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Landscape Sensitivity to Wind and Solar Energy Development in Purbeck District

Prepared by LUC
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Contents

1 Introduction

Background and Scope

1.1 This study assesses the potential effect of wind and solar photovoltaic (PV) energy developments on landscape character in Purbeck District. It does this on the basis of the subdivision of the District into landscape character areas (LCAs) as identified in the two Landscape Character Assessments that cover the Purbeck District[1], organised within the landscape character types (LCTs) identified in the Dorset Landscape Character Assessment[2]. Studies in the same format have also been carried out for North Dorset, East Dorset and Christchurch Borough.

1.2 Wind and solar power are two of the more 'mature' forms of renewable energy which have seen considerable growth across the UK in recent years. Planning applications for both types of installation have been submitted in most Dorset Districts and several sizeable schemes have been approved, including two solar farms totalling nearly 125 hectares at Parley, Christchurch, and the four-turbine Alaska Wind Farm at East Stoke near Wareham (although this is awaiting a final decision from the Court of Appeal). The first operational solar farm in Dorset, at Park Farm, Shroton, opened in 2011 and a 60m (to tip) wind turbine at Rogershill Farm, Bere Regis, was constructed in late 2012. Councils in Dorset want to ensure that renewable energy development takes place in the most appropriate locations, and landscape sensitivity is a key element in this.

1.3 Councils in Dorset recognise that the UK has a legally binding target to generate 15% of its energy from renewable sources. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to proactively address the need to increase the use of renewable energy sources; paragraph 97 of the NPPF states:

To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy, local planning authorities should recognise the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable or low carbon sources. They should:

- *have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources;*
- *ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts;*
- *consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure the development of such sources;*
- *support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, including developments outside such areas being taken forward through neighbourhood planning; and*
- *identify opportunities where development can draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers.*

1.4 Impact on landscape is one of the major planning considerations associated with wind and solar energy so by addressing sensitivity to these things this study will form a key element of the information base for addressing adverse impacts and community concerns, and for developing a positive strategy.

1.5 The study addresses sensitivity of landscape characteristics to wind and solar PV development but also considers the extent to which those characteristics will, at a general level, affect views of that landscape. It is not an assessment of visual sensitivity since that is dependent on the nature and location of the viewers (e.g. whether they are residents of a nearby settlement, tourists or passing motorists), and as such cannot be carried out without more detailed assessment of

[1] Purbeck District Council: Draft Landscape Character Assessment (Non-AONB Areas) January 2008 and Conserving Character – Landscape Character Assessment & Management Guidelines for the Dorset AONB (2008)

[2] Prepared by Dorset Senior Landscape Officer Tony Harris subsequent to the District study – available on-line as an interactive map with associated data.

specific sites, but consideration of the way in which landscape characteristics affect views contributes to an appreciation of the likelihood of a development being considered acceptable or otherwise.

1.6 This assessment considers wind and 'field scale' solar PV developments that require planning consent (permitted development is set out in The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995[3]). It does not cover roof mounted turbines or PV panels and it does not encompass freestanding 'back garden' installations or turbines less than 15m high, which can be constructed under Permitted Development planning regulations.

1.7 The assessment of sensitivity is concerned principally with completed, operational developments, not the construction process, since the effects of construction will typically be more limited or associated with a specific development location.

1.8 Although the assessment presented in this document is limited to Purbeck District the methodology takes into consideration the effect of interrelationships with landscapes beyond the District boundary, in both Dorset and neighbouring counties.

Usage

1.9 LUC has been commissioned to undertake sensitivity assessment work for four Dorset Council areas: East Dorset District, Christchurch Borough, Purbeck District and North Dorset District. A common methodology has been employed across all four districts, but results are presented as separate reports for each Council.

1.10 It is intended that this report should:

- Provide guidance to inform the development of design proposals at the pre-application stage;
- Assist the Local Planning Authority with the EIA Screening process;
- Inform the preparation of landscape and visual impact assessments (LVIA) for proposed developments (whether or not Environmental Impact Assessment is a planning requirement);
- Assist with the determination of planning applications;
- Contribute to the evidence base used by the Local Planning Authority to inform policy.

1.11 The assessment of landscape sensitivity to wind and solar PV development presented in this report does not extend to the assessment of the capacity of any given landscape area for such development, although at a basic level it is reasonable to assume that an area in which sensitivity is judged to be lower is likely to be able to accommodate more development than one in which sensitivity is judged to be higher. The question of how much wind or solar development is too much cannot be answered by a landscape sensitivity assessment, because policy considerations beyond landscape character have a key influence on determining strategies for landscape capacity – i.e. the question of capacity might have strategic considerations beyond those of cumulative impact on landscape character. For example:

- National planning policy, guidance or targets might influence the level of wind or solar provision in an area, affecting the degree of landscape character change that might be considered acceptable by planning authorities in order to accommodate renewable energy;
- Planning authorities may decide to adopt an approach to wind or solar PV energy which focuses development in certain locations, in effect accepting that landscape character will change in these areas as a result but considering this to be preferable to a lesser degree of landscape change over a wider area. Similarly there may be certain locations in which it is decided that no wind or solar PV development (or none beyond a certain scale) will be permitted, even though in terms of landscape character the impact of a particular proposal might, if assessed, be less than in an area not subject to a 'blanket ban'.

[3] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1995/418/made/data.pdf

Landscape Sensitivity

1.12 There is currently no published method for evaluating sensitivity of different types of landscape to renewable energy developments. However, the approach taken in this study builds on current guidance published by the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage including the Landscape Character Assessment Guidance[4], Topic Paper 6 that accompanies the Guidance[5] and the Landscape Institute and IEMA's guidance for assessing landscape and visual impact[6]. More specifically the assessment methodology reflects the pilot methodology for wind turbine sensitivity assessment set out in the *Dorset Landscape Change Strategy: Pilot Methodology* produced by LUC for Dorset County Council in January 2010, and subsequent and on-going studies of a similar nature.

1.13 Paragraph 4.2 of Topic Paper 6 states that:

'Judging landscape character sensitivity requires professional judgement about the degree to which the landscape in question is robust, in that it is able to accommodate change without adverse impacts on character. This involves making decisions about whether or not significant characteristic elements of the landscape will be liable to loss... and whether important aesthetic aspects of character will be liable to change'

1.14 Two aspects to landscape sensitivity assessment can be identified from this quote: the need to consider the characteristics of the landscape in relation to the type of development proposed – i.e. the *susceptibility* of the landscape – and the need to identify characteristics which are 'significant' or 'important'. These dual aspects of sensitivity are stressed in the latest Landscape Institute and IEMA guidance.

1.15 In this study the following definition of sensitivity has been used, which is based on the principles set out in Topic Paper 6 as well as definitions used in other landscape sensitivity studies of this type:

Landscape sensitivity is the extent to which the character and quality of the landscape is susceptible to change as a result of wind energy/field-scale solar PV development.

Basis of Assessment

1.16 This assessment uses as its 'baseline' the District-level Landscape Character Assessment for non-AONB areas and the Dorset AONB Landscape Character Assessment, both published in 2008, and the County-level landscape character typologies (LCT) which were informed by District-level assessments. Reference has also been made to the Management Plans for the two AONBs which cover parts of the District[7]. All of these studies provide information on landscape characteristics and features, and also on the value which they contribute to overall character (which in some cases is reflected in landscape designations).

1.17 The study has been supported by fieldwork to verify desk-based assessment work. It does not set out to update the LCA, but it is possible that some conclusions with respect to sensitivity will reflect either a different interpretation of characteristics and their relative contribution or physical changes in the landscape which have occurred since the baseline assessments were published.

1.18 Potential effects of development on landscape character draw on LUC's experience in carrying out LVIA for specific development proposals in many part of the UK, preparing guidance on landscape sensitivity for local authorities and observing the landscape effects of operational wind and solar developments.

[4] Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002) Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland CAX 84

[5] The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2004) Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity.

[6] Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment v3 – Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (2013)

[7] The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Management Plan (2009-2014) and Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - A Framework for the Future - AONB Management Plan (2009-2014)

Limitations of the Assessment

1.19 Certain locations, either localised or covering a broader area, may be considered less suitable for development for construction or operational reasons, e.g. access roads are too small to accommodate construction traffic or location has limited wind speeds or availability of sunlight. These considerations do not form part of the sensitivity assessment and would be expected to be addressed at an early stage in the consideration of a potential development site.

1.20 There will be local variations in the balance of sensitivities which this district-level study cannot pick out but which an assessment of a specific location for proposed development would be expected to identify. Conclusions on sensitivity are generalisations, hence the approach outlined in **Section 5** below to indicate factors that would raise the typical level of sensitivity.

1.21 Although it takes into account ancient monuments or other historic landscapes where they form notable landscape features, the guidance does not cover specific cultural heritage/archaeological issues associated with individual designated heritage assets and their settings. Likewise it does not consider ecological issues associated with nature conservation designations, other proposed uses for land which might influence any development proposal (e.g. housing allocations) or technical issues relating to what might make one site more suitable than another for wind or solar PV development. These are factors that will need to be taken into account in site selection and in impact assessment work produced as part of the planning application process.

Document Structure

1.22 **Sections 2** and **3** set out the principal components of wind and solar PV energy schemes and the nature of the effects that these could have on physical landscape elements, landscape characteristics and landscape value. Consideration is also given to current development trends in these forms of renewable energy.

1.23 **Section 4** looks at the characterisation of the District's landscape in published assessments, providing the baseline information for assessment of sensitivity.

1.24 **Section 5** sets out the methodology employed to carry out and present this assessment.

1.25 **Section 6** details the criteria against which sensitivity has been assessed, including definitions of sensitivity levels and typologies used to reflect potentially differing levels of sensitivity to different scales of development.

1.26 **Section 7** presents the assessment results for Purbeck District.

1.27 **Sections 8** and **9** give brief summaries of the sensitivity findings for wind and solar PV development respectively, together with maps to illustrate sensitivity for different scales of potential development across the District.

1.28 **Sections 10** and **11** provide generic guidance, for wind and solar PV development respectively, to assist in the identification of potential development sites that minimise adverse landscape and visual impact.

2 Characteristics of Wind Energy Development

Components of Development

2.1 The key components of wind energy development are the wind turbines, which may be grouped together into a 'wind farm'.

2.2 The main visible components of a wind turbine consist of the tower, nacelle and rotor blade system. Depending on the scale and design of the turbine, the transformer may be located inside or outside the tower. The tower itself sits on a buried concrete foundation which is hidden from view.

2.3 In addition to the turbines themselves, developments typically require additional infrastructure as follows:

- Road access to the site able to accommodate Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) carrying long, heavy and wide loads (for the turbine blades and construction cranes);
- On-site access tracks able to accommodate the construction HGVs - the size of these tracks will vary with the size of turbine and will remain during the operation of the wind farm, although they can be narrowed during operation;
- A temporary construction compound and lay down area for major components;
- An area of hardstanding next to each turbine to act as a base for cranes during turbine erection (these can be removed or covered over during operation);
- Underground cables connecting the turbines (buried in trenches, often alongside tracks);
- One or more anemometer mast(s) to monitor wind direction and speed;
- A control building, to ensure that the turbine(s) are operating correctly, and a substation.

2.4 Depending on the scale of the operation and the site terrain, borrow pits may also be required to provide construction materials for the access tracks and/or to create level surfaces.

2.5 Lighting requirements depend on aviation and can be required on turbines. However, aircraft warning lights can be infra-red (IR) and therefore not visible to the naked human eye. Lighting has not been considered as part of the landscape sensitivity study, although guidance will advise that if lighting is required on turbines for aviation purposes, infra-red lighting should be used where possible to minimise visual impacts at night.

2.6 Security fencing may be required, either during construction or on an on-going basis.

2.7 The District Network Operator (DNO) is responsible for establishing a connection between the substation and the national grid. This connection is usually routed via overhead cables on poles, but may be routed underground (a more expensive option). Since these are part of a separate consenting procedure these connections are not being considered as part of the landscape sensitivity study.

Location, Size and Arrangement

2.8 As noted, in paragraph 1.6, this study is concerned with turbines which are at least 15m from base to maximum rotor tip height. The tallest on-shore turbines currently operating in the UK are c.125m to tip, although larger models are available.

2.9 Wind strength and consistency are important factors in determining the efficiency of a turbine, so more exposed locations are favoured, although installations can still be cost-effective in less optimal sites.

2.10 Spacing between wind turbines is typically between 5 and 9 times the rotor diameter, reflecting a balance between minimising capital costs (which will be greater if the site is larger) and minimising loss of efficiency as a result of the 'wind shadowing' effect of upstream turbines (which will be greater if turbines are closer together). However, separation may be as little as 3 times the rotor diameter and, conversely, much wider separation distances may be more effective on larger wind farms.

2.11 A turbine would usually be located far enough away from any residential property to avoid the phenomenon of 'shadow flicker' (see 2.19 below).

2.12 Ecological considerations play a role in the positioning of turbines; in particular they are typically located away from hedgerows to avoid risk of harm to bats (which commute or forage along such linear features).

Appearance

2.13 The majority of wind turbines consist of horizontal axis three-bladed turbines on a steel tower, as shown in **Figure 1** below. Other turbines are available including two bladed turbines and vertical axis turbines.

2.14 Turbines are typically a pale grey colour but some models have gradations in colour on the lower part of the tower, from a darker green at the base to grey further up.

2.15 The movement of a turbine is a unique feature of wind energy, setting it apart from fixed tall structures such as communications masts and electricity pylons.

Permanence

2.16 All forms of turbine are usually given planning permission for 25 years, although applications for upgrading (known as 'repowering') in order to enhance energy production (through larger and/or more efficient turbines) may take place during this period or when it due to elapse.

Figure 1: A three bladed turbine at Stowford Cross, Bradworthy, in Devon.

Effect on Existing Landscape Elements

2.17 The physical surface area required to accommodate a wind turbine will be relatively modest. The construction of turbines and associated infrastructure may result in direct loss of landscape features such as sections of hedgerow (to facilitate access) and will require land surface and land use change in the immediate area of the turbine, although beyond this the existing land use in a field containing a turbine could continue (e.g. grazing or arable cultivation).

2.18 Depending on the road network in the vicinity of a site there may also be requirements for widening, tree clearance or crown-lifting to facilitate access for construction traffic.

2.19 The phenomenon of 'shadow flicker', in which the movement of rotor blades in between the sun and a viewer within a building causes an effect akin to lights being repeatedly switched on and off, only theoretically occurs under specific conditions within a limited distance from a turbine. As such it is a specific residential amenity issue rather than a landscape character issue, and falls outside the remit of this study.

2.20 Earthworks are occasionally undertaken, e.g. to screen certain views, but the scale of this is usually limited.

2.21 A wind turbine / farm is considered a reversible development, so in theory all elements should be removed / reinstated when the site is decommissioned.

2.22 If remote grid connection works are required, these would have to be assessed as a separate development.

Effect on Landscape Characteristics

2.23 Impact on landscape character will in most circumstances relate to changes in the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of landscape character as a result of the introduction of new landscape elements, rather than to any change to or loss of existing physical landscape elements.

2.24 The most significant attribute of a wind turbine is its vertical scale. Even a small turbine is likely to be taller than any landscape element in the vicinity, and the movement that accompanies it will enhance its prominence as a landscape element.

2.25 Other aesthetic aspects of landscape character which could potentially be affected by wind development include the complexity of the landscape, pattern (in the case of wind farms rather than individual turbines) and the combination of texture, form, line, colour and balance which help to define the landscape character of an area.

2.26 Perceptual aspects of landscape character, such as peacefulness and tranquillity, typically reflect a degree of value attributed to the landscape which could be affected by the movement of a turbine and, at close quarters, by the noise it generates. Where tranquillity is associated with a lack of modern development the presence of a distinctly modern structure could also affect perceptions of tranquillity.

Effect on Landscape Value

2.27 Landscapes that have a high scenic quality may be more sensitive than landscapes of low scenic quality. This is particularly the case where the qualities of a designated landscape (e.g. an AONB or AGLV) are likely to be affected by wind energy development.

2.28 All landscapes are likely to be valued to some degree by some people. 'Special qualities' is the term used to describe the characteristics that make an AONB distinctive and valued, but landscapes that are not designated may also have valued elements or characteristics recorded in District or County landscape assessments – e.g. perceptual qualities such as tranquillity.

Development Trends in Wind Energy

2.29 The following information is taken from 'reNews', a twice-monthly renewables industry publication, in a 'special report' of October 2013:

- There were 468MW of new wind energy installations in England in 2013, compared to average of 168MW per year over the period 2008-2012, which can principally be explained by the rush to install before the 10% reduction in the Renewables Obligation subsidy rate in April 2013.
- Developer predictions for new builds in 2014 are still high (a figure of 427MW was quoted in October 2013), but industry observers are predicting that gradual decline will set in within 5 years, as space and wind resource constraints become more significant, with central and southern England seen as having the most limited capacity.
- There is uncertainty in the industry over the degree of political will for continued growth in the sector, with an increasing number of schemes called in by the Department of Communities and Local Government, but decisions so far do not reflect any trend towards decreasing acceptance of wind energy.
- There is increasing competition for grid capacity between wind and solar developments, with their uncorrelated energy generation profiles creating redundant capacity in individual connections, so it is commercially effective to combine wind and solar on one site.

2.30 **Table 1** lists the applications, screening or scoping requests in relation to wind energy developments in Purbeck District in the 18 month period to September 2013.

Table 1: Applications to Purbeck District Council in 18 months to September 2013

Wind farm	Number of turbines	Height of turbine (to tip)	Status
Godlingston Manor Farm Swanage	1 x 53kW	27.1m	EIA Screening
Bucknowle Farm Corfe Castle	1 x ?kW	22.25m	EIA Screening
Knitson Farm Swanage	1 x 15kW	20.95m	Allowed on appeal
Weston Farm Worth Matravers	1 x 10kW	18.99m	Withdrawn
Masters Pit East Stoke	1 x 500kW	102m	Consented
Alaska Wind Farm East Stoke	4 x 500kW	125m	Appeal allowed (awaiting final Court of Appeal decision)

3 Characteristics of Solar Energy Development

Components of Development

3.1 The principal component of solar PV development is panels of photovoltaic cells, encased in aluminium frames and supported by aluminium or steel stands. An individual panel is typically in the order of 1mx2m in size, but panels are grouped into 'arrays' of around 20 panels, usually in a double-row linear formation.

3.2 Grass is usually grown around and beneath the panels.

3.3 Other features of field scale solar PV may include:

- Temporary storage compounds for plant, machinery and materials during the construction phase.
- Inverters to convert the electricity from DC to AC - which may be housed within new or existing buildings and will require access tracks.
- Transformer and underground power cables to transfer the electricity to the National Grid.
- An on-site power house (usually a Portacabin with a concrete base).
- Security fencing, usually 2-2.5 metres in height, required for insurance purposes.
- Hedgerows or tree planting to screen sites.
- CCTV (such as cameras mounted on 4.5m high poles).
- Access tracks will be necessary on field scale schemes with central inverters (central inverters cannot be delivered and maintained using temporary tracks). In other instances, temporary matting can be used to bring the solar panels to a site (i.e. if a site is not accessible by existing roads or tracks).

Location, Size and Arrangement

3.4 In general, the favoured sites for PV schemes from a technical standpoint are plateau tops or gently sloping landforms, with a southerly aspect required to maximise efficiency. From a logistical standpoint, steep slopes are avoided.

3.5 The size of field-scale solar PV developments may vary considerably.

3.6 Panel arrays are positioned at a fixed angle between 20-40 degrees from the horizontal. The arrays are usually sited in parallel rows with gaps between the rows, typically 5-8m wide, to prevent shading of adjacent rows and to facilitate access.

3.7 The actual arrangement of the arrays within the landscape varies from scheme-to-scheme (i.e. regular layouts versus more varied and irregular, depending on the site situation). Generally though, layouts of the solar arrays tend to be regular.

Figure 2: solar PV development at Benbole Farm, Cornwall

3.8 Some developments contain panels that can be manually rotated several times a year to enable the arrays to track the sun and so ensure maximum capture of the sun's energy, while others feature fixed panels which are positioned to face in a southerly direction. The technology does exist to allow for automatic tracking, although this is at present much rarer. Movement due to automatic tracking is likely to be imperceptible as it will be slow.

3.9 Ground mounted panel arrays are typically set 0.6-1m above ground level, allowing the growth of vegetation beneath and between the arrays and sometimes the associated grazing of stock (usually sheep, since cattle would be more damaging to the installations and would require panels to be set further from the ground). The overall panel array height above ground level, taking into account the angle at which it is set, is usually between 2m and 3m.

Appearance

3.10 Panels are typically described as appearing dark in colour as a result of their non-reflective coating and maximised absorption of light. En-masse they tend to reflect the sky - for example, on a sunny day they can appear bluer while on a cloudy day they can appear a metallic grey. When viewed from a distance panels have sometimes been likened to poly tunnels or, depending on angle of light, to areas of standing water (i.e. reservoirs or lakes).

3.11 Whilst the spacing between rows means that a solar farm will not physically cover a whole field the degree of panel tilt means that, from most viewing angles, coverage will be dense and little will be seen of the ground surface in between rows. Similarly, unless viewed from above, it is unlikely that a whole solar PV development would be visible to the eye.

3.12 Panels may be seen from behind (back of the panels) or from the side (down the rows of frames), which will also influence how they are perceived.

3.13 The possibility of glint or glare emitting from the solar panels is a consideration in terms of the visual health and safety impacts of schemes, as specific alignments associated with a particular development proposal, e.g. a nearby road or airfield runway, might give cause for concern, but this is not addressed as a landscape character issue. Photovoltaic technology requires absorption of sunlight to allow for the conversion of energy to take place, therefore allowing little light energy to be lost, so the extent of impact on landscape character is not generally an issue above any concerns which might exist regarding the modern, man-made materials and geometric form of a solar PV installation.

Permanence

3.14 Like wind farms, solar PV developments are usually given planning permission for 25 years. The initial investment required to set up a solar farm, and its very nature as a renewable energy source, means that it would not be considered a short-term investment.

3.15 Earthworks associated with solar development are not usually major, so landscape impacts in most settings can be considered reversible. Panels do not require concrete foundations.

Figure 3: solar PV development in Muhlhausen, Germany

Figure 4: 1.25 hectare solar PV development at Five Mile Hill near Pathfinder Village, Cornwall

Figure 5: 8 hectare development at Park Farm, Shroton, North Dorset, viewed from Hambledon Hill

Effect on Existing Landscape Elements

3.16 Whilst there is some scope to utilise the space in between panels for other uses, a solar farm is likely, particularly in visual terms, to represent a change in land use. Vegetation within the site area is likely to be affected.

3.17 There may be damage to boundary features, e.g. hedgerows, to facilitate access.

3.18 Earthworks are occasionally undertaken, e.g. to screen certain views, but the scale of this is usually limited.

3.19 A solar farm is considered a reversible development, so in theory all elements should be removed / reinstated when the site is decommissioned.

3.20 Any major works associated with grid connections would have to be assessed as separate developments.

Effect on Landscape Characteristics

3.21 Solar PV development can affect the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of landscape character as a result of the introduction of new landscape elements.

3.22 The most significant aesthetic attributes of a solar PV development are its consistency of texture, form, line and colour and the rigidity of the geometric pattern created by massed arrays of panels. These can constitute a strong contrast with more natural textures and forms. These elements can, depending on the scale of development, have a significant impact on the existing landscape pattern.

3.23 Perceptual aspects of landscape character, such as a sense of rural tranquillity, typically reflect a degree of value attributed to the landscape (see below) which could be affected by the introduction of an overtly modern development such as a solar farm.

Effect on Landscape Value

3.24 Landscapes that have a high scenic quality may be more sensitive than landscapes of low scenic quality. This is particularly the case where the qualities of a designated landscape (e.g. an AONB or AGLV) are likely to be affected by solar PV energy development.

3.25 All landscapes are likely to be valued to some degree by some people. 'Special qualities' is the term used to describe the characteristics that make an AONB distinctive and valued, but landscapes that are not designated may also have valued elements or characteristics recorded in District or County landscape assessments – e.g. perceptual qualities such as tranquillity.

Development Trends in Field Scale Solar PV Energy

3.26 Solar energy development is typically seen as less controversial than large scale wind energy development, and as such it has received clearer government support over recent years than onshore wind energy. Combined with a reduction in construction costs over recent years, this has led to a significant increase in planning applications.

3.27 Reductions in subsidies in 2013 and concerns over limited capacity for new grid connections have fuelled a high level of applications in the last year or so, in particular for larger schemes (above 5MW).

3.28 The information in the table below suggests there is significant interest in creating mid-scale solar energy developments in Purbeck.

Table 2: Applications to Purbeck District Council in year to September 2013

Location	Land area (ha)	Other details
Trigon Estate Wareham	17ha	7.7MW Consented
Bottom Plain, Trigon Wareham	15.7ha	10MW Consented
Redbridge Farm Dolmans Hill, Lytchett Matravers	7ha	4.99MW Consented
Tout Hill Woolbridge	10.6ha	5MW Consented
South of Newton Farm Lytchett Minster	16.7ha	8.1MW Consented
North of Newton Farm Lytchett Minster	13.7ha	3.3MW Consented
Race Farm Lytchett Minster	14.5ha	6.2MW Consented

4 Baseline Landscape Character

Landscape Character Types and Areas

4.1 The Dorset Landscape Character Assessment subdivides the county into landscape character types (LCTs), which may occur either as one discrete area or, more commonly, as a number of separate areas.

4.2 Each LCT has a description which is subdivided into information on location, key characteristics (bullet points followed by a description), management objectives and key land management guidance notes.

4.3 The assessment of landscape character within Purbeck District is split across two separate studies, one covering that part of the District which lies within the Dorset AONB (as well as parts of other Districts covered by the designation) and one covering the non-AONB parts of the District.

4.4 The non-AONB study assesses landscape character areas (LCAs), each of which is categorised using the same or similar LCT terms as the County Assessment, although there are several cases where a LCA is split across two LCTs.

4.5 The AONB study assesses both LCTs and LCAs, subdividing the former into the latter. The LCT naming convention and boundaries used in the AONB study match those used in the County Assessment, other than that neither it nor the non-AONB study distinguishes between chalk river valley floors and their surrounding valley sides (a distinction which is made at the County LCT level although no descriptive text is provided for the Chalk River Valley Floor LCT).

4.6 Each non-AONB LCA description is subdivided into a bullet-point list of key characteristics, followed by descriptions of landscape character and condition and a bullet-point list of landscape management and development objectives.

4.7 Each AONB LCA description includes a summary, a bullet-point list of key characteristics, a detailed description (with subheadings for land shape and structure, soils and vegetation, settlement and land cover, historic character and visual character and perceptions) and an evaluation of strength of character and condition.

4.8 In order that this assessment can draw on both County LCT and District LCA baseline character data it is sometimes necessary to subdivide the LCA. The table below summarises the relationships between LCTs and LCAs and where necessary makes reference, in the 'notes' column, to any specific treatment for this landscape sensitivity assessment.

Table 3: Landscape categorisation

County LCT	District LCT	District LCAs	Notes
Limestone Plateau	Limestone Plateau	Purbeck Plateau	
Clay Valley	Clay Valley	Corfe Valley; Kimmeridge Coast	
Chalk Ridge/ Escarpment		Purbeck Ridge; South Dorset Escarpment	
Chalk Valley and Downland	Open Chalk Upland	Bloxworth/Charborough Downs; Chaldon Downs	At County level the Chaldon Downs are split between the Open Chalk Downland and Chalk Valley &

County LCT	District LCT	District LCAs	Notes
			Downland LCTs, although the Dorset AONB assessment treats the whole LCA as Open Chalk Downland
Open Chalk Downland	Open Chalk Upland	Chaldon Downs South Dorset Downs; Puddletown/Affpuddle Downs; North Bere Regis Downs; South Bere Regis Downs	At County level the Chaldon Downs are split between the Open Chalk Downland and Chalk Valley & Downland LCTs, although the Dorset AONB assessment treats the whole LCA as Open Chalk Downland At County level a small part of the South Bere Regis Downs is defined as Valley Pasture LCT and therefore assessed as part of the Mid Piddle Valley Pasture LCA.
Valley Pasture	Valley Pasture	Lower Frome Valley Pasture; Mid-Frome Valley Pasture; Mid Piddle Valley Pasture; Lower Piddle Valley Pasture; Sherford Valley Pasture; South Bere Regis Downs	The Mid Piddle Valley Pasture LCA as defined at District level includes the valley of the Bere Stream, but at County level, and therefore in this sensitivity assessment, this is categorised in the Chalk River Valley Floor LCT. The South Bere Regis Downs is mostly within the Open Chalk Downlands LCT but a small part is defined at County-level as Valley Pasture and therefore assessed as part of the Mid Piddle Valley Pasture LCA.
Chalk River Valley Floor	Valley Pasture	Mid Piddle Valley Pasture	The Mid Piddle Valley Pasture LCA as defined at District level includes the valley of the Bere Stream, a tributary which at County level is categorised in the Chalk River Valley Floor LCT. This is termed the Bere Stream Valley in this sensitivity assessment.
Ridge & Vale	Ridge & Vale	Osmington Ridge & Vale	
Rolling Wooded Pasture	Wooded Pasture	Lulworth Wooded Pasture; Rempstone Wooded Pasture; Morden/Lytchett Rolling Wooded Farmland	
Harbour/Wetland/ Lagoon	Coastal Marshland	Upton Bay Marsh	
Heath / Forest Mosaic	Lowland Heath/Forest Mosaic	Crossways/Winfrith Lowland Farmland & Heath; Bovington/Affpuddle Heath/Forest;	

County LCT	District LCT	District LCAs	Notes
		North Wareham Heath/Forest	
Lowland Heath	Lowland Heathland; Lowland Heath/Forest Mosaic	South Purbeck Heaths; Upton Heath	Upton Heath LCA is categorised as Lowland Heath/Forest Mosaic LCT in Purbeck District but as Lowland Heath LCT at County-level

4.9 **Figure 6** illustrates the LCTs and LCAs into which the Purbeck District landscape is subdivided.

Statutory Designations

4.10 All landscapes can be valued, but approximately 56% of the District is recognised by statutory designation as part of the Dorset AONB. The designation (under the provisions of the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, with further protection under The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) is for the fundamental purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty.

4.11 Paragraph 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that "*the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment*" by, amongst other things, "*protecting and enhancing valued landscapes*". Paragraph 115 identifies AONBs as being valued landscapes, stating that "*great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty*". Paragraph 116 goes on to say that "planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest".

4.12 The Dorset AONB Management Plan[8] provides descriptions of the *special qualities* identified in the original designation: the *contrast and diversity of the landscape*, the *internationally important wildlife*, the *living textbook* of geology provided by the Jurassic Coast, the *historical record of rural England* that it provides and the *inspirational nature of the landscape*.

4.13 The first of these, the contrast and diversity of the landscape, has the most bearing on the landscape's visual character. Key phrases from the description are:

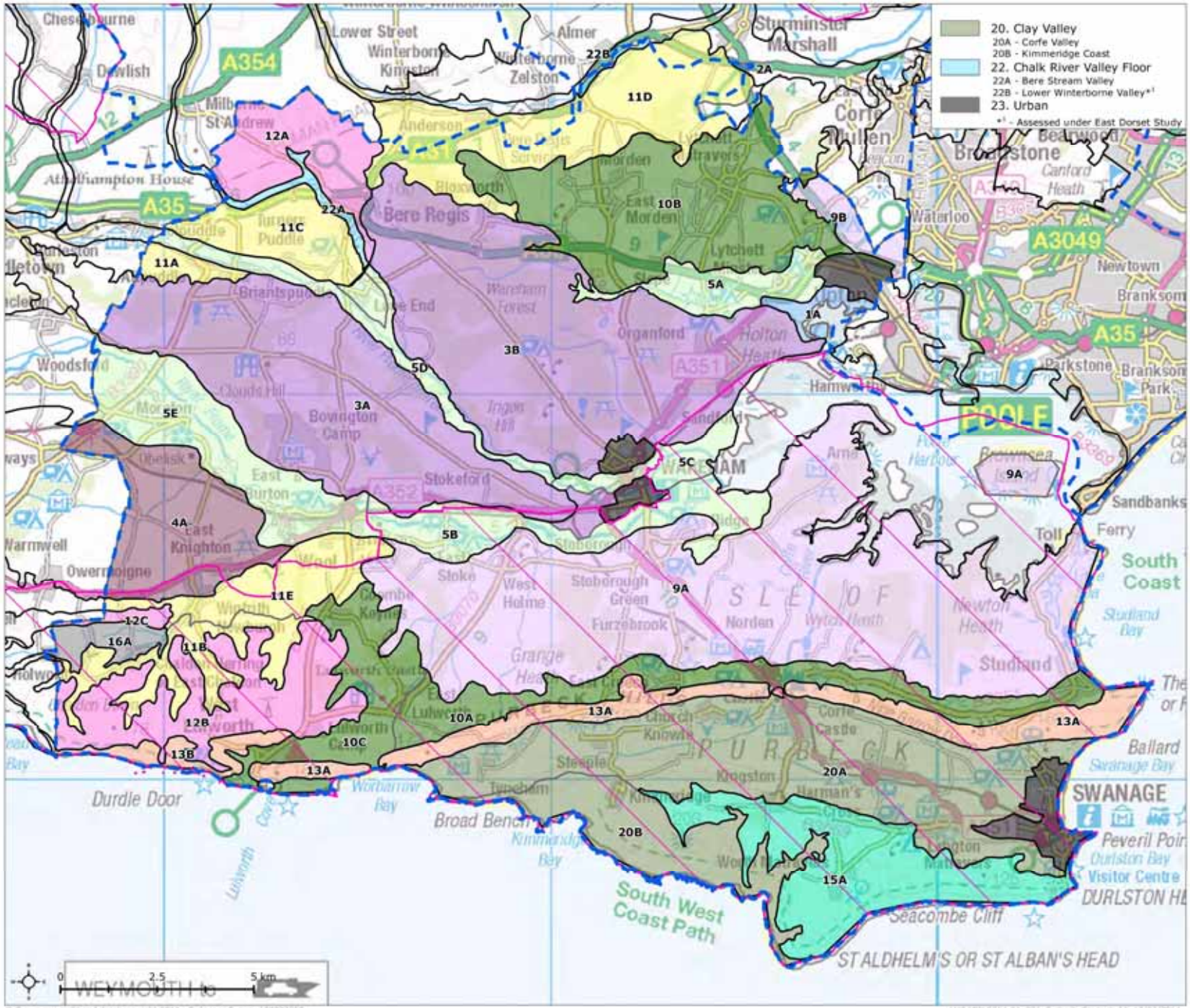
- *A collection of fine landscapes, each with its own characteristics and sense of place … often closely juxtaposed to create striking sequences of beautiful landscapes that are unique to Britain.*
- *Uninterrupted panoramic views* [from the chalk escarpments].
- *Numerous individual landmarks such as hilltop earthworks, monuments and tree clumps, that help to contribute an individuality and a sense of place at a local scale.*
- A *sense of tranquillity and remoteness.*
- *Dark night skies.*
- *An undeveloped rural character.*

4.14 With regard to cultural heritage, the AONB is described as having:

- *An unrivalled expression of the interaction of geology, human influence and natural processes in the landscape*.
- A *strong sense of continuity with the past, supporting a rich historic and built heritage.*
- *A rich legacy of cultural associations. The best known of these is Thomas Hardy, whose wonderfully evocative descriptions bring an extra dimension and depth of understanding to our appreciation of the Dorset landscape.*

4.15 AONB designations are also indicated on **Figure 6**.

[8] Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - A Framework for the Future - AONB Management Plan (2009-2014)



Purbeck Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 6

Purbeck - Landscape Character Types and Areas

- District boundaries
- LCT boundaries
- LCA boundaries
- AONB

Landscape Character Types and Areas

1. Harbour/Wetland/Lagoon
   - 1A - Upton Bay Marsh
2. River Terrace
   - 2A - Sturminster Marshall River Terrace*1
3. Heath/Forest Mosaic
   - 3A - Bovington/Affpuddle Heath/Forest
   - 3B - North Wareham Heath/Forest
4. Heath/Farmland Mosaic
   - 4A - Crossways/Winfrith Lowland Farmland & Heath
5. Valley Pasture
   - 5A - Sherford Valley Pasture
   - 5B - Frome Valley Pasture
   - 5C - Lower Piddle Valley Pasture
   - 5D - Mid Piddle Valley Pasture
   - 5E - Mid Frome Valley Pasture
9. Lowland Heathland
   - 9A - South Purbeck Heaths
   - 9B - Upton Heath
10. Rolling Wooded Pasture
    - 10A - Rempstone Wooded Pastures
    - 10B - Morden/Lytchett Rolling Wooded Farmland
    - 10C - Lulworth Wooded Pasture
11. Chalk Valley & Downland
    - 11A - Puddletown/Affpuddle Downs
    - 11B - Chaldon Downs
    - 11C - South Bere Regis Downs
    - 11D - Bloxworth/Charnborough Downs
    - 11E - South Dorset Downs
12. Open Chalk Downland
    - 12A - North Bere Regis Downs
    - 12B - Chaldon Downs
    - 12C - South Dorset Downs
13. Chalk Ridge/Escarpment
    - 13A - Purbeck Ridge
    - 13B - South Dorset Escarpment
15. Limestone Plateau
    - 15A - Purbeck Plateau
16. Ridge & Vale
    - 16A - Osmington Ridge and Vale

Map Scale @ A4: 1:140,000

LUC

Source: Purbeck District Council

5 Methodology

Components of Landscape Sensitivity

5.1 The sensitivity of a landscape will depend on the **susceptibility** of the characteristics of that landscape to change as a result of the development type in question, the extent of **contribution** of those characteristics to landscape character and the overall **value** attached to the landscape.

5.2 It is recognised that it is not the intention of the District Assessment to attribute relative levels of value to different character areas. This approach is in keeping with LCA guidance[9], which recognises that all landscapes are valued to some extent by some people, but LVIA guidance[10] recognises that there are differences in value which will affect sensitivity, so some consideration of value is therefore required.

5.3 The methodology outlined below presents a systematic approach to assessing sensitivity, making judgements as objectively as possible.

Sensitivity Assessment Process

5.4 **Section 6** defines sets of **assessment criteria** relating to wind and solar PV energy development. The criteria are the same for both development types, but the definitions of relative levels of susceptibility vary. The definitions for each sensitivity criterion include examples to illustrate five different levels of sensitivity (see **Table 4**).

5.5 The level of impact on landscape character resulting from a development will clearly depend to an extent on the scale of the proposed development so it is necessary to consider different scenarios. These take account of the variable characteristics of each development type which are most likely to have an effect on landscape character. **Section 6** therefore also defines the different **scales of development** for wind and solar PV energy that have been used in this study.

5.6 **Section 7** sets out the **assessment of sensitivity to wind and solar PV energy development**. This is presented at the generic Landscape Type (LCT) level, with detailed information presented for constituent Landscape Character Areas (LCA).

5.7 Landscape Character Type assessments:

- The County-level LCT summaries are studied to identify characteristics which reflect **susceptibility** to change as a result of wind or solar PV development as defined in the assessment criteria;
- Any designations which indicate landscape value, and any characteristics or sensitivities identified in the LCT summary which reflect aspects of landscape **value**, are noted. The landscape typologies provide guidance on management objectives which gives a clear indication of value through the identification of elements to conserve, protect or restore. The latest LVIA guidance suggests a number of factors which can be used to identify the value of landscapes (see definitions in **Figure 7** below);
- Comments are made on the 'typical' sensitivity within the LCT, weighing up the relative **contribution** of different characteristics and taking into consideration any aspects of landscape **value** which would affect the judgements.

5.8 Landscape Character Area assessments:

[9] Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002) Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland CAX 84

[10] Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment v3 (2013) – Landscape Institute and IEMA

- The above steps are repeated for each LCA represented within the LCT, making reference to the published landscape character assessment and, where applicable, any landscape character information provided in AONB management plans or AGLV Supplementary Planning Guidance;
- An assessment of the LCA's sensitivity, represented by a rating on a five-point scale (defined in **Table 3** below), is made for each combination of the defined **scales of development** for each development type. Consideration is given to any characteristics or features which would elevate the typical level of sensitivity within each LCA.

5.9 Presentation of the landscape sensitivity assessment results:

- **Sections 8** and **9** comprise brief summaries of the assessment findings for wind and solar PV energy respectively, followed by maps illustrating sensitivity ratings across the district for each development scale category. AONB and AGLV boundaries are also shown.
- In addition to the assessment of sensitivity by LCA/LCT a generic check list is provided, in **Section 10** for wind energy and **Section 11** for solar PV, to assist potential developers in the consideration of the sensitivity of a specific site.

Table 4: Sensitivity definitions

Sensitivity Level	Definition
High	Key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are highly vulnerable to change from the development type. Such development is likely to result in a significant change in character.
Moderate-high	Key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are vulnerable to change from the development type. There may be some limited opportunity to accommodate the development type without significantly changing landscape character. Great care would be needed in locating development.
Moderate	Some of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are vulnerable to change from the development type. Although the landscape may have some ability to absorb development, it is likely to cause a degree of change in character. Care would be needed in locating development.
Moderate-low	Fewer of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are vulnerable to change from the development type. The landscape is likely to be able to accommodate development with limited change in character. Care is needed when locating development to avoid adversely affecting key characteristics.
Low	Key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are unlikely to be adversely affected by introduction of the development type. The landscape is likely to be able to accommodate development without a significant change in character. Care is needed when locating development to ensure best fit with the landscape.

Range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes

- **Landscape quality (condition)**: A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements.
- **Scenic quality**: The term used to describe landscapes that appeal primarily to the senses (primarily but not wholly the visual senses).
- **Rarity**: The presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or the presence of a rare Landscape Character Type.
- **Representativeness**: Whether the landscape contains a particular character and/or features or elements which are considered particularly important examples.
- **Conservation interests**: The presence of features of wildlife, earth science or archaeological or historical and cultural interest can add to the value of the landscape as well as having value in their own right.
- **Recreation value**: Evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important.
- **Perceptual aspects**: A landscape may be valued for its perceptual qualities, notably wildness and/or tranquillity.
- **Associations**: Some landscapes are associated with particular people, such as artists or writers, or event in history that contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area.

Figure 7: Aspects of landscape value (from Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment v3)

6 Criteria for Assessment of Sensitivity

Criteria for Assessment of Sensitivity to Wind Energy Development

6.1 **Table 5** identifies landscape characteristics which could potentially be affected by wind development, and gives examples of physical landscape elements which, by exhibiting these characteristics, might suggest a greater susceptibility to character change.

Table 5: Landscape characteristics and their susceptibility to wind energy development

Scale and complexity of landform				
A smooth gently sloping or flat landform is likely to be less sensitive to wind energy development than a landscape with a dramatic rugged landform, distinct landform features (including prominent headlands and cliffs) or pronounced undulations. Larger scale landforms are likely to be less sensitive than smaller scale landforms - because turbines may appear out of scale, detract from visually important landforms or appear visually confusing (due to turbines being at varying heights) in the latter types of landscapes. Information sources: Landscape Character Assessment, Ordnance Survey maps; fieldwork.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		⟷		**Higher sensitivity**
e.g. an extensive lowland flat landscape or elevated plateau, often a larger scale landform	e.g. a simple gently rolling landscape, likely to be a medium-large scale landform	e.g. an undulating landscape, perhaps also incised by valleys, likely to be a medium scale landform	e.g.a landscape with distinct landform features, and/or irregular in topographic appearance (which may be large in scale), or a smaller scale landform	e.g. a landscape with a rugged landform or dramatic landform features (which may be large in scale), or a small scale or intimate landform

Scale and complexity of land use & field pattern				
Simple, regular landscapes with extensive areas of consistent ground cover are likely to be less sensitive to wind energy development than landscapes with more complex or irregular land cover patterns, smaller and / or irregular field sizes and landscapes with frequent human scale features that are traditional of the landscape, such as stone farmsteads and small farm woodlands [11]. This is because large features such as wind turbines may dominate smaller scale traditional features within the landscape. Information sources: Landscape Character Assessment, Ordnance Survey maps; Google Earth (aerial photography); fieldwork.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		⟷		**Higher sensitivity**
e.g. a very large-scale landscape with uniform groundcover and lacking in human scale features	e.g. a landscape with large-scale fields, little variety in land cover and occasional human scale features such as trees and domestic buildings	e.g. a landscape with medium sized fields, some variations in land cover and presence of human scale features such as trees, domestic buildings	e.g.a landscape with irregular small-scale fields, variety in land cover and presence of human scale features such as trees, domestic buildings	e.g. a landscape with a strong variety in land cover and small-scale / irregular in appearance containing numerous human scale features
Visual exposure				
The relative visibility of a landscape or distinctive elements within it, both from within the character area and in relation to other character areas, will influence its sensitivity. An open, elevated landscape such as a hill range or escarpment, which permits panoramic views and is also widely visible from surrounding landscapes, may be more sensitive than a more enclosed, inward-looking landscape, where turbines are more likely to be screened by vegetation and/or topography. Landscapes which have important visual relationships with other areas, for example where one area provides a skyline backdrop to a neighbouring area, are considered more sensitive than those with less important visual relationships. The sensitivity of the related landscapes will also affect the importance of visual exposure: a character area will for example be more sensitive if it forms part of the setting of a designated landscape (e.g. an AONB), and if the character area itself also has high scenic quality then its sensitivity will be further magnified. Visual sensitivities may also relate to specific landscape features, such as a prominent ancient monument. Information sources: Landscape Character Assessment, fieldwork.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		⟷		**Higher sensitivity**
e.g. An enclosed, self-contained landscape, or one with weak connections to neighbouring areas, and/or where related landscapes are of lower sensitivity	e.g. A landscape with limited connections to neighbouring areas, and/or where related landscapes are of low or medium sensitivity	e.g. A landscape which has some relationship with neighbouring areas, and/or where related landscapes are of medium sensitivity	e.g. A landscape which is intervisible with several related areas, and/or where related landscapes are of medium or higher sensitivity	e.g. A landscape which has important relationships with one or more neighbouring areas, and/or where related landscapes are of high sensitivity

[11] Human scale features are aspects of land cover such as stone walls, hedges, buildings which give a 'human scale' to the landscape

Development and activity				
Landscapes that are relatively remote or tranquil tend to be more sensitive to wind energy development, since turbines may be perceived as intrusive. Landscapes which are relatively free from overt human activity and disturbance, and which have a perceived naturalness, or a strong feel of traditional rurality, or are dominated by historic rather than modern buildings, will therefore be more sensitive. Wind turbines will generally be less intrusive in landscapes which are strongly influenced by modern development, including settlement, industrial and commercial development and infrastructure. Information sources: Landscape Character Assessment, Ordnance Survey maps, fieldwork.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		⟷		**Higher sensitivity**
e.g. a landscape with much human activity and development, such as industrial areas	e.g. a rural or semi-rural landscape with much human activity and dispersed modern development, such as settlement fringes	e.g. a rural landscape with some modern development and human activity, such as intensive farmland	e.g. a more naturalistic landscape and/or one with little modern human influence and development	e.g. a tranquil landscape with little or no overt sign of modern human activity and development

Wind Energy Development Typologies

6.2 For the purposes of presenting the assessment, the following wind turbine height categories are defined:

- 15-35 metres to blade tip;
- 36-65 metres to blade tip;
- 66-99 metres to blade tip;
- Over 99 metres to blade tip.

6.3 The following cluster size categories are also defined:

- A single turbine;
- 2-4 turbines;
- More than 4 turbines.

6.4 These typologies have been defined with reference to the spread of turbine sizes available, the sizes of turbines already operational in the County, the range of sizes for which planning applications or pre-application requests have been made and a general assessment of sensitivity of the Dorset landscape.

6.5 In order to visualise how these different turbine heights relate to other tall structures, **Table 6** and **Figure 8** below set out the heights of features including some well-known landmarks and existing wind energy developments in the County:

Table 6: Tall structures comparison

Structure	Height
Domestic buildings	6-10m
Mature deciduous trees (depending on species)	10-25m
Charborough Tower	30m
Horton Tower, near Chalbury Common	43m
Standard lattice tower 'pylons'	25-50m
Sealife Tower, Weymouth	53m
Rogershill Farm turbine, near Bere Regis	60m (to tip)
Salisbury Cathedral	123m

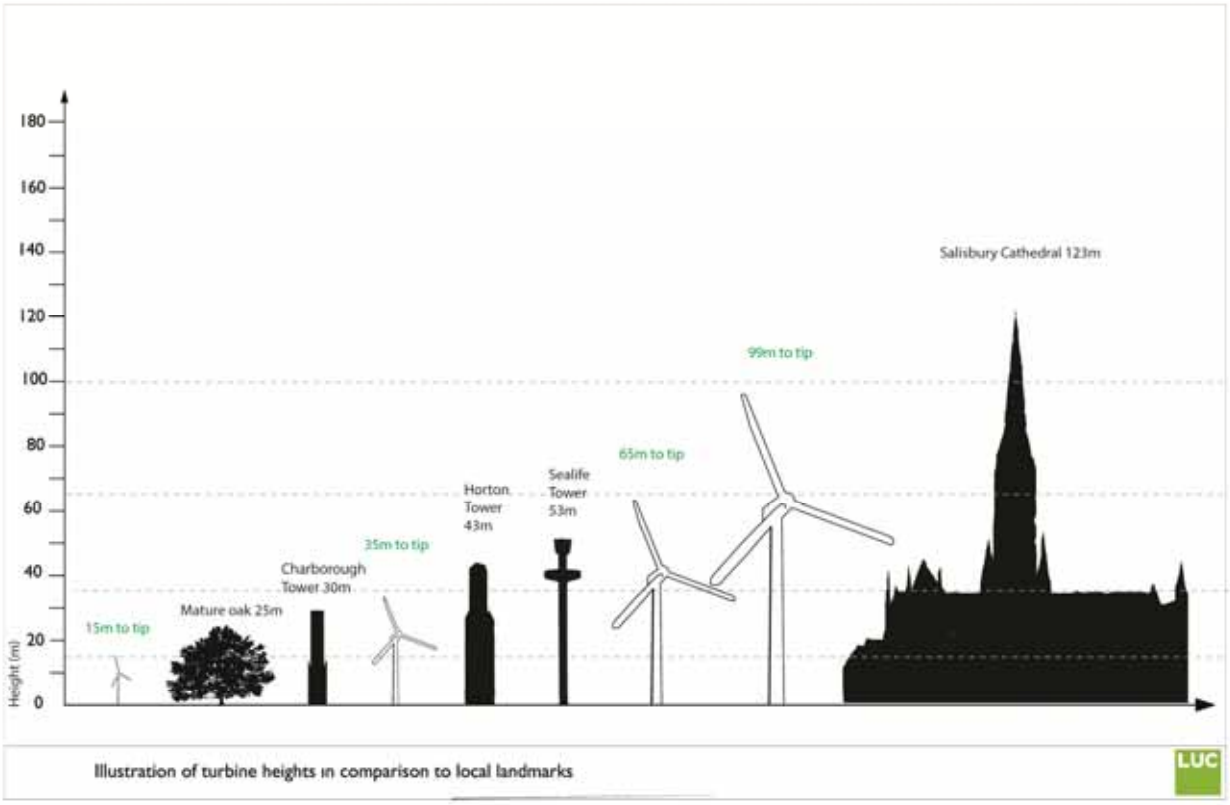


Figure 8: Tall structures comparison

Criteria for Assessment of Sensitivity to Solar PV Development

6.6 **Table 7** below identifies landscape characteristics which could potentially be affected by solar PV development, and gives examples of physical landscape elements which, by exhibiting these characteristics, might suggest a greater susceptibility to character change.

Table 7: Landscape characteristics and their susceptibility to solar PV development

Scale and complexity of landform				
Arrays of solar panels will be less easily perceived in a flatter landscape than on a sloping one, and will also stand out less if the landform is even rather than undulating. A landscape in which topographic variations occur at a more localised scale is more likely to contrast with solar PV land use than a larger scale landscape in which variations are less frequent. The margins of character areas may be more sensitive, if there is a distinct change in landform. Information sources: Landscape Character Assessment, Ordnance Survey maps; fieldwork.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		⟷		**Higher sensitivity**
e.g. An extensive flat lowland landscape or elevated plateau, often a larger scale landscape with no distinctive landform features	e.g. A simple, gently rolling landscape, likely to be of medium-large scale, without distinctive landform	e.g. An undulating landscape, perhaps also incised by valleys, likely to be of medium scale	e.g. A landscape with distinct landform features, and/or irregular in topography (which may be large in scale), or a smaller scale landform	e.g. A landscape with a distinctive, rugged landform or dramatic topographical features (which may be large in scale), or a small scale or intimate landform
Scale and complexity of land use & field pattern				
A solar farm is a very homogeneous and typically geometric form, and one which is likely to contrast with more natural textures. The presence of a diversity of land uses in the landscape will act to reduce sensitivity in this respect, particularly if those uses include arable land, horticulture or brown-field sites, whereas there is more likelihood that solar PV development will stand out as a significant change in a semi-natural landscape or one in which permanent pasture features heavily. However, complexity of land use needs to be considered in tandem with scale and complexity of field patterns: the size of a proposed development relative to the scale of the field pattern in the locality is an important consideration because of the risk of diluting or masking the characteristic landscape patterns through development that is out of scale with boundary features. In general terms landscapes with small-scale, more irregular field patterns are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of solar PV development than landscapes with medium or large scale fields in regular, geometric patterns, although an open area lacking field boundaries would also be highly susceptible to the imposition of a new pattern. Information sources: Landscape Character Assessment, Ordnance Survey maps; Google Earth (aerial photography); fieldwork.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		⟷		**Higher sensitivity**
e.g. A landscape with a strong variety in land cover, including significant arable or 'brownfield' elements, but with a geometric, medium or large field pattern	e.g. A mixed pastoral and arable landscape with medium sized fields mostly in geometric forms	e.g. A mixed pastoral and arable landscape with a some variation in field sizes or shapes and some semi-natural land cover	e.g. A landscape with irregular or small-scale fields and some variety of land use but largely pastoral	e.g. A landscape of small, irregular fields with uniform pastoral land use, or an open semi-natural landscape

Visual exposure				
The relative visibility of a landscape or distinctive elements within it, both from within the character area and in relation to other character areas, will influence its sensitivity. A landscape with a strong sense of enclosure is likely to be less sensitive to solar PV development than a more open and exposed landscape in which the development can be more readily perceived. Landscapes which have important visual relationships with other areas, for example where one area provides a skyline backdrop to a neighbouring area, are considered more sensitive than those with less important visual relationships. The sensitivity of the related landscapes will also affect the importance of visual exposure: a character area will for example be more sensitive if it forms part of the setting of a designated landscape (e.g. an AONB), and if the character area itself also has high scenic quality then its sensitivity will be further magnified. Visual sensitivities may also relate to specific landscape features, such as a prominent ancient monument. Information sources: Landscape Character Assessment, fieldwork.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		⟷		**Higher sensitivity**
e.g. An enclosed, self-contained landscape, or one with weak connections to neighbouring areas, and/or where related landscapes are of lower sensitivity	e.g. A landscape with limited connections to neighbouring areas, and/or where related landscapes are of low or medium sensitivity	e.g. A landscape which has some relationship with neighbouring areas, and/or where related landscapes are of medium sensitivity	A landscape which is intervisible with several related areas, and/or where related landscapes are of medium or higher sensitivity	e.g. A landscape which has important relationships with one or more neighbouring areas, and/or where related landscapes are of high sensitivity
Development and activity				
Landscapes which show evidence of modern development, including settlement, industrial and commercial development and infrastructure, tend to be less sensitive to solar PV development. Landscapes which are relatively free from overt human activity and disturbance, and which have a perceived naturalness, a strong feel of traditional rurality or are dominated by historic rather than modern buildings, will therefore be more sensitive. Information sources: Landscape Character Assessment, Ordnance Survey maps, fieldwork.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		⟷		**Higher sensitivity**
e.g. A landscape with much human activity and development, such as industrial areas	e.g. A rural or semi-rural landscape with much human activity and dispersed modern development, such as settlement fringes	e.g. A rural landscape with some modern development and human activity, such as intensive farmland	e.g. A more naturalistic or historic landscape and/or one with little modern human influence and development	e.g. A tranquil landscape with little or no overt sign of modern human activity and development

Solar PV Development Typologies

6.7 Of the scheme elements considered in **Section 3** the only one which is considered to offer sufficient variation to have a significant impact on landscape sensitivity is the overall size of the solar PV development in terms of the land area covered by panels. The technology is very scalable, and can be used from garden-sized installations upwards; applications for schemes of 50

hectares or more have been submitted in Dorset and elsewhere in the UK. In general, the larger the proposed development the greater its impact is likely to be, but the characteristics of the landscape in which it is sited may either emphasise or diminish this impact.

6.8 The density of rows of solar PV panels doesn't tend to vary more than is necessary to allow sufficient spacing to avoid over-shading (which will differ a little depending on latitude), and the general appearance of a solar farm, in terms of array design, materials and associated fencing and built infrastructure, are fairly consistent.

6.9 Higher arrays are unlikely to appear because any benefit of additional vertical panels would be offset by the need to set parallel rows of arrays further apart, to avoid shading. A rare exception to this is where the intention is to graze cattle beneath the panels, requiring higher and stronger mountings.

6.10 For the purposes of assessing landscape sensitivity through this study, the following scales of solar PV development are defined:

- Up to 1 hectare (2.5 acres);
- 1 to 10 hectares (2.5 to 25 acres);
- 10 to 30 hectares (25 to 75 acres);
- Over 30 hectares (75 acres).

6.11 This banding has been defined with reference to the sizes of solar PV development already operational in the County, the range of sizes for which planning applications or pre-application requests have been made and a general assessment of sensitivity of the Dorset landscape.

6.12 In order to visualise these different areas, the table below sets out the size of features including some well-known landmarks and existing solar energy developments in the County:

Table 8: Comparative areas

Structure	Area (hectares)
Typical football pitch	0.6 – 0.8
Moors Lake (in Moors Valley Country Park)	3.6
Badbury Rings Hill Fort	7
Solar Farm at Park Farm, Shroton	8
Longham Reservoir (south of Ferndown)	10
Poole Park Boating Lake	21
Typical 18-hole golf course	50

7 Assessment of Sensitivity to Wind and Solar PV Energy Development in Purbeck

Using the assessment for a specific location or area

7.1 The assessment is presented by **Landscape Character Type** (LCT) so the map of all LCTs within the District in **Figure 6** should be referenced to identify the relevant LCT(s).

7.2 The heading page for each LCT (**Figure 9**) gives the names of the **Landscape Character Areas** (LCAs) that fall (wholly or partly) within the LCT and a **map** is provided to illustrate the relevant LCT and LCA boundaries within the District. A smaller inset map shows occurrences of the LCT across the whole County. It should be noted that there is not always a consistent relationship between LCTs and LCAs: typically an LCT will subdivide into one or more LCAs but sometimes one LCA will cover more than one LCT (as noted in **Table 3** in **Section 4**).

