

## 2. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1.1 The area of West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland stands out from many other parts of the country for its natural environment and built heritage. The plan area contains a diverse range of natural and built environments of exceptional quality. Much of the area is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and a major part of the coastline is designated as a Heritage Coast and World Heritage Site. There are many important wildlife habitats and protected species. And many buildings and landscapes are of architectural or historic interest.
- 2.1.2 The local plan policies seek to protect these and other assets in the plan area in a manner commensurate with their status and giving appropriate weight to their significance. It is recognised that their active management and enhancement is to be encouraged as part of safeguarding their future, and continuing the support they provide to the local economy through making the area an attractive place to live, work and visit.
- 2.1.3 The impacts of climate change present increasing challenges, and the local plan policies seek to strengthen our resilience to key issues affecting the area such as flooding and coastal erosion. We can achieve a lot through good design, in terms of promoting better places for people to live, reducing our vulnerability to extreme weather events and other potential hazards.
- 2.1.4 The quality of design is key to making places that last. It is important that any new development responds positively to the character of its surrounds. Local distinctiveness and a sensitive response to local character goes beyond aesthetic considerations, covering issues such as the landscape or townscape setting, the pattern of streets and spaces, organisation of uses, plot patterns and the scale and positioning of buildings.

#### STRATEGIC APPROACH

Development should protect and enhance the natural environment - its landscape, seascapes and geological conservation interests, its wildlife and habitats and important local green spaces - by directing development away from sensitive areas that cannot accommodate change. Where development is needed and harm cannot be avoided, appropriate mitigation to off-set any adverse impact to the landscape, wildlife and green infrastructure network will be required.

High priority will be given to protecting and enhancing the area's heritage assets- including its Listed Building and Conservation Areas, and other features with local historic or cultural associations, particularly where it contributes to the area's local distinctiveness.

Development will be directed away from areas where there is likely to be significant risk to human health or the wider environment, through flooding, coastal erosion and land instability, air and water pollution

Development should be of high quality design to help achieve sustainable, safe and inclusive communities, enhancing quality of life for residents and visitors, and designed in keeping with or to positively contribute towards the local identity of the area

## 2.2 PROTECTING AND ENHANCING OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

### LANDSCAPE, SEASCAPE AND SITES OF GEOLOGICAL INTEREST

#### LANDSCAPE AND SEASCAPE

- 2.2.1 The plan area covers a range of diverse landscapes, each with its own characteristics and sense of place. Areas of higher ground allow uninterrupted panoramic views of the surrounding landscapes. Within the landscape are numerous individual landmarks, such as hilltop earthworks, monuments, field patterns with associated hedges, banks and stone walls, woodlands and tree clumps, that help to contribute an individuality and sense of place at a local scale. Many of the more rural parts and some of the coastal areas have an undisturbed feeling and sense of tranquillity that are hard to find in our modern world.
- 2.2.2 From the rolling chalk downland to the more secluded clay vales, much of the countryside is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Some of these landscapes have been captured by famous artists, such as Turner and Constable. The designation gives statutory recognition to the national importance of the landscape. A strategic framework for management of the Dorset AONB is set out in the policies of the Dorset AONB Management Plan.
- 2.2.3 The councils will have special regard to the conservation of the area's natural beauty in development management decisions. The cumulative and indirect, as well as the direct, impacts of development need to be taken into account, such as changes to drainage which could affect the landscape down stream. Effects of development outside, but affecting the AONB (within its "setting"), will also need to be carefully considered. National policy guidance gives great weight to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and states that planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. It suggests that consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:
- the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
  - the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
  - any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.
- 2.2.4 Away from the main coastal resorts, much of the coast and a wide inland strip is defined as Heritage Coast, a non-statutory designation protecting the finest stretches of undeveloped coast in England and Wales. The objectives of the designation relate to the conservation and enhancement of the area's natural beauty, enhancing the public's enjoyment and appreciation of the area, the environmental health of the inshore waters, and the social and economic needs of the area. Management of the Heritage Coast is achieved through the Dorset AONB Management Plan. Natural England is working to create the England Coast Path, a new national trail around all of England's open coast. This project will help to improve public access to, and enjoyment of, the coast.
- 2.2.5 Areas that lie outside these national designations are not significantly less outstanding, and are worthy of conservation and enhancement.
- 2.2.6 Landscape character assessments of the area have been carried out and provide information on the different landscape character types of the area. The qualities of the coastal strip have also been considered in more detail through the Dorset Coast Land and

Seascape Character Assessment. These assessments will be used as a basis to guide decisions about whether development is appropriate in the landscape and provide a framework for the provision of appropriate landscape mitigation.

