Habitats Regulations Assessment

Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan

September 2024

Contents

1 Introduction

1.0.1 This document provides a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

1.0.2 The main purpose of the HRA process is to prevent a plan or project from adversely affecting the integrity of a European Site, which are areas of exceptional importance for rare, endangered or vulnerable natural habitats or species. Extensive areas of Dorset and surrounding areas are occupied by European sites, reflecting the importance of the region for wildlife and habitats.

1.0.3 The HRA process involves several distinct stages of assessment which must be undertaken in order to meet the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017).

1.0.4 The first of these stages is the HRA screening stage. The main purpose of the HRA screening is to assess whether a plan is likely to have a significant negative effect on a European Site, and hence whether the subsequent steps of the HRA process are required.

1.0.5 If the HRA screening concludes that there would be no likely significant effect on a European Site, then the plan may proceed without further assessment.

1.0.6 However, if it is found that the plan would have a likely significant effect on a European Site then further assessment is required through the subsequent stages of the HRA process, to ensure that the plan does not result in adverse effects upon the integrity of a European site.

1.0.7 The HRA screening report firstly explains the legal basis for HRA (Chapter 2) and explains the HRA process (Chapter 3), before setting out the scope of the Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan (Chapter 4). Following this, consideration is given to whether the Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a significant effect upon a European site in the HRA screening exercise (Chapter 5) and whether it will have an adverse effect upon the integrity of a European Site (Chapter 6).

2 Legislative background to Habitats Regulations Assessment

2.0.1 EU Directive (92/43/EEC) on the Conservation of Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora ('the Habitats Directive') led to the establishment of a network of 'European sites', collectively known as Natura 2000, which are areas of exceptional importance with respect to rare, endangered or vulnerable natural habitats or species. European Sites consist of the following ecological designations:

- Special Protection Areas (SPAs): Classified under the EU Directive (79/409/EEC) on the Conservation of Wild Birds ('the Birds Directive'), with the objective of protecting and managing areas which are important for rare and vulnerable birds as they are important grounds for breeding, feeding, wintering or migration; and
- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs): Classified under the Habitats Directive, these areas provide rare and vulnerable animals, plants and habitats with increased protection and management.

2.0.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 187) states that the following sites should be afforded the same protection as European Sites:

- Potential Special Protection Areas (pSPA): Potential Special Protection Areas, are sites on which the Government has initiated public consultation on the scientific case for designation as a Special Protection Area;
- Possible Special Areas of Conservation (pSAC): Possible Special Areas of Conservation are sites on which Government has initiated public consultation on the scientific case for designation as a candidate Special Area of Conservation;
- Ramsar sites (and listed/proposed Ramsar sites): Wetlands of international importance designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention, and proposed Ramsar sites are sites on which Government has initiated public consultation on the scientific case for a Ramsar site; and
- Sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on European sites and Ramsar sites: Sites which are included as compensation in schemes to mitigate adverse impacts upon European and Ramsar sites.

2.0.3 The requirement to undertake an assessment of plans or projects that are likely to have an effect upon European sites is given in Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

2.0.4 The Habitats Directive is transposed into UK law through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ('Habitats Regulations'). Regulation 63 of the Habitats Regulations implements Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive and requires the competent authority to complete an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan or project for the European site in view of the site's conservation objectives before deciding to undertake a plan or project which is likely to have a significant effect on a European site. Regulation 105 applies to land use plans, with Regulation 106 pertaining to Neighbourhood Development Plans specifically.

2.0.5 The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 require submitted neighbourhood plans to be accompanied by a statement explaining how the proposed neighbourhood plan meets a series of 'basic conditions', which are set out in Schedule 4B of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. These basic conditions include a requirement to demonstrate how the plan is compatible with EU obligations, which includes the need to undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment to satisfy the Habitats Directive. Furthermore, Schedule 2 of these regulations demands that the making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Habitats Regulations, which sets out the need to assess the implications of land use plans upon European Sites.

3 The Habitats Regulations Assessment Process

3.0.1 The UK Government's Planning Practice Guidance on Appropriate Assessment explains that there are several distinct stages of assessment which must be undertaken in order to achieve compliance with the Habitats Regulations.

3.1. TASK 1: HRA SCREENING

3.1.1 The HRA screening stage involves consideration of whether the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site, either alone and in combination with other plans or projects.

3.1.2 A 'likely significant effect' may be defined as a 'possible significant effect; one whose occurrence cannot be excluded on the basis of objective information'.

3.1.3 The HRA screening stage firstly involves gathering information on the European sites that may be affected, through geographical proximity or a potential impact pathway which links the plan to an effect on a European Site.

3.1.4 Following this, the HRA considers whether the plan is likely to result in a significant effect upon these European sites, either alone or in combination with other projects and plans, through the test of likely significant effect.

3.1.5 Measures which have been specifically added to achieve the purpose of avoiding or reducing the harmful effects of a plan upon a European site, known as mitigation measures, should not be considered at the screening stage.

3.1.6 If the HRA screening concludes that there is no likely significant effect on a European site, then further assessment is deemed unnecessary.

3.1.7 However, if it is found that the plan would have a likely significant effect on a European site then the next stage of assessment, known as the Appropriate Assessment stage, is required.

3.2. TASK 2: APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

3.2.1 If a proposed plan or project is considered likely to have a significant effect on a European Site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, then an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site, in view of the site's conservation objectives, must be undertaken.

3.2.2 The scope and content of an appropriate assessment will depend on the nature, location, duration and scale of the proposed plan and the European sites which may be affected. However, the assessment needs to be proportionate and sufficient to support the task of determining whether the plan will adversely affect the integrity of a European site.

3.3. TASK 3: MITIGATION

3.3.1 The competent authority may agree to the plan or project only after having ruled out adverse effects on the integrity of the European site.

3.3.2 Where it cannot be concluded that there will be no adverse effects on a site's integrity, there is a need to consider potential mitigation.

