



# Dorset Council **Local Plan**



# **Green Belt**

## Background Paper



**Dorset**  
Council

# Dorset Council Local Plan: Green Belt background paper

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1.1. The council has prepared this paper as part of its work on the Dorset Council Local Plan. It should be read in conjunction with draft Policies DEV2 and SED1 and the supporting text in the consultation draft Dorset Council Local Plan along with stages 1 and 2 of the 'Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council and Dorset Council, Strategic Green Belt Assessment'.
- 1.1.2. Through this paper the council has examined:
- Whether Dorset's needs can be satisfied through delivery of development on previously developed land outside the Green Belt: a) within the South Eastern Dorset functional area and b) around the edges of the South Eastern Dorset functional area.
  - Whether Dorset's needs can be met by optimising the density of development on sites outside the Green Belt in town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport.
  - The implications for sustainable development of: a) channelling development toward urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary; b) channelling development towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt; and c) channelling development toward locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary.
  - Whether there are exceptional circumstances for changes to Green Belt boundaries to release land for development.
- 1.1.3. This paper will demonstrate that in order to provide the quantity of homes to meet the demand within the South Eastern Dorset functional area, there are no other reasonable options other than through changes to Green Belt boundaries. It will also demonstrate that the council's development strategy for meeting the area's housing needs:
- makes as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land;
  - optimises densities on development sites in town centres and other locations well served by public transport;
  - includes allowances for windfall development within those settlements that have a development boundary; and
  - is being prepared in cooperation with neighbouring authorities
- 1.1.4. In respect to the need to consider the exceptional circumstances for Green Belt release, relevant case law in "the Calverton case" (Calverton Parish Council v Nottingham City Council [2015] EWHC 1078 (Admin) establishes that five considerations ought to be addressed to ascertain whether 'exceptional circumstances' exist to justify releasing land from the Green Belt for development. Paragraph. 51 of the judgment states that:

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“... the planning judgements involved in the ascertainment of exceptional circumstances in the context of both national policy and the positive obligation located in section 39(2)5 should, at least ideally, identify and then grapple with the following matters:

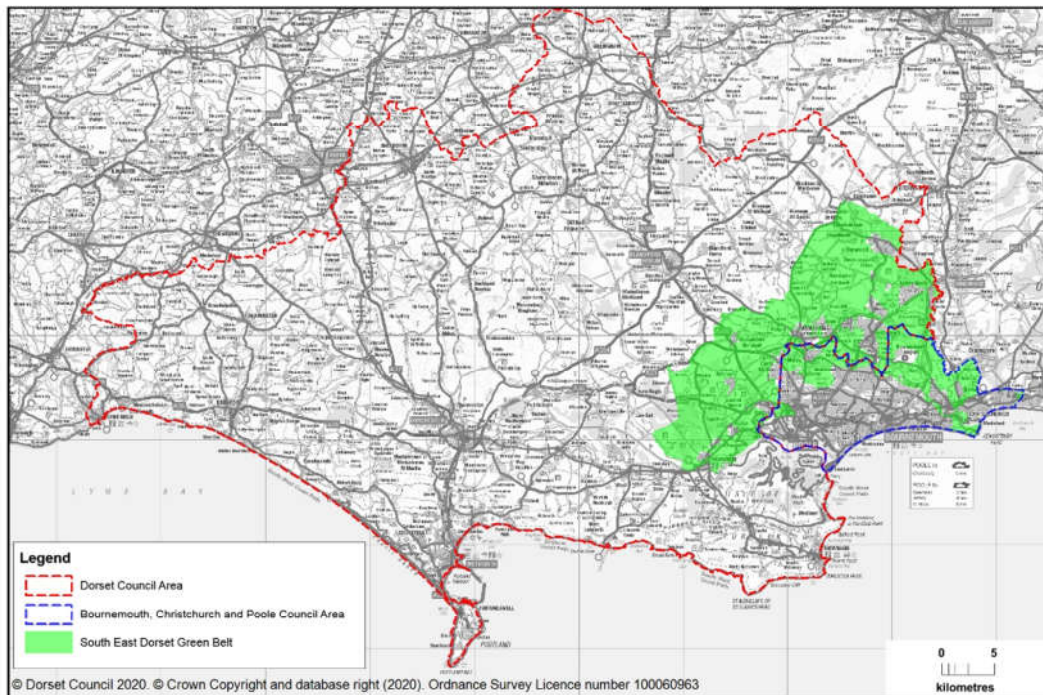
- (i) the acuteness/ intensity of the objectively assessed need (matters of degree may be important);
- (ii) the inherent constraints on supply/ availability of land prima facie suitable for sustainable development;
- (iii) (on the facts of this case) the consequent difficulties in achieving sustainable development without impinging on the Green Belt;
- (iv) the nature and extent of the harm to this Green Belt (or those parts of it which would be lost if the boundaries were reviewed; and
- (v) the extent to which the consequent impacts on the purposes of the Green Belt may be ameliorated or reduced to the lowest reasonably practicable extent.”

- 1.1.5. The final part of this paper outlines the matters, which the council considers amount to exceptional circumstances.

## 2. The South East Dorset Green Belt

- 2.1.1. The South East Dorset Green Belt was first designated in 1980 and covers just over 30,000 hectares. Around 80% (24,920 hectares) of the land that is defined as the South East Dorset Green Belt is located in Dorset Council area, making up 9.7% of its land area. The remaining parts of the South East Dorset Green Belt are located in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council area.

Figure 2.1: The South East Dorset Green Belt and administrative boundaries for Dorset Council and Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council



- 2.1.2. The Green Belt surrounds the large built-up area of the South East Dorset Conurbation comprising Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole together with the Dorset Council settlements of Corfe Mullen and Upton. These settlements are at the top of Dorset Council's settlement hierarchy and are referred to as Tier 1 'large built-up areas'.

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- 2.1.3. There are also a number of towns positioned around the edges of the large built-up area, which are inset from the Green Belt and are located in Dorset Council area. These include:
- Ferndown and West Parley;
  - St Leonards and St Ives;
  - Verwood;
  - Wareham;
  - West Moors; and
  - Wimborne Minster and Colehill.
- 2.1.4. These settlements are referred to as Tier 2 'Towns and other main settlements' in the Dorset Councils settlement hierarchy. There are also a number of smaller settlements, which are inset from the Green Belt. These are referred to as Tier 3 'Villages with Local Plan Development Boundaries' or 'Villages excluded from (inset within) the Green Belt'. They include:
- Lytchett Matravers;
  - Lytchett Minster;
  - Sandford;
  - Sturminster Marshall; and
  - Three Legged Cross.
- 2.1.5. The Green Belt also includes a number of smaller villages (with populations of less than 500 people) which are 'washed over' by it. The council has described these as 'Villages without 'Local Plan Development Boundaries' or villages included within (washed over by) the Green Belt'. They include:
- Furzehill;
  - Gaunts Common;
  - Hinton Martell;
  - Holt;
  - Horton; and
  - Woodlands.

### 3. Planning policy

- 3.1.1. Planning policy relating to the Green Belt is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraph 133 of the NPPF states that:
- ‘The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.’
- 3.1.2. The NPPF goes on to describe five purposes for the Green Belt (paragraph 134) and the processes for defining (paragraph 135) and altering (paragraphs 136 to 137) Green Belt boundaries through the preparation or updating of plans. Paragraph 136 of the NPPF explicitly states that:
- ‘Once established Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans.’
- 3.1.3. The NPPF also states that when engaged in the process of drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries the plan maker should consider the need to promote sustainable patterns of development, and more specifically the consequences of:
- ‘...channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary.’ (Paragraph 138).
- 3.1.4. The NPPF also provides direction on the preferences (given alternatives) that plan makers should apply when selecting Green Belt land for release and a requirement to set out the ways in which impacts of Green Belt release can be offset through improvements to environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt (paragraph 138). Paragraph 139 of the NPPF outlines those considerations, which plan makers should take into consideration when defining Green Belt boundaries. Paragraphs 143 to 147 of the NPPF give direction to decision makers around ‘inappropriate development’ in the Green Belt, the exceptions relating to treating new buildings as ‘inappropriate development’ (paragraph 145) and the process for assessing whether there are ‘very special circumstances’ (paragraphs 143 and 144).
- 3.1.5. Planning practice guidance supplements national planning policy with direction for decision makers:
- around assessing the impacts on Green Belt openness (Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 64-001-20190722);



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- on suggestions for compensatory measures (that would improve environmental quality / accessibility to remaining Green Belt) in response to release of Green belt (Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 64-002-20190722); and
- direction around securing compensatory measures (Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 64-003-20190722).

### 4. Justification for changes to Green Belt boundaries

- 4.1.1. This section of the background paper seeks to specifically address the requirements in paragraphs 136, 137 and 138 of the National Planning Policy Framework to:
- fully examine reasonable alternatives for meeting the identified need for development before considering whether there might be exceptional circumstances for changes to Green Belt boundaries; and
  - take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development when drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries.

### 4.2. Dorset's need for development

- 4.2.1. The council is planning to meet needs for:
- new homes (including for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople); and
  - businesses / industry;
- through the preparation of the Dorset Council Local Plan. The council's local plan will not be found sound unless it has been positively prepared and at minimum seeks to meet Dorset's objectively assessed needs (paragraph 35 (a) of the NPPF 2019).
- 4.2.2. The most pressing need in Dorset is for new homes. The council has assessed the number of new homes needed (the local housing need) using the government's standard methodology. After carrying out the calculation in June 2020 (making use of current evidence, policy and guidance at this time), the council has assessed that there is an uncapped local housing need figure of 1,793 new homes each year across the whole of the Dorset Council area. This equates to 30,481 new homes over the 17-year plan period (2021 to 2038).
- 4.2.3. Government states that 'baseline' assessments of housing need that are calculated using its methodology may need to be adjusted to take account of the unmet needs for homes in neighbouring councils. Dorset Council is engaged in discussions with neighbouring authorities, and whilst there is reasonable certainty that East Devon, South Somerset and Wiltshire Councils will be able to meet their own housing needs, there remains uncertainty as to whether Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole and New Forest (including the district council and national park authority) Councils will be able to meet their housing needs. The housing target may need to be adjusted to take account of unmet need from these councils.
- 4.2.4. The need for land to support new business / industry and the growth of existing business / industry has been assessed through a workspace strategy. The strategy forecasts that around 21,000 new full time equivalent (FTE) jobs could be generated

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across Dorset between 2018 and 2038. To support this growth the council estimates that between 131 and 151 hectares of employment land will be needed.

- 4.2.5. The evidence indicates that there is a need for both homes and land to support the growth of new and existing businesses and industry. This paper specifically focus on the justification for the council's strategy for meeting the need for new homes and the reasons that the council considers there are exceptional circumstances for Green Belt release.
- 4.2.6. The consultation draft Dorset Council Local Plan also proposes the release of Green Belt for employment uses to the west and south of Longham Roundabouts (FERN10). At the time of preparing the local plan, evidence around the overall need for and availability of employment space had not been fully concluded. The results of this economic evidence will be reflected in the publication version of the local plan.

### 4.3. Constraints to meeting development need in the South Eastern Dorset functional area

- 4.3.1. A large proportion of the South East Dorset is defined as Green Belt. The South East Dorset is also effected by national planning policies which protect assets or areas of particular importance, including those policies relating to:
- Habitat sites<sup>1</sup> and Sites of Specifically Scientific Interest;
  - Local Green Space<sup>2</sup>;
  - The Dorset AONB, Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB and the Purbeck Heritage Coast;
  - Irreplaceable habitats<sup>3</sup>;
  - Designated heritage assets<sup>4</sup>; and

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<sup>1</sup> The NPPF clarifies that habitat sites include: 'Any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites.'

<sup>2</sup> Local Green Space comprises green areas that are particularly important to local communities. These areas can be defined through local and neighbourhood plans. The criteria for defining these areas through plans are outlined in paragraph 100 of the NPPF (2019).

<sup>3</sup> The NPPF defines irreplaceable habitats as: 'Habitats which would be technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity. They include ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, blanket bog, limestone pavement, sand dunes, salt marsh and lowland fen.' Within the South Eastern Dorset functional area there are a number of defined ancient woodlands and veteran trees.

