

## Landscape Management Guidelines

### 1 - Introduction

- 1.1 Minerals are essential for development, quality of life and in contributing to the creation of sustainable communities. Waste management facilities provide essential infrastructure for communities. Minerals and waste planning seeks to ensure that the minerals and waste management facilities required by society and the economy, along with the impacts of their extraction, processing or operation on people and the environment, are managed in an integrated and sustainable way.
- 1.2 The relationship between mineral extraction and waste management and the environment (including human settlement) is sensitive, as the impacts of quarrying and the operation of facilities can potentially lead to adverse effects on landscape, habitats and amenity. However, the restoration and aftercare of sites presents opportunities for significant biodiversity, geodiversity and amenity gains.
- 1.3 It is important, and required under Government policy, that when mineral extraction at any site is completed the site is properly restored to an appropriate and beneficial afteruse. Although many waste management facilities are permanent developments, the same is true for those that are temporary uses of land, such as landfill sites.
- 1.4 The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy (the Minerals Strategy) was adopted in May 2014. It provides the strategic context and policy framework for minerals development in the county. The Mineral Sites Plan identifies specific sites for mineral extraction, in line with the strategic approach of the Minerals Strategy. The Mineral Sites Plan Pre-Submission Draft was published for consultation on 1 December 2017.
- 1.5 The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Waste Plan (the Waste Plan) provides the strategic context and policy framework for waste management development. It also identifies specific sites for the development of waste management facilities. The Waste Plan Pre-Submission Draft was published for consultation on 1 December 2017.
- 1.6 These guidelines set out the background to the approach taken to restoration by the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy and the Waste Plan Pre-Submission Draft. The guidelines provide guidance on the type of restoration expected in different parts of the county, dependent on landscape character and ecology.
- 1.7 Further advice, including pre-application advice, can be sought from the County Planning, Minerals and Waste team at Dorset County Council. Email [planning@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:planning@dorsetcc.gov.uk) or see [www.dorsetforyou.com](http://www.dorsetforyou.com)

### 2 - Policy Context

#### National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework<sup>1</sup> (NPPF) sets out a requirement in paragraph 144 to:  
  
“provide for restoration and aftercare at the earliest opportunity to be carried out to high environmental standards, through the application of appropriate conditions, where necessary. Bonds or other financial guarantees to underpin planning conditions should only be sought in exceptional circumstances;”
- 2.2 In paragraph 117, the NPPF states that planning policies should:

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<sup>1</sup> National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012; Department for Communities and Local Government)

“promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations, linked to national and local targets, and identify suitable indicators for monitoring biodiversity in the plan;”

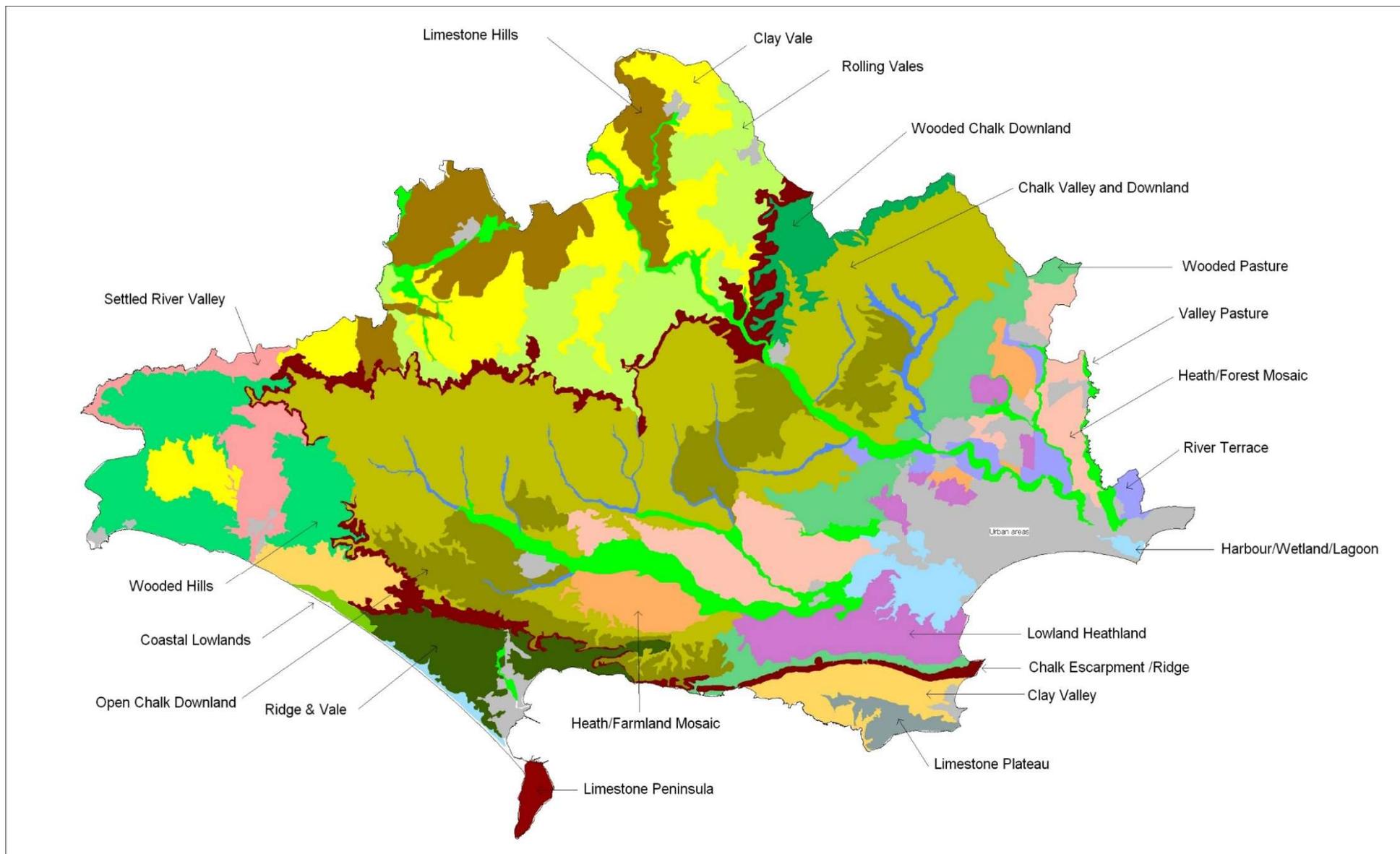
### **3 – Approach taken by the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy and Waste Plan**

- 3.1 The Minerals Strategy and the Waste Plan recognise the importance and benefits of appropriate and timely restoration of minerals sites when extraction is complete.

#### **The Strategic Approach**

- 3.2 The strategic approach for the restoration of minerals and waste sites is based on the landscape character types of the county and combines county-wide consistency with local relevance. Landscape character types are distinct landscapes across the county that are relatively uniform in character, sharing broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation, historical land use and settlement pattern. The landscape character types of the county are illustrated in Figure 1.
- 3.3 Specific guidelines for management of the land relevant to each landscape character type have been prepared for those landscape character types which contain mineral resources. These guidelines provide a broad framework for managing change, supporting the Minerals Strategy by establishing specific land management principles for minerals site restoration within each landscape character type which are appropriate to that specific type. These guidelines provide practical and locally relevant advice to developers, landowners, local authorities and the general public as to what will be expected in restoration of the land following mineral working.
- 3.4 It is expected that the majority of landfill sites where restoration, and therefore these guidelines, is relevant will be linked to mineral working. However, if a proposal for waste development requiring restoration is outside the areas currently covered by this document, advice can be sought from the council’s landscape officer who can provide relevant guidelines consistent with the principles set out here.
- 3.5 Proposals for restoration will be required to implement the relevant landscape type management guidelines. Restoration proposals should also take into account, and where possible contribute to, the targets of the Dorset Biodiversity Strategy. This is required by Policy RS1 of the Minerals Strategy and Policy 23 of the Waste Plan.
- 3.6 As a result, the restoration process should ensure that the finished site will integrate easily into its landscape in which it sits. The management guidelines should also ensure that the restoration process has created or enhanced any priority habitats which might be typical of the relevant landscape type. In this way the strategic approach ensures that specific site restoration proposals are relevant and appropriate both across the county and within the local context.

**Figure 1 – Landscape Character Types**



## The Local Context

3.7 The stages of the restoration process at a local level are:

- **Restoration** - establishing the post-extraction land levels and landform, returning the soils stripped prior to extraction and preparing for the after-care stage.
- **Aftercare** – when the mineral has been extracted and the stripped soils returned, the aftercare period is the time when the site is prepared for the agreed after use. Aftercare can include the processes of cultivating, fertilising, planting, draining and otherwise treating the land.
- **Afteruse** - the after use is the agreed use to which the site will be returned following mineral/waste development. It may be agriculture or some other use providing employment opportunities – alternatively, it may be some nature conservation or recreational use.

3.8 For more information on these stages, please refer to the Minerals Strategy, Chapter 15.

## The Management Guidelines

3.9 The management guidelines are set out below. Each one is a 'landscape ecology'<sup>2</sup> based strategy, providing guidance to developers, landowners, local authorities, parishes and the general public as to what the Minerals & Waste Planning Authority expects for the restoration of a site. It establishes the principles for restoration within this landscape character type.

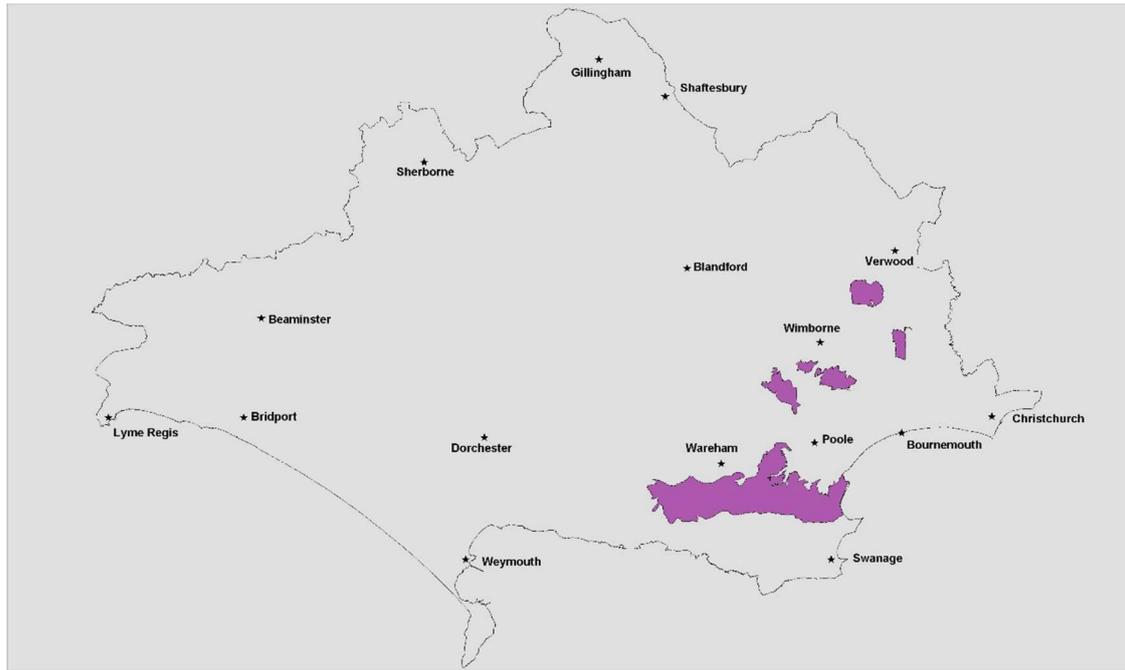
3.10 Each covers a standard range of topics such as: Restoration Vision; Context; Value; Landscape Sensitivity; Opportunities and Constraints; Mitigation Considerations; Contribution to other policy documents; the Historic Environment and Mechanisms for Long-Term Management. The management guidelines, set out in this paper, are as follows:

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<sup>2</sup> Landscape ecology relates to the study of landscape structures/patterns and ecological processes.

## RS 1: Restoration Strategy for the Lowland Heathland Landscape Type



### Introduction

- 1.1 Restoration and aftercare should provide a means of conserving and where possible enhancing landscape character for the benefit of local communities, wildlife, amenity and/or recreation<sup>3</sup>. This 'landscape ecology'<sup>4</sup> based strategy provides guidance to developers, landowners, local authorities, parishes and the general public as to what the Minerals & Waste Planning Authority expects and it establishes the principles for restoration within this landscape type.

### Restoration Vision

- 1.2 A flat to undulating landform where the predominant habitat and after use is heathland. In places a mosaic of wet/dry heath, mires, acidic grassland and some wood/scrub e.g. pine/birch may be appropriate. The proper retention, storage and after use of restoration soils is vital. The retention and management of forestry plantations that provide an amenity value and/or mitigate intrusive development may be important. Their gradual thinning to reduce the proportion of conifers and reduce their 'hard' edges is a key part of their management.
- 1.3 Opportunities to reduce the fragmentation of habitats must be sought by linking in with existing heathland sites to create large-scale continuous landscapes. Management of these large units shall be by extensive grazing.
- 1.4 Opportunities to contribute a multi-functional approach to restoration and to Green Infrastructure/open space provision shall be sought where demand/deficiency highlights, where this helps deflect pressure from sensitive habitats and where accessible to the public e.g. adjacent to roads. This must be a long-term restructuring of parts of the landscape currently affected by existing and future mineral extraction and landfill.

<sup>3</sup> Minerals Policy Statement 1: Planning & Minerals; Paragraph 19: 'take account of the opportunities for enhancing the overall quality of the environment and the wider benefits that sites may offer, including nature and geological conservation and increased public accessibility, which may be achieved by sensitive design and appropriate and timely restoration'.

<sup>4</sup> Landscape ecology relates to the study of landscape structures/patterns and ecological processes.

- 1.5 A careful decision has to be made therefore, in consultation at an early stage, as to which restored areas are primarily suitable for habitat and which are more suitable for open access green space to be used for informal recreational.

### **Context**

- 1.6 The undulating heathland landscapes of Dorset are found in the Poole Basin, a low-lying area enclosed by the chalk to the north, west and south.

### **Key characteristics**

- An undulating lowland landform with a distinctive open, exposed and uniform character.
- Associated with the poor, sandy and infertile soils of the Poole Basin.
- A complex, diverse and often fragmented mosaic of heather carpets, grassland, birch/pine wood and scrub, which combine to create a blend of textures and colours.
- Heavily influenced by urban development and associated pressures.
- Wide, expansive and open views especially from elevated areas.
- Important European designated habitats and species.
- A fragile landscape easily damaged by human activities e.g. fire and motorcycles.

### **Mineral characteristics**

- Ball clay operations, usually deep extraction without progressive restoration due to the need to keep different faces open to access the various clay types.
- Sand is extracted as overburden and interburden, this is used in restoration and creation of final landform.
- Some potential for sand/gravel sites in this character type.

### **Existing value**

- 1.7 The Purbeck heathlands are within the Dorset AONB which increases the value of these parts of the landscape type. The recreational value to the local community and visitors for informal recreation is high, particularly as the whole area is generally well served by the rights of way network as well as there being significant areas of open access land. The national cycle network cuts across a large section of the heathland.
- 1.8 Its historic value is significant in that the heath character is a result of intensive farming mainly in the Bronze Age. There are also a number of barrows and the area has a long history of clay extraction and pottery.
- 1.9 The heathland landscape type is recognised at a national and international level for its exceptional biodiversity value based on heathland and mire habitats. However wildlife value is not restricted to the heaths as the area supports ancient woodlands, unimproved grasslands and small river systems e.g. the Corfe River.

### **Landscape Sensitivity**

- 1.10 Due to past, current and future predicated forces for change and the areas' landscape sensitivities and vulnerabilities it is suggested that the key positive landscape attributes, in particular the protected Heathland habitats, are sensitive to change<sup>5</sup>. Therefore development must protect and manage the positive landscape attributes and actively plan/create new landscapes and multifunctional Green Infrastructure opportunities.
- 1.11 Much of the parts of this landscape type in the AONB have lost its traditional heathland character so overall landscape condition is judged to be moderate and stable<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> The Dorset Landscape Change Strategy 2010. Based on the assessment of landscape character areas of the same type

<sup>6</sup> 'Conserving Character; Landscape Character Assessment and Management Guidance for the Dorset AONB' 2008.

