

# Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Draft Mineral Sites Plan

Proposed Sand and Gravel Area of Search

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Landscape & Ecological Impact Assessment

August 2015

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Mineral Sites Plan is currently being prepared and will identify the specific mineral sites that will deliver the separate mineral strategies set out in the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy 2014 to meet the need for minerals in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole.
- 1.2. For sand and gravel, the Mineral Planning Authority is required to identify enough sites to allow the minerals industry to provide up to 1.56 million tonnes per annum, during the life of the Plan. This figure will vary slightly each year. A balance has to be achieved, identifying enough sites to meet the annual figure but not so many that the figure is exceeded and more land is quarried than is necessary.
- 1.3. Problems could arise if one or more of the identified/allocated sites was to fail for some reason, and not be able to be developed. Alternatively, if demand was to increase significantly over the period of several years, the allocated sites might be unable to supply enough mineral to keep up with demand. Both of these scenarios could see a shortfall in supply of aggregates in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole and beyond. Not identifying enough sites could lead to the Plan being found unsound at Examination, while identifying too many will have impacts on the local environment.
- 1.4. To assist in addressing any shortfall, the Draft Mineral Sites Plan identifies an area of search (AOS) for sand and gravel which is intended to assist in meeting any shortfall in sand and gravel supply.

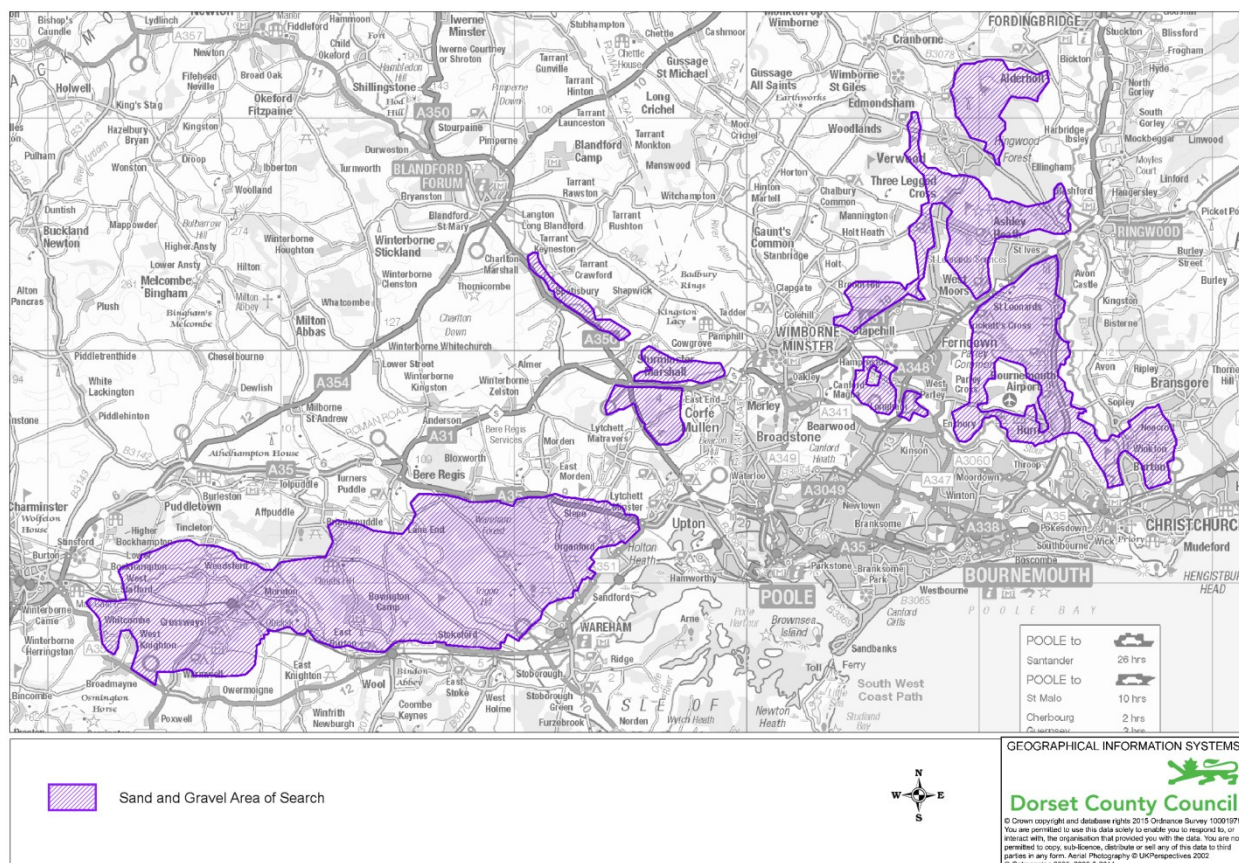
### The Area of Search

- 1.5. Policy AS1 of the Minerals Strategy requires that new sand and gravel quarries are located within the designated Superficial and Bedrock Resource Blocks. The Resource Blocks are the areas of Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole within which the British Geological Survey (BGS) have identified significant reserves of sand and gravel considered to be economically viable<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.6. Although the whole area of the Resource Blocks is designated as having potential for development, there are areas within them which will be subject to higher levels of environmental constraints, including landscape and ecological constraints, which could prevent or limit mineral development. To reduce the likelihood that proposals for development within these areas will be subject to constraints and to give clearer guidance to developers, a landscape and ecological assessment of the Resource Blocks has been carried out to identify those areas within the designation where mineral development is less likely to be constrained and therefore more likely to be successfully developed.
- 1.7. The resulting areas are shown in Figure 1 and designated through Policy MS-2 of the Mineral Sites Plan as the Sand and Gravel Area of Search (AOS) of the Mineral Sites Plan. Should there be a shortfall in sand and gravel supply, then the MPA will permit the development of an unallocated site or sites within the AOS provided that the potential developers of any such site can:
  - demonstrate that there is a shortfall in the supply of sand and gravel
  - that the shortfall cannot be met from existing sites and/or new sites allocated through Policy MS-1 of the emerging Mineral Sites Plan
  - there are no permitted sand and gravel reserves capable of being worked but not currently being worked in the vicinity of the site that could be used to meet the identified shortfall and
  - the development of the unallocated site/sites does not prevent or disadvantage any allocated sites in coming forward and

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<sup>1</sup> Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole Sand and Gravel Assessment - Minerals and Waste Programme – External Report CR/11/049. BGS: 2011

**Figure 1 – the Sand and Gravel Area of Search**



1.8. In addition to permitting unallocated sites where there is a demonstrable shortfall in supply, the MPA will also permit unallocated sites in the AOS where the development of such sites can be shown to result in significant environmental gains which deliver a net environmental benefit provided they do not delay or otherwise prejudice the development of sites allocated through this Plan. If it appears that the unallocated site would prejudice development of allocated sites, it will not be permitted.

1.9. In determining whether to approve an unallocated site, the MPA will consider factors such as:

- the need for the site and whether there is a shortfall in supply (through assessing the size of the landbank and the existing level of demand),
- the benefits to be provided through development of the unallocated site(s),
- whether there are allocated site(s) that could be delayed or otherwise prejudiced by the approval of the unallocated site, and
- whether the development of the unallocated site(s) would add unacceptable cumulative impacts to the development of the sites allocated through this Plan.

1.10. All sites within the AOS or Resource Blocks proposed for development will be required to go through the process of submission of a planning application, with all the associated detailed assessments.

### **Description of study area and its landscape context.**

1.11. The area includes most of the Poole Basin, an area of underlying sands and gravels which produce poor acidic soils which in turn support the important heathland mosaic habitats. The most extensive deposits are those of the Poole Formation or Bagshot Beds. At one time the whole area was almost all heathland lying on acidic soils.

1.12. The edges of the basin are formed of chalk and the study area merges into the chalk landscapes to the north west. Between the chalk edges and the central heaths is a belt where the Reading Beds and London Clays surface, giving rise to richer but still acidic, soils. Deposits of plateau and valley gravels overlie the sands of the Poole Formation, but their soils are also poor and acidic. The area has many nature conservation designations making it internationally important of wildlife, it is a popular and well used recreational area and fringed to the north and south by two AONBs.

**Figure 2 - Extent of study area**



### **Description of Proposals**

1.13. For the purposes of assessing the impacts of further sand and gravel extraction, the study will assume that the proposed methods will be based largely on existing practices and the following outline and approximate development parameters will be used to guide the assessment.

#### **'Typical' River Terrace (Superficial Sand and Gravel) sites - (shallow, progressive restoration, worked wet or dry)**

##### **General parameters:**

Processing plant: Say 15-18m, could be reduced by being located in the quarry void

Excavation depth: Up to 5m

Bund height (max): 3m

Overburden stockpile height (max): 8m

Mineral stockpile height (max): 8m

Lorry movements: Say 100 per day (i.e. 50 in, 50 out) but this could vary depending on size of site or level of demand.

Life of operation: Varies widely depending on size of reserve and level of demand – assume average of 10 years, then need to add time for completion of restoration, say **average** of 15 years

Size of site: Varies widely, for the current site nominations from 2.5 ha to almost 200 ha – more likely to be 50-100 ha.

#### **'Typical' Poole Formation (Bedrock Sand) sites (deep working)**

##### **General parameters:**

Processing plant: 15-18m, but likely to be located in quarry void.

Excavation depth: 10 – 20m (Note that depths are variable within the sites)

Bund height (max): 3m

Overburden stockpile height (max): 8m (however likely to be located in quarry void)

Mineral stockpile height: 8m (however likely to be located in quarry void)

Lorry movements: Say 100+ per day (i.e. 50+ in, 50+ out) but this could vary depending on size of site or level of demand.

Life of operation: Varies widely depending on size of reserve and level of demand – expect it to be longer as the reserve is deeper, then need to add time for completion of restoration, say around 20-25 years +

Size of site: Varies widely, but likely to be at least 50-100 ha.

To summarise, the principle elements likely to cause impacts during the construction and operational phases are as follows:

- Areas of open disturbed/unrestored land i.e. removal of existing landscape features/alteration of topography.
- Processing plants.
- Stockpiles/storage mounds.
- Exposed working faces.
- Bunds
- Plant/traffic and its noise.
- Lagoons.
- Creation of dust.

The principal elements likely to cause impacts post operational phase and at the restoration phases are as follows:

- Re-profiling of voids.
- Introduction of lakes/water features.
- New profiles/earth shaping/features in the landscape
- Establishment of planting/seeding

## **2. Assessment of Impacts**

- 2.1. This part of the report assesses the potential landscape, visual and ecological impacts of the proposal to extract sand and gravel from the study area. At this stage the detailed proposals for any specific site are not known but as mentioned above, there is enough understanding of the design and working of existing pits to assess potential impacts within the study area.
- 2.2. The methodology of the impact assessment is derived from the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition' (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013). The assessment was carried out by a Chartered Landscape Architect (Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute) and a qualified Ecologist.
- 2.3. The main aspects considered in this assessment include:
  - Impacts on landscape resources, mainly the landscape character of the area, a range of international, national and local designations, European protected and Biodiversity Action Plan species, ancient woodland and other important habitats.
  - Impacts on visual resources, based on the sensitivity of some representative viewpoints where people are likely to see changes.

### **2.1 Landscape and visual resource sensitivity**

#### **Landscape Character**

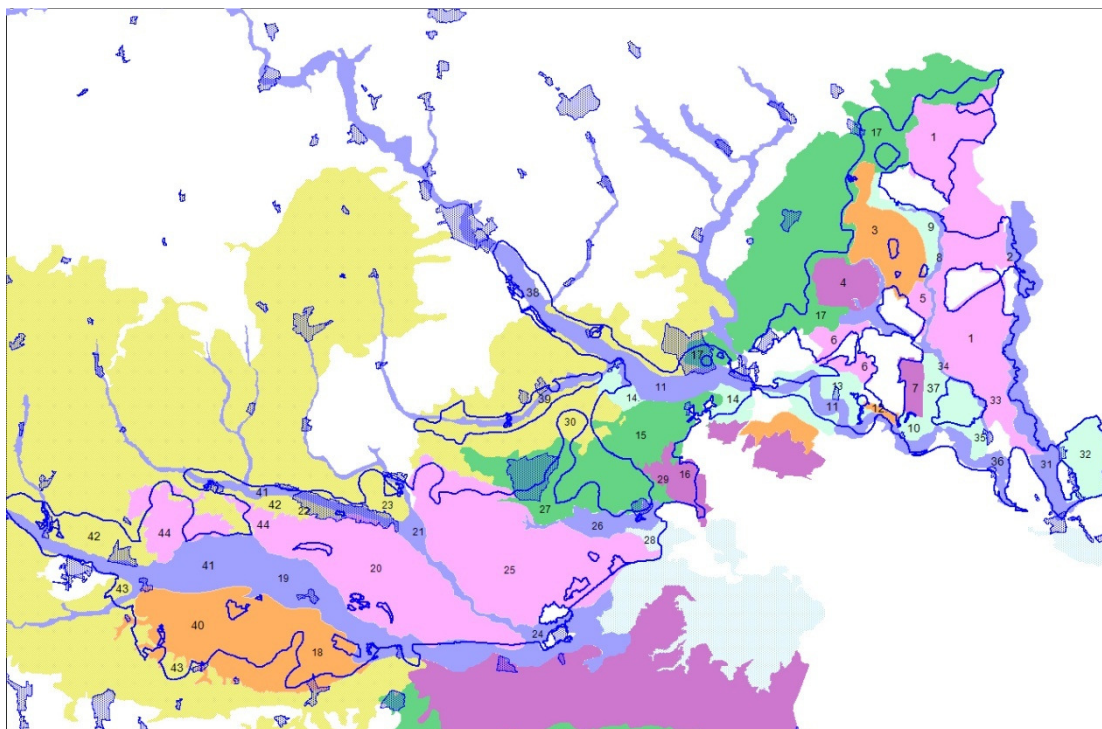
The character of this part of Dorset has been well described at various levels:

- National level: Dorset Heaths National Character Area; Natural England 2005.
- County level: Valley Pastures, Heath/Forest Mosaic, Heath/Farmland Mosaic, Chalk Valley and Downland, Harbour, Wetland & Lagoon, Rolling Wooded Pasture, Lowland Heathland & River Terrace Landscape Types; Dorset County Landscape Character Assessment 2009.

- East Dorset District level 2008: Ringwood Hurn Heath Forest Mosaic, Horton Common-Three Legged Cross Heath/Farmland Mosaic, West Moors Heath Forest Mosaic, Ferndown Forest Stapehill Heath Forest Mosaic, Moors River, Dewlands-Rushmoor River Terrace, Parley River Terrace, Hampreston River Terrace, Sturminster Marshall River Terrace, Lower Avon Valley Pasture, West Parley Heath, Woodlands Colehill & Hillbutts farm woodland mosaic, Holton Heath and Henbury Corfe Farm Woodland Mosaic Landscape Character Areas.
- Purbeck District level 2008: Lower Piddle Valley Pasture, North Wareham Heath Forest, Bovington Affpuddle Heath Forest, Sherford River Valley Pasture, Upton Heath, Upton Bay Marsh, Mid Frome Valley Pasture, Upper/Middle Piddle Valley, South Bere Regis Downs, Crossways Winfrith Heath/Farmland Mosaic, Bloxworth Charlborough Downs and Morden Lytchett Rolling Wooded Farmland Landscape Character Areas.
- West Dorset District level 2009: Frome & Piddle Valley Pasture, Cerne & Piddle Valleys & Chalk Downland, Dorchester Downs, Puddletown Forest & Clyffe House, Crossways Gravel Plateau and the South Dorset Downs Landscape Character Areas
- Christchurch Borough level 2003: Avon Terrace, Stour Terrace, Lower Avon valley, St Catherine's Hurn Forest, Lower Stour Valley, Airport East Parley Common and Moors River Landscape Character Areas.
- North Dorset District level 2008: Mid Stour Valley and Lower Winterborne Valley Landscape Character Areas.

It is the district level assessments, which gives the most relevant level of detail for this assessment. The extracts from each character area within or adjacent to the study area, are useful for establishing the baseline of the character and the implications of the proposals. See Appendix 1 for further information and Figure 3 below for map.

**Figure 2 - Relevant Landscape Character Areas. NB: This also shows the Conservation Areas**



## 2.2 Designations

As well as the landscape character areas described above there are many international, national and local designations potentially affected by proposals:

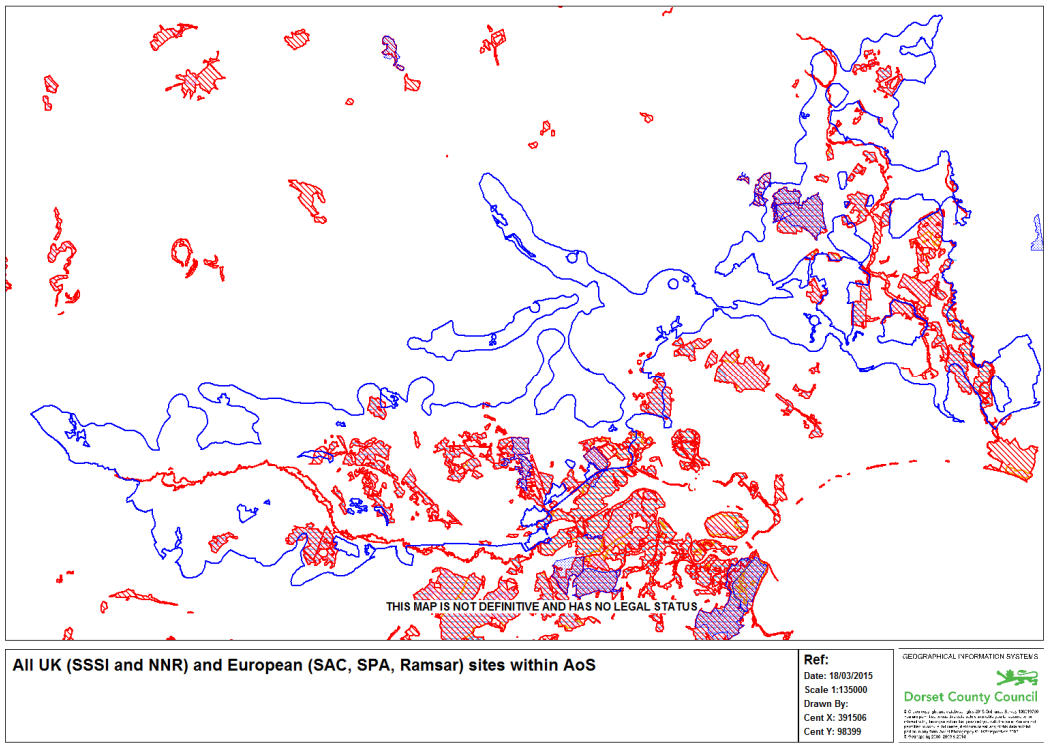
- National Nature Reserves
- Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Areas & Ramsar sites which also includes Site of Special Scientific Interest



- Sites of Nature Conservation Interest.

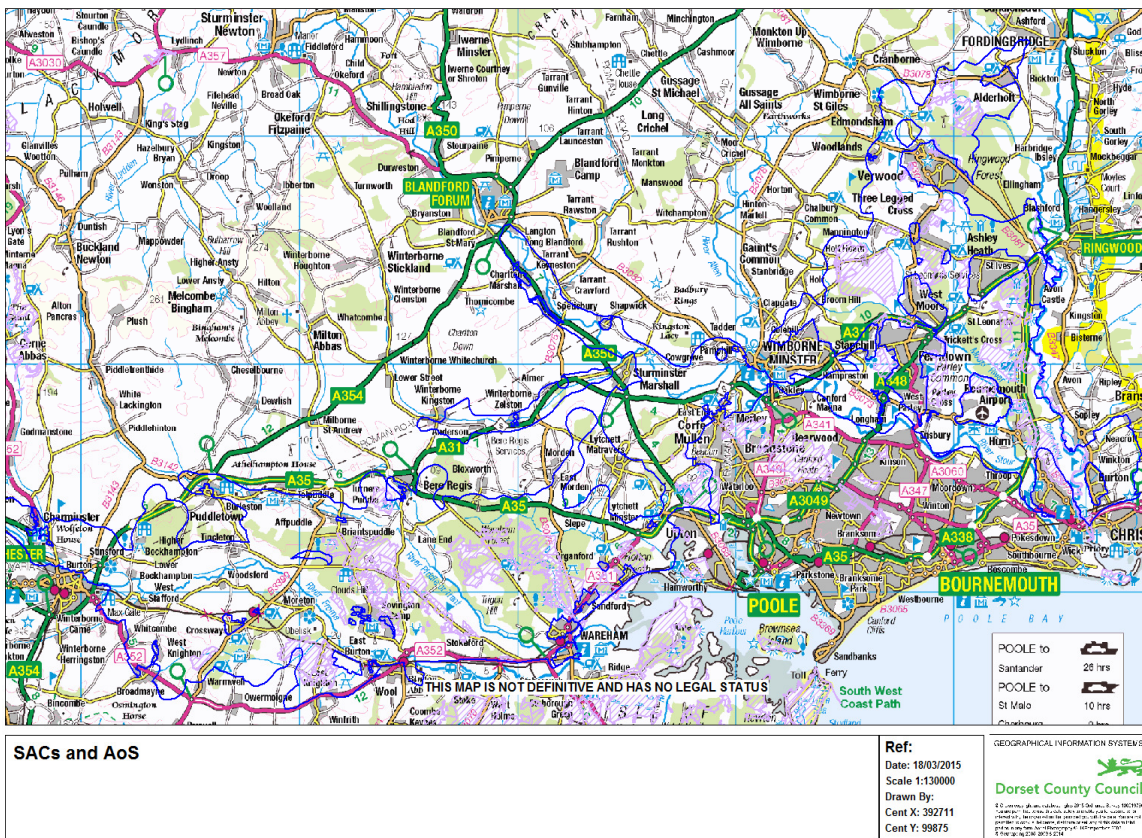
Figure 3 below shows the extent of these designations and Figures 4 – 9 show the individual designations within the proposed area of search.