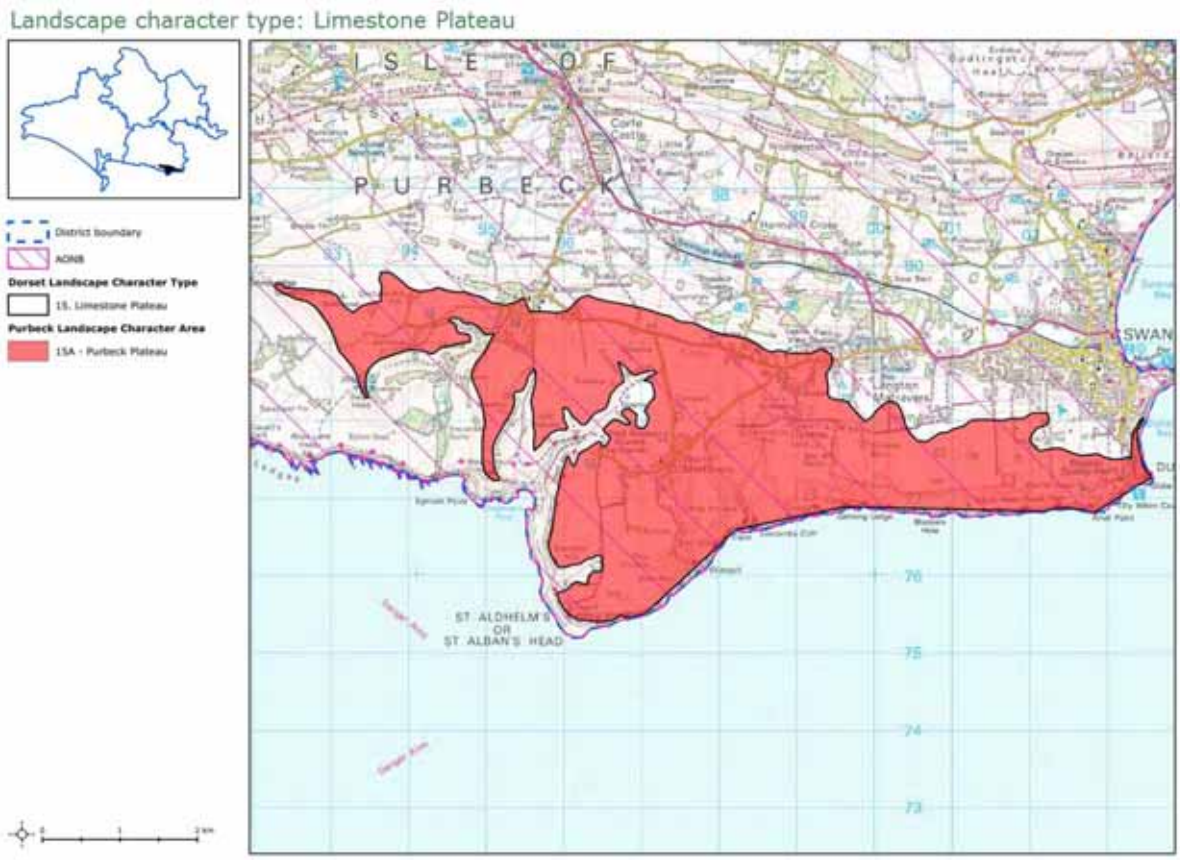


Figure 9: example of heading page for LCT

7.3 Where a substantial part of an LCA is defined at County-level as being in a different LCT to the rest the LCA assessment is likewise split, but where boundary differences between LCT and LCA definitions are less significant, affecting only small areas, the LCA is assessed as a whole. In the case of an area of interest in an LCA falling outside of the boundary for the LCT, as will be clear from the assessment mapping, the reader should also make separate reference to the assessment for the nearest LCA in the LCT in question, in case this identifies any potential differences in sensitivity.

7.4 An assessment table for the LCT (**Figure 10**) follows the map page. This starts with a brief **overview** of the LCT location and relationship with LCAs and surrounding LCTs. The following lines list relevant information from the County-level 'key characteristics' and 'landscape management guidance' for the LCT, arranged under headings of **susceptibility criteria** (as identified in **Section 6** above). Direct quotes from published assessments are shown in italics, whilst other text represents the assessment judgements formed by LUC on the basis of the published assessments and supported by fieldwork carried out by LUC between October and December 2013.

7.5 The LCT descriptions are also drawn upon to identify any factors which add **value** either to the LCT or to particular elements within it. These might be 'special qualities' associated with a designated landscape (e.g. an AONB) or other aspects of value (see **Figure 7**) which could influence the sensitivity of the landscape to wind or solar PV development.

Limestone Plateau LCT overview

The Limestone Plateau LCT is represented by just one LCA in Dorset, within south Purbeck and comprises an elevated, exposed plateau which extends from Kimmeridge in the west to Swanage in the east and includes St Aldhelm's Head.

Limestone Plateau LCT characteristics by susceptibility criteria

Scale and complexity of landform:

"Exposed sloping limestone plateau which plummets towards the sea along the cliff edge."

"Dramatic coastline with steep cliffs and incised deep valleys"

Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

"...has a simple but striking character represented by its windswept, exposed and treeless appearance"

"Defined by the long tradition of quarrying and use of local limestone, being covered by small quarries, spoil tips and tracks."

"Mixed farming with geometric fields divided by walls and some weak hedges"

Visual exposure:

"Open expansive views across the Corfe valley to the sea and from the coast"

"...some sweeping views along the coast from the South West Coast path..."

Development and activity:

"a well-settled landscape with isolated farms and Langton Matravers and Worth Matravers being distinctive limestone villages and the main settlements on the plateau"

"The hard southern edges of Swanage detract from the character of the area and signs, telegraph poles and spoil heaps are all prominent on the skyline in this open landscape and therefore also detract from local character"

Limestone Plateau LCT value characteristics

All of the Limestone Plateau LCT lies within the Dorset AONB and it is the only area of limestone plateau within Dorset. The principal management objective for the LCT makes reference to conserving the *"strong open character"* and one of the key guidance notes is to *"Identify, protect and conserve the sweeping views of the coast e.g. via Parish Action Plans, Village Design Statements and other Settlement Appraisals"*.

The Priest's Way ancient track, a public right of way across the plateau, is noted as being a key feature, and the South West Coast Path also passes through the area, adding recreational value.

Figure 10: example of LCT description page

7.6 General comments are made regarding the sensitivity of the LCT to wind and solar energy, with reference to the susceptibility criteria and landscape value (**Figure 11**).

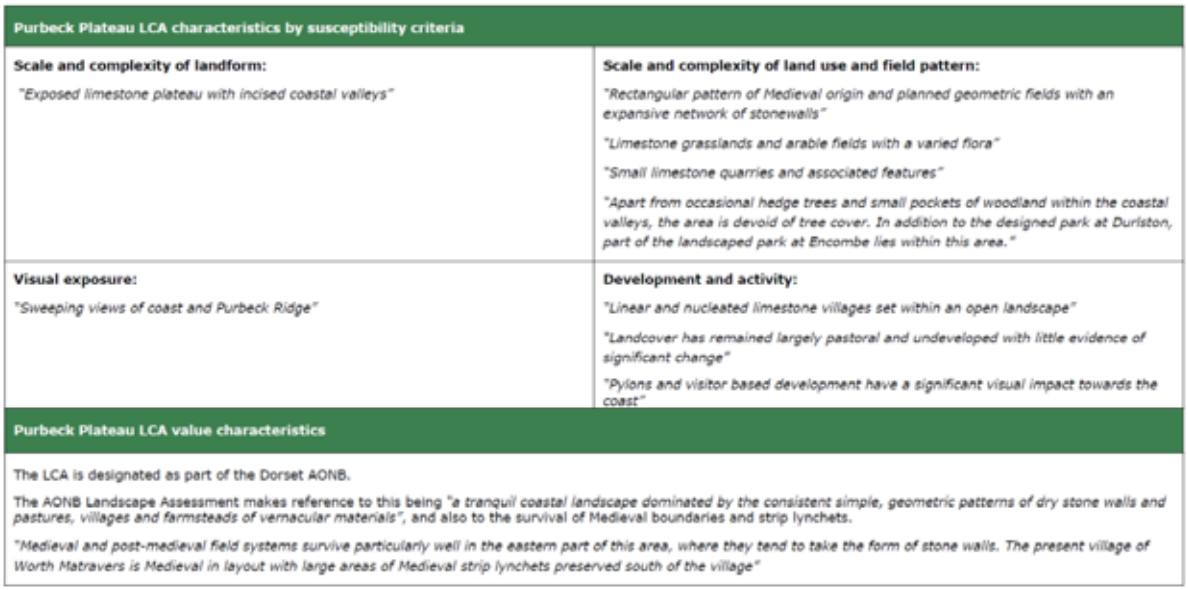
Limestone Plateau LCT sensitivity to wind energy	Limestone Plateau LCT sensitivity to solar PV energy
The limestone plateau is characterised by a broad undulating topography which indicates moderate sensitivity to wind energy development, and the large scale and openness of the landscape together with the geometric pattern of enclosure and consistency of landcover suggest a lower susceptibility to wind energy development. In terms of development and human influence, although there are localised areas of activity, most notably a number of quarries, this is a predominantly rural landscape with few trees or vertical features, so sensitivity high. Visibility within the narrow incised coastal valleys is limited but from most of the plateau extensive views over the plateau and the coast are available so development is likely to be visible over a wide area. The positioning of turbines in locations on these valley sides would raise the prospect of hubs and turbine blades appearing in what are currently very open views from higher ground, in which valleys beyond the immediate vicinity are only barely perceptible. The landscape has an important relationship with adjoining LCTs, including the Clay Valley LCTs, and forms long, unbroken skylines defining adjoining valleys. The introduction of development on the plateau is likely to interrupt the distinctive and open skylines which this areas forms in views from the valley and ridge to the north. The undulating landform, the exposure and openness and the lack of modern development creates a unique landscape within Dorset which valued for its scenic and perceptual qualities. Whilst large scale landscapes are typically more able to accommodate large scale features such as wind turbines than a more human-scale environment, the particular characteristics of Limestone Plateau LCT, the value of which is recognised by the extent of AONB and its relationship with surrounding landscapes within the AONB, are considered to be highly sensitive to wind turbines.	The limestone plateau is characterised by a broad undulating topography which indicates moderate sensitivity to wind energy development. Solar PV development may be less easily perceived in areas with less topographic variation, such as flatter areas within the plateau. However the exposed and open character increases the susceptibility of the landscape to solar PV energy development. The more dramatic coastline of steep cliffs and incised deep valleys is of high sensitivity. The predominance of medium to large scale geometric fields enclosed by stone walls indicates a lower sensitivity in terms of the pattern and complexity of landcover. However the exposed pastoral landscape of the limestone plateau is characterised by distinctive colours and textures which solar PV development is likely to strongly contrast with. Although there are localised areas of development and activity, including a number of quarries, this is a predominantly rural landscape, so sensitivity high. Extensive views within the LCT are often available and with low stone walls and limited tree cover mean that development is likely to be highly visible. There is a strong visual relationship with surrounding LCTs, including the Clay Valley LCTs to the north and west and the Chalk Ridge/Escarpment, particularly with the northern extents. The exposure and openness, the lack of modern development and the coastal aspect creates a unique landscape within Dorset which valued for its scenic and perceptual qualities. It is an area well used for recreation, with large areas of open access. Solar PV development could potentially diminish the coherance of this landscape.

Figure 11: example of LCT assessment text

7.7 For each LCA represented within the LCT a map is presented to show the LCA, together with its area in hectares[12] (**Figure 12**). This is followed by quotes and comments relating to susceptibility and value in the same format as for the LCT but with reference to the District Landscape Character Assessment (**Figure 13**).

Figure 12: example of LCA map page

[12] Calculation based on LCA boundary data provided by Purbeck District Council



Purbeck Plateau LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria

Scale and complexity of landform:

"Exposed limestone plateau with incised coastal valleys"

Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

"Rectangular pattern of Medieval origin and planned geometric fields with an expansive network of stonewalls"

"Limestone grasslands and arable fields with a varied flora"

"Small limestone quarries and associated features"

"Apart from occasional hedge trees and small pockets of woodland within the coastal valleys, the area is devoid of tree cover. In addition to the designed park at Durlston, part of the landscaped park at Encombe lies within this area."

Visual exposure:

"Sweeping views of coast and Purbeck Ridge"

Development and activity:

"Linear and nucleated limestone villages set within an open landscape"

"Landcover has remained largely pastoral and undeveloped with little evidence of significant change"

"Pylons and visitor based development have a significant visual impact towards the coast"

Purbeck Plateau LCA value characteristics

The LCA is designated as part of the Dorset AONB.

The AONB Landscape Assessment makes reference to this being *"a tranquil coastal landscape dominated by the consistent simple, geometric patterns of dry stone walls and pastures, villages and farmsteads of vernacular materials"*, and also to the survival of Medieval boundaries and strip lynchets.

"Medieval and post-medieval field systems survive particularly well in the eastern part of this area, where they tend to take the form of stone walls. The present village of Worth Matravers is Medieval in layout with large areas of Medieval strip lynchets preserved south of the village"

Figure 13: example of LCA description page

7.8 Matrices are provided for each LCA to give, for each development typology, **ratings** of overall **sensitivity**, weighing up the importance of characteristics and associated susceptibility criteria for the LCT in general and the specific LCA in question and taking into consideration any aspects of landscape value which would affect the judgement. Summaries are provided to explain the judgements and to note any **local characteristics** which might serve to increase or decrease the sensitivity from the rating provided for the LCA as a whole (**Figure 14**).

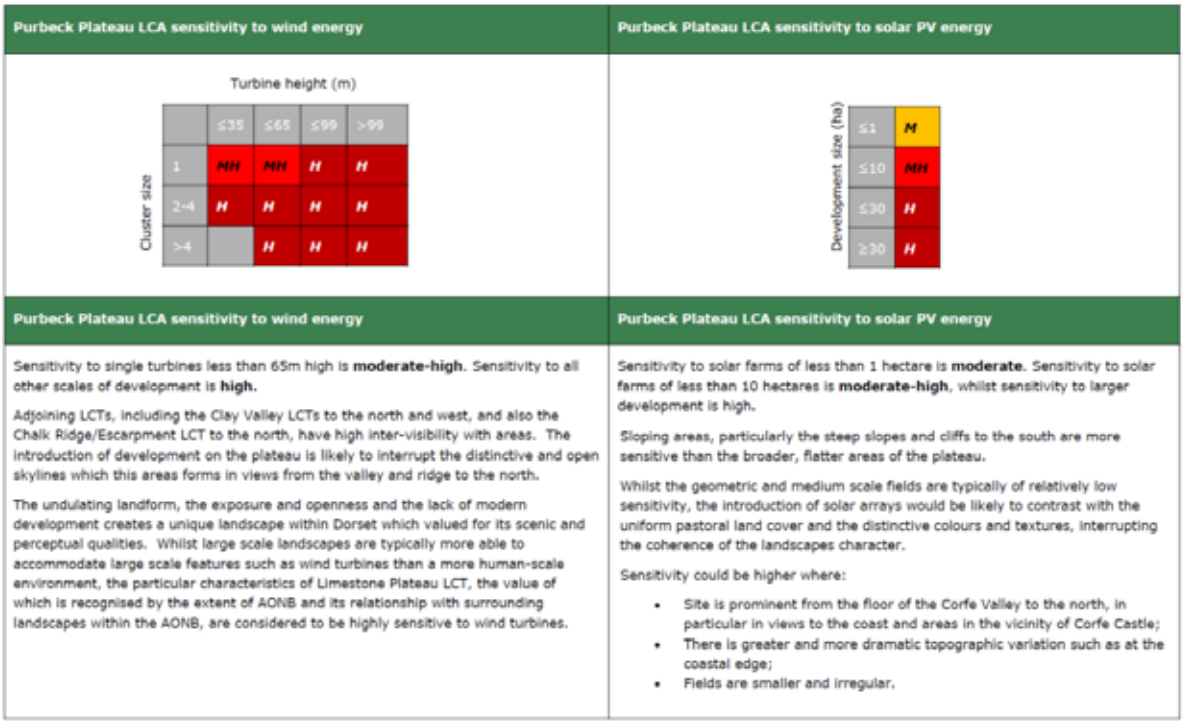
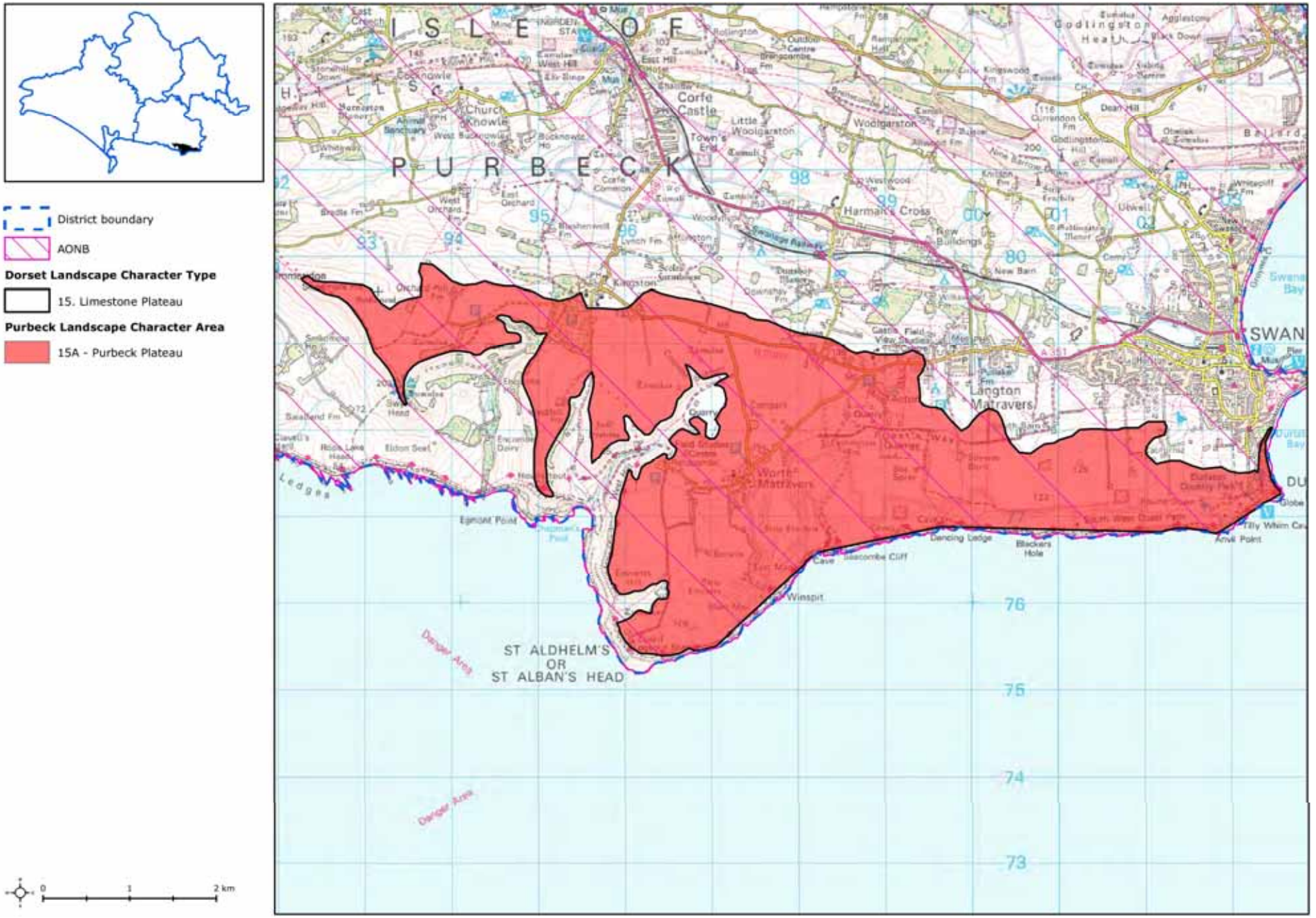


Figure 14: example of LCA assessment page

7.9 Reference should be made to the published landscape character assessments to gain a fuller picture of characteristics and features of an area.

7.10 **Sections 8** and **9** have maps to show sensitivity ratings across all the LCAs in the District. For wind power there is one map for each combination of cluster size and turbine height and for solar PV energy there is one map per size category.

Landscape character type: Limestone Plateau



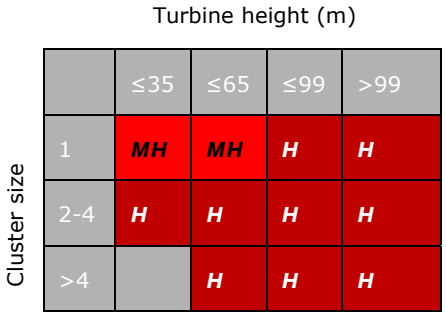
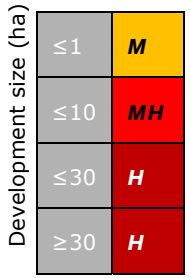
Limestone Plateau LCT overview	
The Limestone Plateau LCT is represented by just one LCA in Dorset, within south Purbeck and comprises an elevated, exposed plateau which extends from Kimmeridge in the west to Swanage in the east and includes St Aldhelm's Head.	
Limestone Plateau LCT characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"Exposed sloping limestone plateau which plummets towards the sea along the cliff edge."* *"Dramatic coastline with steep cliffs and incised deep valleys"*	***Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:*** *"…has a simple but striking character represented by its windswept, exposed and treeless appearance"* *"Defined by the long tradition of quarrying and use of local limestone, being covered by small quarries, spoil tips and tracks."* *"Mixed farming with geometric fields divided by walls and some weak hedges"*
Visual exposure: *"Open expansive views across the Corfe valley to the sea and from the coast"* *"…some sweeping views along the coast from the South West Coast path…"*	***Development and activity:*** *"a well-settled landscape with isolated farms and Langton Matravers and Worth Matravers being distinctive limestone villages and the main settlements on the plateau"* *"The hard southern edges of Swanage detract from the character of the area and signs, telegraph poles and spoil heaps are all prominent on the skyline in this open landscape and therefore also detract from local character"*
Limestone Plateau LCT value characteristics	
All of the Limestone Plateau LCT lies within the Dorset AONB and it is the only area of limestone plateau within Dorset. The principal management objective for the LCT makes reference to conserving the "strong open character" and one of the key guidance notes is to "Identify, protect and conserve the sweeping views of the coast e.g. via Parish Action Plans, Village Design Statements and other Settlement Appraisals". *The Priest's Way ancient track, a public right of way across the plateau, is noted as being a key feature, and the South West Coast Path also passes through the area, adding recreational value.*	

Limestone Plateau LCT sensitivity to wind energy	*Limestone Plateau LCT sensitivity to solar PV energy*
The limestone plateau is characterised by a broad undulating topography which indicates moderate sensitivity to wind energy development, and the large scale and openness of the landscape together with the geometric pattern of enclosure and consistency of landcover suggest a lower susceptibility to wind energy development. *In terms of development and human influence, although there are localised areas of activity, most notably a number of quarries, this is a predominantly rural landscape with few trees or vertical features, so sensitivity high.* *Visibility within the narrow incised coastal valleys is limited but from most of the plateau extensive views over the plateau and the coast are available so development is likely to be visible over a wide area. The positioning of turbines in locations on these valley sides would raise the prospect of hubs and turbine blades appearing in what are currently very open views from higher ground, in which valleys beyond the immediate vicinity are only barely perceptible.* *The landscape has an important relationship with adjoining LCTs, including the Clay Valley LCTs, and forms long, unbroken skylines defining adjoining valleys. The introduction of development on the plateau is likely to interrupt the distinctive and open skylines which this areas forms in views from the valley and ridge to the north.* *The undulating landform, the exposure and openness and the lack of modern development creates a unique landscape within Dorset which valued for its scenic and perceptual qualities. Whilst large scale landscapes are typically more able to accommodate large scale features such as wind turbines than a more human-scale environment, the particular characteristics of Limestone Plateau LCT, the value of which is recognised by the extent of AONB and its relationship with surrounding landscapes within the AONB, are considered to be highly sensitive to wind turbines.*	*The limestone plateau is characterised by a broad undulating topography which indicates moderate sensitivity to wind energy development. Solar PV development may be less easily perceived in areas with less topographic variation, such as flatter areas within the plateau. However the exposed and open character increases the susceptibility of the landscape to solar PV energy development. The more dramatic coastline of steep cliffs and incised deep valleys is of high sensitivity.* *The predominance of medium to large scale geometric fields enclosed by stone walls indicates a lower sensitivity in terms of the pattern and complexity of landcover. However the exposed pastoral landscape of the limestone plateau is characterised by distinctive colours and textures which solar PV development is likely to strongly contrast with. Although there are localised areas of development and activity, including a number of quarries, this is a predominantly rural landscape, so sensitivity high.* *Extensive views within the LCT are often available and with low stone walls and limited tree cover mean that development is likely to be highly visible. There is a strong visual relationship with surrounding LCTs, including the Clay Valley LCTs to the north and west and the Chalk Ridge/Escarpment, particularly with the northern extents.* *The exposure and openness, the lack of modern development and the coastal aspect creates a unique landscape within Dorset which valued for its scenic and perceptual qualities. It is an area well used for recreation, with large areas of open access. Solar PV development could potentially diminish the coherence of this landscape.*

Landscape character area: Purbeck Plateau

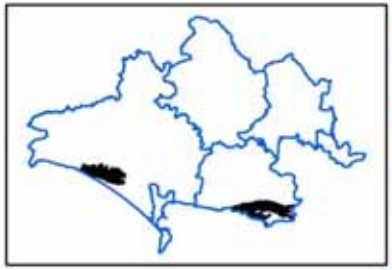
Area: 1746 hectares

Purbeck Plateau LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"Exposed limestone plateau with incised coastal valleys"*	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"Rectangular pattern of Medieval origin and planned geometric fields with an expansive network of stonewalls"* *"Limestone grasslands and arable fields with a varied flora"* *"Small limestone quarries and associated features"* *"Apart from occasional hedge trees and small pockets of woodland within the coastal valleys, the area is devoid of tree cover. In addition to the designed park at Durlston, part of the landscaped park at Encombe lies within this area."*
Visual exposure: *"Sweeping views of coast and Purbeck Ridge"*	**Development and activity:** *"Linear and nucleated limestone villages set within an open landscape"* *"Landcover has remained largely pastoral and undeveloped with little evidence of significant change"* *"Pylons and visitor based development have a significant visual impact towards the coast"*
Purbeck Plateau LCA value characteristics	
The LCA is designated as part of the Dorset AONB. The AONB Landscape Assessment makes reference to this being *"a tranquil coastal landscape dominated by the consistent simple, geometric patterns of dry stone walls and pastures, villages and farmsteads of vernacular materials"*, and also to the survival of Medieval boundaries and strip lynchets. *"Medieval and post-medieval field systems survive particularly well in the eastern part of this area, where they tend to take the form of stone walls. The present village of Worth Matravers is Medieval in layout with large areas of Medieval strip lynchets preserved south of the village"*	

Purbeck Plateau LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Purbeck Plateau LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
	

Purbeck Plateau LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Purbeck Plateau LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Sensitivity to single turbines less than 65m high is **moderate-high**. Sensitivity to all other scales of development is **high.** Adjoining LCTs, including the Clay Valley LCTs to the north and west, and also the Chalk Ridge/Escarpment LCT to the north, have high inter-visibility with areas. The introduction of development on the plateau is likely to interrupt the distinctive and open skylines which this areas forms in views from the valley and ridge to the north. The undulating landform, the exposure and openness and the lack of modern development creates a unique landscape within Dorset which valued for its scenic and perceptual qualities. Whilst large scale landscapes are typically more able to accommodate large scale features such as wind turbines than a more human-scale environment, the particular characteristics of Limestone Plateau LCT, the value of which is recognised by the extent of AONB and its relationship with surrounding landscapes within the AONB, are considered to be highly sensitive to wind turbines.	Sensitivity to solar farms of less than 1 hectare is **moderate**. Sensitivity to solar farms of less than 10 hectares is **moderate-high**, whilst sensitivity to larger development is high**.** Sloping areas, particularly the steep slopes and cliffs to the south are more sensitive than the broader, flatter areas of the plateau. Whilst the geometric and medium scale fields are typically of relatively low sensitivity, the introduction of solar arrays would be likely to contrast with the uniform pastoral land cover and the distinctive colours and textures, interrupting the coherence of the landscapes character. Sensitivity could be higher where: • Site is prominent from the floor of the Corfe Valley to the north, in particular in views to the coast and areas in the vicinity of Corfe Castle; • There is greater and more dramatic topographic variation such as at the coastal edge; • Fields are smaller and irregular.

Landscape character type: Clay Valley



District boundary

AONB

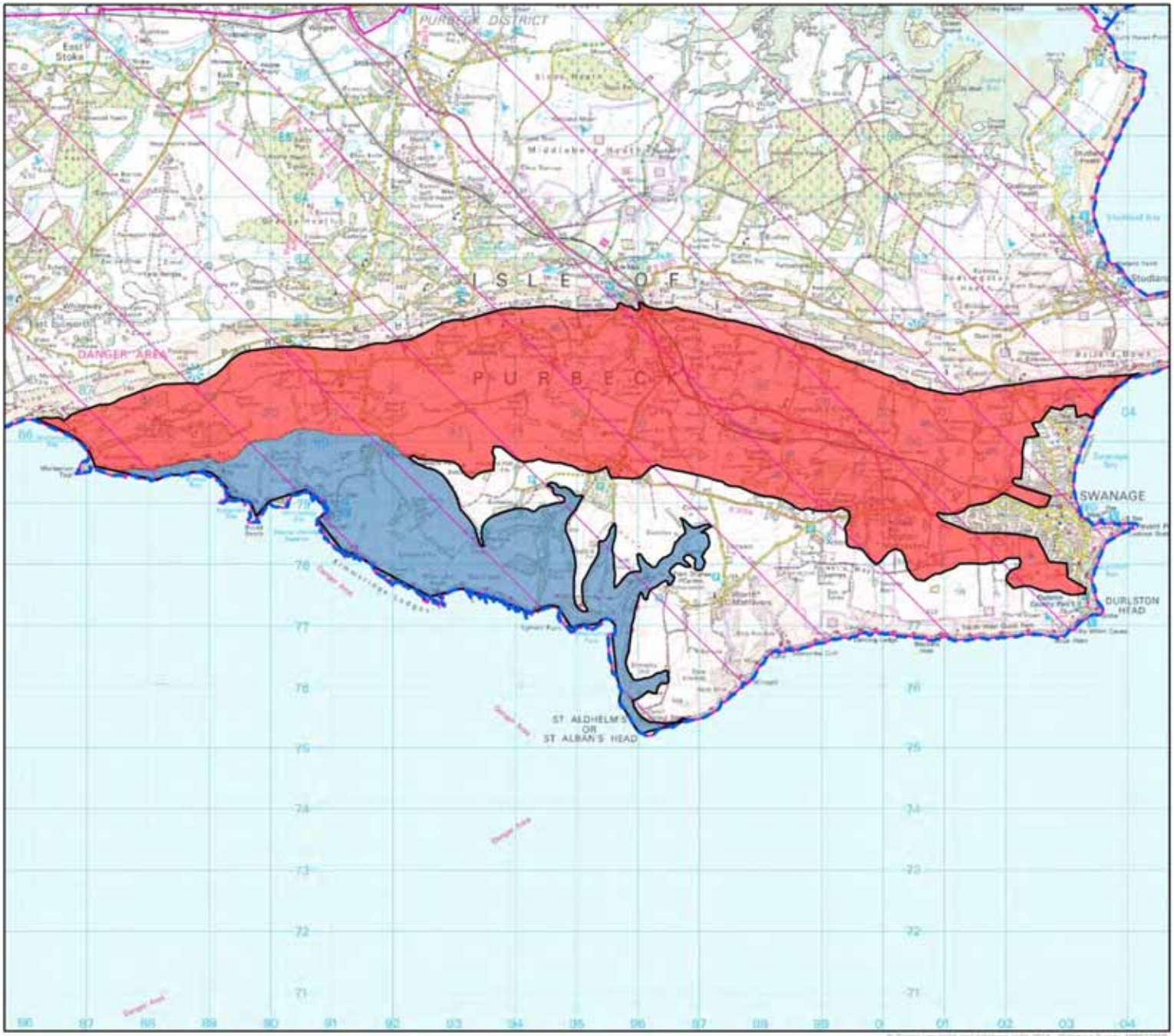
Dorset Landscape Character Type

20. Clay Valley

Purbeck Landscape Character Area

20A - Corfe Valley

20B - Kimmeridge Coast



0 1.5 3 km

Clay Valley LCT overview
The LCT is represented by two adjacent LCAs in Purbeck, one coastal and one inland, and by one LCA in West Dorset. Corfe Valley is the broader of the two valleys within the Isle of Purbeck and extends from Swanage in the east to Warbarrow Bay in the west. It comprises areas of pasture set within a dense network of hedgerows and small woodlands, becoming more open on the upper slopes of the valley. Corfe Valley is enclosed and defined by the dramatic ridge to the north and the Purbeck Plateau to the south, with views of the coast opening out to the east and west of the area. The Kimmeridge Coast is an undulating coast of limestone cliffs and headlands, with small incised valleys compared to the more typical valley profile of the Corfe Valley.

Clay Valley LCT characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"Varied landform from broad open valley, to more sweeping valley and areas which are more secluded"* *"The surrounding dramatic escarpments and ridges enclose and define these valley landscapes with the Purbeck chalk ridge in particular forming an imposing backdrop to the Corfe valley"*	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"Patchwork of small scale pasture, irregular dense hedges and copses with larger arable fields, grassland and scrub on the steeper slopes"* *"There are occasional small wet woods and springs and flushes on the valley floors with larger woods on the valley sides"*
Visual exposure: *"From the elevated areas [there are] glimpses of the sea"* *"The views over the valley to Corfe Castle from Kingston [are] one of the distinctive panoramas in the area"*	**Development and activity:** *"Small, nucleated and scattered villages and farmsteads"* *"The areas generally have a settled rural character"* *"The hard western edges of Swanage and to a lesser extent the eastern edges of Bridport, detract from the character of the area"*

Clay Valley LCT value characteristics
All of the Clay Valley LCAs lie within the Dorset AONB. *"The overall management objective for the Clay Valley Landscape Type is to conserve and restore the intimate patterns of grasslands, woodlands, field boundaries and nucleated settlements".* One of the key land management guidance notes is to *"Conserve views of key landmarks such as church spires e.g. through the careful control of building heights"*. *"The church towers at Steeple, Church Knowle and Kingston are particularly prominent landscape features"* *"The popular and distinctive ruined castle and village at Corfe Castle, the historic folly of Clavell's Tower and the prominent landmarks of Swyre Head and Worbarrow Tout are all key landmarks in the area. Several of the planned parkland landscapes across the area are also key features"*

Clay Valley LCT sensitivity to wind energy	Clay Valley LCT sensitivity to solar PV energy
The scale of the LCT varies from larger scale areas of broad river valley and open, and exposed upper slopes and headlands at the coastal edge to small incised and secluded valleys. The complex and irregular landforms indicates a high sensitivity to wind energy development, particularly where dramatic and distinctive coastal features occur. The landscape encompasses a mixture of small scale, irregular pastoral fields and woodland with some larger scale, more open fields occurring on upper, more elevated slopes. Small villages are generally dispersed along the valley floors and within smaller valleys, but otherwise development is very limited and the landscape retains a strong rural character which indicates high sensitivity to wind energy development. There is significant potential for wind turbines to appear out of scale in this complex and predominantly small scale or intimate landscape and visually dominant in a landscape characterised by "human scale" buildings and features. Visibility can be limited within the valley floors, particularly in well wooded areas or within the narrow incised valleys, but from the upper valley sides extensive views are available and development would typically be visible over a wide area. Adjoining LCTs, most notably the Chalk Ridge/Escarpment and the Purbeck Limestone Plateau, have high inter-visibility with the valleys, although the visibility into the small incised valleys and undercliffs can be limited. The many distinctive focal features and panoramic views to the coast that are available in these landscapes are highly sensitive to wind energy development which may potentially interrupted these views or diminish the perceived scale and wild and remote character which prevails in these views.	The clay valley has a distinctive and complex topographic profile, indicating a high susceptibility to solar PV energy development particularly within the more narrow and secluded valleys in the west and at the coastal edge. The mixture of small scale, irregular pastoral fields and areas of scrub and woodland within the valley floors indicate high sensitivity to this form of development. However, within well wooded areas and where there is a strong network of dense hedgerows there may be some scope to screen smaller scale developments. Whilst there are areas in which the scale and pattern of land cover is larger and more open, namely the more elevated grassland slopes, tree cover tends to be more limited in these areas, reducing the scope for development to be screened. In terms of development and human influence this is a rural landscape with little modern intrusion, so sensitivity is relatively high. Visibility can be limited within the valley floors, particularly in well wooded areas or within the narrow incised valleys, but from the upper valley sides extensive views are available and development would typically be visible over a wide area. Adjoining LCTs, most notably the Chalk Ridge/Escarpment and the Purbeck Limestone Plateau, have high inter-visibility with the valleys, although the visibility into the small incised valleys and undercliffs can be limited. The combination of complex and irregular landforms, and variety of land cover, from small scale pastures and woodland within the valley floors to more open grasslands on upper slopes, create a distinctive and intricate landscape which is highly valued for its scenic and perceptual qualities and the general absence of modern development. Sensitivity to solar energy developments in this LCT would typically be high, introducing uncharacteristic shapes and textures.

Landscape character area: Corfe Valley

Area: 3522 hectares

Corfe Valley LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"Sweeping and secluded clay valley enclosed by the dramatic chalk escarpment to the north and undulating limestone ridge to the south"* *"The Corfe Valley is a broad, sweeping and gently undulating valley on soft heavy clays, rising from the east to the west with a small ridge at Harman's Cross. The Corfe River flows into the valley at Corfe, flowing towards Swanage. The upper valley sides are formed by the Purbeck Ridge to the north with an undulating limestone ridge to the south."*	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"Land cover includes ancient and secondary trees and woods in a settled pastoral landscape where dairy farming predominates. Towards the west, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) operate with associated infrastructure and pastoral landcover."* *"The valley has a prevailing historic character of planned enclosure of open fields with fragments of piecemeal enclosure and paddocks adjacent to settlements. There are large areas of common land next to Corfe Castle with associated barrows."* *"…a diverse colourful patchwork of structured fields and winding lanes."*
Visual exposure: Extensive views over the area are available from the elevated Purbeck Ridge/ Escarpment to the north and the Purbeck Plateau to the south, with particularly iconic views associated with Corfe Castle. The assessment notes that "*The church towers at Steeple, Church Knowle and Kingston are particularly prominent landscape features with the views over the valley to Corfe Castle from Kingston being one of the distinctive panoramas in the area."*	**Development and activity:** *"…a largely settled landscape characterised by scattered farmsteads and small nucleated settlements of local limestone with church spires dotted along the valley floor and sides. Frequent loose clusters of dwellings occur along roads and lanes to the east where settlement patterns become more intensive towards Swanage"* *"A host of urban fringe land uses around the edges of Swanage detract from the combination of landscape features*"
Corfe Valley LCA value characteristics	
The LCA is designated as part of the Dorset AONB. *"…stunning coastal views"* *"Corfe Common has a wild feel dominated by views of the imposing Corfe Castle"* Corfe Castle is a Grade I listed building and Scheduled Ancient Monument. Its distinctive and imposing landscape setting is a key aspect of its character. *"A strong rural character enforced by the distinctive valley landform and sense of visual unity. The distinct pattern of nucleated villages, patchwork of dense hedges, regular pastures and small woodlands is apparent throughout most of the area, despite some change to arable. There are relatively few detracting features that weaken the overall character"*	

Corfe Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Corfe Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Turbine height (m) Cluster size ≤35 ≤65 ≤99 >99 1 MH MH H H 2-4 MH H H H >4 H H H	Development size (ha) ≤1 MH ≤10 H ≤30 H >30 H
Corfe Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy	**Corfe Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy**
Sensitivity to single turbines and 2-4 turbines less than 35m high or single turbines 36-65m high is **moderate-High**. Sensitivity to all other scales of development is **high.** The undulating and irregular profile of the clay valley and the predominantly small scale, irregular pattern of the settled valley with pastoral fields and woodland is typically of high sensitivity to wind energy development. Even where some larger scale, more open fields occur on the upper valley slopes, there is significant potential for wind turbines to appear out of scale in the complex landscape. Particularly larger scale turbines are likely to be visually dominant in a landscape characterised by "human scale" buildings and features. The area is influenced by development at the edges of Swanage to the east of the area, but otherwise development is very limited and the landscape retains a strong rural character which indicates high sensitivity to wind energy development. From the upper valley sides, extensive views are available along the valley and to the coast and development would typically be visible over a wide area, although visibility can be limited within the valley floors. The Chalk Ridge/Escarpment to the north and the Purbeck Limestone Plateau to the southeast, have high inter-visibility with the valley and the long, sweeping views along the valley floor to the sea are valued as a distinctive attribute of the landscape. Sensitivity could be higher: • Where an area forms part of the setting of Corfe Castle; • Towards the coastal edge in the west of the area;	Sensitivity to solar PV development of less than 1 hectare is **moderate-high** and sensitivity to larger development is **high.** The rounded, undulating and irregular profiles that characterise the clay valley is typically of high sensitivity to solar PV development. This LCA forms both upper and exposed slopes of the river valley and the more enclosed areas within the valley floor, so topographically some areas are more sensitive than others within this LCA. The pattern and textures of the landcover are generally complex and where small scale irregular field patterns predominate, these areas are particularly sensitive to new geometric forms being imposed. The area is influenced by development at the edges of Swanage to the east of the area, but otherwise development is very limited and the landscape retains a strong rural character of the pastoral farmland which indicates high sensitivity to wind energy development. The area is overlooked by the elevated Chalk Ridge/Escarpment LCA to the north and the Limestone Plateau to the south, as well as from smaller hills within the valley. Whilst woodland and hedgerows within the lower parts of the valley could serve to partly screen small scale development, development here is still likely to be visible from surrounding areas and contrasting strongly with the landscape experienced in these views. Sensitivity could be higher: • Where an area forms part of the setting of Corfe Castle;

• In any location where the introduction of turbines may diminish either the prominence of distinctive landscape features such as the church towers, or the scale of the surrounding ridges and hills.	• Towards the coastal edge in the west of the area.

Landscape character area: Kimmeridge Valley

Area: 1108 hectares

Kimmeridge Valley LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria

Scale and complexity of landform:

"The area has dramatic coastal slopes and cliffs, with an inland, broad sweeping slope with deep incised valleys. The underlying geology of soft Kimmeridge clay is of sedimentary origin and provides a fine collection of Upper Jurassic marine life and fossils."

Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

"Land cover is largely pastoral, particularly along the coast with thinly scattered groups of trees around valley slopes. Towards Kimmeridge, cover becomes more arable. The MoD Ranges retain an undeveloped, pastoral character. Towards the east, the area has a more wooded character around the landscaped parkland at Encombe and Smedmore."

"The pattern of incised valleys along the coast with associated wooded sides provides a sharp contrast to the open mosaic of irregular pastoral fields."

Visual exposure:

"A broad landscape heavily influenced by the coastal landforms and associated panoramic views"

Development and activity:

"Remote and largely inaccessible"

"Settlement is characterised by small villages, hidden away in hollows with a limited network of small lanes."

Kimmeridge Valley LCA value characteristics

The LCA is designated as part of the Dorset AONB.

"This is a landscape of strong character as a result of the distinctive sweeping coastal landform. The distinct and recognisable pattern of features of open pastures, undulating cliffs and hidden settlements reinforce the strength of character of this coastal landscape. There are a number of areas where traces of medieval field systems survive on the higher ground particularly around Kimmeridge and South Elliston. Landscaping of historic parks at Encombe and around Smedmore contributes to the strength of character. There are relatively few detracting features that weaken the character."

Kimmeridge Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy

Turbine height (m)

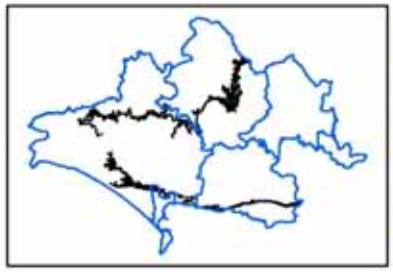
Cluster size	≤35	≤65	≤99	>99
1	MH	H	H	H
2-4	H	H	H	H
>4		H	H	H

Kimmeridge Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy

Development size (ha)	
≤1	MH
≤10	H
≤30	H
>30	H

Kimmeridge Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Kimmeridge Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Sensitivity to single turbines and 2-4 turbines less than 35m high is **moderate-high**. Sensitivity to all other scales of development is **high.** The complexity and strongly undulating profiles of the landform of this area, and distinctive coastal features indicate a high sensitivity to wind energy development of all scales. Whilst there is a mixture of intimate, incised valleys and more open pattern of irregular pastoral fields, the attributes of both these contrasting areas are both typically of high sensitivity to wind energy development. Development is very limited and the landscape retains a strong remote and rural character which indicates high sensitivity to wind energy development. From the upper valley sides, extensive views are available along the valley and to the coast and development would typically be visible over a wide area, although visibility can be limited within the valley floors. The steep ridge enclosing the area to the north (separating it from the Corfe Valley LCA) and the Purbeck Limestone Plateau to the east, have high inter-visibility with the area and the scenic, sweeping views along the coastal edge, such as those from Swyre Head Viewpoint, are an important and valued feature of the landscape. Sensitivity is likely to be particularly high: • In areas which form part of the setting of Kimmeridge Bay; • In any location where the introduction of turbines may diminish the prominence of the distinctive landscape features such as the church towers or which may diminish the scale of the surrounding ridges and hills.	Sensitivity to solar PV development of less than 1 hectare is **moderate-high** and sensitivity to larger development is **high.** This LCA comprises both steep, exposed slopes and the more enclosed areas within narrow valleys, both topographically very sensitive to this form of development. The more dramatic slopes, such as that rising up to Swyre Head and Tynham Caps are particularly sensitive. The pattern and textures of the pastoral fields are generally simple and unified and enclosures are of a small scale and irregular, often closely corresponding to the profile of the underlying landform. The coherence, scale and pattern of the land cover indicate high sensitivity to new geometric forms being imposed. Development is very limited and the pastoral farmland retains a very remote and rural character highly sensitivity to solar PV development. The area is overlooked by the elevated ridge enclosing the area to the north, the Limestone Plateau to the east, as well as from hills within the LCA. Woodland, which could serve to partly screen small scale development, tends to be concentrated within the narrower valleys, such as that surrounding Encombe House and Hill Bottom in the east of the area. Due to the steep topography and secluded qualities would be highly sensitive and probably pose technical constraints. Developments located in all other areas are likely to be highly visible from a wide area and appear incongruous with the existing landscape in these views. Sensitivity is likely to be particularly high: • At the coastal edges and where development might coincide with sweeping views along the coast. • In any location where the introduction of solar PV farms may affect views within and to Kimmeridge Bay.

Landscape character type: Chalk Ridge/Escarpment



District boundary

AONB

Dorset Landscape Character Type

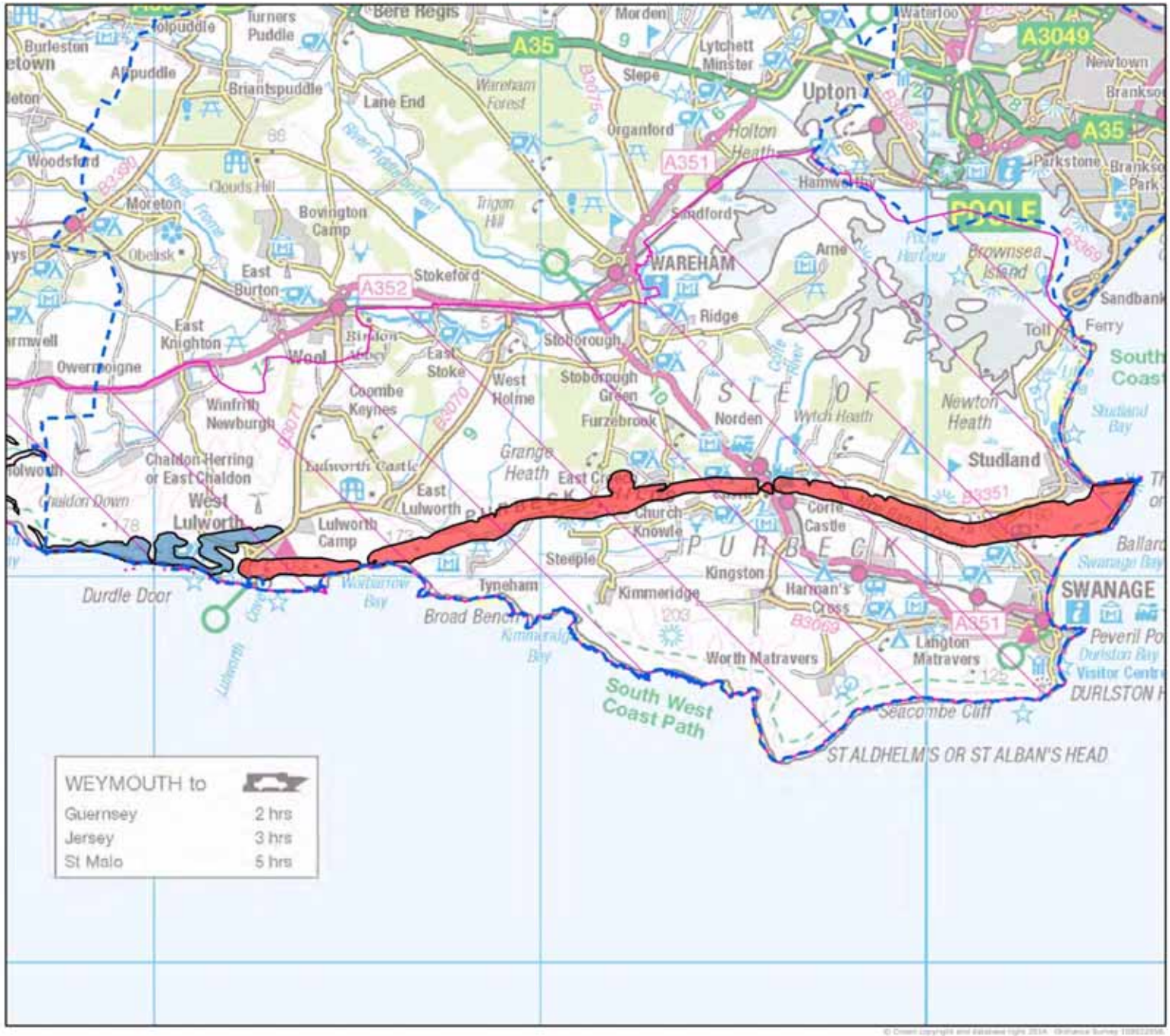
13. Chalk Ridge/Escarpment

Purbeck Landscape Character Area

13A - Purbeck Ridge

13B - South Dorset Escarpment

0 2.5 5 km



Chalk Ridge / Escarpment LCT overview	
Chalk escarpments form an almost unbroken band marking the northern, western and southern edges of the chalk hills of Dorset and also represent the slopes up to the highest areas in the county (the hill crests themselves are in some cases categorised as Chalk Valley & Downland LCT), rising dramatically above the surrounding lowlands. In Purbeck the Purbeck Ridge cuts east-west through most of the District, with a small gap to the South Dorset Escarpment, only the eastern end of which falls within the District.	
Chalk Ridge / Escarpment LCT characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"Steep, distinctive and bold ridge and scarp slope on the edges of the chalk landscapes"* *"… variations in character and landform often based on geology and patterns of erosion"*	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"With an undeveloped and open character and bold skyline, this landscape type supports important patches of chalk grassland and hanging mixed woodlands which together often form broad distinctive patterns and adds variety along the steep scarp slopes"* *"In many locations the small scale pattern of fields extends up the scarp slopes from the valleys below gradually giving way to larger fields or open downland"*
Visual exposure: *"… a bold, dominant and prominent visual edge which helps enclose the surrounding landscapes"* *"… woods are often very visible landmarks"* The uncluttered character of the skyline formed by the chalk escarpment is a key element in views from within the AONB and beyond.	**Development and activity:** These strong, exposed slopes are unsettled other than by a few scattered farms, with settlement being focused along the foot of the scarp slope. A remote, isolated character persists.
Chalk Ridge / Escarpment LCT value characteristics	
The chalk escarpment offers the most dramatic scenery and viewpoints in the County, recognised by the inclusion of all of the LCT in AONBs. Public rights of way give recreational access to many of the high points and along much of the ridge top. Many escarpment locations are in the care of the National Trust and the ecological importance of unimproved chalk grassland slopes is recognised in a number of SSSI and SNCI designations. *"There are many ancient hillforts several of which are key landmarks..."* Strip lynchetts add historic value and landscape character in some locations. The overall management objective for the Chalk Ridge/Escarpment is to *"conserve the uninterrupted landform, strong open skyline and the distinct mosaic patterning of woodland, scrub and chalk grassland". Guidance notes make reference to the need to "Identify, protect and enhance important views to and from the ridge/escarpment e.g. via Parish Action Plans, Village Design Statements and other Settlement Appraisals", and to "… enhance the sense of continuity and openness across the escarpment/ridge tops and associated monuments."*	

Chalk Ridge / Escarpment LCT sensitivity to wind energy	Chalk Ridge / Escarpment LCT sensitivity to solar PV energy
The scarp is a dramatic landform and a significant feature, forming a strong, recognisable skyline and horizon. It retains a strong feeling of remoteness and tranquillity engendered by the absence of built development, and the elevated landform and long views contribute to a sense of isolation. The landscape is therefore highly sensitive to the introduction of built form and movement associated with turbines and infrastructure, which could dilute these special perceptual characteristics. Further sensitive attributes include the archaeological features and their setting, woodland, chalk grassland and parks/designed landscapes. All of these elements are highly sensitive to the intrusion of a prominent vertical structure and associated infrastructure. The highly prominent and elevated scarp landform, predominantly open character and extensive views that can be obtained to and from the ridge are all highly sensitive.	The scarp is a dramatic landform and a significant feature, forming a strong, recognisable skyline and horizon. Steep, open, distinctive and highly visible slopes would be very susceptible to adverse effects on landscape character as a result of solar energy development. The scarp also retains a strong feeling of remoteness and tranquillity engendered by the absence of built development, and the elevated landform and long views contribute to a sense of isolation. The landscape is therefore highly sensitive to the introduction of built form which could dilute these special perceptual characteristics. Further sensitive attributes include the archaeological features and their setting, woodland, chalk grassland and parks/designed landscapes. All of these elements are highly sensitive to distinctive, geometric, modern structures, and the predominantly open character and extensive views that can be obtained to and from the ridge add to the sensitivity of the LCT.

Landscape character area: Purbeck Ridge

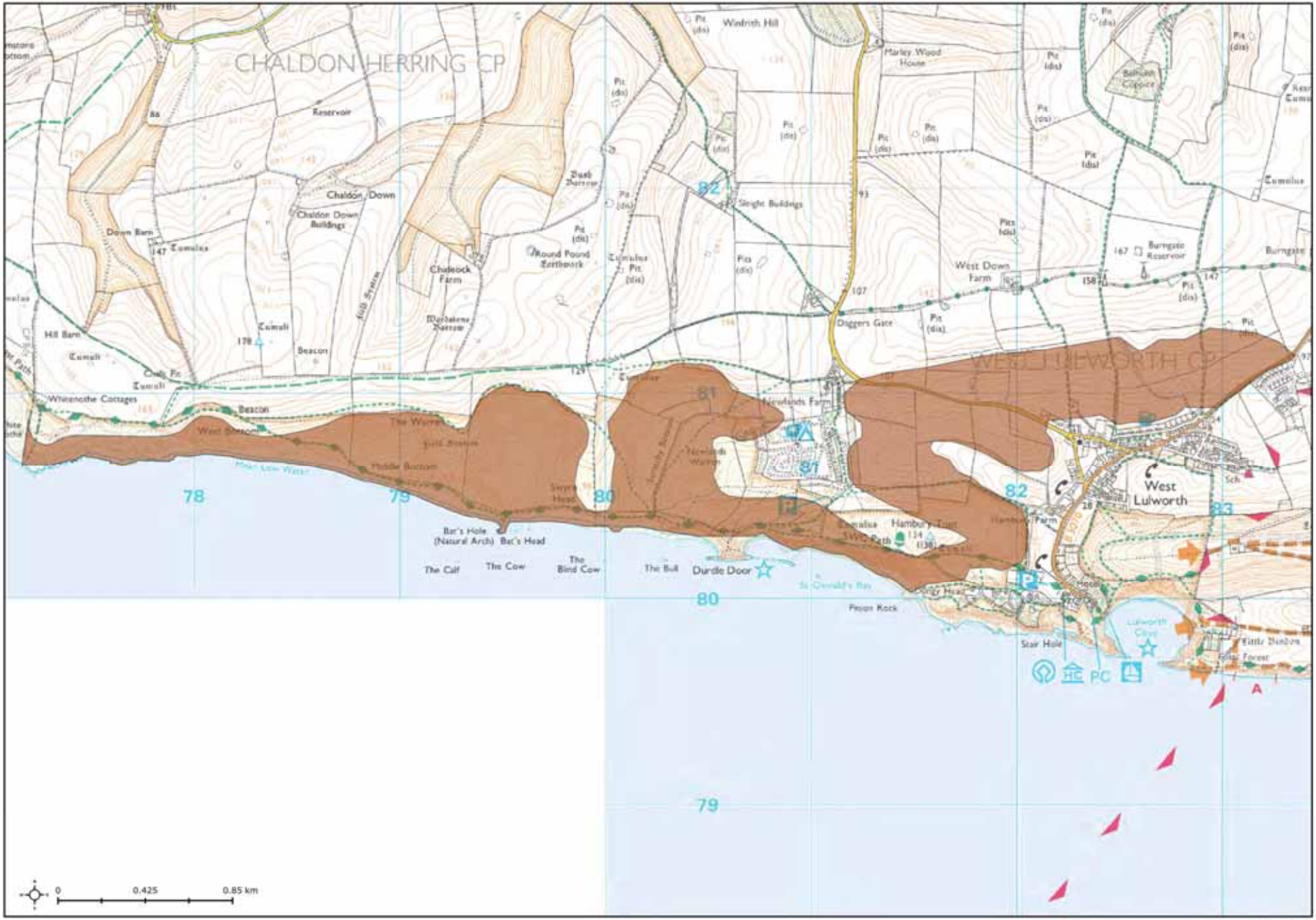
Area: 1233 hectares

Purbeck Ridge LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"The Purbeck Ridge is a dominant steep sided, undulating chalk ridge, separating and contrasting to the flat heathlands in the north and the patchwork landscape of the Corfe Valley to the south."* *"The physical dominance of this dramatic landform is clearly evident from the surrounding landscapes."*	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"The open flat ridge top consists of a mixture of pastoral and arable landuse with significant patches of scrub encroachment. There are important areas of chalk grassland along the southern length of the ridge and attractive woodlands on the northern side that blend into the surrounding wooded landscapes towards the heaths."* *"Patchwork of small scale pastoral fields on lower slopes with scattered farmsteads along the ridge bottom" and "Extensive areas of unimproved calcareous downland turf on steep slopes". There are however larger rectangular arable fields on the ridge top.*
Visual exposure: *"Panoramic long distance views of the surrounding landscapes"* *"The ridge dominates the surrounding landscape with a textured appearance of scrub and extensive darker areas of woodland. It has a powerful, wild appearance due to its open and exposed nature with commanding views of most of Purbeck, Poole Harbour and the coast."*	**Development and activity:** *"The area is devoid of settlement except for occasional small farmsteads, at least medieval in origin, on the lower slopes of the ridge. It is largely uncultivated along the slopes with unenclosed grazing of rough pasture. The west of the area is dominated by the Ministry of Defence ranges."*
Purbeck Ridge LCA value characteristics	
The LCA forms a particularly prominent and iconic landscape within the Dorset AONB. Of particular note are the *"Landmarks and historical interest along the ridge add cultural value to this exposed and inspiring formation. These include Creech Barrow, with its conical shape and rough vegetation, and Flowers Barrow, Nine Barrows and Bindon Hill."*	

Purbeck Ridge LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Purbeck Ridge LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Turbine height (m) Cluster size ≤35 ≤65 ≤99 >99 1 H H H H 2-4 H H H H >4 H H H	Development size (ha) ≤1 H ≤10 H ≤30 H >30 H
Purbeck Ridge LCA sensitivity to wind energy	**Purbeck Ridge LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy**
The chalk ridge/escarpment is highly valued in scenic, historic and recreational terms, reflected in its AONB designation, and so would be highly sensitive to wind energy development of any scale. Even scale small turbines would still be very visible across wide areas. The introduction of turbines into the landscape is likely to have an adverse effect, detracting from the historic character, open, uncluttered and distinctive skylines and strong sense of tranquillity.	The combination of strong natural landform, with steep, exposed slopes and ridge tops, presence of large areas of unimproved chalk grassland and high landscape value in terms of scenic, historic and recreational interest (reflected in the AONB designation) make this LCA of high sensitivity to solar energy development of any scale.