### **Opportunities and Constraints**

- 1.12 The development of large scale heathland habitat to link with existing areas of heathland, creating landscape scale habitat restoration; reduce heathland fragmentation; increase landscape and biodiversity values of sites; create large scale grazing units; screen/integrate urban/military uses; enhance 'hard' edges to conifer blocks; contribute to green infrastructure provision and enhance informal recreation/access value of areas to reduce pressure on designated heathlands.
- 1.13 The ecological, landscape and recreational value of this landscape type, highlighted above, can provide constraints to restoration proposals; building scale/location/design; site access location; lack of material to create desired landform and suitable substrates for revegetation.

### **Mitigation considerations**

- 1.14 Retain plantations/trees/copses/hedgerows e.g. adjacent to urban/military uses to help integrate these uses; management of these retained features e.g. to increase proportion of broadleaved plants; building form, mass, scale, design and location; processing plant location/storage e.g. in lower parts of sites; bunding may be appropriate only in some locations; phasing to reduce impacts on adjacent uses; ongoing phased restoration where practical.

### **Contribution to other policy/project initiatives**

- 1.15 Relevant documents include:
- South West Nature Map<sup>7</sup>. *This landscape type covers parts of the 'Heathland Strategic Nature Area' the priority habitat identified and prioritised for heathland conservation, creation and enhancement. This helps to underpin the restoration vision element of this strategy.*
  - Dorset AONB Management Plan
  - South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy
  - Dorset Biodiversity Action Plan
  - Dorset Local Geodiversity Action Plan (LGAP)
  - Purbeck Heritage Strategy

### **Elements of the historic environment such as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Historic Landscape Characterisation.**

- 1.16 The individual settings of these features need to be considered as part of the holistic approach to restoration as well as on a case-by-case basis. Opportunities to not only conserve but also enhance the setting of these heritage assets need to be built into restoration schemes. In some cases this may generate different restoration visions which will need to be resolved through negotiation with all relevant parties. The information below provides a broad overview, details of assets relevant to specific sites will need to be drawn from the Historic Environment Record.

### **Historic Landscape Character Type/Commentary<sup>8</sup>**

- 1.17 Heathland predominates, along with large areas of twentieth-century coniferous plantation on areas of former heathland. Some very piecemeal small-scale enclosure on the fringes. Occasional small isolated enclosures associated with the exploitation of the heathland in relatively modern times.

### **Known Archaeology**

- 1.18 Relatively little known. Known features tend to be prehistoric earthworks, such as barrows, and twentieth-century military remains – slit trenches etc. However, archaeological work in adjacent areas of (generally) former heathland reveals dense occupation and industrial activity in the prehistoric and Roman periods.

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<sup>7</sup> SW Nature Map produced by Biodiversity South West Partnership in 2007 to give a strategic picture to forward planners of the areas biodiversity so it can be incorporated into planning policy.

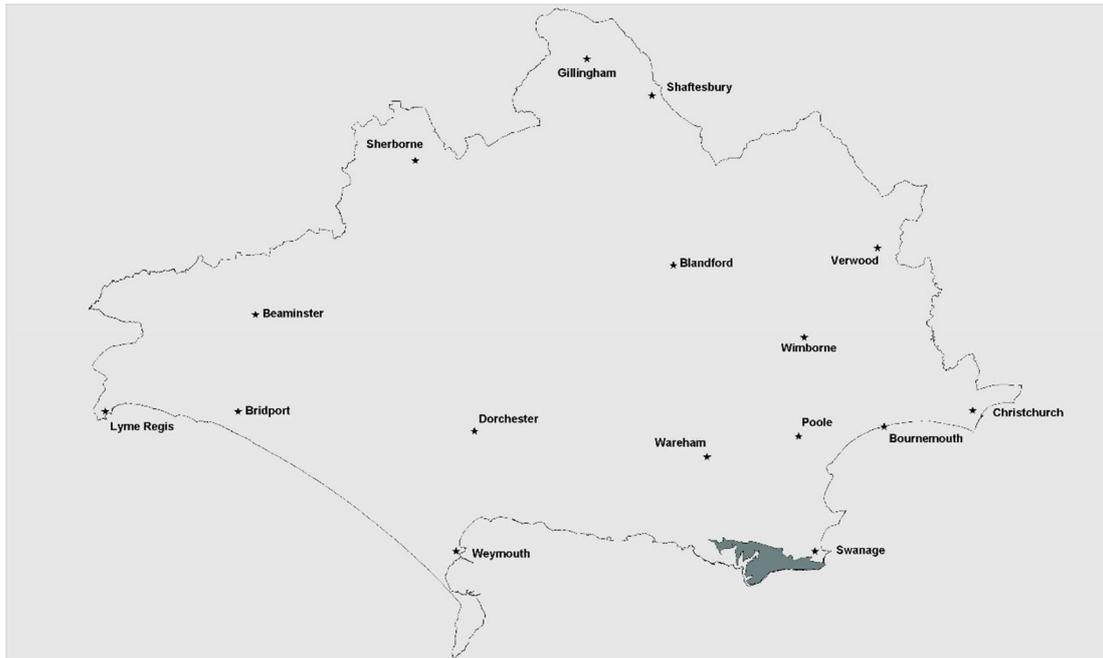
<sup>8</sup> From 'The Historic Landscape Character Assessment' pages on Dorset For You  
<http://maps.dorsetforyou.com/landscape/hlc.aspx?prevpg=home>

- 1.19 It is to be expected that extensive prehistoric field systems and associated settlements survive in heathland areas, as over-farming led to the creation of the heaths in the Bronze Age. There is very little in the Historic Environment Record relating to later industrial activity and other uses and exploitation of the heath in historic times. Features must survive and more survey work required.

**Mechanisms for long term management**

- 1.20 Likely management of some smaller areas to be via private agricultural business but the most suitable method would be via linking up the wider areas managed by conservation trusts and/or via management agreements. Minerals/waste operators are strongly encouraged to consider long term land management issues in bringing forward their proposals.

## RS 2: Restoration Strategy for the Limestone Plateau Landscape Type



### Introduction

- 2.1 Restoration and aftercare should provide a means of conserving and where possible enhancing landscape character for the benefit of local communities, wildlife, amenity and/or recreation<sup>9</sup>. This 'landscape ecology'<sup>10</sup> based strategy provides guidance to developers, landowners, local authorities, parishes and the general public as to what the Minerals & Waste Planning Authority expects and it establishes the principles for restoration within this landscape type.

### Restoration Vision

- 2.2 An open and generally flat to undulating landform where grazing of limestone pasture is the preferred end use. Conservation of the strong character of the area is a key objective as is to protect and manage the positive landscape attributes. The landforms must tie in with surrounding areas however there may be scope for small-scale geological exposures to be left as part of the restoration, particularly where they can be seen from public rights of way.
- 2.3 The protection, retention and enhancement of historic field patterns is important and linking in with adjacent limestone grasslands where possible is also a key objective to create large scale grazing units within the network of small fields. A key part of this will be native hedgerow and copse retention/protection and/or planting and the conservation and enhancement of existing local limestone stonewalls. The appropriate reuse/restoration of any site buildings, in particular which contribute to the agricultural after use and help conserve character, needs to be considered.
- 2.4 Opportunities to contribute to and link/extend with existing rights of way networks need to be explored. Nature conservation after use, integrating semi-natural grasslands, is a key element of this vision.

<sup>9</sup> Minerals Policy Statement 1: Planning & Minerals; Paragraph 19: 'take account of the opportunities for enhancing the overall quality of the environment and the wider benefits that sites may offer, including nature and geological conservation and increased public accessibility, which may be achieved by sensitive design and appropriate and timely restoration'.

<sup>10</sup> Landscape ecology relates to the study of landscape structures/patterns and ecological processes.

## **Context**

2.5 The Limestone Plateau landscape type is found in one location in Dorset and that is in south Purbeck.

### **Key characteristics**

- Exposed sloping limestone plateau which plummets towards the sea along the cliff edge.
- Dramatic coastline with steep cliffs and incised deep valleys.
- Windswept wild landscape with virtually no trees.
- Defined by the long tradition of quarrying and use of local limestone, being covered by small quarries, spoil tips and tracks.
- Distinctive stark limestone villages and exposed farmsteads
- Mixed farming with geometric fields divided by walls and some weak hedges.
- Open expansive views across the Corfe valley to the sea and from the coast.
- Some important limestone grassland sites.

### **Mineral characteristics**

- Purbeck limestone sites which have traditionally been small-scale, scattered sites. Can be 10-20m in depth. Worked in campaigns (short periods of extraction e.g. over the summer months)
- Restoration to original ground levels achieved by backfilling due to the bulking up of overburden and waste materials
- Stone is transported to and stocked at service areas or processing areas.

### **Existing value**

- 2.6 The whole area lies within the Dorset AONB which increases the value of these parts of the landscape type. The recreational value to the local community and visitors for informal recreation is high, particularly as the whole area is generally well served by the rights of way network, with the Priests Way being a major route through the area.
- 2.7 As recognised in the Purbeck Heritage Strategy and AONB management plan, traditional Purbeck stone sites have made a positive contribution the heritage and landscape character of the area. Its historic value is also associated with pre historic and Romano-British occupation, industrial activity and the medieval and post medieval field systems, often in the form of stone walls.
- 2.8 The biodiversity value of this landscape type is centred on the limestone coastline and its hinterland, which is designated at a national and international level.

### **Landscape Sensitivity**

- 2.9 Based on analysis of the Dorset AONB Landscape Character work<sup>11</sup> and local knowledge, it is felt that overall this landscape type is visually sensitive due to its open and exposed nature with some sweeping views and vistas from nearby elevated ridgelines.
- 2.10 Based on this Dorset AONB Landscape Character work, the overall condition of the landscape is moderate and stable with a strong assessment of 'strength of character'. This points to a range of sensitivities and vulnerabilities indicating the area's overall high sensitivity to further development that may detract from the key positive landscape attributes. Further development of groups of quarries, rather than scattered small ones, is a particular issue of concern.

### **Opportunities and constraints**

- 2.11 The National Trust are major landowners; maintain and enhance the small scale pattern of pastures and stone walls, conserve, enhance and extend any hedgerows and in particular stonewalls; seek opportunities to link in with new walls to match the existing; enhance biodiversity and geodiversity e.g. by introducing low key grazing on restored fields and provide

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<sup>11</sup> 'Conserving Character'; Landscape Character Assessment and Management Guidelines for the Dorset AONB 2008.

small scale geological exposures; protect skylines from stockpiles and buildings; restore/retain buildings which contribute to local character and promote agricultural after use; reinstatement of site access and/or walls/hedgerows; enhance urban edges where possible by planting of small scale native copses and contribute to public open space/access and conservation initiatives.

- 2.12 Opportunities to enhance the geodiversity of Dorset can occur whenever someone digs down into the bedrock. New and old small scale quarries represent important points to access and study the underlying geology. Generally, where a rock exposure is considered important a small face should be retained during restoration. Where retaining rock face is seen as problematic a decision should be based on the relative scientific or educational value of the exposure as well as how well the stratigraphy exposed is represented at other sites. Restoration does not always have to include a retained rock face, as long as an opportunity to record the geology is provided before it is covered.
- 2.13 The Limestone Plateau landscape type in Dorset tends to sit over Upper Jurassic and Lower Cretaceous geology. Rock units of particular interest for conservation and recording would be the Portland Limestone and Purbeck Beds. The latter is a rich source of diverse fossils including dinosaur trackways. In Dorset these are unique to the Purbeck beds and when exposed they should be properly recorded and if possible retained in an exposure.
- 2.14 The ecological, landscape and recreational value of this landscape type, highlighted above, can provide constraints to restoration proposals; building scale/location/design; site access location; lack of material to create desired landform and suitable substrate for revegetation.

### **Mitigation considerations**

- 2.15 Small scale operations in short campaigns; building form, mass, scale, design and location; where secure boundaries are required stone walls or appropriate fencing is preferred; keep stockpiles to minimum heights and off skylines; use of stone to limit and define storage areas; retain and protect important walls, hedgerows and any copses; management of these retained features and planting of new vegetation which will contribute to the overall restored site.

### **Contribution to other policy/project initiatives**

- 2.16 Relevant documents include:
- South West Nature Map<sup>12</sup>. *This landscape type covers parts of the 'Limestone grassland Strategic Nature Area' the priority habitat identified and prioritised for limestone grassland conservation, creation and enhancement. This helps to underpin the restoration vision element of this strategy.*
  - Dorset AONB Management Plan
  - Purbeck Heritage Strategy
  - Dorset Biodiversity Action Plan
  - Dorset Local Geodiversity Action Plan (LGAP)

### **Elements of the historic environment such as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Historic Landscape Characterisation.**

- 2.16 The individual settings of these features need to be considered as part of the holistic approach to restoration as well as on a case-by-case basis. Opportunities to not only conserve but also enhance the setting of these heritage assets need to be built into restoration schemes. In some cases this may generate different restoration visions which will need to be resolved through negotiation with all relevant parties. The information below provides a broad overview, details of assets relevant to specific sites will need to be drawn from the Historic Environment Record.

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<sup>12</sup> SW Nature Map produced by Biodiversity South West Partnership in 2007 to give a strategic picture to forward planners of the areas biodiversity so it can be incorporated into planning policy.

**Historic Landscape Character Type/Commentary<sup>13</sup>**

2.17 Almost entirely large-scale planned enclosure, probably quite late. Towards the west of this area, large areas of strip lynchets (terraces) and prehistoric field systems survive within these large fields.

**Known Archaeology:**

2.18 Relatively little known and more survey work required.

**Mechanisms for long term management**

2.19 Likely management to be via private agricultural business but any suitable nature conservation sites or parts of sites may be managed by conservation trusts or via management agreements. Minerals/waste operators are strongly encouraged to consider long term land management issues in bringing forward their proposals.

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<sup>13</sup> From 'The Historic Landscape Character Assessment' pages on Dorset For You  
<http://maps.dorsetforyou.com/landscape/hlc.aspx?prevpg=home>

## RS 3: Restoration Strategy for the Limestone Peninsula Landscape Type



### Introduction

- 3.1 Restoration and aftercare should provide a means of conserving and where possible enhancing landscape character for the benefit of local communities, wildlife, amenity and/or recreation<sup>14</sup>. This 'landscape ecology'<sup>15</sup> based strategy provides guidance to developers, landowners, local authorities, parishes and the general public as to what the Minerals & Waste Planning Authority expects and it establishes the principles for restoration within this landscape type.
- 3.2 The restoration strategy for Portland is primarily concerned with existing sites as it is the intention in the Minerals Strategy that the only new sites that will be permitted will be mines, except in exceptional circumstances. The majority of permitted sites are already large holes, some being partly revegetated. There is also an ongoing ROMP<sup>16</sup> which will be addressing restoration issues, this is also important for the couple of areas which have permission but that haven't yet been worked.

### Restoration Vision

- 3.3 Due to the unique nature of Portland, with old and existing workings, a specific restoration Action Plan may be required. Overall the vision is to create a mosaic of landscapes and habitats such as limestone grasslands interspersed with rocky outcrops, small-scale grazed fields and some areas restored to former levels as open space which are generally open to public access.
- 3.4 The protection, retention and enhancement of ancient field patterns is important and linking in with adjacent limestone grasslands where possible is also a key objective to create medium/large scale grazing units within the network of small fields. A key part of this will be the conservation and enhancement of existing local limestone stonewalls. The appropriate reuse/restoration of any site buildings, which may contribute to the appropriate landscape management after use and help conserve character, needs to be considered.

<sup>14</sup> Minerals Policy Statement 1: Planning & Minerals; Paragraph 19: 'take account of the opportunities for enhancing the overall quality of the environment and the wider benefits that sites may offer, including nature and geological conservation and increased public accessibility, which may be achieved by sensitive design and appropriate and timely restoration'.

<sup>15</sup> Landscape ecology relates to the study of landscape structures/patterns and ecological processes.

<sup>16</sup> Review of Old Mineral Permissions; this gives the Mineral Planning Authority the opportunity to ensure that conditions attached to mineral planning permissions remain up-to-date and relevant.

- 3.5 Opportunities to contribute to enhanced public open space provision, and/or extend existing rights of way networks and enhance the edges to settlements need to be explored. The protection of key views and maintaining the skyline free from visual intrusion is also a key part of the vision. Agriculture is unlikely to be a predominate afteruse.

### **Context**

- 3.6 The Isle of Portland forms the Limestone Peninsula landscape type.

### **Key characteristics**

- A dramatic and distinctive wedge shaped limestone peninsula at the end of Chesil Beach with prominent cliffs.
- A unique coastal landmark with sweeping views along the coast.
- The pale grey Portland limestone rock dominates the natural and built landscape.
- Exposed, windswept and rocky landscape
- Quarrying and military activity has and continues to significantly impact on the islands character.
- Little tree cover and a historic pattern of small fields separated by low stonewalls.
- Can be perceived as disjointed, untidy and neglected.
- An open skyline dominated by manmade structures and features.
- Many key nature conservation sites of geological and ecological importance.
- Portland Bill and the lighthouse are key landscape features.