**Figure 3: The extent of designated sites within the proposed area of search (SAC, SPA, Ramsar and SSSI).**



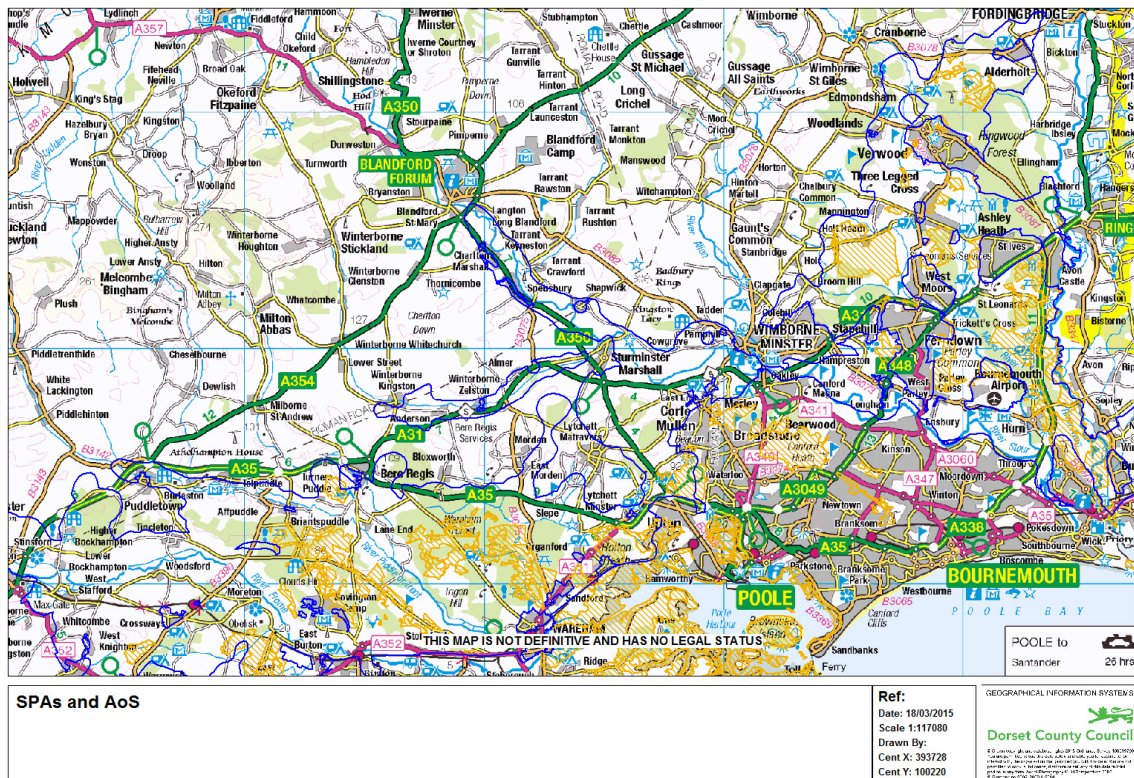
SNCI's are not included on this map as the sheer number of sites obscures the overview achieved by just including SAC/SPA/Ramsar/SSSI sites.

**Figure 4: the extent and location of Special Areas of Conservation within the proposed area of search.**



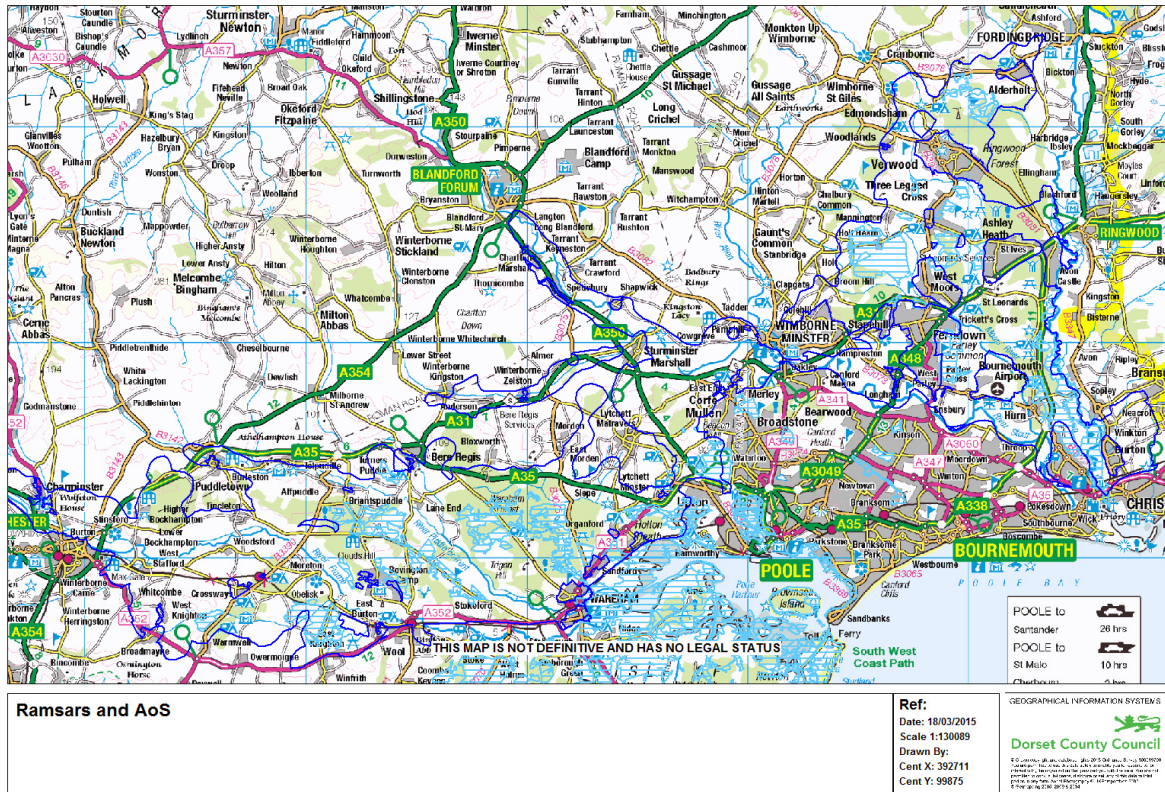
There are three SAC's within the proposed area of search. They are listed below.

**Figure 5: the extent and location of Special Protection Areas within the proposed area of search.**



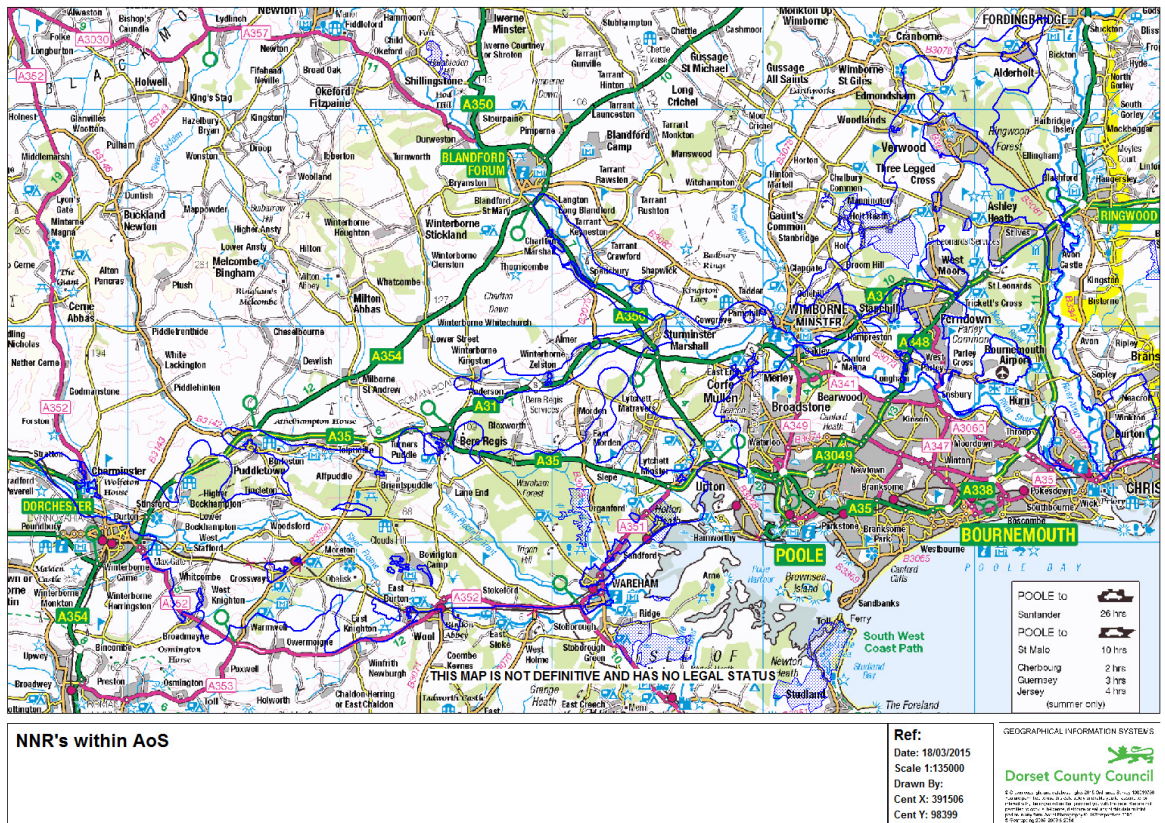
There are three SPA's within the proposed area of search. They are listed below.

Figure 6: the extent and location of Ramsar sites within the proposed area of search.



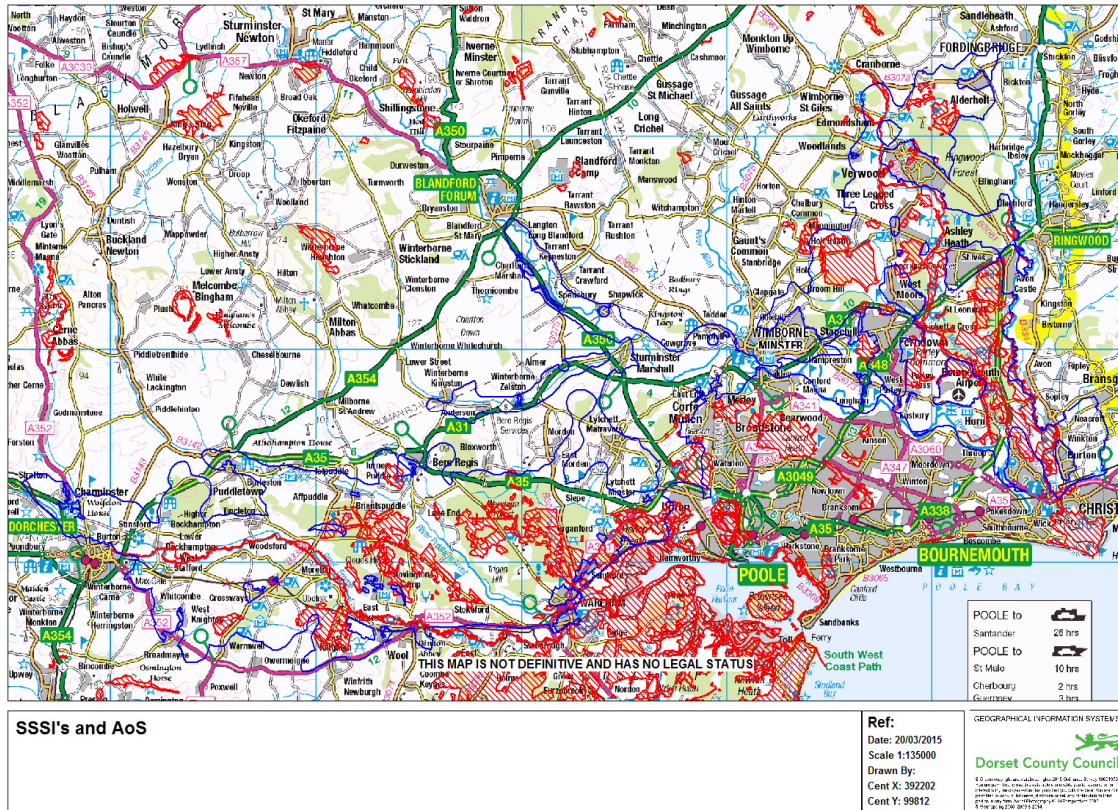
There are three Ramsar sites within the proposed area of search. They are listed below.

Figure 7: the extent and location of National Nature Reserves within the proposed area of search.



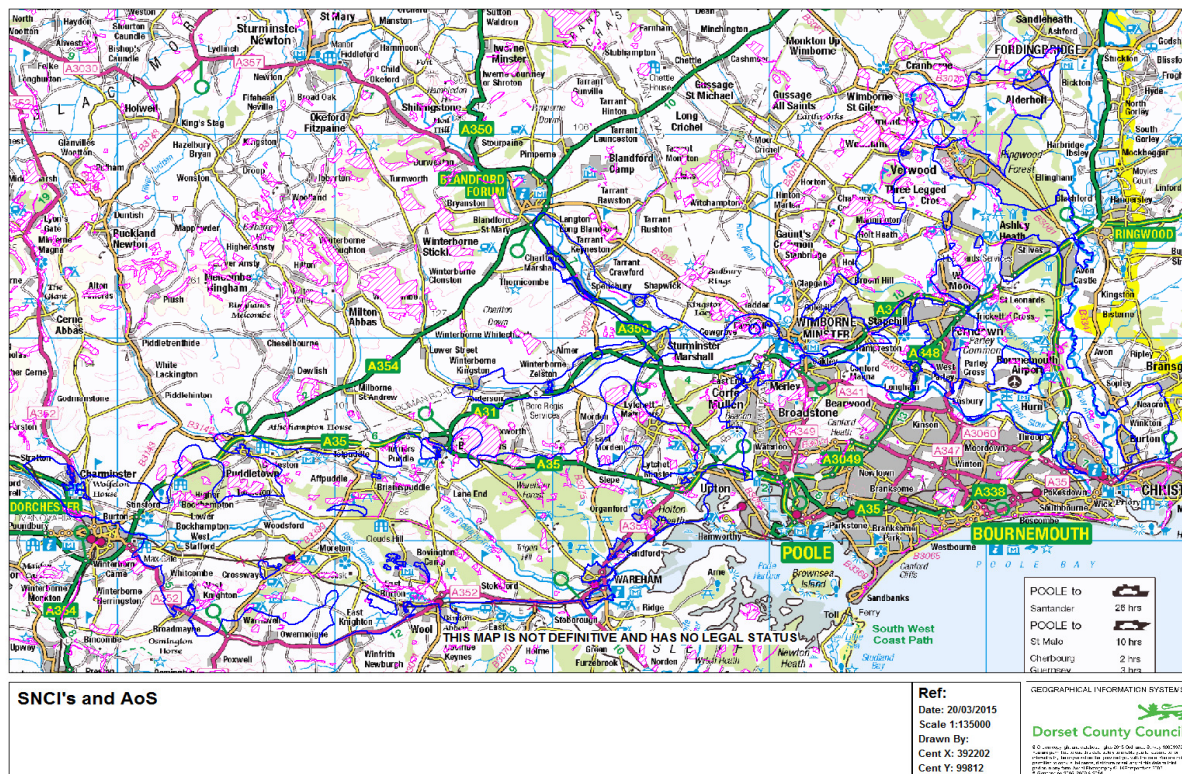
There are three National Nature Reserves within the proposed area of search. They are listed below.

**Figure 8: the extent and location of Sites of Special Scientific Interest within the proposed area of search.**



There are 34 SSSI's within the proposed area of search. They are listed below.

**Figure 9: the extent and location of Sites of Nature Conservation Interest within the proposed area of search.**



It can be seen that there are many SNCI's (255) within the proposed area of search, and that they are in general fairly small and widespread. In light of this, the report will not consider each individual SNCI but will instead consider all of them together.

### 2.3 European protected, NERC Act (2006) Sect 41 species and Biodiversity Action Plan species, ancient woodland & other habitats.

There are populations of protected and important species as well as fragments of important habitats and linear and/or isolated features such as veteran trees widespread throughout the whole area. For the purposes of this geographic study the focus will be on designated sites rather than individual species as the study is concerned with geographic area. However, it is important to acknowledge that there may be areas within the Area of Search which contain populations of protected species/veteran trees and these will be given adequate and appropriate consideration at the consultation stage.

### 2.4 Sensitivity of each category of landscape and ecological resource

Table 1 below summarises the sensitivity of each category of landscape and ecological resource:

- Landscape Character Areas.
- European and UK Protected site designations.
- European protected, NERC Act (2006) Sect 41 and Biodiversity Action Plan species

Site information is from the JNCC and Natural England websites for designated sites.

