p>Overall, negative effects are considered likely if this site is allocated. This reflects the site's elevation and the likely visual impact on views from the site across the surrounding area, including the public right of way and the SSSI, and views into the site from existing development. It also reflects the potential for future development to the north and west, as well as the potential for coalescence between settlements.</p>	

SEA Theme Site A: Land off Budmouth Avenue

Transportation	<p>There is a rail station in the neighbourhood area, though it is located approximately 2km from the site. The Weymouth station offers hourly services to locations including (but not limited to) London Waterloo, Southampton and Basingstoke, and less frequent direct services to Bristol Parkway. There are no bus stops within a suitable distance to this site – the nearest being located on Sunningdale Rise to the east, approximately 740m away. However, there is a public right of way crossing the site in a north-south direction, connecting Louviers Road to the north with residential development off the B3159 to the south. This allows for access to services in the centre via the B3159. This footpath should be retained to allow for safe active transportation methods.</p> <p>There is limited access to the strategic road network. Access could come from Budmouth Avenue or other residential streets in close proximity, but these tend to be long and narrow cul-de-sacs that are unlikely to have capacity to serve the whole site. As such, it is likely consultation with the highways authority will be required for this site to confirm suitable access. It is likely there will still be a continued reliance on private vehicles to access locations and services outside the neighbourhood area.</p> <p>In conclusion, negative effects are concluded likely for this SEA theme through development of this site. This reflects the complexities for allowing access to the site and the lack of feasible sustainable transport opportunities, given the distance to the rail station and the nearest bus stop.</p>	
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Key			
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect	
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effect	

Table 4.10 Assessment findings – Site B

SEA Theme Site B: Lodmoor Old Tip (Middle Section)



Air quality

As there are no AQMAs within the Weymouth neighbourhood area, it is unlikely allocating any site for development will considerably change the air quality baseline. Whilst it is noted the Rodwell Road / Boot Hill area of Weymouth has historically been an area of concern, this site is removed from the area – and the area has experienced an improvement in air quality over recent years.

The nearest air quality monitoring stations are located on King Street, approximately 1.5km south-west of the site in the centre of Weymouth. The latest ASR indicates the monitoring stations within Weymouth were all under the annual mean concentration target for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). Nonetheless, allocating this site for housing development would result in more traffic on the roads, and a subsequent increase in NO₂.

Given the size of the site and the indicative capacity of 75-90 homes, it is possible this site could influence local air quality. This could have an effect on the Lodmoor SSSI designation which is adjacent to the site to the east – potentially affecting the biodiversity and geodiversity value of the site. However, given the size of the site, new development areas could support opportunities for on-site green infrastructure enhancements which would help to absorb pollutants and improve air quality at the local level. As such, **uncertain effects** are concluded to be the most likely if this site was taken forward.

SEA Theme Site B: Lodmoor Old Tip (Middle Section)

Biodiversity and geodiversity	<p>This site is adjacent to the Lodmoor SSSI, which is located directly to the north and east. It is also approximately 1.27km south-west of the Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC and the South Dorset Coast SSSI. As the site is in proximity to these designations, it is subject to SSSI IRZs for the types of development that are likely to be taken forward through the neighbourhood plan (i.e., residential, rural residential, and rural non-residential). As such, consultation with Natural England will be required if this site is allocated for development, given there could be the loss of connectivity with the SSSI and surrounding important areas for biodiversity and geodiversity, as well as increased pressure on the SAC. This whole site is within Network Enhancement Zone 1 and as such is seen to be suitable for the creation of primary habitat. As such, developing this site in its entirety could bring forward negative effects for the Lodmoor SSSI and biodiversity value of the wider area by reducing the connectivity of this part of the neighbourhood area.</p> <p>In terms of BAP Priority Habitat, the site has coastal and floodplain grazing marsh in its eastern extent - this is associated with the large area of this habitat type in the Lodmoor SSSI to the east. Additionally, the site is adjacent to two further BAP Priority Habitat areas – an area of reedbeds on the northern site boundary, and an area of deciduous woodland on the western site boundary. As such, development of this site could result in disturbances to these habitats through increased noise and light pollution. There is a level of boundary vegetation, as well as hedgerows and trees contained in the site itself – these features likely contribute to the local biodiversity network and as such should be retained and enhanced where possible.</p> <p>Overall, negative effects are considered likely if development comes forward on this site. This reflects the potential negative effects on the nearby national biodiversity and geodiversity designations, BAP priority habitats in proximity and the hedgerows on the site boundaries. It also acknowledges that developing this site would reduce the ability of the neighbourhood area to bring forward biodiversity improvements / net-gain, as this site is suitable for habitat connection and expansion according to Natural England.</p>
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SEA Theme Site B: Lodmoor Old Tip (Middle Section)

Climate change	<p>Development of any site within Weymouth will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions, linked to the construction phase of development, the increase in the built footprint of Weymouth, as well as an intensification of use at this site. Given this site has a large capacity for housing, the associated greenhouse gas emissions increase has the potential to be significant, and subsequently negatively impact local human and environmental health.</p> <p>The site is within Flood Zone 1, which indicates the site is at low risk of fluvial flooding – however, the site boundaries are within an area of Flood Zone 3 associated with a series of drains. As such, the site boundaries and the land in proximity to them are at higher risk of flooding. In terms of surface water flood risk, there are a couple of small areas within the site that are at low risk of surface water flooding – located by the existing structures on the site and an area to the north-east. However, the site is adjacent to areas at low and medium risk to the east and north, and high risk to the west. This surface water flood risk is linked to the Lodmoor SSSI to the east and north, and drains to the west. Given the level of fluvial and surface water flood risk, this site would benefit from sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) in this area in line with higher planning policy. However, the risk of flooding could be avoided by developing land away from these areas.</p> <p>Given this, uncertain effects are considered likely if development comes forward on this site. This is due to the potential for an increase in CO₂ emissions and due to the risk of fluvial and surface water flooding on the site, especially to the east and west, as well as the uncertainty around how flood risk in the immediate area could impact the site. It is recognised this could likely be addressed through the inclusion of sustainable drainage within new development areas, and avoiding developing on areas of land at greater risk. The extent to which the options have the potential to support climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts depends on the specific location, design, layout and scale of development, and the inclusion of features to support climate resilience.</p>
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SEA Theme Site B: Lodmoor Old Tip (Middle Section)

Community wellbeing	<p>Allocating any site for development will help contribute to the identified housing need in Weymouth; This site has the potential to deliver between 75 and 90 new homes, contributing towards the identified housing need for the area. It is recognised that as the size of the site increases, so does the potential to deliver affordable homes – with the potential for long term positive effects.</p> <p>Weymouth is well served by services, facilities and amenities – offering a number of green spaces, health services including Weymouth hospital as well as GP practices and dental surgeries, sports facilities, retail opportunities, grocery stores, educational infrastructure and a number of independent businesses. The site is located under 1km from the town centre and a number of these key facilities and services; it is seen to be adjacent and connected to the existing settlement boundary and built up area. As such, access to these key services and facilities is already in place.</p> <p>Furthermore, there is a public right of way (PRoW) that runs along the northern site boundary and cuts through the site; and the site is located adjacent to the Lodmoor Country Park. As such, this site allows for safe and active travel, as well as providing opportunities for engagement with sport and recreational pursuits as long as the PRoW extending through the site is retained.</p> <p>Given the above, positive effects are considered likely if this site is allocated for development. This is due to the position of the site – allowing for easy access to services and facilities, though it would contribute to closing the gap between two distinct settlements. It has potential to bring forward a large level of housing (especially affordable housing), and provides recreational opportunities, and safe and active travel and exercise prospects.</p>
Historic environment	<p>This site is not located in proximity to any international, national or local historic environment designations. This site is approximately 350m north of the Weymouth Town Conservation Area, but is screened by existing development, including the aquarium and a primary school. However, the site is approximately 1.3km south-west of the Dorset and East Devon WHS. Whilst development of this site would be visually screened by the Lodmoor SSSI and country park designations and existing development to the north-east, recreational impacts on this designation could occur. This is not expected to lead to negative effects for the WHS designation given the management plan in place has not identified recreational activities as a threat. As such, neutral / no effects are considered likely for the historic environment if this site is taken forward for development.</p>

SEA Theme Site B: Lodmoor Old Tip (Middle Section)

Land, soil and water resources	<p>Indicative ALC maps suggest there is a low likelihood (<20%) of the land being BMV, with some potential for Grade 3 (which could be BMV) as well as urban uses. Whilst there is a level of uncertainty, it is considered unlikely that development of the site would lead to a loss of BMV agricultural land.</p> <p>There are no watercourses on the site, but it is noted there are drains on the eastern and western site boundaries, and the water associated with Lodmoor SSSI to the east. As such, it will be important for surface water runoff to be limited at this site to avoid impacts on this designation and these features.</p> <p>This site is a mix of greenfield and brownfield land. The development of brownfield land presents a positive for this SEA theme due to the efficient use of available land resources. However, given the existing household recycling centre on site, the area could have a level of contamination which would need to be remediated prior to development.</p> <p>Considering the above, uncertain effects are concluded likely for this SEA theme if this site is allocated. Whilst the quality of the land at the site it uncertain, it has the potential to be of high quality. Additionally, there is the question around contamination linked to the recycling centre on the site at present. This could bring forward benefits to this SEA theme through effective remediation.</p>
Landscape	<p>Whilst there are no international or national landscape designations within the boundaries or in proximity to this site, the site is adjacent to the Lodmoor Country Park – located to the east (the same designation area as the Lodmoor SSSI). In terms of elevation, the delivery of 75-90 new homes on the site could impact upon long distance views to and from the country park, notably from development along Weymouth Bay Avenue, Beaumont Avenue and Grove Avenue, as well as the Lodmoor Play Park, all of which are located to the west of the site. It is noted that views may already be disturbed to an extent, due to the presence of the household recycling centre on the site.</p> <p>In line with the whole neighbourhood area, this site is within the National Character Areas (NCA) 138: Weymouth Lowlands, and the site sits within the ridge and vale local character area. Pressures on this landscape area includes new housing development, grazing, climate change (higher temperatures and more frequent drought conditions etc), and renewable energy development. Development here is limited by the Lodmoor designations to the east, and existing development and sports and recreational provision to the west. However, growth could continue northwards and / or southwards of this site – this urban extension would reduce the gap between Weymouth and Overcombe.</p> <p>In conclusion, uncertain effects are concluded most likely if this site was taken forward for development. This reflects the proximity of the site to the Lodmoor designations and existing development to the west, which could have views impacted. It also reflects the potential for development here to close the gap between two distinct settlements, and the uncertainty over the design and what mitigation could be achieved here to lessen landscape and visual impacts.</p>

SEA Theme Site B: Lodmoor Old Tip (Middle Section)

Transportation	<p>Weymouth rail station is approximately 1.5km south-west of this site. It offers hourly services to locations including (but not limited to) London Waterloo, Southampton and Basingstoke, and less frequent direct services to Bristol Parkway. The nearest bus stop to this site is located on the B3155, an approximate 540m walk away. This allows for sustainable transportation to a variety of locations in and around Weymouth. Additionally, there is a public right of way on the northern site boundary that allows for active travel to residential development and the B3159 to the west, and Littlemoor to the north. This should be retained and enhanced through development where possible.</p> <p>Whilst the site is not adjacent to any roads, existing access for the household recycling centre connects to the B3155 to the south. This then connects with Overcombe in the north-east and Weymouth in the south-west. From there, there is access to the strategic transport network (A35 and A354) and larger centres such as Dorchester to the north and Portland to the south. This road is also walking/ cycling friendly, connecting to the South West Coastal Path. However, it is likely there will still be a continued reliance on private vehicles to access locations and services outside the neighbourhood area.</p> <p>In light of the above, neutral / no effects are considered likely through developing this site. This is due to there being opportunities to engage with sustainable and active transportation, and the site's location in relation local strategic road network which will likely encourage private vehicle usage.</p>		
Key			
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect	
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effect	

Table 4.11 Assessment findings – Site C

SEA Theme Site C: Lodmoor Old Tip (Southern Section)



Air quality

Given there are no AQMAs within the Weymouth neighbourhood area, it is unlikely allocating any site for development will considerably change the air quality baseline. Though the Rodwell Road / Boot Hill area of Weymouth has been of concern over the years, this site is not within proximity to this part of the neighbourhood area and is unlikely to impact it.

The nearest air quality monitoring stations are located on King Street, approximately 1.5km south-west of the site in the centre of Weymouth. The latest ASR indicates the monitoring stations within Weymouth were all under the annual mean concentration target for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). Nonetheless, allocating this site for housing development would result in more traffic on the roads, and a subsequent increase in NO₂.

Given the indicative capacity of 30-50 homes for this site, it is possible development at this location could negatively impact the overall air quality of the neighbourhood area. This is due to an increase in vehicles on the road linked to home ownership at this site. However, given the size of the site, new development areas could support opportunities for on-site green infrastructure enhancements which would help to absorb pollutants and improve air quality at the local level. As such, **uncertain effects** are concluded to be the most likely if this site was taken forward.

SEA Theme Site C: Lodmoor Old Tip (Southern Section)

Biodiversity and geodiversity This site is adjacent to the Lodmoor SSSI, which is located to the east. It is also approximately 1.25km south-west of the Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC and the South Dorset Coast SSSI. As the site is in proximity to these designations, it is subject to SSSI IRZs for the types of development that are likely to be taken forward through the neighbourhood plan (i.e., residential, rural residential, and rural non-residential). As such, consultation with Natural England will be required if this site is allocated for development, given there could be the loss of connectivity with the SSSI and surrounding important areas for biodiversity and geodiversity, as well as increased pressure on the SAC. This site is also seen to be suitable for habitat creation and expansion, as it overlaps with a Network Enhancement Zone 1 and Network Enhancement Zone 2, as well as an area of Restorable Habitat. As such, developing this site for new housing could negatively impact biodiversity and geodiversity in the neighbourhood area by removing an area that could positively contribute to biodiversity net-gain activities and the improvement of biodiversity connectivity.

The site has a small area of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh BAP Priority Habitat on its eastern site boundary, which is linked to the Lodmoor SSSI designation. This habitat could be disturbed by development on this site through increased noise and light pollution. There is boundary vegetation on the site boundaries, and hedgerows within the site that likely contribute to the local biodiversity network. As such they should be retained and enhanced as far as possible to avoid biodiversity impacts and to help deliver biodiversity connectivity and net gains.

Overall, **uncertain effects** are considered likely if development comes forward on this site. Whilst there might be potential negative effects on the nearby national biodiversity and geodiversity designations, the site is suitable for habitat connection and expansion according to Natural England which may support opportunities for net-gains. This is dependent on the design of new development areas.

Climate change Development of this site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions, linked to the construction phase of development, the increase in the built footprint of Weymouth, as well as an intensification of use at this site. This site has the potential to increase greenhouse gas emissions, which could impact on the natural and built environment surrounding the site and further afield.

Regarding flood risk, the site predominately falls within Flood Zone 1 and as such has a low risk of fluvial flooding; however, areas of Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 exist towards the eastern, southern and western site boundaries, and are at greater risk of flooding. Similarly, the majority of the site is at low risk of surface water flooding – with the eastern and western site boundaries at medium to high surface water flood risk. Given the level of fluvial and surface water flood risk, this site would benefit from SuDS in this area in line with higher planning policy. Additionally, it is recognised that development at the site could avoid areas at higher risk of flooding.