### **Mineral characteristics**

- Long history of quarrying.
- Production of both dimension stone and crushed rock for aggregate.
- Extensive surface quarrying has taken place under several permissions issued in the 1950s, with issues including proximity to residential and environmental impacts
- Some underground mining currently occurs.

### **Existing value**

- 3.7 The recreational value to the local community and visitors for informal recreation is high, particularly as the whole area is generally well served by the rights of way as well as many informal paths and open spaces. There is also public access through many of the disused quarries. There are many SSSIs and SNCIs across the area and within the quarries and the vast majority of the coastline designated, which elevates its overall value to all users.
- 3.8 From a nature conservation point of view about 40% of the island is recognised nationally or internationally for biodiversity. Whilst much of this incorporates the relatively unmodified maritime cliff and slope, former quarrying activity over several centuries has allowed substantial areas of high value habitat to form naturally. The wildlife value is increased by several areas being recognised to be of county significance and designated as SNCIs.

### **Landscape Sensitivity**

- 3.9 Based on existing limited desk study evidence<sup>17</sup> it is felt that overall this landscape type has a high visually sensitive rating. This is due to the exposed nature of most of the area being open to views from all aspects.
- 3.10 The domination and negative landscape and visual impact of aspects of quarrying, industrial buildings, spoil heaps and poorly maintained stone walls<sup>18</sup> indicates the sensitivity of this landscape to further open quarrying.

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<sup>17</sup> Landscape sensitivity data carried within the desk study assessment of the building blocks of the Dorset Landscape Character Assessment; the Landscape Description Units. Diacono Associates.

<sup>18</sup> Based on the text in 'The Changing Countryside' Isle of Portland National Character Area. Natural England 1996.

### Opportunities and constraints

- 3.11 The overall **opportunity** is to maintain the integrity of the skyline, conserve the ancient field patterns, conserve and enhance the biodiversity value and rugged character of the cliff tops and quarried landscapes, promote industrial heritage and a strategic approach to landscape restoration.
- 3.12 Restoration provides a significant opportunity for improving the condition of the Isle of Portland SSSI – where sites fall within the SSSI restoration for nature conservation should be the objective (see policy PD5 of the Minerals Strategy).
- 3.13 Other opportunities include; linking any new walls with existing walls; enhance biodiversity and geodiversity e.g. by introducing low key grazing and provide small scale geological exposures; protect skylines from stockpiles and buildings; restore/retain buildings which contribute to local character and promote agricultural after use; enhance urban edges where possible with appropriate landscape treatment and contribute to public open space/access and conservation initiatives.
- 3.14 **Constraints:** building scale/location/design; site access location; lack of material to create desired landform and suitable substrate for revegetation. Modern working practices, which lead to industrial scale workings and deep excavations, offer much less potential for creating the diversity of substrates which historic workings left behind and on which biodiversity thrives.

### Mitigation considerations

- 3.15 Keeping stockpiles to minimum heights and off skylines; use of stone walling to limit and define storage areas; retain and protect important walls, hedgerows and any copses; management of these retained features and limit the use of planting of new vegetation to small sheltered pockets. Set up grazing management initiatives to link up sites in different ownerships to create a coordinated approach to the islands overall management.

### Contribution to other policy/project initiatives

Relevant documents include:

- South West Nature Map<sup>19</sup>. *This landscape type covers parts of the 'Limestone grassland Strategic Nature Area' the priority habitat identified and prioritised for limestone grassland conservation, creation and enhancement. This helps to underpin the restoration vision element of this strategy.*
- Dorset Biodiversity Action Plan
- Dorset Local Geodiversity Action Plan (LGAP)
- Background papers for the Minerals Strategy: Background Paper 11 – Isle of Portland Landscape Assessment and Background Paper 12 – Isle of Portland Site Specific Landscape Assessment, available at [www.dorsetforyou.com/minerals-and-waste](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/minerals-and-waste)

### Elements of the historic environment such as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Historic Landscape Characterisation.

- 3.16 The individual settings of these features need to be considered as part of the holistic approach to restoration as well as on a case-by-case basis. Opportunities to not only conserve but also enhance the setting of these heritage assets need to be built into restoration schemes. In some cases this may generate different restoration visions which will need to be resolved through negotiation with all relevant parties. The information below provides a broad overview, details of assets relevant to specific sites will need to be drawn from the Historic Environment Record.

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<sup>19</sup> SW Nature Map produced by Biodiversity South West Partnership in 2007 to give a strategic picture to forward planners of the areas biodiversity so it can be incorporated into planning policy.

### **Historic Landscape Character Type/Commentary<sup>20</sup>**

3.17 Much of the area is essentially a medieval landscape, with large areas of open fields surviving in the southern part. Otherwise dominated by quarrying, though large areas given over to structures associated with former military use. As might be expected, stone buildings and walls.

#### **Known Archaeology:**

3.18 Intense activity here in the prehistoric and Romano-British periods. Much disturbed by e.g. quarrying in the nineteenth century, and consequently poorly recorded. We might expect good survival of complex and important archaeology in undisturbed areas. Relatively recent military and industrial archaeology also of interest.

3.19 Need to recognise the industrial archaeology present within many of the quarries – Policy PD5 of the Minerals Strategy seeks to ensure that such features are protected in restoration schemes.

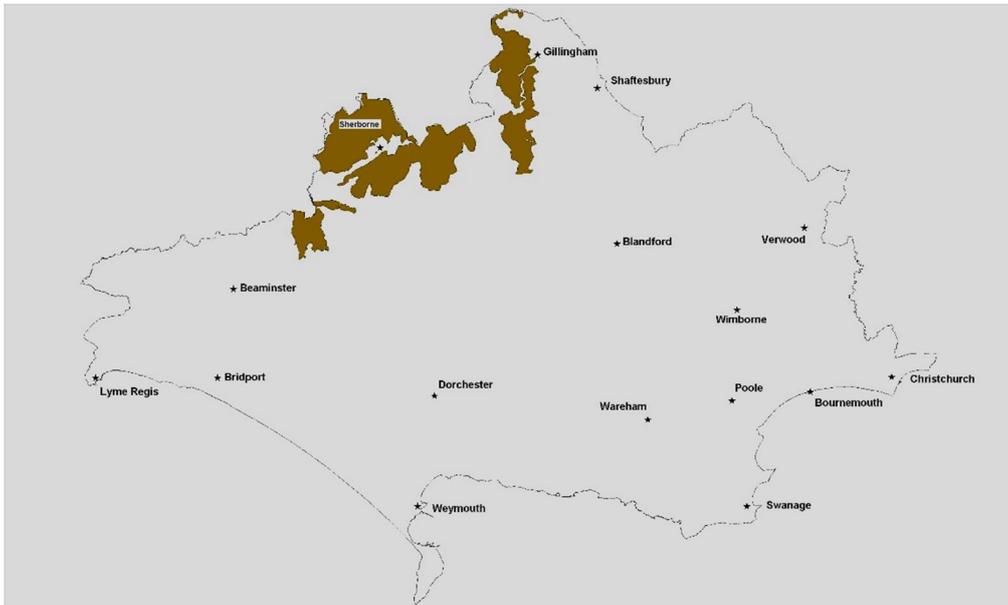
#### **Mechanisms for long term management**

3.20 Likely management to be via a range of mechanisms, including local authority, trusts and a limited amount of private agricultural business. Any suitable nature conservation sites or parts of sites may be managed by conservation trusts or via management agreements. Minerals/waste operators are strongly encouraged to consider long term land management issues in bringing forward their proposals.

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<sup>20</sup> From 'The Historic Landscape Character Assessment' pages on Dorset For You  
<http://maps.dorsetforyou.com/landscape/hlc.aspx?prevpg=home>

## RS 4: Restoration Strategy for the Limestone Hills Landscape Type



### Introduction

- 4.1 Restoration and aftercare should provide a means of conserving and where possible enhancing landscape character for the benefit of local communities, wildlife, amenity and/or recreation<sup>21</sup>. This 'landscape ecology'<sup>22</sup> based strategy provides guidance to developers, landowners, local authorities, parishes and the general public as to what the Mineral Planning Authority expects and it establishes the principles for restoration within this landscape type.

### Restoration Vision

- 4.2 A landscape which conserves and enhances existing character in this rural and tranquil part of Dorset with agriculture being the preferred after use. Final landforms must tie in with surrounding areas however there may be scope for small-scale geological exposures to be left as part of the restoration, particularly where they can be seen from public rights of way.
- 4.3 It will be important to recreate the small-scale irregular pattern of fields to help conserve the intimate scale of most of this landscape type. A key part of this will be native hedgerow and copse retention/protection and/or planting and the conservation and enhancement of existing local limestone stonewalls. The appropriate reuse/restoration of any site buildings, in particular which contribute to the agricultural after use and help conserve character, needs to be considered. Opportunities to contribute to public open space provision and/or link/extend with existing rights of way networks need to be explored.

### Context

- 4.4 The Limestone Hills landscape type is found across the north western corners of the county in three main areas; the hills around Melbury Park, the hills and ridges around Sherborne and the north south ridge between Sturminster Newton and Bourton. There are some important SSSIs and SNCIs in the area which is characterised by the use of the local limestone.

### Key Characteristics

- Varied landform due to the complex geological structure.

<sup>21</sup> Minerals Policy Statement 1: Planning & Minerals; Paragraph 19: 'take account of the opportunities for enhancing the overall quality of the environment and the wider benefits that sites may offer, including nature and geological conservation and increased public accessibility, which may be achieved by sensitive design and appropriate and timely restoration'.

<sup>22</sup> Landscape ecology relates to the study of landscape structures/patterns and ecological processes.

- Diverse scenery with mixed farmland, dense hedgerows, stonewalls, and some steep wooded slopes.
- Expansive generally open landscape but with some deep, enclosed and narrow valleys.
- Many scattered farmsteads and villages.
- Distinctive build environment patterns and building materials with the frequent use of the local limestones.
- Some key parkland landscapes and associated features.

### **Minerals Characteristics**

- Small-scale extraction of building stones.
- Inferior Oolite, Forest Marble and Cornbrash excavated and traditionally used locally.
- A lot of the sites are very small and are left open so that they can be worked again in the future when a building project demands and/or for geological value.

### **Existing value**

- 4.5 The hills around Melbury Park are within the Dorset AONB and therefore have a high value. The recreational value to the local community for informal recreation is high as the whole area is generally well served by the rights of way network. There is some historic landscape value in the areas outside of Melbury Park such as areas with strip lynchets and the ancient pattern of irregular pastures.
- 4.6 The area supports a mix of wildlife habitats and geological exposures, some of which are recognised to be of national interest. The largest outstanding feature is Melbury Park, an ancient park supporting a mosaic of unimproved grasslands, woodlands, springs and associated wetlands and an exceptional number of veteran trees. These trees support an assemblage of lichens amongst the richest in Western Europe. To the north are small but important geological exposures.

### **Landscape Sensitivity**

- 4.7 Based on existing limited desk study evidence<sup>23</sup> it is felt that overall this landscape type is visually sensitive due in particular to its elevated landform being open to views from the Clay Vales.
- 4.8 There is some evidence<sup>24</sup> to suggest that the decline of key elements of this landscape, such as hedgerow trees and in traditional forms of land management, indicates the sensitivity of this landscape to development that does not help address these issues in a positive way. The parts of this landscape type in the AONB are under parkland management which helps to ensure the survival and good management of landscape features and overall these areas are in a good and stable condition<sup>25</sup>.

### **Opportunities and constraints**

- 4.9 Maintain and enhance wooded hillsides, conserve and enhance hedgerows, stonewalls, copses and the ancient pattern of small irregular pastoral fields; seek opportunities to link in with new walls to match the existing; plant new hedgerow trees; enhance biodiversity and geodiversity e.g. by introducing low key grazing on restored fields and provide small scale geological exposures; reinforce the wooded character along slopes; protect skyline on ridges; restore/retain buildings which contribute to local character and promote use of local stone; promote agricultural after use; reinstatement of site access and/or hedgerows; enhance urban edges where possible by planting of small scale native copses and contribute to public open space/access and conservation initiatives.

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<sup>23</sup> Landscape sensitivity data carried within the desk study assessment of the building blocks of the Dorset Landscape Character Assessment; the Landscape Description Units. Diacono Associates.

<sup>24</sup> Based on the text in 'The Changing Countryside' The Blackmoor Vale & Vale of Wardour National Character Area. Natural England 1996.

<sup>25</sup> 'Conserving Character; Landscape Character Assessment and Management Guidance for the Dorset AONB' 2008.

- 4.10 Opportunities to enhance the geodiversity of Dorset can occur whenever someone digs down into the bedrock. New and old small scale quarries represent important points to access and study the underlying geology. Generally, where a rock exposure is considered important a small face should be retained during restoration. Where retaining rock face is seen as problematic a decision should be based on the relative scientific or educational value of the exposure as well as how well the stratigraphy exposed is represented at other sites. Restoration does not always have to include a retained rock face, as long as an opportunity to record the geology is provided before it is covered.
- 4.11 The Limestone Hills landscape type in Dorset tends to sit over Middle and Upper Jurassic geology. Rock units of particular interest for conservation and recording would be the Corallian, Inferior Oolite and Junction Bed.
- 4.12 The ecological, landscape and recreational value of this landscape type, highlighted above, can provide constraints to restoration proposals; building scale/location/design; site access location and lack of material to create desired landform.

### **Mitigation considerations**

- 4.13 Small scale operations in short campaigns; building form, mass, scale, design and location; bunding with shallower profiles on public sides; keep stockpiles to minimum heights and off skylines; retain and protect important hedgerows, trees and copses; management of these retained features and planting of new vegetation which will contribute to the overall restored site and enhance landscape character.

### **Contribution to other policy/project initiatives**

Relevant documents include:

- South West Nature Map<sup>26</sup>. *This landscape type covers parts of the 'Woodland Strategic Nature Area' the priority habitat identified and prioritised for woodland conservation, creation and enhancement. This helps to underpin the woodland/ copse restoration vision element of this strategy.*
- Dorset Biodiversity Action
- Dorset AONB Management Plan
- Dorset Local Geodiversity Action Plan (LGAP)

### **Elements of the historic environment such as such as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Historic Landscape Characterisation.**

- 4.14 The individual settings of these features need to be considered as part of the holistic approach to restoration as well as on a case-by-case basis. Opportunities to not only conserve but also enhance the setting of these heritage assets need to be built into restoration schemes. In some cases this may generate different restoration visions which will need to be resolved through negotiation with all relevant parties. The information below provides a broad overview, details of assets relevant to specific sites will need to be drawn from the Historic Environment Record.

### **Historic Landscape Character Type/Commentary<sup>27</sup>**

- 4.15 Generally mixed and on a smaller scale than e.g. Clay Vale, but with a greater woodland element. Piecemeal enclosure dominates, with some enclosed strip fields, particularly in the vicinity of settlements. No parliamentary enclosure, but some planned enclosure on a relatively small scale. There are large areas (particularly areas of less organised enclosure) where the character of the field boundaries suggests that they may well be surviving prehistoric or Romano-British boundaries and trackways.

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<sup>26</sup> SW Nature Map produced by Biodiversity South West Partnership in 2007 to give a strategic picture to forward planners of the areas biodiversity so it can be incorporated into planning policy.