- 2.2.7 Where development may be visually prominent or adversely affect landscape character, production of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, a strategic landscape masterplan and/or a landscape management plan detailing mitigation proposals may be required.

## GEOLOGY

- 2.2.8 The geology and soils of the plan area are an important resource. They provide fertile soils for agriculture and valuable minerals; and the geological exposures are of educational benefit. There are extensive areas of outcropping minerals within the plan area. To ensure these resources remain available, a safeguarding policy is implemented through Dorset County Council's minerals local plan .
- 2.2.9 Most of the coastline is part of the Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site. The World Heritage site was designated by UNESCO in 2001 in recognition of its worldwide outstanding geological and scientific value. It is often referred to as the Jurassic Coast, but actually it represents a unique geological 'walk through time' spanning the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous periods. The changes in the cliffs and rocks, and the ongoing coastal processes, including erosion, that continue to reveal more insights into this era, are key to what is important about the coast. Its wider landscape setting is also important to its presentation and appreciation.
- 2.2.10 The World Heritage site and its setting are protected through a wide range of international, national and local designations made either for geological, wildlife or landscape value, providing long term security for the natural values of the site. It has a management plan which sets out the significance of the area and how the various partners aim to manage and promote its enjoyment now and the future. Proposals that would better enhance or reveal the significance of the site will be supported.
- 2.2.11 At a local level, Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS) are protected for the scientific and educational value of exposures. There is sometimes potential for designation of alternative sites and the creation of new exposures. The policy therefore allows some flexibility in protecting these sites, except where the features concerned are not capable of being created elsewhere.
- 2.2.12

### **ENV 1. LANDSCAPE, SEASCAPE AND SITES OF GEOLOGICAL INTEREST**

- i) The plan area's exceptional landscapes and seascapes and geological interest will be protected, taking into account the objectives of the Dorset AONB Management Plan and World Heritage Site Management Plan. Development which would harm the character, special qualities or natural beauty of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Beauty or Heritage Coast, including their characteristic landscape quality and diversity, uninterrupted panoramic views, individual landmarks, and sense of tranquillity and remoteness, will not be permitted.**
- ii) Development should be located and designed so that it does not detract from and, where reasonable, enhances the local landscape character. Proposals that conserve, enhance and restore locally distinctive landscape features will be encouraged. Where proposals relate to sites where existing development is of visually poor quality, opportunities should be taken to secure visual enhancements. Development that significantly adversely affects the character or visual quality of the local landscape or seascape will not be permitted.**

- iii) **Appropriate mitigation measures will be required to minimise adverse effects of development on the landscape and seascape.**
- iv)
- v) **Development should maintain Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS) for their scientific and educational value. Development that significantly adversely affects local geological features will not be permitted unless comparable sites can be identified or created elsewhere or the impact adequately mitigated through other measures.**

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## WILDLIFE AND HABITATS

- 2.2.13 The plan area includes a diverse range of habitats and associated species, many of which are protected through law. Some areas are of international significance, including the Fleet (an important site for breeding and overwintering birds), lowland heath areas around Crossways in the east, calcareous grasslands in the Cerne and Sydling Valleys, and ancient ash and alder woods. Coastal and marine areas are also proposed for protection at a European level. Many further areas are important at the national or local level. All of the sites designated (and those subject to consultation at the time of publication) are shown on the Proposals Map. Further sites may be designated during the lifetime of this plan.
- 2.2.14 It is important that we take account of the need to plan for this level of biodiversity to thrive at both a local and much larger, landscape-scale, through the appropriate protection of key sites, priority habitats and species, and the strengthening of local ecological networks.
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- 2.2.17 The protection of nationally or internationally designated wildlife sites will be given great weight in planning decisions. The protection of internationally designated wildlife sites through policy ENV2 will be the over-riding policy consideration where development may cause a significant adverse impact to such a site. The strategies set out in table 2.2 have been adopted to safeguard important internationally designated wildlife sites that are known to be sensitive to certain types of development. As and when further issues arise that may adversely impact such sites, the approach to development will be carefully considered and if appropriate, a relevant strategy produced to guide new development.

