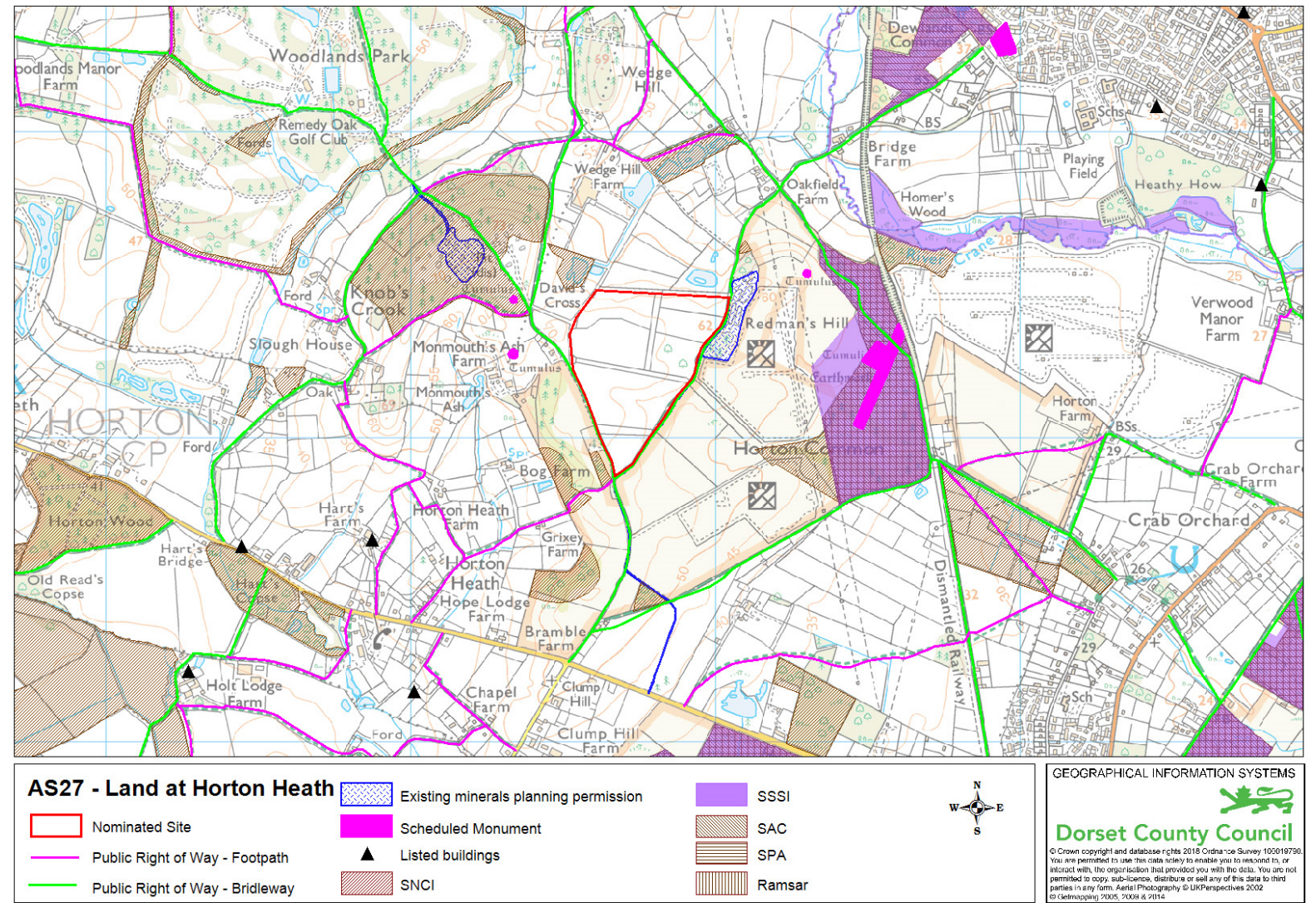


Horton Heath AS27 - Site Assessment – December 2018

Site Information	
Site Location	Land at Horton Heath, Horton, Wimborne
Grid Reference	SU 067 072
Administrative Area	East Dorset District Council
Parish	Horton CP
Site Nominee(s)	Dorset Property Surveys
Proposed development	Sand and gravel extraction (Poole Formation) There would be no requirement for on-site processing Although there will be no on-site washing and sorting plant, it is expected there will be a dry-screening process on-site, to screen the sand before it is removed.
Site Area	Approximately 16.2 ha
Estimated annual output (tpa)	Approximately 200,000 tpa
Estimated reserve	Between 2,400,000t and 3,500,000t
Expected life of operation	Approximately 12 years (could be longer if the entire reserve is extracted)
Existing land use	Agriculture/Woodland
Current Agricultural land classification	Most is poor – Grade 5 Small part of the south is Grade 4
Proposed Restoration	Restoration, at excavated levels, should be to 'acid grassland' as this is a priority habitat. This would function as low-quality pasture. Restoration at excavated levels would see a valley running from a high point in the southernmost corner down to the pond that lies a short distance to the north of the area. The sides of the valley would slope from the tracks along either side of the triangle, so the perimeter tracks and hedges would be maintained.
Access	Via access road to solar farm, onto C2 The access road was created recently to allow access for construction of the adjacent solar panel farm.
Estimated Traffic Movements	Up to 80 lorry movements per day based on extraction at a level of 200,000tpa



Biodiversity.

Criterion C1 - Impact on European/international nature designations.	A
<p>Area AS27 lies to the west of Horton Common SSSI, a component part of the Dorset Heaths SAC and Dorset Heathlands SPA/Ramsar. The site is hydrologically linked to the European sites and would once have fed the mire which historically ran from AS27 east to Horton Common SSSI. Investigations linked to other planning applications at this site have established that there is a layer of Broadstone Clay beneath the sand and gravel and disturbance of this risks affecting the hydrology of Horton Common SSSI. Further investigations will be needed to determine how to protect the hydrological link between AS27 and Horton Common SSSI.</p> <p>DCC 25/10/18</p>	

Criterion C2 - Impact on areas used by Annex 1 bird species.	D
<p>Area AS27: No comment. DCC 25/10/18</p>	

Criterion C3 - Impact on national nature designations.	A
