8 Conclusions

8.1 This chapter concludes the assessment with a combined summary of the environmental and infrastructure capacity of each parcel of land identified as having potential for residential development. It also sets out the nature of further studies required to identify appropriate mitigation, to enable sites within those areas to be brought forward as options to meet Purbeck's housing need.

Summary of constraints

8.2 The assessment of environmental constraints (**Chapters 3-5**) enabled the most highly sensitive areas of the District to be identified and excluded from areas considered for potential residential development. More than half of the District was excluded on this basis. The remaining areas were found to be moderately sensitive (in environmental terms) to varying degrees, depending on how many types of moderately sensitive assets are present at each location, with the exception of one small area of low sensitivity. The low and moderately sensitive areas of the District were then grouped into parcels to enable more detailed analysis to take place.

8.3 Moderately sensitive environmental areas are those that might be able to accommodate residential development in some locations, provided that appropriate mitigation is in place. Some of these areas of the District also have assets that have been classed as lower sensitivity, which means that although the asset itself does not pose a firm constraint to residential development, mitigation is still likely to be required.

8.4 The infrastructure and services constraints have been assessed by identifying the proximity of existing services and the type of upgrades that would be required to support residential development at various scales. All of the potential capacity issues can be overcome, but the cost of doing so would make some developments unviable and the provision of new infrastructure may itself be limited by environmental / physical constraints.

8.5 The scale and nature of environmental effects at any low or moderately sensitive location in the District and the cost of infrastructure / service provision would need to be assessed on a site-specific basis and mitigation developed accordingly, however this study indicates the *types* of mitigation that would be needed to enable residential development to proceed. **Figures 8.1-8.11** show the overall environmental sensitivity of each parcel and **Table 8.1** provides a summary of the type of environmental and infrastructure / services constraint for each parcel. The type of mitigation associated with each constraint is then discussed below.