**Table 1 - Sensitivity of each category of landscape and ecological resource**

<b>Landscape resource</b>	<b>Location:</b> in relation to study area	<b>Value/level of importance*</b>	<b>Sensitivity level**</b>
<b>Landscape Character Areas</b>			
<b>East Dorset</b>			
1. Ringwood Hurn Heath Forest Mosaic	Eastern edges of the area in three separate blocks running north – south.	Medium High value and level of importance due to the ecological value of the heathlands, the recreational value of the pine/birch forest mosaic close to residential areas. Includes Avon Country Park and Moors Valley.	<b>Medium High</b>
2. Lower Avon Valley Pastures	Far eastern fringes of the study area.	High Medium value and level of importance due to the open and extensive views along the valley, its continuity and intactness, its recreational use and its high ecological value.	<b>High Medium</b>
3. Horton Common Three Legged Cross Heath/Farmland Mosaic	North eastern part of area sandwiched between Moors River and Holton Heath. The whole LCA is in the study area.	Medium Low value and level of importance as a largely marginal urban fringe farmland character and use despite the ecological interests within the heathland blocks.	<b>Medium Low</b>

4. Holton Heath	North eastern part of area abutting the farm woodland mosaic areas. The whole LCA is in the study area.	High value and level of importance due to its high ecological value and potential, its open exposed character with extensive outward views and high recreational value.	<b>High</b>
5. West Moors Heath Forest Mosaic	East part area being a small block of heath forest west of the Moors River.	Medium value and level of importance as a relatively small area of mosaic landscape on the urban fringe despite the ecological interests of the heathland within the area.	<b>Medium</b>
6. Ferndown Stapehill Heath Forest Mosaic	Small area just east of Wimborne.	Medium Low value and level of importance due to its urban fringe character, presence of main roads and limited size and influence. There is some ecological interest in the habitats to the east and it has some recreational value within the dense forest areas.	<b>Medium Low</b>
7. West Parley Heath	Small area of heath mosaic abutting Ferndown. The whole LCA is in the study area.	Medium High value and level of importance due to the ecological value of the heathlands, its recreational value close to residential areas and the views across the area from the north despite some detracting urban fringe influences.	<b>Medium High</b>
8. Moors River	Narrow corridor running north south between the eastern heathland mosaic landscapes.	Medium High value and level of importance due to the ecological value of the river corridor and the unity this provides along its length; despite its urban and semi urban setting.	<b>Medium High</b>
9. Dewlands-Rushmoor River Terrace	Small area in east along north eastern edges of Horton Common Heath/Farmland Mosaic	Medium Low value and level of importance due to its urban fringe character being mainly pasture and grazing linked to small holdings despite some ecological interest in the heathland areas.	<b>Medium Low</b>
10. Parley River Terrace	Southeast fringes of area along north of Stour valley corridor	Medium Low value and level of importance as a mainly flat open agricultural landscape on the urban fringe and near the airport. Part of setting of West Parley Conservation Area.	<b>Medium Low</b>
11. Lower Stour Valley Pastures	Southeast fringes of area along Stour valley corridor	Medium High value and level of importance due to the open and integrated character of the valley with long views along its floor and its important historic built and natural environment	<b>Medium High</b>

		features. Part of setting of Shapwick, Sturminster Marshall, Wimborne and Kingston Lacey Conservation Areas.	
12. Dudsbury Ridge Heath Farmland Mosaic	Small block in central east part of site with most of the LCA in the study area.	Medium value and level of importance as has extensive views from the ridge with important wooded areas and historic environment features despite urban fringe pressures.	<b>Medium</b>
13. Hampreston River Terrace	Small river terrace along Southeast fringes of area on Stour valley corridor	Medium Low value and level of importance as largely a small area of flat agricultural land with no significant features of interest on the urban fringe. Part of setting of Hampreston Conservation Area.	<b>Medium Low</b>
14. Sturminster Marshall River Terrace	Central north side of study area on south side of Stour valley corridor	Medium Low value and level of importance as a dominated by urban edges and main roads despite open nature and presence of the Wareham Forest Way.	<b>Medium Low</b>
15. Henbury Corfe Farm Woodland Mosaic	Central south side of study area on south side of Stour valley corridor	Medium High value and level of importance due to the varied landform, narrow lanes, and a mosaic of pasture, woods and hedgerows and despite some detracting urban influences.	<b>Medium High</b>
16. Upton Heath	Central south side of study area abutting Poole.	High value and level of importance due to its high ecological value and potential and the key views from its high points despite some urban fringe pressures. It is also a key accessible recreational area next to urban fringes.	<b>High</b>
17. Woodlands, Colehill & Hillbutts Farm Woodland Mosaic	North western fringes of study area abutting the chalk landscapes.	High medium value and level of importance as it is an area with a rural and undeveloped perception heavily influenced by woods, copses and hedgerows with an absence of major roads and a good right of way network. Part of setting of Edmondsham, Kinston Lacey and Burts Hill Conservation Areas.	<b>High Medium</b>
<b>Purbeck District</b>			
18. Crossways Winfrith Farmland Heath Mosaic	South western edge of study area abutting the chalk landscapes.	High medium value and level of importance due to the overall integrity of the area, the areas key ecological value and its	<b>High Medium</b>

	Substantial part of character area in the study area.	importance for informal recreation despite some negative urban influences.	
19. Mid Frome Valley Pasture	In south western part of area with a large proportion in the study area.	High medium value and level of importance due to the areas overall intactness throughout the valley with key ecological features and areas of cultural and historical importance. Urban pressures detract form condition in places. Part of setting of Moreton and Wool Conservation Area.	<b>Medium High</b>
20. Bovington Affpuddle Heath Forest Mosaic	Most of this character area is in the central south west part of the study area.	Medium high value and level of importance due to the areas ecological and cultural importance in particular its heathland habitats. Despite being adversely affected by military and mineral extraction activities there are still some large intact areas in a good condition.	<b>Medium High</b>
21. Upper Middle Piddle valley Pasture	Most of this narrow character area is in the central south west part of the study area.	High medium value and level of importance as it is a largely undeveloped and tranquil rural landscape which is unified by the river and its key features including some important ecological and cultural areas. This is despite being adversely affected by some detracting commercial activities.	<b>High Medium</b>
22. Puddletown Affpuddle Downs	Small area to north fringes of the western part of the study area.	High medium value and level of importance due to its open valley arable character with wide open views to the north and its narrow lanes and distinctive settlement and hedgerow patterns. Part of setting of Piddle Valley Conservation Area.	<b>High Medium</b>
23. South Bere Regis Downs	Small area on northern fringes of the western part of the study area.	High medium value and level of importance due to its intact condition and the continuity of the thick hedgerows which link to blocks of woodland. Black, Damers and Kite Hills are all important ecologically and historically and the whole of this part of the area is an important informal recreational resource.	<b>High Medium</b>
24. Lower Piddle Valley	Small part of study area located around Wareham.	High medium value and level of importance due to its open pastoral character, open views	<b>High Medium</b>



		and its key role in separating Wareham from Northport and as forming part of the historic valley setting for Wareham and its Conservation Area. It also has some ecological and cultural interests in the old water meadow systems.	
25. North Wareham Heath Forest Mosaic	Most of this character area is in the central south west part of the study area.	High medium value and level of importance due to its largely intact mosaic character and managed integrity, its importance for informal recreation and its ecological and cultural condition, in particular its heathland habitats.	<b>High Medium</b>
26. Sherford River Valley Pasture	Most of this character area is in the central part of the study area.	Medium low value and level of importance as it is a fragmented landscape with some urban fringe uses which detract from character despite the relative intactness of the river corridor and its associated features. Part of setting of Lytchett Minster Conservation Area.	<b>Medium Low</b>
27. Morden Lytchett Rolling Wooded Farmland	Two locations with the central part of the study area.	Medium high value and level of importance due to its largely intact landscape features such as hedgerows and woodland, the open views from elevated areas and the intimate character around Lytchett Matravers despite the urban fringe uses which detract from character. Part of setting of Morden Conservation Area.	<b>Medium High</b>
28. Upton Bay Marsh	Small central part of study area near north west Poole harbour fringes.	High value and level of importance due to its largely intact character, extensive open and undeveloped nature and the high ecological value of the marsh and mudflats.	<b>High</b>
29. Upton Heath	Most of this centrally located area is within the study area near the edges of Upton.	High value and level of importance despite the urban fringes pressures and development which has fragmented the area. It has some key views from elevated locations and it still has a high ecological and open space value.	<b>High</b>
30. Bloxworth Charlborough Downs	Small area of chalk downs in the central part of the study area.	Medium high value and level of importance due to its open rolling character with some dense woodland, its open views	<b>Medium High</b>

		from elevated locations, the well managed estate landscapes with key features such as Park Tower and other historic estate features. Part of the wider setting of Morden Conservation Area.	
<b>Christchurch Borough</b>			
31. Avon Valley	Narrow fringes along the far eastern edges of the study area.	High value and level of importance due to the areas informal character, general absence of buildings and other structures, its high ecological value and the relative remoteness of the northern parts of the valley. It also has a key role in providing a setting and context for the urban edges of Christchurch. Part of the wider setting of Burton and Winkton Conservation Areas	<b>High</b>
32. Avon Valley Terrace	Most of this character area is in the far east part of the study area.	Medium value and level of importance due to the areas accessibility as a recreational resource with a rural agricultural character, quiet lanes and footpaths. Part of setting of Burton Conservation Area.	<b>Medium</b>
33. St. Catherine's Hill – Hurn Forest Forest Heath Mosaic	A large part if this character area covers the eastern edges of the study area.	High medium value and level of importance due to its ecological and cultural heritage interest and its use as an accessible and well used recreational landscape resource which has key views and vantage points.	<b>High Medium</b>
34. Moors River	Most of this narrow character area is in the central part of the east study area.	High value and level of importance due to its small scale and highly contained flood plain with small meadows, contained by dense copses and woodland with a high ecological value.	<b>High</b>
35. Stour River Terrace	Most of this character area is in the south east part of the study area.	Medium low value and level of importance as it is compromised by urban fringe uses and the airport but does have some key features to retain such as the hedgerows, mature trees and scrub. It also has a role as a buffer to the valley pastures south of this area. Part of setting of Hurn Conservation Area.	<b>Medium Low</b>
36. Stour Valley Pasture	Most of this character area is in the south east part	High medium value and level of importance due to its key recreational and multi-functional	<b>High Medium</b>

	of the study area.	greenspace value on the urban fringe, lack of buildings and other structures with some key ecological and heritage features. Part of setting of Holdenhurst Conservation Area.	
37. Airport & East Parley Common	All of East parley common is in the central eastern part if the study area.	Medium low value and level of importance as the area is dominated by the airport land, buildings and operations and other commercial development nearby. It does have some semi natural areas of woodland and scrub and is of use for informal recreation.	<b>Medium Low</b>
<b>North Dorset District</b>			
38. Mid Stour Valley	Most of this character area is in the north western part of the study area.	Medium high value and level of importance as it is a largely open, flat and undeveloped pastoral area with distinctive river valley natural and historic features of interests and importance.	<b>Medium High</b>
39. Lower Winterbourne Valley Parts of area in EDDC for clarity.	Most of this narrow character area is in the north western part of the study area.	Medium high value and level of importance due to its narrowly defined corridor, distinctive ribbons of trees and its important historic features. Part of setting of the adjacent chalk downs and Almer, Winterbourne Zelston & Mapperton Conservation Areas.	<b>Medium High</b>
<b>West Dorset District</b>			
40. Crossways Gravel Plateau	Most of this narrow character area is in the south western part of the study area.	Medium Low value and level of importance due to the varied character of the area with some rural and interesting mosaic habitats of scrub, copse, heath and farmland but with some detracting urban uses, industry and lack of management. Part of setting of West Kington and West Stafford Conservation Areas.	<b>Medium Low</b>
41. Frome and Piddle Valley Pastures	Most of this narrow character area is in the western part of the study area.	Medium High value and level of importance as it is still a largely tranquil and rural character despite some urban fringe influences in the west. There are also important views across and along the valley with some key ecological and historic features across the area. Part of setting of West Stafford and Dorchester	<b>Medium High</b>

		Conservation Areas.	
42. Cerne & Piddle Valleys and Chalk Downland	Small fringes of the area fall into the western part of the study area.	High Medium value and level of importance due the open and expansive nature of the downland, the small scale pattern of pastoral fields, riparian features and some key ecological and historic/cultural value. Part of setting of Puddletown, Charminster and Stinsford Conservation Area.	<b>High Medium</b>
43. Dorchester & South Dorset Downs. NB: Two LCAs combined for purpose of this study.	Small fringes of the area fall into the western part of the study area.	High Medium value and level of importance due to its expansive rolling character with open views and skylines. It acts as a buffer to the adjacent AONB.	<b>High Medium</b>
44. Puddletown Forest and Clyffe House	Significant parts of the area fall into the north western part of the study area.	High Medium value and level of importance due to its extensive tree/plantation cover over undulating landform with a dense network of rural lanes and rights of way. It is also a popular and well used recreational area with important areas and features of ecological and historic value.	<b>High Medium</b>

**Sites designated for European or UK ecological significance**

<b>Site</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Value/level of Importance</b>	<b>Sensitivity level</b>
Dorset Heaths SAC	Throughout the area of search, excluding the far western tip, the upper reaches of the Stour valley towards Blandford and the area around Sturminster Marshall and Corfe Mullen.	High value/importance in particular due to international nature conservation interest & rarity.  Annex 1 primary habitats: Northern Atlantic wet heaths, and European dry heaths.	<b>High</b>
Dorset Heaths (Purbeck and Wareham) and Studland Dunes SAC	Two small areas to the north west (part of Morden Bog and Hyde Heath SSSI) and east (part of Holton and Sandford Heath SSSI) of Wareham,	High value/importance in particular due to international nature conservation interest & rarity. Ten Annex 1 primary habitats including: Northern Atlantic wet heaths, European dry heaths, and bog woodland.	<b>High</b>
River Avon SAC	The linear feature of the river, excluding	High value due to international nature conservation interest,	<b>High</b>

	any land outside the actual channel	BUT, very unlikely to be affected by the proposed activities so excluded from further consideration in this study.	
Dorset Heathlands SPA	Throughout the area of search, excluding the far western tip, the upper reaches of the Stour valley towards Blandford and the area around Sturminster Marshall and Corfe Mullen.	High value/importance in particular due to international nature conservation interest & rarity.  Annex 1 species: Dartford warbler, Nightjar, Woodlark, Hen Harrier, Merlin.	<b>High</b>
Poole Harbour SPA	One small area (upper reaches of Lytchett Bay) within the area of search	High value due to international nature conservation interest, BUT very unlikely to be affected by the proposed activities so excluded from further consideration in this study.	<b>High</b>
Avon Valley SPA	Flood meadows on either side of the lower reaches of the river Avon.	High value due to international nature conservation interest, BUT very unlikely to be affected by the proposed activities so excluded from further consideration in this study.	<b>High</b>
Dorset Heathlands Ramsar site	Throughout the area of search, excluding the far western tip, the upper reaches of the Stour valley towards Blandford and the area around Sturminster Marshall and Corfe Mullen.	High value/importance in particular due to international nature conservation interest & rarity. The Ramsar designation cites: good examples of Northern Atlantic wet heath and acid mire, largest example in Britain of Southern Atlantic wet heaths, 42 species of nationally scarce or rare plants or invertebrates, and encompasses one of the most biologically rich wetland areas of lowland Britain.	<b>High</b>
Poole Harbour Ramsar site	One small area (upper reaches of Lytchett Bay) within the area of search	High value due to international nature conservation interest, BUT very unlikely to be affected by the proposed activities so excluded from further consideration in this study.	<b>High</b>
Avon Valley Ramsar site	Flood meadows on either side of the lower reaches of the river Avon.	High value due to international nature conservation interest, BUT very unlikely to be affected by the proposed activities so excluded from further	<b>High</b>

		consideration in this study.	
Morden Bog NNR	North of Wareham, within the Wareham Forest area.	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity. One of the largest valley mire habitats in England, with the dry heath slopes in the north of the reserve containing some of the oldest heather plants to be found in Dorset. Supporting many rare plants and animals.	<b>High</b>
Holton Heath NNR	Between Wareham and Upton.	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity. Important areas of European dry heath habitat plus populations of scarce/rare plants and animals.	<b>High</b>
Holt Heath NNR	North East of Wimborne and the largest remaining fragment of heathland in this area	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity. Internationally important dry, wet heath and mire communities as well as many scarce/rare plants and animals	<b>High</b>
Holt and West Moors SSSI	Two heathland areas either side of West Moors, east Dorset	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity. The SSSI comprises one of the largest remaining areas of heathland in Dorset.	<b>High</b>
Horton Common SSSI	To the south of Verwood	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity. The site supports the range of heathland types from dry heath to wet heath and bog with plants and animals typical of these habitats several of which are uncommon or rare.	<b>High</b>
Slop Bog and Uddens Heath SSSI	Alongside the A31 between Wimborne and West Moors	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity. The site supports a mosaic of wet and dry heathland communities.	<b>High</b>
Verwood Heaths SSSI	Fragments of heathland around	High value/importance in particular due to national nature	<b>High</b>

	Verwood	conservation interest & rarity. Nationally important wet and dry heathland communities.	
Cranborne Common SSSI	Site situated in the northernmost tip of the area of search, east of Cranborne	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity. A complex of heathland and acidic grassland, this site comprises the most northerly heathland communities on the Tertiary deposits of Dorset. There is considerable variety of vegetation with dry and wet heath, bog and grassland, subject to differing management and with great species-richness, including many plants and animals which are local and rare.	<b>High</b>
Ebblake Bog SSSI	Small site, south east of Verwood	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity. Ebblake Bog is an acid mire in the upper valley of the Moors River. The habitat is now internationally scarce and Ebblake Bog represents one of the few remaining undamaged mires.	<b>High</b>
Hurn Common SSSI	Heathland site north of Bournemouth Airport	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest and rarity. Nationally important wet and dry heathland communities.	<b>High</b>
Lions Hill SSSI	Heathland fragment between the Moors River and Ashley Heath.	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity. Varied plant communities, which include dry and wet heath, bog, pine and birch woodland have a rich associated fauna, including species of restricted distribution.	<b>High</b>
St Leonards and St Ives SSSI	Large area of heathland north of Bournemouth Airport, mostly encompassed within Avon Heath Country Park	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity. The St. Leonards and St. Ives Heaths are notified for acidic grassland, dry and wet heath, and mire vegetation types. The site is also notified for nationally scarce plants; the assemblage of breeding birds of lowland heath habitat and significant	<b>High</b>

		<p>breeding populations of the rare Dartford warbler, nightjar and . It contributes as part of the Dorset heathlands towards supporting significant wintering populations of hen harrier and merlin; important populations of smooth snake and sand lizard and nationally rare and scarce invertebrates.</p>	
Ferndown Common SSSI	West of Ferndown	<p>High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest &amp; rarity.</p> <p>A significant block of heathland containing significant biological interest, including many of the very rare animals confined to lowland heaths.</p>	<b>High</b>
Parley Common SSSI	East of Ferndown	<p>High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest &amp; rarity.</p> <p>Many of the characteristic and rare species associated with Dorset Heathlands are recorded on this site, whilst the rich invertebrate fauna reveals interesting affinities with the heaths of the New Forest.</p>	<b>High</b>
Moors River System SSSI	The Moors River runs from Cranborne in the north, to where it joins the Stour river at Hurn.	<p>High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest &amp; rarity.</p> <p>Adjacent to several heathland SSSI's and supporting a very diverse range of habitats, including fen woodland and meadows where the stream passes through the reading beds and London clays. The river provides an important link between habitat types linked to the underlying geology.</p>	<b>High</b>
Town Common SSSI	East of Hurn	<p>High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest &amp; rarity.</p> <p>An extensive area of heathland supporting diverse heathland habitat and associated protected species of reptile, bird, invertebrate and plants.</p>	<b>High</b>
Avon Valley, Bickton – Christchurch SSSI	The Avon river channel from Bickton in the north to	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity.	<b>High</b>



	Christchurch at Poole Harbour	However, this is a riparian SSSI and highly unlikely to be affected by the proposed activities. For this reason it is excluded from further consideration in this study.	
Avon River System SSSI	The Avon river and associated flood meadows from Bicton in the north to Christchurch at Poole Harbour	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity. However, this is a riparian SSSI and unlikely to be affected by the proposed activities. For this reason it is excluded from further consideration in this study.	<b>High</b>
Poole Harbour SSSI	A small area in the upper reaches of Lytchett Bay	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity. However, this area is highly unlikely to be affected by the proposed activities and for this reason is excluded from further consideration in this study.	<b>High</b>
Warmwell Heath SSSI	Just north of the village of Warmwell.	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity. Warmwell Heath represents one of the most westerly blocks of Dorset heathland and has a long history of isolation which is of interest for the study of habitat fragmentation and the resulting faunal and floral richness. The area supports a range of heathland habitats from dry heath to bog.	<b>High</b>
Stokeford Heaths SSSI	An mosaic of heathland areas along the Puddletown Road from Wareham	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity. Stokeford Heaths consists of several heathland fragments occupying a ridge of high ground (up to 60 metres) between the rivers Piddle and Frome. The ridge is formed from sands and clays of the Bagshot Beds overlain with plateau gravels. The original heathland area has been reduced in extent and fragmented by the quarrying of these deposits. The site is important for its heath and mire plant communities and for the many	<b>High</b>

		rare and scarce species associated with the heath and mire.	
Winfrith Heath SSSI	North of Winfrith Newburgh.	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity. A substantial and varied tract of heathland near the western limit of the Dorset Heaths natural area.	<b>High</b>
Worgret Heath SSSI	A small area of heathland north of the A352 between Wool and Wareham.	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity. A small area of heathland important for the rare and protected sand lizard.	<b>High</b>
River Frome SSSI	A riparian SSSI running from Dorchester in the west to Poole Harbour in the east.	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity. However, this area is highly unlikely to be affected by the proposed activities and for this reason is excluded from further consideration in this study	<b>High</b>
Bere Stream SSSI	A small stretch of the Bere stream, south of Bere Regis.	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity. A length of chalk stream with marshland and woodland. Although much of the SSSI is riparian, significant areas of woodland and neutral grassland are also included within the SSSI boundary and for this reason the site is given a high sensitivity level	<b>High</b>
East Coppice SSSI	A small SSSI north of the A35, east of Bere Regis.	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity. East Coppice is a rare example of ancient woodland which has been continuously managed as coppice to the present day. The ground flora and fauna are very rich.	<b>High</b>
Oakers Bog SSSI	Part of the heathland/woodland complex south of Briatspuddle	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity. A relatively large and undamaged valley mire near the western extremity of the sands and gravels of the Poole basin, with a rich assemblage of	<b>High</b>

		heathland plants and animals.	
Oakers Wood SSSI	West of Oakers Bog SSSI	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity. An acid oak woodland with many elements typical of ancient woodland and a rich fauna.	<b>High</b>
Cull Peppers Dish SSSI	North of Oakers Wood and Bog SSSI's	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity. A site of geological and nature conservation interest, containing small areas of heathland with associated flora and fauna.	<b>High</b>
Black Hill Heath SSSI	South of Bere Regis	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity. A varied site supporting dry heath grading through wet heath to bog and fringing woodland. A rich flora and fauna with many protected species.	<b>High</b>
Turners Puddle Heath SSSI	A mosaic of heathland sites between Turners Puddle in the north and Bovington Camp to the south.	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity. One of the largest continuous heathland tracts remaining in Dorset, supporting many of the nationally rare typical Dorset heathland species.	<b>High</b>
Wareham Meadows SSSI	Meadows to the east of Wareham, between the town and Poole Harbour.	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity. Grazing meadows strongly affected by ground water, of great value to overwintering birds and breeding birds. The site also contains floristically rich ditches and a heathland slope.	<b>High</b>
Wareham Common SSSI	Two small areas west of Wareham.	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity. An area of grazing marsh, lying in the flood plain of the river Piddle, and containing nationally uncommon grassland communities.	<b>High</b>
Holton and Sandford Heaths SSSI	Heathland predominantly to the south of the A351 between	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity.	<b>High</b>