Landscape character area: South Dorset Escarpment

Area: 254 hectares

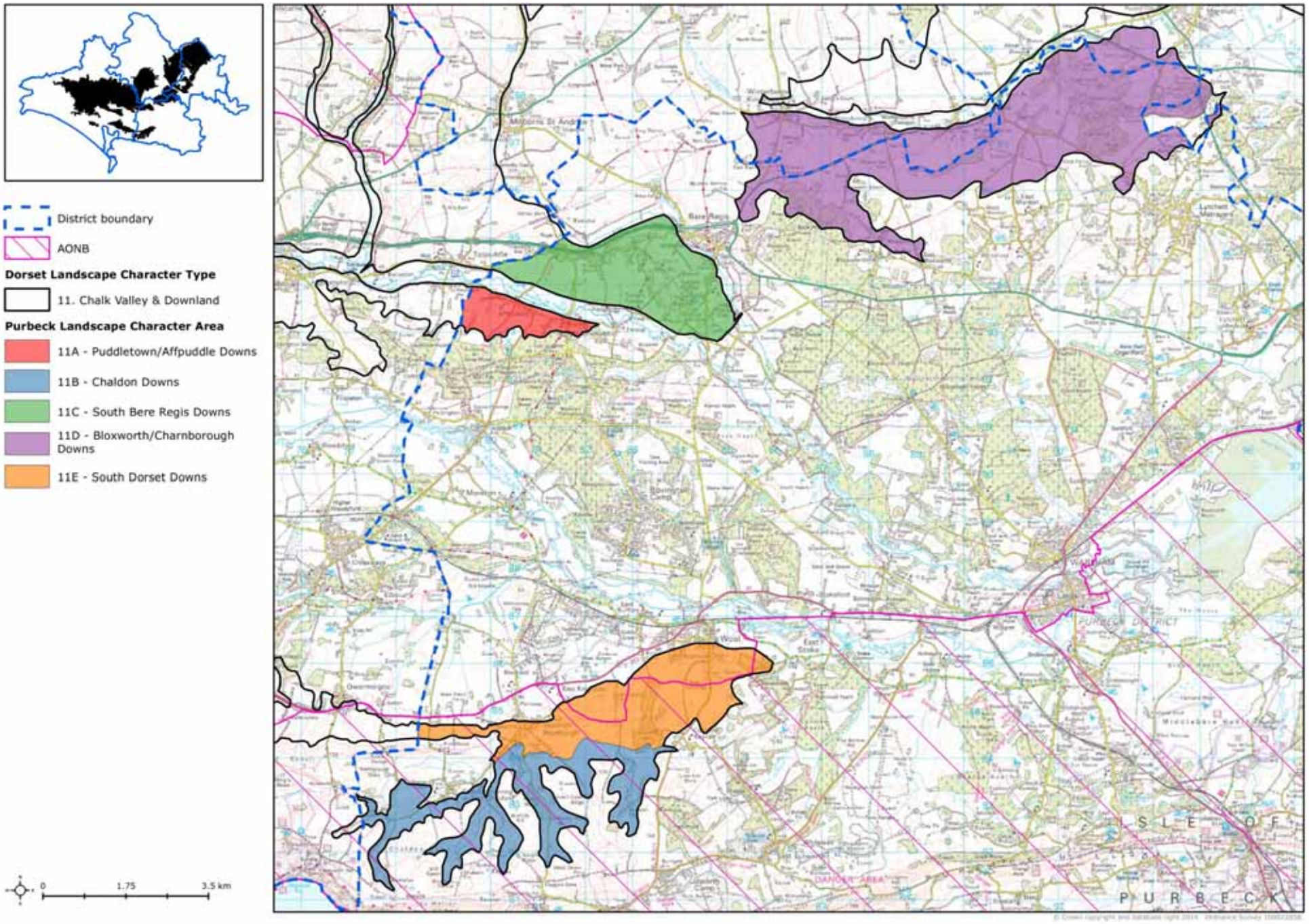


South Dorset Escarpment LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"A dramatic and exposed steep and narrow escarpment with occasional rounded spurs and deep coombes"* *"The landform is less sinuous than the other escarpments across the AONB, running almost in a straight east-west line, forming a physical barrier to the chalk landscapes to north and the coastal landscapes to the south."*	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"Patchwork of small scale pastoral fields on lower slopes with scattered farmsteads located at gaps in the escarpment."* *"Areas of rough unimproved calcareous downland turf on steep slopes with soil creep."* *"Large, straight-sided arable fields of late regular 18th or early 19th century enclosures on escarpment top Occasional hanging ancient oak, ash, hazel woodlands on lower slopes. "* *Dense gorse scrub on steep ridge sides."*
Visual exposure: *"Panoramic views of the surrounding coastal landscape"*	**Development and activity:** *"Largely due to the steep topography, the escarpment is mostly unsettled with occasional isolated farmsteads. Towards the lower slopes, small farmsteads and nucleated villages, at least medieval in origin, lie along the spring line with regular enclosures towards the base of the escarpment."* *"Communication masts, modern barns, major roads and powerlines have a negative landscape impact in places…"*
South Dorset Escarpment LCA value characteristics	
The area is part of the Dorset AONB and its dramatic and exposed landform forms a distinctive feature of the coastal landscape within Purbeck. *"The ridge dominates the surrounding landscape with an open, rugged appearance of rough grasslands. It has a powerful, almost wild appearance due to its open and exposed nature, subject to powerful coastal forces."*	

South Dorset Escarpment LCA sensitivity to wind energy	South Dorset Escarpment LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Turbine height (m) Cluster size ≤35 ≤65 ≤99 >99 1 H H H H 2-4 H H H H >4 H H H	Development size (ha) ≤1 H ≤10 H ≤30 H >30 H

South Dorset Escarpment LCA sensitivity to wind energy	South Dorset Escarpment LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Within Purbeck the chalk ridge/escarpment forms a relatively small area comprising steep, intricately contoured slopes which drop down dramatically from the Chaldon Downs to the sea. The escarpment forms an important backdrop to the settlement of West Lulworth as well as the setting to Durdle Door. It is highly valued for its scenic qualities, reflected in it AONB designation, with long dramatic coastal views extending as far as Portland, and it is heavily used for recreation. Topographically and in terms of the value attached to it, it would be highly sensitive to wind energy development of any scale. Wind turbines of all scales are likely to diminish the perceived scale and dramatic forms of the escarpment. Development across this area is extremely limited and any development is likely to affect its wild and remote qualities.	The combination of strong, dramatic landform, with steep, exposed slopes, presence of large areas of unimproved chalk grassland and high landscape value in terms of scenic, historic and recreational interest (reflected in the AONB designation) make this LCA of high sensitivity to solar energy development of any scale.

Landscape character type: Chalk Valley & Downland

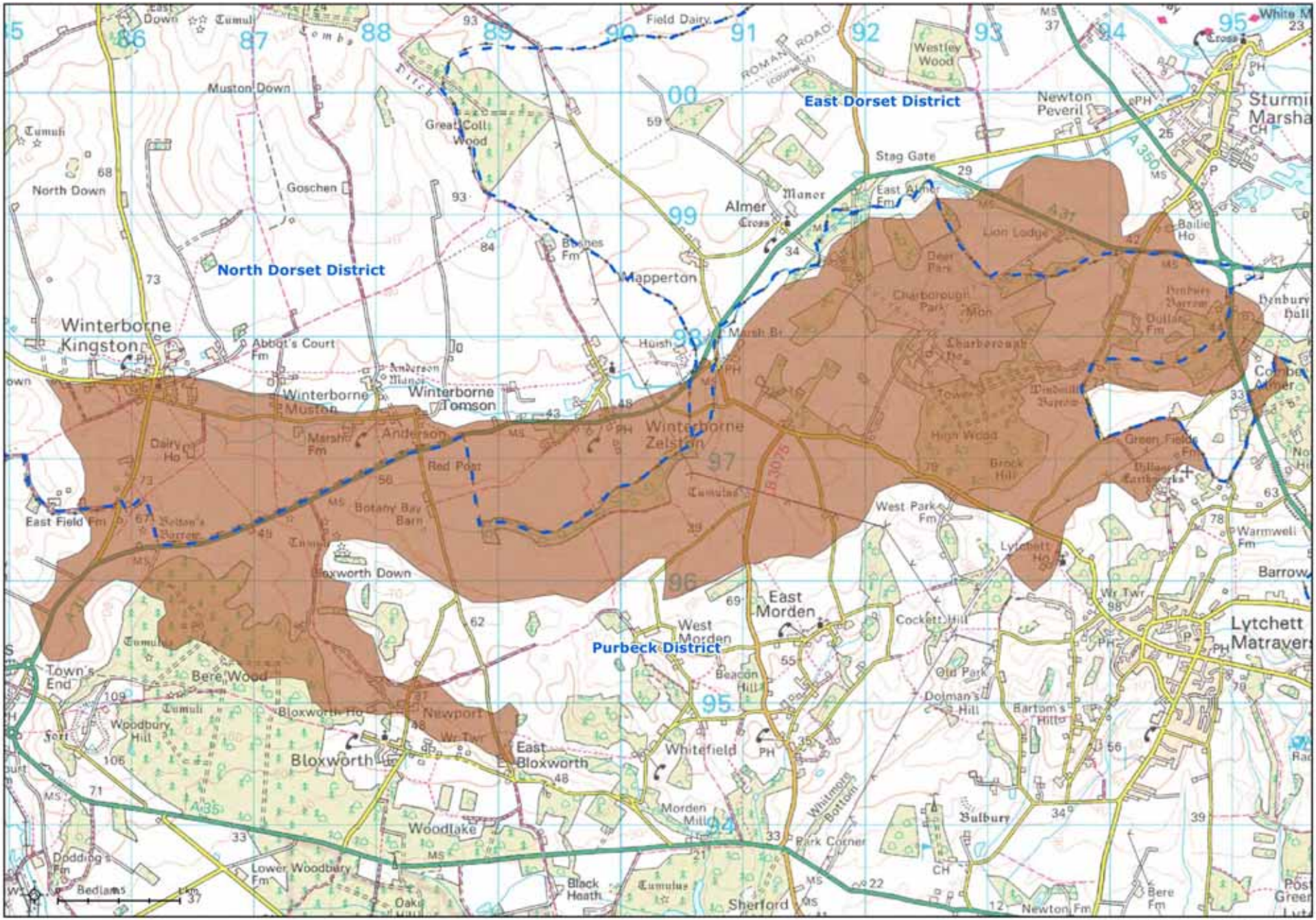


Chalk Valley & Downland LCT overview	
The Chalk Valley and Downland LCT, and associated chalk landscape types, occur extensively across Dorset. In Purbeck there are Chalk Valley and Downland landscapes in the north western part of the District and also the south west, associated with adjacent Open Chalk Downland and Chalk Escarpment. The Bloxworth/Charborough Downs span the north west corner of the District and parts of North and East Dorset too (the sensitivity assessment covers the Chalk Valley and Downland for this LCA across all three districts), and the South Bere Regis Downs and Puddletown/Affpuddle Downs lie just to the south west. The south eastern end of the South Bere Regis Downs LCA is categorised at County level as part of the Valley Pasture LCT, and the District Assessment states that *"the low lying fields in the east form part of the Frome meadows pasture and contrast with the elevated nature of the rest of the area"*, so this area of the LCA is assessed as part of the Upper/Mid Piddle Valley Pasture LCA. Both the Chaldon Downs and the South Dorset Downs, which extend westwards into West Dorset, incorporate areas of Open Chalk Downland LCT as well as Chalk Valley & Downland. Unlike most of the chalk valleys in North and East Dorset districts, the Chalk Valley and Downland is not sufficiently distinct from the valley floor to warrant designation of separate Chalk River Valley Floor LCT areas.	
Chalk Valley & Downland LCT characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: "*Extensive and uniform area of chalk covering a large part of the county"…" The whole area is undulating with an inverted saucer shaped profile and a gentle dip slope towards the Frome valley and Poole Basin linking into the escarpment landscape along its remaining edges."* Within the broader chalk landscape there are distinctive valley forms, ranging from shallower coombes to more incised chalk river valleys (the valley floors are assessed as a separate LCT), but landform scale is typically large.	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"Large arable fields subdivided by low, thin and straight hedges"*
Visual exposure: *"…has a dominant visual influence being more extensive and generally more elevated than other landscape types in the county with open views from elevated positions."*	**Development and activity:** The area is sparsely settled, with most habitation being located in the river valleys along the margins of the LCT. The area retains a strong agricultural character.
Chalk Valley & Downland LCT value characteristics	
Most of the Chalk Valley & Downland area in the south west of the District, where the chalk escarpment is in relatively close proximity, lies within the Dorset AONB. The Dorset AONB includes a wide range of landscapes, the contrast and diversity of which is one of the 'special qualities' of the designated area, but the chalk downs are particularly associated with a distinctive sense of place, panoramic views, individual landmarks, an undeveloped rural character and a sense of remoteness and tranquillity. The Bloxworth/Charborough Downs and South Bere Regis Downs, which are more remote from the most dramatic chalk landscapes, are not designated. The principal management objective for Chalk Valley & Downland LCT is to conserve the distinct landscapes.	

Chalk Valley & Downland LCT sensitivity to wind energy	Chalk Valley & Downland LCT sensitivity to solar PV energy
The chalk downlands are an undulating landscape which in topographical terms can typically be considered moderately sensitive to wind energy development, and the large scale and openness of the landscape suggest a lower susceptibility to wind energy development. Visibility within the LCT is limited in valley locations but higher downs offer extensive views so development would typically be visible over a wide area. Adjoining LCTs, most notably the Chalk Ridge/Escarpment but also other chalkland LCTs and Valley Pasture, have high inter-visibility with many downland areas and there is a high potential for distinctive horizon lines to be interrupted, distorting the sense of balance in what is currently a very open landscape with few features to break distant skylines. In terms of development and human influence this is a rural landscape with little modern intrusion, so sensitivity is relatively high. The combination of landform, openness and arable cultivation create a distinctive landscape which is valued for its scenic and perceptual qualities. A large scale landscape can be considered more able to accommodate strong features such as wind turbines than a more human-scale environment, but in all other respects the distinctive character of the Chalk Valley and Downland LCT, the value of which is recognised by the extent of AONB coverage, can be considered highly sensitive to wind turbines. Its distinctive visual lines and uniformity deriving from an absence of visual clutter could be compromised by the introduction of high vertical structures with movement. The positioning of turbines in locations on valley sides would raise the prospect of 'disembodied' turbine blades appearing in what are currently very open views from higher ground, in which valleys beyond the immediate vicinity are only barely perceptible (contributing to the sense of remoteness and tranquillity that are 'special qualities' of the AONB).	The chalk downlands are an undulating landscape which in topographical terms can typically be considered moderately sensitive to solar energy development, but the large scale and openness of the landscape suggest a higher susceptibility to solar PV energy development. Visibility within the LCT is limited in valley locations but higher downs with large, open areas and only low hedging mean that development would typically be visible over a wide area. Adjoining LCTs, most notably the Chalk Ridge/Escarpment but also other chalkland LCTs and Valley Pasture, have high inter-visibility with many downland areas. In terms of development and human influence this is a rural landscape with little modern intrusion, so sensitivity is relatively high. The combination of landform, openness and arable cultivation create a distinctive and uniform landscape which is valued for its scenic and perceptual qualities, and the general absence of modern development and frequency of ancient monuments add a sense of 'time depth'. Sensitivity to solar energy developments in this LCT would typically be high, adding uncharacteristic shapes and textures to an uncluttered landscape.

Landscape character area: Bloxworth / Charborough Downs

Area (within Purbeck): 1359 hectares



Bloxworth / Charborough Downs LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria

Scale and complexity of landform:

"A varied character area but largely dominated by large scale open chalk upland which gradually slopes down to the Lower Winterborne Valley along its northern fringes"

Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

"…intensively farmed regular sized large fields are subdivided by thin and weak hedgerows with the occasional hedgerow tree characteristic of a 'planned enclosure' landscape"

"Individual mature parkland trees"…"Old estate lodges, gateposts and walls abutting lanes are key features in parts of this area"

"Interconnected and enclosing woodland blocks along high ground"

Visual exposure:

"There are open views across the Winterborne valley from elevated positions."

There are views from lower-hedged stretches of the A31 into much of the area, with middle-distance views to the chalk downs to the north of the Winterborne Valley (although not to the more dramatic higher ridges further north). There is a shorter horizon to the south, with wooded high ground in the western part of the LCA.

Development and activity:

"The area has few settlements with Winterborne Kingston, Tomson, Anderson, Zelston and Muston (all part of the linear Winterborne 'family' of villages/hamlets) being found along the edges of the area abutting the Winterborne valley and following the straight valley floor road network. There are a few isolated farmsteads in the area and the A31 cuts through its north edges creating in particular an audible impact on the character area."

Bloxworth / Charborough Downs LCA value characteristics

There are no landscape designations relating to this LCA in North Dorset or Purbeck, although within East Dorset the LCA is part of the Stour Valley AGLV.The estate parkland landscape of Charborough Park is a key feature influencing the Purbeck and East Dorset parts of the LCA. The LCA includes the northern part of Bere Woods, which is a prominent skyline feature to the south west.

Bloxworth / Charborough Downs LCA sensitivity to wind energy

Turbine height (m)

Cluster size	≤35	≤65	≤99	>99
1	M	MH	H	H
2-4	MH	H	H	H
>4		H	H	H

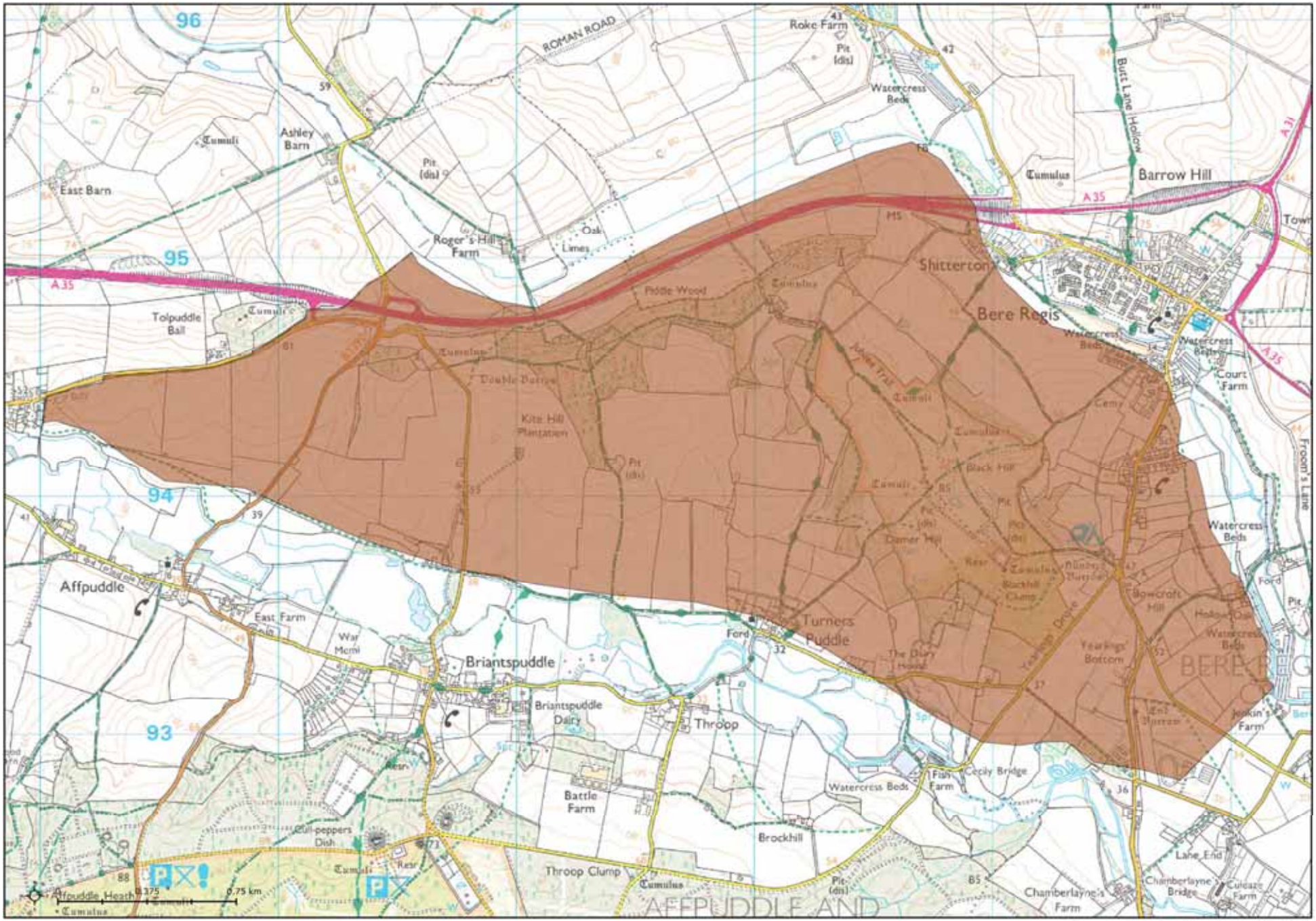
Bloxworth / Charborough Downs LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy

Development size (ha)	
≤1	LM
≤10	M
≤30	M
>30	MH

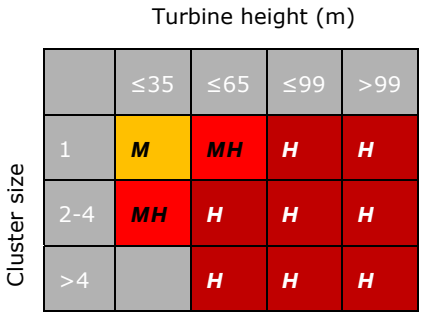
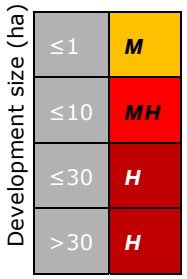
Bloxworth/Charborough Downs LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Bloxworth/Charborough Downs LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Sensitivity to single turbines less than 35m high is **moderate**. Sensitivity to 2-4 turbines less than 35m high, or single turbines 36-65m high, is **moderate-high**. Sensitivity to all other scales of development is **high.** The busy A31 makes the lower, northern part of area less tranquil than most Chalk Valley & Downland LCAs, and the landform is less distinctive than that which is associated with the narrower north-south stretches of chalk river valley further north, but proximity to the lower Winterborne villages, with their smaller-scale valley floor landscape, raises sensitivity to wind turbines. Sensitivity could be higher where: • Site is prominent from the floor of the Winterborne Valley, in particular from settlements; • Location detracts from prominence of the tower at Charborough Park in views, or the historic character of the park's setting.	Sensitivity to solar farms of less than 1 hectare is **low-moderate,** sensitivity to solar farms of less than 30 hectares is **moderate** and sensitivity to larger development is **moderate-high.** This LCA forms only the lower slopes of the downs in the broad lower part of the Winterborne Valley, so topographically (disregarding technical issues relating to availability of sunlight on north-facing slopes) it is more suitable for solar PV installations than many downland LCAs, and the geometric, arable fields are also of relatively low sensitivity. The busy A31 makes the lower, northern part of area less tranquil than most Chalk Valley & Downland LCAs. Sensitivity could be higher where: • Site is prominent from the floor of the Winterborne Valley, in particular from settlements; • Location affects the historic character of Charborough Park; • Fields shapes are irregular.

Landscape character area: South Bere Regis Downs

Area: 670 hectares



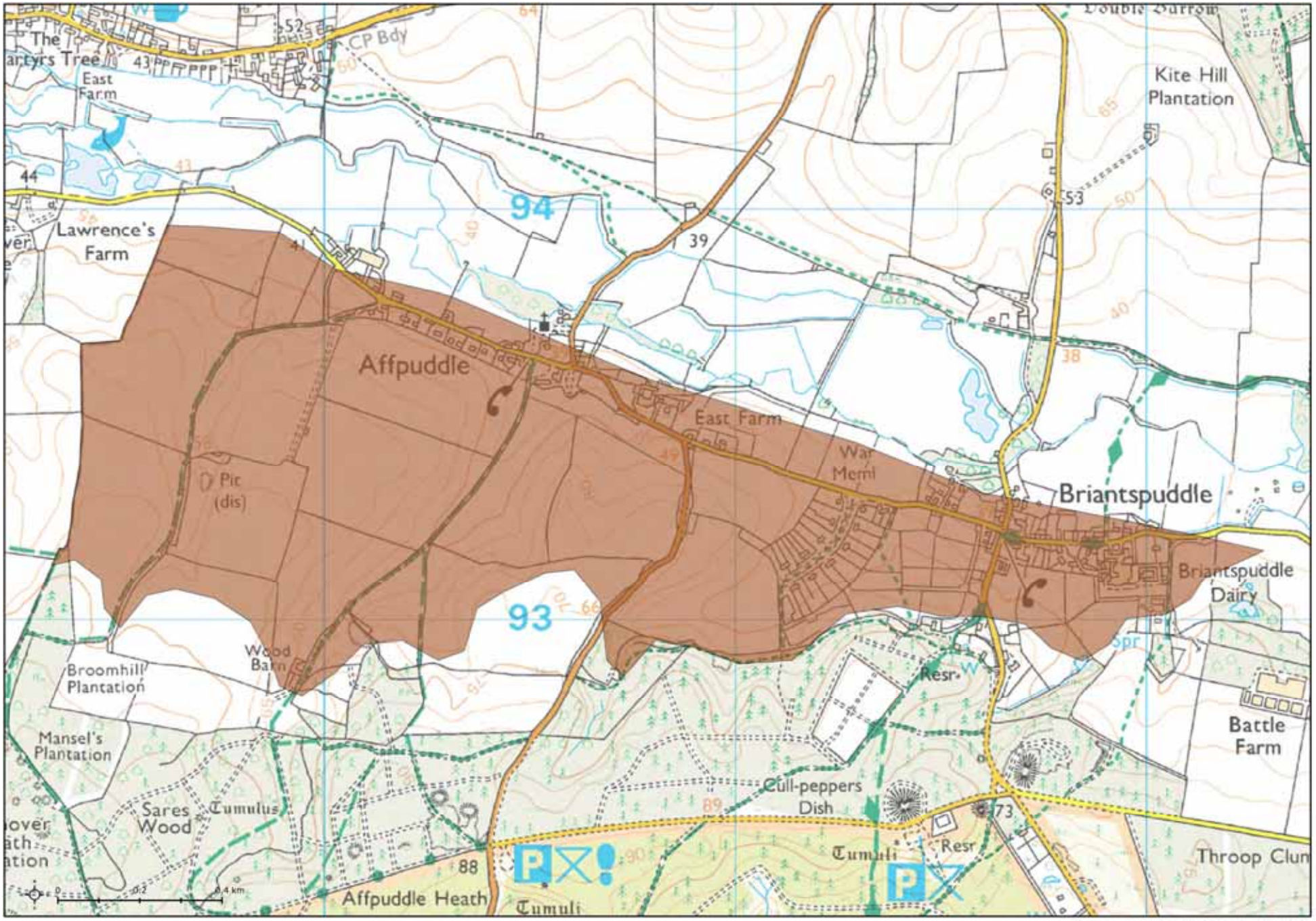
South Bere Regis Downs LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"a spur of mainly chalk high ground divided and bounded by the River Piddle valley to the south and Bere Stream valley to the east"* *"The prominent elongated whale back landform of Black Hill, Damer Hill and the high ground associated with Kite Hill plantation and Piddle/Shitterton Woods provides a distinctive feature"*	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"elevated dense woodland/plantation at Kite Hill plantation and Piddle/Shitterton Woods"* *"There are undulating and rolling arable geometric fields on the chalk around the fringes of the high ground with thick hedges and small copses"* *"Overall this landscape is intact due partly to the reasonable condition and continuity of thick hedgerows which interconnect the significant blocks of mixed woodland"*
Visual exposure: The hills that form this LCA are locally prominent in views from the surrounding valleys and from the North Bere Regis Downs and Puddletown/Affpuddle Downs.	**Development and activity:** *"The A35 corridor defines the northern edge of the area and does create an audible impact in particular on the character area"* *"The eastern end of the area is influenced by the urban edges of Bere Regis, which is the only settlement in the area apart from the fringes of Turners Puddle. In places this hard edge impacts on views from well-used footpaths."*
South Bere Regis Downs LCA value characteristics	
There are no landscape designations relating to this LCA. *"Black Hill and Damer Hill form a local landmark of historic, wildlife and amenity value … These hills are well used and accessible areas of open space close to Bere Regis with the Jubilee Trail passing over Black Hill"* *"Black Hill Heath … forms part of the Dorset Heathlands SPA and Dorset Heath SAC"*	

South Bere Regis Downs LCA sensitivity to wind energy	South Bere Regis Downs LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
	

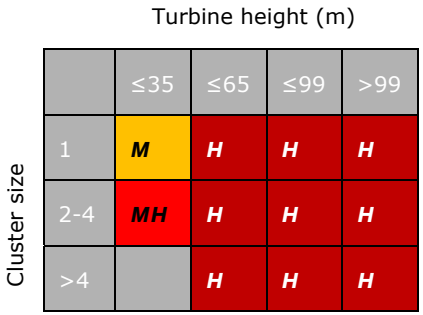
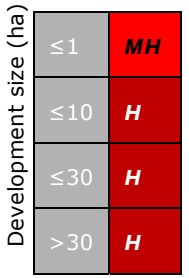
South Bere Regis Downs LCA sensitivity to wind energy	South Bere Regis Downs LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Sensitivity to single turbines less than 35m high is **moderate**. Sensitivity to 2-4 turbines less than 35m high, or single turbines 36-65m high, is **moderate-high**. Sensitivity to all other scales of development is **high.** The combination of undulating, high ground, distinctive woodlands, intervisibility with river valleys and recreational value make these hills sensitive to wind energy development, despite the fact that they are not remote from activity (i.e. the A35). There are a few farm building groups on lower slopes within the LCA with which small turbines could be associated. Sensitivity could be higher where: • Development would have skyline impact in relation to linear or cross-valley views from the floor of the Piddle Valley or the Bere Stream valley south of the A35, in particular from settlements; • Development would detract from the prominence and character of Black Hill, Damer Hill or Tolpuddle Ball (just to the west of the District Boundary); • Development would be prominent in expansive views from the Jubilee Trail, or from open access area on Black Hill and Damer Hill.	Sensitivity to solar farms of less than 1 hectare is **moderate** and sensitivity to solar farms of less than 10 hectares is **moderate-high**. Sensitivity to larger development is **high.** The distinctive undulating and open nature of the chalk downland and visual relationships with Bere Regis and settlements in the Piddle Valley are likely to be sensitive to the geometric forms of solar PV development. There may be locations on lower slopes, particularly in association with existing built development, when smaller solar schemes would be less intrusive. Sensitivity could be higher where: • Site is prominent from the floor of the Piddle Valley or the Bere Stream valley south of the A35, in particular from settlements, detracting from the distinctive form of the hills and woods in the LCA; • Development is on distinctive rounded downland slopes, or more exposed and steeper upper slopes; • Development would be prominent in expansive views from the Jubilee Trail, or from open access area on Black Hill and Damer Hill.

Landscape character area: Puddletown / Affpuddle Downs

Area: 167 hectares



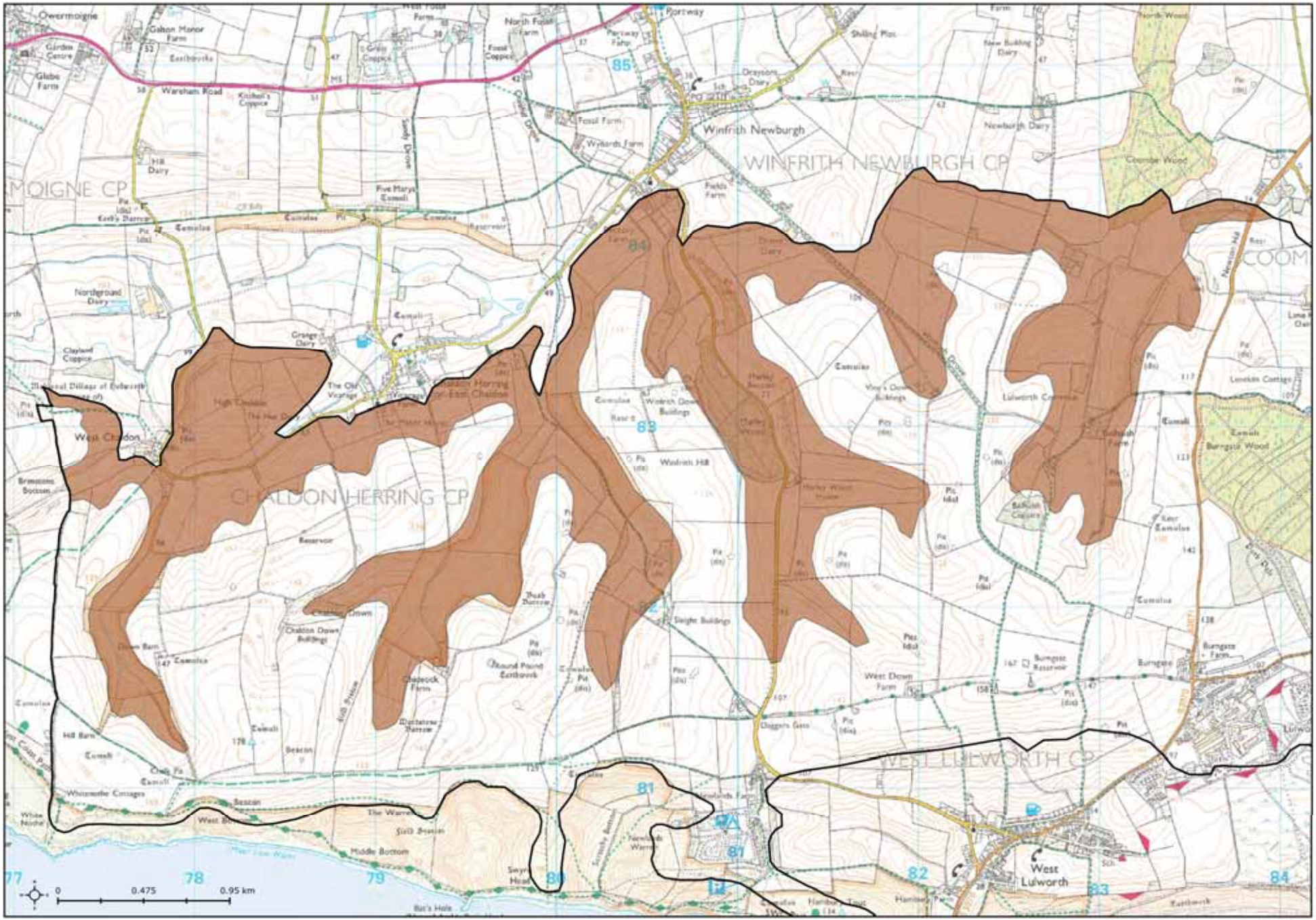
Puddletown / Affpuddle Downs LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"…an open rolling chalk valley side, sloping down to the River Piddle valley with its alluvial flood meadows. There are some distinctive folds in the landform around Affpuddle which contributes to landscape character"*	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"The relatively large regularly shaped fields are characteristic of a 'planned enclosure' landscape and are bounded by some thick hedgerows and trees but most hedges are thin, low and in decline"* *"There are some important groups of trees around the settlement edges"*
Visual exposure: *"There are some open views west and north across the valley."* *"The wooded plantation along the ridgeline to the south defines the area and provides a backdrop"*	**Development and activity:** *"…narrow hedge lined lanes link the villages along the lower valley side. There is a distinctive building style and form to the settlements which are located at the river crossing points"*
Puddletown / Affpuddle Downs LCA value characteristics	
This LCA does not have any landscape designation. *"An intact landscape in an apparently good condition created by the distinctive settlement and road pattern and the close and harmonious relationship this has with the surrounding landscape. The link between the valley floor and sloping valley sides contribute to this condition and integrity."* *"Culturally this is part of an important river valley landscape"* *"The buildings grouped adjacent to the war memorial in Bladen Valley create a distinctive local feature"*	

Puddletown / Affpuddle Downs LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Puddletown / Affpuddle Downs LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
	

Puddletown / Affpuddle Downs LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Puddletown / Affpuddle Downs LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Sensitivity to single turbines less than 35m high is **moderate**. Sensitivity to 2-4 turbines less than 35m is **moderate-high**. Sensitivity to all other scales of development is **high.** The distinctive folding topography of the chalk valley side, the scale of the landform and the land cover and its important visual relationships with Affpuddle, Tolpuddle and the Piddle Valley makes this area of downland sensitive to wind energy development. The area of downland forms a distinctive and undeveloped backdrop to the small Piddle Valley and development in this area is likely to intrude on the small, human scale landscape and the strong rural an tranquil qualities. On lower slopes within the LCA small turbines could potentially be less intrusive and associated with farm buildings. Sensitivity could be higher where: • Development would interrupt the skyline in views within or across the Piddle Valley, in particular from settlements; • Development would detract from the prominence and character of the hills; • Development would be prominent in expansive views from amore elevated areas of the hills that enclose the valley to the north.	Sensitivity to solar farms of less than 1 hectare is **moderate-high**. Sensitivity to larger development is **high.** The distinctive folding topography of the chalk valley side, its medium scale and visual relationships with Affpuddle and the Piddle Valley makes this area of downland sensitive to solar PV development. Although the medium scale fields which are more geometric may be of a lower sensitivity in terms of their pattern, the landform and the open character of the development increases sensitivity to this form of development overall. There may be locations on lower slopes, particularly in association with existing built development and where greater woodland cover and a denser network of hedges could contain views, where smaller solar schemes would be less intrusive. Sensitivity could be higher where: • Site is prominent from the floor of the Piddle Valley and Affpuddle detracting from the distinctive form and scales of the downland; • Development is on distinctive rounded downland slopes, or more exposed and steeper upper slopes.

Landscape character area: Chaldon Downs (part)

Area: 643 hectares



Chaldon Downs LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria

Scale and complexity of landform:

"The landscape has a broad open rolling landform with smooth convex summits incised by small-scale valleys with occasional steeper escarpments"

Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

"A predominantly arable landscape divided into large, straight-sided fields of late 18th or early 19th century enclosures with hazel hedgerows,"

"…textured patchworks of large fields…"

"Occasional old hazel coppice stands and small broadleaved woodlands on gentle slopes"

Visual exposure:

Views tend to be enclosed within this area by the steep slopes, although framed views along the rounded valley sides open out from the upper slopes which extend into the surrounding landscape.

Development and activity:

"Low density scattered settlement of farmsteads and the occasional downland nucleated villages of cob, stone and thatch on valley floors"

"Winding rural roads with wide verges along valley floors and a network of farm tracks along the valley sides"

Chaldon Downs LCA value characteristics

The Chaldon Downs are part of the Dorset AONB.

"Secluded, intimate and tranquil character"

"The strength of character of this area is judged to be strong, with the overall combination and patterns of features consistent throughout the landscape."

Chaldon Downs LCA sensitivity to wind energy

Turbine height (m)

Cluster size	≤35	≤65	≤99	>99
1	H	H	H	H
2-4	H	H	H	H
>4		H	H	H

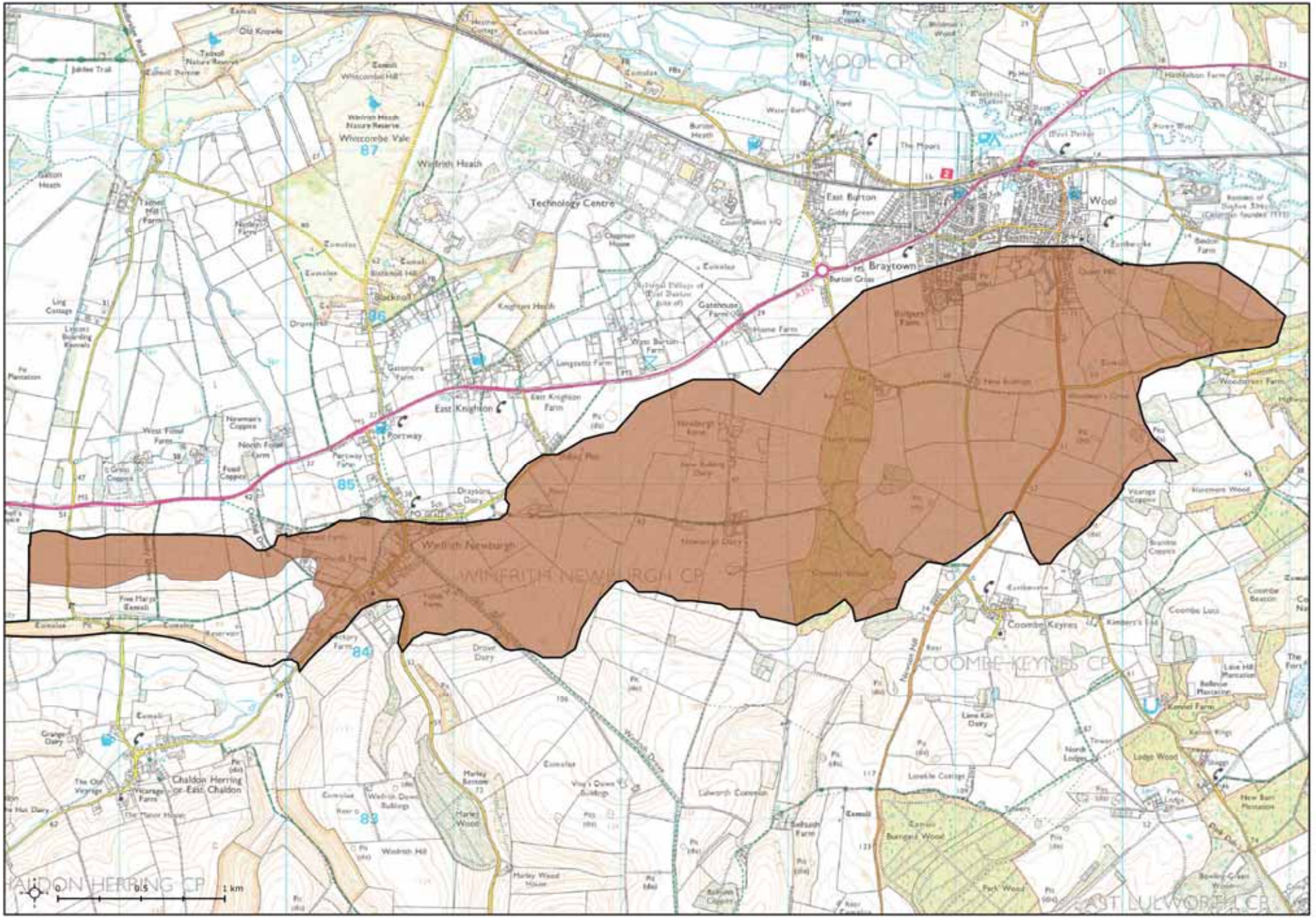
Chaldon Downs LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy

Development size (ha)	
≤1	H
≤10	H
≤30	H
>30	H

Chaldon Downs LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Chaldon Downs LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Sensitivity to all scales of development is **high.** Whilst the medium scale of this landscapes is typically considered to be less sensitive to large scale features such as wind turbines than a more human-scale environment, the enclosed character and particular qualities of this downland are considered to be highly sensitive to wind turbines. The steep, rounded slopes of the downs together with the undeveloped and rural character of this more intimate area of downland create a unique landscape which is highly valued for its scenic and perceptual qualities, characteristics are recognised by its designation within the Dorset AONB. The Chaldon Downs are visible in views available from adjoining LCTs to the north, including the Ridge and Vale LCA to the north and form part of the views to the more elevated areas of the Chaldon Downs. The introduction of development within the area could potentially interrupt the distinctive and open skylines in views from the surrounding valleys and ridges and from the enclosed vale to the north of High Chaldon.	Sensitivity to all development is **high.** This LCA forms the steeper, lower slopes of the downs, and this undulating landscape in topographical terms is typically considered to be sensitive to solar energy development. Visibility within the lower and more incised valleys is limited but the upper slopes with large, open areas and only low hedging mean that development would be visible over a wide area. Adjoining areas, most notably the Ridge and Vale to the north of High Chaldon, have high inter-visibility with parts of this downland area. The scale and geometric field pattern would typically be considered to be of lower sensitivity to solar PV development. However, the distinctive rounded landforms combined with the character of the open fields would mean that development would be widely visible and would be highly sensitive to solar PV development. The area is valued for its distinctive, simple and uniform pattern of smooth slopes and pastoral fields as well as its strongly rural, undeveloped character. These qualities are recognised in its designation within the Dorset AONB and would be highly sensitive to the introduction of solar arrays.

Landscape character area: South Dorset Downs (part)

Area: 729 hectares

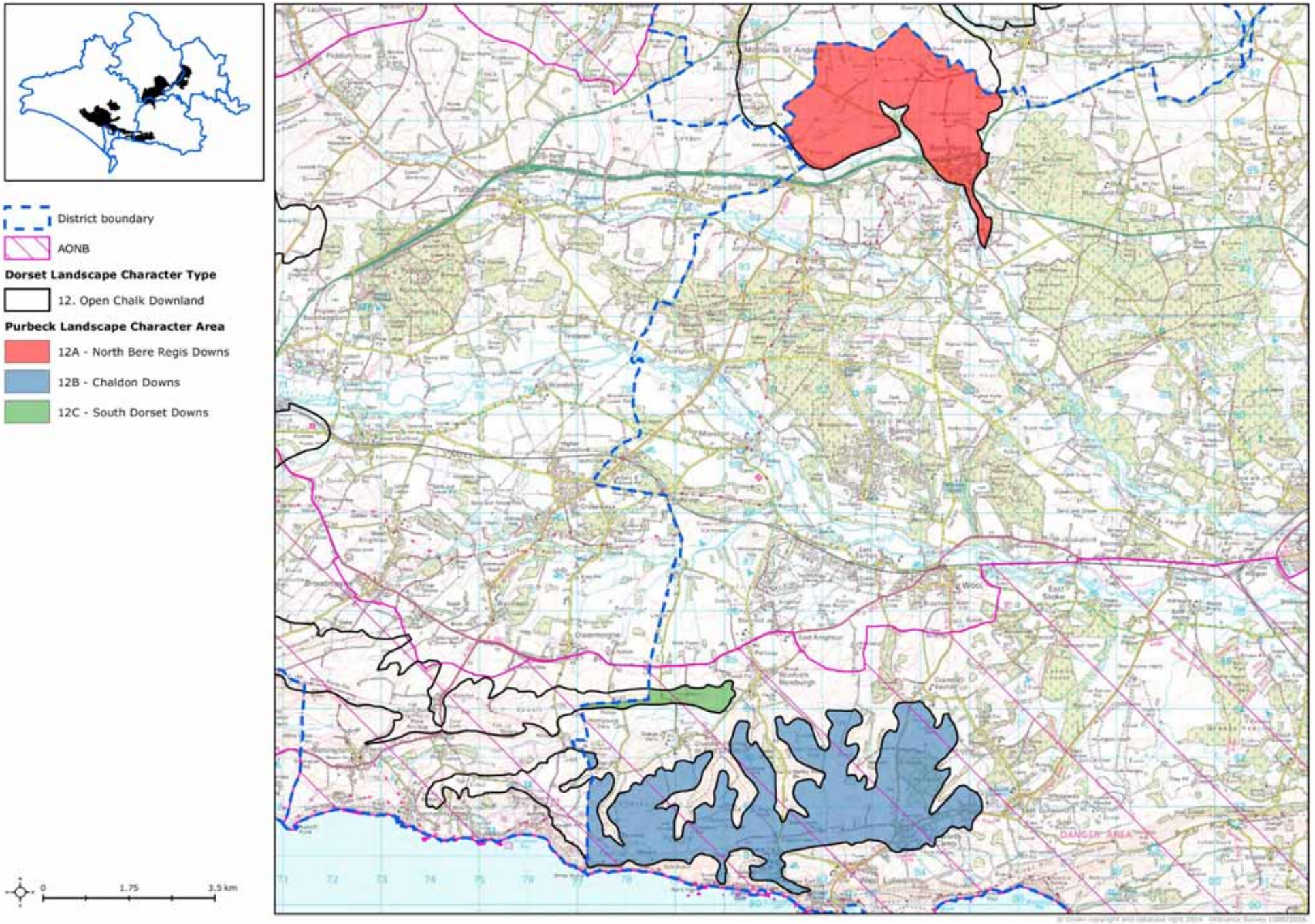


South Dorset Downs LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"Broad open rolling uplands with convex slopes and broad dry valleys giving way to large open skies and distant horizons"* *"Within Purbeck District the valley forms in the South Dorset Downs are indistinct. The area represents the lower end of valleys that are more distinctive in the Chaldon Downs to the south, where they rise up to Open Chalk Downland"*	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"A simple pattern of regular dense hedgerows enhance the sense of structure with occasional broadleaved woodlands set within a mixed pastoral and arable landscape. The landscape has a textured appearance due to agricultural patterns of arable cultivation on gentle slopes, some rough grazing on the deeper valley sides and largely pastures on the broad valley floors."* *"Large, straight-sided arable and pastoral fields of late 18th or early 19th century enclosures with hazel hedgerows"* *"Valley slopes with patches of semi-natural chalk grassland, old hazel coppice stands and small broadleaved woodlands"* *"Remnant winding chalk winterbourne with floodplain supporting occasional water meadows, wet woodlands, water cress beds and rough damp meadows"*
Visual exposure: *"Large open skies and distant horizons"* The northern extent of the area is visible in views from open areas of heathland within the Crossways/Winfrith Lowland Farmland and Heathland to the north, in which it forms a low, even and undeveloped skyline to the south.	**Development and activity:** *"Straight rural lanes with occasional farmsteads with a series of small linear and nucleated villages of brick and flint, stone, thatch and cob along the valley floor"* Within this area of the South Dorset Downs LCA settlement is limited to the small village of Winfrith Newburgh which is settled within the gentle slopes of the downland and the southern extents of Wool, which is well defined by woodland.
South Dorset Downs LCA value characteristics	
The boundary of the Dorset AONB divides this LCA, with some of the north eastern part of the area, to the south of Wool and around Newburgh Farm, falling outside of the designation. *"The area is judged to have a moderate strength of character. The open character of the broad landform and agricultural patterns ensures a continuity of characteristic features. However, the overall combination and patterns appear less consistent and therefore less distinct than Chaldon Downs for example."* *"The southern part of the area retains a strong rural character."*	

South Dorset Downs LCA sensitivity to wind energy	South Dorset Downs LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Turbine height (m) Cluster size ≤35 ≤65 ≤99 >99 1 MH MH H H 2-4 MH H H H >4 H H H	Development size (ha) ≤1 M ≤10 MH ≤30 H >30 H

South Dorset Downs LCA sensitivity to wind energy	South Dorset Downs LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Sensitivity to single turbines and 2-4 turbines less than 35m high, or single turbines 36-65m high, is **moderate-high**. Sensitivity to all other scales of development is **high.** This area of the South Dorset Downs LCA is characterised by more gentle, undulating topography on a smaller scale than the steep, dramatic topography of other parts of the South Dorset and the Chaldon Downs which lie adjacent to it to the south. The area nevertheless for the most part retains a rural and undeveloped character, one of the 'special qualities' of the Dorset AONB, and the complexity of the landform increases typical sensitivity of the area to wind farm development. Sensitivity could be higher where: • Site is prominent from more intimate and enclosed valleys, and in particular from the settlement of Winfrith Newburgh.	Sensitivity to solar farms of less than 1 hectare is **moderate** and sensitivity to solar farms of less than 30 hectares is **moderate-high**. Sensitivity to larger development is **high.** This LCA forms only the lower slopes of the downs and topography is therefore less strongly pronounced, although it is generally undulating and complex, indicating a moderate sensitivity to wind energy development. The rural and undeveloped character of much of the LCA, one of the 'special qualities' of the Dorset AONB, elevates sensitivity to solar PV development, although areas where more geometric arable fields predominate would be less sensitive than pastures or more irregular fields. Sensitivity could be higher where: • Site is prominent from the Frome Valley to the north and from more intimate and enclosed valleys, and in particular from the settlement of Winfrith Newburgh; • Fields shapes are irregular.

Landscape character type: Open Chalk Downland



Open Chalk Downland LCT overview

The Open Chalk Downland LCT forms part of the belt of chalk (also incorporating the Chalk Valley and Downland, Chalk Ridge/Escarpment and, towards the north of the county, Wooded Chalk Downland and Chalk Valley River Floor LCTs) that runs north east to south west through the centre of the county. It represents the areas which are not directly associated with the river valleys cut into the chalk or border it.

In Purbeck District there are two separate areas of chalk downland, in the north-west and south-west parts of the District. The North Bere Regis Downs and Puddletown/Affpuddle Downs form part of the chalk belt that cuts across the north-eastern corner of the District, subdivided by the Piddle Valley. To the south-west, the Chaldon Downs and South Dorset Downs form another section of the chalk belt, both of which are split at County level into areas of Open Chalk Downland LCT and Chalk Valley and Downland LCT. Although classified as Open Chalk Downland in the Dorset AONB Landscape Assessment, almost all of the South Dorset Downs area within Purbeck is defined in the County Assessment as Chalk Valley and Downland.

Open Chalk Downland LCT characteristics by susceptibility criteria

Scale and complexity of landform:

"Elevated areas of open chalk upland with a broad rolling landform… Gentle curving convex profiles to the landform"

This is a large scale landform.

Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

"Uniform and homogenous landscape character"

"Patchwork of large-scale arable fields subdivided by low, straight and weak hedges"

"Isolated small blocks of geometrically shaped woods"

Visual exposure:

"*An expansive open scale with panoramic views to distant landmarks"*

Development and activity:

"*Sparsely populated with few settlements and scattered isolated farmsteads"*

There is consequently a strong sense of remoteness.

Open Chalk Downland LCT value characteristics

The Chaldon Downs and South Dorset Downs are part of the Dorset AONB. This AONB includes a wide range of landscapes, the contrast and diversity of which is one of the 'special qualities' of the designated area, but the chalk downs are particularly associated with a distinctive sense of place, panoramic views, individual landmarks, an undeveloped rural character and a sense of remoteness and tranquillity. The North Bere Regis Downs and Puddletown/Affpuddle Downs are not designated.

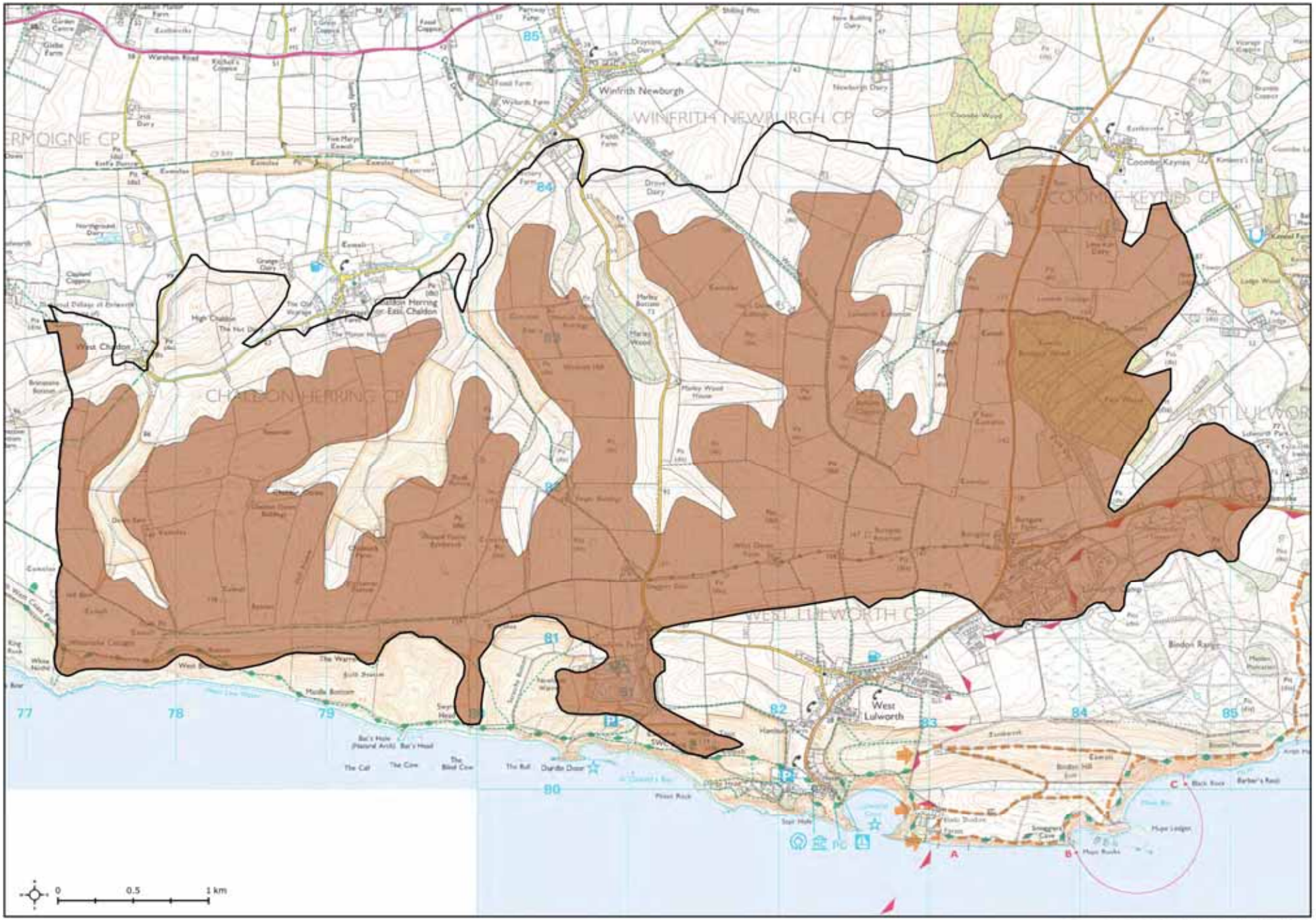
The principal Management Objective for the Open Chalk Downland LCT is to conserve the distinct landscapes, and the Management Objectives also make reference to restoring the condition of characteristic features so as to "*increase visual unity*" and "*make the combination of patterns and elements more distinct*".

The distinctive character of the Open Chalk Downland has literary associations with Thomas Hardy, and throughout the area there are ancient monuments in exposed locations which add an important historic dimension to the landscape.

Open Chalk Downland LCT sensitivity to wind energy	Open Chalk Downland LCT sensitivity to solar PV energy
This is an open, large scale landscape, and these characteristics are typically considered less sensitive to strong features such as wind turbines than more human-scale environments, but in all other respects the distinctive character of the Open Chalk Downland can be considered more sensitive to wind turbines. Its distinctive landform, uniformity deriving from an absence of visual clutter and visual openness are all valued characteristics of AONB downland which could be compromised by the introduction of high vertical structures with movement. In terms of development and human influence this is a rural landscape with little modern intrusion, so sensitivity is relatively high.	The undulating, rounded forms of the downland landscape are moderately sensitive to the introduction en masse of rigid forms such as solar panels, and the openness and large scale of the landscape, with low hedges, increases sensitivity. Geometric fields on more even slopes are of lower sensitivity if they are either reasonably well screened by woodland blocks or are located some distance from strong viewpoints, but the value attached to this AONB landscape, in which prominent modern development is rare, makes any location relatively sensitive to solar PV development.

Landscape character area: Chaldon Downs (part)

Area: 1455 hectares



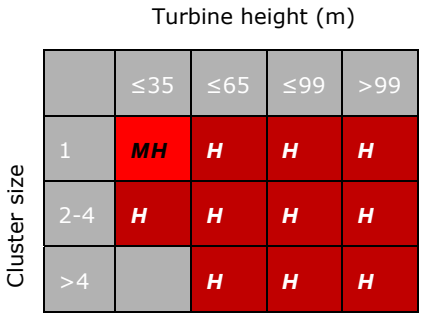
Chaldon Downs LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
• **Scale and complexity of landform:** *"The landscape has a broad open rolling landform with smooth convex summits incised by small-scale valleys with occasional steeper escarpments"* The Open Chalk Downland comprises the open, rolling downs. The incised valleys are categorised as part of the Chalk Valley and Downland LCT.	• **Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"A predominantly arable landscape divided into large, straight-sided fields of late 18th or early 19th century enclosures with hazel hedgerows, with post & wire on the higher ground"* *"Regular hedgerows enhance the sense of structure with occasional small broadleaved woodlands set within a mixed pastoral and arable landscape. The area has a textured appearance due to agricultural patterns of arable cultivation on gentle slopes, some rough grazing on the deeper valley sides and largely arable along the valley floors. Small nucleated villages dispersed within the landscape have a strong association with the agricultural character."* *"The broad chalk uplands have a remote and open character contrasting to small intimate valleys"* Historic land use is evident in the "*numerous prehistoric barrows on higher ground and extensive medieval field systems".*
• **Visual exposure:** *"Large open skies and distant panoramic views"* Visibility between the upper Open Chalk Downland and the adjacent Chalk Valley and Downland character type (which together comprise the Chaldon Downs LCA as defined within the Dorset AONB Landscape Character Assessment) is limited in some areas due to the steep slopes of the narrower chalk valleys containing views within them. The outer extents of the Open Chalk Downland do however form the skyline from within the valleys. Views across the downland are available in panoramic views from the upper slopes and ridge tops of the Purbeck Ridge LCA (of the Chalk Ridge/Escarpment LCT) which lies to the southeast. Visibility from the South Dorset Escarpment LCA tends to be more limited as the escarpment drops away abruptly at the southern coastal edge of the downland, restricting views inland. An exception is Hanbury Tout which forms a prominent hill and important backdrop to the village of West Lulworth. The northern slopes of the Chaldon Downs (both the areas defined as Open Chalk Downland and Chalk Valley and Downland LCTs) encloses the Osmington Clay Ridge and Vale LCA to the north, forming an integral part of its visual setting as a prominent, open, undulating skyline.	• **Development and activity:** *"The area is characterised by small nucleated settlements of largely cob, brick, flint and stone with a strong rural, agricultural association."* *"A network of winding lanes along the valley floors connect dispersed villages with farmsteads along the valley sides".* Settlement is generally very sparse and widely scatted across the area.

