

BLANDFORD + NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2011 – 2033

FINAL PLAN



***Published by Blandford Forum Town Council, Blandford St
Mary Parish Council and Bryanston Parish Council under the
Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012
(as amended)***

June 2021

Guide to Reading this Plan

Of necessity, this Neighbourhood Plan is a detailed technical document. The purpose of this page is to explain the structure and help you find your way around the plan.

1. Introduction & Background

This section explains the background to this Neighbourhood Plan.

2. The Neighbourhood Area

This section details many of the features of the designated area.

3. Planning Policy Context

This rather technical section relates this Plan to the National Planning Policy Framework and the planning policies of North Dorset District Council.

4. Community Views on Planning Issues

This section explains the community involvement that has taken place.

5. Vision, Objectives & Land Use Policies

This is the key section. Firstly, it provides a statement on the Neighbourhood Plan Vision and Objectives. It then details Policies which are proposed to address the issues outlined in the Foreword and in Section 4. These Policies are listed on page 7. There are Policy Maps at the back of the plan and additional information in the Appendices to which the policies cross reference.

6. Implementation

This section explains how the Plan will be implemented and future development guided and managed. It suggests projects which might be supported from the potential future Community Infrastructure Levy which the Town and Parish Councils will have some influence over. Finally, it deals with a number of issues which although relevant are outside the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan.

BLANDFORD + NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2011 – 2033

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JUNE 2021

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FOREWORD

Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan is back!

You may recall that a previous version, Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan 2015 - 2031 (B+NP 2031), passed examination in 2017 but was eventually withdrawn in May 2018 because of the examiners request to remove two key policies from the plan, which correlated with the two major issues that the community wished to see addressed – the provision of education infrastructure in the northern part of the town, and conserving and enhancing the setting of the Crown Meadows. Concurrently, North Dorset District Council (NDDC) announced that the 5 Year Housing Land Supply¹ had fallen short, thus rendering certain policies within the North Dorset Local Plan 'Out of Date'.

Following this the B+ group became concerned that Blandford could miss out on the critical and much needed infrastructure, especially a new primary school in the northern part of the town, or worse still, become vulnerable to unwanted and unplanned development. Therefore, and in consultation with a government advisor and NDDC, Blandford+ launched the Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan 2011 – 2033 (B+NP 2033) and agreed with NDDC in May 2018 to increase the scope of the B+NP 2033 to take forward the work from NDDC's Local Plan 'Issues and Options' Consultation ahead of the North Dorset Local Plan Review.

Who are we?

Blandford+ is a grouping of three councils – Blandford Forum Town Council, Blandford St. Mary Parish Council and Bryanston Parish Council. The Steering Group is made up of councillors from the three councils and local residents. Whilst both adjoining parishes have their own special environment and atmosphere, residents primarily use the services and infrastructure in Blandford Forum Town.

Why do we need a Neighbourhood Plan?

Blandford+ is a vibrant and thriving community, it is the largest retail centre in North Dorset with 15% of the market share for comparison goods and the 4th largest centre in Dorset. As with all areas of the country, Blandford+ must continue to grow to meet the current and future demands of a healthy and growing population, and ensure that infrastructure is provided where it is needed most.

B+NP2 aims to:

- Review policies from B+NP 2031 in the light of changes to local planning circumstances and through discussions with expert parties.
- Take forward the work by NDDC on the North Dorset Local Plan Review 'Issues & Options' stage as it relates to the designated neighbourhood area

¹ <https://news.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/2017/07/31/development-pressure-north-dorset/>

- Ensure Blandford acquires the essential infrastructure it needs to address Dorset County Council's urgent requirement for a new 2FE Primary School to ensure its statutory responsibilities can be met.
- Allocate land for a mixed use scheme to enable the release of the land for the primary school and to contribute to the number and mix of new homes required for Blandford within the neighbourhood area to help redress the 5 Year Housing Land Supply shortfall
- Engage with Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group plans regarding the significant shortfall in GP services for Blandford.
- Allocate employment land to address the undersupply in Blandford.
- Address the need for additional community facilities
- Address and protect green infrastructure.
- Strengthen the planning strategy for Blandford, protecting the town and surrounds from unsuitable planning applications.
- Ensure Blandford is not impacted by the timescale proposed for the Dorset Council Local Plan , and through the provisions of Policy B2 that this provides sufficient certainty for the Education Authority to commence the development of the Business Case for securing the development of the new primary school that is needed now.

Blandford Forum is a unique Georgian Market Town, as the centre was re-built after a series of disastrous fires which completely destroyed the town in 1731. The lovely, red-brick houses are complemented by two stone-built buildings in The Market Place itself – the Corn Exchange complex and the Parish Church. Over the centuries since then, the town has continued to expand, in particular to the north. It is a very pleasant place to live, partly because of its beauty and situation but also because of the friendliness of the people.

Blandford St Mary is a small but varied community with an active primary school, an annual horticultural and craft fayre and various groups which meet regularly in and around the village in residents' homes – and a talented group of artists who regularly exhibit as part of the bi-annual Dorset Art Week. As well as a variety of old and distinguished properties dating back a century or more, there are many relatively new residential properties, together with a busy business estate which is home to, among others, Tesco, Homebase and the famous Hall & Woodhouse Brewery.

Bryanston is a small parish, full of history, which extends over approximately 715 Hectares of mainly agricultural land and lying to the west of Blandford. Bryanston village itself is spread out amongst the rolling Dorset fields, which still bear traces of lynchets and ancient field systems. Dominating the village today is the large house and grounds, once the home of the Portman family, which is now owned by Bryanston School. 'Old Bryanston' village consists of picturesque and historic Portman Estate cottages, clustered below the Bryanston Club. A second area of the village, which runs along the Cliff, consists of former Council-owned housing together with some more modern detached houses. A third part of the village has historic cottages built along a short portion of Dorchester Hill, close to Blandford town and a fourth area is mainly former Portman Estate cottages surrounding the Kennels.

The Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan area sits within beautiful Dorset countryside, and is enclosed by Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to the North and Dorset AONB to the South. The B+NP 2033 recognises the importance of the AONB designations and aims to ensure that future development proposals are sensitive and suitable in respect of National Planning Policy Framework tests and Countryside Rights of Way Act obligations.

Blandford+ Steering Group has been supported throughout the plan development by O'Neill Homer Consultancy and also UVECIC funded by MHCLG to assist with facilitation. The Steering Group are also grateful for the guidance and support provided by officers of Dorset Council. As well as funding from the three councils, the Steering Group has received grants and technical support from the Community Rights Programme and Groundwork UK.

The Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan Group
February 2020

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1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Background

1.1 Blandford Forum Town Council, Blandford St Mary Parish Council and Bryanston Parish Council (“the Councils”), and local residents are working together under the title Blandford + (“the Steering Group”) to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for the area designated by North Dorset District Council (NDDC) under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The designated area is shown in Figure A below and coincides with the parish boundaries of the three parishes.

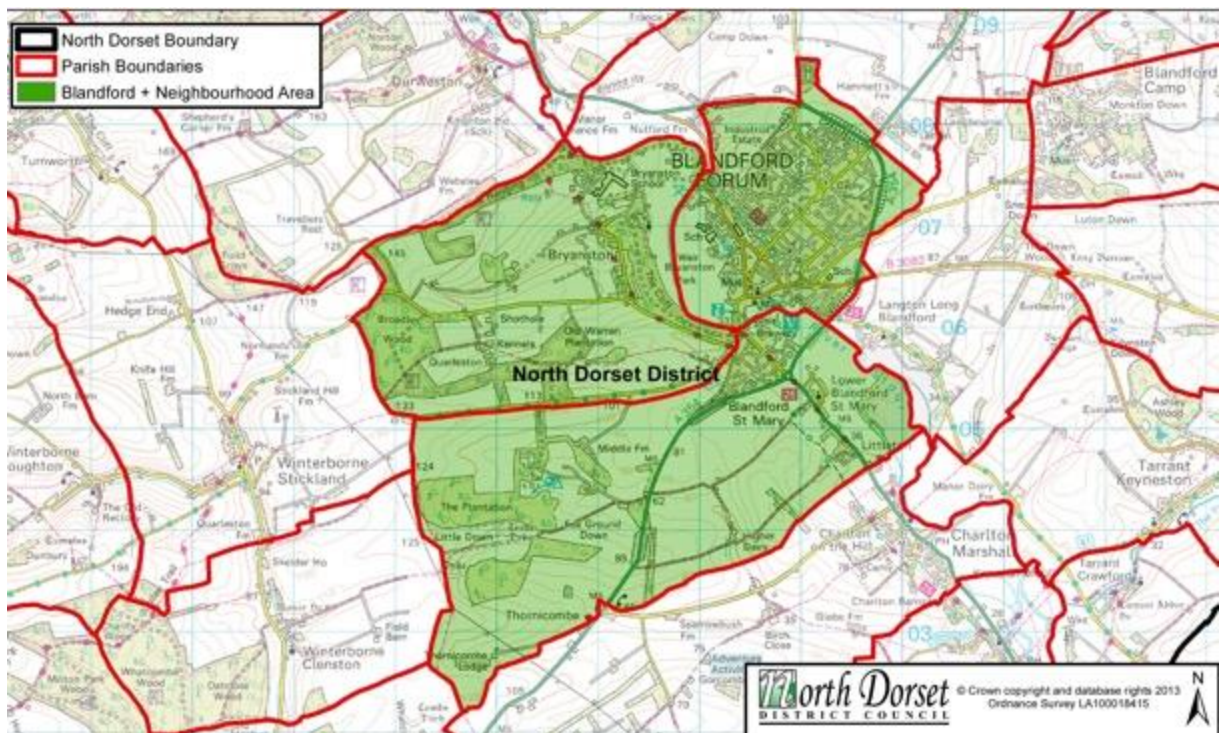


Fig A: Designated Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan Area

1.2 The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to make planning policies that will be used to determine planning applications in the area in the period to 2033. Its policies will aim to deliver essential social infrastructure, mainly in the northern part of the town, with enabling housing, and employment. In some cases, its policies are aimed at lowering planning risk to encourage development and investment of the right type in the right location, such as that of the critical need for a new primary school. In others, its policies discourage development that will undermine the special historic and landscape character of the area, such as conserving and enhancing the setting of the River Stour (Crown) Meadows.

1.3 Neighbourhood Plans provide local communities with the chance to shape the future development of their areas. Once approved at referendum, the Plan becomes a statutory part of the development plan for the area and will carry significant weight in how planning applications are decided. Plans must therefore contain only land use planning policies that can be used for

this purpose. This often means that there are important issues of interest to the local community that cannot be addressed in a Plan if they are not directly related to planning.

1.4 Although there is considerable scope for the local community to decide on its planning policies, Neighbourhood Plans must meet all of the following 'basic conditions' as set out in Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). These are:

- Have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- Ensure that the making of the Neighbourhood Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- Ensure that the making of the Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the Development Plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area);
- Ensure that the making of the Neighbourhood Plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.

1.5 In addition, the Steering Group, on behalf of the Councils as the qualifying body, must be able to show that they have properly consulted local people and other relevant organisations during the process of making the Plan and has followed the Regulations. The Steering Group have undertaken extensive consultations to ensure that the Plan reflects the majority of local community opinion and they are described in greater detail in Section 4.

1.6 These requirements were tested by an independent Examiner, who recommended to Dorset Council (DC) that subject to a number of modifications, the Plan may proceed to a referendum of the local electorate. If a simple majority of the turnout votes for the Plan, then it must become adopted (or 'made') as formal planning policy for the area.

The Submission Plan

1.7 A previous version of the plan, the Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan 2015 – 2031 (B+NP 2031) (see evidence base) proceeded through to the examination stage in 2017. Due to NDDC losing its five-year housing land supply within two weeks of the examination, Blandford + considered that this information could have had a major impact on the results of the examination, and therefore engaged with the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) on how to proceed.

1.8 Locality, on behalf of MHCLG, were asked to advise on the options available to the Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan Qualifying Body following the report and recommendations of the neighbourhood plan Examiner (see evidence base). The main matters at issue were the recommendations to:

1. Delete Policy 1 (Land North and East of Blandford) from the submitted Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan; and
2. Delete the proposed Local Green Space designation on Crown Meadows.

1.9 On the advice of MHCLG, Locality commissioned Urban Vision Enterprise CIC (UVECIC) to review the submission version of the B+NP 2031 and its evidence base along with the Examiner's recommendations. A key part of this review involved a series of meetings facilitated by UVECIC, with members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, officers of Dorset Council (DC) and the Examiner.

1.10 The report² published following the review, describes the methodology in full and outlines six options with a recommendation to the Qualifying Body to accept option 4 as the most appropriate way forward. This involved withdrawing the earlier Submission Plan to enable the evidence base to be reviewed and updated prior to commencing a new Regulation 14 consultation.

1.11 The UVECIC report concluded that the best outcome for the community was likely to be achieved if a shared strategy can be developed through close, cooperative working between the Neighbourhood Plan bodies and the Local Planning Authority. Having considered this advice and following further discussions and agreement on the way forward with NDDC, the first plan was formally withdrawn in May 2018³.

1.12 The Councils therefore consulted on a Pre-Submission version of the B+NP 2033 in November – December 2018. Comments were received from local people and from statutory bodies and landowners. It is clear there is support from the local community for the B+NP 2033, but a few, relatively minor, technical changes have been necessary to ensure the Plan meets the Basic Conditions. A full account of this and the other community engagement activities undertaken during the process of making the Plan is provided in the separate Consultation Statement document.

Sustainability Appraisal (& Strategic Environmental Assessment)

1.13 As the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has been working closely with NDDC / Dorset Council, it has always been considered that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the B+NP would be necessary in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004. NDDC formally confirmed this in its screening determination in July 2018. The Councils, in agreement with NDDC, determined that this should be done within the broader scope of a Sustainability Appraisal (SA/SEA) to enable the social and economic effects of the Plan to be understood alongside its environmental effects.

1.14 A Draft SA/SEA report was published alongside the Pre-Submission Plan for consultation and the Submission Plan and the Final SA/SEA report have both considered comments received on those documents.

² UVECIC Options Report V1.1 Final (Dec 2017)

³ Blandford Plus Neighbourhood Plan Withdrawal Statement (May 2018)

Habitats Regulations

1.15 The screening determination also confirmed that given the scale of additional housing being considered by the plan that a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) would be required in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

1.16 A draft HRA was published alongside the Pre-Submission Plan for consultation. An updated HRA was submitted alongside the Submission Plan and screens out effects in relation to the Fontmell and Melbury Downs, Rooksmoor and Dorset Heath SACs.

2. THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

2.1 The area, totalling 1977 hectares, comprises the main town of Blandford Forum to the north of the River Stour, the smaller village of Blandford St Mary to the south, and the smaller still settlement of Bryanston to the west of the Stour. The town lies in the gap where the River Stour cuts through the chalk downland and is at the meeting point of two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs (CCWWD) AONB lies to the north and east of Blandford Forum and the Dorset AONB to the west and southwest. Small parts of the existing built up area lie within the CCWWD AONB (See Figure B). In landscape terms, The Neighbourhood Plan area falls predominately within the South Blandford Downs landscape character area, the Mid Stour Valley landscape character area, and the North Dorset Chalk Escarpment landscape character area.

2.2 Blandford Forum covers an area of 409 hectares and is the main service centre in the south of the District with an extensive rural hinterland. The 2011 Census showed that the town had a population of 10,325. Blandford has expanded significantly in recent years, more than 1,400 new homes being built between 1994 and 2012 and a similar number planned in the period to 2031, although these will mainly be located in Blandford St Mary and Lower Bryanston as set out in the North Dorset Local Plan 2011-2031.