	Wareham and Upton	The site is important for a number of plant communities and their associated species; for heathland mire plant communities; for dry acid grasslands; for river valley and coastal wetlands as well as for a number of rare or scarce species associated with all of these habitats.	
Morden Bog and Hyde Heath SSSI	A large area of heathland within the Wareham Forest area.	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity.  A 6km long valley mire comprising of Hyde Bog and Morden Bog, of international and national importance. Historic peat cutting has resulted in a range of heathland habitat types which support an outstanding invertebrate fauna as well as being of international importance for reptiles and birds.	<b>High</b>
Upton Heath SSSI	A heathland area between Corfe Mullen and Upton	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity.  The site supports many of the rare plants and animals typically supported by heathland habitat. Much of the heathland of this site is humid or wet, and there is a valley bog running through the site..	<b>High</b>
Corfe Mullen Pastures SSSI	Immediately to the west of Corfe Mullen	High value/importance in particular due to national nature conservation interest & rarity.  Nationally scarce acid grassland and mire communities, of particular significance where these areas grade into one another.	<b>High</b>
Sites of Nature Conservation Interest, Ancient Woodland and other habitats	Widespread throughout the area of search.	Medium value/importance in particular due to county nature conservation interest.  These sites are not only of importance for their intrinsic wildlife value, but also for the value they have as 'stepping stones' for wildlife within the landscape.	<b>Medium</b>

<b>European protected species, NERC (2006) Sect 41 species and BAP species.</b>			
European protected, NERC (2006) Sect 41 and Biodiversity Action Plan species	Populations of protected and important species are widespread throughout the area.	High value/importance for nature conservation where these species occur.  Many species which are both integral to and characteristic of the heathlands in this area of Dorset are afforded the same level of protection as their habitat. However, as this is a site based, geographic study, these species will be considered as a group, instead of listing them individually.	<b>High</b>

**\* Value defined as High, High/medium, Medium/ High, Medium, Medium/ Low or Low based on these criteria:**

- **Landscape quality:** the intactness of the landscape and the condition of features and elements;
- **Scenic quality:** the term that is used to describe landscapes which appeal primarily to the visual senses;
- **Rarity:** the presence of rare features and elements in the landscape, or the presence of a rare landscape character type;
- **Representativeness:** whether the landscape contains a particular character, and/or features and elements, which is felt by stakeholders to be worthy of representing;
- **Ecological significance:** the significance of a habitat in relation to its national and international distribution, as defined by UK and European site designations.
- **Conservation interests:** the presence of features of particular species/wildlife, earth science or archaeological, historical and cultural interest can add to the value of a landscape as well as having value in their own right;
- **Wildness:** the presence of wild/remote (or relatively wild/remote) character in the landscape which makes a particular contribution to sense of place;
- **Associations** with particular people, artists, writers, or other media, or events in history.
- **Recreational value:** for walking, riding, cycling.

**\*\* Sensitivity defined as High, High/medium, Medium/ High, Medium, Medium/ Low or Low based on these criteria:**

Contribution to landscape character, quality/robustness & condition, value, replicability of resource, contribution to national resource of a protected habitat/species (e.g. heathland/nightjar).

## **2.5 Landscape and Ecological resource sensitivity summary**

Of the 92 resources assessed, 53 are rated as highly sensitive, 13 are rated as high/medium sensitivity, 12 are rated as medium/high sensitivity, 4 are rated as medium sensitivity and 10 are rated as medium/low sensitivity.

It can be concluded that a number of landscape resources are likely to be affected by the proposals which overall have a high sensitivity to change.

In addition all of the ecological resources have a high sensitivity to the proposed activity, due to the intrinsic value and national and European significance of the habitat type, as well as the presence of

protected species. The only exception to this is County wildlife sites (SNCI's) which are rated as medium sensitivity.

Table 1 demonstrates the highly sensitive landscape and ecological features within the area of search, and the need for thorough screening at every stage in the process to ensure that the ecological status of our protected sites is not affected by the proposed activities.

## **2.6 Visual resources and sensitivity**

The landscape was scoped at a broad desk study level and on site to establish who can see the project area and from where. The degree to which people are sensitive to and concerned about landscape change depends on several factors, as advised in the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment':

- The visibility of the landscape (location & context of viewpoints)
- The number of people who see the landscape (their expectations, occupation, activity)
- The nature of the viewing experience (importance of the view, popularity & facilities for its enjoyment, period viewed & frequency of use/sequential)

### **2.6.1 The visibility of the landscape.**

The visibility of a landscape depends on the topography, the presence of elements that block or screen views and the amount of the landscape accessible to potential viewers.

There are many other viewpoints inside and outside the study area which provide attractive scenic and local views and the potential alteration of all these views is not possible to assess in this study. Those assessed provide guidance as to the overall sensitivity of the area with many being representative of views elsewhere within the vicinity and landscape character area of the photo location.

### **2.6.2 The number of people who see the landscape.**

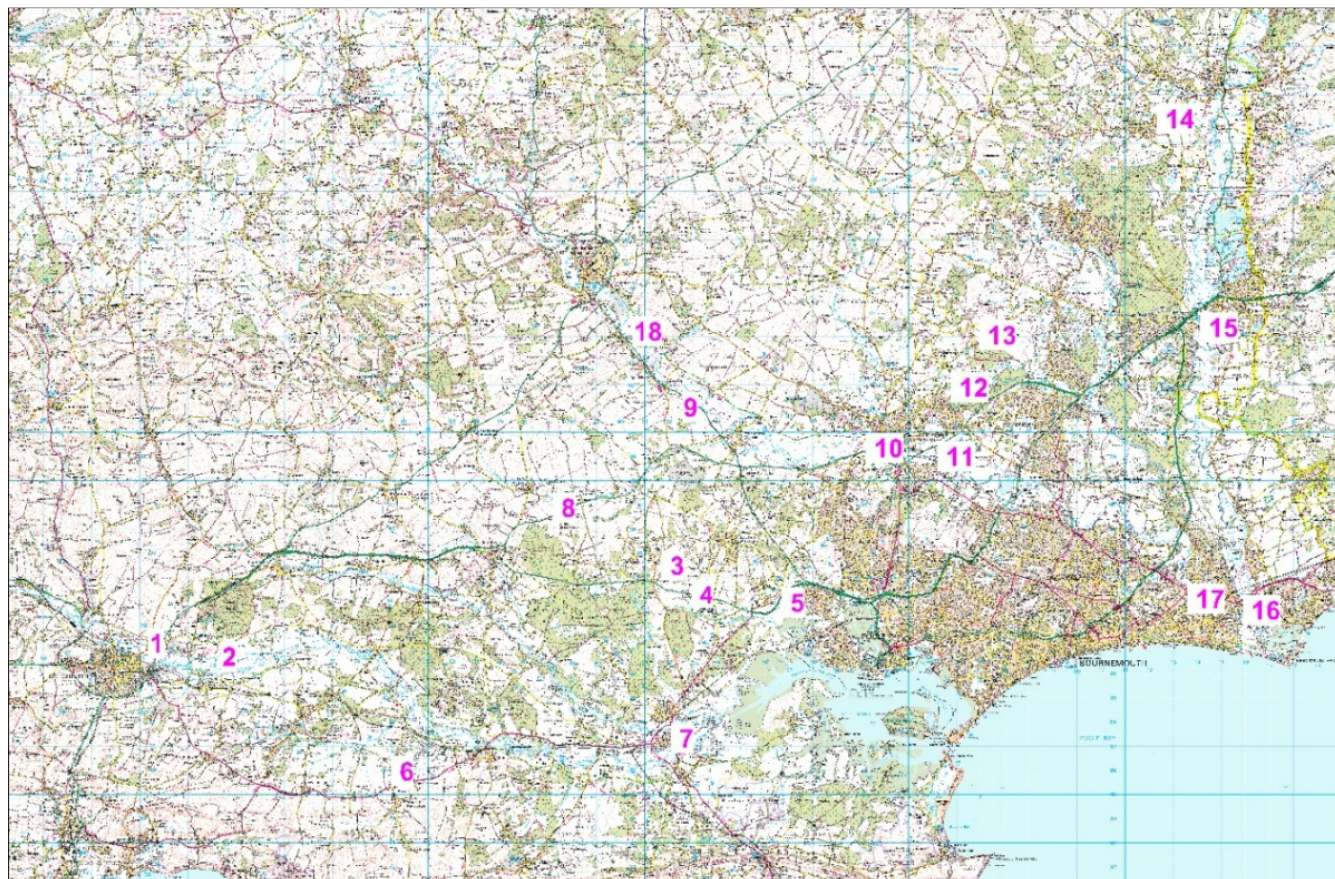
The area includes locations which are popular tourist recreational destinations, as well as being well used by locals for a range of recreational activities, and there are therefore large numbers of people who regularly see and use the area.

### **2.6.3 The nature of the viewing experience.**

Much of this area is a key part of Dorset's tourism resource used for informal recreational use. Many people who live in the area also enjoy the views of countryside and the many accessible opportunities for walking, cycling, biking or horse riding. This means that people experience the landscape all year round and enjoy its changing moods. This is also likely to mean that people have an expectation of seeing much but not all of the landscape 'as it is' and are not likely to react favourably to dramatic changes taking place.

Many people visit the area specifically to enjoy the scenery and the panoramic views. Residents and visitors alike gain significant benefit from the quality of the landscape as they enjoy their visit, go about their daily lives or pursue recreation at weekends.

**Figure 10 - Photo locations**



**Table 2. Summarises the sensitivity of each Viewpoint**

Photo/ Viewpoint Number	Location	Description				Overall viewpoint sensitivity**
1	Layby on C road off Stinsford roundabout near Dorchester.	Looking west over the town, the Frome Valley and the downs to the north. Depicts its importance to the setting of Dorchester and is a representative typical open view of the valley seen by all users.	H	H	M	High
2	View towards Puddletown Forest from C road to south.	Typical representative view along this road looking east towards the rolling tree covered landscape of the forest.	M	H	H	High
3	Dolmans Hill from C road to east of East Morden	Looking north east across the typical open countryside sloping up towards the edges of Lytchett Matravers.	M	M	M	Medium
4	From C	Looking north east towards the	M	M	M	Medium

Photo/ Viewpoint Number	Location	Description				Overall viewpoint sensitivity**
	road/bridl eway junction to south of Lytchett Matravers .	settlement edges across typical open gently sloping countryside.				
5	From B3067 bridge over A35.	Looking south west with Lytchett Minster to the right of the view. Open estate type landscape provides rural setting for the village.	H	M	M	Medium
6	From C road on Winfrith Heath	Looking south west over the heath showing open expansive views typical and representative for all users of the heath.	H	H	M	High
7	B3075 over Piddle flood meadows north of Wareham	Looking west from old bridge across open flood meadows. Depicts its importance to the setting of Wareham and is a representative typical open view of the valley seen by all users.	H	H	M	High
8	From C road in Winterbor ne Muston	Looking north over undeveloped valley pasture typical of the open nature of the valley.	H	H	M	High
9	From A350 south of Spetisbur y.	Looking north over undeveloped valley pasture typical of the wide and open nature of the Stour valley floor and representative of other views within the valley setting.	H	H	M	High
10	From old Wimborne road bridge (Julian's Bridge) on the B3078	Looking north west over valley pasture typical of the wide and open nature of the Stour valley floor. It depicts the importance to the setting of the adjacent conservation areas and the town.	H	H	M	High
11	From A31 across Stour Valley south of Wimborne .	Looking south towards Canford School over undeveloped valley pasture typical of the wide and open nature of the Stour valley floor. It depicts the importance of the setting of the historic school in the river valley.	M	H	M	Medium
12	On C road south of Broomhill.	Looking north over wooded pasture mosaic typical of the area and representative of other views	H	H	M	Medium



Photo/ Viewpoint Number	Location	Description				Overall viewpoint sensitivity**
		within the landscape setting.				
13	On C road across Holt Heath.	Looking south west over the heath showing open expansive views typical and representative for all users of the heath.	H	H	M	High
14	On B3078 east of Alderholt	Looking south east over rolling rural countryside typical and representative of the wider character area.	H	H	M	High
15	From Castlemain Trailway east of the A31 at Ashley.	Looking south across the Avon Valley depicting a representative and typical open undeveloped view of the valley seen by all users.	H	H	M	High
16	A35 bridge over Avon at Purewell, Christchurch	Looking north from bridge across wide open valley floor. Depicts its importance to the setting of town as open space at key entrance point.	H	H	M	High
17	Stour Valley Way from A35 at Iford Bridge, Christchurch	Looking north west up the Stour Valley from busy road/footpath route showing the importance of the greenspace to the setting of the urban area.	M	H	M	High
18	C road at Langford Long, a NCN route	Looking north west up the Stour Valley from quiet rural lane across undeveloped valley pasture typical of the wide nature of the Stour valley floor. Depicts its importance to the setting of adjacent settlements and is a representative typical open view of the valley seen by all users.	H	H	M	High

**Visibility issues defined as high, medium/high, medium or low based on these criteria:**

A\*= Landscape visibility (location, context of viewpoints & the amount of the landscape accessible to viewers)

B\*= Number of people seeing the landscape (their expectations, occupation, activity)

C\*= Nature of viewing experience (importance of the view, period viewed & frequency of use/sequential)

**\*\* Overall viewpoint sensitivity defined as High/Medium/Low based on these criteria:**

**High:**

- Users of outdoor recreational facilities whose attention is focused on the landscape.
- Communities where the proposal results in changes in the setting or valued views enjoyed by the community.
- Occupiers of residential properties with views affected by the proposal.

**Medium:**

- People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation whose attention maybe focused away from the landscape.
- People traveling through or past the proposal in cars, or other transport routes.

**Low:**

- People at their place of work, or engaged in similar activities, whose attention maybe focused away from the change in view.

**2.6.4 Visual resource sensitivity summary**

The results of this analysis show a limited range of sensitivities, from high to medium with the majority being in the high category. Of the 18 viewpoints assessed 13 were High and 5 Medium.

The overall picture presented by the selection of views and in the desktop and on site assessment, is of a visible area seen by many people and communities over reasonably long periods of time actively involved in recreation and with a particular interest in the landscape and valued views as a whole. The overall conclusion by assessing these views, many of which are representative, is that the landscape can be regarded as having an overall high visual sensitivity with pockets that are less sensitive. This means that generally good quality site planning, design and mitigation is important and that the extent and rate of landscape change needs to be controlled and managed to keep impacts to a minimum.

### 3. Significance of Impacts

The impacts on each of the landscape and visual and ecological resources are assessed using a set of criteria based on the scale and nature of the impact on each resource balanced by the level of sensitivity calculated at the baseline stage.

#### 3.1 Significance criteria

The potential significance of landscape and visual and ecological impacts is determined by a combination of the magnitude of the potential impact and the sensitivity of the receptor to change. These two variables can be combined as illustrated in Table 3 below.

**Table 3 - combination of the magnitude of the potential impact and the sensitivity of the receptor to change**

Sensitivity of receptor to change	Magnitude of change				Significance of effect
	Negligible	Moderate	Moderate/major	Major	
Very high	Negligible	Moderate	Moderate/major	Major	
High	Negligible	Minor/moderate	Moderate	Moderate/major	
Medium	Negligible	Minor	Minor/Moderate	Moderate	
Low	Negligible	Negligible	Minor	Minor/Moderate	

#### 3.2 Impact on landscape and ecological resources.

As indicated above, this depends on a combination of direct and indirect effects that the proposal will have on the resource. Proposals within the boundaries of the landscape and ecological resources are likely to be greater. However, impacts can be positive, neutral or negative and how this is interpreted involves professional judgement and, since it is largely qualitative in nature is not entirely susceptible to conclusions solely based on the application of a set of standardised measures. Positive impacts are those where the landscape resource is improved or strengthened, negative impacts where they are changed for the worse and neutral where the changes may have no real effect on quality either way.

Table 4 below presents the assessment of impacts of the proposal on each landscape and ecological resource identified in the baseline study.

- Landscape Character Areas.
- European and UK designated sites.
- European protected NERC Act Sect 41 species and Biodiversity Action Plan species.
- Ancient woodland and other important habitats.

**Table 4 - impacts of the proposal on each landscape and ecological resource identified in the baseline study.**

Landscape resource	Sensitivity level (from table 1)	Nature of effect NB: Includes suggested mitigation measures*	Level of significance of impact**
<b>East Dorset District</b>			
<b>Landscape Character Areas</b>			
1. Ringwood Hurn Heath Forest Mosaic	<b>Medium High</b>	Development has the potential to adversely impact directly on the recreational value of the area and potentially on its ecological value.  Also of concern are the potential	<b>Moderate adverse</b>

Landscape resource	Sensitivity level (from table 1)	Nature of effect NB: Includes suggested mitigation measures*	Level of significance of impact**
		<p>negative impacts directly and indirectly on the key country park sites.</p> <p>Potential mitigation: Use and manage the screening value of forest cover only where development would have minimal impact.</p>	
2. Lower Avon Valley Pastures	<b>High Medium</b>	<p>Development has the potential to adversely impact directly on the areas intactness, open nature and views and on its high ecological value.</p> <p>Potential mitigation: all designated nature conservation sites and their settings, locations within the settings of Conservation Areas and those within sight and influence of rights of way, including the Avon Valley Way are all to be avoided.</p>	<b>Moderate adverse</b>
3. Horton Common Three Legged Cross Heath/Farmland Mosaic	<b>Medium Low</b>	<p>Development has the potential to further erode the fragmented and marginal nature of the area and its ecological interests.</p> <p>Potential mitigation: avoid all designated nature conservation sites and their settings and Open Access areas.</p>	<b>Moderate /Low adverse</b>
4. Holton Heath	<b>High</b>	<p>Development has the potential to significantly adversely impact directly on the areas high ecological value as well as its open views and exposed character.</p> <p>Potential mitigation: all designated nature conservation sites and their settings and those within sight and influence of rights of way, including the Avon Valley Way and Open Access land are all to be avoided.</p>	<b>Severe /Moderate adverse</b>
5. West Moors Heath Forest Mosaic	<b>Medium</b>	<p>Development has the potential to further erode the fragmented and urban fringe nature of the area and its recreational and ecological interests.</p> <p>Potential mitigation: all designated nature conservation sites and their settings and locations within the setting of recreational sites to be avoided. Use and manage the</p>	<b>Moderate /Low adverse</b>

<b>Landscape resource</b>	<b>Sensitivity level</b> (from table 1)	<b>Nature of effect</b> NB: Includes suggested mitigation measures*	<b>Level of significance of impact**</b>
		screening value of forest cover.	
6. Ferndown Stapehill Heath Forest Mosaic	<b>Medium Low</b>	Development has the potential to further erode the fragmented and urban fringe nature of the area and its recreational and ecological interests.  Potential mitigation: all designated nature conservation sites and their settings and locations within the setting of well used recreational areas to be avoided. Use and manage the screening value of forest cover.	<b>Moderate /Low adverse</b>
7. West Parley Heath	<b>Medium High</b>	Development has the potential to adversely impact directly on the areas high ecological value as well as its open views and recreational value.  Potential mitigation: all designated nature conservation sites and their settings and those within the setting of rights of way to be avoided.	<b>Severe /Moderate adverse</b>
8. Moors River	<b>Medium High</b>	Development has the potential to adversely impact directly on the areas high ecological value as well as its overall integrity and unity.  Potential mitigation: all designated nature conservation sites and their settings to be avoided to create suitable buffer.	<b>Severe /Moderate adverse</b>
9. Dewlands-Rushmoor River Terrace	<b>Medium Low</b>	Development has the potential to further erode the urban fringe nature of the area and its and ecological interests.  Potential mitigation: avoid the setting and immediate corridors of the Moors and Crane Rivers.	<b>Moderate /Low adverse</b>
10. Parley River Terrace	<b>Medium Low</b>	Development has the potential to further erode the urban fringe nature of the area and its recreational and ecological interests.  Potential mitigation: locations within the setting of the Stour Valley Way, within the setting of Conservation Areas, other well used recreational areas and a buffer along the Stour River	<b>Moderate /Low adverse</b>

