

# Redlands Farm, Weymouth (WEY14. Land South of Wey Valley)

Statement in support of proposed site allocation in The Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation

February 2021





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## Introduction

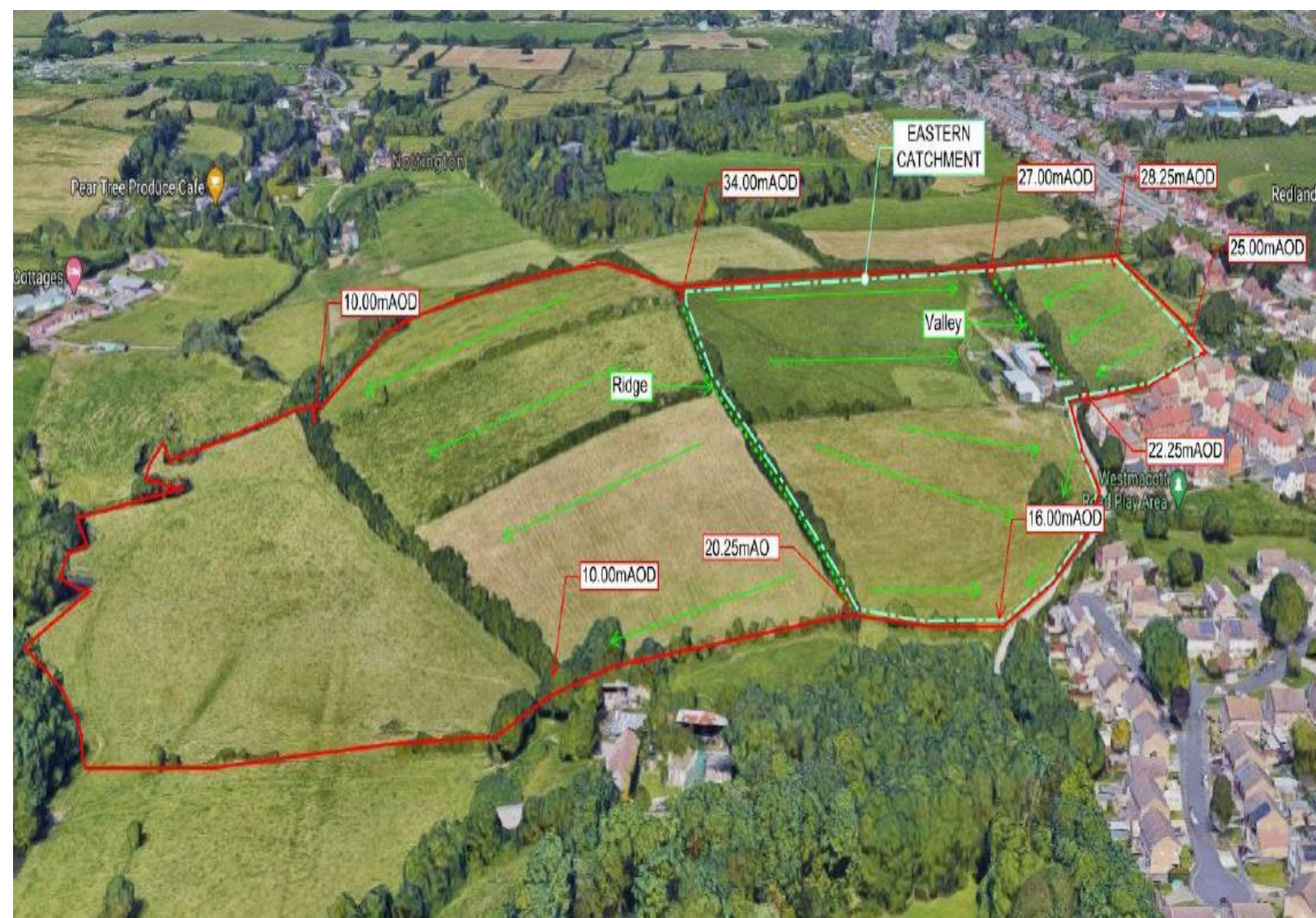
C G Fry and Son Limited has an Option Agreement in respect of land at Redlands Farm and supports the decision of Dorset Council to propose the allocation of the site in its Local Plan Options Consultation. The purpose of this document is to demonstrate the soundness of the allocation and that the site is suitable, available and deliverable.

The Site has been informed by a suite of technical investigation which demonstrates that residential development can be comfortably accommodate on the ‘eastern catchment’. Rather than causing significant harm to potentially sensitive onsite and offsite considerations, the scheme can deliver substantial social, environmental, and economic benefits over the course of the Local Plan period.

Whilst additional information will be provided throughout the Local Plan review process, the information included in this document offers a robust interpretation of the Site, the proposal, and potential benefits. The Site was submitted in September 2019 in response to the Dorset Council call for sites and was subsequently included as a draft allocation in the consultation version of the Dorset Council Local Plan.

### The Proposal

The erection of up to 150 to 200 dwellings on 6.3ha, as well as the provision of up to 9.1ha of open space, landscape planting, ecological mitigation, and surface water attenuation features.



Aerial photo showing the extent of the redline along with the ‘eastern catchment’ proposed for residential development

### Opportunities

There are numerous opportunities associated with the development of this Site for residential development, including:

- Proposed housing on the ‘eastern catchment’ will sit comfortably between existing and consented residential development directly to the north, east and south, thereby providing a natural continuation of built form when viewed in this context.
- Open market and affordable housing provision positioned close to existing services and facilities in and around Weymouth
- Vehicular access via the consented Land at Wey Valley development (WEY13) directly to the north.
- Easy pedestrian access routes onto Dorchester Road will offer connectivity to multiple key services and sustainable transport links
- The ‘western catchment’ which slopes down from the ridge towards the river will be utilised exclusively for public open space, landscape planting, ecological mitigation and surface water attenuation.
- Significant potential to provide interconnected natural space offering a multitude of public and environmental benefits
- 150 to 200 dwellings towards Dorset Council’s housing targets and land supply.



## The Site

The Site covers an area of approximately 15.4ha of agricultural land which is predominantly used for stock grazing at present. Fields boundaries are delineated by mature hedgerows, the majority of which will be retained, reinforced, and incorporated into the development. The site comprises of seven fields which have been categorised into an ‘eastern catchment’ of approximately 6.3ha proposed for built development and a ‘western catchment’ of approximately 9.1ha reserved for public open space, landscape planting, ecological habitat and surface water mitigation features.

Whilst the ‘eastern catchment’ fields gently undulate, these gradients are modest and can comfortably accommodate residential development within the constraints of the overall site. The ‘western catchment’ slopes steeply westwards, is less suitable for residential development and is therefore proposed for more sensitive uses better suited to these gradients and the wider landscape.

