

Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan

INITIAL DRAFT

**Initial Draft 1**  
**April 2023**

# Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan

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References to the Neighbourhood Plan are to the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan, unless otherwise specified.

All references to the Town Council are to Weymouth Town Council.

## Policies List:

- WNP01: Shoreline Protection
- WNP02: Protection and Enhancement of Wildlife Habitats and Areas
- WNP03: Areas of Natural Conservation
- WNP04: Landscape and Wildlife Corridors
- WNP05: Ecological Impact of Development
- WNP06: Trees, Woodlands, and Hedgerows
- WNP07: Footpaths, Rights of Way, and Bridleways
- WNP08: Coastal Recreation Areas
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- WNP29: Timings of Infrastructure
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- WNP33: Mixed-Use Employment Schemes
- WNP34: New Workshops and Business Hubs
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- WNP37: Temporary Uses
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## Foreword

The Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan provides a great opportunity to set out planning policies which will help regulate future development in Weymouth. You told us that you wanted to protect our natural and historic environment, have better local jobs, more affordable homes, strong local communities and address the climate and ecological emergency. With support from our Consultants, Theme Group participants, and Technical Support from Locality, we have gathered evidence to support addressing these concerns. We have undertaken multiple public engagements to produce the initial draft of a balanced and sustainable plan, which reflects all these needs.

This initial draft plan enables a comprehensive Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to assess its effect on the environment, recommending alternatives and mitigations. We will use this to support further engagement with Dorset Council, local landowners, residents, and other stakeholders. Prior to this, it will be presented for approval by the Steering Group and for endorsement by the Town Council. After this the Plan's progress will accord with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012.

In August 2023 the Steering Group will update the plan taking into account the SEA and further stakeholder feedback and results of the viability assessment. In September 2023, we intend to publish the Pre-Submission Draft Plan which will then be subject to formal consultation over a six-week period. We shall consider the responses and form the Submission Draft Plan.

Following this, we shall submit the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan to Dorset Council, in the 1st quarter of 2024 who will arrange a further six-week consultation and independent examination, to ensure it meets the basic conditions required of a statutory plan. Any amendment required by the Examiner will be included in the final version of the Neighbourhood Plan, which will be the subject of a local Referendum conducted by Dorset Council. Subject to this being favourable, the Plan will become a statutory planning document for the Weymouth Area.

You can view our supporting papers and the record of meetings on the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan page on the Weymouth Town Council website.

PLEASE NOTE: The initial draft plan is still an in-work draft plan and, as outlined above, there will be significant opportunities to provide feedback on the plan in the next year. Meanwhile, if you would like to comment on this draft, ahead of our informal and formal engagements, please send your comments to [Neighbourhood@Weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:Neighbourhood@Weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk)

Weymouth Town Council is the qualifying body for the Neighbourhood Plan and decided that the plan should be developed by a delegated Steering Group through a process of community engagement. Members of the Steering Group, 7 residents and 4 councillors, represent different communities and interests across Weymouth. Steering Group members have supported 28 monthly meetings, led the theme and focus groups, helped compose our surveys, and supported a range of walkabouts and community events.

I'd like to thank all those who have contributed to the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan. This includes the other ten members of the Steering Group who have given their time freely over the last two and a half years. Thanks go to the members of the five Theme Groups comprising local residents, businesses, interest groups and representatives of Dorset and Weymouth Councils who, also, gave freely of their time and brought their expertise and local knowledge to gathering and analysing evidence to support our Plan. Six local schools have used our materials and have said what they want for Weymouth's future. The Neighbourhood Plan has been mainly funded by central government, through Locality, which has enabled us to appoint our planning consultants, use Dorset Coast Forum to assist our public engagement, and to commission technical assessments.

Lastly, but most importantly, I'd like to thank the residents for supporting our various engagement events, and responding to our surveys that will help shape a plan that is for all of us.

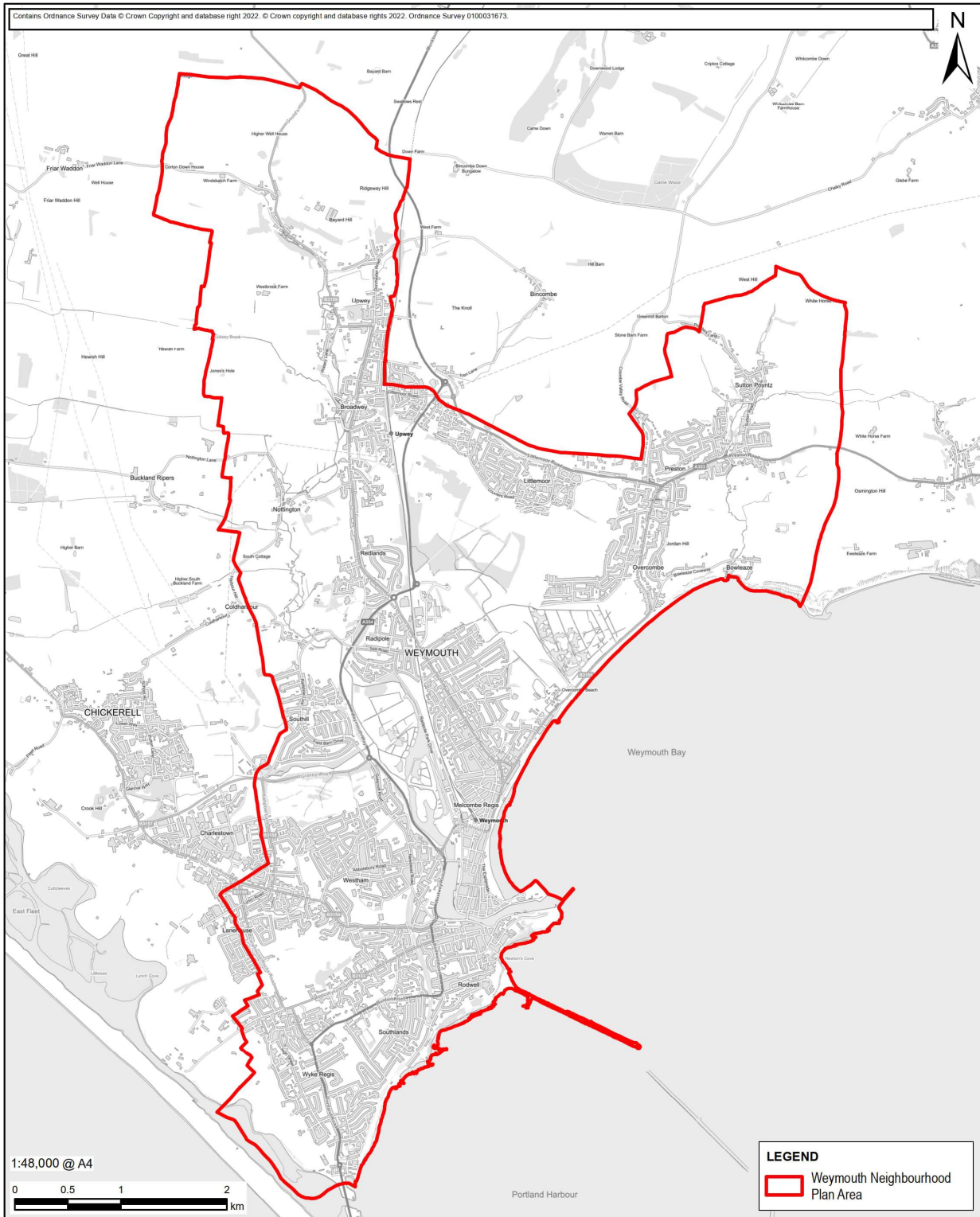
Cllr David Northam

Chair of the Weymouth NP Steering Group, April 2023.

# 1. Introduction

## The Plan Area

1.1 The Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan applies to the parished area that is under the jurisdiction of Weymouth Town Council. The plan area, designated as a 'neighbourhood area', for neighbourhood planning purposes, by Dorset Council in July 2020, is shown on Map 1 (delineated by the red boundary).



Map 1: Neighbourhood Plan Designated Area

- 1.2 In designating the parished area of Weymouth as a neighbourhood area for neighbourhood planning purposes, Dorset Council made the following statement: *“Dorset Council has approved a request from Weymouth Town Council for the designation of a Neighbourhood Area, which is the first formal stage of preparing a plan. A Neighbourhood Plan aims to give residents more control over planning policy in their local area, and where land is earmarked for new homes, shops and offices in their town or village. The first step is to designate the neighbourhood area. The next is to set up a steering group with local community groups and businesses to work on the plan. Once the plan is written, it will be consulted on locally and submitted to Dorset Council for independent examination. It will also be subject to a local referendum to make sure it has the support of local people. Within the town council boundary, Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Plan has been made. The new Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan will ensure that the Sutton Poyntz Plan is respected and included within the new developing plan.”*<sup>1</sup>

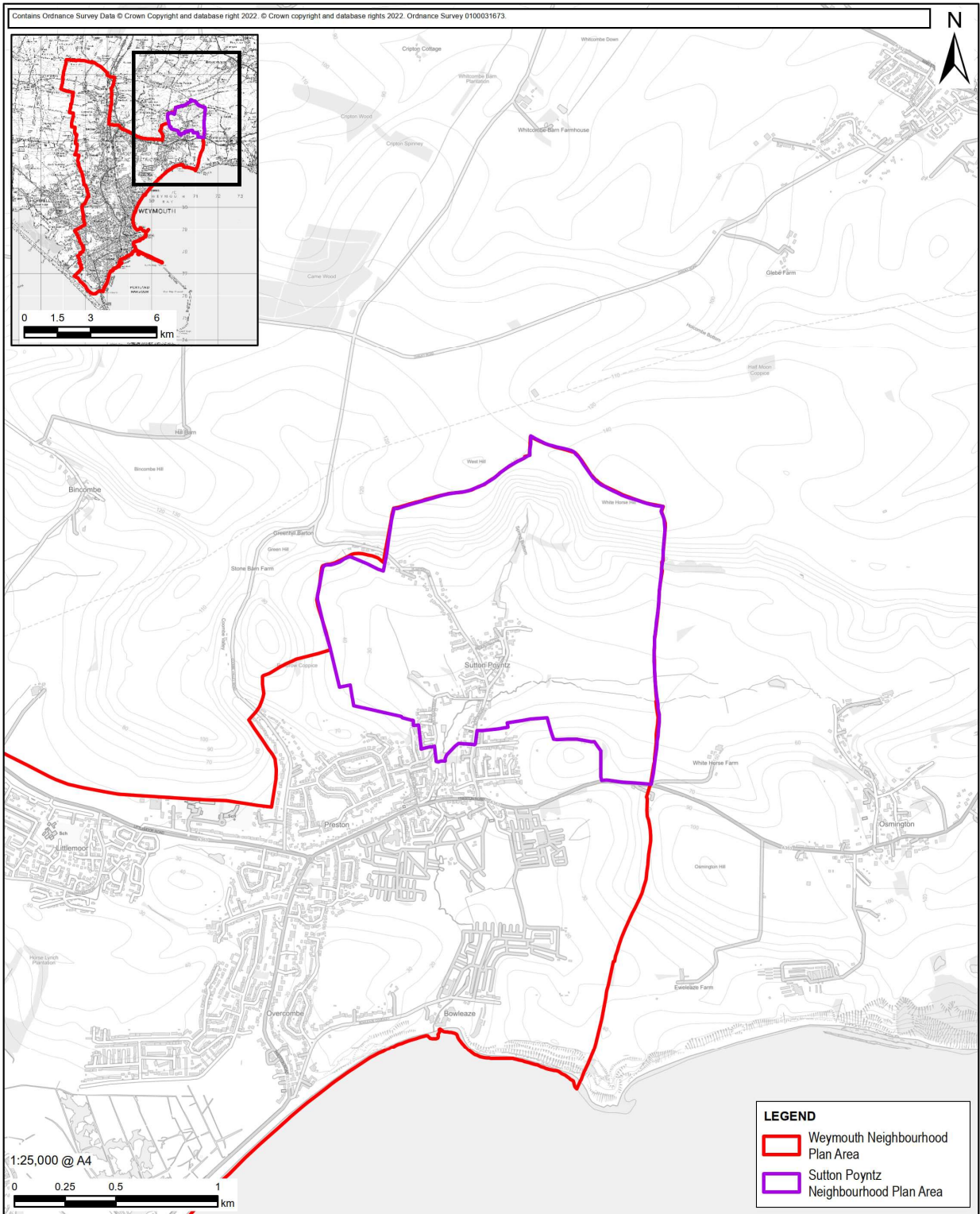
#### Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.3 Sutton Poyntz, part of the area under the jurisdiction of Weymouth Town Council, was designated as a Neighbourhood Area in its own right in September 2016. The application was made by the Sutton Poyntz Society, which gained recognition, under the terms of the Localism Act 2011, as a non-parish Neighbourhood Forum and a qualifying body to prepare a neighbourhood plan. Following local government re-organisation Weymouth Town Council took over responsibility for the Plan as the ‘Qualifying Body’.
- 1.4 Following a 'yes' vote in the referendum on 13 February 2020, Dorset Council officially 'made' the Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Plan<sup>2</sup> on 5 May 2020. At that point, the Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Plan became part of the statutory development plan for use in planning decisions in the Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Area.
- 1.5 The Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Plan contains some 28 policies that apply only to the defined neighbourhood area defined on Map 2. Weymouth Town Council undertook a monitoring review of the Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Plan in August 2022. It concluded that the Plan was still relevant and significant, and no formal review of the Plan was necessary at that time. The Report expressed the intention that *“a review can be swept into the emerging Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan work”*.
- 1.6 The policies in the Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Plan have informed the preparation of the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan and been integrated into it (see Appendix A). The Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan covers the whole of the area under the jurisdiction of Weymouth Town Council, including Sutton Poyntz.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://news.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/2020/07/24/weymouth-designated-a-neighbourhood-area/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.suttonpoyntz.org.uk/images/Neighbourhood/ReferendumVersion/NPReferendumVersionNov2019.pdf>



Map 2: Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Area



## 2. Weymouth Neighbourhood Area

- 2.1 The Weymouth Character Area Assessment<sup>3</sup> confirms that Weymouth remains an important tourist and recreation destination, with a beautiful seascape and built heritage. Surrounding and overlapping on the north of the neighbourhood area is the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which is given this status due to the beautiful landscapes. The stretch of coast is a World Heritage Site, the Jurassic coast, important and well known for its geology and fossils.
- 2.2 Weymouth is the third largest settlement in the county of Dorset, having a population of around 53,000 and is the largest settlement in the Dorset Unitary Council area. Weymouth attracts around half a million staying visitor trips and almost two million-day visits mainly in the summer season. 5,000 jobs are supported by visitor-related spending.
- 2.3 The built-up area of Weymouth is bound to the north by the South Dorset Ridgeway, a high ridge of land dominating the skyline between Weymouth and Dorchester. This location has been an important place for people for the last 6,000 years, with over 1,000 ancient monuments, some dating back to the Neolithic (4,000 - 2,000 BC). The South Dorset Escarpment follows from the South Dorset Downs of expansive open chalk downland that drain from the escarpment. The South Dorset Ridge and Vale, and Osmington Ridge and Vale are a series of small limestone ridges and clay vales running east to west. Lower Wey and Lorton Valley is characterised by a flat valley floor and flood plain with large areas of wetland. The valley sides provide a more intimate feature. Radipole Lake and Lodmoor have extensive reed beds and areas of open water from the flood plain. These features form an important backdrop and setting for the town, as well as providing important green space within the built-up area.
- 2.4 The town of Weymouth originates in two small settlements on either side of the river Wey, which eventually developed into the two separate medieval seaports of Weymouth and Melcombe Regis. In the Middle Ages wool was exported via Melcombe Regis and wine imported through Weymouth. The harbour, which they shared uneasily, was at the centre of the economic life of both towns, and from earliest times they quarrelled over it. These quarrels became so bitter that in 1571 they were amalgamated into one borough by Act of Parliament.
- 2.5 In the Georgian period, when medical science of the day declared sea bathing to be good for the health, Weymouth began its rise as a seaside resort. George III's decision to come to Weymouth in 1789 for his health, led the town to become the most celebrated and visited watering-place in the land. During the Victorian period the town continued as a popular resort and the harbour flourished with the growth of sea-borne trade with the Channel Islands. The arrival of the railway in 1857 enabled both these aspects of the town's life to continue to grow. The 20th century with population growth and two world wars had a great impact on the town. The town was badly bombed during World War II and was a key embarkation point for American troops on their way to Normandy in 1944. In the latter half of the 20th century Weymouth's popularity as a seaside resort declined with the rise of cheap foreign holidays; and by the end of the century harbour trade had virtually disappeared. The end of regular cross-Channel shipping followed not long after.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Item-11-Appendix-E-210429\\_Wey-characterassessment-RN.pdf](https://www.weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Item-11-Appendix-E-210429_Wey-characterassessment-RN.pdf)

## Character Areas

2.6 The historic growth and fluctuations in economic fortune is evident in the present-day urban form and the varied building types and styles. Weymouth's past is still very evident in the street pattern, the historic buildings, and heritage features that remain, and is recognised in the number of Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings in Weymouth see Figure 1.

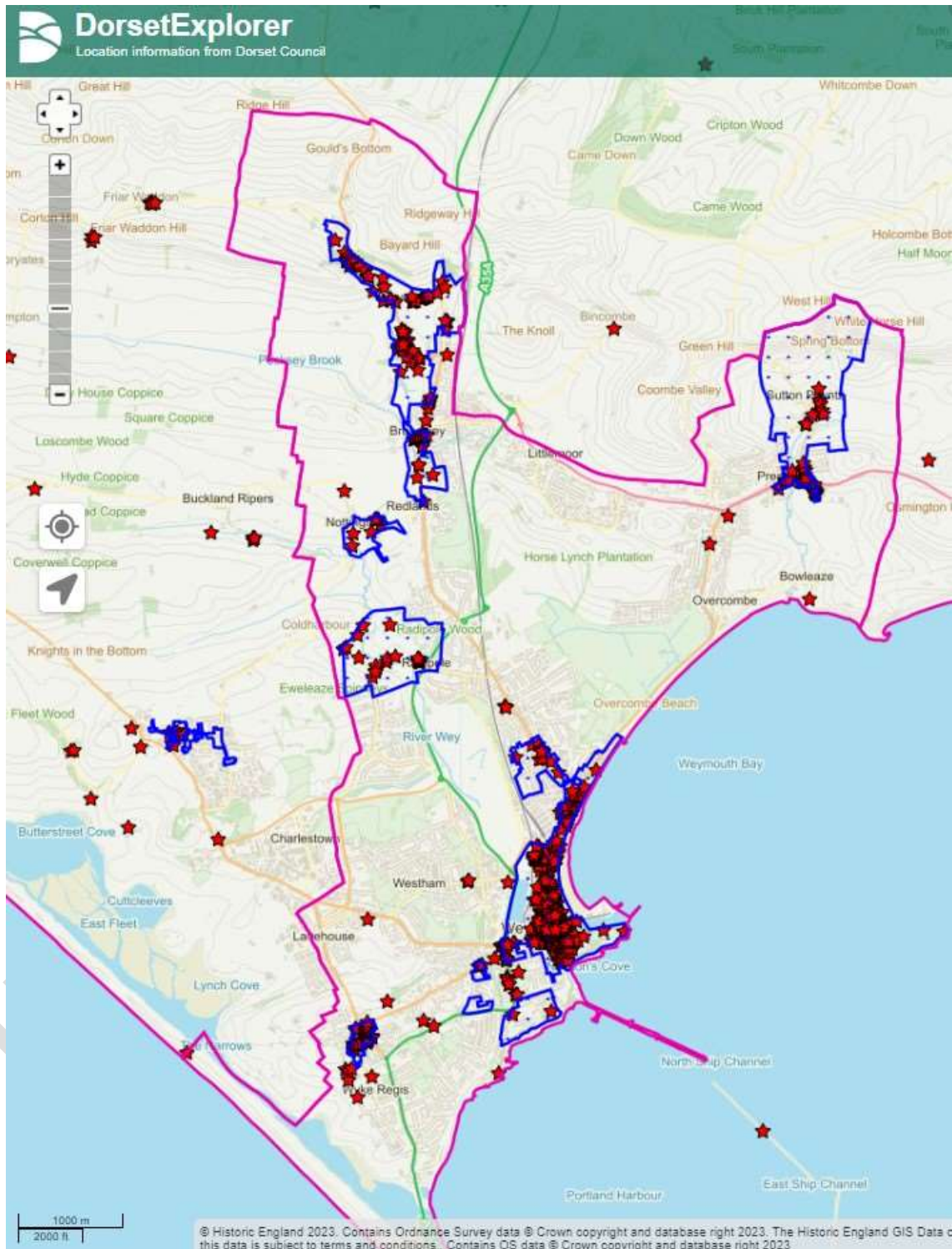


Figure 1

2.7 Five separate character areas were identified by the Weymouth Character Area Assessment based on “density, constraints, access to facilities, typologies, design styles and era built”. Their different and distinct characters have had influence on the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Character Area map is divided into the following areas (see Map 3).

- 2.8 *Character Area 1* is the historic core of Weymouth, the town centre, the harbour and Melcombe Regis. This area is urban core/central urban area with higher densities. It contains the rail and bus stations. The area is densely built and contains many houses of multiple occupation. The central area has a large area of policy-protected primary shopping and secondary frontages and many facilities for residents of the wider area of Weymouth.
- 2.9 *Character Area 2* is Westham, Radipole Spa, and Lodmoor which are suburban areas of the Town although listed buildings and the Lodmoor Conservation Area form part of its identity. Open gaps and sizeable areas of public open space define the boundary of each area. These areas have access to facilities through either walking or public transport.
- 2.10 *Character Area 3* consists of the semi-rural settlements of Sutton Poyntz, Preston, Broadwey, Upwey, Nottingham, and Radipole village, which follow the river valleys and have a distinct character of their own. Listed buildings and the conservation areas are part of the identity and heritage of the area. Open gaps and woodland provide important open spaces for recreation as well as defining the boundary of each area. Some areas have experienced ribbon development. Many of the settlements lack community facilities.
- 2.11 *Character Area 4* is Southill, Littlemoor, Overcombe, and Redlands which developed between the 1960's and present day. These are suburban/urban areas that were designed around central facilities and community buildings for day-to-day needs, sports, community events, to encourage social interaction and maintain health. Access to services and jobs is limited in Southill and Redlands.
- 2.12 *Character Area 5* is Wyke Regis, the original parish of Weymouth, which is now its own distinct area and includes Southland and Rodwell. It has a significant coastline. It lacks access to employment facilities within walking distance. Listed buildings, four conservation areas and Sandsfoot Castle form part of its identity and heritage. Open gaps between settlements provide important open spaces for leisure.
- 2.13 Preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for an area the size of Weymouth, with its heritage and varied townscape, landscape, and character, is challenging. The greater challenge however is to put in place a land use plan that will contribute to addressing the issues that impact on the daily lives of those who live in the area. These issues are articulated in the Key Findings and Messages document<sup>4</sup> agreed by the Steering Group in November 2022 along with associated community aspirations for the area, which remain strong and positive.

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Weymouth\\_NP\\_Key\\_Findings\\_and\\_Messages.pdf](https://www.weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Weymouth_NP_Key_Findings_and_Messages.pdf)



Map 3: Weymouth Character Assessment Areas

## Homes

- 2.14 In 2021 Weymouth was home to 24,600 households, 74% of whom were living in whole houses or bungalows, and 26% in flats. Weymouth has slightly higher than national average levels of owner occupation (66%), similar percentages of private renting (20%) and slightly lower levels of social renting at 13%. The proportion of private rented dwellings in the stock has increased since 2011. There are fewer detached properties in Weymouth than in Dorset overall, and more terraced homes and flats. This type-mix also tallies with the size-mix in Weymouth, showing 43% smaller (1-2 bedroom) properties and fewer very large (4+ bedroom) homes, 18%, than across Dorset and nationally. A third of all households in 2021 were single persons. Over 70% of households comprised no more than two persons.
- 2.15 Weymouth has a significant housing affordability problem. According to the 2021 Housing Needs Study<sup>5</sup>, the current profile of Weymouth in terms of affordability is not too dissimilar from that of the Dorset Council area overall. It is characterized by average annual incomes of £39,929, which is above the national average, but average house sale prices that are unaffordable on average incomes (with an average resale home requiring an income of over £60,000 and a new build requiring on average an income of over £100,000). Households on the two lower quartile incomes (as measured at overall local authority level) cannot afford any of the available tenures in Weymouth, except social and affordable rent. Many more locally affordable homes are required. The overall minimum affordable housing need over the plan period (2021-38) is estimated to be 1,775 units.

## Jobs and the Local Economy

- 2.16 The average income of Weymouth residents may be above the national average, but the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) identified Weymouth as the area in Dorset with the most incidences of household deprivation; several parts of the area are in the bottom 10% nationally and Melcombe Regis (the town centre area) is in the bottom 4% nationally. The IMD has worsened since 2015.
- 2.17 Seven of Weymouth's 31 LSOAs<sup>6</sup> are in the bottom 20% nationally. The lack of good quality permanent local employment opportunities and low pay underly this data. There are also substantial numbers of people who receive employment support. In four areas of Weymouth the rate is between 10% and 13.6%, compared with a 3.9% average in Dorset. In 2018, 48% of Weymouth's workforce was earning less than the real living wage.

## Communities

- 2.18 There is no doubt that community life is generally strong, and most people are fond of their own neighbourhood. The resilience of our communities however is being tested by the failure or closure of local services and facilities, contributing to poor health and lower education outcomes; and the lack of job and housing opportunities is leading to increased dissatisfaction and alienation and a deterioration of community life.
- 2.19 The issues, opportunities and aspirations referred to above are set out in detail in the theme evidence papers<sup>7</sup> that were prepared through research and surveys in advance of the drafting of the Neighbourhood Plan.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Weymouth-Housing-Needs-Assessment.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> LSOA = Lower Super Output Area

<sup>7</sup> [Weblink](#) to evidence papers

### 3. The Strategic Context

- 3.1 In preparing our Neighbourhood Plan we are obliged, by law<sup>8</sup>, to:
- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State
  - ensure the Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies in the Local Plan

#### National Planning Policy Framework

- 3.2 In preparing the Neighbourhood Plan we have been mindful of the current national planning framework. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policy to which all plans and proposals for development should comply. The NPPF includes, at its heart, a "*presumption in favour of sustainable development*" (NPPF para. 11). It states that "*neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies; and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies*" (NPPF para. 13). The NPPF goes on to say that "*strategic policies [in the Local Plan] should not extend to detailed matters that are more appropriately dealt with through neighbourhood plans*" (NPPF para. 21). Outside of strategic policies therefore, we are encouraged to shape and direct sustainable development in our area through our Neighbourhood Plan. "*Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct, and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan*" (NPPF para. 29).

#### West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan

- 3.3 The West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan was adopted by Weymouth and Portland Borough Council on 15 October 2015. The Borough and its Council was abolished on 1 April 2019 and, together with the other 5 districts outside the greater Bournemouth area, formed a new Dorset unitary authority. At the same time, a town council serving only Weymouth was formed, called Weymouth Town Council.
- 3.4 Dorset Council, the Local Planning Authority (LPA), is committed to preparing a new Local Plan for the county area. An extensive consultation on a first draft of a Dorset Local Plan took place in 2021. It was hoped that a new local Plan could be adopted in 2024. However, the 2021 consultation received a large response – more than 9,000 submissions. The LPA is required to give full consideration to all the responses in preparing the Local Plan. For that reason, the local development scheme<sup>9</sup> has been updated to reflect a change in timescale for the Dorset Council Local Plan and other planning documents, which would see the Dorset Local Plan being adopted in 2026, depending upon examination by a National Planning Inspector.
- 3.5 Until such time as it is superseded by a new Local Plan, the West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan remains the current adopted strategic plan with which the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan must generally conform.
- 3.6 Specifically, the policies in the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan should not conflict with the strategic policies in the prevailing Local Plan. Guidance on which policies should be considered as 'strategic' has been provided by the LPA. The Local Plan however does

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<sup>8</sup> PPG Para: 065 Reference ID: 41-065-20140306

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/282495/Dorset+Council+Local+Development+Scheme+-+October+2022.pdf/dae6a342-c6f2-a946-8cf2-3bdb87ef56ed?t=1664958659360>

acknowledge that a neighbourhood plan can contain policies that are contrary to the non-strategic policies in the Local Plan.

- 3.7 The Local Plan includes 16 specific strategic policies for the Weymouth area. The Neighbourhood Plan acknowledges the significance and status of these policies. Reference is made to them in this document and how policies in the Neighbourhood Plan relate positively to them.

#### Development Plan Documents

- 3.8 Aside from the Local Plan, the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan acknowledges other documents that form part of the area's development plan. The LPA may produce supplementary planning documents and guidance when necessary to cover specific topics, sites or to provide more detailed guidance to be taken into account in any planning decisions. At the time of writing there are few such documents that are current other than the Weymouth Town Centre Masterplan and SPD (2015)<sup>10</sup>. The AONB Management Plan has been of influence.

#### Climate and Ecological Emergency

- 3.9 The impacts of climate breakdown are causing serious damage around the world. There are global concerns about the enormous harm that a 2°C average rise in global temperatures would likely cause compared with a 1.5°C rise. Limiting global warming to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society, and the private sector. Dorset Council is committed to tackling climate change<sup>11</sup> and acknowledged the role it must play in helping the whole of Dorset become carbon-neutral by 2050 (at the latest). This includes working with town and parishes, community engagement, behaviour change, regional transport policy.
- 3.10 In response to the climate threat, Weymouth Town Council has declared a climate and ecological emergency and is committed to doing what it can to minimise carbon emissions in the Weymouth area, including making the Council's activities net zero carbon by 2030. Strong policies to cut emissions also have associated health, wellbeing, and economic benefits. The Neighbourhood Plan is recognised as one of the vehicles by which the town can respond to the climate and ecological emergency.
- 3.11 The Centre for Sustainable Energy believes that *"developing a neighbourhood plan offers a unique opportunity for your community to proactively set out a positive and ambitious vision for the future and increase your community's resilience in the face of the challenges associated with climate emergency"*<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup><https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/316276/Masterplan+Supplementary+Planning+Document.pdf/d05dd8a2-db75-e4d6-e672-f6bab21b4aea?version=1.0&t=1624787322334>

<sup>11</sup>[https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/281288/DORSET\\_COUNCIL\\_CE\\_STRATEGY.pdf/9627df99-ca43-cd5b-8b94-95aaea08a24e](https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/281288/DORSET_COUNCIL_CE_STRATEGY.pdf/9627df99-ca43-cd5b-8b94-95aaea08a24e)

<sup>12</sup><https://centreforsustainableenergy.ams3.digitaloceanspaces.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/18215641/neighbourhood-planning-in-a-climate-emergency-feb-2020.pdf>

This Section will be drafted and pre-approved by the Town Council prior to the publication of the Pre-Submission Version of the Neighbourhood Plan.

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#### 4. Purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.1 Neighbourhood planning is intended to give communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of the local area. National Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) says that, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, the Town Council, as a qualifying body can “*choose where it wants new homes, shops and offices to be built, have our say on what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided, and grant planning permission for the new buildings it wants to see go ahead*”<sup>13</sup>.

#### The Neighbourhood Planning Process

- 4.2 Whilst Weymouth Town Council is the *Qualifying Body*<sup>14</sup>, it was agreed by the Town Council that the neighbourhood planning process would be managed by a Steering Group comprising a majority of members of the public, up to eight, and four councillors.
- 4.3 The Steering Group approached the task with an open mind as to what the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan would cover and what its themes and purposes would be. The Steering Group adopted a ‘bottom-up’ approach starting with broad based open questions and then becoming more focused and specific as the process progressed.
- 4.4 It was understood from the outset that the Plan would have to meet the basic conditions i.e.:
- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State
  - contribute to the achievement of sustainable development
  - be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area – the West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan
  - not breach, and be otherwise compatible with, EU obligations
- 4.5 With these conditions in mind, and with the help of consultants, the Steering Group undertook research, consulted widely, and engaged with local communities to understand what is needed and what it is possible to influence and effect via a set of neighbourhood planning policies. It considered the policies of the Local Plan and assessed, based on an agreed set of aims and objectives, whether a more localised or detailed or up-to-date neighbourhood plan policy is required. In several instances, it was concluded that the policies of the Local Plan are sufficient. A neighbourhood plan policy has been only introduced where it will help ensure the area develops in the way we wish it to.
- 4.6 The resultant Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan sets out how we would like to see the area developed over the time span of the Plan and, through its policies, shapes and directs sustainable development that will benefit those that live, work, or visit in our area.