<b>Landscape resource</b>	<b>Sensitivity level</b> (from table 1)	<b>Nature of effect</b> NB: Includes suggested mitigation measures*	<b>Level of significance of impact**</b>
		corridor to be avoided.	
11. Lower Stour Valley Pastures	<b>Medium High</b>	Development has the potential to adversely impact directly on the open integrated character, the long views and on its historic, ecological and recreational value.  Potential mitigation: all designated nature conservation sites, Conservation Areas, historic features and sensitive visual edges (like the NCN route) and their settings to be avoided to create suitable buffers.	<b>Severe /Moderate adverse</b>
12. Dudsbury Ridge Heath Farmland Mosaic	<b>Medium</b>	Development has the potential to further erode the urban fringe nature of the area and its historic and recreational interests as well as impact on the open views.  Potential mitigation: locations within the setting of the Stour Valley Way and other well used recreational areas to be avoided.	<b>Moderate /Low adverse</b>
13. Hampreston River Terrace	<b>Medium Low</b>	Development has the potential to further erode the urban fringe nature of the area and its historic environment and ecological interests.  Potential mitigation: all designated nature conservation sites, areas within the setting of the Conservation Area and a buffer along the area adjacent to existing gravel workings to be avoided.	<b>Moderate /Low adverse</b>
14. Sturminster Marshall River Terrace.  Includes part of the river Terrace running east in to Poole.	<b>Medium Low</b>	Development has the potential to further erode the urban rural fringe nature of the area, the setting and views from of the open river corridor to the north and the setting of Wareham Forest Way.  Potential mitigation: avoid a buffer zone along the A31 corridor to protect the urban edge and the setting of the river valley.	<b>Moderate /Low adverse</b>

<b>Landscape resource</b>	<b>Sensitivity level</b> (from table 1)	<b>Nature of effect</b> NB: Includes suggested mitigation measures*	<b>Level of significance of impact**</b>
15. Henbury Corfe Farm Woodland Mosaic	<b>Medium High</b>	<p>Development has the potential to adversely impact directly on the mosaic landscape of varied landform, narrow lanes, woods, pastures and some sensitive visual edges along the urban fringes.</p> <p>Potential mitigation: Conservation Areas and sensitive visual edges along the edges of the conurbation and their settings to be avoided to create suitable buffers. Use landform and existing woodland cover to help integrate and screen future development.</p>	<b>Moderate/Low adverse</b>
16. Upton Heath	<b>High</b>	<p>Development has the potential to significantly adversely impact directly on the areas high ecological value as well as its open views and accessible recreational value.</p> <p>Potential mitigation: all designated nature conservation sites and their settings and those within sight and influence of rights of way are all to be avoided.</p>	<b>Severe /Moderate adverse</b>
17. Woodlands, Colehill & Hillbutts Farm Woodland Mosaic	<b>High Medium</b>	<p>Development has the potential to adversely impact directly on the areas rural and undeveloped perception, its accessible network of rights of way and its woods, copses and hedgerows.</p> <p>Potential mitigation: all designated nature conservation sites and their settings, those within sight and influence of rights of way, Conservation Areas and settings and rural and undeveloped locations to be avoided.</p>	<b>Severe /Moderate adverse</b>
<b>Purbeck District</b>			
18. Crossways Winfrith Farmland Heath Mosaic	<b>High Medium</b>	<p>Development has the potential to adversely impact directly on the overall integrity of the area, its key areas of ecological value and its recreational value.</p> <p>Potential mitigation: areas within the setting of Conservation Areas, all designated nature conservation sites and their settings, areas within sight and influence of rights of way are all to be avoided. Avoid the cumulative</p>	<b>Moderate adverse</b>

Landscape resource	Sensitivity level (from table 1)	Nature of effect NB: Includes suggested mitigation measures*	Level of significance of impact**
		adverse impacts of development adjacent to existing and unrestored works.	
19. Mid Frome Valley Pasture	<b>Medium High</b>	<p>Development has the potential to adversely impact directly on the overall intactness of the area, and its key ecological, cultural and historic features and value despite the detracting urban fringe pressures.</p> <p>Potential mitigation: areas within the setting of the Conservation Areas, all designated nature conservation sites and their settings, areas within sight and influence of rights of way/quiet rural lanes are all to be avoided. Avoid the cumulative adverse impacts of development adjacent to existing and unrestored works.</p>	<b>Moderate adverse</b>
20. Bovington Affpuddle Heath Forest Mosaic	<b>Medium High</b>	<p>Development has the potential to adversely impact directly on the overall intactness of the area, and its key ecological and cultural importance despite the detracting existing military and extractive uses.</p> <p>Potential mitigation: areas within the setting of the Conservation Areas, all designated nature conservation sites and their settings and locations within the setting of well used recreational areas, including Open Access areas to be avoided. Use and manage the screening value of forest cover and avoid the cumulative adverse impacts of development adjacent to existing and unrestored works.</p>	<b>Moderate/Low adverse</b>
21. Upper Middle Piddle Valley Pasture	<b>High Medium</b>	<p>Development has the potential to adversely impact directly on the unified, largely undeveloped and tranquil character and its ecological and cultural significant areas.</p> <p>Potential mitigation: areas within the setting of the Conservation Areas, all designated nature conservation sites and their settings and locations within the setting of well used recreational routes to be avoided. Use and</p>	<b>Severe /Moderate adverse</b>



<b>Landscape resource</b>	<b>Sensitivity level</b> (from table 1)	<b>Nature of effect</b> NB: Includes suggested mitigation measures*	<b>Level of significance of impact**</b>
		manage the screening value of forest cover and avoid the cumulative adverse impacts of development adjacent to existing and unrestored works.	
22. Puddletown Affpuddle Downs	<b>High Medium</b>	Development has the potential to adversely impact directly on the open valley side character, open views, distinctive settlement and hedgerow pattern and areas of historic interest.  Potential mitigation: areas within the setting of the Conservation Areas, all designated nature conservation sites and their settings and locations within the setting of well used recreational routes/lanes to be avoided.	<b>Severe/Moderate adverse</b>
23. South Bere Regis Downs	<b>High Medium</b>	Development has the potential to adversely impact directly on the intact condition, continuity of landscape features and on the key hill landmark features which have high ecological and recreational value.  Potential mitigation: areas within the setting of the Conservation Areas, all designated nature conservation sites and their settings and locations within the setting of well used and visually prominent recreational routes/lanes to be avoided.	<b>Severe adverse</b>
24. Lower Piddle Valley	<b>High Medium</b>	Development has the potential to adversely impact directly on the open pastoral character, open views and on its buffering and historic setting function for Wareham. It would also impact negatively on its ecological and cultural significance.  Potential mitigation: areas within the setting of the Conservation Areas, all designated nature conservation sites and their settings and locations within the setting of recreational routes to be avoided.	<b>Severe adverse</b>
25. North Wareham Heath Forest Mosaic	<b>High Medium</b>	Development has the potential to adversely impact directly on the largely intact mosaic character, its importance for recreation and its	<b>Moderate/Low adverse</b>

<b>Landscape resource</b>	<b>Sensitivity level</b> (from table 1)	<b>Nature of effect</b> NB: Includes suggested mitigation measures*	<b>Level of significance of impact**</b>
		<p>ecological and cultural importance despite the detracting existing extractive uses.</p> <p>Potential mitigation: all designated nature conservation sites and their settings and locations within the setting of recreational routes to be avoided. Use and manage the screening value of forest cover and avoid the cumulative adverse impacts of development adjacent to existing and unrestored works.</p>	
26. Sherford River Valley Pasture	<b>Medium Low</b>	<p>Development has the potential to further erode the fragmented urban fringe nature of the area and the intactness of its historic environment and river corridor.</p> <p>Potential mitigation: areas within the setting of the Conservation Area, the river corridor and adjacent harbour side fringes to be avoided.</p>	<b>Moderate /Low adverse</b>
27. Morden Lytchett Rolling Wooded Farmland	<b>Medium High</b>	<p>Development has the potential to adversely impact directly on intact landscape features such as hedgerows and woodland, the open views from elevated areas and the intimate character around Lytchett Matravers.</p> <p>Potential mitigation: areas within the setting of the Conservation Area and the southern fringes of Lytchett Matravers to be avoided.</p>	<b>Severe /Moderate adverse</b>
28. Upton Bay Marsh	<b>High</b>	<p>Development has the potential to significantly adversely impact directly on the largely intact character, extensive open and undeveloped nature and the high ecological value of the marsh and mudflats.</p> <p>Potential mitigation: all designated nature conservation sites and their settings and those within the mudflats/marshland areas are all to be avoided.</p>	<b>Severe adverse</b>
29. Upton Heath	<b>High</b>	<p>Development has the potential to significantly adversely impact directly on the areas high ecological value as well as its key views and accessible recreational value.</p>	<b>Severe /Moderate adverse</b>

<b>Landscape resource</b>	<b>Sensitivity level</b> (from table 1)	<b>Nature of effect</b> NB: Includes suggested mitigation measures*	<b>Level of significance of impact**</b>
		Potential mitigation: all designated nature conservation sites and their settings and those within sight and influence of rights of way are all to be avoided.	
30. Bloxworth Charborough Downs	<b>Medium High</b>	Development has the potential to adversely impact directly on the areas rolling rural intact character, wooded areas, open views and well managed estate landscape.  Potential mitigation: areas within the setting of the Charborough Park and its estate landscape to be avoided.	<b>Severe /Moderate adverse</b>
<b>Christchurch Borough</b>			
31. Avon Valley	<b>High</b>	Development has the potential to significantly adversely impact directly on the undeveloped and rural character, its value as a setting for Christchurch and Burton, open access land and its high ecological value.  Potential mitigation: all designated nature conservation sites and areas within the setting of Conservation Areas.	<b>Severe adverse</b>
32. Avon Valley Terrace	<b>Medium</b>	Development has the potential to erode the rural characteristics, the recreational amenity of its quiet hedge lined lanes and on its value as a setting for Burton and Winkton Conservation Areas.  Potential mitigation: all areas within the setting of Conservation Areas to be avoided and set any development within the existing field pattern.	<b>Moderate /Low adverse</b>
33. St. Catherine's Hill – Hurn Forest - Forest Heath Mosaic	<b>High Medium</b>	Development has the potential to adversely impact directly on the areas high ecological and cultural heritage, its open access, importance for recreation and its key views and vantage points.  Potential mitigation: all designated nature conservation sites and their settings, locations within the setting of recreational routes to be avoided. Use and manage the screening value of forest cover.	<b>Moderate adverse</b>
34. Moors River	<b>High</b>	Development has the potential to adversely impact directly on the	<b>Severe adverse</b>

<b>Landscape resource</b>	<b>Sensitivity level</b> (from table 1)	<b>Nature of effect</b> NB: Includes suggested mitigation measures*	<b>Level of significance of impact**</b>
		<p>areas compact dense wooded nature and its high ecological value.</p> <p>Potential mitigation: all designated nature conservation sites and their settings to be avoided.</p>	
35. Stour River Terrace	<b>Medium Low</b>	<p>Development has the potential to further erode the urban fringe nature of the area and its key tree and hedgerow features and patterns and its role as a buffer to the River Stour.</p> <p>Potential mitigation: locations within the setting of the Stour Valley Way, within the setting of Hurn Conservation Area and a buffer along the Stour River corridor to be avoided.</p>	<b>Moderate /Low adverse</b>
36. Stour Valley Pasture	<b>High Medium</b>	<p>Development has the potential to adversely impact directly on the areas key recreational, multi-functional open space, ecological and heritage value and its role as a buffer between settlement edges.</p> <p>Potential mitigation: all designated nature conservation sites and their settings, locations within the setting of Holdenhurst Conservation Area, in areas acting as buffers between settlement edges and within open views of the A338 to be avoided.</p>	<b>Moderate adverse</b>
37. Airport & East Parley Common	<b>Medium Low</b>	<p>Development has the potential to further erode the urban fringe nature of the area and some of its landscape features and recreational interest.</p> <p>Potential mitigation: avoid cumulative adverse impact issues when seen in conjunction with other development in the area.</p>	<b>Moderate /Low adverse</b>
<b>North Dorset District</b>			
38. Mid Stour Valley	<b>Medium High</b>	<p>Development has the potential to adversely impact directly on the areas pastoral and undeveloped character and its ecological, cultural and historic features and value and its setting for the Stour Valley Way and quiet lanes.</p> <p>Potential mitigation: areas within</p>	<b>Severe adverse</b>

<b>Landscape resource</b>	<b>Sensitivity level</b> (from table 1)	<b>Nature of effect</b> NB: Includes suggested mitigation measures*	<b>Level of significance of impact**</b>
		sight and influence of rights of way/quiet rural lanes/NCN, within the setting of Conservation Areas and within the fringes of settlement edges are all to be avoided.	
39. Lower Winterbourne Valley	<b>Medium High</b>	Development has the potential to adversely impact directly on the areas narrowly defined and in places intimate character and its setting for the adjacent chalk downs, its distinctive wooded ribbons and historic value.  Potential mitigation: areas within sight and influence of rights of way/quiet rural lanes, within the setting of all Conservation Areas and the chalk downs to be avoided.	<b>Severe adverse</b>
<b>West Dorset District</b>			
40. Crossways Gravel Plateau	<b>Medium Low</b>	Development has the potential to further erode the urban fringe nature of the area and adversely impact on recreation trails, quiet lanes and some of its mosaic of habitats.  Potential mitigation: areas within the setting of Conservation Areas, all designated nature conservation sites and their settings, areas within sight and influence of rights of way are all to be avoided. Avoid the cumulative adverse impacts of development adjacent to existing and unrestored works.	<b>Moderate /Low adverse</b>
41. Frome and Piddle Valley Pastures	<b>Medium High</b>	Development has the potential to adversely impact directly on the areas overall tranquil and rural nature, its key views and its key ecological, cultural and historic features and value despite the detracting urban fringe pressures.  Potential mitigation: areas within the setting of the Conservation Areas, all designated nature conservation sites and their settings, areas within sight and influence of rights of way/quiet rural lanes are all to be avoided. Avoid the cumulative adverse impacts of development adjacent to existing and unrestored works.	<b>Moderate adverse</b>

<b>Landscape resource</b>	<b>Sensitivity level</b> (from table 1)	<b>Nature of effect</b> NB: Includes suggested mitigation measures*	<b>Level of significance of impact**</b>
42. Cerne & Piddle Valleys and Chalk Downland	<b>High Medium</b>	Development has the potential to adversely impact directly on the open and expansive downland, its field patterns and its open views and its features of historic and ecological interest.  Potential mitigation: areas within the setting of the Conservation Areas, all designated nature conservation sites and their settings and locations within the setting of well used recreational routes/lanes to be avoided.	<b>Severe /Moderate adverse</b>
43. Dorchester & South Dorset Downs.  NB: Two LCAs combined for purpose of this study.	<b>High Medium</b>	Development has the potential to adversely impact directly on the open and expansive downland, its field patterns and its open views and its features of historic and ecological interest.  Potential mitigation: areas within the setting of the Conservation Areas and the AONB, all designated nature conservation sites and their settings and locations within the setting of well used recreational routes/lanes to be avoided.	<b>Severe adverse</b>
44. Puddletown Forest and Clyffe House	<b>High Medium</b>	Development has the potential to adversely impact directly on the extensive and well used recreational value of the area, its undulated landform and tree/woodland cover and its features of historic and ecological interest.  Potential mitigation: all designated nature conservation sites and their settings and locations within the setting of well used recreational areas, routes/lanes to be avoided.	<b>Severe adverse</b>

**Table 5 - impacts of the proposal on sites designated for European or UK ecological significance**

<b>Landscape resource</b>	<b>Sensitivity level</b> (from table 1)	<b>Nature of effect</b> NB: Includes suggested mitigation measures*	<b>Level of significance of impact**</b>
Dorset Heaths SAC	<b>High</b>	Development has the potential to severely impact on highly protected habitats and species of European significance.	<b>Severe Adverse</b>
Dorset Heaths (Purbeck and	<b>High</b>		

<b>Landscape resource</b>	<b>Sensitivity level</b> (from table 1)	<b>Nature of effect</b> NB: Includes suggested mitigation measures*	<b>Level of significance of impact**</b>
Wareham) and Studland Dunes SAC		Potential Mitigation: it would not be possible to fully mitigate the effects of the proposed activities on these sites. These sites could not be used while suitable alternatives are available and then only if there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (applying Regulation 62 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2010).	
Dorset Heathlands SPA	<b>High</b>	Development has the potential to severely impact on highly protected habitats and species of European significance.  Potential Mitigation: it would not be possible to fully mitigate the effects of the proposed activities on this site. This site could not be used while suitable alternatives are available and then only if there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (applying Regulation 62 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2010)	<b>Severe Adverse</b>
Dorset Heathlands Ramsar site	<b>High</b>	Development has the potential to severely impact on highly protected habitats and species of European significance.  Potential Mitigation: it would not be possible to fully mitigate the effects of the proposed activities on this site. This site could not be used while suitable alternatives are available and then only if there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (applying Regulation 62 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2010).	<b>Severe Adverse</b>
Morden Bog NNR	<b>High</b>	Development has the potential to severely impact on habitats and species of national importance.  Potential Mitigation: The proposed activities would permanently change and diminish the quality of these sites and it would not be	<b>Severe Adverse</b>
Holton Heath NNR	<b>High</b>		
Holt Heath NNR	<b>High</b>		

<b>Landscape resource</b>	<b>Sensitivity level</b> (from table 1)	<b>Nature of effect</b> NB: Includes suggested mitigation measures*	<b>Level of significance of impact**</b>
		possible to prevent this through mitigation.	
Holt and West Moors SSSI	<b>High</b>	<p>Development has the potential to severely impact on habitats and species of national importance on these sites.</p> <p>Potential Mitigation: It would not be possible to fully mitigate damage to these sites. Mineral working would be substantially damaging.</p>	<b>Severe/Moderate Adverse</b>
Horton Common SSSI	<b>High</b>		
Slop Bog and Uddens Heath SSSI	<b>High</b>		
Verwood Heaths SSSI	<b>High</b>		
Cranborne Common SSSI	<b>High</b>		
Ebblake Bog SSSI	<b>High</b>		
Hurn Common SSSI	<b>High</b>		
Lions Hill SSSI	<b>High</b>		
St Leonards and St Ives SSSI	<b>High</b>		
Ferndown Common SSSI	<b>High</b>		
Parley Common SSSI	<b>High</b>		
Moors River System SSSI	<b>High</b>		
Town Common SSSI	<b>High</b>		
Warmwell Heath SSSI	<b>High</b>		
Stokeford Heaths SSSI	<b>High</b>		
Winfrith Heath SSSI	<b>High</b>		
Worgret Heath SSSI	<b>High</b>		
Bere Stream SSSI	<b>High</b>	<p>Development has the potential to severely impact on this site.</p> <p>Potential Mitigation: Much of this site consists of riparian or wetland habitat and impacts could be reduced if these areas were</p>	<b>Moderate/Low Adverse (after mitigation)</b>



<b>Landscape resource</b>	<b>Sensitivity level</b> (from table 1)	<b>Nature of effect</b> NB: Includes suggested mitigation measures*	<b>Level of significance of impact**</b>
		excluded from any development.	
East Coppice SSSI	<b>High</b>	Development has the potential to severely impact on this coppiced ancient woodland.  Potential Mitigation: Impacts on this small SSSI could easily be avoided by excluding it from the area of search.	<b>Neutral (after mitigation)</b>
Oakers Bog SSSI	<b>High</b>	Development has the potential to severely impact on habitats and species of national importance on these sites.  Potential Mitigation: It would not be possible to fully mitigate damage to these sites. Mineral working would be substantially damaging	<b>Severe/Moderate Adverse</b>
Oakers Wood SSSI	<b>High</b>		
Cull Peppers Dish SSSI	<b>High</b>		
Black Hill Heath SSSI	<b>High</b>		
Turners Puddle Heath SSSI	<b>High</b>		
Wareham Meadows SSSI	<b>High</b>		
Wareham Common SSSI	<b>High</b>		
Holton and Sandford Heaths SSSI	<b>High</b>		
Morden Bog and Hyde Heath SSSI	<b>High</b>		
Upton Heath SSSI	<b>High</b>		
Corfe Mullen Pastures SSSI	<b>High</b>		
Sites of Nature Conservation Interest, Ancient Woodland and other habitats	<b>Medium</b>	Development has the potential to negatively impact on habitats and species of County importance.  Potential Mitigation: Keeping development to a small scale, creation of compensatory habitat areas, avoidance of especially sensitive features such as veteran trees and possibly habitat translocation could all help mitigate any effects in these areas.	<b>Moderate/Low Adverse (after mitigation)</b>
<b>European protected species, NERC (2006) Sect 41 species and BAP species.</b>			
European protected, NERC (2006) Sect 41	<b>High</b>	Development has the potential to impact negatively on species protected under European and	<b>Moderate Adverse</b>

Landscape resource	Sensitivity level (from table 1)	Nature of effect NB: Includes suggested mitigation measures*	Level of significance of impact**
species and Biodiversity Action Plan species		UK law.  Mitigation: Some mitigation may be possible, such as keeping development to a small scale, creation of suitable alternative habitat, avoidance of particularly sensitive areas and possibly species translocation. However, where European protected species are concerned this will only be allowed if the three tests in Regulation 53 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) can be met.	