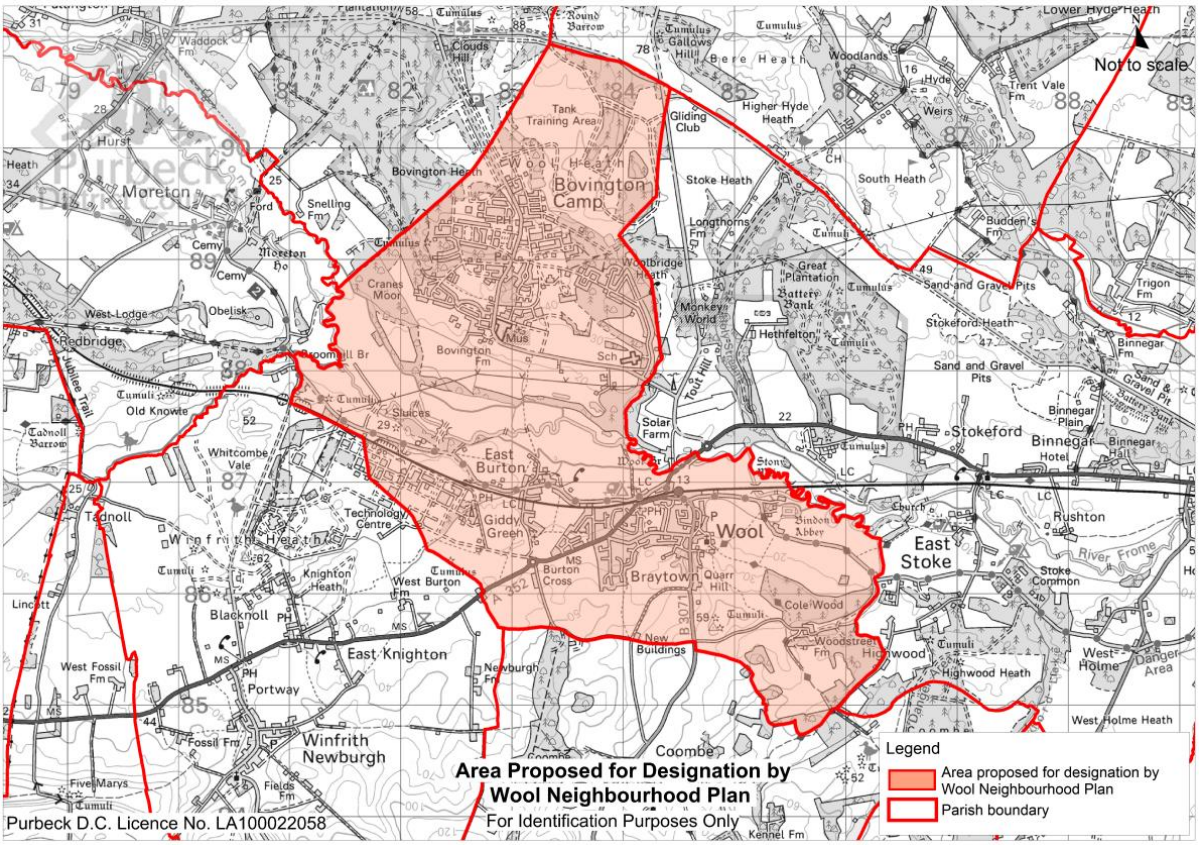
3.3.3 Mitigation measures are protective measures forming part of a project and are intended to avoid or reduce any direct adverse effects that may be caused by a plan or project, to ensure that it does not have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site.

3.3.4 Any measures used to inform the decision about the effects on the integrity need to be sufficiently secured and likely to work in practice.

4 The Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan

4.0.1 The Wool Neighbourhood Plan area is based on the boundary of the Wool parish and occupies an area of approximately 14.72 km^2 (1,472ha).

Figure 4.1: The Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan area



4.0.2 The Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan covers the period from 2024 to 2038, in line with adopted and emerging local plans.

4.0.3 The neighbourhood plan Vision is to ensure that the essential characteristics of Wool Parish which local people value and support, are retained and where possible enhanced, whilst services are improved with better connections between settlements, and local housing needs for all sections of the community are better met.

4.0.4 Based on the Vision, the following objectives are identified to help deliver it:

- Objective 1 – Through good design, new development should be sustainable, and should respect and enhance the existing character of Wool Parish.
- Objective 2 – Housing provision in Wool Parish should be tailored to meet the needs of residents.
- Objective 3 – Community infrastructure and services should be protected and improved.

- Objective 4 – Active travel and public transport connections between settlements in Wool Parish and with other key towns must be improved.
- Objective 5 – Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity must be protected and should be improved.

4.0.5 The Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan doesn't allocate any land for development.

4.0.6 However, the overarching local plan, which is the Purbeck Local Plan 2018-2034 identifies a housing requirement of around 470 dwellings and 65 extra care homes to be accommodated within Wool Parish on four allocated sites over the plan period (policy H5: Wool).

4.0.7 The Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan cannot take a contrary position to adopted strategic policies in the local plan, and instead provides evidence of local housing needs and how, logically, these should be met on local developments.

5 Habitats Regulations Assessment: Screening

5.0.1 The first stage of the HRA process is the screening stage, the purpose of which is to determine whether the plan is likely to result in a significant effect upon a European Site.

5.0.2 In order to determine whether the Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan is likely to result in a significant effect upon a European Site, it is first necessary to identify those European Sites which may be affected by the plan. This involves gathering information about the European Sites within the neighbourhood plan area and its vicinity.

5.0.3 The terrestrial European Sites within approximately 20km of Wool Parish are shown in Figure 5.1. Further details of these European Sites are presented in Appendix A. Please note that the marine European Sites are not included as there is not considered to be a viable pathway between the Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan and marine European Sites given the scope of the plan and distance from the sea.

Figure 5.1: European sites within 20km of Wool Parish

European Site	Designation	Approx. Distance/orientation from Neighbourhood Plan area (km)
Dorset Heaths	SAC, SPA, Ramsar	Within the NP area
Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs	SAC	3.8km to the south
Dorset Heaths (Purbeck & Wareham) & Studland Dunes	SAC	5.8km to the east
Poole Harbour	SPA, Ramsar	6.1km to the east
St Albans Head to Durleston Head	SAC	13.8km to the southeast
Cerne and Sydling Downs	SAC	18.3km to the northwest
Crookhill Brick Pit	SAC	18.5km to the southwest
Chesil Beach and the Fleet	SAC, SPA, Ramsar	18.8km to the southwest

5.0.4 Having identified the characteristics of the European sites within approximately 20km of the Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan boundary, it is now possible to identify those European Sites which may be linked to the plan through a known ‘pathway’.

5.0.5 A ‘pathway’ may be defined as the means by which a change in activity leads to an effect. In this instance, a pathway may be defined as the means by which a change in activity due to the Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan leads to an effect on a European Site.

5.0.6 At the initial stage of the screening, all of the potential pathways relevant to the Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan were identified by considering the potential threats, pressures and activities to the European Sites provided in the official citation.

Figure 5.2: The potential threats, pressures and activities to European sites within 20km of the Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan

Potential threat, pressure or activity	European Site
Water pollution	Poole Harbour SPA, Ramsar Chesil Beach and the Fleet SAC, SPA, Ramsar Dorset Heathlands Ramsar
Air pollution	Cerne & Sydling Downs SAC Dorset Heathlands SAC Dorset Heaths (Purbeck & Wareham) & Studland Dunes SAC
Public access, disturbance and other human intrusion	Dorset Heathlands SPA Poole Harbour SPA, Ramsar Chesil Beach and the Fleet SPA, Ramsar
Sport, leisure and recreational activities	Cerne & Sydling Downs SAC Chesil and the Fleet SAC Dorset Heaths SAC Dorset Heaths (Purbeck & Wareham) & Studland Dunes SAC Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC St Albans Head to Durleston Head SAC
Habitat Fragmentation	Dorset Heathlands SPA

5.0.7 Following the identification of all of the possible pathways, the screening then considered these possible pathways in more detail to determine whether or not they represent a credible or plausible pathway.

5.0.8 The following sections of this chapter explores each of the potential pathways which have been identified according to the threat, pressure or activity. Please note that the 'public access, disturbance and other human intrusion' and 'sport, leisure and recreational activities' chapters are combined in a single chapter titled 'disturbance and recreation' in this report, given the close connection and synergies between these issues.