| <b>Table 2.1 Sites Designated for Nature Conservation Importance</b> | <b>Site Designation</b>  | <b>Explanation</b>  |
|--|--|---|
| <b>INTERNATIONAL</b>   | <b>RAMSAR SITES</b><br>Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat, held at Ramsar, 1971  | Sites of international importance as wetlands, particularly for their populations of migratory or wintering waterfowl.  |
| <b>INTERNATIONAL</b>   | <b>SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS (SPAs)</b><br>EC Council Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds, 1979   | Habitats of international importance for birds, designated to ensure the survival and reproduction of rare breeding and migratory species. Together with SACs they form a network of internationally important sites known as "Natura 2000" throughout the European Union.                                      |
| <b>INTERNATIONAL</b>   | <b>SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION (SACs)</b><br>EC Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, 1992 (The Habitats Directive) | Sites of international importance as natural habitats, designated to conserve habitats and species which are rare or threatened within the European Union. Sites hosting habitats or species which are particularly threatened have "priority" status. These sites also form part of the "Natura 2000" network. |
| <b>NATIONAL</b>  | <b>NATIONAL NATURE RESERVES (NNRs)</b><br>1949 National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act, or 1981 Wildlife & Countryside Act                                      | Sites of key national, or international, biological or geological importance which are managed primarily for nature conservation. They are owned or leased by Natural England or approved bodies.   |
| <b>NATIONAL</b>  | <b>SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (SSSIs)</b><br>Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)  | SSSIs collectively form a nationally important series of sites of biological or geological value and are notified by Natural England in accordance with published guidelines.   |
| <b>COUNTY</b>  | <b>SITES OF NATURE CONSERVATION INTEREST (SNCIs)</b><br>Non-statutory wildlife sites   | Wildlife sites which are important in a county context. In Dorset they are selected in accordance with guidelines published by the Dorset Wildlife Trust. The guidelines are similar to those for SSSI selection, although the thresholds are lower.  |
| <b>LOCAL</b>   | <b>LOCAL NATURE RESERVES (LNRs)</b>  | LNRs are sites of at least local importance for nature conservation,  |

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|--|---|---|
|  | S.21 of the 1949 National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act | which are declared and usually managed by local authorities |
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- 2.2.18 Wildlife is not confined to designated sites. Development sites may contain or be adjacent to features which support wildlife or provide “stepping stones” for species. Such features should be retained or restored and appropriately managed. A number of rare or threatened species are also found in the plan area, including sand lizards, great crested newts, bats, otters, dormice and water voles. It is a criminal offence to kill, injure, sell or take protected species, or to intentionally damage, destroy or destruct their places of shelter. It is the developer’s responsibility to take reasonable measures to ascertain whether there are protected species on a site.
- 2.2.19 Where land proposed for development may be of wildlife value, applicants will be expected to provide appropriate survey information.
- 2.2.20 The cumulative and indirect, as well as the direct, impacts of development need to be taken into account. For example, excessive visitor pressure can lead to trampling, erosion and disturbance. Increasing traffic can also create noise and adversely affect air quality, as well as severance of important migration routes for land animals. Consideration will also be given to whether any adverse impact to such sites could be avoided through meeting the need for that development elsewhere. Some habitats, such as ancient woodlands, cannot be replaced.
- 2.2.21 Where development is permitted the council will seek to ensure that it does not adversely affect the conservation interests of sites and species through the use of appropriate conditions to prevent damaging impacts, secure long term protection and provide necessary compensation. Where development would cause significant harm to local biodiversity, and this cannot adequately mitigated, the application will be refused. Development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity are encouraged. Where there are opportunities for enhancements which benefit nature conservation and biodiversity the council will seek appropriate measures to secure this.
- 2.2.22 Where wildlife sites are relatively isolated from each other and from the wider countryside by urban development, it will be important to protect and enhance the remaining wildlife corridors. Work is needed to identify key wildlife corridors and local nature improvement areas through the green infrastructure strategy (see policy ENV 3), giving appropriate consideration to the ecological network across the area and how it connects to adjoining areas.
- 2.2.23 Locally coordinated projects such as Wild Purbeck, Pastures New and the Dorset Wild Rivers Project, the continuing enhancement and extension of the green infrastructure network, together with the development of major sites incorporating areas of open space managed for biodiversity, the restoration of habitats and features within or close to the site and the planting of trees and woodlands, will provide the main opportunities for biodiversity gains during the lifetime of this plan.