\* **Nature of effect** defined as ‘whether the key characteristics and/or ecological interest of the existing landscape resource, and its consistency/integrity throughout that area, are reinforced or weakened as a result of the changes to landscape character and/or ecology brought about by the introduction of the proposals.’ Described as; Adverse or positive, direct, indirect, secondary or cumulative, permanent or temporary (short/medium/long term), at a national, regional or local level.

**NB: Included in this section are suggested mitigation measures to avoid or reduce the adverse landscape, visual, ecological and cumulative effects.**

\*\* **Level of significance** of impact criteria defined as:

**Severe adverse**

The proposed scheme would result in effects that:

- Are at a complete variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape and/or its ecological value;
- Would permanently degrade, diminish or destroy the integrity of valued characteristic features, elements and/or their setting;
- Would cause a very high quality landscape/ecological feature to be permanently changed and its quality diminished
- Would permanently change and diminish the quality of a site designated for its very high quality ecological value.

**Severe /Moderate adverse**

The proposed scheme would result in effects that:

- Cannot be fully mitigated and may cumulatively amount to a severe adverse effect;
- Are at a considerable variance to the landscape/ecological value degrading the integrity of the landscape;
- Will be substantially damaging to a high quality landscape
- Will be substantially damaging to a site designated for its very high ecological value.

### **Moderate adverse**

The proposed scheme would:

- Be out of scale with the landscape or at odds with landform, scale and pattern of the landscape and/or its ecological value;
- Leave an adverse impact on a landscape of recognised quality.
- Leave an adverse impact on a site with high ecological value.

### **Moderate /Low adverse**

The proposed scheme would:

- Not quite fit into the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape and/or its ecological value;
- Affect an area of recognised landscape character
- Have moderate effects on a site with high ecological value.

### **Neutral**

The proposed scheme would:

- Complement the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape and/or its ecological value;
- Maintain existing landscape quality
- Neither adversely or positively affect a site designated for its ecological value

### **Minor beneficial**

The proposed scheme has the potential to:

- Improve the landscape quality and character;
- Fit in with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape and/or its ecological value;
- Enable the restoration of valued characteristic features partially lost through other land uses/management.
- Avoid negative effects on a site designated for its ecological value and, in addition, perhaps enable enhancement/restoration of a valuable ecological feature.

### **Moderate beneficial**

The proposed scheme would have the potential to:

- Fit very well with the landscape character and/or its ecological value;
- Improve the quality of the landscape through removal of negative impacts caused by existing land uses/management.
- Contribute towards removal of a negative impact on a site, or moderately improve the site's ecological value.

### **Major beneficial**

The proposed scheme would have the potential to:

- Enhance landscape character and/or its ecological value;
- Improve the quality/condition of the landscape through removal of negative impacts caused by existing land uses and through positive land management.
- Significantly enhance the ecological value of a site

The overall picture of the impacts on landscape and ecological resources is that of the 83 resources assessed, 16 were Severe Adverse, 42 Severe/Moderate Adverse, 8 Moderate Adverse and 17 Moderate/Low Adverse.

The conclusion is that further extraction would have an overall adverse impact on landscape character, European and UK designated sites, European protected species, NERC Act (2006) Sect 41 species and Biodiversity Action Plan species, ancient woodland and other important habitats. This implies that development is inappropriate or that significant mitigation is required.

### 3.3 Impact on visual resources

Table 5 below presents the assessment of visual impacts of the proposal on each viewpoint identified in the baseline study (See table 2 above).

**Table 6 - visual impacts of the proposal on each viewpoint identified in the baseline study**

<b>Photo/ viewpoint Number</b>	<b>Overall viewpoint sensitivity (from table 2)</b>	<b>Nature of visual impact*</b>	<b>Magnitude of change**</b>	<b>Significance***</b>
1	High	Development would have an adverse direct impact on the open views across the valley pasture, on the value of the area as a key part of the cultural and historic setting for Dorchester and on the amenity of rights of way users.	High	Severe
2	High	Development would have an adverse impact on this rolling open view and on the amenity of the recreational users of the wider area.	High	Substantial
3	Medium	Development would have a moderate adverse sequential impact on this open view and on the amenity of the recreational users of the wider area.	High	Substantial
4	Medium	Development would have a moderate adverse sequential impact on this open rural view and on the amenity of the recreational users of the footpath.	High	Substantial
5	Medium	Development would have a direct adverse impact on this open rural estate view despite the presence of the main road and on the setting of Lytchett Minster and its Conservation Area.	High	Substantial
6	High	Development would have a significant and direct adverse sequential impact on this open view, on the amenity of recreational users of this open access land and on key nature conservations designations.	High	Severe
7	High	Development would have a direct	High	Severe

		adverse impact on this open rural view from a historic location and on the setting of Wareham the adjacent Conservation Area.		
8	High	Development would have a direct adverse sequential impact on this open valley view and on the amenity of recreational users of the rural lanes.	High	Substantial
9	High	Development would have a direct adverse sequential impact on this open flat rural view of the flood plain.	High	Substantial
10	High	Development would have a direct adverse impact on this open rural view from a historic location and on the setting of Wimborne and the adjacent Conservation Areas.	High	Severe
11	Medium	Development would have a direct adverse sequential impact on this open rural view across the valley floor and on the setting of the listed school buildings.	High	Substantial
12	Medium	Development would have a direct adverse sequential impact on this open rural and undeveloped view and on the amenity of recreational users of the rural lanes.	High	Substantial
13	High	Development would have a significant and direct adverse sequential impact on this open view, on the amenity of recreational users of this open access land and on key nature conservations designations.	High	Severe
14	High	Development would have a direct adverse sequential impact on this open rural and undeveloped view and on the amenity of recreational users of the rural lanes and other rights of way.	High	Substantial
15	High	Development would have a direct adverse sequential impact on this open flat rural, on the undeveloped view of the flood plain, the amenity of the Trailway users and on key nature conservations designations.	High	Severe
16	High	Development would have a direct adverse impact on this open view of the valley pastures and river and on the setting of Christchurch in its flood plain.	High	Severe
17	High	Development would have a direct adverse impact on this view of the valley and on the importance of the area as a key greenspace asset for	High	Severe

		the use by the adjacent population and on its value as a key part of the setting of Christchurch in its flood plain.		
18	High	Development would have a direct adverse impact on this open undeveloped rural view across the valley floor, on the amenity of footpath/NCN users and on the setting of the nearby Conservation Area.	High	Severe

\* **Nature of visual impact** will be given which will depends on how much of the view is affected and what happens to the view as a result of the proposals.

\*\* **Magnitude of change** criteria defined as:

**High**

- Total loss of or major alteration to key elements/ features/characteristics of the baseline, i.e. pre-proposal landscape or view and/ or introduction of elements considered to be totally uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape

**Medium**

- Partial loss of or alteration to key elements/ features/characteristics of the baseline, i.e. pre-proposal landscape or view and/ or introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not necessarily be considered to be substantially uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape

**Low**

- Minor loss of or alteration to key elements/ features/characteristics of the baseline, i.e. pre-proposal landscape or view and/ or introduction of elements that may not necessarily be considered to be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape

**Negligible**

- Very minor loss of or alteration to key elements/ features/characteristics of the baseline, i.e. pre-proposal landscape or view and/ or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic with the surrounding landscape- approximating the ' no change' situation

\*\*\* **Significance** criteria defined as:

**Imperceptible**

- The degree of change is so small as to have little or no effect

**Slight**

- The proposals have some, but only a limited effect within the mainly local context

**Moderate**

- The proposals have a noticeable effect within the context of the wider area

**Substantial**

- The proposals have a large effect within the context of the wider area

**Severe**

- The proposals are wholly out of character with the existing situation, both locally and on the wider scale

The overall picture of the significance of the visual impacts is that of the 18 viewpoints assessed; 9 are Substantial change and 9 are Severe change. The conclusion is that the visual impacts of development on the viewpoints are overwhelmingly substantial and severe. This is particularly due the overall sensitivity of receiving landscape in terms of its character, habitats and amenity/recreational value and the fact the views are representative of the wider adjacent landscape.

### **3.4 Summary of the Significance of Impacts**

Two hundred years ago, Dorset's heathland covered over 150 square miles in vast tracts divided only by river valleys. Today only around 30 square miles remain, much of it in small fragments. The Dorset heaths are one of the major lowland heathland areas in Britain, and represent 2% of all that remains in Europe as a whole. As legislation has developed these Dorset heathland areas have all become protected by European and UK law.

The conclusion of this study is that the impacts of further extraction on landscape, ecological and visual resources are overwhelmingly major in significance and they would have an overall adverse impact particularly on landscape character, European and UK designated sites and most viewpoints.

Furthermore, the impact assessment presented in Section 3 concludes that for the overwhelming majority of European and UK designated sites it will not be possible to fully mitigate any impacts arising from the proposed development.

Where European sites are concerned it is important that it is understood this would be seen as a likely significant effect and that development would only be allowed if an Appropriate Assessment (under Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2010) showed that there was no adverse effect on the integrity of the site. If the assessment concluded that there would be an adverse effect then development would only be allowed to proceed if there was no alternative solution and if there were imperative reasons of overriding public interest. If this was thought to be the case then the decision would have to be made by the Secretary of State on a site by site basis.

For UK designated sites (SSSI's) guidance is laid down in the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), Paragraph 118, which states that "when determining planning applications local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles:

- If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- Proposed development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest likely to have an adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (either individually or in combination with other developments) should not normally be permitted. Where an adverse effect on the site's notified special interest features is likely, an exception should only be made where the benefits of the development, at this site, clearly outweigh both the impacts that it is likely to have on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest."

Although, for the purposes of this study, the area of search includes European and UK designated sites, County wildlife sites (SNCI's) and areas of ancient woodland, this is on the understanding that development will not be permitted within these areas unless it meets the above criteria or, in the case of SNCI's and ancient woodland has been granted planning permission with a comprehensive mitigation and restoration plan.

Where mitigation is possible this is discussed below.

## 4. Mitigation of negative landscape, visual, ecological and cumulative<sup>2</sup> effects

The impact assessment presented in Section 3 concludes that impacts of aggregate development on the visual and landscape resources are of major significance. The design and implementation of mitigation would therefore have minimal effect in reducing the identified impacts apart from avoiding them by proposing a revised area of search boundary.

However, for any future sites it is recommended that mitigation should be based on all, or a combination of, the measures shown in the footnote below<sup>3</sup>.

Ecological mitigation will include a range of enhancement measures and specifically in the Poole Basin opportunities to create/extend heathland type habitats. Other opportunities appropriate to soil type, post extraction as part of phased site restoration will also be sought to linking fragments of habitat.

Mitigation of cumulative impacts will include the timely ongoing restoration of all existing mineral areas in the area, and the implementation of the recommended revised area of search

## 5. Conclusions

This report has identified all the major relevant landscape resource and a representative number of visual resources likely to be affected by aggregate extraction in the study area. By applying methods of landscape, visual and ecological assessment at an appropriate scale, conclusions in terms of the impacts on these resources have been arrived at.

As indicated above, the overall impacts on landscape character, visual resources, European and UK designated sites, European protected species, NERC (2006) Section 41 species and BAP species, are assessed to be adverse. This reflects the overall sensitivity of the receiving landscape which is highly designated, popular, accessible and an important recreational area for locals and visitors which contribute to SE Dorset's green infrastructure network.

For these reasons, a revised 'area of search' is proposed which will help to minimise the identified negative impacts; this area is shown on Figure 11 below.

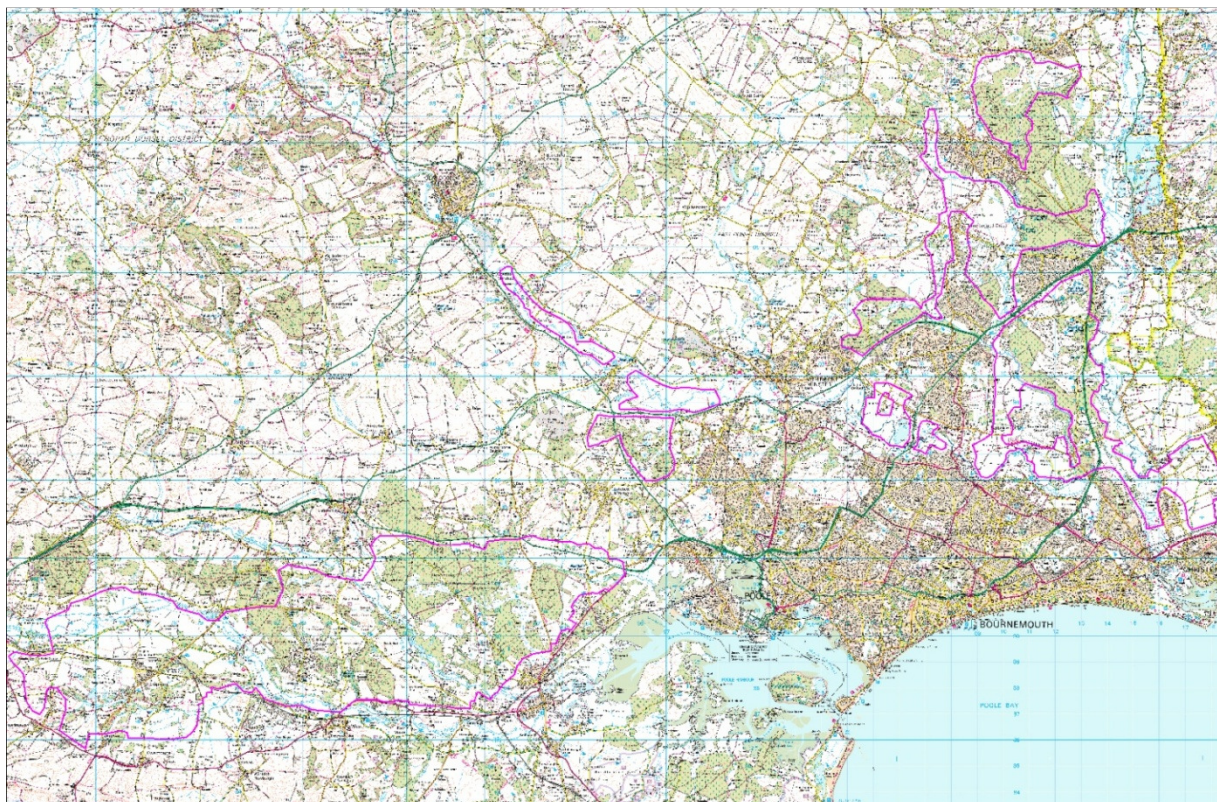
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<sup>2</sup> The incremental landscape and visual effects when a site or a combination of sites are added to other existing mineral workings and / or other development.

<sup>3</sup> The retention, protection, enhancement and management of key landscape/ecological features to help screen/integrate development; positive ongoing landscape and ecological enhancement measures; ongoing and phased restoration and extraction to reduce cumulative impacts; ongoing restoration based on landscape ecology and an agreed restoration plan; minimising the bulk, scale and heights of storage/stockpile areas; prompt appropriate landscape treatment of exposed cut faces of excavations/storage/stockpile areas; minimising the bulk, scale and heights of any required bunds; minimising the scale, height, bulk of any plant/infrastructure; minimising noise/traffic generation and the overall scale, size and duration of operations.



**Figure 11 – Proposed Area of Search.**



### **5.1 Revised Area of Search**

The revised area is based on the following criteria:

◆ **Dorchester/Frome Valley environs (Between Charminster and West Stafford).**

The revised area avoids the valley floor and downland fringes in this area as it is highly sensitive and contributes significantly to landscape and cultural heritage of Dorchester, Stinsford, West Stafford and Charminster, being an essential component of its historic setting and character. It also has recreational, ecological and amenity value.

◆ **West Knighton environs**

The revised area around the Dorset AONB downland setting provides a reasonable buffer to this designation and its setting and the West Stafford Conservation Area.

◆ **Winfrith/Wool environs**

The revised area avoids the sensitive setting of this wildlife designation which also has a high recreational value as well as contributing to the areas overall character. It also provides a buffer to the area's cultural and historic interests around the valley floor, the Dorset AONB, its Conservation Areas (East Burton, Wool and Winfrith Newburgh) and other historic features of importance in the area e.g. at Wool Bridge.

◆ **Wareham environs**

The revised area avoids the sensitive historic flood plain of Wareham which contributes significantly to its cultural setting, character and context in the Lower Piddle valley. This area is also popular recreationally and has some ecological and amenity value.

◆ **Lytchett Bay/Lytchett Minster environs**

The revised area avoids important ecological areas around Holton Heath and Lytchett Bay, the later area being visually sensitive and open to wide views. The revised area also avoids the sensitive open areas around Lytchett Minster which contributes to its estate setting and character.

◆ **Lytchett Matravers environs**

The revised areas avoid the open rolling, rural countryside fringes all around the settlement which provides a significant contribution to its setting and character.

◆ **Bloxworth/Morden environs**

The revised area avoids the open rural countryside associated with Charlborough Park, Morden Conservation Area and the A35 corridor as this contributes to the setting, character and/or ecological/amenity value of this whole area.

◆ **Bere Regis/Black Hill environs**

The revised area avoids the elevated rolling and highly sensitive fringes of the village, Black Hill, Woodbury Hill, Briantspuddle Conservation Area and the open Piddle Valley floor. The area contributes to their setting, character, amenity and ecological value. The area also has a high historic and cultural value.

◆ **Puddletown/Affpuddle/Puddletown Forest environs**

The revised area avoids this sensitive flood plain of the Piddle Valley which provides a significant contribution to the setting and character of its settlements and its historic/cultural value and character. The more wooded elevated areas are important recreationally and for its historic and cultural significance and have some key ecological areas.

◆ **Corfe Mullen/Upton environs**

The revised area avoids the highly sensitive ecological sites and their fringes and the urban fringes of Corfe Mullen, Sleight and Lambs Green as they contribute to their character and setting on the elevated southern edges of the Stour Valley which is overlooked from these areas.

### **Northern West Section**

◆ **Charlton Marshall/Sturminster Marshall environs**

The revised area avoids the sensitive settings of the AONB, the National Cycle Network route, Charlton Marshall, Spetisbury, Shapwick and Sturminster Marshall Conservation Areas, National Trust property and the Stour Valley Way as it contributes to their setting, character, recreational and amenity value.

◆ **Winterbourne Valley environs**

The revised area avoids this sensitive narrow intimate valley and downland fringes as it contributes to the integral character of the whole area and provides a setting for Winterbourne Zelston, Mapperton and Almer Conservation Areas and its other historic/cultural features of importance and interest. The area also has some recreational and amenity value.

### **Eastern Section**

◆ **Wimborne/Colehill environs**

The revised area avoids the Stour Valley floor south of the town associated with Canford School, western areas associated with Pamphill/Kingston Lacey and Wimborne Conservation Areas and the open rural areas associated with Burts Hill Conservation Area to the north. These all contribute significantly to the character, setting and context of the area and have high amenity and recreational value.

◆ **Ferndown/Hampreston/Dudsbury environs**

The revised area avoids the urban fringe setting of Ferndown/Stapehill, the sensitive setting of Hampreston Conservation Area and the elevated ridge along Dudsbury as these all contribute to the character, setting and amenity/recreational value of these areas. The area also has some important historical and cultural interest.

◆ **Parley/Holdenhurst environs**

The revised area avoids the sensitive ecological sites and their setting within Parley Common and the Stour Valley/Urban Fringes locations along the northern edges of Bournemouth. These contribute to the setting and character of the Stour Valley Way, West Parley and Holdenhurst Conservation Areas and have important recreational, amenity, open space and some ecological and historical value.

◆ **Lower Stour and Avon Valleys environs**

The revised area avoids the confined, open and undeveloped Stour Valley which is sandwiched between the urban edges and has high amenity, open space, and recreational value with some ecological interest. The lower Avon valley, like the Stour, contributes significantly to the setting and character of Burton and Christchurch.

◆ **Avon Valley environs**

The revised area avoids the valley setting and some important ecological sites along the valley floor as they contribute to the unique and open undeveloped character and context of the wider landscape.

◆ **West Moors/Ashley Heath/Three Legged Cross/Verwood environs**

The revised area avoids the immediate setting of these settlements to provide a greater buffer to help ensure their setting and character is protected and conserved. Some of these areas have important amenity, ecological and recreational value.

◆ **Holt Heath/Horton Common/Woodlands Common**

The revised area avoids these open rural areas as it is sensitive ecologically and due to their amenity and recreational value. They also contribute to wider, open character of the interconnected rolling wooded pasture which forms a buffer between the AONB and the urban fringes along the edges of the wider conurbation. It therefore contributes to the setting and character of the AONB.