<p>Area AS27: See Criterion 1 above for comments on how working AS27 may affect the hydrology of adjacent Horton Common SSSI. DCC 25/10/18</p>	

Criterion C4 - Impact on protected species.	D
<p>Area AS27: Hedgerows should be assessed for dormice, and to determine whether they are important under the Hedgerow Regs, 1997. DCC 25/10/18</p>	

Criterion C5 - Impact on local recognitions/designations, including ancient woodland and veteran trees.	C	D
<p>Area AS27: There may be important boundary features or individual veteran trees which would need assessment. DCC 25/10/18</p>		

Further comments related to Restoration

Restoration should be to 'acid grassland' as this is a priority habitat. This would function as low-quality pasture.

DCC 25/10/18

Geodiversity

Criterion C6 - Impact on geodiversity.

D

No specific scientific gains or geodiversity enhancements are likely but the exposures may be of interest to the quaternary and tertiary research associations. Provision should be made so that it will be possible to arrange such visits on request.

DCC 05.07.2016

Landscape

Criterion C7 – Impact on designated landscapes.

D

No significant impact/negligible.

Dorset County Council 31.5.2016

Criterion C8 – What is landscape capacity to accommodate proposed development.

C

The whole area is within the Horton Common -Three Legged Cross Heath/Farmland Mosaic in the draft EDDC Landscape Character assessment. This assessment indicates the importance of belts of trees and scrub and all around the site these form key features with mature oaks along the western edges which are ancient boundaries. The site is also part of a prominent ridge line with open views especially to the east.

The site has some landscape value and any future extraction should be limited in extent and be based on a detailed and independent assessment of landscape character so any future operations conserve and enhance key features and views and mitigation and restoration reflects existing character.

The adjacent bridleway is a key visual receptor. It is important that prior to any application a full LVIA is carried out to assess impacts from all key visual receptors.

Dorset County Council 31.5.2016 updated 04.12.18

Criterion C9 –Impact on historic landscapes.

A

→

E

Until relatively recently, most if not all of this site would have been heathland. The Scheduled Monuments mentioned under C11 would have occupied prominent locations within this landscape. The impact depends upon how well this setting is restored – at this stage I think it could range between categories A and E.

Dorset County Council 4/11/2013 - Re-consulted 14.11.18

Historic Environment

Criterion C10 – Impact on historic buildings.