**Table 2.2: Strategies to safeguard important internationally designated wildlife sites**

| International site                | Development type / issue  | Strategy   |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Dorset Heathlands important sites | Residential development involving a net increase in the local resident or | The following forms of development (including changes of use) will not be permitted within a 400m buffer around protected heathland: |

| International site   | Development type / issue  | Strategy  |
|--|---|---|
| <p>which represent some of the biggest and finest remaining areas of lowland heathland in the UK</p> | <p>staying visitor population, or other developments leading to greater recreational pressure on the heathlands causing disturbance to key species.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Residential (C3 or C4 of the Use Classes Order or similar) development that would involve a net increase in homes;</li> <li>- Tourist accommodation including built tourist accommodation, caravan and camping sites;</li> <li>- Sites providing accommodation for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show People (permanent and transit); and</li> <li>- Equestrian-related development that may directly or indirectly result in an increased adverse impact on the heathland.</li> </ul> <p>Between 400 metres and 5 kilometres of a protected heathland, development will only be permitted where it takes all necessary steps to avoid or mitigate any adverse effects on the heathlands. There are a range of mitigation measures which may include the provision of areas of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), access and parking management, warden services, monitoring and education.</p> <p>In the case of large scale development, a bespoke mitigation package agreed with Natural England and including the delivery of SANG will be required. Mitigation measures will be expected to be provided in perpetuity and operational before the occupation of new development.</p> <p>Where mitigation is required for smaller scale development, this will be delivered through financial contributions as outlined in the Planning Obligations SPD (and its subsequent replacement) – either in the form of a planning obligation or the community infrastructure levy. The council will ensure that the monies collected are directed towards delivering identified Dorset Heathlands SPA and Ramsar and Dorset Heaths SAC mitigation projects.</p> <p>The provision of mitigation measures and their impact on the protected heathland will be monitored. If necessary, this strategy will be reviewed in light of the results.</p> <p>Proposals which alter patterns of recreational use on existing open spaces within 5km of the European Heathland sites must comply with environmental law by ensuring that significant adverse impacts upon internationally designated wildlife sites are avoided.</p> |
| <p><b>Poole Harbour</b></p>  | <p>Any development in the</p>   | <p>Development will only be permitted where it makes</p>  |

| International site                                       | Development type / issue   | Strategy  |
|--|--|---|
| important site for breeding passage and wintering birds. | Poole Harbour catchment that may potentially contribute to an increase of nutrient loading (nitrogen) discharge into Poole Harbour, primarily through sewage treatment and disposal. | <p>provision to avoid or mitigate any adverse effects of nutrient loading on the ecological integrity of the protected Poole Harbour sites, either as part of the development or through a contribution towards mitigation measures elsewhere.</p> <p>A strategic approach to the mitigation of anticipated adverse effects on these sites is being developed in conjunction with neighbouring authorities also affected (Borough of Poole and Purbeck District Council) the Environment Agency and Wessex Water to ensure that mitigation measures are coordinated and consistent, and to secure their delivery.</p> <p>Mitigation measures may include solutions that tackle point sources from sewage treatment works, or those that deal with diffuse pollution from agriculture.</p> |