Figure 8.1 Environmental sensitivity of Parcel 1

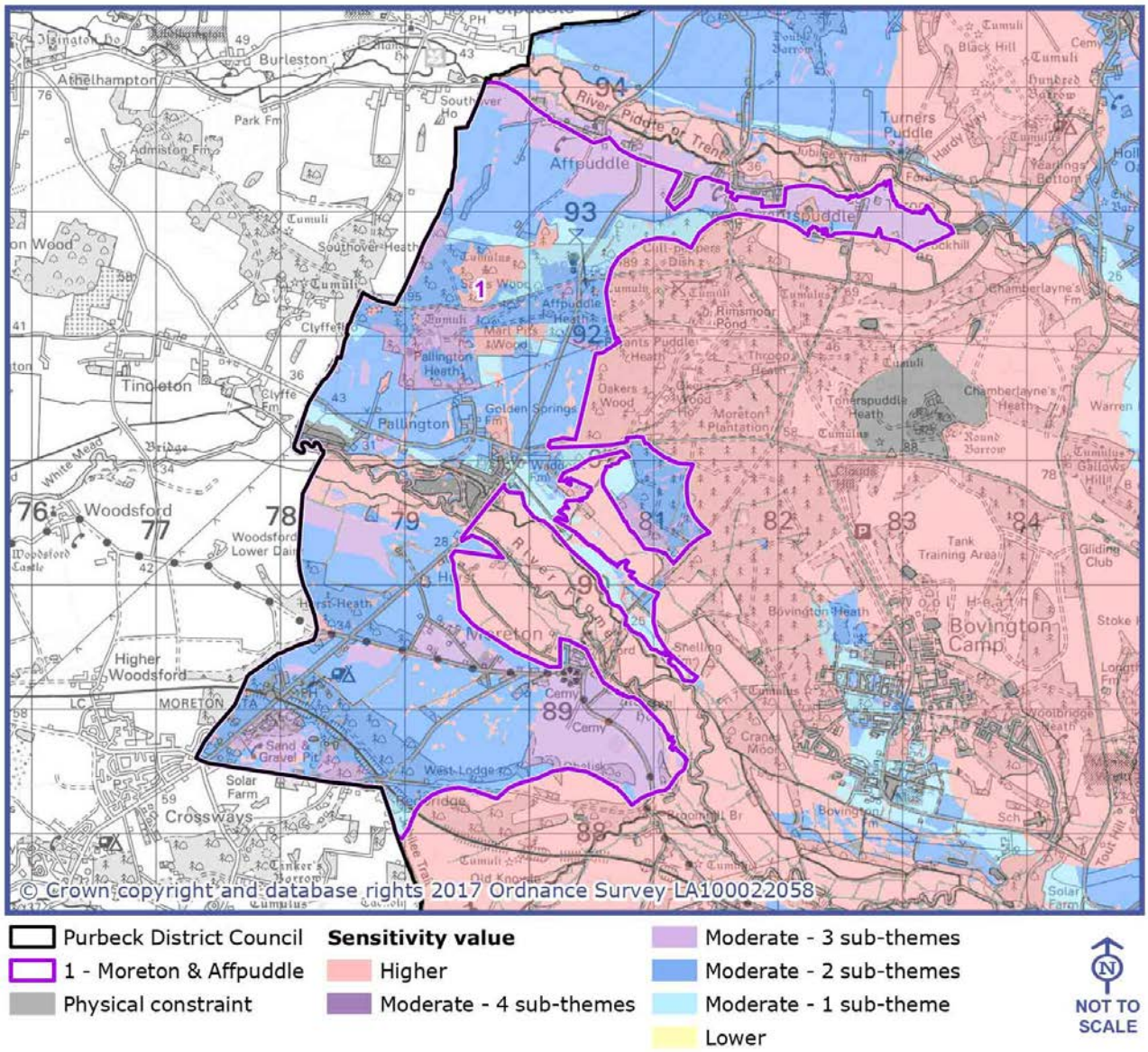

Figure 8.2 Environmental sensitivity of Parcel 2

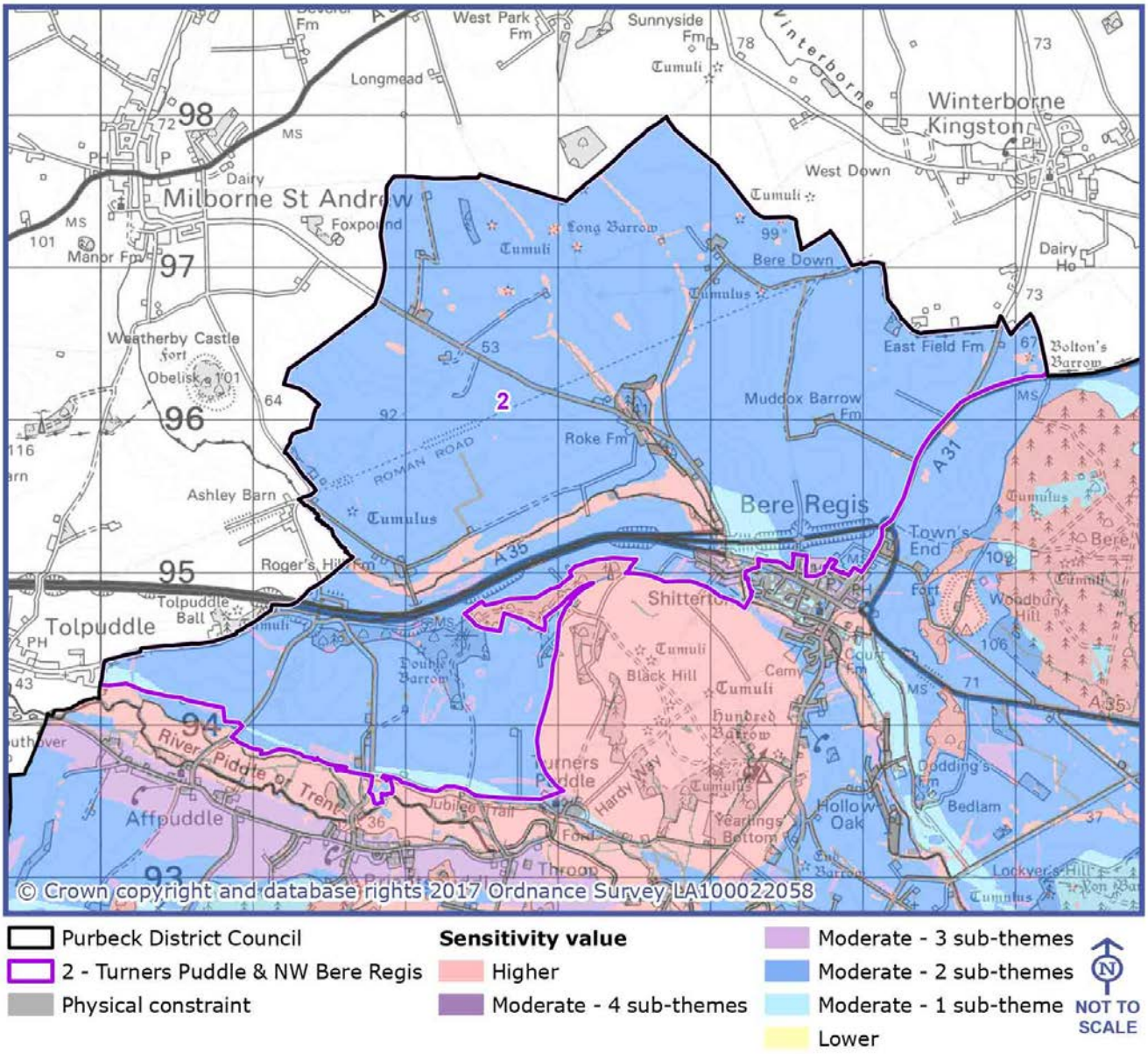

Figure 8.3 Environmental sensitivity of Parcel 3

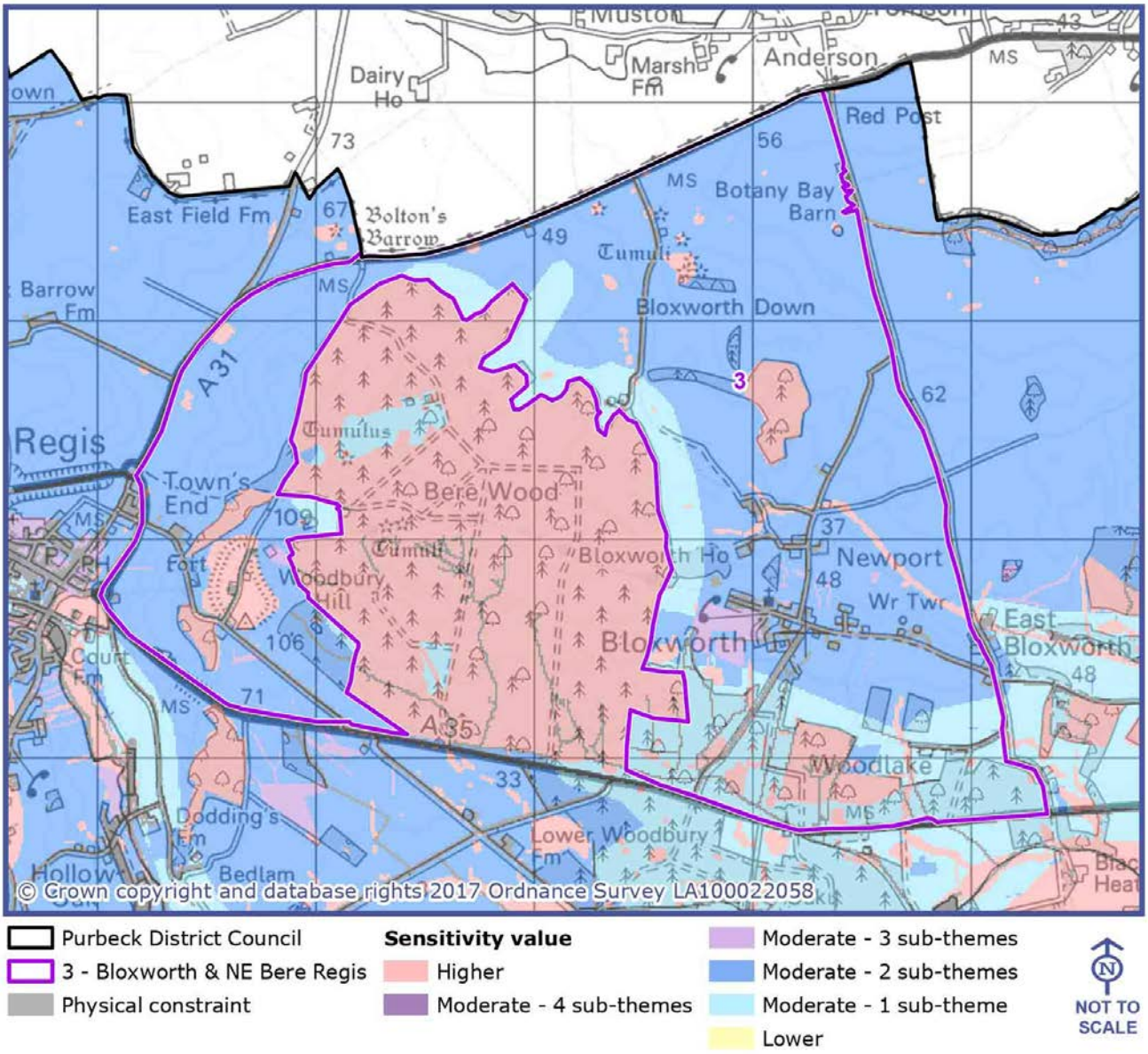

Figure 8.4 Environmental sensitivity of Parcel 4

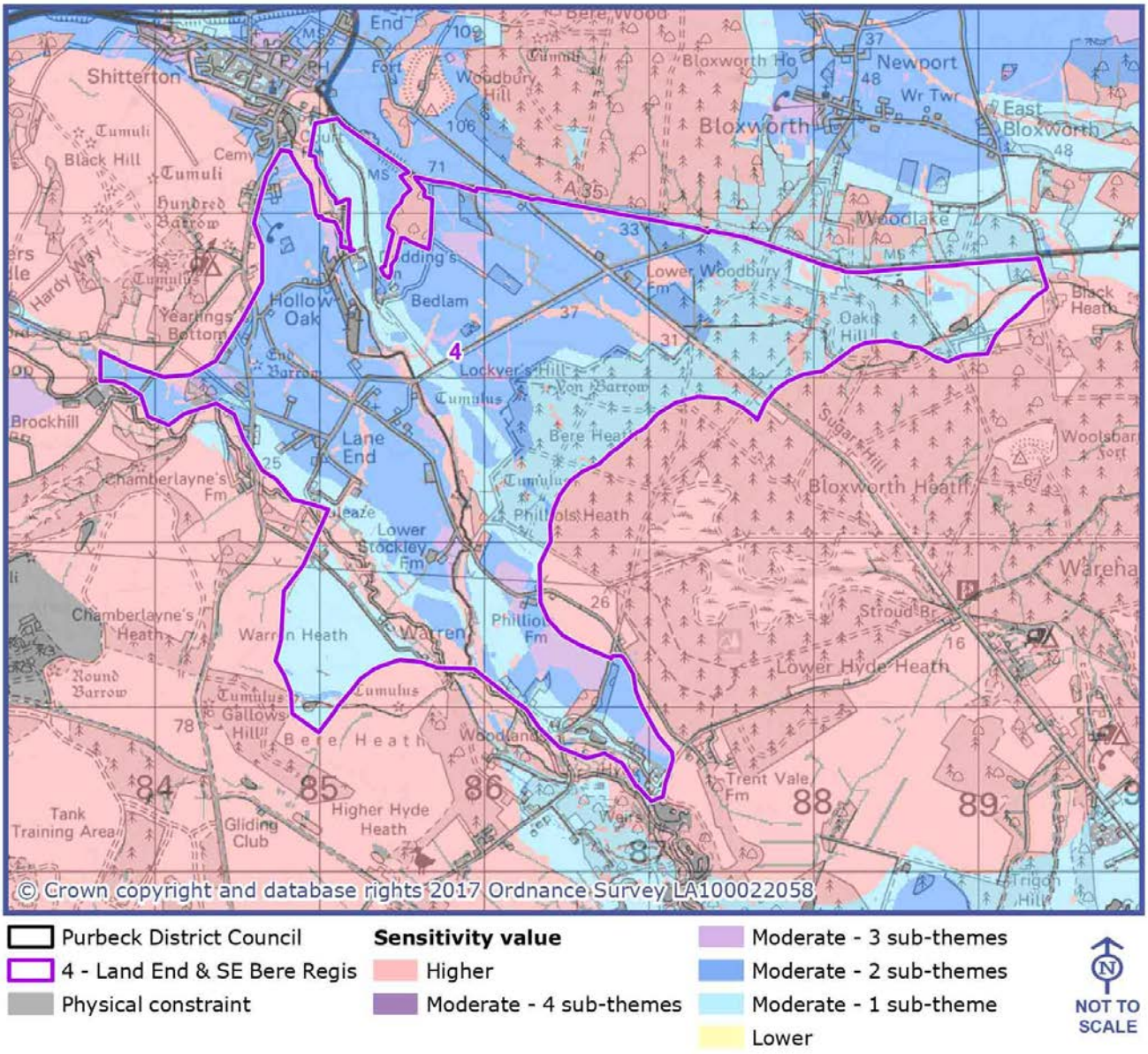

Figure 8.5 Environmental sensitivity of Parcel 5

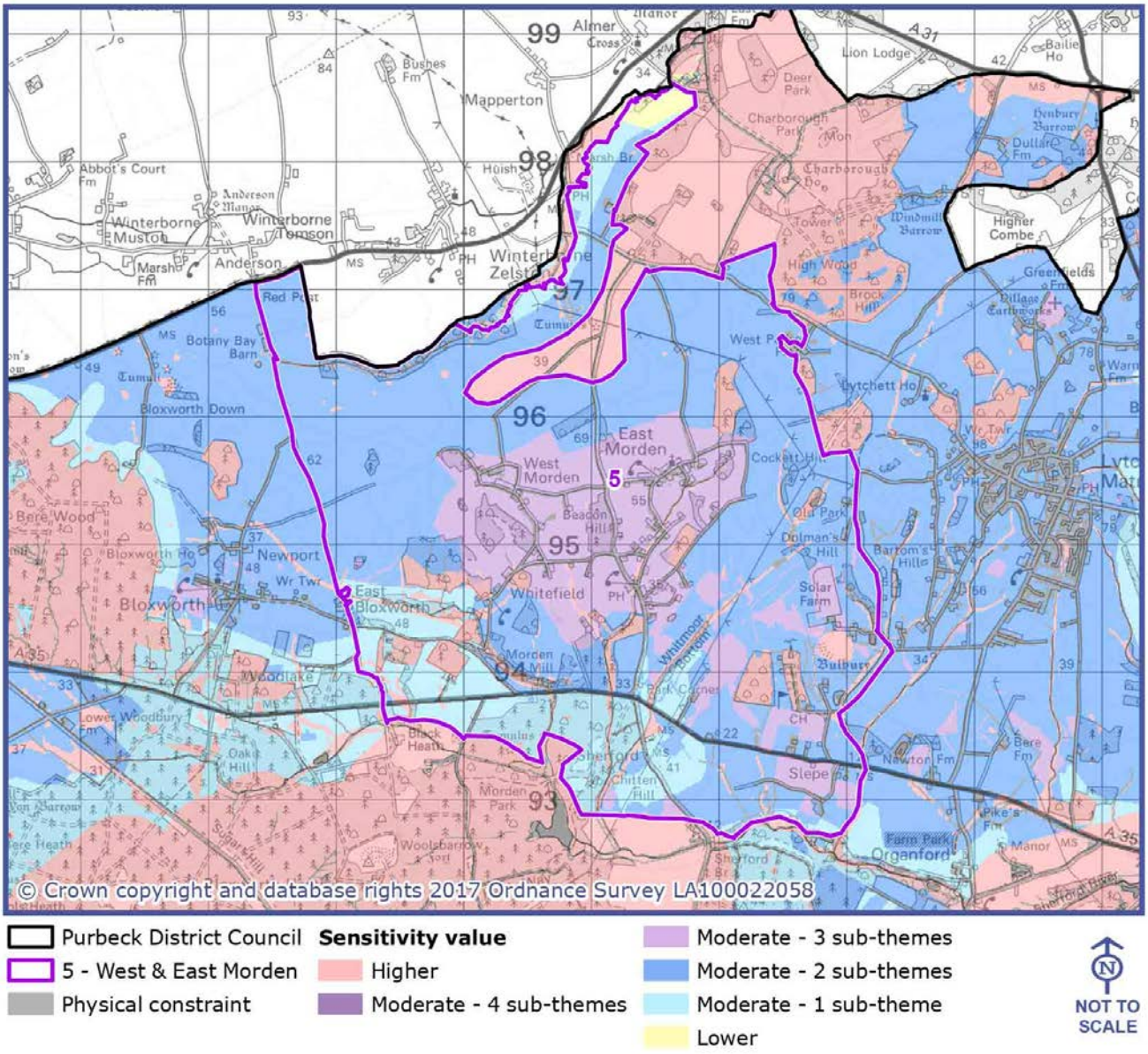

Figure 8.6 Environmental sensitivity of Parcel 6

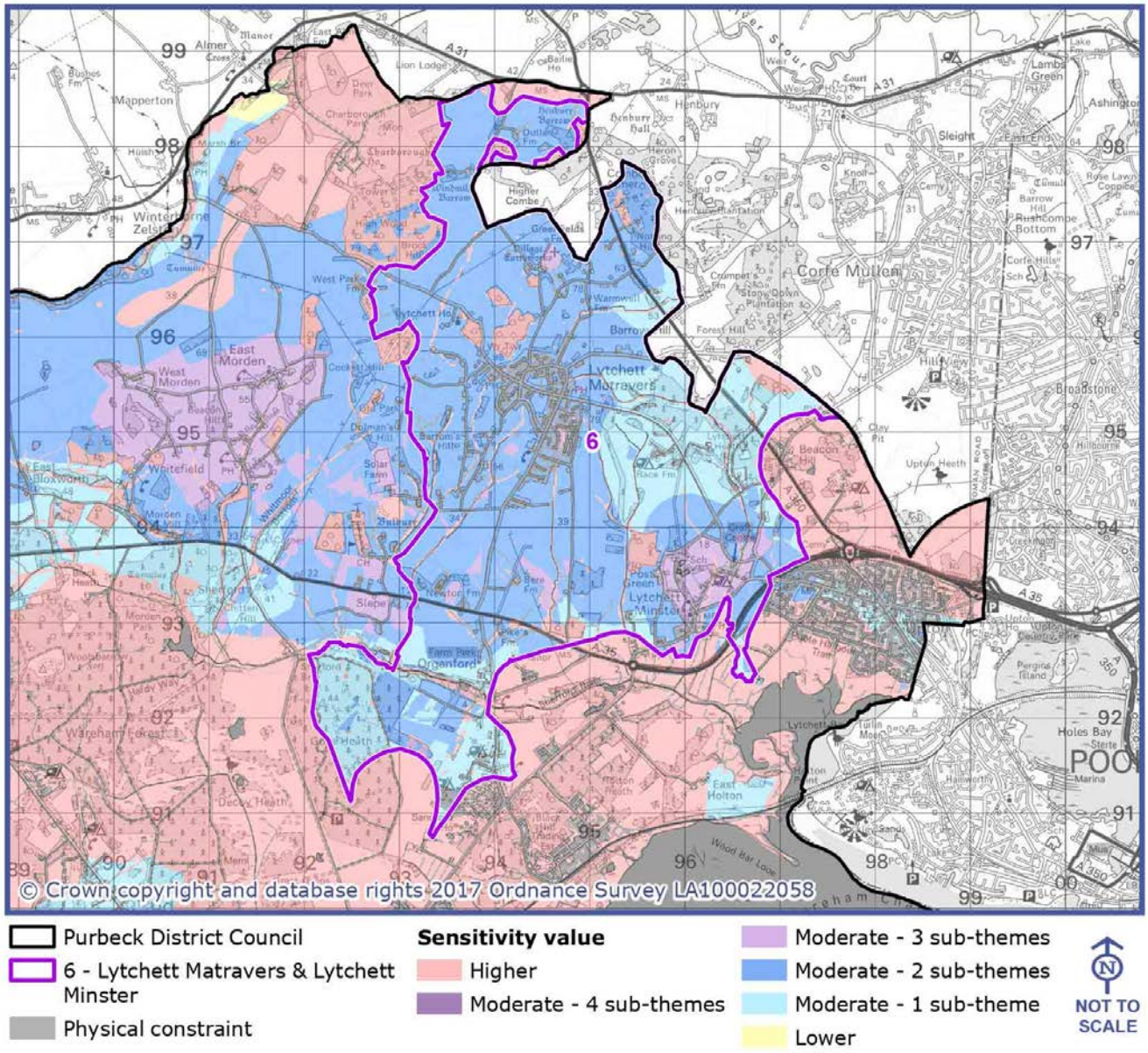

Figure 8.7 Environmental sensitivity of Parcel 7

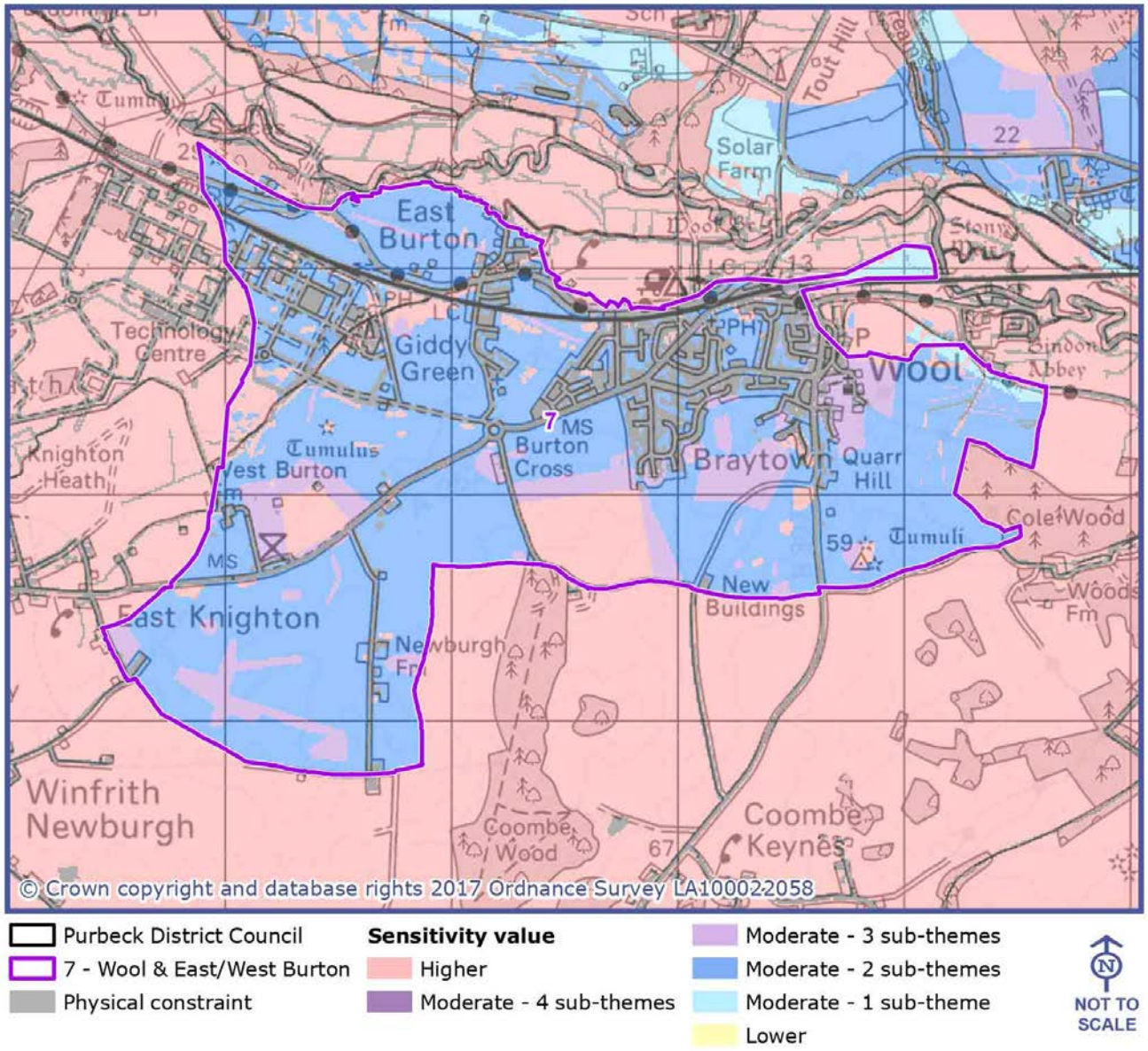

Figure 8.8 Environmental sensitivity of Parcel 8

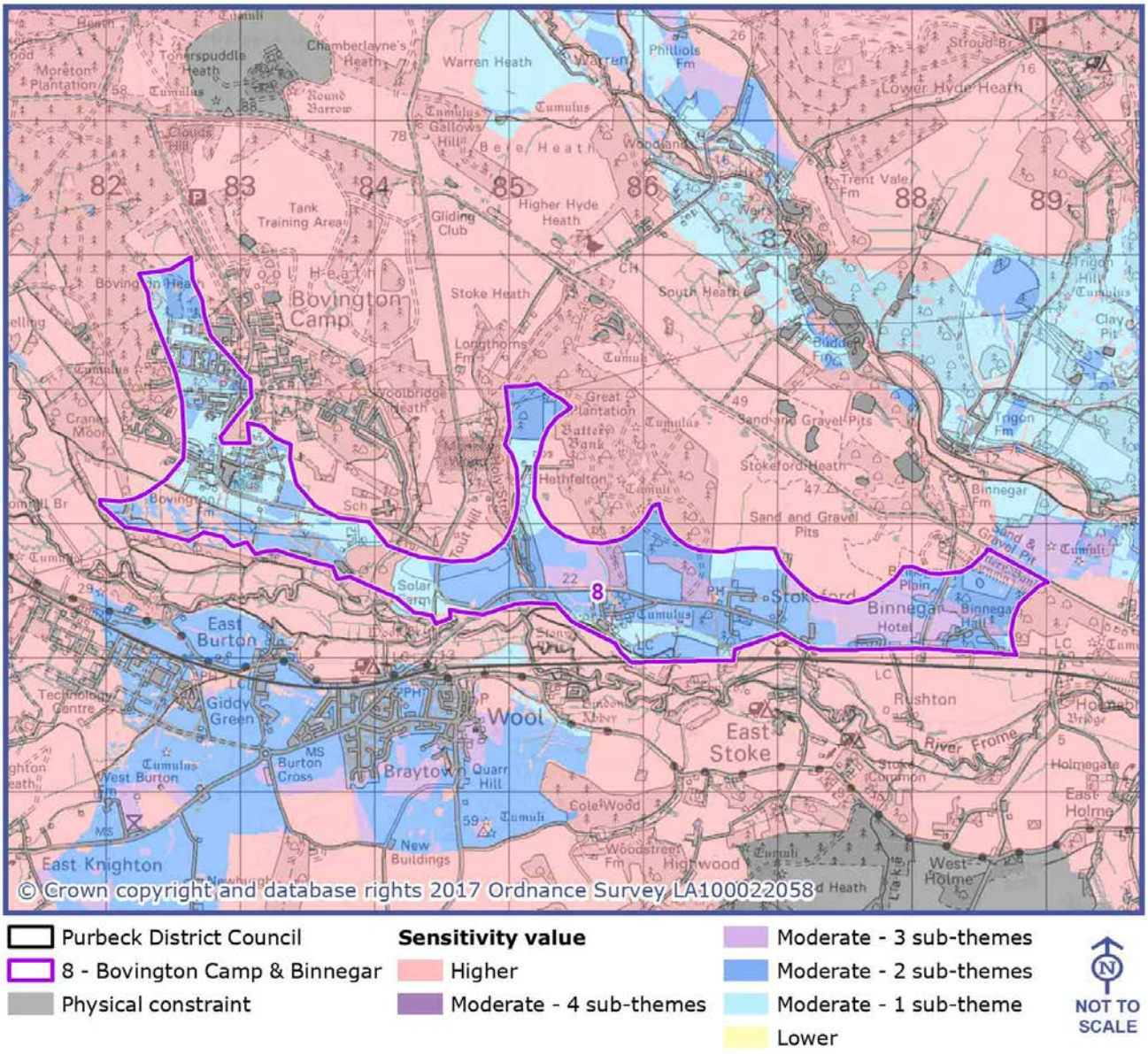

Figure 8.9 Environmental sensitivity of Parcel 9

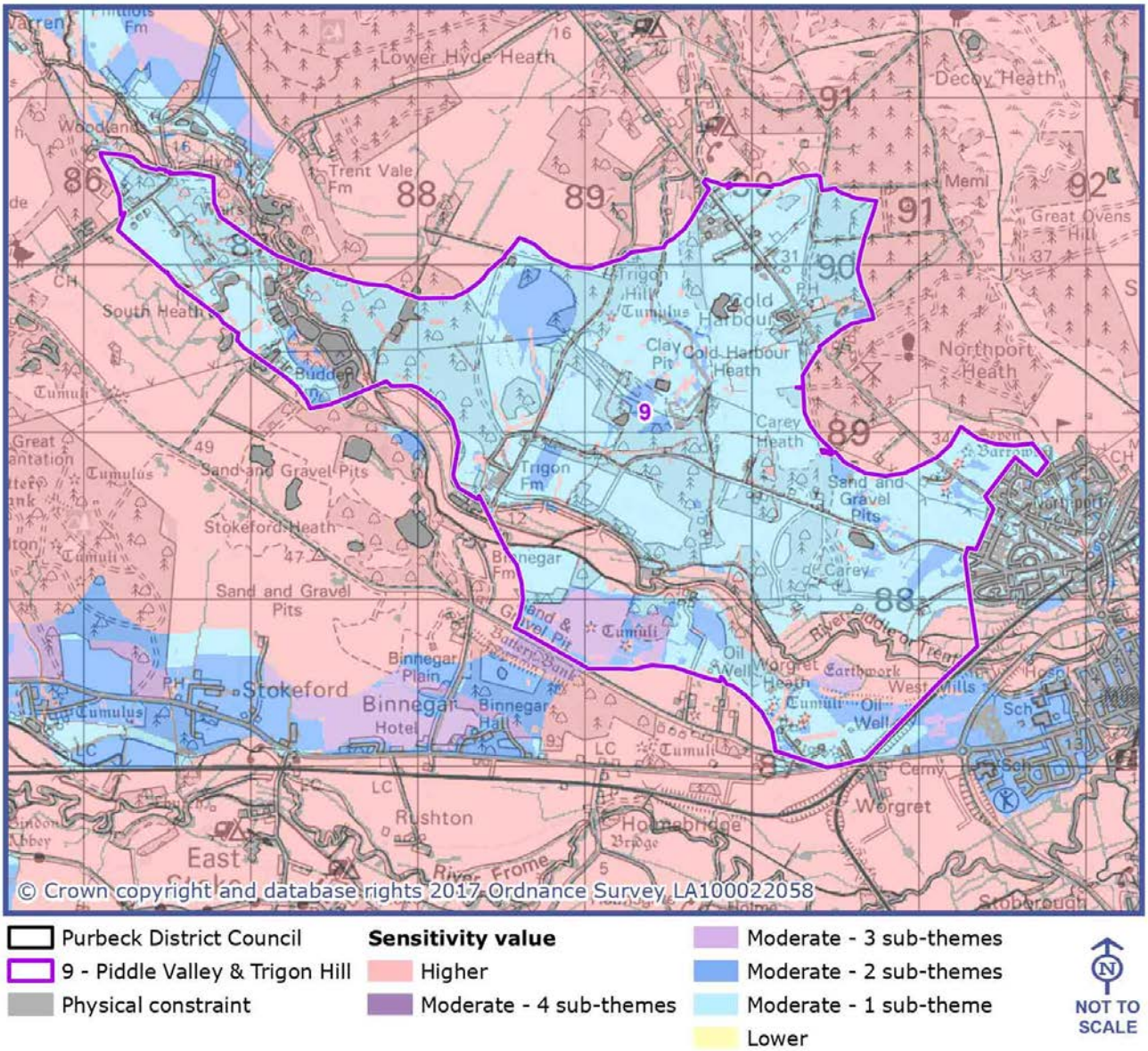