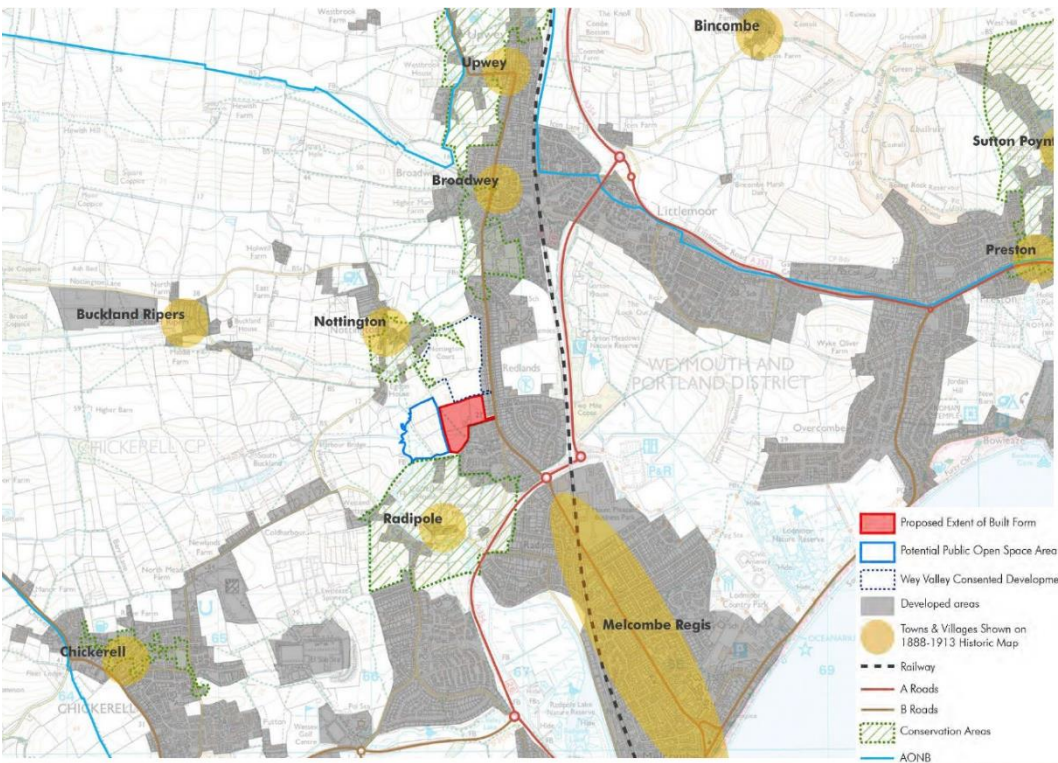


Figure 1: Site Location Plan

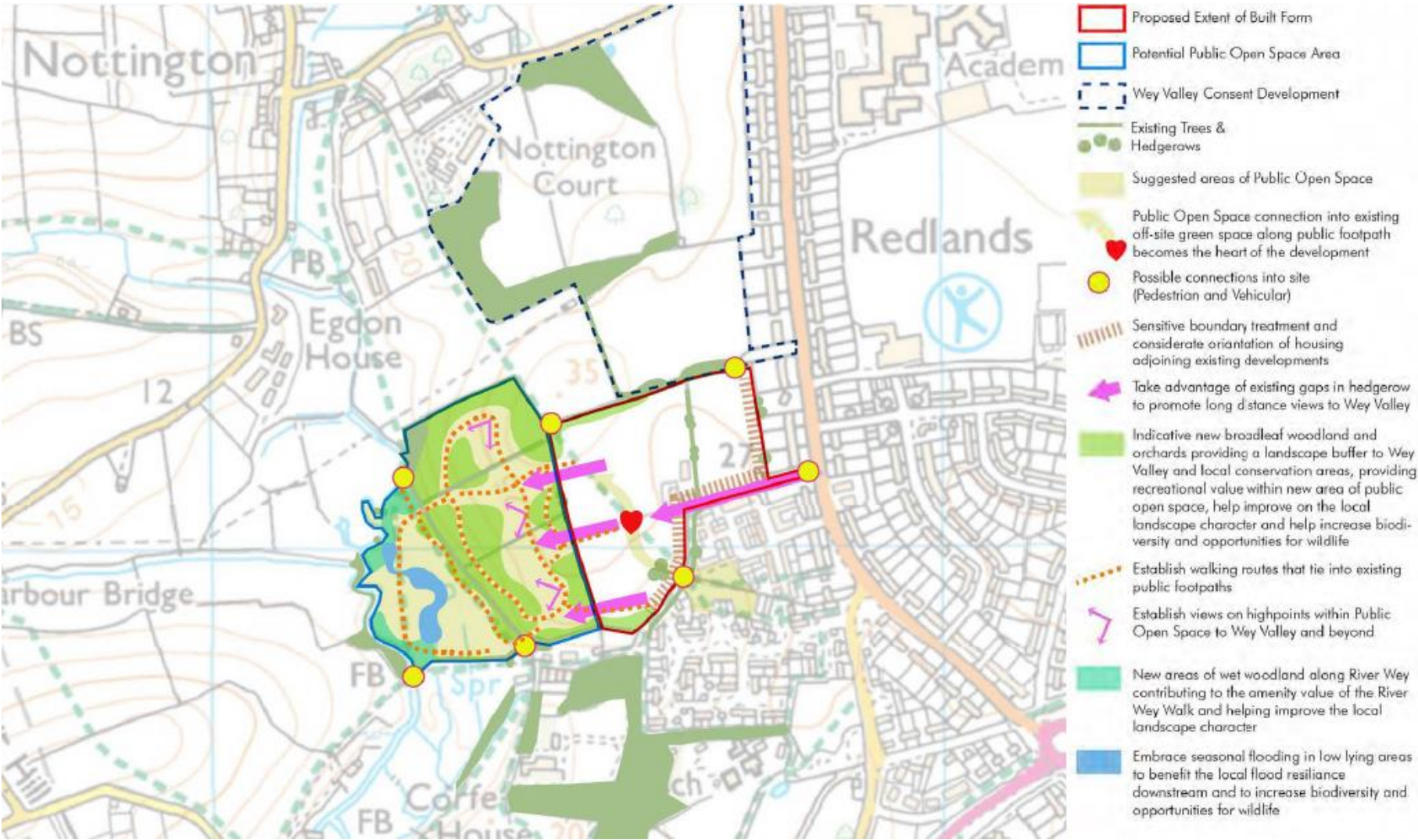


Figure 2: Preliminary Layout Principles

Vehicular and pedestrian/cycle access into the site will be achieved via the consented Land at Wey Valley development to north. From there, safe, easily navigated routes onto Dorchester Road which offers a variety of services and several points of connection to wider settlements, either by use of private vehicle or various sustainable transport methods. Opportunity also exists for pedestrian and cycle connection direct to Dorchester Road alongside the existing track/public footpath serving the current site.

The site is approximately 3.3km north of the centre of Weymouth, a settlement identified as one of the highest priority settlements for development and a Tier 1: Large built up area in the adopted WDWP LP and emerging DC LP respectively. In addition, there are key education, convenience retail and transport facilities available within an 800m / 10 minute walk of the Site. The Site is well connected, will directly abut existing and consented residential development to the north, east and south and is therefore considered a sustainable and accessible location.



# Planning Background

## Planning Policy Context:

On 1st April 2019, West Dorset District Council & Weymouth Borough Council, North Dorset District Council, East Dorset District Council and Purbeck District Council formally merged to create Dorset Council. As such, the Local Planning Authority covering Weymouth and the surrounding settlements is Dorset Council. However, given the recent creation of the unitary Authority, until a Dorset Council Local Plan is progressed to adoption, the extant adopted Local Plans remain applicable to their respective localised areas. Thus, the adopted development plan comprises of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (adopted October 2015).

An additional consideration, albeit one in its infancy, is the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan which was formally designated on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020. Whilst the Site is located within the Neighbourhood Plan boundary, at this stage the Neighbourhood Plan is not sufficiently progressed to have any weight attached to it. Whilst Neighbourhood Plans sit below adopted Local Plans in the Development Plan hierarchy and must be in conformity with the latter, the Site will respond to the requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan once it has reached a sufficiently progressed stage.

## Five Year Housing Land Supply:

West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland housing market area cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply. Adopted local planning policies for the supply of housing are therefore considered out of date. As per the latest West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Five-year housing land supply report, the council concede a shortfall in dwellings and can only demonstrate 4.83 year supply of deliverable housing. Given this shortfall and out of date policies, the tilted balance is engaged and paragraph 11 of the NPPF is relevant:

*“where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, granting permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole”*

The delivery of this sustainable Site would significantly contribute towards the council’s faltering five year Housing Land Supply and its continued support should be maintained.