Given this, **uncertain effects** are considered likely if development comes forward on this site, given the potential for a great increase in CO₂ emissions and due to the risk of fluvial and surface water flooding on the site, especially in proximity to the northern site boundary. It is recognised this could likely be addressed through the inclusion of SuDS and the avoidance of areas more susceptible to flooding.

SEA Theme Site C: Lodmoor Old Tip (Southern Section)

Community wellbeing	<p>Allocating any site for development will help contribute to the identified housing need in Weymouth. This site has the potential to deliver between 30 and 50 new homes, contributing towards the identified housing need for the area. It is recognised that as the size of the site increases, so does the potential to deliver affordable homes – with the potential for long term positive effects.</p> <p>There are a number of key facilities and amenities in Weymouth that provide important services and opportunities, including recreational, health, and education. This site is located less than 1km from the town centre and these associated services; being adjacent and connected to the existing settlement boundary and built up area. Furthermore, as this site is connected to the existing settlement boundary, allocating this site for development is not seen to have potential to cause coalescence between settlements. However, it would still change the settlement pattern of Weymouth slightly, and could set the precedent for further growth to the north.</p> <p>The site is adjacent to the Lodmoor designations, and as such could have a recreational impact. This is especially true given the car park already on the site – which could limit the number of people engaging with the recreational opportunities in this part of the neighbourhood area, which includes (but is not limited to) Lodmoor Country Park, the beach, SEA Life, a skatepark and a mini golf business.</p> <p>Given the above, positive effects are considered likely if this site is allocated for development. This reflects the location of the site and ease of access to facilities and services, as well as its potential to bring forward needed infrastructure and a good level of affordable housing.</p>
Historic environment	<p>This site is not located in proximity to any international, national or local historic environment designations, but it does sit within the setting of the Weymouth Town Centre Conservation Area, which is located approximately 270m south-west of the site. The conservation area is on the Heritage at Risk 2022 register for the South West, and is seen to be in very bad condition with a medium vulnerability – as such, it is deteriorating significantly. Additionally, the site is approximately 1.25km south-west of the Dorset and East Devon WHS. Though it is acknowledged the site is likely screened by the Lodmoor designations and existing development, allocating this site could result in an increase in recreational pressure on this site.</p> <p>Overall, neutral / no effects are likely with respect to the historic environment, given the relative distance of the site from internationally and nationally designated heritage assets. It is noted work on the site could improve the status of the conservation area through considerate design that betters the setting, which would allow for positive effects to come forward for this SEA theme.</p>

SEA Theme Site C: Lodmoor Old Tip (Southern Section)

Land, soil and water resources	<p>Indicative ALC maps suggest there is a low likelihood (<20%) of the land being BMV, with some potential for Grade 3 (which could be BMV) or land in urban use. Whilst there is a level of uncertainty, it is considered unlikely that development of the site would lead to a loss of BMV agricultural land.</p> <p>There are no watercourses on the site, however there is a drain on the western site boundary, and another in proximity to the southern boundary. Given the proximity of the Lodmoor SSSI it will be essential for surface water runoff to be limited to maintain the integrity of the designated site.</p> <p>There is a car park within the site boundaries which could impact on the land quality. However, the potential level of contamination linked to this feature is unlikely to be significant – and it is likely allocating this site for housing development will bring forward opportunities for remediation, with the potential for positive effects overall.</p> <p>Given the above, broadly neutral / no effects are considered likely if this site is taken forward for development. This is due to the redevelopment of a partial brownfield site and the likely poor quality of the land, as well as the limited water concerns.</p>
Landscape	<p>There are no internationally or nationally designated landscape features within or near to this site. However, the Lodmoor Country Park is adjacent to the site to the east. Despite this proximity, it is unlikely allocating this site will significantly impact on views to and from the Country Park given the existing SEA LIFE Centre Weymouth, Weymouth Pirate Adventure Mini Gold, The Front Skatepark, Weymouth Bay Miniature Railway and the Sandworld Weymouth recreational development adjacent to the site to the west, as well as the existing built development within the site. The size of the site also contributes to reduced impacts on views. Additionally, the site slopes downwards in a south-east direction. Therefore, any potential landscape impacts (notably impacts on views) will likely be reduced in the southern part of the site as new development will be at a lower elevation.</p> <p>This site is considered to be adjacent to and connected to the existing settlement boundary and built up area, and as such is unlikely to significantly change the size and character of the existing settlement. Additionally, the site is currently contained / constrained to the east, south and west. As such, development is unlikely to lead to further development in these directions, but could set the precedent for growth to the north.</p> <p>Given the size of the site, its limited opportunity for future growth, and its location adjacent to existing development to the west, it is unlikely bringing forward development here will result in significant landscape impacts – especially given the site is partially brownfield and located on the edge of the Weymouth settlement. The brownfield status of this site, as well as its location in relation to Weymouth, limits the potential for negative effects on the landscape. Additionally, given there is existing development on the site, this site offers the opportunity to bring forward benefits for the landscape through the adoption of a sensitive design and layout scheme.</p> <p>In conclusion, neutral / no effects are concluded most likely if this site is taken forward for development. This reflects the size of the site and the low likelihood of development impacting on views in the area. It also reflects the partial brownfield status of the site, as well as the potential for landscape remediation through sensitive design and layout.</p>

SEA Theme Site C: Lodmoor Old Tip (Southern Section)

Transportation	<p>Weymouth rail station is approximately 1.5km south-west of this site. This station offers hourly services to locations including (but not limited to) London Waterloo, Southampton and Basingstoke, and less frequent direct services to Bristol Parkway. The nearest bus stop to this site is located on the B3155, an approximate 300m walk away. This allows for sustainable transportation to a variety of locations in and around Weymouth. Access to this bus stop already exists via the road that runs through the site to the car park, and the household recycling centre to the north of the site. The road to the car park and the B3155 to the south offers safe pedestrian and cycle access through the pavement and cycle path provision, and the South West Coastal Path runs alongside this road to allow for longer walking routes.</p> <p>Access to the site already exists through the junction between the car park and the B3155. This road allows for vehicular access to Overcombe in the north-east to Weymouth in the south-west. From there, the wider strategic network includes the A354, connecting to the A35 to the north around Dorchester, and Portland to the south.</p> <p>Given this, positive effects are considered likely through developing this site. This is due to the site's connection to the local strategic road network, and the existing access to the site from Weymouth town centre via the pavements and bus services. This allows for sustainable transportation to a variety of locations in and around Weymouth</p>	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effect

Table 4.12 Assessment findings – Site D

SEA Theme

Site D: Redlands Farm



Air quality

There are no air quality management areas (AQMAs) within Weymouth; as such, allocating any site for development would not contribute to air quality concerns in the neighbourhood area. It is noted that the Rodwell Road / Boot Hill area of Weymouth is of concern with regards to air quality in Weymouth – however, this site is a distance from this part of the neighbourhood area and is unlikely to impact it.

This site is not located within proximity to an air quality monitoring station (the nearest being located approximately 2.8km south-east on King Street), and the latest air quality annual status report indicates the monitoring stations within Weymouth were all under the annual mean concentration target for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). Nonetheless, allocating this site for housing development would result in more traffic on the roads, and a subsequent increase in NO₂.

Given the size of the site and the indicative capacity of 150 homes, it is likely the site will influence the air quality baseline (e.g., from an increase in vehicles on the road network). However, given the size of the site, new development areas could support opportunities for on-site green infrastructure enhancements which would help to absorb pollutants and improve air quality at the local level. As such, **uncertain effects** are concluded to be the most likely if this site was taken forward.

SEA Theme

Site D: Redlands Farm

Biodiversity and geodiversity

This site is within proximity to the Lodmoor SSSI, which is located approximately 500m to the east. However, given the existing development along Dorchester Road, Blenheim Road, Clarendon Avenue and Greenway Road, as well as the A354, it is likely development at this site will be screened from the designation. Additionally, the site is approximately 550m north of the Radipole Lake SSSI. Given the open nature of the landscape between the site and the designation, it is possible allocating this site for development could impact on the visual interpretation and the setting of the designation. However, this is dependent on the design of the site. As the site is in proximity to two SSSIs, it is subject to SSSI IRZs for the types of development that are likely to be taken forward through the neighbourhood plan (i.e., residential, rural residential, and rural non-residential). Consequently, consultation with Natural England will be required if this site is allocated for development. Half of the site (to the west) is within an identified Network Expansion Zone – and as such is suitable for connecting biodiversity networks across the landscape. If this action was incorporated into the development design scheme for the site, it would likely bring forward benefits for this SEA theme in this part of the site.

The western extent of this site has coastal and floodplain grazing marsh BAP Priority Habitat, which extends to the north and south outside of the site boundaries. The site is also adjacent to deciduous woodland BAP Priority Habitat located to the south. These habitats could be disturbed by development on this site through increased noise and light pollution. Additionally, there is boundary vegetation in the form of hedgerows on the site perimeter and also within the site that delineate between different fields. These features should be retained and enhanced as far as possible to avoid biodiversity impacts and to help deliver biodiversity connectivity and net gains. It is noted that development of this site has the potential to lead to fragmentation of habitats, which will reduce the connectivity of the biodiversity network in the neighbourhood area.

Overall, **negative effects** are considered likely if development comes forward on this site. This reflects the scale of the development potentially impacting designated sites (reflected through the IRZ overlaps), and the BAP priority habitats in proximity and the hedgerows on the site boundaries and within the site. It is recognised that there is the potential for mitigation measures to address any impacts, for example enhanced tree or hedgerow planting as part of the design scheme.

SEA Theme

Site D: Redlands Farm

Climate change	<p>Allocating any site for development will lead to an unavoidable increase in greenhouse gas emissions. This is due to the associated development construction phases, and an increase in the built footprint and land use intensification in the neighbourhood area. Given the potentially significant housing capacity of this site, this site would increase the greenhouse gas emissions more than any of the other potential sites. This increase in emissions is likely to impact on the natural and built environment on and surrounding the site, as well as in the local area.</p> <p>Given the presence of two watercourses in the western part of the site, the associated area of the site is within Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 and is at medium to high risk of fluvial flooding. The same area is at low to high risk of surface water flooding – additionally, the area around the farm structures in the eastern part of the site is at low, medium and high risk of surface water flooding, especially along the hedgerow that intersects the site in a north-south direction. It will be important to lower housing densities in these sections, or avoid placing houses in these areas altogether, to reduce the impact of fluvial and surface water flooding on the development. It is suggested the use of SuDS is explored for this site as well to reduce the flood risk, in line with higher planning policy. Avoidance of the areas at risk of flooding would likely reduce the number of houses brought forward on this site.</p> <p>From the above, it is clear negative effects would be anticipated through taking this site forward for development. This reflects the high fluvial and surface water flood risk in the western and eastern parts of the site, plus the large potential housing capacity that will contribute a greater level of greenhouse gas emissions.</p>
Community wellbeing	<p>Allocating any site for development will help contribute to the identified housing need in Weymouth. This site has the potential to deliver 150 new homes, contributing towards the identified housing need for the area. It is recognised that as the size of the site increases, so does the potential to deliver affordable homes – with the potential for long term positive effects.</p> <p>There are a number of key facilities and amenities in Weymouth that provide important services and opportunities, including recreational, health, and education. Whilst this site is approximately 2.5km from the town centre and its associated services (and is this seen to be outside the development boundary), it is adjacent to a play area, and in proximity to Radipole Primary School, and a sports ground. It is also within proximity to a garage and an M&S supermarket, as well as Redlands Leisure and Community Park. This allows for engagement with recreational opportunities.</p> <p>Given the above, broadly uncertain effects are considered likely if this site is allocated for development. This reflects the potential housing growth the site could provide, as well as its proximity to recreational opportunities. However, the site is a distance from the town centre and its associated amenities, like healthcare provision. Access to these is provided via Dorchester Road.</p>

SEA Theme

Site D: Redlands Farm

Historic environment	<p>The site is within 300m north-west / north / north-east of a number of historic environment features, including a scheduled monument (Humpty Dumpty Field, Radipole – Historic England List Entry Number: 1002395), and three Grade II listed buildings: Mill to North East of The Meadows (The Meadows Not Included (Historic England List Entry Number: 1147986), Corfe Hill House (Historic England List Entry Number: 1271637) and Marvels Cottage with Outbuilding (Historic List Entry Number: 1147984). It is possible developing this site could impact on the setting of these features. However given the distance, development between these features and the site, and the elevation of the site being lower or similar to historic environment features, there is potential for negative effects to be reduced. However, the site is adjacent to the Radipole Conservation Area (located to the south) and in proximity to the Nottingham Conservation Area (located approximately 75m to the north). It is likely allocating this site for development will detract from the setting of these conservation areas – and change their interpretation and experience.</p> <p>This site is located in an area with a variety of historic environment features. Despite the distance between the site and specific features, the site is also within proximity to two conservation areas and has the potential to negatively impact on their setting. Nonetheless, it is recognised that the design of new development areas can support opportunities to enhance the setting of nearby heritage assets. As such, uncertain effects are considered likely for this site under this SEA theme.</p>	
Land, soil and water resources	<p>According to the indicative ALC for the south-west, undertaken by Natural England, this site is mostly Grade 3 ‘Good to Moderate’ agricultural land, with an area of Grade 4 ‘Poor’ by the watercourse. Despite this, the site is seen to be mostly within urban / industrial use, with the western part having a low likelihood (<20%) of being BMV land. As such, allocating this site for development is unlikely to result in the loss of land better suited for agricultural purposes.</p> <p>The River Wey is on the western site boundary; as such, the site sits within the Wey Water body catchment. The Wey waterbody has a moderate ecological status and a failed chemical status. Given this, development has the potential to exacerbate ecological and chemical processes in this stretch of the waterbody. It will be important to ensure the potential design of the development reduces surface water runoff into the River Wey to ensure the water regimes remain in their current state.</p> <p>Given the above, uncertain effects are concluded most likely for this SEA theme, given the presence of the watercourse.</p>	

SEA Theme

Site D: Redlands Farm

Landscape

This site is not located within or in proximity to a landscape designation. However, the site is a large greenfield site located outside the development boundary, with open landscape to the north and west. The delivery of new homes at this site would lead to the loss of open greenfield land, altering the settlement pattern and resulting in urban sprawl to the north-east of Weymouth. Allocating this site for development could also set the precedent for further growth to the west and north, which could encroach on the gap between Weymouth and Nottingham, as well as encroach on the linear ribbon development seen along Dorchester Road.

The site, like the whole neighbourhood area, is within the National Character Areas (NCA) 138: Weymouth Lowlands, and the site sits within the ridge and vale local character area. Pressures on this landscape area includes new housing development, grazing, climate change (higher temperatures and more frequent drought conditions etc), and renewable energy development.

The eastern half of the site is fairly level, but slopes steeply downwards towards the west when the middle of the site is reached. The site also slopes downwards from the north to the south. The most eastern field is at a similar elevation to the existing development adjacent to it. The varying topography of the site will lead to varying impacts in terms of long and short distance views depending on where the development is focussed.

Overall, **negative effects** are considered likely if this site were to come forward for development. This reflects the site's large greenfield status, the steeply sloping elevation, and the potential to set the precedent for further growth in this area. It is noted that the landscape impact could be partially mitigated through sensitive design choices.