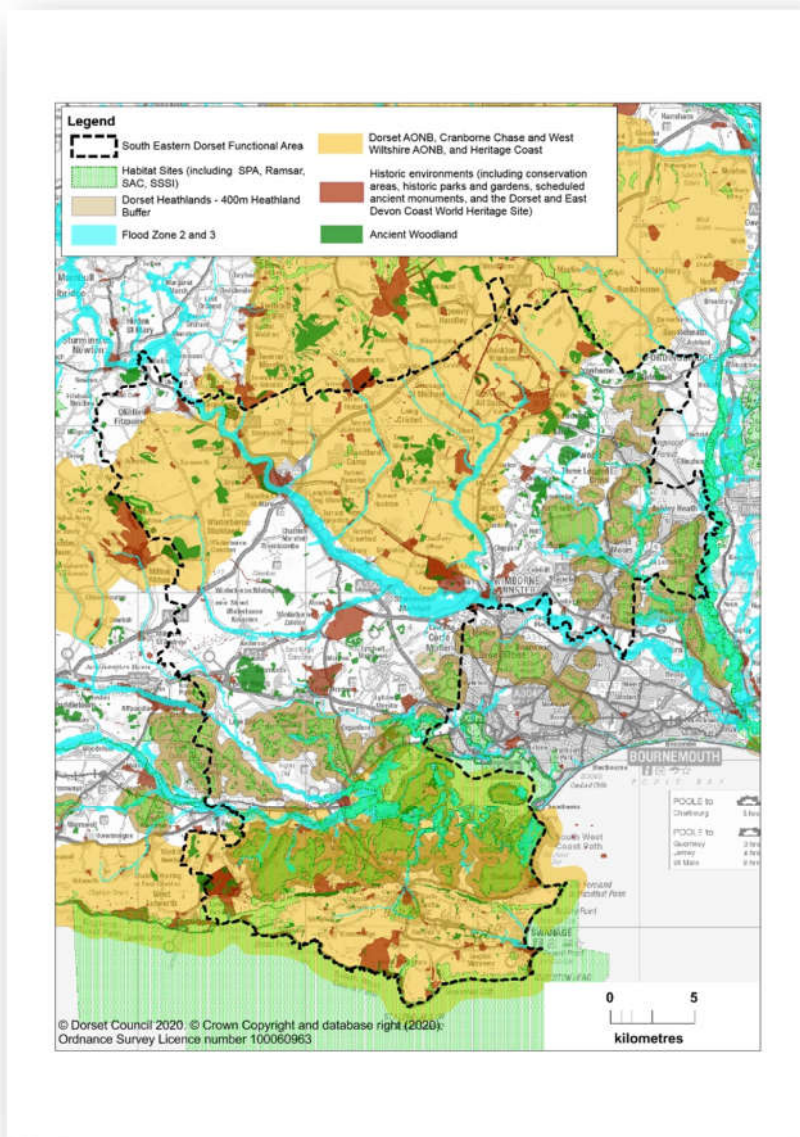
<sup>4</sup> In addition to: 'Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.'

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- Areas at risk from flooding or coastal change.

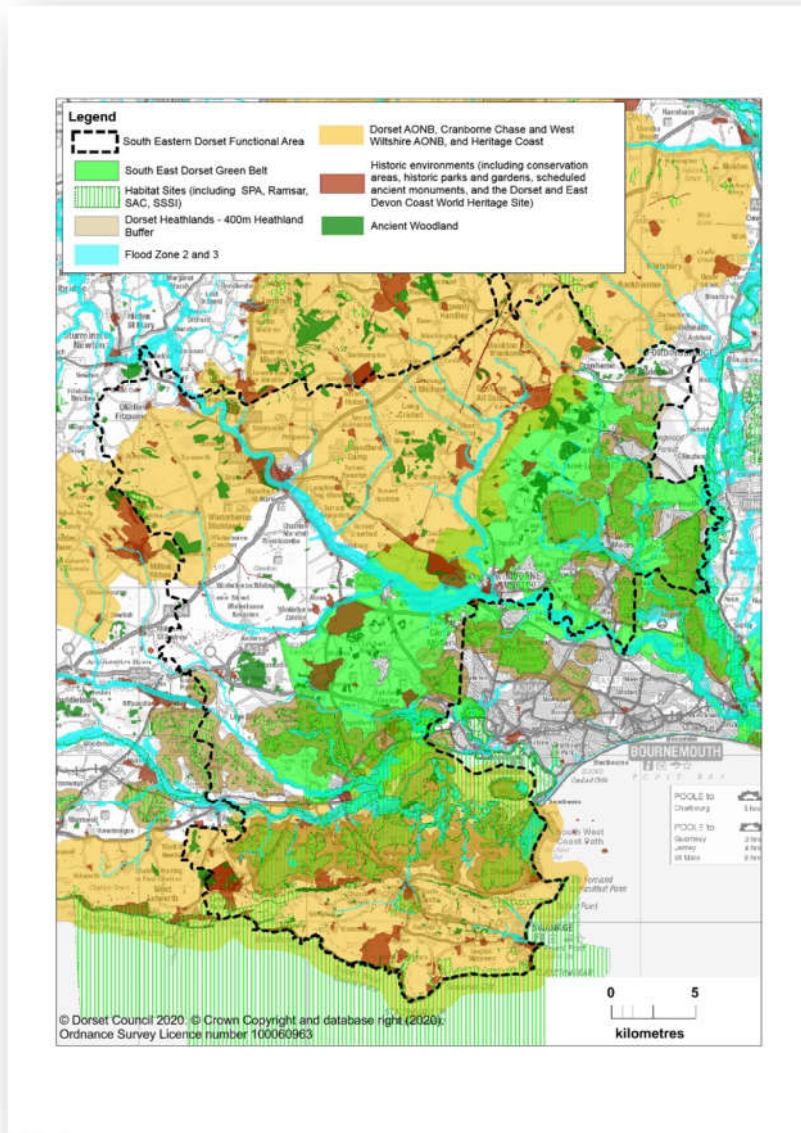
4.3.2. Figure 4.1 and 4.2 below illustrate the spatial proportion of the South Eastern Dorset area that is effected by those national planning policies which protect areas and assets of particular importance (the council has not sought to show individual small scale heritage assets, for example listed buildings, because of the difficulties arising from accurately representing these on large scale maps).

Figure 4.1: Map to show the spatial proportion of the South Eastern Functional area not effected by national planning policy that seeks to protect areas and assets of particular importance.



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Figure 4.2: Map to show the spatial proportion of the South Eastern Functional area not effected by national planning policy (including the South East Dorset Green Belt) that seeks to protect areas and assets of particular importance.



4.3.3. Dorset Council area extends to around 251,000 hectares. The council has identified four functional areas (see Figure 4.3) in its local plan. The sizes of each area are listed below:

- South Eastern Dorset functional area - 86,610 hectares;
- Central Dorset area functional area – 84,590 hectares;
- Northern Dorset area functional area – 48,790 hectares; and

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- Western Dorset area functional area – 31,460 hectares.
- 4.3.4. In total around 73,410 hectares in the South Eastern Dorset functional area are affected by national planning policies that seek to protect areas and assets of particular importance. Around 13,200 hectares in the South Eastern Dorset area is free from the effects of these national planning policies. Collectively these policies restrict the opportunities to meet development needs in this part of the council area<sup>5</sup>. Despite the constraints arising from national planning policy, there is a clear demand for development in this part of Dorset.

### 4.4. Consideration of options for meeting development needs on brownfield sites and underutilised land

- 4.4.1. The section summarises the council's exploration of the alternatives for meeting housing needs outside the Green Belt. It demonstrates that the council's development strategy for meeting Dorset's need for new homes makes as much use as possible of available previously developed (brownfield) land.
- 4.4.2. This part of the paper also refers to the council's settlement hierarchy. The council has prepared a separate background paper, which explains the hierarchy in more detail and has published this to support the Dorset Council Local Plan. It also refers to the functional housing market / economic areas defined in the draft Dorset Council Local Plan. There is a further discussion relating to these areas in section 4.7 of this paper and the separate Functional Areas background paper that also supports the Dorset Council Local Plan.

#### Previously developed / underutilised land outside the Green Belt, but within the South Eastern Dorset functional area

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- 4.4.3. The land designated as Green Belt in Dorset Council is confined to the south eastern part of the council area. The South Eastern Dorset functional area, that includes the Green Belt, adjoins the council's boundary with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council. A significant proportion of this adjoining council area is taken up by the large built-up conurbation, which extends across its full width. Almost all of the built up area is confined within the BCP area except for Corfe Mullen and Upton which are within the Dorset Council area. As part of the justification for changes to Green Belt boundaries the council has explored the opportunity to meet housing need on previously developed / underutilised land in these two settlements. The council is

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<sup>5</sup> Figures 4.1 and 4.2 also illustrate that national policies affect the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council area.



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aware that Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council are undertaking a similar assessment as part of the preparation of their new local plan.

- 4.4.4. The council has also fully explored the opportunity to meet development needs in the South Eastern Dorset functional area on previously developed land outside Green Belt boundaries within existing settlements inset from the Green Belt or are positioned beyond its boundaries. These settlements include:
- Corfe Mullen and Upton (Tier 1);
  - Blandford, Ferndown and West Parley, St Leonards and St Ives, Swanage, Wimborne Minster and Colehill, Verwood, West Moors and Wareham (Tier 2); and
  - Alderholt, Bere Regis, Bovington, Charlton Marshall, Corfe Castle, Cranborne, Harmans Cross, Langton Matravers, Lytchett Matravers, Pimperne, Sandford, Sixpenny Handley, Stoborough, Sturminster Marshall, Three Legged Cross, West Lulworth, Winterborne Kingston, Winterborne Whitechurch and Wool / East Burton (Tier3).
- 4.4.5. The council has made use of its Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) to identify developable<sup>6</sup> sites and estimate their yield. This paper goes onto explain that the estimated housing yields have been based on assumptions that will help to ensure the effective use of land (in accordance with paragraph 137 (b) of the NPPF).
- 4.4.6. The council has identified a total of 28 housing sites on previously developed land that are both outside the Green Belt and within the South Eastern Dorset functional area. These sites have an estimated yield of approximately 894 homes. These homes would make a contribution to meeting around 3% of Dorset's overall housing need (30,481). Full details of these sites are presented in Appendix 1 of this paper. Previously developed and underutilised land in the South Eastern Dorset functional area will not meet all of Dorset's housing needs.

### Previously developed / underutilised land outside the Green belt and the South Eastern Dorset functional area

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- 4.4.1. The council has also explored the potential to meet housing need in the villages located around the edges of the South Eastern Dorset functional area that also fall outside the Green Belt. As above the council has made use of its Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment to identify developable sites and estimate their capacity. When estimating their capacity, the council has taken account of guidance in national planning policy on effective use of land and the direction in paragraph 137 (b) of the

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<sup>6</sup> The council does not consider that sites which have been excluded from the SHLAA could reasonably meet the areas development needs. These excluded sites have not therefore been taken into consideration.

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NPPF to optimise densities in town centre locations and those locations that are well served by public transport.

- 4.4.2. The council has identified 5 previously developed / underutilised housing sites outside the Green Belt, and around the edges of the South Eastern Dorset functional area, with estimated yield of approximately 91 homes. These homes would make a contribution to meeting around 0.2% of Dorset's overall housing need (30,481). Previously developed and underutilised land around the edges of the South Eastern Dorset functional area will not meet all of Dorset's housing needs.

### Previously used / underutilised land across Dorset Council area as a whole

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- 4.4.3. Including those previously developed sites within and outside the South Eastern Dorset functional area described above, the council estimates that a total of 10,581 new homes on sites outside of Green Belt boundaries. These homes would be delivered from the following sources of housing land supply:
- Unconsented major and small sites<sup>7</sup> – totalling 3,651 homes;
  - Windfall<sup>8</sup> – totalling 6,193; and
  - Neighbourhood plans<sup>9</sup> – totalling 737.
- 4.4.4. A significant proportion of the homes identified in these sources of supply will be delivered on previously developed land and will make an important contribution to the housing land supply, but will not meet all of the need for new homes across Dorset.

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<sup>7</sup> Unconsented major sites have been identified through the council's employment and housing land availability assessments, or the brownfield register for Dorset. Redevelopment of these sites with new homes would be consistent with emerging planning policy in respect to development boundaries and the countryside. Unconsented small sites have also been identified through the council's employment and housing land availability assessments and meet the definitions in national planning policy (paragraph 68 (a) of the NPPF (2019)). **NB the total for unconsented major and small sites includes sites, which the council has identified under the headings relating to previously developed land in the South Eastern Dorset functional area and around the edges of the South Eastern Dorset Functional area.**

<sup>8</sup> These are sites for 'minor' (i.e. with capacity for up to 9 dwellings) unplanned development that is consistent with the council's policies in respect to development boundaries and the countryside. The council has estimated an allowance for the numbers of homes delivered as 'windfall' over the local plan period (2021 – 2038) that is based on recent windfall delivery rates for minor residential development over the past 5 years.