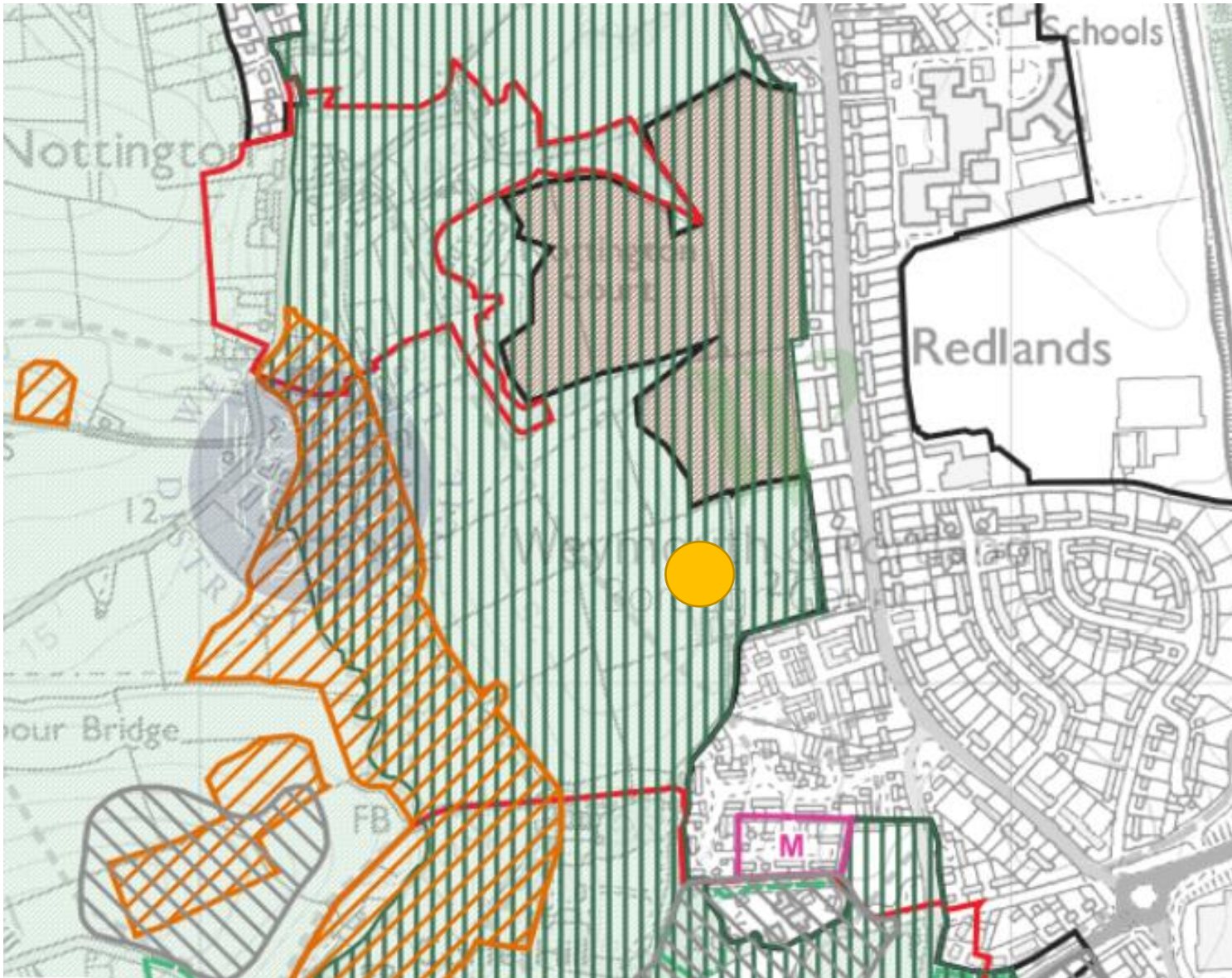


Figure 3: West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan map (Site location marked by yellow marker)

Adopted Local Plan Area	5 Year Supply
North Dorset	4.00 years
East Dorset	4.91 years
West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland	4.83 years
Purbeck	5.3 years

West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland in March 2020



**Development Plan Review:**

Following the creation of the unitary authority on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, Dorset Council began preparation of the Dorset Council Local Plan. The Site was submitted in September 2019 following a call for sites and following dialogue with Planning Policy Officers, the Site was identified as a preferred location for housing.

**Site Planning History**

Historically, the Site has operated in an agricultural capacity and has retained this function, thereby remaining undeveloped whilst land around it has been subject to housing development.

The site was put forward in 2016 following a call for sites by West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Council. The Site was given the reference

WP/WEYV010 and whilst the western part of the site was not deemed appropriate for housing, the eastern fields (6.85ha) were deemed viable and a preliminary figure of 205 dwelling was noted.

Subsequently, the site was identified as a preferred site for housing in the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan Review in 2018. The draft Local Plan, including the site as WEY15 Land south of Wey Valley (Preferred Option), was presented to the WDDC Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12th June 2018.

On 18<sup>th</sup> June 2018 during a Weymouth & Portland Borough Council Policy Development Committee, the site was discussed and was subsequently removed as a preferred option.

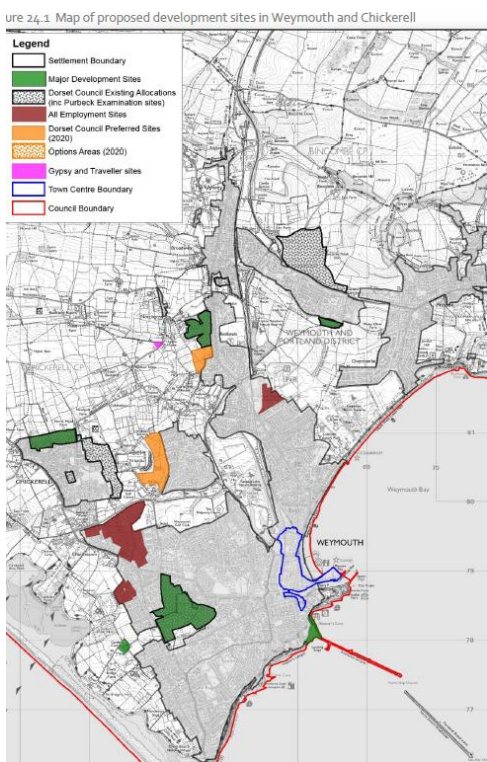
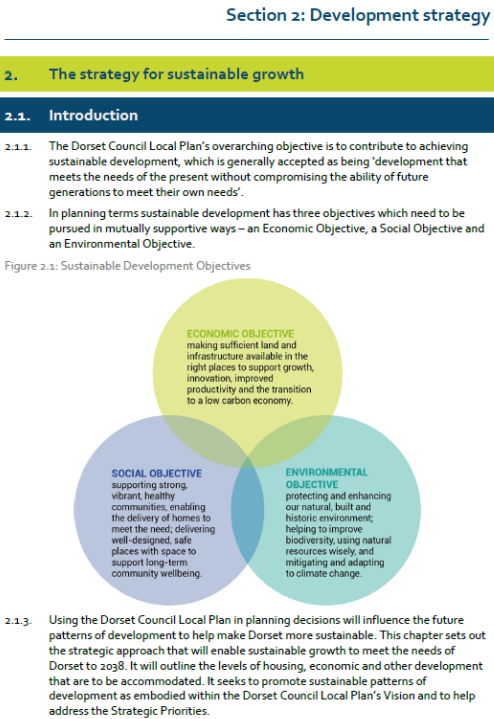
However, the minutes of this meeting confirm that the principal reason for the removal of the Site was not related to planning policy or technical evidence, rather more political reasons. In 2018, a tenant was operating an organic farm on the Site and of the four points of concern raised by Members, three related to impact on the farm. Since 2018, the tenant has left the Site and the farm has ceased to operate.

The final point of objection related to the site being located within an ‘Important Open Gap’. Whilst this point is discussed in detail below, since 2018, the allocated WEY13 development to the north has been consented and so a significant element of that ‘Important Open Gap’ has been eroded. Nevertheless, the key function of this designation will remain protected if the Site is developed.

The planning policy history of the Site confirms that it has been considered an appropriate and sustainable location for development since at least 2016. Its inclusion as a preferred option in 2018 by the Council reinforces this conclusion.

Whilst its removal in 2018 might be viewed negatively, this was politically motivated rather than based on legitimate technical planning considerations. The site is in a highly sustainable location and is abutted on three sides by residential development. In addition, recent, robust, technical evidence concludes that the development will not have a detrimental impact on potentially sensitive receptors

Its latest inclusion as a preferred option confirms the legitimacy of the Site as an appropriate location for sustainable residential development.