SEA Theme

Site D: Redlands Farm

Transportation	<p>This site is approximately 1km from Upwey rail station located to the north-east, and approximately 2.6km from the Weymouth station to the south-east. The Weymouth station offers hourly services to locations including (but not limited to) London Waterloo, Southampton and Basingstoke, and less frequent direct services to Bristol Parkway. The Upwey station is on the same line. There is a bus stop on the northern site boundary that provides access to three bus services. These bus services provide sustainable transportation opportunities to locations including Littlemoor, Weymouth town centre, and Poundbury. Additionally, Dorchester Road on the eastern site boundary has pavement and cycle lanes to allow for safe active transportation opportunities. Dorchester Road, also known as the B3159, provides vehicular access to the A354 to the south and north, which runs to Weymouth town centre and onto Portland in the south, and to Dorchester in the north.</p> <p>In addition to the sustainable and active transport provision off site, there are three PRowS on the site – footpaths that travel in a broadly north-south direction, connecting Nottingham to Redlands. There is a further PRow on the southern site boundary – another footpath connecting Redlands to Radipole. These PRowS should be maintained and enhanced where possible to ensure safe access continues and the wider PRow network is well connected.</p> <p>As it currently stands, the existing access to the site is narrow and is in poor condition. It is not capable of serving development on the site. However, the site includes land that leads directly onto Dorchester Road to the east, which would allow access if a junction was created and the road widened. Alternatively, access could be provided through land immediately to the north of the site. It is likely there will still be a continued reliance on private vehicles to access locations and services outside the neighbourhood area.</p> <p>In conclusion, negative effects are concluded likely for this SEA theme through development of this site, due to the access constraints at this location.</p>
Key	
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)	Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect	Uncertain effect

Table 4.13 Assessment findings – Site E

SEA Theme

Site E: Land at Wyke Oliver Farm (North)



Air quality

As there are no AQMAs within the Weymouth neighbourhood area, it is unlikely allocating any site for development will considerably change the air quality baseline. Whilst it is noted the Rodwell Road / Boot Hill area of Weymouth has historically been an area of concern, this site is removed from the area – and the area has experienced an improvement in air quality over recent years.

This site is not located within proximity to an air quality monitoring station (the nearest being located on King Street approximately 2.7km south), and the latest air quality annual status report indicates the monitoring stations within Weymouth were all under the annual mean concentration target for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). Nonetheless, allocating this site for housing development would result in more traffic on the roads, and a subsequent increase in NO₂.

Given the size of the site and the indicative capacity of 112-135 homes, it is likely this site could influence local air quality (e.g., from additional vehicles on the road network). However, given the size of the site, new development areas could support opportunities for on-site green infrastructure enhancements which would help to absorb pollutants and improve air quality at the local level. As such, **uncertain effects** are concluded to be the most likely if this site was taken forward.

SEA Theme

Site E: Land at Wyke Oliver Farm (North)

Biodiversity and geodiversity

This site is within 500m of the Lodmoor SSSI, which is located to the south of the site. It is also approximately 750m north-west of the Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC and the South Dorset Coast SSSI. As the site is in proximity to these designations, it is subject to SSSI IRZs for the types of development that are likely to be taken forward through the neighbourhood plan (i.e., residential, rural residential, and rural non-residential). Development of the site could result in additional pressure on the SAC – as such, consultation with Natural England will be required if this site is allocated for development.

Whilst there are no BAP Priority Habitats within the site boundaries, the site is adjacent to an extensive area of traditional orchard on the northern boundary. This habitat could be disturbed by development on this site through increased noise and light pollution, as well as potential destruction to allow for access to and from the site. Additionally, there are hedgerows on the site boundaries and within the site itself delineating different fields, which will contribute to the local biodiversity network. These should be retained where possible.

Overall, **uncertain effects** are considered likely if development comes forward on this site. This reflects uncertainty over the potential impacts on the nearby national biodiversity and geodiversity designations, and the hedgerows on the site boundaries, as well as the BAP Priority Habitat to the north of the site.

Climate change

Development of this site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions, linked to the construction phase of development, the increase in the built footprint of Weymouth, as well as an intensification of use at this site. As this site is of a large scale and has a large housing capacity, the potential increase in greenhouse gas emissions is likely to be significant and could contribute to local climate change impacts through increasing carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. This could further impact other areas included under the SEA framework, such as community wellbeing (through potential impacts on health linked to emissions) and biodiversity and geodiversity (through potential impacts on habitats, species and designated sites).

Regarding flood risk, the site is mostly within Flood Zone 1, with areas within Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 located in the middle of the site to the west of Wyke Oliver Farm. However, the areas affected are not of a significant size. It is noted there are areas of Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 to the north of the site, which could impact upon the northern site boundary. The same areas of the site are at risk of surface water flooding – ranging from low to high risk in and around Wyke Oliver Farm and around the waterbody on the site. Again, given the areas affected are small, or adjacent to the northern site boundary, it is unlikely development would be affected by flooding, as these areas could be avoided.

Given the above, **uncertain effects** are concluded most likely. This is due to the uncertainty linked to the potential affects of flooding on development; though it is noted these could be largely avoided through an appropriate design scheme.

SEA Theme

Site E: Land at Wyke Oliver Farm (North)

Community wellbeing	<p>Weymouth has identified a need for additional housing, especially affordable housing. This site has the potential to deliver between 112 and 135 new homes, contributing towards the identified housing need for the area. It is recognised that as the size of the site increases, so does the potential to deliver affordable homes – with the potential for long term positive effects.</p> <p>Weymouth is well served by services, facilities and amenities – offering a number of green spaces, health services including Weymouth hospital as well as GP practices and dental surgeries, sports facilities, retail opportunities, grocery stores, educational infrastructure and a number of independent businesses. Whilst this site is outside of the existing development boundary, it is considered to be connected to it. As such, access to these services and facilities is relatively good through driving. It is noted there are a number of PRow on the western site boundary, that connect Littlemoor to the residential development off the B3159 that provides opportunities for active travel uptake.</p> <p>Overall, uncertain effects are considered likely if this site is allocated for development. It is of a size large enough to help meet housing targets in Weymouth and bring forward a good amount of affordable housing. However, given its location outside of the development boundary, there is uncertainty over how well it will connect to the main settlement of Weymouth and encourage community integration.</p>	
Historic environment	<p>Whilst there are two listed buildings within 300m of this site to the east, it is unlikely allocating this site for development will impact on the setting of these features given the site is screened by existing development. As such, allocating the site for development is unlikely to impact upon locally or nationally designated sites. However, it is approximately 760m north-west of the Dorset and East Devon WHS. Existing screening exists through the presence of housing development between the site and the designation. Whilst it is acknowledged there could be a recreational impact on this site through a greater number of people using the site, recreational pressure is not considered to be an issue according to management plan for the designation. Given this, neutral / no effects are concluded likely for this SEA theme.</p>	
Land, soil and water resources	<p>The indicative ALC for the south west region provided by Natural England demonstrates this site is within an area of Grade 3 'Good to Moderate' agricultural land, with a low likelihood (<20%) of being BMV land. However, it is noted there is a small section of land extending from the development to the east that has a moderate likelihood (20%-60%) of being best and most versatile land. Despite this, given this size of this area in comparison to the rest of the site, allocating this site would not lead to the loss of productive agricultural land. It is noted that the western edge of this site is within a gas pipeline safeguarding zone.</p> <p>There are no watercourses on the site. However, there is a small pond in the southern part of the site, and a drain intersecting the site - from Wyke Oliver Farm to the east to the residential development to the west. It is not anticipated that allocating this site will result in impacts on these water features.</p> <p>Uncertain effects are concluded for this SEA theme. Whilst there is limited potential for the loss of BMV land, consideration should be given to the gas pipeline safeguarding zone that is located along the western edge of the site.</p>	

SEA Theme

Site E: Land at Wyke Oliver Farm (North)

Landscape

The site is in proximity to the Dorset AONB, which is located north of the A353. Given the proximity, it is likely development (especially in the northern part of the site) will affect the setting of the designation. This is due to the open greenfield nature of the site – developing the land here would alter the settlement pattern of Littlemoor and result in urban sprawl in this part of the neighbourhood area. It is also due to the elevated topography in this part of the site – though it is noted there is screening adjacent to the northern boundary that will likely help with visual mitigation if it is maintained. The elevation of the site slopes downwards from the north, and then steeply inclines in the southern third. As such, developing the southern part of the site would likely have significant adverse impacts on the landscape character of the Lorton Valley and on the visual amenity of the area, which includes the PRoW on the western site boundary.

The site, like the whole neighbourhood area, is within the National Character Areas (NCA) 138: Weymouth Lowlands, and the site sits within the ridge and vale local character area. Pressures on this landscape area includes new housing development, grazing, climate change (higher temperatures and more frequent drought conditions etc), and renewable energy development. Development of this site is bounded in the north by the A353, and by existing development to the east and west. The open nature of the site extends south, and it is considered that development could set the precedent for urban sprawl / coalescence effects, closing the existing gap between development to the east and west.

Overall, **negative effects** are considered likely if this site is allocated. This reflects the potential negative impacts on the AONB to the north, and the loss of open greenfield land that forms a gap between development to the east and west. Development here has the potential to bring forward urban sprawl effects to the south.

SEA Theme

Site E: Land at Wyke Oliver Farm (North)

Transportation	<p>The Weymouth rail station is located approximately 2.6km from the site to the south-west; it offers hourly services to locations including (but not limited to) London Waterloo, Southampton and Basingstoke, and less frequent direct services to Bristol Parkway. There are bus stops in proximity to the northern site boundary – approximately 75m to the north. These bus stops provide access to sustainable transport to locations including Weymouth town centre, Poundbury, Blandford, and Dorchester. Additionally, there is a PRoW on the western site boundary that connects the Louviers Road to the north with residential development off the B3159 to the south. This allows for access to services in the centre via the B3159. This footpath should be retained to allow for safe active transportation methods</p> <p>In addition to the PRoW and bus stops, the site is in proximity to the A353, which offers safe pedestrian and cycle access through pavement provision on both sides of the road. This strategic road allows for travel via private vehicle to the A354 to the north-east (providing access to Weymouth, Portland and Dorchester), the A352 to the north-east, and the B3155 to the west – which runs through Overcombe to reach Weymouth town centre. It is likely there will still be a continued reliance on private vehicles to access locations and services outside the neighbourhood area.</p> <p>However, as it currently stands there is no existing access to the site – it could be established from Littlemoor Road / A354, but this would involve land not within the site boundary. As such, consultation with the local highways authority would be needed.</p> <p>In conclusion, while the site holds reasonable active / sustainable travel opportunities, uncertain effects are concluded. This reflects issues with access as well as the likelihood of bring forward high private vehicle use.</p>		
Key			
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect	
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effect	

Table 4.14 Assessment findings – Site F

SEA Theme

Site F: Land South of Wessex Roundabout



Air quality

Given there are no AQMAs within the Weymouth neighbourhood area, it is unlikely allocating any site for development will considerably change the air quality baseline. Though the Rodwell Road / Boot Hill area of Weymouth has been of concern over the years, this site is not within proximity to this part of the neighbourhood area and is unlikely to impact it.

This site is not located within proximity to an air quality monitoring station - the nearest are located on the A354 Rodwell Road approximately 2km south-east. The latest air quality annual status report indicates the monitoring stations within Weymouth were all under the annual mean concentration target for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). Nonetheless, allocating this site for housing development would result in more traffic on the roads, and a subsequent increase in NO₂.

Although the site is removed from AQMAs, and the current air quality status of the neighbourhood area is stable, the development of this site for 50 homes will lead to increased vehicles on the local road network. This level of growth is therefore likely to have a negative effect on the local air quality. However, new development areas could support opportunities for on-site green infrastructure enhancements which would help to absorb pollutants and improve air quality at the local level. As such, **uncertain effects** are concluded to be the most likely if this site was taken forward.

SEA Theme

Site F: Land South of Wessex Roundabout

Biodiversity and geodiversity

This site is approximately 20m west of the Radipole Lake SSSI. It is also approximately 1.2km east of the Crookhill Brick Pit SAC and SSSI designations, and approximately 1.7km from the Chesil and The Fleet Ramsar, Special Protection Area (SPA), SAC and SSSI designations. Given the proximity of these designations, the site overlaps with SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs), and the majority of the site sits within an IRZ for the types of development that could potentially be taken forward through the neighbourhood plan (i.e., residential, rural residential, and rural non-residential). As such, consultation with Natural England will likely be required for this site if taken forward as a Neighbourhood Plan allocation. It is noted, however, that the site is seen to be suitable for habitat creation that would benefit these international and national biodiversity designations, as it overlaps with a Fragmentation Action Zone. This zone connects existing patches of primary and associated habitats which are currently highly fragmented. As such, development this site in its entirety could bring forward negative effects for the biodiversity value of the area by reducing biodiversity connectivity.

It is acknowledged that development here would require a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) to understand the impacts of recreational disturbance on the Chesil and The Fleet designations.

The site does not overlap with any Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat, though it is within 70m south-west of two extensive areas of deciduous woodland associated with Radipole Lake. These habitats could be disturbed by development on this site through increased noise and light pollution. Additionally, there are extensive hedgerows and trees on the site boundaries. These could be impacted by development on the site, as they may need to be removed to allow for access into the site. Hedgerows should be retained and enhanced as far as possible to avoid biodiversity impacts and to help deliver biodiversity connectivity and net gains. It is also noted that this site sits within the Chickerell Wildlife Corridor – this forms an important network of multifunctional greenspace that delivers a wide range of environmental benefits¹⁷.

Overall, **negative effects** are considered likely if development comes forward on this site. This reflects the potential negative effects on the nearby national biodiversity and geodiversity designations, BAP priority habitats in proximity and the hedgerows on the site boundaries. It also acknowledges that developing this site would reduce the ability of the neighbourhood area to bring forward biodiversity improvements / net-gain.

¹⁷ Chickerell Town Council (2021) 'Chickerell Town Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2036' can be accessed [here](#).

SEA Theme

Site F: Land South of Wessex Roundabout

Climate change

Development of this site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions, linked to the construction phase of development, the increase in the built footprint of Weymouth (and Chickerell given the cross boundary nature of the site) and an intensification of use at this site. Given the capacity of the site, the increase in greenhouse gas emissions has the potential to be great (but less than some other potential sites); impacting local carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions and contributing to climate change effects in the local area. This in turn has the potential to cause effects for other areas included under the SEA framework, such as community wellbeing (through potential impacts on health linked to emissions) and biodiversity and geodiversity (through potential impacts on habitats, species and designated sites). However, an increase in CO₂ emissions linked to growth is inevitable across all options.

In terms of flood risk, the whole site is within Flood Zone 1 and has a low risk of fluvial flooding. However, the site is at low, medium and high risk of surface water flooding – associated with Radipole Lake to the east and drains to the east and north. This flood risk is located in the northern half of the site and is most prevalent on the northern site boundary. The site may benefit from SuDS in this area in line with higher planning policy, and development could be focused away from areas at risk – but would result in a decrease in the number of homes brought forward.

Given this, **negative effects** are considered likely if development comes forward on this site, due to the risk of surface water flooding on the site, especially in proximity to the northern site boundary. It is recognised this could likely be addressed through the inclusion of SuDS within new development areas, and through avoiding developing on certain parts of the site.