2.3 Blandford Forum has been described as one of the finest ensembles of Georgian country town architecture in the UK, possessing an excellent example of a Georgian town centre which contains many Listed Buildings. The town has a good range of shops and other key town centre uses, with a number of national businesses represented as well as independent traders. There are a number of large employment sites within the town and many local people are also employed at Blandford Camp, a large military site located just to the east of the by-pass, outside of the parish. The settlement also contains three primary schools (one of which is located in Blandford St Mary) with a fourth at Blandford Camp, a secondary school, a GP surgery and a community hospital.

2.4 Blandford St Mary covers an area of 961 Hectares and has an estimated population of 1,511 and 656 dwellings (Census, 2011). It is bounded with Blandford Forum to the North by the River Stour. The A354 divides the village to the East separating the NDDC Local Plan commitments (St Mary's Hill and Land at Ward's Drove), Lower Blandford St Mary and the parish church from the bulk of the village.

2.5 Bryanston Parish covers 607 hectares of mainly agricultural land to the west of the River Stour and has an estimated population of 925 and 199 dwellings (Census, 2011). It is bounded with Blandford Forum to the East by the River Stour and the grounds of Bryanston School, one of the UK's leading independent boarding schools.

2.6 There is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in Bryanston, see Figure B. The Bryanston SSSI citation confirms that the large roof space in the derelict 18th century kitchens at Bryanston is the only known breeding site for the

Greater Horseshoe Bat in Dorset, and one of only seven breeding colonies remaining in Britain. Natural England have confirmed the significance of the colony and its supporting habitat as this is an important aspect to the protection and enhancement of the SSSI and its protected Greater Horseshoe Bat population.

2.7 The Vincent Wildlife Trust assessment in 2010 confirmed that the Greater Horseshoe Bat is continuing to increase at the site and that the kitchen building continues to attract other overwintering species. The ancient woodland to the south of the building acts as a commuter route to foraging areas further afield, including Local Nature Reserves the Milldown and Stour Meadows, and as a foraging resource just before dawn.

2.8 The ancient woodland is also a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) known as The Cliff, along with the ancient woodland The Hanging. The Local Nature Reserve, The Milldown, a popular recreational area of chalk grassland is also a SNCI.

2.9 Fontmell and Melbury Downs SAC lies approximately 10km north of Blandford, consisting of approximately 260 hectares of species rich chalk grasslands on the scarp slope of the Dorset Downs.

2.10 The Neighbourhood Area has over 200 listed buildings including:

Grade I:

- Church of St Peter and St Paul, Blandford Forum
- Town Hall and Corn Exchange, Blandford Forum
- Pump House, Blandford Forum
- The Old House, Blandford Forum
- Greyhound House, Blandford Forum
- Coupar House, The Plocks, Blandford Forum
- 18-20 Market Place, Blandford Forum
- 26 Market Place, 72 East Street, Blandford Forum
- The Portman Chapel, Bryanston
- Bryanston School, Bryanston

Grade II*:

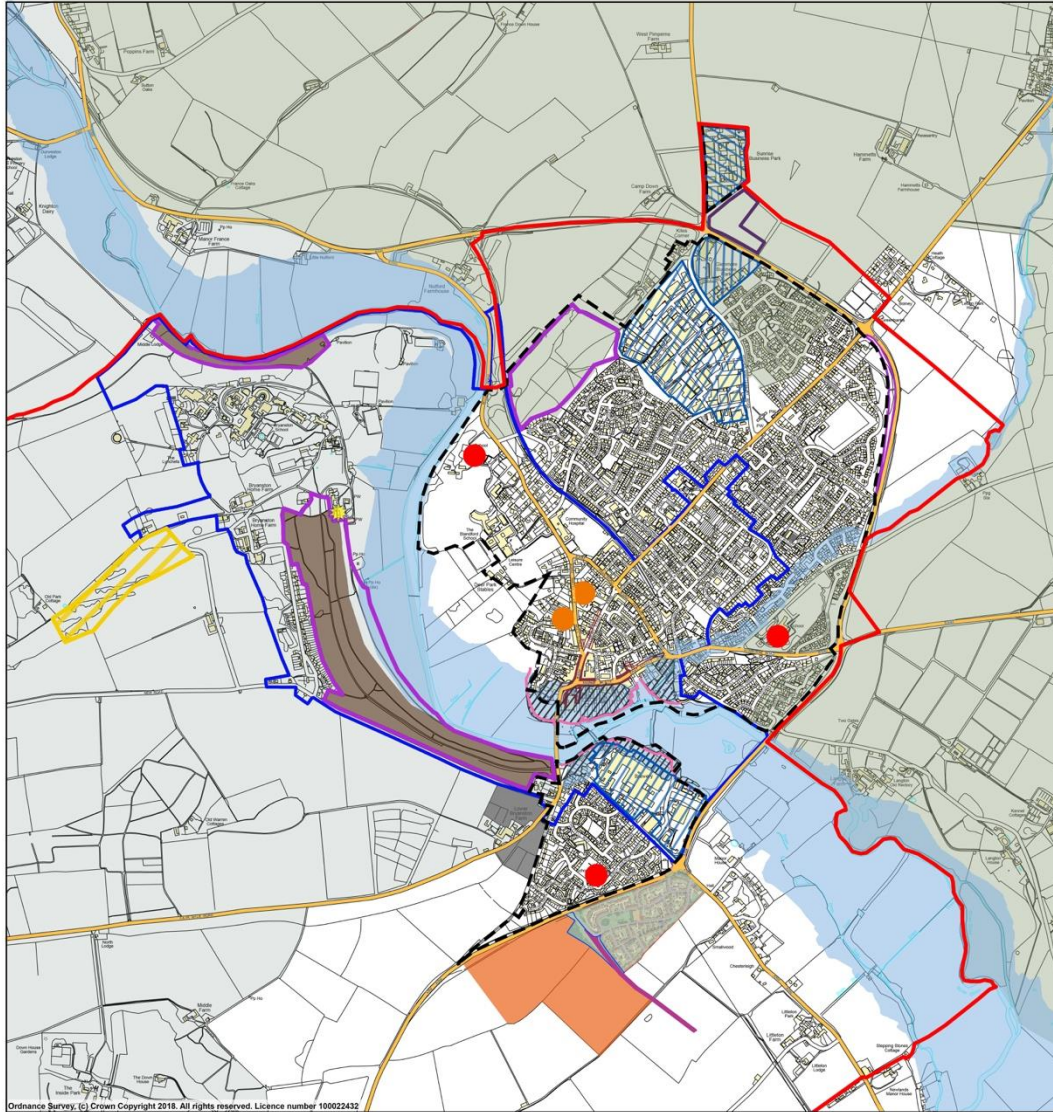
- Lime Tree House, Blandford Forum
- Lyston House, 32 East Street, Blandford Forum
- 1 Market Place, Blandford Forum
- 9 Market Place, Blandford Forum
- Eastway House, 5 East Street, Blandford Forum
- Dale House, Salisbury Street, Blandford Forum
- Church of St Mary, Lower Blandford St. Mary
- The Manor House, Lower Blandford St. Mary
- Home Farm, Bryanston
- Outbuildings to the South, Bryanston

Scheduled Monuments

- St Leonard's Chapel, Blandford Forum
- Field system in Old Park, Bryanston

2.11 The Blandford, Blandford St Mary and Bryanston Conservation Area was designated in 1972. It was expanded in 1990 (see Fig. B) and nine sub-areas within it were subsequently identified with their key characteristics in the 2003 Local plan and a number of subsequent reports, including the Dorset Historic Towns Study (2011).

2.12 The Neighbourhood Plan area has a functional floodplain which is principally Flood Zone 3, separating Blandford Forum from Blandford St Mary. Flood Zone 3 is of high risk of flooding, representing that there is a 1% (1 in 100) or greater chance of happening each year. Flood Zone 3 is also seen to the north east of the Neighbourhood Plan area, associated with the presence of Pimperne Brook.



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B+ NP Constraints Plan

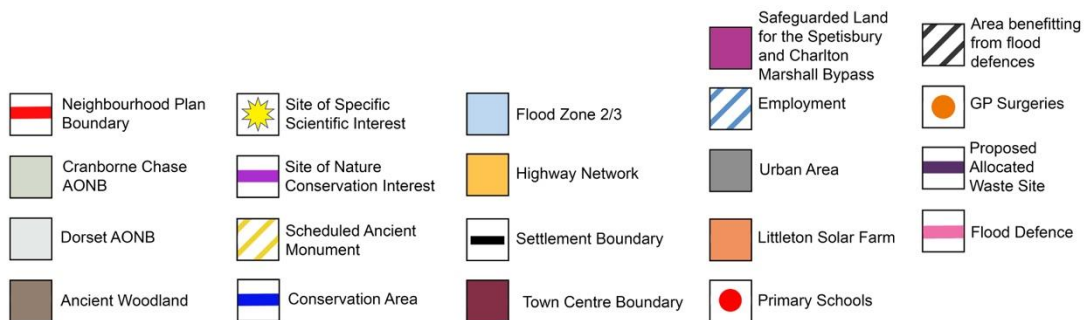


Fig B: B+ NP Constraints Plan

3. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan Area lies within the Dorset Council Local Planning Authority area in the County of Dorset.

3.2 During the early stages of B+NP2 development, the Dorset Area was served by Dorset County, East Dorset, North Dorset, Purbeck, West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland councils. North Dorset District Council was the Local Planning Authority at that time. The new Unitary Authority, Dorset Council, came into being as the Local Planning Authority on the 1st April 2019. The North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1) set out that North Dorset District Council (NDDC) would commence a review of the plan by the end of March 2016 with the aim of adopting the Plan by the end of November 2018. NDDC did consult on an Issues and Options Document as part of the Local Plan Review, but the review did not progress as quickly as anticipated prior to NDDC being dissolved on the 31 March 2019. Dorset Council took the decision to cease work on the North Dorset Local Plan Review with the work that had been done to date feeding into the production of the Dorset Council Local Plan (which now encompasses the North Dorset area). Dorset Council aims to adopt the new (wider) local plan in 2023.

3.3 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published by the Government is an important guide in the preparation of local plans and neighbourhood plans. In July 2018 the government published an updated Framework and the following paragraphs of the NPPF 2018 are especially relevant to the Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan 2033:

- Achieving sustainable development (§13)
- Neighbourhood Planning (§28 - 30)
- Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes (§61)
- Building a strong, competitive economy (§80 - §82)
- Ensuring the vitality of town centres (§85)
- Promoting healthy safe communities (§91 - §92)
- Sufficient choice of school places (§94)
- Open space and recreation (§96 - §97)
- Local green spaces (§99 - 101)
- Good design (§127)
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (§170 - §172)
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (§184 - §197)

3.4 The extent to which the Plan has reflected these policies in its own policies is set out in the separate Basic Conditions Statement. It is the role of the Plan to strike the right balance between these policies as they apply to the Neighbourhood Area.

3.5 Neighbourhood Plans must also be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in any development plan, which currently comprises policies from the NDDC Local Plan Part 1, as well as policies saved from the District-Wide Local Plan (adopted 2003), and waste and minerals plans for Dorset. There are no matters in the adopted Minerals Plan which directly affects this plan.

3.6 Blandford Forum (and St Mary) is identified as one of the main locations for growth and Policy 16 sets out detailed specifications for this area. Bryanston is identified as the Countryside subject to countryside policies.

POLICY 16: BLANDFORD

Sustainable Development Strategy

Blandford will maintain its role as the main service centre in the south of the district through:

- a development and redevelopment within the settlement boundary; and
- b extensions, primarily of housing to the south-east and to the west of Blandford St Mary; and
- c employment uses on land within the bypass on the northern edge of the town and the mixed-use regeneration of the Brewery site close to the town centre.

Growth will be taken forward in ways which respect the town's environmental constraints, support its role, function and identity, and contribute to making it more self-contained. Blandford's distinctive natural and historic character will be retained and enhanced.

Environment and Climate Change

The impact of flooding and climate change on the town will be addressed by:

- d taking account of the risks of fluvial, groundwater and surface water flooding in new development; and
- e incorporating sustainable drainage systems into new developments; and
- f the protection and management of valuable groundwater resources.

The town's natural and historic built environment will be protected and enhanced.

Meeting Housing Needs

At least 1,200 homes will be provided at Blandford Forum and Blandford St Mary during the period 2011 - 2031. In addition to infilling and redevelopment within the settlement boundary, Blandford's housing needs will be met through:

- g mixed-use regeneration of the Brewery site; and
- h the development of land to the south east of Blandford St Mary; and
- i the development of land to the west of Blandford St Mary (at Lower Bryanston Farm and Dorchester Hill).

POLICY 16 (CONT'D): BLANDFORD

Development of land at Lower Bryanston Farm and Dorchester Hill should only commence once a mitigation package (that includes details of implementation measures) has been agreed to the satisfaction of Natural England.

Supporting Economic Development

Employment needs in the town for the period up to 2031 will be met through:

- j the mixed-use regeneration of the Brewery site; and
- k the development of land off Shaftesbury Lane; and
- l the development of vacant sites on existing industrial estates; and
- m the retention of existing employment sites.

In the period up to 2031, additional retail floorspace will be provided through:

- n the extension of the existing Tesco supermarket at Stour Park; and
- o the provision of a new supermarket off Shaftesbury Lane.

Town centre regeneration will embrace a range of town centre uses, not only retail and commercial but community and leisure as well as residential uses, and will be encouraged. An important element of town centre regeneration will be land to the south of East Street, including land around the existing retail store. On appropriate sites, all development and redevelopment schemes which support town centre regeneration, such as the extension of existing retail units south of Market Place and East Street, will be viewed positively within the recognised constraints of heritage and flooding considerations. The emerging neighbourhood plan for Blandford will have a key role to play in identifying regeneration opportunities in the town.

Infrastructure

In the period up to 2031, grey infrastructure to support growth will include:

- p the provision and enhancement of walking and cycling links within Blandford between residential areas and key destinations, such as the town centre, employment sites, schools and other community facilities; and
- q the provision and enhancement of public transport, cycling and walking links between Blandford and nearby villages (and Blandford Camp); and

POLICY 16 (CONT'D): BLANDFORD

- r the improvement and extension of the North Dorset Trailway along, or close to, the route of the former Somerset and Dorset Railway line for cycling and walking; and
- s the identification of a safeguarded route for the Spetisbury and Charlton Marshall Bypass as part of the development of the land south east of Blandford St Mary;

In the period up to 2031, social infrastructure to support growth will include:

- t the refurbishment of the Corn Exchange to form the main community venue for the town and the provision of neighbourhood halls to serve new development in the northern part of the town and Blandford St Mary; and
- u the retention of Blandford Leisure Centre in community use and the upgrading of its facilities; and
- v the extension of the Archbishop Wake school and either extension of the Milldown school or provision of a new 2 forms of entry primary school; and
- w a new doctors' surgery or the expansion or relocation of existing doctors' surgeries.

A network of green infrastructure will be developed in and around Blandford, focusing on linking existing sites (such as the Milldown and Stour Meadows) and providing new sites and links to serve the residents of both the new and existing developments in the town. New or improved facilities will include:

- x new sports pitches and associated facilities on land within the settlement boundary of Blandford.

3.7 The sustainable development strategy for Blandford as defined by Policy 16 seeks to ensure that Blandford's role as the main service centre in the southern part of the district is maintained.