Chaldon Downs LCA value characteristics

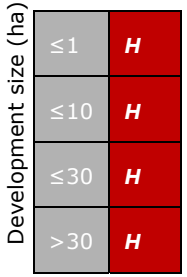
This LCA is part of the Dorset AONB. The South West Coastal Path runs through the south of the area and the area is crossed by a number of footpaths.

"The strength of character of this area is judged to be strong, with the overall combination and patterns of features consistent throughout the landscape."

Chaldon Downs LCA sensitivity to wind energy



Chaldon Downs LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy



Chaldon Downs LCA sensitivity to wind energy

Sensitivity to single turbines less than 35m high is **moderate-high**. Sensitivity to all other scales of development is **high.**

This is a simple, large-scale and expansive landscape which has a remote and exposed character which would typically suggest a lower sensitivity to wind energy development. Whilst large scale landscapes are typically considered to be more able to accommodate large scale features such as wind turbines than a more human-scale environment, the particular characteristics and qualities of this downland are considered to be highly sensitive to wind turbines. The rolling landform together with the open, undeveloped and rural character of this expansive area of downland create a unique landscape which is highly valued for its scenic and perceptual qualities. These aspects, together with the area's location as part of the undeveloped coastline, are identified as 'special qualities' of the Dorset AONB.

The Chaldon Downs are visible in important views available from adjoining LCTs, including the Ridge and Vale LCA to the north and the Chalk Ridge/Escarpment LCT to the east. The introduction of development within the area is likely to interrupt the

Chaldon Downs LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy

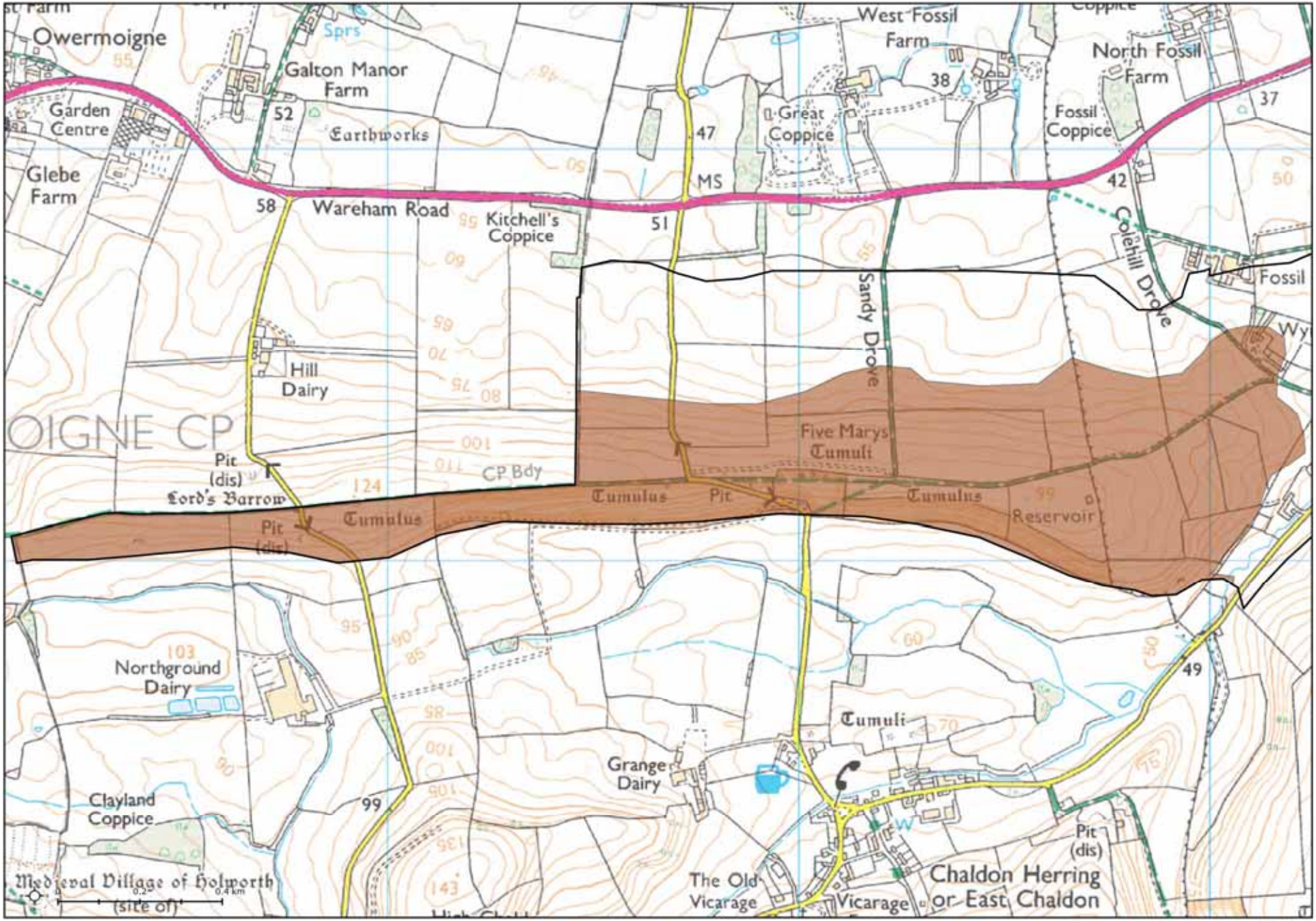
Sensitivity to all development is **high.**

This LCA forms the broad, upper slopes of the downs, and the scale and geometric field pattern would typically be considered to be of lower sensitivity to solar PV development. However, the exposed character of the open fields would mean that development would be widely visible and the rolling landform is highly sensitive to solar PV development. The area is valued for its distinctive, simple and uniform pattern of smooth slopes and pastoral fields as well as its remote, undeveloped character. These qualities would be highly sensitive to the introduction of solar arrays.

distinctive and open skylines in views from the surrounding valleys and ridges and in dramatic coastal views. Sensitivity is particularly high where: • Turbines would intrude on views along the undeveloped coastline; • Turbines would intrude on views from within surrounding valleys where the downland form a continuous, undeveloped skyline; and • Turbines could detract from the prominence of Hanbury Tout in views from West Lulworth and Lulworth Cove.	

Landscape character area: South Dorset Downs (part)

Area: 81 hectares



South Dorset Downs LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria

- **Scale and complexity of landform:**

"*The area has a structure of undulating topography with the open chalk uplands"*

"The uniformity of the landform with rolling, convex hills, gentle slopes and shallow valleys defines much of the open, large scale character of the South Dorset Downs"

In Purbeck District the Open Chalk Downland part of the LCA consists of the eastern and southern parts of a distinctive ridge, with steep slopes particularly to the south.

- Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

"Areas of downland and open ground are found on the higher ground"

Small arable fields on northern slope, mostly grassland and scrub on steeper southern slope…

- **Visual exposure:**

The ridge is prominent in views from all directions, including elevated views from Moigns Down to the west and from within the small enclosed vale to the south.

- **Development and activity:**

There is no habitation in the Open Chalk Downland part of this LCA within Purbeck District.

South Dorset Downs LCA value characteristics

This Open Chalk Downland part of the LCA lies within the Dorset AONB and forms an abrupt edge to the chalk downlands of south Dorset and Purbeck as they give way to the lowland heathlands and river valleys to the north.

"The area's rich time depth is reflected in the significant scattering of prehistoric barrows along the South Dorset Ridgeway"

A public right of ways runs along the ridge crest, providing expansive panoramic views in all directions.

South Dorset Downs LCA sensitivity to wind energy

Turbine height (m)

Cluster size	≤35	≤65	≤99	>99
1	***H***	***H***	***H***	***H***
2-4	***H***	***H***	***H***	***H***
>4		***H***	***H***	***H***

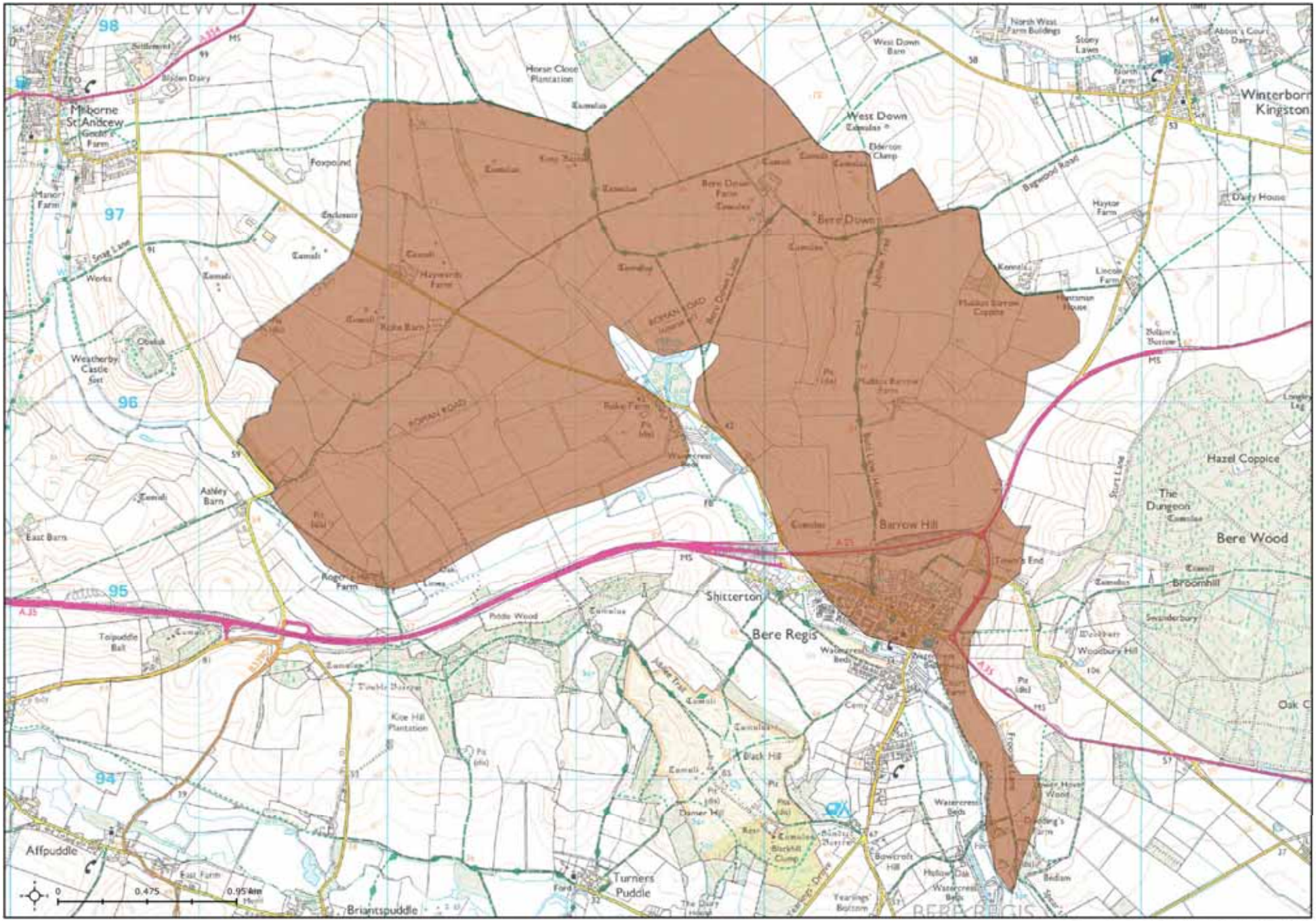
South Dorset Downs LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy

Development size (ha)	
≤1	***H***
≤10	***H***
≤30	***H***
>30	***H***

South Dorset Downs LCA sensitivity to wind energy	South Dorset Downs LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Sensitivity to single turbines less than 35m high is **moderate-high**. Sensitivity to all other scales of development is **high.** Within Purbeck the Open Chalk Downland part of the South Dorset Downs LCA forms a narrow and steep ridge that rises sharply up from the lowland. This is a distinctive and prominent landform, providing panoramic views and, with its ridge-top tumuli, constituting one of the landmarks that provide the sense of place that is a 'special quality' of the Dorset AONB. As such it is highly sensitive to all scales of wind energy development, although a slightly lower level of sensitivity might apply to the lower slopes to the north east of the ridge. This small area of the South Dorset Downs is widely visible from across a wide area to the north as well as forming an important skyline enclosing the Osmington Ridge and Vale LCA to the south. The introduction of development within the area is likely to interrupt the largely undeveloped skylines in views from the lowland heathland to the north. Turbines located on this ridge would also be likely to intrude on views from within the enclosed valley to the south as well as affect the setting of the Five Marys Tumuli.	Sensitivity to all development is **high.** The combination of strong landform, with steep, exposed slopes and ridge tops, presence of unimproved chalk grassland and high landscape value in terms of scenic, historic and recreational interest illustrate the 'special qualities' of the Dorset AONB and make this LCA of high sensitivity to solar energy development of any scale.

Landscape character area: North Bere Regis Downs

Area: 876 hectares



North Bere Regis Downs LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria

- **Scale and complexity of landform:**

"The area is characterised by its open, broad and rolling landform, distinctive of chalk upland landscapes"

- **Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:**

"…an intensively farmed arable landscape with large geometric shaped fields separated by thin, weak and straight hedges with few trees"

- **Visual exposure:**

"Open views across wide areas to horizons"

Within the LCA much of the higher ground is towards the margins, spreading upwards away from the valley at associated combes around Millum Head, which gives a remote character to the area other than towards the southern edge where it is exposed to views from the A35 in the valley and the South Bere Regis Downs LCA beyond.

- **Development and activity:**

"The few isolated farms are located off straight rural lanes and tracks and are often the only locations for tree groups"

"Bere Regis is bypassed by the A35 trunk road, which creates a visual impact in the southern part of the area"

North Bere Regis Downs LCA value characteristics

This LCA does not have any designation for landscape value.

"*The area is well served by public rights of way which are often based on ancient track ways and drove roads, including the Jubilee Trail over Bere Down. These historic tracks and Bere Down itself are all important local landmarks."*

"Numerous barrows, tumuli, drove roads and other historic environment features"

North Bere Regis Downs LCA sensitivity to wind energy

Turbine height (m)

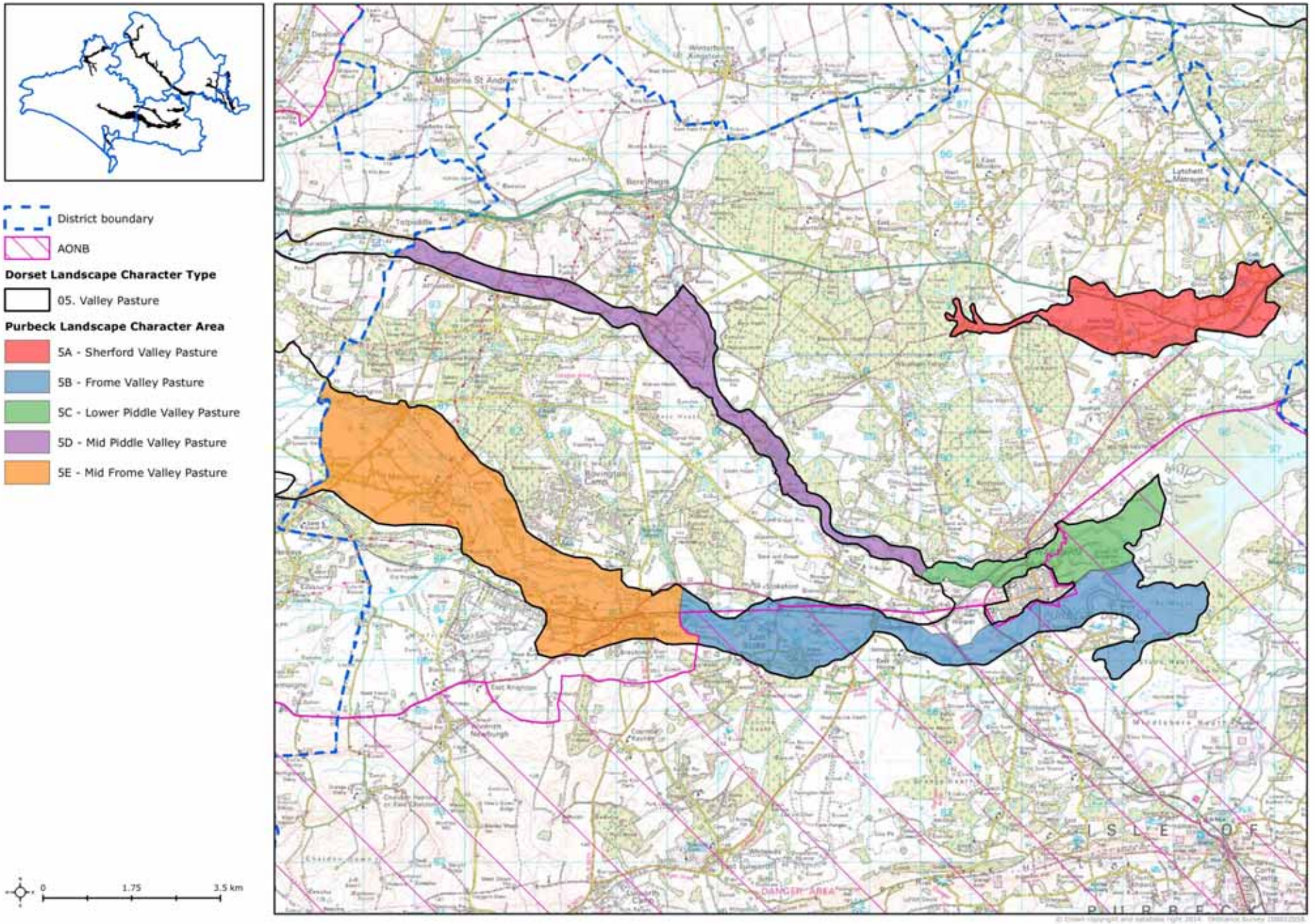
Cluster size	≤35	≤65	≤99	>99
1	M	MH	H	H
2-4	MH	H	H	H
>4		H	H	H

North Bere Regis Downs LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy

Development size (ha)	
≤1	M
≤10	M
≤30	H
>30	H

North Bere Regis Downs LCA sensitivity to wind energy	North Bere Regis Downs LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Sensitivity to single turbines less than 35m high is **moderate**. Sensitivity to 2-4 turbines less than 35m high or to single turbines 36-65m high is **moderate-high.** Sensitivity to all other scales of development is **high**. The homogenous, open character of the landscape is not highly sensitive to wind energy, but the presence of a number of distinctive hills in the vicinity elevates sensitivity. The character of the southern part of the LCA is adversely affected by the A35, and so of lower sensitivity. Sensitivity could be higher where: • There is a greater sense of remoteness, away from the southern part of the LCA; the upper parts of turbines located towards the margins of the area could loom large above shorter horizons, affecting the sense of scale and balance in the landscape; • Development appears prominent in context of smaller scale landscapes – e.g. the Milborne Valley, Bere Regis, Shitterton or the Bere Stream to the south of Bere Regis; • Location affects the prominence or character of Bere Down, Weatherby Castle, Woodbury Hill, Black Hill or Tolpuddle Ball; • Turbine is prominent in panoramic views from the Jubilee Trail.	Sensitivity to solar PV schemes of less than 10 hectares is **moderate**. Sensitivity to larger schemes is **high**. The open and homogenous character and undulating form of the downs would typically be sensitive to solar PV development, although this sensitivity would be reduced on lower, shallower slopes. Sensitivity could be higher where: • There is a greater sense of remoteness, away from the southern part of the LCA; • Development appears prominent in context of smaller scale landscapes – e.g. the Milborne Valley, Bere Regis, Shitterton or the Bere Stream to the south of Bere Regis; • Location is on more exposed, upper slopes; • Location affects the prominence or character of Bere Down, Weatherby Castle, Woodbury Hill, Black Hill or Tolpuddle Ball; • Location is prominent in panoramic views from the Jubilee Trail.

Landscape character type: Valley Pasture

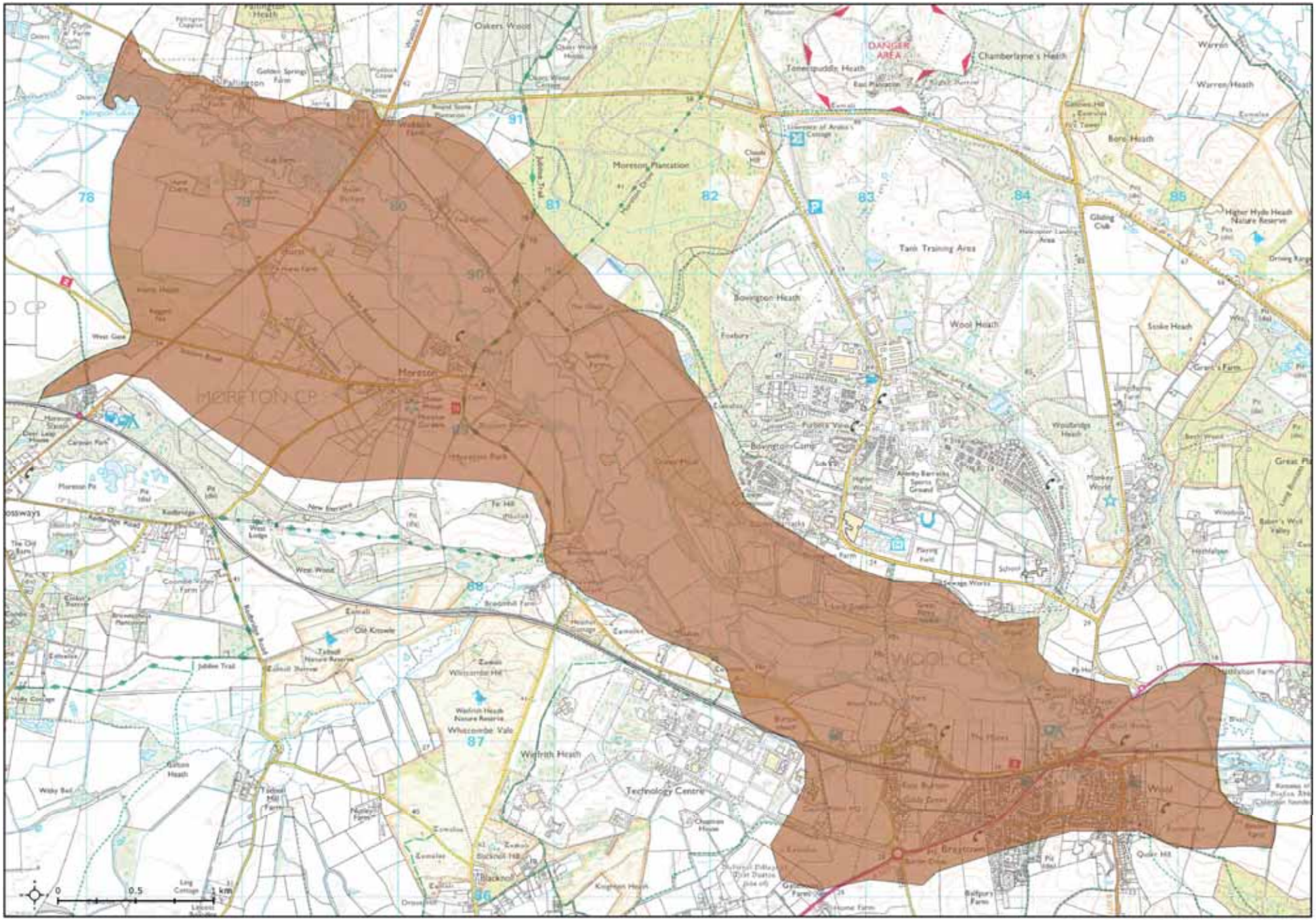


Valley Pasture LCT overview	
The Valley Pasture LCT is associated with the floodplains of three rivers that discharge into Poole Harbour: the Piddle, the Frome and the Sherford. The Piddle is subdivided into the Mid Piddle Valley and the Lower Piddle Valley; the District Assessment includes the Bere Stream valley as part of the former but at County level this is treated as Chalk River Valley Floor LCT. The Frome Valley is subdivided into the Mid Frome Valley and, representing the downstream part, the Frome Valley. The Sherford River discharges into Lytchett Bay, on the north side of Poole Harbour. There is an overlap between the Frome Valley LCA as defined in the Dorset AONB Landscape Character Assessment and the Lower Piddle Valley LCA as defined in the Purbeck District Assessment, with the former including the Piddle Valley to the east of Wareham. This sensitivity study uses the boundary defined in the Purbeck District Assessment.	
Valley Pasture LCT characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: "*Flat and open valley floor landscape with distinctively meandering river channels which often floods"* *"Widens out towards the coast and merges with the harbour side landscapes at Poole…"*	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** "*Typically a grazed pastoral landscape"* *"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 and features are common."*
Visual exposure: As flat, low-lying areas there will typically be exposure to views from surrounding higher ground, but in Purbeck the Valley Pastures are typically bordered by LCAs with a large woodland/plantation element, mostly in association with heathlands. Further from Poole Harbour, i.e. further west, there is a more marked change in elevation beyond the Valley Pasture, particularly where the Mid Piddle Valley is bordered by chalk downland.	**Development and activity:** "*The valley floors are the focus for settlements, transport and infrastructure corridors and historic river crossings"* *"Settlements … are often on the slightly elevated low terraces to the side of the valleys"* *"…sand and gravel extraction has and still is taking place, creating its own set of impacts"*
Valley Pasture LCT value characteristics	
The lower reaches of the Frome and Piddle valleys are part of the Dorset AONB. "*The valleys provide the historic and cultural setting to many county towns"* *"Historic river crossings points are often over old bridges"* The overall management objective for the LCT is "*to conserve the strong visual unity of the valley, the diversity of semi-natural habitats and to restore features such as wet woodlands pastures, water meadows, boundary features and historical lanes and bridges"*	

Valley Pasture LCT sensitivity to wind energy	Valley Pasture LCT sensitivity to solar PV energy
Areas of valley pasture where landscape character is dominated by the river are sensitive to wind energy schemes. Development located in the immediate proximity of a river might detract from its meandering landscape form. The character and sensitivity of the LCT is also subject to a variety of influences depending on the character of the landscape through which it passes. Valley Pastures are always topographically level, and so are not in themselves unsuitable for wind energy development in this respect, but where the surrounding landform rises to create a narrow valley sensitivity will be higher than is the case where the landform is a more open plain. In terms of land use, there is a traditional relationship between Valley Pastures and grazing, so sensitivity to development which is perceived as industrial rather than agricultural would be high in areas where modern development has a limited influence. Although development within floodplains is very limited, adjacent slightly elevated landscapes have historically attracted settlement and communications links, but in some locations the character of the landscape is still strongly influenced by historic features such as mills and bridges. Where there has been more modern development, such as business parks and power lines, sensitivity in terms of naturalness is more limited, but the extent of development and activity close to this LCT also gives a human scale to the landscape that would be sensitive to the introduction of wind turbines. Visually the degree of exposure varies depending on surrounding landscapes, with less intervisibility where the landscape is well treed, but more in the vicinity of higher hills and in particular the chalk downs.	Areas of valley pasture where landscape character is dominated by the river will be very sensitive to solar energy schemes. Any development in the immediate proximity of the river might detract from its meandering landscape form. The character and sensitivity of the LCT is also subject to a variety of influences depending on the character of the landscape through which it passes. Valley Pastures are always topographically level, and so are not in themselves unsuitable for solar PV development in this respect, but where the surrounding landform rises to create a narrow valley sensitivity will be higher than is the case where the landform is a more open plain. In terms of land use, there is a traditional relationship between Valley Pastures and grazing, so sensitivity to development which is perceived as industrial rather than agricultural would be high in areas where modern development has a limited influence. Water meadows and rough grazing land would be particularly sensitive, but arable land which has intruded on the pastoral character would be less sensitive. Although development within floodplains is very limited, adjacent slightly elevated landscapes have historically attracted settlement and communications links, but in some locations the character of the landscape is still strongly influenced by historic features such as mills and bridges. Where there has been more modern development, such as business parks and power lines, sensitivity in terms of naturalness is more limited. Visually the degree of exposure varies depending on surrounding landscapes, with less intervisibility where the landscape is well wooded, but more in the vicinity of higher hills and in particular the chalk downs.

Landscape character area: Mid Frome Valley

Area: 1322 hectares



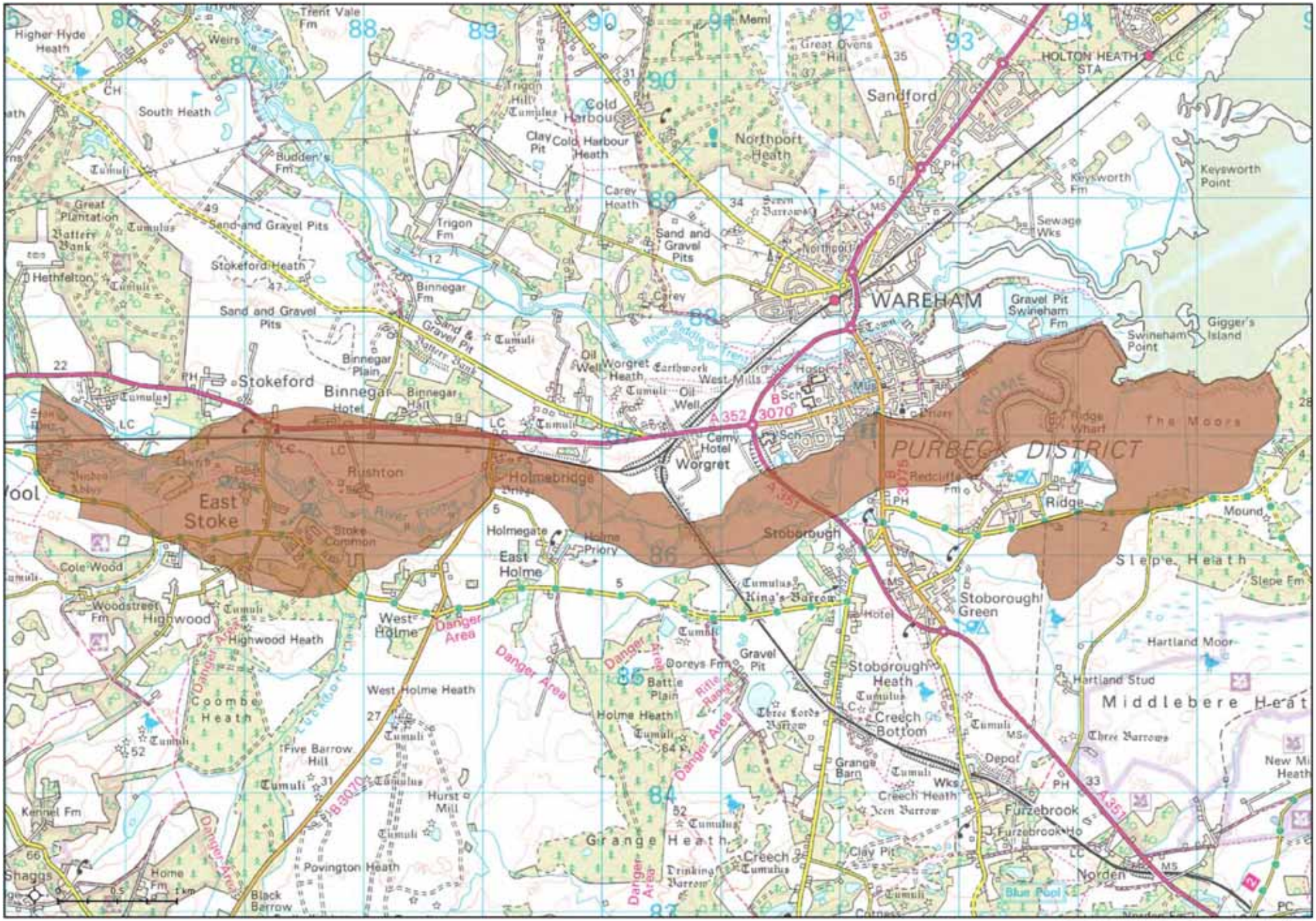
Mid Frome Valley LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"This is a wider alluvial valley than the Upper/Mid Piddle Valley, sandwiched between two slightly elevated areas of heath/scrub/farmland. The flat flood plain accommodates the meandering Frome and its many associated wet ditches, small tributaries and channels."*	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** "*Margins of trees associated with these wetland elements create important landscape features and a distinctive pattern. The slightly elevated land to the north and south on the valley sides is largely arable farmland with medium sized regularly shaped fields which are cultivated hard up to blocks of fringing woodland. This contrasts with the rough grazed land and smaller fields abutting the river and creates a subdivision of the flood plain. A significant narrow belt of remnant woodland along the northern side of the flood plain area is designated as ancient woodland."* *"Old water meadow field patterns and associated ditches"*
Visual exposure: Woodland and plantations within the LCA and in the adjoining LCAs limits visual exposure. There are no particularly distinctive landforms on the wooded skylines.	**Development and activity:** *"The A352 and the rail line create a significant physical and visual impact as they cross the southern part of this character area. Roads follow the valley floor linking the settlements of Moreton, Wool and East Stoke which are the main settlements of influence in the area and the main crossings points of the Frome"*
Mid Frome Valley LCA value characteristics	
The Mid Frome Valley as defined in this study is outside of the Dorset AONB. "*The old flood meadow systems and field patterns are of key historic environment importance and contribute to the setting of the settlements in the valley"* *"There are a number of important scheduled ancient monuments in the area such as Wool Bridge and Binden Abbey. Access along the valley is reasonable and there are important informal recreational areas such as at the Frome crossing at Moreton."* *"The parkland landscape estate of Moreton Park is an important local feature"* *"In general this is an intact landscape whose integrity is enhanced by the grazed flood plain meadows and the unifying presence of the river, its many tributaries and associated trees, woods and other vegetation. It has significant ecological value and culturally the importance of the flood meadows, estate landscape and the other built historic features all contribute to its overall condition."*	

Mid Frome Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Mid Frome Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Turbine height (m) Cluster size ≤35 ≤65 ≤99 >99 1 M H H H 2-4 MH H H H >4 H H H	Development size (ha) ≤1 LM ≤10 M ≤30 H >30 H

Mid Frome Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Mid Frome Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Sensitivity to single turbines less than 35m high is judged to be **moderate** and sensitivity to groups of 2-4 turbines is **moderate-high**. Sensitivity to all other scales of development is **high**. Any wind energy development within the valley is likely to break the skyline. There are few long lateral views that could be interrupted but, in particular where the valley is narrower, the scale of anything other than a smaller turbine would be at odds with the scale of the well treed and settled valley landscape. There are a few isolated farmsteads with which smaller wind turbines could be associated, to reduce their impact as new focal features. Sensitivity could be higher where: • Location is close to the river, or to the centre of the valley; • Development has an impact on the historic character of scheduled monuments (e.g. Binden Abbey or Wool Bridge) or historic landscapes such as Moreton Park. • Development detracts from the setting of areas popular for informal recreational.	Sensitivity to solar farms less than 1 hectare in area is **low-moderate**, sensitivity to developments between 1-10 hectares is **moderate** and sensitivity to larger developments it is **high**. Sensitivity to developments within the irregularly shaped fields adjacent to the river, or former water meadows, would be high but the relatively enclosed character of this LCA means that there are locations towards the margins of wider stretches of the valley where sensitivity to solar PV development would tend to be lower, in particular where woodland belts create some separation from the riverside pastures. There would be more sensitivity to loss of pastoral land use than to loss of arable. There are unlikely to be locations where larger developments could be sited without appearing out of scale with the Valley Pasture landscape pattern. Sensitivity could be higher where: • Fields have little screening, or front onto the river; • Land use is water meadow or rough pasture; • Development may have an impact on the historic character of scheduled monuments (e.g. Binden Abbey or Wool Bridge) or historic landscapes such as Moreton Park. • Development detracts from the recreational appeal of riverside locations such as the bridge at Moreton.

Landscape character area: Frome Valley

Area: 931 hectares



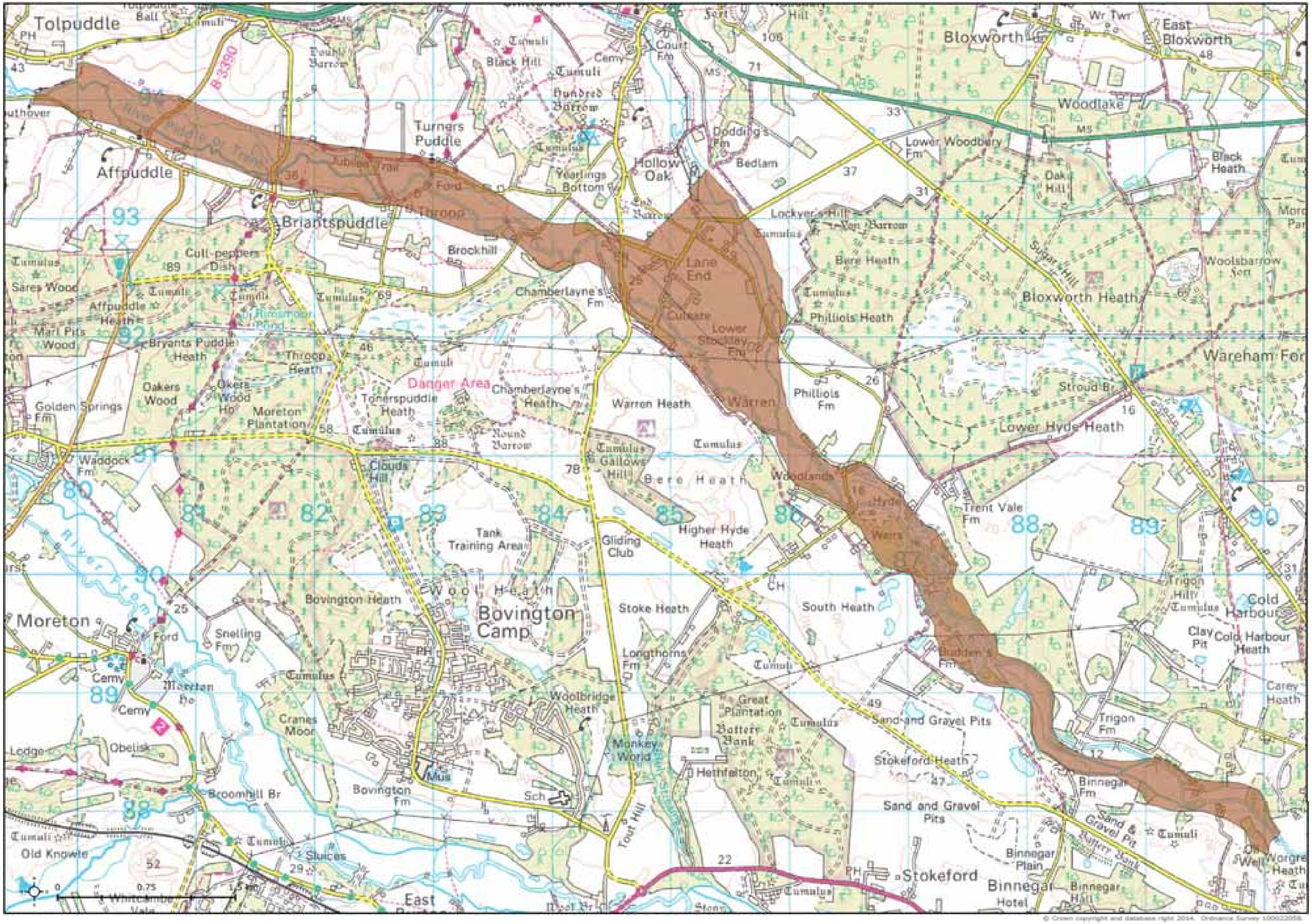
Frome Valley LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"…a flat bottomed valley floor with a meandering river and floodplain becoming broader towards Poole Harbour. A series of terraces form the outer fringes of the main channel."*	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"The land cover is typified by rough pasture used for seasonal grazing with small pastoral wet woodlands along the meandering river. Arable fields are found along the upper terraces"* *"Large open regular fields with dense copses of oak, hazel, holly ancient woodlands and occasional individual trees"* *"The area is dominated by extensive water meadows with some fragments of regular enclosure…"* *"Extensive reedbeds and coastal grazing marsh towards the Harbour"*
Visual exposure: *"Long open views with a tranquil experience"* Views north within this LCA typically do not extent beyond the wooded margins of the valley, but views south from the northern side of the LCA, and from the heath/forest area to the north, extend over the South Purbeck Heaths as far as the Purbeck Ridge. Low hedgerows mean that there are also long linear views where woodland blocks do not intercede.	**Development and activity:** "*Linear and nucleated settlements of local stone along the river terrace margins"* *"Settlement patterns are characterised by small compact and linear villages, although the area is influenced by the towns of … Wareham and Wool"* *"…largely unaffected by development"* *"Some hedges have been replaced by fencing and urban fringe pressures around Wareham … and along the major roads impact on the tranquil valley floor. Pylons also have a visual impact along parts of the area."*
Frome Valley LCA value characteristics	
The Frome Valley LCA is in the Dorset AONB. Although less remote than many AONB areas, it forms one of the distinctive belts of landscape that contribute to the contrast and diversity within the designated area. "*This is a landscape of strong character as a result of the distinctive winding river and associated floodplains. The distinct and recognisable pattern of features such as grazed valley floor pasture, historic water meadows and linear wet woodlands reinforce the strength of character of the valley pasture"* *"Historic bridges, mills and ecclesiastical remains"* *"Bindon Abbey is probably the most notable Medieval feature in this area, and of particular interest because of its gardens."*	

Frome Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Frome Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Turbine height (m) Cluster size ≤35 ≤65 ≤99 >99 1 M H H H 2-4 MH H H H >4 H H H	Development size (ha) ≤1 MH ≤10 MH ≤30 H >30 H

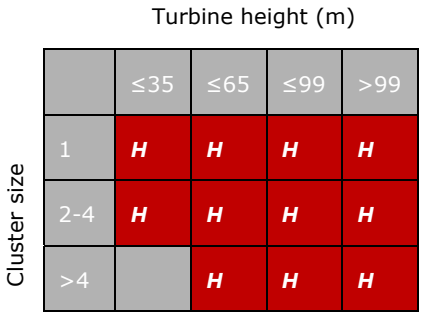
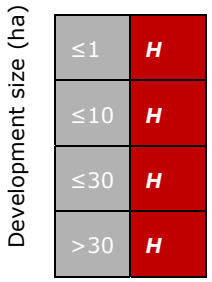
Frome Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Frome Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Sensitivity to single turbines less than 35m high is judged to be moderate and sensitivity to groups of 2-4 turbines is moderate-high. Sensitivity to all other scales of development is high. The sense of openness is strong in this low-lying landscape, particularly further east towards Poole Harbour, and there is a consistent pastoral land use pattern associated with the riverside location. There is little sense of remoteness, with roads, railways and settlements in and adjacent to the LCA clearly discernible. The area does however still retain a distinctive character which is valued as a quality of the AONB and which could be affected by wind energy development. The settled character of the landscape gives it a human scale which would be sensitive to larger wind turbines. The remote character of the neighbouring South Dorset Heaths, also an AONB landscape, would be sensitive to the appearance of turbines in the background of northward views. Sensitivity could be higher where: • Location is close to the river, or to the centre of the valley; • Development could impact on the setting of scheduled monuments or listed buildings - e.g. Binden Abbey, the Lady St Mary Church in Wareham or the Wareham Town Walls. • Development could detract from the setting of areas popular for informal recreational – e.g. the riverside path between Wareham and Swineham Point.	Sensitivity to solar farms less than 10 hectares is **moderate-high** and sensitivity to larger developments it is **high**. The sense of openness in this low-lying landscape increases as the valley surrounds become flatter further east towards Poole Harbour, and there is a consistent pastoral land use pattern associated with the riverside location. There is little sense of remoteness, with roads, railways and settlements in and adjacent to the LCA, but the area still has a distinctive character which is valued as a quality of the AONB and which could be affected by solar PV development. Sensitivity to developments within the irregularly shaped fields adjacent to the river, or former water meadows, would be high. There would be more sensitivity to loss of pastoral land use than to loss of arable. Sensitivity could be higher where: • Fields have little screening, or front onto the river; • Land use is water meadow or rough pasture; • Development has an impact on the historic character of scheduled monuments or listed buildings - e.g. Binden Abbey, the Lady St Mary Church in Wareham or the Wareham Town Walls. • Development detracts from the setting of areas popular for informal recreational – e.g. the riverside path between Wareham and Swineham Point.

Landscape character area: Mid Piddle Valley

Area: 560 hectares

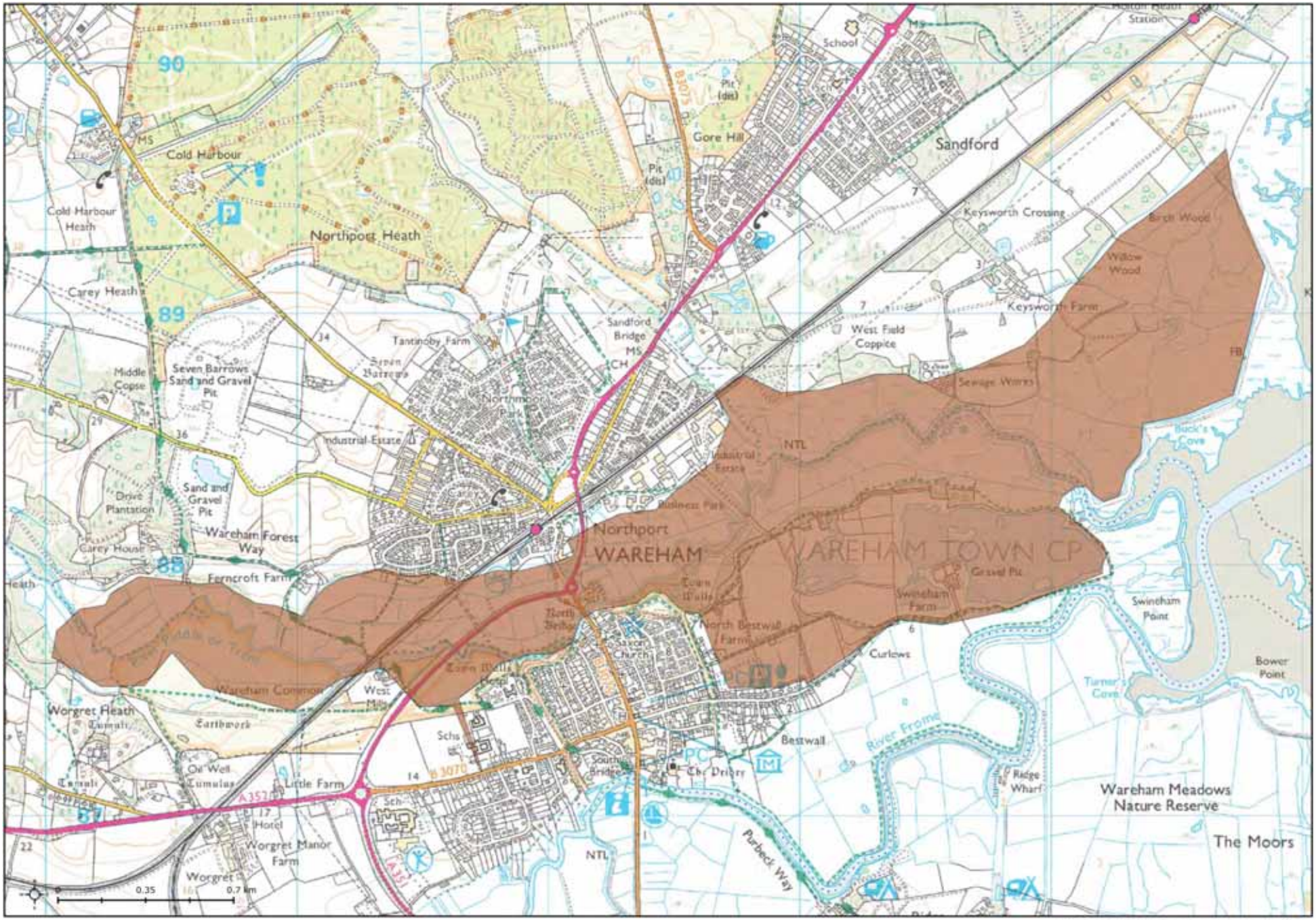


Mid Piddle Valley LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"This is a uniform, flat and largely pastoral river valley landscape on alluvial soils. It is defined by shallow river terraces along each side of the flood plain which confine the valley into a relatively narrow corridor."* Landform scale is therefore relatively small in most parts.	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"The Piddle meanders across the low lying grazed and generally small scale fields and has numerous small tributaries, ditches and channels. A mosaic of trees and other wetland vegetation follows the course of the river and these other wetland areas, to create a distinctive pattern. Woods and plantations on one or more sides of the river terrace frame and enclose the valley."* Although generally narrow across the valley many of the irregular riverside fields are fairly long in the direction of the river.
Visual exposure: *"There are few open views of the valley due to the pattern of trees and woods"*	**Development and activity:** *"There is the occasional rural dwelling positioned on the side of the valley overlooking the meadows. The lack of development and paths along the valley help to create an inaccessible and tranquil landscape."*
Mid Piddle Valley LCA value characteristics	
The Mid Piddle Valley sits outside of the Dorset AONB. *"A largely intact and tranquil landscape due partly to the general lack of development and the unifying function of the river, its tributaries, ditches, channels and associated trees, woods and other vegetation. The grazed fields along the river and the historic river crossings also contribute to this integrity."* *"The cultural integrity of the flood meadows is significant and important"*	

Mid Piddle Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Mid Piddle Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
	
Mid Piddle Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy	**Mid Piddle Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy**
The narrow form of the Piddle Valley, its tranquillity and lack of development and the strength of enclosure by trees and hedges make this small-scale landscape of **high** sensitivity to all scales of wind energy development.	Sensitivity all scales of solar PV development is **high**. For the most part the Piddle Valley is very narrow, meaning that there are few fields which are not pastoral and irregular in form, immediately fronting onto the river. The strength of screening around the character area, by woodlands and strong hedgerows, contributes to it inaccessible, undeveloped and tranquil nature. Other than the occasional location in which there are geometric, arable fields set away from the river, or small, well-hedged pastures, sensitivity is high.

Landscape character area: Lower Piddle Valley

Area: 322 hectares



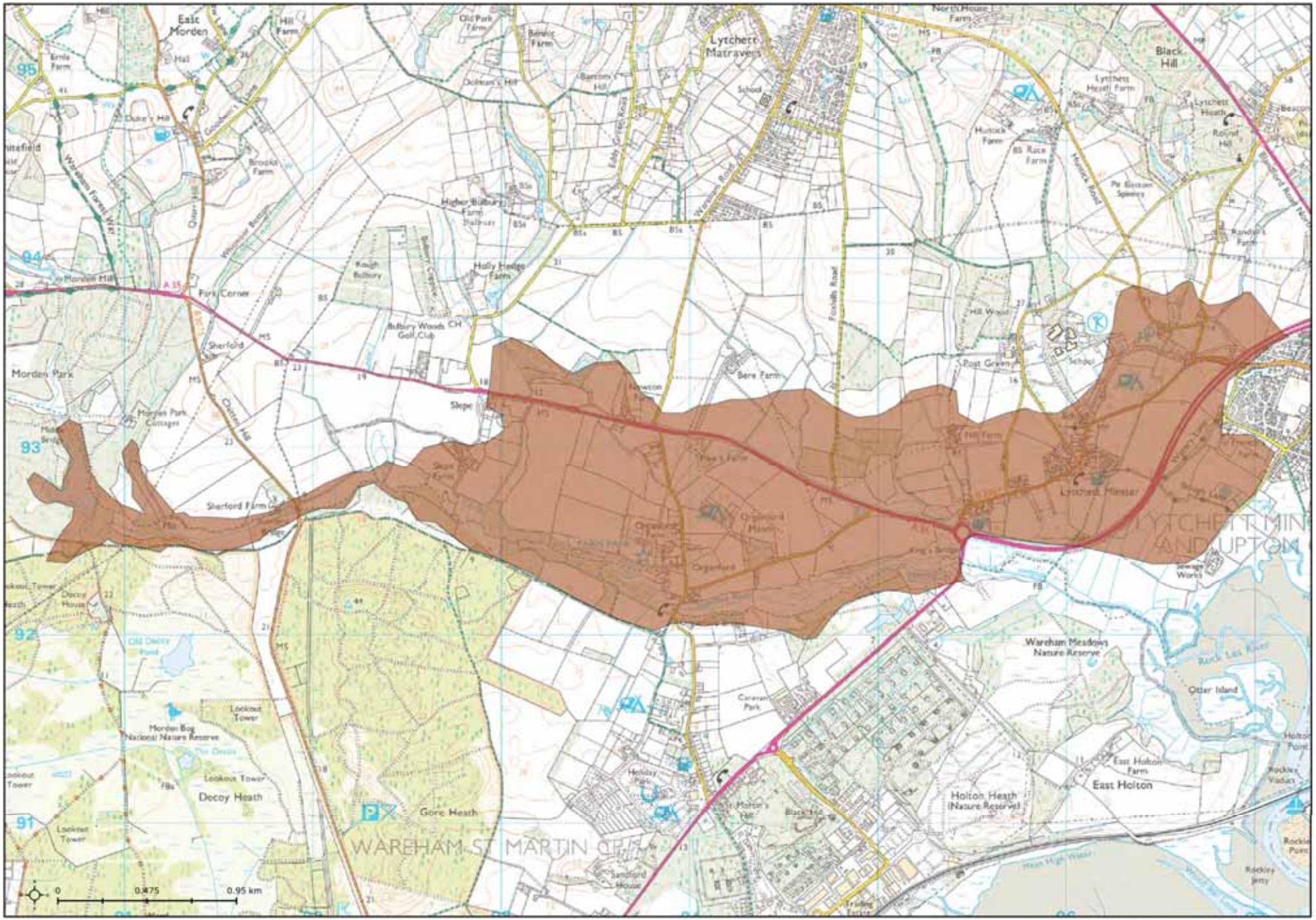
Lower Piddle Valley LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"This area is a distinctive flat river flood plain landscape, which separates the two urban areas of Wareham and Northport. These two urban areas are located on the elevated river terraces to the north and south of this character area and provide distinctive edges."* Landform scale is large.	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"…a pastoral landscape, seasonally grazed in the summer and often flooded in winter. The fields are enclosed by ditches and/or simple wire fences."* *"There are few hedges and the tree/scrub cover is found mainly along the river terraces, which help in places to soften and screen the urban edges. Some tree/scrub cover is also found along the rail and road embankments…"* Land use scale is large.
Visual exposure: The LCA is exposed to views from Wareham and Northport and the margins of Wareham Forest, and in views towards and from the Purbeck Ridge.	**Development and activity:** *"…the rail and road embankments … sever the area and dominate the landscape"* *"There is a small area of 'horsiculture' paddocks with an unkempt appearance and a residential park which both detract from the area's character."*
Lower Piddle Valley LCA value characteristics	
The eastern half of the LCA lies within the Dorset AONB, forming part of its northern edge. Although affected by nearby development it is a distinctive landscape, marking the point at which the Piddle Valley opens out into Poole Harbour. *"The meandering course of the River Piddle and its associated ditches and banks in the broad alluvial valley floor are important key features."* *"The impressive steep ramparts of Wareham Town walls, a scheduled ancient monument, form part of the southern edge of this character area"* *"The flood plain therefore acts as an important undeveloped buffer between these two urban areas" (Wareham and Northport)* *"Being close to the urban population with good access, the area is a well-used and important public open space. Wareham Forest Way passes across the area."*	

Lower Piddle Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Lower Piddle Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Turbine height (m) Cluster size ≤35 ≤65 ≤99 >99 1 MH H H H 2-4 MH H H H >4 H H H	Development size (ha) ≤1 H ≤10 H ≤30 H >30 H

Lower Piddle Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Lower Piddle Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Sensitivity to turbines less than 35m high is judged to be **moderate-high** and sensitivity to all other scales of development is **high**. The sense of openness is strong in this low-lying landscape, and there is a consistent pastoral land use pattern associated with the riverside location. There is little sense of remoteness, with roads, railways and settlements in, and adjacent, to the LCA, but the area still has a distinctive open character and sense of place. This is valued, as reflected in the AONB designation, and could be diminished by wind energy development. The extent of settlement in the vicinity and recreational use of the LCA gives it a human scale, despite its openness, which would be sensitive to larger wind turbines. The remote character of the neighbouring South Purbeck Heaths, within the AONB and valued for their scenic and tranquil qualities, would be sensitive to the appearance of turbines in the background of northward views. Sensitivity could be higher where: • Location is close to the river, or to the centre of the valley; • Development has an impact on the historic character of scheduled monuments or listed buildings - e.g. Wareham Town Walls or the North Bridge. • Development detracts from the setting of areas popular for informal recreational.	Sensitivity to all scales of solar PV development it is **high**. The sense of openness in this low-lying landscape is strong, and there is a consistent pastoral land use pattern of mostly ditch-edged meadows associated with the riverside location. There is little sense of remoteness, with roads, railways and settlements, in and adjacent, to the LCA, but the area still has a distinctive open character and sense of place. This is valued, as reflected by the AONB designation, and could be affected by solar PV development. Sensitivity would be highest where development has an impact on the historic character of scheduled monuments or listed buildings - e.g. Wareham Town Walls or North Bridge – or is located in or near to areas used for informal recreation.

Landscape character area: Sherford Valley

Area: 510 hectares

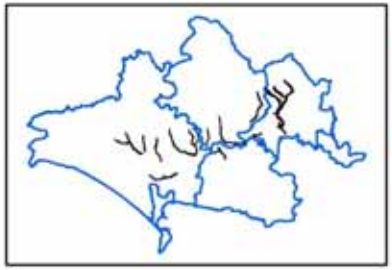


Sherford Valley LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"A largely flat intensively farmed landscape associated with the alluvial soils of the Sherford River valley and the other small streams draining into Upton Bay. It slopes gently north towards Lytchett Matravers and is bound on the south by the low lying heathland character area."* Landform scale is mostly large.	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"…intensively farmed landscape…"* *"There is a distinctive corridor of trees and woodland along the river with some important mature trees"* To the west of Slepe the LCA is small in scale: very narrowly defined and strongly enclosed by trees, ending in woodland at Morden Park Lake. Further east it is a medium scale agricultural landscape. *"There are few other woods apart from a few geometric blocks not associated with the stream. Arable fields are cropped right up to the edge of these woods. The far western side of the area is framed by conifer plantation within which are small lakes which form the source of the Sherford River"*
Visual exposure: The narrow valley west of Slepe is well screened by trees. Further east, the strong belt of riverside woodland creates separation from the Wareham Heath/Forest LCA to the south and to the north there is an indistinct transition to the Morden/Lytchett Rolling Wooded Pastures, which create a fairly short and even horizon. In views from higher ground to the north, e.g. around Lytchett Matravers, the LCA appears in the middle distance in views with the Purbeck Ridge forming a backdrop.	**Development and activity:** "*Lytchett Minster is the main settlement which dominates the eastern side of the area"* *"The A35 creates a visual and physical impact across the whole area. There are few rights of way which exacerbate feelings of inaccessibility, especially along the river corridor."* *"The urban impacts caused by the road network, some poor edges to settlements and 'horsiculture' detract from quality and create fragmentation"*
Sherford Valley LCA value characteristics	
Sherford Valley does not have any landscape designations. "*[Lytchett Minster] has some important parkland/estate features such as individual trees, avenues and buildings"* *"The group of buildings at the Sherford River crossing in Organford are also of importance as some of the few locally distinctive rural buildings of merit in the area."*	

Sherford Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Sherford Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Turbine height (m) Cluster size ≤35 ≤65 ≤99 >99 1 L LM M H 2-4 LM M MH H >4 H H H	Development size (ha) ≤1 L ≤10 LM ≤30 M >30 H

Sherford Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Sherford Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Sensitivity to single turbines less than 35m high is judged to be **low**. Sensitivity to 2-4 turbines less than 35m high or single turbines up to 65m high is **low-moderate**. Sensitivity to groups of 2-4 turbines 35-65m high or single turbines 66-99m high is **moderate**. Sensitivity to groups of 2-4 turbines 65-99m high is **moderate-high** and sensitivity to all other scales of development is **high**. Sensitivity to any development in the narrow river corridor west of Slepe would be high, but the Valley Pasture area widens out considerably to the east of Slepe, where the river corridor is strongly wooded but the area to the north is mostly under arable cultivation. There are a number of farmsteads in this area, and the area does not have a remote character, being crossed by the A35 and an overhead power line, and being the location for a popular tourist attraction, the Farmer Palmer's Farm Park. The scale of the landscape, with settlements within and close to the LCA, would be sensitive to larger cluster sizes and taller turbines. Sensitivity could be higher where: • There is skyline impact on southward views in which the Purbeck Ridge forms a prominent backdrop; • Development has an impact on the historic character of the group of buildings at the Sherford River crossing in Organford, or detracts from the parkland/estate character to be found in the vicinity of Lytchett Minster.	Sensitivity to solar PV developments of less than 1 hectare is judged to be **low,** sensitivity to developments of 1-10 hectares is **low-moderate**, sensitivity to developments of 10-30 hectares is **moderate** and sensitivity to larger developments is **high**. Sensitivity to any development in the narrow river corridor west of Slepe would be high, but the Valley Pasture area widens out considerably to the east of Slepe, where the river corridor is strongly wooded but the area to the north is mostly under arable cultivation. There are a number of farmsteads in this area, and the area does not have a remote character, being crossed by the A35 and an overhead power line, and being the location for a popular tourist attraction, the Farmer Palmer's Farm Park. The scale of the landscape, with settlements within and close to the LCA, would be sensitive to large solar farms. Sensitivity could be higher where: • Development has an impact on the historic character of the group of buildings at the Sherford River crossing in Organford, or detracts from the parkland/estate character to be found in the vicinity of Lytchett Minster.