SEA Theme

Site F: Land South of Wessex Roundabout

Community wellbeing	<p>Allocating any site for housing development will make a positive contribution towards meeting the local housing needs as outlined by Dorset Council, and has the potential to bring forward a good level of affordable housing.</p> <p>Weymouth is well served by services, facilities and amenities – offering a number of green spaces, health services including Weymouth hospital as well as GP practices and dental surgeries, sports facilities, retail opportunities, grocery stores, educational infrastructure and a number of independent businesses. This site is located adjacent to the built up area of Weymouth and the settlement boundary. Whilst new development at this location would be in proximity to these services and facilities, access would likely rely on vehicular transportation given the distance from the centre. It is acknowledged there is pavement provision on the B3158 and the B3157 that could provide a level of active transportation.</p> <p>However, allocating this site for housing development will remove its safeguarding status for employment usages, specifically for the western part of the site.</p> <p>Additionally, the site is partially within the Chickerell neighbourhood area – as such, the Chickerell Neighbourhood Plan will need to be considered if development comes forward here, and their consideration will be required. The proximity of the site to Chickerell as well as Weymouth could cause a coalescence effect and negatively impact the two settlements' individual identities.</p> <p>Given this, negative effects are considered likely if development comes forward on this site. This reflects the loss of a potential employment site for housing, and the location of the site outside the settlement boundary (including outside of the neighbourhood area).</p>	
Historic environment	<p>This site is not located in proximity to any international, national or local historic environment designations, nor does it sit within the setting of any historical conservation areas associated with Weymouth or the adjacent Chickerell neighbourhood area. Given this, it is unlikely development at this site will impact the historic environment of Weymouth, and neutral / no effects are concluded likely.</p>	
Land, soil and water resources	<p>According to the indicative ALC for the south west region provided by Natural England, this site is considered to be within an area of Grade 3 'Good to Moderate' agricultural land, with a low likelihood (<20%) of being BMV land. As such, allocating this site does not have the potential to lead to the loss of productive agricultural land.</p> <p>There is a pond on the site located on the eastern site boundary, and there are drains located to the east and north of the site that travel westwards. Additionally, the Radipole Lake designated is located directly to the north-east of the site.</p> <p>Given the site is unlikely to the loss of best and most versatile land, and the lack of watercourses on the site, it is considered likely that neutral / no effects will be brought forward by allocating this site.</p>	

SEA Theme

Site F: Land South of Wessex Roundabout

Landscape

There are no international or national landscape designations within proximity to this site. This site is located adjacent to the built up area and the settlement boundary of Weymouth, and is located on the neighbourhood area boundary with Chickerell neighbourhood area directly west. The proximity of the site to Chickerell as well as Weymouth could cause an urban sprawl effect - negatively impacting the landscape through expanding development and creating a larger urban area. The Chickerell Neighbourhood Plan will need to be considered if development comes forward here, and their town council's consideration will be required.

The site, like the whole neighbourhood area, is within the National Character Areas (NCA) 138: Weymouth Lowlands, and the site sits within the ridge and vale local character area. Pressures on this landscape area includes new housing development, grazing, climate change (higher temperatures and more frequent drought conditions etc), and renewable energy development. However, development at this location is limited by the B3157 adjacent to the north, B3158 to the east, businesses to the west and Weymouth Golf Club to the south. As such, it is unlikely development would set the precedent for future development in this area.

The site is relatively level when travelling in an east-west direction, but it does incline from the north to the south. Given the level of screening on the site provided by the boundary hedgerows and trees, and the location of the site, it is unlikely development will impact on views from residential developments to the north and south. However, it is noted the views from the golf course to the south could be impacted, and the businesses to the west could have views into the site. This could be mitigated through development design and the retention of the boundary vegetation.

Overall, **uncertain effects** are considered likely if this site is allocated. This reflects the greenfield nature of the site and its location outside the settlement boundary, with the potential to impact on views. However, the site is contained by roads and the roundabout to the north east, and development to the west. As such, any landscape effects are likely to be reduced.

SEA Theme

Site F: Land South of Wessex Roundabout

Transportation	<p>There is a bus stop on the eastern site boundary on the B3158 that can allow for sustainable transportation to locations within Weymouth, including the Asda and the rail station. The Weymouth station offers hourly services to locations including (but not limited to) London Waterloo, Southampton and Basingstoke, and less frequent direct services to Bristol Parkway. The B3158 supports safe active transportation through the provision of pavement. This allows for safe pedestrian access into the centre of Weymouth.</p> <p>The site is at a junction between the B3157 and the B3158; providing access to the strategic road network, connecting with locations within and outside of Weymouth. This includes Chickerell and settlements on the B3157 to Bridport, and Dorchester via the A35 and A354 to the east. It is likely there will still be a continued reliance on private vehicles to access locations and services outside the neighbourhood area.</p> <p>Access to the site could be achieved via Radipole Lane on the eastern site boundary, or the Chickerell Link Road on the northern site boundary. It is noted that considerations will need to be given to the potential impacts on Wessex Roundabout, which is adjacent to the site to the north-east. As the site is located outside the main settlement of Weymouth, it is likely allocating this site will lead to an increased uptake in private vehicle use to access amenities across the neighbourhood area.</p> <p>Given this, negative effects are considered likely through developing this site. This is due to it being located outside of the main settlement of Weymouth, and the potential safety issues associated with establishing access near to the junctions of a busy roundabout.</p>	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral / no effect		Uncertain effect

Options for non-principal residences

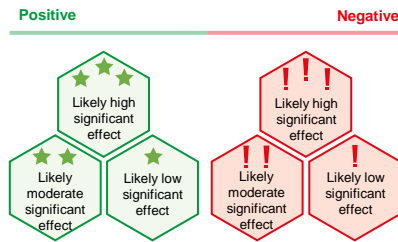
4.22 The location and environmental quality of the neighbourhood area has resulted in a demand for second homes and holiday lets, and this is part of the tourism-related aspects of the local economy. The emerging WNP recognises the benefits of the visitor economy, but also acknowledges the key challenges associated with this key sector of the local economy. This includes with respect to reducing the supply of available housing which affects the ability of local people to buy or rent in the neighbourhood area.

4.23 In the context of the above, the relative sustainability merits of establishing a 'principal residency policy' within the Neighbourhood Plan has been explored. The following options have been considered through the SEA:

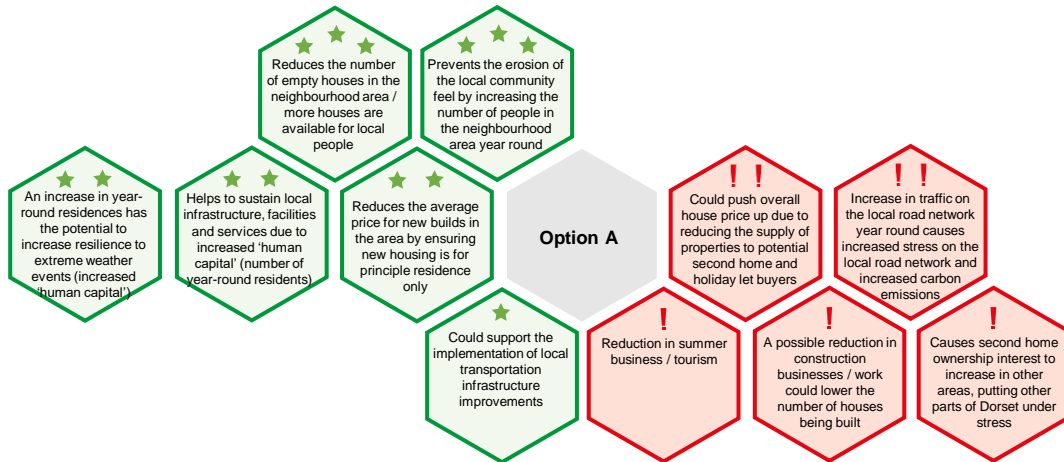
- **Option A:** Take a policy approach to limit non-principal residences and holiday homes within the neighbourhood area.
- **Option B:** Do not take a policy approach to limit non-principal residences and holiday homes within the neighbourhood area.

4.24 An overview of the likely significant effects (both positive, and negative) of each option is presented in the diagram below. The positive impacts are presented in the 'green' shaded areas on the likely significant effects diagram, and the negative impacts are presented in the 'red' shaded areas on the likely significant effects diagram. The number of positive 'stars' and negative 'exclamation marks' within each shaded area represents the potential impact of the likely significant effects (i.e., low, moderate, or high).

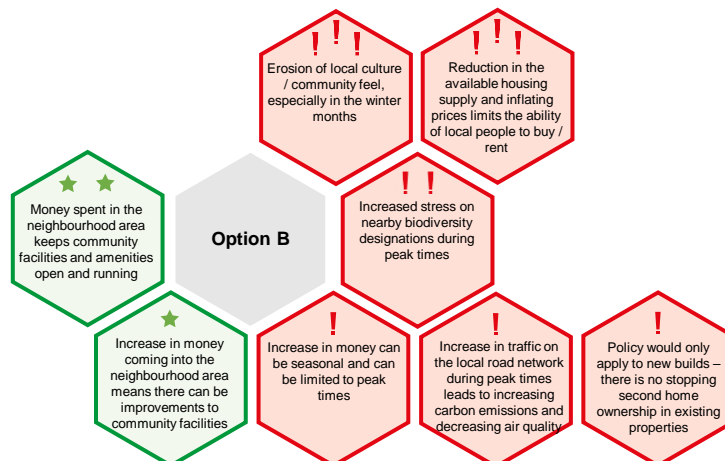
Likely significant effects:



Option A: Take a policy approach to limit non-principal residences and holiday homes within the neighbourhood area



Option B: Do not take a policy approach to limit non-principal residences and holiday homes within the neighbourhood area



Summary of assessment findings

Options for the focus of development within the DDB

4.25 **Table 4.15** below summarises the rankings of the options in terms of their relative performance for each SEA theme. This is followed by the key conclusions of the appraisal findings.

Table 4.15 Summary of rankings by SEA theme

SEA Theme	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Option E
Air Quality	=1	4	5	3	=1
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	=2	4	5	1	=2
Climate Change	=1	4	5	3	=1
Community Wellbeing	2	=3	=3	=3	1
Historic Environment	=3	=3	=3	1	2
Land, Soil and Water Resources	1	3	5	4	2
Landscape and Townscape	=1	=4	=4	=1	=1
Transportation	1	3	5	4	2

4.26 The assessment findings conclude **that there is the potential for mixed effects (e.g., positive, and negative) associated with Option A – Option D against the SEA themes**. For example, Option A will deliver new housing provision within the most sustainable locations in the neighbourhood area with respect to proximity to services and facilities, accessibility to public transport options and walking / cycling networks. This is a significant positive for community wellbeing, and also with respect to facilitating affordable home delivery in appropriate locations (a key priority for the Neighbourhood Plan). However, it is recognised that there might be locations within the DDB which are perhaps less suitable for affordable homes (e.g., the size of a site reducing the viability of delivering an appropriate housing mix).

4.27 Option B, Option C, and Option D also have the potential to deliver positive effects, for example:

- Option B and Option C: Supporting the vibrancy of the town centre environment; supporting additional and emerging sectors of the local economy, more appropriately reflecting town centre uses in a post-pandemic context; and rejuvenating both the daytime and evening economies in the neighbourhood area.
- Option D: Encouraging greater opportunities for green infrastructure enhancements and net-gain opportunities; additional scope for implementing climate change resilience measures, positively tackling the

climate crisis; delivering public realm enhancements to enhance the character of the built-environment and the attractiveness of Weymouth as a place to live and work; and improving the understanding and enjoyment of Weymouth's natural and built-environmental assets.

- 4.28 However, **a focus on Option B, Option C and Option D may result in fewer homes being delivered within the DDB, with additional emphasis therefore placed on identifying sites outside of the DDB to meet emerging housing requirements. This is likely to lead to significant negative impacts** (e.g., delivering housing in less sustainable locations; maintaining a reliance on private vehicles to access locations within the DDB, given the relative distance of sites from services and facilities; delivering homes within closer proximity to internationally and nationally protected sites for biodiversity; and encroaching into the open countryside and reducing green gaps – with associated impacts to landscape and townscape character).
- 4.29 On balance, **Option E, through encouraging a range of uses within the DDB and considering proposals on a case-by-case basis, may help to enable the 'win-win' opportunities associated with the effective planning of key areas within the DDB to be realised.**

Consideration of sites outside of the DDB

- 4.30 A summary of the findings is presented in **Table 4.16** below. This provides an indication of how the sites have performed in relation to each of the SEA themes, with the colouring as follows:
- **Green:** likely positive effects resulting from an allocation at this location.
 - **Yellow:** likely to be limited or no effects resulting from an allocation at this location.
 - **Blue:** likely to be uncertain effects resulting from an allocation at this location (i.e., there are constraints, but the effects are perhaps dependent or influenced on the design and mitigation measures which could brought forward as part of a proposal).
 - **Red:** likely negative effects resulting from an allocation at this location.

Table 4.16 Summary of SEA site assessment findings

Site	Air Quality	Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Climate Change	Community Wellbeing	Historic Environment	Land, Soil, and Water Resources	Landscape	Transportation
A								
B								
C								
D								
E								
F								
Key								
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)						Likely positive effect		
Neutral/no effect						Uncertain effect		

4.31 The appraisal findings highlight that ‘uncertain effects’ and ‘likely negative effects’ are likely for all site options under one or more SEA themes. If the emerging WNP takes forward any of these site options, it will be important for new development areas to appropriately address any concerns or constraints associated with the sites.

4.32 In the context of the above, the draft plan appraisal findings (i.e., the next stage of the SEA), will consider the extent to which the emerging WNP policies and proposals address any constraints to the sites, including with respect to mitigation and enhancement measures. The draft plan appraisal findings are presented in **Chapter 5** of this Environmental Report.

Options for non-principal residences

4.33 The appraisal concludes that **Option A is likely to perform more favourably than Option B with respect to the Transportation and Air Quality SEA themes**. Option B, by taking an approach which would not limit non-principal residences in the neighbourhood area, will likely result in longer-term increases in traffic at peak times of the year. Issues will be more pronounced during these times, e.g., during the summer months. Although Option A would bring an increase to year-round traffic flows, it could also offer support to the local transport network to improve sustainable transport and maintaining the viability of public transport options.

4.34 **The Community Wellbeing SEA theme also performs more favourably under Option A.** By taking a policy approach which seeks to limit non-principal residences in the neighbourhood area, this is likely to increase the availability of housing stock for local people and ensure that fewer properties are left unoccupied throughout the year. However, it is recognised this could cause more pronounced issues for neighbouring areas as the interest in second homes and holiday lets could shift to other locations along the Dorset coastline.