3.8 Policy 4 (The Natural Environment), Policy 5 (Historic Environment), Policy 11 (Economy) and Policy 14 (Social Infrastructure) of the Local Plan are also considered to be especially relevant. Policy 4 seeks to protect the Natural Environment, and as the Neighbourhood Area is bounded by the two AONBs in North Dorset, the Policy is of particular importance in setting out the requirements and expectations of the local planning authority regarding the AONBs. The policy states:

"...Within the areas designated as AONB and their setting, development will be managed in a way that conserves and

enhances the natural beauty of the area. Proposals which would harm the natural beauty of the AONBs will not be permitted unless it is clearly in the public interest to do so. In such instances, effective mitigation should form an integral part of the development proposals. Developers will be expected to demonstrate how they have had regard to the objectives of the relevant AONB management plan for the area..."

3.9 Policy 5 seeks to protect the Historic Environment. The Neighbourhood Area has a Conservation Area and a wealth of listed buildings and some scheduled ancient monuments, some of these are on the Heritage at Risk Register and therefore the policy is particularly important in setting out how the Local Planning Authority will assess proposals that would harm a heritage asset, and in justifying substantial and less than substantial harm.

3.10 Policy 11 sets out the Local Planning Authority's position on employment, specifically the spatial approach, specific site allocations and uses on employment sites. The policy specifically names part of the Brewery Site, Blandford St Mary and Land off Shaftesbury Lane in the Neighbourhood Area as key strategic sites primarily for employment uses. Since the adoption of the Local Plan the position on employment in the town has changed and updated evidence demonstrates that there is now a need for employment land in Blandford Forum.

3.11 Policy 14 of the Local Plan aims to deliver the principles of National Policy in delivering sufficient community facilities to meet local needs. It seeks to ensure that new development contributes to the maintenance and enhancement of social infrastructure, where appropriate. The policy specifically seeks new or expanded health services facilities in Blandford, but the evidence that was being relied in the preparation of the Local Plan in terms of education provision, has since been updated (See DC Pupil Place Planning Statement in the evidence base). The updated evidence demonstrates that there is now a critical need for a new primary school in the northern part of the town.

3.12 To ensure conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan the neighbourhood plan sets out to balance the needs for social infrastructure, local housing and employment in Blandford with the need to protect and enhance the natural and historic character of the area. It is the resolution of the social infrastructure deficits including a school and health facilities that remain uppermost in the minds of the local community.

3.13 Prior to 1st April 2019, NDCC commenced production of a new Local Plan for the District, which was intended to replace both the North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (1st Revision adopted in January 2003) and the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1. As part of this process the District Council consulted on an Issues and Options Document between November 2017 and January 2018 and responses were published online. The North Dorset Local Plan Review reflected the Local Plan core spatial strategy which directed development to the main service centres while also supporting modest development in the rural villages and had confirmed that it intended continuing this strategy for

the next plan period. This work is now being carried forward into production of the Dorset Council Local Plan.

3.14 Both Dorset Council and the three Neighbourhood Plan Councils are keen to see the growth in the designated area to be plan-led and for the town to contribute positively to the area's objectively assessed needs in the absence of Dorset Council being able to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply for the North Dorset area. It has been agreed that to address this position, the Neighbourhood Plan will come forward more quickly than the new Dorset Council Local Plan and will be responsible for site allocations and other area specific policies within the designated area. The plan has also applied the reasoning and evidence underpinning the North Dorset Local Plan Review (LPR).

3.15 To this end, the Councils and Dorset Council worked collaboratively by sharing evidence and by holding regular progress meetings. They agreed a land use specification covering infrastructure, housing and employment needs to which the policies in the neighbourhood plan now address. The specification reflects the updated position provided to the Councils by Dorset Council since the Local Plan was adopted and accords with the new provisions of the NPPF 2018 (paragraphs 23 and 66). The specification requires the neighbourhood plan to allocate land for:

- *approximately 400 homes over and above commitments and Local Plan allocations*
- *at least a 2FE primary school with room for expansion to 3FE*
- *at least 2Ha of B1-B8 employment land*
- *the delivery of the necessary highway and green infrastructure*

3.16 This is in anticipation of the LPR and to avoid any general conformity issues. The Site Selection Background Paper, included in the evidence base, sets out how this has been achieved and has been informed by a SA/SEA appraisal as the work has progressed. This includes the testing of the spatial options which were consulted on informally in July 2018.

3.17 As the Site Selection and SA/SEA Scoping Reports acknowledge, a large proportion of the neighbourhood area lies either within the Dorset AONB or the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB or their setting and also includes an extensive area of functional flood plain and significant and nationally important heritage assets. Despite these physical and environmental constraints the Councils have concluded that on balance that allocations in part of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB (CCWWD) is unavoidable and in the public interest if it is to address social and other infrastructure weaknesses even though the NPPF states that 'great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty' in these areas (paragraph 172).

3.18 The Councils have long sought to address these weaknesses, particularly in the northern part of the town where housing expansion over recent decades has not been accompanied by supporting social or commercial infrastructure. Dorset Council, the Local Education Authority, have updated

the Pupil Place Planning Statement⁴ which has reviewed the need for early years, primary and secondary school provision in Blandford to update the position set out in Policy 16 of the adopted Local Plan. The statement confirms that the provision of new primary school places in Blandford is now critical and, having discounted all other options, their preferred option is to locate a new primary school and enabling development within and in the setting of the CCWWD AONB in the north of the town beyond the bypass. They have concluded there is no other land available in Blandford to accommodate the new school.

3.19 The challenge for the Plan is to secure these identified needs in a way which demonstrates the plans contribution to sustainable development - it is this that lies at the heart of the neighbourhood plan's Vision for Blandford.

The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Waste Local Plan

3.20 While waste planning is 'excluded development' for the purposes of neighbourhood planning, the new Dorset Waste Plan was adopted in December 2019. The Plan identifies sites for new waste management facilities to meet the county's needs and provides the policy framework for determining planning applications for waste management facilities up to 2033.

3.21 The new Waste Plan allocates land to the south east of Sunrise Business Park within the CCWWD AONB and within the neighbourhood area for a new waste management facility, see Figure C below.

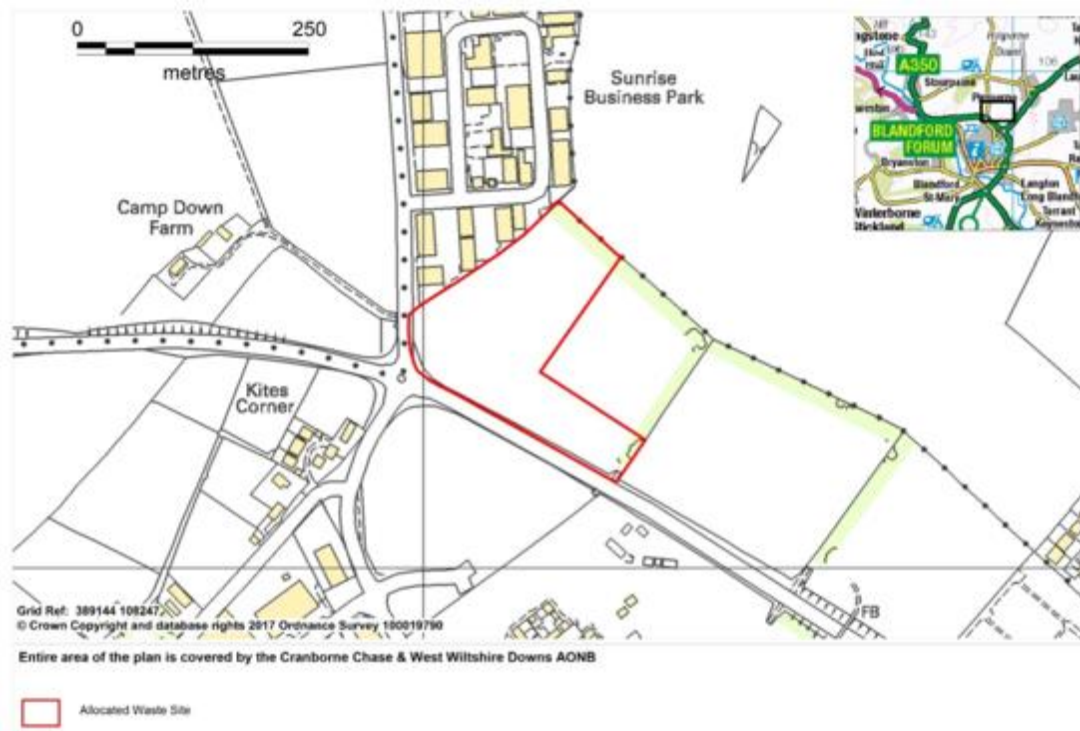


Fig C: Allocated waste site in Blandford + Area

⁴ Blandford Pupil Place Planning Statement – Updated June 2019

3.22 The land included in the new Waste Plan is on land that was considered for employment allocation in B+NP 2031. The exact siting of the waste facility is yet to be determined, however it has been determined that the whole of the site considered for employment allocation in B+NP 2031, is not required. The remainder of the land could therefore still be considered for employment purposes and the landowners have confirmed that this is the intention, subject to any uses not being preudicial to the waste use. The landowners have also confirmed that the intended employment use is a fall-back position should the County's proposals fall for any reason.

AONB Management Plans

3.23 The Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs AONB Management Plan 'Cranborne Chase Partnership Plan 2019 – 2024' and the Dorset AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024 are material considerations for all applications within, or within the setting of, the AONBs. Public bodies, including parish and district councils, have a statutory duty under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of areas of outstanding natural beauty.

Neighbourhood Plans

3.24 There are made neighbourhood plans in the Local Planning Authority area, but none in the vicinity of the Neighbourhood Area, other than the Pimperne Neighbourhood Plan 2016 – 2031 which had a successful Referendum on 10 January 2019, and was subsequently made on the 25 January 2019. However, the plan does not contain policies that are of direct relevance to the policies in the B+NP 2011 - 2033.

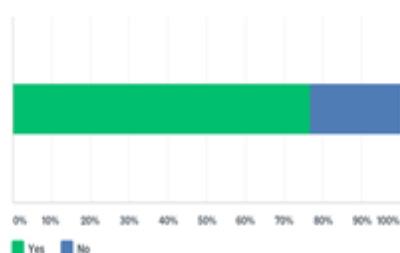
4. COMMUNITY VIEWS ON PLANNING ISSUES

4.1 In July 2018 the Councils carried out an informal consultation on the proposed scope of the Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan 2, and on preliminary development options identified through the Local Plan Review Issues & Options Consultation⁵ and through subsequent contact with local land interests.

4.2 Aside from confirming the scope and direction for the new Plan, the two main aims of the informal consultation were to gauge community opinion regarding the definition of a settlement boundary for Blandford Forum and Blandford St. Mary, but excluding Bryanston, and identifying the preferred development option.

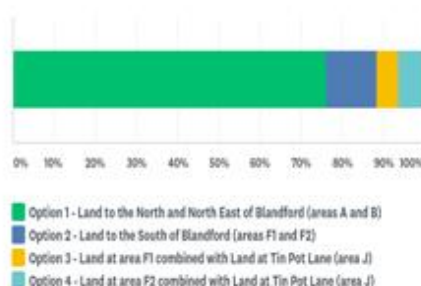
4.3 Settlement Boundary - Of the survey responses received, 77% were in favour of a settlement boundary being defined for Blandford Forum and Blandford St. Mary, and for Bryanston to remain without a settlement Boundary.

Q3 Do you agree to Bryanston not having a settlement boundary?



4.4 Preferred Development Option - Of the survey responses received, 76% preferred Option 1 – Land to the North and North East of Blandford (Areas A & B).

Q4 Which Development Option do you prefer?



4.5 Full details of all questions, a summary of the methodology and a breakdown of the public response to the informal survey questionnaire can be found in the [Informal Consultation Report](#). A summary and analysis of

⁵ North Dorset Local Plan Review Issues and Options [Consultation](#) (Nov 2017)

feedback from statutory bodies / land interests can be found in the [Informal Consultation Feedback Analysis Report](#).

4.6 Details of all consultations are provided in the Consultation Statement which accompanied the Submission version of the B+NP 2011 - 2033.

5. VISION, OBJECTIVES & LAND USE POLICIES

5.1 The vision for the Blandford + Neighbourhood Area in 2033 comprises:

Growing our Communities Sustainably

Blandford Forum will maintain its role as the main service centre in the south of the district by:

- a. development and redevelopment within the settlement boundary; extensions, primarily of enabling housing to the north and north-east of Blandford Forum to deliver a new primary school in that part of the town and through existing committed land to the south east and west of Blandford St Mary; and
- b. encouraging new employment uses on land within and beyond the bypass on the northern edge of the town and the regeneration of Blandford Heights Industrial Estate.

Sustainable growth will be taken forward in ways which respect the town's environmental constraints and support its role, function and identity, and contribute to making the town more self-contained. Blandford's distinctive natural and historic character will be retained and enhanced.

Maintaining our Special Heritage and Landscape Character and Addressing the Challenges of Climate Change

The town's special landscape and historic assets will be protected and enhanced in ways which balance the needs for development by:

- c. steps to moderate the visual intrusion of development into the landscape and in the setting of historic assets;
- d. the provision of strategic landscaping to provide a transitional edge between development and the wider landscape; and
- e. siting and minimising the height of development to reduce its visual envelope and impact on the skyline, and by the use of green roof and other techniques to reduce the visual footprint of development.

The impact of flooding and climate change on the town will be addressed by:

- f. taking account of the risks of fluvial, groundwater and surface water flooding in new development;
- g. incorporating source control and sustainable drainage techniques into new developments;
- h. the protection and management of valuable groundwater resources; and
- i. increasing school place capacity in areas of deficiency to reduce the need for children to travel by car.

Meeting Local Housing Needs

At least 1,700 homes will be provided at Blandford Forum and Blandford St Mary during the period 2011 - 2033. In addition to infilling and redevelopment within the settlement boundary, Blandford's housing needs will be met through:

- j. the development of land to the north and east of Blandford Forum to enable the delivery of a new primary school in this part of the town and south east of Blandford St Mary (at St Mary's Hill and land north west of Ward's Drove); and
- k. the development of land to the west of Blandford St Mary (at Lower Bryanston Farm and Dorchester Hill), which should only commence once a mitigation package has been agreed and implemented to the satisfaction of Natural England and the community.

To ensure new houses are of high quality design and of an appropriate mix, in keeping with the established character of the area, and, that meets the needs of the existing community, especially younger families and local people.

Creating and Supporting Jobs and Cherishing our Town Centre

Employment needs in the town will be met through:

- l. the extension to the Sunrise Business Park;
- m. the development of land off Shaftesbury Lane;
- n. the development of vacant sites on existing industrial estates and the retention of existing employment sites.

The town centre will remain the focus of community activity. It will embrace a range of town centre uses, including retail, commercial, community, tourism and leisure as well as residential uses.

On appropriate sites, all development and redevelopment schemes should build on the ability of the town to attract and retain new businesses and major high street brands. Proposals such as the extension of existing retail units south of the Market Place and at East Street/Langton Road, will be viewed positively within the recognised constraints of heritage and flooding considerations.

Improving Vital Community Infrastructure

Grey infrastructure to support sustainable growth will include:

- o. the provision and enhancement of walking and cycling links within Blandford between the existing and new residential areas and key destinations, such as the town centre, employment sites, schools and other community facilities;
- p. the provision and enhancement of public transport, cycling and walking links between Blandford and nearby villages (and Blandford

- Camp);
- q. the improvement and extension of the North Dorset Trailway along, or close to, the route of the former Somerset and Dorset railway line for cycling and walking; and
- r. maintaining the safeguarded route for the Spetisbury and Charlton Marshall Bypass as part of the development of the land south east of Blandford St Mary.