<sup>27</sup> From 'The Historic Landscape Character Assessment' pages on Dorset For You  
<http://maps.dorsetforyou.com/landscape/hlc.aspx?prevpg=home>

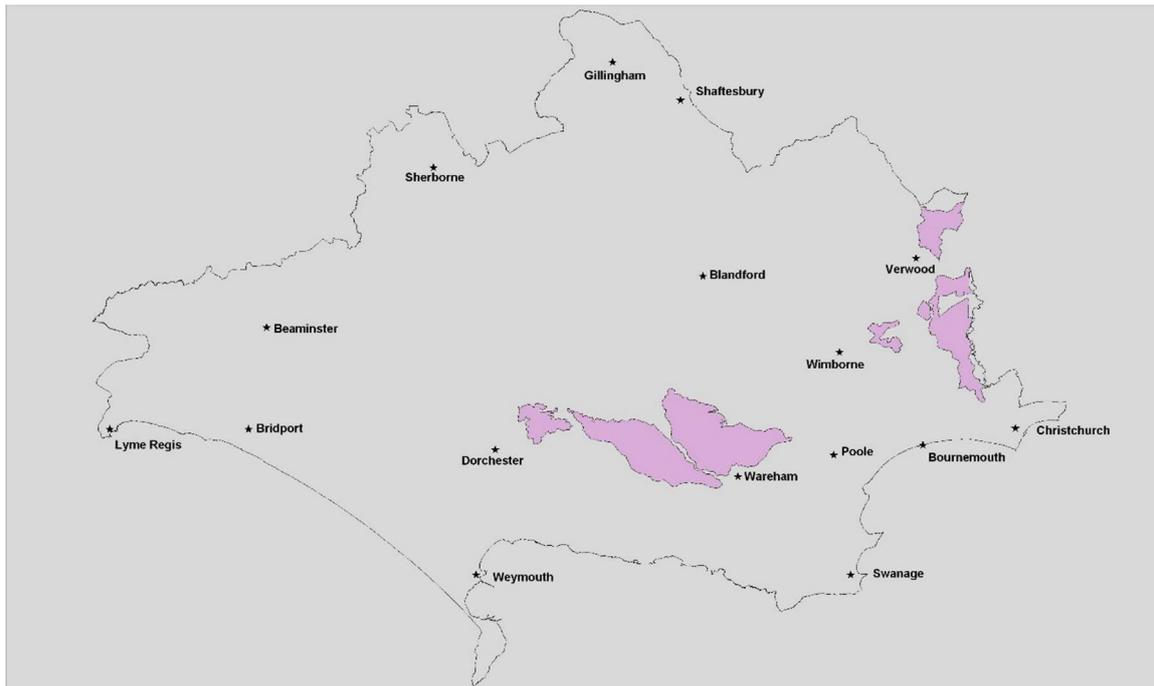
**Known Archaeology:**

4.16 Relatively little known and more survey work required.

**Mechanisms for long term management**

4.17 Likely management to be via private agricultural business but any suitable nature conservation sites or parts of sites may be managed by conservation trusts or via management agreements. Minerals/waste operators are strongly encouraged to consider long term land management issues in bringing forward their proposals.

## RS 5: Restoration Strategy for the Heath Forest Mosaic Landscape Type



### Introduction

- 5.1 Restoration and aftercare should provide a means of conserving and where possible enhancing landscape character for the benefit of local communities, wildlife, amenity and/or recreation<sup>28</sup>. This 'landscape ecology'<sup>29</sup> based strategy provides guidance to developers, landowners, local authorities, parishes and the general public as to what the Minerals & Waste Planning Authority expects and it establishes the principles for restoration within this landscape type.

### Restoration Vision

- 5.2 A flat to undulating landform where there is a need to have a multi-functional and interconnected approach to restoration to provide Green Infrastructure; including recreational, landscape, biodiversity and amenity benefits. This must be a long-term restructuring of parts of the landscape currently affected by existing and future mineral extraction and landfill.
- 5.3 All recreational activities need to divert pressure from sensitive heathland habitats. The restoration to a heathland and semi natural grassland/scrub mosaic is the key objective to link with existing heathland sites to create a large and continuous habitat managed by extensive grazing. The heathland is the key habitat in this mosaic. Protecting and managing blocks of conifer plantations, especially where they act as screens/buffers to urban/military uses, is also important. Their gradual thinning to reduce the proportion of conifers and reduce their 'hard' edges is a key part of their management. The protection, conservation and management of the dense hedgerows, especially those along narrow lanes is important.
- 5.4 A careful decision has to be made, in consultation at an early stage, as to which restored areas are primarily suitable for habitat and which are more suitable for open access green space to be used for informal recreational.

### Context

- 5.5 The Heath Forest landscape type forms part of the wider 'Poole Basin', an extensive and expansive area of former heathland on acidic and impoverished soils.

<sup>28</sup> Minerals Policy Statement 1: Planning & Minerals; Paragraph 19: 'take account of the opportunities for enhancing the overall quality of the environment and the wider benefits that sites may offer, including nature and geological conservation and increased public accessibility, which may be achieved by sensitive design and appropriate and timely restoration'.

<sup>29</sup> Landscape ecology relates to the study of landscape structures/patterns and ecological processes.

### **Key Characteristics**

- An extensive and expansive landscape with an unspoilt feel over a large proportion.
- A mosaic of heath, forest and scrub on impoverished sandy soils.
- Extensive stands of conifer plantation on former heathland sites.
- Varied landform but generally on elevated areas subdivided by a series of river valleys.
- Forms a 'buffer' between the chalk landscapes, river valleys and other heathland landscape types.
- Straight roads lined by woodland/forest/grass/scrub mosaic.
- Significant impacts created by urban development such as industrial, military use, quarrying, housing and transport corridors.
- Important open vistas from key viewpoints (including from within the AONB)
- Area popular for informal recreation activities as well as for nature conservation.

### **Mineral Characteristics**

- Predominantly deep sand, or potentially ball clay operations.
- For sand operations, restoration to a lower level is usual
- For ball clay operations, sand is extracted as overburden, this is used in restoration and creation of final landform.
- There is some shallow sand around the fringes.

### **Existing value**

- 5.6 The southern fringes of parts of the area abut the Dorset AONB which increases the value of these parts of the landscape type. The recreational value to the local community and visitors for informal recreation is high, particularly as the whole area is generally well served by the rights of way network as well as there being significant areas of open access land.
- 5.7 This landscape type supports exceptional biodiversity interest based on its internationally important heathlands. Much of the plantation forestry was established in the last century on extensive tracts of heathland between the Frome, Piddle and Sherford river valleys. Through forestry management the plantations themselves do support high numbers of breeding heathland birds such as nightjar, woodlark and Dartford Warbler, which help to sustain populations of these birds on adjacent designated heathland.
- 5.8 In addition the plantations provide a significant contribution to green infrastructure principally to the urban areas of south east Dorset. In doing so they are already providing a significant capacity to reduce recreational pressure that would otherwise, in part, be directed onto the designated heathlands. There is therefore a complex and critical interaction between the heathlands, the plantations and the recreational use of both.

### **Landscape Sensitivity**

- 5.9 Based on existing limited desk study evidence<sup>30</sup> it is felt that overall this landscape type is moderately visually sensitive. Due to past, current and future predicated forces for change and the areas' landscape sensitivities and vulnerabilities it is suggested that the key positive landscape attributes are sensitive to change. This is particularly the case where the development does not protect and manage the positive landscape attributes and does not actively plan/create new landscapes and Green Infrastructure<sup>31</sup>.
- 5.10 A particular sensitivity of this landscape type, particularly in the Wareham Forest area, is the openness to views from the elevated and well used recreational areas in the south. New development potentially would be open to views and impact negatively on character and amenity.

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<sup>30</sup> Landscape sensitivity data carried within the desk study assessment of the building blocks of the Dorset Landscape Character Assessment; the Landscape Description Units. Diacono Associates.

<sup>31</sup> The Dorset Landscape Change Strategy 2010. Based on the assessment of landscape character areas of the same type.

5.11 The Purbeck District assessment<sup>32</sup> does highlight that gravel extraction in the urban fringe does 'detract from overall condition' of the landscape.

### **Opportunities and constraints**

5.12 Reduce heathland fragmentation by landscape scale restoration to create a heath/semi natural grassland/scrub mosaic; screen/integrate urban/military uses; enhance existing straight lines & edges to conifer blocks; conserve and enhance the biodiversity value of wetlands/water courses; contribute to Green Infrastructure provision and enhance informal recreation value of areas to reduce pressure on designated habitats.

5.13 The ecological, landscape and recreational value of this landscape type, highlighted above, can provide constraints to restoration proposals; building scale/location/design; site access location; lack of material to create desired landform and suitable substrate for revegetation.

### **Mitigation considerations**

5.14 Retain trees/copses/hedgerows e.g. adjacent to properties and along lanes; management of these retained features and planting of new vegetation which will contribute to the overall restored site; building form, mass, scale, design and location; plant location/storage e.g. in lower parts of sites; bunding may be appropriate in some locations; phasing to reduce impacts on adjacent uses; ongoing phased restoration.

### **Contribution to other policy/project initiatives.**

#### **Relevant documents include:**

- South West Nature Map<sup>33</sup>. *This landscape type covers parts of the 'Heathland Strategic Nature Area' the priority habitat identified and prioritised for heathland conservation, creation and enhancement. This helps to underpin the restoration vision element of this strategy.*
- Draft South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy
- Dorset Biodiversity Action Plan
- Purbeck Heritage Strategy
- Dorset Local Geodiversity Action Plan (LGAP)

### **Elements of the historic environment such as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Historic Landscape Characterisation.**

5.15 The individual settings of these features need to be considered as part of the holistic approach to restoration as well as on a case-by-case basis. Opportunities to not only conserve but enhance the setting of these heritage assets need to be built into restoration schemes. In some cases this may generate different restoration visions which will need to be resolved through negotiation with all relevant parties. The information below provides a broad overview, details of assets relevant to specific sites will need to be drawn from the Historic Environment Record.

### **Historic Landscape Character Type/Commentary<sup>34</sup>**

5.16 Large areas of woodland, generally modern plantation, interspersed with a mixture of heathland and small-scale enclosure, particularly in the vicinity of the older (i.e. at least medieval) settlements. Some disruption from modern uses such as recreation and military use.

### **Known Archaeology:**

5.17 Relatively little known and more survey work required.

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<sup>32</sup> Purbeck District Council Landscape Character Assessment (Non AONB) 2008

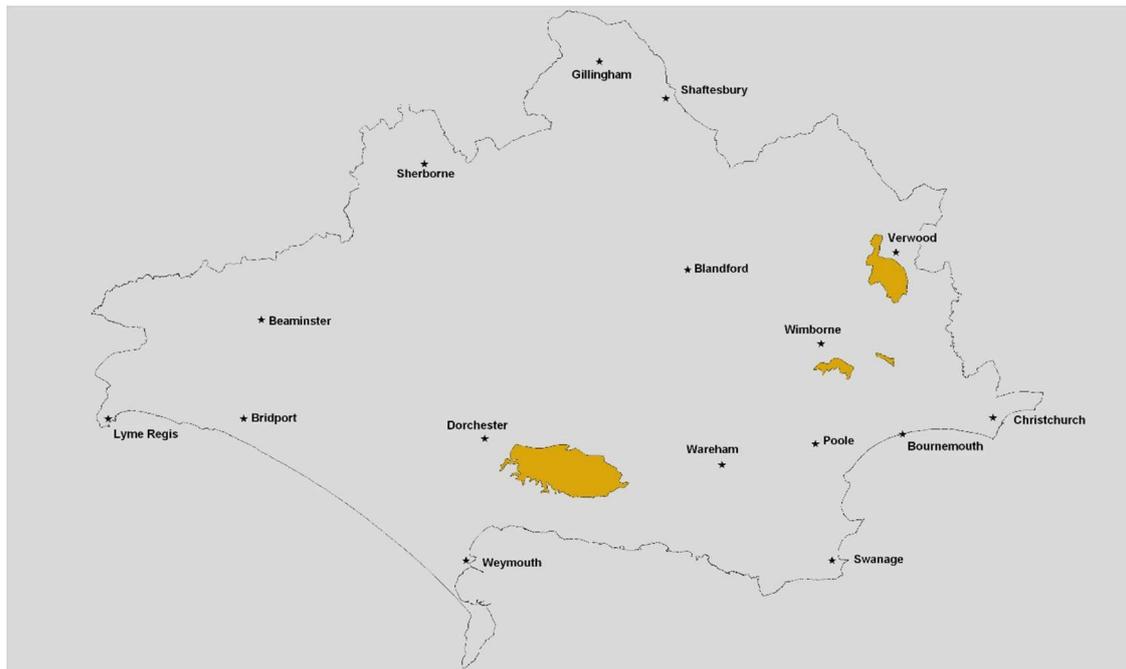
<sup>33</sup> SW Nature Map produced by Biodiversity South West Partnership in 2007 to give a strategic picture to forward planners of the areas biodiversity so it can be incorporated into planning policy.

<sup>34</sup> From 'The Historic Landscape Character Assessment' pages on Dorset For You  
<http://maps.dorsetforyou.com/landscape/hlc.aspx?prevpg=home>

**Mechanisms for long term management**

- 5.18 Likely management to be via private agricultural business but any suitable nature conservation sites or parts of sites may be managed by conservation trusts or via management agreements. Minerals/waste operators are strongly encouraged to consider long term land management issues in bringing forward their proposals.

## RS 6: Restoration Strategy for the Heath Farmland Mosaic Landscape Type



### Introduction

- 6.1 Restoration and aftercare should provide a means of conserving and where possible enhancing landscape character for the benefit of local communities, wildlife, amenity and/or recreation<sup>35</sup>. This 'landscape ecology'<sup>36</sup> based strategy provides guidance to developers, landowners, local authorities, parishes and the general public as to what the Minerals & Waste Planning Authority expects and it establishes the principles for restoration within this landscape type.

### Restoration Vision

- 6.2 A flat to undulating landform where agricultural grazing is the preferred end use. The restoration of marginal areas back to heath is a key objective particularly where this helps to reduce fragmentation of this habitat. The retention and management of existing trees, copses and woodland is an important part of the vision particularly where it helps to screen and integrate unsightly uses.
- 6.3 Grazing management of the heath and pastoral areas is a key objective to create a large and continuous habitat managed by extensive grazing. There is a need to consider a multi-functional approach to restoration to provide recreational, landscape, biodiversity and amenity benefits. All recreational activities need to divert pressure from sensitive heathland habitats. The restoration to a heathland and semi natural grassland/scrub mosaic is the key objective to link with existing heathland sites. The protection, conservation and management of the dense hedgerows especially along lanes is important.
- 6.4 A careful decision has to be made, in consultation at an early stage, as to which restored areas are primarily suitable for habitat and which are more suitable for open access green space to be used for informal recreational.

<sup>35</sup> Minerals Policy Statement 1: Planning & Minerals; Paragraph 19: 'take account of the opportunities for enhancing the overall quality of the environment and the wider benefits that sites may offer, including nature and geological conservation and increased public accessibility, which may be achieved by sensitive design and appropriate and timely restoration'.

<sup>36</sup> Landscape ecology relates to the study of landscape structures/patterns and ecological processes.

## Context

6.5 The Heath/Farmland landscape type is found largely on the fringes of the wider 'Poole Basin', an extensive area of former heathland on acidic and impoverished soils.

### Key characteristics

- Mosaic of mixed farmland, heathland and scrub which creates a patchwork landscape.
- Generally flat landform, which drains to the adjacent river basins.
- Heavily influenced and fragmented by urban and urban fringe land uses such as industrial, commercial & leisure uses as well as transport corridors, quarrying, power lines and 'horsiculture'.
- Some large areas of open heath and small fragmented pockets.
- Straight roads and lanes often lined with thick hedges.
- Mixed agriculture with some areas of estate farmland.
- Woodland and plantations create key features, which helps to integrate development.
- Winfrith Technology Centre creates an adverse visual impact

### Mineral characteristics

- This character type is mostly overlain by the sand and gravel resource block, and is characterised by past and current sand and gravel workings.
- Some potential for sand/gravel sites in this character type.

### Existing value

- 6.6 The recreational value to the local community and visitors for informal recreation is high, particularly as the whole area is generally well served by the rights of way network (The Castleman Trailway, the Frome Valley and sections of the national cycle network are found in this landscape) and there are areas of open access land. The very south western fringes of the area overlap with the Dorset AONB which increases the value of these areas.
- 6.7 This landscape type contains exceptional biodiversity interests based on the remnant fragments of lowland heathland in an otherwise agriculturally improved setting. Each sub area of this landscape type was once dominated by heathland until the end of the 19th century but the relatively flat landform and slightly more fertile soils have enabled these areas to be agriculturally improved. The Horton Common area was an extensive area of lowland heath until the 1980s. The Crossways area additionally supports high quality wetland and grassland habitats, much of it occurring within the Tadmoll Brook catchment.

### Landscape Sensitivity

- 6.8 Based on existing limited desk study evidence<sup>37</sup> it is felt that overall this landscape type has a low visually sensitive rating. This would be partly due to landform but in particular due to the value the forest elements have in screening and integrating development/uses.
- 6.9 The need to protect, strengthen and extend its semi-natural habitats, particularly areas of heathland, point to the areas' key sensitivities. However due to past, current and future predicated forces for change and the areas current condition it is suggested that there are significant opportunities to plan for a new structure in these areas. This is particularly the case where multifunctional Green Infrastructure benefits can be achieved<sup>38</sup>. The West Dorset District assessment<sup>39</sup> does identify current mineral development as a 'detrimental feature' to landscape character and the Purbeck District assessment<sup>40</sup> also highlights that gravel extraction in the urban fringe does 'detract from overall condition' of the landscape.