- 4.35 Additionally, by having a higher ‘human capital’ (number of year-round residents) across the year, local infrastructure, facilities, and services can be maintained and improved – such as health and education. **This will also bring benefits under the Community Wellbeing SEA theme.** Furthermore, a higher human capital can also improve the maintenance of existing properties and enable a more effective response and increased resilience to extreme weather events. **This is a significant positive under the Climate Change SEA theme.**
- 4.36 It is recognised that establishing a principal residency policy will only apply to new housing developments within the neighbourhood area. In this respect, Option A could lead to a shift in focus of second home ownership from new builds to the existing housing stock, including buildings that may be significant from a heritage perspective (i.e., nationally designated and / or locally recognised). This could lead to inappropriate development occurring on buildings with heritage importance, or buildings with heritage importance deteriorating as they become second homes or holiday lets, as the property might not be occupied or maintained throughout the year. **Therefore, there could be negative impacts on the Historic Environment SEA theme under Option A.**
- 4.37 With respect to Option B, during peak times of the year heritage assets and resources may experience increased stresses associated with an influx of visitors (and associated recreational and tourism activities). This is also a consideration when thinking about the resilience of ecological assets within and within proximity to the neighbourhood area, and with respect to landscape and townscape character (e.g., impacts to noise and disturbances). **However, it is difficult to conclude whether these impacts would be significantly different to what is currently experienced within the neighbourhood area.**

Developing the preferred approach

Choice of sites taken forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.38 The preferred approach has been informed by the various surveys and evidence base documents prepared to support the Neighbourhood Plan (to date), responses from community consultation events, and the findings of the SOA and SEA.
- 4.39 Within the DDB, the WNP seeks to encourage a range of uses to support additional housing growth and opportunities for town centre regeneration (**Option E**). It is anticipated that this will help to enable the ‘win-win’ opportunities associated with the effective planning of key areas within the DDB to be realised.
- 4.40 The following sites within the DDB are allocated within the WNP:
- Policy WNP27 allocates **Land at Beverley Road, Littlemoor** for residential development of approximately 25 homes.
 - Policy WNP28 allocates **Land at St Nicholas Street** (formerly Lakeside Superbowl) for residential development of high density (up to six storeys).
 - Policy WNP41 allocates **Land at Jubilee Sidings** for a mixed-use development comprising residential and employment / training uses.

- Policy WNP54 supports the regeneration of **Mount Pleasant Old Tip**¹⁸ to provide a transport interchange 'hub', including a revitalised Park and Ride service to encourage out-of-town parking. Leisure uses and power generation uses are also supported in principle at this location.

4.41 A key objective of the emerging WNP is to positively contribute to the delivery of affordable homes, with a recognition that affordable housing needs cannot be met by sites within the DDB alone. In light of this, the following sites outside of the DDB are also allocated within the WNP:

- Policy WNP24 allocates **Land off Budmouth Avenue** for residential development of approximately 230 homes.
- Policy WNP25 allocates **Land at Wyke Oliver Farm North** for residential development of approximately 250 homes.
- Policy WNP26 allocates **Land at Redlands Farm** for residential development of approximately 150 homes.
- Policy WNP29 identifies **Land at Lodmoor Old Tip** as a major development area. The site comprises three zones which will deliver 3.35ha of land for employment uses (Zone 1); up to 90 homes and a café (Zone 2); and 2.17ha of land for leisure and / or tourism uses together with some permanent residential development (Zone 3).

4.42 The site-specific policies for the proposed site allocations within the WNP contain further detail with respect to design and mitigation considerations which aim to address potential constraints to development. These aspects are further discussed within the plan appraisal section of the Environmental Report (presented in **Chapter 5**, below).

4.43 With respect to the options for non-principal residences, the preferred approach for the WNP is to proceed with **Option A** and establish a principal residency policy for new dwellings within the neighbourhood area. Further details are presented within Policy WNP35 in the WNP (and supporting paragraphs).

¹⁸ Whilst the site is identified within the West Dorset, Weymouth, and Portland Local Plan as being located outside of the DDB, the site primarily comprises areas of brownfield land which adjoin the DDB. The SOA findings conclude that the site is not suitable for residential, or employment uses.

5. Appraisal of the Regulation 14 version of the Neighbourhood Plan

Introduction

5.1 This chapter presents an appraisal of the Regulation 14 version of the draft WNP under the eight SEA topic headings, reflecting the established assessment framework (see **Chapter 3**).

Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan policies

5.2 The WNP contains 62 policies, which it groups under four themes. These are listed in **Table 5.1** below.

Table 5.1 WNP policies

Policy Reference	Policy Name
Landscape and Greenspace	
WNP01	Shoreline Protection
WNP02	Areas of Nature Conservation
WNP03	Wildlife Habitats and Areas
WNP04	Wildlife Corridors
WNP05	Ecological Impact of Development
WNP06	Trees, Woodlands, and Hedgerows
WNP07	Footpaths, Rights of Way, and Bridleways
WNP08	Coastal Green Recreation Areas
WNP09	Public Access to the Countryside
WNP10	Green Gaps
WNP 11	Local Green Space
WNP 12	Incidental Open Space
WNP 13	Countryside
WNP 14	Riversides
WNP 15	Panoramas, Vistas and Views
Development and Homes Policies	
WNP16	Development Boundaries
WNP17	Design
WNP18	Extensions and Alterations
WNP19	Heritage Assets
WNP20	Major Housing Sites
WNP21	Housing Mix
WNP22	Affordable Housing
WNP23	Residential Site Allocations

Policy Reference	Policy Name
WNP24	Land at Budmouth Avenue
WNP25	Land at Wyke Oliver Farm North
WNP26	Land at Redlands Farm
WNP27	Land at Beverley Road, Littlemoor
WNP28	Land at St Nicholas Street
WNP29	Land at Lodmoor Old Tip
WNP30	Self-Build and Custom-Build Housing
WNP31	Community Housing Schemes
WNP32	Specialist Housing Provision
WNP33	Houses in Multiple Occupation
WNP34	Exception Site Development
WNP35	Principal Residence Requirement
WNP36	Timing of Infrastructure
WNP37	Sustainable Development
Jobs and the Local Economy	
WNP38	Loss of Business Premises
WNP39	New Business Development
WNP40	Mixed-Use Employment Schemes
WNP41	Mixed-Use Scheme at Jubilee Sidings
WNP42	Redevelopment of Town Centre Car Parks
WNP43	New Workshops and Business Hubs
WNP44	Higher & Further Education & Skills Provision
WNP45	Weymouth Town Centre
WNP46	Temporary Activities and Uses
WNP47	Sustainable Tourism Development
WNP48	Building Access
WNP49	Offshore Renewable Energy Projects
WNP50	Community Energy Schemes
Communities	
WNP51	Transport and Travel
WNP52	Public Transport
WNP53	Off-Street Parking
WNP54	Mount Pleasant Old Tip – Transport Interchange
WNP55	Vehicle Charging Facilities
WNP56	Cycle Routes
WNP57	Traffic Impact
WNP58	Existing Community Buildings

Policy Reference	Policy Name
WNP59	Sports and Recreation
WNP60	Public Spaces
WNP61	Allotment and Community Gardening Provision
WNP62	Burial Grounds

Approach to this appraisal

- 5.3 The assessment identifies and evaluates 'likely significant effects' on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability objectives identified through scoping (see **Table 3.1**) as a methodological framework.
- 5.4 Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the strategic nature of the policies under consideration and understanding of the baseline (now and in the future under a 'no plan' scenario) that is inevitably limited. Given uncertainties there is a need to make assumptions, e.g., in relation to plan implementation and aspects of the baseline that might be impacted. Assumptions are made cautiously and explained within the text (with the aim of striking a balance between comprehensiveness and conciseness). In many instances, given reasonable assumptions, it is not possible to predict 'significant effects', but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) of the draft plan in more general terms.
- 5.5 Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted taking account of the criteria presented within Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations. For example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of effects as far as possible. Cumulative effects are also considered, i.e., the potential for the WNP to impact an aspect of the baseline when implemented alongside other plans, programmes, and projects. These effect 'characteristics' are described within the assessment as appropriate.

Air Quality

- 5.6 There are no air quality management areas (AQMAs) within Weymouth; as such, allocating any site for development is unlikely to lead to air quality concerns in the neighbourhood area. Nevertheless, it is recognised that the Rodwell Road / Boot Hill area of Weymouth is of concern locally with regards to air quality issues. However, the site allocations within the draft WNP are a distance from this part of the neighbourhood area and are therefore unlikely to impact air quality here. The nearest site is **Land at St Nicholas Street**. However, given that this site is located in the town centre, within walking distance to services, facilities and amenities and public transport nodes, development here is unlikely to lead to a deterioration in air quality. Nevertheless, allocating sites for residential development will ultimately result in an increase in road traffic, and as a result, an increase in nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and an associated decrease in air quality. It is noted that the sites outside of the existing DDB, away from the town centre, are likely to perform less favourably with regards to air quality.
- 5.7 In response to the above, Policy WNP51 (Transport and Travel) of the draft WNP outlines that development that would give rise to air pollution will not be supported. This should ensure that inappropriate development which would

adversely impact air quality will not come forward. More broadly, Policy WNP57 (Traffic Impact) seeks to reduce the volume and impact of motor vehicles in the neighbourhood area by supporting development proposals that include traffic calming measures and gateway treatments to deter non-local traffic in residential streets and visitor areas. In addition, Policy WNP37 (Sustainable Development) outlines that new development will only be supported where adequate provision is made for the storage of electric vehicles (EVs) consistent with the prevailing standard of the Local Planning Authority (LPA). Similarly, Policy WNP55 (Vehicle Charging Facilities) outlines that development proposals which are likely to generate increases in vehicle use will be expected to integrate EV charging infrastructure. Policy WNP55 also supports the provision of public EV charging points in suitable locations.

- 5.8 Of relevance to site allocation **Land at St Nicholas Street**, Policy WP42 (Redevelopment of Town Centre Car Parks) supports redevelopment proposals relating to car parks in or adjacent to the town centre providing that the proposed development does not create increased traffic flow in the area. In this respect, the site allocation is unlikely to lead to worsening air quality in and around the Rodwell Road / Boot Hill area.
- 5.9 Overall, whilst some of the draft WNP's site allocations perform more favourably than others from an air quality perspective, none of them are considered likely to lead to significant negative effects on air quality. In addition, the draft WNP's policy framework performs well by prohibiting development which would give rise to air pollution; deterring non-local traffic through traffic calming measures; and providing EV charging infrastructure both within new developments and across the wider area. Nevertheless, development will ultimately result in an increase in road traffic, and as a result, it is likely to have some impact on air quality. Due to this, **uncertainty** is noted.

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 5.10 Weymouth supports a vast array of habitats and species, which support local biodiversity and form complex ecological networks. This includes part of the Portland to Studland Cliffs Special Area of Conservation (SAC); several Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); and numerous Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitats, particularly coastal habitats. Whilst national and local planning policy provides protection for these sites, it will be important for the WNP to strengthen this policy, as well as provide protection for locally important sites.
- 5.11 The various constraints associated with the draft WNP's site allocations, in terms of biodiversity and geodiversity, are outlined below alongside the draft WNP's approach to mitigating these constraints:
- **Land off Budmouth Avenue** – The site is adjacent to Lodmoor SSSI. It is also approximately 700m northwest of the Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC and South Dorset Coast SSSI. In terms of BAP priority habitats, the site contains a small area of traditional orchard, and is adjacent to areas of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh; reedbed; and deciduous woodland. According to the National Habitat Network, part of the site is within Network Enhancement Zones 1 and 2, as well as the Network Expansion Zone. As such, the site is suitable for the creation and expansion of primary habitat. Policy WNP24 states that existing hedgerows will be retained and the site will be adequately screened. In addition, approximately 9.5ha of land will

be transferred to Dorset Wildlife Trust to form part of the Lorton Valley Nature Park, with a commuted sum to cover future maintenance. This should help to protect the wildlife corridor across Southdown Ridge.

- **Land at Wyke Oliver Farm North** – The site is approximately 500m north of Lodmoor SSSI. It is also approximately 750m northwest of the Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC and the South Dorset Coast SSSI. In terms of BAP priority habitats, the site is adjacent to a large area of traditional orchard. Policy WNP25 states that existing hedgerows will be retained and the site will be adequately screened. In addition, 23ha of land will be transferred to Dorset Wildlife Trust to form part of the Lorton Valley Nature Park, with a commuted sum to cover future maintenance.
- **Land at Redlands Farm (WNP26)** – The site is approximately 500m west of Lodmoor SSSI and approximately 550m north of Radipole Lake SSSI. In terms of BAP priority habitats, the site contains an area of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh and is adjacent to an area of deciduous woodland. According to the National Habitat Network, the western part of the site is within the Network Expansion Zone. As such, the site is suitable for the expansion of primary habitat. Policy WNP26 states that existing trees and hedgerows will be retained and the site will be adequately screened. Where attenuation ponds are required, they should contribute to habitat enrichment, and broad leaf woodland, which is comparable with the nearby coppices, should be planted. The western part of the site, which covers an area of 9.1ha, will be turned into a new major public open space and transferred to an appropriate body for public use and nature conservation, with a commuted sum to cover future maintenance.
- **Land at Beverley Road, Littlemore** – The site, which is an ecological valuable green space with mature trees, is approximately 500m north of Lorton SSSI. In terms of BAP priority habitats, the site is within 200m of an area of deciduous woodland. Policy WNP27 states that existing trees will be retained, as will a sizeable piece of public open space. In addition, planting throughout the site, as well as the provision of wildlife corridors, will connect the site with the open space to the north and south, contributing to ecological connectivity and reducing the potential for habitat fragmentation.
- **Land at St Nicholas Street** – The site, which comprises brownfield land, is approximately 380m southeast of Radipole Lake SSSI and approximately 500m northwest of Portland Harbour Shore SSSI. In terms of BAP priority habitats, the site is approximately 420m from an area of deciduous woodland. According to the National Habitat Network, the whole site is within Network Enhancement Zone 2. As such, it is suitable for the creation of primary habitat. Policy WNP28 states that the development should provide areas for planting, such as roof top gardens and balconies.
- **Land at Lodmoor Old Tip** – The site is adjacent to Lodmoor SSSI. It is also approximately 1km northeast of Radipole Lake SSSI and 1.3km southwest of the Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC and South Dorset Coast SSSI. In terms of BAP priority habitats, Zone 1 of the site contains an area of reedbeds. Meanwhile, Zones 2 and 3 of the site border coastal and floodplain grazing marsh to the northeast, whilst Zone 2 also borders deciduous woodland to the southwest. According to the National Habitat Network, the majority of the site is within Network Enhancement Zone 1.

As such, the site is suitable for the creation of primary habitat. A small part of the site is also within an area of Restorable Habitat. Policy WNP29 states that development at this location should include adequate screening between zones and along the site's perimeter. In addition, any application will need to be accompanied by an Ecological Impact Assessment to demonstrate that the development is acceptable and / or provides appropriate mitigation measures.