D

No listed buildings in the immediate vicinity of the site. The nearest, Harts Farm, is well screened from the site.

Assessment D – no significant impact.

Dorset County Council 22/10/2013 - Re-consulted 14.11.18

Criterion C11 – Impact on archaeology.	A	→	D
<p>There are Scheduled Monuments in the vicinity.</p> <p>An archaeological assessment and probably an evaluation of the site that considers all the Monuments mentioned above and their settings, as well as other possible archaeological material on the site, are needed before an informed planning decision can be made. An applicant also needs to undertake early discussion with Historic England concerning the Scheduled Monuments and their setting.</p> <p>Only when these have been undertaken would the archaeological impact be understood – at present it could be anywhere from category A to category D.</p> <p>Dorset County Council 10 June, 2016</p> <p><u>Comments provided by Historic England 9 November 2018</u> (Comment made in relation to AS27 and previously considered AS08)</p> <p>An assessment needs to be undertaken to establish what is important about the SM; how the quarry sites contribute to the significance of the SMs and their setting; what would impact would quarrying have on the significance of the SMs; how could harm be avoided; could improvements be achieved. These matters can't be left until after the principal has been agreed as they are fundamental.</p> <p><u>Further comments provided by Historic England (Inspector of Ancient Monuments) – 12 November 2018</u></p> <p>Quarrying impacts on topography and historic landform could have very significant impacts on the settings of the SMs and their inter-relationship within the landscape. The SMs here – prehistoric barrows and land boundary dikes - are all specifically 'landscape monuments', which have an intimate and highly significant relationship with the local topography; their relationship with the landform and their inter-relationship with each other across the landscape are important factors in their heritage significance.</p> <p>AS27 covers a wider area in a broad lower lying area of heathland and former heathland. It could have a significant impact on setting, in view of its location between the groups of SMs (the barrows on the ridge to the W and the barrows and earthwork dikes to the E). There is a suggestion that the area might be reinstated to original contours. However, this would entail a good supply of backfill material and very many vehicle movements, either of which could present high risk factors to satisfactory completion of a restoration scheme. This area, lower less undulating than the ridge to the west at AS08 (<i>site previously considered</i>), has greater potential for archaeological features and would need careful evaluation. (As advised by DCC)</p>			

Water and Flood Management

No objection to AS27, provided there is no significant impact on the ponds adjacent to the site, or from/to the neighbouring historic landfill.

Criterion C12 - Impact on hydrogeology or groundwater.	C		
<p>Proximity to secondary aquifer</p> <p>Environment Agency 17 June 2016</p> <p><u>Groundwater Protection</u></p> <p>We have no objection in principle from a controlled waters perspective but the hydrogeological risk assessment (Chord Environmental) is only a qualitative preliminary assessment. As recommended in the report, the desk study needs to be supported by geological, geotechnical and groundwater data collected from appropriate site specific monitoring.</p> <p>Environment Agency 12 November 2018</p>			

Criterion C13 – Impact on surface waters.	A		
<p>Pond within 50m of site</p> <p>Environment Agency 17 June 2016</p>			

Criterion C14 - Impact on flooding or coastal stability.	D
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No significant impact – entire site located within Flood Zone 1.
 Environment Agency 17 June 2016

The Lead Local Flood Authority were consulted on 16th November 2018, and had the following comment:

No grounds for objection, subject to detail: The site falls entirely within Flood Zone 1 (low risk – fluvial flooding) according to the Environment Agency’s relevant flood modelling, and is not shown by relevant mapping to be at theoretical risk of surface water flooding. However, the site is seen to be approximately 1000m upstream / south of extensive fluvial, surface & ground water flooding adjacent to the Main River Crane, Bridge Farm & beyond, and is approximately 400m upstream of a number of on-line ponds (Wedge Hill Farm) which may well have a commercial and/or recreational purpose.

Whilst BGS data suggests that the site sits above a bedrock of a Parkstone Sand Member (sedimentary sand) with some overburden of River Terrace Deposits (sand & gravel) to the west, any existing surface water runoff or ground water emergence is perceived to migrate northwards into a receiving (Ordinary) watercourse, flowing towards the (man-made) ponds referred to above.