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<sup>37</sup> Landscape sensitivity data carried within the desk study assessment of the building blocks of the Dorset Landscape Character Assessment; the Landscape Description Units. Diacono Associates.

<sup>38</sup> The Dorset Landscape Change Strategy 2010. Based on the assessment of landscape character areas of the same type.

<sup>39</sup> West Dorset District Council Landscape Character Assessment 2009.

<sup>40</sup> Purbeck District Council Landscape Character Assessment (Non AONB) 2008

### **Opportunities and constraints**

- 6.10 Enhance the 'urban fringe' perception of these areas; reduce heathland fragmentation by landscape scale restoration to create a heath/semi natural grassland/scrub mosaic; screen/integrate urban/military uses; contribute to green infrastructure provision and enhance informal recreation/access value of areas to help reduce pressure on designated habitats.
- 6.11 The ecological, landscape and recreational value of this landscape type, highlighted above, can provide constraints to restoration proposals; building scale/location/design; site access location; lack of material to create desired landform and suitable substrate for revegetation.

### **Mitigation considerations**

- 6.12 Retain trees/copses/hedgerows e.g. adjacent to properties and along lanes; management of these retained features and planting of new vegetation which will contribute to the overall restored site; building form, mass, scale, design and location; plant location/storage e.g. in lower parts of sites; bunding may be appropriate in some locations; phasing to reduce impacts on adjacent uses and ongoing phased restoration.

### **Contribution to other policy/project initiatives**

Relevant documents include:

- South West Nature Map<sup>41</sup>. *This landscape type covers parts of the 'Heathland Strategic Nature Area' the priority habitat identified and prioritised for heathland conservation, creation and enhancement. This helps to underpin the restoration vision element of this strategy.*
- Draft South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy
- Dorset Biodiversity Action Plan
- Purbeck Heritage Strategy
- Dorset Local Geodiversity Action Plan (LGAP)

### **Elements of the historic environment such as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Historic Landscape Characterisation.**

- 6.13 The individual settings of these features need to be considered as part of the holistic approach to restoration as well as on a case-by-case basis. Opportunities to not only conserve but enhance the setting of these heritage assets need to be built into the restoration schemes. In some cases this may generate different restoration visions which will need to be resolved through negotiation with all relevant parties. The information below provides a broad overview, details of assets relevant to specific sites will need to be drawn from the Historic Environment Record.

### **Historic Landscape Character Type/Commentary<sup>42</sup>**

- 6.14 Very mixed historic landscape character. Fragments of heathland. No large-scale enclosure, with piecemeal and small areas of planned enclosure dominant, suggesting opportunistic enclosure of relatively marginal areas. Similarly marginal deciduous woodland, with some small plantations. Some enclosure of former strip fields adjacent to settlements, but on a small scale. Quarrying, on a large scale in recent years.

### **Known Archaeology:**

- 6.15 Relatively little known and more survey work required.

### **Mechanisms for long term management**

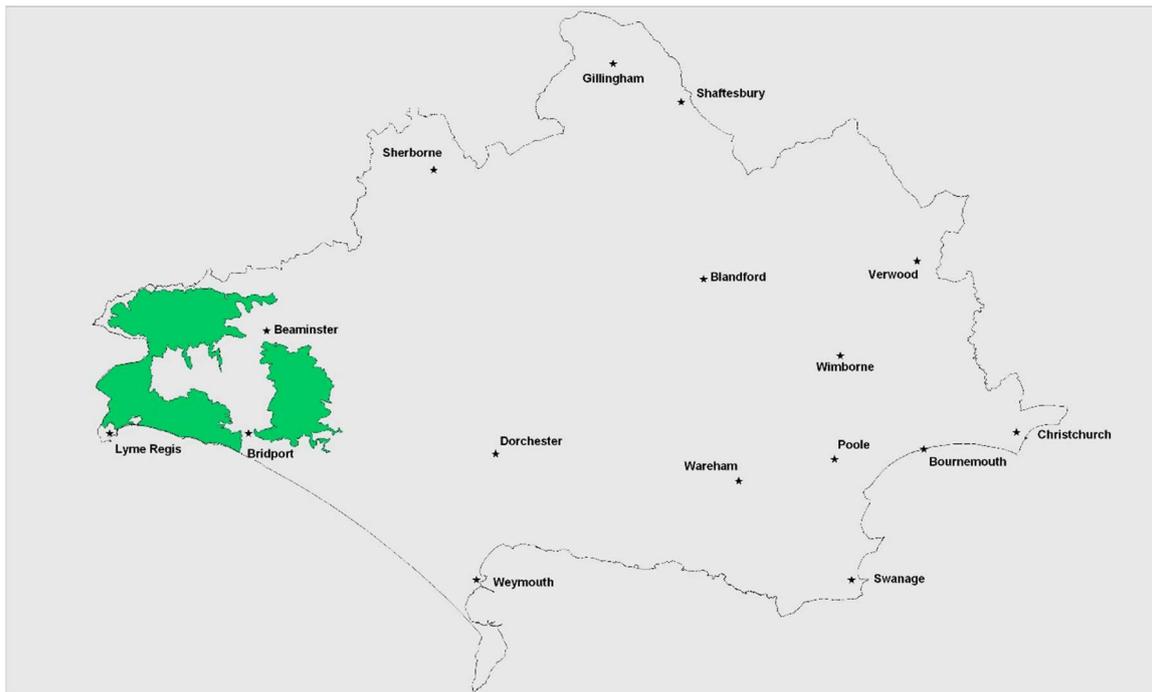
- 6.16 Likely management to be via private agricultural business but any suitable nature conservation sites or parts of sites may be managed by conservation trusts or via management agreements. Minerals/waste operators are strongly encouraged to consider long term land management issues in bringing forward their proposals.

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<sup>41</sup> SW Nature Map produced by Biodiversity South West Partnership in 2007 to give a strategic picture to forward planners of the areas biodiversity so it can be incorporated into planning policy.

<sup>42</sup> From 'The Historic Landscape Character Assessment' pages on Dorset For You  
<http://maps.dorsetforyou.com/landscape/hlc.aspx?prevpg=home>

## RS 7: Restoration Strategy for the Wooded Hills Landscape Type



### Introduction

7.1 Restoration and aftercare should provide a means of conserving and where possible enhancing landscape character for the benefit of local communities, wildlife, amenity and/or recreation<sup>43</sup>. This 'landscape ecology'<sup>44</sup> based strategy provides guidance to developers, landowners, local authorities, parishes and the general public as to what the Minerals & Waste Planning Authority expects and it establishes the principles for restoration within this landscape type.

### Restoration Vision

- 7.2 A landscape that conserves and enhances existing character in this rural and tranquil part of Dorset is key. Final landforms should generally tie in with surrounding areas but small scale geological exposures should be prevalent and agriculture is likely to be the preferred after use. Restoration should retain the landform and profiles of the conical shaped hills and it will be important to recreate the small-scale irregular pattern of fields to help conserve the intimate scale of most of this landscape type.
- 7.3 A key part of this will be native hedgerow and copse retention/protection and/or planting, the conservation and enhancement of existing local limestone stonewalls and the heathland character of the various greensand summits. Retaining the open skylines is also a key part of this vision. The appropriate reuse/restoration of any site buildings, in particular which contribute to the agricultural after use and help conserve character, needs to be considered. Opportunities to contribute to public open space provision and/or link/extend with existing rights of way networks need to be explored.

### Context

7.4 The Wooded Hills landscape type is found over a significant part of the western end of Dorset.

<sup>43</sup> Minerals Policy Statement 1: Planning & Minerals; Paragraph 19: 'take account of the opportunities for enhancing the overall quality of the environment and the wider benefits that sites may offer, including nature and geological conservation and increased public accessibility, which may be achieved by sensitive design and appropriate and timely restoration'.

<sup>44</sup> Landscape ecology relates to the study of landscape structures/patterns and ecological processes.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Very varied and undulating pastoral farmland scenery with broad rolling hills, steep greensand ridges, some steep incised valleys and a dramatic coastline.
- Wooded valley side slopes interspersed within a patchwork of fields and hedges which become more irregular and smaller scale on steeper land.
- Distinctive steep greensand summits with heathland vegetation cover.
- Many of the summits are key local landmarks.
- Distinctive and popular coastal landscape of headlands, eroding cliffs and undercliffs, landslips and small beaches.
- Narrow twisting hedge lined lanes.
- Many scattered farmsteads and small villages.

### **Minerals characteristics**

- Lower and Middle Lias Jurassic geology with Blue Lias, Charmouth Mudstone, Junction Bed and Inferior Oolite being of geological interest.
- Small scale extraction of Inferior Oolite limestone and greensand.
- Historically used for building stone.
- Many small scale sites left open and now naturally regenerated with some geological exposures or filled in.

### **Existing value**

- 7.5 The whole area lies within the Dorset AONB which increases the value of this landscape type. The area also has a high recreational value for visitors and locals being a landscape of high scenic quality and well served by quiet lanes, bridleways and paths such as the Wessex Ridgeway. The National Trust also manages a significant stretch of the coast.
- 7.6 The value and contribution of locally sourced stone to local distinctiveness is recognised in the AONB management plan. It has a high cultural and historic value with ancient field patterns, strip lynchets, hedgebanks, old villages and hillforts at Pilsdon Pen, Waddon Hill, Lewesdon Hill, Lamberts Castle, Coney's Castle and Chideock Hillfort.
- 7.7 The relatively intact landscape of the three 'blocks' that make up this landscape type holds significant biodiversity value in terms of maritime cliffs and slope, meadows and pastures, small woods and hedgerows/hedgebanks. There is considerable habitat connectivity within the type. The Mapperton/Powerstock area has exceptional wildlife value, as does the coastline from Bridport west to the county boundary.

### **Landscape Sensitivity**

- 7.8 Based on analysis of the Dorset AONB Landscape Character work<sup>45</sup> and local knowledge, it is felt that overall this landscape type is visually sensitive. This is due not only to the open views across the landscape from the many hilltops, ridgelines and along the coastline but because of the intimate, unspoilt rural character of areas between these viewpoints.
- 7.9 Based on this Dorset AONB Landscape Character work, the overall condition of the landscape is 'moderate to good and stable' with a 'strong' character assessment. This is due to its innate variety and the historic and consistent repeated patterns of natural and built landscape elements which creates a strong sense of place. This points to a range of sensitivities relating to scale, location and design of any future development.

### **Opportunities and constraints**

- 7.10 The National Trust are major landowners; maintain undeveloped character and resist intrusive developments on sensitive hillside locations; protect patterns of strip lynchets and their landscape setting e.g. by the careful consideration of new development design and positioning; conserve the ancient pattern of small irregular piecemeal enclosures, assarts and strip fields;

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<sup>45</sup> 'Conserving Character; Landscape Character Assessment and Management Guidance for the Dorset AONB' 2008.

protect the character of elevated woodlands on key ridges; promote the use of locally sourced stone.

- 7.11 Opportunities to enhance the geodiversity of Dorset can occur whenever someone digs down into the bedrock. New and old small scale quarries represent important points to access and study the underlying geology. Generally, where exposed geology is considered important a small face should be retained during restoration. Where retaining a rock face is seen as problematic a decision should be based on the relative scientific or educational value of the exposure as well as how well the stratigraphy exposed is represented at other sites. Restoration does not always have to include a retained rock face, as long as an opportunity to record the geology is provided before it is covered.
- 7.12 The Wooded Hills landscape type in Dorset tends to sit over Lower and Middle Lias Jurassic geology. Rock units of particular interest for conservation and recording would be the Blue Lias, Charmouth Mudstone, Junction Bed and Inferior Oolite.
- 7.13 The landscape, ecological and recreational value of the landscape outlined above can be a restraint to restoration proposals; building scale/location/design; site access location; narrow lanes and lack of material to create desired landform.

### **Mitigation considerations**

- 7.14 Very small scale operations in short campaigns; use of any existing farm access points; building form, mass, scale, design and location; bunding with shallower profiles on public sides; keep stockpiles to minimum heights and off skylines; retain and protect important hedgerows, trees and copses; management of these retained features and planting of new vegetation which will contribute to the overall restored site.

### **Contribution to other policy/project initiatives**

Relevant documents include:

- South West Nature Map<sup>46</sup>. *This landscape type covers parts of the 'Mosaic of Habitats Strategic Nature Area' the priority habitat identified and prioritised for a variety of conservation, creation and enhancement measures. This helps to underpin the restoration vision element of this strategy.*
- Dorset Biodiversity Action Plan
- Dorset AONB Management Plan
- Dorset Local Geodiversity Action Plan (LGAP)

### **Elements of the historic environment such as such as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Historic Landscape Characterisation.**

- 7.15 The individual settings of these features need to be considered as part of the holistic approach to restoration as well as on a case-by-case basis. Opportunities to not only conserve but also enhance the setting of these heritage assets need to be built into restoration schemes. In some cases this may generate different restoration visions which will need to be resolved through negotiation with all relevant parties. The information below provides a broad overview, details of assets relevant to specific sites will need to be drawn from the Historic Environment Record.

### **Historic Landscape Character Type/Commentary<sup>47</sup>**

- 7.16 Mixture of piecemeal enclosure, enclosure of areas of former open fields, and modern fields. Some assarting, and surviving fragments of open ground. Areas of former open fields generally larger than in e.g. Undulating River Valley. This could be evidence of more deliberate planned enclosure (by landowners, larger tenants, or organised groups of tenants) but may simply reflect

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<sup>46</sup> SW Nature Map produced by Biodiversity South West Partnership in 2007 to give a strategic picture to forward planners of the areas biodiversity so it can be incorporated into planning policy.

<sup>47</sup> From 'The Historic Landscape Character Assessment' pages on Dorset For You  
<http://maps.dorsetforyou.com/landscape/hlc.aspx?prevpg=home>

the general character of the landscape, with larger villages surrounded by larger areas of open field.

- 7.17 Scattered woodland. Some small survivals of older woodland, often coppice, and larger areas of plantation, generally fir, reflect probable twentieth-century forestry, perhaps in areas of former ancient woodland.

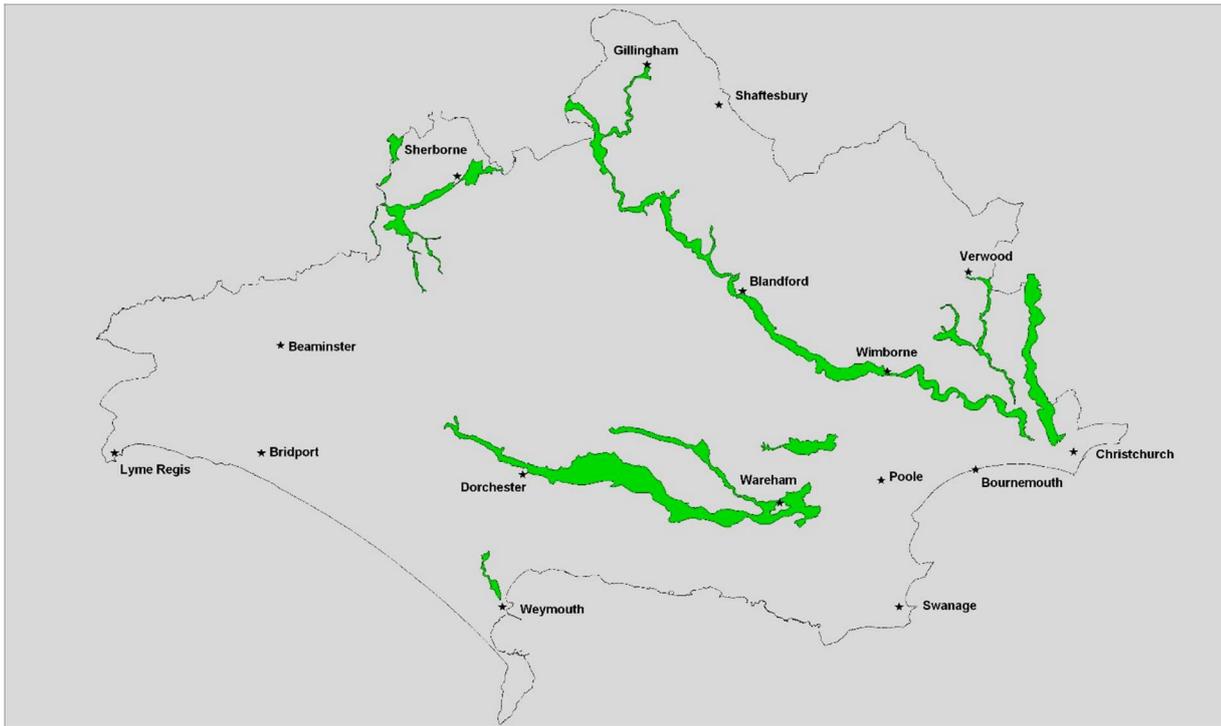
**Known Archaeology:**

- 7.18 Woodland archaeology poorly recorded in Dorset. The nature of woodland makes recognition and survey difficult. However, older areas of woodland are likely to conceal surviving earthwork features of prehistoric and later date, as well as more ephemeral features associated with the management and exploitation of the woodland itself over time. We have some records of coppice stands, veteran trees etc but they are very few. A landscape type where further research is required.