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<sup>13</sup> PPG Para: 001 Reference ID: 41-001-20190509

<sup>14</sup> A ‘qualifying body’ is defined by Section 38A(12) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Schedule 9 of the Localism Act as “*a Parish Council, or an organisation or body designated as a neighbourhood forum, authorised for the purposes of a neighbourhood development plan to act in relation to a neighbourhood area...*”.

## Community Involvement

- 4.7 It was understood from the outset that for the Plan to be truly representative of the planning issues of relevance in the area and to be the community's plan, it was necessary to carry out a thorough and on-going consultation process with those who live and work in the area and those that visited on a regular basis. It was also recognised that the Plan could not be properly developed without the input of organisations and agencies with a county, sub-regional or national remit and an interest in the area.
- 4.8 The process and the types of consultation exercise and discussion that was gone through, often with the expert help of Dorset Coastal Forum<sup>15</sup> and ECA<sup>16</sup> is documented in detail in a Consultation Statement which will accompany the Submission Version of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.9 It is inevitable when carrying out community consultation exercises that ask people their views on the living environment that a broad range of matters, good and not so good are raised. This certainly was the case in Weymouth. Quite a few of these matters are not land-use-related and therefore largely beyond the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan to address. Appendix C of this document will provide a summary of the various matters raised during consultation.
- 4.10 Throughout the development of the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan the intent has been to encourage and foster discussion and debate within the community about the issues and opportunities that face us and strive to achieve a community consensus. As we have developed the Plan, we have had to resolve competing demands for land use and the protection of land for community, and environmental reasons. This Plan represents the product of this process, and we think provides a balanced Plan protecting what is important to the people of Weymouth, enabling the necessary development for better jobs, and affordable homes whilst also seeking to reduce our impact on the climate and ecological emergency and increase our resilience.

## The Plan's Status

- 4.11 This Neighbourhood Plan, once made, will be a statutory development plan. That means that its policies will have significant influence when the local planning authority determines proposals for development submitted through planning applications. It will form the local tier of planning policy in the Weymouth area. It sits with the wider Local Plan, and other development plan documents, underneath the umbrella of national planning policy in the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), as the main planning policy documents relevant to the Weymouth neighbourhood area. Other important planning documents which govern specific issues are the Minerals and Waste Plans produced at the county-wide level.
- 4.12 The Neighbourhood Plan's policies cannot guarantee that a development proposal will be refused nor be granted permission, but the policies will carry significant weight, alongside policies of the NPPF and the West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan, or whatever supersedes it, when weighing up the appropriateness of the development proposal in question.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.dorsetcoast.com/>

<sup>16</sup> ECA Architecture and Planning

## 5. The Structure of the Plan

- 5.1 The Plan includes the neighbourhood planning vision, aims and objectives for the neighbourhood area, which have been developed following a dialogue with the community and shaped by existing planning policies and plans.
- 5.2 Having explained the rationale for these, the Plan sets out local planning policies on a topic-by-topic basis. The brief introduction to each topic is based on the findings of the research, surveys and consultations that have taken place as part of the neighbourhood planning process. More detail can be found in various documents on the Neighbourhood Plan website.
- 5.3 Under each topic heading we summarise the characteristics of that topic and the key issues which have been identified and how they are reflected in the agreed objectives the neighbourhood planning policies are seeking to achieve.
- 5.4 It should be noted that for all topics we have given due consideration to the policies of the West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan and been mindful of the emerging policies for the new Dorset Local Plan. We have generally only introduced a neighbourhood plan policy where we feel it strengthens or brings local specificity to the Local Plan.
- 5.5 For each neighbourhood plan policy that follows we set out the policy statement; and an explanation of and justification for the policy, including reference to the other planning policies in national and district planning documents which relate to that policy.
- 5.6 It is important to note that, while we have set out policies under topic headings, when development proposals are being assessed, the whole plan (i.e. all policies) should be taken into account, as policies in one topic may apply to proposals which naturally fit under another.
- 5.7 The Plan finishes with an explanation of how we will monitor and review the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan, and a Glossary which seeks to demystify the planning terminology used in this Plan.

### Companion Documents

- 5.8 Several documents will accompany the submission version Neighbourhood Plan. We are obliged by Neighbourhood Planning Regulation 15<sup>17</sup> to produce a **Consultation Statement**, which “*should reveal the quality and effectiveness of the consultation that has informed the plan proposals*”, and a **Basic Conditions Statement**, setting out how the Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions (see para. 4.4).
- 5.9 The Neighbourhood Plan must also be tested as it develops to help determine its positive or negative impact on the social, environmental, and economic character of the neighbourhood area. If significant environmental effects are considered possible, a **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** must be prepared in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) of regulation 12 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. In this respect, the Neighbourhood Plan has been screened in as requiring an SEA process because it supports allocations for new development in proximity to potentially environmentally sensitive locations, such as:

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/contents/made>

- locations with sensitivity for the historic environment, including the Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site, nationally designated listed buildings, scheduled monuments, and eleven conservation areas; and
- locations with sensitivity for biodiversity and geodiversity, including the Chesil Beach and The Fleet Ramsar (and Special Protection Area), Chesil and The Fleet Special Area of Conservation, and several Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

5.10 In light of this screening outcome, an SEA process is being undertaken to meet the requirements prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations). A Scoping Report<sup>18</sup> for the SEA has been prepared by independent specialist consultants, in consultation with the local planning authority and environmental agencies.

5.11 The potential impact of the Neighbourhood Plan on environmental sites of internationally designated areas such as Chesil Beach and the Fleet Ramsar (and SPA), Chesil and the Fleet SAC, The Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC, and SSSIs requires a screening for a **Habitat Regulations Assessment** (HRA). An HRA screening will be undertaken to understand the potential effects arising at internationally important biodiversity sites and any mitigation that may be required to avoid significant effects. The findings of the HRA will inform both plan-making and the SEA.

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<sup>18</sup> [Weblink to Scoping Report](#)

## 6. Vision, Aims and Objectives

### *Our Vision:*

*By 2038, Weymouth will be a resilient coastal community with a diverse range of jobs and homes which meet the needs of residents for present generations without compromising the needs of future generations. The unique identities of our local neighbourhoods will be attractive to all age groups and will foster healthy and happy lifestyles.*

- 6.1 The planning framework for the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan comprises:
- the aims - it is hoped that the Plan can help achieve; and
  - the objectives - that we expect the Plan to attain by the application of appropriate neighbourhood planning policies.
- 6.2 The vision, aims and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan were developed by a process of community consultation and analysis of the 'evidence' that was gathered under five theme headings. An initial set of aims<sup>19</sup> was prepared in response to the first consultation in Dec 2020/Jan 2021. These were assembled into five themes and intended to apply across the whole of Weymouth. Following subsequent consultations the aims were further refined and for each aim neighbourhood planning objectives were prepared.
- 6.3 The aims and objectives were agreed by the Steering Group on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022. It is based on these aims and objectives that the policies in the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan have been prepared.
- 6.4 Following strong community support, it has been decided that the objectives set out under the Environmental Sustainability Theme heading should underpin all policies. This supports the Town Council's declared Climate and Ecological Emergency. The four objectives are regarded as 'cross-cutting' and all policies in the Neighbourhood Plan will be tested against them<sup>20</sup>. This reflects local concern about the potential impact of climate change and a genuine statement of intent that:
- planning policies should require development to achieve high standards of environmental sustainability;
  - development proposals should set out in detail their green credentials; and
  - planning decisions taken locally should ensure that development contributes to a low carbon economy.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

***Aim: To ensure development achieves or surpasses national and local agreed targets relating to the sustainable use of land and buildings, net-zero carbon emissions, improving biodiversity, and ensuring future resilience to climate change impacts***

Cross-cutting objective(s):

**Carbon Neutrality** - All new developments are expected to minimise the emissions of greenhouse gases and be as near to carbon neutral as is reasonably possible

**Biodiversity Net Gain** - All new developments are expected to include measures to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the area

**Resource Efficiency** - All new developments are expected to maximise the sustainable use of natural resources and the re-use and recycling of resources, and minimise energy consumption and waste

**Climate Change Management** - All new developments are expected to result in no increase in the risk of flooding and provide adequate resilience to extreme weather events

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Weymouth-Neighbourhood-Plan-Vision-Mission-Aims.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> [Weblink to SA testing](#)

## Landscape and Greenspace

**Aim – To preserve and enhance our unique environments and sustain the distinctive landscapes and coastline**

### **Draft Objectives**

- *identify and protect key locations and special habitats*
- *promote development that complements and enhances the landscape and seascape character*
- *support required flood resilience measures*
- *facilitate responsible public access to the countryside and coastline*
- *identify and protect local green spaces*

**Aim - Encourage engagement with nature, enhance biodiversity and habitat conservation, and invest in our natural environment and ecosystems**

### **Draft Objectives**

- *conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the area*
- *protect wildlife habitats and key landscape features and characteristics*
- *protect existing and promote the provision of native tree/hedge species in new developments*
- *support sustainable local food production*
- *protect existing allotments and support new allotments that meet a local demand*
- *improve and extend green infrastructure*

**Aim - Create an integrated network of green and blue infrastructure, habitats, parks, water, and nature trails**

### **Draft Objectives**

- *protect important green gaps between settlement areas*
- *identify and protect local green spaces*
- *create and enhance green linkages between neighbourhoods and developed areas*
- *provide a network of accessible interconnected and accessible pedestrian and cycle routes*

## Development and Homes

**Aim - Provide a broad mix of homes, which align with housing need.**

### **Draft Objectives**

- *establish an appropriate mix of dwellings on new developments*
- *ensure housing development is suitable to its locality*
- *prioritise local housing needs*
- *maximise the provision of affordable housing*
- *meet the identified need for special housing*

**Aim - Support and encourage the reuse of brownfield sites**

### **Draft Objectives**

- *prioritise and facilitate brownfield site development*
- *support community housing initiatives*
- *encourage innovation in the provision of more homes*

**Aim - Remain responsive to local housing issues and opportunities**

### **Draft Objectives**

- *support appropriate modifications and extensions to existing homes*
- *control housing conversions and houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)*
- *restrict second homes and holiday lets*
- *ensure new homes are as energy efficient as possible*
- *identify opportunities for affordable housing schemes*

**Aim - Achieve the highest sustainability standards for all new development**

**Draft Objectives**

- *use sustainable building techniques and sustainable materials*
- *achieve the highest possible standards of energy efficiency*
- *create a safe and inclusive environment*

## Jobs and the Local Economy

### Aim - Protect and enhance employment provision

**Draft Objectives**

- *safeguard existing employment spaces*
- *support improvements and enhancements to existing business and industrial areas*
- *support new employment uses in suitable locations*

1. **Policy** – that protects existing employment sites and buildings unless there is no potential for either reoccupation or redevelopment for employment purposes
2. **Policy** – that offers in principle support for improvements and enhancements to employment sites and buildings
3. **Policy** – that supports the change of use for employment purposes subject to strict criteria to protect the local environment and amenity
4. **Policy** – that provides in principle support for development which provides additional employment opportunities in appropriate locations and on sites with good accessibility and close to other existing local facilities
5. **Policy** – that allocates specific sites for employment purposes subject to a range of site and area-specific criteria
6. **Policy** – that promotes ‘green jobs and technology

### Aim - Preserve and enhance Weymouth’s unique built and maritime heritage, leisure, and entertainment offering to provide a thriving local economy

**Draft Objectives**

- *control town centre uses and development in the interest of its character and vitality*
- *support development and uses that contribute positively to the local economy*
- *encourage tourism, arts, and culture across Weymouth*
- *promote the full use of properties in the town centre*

### Aim - Encourage the creation a wide range of jobs and training opportunities

**Draft Objectives**

- *promote mixed use development such as live/work units*
- *support the provision of new education and training facilities*

### Aim - Promote and facilitate the production and use of renewable energy

**Draft Objectives**

- *promote community-scale renewable energy schemes and initiatives*
- *identify suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure*

## Communities

### **Aim - Celebrate the unique character and culture of each local neighbourhood**

#### **Draft Objectives**

- *reinforce the unique character of each local neighbourhood*
- *promote sustainable neighbourhoods*
- *protect existing community facilities*
- *support the provision of community hubs*
- *support community-based initiatives and enterprise*
- *encourage the provision of new cultural and leisure facilities*
- *maximise the reuse of buildings*
- *create more interesting and appealing public spaces*
- *protect green spaces*
- *improve the value and appeal of the town centre and neighbourhood centres*

### **Aim - Allocate sustainable sites for new homes and jobs which are within walking distance to town or a neighbourhood centre**

#### **Draft Objectives**

- *set out the community's preferred development strategy*
- *identify suitable development sites*
- *ensure new development is well connected*
- *ensure the necessary infrastructure is in place in good time*
- *promote safe and sustainable travel routes and modes*

### **Aim - Protect and enhance the distinctive historic character of the conservation areas and other heritage locations**

#### **Draft Objectives**

- *protect historic buildings, sites, and structures from harm*
- *respect the scale, style and setting of the site, with special reference to historic townscapes*
- *identity and safeguard non-designated heritage buildings, structures, and sites*
- *ensure development is sympathetic to and enhances the character of the surrounding area*
- *promote high quality public realm enhancements*

### **Aim - Increase the provision and use of Weymouth's open spaces and community facilities**

#### **Draft Objectives**

- *ensure recreational spaces are sufficient to meet local demands*
- *provide sufficient areas of green space within new developments*
- *meet or exceed national standards for play spaces and sports pitches*
- *support improvements and enhancements to existing recreation and sports facilities that help ensure all needs are met*

### **Aim - Reduce car movements and encourage sustainable transport modes**

#### **Draft Objectives**

- *support public and community transport initiatives*
- *support measures to reduce traffic congestion and improve road safety*
- *support traffic management measures for the town centre*

### **Aim - Plan for a greater use of sustainable transport**

#### **Draft Objectives**

- *improve and extend the footpath and cycle network*
- *facilitate electric vehicle charging facilities*
- *support the provision of additional facilities for bikes, scooters and electric cars and boats*



## 7. Environmental Sustainability

- 7.1 One of the overarching aims of land use planning is encapsulated by the **NPPF environment objective** *“to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy”*.
- 7.2 There is no doubting the significance of this aim particularly for a coastal location, as it is certain that we are facing a Climate and Ecological Emergency and its consequences. In response to this, Weymouth Town Council declared a local climate and ecological emergency in 2019. It committed to making the Council’s activities net zero carbon by 2030, which included ensuring all planning comments to Dorset Council are consistent with a shift to net-zero carbon by 2030.
- 7.3 Consistent with the Town Council’s declaration and action plan is the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan that promotes sustainable development and is pro-active in its approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. This is in line with the requirements of NPPF para. 153, which demands that *“policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure”*.
- 7.4 In preparing the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan, the Steering Group carried out a series of community consultations regarding the priorities and policies of the Plan. The community’s response to neighbourhood planning in a climate emergency has been encouraging and very consistent. In 2021 around a third of survey respondents indicated that climate change was an important issue that the Neighbourhood Plan should address. In 2022 a set of draft aims relating to tackling and mitigating the effects of climate change were overwhelmingly supported at three community events and in an online survey. When asked what the biggest climate and ecological threats to Weymouth communities were, the following featured highly in the response, air pollution, flooding, extreme weather events, loss of biodiversity, water quality and availability. Based on these concerns a set of environmental objectives, relevant to land use planning was prepared:
- All new developments should minimise the emissions of greenhouse gases and be as near to carbon neutral as possible
  - All new developments should include measures to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the area
  - All new developments should maximise the sustainable use of natural resources, the re-use and recycling of resources, and minimise energy consumption and waste
  - All new developments should result in no increase in flood risk and provide adequate resilience to extreme weather events

- 7.5 The objectives were presented to the community in January 2023 as “*strategic environmental objectives*” that would, if supported, “*have influence on all aspects of the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan*”. All four objectives received a substantial endorsement from the people of Weymouth. On that basis it has been agreed to adopt them for the Neighbourhood Plan and, in recognition of their significance and relevance to the most pressing issue of our times, regarded them as cross-cutting objectives, which should influence the content and interpretation of all the policies in the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan.
- 7.6 How the strategic environmental objectives are intended to impact on development is explained on a policy-by-policy basis in the Neighbourhood Plan. It is acknowledged that there are restrictions on the extent that high standards can be imposed by planning policy. In many instances therefore we have only been able to advocate and encourage the achievement of standards and finishes higher than are statutorily required. We must rely on the development industry to recognise what we aspire to as a community, and what we expect from new development, and urge them to work with us to achieve the strategic environmental objectives for the sake of the town, its inhabitants, and visitors.
- 7.7 To guide development proposals in their attainment of the environmental objectives, the Steering Group will be requesting that the Town Council considers preparing and adopting a set of ‘Strategic Environment Targets’. These would be consistent with national policy, but based on what is considered relevant and achievable locally. They will be contained in a separate document, which should be referred to when preparing development proposals. The document will present what are considered to be acceptable and reasonable targets for each of the strategic environmental objectives in the current situation, which we will expect developers to achieve, and hope they will exceed whenever possible.
- 7.8 The Strategic Environment Targets document should be monitored on an annual basis using a recognised measurement tool and be kept up to date throughout the plan period. It should take account of changing national policy and targets; what has taken place and developer’s feedback; and what appears to be possible and achievable. But given the climate emergency, it should remain firm in intent and its duty to exert whatever influence it can on addressing the impacts of climate change and securing the future resilience of our area and communities.
- 7.9 “*Any plan made now that does not consider radical reductions in carbon and help build our resilience to things like flooding will simply not be fit for purpose.*” - Centre for Sustainable Energy Guide to Neighbourhood Planning in a Climate Emergency 2020<sup>21</sup>
- 7.10 The environmental sustainability of the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan will be put to the test firstly through the SEA process (see para. 5.9) but also through a self-assessment exercise following guidance from the Centre for Sustainable Energy<sup>22</sup>. The results of the testing and how policies are subsequently adjusted, will be included in the appendices to this Plan.

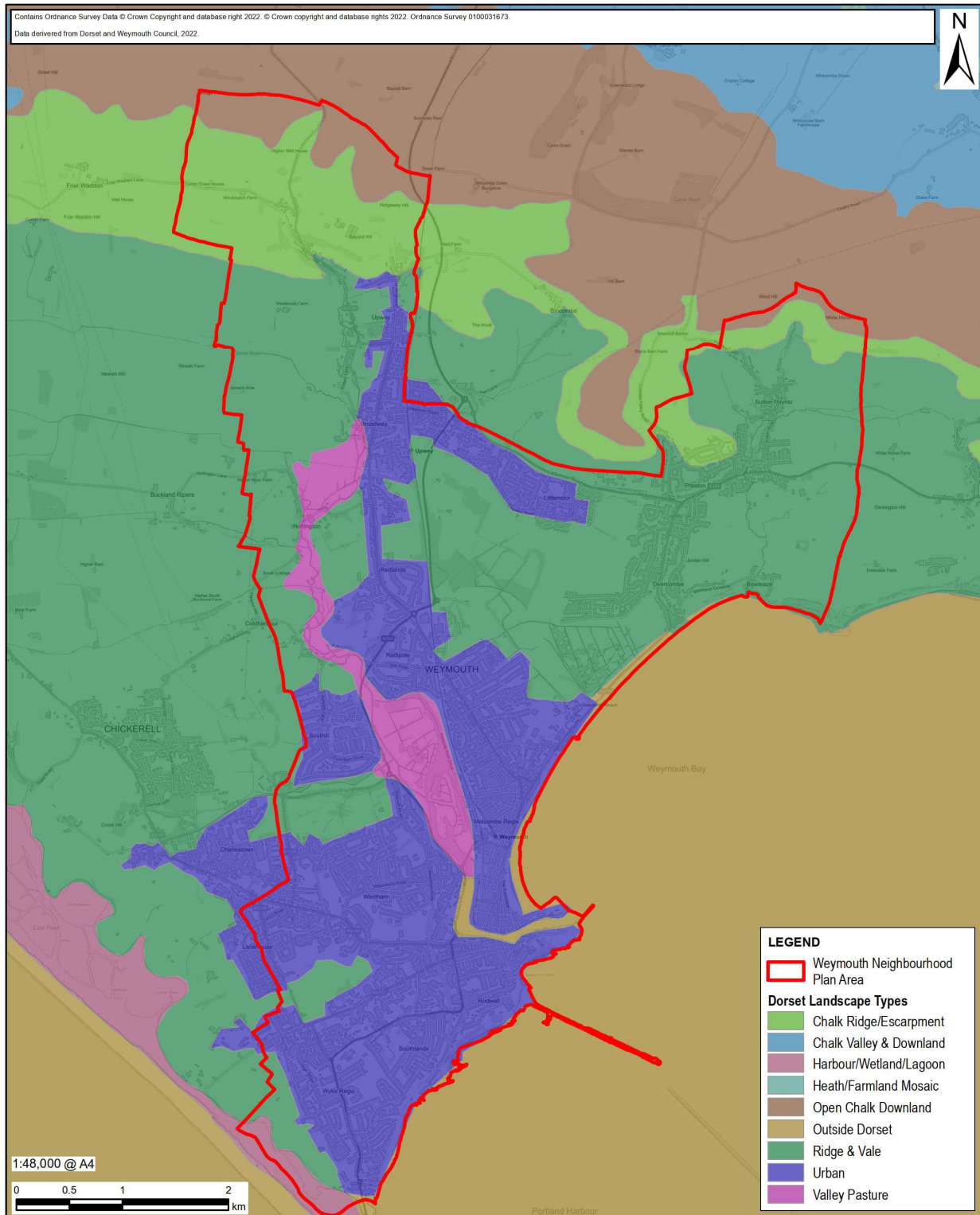
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<sup>21</sup> <https://centreforsustainableenergy.ams3.digitaloceanspaces.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/18215641/neighbourhood-planning-in-a-climate-emergency-feb-2020.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> <https://centreforsustainableenergy.ams3.digitaloceanspaces.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/18215641/how-green-is-my-plan-urban-suburban.pdf>

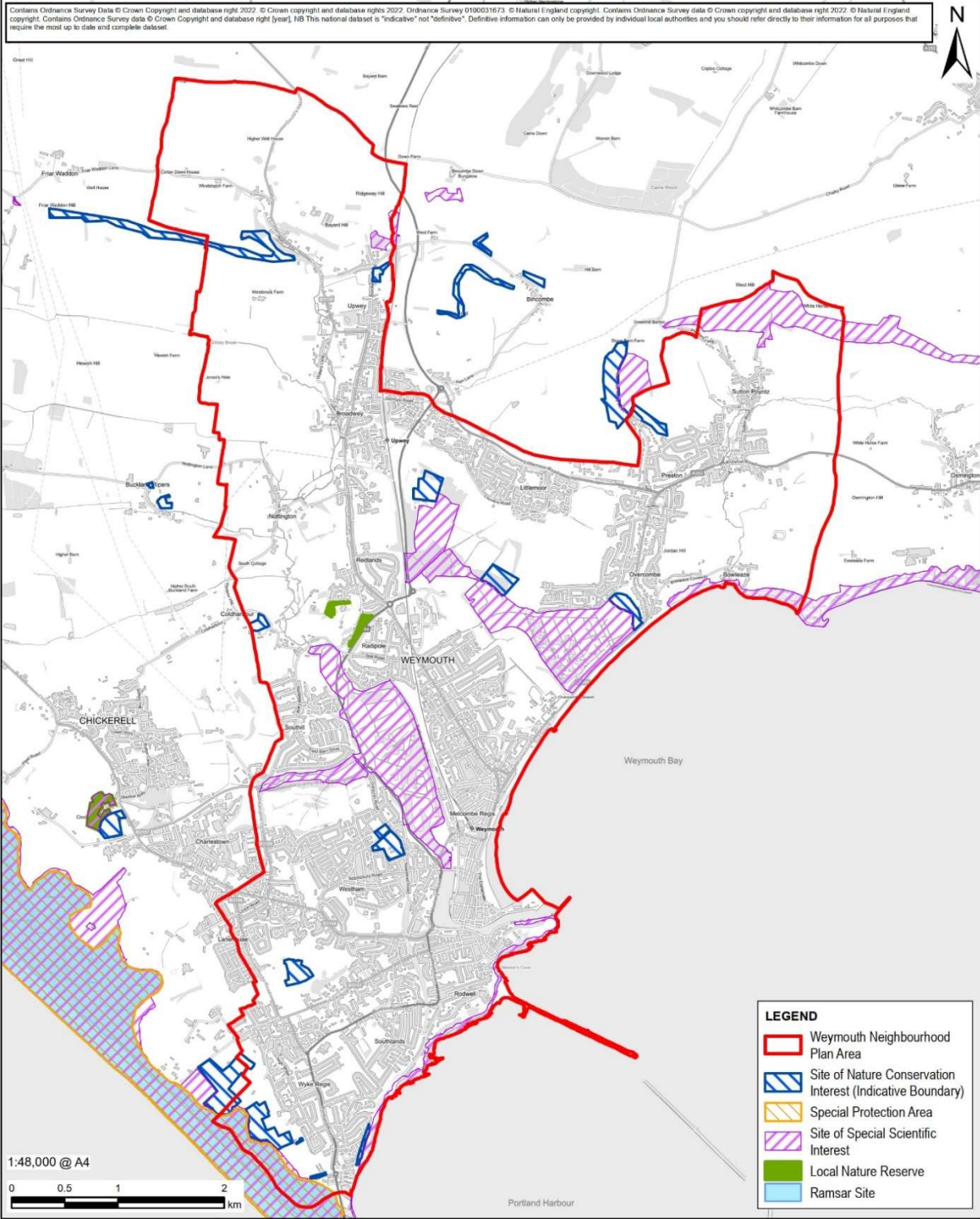
## 8. Landscape and Greenspace

8.1 The neighbourhood area covered by the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan has many areas of countryside and greenspace. Map 4 demonstrates just how much of the area has a defined landscape character that is not urban.



Map 4: Landscape Types

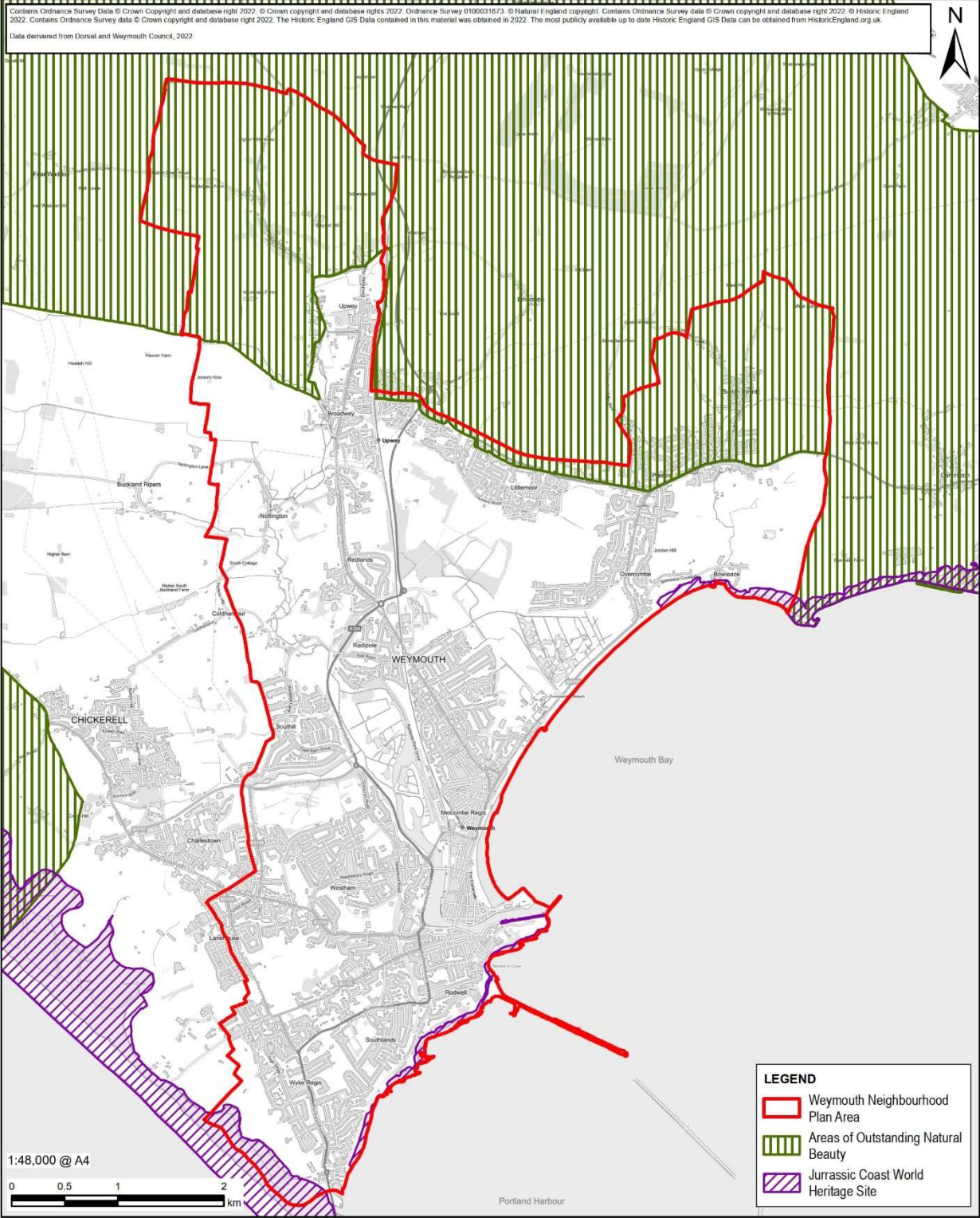
8.2 Within these landscape character area are extensive tracts of SSSI's<sup>23</sup> and local nature reserves (see Map 7) many of which contain important water-based habitats. Much of the coastline is part of the Jurassic Coast, World Heritage site. Additionally, the chalk streams of the River Wey and River Jordan are of great habitat importance.



8.3 It is one of the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan to protect and enhance our unique environments and sustain the distinctive landscapes and coastline.

<sup>23</sup> SSI = Site of Scientific Interest

8.4 The Dorset AONB includes those parts of the neighbourhood area northwest of Upwey and around Sutton Poyntz (see Map 5). The Neighbourhood Plan provides an opportunity to embed AONB Management Plan<sup>24</sup> land-use objectives and policies into the statutory development plan.



Map 5: AONB and Jurassic Coast WHS

8.5 Open greenspace is very important to the sense of health and wellbeing experienced by the people of the area. 64% of respondents to the 2022 Community Survey expressed high regard for the area’s countryside and parks.

<sup>24</sup> [https://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/DAONB\\_Managementplan.pdf](https://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/DAONB_Managementplan.pdf)

- 8.6 The area is blessed with 91 hectares of publicly accessible green space, which not only provides for the daily recreation needs of the permanent residents of Weymouth but also offer leisure and recreation opportunities to the town's many visitors. Weymouth's gardens and play areas are the most frequently used leisure facilities in the town. From play areas and skate parks to tennis courts and tranquil walks, there's something for everyone. Each year the gardens play host to several events, including smaller scale community fairs to open-air musical concerts.
- 8.7 Weymouth Town Council manages nine public parks and gardens. Five of these have Friends Groups who organise events to promote the parks. Two of the parks have received Green Flag awards. These spaces provide natural beauty in the town and also support leisure and physical activities for the young and old. In the 2022 Community Survey 55% expressed satisfaction with the parks and gardens as they are; illustrating that people care but there is opportunity for improvement.
- 8.8 Areas of woodland are few and small, for example in the Lorton Valley, at Redlands and along the Rodwell Trail. The only area of designated 'Ancient Woodland' is at Two Mile Coppice.
- 8.9 The network of public rights of way is an important facet of the open space offer and provides connections and corridors between open spaces. We are blessed with many miles of public rights of way including a section of the South West Coast Path and numerous bridleways that provide links between settlement areas and access to the countryside. There are several important trails such as the Wey Valley Riverside Walks the Rodwell Trail and the Jubilee Trail, passing through Upwey.
- 8.10 The farmland of the neighbourhood area is largely treeless with small pockets of woodland. The open fields on the slopes are divided by sparse hedgerows, post and wire fencing and occasional dry-stone walls. The soil is relatively thin and much of it is classed as Grade 3 agricultural land. It may not be the most productive farmland, but it is important for the character and setting it provides and the opportunity for local people to connect easily with the countryside.
- 8.11 The area's greenspaces play a significant role in flood alleviation. Many are low-lying and prone to flooding. The main sources of flood risk to Weymouth town centre are water tide levels in the harbour and waves over topping the Esplanade. High tidal levels also exacerbate flooding upstream of Westham Bridge. The River Wey floods if high tide coincides with prolonged heavy rainfall. Another risk arises from silt deposition in Radipole lake. At high tide, the nature reserve is tide locked and acts as the flood defence, however as the lake gets shallower the capacity to store water will decrease.
- 8.12 The Wey Valley villages of Upwey, Broadwey, Nottingham, and Radipole are all prone to surface water flooding which can be exacerbated by high tides. In the Upper Wey Valley groundwater flooding is also a frequent occurrence. In general flood patterns follow the River Wey and the River Jordan which flows through Sutton Poyntz and Preston to Bowleaze Cove. The Environment Agency has introduced flood mitigation areas in the Wey Valley and taken action to mitigate flooding on the River Jordan in Preston. In both areas, groundwater flooding is a frequent occurrence during periods of high rainfall due to overflow of the storm water drains.