◆ **Gotham/Alderholt environs**

The revised area avoids the rolling wooded pasture landscape on the fringes of the AONB. This area contributes to and ties in with the wider open interconnected wooded pasture which forms a buffer between the open countryside and the edges of the conurbation. It also has some recreational, open space and amenity value.

## Appendix 1

Extracts from local authority Landscape Character Assessments. Used to establish the baseline character and understand the implications of the proposals.

### East Dorset District

#### Henbury Corfe farmland/woodland mosaic

##### Key characteristics

- Undulating landform, punctuated by hilltops
- Heavily influenced by woods, copses and hedgerow trees
- Irregular mosaic of pasture, woodland and hedgerows
- Allen Hill/Stoney Down
- Gravel extraction at Henbury Plantation
- Disused railway line
- O/h power lines (adverse impact)
- Hamlets and narrow lanes

#### Woodlands - Colehill & Hillbutts farmland/woodland mosaic

##### Key Characteristics

- Undulating landform, punctuated by hilltops
- Heavily influenced by woods, copses and hedgerow trees creating an irregular patchwork
- Absence of major roads
- Irregular road pattern, having an east-west emphasis with short north-south links
- Narrow, winding lanes throughout the area, with high, dense hedgerows
- Extensive network of public footpaths and woodland and other tracks
- Farmhouses and other modest rural dwellings, few major historic buildings or churches
- General absence of archaeological remains, except for tumuli on hilltops
- Heavy concentration of Ancient Woodlands
- Quiet, peaceful countryside largely unaffected by modern development

#### Sturminster Marshall River Terrace

##### Key Characteristics

- Large flat, open fields
- Field boundary trees and hedges

#### Hampreston River Terrace

##### Key Characteristics

- Flat landform
- Mosaic of large fields used for arable and pasture
- Few trees in fields, most trees near river and village

## **Parley River Terrace**

### **Key Characteristics**

- Gentle slope to river
- Sparse tree cover
- Large flat fields
- Urban influences

## **Moors River Valley**

### **Key Characteristics**

- Flat
- Valley pasture
- Woodland blocks
- Ecological interest along river corridor
- Urban influences

## **Lower Avon Valley**

### **Key Characteristics**

- Flat, open meadows
- Enclosure by wooded, higher land to west
- Waterside trees and copses
- Extensive views along valley

## **Ringwood-Hurn Forest/Heath Mosaic**

### **Key Characteristics**

- Patchwork of heath, woodland and farmland
- Sandy soils
- Extensive areas of pine forest and birch woodland
- Varied landform, with steep slopes especially to the east
- Remnant heathland areas with groups of naturalised pine and birch
- Absence of fields and hedgerows
- Ecological value of heathland
- Urban influences
- Influence of major roads

## **West Moors Forest/Heath Mosaic**

### **Key Characteristics**

- Flat land
- Extensive areas of pine and birch woodland
- Remnant heathland areas
- Absence of fields and hedgerows
- Ecological value

## **Ferndown – Stapehill Forest /Heath Mosaic**

### **Key Characteristics**

- Extensive areas of pine and birch woodland
- Important backdrop to Stour Valley
- Remnant heathland areas
- Absence of fields and hedgerows
- Ecological value
- Long distance views from ridge

## **Horton Common-Three Legged Cross Heath/Farmland Mosaic**

### **Key Characteristics**

- Undulating land rising towards the north
- Irregular mosaic of heathland and scrub
- Belts of trees and scrub
- Ribbon development
- Small scale industrial uses at the urban fringe

## **Upton Heath**

### **Key Characteristics**

- Undulating elevated terrain
- Exposed open landscape
- Mosaic of heath, scrub and woodland
- High ecological value
- Viewpoints

## **West Parley Heath**

### **Key Characteristics**

- Sections of heath are open and exposed
- High ecological value
- Urban influences
- Views from the north
- Undulating terrain rising to the north

## **Dudsbury Ridge**

### **Key Characteristics**

- Steep slope to river
- Important woodland
- Extensive views from ridge
- Urban influences
- Dudsbury Camp

## **Holt Heath**

### **Key Characteristics**

- Views towards Bournemouth and Isle of Wight
- Undulating elevated terrain
- Exposed open landscape
- Sparsely populated
- High ecological value
- Viewpoints

## **Lower Stour Valley**

### **Key Characteristics**

- Meandering river
- Riverside trees and copses
- Long distance views along the valley
- Views of A31 Wimborne By Pass
- Historic views and features
- Road crossings and historic multi-arched bridges e.g. White Mill, Julian's, Canford and Longham Bridges.

## **Purbeck District**

### **North Wareham Heath Forest**

#### **Key characteristics**

- An undulating, open and expansive heathland landscape
- Bounded by Piddle Valley along its western and southern edges and the fringes of Poole Harbour along its eastern side
- Unspoilt across much of the area with patchwork of heath, forestry, scrub and farmland
- Conifer plantations create hard edges but act as screening and landscape features
- Recreational use and conservation management a key feature across the area
- Urban/industrial impacts along the south east parts of the area
- Straight and fast roads often lined with plantation wood/forest
- Morden Bog is a distinctive and open landscape feature
- Woolsbarrow Fort and Woodbury Hill (both scheduled ancient monuments) are key local landmarks
- The area around Keysworth Farm forms a locally distinctive parkland landscape

#### **Landscape Character**

The area is an expansive, undulating and rolling landscape formed of large areas of uniform heathland based on acidic and impoverished soils. This creates an open and unspoilt landscape across much of the area. These open areas are surrounded by a patchwork landscape of conifer plantation, scrub, woodland, farmland, mineral extraction, industrial use and urban edges.

The conifer plantations dominate and create strong geometric edges but also help to screen urban and industrial uses such as existing and proposed mineral workings. 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. Large areas are designated SPA, SSSI and SNCI, mainly for their important heathland habitat on the sandy/acidic soils. Morden Bog is a National Nature Reserve and a distinctive low lying open wetland within the wider character area. Holton Heath nature reserve is sandwiched between the rail line and the industrial estate.

There are a significant number of barrows, tumuli and some hill forts designated as scheduled ancient monuments. 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.

The urban, industrial and commercial land uses at Sandford and Holton Heath create an impact in 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. The roads are straight and fast, and 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. The acidic and impoverished soils gradually improve northwards towards the wooded farmland and chalk character areas. The area around Holton Lee, and to the south east of the railway line – around Keyworth Farm - is of a very different character. There is a distinct parkland feel. The trees grade from being mainly coniferous to being mainly deciduous species, with many individual parkland trees in evidence (with characteristic flat bottomed/grazed outline).

### **Landscape Condition**

It is a largely intact landscape comprising a mixed patchwork of conifer plantation, scrub and woodland which contributes to the overall integrity of the area. It is generally managed as a multi functional landscape. There are detractors from condition such as the weak, fragile hedgerows in arable areas, the significant pressures from the urban fringe uses, visitor pressure, industrial/commercial use and the dominance in places caused by the hard edges to plantations. Its ecological and cultural condition is generally good or favourable and the area forms a key part of the lowland heath basin with opportunities to expand this habitat.

**Condition: Good to Moderate.**

## **Upper/Middle Piddle Valley**

### **Key characteristics**

- A flat relatively narrow valley floor with a meandering river channel and associated ditches and channels
- A pastoral grazed landscape of small fields
- A mosaic of trees and other vegetation associated with the river
- Area often framed and defined on the terraces by groups of trees/woodland
- Crossed at 90 degrees by narrow lanes on old bridges
- Valley narrows and becomes less treed on the chalk
- An undeveloped and tranquil rural landscape

### **Landscape Character**

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. 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.



There are a number of wet woods designated as SNCI. There are few open views of the valley due to the pattern of trees and woods. Narrow lanes cross the valley at 90 degrees often via historic bridges. There is the occasional rural dwelling positioned on the side of the valley overlooking the meadows. The lack of development and access to paths along the valley help to create an inaccessible and tranquil landscape.

The valley narrows in its northern sections and 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.

### **Landscape Condition**

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. Intensive agricultural use in places close to the river margins and some dominant commercial use detract from this integrity. Ecologically the reasonable condition overall is due to the variety of wetland habitats. The cultural integrity of the flood meadows is significant and important.

**Condition: Good to Moderate.**

## **South Bere Regis Downs**

### **Key characteristics**

- Black Hill and Damer Hill form a local landmark of historic, wildlife and amenity value.
- The elevated dense woodland/ plantation at Kite Hill plantation and Piddle/Shitterton Woods are characteristic features.
- Open rolling arable fields with lanes lined with thick hedgerows.
- An extensive network of public rights of way and trails.
- Low lying pastoral landscape associated with the Frome valley.
- Some hard urban edges of Bere Regis are evident from certain locations and impact on local viewpoints.

### **Landscape Character**

The area is 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 A35 corridor defines the northern

edge of the area and does create an audible impact in particular on the character area. 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, especially when combined with their woods and plantations.

Piddle/Shitterton Woods are semi natural and mixed broadleaved woodland and are designated SNCIs. Black Hill and Damer Hill form an elevated ridge of Reading Beds and London Clay, overlain in part by plateau gravels.

The mix of heath, plantation and scrub landcover on the sandy soils of these hills add to the areas unique character in an otherwise chalk landscape. 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 is a designated SSSI for its wildlife and geological interest primarily as an outlier of sandy heathland and also has several tumuli which are scheduled ancient monuments. It also forms part of the Dorset Heathlands SPA and Dorset Heath SAC.

There are undulating and rolling arable geometric fields on the chalk around the fringes of the high ground with thick hedges and small copses. 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 wellused footpaths. 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.

### **Landscape Condition**

Overall this landscape is intact due partly to the reasonable condition and continuity of thick hedgerows which interconnect the significant blocks of mixed woodland. The designated areas of woodland and heath appear to be in management and there is evidence of agri-environment scheme management such as arable margins. Both these forms of management contribute to the landscape condition. Elements which detract from condition are the A35, hard urban edges to parts of Bere Regis and some prominent intrusive agricultural buildings.

**Condition: Good to Moderate**

## **Bloxworth Charlborough Downs**

### **Key characteristics**

- The open and rolling expansive chalk landscapes with hedgeline lanes.
- The estate parkland landscape of Charborough Park.
- Individual mature parkland trees.
- Old estate lodges, gateposts and walls abutting lanes are key features in parts of this area.
- Charborough Park Tower is a distinctive local landmark.
- Interconnected and enclosing woodland blocks along high ground.
- Open views from elevated positions.
- Plantation woodland blocks such as Bere Wood.

### **Landscape Character**

This is a varied character area, but largely dominated by open chalk upland which gradually slopes down to the Winterborne valley along its northern fringes. The rolling intensively farmed regular sized large fields are subdivided by thin and weak hedgerows with the occasional hedgerow tree characteristic of a 'planned enclosure' landscape.

There are a few barrows, some of which are scheduled ancient monuments. The eastern part of the area is characterised by the undulating and sweeping estate landscape of Charborough Park which has important individual 'parkland' trees in open fields where game management and horse gallops are evident. Charborough Park Tower is a key local landmark. This is a well managed, designed estate landscape with its deer park and distinctive blocks of interconnected woodland along the elevated ridges. These help to enclose the landscape and

contrast to the less wooded and open landscapes to the west. One of these woods, Highwood, is a semi natural and plantation woodland designated as SNCI. There are open views across the Winterborne Valley from the elevated positions. The area has few settlements, just a few isolated farmsteads. The A31 cuts through its north edges, creating in particular an audible impact on the character area. The area is reasonably well served by public rights of way. The western end of the area is semi-enclosed by Bere Wood, a large and imposing plantation of mainly conifer woodland designated as SNCI.

### **Landscape Condition**

It is an intensively farmed landscape where the hedgerows are generally in decline as they no longer have an agricultural function and therefore become fragmented and weak. The large woodland blocks, however, do seem to be managed, perhaps for game. Arable margins in places in the east are also managed for this reason. Culturally the estate landscape and its associated features contribute to the condition and quality of the area. The A31 detracts from condition.

**Condition: Good to Moderate.**

## **Morden / Lytchett Rolling Wooded Farmland**

### **Key characteristics**

- Narrow densely hedged rural winding lanes lined with hedgerow trees.
- Open views from elevated points.
- Harmonious link between the natural and traditional built environment.
- The network of interconnected hedges and woodland blocks.
- The folded intimate valley landforms around Lytchett Matravers.
- The settlements of East and West Morden are both key local features.
- East Morden church is a key feature.
- The estate landscape and school grounds at Lytchett Minster.

### **Landscape Character**

The area is an undulating and rolling farmland landscape with some characteristic narrow valleys and folds which create a distinctive landform. The area rises to the chalk landscapes in the north and falls to the Sherford River in the south. It forms a transitional area between the chalk landscapes and the lower lying acidic soil landscapes to the south and is a varied, interesting and largely intact landscape. The 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 and many of the woods are designated as SNCIs. 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. 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.

### **Landscape Condition**

The landscape elements (hedgerows, hedgerow trees and woodland) are generally intact in the central parts of the area but are in decline towards the north west as hedges in particular, become redundant agriculturally. The number and frequency of small scale horse paddocks, associated 'clutter' and selective grazing does not contribute to landscape condition at the urban fringes. Newer development and the rural lane network generally integrates satisfactorily apart from in selected places to the south and east of Lytchett Matravers and the northern edges of Lytchett Minster.

Suburban features such as lighting, pavements, highways, and signage detract from condition at settlement edges. There is some evidence of hedgerow and woodland management but fragmentation of habitat is an issue in parts of the more intensively farmed areas.

**Condition: Moderate to Good.**

## **Crossways / Winfrith Lowland Farmland and Heath**

### **Key characteristics**

- Open expansive heathland areas with wide views
- Dense hedgerows and small copses
- Conifer plantations form the northern backdrop to the area
- Flat pastoral farmed landscape in the west
- Estate farmed landscape in the north at Moreton Park
- Straight lanes with thick hedges
- Winfrith Technology Centre creates a significant negative impact
- Fir Hill obelisk is a distinctive feature

- Tadnoll hamlet is a distinctive part of the area

### **Landscape Character**

This is a generally flat farmed landscape sandwiched between the alluvial soils of the Frome valley and the chalk uplands. 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. 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 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.

The lanes are straight and lined by thick hedgerows and there are a few isolated farms and groups of agricultural buildings. Winfrith and Tadnoll Nature Reserves are designated as SPA and SSSI for their wet and dry heathland habitats especially and they also have a number of tumuli and barrows designated as scheduled ancient monuments. The site of the medieval village of West Burton near Wool is also a scheduled ancient monument.

The area around Tadnoll hamlet with its narrow winding lanes, wetland, small copses and streams, creates an intimate and distinctive feature within the wider area. The area is well used as a recreation resource and the Jubilee Trail passes through the area at Moreton Park, passing the distinctive obelisk on Fir Hill.

### **Landscape Condition**

This is a varied area with mixed condition but overall its integrity is maintained by the distinctive pattern of hedgerows/trees and small copses interspersed by, plantation woodland, wetland areas and elevated areas of heath. The condition of the landscape in the estate farmland/ wooded areas and in heathland areas appears to be good, with evidence of appropriate management which has and still does contribute to the cultural condition of these areas. The designated areas of heath are in a favourable condition. The urban influence of the Technology centre, the main road, 'horsiculture' paddocks and the gravel extraction uses in the urban fringe all detract from overall condition.

**Condition: Good to Moderate.**

## **Bovington / Affpuddle Heath / Forest**

### **Key characteristics**

- The patchwork of heath, scrub, plantation and farmland.
- Large scale blocks of conifer plantation create hard edges but act as screening and landscape features in places.
- Open expansive heathland with wide views.
- Open views from elevated positions across the area.
- Recreational use and conservation management a key feature across the area.
- There are localised industrial/urban and military use impacts in the area.
- Straight and fast roads often lined with plantation wood/forest
- Bounded by the Piddle and Frome valleys.
- Acts as a buffer between the two valleys particularly at its eastern end.
- The wooded ridgeline to the north is a key feature.

## **Landscape Character**

This is an undulating landscape of heathland, conifer plantation and farmland based on acidic and impoverished soils and dominated by Bovington and the Camp. It is divided by the valleys of the Piddle and Frome and framed in the north by the elevated and wooded ridgeline associated with Affpuddle Forest. At its far eastern end it forms a distinctive elevated plateau/ridge on which Wareham is strategically located between the river valleys.

Its distinctive character is created by the broad scale patchwork of dense plantation forest, open heath, scrub and farmland. The heath is in itself a mix of regenerating scrub, birch and individual or small groups of pine. Much of the area is designated as SPA, SSSI and/or SNCI for its heathland habitat value on the sandy/acidic soils and some as woodland habitat.

Higher Hyde Heath nature reserve is an important feature. There are a significant number of scheduled ancient monuments including a group of tumuli associated with the northern ridgeline. The 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. The dense blocks of coniferous plantation create bold features and strong geometric edges but do help to screen intrusive urban and military uses.

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 on-going issue. 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.

## **Landscape Condition**

The integrity of this area has been adversely affected by past military use and mineral extraction activities, contributing to an unfavourable condition in parts of the designated areas and elsewhere. However, there are still large areas which are intact, in good condition and being managed in a multi-functional way to minimise heathland fragmentation.

Fringe areas of estate farmland appear to be well managed with generally intact landscape elements such as hedgerows and woodland blocks. Its ecological and cultural importance is significant and the area forms a key part of the lowland heath basin with opportunities to expand this habitat. The impacts of urban development at the fringes of the area detract from overall condition.

**Condition: Good to Moderate.**

## **Upton Heath**

### **Key characteristics**

- A fragmented mosaic of undulating heath, scrub, woodland/ plantation and marginal farming.
- Part of the larger Upton Heath nature reserve.
- Woodland/plantation blocks around the area are characteristic features.
- Beacon Hill is a locally distinctive feature.
- Urban features (roads, settlement edges, pylons) are visually and physically intrusive and sever and define the area.
- Open views from highpoints.
- Marginal farming paddocks and 'horsiculture' are detracting features

## **Landscape Character**

This is a rolling urban fringe landscape typical of the SE Dorset urban heathland associated with the areas acidic soils and gravels. It is comprised of open heath and a fragmented mosaic of scrub (gorse/bramble), pine/birch woodland and marginal farming/ 'horsiculture'.

The southern part of the area, being SPA and SSSI and part of the wider Upton Heath nature reserve, is open heathland with areas of regenerating birch and pine breaking up the undulating heath. This area is heavily bisected by informal paths eroded into the heath cover and is defined by the hard edges of Creekmoor/ Broadstone to the east, the A35 and pton to the south and the A350 to the west.

It merges with Beacon Heath to the north; an area with a disjointed patchwork of ormer heath with marginal farmland, old clay workings, some leisure uses and random development along the Corfe Mullen road. he northern end of the area is defined and framed by blocks of conifer plantation and other woodland. Beacon Hill is a planted feature of local importance.

These woodland blocks and those against the urban edges create important landscape features and help screen unsightly urban uses. Being close to a large urban population, the area is very heavily used and there are signs of misuse and erosion. There are some open views over the area from highpoints whilst other views are framed by the landform and land use.

## **Landscape Condition**

The integrity of this landscape has been severely compromised by urban fringe pressures and development. It is fragmented, and the non-heathland landcover areas are in a poor condition due to marginalised farming/horsiculture and development pressure.

The remaining heathland is reasonably intact as a feature and is linked to the rest of Upton Heath to the east. However, it is still in an unfavourable condition due to lack of management, fires, motorbike/cycle erosion and under-grazing.

**Condition: Poor to Moderate.**

## **Upton Bay Marsh**

### **Key characteristics**

- A flat and expansive marsh, mudflats and meadow landscape.
- Open, undeveloped and windswept character.
- Developing scrub woodland along the urban fringes.
- Distinctive hard urban edges to Upton and Turlin Moor.
- Wetland and meadow wildlife habitats.
- Deeply incised and sinuous shoreline.

### **Landscape Character**

The area is a flat, windswept and expansive waterside landscape of alluvial marsh, stretches of mudflats and meadow at the northern end of Poole harbour. The shoreline along the water's edge is characteristically deeply incised and sinuous as it follows numerous channels and inlets. There is a strong and distinctive urban edge to the area softened in places by extensive scrub woodland. This is regenerating from the marshland as the land gradually rises towards Upton and it provides an important landscape feature and buffer for the urban edges. There are signs of typical urban fringe pressure on the landscape such as fly tipping which detract from the areas character.

The Sherford River drains into Lytchett Bay in the west of the area and the Sherford River Character Area merges at the A351 bridge. The meadows and farmland to the north form a transition with the Morden/Lytchett Rolling Wooded Farmland Character Area. There is a more abrupt edge to the south west adjacent to the heathland character area. Large parts of the marsh land are designated as SPA and/or SSSI and some of the wet meadows and ditches as SNCI. There are few other trees in the landscape apart from those associated with the urban edges and there are a few hedged fields to the west.