Landscape character type: Chalk River Valley Floor



District boundary

AONB

Dorset Landscape Character Type

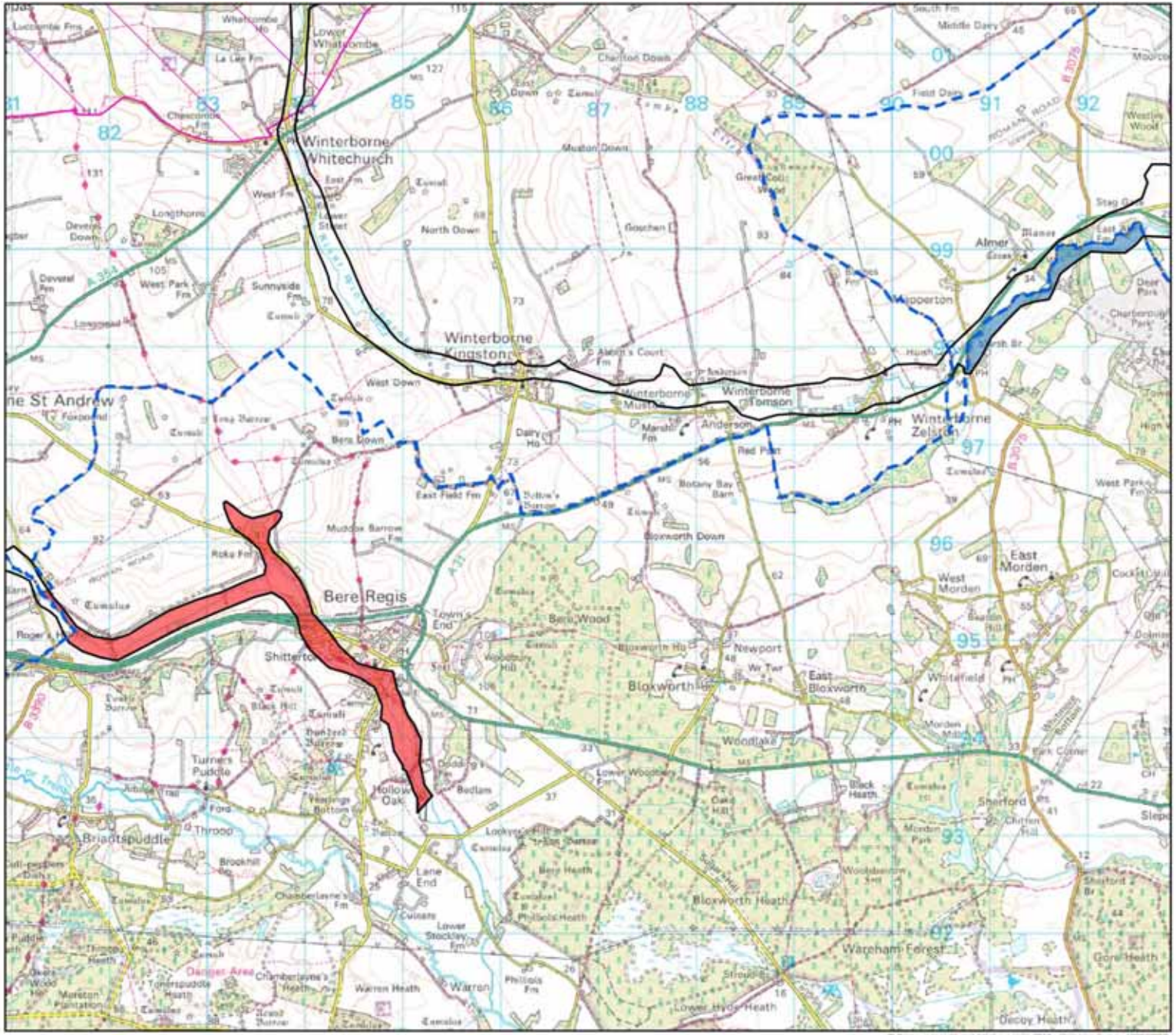
22. Chalk River Valley Floor

Purbeck Landscape Character Area

22A - Bere Stream Valley

22B - Lower Winterborne Valley

*Lower Winterborne Valley is assessed under East Dorset District Sensitivity Study



Chalk River Valley Floor LCT overview

Chalk River Valley Floor areas are identified on County LCT mapping but described as part of the typology for the Chalk Valley and Downland LCT, with which they are associated. The river valleys run in a generally north west to south east direction, draining off the chalk into larger valleys.

The Chalk River Valleys are principally associated with the downlands in the northern half of the county, and within Purbeck the only area in this category is the valley of the Bere Stream (which becomes the Milborne Valley as it crosses into North Dorset). The District Assessment treats this area as part of the Mid Piddle Valley Pasture LCA, but in line with the County-level LCT mapping this sensitivity study assesses it as part of the Chalk River Valley Floor LCT. This part of the Mid Piddle Valley Pasture LCA has been termed the Bere Stream Valley for this assessment.

Chalk River Valley Floor LCT characteristics by susceptibility criteria

Scale and complexity of landform:

"The distinctive north south aligned, secluded chalk valleys of this landscape drain and subdivide the surrounding chalk downlands"

The Chalk River Valley Floor LCT character areas are narrowly defined to include only the valley bottoms and lowest slopes, the surrounding hillsides and ridges typically being categorised as the Chalk Valley & Downland LCT but in some cases as Open Chalk Downland.

Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

"Smaller scale pattern of fields and winding ribbons of trees along the valley floors creates a more sheltered and secluded character" (in comparison to the more open, exposed chalk downs)

"Historic now disused water meadows are key features"

Visual exposure:

Lateral views from the chalk valley floors are constrained to the immediate ridgelines. Longer linear views are available in places but vegetation bends in the valley form also limit these. Outside of the LCT there is very limited perception of the valleys beyond the immediate hillsides and crests.

Development and activity:

"Distinctive settlements of stone, brick and flint in linear form along the valley floors"

Chalk River Valley Floor LCT value characteristics

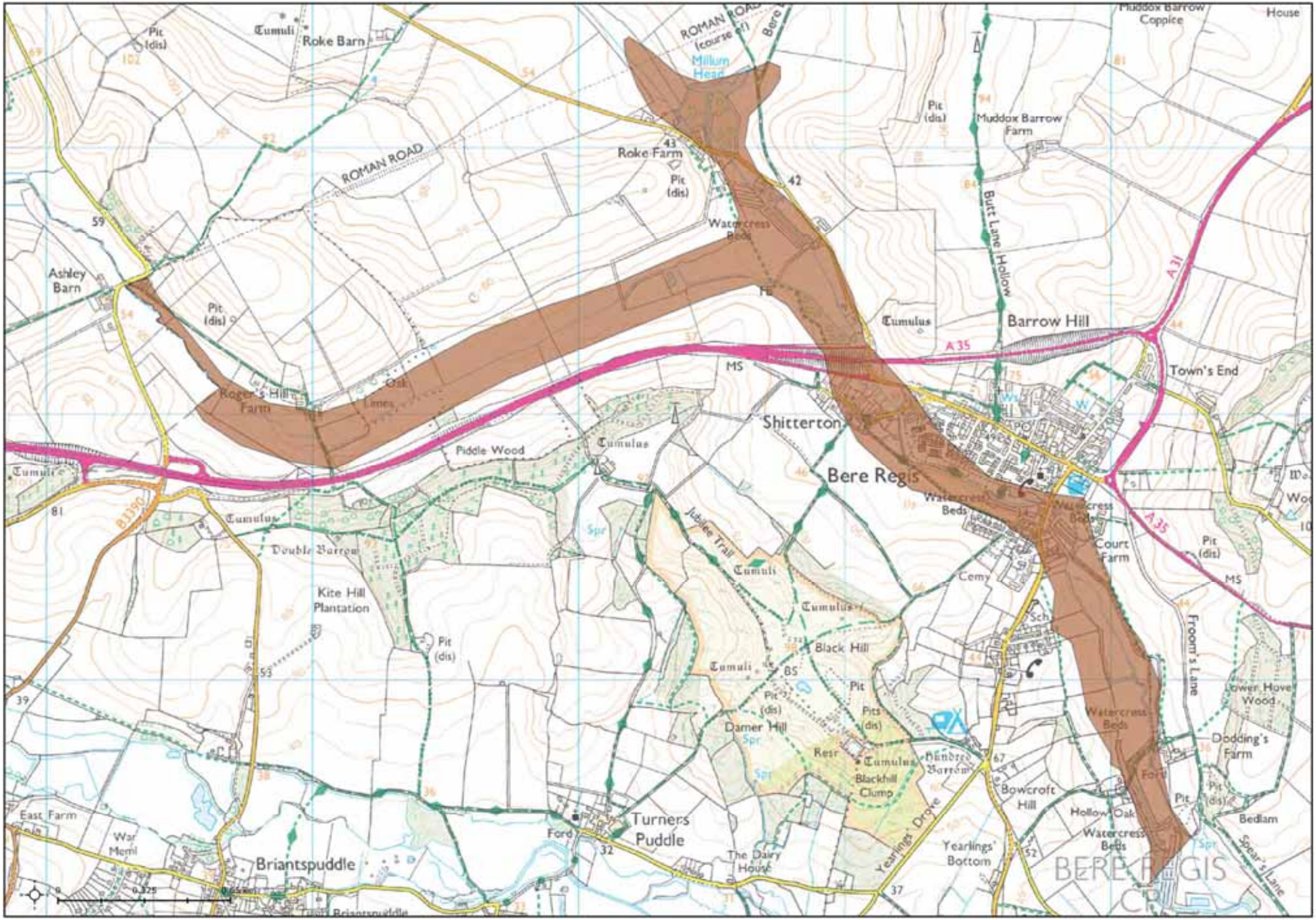
The upper reaches of chalk river valleys in Dorset are generally designated as part of either the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB or the Dorset AONB, but the lower reaches closer to the major river valleys are typically not, and this is the case with the small area of this LCT in Purbeck.

The management guidance notes for the Chalk Valley and Downland LCT include aspects specifically relating to the valley floors. These include *"Conserve and enhance the pattern and character of valley floor 'ribbon development' villages"* and *"Conserve and restore remnant water meadow systems that are an important historic landscape feature…"*

Chalk River Valley Floor LCT sensitivity to wind energy	Chalk River Valley Floor LCT sensitivity to solar PV energy
The rivers that meander along the chalk valley floors are the key physical features within this LCT and the introduction of significant vertical landscape elements would detract from these and also jar with the sheltered, secluded, small-scale of the landscape and with its unchanging, historic character. The upper sections of turbines could potentially appear above the ridge tops in views, which would have a significant impact on the very limited perception of these valleys that presents exists in views across the open downlands from locations away from the immediate valley tops.	The predominant land use types are pastoral, including water meadows with historic value, and these would be sensitive to the introduction of solar energy. There may be some scope for smaller solar schemes to be located where they would not be widely perceived in the local landscape and would not appear out of scale, but the sharp, geometric forms of solar development are likely to clash with the historic, pastoral character of the valleys wherever they are sited, and any location immediately adjacent to a river would be likely to detract from its sinuous form.

Landscape character area: Bere Stream Valley

Area: 125 hectares

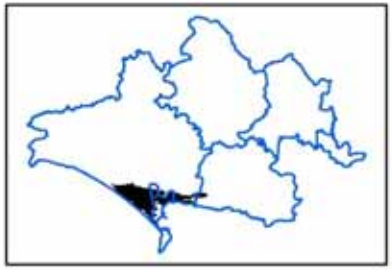


Bere Stream Valley LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"The valley narrows in its northern sections"* The LCA is bounded by distinctive hills to the north (Bere Down and Barrow Hill), east (Woodbury Hill) and south (Black Hill).	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"The valley … becomes less treed as it crosses in to the chalk landscapes. It is in these upper areas of the valley that several distinctive and large scale commercial watercress beds are located which create a significant impact on landscape"* From Millum Head to the southern end of the LCA the meandering stream is bordered by pastures, and has the small scale land use pattern which is typical of chalk valley floors, but the east-west stretch of valley between Bere Regis and the District boundary, where the stream follows a straight course, has geometric fields under arable cultivation, merging with no distinct break into the downland hillside above, and consequently has a larger scale.
Visual exposure: The valley is exposed to views from the surrounding higher ground, including the A35 and the settlement of Bere Regis.	**Development and activity:** Unlike the typical Chalk River Valley Floors of North and East Dorset, which are characterised by small, linear settlements, the Bere Stream Valley is dominated by the nucleated village of Bere Regis which is centred on the lower slopes of the chalk downland to the north but extends across the valley floor. The A35 crosses the LCA to the north of Bere Regis and runs parallel to it along the foot of the downs between the village and the District boundary, with a significant effect on landscape character.
Bere Stream Valley LCA value characteristics	
The LCA does not have any landscape designations.	

Bere Stream Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Bere Stream Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Turbine height (m) Cluster size ≤35 ≤65 ≤99 >99 1 M H H H 2-4 MH H H H >4 H H H	Development size (ha) ≤1 LM ≤10 LM ≤30 H >30 H

Bere Stream Valley LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Bere Stream Valley LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Sensitivity to single turbines of less than 35m is **moderate** and sensitivity to 2-4 turbines of this height is **moderate-high**. Sensitivity to any other scale of wind energy development is **high**. The LCA is narrowly defined to exclude the downs that form the valley sides so any sizeable turbines would appear incongruous in the context of surrounding higher ground. Development located close to the stream itself would detract from its meandering form. The character of the valley changes quite significantly to the west of Bere Regis, where the typical chalk river valley character is much weaker, so sensitivity to smaller turbines would be lower here than in the area to the south of the village, where pastoral land use, the small scale of streamside fields and the presence of human-scale features (buildings, trees, bridges…) all elevate sensitivity. Sensitivity could be higher where: • Location is to the south of the A35.	Sensitivity to solar PV developments of less than 10 hectares is **low-moderate** and sensitivity to larger schemes is **high**. The character of the valley changes quite significantly to the west of Bere Regis, where the typical chalk river valley character is much weaker, so sensitivity to solar energy would be lower here than in the area to the south of the village, where pastoral land use, small, irregular fields and the meandering form of the stream elevate sensitivity, despite the developed character of the landscape. Sensitivity could be higher where: • Location is to the south of the A35.

Landscape character type: Ridge and Vale



District boundary

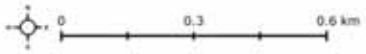
AONB

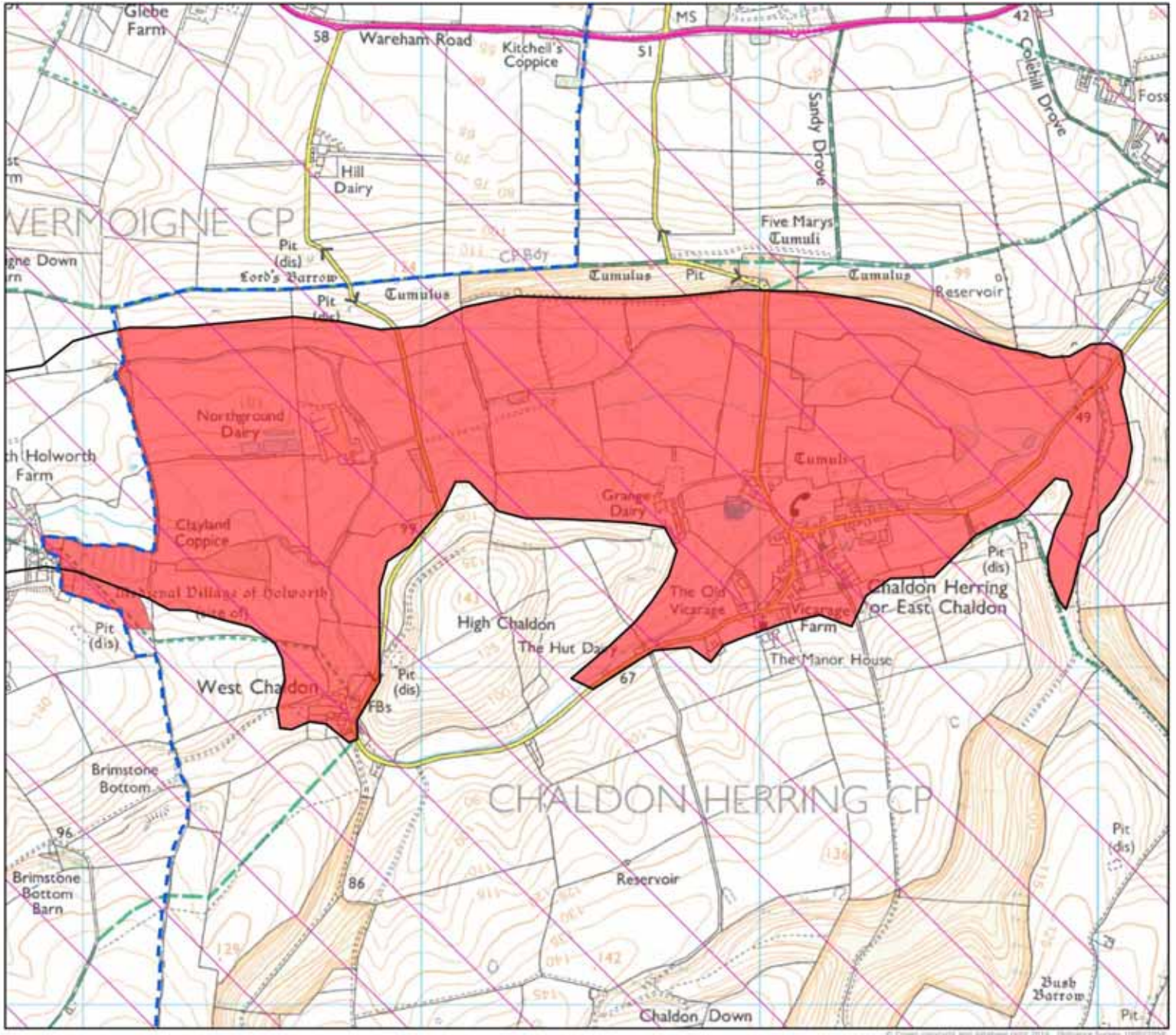
Dorset Landscape Character Type

16. Ridge & Vale

Purbeck Landscape Character Area

16A - Osmington Ridge and Vale

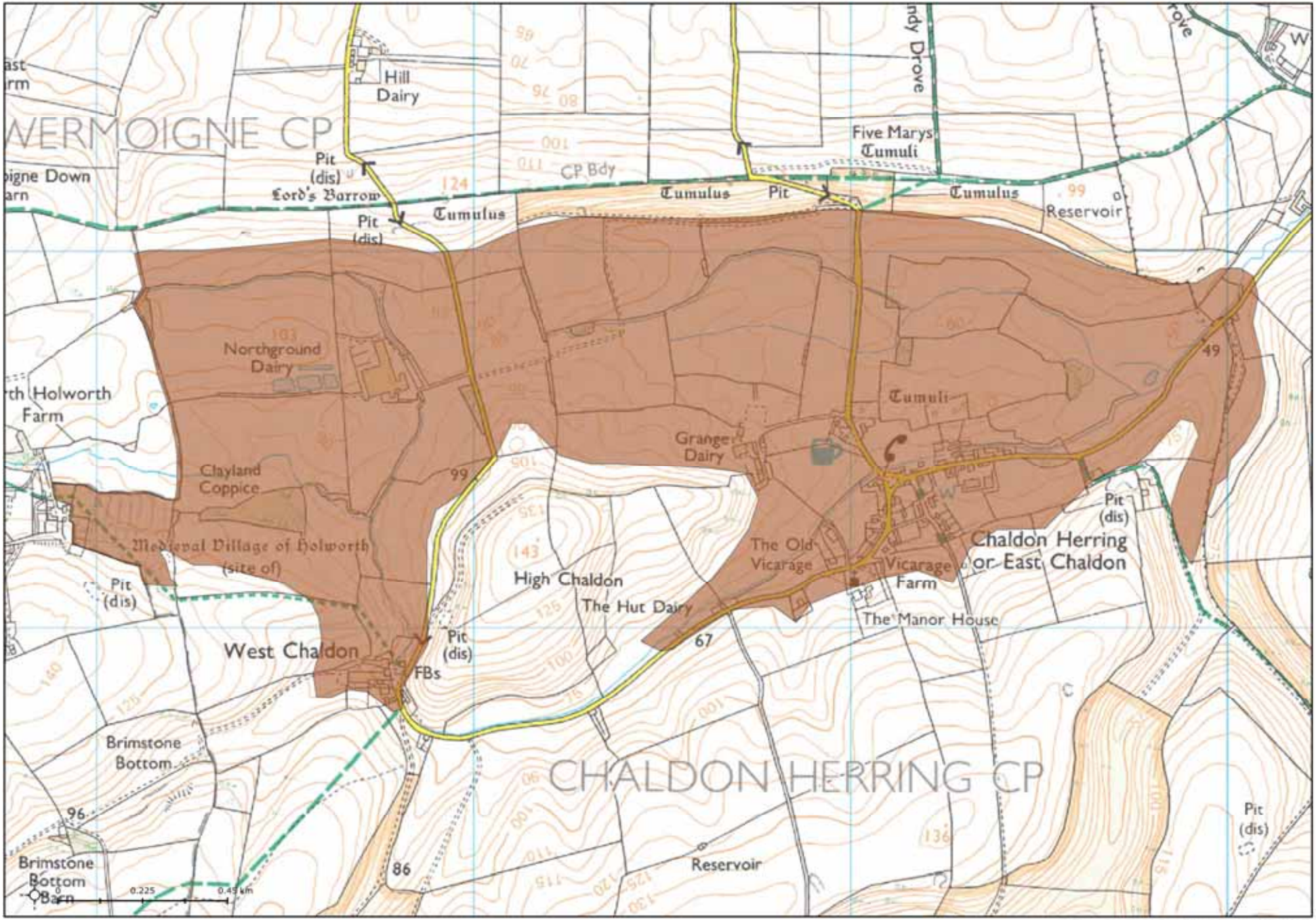




Ridge and Vale LCT overview	
The Ridge and Vale LCT forms a belt of low-lying limestone ridges and clay vales that run east to west through the south west of the county. In Purbeck District the LCT is represented by one LCA, Osmington Ridge and Vale, which extends west from Chaldon Herring to West Chaldon and continues into West Dorset. The Osmington Ridge and Vale LCA within Purbeck comprises a small vale of undulating farmland enclosed by the steep slopes of Chalk Downland: to the south the Chaldon Downs and to the north South Dorset Downs.	
Ridge and Vale LCT characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: "*This landscape is characterised by evenly divided low lying hog-backed limestone ridges running east to west, separated by undulating clay vales…"* *"The Ridge and Vale landscape type is enclosed to the north of the area by the imposing and dramatic chalk ridge/escarpment landscape type, which forms the setting and prominent backdrop to the area."*	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** "*Mixed farmed area with a patchwork of geometric fields divided by straight hedges."* *"Larger fields in the valleys and on the open ridges."* *"Distinctive settlement pattern along the valley floor and at the foot of the escarpment."*
Visual exposure: "*Open views along the coast from the smooth, broad and hog-back shaped ridges."*	**Development and activity:** There is very limited development within this area of the LCT.
Ridge and Vale LCT value characteristics	
The ridge and vale landscape within Purbeck and West Dorset forms part of the Dorset AONB. One of the key management objectives is to *"Identify, protect and conserve the sweeping views of the coast"*.	
Ridge and Vale LCT sensitivity to wind energy	**Ridge and Vale LCT sensitivity to solar PV energy**
This is an open, medium scale landscape, which would typically by considered to be of moderate sensitivity to wind turbines, however the distinctive and often irregular landforms as well as the coastal aspect increases the sensitivity of some areas. Parts of the area are more enclosed and contain more human-scale environments, particularly along the floor of the vales, and these would be correspondingly more sensitive to larger scale developments. Where larger, geometric field patterns occur on more exposed upper slopes, sensitivity is lower. The prominence of the ridges, which form long gently undulating skylines from within the vales means that it would be difficult to locate turbines, particularly larger scale turbines, on these without the turbines appearing to impose on the surrounding vales and the settlements which tend to be clustered within them.	The rounded forms of the ridge and vale landscape are sensitive to the introduction of geometric forms such as solar panels, and the openness and medium scale of the more elevated areas of the landscape, increases sensitivity. Whilst large scale geometric field patterns are typically considered to be of lower sensitivity, the strong relief of the landform, to which the field boundaries closely relate, increases the overall sensitivity. The value attached to this landscape within the AONB, in which there is mostly limited development and long coastal views, makes most locations within this landscape relatively sensitive to solar PV development.

Landscape character area: Osmington Ridge and Vale

Area: 239 hectares

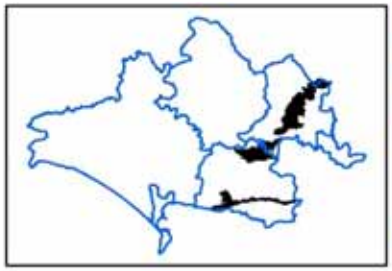


Osmington Ridge and Vale LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"Partly enclosed by the South Dorset Escarpment, the land shape is characterised by a series of small scale limestone ridges and broad vales running east to west… The landscape is more intimate around the deeper valleys at Osmington."* Within Purbeck the landscape comprises a medium scale, broad vale of rounded and gently undulating slopes enclosed by a chalk ridge to the north and the Chaldon Down to the south. To the east of the area the vale gradually narrows and becomes irregular and intimate.	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** "*Continuous patchwork of complex regular fields of neutral and acid grasslands becoming larger towards the ridge tops"* *"Smaller scale landscape towards the east"* *"Landcover has remained largely pastoral on the higher and steeper ground with mixed arable and pastoral farming with small woodlands along the broad valleys and vales."*
Visual exposure: Whilst other areas of this LCT afford long sweeping coastal views, within Purbeck the landscape comprises a more isolated vale which is visually very contained. Relatively short views extending up to long undulating skylines formed by the surrounding chalk downlands. The area is overlooked by a long chalk ridge to the north (which includes Five Marys Tumuli) and High Chaldon and the Chaldon Downs to the south.	**Development and activity:** "*Rural nucleated settlements, made of limestone with well-defined edges are found along the vales."* Within the Purbeck this landscape has retained a strong rural character with development limited to scattered farms and small, nucleated villages including Chaldon Herring.
Osmington Ridge and Vale LCA value characteristics	
This LCA is part of the Dorset AONB. This area has a sense of remoteness and isolation, due to its enclosure by the surrounding ridges and downs.	

Osmington Ridge and Vale LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Osmington Ridge and Vale LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Turbine height (m) Cluster size ≤35 ≤65 ≤99 >99 1 M MH H H 2-4 MH H H H >4 H H H	Development size (ha) ≤1 MH ≤10 H ≤30 H >30 H

Osmington Ridge and Vale LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Osmington Ridge and Vale LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Sensitivity to single turbines less than 35m high is **moderate**. Sensitivity to 2-4 turbines less than 35m high, or single turbines 36-65m high, is **moderate-high**. Sensitivity to all other scales of development is **high.** The medium scale of the broad and gently undulating vale to the west and north of the area is of moderate sensitivity to this form of development. Where the field pattern is larger, simple and geometric, sensitivity to turbines would be lower. Enclosed by the steep slopes of the chalk ridge to the north and the more rounded slopes of the Chaldon Downs to the south and, smaller scale development located on the sloping sides of the vale might not have skyline impact. Larger scale development could however begin to diminish the scale of the surrounding ridges and hills and impose on the contained vale, reducing the sense of isolation which is a valued AONB quality. Within the east of the area the scale of landform and landuse becomes smaller and more irregular, with a patchwork of small pastoral fields and woodland predominating. The eastern part of the area would be particularly sensitive to development that could affect the setting of the scenic village of Chaldon Herring, settled between small scale hills and ridges. Sensitivity could be higher where: • Site is prominent from the floor of the vale, in particular from villages; • Location detracts from the prominence of the chalk ridge to the south, including Five Marys Tumuli, or affects the setting of the Scheduled Monuments such as the site of the medieval Village of Holworth.	Sensitivity to solar farms of less than 1 hectare is **moderate-high.** Sensitivity to larger development is **high.** The open and remote character and rounded, undulating land forms of the landscape as it occurs in Purbeck is considered to be sensitive to solar PV development. Although some geometric, larger scale fields occur in the west and north of the area, their high visibility and the undulating landform mean that sensitivity remains high. There is very limited development within this area and it has a strong rural and coherent character, one of the 'special qualities' of the AONB, which development of this type is likely to diminish. Sensitivity could be higher where: • Development appears prominent in context of smaller scale landscapes – e.g. the more enclosed and complex eastern part of the area around Chaldon Herring; • Location is on more exposed, upper slopes; • Location affects the setting of historic features such as Five Marys Tumuli to the north and the site of the medieval Village of Holworth to the west; • Location is prominent in long views from the surrounding ridges and hills that look across the vale.

Landscape character type: Rolling Wooded Pasture



District boundary

AONB

Dorset Landscape Character Type

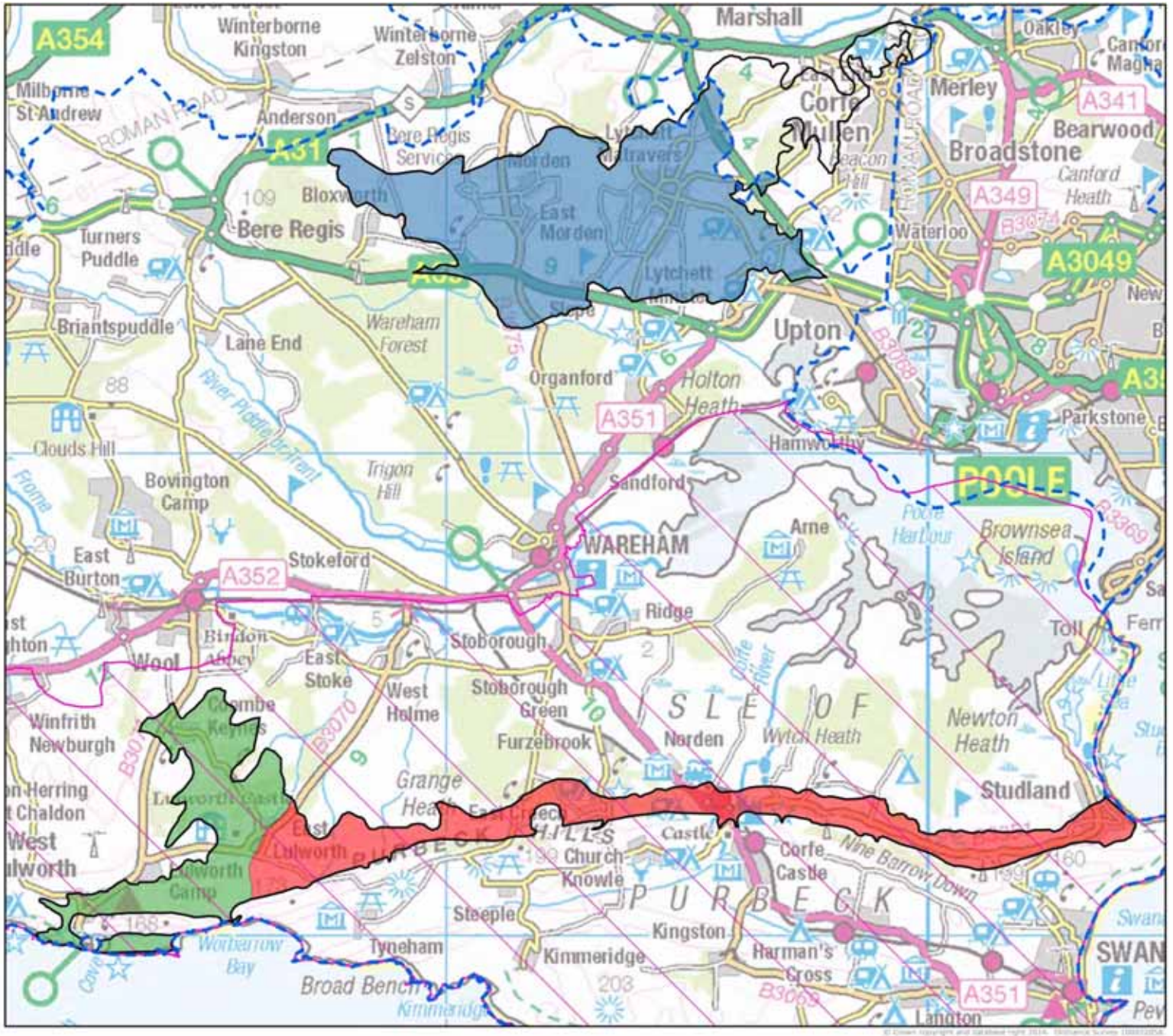
10. Rolling Wooded Pasture

Purbeck Landscape Character Area

10A - Rempstone Wooded Pastures

10B - Morden/Lytchett Rolling Wooded Farmland

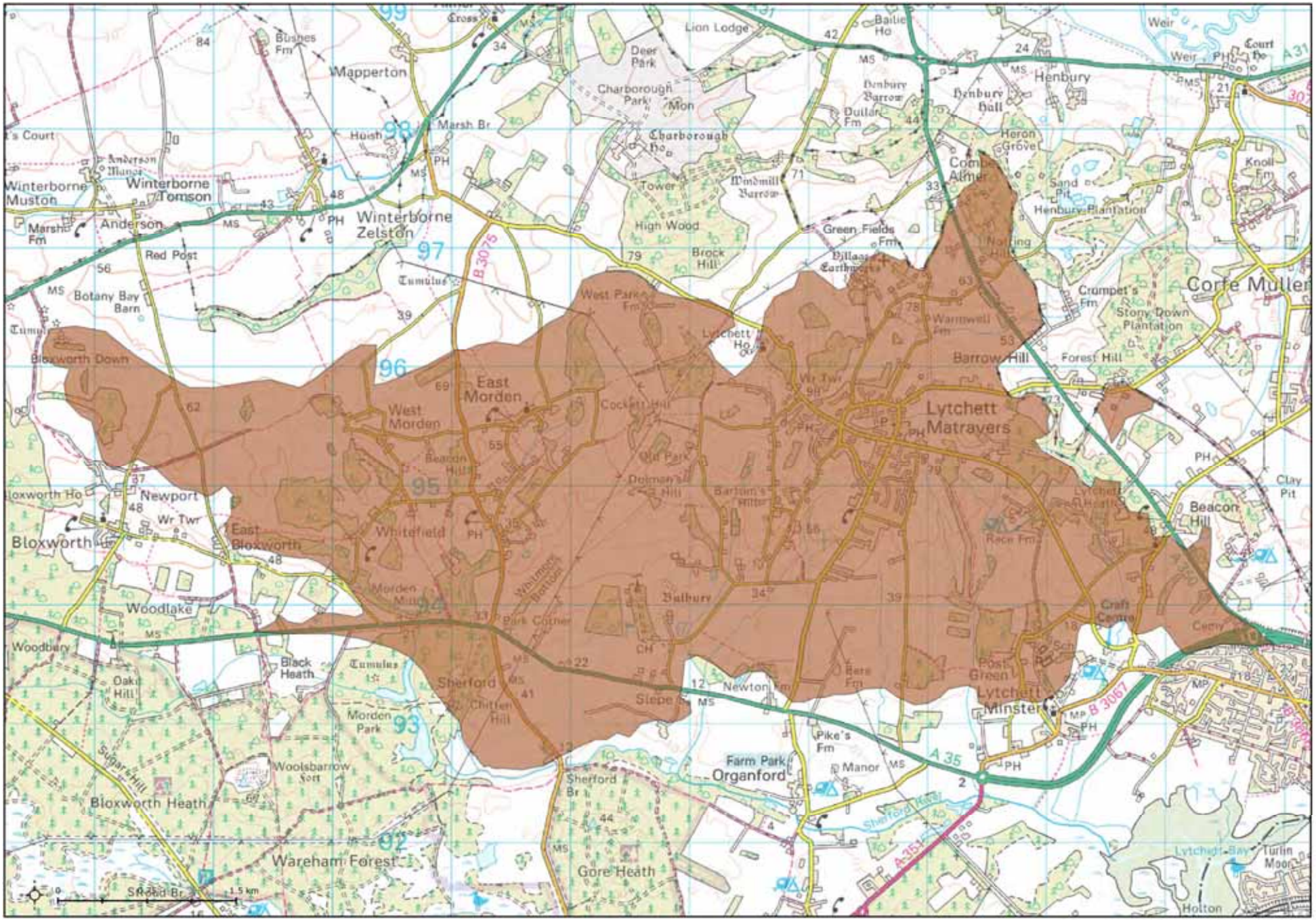
10C - Lulworth Wooded Pasture



Rolling Wooded Pasture LCT overview	
This LCT is represented by three LCAs within Purbeck. The Morden-Lytchett LCA represents the southern end of a belt of Rolling Wooded Pasture (interrupted by the Stour Valley) that runs down through East Dorset between the chalk landscapes to the west and heathlands to the east. The Rempstone LCA forms a long, narrow belt at the fringes of the South Dorset Heaths and is strongly defined to the south by the steep Chalk Ridge Escarpment. To the west of the Rempstone LCA, the Lulworth LCA, also defined by the Chalk Ridge Escarpment to the south, forms a transitional landscape between the Dorset Heaths to the east and the open chalk downland of the Chaldon Downs to the west.	
Rolling Wooded Pasture LCT characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: "*Undulating, low and rolling hills*"	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** "Small scale, intimate and enclosed mosaic landscape" "… an irregular patchwork of pasture, woods and hedgerows" Predominantly a pastoral landscape with some larger arable fields on flatter land.
Visual exposure: *"Views limited by dense hedgerows and many small woods and copses"*	**Development and activity:** *"Intimate wooded pastoral character"*
Rolling Wooded Pasture LCT value characteristics	
The Lulworth and Rempstone LCAs are part of the Dorset AONB. The overall management objective for the LCT is to "*conserve its diverse intimate wooded pastoral character"* and one of the key guidance notes is to *"conserve the ancient pattern of small irregular fields and narrow lanes interspersed with irregular patches of woodland".*	
Rolling Wooded Pasture LCT sensitivity to wind energy	**Rolling Wooded Pasture LCT sensitivity to solar PV energy**
The landform variations, complex, small-scale mosaic of land cover and general lack of modern development make this a sensitive LCT. Scenic value is high both at a localised level, where the intimacy of the small scale, pastoral landscape also creates a sense of tranquillity, and on a wider scale, where the area has a strong presence in views either as a backdrop (Morden-Lytchett) or in association with the dramatic Purbeck Ridge (Lulworth and Rempstone).	The landform variations, scenic value and general lack of modern development tend towards making this a sensitive LCT, but there are likely to be locations where the strong screening effect of field boundaries limit any adverse impact to a small area. The strong patchwork character of the land use pattern makes it more robust than would be the case in a more open landscape, although solar PV development would present a strong contrast to the softer and more varied textures and forms of trees and hedgerows.

Landscape character area: Morden-Lytchett

Area: 2456 hectares



Morden-Lytchett LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria

Scale and complexity of landform:

"undulating and rolling farmland landscape with some characteristic narrow valleys and folds which create a distinctive landform"

Landform scale varies from moderate to small.

Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

"interlocking blocks of woodland together with the dense hedgerows, hedgerow trees and relatively small fields create a well wooded/treed landscape"

"Large plantations dominate the landscape in the south west and north east of the area. The farming is mixed with arable more open fields in the west towards the chalk and a more pastoral landscape to the east of the area with corresponding thicker hedges and more hedgerow trees."

Visual exposure:

"There are open and impressive views from elevated areas to distant horizons such as over to Poole Harbour, Lytchett Bay and to the Purbeck Hills."

The Morden-Lytchett LCA forms a wooded backdrop to views from adjoining areas.

Development and activity:

The Morden-Lytchett LCA area includes the large village of Lytchett Matravers and major roads (the A35 and A350) pass through the fringes of the LCA.

Morden-Lytchett LCA value characteristics

There are no landscape designations within Purbeck District relating to the Morden-Lytchett LCA, although within East Dorset this LCA is designated an AGLV. East Morden church, the settlements of East and West Morden and the estate landscape and school grounds at Lytchett Minster are noted as key local features in the LCA.

"…a varied, interesting and largely intact landscape."

Morden-Lytchett LCA sensitivity to wind energy

Turbine height (m)

Cluster size	≤35	≤65	≤99	>99
1	M	H	H	H
2-4	MH	H	H	H
>4		H	H	H

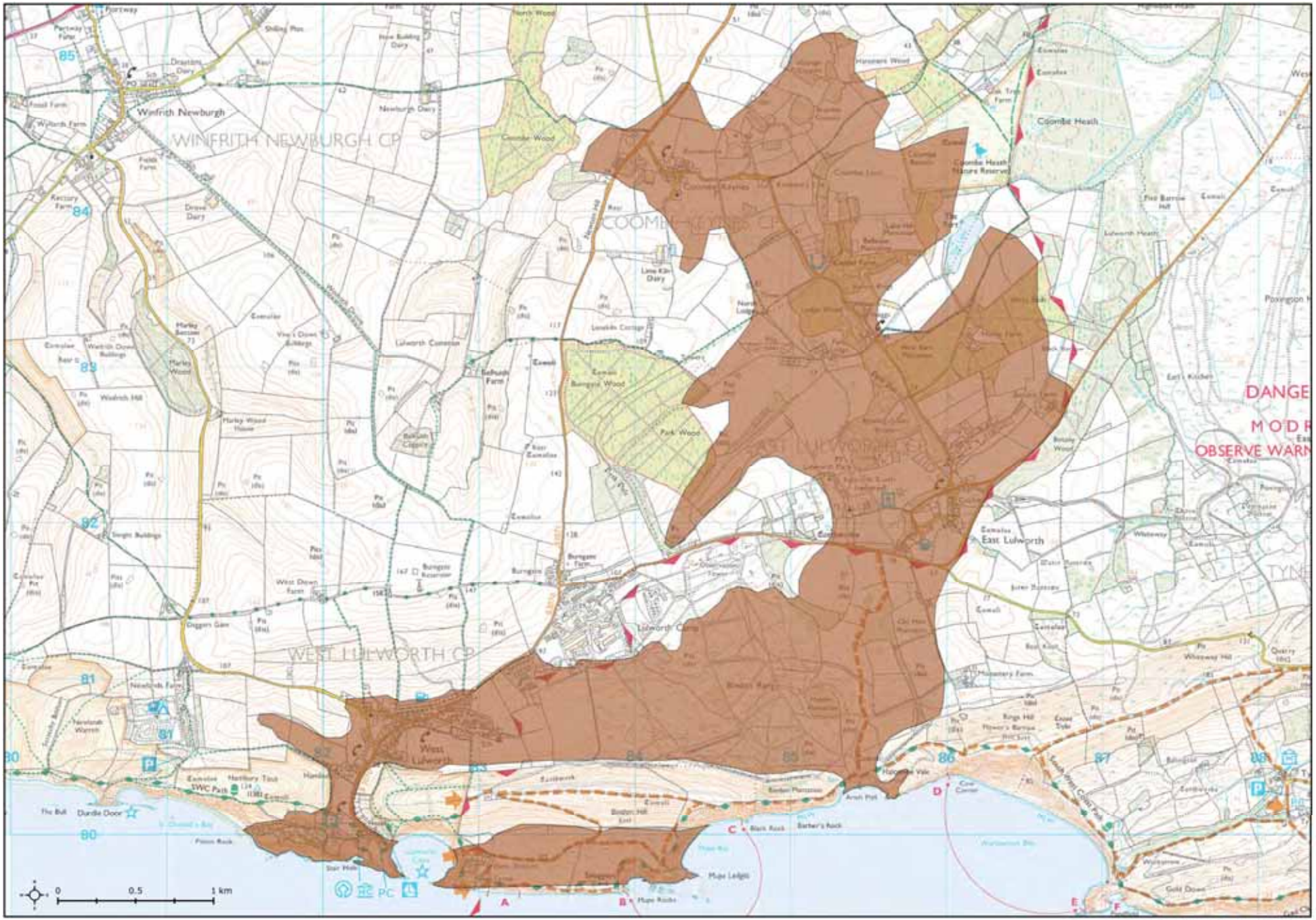
Morden-Lytchett LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy

Development size (ha)	
≤1	LM
≤10	M
≤30	H
>30	H

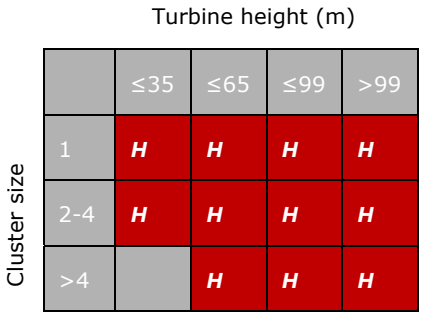
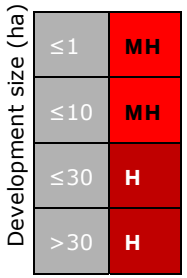
Morden-Lytchett LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Morden-Lytchett LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Sensitivity to the introduction of single turbines less than 35m high is **moderate** and sensitivity to 2-4 turbines of this height is **moderate-high**. Sensitivity to all other scales of wind energy development is **high**. The presence of wind turbines would potentially add uncharacteristic, large scale elements to views, acting as focal points to the detriment of other features or and affecting the unity of this intimate landscape. The fringes of the area, where overhead powerlines and major roads (e.g. A35, A350) reflect modern development and activity, would be less sensitive in this respect, but there are still sensitivities associated with the LCA value as part of the setting of the Dorset AONB to the west, for which it forms a wooded backdrop that contributes to the rural character of the designated area. There may be locations where single or small groups of turbines could be accommodated without having a major effect on the sense of scale in the landscape, or in longer views, but the higher the turbine the less likely it is that any such location could be found. Sensitivity could be higher where: • A turbine affects view of East Morden church or is visible from the settlements of East and West Morden or from the estate landscape and school grounds at Lytchett Minster.	Sensitivity to the introduction of solar PV developments of less than 1 hectare is **low-moderate** and sensitivity to developments of up to 10 hectares is **moderate**. Sensitivity to all other scales of solar PV energy development is **high**. Whilst solar PV development would present a contrast to the softer textures that prevail in this landscape the extent of woodland cover and strong field boundaries offer scope for containing any adverse visual impact to a localised area. Towards the fringes of the LCA, overhead powerlines and major roads (e.g. A35, A350) already have an adverse effect on landscape character, so sensitivity to modern development would be lower, but larger developments would be out of scale with the field pattern. Sensitivity could be higher where: • The landform is more strongly undulating, in the vicinity of Lytchett Matravers.

Landscape character area: Lulworth

Area: 953 hectares



Lulworth LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"Low rolling hills with an intimate and enclosed character"*	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** The southern half of the Lulworth LCA is used by the MOD as firing ranges. *"Mosaic of pastures, woodland blocks and dense hedgerows with trees" …"The army ranges to the south also influence the landscape where it becomes more open in character"*
Visual Exposure: *"The diverse structure of vegetation shapes an enclosed landscape with an intimate character. The parkland landscape around Lulworth has a grander scale with long views and vistas. The extensive military use in the west tends to have a bleak visual appearance."* The B3070 and B3071 pass through the area en route to nearby Lulworth Cove, a popular tourist attraction, with the latter offering extensive views from high ground to the north of Lulworth Camp, and the Purbeck ridge offers panoramic, elevated views into the LCA.	**Development and activity:** *"…a settled rural landscape with discreet settlements of small villages set within a mixed farmed landscape"* *"The impact of military activity affects the tranquillity of the area."*
Lulworth LCA value characteristics	
Lulworth LCA is located within the Dorset AONB. The mosaic of woodland, pasture, well treed hedgerows and also patches of unimproved marshy grassland and heath create a distinctive character that contrasts with other nearby AONB landscapes such as heathlands and the open chalk downs. This diversity, and the scenic quality of the landscape, are valued characteristics of the AONB. *"With many woodland blocks and fine stands of veteran trees, it has a sense of harmony and enclosure"* *"Extensive sweeping parkland landscape and castle with veteran trees and parkland railings" …"Small patches of unimproved neutral and acidic wet grasslands and heathy patches" … "Occasional barrows and traces of prehistoric field patterns"…"Recent conifer planting and military development does detract from the more inherent characteristics"*	

Lulworth LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Lulworth LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
	

Lulworth LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Lulworth LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Sensitivity to all scales of wind energy development is judged to be **high**. Areas where the landscape has an "*intimate and enclosed*" character, valued qualities of the AONB, will be highly sensitive to the scale of wind energy development, and the parkland around Lulworth Castle is also a distinctive and valued landscape. The areas at the southern end of the LCA affected by military use are considered less tranquil, but sensitivity to development in close proximity to the chalk escarpment or the distinctive coastal landscape around Lulworth Cove would be high.	Sensitivity to solar developments that fit within the field pattern which would be in the range up to 10 hectares, is judged to be **moderate-high**. Sensitivity to developments above 10 hectares is **high**. The enclosed nature of much of the LCA offers some potential to screen development, but this is a scenic and largely tranquil rural landscape which would have a relatively high level of sensitivity to any distinctly modern development. Sensitivity could be higher where: • A potential site is part of the parkland landscape around Lulworth Castle; • A potential site affects unimproved grassland or heathland; • A potential site is on exposed ground.

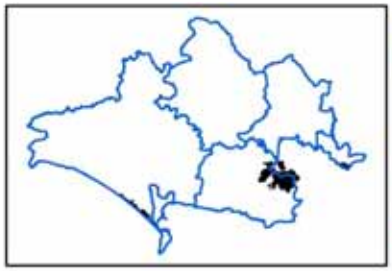
Landscape character area: Rempstone

Area: 1238 hectares

Rempstone LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: "*Low rolling hills"* *"The landscape is set around a gently rolling terrain with soft London clay and Poole formation of sedimentary origin."* Landform scale is moderate.	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** "*The area has a consistent pattern of rough pastures, dense hedgerows with trees and small woodland blocks with occasional settlement and farmsteads along rural winding lanes."* *"With a rolling landform, the structured pattern of vegetation and enclosures provides an often intimate character when compared to the surrounding open heathlands and ridge."* Landscape scale is relatively small.
Visual exposure: "*With a rolling landform, the structured pattern of vegetation and enclosures provides an often intimate character when compared to the surrounding open heathlands and ridge."* *"…heavily influenced by the imposing Purbeck Ridge to the south opening to the flat heathlands in the north."* *"Occasional glimpses of Corfe Castle and Poole Harbour add to the variety of viewing experience"*	**Development and activity**: *"…a sparsely settled rural landscape"*
Rempstone LCA value characteristics	
The area forms part of the Dorset AONB and located at the foot of the Purbeck escarpment, contributes to its setting and the setting of Corfe Castle, a Grade 1 listed building and Scheduled Ancient Monument. "*Small patches of unimproved neutral and acidic marshy grasslands"… "Occasional patches of heathy scrub and bracken"… "areas of conifer plantation have been planted with some negative visual impact"* "*Visual unity is afforded by a rolling patchwork of pastures"*	

Rempstone LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Rempstone LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Turbine height (m) Cluster size ≤35 ≤65 ≤99 >99 1 MH H H H 2-4 H H H H >4 H H H	Development size (ha) ≤1 MH ≤10 MH ≤30 H >30 H
Rempstone LCA sensitivity to wind energy	**Rempstone LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy**
In this landscape sensitivity to single turbines less than 35m high is judged to be **moderate-high** and sensitivity to all other scales of wind energy development is **high**. The Rempstone LCA lies within the Dorset AONB and forms a narrow (typically less than 500m) strip set against a backdrop of the high Purbeck Ridge, which rises sharply by more than 100m to the south. As such it forms an integral part of the setting of the extensive and valued heathland areas to the north and is also highly visible from elevated viewpoints on the Purbeck ridge. Any development within it is likely to be highly visible from a wide area to the north and from the escarpment to the south and appear incongruous with the pastoral, wooded landscape. However, the landscape is not free from intrusion, with the busy Corfe-Studland road running through much of its length, and the scale of the ridge is such that there might be a degree of robustness to smaller turbines, particularly if they are located in association with existing farm complexes. Sensitivity could be higher where: • An area forms part of the setting of Corfe Castle and development would intrude on views to and from the castle.	Developments of less than 10 hectares are judged to have **moderate-high** sensitivity and any larger developments would have **high** sensitivity. The Rempstone LCA lies within the Dorset AONB and, being a narrow strip on ground sloping down from the Purbeck Ridge towards the Dorset Heaths, any development within it is likely to be highly visible from both the ridge and potentially also from locations in the wider Poole basin to the north, appearing incongruous with the pastoral, wooded landscape and its distinctive, homogeneous linear form. There is however some modern intrusion in the form of the busy Corfe-Studland road, which reduces sensitivity for some locations. Sensitivity could be higher where: • Areas form part of the setting of Corfe Castle and development would intrude on views to and from the castle; • Areas comprise unimproved grassland or heathland; • Site is prominent in views from the Purbeck Ridge.

Landscape character type: Harbour/Wetland/Lagoon



District boundary

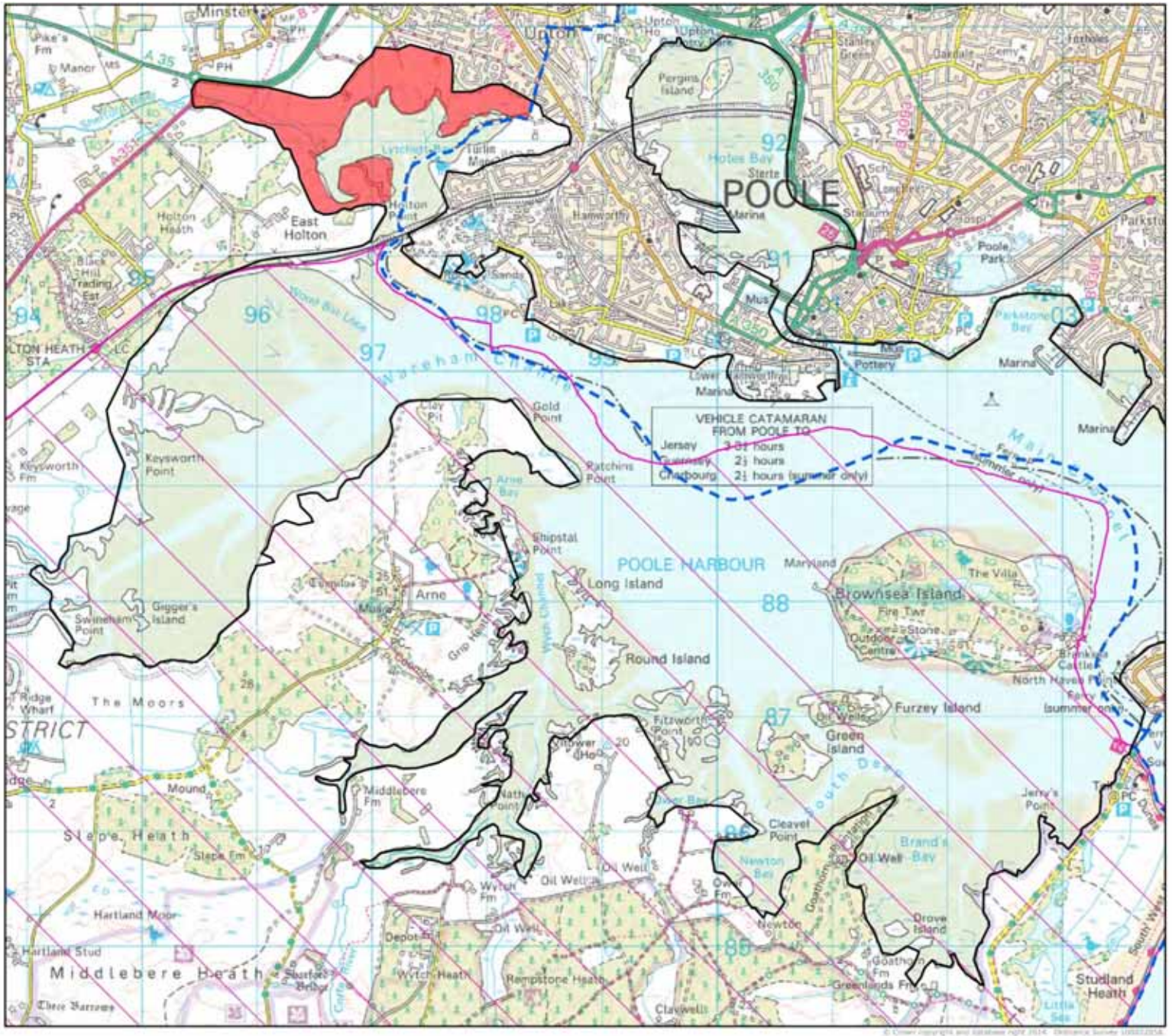
AONB

Dorset Landscape Character Type

1. Harbour/Wetland/Lagoon

Purbeck Landscape Character Area

1A - Upton Bay Marsh



Harbour / Wetland / Lagoon LCT overview

This LCT includes a large area within the Purbeck District, comprising the open water of Poole Harbour and the intertidal mudflats, marshlands and reedbeds that fringe it. This LCT is represented by one LCA within the Purbeck District, defined as Coastal Marshland within the district landscape character assessment. Upton Bay Marsh LCA is a small, low-lying area of saltmarsh, fragmented heathland and meadows at the lower reaches of the Piddle, Frome and Stour river valleys within the Poole Basin. The area encloses Lytchett Bay to the north and east. To the north it is defined by the urban edge of the settlement of Upton and to the west it gives way to Lowland Heathland and Valley Pasture LCAs.

Harbour / Wetland / Lagoons LCT characteristics by susceptibility criteria

Scale and complexity of landform:

"*Large scale [and] open.*"

There is little variation in landform, with much of the areas fringing the open water low-lying and flat.

Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

"*Indented and shallow shorelines to the harbours*"

Complex, distinctive relationship between the intertidal flats and marshes, with dendritic creeks and irregular, dynamic coastal edges.

Visual exposure:

"Important vistas and views of historic and cultural importance."

"Provides a unique setting for the towns of Poole and Christchurch"

The expanse of open water of the harbour, its edges and islands form an important focus in views from an extensive area surrounding the basin. It is overlooked by the Purbeck Hills to the south, the rolling pastures to the north and low ridges to the west. The harbour is also highly visible from much of the adjacent urban areas to the northeast and forms an important part of their setting.

Development and activity:

"Tranquil and generally unspoilt"

The key land management objectives are to "*maintain tranquillity, control development at the fringes to minimise its landscape, ecological and visual impacts … maintain key viewpoints and maintain undeveloped character."*

In addition it notes several features which "*need their landscape setting to be conserved and enhanced such as Sandbanks Peninsular, Poole Harbour islands…* [and] *Poole Harbour Entrance"*.

Harbour / Wetland / Lagoons LCT value characteristics

"Provides important and popular open space and recreational value."