<sup>9</sup> These are sites which have been allocated for new development with new homes in made or emerging (where the neighbourhood plan is well advanced through its preparation). There are no neighbourhood plans in Dorset Council area which are seeking to make allocations to deliver development in the Green Belt (the emerging Wareham Neighbourhood Plan seeks to meet development needs within current development boundaries which are inset from the Green Belt).



### 4.5. Consideration of optimising housing densities on allocated sites in line with national planning policy

- 4.5.1. Chapter 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019) relates to the effective use of land. Paragraph 118 (a) of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should 'encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside'.
- 4.5.2. The council has sought to ascertain the optimum capacity for those housing sites that proposed through the local plan and through the assessments undertaken for the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). Through the SHLAA the council has sought to:
- identify a developable area. In order to identify the developable area for each site, the council has assessed site area and subtracted the proportion of the site affected by constraints that are likely to restrict development;
  - identify a housing site area. This is the area which the council expects to be available to deliver new homes. On larger development sites the council has assumed that a greater proportion of the total site area will need to be devoted to providing site infrastructure that is necessary for re-development (e.g. drainage infrastructure, landscape buffers etc.); and
  - estimate a housing yield through a calculation using a housing density and the housing site area. The council has adjusted the housing site densities used to estimate housing yield to reflect the sites location, accessibility and the character of its surroundings. In general terms the council has sought to achieve higher densities in those 'town centre' sites in the Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements. It has sought to achieve lower densities on those sites around the edges of the main settlements and on village sites.
- 4.5.3. The assessments made in the SHLAA have also been further refined through the site selection process considering:
- the aim of achieving well designed, attractive and health places;
  - an areas prevailing character and setting; and
  - the need to deliver site-specific supporting infrastructure and mitigate any potential adverse impacts arising from development.
- 4.5.4. By way of an example of this approach, the council has assumed that the previously developed and underutilised sites identified in the Weymouth Town Centre policy area (WEY2) will deliver homes at a higher density than those sites located at rural towns (e.g. Stalbridge). This reflects the town centre location of the Weymouth sites

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and the opportunities to make use of sustainable means of travel (e.g. the railway via Weymouth train station and bus services).

- 4.5.5. In accordance with paragraph 118 (d) of the NPPF the housing land supply identified by the council includes under-utilised land and buildings (including council owned land and buildings in Wareham).
- 4.5.6. The council is satisfied that the assessments underpin expected yields from the sites allocated for new homes will ensure the effective use of land in accordance with national planning policy.

### 4.6. Consideration of whether neighbouring councils could accommodate some of the identified need for development

- 4.6.1. At the time of preparing this background paper, and beginning consultation on the draft Dorset Council Local Plan, the council's discussions with neighbouring council's around strategic matters was ongoing. The proposed development strategy in the Dorset Council Local Plan includes proposals to change Green Belt boundaries and to make allocations for development around a number of settlements. The council estimates the yield from these allocations would be approximately 2,940 new homes (or approximately 10% of the overall housing requirement) and 2ha of land for employment.
- 4.6.2. The council will continue to engage with neighbouring councils to ascertain whether they are able to accommodate any of the council's housing / employment land needs and similarly whether there is a need for Dorset Council to accommodate any of their need. The council will seek to summarise this engagement through a jointly prepared duty to cooperate statement. The council will publish detail of these strategic duty to cooperate discussions alongside the pre-submission draft of the local plan with conclusions reflected within the draft plan.

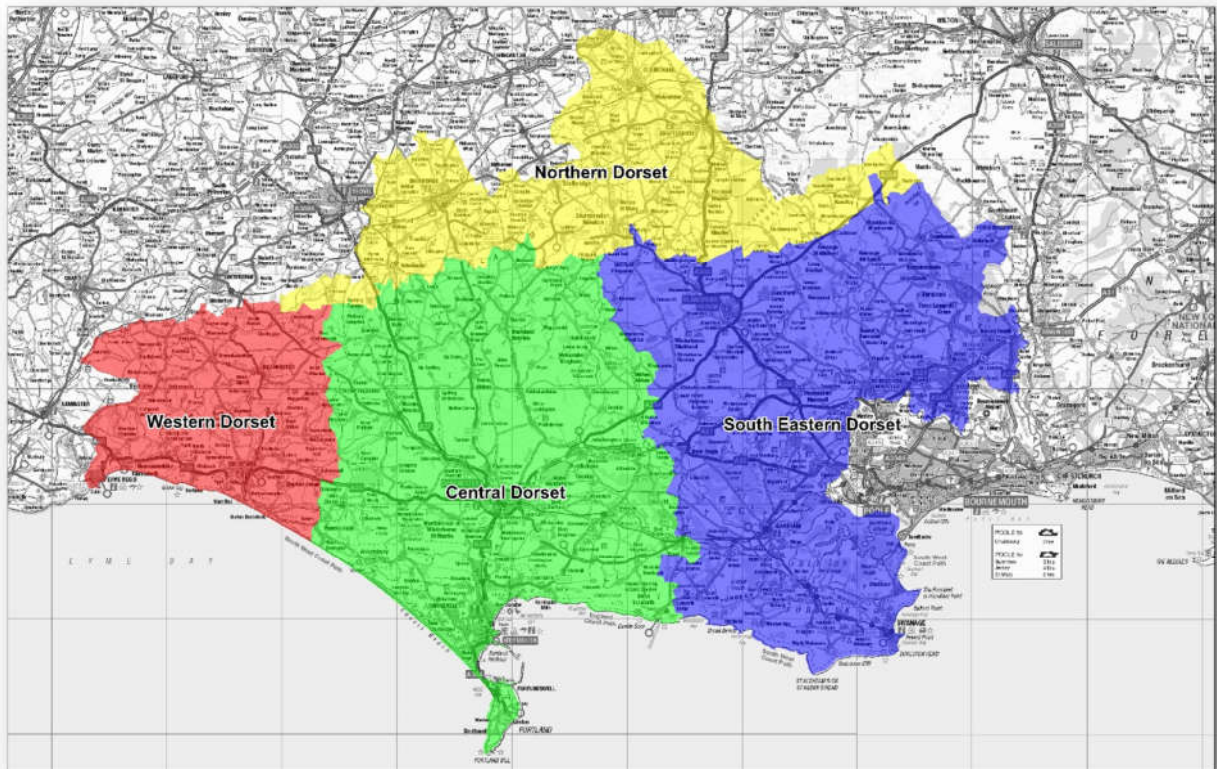
### 4.7. Consideration of the implications for sustainable development

- 4.7.1. Dorset council covers a wide spatial area – there are significant variations across this area in housing markets and local economies. To reflect these variations the council has identified four functional housing market / economic areas. These areas are represented in Figure 4.3 below.

Figure 4.3: Functional housing market / economic areas

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- 4.7.2. The council has not attempted to split or apportion development needs according to each functional area, but it is clear that each of these areas creates particular demands for new homes and spaces for business growth.
- 4.7.3. Paragraph 138 of the NPPF states that:
- ‘When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should be taken into account. Strategic policymaking authorities should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary. ...’
- 4.7.4. Paragraph 139 of the NPPF states that:
- ‘When defining Green Belt boundaries, plans should:
- ensure consistency with the development plan’s strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;...’
- 4.7.5. The council considers that there are strong planning reasons for limiting the spatial scope of its examination of the implications for sustainable development when

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considering different development strategies in accordance with paragraph 138 and Paragraph 139 a) of the NPPF. These include:

- variations in the demand for development across Dorset – In particular the demand for new homes in the South Eastern Dorset functional area is particularly strong. This demand is driven in part by the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole conurbation and the concentration of functionally tied towns that are positioned in the hinterland around its edge<sup>10</sup>.
- the impacts of displacing growth outside the South Eastern Dorset functional area – In general terms the council does not consider that it would be reasonable to widen the spatial scope of its consideration of other potential strategies for meeting needs to areas outside the South Eastern Dorset functional area as this is likely to encourage unsustainable patterns of growth. Seeking to meet the demands of the South Eastern Dorset functional area in other parts of Dorset Council area is likely to encourage unsustainable patterns of travel<sup>11</sup>. It is expected that the impact of displacing growth away from the conurbation is likely to increase the further growth is displaced. For this reason the implications arising from meeting development needs around the immediate edges of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole conurbation, including the release of Green Belt land, are considered preferable to more remote development.

4.7.6. The council recognises that there are alternative options for meeting development needs in the Northern, Western and Central functional area on land which is not defined as part of the Green Belt, but for the reasons outlined above it does not consider that these represent sustainable alternatives that require further detailed consideration in this paper. In part, this would be contrary to the overall strategy within the local plan for managing development in a sustainable way and would be directly opposed to the Strategic Priorities in the plan.

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<sup>10</sup> The South Eastern Dorset Functional Area includes part of large built-up area (Tier 1), 8 separate towns / other main settlements (Tier 2) and 19 villages (Tier 3) with a combined estimated population of around 137,310 people. This excludes the population outside of the Dorset Council Area. In comparison Tier 1 (x2), Tier 2 (x2) and Tier 3 (x12) settlements in the Central Dorset area have a combined estimated population of around 105,701 people. The combined estimated populations of the Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 settlements in the Northern Dorset area are around 50,059 people and around 25,142 people in the Western Dorset area.

<sup>11</sup> National planning policy states that ‘The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.’ (Paragraph 103 NPPF (2019)).

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To reflect the functional housing market / economic areas, and the particular demands for development within each of these areas, the council has limited the spatial scope of its examination of the implications of channelling growth beyond the Green Belts outer edges to:

- those Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 settlements within the South Eastern Dorset functional area and
  - those Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 settlement in the adjoining Northern and Central Dorset functional areas that are closely related to the edges of the South Eastern Dorset functional area.
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- 4.7.7. The council has classified the existing settlements across Dorset into three broad tiers through its settlement hierarchy according to:
- the size of their population;
  - availability of services / facilities;
  - the travel times (using public and private methods of transport) to other settlements; and
  - access to superfast broadband.
- 4.7.8. The highest ranked settlements (in Tier 1) have the largest populations with the greatest range of services and facilities. These settlements are the most sustainable locations for future growth.
- 4.7.9. Ranked below the Tier 1 settlements are the Tier 2 towns and other main settlements. These settlements are also considered sustainable locations for larger scale growth to help in meeting Dorset's development needs.
- 4.7.10. Ranked below the Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements are those villages of a reasonable size that also have a good range of services / facilities. These settlements have local plan development boundaries, with some also being excluded (inset) from the Green Belt. The council considers that steering growth to the more highly ranked Tier 1 and 2 settlements is likely to encourage more sustainable patterns of growth, but recognises that sustainable growth can still be achieved through development at Tier 3 settlements. The council is proposing some development at Tier 3 settlements that are located where sustainable travel options exist.
- 4.7.11. The council's approach to encouraging sustainable patterns of growth through a settlement hierarchy is explained in more detail in its settlement hierarchy background paper and the background paper relating to the functional housing market / economic areas.

### Consideration of the implications of channeling development toward urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary

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- 4.7.12. The Tier 1 large built-up area inside the South East Dorset Green Belt comprises:

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- The Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole conurbation (including Tier 1 Corfe Mullen and Upton).
- 4.7.13. Corfe Mullen and Upton form part of the large built-up area. In broad terms the council considers that they represent sustainable locations for development because new development can be supported by or build upon existing infrastructure (including services, facilities and jobs) and the distance people need to travel on a daily basis would be minimised.
- 4.7.14. The council considers that the proposed allocations in the draft Dorset Council Local Plan for around 400 new homes at Corfe Mullen will deliver sustainable patterns of development. The council also proposes to take forward an allocation from the emerging Purbeck Local Plan (2018-2034) for around 90 new homes around Upton. As with Corfe Mullen this allocation will deliver sustainable patterns of development.
- 4.7.15. As part of the preparation of the local plan, the council has explored the opportunities for further development around both Corfe Mullen and Upton. Its consideration of the alternatives are presented in the site selection background paper (published with the consultation draft Dorset Council Local Plan) and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal. Aside from Green Belt, in broad terms the opportunities for further sustainable growth around both settlements are constrained by habitat sites (including the Dorset heathlands and Poole Harbour designations), flood risk, designated heritage assets and local considerations (including sports pitches / playing fields).
- 4.7.16. Channelling further development to these settlements, beyond that proposed by the council may have a negative impact on local character and the local environment.