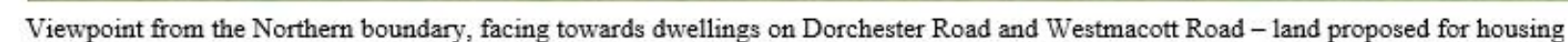
Section 24: Weymouth

**WEY14: Land south of Wey Valley**

- I. Land South of Wey Valley as shown on the policies map is allocated for residential development.
- II. The site should be developed in accordance with a masterplan prepared by the developer /landowner in conjunction with the local community and agreed by Dorset Council. The masterplan should ensure that:
  - the layout and form of development respects its setting and that appropriate landscape planting is provided to ensure that the development does not have an adverse impact on the landscape character, the character of the adjacent conservation area or the amenity of surrounding properties;
  - the development connects effectively to the Wey Valley site to the north and into the existing built areas; and
  - the footpaths running through and around the site are retained and enhanced to maintain connections to Nottingham and the wider countryside.



## Landscape





# Ecology:

Andrew McCarthy Ecology undertook a suite of ecological surveys in 2020 which have subsequently informed the preliminary mitigation strategies.

Buildings were checked for roosting bats and nesting birds, and the wider site was checked for field signs of Badger. No signs of roosting bats were found, and all structures were assessed as having ‘negligible’ potential. No evidence of Barn owl was found. Evidence of badger was found to the west of the development area, but these species would not be significantly affected by the development proposals.

Habitats within the survey area comprise grassland and arable crops bounded by species-poor hedges.

Habitats within development areas were assessed as having low-medium potential to support commuting / foraging bats. A suite of transect and static surveys for bats took place from spring 2020 into October 2020. The bat assemblage was found to be of moderate interest only, with activity being dominated by Common and Soprano pipistrelle. Other species were present only at a very low level.

Evidence of Dormouse was found following surveys commenced in April 2020 and so a licence will be required from Natural England before any hedge clearance can take place.

Following completion of the protected species work (and a desk study) an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) was prepared to understand the extent of habitat loss and gain.

A preliminary Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) audit has been undertaken in order that a 10% net gain might be achieved following mitigation. A mosaic of habitats including species-rich floodplain meadow and new scrub planting would be needed to offset impacts. This habitat creation would be delivered on fields alongside the River Wey to the west of the Site which have been subject to detailed survey. To compensate for the loss of short lengths of hedgerow, approximately 110m of new species-rich native hedge with trees would be planted in an area of strategic importance to Dormouse to the west of the proposed development zone.

Given 9.1ha of the site will remain undeveloped for housing, the Site has significant potential to offer substantial ecological enhancement.

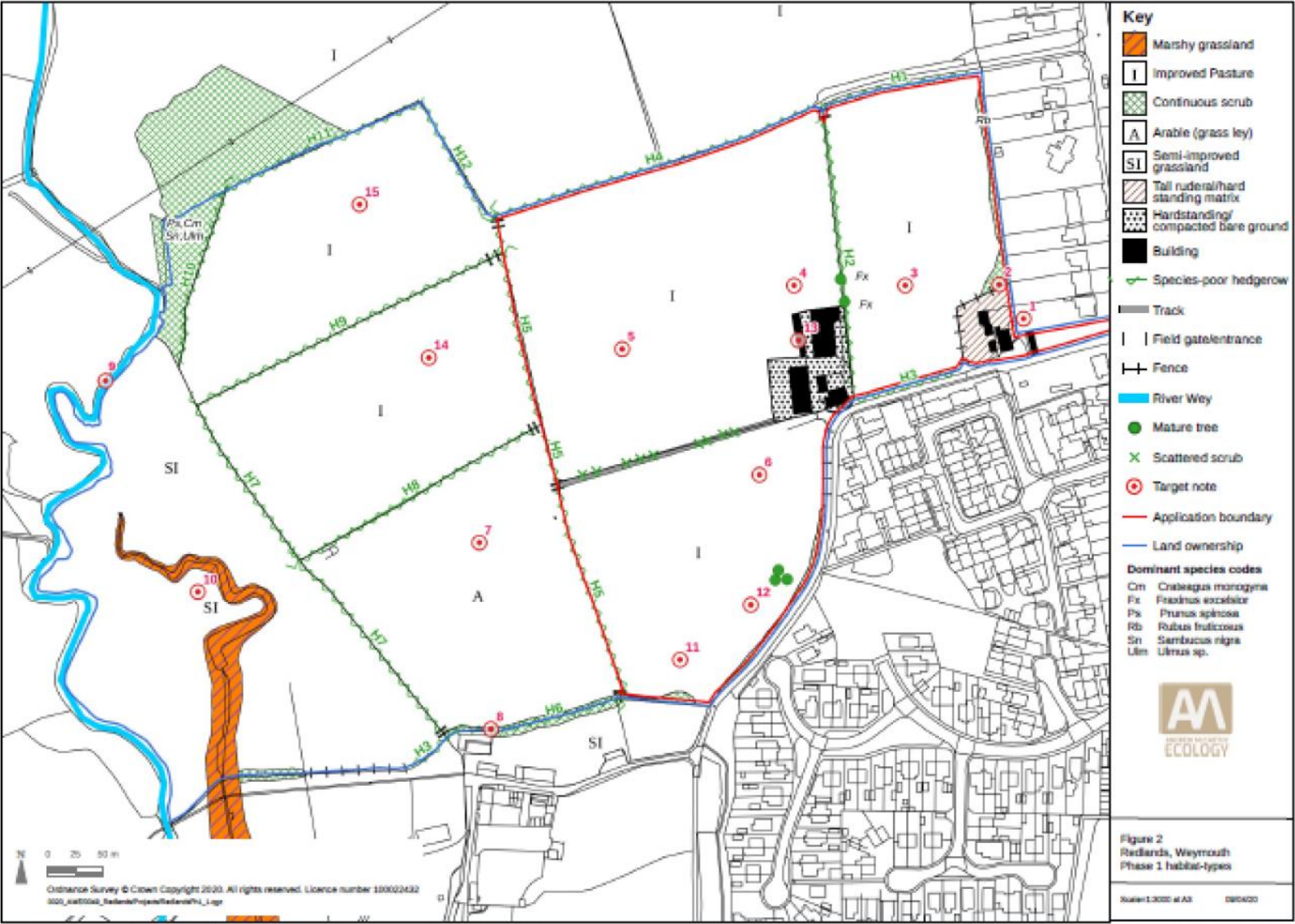


Figure 4 Phase 1 Survey Plan





# Flood Risk and Drainage:

The full extent of developable land is located within Flood Zone 1. A localised area of land mapped as being susceptible to fluvial flooding would be mitigated through the development of this site.

A desktop review suggests the site is underlain by clayey soils with impeded drainage, meaning soakaways are unlikely to present a viable method of surface water disposal.

Surface water runoff generated by the development will be attenuated on-site within a series of sustainable drainage features such as ponds. The features will be located outside of any mapped flood extents and will be sized to accommodate runoff in up to the 100 year return period.

The strategy would safeguard against the upper end allowances for climate change, providing betterment over undeveloped conditions, where the rate and volume of runoff would continue to increase due to climate change.

The use of Sustainable Drainage Systems will offer attenuation and long-term storage, whilst also providing water quality enhancement, amenity and biodiversity benefits.