## ENV 2. WILDLIFE AND HABITATS

- i) **Proposals that conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported.**
- ii) **Internationally designated wildlife sites (including proposed sites and sites acquired for compensatory measures), will be safeguarded from development that could adversely affect them, unless there are reasons of overriding public interest why the development should proceed and there is no alternative acceptable solution.**
- iii) **Development that is likely to have an adverse effect upon the integrity of the Poole Harbour and Dorset Heaths International designations will only be permitted where there is provision to avoid or secure effective mitigation of the potential adverse effects in accordance with the strategy in Table 2.2.**
- iv) **Development that is likely to have an adverse effect upon nationally designated wildlife sites will not be permitted unless the benefits, in terms of other objectives, clearly outweigh the impacts on the special features of the site and broader nature conservation interests and there is no alternative acceptable solution.**
- v) **In other locations, including locally identified wildlife sites, where significant harm to nature conservation interests cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated or compensated for, development will not be permitted. Features of nature conservation interest should be safeguarded by development. Proposals that would result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, such as ancient woodlands and veteran trees, will be refused unless the need for and public benefits of the development site clearly outweigh the loss.**
- vi) **Development of major sites will be expected to demonstrate no net loss in biodiversity, and take opportunities to help connect and improve the wider ecological networks.**
- vii) **Development that is likely to have an adverse effect on internationally protected species will not be permitted unless there are reasons of overriding public interest why the development should proceed and there is no alternative acceptable solution. Development on sites supporting other protected species will only be permitted where adequate provision can be made for the retention of the species or its safe relocation.**



**Monitoring Indicator:** change in areas designated for their intrinsic nature conservation value.

**Target:** net increase

**Monitoring Indicator:** condition of sites designated for their nature conservation interest.

**Target:** net increase

**Monitoring Indicator:** Heathland bird Populations. **Target:** no net decrease

**Monitoring Indicator:** Productivity of heathland birds. **Target:** no net decrease

## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE, INCLUDING IMPORTANT LOCAL GREEN SPACES

- 2.2.24 Green infrastructure refers to a network of spaces and linkages that are generally valued for their wildlife, geological, landscape or historic importance and may also have recreational value and help reduce flood risk. Although often important in their own right, when considered as a holistic network they provide much greater benefits.
- 2.2.25 Developing a coherent green infrastructure network is a key step towards a more comprehensive and effective approach to managing these spaces, and working in partnerships with a range of organisations from landowners and local communities through to statutory consultees such as the Environment Agency and Natural England.
- 2.2.26 The councils will work together with local communities, developers and other relevant partners, such as town and parish councils, to develop a green infrastructure strategy for the plan area, details of when this work will commence will be given in the Local Development Scheme. This will identify those areas to be included in the green infrastructure network, which can include small open gaps which prevent neighbouring communities that have distinct and separate characters from merging into one another, areas of particular local landscape or townscape importance, historically important spaces such as those identified within Conservation Area Appraisals, and the more urban key wildlife corridors and local nature conservation sites referred to in the above policy. The reasons for their inclusion will be clearly recorded. Local communities may identify further areas of particular importance to them through neighbourhood development plans, making clear the reason/s for their designation. Such a network is intended to support, but not prevent, the long-term development of communities. The resulting green infrastructure network will be given significant protection from development.
- 2.2.27 In the interim period, until such time as the green infrastructure network is defined, the following policy will apply to:
- Areas / Land of Local Landscape Importance (as identified in the previously adopted local plans)
  - Portland Coastline (as identified in the previously adopted local plan for Weymouth and Portland)
  - Important Open Gaps (as identified in the previously adopted local plan for Weymouth and Portland)
  - Historically important spaces (as identified in adopted Conservation Area Appraisals)
  - Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, Local Nature Reserves and Ancient Woodlands, Lorton Valley and Portland Quarries nature parks.

Information on these areas and their special features may be found in a number of other published documents.