Social infrastructure to support sustainable growth will include:

- s. the refurbishment of the Corn Exchange to form the main community venue for the town and the provision of new community centres on land north-east of Blandford Forum to serve new development in the northern part of the town and on land at St Mary's Hill, Blandford St Mary to serve that community;
- t. the retention of Blandford Leisure Centre in community use and the upgrading of its facilities;
- u. the provision of at least a 2FE new primary school on land north of Blandford Forum; and
- v. new or improved GP facilities and services from all new residential development proposals or the expansion or relocation of existing doctors' surgery in the town.

A network of green infrastructure will be developed in and around Blandford, focussing on linking existing sites (such as the Milldown, Stour Meadows and Preetz Way) and providing new sites and links to serve the residents of both the new and existing developments in the town. New or improved facilities will include:

- w. informal open space and play space on land north and north-east of Blandford Forum; and
- x. Upgrading of existing sports pitches and associated facilities on land within the built up area of Blandford.

Land Use Policies

5.2 Land use policies are used to determine planning applications made for development proposals. They can establish the principles for retaining or changing the use of land in settlements and in the countryside. They can also set out the conditions against which development proposals will be judged in terms of their design, access etc.

5.3 The purpose of these policies is to either encourage planning applications to be made for things the local community wants to see happen or to discourage applications for developments that they do not want to happen. Policies must be clearly written so they can be easily applied when considering planning applications.

5.4 The Plan deliberately avoids repeating existing national or local planning policies. The Plan is infrastructure led and focuses on a number of key development issues in the area, particularly the need to provide a new

primary school in the northern part of the town. For all other planning matters, the National Planning Policy Framework and the North Dorset Local Plan will continue to be used. The development plan for North Dorset comprises the Local Plan Part 1 covering the period 2011-2031, the Dorset Minerals and Waste Plans (excluded development for the purposes of neighbourhood planning) and some remaining saved policies of the former District-wide Local Plan. Any non-strategic policies that have not been delivered through the Neighbourhood Plan will be dealt with by the Dorset Council Local Plan.

5.5 Set out below are the proposed policies of the Plan. Each policy has a number and title and the policy itself is written in bold italics for ease of reference. There is also a short statement explaining the intention of the policy and any other relevant background information preceding each policy. At the end of this document are the Policies Maps - where a policy refers to a specific site or area then it is shown on the Maps.

Policy B1 – Blandford Forum & Blandford St. Mary Settlement Boundary

The Neighbourhood Plan defines the Settlement Boundary of Blandford Forum and Blandford St Mary, as shown on the Policies Map (Inset B), to manage development proposals in accordance with strategic policies for settlements and the countryside.

5.6 This policy defines the extent of the settlement boundary at Blandford Forum and Blandford St. Mary for the application of Policy 2 and Policy 20 of the Local Plan. These strategic policies set out the principles for development within settlement boundaries and the surrounding countryside respectively.

5.7 In making provision for new development on the edge of the 'main town' of Blandford Forum, it complements the spatial strategy and proposals of Policy 16 of the Local Plan and the emerging reasoning and evidence of the North Dorset Local Plan Review. It also updates the Settlement Boundary defined on the Proposals Map of the 2003 District-Wide Local Plan (in relation to its saved Policy 1.17).

5.8 The spatial plan focuses growth on building Blandford Forum into a more successful town, Blandford St Mary into a more successful village, and retaining Bryanston as part of the countryside. In doing so, it recognises that the town overall must grow up to and beyond 2033 to maintain its settlement status in the County and to roll forward the sustainable development strategy for Blandford in line with Policy 16 of the adopted Local Plan. In this way, it will secure crucial improvements to local schools and other community facilities and support the creation of higher value-added job opportunities for the local workforce.

5.9 The current settlement boundary is defined to the north-east and east by the bypass (A350/A354) between Shaftesbury Lane and the crossing of the River Stour. Between the river crossing of the A354 and Blandford Bridge, the settlement boundary follows the northern bank of the River Stour. From West Street, the western edge of the settlement boundary is defined by existing residential developments at River Mews and Parklands, and includes Deer Park Farm and The Blandford School, before re-joining the River Stour to the west of the school. Where the River Stour adjoins Milldown Road, the settlement boundary follows the north-western edge of The Milldown Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) before joining Tin Pot Lane along the north-western edge of Blandford Heights (Clump Farm) Industrial Estate, including Kites Farm (Kites Corner).

5.10 The proposed boundary incorporates the Local Plan Part 1 committed land to the south east and south west of Blandford St Mary and the Policy B2 Mixed Use allocation and Policy B3(c) employment allocation. However, the land made available for development in relation to Policy B2 does not extend beyond the Town Council boundary into the neighbouring Parish of Pimperne. It will be for the Dorset Council Local Plan to determine if that land beyond the boundary shall be allocated.

Policy B2 – Land North & East of Blandford Forum

The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land to the North and North East of Blandford Forum, as shown on the Policies Map (Inset B), for a mix of residential, education, community and allotment uses.

Development proposals for the land will be supported, provided:

- i. The residential scheme comprises approximately 400 dwellings, including a mix of open market homes of which 5% should be self-build and/or custom build housing, and affordable homes for rent and other affordable routes to home ownership, primarily located on land to the north-east of Blandford Forum;**
- ii. The education scheme comprises a new two form entry primary school with integrated early years provision;**
- iii. The education scheme shall be confined to land to the north of Blandford of about 3 hectares and of a design to reduce its impact on the skyline to minimise its visual footprint and of regular form to enable school expansion to three form entry and in a convenient position to facilitate the use of the existing A350 pedestrian bridge;**
- iv. The community hub scheme comprises a new health and wellbeing facility, a community centre and convenience shop to serve the locality;**
- v. The Lamperd's Field Allotments are relocated to a single location to the west of their current position and comprise land of approximately 2.5 hectares and ancillary facilities that meet or exceed the standards of the existing site;**
- vi. The highways scheme comprises measures to satisfactorily manage its traffic effects on the road network and to encourage and enable safe and convenient walking and cycling to community facilities (including the new community hub and new school, the Blandford School, the recreation ground at Larksmead and Pimperne Brook/Black Lane) and employment areas (including the town centre, Sunrise Business Park, Glenmore Industrial Estate, and Blandford Heights Industrial Estate);**
- vii. The highways scheme includes proposals for the improvement to the existing bus services to serve the proposals and connecting to the town centre, Blandford School, the Sunrise Business Park, Glenmore Industrial Estate and Blandford Heights Industrial Estate;**
- viii. A design and landscape scheme comprises measures to satisfactorily mitigate any adverse impacts upon the AONB and minimise harm to the Grade II listed Langbourne House by way of the details of the design, layout, landscape treatment, materials and typical details of appearance and elevation of buildings and of minimising light spill into the AONB;**
- ix. The green infrastructure scheme comprises an ecology, sustainable drainage and boundary treatment strategy that demonstrates how**

existing environmental assets will be protected and enhanced comprising:

- **A biodiversity strategy to deliver, where possible, a net gain in biodiversity value on site; and, how biodiversity assets will be connected into the wider green infrastructure network; and**
 - **A public open space strategy to integrate the built environment and connected into the wider green infrastructure network, including the delivery of public open space proposals on both the land to the North and North East including informal open spaces and natural and equipped children's play space; and**
- x. **A flood risk assessment and sustainable drainage strategy to demonstrate how the scheme will not increase surface water or fluvial flood risk on any adjoining land.**

Proposals should be made in the form of a comprehensive planning application and should include:

- xi. **an illustrative masterplan that defines the land uses and key development principles for access, layout, design and the principles of phasing and implementation and demonstrates that the proposals would not adversely impact on the operation of a waste management centre on adjoining land;**
- xii. **design features that improve energy efficiency and reduces carbon dioxide emissions; and,**
- xiii. **a planning obligation to secure the release of all land necessary for the supporting infrastructure, the 2FE primary school and other community facilities following planning consent for the phase 1 scheme within the Blandford + Neighbourhood area and prior to the commencement of that scheme.⁶**

Where serviced plots have been made available and marketed appropriately for at least 12 months and have not sold, the plot(s) may either remain on the open market for self-build/custom build or be built out by the developer.

5.11 This policy allocates land on the northern and north-eastern edges of Blandford Forum and establishes the key land uses and development principles to meet the long term needs of the local community and ensure a successful scheme is delivered.

5.12 In doing so, it complements the strategy and proposals of Policy 14 and 16 of the adopted Local Plan, in that fundamentally Policy B2 is an enabling policy to ensure the critical educational needs identified by the Local Education Authority can be met to the north of the town. It continues the historic growth pattern of the town and presents the opportunity to create a

⁶ The planning obligation relates solely to the allocation in this plan and is not connected with any development proposal that may come forward on land beyond the boundary of B+ Neighbourhood Plan.

new town gateway which reinforces this growth pattern and the strategic importance of Salisbury Road for both new and existing communities.

5.13 The allocation of housing here is to enable the delivery of a number of vital land uses and infrastructure to meet the needs of the northern part of Blandford Forum. These include critical educational and health infrastructure and public transport benefits which cannot be directly met by the planned growth of Blandford St Mary. In addition, this provision will increase the contribution of the town to meet the additional local housing needs of North Dorset in the period to 2033.

5.14 The provision of a new two form entry primary school, with space to expand to a three form entry primary school, complete with integrated Early Years provision will ensure proposals set out in policies 14 and 16 of the Local Plan are delivered. The evidence of the Local Education Authority is unequivocal; that the provision of additional primary school places is now critical and there is a need to serve the needs pupils living north of the town centre, which has no existing provision. The Policy locates the school where the evidence indicates it is most needed and having considered all other options.

5.15 The availability of land north of the bypass for a new primary school has been discussed with the landowners and Dorset Council. The Education Authority have provided a Pupil Place Planning Statement, and updated report (see evidence base) which summarises the future demand for school places in Blandford. Whilst the Statement acknowledges the proposed location sits within the Cranborne and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, it confirms that based on their analysis to date for delivering additional capacity in terms of a new 2FE primary school, the site north of the bypass is their preferred location and the delivery of which is critical to the ability of DC to fulfil its statutory obligation of providing school places in Blandford. The location also benefits from pedestrian access to the Shaftesbury Lane residential area via a pedestrian footbridge and would mitigate the potentially considerable additional car movements required to ensure 400 children are able to access the primary school safely and that could result from school locations elsewhere.

5.16 It is considered that the vital school benefit, and the national priority given to the provision of school places by government justifies the incursion of a major development into the AONB in accordance with paragraph 172 of the NPPF, which places great weight on conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of such designated landscapes. Policy 4 of the Local Plan reiterates this importance. This is a matter of planning judgement and the Site Selection Background Paper explores this matter in more detail.

5.17 The land comprises two main parcels in the single ownership of a consortium of landowners, which have a development agreement in place and have made the land available for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan.

5.18 The northern land forms part of approximately 10 hectares of land immediately north of the A350 bypass and extends to the neighbourhood boundary to the north. The site lies within but on the edge of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB. The land was originally allocated for sports pitches by Policy BL6 of the 2003 Local Plan, but this proposal has since been abandoned. There is already a pedestrian bridge over the A350 bypass connecting the land with the large residential area at Shaftesbury Lane, which is also within the AONB.

5.19 The north-eastern land forms part of 28 hectares immediately to the east of the A350 bypass to the south of Letton Park and north of Pimperne Brook and Black Lane. The land falls within the setting of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB but does not lie within it. It can be safely accessed from both the bypass A350/A354 roundabout and by the A354 Salisbury Road and there are opportunities to establish a safe pedestrian and cycling crossing of the bypass to connect the development with Preetz Way.

5.20 Based on the housing land budget, it is anticipated that approximately 400 dwellings can be delivered principally on land to the north east. Both land parcels which make up land allocated by Policy B2 lie within the neighbourhood plan boundary. The allocation will be expected to deliver a wide range of house sizes, types and tenures, comprising open market, affordable⁷ and self-build homes in accordance with national and emerging local planning policies.

5.21 Dorset Council maintains a register of individuals who have expressed an interest in self-build and custom homes and 80 expressions of interest are currently recorded for Blandford Forum⁸. The adopted Local Plan does not make specific policy provision for self-build housing, however the Issues & Options Consultation for the LPR recognised that this had to change to meet the demand in the Area. The policy therefore requires the mix of homes to include a proportion of self-build and custom homes.

5.22 The principle to relocate the existing allotments to accommodate the allocation has already been discussed with the Town Council and negotiations continue with the land interests.

5.23 With the major housing and retail schemes off Shaftesbury Lane approved in the AONB in recent years, the need for the development and its dependency on that location and ability to moderate its effects on the AONB can provide sufficient justification.

5.24 And, unlike those schemes, this policy allocation, which establishes a series of key development principles, will ensure that a full package of supporting infrastructure and landscape mitigation measures will be delivered. To that end, the policy requires a comprehensive site masterplan

⁷ Affordable Housing includes affordable housing for rent, starter homes, discounted market sales housing and other affordable routes to home ownership as defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF 2018

⁸ As recorded in NDDC Annual Monitoring Report 2018

and landscape strategy setting out how any impact on the AONB will be moderated and how the key development principles will be met including access, layout, design, landscaping and surface water management, including how this has been accommodated so as not to adversely affect the delivery or operation of the proposed waste management facility adjoining the site in accordance with Policy 24 of the Bournemouth, Dorset & Poole Waste Plan (adopted December 2019).

5.25 Importantly, it also requires a planning obligation to be agreed to secure all the infrastructure requirements of the policy, alongside other Local Plan requirements, to deliver a satisfactory scheme in line with Policies 13, 14 and 15 of the Local Plan. The obligation will detail the phasing of onsite delivery of infrastructure as well as financial contributions to other off-site works. Given the housing scheme is enabling the delivery of specified educational development infrastructure, the policy requires that the land is made available for those purposes on receipt of a planning consent, and this can be in the form of an outline or hybrid consent, but simply needs to be prior to the commencement of the housing scheme. In addition, the policy acknowledges that part of the housing land north-east of the town lies beyond the designated neighbourhood area (in Pimperne Parish) and that the planning obligation relates solely to the allocation in this plan. It is not connected with any development proposal that may come forward on land beyond the boundary of B+ Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy B3 – Employment

(a) Blandford Heights Industrial Estate

Development proposals to enhance the operational effectiveness and appearance of existing employment sites and facilities or to redevelop sites to provide modern commercial premises and flexible workspace opportunities on Blandford Heights Industrial Estate, as shown on the Policies Map Inset B, will be supported.

(b) Land off Shaftesbury Lane

Proposals for the change of use of allocated or established E(g), B2, B8 employment land off Shaftesbury Lane, as shown on the Policies Map Inset B, will be resisted, unless it can be demonstrated that there will be no demand for that use of the land within the plan period. Proposals for new E(g), B2, B8 employment uses on the land will be supported, provided they include measures to satisfactorily mitigate any adverse impacts upon the AONB by way of the details of the design, layout, landscape treatment, materials and typical details of appearance and elevation of buildings and of minimising light spill into the AONB.