5.1. WATER POLLUTION

POOLE HARBOUR SPA, RAMSAR

5.1.1 Poole Harbour is a large natural harbour comprising extensive tidal mudflats, seagrass beds and saltmarsh, together with reedbed, freshwater marsh and wet grassland habitats.

5.1.2 The Poole Harbour SPA designation recognises the international importance of Poole Harbour for bird species. The extensive intertidal mudflats provide feeding habitat for overwintering waterbirds, whilst the saltmarsh and reedbed habitats which fringe the landward side of the harbour provide roosting areas as well as feeding areas for birds.

5.1.3 The qualifying interest species for the SPA include overwintering populations of shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*, pied avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*, Icelandic-race black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa islandica* and an overwintering assemblage of waterbirds. Also included are the breeding populations of Mediterranean gull *Larus melanocephalus*, common tern *Sterna hirundo* and Sandwich tern *Sterna sandvicensis*, and Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola* and Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* which are on passage.

5.1.4 The Poole Harbour Ramsar designation recognises the international importance of Poole Harbour as a wetland, noting that Poole Harbour is the best and largest example of a natural bar-built estuary with lagoonal characteristics in Britain. The Ramsar designation further recognises the importance of the calcareous fens and peatland mire habitats which are of exceptional conservation importance.

5.1.5 In terms of species, the Ramsar designation also recognises the importance of the site for breeding wildfowl and overwintering bird species in addition to two species of nationally rare plant, one nationally rare alga, and at least three British Red data book invertebrate species.

5.1.6 The Poole Harbour SPA and Ramsar is in an 'unfavourable' condition due to poor water quality as a result of elevated concentrations of phosphorus and nitrogen.

5.1.7 Excessive levels of phosphorus and nitrogen in the water have caused a nutrifying effect, resulting in the rapid growth of algal mats on mudflats and shallow water in Poole Harbour through the process of eutrophication. These mats restrict the availability of invertebrates which provide food for wading birds, including those upon which the SPA is designated, resulting in severe declines in the population of some bird species.

5.1.8 Eutrophication also affects other important features within the harbour, causing the loss of saltmarsh and an absence of eelgrass over large areas of the harbour.

5.1.9 On 16th March 2022, Natural England informed Dorset Council that the Poole Harbour SPA and Ramsar was in unfavourable condition and advised the council to carefully consider the water quality impacts of additional nitrogen and phosphorus from development proposals in the Poole Harbour hydrological catchment. Natural England later rescinded the need to consider phosphorus as a nutrient of concern, in a letter dated 24th May 2024, and therefore Nitrogen is therefore the main nutrient causing eutrophication in Poole Harbour.

5.1.10 Nutrient enrichment in Poole Harbour is believed to arise from a number of sources. The majority (~85%) of nitrogen entering Poole Harbour from land sources is generated by agriculture within the Poole Harbour catchment. However, a proportion (~15%) of the nitrogen entering Poole Harbour is from human sewage discharged within the Poole Harbour catchment, since wastewater treatment works (WWTW) remove only part of the nutrient from human waste.

5.1.11 Natural England advised that development which results in an increase in overnight accommodation, the intensification of agricultural practices or introduces industrial processes which discharge nutrients will have a likely significant effect upon the Poole Harbour European Site.

5.1.12 Wool Parish is within the hydrological catchment of Poole Harbour. Development within the plan area would connect to the Wool Water Recycling Centre (WRC), with waste water from the development discharging into Poole Harbour, resulting in additional nitrogen loading into Poole Harbour.

5.1.13 Whilst the Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan doesn't allocate land for development, it does provide policy on how the local housing need of 470 homes should be met. Therefore, it is concluded that the Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan will result in a likely significant effect upon the Poole Harbour SPA and Ramsar from water quality impacts.

DORSET HEATHLANDS RAMSAR

5.1.14 The Dorset Heathlands Ramsar occupies an extensive but fragmented area in the southeast of the Dorset.

5.1.15 The Dorset Heathlands Ramsar is amongst the best examples of wet heaths and acid mires in lowland Britain, and supports a large assemblage of nationally rare and scarce wetland plant species and invertebrates.

5.1.16 Urban development in close proximity to the Dorset Heathlands may result in:

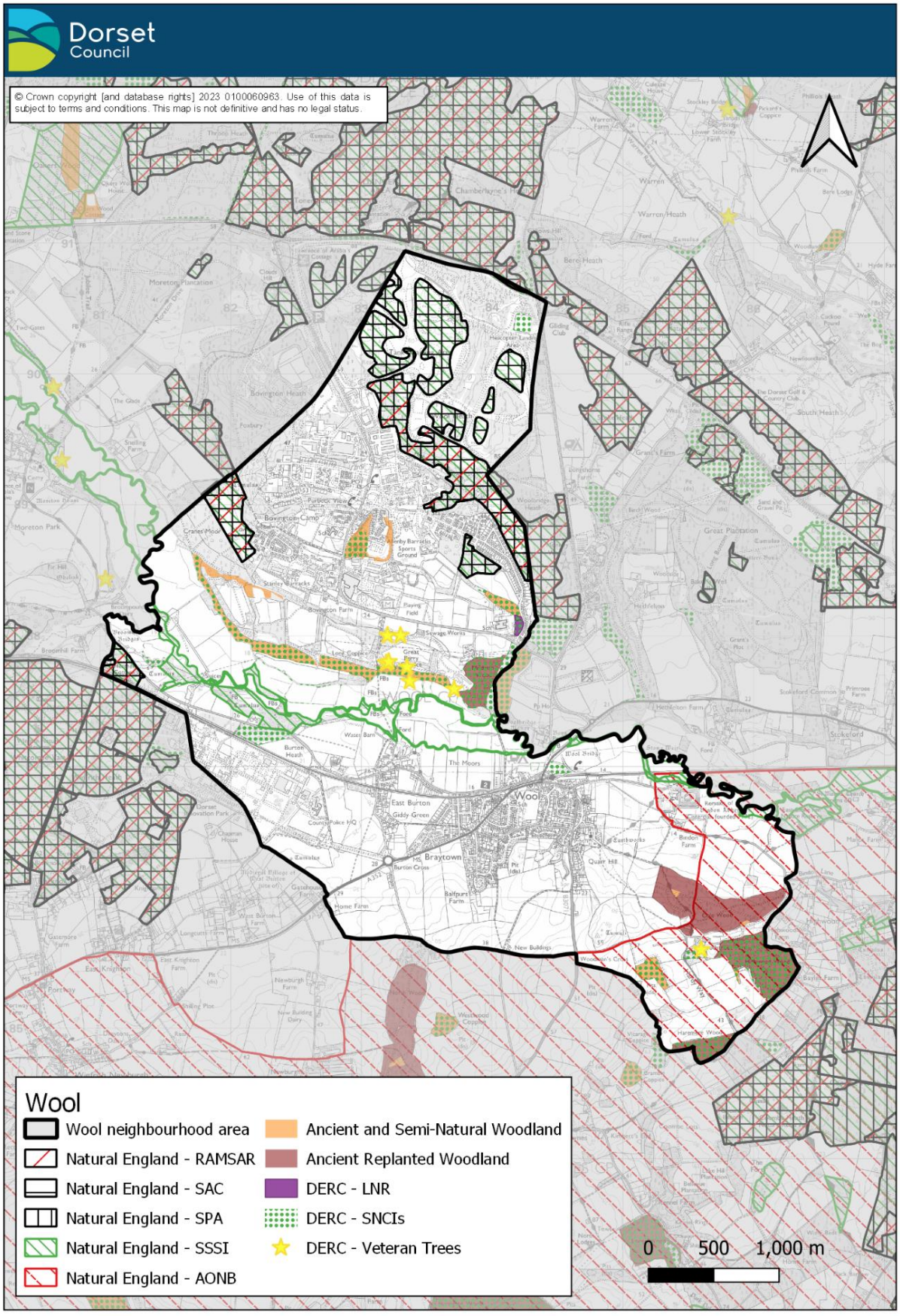
- Changes in pH, nutrient status, turbidity of water supplies to heathland;
- Enrichment and pollutants from urban run-off;
- Pollutants from mis-connections, storm overflows, spills, accidents;
- Diversion of pre-existing natural water sources away from heathland catchments; and
- Changes in heathland hydrology and leakage in underground pipes and sewers as a result of service infrastructure.