**Draft Policy WNP01: Shoreline Protection**

Development proposals, in areas designated by the South Devon and Dorset Shoreline Management Plan to be protected ('hold the line'), specifically to prevent coastal erosion or flooding, and protect property and businesses will be supported.

- 8.13 Taking account of coastal change resulting from natural forces and climate change is consistent with the NPPF. However, para. 171 of the NPPF requires plans to avoid inappropriate development in vulnerable areas, as well as not exacerbating the impacts of physical changes to the coast.
- 8.14 The South Devon and Dorset Shoreline Management Plan (SMP)<sup>25</sup> sets out what is agreed to be the most sustainable approach to managing the flood and coastal erosion risks to the coastline over the next 20, 50 and 100 years. It is a policy document for the planning of sustainable coastal management. It takes account of other existing planning initiatives and legislative requirements and is intended to inform wider strategic planning.
- 8.15 Redcliff Point to Portland Bill is recognised by the SMP as *one of the more heavily developed stretches of coastline within the SMP area, incorporating the key service and tourism centre of Weymouth and the Isle of Portland. The area also has several nature designations for both geological and biological reasons. This whole stretch of coast is heavily dependent on any changes to the breakwaters. Policies developed in this area have assumed that the breakwaters will remain and be maintained. A key driver of policy in this area is the continued protection of commercial and social assets, which requires the continued defence of the shoreline for much of this area. This will, however, result in coastal squeeze of intertidal habitats against fixed sea defences. At Bowleaze Cove and Preston Beach, the long-term vision is to provide more sustainable defences through realignment of existing defences.*
- 8.16 Policy WNP01 supports development necessary to prevent coastal erosion or flooding if it is consistent with the 'hold-the-line' approach of the SMP and any approved coastal management strategy. In 2019 the Weymouth Beach Management Study<sup>26</sup> was adopted by Dorset Council. It sets out the flood and coastal erosion risk management activities required along this section of coast.

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/countryside-coast-parks/beaches-and-coast/coastal-protection-and-management/shoreline-management-plans.aspx>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/282053/Weymouth+Beach+Management+Plan.pdf/31ed71d2-bf00-4ac5-27c9-1c3b31fef23e?version=1.0&t=1619384325215>

## **Draft Policy WNP02: Protection and Enhancement of Wildlife Habitats and Areas**

Development proposals should:

- i. demonstrate that they have no adverse effects on the integrity or continuity of landscape features and habitats of local and national importance for wild flora and fauna
- ii. contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by providing net gains in biodiversity

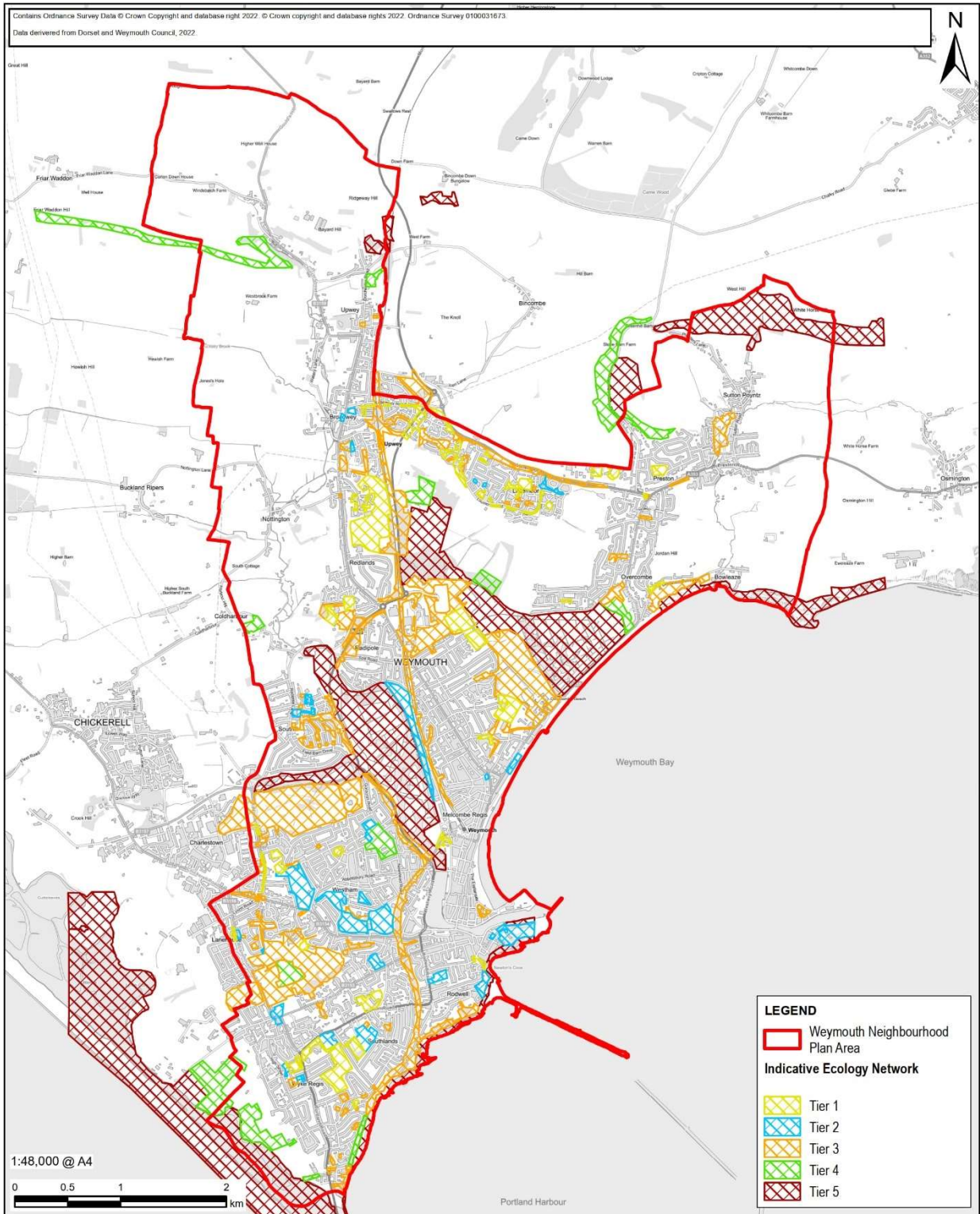
Proposals to protect or restore any existing features, or to create new features of wildlife habitat – particularly where these form linkages between habitats within or beyond the site – will be supported.

- 8.17 Part of the neighbourhood area is within the formally designated Dorset Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB). In accordance with Policy ENV 1 of the Local Plan any development proposals within or likely to affect the character, special qualities, or natural beauty of the AONB should be compatible with the objectives of the Dorset AONB Management Plan<sup>27</sup>.
- 8.18 There are many statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites in the neighbourhood area including several sites of special scientific interest (SSSI): for example Radipole Lake, Tumbledown Farm (part), Bowleaze Cove, Whitehorse Hill, Upwey Quarries, land at Nothe Fort, Portland Harbour Shore.
- 8.19 Bowleaze Cove has a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) on the coast and forms part of the South West Coastal Path. Additionally, there are Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation such as Radipole community woodland and Radipole school. There are also many Sites of Nature Conversation Interest (SNCI).
- 8.20 Chesil Beach and the Fleet which lie immediately adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan boundary is a RAMSAR site, SAC, SPA and SSSI as well as open access land.
- 8.21 The NPPF para. 175 makes clear that great weight should be given to “*conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection*”. Regarding recognised wildlife areas, “*plans should distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries*” NPPF (para. 176).
- 8.22 Policy WNP02 recognises that development proposals will come forward that may impinge on ecologically sensitive sites in the neighbourhood area. Such development proposals will only receive support if it is shown that they will have no adverse effect on areas and habitats recognised as having ecological or geological value. These areas are shown on Map 6. Many are non-statutory sites, which include county wildlife sites (CWS), county geology sites (CGS), roadside verge audit biological sites and ancient woodlands. These are of, at least, county importance for wildlife/geology in Dorset and are all recognised and given weight through the planning process.

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/the-dorset-aonb/management-plan/>





Map 6: Ecology Network

Tier	Designation	Description
5	National sites: SSSI	Areas of outstanding habitat designated nationally
4	Local Sites: SNCI, LNR	Areas of good natural/semi-natural habitat
3	Sub-SNCI	Semi-natural habitat predominantly native species usually including a few DN.

		May include wildlife areas, churchyards with good floral diversity, permanent pasture, water meadows, wildlife corridors and areas within the floodplain
<b>2</b>	Gardens and allotments	Managed as gardens, predominantly non-native species, good nectar plants. May include churchyards with limited floral diversity, good road verges, avenues with mature trees and ground flora, orchards and unconnected areas within the floodplain with poor flora or other interests.
<b>1</b>	Amenity grassland	Poor native flora, often Lolium dominated grassland. May include sports fields, play parks, wide road verges with poor floral diversity

8.23 The scale and extent of development within these areas should be limited and development within their setting should be mindfully located and designed to avoid/minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas. Guidance on the status and significance of local wildlife areas and other areas of local countryside should be sought by developers from the appropriate agencies prior to planning application. Further guidance on how to achieve a gain for nature within development sites is available in the Dorset Biodiversity Guide.

8.24 Development proposals should accord with the mitigation strategy and hierarchy of Policy ENV 2 'Wildlife and Habitats' of the Local Plan.

### **Draft Policy WNP03: Areas of Nature Conservation**

Existing areas of nature conservation, such as country parks, nature parks and nature reserves should be retained and protected from any negative impacts likely to arise from development.

Projects that improve the interpretation and accessibility of the area will be supported, provided measures are in place to protect wildlife and enhance biodiversity and important habitats.

Support is given to the recognition of a new nature conservation area at Wey Valley Watermeadows on land shown on Map 8 tbd.

8.25 The neighbourhood area is fortunate to have several designated areas of nature conservation (see Map 7), which are managed with public access in mind. The following have all been the subject of measures to protect and enhance the diversity habitats and wildlife inhabitants.

- Lorton Meadows
- Lorton Valley Nature Park
- RSPB Lodmoor
- Lodmoor Country Park
- RSPB Radipole Lake

Each has its own special characteristics; each has had to find ways to accommodate regular visitors and tourists who are attracted to them.

8.26 Policy WEY16 of the Local Plan allocates land between Preston Beach Road and Southdown Ridge, to extend Lorton Valley Nature Park “*to promote sustainable tourism, management of conservation and heritage interest, enhancement of public access and open spaces and opportunities for volunteer and community involvement*”. The Nature Park not only protects important habitats and helps to maintain the area’s biodiversity it serves as an education resource and a destination for trail walkers and other visitors. Local Plan Policy WEY8 is permissive of new tourism and recreation facilities at Lodmoor Country Park as long as they do not harm the character or natural environment.

8.27 Policy WNP03 not only protects existing designated areas of nature conservation, it also supports the recognition of other areas where the purpose of protecting an important natural environment is clear and where enhancements will not only help safeguard the special character of the site, they can provide for an increase in responsible public access.

8.28 The Wey Valley Watermeadows comprise approximately 5ha of land beside the River Wey (see Map 8 tbd). They are essentially two fields with open access that have long been used on an informal, and generally responsible, basis by ramblers, dog walkers, and horse riders, who take advantage of the local rights of way. The area is also known for its wildlife value and attracts naturalists on a regular basis. Otters and deer have been seen, small mammals live in the meadow tussock grass and are preyed upon by kestrel, owls, and buzzards. Kingfisher, swallows, and martins’ nest in the area.

## Map 7: Areas of Nature Conservation

- 8.29 The area features in the River Wey Walks promoted by the River Wey Society and provides one of the few walking areas beside the river where the path is not bounded by fences. Community consultation has affirmed the high regard that local people have for the area in question.
- 8.30 Policy WNP03 seeks to secure the future of the Watermeadows as an important part of the local ecological network. The policy is permissive of minor works to ensure its status is recognised, such as signage, and improvements and additions in the interests of accessibility and interpretation. Such measures could be secured through developer contributions in the interest of increasing biodiversity. Part of the area is within the Radipole Conservation Area.

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#### **Draft Policy WNP04: Landscape and Wildlife Corridors**

Landscape and Wildlife Corridors indicated on Map 10 should be protected from development, other than that required to maintain, enhance, or interpret their landscape or wildlife purposes.

All development proposals within the areas recognised as Landscape and Wildlife Corridors on Map 10 should meet the requirements of the Dorset Biodiversity Appraisal Protocol.

Wherever appropriate, development proposals should demonstrate they take the opportunity to enhance and extend the network of Landscape and Wildlife Corridors as a means of mitigating development impact with a focus on increasing biodiversity, wildlife value and general amenity value of these corridors.

Where Landscape or Wildlife Corridors are disrupted as an unavoidable consequence of adjacent or nearby development, developers will be required to minimise the impact and to carry out remedial action in accordance with a scheme that shall be secured by way of a planning obligation.

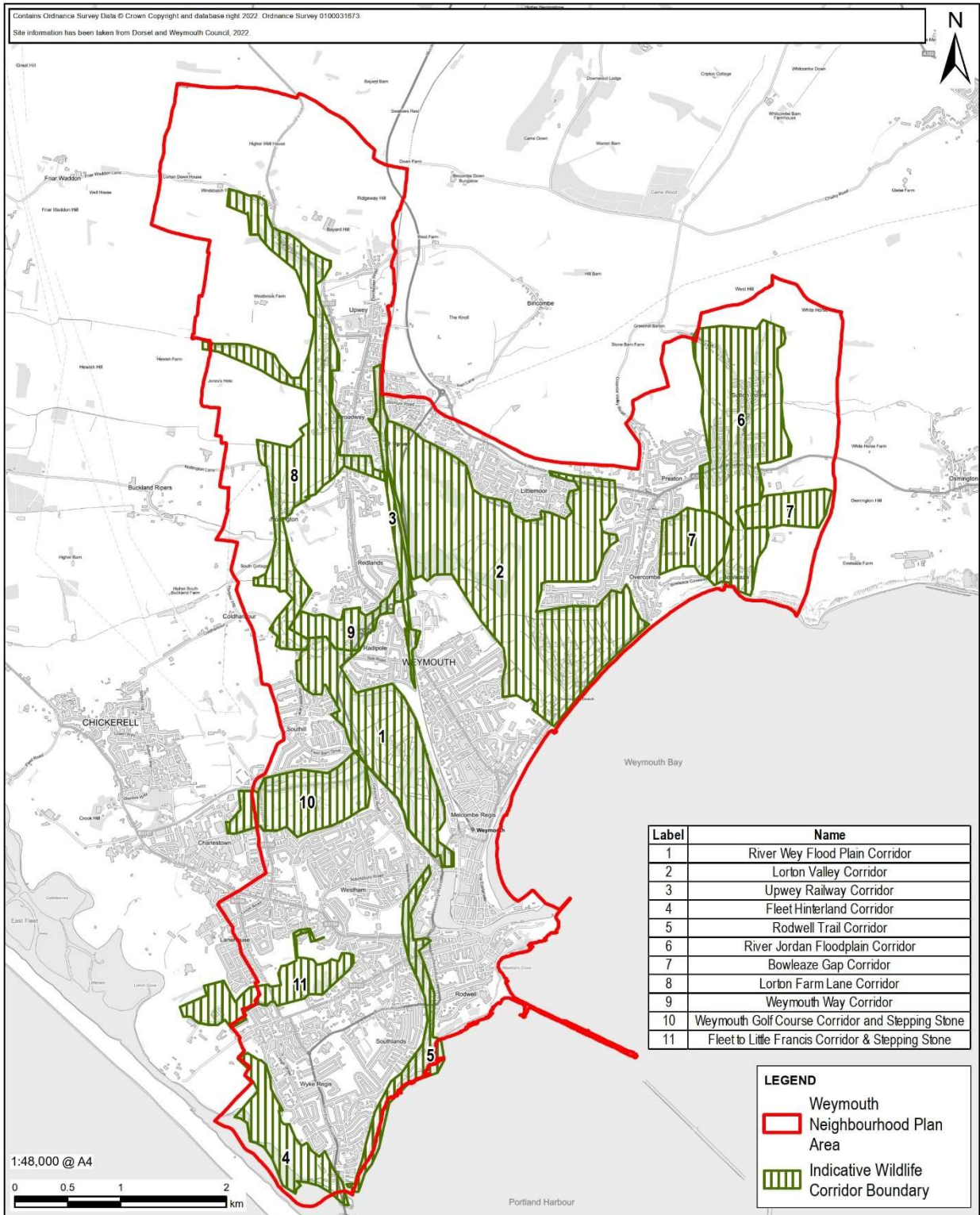
- 8.31 Whilst the neighbourhood area is predominantly urban, it includes many significant wildlife areas and habitats. In 2010 it was acknowledged<sup>28</sup> that these were relatively isolated from each other and from the wider countryside by urban development. Since that time much attention has been paid to identifying, protecting, and enhancing the areas wildlife corridors and stepping stone habitats in the interests of maintaining biodiversity and maintaining the migratory bird routes. In 2020 a follow-up study<sup>29</sup> showed improvements in some areas and noted some losses because of development.
- 8.32 Map 9 shows the recognised Wildlife Corridors of the neighbourhood area. These are protected from development. Any development that does take place within these areas should be justified on the basis of necessity and satisfying the requirements of the Dorset Biodiversity Appraisal Protocol (DBAP)<sup>30</sup>. The DBAP applies to all development sites of 0.1ha or greater in size, or where there are known protected species or important habitats/habitat features.

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<sup>28</sup> <https://dorsetlnp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Weymouth-Portland-Corridors-and-Stepping-Stones-Report-2010.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> <https://dorsetlnp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Weymouth-Portland-Addendum-Sept-2020.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/countryside-coast-parks/countryside-management/biodiversity/the-dorset-biodiversity-appraisal-protocol.aspx>



Map 9: Wildlife Corridors

8.33 Development that takes place within, or has an impact on, the Landscape and Wildlife Corridors should minimise damage and disruption and take every opportunity to enhance and/or extend the network of Landscape and Wildlife Corridors. In accordance with the Environment Act (2021), all DBAP applications are required to provide a measurable biodiversity net gain of at least 10%.

### **Draft Policy WNP05: Ecological Impact of Development**

All proposals for new development should consider potential ecological impacts at an early stage in their design consistent with best practice guidance and identify the array of net gain measures (e.g. bat tiles, bird boxes, retention of hedges and other heritage boundaries, green roofs, rainwater gardens etc) to be included in the development. Proposals for development must deliver at least a 10% net gain in biodiversity wherever possible.

- 8.34 The NPPF para. 180 says that *“opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate”*.
- 8.35 Local Plan Policy ENV 8. requires developers to take *“opportunities to incorporate and enhance biodiversity in and around developments will be encouraged”*. It is expected that the new Local Plan will be much firmer in its biodiversity requirements. It may compel developers to deliver a minimum of 10% net gain in biodiversity through the restoration and re-creation of habitats and provide for the long-term monitoring and management of biodiversity features.
- 8.36 The policy in the new Local Plan will be informed by the Environment Act 2021 under which all planning permissions granted in England (with a few exemptions) will have to deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain. Biodiversity net gain (BNG) delivers measurable improvements for biodiversity by creating or enhancing habitats in association with development. BNG can be achieved on-site, off-site or through a combination of on-site and off-site measures. BNG will be measured using Defra’s biodiversity metric and habitats will need to be secured for at least 30 years.
- 8.37 Policy WNP05 requires development proposals to demonstrate that the possible ecological impacts have been considered **and measured** as part of the design process and, in accordance with guidance available from the local planning authority, several measures have been integrated into the development to achieve the required biodiversity gains.

### **Draft Policy WNP06: Trees, Woodlands, and Hedgerows**

Development proposals should avoid the loss of or damage to trees, woodland, orchards, or hedgerows that contribute positively to the character, biodiversity, and amenity of an area.

Development proposals which could result in loss or damage to aged or veteran trees will not be supported. Where it is unavoidable, development proposals must provide for appropriate replacement planting on the site with an indigenous species along with a method statement for the ongoing care and maintenance of that planting. Such replacement planting should at least be on a two-for-one basis.

New development within the proximity of existing mature trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order will be expected to have an arboricultural method statement in place before any development commences. This will detail tree protection strategies to be employed during construction.

A Tree Survey should be submitted as an integral part of all planning applications where there are trees within the application site, or on land adjacent to it that could influence or be affected by development.

- 8.38 Areas of woodland within the neighbourhood area are generally small, for example in the Lorton Valley, at Redlands and along the Rodwell Trail. The only area of designated Ancient Woodland is at Two Mile Coppice. Street trees are relatively sparse, estimated at 1,500 across the entire area. The Weymouth Neighbourhood Area has tree cover of 5-6%, compared with the average tree canopy cover in England for all trees estimated to be 12.8% and 38% in the EU, according to a recent study by Friends of the Earth.
- 8.39 It is therefore important that where trees are lost for whatever reason they are replaced with an appropriate species, at a ratio greater than one-for-one. Weymouth Town Council is committed to planting 1,000 trees by 2025 as part of its Biodiversity Management Plan<sup>31</sup>. There are also a few traditional orchard sites that satisfy the definition<sup>32</sup> of a priority habitat.
- 8.40 Areas of established trees, particularly veteran trees, and traditional orchards, need to be protected from further loss to land development if the character of the area landscape is not to be further eroded.
- 8.41 Established hedgerows too are an important feature of the landscape as historical boundaries, for their amenity value and are a priority biodiversity habitat. The loss of historical boundary hedges and dry-stone walls on agricultural land is seen as detrimental to conservation of the landscape. Agricultural hedges have some protection from the Hedgerows Regulations 1997.

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<sup>31</sup> Weblink to WBMP

<sup>32</sup> UK BAP Definition [Traditional orchards (jncc.gov.uk)]



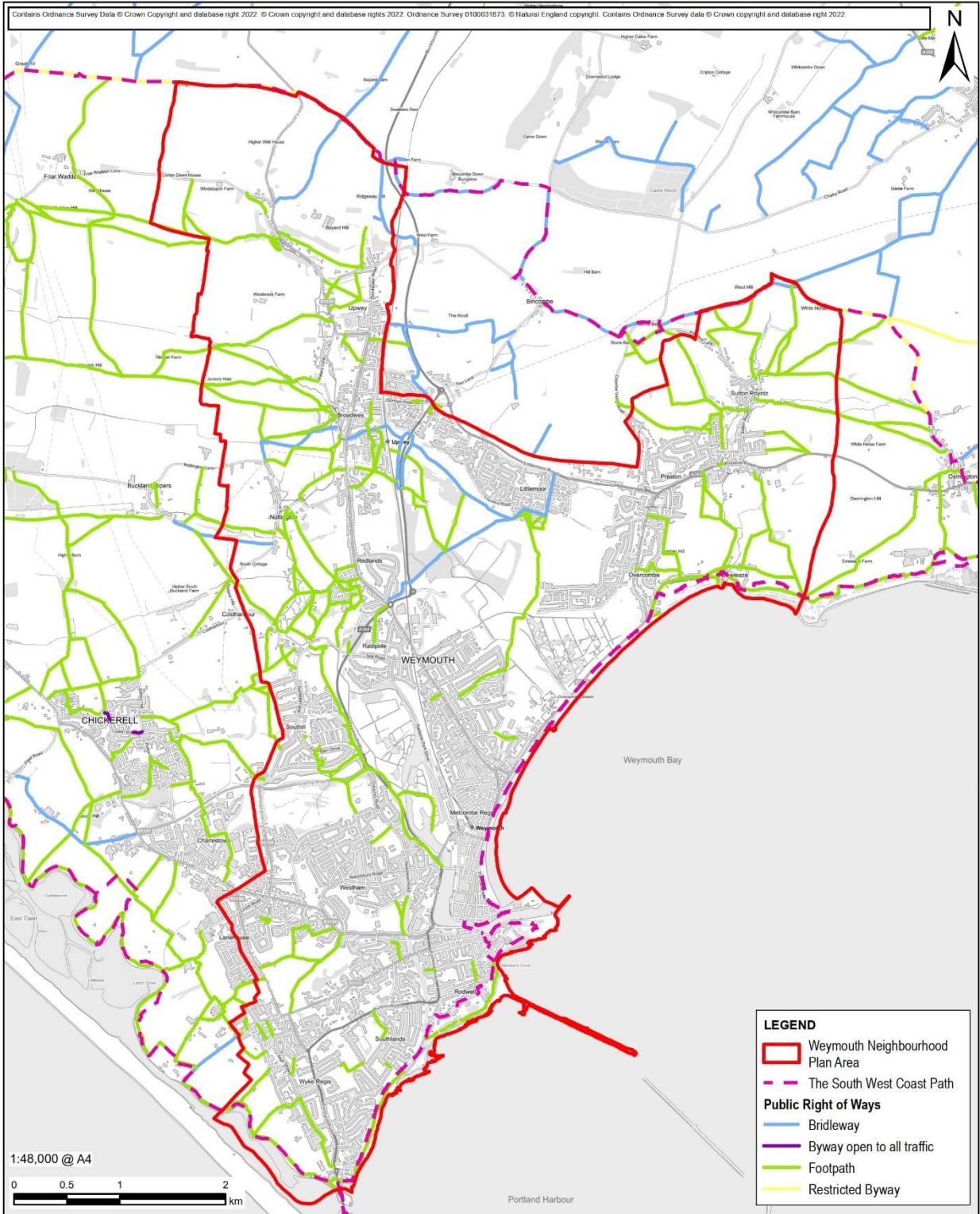
### **Draft Policy WNP07: Footpaths, Rights of Way, and Bridleways**

Footpaths, rights of way and bridleways should be protected from development. Proposals for new footpaths and trails and countryside access facilities, or to improve those that exist, will be supported where it can be demonstrated that consideration has been given to making the facility accessible for disabled people and there is no adverse or harmful impact on statutorily protected species or habitats.

- 8.42 The NPPF (para. 100) says “*planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access*”. Whilst the PPG<sup>33</sup> advises that “*public rights of way form an important component of sustainable transport links and should be protected or enhanced*”.
- 8.43 The network of footpaths, rights of way, and bridleways in the area is shown on Map 10. Several have been promoted in local guides such as the Rodwell Trail and the series of Littlemoor walking maps and information, which aid local people and visitors alike to appreciate the ecology and heritage adjacent to the paths. Weymouth Town Council will continue to promote the value of the footpaths to community wellbeing. A cross connection footpath on the north edge of the RSPB reserve, and footbridges over the River Wey would create a circular walk from the town centre to the north of Radipole lake. Where possible public footpaths and pedestrian paths on new developments will link into walkable access routes both existing and future open and green spaces.
- 8.44 The Weymouth area has a limited number of bridleways mainly in the more rural areas along the River Wey Valley from Upwey to Redlands/Nottingham and north of Sutton Poyntz along the South Dorset Ridgeway. The bridleways appear to be reasonably well used, although their limited extent results in horse riders using the roads and other public rights of way for exercising their horses. As a result, the surfaces do get broken up by horse traffic particularly in the winter months, which can make them less accessible to walkers and cause conflict on occasions.
- 8.45 Improvements to the footpath network of the area are consistent with the Ramblers Charter that was adopted by the Town Council in 2019. We are committed to strive to ensure that everyone has access to high-quality green space within five minutes’ walk of their doorstep, a network of green walking routes connects people to the places they want to go, and green routes and spaces are designed with communities and open to all. Reopening of the Temporary closure of the Underbarn footpath is a supported local priority.
- 8.46 Policy WNP07 is generally supportive of improvements and enhancements to the public rights of way network. It is important that any changes should be done in a way that cause least harm to local ecology and includes measures that will help enhance biodiversity. New development should ensure that rights of way are incorporated into the layout whenever possible.

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<sup>33</sup> Planning Practice Guidance para. 004 Reference ID: 37-004-20140306



Map 10: Public Rights of Way

### **Draft Policy WNP08: Coastal Recreation Areas**

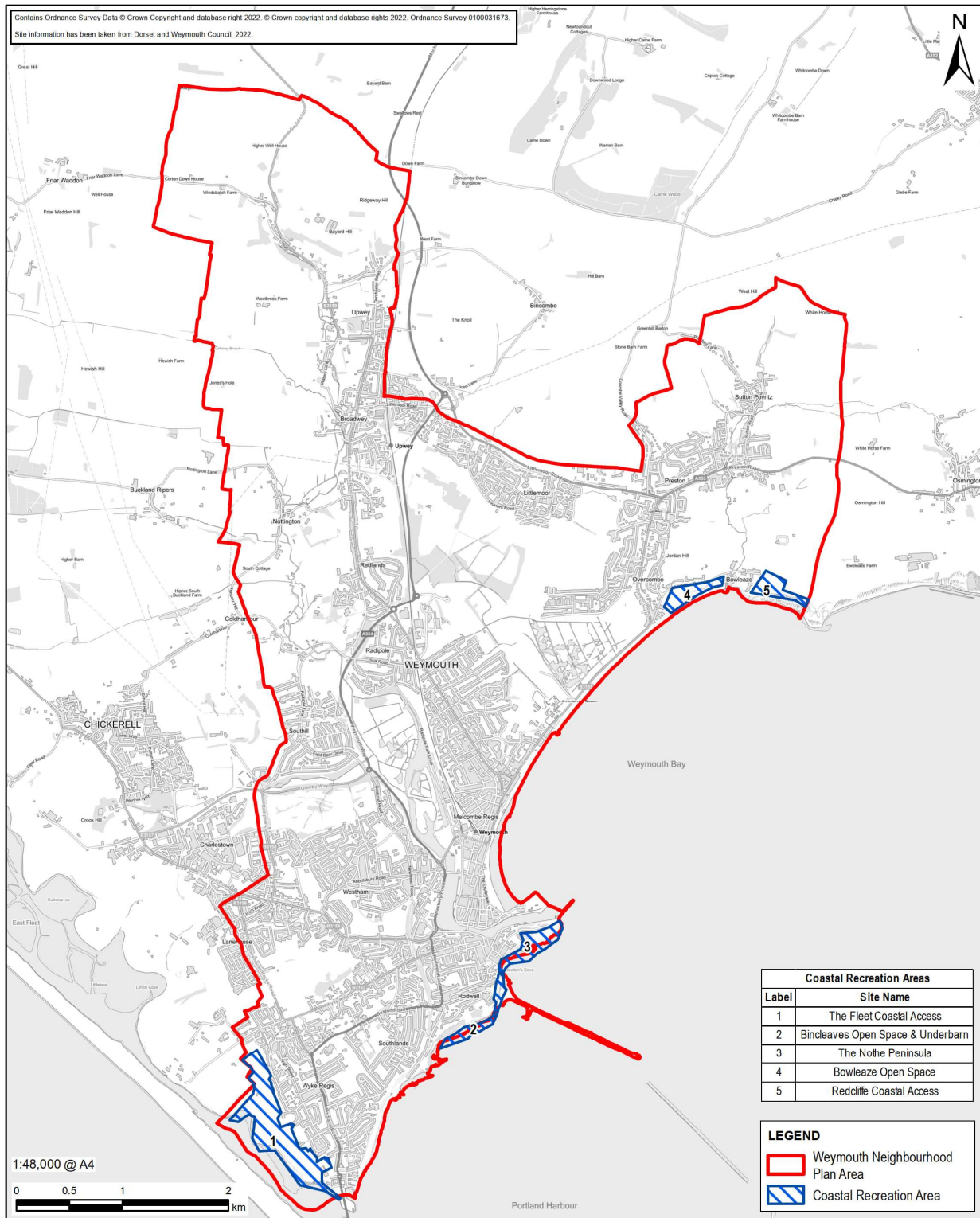
Coastal recreation areas shown on Map 11 are protected from development unless it is for: coastal defence purposes; or for the improvement or extension of an existing built facility; or the provision of an additional unobtrusive small-scale public facility; or improved accessibility; and enhances the quality and appearance of the built environment in relation to the coastal landscape and seascape.