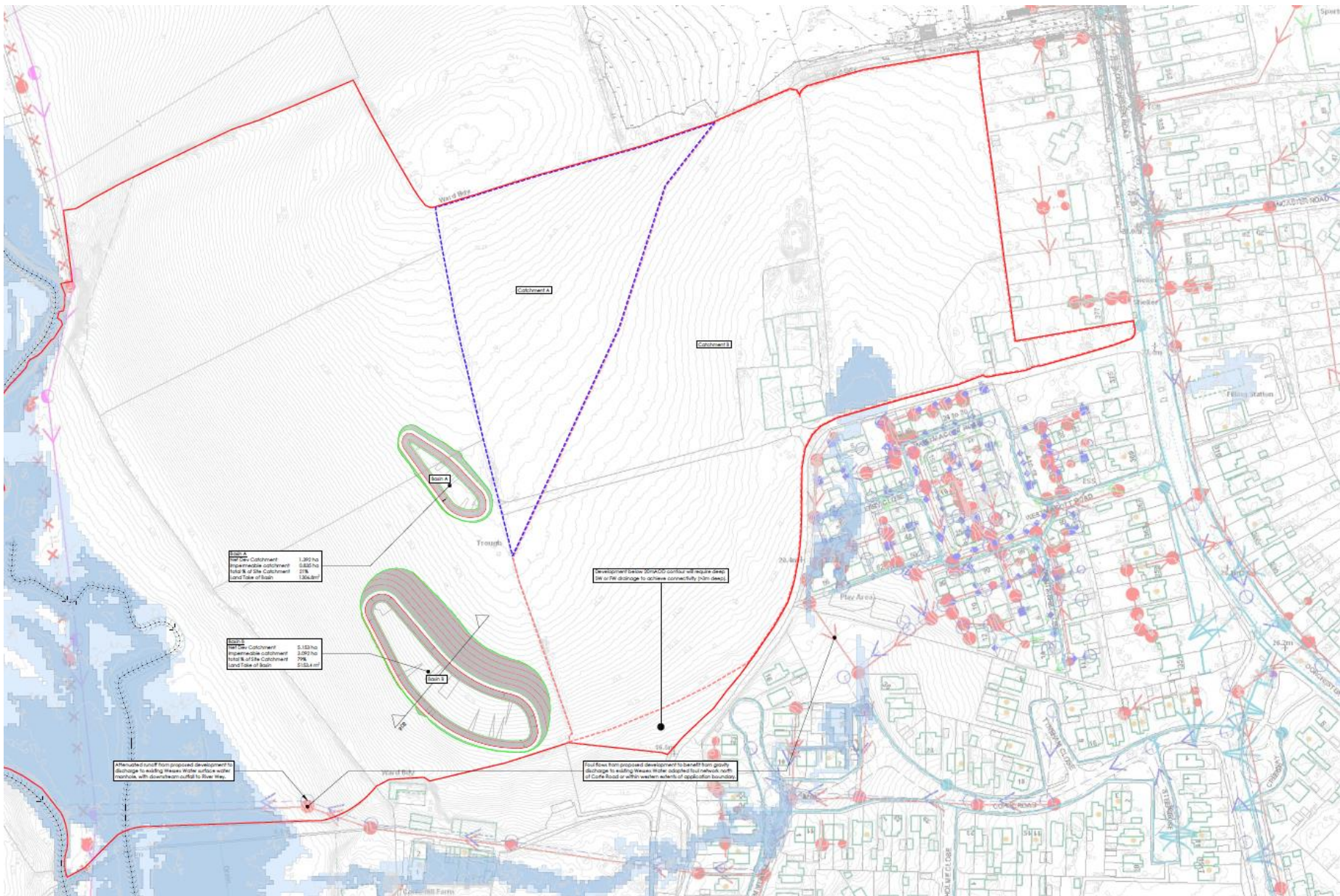


Figure 5 Preliminary drainage strategy including EA flood map data from surface water.

The proposed development benefits from the ability to utilise a new gravity sewer connection to the existing foul sewer network inside the south-west corner of the site. There is no requirement for on-site foul pumping.

In terms of providing wastewater connections from the proposed development site, the developer is entitled to make a connection to the nearest practical point on the existing public network where the existing sewer is at least the same diameter as the new sewer being connected.

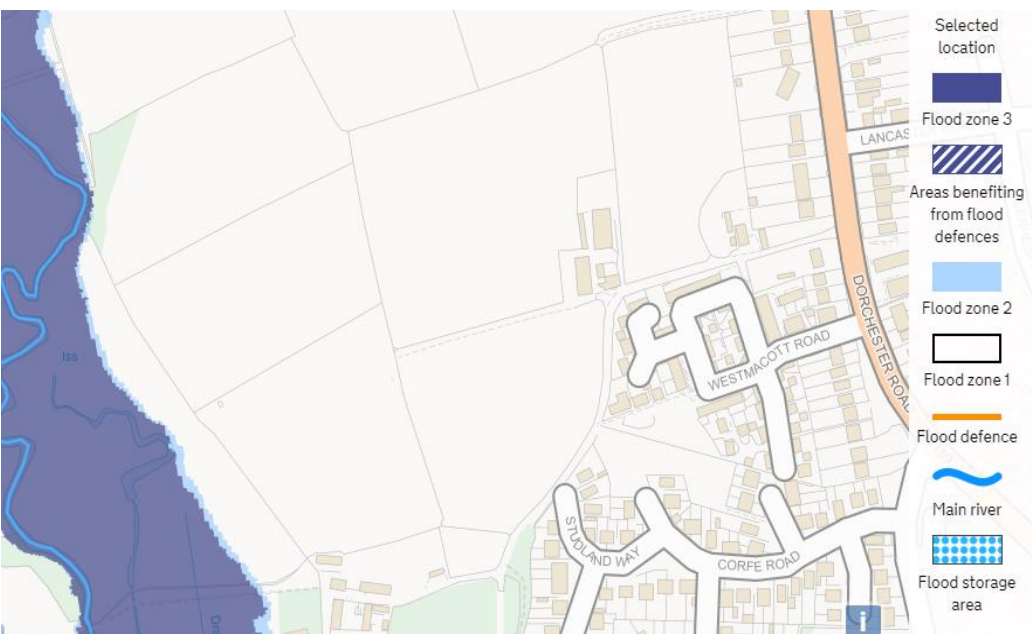


Figure 6 EA flood map identifies the eastern catchment within FZ 1 from rivers and seas



Transport and Access

In addition to assessing the site from a flood risk and drainage perspective, Awcock Ward Partnership has assessed the access arrangements for the Site as well as accessibility to sustainable transport methods.

The site is located towards the north of Weymouth, in the Redlands area of the town. The site lies approximately 3.3km north of Weymouth town centre, with local facilities available in closer proximity to the site. The site is within a sustainable and accessible location, with key education, convenience retail and transport facilities available within 800m/10 minutes’ walk of the site, creating a ‘walkable neighbourhood’ as defined by Manual for Streets. A further range of facilities are available within 2km of the site, or the distance within which Manual for Streets suggests most short car trips can be replaced by walking.

The site is well located in terms of access to sustainable transport opportunities, with bus stops located within 250m of the site, and rail services located within 2km of the site. The bus stops are served up to every 9 minutes by key services into Weymouth town centre, and north towards Dorchester and Upwey station. Upwey station is served by regular trains between Weymouth and London Waterloo, via Southampton and between Weymouth and Bristol via Yeovil.

Access for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists is proposed via the consented Land at Wey Valley development directly to the north of the site. Several existing footpath connections into the site offer additional pedestrian links.

In summary, and considering the points addressed in this note, it is concluded that the site represents an exceptional opportunity to provide a highly accessible and sustainable residential development that will be safe from flooding and will offer a reduced flood risk to properties in the downstream catchment.



Figure 7. Vehicular and pedestrian access via the consented Land at Wey Valley development directly to the north

Service Number	Operator	Destinations	Typical Frequency		
			Mon - Fri	Sat	Sun
2	First Bus	Littlemoor - Weymouth	Every 15 minutes	Every 20 minutes	Every 30 minutes
10	First Bus	Dorchester - Weymouth	Every 15 minutes	Every 20 minutes	Every 30 minutes
701	Damory Coaches	Kingston Maurward Agricultural College - Weymouth - Portland	Daily (college service)	-	-

Sources: [travelinesw.com](#)Date: 18.02.2021

Existing Bus Services from Sports Centre, Dorchester Road

Destination	Approximate Average Frequency		
	Mon-Fri	Sat	Sun
London Waterloo	Hourly (+1 service AM peak)	1 per hour	1 per hour
Weymouth	1 per hour (+1 service AM peak)	1 per hour	1 per hour
Dorchester	1 per hour (+1 service AM peak)	1 per hour	1 per hour
Bournemouth	1 per hour	1 per hour	1 per hour