Figure 8.10 Environmental sensitivity of Parcel 10

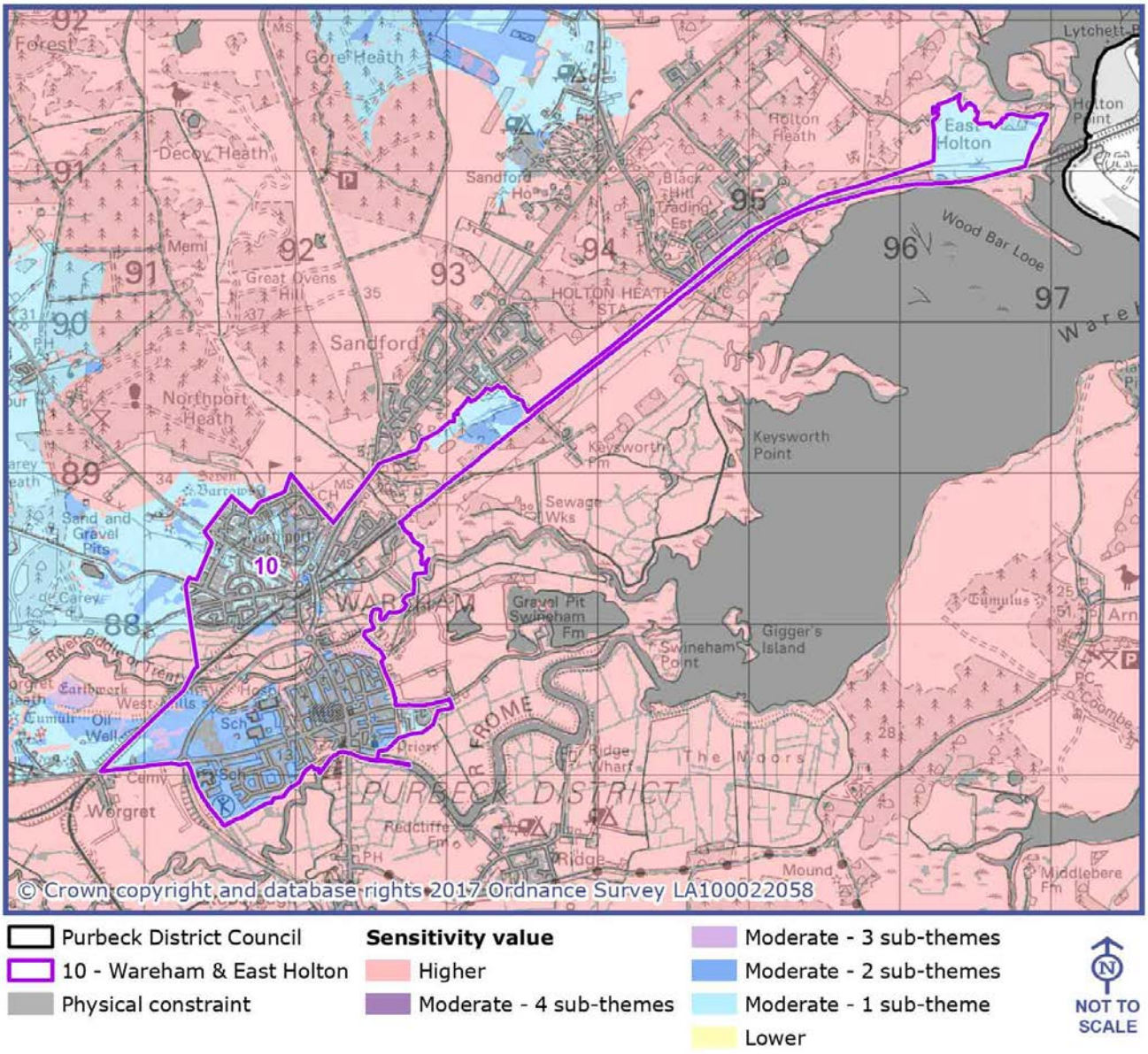

Figure 8.11 Environmental sensitivity of Parcel 11

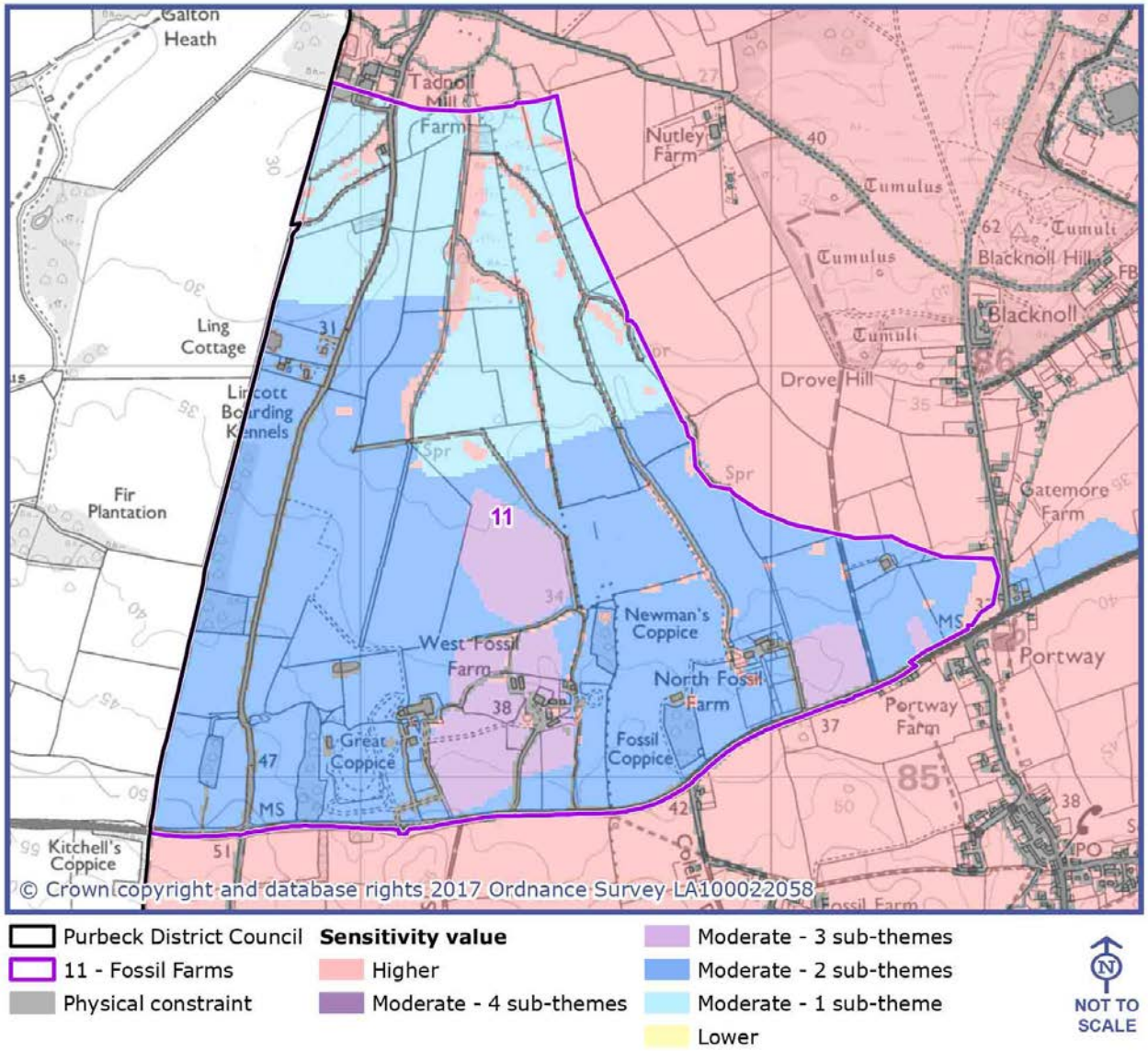

Table 8.1 Summary of environmental and infrastructure constraints requiring mitigation, for each parcel*

Parcel	Geology, water & wildlife			Productive land				Landscape, greenspace & historic environment						Infrastructure & services		
	Dorset Heaths 5km buffer / SSSI IRZ	LNR or SNCI	Priority habitat	ALC grade 3	ALC grade 4-5 (lower sensitivity)	National Forest Inventory (lower sensitivity)	Allotments (lower sensitivity)	Village greens (high sensitivity – protect from development)	Open country & common land	Parks & garden, open space or amenity open space	SANG	Conservation Area	Other HER	Education	Transport	Health
1) Moreton & Affpuddle	●●	●	●●	●	●	●●			●	●	●	●	●●	●	●	