(c) Land adjacent to Sunrise Business Park

Development proposals for an extension of Sunrise Business Park, as shown on the Policies Map Inset B, for business (E(g), B2,B8) uses will be supported, provided:

- i. **they are made in the form of a comprehensive outline planning application that sets out the key land use components and the residual land available once the needs of the household waste facility (excluded development) are finalised and demonstrate that the proposed uses would not adversely impact on the operation of a waste management centre on adjoining land;**
- ii. **employment uses will be compatible with educational or residential uses on adjacent land;**
- iii. **any buildings are of a similar scale and height to the existing buildings in the Business Park and of a design to reduce their impact on the skyline and to reduce their visual footprint;**
- iv. **along the northern boundary, employment uses will be compatible with the open landscape and AONB and structural landscaping forms a transitional edge;**
- v. **they include measures to minimise light spill into the AONB;**
- vi. **a positive frontage is created with the A350 which enhances its function as a gateway to the town and minimises the loss of existing hedgerow and any unavoidable loss is made good through new hedgerow planting; and**
- vii. **unencumbered access is provided through the allocated waste site to serve employment land to the rear of the site.**

Development proposals that will result in the loss of employment floorspace will be resisted, unless it can be demonstrated that either there will be an increase in jobs as a result of the proposals enabling a higher employment density to be achieved or the use is no longer viable.

5.26 The specification agreed with Dorset Council requires the neighbourhood plan to seek land to be able to accommodate at least 2 hectares and up to 5 hectares of employment land to help mitigate the employment land deficit in Blandford.

5.27 The employment strategy of the neighbourhood plan is twofold:

- i. to seek to identify new employment land to reduce the deficit; and,
- ii. to consider how the plan might act as a catalyst for the regeneration of existing safeguarded employment land which might serve a more sustainable and higher wage local economy by offering a greater proportion of E(g)(i) office and small flexible type workspace - the latter having a higher employment density which will in turn reduce the pressure to find new employment land on the edge of the urban area.

5.28 The Brownfield register confirmed there was a limited supply of suitable previously developed land that could be allocated for employment purposes.

5.29 Land of about 5.5 hectares to the north of Blandford which had previously been considered for employment uses in the B+NP 2031 is now proposed for allocation in the new Waste Plan. And while this use is acknowledged as 'excluded development' for the purposes of

neighbourhood planning, the household waste site allocation boundary encompasses approximately 3.5 hectares of land, while the accompanying site assessment indicates that only 2 hectares of land to service the needs of the new facility are required, although this will not be confirmed until details of access/landscaping etc. are agreed. This leaves approximately 3.5 hectares of residual land which could service the employment needs of the town and contribute to the employment land use specification.

5.30 Although the precise layout of the new waste management facility has yet to be published, the policy supports proposals to extend the existing Sunrise Business Park to deliver new employment opportunities for local people in that part of the land which will not be required for the new waste facility. The principle for development within this area has already been established by the existing Sunrise Business Park and the siting of the new waste management facility (see Fig. C).

5.31 The policy does not allocate the site for the new waste management facility as this is 'excluded development' and is unable to do so, nor does it try to undermine the delivery of the facility and requires an application to demonstrate this, in accordance with Policy 24 of the Bournemouth, Dorset & Poole Waste Plan, adopted in December 2019. It simply tries to secure any land that is surplus to requirements for the waste management facility to be for employment purposes. The landowner has confirmed their commitment to providing the land adjacent to Sunrise Business Park for employment purposes.

5.32 In addition, the policy encourages new commercial development of E(g)(i) office-type uses within underutilised space in the existing Blandford Heights Industrial Estate, as a means of growing the local employment base and to balance housing growth. The recent approval of the conversion of the Grainstore at Blandford Heights into flexible work space is a welcome addition to a large unused site and the neighbourhood plan encourages similar proposals to come forward.

5.33 The policy also seeks to protect existing employment sites from other uses outside of permitted development rights. The North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 sets out an overarching policy for economic development. Policy 11 of the Local Plan Part 1 protects employment sites but provides the flexibility for alternative uses where they would provide job opportunities in the knowledge based economy which operate at a higher employment density. In so doing the policy proposes to make the most efficient use of existing employment land.

5.34 Each of the four main towns in North Dorset has a strategic employment site and collectively they provide 33ha of land. The Local Plan also identified a number of sites for mixed use development near town centres which will enable economic growth for office and non-B class uses.

5.35 Local Plan Part 1 supports a more flexible approach to the range of uses permitted on employment sites. This has led to employment related

development of non-B-use classes in addition to B1, B2 and B8 uses. This approach was appropriate when employment land supply was in excess of projected demand. This policy updates this approach to reflect the circumstances now evidenced in the Blandford + Commercial Situation Report.

Policy B4 – Secondary Education

Proposals to upgrade or expand the Blandford School will be supported provided:

- i. safe access by public transport and enhanced pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to contribute to the school's travel planning objectives can be delivered;***
- ii. a safe drop-off and pick-up is available;***
- iii. conflict with the adjoining Leisure Centre and Youth Services uses are avoided; and***
- iv. they sustain and enhance the character and appearance of the Blandford Forum Conservation Area.***

5.36 This policy supports the expansion of The Blandford School, which the Education Authority has confirmed would be required to meet the demand for secondary school places in the town over the Plan Period and is consistent with Policy 14 of the Local Plan Part 1.

5.37 The policy requires proposals for the expansion of the Blandford School to address safe access and to reflect the school's needs and travel requirements. The area around The Blandford School is already congested during school drop-off and pick-up times and the policy seeks to ensure that this is managed in an effective way to accommodate any planned growth.

5.38 The policy also seeks to protect the adjoining uses of the Leisure Centre and the recently re-opened Youth Services immediately adjacent to The Blandford School. The Blandford School lies within the policy coverage of design policy B10 and any proposal to extend the existing school will need to have regard to the design criteria set out to preserve and enhance this sub-area.

Policy B5 – Community Facilities

The Neighbourhood Plan defines the following properties as community facilities:

- i. The Corn Exchange, The Market Place, Blandford Forum, DT11 7AF***
- ii. The Leisure Centre, Milldown Road, Blandford Forum, DT11 7DB***
- iii. Woodhouse Gardens and Pavilion, The Tabernacle, Blandford Forum, DT11 7UN***
- iv. The Bowling Club, Milldown Road, Blandford Forum, DT11 7DD***
- v. The Football Pavilion, Milldown Road, Blandford Forum, DT11 7DD***

- vi. ***The Cricket Pavilion, Milldown Road, Blandford Forum, DT11 7DD***
- vii. ***Larksmead Pavilion, Larksmead, Blandford Forum DT11 7LU***
- viii. ***The Victorian Garden, Blandford Museum, Blandford Forum, DT11 7HQ***
- ix. ***Blandford Forum Parish Centre, Blandford Forum, DT11 0YU***
- x. ***The Skate Park, Stour Park, Blandford St Mary, DT11 9LQ***
- xi. ***Bryanston Estate Club, Hillside, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 0PR***

Proposals that will result in either the loss of or cause significant harm to a defined facility will be resisted, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the operation of the facility, or the on-going delivery of the community value of the facility, is no longer financially viable.

Development proposals to sustain or extend the viable use of existing community facilities, and the development of new facilities, will be supported.

5.39 This policy identifies community facilities that will be protected from unnecessary loss or harm in accordance with Policy 27 of the Local Plan.

5.40 The Neighbourhood Plan Group have been collecting evidence on community facilities within Blandford that are valued by the community and offer a valuable resource to support community life. Whilst some facilities like the Corn Exchange are very well known, others less so and some may, at some time in the future, come under increased financial pressure.

5.41 The purpose of this policy is therefore to secure these assets in the long term for the benefit of the people of Blandford Forum and surrounding parishes and to apply a test of viability, which otherwise would not exist, to give added protection to them.

Policy B6 – Blandford St Mary Community Hall

Proposals for a new community hall in Blandford St Mary will be supported provided:

- i. ***the location is within the St Mary's Hill development boundary and is convenient for access by foot or bicycle;***
- ii. ***the scheme provides the community with a meeting place of sufficient size to accommodate office uses, informal socialising, refreshment and indoor recreational activities;***
- iii. ***sufficient off-road car parking spaces are provided;***
- iv. ***the scheme is sympathetic to the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape; and***
- v. ***the scheme design incorporates features that improve energy efficiency and reduces carbon dioxide emissions.***

5.42 This policy identifies a new community facility that is required in Blandford St Mary and applies Policy B5 above which supports the development of new facilities. The design should incorporate multi-purpose meeting rooms to support a range of community users such as societies and other visiting providers of services for health and wellbeing, and individuals or organised groups meeting for study, research or advice.

5.43 An objective contained within Local Plan Policy 16 is the provision of a neighbourhood hall to serve new development in Blandford St Mary. The previously agreed location at the Hall and Woodhouse brewery site is no longer viable. However, the approved outline application at St Mary's Hill has committed to transfer a parcel of land measuring 0.053ha = 23m by 23m for the purpose of providing a community hall.

5.44 Blandford St Mary has not had a village hall for many years. Despite a number of historic attempts to secure the provision of a village hall, the projects have not come to fruition. The policy therefore seeks to be supportive of a scheme coming forward that takes into account the needs and requirements of the village, the specification of which is set out in the Blandford St Mary Village Hall Study Group report included in the evidence base, to secure a facility that it is envisaged will become a community hub for its residents and a source of income for the village. The proposals should demonstrate how the Sport England Village and Community Hall design guidance has been considered.

Policy B7 – Health Provision

Proposals to meet increasing demand by expanding the existing Whitecliff Surgery and the Blandford Community Hospital will be supported.

All new residential development proposals will only be permitted where they provide or improve the delivery of essential health and/or wellbeing facilities and services required to serve the scale of development proposed.

Development proposals which would have a detrimental effect on, or result in the loss of essential GP facilities and services that meet community needs and support well-being will only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that:

- i. The service or facility is no longer needed; or***
- ii. It is demonstrated that it is no longer practical, desirable or viable to retain them; or***
- iii. The proposals will provide sufficient community benefit to outweigh the loss of the existing facility or service.***

5.45 This policy makes provision to accommodate new or extended GP facilities and facilities that provide health and wellbeing services. The policy reflects Policy 14 and 16 of the adopted Local Plan. A priority for North Dorset is to ensure people, particularly older people, are healthy, active and lead independent lives. Health and well-being facilities are able to provide a range of community services closer to the people they serve and do not require a GP practice setting (for example, the Ryde Health and Wellbeing Centre on the Isle of Wight)

5.46 Meetings with all surgeries in Blandford confirmed GP services are under significant pressure and a new or improved/extended surgery is required. The Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group, who were also party to these

discussions, confirmed that such needs will be met principally through improving existing clinical space, rather than building new surgeries. The existing GP practices in Blandford have agreed that this can be achieved by way of a merger of the two practices and through reorganisation of the existing clinical space, including the expansion of the Whitecliff Surgery site and the use of satellite health and wellbeing facilities for non-urgent care. The policy therefore supports the extension of the existing site. It also requires new residential development proposals to provide or improve essential GP facilities or services, either by way of providing the facilities for a satellite service, such as a multi-use community facility to provide health and wellbeing services that can be delivered outside of a surgery setting, or by contributing to improving existing GP facilities. A Health Background note that supports this provision of the policy is included in the evidence base.

5.47 The policy also seeks to safeguard existing GP provision. The Councils will work positively with local communities to retain, improve or re-use essential facilities and services along with appropriate supporting development which may make such provision economically viable.

Policy B8 – Blandford Forum Town Centre

The Neighbourhood Plan defines the Town Centre Area and the Primary Shopping Area, as shown on the Town Centre Policies Map, for the purpose of managing proposals for retail, leisure, commercial, housing and other forms of development.

Within the Primary Shopping Area, proposals for new Retail floorspace will be supported. Proposals for new E(c) Financial Services, E(g)(i) Offices, C3 Residential and E(e) and F.1 Community Uses on the upper floors of buildings that contribute to the vibrancy and vitality of the town will be supported. Loss of established ground floor Retail floorspace or of an active frontage as a result of a change of use will be resisted.

Outside the Primary Shopping Area but within the Town Centre Area the following will be supported:

- ***Shops and retail outlets (E(a));***
- ***Professional services (E(c));***
- ***Food and drink (E(b))***
- ***Drinking establishments (Use as a public house, wine bar, or drinking establishment (sui generis));***
- ***Hot food and takeaways (Use as a hot food takeaway for the sale of hot food where consumption of that food is mostly undertaken off the premises (sui generis));***
- ***Health and public services (E(e) and F.1);***
- ***Entertainment and leisure (Use as a venue for live music performance, a cinema, a concert hall, a bingo hall, a dance hall (sui generis)) and E(d);***
- ***Business (E(g); and***
- ***Residential (C3) which does not replace an existing retail or commercial ground floor frontage.***

All proposals in the Town Centre should retain or create, where appropriate to the use, an active street frontage and should seek to enhance the public realm through street planting and other measures intended to enhance the vitality of the Town Centre and to increase the footfall.

All proposals for development, including a change of use, must preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

5.48 This policy complements Local Plan Policy 12 by defining the Town Centre Area and a Primary Shopping Area of Blandford Forum. The Local Plan policy allows for a Neighbourhood Plan to review its frontages and the policy therefore makes such changes. The policy effectively anticipates the changes made in the NPPF 2018 in planning for successful town centres. For the purposes of this policy, commercial development is considered to be development which functions/operates in relation to the buying and selling of goods and/or services. This includes, amongst other things, retail and leisure development.

5.49 The policy extends the Primary Shopping Area northwards to include 51/52 Salisbury Street. The extension reflects the importance of trading shops on Salisbury Street and their contribution to the town centre and local economy.

5.50 The policy also establishes the uses that will be allowed in the Town Centre Area as part of a positive strategy for the town centre, as supported in the Retail and Town Centre Report (2018) included in the evidence base. The strategy essentially seeks to maintain the Primary Shopping Area for a shopping function whilst allowing other uses, which can add to attractiveness and vitality. In this respect all proposals should consider how they may enhance the streets and spaces to increase footfall and 'staying' activity⁹.

5.51 It is also recognised that residential accommodation can lead to increased footfall and vitality, however such uses are more suited to areas outside of the Primary Shopping Area, and the policy therefore also seeks to retain its retail frontages and encourage residential accommodation on upper floors rather than ground floors. The policy does recognise, however, that there are some areas within the Primary Shopping Area that do already contain residential dwellings at ground floor level, and so will support residential development which does not replace an existing retail or commercial ground floor frontage.

5.52 This approach is entirely in line with the Grimsey Review 2 (July 2018)¹⁰ conclusions which highlight the need to reshape town centres into community hubs which incorporate health, housing, arts, education, entertainment, leisure, business/office space, as well as some shops, while developing a unique selling proposition.

⁹ [The Pedestrian Pound](#): The business case for better streets and spaces. (Living Streets 2014)

¹⁰ The Grimsey Review 2 [Report](#) (2018)

5.53 In addition to these proposals, and as another regeneration initiative, the Town Council is keen to address the improvement of traffic flow within the town centre. However, it recognises that such proposals require time to debate with traders and other organisations in the town, and the highways authority, and that a Neighbourhood Plan is not the correct platform for such debate. This plan does not therefore make such proposals but informs local people that these discussions will begin once the Plan is made.

Policy B9 – Green Infrastructure Network

The Neighbourhood Plan designates a Green Infrastructure Network, as shown on the Green Infrastructure Policies Map, for the purpose of promoting sustainable movement and ecological connectivity through the town and neighbouring parishes. The Network comprises Local Green Spaces, informal open spaces, allotments, playing fields, off-street footpaths/cycleways, children's play areas, woodland and land of biodiversity value.

Development proposals that lie within or adjoining the Network are required to have full regard to maintaining and improving the Network, including delivering a net gain to general biodiversity assets, where possible, in the design of their layouts, landscaping schemes and public open space provisions.

Proposals that will lead to the loss of land lying within the Network and that will undermine its integrity will be resisted. Development proposals that will lead to the extension of the Network will be supported, provided they are consistent with all other relevant policies of the development plan.