Source: [www.nationalrail.co.uk](#)Date: 25.09.2020

Railway Service Frequencies – Upwey

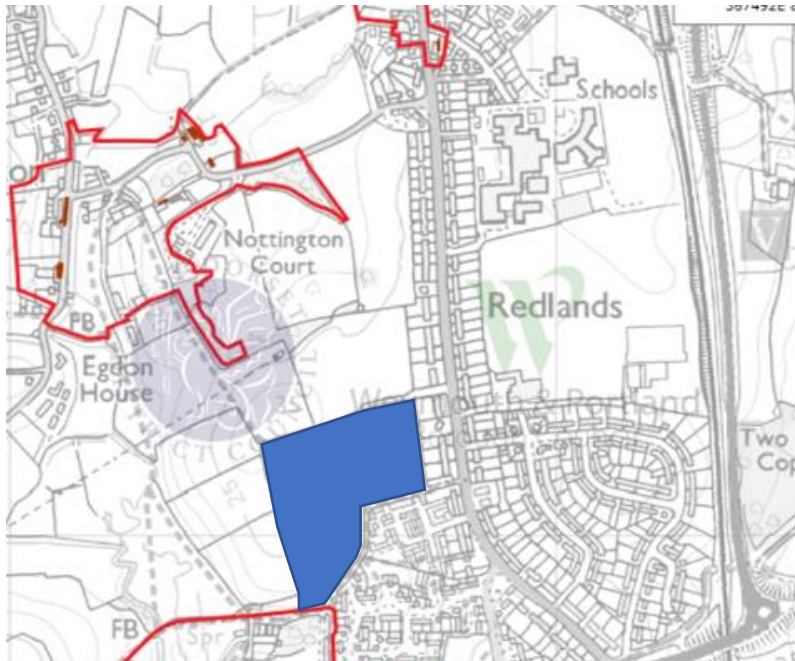


Heritage and Archaeology

RPS Heritage has assessed what impacts development of the Site will have on surrounding built heritage features. The adjacent map identifies the listed buildings located within 1km of the Site, a number of which are located within the Nottingham Conservation Area to the north-west. The Site is visually, historically and functionally unrelated to the majority of surrounding built heritage assets and makes no contribution to their significance, thus it will have no impact on their significance. This includes the Broadway Conservation Area and those listed buildings contained within it.

Consideration is given to those heritage assets in closest proximity to the Site as a result. These are:

- Nottingham Conservation Area (including listed buildings and the surviving elements of Nottingham House Parkland)
- Corfe Hill House (Grade II listed building)



Corfe Hill House and Radipole Conservation Area

Corfe Hill House is a Grade II listed building constructed in 1821. It is located within the wider Radipole Conservation Area, which also includes Corfe Hill Farm and extends up to the southern boundary of the Site. The majority of the Conservation Area is distinct from the Site and therefore consideration of the Conservation Area is provided as part of the assessment of Corfe Hill House.

The Site shares a historic functional association with Corfe Hill House and formed part of the wider estate. However, it was always a functional part of the estate deliberately visually separated from the house and the formal grounds that immediately surrounded it. Consequently, there is now no experience of Corfe Hill House from within the Site and the historic association between the Site and the listed building is not appreciable. As a result, the Site does not make any contribution to the significance of Corfe Hill House.

The Site also makes no contribution to the significance of the wider Radipole Conservation Area. Although this heritage asset lies immediately south of the Site, only poor-quality agricultural buildings at Corfe Hill Farm are visible. The wider conservation area, which includes Corfe Hill House and a number of dispersed farmsteads on lower lying ground, are not visible from within the Conservation Area. The Site therefore makes no contribution to the significance of this wider Conservation Area and does not allow an understanding of its morphology, historic development or architectural interest.

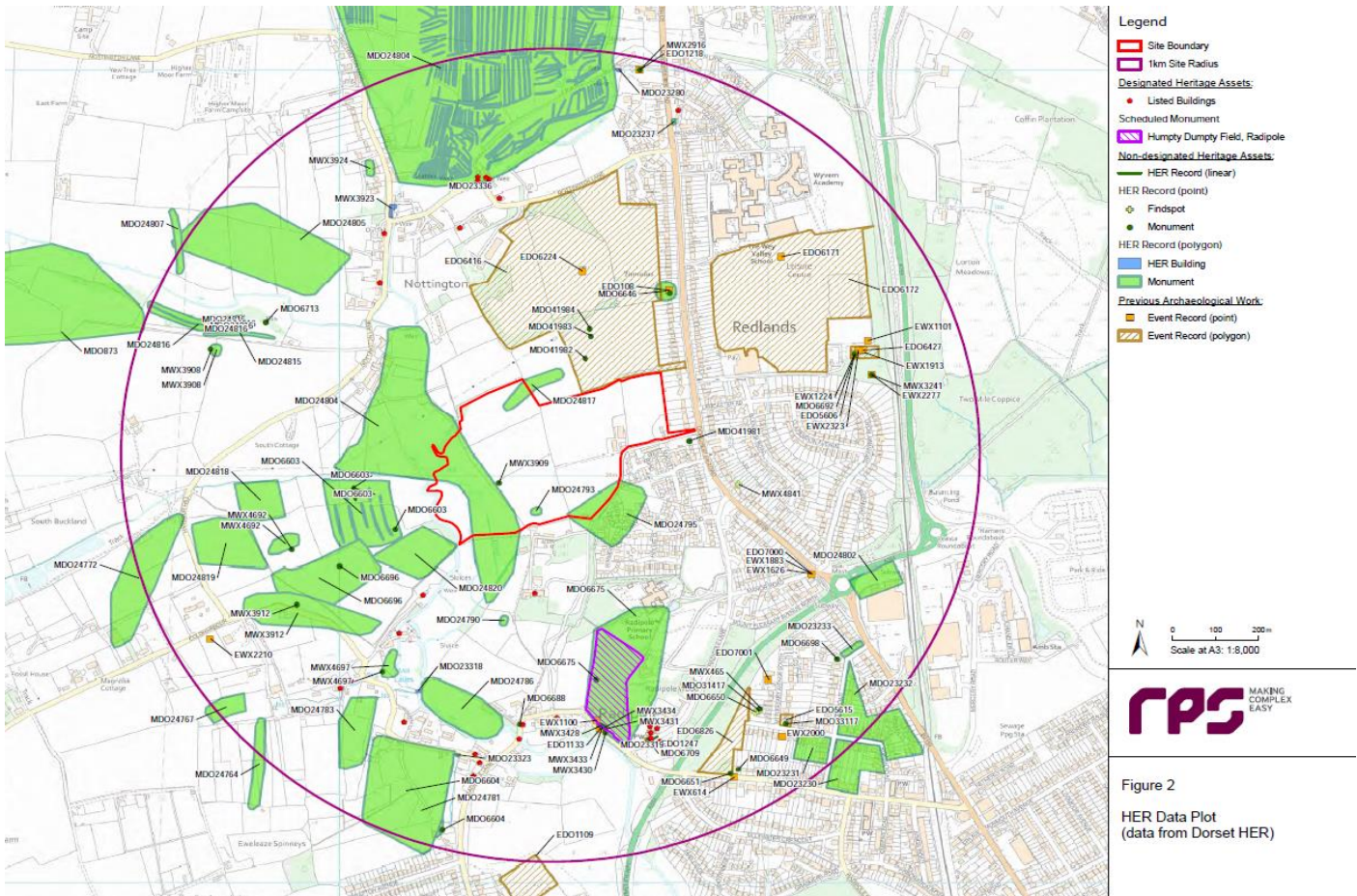


Figure 8. HER data plot

Nottingham Conservation Area

The Site is located to the south-east of the Nottingham Conservation Area, beyond two dense shelterbelts which historically formed part of the landscaped park of Nottingham House and are partly included within the Conservation Area’s boundary. These shelterbelts, in conjunction with further boundaries to the south and the local topography, prevent views into the Conservation Area from within the Site. This means that whilst the Site does form part of the wider rural surroundings of the Conservation Area, it is visually distinct and there is no experience of the Conservation Area from within the Site. The Site is not therefore considered to contribute to the significance of the Nottingham Conservation Area.

In addition, the development directly the north benefits from an extant consent and once constructed, will change the immediate setting of the Conservation Area and further divorce it from the Site.

The proposed residential development of the Site is therefore likely to have no impact on the significance, or special architectural and historic interest, of these surrounding heritage assets and will be acceptable in heritage terms.

Nevertheless, opportunities to strengthen the existing planting on the southern edge would provide a further buffer between Corfe Hill House, its historic farm, and the Site.