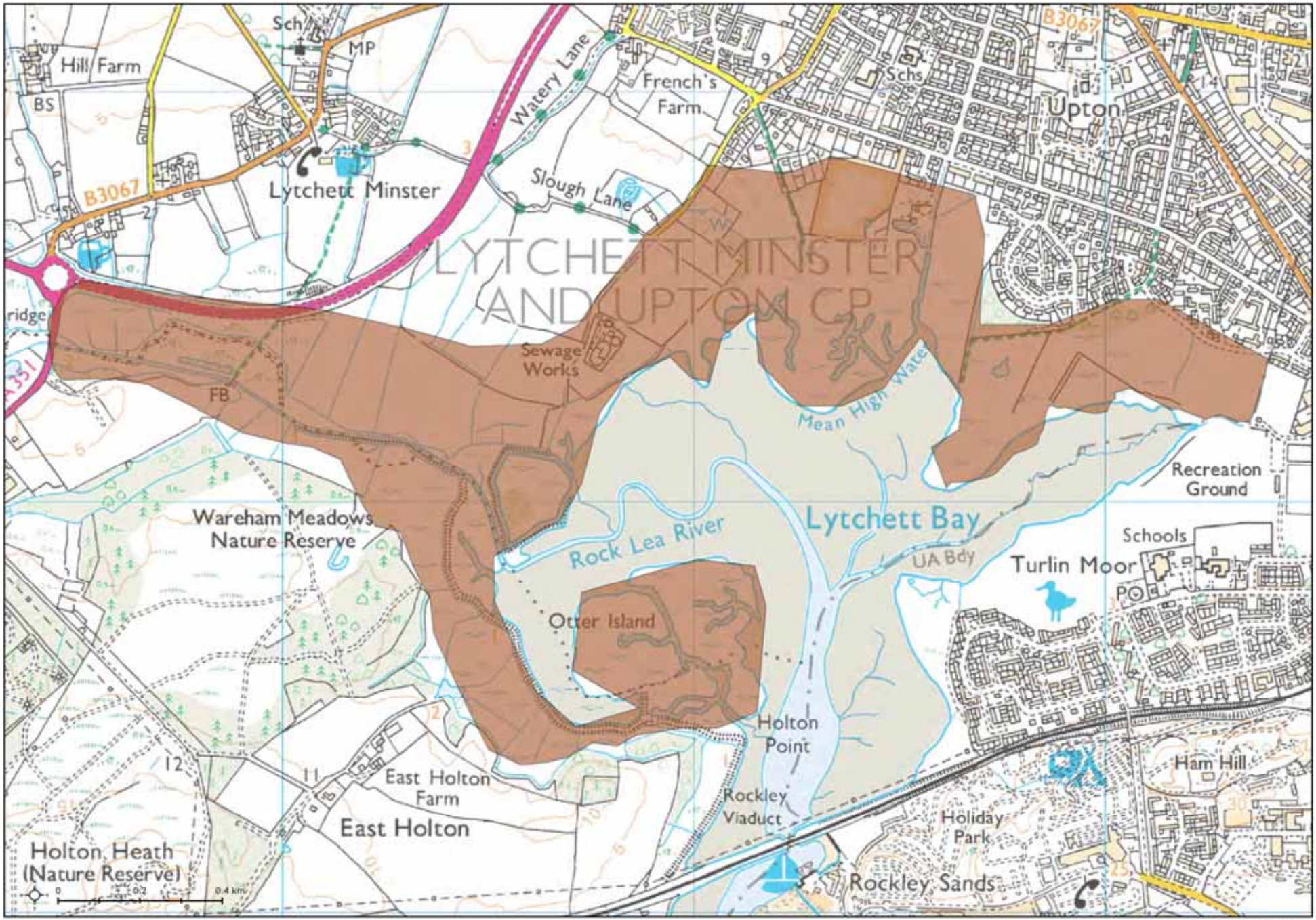
"Many key features of interest such as Sandbanks Peninsular, Poole Harbour islands… [and] *Poole Harbour Entrance…"*

The overall management objective for the LCT is to "*Maintain the open, uncluttered and dramatic coastal landscape character of the area"* and to *Conserve and enhance the undeveloped character along the coast.*

Harbour / Wetland / Lagoons LCT sensitivity to wind energy	Harbour / Wetland / Lagoons LCT sensitivity to solar PV energy
Although generally flat and low-lying, the subtle variations in landform which relate to the complex relationship between the open water/marsh and land, and the complexity and small scale mosaic of land cover, islands and intertidal areas, makes this a sensitive LCT. The is very high scenic value associated with Poole Harbour, which forms the focus of views from extensive areas to the south (including the Dorset AONB), west and north and as part of the setting to Poole. Within this open and predominantly undeveloped landscape wind turbines of all scales have the potential to be highly visible, as it is overlooked from surrounding elevated areas as well as visible across large areas of open water.	The subtle and irregular variations in landform and land cover which relate to the complex relationship between the open water/marsh and land are highly sensitive to this form of development. Solar PV development would form a strong contrast to the distinctive forms and textures of the coastal edge, despite the reflective nature of the water. As the areas are generally low-lying, Solar PV development has the potential to be screened locally by trees and vegetation. However the area is overlooked from elevated areas to the south which increases potential visibility in some areas. Overall the high landscape value of these areas and the complexity and sensitivity of the features which characterise them are highly sensitive to this form of development.

Landscape character area: Upton Bay Marsh

Area: 136 hectares



Upton Bay Marsh LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria

Scale and complexity of landform:

"A flat and expansive marsh, mudflats and meadow landscape."

The area is generally low-lying and flat, although to the northeast the land gradually rises towards Upton.

Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

"Deeply incised and sinuous shoreline."

"There is a strong and distinctive urban edge to the area softened in places by extensive scrub woodland. This is regenerating from the marshland and it provides an important landscape feature and buffer for the urban edges."

Visual exposure:

This area is less overlooked than other parts of the wider LCT around Poole Harbour, with close-range views from the settlement at Upton are inland areas to the west and south screened by trees and scrub vegetation. It is however visible in open views from Turlin Moor to the southwest, and from more elevated adjacent LCAs to the north, including Upton Heath and the Morden/Lytchett Rolling Wooded Farmland LCAs.

Development and activity:

"This is generally an intact landscape despite some typical urban fringe pressures and uses. The lack of fragmentation is due to the consistent and extensive coverage of marsh/mudflats, meadow and extensive scrub woodland."

"…apart from the impact of the urban edges of Upton and Turlin Moor and a sewage works; there are no other built environmental features."

Upton Bay Marsh LCA value characteristics

The LCA is not within a designated landscape. The assessment does however note that the area is well used by the population of the surrounding settlement and it has remote and scenic qualities which are likely to be valued locally.

Upton Bay Marsh LCA sensitivity to wind energy

Turbine height (m)

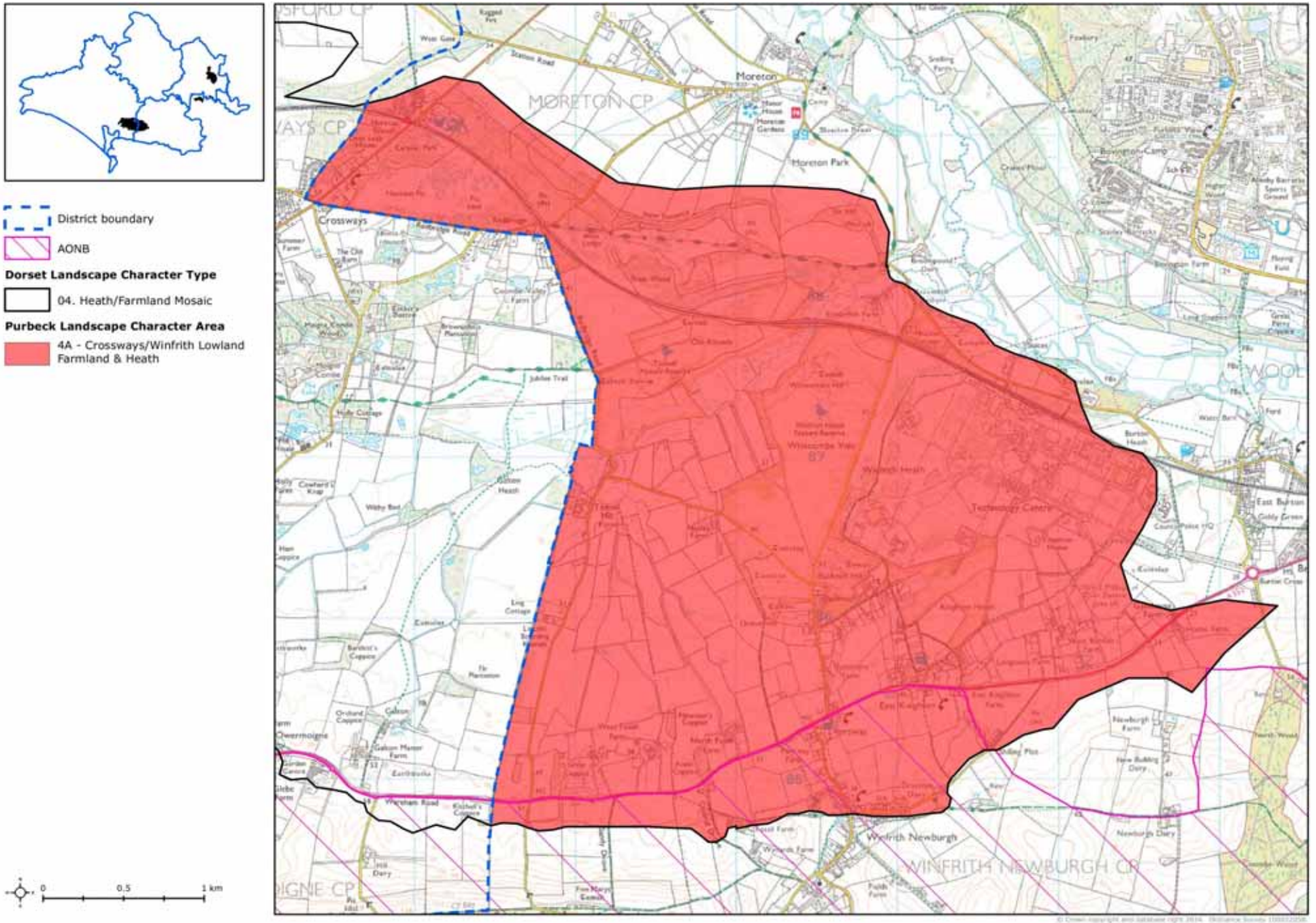
Cluster size	≤35	≤65	≤99	>99
1	MH	H	H	H
2-4	H	H	H	H
>4		H	H	H

Upton Bay Marsh LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy

Development size (ha)	
≤1	MH
≤10	H
≤30	H
>30	H

Upton Bay Marsh LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Upton Bay Marsh LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Sensitivity to the introduction of single turbines less than 35m high is **moderate-high**. Sensitivity to all other scales of wind energy development is **high**. The presence of wind turbines would introduce uncharacteristic, large scale elements within the context of a predominantly flat landscape where vertical features are of a small, human scale. The intricacy of the landscape pattern, the intact character, qualities of remoteness (despite adjacent areas of settlement) and scenic value makes this area of high sensitivity to this form of development.	Sensitivity to the introduction of solar PV developments of less than 1 hectare is **moderate-high** towards the north-eastern fringes of the LCA, where the settlement edges of Upton and major roads (e.g. A35) influence the landscape character. Across the remainder of the area sensitivity is **high** to this and all other scales of solar PV energy development. Solar PV development would present a contrast to the distinctive textures and patterns that prevail in this landscape. The woodland cover at the fringes of the area offer some scope for containing views from some localised areas, although this is generally limited. Larger developments would be out of scale with the field pattern and so sensitivity would be high.

Landscape character type: Heath Farmland Mosaic



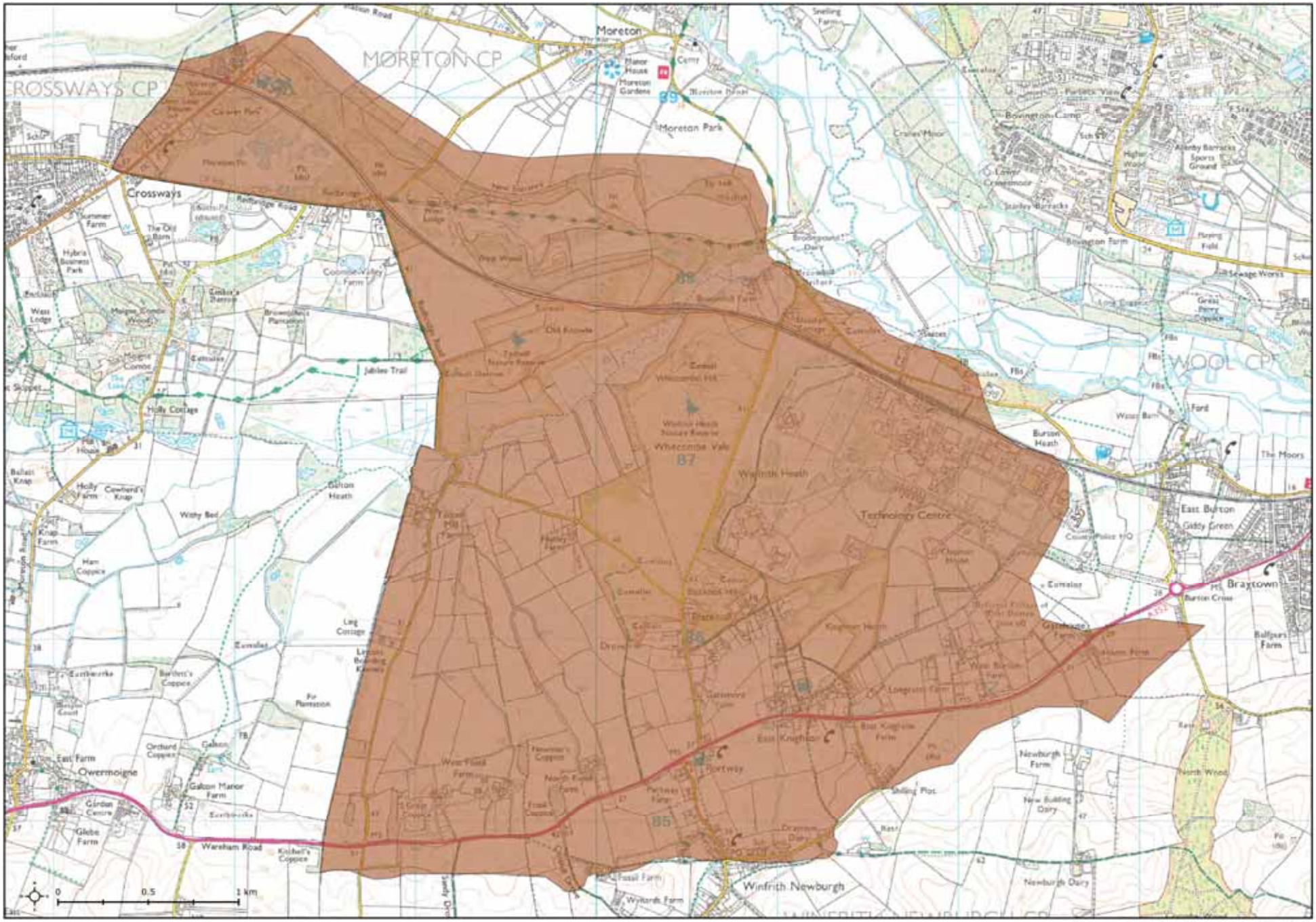
Heath Farmland Mosaic LCT overview
This landscape type forms a transitional landscape between the chalk landscapes river valleys and other heathland landscape types. It is generally a flat mixed farmed area interspersed with a mosaic of heathland and scrub which all combine to create a patchwork landscape. It is impacted on by transport corridors, mineral extraction, other urban developments, such as recreational/leisure/retail centres and urban fringe land uses which all fragment the area creating a disjointed perception particularly in the east of the county where the urban edges abutt the landscape. There are a number of important elevated areas such as at Whitcombe Hill, which form key local landscape features. The plantations and tree belts across the area also form key features and do help to soften urban edges and uses in places. This LCT is represented by one LCA within the Purbeck, the Crossways/Winfrith Lowland Farmland and Heath, which lies between the Chaldon Downs and the Frome River Valley.

Heath Farmland Mosaic LCT characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"Generally flat landform, which drains into adjacent river basins"* *"There are a number of important elevated areas such as at … Whitcombe Hill"*	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"…mixed farmed area interspersed with a mosaic of heathland and scrub which all combine to create a patchwork landscape. The farmed landscape does include some intensive estate managed farmland where the medium sized fields have dense hedges and some important hedgerow trees and small copses."* *"plantations and tree belts across the area also form key features and do help to soften urban edges and uses in places"* *"There are some reasonably expansive islands of open heathland such as at Winfrith Heath and Tadnoll Nature reserve as well as smaller fragmented pockets across the area"*
Visual exposure: There are a number of open and more elevated areas with views across the wider landscape.	**Development and activity:** *"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'"* *"Stand alone settlements vary from picturesque villages such as West Knighton to 'growth' villages such Crossways"* (Crossways is just across the district boundary in West Dorset) *"The scale and prominence of Winfrith Technology Centre near Wool creates a significant visual impact across a wide area"*.

Heath Farmland Mosaic LCT value characteristics	
This LCT is for the most part undesignated in landscape terms, but the southern edge of the Crossways/Winfrith area is in the Dorset AONB. The overall management objective for the LCT, to *"reduce heathland fragmentation, control and enhance urban fringe uses and hard edges, manage and enhance al existing tree belts and promote informal recreation"*, reflects the landscape value of remaining heathlands, and potential recreational value, but also suggests that value has been lost through built development. "There are a number of important elevated areas such as at … Whitcombe Hill, which form key local landscape features. "	
Heath Farmland Mosaic LCT sensitivity to wind energy	**Heath Farmland Mosaic LCT sensitivity to solar PV energy**
Sensitivity is variable within this LCT. Remnant heathlands will typically be more sensitive than cultivated landscapes, however where visual exposure is low and there is not a strong sense of a homogeneous landscape character sensitivity to development is reduced. The degree of development and activity reduce sensitivity in some locations.	Sensitivity is variable within this LCT. Remnant heathlands, and to an extent areas which still retain some potential for reversion to heathland, will be sensitive to development but the extent of modern intrusion reduces sensitivity in other locations so that, where there are areas of level ground, a patchwork of land uses and good screening from hedges and trees, the sensitivity to development is lower.

Landscape character area: Crossways / Winfrith Lowland Farmland & Heath

Area: 1350 hectares

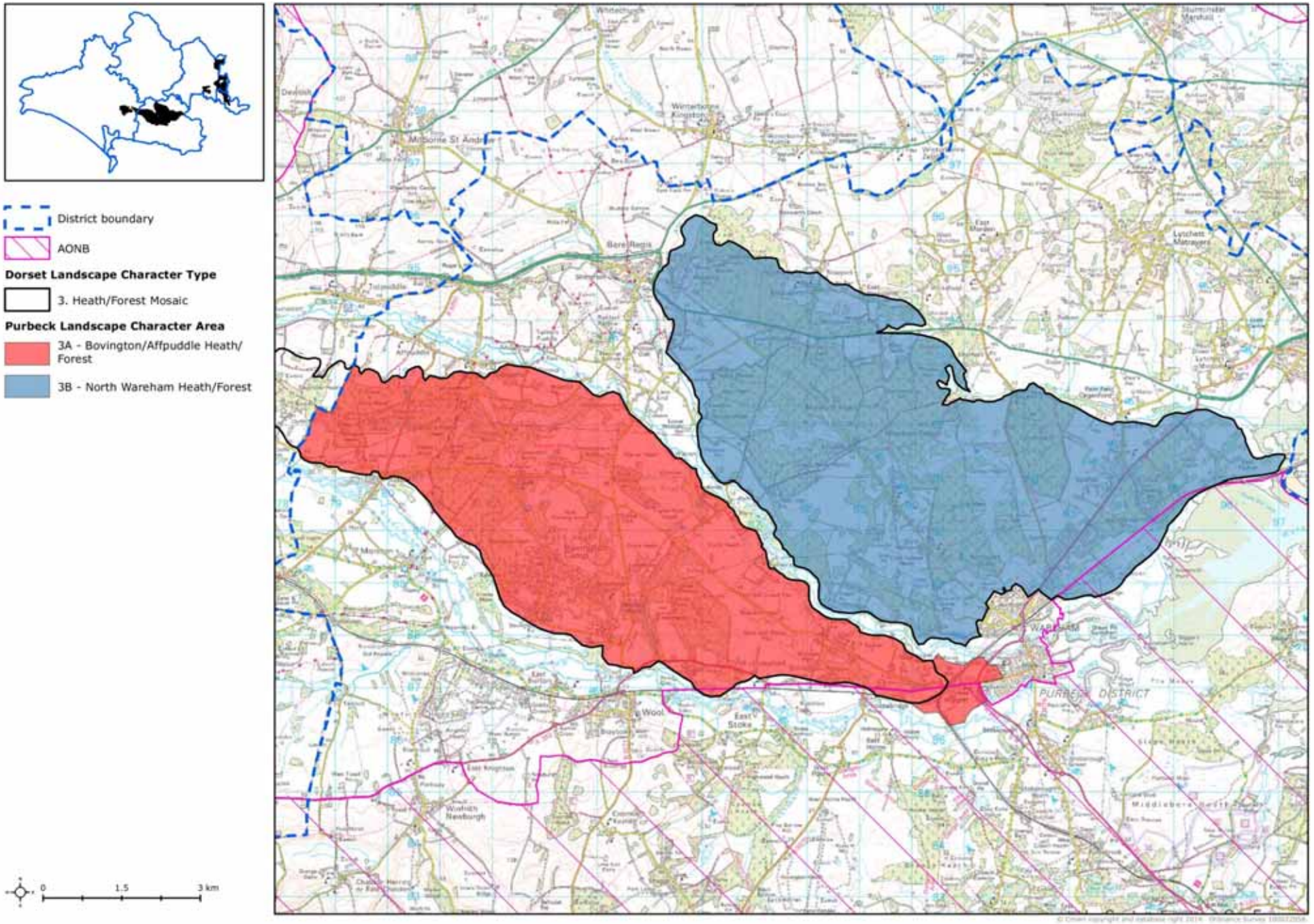


Crossways / Winfrith Lowland Farmland & Heath LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: The area is generally flat and of a medium scale although *"it has some distinctive elevated areas, from the rising land in the south east up onto the chalk, the undulating Winfrith Heath with Whitcombe and Blacknoll Hills as key features, and the northern ridgeline dominated by plantation woodland at West Wood in the Moreton Park estate."*	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"The farmland is mixed with pastoral farming to the west and arable in pockets across the area and especially to the north in Moreton Park.* *There are also areas of marginal farming and 'horsiculture', for example in the Redbridge area. This part of the area has an urban fringe feel partly due to former and current mineral extraction activities..."* *"The medium sized fields have dense hedges with some important hedgerow trees and small copses creating a distinctive pattern across the farmed areas."* The LCA also contains areas of heathland of a smaller scale, with a complex mosaic of vegetation.
Visual exposure: Adjoining LCAs to the north, east and west do not have significantly higher ground but there are more panoramic views from the chalk downs to the south, in particular the ridge to the west of Winfrith Newburgh.	**Development and activity:** "*The area is dominated visually and physically by Winfrith Technology Centre on the edge of the heath, despite retained geometric blocks of conifers. The A352 also creates a physical and visual impact on the character area."*
Crossways / Winfrith Lowland Farmland & Heath LCA value characteristics	
A small part of the LCA, to the south of the A352 Wareham Road and west of East Knighton, is in the Dorset AONB. Large tracts of the area are accessible as areas of open access and many, are very well used for informal recreation, with a well-established network of informal paths and tracks. The areas of lowland heathland represent a unique and rare landscape character type.	

Crossways / Winfrith Lowland Farmland & Heath LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Crossways / Winfrith Lowland Farmland & Heath LCA LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Turbine height (m) Cluster size ≤35 ≤65 ≤99 >99 1 M MH MH H 2-4 MH MH H H >4 H H H	Development size (ha) ≤1 M ≤10 MH ≤30 H >30 H

Crossways / Winfrith Lowland Farmland & Heath LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Crossways / Winfrith Lowland Farmland & Heath LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Sensitivity to the introduction of single turbines less than 35m high is **moderate** and to 2-4 turbines of this height is **moderate-high.** Sensitivity to the introduction of up to 4 turbines 35-65m high, or single turbines 65-99m high is **moderate-high.** Sensitivity to all other scales of wind energy development is **high**. This is a landscape of mixed character and quality, and sensitivity varies across the area accordingly. The topography is generally flat to gently undulating which typically suggests a lower sensitivity. Where there is more topographic variation, and slightly raised areas form the back drop to the lower-lying river valley to the north (particularly to the south of Moreton), sensitivity will be high to all scales of this development type. Within the southern extents of the area the introduction of turbines could affect the rural setting and tranquillity of the more remote, higher AONB landscapes of the Chaldon and South Dorset Downs. High turbines could potentially alter the perception of the scale of the long ridge in the South Dorset downs, which forms an important part of the setting of the wider area.	Sensitivity to the introduction of solar PV developments up to 1 hectare in area is **moderate**, sensitivity to developments of 1-10 hectares is **moderate-high** and sensitivity to larger solar PV developments is **high**. This is a landscape of mixed character and quality, and sensitivity varies across the area accordingly. The topography is generally flat to gently undulating, which typically suggests a lower sensitivity, but this is likely to vary locally depending on the landuse and landcover and the extent to which development influences the perceptual qualities at different locations. There are areas of heathland at Winfrith, Tadnoll and Knighton Heath which will be highly sensitive to all scales of solar PV development, but where there are more marginal areas of farming and simple, geometric field patterns, sensitivity is lower. The extent of forest and woodland across localised parts of the area has the potential to contain views of small scale development of this type, although as the area is overlooked by higher ground to the south, scope to screen this form of development may be limited. Sensitivity is likely to be higher: • In remaining areas of heathland, such as Winfrith Heath, Tadnoll and Knighton Heath with a greater complexity in the mosaic of heathland, scrub and woodland.

Landscape character type: Heath Forest Mosaic

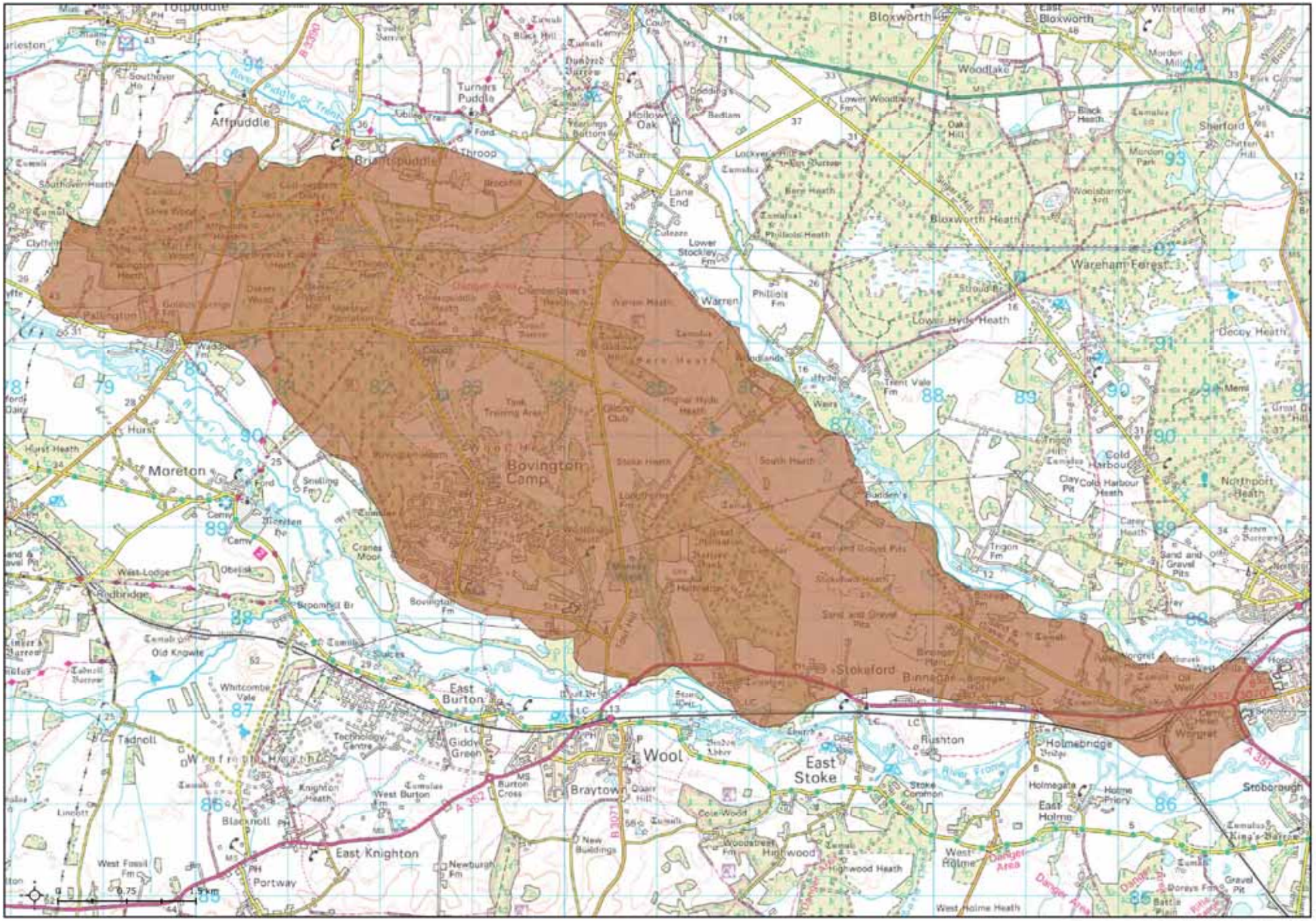


Heath Forest Mosaic LCT overview	
This landscape type forms a transitional landscape between the chalk landscapes, river valleys and other heathland landscape types. The LCT is represented by two LCAs within Purbeck, lying to the south of the chalk belt and separated by the Piddle Valley, which together account for most of the northern part of the District: the Bovington/Affpuddle and the Wareham Forest/Heath. The former is bordered to the south by the Frome Valley and the latter is bordered to the east by Poole Harbour and to the north by the Sherford Valley.	
Heath Forest Mosaic LCT characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: "*It has a varied landform from undulating in the west with steeper slopes in the east of the county. It is generally formed on elevated plateaus or ridges cut by the rivers Avon, Moors, Sherford, Piddle and Frome."*	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** "*An extensive and expansive landscape"* "*It is characterised by a patchwork landscape of heath, forest and scrub on sandy soil with extensive blocks of conifer plantation and areas of regenerating birch woodland to create a distinctive mosaic. The conifer plantations blanket former heathland sites often in extensive stands with their margins often creating striking 'sharp edges' but can help to soften urban development."*
Visual exposure: *"There are a number of key viewpoints with important open views across the wider landscape such as from … the picnic sites along the ridge at Affpuddle Heath and from within elevated parts of Wareham Forest."*	**Development and activity:** "*The urban influences of housing, military and industrial development impact significantly on the area, which is well used and popular for informal recreation.* Bovington Camp creates a significant impact over a wide area to the west of the area as does quarrying operations. *Urban fringe pony/horse paddocks and its associated 'clutter' create more localised but still significant impacts."*
Heath Forest Mosaic LCT value characteristics	
The southern edge of both the Bovington/Affpuddle LCA and the Wareham LCA border the Dorset AONB. *"…an unspoilt feel over a large proportion"* *"Area popular for informal recreation activities as well as for nature conservation"* *"Wareham Forest [and other locations outside of Purbeck District] are key features in the area particularly because of their open space and landscape value."* The overall management objectives for the Heath/Forest Mosaic LCT focus on increasing diversity away from a dominance of hard-edged conifer plantations, but "*skyline trees and trees which help to soften urban development"* are noted as key features to be conserved, together with "*the designated sites of nature conservation and cultural heritage interest and the heathland areas to reduce fragmentation"*.	

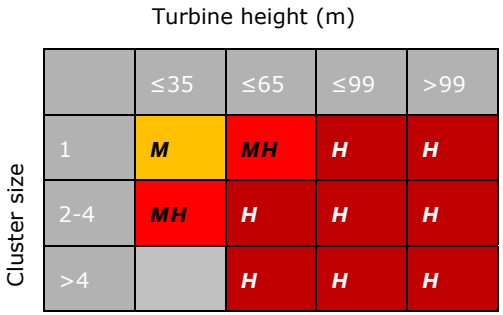
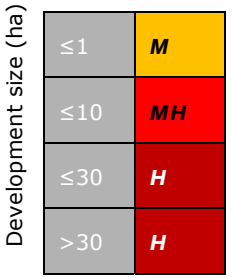
Heath Forest Mosaic LCT sensitivity to wind energy	Heath Forest Mosaic LCT sensitivity to solar PV energy
The undulating landform can generally be considered of higher sensitivity to wind turbines, in particular high points and ridges. These are typically on open access land with high recreational value which consequently also contributes to a higher sensitivity. Whilst large scale landscapes are more suitable for wind energy development than those with a smaller scale land cover pattern, the value attached to heathland landscapes makes these areas more sensitive. Coniferous plantation woodland is not inherently sensitive as a land use, but its proximity to heathland areas, and the combined recreational value of two land use types, increases its sensitivity. Farmed areas are broadly less sensitive. The screening effect of coniferous woodland means that there is scope for finding locations in which smaller turbines would have a limited degree of visibility, but larger turbines are likely to stand out sharply on skylines in panoramic views where coniferous forest currently dominates. From outside of the LCT, the forest-heath areas form a backdrop to some views from lower ground, and are prominent in panoramic views from the Purbeck Ridge. Sensitivity will be higher where development would have skyline impact in views from beyond the LCT, in particular where it has a noticeable effect on views to or from the Purbeck Ridge, and it will also be higher where prominent land marks or features are present on the skyline. The impact of modern development is typically fairly localised, because of the screening effect of the afforested areas, so large areas still have a sense of remoteness and, as a consequence, would be more sensitive to development.	The undulating landform can generally be considered of higher sensitivity to solar PV developments. The absence of any regular pattern in areas dominated by heath and forest, and their recreational and scenic value, raises sensitivity. Solar PV development would form a strong contrast to the distinctive colours and textures of the heathland and birch woodland and scrub. There is lower land use sensitivity associated with farmed former heathland areas, but their typical position on the margins of the heath and forest areas makes visual impact on surrounding areas more likely. Where solar PV development has the potential to be visible on elevated hill slopes, or where it would interrupt skylines, there is a raised degree of sensitivity. Forest and woodland could be used to contain views locally. The impact of modern development is typically fairly localised, because of the screening effect of the afforested areas, so large areas still have a sense of remoteness and, as a consequence, would be more sensitive to development.

Landscape character area: Bovington / Affpuddle Heath / Forest

Area: 3589 hectares



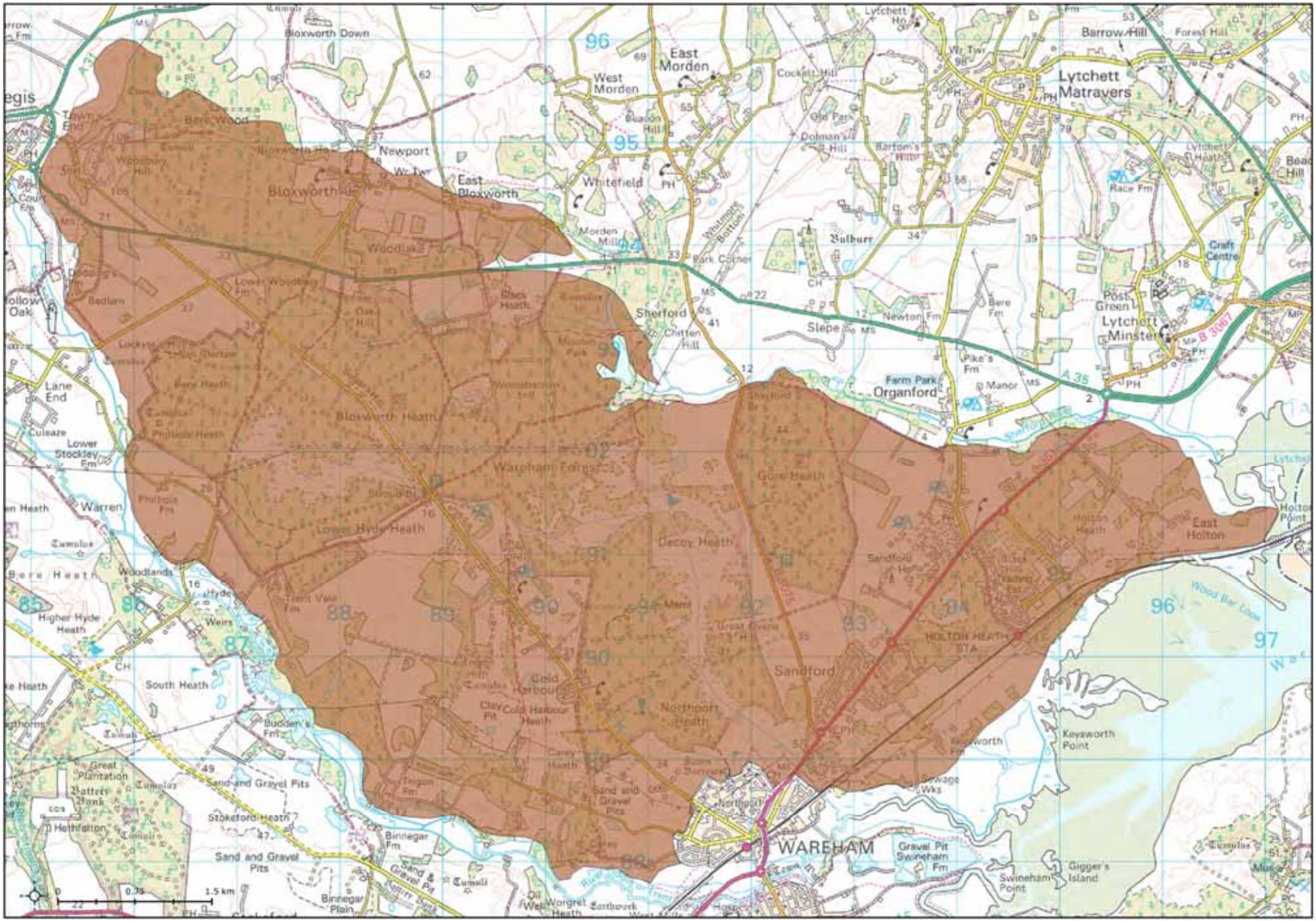
Bovington / Affpuddle Heath / Forest LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"…an undulating landscape"*	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"…broad scale patchwork of dense plantation forest, open heath, scrub and farmland"* *"Large scale blocks of conifer plantation "* *"…arable farming is generally found along the margins of the area abutting forestry and especially along the Frome valley and into the chalk landscapes to the north"* *"Open expansive heathland"*
Visual exposure: *"Open views from elevated positions across the area "* *"…dense blocks of coniferous plantation create bold features and strong geometric edges but do help to screen intrusive urban and military uses"* .	**Development and activity:** *"The military activity and use based at Bovington does create an impact across a large part of the area. Current and former mineral extraction activities influence the appearance and after use of significant parts of the south and eastern side of the area in particular. Modern day reclamation of these sites has and will continue to provide landscape, biodiversity and amenity benefits. Traffic generation from these sites is an ongoing issue."* *"The impacts of urban development at the fringes of the area detract from overall condition"*
Bovington / Affpuddle Heath / Forest LCA value characteristics	
The LCA is outside of the Dorset AONB but forms part of a forested backdrop to the north of it. *"The wooded ridgeline to the north is a key feature"* *"There are a significant number of scheduled ancient monuments including a group of tumuli associated with the northern ridgeline"* *"…ecological and cultural importance is significant"* *"The whole area is well used as a recreation resource despite the heavy military presence. There are several forest trails and picnic areas, for example at Culpeppers Dish. Three of Dorset's major visitor attractions are in the area: Bovington Tank Museum, Monkey World and Clouds Hill. "* *"Higher Hyde Heath nature reserve is an important feature"*	

Bovington / Affpuddle Heath / Forest LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Bovington / Affpuddle Heath / Forest LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
	

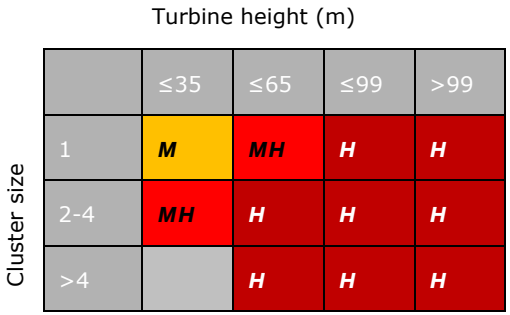
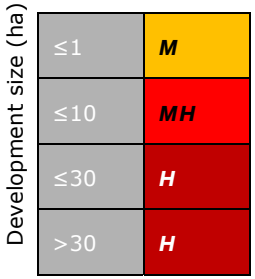
Bovington / Affpuddle Heath / Forest LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Bovington / Affpuddle Heath / Forest LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Sensitivity to the introduction of single turbines less than 35m high is **moderate** and sensitivity to 2-4 turbines of this height is **moderate-high**. Sensitivity to single turbines of 35-65m is **moderate-high.** Sensitivity to all other scales of wind energy development is **high**. The presence of open heath and scrub, framed by forest which hides intrusive development (e.g. the major roads and quarries) but permits some longer views, is a sensitive combination in terms of scenic beauty and recreational value. Farmed areas will typically be less sensitive than heath and forest areas, unless the character of those heath or forest areas has already been much altered as a result of nearby development and their recreational value is low. The least sensitive areas are likely to be where quarrying works have had a significant effect on the landscape, or in the southern part of the LCA where modern development has had more impact. Sensitivity is likely to be higher where: • Area is popular for informal recreation; • There are areas of heathland, scrub and woodland mosaic where there is a perception of remoteness or wildness; • Turbines would be visible from the AONB to the south, and have an impact on the sense of seclusion in the more remote parts of the South Purbeck heathlands or the Frome Valley • Location detracts from the historic character of scheduled monuments.	Sensitivity to the introduction of solar PV developments of less than 1 hectare is **moderate**, sensitivity to developments of 1-10 hectares in **moderate-high** and sensitivity to all other scales of solar PV energy development is **high**. The extent of forest and woodland across the area offers scope for containing views of this form of development, although consideration should be given to the fact that most of these trees were planted as crops and will at some point in time be felled. Policies for heathland restoration mean that some cleared areas are likely not to be replanted. Sensitivity will be lowest where there is existing fragmentation and degradation towards the fringes of settlements, or where mineral extraction has taken place, but will typically be higher, for all scales of development, where areas of intact heathlands, or a mosaic of heathland, scrub and woodland, are affected. Sensitivity is likely to be higher where: • Terrain is undulating, or elevated (e.g. the northern ridgeline); • Area is popular for recreation; • Location is in open heathland, or in an areas of heathland, scrub and woodland mosaic where there is a perception of remoteness or wildness; • Location detracts from the historic character of scheduled monuments; • Trees which would visually contain development are likely to be felled in the lifetime of the development (reference should be made to Forest Design Plans).

Landscape character area: North Wareham Heath / Forest

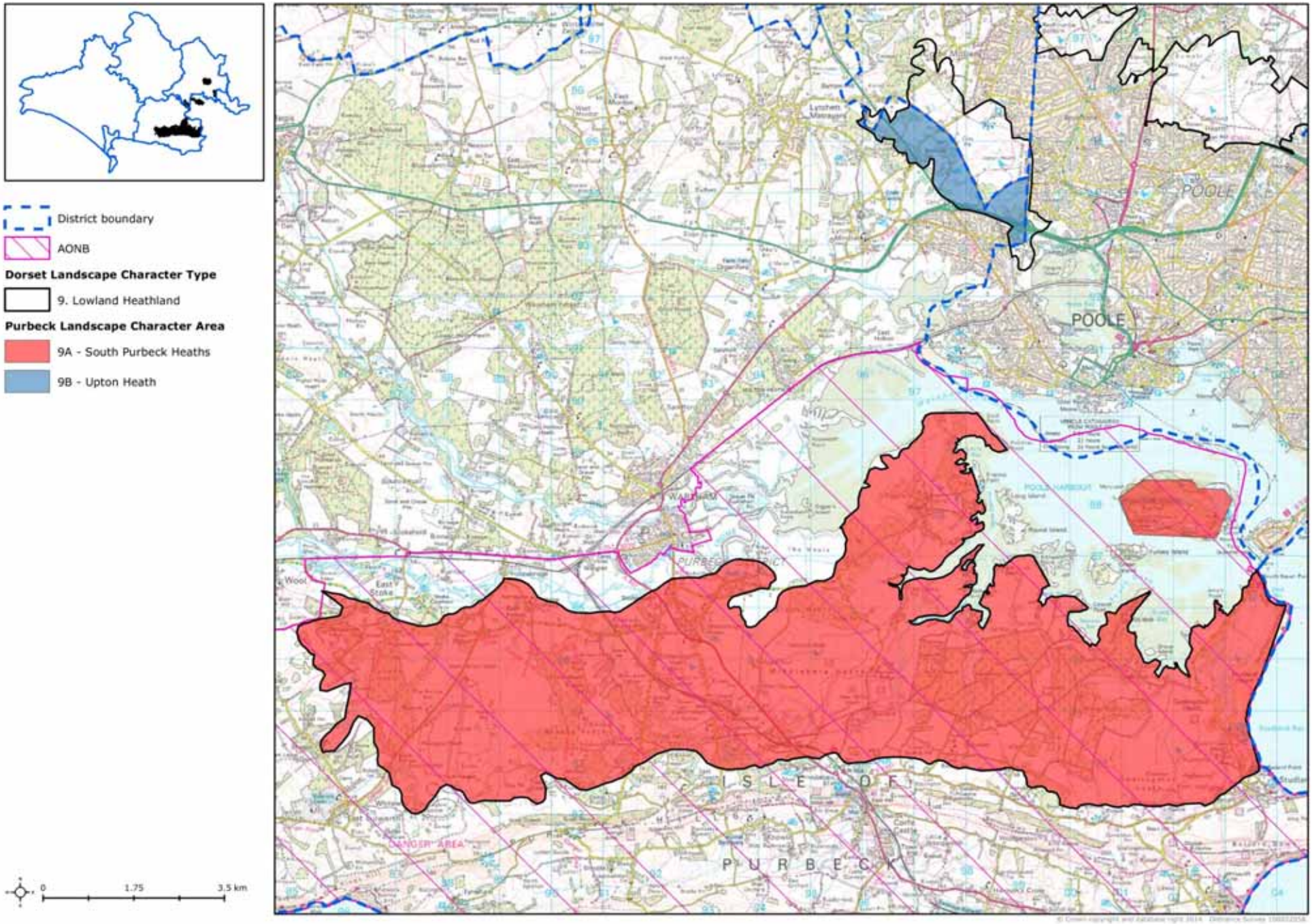
Area: 4552 hectares



North Wareham Heath / Forest LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"…an expansive, undulating and rolling landscape"* The southern and eastern parts of the LCA, to the south and east of Bloxworth Heath and Morden Heath, are typically less elevated and less undulating.	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"…large areas of uniform heathland"* *"…open areas are surrounded by a patchwork landscape of conifer plantation, scrub, woodland, farmland, mineral extraction, industrial use and urban edges"* *"The heathland area's character is created by the mix of species together with the regenerating birch woodland around the edges and individual pine amongst the heath"* *"Arable farming occurs around the fringes especially to the north west and north east and in parts along the River Piddle valley and are often areas of cleared heath. There are marginal farmed areas and patches of 'horsiculture' across the area."* *"…weak, fragile hedgerows in arable areas"* *"The area around Holton Lee, and to the south east of the railway line – around Keysworth Farm - is of a very different character. There is a distinct parkland feel"*
Visual exposure: *"…conifer plantations dominate and create strong geometric edges but also help to screen urban and industrial uses such as existing and proposed mineral workings"* Views across the LCA from beyond its margins are generally limited by the woodland plantations, other than longer views from the Purbeck Ridge. The strongest views across the area are from high points within it, such as from Woodbury Hill near Bere Regis and from the Woolsbarrow hillfort in the centre of Wareham Forest.	**Development and activity:** *"The urban, industrial and commercial land uses at Sandford and Holton Heath create a negative landscape and visual impact across parts of the south east of the character area. There is also a long and continuing influence caused by mineral extraction in the area which has shaped the landscape and its use, particularly in the south of the area. Modern day reclamation of these sites has and will continue to provide biodiversity, landscape and amenity benefits. Traffic generation from these sites is an ongoing issue"*
North Wareham Heath / Forest LCA value characteristics	
The LCA is outside of the Dorset AONB but forms part of a forested backdrop to the north of it. *"…an open and unspoilt landscape across much of the area"* *"Morden Bog is a National Nature Reserve and a distinctive low lying open wetland within the wider character area"* *"There are a significant number of barrows, tumuli and some hill forts designated as scheduled ancient monuments"* *"…the forests in particular form an important and well used recreational resource with many parking/picnic sites. The Wareham Forest Way passes through the area."*	

North Wareham Heath / Forest LCA sensitivity to wind energy	North Wareham Heath / Forest LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
	
North Wareham Heath / Forest LCA sensitivity to wind energy	**North Wareham Heath / Forest LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy**
Sensitivity to the introduction of single turbines less than 35m high is **moderate** and sensitivity to 2-4 turbines of this height is **moderate-high**. Sensitivity to single turbines of 35-65m is **moderate-high.** Sensitivity to all other scales of wind energy development is **high**. The presence of open heath and scrub, framed by forest which hides intrusive development (e.g. the major roads and quarries) but permits some longer views, is a sensitive combination in terms of scenic beauty and recreational value. Farmed areas will typically be less sensitive than heath and forest areas, unless the character of those heath or forest areas has already been much altered as a result of nearby development and their recreational value is low. The least sensitive areas are likely to be where quarrying works have had a significant effect on the landscape. Sensitivity is likely to be higher where: • Area is popular for recreation; • There are areas of heathland, scrub and woodland mosaic where there is a perception of remoteness or wildness; • Turbines would be visible from the AONB to the south, and have an impact on the sense of seclusion in the more remote parts of the South Purbeck heathlands or the Frome Valley • Location detracts from the historic character of scheduled monuments (e.g. Woolsbarrow Fort).	Sensitivity to the introduction of solar PV developments of less than 1 hectare is **moderate**, sensitivity to developments of 1-10 hectares in **moderate-high** and sensitivity to all other scales of solar PV energy development is **high**. The extent of forest and woodland across the area offers scope for containing views of this form of development, although consideration should be given to the fact that most of these trees were planted as crops and will at some point in time be felled. Policies for heathland restoration mean that some cleared areas are likely not to be replanted. Sensitivity will be lowest where there is existing fragmentation and degradation towards the fringes of settlements, or where mineral extraction has taken place, but will typically be higher, for all scales of development, where areas of intact heathlands, or a mosaic of heathland, scrub and woodland, are affected. The extensive public access and recreational value of the area also serve to increase typical sensitivity. Sensitivity is likely to be higher where: • Terrain is undulating; • Area is popular for recreation; • Location is in open heathland or wetland, or in an areas of heathland, scrub and woodland mosaic where there is a perception of remoteness or wildness; • Location detracts from the historic character of scheduled monuments (e.g. Woolsbarrow Fort); • Trees which would visually contain development are likely to be felled in the lifetime of the development (reference should be made to Forest Design Plans).

Landscape character type: Lowland Heathland

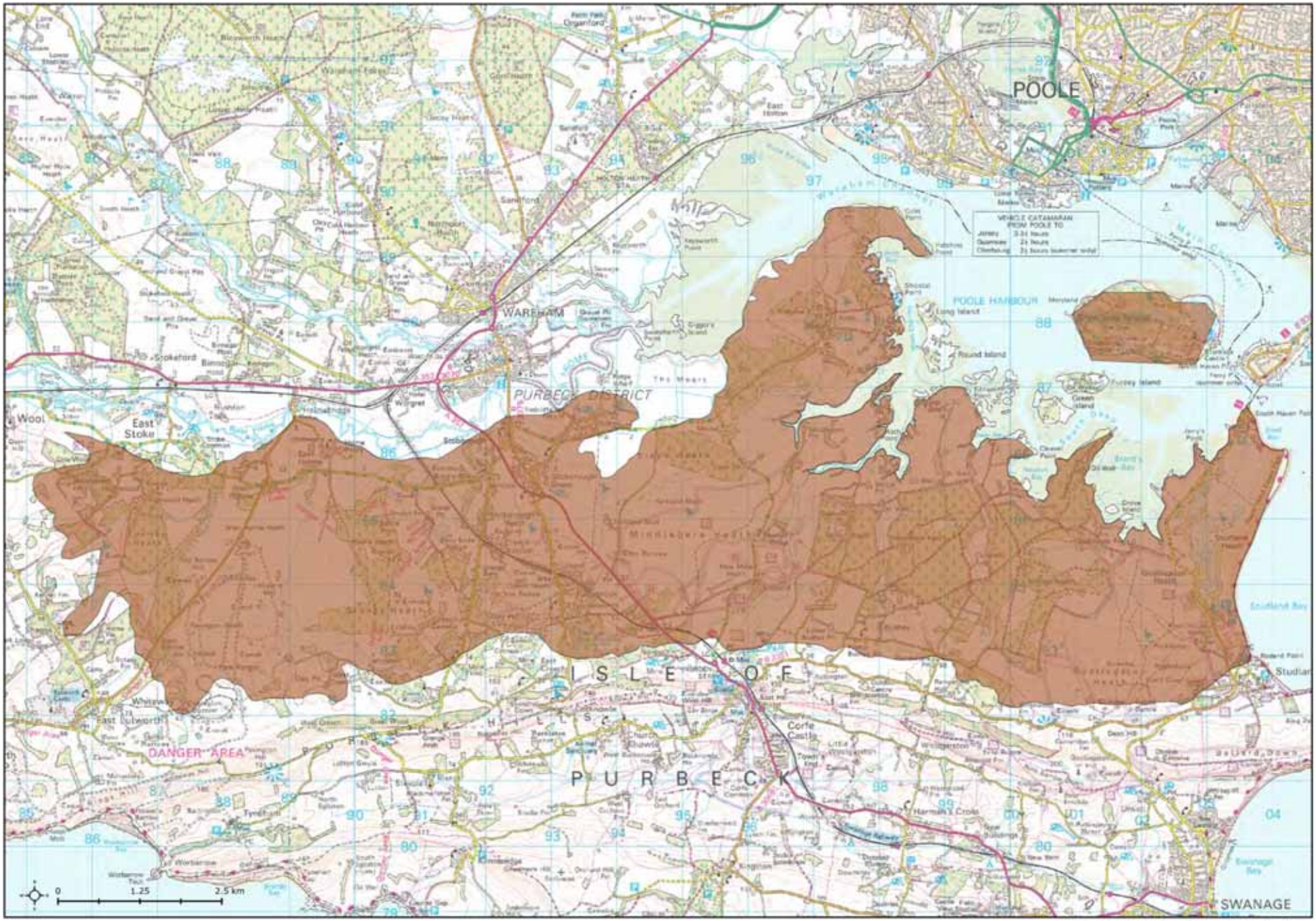


Lowland Heathland LCT overview	
This LCT is represented by two LCAs within Purbeck. South Purbeck Heaths LCA comprises a large area of heathland and remnant heathland enclosing Poole Harbour to the south and stretching from the coast at Studland Bay in the east to Lulworth in the west. Upton Heath LCA, smaller in size, lies to the northwest of the Poole Basin; it continues into East Dorset, where it is assessed separately.	
Lowland Heathlands LCT characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"An undulating lowland landform with a distinctive open, exposed and uniform character."*	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"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"*
Visual exposure: *"Wide, expansive and open views especially from elevated areas."*	**Development and activity:** *"Heavily influenced by urban development and associated pressures"* *"A fragile landscape easily damaged by human activities e.g. fire and motorcycles".* *"Modern development, including significant conifer plantations, mineral extraction, planned farms, golf courses, roads and other urban fringe development has fragmented the remaining heathland patches"*
Lowland Heathlands LCT value characteristics	
"The wild and exposed appearance and feel of the open heathlands has been well documented in Thomas Hardy's writings. There are numerous landmarks and distinctive open areas of heath such as Hartland Moor, Studland, Middlebere, Povington, Winfrith, Canford and Holt Heaths" The overall management objective for the LCT is to "*conserve and enhance existing heathland habitats and restore important former heathland sites*". The South Purbeck Heaths, accounting for the majority of the LCT in Purbeck, are designated as part of the Dorset AONB.	
Lowland Heathlands LCT sensitivity to wind energy	**Lowland Heathlands LCT sensitivity to solar PV energy**
Generally flat, slightly elevated from surrounding landscapes and with subtle variations in landform, this type is generally of lower sensitivity in terms of the scale and complexity of landform, although where landform variation is more pronounced and where the area forms open, ridgelines in views from surrounding areas, sensitivity is higher. However, the complexity and small scale mosaic of land cover and historic land use pattern makes this a sensitive LCT. Scenic value is generally high due to the distinctive colours, textures and expansive views often afforded from within the heathlands, particularly in association with wide views over Poole Harbour	The subtle variations in landform, complex and diverse mosaic of open expansive dry and wet heath, grassland, regenerating birch/pine wood and wooded scrubby heath and historic land use pattern is highly sensitive to this form of development, despite intrusion and fragmentation by modern development. Within this open and expansive landscape solar PV development has the potential to be highly visible, although localised areas of woodland and scrub could be used to contain views locally. Solar PV development would form a strong contrast to the distinctive colours and textures of the heathland and the intricate mosaics of land

and where very limited development is visible from within the area. This value is reflected in AGLV designations for the heathland areas least affected by modern development.	cover found within these areas.

Landscape character area: South Purbeck Heaths

Area: 7036 hectares



South Purbeck Heaths LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria	
Scale and complexity of landform: *"Undulating and exposed heathland landscape"* *"The area has a distinctive and dramatic relief with small ridges rising to 100m, rolling hills, undulating lowlands with upstanding geological features of dark ironstone."*	**Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:** *"The area has a diverse visual character ranging from wild open heathlands to enclosed wooded areas. To the far east and west, there is a lack of tree cover with a dramatic gently rolling relief… The central area is wooded with a more intimate and enclosed feel."* *"Around the fringes towards the west and south the landscape becomes more pastoral in character with significant conifer plantations towards the north. The conifer plantations of Rempstone and Newton Heath provide a sharp contrast to the surrounding open heaths. Hartland Moor forms a suburb heathland and mire landscape with extensive views of colour and texture. Arne Peninsula is a complex structure of pastoral woodlands with veteran oaks opening out to a mosaic of heathland and scrub with mires, grasslands, reed beds and salt marshes grading towards Poole Harbour. Where field boundaries exist they are largely made up of trimmed hedgerows and trees."*
Visual exposure: *"Towards Studland, a dramatic relief offers spectacular views of the surrounding wild heathlands and coast..."* *This exposed landscape offers impressive views of the remote and colourful heathlands towards the tranquil fringes of Poole Harbour.* The central area is more wooded, which contains views.	**Development and activity:** "*Due to much of the heathland habitat being protected, much of the area is free of settlement except a few scattered farmsteads."* However, accessibility from the nearby urban means that "*much of the area is subject to urban pressures of visitor impact, fly tipping and fires, a particular problem on the more open heathlands … much of the area has lost its traditional heathland character"*

South Purbeck Heaths LCA value characteristics
The LCA is designated as part of the Dorset AONB. Large tracts of the area are accessible as areas of open access and many, such as the RSPB reserve at Arne, are very well used for informal recreation, with a well-established network of informal paths and tracks. As an area of lowland heathland it represents a unique and rare landscape character type and is valued for its tranquil and scenic qualities.