### Consideration of the implications of channeling development towards settlements inset within the Green Belt

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- 4.7.17. The following Tier 2 settlements are inset within the South East Dorset Green Belt:
- Ferndown and West Parley;
  - St Leonards and St Ives;
  - Verwood;
  - Wareham;
  - West Moors; and
  - Wimborne Minster and Colehill.
- 4.7.18. The following Tier 3 villages are also inset within the South East Dorset Green Belt:
- Lytchett Matravers;



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- Lytchett Minster<sup>12</sup>;
  - Sandford;
  - Sturminster Marshall; and
  - Three Legged Cross.
- 4.7.19. The Dorset Council Local Plan area also includes a number of smaller villages. These smaller villages do not have development boundaries unless established through a neighbourhood plan. Those within the outer boundary of the South East Dorset Green Belt are 'washed over' by the Green Belt and listed in paragraph 2.1.5 of this paper.
- 4.7.20. As with Tier 1 settlements, the council considers that the larger Tier 2 settlements that are inset within the Green Belt represent sustainable locations for development because new development can be supported by / or build upon existing infrastructure (including services, facilities and jobs) and the distance that people need to travel can be minimised. Overall, these towns include a broad range of facilities, services and employers that allows them to function in a self-contained manner. Wimborne Minster / Colehill and Ferndown / West Parley are also closely related to the northern edges of the conurbation.
- 4.7.21. The council considers that the following proposed allocations in the draft Dorset Council Local Plan will promote sustainable patterns of development.
- around 1,100 new homes around Ferndown and West Parley;
  - around 100 new homes south of Verwood;
  - around 170 new homes east of West Moors;
  - around 200 new homes around Lytchett Matravers; and
  - around 425 new homes around Sturminster Marshall;
- 4.7.22. As part of the preparation of the local plan, the council has explored the opportunities for further development around all of the inset settlements. Its consideration of the alternatives and implications arising from these alternatives are presented in the site selection background paper and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal. Aside from Green Belt, in broad terms the opportunities for further sustainable growth around these settlements are constrained by:
- habitat sites (including Dorset heaths designations and Poole Harbour);
  - flood risk;
  - designated heritage assets;

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<sup>12</sup> Officers note that Lytchett Minster is not referred to as a Tier 3 village in the council's draft local plan. There is a fuller discussion and justification around its proposed definition as a Tier 3 village in the settlement hierarchy. For the purposes of this background paper officers have made the assumption that it would be treated as a Tier 3 village. The council will finalise its position on this matter on conclusion of the current consultation, taking account of any responses on this matter and considerations of the implications for the development strategy.

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- landscape sensitivity (which is affected by designation of some parts of the council area as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty);
  - irreplaceable habitats (in particular ancient woodland); and
  - local considerations (including loss of sports pitches / playing fields / local amenity space etc.).
- 4.7.23. The council has also considered the opportunities and implications for sustainable development arising from development sites around Sandford, St Leonards and St Ives, Wareham, Lytchett Minster and Three Legged Cross. The council has discounted Lytchett Minster from further consideration for strategic housing allocations through the current local plan because of its size (estimated population of 244 people) and the range of services and facilities when compared to other Tier 3 villages. The council has concluded that habitat sites, landscape sensitivity, flood risk and heritage assets constrained the opportunity for sustainable growth around Sandford, St Leonards and St Ives and Three Legged Cross.
- 4.7.24. The local community in Wareham are in the course of preparing a neighbourhood plan that seeks to meet the development needs in the neighbourhood plan area in large part through allocation of previously developed sites within existing development boundaries, together with expected windfall development. The council has considered opportunities for growth around the northern boundaries of Wareham, within the Green Belt and discounted these after taking account of the impact on habitats sites, heritage assets and local considerations.
- 4.7.25. The council has discounted the smaller villages (not listed as Tier 3 settlements within the hierarchy), both within and outside the South Eastern Dorset area as reasonable alternative options for development. Allocations for larger scale development through the council's local plan either within or around these villages would not encourage a sustainable pattern of growth. The council does not propose to define development boundaries for these villages, and for this reason, small scale infilling would not be permitted unless a neighbourhood plan was prepared that specifically permitted this approach.

### Consideration of channeling development toward locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary

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- 4.7.26. There are no Tier 1 settlements around the edges of the South Eastern Dorset functional area. Both Dorchester and Weymouth are located around 7 km to the west of the boundary of the South Eastern Dorset functional area. Together these towns interact with the larger South Eastern Dorset Functional Area but are separate from it. Both settlements have railway lines that allow for sustainable travel to the east into the conurbation. The council is making significant proposed allocations for



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development around both Dorchester (3,600 new homes) and Weymouth (500 new homes as well as taking forward existing commitments).

- 4.7.27. There are two Tier 2 settlements that are located within the South Eastern Dorset Functional Area and beyond the outer edges of the Green Belt. These Tier 2 settlements are Blandford and Swanage. The council considers that these larger Tier 2 settlements that are beyond the Green Belt's outer edges represent sustainable locations for development because new development can be supported by / or build upon existing infrastructure (including services, facilities and jobs) and the distance that people need to travel can be minimised. Overall, these towns include a broad range of facilities, services and employers that allows them to function in a self-contained manner. The council considers that the following proposed allocations in the draft Dorset Council Local Plan will promote sustainable patterns of development.
- around 900 new homes around Blandford;
  - around 150 new homes Swanage.
- 4.7.28. As part of the preparation of the local plan, the council has explored the opportunities for further development around both Blandford and Swanage. Its consideration of the alternatives are presented in the site selection background paper (published with the consultation draft Dorset Council Local Plan) and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal. The proposed allocations around Blandford take account of the local communities neighbourhood plan, which also includes significant allocations for further homes. In respect to Swanage the council has also taken account of the outstanding committed allocations in the Swanage Local Plan (2017). In broad terms the opportunities for further sustainable growth around both settlements are constrained by landscape sensitivity, habitat sites, coastal change (in Swanage), flood risk, designated heritage assets and local considerations (including sports pitches, playing fields, land form).
- 4.7.29. Channelling further development to these settlements, beyond that proposed by the council may have a negative impact on local character and the local environment.
- 4.7.30. There are no Tier 2 settlements positioned close to the edges of the South Eastern Dorset Functional Area. The Tier 2 settlements in the Central Dorset area (Chickerell and Portland), Northern Dorset area (Gillingham, Shaftesbury, Sherborne, Stalbridge and Sturminster Newton) and Western Dorset area (Beaminster, Bridport and Lyme Regis), are all detached from the edges of the South Eastern Dorset functional area. They are surrounded by countryside with limited opportunities for residents to make use of sustainable transport options for travel into and out of the South Eastern

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Dorset functional area. These settlements also interact more closely with the other settlements within their functional areas.

- 4.7.31. The council considers that channelling development toward Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements in the Central Dorset and Northern Dorset functional areas to meet the needs of the South Eastern Dorset functional area would lead to unsustainable patterns of growth and result in long distance commuting.
- 4.7.32. The following Tier 3 villages are positioned beyond the outer edges of the Green Belt in the South Eastern Dorset functional area:
- Alderholt;
  - Bere Regis;
  - Bovington;
  - Charlton Marshall;
  - Corfe Castle;
  - Cranborne;
  - Harmans Cross;
  - Langton Matravers;
  - Pimperne;
  - Sixpenny Handley;
  - Stoborough;
  - West Lulworth;
  - Winterborne Kingston;
  - Winterborne Whitechurch; and
  - Wool / East Burton<sup>13</sup>.
- 4.7.33. There are also a number of Tier 3 villages positioned around<sup>14</sup> the edges of the South Eastern Dorset functional area. They include:
- Broadmayne / West Knigton (Central Dorset area);
  - Child Okeford (Northern Dorset area);
  - Crossways and Moreton (Central Dorset area);
  - Iwerene Minster (Northern Dorset area);
  - Milborne St Andrew (Central Dorset area);

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<sup>13</sup> The lowest ranked settlements in the South Eastern Dorset functional area are those villages without local plan development boundaries, which are also 'washed' over by the Green Belt. In the South Eastern Dorset functional area they include: Holt, Spetisbury, Woodlands, Winfrith Newburgh, Studland, Lytchett Minster, Gaunts Common, Horton, Furzehill, Gussage St Michael, Briantspuddle, Worth Matravers, Gussage All Saints, Hinton Martell, East Lulworth, Shapwick, Church Knowle, Chaldon Herring, Kingston and Kimmeridge (Tier 4).

<sup>14</sup> Officers have applied judgement in determining which settlements positioned around the edges of the South Eastern Dorset functional area should be considered as a reasonable option for meeting development need. As part of this judgement, officers have considered the distance between the settlement and the edge of the South Eastern Dorset functional area, the availability of suitable sites and the relative ease of movement between the settlement and the large built-up area / towns in the South Eastern Dorset functional area.

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- Milton Abbas (Central Dorset area);
  - Okeford Fitzpaine (Northern Dorset area);
  - Puddletown (Central Dorset area);
  - Shillingston (Northern Dorset area);
  - Stourpaine (Northern Dorset area); and
  - Winterbourne Stickland (Central Dorset area).
- 4.7.34. After considering their size, the services and facilities on offer and the availability of suitable development sites, the council considers that it would not be appropriate to direct significant growth to the smaller (population less than 1,500 people) Tier 3 settlements. As a result, these settlements have not been considered for meeting significant growth within the South Eastern Dorset functional area as this would result in unsustainable patterns of development. The following settlements fall within this category: Charlton Marshall, Child Okeford, Corfe Castle, Cranborne, Harmans Cross, Iwerene Minster, Langton Matravers, Milborne St Andrew, Milton Abbas, Pimperne, Puddletown, Okeford Fitzpaine, Shillingston, Sixpenny Handley, Stoborough, Stoupaine, West Lulworth, Winterborne Kingston, Winterborne Stickland and Winterborne Whitechurch.
- 4.7.35. The remaining larger Tier 3 villages beyond the outer edges of the Green Belt boundary have been considered as locations where more significant development could take place to meet the needs of the South Eastern Dorset functional area:
- Alderholt;
  - Bere Regis;
  - Bovington;
  - Crossway / Moreton; and
  - Wool / East Burton.
- 4.7.36. The council does not consider that larger scale growth could be sustainably channelled to Bovington as a significant proportion of the land around the village is protected as habitats sites and areas are at risk of flooding.
- 4.7.37. The Bere Regis neighbourhood plan (made in May 2019) includes allocations capable of delivering up to 105 new homes. The council considers that there are limited opportunities for further sustainable growth within and around Bere Regis. Sites are constrained by habitat sites, flood risk, heritage assets, physical barriers and irreplaceable habitats. In addition, due to the size and facilities available at Bere Regis and its location away from public transport options, development here would result in an increase in car-based trips to meet every day needs and therefore does not constitute a sustainable location for significant growth.

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- 4.7.38. The council is proposing to make large-scale allocations for new homes around Crossways / Moreton Station and Wool / East Burton. Both Crossways / Moreton Station and Wool / East Burton have railway stations that provide the opportunity for sustainable travel eastward toward the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole conurbation or westward toward Dorchester and Weymouth. Both settlements on the fringes of their respective functional areas and therefore development in these settlements could contribute toward meeting the development needs in both functional areas. There are opportunities to deliver further growth at both settlements, however given their position in the settlement hierarchy and the significant levels of proposed growth (arising from both allocations in the Dorset Council Local Plan and those taken forward from the emerging Purbeck Local Plan) there is a real risk that saturation of the local housing markets could undermine housing delivery and the housing land supply identified by the council.
- 4.7.39. For these reasons, the council considers that channelling further development to these settlements, beyond that proposed may not be deliverable over the plan period.
- 4.7.40. Through consultation on the Dorset Council Local Plan, the council is specifically seeking to examine the opportunities for and implications of channelling development to Alderholt. The council is seeking to establish whether it would be possible to sustainably deliver a transformatory level of growth at Alderholt that would allow delivery of the necessary infrastructure for a self-sustaining settlement.

### 5. Consideration of Exceptional circumstances

- 5.1.1. The council's assessment of whether there are exceptional circumstances for changes to Green Belt boundaries have been informed by an assessment of the harm to the Green Belt arising from the release of land.