2) Turners Puddle & NW Bere Regis	●●	●	●	●●	●	●	●					●	●	●	●●	
3) Bloxworth & NE Bere Regis	●●	●●	●	●●	●	●	●	●					●	●	●●	
4) Lane End & SE Bere Regis	●●	●	●	●●	●●	●●	●					●	●	●	●●	
5) West Morden & East Morden	●●	●	●	●●	●	●●	●	●			●	●●	●	●	●●	●●
6) Lytchett Matravers & Lytchett Minster	●●	●	●	●●	●	●●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●●	
7) Wool & East/West Burton	●●		●	●●	●	●	●	●				●	●●	●	●	
8) Bovington Camp & Binnegar	●●	●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●	●	●	●			●●	●	●	
9) Piddle Valley & Trigon Hill	●●	●	●●		●●	●●	●		●		●		●●	●	●●	●
10) Wareham & East Holton	●●	●	●	●	●●	●	●		●	●		●	●●	●	●	
11) Fossil Farms	●●		●	●●	●	●							●	●	●●	

** A single ● indicates that the constraint is present within the parcel. A double ●● indicates that the constraint covers a large proportion of the parcel*

Potential housing supply

8.6 As presented in **Chapter 7** (**Table 7.13**), proximity to existing infrastructure and services is likely to limit the most sustainable scale of development within each parcel.

8.7 The assessment has identified locations within parcels close to Wareham, Wool, Crossways and Bovington Camp have the potential to sustain the highest scales of development, while other locations do not have any significant sustainability issues at 50 dwellings, but do at 250 dwellings or higher.

8.8 These suggest that in the region of 550 to 4,350 dwellings could be accommodated within the District, subject to further site-level assessment. The next steps required to undertake more detailed assessment at the site level are identified below.

Next steps: identifying potential development sites

8.9 As the next key step, it is recommended that Purbeck District Council should identify the areas of land that are available for development (e.g. from the Local Plan consultation process or by approaching land owners to identify sites not put forward for consideration through the Local Plan process) within the least constrained areas of the District. A review of these sites can then be undertaken, taking account of site-level environmental and infrastructure constraints to test out the suitability of these potential areas to accommodate development and identify what potential mitigation may be required to minimise any potential impacts. Should the District decide to allocate land for development, any such mitigation can then be embedded in policy guidance or concept masterplans that are prepared as part of the Local Plan process.

8.10 **Chapter 7** has identified the areas of each assessed 'parcel' that would be most appropriate for development. In all cases, these are the locations within each parcel that are closest to the largest nearby settlements.

Next steps: identifying appropriate mitigation

8.11 Although this study identifies areas that may be suitable for residential development, each potential site will need to be considered in detail. It may not be possible to mitigate the impacts on some environmental assets or services, i.e. if the impact is too great and mitigation is not physically possible, or the costs of doing so are too high.

8.12 Location-specific impacts will therefore need to be identified and mitigation developed in conjunction with relevant stakeholders. The approach to mitigating impacts on each type of asset is considered in **Table 8.2**.