- 8.47 Map 11 shows the very important coastal recreation areas that Weymouth is famous for, and which contribute so much to the wellbeing of residents and the enjoyment of visitors.
- 8.48 Several parts of the undeveloped coastal strip are protected by statutory designations. Policy WNP08 places protection, from most kinds of development, on those other areas that are primarily used for recreation purposes.
- 8.49 Policy WNP08 recognises that the following coastal locations have a special appeal, and each has its own unique character and setting, that should be safeguarded. Their appeal is self-evident. The policy is intended to future-proof the value and appeal of these locations by being permissive of certain small-scale developments that serve public needs.

#### Designated Coastal Recreation Areas:

- 8.50 *Bincleaves Open Space* – This is an important coastal grassland area with scenic views over Portland harbour, which is well used by all age groups for walking, dog walking and relaxation. It is a significant part of a well-used green corridor for walkers between south and central Weymouth.
- 8.51 *Nothe Peninsula* – This landmark area is well known for its panoramic coastline views of Weymouth Bay and Portland Harbour. It is a tranquil area that is appreciated and well used by visitors and locals alike. A range of trees, established shrub beds and winding paths lead down to sheltered slopes and picnic spots that serve walkers, sun bathers and families. The large, grassed area is used for ball games while, at the foot of the gardens, the seashore is a fun place for children to go crabbing in the rock pools.
- 8.52 *Bowleaze Open Space* – This coastal stretch of amenity grassland with a café, offers beautiful scenic views of the coastline. It has high recreational value, both for local people and visitors to the area. It is part of a green corridor through east Weymouth and falls within the ecological network with significant wildlife value. It is well used and appreciated by coastal trail walkers, dog walkers, picnickers and those that simply want to appreciate the beautiful view.
- 8.53 *Bincleaves Open Space and Underbarn* – This stretch links The Nothe Peninsular with the Rodwell Trail. The Bincleaves Open Space has high recreational value, both for local people and visitors to the area and has views across Portland Harbour and Weymouth Bay. The Thomas Fowell-Buxton memorial is a significant local landmark. The area includes the Coastal Look-out Station and gun-emplacement markers. Sections of the Underbarn remain Open, whilst there are sections which are temporarily closed. Re-opening the Underbarn will increase the use of the space and enable the English Coastal Path to be re-routed along the coast.

8.54 *The Fleet Coastal Access Area* – The South West Coast Path runs beside the Fleet but the area of open space provides access to Pirate Cove and views across the Fleet. The area extends beyond the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan Area.



Map 11: Coastal Recreation Areas

8.55 *Redcliffe Coastal Access Area* – The English coastal path runs through this area and there are links to the nearby caravan sites and Preston Village. The landslip area visible from the area is a unique habitat with deer and varied birdlife. The views across Weymouth Bay and along the coast to Weymouth are stunning. The area is much frequented by residents and visitors for exercise, tranquillity and the view.

### **Draft Policy WNP09: Public Access to the Coastline and Countryside**

Development proposals to improve public access to and enjoyment of the countryside (including publicly accessible cliff-top areas) will be supported, where they are in accordance with the other policies in this Plan.

Where practicable in new developments, provision should be made to extend the routes for walkers and cyclists, including routes linking into the countryside network as well as into the town and to accommodate people of all ages and abilities, including those with push chairs, wheelchairs and mobility scooters.

- 8.56 The NPPF (para. 120) states that planning policies should encourage improved public access to the countryside. The Local Plan likewise (Policy ENV 3.) is supportive of improved access to the area's green infrastructure network. Lorton Valley Nature Park has its own specific policy in the Local Plan (WEY16.) that specifically advocates "*enhancement of public access*" in the interests of promoting sustainable tourism.
- 8.57 The Weymouth and Portland Access Group<sup>34</sup> has stressed how vital green spaces are to a healthy environment especially in the absence of a large town centre park. The nearby countryside is a magnificent local resource and contributor to community health and wellbeing. But good accessibility is essential especially for people with disabilities and for those caring for young children. At the time of writing there is a long-running problem area along the Wey Valley footpath, where the bank has crumbled into the River Wey relief channel.
- 8.58 Policy WNP09 supports improvements and extensions to the footpath network in the interest of improving accessibility. It also encourages the provision of dedicated easy walking routes through new developments that link to wider network and thereby provide safe and accessible motor-vehicle-free routes from urban areas into the countryside and to local services and facilities.

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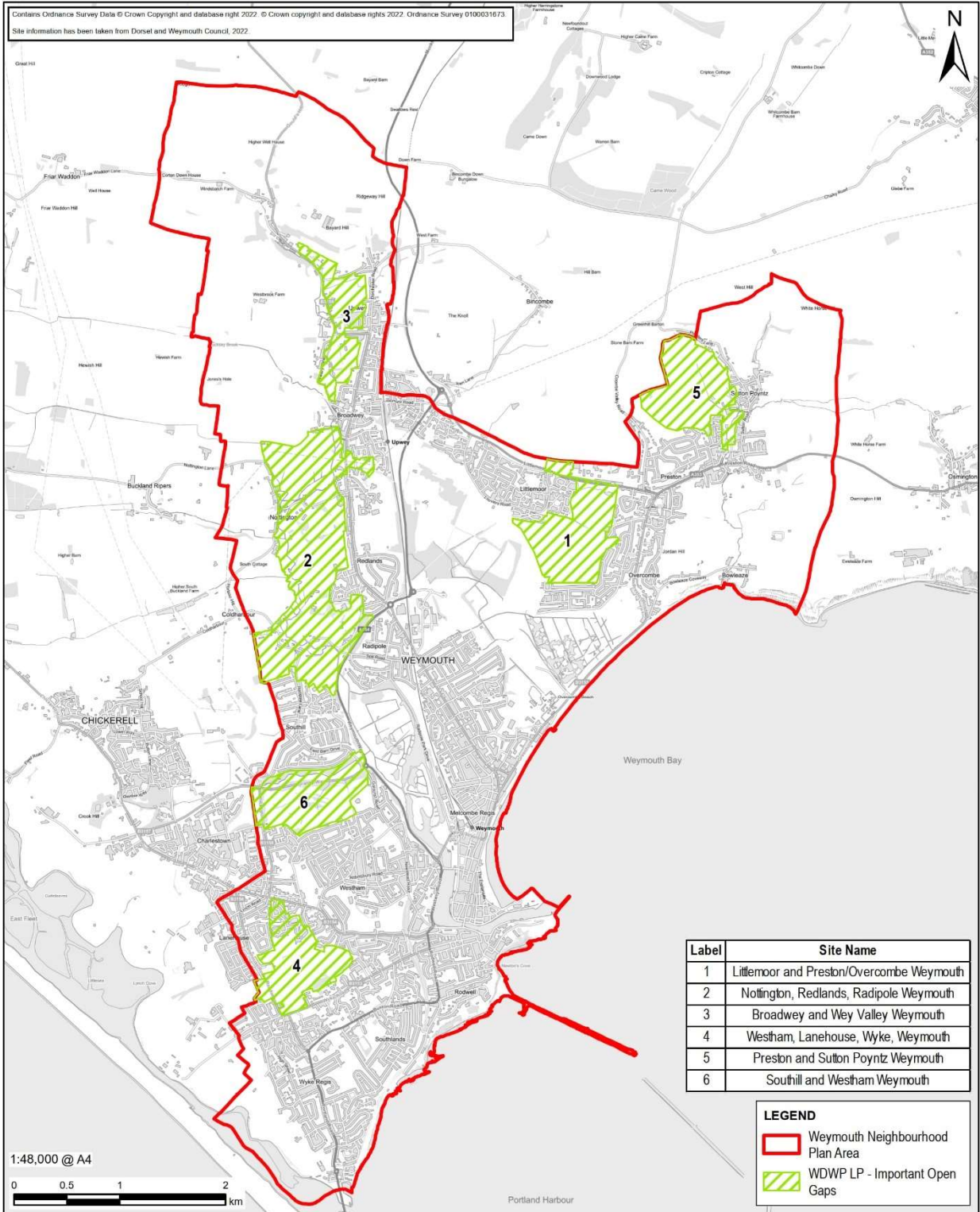
<sup>34</sup> Written Review from Weymouth and Portland Access Group 28th March 2022

### **Draft Policy WNP10: Green Gaps**

The areas (shown on Map tbd) are fundamental to retaining and protecting the special character and setting of local settlement areas and preventing coalescence. Development proposals in the designated green gaps will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the development is for:

- i. measures to prevent flooding; or,
- ii. improvements to access to the countryside;
- iii. enhancement of recreation activities; or,
- iv. for essential agricultural uses; and
- v. do not compromise the visual openness and landscape character of the gap; and,
- vi. do not compromise the character or setting of important local heritage assets.

- 8.59 The Neighbourhood Plan has signified the importance of the local countryside and the natural environment within the neighbourhood area. To safeguard what we have, there is a need to keep the sprawl of settlement areas to a minimum. The Local Plan defines development boundaries, and these are endorsed and updated in the Neighbourhood Plan (see policy WNP16). Policy WNP10 is intended to reinforce this approach with a specific policy that seeks to maintain a buffer or 'local green gap' between settlements, specifically to prevent coalescence.
- 8.60 The principle of a buffer to prevent coalescence or urban sprawl and protect the integrity of the settlements "*that have distinct and separate characters from merging into one another*", is accepted by the Local Plan under Policy ENV3 'Green Infrastructure Network'. This policy, inherited from the Weymouth and Portland Local Plan 2005, has been applied to those "*important open gaps (as identified in the previously adopted local plan for Weymouth and Portland)*" see Map 12. The Local Plan also commits the LPA to "*work together with local communities, developers and other relevant partners, such as town and parish councils, to develop a green infrastructure strategy for the plan area*".
- 8.61 In preparing the Neighbourhood Plan a review was undertaken of the 'important open gaps' policy and the areas recognised by the 2015 version of the Local Plan. The 2023 Community Survey confirmed that considerable community support remains for continued recognition of the gap concept and the value of 'community buffers'. Only 3% of survey respondents were opposed to the idea or its application. In response to this endorsement, areas to be recognised as green gaps and serve as community buffers have been defined, based on the 'important green gaps' in the Local Plan and taking into account planning application and policy decisions taken since 2015.
- 8.59 Policy WNP10 recognises the areas shown on Map tbd as important Green Gaps. Proposals in these areas will only be supported for uses or development that are essential because of their location or need on the site proposed. Notwithstanding this, proposals that qualify for development in these Green Gaps must not take place at the expense of the quality of the landscape or setting. Policy WNP10 seeks to ensure this is taken fully into account.



Map 12: WDW&P LP Important Open Gaps

### **Draft Policy WNP11: Local Green Space**

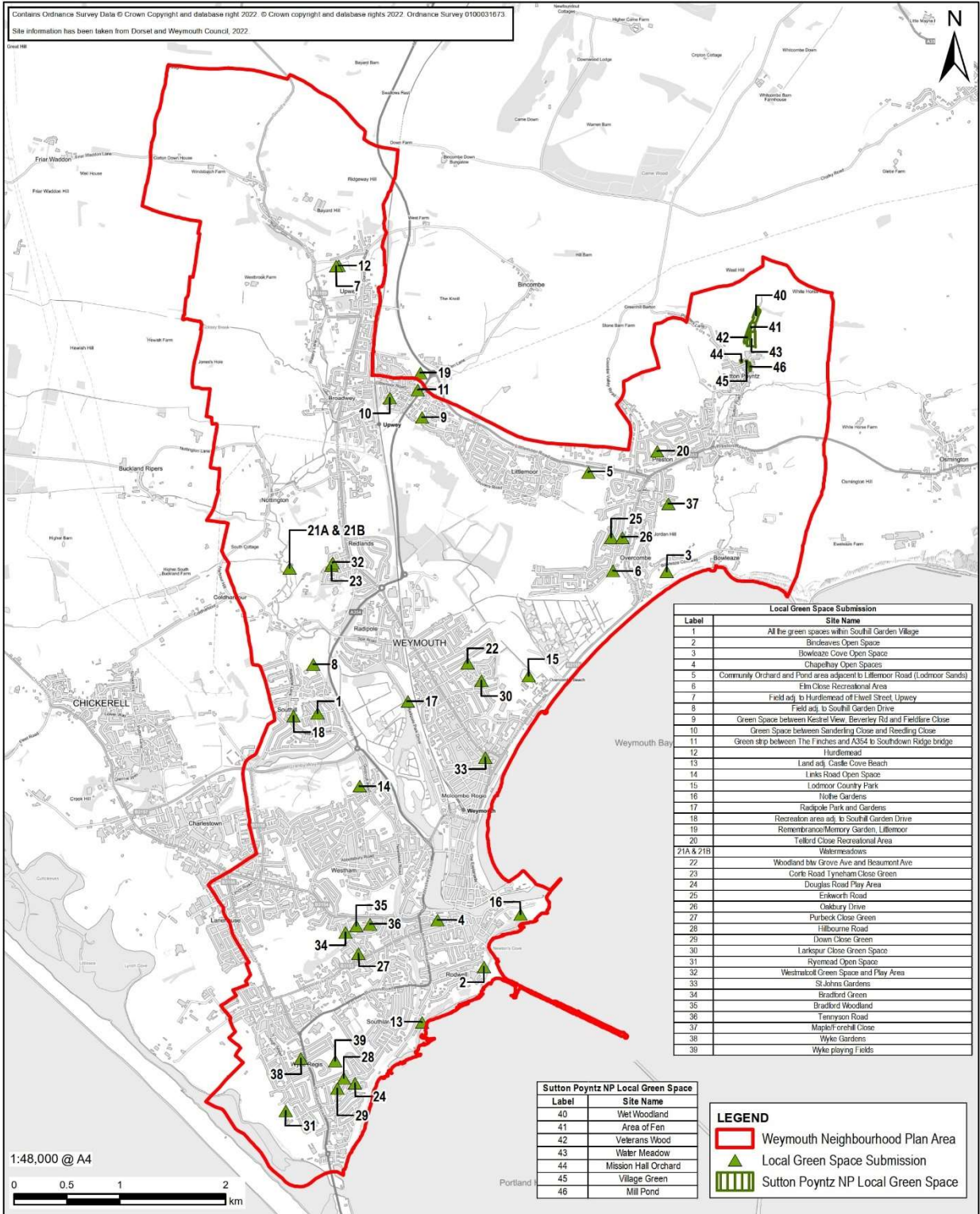
The areas listed in Schedule 1 of the Neighbourhood Plan are designated 'Local Green Spaces' and are protected from new development unless minor and ancillary to their existing use, or 'very special circumstances' can be demonstrated.

- 8.63 Local green spaces within the urban area provide important amenity and casual recreation space for residents and a valuable part of the overall green infrastructure, which contribute to the quality and distinctiveness of the local environment as well as safeguarding local biodiversity. Many of the local green spaces incentivise walking and physical activity and generally add to quality of life.
- 8.64 The NPPF (para. 101) gives us the right to designate amenity areas that are highly regarded as 'local green spaces' and give them protection for current and future generations via policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 8.65 45 locations (see Map 13) were submitted for consideration by the public and will be assessed against the required criteria (paragraph 102 of the NPPF). Those listed in Schedule 1 below are under consideration as 'Local Green Space' in recognition of their importance to the amenity and wellbeing of their neighbourhood and to protect them for the continued enjoyment and appreciation by local people and visitors (see the Local Green Space Assessment Report<sup>35</sup>). They vary in character from formal gardens, informal play areas, to wilder amenity area. They all share a similar regard by the people and communities that have nominated them and supported their designation.
- 8.66 Development on sites designated as local green space should be limited to that which is deemed appropriate by being ancillary to its existing use and small scale. 'Very special' circumstances to justify other forms of development will not exist unless the potential harm to the designated space by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations such as where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss. In these instances, the local green space to be lost should be replaced by alternative green space that will benefit the community and the area. Several of the sites are maintained by Weymouth Town Council for the enjoyment of residents.
- 8.67 The sites on Schedule 1 overleaf are under consideration for designation as Local Green Space and subject to policy WNP11.

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<sup>35</sup> To-be-done final LGS report





Map 13: Local Green Spaces Submissions

Map Ref No.	Submission No.	Name and Location of Site
1	WTCLGS 011 WTCLGS 012	Interconnecting strips of grass verge between streets at Southill Interconnecting strips of grass verge between streets at Southill
2	WTCLGS 027	Bincleaves Open Space
3	WTCLGS 020	Open Space at Bowleaze Coveaway
4	WTCLGS 028	Chapelhay Open Spaces
5	WTCLGS 017	Open space with public access adjacent to Littlemoor Road
6	WTCLGS 009 WTCLGS 010 WTCLGS 015	Area of recreational land south east of Elm Close DT3 6JN Area of recreational land south west of Elm Close DT3 6JN Recreational area – walking, play, woodland off Elm Close
7	WTCLGS 004	Adjoining fields adjacent to Hurdlemead, Upwey.
8	WTCLGS 013	Field adjacent to top end of Southill Garden Drive by the turning circle and adjacent to the school playing field.
9	WTCLGS 023	Open Green Space between Kestrel View, Beverley Road and Fieldfare Close, Littlemoor
10	WTCLGS 022	Green Space between Sanderling Close and Reedling Close, Littlemoor
11	WTCLGS 021	Green Strip between the Finches and the A354 to Southdown Ridge bridge, Littlemoor
12	WTCLGS 002 WTCLGS 006	Hurdlemead off Elwell Street, Upwey Replicates 'Hurdlemead' WTCLGS002
14	WTCLGS 019	Links Road Open Space
15	WTCLGS 025	Lodmoor Country Park
16	WTCLGS 026	Nothe Gardens
17	WTCLGS 018	Radipole Park and Gardens
18	WTCLGS 024	Multi use recreational area at Southill
19	WTCLGS 016	Remembrance/Memory Garden at Littlemoor
20	WTCLGS 014	Recreation Area off Telford Close
21	WTCLGS 005A WTCLGS 005B	Wey Valley Watermeadows part A Wey Valley Watermeadows part B
22	WTCLGS 003 WTCLGS 007 WTCLGS 008	Area between Beaumont Avenue and Grove Avenue at DT4 7RJ Replicates WTC LGS 003 Replicates WTC LGS 003
23	WTCLGS 031	Corfe Road/Tyneham Close Green Space
24	WTCLGS 041	Douglas Road Play Area and Open Space
25	WTCLGS 033	Green area between Enkworth Road and Oakbury Drive, Preston
26	WTCLGS 034	Woodland area off Oakbury Drive, Preston
27	WTCLGS 043	Purbeck Close Green
28	WTCLGS 044	Hillbourne Road Green
29	WTCLGS 045	Down Close Green
30	WTCLGS 029	Larkspur Close Green Space
31	WTCLGS 040	Ryemead Open Space
32	WTCLGS 030	Westmacott Estate Green Space
32/23	WTCLGS 035	Westmacott/Corfe/ Tyneham Green Space
33	WTCLGS 032	St Johns Gardens, Park District, Weymouth
34	WTCLGS 036	Bradford Road Green
35	WTCLGS 037	Bradford Road Woodland Area
36	WTCLGS 038	Tennyson Road Green
37	WTCLGS 046	Forehill Maple Close Green Space
38	WTCLGS 042	Wyke Gardens
39	WTCLGS 039	Wyke Playing Fields

Continued overleaf

<b>AREAS SUGGESTED FOR LOCAL GREEN SPACE DESIGNATION DURING THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION FOR WHICH A SUBMISSION IS AWAITED</b>		
		Sandsfoot Gardens
		Louviers Road Amenity space and play area
		Greenhill Gardens
		Community Orchard near Horse Lynch Plantation
		Rodwell pre-school pre-space
<b>AREAS DESIGNATED AS LOCAL GREEN SPACE IN THE SUTTON POYNTZ NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN</b>		
40	n/a	Wet Woodland
41	n/a	Area of Fen
42	n/a	Veterans Wood
43	n/a	Water Meadow
44	n/a	Mission Hall Orchard
45	n/a	Village Green
46	n/a	Mill Pond

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### **Draft Policy WNP12: Incidental Open Space**

Areas of incidental open space in residential areas that contribute to local amenity, character and/or green infrastructure should be protected from development except where:

- i. new and appropriate alternative provision can be demonstrated to compensate for localised loss of public amenity and community wellbeing; or,
- ii. it can be demonstrated that any damage to green infrastructure and/or local character can be satisfactorily mitigated, or the existing situation enhanced.

- 8.68 Several of the housing areas of Weymouth were designed and developed with areas of incidental open space included in the layout to provide amenity and/or a shared recreation space for residents. These, now mature, open spaces are part of the essential character of the residential areas such as in the Southill Garden village area, which has 44 individual areas of amenity space of various sizes that total almost 4ha. They are an integral part of the design of the estate and together form an essential part of its attractive open and green character. Some are used for informal play. Several contribute to local biodiversity and form an important part of the green infrastructure by serving as green corridors through the built-up area.
- 8.69 Other estates such as Corfe Manor, Southlands, Westham and Littlemoor are similarly recognised for their amenity spaces. In acknowledgement of their value and the purpose they were designed for, policy WNP12 applies to all areas of incidental open space within the residential areas shown on Map 14 tbd. It recognises all these incidental areas as 'sites of open space value' within residential areas and places a protection upon them unless the community they serve is supportive of their change of use.

### **Draft Policy WNP13: Agricultural Buildings**

To support farm diversification, the conversion of existing agricultural buildings for business or business-related purposes will be supported where:

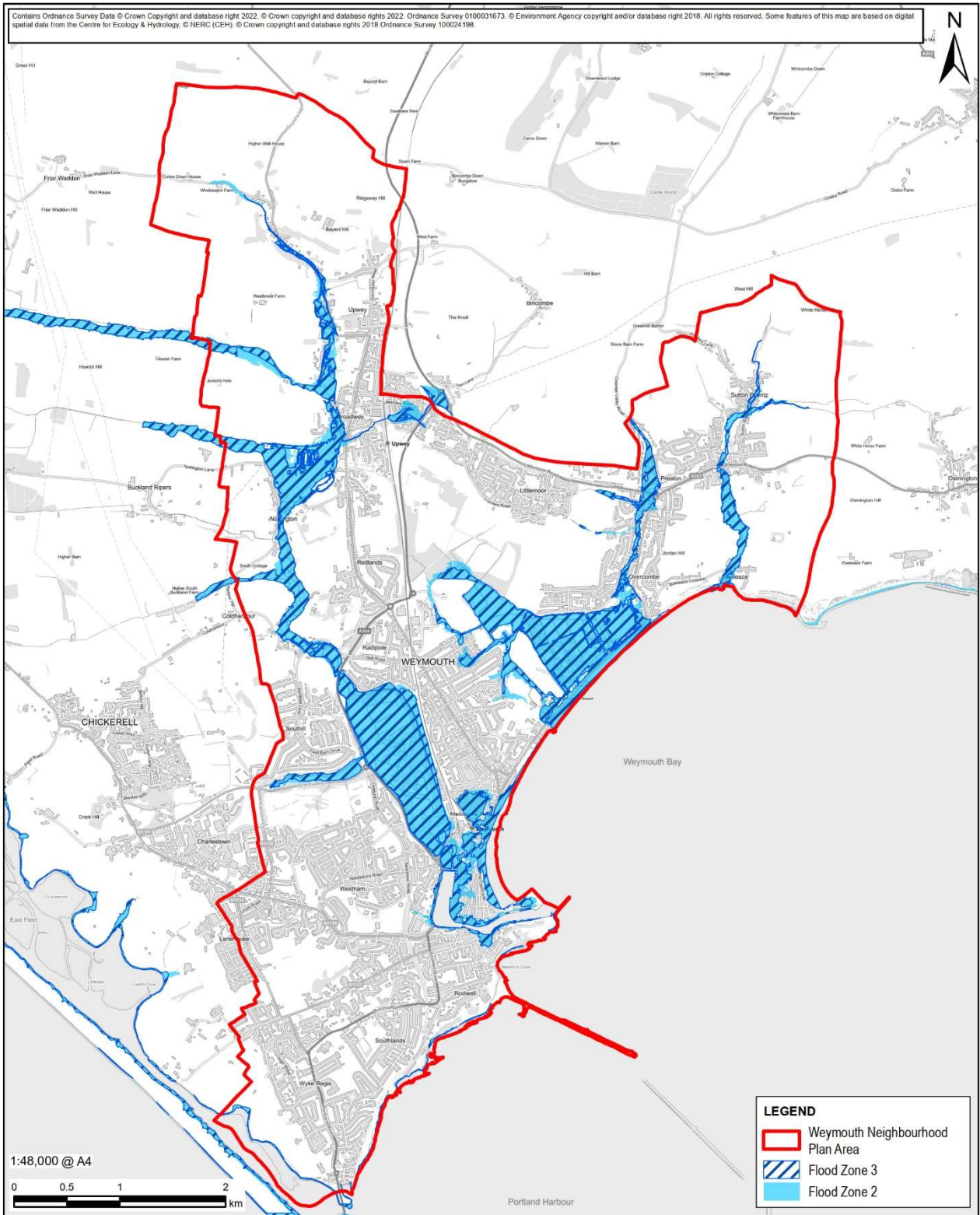
- i. the proposal would be compatible with its landscape setting;
- ii. the proposal takes into account residential amenity and highway safety;
- iii. the proposal is compatible with the agricultural or other land-based activities present in the area;
- iv. the buildings concerned would not require substantial rebuilding or disproportionate extension; and
- v. the design approach is appropriate and sympathetic to the building's surroundings and wider context.

- 8.70 Farming is still a significant feature of the neighbourhood area. including on land designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which impinges on the north of the area at Upwey, Preston and Sutton Poyntz. The area consists of small villages and isolated farmsteads connected by a network of small roads and lanes. Agriculture is generally mixed. The soil of the area is generally thin in character and much of it is classed as Grade 3 agricultural land. Higher quality agricultural land is at a premium.
- 8.71 We wish to ensure that farming continues to prosper, not least to help maintain the landscape we so value. The NPPF (para. 84) says "*planning policies and decisions should enable the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses*".
- 8.72 Whilst we will resist major development in the countryside, we are prepared to facilitate small-scale change in the interests of ensuring that farming remains viable, and the use of farmland and buildings is compatible with the local landscape.
- 8.73 Policy WNP13 facilitates the conversion of existing agricultural buildings for business or business-related purposes where diversification is in the interest of ensuring the continued viability of a farming business. Such conversions should not lead to the permanent change of use of agricultural buildings to dwellings or uses that are not compatible with their farm setting.

### **Draft Policy WNP14: Riversides**

Schemes to enable safe and responsible use of the rivers and encourage recreation and tourism activity alongside the waterways will be supported if appropriate and consistent with the strategic environmental objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan.

- 8.74 The lower valleys of the River Wey and River Jordan and their tributaries play an important role in the life and wellbeing of the neighbourhood area. In general, and for good and bad, flood patterns follow the rivers. They provide vital drainage courses but are themselves prone to causing flooding because of tidal effects. Map 15 shows the area's flood risk zones, within which the river courses are clearly identifiable.
- 8.75 Most of the land either side of the rivers is flood zone 3b. The NPPF (para. 159) makes clear that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding "*should be avoided*". The Environment Agency identifies what it considers to be 'water-compatible' development that could take place in flood zone 3b. These include water-based recreation (excluding sleeping accommodation), and amenity open space, nature conservation and biodiversity, outdoor sports and recreation and essential facilities such as changing rooms.
- 8.76 There is public support for an improved riverside walkway from Upwey to Weymouth. Large stretches of the current Wey Trail are not beside the River. Support for better access along the River Wey was confirmed in the community consultation in 2023.
- 8.77 The Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Plan identified a green corridor along that part of the River Jordan that runs through the Sutton Poyntz neighbourhood area. It is proposed to extend this green corridor and apply the related policies to the remainder of the River Jordan to its outfall at Bowleaze Cove.
- 8.78 Policy WNP14 recognises the recreation and education potential of the riverside areas and supports appropriate recreation and tourism schemes if they satisfy the Environment Agency, and other relevant flood risk management authorities, and are deemed not to harm the ecology and wildlife habitats in the area. Measures to aid greater appreciation of the wildlife such as platforms, shelter and hides in appropriate locations are supported.



Map 15: Flood Zones

### **Draft Policy WNP15: Panoramas, Vistas and Views**

In the neighbourhood area, there are important panoramas, vistas and views that contribute to the special character and quality of coast, town and countryside including (but not limited to) those shown on Map 17.

Development proposals will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that there will be no significant negative impact on any important public panorama, vista, and view.

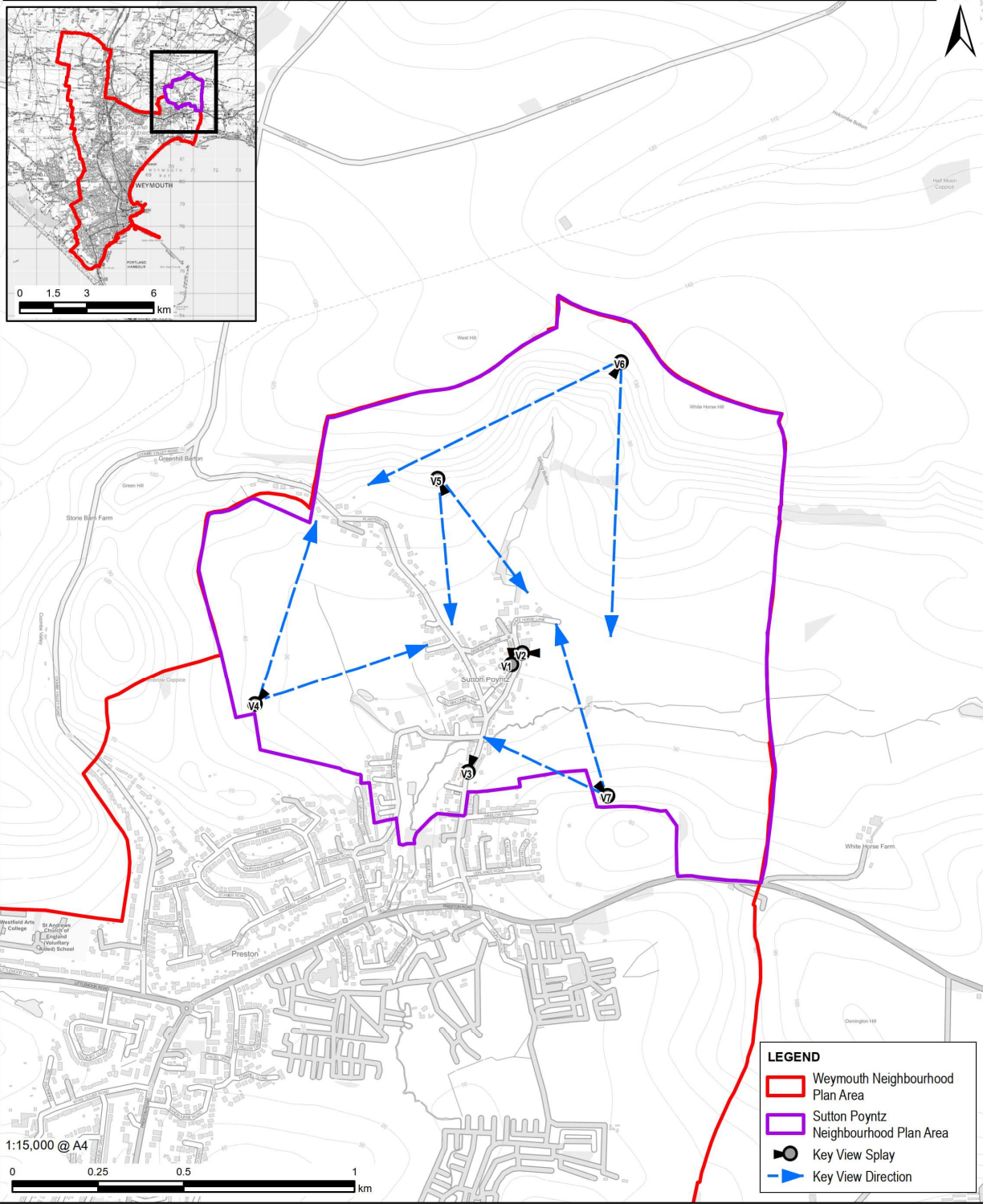
- 8.79 The value of panoramas, vistas and views has been highlighted by the work of the Sutton Poyntz Society. Key views within the Sutton Poyntz neighbourhood area are identified in the Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Plan and protected by a specific policy (H&P 3.2) which states that *“new development should respect the key views. Any development which would obstruct or significantly detract from them will not be supported”*.
- 8.80 The seven views that are subject to Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Plan policy are identified on Map 16.
- 8.81 Development proposals should demonstrate consideration of the area’s panoramas, vistas, and views that are highly regarded by the public, and an awareness of the potential impact of their development proposals on the visual character and amenity of the area. Development should not impair or compromise significant panoramas, views, and vistas and where appropriate, show consideration of how it may frame a view or enhance the visual experience.