### 5.2. Strategic Green Belt review (2020)

- 5.2.1. Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council were formed in April 2019. Both council areas include large areas of Green Belt. The unitary authorities committed to preparing new local plans for their areas within 5 years of local government re-organisation. Officers at the councils recognise that the need for homes in both new councils, and their respective approaches to meeting this need, are strategic matters<sup>15</sup>. The Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole conurbation is surrounded by Green Belt, and therefore any discussions relating to meeting development needs in this area needs to take account of the Green Belt.
- 5.2.2. A number of the former councils had conducted reviews of the Green Belt as part of the preparation of their local plans. The underlying assumptions, methodologies and coverage of these reviews were not consistent. As a consequence Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council were not able to rely on these existing reviews to guide the preparation of their local plans and those discussions relating to strategic matters.
- 5.2.3. To address this issue the councils have prepared a joint strategic review of the Green Belt. This strategic Green Belt review is presented in two parts. The first part comprises a comprehensive assessment of parcels of Green Belt land and their contribution to the Green Belt purposes defined in the NPPF, these contribution assessments also take account of the openness of the Green Belt and the level of distinction between the Green Belt land and developed land<sup>16</sup> which is excluded from the Green Belt.
- 5.2.4. The second part of the review considers the impact, measured on a 'harm' rating scale, arising from release of Green Belt land. These 'harm' assessments take account

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<sup>15</sup> Strategic matters are defined in section 33A (4) (a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as: 'sustainable development or use of land that has or would have a significant impact on at least two planning areas, including (in particular) sustainable development or use of land for or in connection with infrastructure that is strategic and has or would have a significant impact on at least two planning areas'.

<sup>16</sup> This land comprises the large built-up area of the Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch conurbation and inset towns and villages.

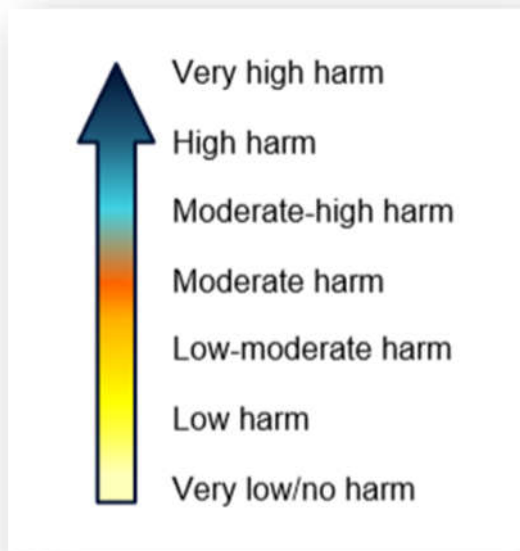
## Dorset Council Local Plan: Green Belt background paper

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of the lands contribution to Green Belt purposes and the impacts of releasing land on adjoining Green Belt (assessed as a measure of any changes to the contribution that adjoining land makes to Green Belt purposes). The review does not present conclusions as to whether it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development or whether there are exceptional circumstances for changes to Green Belt boundaries.

- 5.2.5. The council will use the harm assessment findings from the second part of the Green Belt review to assess whether there are exceptional circumstances for changes to Green Belt boundaries. Harm was rated using a seven-point scale ranging from very high to very low (see Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1: Rating scale for defining harm arising from release of Green Belt.



- 5.2.6. The next part of this paper presents a summary of the sites, which the council proposes to release from the Green Belt, the harm arising from release of the Green Belt (taken from the second stage of the strategic Green Belt review) and those considerations, which the council considers amount to exceptional circumstances. Where a preferred site for homes encompasses multiple Green Belt parcels or parts of parcels the council has assessed the overall harm rating as equating to the highest rated constituent parcel or part of parcel. This approach is consistent with the methodology in the stage 2 of the council's Green Belt review<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> Stage 2 of the Green Belt review clarifies that where release of land 'encompass[es] areas with different harm ratings, the overall harm rating will always equate to the highest parcel or part-parcel harm rating.' (Paragraph 2.44).

## Dorset Council Local Plan: Green Belt background paper

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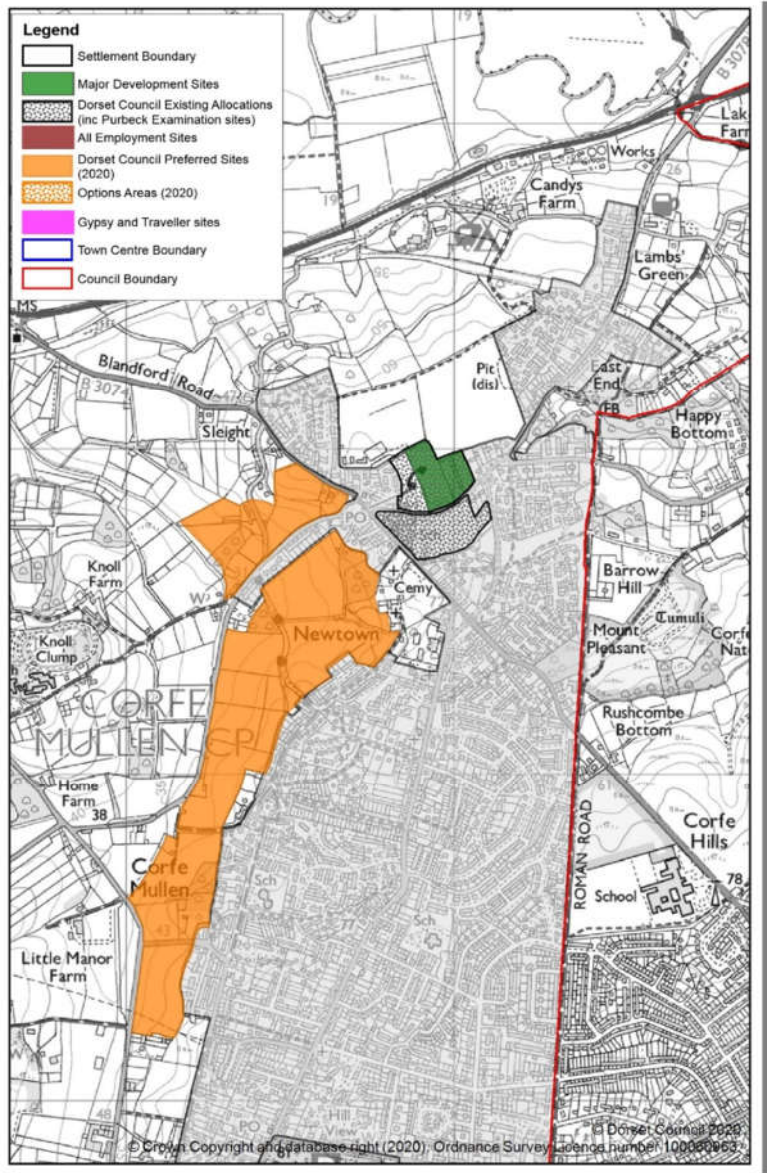
- 5.2.7. In addition to any specific considerations relating to each site the council considers that the following overriding considerations also amount to exceptional circumstances for the proposed release of Green Belt:
- the implications for sustainable development of channelling growth beyond the Green Belt (as discussed earlier in this paper);
  - the limited supply of suitable brownfield sites for new homes in the South Eastern Dorset functional area (as discussed earlier in this paper);
  - the limited supply of suitable sites for new homes outside the Green Belt, but within the South Eastern Dorset functional area;
  - the opportunity to ameliorate / compensate for harm to the Green Belt. (All of the proposed allocated sites will need to demonstrate that the adverse impacts on habitat sites can be mitigated. Delivery of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) provide the opportunity ameliorate / compensate for harm to the Green Belt); and
  - the implications of allocating development beyond the South Eastern Dorset functional area for the spatial strategy and the local plan's Strategic Priorities.



## 5.3. Corfe Mullen

5.3.1. Figure 5.2 below shows Dorset Council preferred option sites for new homes to the West of Corfe Mullen.

Figure 5.2: Map showing Dorset Council Corfe Mullen Preferred Sites





## Dorset Council Local Plan: Green Belt background paper

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### Harm to Green Belt arising from release of land

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- 5.3.2. Land to the west of Pardy's Hill (CORM<sub>3</sub>): **Very high** (Stage 2 Green Belt review reference CM8 and CM10).
- 5.3.3. Land to the east of Haywards Lane (CORM<sub>4</sub>): **Very high** (Stage 2 Green Belt review reference CM5).
- 5.3.4. Land to the west of Haywards Lane (CORM<sub>5</sub>): **Very high** (Stage 2 Green Belt review reference CM37, CM39 and CM6).

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### Exceptional circumstances

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- 5.3.1. For land to the west of Pardy's Hill (CORM<sub>3</sub>) exceptional circumstances include:
- The site is a deliverable housing site that will contribute to meeting Dorset's housing needs;
  - Development around Corfe Mullen (Tier 1 large built-up area), in conjunction with the other proposed housing sites, will constitute a sustainable urban extension to the existing settlement minimising the need to travel long distances to access everyday services / facilities; and
  - There are opportunities to ameliorate / compensate for harm to the Green Belt arising from the release of this site (the council will be fully exploring these opportunities in a separate piece of evidence, which will be published prior to submission of the draft Dorset Council Local Plan).
- 5.3.2. For land to the east of Haywards Lane (CORM<sub>4</sub>) exceptional circumstances include:
- The site is a deliverable housing site that will contribute to meeting Dorset's housing needs;
  - Development around Corfe Mullen (Tier 1 large built-up area), in conjunction with the other proposed housing sites, will constitute a sustainable urban extension to the existing settlement minimising the need to travel long distances to access everyday services / facilities; and
  - The proposed SANG provides the opportunity to enhance the quality of the environment and improve accessibility into this part of the Green Belt.
- 5.3.3. For land to the west of Haywards Lane (CORM<sub>5</sub>) exceptional circumstances include:
- The site is a deliverable housing site (excluding a small section along the southern edge located inside the 400 metre area for Upton Heath) that will contribute to meeting Dorset's housing needs;
  - Development around Corfe Mullen (Tier 1 large built-up area), in conjunction with the other proposed housing sites, will constitute a sustainable urban extension to the existing settlement minimising the need to travel long distances to access everyday services / facilities; and

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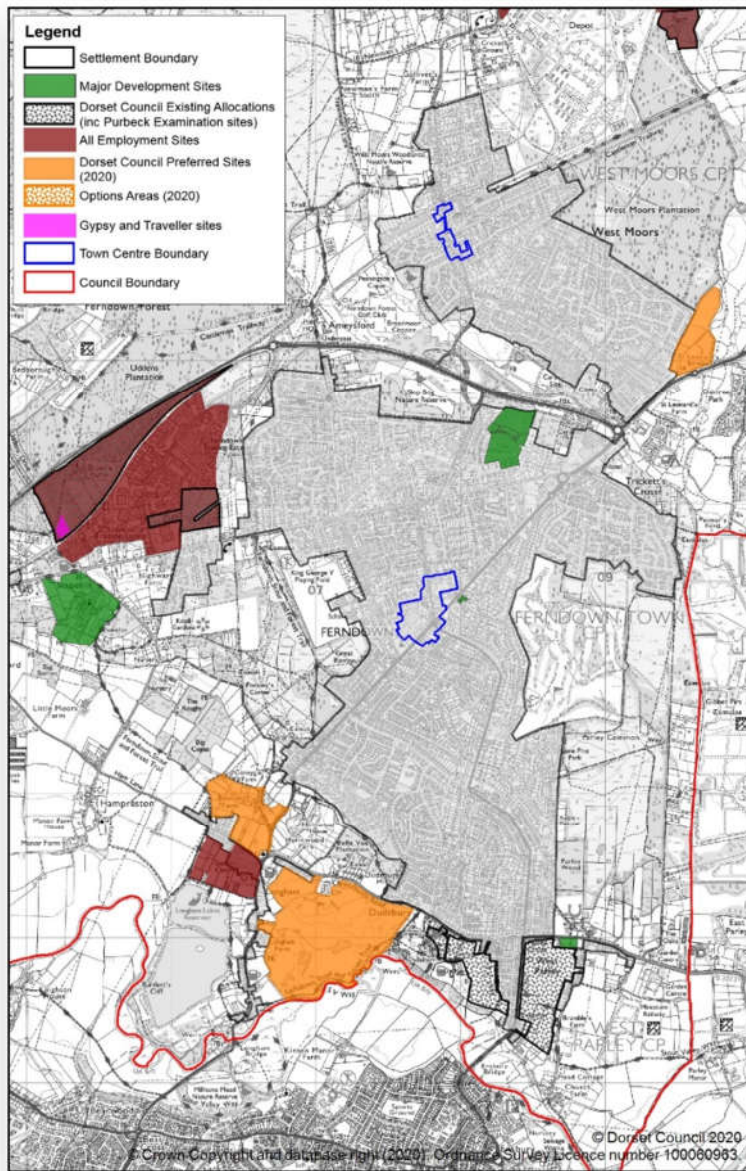
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- The proposed SANG provides the opportunity to enhance the quality of the environment and improve accessibility into this part of the Green Belt.