5.1.17 The issue of pollution to water is intrinsically linked to the other pressures upon the Dorset Heaths caused by development, such as disturbance and recreational pressure, which is considered elsewhere in the HRA screening.

5.1.18 The northern and western parts of Wool Parish, and some of the surrounding areas, includes the Dorset Heathlands Ramsar (Figure 5.3). Winfrith Heath occupies parts of the western plan area and Turners Puddle Heath is located on the northern plan area.

5.1.19 The Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan doesn't allocate land for development, but does provide policy on how the local housing need of 470 homes should be met. Considering the scope of the plan alongside the location of the Dorset Heathlands Ramsar within the plan area, it is concluded that the Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan will result in a likely significant effect upon the Dorset Heathlands Ramsar from water quality impacts.

Figure 5.3: Ecological designations within Wool Parish



CHESIL BEACH AND THE FLEET SAC, SPA, RAMSAR

5.1.20 The Chesil Beach and the Fleet European site is characterised by a 29km long shingle storm beach and a coastal lagoon called the Fleet.

5.1.21 The primary reasons for the designation of the Chesil and the Fleet SAC are the following habitats:

- Coastal lagoon;
- Mediterranean and thermos-Atlantic halophilous scrubs (Sarcocornetea fruticoia);
- Perennial vegetation of stony banks; and
- Annual vegetation of drift lines.

5.1.22 The shingle beach encloses a brackish lagoon called the Fleet, which is the largest lagoon in England occupying 495ha and supports the greatest diversity of habitats and species of any lagoon in the UK[1]. Due to the salinity gradient, peculiar hydrographic regime, and associated reedbed and intertidal habitats, the Fleet is extraordinarily rich in wildlife with outstanding numbers of aquatic plants and animals present.

5.1.23 The Mediterranean and thermos-Atlantic halophilous scrubs habitat is largely associated with the lagoon habitat, since it is found predominantly on the seaward margin of the Fleet.

5.1.24 Chesil Beach represents a large area of 'perennial vegetation of stony banks' habitat which supports the most extensive occurrences of the rare sea-kale *Crambe maritima* and sea pea *Lathyrus japonicas* in the UK, together with other grassland and lichen-rich shingle plant communities typical of more stable conditions.

5.1.25 In addition, Chesil beach is also one of two representatives of Annual vegetation of drift lines on the south coast of England. The inner shore of the beach supports extensive drift-line vegetation dominated by sea beet Beta vulgaris maritima and orache Atriplex.

5.1.26 The Chesil Beach and the Fleet SPA occupies the Fleet lagoon and immediate surroundings which support saltmarshes and reedbeds. The SPA supports over wintering bird species such as the Dark Bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*. In Spring and Summer, Chesil Bank is an important breeding ground for the Little Tern *Sterna albifrons* which feed in the shallow waters of the lagoon. The site also provides a habitat for bird species which do not breed at this location, such as Wigeon *Mareca Penelope*.

5.1.27 Chesil and the Fleet is also a designated Ramsar site in recognition of its international importance as a wetland.

5.1.28 On 16th March 2022, Natural England informed Dorset Council that the Chesil and the Fleet SAC, SPA and Ramsar was in unfavourable condition and advised the council to

[1] Bamber, R. N. 1997. Assessment of saline lagoons within Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). Peterborough: English Nature

carefully consider the water quality impacts of additional nitrogen and phosphorus from development proposals in the hydrological catchment of Chesil and the Fleet.

5.1.29 Wool Parish is not within the Chesil and the Fleet hydrological catchment, and therefore development within the neighbourhood plan area will not result in additional nutrient loading to the European site. The Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan will not result in a likely significant effect upon Chesil and the Fleet as a result of water quality impacts.

5.2. AIR POLLUTION

CERNE AND SYDLING DOWNS SAC

5.2.1 The Cerne and Sydling Downs SAC is located towards the north of the Dorset Council Local Plan area, upon the vast swath of chalk which runs from southwest to northwest across Dorset.

5.2.2 The Fontmell and Melbury Downs SAC is characterised predominantly by semi-natural dry grassland with some scrub and heathland on the chalk valley slopes.

5.2.3 Chalk grassland habitats are necessarily naturally low in nutrients, and therefore the enrichment of soils through the deposition of atmospheric nitrogen represents a threat to the integrity of these European sites.

5.2.4 New development may result in an increase in atmospheric nitrogen through additional traffic, particularly as a result of residential development, and emissions from agricultural and industrial development.

5.2.5 Wool Parish is more than 18km from the Cerne and Sydling Downs Neighbourhood Plan area. Given the scale of development likely to come forward within the plan area and the distance from the Cerne and Sydling Downs SAC, which is more than 18km, it is unlikely that the plan will give rise to emissions at the Cerne and Sydling Downs SAC. Therefore, it is concluded that the Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan will not result in a likely significant effect upon the Cerne and Sydling Downs SAC from air quality impacts.

DORSET HEATHS SAC

5.2.6 The Dorset Heaths SAC is designated on account of the rare and vulnerable wet and dry heathland habitats, which support the Southern damselfly *Coenagrion mercurial*.

5.2.7 The deposition of airborne nitrogen-based pollutants may result in the enrichment of soils within the heathland habitat. This favours faster growing plants and the spread of species not normally found on heathlands which outcompete and inhibit the recovery of the heathland habitats. Ammonia and nitrogen oxides also have direct toxic effects on plant communities.

5.2.8 Therefore, emissions to air of nitrogen-based pollutants may result in the degradation of the heathland habitat and contribute to the European Site being in an unfavourable condition.

5.2.9 There are multiple sources of airborne nitrogen-based pollutants, including agriculture and vehicle exhaust emissions, which new development may contribute to.

5.2.10 There are areas of Dorset Heaths SAC within Wool Parish which are situated adjacent to or in close proximity to roads. Winfrith Heath and Turners Puddle Heath, both of which are situated within the plan area, are located close to roads. Development through the Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan may contribute to an increase in traffic and therefore additional nitrogen deposition within the Dorset Heaths SAC.