5.54 This policy supports Local Plan Policy 15 on Green Infrastructure by defining a network of green infrastructure assets in and around Blandford Forum, Blandford St Mary and Bryanston as a means of promoting walking, cycling and recreation and of improving local biodiversity through connecting habitats. It continues to promote walking and cycling routes identified in the North and North East Dorset Transport Study (see evidence base) and supports enhanced links with the land to the north to ensure the integration of these areas to the town south of the bypass.

5.55 The policy requires that all development proposals that lie within the Network, or that adjoin it, should consider how they may improve it, or at the very least do not undermine its integrity of connecting spaces and habitats. This may mean that scheme layouts, access points, landscape schemes and amenity spaces are designed to contribute to the effectiveness of the Network where possible and without undermining other planning policy objectives. In some cases, proposals will enable the creation of new green infrastructure assets that extend the benefits of the Network. They will be supported provided they are appropriate in other respects.

5.56 The spine of the network is provided by the Trailway running along a former railway line from Sturminster Newton north of Blandford Forum to

Spetisbury to the south but also includes the major spaces of the River Stour corridor, the Bryanston Estate, Stour Meadows and the Milldown. Although the majority of these features are physically attached to enable habitat connectivity, some features of the Network are not. This does not devalue their integral biodiversity or recreational value and at some point in the future an opportunity may arise to achieve similar connectivity. The policy passed examination of the Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan 2031 and no changes have been made in this version.

Policy B10 – Local Green Spaces

The Neighbourhood Plan designates Local Green Spaces in the locations shown on the Green Infrastructure Policy Map and subsequent LGS Inset Maps.

Proposals for development in a Local Green Space will only be supported in exceptional circumstances.

Blandford Forum

- 1. Diamond Way Amenity Area***
- 2. Westbury Way***
- 3. Davies Gardens***
- 4. Badbury Heights Open Spaces***
- 5. Land adjacent the Leisure Centre***
- 6. The Trailway***
- 7. Overton Walk***

Blandford St Mary

- 8. Coppice and Badger Sett***
- 9. Bryanston Hills***

Bryanston

- 10. Between the Cliff and Forum View at the entrance to the village, locally known as the Island***
- 11. The Telephone Box and surrounding area at The Cliff***

5.57 This policy designates a series of Local Green Spaces in accordance with paragraphs 99 - 100 of the NPPF and with Local Plan Policy 15 on Green Infrastructure. A designation has the policy effect of the equivalence of the Green Belt when determining planning applications located within a designated Local Green Space. Hence, the policy resists all development proposals that will undermine the essential character of designated areas, unless there are very special circumstances as set out in NPPF paragraph 101, to justify why consent should be granted.

5.58 A review of all open land within and adjoining each settlement has been completed, informed by the qualifying criteria of paragraph 100 of the NPPF. The land that is considered to meet those criteria and is therefore worthy of designation is shown on the Policies Map. 29 sites were originally reviewed (see 'Local Green Spaces Working Group Report' in evidence base). A

review of Important Open Wooded Areas (IOWA) has since been undertaken, as this designation will no longer apply following the production of the Dorset Council Local Plan. A further 3 sites were identified as part of this review.

5.59 The policy passed examination, subject to the removal of Crown Meadows, in the examination of the Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan 2031. A full description and justification for each site is included in the Local Green Spaces Study (2018) in the evidence base.

Policy B11 – Managing Design in the Conservation Area: Blandford Forum

Proposals within or affecting the setting of the Conservation Area, as shown on the Policies Map Inset B, must sustain and enhance its character and appearance and should demonstrate:

- i. consistently high standard of design and detailing reflecting the scale and character, including the layout of the streets, development patterns, burgage plots, building lines and building form;***
- ii. the use of building materials and finishes which are sympathetic to the area, in particular the use of red brick in facades;***
- iii. no harmful impact on the townscape and roofscape;***
- iv. the retention and protection of trees, gardens, spaces between buildings, and other open areas which contribute to its character and appearance, and the use of permeable surfaces to reduce surface water flooding;***
- v. where appropriate, the removal of unsightly and inappropriate features or details; and***
- vi. the retention and, where appropriate, the reinstatement of original features such as chimneys, chimney pots, gates, railings and shop fronts and small scale architectural details such as mouldings which individually or cumulatively contribute to its character and appearance.***

All planning applications within the Conservation Area must demonstrate how the design of proposals has sought to preserve and enhance the significance of the heritage assets and their setting in line with the recommendations of the Character Area Appraisal.

Proposals including proposed changes of use that are likely to have an adverse impact on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area will not be supported.

5.60 Blandford Forum is best known as one of the finest examples of a Georgian Market Town in Britain. Its centre was re-built after a series of disastrous fires which completely destroyed the town in 1731. The lovely, red-brick houses are complemented by two stone-built buildings in The Market Place itself – the Corn Exchange complex and the Parish Church. Over the centuries since then the town has continued to expand and the settlement pattern saw the town grow to the north up the chalk escarpment.

5.61 This policy will require planning applications to reflect the character of the buildings and landscape in and around the conservation area in their design proposals. The area is deficient in tree cover and proposals should give special attention to new landscaping and how this may complement other flood risk measures to avoid new development exacerbating existing problems. The policy sets out specific local requirements as provided for by Local Plan Policy 24.

5.62 The Design Management: Blandford Forum Update Report (2018) included in the evidence base provides background information and outlines the changes that have been made to the policy since it passed examination of the Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan.

5.63 Blandford Forum has developed over centuries, starting from the centre of town, where buildings are older, to the outskirts where building continues. Many styles and trends are incorporated in the buildings, although the town is famous for the excellent examples of Georgian architecture. Heritage led regeneration such as the refurbishment of the Corn Exchange, will help to secure this status. This policy establishes the key design management principles for the Blandford Forum Conservation Area and its setting and requires special regard to matters of detailed design to avoid the continued erosion of the town centre character. The Dorset Historic Towns Study (2011) identified the Medieval Town and Salisbury Road areas as highly sensitive to large scale development and Historic England have confirmed the Conservation Area as a whole, is on the 'At Risk Register' in addition to a number of 'listed buildings'.

5.64 In 2015, the local community formed the Blandford Heritage Group. The Heritage Group is a Blandford Forum Town Team sub-group comprising NDDC's Conservation Officer, the Town Museum and Civic Society members. The group's initial aim was to highlight and promote the unique nature of the Town and surrounding Conservation Area and ensure that the community's wishes to maintain the town's architecture, halt its steady deterioration and identify areas where improvements could be implemented.

5.65 At the time, Historic England advised that there may be an opportunity for the Heritage Group to undertake a Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA). This in turn will help the production of a Conservation Area Management Plan (CAMP) with the support of Dorset Council and Historic England. Guidance on how this could be achieved was provided by NDDC's Conservation Officer in November 2015 and a Management Brief produced in 2016. The Heritage Group's initial priority is Blandford Forum Town Centre. The group have provided a detailed document, the Blandford Heritage Group Towards a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, on how it will achieve this, and a draft Conservation Area Appraisal is included in the evidence base.

Policy B12 – Managing Design in the Conservation Area: Blandford St Mary

Proposals including infill within or affecting the setting of the Conservation Area, as shown on the Policies Map Inset B, must sustain and enhance its character or appearance and should demonstrate:

- i. a consistently high standard of design and detailing reflecting its scale and character;***
- ii. ensure that where flats may be proposed, their scale, massing, detailing and landscaping is domestic in form and their appearance harmonises with the housing types of the area;***
- iii. the use of building materials and finishes which are sympathetic to the area;***
- iv. the retention and protection of trees, front gardens, boundary hedges and other open areas which contribute to its character and appearance;***
- v. the use of permeable surfaces to reduce surface water flooding; and***
- vi. where appropriate the removal of unsightly and inappropriate features or details.***

Proposals including proposed changes of use that are likely to have an adverse impact on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area will not be supported.

5.66 Blandford St Mary is a small but varied community lying south of the River Stour and the large connecting public greenspace of Stour Meadows. The village, which has its own identity, includes an active primary school, an annual horticultural and craft fayre, various groups which meet regularly in and around the village in residents' homes and a talented group of artists who regularly exhibit as part of the bi-annual Dorset Art Week. As well as a variety of old and distinguished properties dating back a century or more, there are many relatively new residential properties, together with the busy commercial area at Stour Park in which is located Tesco, Homebase and a small number of professional services and IT companies. Blandford St Mary is home to the famous Hall & Woodhouse Brewery, a significant local employer.

5.67 This policy will require planning applications to reflect the character of the buildings and landscape in and around the village in their design proposals. It also requires that specific attention is paid to how flood risk is managed to avoid new development increasing existing problems. The policy sets out specific local requirements as provided for by Local Plan Policy 24.

5.68 The Design Management: Blandford St Mary Update Report (2018) included in the evidence base provides background information and confirms that no changes have been made to the policy since it passed examination of the Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan.

5.69 Present day Blandford St Mary is adjacent to the town of Blandford Forum, but wishes to retain its identity. The village has three distinct areas. The older area of Lower Blandford St Mary lies mainly to the south east of the

Blandford bypass. The main part of the village, south west of Bournemouth Road, is made up of mainly 1980s and the 1990s housing developments.

5.70 The third distinct area of the village, lies within the Blandford, Blandford St Mary and Bryanston Conservation Area, and includes the Stour Meadows, Brewery complex and the area around the Stour Inn with a village green in front. The latter area forms part of the historic context to the important entrance to Blandford Forum, over the River Stour, the main entrance to Bryanston School and to Bryanston village.

5.71 Whilst the Dorset Historic Towns Study identified this area as having medium sensitivity to change, this sensitivity varies throughout the area. The Hall and Woodhouse Brewery building is the dominating feature of the area and holds the greatest architectural interest and is considered to be of regional significance. The Brewery site and the river meadows of Stour Park to the north offer a considerable and underutilised 'green infrastructure' asset in terms of offering a 'shared focus' with the historic town centre to the north of the river.

Policy B13 – Managing Design in the Conservation Area: Bryanston

Proposals including infill within or affecting the setting of the Conservation Area, as shown on the Policies Map Insets A and B, must sustain and enhance its character and appearance and should demonstrate:

- i. consistently high standard of design and detailing reflecting the scale and character or appearance of the village;***
- ii. the use of red brick and slate roofs and finishes which are sympathetic to the area and to the original Portman style of houses;***
- iii. the retention of flint and brick walls, protection of trees, front gardens and grass verges and other open areas which contribute to its character and appearance;***
- iv. sympathetic on plot parking and the use permeable surfaces to reduce surface water flooding; and***
- v. the removal of unsightly and inappropriate features or details where appropriate.***

Proposals including proposed changes of use that are likely to have an adverse impact on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area or views towards or from The Cliff will not be supported.

5.72 Bryanston is a small parish, full of history, which extends over 715 hectares of mainly agricultural land lying to the west of Blandford and the River Stour between which is 'The Cliff', an area of wooded hillside within the Bryanston Conservation Area. Bryanston village itself is spread out amongst the rolling Dorset fields and almost entirely within the Dorset AONB. The countryside areas still bear traces of historic lynchets and ancient field systems. Dominating the village today is the large house and grounds, once the home of the Portman family, which is now owned by Bryanston School. 'Old Bryanston' village consists of picturesque and historic Portman Estate cottages, clustered below

the Bryanston Club. A second area of the village, which runs along the Cliff, consists of former Council-owned housing together with some more modern detached houses. A third part of the village has historic cottages built along a short portion of Dorchester Hill, close to Blandford town, and a fourth area is mainly former Portman Estate cottages surrounding the Kennels.

5.73 A significant proportion of the parish (537 hectares - 75%) is in the ownership of Bryanston (RFE) Ltd and a substantial portion of the remainder is owned by Bryanston School. Bryanston (RFE) Ltd rents out two farms and 43 residential dwellings.

5.74 Former council housing (Forum View) (now owned/administered by Sovereign Housing) runs along 'the Cliff', with a substantial number of the properties now in private hands. 'Old Bryanston' village clustered below the Bryanston Club consists of old Portman estate cottages, with some in private hands and most rented out by Bryanston (RFE) Ltd. A third segment of the village consists of cottages, mainly privately owned, along a short portion of Dorchester Hill close to Blandford St Mary.

5.75 The 'Cliff' (Bryanston Woods) rises steeply above the River Stour and meadows and dominates views to the west from the town; this is the most significant aspect of the setting of this sub-area. The area has been described in the Insall Report (p17 and p67) in the following manner:

"Sweeping pastures stretch up from the river beyond (Blandford bridge) from whose far bank rise steeply and gloriously Bryanston Woods. Bryanston Woods are a national heritage which must never be destroyed".

5.76 The Cliff forms a perfect backdrop to the historic setting of Blandford Forum when viewed from the east. Development should not mask important views of this wooded ridge.

5.77 This policy will require planning applications to reflect the character of the buildings and landscape in and around the village in their design proposals. It also requires specific attention is paid to how flood risk is managed to avoid new development increasing existing problems. The policy sets out specific local requirements as provided for by Local Plan Policy 24.

5.78 The Design Management: Bryanston Update Report (2018) included in the evidence base provides background information and outlines the changes that have been made to the policy since it passed examination of the Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan 2031.

Policy B14 – The River Stour Meadows

The River Stour Meadows represents an area of predominantly open land within the Blandford Forum Conservation Area that plays an important role in defining the historic setting of Blandford Forum and 'The Cliff' within the wider landscape.

Within the land defined on the Policies Map Inset B, development proposals will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that they will sustain and enhance the character and appearance of the River Stour Meadow and they will secure an opportunity for public access and enjoyment to the River Stour Meadows or where they are intended to replace a detrimental feature.

Proposals including proposed changes of use that are likely to have an adverse impact on the character or appearance of the meadows or harm views towards or from Blandford Forum or 'The Cliff' will not be supported.

5.79 The River Stour Meadows (known locally as Crown Meadows that forms the western part of the area and Stour Meadows that forms the eastern part of the area) is an undeveloped area of land of significant historic and landscape importance and a defining feature in the setting of Blandford Forum.

5.80 The open parkland setting of Crown Meadows is of significant local importance both in terms of its historical associations with the development of the town and its surroundings and individually. Whilst development has taken place within the Bryanston House parklands related to its use as a school, care has been taken to contain development. The draft Conservation Area Appraisal, published in the evidence base, recognises that the Crown Meadows is of vital importance in preserving the undeveloped setting of the town of Blandford.

5.81 The area has been described in the Insall Report (p35) in the following manner:

"The intensely urban quality of the town centre is marvelously enhanced by the rural beauty of Bryanston Park, the River Stour and Bryanston Woods. The river is one of Blandford's greatest but most underplayed assets . . . this is a delightful area full of opportunities for improvement and public enjoyment".

5.82 During the 17th century, the meadows were a busier pastoral landscape than they are today, crossed with lanes and divided by hedgerow enclosures. The open parkland setting which is largely visible today was created in the 18th century.

5.83 In the Victorian period additions to the Deer Park Stables, a group of buildings which lie centrally, created Deer Park Farm. During the 1920s and 30s, an area within the southern part of the Park was used as a football ground. It was at this time that almost all of the Portman lands in Dorset, including Bryanston Park, passed to the Crown Estate Commissioners in lieu of death duties.

5.84 Today, the south of the Park remains undeveloped and its 18th-century boundary remains intact having been incorporated into the Second World War defences. The north of the Deer Park, however, has been encroached upon significantly since the 1960s by developments on Milldown Road and the buildings and sports fields of the Blandford School and Milldown Primary School.