The area is well used by the adjacent urban population and apart from the impact of the urban edges of Upton and Turlin Moor and a sewage works; there are no other built environmental features.

### **Landscape Condition**

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. Ecologically the area is significant due to the various wildlife designations and is in a favourable condition because of appropriate management. This contributes to overall condition. In places the hard urban edges detract from the condition of the area.

**Condition: Good to Moderate.**

## **Mid-Frome Valley Pasture**

### **Key characteristics**

- A flat, wide river valley flood meadow landscape with a meandering river channel.
- The variety of wetland habitats are characteristic landscape and wildlife features.
- Margins of trees along the water courses.
- Woodland define the edges of the valley in places.
- Grazed small fields abutting the river.
- Improved large arable fields on the margins subdivide the integrity of floodplain.
- Lanes link settlements along valley floor.
- Estate farmland and buildings at Moreton Park.
- Old water meadow field patterns and associated ditches.
- The historic setting of Wool Bridge and Woolbridge Manor

### **Landscape Character**

This is a wider alluvial valley than the Upper/Mid Piddle Valley, sandwiched between two lightly elevated areas of heath/scrub/farmland. The flat flood plain accommodates the meandering Frome and its many associated wet ditches, small tributaries and channels. 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. A significant number of semi natural woodland areas, conifer plantations and wet ditches are designated as SNCI.

The Frome itself and its associated wet meadows are designated as SSSIs. 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 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. The parkland landscape estate of Moreton Park is an important local feature.

### **Landscape Condition**

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.

There is no landscape management evident across the area and is the reason why the River Frome SSSI is in an unfavourable condition. The estate landscape at Moreton is well managed with evidence of both woodland and tree management. Urban fringe pressures and urban development uses detract from condition particularly to the south east of the area.

The intensively farmed nature of the landscape around Wool contributes to its open character but its hedges and hedgerow trees are in decline as they become redundant agriculturally. This decline will contribute to fragmentation of the landscape as no management is evident. The groups of trees around the settlement do contribute to overall condition and the historic environment features in the area contribute to its cultural integrity.

**Condition: Good to Moderate.**

## Sherford Valley Pasture

### Key characteristics

- A flat intensively farmed landscape.
- Well wooded river corridor with some significant mature trees.
- An inaccessible perception especially along the river corridor.
- Lytchett Minster is the main settlement with some characteristic parkland/estate features.
- Narrow hedge lined lanes.
- The group of buildings at the Sherford River crossing in Organford are key features.
- Farmer Palmers is a distinctive recreational feature.
- The A35 is a major visual and physical feature of influence

### Landscape Character

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. There is a distinctive corridor of trees and woodland along the river with some important mature trees. A large section of this stream side woodland is designated as SNCI. 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 eastern side of the area is framed by conifer plantation within which are small lakes which form the source of the Sherford River and are designated SNCIs. The narrow lanes are lined with hedgerows of mixed quality and height.

Lytchett Minster is the main settlement which dominates the eastern side of the area and 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. 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.

### Landscape Condition

The relatively intact corridor of woodland and trees associated with the river valley contributes to the integrity of this area despite the apparent lack of management. Elsewhere agricultural hedgerows are declining and are fragmented due to lack of appropriate management. Hedgerows and trees along rural lanes, however, appear to be in better condition. The importance of estate features such as avenue trees and woodland blocks contribute to the cultural condition of the landscape. The urban impacts caused by the road network, some poor edges to settlements and 'horsiculture' detract from quality and create fragmentation.

**Condition: Poor to Moderate.**



## Lower Piddle Valley Pasture

### Key characteristics

- Flat river valley flood meadow landscape.
- The meandering course of the River Piddle and its associated ditches and banks.
- Elevated river terraces and associated trees and scrub.
- Open pastoral expansive landscape with some views up the valley.
- The visually and physically intrusive transport corridors are major features.
- A largely undeveloped landscape used for informal recreation.
- A buffer between Wareham and Northport.

### Landscape Character

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. 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. The meandering course of the River Piddle and its associated ditches and banks in the broad alluvial valley floor are important key features.

It abuts a similar valley pasture character area to the south, that of the River Frome, with the original old town of Wareham strategically located on higher ground between the two. It is 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 is a small area of 'horsiculture' paddocks with an unkempt appearance and a residential park which both detract from the area's character.

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 which both sever the area and dominate the landscape. 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.

Large areas of the meadows are designated as a Ramsar site, being internationally important for wetland birds, as well as being a SSSI. Some of the wet ditches area designated as SNCI for their wetland habitat value.

### Landscape Condition

This is a fragmented landscape due to the severance caused by the road and rail corridors. There are other detractors caused by poorly located development, 'horsiculture' paddocks and some hard urban edges, all of which detract from overall condition. Ecologically and culturally the remaining areas of water meadow and associated features provide some integrity and continuity with the rest of the valley floor contributing to condition. The SSSIs in the west of the area are in a favourable condition but generally unfavourable in the east.

**Condition: Moderate to Good.**

## Puddletown Affpuddle Downs

### Key characteristics

- Chalk valley side sloping down to river.
- Open rolling arable landscape with some distinctive folds.
- Distinctive settlement pattern, form and materials.
- Narrow tree/hedge lined lanes linking the villages.
- Open views across Piddle valley.

- Planted ridgeline creates distinctive backdrop to area.
- The buildings grouped adjacent to the war memorial in Bladen Valley create a distinctive local feature

### **Landscape Character**

The eastern end of a wider character area to the west, comprising 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. The wooded plantation along the ridgeline to the south defines the area and provides a backdrop and the valley floor to the north provides the areas northern edge.

It opens out into the wider Piddle valley to the west towards Burleston. There are some open views west and north across the valley. 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 and the 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.

### **Landscape Condition**

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 his condition and integrity. However the decline in condition of hedgerows and their lack of perceived management in the intensively farmed areas together with the presence of horse paddocks near the settlement hedges detract from overall condition. Culturally this is part of an important river valley landscape.

**Condition: Good to Moderate**

## **West Dorset District**

### **South Dorset Downs**

#### **Landscape characteristics**

- The area is dominated by broad, open and rolling uplands, with gentle convex slopes and small broad valleys giving way to large open views and skylines.
- Large, straight-sided arable and grassland fields (late c18th / early c19th enclosures) with hazel hedgerows, with post and wire on higher ground.
- Extensive scattering of prehistoric monuments on higher ground.
- Network of stone walls towards the South Dorset Escarpment.
- Valley slopes with patches of semi-natural chalk grassland, old hazel coppice stands and occasional small broadleaved woodlands.
- Remnant winding chalk winterbourne with floodplain supporting occasional water meadows, wet woodlands, water cress beds and rough damp meadows.
- Straight rural lanes have an open character and characteristic finger posts and furniture.

#### **Detrimental features**

- Pylons and masts are visually prominent creating visual clutter and detracting from the characteristic open views.
- The main road corridors and some urban fringe areas can have an urbanising and detrimental impact in some places.
- Some boundaries block important open views.
- Neglected traditional barns and farm buildings in a poor state of repair.
- Conifer tree plantations have a negative visual impact.

- Intensive farming has led to loss of some landscape features with fragmented hedges and stone walls often replaced with post and wire fencing.

### **Crossways Gravel Plateau**

#### **Landscape characteristics**

- The scale of this area changes with its varied land use and topography. There are large-scale, wide views across the Frome valley from the plateau areas. This contrasts with the intimate landscape and filtered views from within the wooded and undulating land in the east. The differing agricultural uses along with areas of heathland, grassland and scrub gives a mosaic of varied land cover.
- There are significant areas of woodland, often with conifers and mixed plantations in irregularly shaped blocks. Small isolated woodlands and copses remain as deciduous planting. Streams are often associated with woodland and small ponds.
- Gorse, bracken and birch scrub, grassland and wetland habitats also form part of this mosaic.
- Small scale irregular shaped fields with a mix of arable and pasture farming, defined by thick, mixed hedges. Gorse and bracken are found in many hedges and give a consistent heathland feel throughout the area.
- Although much of the character area has a unifying 'heathland feel' only very limited areas actually remain as intact heathland.
- Deserted medieval villages at Broadmayne Church and Fryermayne, plus a significant Roman and Medieval site at Moigne Court. Evidence of Bronze Age activities with many round barrows, plus Iron Age and Roman habitation at Osmington Drove a medieval greenway defined by an avenue of Beech Trees.

#### **Detrimental features**

- Woodlands have been replanted with conifers. Large areas of woodland have been colonised by invasive rhododendron.
- Some hedgerow field boundaries are very patchy or missing, either replaced with post and wire fencing or simply left undefined.
- Some heathland is poorly maintained and does not link with surrounding heath habitats.
- Extensive sand and gravel pit workings particularly to the west of Crossways gives a sense of deterioration and neglect, and has removed evidence of previous field boundaries in some large areas.
- Urbanising impacts are noticeable at the edge of settlements where development has spread and in the case of Broadmayne and West Knighton merged the two settlements. Crossways is a temporary settlement that has had an urbanising influence on the surrounding rural area.
- A high voltage transmission line bisects the area and its cables and large pylons are often visually dominant.
- Some roads have lost their rural character.

### **Puddletown & Forest & Clyffe House**

#### **Landscape characteristics**

- Extensive tree cover at Puddletown Forest and Southover Heath dominates the area consisting of varied irregular shaped blocks of coniferous and mixed deciduous woodland. The vertical nature of the woodland enhances the sinuous and undulating landform.
- Species such as Bracken and Rhododendron are prevalent along the roadside.
- Rural roads and an intricate network of public rights of way and private access tracks provide access throughout the area. There are also the remains of a distinct straight Roman road that would have historically provided connection to the roman town of Dorchester, together with the modern A35 through Puddletown Forest.

- The field pattern is varied with evidence of both large regular planned enclosures, and smaller irregular fields of piecemeal enclosure, often reflected in the random edges of the woodland blocks.
- There are patches of lowland heath at Duddle Heath and Bhomepston Heath.
- Bronze Age features such as the bowl barrows at Rainbarrows on Duddle Heath.
- Few ponds scattered at lower and flatter elevations.

#### **Detrimental features**

- Straight edges of tree blocks and coniferous plantations appear unnatural the landform.
- Hedgerow field boundaries are poorly maintained in places.
- Some heathland is poorly maintained and does not link with surrounding heath habitats.

### **Frome & Piddle Valley Pasture**

#### **Landscape characteristics**

- A medium scale flat, predominantly open, landscape that gives long views both across and along the wide valley floor.
- The meandering river channels cut through the wide, flat floodplain and connect to a complex network of side streams and ditches. Lines of individual trees, trace the lines of watercourses.
- There are numerous remnants of historic water meadow systems clearly visible although traditional water meadow management is no longer practised.
- Important wetland habitats including wet pasture, alder and willow carr and marsh are found on the valley floor. The aquatic and bankside vegetation of the River Frome shows a downstream trend from a purely chalk stream community type to a lowland mixed geology community.
- The river valleys have a high potential for archaeological remains due to the lack of disturbance from modern development.
- Fields on the valley floor are bordered by hedgerows and the network of wet ditches and streams.
- Mixed hedgerows border the fields on the higher river terraces. Some boundaries marked by traditional metal estate fencing.
- Occasional small, wet woodlands and dense copses of oak, hazel and holly. Neutral grassland and mixed broadleaf and yew woodland are important lowland habitats found within the floodplain.

#### **Detrimental features**

- Uncharacteristic planting including lines of poplar trees that are conspicuous in the landscape.
- Electricity pylons crossing the Frome valley in the east are conspicuous in this flat open landscape.
- Urban influences are apparent in parts around Dorchester.
- Boundary fencing neglected and in poor condition.
- Main roads and their associated signing and lighting have an impact around the Dorchester area.
- Sections of hedgerow have been lost and replaced with post and wire fencing.
- Historic loss of traditional orchards around settlements.
- Decline in condition and extent of seminatural features within the floodplain, for example former extensive wet woodland has reduced in size and traditional water meadow management is no longer practised.

## **Dorchester Downs**

### **Landscape characteristics**

- Broad open rolling uplands with convex slopes and incised dry valleys give way to large open views and skylines.
- Extensive scattering of prehistoric monuments on higher ground.
- Large, straight-sided arable and grassland fields (late c18th / early c19th enclosures) with hazel hedgerows, or post and wire on higher ground.
- Occasional small broad leaved woodlands and trees on upland slopes provide a sense of enclosure.
- Complex twisting valley slopes with patches of semi-natural chalk grassland and old hazel coppice stands.
- Parkland character with estate railings and parkland trees on the valley floors.
- Straight rural lanes of open character, with characteristic finger posts and furniture.

### **Detrimental features**

- Pylons and masts are visually prominent creating visual clutter and detracting from the characteristic open views.
- The main road corridors and some urban fringe areas can have an urbanising and detrimental impact in some places.
- Some boundaries block important open views.
- Neglected traditional barns and farm buildings in a poor state of repair.
- Some sections of hedgerow have become fragmented and replaced with post and wire fencing.

## **Cerne & Piddle Valleys and Downland**

### **Landscape characteristics**

- Open and expansive chalk downland incised by flat-bottomed valleys and associated branching chalk streams and dry coombes.
- Regular pattern of large-scale arable fields (typical of planned late c18th / early c19th modern enclosure), with trimmed hazel hedgerow boundaries at lower elevations and post and wire fencing at higher elevations offering long distance views.
- Many prehistoric monuments such as barrows and prehistoric field systems have survived and are often visible as humps along the skyline.
- Occasional small regular native woodlands and tree groups associated with built form and corners of fields, or functioning as shelterbelts.
- On the south facing dry slopes, surviving patches of semi-natural chalk habitat support a rich diversity of grassland, scrub and woodland including relic hazel coppice. Soil creep is often visible across the steep valley sides.
- Small-scale pattern of pasture fields within the valley floor. The fertile alluvial soils support a diversity of vegetation and wet grazing pasture enclosed by thick, species rich hedgerows and occasional hedgerow trees. Historic water meadows are evident as subtle field patterns and some water meadow channels survive.
- Linear woods of riparian species such as willow and alder follow watercourses flanked by wet sedge and rush.
- The A35 road corridor is a major feature in this open landscape.
- Lanes have a rural character with small humped bridges, and traditional fingerpost signs. Straight Roman roads radiate from nearby Dorchester.

## **Detrimental features**

- The A35 corridor has localised major impact within this open landscape. The majority of the road in this area is dual carriageway with the associated grade separated junctions and substantial, very angular cuttings. The associated noise and lighting also add to the impact.
- Pylons and masts are visually prominent creating visual clutter and interrupting the characteristic open views.
- Unsympathetic *Leylandii* and conifer planting has a detrimental impact on landscape character.
- A growth in the use of pastures for horse grazing is changing the rural character of settlement edges.
- Historic loss of traditional orchards around settlements.
- Some traditional barns and farm buildings are in a poor state of repair.

## **Christchurch Borough**

### **Avon Terrace**

#### **Main Characteristics**

- Wide expanse of flat landscape across deep alluvial soils.
- Mixed agricultural production of arable and livestock.
- Medium scale enclosure landscape of low hedged/fenced fields and occasional shelter belt plantations.
- Overall area enclosed by rising ground to the east and rail embankment to the south. Low horizon and limited views across and out of the landscape.
- Principal trees are oak and field maple, within hedge lines. Scotts pine within shelterbelts.
- Farmsteads and settlements sit low, often tightly grouped, in the landscape with few visually dominant buildings. Occasional large modern barn constructions are also contained within landscape.
- The landscape is not heavily populated or developed. With quiet minor roads and footpaths, it is possible to feel some isolation (relative to the other parts of the Borough) within parts of the area.
- Glimpsed views of urban development, general noise intrusion, and intrusion of the railway result in a degree of connection to the modern townscape. This is not a totally unspoilt landscape. It is however accessible and reasonably well connected as a recreational resource.
- Historic development pattern remains evident as the boundary to Burton and the footprint of Winkton. Informal linear patterns of agricultural cottages and farm buildings reflect rural setting. Expanded area of Burton has compromised the isolated entirely rural character of the village. The older area provides a valuable contrast to more recent expansion.
- Character of original village strongly related to general density of buildings and spaces around and between plots.

### **River Avon Flood Plain**

#### **Main characteristics**

- Low lying flood plain landscape with meandering natural river course.
- Tree cover of riverside willow trees and occasional blocks of willow carr woodland.
- Pastures formed with fencing and small-scale ditches. These include permanent grasslands and water meadows management areas supported by the ESA project).

- Low key agricultural management and irregular field patterns give the landscape an informal character
- Absence of buildings, roadways and other structures help reinforce this as a semi natural landscape.
- The northern part of the flood plain is inaccessible and remote from a range of urban influences.
- The southern area is slightly more accessible but at the same time more influenced by the urban area.
- The high water quality and natural chemistry of the river supports equally important nature conservation interests.

### **St. Catherine's Hill – Hurn Forest**

#### **Main characteristics**

- Localised ridge of high ground in the south fading out into the more gently rolling landform to the north.
- Thin poor soils over sandstone resulting in free drainage on the high ground. Areas of ponds and wet heath on lower slopes.
- Land cover of heathland and pine forest with occasional semi natural pockets of birch and oak woodland.
- Recognised nature conservation and cultural heritage interests and assets.
- Accessible and well used recreational landscape.
- Background influences of the urban area with trunk road traffic and aircraft noise.
- Prominent ridgeline and evergreen tree cover provide key landmark in local views and vantage point for views back across the Borough and over Bournemouth

### **Moors River**

#### **Main Characteristics**

- Small scale landscape of secluded valley.
- River heavily contained by vegetation.
- Narrow flood plain divided into small water meadow pastures.
- Semi-natural tree cover of willow, oak in scrub woodland and copses.
- Private landscape with no public access

### **River Stour Terrace**

#### **Main Characteristics**

- Narrow 'shelf' of Terrace landscape previously extended across the Airfield boundary
- Medium scale Parliamentary Enclosure landscape with regular field pattern
- Hedge lines managed as flail cut native hedges with mature oaks as hedgerow trees
- Adjoining parkland landscape of Hurn Court provides glimpsed views of more formal and varied treescape
- Fringe of willow scrub areas on boundary to River flood plain
- Minor lanes and farm tracks define the riverside edge to the Terrace and provide recreational access links.
- Views limited by low lying landscapes, hedgerow cover and enclosing tree cover

## **Bournemouth International Airport and East Parley Common**

### **Main Characteristics**

- Open expanse of managed operational land presents a tidy frontage to public areas.
- The future terminal development will bring the foot print of development out towards the main road and proposed landscape works will enclose the site from the roadway.
- Commercial development areas of very poor and uninviting visual quality.
- Pockets of nature conservation interest are retained within the operational areas.
- Semi natural woodland cover of oak/birch scrub provides some enclosure to the site.
- Areas outside of Airport boundary provide some level of recreational access to the north of the airport.
- Area to south-east of airport provides an essential buffer area to the Moors River SSSI, Hurn Conservation Area and listed building.

## **Lower Stour Valley**

### **Landscape Character**

- Low-lying modest scale flood plain contained by river terraces
- Flood plain has developed as a winding corridor with meandering river channel
- Evidence of water management for mills and water meadows, along with drainage ditches as land improvement
- Regular field pattern broken by natural river course and irregular tree cover
- Absence of buildings, roadways or other 'historic' structures within flood plain area
- Minor roads and tracks located on terrace edges provide views down into and across the area
- Modern intrusions include A338, large scale sewage works and overhead power lines.

## **North Dorset District**

### **Mid Stour Valley**

#### **Key characteristics**

- A flat and wide flood plain with gently rising sides to the northeast and steeper on the south western side.
- Meandering river and associated sub-channels, ditches and streams.
- Distinctive linear settlement pattern along the sides of the flood plain with locally distinctive use of flint and stone.
- The road network follows either side of the valley floor at the junction with the chalk downland landscape.
- Small copses, wet woodland, tree groups and individual trees follow the river course and the edges of the area.
- Important historic crossing points, for example, at Blandford.
- Provides an important setting and context for Blandford.
- Steep valley side plantation woodland (The Cliff) and the parkland landscape at Bryanston are key features.
- The remnants of traditional river valley features, such as old withy beds, oxbow lakes, mills, weirs and the water meadows are all important features across the area.



## Lower Winterbourne Valley

### Key characteristics

- A flat valley floor with sloping sides up to chalk downland on either side.
- Narrowly defined stream corridor.
- Winding ribbons of trees along the stream corridor.
- The road network and settlement pattern follows the stream corridor.
- Historic river crossings are the focus of settlements.
- Important tree groups at settlement edges.
- The parkland landscape of Watcombe Park is an important local feature.
- Winterborne Whitechurch is the main settlement and a key feature on the valley floor at the junction with the A354.
- Locally distinctive boundary and building materials used, such as brick and flint.
- Distinctive built features such as Clenston Church, the wall around Whatcombe Park and small terrace of farm cottages.