South Purbeck Heaths LCA sensitivity to wind energy	South Purbeck Heaths LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Turbine height (m) / Cluster size	Development size (ha)

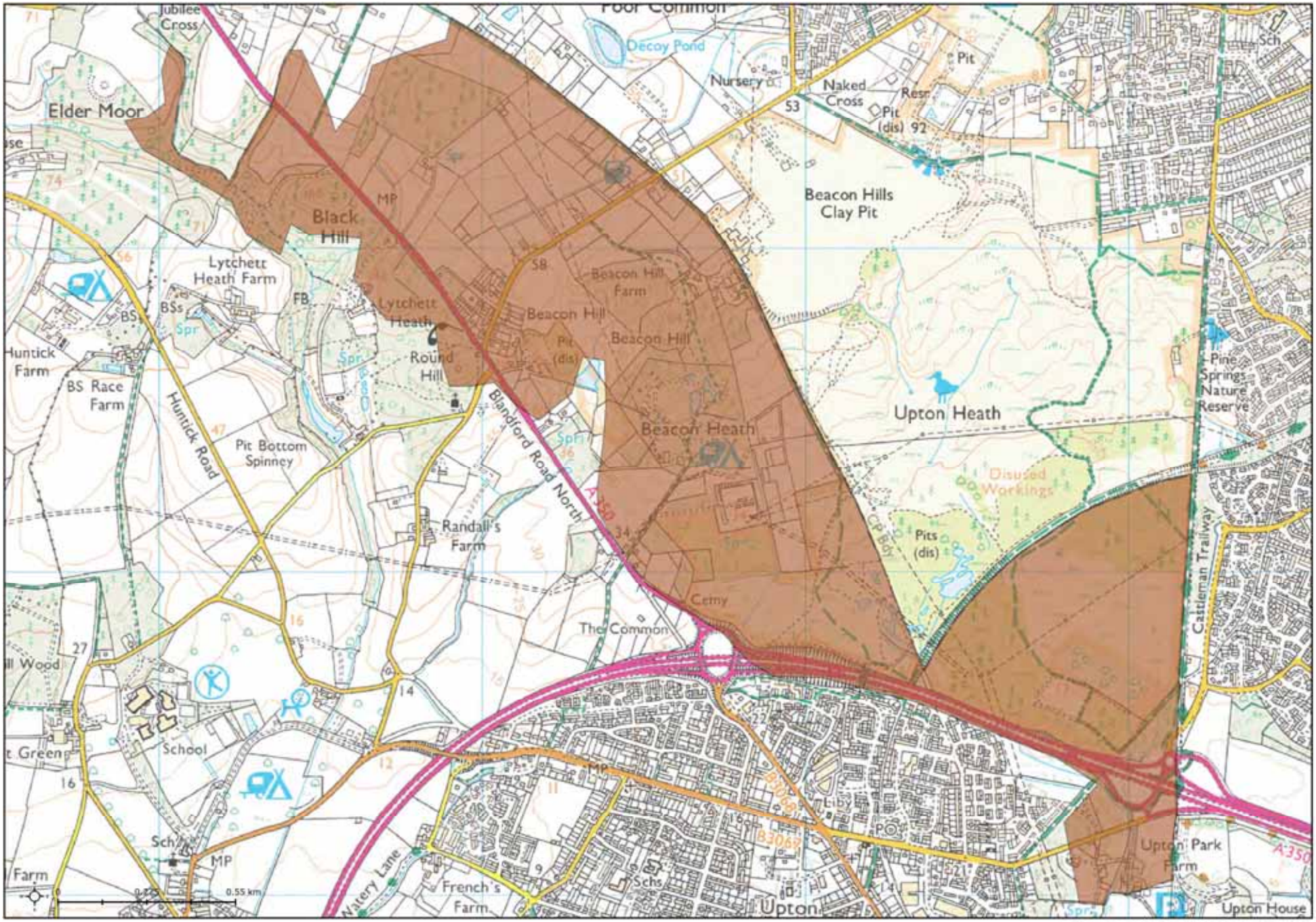
Cluster size \ Turbine height (m)	≤35	≤65	≤99	>99
1	MH	H	H	H
2-4	MH	H	H	H
>4	H	H	H	H

Development size (ha)	
≤1	MH
≤10	H
≤30	H
>30	H

South Purbeck Heaths LCA sensitivity to wind energy	South Purbeck Heaths LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Sensitivity to the introduction of single turbines less than 35m high and to 2-4 turbines of this height is **moderate-high.** Sensitivity to all other scales of wind energy development is **high**. The introduction of turbines within this landscape could potentially adversely affect the landscapes value as part of the Dorset AONB, and the setting of the Purbeck ridge to the south as seen from the wider Poole basin and Poole Harbour. There may be locations where single or small groups of small scale turbines could be accommodated without diminishing the sense of scale of the landscape, it's qualities of perceived wildness and the scale of the Purbeck ridge to the south, against which turbines are likely to be viewed. Turbines of a greater height are likely to alter the perception of the scale of the long ridge to the south which forms an important part of the setting of the wider Poole basin and AONB.	Sensitivity to the introduction of solar PV development of less than 1 hectare is **moderate-high** and sensitivity to all larger scales of solar PV developments is **high**. The extent of forest and woodland across localised parts of the area has the potential to contain views of small scale development of this type, although as the area is overlooked by the Purbeck ridge to the south, scope to screen this form of development may be limited. In areas where there is a simple composition of land cover comprising extensive areas of commercial forest, sensitivity is lower. Areas of intact heathlands, or a greater complexity in the mosaic of heathland, scrub and woodland, will be highly sensitive to all scales of Solar PV development. Similarly, where there is topographic variation, and elevated areas form the back drop to lower-lying river valleys, sensitivity will be high to all scales of this development type. Sensitivity is likely to be particularly high at the edges of the LCA adjacent to the harbour and at the coastal edge, both of which are heavily used for recreational and which form part of the surrounding setting for Poole Harbour.

Landscape character area: Upton Heath

Area: 246 hectares



Upton Heath LCA characteristics by susceptibility criteria

Scale and complexity of landform:

"Undulating elevated terrain"

"From the viewpoint on a cap of Plateau Gravel at Beacon Hill the land falls to the south and west in a series of gentle folds."

Scale and complexity of land use and field pattern:

"Exposed, open landscape"

"Mosaic of heath, scrub and woodland"

Visual Exposure:

From Hill View, the viewpoint located to the east of the Beacon Hills Clay Pits, extensive scenic views south over Poole Harbour to the Purbeck hills area available. Beacon Hill and the low ridge that extends eastwards from this towards Corfe Mullen form a distinctive pine and wood-topped skyline from a wide area to the south, particular from Holes Bay and Canford Heath. Part of this skyline is broken by the presence of the former workings, but is otherwise largely undeveloped.

Development and activity:

"The heath area is fragmented by blocks of trees and scrub and by informal tracks. Large areas to the south and north west have, in the past, been the subject to sand and clay working and used for waste disposal… The area is also crossed by a high voltage overhead electricity line that serves a major sub-station sited at the western edge of the heath."

Upton Heath LCA value characteristics

The area is not designated nationally or at a local level in terms of landscape, although it has high ecological value. Parts of the area are however accessible as areas of open access and the southern and eastern areas are an important recreational resource for local settlements, valued in particular for the extensive and scenic views available from the ridge top.

Upton Heath LCA sensitivity to wind energy

Turbine height (m)

Cluster size	≤35	≤65	≤99	>99
1	MH	MH	H	H
2-4	MH	MH	H	H
>4		H	H	H

Upton Heath LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy

Development size (ha)	
≤1	MH
≤10	H
≤30	H
>30	H

Upton Heath LCA sensitivity to wind energy	Upton Heath LCA sensitivity to solar PV energy
Sensitivity to the introduction of up to 4 turbines less than 65m high is **moderate-high.** Sensitivity to all other scales of wind energy development is **high**. There may be some locations where wind turbines could have a unifying effect on an area of degraded landscape, but careful consideration would need to be given to specific site conditions so as to avoid exacerbating issues of landscape clutter, particularly where skyline views might be affected. The tree-topped ridgeline, and in particular Beacon Hill, is a feature on an important and largely undeveloped skyline which forms a back-drop to the wider Poole basin and Poole Harbour. There may be lower-lying locations within the LCA where turbines could be accommodated without interrupting this skyline. Where land cover has been significantly modified and comprises agricultural land and areas of commercial forest, sensitivity is lower. Sensitivity is likely to be higher where: • Development has the potential to interrupt the tree cover which extends across the ridgeline in views from the wider areas to the south, around Holes Bay and Poole Harbour; • Development is on or close to remnant heathland; • Development could reduce recreational value of the area.	Sensitivity to the introduction of solar PV schemes of less than 1 hectare is **moderate-high** and sensitivity to all larger scales of solar PV development is **high**. The extent of forest and woodland across localised parts of the lower-lying parts of this area has the potential to contain views of small scale development of this type, although as the southern parts of the area are largely overlooked by Beacon Hill, scope to screen this form of development may be limited here. In areas where land cover has been significantly modified and comprises agricultural land and areas of commercial forest, sensitivity is lower. Areas of intact heathlands, or a greater complexity in the mosaic of heathland, scrub and woodland, will be highly sensitive to all scales of solar PV development. Sensitivity is likely to be higher where: • Location is on a more steeply sloping area, or the distinctive wooded ridge-top; • There are more intact areas of heathland, scrub and woodland mosaic; • Development has the potential to interrupt the tree cover which extends across the ridgeline in views from the wider areas to the south, around Holes Bay and Poole Harbour; • Development could reduce recreational value of the area.

8 Wind Energy Sensitivity Summary

8.1 The maps shown in **Figures 15 – 25** illustrate the sensitivity ratings set out in **Section 7**, with a separate map for each combination of turbine height category and cluster size category.

8.2 In summary it can be stated that Purbeck District has a generally high level of sensitivity to wind energy development. In every part of the District sensitivity to turbines of over 99m to tip is judged to be 'high', and there is only one character area where sensitivity to even the smallest size category – 15-35m – is assessed as lower than 'moderate'. The typically high level of sensitivity relates to numbers of turbines as well as height: sensitivity to developments of more than 4 turbines is assessed as 'high' across the whole District.

8.3 Sensitivity ratings reflect the high quality and value associated with the wide variety of landscapes across the whole District, but are generally higher in the areas which are designated within the Dorset AONB. This is in line with Natural England's view that the presence of landscapes with statutory protection (i.e. National Parks and AONBs) will substantially reduce the degree to which wind energy development can be accommodated[13].

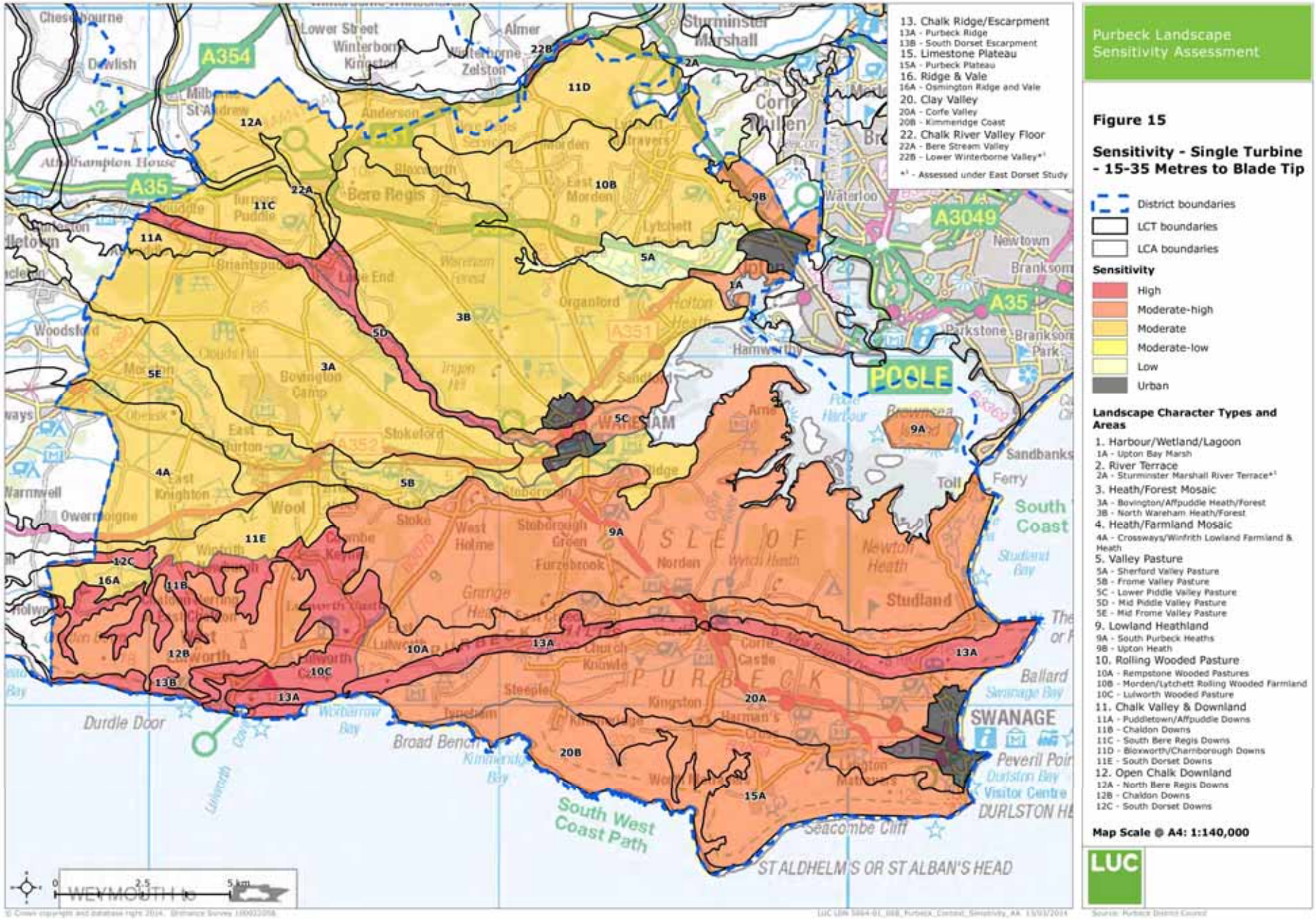
8.4 Remoteness, tranquillity, historic rural character and panoramic views with strong, uncluttered skylines are 'special qualities' applicable to the AONB which could be diminished by wind energy development. Where a landscape is valued either for an open, uncluttered character or a very contained, intimate character, any size of turbine is likely to be incongruous; high chalk escarpments and narrow river valleys are therefore the most sensitive locations for wind turbines.

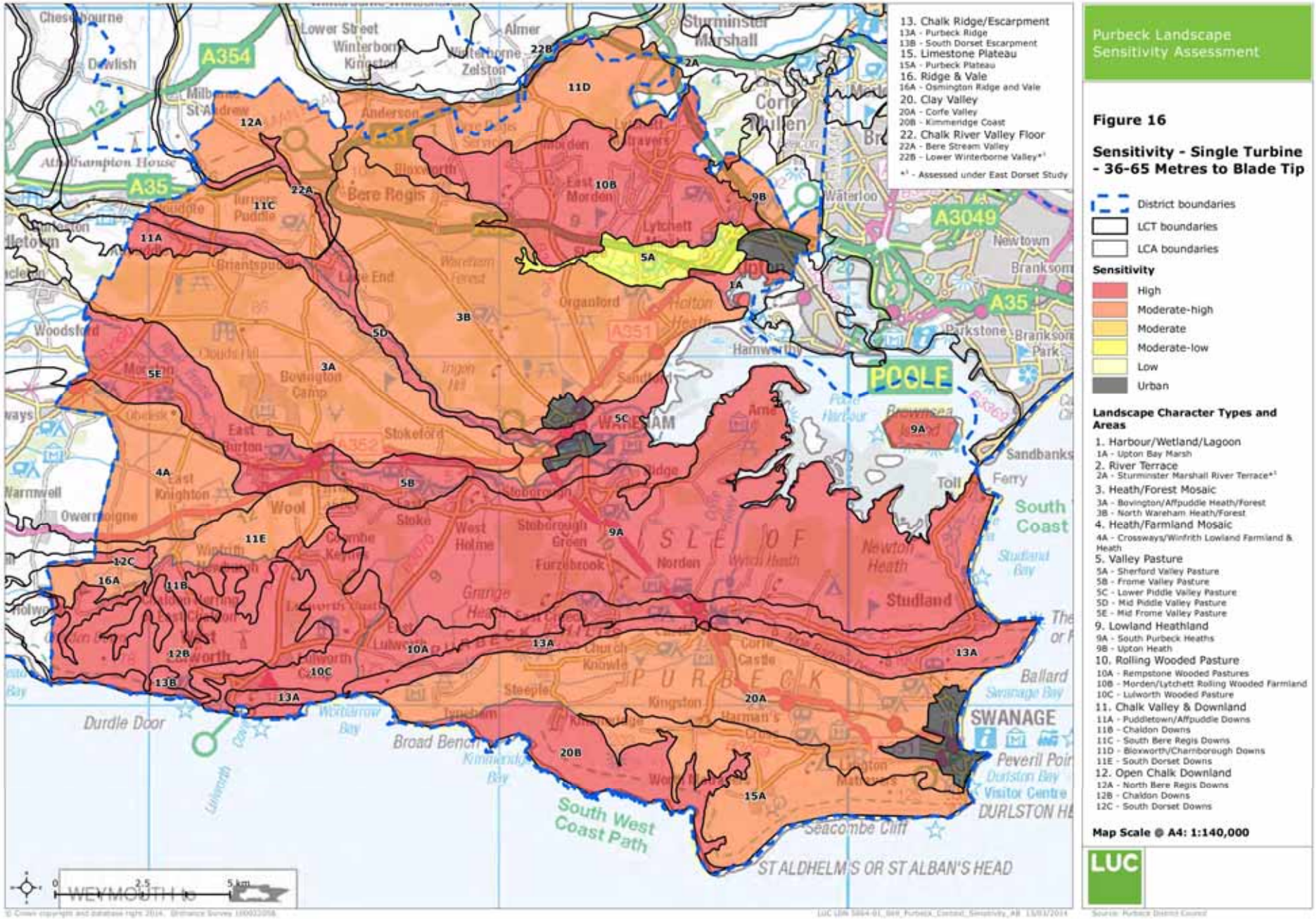
8.5 A slightly lower level of sensitivity applies to areas where landform and land use are reasonably large scale but there is also a degree of modern development which has affected traditional landscapes – principally heathlands – and their perceptual qualities. The degree of sensitivity within such areas will often vary locally, but the variety of distinctive landscapes within Purbeck – a characteristic recognised as a 'special quality' of the AONB – is such that the perceptual qualities of valued landscapes are likely to be affected by very tall turbines wherever in the District they are located.

8.6 Whilst this sensitivity assessment provides an initial indication of the relative landscape sensitivities of different areas to wind energy development, it should not be interpreted as a definitive statement on the suitability of a certain location for a particular development proposal. It is not a replacement for detailed studies on specific siting and design, and all developments will need to be assessed on their individual merits.

8.7 This assessment does not consider cumulative impact of wind energy developments, other than within the guidance notes in **Section 10** below, and it is important to note that, however low the sensitivity rating for an individual turbine or cluster, the cumulative effect of a proliferation of turbines can be significant, regardless of turbine size. Cumulative assessment of any specific wind energy proposal on landscape character and qualities will be a key aspect of the development process.

[13] As set out in the 2010 report *Making Space for Renewable Energy: Natural England's Approach to Assessing On-Shore Wind Energy Development* (Catalogue Code: NE254), table 2, page 11.


13. Chalk Ridge/Escarpment
13A - Purbeck Ridge
13B - South Dorset Escarpment
15. Limestone Plateau
15A - Purbeck Plateau
16. Ridge & Vale
16A - Osmington Ridge and Vale
20. Clay Valley
20A - Corfe Valley
20B - Kimmeridge Coast
22. Chalk River Valley Floor
22A - Bere Stream Valley
22B - Lower Winterborne Valley*1
*1 - Assessed under East Dorset Study
Purbeck Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
Figure 15
Sensitivity - Single Turbine - 15-35 Metres to Blade Tip
District boundaries
LCT boundaries
LCA boundaries
Sensitivity
High
Moderate-high
Moderate
Moderate-low
Low
Urban
Landscape Character Types and Areas
1. Harbour/Wetland/Lagoon
1A - Upton Bay Marsh
2. River Terrace
2A - Sturminster Marshall River Terrace*1
3. Heath/Forest Mosaic
3A - Bovington/Affpuddle Heath/Forest
3B - North Wareham Heath/Forest
4. Heath/Farmland Mosaic
4A - Crossways/Winfrith Lowland Farmland & Heath
5. Valley Pasture
5A - Sherford Valley Pasture
5B - Frome Valley Pasture
5C - Lower Piddle Valley Pasture
5D - Mid Piddle Valley Pasture
5E - Mid Frome Valley Pasture
9. Lowland Heathland
9A - South Purbeck Heaths
9B - Upton Heath
10. Rolling Wooded Pasture
10A - Rempstone Wooded Pastures
10B - Morden/Lytchett Rolling Wooded Farmland
10C - Lulworth Wooded Pasture
11. Chalk Valley & Downland
11A - Puddletown/Affpuddle Downs
11B - Chaldon Downs
11C - South Bere Regis Downs
11D - Bloxworth/Charnborough Downs
11E - South Dorset Downs
12. Open Chalk Downland
12A - North Bere Regis Downs
12B - Chaldon Downs
12C - South Dorset Downs
Map Scale @ A4: 1:140,000
LUC
POOLE
SWANAGE
WEYMOUTH
Durdle Door
South West Coast Path
ST ALDHELM'S OR ST ALBAN'S HEAD
A354
A35
A3049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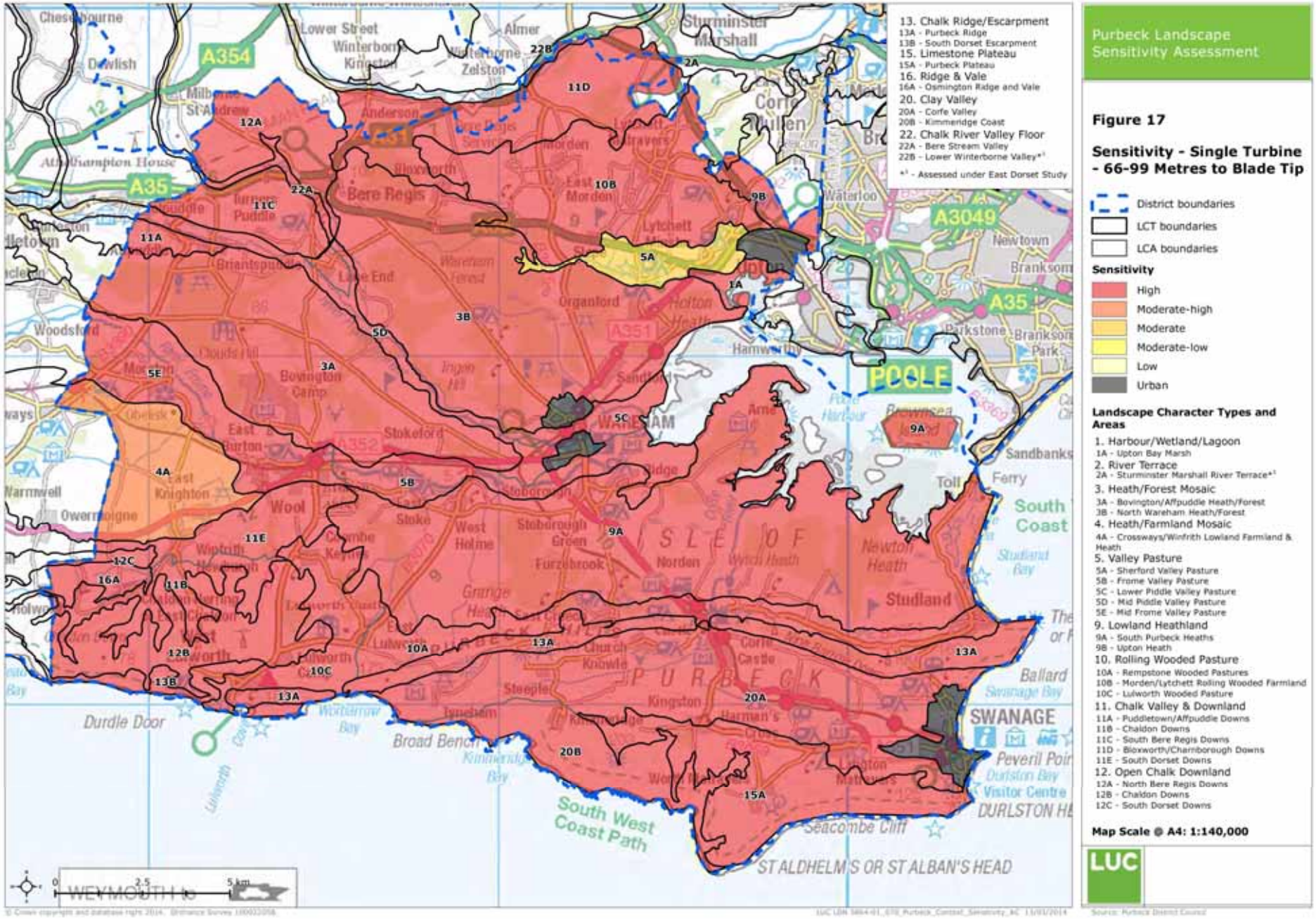
13A - Purbeck Ridge
13B - South Dorset Escarpment
15. Limestone Plateau
15A - Purbeck Plateau
16. Ridge & Vale
16A - Osmington Ridge and Vale
20. Clay Valley
20A - Corfe Valley
20B - Kimmeridge Coast
22. Chalk River Valley Floor
22A - Bere Stream Valley
22B - Lower Winterborne Valley*1
*1 - Assessed under East Dorset Study
Purbeck Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
Figure 16
Sensitivity - Single Turbine - 36-65 Metres to Blade Tip
District boundaries
LCT boundaries
LCA boundaries
Sensitivity
High
Moderate-high
Moderate
Moderate-low
Low
Urban
Landscape Character Types and Areas
1. Harbour/Wetland/Lagoon
1A - Upton Bay Marsh
2. River Terrace
2A - Sturminster Marshall River Terrace*1
3. Heath/Forest Mosaic
3A - Bovington/Affpuddle Heath/Forest
3B - North Wareham Heath/Forest
4. Heath/Farmland Mosaic
4A - Crossways/Winfrith Lowland Farmland & Heath
5. Valley Pasture
5A - Sherford Valley Pasture
5B - Frome Valley Pasture
5C - Lower Piddle Valley Pasture
5D - Mid Piddle Valley Pasture
5E - Mid Frome Valley Pasture
9. Lowland Heathland
9A - South Purbeck Heaths
9B - Upton Heath
10. Rolling Wooded Pasture
10A - Rempstone Wooded Pastures
10B - Morden/Lytchett Rolling Wooded Farmland
10C - Lulworth Wooded Pasture
11. Chalk Valley & Downland
11A - Puddletown/Affpuddle Downs
11B - Chaldon Downs
11C - South Bere Regis Downs
11D - Bloxworth/Charnborough Downs
11E - South Dorset Downs
12. Open Chalk Downland
12A - North Bere Regis Downs
12B - Chaldon Downs
12C - South Dorset Downs
Map Scale @ A4: 1:140,000
LUC
A354
A35
A3049
POOLE
SWANAGE
WEYMOUTH
Durdle Door
South West Coast Path
ST ALDHELM'S OR ST ALBAN'S HEAD
Bere Regis
Wareham
Wool
Studland
Corfe Castle
Lulworth
Broad Bench
Seacombe Cliff
0
2.5
5 km


13. Chalk Ridge/Escarpment
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13B - South Dorset Escarpment
15. Limestone Plateau
15A - Purbeck Plateau
16. Ridge & Vale
16A - Osmington Ridge and Vale
20. Clay Valley
20A - Corfe Valley
20B - Kimmeridge Coast
22. Chalk River Valley Floor
22A - Bere Stream Valley
22B - Lower Winterborne Valley*1
*1 - Assessed under East Dorset Study
Purbeck Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
Figure 17
Sensitivity - Single Turbine - 66-99 Metres to Blade Tip
District boundaries
LCT boundaries
LCA boundaries
Sensitivity
High
Moderate-high
Moderate
Moderate-low
Low
Urban
Landscape Character Types and Areas
1. Harbour/Wetland/Lagoon
1A - Upton Bay Marsh
2. River Terrace
2A - Sturminster Marshall River Terrace*1
3. Heath/Forest Mosaic
3A - Bovington/Affpuddle Heath/Forest
3B - North Wareham Heath/Forest
4. Heath/Farmland Mosaic
4A - Crossways/Winfrith Lowland Farmland & Heath
5. Valley Pasture
5A - Sherford Valley Pasture
5B - Frome Valley Pasture
5C - Lower Piddle Valley Pasture
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10A - Rempstone Wooded Pastures
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11E - South Dorset Downs
12. Open Chalk Downland
12A - North Bere Regis Downs
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Map Scale @ A4: 1:140,000
LUC
POOLE
SWANAGE
WEYMOUTH
Durdle Door
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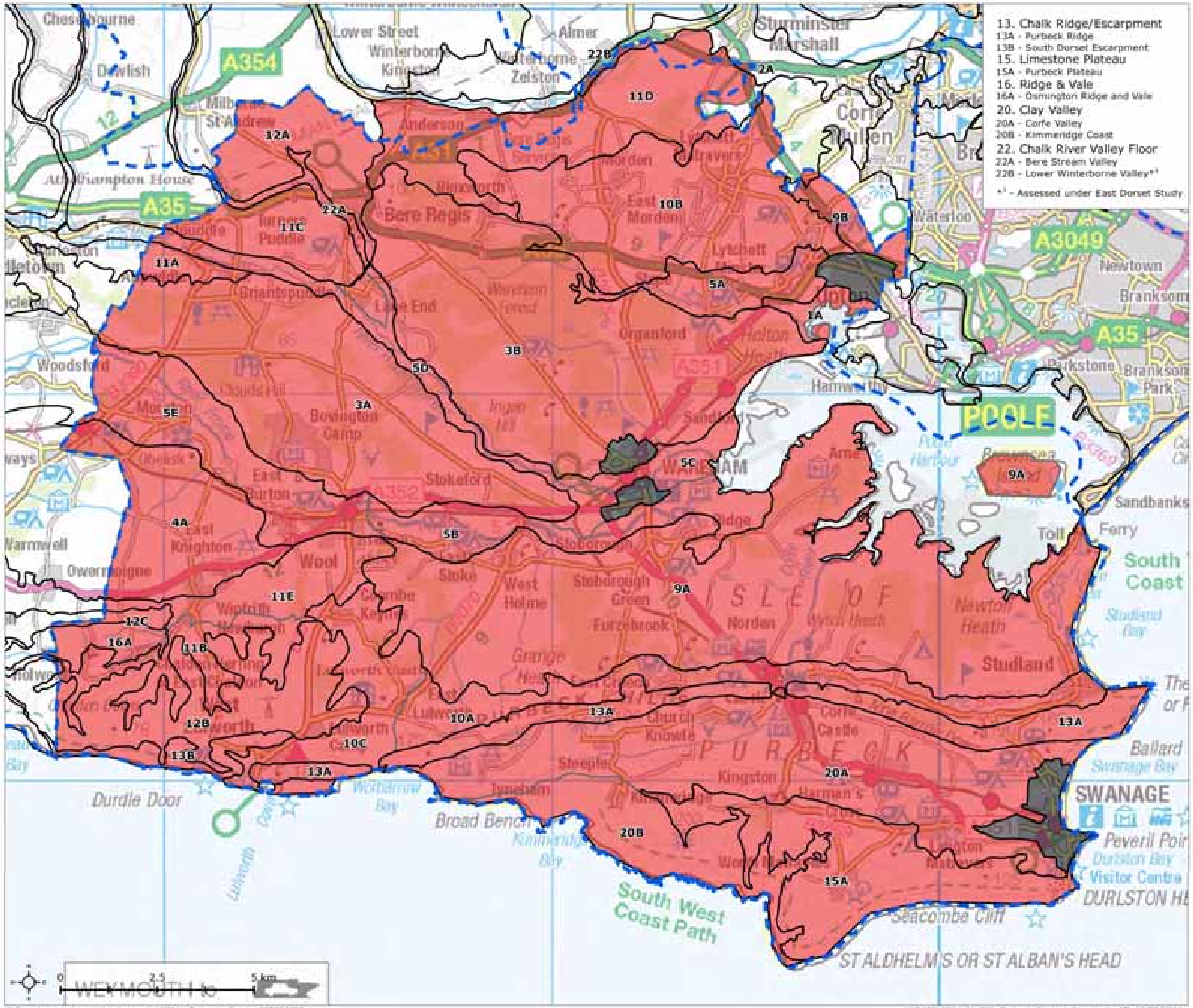
ST ALDHELM'S OR ST ALBAN'S HEAD
A354
A35
A3049
A351
A352



Purbeck Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 18

Sensitivity - Single Turbine - 100 Metres or More to Blade Tip

District boundaries
LCT boundaries
LCA boundaries

Sensitivity

High
Moderate-high
Moderate
Moderate-low
Low
Urban

Landscape Character Types and Areas

1. Harbour/Wetland/Lagoon
1A - Upton Bay Marsh
2. River Terrace
2A - Sturminster Marshall River Terrace*1
3. Heath/Forest Mosaic
3A - Bovington/Affpuddle Heath/Forest
3B - North Wareham Heath/Forest
4. Heath/Farmland Mosaic
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10A - Rempstone Wooded Pastures
10B - Morden/Lytchett Rolling Wooded Farmland
10C - Lulworth Wooded Pasture
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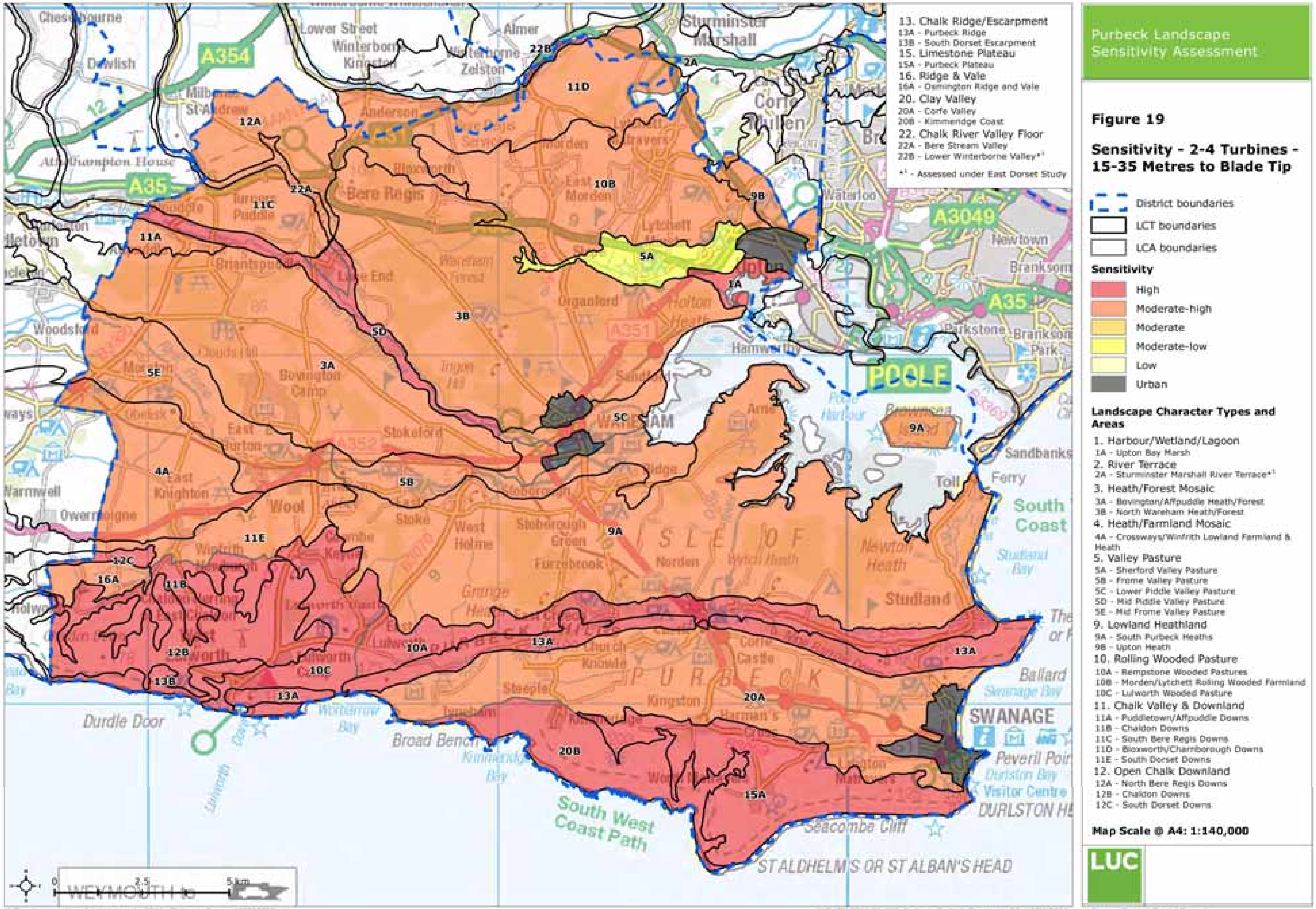
11A - Puddletown/Affpuddle Downs
11B - Chaldon Downs
11C - South Bere Regis Downs
11D - Bloxworth/Charnborough Downs
11E - South Dorset Downs
12. Open Chalk Downland
12A - North Bere Regis Downs
12B - Chaldon Downs
12C - South Dorset Downs

Map Scale @ A4: 1:140,000

LUC

Source: Purbeck District Council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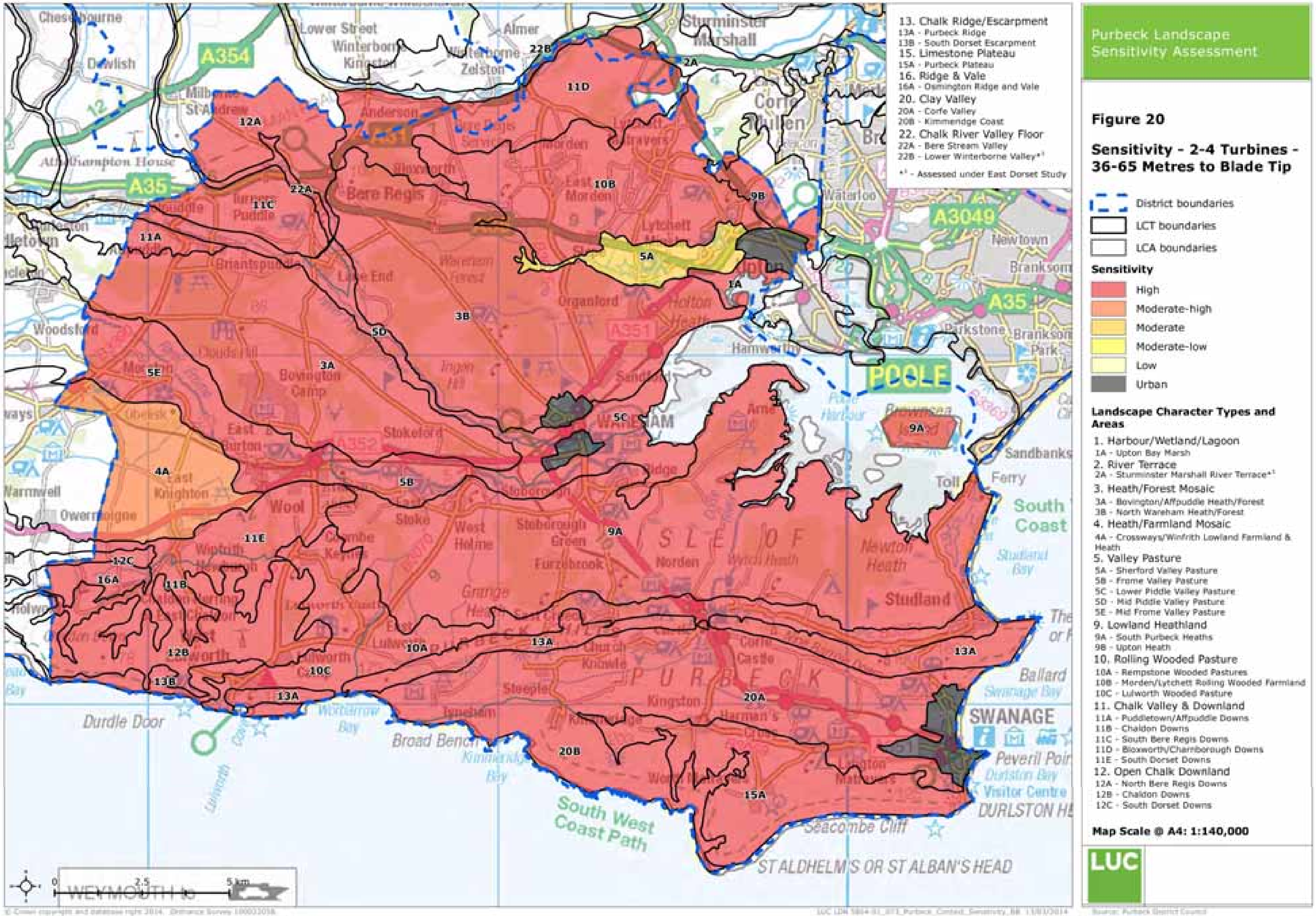
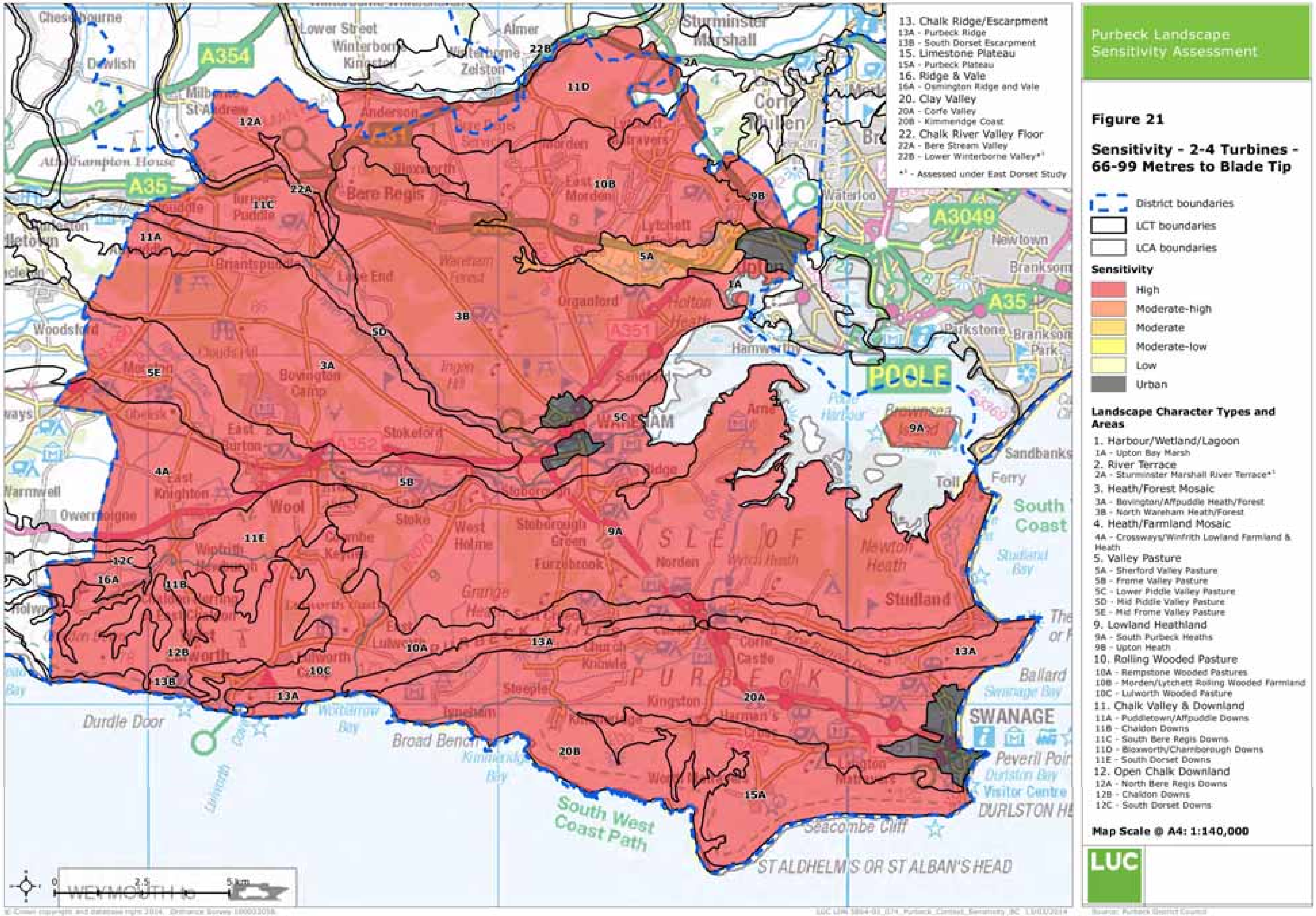
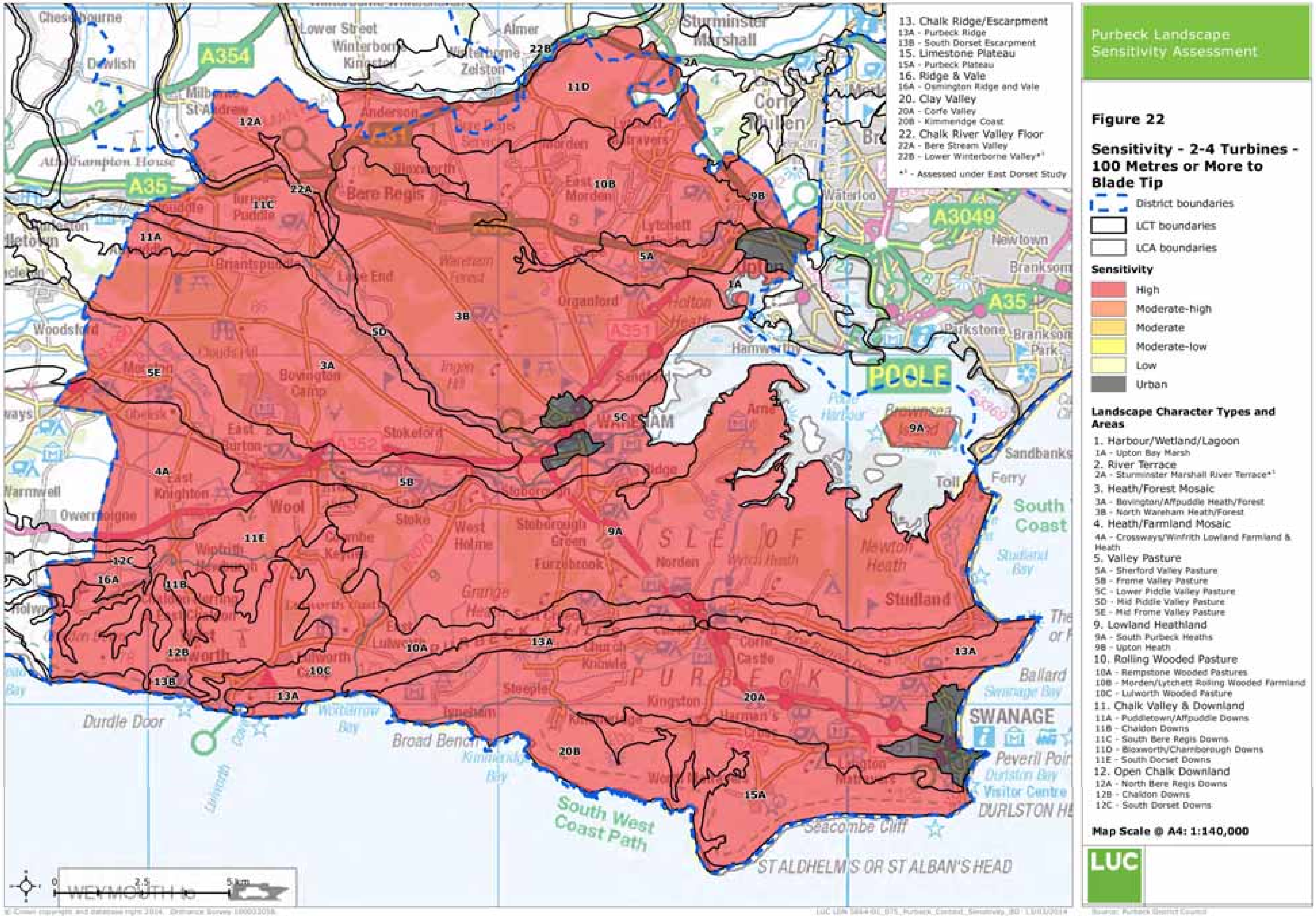
15. Limestone Plateau
15A - Purbeck Plateau
16. Ridge & Vale
16A - Osmington Ridge and Vale
20. Clay Valley
20A - Corfe Valley
20B - Kimmeridge Coast
22. Chalk River Valley Floor
22A - Bere Stream Valley
22B - Lower Winterborne Valley*1
*1 - Assessed under East Dorset Study
Purbeck Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
Figure 19
Sensitivity - 2-4 Turbines - 15-35 Metres to Blade Tip
District boundaries
LCT boundaries
LCA boundaries
Sensitivity
High
Moderate-high
Moderate
Moderate-low
Low
Urban
Landscape Character Types and Areas
1. Harbour/Wetland/Lagoon
1A - Upton Bay Marsh
2. River Terrace
2A - Sturminster Marshall River Terrace*1
3. Heath/Forest Mosaic
3A - Bovington/Affpuddle Heath/Forest
3B - North Wareham Heath/Forest
4. Heath/Farmland Mosaic
4A - Crossways/Winfrith Lowland Farmland & Heath
5. Valley Pasture
5A - Sherford Valley Pasture
5B - Frome Valley Pasture
5C - Lower Piddle Valley Pasture
5D - Mid Piddle Valley Pasture
5E - Mid Frome Valley Pasture
9. Lowland Heathland
9A - South Purbeck Heaths
9B - Upton Heath
10. Rolling Wooded Pasture
10A - Rempstone Wooded Pastures
10B - Morden/Lytchett Rolling Wooded Farmland
10C - Lulworth Wooded Pasture
11. Chalk Valley & Downland
11A - Puddletown/Affpuddle Downs
11B - Chaldon Downs
11C - South Bere Regis Downs
11D - Bloxworth/Charnborough Downs
11E - South Dorset Downs
12. Open Chalk Downland
12A - North Bere Regis Downs
12B - Chaldon Downs
12C - South Dorset Downs
Map Scale @ A4: 1:140,000
LUC


Purbeck Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
Figure 20
Sensitivity - 2-4 Turbines - 36-65 Metres to Blade Tip
District boundaries
LCT boundaries
LCA boundaries
Sensitivity
High
Moderate-high
Moderate
Moderate-low
Low
Urban
Landscape Character Types and Areas
1. Harbour/Wetland/Lagoon
1A - Upton Bay Marsh
2. River Terrace
2A - Sturminster Marshall River Terrace*1
3. Heath/Forest Mosaic
3A - Bovington/Affpuddle Heath/Forest
3B - North Wareham Heath/Forest
4. Heath/Farmland Mosaic
4A - Crossways/Winfrith Lowland Farmland & Heath
5. Valley Pasture
5A - Sherford Valley Pasture
5B - Frome Valley Pasture
5C - Lower Piddle Valley Pasture
5D - Mid Piddle Valley Pasture
5E - Mid Frome Valley Pasture
9. Lowland Heathland
9A - South Purbeck Heaths
9B - Upton Heath
10. Rolling Wooded Pasture
10A - Rempstone Wooded Pastures
10B - Morden/Lytchett Rolling Wooded Farmland
10C - Lulworth Wooded Pasture
11. Chalk Valley & Downland
11A - Puddletown/Affpuddle Downs
11B - Chaldon Downs
11C - South Bere Regis Downs
11D - Bloxworth/Charnborough Downs
11E - South Dorset Downs
12. Open Chalk Downland
12A - North Bere Regis Downs
12B - Chaldon Downs
12C - South Dorset Downs
13. Chalk Ridge/Escarpment
13A - Purbeck Ridge
13B - South Dorset Escarpment
15. Limestone Plateau
15A - Purbeck Plateau
16. Ridge & Vale
16A - Osmington Ridge and Vale
20. Clay Valley
20A - Corfe Valley
20B - Kimmeridge Coast
22. Chalk River Valley Floor
22A - Bere Stream Valley
22B - Lower Winterborne Valley*1
*1 - Assessed under East Dorset Study
Map Scale @ A4: 1:140,000
LUC
0
2.5
5 km
WAREHAM
POOLE
SWANAGE
Bere Regis
Wool
Studland
Durdle Door
South West Coast Path
ST ALDHELM'S OR ST ALBAN'S HEAD


Purbeck Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
Figure 21
Sensitivity - 2-4 Turbines - 66-99 Metres to Blade Tip
District boundaries
LCT boundaries
LCA boundaries
Sensitivity
High
Moderate-high
Moderate
Moderate-low
Low
Urban
Landscape Character Types and Areas
1. Harbour/Wetland/Lagoon
1A - Upton Bay Marsh
2. River Terrace
2A - Sturminster Marshall River Terrace*1
3. Heath/Forest Mosaic
3A - Bovington/Affpuddle Heath/Forest
3B - North Wareham Heath/Forest
4. Heath/Farmland Mosaic
4A - Crossways/Winfrith Lowland Farmland & Heath
5. Valley Pasture
5A - Sherford Valley Pasture
5B - Frome Valley Pasture
5C - Lower Piddle Valley Pasture
5D - Mid Piddle Valley Pasture
5E - Mid Frome Valley Pasture
9. Lowland Heathland
9A - South Purbeck Heaths
9B - Upton Heath
10. Rolling Wooded Pasture
10A - Rempstone Wooded Pastures
10B - Morden/Lytchett Rolling Wooded Farmland
10C - Lulworth Wooded Pasture
11. Chalk Valley & Downland
11A - Puddletown/Affpuddle Downs
11B - Chaldon Downs
11C - South Bere Regis Downs
11D - Bloxworth/Charnborough Downs
11E - South Dorset Downs
12. Open Chalk Downland
12A - North Bere Regis Downs
12B - Chaldon Downs
12C - South Dorset Downs
13. Chalk Ridge/Escarpment
13A - Purbeck Ridge
13B - South Dorset Escarpment
15. Limestone Plateau
15A - Purbeck Plateau
16. Ridge & Vale
16A - Osmington Ridge and Vale
20. Clay Valley
20A - Corfe Valley
20B - Kimmeridge Coast
22. Chalk River Valley Floor
22A - Bere Stream Valley
22B - Lower Winterborne Valley*1
*1 - Assessed under East Dorset Study
Map Scale @ A4: 1:140,000
LUC
POOLE
SWANAGE
WAREHAM
Bere Regis
Wool
South West Coast Path
Durdle Door
ST ALDHELM'S OR ST ALBAN'S HEAD
0
2.5
5 km


Purbeck Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
Figure 22
Sensitivity - 2-4 Turbines - 100 Metres or More to Blade Tip
District boundaries
LCT boundaries
LCA boundaries
Sensitivity
High
Moderate-high
Moderate
Moderate-low
Low
Urban
Landscape Character Types and Areas
1. Harbour/Wetland/Lagoon
1A - Upton Bay Marsh
2. River Terrace
2A - Sturminster Marshall River Terrace*1
3. Heath/Forest Mosaic
3A - Bovington/Affpuddle Heath/Forest
3B - North Wareham Heath/Forest
4. Heath/Farmland Mosaic
4A - Crossways/Winfrith Lowland Farmland & Heath
5. Valley Pasture
5A - Sherford Valley Pasture
5B - Frome Valley Pasture
5C - Lower Piddle Valley Pasture
5D - Mid Piddle Valley Pasture
5E - Mid Frome Valley Pasture
9. Lowland Heathland
9A - South Purbeck Heaths
9B - Upton Heath
10. Rolling Wooded Pasture
10A - Rempstone Wooded Pastures
10B - Morden/Lytchett Rolling Wooded Farmland
10C - Lulworth Wooded Pasture
11. Chalk Valley & Downland
11A - Puddletown/Affpuddle Downs
11B - Chaldon Downs
11C - South Bere Regis Downs
11D - Bloxworth/Charnborough Downs
11E - South Dorset Downs
12. Open Chalk Downland
12A - North Bere Regis Downs
12B - Chaldon Downs
12C - South Dorset Downs
13. Chalk Ridge/Escarpment
13A - Purbeck Ridge
13B - South Dorset Escarpment
15. Limestone Plateau
15A - Purbeck Plateau
16. Ridge & Vale
16A - Osmington Ridge and Vale
20. Clay Valley
20A - Corfe Valley
20B - Kimmeridge Coast
22. Chalk River Valley Floor
22A - Bere Stream Valley
22B - Lower Winterborne Valley*1
*1 - Assessed under East Dorset Study
Map Scale @ A4: 1:140,000
LUC
0
2.5
5 km
WAREHAM
POOLE
SWANAGE
Bere Regis
Wool
Studland
A35
A354
A3049
A351
A352