Table 8.2 Identifying mitigation for impacts on each type of asset

Asset or constraint	Type of mitigation that may be required	How detailed mitigation can be identified
Dorset Heaths 5km buffer or SSSI impact risk zone	SANGs could be created to provide alternatives to the Dorset Heaths for recreation. Additional measures could include funding for improvements to access, monitoring at the sites themselves and considering the opportunities to form coherent and resilient ecological network between sites[140]. Mitigation for impacts to the SSSIs will depend on the nature of the SSSIs. Mitigation for residential development near to the River Frome SSSI, for example, could include measures to improve sewage infrastructure and pollution control measures during construction.	An ecologist would need to undertake a site survey and provide detailed mitigation for any site being considered for housing within these zones. Mitigation for potential impacts on the Dorset Heaths sites or SSSIs would need to be agreed in consultation with Natural England (the statutory consultee). Dorset Wildlife Trust and the RSPB could also be consulted in relation to Dorset Heaths – both have raised objections to housing sites considered by Purbeck District Council due to concerns over the effectiveness of SANG provision.
LNR or SNCI	Mitigation for impacts to LNRs or SNCIs will depend on the nature of the wildlife sites. Partial or complete loss of this type of site would require mitigation for the specific types of habitats or species affected, for example compensatory habitat provision. This could be difficult to achieve, depending on the scale of the impact and habitats / species involved.	An ecologist would need to undertake a site survey and provide detailed mitigation for any site being considered for housing that would affect these sites. Dorset Wildlife Trust and Purbeck District Council ecologists would need to be consulted over any potential mitigation. Natural England may also want to provide comment.
Priority habitat	Mitigation for impacts to priority habitat will depend on the habitat affected. It may be possible to compensate for the loss of priority habitat elsewhere, although this will be harder for habitats that are slow- or difficult to establish.	An ecologist would need to undertake a site survey and provide detailed mitigation for any sites being considered for housing with priority habitats.

[140] as suggested in 'Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network' 2010.

Asset or constraint	Type of mitigation that may be required	How detailed mitigation can be identified
ALC grade 3, ALC grade 4-5 (lower sensitivity), or National Forest Inventory (lower sensitivity)	Although it would be difficult to replace or mitigate lost productive land, it may be possible to compensate for economic impacts and improve the productivity of other areas. More detailed ALC assessments may be needed to identify which Grade 3 land is 'best and most versatile' i.e. 3a so that this can be avoided. Loss of higher grade agricultural land would only be in line with the NPPF, if alternative lower grade agricultural land was not available.	A specialist consultant would be needed to assess the value of productive land and ensure that loss of the highest value land (e.g. ALC Grade 3a) is avoided where possible.
Allotments (lower sensitivity), Open country & common land, Parks & garden, open space or amenity open space, or SANG	All of these types of assets contribute to the network of greenspace in the District. Loss of specific features should therefore be considered with reference to overall greenspace provision and the potential wider recreational/ecological effects on any connected greenspaces. Some types of assets may be inherently difficult to replace or mitigate, for example open country and common land. Where replacement assets are appropriate, care would need to be taken to ensure that the function of the feature is maintained and that it is accessible to those who use it.	The assessment of impacts and the development of mitigation should involve the input of landscape consultants, ecologists, stakeholders and planners, as appropriate to the type of asset.
Conservation Area or Other HER	Heritage assets cannot be replaced, although development may be appropriate in proximity to them if undertaken sensitively. Mitigation could include minimising excavation, a programme of archaeological / heritage recording, and/or design that minimises visual impacts and any impacts to the setting of historic assets.	Site-specific appraisal would need to be undertaken by a heritage specialist and mitigation agreed in consultation with Purbeck District Council officers or Historic England (depending on the asset).
Education, Transport, or Health	The capacity of infrastructure and services can be improved by providing new infrastructure / services as part of a new development and/or providing a financial contribution.	The needs of specific sites would need to be identified through consultation with providers and/or specific assessments (e.g. Transport Assessment). Mitigation would be agreed in consultation with service providers and/or the local planning authorities (e.g. Purbeck District Council as part of developer contribution negotiations).

8.13 **Table 8.2** only considers constraints that were identified through this study as having the possibility of being mitigated. Any of these constraints could prevent residential development from occurring, if mitigation cannot be achieved at a specific site.

8.14 There are also a number of types of constraints that it is not possible to pick up at the strategic level of this study and which would need to be identified at the site level. For example: impacts on protected species, site-level flood risk assessment, contaminated land, visual impacts, or the setting of heritage assets. Mitigation may also be required for these.

Conclusion

8.15 This study has brought together information from a number of sources and mapped the various environmental constraints to development that exist in the District. Purbeck District is heavily constrained by national and international nature conservation designations and its high quality landscape character; the AONB in particular. Although it is not possible as part of this study to identify areas of the District that are definitively suitable for residential development, it has been possible to identify areas that are likely to be too constrained to enable development, and the type of mitigation that may be required to enable residential development elsewhere.

8.16 As outlined in Chapter 2, the purpose of this environmental capacity study is not to determine the tipping point at which targets, standards and policy intent are likely to be breached. It is to provide in an as objective way as possible, a description and evaluation of the effects of further development in order to inform those with an interest and, ultimately, those who have to make decisions on the potential implications of the choices to be made.

8.17 The study has shown over half of the District is constrained by highly sensitive environmental assets and would not be suitable for residential development. All of the remaining areas have a high proportion of their overall area constrained by at least three moderately sensitive environmental assets or infrastructure / services constraints. It is not possible to rank these parcels further without more detailed site-level analysis, as each constraint would need to be carefully considered in the context of relevant site level mitigation.

8.18 Although this study has considered cumulative impacts at the parcel level, it is not possible as part of this strategic assessment to consider the cumulative impacts of the collective development of a number of sites, particularly at the District scale. These issues would need to be considered as part of the next stage of assessment, once decisions had been taken about which sites may be suitable for allocation. The potential suitability of specific sites will ultimately come down to levels of ‘acceptability’ (as discussed in Chapter 2), which in turn will be influenced by the mitigation measures proposed and how well they can be implemented.

8.19 The assessment of proximity to infrastructure and services has concluded that areas within the assessed parcels that are close to existing settlements are potentially the most sustainable locations for development. Taking into consideration the likely scale of development that could be sustained at those locations, the District may be able to accommodate c. 550 to 4,350 dwellings, subject to further site-level assessment.

8.20 As the next key step, it is recommended that Purbeck District Council should identify the areas of land that are available for development (e.g. from the Local Plan consultation process or by approaching land owners to identify sites not put forward for consideration through the Local Plan process) within the least constrained areas of the District. A review of these sites can then be undertaken, taking account of site-level environmental and infrastructure constraints to test out the suitability of these potential areas to accommodate development and identify what potential mitigation may be required to mitigate any potential impacts. Should the District decide to allocate land for development, any such mitigation can then be embedded in policy guidance or masterplans that are prepared as part of the Local Plan process.