**Mechanisms for long term management**

- 7.19 Likely management to be via private agricultural business but any suitable nature conservation sites or parts of sites may be managed by conservation trusts or via management agreements. Minerals/waste operators are strongly encouraged to consider long term land management issues in bringing forward their proposals.

## RS 8: Restoration Strategy for the Valley Pastures Landscape Type



### Introduction

- 8.1 Restoration and aftercare should provide a means of conserving and where possible enhancing landscape character for the benefit of local communities, wildlife, amenity and/or recreation<sup>48</sup>. This 'landscape ecology'<sup>49</sup> based strategy provides guidance to developers, landowners, local authorities, parishes and the general public as to what the Minerals & Waste Planning Authority expects and it establishes the principles for restoration within this landscape type.

### Restoration Vision

- 8.2 A predominantly flat landform creating a multi-functional landscape where recreation and amenity are just as important as agriculture, enhanced nature conservation value and flood water management. The creation of multifunctional green infrastructure links across and along the valley, linking to adjacent centres of population is seen to be important.
- 8.3 Grazing of pastoral fields is the preferred land management and opportunities for local food production need to be explored. The main aims are to protect the positive landscape attributes of this landscape, and to manage change to improve landscape condition and overall resilience to climate change and development pressure.
- 8.4 Key features such as wet woodland, hedgerows, waterside belts of trees and historic features associated with old water meadows need to be retained, conserved and managed. Increased and improved access to an expanded river corridor with more bridging points and connectivity with existing open space and path networks is a key aim.

<sup>48</sup> Minerals Policy Statement 1: Planning & Minerals; Paragraph 19: 'take account of the opportunities for enhancing the overall quality of the environment and the wider benefits that sites may offer, including nature and geological conservation and increased public accessibility, which may be achieved by sensitive design and appropriate and timely restoration'.

<sup>49</sup> Landscape ecology relates to the study of landscape structures/patterns and ecological processes.

## Context

- 8.5 The valley pasture landscape type is found along the Stour, Frome, Piddle, Moors, Sherford, Avon and Yevo river systems based on alluvial soil deposits.

## Key Characteristics

- Flat and open valley floor landscape with distinctively meandering river channels which often floods.
- Typically a grazed pastoral landscape based on deep alluvial and gravel soils.
- Generally large fields with a mosaic of smaller fields abutting the river edges.
- Groups of riverside trees follow the watercourses creating key features along the valleys.
- Old water meadow systems, a variety of wetland habitats and features are common.
- Settlements and transport corridors follow the valley floor.
- Historic river crossings points are often over old bridges.
- The valleys provide the historic and cultural setting to many county towns.
- Widens out towards the coast and merges with the harbour side landscapes at Poole and Christchurch.

## Mineral characteristics

- Shallow sand and gravel extraction, suitable for progressive restoration to agriculture or other land-based uses.
- May be a need for the importation of inert fill to return sites to original landforms/levels

## Existing value

- 8.6 Several areas overlap or are adjacent to the Dorset and/or Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs AONB which increases the value of the landscape type. The areas have important informal recreational value being close to the major urban conurbations and often provide some access to river corridor landscapes. There is significant historic value represented by the old water meadows, old stone bridges, mills and associated features and the occasional designed parkland.
- 8.7 The nature conservation value depends on the specific river valley. The River Avon and the Avon Valley are internationally recognised for a variety of wildlife interests. The Frome and a number of the floodplain grasslands at least downstream from Dorchester are designated nationally as a chalk stream with associated habitats. The Piddle is also a chalk stream rich in biodiversity with sections of the river and adjacent habitats recognised nationally. The Stour, for the majority of its length, is less well recognised but the river and its floodplain are important wildlife corridors.

## Landscape Sensitivity

- 8.8 Based on existing limited desk study evidence<sup>50</sup> it is felt that overall this landscape type is moderate/low visually sensitive due to the generally flat landform which can reduce overlooking from close viewpoints.
- 8.9 Due to past, current and future predicated forces for change and the areas' landscape sensitivities and vulnerabilities it is suggested that the key positive landscape attributes are sensitive to change. This is particularly the case where the development does not protect and manage these positive landscape attributes. These areas also provide specific Green Infrastructure opportunities to plan for a multi-functional landscape to incorporate the recreational needs in support of nearby urban populations.<sup>51</sup>
- 8.10 In the areas of this landscape type in the AONB some hedges have been replaced by fencing and urban fringe pressures around Wareham and Dorchester and along the major roads impact

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<sup>50</sup> Landscape sensitivity data carried within the desk study assessment of the building blocks of the Dorset Landscape Character Assessment; the Landscape Description Units. Diacono Associates.

<sup>51</sup> The Dorset Landscape Change Strategy 2010. Based on the assessment of landscape character areas of the same type.

on the tranquil valley floor. Larger developments do impact on the open floodplain and tranquil quality so overall, landscape condition is judged as moderate and stable/declining<sup>52</sup>.

### **Opportunities and constraints**

- 8.11 Landscape scale restoration and enhancement; biodiversity conservation and enhancement e.g. via low key grazing, reversion of arable to pasture and wetland habitat creation/management; increased informal recreation provision; enhanced settlement edges e.g. via planting; improved access to the river corridor; open up river banks to increase width and areas of wetland; enhanced and extended existing facilities such as local nature reserves; reduce agricultural run off/diffuse pollution and consider more formal/active recreation provision in urban fringe locations where demand/deficiency exists (such as where identified in the SE Dorset Green Infrastructure studies).
- 8.12 Diffuse pollution, especially of nitrates and phosphates from agricultural fertiliser, is adversely affecting the wildlife of Poole harbour downstream of the Frome. This issue requires a landscape scale change in land management and mineral site restoration in the valley could contribute significantly to the resolution of this issue.
- 8.13 The ecological, landscape and recreational value of this landscape type can provide constraints to restoration proposals; Aerodrome safeguarding zone restricts restoration involving standing water and therefore may limit some nature conservation restoration; availability of appropriate grazing; site access location and lack of material to create desired flat landform.

### **Mitigation considerations**

- 8.14 Retention of existing key features especially where they may contribute to future green infrastructure provision; retention, protection and management of existing trees, copses and hedgerows; bunding may be appropriate in some locations e.g. adjacent to properties; keep stockpiles to minimum heights and plant location.

### **Contribution to other policy/project initiatives**

Relevant documents include:

- South West Nature Map<sup>53</sup>. *This landscape type covers parts of the 'Coastal & Floodplain grazing marsh Nature Area' the priority habitat identified and prioritised for grazing marsh conservation, creation and enhancement. This helps to underpin the restoration vision element of this strategy.*
- Dorset AONB Management Plan
- South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy
- Dorset Biodiversity Action Plan
- Purbeck Heritage Strategy
- Dorset Local Geodiversity Action Plan (LGAP)

### **Elements of the historic environment such as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Historic Landscape Characterisation.**

- 8.15 The individual settings of these features need to be considered as part of the holistic approach to restoration as well as on a case-by-case basis. Opportunities to not only conserve but also enhance the setting of these heritage assets need to be built into the restoration schemes. In some cases this may generate different restoration visions which will need to be resolved through negotiation with all relevant parties. The information below provides a broad overview, details of assets relevant to specific sites will need to be drawn from the Historic Environment Record.

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<sup>52</sup> 'Conserving Character; Landscape Character Assessment and Management Guidance for the Dorset AONB' 2008.

<sup>53</sup> SW Nature Map produced by Biodiversity South West Partnership in 2007 to give a strategic picture to forward planners of the areas biodiversity so it can be incorporated into planning policy.

**Historic Landscape Character Type/Commentary<sup>54</sup>**

8.16 Historic character tends to vary depending on local circumstances. Watermeadows predominate.

**Known Archaeology**

8.17 The history and typology of watermeadows in Dorset (the managed structures, rather than meadows near water) are poorly understood. It is difficult to say which areas are rare, significant, typical etc. Another area where research is required.

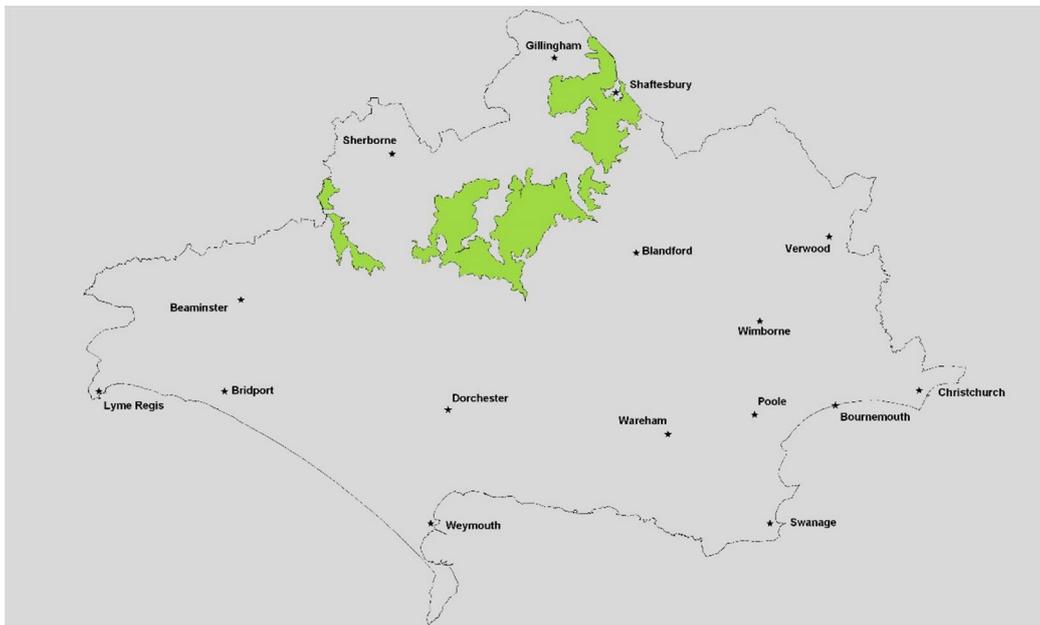
**Mechanisms for long-term management**

8.18 Likely management to be via private agricultural business but any suitable nature conservation sites or parts of sites may be managed by conservation trusts or via management agreements. Open space sites/corridors may also be jointly managed by one or more of the following or a partnership of these; local authority/voluntary organisations/charities/trusts. Minerals/waste operators are strongly encouraged to consider long term land management issues in bringing forward their proposals.

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<sup>54</sup> From 'The Historic Landscape Character Assessment' pages on Dorset For You  
<http://maps.dorsetforyou.com/landscape/hlc.aspx?prevpg=home>

## RS 9: Restoration Strategy for the Rolling Vales Landscape Type



### Introduction

- 9.1 Restoration and aftercare should provide a means of conserving and where possible enhancing landscape character for the benefit of local communities, wildlife, amenity and/or recreation<sup>55</sup>. This 'landscape ecology'<sup>56</sup> based strategy provides guidance to developers, landowners, local authorities, parishes and the general public as to what the Minerals & Waste Planning Authority expects and it establishes the principles for restoration within this landscape type.

### Restoration Vision

- 9.2 An undulating and primarily pastoral grazed landscape, within a small scale network and irregular pattern of small pastures, woodland, individual trees and dense hedgerows with a tranquil and secluded perception. Final landforms must tie in with surrounding areas however there may be scope for small-scale geological exposures to be left as part of the restoration, particularly where they can be seen from public rights of way and on the greensand parts of the area.
- 9.3 A key part of conserving the existing diverse character will be native hedgerow/hedgebank and copse retention/protection and/or planting. Small brooks, streams and damp flushes are also important to conserve and enhance. The appropriate reuse/restoration of any site buildings, in particular which contribute to the agricultural after use and help conserve character, needs to be considered.
- 9.4 Opportunities to contribute to public open space provision and/or link/extend with existing rights of way networks need to be explored where possible.

### Context

- 9.5 The Rolling Vales landscape type is found around the fringes of the Clay Vale landscape type in north Dorset.

<sup>55</sup> Minerals Policy Statement 1: Planning & Minerals; Paragraph 19: 'take account of the opportunities for enhancing the overall quality of the environment and the wider benefits that sites may offer, including nature and geological conservation and increased public accessibility, which may be achieved by sensitive design and appropriate and timely restoration'.

<sup>56</sup> Landscape ecology relates to the study of landscape structures/patterns and ecological processes.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Rolling and undulating farmland forming the transition between the clay vale and the chalk escarpment/ridge landscape types.
- Landform becomes more twisted and folded towards the foot of the escarpment.
- Subdivides the vale in the north.
- The chalk escarpment forms a distinctive backdrop to the area.
- Varied and irregular pattern of predominantly pastoral fields, copses, dense hedges and occasional arable fields.
- Many scattered farmsteads.
- Twisting hedge lined lanes with narrow verges.
- Settlements are typically located at the foot of the escarpment or on elevated slopes overlooking the vale.
- Frequent use of locally distinctive building materials such as limestone.
- Many small streams and brooks.
- A tranquil, secluded and unified landscape

### **Mineral characteristics**

- Small-scale extraction of building stones
- Forest Marble is a common local building stone
- Restoration implications; small sites left open so can be worked again, restored back to agriculture or left to regenerate.

### **Existing value**

- 9.6 The southern fringes of the area are within the Dorset AONB and the Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs AONB abuts the eastern edges of the area with a small area around Compton Abbas and Fontwell Magna being in the latter AONB. This increases the value of these parts of the landscape type. The recreational value to the local community and visitors for informal recreation is high, particularly where it links on to the Chalk Escarpment/Ridge, as the whole area is generally well served by the rights of way network.
- 9.7 From a nature conservation point of view the habitats within the Rolling Vales comprise unimproved pastures, woods, copses, hedgerows and ponds as well as green lanes. The biodiversity interests are rather fragmented as a result of agricultural intensification but a number of areas that remain are of exceptional importance being designated at international and national level.

### **Landscape Sensitivity**

- 9.8 Based on existing limited desk study evidence<sup>57</sup> it is felt that overall this landscape type is moderately visually sensitive. The undulating landform and varied land cover reduce its sensitivity but the fact it is overlooked by high ground, the Chalk Escarpment/Ridge, to the east and from other outliers of high ground within the area increase its visual sensitivity.
- 9.9 There is some evidence<sup>58</sup> to suggest that the decline of key elements of this landscape, such as hedgerow trees and in traditional forms of land management, indicates the sensitivity of this landscape to development that does not help address these issues in a positive way.

### **Opportunities and constraints**

- 9.10 To conserve and enhance the distinctive pattern of dense hedgerows/hedgebanks, small pastures, copses and small watercourses; conserve and enhance any streams, ponds and marsh areas in the escarpment foothills; new planting should reflect the existing varied visual structure of woods, copses, hedges and trees; enhance biodiversity and geodiversity e.g. by introducing low key grazing on restored fields and provide small scale geological exposures;

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<sup>57</sup> Landscape sensitivity data carried within the desk study assessment of the building blocks of the Dorset Landscape Character Assessment; the Landscape Description Units. Diacono Associates.

<sup>58</sup> Based on the text in 'The Changing Countryside' The Blackmoor Vale & Vale of Wardour National Character Area. Natural England 1996.

contribute to public open space/access and conservation initiatives and reinstatement of site access and/or hedgerows.

- 9.11 Opportunities to enhance the geodiversity of Dorset can occur whenever someone digs down into the bedrock. New and old small scale quarries represent important points to access and study the underlying geology. Generally, where a rock exposure is considered important a small face should be retained during restoration. Where retaining rock face is seen as problematic a decision should be based on the relative scientific or educational value of the exposure as well as how well the stratigraphy exposed is represented at other sites. Restoration does not always have to include a retained rock face, as long as an opportunity to record the geology is provided before it is covered.
- 9.12 The Rolling Vales landscape type in Dorset tends to sit over Upper Jurassic and Upper Cretaceous geology. Rock units are predominantly clays making retained rock faces difficult. The Kimmeridge clay in particular is noteworthy for its fossils. Proper recording of exposures is important.
- 9.13 The ecological, landscape and recreational value of this landscape type, highlighted above, can provide constraints to restoration proposals; overlooking from the Chalk escarpment; building scale/location/design; site access location and lack of material to create desired landform.