5.85 Views into and within the meadows maintain the sense of a designed landscape and the area is highly valued by its residents, visitors and historians. As well as being a defining feature in the setting of Blandford Forum, it has itself a distinct historical character as described in the Insall Report and the Crown Meadows Background Report (NDDC, 2014), confirming the preservation of the character the setting provides, must inform and guide any management of change.

5.86 The loss of views, both in terms of the relatively open vistas from key vantage points and the blocking of more limited views from within the built-up area would reduce the sense of visual and physical connectivity, which exists at present. Development could also reduce the historic rural character of the open parkland and views over the meadows to and from 'The Cliff'. The draft version of the Blandford Conservation Area Appraisal also recognises that views which enable an appreciation of the landscaped framework within which the town sits, include that of Crown Meadows and Stour Meadows, and that such views enable an understanding of the town's historic development and are considered important contributors to the special interest of the Conservation Area.

Policy B15 – Tourism

Proposals for the development of, or change of use to, a C1 bed and breakfast, hotel or hostel use within the defined settlement boundaries of Blandford Forum and Blandford St Mary, or within the observed built up area of Bryanston village will be supported, provided the scheme has sufficient off-street car parking spaces and has regard to the amenities of adjoining residential properties.

Proposals that will result in the loss of an existing tourist use will be resisted, unless it can be demonstrated that its continued use is no longer viable. Proposals to expand an existing tourist use will be supported, providing they are located in or adjoin the defined Town Centre Area and any impact on local amenity can be satisfactorily mitigated.

5.86 The existing tourism accommodation sites in the area that currently successfully contribute to local tourism include Inside Park caravan and camping facility and existing hotel and bed and breakfasts. This policy is intended to support the growth of the tourist economy, protect existing tourist uses, and support development of new accommodation to contribute

towards it by giving specific encouragement for the provision of new hotel, hostel and bed and breakfast accommodation.

5.88 This may either be by way of a change of use of an existing house or by new development, provided it is located within the existing settlements. However, it requires proposals to ensure they are suited to their location, in which case it distinguishes between the provision of new accommodation within the settlements and the provision of new tourism destination uses, which are only appropriate in or adjoining the town centre. Policy 31 of the Local Plan provides the basis for considering tourism proposals beyond the three settlements in the countryside.

5.89 The Joint Retail and Commercial Leisure Study March 2018 recognises that the North Dorset area is an important tourist destination and that there may be opportunities for growth in this sector, as described in the Local Tourism report included in the evidence base. Hence the policy seeks to encourage investment in the tourism offer of the area, both in terms of tourist attractions (to be located in the town centre) and the supply of tourist accommodation (within the settlement boundaries and observed built-up area).

6. IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

6.1 The policies of the Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan 2033 will be implemented through the determination of planning applications and through the investment of financial contributions in supporting infrastructure projects.

Development Management

6.2 Most of the policies contained in the Plan will be delivered by landowners and developers. In preparing this plan, care has been taken to ensure, as far as possible, that the policies are achievable.

6.3 Whilst the Local Planning Authority will be responsible for development management, the Town and Parish Councils will also use the Plan to frame its representations on submitted planning applications. It will also work with Dorset Council to monitor the progress of sites coming forward for development.

Infrastructure

6.4 The Town and Parish Councils propose that the priorities for investment of future Community Infrastructure Levy, and/or S106 funding received by the local planning authority are:

- i. Blandford St Mary Community Hall
- ii. New health and wellbeing centre (to include GP surgery)
- iii. Refurbishment of the Corn Exchange
- iv. Blandford Town centre enhancements
- v. Public toilets provision / upgrading
- vi. Provision / maintenance of children's centre
- vii. Additional and new provision of sports pitches
- viii. Library enhancement scheme
- ix. Retention and upgrading of Leisure Centre, Blandford Forum
- x. Blandford – Cycleway schemes
- xi. Blandford hard and soft landscaping
- xii. Extension to the Trailway Network
- xiii. Bus interchange Blandford / town centre stop improvements
- xiv. Development of the Fording Point
- xv. Allotments
- xvi. Blandford Town centre public artwork (sculpture, painting, mosaic)

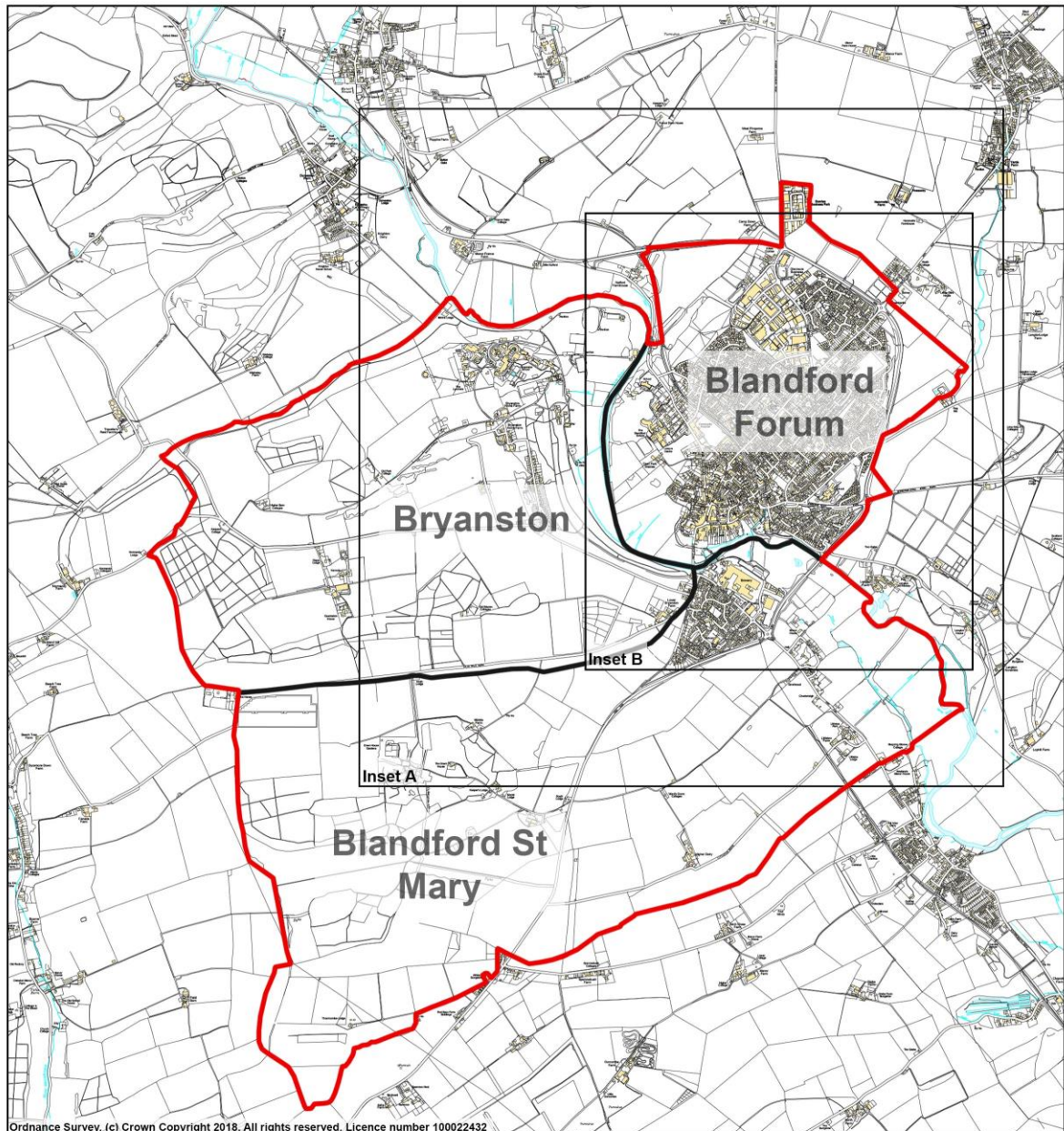
6.5 This series of local infrastructure projects has been identified in the North Dorset Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2014 (IDP) and will be prioritised for investment from the potential future Dorset Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and/or S106 contributions. The list does not include the infrastructure projects that are proposed to be delivered through site specific policies in this Neighbourhood Plan.

6.6 In addition to this list the position set out in the IDP in relation to secondary school provision is now out of date. The proposals contained in this Neighbourhood Plan will result in an increase of secondary school places demand, which the Education Authority, has confirmed would be accommodated by an extension to the existing Blandford School. Developer contributions will be required for this level of expansion and the Town Council will therefore take this matter forward with Dorset Council as part of a review of the IDP, which will take place as part of the Dorset Council Local Plan.




6.7 The CIL will potentially supplement S106 agreement financial contributions during the plan period, although whether a CIL charging schedule covering North Dorset is progressed, adopted and implemented will be for Dorset Council to decide. At least 25% of the levy collected from development in the Blandford + designated area will be invested in the Blandford + designated area and prioritised as per the Memorandum of Understanding between the Councils. The Memorandum of Understanding provides the local community with an indication of the priorities for investing the fund to improve local infrastructure as a result of new development in the plan area.

6.8 In addition, other policies of the Plan require planning obligations to be entered into as part of planning consents to finance and deliver specific infrastructure projects relating to the development scheme in order to make the scheme satisfactory.