## 5.4. Ferndown and West Parley

5.4.1. Figure 5.3 below shows Dorset Council preferred option sites for new homes to the South and South West of Ferndown and West Parley.

Figure 5.3: Map showing Dorset Council Ferndown and West Parley Preferred Sites



### Harm to Green Belt arising from release of land

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- 5.4.1. Land at Dudsbury Golf Course, Longham (FERN6): **Very high** (Stage 2 Green Belt review reference: FE43 and FE47).
- 5.4.2. Land off Angel Lane north of Ham Lane (FERN7): **Very high** (Stage 2 Green Belt review reference: FE50 and FE51).

### Exceptional circumstances

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- 5.4.1. For land at Dudsbury Golf Course, Longham (FERN6) exceptional circumstances include:
- The site is a deliverable housing site that will make a significant contribution to meeting Dorset's housing needs;
  - Development around Ferndown and West Parley (Tier 2 town / other main settlement), in conjunction with the other proposed housing sites, will constitute a sustainable urban extension to the existing settlement minimising the need to travel long distances to to access everyday services / facilities;
  - The proposed SANG provides the opportunity to enhance the quality of the environment and improve accessibility into this part of the Green Belt. The land owners / promoters have also indicated that the SANG could serve a wider strategic function around mitigating the impacts of residential development on habitat sites;
  - Opportunities to form links with the Stour Valley Way (running along the northern side of the River Stour) and over the River Stour to Millhams Mead Nature Reserve. This will link in with the proposed Stour Valley Country Park; and
  - Opportunities for investment in local infrastructure (including options to form part of a sustainable cycle link and improve the local highway network) connecting through the site to the wider area and therefore facilitating sustainable travel options.
- 5.4.2. For land off Angel Lane north of Ham Lane (FERN7) these include:
- The site deliverable housing site that will contribute to meeting Dorset's housing needs;
  - Development around Ferndown and West Parley (Tier 2 town / other main settlement), in conjunction with the other proposed housing sites, will constitute a sustainable urban extension to the existing settlement minimising the need to travel long distances to to access everyday services / facilities; and
  - The creation of routes through the site to further facilitate sustainable travel options
  - Opportunities exist to ameliorate / compensate (potentially through a Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG) that will need to be delivered to mitigate

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the impacts of development on habitat sites) for harm to the Green Belt arising from the release of this site.

### Land west and south of Longham Roundabouts (FERN10)

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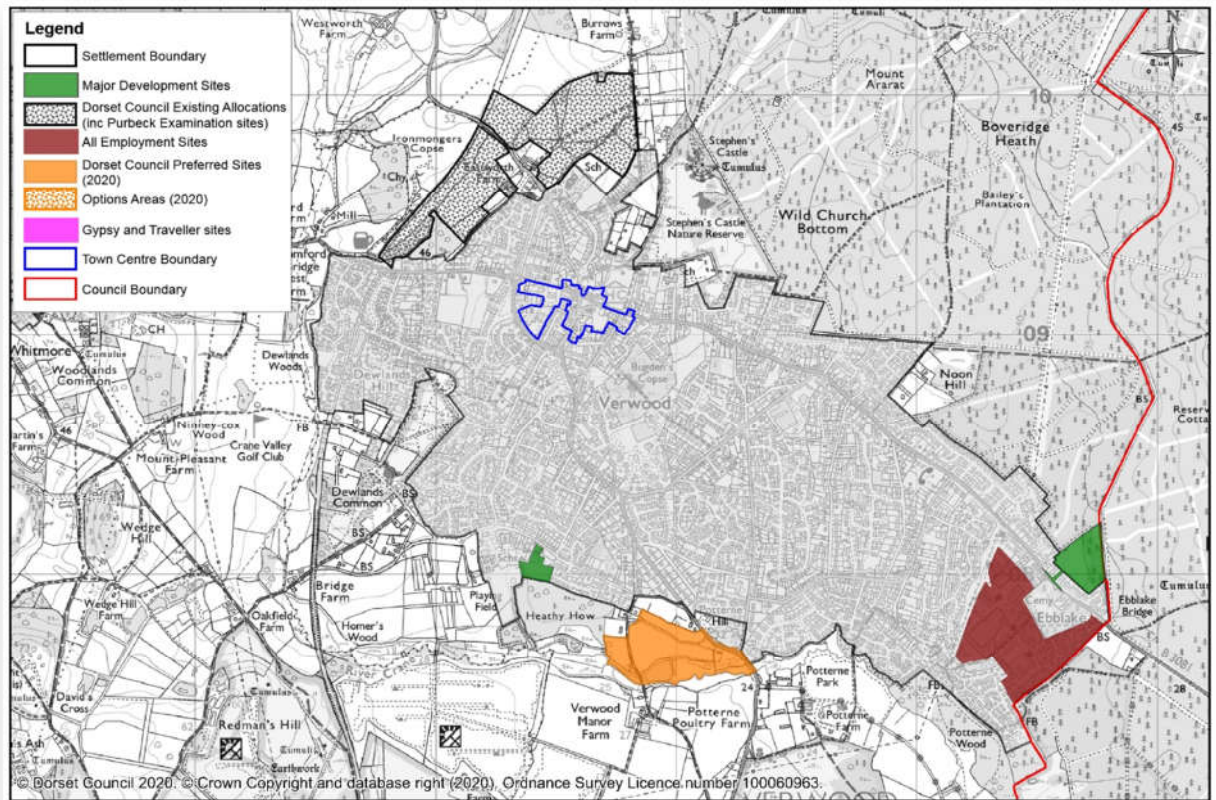
- 5.4.3. The consultation Dorset Local Plan also includes a proposed allocation for land to the west and south of Longham Roundabouts through policy FERN10. The allocation is for employment uses which can be carried out in residential areas without harm to residential amenity and B2 light industrial uses. Green Belt boundaries will need to be changed to allow development in accordance with the proposed policy allocation. Further evidence to more fully understand the need for employment land in the South Eastern Dorset functional area is being gathered. This will help inform whether there are exceptional circumstances to release this land from the Green Belt.
- 5.4.4. The council is inviting responses on the proposed allocation through the consultation on its new local plan. Stage 2 of the council's Green Belt review rates the harm arising from release of this land as **Moderate high** (the policy area also includes an area which the review has assessed has 'no openness').

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## 5.5. Verwood

5.5.1. Figure 5.4 below shows Dorset Council preferred option site for new homes to the South of Verwood.

Figure 5.4: Map Showing Dorset Council Verwood Preferred Site





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### Harm to Green Belt arising from release of land

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- 5.5.2. Land south of Manor Road (VER3): **Moderate high** (Stage 2 Green Belt review reference VE5).

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### Exceptional circumstances

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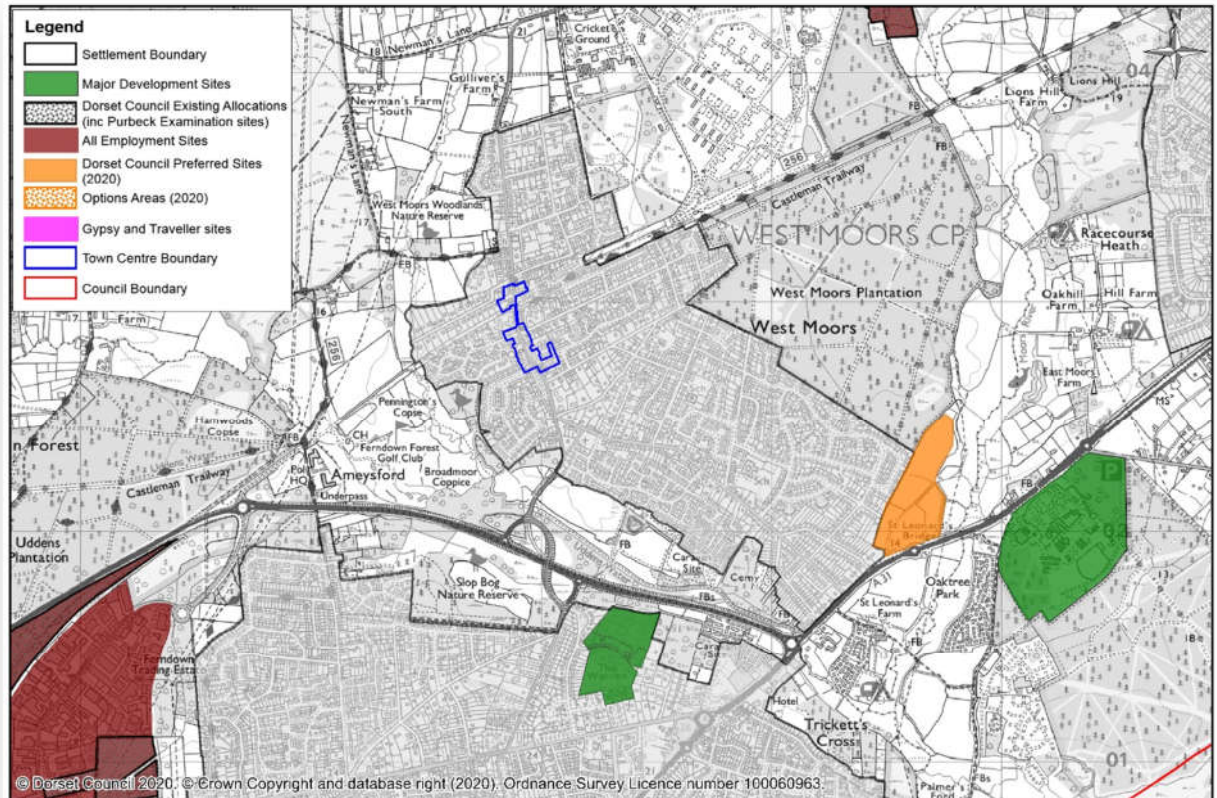
- 5.5.1. For land south of Manor Road (VER3) exceptional circumstances include:
- The site is a deliverable housing site that will make an important contribution to meeting Dorset's housing needs;
  - The development of this site, in conjunction with the other sites currently being developed, will constitute a sustainable urban extension to the existing settlement; and
  - There are opportunities to ameliorate / compensate (potentially through a Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG). Land owners / promoters have also explored the potential to form 'functional links' between the site of a proposed SANG and Potterne Hill Local Nature Reserve and green space further to the east (the land owner / promoter also notes the potential to connect to Moors Valley Country Park to the south).

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## 5.6. West Moors

5.6.1. Figure 5.5 below shows Dorset Council preferred option site for new homes to the east of West Moors.

Figure 5.5: Map Showing Dorset Council West Moors Preferred Site





## Dorset Council Local Plan: Green Belt background paper

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### Harm to Green Belt arising from release of land

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- 5.6.1. Land north of Azalea Roundabout (WMO<sub>1</sub>): **Moderate high** (Stage 2 Green Belt review reference: WE3).