The walkabouts and second consultation raised three specific views valued by residents;

- From Bowleaze Open Space to Town Centre and Esplanade,
- From The Nothe across the Harbour, and
- From Chapelhay Steps across the Harbour towards Melcombe old town.

Other views were suggested including views out to sea and from outside the Neighbourhood Area which are outside the scope of WNP15.





Map 16: Sutton Poyntz Views

## 9. Development and Homes

- 9.1 The population of the neighbourhood area in April 2021 was approximately 53,400 comprising 24,600 households. Average household size was 2.2 persons. A third of households in 2021 were single person households and 14% were four or more persons.
- 9.2 In 2021 a quarter of households lived in a flat, maisonette or apartment. 14% of all households occupied a one-bedroom dwelling, 29% a two-bed dwelling, 39% had 3 bedrooms, and 18% had four or more bedrooms. Almost two-thirds of households owned their home. A third were in rented accommodation (14% social rented, 20% private rented). All evidence suggests that area in and around Weymouth Town Centre has the highest proportion of flats and many bedsits.
- 9.3 Properties in Weymouth had an overall average price of £311,928 in 2022<sup>36</sup>. Most sales in Weymouth during the year were detached properties, selling for an average price of £474,572. Terraced properties sold for an average of £263,630, with flats fetching £185,784. Overall, sold prices in Weymouth over the last year were 10% up on the previous year and 16% up on the 2020 peak of £268,533.
- 9.4 A Housing Needs Assessment<sup>37</sup> (HNA) was commissioned by the Steering Group in 2021. It concluded that average house sale prices were unaffordable to those on average incomes (with an average resale home requiring an income of over £60,000 and a new build requiring on average an income of over £100,000). Households on two lower quartile incomes cannot afford any of the available tenures in Weymouth without recourse to benefits to top up their incomes, except social and affordable rent. The only affordable ways to home ownership for those on an average income in Weymouth are either through shared ownership at 25% or through a discount market sale scheme, which would have to offer a minimum discount of at least 34%.
- 9.5 In January 2023 there were 573 applications on the Dorset Housing Register “with a local connection”. These are graded according to need – at this time 197 applications were in the process of being graded.

Weymouth	Bed need						
Band	1	2	3	4	5	(blank)	Grand Total
Not yet assessed	124	48	20	5			197
Band A - Urgent Housing Need	31	9	6	4	2		52
Band B - High Housing Need	57	16	8	1			82
Band C - Medium Housing Need	50	16	26	3			95
Band D - Low Housing Need	108	32	6	1			147
(blank)							
Grand Total	370	121	66	14	2		573

- 9.6 Dwellings that are affordable to local households are much needed. The HNA reports a chronic need for affordable homes in Weymouth. It estimates that up to 2,649 new affordable homes are required over the period 2021 to 2038. The latest strategic housing

<sup>36</sup> 2022 Data from Right Move website

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Weymouth-Housing-Needs-Assessment.pdf>

target for Weymouth, set by the local planning authority, is 3,225 dwellings<sup>38</sup>.

Source of Supply	Number of Dwellings
Sites with Planning Permission at April 2020	1460
Site Allocations without Planning Permission (both current and proposed)	550
Large Site Windfall Allowance (based on sites identified in the SHLAA)	290
Small Site Windfall Allowance (based on past completion rates)	925
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3225</b>

- 9.7 The Local Plan requires 35% of new dwellings to be affordable homes on sites of 10 units or more. If this proportion was viable, it would only deliver 1,129 affordable homes. At that proportion, to achieve close to the number of affordable homes that we are told are needed would require over 7,000 new dwelling units to be built between 2021 and 2038. Dorset Council's latest monitoring information shows that in 2021 and 2022 of the homes built in Weymouth only 13% were 'affordable'.
- 9.8 The West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan identifies several development opportunities both within and on the edge of Weymouth. Progress on the development of these sites has been slow. Only 671 new dwellings were completed in the Weymouth area between 2015 and 2021. This was well below the target of the Local Plan of 775 per annum for the whole plan area of West Dorset, Weymouth, and Portland.
- 9.9 The construction of 7,000 or more dwellings over the 17 years of the plan-period is unachievable. Such a rate of completions would exceed what the local building industry is capable of sustaining<sup>39</sup> and our land supply assessments show that there is insufficient available and developable land to accommodate that number. The Town Council has endorsed the Affordable Homes Paper produced by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group which seeks to maximise the provision of affordable homes, giving primacy to the needs of the local community. The Town Council is also concerned that, unrestrained, open market housing development may increase the number of second homes and increase the number of people moving into the area whose buying power will force up local prices to the disadvantage of local people (Mar 2021). Seeking to prioritise and satisfy local housing need is consistent with the **NPPF social objective** – *to support strong, vibrant, and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations.*
- 9.10 In 2022 a Site Options Assessment Study<sup>40</sup> to assess the developability of sites that had been identified as potential housing sites. 34 of 61 sites were assessed as potentially suitable for allocation as housing or mixed-use development. 27 of the sites have the

<sup>38</sup> From Appendix 2 of the Dorset Local Plan Consultation 2021 and is the sum of: completions since the beginning of the plan period; extant planning permissions; adopted housing allocations; capacity on major sites (of 10 or more dwellings) within development boundaries as evidenced through the SHLAA; and a windfall allowance on minor sites (of less than 10 dwellings).

<https://moderngov.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/s21990/20201208%20-%20Appendix%20%20-%20Neighbourhood%20Plan%20Housing.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> Housing completions in Weymouth average 101 per annum 2013-2021 (source Joint Annual Monitoring Report West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland 2020/21)

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Weymouth-Neighbourhood-Plan-Site-Assessment-Final-Report.pdf>

potential to accommodate 10 or more dwellings and would therefore be required to include a proportion of affordable housing.

- 9.11 It was recognised that many of the proposed sites had development issues to overcome and some were unlikely to win community approval. A consultation exercise was carried out in January 2023<sup>41</sup> to give the community an opportunity to review the studies and express their own views about the developability of the 34 potentially suitable sites. The feedback from the community was given serious consideration.
- 9.12 The housing policies that follow reflect what we consider is desirable and achievable to address the housing crisis with which we are faced. The policies both supplement and extend the influence of the Local Plan on housebuilding and endeavour to ensure the local issues and opportunities are to the fore.
- 9.13 The Neighbourhood Plan policies respond to the agreed housing aims and objectives. They define and affirm the limits of development. They recognise the importance of design and layout on sustainability and wellbeing. They ensure that local needs, both ordinary and special, are recognised. They address affordability as much as they can. They encourage imagination and innovation. They place importance on quality as well as quantity. They prioritise local households. They help to release those sites that have been long recognised but still have not been developed.

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<sup>41</sup> [Weblink to consultation report](#)

### **Draft Policy WNP16: Development Boundaries**

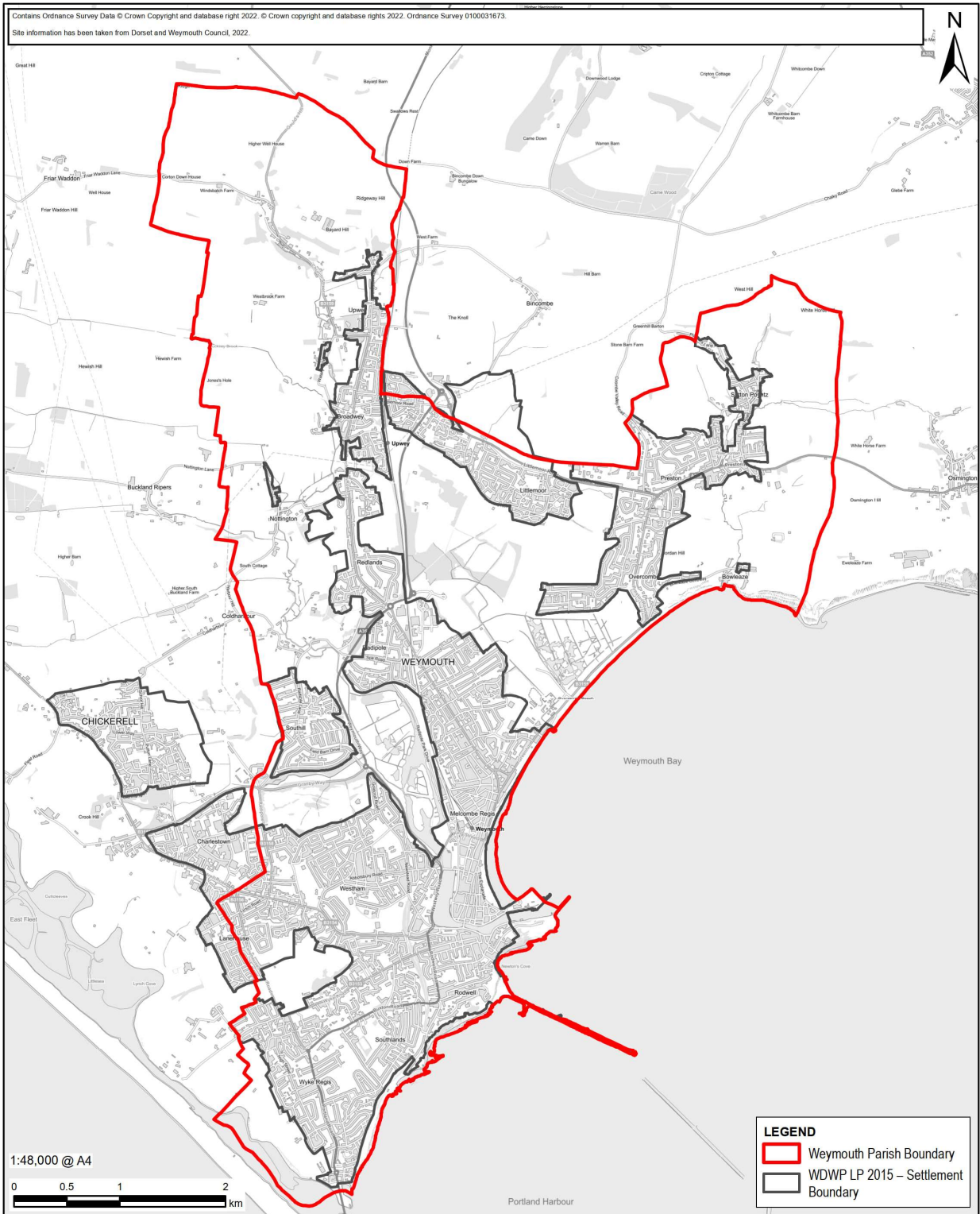
Development shall be focused within the defined development boundary as identified in the Plan.

Development proposals will be supported within the defined development boundary subject to alignment with the strategic environmental objectives of the

Neighbourhood Plan and conformity with relevant policies in the development plan.

Outside the defined development boundary development proposals must comply with Policy SUS2 of the Local Plan or whatever policy succeeds it and relevant policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

- 9.14 Local Plan Policy SUS 2 'Distribution of Development' establishes a settlement hierarchy for West Dorset, Weymouth, and Portland, which has been used to direct the greater proportion of development at the larger and more sustainable settlements. Weymouth, along with Dorchester are the highest priority locations for new development.
- 9.15 To further direct development the Local Plan, adopted in 2015, includes defined development boundaries for Weymouth, "*within which residential, employment and other development to meet the needs of the local area will normally be permitted*". (See Map tbd.)
- 9.16 Policy WNP16 endorses the definition of a development boundary as a device to focus development and generally protect the more environmentally sensitive and significance parts of the neighbourhood area. The defined development boundaries for the neighbourhood area (see Map 17) were based on a set of criteria, not so much to identify which areas are built-up, but to identify the areas where the 'countryside', and related restrictive, policies of the Local Plan should and should not apply. Local Plan Policy SUS 2 states "*outside defined development boundaries, development will be strictly controlled having particular regard to the need for the protection of the countryside and environmental constraints*" and includes a list of exception-type development. Inevitably however, some development has occurred, outside of the defined development boundaries since the Local Plan was adopted.
- 9.17 Updating the DDB is necessary. Further discussions with Dorset Council are required about how this can be done.



Map 17: WDWP Defined Development Boundary

**Draft Policy WNP17: Deleted**

### **Draft Policy WNP18: Extensions and Alterations**

Extensions and retrofit measures requiring planning consent should seek to safeguard and enhance the prevailing character of the area. Extensions that have an overbearing or adverse visual effect on the prevailing character of the area will be considered on a case by case basis.

- 9.18 The significance of design and character should apply not just to new development but to alterations to existing property. Owners are encouraged to consider retrofitting measures to an existing property and to improve its energy efficiency and reduce energy consumption in accordance with policy WNP30.
- 9.19 Policy ENV12 of the Local Plan requires any alterations to or extensions of buildings should be well related to, and not overpower, the original building or neighbouring properties, unless they achieve significant visual enhancement to both the building and surrounding area.
- 9.20 The NPPF makes clear that all local planning authorities should prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide<sup>42</sup> and National Model Design Code, and which reflect local character and design preferences.

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<sup>42</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>

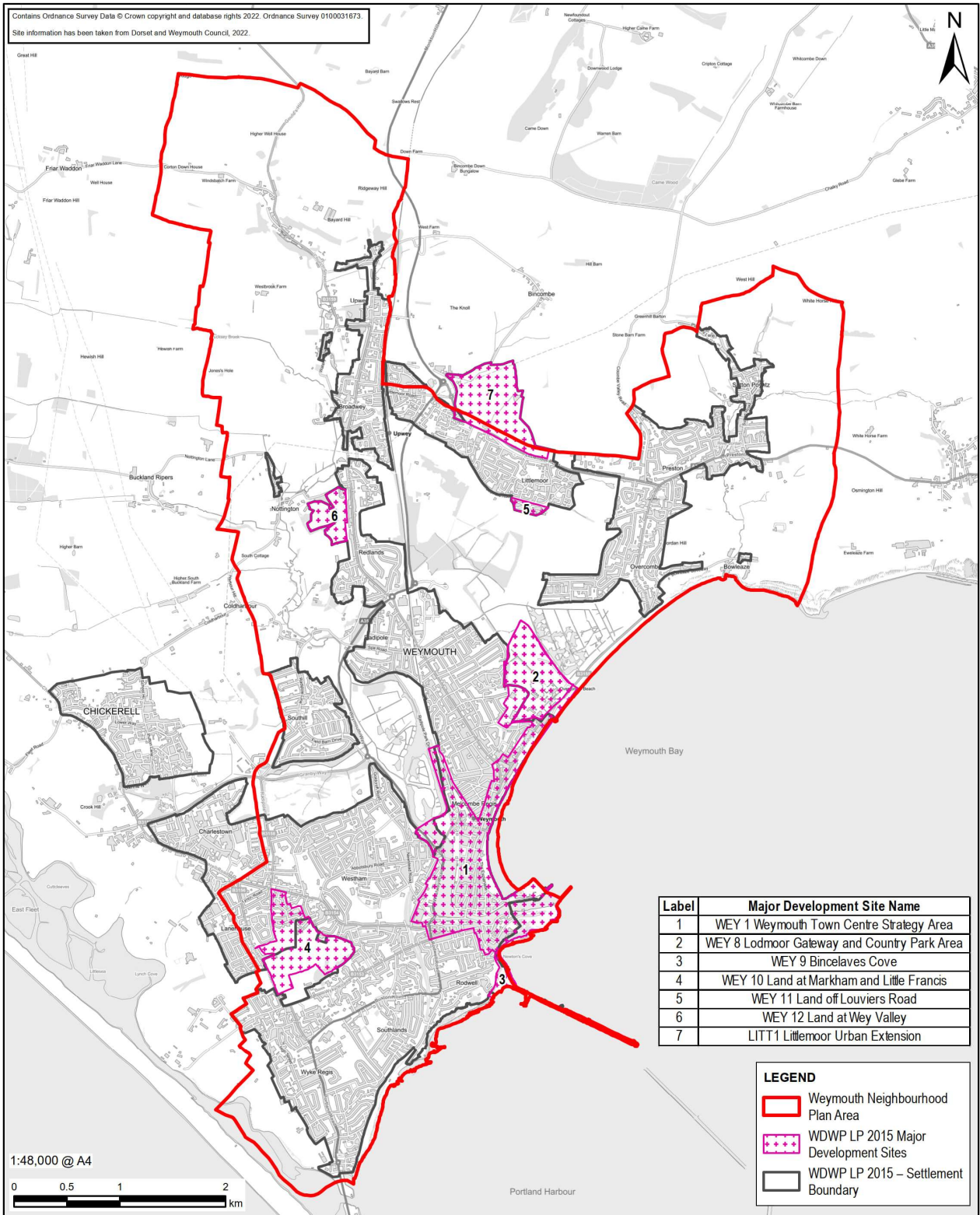
### **Draft Policy WNP19: Major Housing Sites**

In the interests of ensuring that the development of major housing sites meets the needs of the communities in the neighbourhood area, their development should provide for:

- i. a minimum of 10% of dwellings that meet current Lifetime Home standards;
  - ii. adequate secure storage for cycles, children's buggies, and mobility scooters where appropriate;
  - iii. adequate storage facilities for refuse and recycling including communal storage provision, where appropriate;
  - iv. sufficient open space, including private gardens, community orchards and communal allotment space as well as multi-functional open spaces to achieve multiple objectives such as play, education, healthy lifestyles, and recreation;
  - v. natural surveillance of public spaces, safe footpaths, and cycle ways and parking areas;
  - vi. parking and servicing provision with adequate EV charging points, which as a minimum, should be in accordance with the standards adopted by the local planning authority;
  - vii. satisfactory lighting, in accordance with national planning guidance; and
  - viii. a district heating scheme using renewable energy sources, where possible.
- Development proposals should also demonstrate alignment with the strategic environmental objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan.

- 9.21 Policy WNP19 recognises the impact that major housing developments can have on the area and the quality of life of our citizens, see Map 18. The community's response to community consultations included a critique of recent housing developments and what were considered essential aspects of a 21<sup>st</sup> century housing environment.
- 9.22 The NPPF (paras. 110-112) encourages us to ensure that housing development achieves high space standards, and we help *"create places that are safe and secure and attractive, which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards; allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations"*.
- 9.23 The criteria of policy WNP19 are aimed at ensuring the development of major housing sites is of a consistent standard to provide a high-quality living environment. They are also expected to make a significant contribution to meeting local needs and demands by adhering to the housing mix and affordable housing policies that follow in the Neighbourhood Plan.





Map 18: WDWP LP Major Development Sites

### **Draft Policy WNP20: Housing Mix**

New residential development should provide or contribute to a mix of housing tenures, types, and sizes to help maintain mixed, balanced, and inclusive communities within the neighbourhood plan area. The proposed housing mixes on major sites should be based on an up-to-date local housing needs assessment following consultation with Weymouth Town Council and Dorset Council.

- 9.24 The NPPF (para. 61) says *“the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies”*.
- 9.25 Policy WNP20 seeks to ensure that new housing development is relevant and contributes to providing a mix of dwelling tenures, types, and sizes that will satisfy local needs and demands, including for down-sizing. This should apply whether the development is for affordable housing or open-market dwellings or a mix.
- 9.26 Policy WNP20 requires residential development proposals to provide justification for the housing mix on the site. The Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan Housing Needs Assessment 2021 advises that *“over the plan period, the greatest increase in housing stock in Weymouth is required in middle sized homes of three- and two-bedrooms (48 and 35% respectively) with only minor additions of 7-9% needed to the stock in the smaller and larger 1- and 4-bedroom size categories. The lowest increase is required in the largest, 5-or-more bedroom category (0.5%). Therefore, new dwelling stock should provide some mix of all sizes of properties, but primarily deliver 2-3 bed properties.”*
- 9.27 At the time of making the planning application for a major development site<sup>43</sup>, the most recent assessment of local housing need should be used as the ‘starting point’ for judging the acceptability of the housing mix on any specific site. In making any judgement on this matter, consideration will also be given to whether the assessment remains relevant, and whether there are any strategic or local circumstances that may justify a different housing mix.

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<sup>43</sup> For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/595/contents/made>

### **Draft Policy WNP21: Affordable Housing**

Weymouth Town Council is committed to maximising the provision of dwellings that are affordable and accessible to local people over the plan period.

Proposals for housing and mixed-use developments, other than replacement dwellings, within the defined development area boundaries that result in a net increase of two or more units or sites greater than 0.2ha will be subject to the following criteria:

- i. the proposals meet the minimum target of 35% affordable housing, and at least 50% in the town centre;
- ii. affordable housing should be provided on the same site as any open market housing which is necessary to provide cross subsidy (except where clause iv. applies);
- iii. the dwellings will be occupied by people with a local connection in housing need in accordance with a Weymouth Local Connections Policy which will also address the need to support homes for key workers.
- iv. where the Local Housing Authority consider that the provision of affordable housing on the proposed site is not viable, deliverable, or practical, consideration may be given to accepting a financial contribution in lieu of on-site provision. Any off-site contributions will be broadly equivalent in value to the cost of on-site provision. Developers' contributions for affordable housing should be committed to specific schemes within the neighbourhood area and secured through a planning obligation.

Any proposals for dwellings, on sites outside the defined development boundaries, other than replacement dwellings, will be classed as an exception to residential development policies in the development plan and subject to policy WNP26 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Any affordable housing provision should demonstrate the following:

- v. a tenure target of approximately 60% affordable rented homes and 40% intermediate housing for sale, which should include 25% First Homes in accordance with Government requirements;
- vi. the type and size mix of affordable dwellings must reflect identified local needs as evidenced through the Dorset housing register or other specific local surveys;
- vii. affordable homes should not be readily differentiated from the open market homes by their design, quality, location, and distribution within a site.

Affordable housing should be provided in perpetuity, (in accordance with the most up-to-date Government policy), for example, through a Community Land Trust, section 106 agreements, other community housing scheme or Registered Provider which retains stock for the benefit of the local community at an accessible cost.

9.28 The Weymouth Housing Needs Analysis 2021 identified a chronic need for affordable homes. The need is driven by the high prices and rents and the low incomes for many people in Weymouth. The Analysis Report estimates a need for affordable homes in Weymouth with a number between 1,775 and 2,649 required over the period 2021 to 2038. This need, the Report suggested, would be best met by the provision of a tenure split which favours rented dwelling; up to as many as 70% rented (either social or affordable rent), and the balance for ownership (including first homes, discounted market sale, and shared ownership). The greatest need over the next few years will be for 3-bed and 2 bed dwellings, 48% and 35% respectively. The forward need for 1-bed dwellings is estimated to be less than 10%.

- 9.29 Policy HOUS1 the Local Plan, adopted in 2015, required 35% of the dwellings on major sites (of over 10 dwelling) to be affordable, with a caveat relating to viability<sup>44</sup>. It is disappointing to report that the Local Plan has failed to deliver anything like the required proportion of affordable dwellings. In the period from 2016-21 of the 1,069 homes that were completed in Weymouth and Portland, 160 homes (15%) were 'affordable'. None of these were completed on exception sites. A combination of viability constraints and small site development is blamed.
- 9.30 The neighbourhood planning process has been used to explore ways to address the issue, and ensure future housing development in the neighbourhood area delivers a much higher number and proportion of affordable dwellings. The site analysis and consultation, undertaken based on the Site Assessment and Options Paper<sup>45</sup> focussed on meeting the community's housing objectives of:
- establish an appropriate mix of dwellings on new developments
  - ensure housing development is suitable to its locality
  - prioritise local housing needs
  - maximise the provision of affordable housing
  - meet the identified need for special housing
- These are reflected in the housing development and site allocation policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 9.31 Policy WNP21 requires developers to prioritise and maximise the provision of affordable dwellings. In view of the local housing crisis, we believe the Local Plan requirement for 35% affordable housing on major development sites within the defined development boundaries is not unreasonable, as is the requirement of 50% affordable housing on town centre sites, where densities can be higher. We urge developers to find ways to maximise the proportion of affordable homes. Such dwellings should not be readily differentiated from the open market homes by their design, quality, location, and distribution within a site.
- 9.32 The exact balance of type, size, and tenure of affordable housing on every site should be determined according to evidence available at the time of any planning application, regarding current and future housing needs in the area. Reference should be made to the Dorset housing register and any specific local surveys. Weymouth Town Council should also be consulted. The Local Plan consultation recently suggested, in 2021, that the provision of affordable homes for rent should be split 50:50 between 'social rent' and 'affordable rent'. Local needs suggest a 60:40 split in favour of homes for social renting<sup>46</sup>.
- 9.33 Affordable housing should be allocated in accordance with a set of locally relevant criteria to ensure they meet an identifiable need and are allocated to households that qualify as being local or with an appropriate local connection or who are keyworkers.
- 9.34 First Homes should account for at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations. First Homes are discounted market sale units which:
- a) must be discounted by a minimum of 30% against the market value;

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<sup>44</sup> "A lower level of provision will only be permitted if there are good reasons to bring the development forward and the assessment shows that it is not economically viable to make the minimum level of provision being sought."

<sup>45</sup> Weblink to AECOM report

<sup>46</sup> Social rent is a lower cost rent, by a Govt formula, to that is paid to registered providers and local authorities.

- b) are sold to a person or persons meeting the eligibility criteria of a first-time buyer, buying within their local area, with the intention of living in the property;
- c) on their first sale, will have a restriction registered on the title at HM Land Registry to ensure the discount (as a percentage of current market value) and certain other restrictions are passed on at each subsequent title transfer; and,
- d) after the discount has been applied, the first sale must be at a price no higher than £250,000.

INITIAL DRAFT

### **Draft Policy WNP22: Self-Build and Custom-Build Housing**

A. Self-build and custom-build housing schemes will be supported on sites within the defined development boundaries or on strategic housing allocations.

B. Outside the defined development boundaries self-build and custom housebuilding schemes may be supported, if the proposal complies with the housing policies of the development plan:

- i. on an affordable housing exception site;
- ii. through the replacement of an existing dwelling;
- iii. through the subdivision of an existing home;
- iv. through the conversion of an existing building; or
- v. as a rural workers' dwelling.

C. A scheme for more than five self-build or custom-build dwellings on any site should be developed in accordance with an agreed design brief.

Development proposals should demonstrate alignment with the strategic environmental objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and conformity with other relevant policies in the development plan.

- 9.35 Dorset Council is required under the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 to keep a register of people who are interested in self-build or custom-build projects in the area. This helps us understand the level of demand for self-build and custom-build plots in Dorset.
- 9.36 The NPPF defines self-build and custom-build housing as that built by an individual, a group of individuals, or persons working with or for them, to be occupied by that individual. Such housing can be either market or affordable housing.
- 9.37 Policy WNP22 supports the provision of self-building initiatives that accord with all relevant policies in the development plan, where there is evidence that it helps the provision of affordable homes. For the same reason policy WNP22 encourages the provision of plots for self-build and custom-build housing on sites recognised by policy WNP18 where a local demand, based on the LPA's Self-Build Register is identifiable.
- 9.38 Outside of the defined development boundaries of policy WNP16, self-build and custom-build housing will only be supported if it is part of an exception site development or in other exceptional circumstances that are laid down by the development plan. Such development should in all ways satisfy the development plan's requirements for development in the countryside.

### **Draft Policy WNP23: Community Housing Schemes**

Development proposals for community-owned housing developments (such as those delivered via Community Land Trusts) that respond to demonstrated local housing needs and retain local affordable housing for the benefit of local people in need will be supported.

Innovative housing solutions that address a specific local housing need will be encouraged.

Development proposals should demonstrate alignment with the strategic environmental objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and conformity with other relevant policies in the development plan.

- 9.39 Whilst collective self-build housing projects may have some impact on meeting the need for more affordable housing, there is a more significant role for other forms of community housing. There are several ownership models including co-housing, self-help housing, cooperative and tenant-controlled housing, and community land trusts. Community housing is often designed to help certain groups – for example young people, older people, or those in need of affordable family homes. Housing can be rented to local people at affordable rates, which are kept low over the long-term, or sold to create income for the community. It is often eco-friendly and sustainable. Quite commonly the land remains in community ownership. Community housing is a worthy way for the community to provide decent and affordable homes for local people and will provide encouragement and support for bona fide schemes. The Neighbourhood Plan is particularly keen to prioritise brownfield sites and promote community-led housing projects, which are developed, owned, and run by local community organisation or enterprise, and focus on local housing needs and priorities.
- 9.40 Community-led housing projects that provide affordable housing within the defined development boundaries are facilitated by policy WNP23 of the Neighbourhood Plan. Innovative schemes are also encouraged to satisfy specific and identifiable local housing need.
- 9.41 Community-based developers are encouraged to consider the applicability of new successful initiatives from elsewhere. Community self-build schemes have proven themselves an effective way for a likeminded group of people to provide themselves with affordable homes and create a community. They could be supported by Neighbourhood Development Orders and the Community Right to Build legislation which allows the community to designate particular forms of development.
- 9.42 ‘Cohousing communities’ are intentional communities, created and run by their residents with sustainability in mind. Each household has a self-contained, private home and shares community space. Residents come together to manage their community, share activities, and regularly eat together. A co-housing initiative at nearby Bridport, Hazelmead<sup>47</sup>, has shown a way to provide a car-free housing scheme within a biodiverse natural environment which is self-sufficient in clean, green, locally generated energy.

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<sup>47</sup> <https://cohousing.org.uk/news/bridport-cohousing-a-beacon-of-inspiration-for-tackling-the-global-climate-crisis/>

- 9.43 In Bristol, an innovative community land trust<sup>48</sup> is addressing housing and affordability issues of young single persons with micro-homes on the back lands of housing estates.
- 9.44 Innovation and availability however should not be at a cost to the environment. We expect innovative housing schemes to involve sustainable construction techniques and materials; to incorporate 'passiv' housing principles in design and layout; and to maximise renewable energy use and water conservation.
- 9.45 An 'exception-site' proposal to further the provision of community-led housing in accordance with policy WNP26, will also be supported if a suitable site is identified outside, but relatively close, to a current defined development boundary. Any community housing proposed on an affordable housing exception site, must fall within the definition of affordable housing set out in the Glossary and achieve a very high proportion of affordable dwellings with a tenure mix that matches local needs and let in accordance with the requirements of policy WNP26.

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<sup>48</sup> <https://wecanmake.org/>



### **Draft Policy WNP25: Houses in Multiple Occupation**

Changes of use to houses in multiple occupation (HMO) will be supported where:

- i. the proposal would not result in an over concentration of HMOs in any one area, to the extent that it would be to the detriment of, or represent an unacceptable change to, the character of the area or undermine the maintenance of a balanced and mixed local community.
- ii. the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the building, adjacent buildings, or local landscape context;
- iii. the design, layout, and intensity of use of the building would not have an unacceptable impact on neighbouring residential amenities;
- iv. there is adequate internal and external amenity space, refuse storage and car and bicycle parking at an appropriate quantity, and is of sufficiently high standard so as not to harm visual amenity;
- v. the proposal would not cause unacceptable highway problems; and,

- 9.46 The Weymouth Housing Needs Assessment undertaken in early 2021 has estimated that at least 1,029 specialist dwellings, maybe up to 1,400, are required to service the needs of older people over the Plan period.
- 9.47 The HNA stresses that it is important for specialist housing for older people to be provided in sustainable, accessible locations, for several reasons, as follows:
- so that residents, who often lack cars of their own, are able to access local services and facilities, such as shops and doctor's surgeries, on foot;
  - so that any staff working there have the choice to access their workplace by more sustainable transport modes; and
  - so that family members and other visitors have the choice to access relatives and friends living in specialist accommodation by more sustainable transport modes.
- 9.48 It is considered that Weymouth is, in broad terms, a suitable location for specialist accommodation on the basis of the accessibility criteria and the considerations of cost-effectiveness that can be achieved through economies of scale. As such, there is potential for such accommodation to be provided within the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- 9.49 Policy WNP24 supports the development of specialist housing that satisfies local needs and enables its occupants to retain vital connections to the neighbourhood and community they are familiar with.
- 9.50 Specialist housing developers will be encouraged to introduce a greater degree of choice and flexibility into the housing options for older people who wish to move in later life.
- 9.51 A house in multiple occupation (HMO) is a property rented out by at least three people who are not from one 'household' (for example a family) but share essential facilities like the bathroom and kitchen. It has recently been reported that there are 50 registered houses in multiple occupation in the neighbourhood area. Most of them are in Weymouth Town Centre or in the vicinity of it.
- 9.52 All single storey and two storey HMOs with five or more occupants are required to be licenced. Licensed HMOs must reach and maintain a required standard of quality and safety to retain their licence<sup>49</sup>. Restrictions also apply to the property owner in relation to

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<sup>49</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/housing/advice-for-landlords/houses-in-multiple-occupation-hmos>

passing a 'fit and proper' test. There are, however, many other properties that would be classified as an HMO, which are not licensed.