A site-specific strategy of surface water management should be requested that does not increase rates of runoff / generate downstream worsening or diminish water quality into the receiving system/s. As such the proposed activity should comply with the recommendations of the recently revised NPPF (July 2018) and other relevant legislation. Prior Land Drainage Consent may be required from DCC/FRM as relevant LLFA, for any works offering an obstruction to flow or realignment to a channel with the status of Ordinary Watercourse.

Further EA comments

Hydrogeological assessment

At the planning application stage, we would expect a hydrological assessment to be undertaken in order to demonstrate no significant negative impact on hydrogeological connectivity and pathways and surface water flow regimes. This is to protect river and wetland habitats and ecology, and also river users.

We require an assessment to demonstrate that the proposed restoration (for example, agricultural inert waste) will have no significant impact on water quality and cause no deterioration in WFD status. This is particularly relevant for sites adjacent to, and which drain to, watercourses and wetland features of interest.

Flood risk

Site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is greater than 1 hectare, therefore a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) will be required in support of any future planning application. The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), Dorset County Council, should be consulted on this proposed site allocation with regard to any other sources of flooding they may be aware of, as well as surface water drainage requirements.

Biodiversity

We have no in principle objections to the proposal, based on the information submitted so long as the recommendations proposed within the Phase 1 Ecology Report (Jan 2018) are carried out in order to protect upon species such as reptiles, bats and birds.

Land and Soils

Criterion C15 - Impact on existing soils or land type (including BMV land).	D
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Soils are primarily poor to very poor in quality, and restoration to heathland is possible. Minimal impact on agricultural land. Soils will be protected during working.
 Dorset County Council 17 October 2013

Air Quality

Criterion C16 – Impact on AQMAs.

D

No AQMA will be directly affected by this proposal.
Dorset County Council 17 October 2013

Economic development

Criterion C17 - Impact on economic development.

D

The site will make a contribution to aggregate supply and thus have a positive impact on the local, and wider, economy.
There is potential for quarry operations, including quarry traffic, to have a negative impact on local businesses. This would be further assessed at the planning application stage.
Dorset County Council 23 October 2018

Human Health and Amenity

Criterion C18 - Impact on Sensitive Human Receptors.

B

C

There are a small number of residences within 500m, the closest being approximately 70m. Best practice in terms of mitigation/screening will be required. Further assessment will be required at the planning application stage.
Dorset County Council 4 December 2018

Criterion C19 - Impact on existing settlements.

D

E

Verwood is approximately 1 km to the north-east, and Three Legged Cross over 1km to the south-east. These settlements are unlikely to experience any visual or noise impacts from working in the vicinity of the sites. However, lorries accessing the A31/A338 will travel through Three Legged Cross and Ashley Heath, and could have an impact. This will be further assessed at planning application stage.
Dorset County Council 23 October 2018

Airport Safety

Criterion C20 - Impact on airport safety

D

Site is located within 13km safeguarding zone, but not proposed for wet working.
Dorset County Council 17 October 2013