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### Exceptional circumstances

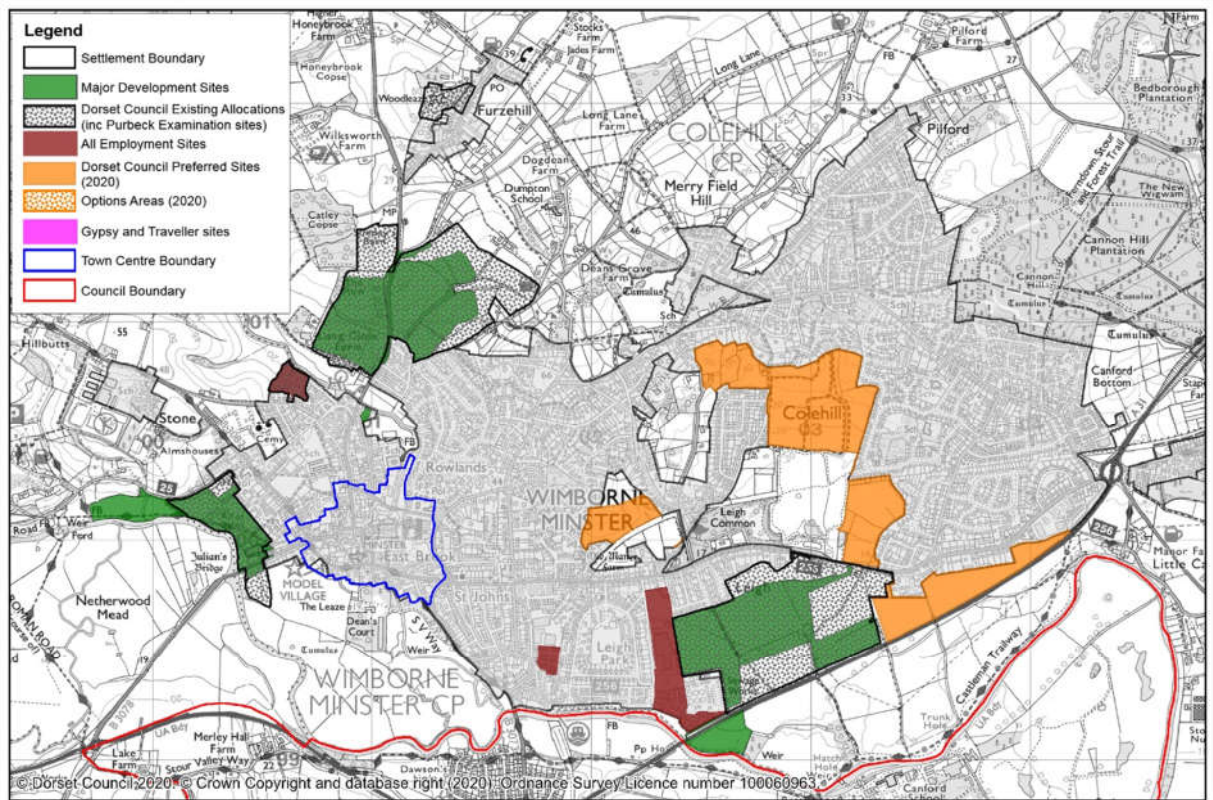
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- 5.6.1. For land north of Azalea Roundabout (WMO<sub>1</sub>) exceptional circumstances include:
- The site is a deliverable housing site that will contribute to meeting Dorset's housing needs;
  - Development around West Moors (Tier 2 town / other main settlement), in conjunction with the other proposed housing sites, will constitute a sustainable urban extension to the existing settlement; and
  - The proposed SANG provides the opportunity to enhance the quality of the environment and improve accessibility into this part of the Green Belt. (There is potential for the proposed SANG identified by the land owner / promoter to have a wider function as recreational space for residents of West Moors and to enhance connections and access between existing green infrastructure).

## 5.7. Wimborne Minster and Colehill

5.7.1. Figure 5.6 below shows Dorset Council preferred option sites for new homes around Wimborne Minster and Colehill.

Figure 5.6: Map Showing Dorset Council Wimborne Minster and Colehill Preferred Sites



## Dorset Council Local Plan: Green Belt background paper

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### Harm to Green Belt arising from release of land

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- 5.7.2. Land at Leigh Farm (WMC6): **Low** (Stage 2 Green Belt review reference: W134).
- 5.7.3. Land east of Northleigh Lane (WMC7): **Very high** (Stage 2 Green Belt review reference: CO29 and CO30).
- 5.7.4. Land north of Wimborne Road (WMC8): **Moderate high** (Stage 2 Green Belt review reference: CO28).
- 5.7.5. Land south of Wimborne Road West (WMC9): **Moderate high** (Stage 2 Green Belt review reference: W11 and CO26).

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### Exceptional circumstances

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- 5.7.1. For land at Leigh Farm (WMC6) exceptional circumstances include:
- a deliverable housing site that will contribute to meeting Dorset’s housing needs;
  - development around Wimborne Minster and Colehill (Tier 2 town / other main settlement), in conjunction with the other proposed housing sites, will constitute a sustainable urban extension to the existing settlement; and
  - opportunities to ameliorate / compensate for harm to the Green Belt arising from the release of this site.
- 5.7.2. For land east of Northleigh Lane (WMC7) exceptional circumstances include:
- a deliverable housing site that will contribute to meeting Dorset’s housing needs;
  - development around Wimborne Minster and Colehill (Tier 2 town / other main settlement), in conjunction with the other proposed housing sites, will constitute a sustainable urban extension to the existing settlement; and
  - opportunities to ameliorate / compensate for harm to the Green Belt arising from the release of this site.
- 5.7.3. For land north of Wimborne Road (WMC8) exceptional circumstances include:
- a deliverable housing site that will contribute to meeting Dorset’s housing needs;
  - development around Wimborne Minster and Colehill (Tier 2 town / other main settlement), in conjunction with the other proposed housing sites, will constitute a sustainable urban extension to the existing settlement; and
  - the proposed SANG provides the opportunity to enhance the quality of the environment and improve accessibility into this part of the Green Belt. (At this site there also potential to create a connection between the proposed SANG and the existing ‘Bytheway’ SANG).
- 5.7.4. For land south of Wimborne Road West (WMC9) exceptional circumstances include:
- a deliverable housing site that will contribute to meeting Dorset’s housing needs;

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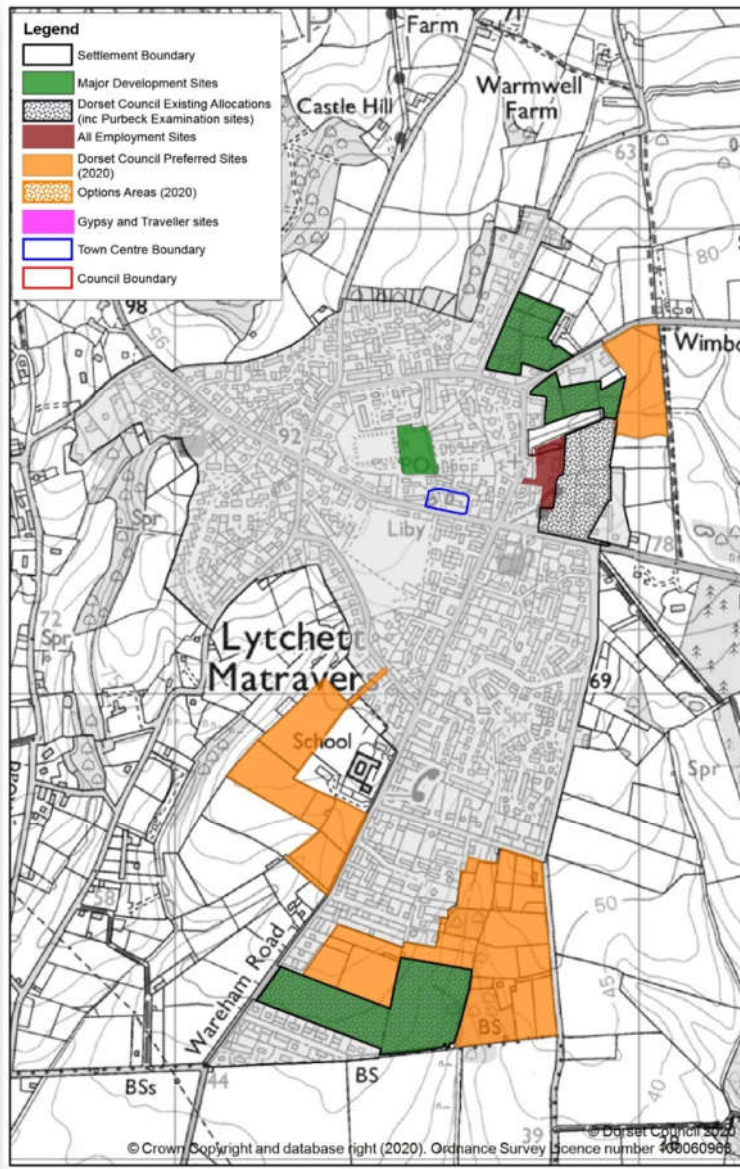
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- development around Wimborne Minster and Colehill (Tier 2 town / other main settlement), in conjunction with the other proposed housing sites, will constitute a sustainable urban extension to the existing settlement; and
- Opportunities to ameliorate / compensate for harm to the Green Belt arising from the release of this site.

## 5.8. Lytchett Matravers

5.8.1. Figure 5.7 below shows Dorset Council preferred option sites for new homes around Lytchett Matravers.

Figure 5.7: Map Showing Dorset Council Lytchett Matravers Preferred Site



## Dorset Council Local Plan: Green Belt background paper

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### Harm to Green Belt arising from release of land

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- 5.8.1. Eastern extension to land at Blaney's Corner (LYMT5): **Moderate high** (Stage 2 Green Belt review reference: LY12).
- 5.8.2. Land between Wareham Road and Foxhills Road (LYMT6): **Moderate high** (Stage 2 Green Belt review reference: LY15, LY16 and LY17).
- 5.8.3. Land to the west of Wareham Road (LYMT7): **High** (Stage 2 Green Belt review reference: LY19, LY23 and LY22).

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### Exceptional circumstances

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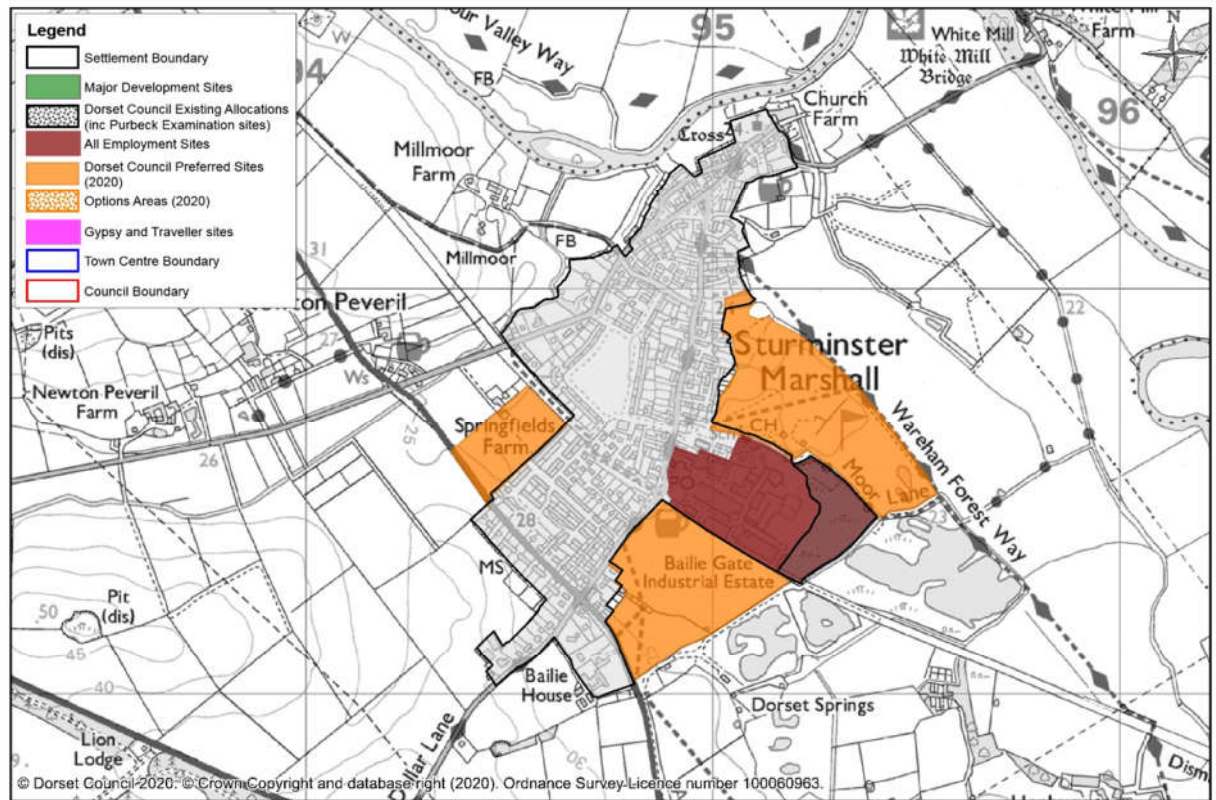
- 5.8.1. For the eastern extension to land at Blaney's Corner (LYMT5) exceptional circumstances include:
  - a deliverable housing site that will contribute to meeting Dorset's housing needs;
  - development around Lytchett Matravers (Tier 3 village), in conjunction with the other proposed housing sites, will constitute a sustainable urban extension to the existing settlement; and
  - the proposed SANG provides the opportunity to enhance the quality of the environment and improve accessibility into this part of the Green Belt. (There are also opportunities to enhance links between the proposed new homes and existing public rights of way running through and around the village that would enhance connectivity).
- 5.8.2. For land between Wareham Road and Foxhills Road (LYMT6) exceptional circumstances include:
  - a deliverable housing site that will contribute to meeting Dorset's housing needs;
  - development around Lytchett Matravers (Tier 3 village), in conjunction with the other proposed housing sites, will constitute a sustainable urban extension to the existing settlement; and
  - opportunities to ameliorate / compensate for harm to the Green Belt arising from the release of this site.
- 5.8.3. For land to the west of Wareham Road (LYMT7) these include:
  - a deliverable housing site that will contribute to meeting Dorset's housing needs;
  - development around Lytchett Matravers (Tier 3 village), in conjunction with the other proposed housing sites, will constitute a sustainable urban extension to the existing settlement; and
  - opportunities to ameliorate / compensate for harm to the Green Belt arising from the release of this site.