- 9.53 It cannot be doubted that HMOs contribute to satisfying a housing need, especially amongst the transient population. It cannot be doubted either that there are many problems associated with HMO's. These justify policy WNP25, which supports HMO's where the proposed development does not lead to an over-concentration in a specific area, achieves high standards of design, development, layout and space, that meets the required standards of Dorset Council and will not harm the amenity and character of the neighbourhood in which it is located.

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### **Draft Policy WNP26: Exception Site Development**

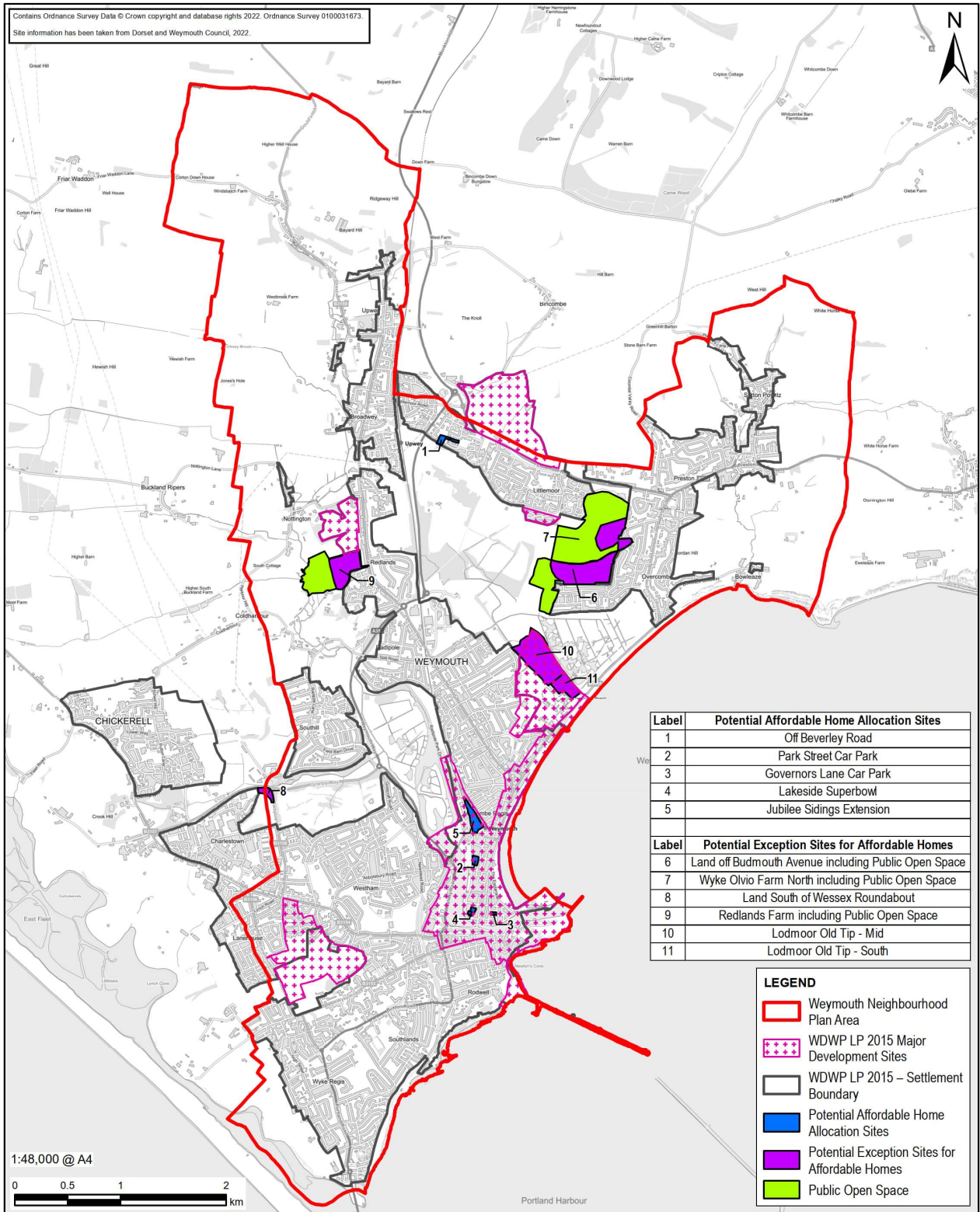
Any development proposals for new dwellings, other than replacement dwellings, outside the defined development boundaries will be classed as an exception to the policies in the development plan and should comprise 100% Affordable Housing only for local people. The application of a local occupancy clause will be expected in perpetuity, without the requirement for further justification.

A small proportion of open market homes with a permanent residency condition attached to them, may be acceptable if it can be shown they are necessary in the interests of a viable scheme.

- 9.54 The defined development boundaries for the area have been purposely drawn tight, in accordance with an agreed set of criteria, to protect our open areas, wildlife habitats and agricultural land. Those areas that are deemed most precious and most important are protected by policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. The criteria used to define the DDB boundaries on Map 17 is that used by the Local Plan. The resultant boundaries are therefore consistent with the Local Plan but updated to take account of planning decisions and policies since the Local Plan was adopted.
- 9.55 Allowing development to take place outside of the DDB is a decision that should not be taken lightly. Policy WNP26 recognises however that the need to increase the stock and range of affordable dwellings that will be available for local households in perpetuity, may justify moderate-scale development beyond, but close to the DDB, on land whose value, in open space terms, is marginal, and in locations that can cope with or may even benefit from an increase in households and are within walking distance of facilities and community infrastructure.
- 9.56 Evidence and consultations have established that there is a substantial need for more affordable homes. For this reason, development proposals for affordable housing schemes on land adjacent to the DDB will be given serious consideration. Such schemes should demonstrably satisfy a local affordable housing need in terms of size of dwellings and tenure mix in accordance with policy WNP21. It is expected that most homes will be available for social rent to households on the Housing Register and allocated in accordance with the prevailing local housing allocations policies, with priority given to those households with a strong Weymouth connection. First homes, that accord with the Government's discount scheme should be a part of the affordable housing mix, depending on need and location. Policy WNP26 requires affordable homes on exception site schemes to be secured in perpetuity.
- 9.57 The recent Site Options Assessment<sup>50</sup> carried out in 2022, identified five locations outside, but adjoining the DDB, that are potentially suitable for residential development, see Map 19. Much of the land outside the DDB however is protected from development by other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. This land will not be suitable for exception site residential development. Developers and their social housing partners should focus on sites that have no such protection and have been assessed as potentially suitable by the latest site development potential exercise that has been accepted by Weymouth Town Council.

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<sup>50</sup> [Weblink to SOA 2022](#)



Map 19: Potential Residential Site Allocations and Exception Sites

These sites are still under consideration and will be accessed following the Site Assessment process and will not be declared until the Pre-Submission Draft of the Neighbourhood Plan.

**Draft Policy WNPXX: Site Allocations**

The following sites are allocated as affordable and/or mixed market housing sites, as defined on Map tbd:

List and detail sites within and adjacent to the DDB

Individual site allocation policies will follow if it is thought prudent to secure the appropriate use of specific sites or to set constraints and conditions on their development.

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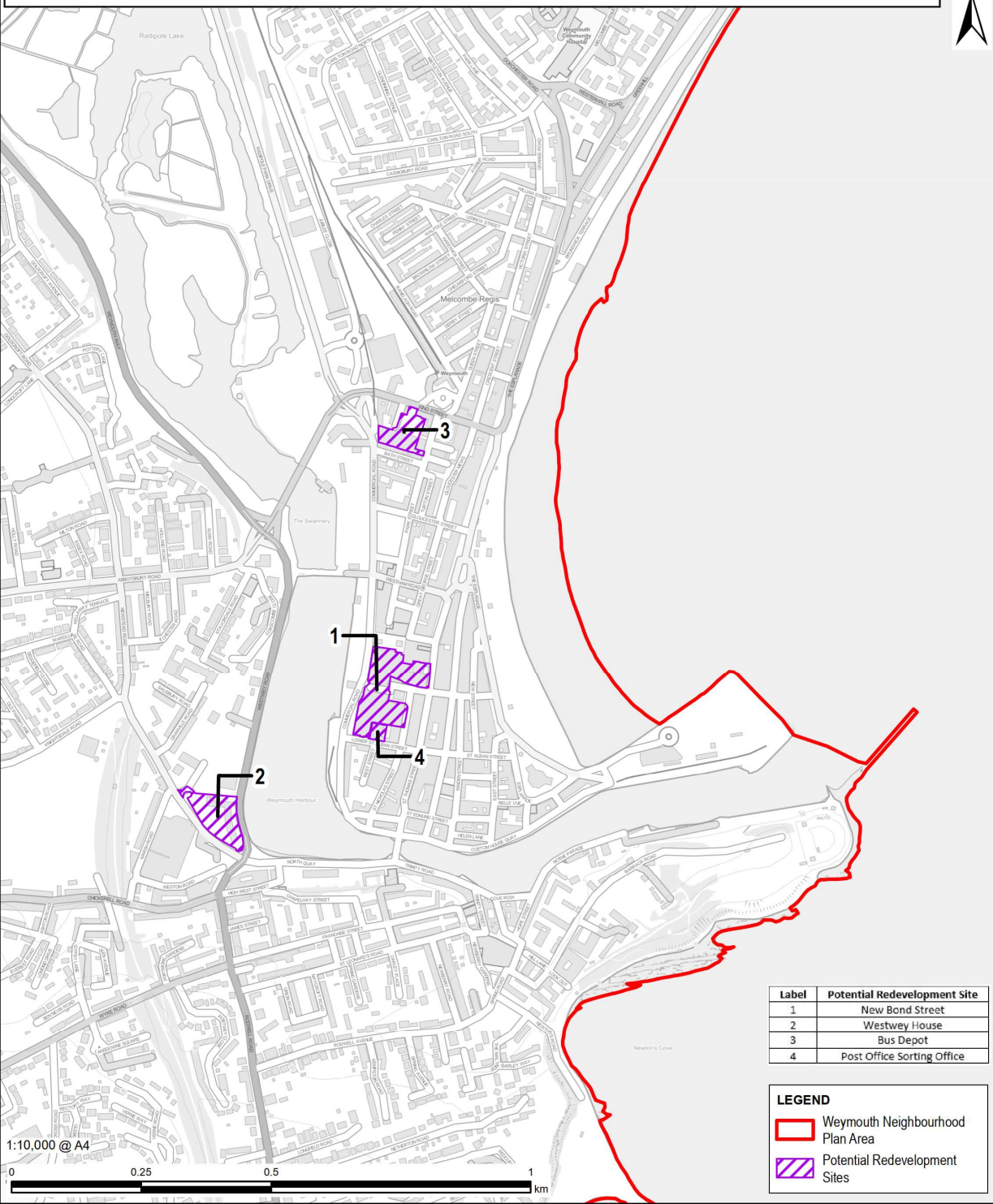
### **Draft Policy WNP27: Regenerating Buildings and Sites**

Development proposals for the appropriate conversion or redevelopment of buildings and sites for mixed use development (including residential) within the defined development boundary, will be supported providing:

- i. they are suitably located for the uses intended;
- ii. their form and general design are in keeping with their surroundings;
- iii. where appropriate they are capable of conversion without the need for complete reconstruction;
- iv. the mix and balance of uses is consistent with needs and character of the locality; and
- v. the proposals demonstrate alignment with the strategic environmental objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and conformity with other relevant policies in the development plan.

- 9.61 Tackling the housing situation in Weymouth requires a range of flexible and imaginative solutions. It has been made clear by consultations and surveys that there are a variety of situations in the area that are suitable for a mixed-use development that could include vital residential units. Many of the most noticeable of redundant buildings and sites are in or adjacent to the town centre; several are in the ownership of Dorset Council. (see Map 22)
- 9.62 Local landowners are encouraged to realise the potential of these 'assets' and to maximise the benefit of these sites for the local economy and to meet local housing needs. A target return of 30% of the previous number of jobs on the site is considered to be a reasonable target for employment and 50% Affordable Homes for residential development.
- 9.63 Policy WNP27 is supportive of conversion or redevelopment projects for redundant buildings and sites to provide a mixed-use development as long as at least 50% of the dwelling units provided can be categorised as 'affordable' under the definitions of the NPPF.
- 9.64 Whilst such projects, by nature of the circumstance of the site or location may not be able to comply with all the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, they will be expected to demonstrate high sustainability credentials.

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 Site information has been taken from DC SHLAA 2021 or from responses to WTC Call for Sites, 2022.



Label	Potential Redevelopment Site
1	New Bond Street
2	Westwey House
3	Bus Depot
4	Post Office Sorting Office

**LEGEND**

- Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan Area
- Potential Redevelopment Sites

Map 22: Potential Redevelopment Sites

### **Draft Policy WNP28: Principal Residence Requirement**

Proposals for open market dwellinghouses (excluding one for one replacements) will only be supported where first and future occupancy occupation is restricted by a planning condition to ensure that each new dwellinghouse is occupied only as a Principal Residence. A principal residence is defined as a dwelling occupied as the resident's sole or main residence, where the resident spends most of their time when not working away from home.

- 9.65 Community consultation in 2022 highlighted a concern amongst the area's population about the growth of the number of second homes and holiday lets in the area. Dorset Council, estimate (in 2021) that there are more than 500 second homes in the neighbourhood area. There are approximately 300 properties in Weymouth listed on Airbnb for July 2023. The Town Council has expressed its concern, in recent Local Plan consultation, that, unrestrained, further open market housing development may increase the number of second homes and increase the number of people moving into the area whose buying power will force up local prices disadvantaging local people.
- 9.66 A study of the second home issue was carried out by Dorset Council in 2021. It was clear that high levels of second homeownership affect areas within the Dorset AONB and at the coast. Because of this concentration in certain areas, Dorset Council expressed the view that *"another way of addressing the issue, as opposed to Dorset-wide Local Plan adoption, is through adoption of the policy in Neighbourhood Plans. This may be more effective than a whole Council approach because, as Figure 2 shows, the issue is localised and does not impact the whole of the Dorset Council area. Communities would be able to decide whether they think it is an issue for them, looking at more localised data. This may reduce the negative implications over the Council area as a whole, however the impacts of displacing the demand to other areas of Dorset in the AONB or at coastal locations would need to be considered."*<sup>51</sup>
- 9.67 In accordance with the agreed aims for the Neighbourhood Plan and the expressed wishes of the community through recent consultation, policy WNP28 requires a principal residency condition to be placed on new houses, which will help keep new houses within reach of local people through price and availability. It will also ensure new housing schemes are more likely to develop as a community. The second home and holiday-let market still has access to new flats and apartments, as well as the whole of the existing housing stock, some of which would benefit from new investment.
- 9.68 In the context of a massive under-provision of affordable homes to meet the needs of local households and enable advancement up the housing ladder, we feel justified in placing a primary residence policy on all new houses built during the plan-period.

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<sup>51</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/290430/DCLP-Jan-2021-second-homes.pdf/9e6c81c7-b186-cad3-b5c9-99dab34d40f7>



### **Draft Policy WNP29: Timing of Infrastructure**

Major development should be phased logically and in tandem with the timely and co-ordinated provision of infrastructure to help support sustainable growth and ensure that an unacceptable strain is not placed on the existing infrastructure.

- 9.69 A common area of public feedback and concern has been about how the area's infrastructure is going to cope. There are significant worries that education, health and wellbeing services, the transport network, safe walking and cycling routes and the sewage system will remain more than adequate to serve a growth in population as well as increased visitor levels and a changing demographic. For at least 10 years, for instance, the inadequate sewerage capacity in the Upper Wey Valley has resulted in pollution to the highways and the River Wey.
- 9.70 Many of these issues lie beyond the remit of a neighbourhood plan but it was felt that the Plan should at least reference these concerns and make it clear that we regard Local Plan policies COM1 and COM10 'Infrastructure' to be very important. Local plans are required to plan positively for the development and make sufficient provision for the infrastructure required in the area to meet the objectives, principles, and policies of the NPPF (para. 20). Development should only be permitted where it is supported by appropriate infrastructure that is provided in a timely manner.
- 9.71 There is a need to consider the area's infrastructure needs and for the Local Planning Authority to work with developers to ensure that these needs and local priorities are recognised fully. Development proposals should include a realistic assessment of their impact on the existing local infrastructure, services and facilities and demonstrate how any such impacts will be addressed so as not to disbenefit existing residents and businesses or harm the natural or physical environment.
- 9.72 Dorset Council became responsible for the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule from 1 January 2019. It is charged at a set amount per square metre of additional floor area and increases each year on 1 January. Any qualifying development granted permission is liable to pay the levy. The levy will be spent on infrastructure projects. A proportion of the levy will be paid directly to the Town Council, to be invested, at the discretion of the Town Council, in community infrastructure projects. This investment will be co-ordinated with that of Dorset Council for maximum benefit and sustainability.

### Draft Policy WNP30: Sustainable Development

New development should seek to achieve high standards of sustainable development, and demonstrate in proposals how design, construction and operation aligns with the strategic environmental objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan.

New development will be supported provided:

- i) sustainable construction methods, water conservation measures and SuDS are fully integrated into the development proposals;
- ii) energy conservation measures and renewable energy technology predominate;
- iii) provision is made for fibre-optic broadband and other communication networks to all new properties;
- iv) adequate provision is made for the safe and secure parking and storage of bikes, and electric vehicles;

The retrofitting of energy conservation measures and renewable energy technology is generally supported. Where planning permission is required, measures and installations should be designed to minimise visual impact and nuisance to adjoining uses. The sensitive retrofitting of historic buildings and buildings in conservation areas will be considered.

- 9.73 Local Plan Policy ENV 12 ‘the Design and Positioning of Buildings’ encourages developers to achieve a high quality of sustainable and inclusive design. The policy states the development “*will only be permitted where it complies with national technical standards*”. It sets a series of criteria to steer the design process to create a high quality and locationally sensitive development. Local Plan Policy ENV 13 ‘Achieving High Levels of Environmental Performance’ states an expectation that new buildings, alterations, and extensions to existing buildings will achieve high standards of environmental performance.
- 9.74 Since the Local Plan was adopted in 2015, interest and demand for ‘eco-friendly’ homes has multiplied, especially in the context of rising energy costs. The communities of Weymouth have shown through consultation a willingness to commit to carbon neutrality and a more sustainable way of living and working. The expectation is that all new development will be in harmony with that ambition. Just as other epochs are identifiable by the buildings of the time, the new buildings of Weymouth should be a conspicuous physical manifestation of how we chose to live in the first half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- 9.75 Policy WNP30 **provides** developers with a sustainability checklist. Proposals that exceed the current technical standards for sustainable construction are encouraged.
- 9.76 The retrofitting of existing traditional buildings in the interest of reducing carbon emissions and greater energy efficiency is encouraged. There is a growing number of guides available to help developers. These, and the advice of the LPA, should be sought out, especially in the case of heritage buildings. Historic England have for instance produced a guide<sup>52</sup> on fitting solar panels to historic buildings.

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<sup>52</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/eehb-solar-electric/heag173-eehb-solar-electric-photovoltaics/>

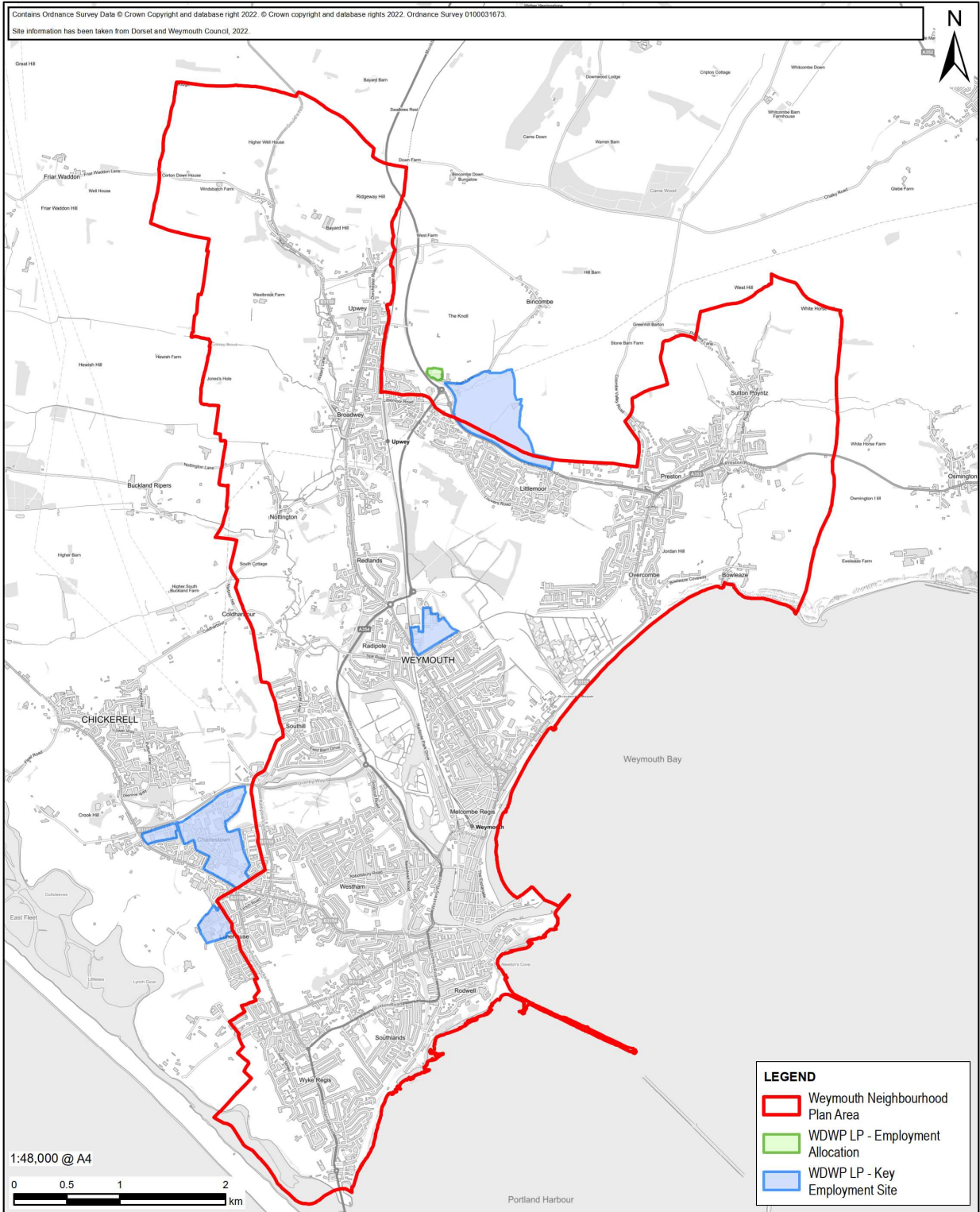
## 10. Jobs and the Local Economy

- 10.1 Weymouth is a seaside resort, the third largest settlement in Dorset and the largest town in the Dorset Unitary Council Area. Its economy is dominated by lower-paid employment and there is a significant amount of outward commuting to Dorchester and other areas for employment purposes. Unemployment and lower-paid work are a significant local issue.
- 10.2 The 2019 Index<sup>53</sup> of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) shows that seven of the 31 LSOAs<sup>54</sup> in Weymouth are amongst the 20% most deprived areas in the country and some of the most deprived in Dorset for employment as well as education and skills, health and disability, and barriers to housing and services; whilst other parts of Weymouth, are more affluent and in the 20% least deprived category. This makes for a very varied Neighbourhood Plan area with significant contrasts. The average income for the area, for instance is £39,929, which is above the national average, yet the average lower quartile income for households with one income is £14,745, and for households with two incomes is £29,490.
- 10.3 The Weymouth local economy is overly dependent on tourism, the harbour and local visitor attractions. There are also a significant number of residents working in Defence and Aerospace, mostly employed at the Granby Industrial Estate, just outside Weymouth, but also on Portland, as well as at Winfrith and Yeovil. Additionally, there are many people working in the building and housing industry, many of whom commute out of Weymouth to work.
- 10.4 The 2021 Census tells us that 52.7% of the resident population who are over 16 were economically active. 2.7% were unemployed in 2021. 65% of the working population worked full-time. 57% of people went to work by car. 23% worked from home (it was during Covid). Only 3% travelled to work by cycle and 12% walked (25% in Melcombe Regis ward). Most of these percentages are similar to the Dorset county averages.
- 10.5 The 2015 Local Plan identified several Key Employment Sites in and near to Weymouth. The Mount Pleasant Business Park is the primary site: but most of the development on this site has been retail contrary to the planning policy. The draft Dorset Council Plan identifies the Littlemoor Northern extension as a Key Employment Site, see Map 20.
- 10.6 'Employment and Skills' was the identified in community consultations as the most important single issue for Weymouth. The lack of good quality jobs and training opportunities was identified by 57% of responders as critical for Weymouth's future. Many aspects of the job market were criticised. The limited range and lack of year-round jobs, poor wages and lack of skilled jobs were repeatedly cited. The lack of training and career opportunities for young people was a particular concern. Weymouth College and nearby Kingston Maurward College are further education colleges providing graduate limited higher education facilities courses (HND, HNC and Foundation Degrees) are provided at Weymouth College linked to Plymouth University and Bournemouth University respectively. Bournemouth and Exeter Universities are the nearest universities.

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<sup>53</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>

<sup>54</sup> LSOA = Lower-layer Super Output Areas are small areas designed to be of a similar population size, with an average of approximately 1,500 residents or 650 household, on which statistics are derived.



Map 20: WDWP LP Key Employment Sites

- 10.7 In 2021, almost half of the resident population (45%) aged over 16 had a level 1-3 qualification. 17% of had no qualification and 27% had a level 4 qualification or higher. 28% of the workforce were in managerial or professional occupations. 13% worked in caring and leisure services. 8% worked in sales and customer services.
- 10.8 Weymouth town centre has a large area of protected primary shopping and secondary frontages. In these areas, shops are encouraged as well as other commercial uses such as offices at first floor. The retail sector however has declined significantly over the past few years in common with many other town centres nationwide. The town centre retains a strong leisure service provision including cafés, restaurants, bars/nightclubs, public houses, takeaways, and a cinema. There are also leisure uses that reflect its role and function as a coastal resort, which make a marked contribution to its overall character and vitality; such as amusement arcades, a theatre, and the Sea Life Centre.
- 10.9 There is a consensus locally that the town centre has an important role to play in the future life and wellbeing of the town but needs a significant revitalisation to do so. The Weymouth Town Centre Masterplan 2015 made a start. It identified a range of regeneration proposals that would deliver many new jobs and homes and a revive the fortunes of the town centre. However, much of the potential identified by the masterplan remains unrealised. The Masterplan needs refreshing to take account of the very discernible changes in culture, fashions and habits that have been taking place post-Covid.
- 10.10 The policies that follow are very much pro-business and more importantly pro-jobs. But not just any jobs, for too long the Weymouth job offer has been inadequate in so many ways. The Neighbourhood Plan's approach is consistent with the NPPF para. 81 in wanting to *"help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt ....by taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development"* and thereby **achieving the economic objective of the NPPF – to help build a strong, responsive, and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation, and improved productivity**".
- 10.11 The policies in this section of the Neighbourhood Plan are intended to promote and facilitate development in the growth sectors and industries, with an emphasis on green technologies and green jobs. This does not negate further tourism development, which Weymouth needs, but it does mean prioritising the kind of tourism development that the Weymouth of the future wants.
- 10.12 In this way we hope local people will benefit from the local availability of good jobs, bigger wages, and better prospects.

**Draft Policy WNP31: Loss of Business Premises**

Development proposals for change of use of existing business premises away from employment activity will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the existing use is no longer economically viable, and all reasonable steps have been taken to let or sell the site or building for employment purposes

Development proposals to expand an existing employment or business use will be supported, subject to no unacceptable harm being caused to local character, residential amenity, highway safety or flood risk and no loss of a dwelling.

- 10.13 There is evidence that Weymouth has been experiencing a loss of employment land because of the pressures on employment land, particularly to residential use, or because premises and sites are no longer fit for purpose or alternative business use.
- 10.14 The Local Plan acknowledges the importance of sustainable economic growth to Weymouth and includes policies to protect existing employment sites including those it identifies as being ‘key employment sites’. These are the larger employment sites that “*contribute significantly to the employment land supply for B class uses*” and serve a wider than local jobs market. Mount Pleasant (with 5ha of employment land approved) is identified in the Local Plan as the location of a ‘key employment site’ (see Map 20) as are those adjacent to the neighbourhood area in Littlemoor Urban Extension (with 8ha of employment land approved) and Chickerell, at Granby Industrial Estate, Lynch Lane Industrial Estate, and Link Park. They are all subject to Policy ECON2, “Protection of Key Employment Sites”, in the Local Plan
- 10.15 Policy WNP31 makes it clear that we continue to support existing businesses in the interests of economic growth and prosperity, as long as it is appropriate to do so in that location.
- 10.16 Policy WNP31 is intended to protect the business premises of the neighbourhood area unless it is clear they are redundant and no longer needed. When, existing sites and premises become available for re-use, we expect every effort to be made by the owner to market the site in the hope of securing a viable alternative employment use that will contribute to economic growth and provide much needed local employment. We believe that 12 months is not an unreasonable period given the importance of economic growth and local employment is to the area. After that period, any redevelopment or change of use proposal should comply with the appropriate development plan policies.
- 10.17 In support of the town’s economic fortune, policy WNP31 is supportive of development that ensures existing employment sites and premises remain suitable to meet modern demands and practices. The policy includes safeguards to ensure that the development is appropriate to its location and does not result in any unacceptable impact on neighbours, infrastructure, or the environment.

### **Draft Policy WNP32: New Business Development**

The development of new businesses and the expansion of existing businesses on brownfield sites or through the sympathetic conversion of redundant buildings within the DDB will generally be supported subject to such development respecting local character and residential amenity, and the residual cumulative impacts on highway safety and the local transport network not being unacceptable.

Development proposals should demonstrate alignment with the strategic environmental objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and conformity with other relevant policies in the development plan.

Where planning permission is required, proposals to facilitate home working will be supported where the amenity and privacy of neighbouring residents is not adversely affected.

- 10.18 The NPPF (para. 81) says we “*should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future*”.
- 10.19 We are mandated by the community to broaden the business base and appreciate that the policy approach espoused by the NPPF requires policies to be flexible enough to accommodate a variety of needs and changing business practices. Policy WNP32 supports new business development that will generate jobs in a range of situations and locations. This is very important as we enter a post-Covid era where working practices and the working environment is evolving.
- 10.20 The Site Options Assessment Report 2022 identified several redevelopment opportunities in the vicinity of the town centre on sites that are obsolete or under-used that could provide new employment opportunities in locations that are generally suitable for employment uses. New Bond Street Shopping Centre, Westwey House, the Bus Depot and the Post Office Sorting Office were also cited by the community during consultations as redevelopment opportunities. Policy WNP32 supports such redevelopment proposals subject to them satisfying the policy requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan and the development achieving high standards of clean energy efficiency.
- 10.21 Support for a particular development proposal should be conditional on the community and economic benefits to be derived from the development significantly outweighing any harm that cannot be satisfactorily mitigated. New retail uses will be resisted on sites where it would result in an over-provision in the location.
- 10.22 The preference and priority are for employment-related development proposals that will:
- broaden and raise the business and skills base of the area
  - increase new technologies, particularly ‘green’ ones, and the digital industries
  - provide training and progression opportunities for the work force
- 10.23 Post-Covid there is a discernible and growing interest in homeworking, which has been made easier and more appealing by the increasing availability of a superfast and efficient communication network. Policy WNP32 is generally supportive of the extension of a dwelling or small-scale development within its curtilage, for appropriate business

purposes by the dwelling's occupants, if it will not result in any unacceptable impact on neighbours or the environment.