### **ENV 3. GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK**

- i) The councils will work together with local communities and other relevant partners to develop a green infrastructure strategy for the plan area.**
- ii) Development that would cause harm to the green infrastructure network or undermine the reasons for an area's inclusion within the network will not be permitted unless clearly outweighed by other considerations.**
- iii) Development proposals that promote geodiversity and biodiversity within this network of spaces and provide improved access and recreational use (where appropriate) should be supported.**

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### **2.3 PROTECTING AND ENHANCING OUR HERITAGE ASSETS**

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- 2.3.1 Much of the area retains strong links with its past heritage, providing a sense of continuity, local identity and pride. This includes a rich historic and built heritage largely protected through Listed Building and Conservation Area status. There are also a large number of heritage assets that are of local architectural or historic interest and importance that add to the richness of the local built environment. In recognition of this interest, and in order to ensure that the character of these buildings is respected by development, the Councils have prepared lists of locally important heritage assets. There is also a multitude of archaeological sites and features. The South Dorset Ridgeway is a fine example of this, with a concentration of prehistoric barrows. There are also cultural associations with some of these places through the works of authors such as Thomas Hardy, William Barnes and Jane Austen and painters such as Fra Newbery.
- 2.3.2 Heritage assets cannot be replaced, they provide wide social, cultural, environmental and economic benefits. Every year English Heritage publishes a list of those heritage assets most at risk of being lost as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development. Each council has a commitment to the management of heritage assets through the ongoing production of conservation area appraisals and the removal of assets from the 'at risk' register.
- 2.3.3 Wherever possible, the councils' strategy is to ensure that historic buildings and other heritage assets that make a positive contribution to local character are put to an appropriate and viable use that is consistent with their conservation. These assets can be harmed through development, either directly or by an indirect impact to the setting. Such harm should be exceptional and will require clear and convincing justification. The effect of development on the significance of a heritage asset will be taken into account in determining planning applications, and proposals will be expected to include available information sources to help evaluate any such impact. Where development is likely to impact on a heritage asset, a statement of heritage significance must be submitted with the application. The information required in the statement will be proportionate to the importance of the asset and no more than is needed to understand the potential impact. It should normally include:
- reference to the Dorset Historic Environment Record (maintained by Dorset County Council)
  - information on the purpose of works / justification for the development
  - a description of the built heritage asset and its setting, including its historical context and evolution (identifying any key phases when additions or alterations have taken place). Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of or damage to a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset will not be taken into account in any decision.

- an assessment of its overall significance, and the significance of the particular element/s affected by the proposal, identifying the degree of harm if any.

2.3.4 Development that makes a positive contribution to, or better reveals the significance of the heritage asset, will be encouraged.

## ARCHAEOLOGY

2.3.5 Today's archaeological remains reflect human activity over thousands of years. The plan area is particularly rich in archaeological remains, which include burial grounds, farms and field systems, defence installations and industrial sites, lime-kilns, lighthouses and older quarry workings. Archaeological sites are an important educational, recreational and tourist resource and the councils will encourage steps to secure their appropriate management and interpretation.

2.3.6 Many archaeological sites are legally protected in whole or part through designation as Scheduled Monuments, in which case the granting of planning permission will be contingent on approval by the Secretary of State. There are also sites of regional or county importance. The level of protection afforded to these sites will depend upon:

- The intrinsic importance of the remains and their settings;
- The need for development and availability of alternative sites;
- The opportunities for mitigating measures and whether the remains are preserved in situ;
- The potential benefits, particularly to education, recreation and tourism

2.3.7 The area covered by the plan has significant potential for undesignated archaeological remains and a great deal of archaeological material has yet to be discovered.

2.3.8 Applications affecting sites of archaeological importance must be accompanied by the results of an archaeological assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation in order that an informed decision can be made on the application. This may also be required in areas of archaeological potential. Advice is available from the County Archaeologist.

## CONSERVATION AREAS

2.3.9 Councils have a duty to designate areas of special architectural or historic interest as Conservation Areas and make sure that their character and appearance is preserved or enhanced. In designating Conservation Areas, consideration is given not only to individual and groups of buildings but also to their surrounding townscape, landscape and setting.