Cumulative Impacts

Criterion C21 - Effects on cumulative impacts.	B
<p>Purple Haze, southeast of Verwood, is allocated through Hampshire County Council's Minerals Plan - it is not yet operational, but could become so prior to or during the time that the site is developed. It would not be expected to contribute to significant cumulative impacts alongside the Horton sites. There are existing workings across the border in Hampshire.</p> <p>A small (100,000 tonnes) sand quarry has recently been permitted immediately to the east of Site AS27 at Horton Common. Site AS08 (site previously considered) has been worked in the past, and there has been other historical working in the area.</p> <p>The closest new neighbourhoods proposed through the Christchurch/East Dorset Local Plan are at Verwood. No significant cumulative impacts are expected with these.</p> <p>In the vicinity of the proposed site are also solar farms, a haulage business, sewage sludge disposal and farming uses.</p> <p>The impacts that could give rise to cumulative effects include noise, dust, visual intrusion, traffic, land stability, flood risk and impacts on surface and groundwater flows, quantity and quality.</p> <p>The receptors of these impacts will include¹:</p> <p>Biodiversity (including flora and fauna): The proposed site is expected to cause impacts on biodiversity, and these impacts could be cumulative or even synergistic with the other uses of land in the vicinity.</p> <p>Population & Human Health (including noise): There are relatively few properties in the vicinity of the proposed site, and impacts on settlements are expected to be limited. However, the nearest properties would experience impacts from development. AS08 is has been discounted and is no longer being considered for development. Therefore, there are not expected to be cumulative impacts.</p> <p>Soil: There will be impacts on soil, but it is expected that these can be minimised through best practice of soil handling. There is no BMV soil on the sites.</p> <p>Water: There is potential for impacts on ground/surface water, and these impacts could be cumulative with other uses in the area. Further assessment of potential impacts and identification of mitigation is required.</p> <p>Air: No particular impacts on air quality are expected.</p> <p>Climatic factors: The operation of heavy machinery/lorries will have cumulative impacts, albeit relatively small, on air quality and climate effects. These should be carefully assessed and mitigated through use of best practice.</p> <p>Material assets: No particular impacts expected.</p> <p>Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage: There are scheduled monuments in the area, and the level of development and different types of development has the potential to lead to cumulative impacts. These should be carefully assessed before development and all appropriate mitigation identified.</p> <p>Landscape: Landscape comments (above) note that 'the site has some landscape value and any future extraction should be limited in extent and be based on a detailed and independent assessment of landscape character so any future operations conserve and enhance key features and views and mitigation and restoration reflects existing character'. As only one site is now proposed in the area potential for cumulative impacts is reduced. Any impacts must be properly assessed and appropriately mitigated.</p> <p>Amenity: Properties in the vicinity of the proposed site is likely to suffer from impacts on amenity. However cumulative impacts are reduced due to only one mineral sites being proposed. Recreational users of the area - on the open access land, and the many public access routes - will have impacts, and these are likely to be cumulative, given other developments in the vicinity depending on working/phasing. Appropriate mitigation will be required.</p> <p>The interrelationship between the above factors: One of the key inter-relationships will be the number of vehicles using the area, and the impacts on residents and other users of the area. There will be increased, and cumulative, visual impacts as well. Both of these must be addressed and mitigated.</p> <p>Dorset County Council 4 December 2018</p>	

Carbon Emissions

Criterion C22 - Impact on carbon emissions	B
<p>Site will rely on lorries to remove the mineral and heavy equipment to extract and process it.</p> <p>Dorset County Council 4 December 2018</p>	

¹ These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects

Recreation/Access

Criterion C23 – Impact on recreational land	C
<p>Bridleways run along the eastern and western boundaries of the site. There are other public footpaths in the vicinity. There will be impacts on these users, and this must be addressed. Dorset County Council 4 December 2018</p>	

Criterion C24- Impact on public rights of way	C
<p>Bridleways run along the eastern and western boundaries of the site. There are other public footpaths in the vicinity. There will be impacts on these users, and this must be addressed. Dorset County Council 4 December 2018</p>	

Criterion C25 - Are the access proposals acceptable	C
<p>For the purposes of this assessment an output of approximately 125,000 tonnes per annum, around 50 movements per day, has been assumed. It is considered that the access serving the permitted solar farm should be suitable to accommodate this level of traffic. The existing Clump Farm access, on the brow of the hill to the west, still remains unsuitable for any intensification of use. Once on the C2, there are good links to the A31 to the east. The A31 can also be reached to the south along the B3072 although this would involve travelling through West Moors. Dorset County Council, Transport Development Management 3 April 2017</p> <p>Confirmed that the comments above, based on a projected 50 vehicles movements per day, apply equally if the movements are increased to around 80. Dorset County Council, Transport Development Management 7 November 2018</p> <p><u>Comments provided by Highways England 5 November 2018 (Comments made when both AS08 and AS27 were being considered)</u> The initial indication is that these sites could generate in the order of 80 HGV movements a day, based on an estimated annual output of 200,000 tonnes. However, the two sites combined would appear to have the capacity to generate an annual output of 325,000 tonnes with an associated uplift in likely vehicle movements, and it is unclear from the information provided whether the two sites would be worked simultaneously.</p> <p>In any event, the proposed sites have the potential to impact on a number of A31 junctions, including Ameysford, West Moors, Brocks Pine and Ashley Heath. It will therefore be essential for the proposals to be supported by a robust transport assessment in line with the requirements of DfT Circular 02/2013, to identify the extent of the traffic impact on the strategic road network and any mitigation requirements.</p>	