Any sites allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan by the policy below is subject to:  
Availability, Deliverability, and Sustainability considerations.

**Draft Policy WNPXX: Sites for Employment Uses**

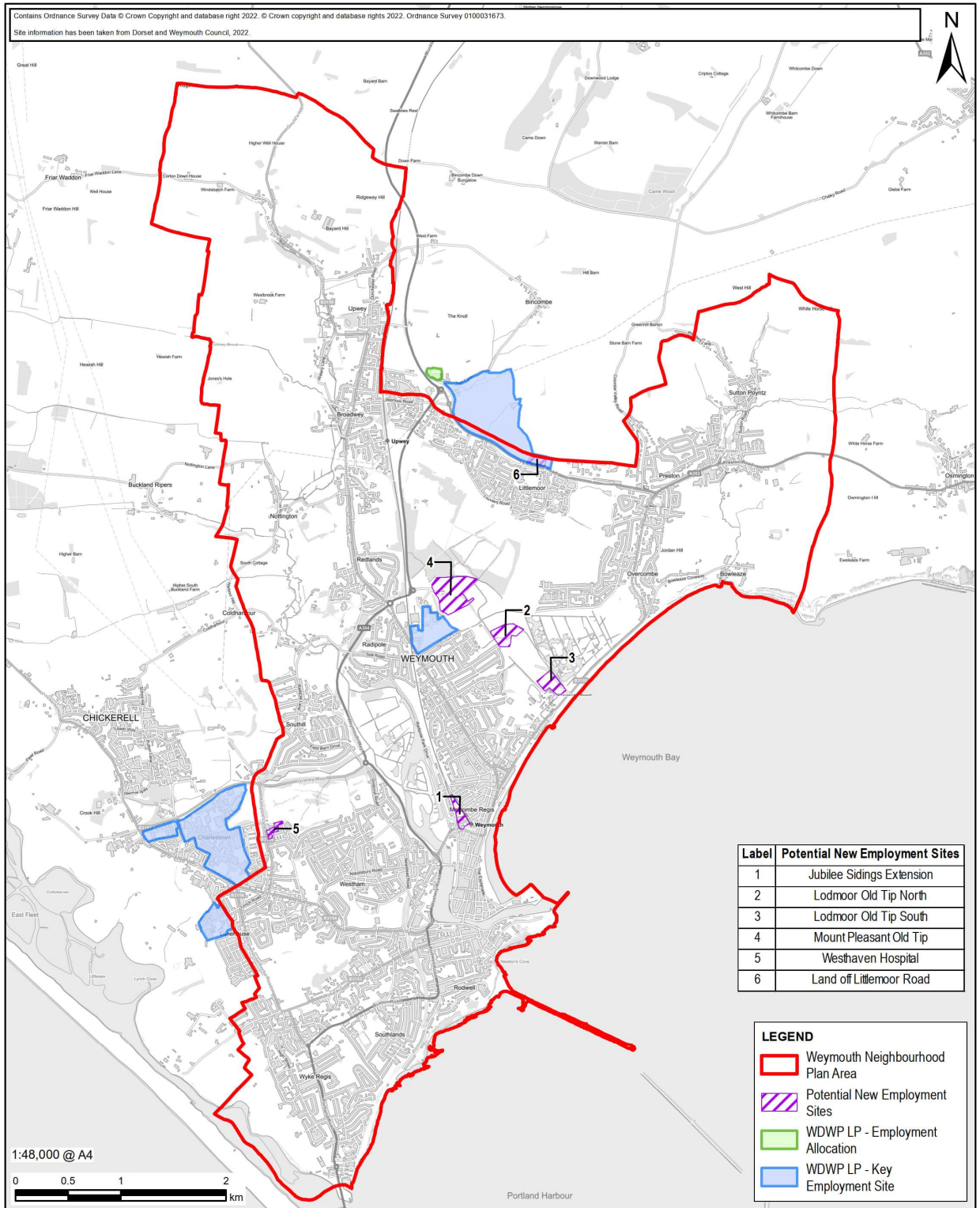
Development proposals for employment use will be supported on the following sites:

List of sites under consideration for being allocated for employment uses and shown on Map 21.

Individual site allocation policies will follow if it is thought prudent to secure the appropriate use of specific sites or to set constraints and conditions on their development

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Map 21: Potential Employment Sites under consideration

### **Draft Policy WNP33: Mixed-Use Employment Schemes**

Development proposals for employment use as part of a mixed-used scheme comprising of a mix of residential and business use (which is not overdominated by retail) will be supported in principle.

- 10.24 Taking advantage of opportunities to expand the economic base of the area and increase local job opportunities is a key aim. A comprehensive Site Options Assessment (SOA)<sup>55</sup> of available land was carried out on behalf of the Town Council in 2022. The assessment identified 34 sites that are potentially suitable for employment development. All but three of them were assessed as also being suitable for residential development, suggesting a mixed-use development approach may be appropriate for several of them. Many of the sites have constraints and issues that need to be acknowledged and addressed in any development proposal. Many will involve extensive and costly redevelopment.
- 10.25 The Dorset Strategic Economic Strategy recognises the major employment opportunities that could be derived from mixed-use redevelopment of locations adjacent to the town centre. This is reflected in the Local Plan with policies for the key areas of:
- Station Area and Swannery Car Park (Policy WEY3)
  - Custom House Quay and Brewery Waterfront (Policy WEY4)
  - Ferry Peninsula (Policy WEY6)
  - Westwey Road and North Quay Area (Policy WEY7)
- All are proposed for extensive mixed-use redevelopment, which includes commercial and tourism-related uses as well as some residential space. All are close and convenient to existing residential areas.
- 10.26 Consistent with the Local Plan, policy WNP33 supports the inclusion of residential use on other sites that are considered suited for employment and mixed-use development because of their location and whose development or redevelopment has the support of the community.
- 10.27 Sites identified as suitable for employment and residential use in the SOA have been the subject of consultation and further assessment the result of which may result in more detailed site-specific policies being included in the Neighbourhood Plan.

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<sup>55</sup> [Weblink to SOA](#)

#### **Draft Policy WNP34: New Workshops and Business Hubs**

Development proposals for the creation of workshop units and business hubs to support starter businesses and/or SMEs will be supported where they have no adverse impact on:

- i. the character of the built environment;
- ii. residential amenity; and
- iii. traffic generation.

Development proposals should demonstrate alignment with the strategic environmental objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and conformity with other relevant policies in the development plan.

- 10.28 An important strand of our approach, to economic growth and prosperity, is creating jobs in the newer, more knowledge-focussed industries to offset losses in more traditional industries. This means nurturing new businesses and supporting innovation. It also means, as the NPPF (para. 82) says, planning *“positively for the location, promotion and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high technology industries”*.
- 10.29 There are buildings and locations in the neighbourhood area that could serve well as workshops, business centres and hubs of enterprise and innovation, and offer a range of work units, central shared services and even support on site. Policy WNP34 offers support to such initiatives as they arise, subject to the businesses individually or collectively not resulting in an unacceptable impact on neighbours, infrastructure, or the environment.
- 10.30 Where an appropriate building falls outside of a Defined Development Boundary, Local Plan Policy SUS3 would have primacy in determination of any application.

### **Draft Policy WNP35: Higher & Further Education & Skills Provision**

Development proposals for higher education provision and for higher skills training especially associated with technical and green skills shall be supported.

- 10.31 Community consultation in 2020-21 identified a discernible dissatisfaction with the local provision of higher education and training opportunities. Our approach, to economic growth and prosperity, seeks to increase local provision, in the interests of diversifying education, training, and skills in synergy with business growth; improving prospects for the young and under-qualified; retaining our young talent; and reducing commuting. We are keen to encourage creativity, technology, innovation, and green jobs<sup>56</sup>, as well as jobs that build on farming, food production, the coastal and maritime location.
- 10.32 Policy WNP35 provides, in principle, support for development proposals that extend local provision to meet local demands.

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<sup>56</sup> Jobs in industries producing a product or service that contributes directly to preserving and enhancing the quality of the environment and associated with green energy, energy efficiency and waste reduction

### **Draft Policy WNP36: Weymouth Town Centre**

Development proposals within the area defined as Weymouth Town Centre on Map 22 should generally conform with the Local Plan policy 'Weymouth Town Centre Strategy' and the latest Town Centre masterplan.

Development and change of use that contributes to a diverse range of uses in the Town Centre including new office, leisure, community, hotel, retail, and residential use, which can be shown to support the core retail offer and generate vitality and add viability to the Town Centre, whilst avoiding harm to existing businesses and residential properties, will be supported.

Proposals which seek to stimulate an appropriate evening economy in the town centre are strongly encouraged.

Proposals that make better use of upper floors and underused floorspace in the town centre are welcomed.

Proposals which enhance the appeal of and use of the town centre by pedestrians are strongly supported.

Development proposals should demonstrate alignment with the strategic environmental objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan.

- 10.33 Despite an obvious decline in its retail role and overall vitality, Weymouth Town Centre is still highly regarded, and considered by the community as an important focal point for so many of the facilities, activities, and services it requires. This is evident from the several community consultations that have been carried out between 2021 and 2023.
- 10.34 The NPPF (para.86) recognises the on-going significance of town centres to towns such as Weymouth and urges us to take a positive approach to the growth, management, and adaptation of town centres to ensure they remain relevant and the heart of the community and the area.
- 10.35 Local Plan Policy WEY1 seeks to protect the town centre's character, improve the public realm, encourage national and independent traders, encourage evening activity, by introducing more family friendly activities in appropriate locations, manage residual flood risk, citing the masterplan prepared for Weymouth & Portland Borough Council, which was adopted in 2015 as a supplementary planning document (SPD).
- 10.36 The Weymouth Town Centre Masterplan<sup>57</sup> was a response to community concerns expressed at the time about the wellbeing of town centre. Its vision was drawn from extensive consultation on the future of the town centre with key stakeholders, residents, businesses, and visitors to the area. The masterplan was heralded in 2015 as *"the start of exciting changes aimed at ensuring that Weymouth can live up to local aspirations as an exciting, vibrant 21st century coastal town"*.
- 10.37 The Weymouth Town Centre masterplan is a ten-year plan. It has served a useful purpose as a framework for change and improvement in a difficult economic climate, but it needs refreshing and updating. Circumstances have changed. The recent consultation on the new Dorset Local Plan acknowledged that *"due to recent changes in shopping habits and the presence of various vacant sites around the town centre it is*

*recognised that..... there is a need to regenerate parts of the town centre. It is anticipated that this regeneration could deliver at least 400 new homes along with the retail and business needs of the area".* It further acknowledges that there are many challenges to be faced if Weymouth town centre is to fulfil a vital and sustainable role in the life of the town, the people of the area and its many visitors.

- 10.38 The Town Centre Masterplan is in need of review. Much of the community feedback from the neighbourhood planning consultations provides valuable guidance as to how local people would like their town centre to be transformed to play a vital role in the life of the town and its inhabitants in the first part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Much of the recent focus has been on the seafront, which is regarded as part of the town centre. It will be important to integrate policy proposals for the revitalisation of the seafront with a refreshed Town Centre Masterplan. Much of the feedback from community consultation highlighted the benefit of independent retailers bringing distinct character and shopping experiences to the Town Centre.
- 10.39 Policy WNP36 recognises the value of a masterplan for the town centre that promotes and stimulate a diverse range of relevant uses whilst safeguarding and enhancing the core retail offer. The charm, character, and overall sense of pleasure and safety experienced by most town centre users is of particular importance. All development should contribute positively to furthering the positive experience that a visit to Weymouth town centre should engender.
- 10.40 Good and sensitive design should be a key factor. Development proposals should include a design statement to show how they have responded to local design guidance and how the development will make a positive contribution to achieving the objectives of the Masterplan through design. The Design Code work carried out on the Weymouth Central Area under the Pathfinder programme may provide a basis for the development of a Design Code for the Town Centre.

### **Draft Policy WNP37: Temporary Uses**

The temporary use of buildings and open spaces for organised events and activities will be supported provided that the proposed temporary use:

- i. does not cause any significant adverse environmental problems;
- ii. would not result in loss or damage to the area's natural resources;
- iii. would not have significant harmful impacts on the amenities of neighbouring residents;
- iv. would not have significant harmful impacts on the wider visitor experience; and
- v. there is clear community and neighbour support for the period of use proposed.

Development proposals should demonstrate alignment with the strategic environmental objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan.

- 10.41 Consultation in association with a seafront study in 2022 identified a strong support for the increased provision of spaces to stage public events and festivities, amongst persons of all ages within the resident population. The seafront study recognises that there is considerable scope to make good and better use of several of the open spaces and the Esplanade itself.
- 10.42 The continued development of a relevant and contemporary annual events and festivals programme is supported. Weymouth Town Council has an approved Events Vision "*that by 2025 Weymouth has developed a comprehensive programme of high-quality sustainable community inspired and tourism-based events and festivals that cultivates community creativity for maximum economic and environmental benefit and social enjoyment throughout the town council area*".
- 10.43 Policy WNP37 supports the temporary use of existing spaces, especially, but not exclusively, within the town centre area for organised events that will attract visitors as well as local people as spectators and/or participants.
- 10.44 It also recognises that there could be significant economic value in taking advantage of, or extending, the 'tourist season'. Making best use of what we have, but on a temporary basis, of no more than six months, which would cause little in the way of long-term harm to the environment or nuisance to nearby uses, is consistent with a sustainable approach to tourism.

### **Draft Policy WNP38: Sustainable Tourism Development**

Sustainable tourism development proposals and/or extensions to or expansion of existing tourism uses that enhance the visitor economy and increase the quality and diversity of the tourism offer are supported in principle throughout the neighbourhood area. Development proposals should be consistent with the hierarchy of preference expressed in the Local Plan.

All proposals must be of a scale, type, and appearance appropriate to the location. Development needs to be sympathetic to the wider environment and must not result in an adverse impact, individually or cumulatively, upon designated landscapes and sites of biodiversity importance.

Development that results in harmful impacts on local services, roads and other infrastructure will not be supported.

Development that delivers a wider environmental or community benefits will be encouraged.

Development proposals should demonstrate alignment with the strategic environmental objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and conformity with other relevant policies in the development plan.

- 10.45 Weymouth is Dorset's premier tourist destination and long may it be so. Furthering the beneficial impact of tourism is an essential part of our approach to economic growth and prosperity.
- 10.46 It is recognised that tourism has not always been in the best interests of the area, its environment, and its inhabitants. The 'cheap and cheerful' image that has evolved for many of the UK's seaside resorts has proven not to stimulate major investment. Seasonality, low wages, traffic congestion, various forms of pollution, crime and safety issues have all repressed economic growth.
- 10.47 Policy WNP38 endeavours to help establish the nature of the tourism development that would be most beneficial to the area, whilst building on a discernible trend in revitalisation that has occurred to many seaside resorts occurred post-Covid. Weymouth is determined to capitalise on this trend and do so by promoting sustainable tourism development, with high quality accommodation, facilities, and activities, to give the town an overall cultural uplift.
- 10.48 Sustainable tourism is committed to generating a low impact on the surrounding environment and community by acting responsibly while generating income and employment for the local economy and aiding social cohesion. Rather than a type of product, sustainable tourism is an ethos that should underpin all tourism activities and is integral to all aspects of tourism development and management and not just an add-on. We expect any such proposal to demonstrate its sustainability credentials and be accompanied by an environmental impact assessment.
- 10.49 WNP38 recognises the need to promote and support eco-tourism; activity and health-related tourism, all-year round, tourism; and extolling the virtues of the area's natural environment, heritage locations and high-quality facilities.



**Draft Policy WNP39: Building Access**

The provision of improved access arrangements to public buildings and spaces, including easier access to historic buildings where it does not detract from the unique character and historic value of designated and non-designated heritage assets, will be supported.

- 10.50 Too many public buildings still have inappropriate access arrangements that discriminate against those with disabilities and mobility problems. We recognise that tackling this problem is not easy for some of the historic buildings of the area. However, we do believe that safe and suitable access to for all people should be the aim.
- 10.51 Policy WNP39 provides in principle support, for improved access arrangements to public buildings throughout the neighbourhood area. Further guidance will be found in the Weymouth Design Code.

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### **Draft Policy WNP40: Offshore Renewable Energy Projects**

Development proposals to facilitate low and zero carbon offshore renewable energy projects will be supported if:

- i. the natural and undeveloped coast, geodiversity and biodiversity is protected;
- ii. it is demonstrated, through a coastal landscape and seascape impact assessment (where required), there will be no significant adverse impact on the natural undeveloped coast; and
- iii. in all other ways, it conforms with the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

- 10.52 The biggest opportunity for renewable energy generation in the vicinity of the neighbourhood area lies offshore. To date there has been resistance to such development off the coast of Dorset.
- 10.53 The importance of locally generated renewable energy has increased manyfold over the past few years. Dorset CEE has estimated that *“without deploying offshore wind or reducing energy beyond current projections we would need to find space for 2,000 more onshore turbines or use 28% of available land for additional solar panels. This reduces dramatically if we can reduce demand by 60% and is well within the potential limits if we develop an offshore wind farm”*<sup>58</sup>.
- 10.54 The only offshore site in the south of England at present is the Rampion windfarm off Brighton. Most of the country’s offshore windfarms are installed along the eastern coast of the UK, in the North Sea. Yet, the Dorset coast is one of the best and windiest locations for offshore wind in England. The Regen Report on Low Carbon Investment Opportunities in Dorset<sup>59</sup> produced for the LEP<sup>60</sup>, estimates that a 1GW offshore site would be able to generate about 30% of total 2018 energy use. *“The network infrastructure from an offshore project could also unlock other net zero opportunities in the area, and investment could be expanded to relieve some of the electricity constraints facing Dorset. The network investment could also unlock other generation opportunities such as tidal stream electricity generation. and support hydrogen production through electrolysis”*.
- 10.55 The earliest an offshore wind site could be operational would be in the early to mid-2030s. The Regen report estimated the costs and benefits. An offshore wind farm of 1GW capacity would be over £1.5 billion, based on current project costs. The associated jobs would amount to approximately 2,300 FTEs. This estimate includes installation, manufacturing, operation, and maintenance, all of which could be localised in Dorset or neighbouring areas.
- 10.56 Policy WNP40 provides support in principle to facilitating development within the neighbourhood area for low and zero carbon offshore energy projects. The Steering Group recognises however that any proposal for a large-scale offshore wind project would be a planning matter decided by the Secretary of State due to its national significance and Dorset Council and Weymouth Town Council would only be one of many statutory consultees to the planning application.

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.dorset2030.com/>

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.dorsetlep.co.uk/userfiles/files/Dorset%20Low%20Carbon%20Energy%20Opportunities%20Document.pdf>

<sup>60</sup> LEP = Local Economic Partnership

## 11. Communities

- 11.1 In preparing the Neighbourhood Plan it was considered important from the outset to recognise that the Weymouth area comprised of many settlement areas each with their own character. The Character Area Assessment of 2021<sup>61</sup> grouped these settlements into five areas based on density, constraints, access to facilities, typologies, design styles and era built; but in doing so it recognised that these areas were comprised of several settlements or neighbourhoods many of them relating back to their historic origins.
- Character area 1 the historic core of Weymouth, the harbour and Melcombe Regis
  - Character area 2 includes Westham, Radipole Spa and Lodmoor
  - Character area 3 consists of the, originally, rural villages of Sutton Poyntz, Preston, Broadway, Upwey, Nottingham and Radipole
  - Character area 4 comprises the more recent neighbourhoods of Southill, Littlemoor, Overcombe and Redlands - built between the 1960's and present day
  - Character area 5 is Wyke Regis, with Southland and Rodwell
- 11.2 A Communities Theme Group was established early in the neighbourhood planning process. The first aim to be agreed following the first neighbourhood planning consultation in Dec 2020/Jan 2021 was a statement of intent to *“celebrate the unique character and culture of each local neighbourhood and respond to their needs to enable our policies to be applied in a sensitive way, relevant to the locality ensuring resilient sustainable communities for all ages”*.
- 11.3 Community consultation has guided the preparation of policies for the Neighbourhood Plan. In 2021 the community indicated some dissatisfaction with many aspects of the living environment. Traffic can be a nuisance, neighbourhood shops are not meeting needs, streets and spaces are in poor condition, community facilities are lacking, and the fear of crime is increasing. The 2022 consultation response confirmed that the sense of community and neighbourhood were *“important or unique”* to many people, and suggested priorities for safeguarding i.e.: green spaces, shops, post offices, community centres, recreation, pubs/cafes, and churches. Walkabouts involving local residents also took place in 2021 to get to the heart of the neighbourhoods and the heart of the matter<sup>62</sup>.
- 11.4 The policies that follow address what are discernibly important to local people. They supplement policies in the Local Plan to ensure Weymouth's neighbourhoods retain a strong sense of identity, enable, and support healthy lifestyles, and are safe and accessible. This approach is consistent with the NPPF para. 92 which states *“planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places”*. The focus is on:
- promoting clean, safe, sustainable, and affordable travel
  - reducing the impact of the motor vehicle
  - safeguarding community facilities
  - supporting community initiatives
  - encouraging sports and recreation
  - safeguarding our heritage and enhancing public spaces

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<sup>61</sup> [https://www.weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/210429\\_Wey-characterassessment-RN-DRAFT.pdf](https://www.weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/210429_Wey-characterassessment-RN-DRAFT.pdf)

<sup>62</sup> [Weblink to walkabout notes](#)

**Draft Policy WNP41: Community Energy Schemes**

Community energy initiatives which contribute to the promotion, development, and delivery of sustainable energy sources for the neighbourhood area will be supported, provided:

- i. the siting and scale of the proposed development is appropriate to its setting and position in the wider landscape;
- ii. the proposed development does not create an unacceptable impact on the amenities of residents in terms of noise, vibration, or electromagnetic interference; **and**
- iii. where appropriate, the energy generating infrastructure and its installation complies with the Microgeneration Certification Scheme or equivalent standard.

- 11.5 The NPPF (para. 156) encourages support for community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, *“including developments outside areas identified in local plans or other strategic policies that are being taken forward through neighbourhood planning”*.
- 11.6 The Community Consultation 2022 highlighted a widespread concern about the cost of energy and considerable interest in cleaner and cheaper energy sources. 66% of respondents cited installation costs as the greatest barrier to them accessing cleaner and cheaper energy sources with approximately half of people limited by knowledge of where to start and/or consistent information.
- 11.7 There is some local interest in community energy projects, and these should be supported. Opportunities are there to be taken on top of existing buildings, in association with new developments, and on marginal land outside the development area. The community is open to various forms of renewable energy generation and installation, of an appropriate scale with suitable safeguards.
- 11.8 There is no doubt that renewable energy technologies will change over the plan-period. It **should lead** to smaller, less intrusive, as well as more efficient installations. Community action and enterprise to harness local energy in the best interests of the community are encouraged.
- 11.9 Policy WNP41 reflects a pro-active position and confirms support in principle to local energy initiatives and a willingness to give weight to the potential community benefits in considering the merits of a development proposal that is genuinely community owned for example the developers should be a registered co-operative or Community Benefit Society. In this regard, community investment opportunities should be offered first to those residing within the area and at least 33% of the project must be owned by residents of the Plan area.

### **Draft Policy WNP42: Transport and Travel**

Development proposals should:

- i. identify the realistic level of traffic it is likely to generate. It must assess the potential impact of this traffic on pedestrians, cyclists, road safety, parking and congestion within the area and include measures to mitigate any impacts. Development that would give rise to unacceptable highway dangers and air pollution will not be supported.
- ii. maximise opportunities to walk and cycle and connect safely with existing walking and cycling routes; and
- iii. support public transport schemes and infrastructure.

- 11.10 There is little evidence that people are giving up the car. Car ownership has increased over the past 10 years and most commuters still go to work by car. There is evidence however that many people are unhappy about the impact of the motor vehicle. Traffic volume, speeds, congestion, and pollution are all mentioned frequently in consultation responses. The Community Consultation 2022 response showed 57% of respondents were concerned about vehicle traffic in the area they live causing a physical safety issue or air pollution risks.
- 11.11 The new Local Plan is likely to encourage the move away from car dependency towards healthy, lower carbon travel choices and lifestyles. The draft policy requires significant new developments to be located close enough to existing facilities or deliver viable new facilities to make walking and cycling a realistic choice. This approach has been taken into account by the housing policies of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 11.12 As much as it would be good to reduce the use and impact of the motor vehicle considerably, policy WNP42 requires developers to be realistic in their assessment of the traffic implications of their development and ensure that proposals include satisfactory access arrangements and highway improvements in accordance with the requirements of the Highways Authority, and include safe walking and cycling routes within the development, with suitable links to the wider transport network wherever possible.

### **Draft Policy WNP43: Public Transport**

Development proposals in association with improvements to the public transport infrastructure and network will be supported.

- 11.13 Within the neighbourhood area, we strongly support the more widespread and regular use of alternative transport modes to the private motor car. We are planning for an ageing and growing population. An effective and efficient public transport service is vital to the wellbeing of the community and the town.
- 11.14 The town centre, as you would expect, has ample facilities, and is very well connected with the rest of the town. Redlands and Littlemoor are on major bus routes and Preston and Overcombe are well served by a bus route. Westham, Lodmoor and Radipole Spa also have reasonable array of public transport facilities and access. Wey Valley has a strong linear form and access to facilities whilst Nottingham and Radipole have no bus provision. Links to Southill are limited. Public transport access in Wyke Regis and beyond is more adequate with numerous bus stops. Despite this relatively comprehensive network, many people still regularly and steadfastly use a private motor vehicle for local trips. There is no doubt however that buses routes and bus frequencies are being reduced, making public transport less accessible to large numbers of our residents. Traffic congestion in the Town Centre has also impacted on the reliability of services. Ways need to be found to increase the appeal of public transport, to further encourage its use, and to encourage providers to respond positively to public demand.
- 11.15 Neighbourhood Plans are encouraged by the NPPF (para. 112) to promote public transport use. Policy WNP43 supports development that facilitates the greater appeal and/or ease of use of public transport, such as interchange areas, linkages, bus refuges and stops etc, as long as the impact of such development would not cause unacceptable harm to the surrounding area.

#### **Draft Policy WNP44: Off-Street Parking**

Development should be designed to discourage additional on-street parking on the existing road network, especially near junctions or where the road is narrow.

Development proposals that do not comply as a minimum with Dorset Council's published off-street parking local parking guidance will not be supported.

- 11.16 The following quote from the 2022 Community Consultation seems to encapsulate local opinion: *“too many cars park illegally because there are not enough allocated parking spaces. When new homes are built, they do not have enough spaces to meet the demand of growing families that grow up also have their own vehicles”*.
- 11.17 Policy WNP44 is intended to ensure that development proposals for new housing and business sites include provision for sufficient vehicle parking and servicing spaces so as not to cause road safety concerns or congestion on the local highway network; and more than sufficient cycle parking and storage facilities.
- 11.18 Development proposals should accord with Dorset Council's published local parking guidance unless a different level of provision can be justified by local or site-specific circumstances. The design and layout of parking provision should seek to diminish the visual impact of parking provision on the street scene and minimise opportunities for illegal parking.

### **Draft Policy WNP45: Vehicle Charging Facilities**

Development proposals which include parking facilities, or which are likely to generate vehicle movements or vehicle ownership will be expected to integrate the provision of infrastructure to enable the charging of electric or other ultralow emission vehicles into the design and layout of the development in accordance with the current requirements of the local planning authority.

In existing areas there needs to be provision of Vehicle Charging Facilities accessible to residents and visitors.

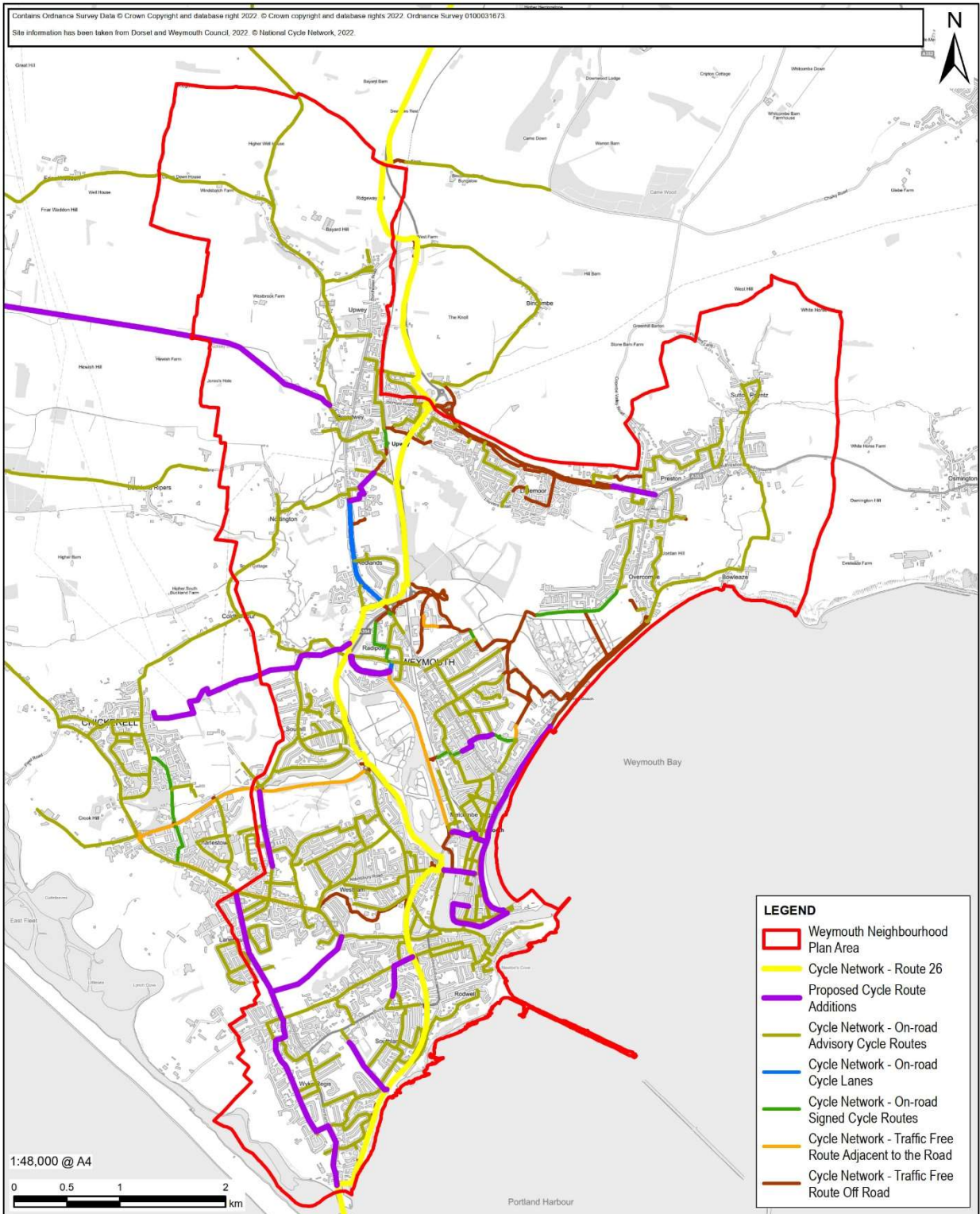
- 11.19 The Government has decided to ban the sale of new diesel and petrol cars by 2030, as part of its efforts to tackle air pollution. The growth of electric vehicles will likely accelerate as technology allows them to travel greater distances on a full charge. We are expecting that more and more of Weymouth's residents' and visitors' cars will be electric in the years ahead and will require more EV Charging facilities in publicly accessible places.
- 11.20 The NPPF (para. 107), requires us to take account of the need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles. The technology associated with such vehicles is still developing. It is difficult to predict the method and space requirements for keeping these vehicles charged and ready to travel in ten years' time.
- 11.21 We expect suitable electric-charging points to be considered as an essential and integral part of all new developments. Policy WNP45 provides support in principle for adequate and appropriate charging facilities without causing nuisance to adjoining uses and adding to any existing traffic/parking problem in the locality.



### **Draft Policy WNP46: Cycle Routes**

Development proposals to improve and extend existing cycle routes, to effect better segregation from motor traffic, and to link them to the wider network will be supported.