### **Mitigation considerations**

- 9.14 Small scale operations in short campaigns with very small or no overburden stockpiling; leave undeveloped margins against important streams/hedges; building form, mass, scale, design and location; plant location/storage e.g. in lower parts of sites; retain and protect important hedgerows, trees, copses and watercourses; management of these retained features and planting of new vegetation which will contribute to the overall restored site. Bunding considered inappropriate with small-scale operations in short campaigns unless close to properties.

### **Contribution to other policy/project initiatives**

Relevant documents include:

- South West Nature Map<sup>59</sup>. *This landscape type covers parts of the 'Woodland Strategic Nature Area' the priority habitat identified and prioritised for woodland conservation, creation and enhancement. This helps to underpin the woodland/ copse restoration vision element of this strategy.*
- Dorset Biodiversity Action Plan
- Dorset Local Geodiversity Action Plan (LGAP)

### **Elements of the historic environment such as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Historic Landscape Characterisation.**

- 9.15 The individual settings of these features need to be considered as part of the holistic approach to restoration as well as on a case-by-case basis. Opportunities to not only conserve but also enhance the setting of these heritage assets need to be built into the Landscape Restoration Strategies. In some cases this may generate different restoration visions which will need to be resolved through negotiation with all relevant parties. The information below provides a broad overview, details of assets relevant to specific sites will need to be drawn from the Historic Environment Record.

### **Historic Landscape Character Type/Commentary<sup>60</sup>**

- 9.16 Mixed but piecemeal enclosure and small-scale planned enclosure dominate, with some enclosed strip fields, particularly in the vicinity of settlements. A greater woodland element, with larger areas of woodland, than e.g. Limestone Hills. There are large areas (particularly areas of

<sup>59</sup> SW Nature Map produced by Biodiversity South West Partnership in 2007 to give a strategic picture to forward planners of the areas biodiversity so it can be incorporated into planning policy.

<sup>60</sup> From 'The Historic Landscape Character Assessment' pages on Dorset For You  
<http://maps.dorsetforyou.com/landscape/hlc.aspx?prevpg=home>

less organised enclosure) where the character of the field boundaries suggests that they may well be surviving prehistoric or Romano-British boundaries and trackways.

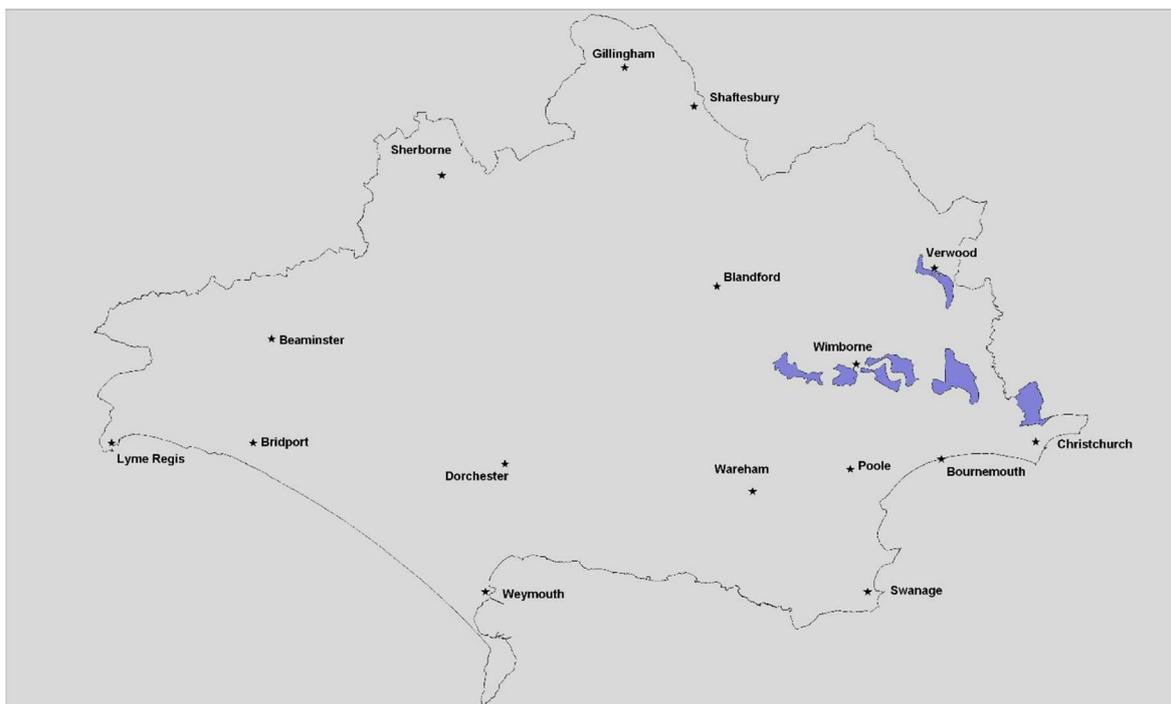
### **Known Archaeology**

9.17 There is no known archaeology information currently held.

### **Mechanisms for long term management**

9.18 Likely management to be via private agricultural business but any suitable nature conservation sites or parts of sites may be managed by conservation trusts or via management agreements. Minerals/waste operators are strongly encouraged to consider long term land management issues in bringing forward their proposals.

## RS 10: Restoration Strategy for the River Terrace Landscape Type



### Introduction

10.1 Restoration and aftercare should provide a means of conserving and where possible enhancing landscape character for the benefit of local communities, wildlife, amenity and/or recreation<sup>61</sup>. This 'landscape ecology'<sup>62</sup> based strategy provides guidance to developers, landowners, local authorities, parishes and the general public as to what the Minerals & Waste Planning Authority expects and it establishes the principles for restoration within this landscape type.

### Restoration Vision

10.2 A generally flat land form mainly restored to agricultural use but with significant space restored for informal public open space linked to footpath/cycle networks and to existing and future built development. Retained features like hedges, woodland and characteristic shelterbelts should be enhanced and linked with new similar native planting. Undisturbed margins along watercourses and/or rights of way to act as key wildlife/recreation corridors linking existing and new habitats/planting.

10.3 Opportunities to contribute a multi-functional approach to restoration and to Green Infrastructure/open space provision shall be sought where demand/deficiency highlights and where accessible to the public e.g. adjacent to roads/public rights of way. This must be a long-term restructuring of parts of the landscape currently affected by existing and future mineral extraction.

### Context

10.4 The River Terrace landscape type is found along the fringes of the Stour, Moors and Avon river valleys. The River Terrace alluvial and gravel landscape acts as a transition/physical buffer or barrier between the heathland and heath/farm/forest types and the river valley pastures.

<sup>61</sup> Minerals Policy Statement 1: Planning & Minerals; Paragraph 19: 'take account of the opportunities for enhancing the overall quality of the environment and the wider benefits that sites may offer, including nature and geological conservation and increased public accessibility, which may be achieved by sensitive design and appropriate and timely restoration'.

<sup>62</sup> Landscape ecology relates to the study of landscape structures/patterns and ecological processes.

### **Key Characteristics**

- A wide and flat landform with deep alluvial and gravel soils.
- A buffer between the heathland landscapes and the valley pastures.
- Mixed agricultural land of arable and livestock with some marginal 'urban fringe' farming.
- Fields subdivided by low hedges and or fencing.
- Scattered farmsteads across the rural parts.
- Some quiet relatively isolated areas.
- Rivers have little impact on overall character.
- Woodland blocks and shelterbelts are key features.
- Heavily influenced and impacted on by urban development including sand/gravel extraction, power lines and transport corridors and the south east Dorset conurbation.

### **Mineral characteristics**

- Shallow sand and gravel extraction, suitable for progressive restoration to agriculture or other land-based uses.
- May be a need for the importation of inert fill to return sites to original landforms/levels

### **Existing value**

- 10.5 The area is not within any protected landscape designation but large parts are in the SE Dorset Greenbelt and it acts as an important buffer between more sensitive habitats. There are a few important SSSIs and SNCIs and the area is moderately important for informal recreational access.
- 10.6 From a nature conservation point of view the majority of the area has low biodiversity interest as a result of changes to agricultural management, although the Moors River System to the north retains high value in places and is designated at a national level.

### **Landscape Sensitivity**

- 10.7 Based on existing limited desk study evidence<sup>63</sup> it is felt that overall this landscape type is low/moderate visually sensitive due to the 'urban fringe' nature of a large part of the area.
- 10.8 There is however some evidence to suggest that due to its 'openness and accessibility it is more sensitive to visual intrusion and increased noise' and 'sensitive to change that may undermine the areas agricultural and rural character'<sup>64</sup>. The importance of a strong landscape framework to help integrate future changes is also stressed in this Borough wide assessment.

### **Opportunities and constraints**

- 10.9 Major contribution towards green infrastructure provision in SE Dorset and in particular in providing multi-functional and interconnected open space and linkages in the open space/access network; habitat linkages; reducing heathland fragmentation; creation of undisturbed margins; reinstatement of site access and/or hedgerows.
- 10.10 The ecological, landscape and recreational value of this landscape type, highlighted above, can provide constraints to restoration proposals; Aerodrome safeguarding zone restricts restoration involving standing water and therefore may limit some nature conservation after uses; building scale/location/design in isolated areas; site access location and lack of material to create desired landform.

### **Mitigation considerations**

- 10.11 Retain/protect and manage shelterbelts; retain undisturbed margins and hedgerows; low level bunding may be appropriate in places; planting, especially as part of the long term restoration, to reflect existing such as shelterbelts; building form, mass, scale, design and location; keep plant/stockpiles to minimum heights and away from sensitive visual edges.

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<sup>63</sup> Landscape sensitivity data carried within the desk study assessment of the building blocks of the Dorset Landscape Character Assessment; the Landscape Description Units. Diacono Associates.

<sup>64</sup> Christchurch Borough wide Character Assessment 2003. Two River Terrace Landscape Character Areas.

### **Contribution to other policy/project initiatives**

Relevant documents include:

- South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy
- Dorset Biodiversity Action Plan
- Dorset Local Geodiversity Action Plan (LGAP)

### **Elements of the historic environment such as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Historic Landscape Characterisation.**

10.12 The individual settings of these features need to be considered as part of the holistic approach to restoration as well as on a case-by-case basis. Opportunities to not only conserve but also enhance the setting of these heritage assets need to be built into restoration schemes. In some cases this may generate different restoration visions which will need to be resolved through negotiation with all relevant parties. The information below provides a broad overview, details of assets relevant to specific sites will need to be drawn from the Historic Environment Record.

### **Historic Landscape Character Type/Commentary<sup>65</sup>**

10.13 Difficult to discern a pattern here – areas of river terrace tend to take their historic character from adjacent areas, with proximity to medieval settlement being particularly significant. Larger areas of terrace tend to have been enclosed in relatively modern times.

### **Known Archaeology**

10.14 Where archaeological work has taken place, generally in advance of gravel extraction, there can be dense prehistoric settlement, farming and industrial activity on the edges of the terrace away from the river. There could be a lot more concealed by alluvium. There is considerable potential for survival of organic material – features associated with the management and exploitation of the river, and palaeoenvironmental information.

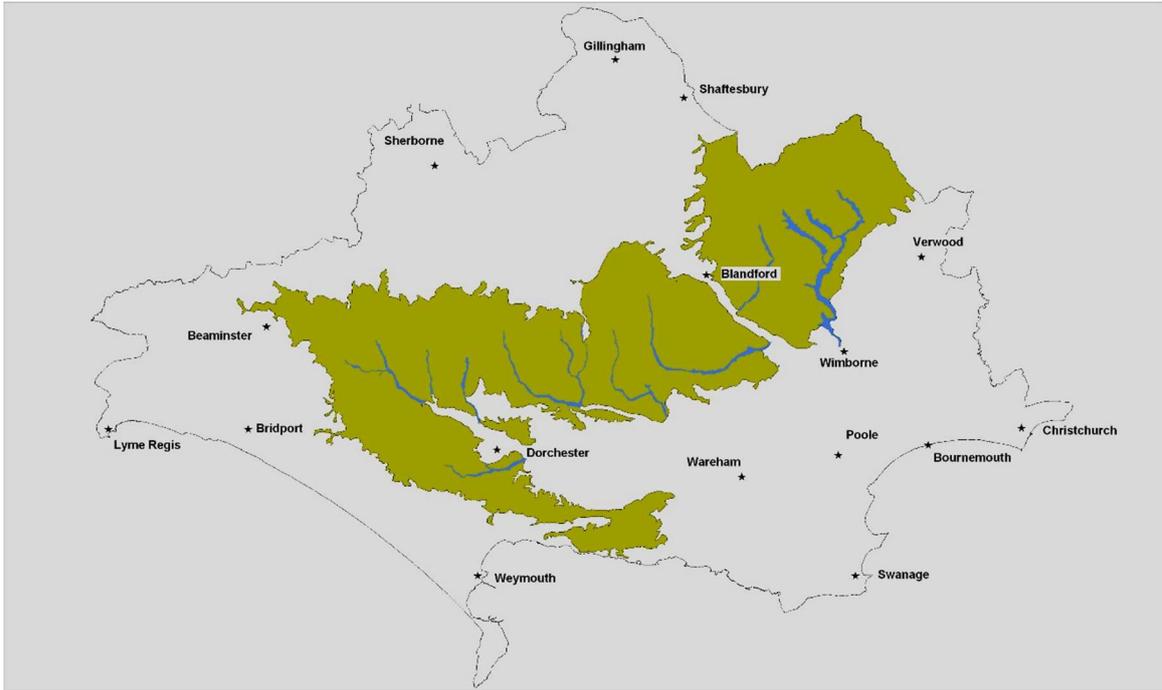
### **Mechanisms for long term management**

10.15 Likely management to be via private agricultural business but any suitable nature conservation sites or parts of sites may be managed by conservation trusts or via management agreements. Open space sites/corridors may also be joint managed by one or more of the following or a partnership of these; local authority/voluntary organisations/charities/trusts. Minerals/waste operators are strongly encouraged to consider long term land management issues in bringing forward their proposals.

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<sup>65</sup> From 'The Historic Landscape Character Assessment' pages on Dorset For You  
<http://maps.dorsetforyou.com/landscape/hlc.aspx?prevpg=home>

## RS 11: Restoration Strategy for the Chalk Valley & Downland Landscape Type



### Introduction

11.1 Restoration and aftercare should provide a means of conserving and where possible enhancing landscape character for the benefit of local communities, wildlife, amenity and/or recreation<sup>66</sup>. This 'landscape ecology'<sup>67</sup> based strategy provides guidance to developers, landowners, local authorities, parishes and the general public as to what the Minerals & Waste Planning Authority expects and it establishes the principles for restoration within this landscape type.

### Restoration Vision

11.2 A landscape that conserves and enhances the open nature of elevated locations, the key rounded and expansive skylines and the distinctive secluded chalk valleys which subdivide the downland. Final landforms should generally tie in with surrounding areas but small scale geological exposures should be prevalent and agriculture is likely to be the preferred after use.

11.3 Restoration should retain profiles of the downland and it will be important to recreate chalk grassland habitats, conserve and enhance coppice woodland, parkland landscapes and key boundary features. The appropriate reuse/restoration of any site buildings, in particular which contribute to the agricultural after use and help conserve character, needs to be considered.

11.4 Opportunities to contribute to public open space provision and/or link/extend with existing rights of way networks need to be explored.

### Context

11.5 The Chalk Valley and Downland landscape type is found in a broad belt running across the county between the heathland basin to the southeast and the vale landscapes to the northwest, forming part of the wider chalk landscape of Wessex.

<sup>66</sup> Minerals Policy Statement 1: Planning & Minerals; Paragraph 19: 'take account of the opportunities for enhancing the overall quality of the environment and the wider benefits that sites may offer, including nature and geological conservation and increased public accessibility, which may be achieved by sensitive design and appropriate and timely restoration'.

<sup>67</sup> Landscape ecology relates to the study of landscape structures/patterns and ecological processes.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Extensive and uniform area of chalk covering a large part of the county.
- Visually dominant with open views from expansive elevated areas.
- Smaller scale pattern of fields and winding ribbons of trees along the valley floors creates a more sheltered and secluded character.
- Distinctive north south aligned valleys each with its own unique character.
- Chalk streams, semi natural chalk grasslands and ancient woodland are all key habitats.
- Large arable fields subdivided by low, thin and straight hedges.
- Historic now disused water meadows are key features.
- Distinctive settlements of stone, brick and flint in linear form along the valley floors.
- Roads typically follow valley floors or on elevated ridges along old straight Roman alignments.
- Important old boundary features such as railings and walls.