DORSET HEATHS (PURBECK & WAREHAM) & STUDLAND DUNES SAC

5.2.11 The Dorset Heaths (Purbeck and Wareham) and Studland Dunes SAC is a separate designation from the Dorset Heaths SAC, designated on account of the rare and vulnerable dry and wet heaths, bog pools and bog woodland within valley mires, and large acidic dune system which includes the shallow oligotrophic lake known as 'Little Sea'.

5.2.12 The Dorset Heaths (Purbeck and Wareham) and Studland Dunes SAC is located approximately 5.8km to the east of the plan area. Considering the scale of development likely to come forward within the plan area and the distance from the plan area at 5.8km, it is unlikely that the plan will give rise to emissions at the Dorset Heaths (Purbeck and Wareham) and Studland Dunes SAC.

5.3. DISTURBANCE AND RECREATION

DORSET HEATHS SAC, SPA, RAMSAR, INCLUDING DORSET HEATHS (PURBECK & WAREHAM) & STUDLAND DUNES SAC

5.3.1 Evidence shows that the Dorset Heaths are under significant pressure from an increasing number of people living nearby. As population grows, the impacts from human pressures have the potential to cause adverse effects upon the protected habitats and species.

5.3.2 The main effects upon the Dorset Heaths as a result of development in close proximity to the Dorset Heaths include the following:

- Loss of supporting habitats: decrease in the semi-natural habitat adjoining heaths which provide functional support;
- Predation: Fox, cat/rat predation on ground nesting birds and reptiles;
- Enrichment: results in vegetation changes particularly alongside paths due to dog excrement and from rubbish and garden waste dumping by roads and from gardens. Also as a result of vehicles in transport corridor;
- Roads: Increased fire risk from car thrown cigarettes, roads forming barriers to species mobility, road kills increasing mortality rates, and noise and light pollution from traffic;
- Service infrastructures, both over and under heathland, causing disturbance and providing poles which act as look-out posts for bird predators;
- Disturbance: May cause changes in breeding bird and animal distributions within and across sites, reduction in breeding success of birds/animals, and delayed breeding in SPA birds;

- Trampling: Results in changes to vegetation, creation of bare areas and subsequent soil erosion, damage to bare ground reptile and invertebrate habitats and populations, increases in path and track networks;
- Fire: May increase frequency of fires particularly in spring and summer, causing long term vegetation changes, increased mortality of heathland animals/birds, fragmentation/reduction of habitat on heaths; and
- Difficulties in heathland management: vandalism of signs and fences, opposition to management techniques such as tree felling, fencing and grazing, increased cost of heathland management.

5.3.3 Since Wool Parish includes sections of Dorset Heath designation, there is the potential for development to result in a likely significant effect from disturbance and recreational pressure.

CHESIL BEACH AND THE FLEET SPA, RAMSAR

5.3.4 Natural England, the Appropriate Nature Conservation Body as defined by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017), have previously raised concerns about recreational pressure affecting the integrity of the Chesil and the Fleet European Site.

5.3.5 Natural England cited evidence on the excess recreational use of the Chesil and the Fleet European Site, including:

- 'Chesil Beach 2019 Recreational Activity Strategy', Footprint Ecology (2019) (ref: 549); and
- Supplementary Advice for Conservation Objectives (SACO) for the Chesil Beach and the Fleet SPA, Natural England (2019).

5.3.6 The Footprint Ecology report confirms that there is currently an unacceptable level of existing recreational pressure at Chesil Beach and the Fleet which is likely to be compromising the integrity of the SAC site features.

5.3.7 There are concerns that the trampling of habitats and species by people are resulting in adverse effects on the features of the SAC designation.

5.3.8 The SACO identified significant concerns regarding recreational pressures on the SPA features of the site, in particular Little Tern, which is in unfavourable condition with the target of restoring the population numbers to the those upon designation. Recreational pressure, particularly from dog walkers and water sports during the winter period, is thought to be having an adverse effecting the over-wintering birds of the SPA.

5.3.9 Footprint Ecology were commissioned by Dorset Council to collect further evidence on the effects of recreational pressure at the Chesil and the Fleet, including information on the distance from which people visit the site for recreational purposes.

5.3.10 Wool Parish is approximately 18.8km from Chesil and the Fleet. Development at this distance from Chesil and the Fleet is considered unlikely to result in a substantial increase

in visitors to the site. Therefore, it is considered unlikely that the plan will result in a likely significant effect upon the European Site from recreational pressure and disturbance.

POOLE HARBOUR SPA, RAMSAR

5.3.11 Studies show that recreational activities in Poole Harbour and its immediate surroundings, such as sailing and paddleboarding, walking, dogs and bait digging along the shoreline, may result in disturbance to the SPA bird species.

5.3.12 These recreational activities may influence a bird's behaviour and ultimately its survival, as disturbance can result in:

- a reduction in the time spent feeding, due to repeated flushing/increased vigilance;
- increased energetic costs;
- avoidance of areas of otherwise suitable habitat, which may result in birds potentially using poorer quality feeding/roosting sites instead;
- increased stress; and
- can lead to reduced fitness and breeding success.

5.3.13 Studies have shown a link between the proximity of peoples' homes to Poole Harbour and the frequency of visits, with those who live around the harbour being more likely to visit it to participate in recreational activities. This draw is probably due to the uniqueness of the features in the harbour close to their homes, and the unique characteristics of the harbour for certain recreational activities such as watersports.

5.3.14 Natural England advises that the cumulative effect of further residential and tourism development and therefore a population increase within a defined 'Poole Harbour Recreation Zone', which encompasses the areas surrounding the harbour, would have a significant effect upon the Poole Harbour SPA and Ramsar Site.

5.3.15 Wool Parish is not situated within the Poole Harbour Recreation Zone and therefore development is unlikely to result in a likely significant effect upon the Poole Harbour European Site from recreational pressure.

CERNE & SYDLING DOWNS SAC

5.3.16 These chalk grassland habitat at Cerne and Sydling Downs SAC is sensitive to recreational pressure, which may result from trampling and erosion by walking or cycling. Those parts that are steep and with thin soils and those areas near to access points, where pressures are more concentrated, are most vulnerable to the effects of recreational pressure. The addition of nutrients from dog faeces is also a threat, as this results in an input of nutrients into the soil, whereas chalk grassland habitats are necessarily naturally low in nutrients.

5.3.17 Given the distance of the neighbourhood plan area from the site, at more than 18km, and the scale of the proposed development, it is considered unlikely that the Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan would result in an appreciable increase in the number of visitors to the Cerne and Sydling Downs SAC. Therefore, the plan will not result in a likely significant effect from recreational pressure upon the Cerne and Sydling Downs SAC.

ISLE OF PORTLAND TO STUDLAND CLIFFS SAC AND ST ALBANS HEAD TO DURLESTON HEAD SAC

5.3.18 The Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC and St. Albans Head to Durlston Head SAC forms a continuous unit extending from Studland in the east to Portland in the West.

5.3.19 Evidence suggests that recreational pressure is causing an adverse effect upon the Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC and St. Albans Head to Durlston Head SAC.

5.3.20 The following qualifying features are being affected by recreation pressure:

- H6210: Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia);
- H1230 Vegetated sea cliffs;
- Early Gentian; and
- Greater Horseshoe Bat.