- 5.12 More broadly, Policy WNP02 (Areas of Nature Conservation) outlines that areas of nature conservation, such as country parks, nature parks and nature reserves, should be retained and protected from any detrimental negative impacts likely to arise as a result of development. This policy also supports the recognition of a new nature conservation area at Wey Valley. Similarly, Policy WNP03 (Wildlife Habitats and Areas) states that development proposals that are likely to have a significant adverse impact on the integrity or continuity of habitats of local and national importance, as well as wild flora and fauna, will only be supported in exceptional circumstances. In such circumstances, mitigation measures must be delivered which are proportionate to the status of the site and satisfy the requirements of the LPA. The policy also states that compensation measures should only be used as a last resort.
- 5.13 Policy WNP04 (Wildlife Corridors) seeks to protect wildlife corridors from development by ensuring that all development proposals in the areas recognised as wildlife corridors within the draft WNP meet the requirements of the Dorset Biodiversity Appraisal Protocol. The policy outlines that opportunities to enhance and extend the network of wildlife corridors should be taken where possible, including as a means of mitigating development impact. In cases where it is not possible to avoid disrupting wildlife corridors, developers will be required to minimise the impact and undertake remedial action in accordance with a scheme agreed with the LPA.
- 5.14 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is addressed through Policy WNP05 (Ecological Impact of Development). This policy highlights that development proposals, unless statutorily exempt, must contribute to the enhancement of the natural environment by providing a substantial BNG. This should be in-line with the requirements of the Environment Act 2021, which sets out that all planning permissions, except for small sites, will have to deliver at least 10% BNG from January 2024. Policy WNP05 also outlines that development proposals should consider potential ecological impacts at the design stage; follow best practice guidance; and identify a range of suitable habitats and other measures, such as green roofs, to be included in the development.
- 5.15 Policy WNP06 (Trees, Woodlands, and Hedgerows) is in place to minimise the loss of / damage to trees, woodland, orchard and hedgerows that contribute positively to the biodiversity of an area. Where it is unavoidable, the policy outlines that development proposals must provide appropriate replacement planting on-site. This should be on a 'two for one' basis; comprise indigenous species; increase the canopy cover by at least 15%; and include a plan for ongoing maintenance. Policy WNP06 does not support development proposals which could result in the loss of / damage to ancient, protected or veteran trees.
- 5.16 Other policies that include measures to protect and / or enhance biodiversity include WNP13 (Countryside), WNP47 (Sustainable Tourism Development), and WNP49 (Offshore Renewable Energy Projects).

5.17 Overall, the draft WNP performs well given the neighbourhood area is heavily constrained by designated sites for biodiversity. Whilst some of the site allocations set out within the draft WNP are located adjacent to / near designated sites, the site-specific policy mitigates the potential for adverse impacts on these sites where possible. In addition, the policy framework as a whole addresses the need to protect and enhance designated sites; deliver BNG; and retain wildlife corridors and trees, woodlands and hedgerows. Nevertheless, development still has the potential to lead to increased recreational pressure on designated sites, and the disturbance of habitats and species. Due to this, **minor significant negative effects** are concluded.

Climate Change

5.18 The site allocations will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, linked to the construction phase of development; an increase in the built footprint of Weymouth; and an intensification of uses across the sites. It is assumed that as the site's capacity increases, so do the associated GHG emissions. This has the potential to adversely impact human health.

5.19 Regarding flood risk, the majority of the site allocations are largely within Flood Zone 1 and mostly at very low risk of surface water flooding. However, each site is constrained to some degree as follows:

- **Land off Budmouth Avenue** – The site borders an area of land within Flood Zone 2 / 3 and at medium / high risk of surface water flooding to the southwest, linked to the Lodmoor SSSI. Policy WNP24 outlines that approximately 9.5ha of land will be transferred to Dorset Wildlife Trust to form part of the Lorton Valley Nature Park. This land is in the southwestern part of the site. Hence, development at this site is unlikely to exacerbate flood risk to the southwest due to the retention of open green space.
- **Land at Wyke Oliver Farm North** – A small strip of land in the middle of the site, to the west of Wyke Oliver Farm, is within Flood Zone 2 / 3 and at medium / high risk of surface water flooding. In addition, the site borders an area of land within Flood Zone 2 / 3 and at medium / high risk of surface water flooding to the north. Policy WNP25 outlines that 23ha of land will be transferred to Dorset Wildlife Trust to form part of the Lorton Valley Nature Park. This land includes the areas outlined above, and therefore development at this site is unlikely to exacerbate flood risk at these locations due to the retention of open green space.
- **Land at Redlands Farm** – The western part of the site, which is intersected by the River Wey, is within Flood Zone 2 / 3 and at medium / high risk of surface water flooding. In addition, a small area around the farm structures in the eastern part of the site is at medium / high risk of surface water flooding. Policy WNP26 outlines that the western part of the site, which covers an area of 9.1ha, will be turned into a new major public open space. Hence, development at this site is unlikely to exacerbate flood risk in the western part of the site due to the retention of open green space.
- **Land at Beverley Road, Littlemore** – The site is adjacent to an area at medium / high risk of surface water flooding to the north. Policy WNP27 states that existing trees will be retained, as will a sizeable piece of public

open space. Combined with the small size of this site, development is unlikely to exacerbate flood risk to the north.

- **Land at St Nicholas Street** – The site, which is brownfield land in Weymouth town centre, is largely within Flood Zone 2 / 3. Policy WNP28 outlines that ground floor development should recognise the flood risk associated with the site, including through suitable uses. In addition, the policy states that development should provide areas for planting, such as roof top gardens and balconies, which should further reduce flood risk. The policy also highlights that any application will need to be accompanied by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment to demonstrate that the development is acceptable and provides appropriate mitigation measures.
- **Land at Lodmoor Old Tip** – The entire site is surrounded by land within Flood Zone 2 / 3 and at medium-high risk of surface water flooding. Surface water flood risk is particularly widespread to the northeast of the site, where Lodmoor Country Park is located. Policy WNP29 highlights that any application will need to be accompanied by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment to demonstrate that the development is acceptable and provides appropriate mitigation measures.

5.20 The site allocation policies for the first three sites (Land off Budmouth Avenue, Land at Wyke Oliver Farm North, and Land at Redlands Farm) outline that off-street resident and visitor vehicle parking provision must include EV charging facilities. With regards to major housing sites, Policy WNP20 outlines that, where practicable and viable, development should include a district heating scheme using renewable energy sources. In addition, Land at Mount Pleasant is allocated for a transport interchange facilities through Policy WNP54. The policy outlines that this site will also be used for renewable energy generation.

5.21 More broadly, Policy WNP37 (Sustainable Development) only supports new development that fully integrates sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and permeable surfaces. Specifically, development proposals should demonstrate that the volume and rate of surface water run-off onto adjacent land and traffic routes is either at a lower or equal level to that prior to the development being built-out. In addition, Policy WNP01 (Shoreline Protection) outlines that development proposals in areas designated by the South Devon and Dorset Shoreline Management Plan are to be protected, specifically to prevent flooding. Moreover, Policy WNP14 (Riversides) states that development proposals should consider natural river processes and the ability for maintenance of the watercourse, including for flood risk management purposes.

5.22 With regards to climate change mitigation, Policy WNP37 only supports new development that utilises sustainable construction methods; water and energy conservation measures; and renewable energy technology. In terms of the existing building stock, the policy supports the retrofitting of energy conservation measures and renewable energy technology.

5.23 Policy WNP49 (Offshore Renewable Energy Projects) supports development proposals which facilitate low and zero carbon offshore renewable energy projects. This is providing that they protect the natural, undeveloped coast and biodiversity and geodiversity; do not lead to significant adverse impacts on the natural, undeveloped coast; and conform with the draft WNP policies. Similarly, Policy WNP50 (Community Energy Schemes) supports community energy

initiatives which contribute to the promotion, development and delivery of sustainable energy sources for the neighbourhood area. This is providing that they are appropriate in terms of location and scale; do not lead to adverse impacts on the amenities of residents; and the energy generating infrastructure and its installation complies with the Microgeneration Certification Scheme.

- 5.24 Overall, the draft WNP performs relatively well by allocating sites primarily in areas within Flood Zone 1 / at very low risk of surface water flooding. Where flood risk exists, this is mitigated through the use of SuDS and green infrastructure. More broadly, the policy framework recognises the neighbourhood area's sensitive location in terms of flood risk, by the coast and intersecting with several waterbodies, including the Rivery Wey. In terms of climate change mitigation, the policy framework seeks to minimise both embodied and operational emissions by supporting the use of sustainable construction methods and renewable energy schemes. Whilst an increase in GHG emissions is inevitable as a result of the site allocations, development is necessary to support local housing needs, and on a global scale this is not significant. Due to this, **no significant effects** are predicted at this stage.

Community Wellbeing

- 5.25 Weymouth has an identified need for additional housing, especially affordable housing, which the site allocations will help address. It is recognised that as the size of the site increases, so does the potential to deliver affordable homes. The neighbourhood area is well served by services, facilities and amenities offering a number of green spaces; health services; sports facilities; retail offers; grocery stores; and educational facilities. Development should be located in proximity to these services, facilities and amenities where possible.
- 5.26 The various merits and constraints associated with the site allocations, in terms of community wellbeing, are outlined below alongside site-specific policy:
- **Land off Budmouth Avenue** – The site is allocated for residential development of approximately 230 homes and is adjacent to existing development to the east and south. However, it is located outside of the DDB, and therefore access to existing services, facilities and amenities will likely be relatively limited. In addition, development at this location is less likely to support a cohesive, connected community due to the site being at a distance from Weymouth town centre. Notably, Policy WNP24 outlines that land in the vicinity of Southdown allotments, sufficient to double the size of the allotments, will be transferred to Weymouth Town Council.
 - **Land at Wyke Oliver Farm North** – The site is allocated for residential development of approximately 250 homes and is adjacent to existing development to the north, east and west. However, it is located outside of the DDB, and therefore access to existing services, facilities and amenities will likely be relatively limited.
 - **Land at Redlands Farm** – The site is allocated for residential development of approximately 150 homes and is adjacent to existing development to the east and southeast. However, it is located outside of the DDB, and therefore access to existing services, facilities and amenities will likely be relatively limited. Nevertheless, there are recreational facilities, a primary school and a supermarket nearby. In addition, Policy WNP26 outlines that

the western part of the site, which covers an area of 9.1ha, will be turned into a new major public open space.

- **Land at Beverley Road, Littlemore** – The site is allocated for residential development of approximately 25 homes and is adjacent to existing development to the north, east and west. In addition, it is located within the DDB, in proximity to schools, a local shopping hub, and health facilities in and around Littlemore. However, the site is a well-regarded local amenity space crossed by two footpaths used regularly by locals. Policy WNP27 requires the site to retain these footpaths, as well as a sizeable piece of public open space. In addition, the policy states that the proportion of affordable homes should meet or exceed the requirements of the LPA. Moreover, the development should comprise well-designed groups of dwellings located in attractive, inclusive and secure spaces.
- **Land at St Nicholas Street** – The site is allocated for residential development of high density and is surrounded by existing development. In addition, it is located within the DDB, in proximity to existing services, facilities and amenities in Weymouth town centre. Policy WNP28 states that the proportion of affordable homes should satisfy the requirements of the draft WNP, which are based on a viability assessment. In addition, the development should include private community space for residents.
- **Land at Lodmoor Old Tip** – This site is identified as a major development area. The site comprises three zones which will deliver 3.35ha land for employment uses (Zone 1), up to 90 homes and a café (Zone 2), and 2.17ha of land for leisure and / or tourism uses together with some permanent residential development (Zone 3). Whilst it is not located within the DDB, it is adjacent to Lodmoor Play Park and 1km from Weymouth town centre. Therefore, for some people it is within walking / cycling distance of existing services, facilities, and amenities. Policy WNP29 outlines that the housing provision should deliver a mixed and balanced community and address housing needs specific to Weymouth.

5.27 The site allocation policies for the first three sites (Land off Budmouth Avenue, Land at Wyke Oliver Farm North, and Land at Redlands Farm) outline that affordable housing provision should form 50% of every completed stage of the development and comprise a mix of sizes, types and tenures as agreed with Dorset Council. In addition, development should include safe footpaths and cycle routes, which link to the wider network, as well as a legible street network which links residential properties with services and facilities such as community centres, play spaces and allotments. The provision of play areas, public amenity space and community space is also required under these policies.

5.28 In relation to the above, Policy WNP22 (Affordable Housing) outlines that proposals for housing and mixed-use development within the DDB that result in a net increase of ten or more units must meet the minimum target of 35% affordable housing, or at least 50% on greenfield sites. The policy states that affordable housing should be provided on the same site as any open market housing and performs well in this respect. Where this is not possible, consideration may be given to accepting a financial contribution in lieu of on-site provision. In addition, Policy WNP22 highlights that homes should be occupied by people with a local connection.

- 5.29 With regards to proposals for housing outside of the DDB, Policy WNP22 outlines that any affordable housing provision should demonstrate a tenure target of approximately 70% affordable rented homes and 30% intermediate housing for sale, 25% of which should comprise first homes in line with national requirements. Similarly to the above, the policy states that affordable housing should not be readily differentiated from open market homes with respect to its design, quality, location and distribution within the site. Policy WNP22 also highlights that the mix of affordable housing must reflect identified local needs.
- 5.30 With a focus on housing mix, Policy WNP21 states that new residential development should provide or contribute to a mix of housing tenures, types and sizes to help maintain mixed, balanced and inclusive communities. With regards to major housing sites, the housing mix should be based on an up-to-date local housing needs assessment. In relation to this, Policy WNP20 (Major Housing Sites) outlines that 10% of homes within major housing sites should satisfy Lifetime Home Standards, supporting the neighbourhood area's aging population. In addition, major housing sites should provide sufficient open space, including multi-functional public open spaces, as well as community orchards and communal allotment space where there is demand and opportunity. With a focus on safety, Policy WNP20 highlights that major housing sites should consider the natural surveillance of public spaces and deliver safe footpaths, cycle ways and parking areas.
- 5.31 Other policies relevant to housing include WNP30 (Self-build and Custom-Build Housing), WNP31 (Community Housing Schemes), WNP32 (Specialist Housing Provision), WNP33 (Houses in Multiple Occupation), WNP34 (Exception Site Development), and WNP35 (Principal Residence Requirement). Meanwhile, accessibility is addressed through Policy WNP48 (Building Access). This policy supports the provision of improved accessibility arrangements to public buildings and spaces to make proper provision for those with mobility impairment. This includes easier access to historic buildings.
- 5.32 Existing community buildings are protected through Policy WNP58. The policy outlines that development proposals which result in the permanent loss of such buildings will only be supported where a) it can be demonstrated that there is no local need for the facility, or it is no longer viable or practical to continue the existing use; or b) a suitable replacement is provided in an equally accessible location. Policy WNP58 supports extensions and improvements to existing community buildings provided that they a) diversify and support the continuation of the existing community use; or b) help meet identified development needs through the more effective use of sites / premises, whilst maintaining or improving the existing community service provision.
- 5.33 Policies that contribute to the protection and / or enhancement of public open and / or green space, including access to such space, include WNP07 (Footpaths, Rights of Way, and Bridleways), WNP08 (Coastal Green Recreation Areas), WNP09 (Public Access to the Countryside), WNP11 (Local Green Space), WNP12 (Incidental Open Space), and WNP60 (Public Spaces). Meanwhile, the protection and / or enhancement of allotments and community gardens is addressed through Policy WNP61.
- 5.34 Policies that support healthy lifestyles include WNP56 (Cycle Routes) and WNP59 (Sports and Recreation). Policy WNP56 supports development proposals to improve and extend existing cycle routes; to effect better

segregation from motor traffic; and to link them to the wider network of walking and cycling routes. Meanwhile, Policy WNP59 protects outdoor sports and recreation facilities and spaces identified within the draft WNP.