- 11.22 The cycle network in the neighbourhood area (see Map 23) has been the focus of much study over the past few years. Less than 10% of the local population appear to be regular cyclists. Only 4% of working adults cycle to work. The lack of a comprehensive cycle way network is undoubtedly a contributory factor as is the perception of safety risk. Map 23 shows there are several significant gaps in the network and limited lengths that are free from motor vehicles.
- 11.23 The Rodwell Trail is one of the area's great leisure assets and shows how a good quality safe route can serve the community. The Rodwell Trail is a shared use walking and cycling path using a former railway line, which provides a pleasant, traffic free 3.5km walk or cycle ride from Westham Bridge in the heart of Weymouth's town centre to Ferry Bridge. It forms part of the National Cycle Network Route 26 (Portland to Portishead).
- 11.24 The 2023 Community Consultation exposed a variety of criticism and considerable dissatisfaction with other parts of the current cycleway network. Many of the complaints are from frustrated other road users who share road space with cyclists. Two-thirds of respondents were happy to support improvements to current cycle routes by extending and connecting existing cycleways and linking them to the wider network. Map 23 shows proposed cycle route additions proposed by Dorset Council.
- 11.25 Many of the measures required to make cycling safer in the Weymouth area and more appealing to local people, relate to education and understanding amongst the population, leading to a greater tolerance of and respect for all road users. More modal separation on the highways and footpaths would help. There is no doubt however that a more joined up network of dedicated cycle routes is required, with cycle paths that provide links to services and facilities within residential areas and connect neighbourhoods together, and routes to employment areas and the town centre. The lack of a much-needed sea front/promenade route from Lodmoor to the Town Centre and Pavilion is often cited in community consultations.
- 11.26 The suggested improvements are based on analysis of the current network focussing on improving the safety for children cycling to schools and joining up the wider cycling network.
- 11.27 Policy WNP46 is supportive of improvements and extensions to the cycleway network, which should make cycling more appealing by improving safety and reducing risks and conflicts. It is hoped that such developments will lead to a shift in public opinion and a significant increase in regular cycle use.



Map 23: Cycle Network & Proposed Additions

### **Draft Policy WNP47: Traffic Impact**

Development proposals to reduce the volume and impact of motor vehicles such as:

- i. traffic calming and gateway treatments to deter non-local traffic in residential streets and visitor areas, and
- ii. extending the areas of pedestrian and cycling priority in town, village, and neighbourhood centres,
- iii. establishing functioning Park and Ride facilities on the outskirts of the town centre

will be supported provided they have been subject to consultation with the local community.

- 11.28 Traffic and the several issues related to it are a major grumble amongst the residents and business of Weymouth. In 2021 it was the highest 'dislike' about the town, with concerns about road safety and air pollution dominating the consultation response. The 2002 consultation identified major concerns about the volume and speed of traffic as well as the congestion when speeds were restricted. 81% of respondents in 2022 agreed that we should *"reduce car movements and encourage sustainable transport modes in local neighbourhoods"*.
- 11.29 The NPPF para. 104 requires plans to ensure the *"potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed... "opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued"* and the patterns of movement, streets, parking, and other transport considerations are considered to be an integral part of design and development.
- 11.30 Policy WNP47 supports development measures necessary to reduce the impact of traffic on the daily lives of people in the neighbourhood area, such as those to facilitate traffic calming or defining pedestrian priority areas. The need for traffic calming was a consistent issue raised during the neighbourhood walkabouts. It is important that such schemes are not imposed on a local community without proper consultation. Those who live and work in the local area, who have understanding of how the road network functions, will have a good idea of what will work and will not.
- 11.31 Attractive and adequate Park and Ride provision is essential if Weymouth is to permanently reduce the impact of the motor car on everyday life and improve the visitor experience. There is a clear need to improve and promote park and ride services and facilities in suitable out-of-town centre locations.

### **Draft Policy WNP48: Existing Community Buildings**

Development proposals, including change of use, which results in the permanent loss of local community buildings or structures (including where the most recent lawful use was as a community use), will not be supported unless:

- i. in the case of facilities not run as commercial businesses, it can be demonstrated that there is no local need for the facility, or it is no longer practical to continue the existing use; or
- ii. in the case of commercial community facilities, such a facility is no longer viable; or
- iii. a suitable replacement is provided in an equally accessible location to serve the local community.

Preference will be given to the change of use or redevelopment to appropriate alternative community uses. Uses other than community uses should be justified with consideration given to whether alternative community uses to meet local needs are not required, suitable or viable.

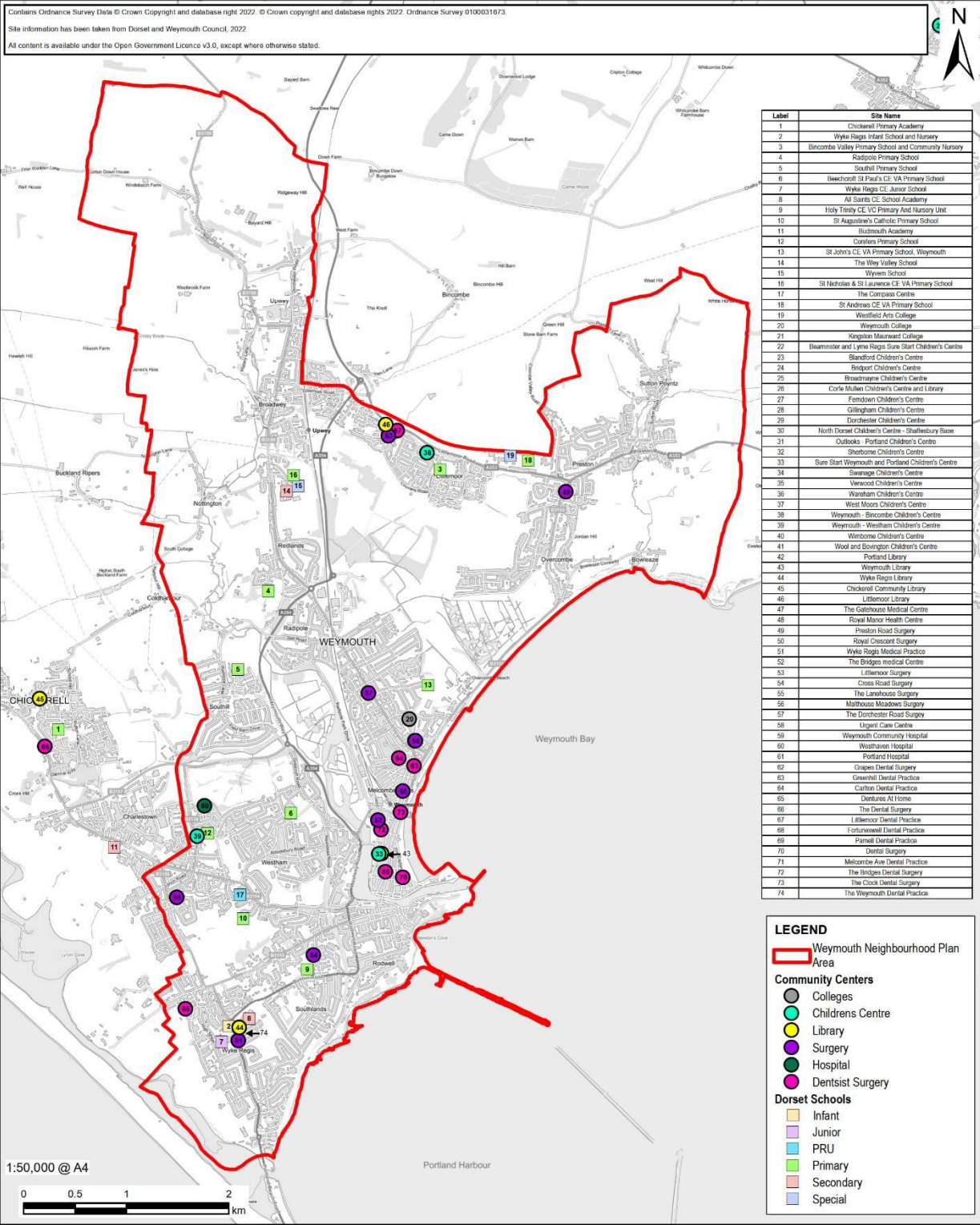
Development proposals will be supported that:

- iv. diversify and support the continuation of the existing community use (for example the change of part of the site to maintain the original use in a viable form); or
- v. help meet identified development needs through the more effective use of sites / premises while maintaining or improving the existing community service provision (for example through a community hub).

11.32 Weymouth has a diminishing number of community and neighbourhood centres that serve a range of community functions, particularly for young people, and purposes as well as hosting events and meeting that serve wider purposes and audiences. They provide space for health and wellbeing surgeries and groups. They host many social activities and are used for a range of indoor leisure and recreation purposes. Many figure on the Weymouth Events and Festivals Calendar. The community facilities and spaces we have, play an important part in sustaining community life and cohesion (many of the buildings are indicated on Map 24 and others listed below:

11.33 The NPPF (para. 93) encourage us to “*guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs*”. Changes were made to the Use Classes Order in England on 1st September 2020, notably with the introduction of a new Use Class E, incorporating shops, financial and professional services, cafe/restaurants, offices, research and development businesses, clinics, health centres, day nurseries, day centres and gymnasiums. As a result, not all changes of use of community facilities now require planning permission.

11.34 Where planning permission is required, policy WNP48 protects existing community buildings and facilities unless they are deemed as being no longer required or suitable for community use. In recognition that community interests and demands can change over-time, the policy supports necessary alterations or extensions to community facilities to ensure that they can continue to provide for community activity and services, so long as they conform with other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.



Map 24: Existing Community Centres

The Table overleaf shows other community centres not shown on Dorset Explorer which are important to our communities.

Upwey Old School Hall  
Upwey & Broadwey Memorial Hall  
Reynolds Community Centre, Broadwey

Littlemoor Community Centre  
Top Club, Littlemoor  
St Francis', Littlemoor  
Littlemoor Library

St Annes Old School  
Redlands Leisure & Community Park  
St Aldhems, Radipole Spa  
Radipole United Reform Church  
Weymouth North Scout Hut, Radipole Lane

Southill Community Centre  
St Emmanuels

Fiveways Centre  
Weymouth West Air Scouts Hut, Granby Close  
Bethany Hall, Westham  
St Pauls Community Centre  
Weymouth Central Scout Hut, Newstead Road  
Steps Youth Club, Chickerell Road  
St Edmunds Church Hall

Holy Trinity  
Hope United Reform Church  
Weymouth Old Town Hall  
Pilgrim House

St Marys World Café and Hall  
St Augustines Community Centre  
Weymouth Baptist Church Hall  
Park Community Centre  
Park Church Centre (are these the same?)  
Centenary Club  
Hope House, St Johns  
Weymouth Library  
Bethany Hall  
Salvation Army citadel

Preston Village Hall  
Mission Hall , Sutton Poyntz  
Scutt Hall, Preston  
St Andrews Church Hall

Wyke Regis Memorial Hall  
Weymouth South Scout Hut, Rylands Lane  
Wyke Library  
Wyke Women's Institute Hall  
Ryemead Lane Community Centre  
Beach View Community Centre, Wyke  
Horticultural Soc. Rylands Lane  
All Saints Church, Wyke  
Wyke Working Men's Club,  
Welworthy Sports and Social Club  
Wyke Sports and Social Club

## Community Halls and Centres in Weymouth

### **Draft Policy WNP49: Sports and Recreation**

The outdoor sports and recreation facilities and spaces identified on Map 25 will be protected. Development proposals that would lead to a reduction in the size or quality of these facilities and spaces will only be supported where the existing facilities are re-provided to a better quality or quantity in an accessible location to be agreed with the Town Council.

Development proposals for improved, new and/or additional sports and recreation facilities and spaces will be supported where they:

- i. respond to a demonstrable need and demand for the proposed facility;
- ii. meet up-to-date standards of design set by the appropriate agency or governing body;
- iii. provide community access; and,
- iv. demonstrate how they will be effectively managed and maintained in perpetuity.

Proposers of development should engage with the local community and Town Council to help ensure that proposals take into account the views and aspirations of the local community.

- 11.35 The NPPF (para. 99) makes it plain that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless they are proven to be surplus to requirements, or they are being replaced by something bigger and/or better.
- 11.36 Map 25 tbd shows the town's provision of public sports and recreation facilities. The 2022 Community Consultation showed they are regularly used by about a third of the population. They are used by many of the town's visitors as well. There was also a call for improvements and additional facilities and a recommendation that further community engagement could be done *"to gain insight into how the public use the recreational open spaces in Weymouth and how to involve residents with creating improvements that best serve the communities"*.
- 11.37 Weymouth is under-provided with sports pitches. A report<sup>63</sup> in 2019 highlighted the extent of under-provision and over-use of the sports pitches in the Weymouth and Portland area. The Active Dorset Playing Pitch Strategy<sup>64</sup> prepared in the context of the new Dorset Local Plan estimated that 69 additional pitches were need in the county over the plan-period to 2038. The Playing Pitch Strategy also recommends safeguarding and improving existing facilities alongside securing community use of existing private facilities to contribute towards meeting future need. Pertinently, the Strategy indicates that major new residential developments of 600 units or more are likely to generate demand for additional sports pitches for sports such as football and cricket. There is no doubt that Weymouth as a growing population centre needs more sports pitches, and these are better provided conveniently local. School-based swimming pools have closed in recent years. Weymouth has only one public swimming pool for its 53,000 residents. The nearest other public pools are in Portland and Dorchester. Similarly, the ageing Weymouth indoor swimming pool, where many learn to swim and improve their water

<sup>63</sup> Active Dorset Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment Report, Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd, March 2019

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/282495/Active+Dorset+-+Strategy+%26+Action+Plan.pdf/850e4b8b-6ac6-72ba-65ec-45f06db203ca>

skills, is at risk; and financial provisions need to be put in place to support a replacement and modernisation programme. Redlands Sports Club was saved from closure, by public outcry and is now operating as Redlands Leisure and Community Park. This emphasises the fragility of such facilities and the need to protect them.

- 11.38 Policy WNP49 puts protection in place for the existing areas of sporting and other recreational activities, delineated on Map 26 tbd. However, we are not just intent on protecting them from loss of area or facilities as a result of development. We are supportive of improvements and additional facilities on the site that help meet local recreational needs and promote increased participation.
- 11.39 The provision of sufficient community infrastructure to encourage healthy leisure and recreational activities and meet the growing and changing leisure needs and demands of the population is an important facet of the agenda. The NPPF (para. 96) recognises that *“access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities”*.
- 11.40 Robust and up to date assessments of the local needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and the identification of opportunities for new provision will be needed in future years. These will need to take into account the latest acceptable levels and standards of provision to ensure needs are met responsibly.
- 11.41 Policy WNP49 supports development proposals to provide additional outdoor sports and recreational facilities to meet identified needs. We expect the local community to be involved in the detailed planning of sports facilities, which should be informed by the design guidance on offer from Sport England<sup>65</sup> to ensure they are fit for purpose.

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<sup>65</sup> <https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance>



### **Draft Policy WNP50: Public Spaces**

Development proposals that will enhance the public realm, such as streets, squares, pavements, through the provision of street furniture, planting, and appropriate scale signage, will be supported provided it is demonstrated through a design and access statement that the proposals will enhance the character, appearance, and sense of place in their immediate locality.

Lighting should be limited, unobtrusive and energy efficient, and minimise light pollution.

Innovative design and art installations in the public realm is encouraged.

- 11.42 Much of the Neighbourhood Plan has focussed on the buildings existing and proposed. The buildings define the public realm, and it is the space between that is most used and often criticised.
- 11.43 The community consultations undertaken in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan highlighted dissatisfaction with the condition of streets and spaces. The 2022 Seafront Study was disparaging of some of the key locations in the town such as the Royal Beach area where *“the public realm and highway layout detracts significantly from the setting of these buildings”* and New Street, and the rear entrance to M&S, *“is a poor-quality space, which detracts from the high-quality buildings which generally front the street”*.
- 11.44 Attention to the public realm and its squares and spaces, however, should not be confined to the town centre and visitor hotspots. Throughout the area there are neighbourhood focus points and areas where people gather, or would do, if the space was inviting, interesting and safe; and pedestrian routes that should be comfortable and enjoyable to use.
- 11.45 The NPPF para. 130 says it is important to *“establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit”*. The recent success of the Harbourside public realm works, has set a standard.
- 11.46 Policy WNP50 encourages a recognition of the importance of the public realm and supports measures such as seating, wayfinding/branding, bike parking facilities, greenery, and arts installations, to increase its appeal and usage. Such improvements should reduce clutter, where it exists, and accentuate the character and distinctiveness of the local area. For instance, improvements to the quality of public realm can help promote the heritage of the town in the right locations. They can provide opportunities for the public realm to be tailored for activities and/or events and justify the restricted presence of motor vehicles in other locations.
- 11.47 Carefully planned lighting can help create nicer and safer places, which can be enjoyed both day and night, and can address the potential detrimental impact to wildlife such as bats.

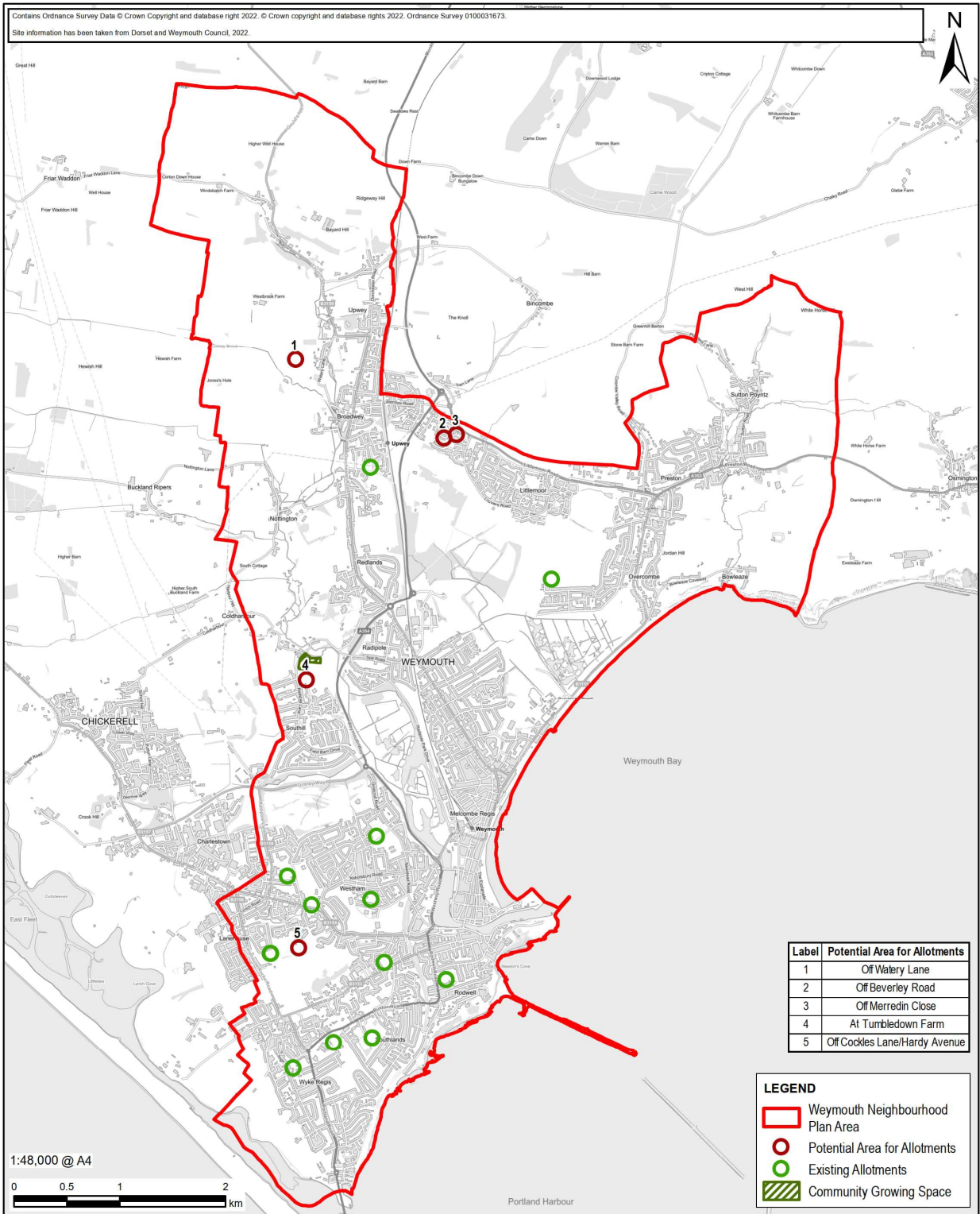
### **Draft Policy WNP51: Allotment and Community Gardening Provision**

Proposals that result in harm to or loss of existing allotments will not be supported unless:

- i. replacement provision is made, of at least equivalent quality, and located at reasonable convenience for the existing plot holders; or
- ii. overriding community benefits are achieved.

Proposals for new allotments and community horticulture projects on appropriate sites and new developments will be supported.

- 11.48 Weymouth has 14 areas of allotments. Many of them have been long-established. All are popular with local people. Ten sites are owned and managed by the Town Council comprising 358 plots. Additionally, there are two sites which are self-managed under a lease arrangement with Weymouth Town Council. There are also two private allotment areas. All these sites are protected by policy WNP51. The distribution of sites is heavily concentrated in the urban areas to the south and west of the neighbourhood area. Community consultation in 2022/23 has confirmed that there are notable gaps in the local distribution of allotments and community gardens, specifically in the Upwey, Broadway and Littlemoor areas, which could be remedied, at least in part, in association with new residential development. (see Map 26)
- 11.49 The NPPF (para. 92) encourages us to “*plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities*”. Community horticulture facilities such as allotments encourage healthier lifestyle and healthy leisure pursuits. If the trend of providing smaller private garden on new developments continues, it heightens the need for an increased supply of allotment or community gardening space. At January 2022 Weymouth Town Council reported having a waiting list of 101 persons for a plot on one of its ten sites.
- 11.50 Tumbledown Farm is a community farm in Radipole and has several growing plots for community groups. It is owned by Weymouth Town Council and run as a community partnership producing local food and delivering responsible stewardship over the natural environment that supports community life, learning and well-being in a sustainable and economic way. The project has ambitious plans to grow as a ‘community anchor’ that offers a range of activities, events, and opportunities to promote health and well-being, try new things and learn new skills and support others. Policy WEY25 of the Local Plan allocates land at Tumbledown Farm for allotments/ community food provision, along other related community uses, if the development “*does not undermine the important open gap function, and the nature conservation interests, and landscape character of the site are protected and enhanced*”.
- 11.51 Opportunities to provide more allotments, community orchards and community composting sites and encourage more local food growing initiatives similar to Tumbledown Farm should be realised. Larger housing developments should include community horticultural space whenever local need is identified; and a minimum soil standard should be required to BS standard 3882:2015 for multipurpose use. It is our belief that given the space and some encouragement people will respond positively.



Map 26: Existing Allotments and Potential new areas

### **Draft Policy WNP52: New Burial Grounds**

Proposals for new burial grounds in the neighbourhood area will be supported in principle, provided they are accessible, located reasonably close to the existing built-up area and in locations where local residential amenity can be protected.

11.52 The Town Council is the burial authority for Weymouth and owns four cemeteries:

- Weymouth Cemetery
- Melcombe Cemetery
- Melcombe Extension
- Wyke Cemetery

The cemeteries are managed in a subtle way, in that they are not excessively manicured. Melcombe Cemetery has been designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) and Melcombe and Wyke Cemeteries have been recognised as living churchyards. These sites are managed by Weymouth Town Council. Burial space will become more limited in the future.

11.53 Whilst there is a Crematorium in Weymouth, operated by Dorset Council, and cremation is the favoured practice the identification of more burial land has become a pressing issue. Although Tumbledown Farm was included in the draft Dorset Council Local Plan, this does not form part of the current WTC plans for Tumbledown.

11.54 Policy WNP52 supports the provision of additional burial space on sites that are deemed suitable for such a purpose.

## 12. Monitoring and Reviewing the Neighbourhood Plan

- 12.1 There is no statutory requirement for the impact of the Neighbourhood Plan and its policies to be monitored.
- 12.2 Weymouth Town Council will monitor and review the impact of policies on planning changes in the neighbourhood area. To achieve this, it will require annual reports from the LPA on the delivery outcomes of planning completions as well as an estimate of the outstanding approved planning permissions which have not completed.
- 12.3 A full or partial review of this Plan may be triggered by changes to legislation, changes to national, county-wide or district planning policies, or significant planning issues being raised by the local community which cannot be dealt with effectively by a combination of national, district and/or existing neighbourhood plan policies. The latter stages of preparation and the adoption of a new Local Plan will necessitate the Town Council considering whether a revised and/or updated Neighbourhood plan will be required.
- 12.4 Notwithstanding this, five years from the date the Neighbourhood Plan is made, the Town Council will consider the need and value in undertaking some form of Review.

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### 13. Glossary

The following terms may be used in the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan:

**Affordable Housing** - Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. (see appendix A)

**Ancient or veteran tree** - A tree which, because of its age, size and condition, is of exceptional biodiversity, cultural or heritage value. All ancient trees are veteran trees. Not all veteran trees are old enough to be ancient but are old relative to other trees of the same species. Very few trees of any species reach the ancient life-stage.

**Ancient Woodland** – a woodland which has existed since the year 1600 or earlier.

**AONB, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** - an area with statutory national landscape designation, the primary purpose of which is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Together with National Parks, AONBs represent the nation's finest landscapes. AONBs are designated by the Natural England.

**Biodiversity** - is the term used to describe the whole variety of life on Earth. It includes not only all species of plants and animals, but also the complex ecosystems they live within. It ranges from species and habitats which are considered commonplace to those considered critically endangered.

**Brownfield Land and Sites** - Previously developed land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.

**Climate change adaptation:** Adjustments made to natural or human systems in response to the actual or anticipated impacts of climate change, to mitigate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities

**Climate Change Emergency** - A declaration by local authorities and countries, which states that urgent action needs to be taken to slow the progress of climate change. An affirmation that the struggle against climate change is an emergency and needs to be treated as such.

**Climate change mitigation:** Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions

**Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** - a tax on certain forms of development to contribute to local infrastructure.

**County Geological Site** - sometimes also called a Regionally Important Geological Site (RIGS) County Geological Site. The geological or geomorphological equivalent of a CWS. They are non-statutory and identified by a group of experts.

**County Wildlife Site (CWS)** - an area of significance for its wildlife in at least a county context i.e. it may be of county, regional or even national importance.

**CROW Act** - The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act) applies to England and Wales only. The Act provides for public access on foot to areas of open land comprising mountain, moor, heath, down, and registered common land; amends the law relating to public rights of way; increases protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and strengthens wildlife enforcement legislation; and provides for better management of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

**Curtilage** - The area normally within the boundaries of a property surrounding the main building and used in connection with it.

**Development Plan Documents (DPDs)** – The suite of documents that form the Development Plan for the local planning area. DPDs must include a Core Strategy and Proposals Map but may also include other documents such as a site allocations document.

**Economically Active** - Persons in work or actively seeking work.

**First Homes** - are the Government's preferred discounted market tenure and should account for at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations.

**Flood Risk Assessment** - An assessment of the likelihood of flooding in a particular area so that development needs, and mitigation measures can be carefully considered.

**Flood Zones** - have been created by the Environment Agency to be used within the planning process as a starting point in determining how likely somewhere is to flood. A flood zone is predominantly a planning tool and doesn't necessarily mean somewhere will or will not flood.

**General Permitted Development Order (GPDO)** - The Town and Country Planning GPDO 2015 provides permitted development rights for a specified range of development, meaning that those activities do not require an application for planning permission. However, agricultural buildings and certain telecommunications equipment covered by permitted development rights are also subject to a prior approval procedure.

**Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)** - A HRA tests the impacts of a proposal on nature conservation sites of European importance and is a requirement under EU legislation for land use plans and projects.

**Heritage Asset** - A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

**Infill Development** - The development of a relatively small gap between existing buildings.

**Landscape Character Area (LCA)** - Single unique areas that are the discrete geographical area of a specific landscape type.

**Listed Buildings** - Buildings which have been recognised by Historic England (formerly English Heritage) as having special architectural or historic interest.

**Local Green Space** - Green areas of particular importance to local communities, which meet the criteria of the NPPF (para. 100), designated as 'local green space' to provide special protection against development.

**Local Plan** - A portfolio or folder of documents (Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), setting out the planning strategy for a local planning authority area.

**Local Planning Authority** - The public body whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a specific area. All references to local planning authority apply in this Plan to Dorset Council.

**Marine Conservation Zone** – Areas designated by Government under the Marine & Coastal Access Act 2009 for the purposes of conserving: (a) marine flora or fauna; (b) marine habitats or types of marine habitat; (c) features of geological or geomorphological interest.

**Marine Management Organisation** - an executive non-departmental public body established and given powers under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 to make a significant contribution to sustainable development in the marine area and to promote the UK government's vision for clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas.

**NPPF** - The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate, and necessary to do so. It provides a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of communities.

**Neighbourhood Plan** - A plan prepared by a town or Town Council or a neighbourhood forum for a specific neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

**PPG, Planning Practice Guidance** - is a web-based resource which brings together planning guidance on various topics into one place. It was launched in March 2014 and coincided with the cancelling of the majority of Government Circulars which had previously given guidance on many aspects of planning.

**Permissive Paths** - It is possible for landowners to allow access over their land without dedicating a right of way. These accesses are called permissive paths. To the user, they are often indistinguishable from normal highways, but there are some important differences:

- A permissive path must have some sign or similar indication that it is not intended to be a right of way
- The landowner can close off or divert the path if they wish to do so, without any legal process being involved
- The landowner can make restrictions which would not normally apply to highways, for example to allow horse riding but not cycling, or the other way around

**Planning Obligation** - A legally enforceable obligation entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal. Sometimes called "Section 106" agreements.

**Principal Residence or Home** - That occupied as the residents' sole or main residence where the resident spends the majority of their time when not working away from home.

**Public Right of Way** - is a highway over which the public have a right of access along the route.

**Qualifying Body** - Either a parish/town council or neighbourhood forum, which can initiate the process of neighbourhood planning.

**Renewable and low carbon energy:** Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

**Rural Exception Sites:** - Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. Small numbers of market homes may be allowed at the local authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

**Section 106** - The section of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 that provided for the creation of planning obligations, now replaced by Section 46 of the 2004 Act. Section 106 agreements allow local authorities to ensure that developers provide the infrastructure needed to support new developments. Often referred to as "*planning gain*".

**Special Area of Conservation (SAC)** - Protected sites designated under the EC Habitats Directive. Article 3 of the Habitats Directive requires the establishment of a European network of important high-quality conservation sites that will make a significant contribution to conserving the 189 habitat types and 788 species identified in Annexes I and II of the Directive (as amended).

**Special Protection Area (SPA)** - Sites providing statutory protection for rare, threatened or vulnerable bird species and also for regularly occurring migratory species.

**Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** - Sites providing statutory protection for the best examples of the UK's flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical features. These sites are also used to underpin other national and international nature conservation designations.

**Stepping Stones** - Pockets of habitat that, while not necessarily connected, facilitate the movement of species across otherwise inhospitable landscapes

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** - A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

**SuDS** - A solution which manages surface and groundwater sustainably by mimicking natural drainage regimes and avoiding the direct channelling of surface water through networks of pipes and sewers to nearby watercourses. SuDS aim to reduce surface water flooding, improve water quality, and enhance the amenity and biodiversity value of the environment.

**Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)** - Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on



specific issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.

**Sustainability Appraisal (SA)** - The consideration of policies and proposals to assess their impact on sustainable development objectives.

**Sustainable Development** - is development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**Sustainable transport modes:** Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, ultra low and zero emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

**Tree Preservation Order** - A mechanism for securing the preservation of single or groups of trees of acknowledged amenity value. A tree subject to a tree preservation order may not normally be topped, lopped or felled without the consent of the local planning authority.

**Use Classes** - The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 put uses of land and buildings into various categories. Planning permission is not needed for changes of use within the same use class.

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## Appendix A

Affordable Housing Definition from the NPPF (page 64)

*Affordable housing: housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:*

*a) **Affordable housing for rent** meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).*

*b) **Starter homes** is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.*

*c) **Discounted market sales housing** is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.*

*d) **Other affordable routes to home ownership** is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low-cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.*