2.3.10 Conservation Area designation means that greater control is exercised over new development which affects the area and its setting, including the demolition of buildings and the lopping, topping or felling of trees. In assessing proposals that may affect a Conservation Area, the councils will have particular regard to:

- avoiding the loss of buildings and features which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the area;
- the characteristics of proposed development (including its function) and how it reinforces local distinctiveness;
- the relationship of the new development to historic development patterns both in terms of the siting of buildings on plots and the form and layout of streets or the settlement as a whole;
- the appropriateness of the proposed design and use of the development and its likely impact on any built or landscape features which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

- 2.3.11 Adverse impacts on buildings, open spaces (including garden areas and the setting of Important Local Buildings), views or features (including trees, walls and architectural features such as windows, doors, chimneys, porches, canopies and ironmongery) which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the area, will not normally be permitted.
- 2.3.12 Applications for total or partial demolition of an Important Local Building (as identified in the Conservation Area Appraisals) or an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of a conservation area, will be required to explain the planning benefits of redevelopment and justify why the repair and retention is not viable ..
- 2.3.13 Proposals for demolition will be refused where this would lead to an unsightly gap in the street scene or where there are no suitable arrangements in place to provide an approved replacement development in keeping with the character of the conservation area. Where consent is granted, a planning condition will be imposed to prevent implementation until a contract has been let for the approved replacement development.

#### LISTED BUILDINGS

- 2.3.14 Buildings are 'listed' by English Heritage as being of special architectural or historic interest. They are protected by law. Listing covers the whole property, inside and out, and any object or structure fixed to it, and any object or structure within the building's curtilage that was built prior to 1 July 1948.
- 2.3.15 Owners of Listed Buildings should keep them in good repair. If a Listed Building falls into disrepair and remains neglected, the councils can serve an urgent works notice or a repairs notice on the owner specifying what work needs to be done. The councils may carry out works and seek to recover the costs from the owner in certain circumstances.
- 2.3.16 A Listed Building can be harmed through inappropriate development. Even minor alterations and extensions or development within its setting, can potentially adversely affect the significance of a Listed Building. The original plan form, roof, walls and openings as well as interior and exterior features should be retained. The replacement of doors, windows and other features with alternatives that harm the character or significance of the building will not normally be permitted.
- 2.3.17 The best way to conserve Listed Buildings is to keep them in use, ideally the use for which they were originally designed. Consent will not be given for the demolition of any Listed Building without clear and compelling evidence from the applicant that the building cannot be conserved, including that adequate efforts have been made to retain the building in its current use or a compatible alternative use, and that its redevelopment will provide substantial planning benefits, including economic regeneration or environmental enhancement. The evidence should include an assessment of the condition of the building, costs of repair and what alternatives have been considered and why they have been dismissed. Where consent is granted for the demolition of a Listed Building, owners will be required to make provision for the appropriate recording and assessment of details of the building. Measures must be taken during demolition and building works to ensure the structural stability of retained parts and adjoining structures.

#### HISTORIC PARKS AND GARDENS

- 2.3.18 Historic parks and gardens are important both for their own intrinsic value, and for their contribution to the character of their surrounding landscapes. Parks and gardens of national significance are identified by English Heritage and listed in its Register of Parks and

Gardens of Special Historic Interest as either Grade I (international importance), Grade II\* (exceptional historic interest), or Grade II (special historic interest).

- 2.3.19 In addition to these sites, there are other historic parks and gardens in the plan area that are of local importance. Dorset County Council and the Dorset Gardens Trust are preparing a list of sites.
- 2.3.20 The appearance or setting of a park or garden will be a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications.

#### **ENV 4. HERITAGE ASSETS**

- i) Proposals which respect, protect or enhance the significance and setting of heritage assets will be supported.**
- ii) In considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset a judgement will be made, taking into account the scale of any harm, potential public benefit and the nature, significance and level of importance of the asset.**
- iii) Where nationally important archaeological remains and their settings are affected by proposed development, there should be a presumption in favour of their physical conservation. Development should not be permitted which would have an adverse effect upon the remains and their settings. Adequate provision must be made for preserving any archaeological remains, either in situ or by record.**
- iv) Proposals for development within a Conservation Area, or outside but which would affect its setting or the views into or out of the area, should not be permitted unless they preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.**
- v) Development should not be permitted if it is likely to have an adverse effect on the significance, setting, character or integrity of a Listed Building. The total or substantial demolition of a Listed Building will be wholly exceptional.**
- vi) Substantial harm to or loss of a historic park or garden should not be permitted.**

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| <b>Monitoring Indicator:</b> number of designated heritage assets at risk. <b>Target:</b> no net increase |
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