5.3.21 The recreational pressure impacts are prominently associated with the high numbers of visitors to the coast, with damage occurring through trampling, erosion, contamination (e.g dog fouling, litter), fire, and changes in site management (e.g lack of grazing on chalk grassland in heavily visited areas).

5.3.22 Other impacts are caused by specific recreational activities, such as climbing on the cliff ledges, caving, mountain biking and wild camping.

5.3.23 The impacts can occur even when levels of access are very low. Many parts of the coast path are heavily worn through trampling, with braided path sections and extensive bare ground occurring on sections of steep slope, and bright green strips of affected sward marking the routes across the limestone grassland. Whilst favourable habitat can occur on the affected areas, as the short turf and thin soils are important for some species and bare ground is important for many invertebrate species, the complete loss of vegetation cover will degrade the habitat.

5.3.24 The impacts of the specific recreational activities are harder to record.

5.3.25 Whilst much of the coast path is heavily worn, the areas of severe trampling damage within the SAC are focussed around the more tourist hotspots and features that draw visitors, including Portland Bill, Old Harry, some of the paths near Lulworth Cove/Stair Hole, some of the Purbeck coastal quarries and parts of Durlston, including the gully near the lighthouse.

5.3.26 The postcode data shows that those visiting the coast travel from a very wide area. However, those visiting from further afield are much more occasional visitors and those living in relative proximity to the coast visit frequently.

5.3.27 Wool Parish is approximately 3.8km from the Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC. Considering the scale of the development likely to come forward through the plan, it is considered unlikely to result in a large increase in visitors to the coastal European site. Therefore, it is considered unlikely that the plan will result in a likely significant effect upon

the Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC and St. Albans Head to Durlston Head SAC from recreational pressure and disturbance.

5.4. HABITAT FRAGMENTATION

DORSET HEATHS SAC, SPA, RAMSAR

5.4.1 Habitat fragmentation occurs when a large area of habitat is split into smaller areas, resulting in populations becoming isolated and the overall area of the habitat being reduced.

5.4.2 Habitat fragmentation may occur as a result of development, for example housing or infrastructure such as roads, dividing a habitat into smaller parcels of land in addition to resulting in habitat loss.

5.4.3 In the mid-18th century, the Dorset Heathlands occupied an area of approximately 36,000ha in Southeast Dorset.

5.4.4 Over time the extent of the Dorset Heathlands reduced, largely as a result of agriculture, forestry and urban development. In 1996, the coverage of the Dorset Heathlands had dramatically reduced to approximately 7,373ha, and by 2019, the coverage of the Dorset Heathlands had fallen to approximately 6,199ha , representing a loss of around 83% of heathland habitat.

5.4.5 In addition to the loss of habitat, the Dorset Heathlands has become fragmented. In 1979, the Dorset Heathland existed in 768 separate parcels, 88% of which were less than 10ha (Webb & Haskins 1980).

5.4.6 Fragmentation of the Dorset Heathlands may reduce the suitability of the remaining habitat and cause them to be more susceptible to recreational pressure and the effects of wildfires and arson.

5.4.7 Studies have recorded negative responses to fragmentation for the species including the Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*, a qualifying feature for the Dorset Heathlands SPA. It is suggested that Dartford warblers avoid smaller and more isolated heath patches.

5.4.8 In recent years, the loss and fragmentation of the Dorset Heaths has almost halted through changes in national and local policy, including the Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework which has been in place since 2007 and prevents further habitat fragmentation.

5.4.9 The Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan contains areas of Dorset Heath, and therefore development to meet local needs may result in further habitat fragmentation at the Dorset Heaths. Therefore, the plan may result in a likely significant effect upon the Dorset Heaths due to habitat fragmentation.

6 Appropriate Assessment

6.0.1 The HRA screening identified the following likely significant effects upon the Dorset Heaths and Poole Harbour European Sites:

- Dorset Heaths SAC, SPA, Ramsar: recreational pressure, air quality, water quality habitat fragmentation; and
- Poole Harbour SPA, Ramsar: water quality.

6.0.2 Therefore, an Appropriate Assessment is required to determine whether the Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan would result in an adverse effect upon the integrity of these European Sites. The following chapter presents the appropriate assessment of these effects.

6.1. DORSET HEATHS SAC, SPA, RAMSAR

6.1.1 The effects upon the Dorset Heaths from recreational pressure, changes in water quality, and habitat fragmentation from new development in Wool would be addressed through applying the Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework 2020-25, which is an adopted Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) by Dorset Council which provides a mechanism for mitigating the impacts upon the Dorset heaths from new development.

6.1.2 The SPD ensures that residential development within 400m of the Dorset Heaths European Site is not permitted due to impacts upon the designation which cannot be satisfactorily mitigated against.

6.1.3 Residential development within the area between 400m and 5km from the Dorset Heaths will result in a likely significant effect which must be adequately mitigated against to avoid an adverse effect upon integrity of the designation.

6.1.4 Preventing development within 400m of the Dorset Heaths will address the water quality issue as it will prevent pollution of the heath from spills and accidents from urban areas, pollution from urban runoff, and the installation of underground pipes and sewers which may leak.

6.1.5 The restrictions within 400m of the Dorset Heaths and the requirement for mitigation between 400m and 5km from the Dorset Heaths will also prevent an adverse effect upon recreational pressure by preventing the effects set out in paragraph 5.3.2.

6.1.6 The prevention of development within close proximity of the heath will also prevent further fragmentation of the Dorset Heaths. The Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan also includes policy to improve ecological networks, restricting development in those areas between fragments of Dorset Heath (WOOL 15).

6.1.7 Whilst the air quality issue may be partly addressed by preventing development within 400m of the Dorset Heaths, it will not fully address the problem as areas of Dorset Heaths are present adjacent to roads and may be affected by increases in traffic from new development.

6.1.8 The adopted Dorset Heathlands Interim Air Quality Strategy 2020-25 SPD, which sits alongside the Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework 2020-25, provides an approach to addressing the adverse effects of airborne nitrogen upon the Dorset Heathlands European Site.

6.1.9 The strategy suggests a series of mitigation measures, paid for through developer contributions. The types of measure include direct measures targeting vehicle emissions adjacent to heathland. These include projects to encourage modal shift to other forms of transport, reduce vehicle speeds adjacent to heathlands, encourage the use of zero emission vehicles and through heathland management alongside roads. The strategy also addresses wider measures to reduce nitrogen deposition from agricultural land near to heathlands, or the re-siting or cleaning up of certain operations that generate emissions.

6.1.10 The Air Quality Strategy will ensure that development within Wool Parish prevents an adverse effect upon those heaths within close proximity to roads. This includes both Winfrith Heath and Turners Puddle Heath within the plan area which are situated within close proximity to Tout Hill and the A352 respectively.

6.1.11 The Purbeck Local Plan provides the overarching policy which ensures protection of European sites and the Dorset Heathlands. Policy E7 of the Local Plan is the primary policy relating to impacts upon European Sites, and prevents impacts upon these sites by stating that:

> "Development will only be permitted where it would not lead to an adverse effect upon the integrity, either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects, directly or indirectly, of nationally, European and internationally protected nature conservation sites."