- 5.35 The economy is an important aspect of community wellbeing, and the draft WNP performs well with respect to protecting existing employment sites and delivering new employment sites. Relevant policies include WNP38 (Loss of Business Premises), WNP39 (New Business Development), WNP40 (Mixed-Use Employment Schemes), WNP41 (Mixed-Use Scheme at Jubilee Sidings), WNP43 (New Workshops and Business Hubs), and WNP45 (Weymouth Town Centre). Policy WNP47 (Sustainable Tourism Development) focuses on tourism, which is a large contributor to the local economy in Weymouth. Also of relevance is Policy WNP44 (Higher & Further Education & Skills Provision) which supports development proposals for higher education provision and skills training, especially those with a particular focus on technical and green skills.
- 5.36 Overall, the draft WNP performs well from a community wellbeing perspective by allocating sites to meet the identified local housing need. Whilst some of the sites are better located than others, in terms of access to services, facilities and amenities, it is recognised that brownfield sites are limited within the neighbourhood area. As such, the allocation of large greenfield sites outside of the DDB is largely unavoidable. The policy framework seeks to deliver an appropriate housing mix, including affordable housing, and protects community buildings, public open / green space, cycle routes and recreational facilities. It also supports the local economy by protecting existing employment sites; delivering new employment sites; and supporting higher education provision and skills training. Hence, **major positive significant effects** are concluded.

Historic Environment

- 5.37 Weymouth has a rich historic environment. In particular, parts of the neighbourhood area's coast are covered by the Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site (WHS) and the neighbourhood area contains several scheduled monuments and numerous listed buildings. In addition, the neighbourhood area contains several conservation areas.
- 5.38 The various constraints associated with the draft WNP's site allocations, in terms of historic environment, are outlined below alongside the draft WNP's approach to mitigating these constraints:
- **Land off Budmouth Avenue** – The site is approximately 700m northwest of the Dorset and East Devon Coast WHS. However, it is noted that there is existing development between the site and WHS. Policy WNP24 states that the site will be adequately screened, including through the retention of hedgerows, in a manner consistent with the character of the area.
 - **Land at Wyke Oliver Farm North** – The site is approximately 280m west of a grade II listed building. In addition, the site is approximately 760m northwest of the Dorset and East Devon Coast WHS. However, it is noted that there is existing development between the site and the listed building / WHS. Policy WNP25 states that the site will be adequately screened, including through the retention of hedgerows, in a manner consistent with the character of the area.

- **Land at Redlands Farm** – The site is within 250m of three grade II listed buildings to the south, and within 400m of eight grade II listed buildings to the north. It is also approximately 240m from scheduled monument ‘Humpty Dumpty Field, Radipole’ to the south. In addition, the site is adjacent to Radipole Conservation Area to the south, and approximately 75m from Nottingham Conservation Area to the north. Policy WNP26 states that the site will be adequately screened, including through the retention of hedgerows, in a manner consistent with the character of the area.
- **Land at Beverley Road, Littlemore** – The site is approximately 490m from Broadway Conservation Area to the west. However, it is noted that there is existing development between the site and the conservation area. Policy WNP27 outlines that the development should be well-designed and in alignment with the height and form of adjacent housing.
- **Land at St Nicholas Street** – The site is within Weymouth Town Centre Conservation Area and adjacent to a significant cluster of predominately grade II listed buildings to the east. However, it is noted that as this site is brownfield land, currently comprising a large building and car park. In this respect, there is potential for development to improve the appearance of the site, consequently contributing positively to the setting of nearby heritage assets. Policy WNP28 outlines that the height of development should reflect the surrounding buildings and not exceed six storeys.
- **Land at Lodmoor Old Tip** – Zone 3 of the site is approximately 240m from the Weymouth Town Conservation Area to the southwest. In addition, the site is approximately 1.3km from the Dorset and East Devon Coast WHS to the northeast. However, it is noted that there is existing development between the site and the conservation area / WHS. Policy WNP29 outlines that the development will include adequate landscaping and screening between zones and along the site’s perimeter. In addition, any application will need to be accompanied by an Archaeological Assessment to demonstrate that the development is acceptable and provides appropriate mitigation measures where necessary.

5.39 All of the site allocation policies outline that proposals should demonstrate, where relevant, that they respect and will cause no significant harm to nearby archaeological sites, heritage assets and / or conservation areas and their setting. In support of this, Policy WNP19 (Heritage Assets) outlines that development proposals should demonstrate, where relevant, that they respect and will cause no significant harm to heritage assets and their setting. The policy recognises that designated and non-designated heritage assets have different levels of significance. As such, they should be accompanied by proportionate heritage impact assessments. It is also noted that development proposals on previously undeveloped land should be accompanied by an archaeological assessment of the site. Policy WNP19 supports developments that better reveal the significance of nearby heritage assets, which should encourage the sensitive and sympathetic design of new development.

5.40 More broadly, Policy WNP10 (Green Gaps) only supports development in the designated green gaps where it can be demonstrated that it is beneficial to the character or setting of important local heritage assets, amongst other criteria. Meanwhile, Policy WNP48 (Building Access) supports improved accessibility arrangements to public buildings and spaces provided that it does not

adversely impact the character and value of designated and non-designated heritage assets. Finally, Policy WNP37 (Sustainable Development) supports the sensitive retrofitting of historic buildings and buildings in conservation areas, with regards to energy conservation measures and renewable energy technologies, provided that it follows the guidance provided by Historic England. In this respect, the policy framework successfully balances the need for improved buildings in the neighbourhood area with the need to protect the significance of heritage assets, particularly listed buildings.

- 5.41 Overall, the draft WNP performs well by ensuring that the site allocations are appropriately designed to minimise potential adverse impacts on the setting and significance of nearby heritage assets and / or conservation areas. This is largely achieved through appropriate siting and building height, as well as screening around the perimeter of sites. The policy framework supports the site-specific policies by highlighting the importance of protecting and enhancing both designated and non-designated heritage assets, as well as archaeological remains. It also considers heritage through other policies which have the potential to impact the historic environment. Nevertheless, there is still potential for the site allocations to impact the setting of heritage assets to some degree, and as a result, **minor negative significant effects** are concluded.

Land, Soil, and Water Resources

- 5.42 It is important that the draft WNP seeks to protect the neighbourhood area's land, soil and water resources, particularly where resources are irreplaceable. The indicative Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) for the South West region, provided by Natural England, shows that the majority of the draft WNP's site allocations are underlain by Grade 3 'Good to Moderate' agricultural land. Notably, Grade 3 agricultural land is split into a further two categories: Grade 3a (higher quality, Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land) and Grade 3b (poorer quality land). With regards to the site allocations, the agricultural land is predominantly Grade 3b (i.e. it has a low likelihood (<20%) of being BMV land).
- 5.43 The various constraints associated with the draft WNP's site allocations, in terms of land, soil and water resources, are outlined below alongside the draft WNP's approach to mitigating these constraints:
- **Land off Budmouth Avenue** – The site is located on greenfield land. A small area of land in the eastern extent of the site has a moderate likelihood (20%-60%) of being underlain by BMV land. In addition, the site is adjacent to the Lodmoor SSSI, where frequent flooding by freshwater occurs. Policy WNP24 outlines that an area of approximately 9.5ha of land will be transferred to Dorset Wildlife Trust to form part of the Lorton Valley Nature Park. This will reduce the loss of greenfield land and should help minimise surface water runoff on to Lodmoor SSSI.
 - **Land at Wyke Oliver Farm North** – The site is located on greenfield land. A small strip of land in the centre of site has a moderate likelihood (20%-60%) of being BMV land. In addition, there is a small pond in the southern part of the site and a drain intersects the site. Policy WNP25 outlines that 23ha of land will be transferred to Dorset Wildlife Trust to form part of the Lorton Valley Nature Park. This will reduce the loss of greenfield land and should help minimise surface water runoff into waterbodies both within and

in proximity to the site. It is also noted that the small strip of land in the centre of site is being retained as open green space.

- **Land at Redlands Farm** – The site is located on greenfield land. The River Wey runs along the western boundary of the site; this waterbody has a moderate ecological status and a failed chemical status. Policy WNP26 outlines that 9.1ha of land in the western part of the site shall be transferred to an appropriate body to provide for public use and nature conservation. This will reduce the loss of greenfield land and should help minimise surface water runoff into the River Wey and associated waterbodies. In addition, the policy includes provision for necessary attenuation ponds.
- **Land at Beverley Road, Littlemore** – The site is located on greenfield land. However, it is noted that this is a small site.
- **Land at St Nicholas Street** – The site is located on brownfield land and is located approximately 30m northeast of Weymouth Harbour. Policy WNP28 outlines that the development should provide areas for planting, such as roof top gardens and balconies. This should help minimise surface water runoff into Weymouth Harbour and associated waterbodies.
- **Land at Lodmoor Old Tip** – Whilst Zones 2 and 3 of the site comprise some brownfield land; the majority of the site is greenfield land. Some parts of the site boundary follow the paths of drains. In addition, the site is adjacent to the Lodmoor SSSI, where frequent flooding by freshwater occurs. Notably, remediation work may be required due to the presence of a waste recycling centre and composting facilities in Zone 2 of the site. There is also a car park within Zone 3 which may require more moderate remediation work. Policy WNP29 outlines that the development will adequately screen or relocate the waste recycling and composting facilities.

5.44 The DDB, as set out within Policy WNP16, has been identified to protect agricultural land from development. Notably, the majority of site allocations, with the exception of Land at Beverley Road, Littlemore and Land at St Nicholas Street, fall outside of this boundary. However, it is recognised that the neighbourhood area has a very limited supply of brownfield land, and in order to meet the identified local housing need, development on greenfield sites outside of the DDB is unavoidable. In addition, the most important areas of land outside of the DDB, which contribute to the separation of settlements, are identified as green gaps through Policy WNP10. The policy outlines that development proposals in the designated green gaps will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that it is for essential agricultural uses, amongst other criteria. Meanwhile, Policy WNP13 (Countryside) highlights that outside of the DDB, development should be strictly controlled to safeguard the agricultural value of countryside within the neighbourhood area.

5.45 With regards to the protection of water resources, Policy WNP05 (Ecological Impact of Development) outlines that all development proposals should consider potential ecological impacts at an early stage in their design; utilise best practice guidance; and identify suitable habitats and other measures, including rainwater gardens, to include in development. This should help minimise adverse impacts on water resources, including surface water runoff into waterbodies, minimising the potential for pollution of waterbodies. Meanwhile, Policy WNP14 (Riversides) highlights that development proposals should consider natural river processes and maintenance of watercourses.

Finally, Policy WNP37 (Sustainable Development) outlines that development must not result in unacceptable levels of water pollution. In terms of the conservation of water resources, the policy outlines that new development will be supported provided that it utilises water conservation measures.

- 5.46 Overall, the draft WNP performs well by retaining significant areas of open green space on the largest of its site allocations. Whilst only one of the site allocations is fully brownfield, it is recognised that brownfield sites are limited within the neighbourhood area, and therefore development on greenfield land is largely unavoidable. The neighbourhood area does not contain much BMV agricultural land, and therefore the loss of productive agricultural land is largely avoided. In terms of water resources, the policy framework performs well by supporting water conserving measures, as well as measures to protect water quality. Nevertheless, due to the loss of a significant area of greenfield land, **minor negative significant effects** are predicted at this stage.

Landscape

- 5.47 The Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located in the northern part of the neighbourhood area. Whilst some of the site allocations are located within proximity of the AONB, none are located within the AONB. Nevertheless, the site allocations still have the potential to impact the setting of the AONB, as well as other aspects of the local landscape, including key views, and townscape character in and around the settlements.

- 5.48 The various constraints associated with the draft WNP's site allocations, in terms of landscape, are outlined below alongside the draft WNP's approach to mitigating these constraints:

- **Land off Budmouth Avenue** – The site adjoins existing development to the south and east. However, it is located approximately 750m south of the Dorset AONB. Nevertheless, it is noted that there is some existing development between the site and the AONB. In addition, development at this site will result in an urban extension which could set precedent for future growth into the open countryside to the north and west. This could eventually lead to the coalescence of the settlements of Overcombe and Littlemoor. The site slopes noticeably downwards from the north, and therefore development has the potential to overlook existing development to the south. Policy WNP24 states that existing hedgerows will be retained and landscaping will be utilised to minimise any visual impact on the setting of the surrounding landscape. This will be accompanied by suitable boundary treatment, consistent with the character of the area, to adequately screen the new homes from existing residential development bordering the site. The policy also safeguards the Old Orchard. The transfer of approximately 9.5ha of land to Dorset Wildlife Trust to form part of the Lorton Valley Nature Park will also minimise adverse impacts on the setting of the surrounding landscape.
- **Land at Wyke Oliver Farm North** – The site is adjacent to the Dorset AONB, with only the A353 to the north separating it from the AONB. In addition, development at this location would alter the settlement pattern of Littlemoor, contributing to urban sprawl in this part of the neighbourhood area. The site slopes downwards from the north, and then steeply inclines towards its southern boundary. Policy WNP25 states that existing

hedgerows will be retained and landscaping will be utilised to minimise any visual impact on the setting of the surrounding landscape. This will be accompanied by suitable boundary treatment, consistent with the character of the area, to adequately screen the new homes from existing residential development bordering the site. The transfer of 23ha of land to Dorset Wildlife Trust to form part of the Lorton Valley Nature Park will also minimise adverse impacts on the setting of the surrounding landscape.

- **Land at Redlands Farm** – Whilst the site is not in proximity to the AONB, it is in an area of open land stretching to the north and west. Development at this location will alter the settlement pattern, contributing to urban sprawl to the northeast of Weymouth. It could also set precedent for future growth into the open countryside to the north and west, which could eventually lead to the coalescence of the settlements of Weymouth and Nottingham. It could also encroach on the linear ribbon development seen along Dorchester Road. The site slopes downwards to the west, where the River Wey intersects with the site. Policy WNP26 states that existing trees and hedgerows will be retained and landscaping will be utilised to minimise any visual impact on the setting of the surrounding landscape. This will be accompanied by suitable boundary treatment, consistent with the character of the area, to adequately screen the new homes from existing residential development bordering the site. In addition, the height of the development will be sufficiently lower than the western ridge line, so as not to be visible from the Wey Valley. The provision of positive frontages onto the adjoining road network will help to mitigate adverse impacts on townscape character. Moreover, the transfer of 9.1ha of land to an appropriate body to provide for public use and nature conservation will minimise adverse impacts on the setting of the surrounding landscape.
- **Land at Beverley Road, Littlemore** – The site is small and adjacent to existing development to the east and west. However, it is approximately 160m south of the Dorset AONB. Nevertheless, it is screened by existing development to the north. The site also slopes down steeply to the north. Policy WNP27 states that development at this site will be aligned with the height and form of the adjacent housing. Specifically, housing will form well-designed groups, located in attractive, inclusive and secure spaces. The policy outlines that development will respect the topography of the site, and a landscape scheme will be utilised to retain existing trees and connect the site with the open space to the north and south. In addition, the development will retain a sizeable piece of public open space.
- **Land at St Nicholas Street** – The site, which is located in Weymouth town centre, has the potential to impact townscape character. Policy WNP28 states that the height of development should reflect the surrounding buildings and not exceed six storeys. In addition, the proposal must demonstrate that it respects and will cause no significant harm to the conservation area and nearby heritage assets and their setting. This should help protect and enhance townscape character.
- **Land at Lodmoor Old Tip** – The site is adjacent to the Lodmoor Country Park, which is located to the north and east of the site. In addition, the site is at a slightly higher elevation than the surrounding land and therefore has the potential to overlook the country park, as well as existing development to the southwest. It could also set precedent for future growth into the open

countryside to the north, which could eventually lead to the coalescence of the settlements of Weymouth and Overcombe. However, this is highly unlikely given the land to the north of the site is within Flood Zone 3. Policy WNP29 outlines that each zone will have its distinct use and character with suitable separation and integration. In addition, the development will include adequate landscaping / screening between zones and along the perimeter of the site.