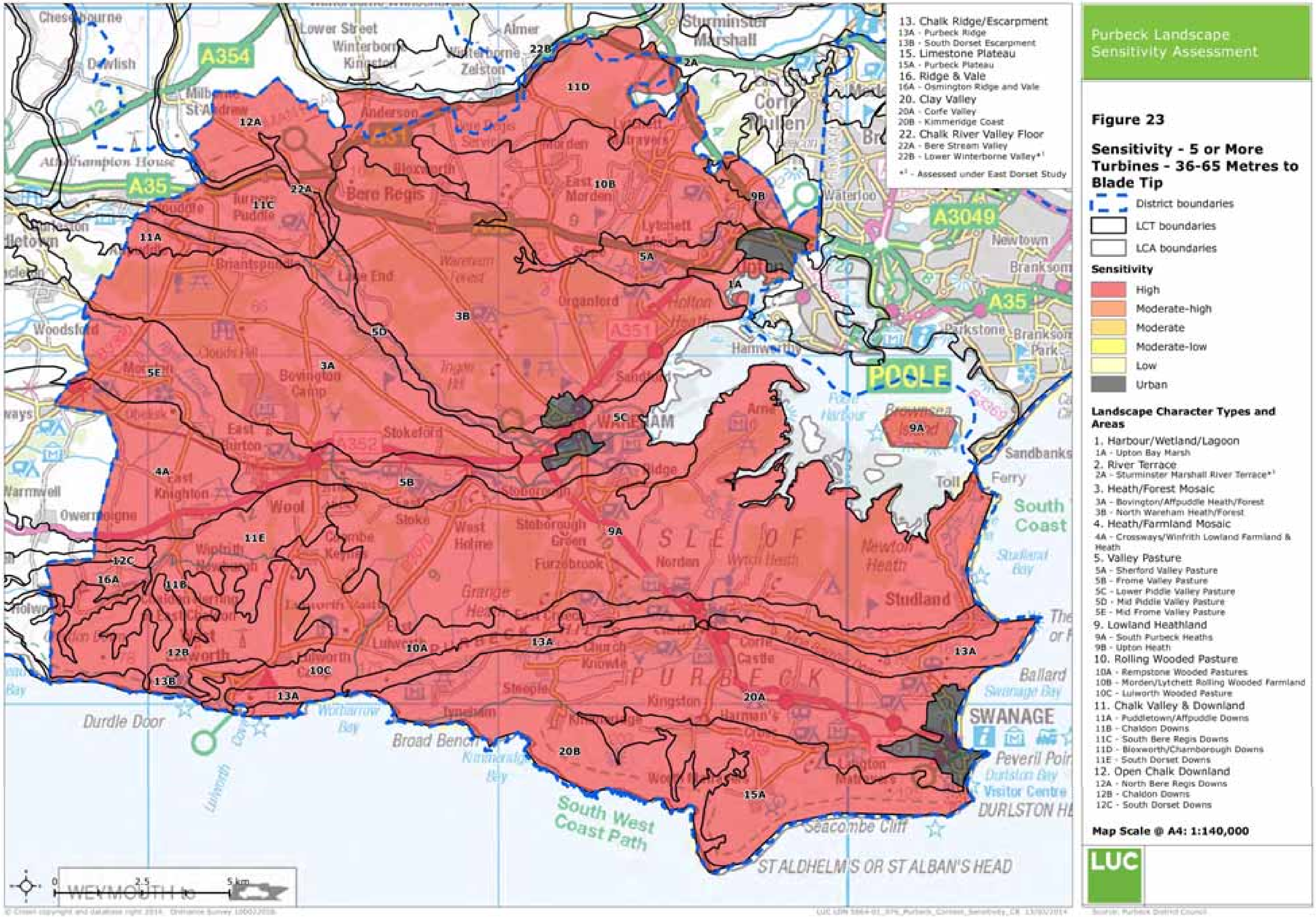
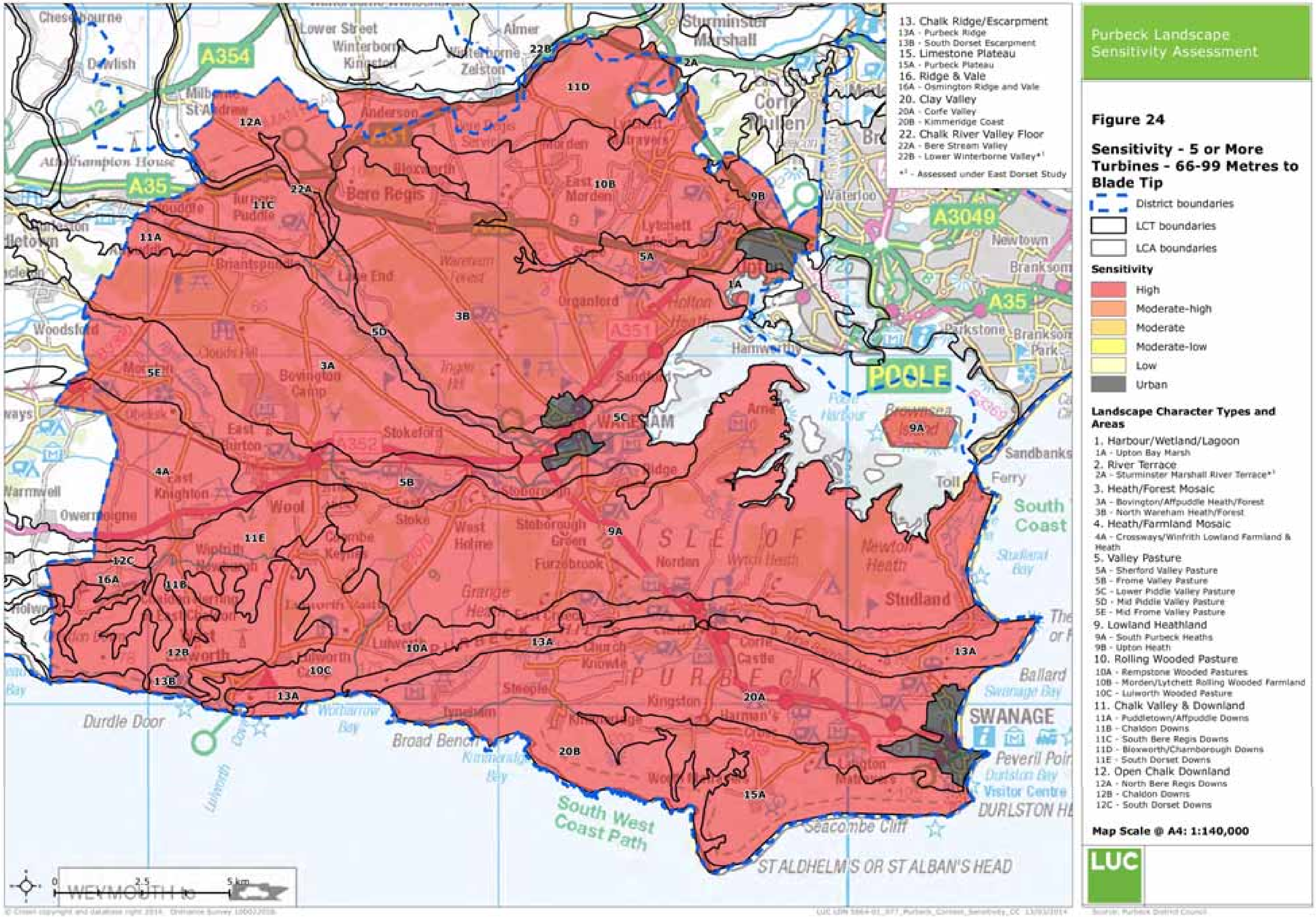
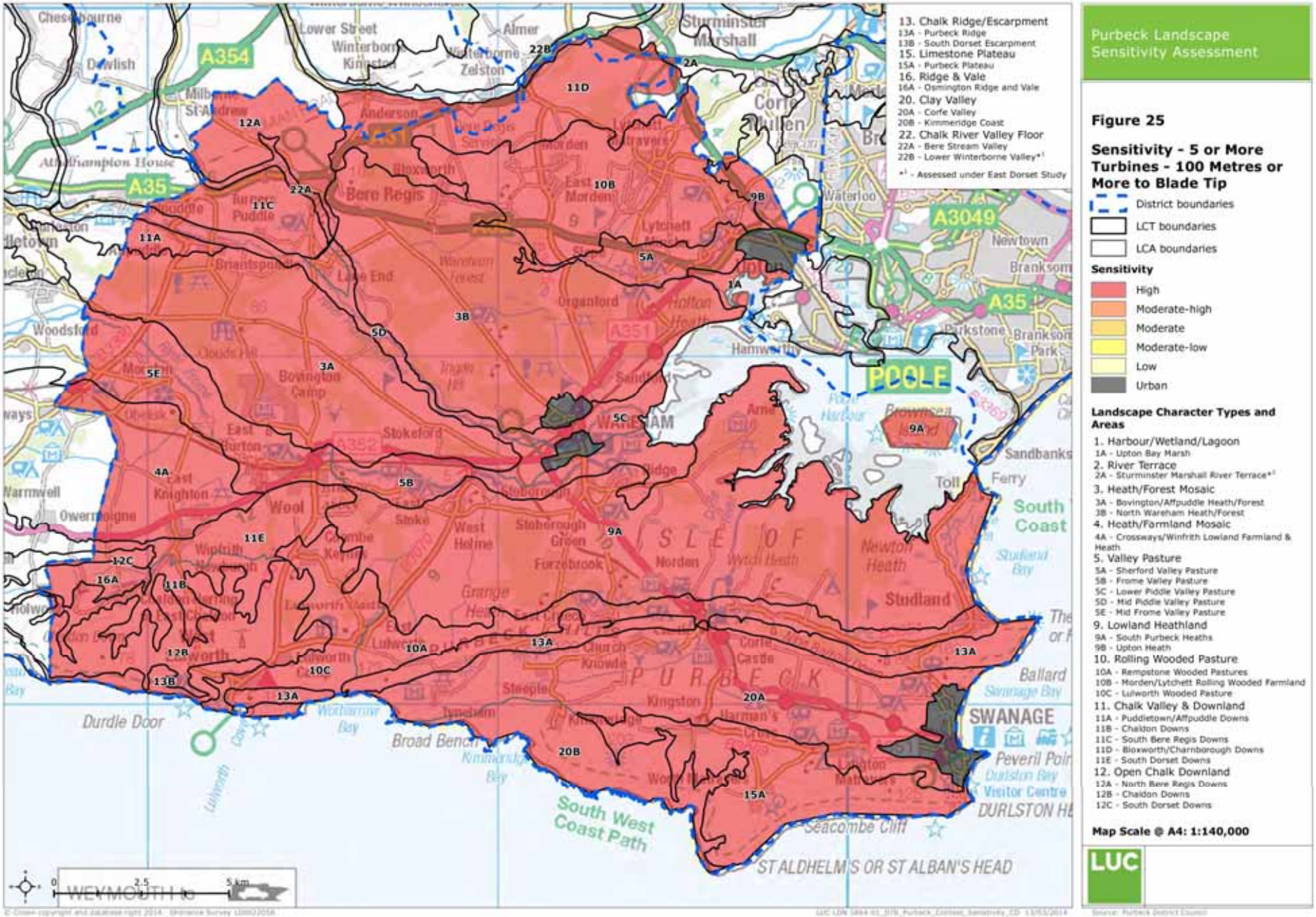


Figure 23

Sensitivity - 5 or More Turbines - 36-65 Metres to Blade Tip


Purbeck Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
Figure 24
Sensitivity - 5 or More Turbines - 66-99 Metres to Blade Tip
District boundaries
LCT boundaries
LCA boundaries
Sensitivity
High
Moderate-high
Moderate
Moderate-low
Low
Urban
Landscape Character Types and Areas
1. Harbour/Wetland/Lagoon
1A - Upton Bay Marsh
2. River Terrace
2A - Sturminster Marshall River Terrace*1
3. Heath/Forest Mosaic
3A - Bovington/Affpuddle Heath/Forest
3B - North Wareham Heath/Forest
4. Heath/Farmland Mosaic
4A - Crossways/Winfrith Lowland Farmland & Heath
5. Valley Pasture
5A - Sherford Valley Pasture
5B - Frome Valley Pasture
5C - Lower Piddle Valley Pasture
5D - Mid Piddle Valley Pasture
5E - Mid Frome Valley Pasture
9. Lowland Heathland
9A - South Purbeck Heaths
9B - Upton Heath
10. Rolling Wooded Pasture
10A - Rempstone Wooded Pastures
10B - Morden/Lytchett Rolling Wooded Farmland
10C - Lulworth Wooded Pasture
11. Chalk Valley & Downland
11A - Puddletown/Affpuddle Downs
11B - Chaldon Downs
11C - South Bere Regis Downs
11D - Bloxworth/Charborough Downs
11E - South Dorset Downs
12. Open Chalk Downland
12A - North Bere Regis Downs
12B - Chaldon Downs
12C - South Dorset Downs
13. Chalk Ridge/Escarpment
13A - Purbeck Ridge
13B - South Dorset Escarpment
15. Limestone Plateau
15A - Purbeck Plateau
16. Ridge & Vale
16A - Osmington Ridge and Vale
20. Clay Valley
20A - Corfe Valley
20B - Kimmeridge Coast
22. Chalk River Valley Floor
22A - Bere Stream Valley
22B - Lower Winterborne Valley*1
*1 - Assessed under East Dorset Study
Map Scale @ A4: 1:140,000
LUC
POOLE
SWANAGE
WAREHAM
Bere Regis
Wool
Studland
South West Coast Path
ST ALDHELM'S OR ST ALBAN'S HEAD
Durdle Door
Broad Bench
0 2.5 5 km


13. Chalk Ridge/Escarpment
13A - Purbeck Ridge
13B - South Dorset Escarpment
15. Limestone Plateau
15A - Purbeck Plateau
16. Ridge & Vale
16A - Osmington Ridge and Vale
20. Clay Valley
20A - Corfe Valley
20B - Kimmeridge Coast
22. Chalk River Valley Floor
22A - Bere Stream Valley
22B - Lower Winterborne Valley*1
*1 - Assessed under East Dorset Study
Purbeck Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
Figure 25
Sensitivity - 5 or More Turbines - 100 Metres or More to Blade Tip
District boundaries
LCT boundaries
LCA boundaries
Sensitivity
High
Moderate-high
Moderate
Moderate-low
Low
Urban
Landscape Character Types and Areas
1. Harbour/Wetland/Lagoon
1A - Upton Bay Marsh
2. River Terrace
2A - Sturminster Marshall River Terrace*1
3. Heath/Forest Mosaic
3A - Bovington/Affpuddle Heath/Forest
3B - North Wareham Heath/Forest
4. Heath/Farmland Mosaic
4A - Crossways/Winfrith Lowland Farmland & Heath
5. Valley Pasture
5A - Sherford Valley Pasture
5B - Frome Valley Pasture
5C - Lower Piddle Valley Pasture
5D - Mid Piddle Valley Pasture
5E - Mid Frome Valley Pasture
9. Lowland Heathland
9A - South Purbeck Heaths
9B - Upton Heath
10. Rolling Wooded Pasture
10A - Rempstone Wooded Pastures
10B - Morden/Lytchett Rolling Wooded Farmland
10C - Lulworth Wooded Pasture
11. Chalk Valley & Downland
11A - Puddletown/Affpuddle Downs
11B - Chaldon Downs
11C - South Bere Regis Downs
11D - Bloxworth/Charnborough Downs
11E - South Dorset Downs
12. Open Chalk Downland
12A - North Bere Regis Downs
12B - Chaldon Downs
12C - South Dorset Downs
Map Scale @ A4: 1:140,000
LUC
POOLE
SWANAGE
WEYMOUTH
Durdle Door
South West Coast Path
ST ALDHELM'S OR ST ALBAN'S HEAD
A354
A35
A3049
A351
A352

9 Solar PV Energy Sensitivity Summary

9.1 The maps shown in **Figures 26 – 29** illustrate the sensitivity ratings set out in **Section 7**, with a separate map for each scale of solar PV development.

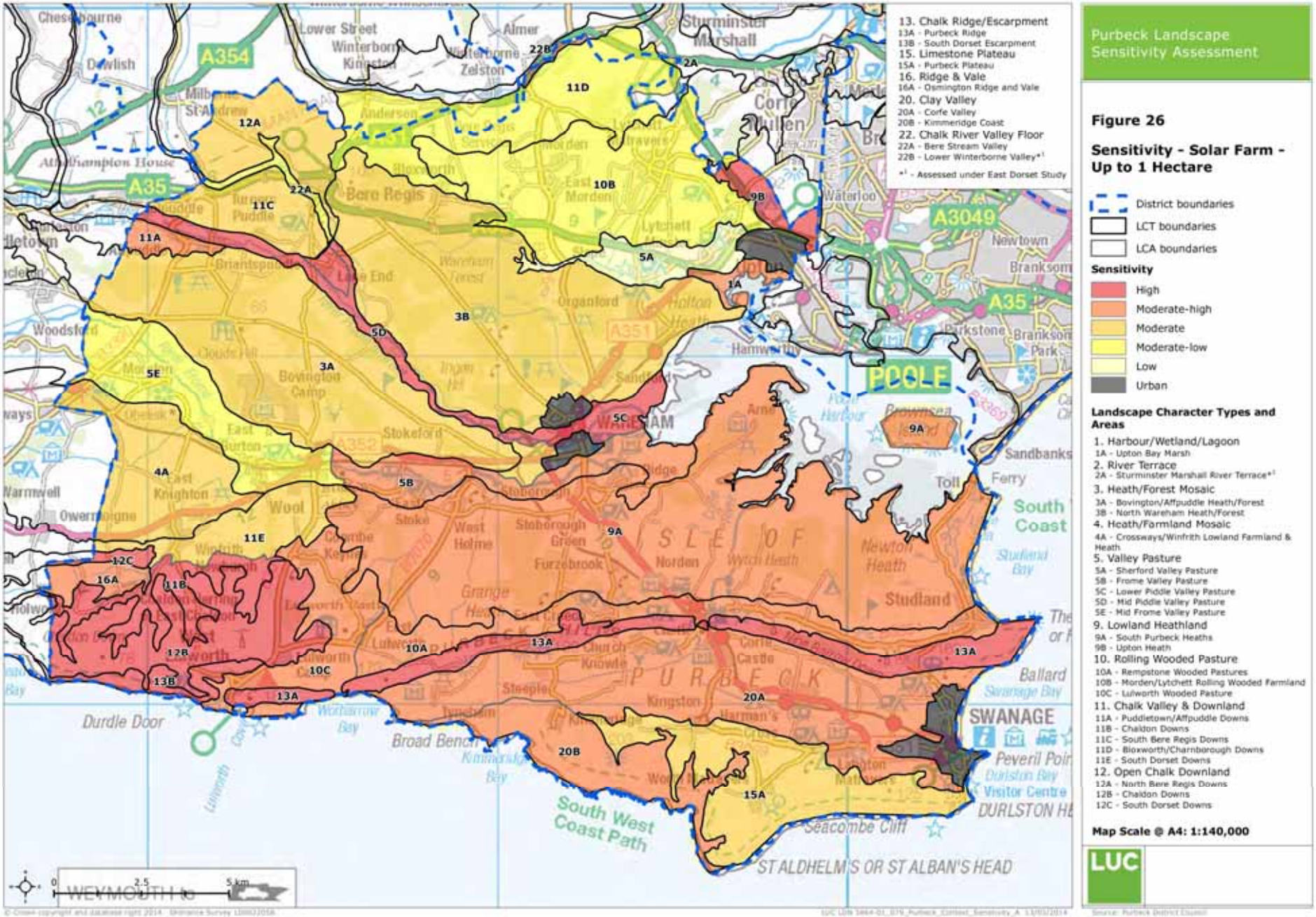
9.2 In summary it can be stated that Purbeck District has a generally high level of sensitivity to large-scale solar PV development, and this is particularly the case in the Dorset AONB, where sensitivity to development of over 10 hectares in any location is assessed as 'high'. The different AONB landscapes, ranging from high chalk ridges, open downs and expansive heathlands to undulating hills, narrower valleys and coastal marshes, are all associated with either historic land use or perceptual qualities relating to a sense of wildness, remoteness or tranquillity; large scale solar PV development would be likely to affect all of these characteristics.

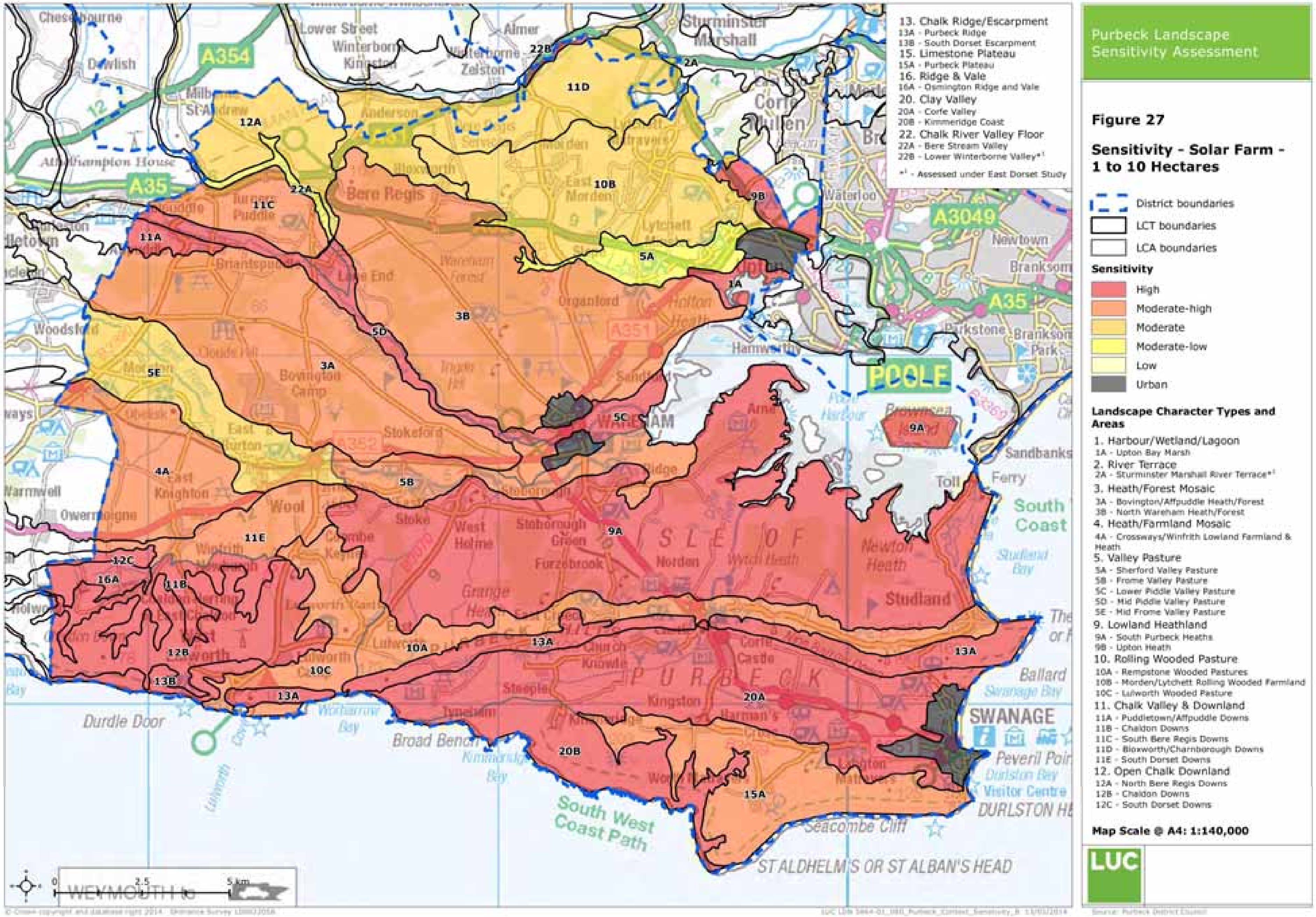
9.3 Within the AONB sensitivity to smaller-scale solar PV development is typically still relatively high in either more open, large scale landscapes such as heathlands or high downs, or in more contained, intimate landscapes. Sensitivity is lower where, outside of the AONB, there are some broader, flatter river valleys, rolling hills or lower downland landscapes that either have a strong enclosure pattern to contain development or are already significantly influenced by modern development and activity (e.g. major roads).

9.4 Solar development will usually result in a change in land use for the duration of its operation, (which planning approval usually limits to 25 years, so where the current land cover or land use is more valued, such as heathlands or traditional pastures in river valleys, there will be a higher level of sensitivity than is the case where land has been converted to arable or devalued through industrial activity (e.g. quarrying).

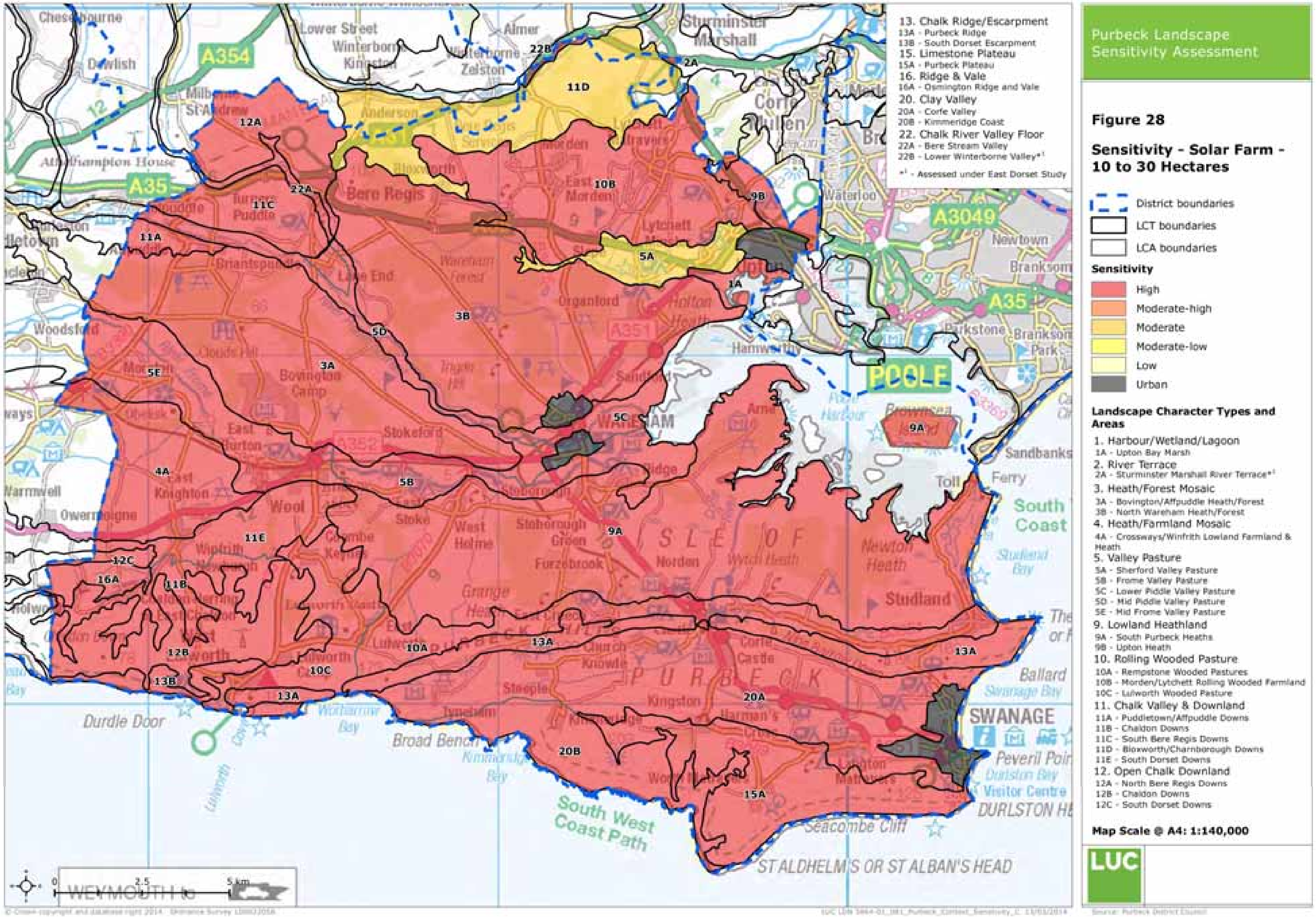
9.5 Whilst this sensitivity assessment provides an initial indication of the relative landscape sensitivities of different areas to solar PV energy development, it should not be interpreted as a definitive statement on the suitability of a certain location for a particular development proposal. It is not a replacement for detailed studies on specific siting and design, and all developments will need to be assessed on their individual merits.

9.6 This assessment does not consider cumulative impact of solar PV energy developments, other than within the guidance notes in **Section 11** below, and it is important to note that, however low the sensitivity rating for an individual development, the cumulative effect of a proliferation of schemes can be significant, regardless of size. Cumulative assessment of any specific solar PV energy proposal on landscape character and qualities will be a key aspect of the development process.


13. Chalk Ridge/Escarpment
13A - Purbeck Ridge
13B - South Dorset Escarpment
15. Limestone Plateau
15A - Purbeck Plateau
16. Ridge & Vale
16A - Osmington Ridge and Vale
20. Clay Valley
20A - Corfe Valley
20B - Kimmeridge Coast
22. Chalk River Valley Floor
22A - Bere Stream Valley
22B - Lower Winterborne Valley*1
*1 - Assessed under East Dorset Study
Purbeck Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
Figure 26
Sensitivity - Solar Farm - Up to 1 Hectare
District boundaries
LCT boundaries
LCA boundaries
Sensitivity
High
Moderate-high
Moderate
Moderate-low
Low
Urban
Landscape Character Types and Areas
1. Harbour/Wetland/Lagoon
1A - Upton Bay Marsh
2. River Terrace
2A - Sturminster Marshall River Terrace*1
3. Heath/Forest Mosaic
3A - Bovington/Affpuddle Heath/Forest
3B - North Wareham Heath/Forest
4. Heath/Farmland Mosaic
4A - Crossways/Winfrith Lowland Farmland & Heath
5. Valley Pasture
5A - Sherford Valley Pasture
5B - Frome Valley Pasture
5C - Lower Piddle Valley Pasture
5D - Mid Piddle Valley Pasture
5E - Mid Frome Valley Pasture
9. Lowland Heathland
9A - South Purbeck Heaths
9B - Upton Heath
10. Rolling Wooded Pasture
10A - Rempstone Wooded Pastures
10B - Morden/Lytchett Rolling Wooded Farmland
10C - Lulworth Wooded Pasture
11. Chalk Valley & Downland
11A - Puddletown/Affpuddle Downs
11B - Chaldon Downs
11C - South Bere Regis Downs
11D - Bloxworth/Charnborough Downs
11E - South Dorset Downs
12. Open Chalk Downland
12A - North Bere Regis Downs
12B - Chaldon Downs
12C - South Dorset Downs
Map Scale @ A4: 1:140,000
LUC
A354
A35
A3049
POOLE
SWANAGE
WEYMOUTH
Durdle Door
South West Coast Path
ST ALDHELM'S OR ST ALBAN'S HEAD
Bere Regis
Wool
Corfe Castle
Studland
Sandbanks
Ferry
South Coast
Ballard Down
Peveril Point
Visitor Centre
DURLSTON HEAD
Seacombe Cliff
Broad Bench
Lulworth
Warmwell
Woodsford
Stoke
Stoborough
Furzebrook
Norden
Newton Heath
Kingston
Langton Matravers
Swanage Bay
Studland Bay
Poole Harbour
Brownsea Island
Parkstone
Branksome
Newtown
Waterloo
Lytchett Minster
Upton
Hamworth
Sturminster Marshall
Almer
Lower Street
Winterborne Kingston
Winterborne Zelston
Milborne St Andrew
Dewlish
Chesilborne
Affpuddle House
Puddletown
Briantspuddle
Tincleton
Clouds Hill
Bovington Camp
Stokeford
East Knighton
Owermoigne
Warmwell
Holme
Grange
Church Knowle
Steeple
Tyneham
Worbarrow Bay
Kimmeridge Bay
Lulworth
Holton Heath
Organford
Lytchett Matravers
Morden
Sandford
Wareham Forest
Lake End
Warmwell
0
2.5
5 km



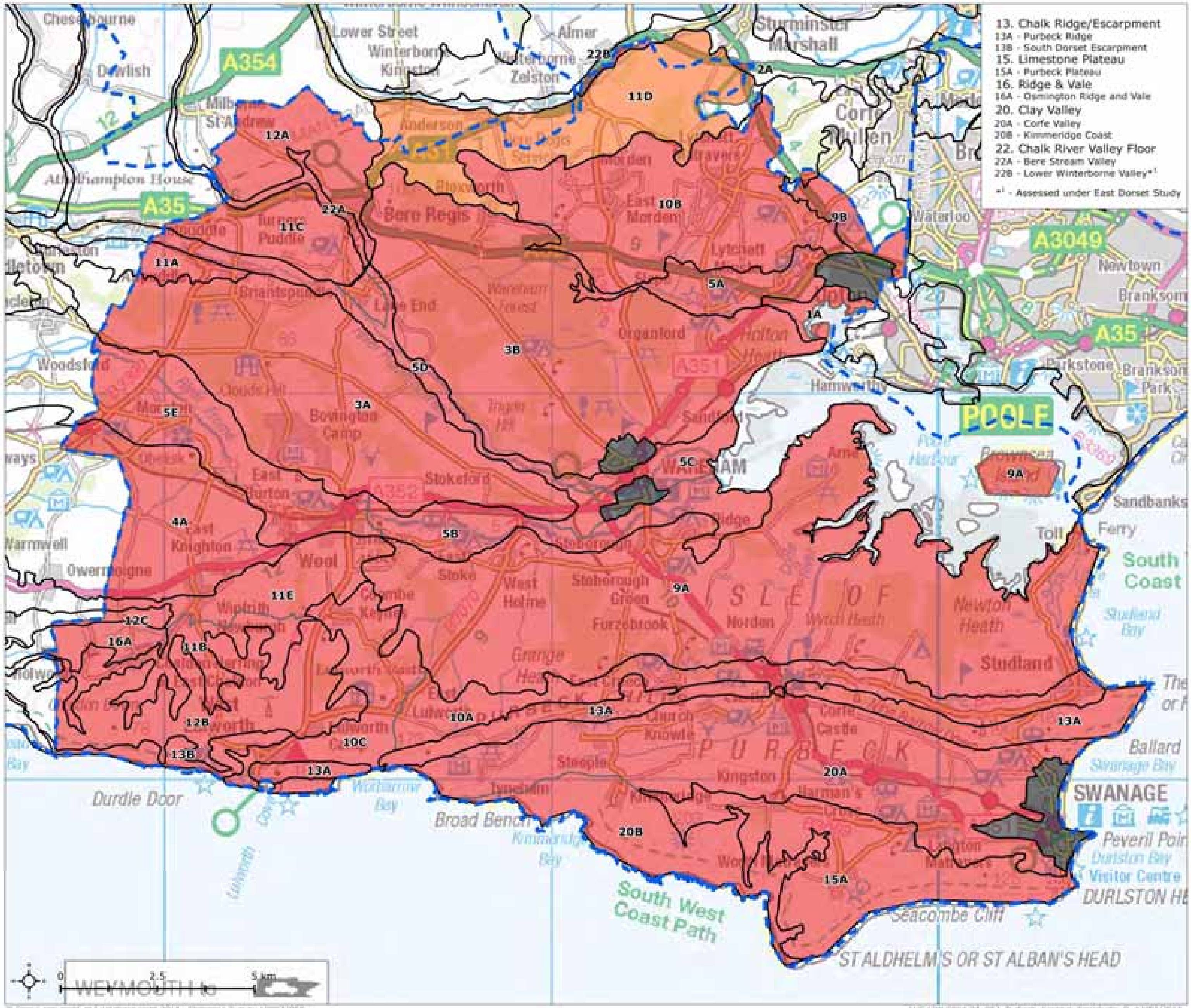
Purbeck Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
Figure 27
Sensitivity - Solar Farm - 1 to 10 Hectares
District boundaries
LCT boundaries
LCA boundaries
Sensitivity
High
Moderate-high
Moderate
Moderate-low
Low
Urban
Landscape Character Types and Areas
1. Harbour/Wetland/Lagoon
1A - Upton Bay Marsh
2. River Terrace
2A - Sturminster Marshall River Terrace*1
3. Heath/Forest Mosaic
3A - Bovington/Affpuddle Heath/Forest
3B - North Wareham Heath/Forest
4. Heath/Farmland Mosaic
4A - Crossways/Winfrith Lowland Farmland & Heath
5. Valley Pasture
5A - Sherford Valley Pasture
5B - Frome Valley Pasture
5C - Lower Piddle Valley Pasture
5D - Mid Piddle Valley Pasture
5E - Mid Frome Valley Pasture
9. Lowland Heathland
9A - South Purbeck Heaths
9B - Upton Heath
10. Rolling Wooded Pasture
10A - Rempstone Wooded Pastures
10B - Morden/Lytchett Rolling Wooded Farmland
10C - Lulworth Wooded Pasture
11. Chalk Valley & Downland
11A - Puddletown/Affpuddle Downs
11B - Chaldon Downs
11C - South Bere Regis Downs
11D - Bloxworth/Charnborough Downs
11E - South Dorset Downs
12. Open Chalk Downland
12A - North Bere Regis Downs
12B - Chaldon Downs
12C - South Dorset Downs
13. Chalk Ridge/Escarpment
13A - Purbeck Ridge
13B - South Dorset Escarpment
15. Limestone Plateau
15A - Purbeck Plateau
16. Ridge & Vale
16A - Osmington Ridge and Vale
20. Clay Valley
20A - Corfe Valley
20B - Kimmeridge Coast
22. Chalk River Valley Floor
22A - Bere Stream Valley
22B - Lower Winterborne Valley*1
*1 - Assessed under East Dorset Study
Map Scale @ A4: 1:140,000
LUC
0
2.5
5 km
POOLE
SWANAGE
WAREHAM
South West Coast Path


Purbeck Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
Figure 28
Sensitivity - Solar Farm - 10 to 30 Hectares
District boundaries
LCT boundaries
LCA boundaries
Sensitivity
High
Moderate-high
Moderate
Moderate-low
Low
Urban
Landscape Character Types and Areas
1. Harbour/Wetland/Lagoon
1A - Upton Bay Marsh
2. River Terrace
2A - Sturminster Marshall River Terrace*1
3. Heath/Forest Mosaic
3A - Bovington/Affpuddle Heath/Forest
3B - North Wareham Heath/Forest
4. Heath/Farmland Mosaic
4A - Crossways/Winfrith Lowland Farmland & Heath
5. Valley Pasture
5A - Sherford Valley Pasture
5B - Frome Valley Pasture
5C - Lower Piddle Valley Pasture
5D - Mid Piddle Valley Pasture
5E - Mid Frome Valley Pasture
9. Lowland Heathland
9A - South Purbeck Heaths
9B - Upton Heath
10. Rolling Wooded Pasture
10A - Rempstone Wooded Pastures
10B - Morden/Lytchett Rolling Wooded Farmland
10C - Lulworth Wooded Pasture
11. Chalk Valley & Downland
11A - Puddletown/Affpuddle Downs
11B - Chaldon Downs
11C - South Bere Regis Downs
11D - Bloxworth/Charnborough Downs
11E - South Dorset Downs
12. Open Chalk Downland
12A - North Bere Regis Downs
12B - Chaldon Downs
12C - South Dorset Downs
13. Chalk Ridge/Escarpment
13A - Purbeck Ridge
13B - South Dorset Escarpment
15. Limestone Plateau
15A - Purbeck Plateau
16. Ridge & Vale
16A - Osmington Ridge and Vale
20. Clay Valley
20A - Corfe Valley
20B - Kimmeridge Coast
22. Chalk River Valley Floor
22A - Bere Stream Valley
22B - Lower Winterborne Valley*1
*1 - Assessed under East Dorset Study
Map Scale @ A4: 1:140,000
LUC
POOLE
SWANAGE
WAREHAM
ISLE OF PURBECK
Bere Regis
Wool
South West Coast Path
0
2.5
5 km

Purbeck Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 29

Sensitivity - Solar Farm - Over 30 Hectares



District boundaries

LCT boundaries

LCA boundaries

Sensitivity

- High
- Moderate-high
- Moderate
- Moderate-low
- Low
- Urban

Landscape Character Types and Areas

1. Harbour/Wetland/Lagoon
   - 1A - Upton Bay Marsh
2. River Terrace
   - 2A - Sturminster Marshall River Terrace*1
3. Heath/Forest Mosaic
   - 3A - Bovington/Affpuddle Heath/Forest
   - 3B - North Wareham Heath/Forest
4. Heath/Farmland Mosaic
   - 4A - Crossways/Winfrith Lowland Farmland & Heath
5. Valley Pasture
   - 5A - Sherford Valley Pasture
   - 5B - Frome Valley Pasture
   - 5C - Lower Piddle Valley Pasture
   - 5D - Mid Piddle Valley Pasture
   - 5E - Mid Frome Valley Pasture
9. Lowland Heathland
   - 9A - South Purbeck Heaths
   - 9B - Upton Heath
10. Rolling Wooded Pasture
   - 10A - Rempstone Wooded Pastures
   - 10B - Morden/Lytchett Rolling Wooded Farmland
   - 10C - Lulworth Wooded Pasture
11. Chalk Valley & Downland
   - 11A - Puddletown/Affpuddle Downs
   - 11B - Chaldon Downs
   - 11C - South Bere Regis Downs
   - 11D - Bloxworth/Charnborough Downs
   - 11E - South Dorset Downs
12. Open Chalk Downland
   - 12A - North Bere Regis Downs
   - 12B - Chaldon Downs
   - 12C - South Dorset Downs

Map Scale @ A4: 1:140,000

LUC

Source: Purbeck District Council

10 Wind Energy Development Guidelines

10.1 These guidelines relate to landscape sensitivity only, and do not address sensitivities relating to other areas of potential environmental impact or other non-landscape considerations which might affect the feasibility of wind energy development.

10.2 The guidelines are generic across the four local authority areas for which sensitivity assessment has been carried out – North Dorset, East Dorset, Purbeck and Christchurch – so not all comments will be relevant to all districts.

Consideration of Landscape Characteristics

10.3 Consideration of the characteristics of the landscape in the vicinity of the site, but also in any area which either has an existing visual relationship with the site or from which the site will be visible, should be a fundamental and early step in the consideration of a location for wind energy development. Published District and County landscape character assessments (and, where applicable, documents associated with AONB designation) are a start point for this but more specific site assessment will be needed to identify the extent to which the typical characteristics identified in published assessments apply to the site in question.

Scale and Complexity of Landform

- In functional terms a wind turbine will operate more efficiently in a position which has higher wind speed, and there is also a case in terms of landscape and visual impact for locating a turbine in a position that makes functional sense. A turbine will typically appear less out of place if it is located in an open, exposed location than if it is located in a sheltered area.
- An exposed location could be a low but wide vale landform but is also likely to be a more elevated area. The scale of landform in which a wind development will best 'fit' depends on the scale of the proposed development, but in general terms the broader and flatter the landform the more suitable it will be for tall turbines or schemes with multiple turbines. Conversely a dramatic, distinctive landform, with sharp changes in elevation, will be a prominent landscape feature, and will typically be valued as a scenic landmark. Many such sites also have cultural heritage value – e.g. Iron Age hill forts.
- Whilst locating a turbine on a distinctive landform is very likely to be sensitive, the sense of scale that such features give to the landscape means that a small turbine situated on lower ground in the vicinity of a strong landform could appear relatively smaller, and consequently less intrusive (the turbine, 24.5m to tip, at West Melbury Farm, beneath Melbury Hill in North Dorset, is an example of this). There may however be a fine line between the landform diminishing the sense of scale of the turbine and, conversely, the turbine diminishing the sense of scale of the landform, to the detriment of landscape character.
- An undulating or sloping site will be more sensitive to multi-turbine schemes due to the discordant visual effect of having different turbine heights. In an undulating landscape a hilltop will be a more natural location for a single turbine than a valley or dip. A turbine blade appearing above the crest of a valley will have a more disruptive effect on views from higher ground, in which the valley form might not otherwise be perceptible (as is often the case with the narrow river valleys that cut into the chalk downs), than would be the case if it were located on high ground.
- A convex slope will also, particularly if it is wooded, help to reduce visibility of high ground from an adjacent valley.

Scale and Complexity of Land Use and Field Pattern

- A more open landscape is generally considered to be more suitable for wind energy than a more enclosed landscape, although the scale of the proposed development makes a big difference in this respect. The presence of high field boundary hedgerows and woodland blocks, forming a very localised horizon, can create an intimate landscape which would be

compromised by the introduction of a disconnected, out-of-scale background feature. If the proposed development is smaller, a well-treed landscape could have a positive screening effect, blocking views from sensitive receptors (e.g. settlements or important viewpoints).

- A simple landscape, with large areas of consistent, uniform vegetation and a regular structure, will generally be less sensitive to larger turbines than a more complex landscape with irregular patterns and smaller scale ('human' scale) features. However, consideration needs to be given as to whether the simplicity of the landscape creates a distinctiveness which gives the area a particular value that could be adversely affected by turbines (see **Valued Landscapes** below). The combination of landscape pattern and landform is important: a simple land cover is likely to be more sensitive when combined with a distinctive or varied landform than when set in a flatter area.
- Access routes for construction traffic need to be considered. Even if a development site has lower sensitivity there may be landscape effects associated with narrow access routes where roadside trees, hedges or verges have to be cleared or altered.
- A certain amount of vegetation is desirable even in a generally open landscape, to provide screening of the low-level ancillary features associated with wind development, such as access tracks, transformers and security fencing.
- Certain landscapes represent the survival of historic land use types, often with a strong connection with the natural environment, and as such contribute to local character and distinctiveness and should therefore be avoided when siting wind turbines. In Dorset the prime examples of this are lowland heaths, ancient woodlands, water meadows and unimproved pastures.
- There are also more localised survivals of field patterns, such as strip fields, which suggest medieval origins, and a number of sites with ridges and hummocks that represent the remains of abandoned settlements. These are similarly sensitive to modern development.

Visual Exposure

- Locations should be chosen to avoid significant changes in views from important viewpoints, scenic tourist routes and settlements, and in views towards important, scenic landmarks. Key viewpoints may be identified in County or District Landscape Character Assessments, AONB Management Plans, AGLV Supplementary Planning Guidance, Parish Action Plans, Town and Village Design Statements or other Settlement Appraisals.
- Turbines should not be located where they have a significant effect on the understanding or appreciation of historic monuments. Consideration should be given to visual relationships between historic landmarks which could be affected – e.g. views from one hill fort to another.
- Turbines will frequently have an effect on skyline views. A higher level of sensitivity will be attached to more distinctive or undeveloped skylines, or skylines featuring prominent landmarks from which the presence of a turbine could detract.
- Managed forest may potentially provide some screening of development sites but consideration must be given as to the likelihood of such trees being cropped during the lifetime of a wind energy development and also to the potential for these areas to be left open for biodiversity reasons (e.g. heathland re-creation). Reference should be made to any Forest Design Plans.

Development and Activity

- The relationship between level of development and activity and sensitivity to wind energy is not a straightforward one. At one end of the scale an area valued for its remoteness and wildness and absence of human intervention would be highly sensitive in landscape terms, but at the other extreme a wind turbine would be unlikely to fit comfortably into very settled landscape, with many human-scale features.
- In Dorset there are few locations which could be considered wild and untamed but there are areas valued for their historic, rural landscape character, lack of modern development and tranquillity. These will typically have high sensitivity but there may be locations where smaller scale turbines could be sited in association with farm complexes, particularly ones which feature large, modern barns.
- There are particular sensitivities associated with undeveloped coastlines. The Purbeck Heritage Coast, within the Dorset AONB, can be considered as undeveloped coast.

- In more developed landscapes there could be potential to minimise adverse impact by locating turbines in association with large scale built development, such as industrial complexes or business parks, which may already be focal points in the landscape, or on brownfield/reclaimed land.
- Pylons are intrusive features which detract from landscape character but the extent to which they make a landscape less sensitive to further development will depend on the extent to which the addition of turbines would add 'clutter' to views. If the arrangement of pylons is fairly simple then adverse impact is more likely than would be the case if the area is crossed by more than one transmission line, or if other tall elements add complexity to the landscape.

Valued Landscapes

10.4 Consideration should be given to any particular value attributed to the landscape, either recognised by statutory (AONB) designation or noted in District and County landscape character assessments:

- Most landscapes have some degree of value to some people but the two AONBs that cover large parts of the County represent the areas which are afforded statutory recognition of landscape quality. It might be that when assessed under the individual headings above a location does not appear to have a particularly high sensitivity to wind energy development, but if any of the distinctive qualities and special characteristics identified in the AONB Management Plans would be affected by a scheme then sensitivity is increased.
- An elevated level of sensitivity also applies to locations which form part of the setting of a designated landscape. This applies to AONBs and also the New Forest National Park, which in places is very close to the Dorset border.
- Consideration should be given to any potential adverse effect on the character of the setting of a Listed Building or Conservation Area (where the setting is an important aspect of the value of the building/designated area), or on views to and from a Registered Park or Garden (in particular any 'designed views').
- Both County and District level assessments may make reference to landscape qualities which reflect a level of value attached to that landscape, such as tranquillity.

Site Design

10.5 Size and number of turbines are clearly the major factors that will affect the landscape sensitivity of a proposed development, but the design of individual turbines and ancillary elements can also have a significant impact, particularly in a relatively undeveloped location.

Turbine design considerations

- Different combinations of mast height and rotor blade diameter are available but from a visual point of view a ratio of close to 1:1 looks most balanced.
- All turbines on a site should be of the same dimensions and should rotate in the same direction and at the same speed.
- Small turbines commonly have faster blade rotation speeds. Faster moving blades tend to draw the eye more, and have a greater impact on an otherwise inactive scene, than slower moving blades, so consideration should be given to limiting speeds where location is exposed.
- Pale grey is the least intrusive colour for a turbine when viewed against a sky backdrop, but depending on the setting other shades, or graduated colouring (usually from green at the base through to light grey) may be effective.
- Use of advertising on turbines will increase landscape and visual impact.

Design considerations associated with ancillary scheme elements

- The creation of new tracks for access to turbines will add landscape impact, particularly if they are exposed to view and more so if they are out of character with the current pattern of roads and tracks. Where new tracks are needed they should as far as possible follow field edges, hedges/trees and contours.

- Although ongoing maintenance access will be needed, some surfaced areas required for construction could be removed/grassed over afterwards (e.g. crane pads).
- Earthworks and clearance of vegetation to facilitate access and construction should be minimised.
- The location of any ancillary buildings or structures, such as substation, control buildings and transformers should be as unexposed as possible, and in rural areas in particular should minimise urbanising features such as hard surfacing, fencing and lighting and should consider the local vernacular in terms of appearance.
- If aircraft warning lighting is required it should be infra-red, to minimise visual impact.
- Cables should be buried where possible. If overhead grid connections are required these will add impact, potentially introducing new linear landscape forms and adding visual 'clutter'.

Layout of Multiple Turbine Schemes

- Typically the cluster size that is feasible will be dictated by the scale of the landscape, with a smaller scale landscape being able to accommodate only a small cluster (if any). The more localised variation there is in landform or land cover the harder it will be to create a group of turbines that have a coherent appearance.
- The layout should consider the pattern and form of the landscape, so that it appears balanced with turbines being grouped rather than disparate. Typically this will mean spacing turbines evenly, so that an individual turbine(s) does not sit apart from the main group, but in some cases difference distances may suit better if it enables turbines to be located at consistent heights, when considered from key viewpoints.
- A linear arrangement may sometimes suit the terrain better than a cluster but consideration should be given to avoiding creating alignments in which turbines may appear 'stacked' in principal directions of view.
- Developments with more than one turbine will tend to have a greater impact if they span more than one landscape character area or, even if within one character area, there are distinct differences in setting – e.g. topography, field size or surrounding land use.

Land Use and Landscaping

- The presence of a wind turbine should not preclude continuation of agricultural land use and management of hedgerows and other landscape elements.
- Opportunities to enhance land use and management to strengthen positive aspects of landscape character (as noted in District and County assessments or observed on site) should be explored. This may include the strengthening of existing field boundaries, or introduction of new planting, to assist with screening of intrusive wind energy ancillary elements (such as access tracks and buildings).
- Synergies with habitat creation and biodiversity enhancement should be explored.
- A landscape management plan for the area surrounding a turbine, or cluster of turbines, would be a positive way of demonstrating that the landscape will be managed to provide benefits beyond those of energy generation.
- As a temporary development (usually permitted for 25 years), it will be important to demonstrate that on decommissioning the landscape can be restored to at least as good a condition as it was prior to the development taking place.

Minimising Cumulative Impact

10.6 The sensitivity assessment presented in this document makes no reference to the potential cumulative impact on landscape character resulting from wind energy developments. The cumulative addition of turbines to a landscape could on the one hand be seen as gradually reducing sensitivity to future schemes, as they become a more characteristic element of the landscape character, or on the other as increasing sensitivity by threatening valued aspects of character and decreasing robustness.

10.7 The question of how much wind development is too much cannot be answered by a landscape sensitivity assessment, because policy considerations beyond landscape character have a key

influence on determining strategies for landscape capacity (see paragraph 1.11), but consideration of the following points can assist with minimising the effects of locating a new development in a landscape which already includes wind turbines:

- When assessing potential effects of a proposed scheme, reference should be made to the relationship between the proposal and i) any existing wind energy developments, but also ii) any consented and iii) any proposed schemes, whether within the District or in a neighbouring District or County.
- The character of existing developments in relation to landscape should be considered. If there is a distinct pattern – e.g. developments are typically small single turbines attached to farm complexes – then continuation of this pattern is less likely to have a significant impact on landscape character than introduction of a new size/form of wind development in a different landscape context.
- The closer developments are to each other, and the more likely they are to be viewed in combination from the same viewpoint, the more important it is that they have some consistency of character (unless the existing development is poorly related to its environment). The presence of developments perceived as being of different scales, whether due to height or cluster size being different or due to the landscape setting being different, is likely to increase the level of cumulative impact. The introduction of turbines that, through their scale and relative position, have a distorting effect on perspective in a view will also have greater impact.
- In determining whether cumulative effects are likely to add significantly to any impacts resulting from a proposed development it is useful to identify the focal points that exist in the landscape at present, to identify whether there is any hierarchy amongst them, and to assess the extent to which the introduction of a new development will affect appreciation of these relationships.
- The location of key viewpoints will be important in determining whether a site will have a significant cumulative landscape impact relative to an existing scheme. In general it is better to avoid locations in which separate schemes will appear to coalesce, but there may be situations where this effect is preferable to introducing a more distinctly separate development.
- It is important to avoid creating any sense of turbines having an overbearing or oppressive effect on residential locations, or other valued receptor locations such as popular rights of way or, on a larger scale, a designated landscape area. Maximising distance from such locations is clearly important in this respect, but avoiding developing on sites that would give a sensitive location a feeling of being surrounded by turbines is also important.

11 Solar PV Energy Development Guidelines

11.1 These guidelines relate to landscape sensitivity only, and do not address sensitivities relating to other areas of potential environmental impact or other non-landscape considerations which might affect the feasibility of solar PV energy development.

11.2 The guidelines are generic across the four local authority areas for which sensitivity assessment has been carried out – North Dorset, East Dorset, Purbeck and Christchurch – so not all comments will be relevant to all districts.

Consideration of Landscape Characteristics

11.3 Consideration of the characteristics of the landscape in the vicinity of the site, but also in any area which either has an existing visual relationship with the site or from which the site will be visible, should be a fundamental and early step in the consideration of a location for solar PV energy development. Published District and County landscape character assessments (and, where applicable, documents associated with AONB designation) are a start point for this but more specific site assessment will be needed to identify the extent to which the typical characteristics identified in published assessments apply to the site in question.

Scale and Complexity of Landform

- A flat, gently sloping or gently undulating site, either on lower ground or on a plateau, will be more suitable than a steep, sharply undulating site or an exposed upper slope.
- A development located in an area with a small-scale landform, with significant variations over the site or in its locality, will be more likely to stand out in the landscape than one located on a flatter site or an even slope.

Scale and Complexity of Land Use and Field Pattern

- A more enclosed landscape is generally considered to be more suitable for solar energy than a more open landscape, although the scale of the proposed development will be a key factor in determining the enclosure size that would be most appropriate. Ideally the solar farm should not dilute or distort the enclosure pattern, either by spanning multiple fields or subdividing a larger field to create an area of homogeneous land use that is a different size or shape to its surroundings.
- A patchwork landscape, with a variety of land uses, will be less sensitive than a more homogeneous land cover.
- A landscape in which geometric forms (e.g. field boundaries and woodland blocks) predominate will be less sensitive than a more irregular landscape, or one in which rounded forms predominate.
- Certain landscapes represent the survival of historic land use types, often with a strong connection with the natural environment, and as such contribute to local character and distinctiveness and should therefore be avoided when siting solar PV developments. In Dorset the prime examples of this are lowland heaths, ancient woodlands, water meadows and unimproved pastures.
- There are also more localised survivals of field patterns, such as strip fields, which suggest medieval origins, and a number of sites with ridges and hummocks that represent the remains of abandoned settlements. These are similarly sensitive to modern development.

Visual Exposure

- Locations should be chosen to avoid significant changes in views from important viewpoints, scenic tourist routes and settlements, and in views towards important, scenic landmarks. Key viewpoints may be identified in County or District Landscape Character Assessments, AONB

Management Plans, AGLV Supplementary Planning Guidance, Parish Action Plans, Town and Village Design Statements or other Settlement Appraisals.

- Solar developments should not be located where they have a significant effect on the understanding or appreciation of historic monuments. Consideration should be given to visual relationships between historic landmarks which could be affected – e.g. views from one hill fort to another.
- Managed forest may potentially provide screening of development sites but consideration must be given as to the likelihood of such trees being cropped during the lifetime of a solar development and also to the potential for these areas to be left open for biodiversity reasons (e.g. heathland re-creation). Reference should be made to any Forest Design Plans.

Development and Activity

- A landscape influenced by modern development, containing hard elements such as buildings, brownfield sites or horticulture (e.g. glasshouses or poly tunnels) will be less sensitive than a more natural or remote location.
- Intensively farmed, arable land is likely to be less sensitive than extensive pasture.
- There are particular sensitivities associated with undeveloped coastlines. The Purbeck Heritage Coast, within the Dorset AONB, can be considered as undeveloped coast.

Valued Landscapes

11.4 Consideration should be given to any particular value attributed to the landscape, either recognised by statutory (AONB) designation or noted in District and County landscape character assessments:

- Most landscapes have some degree of value to some people but the two AONBs that cover large parts of the County represent the areas which are afforded statutory recognition of landscape quality. It might be that when assessed under the individual headings above a location does not appear to have a particularly high sensitivity to wind energy development, but if any of the distinctive qualities and special characteristics identified in the AONB Management Plans would be affected by a scheme then sensitivity is increased.
- An elevated level of sensitivity also applies to locations which form part of the setting of a designated landscape. This applies to AONBs and also the New Forest National Park, which in places is very close to the Dorset border.
- Consideration should be given to any potential adverse effect on the character of the setting of a Listed Building or Conservation Area (where the setting is an important aspect of the value of the building/designated area), or on views to and from a Registered Park or Garden (in particular any 'designed views').
- Both County and District level assessments may make reference to landscape qualities which reflect a level of value attached to that landscape, such as tranquillity.

Site Design

11.5 The size of a solar farm is the major factor that will affect the landscape sensitivity of a proposed development, but the arrangement of panel arrays and ancillary elements can also have a significant impact, particularly in a relatively undeveloped location or where a site is overlooked by higher ground.

Layout considerations

- Developments will tend to have a greater impact if they span more than one landscape character area or, even if within one character area, there are distinct differences in setting – e.g. topography or field size.
- The appearance of a development will be quite different from the sides or back in comparison to the front, due to the visibility of supporting frames.
- The arrangement of panels should try and fit with the form and enclosure of the site; a straight edged layout will not sit comfortably in an irregular field. It will be much easier to

achieve a more acceptable fit in a geometric landscape, given the shape of the individual panels, but the use of a curving or staggered arrangement of arrays could in some cases provide a better fit than a rectilinear layout.

- Within a field, spacing between panels should be consistent, without outlying or remote clusters.
- The removal of boundary vegetation within a site than spans multiple fields will typically have a negative landscape and visual impact (and is likely also to have adverse ecological effects). Panels should be set back from boundaries to maintain the legibility of field patterns (and also to assist with hedgerow management and potentially to provide habitat).
- Panels should not be positioned where they would be shaded by vegetation, if that would result in vegetation being cut back or removed.
- Panel heights should be kept as low as possible, to minimise visual impact.
- Pile-driven or screw-anchored bases are preferable to concrete foundations.

Design considerations associated with ancillary scheme elements

- The creation of new tracks for access to solar arrays will add landscape impact, particularly if they are exposed to view and more so if they are out of character with the current pattern of roads and tracks. Where new tracks are needed they should as far as possible follow field edges, hedges/trees and contours.
- Although ongoing maintenance access will be needed, consideration should be given as to whether some surfaced areas required for construction could be removed (e.g. perhaps using temporary trackway) and grassed over afterwards. Regular tracks between rows of arrays should be avoided.
- Earthworks and clearance of vegetation to facilitate access and construction should be minimised, although where it does not have a significant adverse effect on landscape character or views, landform remodelling, with appropriate ongoing management, may assist with screening a solar PV development.
- The location of any ancillary buildings or structures, such as substations, transformers and inverters should be as unexposed as possible, and in rural areas in particular should minimise the impact of urbanising features such as hard surfacing, fencing, CCTV and lighting, and should consider the local vernacular in terms of appearance. Existing buildings should be utilised where possible.
- Consideration should be given to using deer-stop type fencing in preference to welded mesh fencing, and to minimising its height (subject to insurance requirements). Likewise CCTV camera should not be mounted on unnecessarily high posts.
- Dark, recessive colours in non-reflective materials are generally considered less visually intrusive for panel frames, fencing and ancillary structures than bright colours and reflective materials.
- Cables should be buried where possible. If overhead grid connections are required these will add impact, potentially introducing new linear landscape forms and adding visual 'clutter'.
- The use of security lighting should be minimised, using passive infra-red (PIR) where possible and minimising any glare or light-spill.

Land Use and Landscaping

- Existing and new landscaping will be important in screening views of the site, but consideration must be given as to whether letting hedges grow higher, or planting new hedges or trees, would be out of keeping with local landscape character. Depending on landscape terrain and character, the use of other forms of screening, such as bunding or tall crops, may be beneficial.
- Fences should be set back from surrounding hedges, to reduce their apparent height when viewed from beyond the boundary.
- Efforts should be made to maintain land uses on the site that fit in with the character of the surrounding area. The space between and surrounding rows of solar arrays can be utilised productively, e.g. for grazing. The potential for heathland restoration should also be explored, where appropriate. Mulching of large areas, in particular the use of plastics to prevent weed growth, should be avoided.

- Maintaining a diversity of land cover types in an area will help to prevent solar PV arrays from having a dominating effect on landscape character.
- Opportunities to enhance land use and management to strengthen positive aspects of landscape character (as noted in District and County assessments or observed on site) should be explored. Hedgerows can be managed to provide ecological benefit as well as screening, which may include the strengthening of existing field boundaries, or introduction of new planting.
- Synergies with habitat creation and biodiversity enhancement should be explored. Any new planting should use native, locally appropriate species.
- A landscape management plan for the site would be a positive way of demonstrating that the landscape will be managed to provide benefits beyond those of energy generation.
- As a temporary development (usually permitted for 25 years), it will be important to demonstrate that on decommissioning the landscape can be restored to at least as good a condition as it was prior to the development taking place.

Minimising Cumulative Impact

11.6 The sensitivity assessment presented in this document makes no reference to the potential cumulative impact on landscape character resulting from solar PV energy developments. The cumulative addition of solar farms to a landscape could on the one hand be seen as gradually reducing sensitivity to future schemes, as they become a more characteristic element of the landscape character, or on the other as increasing sensitivity by threatening valued aspects of character and decreasing robustness.

11.7 The question of how much solar development is too much cannot be answered by a landscape sensitivity assessment, because policy considerations beyond landscape character have a key influence on determining strategies for landscape capacity (see paragraph 1.11), but consideration of the following points can assist with minimising the effects of locating a new development in a landscape which already includes solar arrays:

- When assessing potential effects of a proposed scheme, reference should be made to the relationship between the proposal and i) any existing solar PV energy developments, but also ii) any consented and iii) any proposed schemes, whether within the District or in a neighbouring District or County.
- The character of existing developments in relation to landscape should be considered. If there is a distinct pattern of development in a particular type of landscape then continuation of this consistent design response is likely to have less of an impact on character than the introduction of a different size/form of solar development.
- The closer developments are to each other, and the more likely they are to be viewed in combination from the same viewpoint, the more important it is that they have some consistency of character (unless the existing development is poorly related to its environment). This is particularly the case where an existing development is being extended. The presence of developments perceived as being of different scales, whether due to the physical area covered or due to the landscape setting being different, is likely to increase the level of cumulative impact.
- In determining whether cumulative effects are likely to add significantly to any impacts resulting from a proposed development it is useful to identify the focal points that exist in the landscape at present, to identify whether there is any hierarchy amongst them, and to assess the extent to which the introduction of a new development will affect appreciation of these relationships.
- The location of key viewpoints will be important in determining whether a site will have a significant cumulative landscape impact relative to an existing scheme. In general it is better to avoid locations in which separate schemes will appear to coalesce, but there may be situations where this effect is preferable to introducing a more distinctly separate development.
- It is important to avoid developing on sites that would give a sensitive location a feeling of being surrounded by solar PV developments.