### **Minerals characteristics**

- Small scale extraction of chalk with limestone and greensand along the western fringes of the area.
- Historically used for building stone and/or for agricultural purposes.
- Many small scale sites left open and now naturally regenerated with some geological exposures or filled in.

### **Existing value**

- 11.6 A large part of this landscape type lies within the Dorset AONB and a significant amount within the Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs AONB which increases its value. It has recreational value being well served by rights of ways including a number of long distance routes such as the Jubilee Trail. With traces of old water meadow, church spires, country houses and parklands, stone, brick and flint settlements this landscape has a rich cultural value and heritage. Medieval enclosures, barrows, ancient field systems, tracks, droves and hollowways and the occasional deer park also enhance its historic value.
- 11.7 The biodiversity value of this landscape is substantive but fragmented by major agricultural intensification in the 20th century and loss of woodland and hedgerows. However there remain large areas of unimproved chalk grassland throughout with concentrations to the south and east of Shaftesbury and in the chalk valleys north of Dorchester. In the far western edges of this type there is a transition from chalk to greensand and Fullers Earth where the exceptionally important habitats associated with Kingcombe are found.

### **Landscape Sensitivity**

- 11.8 Based on analysis of the Dorset AONB Landscape Character work<sup>68</sup> and local knowledge, it is felt that overall this landscape type is visually sensitive. This is due to the intimate enclosed visual character defined by the sweeping valley downland edges of each of the distinctive chalk river valleys and the visually open valley watersheds.
- 11.9 Based on this Dorset AONB Landscape Character work, the overall condition of the landscape is 'moderate to good and stable/improving' with a 'strong/medium' character assessment. This is due to the consistent and distinctive landform, the strong visual unity creating by landscape elements such as flat valley floors and dry coombes and the vernacular settlement pattern. This points to a range of sensitivities relating to scale, location and design of any future development.

### **Opportunities and constraints**

- 11.10 Conserve and enhance important boundaries, particularly parkland railings and flint walls, along the valley floors; conserve views of key landmarks; enhance coppice management; promote the planting of small oak, ash and hazel broadleaved woodlands on gentle slopes and around settlements and farmsteads to increase landscape diversity; coniferous planting and shelterbelts should not be encouraged; enhance the management of existing chalk grasslands and, where

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<sup>68</sup> 'Conserving Character; Landscape Character Assessment and Management Guidance for the Dorset AONB' 2008.

important woodland edges will not be affected (along the valley floor and settlements), encourage reversion back to chalk grassland where remaining areas could be linked up; plant new parkland trees; protect skyline on ridges; restore/retain buildings which contribute to local character and promote agricultural after use; reinstatement of site access and/or hedgerows; enhance urban edges where possible by planting of small scale native copses and contribute to public open space/access and conservation initiatives.

11.11 Opportunities to enhance the geodiversity of Dorset can occur whenever someone digs down into the bedrock. New and old small scale quarries represent important points to access and study the underlying geology. Generally, where a rock exposure is considered important a small face should be retained during restoration. Where retaining rock face is seen as problematic a decision should be based on the relative scientific or educational value of the exposure as well as how well the stratigraphy exposed is represented at other sites. Restoration does not always have to include a retained rock face, as long as an opportunity to record the geology is provided before it is covered.

11.12 The Chalk Valley & Downland landscape type in Dorset tends to sit over Chalk and upper Cretaceous geology. Rock units of particular interest for conservation and recording would be the Cennomanian, the Upper Greensand and particularly the boundary between the lower Chalk and Upper Greensand and also erosion surfaces cutting across the chalk.

11.13 The ecological, landscape and recreational value of this landscape type, highlighted above, can provide constraints to restoration proposals; building scale/location/design; site access location and lack of material to create desired landform.

### **Mitigation considerations**

11.14 Very small scale operations in short campaigns; use of any existing farm access points; building form, mass, scale, design and location; bunding with shallower profiles on public sides; keep stockpiles to minimum heights and off skylines; retain and protect important hedgerows, trees and copses; management of these retained features and planting of new vegetation which will contribute to the overall restored site.

### **Contribution to other policy/project initiatives**

Relevant documents include:

- South West Nature Map<sup>69</sup>. *This landscape type covers parts of the 'Chalk Downland Strategic Nature Area' the priority habitat identified and prioritised for chalk downland conservation, creation and enhancement. This helps to underpin this restoration vision element of this strategy.*
- Dorset Biodiversity Action Plan
- Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs AONB Management Plan
- Dorset AONB Management Plan
- Dorset Local Geodiversity Action Plan (LGAP)

### **Elements of the historic environment such as such as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Historic Landscape Characterisation.**

11.15 The individual settings of these features need to be considered as part of the holistic approach to restoration as well as on a case-by-case basis. Opportunities to not only conserve but also enhance the setting of these heritage assets need to be built into restoration schemes. In some cases this may generate different restoration visions which will need to be resolved through negotiation with all relevant parties. The information below provides a broad overview, details of assets relevant to specific sites will need to be drawn from the Historic Environment Record.

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<sup>69</sup> SW Nature Map produced by Biodiversity South West Partnership in 2007 to give a strategic picture to forward planners of the areas biodiversity so it can be incorporated into planning policy.

### **Historic Landscape Character Type/Commentary<sup>70</sup>**

11.16 Almost entirely large scale planned enclosure, with some areas of parliamentary enclosure. Predominantly large scale enclosure of areas of downland in relatively recent times. Some enclosure of areas of former open fields adjacent to villages. Some notable country houses, but with relatively minimal impact in terms of ornamental landscaping.

#### **Known Archaeology:**

11.17 Extensive prehistoric field systems with associated enclosures and settlements, and large-scale boundaries such as Bokerley Dyke. In the eastern areas there is a concentration of prehistoric ritual and ceremonial features, for example the Dorset Cursus. Roman roads – no more here than any other type, but very visible here. For example, Ackling Dyke.

11.18 There tends to be a concentration of known archaeology in these areas. This is partly because of the nature of successive agricultural activity in these areas tending to leave (until very recently) extensive areas of earthwork features undisturbed, and partly because the nature of the geology makes recognition of below-ground archaeology from aerial photographs very easy.

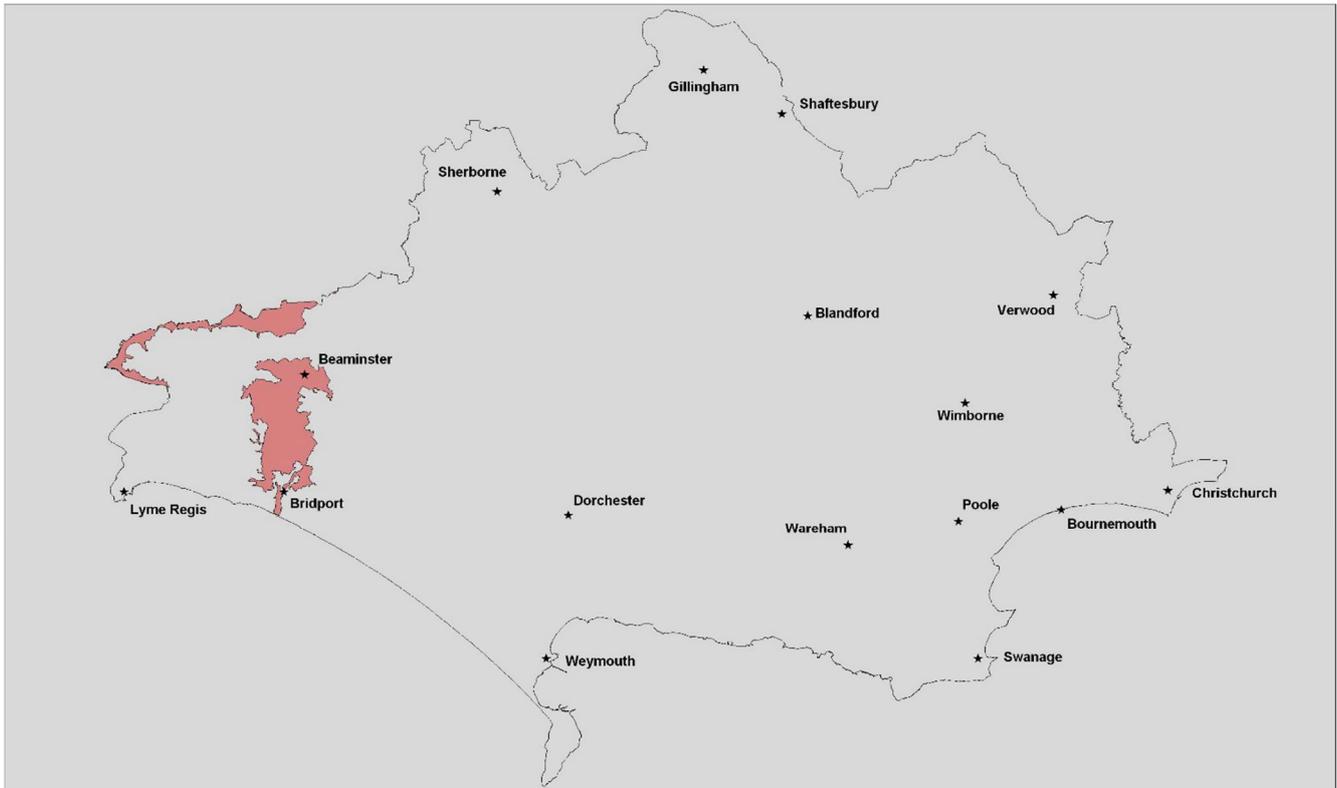
#### **Mechanisms for long term management**

11.19 Likely management to be via private agricultural business but any suitable nature conservation sites or parts of sites may be managed by conservation trusts or via management agreements. Minerals/waste operators are strongly encouraged to consider long term land management issues in bringing forward their proposals.

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<sup>70</sup> From 'The Historic Landscape Character Assessment' pages on Dorset For You  
<http://maps.dorsetforyou.com/landscape/hlc.aspx?prevpg=home>

## RS 12: Restoration Strategy for the Undulating River Valley Landscape Type



### Introduction

12.1 Restoration and aftercare should provide a means of conserving and where possible enhancing landscape character for the benefit of local communities, wildlife, amenity and/or recreation<sup>71</sup>. This 'landscape ecology'<sup>72</sup> based strategy provides guidance to developers, landowners, local authorities, parishes and the general public as to what the Minerals & Waste Planning Authority expects and it establishes the principles for restoration within this landscape type.

### Restoration Vision

- 12.2 Generally a flat valley floor landform where a grazed pastoral agricultural restoration is best suited to conserving and enhancing existing character. The conservation and enhancement of the historic pattern of small scale irregular fields where possible, wet woodlands along water courses, damp meadows, hedgerows/hedgerow trees and the retention/enhancement of footpaths, such as Liberty Trail are all key to the restoration vision.
- 12.3 The restoration and enhancement of historic parkland and/or orchard landscapes is an important consideration as is the need to buffer semi natural habitats and to reduce diffuse pollution into watercourses. Habitat creation is a key part of the restoration vision in this landscape type, considering the work carried out at the Chard Junction quarry.

### Context

12.4 The Undulating River Valley landscape type is based on the river valleys of the Brit and Axe.

<sup>71</sup> Minerals Policy Statement 1: Planning & Minerals; Paragraph 19: 'take account of the opportunities for enhancing the overall quality of the environment and the wider benefits that sites may offer, including nature and geological conservation and increased public accessibility, which may be achieved by sensitive design and appropriate and timely restoration'.

<sup>72</sup> Landscape ecology relates to the study of landscape structures/patterns and ecological processes.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Meandering flat river floodplains with rolling adjacent hills.
- Patchwork of small fields on the valley floor and a mix of arable and pasture elsewhere with trimmed hedgerows.
- Occasional woods along the valley sides.
- Historic bridging points.
- Extensive grazing marsh and reedbeds towards the coast.
- Scattered clustered settlements with golden limestone and thatch.
- Occasional orchards.
- Ribbons of wet woods and tree groups along watercourses.
- Important parkland landscapes.
- Open views along valley bottoms.

### **Mineral characteristics**

The sand and gravel deposits located along the Dorset-Somerset border within this landscape type are unusually thick, giving working depths of up to 20m.

- Restoration is therefore at a lower level. Previously this has supported a mix of agricultural grazing land, water and nature conservation areas, supported by the local wildlife trust.

### **Existing value**

- 12.5 The vast majority of the area is within the Dorset AONB which increases the value of the landscape type. The recreational value to the local community and visitors for informal recreation is high as the whole area is generally well served by the rights of way network; this includes the Brit Valley Way and sections of the Wessex Ridgeway, Jubilee and Liberty Trials.
- 12.6 Remnant 18th century parkland landscapes, old watermeadows, piecemeal enclosure, fragments of strip lynchets and some industrial heritage provides some significant historic value to the landscape.
- 12.7 From a nature conservation point of view the area comprises of a mosaic of unimproved pasture, woods and stream valleys giving rise to a generally rich area for biodiversity, although much is centred on the a suite of SNCIs rather than nationally designated areas.

### **Landscape Sensitivity**

- 12.8 Based on existing limited desk study evidence<sup>73</sup> and local knowledge, it is felt that overall this landscape type is moderately visually sensitive. This is due to the relatively intimate nature of the valley floors created by the landform and landcover, balanced by the fact that there are some long open views along the valley floors and in places from elevated valley sides.
- 12.9 Based on analysis of the Dorset AONB Landscape Character work<sup>74</sup> the overall condition of the landscape is moderate to stable/declining with a medium assessment of 'strength of character'. This points to a range of sensitivities and vulnerabilities indicating the area's overall sensitivity to further development that may detract from the key positive landscape attributes. The West Dorset District assessment<sup>75</sup> does identify current mineral development as a 'detrimental feature' to landscape character.

### **Opportunities and constraints**

- 12.10 Conservation, enhancement and extension of historical landscapes and associated features e.g. in relation to Forde Abbey; conservation and enhancement of wet woodlands, the small scale landscape pattern, the open character of parts of the valley floors, hedgerows/hedgerow trees,

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<sup>73</sup> Landscape sensitivity data carried within the desk study assessment of the building blocks of the Dorset Landscape Character Assessment; the Landscape Description Units. Diacono Associates.

<sup>74</sup> 'Conserving Character'; Landscape Character Assessment and Management Guidelines for the Dorset AONB 2008.

<sup>75</sup> West Dorset District Council Landscape Character Assessment 2009.

low impact grazed pasture, small scale copses along valley sides and orchards. The phased removal of non-native poplars and retention of orchard are also key opportunities.

12.11 The ecological, landscape and recreational value of this landscape type, highlighted above, can provide constraints to restoration proposals; overlooking from the valley sides; building scale/location/design; site access location, lack of grazing stock and the 'tradition' of arable farming along valley floors and lack of material to create desired landform.

### **Mitigation considerations**

12.12 Retention, protection and management of existing key features especially historic parkland landscapes; retention, protection and management of existing trees, copses and hedgerows; bunding may be appropriate in some locations e.g. adjacent to properties; keep stockpiles to minimum heights; plant location e.g. in lower parts of sites.

### **Contribution to other policy/project initiatives**

Relevant documents include:

- Dorset AONB Management Plan
- Dorset Biodiversity Action
- Dorset Local Geodiversity Action Plan (LGAP)

### **Elements of the historic environment such as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Historic Landscape Characterisation.**

12.13 The individual settings of these features need to be considered as part of the holistic approach to restoration as well as on a case-by-case basis. Opportunities to not only conserve but also enhance the setting of these heritage assets need to be built into restoration schemes. In some cases this may generate different restoration visions which will need to be resolved through negotiation with all relevant parties. The information below provides a broad overview, details of assets relevant to specific sites will need to be drawn from the Historic Environment Record.

### **Historic Landscape Character Type/Commentary<sup>76</sup>**

12.14 Very mixed. Enclosed land dominated by piecemeal enclosure, suggesting un-organised and opportunistic enclosure. Scattered small areas of woodland, often historically coppice, and fragments of un-enclosed land. Occasional industrial (gravel extraction) activity.

### **Known Archaeology**

12.15 In places gravel terraces means high potential for recovery of Palaeolithic finds and palaeo-environmental material (notably the Axe Valley).

### **Mechanisms for long-term management**

12.16 Likely management to be via private agricultural business but any suitable nature conservation sites or parts of sites may be managed by conservation trusts or via management agreements. Minerals/waste operators are strongly encouraged to consider long term land management issues in bringing forward their proposals.

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<sup>76</sup> From 'The Historic Landscape Character Assessment' pages on Dorset For You  
<http://maps.dorsetforyou.com/landscape/hlc.aspx?prevpg=home>