- 5.49 The DDB, as set out within Policy WNP16, has been identified to protect greenfield land from development. Notably, the majority of site allocations, with the exception of Land at Beverley Road, Littlemore and Land at St Nicholas Street, fall outside of this boundary. However, it is recognised that the neighbourhood area has a very limited supply of brownfield land, and in order to meet the identified housing need, development on greenfield land outside of the DDB is unavoidable.
- 5.50 More broadly, Policy WNP06 outlines that development proposals should avoid the loss of / damage to trees, woodland, orchards and hedgerows that contribute positively to the character of the area. Where this is not possible, development proposals must provide for appropriate replacement planting on the site. Meanwhile, green gaps are identified through Policy WNP10. Here, development will only be allowed where it is a) for flood prevention, access improvements, recreation or agriculture; and b) does not compromise the visual openness and landscape character of the gap. In addition, local green spaces are designated through Policy WNP11. These spaces are protected from new development unless it is minor and ancillary to its existing use, or under 'very special circumstances' as outlined within the draft WNP. Similarly, Policy WNP12 seeks to protect incidental open space in residential areas that contribute to local character and / or green infrastructure.
- 5.51 Policy WNP13 (Countryside) states that outside of the DDB, development should be strictly controlled to safeguard the unique character and natural beauty of the countryside. Meanwhile, Policy WNP15 seeks to protect important panoramas, vistas and views that contribute to the special character and quality of the coast, town and countryside. The policy outlines that development proposals will only be supported where they can demonstrate that there will be no significant negative impact on important panoramas, vistas and views, as identified within the draft WNP.
- 5.52 With a focus on design, Policy WNP17 outlines that all proposals for new development should demonstrate high quality design which complements the local character of the area. This includes selecting appropriate materials and having regard to scale, massing and density. The policy supports innovative design approaches where they enhance the character, function and visual amenity of the area. Policy WNP17 also states that development proposals within the Dorset AONB must respect the significance of this designation and meet the requirements set out in the Dorset AONB Management Plan.
- 5.53 Other policies that consider impacts on landscape character include WNP18 (Extensions and Alterations), WNP19 (Heritage Assets), WNP20 (Major Housing Sites), WNP30 (Self-Build and Custom-Build Housing), WNP33 (Houses in Multiple Occupation), and WNP34 (Exception Site Development). Notably, Policy WNP34 states that development proposals for affordable housing schemes outside of the DDB will be supported as long as the scheme

is outside the Dorset AONB. However, within the AONB, rural exception housing schemes may be supported if they are small in scale and satisfy the requires of Local Plan Policy HOUS2.

- 5.54 Overall, the draft WNP performs well by seeking to ensure that the site allocations on greenfield land, outside of the DDB, are designed to reduced adverse impacts on the surrounding landscape. The policy framework supports the site-specific policies by designating green gaps and local green spaces to protect the most important areas of the countryside surrounding the settlements in the neighbourhood area. This is in addition to protecting trees, woodlands and hedgerows and important panoramas, vistas and views. Moreover, the policy framework states explicitly how the Dorset AONB, including its setting, will be protected from new development. Combined with more broad considerations of landscape, the policy framework performs very well. Nevertheless, given some of the site allocations are located adjacent / near the Dorset AONB, on greenfield land and with the potential to impact key views, **minor negative significant effects** are concluded.

Transportation

- 5.55 The neighbourhood area is relatively well served by public transport. It has two railway stations – Weymouth and Upwey – which offer hourly services to locations including (but not limited to) London Waterloo, Southampton and Basingstoke, and less frequent direct services to Bristol Parkway. The neighbourhood area is also relatively well served by several bus services and contains an extensive network of cycle ways and public footpaths.

- 5.56 The various constraints associated with the draft WNP's site allocations, in terms of transportation, are outlined below alongside the draft WNP's approach to mitigating these constraints:

- **Land off Budmouth Avenue** – This site is located approximately 3km from Weymouth Railway Station. In addition, there is limited access to the strategic road network. Whilst access could come from Budmouth Avenue or other residential streets in close proximity to the site, these are long and narrow cul-de-sacs that are unlikely to have capacity to serve the whole site. Policy WNP24 outlines that development proposals will need to include the provision of safe vehicular and pedestrian access points via Budmouth Avenue and Brackendown Avenue.
- **Land at Wyke Oliver Farm North** – The site is located approximately 3.7km from Upwey Railway Station. As it stands, there is no existing access to the site. Policy WNP25 outlines that development proposals will need to include the provision of safe vehicular and pedestrian access points via Wyke Oliver Road. In addition, development proposals will have to improve public access to Lorton Valley Nature Park.
- **Land at Redlands Farm** – The site is located approximately 1.9km from Upwey Railway Station. As it stands, the existing access to the site is narrow and in poor condition. Policy WNP26 outlines that development proposals will need to include the provision of safe vehicular and pedestrian access. In addition, development proposals will have to retain public rights of way that intersect with the site.

- **Land at Beverley Road, Littlemore** – The site is crossed by two footpaths used regularly by the community. Policy WNP27 outlines that these footpaths must be retained, as well as the bridge over the Weymouth relief road.
- **Land at St Nicholas Street** – The site, which is located in Weymouth town centre, is not constrained from a transportation perspective.
- **Land at Lodmoor Old Tip** – The site is located approximately 2km from Weymouth Railway Station. Policy WNP29 outlines that vehicular access should be separate for Zone 1 of the site. In addition, any planning application will require a Transport Assessment which assesses the cumulative impact of the whole development to show the traffic impact on the surrounding highway network, with proposed mitigation measures set out where a need is identified.

5.57 The site allocation policies for the first three sites (Land off Budmouth Avenue, Land at Wyke Oliver Farm North, and Land at Redlands Farm) outline that development proposals must deliver a legible street network which links residential properties with services and facilities; safe footpaths and cycle routes with links to the wider network; a street lighting scheme designed with pedestrian safety in mind; and off-street resident and visitor parking provision with EV charging facilities. In addition, the design and layout of roads should comply with the standards of Dorset Council and provide adequately for the safety of all road users.

5.58 Land at Mount Pleasant is allocated for a transport interchange hub through Policy WNP54. This will include ancillary functions to encourage out-of-town parking, particularly in the peak summer periods. Any businesses operating on the site should relate to the use of the site (e.g. cafes, cycle hire, EV hire and EV charging points, bus depot, and over-night camper vans). The site previously homed a park and ride facility, which fell into disuse. Weymouth Town Council has proposed to renew the park and ride scheme and have encouraged a private operator to provide a summer peak time service. This will relieve congestion in the town centre and pressure on the car parks here. Notably, the site is near National Cycle Route 26 and is linked by multi-use paths to the surrounding area, including the beach and nearby nature reserves.

5.59 More broadly, Policy WNNP36 (Timing of Infrastructure) highlights that major development should be phased logically and in tandem with the timely and coordinated provision of infrastructure. This is to help support sustainable growth and ensure that an unacceptable strain is not placed on existing infrastructure. Meanwhile, Policy WNP51 (Transport and Travel) states that development proposals should a) identify the realistic level of traffic they are likely to generate; b) maximise opportunities to walk and cycle; and c) support public transport schemes and infrastructure. The policy does not support development that would give rise to unacceptable highway dangers and / or air pollution. Similarly, Policy WNP52 (Public Transport) supports development proposals linked to improvements to public transport infrastructure.

5.60 The redevelopment of town centre car parks is supported through Policy WNP42. This is providing that peak parking demand will be adequately catered for by out-of-town park and ride schemes, amongst other considerations. Also

with a focus on parking, Policy WNP53 (Off-Street Parking) seeks to discourage additional on-street parking on the existing road network.

- 5.61 With a focus on EVs, Policy WNP55 (Vehicle Charging Facilities) highlights that development proposals which include parking facilities, or which are likely to generate vehicle movements, will be expected to integrate EV charging infrastructure into their design and layout. The policy also supports the provision of public EV charging points in suitable locations. In support of this, Policy WNP37 (Sustainable Development) outlines that new development should include provision for the safe and secure parking and storage of bikes and EVs in line with the prevailing standard of the LPA.
- 5.62 With regards to active travel, Policy WNP56 (Cycle Routes) supports development proposals to improve and extend existing cycle routes; effect better segregation from motor traffic; and link routes to the wider network. In addition, development proposals to extend the areas of pedestrian and cycling priority in town, village and neighbourhood centres are supported through Policy WNP57 (Traffic Impact). Policy WNP57 also supports development proposals for traffic calming measures; park and ride facilities; campervan / motorhome overhigh parking areas; and the provision of dedicated cycle and public transport lanes in the neighbourhood area. Finally, Policy WNP45 (Weymouth Town Centre) supports public realm improvement proposals which will enhance the appeal of, and use of, the town centre by pedestrians.
- 5.63 Overall, the draft WNP performs well by supporting the delivery of a transport interchange hub, including a park and ride scheme; enabling improvements to public transport; and making active travel safer and more attractive. This should help to encourage modal shift. Whilst some of the site allocations are located at a distance from Weymouth town centre, it is noted that this is largely unavoidable due to the limited availability of land within the neighbourhood area. However, it is recognised that development will ultimately lead to an increase in private vehicles on roads within the neighbourhood area and wider area. Hence, **minor negative significant effects** are predicted at this stage.

Conclusions at this stage

- 5.64 **Major positive significant effects** are concluded under the community wellbeing SEA topic. This is because the draft WNP takes a pro-active approach to identifying sites for a range of uses and has a strong focus on town centre regeneration. Whilst some of the residential site allocations are better located than others, in terms of access to services, facilities and amenities, it is recognised that local housing needs (particularly, affordable housing needs) are unlikely to be fully met through just allocating brownfield sites within the DDB. As such, the allocation of greenfield sites outside of the DDB for residential uses is largely unavoidable. The policy framework seeks to deliver an appropriate housing mix, including affordable housing, and protects community buildings, public open / green space, cycle routes and recreational facilities. It also supports the local economy by protecting existing employment sites; delivering new employment sites; and supporting higher education provision and skills training.
- 5.65 **No significant effects** are noted under the climate change SEA topic. The draft WNP performs relatively well by allocating sites primarily in areas within Flood Zone 1 / at very low risk of surface water flooding. Where flood risk

exists, this is mitigated through the use of SuDS and green infrastructure. More broadly, the policy framework recognises the neighbourhood area's sensitive location in terms of flood risk, by the coast and intersecting with several waterbodies, including the River Wey. In terms of climate change mitigation, the policy framework seeks to minimise both embodied and operational emissions by supporting the use of sustainable construction methods and renewable energy schemes. Whilst an increase in GHG emissions is inevitable as a result of the site allocations, development is necessary to support local housing needs, and on a global scale this is not significant.

5.66 **Uncertainty** is noted under the air quality SEA topic. Whilst some of the draft WNP's site allocations perform more favourably than others from an air quality perspective, none of them are considered likely to lead to significant negative effects on air quality. In addition, the draft WNP's policy framework performs well by prohibiting development which would give rise to air pollution; deterring non-local traffic through traffic calming measures; and providing EV charging infrastructure both within new developments and across the wider area. Nevertheless, development will ultimately result in an increase in road traffic, and as a result, it is likely to have some impact on air quality.

5.67 **Minor negative significant effects** are concluded under the biodiversity and geodiversity, historic environment, land, soil and water resources, landscape, and transportation SEA topics. The reasoning behind this is summarised under each of these SEA topics below:

- Biodiversity and geodiversity – The draft WNP performs well given the neighbourhood area is heavily constrained by designated sites for biodiversity. Whilst some of the site allocations set out within the draft WNP are located adjacent to / near designated sites, the site-specific policy mitigates the potential for adverse impacts on these sites where possible. In addition, the policy framework as a whole addresses the need to protect and enhance designated sites; deliver BNG; and retain wildlife corridors and trees, woodlands and hedgerows. Nevertheless, development still has the potential to lead to increased recreational pressure on designated sites, and the disturbance of habitats and species.
- Historic environment – The draft WNP performs well by ensuring that the site allocations are appropriately designed to minimise potential adverse impacts on the setting and significance of nearby heritage assets and / or conservation areas. This is largely achieved through appropriate siting and building height, as well as screening around the perimeter of sites. The policy framework supports the site-specific policies by highlighting the importance of protecting and enhancing both designated and non-designated heritage assets, as well as archaeological remains. It also considers heritage through other policies which have the potential to impact the historic environment. Nevertheless, there is still potential for the site allocations to impact the setting of heritage assets to some degree.
- Land, soil, and water resources – The draft WNP performs well by retaining significant areas of open green space on the largest of its site allocations. Whilst only one of the site allocations is fully brownfield, it is recognised that brownfield sites are limited within the neighbourhood area, and therefore development on greenfield land is largely unavoidable. The neighbourhood area does not contain much BMV agricultural land, and therefore the loss of

productive agricultural land is largely avoided. In terms of water resources, the policy framework performs well by supporting water conserving measures, as well as measures to protect water quality. Nevertheless, the site allocations still result in the loss of a significant area of greenfield land.

- **Landscape** – The draft WNP performs well by seeking to ensure that the site allocations on greenfield land, outside of the DDB, are designed to reduced adverse impacts on the surrounding landscape. The policy framework supports the site-specific policies by designating green gaps and local green spaces to protect the most important areas of the countryside surrounding the settlements in the neighbourhood area. This is in addition to protecting trees, woodlands and hedgerows and important panoramas, vistas, and views. Moreover, the policy framework states explicitly how the Dorset AONB, including its setting, will be protected from new development. Combined with more broad considerations of landscape, the policy framework performs very well. Nevertheless, some of the site allocations are still located adjacent / near the Dorset AONB, on greenfield land and with the potential to impact key views.
- **Transportation** – The draft WNP performs well by supporting the delivery of a transport interchange hub, including a park and ride scheme; enabling improvements to public transport; and making active travel safer and more attractive. This should help to encourage modal shift. Whilst some of the site allocations are located at a distance from Weymouth town centre, it is noted that this is largely unavoidable due to the limited availability of land within the DDB to deliver all of Weymouth's housing requirements. However, it is recognised that development will ultimately lead to an increase in private vehicles on roads within the neighbourhood area and wider area.

6. What are the next steps?

- 6.1 This part of the report explains the next steps that will be taken as part of plan-making and SEA.

Plan finalisation

- 6.2 This Environmental Report accompanies the WNP for Regulation 14 consultation. Following consultation, any representations made will be considered by the Steering Group, and the WNP and Environmental Report will be updated as necessary. The updated and final version of the Environmental Report will then accompany the WNP for submission to the LPA, Dorset Council, for subsequent Independent Examination.
- 6.3 At Independent Examination, the WNP will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with local planning policy.
- 6.4 If the Independent Examination is favourable, the WNP will be subject to a referendum, organised by Dorset Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the WNP, then it will be 'made'. Once made, the WNP will become part of the Development Plan for the town.

Monitoring

- 6.5 The SEA regulations require 'measures envisaged concerning monitoring' to be outlined in this report. This refers to the monitoring of likely significant effects of the WNP to identify any unforeseen effects early and take remedial action as appropriate.
- 6.6 It is anticipated that monitoring of effects of the WNP will be undertaken by Dorset Council as part of the process of preparing its Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). No significant negative effects are considered likely in the implementation of the WNP that would warrant more stringent monitoring over and above that already undertaken by Dorset Council.

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