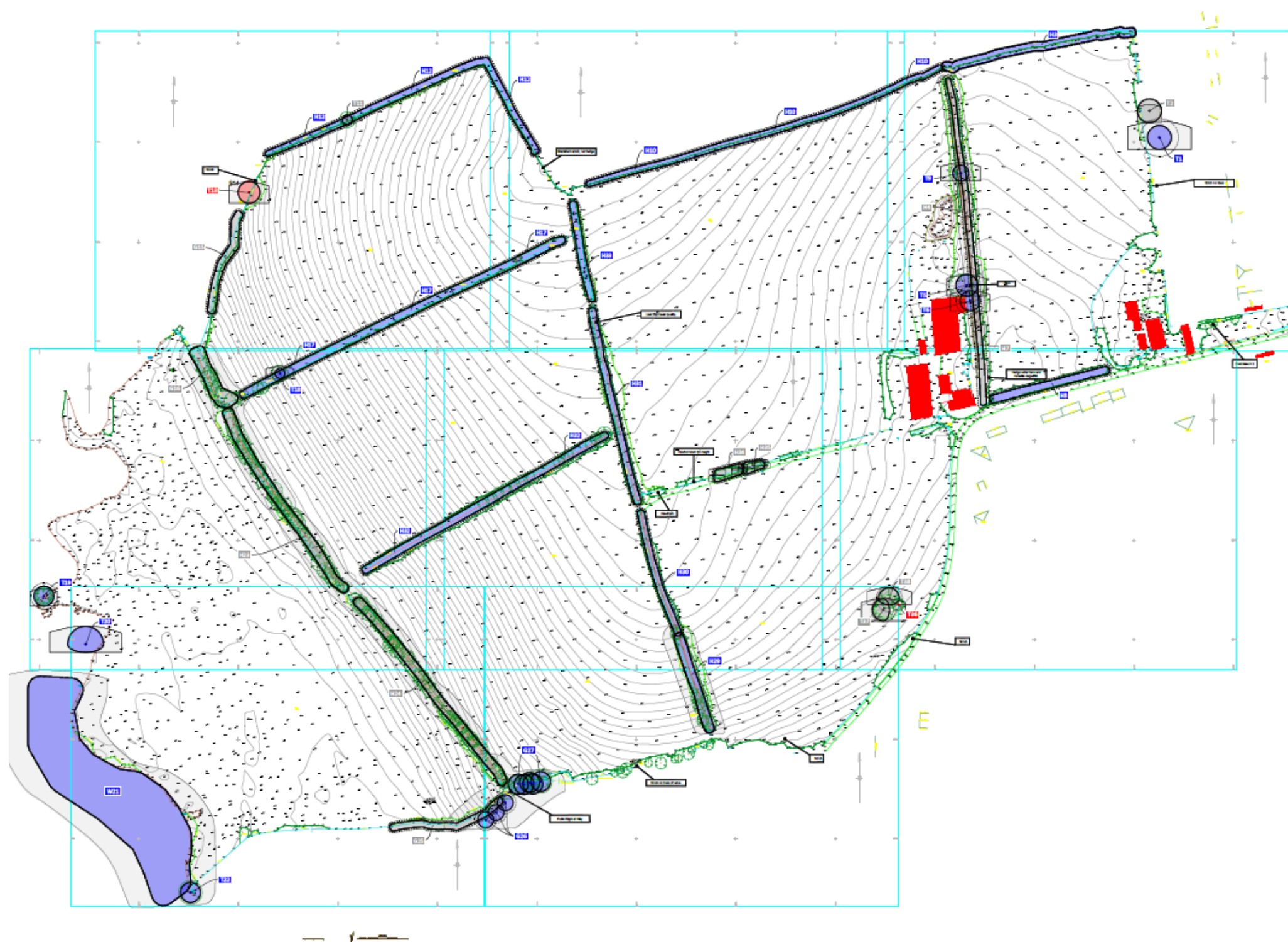
## Trees:

Aspect Tree Consultancy has surveyed all trees and hedgerows located on site and produced the adjacent Tree Constraints Plan.

In addition, a comprehensive tree survey lists the species, features, and condition of the existing vegetation on the Site, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of the wider Site.