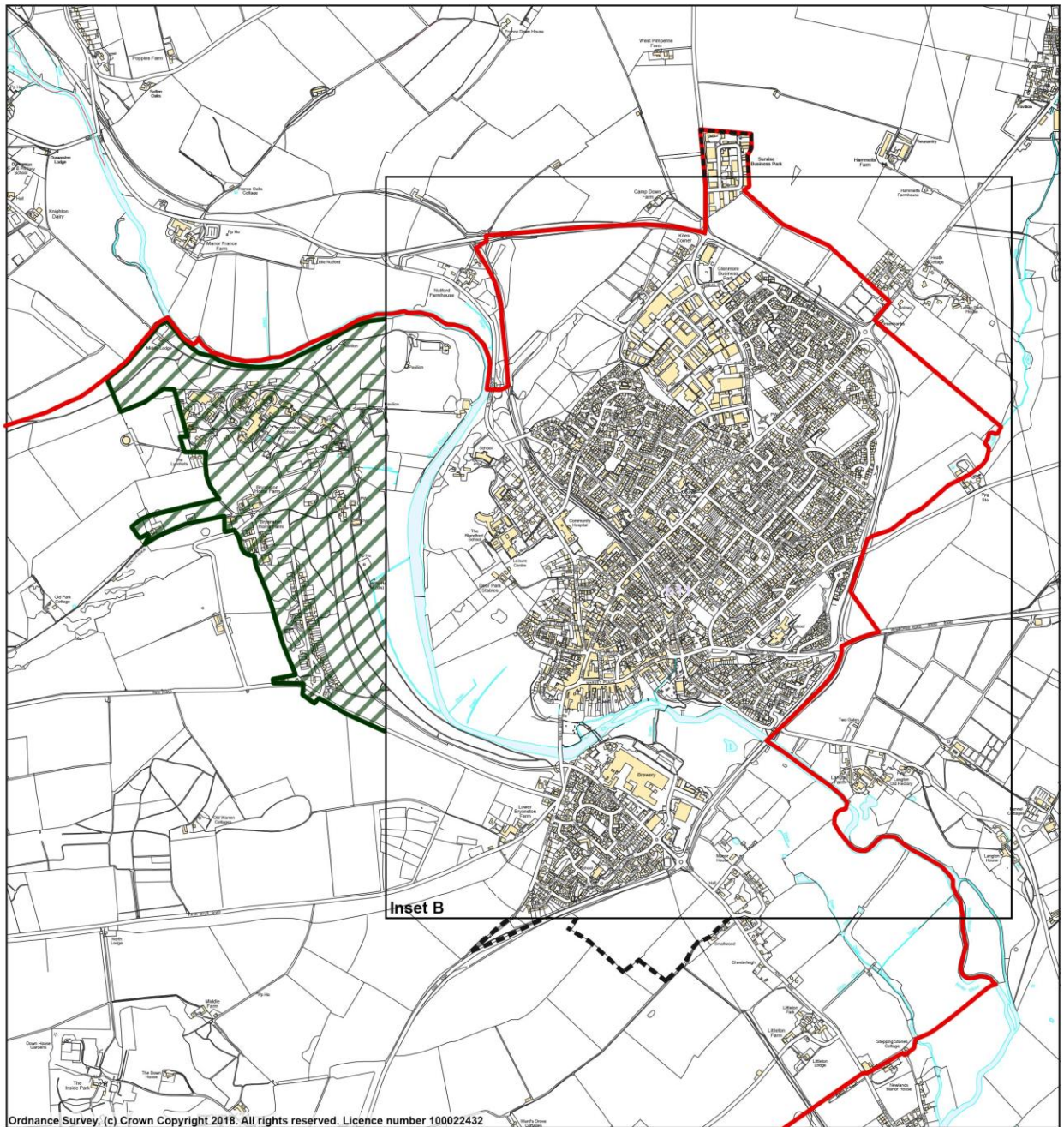
POLICY MAPS



**Blandford Plus Neighbourhood Plan
Submission Plan - Policies Map - January 2019**

-  Neighbourhood Forum Boundary
-  Parish Boundary
-  Inset

POLICIES MAP – INSET A

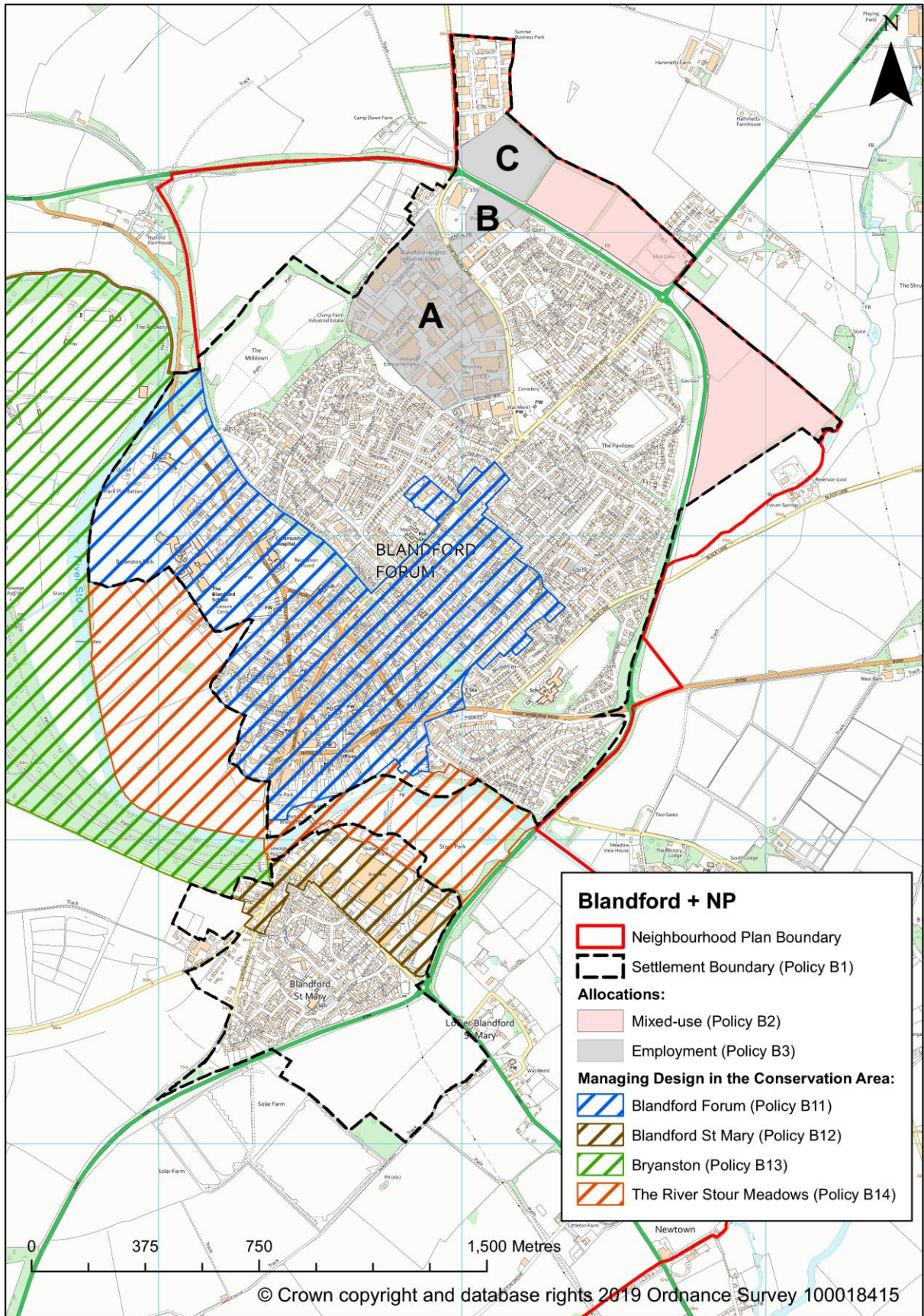


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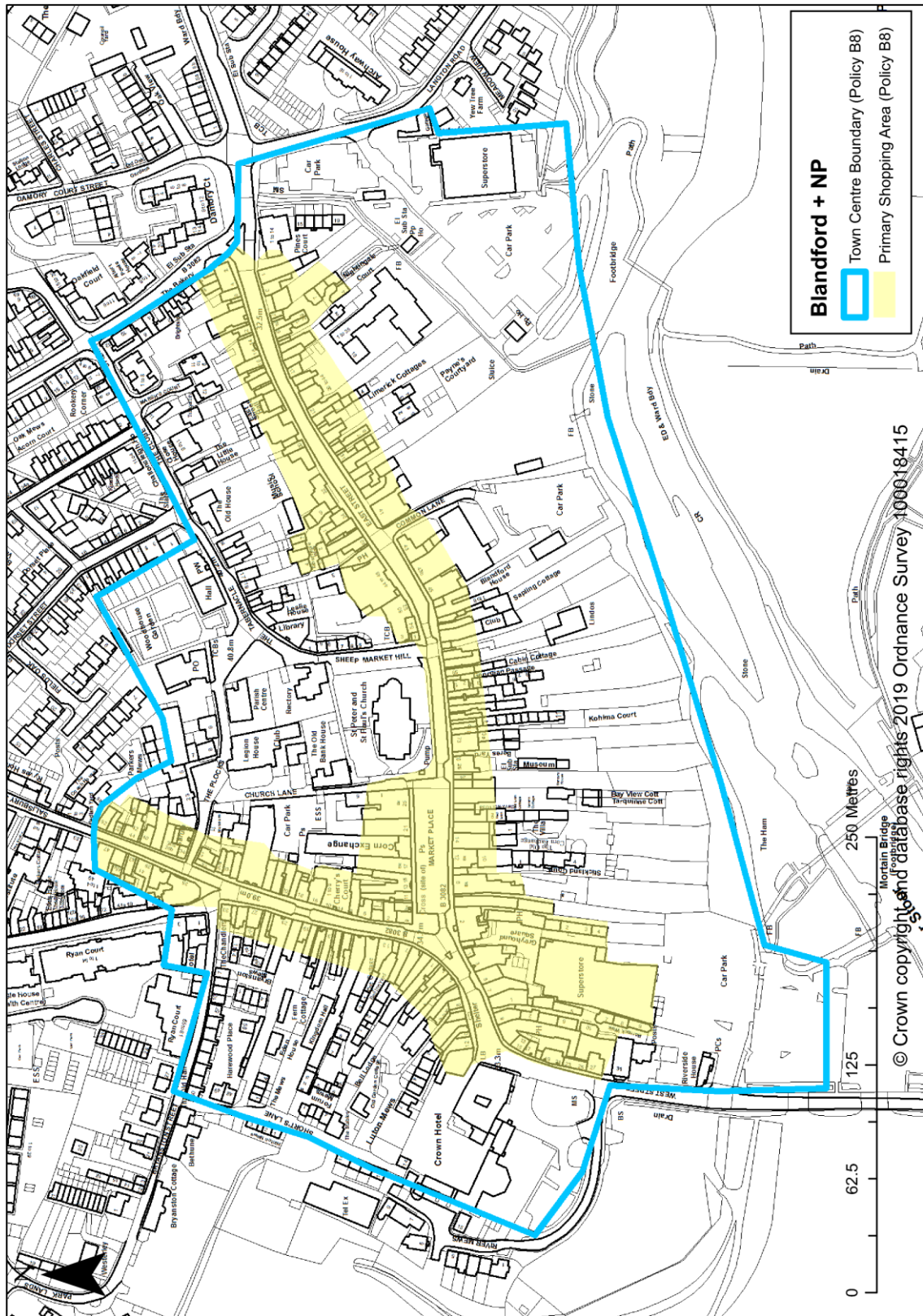
Blandford Plus Neighbourhood Plan Submission Plan - Inset A - January 2019

-  Neighbourhood Forum Boundary
-  Inset
-  B1 Settlement Boundary
-  B13 Managing Design in the Conservation Area: Bryanston

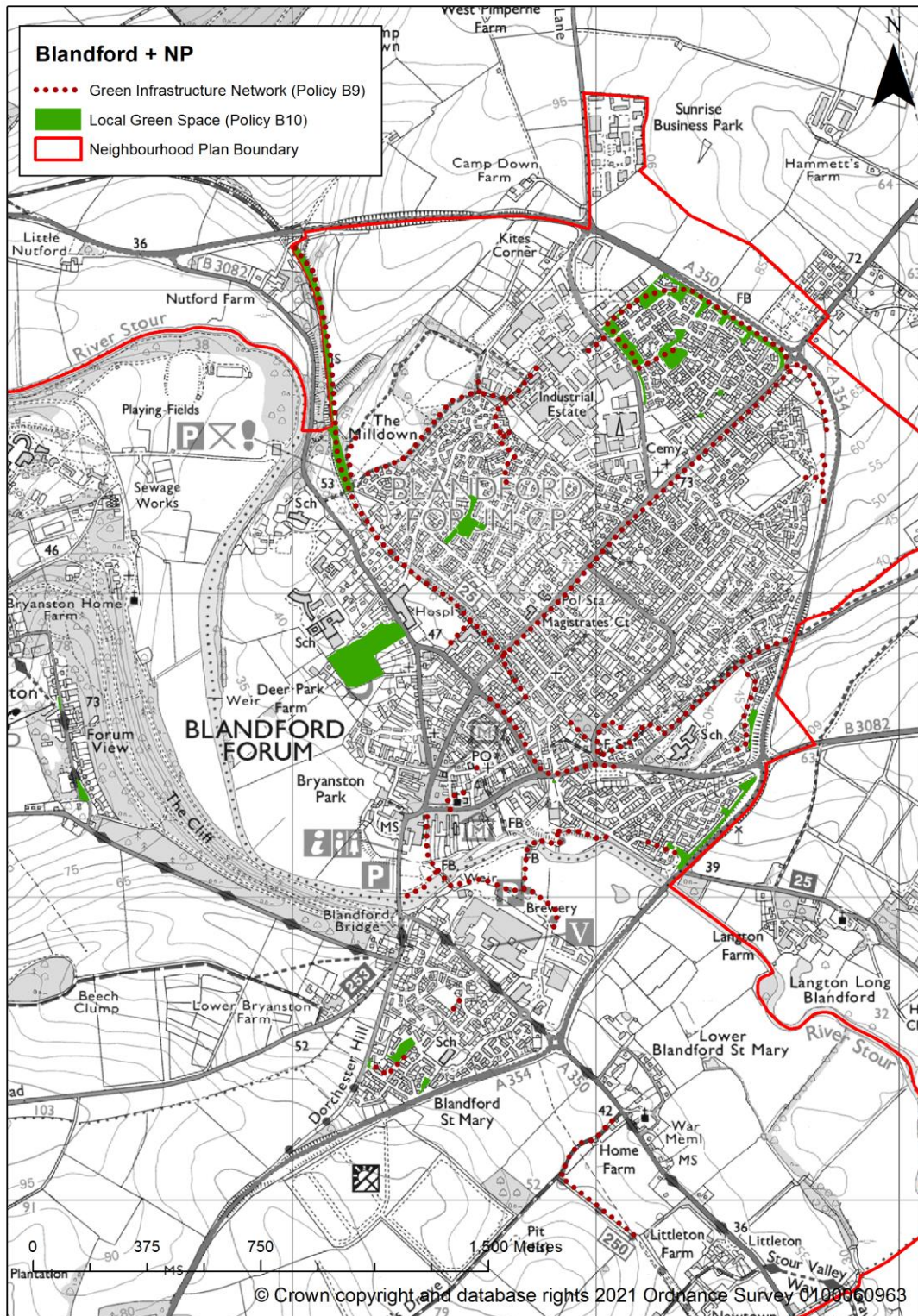
POLICIES MAP – INSET B



TOWN CENTRE POLICIES MAP



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE POLICIES MAP

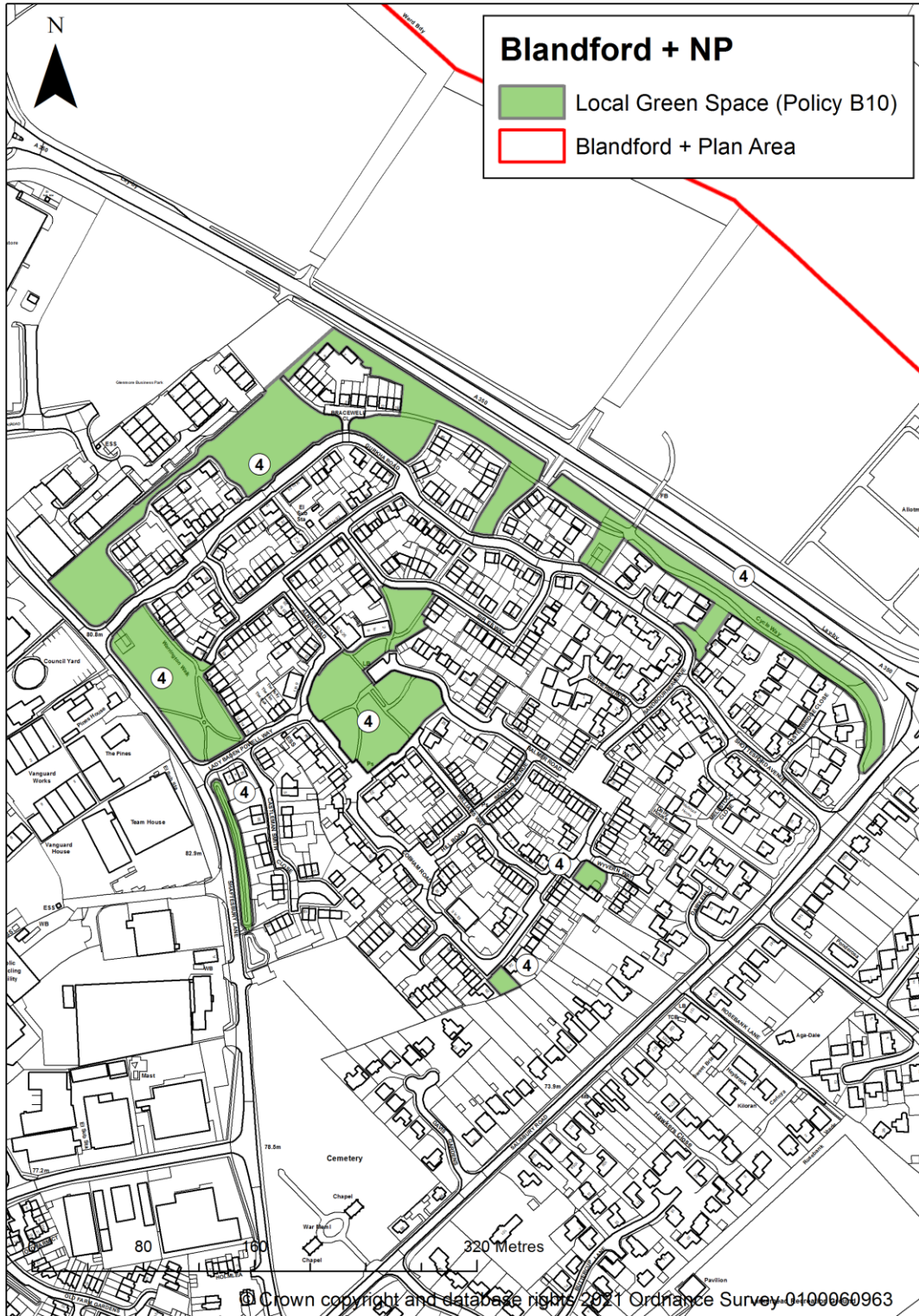


LOCAL GREEN SPACE INSET MAPS





















APPENDIX A: SCHEDULE OF EVIDENCE

The list below contains all those documents collected and reviewed in the process of preparing the Plan. Links to the evidence base are available on the Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan website.

Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan 2015 - 2031
Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan 2015 – 2031 Examiner's Report
Urban Vision Enterprise CIC Report (2017)
The SA/SEA Scoping Report (AECOM, 2018)
The Draft SA/SEA Report (AECOM, 2018)
Final SA/SEA Report (AECOM, Jan 2019)
Site Selection Background Report and Appendices (Updated Jan 2019)
Habitat Regulations Assessment (AECOM, Jan 2019)
DCC Blandford Pupil Place Planning Statement (updated June 2019)
North Dorset District Council Proposed Housing Sites Landscape Impact Assessment (2010)
Retail and Town Centre Report and Appendix A: Existing Uses (2018)
Blandford + Commercial Situation Report (2018)
Blandford + Health Background Note (2019)
Local Green Spaces working group report (2015)
Local Green Spaces Study (2018)
Green Infrastructure Network report (2016)
Draft Blandford Forum Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal (2018)
Heritage working group report (2015)
Design in Blandford Forum, Blandford St Mary and Bryanston (2015)
Design in Blandford Forum, Blandford St Mary and Bryanston Update (2018)
Community Facilities working group report (2015) and Update Report (2018)
The National Planning Policy Framework (2012)
The National Planning Policy Framework (2018)
The North Dorset Local Plan 2003-2011
The North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2011-2031)
The North Dorset Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2014)
The North Dorset Issues and Options Consultation Document (2018)
The North Dorset Issues and Options Sustainability Appraisal (2018)
The North Dorset Annual Monitoring Report including Self Build Registrations (2018)
The Cranborne Chase AONB Management Plan (2019 - 2024)
The Dorset AONB Management Plan (2019 - 2024)
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) (NDDC, 2010)
Responses to NDDC Call for Sites 2017
The Brownfield Register for North Dorset 2017
Eastern Dorset Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update and Review (G L Hearn, 2015)
Economic Growth Strategy for: North Dorset, West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland (2017)
Joint Retail and Commercial Leisure Study (Carter Jonas, 2018)
The Grimsey Review 2 Report (2018)
The Pedestrian Pound: The business case for better streets and spaces. (Living Streets, 2014)
Dorset County Council's Dorset Historic Towns Survey: Blandford Forum (2011)
The Insall Report (1970) "Blandford Forum; Conserve and Enhance"
DCC North and North East Dorset Transport Study (Buro Happold 2010)
Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019)
Strategic Landscape and Heritage Study (North Dorset Area) (2019)