6.1.12 Policy E8 of the Local Plan provides the policy approach for Dorset Heathlands specifically, ensuring that impacts upon both recreational pressure and air quality are addressed.

6.1.13 The SPDs will also be applied at the HRA stage of planning applications within Wool Parish, as required by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

6.1.14 The requirement to apply the SPD is also included in the Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that the impacts upon the Dorset Heaths are avoided. Paragraphs 274 to 276 of the Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan explains the mitigation required to prevent an adverse impact upon the integrity of the Dorset Heaths.

6.1.15 The requirement to consider the effects upon Dorset Heaths is secured by Policy WOOL 15 of the Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan which states that:

> "Development will only be supported where it would not lead to an adverse effect upon the integrity, either alone or in-combination, directly or indirectly, on European sites."

6.2. POOLE HARBOUR SPA, RAMSAR

6.2.1 The Nitrogen Reduction in Poole Harbour SPD was adopted in 2017 and has provided a means of mitigating against the effects of new development upon water quality in the Poole Harbour catchment.

6.2.2 The SPD calculates the nitrogen loading from a new dwelling and calculates the area of agricultural land that is needed to offset the additional nitrogen loading through a reduction in intensity of use of this land. The delivery of mitigation is largely funded through the standard CIL contributions that are paid by developments across Dorset.

6.2.3 Since the adoption of the SPD in 2017, there have been advances in calculating nutrient loading and the approach provided by the SPD no longer accords with the latest scientific understanding.

6.2.4 Therefore, although the SPD has proven to be adequate in enabling development to take place and for mitigation to be delivered in the Harbour catchment from 2017, it is no longer considered fit for purpose. The intention is to withdraw the SPD from use at Cabinet on 10 September. In the period between the 31 July and the Cabinet decision, Dorset Council will be giving very limited weight to the SPD in planning decisions.

6.2.5 Following the expected withdrawal of the SPD, a new approach to achieving nutrient neutrality will be applied in Poole Harbour as the onus for the provision of mitigation will shift to the developer.

6.2.6 There are multiple ways that nutrient neutrality can be achieved including:

1. Delivery of sufficient nitrogen mitigation on site as part of the open space within the development. This can also assist with the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain

2. Delivery of mitigation off-site but on land under the control of a developer

3. Provision of new WWTW to be managed by a NAV water company (only likely to be suitable for a larger development site)

4. The purchase of nutrient credits from a certified third party mitigation provider such as Natural England's Lyscombe Farm mitigation project

5. The purchase of nutrient credits from Dorset Council (when available)

6.2.7 Development within the Wool Parish would achieve nutrient neutrality by applying this approach.

6.2.8 The Purbeck Local Plan provides the overarching policy which ensures protection of European sites in Policy E7. Policy E9 of the Local Plan provides the policy approach for Poole Harbour specifically, ensuring that nutrient neutrality had been achieved.

6.2.9 Paragraph 277 of the Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan explains the mitigation required to prevent an adverse impact upon the integrity of the Poole Harbour SPA and Ramsar from changes in water quality.

6.2.10 The requirement to consider the effects upon the Poole Harbour European Site is secured by Policy WOOL 15 of the Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan which states that:

> "Development will only be supported where it would not lead to an adverse effect upon the integrity, either alone or in-combination, directly or indirectly, on European sites."

7 Conclusion

7.0.1 The HRA screening exercise considered the potential threats, pressures and activities which may affect the European sites within 20km of the Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan area, and concluded that the plan would cause the following likely significant effects:

- Dorset Heaths SAC, SPA, Ramsar: recreational pressure, air quality, water quality habitat fragmentation; and
- Poole Harbour SPA, Ramsar: water quality.

7.0.2 An Appropriate Assessment was therefore undertaken to determine whether the Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan would result in an adverse effect upon the integrity of these European Sites.

7.0.3 The Appropriate Assessment concluded that the protection provided by policies E7 to E9 in the Purbeck Local Plan, mitigation strategy, and policy WOOL 15 of the Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan will ensure that the Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan will not result in an adverse effect upon the integrity of a European Site.

Appendix A: Details of European Sites within 20km of the Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan

European Site	Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Potential threats, pressures and activities with impacts
Cerne and Sydling Downs SAC	**Annex 1 habitats:** Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) **Annex 2 species (present as a qualifying feature but not a primary reason for selection of this site):** Marsh fritillary butterfly *Euphydryas (Eurodryas, Hypodryas) aurinia*	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely • The populations of qualifying species, and, • The distribution of qualifying species within the site.	Grazing; Fertilisation; Interspecific floral relations; Other ecosystem modifications
Chesil and the Fleet SAC	**Annex 1 habitats:** Coastal lagoons; Annual vegetation of drift lines; Perennial vegetation of stony banks;	Subject to natural change, maintain the **lagoon** in favourable condition, in particular: • Seagrass bed communities • Tide-swept communities	Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources; Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities;

European Site	Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Potential threats, pressures and activities with impacts
	Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrubs (Sarcocornetea fruticosi) **Annex 1 habitats (present as a qualifying feature but not a primary reason for selection of this site):** Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae)	• Subtidal coarse sediment (gravel, cobbles, pebbles) communities • Intertidal sediment communities • Shingle spring line communities Subject to natural change, maintain the **Annual vegetation of drift lines** in favourable condition, in particular: • Beta vulgaris maritima (sea beet) - Atriplex (orache) communities • Honkenya peploides (sea sandwort) - Cakile maritima (sea rocket) communities Subject to natural change, maintain the **Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrub** in favourable condition, in particular: • Shrubby sea-blite (Suaeda vera) communities	Invasive non-native species; Pollution to groundwater (point sources and diffuse sources); Changes in biotic conditions
Chesil Beach and the Fleet Ramsar	The information sheet on the Ramsar Wetland lists the following criterion as justification of the designation: ***Ramsar criterion 1-*** The Fleet is an outstanding example of rare lagoon habitat and is the largest of its kind in the UK. In Europe lagoons are classified as a priority habitat by the EC Habitats and Species Directive. The site also supports rare saltmarsh habitats.	Natural England considers the Conservation Advice packages for the overlapping European Sites to be sufficient to support the management of the Ramsar interests at this site.	No adverse factor categories identified.