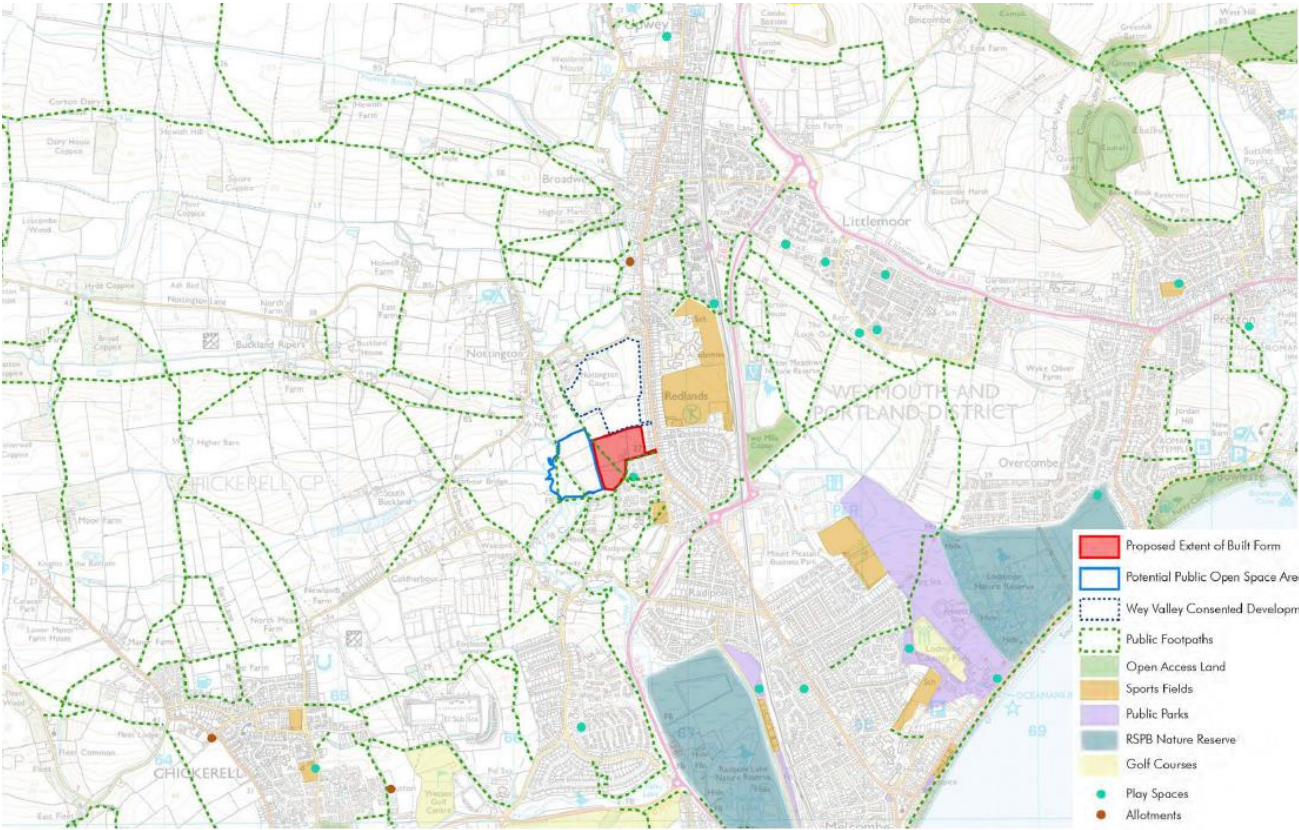
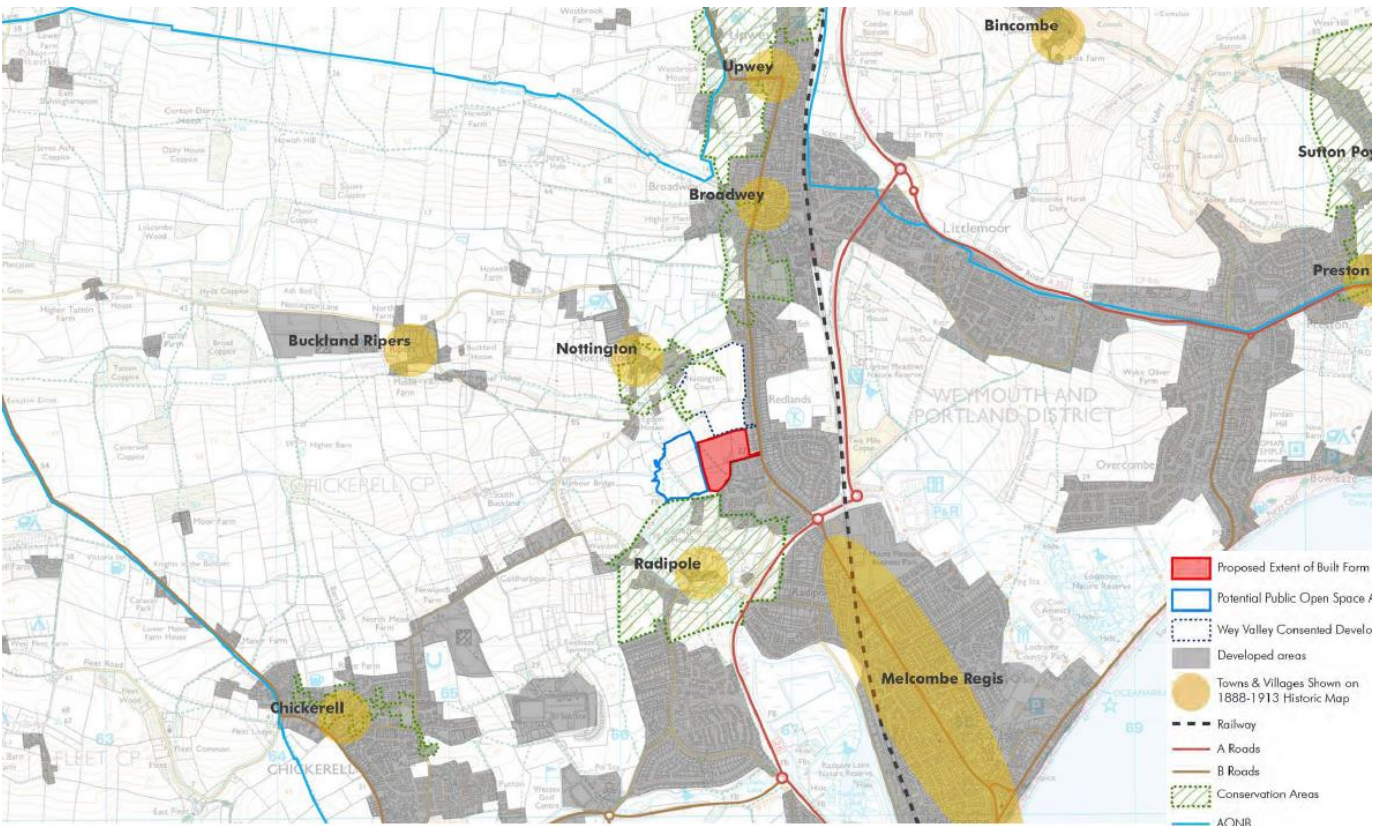
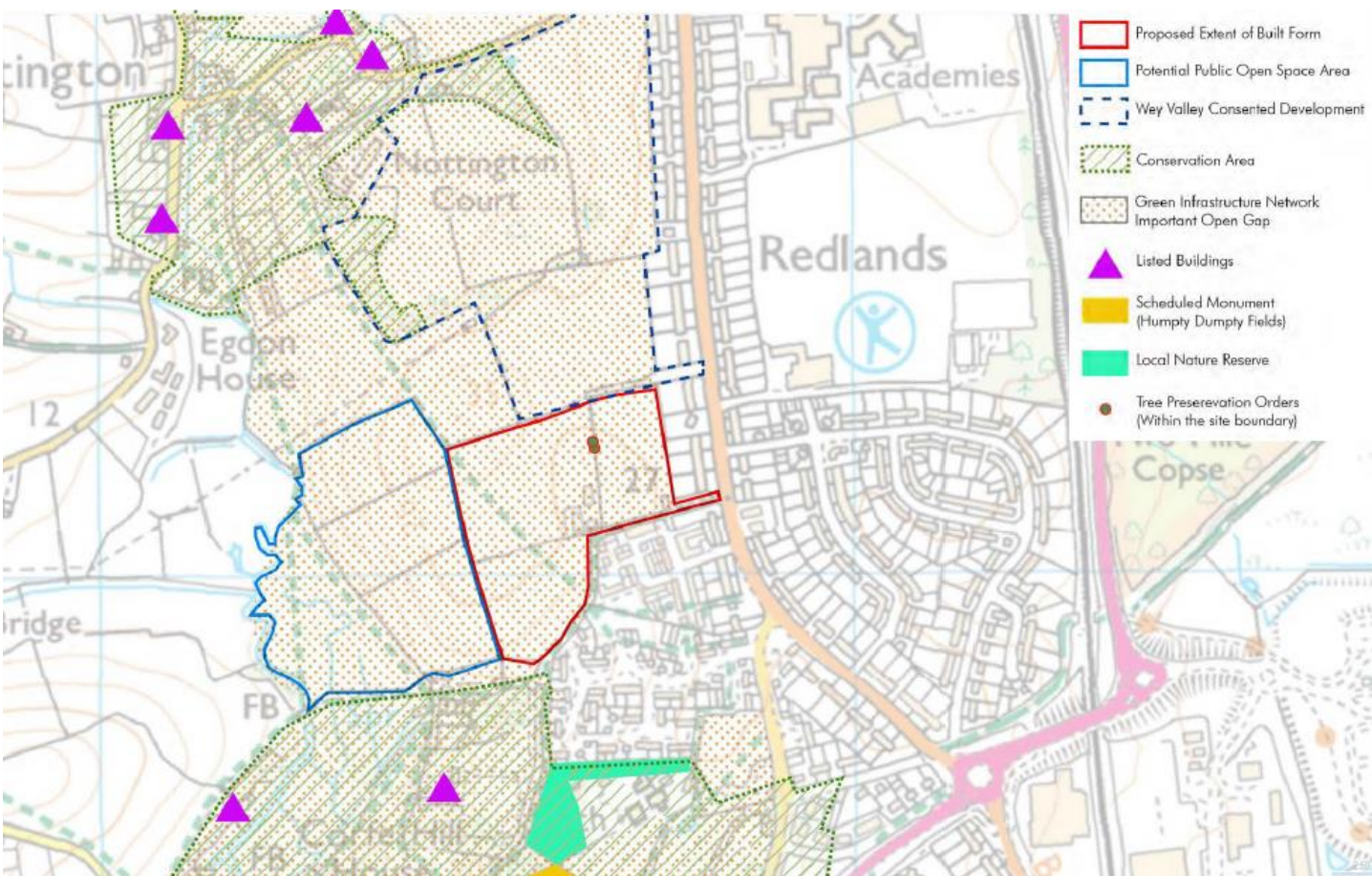
Whilst removal of small section of hedgerow will be inevitable to achieve access points into and throughout out the site, it is intended at this stage to retain as much vegetation as possible and incorporate it into the scheme.

Failing or diseased vegetation will be removed, however, where gaps are left or reinforcement is required, additional planting will replace that which is removed.





Location Plans





## Conclusion

Residential development at Redlands Farm, Weymouth would achieve the following list of benefits and the Site is therefore an ideal candidate for allocation. It is suitable, available and deliverable as demonstrated above:

- Provides sustainable open market and affordable housing provision positioned close to existing services and facilities in and around Weymouth
- Contribute up to 150 to 200 dwellings towards Dorset Council's housing targets and land supply
- Proposes easy pedestrian and cycle access routes onto Dorchester Road thereby offering connectivity to services and sustainable transport links
- Offer significant potential to provide interconnected natural space offering a multitude of public and environmental benefits
- Preserve the settings of adjacent heritage assets
- Preserve the landscape setting whilst offering substantial landscape planting, ecological net gain and public connectivity to the wider countryside.