## 5.9. Sturminster Marshall

5.9.1. Figure 5.8 below shows Dorset Council preferred option sites for new homes around Sturminster Marshall.

Figure 5.8: Map Showing Dorset Council Sturminster Marshall Preferred Sites





## Dorset Council Local Plan: Green Belt background paper

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### Harm to Green Belt arising from release of land

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- 5.9.2. Land at Station Road (STMR<sub>2</sub>): **Moderate** (Stage 2 Green Belt review reference: SM<sub>10</sub>).
- 5.9.3. Springfield Road (STMR<sub>3</sub>): **Low** (Stage 2 Green Belt review reference: SM<sub>1</sub>).
- 5.9.4. Sturminster Marshall Golf Course (STMR<sub>4</sub>): **Moderate high** (Stage 2 Green Belt review reference: SM<sub>7</sub>).

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### Exceptional circumstances

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- 5.9.1. For land at Station Road (STMR<sub>2</sub>) exceptional circumstances include:
- a deliverable housing site that will contribute to meeting Dorset’s housing needs;
  - development around Sturminster Marshall (Tier 3 village), in conjunction with the other proposed housing sites, will constitute a sustainable urban extension to the existing settlement; and
  - Opportunities to ameliorate / compensate for harm to the Green Belt arising from the release of this site (the council will be fully exploring these opportunities in a separate piece of evidence which will be published prior to submission of the draft Dorset Council Local Plan).
- 5.9.2. For land at Springfield Road (STMR<sub>3</sub>) exceptional circumstances include:
- a deliverable housing site that will contribute to meeting Dorset’s housing needs;
  - development around Sturminster Marshall (Tier 3 village), in conjunction with the other proposed housing sites, will constitute a sustainable urban extension to the existing settlement; and
  - the proposed SANG provides the opportunity to enhance the quality of the environment and improve accessibility into this part of the Green Belt. (There are also opportunities to enhance links between the proposed new homes and existing public rights of way running through and around the village that would enhance connectivity).
- 5.9.3. For land at Sturminster Marshall Golf Course (STMR<sub>4</sub>) exceptional circumstances include:
- a deliverable housing site that will contribute to meeting Dorset’s housing needs;
  - development around Sturminster Marshall (Tier 3 village), in conjunction with the other proposed housing sites, will constitute a sustainable urban extension to the existing settlement; and
  - the proposed SANG provides the opportunity to enhance the quality of the environment and improve accessibility into this part of the Green Belt. (The land owners / promoters have also indicated that the SANG is larger than required to mitigate the impact from the proposed residential development, there is potential

## Dorset Council Local Plan: Green Belt background paper

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that it could serve a wider strategic function around mitigating the impacts of residential development on habitat sites).

### 5.10. Villages washed over by the Green Belt / other sites inset within the Green Belt

- 5.10.1. As part of the first stage of the Green Belt the council assessed whether there was a justification for assessing whether there were exceptional circumstances for changes to the parts of the Green Belt which wash over smaller villages and the land which is inset (i.e. excluded from it) from the Green Belt but not defined as either part of the 'large built-up area' or a 'town' for the purposes of the Green Belt review.
- 5.10.2. The findings from this first stage of the review are summarised below:
- Beacon Hill – 'Settlement makes little contribution to Green Belt openness, but the settlement is smaller than any inset residential areas in Dorset or BCP.' **No change to boundaries justified.**
  - Edmondsham – 'Settlement is sufficiently open to justify washed-over status.' **No change to boundaries justified.**
  - Furzehill – 'Settlement is sufficiently open to justify washed-over status.' **No change to boundaries justified.**
  - Gaunts Common – 'Settlement is sufficiently open to justify washed-over status.' **No change to boundaries justified.**
  - Hinton Martell – 'Settlement is sufficiently open to justify washed-over status.' **No changes to boundaries justified.**
  - Holt – 'Settlement is sufficiently open to justify washed-over status.' **No changes to boundaries justified.**
  - Horton – 'Settlement is sufficiently open to justify washed-over status.' **No changes to boundaries justified.**
  - Hurn – 'Settlement is sufficiently open to justify washed-over status.' **No changes to boundaries justified.**
  - Longham – 'Settlement has a sizeable area of development which makes no significant contribution to Green Belt openness, but where it is more linear there are open gaps which do contribute to the Green Belt purposes.' **No changes to boundaries justified.**
  - Morden – 'Settlement is sufficiently open to justify washed-over status.' **No changes to boundaries justified.**
  - Shapwick – 'Settlement is sufficiently open to justify washed-over status.' **No changes to boundaries justified.**
  - Whitmore – 'The settlement as a whole is sufficiently open to justify its washed-over status. The New Road housing estate is not in itself large enough to significantly compromise openness.' **No changes to boundaries justified.**
  - Woodlands – 'Settlement is sufficiently open to justify washed-over status.' **No changes to boundaries justified.**

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- West Moors Oil Depot – ‘The nature and density of development do not compromise openness sufficiently to warrant the questioning of the site’s washed-over status.’ **No changes to boundaries justified.**
  - Victory Oak – ‘The developed area makes no contribution to the Green Belt purposes and is larger than some existing inset areas (e.g. Lytchett Minster).’ **No changes to boundaries justified.**
  - Winkton – ‘Settlement is sufficiently open to justify washed-over status, although modern development has some urbanising influence.’ **No changes to boundaries justified.**
  - Queen Elizabeth’s School Pamphill – ‘No potential to designate as Green Belt. It is noted that the school buildings extend into the Green Belt to the west, so consideration should be given to the extension of the inset area.’ **No changes to boundaries justified.**
  - Stapehill – east of Canford Bottom Roundabout – ‘No potential to designate as Green Belt.’ **No changes to boundaries justified.**
  - Ferndown and Uddens Industrial Estates – ‘No potential to designate as Green Belt.’ **No changes to boundaries justified.**
  - Gundrymoor Industrial Estate, West Moors – ‘No potential to designate as Green Belt.’ **No changes to boundaries justified.**
  - Woolsbridge Industrial Park, Three Legged Cross – ‘No potential to designate as Green Belt.’ **No changes to boundaries justified.**
  - Bournemouth Airport and associated business park – ‘No potential to designate as Green Belt.’ **No changes to boundaries justified.**
  - Lytchett Minster – ‘No potential to designate as Green Belt.’ **No changes to boundaries justified.**
  - Romany Works Business Park – ‘Although land on the western fringes of the business park still retains some openness, the area as a whole is too developed to suggest any clear justification for adding it to the Green Belt.’ **No changes to boundaries justified.**
  - Throop – ‘No potential to designate as Green Belt.’ **No changes to boundaries justified.**
- 5.10.3. Following the findings of the review it is not considered that the council need consider further changes to the boundaries of Green Belt in Dorset council area in response to this part of the assessment. Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council will reach its own conclusion on this issue.
- 5.10.4. As indicated below, the council intends to gather further evidence relating to the potential to mitigate harm to the Green Belt arising from the proposed changes identified in the draft Dorset Council Local Plan. As part of this work the council will take account of the proposed releases / allocations on existing Green Belt boundaries in related washed over villages (e.g. Longham in respect to the proposed allocation at Ferndown and West Parley).

### 5.11. Supplementary evidence

- 5.11.1. The council intends to gather further evidence relating to the Green Belt following completion of the consultation on the draft Dorset Local Plan. The purpose of the evidence is to explore the opportunities for:
- Mitigating harm to Green Belt arising from the release of land (subject to the outcome of this further work, and certainty around of the delivery of mitigation measures, the harm assessments in stage 2 of the Green Belt review may be adjusted); and
  - Compensating for harm to the Green Belt arising from the release of land. National planning states that council's should 'set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land' (paragraph 138, NPPF (2019)).
- 5.11.2. Where appropriate the council has sought to outline where there might be the opportunity to mitigate the harm to the Green Belt or delivery compensatory measures when identifying exceptional circumstances for each of the proposed release sites.
- 5.11.3. The council will also be exploring through this evidence the potential to clearly define new Green Belt boundaries, any implications for those existing settlements listed in stage 1 Green Belt report which are washed over by the Green Belt and the cumulative impacts of Green Belt release proposed in the draft Dorset Council Local Plan. The council intends to gather and present this evidence prior to the submission of the Dorset Council Local Plan for examination.

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### Appendix 1 – previously developed land outside the Green Belt in the South Eastern Dorset functional area

5.11.4. The table below lists those developable housing sites that are both outside the Green Belt and previously developed land. This list includes sites inside the development boundaries of settlements in Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 of the council's settlement hierarchy. The total estimated yield from these sites is estimated at approximately 894 homes.

SHLAA reference	Site description	Settlement	Estimated housing yield
LA/ALDE/017	Alderholt Surplus Stores	Alderholt	89
LA/BERE/009	Former Bere Regis School	Bere Regis	23
LA/BLFO/011	Blandford Depot Site	Blandford Forum	19
LA/BLFO/012	Castleman House and Bungalow Site	Blandford Forum	18
LA/BLFO/009	Land adj Shorts Lane & Luton Mews	Blandford Forum	9
LA/BLFO/010	Nordon Council offices	Blandford Forum	40
LA/BLSM/003	Blandford Brewery	Blandford St Mary	180
LA/CMUL/020	Dorset Soldier PH	Corfe Mullen	10
LA/COLE/028	92 - 120A Wimborne Road West	Colehill	44
LA/FERN/001	Peveril House 382 - 388	Ferndown	8
LA/LAMA/002	The Old Malthouse	Langton Matravers	15
LA/PAMP/002	Stone Lane Industrial Estate	Pamphill	62
LA/SWAN/001	Land at Swanage	Swanage	24
LA/SWAN/007	Cauldron Barn, Caravan Site	Swanage	11
LA/SWAN/008	Former grammar school	Swanage	27
LA/SWAN/009	Former Police Station Premises	Swanage	4
LA/VERW/011	Verwood Industrial Estate	Verwood	83
LA/WARE/006	Wareham Hospital	Wareham	18
LA/WARE/009	Anglebury Court and Day Centre sites	Wareham	17
LA/WARE/007	Former Gas Works	Wareham	10
LA/WARE/005	Wareham Health Centre	Wareham	5
LA/WARE/008	Wareham Middle School	Wareham	42
LA/WIMI/008	30 New Borough	Wimborne	11

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LA/WIMI/013	Northern Portion Flight Refuelling Site	Wimborne	50
LA/WIMI/012	Old Road Car Park and Old Dairy	Wimborne	8
LA/WIMI/010	Wimborne First School	Wimborne	13
LA/WIMI/007	Wimborne Market	Wimborne	50
LA/WMOO/006	West Moors Library site	West Moors	4



### Appendix 2 – previously developed land outside the Green Belt on the edges of the South Eastern Dorset functional area

- 5.11.1. The table below lists those developable housing sites around the edges of the South Eastern Dorset functional area that are both outside the Green Belt and previously developed land. The list includes sites inside the development boundaries of settlements in Tier 3 of the council's settlement hierarchy. The total estimated yield from these sites is estimated at approximately 91 homes.

SHLAA reference	Site description	Settlement	Estimated housing yield
LA/BRWK/010	Land off Chalky Road	Broadmayne	6
LA/IWMI/004	Art School (former village school)	Iwerne Minster	4
LA/IWMI/002	Land at Devine House	Iwerne Minster	5
LA/MILB/002	Camelco Site	Milborne St Andrew	32
LA/OKEF/003	Wessex Park Homes	Okeford Fitzpaine	44