European Site	Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Potential threats, pressures and activities with impacts
	Ramsar criterion 2**-** The Fleet supports 15 specialist lagoonal species and five nationally scarce wetland plants as well as ten nationally scarce wetland animals. Chesil Bank is one of the most important UK sites for shingle habitats and species. ***Ramsar criterion 3*** **-** The site is the largest barrier-built saline lagoon in the UK and has the greatest diversity of habitats and of biota. ***Ramsar criterion 4*** **-** The site is important for a number of species at a critical stage in their life cycle including post-larval and juvenile bass *Dicentrarchus labrax*. ***Ramsar criterion 6*** **-** Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance including Mute Swan *Cygnus olor* and Dark-bellied brent goose, *Branta bernicla* ***Ramsar criterion 8*** **-** The site is important as a nursery for bass *Dicentrarchus labrax*.		
Chesil Beach and the Fleet SPA	Little tern *Sternula albifrons* (Breeding) ; Wigeon *Mareca penelope* (Non-breeding); Dark-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla bernicla.*	Subject to natural change, to maintain in favourable condition the habitats for the internationally important populations of the regularly occurring Annex 1 bird species, under the Birds Directive, with particular reference to: • Lagoon waters Subject to natural change, to maintain in favourable condition the habitats for the internationally important populations of regularly occurring migratory bird species,	Water pollution; Changes in species distribution; Public access/disturbance; Fisheries: commercial marine and estuarine; Invasive species;

European Site	Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Potential threats, pressures and activities with impacts
		under the Birds Directive, with particular reference to: • Intertidal sediment communities • Seagrass bed communities	Natural changes to site conditions; Air pollution (atmospheric nitrogen deposition); Inappropriate coastal management.
Crookhill Brick Pit SAC	**Annex 2 species:** Great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; • The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species • The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely • The populations of qualifying species, and, • The distribution of qualifying species within the site.	Biocenotic evolution, succession
Dorset Heathlands Ramsar	**Ramsar criterion 1:** Contains particularly good examples of (i) northern Atlantic wet heaths with cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix* and (ii) acid mire with Rhynchosporion.	Natural England considers the Conservation Advice packages for the overlapping European Sites to be	Acid rain; pollution.

European Site	Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Potential threats, pressures and activities with impacts
	Ramsar criterion 2: Supports 1 nationally rare and 13 nationally scarce wetland plant species, and at least 28 nationally rare wetland invertebrate species. **Ramsar criterion 3:** Has a high species richness and high ecological diversity of wetland habitat types and transitions, and lies in one of the most biologically-rich wetland areas of lowland Britain, being continuous with three other Ramsar sites: Poole Harbour, Avon Valley and The New Forest.	sufficient to support the management of the Ramsar interests at this site.	
Dorset Heathlands SPA	**During the breeding season;** Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*; Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus;* Woodlark *Lullula arborea* **Over winter;** Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* Merlin *Falco columbarius*	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring; • The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features • The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features • The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely • The population of each of the qualifying features, and, • The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.	Inappropriate scrub control; Public access/disturbance; Undergrazing; Forestry and woodland management ; Drainage; Water pollution; Invasive species; Habitat fragmentation; Wildfire/arson; Air pollution (atmospheric deposition); Deer
Dorset Heaths SAC	**Annex 1 habitats:**	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site	Grazing; Invasive non-native

European Site	Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Potential threats, pressures and activities with impacts
	Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix* European Dry Heaths; Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion **Annex 1 habitats (present as a qualifying feature but not a primary reason for selection of this site):** Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*); Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the Caricion davallianae; Alkaline fens; Old acidophilous oak woods with *Quercus robur* on sandy plains **Annex 2 species:** Southern damselfly *Coenagrion mercuriale* **Annex 2 species (present as a qualifying feature but not a primary reason for selection of this site):** Great crested Newt *Triturus Cristatus*	contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely • The populations of qualifying species • The distribution of qualifying species within the site	species; Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities Bionetic evolution; succession; Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions.
Dorset Heaths (Purbeck and Wareham) and Studland Dunes SAC	**Annex 1 habitats:** Embryonic shifting dunes; Shifting dunes along the shoreline with Ammophila arenaria (white dunes); Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (Calluno-Ulicetea); Humid dune slacks;	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring:	Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions; Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities; Biocenotic evolution, succession;

European Site	Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Potential threats, pressures and activities with impacts
	Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (*Littorelletalia uniflorae);* Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*; Temperate Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica ciliaris* and *Erica tetralix*; European dry heaths; Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion; Bog woodland. **Annex 1 habitats (present as a qualifying feature but not a primary reason for selection of this site):** Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae); Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae; Alkaline fens; Old acidophilous oak woods with Quercus robur on sandy plains; **Annex 2 species:** Southern damselfly *Coenagrion mercuriale* **Annex 2 species (present as a qualifying feature but not a primary reason for selection of this site):** Great crested newt Triturus cristatus	• The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species; • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats; • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species; • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely; • The populations of qualifying species; and • The distribution of qualifying species within the site.	Invasive non-native species; Grazing
Isle of Portland to	**Annex 1 habitats:** Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic Coasts;	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation	Cultivation; Undergrazing; Invasive non-native

European Site	Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Potential threats, pressures and activities with impacts
Studland Cliffs SAC	Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) **Annex 1 habitats (present as a qualifying feature but not a primary reason for selection of this site):** Annual vegetation of drift lines **Annex 2 species:** Early gentian *Gentianella anglica*.	Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely • The populations of qualifying species • The distribution of qualifying species within the site.	species; Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities; Bionetic evolution, succession
Poole Harbour Ramsar	**Ramsar criterion 1:** The site is the best and largest example of a bar-built estuary with lagoonal characteristics (a natural harbour) in Britain. **Ramsar criterion 2**: The site supports two species of nationally rare plant and one nationally rare alga. There are at least three British Red data book invertebrate species.	Natural England considers the Conservation Advice packages for the overlapping European Sites to be sufficient to support the management of the Ramsar interests at this site.	Eutrophication; Introduction/invasion of non-native animal species

European Site	Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Potential threats, pressures and activities with impacts
	Ramsar criterion 3: The site includes examples of natural habitat types of community interest - Mediterranean and thermos Atlantic halophilous scrubs, in this case dominated by Suaeda vera, as well as calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus*. Transitions from saltmarsh through to peatland mires are of exceptional conservation importance as few such examples remain in Britain. The site supports nationally important populations of breeding waterfowl including Common tern *Sterna hirundo* and Mediterranean gull *Larus melanocephalus*. Over winter the site also supports a nationally important population of Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta.* **Ramsar criterion 5:** Assemblages of international importance: Species with peak counts in winter: 24709 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003) **Ramsar criterion 6** – species/populations occurring at levels of international importance. Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation): Species with peak counts in winter: Common shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*, NW Europe 2120 individuals, representing an average of 2.7% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) Black-tailed godwit , *Limosa limosa islandica*, Iceland/W Europe 1724 individuals, representing an average of		

European Site	Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Potential threats, pressures and activities with impacts
	4.9% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)		
Poole Harbour SPA	During the breeding season: Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*; Sandwich tern *Sterna sandvicensis*; Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*; On passage: Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola*; Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* Over winter: Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*; Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*, Eurasian spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* Migratory species: Over winter: Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa islandica*; Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*; Assemblage qualification: A wetland of international importance. The area qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 waterfowl	The objectives are to ensure that, subject to natural change, the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring: • the extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features • the structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features • the supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely • the populations of each of the qualifying features • the distribution of qualifying features within the site	Water Pollution; Air Pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition; Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine; Coastal squeeze; Public Access/Disturbance; Deer
St Albans Head to Durlston Head SAC	**Annex 1 habitats:** Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic Coasts; Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (*important orchid site)	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;	Biocenotic evolution, succession; Grazing; Cultivation; Invasive non-native species;

European Site	Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Potential threats, pressures and activities with impacts
	Annex 2 species: Early gentian *Gentianella anglica* **Annex 2 species (present as a qualifying feature but not a primary reason for selection of this site):** Greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*	• The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely • The populations of qualifying species, and, • The distribution of qualifying species within the site.	Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities.